

## Road Trippin' with Jim and Bonnie

I have always loved to drive! Both of our families never flew anywhere on our vacations (of course airplane travel was more for the well-to-do in those times). We drove everywhere, and I can still remember getting Daddy to stop at some road-side attraction for pictures and souvenirs. I had a collection of little pennants from different states attractions....Four Corners, Trees of Mystery, Grand Canyon, Crater Lake, you name it. Jim had those too.

In 2005 we took a fun road trip for 3 weeks and covered 22 states, 7500 miles-almost exclusively NOT on freeways. We use state and county roads, and many times just by accident we stumbled upon most interesting places. Attractions, parks, cool Americana. You just can't plan for everything, because you don't know what all is out there. Along the route we bought those little magnets of every state, to put on our refrigerator. Have enjoyed looking at them and reminiscing....

Well, in September of this year when we drove to Kansas for a reunion, we again attempted to stay off of freeways and found many "Bonnie roads" as Jim calls them. Crossed to central Oregon, down into California on 395, took 299 over beautiful winding Cedar Pass east, then south into Nevada to Gerlach (near Burning Man/Black Rock Desert) and onto Hwy 50, the "Loneliest Road in America". We pretty much stayed on Hwy 50 thru Nevada, and on into Utah. East to Green River and on to Moab, then south and east to Colorado, and back on Hwy 50. The weather had been beautiful until Colorado where it rained all the way across. One highlight of Colorado was Monarch Pass at 11,300 feet. Seems like the rest of Colorado doesn't drop much below 6-7K in elevation either! On to Kansas, highlights were the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library & Museum in Abilene & the family reunion.

After the reunion we headed to Kansas City, found a fantastic Steamship museum (The Arabia) in Kansas City MO, and spent a whole day at the WW1 Museum, learning so much!! Of course barbeque and beer that eve. Did I tell you we found at least 8 wonderful brew pubs along the way? 😊 And every morning we had to find a coffee shop for our Lattes and to do Wordle. It became an obsession.

Next, checked out Hannibal MO, birthplace of Mark Twain. On to Illinois, then Indiana. Highlight of Indiana was both the Auburn/Duesenberg Museum in Auburn, and the National Studebaker Museum in South Bend. Checked out Notre Dame University. Oh, stumbled upon a great used toy shop in Romney. You never know.

Next was Michigan, actually my favorite state of the trip. Of course it was beautiful weather – I might not be saying that if I was there right now.. We drove up the west side of Michigan along Lake Michigan. So HUGE. Also went to the east side and took in Lake Huron, saw where Jim's folks grew up. My favorite part of lower Michigan was the Peninsula at Traverse City. Beautiful- about 10 miles long and narrow – packed with vineyards galore.

Crossed the Mackinac Bridge to get to the "Yuppers" and it is so cool you have Lake Michigan on the left, Lake Huron on the right as you drive north on the bridge. Longest suspension bridge in the western hemisphere!

Now, we were on Hwy 2, and our plan was to follow it all the way to Washington, but we didn't...Veered off to go north to Marquette MI to see some huge docks for the iron ore ships and to check out Lake Superior. Another Great Lake checked off! On to Wisconsin, back on Hwy 2 so we were across WI quickly, but a new state checked off. In Duluth MN got absolutely lost trying to find a route I had read about. It was beautiful crossing MN, brewpubs, statues of Paul Bunyan (kinda wimpy one) headwaters of the Mississippi....lots to see.

Then across North Dakota on Hwy 2, veered off 2 to drive alongside the Missouri River for a way. Next into Montana. Beautiful state! Visited my Sister and niece in Columbia Falls (next to Glacier), then abandoned the Hwy 2 quest in favor of getting home sooner. South to Missoula, onto Salmon Idaho and crossing the Sawtooth Range. Absolutely stunning! Then on to Emmett ID, Ontario OR and cruised on home.

**\*\*6740 Miles driven \*\*17 States covered \*\*Averaged More than 30 MPG\*\*Gas is cheaper anywhere other than the West coast\*\*\*Motels are cheaper in the Midwest!!\*\* More state magnets on the fridge.**

We have a beautiful country! Get out and drive it.

Bonnie