

# Arlington to Cabo Saint Lucas and Return

*by Richard and Barbara Cleaveland*

This diary was originally published chapter-by-chapter and posted to our closest relatives and neighbors. We are republishing in this (considerably edited) form for uploading to our web site as a possible aid to those who may be interested to making a similar trip in the future. Our motor home was a 1989 31 foot Winnebago Super Chief. Readers are reminded that this trip took place in 1994, and things have probably changed since then. The Mexican part of trip was as part of a caravan organized by Tracks to Adventure.

## **Part 1: From Home to San Diego**

Sunday 01-02-94: We had done most of the packing Saturday, so all we had to do was load the last-minute stuff - breakfast foods and so forth. The days' drive was uneventful, the weather overcast for the most part, no bothersome cross-winds and clear dry roads - a little surprising considering the recent snows that had hit the area. We decided to travel farther than we had originally planned, and drove to Kingsport, Tennessee rather than stopping at Wytheville in Virginia. Part of the reason we took the first opportunity to vary from our carefully planned itinerary was that there was a snowstorm predicted, and it looked like the farther south and west we got the better our next day would be. We stayed at the Rocky Top Campground. After we watched the Raiders beat the Broncos we checked in on the weather channel (our campground had cable TV) and were rewarded with a confirmation of our guess. It looked like an early start in the morning might be enough to let us miss the worst of the coming storm.

Monday 01-03-94: We got an early start (for us), being on the road at 7:30 AM; it had just started raining, and the rain continued. We stopped at Lebanon, just about 20 miles before Nashville, for gas. The price of \$.879 per gallon was very welcome. We went as far as Memphis, stopping for the night at the edge of the Mississippi at what for us has become a typical campground - looks great and is comfortable, but after we're securely ensconced turns out to have a railroad track nearby with a fair amount of traffic. It's become a family joke with us - "I wonder where the track is this time...." Passed the evening with crossword puzzles, TV and Glen Miller tapes. Paid no respects whatsoever to Elvis; didn't visit Graceland.

Tuesday 01-04-94: No snow; it looks like we dodged the bullet. Interested to see Willard Scott on TV in the morning standing in the snowstorm there back home. Glad we left when we did! There was a little drizzle during the morning, but the drive to Texarkana was comfortable otherwise. Just outside of Memphis, as we were passing one of those modular home transports, the truck that was towing it threw a stone and gave us a small

chip in the center of our drivers-side windshield. We stopped just outside of Little Rock for lunch at a Bonanza; never fails to amaze me how much food one can get there for little \$. In Texarkana we stopped at the Northgate campground. When I went to check the oil I discovered the hood latch was stuck, so I had the first repair job of the trip. Had to remove part of the grill to get it unstuck, then monkeyed around trying to get the latch parts aligned properly. Barb's lipstick was helpful; I used it to paint one piece and then see where it hit the latch mechanism on closing. In the process I discovered that I must have mislaid my 3/8" combination wrench at home because it wasn't there in the kit. Of course it was the one size I needed for the job, but I had along a ratchet of the right size which served the purpose.

Wednesday 01-05-94: Our drive from Texarkana was remarkable in two respects. First, there was a southerly crosswind of (we later learned) 40 miles per hour. This made handling of our "sailboat" very troublesome; it was impressive how much of a surge one gets when a semi passes to windward going in the other direction on a two lane road. The other item worth remarking is that we paused en route to pay our first visit ever to a Walmart. There was one we passed in Little Rock, but it had closed; I seem to recall reading about that vis-à-vis Clinton's extolling the company and then being faced with it closing a store in his state capital. We arrived in Frisco (our destination outside of Dallas) about 2PM and commenced our 3-day layover and visit with the Hartz family, which we thoroughly enjoyed.

Thursday 01-06-94: Gave the motor home a good washing; first since last summer. The weather was ideal - the wind had pretty much died down and the temperature was in the 60's. Caught up on correspondence and loafed the rest of the day. Bobbie Hartz served us a delicious shrimp dish for dinner.

Friday 01-06-94: During the morning I went to the Denton Camper World store and a nearby Kmart for a couple of significant purchases - a carbon monoxide detector and a pair of new deep-cycle batteries. Evening included a great dinner at the Trail Dust Cafe near Denton, although there was more than an hour's wait for a table for the five of us.

Saturday 01-08-94: Overnight the temperature dropped to about 50 degrees, much warmer than the 16 or so that had been forecast, but still quite chilly. We left a little before 9AM and, thanks to it being a Saturday, made it out of the Dallas-Fort Worth area before lunch time. One delay was at a Kmart where we stopped so I could get the refund for the "core charge" by depositing the old deep-cycle batteries. It was a great pleasure later in the day to find the temperature creeping upward; it finally made it to 62 degrees, the warmest it's been since we left. We made it to Big Spring by 4:15 PM, in time to watch the last half of the Packers' demolition of the Lions. More and more RV parks are providing cable TV connections these days; it's nice: we got to see the Statler Brothers TNN show later in the evening. Barbara did a nice job with roast chicken, stuffing and gravy for dinner.

Sunday 01-09-94: A nice drive today, from the flat desert up to the mountains near El Paso. We stopped near Abilene for propane (with the cold weather the heater has really

been consuming the fuel) and again at Odessa for gas, at 1.099 per gallon, the highest we've had to pay so far. We arrived at the Mission RV Park in El Paso at 2:15 Mountain time and, after we hooked up, met the trip wagon master and a couple of the other people who would be traveling to Mexico with us. Discovered that El Paso doesn't have the "follow-me roaming" feature with their cellular phone system, so people that call us at home on our cellular number won't get us here. It's a great idea, it ought to be made mandatory. *[Note: a reality in 2002.]*

Monday 01-10-94 and Tuesday 01-11-94: Two days spent with last-minute shopping, minor maintenance, discussions with the wagon master, and loafing. Much interested in water-saving techniques. On the way, through experiments, I discovered that it takes about 1.5 gallons of water for a shower, and about a quart for each toilet flush. With two of us, and knowing that we will be without a source of good water for about 9 days, that makes the 40-gallon capacity of our water tank kind of marginal, even considering that there are some places we will visit during the period where we can use their showers. We filled plastic containers to a total of about fifteen extra gallons to use for drinking in case we find it necessary to load up our main tank with the usual (impure) Mexican water. It was suggested that we use old wash water (dishes, etc) for some toilet flushing, and to that end we should keep a bucket handy in the shower.

With the cold nights, propane may be a problem, given that it is used for the furnace as well as the refrigerator and range, so conservation efforts there may be in order. I guess we'll turn the thermostat down a lot at night; fortunately we have a very nice warm quilt for the bed.

The revolution in progress in Mexico seems to be easing somewhat, according to the authorities, but then what else would they say.... It will be interesting to see if any unrest is visible to us during the trip.

The night before we were to cross the border there was a catered buffet dinner and a long meeting with the group where we each introduced ourselves and the wagon master reviewed the plans for the next morning.

