

JKß – JOY KROEGER BECKNER – JKß

classical realism, from hounds to humans & and more!

JOURNEYS OF JOY! :: ALASKA :: PART TWO :: 2018

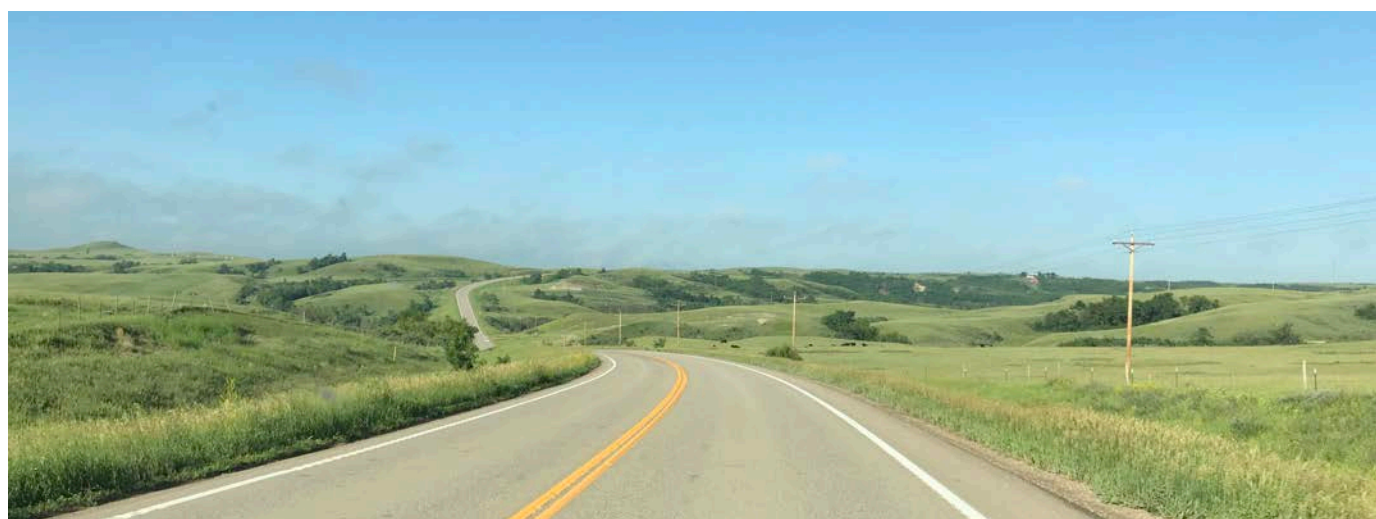
NEW TOWN, ND TO JASPER, ALBERTA, CANADA

Day Five

JUNE 25, 2018, MONDAY, 7:34AM, 61 DEGREES, NEW TOWN, ND



Dense fog blankets New Town, ND. Highway crews work to widen ND-1804 to accommodate oil exploration. New apartments and businesses have popped up since Brian was here last year. Snow geese huddle in a pond as a duck flies close to us. It's almost too muddy to work on widening ND-1804.



8:07AM: Ahhh, sunlight! Briefly. Last year, Brian says ND-1804 was under construction from Williston East. Crews seem to be working from both ends. Construction goes on forever, as did this morning's fog. At 45mph, we are in a slow moving dream.

8:26AM: Fog is behind us. Drilling and farming, and more drilling and farming, is along the road. Canola is King!



9:17AM: Main Street, Williston, ND. “The Daily Addiction” is a charming little coffee shop with crystal chandeliers, china plates, granite countertops and a gal who knows how to make my favorite, a green tea latte! We enjoy our snacks: double chocolate chip and blue berry muffins.

Regular gas is higher in Williston, ND, than other places. Regular is \$3:04 and Premium is \$3.54 for Brian’s FJ.



9:45AM: We head west on two-lane US-2, enter Montana and cross Little Muddy Creek. Scenery is appreciably more beautiful here than when oilrigs were dense.

9:57AM MDT: Downtown Culbertson, MT looks like it could be in Kansas or eastern CO. We enter Fort Peck Indian Reservation, and Brian comments that we've driven nearly 1600 miles since we left home last Thursday. Here, I imagine people eat what we ate in the 1950s: canned fruit, canned vegetables, beef and chicken. Maybe fish. They must make a run into town once a week or so to get groceries.



