

Alaska Trip

May 20, 2004: The day has arrived, we're finally on the road. In some ways it's gotten here in a hurry and in some ways it seemed like it would never get here. We left Topeka at 3PM and arrived in Des Moines IA about 8 PM. Driving distance, 291 miles. Staying at Saylorville Lake. Will spend the next 6 days visiting kids and grandkids. Camping Fees, \$60.00 Miles Driven: 291 Fuel \$1.74.9 gal Weather: Sunny, 80's

May 25, 2004: What a week! We leave Kansas, where the storms usually are this time of year, and they followed us to Iowa. Friday the 21st was great, we spent the evening with Jim, Randi and baby Brett. First time we've seen him since he was just born. We all went to Sears for pictures, got some of us with Brett. Saturday AM we watched Allie play softball and then stayed with the kids while Gin and Dean went to KC for a graduation. In the evening we were just ready to sit and watch a movie with the kids when the sirens went off. Between 7 PM and 1AM, when Gin and Dean got home from KC the sirens went off 4 or 5 times, we were down in the basement most of the time. Jim and Randi had come to visit and they couldn't leave for home until about midnight. Sunday Allie's softball game was rained out. Jim and Randi came back from Ames, we all hung out most of the day. On Monday Dean and I to Ames to celebrate Jim's birthday. More Storms. The whole area is flooded. There are many corn fields under water and the little stream behind Ginger's house is flooded. Tuesday the 25th we went to Ginger's in Des Moines (Johnston), washed clothes and watched a movie with the kids. Said our good by's and headed for the coach. Tomorrow we will go visit Jim and Delores Kruse, in Sioux City. Weather for week: Rain, Rain, Tornados, Floods.

May 26, 2004: Today we crossed Iowa on H-141 – 169 - & 30 to Sioux City. GPS appears to be working properly. Lots of neat farmsteads, very well kept. Iowa corn farmers usually have very nice places. Have also seen some cool old barns and corn cribs. Ogden IA has its water tower painted like a hot air balloon. Have seen many fields with water standing. All highways the way we came are very rough in most places. Arrived at Jim & Delores, picked up mail we had sent there, and got some good visit time in. Tomorrow Laurel will go with Delores to see her son Mark and get her back fixed from lifting Brett. Then we will hit the road for the Dakotas. Miles Driven: 191 Weather, Cloudy, 70's

May 27, 2004: Left Sioux City about noon. Went to see Dr. Mark this AM and feel better. Enjoyed our visit with J & D. On the road for 7.5 hours. Think it's the longest 7.5 hours we've spent in the coach. There is nothing to see and the time goes slowly. We finally started listening to a book on tape and that helped. I-29 is a smooth, good road. Some of the country looks a bit like the flint hills of KS, but the land is plowed instead of native grass. In Watertown SD is the Redlin Art Center. We got there at 4:50 and it closed at 5:00. Terry Redlin is an artist and he built the center, which is huge, to display his original art. Very classy setup. Not my kind of art, however worth the stop. When we arrived in Fargo we stopped at Flying J for fuel. It was less expensive here than in South Dakota. \$1.68.9. That was the cash price. Then we decided to find Wal Mart, so drove to H-10, where it showed on the FMCA Atlas. We went all the way through town and never did find it. Did find road construction and had to drive through residential neighborhoods. Gave up, went back to Flying J for the night. Will enter Canada tomorrow. Miles Driven: 356 Purchased Diesel in Fargo, ND \$1.68.9 gal Dean wanted to make sure we were full before we hit Canada. Weather: Sunny, 60's

May 28, 2004: Another Day, Another Adventure!! Stopped in Grand Forks, ND to go to Wal Mart, Sams and Cabellas. Again Wal Mart and Sams weren't where they were shown on the FMCA Atlas. So, if you're in Grand Forks or Fargo don't count on Wal Mart and Sams being where the map says. Stop and ask. Cabella's is smaller than most, but nice. Dean found shoes and Laurel a pair of bibs and hiking pants, both which unzip to make shorts.

Crossing the border was the highlight of our day ☺ NOT. We got in the truck lane by mistake, then it was too late to pull over, she said no problem, however gave us the dreaded yellow slip and we had to pull over to be searched. All went well until they found some pepper spray in a drawer that we hadn't declared, because neither of us remembered we had it. She came out of the coach with it in her hand and informed us we had lied to them. There would be paperwork and a fine. They ran us through the crime computers and everything. Then we were asked who the maker of our motor home was. Finally we were told they were confiscating our motor home and it would cost us \$200. to get it back. Gave them a credit card, so it was only \$150. When we were finally on our way, 2 hours later, we looked at the paperwork and it says you will be fined a % of the value of your vehicle. Guess that's why they wanted to know the maker of the MH. Funny thing, once they found the pepper spray they never went through the bays or the car. It was like, they got their \$200. and were happy. Would have thought they would have searched more once they found it. The border patrol people were polite, however very condescending. The information will remain on the Canadian computers 6 years. Guess going across the border won't be much fun for the next 6 years. So, when you go into Canada, don't forget if you have pepper spray. Finally made it to Winnipeg, staying at a nice small park in Isle Des Chenes. Camping fees \$35.50 American for 2 nights. Miles traveled: 242. Total miles traveled since we left KS, 1080 Purchased diesel in Pembina ND \$1.73.9 Gal. Weather: Sunny, low 70's

May 29, 2004; **Winnipeg:** Our day to see some sights. Started in Steinback Manitoba. Visited the Mennonite Heritage Village. Cost \$6. each (Canadian), if you're over 60. It's a 40 AC site and is patterned after the Mennonite villages found throughout Southern Manitoba at the turn of the century, and reconstructed in it's original form. The village features church, schools, houses, some built as early as 1877, a housebarn that is traced back to Danzig where the Mennonites settled in the 1700's, a restaurant in a replica of the livery barns that were rest-stops for the pioneers. We had cabbage bisque (soup). Tried to get the receipt, however she said her mother made it and doesn't use recipes. Had Cabbage, potatoes, carrots, onion, and lots of seasoning from dill and green chilies. In the village there is a windmill that was built in 2001 by local tradespeople and Dutch millwrights, and is an exact reconstruction of the Steinback windmill first built in 1877. It's the only working windmill in Canada and grinds organic flour which is for sale. The village also has a huge new village center. Enjoyed the quilting room, bought 3 tickets for the raffle for a quilt. Visited with a lady that was putting a new quilt in to be started. She was very interesting. Steinback is 45 minutes from downtown Winnipeg. A very interesting place to visit. Also, fresh rhubarb pie and GOOOOD crust. In Steinback we saw the Lund Boat factory. Since it was Sat, they were not open. Dean has a Lund Boat, so that was interesting for him.

Next we drove to Winnipeg. Visited the St. Boniface Museum. It's the oldest building in Winnipeg and the largest oak structure in N. America. It's built of white oaken logs and is a prime example of early Red Frame Construction. It was constructed in 1851 and was originally a Grey Nuns Convent. It housed

the first group of Grey Nuns to come to the West, a mission house used to care for the aged, orphans, treating the sick and instructing Children.

Next to the Museum is St Boniface Cathedral-Basilica. It was built in 1908 and was destroyed by fire in 1968. The rock walls that remained were incorporated into the design of the new church, creating a dramatic façade facing west across the Red River towards downtown Winnipeg.

From these two attractions it was a short drive to The Forks National Historic Site of Canada. It's a 13.5 acre park in the heart of Winnipeg, which encompasses open green spaces, a tree-lined river walkway. It was starting to rain so we ducked into the Forks Market. It is housed in a fun and funky building that was originally a horse stable. It houses 50 shops, open air veg. markets, specialty foods, a hayloft with clothing, gifts, jewelry, toys and much more. There is an overview on top where one can view Winnipeg. We ate wonderful sweet rolls for supper. From there we took a free shuttle bus to the corner of Main and Portage. The intersection is reputed to be the windiest in N. America. The guy that runs the RV Park told us it was from the way the high rise buildings funnel the wind down to the intersection. It was really raining by this time so we ducked into the city's underground walkway system. All shops are closed on Sat and Sunday, so we just walked around a bit. It's huge.

We came back out to hard rain, so caught the bus back to the Forks and headed home. Wanted to walk around downtown and the Exchange District and go into the Union Station. Raining too hard.

The bus driver was great, told us a lot of history as we drove through town. Noticed lots of murals on the sides of buildings and she said the city really encourages merchants to do that. They have more murals than any other city. We plan to leave tomorrow, however it's raining so hard and there is so much water standing we're not sure we can even get out of the campground.

Paid 92.9 a liter for gas for the Jeep. (\$3.52 gal.) Weather, Rain, 60's

Side Note: We asked Joe, the RV Park owner, how big the average farm is in this area. Family Farms, average 3,000 to 4,000 acres. Commercial 30,000 to 40,000 acres.

May 30, 2004: Winnipeg: Rain again, decided not to travel because it was raining too hard and will continue to do so all day. Went back downtown, walked through Union Station and the train museum. The Countess of Dufferin, the first steam engine to arrive in Winnipeg in 1887 was one of the attractions. The museum is upstairs from the terminal, which puts it at the level with the trains. The roof leaked and it was cold, but interesting. Walked back to the Johnston Terminal which was constructed in the late 1920's as a warehouse. It is restored and contains shops etc. Found a Spaghetti Warehouse, (the chain from the US) and went back later for a great supper. We drove downtown to see some of the buildings and take pictures. The Hotel Fort Garry is very ornate, and leads to an underground shopping area. We then went to the building next door, rode up to the 31st floor and looked out over the city. There is a small portion of the old Fort Garry; however we didn't stop to see it in the rain. We also drive through the Exchange district and China Town. Saw more murals. Really makes the town look unique. Winnipeg was the drop off point for the western pioneers. Transportation by rivers stopped and overland travel began. Glad we didn't leave today; now feel like we've seen most of what the city has to offer. When we leave tomorrow (Hopefully) it won't be with the feeling that we need to come back again to see the rest of the city. Purchased gas for the Jeep, \$3.52 a gal, US Weather: Heavy Rain, 60's

May 31 – Day 11 Winnipeg: Raining again. Left @ 9:30. Got out of the campground without getting stuck. Dean was really worried about that. Seeing lots of flooded fields and the ditches are running over. Took H-100 around Winnipeg and picked up H-1 and 16. We are now on the “Yellowhead Highway” and will take it all the way across Canada. Found out we could have visited the Canadian Mint while in

Winnipeg, but a trip to take if one had time would be the train to Churchill, the polar bear capitol of the world. It's on the Hudson bay and only reachable by train. On the road today at Yourkton, took the wrong highway, ended up on 9 to Canora and H-5 to Saskatoon. Great road, almost no traffic and only met a couple of trucks. There are normally lots of trucks on the highway. Stayed at a truck stop in Saskatoon. Long day on the road, however raining and nothing to see. Miles Driven: 543 Weather: Light Rain, 60's

June 1: Arrived Edmonton: Laurel drove an hour. Trip was uneventful. Campground in Edmonton: Glowing Embers. 30 Amp service, full hookups, internet connection (46.5bps), best rated campground in Edmonton. Fuel for Coach: \$2.60 a gal, US in Saskatoon. Miles Driven: 342 Cost for Camping: \$16.25 pr day, US. Weather: Partly cloudy, high 60's

June 2: Edmonton: Spent the day sightseeing in Edmonton. Huge City, 750,000. First stop, Fort Edmonton Park, Canada's largest living history park, the park represents four distinct time periods, exploring Edmonton's development from a fur trade post in the vast Northwest, to a booming metropolitan center after the First World War. The fort represents the fur trading era, 1795 to 1870. 1885 Street has homes and businesses from 1871 to 1891. 1905 Street, 1892 to 1914. 1920 Street, 1914 to 1929. There are people dressed in period clothing working, cooking, driving period cars around and really adding to the atmosphere. The park also features a steam train and a trolley system to help get around. Next, we headed to the Muttart Conservatory. The buildings are glass pyramids and contain the exotic plant communities of desert, jungle, and "temperate forest". From there we drove through the Old Strathcona district. Lots of antique shops, little cafe's opening onto the street and funky buildings. Appears to be a hang out for college kids, it's not far from the university. Next we headed downtown. Lots of traffic made it difficult to locate the Alberta Legislative building. By the time we got there, it was too late to go in. It was built in 1913, its grandiose portico and dome, perhaps make it the most imposing of all prairie Parliaments. Drove around looking for "the street of churches" 16 churches in a very small area, think we found it, but not sure. The West Edmonton mall is listed as the top attraction. It has over 800 stores, services and restaurants. Also a water park, ice rink, mini-golf, submarine rides, hotel and spa. We walked around for an hour or so and ate ribs at Tony Roams, Wonderful ribs. Edmonton is 1900 miles from Topeka and 1853 miles from Fairbanks. Still a long way to go. Weather: Cloudy, 60's

June 3: Beautiful day in Edmonton. Dean's cousin Al Lowery came to visit us. Dean hasn't seen him for 30 years. He plays the trumpet in the symphony, and is also a professor at the University. He took us to the college and showed us around, and then we rode the underground rail system to downtown. Went to the Windpear Center, where the symphony plays and got a backstage tour. Took the underground back to the college. He also took us through the park by the river and gave us a tour of the city. Weather: low 70's and sunny

June 4: Dawson Creek BC: Traveled from Edmonton, AB to Dawson Creek BC. on H-43. Dawson Creek is Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway. Started using the Milepost today, it gives you lots of information about everything along the highway. There was lots of rolling hills and pine trees today. Not pine trees like we see in the Midwest, more like you see in Minnesota. Stopped at the Rochfort Bridge Trading Post, it's mentioned in the milepost as having good curly q fries. They're average at best, however the hamburger was good. Didn't eat the great big one. You can only see the bridge, the second

longest wooden railway trestle in the world – 2,414 ft long, as you go under it on H-43. There is so much road construction you can't drive down a dirt road to see it anymore. Could not take an RV down the road anyway. So, I missed the picture. Stopped for fuel in Alberta because it's cheaper than BC. Paid \$2.46 a gal, US.

Weather: Sunny and 76

Staying at Northern Lights Campground, full hookups. Internet access is available; however you must plug your computer into a pay phone and pay Canadian LD rates, even if you have an 800 #, or local access #. We passed on that opportunity. Roads today were good, lots of four lane, and more under construction. Distance Traveled: 369 miles. Will spend the day tomorrow exploring Dawson Creek.

June 5: Dawson Creek: Took pictures at the You are Now entering the Famous Alaska Highway sign, a must for anyone coming to Dawson Creek. Toured the Art Gallery and purchased a moose made by a local artist.

Attended a movie at the museum and visitor center about the construction of the Alaska Highway, really amazing they got it built so quickly under such terrible conditions. Walked down Main Street and took pictures at the MM0 sign. Was going to eat at the Alaska Hotel, Dew Drop In, but the café is not open. Read about the Under the Willow tea room, so went there. Decided not to stay, asked a lady and she said the Hug-a-Mug was good. Went there, good food, good carrot cake. Drove to MM 17, to the Kiskatinaw Provincial Park, to see the old Kiskatinaw river bridge. It's on the original Alaska Highway (a 2.5 mile stretch) and is a curved wooden structure, 535 ft long and the only original timber bridge built along the highway that is still in use today. Good side trip from DC, don't think you'd want to take your big rig down the road. There is a campground in the park, tents, fifth wheels and pull behinds, but none of them were real long. Beautiful sites in the trees. Dean fixed a pork loin on the grill, washed some clothes and we're ready to hit the road tomorrow AM. Weather today, 70's, cloudy.