Wednesday 01-12-94: Crossing the border into Jaurez was very much a hurry up and wait process, with various forms having to be stamped, checked, and stamped again, and finally, with our visas and vehicle documents issued, we proceeded to the parking lot of a shopping mall where we had a nice buffet lunch at the mall's "Viva Mexico" restaurant. Most of the food was not particularly spicy, but some certainly was. During the afternoon we went shopping in the mall, but bought nothing except some milk and liquor. Prices were about the same as in the USA.

Thursday 01-13-94: We had a 7AM pre-dawn meeting, then left for Chihuahua via a toll road. Total toll was about \$15; it was worth it based on the little we saw of the regular road. During the ride our altitude increased from the El Paso 4000 feet to about 5000. We arrived at the Chihuahua sports complex at about 2:30 pm and parked in their parking lot. En route we gassed up at a rate of 1.3 pesos per liter. That translated to

(1.3/3.2)\*3.785) or 1.538 dollars per gallon. What's interesting is that what passes for "regular unleaded" is only about 82 octane, so we all got hi-test ("Magna Sin") which was reportedly about 87 octane. In the evening we were bussed to a major hotel and served an excellent dinner in one of the private dining rooms. This was followed by a demonstration of the native dances of the several Mexican states; some of the music recognizable from tunes popular in the USA in the past - Mexican Hat Dance, Las Chiapas and so forth.

Friday 01-14-94: The morning was spent on an extensive (and chilly) city tour, encompassing an old church, the state capitol building (with interesting murals depicting the history of the state), a restored turn of the century mansion, and the home of Pancho Villa. The latter was of more modern history than I expected; the revolution he led took place between 1910 and 1920. Our guide was a fairly close acquaintance of Villa's wife; she died only twelve years ago, in 1981.

During the afternoon we drove to an RV park in the Mennonite area; we were surprised to learn there are about 40,000 Mennonites farming in this part of Mexico. During the drive, we stopped at a supermarket (a rarity here) and bought ten gallons of purified water to top off our tank. It was quite a hassle; they sell the water in 5 gallon containers (like those that are used in the classic water coolers) for 3 pesos plus about 22 pesos for the container. They'll exchange the container, but will not pay money for an empty one, and since we wanted to take them out to our vehicles, empty them into our tanks and return them, that didn't fit into their scheme of things. It was quite a while before we managed to convince them to do things our way. They sent bag boys out with us to help the loading process, but the fellow with me was so small - maybe about nine years old - that he couldn't possibly hold the container while it poured into the tank, so he held the funnel and I did the pouring of the first container and a kind neighbor motorhomer did the second for me, as I was exhausted. When the bunch of us went to leave the parking lot, there was some confusion as the wagon master couldn't start his engine and had to have a battery jumper.

From there we proceeded to a huge propane storage area to top off the LP tank, and then to the RV park, which was owned and run by Mennonites. We had an excellent home-cooked dinner in their dining room, followed by a question and answer period relative to their religion, settlements and life style.

The altitude at the park is 6800 feet. Neither Barbara nor I seem to be reacting severely to the thinness of the air, although we have noticed that we seem to get short of breath a little sooner than usual when we exert ourselves. One interesting sidelight, though, is that we have concluded that we seem to dream more vividly and frequently when sleeping at the higher altitudes. We first noticed it when visiting the Grand Canyon a couple of years ago, and the phenomenon has returned here.

Saturday 01-15-94: This was loading day - loading the RV's onto the railroad flatcars in preparation for tomorrow's departure. The flatcars were lined up in two rows, each row abutting a loading dock, and we drove from the dock onto the first car with no problem.

Most of us had to traverse the coupling area between cars to get to the one we were to be on, and that was a little tricky. They made a temporary bridge across the coupling space with planks 8 by 12 inches in cross section and about eight feet long; they were beveled on each end, making a ramp that had to be traversed to the accompaniment of directions from two different sources: the wagon master on the ground aside the car shouting directions and the railroads loadmaster giving hand signals. Most of the time - but not all of the time - the two agreed. After we reached our final position, as close to the left edge of the car that the wheels could get without being off, the wheels were chocked and the chocks nailed down, then cables were strung between the RV and flatcar to reduce the likelihood of problems should there be a severe tip of the flatcar. We all finished loading by about 2PM, and the rest of the day was spent just reading and loafing and watching the local children pester RVers for handouts.

Sunday 01-16-94: After a little back and forth to get the train properly configured, we finally got underway at about 9AM. We climbed to almost 8000 feet, through a mixture of farmland, pasture and forest, and arrived in Creel at about 2PM. The trip was punctuated by a few stops to let more favored trains pass (ours is a "special"). During the trip the wagon master's wife read some passages from books about the area to us over the CB. One of the tunnels we went through was over 4000 feet in length, and at the speed we were traveling (uphill) it took about 3 minutes. Creel is a fairly large town, of about 3100 people. We took a bus tour (\$10 each extra) to visit some Tarahumara Indian settlements. These Indians live, for the most part, in natural caves in the area, and are mostly anti-social, so they don't normally form villages, although some western influence (missions, mostly) has had its effect. Barbara bought some cute little dolls made by them. In the biggest settlement, it was interesting to see the men of the village all gathered near the church for their usual Sunday afternoon discussion of village problems, while the women and children were on the periphery of the meeting just waiting for the men to finish. The only smiling faces in the group were the young boys. The women all were somber, and the girl children emulated their mothers. One little girl of three years old was carrying her baby sibling in her shawl. When I asked to take her picture (using sign language) the slightest smile crossed her face briefly, but it vanished before I readied my camera. Literature on these Indians suggests that the women have an equal say with the men about family and community business, but the evidence we saw strongly suggested otherwise.

We spent the night on a siding along the main street in Creel. It was interesting to see the cars and trucks driving the main street back and forth, just like the cruising that takes place in small towns in the USA.

Monday 01-17-94: The trip to Bahuichivo was a short one as measured by rail miles, but very long in hours, as we spent a great deal of time stopped at sidings for one reason or another. One of the motorhomes was equipped with a satellite dish, and shortly after breakfast the owner briefed us (over the CB) about the earthquake in the Los Angeles area. At noon we were stopped in a small town and could pick up a Mexican TV channel with some pictures of the damage, narrated, of course, in Spanish, which was no help to us. Occasionally we could pick up some US radio stations on AM, so managed to get the

essence of the news during the day and evening.

During the day we passed the highest point on the trip, slightly over 8000 feet. At one stop we had the opportunity to look out over a nice scenic area, and Barbara picked up a couple of mementos from the local Indians. When we finally arrived in Bahuichivo we all gathered on the first flatcar - one that had been purposely left empty - for an evening briefing and snacks, along with our self-supplied beverages. We seem to be doing fairly well on water and holding tank capacity, but we still have a few more days to go. Tomorrow we'll be out of our rigs all day, so that will help.

