

# Marty's Random Thoughts

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WHATEVER'S ON MY MIND WHEN MY FINGERS HIT THE KEYBOARD

14<sup>th</sup> Year

Woodstock, Illinois, USA, Earth

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### 3-Mar-13 7:09am \*\$

Well the power supply failed me on my file server. But I have replaced it and it works fine now. Those kinds of failures are not so bad. You just buy a new one and put it in and you are good to go. My PC on the other hand has a software problem and I don't have it figured out yet.

Since I can get to all the data on it I will be backing it up and the rebuilding the hard drive from scratch. It is time consuming but it seems like my best option at this time.

I have the laptop to use until I get the PC running again so I will not go through too much withdrawal. ☺

### California Trip

But there is more to this. I am going to Santa Barbara, CA to the American Pilgrims Gathering in a week. I have dug

the Camper out of the snow and it seems to be running well. In a matter of fact I drove it to Hoffman Estates to get that power supply yesterday and it did fine.

The plan today is to leave on the 8th and drive to Redding, CA then down to Santa Barbara for the Gathering and meet up with my brother Mike on the 14th. Then after the Gathering give Mike a ride home to Santa Fe. This means I should be home before spring.

### Unfinished Business

So before I leave on this trip I would like to finish up some things. I am working on my Income Taxes and then there is my January issue of MRT, well February too, that has not been published yet. I have another laptop and my PC to rebuild. Both have the same issue. And I have to get the Camper ready and I am broke. Yes I am

heading for California in less than a week and I have no spending money. Thank God for plastic money. So I have so much to do and I am sitting here at Starbucks drinking coffee. Hum, I think I will get another cup. ☐ Thank God I have more coffee money on me \*\$ card. ☐

Well, I have to wait because Linda just told me they were out of coffee. Well my kind!

### I just met some one

While sitting here at Starbucks instead of doing me stuff I met Bill Cockren and was talking about my walk in Spain. It seems it is Bill Cockren a camera man for WGN. The name sounded like a name I heard before.

### 5-Mar-13 6:04am \*\$

I'm getting closer to being ready to head to California. Yesterday I got the oil changes and got the trailer hitch wired up. I can't believe there was never any wiring to connect the trailer lights. My Roadtrek camper has a hitch that lets you pull a 5,000 pound load and no wiring. Oh well, it has it now. It is nice to work with some one that knows what they do. If I had done this myself I would had got frustrated. The wires in the camper were not where I would have expected them to be. Thanks Zimmerman Welding!

When they changed the oil they told me the battery is good and the tire are good just old. Thank you Goodyear!

**Remember this for later reference!**

So here I am eating a muffin and testing a new blend of coffee at Starbucks thinking about what else needs to get done before I/we leave Woodstock on Friday.

You heard me say "...I/we leave..." I am working on my brother Cork to see if he

might like to go along. I would love to have company on this trip. I usually like to go alone when I go on vacation. It gives me time to be alone with my thoughts. When I'm around people I tend to talk and not think so much. Whoops, I didn't really say that out loud, did I? ☐ I know I talk too much time. I have a good friend that reminds me that is quite time. And you can tell when that happens from the blood on my tongue. I have to bite it so it does not flap in the wind. ☐

### Snow?

They are calling for a bunch of snow before tomorrow is over with. The one forecast called for up to as much as twelve inches of the pretty white stuff. I love snow. Well pictures of it. ☐

The snow comeith and I am guessing that it be gone before I leave on Friday. If not I wouldith just drive a little slower. I will be leaving on Friday early I suspect. It is a 4-5 day road trip until I get there. After I get there I will have time to drive around or wait out the weather. Oh, it snows now!

### Pack Light

After walking across Spain last year, I hoping I remember I do not need to take everything I own with me. I am think a couple cooking pots and my computer will be added to the list that I used for my backpack list. After all I am taking my home with me. In Spain I had a different home each night. Most of them had kitchens and Internet. I gave the Camper a once over and it is stocked with the little things I'll need. I forgot I'll need a little food. Even thought as in Spain they have food along the path, it is nice to have a little with you. I will try to not dwell too much time on this or I may will empty the house and need to move up the Motor Home. I

want to keep this a simple adventure, not so much stuff. And if there are two of us there will be less room for my stuff.

### **7-Mar-13 7:59am Hospital**

No I'm not sick. It is just a routing blood test. I wanted to get it done before I leave for California tomorrow. So I sit here and wait.

In a couple hours I'll start loading up things so I am ready to leave in the morning.

### **At Starbucks**

This morning I was in a little hurry while having morning coffee and met a friend with a computer problem. I gave her some ideas maybe she can figure it out by herself. This was a little new problem. It seems the printer keeps printing this see is not sending to it. I kind of know how this can happen but have never happen to me. So I am using my best guess what she should try.

Sometimes when I figure out something new it may help all of you. Not that any of you have ever had trouble with your computer stuff. :-| More story to come...later.

### **Trip Notes**

I will be putting my trip notes on the Blog at <http://MartysRandomThoughts.com/blog> . Feel free to read them and comment what you wish. Please register so I know you have viewed my stuff. I will show no one see your email address.

Oh, My PC is still broken and I need to remember my email friends form the list that on the PC

### **9-Mar-13 11:53am Crain Coffee,**

#### **Council Bluffs Iowa**

Well Cork and I had a god yesterday. We left Woodstock around noon heading to Redding California and got clear to Council Bluffs Iowa. Trailer, camper, and all the stuff were just fine.

