

RV-n-AMERICA 2016

**RV-n AMERICA**  
**2016 and 2017**

*Author/Co-photographer: Paul Grenier*

# PAUL GRENIER



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ISBN:

## DEDICATION

Dedicated to my wife, Carla, for her love, patience and navigational skills which guaranteed our safe passage all year.



I Love You...

*Happiness, is to have everything;...you need.*

*Not, the need to have everything.*

pjgrenier

**Co-photographer: Carla Grenier**

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## PREFACE

I would like to take a few minutes here to introduce you to my wife Carla and myself, Paul. We're both working on our second marriages and we're both retired. During Carla's working years she worked for an Orthopedic Group as a Radiologic Technologist. As for myself, I've worn a couple of hats. I graduated college and worked as a pharmacist for twenty-five-years. At fifty, give or take a year, we both decided to officially retire from our professions. While in Connecticut we enjoyed square dancing and long weekends on our boat. In order to help us find our next work opportunity we travelled the east coast through Florida and back up again. Soon after hat trip we sold everything and moved to Florida eventually purchasing a Child Care Center in Greenacres, FL. About ten-years later we sold it and bought another in Titusville, FL. That facility ended up not being one of our better choices. By this time the square dancing was over as with the boat. I spent a few years as a Commercial Realtor, selling and listing, what else, but Day Care Centers. Carla, at this time, was retired. For myself I was challenged with thoughts of how to fill the years I have left; until a vacation we took enlightened me, our lives would never be the same again.

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining Carla and I for our third and forth years as we Travel America in 2016 and 2017. This year we will be exploring northern America, Devils' s Tower (from Close Encounters of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Kind) Mount Rushmore, Boeing, British Columbia, Canada Alaska and all parts in-between.

This dissertation is not a regular literary piece or novel like "Betrayal" or "War and Peace." On top of that, right from the onset I wish to make clear, I am no James Patterson, as you will soon discover. The resource material for this composition is from our Travel Blogs. A Blog is a mishmash of occasional entries. For you, the reader, to remain continually abreast of the timeline of the story, I am entering the day and month for your convenience. As we travelled in our motorhome, we would go on field trips to different venues in the area and then, quite often, do very little for a couple of days or even a week, which necessitates a date, from time to time, to avoid your feeling lost in time. I've tried to include as many photos as possible to make up for my lack of verbal expertise. Over the last eight-years we have travelled over fifty-thousand miles viewing so many places of interest and, often, just plain unusual points of interest. Please excuse my lack of literary talent, and hopefully you will enjoy the overall scope of the story and hopefully give you and your family ideas for a travel destination of your own.

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As I mentioned in the closing pages of last years' RV-n-America 2015 book we traded our fifth wheel RV for something a little bigger and much easier to handle.



Not everything has changed, however. Scoots is a little older a little heavier and much tamer than a year ago. Since then, she's been de-clawed, an action we had to take, but that's another story.

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Dennis, my brother, has been spending a little more time with us as well. It's our hope that he'll embrace this lifestyle, at least on a part-time basis, and possibly spend less time in Boca.



I think everyone reaches a stage in their lives when they realize that it's time to try something a little different for the few years we might still have. Dennis, on the right, is now trying to map out his future. In the 2015 book we mentioned that it's not our goal to visit only the well visited venues in America, but rather, to discover some lesser-known attractions that could be equally interesting. As with 2014 and 2015, we will discover numerous churches, many with very interesting histories and or origins. Included in our travels this year will be, as mentioned before, Boeing, Devil's Tower, Yellowstone Park, British Columbia and Cannada and of course a variety of campgrounds.



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## DECEMBER 2015

### 12.30<sup>th</sup>. Travel Calendar:

**Vero Beach, FL: on Jan 1, leave 3/31**

**Clermont, FL (TT Orlando): on April 1 leave 4/15**

**Wildwood, FL (Three Flags) on 4/15 leave 5/01**

**Clermont, FL on 5/01 leave 5/22 Begin travel year three**

30<sup>th</sup> , Sunday: The Web Site has been in a coma lately and very difficult to access even for me, lately. I could type and add items but could only hope it was appearing on the site. That all came to a successful conclusion around the 25<sup>th</sup>. of January when John Van Horn was able to resuscitate it from its comatose state. Our first week in the New Year began at the Cracker Barrel in Titusville, FL., where we enjoyed Christmas with Dennis on Dec 25<sup>th</sup>. , another Christmas on New Year's with Mary Ann in mid-January. One 31<sup>st</sup> New Year's Eve, and we had Dinner at Cracker Barrel.

## JANUARY

### A Mary Ann Christmas

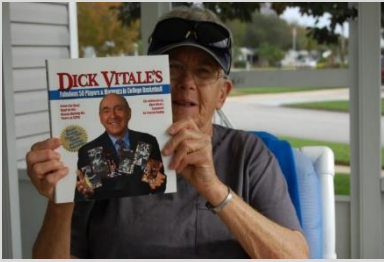
8<sup>th</sup> It's a beautiful day here in Port Orange, FL. This will be our third and last Christmas gift giving occasion. We'll be opening presents on Mary Ann's porch, benefits of having a grown-up home. Gift are and the most ideal gift for any RVers, since we all enjoy eating a little more than we should. Now that I think about it, some cinnamon buns with raisins would be great for breakfast tomorrow morning.



A very thoughtful and very appropriate gift for Mary Ann from Dennis. He's always the best in selecting cloths, especially when we had the benefits of a walk-in closet. This delicate swan (see next page) is a weather indicator. We had one for ourselves in the coach but it suffered a broken neck. *If it's fragile, a coach might not insure longevity.* A very thick cookbook. With Mary Ann sports are everything. This item

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will, most likely, get read more than once.



Today's the 31<sup>st</sup>. and Carla is still trying to put this gift together. Heavy down-pours continue to inundate Vero Beach, Sunshine Travel Resort. All was back to normal by morning. Our second week was equally as exciting, not to mention all the doctor appointments scheduled for the first three weeks in January. On the 13<sup>th</sup>. we, ask Dennis, to attend the Tampa RV Show with us, which never disappoints. No! We're not looking to upgrade, but we were looking into something Dennis might like should he decide to try RVing if only part-time. Just checked, and I didn't take any pictures at the RV fair, awesome! We must be very satisfied with the Itasca.



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We continue to be inundated with heavy rains, as you can see from the above picture, but that's still much better than the snow that landed in Washington, DC. This last week in January, Dennis was supposed to join us, but work kept him at home, we're expecting him to make good on his visit on Feb. 1, next Monday. Dennis should join us.

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## FEBRUARY 2016

### Current Travel Calendar:

**Vero Beach, FL: on Jan 1, leave 3/31**

**Clermont, FL (TT Orlando): on April 1 leave 4/15**

**Wildwood, FL (Three Flags) on 4/15 leave 5/01**

**Clermont, FL (TT Orlando) on 5/01 leave 5/22 Begin travel year three.**

**Moscow, IA (HWH)**

**Cedar Rapids, IA (MacDougall)**

**Forest City, IA (Winnebago)**

**Mount Rushmore**

**Glacier National Park**

**Dawson Creek, BC**

**Start Alaska Trek (July 19th)**

2<sup>nd</sup>. My brother Dennis joined us yesterday, once again, this time for just three days. Each time he visits it affirms in our minds that we are very fortunate to be able to live this lifestyle day after day. Yesterday was a day of rest, time to talk about things going on in our lives but today all three of us will venture out to, once again, experience the National Navy Seal Museum.

## National Navy Seal Museum.

3<sup>rd</sup> If you have been reading our 2015 blogs the blog will be available in book form from Kindle soon. You'll remember that we were here last year as well. The Museum was undergoing an expansion and each visitor was given a free pass to revisit here this year.



This is the first item you'll see just as you enter the property. The statue is of Michael Thornton carrying Tom Norris to safety. Both men, Seal teammates were recipients of the Medal of Honor. Mr. Ross Perot donated the monument. At the base you will find the words: *Swim Buddy is a deeply rooted SEAL term which means each being responsible for the other's safety.*

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The Trident. The anchor represents Navy, and thus its their responsibility to protect and serve, guaranteeing the world peace. Originally the Seals were a by-product of two other Navy branches; The Naval Combat Demolition Units and the Underwater Demolition Teams. These branches of the Navy were stationed at Fort Pierce, FL at the National Navy UDT-Team. You'll also notice the fork-like item seen in the Trident. It would symbolize the Scepter of Neptune of Poseidon, King of the Oceans. The pistol symbolizes the land element of the SEALS. SEALS is an anagram for SE-sea A-air and L-land. Since 9-11 the Seals are now integrated into many combat groups, however, when additional expertise is needed Seal Teams go into action. It was in 1961 the then President John F. Kennedy asks the heads of all the armed forces and Underwater Demolition teams to create a separate, new, and unconventional fighting team to handle special ops missions with a high degree of expediency. A plaque honoring the establishment of this new fighting force has the following comment on it; *"Let every*

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*nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty."*

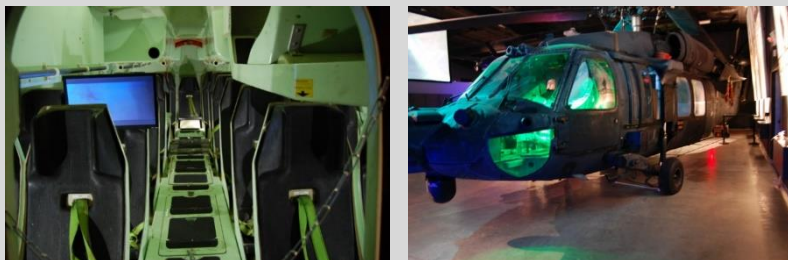
John F. Kennedy's, Inaugural Address was on, January 20, 1961 On display, at the museum, There is also a wall with actual guns, knives and other military items used by the SEALs through the years. This is just a small section displaying guns. This is what the Museum looks like from the air. Not only is it full of descriptions and examples of the weapons they used, there is a typical training facility on the grounds of the museum outdoors.



I also found the item which I thought would be of interest to everyone. A real navy helicopter "Huey." Videos are everywhere showing examples of how these individual war weapons might have been used.



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So much to read, view and try to assimilate, but that's the idea. Seals can do it all and are expected to be able to handle all situations. Glass case units are everywhere. One could easily deduce that the industry that never stops growing or reinventing itself would be "arms and munitions." There is a typical rescue boat from "Captain Phillips." Above and to the left is the inside of the rescue boat looked like. The seats are extremely narrow, and the quarters are very tight. In the left-hand corner of the picture is a screen running that portion of the movie "Captain Phillips" pertaining to the rescue vessel. Another actual helicopter above was used by the Seals to drop Seals where they might be needed. In the next picture is a picture (not shown) of a steel beam from the World Trade Center. This piece was donated to the Seal Museum through the help of Mr. Lee Lalpi. His son, Jonathan, was a FDNY firefighter who died in the 9-11 tragedy. The SEALS were the heroes that executed the Bin Laden operation. On the wall in the background is actual footage of the event carried out by the SEALS.

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The next group of pictures are of the training courses they must master. In front are the "Vaults." in the background is the "swing, stop and Jump venues. In the picture above are the "Hoyas Logs" to the left is the "low belly over obstacle.



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Next the "Net Traverse" Low Walls and wall climbing obstacles above. I'm sore just looking at this obstacle course!



Above would be a MK V Special Operations Craft. The little person under the MK V (not shown) is Carla. At 5'3 she's not that tall, but it will give you a perspective on how big this craft really is. Now let's go on board. In 1996, it cost 3.7 million dollars to build this craft. It would also cost \$4,500 per hour to operate it. Not to mention that it is eighty-two feet long and seventeen feet wide. It needed a crew of five and can carry up to sixteen souls comfortably. At fifty-two tons it's not a pleasure craft. The boat had plenty of room to carry four of the rubber boats (not shown) below plus additional engines and personnel gear. I've only touched on some of all there is to see and do at this museum. Now, as you enter the museum, there's a video demonstrating the history and deployments of the SEALs. We watched the segment that was their current history, very impressive!



## **St. Sebastian Catholic Church**

6<sup>th</sup>. Saturday Of course this means movie, church, and pizza.



We are currently going to St. Sebastian Catholic Church in Sebastian, FL. The Pastor is Fr. John Morrissey, right from Ireland, originally. He's put together a very strong and unified Parrish. It's been a pleasure attending his services.

## **Vero Beach**

9<sup>th</sup>. Tuesday So much is going on today, except here in Vero Beach. In New Hampshire they're voting and in New Orleans you will find so many celebrating in the streets. In Vero here we go about our days biding time till the winter storms are done, and spring returns once again. Temps here are getting much cooler. Our fireplace is on the blitz, e plan to have it fixed and back again soon.

Next week when we travel to Clermont, FL for two-three days, we plan to have the new dining buffet installed. We have a few more items that need looking at as well. We'll be staying at Camping Connections on US-192-(no longer

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there.) Tomorrow will be the beginning of Lent and with that comes a little sacrificing and some reflecting on our current lives and how we might improve on them for His sake in the future.



Scoots took a field trip to the doctor's today for a checkup; she's been doing more scratching than acceptable, I thought, but Dr. Eric says she's just great, except for being a little on the porky side. I take a little offense on the word porky, possibly just a little chunky; after all, she still fits in the sink.

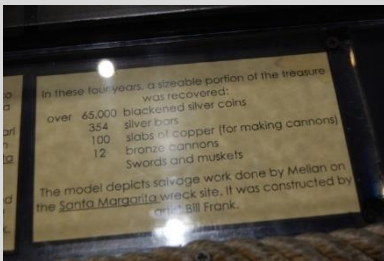
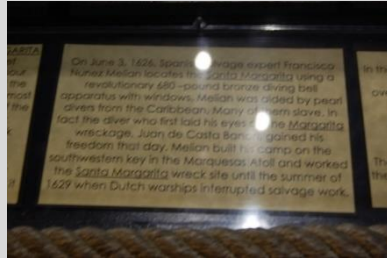
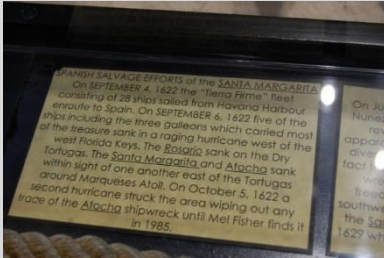
15<sup>th</sup> Nothing much is new, and we're still at the Sunshine Campground in Vero. The reason we're a bit dormant is that we've seen most of what is here last year. There are still a couple of venues still out there of interest, hopefully we'll get to possibly next week. Two venues we experienced last year were the McLarty Treasure Museum and Mel Fisher Museum. I'm not going to dwell on it again.

## The Mel Fisher Treasures Museum

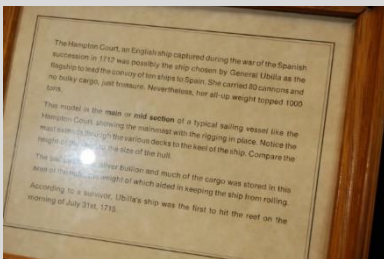


9<sup>th</sup> This is what you see from the road... But, it's a very unassuming place. We're now at the entrance of the Mel Fisher Museum. This is a cannon that was found at ocean's bottom from the sunken ship Atocha. Dick Fisher made the discovery in 1975. On the wall above the cannon are the tools used to clean and reload the cannon. Below, in the back-right side of the picture you'll see metal balls. These were crude grenades but devastating when thrown onto an attacking ship by a sailor at the time. The grenade ball was hollow inside and would be filled with gun powder. Just prior to tossing this weapon the sailor would ignite it.

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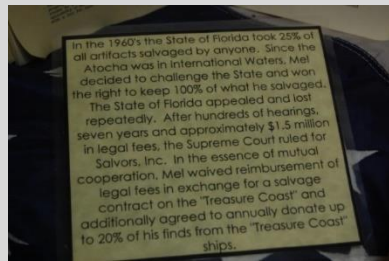
I found this item extremely enlightening. As you can see it's a cross-section of a 1600's sailing ship, the kind Mel Fisher was looking for. Mel was not only looking for gold but items like the silver tea pot and, of course, religious items. Gold plated dishes, and once again, religious ornaments were high on his priority list.



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This map, one of many, dates to the 1600's indicating the approximate location of the ships when they went down that that hurricane. Gold this and gold that is found in every corner of this museum. The Salvage Vessel M/V Endeavor, and it's captained by John Brandon



So, I'm sure by now you've asked yourself, can I get a piece of this action. Short answer, probably no! Below is a short summary of the contract Mel Fisher has with the state of Florida. I don't think anyone wanted to hear about this agreement. I've been told that anything anyone finds anywhere off the Florida is his, *he'll have a richer retirement than I have.*

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24<sup>th</sup>. Wednesday. We have been waiting for this date for six months. This is what we had:



Before



After

Then we changed out the linoleum and old carpets as well; This change alone made the entire coach feel so much lighter and airier, but it was not what we were aiming for. Today we're at Camping Connections where they installed the final dinette units. Above right, is before without the buffet.



I know, you're saying that it looks like office space also, you're right. We live in just over four-hundred square feet in our coach, so if we can make an item for dual purpose, then so be it. We had Bradd and Hall, located on Charlotte

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Ave in Elkhart, IN., upgrade our coach. We had approached Lazydays to build this for us and they wanted at least sixty-five hundred or more to build what Bradd and Hall created for far less than that. This unit was delivered to Camping Connections (US 192 in Kissimmee, FL).



It came in one big box with four individual pieces. In less than six hours Camping Connections meticulously assembled this beautiful piece of furniture. Camping Connections has come to our assistance several times in the last couple of years and once again outdid themselves without draining our savings. We continue to enjoy our new Dining /office sectional. Motorhomes don't offer the luxury of specialty rooms, except for bedroom and bathroom, but we enjoy multitasking and multiservice sections. One thing did change. Our unit did come to us with a pull-out computer table, we did not ask for it, but we'll keep it. An error that, in the end, turned out to be a bonus we did not anticipate. I've always sat on the further side of the table, but with this unannounced computer unit, it was to both our advantages to switch sides. This would give Carla the three big draws

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she needs for maps and family papers. In the end Someone knew what we really needed.



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### MARCH 2016

Today we are anticipating the arrival of Connie Fugere. To the best of our knowledge, they're the only other family members that own an RV. It's a Road Trek.



Currently Connie (left) and friend (Sharon) are visiting in Coral Gables and we're expecting them around 3:30 today. Connie is the daughter of Harold and Alice Fugere. I met each of them only once but they were folks who, once you meet them, make a very awesome impression, and they are always in our prayers. This is Connie and Sharon's first real camping experience with their Road Trek RV, and they're loving it.

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## Dennis is back and it's Easter



23<sup>rd</sup> Always a joy to have him drop in and spend a couple of days with us.

## St. Sabastian's Catholic Church

25<sup>th</sup> Good Friday at St. Sabastian's Catholic Church in Sabastian, FL



This is Holy Week and like many parishes they had a Living Station of the Cross. What an awesome production. With a cast of possibly over six-dozen individuals and with selected readings and hymns by parishioners in attendance,

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the two-hour production held your attention from the very first minute. Those in attendance would sing "Where You There When They Crucified My Lord" intermittently at each new station. The cast individuals were as polished as you could ask for. This has been a production of the parish for the past fifteen years and will be presented far into the future. Lighting and costumes were excellent. Our church had maximum attendance. This is a production everyone should witness at least once. Fr John Morrissey, Pastor of St. Sabastian's, is the glue and manna that binds and grows this great parish, but humbly states "I just live here"...Awesome! Later this day we will begin packing up again. This has been a 3-month lay-over waiting all that inclement weather in the upper 47 states to clear out.

