

## **Alaska Bound!!**

**Subject: NEXT Stop ALASKA!**

**Date: Mon, 05 Jul 1999 22:54:01**

Next stop Alaska! Well not really. Connecticut first, then Pennsylvania, ...

We had a great time visiting my brother for the 4th of July. It was a great party. We went to the Chelmsford parade on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. There were fire trucks from all around the state. What we noticed was they were all RED not one was our traditional yellow. Lots of antique cars, including corvettes, cameros, model As and Ts, Marching Bands, and local politicians and congress people. John made lots of interesting comments "that one lost nannygate", " that one believed in term limits until he came up against the limit". When we got home after the parade at 12:00 it was reading 100F on the thermometer, AND HUMID.

We had a great time with people at the party, and visiting with my brother and his kids and their extended family is always fun.

We are off to Connecticut tomorrow to visit with a friend working in Connecticut and plan to visit the Mark Twain house in Hartford. I have been looking for "Following the Equator" for several months now so that might be the place to look. Jimmy Buffett lists it as one of the books to take to a desert island. Sounds like a good recommendation to me.

**Subject: In the Penn (Pennsylvania that is).**

**Date: Sun, 11 Jul 1999 22:01:19**

We had dinner with Andrew and he is thinking about joining us when we get to the BC wine country. He is done his contract in Connecticut in September in time to join us in the BC wine country.

We drove from Mass to Conn via a number of non-interstate roads. We passed through a number of little towns. Boy can those little signs that give you the time and temperature be depressing. The low 90s were not too bad, the high 90s were hot but when they started to show the 100s it was no fun anymore. HIGH HUMIDITY too. Bonnie and I like the heat but around the 100s we are starting to think maybe we should get the AC fixed, something CRC was supposed to make sure worked and didn't.

After dinner we had coffee at the campground (Black Rock State Park) about 20 west of Hartford and the closest campground (public or private) to Hartford. Andrew works on the East Side of Hartford so it was a long drive to come see us. We appreciated it THANKS ANDREW. If you ever get the idea you would like to go to a state park in Penn don't expect to see any road signs to help. We took a couple of passes to find it. Black Rock is a nice park so here are the directions!! Route 8 North exit 38 left under the highway (to 6W) and start looking for LITTLE brown signs.

We didn't get to Mark Twain house. We managed to hit the AREA we never did see the house at about 2pm. If you have ever seen a pack of ants trying to move a bumble bee you have a good idea of how we felt moving in the city traffic. At one point we had a choice of I84 out of town or turning around and trying another pass. I84 looked awful good. Especially when one of those cute little signs said 101F. That night a cold front was expected to come in and it did. OK people in the weather class what

happens when you have a humid 100 degree air mass lifted on a cold front?

Right THUNDERSTORMS!!! We had a dousy the whole sky lit up and it danced for quite a while. We heard air raid sirens and wondered what they were for (we had our suspicions, which were right). You guessed it tornado warnings. The park wardens did a pass through but there wasn't much they could do. We figured we were safe we were in a campground not a trailer park. Either you were safe or history so I went to bed. We had a couple more waves of storms come through during the night one actually woke me up but Bonnie was restless because of the heat and couldn't sleep. After the front past it was actually cool enough that we got under the covers on the bed. First time in over a week.

We dropped onto I84 again this morning. It took us through beautiful country and also took us from Conn across the neck of NY well north of Yonkers and into the top corner of Penn. We immediately dropped onto Route 209 and along the coast of the Delaware River in the Poconos. The ditches along the edge of the roads were loaded with Tiger Lillys running free. Reminded me of the lupines on the way to Saint Stephen.

We are now tucked into the Locus Lake State Park in Pennsylvania. We plan to head to Gettysburg tomorrow. We are using the National Geographic's Trip Planner to help us with some of our travels and it has a number of neat features one of which is type in an address and it shows you where it is. (Works great in the US, Canada barely has roads, well not quite that bad but the house locator doesn't work well) We typed in all of the address of the campgrounds in Gettysburg and got a bunch of choices. We narrowed it down to Artillery Ridge Camp Resort as it was the closest to everything. It has Free showers too. Bonnie figures if they are trying to nickel and dime you with fee showers you are probably better off elsewhere.

**Subject: Gettysburg and Einstein**

**Date: Mon, 12 Jul 1999 10:35:29**



**One of the most touching memorials we saw.**

They should just rename Gettysburg monumentville or cannon town. The guide says there are over a 1000 monuments and canons in Gettysburg. We arrived at lunchtime at the Armory Ridge Campground. They pack you in but we were there for a sightseeing trip not a vacation so it didn't bother us. While we were having lunch we say the trolley go by. The trolley is a lot like the People movers in Niagara Falls. Except there seems to be only one of them that is in service. They have one loop they do on even hours and one loop on odd hours. The campground was on even hours so it wouldn't be back again until 2ish. So we figured we could walk up to the Battlefield park and tour there and then come back on the trolley or go elsewhere. We spent over 6 hours walking around the park, grounds, visiting the cyclorama, or listening to the Park Warden lectures. We also consumed 8 500 ml bottles of water in the 90+ heat.

