

“On Traveling”

THUMP THUMP THUMP.... this metrical sound of car tires hitting the pavement takes me to the place where I am happiest. Whether on the ancient concrete slabs in the center of the country, the roads of Canada, or the west coast of the States, my mind is put at ease. The feeling of freedom and ability to explore excites me like nothing else I have yet experienced.

One may not realize her passion for traveling until she has completed her initial trip. For me, my first voyage that ignited my love for traveling was a thirteen-day, fifteen-state, thrilling expedition. My dad and I drove away from our house on a sunny Saturday in June 2008, the day following my sister’s graduation from high school. In my mind I had few expectations and little knowledge that this was the beginning of a new page in my life.



Yes, I had been the girl who lived for the vacation to sit on a beach chair, to



Bottle Ranch

soak in the rays of the sun, and to listen to the crash of the oceans’ aqua waters repetitively sounding in the background. Beaches had been the sole location I visited, and never had I imagined any other sort of vacation; it was ingrained in the Broomell girls’ persona to be a beach babe while on vacation.

Relaxation and rest had exclusively constituted every vacation. Until now.

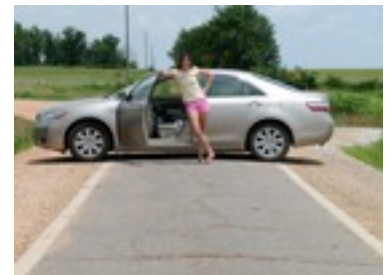
Our primary goal was to drive to Chicago, passing through Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia,



Catoosa Blue Whale

Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana. From Chicago, which is the beginning of the Mother Road, Route 66, we would follow the historic route through Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, the Texas panhandle, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. To top off that impressive list of states, along the way we managed to set foot in Michigan as well.

We rose early and retired late on the initial day of our Historic Route 66 trip. Little did I expect this extended day to become a norm. Frequently my father and I would depart our motel before 7:30 am and eat dinner around 7:00 pm with most likely many miles left to travel. Those days were filled with once-



Ribbon Road

in-a-lifetime experiences. Who would imagine that my father and I would travel along the nine-foot wide Ribbon Road in Oklahoma, sleep in a wigwam in both Arizona and California, visit the world's largest barbed wire museum in Texas, travel the Oatman Trail in Arizona, and explore the Catoosa blue whale in Oklahoma?



Wigwam Motel

Besides these historic gems that litter the sides of the road, the memories that my father and I



Ohio/Michigan Border

made along the route are personal, and frequently raise laughter, only between the two of us. We will forever remember the time we saw a cow lying on the side of the road, dead, with its feet raised to the sky. Nor will we forget the thrill of driving down an old country road toward the Ohio-Michigan border; all the while I was enjoying my unobstructed view from out

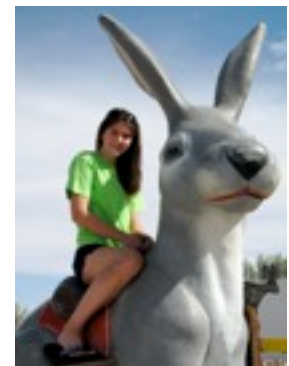
the sunroof. From happy hour sundaes at Sonic to scale model replicas of the Hubble Telescope, our Historic Route 66 trip was a trip to remember forever.



Grand Canyon National Park

Although draining to my body in the beginning, I now worship the full days of traveling on the road. A four hour car ride used to seem like eternity to me. That changed after the day we departed Holbrook, Arizona before 7:00 am, visited the Grand Canyon, and drove 250 miles along the Mother Road to Flagstaff, AZ. By the time we reached the haunted hotel where we were staying, it was 11:00 pm. There have been many comparable days to this in the years since Route 66, and I relish the experience every time I am allowed.

Following my road trip along Route 66, I yapped for months, begging my mother to allow me to travel with my father on another road trip. His frequent road trips have made him an expert on the majority of the United States and England, so he is a trusty guide. In time, my mom consented, and the following



Riding a Giant Jackrabbit!

summer Dad and I took to the road again; this time conquering the famous cities in the eastern provinces of Canada.