June 6: Dawson Creek to Ft Nelson BC,: On the road by 6AM, very little traffic, Sunday or 6A, probably both. Raining in DC, sun out by 8:30. Stopped at MM 79.1, Slept 45 minutes. Nice rest area, flush toilets. Saw first black bear today, he was just sitting by the side of the road. Didn't have the camera ready and couldn't stop. Lesson learned, have a disposable camera, you can snap with those quickly, and then have a disc made when you develop the film. Have seen quite a few deer today, some alive and some not so alive. Signs all along the road to watch for Moose and Caribou, didn't see either. When traveling the AL highway, set your trip mileage so you can follow the milepost. The mileposts aren't marked along the highway. Canadian road signs aren't the best, difficult to follow, even in towns. Our Buddy Brake dash light is not working today. Dean says brake still OK, he will pay close attention for it braking so we don't burn up the Jeep brakes. Will have to have them send a part. Heavy pine, aspen and Burch forest today, many areas reforested in 1989. Highway pretty good, some rough spots and millions of dandelions. Should be the state flower ☺. Had one 9% grade today at MM 159, no problem, slow going up the other side. At MM 225, 8% grade with rough road. At MM 224 you enter the Northern Rockies Lots of Gas fields along the route and new roads being cut into the timber. In Canada they pronounce Kilometers – kil-o-meters, not like we pronounce it in the states. Have heard several cars with the 50's style loud pipes, sounds good to us. Staying tonight at West End RV PK, in Ft. Nelson, BC. Nice park, 150 spaces. You have to understand a nice park in CA isn't the same as a nice park in the US. Miles Traveled: 289. Weather: Rain and Clouds this AM, Sunshine and low 70's afternoon.

June 7: Fort Laird, North West Territories: (Laird Highway) Quite a day!! Took a side trip in the Jeep, to the Northwest Territories. Drove 252 miles, 25 miles of it was gravel road. The Laird Highway runs from 17 miles W of Ft Nelson to the NWT. The BC portion is chip and seal, good road, some construction and big trucks. Rained most of the way. When you cross the border into NWT the road becomes gravel. Really raining by the time we got on the gravel road. For the most part the base was good, lots of pot holes filled with water. The Jeep was very dirty. Had one 11% grade on the BC side. Saw 9 black bears, some pretty close to the highway and 8 or 9 wild Buffalo. They were all right up by the highway. Also 4 deer. Crossed a one lane wooden bridge going over the Petitot River. Had steel supports with wood planks. The river is large enough for barge traffic. Saw a barge (ferry) bringing cars across. The temperature ranged from 47 to 55 degrees today. The town we stopped at in the NWT was Ft Laird. It is mostly an Indian village, very few, businesses, a filling station, café (don't eat there), fire station, rec hall and native gift shop. Had to purchase NWT shirt and a native made Burch bark and beaded small basket. The lady in the gift shop told us to go see the old mission. It was built in 1912 by a priest, Father Petitot. They use it for meetings now. Has a small bell tower, she said they are afraid to ring the bell because they think it might fall.

Purchased gas at \$3.44 US, didn't buy very much. Having a Jeep up here is pretty expensive, they get poor gas mileage. The Mackenzie Highway runs from Ft Laird to Yellow Knife. We drove a short way up and decided to turn around. It was a mud road, no base. The Nahanni National Park Reserve is 93 Kilometers up the road from Ft Laird. We understand access is by boat and the scenery is spectacular. To rainy and muddy to even get up that way.

When we ran into the road construction the flagmen (women) had little bug zappers about the size of a ping pong paddle, but looked like tennis racquets. They run on batteries and zap mosquitoes. Had to purchase a couple. On the road again tomorrow, more rain in the forecast

June 8 : Watson Lake, Yukon territories: (Alaskan Highway): Most scenic travel day yet. The first 200 miles out of Ft Nelson were just awesome. Hate that word; however it's about the only thing to describe the scenery. First stop was Steamboat Mountain, clouds were low over the mountains and there was a small diner with a great overlook. The diner also has home made muffins, mine was rhubarb. Next stop should have been Testa River Guest Ranch, they make cinnamon buns and home baked bread. We missed the turn, probably didn't need the buns anyway. We had several 10% grades today, no problem with the coach. We went over the highest point on the Alaska Highway, over 4,000 ft. Saw quite a bit of snow in the mountains. The rivers are really running, and have lots of driftwood. Passed by Muncho Lake, beautiful lake, turquoise and smooth as glass. Light rain off and on all day, temp low 50's. Stopped for lunch at The Northern Rockies Lodge. Looked very pretty in the picture, was pretty, was also expensive and the food wasn't real good. That plus it took over half an hour to get it to us and the place was empty. Found out it's where Bobby Knight was fishing just before he was fired by Indiana. They said he was unavailable for comment because he was in Canada fishing. He must not be too worried about money because the fishing trips to that place aren't cheap.

Stopped at Laird Hot Springs, walked back to look at them, however didn't get in. We were running pretty late because we had stopped so many times to look at the scenery and take pictures. Don't know how many times I said WOW today, but quite a few. We are now in the Yukon Territory at Watson Lake. Walked around in the sign forest a bit, got ice cream and came back to pick up e-mail.

Wildlife seen today: Moose -2, Deer - 4, Elk - 1, Stone Sheep - 5, Caribou - 1, Mink - 1, Bear - 7, Buffalo - 1. Pretty good day.

RV Park: Downtown RV Park, Watson Lake YK, Cost: \$18.36 day, US

Fuel: Diesel - \$2.44 gal in Fort Nelson, BC Internet Access, free at pay phone, fair speed. Free high speed at public library.

Road Conditions Today: Good, most highway nice and smooth, wide shoulders, some places no shoulders and a few gravel spots. Passed quite a few trucks going the other way. Had one rock on the windshield, don't think it caused a chip. Dean said the Jeep has several rock chips and lots of tar. He has washed the jeep and coach 4 times since we left Winnipeg. Miles Driven: 328

Note: its 11PM and still not dark. It's like a late twilight. At 10PM it wasn't even starting to get dark. At 4:30 in the AM it's already light. Have started running into the same people every day or so on the road. Fun visiting with them. Trying to decide if we want to take the coach on the Top Of the World Highway or take the Jeep. Everyone seems to have the same concern. It's usually the topic of conversation each evening.

June 9: Watson Lake, Yukon: Weather rainy and cool. High in the 50's. Visited the Sign Forest and put up a sign. Went to a cinemax theater in the round, the picture created by laser light. The show was on the Northern Lights and Size of our universe. Also went to a visitor center and watched a movie on the making of the Alaska Highway. The movie is very interesting. Told that the highway was nicknamed "Oil Can Highway" because so many empty oil barrels are sitting around. The fact the highway was completed in 9 months is almost unbelievable. Be sure to stop and see the movie when you passed through Watson Lake. Rested, walked and ate ice cream and pizza.

June 10: Teslin YT: Doesn't seem like we've been on the road for 21 Days, time passes so quickly. Stopped for diesel at Ranchara Motel, \$2.42 gal, US. Next stop was Walker's Continental Divide for lunch. Home made everything. We ate breakfast with homemade bread, and then ate a cinnamon bun for dessert. Bought clam chowder and rhubarb pie back to the house to eat later. Lots of blue wildflowers and yellow dandelions along the road, never thought a dandelion could be pretty, however the mixture is great. Years ago a sports team stopped along the highway and wrote their names with rocks along a bank at the side of the road. For miles now there are names written in rocks. Yes, ours is there too. Since Laurel & Dean would be to long, so at MM 677, look on the right side of the road if you're heading north. LT DNO KS is there for all the world to see. We had stopped at a rest area and there were rocks on the hill, I looked at Dean and said, "Well, shall we?" Why Not, so we did. What fun. Rained off and on today, and was raining when we stopped at Rancheria Falls Recreation Area and walked down to see the falls. That's what Gortex is for. When you come to the North Country, bring Gortex jacket, pants and boots. The water was running hard and fast. All the streams and rivers are full and running hard up here, lots of driftwood. Winding road, beautiful snow capped mountains and lots of lakes, rivers and streams today. Few more frost heaves today, most have been repaired, and the others haven't been bad. Temperature low to mid 50's. Sun came out about 3PM. Drove in and out of the Yukon today. The road goes in and out a total of 7 times. Drove over the Nisultin Bridge, the longest span on the Alaska Highway, right after the bridge at Teslin, hit our first stretch of dusty road. It was caused by a fresh chat overlay. I think that's a taste of things to come. Spent the night at Mukluk Annie's Salmon Bake. (Nine Miles N. of Teslin) Meat is cooked over an open fire in the dining room. All the meat was way overcooked and we had salad, baked potato and a brownie. Good atmosphere, can camp free (dry Camp), if you want elect & water you must pay for it, and a free houseboat ride on Teslin Lake. Huge lake, 86 miles long, about 2 miles wide and average 194 ft deep. Annie's husband and his dog were the pilot's. He was very funny, said life vests were to identify where the bodies were floating

because the water was so cold, 45, that you couldn't survive anyway. What a great thing to hear when you're in the middle of the lake. The view over the lake from the park was wonderful.

Hooked up the GPS today, so we wouldn't miss anything interesting. There are no milepost signs and mileposts listed in the book aren't real accurate because the highway has been moved and they didn't redo the mileposts. Took the mileage from DC on the GPS, figured out how many miles it was from DC to the stops we wanted to make, and then watched the GPS. I could tell Dean when we were coming up on something; give him a bit of warning, so he could easily stop. It worked really well. Miles Driven: 181

June 11: Whitehorse YT : Cold and cloudy this AM, 33 degrees. Forgot to mention yesterday that there were a flock of Cliff Swallows, small birds that dig their nests into the side of a cliff. There were so many you couldn't count, they catch mosquitoes, then go back and feed their young. Fascinating to watch, they were at Annie's. Not much going on today, scenery not as good as yesterday, but still beautiful. Crossed the Yukon River Bridge, where Marsh Lake and the river meet. Yukon is a mighty river !!

Sunny and 50's when we arrived at Whitehorse. Will spend a few days here, catching up laundry, getting the parts from Buddy Break and seeing the sights. Miles Driven: 103, Campground: High Country RV, very nice park, full hookups, 30 AMP, Internet Access, dial up. Cost \$19.50 per day, US. Haven't seen any animals for the last couple of days.

June 12: Whitehorse: Most of the day washing clothes and cleaning house. Afternoon went to the SS Klondike, a restored stern-wheeler, built in 1937 to travel between Whitehorse and Dawson. Short tour, \$5. A person. Good video before the tour. Next visit was to the Transportation Museum. Very interesting, several good videos, one on the Yukon Quest, a 1000 mile sled dog race. The tape is called Quest, and is very interesting. Ate at Klondike Rib & Salmon BBQ. Excellent food, the Halibut chowder and foccacia bread, really tasty. In the evening we attended the Frantic Follies, a good production, a first class vaudeville show. Some Robert Service poetry, banjo, dancing girls, lots of good comedy. Cost \$ 10. Each. Tickets available at the camp ground, or at the theater.

June 13: Skagway: Left at 8:30 AM and drove the Klondike Highway 2 to Skagway in the Jeep. Passed through US customs, no problem. The drive is spectacular, winding roads, snow capped mountains and beautiful lakes. Don't miss the drive. We decided to make it a side trip and leave the MH in Whitehorse. One can also take the ferry from Hanes to Skagway. Coming into Skagway there is an 11 mile hill. So steep there is two runaway truck ramps. They don't give the grade. Skagway is a Cruise ship port, very quaint buildings, and many shops. Not many cars around so parking is easy and the town looks neat without the traffic. We drove to Dyea, an abandoned settlement, then to the trailhead of the Chilkoot trail, a 33 mile trail that climbs Chilkoot pass. It took an average of three months for the gold seekers to climb this trail with the required 2,000 lbs of supplies required. It was raining when we got there, went up a little way, unbelievable how anyone could climb this trail. From the very beginning it goes straight up, with many rocks and trees. In Dyea there is a cemetery with the graves of many of the people killed in a Palm Sunday avalanche on April 3, 1898. In the Dyea area the wild flowers were beautiful. Lupine, wild iris and Chocolate lilies. We also walked through the Gold Rush cemetery and walked around in town. If you love to shop this would be one of the places. Ate at -----, a funky little place, good halibut chowder and the best carrot/cranberry/ rhubarb cake we've ever tasted. The trip back was mostly in the rain, Canadian Customs no problem (thank goodness). Total miles driven: 205

June 14: **Whitehorse:** Dean's Buddy Break Part still not here. Went out to see the sled Dog demo, not having it today, will go tomorrow. Back downtown to see if there was anything we missed, no, so went to the Klondike Rib & Salmon BBQ again. This time for deep fried Halibut, and another piece of bumble berry pie. Drove from there to Miles Canyon, a short drive out of Whitehorse. Miles Canyon is on the Yukon River above the Hydro-Electric Dam. There is a suspension bridge to walk over and trails. Very pretty views, worth the trip.

June 15: **Whitehorse:** Still no B Brake parts, so much for mail service in Canada. Will wait until the mail comes tomorrow AM, then will leave anyway. Went back to MukTuk Kennels today, owned by Frank Turner. Frank has participated in the Yukon Quest for 21 years. The Quest is a sled dog race from Whitehorse to Fairbanks. It takes from 10 to 14 days. Frank won in 1995. We got to be around the dogs, he has over 100 and take a walk with the Quest team. We walked, they ran, played and swam in the river, after that we went into his house and watched a tape of the 2002 Quest race made by Canadian Public TV. Frank described the people, how and what they were doing and there was lots of footage of his team. We then went down where he keeps all his racing equipment, clothes, sleds etc. He showed us how he takes care of the dogs at -40, and how he manages to make the grueling race. He will have pups in Aug when we come back through and we will stop to see them. Neat Guy, the oldest in the race at 57, but still doing well. This is a must stop while in Whitehorse. On the way back stopped for a picture of the DC-3 that is mounted as a weather vane. Quite a history, another must stop. Whitehorse has been fun, but it's time to hit the road again. Two days ago we weren't ready, just needed a break, now we're anxious for the next adventure.

June 16: **On the road, Whitehorse to Dawson City.** Uneventful day, scenery not as striking as some of the other roads, and the road was pretty narrow, rough and had many frost heaves. Had our first experience with gravel and picked up a good sized rock chip in the Jeep windshield. Would suggest some kind of protection for your toad, we thought our big mud flap would be enough, wrong. The area along this road, Highway 2, aka The Klondike Loop, is pretty barren in many places because of forest fires. The areas are huge and it takes years to grow trees back. One area was a 1998 fire and lasted for 16 miles, as far as you could see on both sides of the road. Only thing grown back was grass, bushes and a few poplar trees. There was one fire from 1969 and it was pretty well re-grown. It takes so many years!! Many wildflowers along this stretch and they were beautiful, blue, purple (fire Weed), yellow and white. Stopped at Penny's Place, half way between Whitehorse and Dawson. Fair hamburgers, good ice cream. The day was beautiful, high close to 80, the farther North we get, the warmer it gets. It's 11:03 at night, full daylight and 70 degrees. Miles traveled today 339: Campground, Bonanza Gold RV Park: Just a big gravel parking lot (we're getting use to these by now) have full hookups, 50 AMP, and high speed internet is available @ \$5.00 an hour. WIFI also available, no charge. Some sites don't get very good reception. Coach washing area available, concrete pad, high pressure, there is a charge. Cost of campground - \$25.68 pr night, US.