If you have never seen a cyclorama (from what we have been told) they were a rage in the early 1920s. Basically

they are a 360 degree painting that is painted from a certain vantage point at some momentous event. There is one in Sainte-Anne des Beaupre PQ (we didn't go in there) depicting the crucifixion of Christ. The one in Gettysburg is during the battle when the Confederate Army has made it through "The Angle". The show is a tour of what is happening at that particular moment in time. They highlight an area of the screen with a spotlight and tell a story of what was happening. I think we saw it too early. It was practically the first thing we saw and it would have meant more after we did a tour of the battleground.

The Gettysburg Address was held at the founding of National Cemetery to commemorate the battle and to properly bury the thousands of people that were killed on the 1,2,3 of July. One of the monuments in the National Cemetery is a bronze tablet with three pages that were the text of the Lincoln's speech. There was one word that was polished by people touching the word. The word: "We"

We walked for hours and visited hundreds of monuments. Some are HUGE others small markers that the left and right flanks of companies of men during the fighting. The relief work in the marble and bronze is incredible.

We are really conscious of the fact that one year is just too short to see even a small piece of what North America has to offer. We are really looking at this trip as a discovery of geography as much as anything and if we get to see a few highlights along the way, that is good too. If we saw it all we would have no excuse to go back. We will come back to Gettysburg.

Einstein must have been inspired by Pennsylvania to figure out that the shortest distance between two points is NOT in a straight line. If you see a straight road in Penn avoid it. At least most of it will be vertical. Looking at the map of Penn you will roads that move in arcs that look like they have been drawn by a drafting compass with it's point stuck in the bottom right corner. By the time you get out of Penn you are scared of straight roads they are near vertical and have a 90 turn at the top and ALWAYS more than 90 at the bottom (max speed 35 mph corner). As we are approaching the top left hand side of the map we are noticing that the up hills are distinctly smaller and shorter than the down hill runs. We are coming out of the mountains. The scenery is wonderful but I am looking forward to flat. We still don't have a lot of confidence in Millie and she hesitates in either the hills or the 100F heat either one is enough to be a concern. She always makes the top but sometimes we aren't sure. We started burning a better grade of gas and she is doing noticeably better on the uphill. (ULTRA SUPREME for the ROCKIES ;-)

But every time I see a pump (1.07 /US Gallon) and they have a sticker that says this price includes 40.40 cents of taxes, I have to ask JUST how much tax is on that gas in Canada.

**Subject: Corn, soybeans, turkey vultures and GREAT Cinnamon buns!**  
**Date: Mon, 12 Jul 1999 10:55:21**

After the waves of hills of Penn, the waves started to flatten out and become reasonably flat again we were in Ohio. Land of Farms, oil wells, and lots of people and industry. The write up on the Amish is much better in the Ohio Tourist info than it is in the Penn Tourist info.

We stopped in a couple of Amish bakeries and picked up GREAT Cinnamon buns called Pecan buns (cinnamon buns with a maple icing and chopped pecans on them YUM) We looked for shoe-fly pie but we couldn't get any. Even tried a couple of restaurants.

Days are the little words written in a LITTLE font on my watch and they don't have a lot of other meaning. Except for other people, Amish notice that Sundays happen and lock things up pretty solid. So anyone interested in visiting Berlin Ohio (lots of neat stuff) should probably not arrive on a Sunday. (Sigh) Besides last thing we need is more furniture.

We kept noticing LARGE birds soaring high over the highways and weren't sure what they were. Eventually we asked someone what they were Turkey vultures. We did see one low enough to spot the red head.

We were camping at a small campground outside of Millersburg and met a number of people that were from a 2-3 hour radius. They were having a 25th wedding anniversary, one of the gifts was a cut glass goblet put out at the time of Charles and Diana's wedding. (She was a brit). The day before I noticed a book of matches with a picture of Chuck and Di on it when I was getting matches out of our match bottle for one of the other campers who had forgotten matches at home. We gave her our present and she was thrilled to get it.

We are now in a State park outside of Flint Michigan. Great weather and not as hot as before. We are going to head to Tillsonburg and see if we can meet up with Tara and Jason again. Bonnie informs me we are eating into our "free" days and shouldn't stay long.

**Subject: Mission Accomplished!**  
**Date: Wed, 14 Jul 1999 21:08:07**

In Tillsonburg we found shoo-fly pie! Actually it was Jason that noticed it. We spent the last couple of days visiting with Tara and Jason. Tara was a neighbor in Oromocto for a years. Great fun to be around and we missed her when she got moved away and got married.

Some of you probably remember that we visited with them in early June on our first pass through Ontario. Our route back into Ontario from Michigan took us back via Sarnia and through Stratroy where Millie was built. We stopped in on the way through and they gave us a manual for the conversion (the non drive train) part of Millie. We still have to go to a Ford dealer and get them to order us a manual for the engine bits.

After Stratroy we stopped in Tillsonburg. We happened to arrive on July 12 Tara and Jason's Anniversary (number 2). After a couple of excellent steaks Jason went to check on a cow and Tara was off to Agility training with Ellie. This class was the "masters" level and they were getting ready to go off to a competition. Some of these dogs and owners have been training for over 6 years and were really impressive to watch. Tara and Ellie have just started training and really improved in the previous month and they really did well.

