

## APRIL 19 - TO BC FERRIES & BEYOND

Well, our departure day has arrived, and guess what...it is raining lightly. This has been a very long, cold and wet winter. We are really happy that we are going south. Perhaps there is some sun there for us?!

We packed everything, said our goodbyes to Betty and Frank, and around 10:30 a.m., motored south to Duke Point for the 12:45 ferry. The electronic BCF sign south of Nanoose Bay indicated that overheights (us) was already 80% full. I wondered if that might cause us some grief, especially as the next sailing is at 3:15.

Ah, but the gods were smiling on us (well, maybe it helped that Jen flashed her BCF handicap card) and we were almost first on the ferry. After an uneventful passage (Are we there yet?!), we proceeded to the border. A few minutes later, we were driving south, in the US of A, on Interstate 5. The weather was overcast BUT it was not raining.

We had already decided that we were going to head for a rest area, south of Seattle, and overnight there.

The temperature reached 17C in the sunshine - WOW, this is what it's all about...we said to ourselves.

Getting through Seattle just around dinner time was not too bad. But south of Seattle, as darkness settled, the heavens opened up.

Turns out our rest area was further south than we remembered - Tumwater, actually, south of Olympia.

We pulled into the rest area, found a vacant lane, and settled down for the night, in the rain.

Hopefully tomorrow it won't be raining!

## APRIL 20 - I5 TO THE OREGON COAST

Fortunately the rain helped to block out the traffic noise overnight, so we both slept quite soundly. But, early to bed, early to rise, so we were on the road by 7:30.

I had wanted to stop at an RV salvage place in Centralia, WA, just a short distance down I5. But my excellent planning let me down - I couldn't remember the name of the place or its address. Ya woulda thought I'd have made a note somewhere!! Oh well, it's probably too early anyway...

Mid-morning, we stopped at Starbucks and checked our email. I had suggested heading towards Bend, OR, but after checking the weather forecast (-2C tonight in Bend) we decided to head for the coast - no point climbing to 3500+ feet this time of year, we'll do that on our return next month.

We continued south through Portland and then headed towards Lincoln City on the coast. Along the way was Lafayette - home of the monks at the Trappist Abbey of Guadalupe. The brothers make a fruit cake that is to die for. We had to stop and pick some up. Here's a picture of the reception building and the foreboding clouds in the distance.



Just down the road, in McMinnville, it began raining, quite heavily. We decided to pull off and wait it out. Besides we had fruitcake to sample!!



By the time we'd had our tea and cake, the sun was shining once again. We continued our trek towards the coast.

We arrived in Lincoln City, got some gas (they pump it here for you!) and checked out the local state park. The lower area sites were really soggy, the ones a bit higher up were not much better, but most of them were reserved. So we continued south. We'd pretty much decided to return to Lincoln City when Jen said that Beverly Beach State Park, the next state park we were heading for, was only 6 miles north of Newport.

We arrived at Beverly Beach and were given a spot for 2 nights. While Jen rested, I went to get something for dinner (and also check our email at Fred Myers).

I took this picture on the way into Newport.



Upon my return, we walked to the beach.



On our way back to our rig, we walked past a couple of Golden Retrievers - we had spoken to their owner on the way into our site - we can never pass up a Golden cuddle.

We asked if it was okay to say hello and both dogs came running to greet us.



Here are Liz and Scott, Belle (lighter) and Joey, Belle's brother - what a delightful few minutes, chatting and cuddling!

Who does Belle remind you of?

There are some interesting "formations" in and around the park. Almost look like mangroves.



The weather this past winter has really done some damage on the coast. There are numerous areas on Hwy 101 that appear to have been washed away. These have been repaired but are quite bumpy to get over.

It's nice to see the sun for a change. And with 17C temperatures, it's was a very lovely day.

We're here for 2 nights, so tomorrow we are going to head to Newport. See you there!

## APR 21 - YAQUINA HEAD OUTSTANDING NATURAL AREA AND NEWPORT

Last night, the stars shone brightly in the heavens. We should have gone to the beach take them in but didn't. It's many years ago, at Nehalem Bay State Park south of Cannon Beach, when we wandered over the dunes in the dark to the water's edge and gazed skyward - an awe-inspiring spectacle we both remember to this day.