Wednesday 01-18-94: We all gathered at 8AM to take the bus to the hotel at Cerocahui; the trip was over a VERY rough gravel road, and took about an hour for the 55 kilometer trip. The town supported the Mission and the hotel (or vice versa?); there wasn't a paved road anywhere, various livestock ambled the streets along with us visitors. The hotel was fairly nice, with electricity occasionally from the local diesel generator and some hot water and some potable water. During the morning Barbara and I took a trip to a Copper Canyon overlook; the trip took about an hour and fifteen minutes for the 27 kilometer (16 mile) ride, about 12 miles per hour on the average. We would have abandoned ship if the driver had tried going any faster. The overlook was very impressive; we understand that the drop from our vantage point to the canyon floor was something like 3000 feet. It WAS, however, quite cold there, and we were happy to get into the warm bus for the trip back.

During the afternoon we visited the local mission and delivered the parcels of clothing and toys we had brought along for the kids. The mission school is a boarding school for Indian girls, with the intent that many of them may continue their education and become nurses or teachers and help the Indian population improve their situation. We were given a tour of the school by one of the five resident nuns.

Later we were provided a dinner by the hotel (part of our "package") which included one free Margarita, and for those people who selected "Mexican" over "steak" and "Fish" as entrees, a HOT HOT HOT vegetable dish of chili peppers and corn. Barbara took one taste and forbade me to get close to it (I had, of course, ordered "steak").

On the return to the train (another hour or so of VERY bumpy road) there was a little rain, the first we had seen since leaving El Paso.

Wednesday 01-19-94: Despite our wagon master's assertion that the railroad would wait until 8AM to get underway, we started moving at 7AM, much to the discomfort of some people caught in showers. Dawn was about 8AM, and found us entering perhaps the most interesting part of the set of canyons; the scenery during the day was magnificent. The mountains, canyons and cliffs, in my opinion, were about the magnitude but quite different from the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Here in the Sierra Madres they seemed to be more weathered, and there was more plant life than the Grand Canyon exhibits.

One thing we've noted is the paucity of wildlife here. Since leaving El Paso we have not

seen a squirrel or any other kind of animal on the loose except for burros, horses, pigs, goats and cattle. Even birds seem scarce; we have seen many hawks and crows, but hardly any others. Occasionally at a stop we'll hear some other birds, but not see them. Cats are a rarity, although dogs abound (the Mexicans treat them like dogs, so they are very shy). Finally, as we arrived near Los Mochis, we saw a lot of blackbirds and pigeons, and even some birds that looked a little like egrets; we couldn't identify them positively, but the marshy land and their profile suggested that that's what they were. There were also a lot of buzzards, many congregating around the remains of a burro here or a cow there that apparently had run afoul of one of the previous trains on the line. The temperature eased up to the 70's as the topography leveled out and the altitude dropped to a hundred feet. We arrived in Los Mochis about mid-afternoon, well ahead of schedule, and spent the night on the loading siding.

Thursday 01-20-94: Offloading from the flatcars started at about 8AM, and was completed about 10:30, with only one hitch. One of the larger motor homes, one with air brakes, had its brake air line severed by one of the ramp logs which flipped up as the front wheels passed over it. Loss of air pressure means that the vehicle stops cold, and there it sat for nearly an hour while the air line was repaired. Later we learned that there had been a theft the previous evening; a motor-generator set had been stolen from one of the rigs. It had been bolted down in the bed of a pickup truck (that was used to pull a trailer) and the thieves had unbolted it and carted it off. It happened at about 4AM; the owner heard the noise but thought it was one of the train crewmen removing the cables and blocks from our wheels in preparation for unloading.

After unloading we drove a short distance to the selected motor home park. Barbara and I decided, along with a few others, to replenish our LP gas supply, so we stopped off at a large propane facility. This time we had no luck; those RV's that used LP gas in removable bottles were serviced ok, but to handle those of us with integral storage tanks we would have had to enter the complex proper, and only the manager could authorize that - and he was not there and not expected to return for a while. So we decided to wait until later in the trip to top off the tank. Later at the RV park we emptied our holding tanks and replenished our fresh water. We had done pretty well; neither holding tank was over half full and we had about half our fresh water left.

The last several mornings following "dry camping" nights the alternator belt in the engine had been slipping for a while, until the batteries, which had been depleted from the lack of an electrical hookup, got a start on being charged up. Figuring that a slipping belt was not something to be tolerated for long, during the afternoon I pulled the engine cover with the aim of seeing if it would be possible to tighten the belt. There was both good news and bad news: the alternator was one of the few items that could be reached without too much difficulty, so tightening it would be not too difficult a task. The bad news had two dimensions; first the belt didn't seem to be particularly loose, and second the bolts for the alternator were VERY hard to get at and so secure that I couldn't loosen them anyway. I settled for trying some belt "dressing" that the wagon master had to see if that would do the job.

In the evening we enjoyed a group dinner of grilled marinated shrimp at one of the large hotels in Los Mochis; the meal was excellent. Through the hotel switchboard Barbara was able to initiate a couple of phone calls, the first we had found convenient to make since entering Mexico, and had predictable results - one answering machine and one line busy.

Several of the caravan members have come down with colds, and today yours truly joined them. Probably due, I figure, to the very cold weather the past few days coupled with the group tours where everyone gets onto a bus and passes their germs around. I now thank goodness for Barbara's foresight in packing a fairly complete medicine chest, which provides me the antihistamines and so forth that should help me continue to enjoy the trip. One of the caravan members had become so ill that she was admitted to the local hospital for what was predicted to be a short stay.

Friday 01-21-94: We left for the trip to Mazatlan without the couple whose member was in the hospital and the tail gunners, who vow to stay and offer aid to them. The trip was uneventful; the toll road was very good and the topography almost totally flat. The tolls, however, were fairly steep; in the 252 mile drive we passed through five toll booths, and were zinged for a total of 180 pesos - \$60 - and that was at the specially low tourist rate! Clearly travel in Mexico is not cheap. The park we settled into at the end of the afternoon, the Escondida Traylor (sic) Park, is beautiful, with two or more tall coconut palms at each site providing a fair amount of shade.

Saturday 01-22-94: First thing in the morning we gathered together our laundry and left it for a local laundry to do. Our bus left at 9:30; first on the agenda was a buffet breakfast at the Playa Mazatlan Hotel, on the North beach, where the service and food were excellent. After breakfast and before the bus took us on a tour of the city, Barbara managed to get through on a phone call to get the information on her new grand niece's entry into the world. During the city tour we saw an exhibition of the high-diving (into shallow water) that all tourists are required to see, then wandered around both the old town's market place and new mall with a supermarket, but didn't buy anything. The afternoon was spent loafing. Barbara got her hair cut by a nice young woman who came around to the site; she did the job outside in the shade of the palms. During the day Barbara started noticing the symptoms of a beginning cold.

