

August 2010, 34 days; 3500 miles with the Winnebago dragging the TrailBlazer (900 mi), Utah, Capital Reef, Canyonlands, Arches, Yellowstone, Columbia River Gorge, and San Francisco.

Monday: 8/2/10 Tonight at Virgin River BLM Recreation Area in the NW corner of Arizona 350 mi from Redondo a long day but good progress getting across the hot desert. Close to St George, Utah. No Wi-Fi and no cell phone with gsm. But a little breeze coming up and a campsite with a good view of mountains and river - and DirecTV damn, but look at the market today! . Nobody here and nice clean area. Kind of expensive though, \$4 with Golden Age. It'd hot, but bearable. Little breeze in the evening. Capital Reef Tuesday I think.

Tuesday 8/3/10: At this moment, 3:45 pm I am sitting off the highway at 8300 ft, about 12 miles west of Loa, Utah in the middle of a violent rain/hail storm. It has been some of both over the last 30 min, so decided to pull off and wait it out a little while and look up local weather on Accuweather.com I don't like driving up/down the mountain through those patches where the highway is covered with ice. After sitting out some of the downpour, I drove on to encounter highway washed over with debris from minor flash flooding and sections of highway covered in 6 inch deep hail ice.

Altitude has pretty much alleviated the heat problem and most of the day is quite pleasant and a nice scenic drive north through the wide Utah valleys with green cedar and juniper lined mountains on either side.

Awakened to 65 deg at SunGlow Campground near Bicknell, UT on Wed. Spent the day moving to Capital Reef NP, setting up, then exploring. In the bottom of the canyon are orchards originally established by early Mormons, now run by the National Park with a pick your own fruit arrangement. \$1/lb for apples, really good deal for NP having not picking, transport, creating, etc. – just plant the trees and collect the money – like those computer programs that just keep collecting these days. Explored the canyon by car and hiked a couple miles and 500ft up an old wagon trail to a point where I was convinced they had to unload and disassemble the wagons and carry the parts up over a 4 ft ledge. At an old tool shed there is an early (circa 1030) small four wheel drive tractor called a Power Horse. Rather than ride on and drive it as we know, this was rigged to walk behind and drive with “line” like you drive a horse! People change slowly. Many farm buildings in this part of Utah are made of wood, cedar I think, but appear to have never been painted or preserved in any way, though maybe approaching 100 years old, appear in excellent repair. Ranger says the dry climate enables this – in Pa or Louisiana they would be severely weathered and falling apart. Tonight we had many hard rains between dusk and about 2 am. – glad I'm not in a tent. Capital Reef has some interesting rock formations but is otherwise somewhat unremarkable. It kind of fits the category where if you have a bunch of land that's unusable, make it into a National Park. Then people will come and a whole ‘industry’ of hotels and services will grow up around it! Before going to Costa Rica I was intrigued by the many Parks in *Lonely Planet*, but found many were no more unique than the other land for 100 miles around, didn't even have a well defined entrance, just park by the highway and hike in. Not to be misunderstood though, Costa Rica has many interesting sites too.

Thursday: 8/5/10: Utah Hwy 12 has been designated as a National Scenic Byway (big deal, I wonder how many there are). But today I drove the best part between Torrey and Escalante. Unfortunately I had to drive both ways (thank God for the Blazer, so didn't have to do it in the Winnebago) since it was not on my route to anywhere. The first half was in overcast cool weather, but with clear visibility virtually unlimited. On many occasions I stopped and looked around with binoculars and was in awe of the green meadow, aspen forests, and sand stone canyons. The return trip was in sunshine and less impressive because of shadows and glare created by the sun – but this drive is definitely impressive and worth the day.

Friday 8/6/10: Moved to Moab. Dry camping at a place called Goose Island close to town along the muddy placid Colorado River. Only time I remember being close to Moab before was some 20 years ago when I kayaked the Westwater Canyon section of the river. This was class 3 to 4 rapids. Seems to be a lot of rafting going on near town on what is class 0 to 2. For the scenery I guess as there's no 'white water.' Unlike the Colorado when it get to California where the river is somewhat clear (green) and warm, here it is always cold (about 50 °F) and muddy. Guess it leaves all that mud in Lake Powell & Mead?