The sun was shining again this morning - time to get out and enjoy the lack of rain. On the way into Newport, we visited the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area. We toured the Visitors Centre then drove to the lighthouse.



It was another beautiful day on the coast!



After touring the lighthouse, we continued our drive into Newport and Starbucks. While there we checked our email.

For lunch, we drove north, past Beverly Beach SP, to the Devil's Punchbowl. And there was Mo's, right at the side of the parking lot,



just where it was when we first visited Mo's decades ago on our first camping trip together.  
After a bowl of Slumgullion (J), Chowder and Shrimp (me), we headed back to camp.



While Jen rested, I attended to business. At the beach, the temperature reached 23C in the sunshine. Sadly, the forecast for the coming week is a return to cooler temperatures and dampness.

Tomorrow we head south towards Florence and one of favourite Oregon State Parks - Jessie.M. Honeyman.

Until then.

## APR 22 - J.M. HONEYMAN STATE PARK & FLORENCE, OR

The weather forecast turned out to be correct - showers in the morning with clearing by noon. Fortunately we were able to break camp without getting too wet. We were on the road by 8:30. We enjoyed our stay at Beverly Beach State Park.

When we turned out of the park and onto Hwy 101, the wind was howling and the rain had a distinct slant to it. It was quite the drive to Florence. All of the flags, both American and those that advertise things in front of businesses, were full, flat out. It wouldn't have surprised me to see them begin to fray. Boy, was the wind strong!

We stopped at Washburn State Park and had a look around. This is a nice park but it's about 14 miles to Florence - a bit too far to be running back and forth if need be. We made a cup of coffee and enjoyed the view out to the Pacific and the absence of rain!

Here's a picture of the dunes in the distance as we drove down off the headland.



We continued on to Florence and a couple of miles south, Honeyman State Park. We stayed here on our first trip to the Oregon coast a couple of years ago. Loop H of the park, by the dunes, is where all the boys and their toys are - we've never seen so many ATVs in one spot. Each family had one for mom, one for dad, and one for each kid - singles, doubles, quads. Boy, these guys must be mortgaged up to the hilt!

We found a site and checked in with the ranger for 4 nights. We've got a bit of "business" business to attend to early in the coming week. Here's our site.