9:34AM MDT: The Perculator offers coffee in tiny Poplar, MT.

Brian sees the first washing machine in front of a house. It is a wringer!

Go south on MT-117 to the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center in Nashua, MT.

10:38AM: Sunflowers dot nearly vertical stone outcrops beside the road. The Interpretive Center is yet to be found.

Big government buildings remain at Fort Peck Dam and Lake. The Corps of Engineers built the town of Fort Peck and then the dam.

We finally come upon what turns out to be the Ft. Peck Dam Interpretive Center.

The 26-minute documentary about the building of this dam between 1934 and 1938 was well worth the detour. It is a well-hidden secret. The dam cost \$84 million to build. The workers, eager after the Great Depression, were paid \$.50 an hour. The first winter of 1933-1934 temperatures plummeted to 60 below. Interestingly, engineers first thought the reservoir should be built on a ONE foot to ONE foot ratio equaling 45 degrees, but later thought a ONE to THREE ratio would be better. Indeed! Only 6-8 men were lost during the first slide and that is when the grade ratio was changed to 1 to 3, a safer grade of 33.3 degrees. After that, all men building the dam survived.



*“Teach your children what we have
taught our children. . . Whatever befalls
the earth, befalls the sons of the earth.”*

—Chief Seattle

Displays include a live beehive and massive fish tanks with wall references to the fishes within.

12:22PM: Montana-42 takes us west-northwest. Glasgow, MT is a railroad town. Glasgow Scottie’s invite one to walk with them under an overpass.

1:27PM: Finally! Brian spies an antelope in the field to the north.

1:58PM: All of this driving (riding) seems almost like five days of flying each day to London or China. Tomorrow we have a rest day at Prince of Wales hotel and the next day in Banff.

AM radio station 88.1 is combo of good songs in English and American Indian.

2:54PM: We cross the Milk River for the umpteenth time. The Milk starts clear up in Canada.



3:06PM: During our entire trip used railroad ties are stacked along newly improved tracks. We are in Havre, MT.

Havre, MT, has at least five sets of stoplights on First Street, AKA US-2. It's a booming town with many hotels, casinos and bars. Restaurants seem to be associated with bars & casinos. OMG! There is even a Walmart, and, a K-Mart!

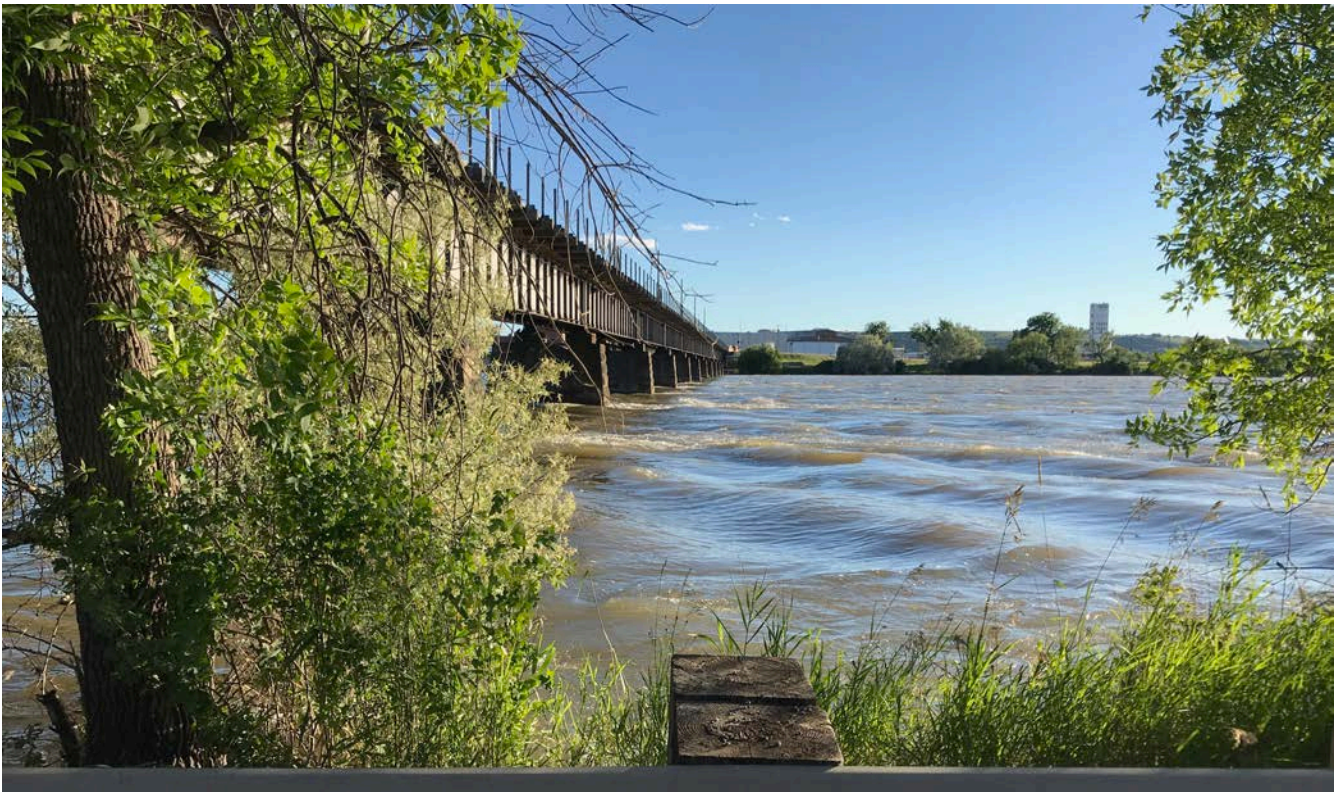
Turn south on US-87 toward Great Falls. See Bears Paw Mountains in the distance.