Today is another story. We lost power in the camper and are over across the street drinking coffee while they install me a new alternator. Jensen Tire & Auto seems to have this under control for us. They are servicing 10-15 cars at once and taking care of a few walk-ins. We have been sitting there since early this morning. We needed to go for a walk and this coffee shop got in our way. I am guessing we should get on the road in an hour or so.

### **10-Mar-13 5:34pm Walmart,**

#### **Cheyenne WY**

We ain't done yet but it would be nice be resting somewhere else.

This morning after breakfast we were on the road before 9 o'clock. Waiting out the storm last night was a good move. Without power in the camper it got kind of cold but we survived. I thought about getting that fixed but I thought we would be in warmer weather tomorrow so we would be fine.

Today started out fine. That 5" of blowing snow was less than 1" and little wind where we stayed last night. We ate breakfast and started down the road before 9:00 and the roads were a little messy but fine.

Then thing changed...

The snow was blowing and the roads got bumpy because of packed snow and ice and we drove miles and miles at less than 10 MPH because of it or traffic. So even though slow all was fine well until the

rough road caused the weak exhaust pipe to fall loose and fall down and drags hanging down in the front. Because of this we sought help. At the truck stop we got the loose muffler removed. Then we back on the road in about an hour. We were so happy with the help that we took the scenic route and 50 miles touring Colorado. We should have been in Nebraska. Yes, we missed our turn off.

The detour got us out of the snowy roads and all was fine again until we got tired. Well that was really de-tired! I heard this rumbling and noticed the camper was swaying. Yes one of those 17 years tires lost its tread. I now know they are really bad. Bummer!

Not too bad! Had jack, jack crank, tire iron, add a spare with air in it. In less than 30 minute we were moving down the road again.

### Update

Cork and I are in Cheyenne at Walmart waiting for them to install 2 new tires. The exhaust system will wait until later. It is noisy but our plans say we can live with this for now. I will be so broke when I return I will have to go the McDonalds instead of Starbucks for my morning coffee....wait something is happening....

### Wow!!!!

We have new tires already. I took them about an hour from start to being back on the road. Thank you Walmart!

We're on the road again!!!!!!!!!!!!!! ☺ ☺ ☺

### 11-Mar-13 10:58pm Elko, NV

Good Day, lot of miles and no break down and a lot of just breaks!

### 12-Mar-13 9:59am NV I-80

Today is going to be a great day. Just called Jay at the Muffler place in Sparks and he said to bring it in and they will take care of us. We are 150 miles east of Sparks on I-80 and should be there around 1:30, pending breaks. We haven't had a break in over a half hour and I am ready for one.

☐ I'm sitting in the back of the camper over the missing muffler and it is noisy here. Cork says it is no fun when he opens to window either. Yes it was nice enough to have the window open for a while. I think it was near 60° for a while. Right now it is around 45 outside.

The camper rides really good. It is also handling very well towing the trailer too. The only problem towing the trailer is that is sucking all the fuel out of the gas tank.

We have been traveling 55 mph the whole trip and getting only around 10 mpg. I only have one good check of gas mileage before this trip and it was around 15 mpg. Being this is the case; after we deliver the trailer load we will be leaving the trailer for someone else when we get to Redding. I don't like burning gas I don't need to and it is a whole lot easier parking without the trailer.

### 13-Mar-13 11:17am U-Haul

#### Redding, CA

Make sure you know before you go. I am just having so much fun on this whole trip. Alternator, battery, complete exhaust system, two tires, and now a hassle trying to leave this U-Haul because they tell me the paper work is all messed up. ☺

I'm going to call back is a couple minutes. I want to leave here! I am just having way too much fun today!!!!

**14-Mar-13 8:18am McDonald's,****Paso Robles, CA****Only about 120 Miles**

After all the things I have to fix on the camper I am still in a good mood.

In case I haven't told you yet, here the brief list.

*Friday left home around noon  
Saturday New Alternator & Battery  
Sunday Muffler fell off & two tires  
Monday whoops just drove 600+ miles  
Tuesday we replaced the muffler, well the whole exhaust system  
Wednesday had paper work issues with turning in the trailer.  
Today, Thursday we sit in McDonald's having breakfast*

Nothing has happened yet so I'll wait we are 120 miles or so from Santa Barbara.

Gas mileage towing the trailer was not so good but much better now without it even drive 20 mph faster. We were driving long and hard and Cork said he thought the camper was swaying when we pulled in to town last night. I haven't noticed it yet. I think he might have been sleep-driving but we'll see. Maybe those two new tires want company. ☐

It may seem to you I am not having much fun on this trip. Not true! I have enjoyed all of these events except the paperwork mess up with the trailer. Even that worked out.

Every one of the people we have met along the way has been very friendly and helpful. The problem with the paperwork was a waiting issue. I always have trouble coping with waiting.

So I am having a great time and looking forward to meeting up with Mike this afternoon.

**Santa Maria, Walmart**

Well maybe Cork was awake last night just before we stopped for the night. I was

driving and as the tires warmed up I thought it might be the road causing the rumbling. Then I could feel that feel that made me stop and check. I also I found a Starbucks a block for the tire place. It only took about 3,000 miles to get my Starbucks fix. ☐

I didn't want to take a change with those tires. After losing the tread on one and the other two were 17 years old and one looked to need replacing the both of them had to go. Now I just need to have the house battery charging checked out and it will be almost like having a new camper.