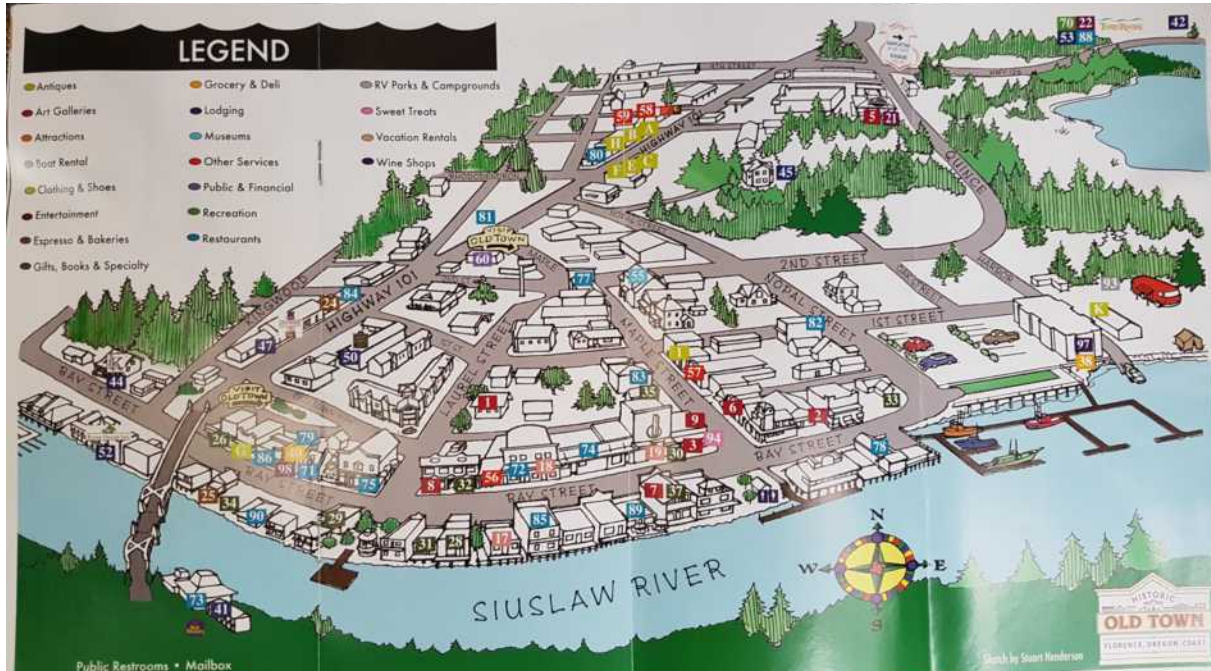


Wednesday we will drive to Brookings, OR where I've arranged to have an awning installed on the rig. The tarps we've used over the last couple of years are just too flimsy and a pain to set up and dismantle.

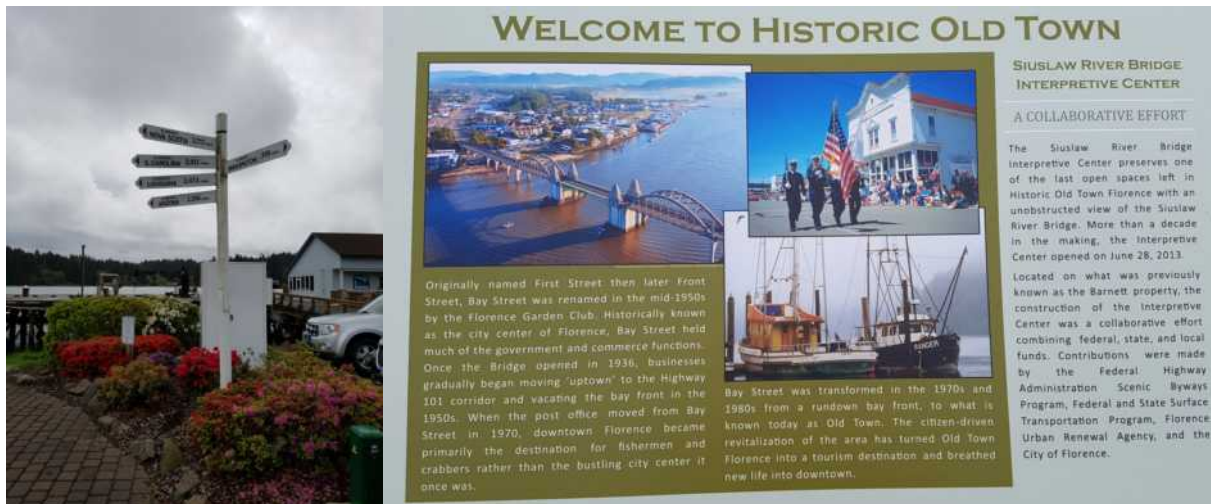
If we get up to anything exciting in the next 4 days, I'll let you know.

## APR 23 - OLD TOWN FLORENCE, OR

Another cloudy day on the Oregon coast but it is not raining. We decided to explore "old town" Florence today. This is the shopping area close to the bridge along the Siuslaw River.



We walked west along Bay Street from the parking lot and stopped for coffee at Siuslaw River Coffee



Roasters, #25 on the map, just by the bridge. Wandering back along Bay Street we marvelled at some of the architecture as well as all the lovely rhodies, flowering bushes, and flowers.

Nestled along the Siuslaw River, Historic Old Town Florence offers lovely, unique, fun shopping and dining to locals and tourists. It's all blended with colorful and creative art galleries, the quaint path through Gazebo Park to the river, and the Siuslaw River Bridge Interpretive Center, where you can sip





a cup of coffee or a cool drink at riverside tables while you listen to the call of the sea gulls flying over the fishing boats as they pass under famous Siuslaw Bridge.

Many of the buildings have fascinating history, and the streets are now enhanced with beautiful flower boxes, ornamental streetlights and benches for relaxing.

[Above text with thanks - Florence Chamber of Commerce]

APR 25 - FLORENCE, OR

Yesterday we did a short tour of Florence. Jen noticed a road on the map called Rhododendron Drive so off we went. Unfortunately, like at home, everything is behind the normal schedule, so a lot of the rhodies are just starting to bloom. It will be really pretty around here in a week or two.