Jason had the next afternoon off so Tara when in early so we could have a chance to visit in the afternoon. Bonnie and I did chores in the morning, Me email, bill paying, and updating the log, Bonnie doing the wash. I was just stepping out of the shower when Jason arrived home for the afternoon.

On the way to pick up Tara from work we stopped into "Leroy and Danny's". An Amish furniture manufacturer. Tara had them make a Saddle Rack for her. We got a chance to peek in while Leroy and Jason were talking. They do very impressive work, the quality of the work was amazing. There was the top of a solid oak roll top desk that was being built that was as nice as anything we have seen

anywhere. We crossed the road to the horse ranch where Tara works as a groomer. She had just returned from a trip to Tennessee where she spent a week learning western version of dressage.

We went to the Alymer Sales Barn, a combo flea market and farmers market. Jason knew a number of the Amish people who were there to sell some of their goods. Jason is a vet and has quite a few Amish clients. We picked up an umbrella (to replace the one destroyed by the winds of Antigonish), hot pepperoni and then SHOO-FLY PIE.

On the way to the Alymer Sales Barn we stopped at one of the Amish vegetable stands to pick up the fix ins for hodge-poge. Something neither Tara or Jason had eaten before.

We spent the afternoon touring around the area seeing lots of Tobacco, Soybean, Corn, Amish farms and the Rush Creek fruit winery. They have a Raspberry dessert wine called "Framboise" that is absolutely decadent when eaten with chocolate. We ended up getting a couple of bottles one Framboise (18%) and one Dry Apple (12%) .



**Grotto and crystal clear water of Georgian Bay**

This morning we were traveling again, we originally planned on making it as far as Sauble Beach on the very start of the Bruce Peninsula. The traffic was light and the roads were light so we ended up traveling the length of the Bruce Peninsula to the National Campground at the end. Tomorrow we are going to try for the ferry to Manitoulin Island. This will put us on the north coast of Georgian Bay and from there we head toward Sault Saint Marie and along the south shore of Lake Superior in Michigan.

We arrived at the campground late in the afternoon and after being driving up all day we like to go for a walk. The Bruce Peninsula National Park Cypress Lake Campground has a great set of trails for walking. The one we started on said "3 km, 3 hr, Varying Difficulty" We were about a kilometer away from it so we hustled right along. We made it to Georgian Bay, crystal clear water and turquoise in color(almost Caribbean colors). When we were on the rocks (dolomite) overlooking the swimmers on the beach we noticed they were definitely dancing and not to any sound we could hear. Then THEY descended on us.

They looked like houseflies but they BITE. their favorite spot is not on my bare legs but through the dark blue socks I am wearing. We didn't stay long and were chased around the point until we were back into the woods. With the insect motivation we finished our 3 hr trail with the extra kilometer on either end in a little over 1.5 hours. We are now finished dinner and resting quietly inside Millie.

One of our ongoing problems is mail. We talked to one of the state parks we are planning to stay at and asked if they would receive a mail drop for us. They said yes so our mail forwarding service is targeting a package for Copper Lake State Park for the 20th of July. This is our first attempt at

receiving mail at somewhere other than a family member. Wish us luck  
Our next mail package will be destined for my stepsister in Red Deer Alberta.

Hopefully one of these packages will have a cable in it from 3com so I can hook the phone to the laptop.

One of the things I always take with me on these little hikes we take is our GPS. I always put a waypoint where Millie is and if we get lost we can get our way back. Anyway we are currently 45 nautical miles south of our mooring in Douglas Harbour. (and 650 west)

**Subject: Sundays.. Even when they are fridays.**

**Date: Sat, 17 Jul 1999 08:53:46**

We have decided that today is a Sunday, a day of rest. Even if my watch says Friday, this is a Sunday.

We had a fantastic trip up the Bruce Peninsula. Tobermoray is the small village that is also the ferry terminal for the ride to Manitoulan Island. It is also the base for lots of dive shops as the Five Fathom National park is nearby. There are lots of wrecks on the islands around the area and divers have a great time exploring. They even sank an extra one not long ago. The lake shore looks like it is all dolomite so the water is crystal clear and really very pretty.

There are lots of big power boats in the harbour. This is obviously a destination point for a lot of people. It is for us too. We will definitely be back for a visit when we can stay for a while.

Bonnie found an excellent little bakery in a small grocery store next to the Harbour Master's office. If you get to Tobermory and want fresh bread you have to get them FIRST thing in the morning. The trip across the ferry was uneventful. We ended up being the first vehicle off of the ferry so I was expecting to be working hard to find a pull off point as fast as I could. Something must have happened since I had noone behind me for at least a few miles. When we got stopped by a swing bridge they all caught up. Shortly after we were by the bridge we pulled off and let them go, looked like the whole ferry was leaving the island.

We made our way to a place called Blind River and crashed for the night. Northern Ontario is Trees, Rocks, lakes, Trees, Rocks, Lakes, ... We made a slight amendment to the plan and rather than go on the northern shore of Lake Superior we decided to do the southern shore through Michigan. The states is cheaper traveling and this side also has a lot of great places to visit.