Note: When in Whitehorse we noticed many RV's in Wal Mart parking lot. They had slides out, lawn chairs etc and were staying several days. That's a good way for all of us to lose the right to park overnight. Campgrounds aren't that expensive folks, stay in one if you're going to be there more than one night. (Now I'll get off my soap box and go to bed)

June 17: Dawson City: pretty much knew what we wanted to see but stopped at the visitor center for information. Bought a set of 5 tickets that will get us into Parks Canada attractions. Today visited Dredge No 4, built in 1912 for the Canadian Klondike Mining Co's claim on Bonanza Creek. It's the largest wooden hull bucket-line dredge in North America. The dredge was used to mine gold until 1959 when a dam broke above the dredge and it sank in about 10 feet of water. It sat partially under the ice for 32 years when Parks Canada purchased it for \$1.00. Considering it cost \$500,000. to build in 1912, that was a bargain. However, it cost a tremendous amount to raise it, get the ice out and restore it. The guide we had was very knowledgeable. This is a must see when in Dawson City. We then went to Klondike Kate's lunch, good food. When we got back to the MH park we took a lesson on gold panning. There is a mine site where you can go free and pan. If we have time tomorrow will do that. Went upstairs in a building to see a beautiful Catholic church. Most of the buildings in town have been restored to their 1880's glory. The streets are still dirt and they left a few buildings to show what permafrost did to them. Really love the town and the atmosphere. Still have lots to see tomorrow. Went to the river to check out the ferry we will have to put the motor home on. Looks like it could be an experience. Today is the first day we've run the AC, the further N we get the warmer it gets, mid to upper 80's and no rain. Think this is the first day we've not had at least a shower. The people who live here are complaining big time about the heat. They say anything over 70 and they are to hot.

June 18: Dawson City: Busy day, in the AM we waited for a guy to show up to fix the rock chip in the Jeep windshield. He was definitely on Yukon time. That's if they say 10 A, they might arrive two hours late, or two hours early, or maybe tomorrow, and if the weather is bad, sometime. He was only an hour or so late so we felt pretty good. Got into town a bit early for the walking tour so went to the museum, saw an informative tape on what part Dawson City played in the gold rush. Next a walking tour with a lady, dressed in period clothes. The tour was 90 minutes and it was very hot. Reached upper 80's today, unusual for this area. The tour was very informative and we got to go into some of the old buildings we normally wouldn't have gotten into. After that tour we walked down to the Commissioners house which was built in 1901, rebuilt in 1906. It was lived in until 1916, then vacant for many years. The lower floor was restored in the early 90's by parks Canada from pictures taken between 1912 & 1916. One must wear booties to walk on the carpets. We then attended a performance at the Palace Theater, the theater was very nice, the performance not the greatest. Wouldn't spend he \$20. each to see the show. After the show we went into Diamond Tooth Gerties, the saloon and gambling hall. Stayed about a half hour, watched part of the can-can show, there are three ½ hour shows a night. To smoky so we left. \$6. each to get in (Canadian) so we wasted the money. Gave the tickets to some teachers from back East as we came out the door. Gerties is a neat place, would have liked to have stayed longer. From there we drove up to Dome Mountain. It's right N of town and a couple of miles up. When we got up there it was really smoky. We had heard earlier that there was a forest fire up around Chicken, but not a big one, they assured us. By the smoke hanging over the mountains it appeared a bit larger than we thought. Dome Mountain is the place to go if you're in Dawson on the longest day of the year, June 21st this year. There is a big party on the dome to watch the sun set and then immediately rise again. The view was great and you need to go up late, it was after 11PM when we got there and the sun on the river was neat. Someone told us 4:30 AM was the best time to go. RIGHT!!!

Talked to some people today, we are now seeing the same people several times. We all go at different times but sooner or later end up at the same place. They said they were not going to Fairbanks first but down to the Keani. They were told there were three reasons for this. The rains come later in the summer to the Keani, so this is a better time to go, when you're driving up toward the mountains instead of down away from them, you can see them better, and the mosquitoes aren't so bad now. Believe me,

mosquitoes are huge here and there are lots of them, at least there has only been one case of West Nile up here, or so we've heard. Even with lots of bug spray (make sure it contains deet) we still get bitten. Paid \$4.13 a gal for gas for the Jeep today (\$1.09 pr liter), the good old USA will look good tomorrow.

June 19: Dawson City: Got up this AM, the campground was covered with smoke. Not good, we're thinking. Went to the Robert Service Cabin to hear the talk given by Parks Canada, they do a good job on all the sites and their people are great. The talk was an hour long and was very good. Didn't know much about Robert Service, but was fascinated with the history of his life. His poem, The Cremation of Sam McGee is probably his most famous. Learned of some interesting books from the guide, purchased Klondike by Pierre Berton (Klondike Fever is the American version) and I married the Klondike by Laura Berton, she also wrote Songs of a Sourdough and Songs of the Far North that he said were excellent books. Another book we purchased, Yukon is a photographic tour of the Yukon. One interesting fact, if you read a book about Robert Service that says he was here during the gold rush it's not correct, he was here after the initial rush and was a banker.

We stopped at the visitor center and the police station to check on the status of the fire. No problem, the road is open. Came back, got the coach ready and drove to town. Decided to stop for lunch before we got on the ferry. After lunch as we were getting ready to go down to the ferry we ran into a Realtor we had met in Whitehorse last week. She told us she just heard the fire jumped the highway and it was closed. Sure enough, the highway was closed. Took the Jeep on the ferry to check out the federal campground on the other side so we could just leave from there when the road was open. Beautiful campground, but pretty tight for us. So, back across the river we came. In one of the journals I read someone made the statement, "Mighty river that Yukon" Well guess what, mighty river that Yukon. Came back to the campground we stayed in and settled in for the rest of the day. Back in town for supper, Fish & Chips (Halibut) at Sourdough Joe's, good food but Dean said the cobbler wasn't very good. Back to the police station, no one there, so ran down the Mountie as he was renting a movie, slow night at the station EH? He said they thought the road would be open by morning. We're going to try and get up by 4:30 or so, to get to the ferry before everyone else does. If the road isn't open we'll go on over and stay at a pull-out somewhere. The fire is at Chicken so we should be OK down on this side. We'll see if this plan really works tomorrow. Interesting note, they don't fight the fires up here unless they threaten the town or populated areas. They just let them burn out, the mountie said they may cut a fire line somewhere but that's about it.

June 21: Dawson City to Tok, Top of the World Highway: Got up at 4:30, road still not open, 6:00, road still not open. Dean went back to sleep, told me not to wake him. At 8:30 I checked at the office, yes its open and no line. HA. We got there at 9:00 and waited 2 hours. Just as we got to the ferry they closed the road again. Dean asked if we could go on and wait it out up the road a ways. Sure was the answer, so lesson learned, when they say the road is closed ask questions, where and can we go on up a ways. In this case he said probably 40 miles or so to the US border. Road out of Dawson very steep, dusty and lots of curves, or so I thought at the time. At least the Canadians had some descent gravel on the road. Crossed US Customs with no problems, then the road changed, turned to a brown dirt road with virtually no gravel. Customs gave us a paper that said the road was closed at Chicken until 10 PM, and then we would be taken over with a pilot car. Reminded me of a Jefferson county mud road, but the views were spectacular, would have been more so if not so smoky. Dean going through Mentholatum like crazy trying to keep the smoke out of his nose. It's about 40 miles from the border to Chicken AK,

some places speeds of only 5 mph. Terrible dust, terrible washboards that shook the coach no matter how slow we went, narrow winding, curvy roads. The coach did great, never did heat up and no rock chips. At least in Alaska didn't need to worry about rock chips, no gravel. Twenty eight miles after the border we saw a coach by the side of the road, Roy and Sara, some folks we had been running into since Watson Lake. Car unhooked, not a good sign. Sure enough they were waiting for a tow truck. Their Holiday Rambler would run a while, and then stop. They were afraid to go any further on the road. They had been waiting for since yesterday afternoon. As we pulled into Chicken the wrecker was there so we figured they were going after Roy and Sara. Turns out he'd already been there and couldn't find them, hadn't gone far enough. Told him exact ally where they were. When we got to Chicken the smoke was really bad. A supervisor for the forestry service was there and he said the highway was definitely closed, they thought maybe midnight. They would come and get us, he said the fire had doubled back and was burning some stuff close to the road. We were at a small filling station/general store. Across the street was Old Chicken, 14 buildings and the lady in the store said I could walk over and look at the town. It was posted private property, so I didn't go in. Walked on up the road to the road that led to New Chicken. Smoke so heavy by this time I turned around. Some people that had gone up to the fire line came back and told me right around the corner from where I'd been there was a moose in the road. Back at the store was a guy, that from his appearance looked like he lived out there, he told me he owned the town of Old Chicken and his wife gave tours every day at 9AM and 1 PM. I told him the lady in the store told me I could walk over, he informed me that wasn't his wife and she had no business telling me that. So much for historic Chicken, which is too bad because am reading the book, Tisha, the true story of a schoolteacher in Chicken in the early 1900's, and the school is still standing. We could now see the fire was just to our North, by new chicken, figured we'd be there a while. Dry camped behind the store, not in either RV park, as we wanted to go out as soon as allowed.

All Dean wanted to do was get the coach off that road. Arrived at chicken at 4:30, at 6:45 a fire truck came through and said he would take us out, talk about a mad scramble to get the slide in and stuff picked up. Got through the fire at 7:15, thank goodness, the smoke had been terrible and the fire was burning beside the road in a few places. Dean saw one burning pine tree, I got a picture of it just starting but did not see it, took lots of pictures, got a few really good ones. Hopefully the only time we'll ever get that up close and personal with a forest fire. In AK they just let them burn out, think I said that before. It's so vast an area and virtually not populated that they watch the towns and let the rest go. When we got out of the fire area, opened the windows and the air was wonderful, still some smoke but by this time we didn't notice. Arrived in Tok at 9PM, AK time. (one hour earlier than Yukon time). Staying at Tok Village RV Park. Another rig that pulled in had a leaf blower, borrowed it and went to the wash rack. \$10. for 45 minutes, high pressure, and again the buckets and brushes were there. Dean blew the engine out; you couldn't believe the dust, that way when he put water on it, and it wouldn't turn to mud. Take something to blow the dust off with you, it really works. Put some Woolite in the buckets, that's what Dean uses to wash the coach, and both of us went to work, Washed, squeezed and chamois off in an hour. By the time we got set up, 11:30 PM. Still light out. Took pictures at midnight, still light. Tomorrow the sun won't set at all. Our Suggestion, take the other road to Tok, nothing really to see between Whitehorse and Dawson. From Tok take some clothes, plan a couple of nights, and drive your toad over the Top of the World Hwy. It would be a fun road in the Jeep. Visit Dawson, a place you don't want to miss, and then come back to Tok on the same highway. Imagine the views would be worth it both ways. Took about 150 pictures, now get to edit them.

Miles Traveled: 195 Campground: Tok Village RV PK, Cost: \$30.50 pr night, 50 amp, WIFI (not real fast but there) Cost for WIFI, \$6. pr day or \$25. pr week, or you can go to the office and get high speed Internet. Very nice park. Have also heard Sourdough is a good campground and they serve sourdough

pancakes. Note: Aug 4, Talked to some folks that just came over Top Of The World Highway. Apparently it's been graded and is not quite so bad as it was. Still think we'd take the Jeep!!

June 22: TOK AK: Mail hasn't arrived yet, the post office said allow 5 to 7 days for priority, Dean ordered the parts from Brake Buddy, should be here tomorrow. We'll see... Found Sara and Roy at Willard's auto elect. Quite a place, quite a guy, traps in the winter, auto repair when not trapping. All sorts of old equipment and wreckers around, one of his flat bed trucks came in with a car on it, taped to the door with duck tape, a paper sign, Not for Hire. They unloaded the car, pulled the sign off and put a sign on, this time magnetic, Willard's Auto Electric. When there, stop and see his office "girl", quite a place!!! Usually those guys are great mechanics. They were putting a new air filter on the coach, hoping that would fix it. Roy and Sara are now parked next to us at the RV park. Their trip across the highway even worse than ours. Not much in Tok, but good place to pick up mail, catch up on phone calls, Dean has 5 bars with Cingular, I have no service with Sprint. Mail came today, I had to prove I was related to Dean before they would give it to me. Went shopping with Sara, purchased some gifts and T-Shirts. Guys stayed home. Roy and Sara are going to travel with us to Valdez since they aren't sure their coach is fixed.

June 23: Tok, AK: Still no UPS Package, will stay another day. Laurel not feeling well, flu going around, didn't do much all day.

June 24: Tok AK to Valdez: Smoke terrible today, package finally got here at 1: PM, so headed out for Valdez. Decided to make the swing the opposite direction, South first, then swing up to Fairbanks. Fairbanks was 100 yesterday, think we'll go where it's a bit cooler. We were also told it's neater to drive up towards McKinley because you have the mountain in front of you all the time. Said best time to leave for the drive is 3AM, before the mountain makes its own clouds. Took the Tok cutoff to the Richardson Highway, which is designated one of the national scenic highways of America, beautiful drive. Fifty eight miles out of Tok is the Double Tree RV Park. It's a private park, even has a post office. Don't know anything about it, but appears to be a beautiful place to stay. Got out of the smoke as we left Tok, what a relief. Saw our first view of the pipeline today, two golden eagles, one bald eagle and a moose. The bald was in Valdez. The Richardson goes across the Copper river, all rivers here are very fast moving, and past three snow capped mountains, the highest of the Wrangell mountains, two over 16,000 feet. We also went by Wrangell St Elias National Park and Preserve, the nation's largest National park with over 13.2 million acres. Seems everything up here is huge. Also passed the Worthington Glacier, decided to drive the Jeep back up as we were pretty tired and wanted to get on the Valdez. Sara and Roy had saved us a site at the Eagles Rest Campground. If you get back in the 50 amp section, against the mountain, the sites are large and the views are great. Can wash the vehicles at the site. The other campground that looked OK was Sea Otter, right on the water, but no sewer hookups on the water, and very few in the park. We would stay at Eagles Rest again.

In the evening we drove out where we could walk by the river, walked way out to a point, saw the bald eagle.

Miles Traveled: 262; RV Park, Eagles Nest, 50 amp, WIFY (\$25. per week or \$10. a day), full hookups. Cost: \$31.50 per day. Fuel: Tok, Diesel, \$1.84.9, with a discount coupon from the campground. Gas for car, \$2.12 gal, with discount from Campground.

June 25 : Valdez AK Beautiful little town, checked out the visitor center, had great clam chowder for lunch, Roy likes to drive so Dean gets to be a passenger for a change, he likes it. Couldn't get on the Lu-Lu Bell today, so going at 2PM tomorrow. Checked out the \$99. book with all the discount coupons, can't decide, they are sold at Safeway and there are many tours etc, buy one and get one free. Went for a drive up Mineral Creek Canyon, can only drive so far then snow blocking the road. It's 7 miles up and normally you can drive about six. Absolutely beautiful drive, green mountains, still some snow and waterfalls all along. The river runs beside the road most of the way. One bridge you can't cross, so must go around in the water. Got to the snow, couldn't decide if we wanted to walk on or not. Some kids just came back and they told us it was a beautiful short hike, a mile or so. Took us an hour and a half to walk back to the old stamp mill, worth the trip. Some narrow trail along the side of a mountain, but not bad. The stamp mill was built in 1913 and used to crush the rocks

June 26: Valdez AK: Another beautiful day in a beautiful city. Took a trip on the LuLu Bell, a truly great boat and a wonderful trip. Saw Puffins, Sea Otters, Sea Lions, Whales, Bald and Golden Eagles. The captain took the boat into a cave to see the puffins, it was amazing where he took the 40 ton boat. We followed a whale until we got to see a "tail" shot. The most amazing part of the trip was the glacier. Got within 6.5 miles, the ice wouldn't let us go any further. We were totally surrounded by ice, it got very cold, be sure and take lots of layers. We had on jeans and Gortex pants, a t shirt, a long sleeve shirt, vest and a Gortex jacket. I had on the head band used for skiing and wished I had gloves. We sat on the bow of the boat the entire way out. There is an enclosed cabin if you don't want to be cold. You can also go up in the pilot house with the captain. We rode there on the way back. There are snacks, brownies (fresh made on the trip), hot coffee, hot chocolate, pop, etc. You can even get a hot dog, (there is a charge for the food, and we took food with us) we were out for almost 7 hours. Get on the 2PM trip, not an earlier one, because he doesn't hurry and will go were needed to see whales. The Glacier is the most amazing thing I thing I've ever seen. Some of the floating huge ice chunks are blue, Just can't say enough about the trip. DO NOT MISS IT. Cost \$80. per person.