Well we are finished with my coffee fix so I should be ok for a day or too. Oh my new tires may be installed and waiting for me too. Maybe Cork and I will get to the Old Mission to meet up with Mike today yet.

**Santa Barbara CA,*****American Pilgrims Gathering.***

Well Cork and I finally made it to Santa Barbara after many delays and it blew my budget. I will most likely need to get a job if I plan to drink any coffee for the next year.

We hooked up with Mike for a while and then Cork took my camper to go do some site seeing while Mike and I attend the Pilgrims Gathering.

After the evening malingering there was some live music and then Mike and I returned to our room to work on the computers. I will turn in for the night in a while.

**15-Mar-13 7:27am Old Mission,****Santa Barbara CA,**

Good Morning! This is day one of the American Pilgrim of Camino Gathering

(APOC). Mike and I sit here getting our computers hooked to the internet while they are readying the breakfast. They have at least 6 different places for us to connect to the Wi-Fi. This is funny because my computer only sees 2 but Mike's sees 5 others. Well I guess it makes a difference in the Old Mission where you sit to find your internet. I think I am here for the gathering and not for the Internet. Breakfast now!

### 1st half day

Some I liked a lot and some I almost slept through ☐

### 16-Mar-13 10:25pm APOC-G

Had a lot of fun today talking to fellow pilgrims and listening to their stories. Us who have walked the Camino helped the ones are planning their Camino. There are so many different stories. Everyone had a different story to tell. I enjoyed every one of them and I hope they liked to listen to mine.

### 24-Mar-13 6:30am \*\$

#### I'm home!!!

I got home twelve hours ago cleaned up put things away took a shower, eat a little and went to bed in my own bed. I slept like a log in my own bed for the first time in over two weeks. Like all vacations they must come to an end and there is no place like home.

#### Vacation in a Minute

I had a great time spending two weeks in the camper with my brother Cork thought we had some problems. Wait, not with Cork, with the camper.

On the first day we got off to a slow start. There is always just one more thing to get done before you leave. I drove by E.W. Training to say good-bye to Michelle and had to fix the computer. It seems like when I had setup the laptop that morning I forgot to plug it in and the battery had gone dead. I laughed because I have done that once or twice before.

So we pointed the camper towing trailer west and headed down the road. The trailer was full of stuff to deliver in Redding California. Since neither Cork nor I have towed trailers in the past we needed to learn this as we drove. We have worked on the farm so we knew how it is done but over the road towing is not quite the same.

The day before we left I backed the trailer up to the garage in five minutes. This told me I could back up and would avoid it if I could. I was ready.

After about the first twenty-miles we were in Belvedere and pulled into the Walmart parking lot to see how things were riding. Finding nothing wrong we filled up without first gasoline and added some engine cleaner to the tank. The gas we started with was put in there in July 2011.

Everything seemed to be just fine so we headed to find the interstate to make some time after our late start. Nothing much happened the rest of the day. We stopped to take a break and switch drivers once in a while. We talked about our route and what we saw out the windows, mostly just chit-chat. Finally it was time to stop for the night. Having a camper we looked for a rest area, truck stop, or in our case a Walmart parking lot.

Walmart parking lots were our preferred spot to park and sleep. There is a sense of security there. They have food, bathrooms, and nobody bothers you. Now I am talking about parking and sleeping not camping.

Camping should be done at campgrounds. We only parked for the night to get some sleep.

On the next morning we stopped and had breakfast checked out the trailer's contents and the camper. All seemed fine so we headed for the Interstate to pound out some miles. As we were heading for the edge of town we setup the charge for the phones and computers we took along. I had a 12 volt to 110v AC inverter Cork was setting up so we could charge many things at once. After it was setup and running it started to beep. It was strange because I didn't remember it ever beeping before. At first I thought maybe we had just too many things plugged into it. It wasn't a very big inverter. I was driving at the time so I could give it too much attention. I noticed the red light flashing so I asked Cork to unplug the devices and it still beeped. Then the "aha" hit me. The power source is low. I looked at the volt meter on the dashboard and it showed something like 9. Whoops! The camper had a dead battery. Not good!

I told Cork it was the same thing that happened the first time Marie had happened when headed for Iowa. The battery was so low it most likely would not start so we started looking for a place to get it checked out while the engine was still running.

We shortly found Jensen Tire & Auto. They looked busy but we were not going anywhere. I told them what was happening and they helped us unhook the trailer and pulled it in to check it out. Well after they jump started it. Yup, we just made it there!

After a while we found out I needed a new alternator. Wait there is more. It seems that it blew the diode there separates the engine battery from the house battery. And though the engine battery checked

out it was old and drawing way to much charge. This might have caused the diode to burn out. So the battery was replaced and the diode bypassed. I had them check out the house battery and it was dead and bad too. I elected to not replace it at this time because I have new batteries at home and they have to get the battery from elsewhere and it was almost 5:00 on a Saturday.

So we decided we had enough fun for one day.

Our first full day out I replaced a battery I figured was bad before I left home and as a bonus received a new alternator. I could live with that. Every few minutes for days after that we asked each other; "How's the gauges?"

We were back on the road again!

Ok, I think I will go have breakfast and tell you some more later.

