

Summer 2005

Larry's Mobile Adventure

Summer 2005 according to Larry (so far).

Hi everyone. After a vacation, I usually write and send out some pictures after our getaways. But have been delayed this year. I'm writing this tonight as I have received numerous emails and voice messages asking where my vacation story is. So, as Faye and Jake are watching Jaws in the next room (just heard a scream! - Jake says it's not too scary for him, but I disagree - his crying right now says I was correct, but you can't argue with a 10 year old!).

One of the things that I am doing this summer (warm/hot



season) is not working on the weekends. This is a first for me. I have instead been spending it with Jake (he's at a perfect age) and Faye doing things together. I haven't



been answering calls then and won't on weekends until it starts getting cold again (hopefully a long way off).

Anyways, a week after Memorial weekend; where we went camping with our new popup for the first time; we were camping again. It was the first weekend in June, and this time with the cub scouts. 700 of them to be exact. It's a right of passage sort of for 3rd and 4th grade scouts to go to Webelos Woods at Camp Moses in Russell, MA. A parent has to accompany every scout. So this year (like last), I took Jake. We camped with his Cub Scout den and had friends on either side of us. It was very HOT at over 90 each of

the 3 days we were there. I was never so happy to get home and take a shower on Sunday!

Anyways, the scouting council has the scouts move around on Saturday to different events of which some were: making a campfire, learning about ham radio and talking on a radio, learning about first aid, the American flag and many more things. The scouts even made a pancake breakfast for us dads on Saturday morning. There were campfires, s'mores and



more. And for the first year in many, no rain! (Jake decided Jaws was too scary and they shut it off a few minutes ago - lesson learned).

The third weekend in June I took the scouts and parents to

Point Judith, RI. We had a few guides and rental kayaks waiting for us (we brought our own). We were a group of 27 people and we paddled around the island. It was low tide and even over 2½ miles out the water was less than 2 feet deep. That was really neat. Unfortunately we did not see any wildlife except seagulls diving into the water and coming up with crabs. They were too fast for my camera and me. But it was real neat. Once around the island we were in the boat channel and saw lots of boats, tubers, fishing boats, and really nice homes on our paddle back to the start. I was told it was 7 miles around, but it didn't seem that far.

The fourth weekend was my



ham radio field day weekend. (www.arrl.org) We camped out at Partridge Hollow campground in Monson, MA with friends. It was really hot then too averaging over 95 for each of the 3 days we were there. But it was nice having a swimming pool about 200 yards away. We took a few cooling dunks.

The first weekend in July was

the 4th of July holiday. I took Faye paddling in Long Pond/ east Brimfield reservoir in the morning of the 4th. We put the kayaks in at the public boat launch on the south side of route 20. Following the lake north, one can go nearly to the Mass pike. We went under route 20 and under a really low bridge before turning around and heading back to the launch. It was a very relaxing paddle. But while heading in, a red canoe past us and I heard voices say together "Faye?". Sure enough, some old customers of Faye's recognized her and in the middle of the lake we sat there chatting. You never know when you're going to meet someone you know. To think we were an hour from our and their house too!

The afternoon of the 4th was special too. Jake was with my sister and her kids at my parents house and the parade. We met 4 other friends and headed to Lenox for the James Taylor Concert at Tanglewood. (www.bso.org) He gave an electric performance that night and there were fireworks after the concert. It was a great day!

Finally, July 16th came and we left for the Lake George Escape campground (www.lakegeorgeescape.com) in Lake George, NY. We were amongst around 350 campers at this camping resort. Our campsite was between the frog pond and the Schroon river. It was extremely hot and humid the whole time we were there. Plus the mosquitoes had

voracious appetites and were vicious. If we had been fortunate enough to get a campsite on the other side of the frog pond, it would have been cooler amongst the pine trees. And we would have been in a mosquito control area. But that was not to be. But Jake was fishing anytime he could. Even while eating he inhaled his



food and went back to the frog pond. He did catch some catfish and other fish. Plus there were lots of kids on either side of us for him to play (fish) with. He had a good time and everyone was real friendly too.