June 27: Valdez AK: Took the Jeep back up Thompson Pass to the Worthington Glacier. Walked up to the glacier, you can touch it and of course get your picture taken by it. Stopped on the way back at old Valdez, you can still see the posts of the old docks. In 1964 an earthquake destroyed the town. It is now 4 miles from the original site, amazing history, the whole harbor emptied out in just a few minutes after the quake, (it's a deep water port, over 800 ft deep in places) then a giant wave hit. Most of the people killed were on the dock when the huge waves came rolling in. There was a huge ship in the harbor, one man on the ship had just gotten an 8mm movie camera and was taking pictures when the quake hit. He managed to film through the whole thing. The film is shown at the museum, you can see the water rush out of the harbor and the wave come in. Valdez has an average of over 300 inches of snow a year, record is over 500 inches, and however it is an open water port all winter. The dirt here is a funny gray and the rivers are all that color. Roy and Sara went on a fishing charter yesterday and caught 4, 25 to 30 lb Halibut. \$225. per person to go on a day long charter, then over \$200. to have it quick frozen and sent home. They caught the fish in over 300 feet of water. Ate at Mikes Palace, best food so far in Valdez.

June 28: Chitina AK: Chitina is 120 miles NE of Valdez, on the Edgerton Highway. Chitina is on the edge of the Wrangel-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, the biggest National Park in the US, and one of the wildest it covers 13.2 million acres. We are here because tomorrow we will take Highway 10 to McCarthy/Kennicott. They are both old, old towns and the road that leads to them is said to be the worst

road in AK. Taking the Jeep, we'll see how it goes. Chitina is mostly a Native American town, the buildings are old and falling down. Drove out to watch the fish wheels on the Copper river. Fish wheels used by Alaskans who are permitted to catch salmon in this manner. They are made of pipes, lumber, chicken wire, small poles and old barrels. They are powered by the force of the river. Salmon swim upstream and are scooped up into a large box. We were told that the Alaskan Red' are running and they are the best salmon. A guy from Georgia that has been here 18 years told us the native people feed pink salmon to their dogs, that is what they don't send to the lower 48. The reds they eat. Drove down a 4 mile gravel road, by a river, from town to see if we could find any salmon. None, but we did see several Eagles, one huge bald. Drove from there out to Three mile lake where we had seen a mother Moose and two babies. There was a guy there with a huge camera, he was standing by the side of the road and a mama moose was only a few feet from him. He said if she puts her ears back, run. Too much brush to see her very well. We decided not to stick around. At the next lake we saw another moose feeding in the lake. Got really close to her for great pictures. Ate at the Downtown Hamburger place, a tiny camping trailer where you order at the back window. Had pretty good batter dipped, deep fried Halibut. He told us it is frozen, they can't sell fresh. Don't know if that's true all over Alaska or just this little town. Very windy here, wind blows right up the river. People tell us it never stops. All water is hauled from Kenny Lake over 30 miles back up the Edgerton Highway because wells are so difficult to drill. Chitina was a railroad town, the end of the railroad from Cordova. A spur went to the Kennicott mines. The trains stopped running in 1938. Miles traveled today: 122, Gas for the car \$2.22 a gal.

June 29: McCarthy/Kennicott AK: Road first goes through an old railroad cut, then crossed the Copper river on a 1,400 ft bridge where you view the fishwheels. There is a campground on the other side of the bridge, it would be tough to get the big rigs in, but there were lots of pick-up campers, small MH's and small fifth wheels, as well as many tents. First 20 miles of the road contains lots of washboards, 20 MPH speed is about the max. Stopped at Silver Lake, where there is a small private campground. It's open, but for sale. The people have owned it over 30 years, the husband can't do the maintenance anymore. There is no running water or indoor bathrooms and elect comes from a generator. The mosquitoes probably could carry you off, but it's probably the prettiest place we've seen. The lake is like glass, stocked with rainbow trout. The lady that runs it was cool, she carries all the water, hauled from Kenny Lake, where the state well is, and does all her husband can't. The asking price is \$200,000. Would be a beautiful place to tear down everything and build a cabin. The campground is 9.3 miles from Chitina. There were quite a few cabins on the lake, most only summer, but she stays year around. Big rigs couldn't stay, again tents, Pick-up campers, small 5ers and small MH's. It's a must stop place. At mile 17, the Kuskulana bridge, its 525 feet long, 238 feet above the river, and was originally built in the dead of winter 1910. Quite a view of the river. Mile 28.5 takes you by the Gilahina Trestle, an old wooden RR bridge. After the first 20 miles one can go a bit faster, maybe 25 to 30 in some places. We picked up an old RR spike along the way, the road was the former rail bed of the Copper River and Northern Railway. At McCarthy you must take a foot bridge across the river, and either walk or take a shuttle the 1/2 mile to town. There are two shuttles and cost is \$5. per person. There is also a \$10. parking fee close to the river or a \$5. fee half way back to the ranger station, or you can park free at the station. The ranger activities are mostly carried out by interns, they don't work directly for the park service, but are sub contracted out to them. They are provided housing, in tents, I think. We walked to McCarthy, a few historic buildings, a couple of flight seeing services, a museum (closed for roof repairs) A hotel and of course a bar. In the 1900's it was where the miners came when not working in Kennicott. We caught a scuttle to Kennicott, as it turned out not one on the regular shuttles, but a van owned by the Plummer

family, the local gospel singers, provider of horses for trail rides, preachers etc. There are 17 children, our driver was one of the boys, he played us the CD of songs written and sung by the family. True mountain people. At Kennicott is the huge abandoned copper mill, you can take a 2.5 hour guided tour, we didn't take it. The mines were started in 1911 and \$21,000,000. in ore was taken out the first year. At the beginning of WWII the mines were still producing when they abruptly closed and were never re-opened. The Root Glacier can be walked to from town, you can take a guide and actually walk on it. For miles the glacier is covered with rock, sand and gravel. Interesting story, glaciers. There is a hotel in Kennicott, open year around. There is so much dust in the area that everyone's clothes are dirty most of the time, no way around it. There was also so much smoke from the fires we couldn't see the mountains. Long trip but worth it, were glad we had a jeep, however it isn't as bad a road as the Top Of the World Highway.

Back in Chitna, where we had parked the MH's along the side of the road, no one said anything or bothered them) we turned in early. At midnight I saw a moose grazing right beside us. Getting use to Moose, but still haven't seen a male up close.

June 30: On the Road, Glenn Highway: Took pictures around the town of Chitna, checked out the shops (all two of them), went to the general store and had fresh baked apple pie, then hit the road. Spent the night in Palmer, in a Fred Myer parking lot. Ate at a wonderful Mexican restaurant, can't remember the name and drove out by the reindeer farm. Want to get on the Anchorage tomorrow so won't come out and see this farm or the Musk Ok farm, maybe on the return trip. Miles Driver: 206

July 1: Anchorage: Found a spot at John's Motel and RV Pk. All parks that take reservations are full. Part from the 4th of July and part because everyone is leaving Fairbanks. The fires are bad there, we talked to a fire fighter, and he was on his way to evacuate the hospital. He said they were taking them to a temp. tent hospital. Things up here are really pretty primitive. The fires are jumping the highway between Tok and Fairbanks. Bought a Kodak camera that has a zoom to 380, now should be able to get some good animal pictures. Stopped at the Cummings place so Roy could buy some filters, all got Cummings hats that say Alaska, and got invited for ribs at noon tomorrow. They fix ribs every Fri. for people with Cummings engines. Ate waffles, played Mexican train and turned in early. Glad to have 4 days to do nothing. Need a break after being on the road so long. Miles Driven: 51 RV Pk: John's Motel and RV Pk, full hookups, modem in office, very slow, 30 AMP, very tight, no reservations. Need to get reservations in Anchorage if you plan to be here around the 4th of July. Cost: \$22.50 with Good Sam

July 2: Anchorage: Quiet AM, needed some down time. Noon, the Cummings Service center had steaks on the grill, not ribs like we thought. Good rib eye, veg, potatoes and cokes, what a neat thing to do. A guy noticed Dean's KU sweat shirt, told Dean he was from Concordia. One thing led to another and they decided Dean taught him defensive driving in the early 70's. Small World!! After that we went to the Alaska Experience Theatre to see "Alaska the Greatland". The theatre is on OMNI theatre. Some of the scenes taken from the air, it felt like you were coming over the mountains. Dean enjoyed it, but felt a bit dizzy after. Laurel closed her eyes, couldn't take it. Cost \$7.50 each. Then took a trolley tour of the city, a good way to see the city, however he talked more about his family than the history of the town. Trolley very crowded and not real easy to see out of. Cost \$10. each. We then walked around admiring the beautiful flowers everywhere. Most buildings have huge hanging baskets as well as flowers planted in front. The town square and street corners and

almost every vacant space is planted with flowers. Went into some shops, saw some very good art, carvings and sculptures. Most very expensive, also lots of tourist shops, T-shirts etc.

July 3: Anchorage: Farmers market in the AM, the market is huge, tents that sell all kinds of Alaska stuff, lots of photographers with beautiful pictures, a few stalls with veg and fruit, but not what we think of as a “farmers market”. Walked around town some more, went by the museum, decided not to go in, kind of museumed out. Drove out by the airport, it sits on a lake, they have as many pontoon planes as regular planes. People rent a slip on the lake and park their boats. In the winter they pull them up and put skis on them.

July 4: Anchorage: Went to the city park for breakfast, then the parade started at 11:30. It lasted an hour and was really neat. There were lots of food tents, Alaska things, a stage with singers and dancers, quite a few huge cold air balloons, one was the Statue of Liberty and with the mountains behind was quite a site. The smoke finally cleared today and most of the clouds. There really are mountains around Anchorage. Glad we got to see them. Drove to the commercial port, the tide was out, 30 feet out. Lots more of the gray mud we’ve seen all over the state. Have enjoyed Anchorage, but ready to move on down the road. One thing we have noticed all over Alaska, the people are very friendly, and seem happy to have us up here. Anchorage is a very clean town.

July 5: Seward: Drove the Seward Highway, traffic terrible, everyone coming home from the 4th of July weekend. Laurel had the flu, so saw none of the drive, and slept all the way down, what a bummer. Found a place at the City Park with no problem, pulled right up to the water. Watched the sea otters play right in front of the coach. City Park, on Resurrection Bay, cost for dry camping, \$12.00. There are a limited number of elect and water hookups, think 20 amp, for \$25. Since it really doesn’t get dark figured didn’t need elect. There is a free dump station and water right here in the park. Miles Driven: 132

July 6: Seward: Beautiful clear, sunny day, warm enough for shorts. Laurel feeling better, thank goodness. Even my hair hurt yesterday, just ached all over. Rode the bikes today, there are nice trails to the harbor and the new part of town one way and to the old town the other. The marathon trail the people climb up the mountain on the 4th of July is visible from our spot. Can’t imagine anyone going up that mountain, we heard the lady that won the woman’s division this year is an Olympic skier and wasn’t even out of breath when she got to the top, then they must also come back down, Her time was something like 47 minutes. The winner of the men’s division’s time was 42 minutes. Watched the sea otters again, they are so cute. Sara and Roy finally arrived, they spent the day at Cummins in Anchorage getting the coach worked on. Ate at Apollo Italian Restaurant, not very good.

July 7: Seward: Went to Kenai Fjords National Park today to see the Exit Glacier. If you flood a valley with seawater, you’ve made a Fjord. The Kenai Fjords Natl Pk, west of Seward is a series of Glaciers and bays, backed by the enormous Harding Ice Field, 50 miles long and 30 miles wide and is a relic of the ice age. The deep water Fjords used to be glacier filled valleys. The Fjords are actually dropping even lower into the ocean, pulled down by two tectonic plates – the great Alaska earthquake dropped the Fjords 6 feet in a few minutes. We purchased a National Park Passport in Kennicott, so is fun getting stamps from all the parks. The park is dominated by the Harding Ice Field and is very rugged, and only a couple of roads. Exit Glacier is three miles long and descends 2,500 feet from the Ice Fields. Took a mile trail to the view the glacier from above, it goes through some beautiful forest on the

way. There is another trail that leads to the base, however it is flooded. You can wade across the river if you want to walk closer, however the glacier calves and they won't let you get very close. There is a huge chunk that looked like it might fall at any time. We didn't wade across, it was VERY cold water. The trip in and out of the park is 8 miles from Seward and a spectacular drive. Again, words can't describe this country. Everyone is saying how this summer is unusually warm and dry, which is great if you're not in a fire area. Close to 80 today, but wind out of the North and some smoke getting down into the area again. Found out later that two years ago one could walk on the glacier. It's interesting on the climb up to see the signs from 1951 and 70 something where the glacier was then, it's really receding. This afternoon we went to Alaska Sea Life Center. Nice research facility and participates in sea life rescue. We expected to see more mammals and birds, however, many remain in quarantine for one reason or another and many more have been returned to the sea. We took the behind the scenes tour, and again didn't get to see anything but how the facility is run, and were told how the sea water is brought in and what type of research is done. Enjoyed the center, but thought \$20. each was a bit pricey. The \$20 included \$6. for the behind the scenes tour.

Had been told Ray's was a good place to eat, but decided when we got there \$18.95 was pretty steep for fish and chips, so went across the street and got fish and chips for \$8.95. More Frozen Halibut? It's 11PM, and people are still walking and the kids are riding bikes along the path in front of the MH. Just finished watching a tug maneuver a huge barge into the dock in the harbor, have also been watching people salmon fish by snagging. We thought only natives can do that, however learned that anyone with a fishing license can snag fish in the ocean, not in fresh water. Another interesting thing we have learned is that native people can hunt anything, anytime, even if it's on the endangered list, as long as they use it for food.

July 8: Sterling Highway, Seward to Cooper Landing: Beautiful Drive (aren't they all?) Stopped at Russian River USFS campground @ mm 56.2. Cooper Landing is in the Chugach National Forest and the Keani and Russian Rivers meet within walking distance of the campground. The state has walkways along the Keani with steps down to the river. Where the rivers meet is called the "Confluence", world famous as one of the best Salmon fishing places. There are several "resident" bears, both black and brown. We saw a black, but not the brown. To Fish in AK be sure and bring waders. The campground is OK for big rigs, tight going in and out, but we didn't have any problems and no scratches on the coach. If you have a big rig getting a double site is a good idea. We tried to put our 40 ft and Sara & Roy's 36 ft in one space. It was long enough, but not wide enough. You can make reservations at the Reserve America # for Fed campgrounds, however we got in with no reservations. Cost for a double site was \$10. (with the Golden Age passport) The park is well worth the stop. Weather is very warm, up to the low 80's for the last several days. Miles Driven: 56

July 9: Sterling Highway, Cooper Landing to Soldotna: Before we left this AM, hiked to the Confluence, what a site. This is what we expected to see in AK, clear streams, beautiful forests etc. There have been 3 "Griz" sightings in the last couple of days, (that's what they call grizzly bears up here), one a huge male standing on his hind legs in the middle of the road. The trip to Soldotna was very pretty. Everything in this part of AK is lush and green. In Soldotna staying at the Swiftwater campground, a city campground with 60 sites, No Reservations, just drive around until you find a site, put chairs out and go back and pay. We checked out Centennial Campground, in town, also city owned, and not nearly as nice. We have a river site, there are trees between us and the river, but we can see and hear it. There are stairs leading to the river and 1200 feet of elevated boardwalk and "fishwalks" on the river, places to fish off, or you can put on your waders and go in the river. We're between Salmon runs,

so not to many fish being caught. Dean got a 2 week license for \$50. If he wanted to fish for “King Salmon” there would be an additional charge. To get to the park, turn off Sterling Hwy at E. Redoubt (just past Fred Myers). Do yourself a favor, don’t stay at Fred Meyer, come into the park. Cost is \$11.55 a day and once you get in you can stay as long as you want.