## Few Problems

I think were in Nebraska and checking out the weather for Wyoming and it looked like a big snow storm coming up. Thought I don't like driving in snow because the Interstate are clear, I do want to drive in a snow storm. It started to get dark and snow we decide to find a place to park and wait for daylight.

It was cold in the camper with no power to run the heater that night. I had blankets and Cork a sleeping bag so we did just fine even though it was less than 20°. I tried only one blanket then gave in and went with two. That was nice! I had the two blankets I bought in 2009 from Chief Yellow Horse while traveling with Mike & Petra. I also had heavy one from my bed. I was warm!

Before morning there was near 1" of snow on the ground and it was crunchy. We went into Walmart and bought some

supplies and checked out the Jelly Beans. On this trip Jelly Beans were the snack of choice. We asked a few people how much snow fell west of there and it sounded like it was little. So we hit the road to check it out.

We soon saw there was nothing to be concerned, so we thought. Where the snow blew across the road it looked like they salted it and the snow melted and with the vehicles driving over it packed the snow into packed ice. Parts of it were like driving over pot holes and a rock field all at once. We drove in the left lane most of this to avoid some of this. We saw many tractor trailers jack knifed in the ditch. The weather was clear and the road was manageable so we guess they were left over from the storm the night before. We were glad we didn't drive then.

Traffic slowed to less than 5 mph because of the ice but at no time did I think it was unsafe as long as you took it easy. After a while the traffic sped up and there was less and less of the packed ice. During this time we never got back to highway speed. It just would not be smart.

Well all of the rumbling from all that ice played havoc on my already weak exhaust system. Yup, the muffler fell down and started dragging.

We pulled in to a truck stop to take a look. It was hanging down in the front so it needed to be removed because if it hooked on something it could punch a hole through the floor or something worse. This truck stop had a tire shop so I asked if they could remove it for us. I knew they wouldn't be able to fix it. One of those truck mufflers is almost big enough from me to drive my camper through. □

After a while the muffler was removed and we were back on the road. Justin removed the muffler and checked the damage at no charge. Thank you Justin!

As for the noisy camper, I figured most people don't sleep along the interstate and the engine isn't running while we sleep, so let it make noise for now.

We were back on the road, a little noisy but getting to California. I am sure they could hear us coming.

We were almost clear of the cold and the weather was warming. It was then when we saw the sign that told us how many miles it was to Denver. The first sign we just thought was for a turn off to Denver because it was not on our route. After the third sign we noticed we were on I-76 and not I-80 that we should be on all the way to where we're headed.

Cork got out the map and GPS and plotted a route back to I-80. After we got back on I-80 we had traveled about 50 miles on a sightseeing route. After a long time we found we were so excited to get the muffler removed that we missed our turn just after we left the truck stop. It was a mini adventure driving all the back roads with warm weather and no snow.

We had checked many times after the rough road to look in the trailer looked. They were just fine and so did the camper. Well other than the noise! :- |

I was back on the road thinking that I still have to replace the muffler soon when I ran over something I thought was a rumble strip. You know, one of those warnings you get before you need to slow down or slip into the shoulder. Wait I'm in the middle of nowhere and just crossed a little bridge. I thought it must be a series of bumps. I thought it is time to recheck the stuff in the trailer when I noticed the camper felt a little like a flat. I pulled over thinking it might be the trailer.

We found the tread missing on the driver side rear on the camper. Part of the tread was hanging on the axle. The first thought was "Aha, Retreads!" The tread



pealed right off. We drove a little while Cork looked to see where we could get fixed. It was too far to drive on a flat so we stopped and put on the spare. Twenty minute later we going down the road heading to a tire shop. At the Walmart Super-center I bought two new tires. They didn't do mufflers so we just bought some more Jelly Beans. □

Things all would be fine other than the noise we made. We figured that Reno would be a good place for a hotel and a new muffler. It would also be a good place to take a break and feed a few quarters in the slot machines. They needed to eat too. □

I'll get back to my story in a while I have to do some home work first. My server needs help and my PC is still down since before my trip. And I have two laptops to rebuild. I'll be back! I can tell my story as some of these things are happening and I need to wait for events to finish. It is Sunday and some of them will have to wait until things open on Monday

### Under Estimate Cost

We found a muffler shop through via the internet and stopped in Sparks just east of Reno to get that fixed. Jay, the manager said it would take a couple hours so we thought we would check out the nearby casino. I budget ten dollars and I think Cork did the same. In an hour or so the slots had eat my ten and five more to get it out of my system. Cork walked out with a loss too. Feeling good that we were smart enough to not spend any more money, we walked the few blocks back to the muffler shop.

When we arrive Jay asked which one of us couldn't hear and which one had the phone. It seems we never heard the phone

in the Casino. He had bad news. Seem that the whole exhaust system needed to be replaced from the engine back. He showed me what it looked like and I agreed that took even more time. Since the camper is seventeen years old and has 120,000+ miles on it and it was of no big surprise. I didn't plan on this expense but it needed to be. I didn't want to be driving through town making all that noise anyway.

So that fixed we headed down the road to Redding to drop of the load of goods. We checked and the stuff in the trailed was doing just fine. More than I could say about my funds.

We stayed at a hotel so we could clean up before dropping of the trailer full of belongings. I am sure be both needed a bath after almost a week on the road. The hotel was about 10 minutes from the drop off point. I think I told Cork;"It gets delivered today if he has to push over there and I told him I would steer." My whole budget had been blown!

