

Taking the High Road

By Donna Bishop

All packed up we hit the open road. This was my first road trip with my son in his new RV Tiger which resembles a hippy bus of the 60's. I settled into the comfortable bucket seat as we turned west towards the majestic Rocky Mountain Range outside of Winter Park, Colorado.

With all the demands of my son's busy family life, the two of us seldom enjoy the time alone to share the close bonds forged when he was my last kid to fly the nest. A whole weekend of adult conversation ranging from the mundane to the philosophical sublime. Heaven on earth for sure.

Our tentative plans were to head north towards the entrance to Rocky Mountain Park, camp overnight along the road and then drive over Trail Ridge Road into Estes Park for a little hiking and then back to Winter Park.

Although it was late September, Trail Ridge Road, which is closed for the winter, was reported to have clear roads. Only the highest peaks were snowcapped. It was a lovely afternoon with that feel of fall in the air. The Colorado blue sky was flawless. The Aspens had lost their golden splendor but a leaf or two clung tightly as reminders of past glory. The multitude of evergreen trees towering along the road provided a visual delight of colors and shapes. Even the dead brown of the beetle killed Lodge Pines added to the spectacular view. Grand Lake appeared sky blue as it stretched across the landscape. As we passed the exit to the small town of Grand Lake, we encountered our first traffic, a sure sign of wild life. Two huge adult Moose grazed beside the road totally undisrupted by the growing traffic jam.

At dusk we located a campsite on the outskirts of the campground but thankfully near the modern bathroom facilities. After a delicious camp stove meal and of course s'mores over the open fire, we prepared for bed. In the pitch black with only the dancing light from our flashlights, we made that last trip to the bathroom. The mountain temperature dropped rapidly. The night hours crept on as I lay awake freezing cold. Finally admitting that the dreaded visit to the bathroom was inevitable, I untangled the sleeping bag, bedding and dog. In all the commotion Tony was awakened and offered to walk with me.

Opening the door of the RV, we stepped into a wonderland. The clouds had cleared revealing a full moon casting its lunar light over our campsite. Millions of stars twinkled in the night sky. I was so awestruck for a moment I lost my balance. My imagination whisked me up the highway to those stars.

The next morning we continued our trip up the steep Trail Ridge Road highway carved out of the beautiful mountain side and descended slowly down into the valley below.