



# Happy Holidays 2011!



It is hard to believe another year has gone by! It has been a year with lots of adventure, outdoor activities, and time with family. Jerry is still substitute teaching, but has started looking for work elsewhere. Kristin is still teaching fifth grade and has a really good class this year. We had a real scare when Dad Heilman took a bad fall from a ladder in the spring, but he has almost fully recovered, which is a real blessing.



John Day



Steens



We decided to travel to the Four Corners area this summer. We packed up the van, otherwise known as the Blue Turtle, and headed out with lots of books on camping and hiking.



We started in Washington where we took a tour of the historic Hanford nuclear weapons facilities with Uncle Les and Mom and Dad Heilman (no photos allowed...still). This was a trip the Jerry's had been talking about for years.

From there, we went to the **John Day Fossil Beds** and enjoyed the new museum and hikes in the Blue Basin. We took a side trip to the Oregon Cascades and met up with CMRU for a training and then headed to the **Steens Mountains** area. Very beautiful!



Nevada



Bridges

We went traveling through **Nevada** next. We ended up on US 50, the "Loneliest Road in America." Great basin and range country with unusual wire tensioners made from bone and very tough looking bulls on the open range signs.

It took a few days to get to **Capitol Reef National Park** in Utah, our first National Park of the trip. Fantastic views, if you like rock, which we do. Tons of trails, narrow canyons, historical town sites, and dirt roads! Kristin really likes the dirt roads! (Not really!) When we left, we decided to take a 60 mile dirt road south to **Bull Frog Marina** at Lake Powell. The road was known for being impassable due to flash floods dumping mud on the road. But, it had been a whole 3 days since the last floods, so we went for it. Besides, the dirt road went across Lake Powell on a small ferry.



Bull Frog

We decided to head towards Hovenweep and on the way, ran across **Natural Bridges National Monument**. It is a great, small, out of the way area with sinuous canyons where rivers have created the bridges.



Capitol Reef





Hovenweep



We continued on to **Hovenweep National Monument**, our first site with ancestral Puebloan artifacts. This was probably the best site for an intimate look at intact ruins that have not been reconstructed. The ranger led talk was fantastic, with the highlight being the parrot petroglyphs only viewable as part of the tour.



From Hovenweep, we headed to **Mesa Verde National Park**. This was a really crowded park and was not what we expected it to look like. You needed reservations for the tours and they had large numbers of people and three tours an hour. We made reservations for three of them. The tours provided us with close views and information. Many of the dwellings have been reconstructed, but you can still see original building techniques and domestic items, like the stone grinders (in the bottom photo). What looks like windows in the photos are actually the doors. It is thought the door style helped keep the domesticated turkeys and dogs out of the house. The Balcony House tour required climbing some pretty steep ladders and steps, which was interesting (for Jerry). Of course, all the cliff dwellings, by definition have heights, which was a challenge for Kristin, but she did make it to two of them.



Mesa Verde



We headed to **Arches National Park** next. It was around 100 degrees and extremely crowded. We were disappointed to find it was mainly a car tour. The arches were very interesting landforms in great red colors. Jerry did manage one backcountry hike and enjoyed exploring the arch filled landscape. We fought the crowds and saw what we wanted in one day. Afterwards, we agreed it was time to head north and get out of the heat.



Yakima

We traveled on some beautiful roads over **Soapstone Pass** into Wyoming. We ended up on a side trip to see Minnetonka Cave. We then ended up in **Grand Teton National Park**. This was a highlight of the trip for Kristin, as we climbed to the base of Grand Teton on a 9.6 mile and 3150 foot elevation gain trail!!!



Arches



Yellowstone

We went through **Yellowstone National Park** on our way to **Yakima**. Jerry helped with lots of work around the farm, as his dad was still recuperating from his springtime injuries. We ended our journey by visiting **Mt. St. Helens National Volcanic Monument**.



It was a great trip, especially considering we did not plan anything and decided what to do and where to go on the fly. We kept our eyes open for new brew pubs to try, and actually found a few we enjoyed in Cortez, CO, Moab, UT, and Jackson Hole, WY. Twenty-eight days and 4,990 miles in the van camping and we are still together and made many great memories!



Teton



Soapstone Pass



CMRU



OPB



Jerry continues to be active in the Corvallis Mountain Rescue Unit. The year was a big one, since this was the year that CMRU had to pass its national recertification exam in technical rock rescue and managing wilderness search operations (and CMRU did!). It was also a fun year full of great trainings like the clean up of a car that fell into the Crater Lake caldera.

A neat opportunity Jerry had was to help take a filming crew from Oregon Public Broadcasting's Oregon Field Guide up Mt. Hood in the early spring. Jerry got to help haul up 40 or 50 pounds of batteries and set up ropes to help the crew get through the more difficult sections towards the top.

We have been trying to get out on longer hikes one day each weekend. Kristin is thrilled to be able to go on more strenuous hikes with greater distances and elevation. Mount Jefferson, Dome Mountain, Crescent Peak, and Marys Peak were a few of them. Really great views, critters (rough skinned newts), and chances for Jerry to swim in alpine lakes!

We got together with a group of friends to enjoy a wine tour and tasting that Kristin had purchased at her school silent auction last spring. It was great fun in the fall weather. We ended up heading to the Rogue Brewery Hopyard afterwards for a tour potluck. A really fun day!

As usual, we spent Thanksgiving in Yakima. The Jerry's worked on the train set and got everything all organized and working well. The guys took their annual day after Thanksgiving hike to Cougar Canyon. They saw lots of Bighorn Sheep (tiny at the top of the photo). Kristin, Alma, and Audrey slept in and then headed into the shopping frenzy to check out the sales.

We will be spending Christmas in Yakima. Hopefully, there will be enough snow in the Washington Cascades to go on a few snowshoe trips, but it does not look promising right now. It is a light snow year so far, especially in comparison to last year's huge snow falls!



Hiking



Fall



**Sending you warm wishes throughout the new year!**

**Jerry & Kristin  
Dogs Yvettz & Marley; Cats Sassy, Tiggy, & Sunshine;  
Turtles George & Evenrude**

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