Took a trip in the afternoon to Kenai, 11 miles Northwest of Soldotna. Stopped at the visitor center, got directions to see the Russian Orthodox Church, a good photo op, where to go to see the Caribou heard that hangs out around the town and as we were driving saw a sign that said “Fresh Fish”. It was the harbor, we stopped and got some red Salmon that was just caught and some Halibut. The Halibut was quick frozen, we ate one of the salmon filets for supper, it fed 4 people with lots left over. Good eatin!! About 11:30 PM a mother and two baby moose were grazing right close to us. Got some good pictures. Miles Driven : 54

July10: Soldotna: Quiet day, needed the down time. Dean, Roy and Sara got their fishing licenses, laurel passed. A two week license is \$50. and Dean bought some hip waders. I decided if they start catching lots of fish, I’d go get a one day license. So neat just to sit outside and soak up the quiet. A moose wandered across the road, got a couple of good pictures. She then went down to the river not far from where Dean was standing in the water fishing, She didn’t pay any attention to him. No fish caught, but everyone had a restful, fun day. One of these days we’ll have hookups again, however staying in the beautiful parks is worth not having the hook-ups. Don’t need elect., because it stays light so late.

July11: Soldotna: Went on a fly-in bear watching, salmon fishing trip on Talon Air. Expensive, \$299. each, but a great trip. The plane was an Otter with what Dean described as a true turbo prop, not just a booster. Dean got to fly up with the pilot on the ½ hour trip out to the lake. Taking off and landing on the water was something new for Laurel. The plane was a 10 seater and was very solid. The owner told Dean it cost 1.4 million to add the turbo prop, so it must be a very profitable business. They have boats up on the lake and guides to take you to the bears and fish. The fishing wasn’t good, only one fish caught for the whole group of 8. Laurel was the lucky one, about a 5+ lb red salmon. When we got back the tour people didn’t have any place for us to clean the fish, and they didn’t even have any ice to put it in. When we caught the fish they didn’t bleed it so by the time we got back and Dean could clean it we’re not sure the meat will be any good. Seems to me if they are going to advertise Salmon fishing they should make some provisions for the fish. The bears were great, only saw two, but they both came several times, stayed around quite a while and jumped in the water close to our boats. It was very hot today, 80’s, makes the fishing slow and the bears not move around as much. Both bears were Grizzly and we got lots of neat pictures. One of the lady’s on the boat had some rhubarb growing in her yard and she wasn’t going to use it, so told us we could come pick it tomorrow when we get to Ninilchik. She is fighting cancer, not doing well and leaves Tues. for back East to try some other treatments. They have lived up here for years and she always wanted to fly in and see the bears. Dean is going fishing one day with another guy he met on the trip. People here are all very friendly and unassuming.

July 12: Ninilchik: Continued on the Sterling Highway to Ninilchik, stopped at Scenic View RV Park at mile 127.1, small park with 27 full hookups, sits on a bluff overlooking Cook Inlet and Mt. Redoubt. It's 7 miles out of Ninilchik but we decided to stop here and check out the area. In Ninilchik the Alaskan Angler has full hookups and so do some of the sites at the Country Boy. The Angler was full and we heard mixed things about the Country Boy. CB is three miles off the highway, both are large gravel parking lots. Nice to get hook – ups again. Drove back to the Tustumena Lodge, home of the Guinness World record hat collection. Had prime rib for \$10.00, it's all they serve on Monday and Wed. Pretty quaint place, one waitress had on a silky dress and combat boots, get the picture? Sat down at a table with two other couples, we ate outside to try to escape some of the smoke, one of the couples lived just a few miles from Sara and Roy in FL, and the other couple was a neighbor of the people we were on the fly-in yesterday and they became friends last summer when they met up here. Small world again. Weather: Mid 70's, Sunny Miles Traveled: 33 Camping Cost: \$24.12 Night

July 13: Ninilchik: Drove to Homer today to check it out, made reservations to stay at the Homer Spit Campground, the one at the very end of the Spit. Kinda pricy, \$25. a day for just elect. For dry camping \$20. a day. Homer's neat, can't wait to explore it. Stopped in Anchor Point, Americas most westerly Highway Point. We stopped to watch them use the tractor launch on the beach, and of course take a picture of the Westerly Highway Point sign. Next stop was the Norman Lowell Gallery, it's just outside of Anchor Point and is not listed in the Milepost. Please don't miss the gallery. He homesteaded in AK in 1958, at the present location of his studio and gallery. There are 250 of his original works on display. All are of AK and all are fantastic. No charge to go through the gallery, you can also purchase some of the original works, saw some up to \$25,000., or you can purchase prints, \$450. to \$750. range. Most winter pictures make me feel cold, his winter pictures made me feel cozy. You can also walk around his original homestead and his present house (outside) and see the gardens. He paints in the winter and tends his greenhouses and gardens in the summer. Next stop was the village of Ninilchik, a Russian name that means "peaceful settlement by the river". There is a Russian Orthodox church built in 1900, with an old cemetery by it and some old houses and old boats. Made rhubarb crisp tonight and caught up on laundry, crisp was great. Weather, Cooler, low 70's

July 14: Homer: Left for Homer @ 8:30 AM, Dean going fishing with John from Ninilchik, so we had to get the coach down to Homer early. Our spaces weren't open so parked in different ones till ours open up. The guys left and Sara and I headed for Homer to prowl, saw many shops, lots of native crafts, just lots of tourist things. Bought stuff for grandkids. Had lunch at the Sourdough Express bakery, good food. When we got back to the park they needed our sites so Sara and I moved the coaches. Had to put a couple of blocks under one front wheel on our coach, we did great, proud of ourselves. Got a phone call from the guys about 5 PM, get down to the dock. They had their limit and they appeared to be nice Halibut. Dean's weighed around 60 lbs, he was in 7th heaven. The guys went to Ninilchik with John to clean fish and Sara and I went back to the café and had Halibut Chowder, very good!! Guys got home after midnight, tired but a fun day was had by all. Weather Upper 60's. to low 70's Camping: Homer Spit RV Park Cost : \$26.37 night, Electric only. Miles Traveled: 52

July 15: Homer: Quiet day, afternoon visited the Alaska Islands & Ocean Visitor Center. Admission is free, and it was very interesting. Lots of information about the attack on the Alutian Islands in WW II. Took Dean to the Sourdough Café for halibut chowder. Drove around in the hills above town, one of the residential areas. Great views!! Weather, high 60's

July 16: Homer: Took the Danny J, an old wooden tug boat that has been converted to a ferryboat, to Halibut Cove. Halibut Cove is a remote village of fishermen and artists on Ismailor Island, in Kachemack Bay State Park. The pilot of the Danny J, a local girl that has worked on the boat for 11 years, has just graduated from law school in Anchorage and will work for a Fed. Judge this fall, lives on the island with her two dogs in a cabin her parents built years ago. She told us the population is about 60 but can get as low as 10 in the winter, the island is mostly privately owned and the sun doesn't get over the mountain in the winter. All houses are on wooden pilings and 12 blocks of boardwalk connect the village's homes and art galleries. The trip is \$25. each and ½ price on Thursday evenings. Thursday evenings were booked until late Aug. There is also a trip at noon, \$45. each, and they go around the islands for a bit of sightseeing. The trip was booked at Central Charters, on the boardwalk in Homer. We booked it the two days before. On the island is one restaurant, Saltry, they make dinner reservations for you, food a bit pricy but very good. We left Homer at 4:45 and were back by 9:45. A nice side trip, the town village is worth seeing. Weather 70's, sunny.

July 17: Homer: Took the Discovery, also booked through Central Charters, to Soldovia, on the Southwestern Keani Peninsula on Seldovia Bay, an arm of Kachemak Bay, 16 miles SW of Homer. The trip cost \$40. each (Sr Rate) and if you want to take bikes it's \$10 extra. It was raining all day so we didn't take bikes. If it's a bright sunny day bikes would be fun. Population about 300, mostly in the summer. It is connected by the Alaskan Ferry System as well as the private boats. There is a historic boardwalk, three restaurants, a couple of grocery/general stores and, of course, some tourist shops. We walked most of the town and even tried the trail, which leads up to the bay. It was very overgrown and had lots of berries. We decided the bears might like the berries so we didn't finish the hike. On the 2 hour trip over they go by bird island and check out Sea Otters along the way. Leave at 10:45AM and arrive back at 5 PM. Time on the island is 3 hours. We didn't feel the trip was really worth the time or \$, however maybe it was because it was raining all day. Leave tomorrow, heading back to Ninilchik to have Dean's Halibut shipped home. Have enjoyed Homer, it's a place you should visit. Would recommend staying on the Spit. Weather, rainy, 60's

July 18: Ninilchick: Came back to Ninilchick so Dean could pick up his fish to have it shipped back to Topeka. Cost \$2.75 a lb to ship it. Doing laundry and trying to catch up on e-mail, log and pictures. Doing the log and pictures takes most of my spare time, however if it doesn't stay current I'd never get it done. While up here one can take as many as 100+ pictures a day. We're using three different cameras. The pictures need to be downloaded to the computer each night and labeled or there is no way one would remember where and what they all were. Be sure and have at least 256 mg memory cards and if you only have one camera, have two cards. An extra battery for each camera is also a must. Camping: Country Boy Campground, 3 miles off the main road, full hookups, laundry, restaurant, sort of like a small city. Remember, campgrounds in AK aren't what we're use to, just be thankful when you have hookups and more than 20 amp Camping Cost \$25.50 Weather, rainy and mid to upper 60's Miles Driven: 47

July 19: Portage: Drove the **Sterling Highway** from Ninilchick to the junction of the Seward Highway, took a side trip on the **Hope Highway** to the tiny town of Hope, which has a post office library, museum (which we didn't even see), some old buildings and a USFS Campground which was too small for us. It was once a gold mining town, it's on the Turnagain Arm of Cook Inlet. Pretty drive, however not worth the time, some nice pullouts overlooking Cook Inlet. The town is 17.5 miles off the highway. Drove on to Portage, not really a town after the 64 earthquake, the town dropped 12 feet and there are a few old buildings. Stopped at the Willaway FS campground, very pretty, nice large sites, no hookups. With Golden Age a single site was \$6. a night and double was \$8. a night. There is a place to watch the salmon run, but they are still a week away. Seems we're just ahead or behind the runs.
Miles Driven: 188

July 20: Portage: Drove to Whittier, called "The Gateway to Prince William Sound" absolutely nothing there except a deep water port that doesn't freeze up in the winter, a new hotel that opened last week, a few shops, and an old abandoned building left over from the military when Japan attacked the Allusion Islands. To get to Whittier by car or train one must go through the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel, a 2.5 mile World War II era railroad tunnel that was converted into the longest North America vehicle tunnel in June 2000. The tunnel is open from May to Sept. and costs \$12. Coming back there is no charge. It's one way and cars and the train take turns. Traffic to Whittier usually runs on the half-hour and coming back on the hour. Info for the tunnel at www.dot.state.ak.us Whittier offers glacier tours, fishing and animal watching.
Coming back into Whittier we stopped at the Information center. Very nice facility, they showed a movie on glaciers that was as good as any movie we've seen on this trip. Looking out the large glass windows at the glaciers and having some huge ice chunks floating in the lake completes the picture. Made our reservations today to go down the Inside Passage from Haines on Aug 12. Will make stops in Juneau and Sitka, arriving at Prince Rupert, BC on Aug 21st. Cost was \$1981. We will have a cabin on the Sitka to PR leg as it is an overnight. Decided to take the ferry instead of driving the Cassier Highway. We keep hearing that it's the worst highway up here. It also cuts out many, many miles of driving. Wanted to go to both Juneau and Sitka, by the time we got over there, paid for a hotel for the days we wanted to stay, paid for the boat or flight over and purchased fuel for the drive back to BC we probably are spending a bit more, however everyone says the passage is really something to see. Feels strange to have an exact date we will leave AK. Have always heard, take the ferry up, then you don't have to have an exact date to leave. That would be the best way to do it, however we talked to one lady, they came from Bellingham WA to Homer and the cost was \$7,000. They stopped at almost every stop and stayed a week or so. It costs more when you get on and off with the MH. Total Miles Driven so far: 4968

July 21: Anchorage: Travel Day, Portage to Anchorage, Parked at Sam's, ran around town all day, groceries, Wal Mart, etc. Tried to connect to a WIFY that was running around out there, very low signal and besides that the computer gave me some error message that scared the heck out of me. Thank gosh for Dell Gold Tec Support. Then tried to hook up my Sprint phone, for the first time we actually have a Sprint Signal, but the cord or the phone is malfunctioning, so got a message to replace the USB Device. Since Sprint no longer sells the device or the cord there may be a big problem.
Miles Traveled: 57 Fuel for coach: \$1.83.9 at Gridwood AK

July 22: **Talkeetna:** Traveled on the Seward Highway from Anchorage to the Parks Highway, (AK Route 3), and then off on the Talketna Spur Road. Talkeetna, which means “River of Plenty” is at the base of Mt McKinley. It sits at the confluence of the talkeetna, the Chulitna and the Susitna River. The river system is one of the best fishing grounds in AK, The town offers an outstanding view of the Alaska Range. (when the mountains are out, they weren’t today). It is the staging ground for climbers attempting Mt McKinley and other peaks in the range. They can climb from Mid April until mid-July when the snow gets to soft and the crevasses began to open. The town is three blocks long and one block wide, with dozens of buildings listed on the National Reg. of Historic Places and most are open to the public. One can fly around, over or land on Mt McKinley, take numerous fishing and sightseeing trips and ride the Hurricane Train. More on that tomorrow, as we are riding it. Talkeetna is one of the few Alaskan communities accessible by car, train (the AK RR runs through town), or plane year round. We rode our bikes ½ mile from the campground to town and then explored some of the side roads. The town is a must stop between Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Campground: Talkeetna Campground Park, the ad says full hookups, however all we see is water & Elect. (30 amp) and a dump station. It’s a small family owned park, very nice young lady runs it and we would stay again. We found it in Milepost, but didn’t see it in TL, maybe just missed it. There is a phone line to hook up to the internet if you have an 800#. Cost: \$23.00 Weather: rained off and on until mid afternoon, sun came out, probably low 70’

July 23: Talkeetna: Rode the Hurricane Train, called the Hurricane Turn, one of North Americas last whistle stop trains. The train runs Thursday thru Sunday between Talketna and Hurricane. A whistle stop train stops anywhere you tell the conductor (who had on a pair of carhart jeans) you want to get off, or will stop to pick people up if they wave a white flag. The train is two 1950’s era diesel cars, with the same Cummings engine as in our coach mounted under the cars. The cars are in great shape and have restroom facilities, the train runs up and back without turning around, the engineer just moves to whichever end the train needs to go. The scenery is breathtaking, however it’s the people that make the train special. The engineer, Chuck and the conductor, buddy, knows everyone that has the back country cabins, delivers the newspaper, (just throws it off the train), knows where all the bears, eagles etc, are and loves to share it with you. We rode up front with the engineer most of the way, his son and niece, from Hawaii, were on the train so got to know them. There were two dogs on the train, they just come in and lay under the seats, and several people going to their cabins for the weekend. We met one guy, Mike Curry, that said his family homesteaded the 80 acres in the 50’s, their name was drawn out of a hat and they got to pick their spot. His family keeps a four wheeler covered with a tarp beside the tracks so they can get to the cabin. He said nobody locks their cabins and winter hunters will use them. He’s from Juneau and told us to call him when we get there and he will show us around. The first thing everyone does when they get off the train is load their guns before they head into the back country. The conductor hands down the things people bring when they stop. Sometimes the train just stops to visit with someone who lives up there and sometimes one lady brings fresh baked cookies out to them. The train stops to see wildlife, to let us off to look into a stream to see the salmon run, and to step out of the train on a bridge 300 ft over a river. Cost was \$72. each for the round trip, but it’s one of the neater things we’ve done. It doesn’t run in the winter, just May to Sept. The main AK RR train between Fairbanks and Anchorage uses the same tracks and they will stop to let people off or pick them up in the winter. In the evening we drove up to find a spot on the Parks Highway where the salmon were running, Dean has one day left on his fishing license so he’ll go up there in the AM. We took some back country roads to see how people live and then stopped at the Talkeetna Lodge, very nice with a great view of Mt. McKinley, when it’s out (which it wasn’t). Stopped on the way back to see Talkeetna’s Willow Roses,

not really roses, they grow on the ends of willow branches and are caused by chemical secretions induced by the egg-laying or feeding of gall insects and mites. They can be as large as tennis balls, but usually are egg size or smaller, The color can range from green to pink and in the fall brown. They actually don't do much damage to the willow. We saw them between the library and the train station, by the tracks.

