

North to South – Highway 395 OR, CA, NV

Took a little different route to get from Olympia to Chandler this year. Through eastern Oregon, across northern California, briefly into Nevada, then through eastern California, mostly down US 395. Very enjoyable drive.

First we went through Bend, OR, but decided it was too early in the day to stop, so continued south to the [Collier Memorial State Park](#), a very nice state park located on the Williamson River. The Williamson River runs along the boundary and Silver Creek runs through the middle of the park. The Williamson is known for its trophy sized trout, both rainbow and brown. Silver Creek is a spring fed creek known for its trout fishing also, very beautiful, water looks like it just came out of the tap. Unfortunately, I didn't have time to get rigged and do any fishing prior to dark, but this is a for sure stop on the return trip. Drove down the road to the casino for dinner and was pleasantly surprised, it was very good and had organic salads...

Next day we cut across to US 395, via OR 139, beautiful drive through a lot of lava beds and Modoc country. Then continued on US395 into Carson City, NV. This is a nice drive, with surprisingly little traffic, especially 18 wheeler traffic. Carson City is a nice small city with all amenities, we spent an extra day here to refresh ourselves and do some shopping. Had lunch at Schaf's Bakery, a great place for lunch. Next time we will go just a little farther south, the next town, Minden. They have a few better RV Parks in this area. All located next to a casino, but better than the one in Carson City.

Then it was off on US395 south through California. We had never been this way before and it as a very pleasant drive.

This is listed as one of California's scenic drives and it lives up to its name. Through some beautiful mountain country, road follows streams and rivers, great scenery. We stopped for the night at [Boulder Creek RV Resort](#) in Lone Pine, CA. This is a nice RV park with plenty of amenities, store, etc. Mostly sandy desert style pads, but nice never the less. The area has a ton f stuff to see, but we didn't do any touring. Think we'll go back and spend a few days there later.

We were planning on going through Death Valley, but the temperatures were in the high 90's low 100's, so we decided to pass and continue south on 395 to Needles, CA. This drive while not pretty (desert landscape most of the way) was pleasant in that there wasn't a lot of traffic until we got to I-15/40. Stayed at [Desert View RV Resort](#), nice park.

From Needles, we went US95 to I-10, then home to Chandler. Just flatlands and desert al the way so not much scenery. US95 was pretty busy with big truck traffic until we reached the Parker cut-off, then not too much after that. Not sure we'll do that again, my just cut across at Parker and through that way.

Anyway, we're in Chandler for the winter, or at least until we decide on our trip to AR. It was a nice drive down and maybe the most relaxing trip we have had. The new truck made a lot of difference I think, it is very comfortable for both driver and passenger. I highly recommend using US395, especially through California, beautiful drive.

Arches National Park, Moab, UT

About the only thing I can say for this is WOW! You won't see scenery like this anywhere else in the world. While not a large park, it is filled with interesting and unique landscapes and features. There are numerous easy and moderate hikes to the various terrain features, with most viewable from the roadway.

We took a lot of the hikes, until we ran out of steam. Although we walk 3-4 miles daily, its on level sidewalks and a mile lower elevation than at Arches, so we got pooped before we saw it all. But we may go back day after tomorrow, will just have to see how Canyon Lands goes.



This is a shot of Landscape Arch in the background. Easy walk in, they were in the process of improving the trail as we walked in. There are also a few more side trips to other arches, but we were losing steam by this point.



The Arches Collage

Day 2.. we had to go back and finish what we didn't catch the first day. This is all of the Windows area of the park.



Monument Valley, UT

We stayed at Goulding Campground and RV Park, but I can't recommend it. It's saving grace is that it is about the only one here and it does have full hook-ups. Paved roads, but red clay sites and close together. My sewer inlet was a good 12 inches about ground, making tank emptying a bit difficult. Plus it was \$50 a night, way too high for the level of facilities.

But the views along the way were great. Pictures can't express the magnitude of these rock formations, we will definitely be back to stay longer and take some of the tours, but will probably stay in Bluff (see other post)



Monument Valley Collage

RVs and Camping

I have been camping for many years, using tents, campers, travel trailers, Class C, 5th wheel, and hybrid. I have posted here some of my adventures and mis-adventures. I make a distinct difference between "camping" and "RVing". its not based on the type vehicle, but how and where you go. You can "camp" in an RV. Camping is going to the out of the way places, without RV pads, or full hookups, and leaving a lot of your electronic toys behind. RVing is taking it all with you, to a park with RV pads, 50 amp hookups, cable, water and sewer. With my 17 foot hybrid, I could "camp" or RV, depending on how much I wanted to rough it. In my 32 foot 5th wheel, it was mostly RVing, most camping areas were too small to

accomodate it. You get the point...

I will post more detail about each RV and the adventures with those camping experiences in other articles. This is just a summary.