Holy Saturday. Just when I thought St. Sabastian could not possibly exceed any more of my expectations; we attended the Holy Saturday Celebration. With the same number of celebrants, we had on Good Friday. The altar was occupied with three priests, three Deacons and three alter persons. The church was filled to just below standing room capacity. With a great selection of hymns, readings by all the priest and deacons, with digital assistance for the parishioners, the church was overwhelmingly filled with the voices of all who attended and a full choir to augment the parishioners. A truly beautiful Holy Saturday experience. Happy Easter to all! Excellent job!

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### APRIL 2016

1<sup>st</sup>. Carla and I arrived in TT a(Thousand Trails) Orlando and settled in very easily and comfortably. We spent the last two nights at Camping Connection having a couple of minor improvements done. Parking the coach with dinghy attached was facilitated by the overly spacious RV/car parking area at the Registration area. They are expecting over one-hundred new RVs coming in on Friday and wanted all pre-registered RVers to try to come in as early as possible. We got in at 9:30 am and had no problems. Last time here our site was in the wooded area, called the swamp, *there's no swamp there*, just the name this area has. This time we're hooked up at the very back of the main camping area. Not much to say about it. This area is called the "Parking Lot." It's just that. Sites are set up in every which way possible to accommodate as many campers as possible. Just like last year they're upgrading the water and electrical utilities at the A, B and C site areas, so everything is a little tight. Great thing about here is the price. As with most (TT) campgrounds we were advised to travel the campground and pick the location we feel good about. We're offered Wi-Fi, pool, and, more importantly, the price is right. As always with these Campground Blogs I'll let the pictures do most of the talking. The park is so big it has several pools strategically located around the park for easy access.

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This is an Encore TT (Thousand Trails) Campground, a step higher than the standard TT park. At over 100 acres with easy access everywhere. Above is the Clubhouse with pool area in back. Tennis, pickleball and game room for the kids are here as well. Behind the club house is the laundry room but most impressively are all the bikes in the foreground (not shown). These bikes some of them belong to adults. However some of these belong to the many kids that travel full-time and are home taught. Home teaching is a very big undertaking for RVers; and yes, the kids enjoy the school hours, I've been told only about three hours a day. This is the heated pool to the right.

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This is the pool on the left of the clubhouse. There's also a Jacuzzi, but not visible in the pictures. This is another section of the clubhouse. They offer small orders of fries, tacos, burgers, and franks. Picture below is the Ballroom. Otherwise known as the Bingo Hall. Tonight, is bingo night.



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Another look at the size of these buildings. The Quiet Room, but not very quiet. Books to read, VHS, DVDs to watch and movies available to rent at \$2/night. Also, in the quiet room, as at most campgrounds, you'll find several puzzle tables. Generally, just one, is offered at most campgrounds. We have 6 tables with puzzles started. It's just after noon and I've run out of pictures. Guess it's time to return to the coach, relax a bit. We're here until the 15<sup>th</sup>, must deal with the temps; around 84.

### **Devine Mercy Sunday**

3<sup>rd</sup>.-As a Catholic I feel many of us look at the Birth of Jesus, and Christmas, as probably the holiest, if not, the most important day every year. Although these are two of the greatest days of the year, The Resurrection, Easter, holds the title as the most important religious holyday of the year. For myself, and I do agree with the above statement, however, I wait eagerly each year for Devine Mercy Sunday, one week after Easter. Sister Faustina, with the backing and assistance of Pope John Paul II, has raised the importance of this day all over the world, as the one very special day for

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everyday folks, like you and I. On this extraordinary day we can avail ourselves of the endless mercy Jesus has for us; it's ours for the asking. The story of St. Faustina is available online for everyone to read. Through her, Jesus has set the requirements needed for every Catholic to receive His Mercy on this special day.

***The Requirements: (don't panic, there aren't that many.)***

1. Go to Confession.
2. Receive Communion,
3. Pray for the intentions of the Holy Father,
4. Take part in the devotions on Devine Mercy Sunday and recite a handful of prayers.

We spend more prep time than this making reservation to go out to eat at a fine restaurant. *So, what do we get for all this effort?*



The picture above displays the Lord with rays emanating from the wound on his side. As he related to Sister: *The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water*



*which makes souls righteous. The Red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls. These two rays issued forth from the depts. of My tender mercy when My agonized heart was opened by a lance on the Cross...Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him (299). So, what happens; the soul (person) that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness for sins and punishment. In the Catholic Religion this is a very big thing.*

The forgiving of sins can be obtained almost anytime, but with each sin, even a forgiven sin, there is a punishment that is due after we die, *I'm sure you all know that.* As it is written, and it is worth repeating; *whoever approaches the Fountain of Life on this day, Devine Mercy Sunday, will be granted complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. (300) the operative word here is "complete."* This is punishment forgiven for all our sins, for our lives on this one special day. For this reprieve from punishment Acts of Mercy should be part of our everyday lives towards others and being compassionate towards others as well, which we should all be doing, regardless!

HE leaves us with a parting statement:

*Before the day of Justice, I am sending the Day of Mercy (1588). I am prolonging the time of mercy for the sake of sinners. But woe to them if they do not recognize this time of My visitation (1160). While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fount of My Mercy (848). He who refuses to pass through the door of My Mercy must pass through the door of My Justice (1146).*

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The numbers (####) after many of the quotes are references to the Diary of St. Faustina, should you want to refer for the full quotation. In conclusion, I am not an overly religious, a priest or even deacon. But I would be the first to share the secret location to the fountain of youth, *I'm still searching for it*, with everyone else, if I knew of its location. *This information is the Fountain of Everlasting Life (not shown) and its location should also be shared with everyone taking the time to read about it. Thank you.*

Carla and I were fortunate to celebrate this great day at the St. Faustina Catholic Church in Clermont, FL. Father David Gillis, the pastor here. This great little parish has had at least two "storefront" locations as it and its parishioners promote as much as possible, activities and events to help raise the funds needed to bring about new construction on a Church of their own. I've been told they now own the property just up the street where they hope construction will someday take place. This new location, another storefront, was supposed to be big enough to handle those attending Mass, but the parish enrollment continues to grow, and additional seating is usually in demand. What is it that brings so many to this little church? Have you ever listened to a sermon, or homily as they are called, and left wishing for more, then you were not attending St. Faustina CC. Father Dave is an everyday guy and his sermons never leave us asking for more. I only wish I were a person of means in order to facilitate the construction of their new church, Fr.

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Dave and his parishioners deserve their own church edifice. Someday that person will attend one of his services and leave with a whole new attitude on this Catholic Church, and maybe he might just be that person to make it happen for these folks.

We'll spend the next few days getting our ducks in order to comply with our Wills and Trust both are time-consuming and a little expensive but should be reviewed every three years which is what we'll end up doing these next two weeks. This lifestyle often leads us to forget the real world, the world of contracts and obligations. To our surprise we discovered that an account we thought was nestled nicely in our Trust, never made it, two years ago, so we had to fix that. Right now, all is as it should be, at least until we look at things, once again, in 2020, if not sooner.

# PAUL GRENIER

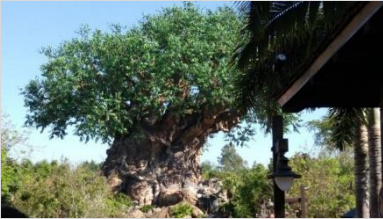
## Walt Disney- Dennis visits –

6<sup>th</sup>, Dennis can't get enough of the type of living, so he visits off and on. We enjoy it as well, it gives us a third person to hash things over with. This week we'll be visiting Walt Disney World's Epcot on the

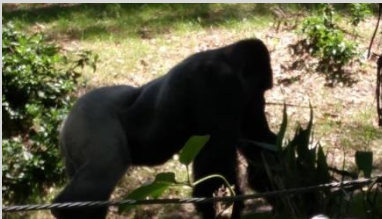


Just a few pictures to remind you of how beautiful Epcot really is. Thought I had a picture of the Mars Experience, but it was not to be found. It's been eight years since we were here last and back then the only choice available was the "full" Mars experience, which was more experience than I wanted ever again. Now you have an option, with a limited experience. It was very enjoyable, and each year, it disappoints. Groups of flowers (one the next page) are just floating on this lake.

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Yea, Dennis does look like he's having a good time. Now we're in Animal Kingdom, as you can see by the Tree of Life. Inside and below is the Tree of Life is an animated production in 3-D, called its A Bug's Life. I've never seen or heard Dennis enjoy anything as much as he did this venue. I thought he was going to ask us if we wanted to view it a second time. A jungle waterway is next. Then we had something I had never experienced before, The Lion King Show. It's very similar to a Cirque production, and very enjoyable. Yes, gorillas also live in Animal Kingdom.



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A must, every time we do Animal Kingdom is the Flights of Fantasy. They have their birds trained so well I've a notion to drop off Scoots, our cat, and see if they could give her a little extra training. Kali River Rapids was also one of our enjoyable experiences. They guaranteed us that 2-3 of us in the raft would really get wet, they were right. Thankfully it was not us, although we did not walk away unscathed. The Safari Trek ride through the Disney Jungles was next. It was going to be a sixty-minute wait but did not seem that long. The pictures that follow are only a few of the many taken...Enjoy! Giraffes and hippos can also be seen enjoying this beautiful day.



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As we left the Safari experienced we saw a view of Disney's of Mount Everest. Not sure when we might return, not for at least 2-3 more years, but we leave with many great memories. Dennis makes his way home tomorrow. Sunday, I thought I would start like every day in a campground, but we were pleasantly surprised to look out the window to see a family of four cranes prancing around between our coach and Gary's.

The following Tuesday was busy finishing Trust items, and for the evening we joined Robbi and Bob in their coach. Robbi was nice enough to drop by a couple of days earlier to compliment us on what a nice-looking coach we had, then she said they also had an Itasca, Suncruiser, but theirs was the 38J floor plan whereas ours is the 38T. If both motorhomes were side by side, it would be hard to tell them apart, except the front of theirs looks brand new. Ours will too in a few months. It was a delightful evening but unfortunately, they'll be leaving on the 15<sup>th</sup>. as we will but they'll be heading to Silver Springs, FL, which is south of Boca, and we'll be heading to Wildwood, FL, north from here. I'm very confident that we'll be seeing them from time to time in our travels. What was very comforting to know is that they've been full-time campers for the last ten years living in a coach same as ours, so my guess is that we'll do okay in it as well.

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## Wildwood Encore/TT

(Three Flags RV Resort)



15<sup>th</sup>. We left Orlando TT RV Park around 9:45 and arrived in Wildwood a little over one-hour later. The trip, as usual, was very smooth and uneventful. I stress we always strive for the “uneventful” portion. Three Flags manager asked us if we had any preference, over the air TV was not an option. We chose lot 33 off Tennessee. If you should be here or in the area, please don't hesitate to drop by. This is another property belonging to the Equity Lifestyle Properties group otherwise known as Thousand Trails (TT). I believe they have eighty-five Properties in the group. As you can see from the picture our site, like most of them here is a "pull-through." Once again the sites offer little privacy. However, if this were a privately-owned campground, instead of paying



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zero dollars to stay here, it would be more like eight hundred or more per month to stay. The perimeter road and the connecting cross-roads are paved, and every site is very easy to access.



The RV Park consist of two connecting properties. We're in the front section while others are situated in this back section. Below is the community clubhouse. It has pool tables and serves as a Bingo Hall. This might look like a very long, dull building; not really. Inside you'll find three big-screen TV's all connected and receiving dozens of stations, I mean dozens. It's also a gathering place for Sunday services and has a kitchen here as well. The building to the right of the picture houses 2 very nice pool tables. The pool sticks leave much to be desired, but otherwise you should have a very nice game.

## PAUL GRENIER



Just outside the clubhouse you'll find horseshoes and mini golf. The mini golf area is awesomely clean and free from debris and leaves, unlike most campgrounds we've stayed at. Above is a community fire pit, no fires permitted at the sites here. Below, what looks like a small tennis court, is pickle ball.



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Additional picture above on the generous entrance to the back section. The resort is not very heavily wooded, but trees may be found here and there, should your site preference mandate a little shade. Below is the main entrance to the park from RT-44, excellent access. Notice the large drive area coming in and below is the office, with equally generous space for anyone with a camper to park comfortable and safely while you check in. Mail is delivered here but unfortunately there is NO WI-FI at this park for camper use.

### **St. Vincent de Paul Church in Wildwood.**

It's Saturday once again and it was supposed to be uneventful, possibly no more than getting the windows washed. Then came a truck, you know, a 42-footer box-style truck advertising Pro-Tech Mobile RV Service

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At first, we let it go by, then we remembered that our hot-water pressure in all the spigots in the RV was down substantially from what it should be. Next time the truck went by we made the call. Not only did they fix our initial problem they also noticed a plastic fitting that was damaged. This barely visible crack in the fitting would cause our water pump to go on, very briefly, as it re-pressurized. We've been noticing this on and off for the last month and now it's fixed. They are going to check out one of our sunshades, an MCD product, and procure a new motor for the shade. If our shade motor gets fixed it will save us from visiting Winnebago in June. Our coach isn't new by any means, but it drives and looks as though it were a late model coach, *priceless!* We haven't had much to write about until today. Russell Stover Chocolates is just down the street from this campground.

## Russell Stover



21<sup>st</sup>. I would hate to tell you what I was expecting. This is a big building. I expected we'd be treated to a tour; my only hope is that pictures would be allowed, but no! It was just a store. Why would I think there'd be more? It's called the Russell Stover Chocolate Store; not factory, not see how we do it, no, *just a store*. It was jammed pack full of their own brand plus Millionaires and Whitman Chocolates; *do you think they own them all?* I did not ask. This is the other side of the building, close outs! What! We're campers. Our lives revolve around Walmart, Aldi's and now the discount side of the RS Store. The experience did have a happy ending; *don't mind me, I have trouble getting my picture taken. It's time for ice cream.*

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You should see the first of these two pictures. I'm not really as grumpy as pictures make me out to be, I just don't take a good picture. Ice Cream was awesome. This was just a single scoop, yet the gal stuffed three scoops of chocolate chip in my waffle cone...*priceless!* 28<sup>th</sup>. Our time here at Three Flags Resort in Wildwood, is ending. Carla still has a small wash to do, and we have so many gifts to wrap for Dennis' birthday as we prepare to move back to Orlando on Sunday. In a way it might have been beneficial for us to stay put for a little longer this year. We'll be back in May. Just when I thought there'd be very little else to talk about, we have the pleasure of meeting Roger and Rosemarie? He's just retired and they're getting their feet wet in 28-foot travel trailer. Not quite ready for full-timing yet, but I bet after September they'll be thinking about it a little more seriously. Right now, Carla is getting ready to trip with her sister going back home to Greenfield, MA and will her visit family. This is now an annual event. I'll have Dennis' company for most of next week, so it should go by quite fast.

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We begin this wondrous trip from the SE corner of the country. From Missoula, MT going west on US 90 stopping briefly in Spokane, WA then proceeding to Seattle, WA. After a brief stay in Seattle; it's off, once again, to Alaska. Our extreme Western travel boundary will be Homer, AK, found on the southern tip of the Kenai Peninsula. From there we'll head north to Anchorage, then Denali State Park and finally ending up at our most northern point, Fairbanks, AK. We have an option, and we'll most likely take it, to take a flight out of Fairbanks and fly north to Barrow, AK, which is the farthest town north and sits on the edge of the Arctic Ocean. Fairbanks, AK we opted not to experience this location. It looks to be about 600 miles from Fairbanks. To put it in another way, if Key West, FL is the most Southern Point, Barrows is the most Northern Point of the continental US. *One interesting point on Barrow, AK. On May 10th the sun will rise but will not set again until August 1st.*

## PAUL GRENIER

### MAY 2016

2<sup>nd</sup>. Back in Orlando once again. We're on a site we enjoyed several months ago, much nicer than what we had two weeks ago. This will be the last time we spend time in this beautiful campground. We left Three Flags in Wildwood, FL mid-morning yesterday and arrived uneventfully a couple of hours later. Our leaving, often, means we meet some very nice campers only to split company before we exchange email addresses. Such will be the case for a nice guy named Mike. Most everyone is bigger than me, but Mike and I saw eye to eye. He was a wrestling coach and was visiting one of his former students during his stay. He and his wife had a beautiful Sport Coach RV they bought brand new, very nice. Just behind us were campers Roger and Rosemarie. He was participating in a 60's baseball matchup. Last I heard it did not go that well. They played in extreme temperatures all day. They did get our travel card, but we never got around to ask for their contact information. Only hope both couples will contact us some time in the future. As I've mentioned earlier, we'll be staying here until the 22<sup>nd</sup>. when we must get an early start for our Alaska Trek.



## RV-n AMERICA 2016-2017



We've returned to the "D" Section. It's been referred to as the swamp area, but I've yet to find a swamp, even after heavy rains. The last few months I've had a phobia about dropping tree limbs, but we're facing temps in the nineties for a good portion of our stay, so we're in the shade till we leave. It's truly awesome to enjoy the outdoors without having to hassle the intense heat from the sun. We've enjoyed a couple very nice homes the last twenty-five years, yet whenever we find ourselves in this type of setting, nestled in the woods, ***Carla will often tell me that she could not imagine being any happier than she is...Priceless!***

Tomorrow, the 3<sup>rd</sup>., we drive to her sisters' home in Port Orange, FL. From there she and Carla will begin their journey of bringing Mary Ann back to Greenfield, MA, a two-day journey. After a short visit she too will be returning to her Summer Home in Derby, VT. In a few days Carla has another chance to visit family, especially this year since we'll be away for twelve months or more before coming back to the East Coast. Yes, there are many we have to say good-bye to. Myself, I'll have to endure the single life for the better part of the next week while Carla is away and, I'll have

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very little to write about for the next seven days.



Carla's been gone almost five days now. Things are going well. I talk to Dennis sometimes for thirty minutes or longer and going on 2-3 times a day. Scoots and I are still on talking terms. No biting so I guess she's tolerating me as well. This being Saturday it was church, pizza and beer night. It's about 10-pm and Scoots wants me to shut down so she can go to sleep, *dream on! Be back Sunday, possibly.*

11<sup>th</sup>. Wed This is such a great way to live your retirement. It's almost sinful. Mornings, for the last three weeks, are coming in at around 68 degrees, and by 11 am are warming up eventually, but that's Florida for you. We are expecting low nineties for the coming weekend, time to get out of Dallas. We continue to edit our trip to Dawson Creek, BC. Now we're scheduled to arrive in DC on the 17<sup>th</sup>. just to take the pressure off us to be on time.

17<sup>th</sup>.-Tuesday-We continue to tweak our travel plans and count down the days till Sunday.! It was around 3 pm and Carla and I decided to take a walk, since there's a 100% chance of rain through Sunday. What a pleasant surprise.

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At the end of our street, here in Clermont, we met Sheryl Scott. Her license plate read New Hampshire, so we had to disturb her quiet and say HI. Not only had she lived in Littleton NH, she was there in the seventies when I was working at Parkers Drug Store. Even more coincidental, she attended Brockton High School. I know, I attended Cardinal Spellman, but it was still quite a coincidence. She's also lived in Christmas, FL just outside of Titusville. We don't have an email on her, only hope she writes some time so we can keep in touch. This, as I've mentioned before, is just another one of the nice occurrences that happen more often than you can imagine living this type of lifestyle...*Priceless!* A day we will remember for quite a while!