This evening we went to a Mexican Buffet and show at the Playa Mazatlan the same place we had had lunch. There must have been about 400 people in the audience. The show consisted of the usual mix of singers, dancers, comedians and jugglers.

Sunday 10-23-94: This was a day off; we generally loafed and took a walk to visit one of the nearby hotels. Our laundry was returned first thing in the morning; it was all there and in wonderful shape. During the afternoon we watched the last round of NFL playoff games, the picture was great, but the audio was all in Spanish except for the occasional referee's call. So it will be Dallas and Buffalo, a repeat of last year. In the evening we all went for dinner at Valentino's restaurant. It was a very upscale place, with both inside and outside dining, impressive waterfalls and an associated (but out of earshot) disco.

Our dinners were excellent; I forgot to check the menu for costs (it was part of our tour) but I paid about \$5.25 for each manhattan on the rocks, so the place was not cheap.

That evening I suffered greatly from chest congestion, lying awake coughing about half the night. Finally Barbara decided I should start taking the antibiotics our doctor had suggested we take along. By morning I felt a little better, but was very weak. Barbara's sore throat is still there, but fortunately not getting any worse.

Monday 01-24-94: We left the park at about 8AM for the half-hour drive to the loading dock of the ferry which is to take us over to the Baja Peninsula. The park we had been staying at was one of the dirtiest I have ever seen. There is no pavement, little gravel, and no grass, and the weather is invariably sunny, so the ground around our site was pure silt, about a quarter of an inch thick for the most part. The water pressure was VERY low; even with a hose nozzle I couldn't throw a stream more than about four feet. Taking showers with it was a joke; the water just dribbled out of the shower head. There were some little ants that one had to look out for - a few got into our motor home, but not enough to be a problem. Electricity was the only thing where you got more than you wanted - it was about 130 volts, making one wonder about the safety of the microwave, refrigerator circuits, and so forth.

The ferry wasn't supposed to load until about 11AM, but our wagon master wanted us to be sure to be there as there was some business about measuring rigs and so forth that had to be done. One thing the Mex's insisted on was that I remove our side view mirrors; I guess they'll REALLY pack us in tightly. We've had our motor home on ferries in Alaska and Nova Scotia, and this is the first time I had to do this. I was told that the alternative was to pay double for the ferry ride. Boarding was no more complex than for other ferries except that we first positioned ourselves sort of in a square with the ferry ramp on one side, and the loadmaster beckoned us individually in the order he wanted. After loading, about 3PM, and as the ferry pulled out from the terminal, I went up to the cabin and found that our promised outside cabin had no porthole and was in the inside. The wagon master straightened that out, and as soon as we moved to an outside cabin I took a nap; my cold/pneumonia had taken all the starch out of me. I slept until dinner time, then went to bed immediately and slept until time to get up in the morning.

Dinner on the ferry was an experience. The menus were dual-language, so ordering wasn't much of a problem, but actually getting the food was something else. The waiter didn't remember who ordered what; they served us bread at first and then took it away when the entrees arrived, then, without being asked, brought twice as much bread later.

Tuesday 01-25-94: By breakfast time I had decided that I was back among the living; the severe fatigue I had felt the previous day was gone, although I still had the congestion and some chest aches and pains from all the coughing I had done. Breakfast was similar to dinner, no problem ordering but difficulty getting what we ordered. The ferry unloaded on schedule, I replaced our mirrors, and after a meeting we all proceeded to a market to stock up on food. Unfortunately, our refrigerator door had opened while on the ferry so all our perishable food (except that in the freezer unit, which was ok) was

deemed discardable, so we stocked up, buying some ice to help the refrigerator cool down. After a while, the tailgunner was promoted to temporary wagon master so the regular #1 went back to the ferry terminal to argue about some perceived overcharges; we were led towards our destination with an interim stop for propane for the few of us that needed it. It was interesting in that we paid for the propane pumped on the basis of the reading of OUR gauge before the pumping! After traversing some pretty rotten roads, with gravel-path detours (which prompted at least one route error resulting in an about-face for all 21 of the rigs), we finally arrived at our destination (the San Pedrito campground in Todas Santos) to find that our reservations had been cancelled because we were late in arriving. After MUCH dickering, they found sites for most of us, but the promised electricity didn't exist because the campground generator was not working. We finally settled in at our sites at about 4:30. The sites are on the beach of the Pacific Ocean. After cocktails (and it certainly was one of THOSE evenings) and dinner we sat outside and watched a beautiful sunset.

I have the impression that generally, in Mexico, maintenance is a hit or miss situation. We have seen many examples of facilities that were beautifully designed and built, but fallen into a state of near disaster for lack of proper maintenance. On the ferry, for example, the cabins were a carbon copy of those on the nicest cruise liners, but the drains were so slow that the shower overflowed onto the floor, and all windows were splattered by paint, even those in the dining room.

Wednesday 01-26-94: A full day of rest and relaxation finished off with a dinner at the campground's restaurant. I opted for fish over steak or Mexican, and all agreed I made the best choice. Generally the steaks we have had here have been disappointing - even the one at the upscale Valentino's in Mazatlan; even when cooked properly, they are lacking in flavor and tougher than I am used to getting back home.

Thursday 01-27-94: A relaxing morning. Had a nice chat with the owners of another motor home like ours, and he let me read the instruction manual for his satellite system, something I had wanted to read for some time. We had a meeting at 11:00 in preparation for our departure to Cabo San Lucas, at the very tip of the peninsula, and departed soon after that. The trip was along a narrow two-lane road with NO shoulders, and it made meeting oncoming vehicles, especially trucks, fairly touch-and-go - almost literally. The scenery was nice; the terrain was mountainous and we traveled near the Pacific coast. We arrived at Cabo San Lucas about 1PM and entered a very nice RV park on the outskirts of town. Our site was just across from the pool and restaurant, and shaded by some small palms. We wasted no time getting around to sampling the pina colodas at poolside (I wore my Jamaica tee shirt). Barbara felt the heavy fatigue that I had felt a few days earlier, so she napped away the rest of the afternoon while I read. Dinner at poolside was lobster tail at \$9.95; the restaurant seems to want to deal mostly in US money.

Friday 01-28-94: At breakfast time Barbara was hit by the intestinal disorder that has been making the rounds, so she begged off from the day's activities. The rest of us took cabs to the Finisterre Hotel, on the side of a promontory at the edge of downtown Cabo

San Lucas, where we had a buffet brunch and enjoyed a magnificent view of both the city and the harbor. Later we walked down to the harbor, a half mile or so, and went on a couple of glass-bottomed boats for a brief tour of the very tip of the peninsula. We saw many pelicans, a few seals, some pretty fish, and had views of beautiful rock formations and sandy beaches. One small area between the rocks had a beach on the Pacific Ocean and another beach on the Sea of Cortez. After we returned I walked into town, purchased some incidentals, and returned to the RV park by cab. Barbara reported that she had slept most of the morning, but wasn't up to anything yet, so she decided not to eat dinner. We spent the rest of the afternoon and evening reading.