In the morning we delivered the trailer load without a hitch. Then we would a U-Haul dealer about 2 miles away to drop off the trailer. You would think this would be an easy task. Not so!

I have to work on the computer again for while. Hang in there I'll be back....The story continues

### Long Wait

Before I left Woodstock with the trailer, Ray at the U-Haul dealer told me it would be cheaper to rent the trailer by the day if I returned it to him I Woodstock. I asked about if I changed my mind could I just change the contract to one-way and pay the higher price. He told just call him and he would take care of it. Well after towing

it over 2,100 miles I was ready to leave it in Redding.

When I dropped off there was no such deal in the computer and the paper work was all messed up so it wasn't an easy task. I called Ray, my guy in Woodstock, and handed this over to him to straighten out. Let's just say after many phone calls and 4-5 hours of waiting were back on the road and one the way to Santa Barbara California to meet up with Mike. Oh, without that trailer following us.

You know you can see cars in the inside rearview mirror following you if there is no trailer in tow! ☐

**Note: Add two new tires story here!**

With the lack of noise it seemed like we both thought we were driving much too slow but were really driving faster. Cork said he was feeling good and thought we would keep driving and see how far we could get so we could deliver the trailer load and give the U-Haul back. The trailed was easy to manage but I made us burn a lot more gas than we would without it. Cork drove up until midnight while I sleep off and on.

We stopped at Walmart for the night. Something looked familiar about the place. Cork told me we were in Paso Robles CA. I said;"Wow, I stayed here before!" Mike & Petra lived here when I visited them and parked it this very parking one night. Now Mike & Petra live in Santa Fe New Mexico.

Cork said that he felt the camper was swaying a little. In the morning after we looked things over I drove and told Cork that he drove up to midnight and he must have been dreaming. It wasn't too long that I kidded him about dreaming up a bad road too. I told him that it isn't the road it is the camper. We stopped to eat

breakfast and checked the tires. Yup, we needed two more of these things.

We found another Walmart Super-center in Santa Maria and they had tires for us.

By this time I was starting to have a little Starbucks withdrawal especially since I saw one on the way into the Walmart. We walked to it and took a break and emerged what else could break. Neither of us let these break down get us down. I knew some of this was old before I left Woodstock and decided I change it at home or on the road. At no time did I feel it was unsafe enough to worry about it. When it was time the parts were replaced. At Larry the Cable guy might say;"Get 'r done!"

I got the oil changed and were on the road to Redding again

## Retired & On the Move

So before we left Santa Maria and while still in Walmart we check for more Jelly Beans. We got a little obsessed with these Jelly Beans. Cork didn't like the black one so somewhere along our route I almost bought only black ones. I figured if I did that Cork might buy something I wouldn't eat so I declined doing that.

At this point I had a new alternator, battery, a complete exhaust system, and four brand new tires. How much better life is with all new parts? At this time I am so far over what I thought spend I didn't care much about money. I just wanted to get to Santa Barbara and hook up with Mike at the American Pilgrims Gathering and forget about the money.

Cork had planned on taking the camper for the three days of the Gathering and did some sightseeing. The Gathering was not his thing. After I was settled in and Mike arrived we visited a

while and Cork took off. Mike and I were without a ride until Sunday afternoon.

After the Gathering we would give Mike a ride home to Santa Fe

## Gathering of Pilgrims

American Pilgrims on the Camino (APOC) is about Pilgrims helping Pilgrims. Mostly for people who have walked the Camino de Santiago and/or people that are thinking about doing so. The Gathering is a more organized way of doing it. You pay a fee and get a bed, food and get to tell your story and listen to others.

The first three and half days are training for the Hospitalero. Hospitalero are the people who help in the albergue on the Camino. I think we would call them helpers for the host.

The next three and a half days are what I attended. They were more about the Camino itself.

**Thursday** evening was the reception followed by some live music that they might have played a thousand years ago on the Camino.

**Friday** they had Questions & Answers (Q&A) for the new pilgrims and bikers. Yes there are pilgrims who ride bikes. I like this because there is always something to learn. I could even answer some the questions the new bees ask. The next things were about Hospitalero and the Chapters neither of which interest me much.

Then Gerard ZM Zegers told us about the international perspectives of the Camino. There was a little more interesting because Gerard made it so.

Before lunch they told about California's 21 Spanish Missions and how the APOC is helping to get this Camino going. It was nice they are working on a Camino for the USA. Most of the long walks in the US are now like the Camino de Santiago because

is not real support. Even the Mission Trail has a way to go for support. It will get there in time. After this talk we broke for lunch.

The presentation after lunch put me to sleep. It was about the Monastery of San Juan de la Peña. Even if I was interested the presenter put me to sleep. The next seminar was about the Monastery of Santa Domingo de Silos by Marsha Holm. Marsha woke me up some and made it a little interesting.

The next presentation was on Self Care along the Way by Marlena Lambert. This was a fun seminar. It was a Yoga class in a new way that you didn't really know it was Yoga. Marlena made this fun! I really enjoyed this. The whole group was laughing. Thanks Marlena!

We needed to go eat dinner after this one.