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### *July... Trip Day Planner: (projected)*

- 18th - 19th -Enjoy Dawson Creek, BC
- 1-3 -Fort Nelson, BC
- 4 -Muncho Lake, BC
- 5 -Watson Lake, YT (Yukon Territory)
- 6-8 -Whitehorse, YT
- 9 -Destruction Bay YT
- 10-11 -Tok, AK
- 12-15 -Valdez, AK
- 16-17 -Palmer, AK
- 18-19 -Seward, AK
- 20-22 -Homer, AK
- 23-26 -Anchorage, AK
- 27-30 -Denali National Park, AK
- 31-34 -Fairbanks, AK again on the way back now
- 35 -Tok, AK
- 36 -Destruction Bay, YT
- 37-40 -Haines, AK
- 41-42 -Whitehorse, YT
- 43 -Watson Lake, YT
- 44 - Iskut, BC
- 45-46 -Steward, BC
- 47 -Smithers, BC
- 48-50 Prince George and farewell dinner (odometer... )

## RV-n AMERICA 2016-2017

22<sup>nd</sup>. (55500 odometer reading). We begin our travels north to Dawson Creek, but we're aiming for Cedar Rapids, IA to visit with family in Iowa. Carla and I enjoyed their company last year and since it's on the way, according to our travel map, we'll be dropping in again this year. Carla and I will forgo curling this time.

Sunday, we made it up to Perry, GA and enjoyed a great meal at Cracker Barrel as well. I think it was a country pot roast...*delicious!* Next day we woke around 7 am and we're on the road by 9, what a life. We were planning to travel until around 3 pm about three-hundred miles but discovered that by 3 pm we were in Central Time Zone. Love Central Time. As a result of this time warp, we decided to continue for another hour and landed in Clarksville, KY. That's the beauty of this lifestyle, *so flexible*. We ate dinner in the coach and slept well that night. Even Scoots slept most of the night in our bedroom sink...*don't ask!* In a couple of days, we awoke and Carla asked what time it was, said 7:15. Thirty minutes later Carla informed that it was really only 6:45, forgot about the time change. We're off to have breakfast at Cracker Barrel. The windshield is clean and we're ready to go at 8 am. So, it was jacks up and we hit the road a little early. We drove past Mattoon, IL and chose to travel a little closer to Moscow, IA and dropped anchor in Urbana, IL. *Wow!* I'd forgotten from last year how big the farms are in this country. We, once again, spotted a few turbines in the distance gently rotating in the breezes. Carla

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took a couple of pictures.



### **Moscow, IA**

26<sup>th</sup> We arrived in MOSCOW, IA on schedule and have our rig was their garage by 8 am. The slides needed no repairs but, at ten years old, needed some updating. Within three hours we were out and on our way to Cedar Rapids, IA where we plan to stay till the 1<sup>st</sup> of June if all goes well! Within an hour we were pulling into Hawkeye Downs Speedway. This is just a big gravel parking lot. Even though we arrived here a day early Joyce and Don insisted that we come over that evening for an exceptional steak dinner. Iowans eat well. Guess that's why they all look so healthy. Next day, 27<sup>th</sup>, Carla felt the tanks should be emptied and the closest dump station was at Squaw Creek Campground in Cedar Rapids, a campground we stayed at last June, go to the link below for more info.

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Long story short when we arrived at Squaw Creek, we noticed the driver's side slide was away from the coach a couple of inches. By the time everyone tried to fix the situation it was out quite a bit, too far to take on the road. The Ranger at Squaw Creek was very helpful. He told us we could stay in the ranger office parking lot until he had an opening. Within an hour he had a cancellation, so we took it. This is much nicer than Hawkeye, *what do you think?* This place is awesome looking! We hope to have someone look and hopefully remedy the slide on the 31<sup>st</sup>. We topped the evening off by going to Noodles' Restaurant and watching Robin Williams' movie RV in the comforts of their home. The movie is not a movie to see if you're pondering this RV lifestyle. Awesome show!

28<sup>th</sup>. We enjoyed The General Store and Pub Saturday, rest assured, the MacDougall's are not going to let us get bored.

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We ate at the General Store and Pub, which was awesome even before we ate the food. You're right, the appetizer was served in a "bait box." They provided each of us with a sheet of aluminum foil to eat the appetizer on. When the prime rib came to the table it was served on plates. Ten ounces of pure delight. Scoots is also enjoying this part of our trip. However, this is about all the excitement she shows daily. Sunday- What a way to begin a day. We attended a "Traditional Mass", like the way Masses used to be before Vatican II. We and the MacDougall families occupied the rear of the Church. The experience was unforgettable. The altar servers, four of them, were impeccable in their actions on the altar, John MacDougall Jr. was one of them. After Mass Don and Joyce joined us for breakfast in the coach, a pure delight. That evening we enjoyed dinner at their home, Chicken in a delicious sauce and raviolis,



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more than we could put away. Monday, of course, was Memorial Day. We celebrated with a picnic at their home. John (son) and Meg and Paul (son) and Ivy were both there with families, the experience with all the families, was priceless. Miss Cat, in the plaid outfit, and her sister Miss Hannah are in the forefront. Miss Elizabeth, opposite Cat, at the table, who grew about twelve inches since last year and Gavin next to her.



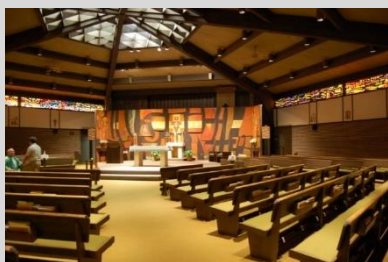
Miss Marren (daughter to John and Meg) is here standing behind Lil Eoghan (pronounced Owen) is always the center of attraction, sitting in the highchair. It's the last day of the month and Carla and I will spend the day hoping our coach will get looked (our slide problem) at, if not, we're here for a while longer.

# PAUL GRENIER

## JUNE 2016

3<sup>rd</sup>. Friday Well, we've been here at Winnebago, in Forest City, IA, for 2 days, and it might be necessary for us to stay till Tuesday. The coach is drivable, and the slides are working well, but some small items remain questionable. I should know more in three hours. In the meantime, we will finish our Subway sandwiches and go back inside where it's a little cooler. Tomorrow and Saturday will be lazy ones this weekend. All our fixes are now complete on the coach. Winnebago wanted to put shoes on the back slider but did not have enough time. They were expecting to be slammed the next week with hopes that they might get to us by Thursday. We opted to pass on that option. Today is the 8<sup>th</sup>. but let me quickly fill in what's been going on.

5<sup>th</sup>. We attended Mass in Forest City St. James Church. We were there last year at about this same time.



Great little church. Fr. Paul Lippstock, with Fr. Jim, cover six churches in the area.

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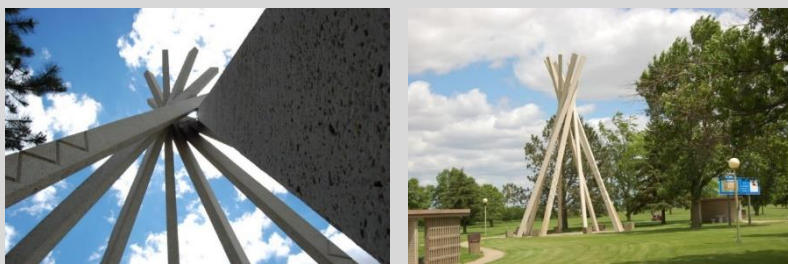
Yup! He also owns an Itasca, as well. Occasionally he will have a couple of parish members join him and they'll take field trips always making use of the canoes. He's awesomely well liked. He ended his service last Sunday and asked anyone who wished to be anointed to remain. This was on his dime. This took about an hour and that little after-mass service was very special.

Tomorrow will be my birthday. I'd forgotten when I first awoke, but Carla's was the first greeting that morning and, as usual, the Ozdarski family, one by one, each called with birthday wishes. Either in calls or texts everyone remembered. A very dear friend, our director for our former Greenacres Child Care Center, Cindy, living in Arizona, also remembered, as she always has. My daughter Cheryl also called later in the day, a call I look forward to each year. At a certain age presents and stuff are not that important. A strong point when you live in a tin can. However, I still enjoy receiving the unique cards Dennis can always find. To be remembered is the biggest gift anyone can

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give. I once heard the saying, *"once people begin to forget you, then we slowly fade away"*, and I'm not ready to fade away yet. All in all, it was another very memorable day. I think it was the night before, when we spoke to Don and Joyce. I'm trying to get up the nerve to ask her for her recipe for Chocolate Chip Cookies, unless it's a family secret. My stash is getting low.

Today we travelled to Mitchell, SD, bucking very strong head winds all the way, and on our way, I heard from Mary Ann and received texts from more Ozdarski members.



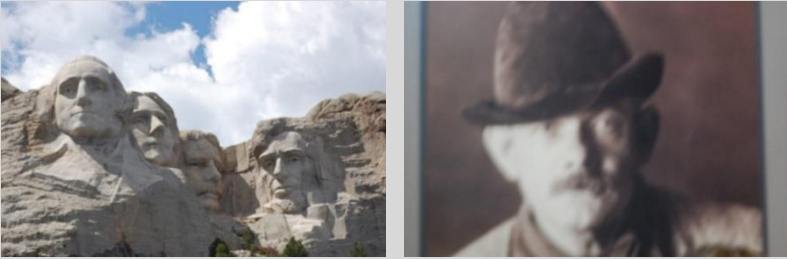
We spent a few minutes at a rest area in South Dakota. On a grassy area, by the welcome station, was a contemporary teepee made of several concrete beams that must have measured about sixty-feet in height. It was a beautiful piece.

### **Mount Rushmore**

7<sup>th</sup> Once again we can change itineraries on the spot. It's the biggest plus for this lifestyle. By going a few extra miles and driving toward Rapid City instead of Mitchell, we were

## RV-n AMERICA 2016-2017

able to squeeze in Mount Rushmore.



The original itinerary called for our staying in Rapid City, SD for three days, but the coach fix mandated that we cancel our reservation so we would be on schedule for Yellowstone. We only got one day at Rushmore, but it was well worth the effort. Poor picture, sorry, but Gutzon Borglum ( seen in the fuzzy picture above) was the head of this project, a world-famous sculpture in his own right. He headed the project until his death, thirty years into the project and his son finalized it about one year after his death. I hope to add to this soon.

### **Devils' Tower**

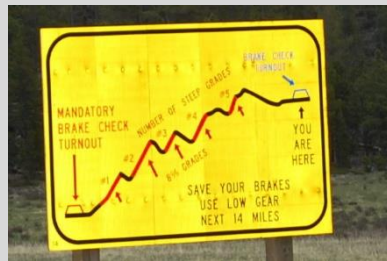
8<sup>th</sup> The next day we took in The Devils Tower. Today we headed out to Sheridan, WY but as we were traveling, we realized if we trekked to Gillette, WY instead we could give ourselves one full day at the Devils Tower.

# PAUL GRENIER



This was such a bonus and, you could say, an additional birthday present I wanted very much but felt we had to forgo it do to time restraints.

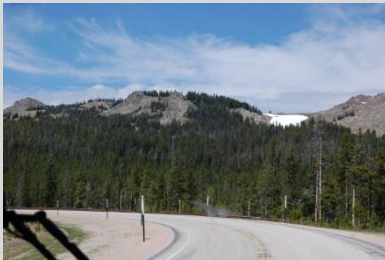
9<sup>th</sup>. E-Ride in the coach. This picture is supposed to exemplify a "*Hair-raising Day.*" It's not that we had a bad experience, just that sometimes you experience something extraordinary for the first time.



This country is just so beautiful. This quiet, uneventful and relaxing trip would soon be replaced with a tad more anxiety and apprehension in the next 24-hours. Just a quick look at what the road ahead would look like in real time, see above. Maximum speed on each of these turns, and

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there's about eight of them, is twenty-five mph; we took them much slower than that. To our benefit a two-foot tall metal rail is along the edge of the road; *like that would save us in a bus twelve feet tall and almost sixty feet long!* As the picture shows in detail, we are very much in the left lane. The drop off the road is measured in thousands of feet. DOT does provide rest areas along this road where we can actually get off the road completely to allow your brakes to cool off. I was even figuring that the snow, all around us, might smooth the fall a bit in a worse scenario.



But what the next picture does not show is that the visibility, looking forward, is over a mile. It was at this rest area that I remembered that I'd never taken the time to have the brakes checked, *hell of a time to think about that!* This would be an 8 1/2 % grade for fourteen miles. In the picture showing the graph(previous page) of the road, the black ink sections are not hilling just another downward hair-pin curve in the road. The picture above does show the excellent visibility for on-coming traffic. We proceeded very slowly and pulled off whenever possible to rest the brakes.

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## Cody, WY



10<sup>th</sup> This is a western town where most guys are cowboys. Carla tried to talk me into the cowboy image, but I wouldn't buy into the image, besides it was a Stetson and much too big to store in our motorhome.

## Yellowstone Valley Inn RVP

10<sup>TH</sup> The Yellowstone Valley RVP comes with electric, sewer and water. It took us about thirty minutes to travel to Yellowstone. This facility has it all.



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How about a Saloon, restaurant, cabins and even a motel unit. This is a private RV Campground but it's the closest we could get and least expensive at \$70 per night, that's not too far from Yellowstone Park. We spent 2 days at Yellowstone Park and 2 days resting up. Negotiating the RV Park was a dream, mostly all pull through. We weren't there long enough to get to meet anyone but the staff at the campground were very helpful. We knew we would visit the East entrance to Yellowstone Park from US 20-16 and 14. Carla recommended we also take in the North-East entrance to Yellowstone, using US 212 from Silver Gate and Cooke City, Montana another day which was a delight from the moment we entered the park.



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### The Shoshone River

10<sup>th</sup>. This river is at the back of the campground, a beautiful sight each evening. This river begins from Yellowstone Park and flows through the Shoshone National Forest and eventually will power the Cody Dam in Cody. It was on my list of things to see, but opted to take a day of rest instead. At first I was awed by how clean the water looked as it flowed by but was later informed that it was polluted with sulfur from the geysers in Yellowstone. When we asked how come the cabin guests got free breakfast we were told because they're paying \$180 a night to stay. She did tell us we would qualify for a 20% discount on all our meals, however the "Motel-like" unit was log style, very rustic. As always, I like to emphasize how generous the parking area is at the campgrounds we stay at. If they know you're coming, and you better call way ahead (possibly one-year), you'll be out the door and at your site within minutes.





As in every stay, it comes to an end. Everything and everyone at this facility was excellent. Don't hesitate to spend a few nights here should you visit Yellowstone National Park. This is what a Wyoming sunset looks like at this campground.

### **Cody Stampede Rodeo**

10<sup>th</sup>. The Cody Stampede Rodeo is a very active and professional rodeo. It's just a few miles outside of Cody going west, on RT 14/16 on the road to our campground. Light entertainment is everywhere prior to the Rodeo beginning, and yes it begins right on time. This dude just paid ten dollars to sit his butt on this bull for ten minutes. *I can't even recall making that kind of money!*

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14<sup>th</sup>. We leave Cody and the Yellowstone Valley Inn, and arrive in Butte, MT around 4 pm. We'll spend the night at a beautiful Walmart and will leave on Wed. for Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. I don't usually relish over the chore of driving in steady rain, but today I was thankful. The coach was dirty, dusty and inundated with other leavings. Right now, it looks pretty good. Enjoy the rodeo sunset. This is the Crescent Bar Encore RVP. It's a 'TT' property, so you know what that means; a freebee. We're planning to stay here for ten days and try to rest up from the driving ordeal of this last week. Above is the view of the Columbia River from site at Crescent Bar. In general, we only get to wish we had a site like this but today we hit it big. Met an awesome couple, Cindy and Jim today, but sadly they'll be leaving in the am. It's the way it is with life on the road. Their traveling in

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a new Winnebago Adventurer, a coach I've always loved. I have no doubt we'll be meeting up with them in the future. They also aspire of doing Alaska someday as well. This will be our home for the next ten days, as we will leave on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Since we have no over-the-air TV reception I should have plenty of time to complete these blogs.

### **Treasures of the Church**

19<sup>th</sup> Sun. At 3 pm today we would attend a presentation called the Sacred Relics Exposition. The presentation is also called the "Treasures of the Church."



Fr. Carlos Martins oversees this presentation. It would be at the Holy Apostles Parish, Wenatchee, WA. The advertisement in the church flyer showed a picture with possibly ten relics each in its own tamper proof reliquary (relic container). We had never attended anything like this and had never really seen a relic close, so we decided to attend. We got there about fifteen minutes early, only to find a beautiful church with few in the pews, nevertheless we stayed. Fr. Carlos finally showed up and began setting up for his verbal presentation. The presentation on relics was awesome and much too intense for me to try to present here, it's a

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must-see show. Fr. Carlos was very unpretentious, but half-way through his talk you could almost feel the saints hovering in the back of the church.

"Handcuffs" that would prevent one from fully benefitting from the relics numbered four.



I had to admit to one of the four but felt good about the other three. Documented miracles were being exalted one after another. Even examples of the lengths the Church goes through to qualify an individual for sainthood. St. Bernadette and St. Maria Goretti stand out most prominently. A little over an hour later he was wrapping up his talk. With so many miracles produced from this exposition over the years I was hoping I could make something happen for Cheryl, my daughter (she's having health issues). The actual exposition would be in the hall next door. Overwhelming, to say the least! About twenty tables, six-foot-long, were set up in the hall each displaying six or more relics on each table. Some of the 167 relics there were; St. Agnes's Augustine. St, Anthony of Padua, St. Blaise (throat saint), St Bernadette, St Francis of Assisi, a fragment from the birth crib

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of Jesus, a fragment from Jesus' Crown of Thorns, Apostles James the Great and James the Less, St. John, St. John Paul II (Pope), Maria Goretti, Mary Magdalene a clothing fragment from Mary, Jesus' mother.



Also were more Apostles, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul, Peter, Philip, Thomas, and John and others. Many of the Sainted Popes were also represented. In addition, were St Teresa of Avila, St Thomas More and St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta. We spoke of St. John Marie Vianney. He lived for 73 years, 1786 to 1859 and died in France. His body, like many others, was found to be incorrupt by death. He is entombed in the Basilica at Ars, France. There were another 150 or more relics I have not mentioned. Also, on display was a relic of Christ' Cross, and a relic from St Joseph and fragments of bones from the twelve apostles. I did feel disappointed a couple of days later, I really tried to make something happen for Cheryl. Carla had family members she was praying for as well, as of this writing. The experience did not produce any miracle for our families, we did pray hard, however. This presentation is a must attend for

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every Catholic and Christian to experience. I would certainly attend this again, even if I had to drive 200 miles to attend.

20<sup>th</sup>. Scoots needed a shot to be allowed into Canada and some paperwork. Found a nice Veterinarian in Quincy. Next day would be a field trip day. In anticipation of Dennis' coming on next Tuesday we knew we had to do a small clean-up. Carla took care of the inside and I did a quick wash and partial wax to the coach and even did the same to the HHR. We were both in need of a rest. We had a great dinner and topped the evening off watching "2012," the movie. Next week was supposed to be a River-Fest but it did not really materialized. Later this evening we'll disconnect water and sewer in preparation for our Sunday departure. We did have a chance to meet Dave and Janet, full-times and have temporarily left their home in the hands of their son to live in and watch over, very nice folks. Their coach is a Monaco Diplomat, which looks brand new. I expect it's about as old as ours but looks great. In the year they've been RVing they've covered some very interesting places. We've marked up our roadmap should we mimic their travel venue. I only hope we get to meet up with them again in our travels. When we get up Sunday morning it'll be slide-in, jacks-up and untether the coach from electrical. Our trip to Monroe, WA is about one-hundred miles. We plan to travel west along US 90 then north on the 205 to Monroe. It's not the shortest route but might be the better



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direction for the coach and sight-seeing.

