

Our Trip Takes Us

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By Becky Hirn

Coming home for a week was an unusual experience for me. I asked Dan as we were pulling onto the Delphos exit from State Route 30, "Are you a different person than when we left?" He paused for a second and said that he thought he had changed. I agreed that we are both different. That's one thing that made stopping home so uncertain. We've changed, people and things here in Delphos have changed too. So we had the task of catching up, finding out the differences and what has stayed the same. While June 15 wasn't that long ago, I guess the experience is similar to going away to college and coming home a few months later. Big changes can happen quickly.

One thing I noticed immediately was our house. Nothing had really changed except for the feel of it. Our house didn't feel like home when we walked in the back door. The first, most obvious difference was the space. Wow, houses are big. Our ceilings are tall so that just added to the enormity of the thing. Big rooms, sprawling countertops, cabinet space and closets everywhere. But it was also very, very empty. That was the strangest thing to walk into. My own house for the past six years didn't feel like mine anymore. I guess when I moved in to the RVs, I really meant it, for a year anyway.

It was really the people I missed anyway. Within the first 24 hours in Delphos, we saw parents, siblings, and friends. I finally got to visit "my hairstylist." I received welcome home text messages. And I stopped to talk to people in the grocery and hardware stores. We also stayed up until 1 a.m. our first three nights home talking with people.

This reminded me of the time in Connecticut we were invited by our very first "road friends" to come for a visit to their house. We met Linda and Joe very early on in our trip while camping in New Hampshire. When we got close to their home state, Connecticut, they insisted we stop by for a visit. After 30 days on the road, we gratefully accepted the offer. The best way to describe going to their house is by saying it was like going to my sister's house for a family party. And I don't have a sister. There was a cardboard sign in the yard welcoming us. There was a barbeque, a pool, and a campfire. Linda's mom made us a cake. Extended family came over and all the kids played in the RV. I think Joe even took a couple days off work. It was true hospitality and it felt really good to be there. It was the people there in Connecticut that made it feel like home, because real home was hundreds of miles away.

Another part of coming home to Delphos that struck me as unusual was that after a couple days, I got antsy. I felt like we should keep moving on. Normally we don't spend more than two or three days in one place, so our stop in Delphos felt like a long stretch of time in one place. The main feeling was that I wasn't accomplishing what I set out to do; travel, find new places with my husband and kids, and write about them. I didn't update our website and I even stopped Twittering for the week. It just didn't feel right.

I came to the conclusion that I was essentially taking a vacation from our trip. A vacation in Delphos. It was the perfect solution to all my uneasiness. We had our annual softball tournament planned for the end of the week anyway. There was a baby shower on Sunday and lots of family in town. I wanted to take a walk on the new sidewalks out to East Towne Plaza and get a coffee and donut at the new shop in town. So I tried to let go of the changes, the uneasiness and feelings of not being productive. And I spend as much time enjoying the time I had left in town.

If I did make a big change in the last couple months, it's that I can recognize when it's time to simply be where I am. Or as some travelers say, "Enjoy the road you're on."

Becky Hirn is a Delphos resident traveling America with her family for a year. She documents the journey at www.ourtriptakesus.com. Follow the Hirn family in photos, blogs, on Facebook and Twitter. Or learn how to partner with the trip as an advertiser. You may e-mail Becky at beckyhirn@ourtriptakesus.com