

THE EGGLESTON GREAT CROSS-COUNTY ADVENTURE

Day 67 — 7 July 2011 (Thursday)

OLD FAITHFUL, YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

by Darry D Eggleston, <http://DarryD.com>¹

04:22 — TWELFTH OF NEVER

This morning, I did 75 push-ups in 2 minutes, followed by 75 sit-ups in 2 minutes, and a 2 mile run — just like I did in the military.

Then I woke up and realized it was just another plot by Sergeant Major Mary to get me to exercise.

“The Twelfth of Never” sung by Johnny Mathis < <http://bit.ly/b2Spck> >, I see my Chief asleep.

As you’ll recall, PegEgg had an inline fracture of the radius of her right (favored) arm.

Her healing is continuing and she’s sleeping more soundly.

She has been dedicated to healing as fast as possible, but not rushing the process.

I’m quite proud of her.

11:07 — GRIZZLY ATTACK IN YELLOWSTONE

As I’m merrily writing in my Journal, PegEgg called out, “Cristal says Yellowstone is closed. A grizzly bear killed a man and they’ve closed the park.”

She had been chatting with Cristal on Facebook for only a moment when Cristal broke the news.

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I, of course, immediately Googled it.

“Man killed by grizzly at Yellowstone National Park,” By Matt Volz Associated Press, July 7, 2011, 11:53 AM (EST) < <http://bit.ly/qcUtis> >

“Yellowstone National Park, Wyo. — A Yellowstone National Park official says authorities won’t try to capture a female grizzly bear that killed a backcountry hiker because it was trying to defend her cubs when she was surprised by the man.

“Park spokesman Al Nash said Thursday the mauling of a 57-year-old man was a purely defensive act by the bear. He said Yellowstone typically does not try to capture or remove a bear in what he calls a wildlife incident.

“Wednesday’s attack occurred about 1-1/2 miles up a popular backcountry trail and was the first fatal grizzly attack inside the park in 25 years — but the third in the Yellowstone region in just over a year.

“Rangers blocked tourists from visiting one of Yellowstone National Park’s most popular destinations Thursday as authorities hunted for a female grizzly bear that was surprised with her cubs by a backcountry hiker couple and mauled a man to death.

“It was the first fatal grizzly attack inside the park in 25 years — but the third in the Yellowstone region in just over a year.

“The attack occurred in an area that is one of Yellowstone’s top attractions, and busloads of tourists normally gather there to take in the view from Artist Point, one of the park’s most iconic. A stunning waterfall drops hundreds of feet in the canyon, and trails along both canyon rims are normally crawling with tourists.

“The identity of the 57-year-old victim was being withheld until his family could be notified. His wife escaped serious injury, park officials said.

“Park spokesman Al Nash said the couple saw the bear twice on their hike. The first time, they continued hiking. The second time, the grizzly charged them and the man told his wife to run. She called 911 on her cell phone, and other hikers in the area responded to her cries for help.

“The woman told park officials she didn’t see the bear attack her husband. When the bear went for her, Nash said, she dropped to the ground. The grizzly lifted her off the ground by the day pack she was wearing, then dropped her. The woman may have had scrapes and bruises but didn’t seek medical attention.

“Yellowstone and surrounding areas are home at least 600 grizzlies — and some say more than 1,000. Once rare to behold, grizzlies have become an almost routine cause of curious tourists lining up at Yellowstone’s roadsides at the height of summer season.

“Barbara and Carl Waxman, Baltimore residents making their first trip to Yellowstone, were dismayed when they found their path blocked by the barricades in the aftermath of the mauling. Avid photographers, they had hoped to shoot a lookout where they had read a stunning early-morning rainbow could be seen above the falls.

“It’s like not being able to see the Mona Lisa,’ Barbara Waxman said. ‘If they gave me the option, I’d go to that point in a second, grizzly bear or no.’

“Some visitors said they didn’t know about the attack. Tourists staying at a campground in nearby Canyon Village said no rangers or park personnel told them about it.

Fortunately, the attack took place far to the northeast of Old Faithful, so we’ll be going to see it pretty soon. Our plan is to leave at noon.