Both the gas and the national parks are cheaper. The most expensive gas in the states works out to be about 46 cents per litre with the exchange. Gas in Canada seems to be running from 55 to 62 cents a litre at the moment. The National Parks in the states are self registration. Which means there is usually a bulletin board that has a bunch of envelopes. Fill in the envelope seal in \$10/night and stuff the envelope in a metal box that is near by.

Painted Rocks National Lakeshore is along the south coast of Lake Superior there are 20 miles of sand roads that you have to travel over. We did about 10 yesterday and about 10 to get out again. The sand is incredible. Our campsite is all sand and we are in a white birch forest extends for a long way. All on sand. We are probably about 30 feet above the lake and it is all SAND.

We watched the sunset over Lake Superior last night. It is on the list as number one in the best sunset department. Since yesterday was a day of a little north and mostly west I just braved the stable flies and put the GPS on a stick where it should get a little satellite coverage. 43 miles north and 830 west our mooring in Douglas Harbour.

We stayed put an extra day and with the north wind it blew the stable flies out of the area to the point where we had an excellent day of hiking and walking the beach. We walked over 2.5 miles up the beach and hardly met another person. The beach was warm and the sand was white and clean. Unfortunately the water was a tad cold for swimming. The brochure says that in August the water is finally warm enough for swimming, "some years!"

The next day we headed off to Copper Lake State park where we will stay until we get our mail, then it is off toward Manitoba. The Mail was waiting for us when we checked in at Copper Falls. Gotta love that mail service. We are plodding along rather than stopping here.



The main drawback of Painted Rocks National Park is the 30 miles of sand road. These are the kind of roads that you do at 80 kph to fly over or 20 kph and slow from there when it gets bad. Since we still wanted dishes in the cupboards the later was the very long choice. After two and a half hours we were having lunch at a little roadside liquor / grocery / video / bait shop / deli counter having a thing called a "pasty". A vegetable meat pie wrapped in a pastry. The pastry was more along the lines of a mexican soft bread shell than a pastry. The whole way from Michigan to Wisconsin was a string of "Pasty" shops, ok not quite, they were second to bait shops.

Between 9 and 12 we traveled 32 miles, with a short stop at the Miner's Castle. A geological formation formed by erosion. This is a really neat spot that if you are in the area you really should stop in and see. Take your Polaroid sunglasses so that you can see down into the water, the colors are simply stunning. We also stopped at a little water fall called Munising Falls, the water is almost copper colored. There used to be an iron ore smelter here but it is now long gone. This was a big iron mining town.

We are now at Copper Falls Wisconsin in the Central Time Zone. It is 9:07 p.m. and it is BLACK out. Last night we were in the Eastern Time Zone and we watched the sun set at about 9:30. You can notice a big difference in the sunset as you go from the western extreme of a time zone to the east edge of the next. Things are getting flatter and flatter. We have been keeping track of our mileage and travel for the month of May we got 8.87 miles per gallon June we got 8.80 miles per gallon. So far this month we are 9.37. Gas is expensive here about 1.22 a gallon. But that does work out to about 46 cents a litre after exchange.

On days when we travel a long way we have to be careful not to trip the credit card. If you buy gas twice in the same day in different states it will sometimes refuse to take the card and will want you to

call Visa. If we are getting close on a tank I will try to gas up before I cross the border to the next state so it doesn't trip the card so readily. It has happened to me twice so far.

The other thing that has started to happen is the western influences on the towns. There are little towns that we drive through that could have served for a set in a spaghetti western not long ago. The businesses on the front street are just the right style to see a guy with a Stetson and a six-shooter walk out of any minute.

**Subject: Paul Bunyan, The Mississippi, the continental Divide and Buffalo.**  
**Date: Tue, 20 Jul 1999 23:52:32**

It was a strange day. We started out in Minnesota and just after we turned the corner out of the park you would have swear that you were on the road between Moncton and the Tantramar Marshes. A little flatter but the trees were the same the bogs were the same the road was the same. Then it started to change :-o The land got just a little flatter then the trees seemed to be a bit different. We took a quick tour into a little place called Bemidji to see Paul Bunyan and his Ox named "Blue". On our way into town we crossed the Mississippi River for the first time.

Bemidji calls itself the "First city of the Mississippi". It really is, the headwaters are here. Not more than a few miles up the road is the continental divide. Really hard to tell there are a few hills in the area but just north of Bemidji is the continental divide. From here on rivers flow up hill (at least on the map) to Hudson's bay or Lake Superior. From here south rivers flow toward the Mississippi (and a few others). One of the reasons the Red River in Manitoba has such fun with the floods is that outlet of the river is frozen solid in the north while the head waters in the south are starting to get spring freshets.

If you ever get to Bemidji stop at the tourist bureau, the fireplace is worth it. When the stone mason/artist was doing the fireplace he wrote to all of the states and provinces and asked them to send a special stone to be incorporated into the work. It is a work of art. (Yes NB, Nova Scotia, Mass, Vermont and Ontario) have stones there. Some were labeled blatantly like those above, others were harder. Granite, Marble, Quartz, Dolomite, What looked like a brain coral, the colors in the rocks were something to see. Minnesota seemed to change from New Brunswick to the Prairies in a matter of minute before our eyes. I remember reading a sign that said something like the town between the "Prairies and the Pines" and they were. On one side there was nothing but prairies, on the other you could see trees in the distance.