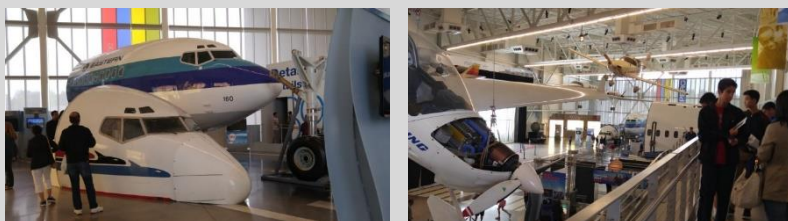
26<sup>th</sup>. Another one of those uneventful rides to Monroe, WA. We plan to stay here until the 13<sup>th</sup> of July.



The next day, as usual, is rest and shopping at Walmart. In two days, the 28<sup>th</sup>., we will be picking up Dennis as he flies into Washington for a one-week visit with us. Scoots is adapting nicely

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### Boeing, Space Needle and Chihuly



30<sup>th</sup> It's the end of the month and Boeing unfortunately, is one of those venues that restrict pictures in the manufacturing complexes. We were exposed to the manufacturing of a 747 and a little later a 777. The plane hangars were off-limits to pictures of any kind, so we had to make do with the on-site museum and the outside grounds. The museum was just short of awesome. The Boeing Dream Lifter Aircraft, not seen here, will travel to a plant and pick up a sectionals for the 777 being produced under contract elsewhere and fly them back to Seattle. It was interesting to learn that the 747 was their largest plane Boeing makes and it takes a month to fully build one unit. En contraire, the new 777 (seen above next page) planes are built in several locations, around the globe, and then transported to Seattle and pieced together. This plane, believe it or not, is assembled in around three days. The other picture shows a new 747 in its "green-skin" coming back from a test flight. Once fully tested it will be painted to the wishes of the owner. I believe we were told one of these could run from 625 to 700 million dollars.

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Picture courtesy of Boeing. This building is the biggest gross volume building in the world. These bay doors are the width of a football field and this building had, I think, five sets of doors housing different types of planes from the 737 to the 777 models.

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## JULY 2016



1<sup>st</sup>. It's Friday, and we rested. We ended the day with a steak dinner, movie and ice cream. Next day would be a field trip day. We had never been to Seattle before and we were told, that even though it was only thirty-four miles away, to allow at least two hours in travel time to get there. We ventured into Seattle and bought tickets to the Chihuly Gardens and then at 2 pm we ascended the Seattle Space Needle. The following pictures were taken at the Chihuly Gardens which is located just below the Seattle Space Needle.

## Chihuly Gardens

1<sup>st</sup> On our way to the Needle we had to walk about one-quarter mile from where we parked the car. It was a very enjoyable walk. On our way we came across a Seattle bikeway. Much smarter than sticking the bikes in the street. This was our destination, however little did we know, we would have to wait nearly three hours for our turn to go up. That would be Okay since we spent that time viewing Chihuly. Our turn did come, eventually, to stand in line to be whisked up five-hundred-twenty feet to the top of Seattle.



Now we would go off to the Space Needle. In my honest opinion Chihuly was far more interesting than the Needle...*whatever!*

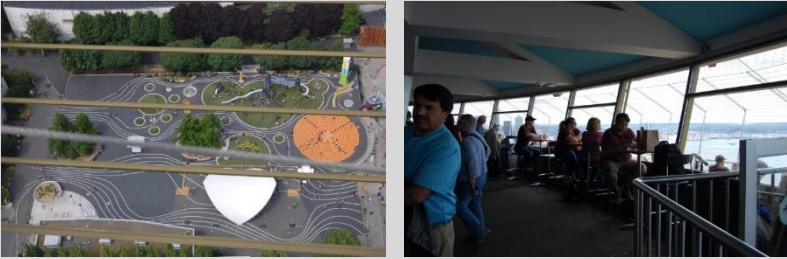
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Famous celebrities and politicians have visited the Needle over the years. They included Eisenhower, Presley, Nixon, Kennedy and many others. The Needle was completed in early 1962, the same time "Telstar" was launched and Chubby Checkers' song "The Twist" was released. This was the same year that the World's Fair came to Seattle, as it was planned over a year before. Just a couple of facts. The Needle has had about twelve-thousand visitors per day each year for the past sixty years, over 2.5 million visitors. Views from the top are awesome. Below you see the Chihuly Gardens.



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The Seattle shoreline is breathless. In the center of the picture you'll see Seattle's Eye in the distance (not shown). Seattle is very strong on sports. Above is a soccer field with stadium seating. Not far from the soccer field is a water-play-area for kids, as seen above. We, Dennis, Carla and I, were packed in very tightly at the top as you can see. This is in the restaurant area. There's a sign at the top that tells us that it took four-hundred-seven days to complete the needle. 467 truckloads of concrete were used to anchor the thirty-seven-tons of steel that was needed to erect the structure.

Like with all field trips there's always a time that we must leave. The experience was unique, but I would not endure the heavy traffic ride into this city to view it again. The city supports a rail system to move its hundreds of thousands of visitors and dwellers around town. We came across a "Ride the Ducks" venue. The Seals originally created this vehicle, and we saw them at the Upper Dells in Wisconsin, as well. We walked by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation headquarters. It was a very nice day and experience, but I'll be glad to get back home, to our coach, and out of

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this city.

### Mishaps in Hope

14<sup>th</sup>. We made it to the Flying J in Hope., only about 60-miles to go to get to the USA/Canadian border. It turned out to be very quiet after 10 pm. The trip up had a couple of mishaps. We had stopped for a break at one of the pull-outs alongside the highway. After fifteen minutes it was time to continue, however at the edge of the roadway were two washout areas and there was nothing I could do except to go very slowly to minimize any rocking action to the coach.



What you see above is what happened. Dishes came flying out of the above cabinet like something you'd see in the RV movie. The views for the rest of the ride were awesome. As you can see from the picture the road, we travel is very acceptable. Every few miles posters on the side of the road ask drivers to pull-over and let faster vehicles pass us.



## Dawson Creek

15<sup>th</sup>. We're planning for a 3-day stay in Dawson Creek.



Just one of many rivers we've crossed trekking to Dawson Creek.

## Wooden Bridge

18<sup>th</sup> No story just a picture. Google the rest of the story, it's very interesting.



20<sup>th</sup>. Our serpentine belt disintegrated. We had just come down from a very steep hill onto a semi-circle bridge when the incident happened; the serpentine belt disintegrated and I was forced to pull over to the side of the road, just after leaving the bridge, going up another hill. Just then the first

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Canadian stopped to help us. He was awesome. He had a name and number in his phone for his cousin Archie. The coach was disabled, we had no cell service and were not sure if we could reach our Road-Service provider, so his offer to help was very appreciated. He left us within a few minutes but promised he'd take care of us. So now I am pacing up and down behind the coach waiting for Archie. Within five minutes another Canadian in his Mercedes stopped in front of the coach and offered to help. I said I think I had it under control, but he insisted on at least trying to reach his in-law Archie to help us. I confirmed that I felt sure that Archie had already been contacted, but he said he would follow-up on it with a phone call. Still waiting for Archie to show up, when a Canadian Mountry shows up. He was very pleasant and offered to contact the local tow person, *who else but...Archie!* I told him I felt Archie might be on his way, but he said he was obligated to make sure someone was coming for safety reasons. He reassured me that to tow would be short and inexpensive since there was a truck repair shop at the top of this hill. The Archie Tow Service did show up, with at least one of his associates, a family member. Within thirty minutes of his arriving, I was safely at the truck shop. My having a spare serpentine belt saved me three days of waiting for one to be delivered. We arrived at Muncho by 4 pm a little later than the others.

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Once we had our serpentine belt replaced, we were back on the road again and arrive at Muncho in fog and misty rain.

21<sup>st</sup>. Our stay in Tok, AK came with a free day

22<sup>nd</sup>. We arrive at Watson Lake, YT and hope to visit Laired Hot Springs, Rancho Falls

### **“Travel Through-Schedule”**

23<sup>rd</sup> - 26th- Whitehorse, AK staying at Pioneer RV Park

26<sup>th</sup>.- Destruction Bay staying at Destruction Bay RV Lodge.

27<sup>th</sup> - 28th Tok, AK staying at the Tok RV Village for 2- days.

29<sup>th</sup> - Arrived at Bear Paw in Valdez, AK.

30<sup>th</sup>. Sat.-It's Church, pizza and movie night.

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While in Valdez we would attend the Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church. The church, I know, is not much to brag about, but I kind of like small churches. Of the forty or so parishioners that were in attendance at least six were from the WIT (Winnebago International Travelers) group and another twenty were visiting from other states, mostly from Florida.

### **Whitehorse, YT (Yukon Terr.)**

We arrive at Pioneer RVP in Whitehorse, YT. We enjoyed Roast Beef Dinner on the WIT dime. This will be a three-day stay until we leave on the 26<sup>th</sup>.



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As the trip continued, we were hoping for sunny blue skies. *Well! As I said* we were just hoping. By 8 am we had reached the Rancheria Falls. This was one of those "park the coach on the side of the road" and huff it a mile to the venue but was it worth it. We were "parkers" (individuals who assist their fellow RVers to their designated parking spots) that day and were following Ed and Jan the WIT Caravan Leaders. The destination can't be that far, so we just follow the walkway. Then the boardwalk leading to the Portage trail to arrive at the falls, okay! Yes, we've seen bigger and more majestic falls, but the force and roar of this waterfall had to be experienced. But as was said in that movie "now we've seen it let's go." and go we did.



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However, even the walk to get here was worth the effort. So, it's back in the coach again, this time we're working hard trying to catch up with Ed and Jan in their Winnebago Meridian "Diesel" Motorhome. It is hard to keep up with a Diesel any time, but we eventually did catch up to them. 2 pm. and you can see the skies are beginning to cut us a break. We can see just a little blue above. We've stopped for a bit to experience the town of Teslin. It's basically a museum of several buildings giving us a history of what life was like for early settlers.

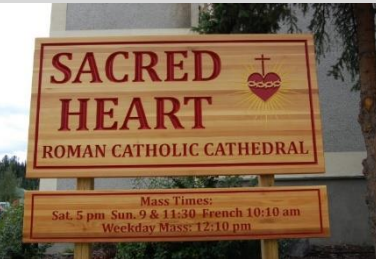


The weather is just not going to give us a break today, cloudy everywhere. So, we travel on, a bit further looking for Whitehorse, YT. We finally did arrive at Whitehorse a little after 3 pm

## Klondike Ship Tour



24<sup>th</sup> Good morning Whitehorse! It's 9:30 in the morning, and even though many of us might have liked sleeping late this morning, that was not to be. We're on an organized WIT Tour to see and experience the town of Whitehorse. Above is the Klondike ship, the centerpiece of Whitehorse, YT



25<sup>th</sup>. Sacred Heart Church in Whitehorse, YT the 24<sup>th</sup>. just

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did not work out, just too busy at that time so we attended mass today, Monday, not totally acceptable, but permitted. Carla mentioned that it might be a Cathedral, not sure. The mass we attended was commemorative for a gentleman who passed away. It was well attended. If he was looking down on all the family members that attended, he would have been very proud. Yup, she was right, it is a Cathedral. Not nearly as ostentatious as many we have seen in the past, but, none the less, a Cathedral.



Daily Mass is at 12:10 pm, maybe that's why the attendance was so good as well.

27<sup>th</sup>. Destruction By Lodge RVP in Valdez, AK This destination is going to be just a 24-hour stop-over.



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From the picture above DBL is about as plain as you can get. But what it lacks for polish and glitter, it provided us with down-home cooking and down to earth good entertainment. We were cared for from the time we arrived that evening, until we were sent off the next morning with a country breakfast second to none. Personally, I can't wait for thirty days to go by till we return to the campground.

### Valdez, AK

29<sup>th</sup> Valdez, AK We will enjoy Valdez for the next three days.



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Above is one of the many mountain ranges surrounding the Bear Paw RVP, in Valdez, AK. The climax of our stay was a cruise to view the Mears Glacier. We will be staying at Bear Paw Campground. There is no shortage of picturesque views as we travel to Valdez. Traveling through Alaska requires patience. Rain and road re-construction are the two biggest pastimes in this state. Due to the permafrost even the best roads require repaving more often than this state would like to do. For the most part, the Alaskan roads are far superior to either Canada or the Yukon Territory. The final road to this town is a ten-mile seven percent decline to within a few miles of our destination. About eight miles down we experienced the falls as seen on the previous page bottom. This is Bridal Vail Falls (seen on the previous page). A little way down you'll also see Horse Tail Falls. Bridal falls are several hundred feet high and an awesome sight to experience. Bear Paw is not much to brag about, it's basically another parking lot campground, but the Valdez experience was well worth it. Just across the street from this campground is the Valdez Marina.

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Mostly what you will find here are private fishing boats,(hundreds of them) here to catch the Pink Salmon. Once the salmon season is over, they'll move on to another part of the state. I had to include this photo. We boated for many years in our early life together, but if I ever felt the urge to revisit that lifestyle again, it would be with a vessel like the one below, *Priceless! Back to Bear Paw.*

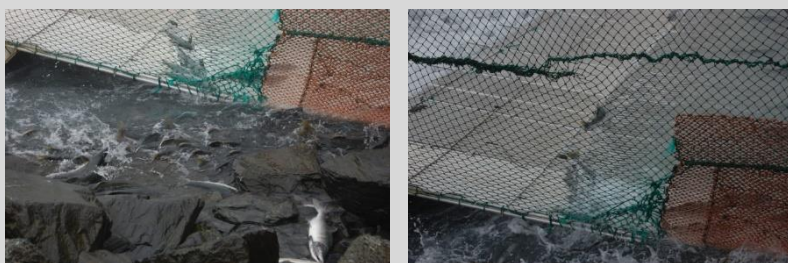


Above are just a couple of shots of Valdez. It's just a little

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village with only a few thousand residents, but very picturesque and friendly. Not much more to say about Bear Paw or the town of Valdez. Other blogs will take you on our cruise to Mears Glacier and the fishery.

Well, there's not to much to say about the fishery, so here goes. This is just on the open sea side of the fishery. Fish that were spawn here always return back here but can only get in from the fish ladder (pictured on the next page) on the opposite side of this facility.



I was unable to take a picture of the fish ladder but the picture above shows the steel obstacle fence that allows water from the fish ladder to escape from the holding pond, but the fish are unable to escape. The purpose of this fishery is the preservation of the salmon fish business for the future. The fishery is ensuring that each new fishing season the salmon industry will have a thousand times more fish that will be available in the future than would be caught this year. In short, the industry is sheltering the baby salmon from other predatory fish to ensure there will always be more salmon available for years to come. The new born

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salmon, once old and big enough will be released from the holding tank by lowering the metal obstacle and letting them go free. In a couple of years or so they will return to spawn and the cycle continues.

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## AUGUST 2016

- 2nd- PALMER, AK @ Mountain View RVP
- 5th- SEWARD, AK @ Stoney Creek RVP 1 free day
- 7th- HOMER, AK @ Heritage RVP 2 free days
- 10th- ANAHORAGE, AK 2 free days
- 13th- DENALI NAT'L PARK 4 free days
- 17th- FAIRBANKS, AK 3 free days
- 21st- TOK, AK we were here last month
- 22nd- DESTRUCTION BAY, YT (again)
- 23rd- HAINES, AK 3 free days, thankfully.
- 27th- WHITEHORSE, YT 2 free days
- 29th- WATSON LAKE, YT @Baby Nugget RVP
- 30th- ISKUT, B.C. lower 48 can't be that far away!!
- 31st- STEWART, BC 1 free day

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### Traveling to Mountain View RVP

2<sup>nd</sup> We're leaving Bear Paw and traveling to Mountain View RVP in Palmer, AK. This means, since we're "parkers", we get up at 5:30, leave Bear Paw at 6:30 and hopefully find a place to have another breakfast or lunch a little later.



About forty minutes from Palmer our stomachs were growling, or at least mine was and we ran into the Sheep Mountain Lodge. From what I gather it has had the same owner since 1946, when it was founded. We all enjoyed a mushroom soup with a chunk of bread that was awesome. It was hard to tear us away with vistas like you see above.

### Mountain View RV Park Palmer, AK

Now, with full tummies, it's off to Palmer. We finally did arrive at Mountain View. We were greeted by the family

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who's garden grows jumbo everything. In the same venue were apple trees as well. We finished off this day with a "walking tacos" dinner at the pavilion with coaches 1-9 providing the dessert. The Winnebago leaders provided the Taco dinner.

### **Church of a Thousand Trees.**

3<sup>rd</sup> On our own we visited the Church of a Thousand Trees. It was a Presbyterian Church, and one of the original buildings was built in 1936, the year the migration to Palmer took place. It has since been enlarged, but the original structure remains.



By 10 am. we found ourselves at the Palmer Information Center for an excellent presentation on the history of



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Palmer. This too is an original 1936 home. It was typical of what the government was building for those that accepted the challenge of moving to Alaska to begin a new life here. One of the ladies presenting the talk had the name Lentz. Her parents were part of the group that came to challenge Alaska. As it turned out her family owned the farm that we are going to visit next. At this time, we were scheduled for an early lunch just down the street. We ate at the Inn Café and Steakhouse. The hotel portion is owned by someone else, but we had the owner of the restaurant serve us with some of her staff. The meal was delicious. The room was very cozy, warm, and friendly. Then it was off to the farm.

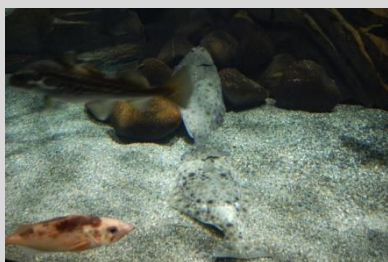
### Musk Ox Farm



3<sup>rd</sup> This would be the Musk Ox Farm. This farm specializes

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in the breeding of the Musk Ox in hopes of domesticating it soon. The fur of the Musk Ox is very expensive and is called qiviut. This fur is thicker and warmer than anything else on the market, but, once again, it is expensive. Fully grown, this is what a Musk Ox looks like. The adults of the herd were not available to be seen the day we came to visit, so this ancestor of theirs had to suffice. This four-year-old OX is a member of the bovine family. It is part sheep and is smaller than a bison.



Like all field trips in this lifestyle, they come to an end and then it's back to the campground. Mountain View is basically just an open area providing water, electric and sewer to RVers visiting Alaska. For all that it had to offer there there were still quite a few seasonal campers camping there as well. Above is a Halibut fish. Little did we know that in a

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couple of hours we would be having one of its cousins for dinner this evening. After spending a couple of hours at the Aquarium we were hungry so it was off to the Cookery Restaurant.



Carl, our server, and owner of a Winnebago Brave, was nice enough to take our picture. This picture should make everyone hungry. Halibut over mashed potato with a bunch of stuff in it...*delicious!* Dinner was great and the dessert was equally as good but we were tired so it would be time to leave. Instead of going directly back to our home, we thought we'd check out the location of our Church for Mass tomorrow evening. Even in a town of only a dozen or more streets it's great to know where things are located.

## Seward, AK

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5<sup>th</sup> Something to remember is that this is a tour, and I'm sure Winnebago is trying to get us sites at the best possible prices. Almost all the RV Parks we've stayed at in Canada, YT and Alaska are basically come park & go parks.



Stoney Creek does offer very good Wi-Fi in your coach, almost unheard of, as well as, cable TV, not that we'll be watching much. Our trip to Seward, AK would not be that long, at 175 miles, but will take time. If the weather had been a little more cooperative it would have been a nicer trip. We're climbing here to a little over 3000 feet. The fancy highway (above) has lights that are not lighting at all. They serve as markers for the snowplows, so they'll better judge the edges of the highway.