Saturday 8/7/10: Canyonlands NP is in three major segments, Needles, The Maze, and Island in the Sky. Today I explored the latter. I think The Maze is only accessible by off-road 4x4 or packing, so I don't expect to get there. Needles is a long drive where I don't perceive anything new either, so probably won't get there. So I chose Island in the Sky and first took a 7 mi bike ride into Dead Horse Point State Park along the way where you can get some good views of Canyonlands from high on the ridge. After exploring the Island down to Grand View, I discovered the Shafer Trail, a 4x4 drive trail from the top down to the Colorado River. This trail is so steep and narrow and right beside cliffs dropping 1000 ft. that **I wouldn't even walk down**. In the first 2 miles you drop 1000 ft. So, frightening as it was, I came down in my TrailBlazer, sometimes too paralyzed to look over the edge (I'm not good with height). But eventually passed the potash mines at the bottom and made my way back to Moab. Good experience.

Monday 8/9/10: Got up early to get into Arches NP in time for the ranger guided Fiery Furnace Walk. Interesting 3 hour hike among the unique rock formations. Very popular – I noticed next opening to go is Thursday pm – I got a reservation on Friday for this Monday walk. The name comes from an optical effect seen near sunset as shadows and reflections dance around the rock formations. Later drove and hiked to Landscape Arch and Delicate Arch.

Tuesday 8/10/10: Today I moved from Moab to Vernal, UT about 200 miles north, but the route goes through western Colorado. The climb over on Hwy 139 over Douglas pass at 8300 ft is one of the most difficult this Winnebago has seen. Sometimes going only 20 mph or less and not sure I would make the next switchback. I think not much to see at Dinosaur NM unless you are a paleontologist, and the exhibit building is presently closed for rebuilding, so I have no motivation to spend an extra day and drive to the monument. Vernal seem to be a really neat small town with periwinkles by the bushel for miles. A little tourist tinge due to Dinosaur NM nearby, but not nearly so much as Moab. Had a difficult time learning the rules and getting a beer in town.

Wednesday 8/11/10: After all the chores this morning, shower, internet, laundry, propane refill, dump, I didn't get off very early about noon. Then a brief stop at Flaming Gorge Dam on the Green River I found myself going on an hour tour of the dam and generating station. The trip from Vernal to Rock Springs is constant climbing n' crawling. Climbing up the mountain and crawling down, lot is the 7500 to 8400 ft elevation with two major passes. Often I have avoided the interstates further south and east and it seems about as fast, because you don't drive a towing RV. Not true in the mountains of Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, I suspect. So I only made about 150 miles driving noon to 6 pm today. I am about 120 miles south of Jackson. WY in Big Sandy Recreation Area. It's about 1 mi east of Hwy 191 on a gravel road and one nail biting U turn. You don't want to be here. But, there's NO ONE here, I am 300 ft from a big reservoir, a nice clear view to DirecTV 101 and 5 bars to the phone and internet.

Friday 8/13/10: "Friday 13th" No wonder it's so cold – awoke to temp in the 40's F. Departing Teton NP campground Gros Ventre I passed by Mormon Row, a gravel road undesirable for RV's but lined with historic Mormon Homesteads. By walking a bit I got a good look at the immaculate Homestead buildings of John & Bartha Moulton. Moved north through sunny weather to Bridge Bay in Yellowstone, where it is overcast, drizzling, and cold! August is too late in the season maybe to visit Yellowstone. I haven't really got this RV'ing thing down yet. So many of my stops are one nighters or in windsurfing venues where you can't use the awning that when it's really appropriate I forget it exists. Now it's raining fairly serious, but as I was canceling the BBQ I realized the awning solves the problem and we can go ahead with the steak. Man! This is kind o'

sweet, I am in here in the dry and not too cold watching the other guys camping the way I used to walking around in the rain getting their tents in order.

Saturday 8/14/10: Followed the 100+ mile Grand Loop today, waiting out the half-hour to see Old Faithful spout and understanding why from the ranger and all the other stuff. How many mud pots and steaming cracks can you look at. Yellowstone Canyon and the falls (upper 100 ft, lower 300 ft, with huge volume of water for late August) were much more impressive than I remembered from the last visit. Made the arduous climb down to the bottom of lower falls as well as numerous other easy hikes.