Any time we stepped outside the camper or screen house, we had to spray ourselves with bug spray. We were only there from Sat to Tuesday morning. In that short time we went thru almost 3 cans of bug repellent. We got eaten alive.

But other than the bugs, the campground was really nice. It had 2 beautiful pools, shuffleboard, huge playground for the kids, dog run area, beach along the Schroon river, clean bathrooms, restaurant, big store and more.

We relaxed by the pool, swam

at the river front beach, visited friends at the pace where we used to stay in LG (www.twinbayvillage.com), walked around the LG Village, etc. Late Sunday afternoon, we decided to put the kayaks in the water. The campground has a nice launch area where you can bring your own small boat or rent kayaks, canoes, pedal boats or electric boats or take tunes down the river. This was also the first time we had Fuzzy in my kayak. He had his own PFD on (personal flotation device) and was nervous. It's tough being 13½ and being put in kayak for the first time. But he did admirably and soon enough settled onto my legs and watched where we were going. (See the pics). We paddled about 1½ miles up river and met lots of people coming down in all sorts of water craft (nothing motorized). We also met some kids that were casually floating along and thought they were part of the campground. After talking to them we learned their story, as they weren't campers.

There were a boy and a girl in high school and the boys older sister from college. They found the speed of the water, put a car at the end and figured that it would take 2 hours to float down from the put in a "few" mile upstream. They also figured to have lunch in between and then do it again.

Well, it didn't work out that way. We saw them at 5:10pm. They had been slowly floating along since 10 am! They had

some water but no food or phone to call for help. They did have a gps and knew (at least) how far they had to go to get to where the car was. But when we met them, they were still over 6 miles from their car! After Faye urged them to let us help (we're not serial killers or anything), Jake towed the youngest one to the launch site and we kept the other 2 company for their trip in. After drying off and deflating their floats (one needed to be constantly blown up), I put them in my van and drove them the 10 minutes to their car. I was at least happy that they



had life vests on. It was nice to do something nice for them. They couldn't believe how long it took to go from start to finish. It would have been very dark when they got near their car. Plus, they would have gone over a small waterfall and into fast moving water near their car. My guess is that they would have overshot their car and been in real bad trouble as the river eventually feeds into the Hudson river not too far away!

Tuesday couldn't come quick enough as the heat, bugs and humidity were getting to us. So we packed up and headed for

the western finger lake region. Where we were going was just south of Rochester, NY. But it was a 5-hour ride. The trip went smoothly. We found that the dog (Fuzzy) was most comfortable sitting in the passenger seat up front while Faye and Jake sat in the back. He's not spoiled or anything.

With the help of my GPS; which I had preprogrammed all the campsites, places of interest and our friends addresses; we found the campsite very easily. The GPS (global positioning satellite) (www.garmin.com - gpsmap 76cs is my model) knew where we were at all times and told us what exit to get off and where to turn, how far from destination and more. Anyways, we arrived at Conesus Lake Campground (www.conesuslakecampground.com) late Tuesday afternoon.

When we drove in, there was a huge hill in front of us. We checked in, were given our campsite location and tried to drive up the hill. Faye was driving and we switched positions so that I could try. Slowly we went up the hill. To be more exact, the lake is at 250 feet above sea level. Our campsite was at nearly 1100 feet. A very steep hill. But we finally made it. I really didn't think my minivan would pull the camper up. I figured I'd need some ones 4x4 to pull it up.

The campground had very few people where we were. But it was very grassy and quiet. There was no humidity or

excessive heat and barely any bugs too. Perfect! I even set up my ham radio and antenna and got some time to talk to people around the world. I did this while Jake was fishing with Faye watching him. It was very peaceful and relaxing.