4:08PM: My ears nearly pop from the quick drop to the Missouri River. It is 88 dry degrees. There is no bar or casino in Loma, at least not on MT-87 South.

Brian's Garmin GPS stopped working! He stops, unplugs it, plugs it back in and it's good to go.

The narrow Missouri reappears.



4:57PM: On MT-87 we pull into booming Great Falls, MT, and the river is next to me along the River Road.

The La Quinta Inn is right on the Missouri River! As a matter of fact, the river was so high in the past few days that water lapped on the grass between the walk and the river.



Above are about a third of the geese that are walking outside our rain-spotted first floor window.



7:45PM: We enjoy a gorgeous Missouri River view from Mackensie River Pizza Company next to La Quinta.

Day Six ... a day of rest in Great Falls, MT

JUNE 26, 2018, TUESDAY:

This morning we sleep in. I wash my hair and do two loads of laundry.



We visit the C.M. Russell Museum. It is wonderful! Plan to spend several hours learning about his life, starting in St. Louis. Be sure to see the big room with all the Indian artifacts and open the drawers below the exhibits to see the glorious beadwork items displayed in the drawers!

Sadly, I learn that the Wellbridge Athletic Club where I have been a member for twenty years is closing at the end of July. I will miss the good teachers, classes and my friends. I'll also miss its close proximity to my bank, UPS, the US Post office and Whole Foods. The entire round trip is just seven miles.

6:00PM: We visit the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center, Great Falls, MT. By 6:07PM, we see this:



BLACK EAGLE

The uppermost falls of the Great Falls of the Missouri bears west of this point. In June 1805, Meriwether Lewis spotted an eagle's nest in a cottonwood tree on an island in the river - "a more inaccessible spot I believe she could not have found; for neither man nor beast dare pass those gulphs which separate her little domain from the shores."

Eighty-six years later, in 1891, the Boston and Montana Consolidated Copper and Silver Mining Company constructed a massive smelter complex on the hill overlooking the site of the nest. The smelter processed copper from Butte until 1918 when the Anaconda Company converted it into an electrolytic copper and zinc refinery.

Three communities, Little Chicago, Little Milwaukee, and North Great Falls, developed in the shadow of the 506-foot smokestack at the top of Smelter Hill. Men from all over North America and Europe came to work in the complex at Black Eagle, as it was known by 1916. A truly cosmopolitan community, all worked together in the plant, maintained their ethnic diversity and rubbed elbows in the vibrant business district along Smelter Avenue. Although the refinery shut down in 1980 and the stack razed two years later, Black Eagle remains a working class community proud of its rich history.





