

The Brauers Havin' Fun

Part 3a
Crater Lake National Park, Oregon
July 2003



**A chronicle of our RV travels as documented in a series of
Emails to our grandkids (and others) and photographs.**

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Introduction

This is the third installment of our chronicles of our travels and adventures since we started being full time RVers. This adventure is very different than our first two. This time we spent three months in one location.

Our last adventure ended when we arrived in Inyokern California in October 2002 after visiting Alaska. We spent the winter in California helping the Carrie Ovall Children's Center refurbish a building to open an Infant Care Center. We also had two college graduations and a wedding to attend. We found it easier to spend quite a bit of time in Inyokern.

After Larry's daughter's wedding, we seriously looked for a summer job. In January we had attended a Workamper's Job Fair in Yuma. We think we could have had a job right away, but we had to be honest and mention our commitments. So we told them we would not be available until early July. In early July, we learned that Xanterra, the concessionaire at Crater Lake National Park, was looking for help. We called them and had a job offer within hours. We left Inyokern on July 7 and arrived at Crater Lake on July 10. On July 11 we attended a new employee orientation and started working. Larry was a Campground Attendant and Adrienne was a Campground Services Hostess. In retrospect, we never worked so hard for minimum wage in our lives. However, we did lose some weight, had a lot of fun, and really enjoyed the summer. In fact, we had so much fun, we were often surprised when we received our paychecks, we almost forget we were working for wages.

Larry and Adrienne Brauer

Subj: 126. Where are we?
Date: Monday, July 7, 2003

It's July 7, 2003, and we've started a new adventure. We'll tell you more about that later. But for right now, at least tonight, we are in the capitol of the Silver State. Tomorrow we head further north.

The past 8 months have been busy. In November 2002 we had a family reunion in San Diego. We spent part of December in Phoenix. In January we went to a Workkampers Job Fair in Yuma. Meanwhile, we received a telephone call from the day care that Adrienne used to operate. They needed some help so we came back to Inyokern to help out. Adrienne held some training classes for the staff and helped out where ever she could. Larry worked on a renovation project so the day care could start an Infant/Toddler Care component. It required almost six months to get a building permit (and some intervention by the local county supervisor). A contractor was hired and the renovation will probably be completed within a couple of weeks. It's amazing, six months to get a permit for renovating an existing building and the renovation will probably take a total of four weeks.

Also, in May, Adrienne's second son, Jeff, received a Bachelor's Degree. In June, Adrienne's daughter, Carrie, received a Bachelor's Degree. Finally, On June 28, Larry's youngest daughter, Denise, was married in San Diego. So we have been busy.

After returning to Inyokern after Denise's wedding, we started making some phone calls to places that were hiring workkampers. Within two hours we had workkamping jobs. We are supposed to start on July 10 and work until September 10. We won't tell you where we are going to be working just yet but we will tell you in a few days. One of us will be a campground attendant and the other will be working in the campground store and pumping gas. That last sentence should give you a hint on what state we will be in. It's not California.

Where are we right now? We are in Carson City Nevada and it's a lot cooler here than in Inyokern.

The Brauers
Havin' Fun
On the way to start workkamping.

Subj: 127. Where are we?
Date: Tuesday, July 8, 2003

Before we forget, Happy Birthday Lynne.

Today we left Carson City and continued our trip to where we plan on working for two months. We have been in three different states today. Of course, the first was Nevada. The second was Taxifornia, oops, California. Now we are in the state where we will be working for the next two months. Right now we are beside a large lake in what is referred to as the high desert, here that means over 4,000 feet in elevation. We are also in the town that is sometimes called the "Oregon's City of Sunshine".

We didn't really do anything in Carson City. The main reason we stopped in Carson City was to get supplies from Costco. So after stocking up at Costco and a quick visit to a Super Wal-Mart, we just relaxed and tried to get a good nights sleep. It's amazing, we spent about 20 hours in Nevada and never entered a casino or put anything in to a slot machine!

Where are we? We are in Klamath Falls Oregon. On Wednesday we will be driving about 60 miles to where we will be spending the next two months as workkampers.

The Brauers
Havin' Fun
Always

Subj: 128. Where are we?
Date: Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Let's see. We are camped about 10 miles from the deepest lake in the US. As a hint we are in Oregon. We are also in a National Park, in fact, it was the seventh National Park created and has been a National Park for just over 100 years. As another hint, we are now about 6,000 feet above sea level.

We left Klamath Falls this morning and only drove about 1 1/2 hours to our current location. Last night, in Klamath Falls the low was in the 40s. That's a whole lot nicer than Inyokern. We had to do a little shopping in Klamath Falls and besides, 300 miles in one day seems to push our relaxed life style.

We did receive a voice mail from one of our email recipients after we left Carson City. It seems that one of Larry's old neighbors in Atlanta is now living in Carson City. Unfortunately, we received the voice mail after we were about 100 miles from Carson City.

Today we filled out all sorts of paperwork for our workkamping jobs. It's amazing how all the different forms are essentially the same but have different check boxes. We have to wonder why one form with three pages can't replace 12 different forms. Anyway, we did most of the stuff we needed to do to be hired and tomorrow we have an orientation for 4 hours.