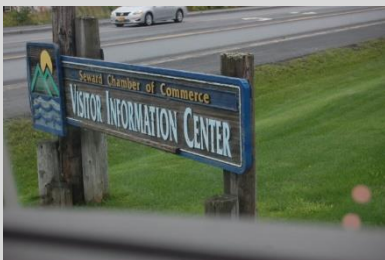
As we do go over the top level and back down to a lower

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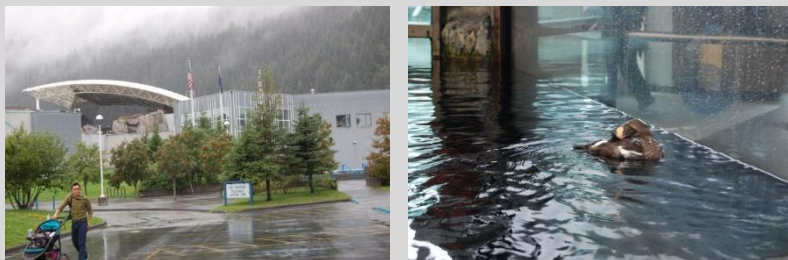
level the scenery continues to amaze us. Such a beautiful state. As we entered Seward, we see Resurrection Bay. Shortly after we enter Seward, AK. Just a couple of pictures to introduce you to this picturesque town.



This would be one of the biggest hotels in town the Seward Hotel. Log structures, homes and commercial buildings abound. This one above, I took a fancy to since it almost looked original from long ago.



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Inside Carla found a friend and they gave us directions to the Aquarium and the Cookery, a very nice place to eat. As always, she is always trying to find a friend for Scoots, I had to say no to this idea. The Alaska Sea Life Center is a must see if you visit Seward. It's not the best nor the biggest we'd ever seen but it did give an awesome history of the efforts Alaska is pushing for in the name of ecology and the preservation of the fish and wildlife that Alaska offers.

6<sup>th</sup>. -Sat. Today we were supposed to visit Exit Glacier, but it's very overcast, rainy and dampish. On top of that I awoke with a head cold, seems to be going around. Decided instead to stay home, make calls to home and friends and work on the blog. Sunday it will be up at 6 am. to travel 173 miles to Homer, AK. It will our turn to be parkers again, so we have the privilege of following Ed and Jan, our team leaders. Jodie and Dudley, our "Tail enders" he who follows last to ensure all the coaches make it to the campground. They're a little under the weather as well. It was only yesterday that Carla remarked that next month, on this date, our tour will have come to an end.

## Homer, AK

7<sup>th</sup>. We were on the road by 7 am. Once again we're the parkers for this leg of the tour. We finally arrived in Homer a little after noon and, although the 173 miles did seem long at times, in general, it was a very enjoyable trip. Most of our miles were straight and narrow but fifteen, miles, were quite serpentine. Homer, AK has an awesome marina; I mean like, thousands of boats in their marina.



This lighthouse is just above the marina, I thought, it might be interesting, but it turned out to be a gift shop and saloon. This portion of Homer is called the "Spit." Go north on the Spit Rd to bring you up to the Town of Homer, the place where people work. The spit is a very narrow strip of land that protrudes from the Southern portion of Homer,

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the "tourist" section.



Most of the shops on the "Spit" or either restaurant and charter boat offices. There is also a bar or two and a smattering of other businesses. In the picture above are halibut fish. The one being weighed here came in at fifty-five pounds. Another small portion of the marina. Just about everyone here owns a small fishing craft. Above is a picture of the last boat we owned. Kind of miss those boating days, but it is a very expensive hobby, fuel wise, makes RVing look cheap. Very small shops abound like these see next page) on both sides of the road, a tourist trap neighborhood.

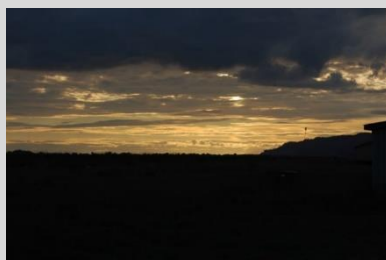


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A little further down the spit are these units. They're all clustered together but the clusters are widely separated so the water vistas are visible from the road. In the above picture is Ed, our tour leader, with his best friend, after Jan that is, Daisy. Tomorrow, Monday, he and Jan are going on a kayaking event. You notice we stayed home where it was at least warm. As you can see above we had to deal with a constant drizzle. Its venues like this one above that make the trip, no matter how long, very palatable. This would be a quiet day. We spent a little time visiting others. Tomorrow will be our last day in Homer. We awoke this morning with the sun so strong that not even the shades at full down in the front of the coach couldn't keep its rays out.

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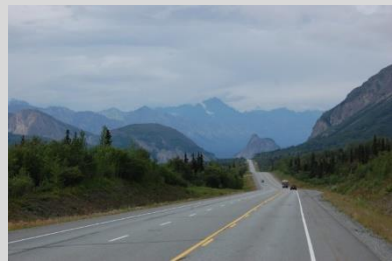
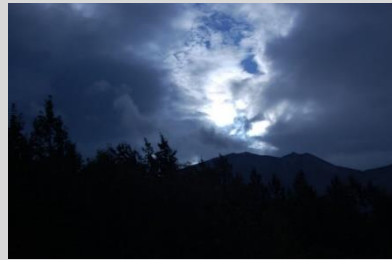


This vessel was just coming into dock at Homer. By midafternoon it had left. This morning the heads of our tour, Ed & Jan and Dudley & Jodie, treated us to an all-American breakfast of eggs, sausage, pancakes galore and so much more. Later this morning we had to pay a little attention to the coach. So, we did a good job of washing off at least a couple of layers of sand and dust. For dinner tonight it's going to be leftovers from the dinner we had at Lands' End Restaurant last night. We asked Scoots if she'd like to try Halibut, at \$60 a pound she gobbled it right up. We have a little left for a future meal...*awesome!* Everyone here is having an enjoyable experience. We spent a little time preparing the coach for our trip to Anchorage tomorrow morning. It's going to be about a six-hour ride, around 260 miles, and we'll probably arrive around 3 p.m. Right

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now, the sun is setting, but it will not go black until around 11 p.m. and it's now time to bring the Homer blog to a close.

Next time we speak we'll be in Anchorage, Alaska. Our trip schedule has been updated and tweaked FYI. We have destinations arranged up to the end of September. Good news for us today, a friend we met last year in Orlando has found a buyer for their home, and will be full-timing in September, *we wish them safe travels.*



Just as we expected, the morning fog was very much in our face for the next ten miles as we climbed our way out of Valdez to the top of the mountains that engulf Valdez. This was a very tedious climb but with Ed and Jan in the lead coach all I had to do is follow behind them and hope they had enough coffee to keep themselves wide-eyed. As it

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turned out all went well and, to my surprise, we were able to maintain a speed of just under 50 MPH for the entire climb. Within an hour after reaching the top of the hill dark clouds began to gather and we were fearful of the strong possibility of rain. Within a few minutes it did rain, but not that hard and only for an hour or so. As you can see the clouds stayed for most of our trip of 280-miles, but they did little to dampen the majesty of land we were traveling through. Long story short, we just continued chipping away at the miles ahead in hopes of seeing signs for Palmer in the distant future.



### **Anchorage, AK**

10<sup>th</sup> We arrive in Anchorage. We left the campground early in the morning and this was one of our last visions of Homer. AK. Homer was an awesome visit.

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We also had a chance to experience halibut. Our road to Anchorage was not always easy going. Road repair is a 24/7 activity in Alaska, this trip would not be much different. The one thing that makes this 244-mile trek more pleasant is the beauty we find every fifteen-minutes, it never stops. The weed you see in the above picture can be found along both sides of the road. It's also a poor-man's calendar. If this plant has its colorful flowers, it is telling everyone in this geographic area that the first snow is at least six weeks away. More on this flower later.



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This is Tom and Sue, friends of ours who are also taking this tour. They're living in a 2009 Winnebago Adventurer 38N. It's been a pleasure marking off the days with their company.

### **Anchorage, Museum**

11<sup>th</sup> Thursday is going to be a full day. We are not expected to return from this trip until just after 4 pm Our bus driver says that his daughters call this place "u-see-ums (museum)." It was a delightful visit.

## Anchorage Museum



Inside the Anchorage Museum we read about the history and heritage of the First Peoples. To their credit they began collecting all this history in photo and video at the turn of the century. Interviews with Alaskans on their parents and grandparents on what life and education consisted of back in their day. The Museum is redoing an entire area and moving many of its collections in a clean-room like this one to preserve them for a future date. This is the entry way and gathering place for the beginning of our tour. Its grandeur is honorably deserved for the fine museum it is.

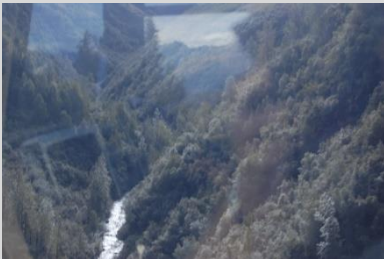
# PAUL GRENIER

## Denali, AK

12<sup>th</sup> Rainy outside, but shopping must be done in preparation for out move to Denali, AK.



## Traveling to Denali





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13<sup>th</sup>. we eventually arrive in Denali, AK. Once we got settled, we spent the evening at a dinner theatre. Fannies Kitchen, I believe was the name of the theatre house. The servers were the entertainment, and they were excellent. Ed, our tour leader, got to play the part of Dangerous Dan McGrew. This character was taken from one of Robert Service's Poems, The Shooting of Dan McGrew. It's too long for me to re-write, it but Google it and you will enjoy it. Our next day, Sunday, would be a free day. We did Mass on Sunday this week. Our friends, Tom and Sue, invited us to go out to the 49<sup>th</sup>. Brewery, which we enjoyed totally, possibly a little too much.

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## Jeff King. Husky Homestead

15<sup>th</sup> We visit the Husky Homestead Tour. This is the business of Jeff King.



As you can tell from the pictures, we enjoyed ourselves immensely. He breeds Huskies for his Iditarod team. He has bred several generations and is breeding them for their performance for when they are needed as part of sled team of dogs. What really made me feel bad was seeing how he overcame the solution to keep his dogs tied, keeping them outside and giving them each a doghouse. When I had my Alaskan Malamute it wanted to be outside the worst way,

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but I could not come up with a solution to allow the dog to be outside and keeping him restrained without his getting tangled up with his lead. The answer was so easy. Take a two-hundred-pound rock of granite, imbed a metal rod in it then give the dog a twenty-foot lead, they've been doing it for decades.

## PAUL GRENIER

### **Denali National Park Tour.**

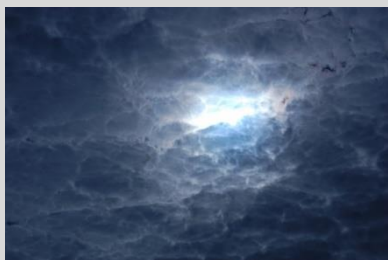
16<sup>th</sup> This would be a bus tour going into the Denali Park for sixty miles and observing animals in their natural habitat.



We did see many animals, moose, bears and caribou not that far from our bus and to top it all we enjoyed the flight of a golden eagle by end of day. *Awesome!!!* Our stay in Denali has been more than anyone could expect, however tomorrow will be jacks up for a 111-mile trek to Fairbanks

### **Fairbanks, AK.**

17<sup>th</sup> Fairbanks, Denali, and Pioneer Village



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Our trip began with questionable weather, as you can see. On several occasions we raced twenty miles or so to the only location in the campground area to experience Denali. Most who visit Alaska hope for the rare opportunity to see Denali should it ever presents itself. Our last hope was for an overlook on our way to Fairbanks. And once again HE was good to us and gave us the right conditions to experience this majestic mountain. At twenty-thousand feet and its overall size it is said that Denali is big enough to generate its own weather around itself. All those hours exploring Denali National Park, and we find this twosome right on the highway to Fairbanks...Priceless! Skies are iffy for a few hours, but they finally broke in our favor. The rest of the trip was just as we want it, uneventful.



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We finally make it to Rivers Edge RVP. These campgrounds are mush akin to the Motel-6 lodging of the past. It's a very short season and they pack us in as tight as possible since they know that most of their coach friends will only be here 2-3 days. This is the only serious building on the property. They do have pretty good Wi-Fi in the coach and a very decent laundry. At this stage, thanks to the intermittent rainy weather, many of us are fighting common colds. I went through it today and for the next two days will let Carla get some rest as she battles the bug. Our first night here we attended the Salmon Bake. A country setting with excellent food. Did I mention that this was all you can eat!



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The Salmon Bake was held at Pioneer Park. Just a few pictures to show you how interesting the venue is.



Dennis, hope you can appreciate this picture below. My father bought a car just like this, it was his way of telling family he was no longer part of the Chevy generation. It had everything a car could have, at that time, except power steering. It handled like a tank especially on really cold days.



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Our tour leaders Ed and Dudley really can't pull themselves away from this car. These two individuals, with the help of their wives, gave twenty coach owners one of the finest vacations we could ever dream of experiencing. Next on our list of things to do, courtesy of Winnebago, is to attend a production at the Palace Theatre. Originally this building, in its day, was Goldin's Grocery. It later became Palfy's Sheet Metal Works and Brewery. I could not understand combining a metal works business with a brewery...*whatever*. These four characters plus a piano player (not shown), put on such a great performance it would be hard for me to describe. It was over two hours of pure satire on the Alaskan way of life in general and then they wrapped it up with an Alaskan rendition of "Who's on First".



The entire day was awesome. As we finished the evening all



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I could say to Carla is to get me home fast. The bug had set in about two hours ago and at this stage I was shivering all over. Two days later I was almost back to normal now taking care of Carla. Next day I spent most of the day in bed trying to get over this bug. Tomorrow I would be feeling better but would spend the day helping Carla get over the same bug. Hopefully we'll both be better by travelling day on Sunday.



20<sup>th</sup>. Hard to believe that in 15 days this sojourn into America's last frontier will be coming to an end. Today is our last full day in Fairbanks, a little town of less than 40,000 that offers so much. It offers all that one needs with the luxury of being able to go into town and come back without having to pack a lunch. This is the furthest North we'll be travelling. Next week, currently, we'll be back in Whitehorse, YT with a variety of stops along the way. Later today we'll be attending Sacred Heart CC for mass (above) followed by only an apple turnover. You could not believe how sick I felt, only wanted to go to bed.

# PAUL GRENIER

## Tok and Haines, AK

21<sup>st</sup> Next it was off to Tok and Haines, AK, and the Alaskan pipeline. We travel south, for a change, to Tok, AK. The trip was 200+ miles on a basically straight road, dull at best. We did however, intersect with the Alaskan Pipeline at the Tanana River. You guessed it-The Alaskan Pipeline.



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### **Destruction Lodge.**

22<sup>nd</sup>, We arrive at Destruction Lodge just for an overnight. Parking was minimal most of us dry-camped. We were promised 30-amp power, but they only provided 10-amp power. I think they've lost a major account. Neither of us are on our feet yet.

### **Haines, AK**

23<sup>rd</sup> We travel to and arrive at Haines, AK. We both need a rest. We're both under the weather. That will be the case for the next seven days, at least.



Haines is just a very small community which manages to get all their work out of the way between Monday and Friday, few work on weekends. The school here has about

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three-hundred students, k-12. In a couple of days, we'll visit Skagway, which has 19 students K-12. The trip to Haines was, as usual, uneventful. We are ready for an oil change but that will have to wait until we get to the lower 48. The Hitch-up RV Park we're in is a Good Sam's venue and is definitely a four-star resort. This was a well-deserved change that we all needed.

24<sup>th</sup>. We embark on a ferry to Skagway, AK. From there we did the White Pass Summit RR ride. Not much to see just lots of jewelry stores. We are still under the weather but getting better. Body chills seem to predominate every day. Our purpose for Haines is to take this ferry to Skagway so we can take a trip on the White Pass Railroad (not shown). In the picture above you can see one of two twin rivers. These rivers drop down to the fjord we're in front of 6000-feet. High above are glaciers that are melting, and the water is filling the sea. About 15,000-years ago this 6000-foot mountain was capped with snow for up to 2000-feet (half mile) thick.

### **Juneau and Mendenhall Glacier**

26<sup>th</sup> We take the Fjord Express to Juneau, AK to visit Juneau, AK. We take the Fjordland Ferry to Juneau. While in Juneau we tour Juneau.

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We top the day off by visiting the Mendenhall Glacier. After that it was back on the ferry and back to Haines. Did I mention we did a little whale watching? It would have been nicer if at least one whale would have been a little more accommodating and had come in a little closer, but it is what it is. It's not whale watching until you get one of these shots.

### **Juneau, AK**

26<sup>th</sup> This was the captain and owner of the ferry vessel with his daughter, also first mate and galley captain.

**Juneau's downtown.**

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Some pictures of downtown Juneau. Above is a parking garage but the town folks wisely added the city library to the top level. This waterfall feeds into the Mendenhall Glacier Lake. In the foreground is the Mendenhall Glacier. Twenty years ago, we were told that the glacier extended to the land mass just off the tip of my right shoulder. One hundred years ago the glacier occupied the entire lake, but thanks to environmental warming this glacier, like so many others, is receding. As you can guess from the itinerary the tour from this point on is to basically get us all back to Prince George, BC, the last stop of our Alaskan Tour.

## Leaving Whitehorse & Pioneer RVP



27<sup>th</sup> The scenery driving to Whitehorse never ends. We've stayed there on our trip going north and now we will spend a couple of days relaxing before we begin our serious trip to Prince George, the end of the road. We are traveling south by way of another southern route. The vistas, however, never cease to impress. We're on Rt 7 and eventually we'll jump onto the Alaskan Hwy Rt 1. Another glacier...Awesome! We continually see these throughout our travels.

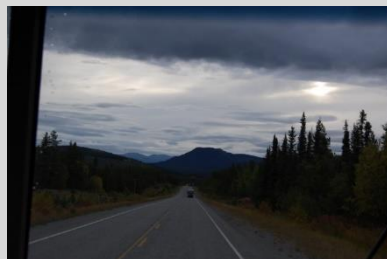
# PAUL GRENIER



Look at these mountains. It's almost distracting. This is not Big Sky Country of Montana but it's darn near close to it. With all these colder temperatures we continually find small farms here and there. Road reconstruction never disappears. Alaska is preparing for a big celebration soon. Watson Lake cannot be much further.

## **Watson Lake, YT (Yukon Terr.)**

Watson Lake at Baby Nugget Campground





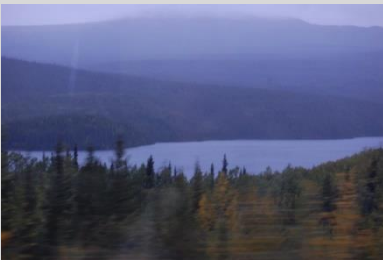
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29<sup>th</sup> We had a very nice stay in Whitehorse and even enjoyed an awesome BBQ steak cookout. But as you can see from the above picture the only way to leave Alaska is to get back on the road each day. This would be a slightly longer trip at almost 266-miles. There's only been a few of these but they sometimes cause us to arrive a little later in the day than usual. As always Alaska has thousands of these beautiful lakes. Many, however, are not clear water but rather glacier water which is embedded with ash and other impurities.

### Iskut, BC

#### Mountain Shadow RV Park



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30<sup>th</sup> In a few miles we'll be pulling off the road to experience Jade City. It's one of the biggest producers of finished Jade in the world. I would like to say that the roads eventually began to look like our superhighways, but no. This is about as good as it will ever get. For this reason, we'd probably not ever do Alaska again. What you see is what you get, this is Jade City. Many here do very well as far as income. I did ask a young girl in the gift shop if she ever got to the big city, she said once, she went to Whitehorse. I felt bad about that but in its own way this is small paradise. I told her she wasn't missing much.



The one thing is for sure, Mountain Shadow does lie ahead, question is; how far.