We crossed the border and within minutes we were definitely in the prairies. We turned a corner to see a few buffalo in a fenced in field running along the edge of the fence. Neat. They were running to catch up with their buddies. There must have been over a hundred of them ranging from small (this years calves) to IMMENSE (GRANDDAD).

We are now sitting in a little place called Steinbach Manitoba. We stopped in at a couple of grocery stores to pick up some stuff. Stuff is expensive here. We got a call from Kent about some stuff at the house. Things seem to be going along fine.

Bonnie was looking at a map today and remarked we had just crossed 96 degrees west longitude. Which means we are at least 30 degrees west of our mooring in Douglas Harbour to the land lubbers this is 1/12 of the distance around the world, today that sounds like a long way. Considering that we have actually done a couple of loops (NB to Mass to NB and Ont to Mass to Ont). We have put just



over 11500km on Millie since May 1 (2.5 months).

**Subject: Mennonite Historical Village in Steinbach MB.**

**Date: Thu, 22 Jul 1999 00:49:22**



Wind powered grist mill.

We got up this morning and drove all of half mile from the campsite to the Mennonite Historical Village in Steinbach MB. The number one neat feature of the village is the windmill. It is a grist mill. Being a sailor type, the mechanism they had for trimming the Sails of the windmill was really neat. The four sails were all wood construction and they had many louvers in the sail. They could control the angle of attack of the louvers by a slide that they could control from inside the mill. Neat stuff. Apart from the wind power it looks very similar in construction to grist mills in Upper Canada Village or Kings Landing.

Very interesting stuff. They have a couple of LARGE oxen that sort of follow the roads around the saw mills down in front of a storage shed and theater. The barn and houses were different styles

but much of the stuff was the same vintage as the stuff in Bonnie's mother's house in New Denmark. New Denmark and Steinbach were settled about the same time and I remember sorting stuff from Bonnie's mother's stuff that was certainly the same vintage.

The other thing that was neat was the Sod house, called a Semlin. The first year they basically arrived in time to build sod huts before winter. These were modeled after huts built by Mennonites in Russia 100 years prior to their move to Canada.

The sod huts were dug 3-4 feet into the soil and stood about three feet above the soil. Inside they were lined with wood (ceiling and walls). This one had the floors wood as well but I understand the originals did not. The walls were about a foot thick and the roof was a nice array of wild flowers. One of the problems with the sod huts was on occasion a cow would fall through. Them's the hazards.

We then got out and drove to Winnipeg all of about 50 kilometers away. Seemed a blink and we were in the campground. We actually are quite a ways out of town. Bonnie and I walked around the trailer park just before sunset and the sun was setting over the sky rises of Winnipeg. I can't quite tell how far it is away. Judging distances in flat surroundings is a little different.

Measured kilometers are funny things here, they are 10 kilometers long. They are nice about it and give you markers every kilometer but the distance was 10 kilometers. It was nice they give you things to do (steering wasn't needed at the time). The test distance was straight as an arrow, so was the previous 10 and the next 10. Millie looks like she is off 1/10 of 1 kilometer in 10 kilometers. I figured a 1% error was pretty good. About half way through the test there was a big brown sign "This is the longitudinal center of Canada." We are now in western Canada.

We have booked into a Gray Line tour again. This one is a morning of double decker bus and the

afternoon of Paddlewheeler in the Red and Assiniboine rivers.

**Subject: Winnipeg land of the Goodyear Blimp.**

**Date: Fri, 23 Jul 1999 00:32:56**



Winnipeg land of the Goodyear Blimp (well this week anyway). If you were watching the Pan Am games and saw them showing a paddlewheeler going up or down the red river and there is a guy on the front wearing a black T shirt and a Tilley hat, that was me.

We did a morning bus ride on a double decker bus Bonnie and I got to sit in the front seat on the top deck. It was a pretty good tour and we are going to try to head in to do a little touring on our own tomorrow. This is Friday and the official opening of the PanAm Games. We didn't really know it was going on until we arrived. We scanned the radio waves and picked up good old CBC. First thing we heard was Traffic reports and the Pan Am games opening. Opps.

Bonnie and I were both pleasantly surprised by Winnipeg. Lots of neat stuff to see, good history and lots of stuff to see.

**“Reflecting Pool” a Leo Mol**

the cars being pushed up the "Hump". The computer causes the rail car to be unhooked and it is released down the hill, the train tracks are automatically switched to build the train in the down hill set of tracks. There are apparently 3 people running the yard. Two in a control tower and one engineer driving an engine.

On the way into town there is a large rail hump yard. The tour guide was talking about the yard on the way into town. The hump yard has a hill on it the computers read the id of

Then next thing after the "hump" is the Royal Canadian Mint. They stamp and print the fancy stuff in Ottawa. Winnipeg is the place they make the circulating coins for Canada and a number of other countries including Bermuda, Bahamas, Tunisia, Madagascar, Australia, Singapore, and other countries throughout Africa, Caribbean, and Asia. Sixty percent of the business is outside of Canada. They come out in two ton bags. No free samples. But we did get samples of the new toonie and July's special edition Canadian quarter. The Mint was issuing new quarters to celebrate the millennium and each province got a different month. We asked her why we couldn't get the new quarters at the banks, we had been able to up until June but we were unable to after that. "Stupid politics" seemed to be the straight answer.