Make the time to view National Geographic photographer Michael Melford’s funny & amazing stories about his work in “The Art of Bear Photography” < <http://bit.ly/pxwmPc> >.

12:35 — **ON THE ROAD AGAIN**

Mileage: 31,693 (8,753 miles from home).

It’s 77 degrees and a beautiful sky is alight above us.

We’re looking forward to another marvelous day.

12:45 — **RUNNING BEAR PANCAKE HOUSE**, 538 Madison Ave, West Yellowstone, MT 59758-9525; 406-646-7703

Open 7am – 2 pm, this restaurant was recommended by the host at our motel. He highly praised it.

It’s a little café, well off the beaten path, so you have to know it’s there in order to find it. Don’t waste your time.



The one thing this place did that was excellent was provide a decanter of water for the table. While it meant that I had to pour our first glass, it meant that we could refill to our heart's content without having to catch the waitress' eye and have her fill our glasses again.

Coffee was \$2.25. We ordered water.

When PegEgg saw Chicken Fried Steak on the menu, her eyes lit up. That's her favorite meal in the whole world — although I've assured her that if she'd just try strawberries in chili, that would change.

Unfortunately, our waitress reported, they no longer had any gravy for it so it was not available.

So we ordered the Reuben Sandwich. (The Reuben sandwich is *supposed to be* a hot sandwich of layered corned beef, sauerkraut, and Swiss cheese, with Thousand Island dressing drenching its contents. Grilled between slices of rye bread, the corned beef hung over the sides of the bread and the dressing struggled to escape.)

While we waited, 3 men and 1 older woman sat at the table near us.

We heard the waitress tell one of the men the bad news about being out of gravy for the Chicken Fried Steak, so they ordered something else.

For reasons totally beyond my comprehension, their orders of eggs, pancakes, and some kind of sandwich came before ours arrived.

After waiting far too long, we were disappointed in the Reuben Sandwiches.

Apparently, someone had told the cook that a Reuben Sandwich is made with toast, thin slices of corned beef, a scoop of sauerkraut, a slice of Swiss cheese and a *hint* of 1,000 Island dressing.



PegEgg, a connoisseur of such a sandwich, looked at it and frowned. When she bit into it, the frown became more pronounced.

I offered to send it back and see if they could, at least, heat it up; but, she pointed out that we had waited so long for the sandwich and the place closed at 2 pm — which is probably when the replacement would arrive.

About that time, the older man at the table next to us, looked at me, and called out, “So you're from Tampa Bay, Florida!”

“Yes, we are,” I intoned.

“We love your name tags,” he countered.

This began an animated conversation with these folk from South Dakota. He was the father, grandfather, and great grandfather of almost 100 children. And his was proud.

The whole family had gathered in RV (recreational vehicles) at Madison Point, in Yellowstone, for a family reunion. The four of them had decided to come to town for a meal “such as it was” (his words), before the reunion began today.

He was the grandfather and the lady was his wife of more years than he could remember.

The younger man was his son.

The youngest man was his grandson. He was the quietest of the males — probably after years of trying, without success, to share ideas with the more talkative, older males.

The lady was a delight. Quiet and demure, she — for the most part — sat quietly, responding to questions or asking them. She was content to be the silent partner in a relationship that had successfully spanned decades.

13:45 — ON THE ROAD AGAIN

We left the restaurant and immediately entered the gate to Yellowstone National Park. The same Ranger who had greeted us yesterday was in the booth who recognized us because of our name tags.

Apparently the reason he spent so much time studying and learning about nature, and getting a degree in forestry, was to be a ticket taker. Surely with the money the Forest Service makes from the entry fees, it could afford to high minimum wage ticket takers. It would give them a job and place the Forest Rangers in a position to improve the management of the forests. (It’s just a thought.)

The sun was the brightest of blues with white, cotton ball clouds, and green in all directions except for some white snow on the mountains in the distance.



We stopped periodically — as the spirit moved us — to photograph the landscapes and the animals. The park appears to be full of bears, elk, deer, squirrels, and chipmunks. The latter are more brazen and approach tourists for handouts — successful 9-times-out-of-10.