I missed the Walk off the Dinner Stroll. But not the 5 x 5-Open Mic. It was time to tell your story. Each storyteller got five minutes and five slides before they were hooked off the stage. This was very entertaining. Mike got up and told his story and was very good. I thought very much of trying this but we ran out of time. Lucky me! ☐

The next thing was Movie Time. I looked in on this and it was in French movie with subtitles. They were talking way too fast for me to keep up so I returned to my room to work on my blog a little then turned in for the night.

It is time to take a break from writing. Saturday is coming up and I need to take a break.

**Saturday's** events started out with breakfast. Our first thing was Birds of the Camino de Santiago. I am not much of a bird watcher but I do look at them from time to time. Merry Roy made this very interesting. Some of these birds have 12

foot wing spans. Yup, they may be small airplanes with feet. Thanks Merry!

After that was a thing about the geology of northern Spain. This I like because it is interesting to me and as you may know I have rocks in my head. Then we had lunch.

After lunch Herbert Medina talked about Packing light & Be Comfortable, To Bring or not to bring? This whole talk was about the things you might want or not want in your back pack. Remember it needs to be useful or you don't want to carry it. That is one of the reason I sent this iPad home after 5 days, too much unwanted weight!

The next session was about first-aid, safety, and bedbugs. Basically if it starts to hurt, rest! If it still hurts seek help. If you pee is too dark you aren't drink enough water. If you get bed bug take off all you close and freeze or burn them. There are many ways to fix a blister. I joke about these things because I experience only one blister, no bedbugs, shin splints, and I don't think I ever got near dehydration. Take care of yourself! They followed this with a Shell Ceremony that I did not attend. It is a blessing. And then dinner followed by a sing along called Camino Cabaret. That was fun. Then there was another Movie. I don't remember that. Hum, I wonder why. Then it was bed time again.

After breakfast **Sunday** there was a seminar called Angels & Demons where they talked about the good and bad parts. Not meaning good and evil this is more of the yin-yang parts of the same thing, kind of a Robin Hood thing. He was a robed the rich and gave to the poor. He did good thing and bad things at the same time. You had to be there to get this one. St. James is one of the Demon/Angles

killing some people and helping others. Well those are the stories.

So there was another walk and box lunch. I was packing because we told Cork to pick us up around one. Of course we were talking and almost forgot to leave. Thanks for waiting Cork!

## **26-Mar-13 7:06am \*\$**

### **Slowing down**

The second day in a roll I woke up late. It is unlike me to be to be late but yesterday I was almost late for my Monday morning training. Then again today I didn't wake up until 6:30. I must have the post vacation sleepy or something.

Yesterday I rebuilt one of those many laptop that were not working on my list there other one I got running on Sunday, or was it Saturday. Anyway you would thing I had a job and jumped back right back into doing things to get caught up.

I started working on paying bill last night and got very little done. I have been gathering my expenses for my trip and I think I will have to start just having water at Starbucks for a while. I am so broke right now and I don't like that. I have always dealt with money like it came from a bottomless pit. Right now it's the pits. Pun intended! ☐

Well I need to get caught up with the paper work to help fill up my money pit. I need not this stress. Oh well, Life goes on.

### **After The Gathering**

Cork picked up Mike and me up after we said our good-bye to the many friends we met at the conference and we hit the road. I was in the mood to get home. Mike and Cork reminded me that the three of us were going nowhere fast by taking the

scenic Route 66. Mike and Petra had walked that back in 2009 when they walked across the country and he wanted us to see it. After an hour or so I did too. I was in the back and they see that at first I was thinking I just wanted to be home. I didn't say anything because I did not want to be a whiner. In my head I was thinking about the break downs and what else could stop working.

Sitting in the back and not being able to hear much of what they were talking about gave me time to think. One of those thoughts was the twenty-five hundred dollars over budget I was and it depressed me. Then I thought about some of my Zen training. That was in the past and can't be changed. What is done is done. Live in the NOW. Not tomorrow as it is only a dream, Well, a nightmare in this case. What is, IS! The camper is running great and it will be fine. I will just dig a little deeper in my money pit and try to not start a fire in the pit with the money and I will be fine.

Like many other times I was thinking myself into felling into being sad, depressed, and/or pissed off at the world. Once I realized this, I was over it.

I knew all these things were old and weak on the camper before I left home. I elected to drive it anyway. All is well. I am with my brothers and going to enjoy them. Om!

## Old Route 66

Cork was driving and Mike is the navigator and I was in the back as a sight seer. What could be better than watching the world go by. The USA is a wonderful place to see from the back seat when you don't have to worry about driving or getting lost. Thanks Mike and Cork!

Old Route 66 was decommissioned as a US highway quit a long time ago being

replaced by Interstates. It was called the Mother Road I connected Chicago to California There are still parts that run through some fanatic country and towns you can't find on the Interstates.

We stopped in one town these that had many touristy shops. We checked out many of them. Sometime I love checking them out. This was one of those times.

In another place we stopped to just to look at the country side. From the top of the mountains and hills you can see forever, well a long ways.

I notice in many areas in the middle of nowhere (somewhere) there is no cell phone service. Once in a while there would be a little signal and I would check my email then say I'm on vacation.

Once when we were walking around I with no service the phone rang. It was Michelle! What a nice surprise. I warned her about the service so if the connection broke she would know it was the service and not me hanging up on her. It was good to talk to her. I was missing her more than I expected. Our encounter was brief as I lost signal after just a few minutes. I miss you!