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## Stewart, BC

### Stewart, BC at Bear River Campground



31<sup>st</sup> Iskut would be another one of those drive, eat sleep and go venues. Our trip today is under 200-miles and we'll be traveling through mountain-views and glacier country, can't wait. Wow! The picture was great but you should have been there with us. A little further down the road and we still have low lying clouds. Above is a turn-out. Just a place

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to get off the road and rest up or spend an evening if needed. Below is, once again, fire weed. It is fully in bloom which is telling us the snow is only a couple of weeks away, or so goes the tale. Glacial rivers are everywhere. We have seen fishermen from time to time so I guess the ash does not affect the fish that much.



No, this is not Bear River, a few miles to go, still just a road workstation. The book was right, glaciers are in our face. These are just so beautiful. To think that the snow trapped in these structures could be thousands of years old in some areas. Every day they melt away and calmly drain into North Country Rivers and streams.

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These falls are hundreds of feet tall. The water to make these falls come from melting glaciers. We've seen pictures of glaciers from fifty years ago all in their great glory and size, not so much these days. Still many insist there's no Environmental changing going on

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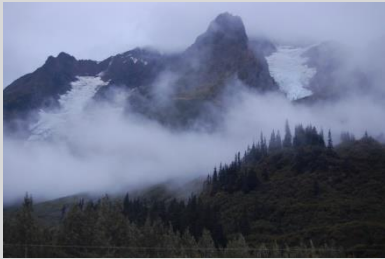
Smithers, BC



2<sup>nd</sup> Little villages, like this one pop up from time to time. They do have electricity but I'm sure many of the inhabitants are living off the grid. We travel to Riverside Municipal RVP. And to Juneau's downtown. We continuously drive in and out of these clouds. Occasionally we do see on-coming traffic and once or twice a day we even get passed, generally by one of our fellow travelers. Throughout these seven weeks the first rule of surviving is to monitor the mechanics of your coach closely. So many of these homes as we travel, require little work. It could be that they do, like

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Carla and I, enjoy each day as it comes and always prepare for surprises.



Once again, more farmlands. Such a short growing season, about three months, how do they do it? Imagine having this view from your porch to enjoy each day...*Awesome!* It would be great to just sit around and contemplate such a pleasant thought, but remember winter is coming and it does get to be forty below in this area. So, we take the pictures and get back into the coach, put it in gear and continue moving on to Prince George, BC.

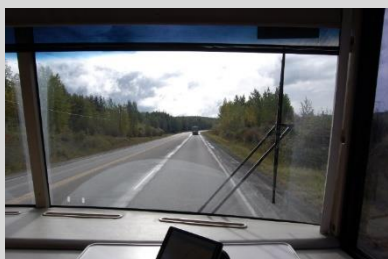
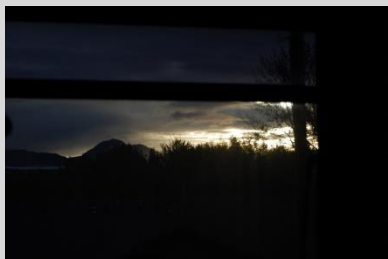
### **Prince George, BC**

Prince George, BC at Hartway RV Park

4<sup>th</sup> We were scheduled to stay only twenty-four hours in

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Smithers, BC. Today, the final leg of this Alaskan Vacation would be today.



We awoke early since we would be parkers on this final leg. Our destination is Prince George, BC some 205 miles from here. The clouds did finally break up, the sun also rose to greet us and the coach was humming on these final miles. Everyone was ready for this episode to end. It was unimaginably exciting and challenging. In no way could visiting Alaska from a cruise ship ever hold a candle to what we experienced.



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We continue to enjoy all that BC has to offer on these final hours of our trip. The roads improve one hundred percent. All of us are tired and looking forward to just remaining in one campground for a couple of days and sleeping late for a change. Finally, we see Prince George.



This is a city not a village or hamlet. If we were spending some extra time here and if we were rested up, the Prince George Curling Club looked very exciting. The coach is encrusted with sand and dust. Once in the states we have an

## PAUL GRENIER

appointment to have some minor repairs completed. I'm not sure if I'll ever get the coach back to its original shine. We will be spending three full days in Prince George and everyone needs it. Tomorrow, the 4<sup>th</sup>, we will enjoy a social hour at 5 pm and a Farrell dinner at 5:30 pm. Just when we all thought we would be sleeping in on the 5<sup>th</sup>, departure day, we're told of a breakfast being sponsored by the leaders of this caravan. Nothing fancy, coffee, and pastries. It was a mixture of happy and sad times. This has been our family for the past seven weeks and after today we will never see many of these folks again. There is a dozen or so I'm certain we'll be crossing paths soon.

### Leaving Prince George- going to Williams Lake.



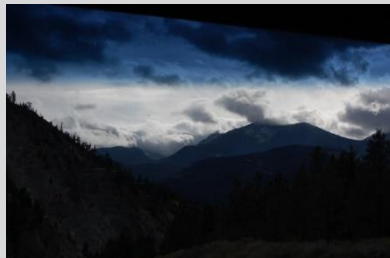
5<sup>th</sup> We're working hard trying to get to the original layer of

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paint. Not sure if the HHR will ever be shiny red again, can only hope. What do you think of these roads? A water-wheel, something you don't see very often. Rain again, what else is new. Williams Lake is just up the road.



Rivers and streams continue to amaze us. Below is a gas station we stopped at on our way up, gosh, how time flies. Turns out that soon this area is to be developed into a first-class ski venue.



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### **What happened to the blog?!**

7<sup>th</sup> We finally find ourselves leaving Alaska as well as the Canadian Provinces and headed south to Washington State. We spent three weeks there enjoying the area and doing nothing. After that we left Washington for Oregon. We were only there a day or two when we received a call that my brother Dennis had had a stroke from a bleeding aneurism. After Carla and the coach was settled in I made plans to fly to Boca Raton, Florida to be with Dennis. My brother Richard, in San Jose, CA, was doing likewise. We both spent four days with him then we both left. Once I got back to Oregon, Carla and I began planning out a trip, cross-country, back to Boca to help Dennis with his rehab. By that Thursday our GPS had a more solid route for us to

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follow and so we were on our way. Eight days and fourteen hundred miles later we arrived in Wildwood, FL in time to experience hurricane Matthew. Our first day in Wildwood we rested, second was preoccupied with the hurricane and we're now making plans to store the coach in Boca for the next twelve months. That's the time the doctors say Dennis will need for a good recovery. You would think I'd be happy to once again live in a very nice condo in Boca, but the Motorhome lifestyle is so addictive. It is our goal that, with a great deal of work on Dennis' part and with His grace, Dennis will someday experience, for himself, the truly unique lifestyle Carla and I enjoy every day.

## PAUL GRENIER

### **It's all about Dennis from now on.**

20<sup>th</sup> It was just five weeks ago Dennis was telling me how excited he was having seen and driven a motorhome he really was interested in. Not that the one he saw was it, due to the condition it was in, but one like it; but that was five weeks ago. Four weeks ago, he was at home and was experiencing a strange sensation. Pain in his arm and the sound of wind coming from his ear. Not knowing for sure he dialed 911 stat and managed to get himself outside within seconds of falling to the ground, he was experiencing a stroke; but that was four weeks ago today. Last night we attended a meeting to instruct caregivers on the neurological struggles our love-ones are challenged with and the types of services available to them if they need them. Today was a red-letter day. The last few days we've been making plans for him with home health care workers. In addition to that we've been cleaning in preparation for an in-house inspection from his case worker and others involved in his rehab. Ambulance service will be needed for him to continue his rehab after he leaves the center on Nov 4<sup>th</sup>, that's still work in progress. Our goal is to keep him at HealthSouth since it is the best facility in South Florida. To our surprise we were told that he could now enjoy liquids without adding thickening agents, awesome! That alone would have made our day but then we were also told that he would be taken off the "puree" formulated meals and could now enjoy finely chopped meals, thank you God! His verbalization is doing

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very well and evidently his swallowing muscles are strong enough for the switch to a slightly more solid food program. A couple of days ago I had asked if salt could be part of his diet, for many reasons; he loves everything with salt on it, food taste better, the sodium will retain fluids and could help when he has to pee and lastly the salt might increase his blood pressure, which currently is low and causing concerns. Tomorrow, Friday, Dennis will visit home for the first time in thirty days. The rehab crew joining him will evaluate the condo and make recommendations that will help Dennis be safe when we come back for good in two weeks. Once we know which bedroom is selected to be the most patient friendly, we will begin refurbishing it to meet his needs. Prayers for Dennis are greatly appreciated.

*( In less than 18-months Dennis did pass away the day after his 74<sup>th</sup>. birthday.)*

*Love you Dennis*

*Brother Paul*

PAUL GRENIER

## OCTOBER 2016

### **New High Speed Server!**

10<sup>th</sup> So many emails and calls asking me what happened to the Blog? In a nutshell it outgrew its server, or something like that. Now we are on a new high-speed server, however, you might not notice the difference. The blog will take a couple of months to bring up to date, but I expect time is something I'll have an abundance of. For the next few months.



## 2016 CHRISTMAS LETTER



As in every Christmas Letter Carla and I hope this letter will find you and your family in good health and spirit. As I sit in front of the television watching the Macy Parade this Thanksgiving Day, I realize just how thankful Carla and I are to Him, once again, on this special day.

Last year, the only time in over a decade of letters, we opted to skip the letter as it was our first Christmas without my Mom. This year our family structure was challenged once again with my brother Dennis suffering a stroke back on September 20 but, once again, *it was only a stroke*. We thank so many of you for your cards, wishes and, most of all, prayers for Dennis. When we got the word I flew in from Oregon and joined my brother Richard, from California, at the Boca Reginal Hospital. On November 4<sup>th</sup> Dennis was finally released to our care and returned home. Our daily responsibilities are eased thanks to the assistance of caregivers, Shirley, Yvonne and Camille providing Dennis his needed personal needs. We try to fill-in wherever needed.

On a lighter side, Carla and I did manage to squeeze in a little traveling. We enjoyed visiting our family-friends in Iowa then travelled west on 90 visiting Rushmore, Devil's Monument and experiencing Seattle for three weeks prior to our seven week jaunt through Canada

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and Alaska. We made so many friends on the Alaska trip, most notably were Sue and Tom Ward. Even now we're still in touch with them. As nice as Dennis' condo is in Boca, life in the coach is still unbeatable. Hopefully, next year, the Christmas Letter will originate from the coach with us and Dennis on the road, I hope.

**Carla, I and Scoots wish everyone  
a Very Merry Christmas &a  
a Safe, Heathy and Happy New Years.**



## THAT'S ALL FOR 2016

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### APRIL 2017:

15<sup>th</sup>. Del-Raton RV Park: We were very lucky to find an RV park within ten miles of Dennis' condo. We officially took back our coach on April 15<sup>th</sup>, Yes, Easter weekend. It was a weekend of mixed feelings.



This is our spot and we'll most likely be here until at least the end of the year or longer. Del-Raton is basically a small family-operated RV Park. In total it looks like they have about seventy RV sites. As a sideline these folks sell and service trailers. The campground has no perks, except for laundry and game room.

# PAUL GRENIER

## MAY 2017

### Celebrating Dennis' Birthday:

4<sup>th</sup>. Well yesterday was Dennis' birthday. We all got together and had a nice celebration. The big gift was a new VCR for the main TV in the house. The previous one could take eternity thinking about getting going. This one, surprisingly had a very simple and fast setup, wish we had it. The other big gift coming in a couple of days would be a transport chair. Not that he hasn't got enough wheelchairs already, this one comes in at only nineteen pounds, great for getting him to his appointments and shopping with Miss Camille.

5<sup>th</sup>. We await Tom and Sue Ward Very good friends we got to know well on our Alaskan Tour.



We've mentioned them before, but this time they're coming way out of their way to spend a few days with us as they

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trek to Tennessee eventually. Nice to see our friends criss-crossing the states in their motorhome. At last, after a month of anticipation, Tom and Sue arrived and met with us at our motorhome in Delray, FL. It was a great night sharing stories and experiences, the good and the not so good workings of our coaches and talk about meeting again tomorrow night.

### **Two Georges Rest. Delray Beach,**



6<sup>th</sup> The Two Georges Restaurant in Delray Beach is right on the intercostal waterway. Beautiful breezes and great food were enjoyed by all. If anyone is ever in driving distance of this great eatery I recommend it highly. We finished the evening with a walk along the docks looking at

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boats only the One-per centers could possibly afford. It wasn't too long before the mosquitoes found us and we called it an evening.

7<sup>th</sup>. Sun. We visited the Ward's at their motorhome. As you can tell from just the size of this coach, it is big. It's a 2017 Tour by Winnebago. Top of the line, and from the picture from the previous page, it's just as pretty on the inside. We enjoyed an awesome dinner with Tom and Sue then watched Sue do dishes. Not necessary in this motorhome since it comes with a dishwasher. Even ours comes with a dishwasher...me! We took a little time to visit this beautiful park, John Prince Park, a Florida State Park. We might even plan to stay there come November of this year. Just checked my phone and we have no pictures of this park. Guess everyone will have to wait until Nov.

20<sup>th</sup>. Sat Nine Lives Not much to say about this great flick except it should be seen by everyone. Yes, it's about a cat. Sounds like a dumb show, but trust me, you will enjoy it.

23<sup>rd</sup>. Tues. Finding Neverland We watched this movie two years ago and my opinion has not changed. This movie, by far in my opinion, is the best movie Johnny Depp has ever starred in.



### **Carla finishes radiation treatments**

24<sup>th</sup>. -This is a six-week regimen, every day except week-ends. She did well. At the end of the course of treatment is the official "Ring of the Bell." We are both very positive about the 5-year outlook. We can only pray that this is all behind us and it's time to get back to our original lives.

25<sup>th</sup>. Thurs Trip to La Mesa. There's always something that needs fixing; definition of a motorhome. We're still trying to have the dash A/C fixed, the by-product damage of a trip to Alaska. Another A/C damaged part, but no A/C person to work on it. Guess we'll have to take another field trip next month.

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Memorial Day and tomorrow will be the end of another month. This is the first month since September on 2016 that I've gotten back to this blog, and it feels good. Began this special day with a call to our extended family in Iowa, Don, and Joyce MacDougall. In our travels we've discovered that almost everyplace we'd decided to travel, mysteriously intersected in Iowa. Our plans are to, hopefully, take some time to ourselves in September and possibly travel North to NY now the construction is completed. It would be nice to do a side trip to Don and Joyce on the way to NY; it might be a stretch. It's been eight months since we've travelled anywhere except to have repairs or improvements done to the coach, we're experiencing travel-withdrawals. We pray each day this will happen. I don't expect to add anything useful the rest of the day and same for the 31<sup>st</sup>, so we'll get together again next month, and hopefully months to follow.

31<sup>st</sup>. This blog has lately evolved into a personal diary as opposed to a travel blog but it will have to continue this



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way until at least September. But getting back to the picture above. This is a group shot the remaining Grenier elders clan. Starting from the right side of the picture my son Michael then Christine and her husband Richard. Left side first is Dennis, myself, and Carla. The only elders here are Rich, Dennis, and myself. For Michael, it might be a "father thing," but I always envision him around eighteen; even at this age he's grown up to be a very impressive adult. Having all three brothers together on a given day is rare for our family; having Michael there as well was a real bonus.

# PAUL GRENIER

## JUNE 2017:



As you can see from the images above the entire facility is paved almost all the sites are pull-through and it is very clean. What you don't see, unless you're lucky enough to be here at the right time is the rail-road tracks that can be found less than one-hundred feet from the back side of the property. We're getting used to the sounds and whistles in the middle to the night.

4<sup>th</sup>. I know, this is out of sequence, but its relevant to the park. I'm bored. Just wanted to note that we're now in site #32 overlooking the back storage/parking-lot of the Delray Hyundai/Genesis Dealership. This is nothing to brag about, but it does give me an opportunity to write, even if it's just a line of two.

18<sup>th</sup>. It's been so long since I've sat down and written a new entry to the Blog. For the last seven months Carla and I

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have been keeping busy tending to my brother and his obligations. At one time or another we might all have the challenge of trying to step into someone else's shoes and do the best we can to expedite the many demands he had to face daily when he was well, but for us we try to handle the ups and downs of his life and let him concentrate on his recovery. Long story short back in September 16<sup>th</sup>. Richard, my brother from San Jose, and I were witness to Dennis just lying in the hospital bed totally motionless. He had lost his ability to control his left arm and left leg. I can't even imagine what was going through his mind. He knew he had a problem, and he was aware that we were there with him in this dilemma, but the shock of his situation must have been mind boggling to him. After nine days in the hospital he was sent to HealthSouth to recuperate in a friendlier environment. HealthSouth did not improve his situation very much so once they felt he was in no more danger of another stroke he was released to Carla and I for home rehab. His physical well-being did not improve much at HealthSouth. At home he would embark on home rehab for six weeks. His diet, since his stroke, consisted mostly of macerated food items which in no way resembled what was being served. By the time we got him his chances for choking and another stroke had been minimized, salt was permitted, and the food presented looked edible. His new life at home would turn out to be quite different from what he was hoping for. He was unable still to sit up on his own, and had to be carried from bed to wheelchair and wheelchair to car.

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Then to make things even worse he had Carla feverishly trying to improve his diet of seventy years and me yapping at him to exercise or else. To make things worse his junk food diet would be a dream. With all this to cope with, medications had to be given all day long. After enduring home rehab for about six weeks and patiently watching Carla and I, mostly Carla, trying to untangle and understand the rules and procedures that had to be followed for Dennis to continue receiving cash benefits to pay for all that he needed, we were fortunate to learn that Boca Regional Hospital ran its own out-patient rehab and Dennis was permitted to participate. Boca Regional was also the hospital he was brought to at the time of his stroke. This happens to be one of the finest facilities in all South Florida.

It's now been seven months and Dennis can sit up on his own even in a regular chair, can stand mostly on his own for a minute or two and is beginning to re-learn how to walk again with considerable help. Guess you could say things are looking up. However, Dennis has always been on his own same as with Carla and me. It was only a matter of time before we realized Dennis needed a little more space and we did, as well, so we've decided to relocate back in our coach. Delray is only a ten-minute ride to Dennis' home so I can check in on him daily and be available to him for his appointments. We appreciate the space as well.

We're staying at the Del-Raton RV Park. This is a great little park just off US 1 in Delray, FL.

***So why do I tell the details of Dennis' trials these last few months; simple!***

I would like everyone reading this to realize just how taxing on everyone a stroke can be especially on the victim. After a discussion with one of Dennis' neurologist he told me that many kinds of strokes are predictable. The best start is diagnosis, through a series of four types of tests and MRI's. These tests are affordable, and, for us, our Medicare is paying for it. The cost of these four procedures is a no-brainer if it can either relieve you of most concerns if they come out negative or make you aware of a potential problem you might be able to avert under a doctor's care.

This is what we had decided to do. The last thing I would wish on anyone is the difficult days my brother has had to endure. Another consideration is the cost of care. Dennis had made an excellent decision about twenty-five years ago with the Disability Insurance he purchased. He has thirteen hours a day of home help care. Believe it or not that comes out to around \$250 dollars a day or about \$8000 a month.