Later, we dine at “5th & Wine” a hip little place with “5 stars” on Yelp! It earns every one of them! In 2014, Mark Tronson, the Norwegian owner, transformed an old sheet metal shop into a wonderful restaurant with to-die-for food. Try the Fresh baby Greens with Honey Dijon and the Cajun Pasta with Chicken Shrimp and Andouille sausage. Great Wine, too!!!

Here’s Mark’s site: www.winesbywednesday.com

Day Seven

JUNE 27, 2018, WEDNESDAY, 8:32AM

First, we take MT-87 north toward Fort Benton, the farthest seaport from the sea in the world. Fort Benton, on the Missouri River, is approximately 3450 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. Vessels travel that far to this seaport.



Today’s sky converges over the Highwood Mountains. Brian comments, “It’s nice to see no fences.” We are in Chouteau County. Take MT-386 right to Fort Benton.

10:25AM:

Opened to the public on Nov. 1, 1892, The Grand Union Hotel was the finest hostelry between Seattle and the Twin Cities and cost \$200,000 to build. The name echoes the reconciliation following the great Civil War.

10:53AM: Take MT-283 north.

Turn west on US-2. We

nearly have a close encounter with an antelope. Here are ponds with lots of ducks.



11:59AM: Three or four major, heavy pieces of road equipment appear to be building a 4-6 lane super highway in the middle of nowhere. Now it is down to renewing a two-lane road - for miles ahead as far as we can see at 35mph speed limit. Backhoes, front loaders, you name it, are visible. Has someone struck oil?

12:08PM: Two bicyclists are at the west end of the miles of road repairs. Maybe they can hitch a ride. It's 70 degrees and we enjoy our first sighting of an Amtrak train.

12:24PM: It is nice to be in open space again after grains, trains, and oil equipment earlier today. Just before Cut Bank, MT, the gorgeous Rockies are to our left about 11 o'clock. Shelby is just over the hill on MT-2.

A vision of the future appears: a huge wind farm!

1:46PM, 60 DEGREES: Take US-89 north to Canada. We are in Blackfoot Indian Territory.

1:58PM: There is major road widening here at mile marker 12. We are in a nondescript little town on a bumpy dirt road lead by a car out of the construction zone. Waterton Lakes is 66 miles. Aspen trees line the road. The new highway will be wider and straighter than the original two-lane road that follows the earth's curves.

Brian's altimeter says we are a mile high. The temperature is 58 degrees.

Wild flowers abound: Purple Lupines, pink roses, plus yellow and white flowers beautifully border the road. We cross the south fork of the Milk River. I wonder what killed the evergreens. See below...

2:42PM: Turn left on Montana Chief Mountain Highway-17. Watch for frost heaves and broken pavement. In Glacier National Park, the temp is up to 63 and the wind is whipping.

Waterton Lakes National Park, Canada!

3:02PM: We are in Canada! How easy was that? It's up to 65 degrees in this mostly evergreen forest. Turn left on Canada-6, and then left toward Waterton Lakes National Park. Cost: \$13.60 for one night in the park.

Waterton Lakes National Park borders our Glacier National Park. We sit outside on a sunny, windy evening at the Thirsty Bear Kitchen & Bar. Cotton blows horizontally from its namesake trees. It is 67 degrees. Some patrons are dressed in shorts and short sleeves, some wear down jackets and we are dressed in between. Glass walls offer patio Patrons protection from the wind.



At our hotel, Brian attempts to make a reservation in Jasper – for \$129 Canadian a night. Well, that IS for a queen bed, but the bathroom is down the hall and shared by nine other rooms! No, thank you!! A private is \$219 Canadian, and, it's private! Yes, we'll take that one, this time, thank you.