Saturday 01-29-94: This was to be a free day, and since Barbara seemed to be well on the mend we elected to take the tour I had had the previous day; I had been so impressed with what I had seen that I wanted her to see them. Another couple who had missed the tour yesterday joined us. Things were very much the same, except for an added surprise; as we were returning to shore in the glass-bottomed boat some bottom flat-fish (bat rays, I was later told) broke the surface and "flew" for a few yards near our boat. I had never seen such a thing, nor had I heard that it was possible. I think I got some good videos of them. In the evening the group had a pot-luck hors-d'oeuvres cocktail hour; Barbara had prepared her (famous?) crab dip for it. One of the games we played resulted in her receiving the grand prize for correctly answering questions about our trip - what was the number of the longest tunnel on the train ride, and so forth.

Sunday 01-30-94: After an early morning briefing we departed for the north, passing through LaPaz to Ciudad Constitucion. The terrain after La Paz was mostly barren desert at an altitude of 500-1000 feet, giving way to farmland as we neared Constitucion. The campground was reached by a gravel washboard that challenged anything we saw on our Alaska trip. When we got to the campground we found a flat area with a few small oases of water and electrical connections; we grouped around them four to a site. The ground was representative of what we had seen elsewhere, hard-packed soil with about a half inch of dust that got stirred up with every step we took. We had power for only a few minutes before the camp breakers gave up. Fortunately the power came back on again, and we managed to see the superbowl; the signal was very weak (snowy) and the commentary in Spanish, but we could pretty much follow what was going on. Apparently the Dallas coach had more useful things to say at half time. We hosted one of the other couples on the trip for the game; they had no electricity at their site. Sometime during the night the power went off again and stayed off until after we left in the morning.

Monday 01-31-94: Despite the fact that the morning briefing had been scheduled for 8AM as recently as 5PM the previous day, the wagon master rescheduled it for 7:30 and didn't bother telling us; we hadn't looked at the bulletin board the previous evening. These morning briefings are at the root of what both Barbara and I feel is the only real negative thing about this tour. Because the wagon master insists that no one leave the camp before he does and that we don't pass him en route, and because he has us all up and ready to roll at the morning briefings, we naturally proceed onto the highway the way elephants enter the circus ring, one after the other with little space in between. We much

prefer the way Good Sam's wagon master handled it on our trip through Nova Scotia: he briefed the day before and personally left early in the morning, and the rest of us could get up and leave when we felt like it. The current wagon master seems to be fond of periodically stopping along the way to gather all his chickens into a tightly knit flock before proceeding, thereby perpetuating the elephant line.

We stopped for gas early in the morning, and as we were the last to leave the station, we had a rare hour or two of more or less independent travel until we came to a beautifully scenic overlook just after reaching the east coast of the Baja. Here was the entire troop apparently waiting for everyone to catch up. The day's drive was, for the most part, VERY rough, over narrow winding mountain roads. The scenery was indeed spectacular, but the driver and navigator had a difficult time keeping their respective cools due to the narrowness of the roadways and the sharp drop-offs. We wound up on a public beach at Bahia Concepcion. This would have been a perfectly wonderful place except for the weather; it was very windy and fairly cool. Barbara and I walked along the beach picking up shells and wading in the warm water, regretting the weather which made swimming unreasonable. In the evening there was a campfire cookout (Mexican hot dogs - ordinary hot dogs wrapped in tortillas) with side dishes contributed by the attendees. Barbara fixed a chicken rice casserole. Most of us will leave in the morning for the next stop in preparation for a whale watching day, so the wagon master kindly consented to give his morning briefing this evening!

Tuesday 02-01-94: The drive to Guerrero Negro was at first a continuation of the winding narrow roads over mountainous terrain, but soon gave way to long stretches of desert, with the only excitement meeting the rare other vehicles on the road. It is hard to believe this is Mexico's highway 1, the only north-south route on the Baja peninsula. We stopped at a small town, Santa Rosalia, where there was a church designed and built by Mr. Eiffel, of the Paris tower fame; the church is constructed entirely of galvanized iron. In Guerrero Negro we topped off the water tank; drinkable water cost us one peso per liter (high test gasoline costs 1.31 pesos per liter).

Wednesday 02-02-94: We boarded a bus, the 30 of us who were prospective whale watchers, at 8AM. Following was an hour's drive over a typical gravel road, almost jolting the fillings out of our teeth. When we got to the place where boats went out to see the whales, Scammon's Lagoon, we saw three row boats anchored off shore and a little shack where life jackets were handed out. The boats approached the shore by being poled in, but stopped perhaps 20 yards from the shoreline. We discovered that we were required to wade out to the boats; there was a muddy bottom so we sunk down a few inches with each step. Once a few of us boarded the boat grounded, so we had to push it out farther in order for all of us to board. Then the operator poled out to water which was deep enough to lower the outboard engine, which would then be started and take us out into the lagoon. At least that's what happened for the other two boats; the engine in our boat wouldn't start at first, and required about a half hour's dismantling and reassembly before we got under way. Meanwhile the wind drifted us toward shore, which required another round of poling to get into deeper water.

While the bus was approaching the lagoon we could see whale spouts out in the water, but nothing could prepare us for the sights we saw as we got out into the deeper parts of the lagoon. We had been told that there were about 700 California Grey whales there, and it seemed like it. Whales, in many cases cows with calves, would surface within a few yards of the boat, and this continued during the entire hour and a half we were out there. Used up lots of video tape. Unfortunately there was only one enthusiastic broach while we were out, and I missed seeing it or capturing it on tape.

When we returned to the shore we found that the tide had gone out so we had to wade perhaps another 100 yards or so through the muck. Then there was an austere sandwich and soda provided by the tour manager, followed by a long wait while others in our group had the boating experience, then the long bumpy road home. Dinner at the RV park's restaurant was excellent.

Thursday 02-03-94: We traveled to Colonia Vicente Guerrero over the usual many mountains with sharp curves and narrow roadways for most of the 269 miles. At about lunch time we stopped in the Central Baja Desert National Park for a brief walk in the desert narrated by our wagon master. We identified many different types of cactus as well as the Cirio tree, which is unique to Baja California. At the Posada Don Diego trailer park we enjoyed another dinner with the group, Barbara again opting for the Mexican combination while I continued to choose fish - a smart move based on what the steaks looked like. A complimentary margarita was served with dinner, but it was pretty small so I went for a refill; it was a giant, enough to refill both our glasses twice over.

Friday 02-04-94: The wagon master had called for a morning briefing for 7AM; it was rainy - the first rain we've had since El Paso. The rain continued for the morning's drive to Ensenada, where we docked at the Estero Beach Resort RV park, a very nice place.