## Grand Canyon

We were driving along the Interstate and the Grand Canyon came into the conversation and Cork seemed to be disinterested. He had the same attitude I had before I saw it. I thought it was just a big ditch why bother. Well it's too far out of the way. Why drive all that way. Well since Mike and I were giving in to Cork when the phone rang. It was Petra. She said it was only 35 miles from Williams. After talking a while Mike and I overrode Cork and we were on the path to the Grand Canyon.

Once Cork says it for the first time he was excited. I think he will be coming back. Even I was impressed and I have

been here three times now. Mike has been here before many years ago too and I think was also in awe. I'll be back

## Santa Fe

We move at a much slower pace down US 66 than the Interstate. It was good! Mike drove for a while and so did I for the next couple days until we arrived at Mike & Petra's home in Santa Fe New Mexico.

I still had ants in my pants to get on the road, but I was calmed down by an invite to check out downtown. Santa Fe is an Arts & Crafty town. Petra had things to take care of, so us three brother head to Downtown Santa Fe to see what there is there to see.

We walked for hours and still did not see all there was to see. We ate a light lunch and met up with Petra for dinner.

Santa Fe is a place where could spend a week and still not see everything. I will have to put this place on my return to places.

At Mike and Petra's we got to sleep in real beds and were fed real food. Petra is a good cook. We did a lot of visiting and had a very good time. I still wanted to sleep in my own bed at home.

## Hit the road

We had Mike make us breakfast and we packed up and listened to everyone telling us which route to take to get us where we wanted to be. My thoughts were to stop in Kansas to see our sisters Marcia and Edie. It looked like US Route 56 would put us within blocks of Marcia & Dan's house. So that was the path. It turned out to be a wonder road. It was only two lanes but very little traffic. We drove highway speeds most of the way. Yes there are a lot of small town to slow us a little. You need

that too. There are places to take a break for time to time.

We both got tired and stopped over night and arrive in the morning.

## Seeing the Sisters

By this time I felt even thought Cork was saying he was enjoying our time together he missed his wife Diane more than he was letting on. Cork has been married 37 years or so and they are always together. He was saying he could do this road trip a lot longer.

We visited with Marcia and Renee. Dan was working so we missed him. I didn't really want to stay all day. I wanted to be home. Things are waiting there for me.

We called Edie and she was home but had to go to work in a few hours so headed over to her place.

We arrived at Edie's. We were surprised to see Amber and her baby. Amber is with child and due next month. Edie's friend Charlie was there. I haven't seen him in a few years. It was good to see all of them and the others whom names I forget. Sorry!

After a while I was trying to find an easy way to say;"Let's go Cork!" when Cork asked Edie when she had to go to work. Hint, hint! It was a queue for me. We both were antsy to get on the road. It was time to make our leave.

There is a time in ever road trip when you don't want to be anywhere but home. This hit me and I think even though he said nothing, Cork too. So we said our good-byes and hit the road.

## On the road again

After leaving Edie's we talked little about our route to Woodstock. When we left home so many days ago I thought about stopping in St. Louis and Iowa to visit

on the way home. We I had no desire this time. All I wanted was to get home. Either Cork sensed this or he too wanted to get home. Cork was saying how much he enjoyed our road trip. I too had a great time. It is time for me to be home.

We plotted the fasted trio home. It was I-80 to I-88 to I-39 to US-20 to Marengo.

Getting near home we know how far between fuel stops. It looked like the last fill up would be in Belvedere. We put our target on the Sam's Club gas station. The price there is usually less. A few mile before there is when Cork stopped at a traffic light and the engine stalled. It started right up so I kidded Cork about running us out of gas at the same time thinking we did not need another break down. He looked at the gas gauge and indeed we were below "E". We had did that before and laughed about it.

At the next two or three stop light the same thing happened. We started looking for gas. Not Sam's Club! Any gas station! We saw one on the left and got lucky. The light was green and the engine stalled but it was downhill and we rolled right up to the pump. ☺ ☺ ☺ Fantastic!

After filling the take we found it holds 32 gallons of useable fuel. The book says it is a 35 gallon tank. We put 30 gallons a couple time on the road. So we were smart or lucky for the last two weeks. I tend to always run my tank on empty. I am lucky because I have roll up to the pump empty many times in my life.

So then we got home!

We planned 6:00pm and were only 2 minute late. I was home at 6:20.

**Home!**

## **27-Mar-13 11:02pm \*\$,**

### **Hoffman Estates**

Yes I'm out of town again. I had to get that power supply for my PC. It has been waiting for years for me to fix it. I think it has been 3 years since it failed. I put the hard drive in another box until I had time to get down here to Tiger Direct to get the new power supply. Before I went to California I picked up one for my server but forgot I needed the same kind for the PC. I could have save some gas. I am driving the car so gas is not a big issue. I could have ordered it online too but I wanted to go for a drive. I order parts from [TigerDirect.com](http://TigerDirect.com) all the time. In most case I have the stuff the next day. They usually ship from Naperville so they don't have far to travel.

I was sleepy while driving here so I stopped for a coffee because this Starbucks got right in the middle of my path and told me to come and visit. ☺

For those who have time and like computer stuff I think you might enjoys [TigerDirect.com](http://TigerDirect.com) and store in Hoffman Estates and the one Naperville was good the last time I was there.