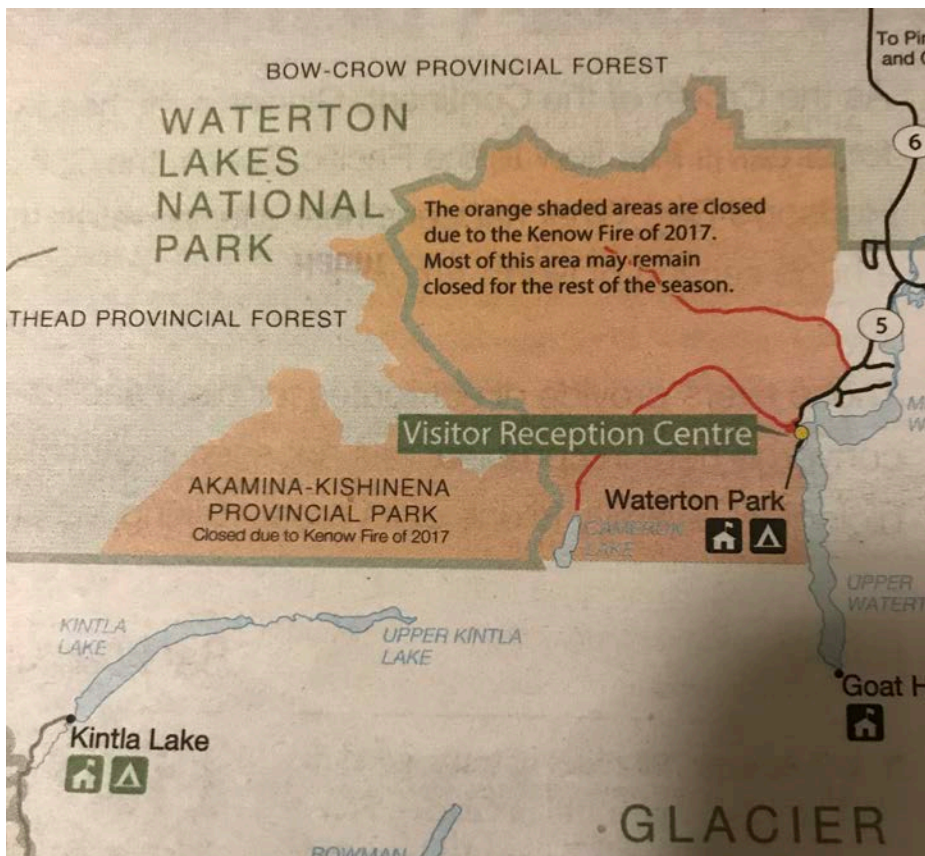
Magpies thrive in Waterton Lakes. They constantly talk in the small downtown area.



Near our room, a young magpie fell out of its nest and mama scolds all passersby.

The Waterton Lakes Lodge Resort is just fine! There are many hand-made details in our room, such as this hand-carved detail on a headboard, and hand-painted art on hand-made pine cabinets.

The water is VERY tasty, just like home. We refill our bottles. Address: 101 Clematis Avenue, TOK 2MO Waterton Park, Canada. Book Direct!



In September 2017, the devastating Kenow Fire burned a huge amount of forest around Waterton Lakes. The town of 1000 was evacuated.

The building to the right in the photo below shows the lodge and in the background you can see the fire damaged forest. Each room at the Waterton Lakes Lodge resort is in a building with 2 - 4 other rooms. It is a very sweet little private place.



Day Eight

JUNE 28, 2018, THURSDAY, 8:38AM, 55 DEGREES



9:03AM: Waterton Lakes National Park

9:08AM: We visit the spectacular Prince of Wales Hotel, Waterton Park, Alberta, Canada



Wow! Men in kilts!

The gift shop offers china in matching plaid!

9:31AM: Turn north on Alberta-6 toward Pincher Creek. It is 750 miles north to the Alaska Highway.

9:53AM, 54 DEGREES F: It's sprinkling. Bring on the rain to wash our windshield.

Last night a handsome young man sat across from us at our windy dinner. His soft red T-Shirt read something to the effect of "Protect" or "Support your Local Farmers." This is farming and ranching country. Brian sees big wind farms in the distance on both sides of the two-lane road. We drive 60 mph. It is 53 degrees. Our windshield is clean with raindrops.

Pincher Creek is a "Community in Bloom."

Our stop at Walmart yields a pair of nightlights. We have no more need to turn on lights in the middle of the night!

We pass a very unusual gas station like none we have ever seen. Regular, premium and diesel each have an above ground tank that appears to be at least 10 feet in diameter and no taller than the pumps.