**Devine Mercy Sunday, once again.**

23<sup>rd</sup>. I guess we were asking too much. We were looking for a Sunday Service at 2:30 so we drove about twelve miles to go to a service at that time. Trouble with the location it was

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basically Hispanic. There was enough English to keep us on the right page, but I should have more diligent in checking out a new church. We must treat ourselves occasionally. This steak was just sitting in the Walmart cooler with a bright yellow sticker saying 40% off, outdates next day. Well, that was two months ago and today we thawed it out and gutted it down to the bone...Delicious! What made it even better was the Lambrusco wine that we enjoyed the main course with. To make the day just about perfect was a call from my daughter, Cheryl, returned my call. Always a refreshing call. It's rewarding to see your child and her husband living a very responsible



life, savings are a mainstay in how they live; so very different from the examples I set for her as a child. Now, as a senior, I must reconcile myself to the fact that if I had lived a little more frugally in my youth, finances might be a little easier these days, although I'm not complaining, not much I would change even if I could.

## JULY 2017

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Mom's Passing.**

3<sup>rd</sup>.- Mom wanted so much to hit the One-Hundred-year mark, but 97 was as far as she got, besides three more years might have been too much for Dennis who had been by her side for so many years. Little did we know, back then, that within two-years Dennis, the son that cared for her the most, would be joining her and my dad in the land of Heavenly bliss with no cares or worries.

4<sup>th</sup>. And for the first time, if I recall correctly, we got through the day and night without viewing any fireworks, I'm now sounding like my parents. After all, after seventy years of viewing fireworks there's very little that's new to be viewed. On the 10<sup>th</sup>. we have an appointment with Trail Tires to have the tires on the coach balanced. Hopefully with a few days after that we'll be trucking north to La Mesa to have a new compressor installed which we need for the dash A/C to operate. This is not a fix not vital for us to live comfortably but leaving it broken is asking for trouble in the future. (*Inevitably it would be the never fix item*)

5<sup>th</sup>. Hard to believe we're still here but here we are, the beginning of another month. Our goal is still jacks-up on September 15<sup>th</sup>, hopefully, about 2 months away. Even as full-

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time RVers we still must take care of business, health business. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Carla went in for dental brushing and I followed her on the 5<sup>th</sup>. We both walked away with good marks. My appointments are finished, and I'm good to go for, hopefully, another ten years, we'll see. Carla is finishing up as well. An appointment today and a couple before the 9/15 deadline and she'll be done for the first year, we're very optimistic so we pray to Him for continued good health for both of us.

8<sup>th</sup>. Saturday...Desperate to write something...Tomorrow being Saturday it's visiting Dennis, Mass, pizza and beer. On another note on Monday we take a short field-trip to Trail Tire to have the tires on the coach balanced; this should be relatively inexpensive. Tires for the coach cost around seven-hundred dollars each and are only good for seven years so we must watch over them. Then on Friday it's back to LaMesa to have the compressor installed. Just got through fighting with Ticketmaster, did not win. Tried to create an account and it said I did but when I went back to sign in, it said password or username did not match; I get that a lot these days. Purpose for the Ticketmaster is for our Anniversary coming up next week on the 14<sup>th</sup>; Yes, I remembered, at least I remembered today. We don't usually do anything special, go out to eat and occasionally go to a movie, but this year we're going to attend the musical "Into the Woods." A musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine being performed at Florida Atlantic University,



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which happens to be just down the street from us in Boca Raton, FL. It should be a very nice night. Sunday, weather is like the Bahamas. Today's weather will be like yesterdays, and last weeks for the next 2 months. 85 in the morning going to 92 but feels like 103 degrees, that's all. If LaMesa does not come through with a compressor by Friday, we have an appointment with Ryan to give us some options for satellite TV. Right now, it sounds like the upgrade should cost between 600 and \$2200 depending on what we choose.

10<sup>th</sup>. Today, as usual opened at 78 degrees and topped out at 93 feeling like 105 degrees. Good day for a field trip, and we did. Off to Trail Tire to have the tires balanced. For a change a cheap fix, until the mechanic looked at the problem. No can fix, and it's off to Excel Freight so they can replace a "king-pin", replace shocks, new alignment and two new tires for the front. No idea on the cost, will know more on the 13<sup>th</sup>. when we're scheduled for the fix. We're told that this is not an unusual repair. Later this month LaMesa on the 28<sup>th</sup>. will replace the compressor for the dash-A/C, at least most of that is warrantee work. Carla and I have begun taking walks, not big ones, too hot, but at least some exercise.

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### **Anniversary #27 for us**

14<sup>th</sup>. Imagine that, 27 years, and best of all 27 happy years. It's difficult remembering that almost that long ago we both decided to give up winters in Connecticut and try living in "Paradise." We moved all our belongings and began renting again. We sunk every dime we had, which wasn't much, into a Child Care Center, and had a big mortgage on the center as well as a private loan needed for the down payment; *What were we thinking?* Two Corporations and 27 years later were just about the same as from the beginning. So, few arguments, not that we haven't ever disagreed, no trust issues but most of all no jealousies. In a past life I could not imagine this being everyday living; LIFE is good. 27 is an odd number of years, unlike 25 or, let's say 50, which we'll never experience; more like a dinner and movie anniversary night. It would be a little more interesting than that. For the past four days I've been down with some type of gastro problem, not eating, loss some weight and not that anxious to go out for the evening. We will go out to dinner possibly next week, if I ever get better, but last night was very entertaining. Please go to the blog for the 14<sup>th</sup>. for a little more into on the evening.

## Into The Woods

14<sup>th</sup>. This play was being presented at Studio-1 at FAU. We both decided it would be a break from the routine. We arrived on the FAU grounds in plenty of time and signs directed up to the parking garage just down the campus road from Studio 1. As we approached the entrance to the garage, and not sure how to get to the theater, we asked a "professor looking" young man how to find Studio-1. He was very knowledgeable and introduced himself as Bruce Linser, Director of the Production. The play was more than anyone could ask for; entertaining, exciting, and beautifully performed. I would love to input a dozen pictures on the production but "no pictures allowed." Do not pass up the opportunity to view this production. Months ago, Dennis decided there was little I could do to help him along. But in our defense, back in September, Dennis was lying in a bed motionless. I have no doubt he was possibly in shock, not really knowing what had happened and only praying that the *powers in charge* of his life would be there for him and help bring him back to the real world. Dennis has overseen his life now for a couple of months and doing well. He and his day caregiver, Keisha, watch his schedule daily so as not to miss any appointments. He's probably Boston Market's best customer. The refrigerator is always full as well as the junk food drawer, but things are as he wants them to be

.

PAUL GRENIER

**AUGUST 2017**

**Our site at DelRaton RV Park.**



It's just a 2.5-acre parking lot but it's location has served us well.

2<sup>nd</sup>. Today, like most of the previous 120-days is just plain hot. Tomorrow will be a special day. We join the masses that possess satellite TV. We're having a local company, 1st Choice, do the installation. We've decided on Dish as the provider and will be signing up for the "News" package. The cost per month should be acceptable and be in budget. So, in two days we'll be having morning coffee with Morning Joe.

12<sup>th</sup>. The picture above is not a bad shot of our site. If I had a drone with a camera and flew it above the DelRaton

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RV property, the picture would look more like a very small Walmart parking lot. But time marches on. About one month from today Carla will be on her way to pick up her sister Mary Ann and drive her back from Derby, VT. Not sure if she'll not want to go back to Vermont when she feels both the heat and humidity. Her days up there begin in the low sixties and go up to the seventies, I could handle that for a couple of weeks. On another front my brother Richard has sold his properties in San Jose and can now concentrate on retirement. His first move was to his previous rental property in Naples. This property was far too nice to rent out. He and wife Christine are blissfully emptying boxes and arranging furniture in their Naples home. Naples is awesome but currently he plans to remain there for a while and possibly move again. I think he'll find Naples-like a very nice town to live in. For now, Carla and I will continue marking time, checking in on Dennis and enduring the heat and humidity until September 20th.

20<sup>th</sup>. It is totally hard to believe that so many months have come to pass. Eleven months ago Dennis had his stroke and his life would be changed forever. Ours also would deviate from our norm to try to assist him in whatever way we could. Next month, at this time we will be on the road again. I have just updated our travel schedule beginning on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September. The last time we travelled seriously was Sept 2016, the "Cruiser is longing to be in motion again.

25<sup>th</sup> I know, I sound like a kid waiting for Christmas, but it does feel like that. At this point we're twenty-four days and counting 'untill we're on the road again. Dennis is very well

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organized and is accepting the fact that we're leaving pretty well. Our new Dish Satellite television system is doing very well also. We find ourselves staying up later to see the Rachel Maddos show, good bye the 9:15 bedtime and getting up around 8 am to catch a little Morning Joe. Do miss the sleeping late. Right now, it's pouring outside and as everyone knows, satellite TV is non-existing with this condition, but we're good. Just finished doing a little shopping before the rain started and I'm happily typing here with my Pepsi and pretzels. I have little to add after this. The sound of the rain on the roof is deafening, but, at the same time, it's a comforting sound, much like a fire in the fireplace on a snowy, chilly day. Guess I'll leave you and go finish my Sudoku. Just an afterthought before I go, hurricane Harvey will be baring down on Corpus Christie this afternoon and later this evening. Cannot understand why so many feel that staying at home in their small home and some in travel trailers thinking they are going to wait out the storm at home, *fools!* Even in a coach, as heavy as ours, would have left two days ago.

## SEPTEMBER 2017

### September- Hurricane Harvey

1<sup>st</sup> Well, a brand-new month. First we have Hurricane Harvey and, of course, Hurricane Irma has her sights set for Florida. We're still here in DelRaton RV Park, or the parking lot. Weather station has one bar from Irma going to Miami then North through the state of Florida. All the other twelve bars are veering North going up the East coast of Florida; sounds good enough for me. The one going through the state is the European projection, and it's much more reliable than the US version. *We'll keep an eye on it.* It's Saturday and we're still watching the weather station. Now, just to add a little confusion both the US and European projections are united in their projected path through Florida. We have a plan B; leave Delray, FL, and head North to Wildwood, FL, 250 miles North of here. We even have a plan C, if needed, which would be to go North to Georgia. All these alternate plans are good and come with a fee stays. We plan on leaving on Thursday to head North, unless Irma goes astray and does not present a danger to us. It's now Sunday and we're still waiting and still watching and getting a little nervous. Asked Dennis today when he visited us at the site, if he would want to come with us. It would have been a little challenging but doable, but he felt comfortable staying in Boca. It turns out that the caregiver on duty last with Dennis, as the storm hits, is relegated to stay with him until the hurricane subsides especially if he has to go to a shelter. He was good with the situation.

# PAUL GRENIER

## Three Flags Wildwood, FL



4<sup>th</sup>. Three Flags Wildwood, FL This is it, Irma is pushing it. I couldn't sleep this morning and so, for lack of company, tossed around enough that Carla could not sleep either. Here we both are and 6:15 am; we never get up that early on our own. Thanks to the luxury of our satellite system, we're totally connected. We turn on the Weather Station. Our worst fears materialize, now four projection bars are borrowing through Florida. We get serious. Carla has a short grocery list, including another 3 gallons of water and fruit. Once the sun comes up she calls the Wildwood campground asking if they would have room for us and if



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we could come in four days early, no problem; love Thousand Trails! We're off to Walmart to shop then down to the office to give notice. As we walked back to our site we must have had dialogs with at least four individuals before we arrived back to the coach; that's more talking than we've had since we got here, whatever! By 10:30 it was jacks up and away we were. We treated ourselves to a short break at a rest stop and had a quick bite to eat then a gas stop in Fort Pierce, FL followed by another short break on the Turnpike at Canoe Creek then off to finish the trek. We arrived in Wildwood around 3:30 and we're set up by 4 pm. An actual Campground with grass and trees. This is not a current picture, but it is the campground, heavenly! When we got here the office had the weather channel on, now there are eight bars nailing Florida, so I'm please we decided to take off. By Thursday, according to the authorities, Irma will be in Florida; are we good or what! The bad news is that if the storm looks serious enough so the campground will be closed, all must leave and go to a shelter. We'll have to wait for the next installment to see what happens next. Oh, the campground here is called "Three Flags."



## Cancer for Paul

As we travelled up to Unadilla, we got a phone call from my endoscopy doctor; in short, he said the results from the test indicate I had cancer! Not what I wanted to hear. Our plans for the beginning of October were to attend a rally in W. VA. The rally was relaxing and very interesting, but my mind was far from the rally. From W. VA we travelled south back to Wildwood, FL at the Three-Flags, once again. It's a very comfortable campground and only a seventy-five-minute ride to my doctors in Tampa. After an exhaustive litany of pre-op tests, I checked into the Florida Hospital on October 31<sup>st</sup> for a full Whipple operation. After the nine-hour operation I was awoken and told the team felt good about the procedure. Later that week Carla brought me back home.

Our new-found friend, the Weather Channel, informed us that Irma would strike the Keys late Wed. or early Thursday, with the strength of a Cat 5 storm. Wildwood has told us there are shelters but none locally that will accept animal. Even Wildwood is anticipating winds of up to 150 MPH and very strong Cat 5. With just a little discussion we decided to take another look at plan C. This would involve a 250+ mile trip going even further North and settling finally in Unadilla, GA. The campground there is Southern Trails. Right now, I'm being told the Cat 5 winds are at 185 MPH, probably the strongest winds ever registered. I even told my Tropic Tenants to evacuate immediately if told to do so. We've stayed here before, about two years ago, and it hasn't changed an iota. It's basically a piece of pasture

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property, but it comes at ten dollars a night electric and septic, life is good.

**6<sup>th</sup>** Wednesday. Yes, we're still watching the weather. Awoke this morning to 78 degrees. AC didn't go on once last night; awesome! Seems Irma, as of late, might travel the east coast of Florida, but with the same amount of velocity. We do not regret our decisions. Unadilla, GA is way out but it's safer than being in Florida. For those RVers with great retirement and 401K plans risking their coach to possible disaster might be acceptable; after all they would just go out and buy another RV. Carla and I are not that well off. The Suncruiser must be considered our last home; a very nice home if I might add.

**Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>** Today is Michael's, birthday. We don't get over to the east coast, Boston, that often. I did call and had a great talk. Only wish I could reset the clock such that we could have had conversations like the one we had now but back then. Father son relationships are difficult with some families. Being the older of the two of us from way back, I must take responsibility for this. I'm so envious of the many fathers we've gotten to know and the close relationships they'd always had with their sons; there have been exceptions, however. I think I've changed a lot over the years, and only wish he'd had a chance to know the new me and not had to live with the older crappier version, but that's life! Irma is not expected to have any effects on Georgia until Monday or Tuesday of next week, will let you know what happens then. Now off to amend out Travel Schedule for Sept.

## PAUL GRENIER

8<sup>th</sup>. Southern RV Campground, Umatilla, GA. This is our second day at Southern and what a experience. It's not that the RV Park is that exceptional, it's not, it's the fact that it's a campground, not a parking lot. The folks next to us travel in a Beaver RV. It's a 42-foot diesel which looks very much like ours except much nicer. They have a home site in West Palm Beach, FL.



We've modified our plans and headed back to Wildwood. Wildwood is only seventy miles from Tampa where all the talent exists. If we should have a need to stay longer Thousand Trails has a campground in Largo, FL where we, hopefully, can stay long term. At the time this picture was taken the park was very empty, that has changed quite a bit as those that fled Florida because of Irma are returning. The park was closed during the storm and has debris everywhere, but no serious damage and no RVs were lost to Irma.

28<sup>th</sup>. It's been two weeks since my last blog entry. My own medical crisis seems not that critical but am still working with my Tampa Doctors for at least the next couple of

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weeks. Carla will have some follow-up appointments through February so, as you can see from our proposed travel schedule, we're still hovering around Florida. We have been making changes however. Last Saturday Carla was inspired to rebuild our poorly installed Dish Satellite system. We decided on Winegard hardware. On the third phone call to Winegard, last Saturday morning, we got a guy who asked us in detail how our system was put together, then told us, step by step how to correct the problems. Turns out the power unit and Wally must be within twenty-five feet of the Winegard aerial. So, we tore what we had apart and reconnected it properly, we hoped. The last step was the expensive one. The system, for a motor coach, needed an HDMI cable to go from the power unit in the front of the coach way to the back of the coach and come forward inside the rear slide and plugged into the TV. To confirm this would work and worthy of the expense we bought a 25-foot HDMI cable and strung it over cabinets, doors and windows and connected it to the TV. Within a minute the little R2D2 Winegard aerial came to life once again after being dormant for over two weeks; *Awesome!* Last Tuesday we took the coach to Alliance, an RV dealership we have a great amount of faith in and had them do the HDMI cable install. So now we have Morning Joe in the morning and Rachel Maddow in the evening; a little less sleep but more entertainment.

Yesterday, the 27<sup>th</sup>., after shopping and doing a wash we decided to take another look at our travel schedule. It has radically changed from a couple of months ago. We will be jumping around a little in Florida, not because we can't sit still, but in order for us to remain in Florida without paying

## PAUL GRENIER

camping fees. December thru Feb. It is truly hard to believe that it has been over one year since we've travelled to a destination to do more than make repairs or improvements. In hindsight it's gone by faster than I thought it would, but I did not share the same feelings last January. Now to Dennis.

Dennis has been on his own, with the help of round the clock caregivers since July. He's been making his own decisions, buying what he wants to eat and going out whenever he wants, once again, with the help of caregivers. He's always been totally in charge of his own life, and he's done quite well; this stroke was not in the cards. He's worked hard with PT and OT and at this point it's up to him how much further progress he wants to achieve, our being around does not mean very much. We talk every day up to three times a day some days. I watch over his major expenses and checks from his insurances while he takes care of everything else.

### **FMCA Rally**

29<sup>th</sup> Our day today began just after seven am, not that we usually get up that early, but there was some excitement in the air. By 9 am we had planned to set off on our three-day venture to West Virginia for an FMCA Rally in that state, and we had jacks-up and off at exactly 9 am. Our plan is to travel I-75 N to 10 E and merge into I-95 N in the end. GPS offered up a short cut going 301 E off 75. It was a slightly slower road but newly paved and much more interesting to travel than 75 for the next 50 miles. Next highway

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was to take the 295N and circumvent Jacksonville, well I missed it, and we went directly to I-95 N which could have been much busier. Our goal for today was Poorly, SC, but we got there just to early, so we continue to drive to Wal-terboro, SC, a town one-hundred miles further north.

We've driven and stayed in previously, I think. We're over-nighting at the local Cracker Barrel, enjoyed a great dinner and even purchased a Christmas gift or two. Current temp. is 72 and very little humidity; AC is off for the first time in twelve months, only using the fans...Awesome! I would have taken a picture or two but they all look the same!

30<sup>th</sup>. It is truly hard to believe that it has been over one year since we've actually travelled to a destination to do more than make repairs or improvements. In hindsight it's gone by faster than I thought it would, but I did not share the same feelings last January. Now to Dennis.

## OCTOBER 2017

3<sup>rd</sup>. Our trip to West Virginia took a total of four days; the first being over 300 miles and the other three were shorter. We arrived today after traveling only 75 miles from Virginia and were all set up by noon. Today at the rally is a meet and greet day with nothing planned. Wednesday has a few more activities not to mention an ice cream social in early evening. today we enjoyed two or three walks around the fairgrounds finding several folks to talk to, even our next-door neighbor. We are experiencing cooler temperatures. Sunday morning came in at 37 degrees and yesterday and this morning around 46 degrees. Daytime temperatures have been delightful, mid-seventies.

4<sup>th</sup>. Wed. Everybody slept well last night. Our traveling days have ended, at least until Sunday. Nothing on schedule for today until 3 pm, a "First-Time Attendees" meeting. This would be our first FMCA Rally. It was extremely worthwhile. FMCA is totally a Non-Profit. From the volunteers all the way up to the top, President, are non-paid positions...Awesome! Our Non-Profit status is also based on educating all its members, more on this tomorrow. At 6:30 this evening we will enjoy an Ice-cream social to be followed by a 20-minute video on the history of the EAMA, the Eastern Area Motorhome Association. This is the FMCA local affiliate for this area. The movie was so educational and really sealed the deal for me to join at least one local association.