This drive was like so many others, but the last one of it's type for the trip, so perhaps this is the time to note one of the most interesting things about travel in Mexico. On almost every curve of any significance - and there are a LOT of them - there was a low guard rail, perhaps one foot off the ground. It seemed that these guard rails were never repaired, and so they became indicators of where vehicles had left the road in the past. Many of the rips and breaks in the rails were accompanied by either a shrine or the remains of a vehicle on the downslope, or both. Rusted out vehicle bodies were encountered about every mile or so along the highways, sometimes (at particularly bad curves) two or three together. It made one think! Going around a hairpin curve with a drop-off of a hundred feet or more is bad enough, but looking at the broken guard rail and seeing a couple of vehicle corpses down in the gully tended to make one extra cautious. There seems to be no market for old vehicle bodies, every one was stripped of any otherwise useful parts; everything from engines to wheels to doors was missing, but the bodies were left where they fell.

This trip was particularly unpleasant for two members of the caravan. The front side window of an Airstream trailer was shattered by a stone thrown up by a speeding semi, and the passenger side window of a pickup pulling a trailer broke out, presumably for the

same kind of reason (although hard to imagine the trajectory of a stone that would hit that side of the vehicle).

Of course our rigs were very dirty from the trip, so there was a lot of washing going on. At noon we embarked upon a tour of Ensenada, including La Bufadora. The latter is a village built around a natural phenomenon: a place where the surf gets channeled into a narrow crevice with a cave beyond. This results in a spout of water up to about a hundred feet high at the end of the crevice for each significant wave that arrives. In Ensenada we received a tour of the Riviera (a part of the resort history of the town) and of the downtown area, then were set loose for a while for shopping. The tour guide was the best we had on the entire trip; she spoke perfect English and had a lot of information to impart.

Saturday 02-05-94: The last day of the tour; we had a nice breakfast at the restaurant associated with the resort, then headed north for the border - Tijuana, then San Diego. The route was over a toll road, a four lane divided highway, the first we had seen for 26 days with the exception of some in-town roads. Except for the traffic jam at the border the crossing was uneventful, and a half hour or so later we were at our site at the De Anza Harbor Resort. It was upsetting that there was no mail waiting for us upon arrival; we had asked our mail forwarding service to send it in a priority mail package early enough that it would be there when we arrived; I guess they failed us in their first test. The first order of business after lunch was to get a washing done as I was down to my last pair of socks. Later we settled in to our site, made a few phone calls and arranged for a rental car for the next day so we could start our sightseeing.

## **Part 2: From San Diego to Home**

Sunday 02-06-94: Although we stayed up until 11PM the prior evening, the habits of the last few weeks held sway and we awoke early. Our rental car, a little GEO with only 1187 miles on it, arrived at our site at 9:30, and shortly after that we departed for the famous San Diego zoo. It really IS impressive, and it's reputation is well deserved. Aside from viewing the wildlife on display, we had lunch at Albert's restaurant, a very nice place near the center of the zoo grounds.

The weather forecast is daunting; it's supposed to start raining during the night and continue for a day or two. This threatens to foul up our plans to visit the Wild Animal Park and the Sea World during the next couple of days.

Monday 02-07-94: The forecast was right; it was stormy and rainy all day. We did some shopping in the morning and in the afternoon went to the huge Horton's Plaza mall. While there we got a couple of rolls of film processed and had the first part of our trip log reproduced. Since I had forgotten to bring along a pair of slippers, and there were none to be had in the places we visited in Mexico, I shopped for them. Most of the stores either had none or only had very expensive ones, which didn't interest me since I had plenty of nice pairs back home. As a last resort we went to Nordstrom's. The sales lady there found a pair that fit nicely, and they were only \$9.95! As I was paying, I asked her if there was

any "junky little gift shop" in the mall, since I had lost my little pocket knife and wanted to replace it. She said she didn't know of any in the mall, but then went into the back room and came out with a Swiss Executive's knife that they had been giving away as a part of a promotion if a pair of expensive shoes were purchased. She said she couldn't charge me for it, and gave it to me. This is the same knife that sells at Brookstone's for about \$25! I don't ever want to hear anyone bad-mouth Nordstrom's!!!!

Tuesday 02-08-94: The weather was still rainy, so in the morning I searched out a Chevrolet dealer that could work on big motor homes and had the alternator belt tightened. I expected them to say the belt had to be replaced, but no, just a \$27 tightening job was all it took. At 2PM we received mail for the first time this year, so we spent the afternoon going through it and then arranged for an extension of our space at the RV park and our little rental car so we could have a couple of more days to visit San Diego.

Wednesday 02-09-94: The weather finally cleared so we headed out to the Wild Animal Park, an extension of the local Zoo. Although we had seen it on various TV shows, we were very impressed by its size and the variety of animals on display in the large areas. There were a couple of excellent shows of some of the trained birds and animals that we enjoyed. In the evening we went to a nice restaurant in La Jolla, the Crab Catcher.

Thursday 02-10-94: A beautiful day. We started out by checking the local AAA office for information about the Los Angeles area, so that we could decide how to get around during our forthcoming visit. Looks like not much of a problem given the route we expect to take. Then we went to Sea World, and enjoyed the various shows for most of the day. One of the shows, Seals and Otters, was a sad attempt to use a frivolous scenario for comedy, supported poorly by a couple of trained seals and a poorly trained otter. The rest of the shows were much better, thank goodness. We took a break in mid-afternoon to go for a drive through Coronado and the beach areas to the south, then returned for another show. We stopped at one of the booths for some ice cream. Barbara just had about two bites into her ice cream bar when a sea gull swooped down from behind her and stole it! Although the park policy is to replace items stolen this way, we didn't have time to go through the line again and still see the Shamu show.

Friday 02-11-94: After turning in our rental car we took a leisurely drive up the coast to Newport Beach, where we relaxed and took care of a bunch of odds and ends. We had planned to stay at Huntington Beach, but found out that the RV park there was full. We studied our schedule and revised it, making plans for a visit to Catalina Island much later than we had originally planned, and shuffling around the remainder of our California stay to be in the right places on weekdays or weekends, then made appropriate reservations. In the late afternoon we took a short walk around the RV park (Newport Dunes Resort) and on the way back were accosted by a "cruise director" type of young girl who almost insisted that we attend a free cooking class the resort was offering. Turns out that the class was really a presentation of a recipe and a demonstration of the preparation of a pasta dish; enough was prepared by the chef to feed all the attendees. So we went back to the RV and had cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, then after a brief pause, desert.

Saturday 02-12-94: The drive to Long Beach from Newport beach was short, taking us through the business districts of various beach communities. We pulled into the city-run Shoreline RV park a little before noon; they have nice sites with full hookups. After lunch we drove to North Hollywood to visit Jack and Mary DuBrasky. We took freeways which were reported by the AAA to be not affected by the earthquake, but the traffic was horrendous, especially considering that this was a Saturday. On the way up we suffered through a few short crawling backups, but on the return trip we only had one - it was 14 miles long and it took almost an hour, an average speed about 15mph. In the evening I tried to make arrangements with a cab company to pick us up at our site in the morning to take us to the landing of the ferry that would take us to Catalina Island, but neither of two cab companies had the vaguest idea where the RV park was, and one said that they don't send cabs on advance reservation to any public places anyway. Hmmmpf! So we elected to drive our RV over to the ferry landing and leave it there while on Catalina.

