

Oregon, I think.

by Monica Haven

I wouldn't know. I have no map and no tour book. And my 10-year old niece is navigating...

...from the back seat. We started out in Portland. I know that because I flew in on Southwest Air a few days ago just in time to shoo my sister and brother-in-law out the door. They were headed for sun and frolic in the Yucatan and left me to deliver my 16-year old nephew to a tennis camp in Central Oregon. At 4 in the afternoon, it was still close to 100 degrees! But no matter, the kid had an oscillating fan to cool his dorm room and a bottle of water--I'm sure that would suffice to keep the kid hydrated and not collapse from heat exhaustion on the court. Not my problem.

Sent away without so much as a departing grunt from the teenager, Lianna and I turned right and headed out. We had no plans. We still don't. We're just going to see what comes.

But we do have homework. Kids today must complete a myriad of assignments during their summer vacations; everything from reading, book reports, and math. Never one to let an opportunity pass and yet always hoping to double up on work and fun, Lianna and I came up with a way to get the job done. With tables designed and outlined in her workbook, Lianna merely has to fill in the blanks as we tick off the miles, wander the trails, and set up camp. Today for example, we drove a 134 miles--that's 215.652 kilometers, 707,520 feet, 21,565,209.6 centimeters. We shared a 16 ounce Pepsi--that's 473.18 milliliters and 16.65 British ounces. Soon we'll snuggle into our queen-sized bed which is roughly 480 square inches; equal to 0.309676 square meters or 3.096768e-05 hectares. Okay, so she doesn't have to calculate that last one, but you get the idea.

This certainly ought to keep us busy as we meander on. Of course, without a map or tour book, we can only be sure of our own measurements. We still don't know where we're headed or when we'll get there.