16:00 — **OLD FAITHFUL**

I'm guessing that if you visit Yellowstone and don't see Old Faithful, they ban you for life from entering any National Park.

Why are all the sites we go to always filled with tourists?

The place was a crowded as Tea Party gathering expecting to see Sarah Palin appear any minute. Here there were not many Asians and only a few Europeans. The majority were white Americans, followed by Hispanics. Again, we saw no black couples.

We found the Info Center and I spotted a tall, blonde, professionally attired Ranger named Beth. She moved with poise and could have passed for a U.S. Army officer. Her head erect, but not haute, she was proud of sharing what she knew with those who asked.

After she answered a few of my questions like she had not answered them 1,000 times before, I asked, "If we were best friends, where would you tell me to stand to get the very best photo of Old Faithful?"

She laughed and replied, *"Well, since we're now BFF [best female friends], go to the far side — directly across from the Info Center. When it erupts, and you'll have the best shots. In addition, if the wind is lightly blowing as it normally is, you'll feel the cool mist of the water that came out hotter than fire moments before, rose 140 feet into the air, and cooled on it's way down to your face. The next appearance will be 4:31 PM so you've got about 15 minutes to get into position."*

About that time, a male Ranger spotted our name tags and rushed over. "You're from Tampa Bay? I'm from Siesta Key," he gushed.

We spoke with the two Rangers and bid adieu.

PegEgg positioned herself with her back to the Info Center on the near side of Old Faithful. I went to the far, recommended position. That way, we reasoned, we would have multiple photos from multiple sides.

At exactly 16:31, the eruptions began. They were preceded by a noticeable increase in steam bursting from the hole, followed by spurts of steamed water about 5 feet, and then — as the Ranger had promised — the steamed water rose 140 feet in the air.

The gasps from the crowds were audible all around the walk that circled the geyser. That was followed by the clicking of thousands of cameras and cellphone cameras. Then cheers as it finished and rested for its next performance.

PegEgg and I met at our agreed upon rally point in wooden chairs outside the Lodge adjacent to the Info Center.

Inside the structure, I purchased 2 diet sodas — at \$2.15 each — from a young, uniformed lady who was as busy as a one-armed paperhanger trying to fill orders for crowds that had just witnessed a WOW moment from Old Faithful and had returned to their previous “Now! Me first!” attitudes.

I patiently waited my turn, softly singing “The Happy Wanderer” (“I love to go a wandering along a wooded path. And as I go, I love to sing, my knapsack on my back” < <http://bit.ly/bsr2Pw> >.

Time passes quite enjoyably when you have a smile on your lips, a song in your heart, and a twinkle in your eyes.

I rejoined PegEgg on the porch where she had been guarding my seat from the swarms of tourists coming and going. Evidently, the tourists at Old Faithful arrive and leave in waves of the curious. They arrive in the 1.5 hours (give or take 10 minutes) between the eruptions, and disappear like mosquitoes at dawn when the current eruption is over.

We slowly drank our diet sodas as we were engaged in conversation by a grandmother who had 3 teenage girls, a 10 year old boy, and a (about) 3-year-old girl circling her to get a refreshment from the large bottles of sodas



that the grandmother pulled out of Walmart shopping bags. At the far side of the mob of kids was the grandfather who appeared to be dreaming of getting a root canal to add to the fun he'd had so far today. He never spoke.

The grandmother had started the conversation after seeing our name tags. They were from Oklahoma down to show the kids what nature was all about in a different part of America.

The littlest girl took a shine to PegEgg and told her that the girl's mother was working, but she wished the mother had seen the water shot out of the ground. Her mother would have enjoyed that.



20:20 — FLEEING A FORESTED FRONTIER

As we were leaving the forests of the park called Yellowstone, there was a mile backup as cars progressed slower than basic trainees in line for their first military haircut. That meant, of course, that someone had spotted an animal and every car, in turn, was stopping to take photos.

PegEgg and I, listening to an audio tape of Clive Cussler's tales about the Van Doren detective Isaac Bell, in "The Wrecker" < <http://bit.ly/pClvQo> > took photos while we patiently waited. We took several photos each knowing that the other of us would see them in the morning.