We don't really have cell phone service in this location. If you are in the right place, and hold your head (and phone) in the right position you will have a strong enough signal to connect. However, where we are camped, no signal at all. We are going to call tomorrow to get a land line. Then, at least, we will be able to send our emails. We can't get our satellite television either, we happen to be camped in a place where the trees block our signal. Well, that just means we can catch up on Harry Potter and other books.

Where are we? We are in Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. We are now employees of Xanterra, the company that runs the concessions for several of the National Parks. Since we are in an employee area, it's not quite as nice as the regular campground. However, unlike the regular campground we have full hookups and we will have telephone service probably tomorrow.

The Brauers
Havin' Fun
in Crater Lake National Park

Subj: 129. Where are we?
Date: Wednesday, July 16, 2003

Maybe we should change the subject of these emails to "What we have been doing," for now we will keep the same subject.

As you know, we are in Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. We arrived last Wednesday. Thursday we had to attend an orientation. Interesting

but, like most orientations, it was a lot of Public Relations stuff on Xanterra, the company we work for. However, there were certainly parts that we interesting. After the orientation we went to meet Bob, the guy we would be working for. He asked if we wanted to start work that afternoon. Our answer was "Sure." but we needed to do a couple of things first. But we did start working that afternoon.

Larry is working as a Campground Attendant. The campground has 211 sites. Larry starts his day at 8:00 AM by driving a golf cart around the campground to collect all the expired slips on the posts at each site. That takes about an hour. Then he goes around the campground emptying the bear proof trash bins. That typically takes until early afternoon. Then it is time to wipe down the bathrooms and make sure they all have enough supplies. He also helps stack firewood, answers questions from the campers, and does anything else that needs to be done. We have to mention that usually two people make the campground runs. It takes two people (or one 6'2" inch tall, 250 pound teenager) to lift the bear proof lids from the trash cans. There is always something to do in the campground and by 4:30 Larry drags himself back to the RV.

Adrienne works in the campground Kiosk, registering campers for the campground. Although that might sound easier than Larry's job, she's on her feet all the time and her job too is tiring. Of course she also has to prepare daily reports, count the cash, and a number of other things. Adrienne's hours vary from 8:30-5:00 or 1:00-9:00. She gets back to the RV around 10:00 p.m after doing the paper work and money reports. Adrienne also comes dragging through the door. If we keep the same schedule we are now on, we have off on Wednesday and Thursday. We need them to recuperate. Of course we also need them to go grocery shopping. The nearest grocery is in Klamath Falls, about 60 miles away. Medford, which even has a Costco, is 75 miles away.

Now, don't get us wrong, we both love our jobs. The work is actually fun even though it's more physical than we are now used to. We both get to interact with the campers and try to solve some of their problems. There are a total of six men who work as campground attendants, four women who work the kiosk. Plus there are about 10 people who work the store, another six who work housekeeping in the Mazama Lodge, and probably 10 or 12 who work in the laundry. Everyone is nice and we both really enjoy what we are doing. What a great way to spend the summer is a beautiful location.

Our campsite is outside the campground. It certainly not as pretty as the campground but we have full hook ups including a telephone line.

Remember, cell phone service is almost non-existent here. The weather has been great. At night it gets down to the low 40s or high 30s. During the day it's typically in the high 70s or low 80s and sunny. Fortunately the snow is virtually gone although there are a few patches here and there. Talking to some of the people who came here in late May, we learned that at the end of May there was about 8 feet of snow in the campground.

If you haven't guessed by now, we love both where we are and what we are doing. It's actually a lot of fun.

The Brauers
Havin' Fun
Workkamping in
Crater Lake National Park

July 2003
Crater Lake National Park, Oregon



Here's Crater Lake when the water is incredibly smooth, like a mirror.



This is the campground kiosk where Adrienne registers campers.



Although this isn't our RV, it does show what most of the campsites look like. Larry goes through the campground several times a day in the yellow cart.



We are on "Camper's Row," an area with full hook-ups that's reserved for Xanterra employees.

July 2003
Crater Lake National Park, Oregon



Crater Lake Lodge is special. As you can see, it is really beautiful at sunset.



Two of the three restaurants are in this building. Downstairs is a café and upstairs is the Watchman's buffet.



This island in Crater Lake is Phantom Ship because it looks like a ship. It looks small, but it is about 120 high and the size of a football field



The other Island in the lake is Wizard Island. Both Islands were formed by volcanic vents.

July 2003
Crater Lake National Park, Oregon



Crater Lake is really beautiful, especially when the water is smooth.



There are also waterfalls near the lake.



These strange formations, called the pinnacles, are fumaroles, or volcanic vents.



The Pumice Castle is one of many natural formations in the Caldera itself.

July 2003
Crater Lake National Park, Oregon



There are some unique plants on the rim. This is a Whitebark Pine, one of a few trees that can withstand the wind and cold on the rim.



Mount Scott, 8926 feet high, is now the highest peak in the Park. It has a very popular day hike to the top.



The landscape on the West side of the lake illustrates the volcanic legacy of the area.



There is a lot of wildlife here, but by far the most prevalent are ground squirrels.