I tent camped for many years, even when the family was young. My oldest son was a mosquito magnet so we knew to continue camping we needed something better than a tent. Plus with 26 years of military life, I know canvass. So in 1972, I bought my first RV, a 1968 Chevrolet 3/4 ton pickup with a cab-over camper. It was great and we used it often. Then in 1974, I got orders to transfer to Alaska, the wife didn't want to travel that far with the kids riding in the camper, so I sold that and purchased a 23 foot Terry Travel Trailer and a 1974 Chrysler Town and Country Station Wagon for the trip to Alaska. That was an experience, me, the wife and 3 kids lived and travelled in that for almost 60 days getting to Alaska, including an ALCAN drive of 1500 miles of gravel road.

Next came the Class C, a 23 foot Free Spirit by Holiday Rambler. Flew out of Alaska to Arkansas, purchased the Class C and drove it back. Used it for a couple of years, then sold it prior to leaving Alaska. Then we took a break for awhile and purchased a 1990 Oddyssey Micro Motor Home on a Toyota chassis. We used this for a few years and finally upgraded to 1995 Alpenlite 5th Wheel, 32 feet, with dual slide outs. We used this setup for over 7 years and loved it. Then after buying a home in Arizona, we sold it. Of course, our grandchildren kept pestering us to go camping, which to them meant going out in grandma and grandpa's RV, we purchased a Jayco Kiwi 17A hybrid. Great little trailer for getting into some of the remote campgrounds in the National Forest and small state parks, but just a little too small for the wife to truly enjoy, and to prevent us from bumping into each other, we sold that and upgraded to a 2008 Trail Cruiser 23SB, with a slide out rear queen bed.

My Worst Day in RVing

It was gusty and lots of 18 wheel traffic, so I knew it was going to be a day of little relaxation. Just keeping it in my lane was going to take attention.

About 150 miles west of Phoenix and 30 miles east of Quartzsite, AZ, the truck started shuddering, so I figured I had a blowout somewhere. Got it off the road and got out to check, the trailer was fine, all tires OK. I had lost the front passenger tire on the truck.

We have roadside assistance, but I figured I could change it faster. My wife on the other hand, insisted we call roadside assistance. After a brief argument on the merits of the idea of calling or changing it myself, where I was reminded I had a bad heart and we paid for road service. I relented, as I often do to the higher power and reasoning ability of my wife. I have learned after 45 years of marriage, the best thing to do is apologize and shut up, it makes for a lot happier marriage.

Anyway, roadside assistance took 45 minutes to get there, changed the tire and had us on our way again. I drove to Quartzsite, got 4 new tires, while my tread was good they were all 5-6 years old and I had read the tire stories about keeping your tires less than 6 years old. So four hours after the blowout we were back on track, only 4 hours behind schedule.

I pulled out of Quartzsite and onto the freeway, got about 3 miles down the road and the engine quit. I started toward the edge of the road and then noticed, the gas gauge was on empty. In all the excitement with tires and stuff, I had not

paid attention to the gas. With the strong headwind we were only getting about 7 mpg, as opposed to the 10-11 we usually get. Fortunately, I could see the exit just about a mile ahead, so I let it coast as long as I could. After coasting, I tried a restart and, walla, got the engine going for a short run, another coast got me to the ramp and up to the stop sign. Another crank, walla, another short run to frontage road and a coast right into the gas station. This was very fortunate, because my wife informed me we WEREN'T calling roadside service twice in one day... Believe me, I paid attention to the gas gauge the rest of the trip...

We got a late start because we didn't expect to be on the road for long. So now it's getting to be 6:30 PM and we still have an hour and a half to get to the campsite. We decided to give the south entrance to Joshua Tree a try and save the driving time. As we got off the freeway, we discovered the south entrance and Cottonwood Campground was still 8 miles up a twisting road. It's a first come first served campground so no guarantee we would even get in. We reconsidered. Just bite the bullet and make the 1.5 hour drive, at least we had reservations in Black Rock Campground. I saw a large gravel area I thought I could turn around in, size was OK, but there was a dip and I scrapped what I thought was my trailer hitch.

Back on the freeway and headed to Black Rock Campground at the west entrance to Joshua Tree. Still fighting a quartering head wind. The road into the campground is terrible. It's rutted out, pot holes, steep sides on the pavement, plus very poor signage. Getting there after dark didn't help any. The roads in the campground are narrow with the signature Joshua Trees sticking out and making turns with a travel trailer difficult. Had to make a couple of circuits before we found our site, pulled in and it's not level in any direction. I moved around a couple of times, put all the blocks I had under one side of wheels, still not level side to side. Raised the front the full length of the jack to get it level front to

rear. All this in 20 mph winds and 40 degree temperatures.

After finally getting it as level as possible, I was putting down the stabilizer jacks, got to the last one, the right front, and guess what, no jack. It wasn't my hitch that drug, it was the jack and it knocked it completely off. The perfect ending to a perfect day...

At least most of the damage was to my ego. The tires I probably needed anyway, the jack will be about \$75 for a new pair, that's the only way they come. We were tired and cranky, but no major harm.

Its been two more days on the trip and no other problems, so I guess we had all our bad luck at once.