We drove down into a mall nearby and took a bus into the downtown area. We did sections of the Art Gallery walking tour and the Exchanged district. We were just 20 minutes late to go up and watch them on the exchange floor. The art galleries were neat and Bonnie and I both found art that we would have seriously considered if we were heading home.

Winnipeg has some of the most interesting terra-cotta and Victorian buildings. The exchange district is full of them. Walking around in the area is a great way to spend some time. I think I spend a little too much time looking up, my neck hurts.

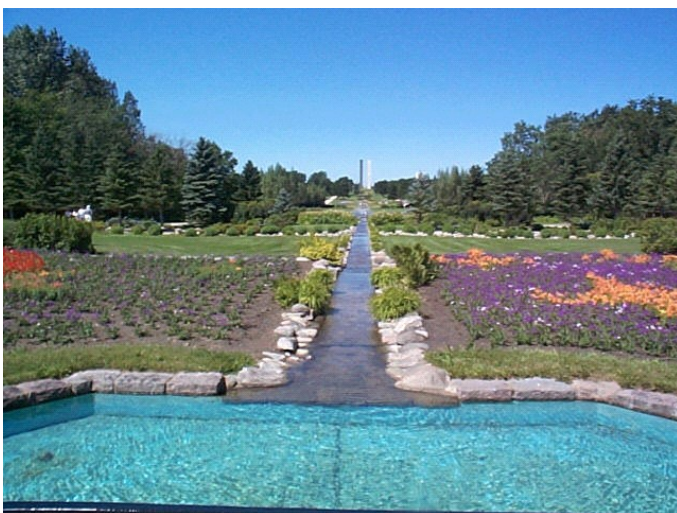
Union Station is a great old train station and is dressed up for the Pan Am Games. It reminds you of the grandeur of the trains of by gone eras. You have to walk down the street and under the tracks to get to an area called "The Forks". The Forks is an area built up for the locals and tourists. The Forks Market is a great place for lunch and a little food shopping. The Johnstown market is another market in the Forks area. It has some really nice shops to go looking in. I found a couple of things that I could have walked out with.

Outside of the markets is an amphitheater surrounded by brick sculptures called the Celebration Circle. The Limestone Monoliths are geometrically aligned to the true North (Polaris) and the sunrise and sunset of each equinox and solstice, define the circle. It doesn't look like they are quite done yet. One of them has a drawing of the constellation of Orion etched into the brick with metal studs where the stars should be. If you are in the area plan on spending some time in the Forks area.

By the way if you get to the Forks area behind the amphitheater is a walking path down to the waters edge the fork where the Red River and the Assiniboine River meet. There is another path down to the waters that has a bunch of plaques that talk about the different floods and what the different levels of water were at different times.

Another thing that was at the Forks was the Canada Tree. It is heading east and if you get a chance to see it do so it is worth spending a half hour or so walking around and looking at it. The web site for the canada tree is <http://www.canadatree.com> they might have a location and times when they will be in your area.

The Canada Tree is a project of Tyler Aspin an artist who has created a sculpture composed of woods from each province and territory. Set in the tree are artifacts that tell stories. He asked Canadians to send him pieces of wood and tell a story about it. A piece of Wayne Gretzey's hockey stick, a paddle of a girl who loved canoeing but as killed in an accident, a weaving shuttle that had been in a family for three generations, a piece of the tree Nova Scotia sent to the city of Boston for Christmas, an alder cane given to him by a Micmac elder from New Brunswick.



*Splitting the border at the International Peace Park*

We seem to be dodging rain. The Red River is very high water and the warning they give at the campground when you come in is careful to stay on the roads if you go off you sink. There is quite a bit of evidence of sinking RVs We are on our site fair and square but we did notice to day that one side is a bit lower than the other. We are slowly sinking but we move out tomorrow. There are some VERY large RV's here, I would be worried if I were them. Bonnie was talking to someone who was complaining that they had 5 days of sunshine

since the 3rd of July. They came from Guelph. Must have started raining just after we left.

We had a great time tootling around Winnipeg.

We are heading to the International Peace Garden tomorrow and then off into Saskatchewan. We were talking to my step sister Mary in Red Deer Alberta. We will be checking in with them in a couple of weeks plus or minus a few days.

We finally really must have raised security flags in the Visa head quarters. We got a phone call from VISA security. "We mailed your card out to you and it looks like someone has intercepted it. We have blocked your card." After a several minutes of explaining what we were doing and yes we did this and that, our card was alive again. It sounded like she was used to being hollered at. When you are traveling these little plastic cards we carry do make up a big part of our lifeline to the civilized world. As far as I was concerned she was doing me a service and I did appreciate it. She sounded like she never had anyone thank her for checking up on them.