July 24: Talkeetna: Dean went fishing this AM, caught a couple of salmon, a red and a king, had to cut the king loose right after he got him up to the bank, he didn't have a king stamp so couldn't land it to take a picture. Fish and Game is really touchy up here and without a king stamp you don't bring one up on the bank. "The Mountain" came out today, some clouds at the base, but we could see lots of it. What a mountain!!! Ate at the Talkeetna Inn, pretty fancy and good food, but not more expensive than any other restaurant.

July 25: Denali National Park: Came up the Parks Highway to Denali National Park. The mountain was "out" until about 10 AM so as we were driving we could see it several times. Staying at a campground 1 mile from the entrance. Drove into the park as far as personal vehicles are allowed. Didn't see any animals. Checked out the campgrounds inside the parks. There are spaces in the first loop of the Riley Creek Campground that are marked for 31ft or longer rigs and a few in the second loop. When you call for reservations you must specify you need a site for a 31ft or longer rig. The campground at Savage River, mile 13, would be pretty tough to get a big rig into. There is a campground at Tekanila River, mile 29, for hard sided campers only. We were told big rigs could go there, and there is a three day min. stay, there are 53 sites. None of the campgrounds in the park have any hook-ups, they have water available and flush toilets. Didn't see anything about dump stations, but would guess they are somewhere around. The park is has mountains, lots of open green space and lots of forest. So far we've seen prettier places, we'll see when we make the 8 hour bus trip on the 27th. Campground: Denali Rainbow Village RV Park, full hookups, 50 amp. TL says internet modem available, however that isn't the case. It's a large gravel parking lot and you can walk to stores and restaurants. Be sure to bring any groceries you may need as the grocery stores are very small and expensive. \$5.50 for a gal. of milk, plus the supplies are very limited. Beautiful day, sunny and high 60's Miles Driven: 158

July 26: Denali National Park: Sort of a day of rest, drove to Healy, 11 miles up the road to see if they had a grocery store that was better, because we needed some lunch meat to take with us tomorrow when we take the bus tour to the park. We catch the bus at 5:30 AM, seemed like a good idea at the time, not it doesn't seem like such a great idea. Roy and Sara arrived, they were in a park yesterday where an RV blew up from a propane leak. It was an older rig, they smelled propane, he thought he fixed it. Would guess they didn't have a propane detector. The lady was badly burned on her legs and feet and one cat was lost. Said it blew out all the windows and totaled the rig. Scary!! Cold today, didn't get over 60, overcast and windy.

July 27: Denali National Park: Caught the bus at 5:30 AM for our tour of the park. Bus not as bad as we figured it would be, had a good driver, saw a mother Grizzly and her two cubs, a total of 7 grizzly's, lots of Caribou, several with big racks, two huge moose, one with the biggest rack most people had ever seen, don't know how he held his head up, Dall Sheep, and various small animals. Rangers patrol the park in the winter with dog sleds to make sure poachers don't come in after the game. The driver told us there are lots of trophy animals in the park and the rangers try to protect them. The

park now consists of 6,000,000 acres and there is only one road. The campground at Tekinla River, mile 29, looks like it would be a really neat place to stay. Our advise if you have an RV, try to get a reservation. Call the Fed Parks Res line, be sure to tell them if you are 31 feet or over.

We reached the mid point of our 8 hour tour at 9:30 AM, Dean and I decided to go on to Wonder lake, which was another 20 miles, about an hour and a half more. We changed buses, got a driver that wasn't as good stopping and explaining things as the 1st one and the bus wasn't as nice. Didn't see much more, a couple of Caribou and the huge moose. Sara and Roy went back with the 1st bus and saw a den of Wolves, then stopped at the Sled Dog demo. Wish we had of done that, the other couple of hours on the bus wasn't that great.

The park is very pretty, the mountain was "out", sort of, but we have seen so much of AK that is prettier. Don't get us wrong, it's a must see place.

July 28 – Day 70: Fairbanks: Easy drive up the Parks Highway, good road, lots of rolling hills, followed the Chena river quite a bit of the way. Laurel drove since the road was good. Fall is starting to come to the North land, as you drive across the country the gold's are starting to show up in the bushes. The story up here is when the fireweed blooms are at the top of the stalk winter is 6 weeks away. Well, the fireweed is all the way to the top so I guess fall is upon us. It seems strange to think of fall in Aug, however that's what it is up here. In the evening we went to Ester, a small town about 10 miles back from Fairbanks, to the Ester gold Camp, ate at the buffet at the old hotel, food was pretty good, the homemade biscuits and homemade blueberry jelly was excellent. We spent some time looking at the gift shop, then went to the aurora borealis show, it's shown on a panoramic screen, photo's are taken by the guy that puts it on and somehow put to music and they sort of blend in and out. Very well done, fantastic photography, mostly taken in Denali, animals, scenery from all seasons, and the northern lights. Cost was \$8. each. After the lights show we went to the Malamute Saloon for a live performance by local artists, the show is about Ester's heyday and includes some Robert Service poems. The saloon has a sawdust floor and really makes one feel like you are back in the olden days. It is non-smoking which was a surprise since it was a saloon. The show was one of the best we've seen in AK. It lasted 1 ½ hours and the cost was \$15. each. Don't miss it. The campground we chose is Rivers Edge RV Park. It's right in town, very close to Fred Myers and Safeway. Cost: \$25.15 per night, and we didn't make reservations ahead. We have full hook-ups, 30 amp, there is a laundry and 5 hookups for your computer. Actually got on at 36 something which is very fast for this part of the country. Miles traveled: 121

July 29: Fairbanks: Checked out the Discovery II boat this AM. Had heard from several people that it's just a tourist trap, saw the 5 tour busses waiting for their people and decided we'd pass. Also decided not to go on the gold mine tour, same thing. If we hadn't been on the water several times and already been to a gold mine we might have felt differently. Went to Sam's and Wal Mart, needed to stock up on things, grocery stores on the Keni and pretty few and far between. Rain off and on today, temp in the 60's.

July 30: Fairbanks: Raining this AM, good day to clean house, wash clothes and catch up some things. Have decided to head out tomorrow toward the Artic Circle, going to take the Jeep, the first 70 miles is paved and goes through the White Mountains. The next 115 miles is gravel, we'll see how bad it is, then decide how far to go.

Drove through Fairbanks, nice town, population about 30,000, however we're told another 50,000 or so live outside of town. The town seemed awfully large for only 30,000 people but with another 50,000 it doesn't. Nice day, high 60's

July 31: Fairbanks: Headed out about 9:30 this AM for the Arctic Circle. First 70 miles, or so on the Elliot Highway (State Hwy 2) to Linengood, blacktop, fairly rough in places, lots of dips. Got our first good look of the Alaska Pipeline, there is an information stop just outside of Fairbanks, a little wooden structure with some souvenirs and information. One can walk up to the pipeline at this point. It's one of the largest pipeline systems in the world and one of the most difficult engineering feats of our time. Oil was discovered in 1968 in Prudhoe Bay and in 1970 the Alyeska Pipeline was formed by eight oil companies. Alyeska is an Aleut work meaning "mainland" or "the great land". Congress authorized the building of the pipeline in 1973 and the first pipe was laid on March 27, 1975, and the final weld was put on the pipeline May 31, 1977. During construction the work force peaked at 28,000 and totaled about 70,000. Total construction cost \$8 billion, making it the largest privately funded construction project in the world at that time. Today it employs 1,000 people and is owned by six oil companies. The pipeline is 800 miles long and stretches from Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's North Slope, through some of the harshest terrain in the world, to Valdez, the northernmost ice-free port in North America. The pipeline was designed both to endure and protect the Alaskan environment. Permafrost, or permanently frozen soil found at the North Slope is between 1,200 to 2,000 feet deep. Heat from the buried pipeline could melt the permafrost, making the soil in some areas unstable. To prevent this, about half of the pipeline was insulated, jacketed, and supported above the ground by 78,000 Vertical Support Members. The ground is also kept frozen by heat transfer pipes and radiators installed atop some of the Vertical Support Members.

The wildlife living along the pipeline route was also studied and the pipeline elevation was designed to allow uninhibited caribou migration and there are 554 specially designed animal crossings. It's also designed to withstand earthquake from 5.5 to 8.5 on the Richter Scale. There is much more interesting information, like how the "pigs" push the oil through the pipeline, how it's constructed, the flow rate etc.

At MM 49 on the Elliott Highway is the Arctic Circle Trading Post at Joy AK (the sign still says Wildwood Trading Post), they sell Arctic Circle T-shirts, some native jewelry and the usual tourist stuff. The restrooms are out back and are true out houses, takes one back a few years. On this highway you stop whenever there is anything, especially gas. This stop, however, doesn't have gas.

At MM 70 you start on the Dalton Highway (State Hwy 11 but in this country the highway's are called by their names, not highway #'s) The Dalton is also known as "The Haul Road" It was constructed at the same time as the pipeline and was only open to commercial traffic until 1981 you could drive to Disaster Creek and in 1995 traffic was allowed all the way to Deadhorse. It's 414 miles from the beginning of the highway to Deadhorse, most of it gravel. The distance to the Arctic Circle is 115 miles, first 90 miles gravel, then blacktop to the Arctic Circle and on another 60 miles to Coldfoot. We were told that after Coldfoot the road gets much worse. We were expecting a BAD gravel road, but that's not the case. Not much loose gravel, nice wide road, speed limit is 50 MPH, we usually went about 45. It does have many steep grades (one 12%) and curves. Ran into one section of construction, they are putting a layer of some type of fabric down over the road, covering it with gravel packing it down. The fabric is to protect against the permafrost, or to protect the permafrost, I'm not sure which. There is evidence of several "burn" areas, one from a 2003 fire and one from a fire this summer. Our next stop was at the Yukon River Bridge, at MM 57. There is a restaurant, gas station and motel. Motel is stretching it a bit and if you want a shower it will cost you \$10. If you have your own towel and soap it's only \$6. The restaurant

had great food, we had a hamburger that was really good. You pump your gas then go in and tell them how much and pay them. It's owned by several guys that have gold claims and use the income from it to finance their prospecting. On the way back we stopped for gas again and noticed some people eating supper. The food looked wonderful. There is another restaurant 3 miles up the road, didn't look so good. At this point is the BLM information center for the highway. It is tiny and was run by an old couple that didn't know much. We were told there is a young grizzly hanging around, doesn't know to be afraid so follows cars and comes right up to people. We didn't see him, but did talk to some people that he came right up to their car, bit at their bumper and followed them down the road. They think he was displaced by the fires and/or thrown out by his mother and not doing well as he is very thin. Just a short distance down the road is something we've never seen before. Gates across the road because of an airstrip, that belongs to the Alyeska Company. The airstrip appears to be closed, there are two big white X's painted on it, Dean said that means the airstrip/airport is permanently closed, but like everything else in AK they just went off and left it. The rest of the trip was uneventful, it started to rain and rained all the way to the Artic Circle. We jumped out by the sign, took pictures, got back in the car and headed home. Saw three Moose on the way home, got back to the coach about 10:30. Long day, worth the trip, fun to be out where there is almost no traffic, (mostly big trucks and you give them the right-of-way) and the pipeline is something to see. It would be OK to take most any car over the road, even campers are OK. Saw some big RV's but we're glad we didn't take ours. Would not want to make the drive all the way to Deadhorse.

August 1: Fairbanks: Lazy Day, checked out downtown, found a great store, The Prospector, they have tall sizes for Dean and both of us bought shoes. Had Pie and Ice Cream with Sara and Roy.

August 2: Fairbanks: Decided we needed to get out and see some of the sights, started downtown at the visitor center, from there to the Quest Museum, then the Alaska Public Lands Info. Center. It's in the basement of the old Post Office, which is now an office building, but still says Post Office since the building is on the National Reg. Of Historic Buildings and they can't alter the exterior. Stopped at the Univ. of AK. Large animal research center to attend a talk about Musk Ox, Reindeer and Caribou. Saw cute babies and the talk was good. Cost for seniors \$9. each. We drove out to Dredge #6, the admission is from \$19 to \$32. each, we decided since we'd seen one dredge already to pass it by. Next we stopped at the Eldorado gold Mine, the charge for a train ride up to the mine is \$30., decided to pass on that too. We then stopped at Pedro's Monument which commemorates the discovery of gold in interior AK. The stream across the street where the gold was discovered has been mined out and now is open to the public for panning. Dean tried his luck for an hour or so and was rewarded with a few flakes of color. When Dean went to get gas he discovered he didn't have his credit card. Decided it had to be at the Quest Museum, called them at 5:25, she had it and waited for us to pick it up even though she closed at 5:30. She had called the credit card company and put a temp hold on the card. Nice to know there are good honest people out there. Weather today: Cool in the AM, low 40's, Sunny and warm Afternoon, high in the 70's.

August 3: Fairbanks to Tok: Stopped at North Pole AK, had to send a package to the grandkids from North Pole and purchase letters Santa will send in December. Another stop at Rika's Roadhouse at Big Delta State Historical Park, picked up lunch and a sweet roll, they are noted for their sweet rolls, they were average. The roadhouse is on the banks of the Tanana River and was one of the original Roadhouses. Fun quick stop. Arrived in Tok and stayed at the same campground, Tok RV Village.

Some smoke in the area again. Highway was good all the way, Weather low 70's Miles Driven: 214, Campground Cost: \$30.60

August 4: Alaska Highway (2), Fairbanks to Kluane Lake: Back in the smoke today a couple of times. Mountains, lakes, lots of gravel, at the very last of the construction we got a big chip in the windshield of the coach. Canadian crossing went well, Laurel started driving after we crossed and sure enough, road construction. Came on a semi that had rolled over, no one hurt. Stopped for the night at a turn out at Kluane Lake (Kloo-WA-nee). Beautiful lake and view. Miles Driven: 252: Weather high 70's and sunny.

August 5: Haines Junction BC: Stopped at HJ so we could make a side trip tomorrow back to White Horse. This morning before we left Kluane lake Sara and I hiked up the mountain part way. Very peaceful country. Stopped at Sheep Mountain Visitor Center to get stamp. Traveling through Kluane Mountain Range and the Ruby Range. Road pretty good. Stopped at a mile long trail, Spruce Beetle Interpretive Trail. The signs along the trail explained how the Spruce Beetle affects the forest. We always thought it was a bad thing, however the signs explain how the beetle kills mostly old, sick trees, how young healthy trees can excrete sap and get the beetle out of the tree. It also explains that beetles are better for the forest than fires, because they don't destroy the ground cover and nutrients. There was a forest fire in the area in 1888 and some of the trees the fire killed are still standing. Very interesting hike through the forest with an overlook part way over the river. You need to make noise as you go so the bears know you are there. Tried to eat at the Palace, listed in Milepost as one of the 21 best restaurants in Canada, were told in no uncertain terms that they had no openings that evening unless you have a reservation. Drove back 6 miles to Bear Creek, wrong decision, don't eat there. Miles Driven: 46 Campground: Haines Junction RV Country, full hookups, 30 amp, modem or DSL hookups available, concrete pad to wash coach (cost us \$12. Canadian to wash both) Camping cost: \$16.50 US.