Instead of a traveling a road filled with history, our goal was to



Niagara Falls from the USA

do the equivalent of barhopping, but instead

we called it city-hopping. We never stayed

more than one night in any city, but always managed to include a walking tour,

historic monuments, and at least one significant memory

from each city. At Niagara Falls, we battled the epic rainstorm

and high winds to photograph the falls at night while also

eating at a restaurant named Kelsey's and visiting the local

arcade. Each city is holds a special memory: Toronto had the

CN Tower, Ottawa was the mint, Montréal we saw Michael Phelps swim at the 1976

Olympic stadium, Québec we visited the old citadel, Prince Edward Island was the

location of Anne of Green Gables' estate, and Saint John was where we learned

Michael Jackson had died. On the drive back to Virginia, one special place we stopped

was the Easternmost Point in the United States, in Lubec, Maine.

All throughout Canada we witnessed the varying ranges to which the

Canadians were willing to speak English. It came

to seem that the closer to the border of the

United States people were, the more they

spoke English. Not only would they speak

English willingly but also would the street

signs provide English as well as French

directions. The one province that proved contrary to this generalization was

Québec. It is evident that Quebecers adhere strongly to their French roots; being



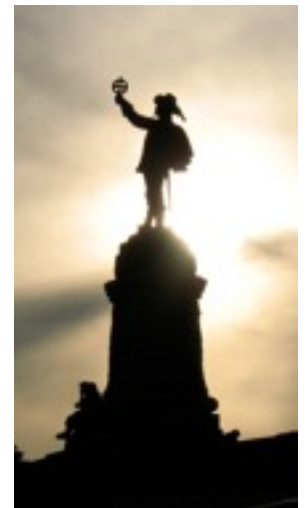
Niagara Falls from Canada



Inside Québec Citadel



Anne of Green Gables Estate



Ottawa Statue at Sunset



Easternmost Point in the USA



Ottawa Mint

the only province in Canada with French as their only official language.

Besides language differences, I noted that Canadians have a more relaxed way of living than that of most Americans I know. When we asked for help, the Canadians were always excited and willing to spend time talking with us. In addition, when at the Ottawa mint, our guide was personal and never rushed us due to a time constraint or worry.



Rocky Mountains

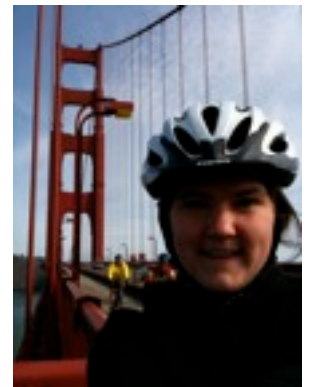
Most recently, my traveling took me to the West Coast with the intention of driving along the Pacific Coast Highway from Tijuana, Mexico to Vancouver, BC, Canada. My father and I used this trip to



Atop Beacon's Rock with Dad and Grandma

practice for my driver's license; and boy did I experience tough driving.

Whether I cruised through the sunny streets of San Diego, or battled hail in Vancouver, the weather was variant. The winding roads were difficult to navigate, but the views were picturesque.



Biking Across the Golden Gate

Together my father and I photographed the snow-

capped Rocky Mountains, the Hoh Rainforest, the rocky shores of Oregon, the sunsets along Big Sur, the beautiful beaches of California, multiple lighthouses along the coast, Bella Swan's truck in Forks, and Mount St. Helens in Washington.

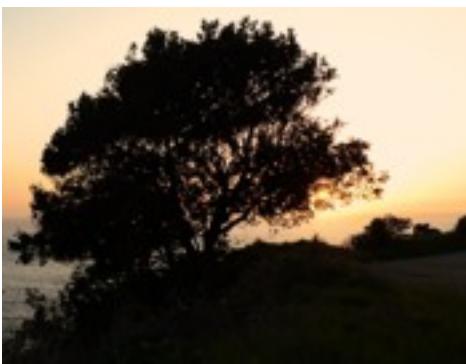
Besides the lay of the land and history of the Pacific Coast Highway, I

was able to visit for the first time in ten years the majority of my father's family who reside in Oregon. On this trip we took care to ensure a visit to my relatives' homes, packing in both



Venice Beach, California

my grandma and grandpa's families. One day, before the Leitner (grandma) reunion that began at 1:00 pm, my dad, grandma and I had



Sunset in Big Sur

already had breakfast with my great uncle, hiked Beacon's Rock, crossed the Bridge of the Gods, and went waterfall hunting. This trip was my first visit to Oregon since 1998, thus my dad planned to have me experience his city and meet his family. During the twenty waking hours I spent in Hillsboro, OR, my dad and I managed to accomplish a tremendous amount and make up for lost time.