Sunday 02-12-94: After a very short drive to the landing and a brief hassle about where we could park our vehicle overnight, we boarded the ferry for the 9AM departure. While waiting to board we bought tickets for a two hour island tour scheduled to depart Avalon at 11:45. I had previously finished off a camcorder cassette, and as luck would have it the new cassette failed right off the bat, so I had to wait until we arrived in Avalon to start recording. We checked in to the Metropole hotel, walked the shorefront promenade, had lunch (very slow service, almost making us miss our tour) and then enjoyed learning about the place while on the tour. I was astonished to learn that the main city, Avalon, was only one square mile, and that development is severely constrained by the Conservancy that owns the vast majority of the island. We had dinner at Solomon's Landing.

Monday 02-14-94: Although we had reservations for a 3PM ferry to return to the mainland, after breakfast we decided we had seen just about all of the island we wanted to, so we departed on the 10:30 trip. The ferry landing in Long Beach is right next to the Queen Mary, a tourist attraction and hotel there since 1968, so we decided to have lunch aboard and tour the ship. Lunch was excellent, and the tour was quite interesting: it is still the largest passenger liner afloat. There was even an enclosure around the remaining propeller filled with clear fresh water so it could be viewed.

Tuesday 02-17-94: We left Long Beach at about 8:30, worried about having to take the same route that was such a mess the previous Saturday, but aside from one or two minor slowdowns it wasn't bad at all. Even when we had to take a detour around a part of Interstate 5 that was destroyed by the January earthquake, the traffic was tolerable. We drove as far as Santa Nella, and stayed overnight at one of the campgrounds in the State-run San Luis Reservoir recreation area. Although there were no hookups, our site was ideal in other respects, with a nice wooded area with a multitude of birds of various types, including hummingbirds, hawks, crows, magpies and several others with beautiful songs that we didn't identify. On the drive in to the campground a fox ran across the road in front of us. There were no lights in the campground, so it was pitch dark at night. There also were no other campers there except for the Campground Host.

Wednesday 02-16-94: We drove up to Windsor, avoiding San Francisco and Oakland as much as possible. We had a brief stop to replenish our food stocks and, after we arrived at Windsor, Barbara did a washing. The predicted storm hit with a vengeance during the night, with lots of rain.

Thursday 02-17-94: We visited the people at COMMSOFT during the morning, and several of us went out to lunch together. During the afternoon Barbara and I drove to Petaluma to spend the night at the KOA there. The storm continued with heavy showers.

Friday 02-18-94 through Monday 02-21-94: We drove to an RV park in Redwood City, rented a car and spent a few days visiting friends and relatives. The storm continued all during the stay, with long periods of heavy showers and brief periods of sunshine. We learned the hard way that this is the rainy season for California.

Our evening visits with Oscar were very pleasant; he and I talked computers and old times while Barbara read a book, then we had cocktails and went out for dinner - first to an Indian restaurant (as his guest), next to an Afghan restaurant (on us), and last to a Chinese restaurant (Dutch treat). No matter how long you've known a person there are always some surprises: I discovered that he was an Army Air Force radio operator during WWII stationed in China, copying the Japanese weather reports for Allied use, and could copy code at upwards of 30 words per minute.

Our visit with Mabel Wright, Barbara's father's friend since his childhood, found her in relatively good health, but not yet acclimated to the idea of being without a car. She took us to lunch at a nice restaurant near her home in Portola Valley run by some Thais; the cuisine was American, however, and we all had variations on Eggs Benedict.

We turned in our rental car on Monday AM and were picked up about noon by Tom Ahrens and driven first to his apartment where we picked up his wife Nancy, then drove to the Waterfront Restaurant where they treated us to a nice lunch, then we visited their school where they train people who have been disabled so that they may re-enter the job market. Although they are doing very well at the present, they have reservations about the future as a result of some legislative changes that may reduce their clientele.

It was interesting to note that, of the four households we visited in the earthquake area only one had any special treatment given to furnishings: Oscar had wired a bookcase to the wall. I guess living with the threat full time makes some people tend to deny that it exists.

Tuesday 02-22-94: We drove to Bakersfield, suffering through the amazing traffic on highway 101 through Silicon Valley (still jammed up at 9:15 AM going AWAY from San Francisco) and arriving at a nice motor home park (Bakersfield Palms) about 3PM. Very interesting and progressive park. Their sites not only have full hookups (water, electric and sewer) but also extensive cable TV and telephone connections. Their telephone arrangement is great; for no extra surcharge you can call at station-to-station rates, and the bill will be ready for you to pay at 8AM in the morning. They charge a

deposit if you need to borrow a telephone (we had one with us) but not for a long connecting cable if needed. The only negative: the usual railroad was nearby, and trains woke us several times during the night.

Wednesday 02-23-94: We drove to Las Vegas. The trip over the mountains and through the Mojave desert was uneventful but pleasantly scenic. The snow on the nearby mountains made us thankful we had not made the trip a few days earlier when it was stormy. All the RV parks in Las Vegas were full up, but one RV park proprietor told us that we probably could park in the parking lot of one of the big casinos without trouble and stay overnight. We drove the strip and cased the various casinos, then chose the Frontier. Sure enough, a security guard showed us where to park (among about 30 other RV's), and we stayed there. No hookups, of course, but we could handle that with no problem. After parking we checked out a few casinos, lost a few bucks in the slots, enjoyed a great buffet, and returned to the RV to watch the Olympics (the Harding/Kerrigan skating started this night). We were surprised (but shouldn't have been) to discover that train tracks were nearby and whistling trains passed frequently during the night. The parking lot was so well lit it seemed almost like daylight.

Thursday 02-24-94: We walked around, visiting some of the lavish casinos and dropping an occasional coin in the slots, and enjoying the low prices for food and drink. We even managed to see a free show (coupon provided at the Nevada welcome center). In that show was an excellent magician, billed as Valentino, whom we would not be surprised to hear about again. Did we win at gambling? No.

Friday 02-25-94 through Monday 03-01-94: We drove south to Interstate 10, then east via I10 and I20 to Abilene, stopping at Tempe Arizona and El Paso for the two nights. The drives were in good weather, and the scenery was dramatic although barren and dry. Yucca was in bloom in many areas, but the blooms weren't particularly pretty, just weird, with the flowers on the top of long bare stems several feet above the plants proper. We had been hoping for a Texas tail wind, but unfortunately the clear weather was accompanied by a stiff southerly cross wind, which required a steady starboard helm. The price of gasoline in Texas seemed to be about 20 cents per gallon cheaper than it had been on the way west a few weeks earlier, a welcome surprise. We resolved on the next trip to allow a little more time for the Phoenix to Abilene stretch so we could have some time to visit some of the more interesting things along the way: some of the old forts, and the Confederate Air Force museum in Midland, Texas. I20 bypasses the center of Abilene, so we didn't verify if it was the "prettiest town you ever have seen." We arrived in Frisco during the afternoon and were greeted by Bobbie, Darryl, Mandy and the newest member of the family, Nichole. Todd was away on a business trip.