As Jimmy Buffett says "It takes about the same amount of time to be nice guy or a jerk"

Our campsite has a phone that we can use to connect to the net. It may be a while before we get email access again. Current delivery time on our cable is Middle of August. Which means September as we will be in the middle of Alaska somewhere in August.

**Subject: MAN Is That Old Baby flAt**

**Date: Mon, 26 Jul 1999 20:17:20**

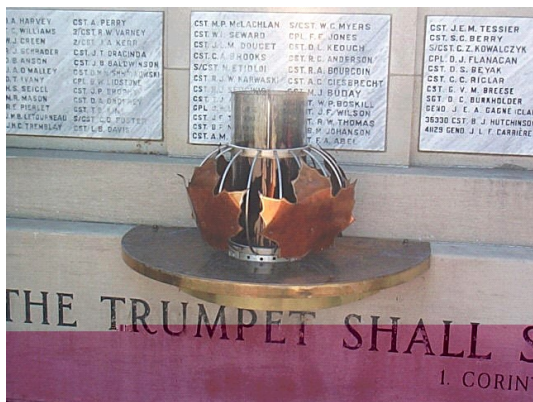
We went from Winnipeg to the International Peace Gardens on the border between Manitoba and North Dakota. The entrance to the Peace Gardens is after you pass Canada customs and before you get the US customs service. We settled into our camp site in North Dakota and had a quiet dinner. We were parking beside a group of RVs traveling together. They were from Alberta and were heading back. They were watching TV's and were picking up Tornado warnings. We dialed in a local radio station and they were warning of severe thunder storms but not much else. We had a great light show from about 10 to 11 pm and then went to bed the storms were well to the south of us. About 3 we were snapped awake by a violent crack of lightening. We had lightening snapping and cracking all around us. There was no time between lightening and thunder. We looked out the back, front and both sides and there was lightening EVERYWHERE. Two or three flashes every second. We don't get storms like that in the east. It was WILD. We were happy when it finally blew over.

We traveled from there to Estevan Sask. We were amazed at the big blue sky and brilliant yellow fields of canola, dozens of shades of green of the different grass crops, one color that did show up a lot and we weren't expecting, was purple. The flax was in blossom and the fields of purple blended with the sky to look like large lakes.

From Estevan we went north and west to Fort Qu'appelle then on to Regina. If you ever travel through the prairies you have to make a swing through to Fort Qu'appelle. Even if you don't stop you have to see the valley. It is amazing to drive through the flat of the prairies looking at vast stretches of canola, flax, wheat, and wetlands then suddenly you drop hundreds of feet into the valley. It is impressive. Fort Qu'appelle was one of the big fur trading places in the area. Sitting Bull and the north west mounted police are also featured in local museum.

We are settling into a campground on the outskirts of Regina. You can see the skyscrapers of Regina from about 25kms east on the Trans-Canada.

We are having fun with the cell phone. We are running in and out of service with great regularity. So if you are trying to get in touch with us call if you don't get us keep retrying. We could hear Kent as clear as a bell but he could hardly hear us at all. So if you call and the phone answers but you don't hear much just tell us who you are and if we hear it we will try to call you back when we get into good cell service again. Given that we are traveling into the boonies more and more the cell service is probably as good as we can expect. Now we have full digital service, in Fort Qu'appelle we had no service (60kms away).



All in all we are pretty happy with the cell phone so far. It has service practically everywhere in the states and ALMOST everywhere in Canada. Very seldom are we without at least minimal service.

We are planning on spending a couple of nights in Regina. The RCMP have a sunset ceremony on Tuesday nights and we should have an easy time moving around in Regina. We are just a few minutes away and the directions on how to get to the RCMP training grounds looks like an easy trip through town.

We do have to get an oil change for Millie, another 5000 kms down. We got it changed in Mass on July 1st. We seem to be doing about 5000 kms a month.

Eternal flame for fallen officers

After a couple of days in Regina we are planning a stop in Moose Jaw and Swift Current and then on to Cypress Hills Provincial Park in Alberta.

**Subject: Redcoats everywhere.**  
**Date: Wed, 28 Jul 1999 12:31:06**

On Tuesday nights the RCMP "Depot" Division have a sunset ceremony. Those navy types in the crowd will recognize the sunset ceremony. It isn't quite the same but it shares a lot of similarities. They put on a nice show and if you are in Regina during the summer on a Tuesday night stop in and take a look.

The RCMP Museum is there and you can take a walk through and see where Paul Gross got a lot of material for Due South. They also offer a tour around the grounds and you can see a number of the facilities they use for training the new recruits. Depot Division is the place you go to get the training to be an RCMP officer. The tour includes a chapel that is really steeped in a lot of history and is very well done up. They have lighted case that contains a book that has one page for every officer that has been killed in the line of duty. The book was opened to a page that honored an officer from NB who was killed in a car accident near St. Anne. NB.

They have a lot of things that build Esprit-du-corps.

They had about 100 recruits training at the moment and about 40 are female. Training takes 5 months. Normally they have about 250 recruits in training.

We are off to do a stop in Moose Jaw (about 75K away) and visit the underground and the murals, with luck we will be off to Swift Current for the night and on to Cypress Hills tomorrow.