The rain abated for our drive but it was still overcast and cool.

We stopped at Nature's Choice café for a coffee and ended up having a nice lunch. While we enjoyed our lunch accompanied by Jo-Jo fries with Miso-Ginger dip - surprisingly delicious - a recommendation from our server, I looked across the street and saw the "Crab Shack". You know where we stopped after lunch!

Here we are enjoying last night's crab feast.



They don't call the left coast the wet coast for nothing. With all the rain this winter, there are some amazing sites.

Today, April 25, we did a few chores around town. I stopped in at the local library and was amazed at the speed of their internet. I managed to do my "work" very quickly and easily.

On the way back to Honeyman, we took a drive out to the South Jetty - the other side of the Siuslaw River - on the dunes side. It was raining - what else is new - and the 5.5 mile drive (one way) was very uninspiring. We arrived at the end of the road and a pot-holed, flooded parking area. There was really nothing there to see, even on a clear day.

Tomorrow we leave for Brookings. See you there.



APR 26 - HWY 101 TO BROOKINGS, OR

It was raining lightly as we broke camp this morning. Jen was telling me yesterday that since October, Portland has received 44" of rain. Bet the population there is looking for some sun too!

We headed out early. Jen took this picture on the way out of the park.



As we drove through Coos Bay in the mist, I noticed a café and a parking spot on the main street. Around the block we went and fortunately no one had taken "my" spot at the end of the block.

We enjoyed a delightful cup of coffee at Kaffe 101. Wifi was good so I walked back to the rig to retrieve the technology (laptop, tablets).

After a second cup, we wandered across to the Boardwalk.



We looked at the informative boards around the perimeter of the covered area. Sure glad it was covered! It wasn't raining as much as it was misty - you just got damp walking through it.



Back at the rig, we continued our journey south on Hwy 101.

Just outside of Port Orford, where we stayed back in '15, I took this picture (and the video).



We stopped in Bandon for a break. The weather had started to improve - at least it had stopped raining.



We arrived in Brookings and booked into the Harris Beach state park just a mile north of Brookings. And guess what, just like the travel literature said, the weather improved dramatically! Apparently this area has a weather effect, similar to our Chinooks, where the weather can dramatically improve. The travel information we had said that because of this phenomena it was not unusual to have 70° temperatures in January and February! Woohoo?! The sun is shining!!



Once we had set up camp, we went for a walk and saw this from the top of the bluff.



Tomorrow we will explore more of Brookings.

APR 27 - AZALEA GARDEN & CHETCO POINT, BROOKINGS, OR

Well, clear overnight, so cool this morning. But the sunshine is much appreciated!

We met with our awning guy late yesterday afternoon. Installation is scheduled for Friday, so today we have the whole day to ourselves. Off we go! First stop, the Tourist Bureau.

We asked about the condition of Hwy 101 south of here. Not good at all. While we have seen many "patch" jobs on our way here, unfortunately Hwy 101 south of here is another story. California DOT is still repairing the highway so there are, apparently, numerous delays with one-way traffic around the problem areas. Good to ask and we now have an alternate plan to get out of here this weekend.

So we decided the next order of business was a coffee. We stopped at Down Town Coffee Lounge and Café and I could not resist the sound of a fresh sticky bun. (We shared one but I really wished I didn't have to). It was soooo good. Mmmmm, delicious (and not too sweet)!!



After coffee we headed to the Azalea Park. We're a little early - there are many rhodies and azaleas yet to bloom - but the park was very impressive nonetheless.



We walked by Capella by the Sea, a small chapel on the grounds.



Then we strolled through the rhodies and azaleas. Absolutely beautiful!!



Lots more blooms to come.



On the base of the artwork was this dedication.



If the weather stays dry, this park will really be pretty in the next couple of weeks.

Okay, tour guide, where are we off to next? Oh, Chetco Point. Chetco Point is a headland that juts out into the Pacific. It's such a beautiful afternoon; we just have to go have a look.



While Jen waited on the beach I headed up the trail to the top.





I found these guys growing on the windswept top of Chetco Point.



The view from the top was quite spectacular. I took these pictures and also 3 videos.