Result from my "Elk Hunting"

I have biked across the Golden Gate Bridge. I have visited the Tillamook Cheese factory in



Cape Heceta Lighthouse (OR)

Oregon. I have gone elk hunting, for photography purposes only, with my

father. I have experienced the wonders of the Marin Headlands. I have crossed the tallest bridge in Oregon.

I have driven through a redwood tree. I have visited three Spanish Missions along the California coastline. I

have sat on the foot of a giant sculpture replica of the

V-J day in Times Square photograph. All of these are just a sample of the once in a lifetime attractions I visited along the Pacific Coast Highway.



Giant V-J Day sculpture

For most people, a few of the items I named above sound familiar, but few sixteen year old children can relate to these unique aspects of North America. Through my experiences

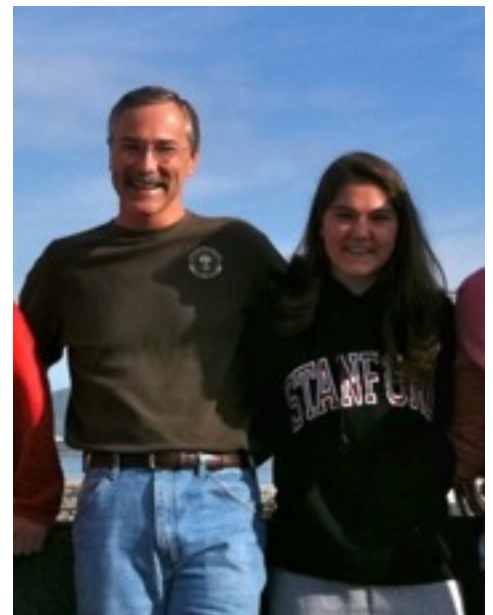


Bella Swan's Truck

on Route 66, Canada's eastern province loop, and the Pacific Coast Highway, I have realized there is more to vacations and travel than I previously assumed. Only a handful of people can claim to have

traveled as widely as I have before the end of their teens, and I feel privileged that these fortunes came to me.

Personally, the connection that has formed between my father and me is irreplaceable. Prior to our trips, I was not specifically close to



Dad and me in San Francisco

my dad. He worked all day and for many years spent a



Dad and Me in Canada

tremendous amount of time traveling to Mexico and Brazil for work. After these monthly trips ended, I was too busy with soccer and school to spend time forming a bond with him. We



Typical Forks, WA, Countryside

had little in which we shared a mutual interest and the first mini-road trip we took could have gone dreadful or amazing, it was a flip of a coin. Now we have such a strong bond and are both passionate about these trips. Frequently I will receive an email with a picture and a trivia question from him, inquiring if I remember the location or the name of a site we visited.

Little things, like road trips, can change someone's relationship and life in the oddest of ways. I am relieved that my dad and I share the memories of our road trips, because not only is it something that is specific to only the two of us but also is it something that will last a lifetime. The stories from my trips are going to be the types of things I will tell my kids when they are young. Travel has shaped my connection with my father and made it a unique aspect tying us together.



Hoh Rainforest

My road trips have made me a better person and have become a keystone

part of my life. Beginning with the tentative first days of Route 66, I have begun to embrace the ways of others and been more prone to joyfully share my stories with others. Travel has added a spark to my life that provides me with an exciting and unpredictable aspect of the future. Something as simple as hopping in a car and venturing out for a day



North Head Lighthouse (WA)

brings me comfort and gaiety. Traveling, whether nearby or abroad, enriches life and is a fantastic instant getaway for any person seeking a change of tempo.



A Joke from *Twilight*