The guy driving the red convertible sports car behind me was craning his neck out past the rearview mirror, pulled his car out into the on-coming lane each time we moved further as if seeing the long lines of cars shorten would alleviate the pained expression on his face. At one point, he even blew his horn — which, of course, everyone else ignored.

I assumed he was either doing the Just in Time Dance, missed the New York City traffic, or had just realized he had left his camera at home. Whatever his problem was, I was not going the 'feed the monkey' that was crawling all over his back.

H. Mathews had shared: "*A man is too apt to forget that in this world he cannot have everything. A choice is all that is left him.*"

For the first time all day, we heard music — loud, blaring, obnoxious music. It took but a moment to realize that the man in the convertible, unable

to command the forces that slowed him, determined to break them down with loud music. Taking a chapter from the U.S. military's method for getting Manuel Antonio Noriega, the dictator of Panama from 1983–1989, to surrender < <http://bit.ly/bVNIJ> >, the slightly bald headed man, with the darker than night sunglasses, turned up his music to decibels that annoyed even the stone deaf.

I felt sorry for my newly discovered needy friend, but the only choices I really had were to ignore him or go back and slap him back to consciousness. For the love of Pete, he's surrounded by beauty. Forests on the left, right, back, and front' a gurgling, white capped river flowing by to his left; and a large, black raven laughing at him from the tall pine above his car (from where I suspect the raven may have left him a present or two in the back seat), and all he can think about is escaping this wonderland.

Finally, we reached the point where people were taking photos of a *faux bear*. Some dark-colored seaweed-like materials had been caught by a branch that had fallen into the swollen river and the tourists had mistaken it for a bear. I didn't even need to zoom in past 5x to see the mistake which PegEgg discovered about the same time. We laughed and never slowed down.

The guy, in the convertible red sports car behind us, blew his horn one more time to ensure it was still working and followed us so closely that I could not see the hood of his car in my rearview mirror.

Just before the exit, I saw and entered a 'pull off' so that he could roar by in warp drive with oil spurting out the dual exhausts as he roared ahead for about 25 feet before screeching to a stop behind the car in front of him. (I guess he had forgotten there was a line of cars in front of me.)

We pulled out and followed behind him — with two car lengths between his car and our truck.

His radio was still blaring and he was still blaming everyone but himself for the miserable day he had — just like the one yesterday and, most likely, like the one tomorrow.

Today's anticipation is tomorrow's dream. (Yes, you can quote me.)

The question is, "Will you live it or survive it?"

20:39 — SPEED TEST

Our location: West Yellowstone, MT
ISP Location: Bozeman, MT (~ 50 mi)

Link: <http://bit.ly/qQJ3YA>

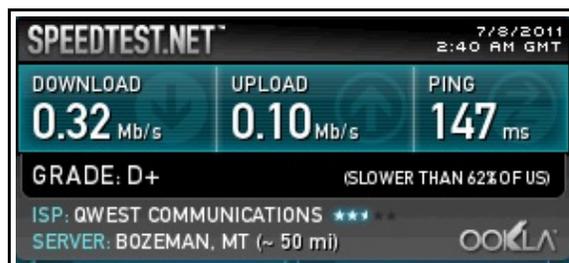
Download Speed: 0.32 Mbps

Upload Speed: 0.10 Mbps

Ping: 147 ms

Grade: D +

Slower than 62% of U.S.



Slower than 62% of US

23:23 — WHEN I GET TO HEAVEN

With “Help Pour Out The Rain (Lacey's Song)” sung by Buddy Jewell < <http://bit.ly/6xRi97> >, I’m rejoicing have enjoyed another marvelous, God-given day on this planet I’ve been visiting for 3/5 of a century.

“Lord, when I get to Heaven, can I taste the Milky Way?

“I don’t wanna come to visit ‘cause I’m comin’ home to stay.

“An’ I can’t wait to see my family and meet Jesus face-to-face.

“An’ do you think, Lord, you could use another Angel,

“To help pour out the rain?”