

Our Trip Takes Us

By Becky Hirn

We had a 12-hour drive on our way back to Delphos for the holidays. We wished we could do it all in a day but it just wasn't practical. Normally, we only drive about three or four hours a day as we make our way around the country. So, we drove from Alabama to Kentucky in one day and then home the next, dividing the trip in two. When we got to Bowling Green, Kentucky, at 9 p.m. Sunday night, we were half way home. Anticipation is hardly a strong enough word for the way we were feeling. We talked about our homecoming and who we would see first. We were excited about the holiday parties and get togethers already planned. The kids couldn't wait to get out all the Christmas decorations and the tree. I still have shopping to do. We called home to our parents. And I sent a text to my girlfriends. After one joyful discussion about being home, my mind betrayed my emotions and glanced in another direction. We are halfway home in another sense. With six months on the road, our trip is also half over. What a bummer! I tried not to let this thought burst my holiday bubble.

We've had some great days on the road. Some I recall very clearly. June 15, 2009, is one of those days. It was the start of our big thing. It was the day we'd been talking about for so long. It was one of our best days on the road – the beginning. Another great memory is the first day we spent at Atlantic Ocean. We were in New Hampshire, that tiny little stretch of the state south of Maine and north of Massachusetts. We were on our way to Boston for the Fourth of July, but had a couple hours to stop at Rye Beach, get our suits wet and breathe in that distinctive salty air. Boston was fantastic too, with the all excitement on the banks of the Charles River, Neil Diamond and more American spirit that I've seen all in one place.

I've learned some lessons too, many I've shared in this column each week. I learned about living in a smaller space, about really listening to my children and to music. I've learned about geography, dozens of National Parks and even Florida's big beast, the alligator.

Some memories are more distant. Now where was that aquarium with the lady and her amazing seals? Remember talking to that guy in the parking lot about RV repairs, what state was that? And what time did I used to set my alarm clock for when I was working?

The realization that the trip is half over gets me worried. That's because I'm also much closer to the question, "Just what am I going to do when the trip is over? What's next?" I told a friend a few days ago that if I have learned anything by taking this trip it is this: If I know what I want, then it's really important to make it happen. That's because knowing what you want is a gift that not everyone gets. Sometimes people struggle and fight and never quite find what they're looking for. I've been there.

I knew I wanted to take this trip. It was on my bucket list, my top ten things. In six more months I'll check it off knowing I've accumulated great memories and learned important lessons. Then I'll have nine more big dreams to pull off. In the meantime, next Friday is as far as I'm looking ahead.

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