Yesterday was a bit of a maintenance day for Millie. She got an oil change and a bit of a housecleaning. Sask has the worst gas prices yet 62.9 per litre seems to be the going rate. Sask also has the first set of operating oil wells we have seen. Strange that the first place pumping oil also has the worst price.

The Buffalo Lookout campground is Modem Friendly so time to go get "friendly". More and more places are expecting travelers to be carrying laptops and want email connections. So far we have had pretty good service with our Sympatico connection it allows us to do email with local calls in many places in Canada. When we finally get our modem cable it will be a lot easier. At the moment we are dependent on land lines.

**Subject: Little Chicago**  
**Date: Thu, 29 Jul 1999 01:48:34**

Ok Moose Jaw wasn't one of the places high on our list of must sees. But we were really impressed with the murals in Boissevain. When the tour guide (Saskatchewan as one of THE BEST tourist guides we have dealt with so far in our trip) mentioned that Moose Jaw has over 20 murals we figured it was worth a stop just to see a few. It also mentioned the underground city.

The Murals were good but the tour of the underground was extremely well done. One of the first north south lines for Canadian Pacific Railways was from Moose Jaw to Chicago. It was used to bring settlers to the newly expanding area in western Canada in the early part of this century. As most people know Chinese men were used for providing labor to build the railways in the west. They were paid 9 cents a day and the railways charged back about 4 cents for food and lodging. Canadians were being paid about \$2.50 per day with free room and board. As part of the package the Canadian government had promised that when the railway was done the chinese men would be given full citizenship and their wives and children would be brought over. When the railway was done the government wanted the chinese people to return to China. A head tax of \$100 per person was required for each person to get their citizenship papers. Rather than return to china many of the workers hid from the government.

In Moose Jaw they actually dug tunnels under the city and lived in the tunnels. They would sneak out at night go to the rail yard steal the equipment they needed for the night's work and then return the equipment before dawn so that the company didn't know what had happened. They built an elaborate set of tunnels under the city.

The Chinese people were also restricted as to what business they could run, Laundries or Restaurants. In the laundry business you would take your laundry in one day and the owner would write a note in chinese and put it on a shelf behind the counter. During the night the laundry was taken to the tunnels and cleaned and repaired as necessary. The next day when the laundry was picked up it came out from behind the counter. Clean and ready for use. The person that was visible had paid their head tax. The owner of the laundry often poured as much as 70% of the earnings of the store into the fund that would pay for the next person's head tax. The government figured this out and rapidly raised the head tax to

\$300 then \$400 and finally \$500 eventually the head tax was repealed a lot of people came out from the underground.

During the time of prohibition there was a ready supply of people who were willing to take advantage of the tunnels. Stills were set up, speak easys and brothels were not uncommon in the tunnels. It was not uncommon for people to use galvanized steel stills in the production of their alcohol. This ended up with getting a double dose of lead (from the rivets and the galvanized steel) injected into the alcohol. The alcohol also was clear and 200 proof. Not the nice whiskey it was supposed to be. To color it some of the rougher "distillers" used a couple of squirts of chewing tobacco juice! and that nice aged flavor was added by a few drops of sulfuric acid. Three fingers of alcohol, the rest water with tobacco juice and sulfuric acid, nice whiskey (I think I'll stick to wine).

One of the smaller sections of the tour talks about the ladies of the evening. Apparently \$2 was the going rate, and a respectable woman was never seen with a \$2 bill. The tour guide's (ya I believe it to) grand mother had a 4 inch stack of \$2 bills that she refused to use during her lifetime. She was a respectable woman after all. Made a neat story.

One of the other stories was Al Capone. Apparently he would show up in Moose Jaw on occasion when things were getting heated in Chicago. There are local legends about the barber cutting his hair on occasion and a story about the local doctor that lanced his infected tonsils, Capone refused to go under and used a bottle of whisky as his anesthetic.

Apparently Moose Jaw was not particularly proud of it's underground tunnels and the history and did not make it well known. Until one day in the 60s or 70s when car driving down River Street really did drive DOWN River Street (about 12 feet down) they were a little hard to ignore at that point.

There is currently a non-profit organization that is working on restoring the tunnels. They have phase 1 open which we toured. Phase 2 is supposed to open later in August 1999. There are 5 phases planned. If you are around Moose Jaw stop in and have a tour it is a good show.

The scenery has changed again. The prairies are a different part of the world and full of striking beauty. We are out of the flat land again, they stopped just after Moose Jaw. We are now into the rolling hills. When you come up on a rise you seem to be able to see forever. We say more golden wheat today rather than the purple flax. The yellow of the canola seems to be petering out. We got a few fields where there seemed to be more oil wells than crops. Oil wells seem to be running more here than in the other areas we have seen.

We drove west until dinner time and stopped in a place called Gull Lake elevation 3200 ft according to the campground guide. We are planning to stop at Cypress hills tomorrow night after a quick visit to Fort Walsh. Cypress Hills is a national park that spans the Saskatchewan and Alberta borders. It is a 50 km trip into the Cypress hills with Fort Walsh and one campground on the Saskatchewan side and lots of campgrounds on the Alberta side. But no one seems willing to tell us if you can drive from the Saskatchewan side to the Alberta side.