Wednesday 8/18/10: In the past two days I moved to Mammoth Hot Springs for 2 nights, met Barb and Fred Smith staying in Gardiner, and we had a couple drinks as well as going out to let Fred beat my pants off at pool. Then moved out of Yellowstone to Baker Hole FS campground Tuesday. A difficult day driving 250 mi from West Yellowstone, MT to a BLM campground on the Salmon River near Challis, ID - a beautiful campground with lawns all around supported by Salmon River water. Seems like a good choice of route to get across Idaho - after a couple hours from Rexburg to Arco on Hwy 33 in pretty hot farming country, the highway bends north on 93 into the Salmon-Challis NF and Sawtooth Mountains, becomes a beautiful drive with ranch land in the foreground and high mountains with only few small trees in the background - reminiscent of Jasper Canada. What's up? A couple nights lately I don't get DirecTV - then talk to someone and they tell me where to point which disagrees with my compass settings- and it works! Is it local magnetic deviation? Now that my DirecTV is coming in, I am listening to this report where children are learning reading better while reading to a dog (which is not critical of their mistakes) - well why not read to a pillow or a brick?

Stayed at a really nice grassy BLM campground, Bayhorse. Back south and west through Stanley (Hwy 75), Lowman (Hwy 21), and to Banks across an unnumbered scenic byway. All in beautiful mountain canyons along branches of the Salmon and then Payette Rivers. Much like the Ca Sierras, but a lot greener. I resolve to come back to Idaho and spend a couple weeks moving a little slower (as soon as they get cell phones and internet access up here).

Friday 8/20/10: Today in late afternoon I drove down the Columbia from Umatilla and McNary Dam. The Mississippi has its character but the Columbia is more impressive. Just as wide for long distances and clean nearly clear water, and a variety of attractive islands. Got a good camp spot at Roosevelt, WA close to the water and a nice grassy spot for rigging..... hoping for winds tomorrow. Along the drive competing with the transport of a new windmill, I note there are hundreds of these lining the landscape of the Columbia River Gorge. The windmill tower was being transported as five huge sections, approaching 12 - 15 ft diameter and perhaps up to 100 ft long. All were stopped at Roosevelt, a tiny burg of consisting of a bar, a little market, and a couple other buildings, giving me the opportunity to inspect a little more closely. Traveling down the highway a section looks like a big empty tank, but close-up it appears to have very heavy steel walls - amazing that one truck could carry. Then imagine this. The front of the largest sections are laid on a trailer, towed by the Peterbuilt in typical fashion, but the rear extends far beyond and rides on its own 'truck' about 4 axels and 16 wheels with "steering capability!" I saw a guy backing one - I bet that's requires as much skill as backing a 4 wheel farm tractor coupled to a 4 wheel wagon down a steep barn bridge! There's a whole crew of pace cars, etc. The propellers are not there. In the past, near El Paso, Tx., I have seen the propeller blades transported on a set of 3 coupled trailers.

Consider the electric power. Forty years ago, when I lived in Moses Lake, WN, we were impressed by the abundance of cheap electrical power (~\$0.03/kwh as I recall) produced by the hydro-electric projects like Grand Coulee, McNary, and Bonneville, all on the Columbia. All-electric "Gold Medallion" homes were the rage of the age, and most in the Northwest were provided with energy for all uses. Today wind another natural and renewable source is escalating

in prominence. But right by the river as I drive by is a long, long train of cars full of coal? What gives? Is this coming or going? I'll ask around.

I did! And learned that the coal is 'coming' here to make electricity, the windmills are just for Obama. Consumption apparently far exceeds the hydro and wind production. While riding around on my bicycle investigating life I came upon another huge train parked and a stream of 18 wheelers unloading the cargo and hauling up the mountain. What is the cargo – garbage from afar.

Tuesday 8/24/10: On Today's bike ride I came upon the Peterbuilt that hauls the bottom section of the windmill tower, the largest. It's a 50 wheeler! I wonder if they count all those tires – that are made from oil, in the cost of wind energy. Later in the day I met a guy who is helping install the windmills. He patches the fiberglass blade to correct shipping damage. Blades are made by Mitsubishi and are 46 m (151 ft) in length. The tower is 90 m (296 ft) high. He took me up to the construction area, gave me a hard hat and safety jacket and let me look around and sneak some pictures. The hardware is huge, but not as impressive when not seen on the big trucks that haul it there because one loses the perspective. The generator that goes on top of the tower is as big as my Winnebago. His project is 64 windmills, but there are hundreds.