I walked back down the trail to where Jen was and couldn't stop myself from walking onto the beach to take some more photos. The views are so dramatic.



Walking back along the trail, we wondered which way the prevailing winds blew.



The winds certainly re-arranged my coif!



We headed back to the rig for lunch. While Jen rested I hit the library to work on the blog. Our new awning is installed in the morning. We're looking forward to that!

## APR 28 - THE AWNING OF A NEW DAY

This morning our awning was installed on the side of Ali - all 15' of it.

For the past two years we've used a white tarp to provide protection from the rain and sun mostly. The problem was it was a pain to set up what with poles and ropes, etc. and then when up, very susceptible to any gust of wind.



It took Jerry, and his partner Debbie, about 2½ hours to complete the installation. And then about 15 minutes of instruction, or... how not to break it.

Here's a few pictures of the installation.



After lunch we drove to the library to check our email. I used the opportunity to update our blog. There was nothing else urgent so went back to the park. While Jen had her rest, I went to do a bit of "hardware" shopping.

We've been driving by this large rhodi in bloom ever since we arrived. Today I made a point of stopping and taking this picture.



When I returned, a cup of tea was in order. It was just so lovely just sitting in the sunshine at the side of Ali that we decided that was it for today.

We've decided to stay one more night - really enjoying the warm sunny weather, so we'll do what we were going to do today, tomorrow. See you then.

## APR 29 - LOEB STATE PARK & BROOKINGS HARBOUR, OR

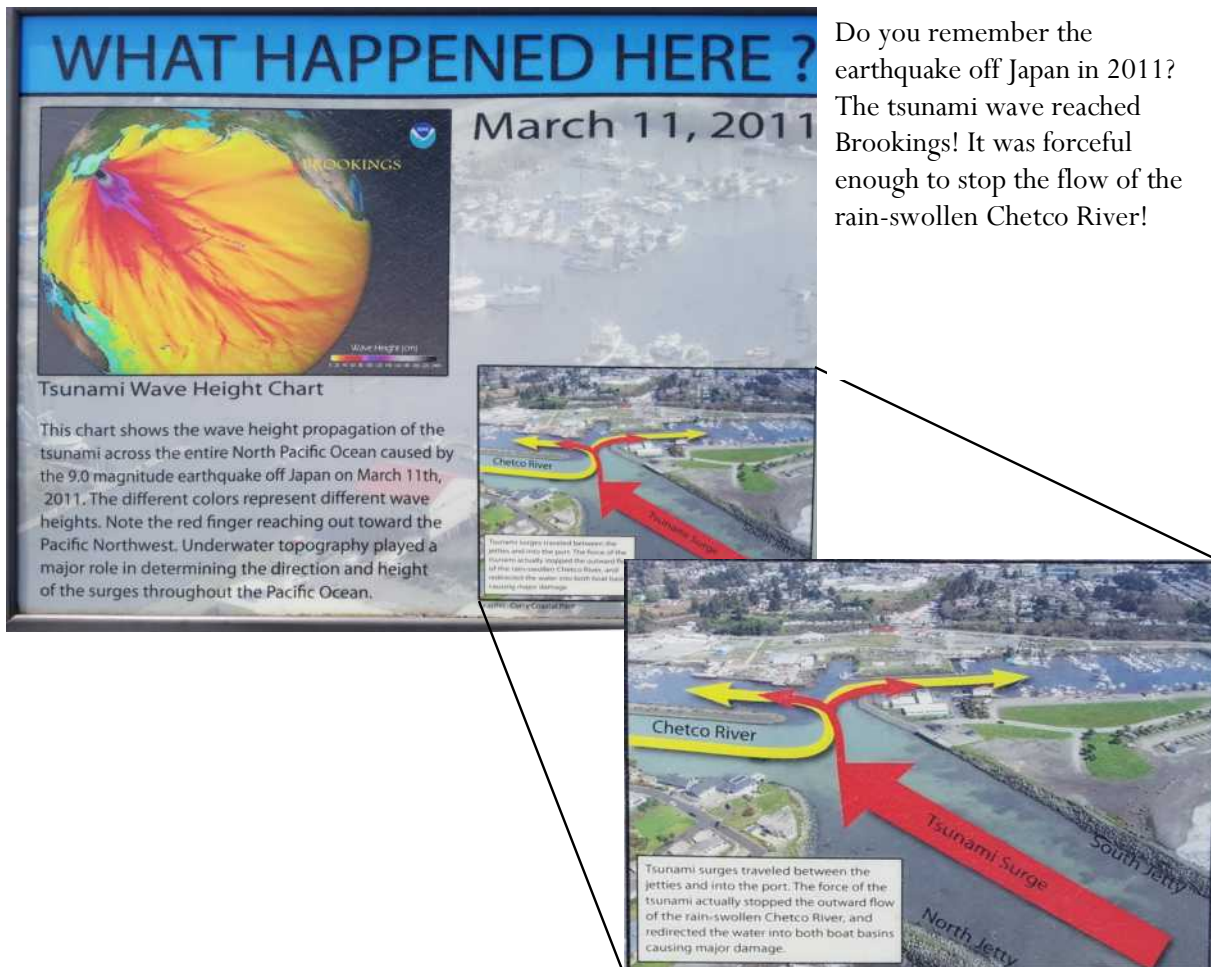
We awoke to another sunny morning. Gotta love all this sunshine!