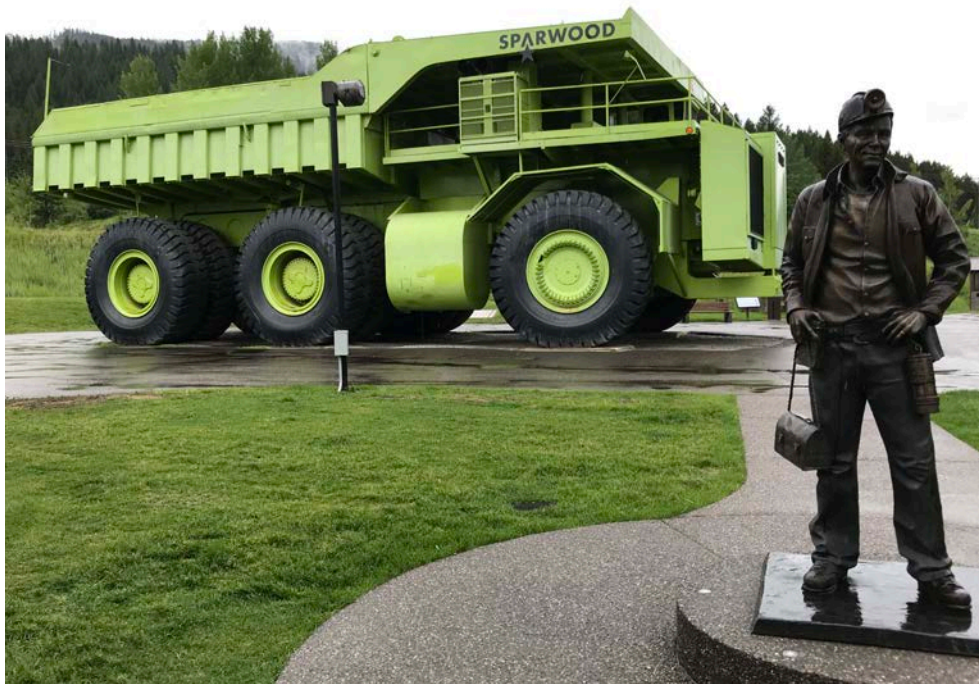


A boulder field, AKA, The Frank Slide, Canada's deadliest rockslide, produced 90 seconds of terror at the Frank coal mine in 1903. See this at Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, Canada.

11AM: 49 DEGREES F: A billboard reads: "Internet Speeds to put your Wind gusts to Shame." Who advertised?

Wow! We pass a crevasse between two rock formations close to the highway. Imagine a pyramid of gabion baskets at least twelve deep on the bottom and 30+ feet long X twelve baskets high. It is designed to keep a rockslide from the crevasse from falling on the highway. Decades ago, when I was a trustee for our subdivision, we used rock filled gabion baskets to help prevent storm stream erosion. One can often see them along I-70 in the Rockies.

11:12AM: We enter British Columbia. Tall evergreens flank the road. Gentle rain falls.



11:31AM: In the community of Sparwood, British Columbia, is a monument to the miners.

Highway signs are not plentiful. Brian's GPS says we are on BC-3 West. Fernie, British Columbia is big enough to support two Subways and a Starbucks. It must be a resort area based on all the big hotels.

Bear proof recycling bins are next to bear proof trash bins at points of interest. I seldom see cans or trash along side the road. Nice! We should do the same!

12:25PM: Rain continues. A lumber mill displays neatly stacked and strapped 2 x 4s and neat piles of strapped telephone poles. Both are ready for rail cars. I wish I'd taken a picture.



The Kootenay River. With rain, today's drive is slow and sleepy.

12:49PM: Yay! The rain stops. Head north on BC-93/95. Clouds are pretty amazing against the dark mountains.

1:23PM: It's not often one sees a two-track dirt road leading into the woods and two dozen cows lying down and enduring sprinkles. Our FJ turns 40,000 miles.



2:34PM: We enter Kootenay National Park of Canada, which is adjacent to Banff National Park. A Park Pass for two nights and three days costs \$33 Canadian.



I wonder about the heart in the center of the mountain. Do you see it???

2:53PM: Mmmm. The rain fresh air smells good. Deer and Canada Geese are here just like in our neighborhood.



3:02PM, 64 DEGREES: HIGHWAY-93 through Kootenay National Park of Canada is very nice.