Lacking wind, today I got my kayak down and practiced about 15 Eskimo rolls – they are pretty sluggish and rusty.

Friday 8/27/10: Yesterday was punishing wind. Late the day the AVERAGE was 40 mph for a short time with gusts to 45. I sailed a 5.0^m early in the day for 1 ¾ hour. Mid-afternoon I tried a 4.0 but this was too large. I saw large men on 2.9 and smaller sails. Packed up and moved 35 miles west to Maryhill, WN. What in the Sam Hill? Is a familiar Pennsylvania expression in my childhood when anyone was bewildered. Samuel Hill, an early railroad executive, established a large ranch, and the town of Maryhill (named for his daughter) in the Columbia Gorge. Between 1914 and the 20's he built a huge 'poured concrete' castle, replica of something in the UK, as a home, but never occupied it. He was persuaded to convert it to an art museum, and it was so dedicated in 1927 by Queen Marie of Romania. Since 1940 it has been open to the public and exhibits a wealth of fine art and a commanding view of snow capped Mount Hood to the west. Lore is that the colloquial expression came from the wonder of his building the castle far from anywhere. A mile or so away he also built a full-size replica of Stonehenge as a memorial to World War I veterans.

Sunday 8/29/10: Last evening I sailed Stevenson for the first time in very light winds on a 6.6 m² sail. Sailed Rowena for about 1 ¼ hours on a 4.5 m² with Richard who sailed a 4.0. This was intense with big swells, strong gusty wind and a most terrible entry for bare feet over rocks. I came out frozen.. Have spent 3 nights boring friends Richard and Diane Shirey with pictures sessions from Africa on the TV in the Winnebago. They keep coming back and even have begun to bring dissert! Tomorrow morning I have to hit the road to be in Palo Alto, Ca. for a consulting engagement with SkyBox on Thursday am.

Tuesday 8/31/10: Awakened to my 45 °F house in a Forest Service, Prairie, campground near La Pine, Or. Oregon weather commentators last evening were remarking of the October weather we are having in August. Turning on email, I learned of the Aug. 28 death at age 98, of my 55 year friend and benefactor, John Bracken.

Wednesday 9/1/10: A long day of about 270 miles, with my Garmin bringing me in across the Oakland Bay Bridge and skirting downtown San Francisco and across the Santa Cruz Mountains to Half Moon Bay, finishing a 3 day trip from Hood River. Half Moon Bay, home to famous Pelican Point and Ritz-Carlton Half Moon Bay golf courses, where you can see the ball bounce on the green instead of disappearing in the fog only about 3 days per year. Tonight is beautifully clear and warm so maybe I caught one of the best days of the year. Came to this area to engage in a consulting meeting with Skybox (www.skyboximaging.com) in Palo Alto on the journey toward home.

Mice. The batteries are running down in my Bluetooth mouse, but with the furry devil things are even worse. Being a farm boy, mice were always around and you mostly ignored them, trapping a few in the cellar, letting the cats take care of the barn and ignoring the rest. But a couple nights ago, after Diane alerted me at Hood River that she had mice, in the middle of the night I hear this guy running around in the living room. Then he began attacking me running across the top of my bed and sometimes toying in my hair. What kind of mouse is this go chew some paper napkins and leave me alone. Mice usually run away from humans, but this guy just wouldn't leave me alone despite my getting up several times join the battle. Eventually, I decided the poor guy was just trapped in my motor home and wanted out So I got up and opened a crack in the door. I went to sleep, he left and the battle was over. But just to be sure next day I bought a quiver of traps and set a couple the next night. When I came back from dinner I found his mate had met her demise eating the cheese dinner I left. But, though keeping the traps with cheese and peanut butter dinners in place, I got through the next two night with no more activity.

Sunday 9/5/10: The coast at Half Moon Bay was foggy again when I awakened each of two mornings, on Friday proceeding down through Big Sur to a friend's home on the ocean at Morro Bay. Much of the Big Sur and coastal drive was pleasant and clear enough to enjoy the spectacular views once again. Two nights in Morro Bay visiting Riles, then home on Sunday (today).