

Our Trip Takes Us

By Becky Hirn

It was never in the plan to come home for Thanksgiving. We figured in Christmas but our itinerary and the distance just wouldn't work for the big meal at home. We planned to find somewhere else to go for Thanksgiving. For a long time, for the couple years at least, I was perfectly fine with this arrangement. I reasoned with myself that it just didn't fit the schedule, that we couldn't come home for everything. Just this week, I started to realize how it was going to feel to miss this holiday at home. This came to me while sitting on a couch in the home of a long lost cousin in Georgia. Dan's cousin, Joene, reads her hometown news online every day. Back in June she read about our trip and realized she was related to Dan. So she emailed and asked us to look her up when we got to Georgia. We did and what a great time our families had together. We spent some time in Yargo State Park together, just east of Atlanta. We went to Stone Mountain, where we saw the huge carving of southern leaders Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. Joene and her husband also insisted we pull our RV right up to the curb, come in their house and have dinner. We shared old family stories and learned new ones. Halfway through the visit, Dan and Joene realized they'd never even met each other face to face. I was simply amazed by their hospitality, especially since we were virtually strangers. In talking to Dan later, he pointed out that the big similarity with our family and Joene's was that we all know and love the same people, that's our connection.

Later the next day I saw a commercial on their television for a supermarket. Several different families were gathered around a feast. In each scene one person was standing, sharing their reasons for being thankful. Being home and with family was the theme. I don't know if it was the commercial, the hospitality our new Georgia family, or the prospect of not going back to Delphos to sit around the table with the people I've eaten with on Thanksgiving for 30+ years, but I cried a little.

A few days later in Alabama I was teaching the kids an art lesson on the cornucopia and I learned something myself. I asked the kids to fill their horns with pictures of all the things they're grateful for. If I'd been drawing too, my own Horn of Plenty would have been overflowing. I have so much to be thankful for. I see something new each day of this trip.

Not coming home for Thanksgiving might be a little tough. But as my husband pointed out, there are a lot of people who don't have a choice, such as the truck drivers we see on the road, those in the military and people without family. We're fortunate to be where we are and have the families we do. Another name for the cornucopia from Greek mythology, I told the kids, is the Horn of Good Fortune. I know we've been very fortunate.

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