There is massive fire burn or pine beetle damage. I'm sad, yet glad, as I do not believe we've seen nearly the evergreen tree loss in Colorado as we see here. There are huge swaths of dead tree trunks. Why didn't the fire cross the road?

Water from these streams goes drains to the Pacific. In a few miles, water will flow to the Gulf of Mexico or maybe Hudson Bay.

3:33PM, 58 DEGREES: We enter Banff National Park. Now we are back in Alberta, Wild Rose Country. Indeed, small pale pink rose bushes grow wild here. Soon, we will cross the continental divide but there are no signs...

The river runs green. What mineral is causing this?



Arched animal crossings across the highway are common sense - and - beautiful! Everyplace I look is gorgeous!!!

Banff is FULL of tourists! We found one good gallery and lots of touristy shops. Oh, my, give me Waterton Lakes! We stay at High Country Inn, 410 Banff Ave. 800-661-1244. It has fast Internet!

Day Nine

JUNE 29, 2018, FRIDAY, BANFF, ALBERTA, CA

After walking to a local coffee shop and back to the High Country Inn, we drive through downtown Banff to head north. Brian is confused by his GPS.

Between Waterton Lakes and Banff, we've heard Danish, German, French, Swiss, English and Australian accents and we've seen many, many Asians and east Indians.

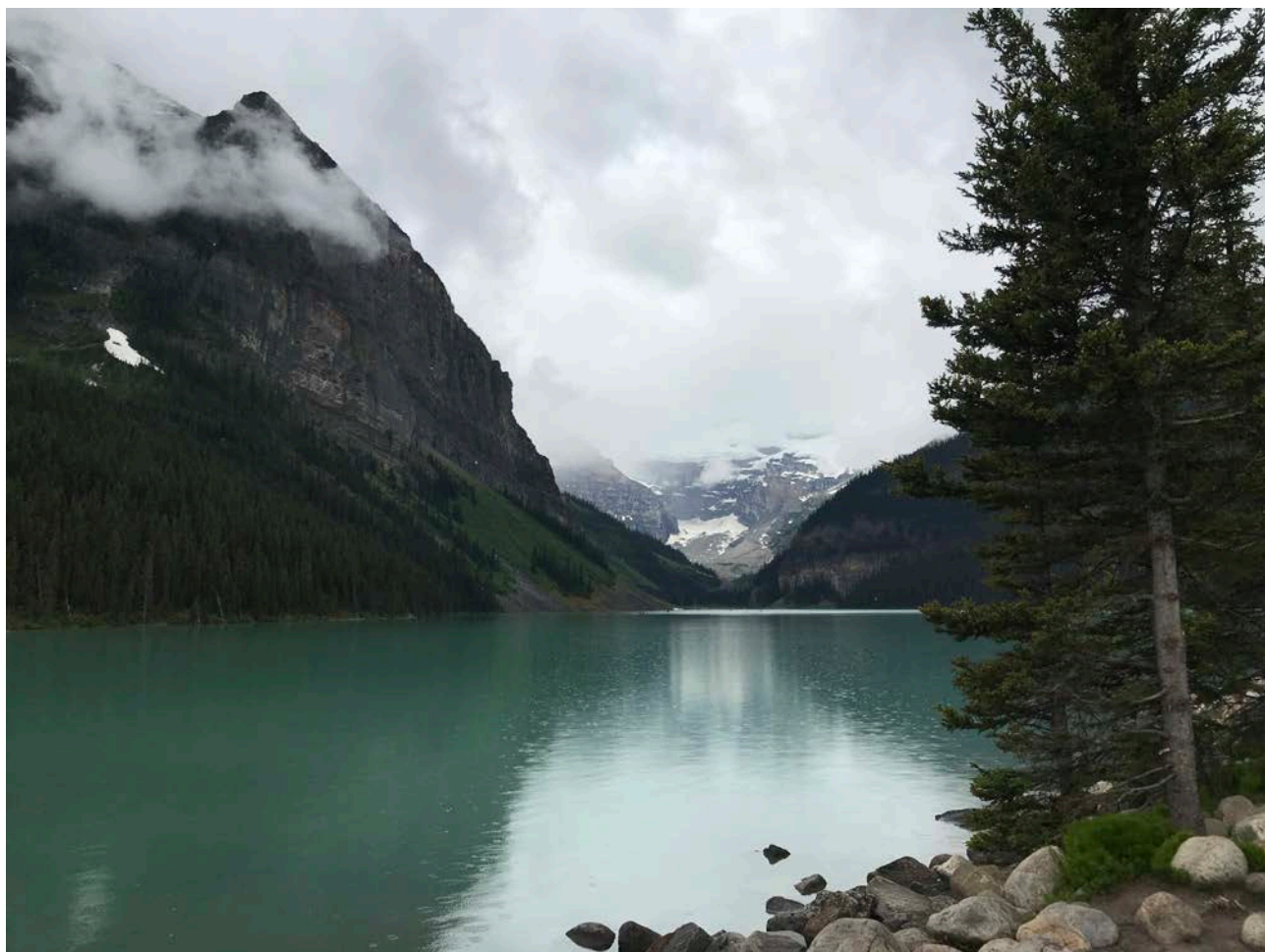
We pass the best gallery in Banff: Canada House Gallery, where I remember the oils of Susan Cibollo, the bronzes and the Chinese white jade carvings of Ken Q Li. WOW!

