

# John Mosley's and Barbara Foster's Grand Adventure

*Home is Where We Park it*

## **Leg 2: photographic highlights from July - December 2007**

We headed off again on July 2nd, 2007, this time to the Pacific Northwest. We quickly crossed Nevada, visited Lava Beds National Monument in northernmost California, spent a week at Crater Lake, Oregon, attended the huge RV Rally in Redmond, and then began working our way slowly north up the Cascades, camping in the forests at Sisters and Mt. Hood and doing a lot of hiking in the mountains. We saw Mt. St. Helens, Washington, which is presently active, and then spent a week hiking the trails at Mt. Ranier. We enjoyed a weekend near Bangor (across from Seattle) to help John's son celebrate his 23rd birthday, and this was our turn-around point. Then back to Oregon. We spent a very relaxing week outside Portland, visiting a friend (and John got to climb Mt. St. Helens). Then we were back in Sisters, camping in the forest and looking for a place where we might one day put a small summer home or park our RV for an extended stay. That was followed by a week on the southern Oregon coast between Coos Bay and the California border, where we had two days of warm weather (70s) followed by days of chilly fog (highs in the mid-60s). John was happy to head inland and see the sun again. We hiked in the neighborhood of Mt. Shasta for a few days, and then a storm blew through while we were at Mt. Lassen and we were snowed on! We hustled down to the Sacramento delta area for a week of warmth – cycling and hiking and visiting friends, followed by a few days in the western Sierra foothills. We crossed the Sierras at Lake Tahoe and slowly headed south down the east side of the mountains, stopping to see Virginia City, Bodie ghost town, Mono Lake, and especially the wonderful hot springs outside Mammoth -- where it was in the low 20s F at night. Our two weeks in Death Valley were *much* warmer, and we explored the majestic desert on foot and by 4-wheel drive. We spent two weeks in Los Angeles visiting friends, and John picked up a new laptop. That was followed by two weeks in resorts in Palm Springs, where the temperatures cooled considerably, and then three weeks in Borrego Springs (pop. 3000) within the huge [Anza Borrego Desert State Park](#), where we Jeeped and hiked in the desert badlands. John had the Jeep lifted (longer shocks and springs) for better clearance off-road. We spent the holidays in Yuma, Arizona, looking (unsuccessfully!) for warmth; it's not an exciting town and we were happy to move on -- to Quartzsite.



Near Lava Beds National Monument, in northernmost California, we walked around Glass Mountain -- an outcropping of obsidian that went on for miles. The biggest chunks are the size of a refrigerator!





We spent a full 8 days at Crater Lake, Oregon, hiking the trails (including portions of the famous Pacific Crest Trail) and enjoying camping in a magnificent forest. The lake water is so pure it exceeds standards for bottled water, and it's actually bluer than in this photo.





One hike at Crater Lake took us to the top of Union Peak. We were under the impression that it was an easy 11-mile stroll, but ... (next photo, below)





... the last hundred feet or so was a climb, not a walk. We're hikers, not climbers! Here Barbara is cautiously starting the descent.



The huge RV [Rally](#) in Redmond, Oregon, drew 9000 people. This photo was snapped on the last afternoon, when the crowd had thinned to the last few hundred diehards. We learned, spent some money -- and then headed for the mountains in the background -- the Three Sisters.





One of our nicest camping spots was at the edge of this meadow near Three Sisters in central Oregon. Our view on three sides was of a huge meadow with lava ridges in the background and tall snow-covered mountains immediately beyond. We were almost alone in this peaceful spot.





John is cooking some sausages on his paper barbecue while smoking his pipe. The night before we enjoyed a campfire until late -- our first campfire of the entire trip.





Barbara puts wild birdseed here and there (here on a tree stump) and then watches the chipmunks stuff their cheeks and scurry off to stash it for the winter.





