

SEPTEMBER 2017 JOURNALS & BLOGS

September- Hurricane Harvey

9.1 Well, a brand-new month. First we have Hurricane Harvey and, of course, Hurricane Irma has her sights set for Florida. We're still here in DelRaton RV Park, or the parking lot.

Weather station has one bar from Irma going to Miami then North through the state of Florida. All the other twelve bars are veering North going up the East coast of Florida; sounds good enough for me. The one going through the state is the European projection, and it's much more reliable than the US version. We'll keep an eye on it.

9.2 Sat. Still watching the weather station. Now, just to add a little confusion both the US and European projections are united in their projected path through Florida. We have a plan B; leave Delray, FL and head North to Wildwood, FL, 250 miles North of here. We even have a plan C, if needed, which would be to go North to Georgia. All these alternate plans are good and come with a fee stays. We plan on leaving on Thursday to head North, unless Irma goes astray and does not present a danger to us.

9.3 Sun. We're still watching and getting a little nervous. Asked Dennis today when he visited us at the site, if he would want to come with us. It would have been a little challenging but doable, but he felt comfortable staying in Boca. It turns out that the caregiver on duty last with Dennis, as the storm hits, is relegated to stay with him until the hurricane subsides especially if he has to go to a shelter, which is just down the street. He was good with the situation.



9.4 Three Flags Wildwood, FL Hurricane Irma



This is it; Irma is pushing it. I couldn't sleep this morning and so, for lack of company, tossed around enough that Carla could not sleep either. Here we both are and 6:15 am; we never get up that early on our own.

Thanks to the luxury of our satellite system we're totally connected. We turn on the Weather Station. Our worst fears materialize, now four projection bars are barrowing through Florida. We get serious. Carla has a short grocery list, including another 3 gallons of water and fruit. Once the sun comes up she calls the Wildwood campground asking if they would have room for us and if we could come in four days early, no problem; love Thousand Trails! We're off to Walmart to shop then down to the office to give notice. As we walked back to our site we must have had dialogs with at least four individuals before we arrived back to the coach; that's more talking than we've had since we got here, whatever! By 10:30 it was jacks up and away we were. We treated ourselves to a short break at a rest stop and had a quick bite to eat then a gas stop in Fort Pierce, FL followed by another short break on the Turnpike at Canoe Creek then off to finish the trek. We arrived in Wildwood around 3:30 and we're set up by 4pm. An actual Campground with grass and trees. This is not a current picture, but it is the campground, heavenly! When we got here the office had the weather channel on, now there are eight bars nailing Florida, so I'm please we decided to take off. By Thursday, according to the authorities, Irma will be in Florida; are we good or what! The bad news is that if the storm looks serious enough the campground will be closed, all must leave and go to a shelter. We'll have to wait for the next installment to see what happens next. Oh, the campground here is called "Three Flags."



9.5 Tuesday. Our new-found friend, the Weather Channel, informed us that Irma would strike the Keys late Wed. or early Thursday, with the strength of a Cat 5 storm. Wildwood has told us there are shelters but none locally that will accept shelters.



Even Wildwood is anticipating winds of up to 150 MPH and very strong Cat 5. With just a little discussion we decided to take another look at plan C. This would involve a 250+ mile trip going even further North and settling finally in Unadilla, GA. The campground here is Southern Trails. Right now, I'm being told the Cat 5 winds are at 185 MPH, probably the strongest winds ever registered. I even told my Tropic Tenants to evacuate immediately if told to do so.

We've stayed here before about two years ago and it hasn't changed an iota. It's basically a piece of pasture property, but it comes at ten dollars a night electric and septic, life is good.

9.6 Wed. Yes, we're still watching the weather. Awoke this morning to 78 degrees. AC didn't go on once last night; awesome! Seems Irma, as of late, might travel the east coast of Florida, but with the same amount of velocity. We do not regret our decisions. Unadilla, GA is way out but it's safer than being in Florida. For those RVers with great retirement and 401K plans risking their coach to possible disaster might be acceptable; after all they would just go out and buy another. Carla and I are not that well off. The S-Cruiser must be considered our last home; a very nice home if I might add.



Sept. 6th. Today is Michael's, birthday.

We don't get over to the east coast, Boston, that often. I did call and had a great talk. Only wish I could reset the clock such that we could have had conversations like the one we have now but back then. Father son relationships are difficult with some families. Being the older of the two of us from way back, I must take responsibility for this. I'm so envious of the many fathers we've gotten to know and the close relationships they'd always had with their sons; there have been exceptions, however. I think I've changed a lot over the years, and only wish he'd had a chance to know the new me and not had to live with the older crappier version, but that's life! Irma is not expected to have any effects on Georgia until Monday or Tuesday of next week, will let you know what happens then. Now off to amend out Travel Schedule for Sept.