August 6: Haines Junction BC: Side trip to White Horse, had an extra day, wanted to go on that stretch of the AK highway, needed an RX filled and there is one in Whitehorse, wanted to go back to Klondike Rib and Salmon Bar B Que, and wanted to go back to Muk-Tuk Kennels to see the pups. Wal Mart won't fill a US prescription (didn't even think about that), there were no pups, but the food was great. Road had construction in two places, but the rest of the highway was good. There is a place you can go on the old AK Highway, MP 929 to 934, so we went on it. There was a turn off for Scout Lake, so we went down there, 5 or 6 miles, the first part good gravel, the last mile or so rutted dirt road. The lake was very pretty so worth the drive.

August 7: Haines AK: Haines Highway is absolutely beautiful. Mountains, Streams, lakes, pine forests, the Chilkat Pass, and glaciers. The wildflowers are going to seed, fields of white and purple, and in several of the lakes we saw Trumpeter Swans. The road is an AK scenic bi-way and a road not to miss. We also went through the Bald Eagle Preserve. Most of the eagles are not around this time of the year, however we hope to see a few. In the evening we drove 8 miles to Chilkoot St Park to watch the bears feed. None came out so will go again tomorrow evening. As we were sitting watching the bay an eagle flew over very low, they are so beautiful. Weather: 70's and sunny, Campground: Oceanside RV, not in Trailer life, but the place to stay. It's at #10 Front Street, by the small boat harbor. The phone # is 907-766-2437 if you want a reservation. We didn't have one, came in on Sat and had no problem. There is 23 sites, full hookups, 30 amp, no restrooms etc. The great thing about it, you face the bay. Cost: \$21. night.

Aug 8: Haines AK: Drove to Chilkat St Pk, which is the other way from town from Chilkoot St Pk, Another beautiful drive. There is a ranger station with a viewing area and a campground, however like most St. parks up here getting a motor home would be difficult, starting with the 14% grade getting down to the park. Next stop was the Ferry Terminal, it's only open when a ship is coming in, to pick up our tickets. The boat the Fjords Express is based out of Haines and is owned by Glenn Jacobson, that graduated from Jeff West with Laurel's kids. We stopped to see him, but didn't catch him, will try later. The town of Haines is small and not a tourist attraction, only one cruise ship docks here and it's on Wed. There are a few shops, but nothing like Skagway. Went back to watch bears, one came out and stayed a couple of hours fishing. She was very close to us, (there were probably 30 people), however didn't pay any attention. The Ranger, Andy, told us bears only eat the salmon skin when the fishing is good. There is more fat in the skin than anywhere else. The bear just picks up the fish, tears the skin off and throws the rest back. If the fishing isn't good, the bear will eat the head, for the brains, then the eggs. They don't eat the meat because they don't need protein, just the fat. There were two eagles watching the bear eat and when she would move on, they would come get the fish. Tonight the mother and cubs didn't come out, there was a big male up the stream and maybe scared her off. Got some good pictures, for some reason some of them fuzzy, I think it's a little dark.

August 9: Haines AK: Lazy day, did washing and cleaned house. In the afternoon we ran by the museum, has both native culture and AK History. We then went to the Native Dancers at Ft. Seward. Ft. Seward is an old military fort that is now mostly privately owned, but since it's on the National Reg. of Historic Places the exterior remains unchanged. The dancers were good, they told stories with the dances. In the evening we went back for more bear watching. Mama and three cubs, plus another mama and two cubs. Where we were standing is probably 100 ft. from the bears, we watched them for another 2+ hours. They are Grizzly's, not black bears. Took lots more pictures.

August 10: Haines AK: Went to watch Sara and Roy get their coach on the ferry. Same ferry we'll take on Thurs. They had no trouble, hope ours goes as well. Next stop was the little bakery down by the St. Park. Good sweet rolls!!! Dean took the hitch off the coach and got the bicycles cleaned up and ready to put in the Jeep. Unless you're avid cyclists don't bring bikes to AK. We have ridden them twice and they have really taken a beating on the back of the coach. Went to the fair grounds to see the White Fang movie set, and take a quick look around the fair grounds. The SE AK St. Fair starts tomorrow evening. Sort of expected people to be setting up, wrong, guess tomorrow is soon enough to start. Dean went to the grocery store and ran into Glenn Jacobson, that Julie knows. Dean said he knew who he was the minute he saw him, just looked like a Mid-Western kid. (I think it helped he had on a shirt with his boat's name on it), anyway Dean said to him, isn't your name Glenn? The guy was really shocked, Dean then told him about me being Julie's mom. He's going to look us up tomorrow. Went back to watch the bears, only one this evening. She is the 3 year old that comes around when the sow and cubs aren't there. She is scared of the sow. Got some great pictures, it was light enough and the camera's did a good job.

August 11: Haines AK: Drove 27 miles back to Mosquito Lake Road to visit a wildlife park that is owned by Steve Kroschel. Steve is a film-maker that raises wild animals that are used in movies. He trains all the animals from very young. He has wolves, lynx, foxes, porcupines, pine martens, minks, voles, coyotes, caribou and wolverines, and keeps them in a natural environment. He also talks to them, he sounds just like them. His 12 year old son lives with him and he trains animals also. They live on 40

acres, way out in the wilderness, in a one room log cabin. Steve has done wildlife calendars for National Geographic, been on the Johnny Carson Show, done work for Opra. He has worked in films such as "Never Cry Wolf" and "Out of the Wilderness" . His place has hand painted signs all over the place, and I think one could say he is a bit eccentric. He has helped with a film about an alternate cure for cancer, and he told us he tries to live the way the film says, even though he doesn't have cancer, because he thinks it will keep him healthy. Don't know very much about it except he says carrot juice and coffee enema's are part of the plan. That's when he lost me!!! The trip is worth the drive and the \$20. each cost.

After leaving Steve's we stopped at the South East Alaska St Fair. Today was the first day, the talent was local and pretty good. Now you have to know, the SE AK St Fair is not very big. We ate hot dogs, hamburgers and corn on the cob, visited with two local ladies and walked around to the exhibits. The one ride was a Merry-go-round and there were about 10 people selling things besides the 10 food booths. A few chickens, rabbits and a horse or two rounded out the fair. A good time was had by all!!!

Decided to drive down to the terminal tonight and sleep there, figured we could sleep later that way.

When we got there one of the big ferry's were in port, had to go watch them load semi trucks, pretty neat trick. Then we had to visit with some people that were leaving on the boat, that we met while watching the bears the last few days. By the time the ferry left it was 12:30 AM. So much for going to bed early, at least we can sleep till 7 AM.

August 12: Juneau AK: So much for sleeping till 7AM, at 5:30 some other people we had visited with the at the river, bear watching, that were leaving on the 5:45 AM ferry, thought we had overslept, so came to wake us up. So now we're going on 5 hours sleep because going back to sleep didn't seem to work, to much going on at the ferry. Loaded the car and coach on with no problem, the ferry guys did a good job, they lifted up the gangplank and lowered it while Dean was driving over it, so he didn't hit bottom. We were on the fast ferry, The Mairweather, only 2 hours to Juneau instead of 6. It travels 40 knots and is very nice inside. There is an AK wildlife guy on board and he points out things of interest. We traveled un the Lynn Canal, which isn't really a canal, it's glacier made, passed by several glaciers, a couple of 100+ year old light houses, passed over a "mud line", a place where glacier water goes over the bay water and is a very different color. The ship also passes by Vander built Reef, the site of the worst maritime disaster in AK history. A ship ran aground and I believe I read that the Captain thought she would float free so wouldn't let any of the 350+ passengers be taken off by other ships. 36 hours later the ship and all aboard went down. Off loading was very simple, just drive forward. After we got settled and took a nap, we went down to historic old town. There were three cruise ships in port. There are cruise ships in 7 days a week in the summer. The town had very narrow streets and old buildings. It resembles Key West, but with mountains. We ate at El Sombrero, a family owned Mexican restaurant that's been here for over 20 years. Very good food. Stopped at the library and used the WIFY. Nice to have high speed. Drove out to the Fed Campground at Mendenhall Glacier, has 9 sites with elect and water and 9 full hoop-ups, and big rigs will fit nicely. Beautiful soreset setting. Of course we had already paid for out site for a week, but this campground is nice too.

Camping: Spruce Meadows, full hookups, 30 amp, laundry facilities and a modem, hook-up speed 28.8. So slow nothing would pick up so went to the library. Cost \$25.10 pr day (we got the weekly rate) daily rate is \$27.10. The side of the campground where they put the big rigs is nice, trees and large sites. The other side of the campground has lots of "permanent" residents. If you stay at Spruce Meadows be sure and tell them you want over on the side where the big rigs go. We made reservations, but wouldn't have needed to. The cancellation policy is 24 hours before, OK, after that \$27. We have started giving an

incorrect Cr Card # to hold the site, they don't run it until you get in. That way they can't charge the card unless we know about it. Miles traveled: ---, plus the 90 ferry miles. Weather, high 60's to low 70's and sunny. They tell us don't plan this weather very often, it's dry and hot. Hot to people up here is anything over 70 ☺

August 13: Juneau AK: Mendenhall Glacier, 13 miles from downtown, the face is 100 ft tall, 1.5 miles wide, and length over 6 miles. It's part of the Juneau Ice field, 5,000 square miles on interconnected glaciers that sits just behind the mountains next to Juneau. The visitor center has a video about the glacier that is worth seeing. Before we came to AK glaciers I didn't know much about them, now when we look at one and realize what goes into making a glacier it's very fascinating. After leaving the park we drove to the South end of the road, many homes on the bay side and the hillside. One wonders how they manage to build in some of the places they put houses. Stopped downtown for a bit, and just walked around. Made contact with Mike Curry, the guy we met on the train at Talkeetna. He stopped over for a while and visited, he will show us around some tomorrow. We asked the ranger at the glacier how many acres AK has. He said it is 591,004 sq miles, that is 388, 242, 560 million acres. That's why when the fires burned 4.5 million acres no one up here got to excited.

August 14: Juneau AK: Took the coach over this AM to get a spot fixed in the windshield, then met Mike at Glacier Gardens Rainforest. His daughter works there and she took us on a tour. The site is 50 acres of SE Alaska's lush rainforest, plus 4 acres of the Tonges Natl Forest. They have covered shuttles to take you on the trail. The flowers at the park are amazing, have never seen hanging basket's of petunias so large. The trip through the forest is fascinating, Amanda was a great guide and told us about how the forest lives and survives. This is a must see place. Cost is \$17.95 per person. From there we drove toward the N. end of Juneau and stopped at the Shrine of St. Therese, a place of special beauty, overlooking the Lynn Canal. The chapel was hand built and completed in 1939. There are several retreat houses, log cabins, some built before the chapel. This is also a must see place. The drive North from Juneau is spectacular, and having Mike, who has lived here for 14 years and loves the town was great.

August 15: Juneau AK: A day to rest and wash clothes. Worked on the web site, hopefully upload it tomorrow.

August 16: Juneau AK: Back to town to see what we missed, found out they had a major fire last night, a huge old building downtown burned. They were putting a new tar roof on and it got away from them. What a mess!! Stopped by the Wickersham House, it was closed, drove by the Russian Church, it was closed, checked out a few more shops and went to the library. Got the site uploaded and picked up e-mail, however can't send any. Mike brought a bag of apples that were picked on the beach, yes, apple trees in his girlfriends yard on the beach. We all went out to eat, he told us the building that burned wasn't insured and the owner had not used a good contractor to do the roof, trying to get by cheap. Didn't work so good ☺ Early night, must be at the ferry at 4:15 AM.

August 17: Sitka AK: Ferry ride over was beautiful, saw several whales. Dean got on and off with no problem. Met some folks from California that were on their way to stay with her folks that have a summer home in Sitka, shared the binoculars with them and their daughter Sara, they gave us some fresh, just picked California peaches, they were soooo good. Dove around the city, pretty town, ate with John and Sherryl Couvilliton they are from Lafayette LA, as he said, "Catholic, Cajn Republican and

Proud” Had Crawfish Junblia, really good. Love to hear them talk. They have an American Eagle, we were on the ferry with them and are parked beside them. Campground: Sitka Sportsman Assoc. Elect and Water, cost \$20. pr night, a blacktop parking lot next to the ferry terminal. There is a Natl Park campground down the road that is in the Tongass Natl Forest and beautiful, most sites limited to 38 ft, and lots of the sites were closed for maintenance.

August 18: Sitka: Sightseeing day, St Michaels Cathedral, Russian Orthodox, it’s a replica of the 1840’s church that burned in 1966. It has an onion dome and spire topped by a gold Russian cross. Most of the treasurers of the church were saved and it’s beautiful inside.

Castle Hill: the site of the ceremony transferring Alaska from Russia on Oct. 18, 1867, also the site of the raising of the 49 star US flag after, shortly after midnight July 4, 1959. AK became a state.

Pioneer Home: Built in 1934 for AK senior citizens. In front is a statue called “The Prospector” has stood in the front lawn since 1949. The grounds are well kept with many flowers.

O’Connell Bridge: 1225 ft long, connects Sitka and Japonski Island, is the first cable style girder bridge in the US, built 1972.

Sitka National Historic Park: Established in 1910 by President William Howard Taft, is the site of the battle between the Tligit Indians and the Russians in 1804. The park is part of the Tongass National Forest, a rainforest. There is a trail along the bay and a river, the trail has 11 totem poles that are replicas of the original poles, some of which can be seen in the visitor center. In the river the pink salmon are now running. Have never seen such a large run before, they jump, trash and swim every which way. Some are starting the decaying process and have white spots on them. Very interesting place.

Sheldon Jackson Museum: Oldest museum in AK, houses a large collection of Alaska Native material from the 19th century. It was built in 1895 and is very well done. We didn’t stay long, we’re pretty museumed out.

Harbor Mountain Road: A ranger told us to go up the road; he said it’s one of Sitka’s best kept secrets. It’s in the Tongass Natl Forest and the road is 6 ¾ miles long, gravel, steep, winding and pretty rough in spots. Best to have an SUV or some high clearance vehicle to go up. It was a radar site in WW II, built in 1942 and abandoned in 1944. Evidence of the old plank road still remains. The site was built in secret and dismantled the same way. Residents of Sitka weren’t really aware of the construction or dismantling. There are beautiful views of the bay, we couldn’t see as much as normal because of the low clouds, and great examples of the mountain tundra.

That was the good part of our day, dinner was another matter. We went to the Channel Club, had been told it had the best food in town. Wanted crab, all they had was steak and Halibut, OK, we’ll have Halibut, get the salad bar, not a very good one, then we waited an hour for the food. Very noisy, food finally came, fish so tough you couldn’t eat it. We sent it back, told them we’d pay for the salad bar. Two salad bars, \$26. Guess you can expect to have one bad experience. Didn’t let that spoil our day, came home and had peanut butter toast and called it a day.

August 19: Sitka: Light rain off and on today, 60’s. Finished the sight seeing, visited the Alaska Raptor Center, a pioneering project that combines veterinary expertise and volunteer efforts to nurse back injured or sick birds of prey, including bald eagles, hawks, owls and other raptors. Every effort is made to return the birds to the wild, however a few that cannot be returned are kept for the centers education program. Some birds are placed in other parts of the lower 48, if they cannot be returned to the wild. The eagles and owls look at you directly like they are studying you, it’s neat. Cost \$12. each. There are trails through the forest, we passed because had already hiked several rain forest trails.

We then went to the visitor center to watch a Russian Dance Team. They do a tribute to the AK flag that is very good, as are the dancers. Short program, cost \$7. each. Stopped on the way home and purchased a Diginus(SP?) cooked crab claw. That was for Laurel, and it was good. Dean thought to fishy. It's the first Crab I've had and figured I shouldn't leave AK without trying some fresh crab. Get on the ferry at midnight, so packing for the 31 hours. Thank goodness we have a cabin. John and Sherryl coming over for waffles.

