



Merry Christmas 2009



Dear

11 December 2009

Christmas greetings! We are finally able to sit and prepare this Christmas letter. Last weekend our choir and orchestra gave four performances of our Christmas program at our church. We had been rehearsing for nearly three months. It is good to relax now. We are a little late getting this letter started this year. The main reason will be mentioned near the end of the letter.

MOTOR HOME TRIP PLANS

Before August, we had not been out in our motor home because we took the month-long trip to Ireland in June. We then planned a trip for August and early September to take us north through Utah, Nevada, and Idaho to Montana. Then we were to return through Idaho and Utah and Colorado.

TRIP REALITY

We left home on 5 August and joined Linda's brother's family at Navajo Lake, New Mexico, for three nights. We had fun traveling around the lake with them. Linda, however, injured her back which was probably still sore from climbing Skellig Michael in Ireland.



Rainbow over Navajo Lake.



Linda and Norma Jean on Jet Ski.



Moonrise over Navajo Lake.

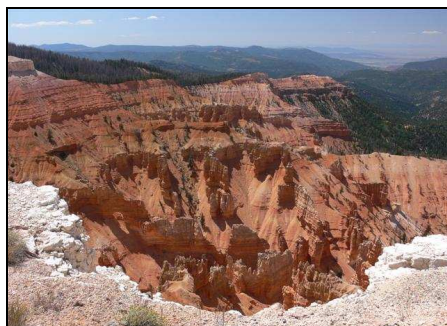


Robert and Chris on Jet Ski.

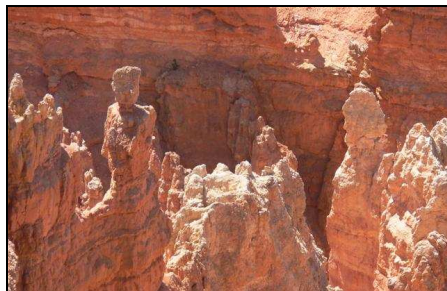
We then headed west from Navajo Lake and made an overnight stop in Page, Arizona. The next day we reached Cedar Breaks National Monument in southern Utah. We have desired to visit Cedar Breaks for years, but we usually visited southern Utah in early springtime. Since the monument is at 10,300 feet altitude, it does not open until mid May. (Winter can put it under 12 feet of snow.) Cedar Breaks is similar to Bryce Canyon National Park which is directly to the east. The scenery is beautiful and we enjoyed the day there.



Cedar Breaks National Monument.



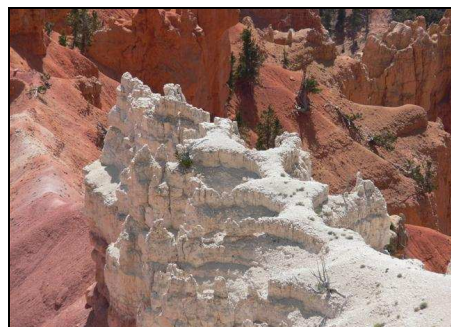
Cedar Breaks National Monument.



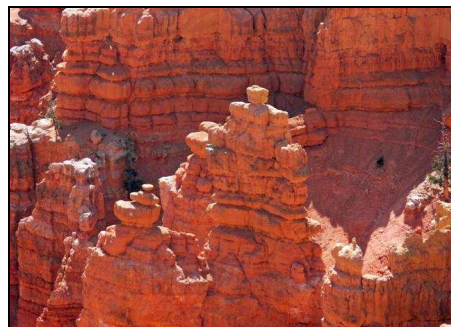
Hoodoos.



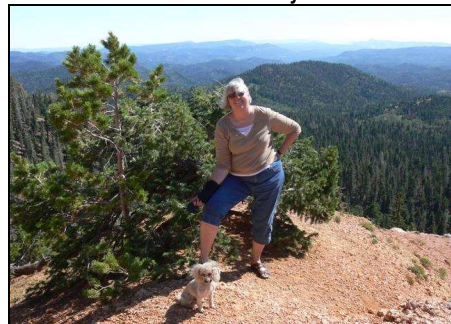
Many spires at Cedar Breaks.



Contrasting colors.

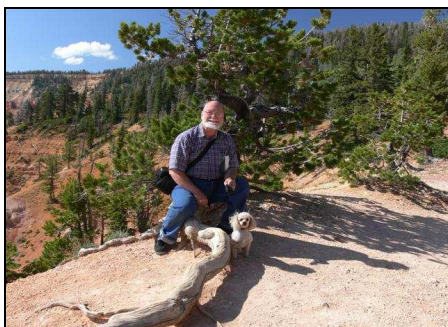


Red rock fantasy.



Linda and Derry.

The National Monument, which was established in 1933, is a natural amphitheater eroded out of the western side of the mountains. We were surprised to learn that the mountains were the site of much relatively recent volcanic activity. There are many recent lava flows and cinder cones in the area.



Robert and Derry.



Lava flow.



Sunset at Cedar Breaks.

After touring around the monument all day, Linda's back was in more pain. Sleep was impossible that night, and therefore Robert drove back to Albuquerque the next day. Linda saw our doctor the following day. Later she received some myotherapy treatments, and rapidly got better.

LABOR DAY TRIP

Since Linda was feeling good by September, we did complete the last stop on our planned trip in Dolores, Colorado. Our local chapter (Chaparral Chapter) of the Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA) had a rally at an RV park there. We were the assistant wagonmasters and helped out with some meals and other activities. It was nice to meet with some of our friends whom we had not seen for a while. Linda is the treasurer of the Chaparral chapter.



Our Trek (right) next to its Safari big brother.



Dinner at the rally.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLE

The Rocky Mountain Motor Coach Association of FMCA held their annual rally in Farmington, New Mexico. We went there in October. It was our fourth Rocky Mountain Ramble. We have been to all that have been held in Farmington. The city is in the northwest corner of New Mexico by the Animas River.



Afternoon snack time.



Cottonwoods along the Animas River.

The cottonwood trees along the river were turning golden as they do throughout New Mexico in October. We also visited the Salmon Ruins and museum in Bloomfield, New Mexico. These are the remains of an ancient abandoned Native American pueblo.



A portion of the Salmon Ruins.

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES RALLY

Our Chaparral Chapter November rally was held in Truth Or Consequences, New Mexico. We spent 3 nights at the rally and then went further south to Las Cruces, New Mexico, for two nights to visit our niece who is a senior there at New Mexico State University.

ROBBERY

On 23 November we went to choir rehearsal, and when we got back home we discovered that our home had been broken into and robbed. The thief broke the window over the kitchen sink to get in. Derry, who was confined to the kitchen, was OK. Cash was stolen as well as our small computer, computer bag, and small printer. Unfortunately, the small computer was acting as our main computer, so we lost 18 days of new e-mail and photos, since the last backup was done on 5 November. (Restoring our data and some programs to an older computer has caused a delay for this newsletter.) Most of Linda's jewelry was also stolen. We have provided police with an extensive list of items stolen, but do not expect anything to be recovered. Linda lost inherited jewelry from Robert's mother and from her parents, which is very upsetting. However we also realize that it is just stuff that will burn up in the end. We are very relieved that Derry was not harmed. We also have our greatest possession which we celebrate at Christmas and can never be taken away – our Lord Jesus Christ.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Linda has been teaching a class in our church's women's ministry this fall. She will teach next semester also.

THE BOTTOM LINE

We continue to be thankful for the Lord's providing for us in all ways. We trust in Him, and pray that you will do likewise and enjoy a blessed Christmas season and New Year as well.

Love,

Robert + Linda

and Derry



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