

2007 Travel Summary

Saturday 22 September 2007

Just a quick note to let you know we are heading on our fall trip, primarily for my youngest sister's wedding on 1 October. Although the first major stop is St. Louis (Washington University), we are not sure of the route yet, since storms are approaching (we usually leave earlier).

Weather here has been almost winter-like, the high temp today was ~ 58 F, with 60% RH, 20 mph breeze, and 0.07 inches of rain. Donna likes the cool weather, but I have already turned on the solar heating for the house.

We will be with our cat Prancer in the new van. There are still some bugs in the van we should get fixed next week, otherwise, we will improve things along the way. We are hoping Prancer will adapt to the van as well as she did to the motor home.

Work is progressing in the house, i.e., we are making things more cluttered and home-like. Still some projects to go, but we are at least seeing what we are going to be mostly living with for the rest of our lives. Donna has her sewing room functional, i.e., let out some dress pants for me to wear at the wedding; my "electronicals" even has a properly connected anti-static work station.

Saturday 20 October 2007

We have now been in the new van for over 2 weeks; not the same as the motor home, but the use of the power wheelchair is a lot easier for both of us. Donna does have to lug a lot more stuff in/out of motel rooms, but as long as we try to stay in most locations at least 2 nights, then not too bad.

We (mostly Donna) drove fairly quickly (3 days) from Nevada to Arkansas. We then spent 3 nights in Fort Smith, location of the largest (area wise) federal court in the frontier area, dealing primarily with the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). Donna was pleased that the movies "True Grit" and "Hang'em High" were loosely (as with all Hollywood movies, very loosely) based on real characters and events. The museum had lots of information about a variety of criminals and the marshals who went after them. We also visited the town of Van Buren, looking for antiques, but without much success.

After a stop near Springfield, Missouri where we visited the Wilson Creek battlefield, with an excellent museum of the history of the Civil War in the west (3rd most Civil War battles were in Missouri), we were on to St. Louis and the first of the medical visits. We then visited some friends (through JEDEC) in Kokomo, Indiana. The next medical visit was to Lexington, Kentucky. Both medical visits were very productive and there is some work for me to do with the web site.

We spent two nights in Pikeville, Kentucky visiting the great little museum in the town. Items of interest included a local collection of old tools, some info on the Hatfield-McCoy feud

(Randolph McCoy and some surviving family moved there), and the Big Cut (the second largest moving of earth in the Western Hemisphere, to route a river around the town). We went to Elkhorn City to see the railroad museum, mostly on the Clinchfield RR, which still moves a lot of coal (e.g., probably where the coal came from for the power plant I worked at in South Carolina). Not a lot of items, but the curators were very talkative. Also visited the Coal and Railroad museum in Jenkins. US-23 was a spectacular drive, the fall foliage of red, gold, and orange on the backdrop of green was nice; I also enjoyed the incredible civil engineering of the highway, lots of earth (sandstone) had been blasted and moved to make a scenic and easy driving highway.

Prancer (our cat) has been doing very well with the traveling. When Donna is driving, she spends almost all the time in my lap, sometimes looking out at the scenery, but mostly sleeping. Occasionally, she goes to Donna's lap; Donna is pleased no end, because Prancer will rarely allow herself to be held for more than 5 minutes, much less sit in one's lap for 2+ hours.

We are finding most motels need a variety of repairs, especially in the handicap accessible rooms; we actually made a list for one location. Seems like housekeeping and maintenance either do not communicate with each other or no one really checks the status of the rooms. Things are much worse than the last time we spend much time in motels, i.e., 3 years ago, which was much worse than 20 years ago.

Now on the South Carolina and my sister's wedding, a week from today.

Tuesday 6 November 2007

We are now in Roswell, New Mexico, obviously traveling slow with Donna having to do so much work!!! She does all the driving now too.

After leaving the changing colors in Kentucky, we visited my Navy buddy in North Carolina, then headed south for my sister's wedding. We arrived a few days early for rehearsal and general visiting with relatives.

We visited the SC Up Country museum with the soon-to-be happy couple; a good description of the settling and industry in western counties of SC, e.g., where the hills are. After spending some time with my brothers and sisters we headed west.

The wedding was very nice, my sister was radiant and her (now) husband handled everything very well. The weather matched the ceremony, i.e., no clouds and comfortable temperature (even for Donna).

As we traveled west, we tried some antique stores, but the Internet is really ruining the shopping. Hard to find or make bargains, even when one does find an interesting item. Strange that so many things we remember from our childhood are now considered antiques. We visited a museum on the initial development of the oil industry in Texas and a great museum on fire-fighting in Beaumont. The oil museum had exhibits on how the technology of oil exploration

and refining linked with other activities occurring in the world (noting the USA was the leading exporter of oil products until WWII). Lots of chemistry and geology.

We stopped by Fort Concho (in San Angelo, TX), which is very similar to other TX forts, e.g., Davis, Stockton. After abandonment by the Army in 1889, the buildings were used as residences and businesses, but starting in the 1920's the city reclaimed the area and now has a very well preserved example of a post Civil War fort on the western frontier.

Prancer has learned (on her own) to go to the carrying case when we stop. Of course, she now does that even at a long stop light, so there is a little irritation on her part when the van starts up again. She has spent the last several days of driving in Donna's lap, apparently she is more comfortable there, since I tend to move too much for her to sleep.