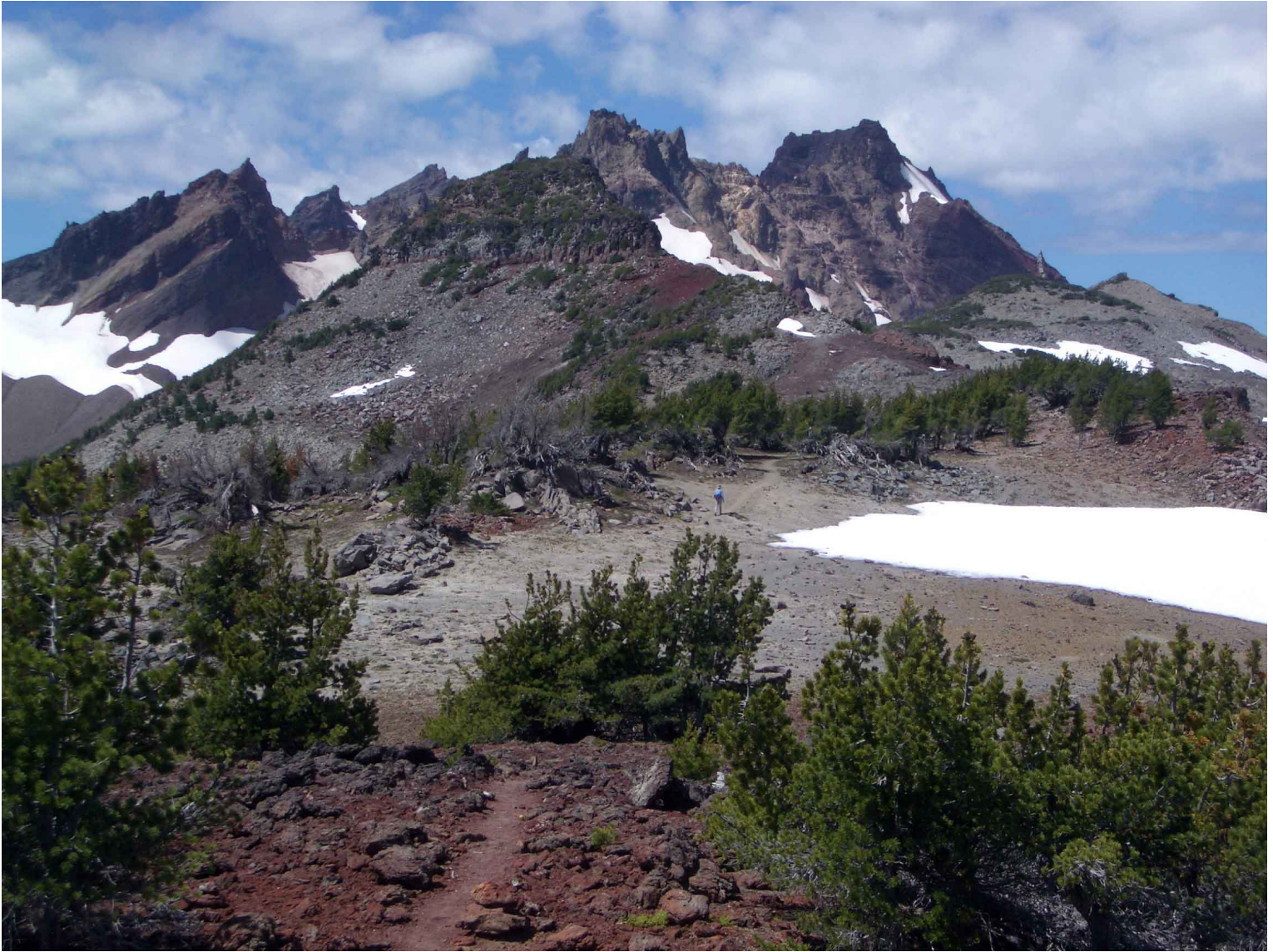
One hike took us to Golden Pond at the foot of Broken Top mountain. We had no idea the Cascades are so rugged and have such wonderful trails.





Happy hikers at a viewpoint with the Three Sisters mountains beyond. These are the same peaks that beckoned from the RV rally.





This trail followed a ridge at 8,000 feet toward Broken Top. Barbara is at center.





We found another favorite campsite at Mt. Hood. This is not in a campground; we drove down a dirt road and backed into this space along a creek. We had this corner of the forest to ourselves: no lights, no noise -- just us. With our solar panels and large holding tanks we can stay out for 8 to 9 days at a time.





Mt. Hood -- Oregon's tallest peak -- is an easy target for cameras. We like this photo because it includes the tiny ecosystems established on tree stumps in a lake. Four glaciers on the mountain are visible from this angle.





Snacks are where you find them. Barbara is gnoshing on huckleberries beside the Pacific Crest Trail near the base of Mt. Hood.





The clouds parted on our visit to Mt. St. Helens in Washington. We saw steam rising in several places from the dome that has been growing at the center of the volcano since 2004. A fascinating place! (For a real-time high-def image of Mt. St. Helens go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/volcanocams/msh/static-highdef.php>.)





We've all seen plenty of ant hills, but this one on the flank of Mt. Ranier is ridiculous. Some are 5 feet high and 10 feet across and they're shimmering with millions of busy ants. We didn't stand long in the close vicinity to marvel at them.





Mt. Ranier is truly awesome. It's good that we saw the other Cascade volcanoes first as Ranier blows the others away. We hiked on the flank of the mountain through the forests, and along the Pacific Crest Trail, but not above timberline. Maybe next time.





This view of Mt. Ranier from a different angle gives a feeling for the immensity of the glaciers.





