

He's got the whole world in His hands

The song, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," is the best way I can describe our recent trip to Austin Texas.

It was a quick trip – four days of driving, hotel staying and unloading a 6X12 foot trailer, pickup truck and Ford Escape containing all of our eldest daughter Laura's belongings as she relocated for her first post-graduation architecture job.

Since Larry is a golf course superintendent, taking extra days to enjoy Austin and see the sites was just not in the picture, that will come in mid-January.

The plan was that Larry, and I would drive in our pickup pulling the trailer while Laura, Andrea and Marissa followed with Laura's 2005 Ford Escape also loaded including a laundry basket of live plants.

We started out Saturday afternoon once Larry was done playing in our church golf scramble. The plan was to drive about seven hours to our first hotel in West Memphis, Ark. and then drive the rest of the way to Austin Sunday, spending the second night in a hotel and moving Laura in once the apartment complex opened Monday morning. We would then start the trek home, staying in Malvern, Ark. on Monday and driving the rest of the way home to Marion on Tuesday, so we could all be at work Wednesday morning.

We knew pulling a trailer would require us to stop for gas more often, what we did not realize is the impor-



A SLICE OF LIFE

Linda Wilk



tance of knowing where gas stations were along our route.

It became uneasily clear that we should have done a little bit more research when we went off the interstate in Cairo, Illinois, only to find a town that literally had no gas stations. Instead, we found a ghost town with numerous abandoned buildings intermixed with barred windows and doors.

I knew we were dangerously low on gas when Larry stopped at the fire station which looked surprisingly brand new to ask where a gas station was located, and the firefighter confirmed there was no gas station in Cairo.

He told us we had to go through town and over a large bridge to gas. What we were not

told, however, is which bridge to take. When we got to the bridge, we found a fork in the road directing us either to Kentucky or Missouri.

Well, we chose the wrong bridge – causing a bit of a panic after we drove over the enormous bridge only to find trees and country roads. After some tense moments and prayer, we did come to a gas station, that was literally closing as we pulled up and started pumping gas.

We then backtracked on some country roads, as insects pelted our windshields so loud, we thought for sure it was raining.

About midnight we pulled into our hotel, spending the night, and getting back on the road about 8 a.m. Sunday. All started out well, until a couple hours into the trip, Andrea called to let us know the bumpy road had seemed to cause something to go wrong with the car.

We were a couple miles from Melvern, Ark, so Larry had Laura follow us into town where we stopped at a Phillips 66 station. Larry jacked up Laura's Escape, fearing a bearing had gone out. While he

could not find what was wrong, as he drove it around the parking lot, it was clear something had happened. The clerk at the gas station told Larry about a local mechanic that might be able to assist on Monday.

So, we took Laura's Escape to the closed K&A Tire Muffler, unloading all the belongings she was hauling in her vehicle into the back of the pickup, writing a detailed note and sticking her car key in a metal key box, also putting a note on the windshield.

Once all the items were secured, Larry put a large blue tarp over the belongings and strapped them down. Since it was Sunday, all we could do was pray the me-

chanic would have time to look at the Escape on Monday.

Then all three of the girls crammed into the back seat of our extended cab pickup and we drove the rest of the way to the hotel in Austin, amidst torrential downpours of rain, which I was convinced all our clothing and Laura's belongings were now drenched - they were not.

Once at the hotel we unloaded the bed of the truck, moving valuables to the cab and suitcases into the hotel. Only to repeat the ritual the next day, as we headed to Laura's apartment.

In making a call to the mechanic, Monday morning, Larry learned a shock had broken in the back of Laura's Es-

cape – and that it would be fixed and ready for us Tuesday morning.

Once at her apartment, we unloaded, helped her set up her kitchen table, bed and desk and headed out, returning to Melvern, Ark, where Larry had booked a hotel room before we left that previous week.

It was a whirlwind trip that clearly showed me just how great God is as we made it safely home Tuesday evening about 9 p.m., while Laura texted, she got back to Austin around 6 p.m. While I do not intend to make that drive again, it was comforting to know just how closely God held us in His hands as we traveled.



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