After breakfast, we wandered into the library to check emails, update the blog, and catch up on the news. That done, it was time to go sight-see.

Our neighbours in the park the other night suggested the next time they were in Brookings they were going to stay at Alfred Loeb SP, 8 miles up the river. We decided to go take a look. The river is certainly blue!



After our walk along the river, we headed back into town. It was time for a coffee. Jen suggested we venture down to the harbour to see what we could find.



We found a small coffee shop - the Bell & Whistle - and enjoyed coffee and a cookie. After coffee, I stopped in at the Tourist Bureau to ask about fresh seafood and where we could buy some. Turns out it was just across the parking lot, on the other side of the boat launch ramps. While in the TB, I noticed this bowl for sale - \$39.95. It was about 24" in diameter and about 5" deep. It was exquisite!



Have you ever had one of those moments when you know you will regret later not buying something right now. Yup, me too! But where the heck do I put a 2' diameter bowl for the next 2 months without it getting damaged? And furthermore, where do I put it when we get "home"? Home is right behind the van most days. But, boy, it sure was a stunning piece of art.

Pretty flowers outside the shops.



Then we headed back to camp so Jen could have her afternoon rest.

Tomorrow we break camp, after 4 beautiful days in Brookings, and head towards Redding, CA. Forecast temperatures for the next few days there are in the 30C range. Good thing we have our A/C and our new awning!

Catch you later.

## APR 30 - DESTINATION OR DIRECTION?

After four delightful days in and around Brookings, OR (and a new awning to boot!), it is time to move on. We're going to miss the coast, but other sights are out there to see.

We were advised of numerous washouts on Hwy 101 south, causing single lane bypasses, as well as a major slide on Hwy 299 to Redding, CA. We thought about taking the "easy" way - inland to Grants Pass on Hwy 199, but the thought of driving I5 south (again) did not excite either of us.

We headed south from Brookings to Eureka, following Hwy 101. A few miles north of Eureka, Hwy 299 headed east towards Redding. We weren't necessarily trying to get to Redding today, Redding was more the direction, not the destination.

We passed a few campgrounds along the way on Hwy 299, only one of which was open. We decided to continue on; it was still reasonably early in our travel day.

We climbed 2 passes over 2,000' in elevation. Attaboy Alfie!



We finally arrived at the latest slide - quite the site - but as it is Sunday, the delay was minimal. I imagine it might be a different story tomorrow.



We decided to continue on through Weaverville - a pretty town - and keep our eyes open for a suitable resting place for the night.



Finally we saw a sign for an County Park and RV parking. It was just a parking lot, by a marina, but we thought... what the hay. We're tired. Then it dawned on us - we have no way of keeping the groceries we just bought cold! Okay let's go get some ice and we'll use the cooler.

By the time we found a store, we were just inside Redding city limits! %\*\$^(!! "Let's find an RV park", and we did, just a few miles north of Redding off I5. Shady old oak trees are sure nice on a hot (30C) day like today.

We're going to exploring tomorrow.



An old 2-6-2T tank engine on the park grounds that the staff are wanting to restore.