Barbara presents Jack with a chocolate cheese cake on his 23rd birthday on August 20 (the candle played "Happy Birthday"). Jack is in the Navy at the submarine base in Bangor, Washington, and his wife Jenny, who is also in the Navy, is based in nearby Bremerton, but she was out to sea aboard her aircraft carrier and missed the cake.





Two days later John had an invitation to join friends on a hike up Mt. St. Helens. It's a steep climb up 4600 feet of rocks and ash, but a great view down into the smoking crater. It was *freezing* on top -- about 45 degrees with a strong, damp wind, so out came the emergency windbreaker. Long pants would have been nice too. The hike/climb down was a killer.





This is what a coast should look like (the Oregon coast near Coos Bay.) This was one of the few fog-free warm days.





Barbara was thrilled by the chance to spy on gray whales. She's watching one spout beyond the rocks (note the tiny white puff about a quarter of the way in from the left).





John has never had much appreciation for sand dunes (sand is so hard to walk on!) but these at Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area are wonderful. They cover an area about 40 miles by 2 miles along the coast, and the highest rise 500 feet. The 75 degree temperature was perfect. We walked for miles in bare feet.





Barbara got the idea it would be fun to take a jet boat ride up the Rogue River (she's in blue just front of center), and an unexpected highlight was the chance to watch a black bear eat blackberries by the river. John went for a slower and quieter hike along the river. John snapped this photo as her boat passed under a bridge.





A storm came through while we were at Mt. Lassen and dumped snow on us in mid-September! We well remember fleeing south down the East Coast last fall to escape cold weather (see [Leg 1](#)) and may find ourselves doing the same thing on the West Coast. Mountains are pretty in snow, but a central part of our travel strategy is to be where it's warm.





Gold and silver mines made Virginia City, Nevada, enormously rich in Mark Twain's day (he got his start writing here). It burned down in 1875 and was rebuilt the following year. The downtown buildings are largely unmodified since 1876, and it's a must-see.





Virginia City was never abandoned, but Bodie, California, most definitely was. The gold panned out in the 1880s and the last resident gave it up in 1942. It's now a state park, and you can walk around the ruins and peer into the stores and homes -- all pretty much as they were left at least six decades ago. (Note snow on the ground -- chilly again.)





This Bodie home has clothes still hanging on hooks and pictures on the walls. Dishes are in the sink. Amazing.





Long Valley just east of Mammoth is hot spring heaven, and we spent two wonderful days sampling as many as we could.  
Is life great, or what?





At last we're in Death Valley -- where it's warm. We'll spend the rest of October here, exploring by Jeep and foot.





A road runner visited us each afternoon in our camp at Furnace Creek in Death Valley. The scope is set up for an evening of skygazing at an altitude of -190 feet.





Abandoned mines abound in Death Valley. This is the remains of one of the few that was prosperous, exactly one century ago.





This memorial is to a German tourist who died on the trail in Death Valley last year. The plaque on the small cross reads: "Here died my beloved wife Brigette Reipert, nee Zielske, from a heat stroke / April 29, 1943 in Berlin, Germany / May 15, 2006." What a lonely place to leave this world.





An all-day drive took us to this amazing oasis in Saline Valley, northwest of Death Valley, that is home to a hot spring that the National Park Service has declared "clothing optional." Unbelievable. You're permitted to camp free at the spring for up to a month, but our RV would never survive the trip, so we visited for one afternoon only in the Jeep.





We especially enjoy slot canyons and seek them out. At this point Marble Canyon (in Death Valley) is about 12 feet wide at the bottom and perhaps 400 feet deep. The walls of ancient metamorphic rock have been polished like marble.





We plan to be in a series of resorts through the winter and to take it easy. This one near Palm Springs has 4 swimming pools and 9 large Jacuzzis fed by underground hot springs, plus clubhouses etc. This is not "your father's trailer park." Barbara adjusted quickly to resort living; John is always looking for places to hike.





A "high point" of our two weeks in Palm Springs was a hike to the top of Mt. San Jacinto with friends Deborah Chapman and Bret Pollack. The summit is 10,000+ feet above the valley floor, so the view is amazing, to say the least. Joshua Tree National Park is at far right.





Anza-Borrego Desert State Park (about 100 miles south of Palm Springs) contains more than 1,000 square miles of Southern California desert, and most of it is extremely arid and lifeless; Death Valley is green in comparison. This palm oasis east of the town of Borrego Springs (pop. 3000) has exactly one palm, and it's on the map as a destination. People come from all around to marvel at it. It took two hours on 4WD dirt roads to reach it, and we ate lunch in its shade.





A mid-December sunrise from our campground in Borrego Springs.





We continue to seek out slot canyons, and there are a *lot* of them in the Anza Borrego desert. This one narrowed down to where we had to step sideways and hold in our stomachs.

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