Tuesday 03-01-94 and Wed 03-02-94: We had a nice visit with the Hartz family, docked in their driveway as we had on the outgoing leg of the trip.

Thursday 03-03-94: We left Frisco and drove to Alexandria, Louisiana. The weather was nice, but the trip was longer than we would have hoped, but the alternative would have been to take three days for this leg (to Pass Christian) rather than two. Much of the

drive was on I49, a nice new interstate with absolutely no rest stops. We had to pull off to the shoulder to change drivers. We stayed at a KOA about 9 miles out of town and topped off our LP tank there. It was a nice campground on the edge of a marshy lake. It became clear to us that we both had picked up colds.

Fri 03-04-94: The remainder of I49 proved to be as barren of rest stops as the first part. We drove to Pass Christian, arriving about 3PM, and began a pleasant visit with Nancy and Jim McCardell. Their daughter Jenise and her daughter Devon were there part of the time; it was the first time we had met the child.

Sat 03-05-94 to Sunday 03-06-94: The pleasant visit continued, with excursions to some of the new casinos that have been springing up in the south part of Mississippi since gambling was legalized over a year ago. There is a very nice new motor home park associated with one of them - the Grand Casino. Our colds continued to get worse; I had a brief attack of laryngitis Sunday evening, but it cleared up by morning.

Monday 03-07-94: Pass Christian to Tuscaloosa was an uneventful drive, except that we deferred gassing up until we arrived in Alabama because we had heard gas was cheaper there, only to find the opposite was true by about five cents per gallon. We took Jim and Nancy's advice and stayed at the Lurleen Lake state park near Tuscaloosa; it was a beautiful place with lots of separation between sites, some with full hookups, and nice woods. The weather was really nice; we sat outdoors for cocktail hour.

Tuesday 03-08-94: The morning brought the Today Show with dire predictions of a storm headed right up the route we were planning to take - I59 to I89 - and included words like "snow" and "icing", so we held a council of war and decided to head due east on I20. We had a little bit of rain until we neared Atlanta, then the weather turned nice - and warm, near 80. We continued on to Georgia's Hard Labor Creek State Park, where we found a beautiful site in a nice wooded hilly area with an adjacent lake. I regret not remembering to ask the ranger where the park name came from - it must be an interesting story.

Wednesday 03-09-94: We continued east on I20, then took I95 north to South Of The Border. During the drive it was at first nice and warm - in the high 70's - and then, about the time we joined I95 it cooled down to the low 60's as we passed under the front that had been bringing rain and sleet to the Northeast. We stayed at Pedro's Campground and were surprised at how nice it was: full hookups, wide spaces, and good security. We had a round of miniature golf and then dinner at their nice seafood restaurant; it was quite good. Later while watching TV we had a knock on the motor home door and found a security guard; he was wanting to return our Discover charge card which had been inadvertently left at the restaurant. It was nice of them to bother to look us up at the campground and return the card.

Thursday 03-10-94: We continued North on I95. At the start of the trip it was warm - in the 70's, but by the time we stopped for the night just south of Fredericksburg the temperature was down to the low 50's; we had driven through the rain that was

accompanying the front for the second day in a row. We could see some of the damage done by the recent ice storm; lots of trees were down and there were many newly-hewn stumps visible. The KOA we stayed at was nicely situated in the woods and had nicely spaced sites, but could not match either of the Georgia State parks that we had visited two and three nights ago.

Friday 03-11-94: The final drive home, along I95 then US17 and I66, was routed to avoid the infamous Springfield area of I95. There were no difficulties, although there could have been: a young lady not paying attention was passing me at about 50 mph totally ignoring a car stopped in her lane attempting a left turn. Screeching brakes alongside our motor home at the very last moment signaled her lifesaving return to awareness. We arrived home at about 10:30 and found everything in order; it took us about 3 hours to unload and settle in. Our hold mail filled one of the large post office tubs, and it took all the strength I had to carry it in from the car.

All in all it was a pretty nice trip, and our only regrets were that we didn't leave enough gaps in our schedule so that we could do more investigation of the areas we cruised through, and just loaf a few of the days.

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**The rigs on the Mexican tour and their occupants. We were #13.**

01 Ed and Arlene Burnham WAGON MASTER.

02 John and Jeri Schindler, Tail Gunner.

03 David and Ann Anderson, Littleton, CO: He's a Lockheed engineer (retired), both grew up in Minnesota. She's a retire public health nurse.

04 Norman and Diane Berg, Huguenot, NY: She's a health care teacher, masters level at Sara Lawrence.

05 Jerry and Jacque Chamberlin, Santa Rosa, CA: Fifth Wheel. Retired from Hewlett Packard for 2 years. Worked on production management, spectrum analyzers.

07 Jack and Kay Crum, Littleton, NC: She's a retired School teacher, he's a retired Methodist minister.

08 Dana and Mildred Eicher, Waterloo, IA: Retired for 10 years.

09 Jim and Lorrie Gould, Los Alamitos, CA: Elite class A. Had a business manufacturing things for traffic control industry, retired.

10 John and Elizabeth Matthews, Gabriola, BC: She runs a laboratory.

11 Richard and Patty McCarroll, Sedona, AZ: Lived for a long time in California, retired to Sedona.

12 Ernie and Doris Moyer, Colorado Springs, CO: Line crew supervisor, power company, Second trackers.

14 Lee and Marcy Northern, Florence, AZ: He was regional sales manager for Admiral Corporation. Retired in San Antonio, lived in Seattle, too.

15 Clay and Karen Peninger, Shreveport, LA: (young couple) BIG motor home.

16 Leroy and Ruth Ringsmith, Tavares, FL: Have been on an Alaska tour. Retired, construction industry.

17 Rex and Nona Sieting, Sandusky, MI: Retired from Michigan State. She's a retired school teacher.

18 P.B. and Betty Snyder, Beaumont, TX: Van conversion. Both retired from LaMarr (?) university. She was a library technical assistant, he was a professor.

19 Dennis and Hazel Stoffa, North Huntingdon, PA: Caribou pickup camper. He taught school for 33 years.

20 Ted and Loma Taylor, Renton, WA: Itasca like mini-winnie. Submarine sailor.

21 Frank and Edna Wallace, Justin, TX: They own a western store (not retired), their children are taking care of it while they're on the trip. Have a satellite dish on their RV.

22 Hugh and Jackie Wheeler, Moab, UT: He worked at the post office, she worked at the telephone company.

23 Robert and Janice Younger, Signal Mountain, TN (Chattanooga). Retired du Pont manager. Has daughter living in McLean, VA, knows the DC area some.