## **29-Mar-13 1:01pm \*\$,**

So since I have been home I have built three computers from scratch. One was so hosed the only way to fix it was to just start over. It went very smooth. The second one came without a hard drives as a donation. It had no problems but had to have the operating system installed just the same. Knowing what it was going to be used for I tried Linux and it went very well. Not the third one was mine. My PC crashed over a year ago and like they say about the computer repair guy. His is the last one he fixes.

As I might have said earlier I move the hard drive to another box and used it up until about a month ago. Then something happened and I knew I had to reload windows onto it. The other day I started doing this processed. If I would just stop things go better. I have all three disc loaded and the anti-virus software loaded. And there it sits waiting for me to work on it. I just hadn't felt like working on it.

So this morning after breakfast I went back to the first computer to do a little fine tuning. What started to be an hour projects, ended up to take about four hours. I did get what I wanted to get done but got frustrated in the process.

You forget sometime when you haven't done some of the things in a long time and you are using different programs. I was setting up Outlook Express that is fairly simple. I use Outlook all the time and know where the setting in it but Outlook Express is different. When those setting are not where they see them you forget and think something is wrong and in reality it is just getting in a hurry.

Wow, there must be a hundred people here in Starbucks!

The other thing I was trying to do was the crop some pictures then resizes the cropping. Using the Microsoft picture editor that comes with Office is easy. If you don't have Office installed...Well I looked for some free tool and only found one that kind of worked.

I think when I get my PC up and running again I need to look for tools that I can use on any PC/laptop and carry them with me. Aha, PortableApps must have a photo editor.

I'll be back...Please Stand by...

...PortableApps has a whole bunch of apps that would be good to keep in my pocket. I used to use this years ago because of all the changes and when this

standardized for me I stopped carrying the Flash drive in my pocket. Now the Flash drives are so small I could almost put one under my fingernail and have a full blown server on it and still have memory to store your whole life on it. Well there are really small. I have one 64 GB USB flash drive that is not much bigger than the plug on it.

....

I just got a phone call and have to go home to check it out. Bye!

### **30-Mar-13 7:17 am \*\$**

Yes I am at Starbucks again. It is a nice place to be when I want the feeling of being alone with my random thoughts.

Here it is almost April and I have not published an issue yet. I have a little work I have to do before my PC is ready to do editing. I will work on it some more today. I am trying to not load anything on it I don't need. In time there are some many apps installed on it and becomes much cluttered. This time I did not even make a list of what was installed before I started over. This way I won't think so much about what I don't have until I need it.

Another thing I have done this time is to remove all those games I never use. Back in 2003 when I bought this PC it was am Windows Media Edition. This means it was a gaming machine. I wanted to edit video and gaming machines were the most powerful item out there. It is still a great PC but I had to reload it as I received it to get the right software to let me use all that power. Hence I got all those games while they install. So I live with my chose until I go out and buy a new PC in the next couple years.

I haven't rushed this because I have my laptop is serving me well while I working on the rebuild.



## Settling in again

I have been settling in since I returned from my trip to California. I need to fix a few things on the camper but that will wait for a while. My Saturday morning visit to see Mary & Heather at Vaughan's is no more. I guess the closed for good last Sunday. I will need to find another way to visit with them. While I was out of town I heard the Mary's Mother died. I am sorry to hear that. Even though I never met her I think she was a wonderful person. She raised a great daughter Mary. Mary passed it on into Heather.

Back to the settling in, I am back to exercising and thinking about starting to walk up here as soon as there are a few more degrees out there. It was 33° this morning so it is close. Since I haven't been walking since June last years, I want the chill off the air before I start again. Walking to E.W. Training in the morning is about five miles takes 1-1/2 hours round trip. I keep thinking about all the other things I could do with that time. Now I think I could be walking with that time. And take mental notes while walking. If I forget what I was going to do when I get home I must have not need to do it anyway. □

## Finishing things

I have so many unfinished projects. Maybe I should say just started projects. Maybe some of them should be removed from my project list and moved out of my life. Part of the problem I don't want to let go of many of them. In my head I think this is what I really should do with a lot of the open projects but in my heart I am still emotionally attached to them. There is where the problems lie. I have to detach for what does not serve me.

One big project I bought was the motor home. I thought I would like to travel the

country and live in it. After having it for few years I realized it was not the answer. After taking the camper to California a couple weeks ago I think the motor home is too big of just me. And it is too big to just a driving vacations as I like to take them. Even with all of the break downs on the last trip with the camper, it is what I need for a driving vacation. With two people the camper is the right size. We had 3 for a few days and it still wasn't too bad. It is designed for 4 but it is not equipped for that but is easily modified. If it was used for more than two vary often I would make those modifications. What this means it the motor home is out of here as soon as I can make it happen!

## Down Sizing

I have heard the term "Down Sizing" many times in the past. I am starting to think what that really means. Having too much is a heavy load. Too much stuff is too to maintain. House it too big to keep clean. Not enough time to work on all those projects. You need extra money to put out the keep things running. Even your body gets hard to carry around if there is too much.

Wow sitting here in my random thought is getting me thinking. Maybe I have spent too much time here and need to get some food into me. I think I should not eat too much.

## 21-Apr-13 8:43am

Wow, it feels like noon! Wait; let me look at the other clock to make sure it isn't 8:43pm. Nope, it's morning alright.

I'm about to publish March's issue and start working on April. I have sure got off to a slow start this year!

Let's getter done!

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