August 20: Ferry : Got loaded onto the ferry with no problem, not as nice as the Columbia because it's not as new. Finally got to bed by 2AM, not a real good experience. Cabin so cold we thought we would freeze, can't adjust the temp and the cold blows right on the beds. Put a towel up in the vent but the cold just came around it. Dean slept fairly good, he was more out of the air, I was up by 4:30, went to the café, took my own cup and tea bag, drank hot tea until about 6, then back to the room. Crawled up on the top bunk, (we had three), was a bit more out of the air and slept a couple of hours. When Dean got up he took the towel and stuffed it into the vent, then stuffed paper up into the louvers to keep the towel there. Very fogged in this AM, could hardly see the shore, finally cleared in the PM. Didn't spot any whales, pretty boring day.

August 21: **Stewart BC:** Slept better last night, got off the boat at 6AM, customs no problem, stopped in Prince Rupert to put the hitch back on the coach, we had taken it off so wouldn't have to pay for the extra couple of feet it adds to the length, yes they do measure before you get on the ferry at Haines. We had put all the contents of the frige and freezer in ice chests so stopped about noon and put it all back, everything was fine. Came up the Yellowhead highway to Kiwanga, then the dreaded Cassier to Meziadin Junction, where we picked up 37A (Glacier Highway) to Stewart. This section of the Cassier was good, a section of blacktop so new it didn't even have a center stripe. The Glacier Highway to Stewart is beautiful, you go by Bear Glacier and can stop beside the lake it calves into, then through Bear River Canyon. Stopped at the Bear Creek Campground at MM 36.7, hooked up and immediately drove to Hyder to see the bears. The viewing area is on the Salmon Glacier Road, N. of Hyder. The viewing area is on Fish Creek where the AK dept of fish and game has built a viewing platform that runs along the creek. There is a ranger on duty during July & August, to give interpretative programs and make sure everyone obeys the rules. No bears tonight, just dead and dying salmon. The smell is not pleasant, think we'll skip this tomorrow evening.
Campground: Bear Creek, full hookups, modem (went down tonight and the phone line was dead)
Cost: \$13.10 day US, Miles driven: 285, Weather cloudy, 60's

August 22 : **Stewart BC:** Rain this AM, doing laundry, after lunch drove the Salmon Glacier Self Guided Auto Tour. Stewart/Hyder has a rich history of mining, mostly for silver and copper. On this drive you pass several old mines, most of the buildings have been burned and for the most part the area hasn't seen any active mining since the late 80's. The road follows Salmon Glacier, the fifth largest in Canada. At one time, 14,000 years ago, known as the Fraser Glaciation period, glaciers covered much of BC and AK, with the exception of the Queen Charlotte Range and parts of the Rocky Mountains. At the 22.9 mile on the drive you reach the summit viewpoint, where you are looking down on the glacier. WOW!!! At this point the road maintenance ends, but you can go on another 10 or 12 miles. That part of the road goes past mines, tunnels through the mountains, and to the Granduc Mine. There are the remains of a huge concrete structure where the mine offices were on the top floor, the miners lived on the second floor and mining was done on the lower floor. The mine closed for the last time in the mid 70's. We met a local; he told us there was so much gold in with the copper and silver

that the gold paid for the whole operation. We found rocks with copper in them and he chipped a rock out for us with silver in it. Said there are still lots of mineral in the mountains. The glaciers come right to the mine. Very interesting. It's the same road that goes by the bear viewing area, still no bears. Sort of feel like this is the end of the AK trip, we still have to get home and will be stopping at some interesting places, but Hyder is the last AK stop. Can't believe all we've seen and done, both of us are tired and looking forward to being home, however this has been the trip of a lifetime.

August 23: **On the Road to Kelona BC:** Back out to the Cassier Highway, then the Yellowhead to Prince George BC, uneventful trip, we changed drivers a couple of times so Dean could catch a nap. Not much traffic but lots of big hills and curves. Two lane road, I'm getting use to driving on two lanes. We talked to the lady at customer service about it, she said Wal Mart doesn't care, it's the city. Then she winked and said, but they park here anyway. Miles Traveled: 441. Weather 60's and dry.

August 24: **Kelona BC:** Left the Yellowhead Highway and came down H-97, beautiful country, mostly farm ground, cattle and horses mixed in with huge forests. A big black bear ran across in front of us heading for a river to fish for salmon. Canada's lumber operations are huge too. They cut and then replant. The new young trees are wonderful, it's a shame the US doesn't allow more logging. It doesn't appear to us they damage anything, it would seem even the owls and other displaced animals could move to another area. The logging areas aren't that big, there are always old growth trees close. That's our opinion, I know there are lots of people that don't agree, so be it.

We traded off driving in the AM, now I'm even getting use to logging trucks on two lane highways, in the mountains. At Kamloops BC we had the option of going two different ways to Kelona. We chose the four lane because by this time it's really raining. Little did we know that we chose the route with the second highest pass in BC, and in that pass we hit some fog so thick you could barely see the center line. Found out if we had chosen the other route we would have missed the fog. Kelona appears to be a very pretty area, wish it wasn't so rainy and cloudy. Spent the night in Kay and Hank Neufelds yard, they live on Lake Okanagan, a huge lake that's 90 miles long and over 700 feet deep in spots. They have a beautiful new home and we enjoyed seeing them again. Miles Driven: 462 Weather: 30 degrees this AM, high of 60 and raining. Getting to cool for us!!!

August 25: **Kalona BC:** Hank and Kay showed us the town and where the forest fire burned a year ago and took over 200 homes. Visited with one lady that's home was spared and she told us how the fire storm came through and the tops of trees were exploding then blowing off ahead of the fire and landing on homes. In the evening we went to the home of one of the guys Dean went mountain climbing with in AZ last winter, that's where we met Hank & Kay. There was a small group from their church and we had pizza and visited. The house was high on the hill, overlooking the town and lake. It is built to resemble the Amish house with three separate parts, living, sleeping and cooking. One of the neatest houses I've ever seen in all my years of Real Estate. It's huge, has a patio that overlooks the whole city and the interior is very well decorated, mostly in the Amish Tradition.

August 26: **Spokane WA:** Stopped in Spokane to see Lynn and Jan Whitig who we met in Puerto Penasco at the Newmar Rally last winter. Lynn collects and restores old cars, Porche, Jag, Rolls, and other sports cars. He has a huge garage with work shops, storage places for the cars and many antique Texaco things. We spent the evening with their family and her parents. Miles Driven 276: Weather, raining.

August 27: Spokane WA: Lynn and Jan showed us around Spokane, another pretty town. We went to an area where there are many small farmers, what we would call “truck farms” At the farms you go out and pick vegetables and fruit. We stopped at several places, picked wonderful corn, green beans, celery, peaches, some raspberries and brought home a Huckleberry Pie. Everybody in this part of the country loves Huckleberries. They sort of taste like a blueberry, but are redder. They’re OK, I’ll still take rhubarb. Weather was sunny and warm.

August 28: Missoula MT: Came through Idaho, at Coeur D’Alene is a huge lake, lots of private cabins and a gold course with a floating green. They can move it around, it floats and has cables attached, and they just pull it where they want it. Idaho is a pretty state. Then, another adventure, why not? Coming down I-90 through the mountains, Laurel got to make the drive down, very steep, curvy and of course road construction. Montana is a truly beautiful place. Got to a rest area 40 miles out of Missoula, stopped to switch drivers and a trucker came over and told us we were throwing diesel all over the place. Said he smelled it when he passed it and didn’t think too much but when we pulled in he smelled it again. They crawled under; it was a rubber fuel line from the final fuel filter to the fuel pump. It was rubbing against the engine block and finally wore a pin size hole in it. Biggest problem, very difficult to get to it. Cummins would send a guy out to fix it, but on Sat. \$400. Just to come look at because it’s Sat. and they aren’t open on Sunday. There is a Freightliner repair place that works on Cummings, they said they would fix it at 10 AM Sunday, because they are open on Sunday. So, we called Progressive (our coach insurance people) and they sent a tow truck. Getting the coach on and off of the flatbed truck was a deal, but we finally got it done. The towing charge was over \$500., The jeep was totally covered with diesel as was the back of the coach. Dean said at least the road tar that was on them would melt ☺ Only now, we have been dry camped for several nights and are low on water and the black tank was pretty full. Just went to bed, will worry about all that tomorrow.

Miles Driven: 152

August 29: Whitehall MT: What a day, the guys came out to look at the engine, hem, hawed around and finally said they didn’t really have time today to work on it, Monday they could tear it down and if they had to go get the part it would be Tuesday. Now the “part” is a small rubber hose about 6 inches long with a clamp on each end. The real problem was it was so hard to get to they didn’t want to mess with it. Should have just been towed to the actual Cummings Service Place and waited until Monday. Dean told them he was just going to do it himself, would they answer any questions if he had any, and they thought that was OK. He alternated between crawling under and sitting up inside the engine to hanging upside down under the bed and finally got the hose off. He had to take off the shield that covered it which also had the throttle on top of it. They did have a hose and new clamp which they gave him, he put the thing back together and we went down the road.

On a lighter note, Montana is aptly named “Big Sky Country”, what a drive it is across the state. Would like to come back sometime and explore.

Campground: Pipestone, very nice, full hookups, laundry (which we needed), high speed internet for \$2. A day (in the office) and all the ice cream you can eat every night from 8 till 9 for \$1.80 each.

Cost \$25.76 Whitehall is 17 miles past Butte on I-90, Miles Driven: 148 (we’re really makin time here folks)

August 30: Yellowstone NP: Another beautiful day on the road, Montana is just as spectacular as it was yesterday, would like to spend a summer here exploring. I-90 passes through the Continental Divide, the grades are steep and the scenery is great. Came into Yellowstone on H-287, which brought us into the

West entrance. Staying at Madison Campground, dry camping, large sites and very pretty. Yellowstone was established in 1872, originally to protect the unique geysers, hot springs and other hydrothermal features. The Old Faithful Inn is a historic log structure built in 1904; they have just finished a renovation for the 100 year celebration. Going in the Inn is like taking a step back in time. We watched Old Faithful go off a couple of times, it goes off approximately every 91 minutes. We have seen herds of buffalo and elk, and the scenery is very pretty. Miles Traveled: 157; Weather High 70's and beautiful. Campground: Madison: \$9. night with Golden Age.

Note: there is one campground in Yellowstone with full hookups, Fishing Bridge, the cost is \$33. a night, no discount with Golden Age.

August 31: Yellowstone NP: Took off from our campground this AM, went toward Mammoth Hot Springs which is just inside the N end of the park. Lots of interesting geyser's. This is in the 1/3 of the park that burned and the new growth trees are wonderful, so new and green. The fire was in 1988, the heat opens the pinecones, releases the seeds for the new trees. The trees in the park are mostly lodgepole pine Mammoth Hot Springs is the site of the old Fort Yellowstone, (didn't even know there was a Ft. Yellowstone), it was built in 1886 for the Army to protect the park, and was used until 1916 when the government established a parks system. The buildings are both stone and wood. The stone is just as straight as it was in the 1800's. The Fort is used for a visitor center and housing for the people that work in the park. There is also a maintenance shop, fire dept, post office, and a magistrate building, all part of the old fort. The area also has hotels, restaurants, and shops. The most interesting thing is the actual Mammoth Hot Springs. They are made of travertine – calcium carbonate – which the hot water brings to the surface from beds of limestone. The formation looks quite different from the silica – based geyserite deposits seen elsewhere in the park. We drove on a ways towards the NE Entrance, went off on a 6 mile gravel loop, blacktail, don't bother. Ended up by Roosevelt Lodge and Tower Falls. The road is closed from past there to Canyon Village, so had to turn around and come back.

Wanted to see all the park today, didn't happen, will go out and see more tomorrow. Today we covered the part of the park considered the Geyser Country, Mammoth Country and Roosevelt Country. The trip today was about 100 miles.

Sept. 1: Yellowstone: Will drive through Canyon Country, Lake Country and back through Geyser Country. The park is divided into the five different areas. Mostly it's in Wyoming, however the West edge is in Idaho and the North edge is in Montana. The highlight today was the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, with the upper and lower falls, all very spectacular. There are many overlooks and trails, and many different colors in the soil, the interpretive panels at each overlook give an interesting history. It's close to Canyon Village, where there are stores, restaurants and a visitor center. At each visitor center throughout the park you can get a stamp for the National Parks Pass Book. Yellowstone Lake is an area with inn's, restaurants, a visitor center and campground. The campground is Fishing Bridge; it's the only campground in the park with full hook-ups. It only allows hard-sided units because of the bears. We drove through; much prefer the campground we're in. The sites in FB are very close together, not spacious as the ones in Madison. Back in the Geyser Basin (the road today makes an 80 mile circle, with all the side trips it was 97 miles) Stopped at Fountain Paint Pot. That's were the mud bubbles all the time, Dean remembered this from his trip 20+ years ago and wanted to see it. There are several geysers along the trail and one of them was really going off, more than usual we were told. Feel like we've seen and enjoyed Yellowstone.

Sept 2: On The Road, Rawlins WY: Came down from Yellowstone through Grand Teton NP on Highway 191. Took the inter road through the park, the map doesn't show it as a good road, however it is. We stopped at the visitor centers to get stamps in the NP book, and just drove on through. The mountains are pretty, the lake is so far down the main marina didn't even open this year. Came through Jackson Hole, it appears to be very similar to the ski villages in Colorado. Lots of shops and touristy things, by this time in the trip we don't need any more shops, so didn't stop. One day it would be fun to come back. Came on the Rawlins, with both of us driving we just kept on going farther than we had planned. I-80 is very smooth, lots of truck traffic, stopped at an RV park for hookups because we need some water. Camping: Western Hills Campground, 15% discount if you're over 60, also a Sam Park. Full hookups, cable and newly installed WIFY. There will be cost for WIFY once they get it set up. WIFY in a campground sounds great, but the signals are usually hard to get because the rigs are in the way. Camping Cost \$21.11; Miles Driven: 410

Sept 3: On The Road, Sidney NB: Short Day, I-80 till good road, stopped at Cabelas, they have a nice Campground. Cost \$24.80, full hookups. Internet access in the office, slow modem. Miles Traveled: 260

Sept 4: On the Road, Des Moines IA: Traded drivers today and just kept going down the road. Ran into lots of traffic going to the NB football game, after we got around that it wasn't bad. Stopped at Flying J in Des Moines. Miles Driven: 558 (longest day of the whole trip)

Sept 5 – 11, Des Moines IA: Nice to be in one place, enjoying the grandkids. Stopped at the Honda dealer to see if they could match the deal we made on a Pilot in AZ last year. They did, so we traded the Jeep (thank gosh it managed to make it to AK and back). Also bought a CRV, that way we can tow either one, depending on where we're going.

Took the coach to Moscow to have the leveling system worked on, hope they got it fixed this time and it won't leak any more.

Stopped in the Amana Colonies, ate a wonderful lunch and picked up a few jars of sauerkraut salad.

Made another stop in Iowa City to see if there was anything we couldn't live without at the outlet mall. There wasn't.

Camping: Adventureland RV PK, full hookups, laundry etc. Cost: \$20.26. It's best to call ahead to these folks, they stay pretty full because they are next to a casino and big amusement park.

Sept 12: Home to Kansas: Uneventful trip home, Laurel drove the Pilot because we don't have a tow bar on it yet. Total Miles including trip to HWH: 595

Total Trip Miles on the Coach: 9852 plus inside passage from Haines to Prince Rupert

Total Trip Miles on the Car: 4796

Campground Costs: \$1853.23

Nights Spent in Campgrounds 103: Average Cost Per Night: \$17.99

Nights we didn't pay for Camping 14

Total Spent on Diesel Fuel \$1969.34: Average Cost per day \$16.83

Total Days On The Road - 117