9.8 Southern RV Campground, Umatilla, GA. This is our second day at Southern and what a experience. It's not that the RV Park is that exceptional, it's not, it's the fact that it's a campground, not a parking lot. The folks next to us travel in a Beaver RV. It's a 42-foot diesel which looks very much like ours except much nicer. They have a home site in West Palm Beach, FL.



Was not about to turn the rest of my life over to his buddy, not that dumb. I've had and experienced the best in the country, the heck with this buddy. Hopefully I'll know more in the next week or so. In the mean time we've modified our plans and headed back to Wildwood. Wildwood is only seventy miles from Tampa where all the talent exists. If we should have a need to stay longer Thousand Trails has a campground in Largo, FL where we, hopefully, can stay long term. At the time this picture was taken the park was very empty, that has changed quite a bit as those that fled Florida because of Irma are returning. The park was closed during the storm and has debris everywhere, but no serious damage and no RVs were lost to Irma.

9.28. It's been two weeks since my last blog entry. My own medical crisis seems not that critical but am still working with my Tampa Doctors for at least the next couple of weeks. Carla will have some follow-up appointments through February so, as you can see from our proposed travel schedule, we're still hovering around Florida. We have been making changes however. Last Saturday Carla was inspired to rebuild our poorly installed Dish Satellite system. We decided on Winegard hardware. On the third phone call to Winegard, last Saturday morning, we got a guy who asked us in detail how our system was put together, then told us, step by step how to correct the problems.

Turns out the power unit and Wally must be within twenty-five feet of the Winegard aerial. So, we tore what we had apart and reconnected it properly, we hoped. The last step was the expensive one. The system, for a motor coach, needed an HDMI cable to go from the power unit in the front of the coach way to the back of the coach and come forward inside the rear slide and plugged into the TV. To confirm this would work and worthy of the expense we bought a 25-foot HDMI cable and strung it over cabinets, doors and windows and connected it to the TV. Within a minute the little R2D2 Winegard aerial came to life once again after being dormant for over two weeks; Awesome! Last Tuesday we took the coach to Alliance, an RV dealership we have a great amount of faith in and had them do the HDMI cable install. So now we have Morning Joe in the morning and Rachel Maddow in the evening; a little less sleep but more entertainment.

Yesterday, the 27th, after shopping and doing a wash we decided to take another look at our travel schedule. It has radically changed from a couple of months ago. We will be jumping around a little in Florida, not because we can't sit still, but in order for us to remain in Florida without paying camping fees. Abby just texted us, always a pleasure to hear from her. Her birthday is next week and we thought she would be celebrating her 19th, but actually it's her 20th year. She's growing in a very mature manner. Saving is part of her vocabulary, something I did not accept until my fifties. I hope she'll open an IRA, even if its only a small account, at least she'll be contributing to securing her future. Michael is still part of her life, a nice guy, very likeable.

We hope we get to see both a few times during our stay in Florida, December thru Feb. It is truly hard to believe that it has been over one year since we've travelled to a destination to do more than make repairs or improvements. In hindsight it's gone by faster than I thought it would, but I did not share the same feelings last January. Now to Dennis.

Dennis has been on his own, with the help of round the clock caregivers since July. He's been making his own decisions, buying what he wants to eat and going out whenever he wants, once again, with the help of caregivers. He's always been totally in charge of his own life, and he's done quite well; this stroke was not in the cards. He's worked hard with PT and OT and at this point it's up to him how much further progress he wants to achieve, our being around does not mean very much. We talk every day up to three times a day some days. I watch over his major expenses and checks from his insurances while he takes care of everything else.

Our day today began just after seven AM, not that we usually get up that early, but there was some excitement in the air. By 9 AM we had planned to set off on our three-day venture to West Virginia for an FMCA Rally in that state, and we had jacks-up and off at exactly 9 AM. Our plan is to travel I-75 N to 10 E and merge into I-95 N in the end. GPS offered up a short cut going 301 E off 75. It was a slightly slower road but newly paved and much more interesting to travel than 75 for the next 50 miles. Next highway was to take the 295N and circumvent Jacksonville, well I missed it, and we went directly to I-95 N which could have been much busier. Our goal for today was Poorly, SC, but we got there just to early, so we continue to drive to Walterboro, SC, a town one-hundred further north, we've driven and stayed in- previously, I think. We're overnighing at the local Cracker Barrel, enjoyed a great dinner and even purchased a Christmas gift or two. Current temp. is 72 and very little humidity; AC is off for the first time in twelve months, only using the fans...Awesome! I would have taken a picture or two but they all look the same!

9-30 It is truly hard to believe that it has been over one year since we've actually travelled to a destination to do more than make repairs or improvements. In hindsight it's gone by faster than I thought it would, but I did not share the same feelings last January. Now to Dennis.

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