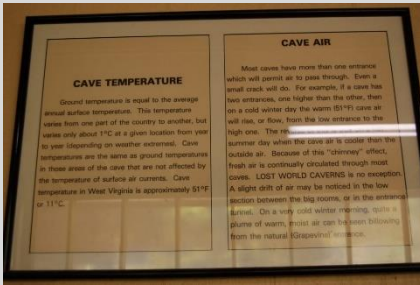


## The Lost World Caverns



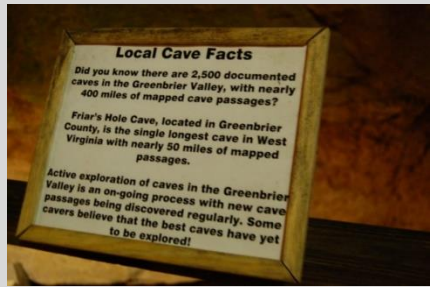
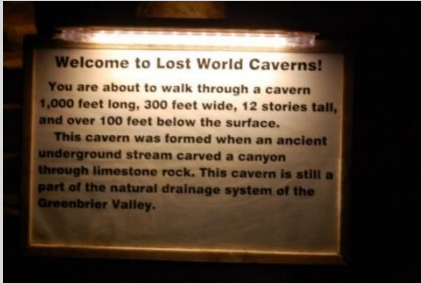
4<sup>th</sup> I know, the date above says one thing but this post is being written on Dec. 30th. A great deal has happened in the last three months, with both me and Carla. When your life and future is full of unknowns it's difficult to fall back into the comfort chairs of the past and write about happy days. I've now finished my first full month of chemo and begin radiation in mid-January, I believe. With that, having been stated, let me tell you about the Lost World Caverns. The Caverns are in Lewisburg, W. Virginia. It is here that we attended the FMCA Rally. We were told about the Caverns our first day here and decided to act on the information while the weather was good and I was feeling well also. The off-road that took us to the facility that housed was right out of the 1800's. Dirt Road all the way with cow pastures on either side of the road. Not to mention some of the most expensive looking mansions I'd ever seen. Each one of this expensive home, I have no doubt, were linked to the hundreds of acres of pasture lands surrounding these buildings; but let's get back to the Caverns.

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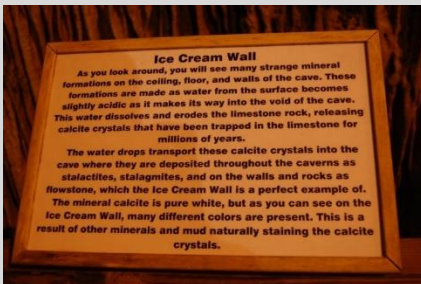


For the sake of readability, I will be leaving information placards in bigger viewing size. I would like to paraphrase the placards and try to pass myself off as "all-knowing" but those that know me would say all-knowing is a real stretch. Upon entering this building you'll be exposed to so much information and artifacts. Items that have been discovered in this cavern such as skeletons, remnants from earlier explorers and most of all the variety of stones and crystals from below. We've seen many caverns and caves but this was the first one that was lighted sufficiently to take good pictures. I have no idea if this will ever happen again so this blog will be more of a picture-blog, and I'll provide a little text from time to time. The way in, for just two people was very dramatic, but by the end of our experience we had a group of more than forty students and guardians of high-school age closing in the ranks behind us.

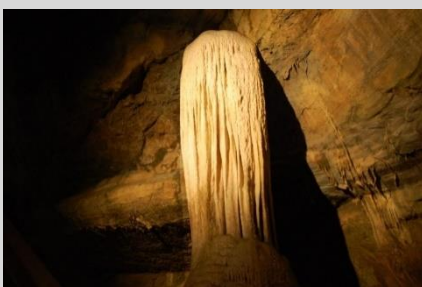
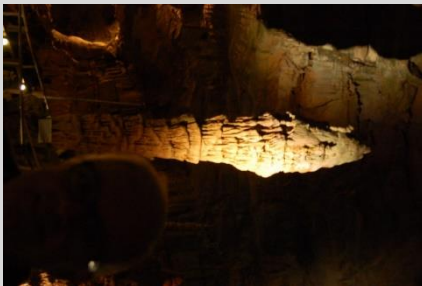
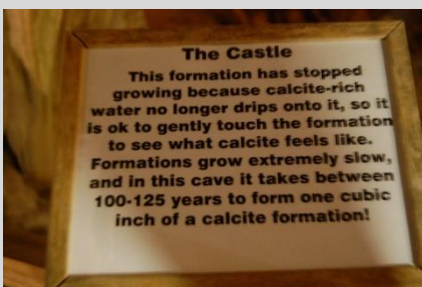
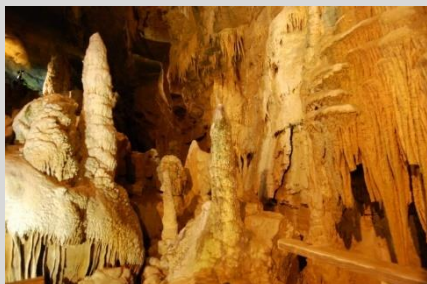
# RV-n AMERICA 2016-2017



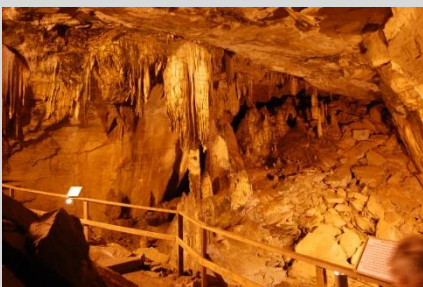
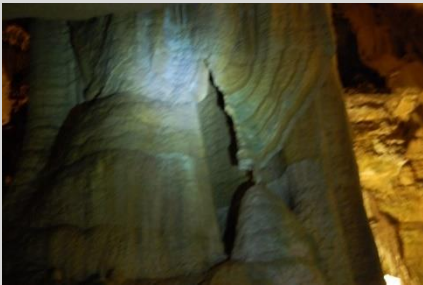
It may seem strange that Carla, most times, is in the lead. It's just the way it is, I follow her in Walmart as well.



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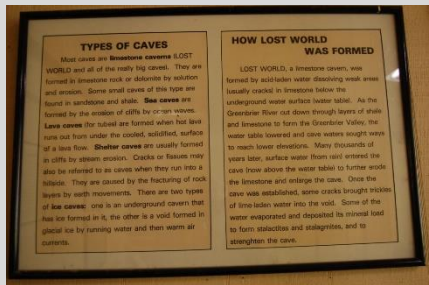
## PAUL GRENIER



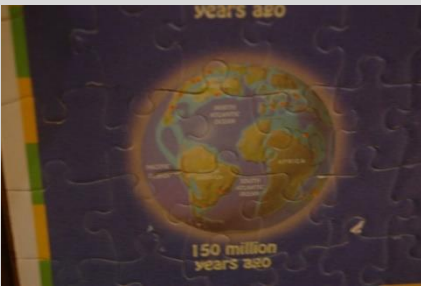
I'm giving up. I'll try to come back in a few days and add a bit more text to the photos, but heck, it's a cavern, and doesn't a picture tell a thousand words. Enjoy the photos that follow and remember there were about one-hundred pics that did not make the cut.



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## FMCA Perry, GA Rally

5<sup>th</sup> Today is a little more involved. At 11 am we are going to attend FMCA University. This will be available to all members by Perry, GA Rally. It will fulfill the non-profit mandate of educational options. FMCA will be taking all tis



## RV-n AMERICA 2016-2017

publications and will make articles in the magazines and group them into six or more categories. More categories were recommended in the question-and-answer session after the presentation. I am looking forward to this program. After this we enjoyed a hotdog/ hamburger lunch. We both needed haircuts and the HHR needed a bath as well; we both feel better after the cuts. By 7:30 this evening we got to enjoy a John Denver tribute.

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## DECEMBER 2017

As in every Christmas Letter Carla and I hope this will find you and your family in good health and spirit. 2017 has been our most difficult year. Dennis, as you might remember, had a stroke in September of 2016. Carla and I did all we could to help bring Dennis back as much as possible. By July of 2017 we realized that Dennis needed his independence as well. We moved back into the coach and relocated just ten miles from him in Delray Beach, FL. We were close enough but not in his way.

### Hurricane Irma

To be safe we opt to pick up and go north to Three-Flags Thousand Trails RV Park in FL. We were there just one day and the storm trackers had her coming right at us, so we move again, going even further north to Unadilla, GA, and there we stayed. We did get pushed around but we came through it unscathed.

## DECEMBER 2017

5<sup>th</sup> I begin six-months of chemo and radiation. All we can do now is hope and pray for the future. It was not an easy year, but as we look back in retrospect, we're both thankful to Him for our outcomes. For almost thirty years we've lived a very happy – healthy life; Awesome!

*Carla, I and Scoots wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas & Safe, Healthy and Happy New Year*

## RV-n AMERICA 2016-2017

Today is the 26<sup>th</sup>., but I would like to record the events of the 25<sup>th</sup> for my own purpose, should my mental faculties begin to fray even more than they have already. I will begin by listing my only disappointment for the day. It has been some time since Dennis and I have visited. With the Doctors Okay for a visit on the 24<sup>th</sup>. I was very anxious. Dennis chose not to permit the visit, but he told me today that, nonetheless, he had a great Christmas. I don't know where to go from here, possibly nowhere!

We broke the rule last night and attended the 6 pm Christmas vigil mass. We found a totally unique location in the church several feet away from the attending crowd; the church was filled; Fr. John was on schedule for the 8 pm mass but showed up at our mass time instead.

He's been a great consolation to me from the beginning of the cancer ordeal. With so many activities I had taken for granted and now I'm told to avoid groups of any size and exert yourself minimally. What's left is quiet contemplation, and for a person like me it's like purgatory. No matter what we topped the day of with presents, a steak dinner to die for, a bag of jumbo shrimp and did not go to bed before we viewed Polar Express once again. Last night was It's a Wonderful Life. On the other hand, Carla and I also had a great Christmas. Since this is the 25<sup>th</sup>. and also a personal blog, I seek permission to take liberty in sharing our Christmas morning with all who are interested,

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We awoke Christmas morning to see a couple of cranes wandering in the vicinity of the coach. Getting mail to us in a timely manner is a challenge, but many made it happen, thank you Scoots enjoyed having Muff and Scruff around the last three weeks to play with and occasionally knocking them to the floor. Not quite the Christmas of the past, since we have all the "Stuff" we really need. But it doesn't mean we can't try to sneak in an item or two, on Christmas.



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Top: This year we did two or three "as seen on TV items" this and the one below are the items. Above is a baking tin that will be placed in a crock pot and this will act as an oven, and it worked well. Within a day Carla was baking bread and it came out tasting really good. Below is the "Red Copper" cooker. We've used this at least three times and all came out excellently. A steak, chicken and hash browns. Well worth the \$29.99 we paid for it. It cleans up well and easily for the dish-washer, yours truly. Scoots receive quite a few gifts including this walking harness. She'll, most likely rarely use it. She is definitely not a country cat. Residing on her lazy-boy by the fireplace is as close to country as she likes. Below is a gift Carla had previously, but it had an accident. Not a travel accident, it was dropped in the sink. Thankfully I was able to replace it.



Clothes we don't always need but you can't wear the same

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thing all the time. A gift her niece, Amy, gave Carla. Actually we both loved the tin so much it could have been delivered empty, but a gift card was also inside.



Scots still looking to be the center of attention. No matter how many times I tell her not to play with plastic, she never listens. Like we really needed this, a knife sharpener. Carla was nice enough to look really pleased and surprised. In other words it was a desperation gift, but our knives were never that sharp. Even I got my fair share of gifts. A bunch of t-shirts, the good ones, to hopefully replace the ones I'm wearing out. Once a t-shirt starts to fray a bit, it just feels so comfy.

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When we took Scoots home from the SPCA the staff gave her a "Mousy". Every night she would spend about fifteen minutes talking and playing with her Mousy. Sometime in the last year or so Mousy ran away from home. We've look high and low trying to find her hiding place, if that were the case to no avail. So for quite a while Scoots, whether she said so or not, has longed for a replacement member of her family. Santa was good to her and gave her exactly what she needed. She has adopted little Grey Mousy with open paws. She has resumed her talking in the evening and chasing her up and down the coach till eleven until both are so hungry they feel they have to come get me out of bed for their treats or they just go to sleep. Our big gifts. I received a Ryobi 1600 pressure cleaner. I witnessed a cleaning crew using this in the past and was impressed on how good a job it did. At 1600 psi, at least it won't rip the paint of the sides of the coach as well. Isn't she a sweetheart. You would think I'd bought her a new Lexus to see the expression on her face, it was only a DVD; Lady Hawk. Most guys would have spent a heck of a lot more money for the same reaction, not bad for \$19.99.

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Bought Carla a pool sticks a while ago and have been hoping for one ever since, until today; finally! Not as big a mess as when we lived in a stick and mortar home, but none the less, it's a mess. Scoots is always the first to offer to help!



## CHRISTMAS 2017



As in every Christmas Letter Carla and I hope this will find you and your family in good health and spirit. 2017 has been our most difficult year. Dennis, as you might remember, had a stroke in September of '16. Carla and I did all we could to help bring Dennis back as much as possible. By July of '17 we realized that Dennis needed his independence as well. We moved back into the coach and relocated just ten miles from him in Delray Beach, FL. We were close enough but not in his way. What we did not expect was to have Carla diagnosed with breast cancer. Her salvation from this new challenge was that we were just minutes from one of Florida's best Cancer Treatment Centers, the Boca Raton Regional Hospital. The staff at the hospital almost immediately took her in as a patient, proposed a treatment plan and began treating her within days. The plan included a right breast mastectomy followed by six weeks of radiation therapy. She bit the bullet and followed through on the plan proposed and presently her doctors are happy to report that, for now, she is a cancer survivor.

By now it's September and yes we are excited. Dennis is doing quite well and Carla is back on her feet again with most of her doctor appointments behind her, and then comes Irma. Still over a week away from us her path continues to come much too close to us for com-

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fort. To be safe we opt to pick up and go north to Three-Flags Thousand Trails RV Park in FL. We were there just one day and the storm trackers had her coming right at us, so we move again, going even further north to Unadilla, GA, and there we stayed. We did get pushed around but we came through it unscathed. However! As we travelled up to Unadilla we got a phone call from my endoscopy doctor; in short he said the results from the test indicate I had cancer! Not what I wanted to hear. Our plans for the beginning of October were to attend a rally in W. VA. The rally was relaxing and very interesting, but my mind was far from the rally. From W. VA we travelled south back to Wildwood, FL at the Three-Flags, once again. It's a very comfortable campground and only a seventy-five minute ride to my doctors in Tampa. After an exhaustive litany of pre-op tests I checked into Florida Hospital on October 31<sup>st</sup> for a full Whipple operation. After the nine-hour operation I was awoken and told the team felt good about the procedure. Later that week Carla brought me back home. Tomorrow, December 5<sup>th</sup> I begin six-months of chemo and radiation. All we can do now is hope and pray for the future. It was not an easy year, but as we look back in retrospect, we're both thankful to Him for our outcomes. For almost thirty years we've lived a very happy - healthy life; Awesome!

Wishing all a Very Merry Christmas

and Happy New Year

## AFTERWORD

First, I would first like to thank you, for purchasing this, my first publication, and secondly for sticking it out to the final pages of this transcript.

It was never my intention, at any time in my life, to ever attempt to write anything of this magnitude. As I have mentioned in the very beginning, our decision to embark on this awesome and ever satisfying lifestyle had nothing to do with writing a book. Our initial reason was to finally experience all we could in the years we have left. So many little stories had occurred in the last eighteen months but they've slipped from memory, unfortunately. Without a doubt many of them would have added a little more levity to this text if I could only remember a few of them. In anticipation of another RV-n-AMERICA I have been much more diligent in recording many more of the details of our travels. So many little mishaps that all RVers come face to face with on a daily basis and resolve them all eventually, will now have a home in print next year. Looking back on many of them, not all though, I realize that it was just Him reminding me that this carefree lifestyle is not meant to be a free ride.

Carla and I, like many of you, had finally reached a stage in our lives where we felt we might be able to entertain retirement. This could have happened a few years earlier if it hadn't been for the Great Recession. There is just so much to see in this great country, both big and small, yet we have seen so little of it.

A great deal of my free time, which is the only kind of time I have lately, the last four months, has been devoted to this manuscript and being more diligent in documenting our current travels, and how

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have we travelled this year. We hit the road this year in April after diligently waiting for tornados and severe weather in the mid-west to subside. Our patience paid off in spades. Our travels as of this writing, will exceed five-thousand miles this year as we began our trek in Florida and travelled to several venues in Florida, Yellowstone Park, Boeing, and so many more and then back home again. We, once again climbed to new heights and at times found ourselves more than three-hundred feet underground, exploring caves and caverns for a change. In many of these underground worlds we walked for miles, sometimes in spaces as big as a basketball court but, other times however, the spaces were so limited that even walking upright was difficult with very few inches to navigate the narrows of these worlds. We, however, did not spend all our time underground

For now, it's time for me to close by thanking you again for allowing me to share with you so many of our experiences this year and previous years, some of the venues coming up next year, but not all, as well as the acquisition of our new "home."

God Bless and have safe travels every day. P. J.

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## THE AUTHOR



I, like many my age, graduated high school and soon after graduated college and got married. Within a couple of years I was blessed to have a beautiful family , son and daughter. However, partially my fault I failed parenting and should have tended more closely to the daily needs of my family more attentively. I pray regularly to Him and hope my kids, might forgive my fatherly failures someday.

I trudged along in this Pharmacy profession for 25-years and, in the eighties, I even had my own pharmacy. My soul however, way down deep, had a yearning to spend less time indoors and more time outdoors. By the time I turned fifty I knew a change was needed, especially after enduring one of Connecticut's worst winters on record.

So, at age 50, Carla, my wife, and I went in search of a warmer climate and hoping to find a business opportunity before we ran out of money, and starved to death. As fate would have it, He guided us faithfully and we eventually purchased our first Child Care Center in center in Greenacres, FL then a second in Titusville, FL. I also began a second career as a Commercial Realtor, brokering what else but, child care centers, of course. We did okay, but as my Broker would attest to, I did not set the world on fire, but with excellent commissions we kept our heads above water.

Within a few years the novelty of getting up early, wiping noses and lacing shoes was wearing thin and Carla was opting for retirement. I and Real Estate were getting along well until 2008, you remember; the Great Recession. We were heavily invested, at that time, in, what else of course, real estate, especially one very expensive log cabin in Maggie Valley, NC.

With many prayers to Him, He got us through that period in our lives decently. But even I, who could not fathom the possibility of retirement, was getting a little jealous of all the free time Carla was enjoying. This next phase of our lives would have to be our last and best, because of our age. We intended to free ourselves of the shackles of home ownership and job responsibilities by enjoying, at least, for a few years, the RV lifestyle. After almost ten-years of traveling I now, find myself, feverishly typing, and fully retired, writing about our travels if James Patterson probably started out this way as well, many years ago.

Moral here is that HE hears all our prayers.

Paul

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## **OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

Miracles of St Jude, (eBook and Softcover)

RV-n America 2014, (eBook and Softcover)

RV-n America 2015 (eBook and Softcover)

RV-n America 2016 / 2017 (eBook and Softcover)

RV-n America 2018 (eBook and Softcover)

RV-n America 2019 (eBook and Softcover)

RV-n America 2020 / 2021 (eBook)

All publications are Amazon/Kindle Books  
and reasonably priced.

**All royalties go to benefit St. Jude Hospital**

# RV-n AMERICA 2016-2017