

Odyssey 2004: The Moss Family

Journal - Week 1

Day 1 – Leaving home at 4:00am on Sunday, June 6 enabled us to arrive in New Orleans for an afternoon swamp tour. Talk about gators --- wow! One crawled up on the bank of the river even as we were boarding our boat! We saw alligators everywhere! Brandon was invited to step out on a ledge with the tour guide and actually hand-fed an 8-foot alligator! All of us got to hold a baby alligator! Greg and Brandon sat on a log within 2 feet of a 12-foot alligator (with 2 feet of teeth!) that slithered up on shore as the tour guide hand-fed him a snack! We also saw egrets, other beautiful birds, raccoons and giant mosquitoes! It turned out to be much more of an “up close and personal” tour than we thought we’d get! We all loved it!

In the evening, we strolled the riverwalk area and French Quarter of New Orleans. We ate beignets (square French doughnuts) at the Café du Monde.

Trip Trivia: We traveled through 4 states today!

Day 2 – We stayed on the beautiful Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas. This is a lovely area! We strolled the Riverwalk in the rain that locals said they desperately needed.

Day 3 – Schlitterbaun Waterpark – San Antonio: Travel Channel’s #1 waterpark in the USA! The park is so big that you have to take shuttle from the East side to the West side. More rain – lots of rain! Thankfully no thunder and lightning, so the park was open. Since it wasn’t the kind of day most people like for spending at a waterpark, we had really short wait times for everything! Schlitterbaun is home to the world’s first “watercoasters” – water rides that blast you uphill as well as downhill! We certainly had a blast and appreciated sharing the park with a lot less people than normal!

Day 4 – Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico: We hiked into the Caverns all the way down to the Big Room. Thankfully, we took the elevator back to the top: 75 stories! We really enjoyed the Bat Flight Program at dusk as several hundred thousand bats exit the cavern’s opening for their night flight.

Day 5 – Beautiful territory through New Mexico and the friendliest folks so far in Albuquerque. We also made a quick stop in Roswell, home of the UFO incident (still unexplained), which happened in 1947.

Day 6 - We traveled through the Painted Desert and Petrified Forest. Layers of colored rock for miles! We arrived at the Grand Canyon where Greg worked his “hotel magic” and secured a room for us in the El Tovar on the rim of the Grand Canyon! We had tried to book a room here months ago and found out that it is reserved nearly two years in advance! This is an elegant hotel with history dating back to 1905, and it sits right on the south rim of the Canyon!

Trip Trivia: One ton of petrified rock (fossilized wood) is STOLEN from the Petrified Forest each month! We bought our piece of the rock!

Day 7 –It was unbelievably cool this morning: 45 degrees F! We spent a full day in awe of the Grand Canyon from various outlooks and views. We even hiked the South Kaibab trail which takes you down into the Canyon. But then . . . you have to come back out! What a hike! But getting the feel of being IN the Canyon was well worth the hike! Experiencing the Canyon and the awe of God’s creation made us feel so small and insignificant. “ Yet the Lord thinketh upon me.” (Psalm 40:17) God still cares for us and every little detail of our lives.

Overall, Week 1 has been wonderful! Lots of good books, good movies, good games, good times and good travels. We’re so thankful for this opportunity God has given us to take this trip together!

Trip Trivia – Week One

- **Technology for this trip! 2 laptops, GPS, Digital Camera and Camcorder**
- **Coollest Spot: Grand Canyon – 45 degrees F at sunrise**
- **Earliest Sunrise: Grand Canyon: 5:21am**
- **Number of Pictures Greg took: 1101**
- **License Tags we’ve seen: 32 states (including Alaska) and Mexico**
- **Friendliest Town: Albuquerque, New Mexico**
- **First Oil Change: Albuquerque, New Mexico**
- **Most Fun: Schlitterbaun Waterpark**
- **Least Fun: The Alamo (We will “remember the Alamo!”)**
- **Total Mileage: 2266 miles**