Lilacs bloom pale pink. A coyote crosses into the woods.

9:28: 48 DEGREES: We leave Banff, turn left and immediately watch a long train hauling double decker containers. Each container car is 53 feet long. Four engines, one in front, one in back and two here and there in the middle, move the train.

Go west on ALBERTA HIGHWAY-1, a nice smooth four-lane divided highway. Lodge pole pines flank the highway.

10:17AM: Sprinkles greet us as we exit toward Lake Louise. Gorgeous! Drizzly rainy day, but Gorgeous!





11:18AM: The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise is THE place to stay and shop in Lake Louise. We enjoy looking!



I refrain from buying anything at a Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise shop that carries exquisite clothes made from musk oxen, bison, vicuña and alpaca. These gloriously soft natural fibers are woven into traditional textural patterns: cables, diamonds and more. It's hard to not touch these super soft fibers.

In the Fairmont Chateau, many Asians help customers. In the gallery at the hotel, I enjoy talking with Richard, who is also a sculptor. Brian buys a simple T-shirt in a shop where I adore the soft red, organic cotton, long sleeved Henley. But, I can think of other things to buy for close to \$200US!

With Canada Day this Monday, July 1, tourists are everywhere!

11:40PM: We take ALBERTA-1 west. Then, quickly exit onto ALBERTA-93 toward Jasper.

Ten or so cars are stopped to see two black bears behind the first row of trees. Sorry, no pictures.



12:38PM: In the Bow Lake Lodge, Beatles songs play as we enjoy incredibly delicious bison chili at the little Jimmy Simpson's Trading Post. Bow Summit is 6600 feet!



1:08PM: Rain. Rocky Mountain Sheep stop for me to take their pictures.

The sun is trying to break through the clouds as we pass a purple Jeep. Sprinkles persist. The sun sets here at 10:11PM.

1:51PM: 45 DEGREES, 6815 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL: We are 52 degrees north of the equator. Here, in Jasper National Park, we are 400 feet higher than San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico. The GPS is full of interesting information!



We pass the Columbia ice field with two glaciers. We spot Anglo Saxons taking pictures on the side of the road!

Evergreens are not happy; some are browning or brown. Young Pines seem to be the only ones with new growth. It's really sad to see so many sick trees.

The temperature rises from 54 degrees to 61 in hardly any time.

A sign says, "Goats and Glaciers." We see "Cars and Trees."

Big time rain falls and the temp is back down to 53 degrees F.

3:03PM, 68 DEGREES F. 3402 FEET: Yay! We are in sunny Jasper!

4:50PM: We settle into the Athabasca Hotel, A Jasper Landmark Since 1929 & Jasper's Heritage Boutique Hotel. We learn that pine beetles are killing the trees.

My mother would have loved the elegant glass topped wooden furniture here. I love the deep crown moldings and chair rails. I open the window and hear a slow moving train a block away. Our night view from the room is stunning.

9:54PM: The sun is setting. I close the window for quiet sleep.



Thank you for joining us.

Please continue on our journey in

Part Three!

Joy

www.joybeckner.com

314-378-7032

JKß