While in Conesus, we visited the grand canyon of the east; Letchworth State Forest. It's a very cool place to visit. There is camping there, hiking trails,



kayaking down on the river and more. We drove the road and stopped at different sites to view and learn about the canyon and waterfalls. We even watched a large group of kayakers from way on top of the canyon rim. We wished we were down there with them, but maybe another time. I highly recommend the tour if you are in the Rochester/Buffalo area. (http://www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler/articles/1057upstate_newyork.html)

Another day we visited friends that we hadn't seen in nearly 7 years. We spent much time talking and the kids played and swam. They live in between Rochester and Buffalo. Jake and their son were in the same orphanage in Russia. We met

them as we all traveled to Russia at the same time back in 1996 when Jake came to be part of our family. But that's another story. Anyways, it was great to see them and we felt sad that we had to leave so quickly. They live about 6 hours from our house. We hope that someday, they will make the trip to this area. It was our 2nd trip to visit them.

One day while at Conesus Lake we did get the kayaks into the Lake. We also brought Fuzz along too, but he didn't seem to like the waves caused by the boats farther out. For part of the trip, he was nervous but seemed to settle down and relax as we paddled back. But wouldn't you know, we stopped to talk with a swimming local and found out she had visited friends in Longmeadow. She was a pediatric doctor and worked for a while at Baystate and even knew some of Faye's customers. So once again, out in the middle of a lake, this time 5½ hours from home; she found some else that she sort of knew. It's a small world.

We spent Tuesday to Saturday at Conesus Lake. Saturday we packed up and slowly drove down the hill with the camper. Our destination was Watkins Glen, NY that was about 70 miles from Conesus Lake.

The trip was easy and we took some back roads to view the beautiful scenery along the way. The next campground was the Watkins Glen KOA (www.watkinsglenkoa.com). I had requested a site with shade

and near kids so that Jake would have someone to play with. We had some shade at our site, but no other campers near us. Our site was rocky and w/o any grass and was not something I would have chosen if I had the option. I even mentioned to the staff that we would relocate to another part of the campground after the weekenders left. But they said no. We won't go back to that campground again.

That Saturday night we noticed a large number of PT Cruisers in WG. We stopped to ask what was going on and was told that it was PT Cruiser weekend. There were over 100 PT Cruiser cars. They drove the track, had a parade, showcased their cars. I must say that they all looked beautiful. And, I've never been a PT cruiser fan!



While in Watkins Glen though, we did pick a nice hot 95-degree day to walk the steps up the gorge. It is 1½ miles each way and over 800 steps up. Faye was told to take the bus to the top and walk it down. I was determined to make the walk up and that's just what we did. Needless to say, I was soaked from head to foot by the time we got to the top. It was really neat. Kind of like



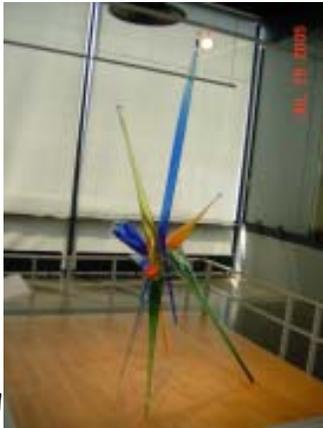
a mini Letchworth. Lots of waterfalls, streams and pools. Also, other areas to hike, but



we kept to the main path up and down. After resting for a bit at the top, we walked it down. Jake counted the steps

at 816. So the sign was accurate. About half way down, my legs felt like rubber, but we kept going. I took some beautiful pictures, as it was so pretty. Needless to say, we all slept very well that night!

We were in WG from Saturday to Tuesday. The day after doing the gorge, we went south to Corning and visited the really interesting Corning Museum



of Glass. Everything about glass that you can think of is there. We even saw something from back home. In the discovery section, they had a real, working periscope. You looked thru and rotated and saw different landmarks around town. Kollmorgen in Northampton makes the periscope, which is where my dad used to work. Part of home visiting us again.

In the parking lot, we noticed a group of antique cars. They were Hupmobiles on a tour of



the Watkins Glen area.

On Tuesday, which was predicted to be 97 degrees (I think it was 103 here according



to my thermometer when we got



home), we took the kayaks out into Seneca Lake. The lake is huge at over 40 miles long. At the southern end where we were, it was slightly more than one mile wide.

Jake was zipping himself around and being very silly. He made it a point to chase the groups of ducks and seagulls and yelling funny noises. It was hilarious to watch! We paddled nearly 4 miles viewing homes and farmland from the water. We also paddled around the marina, which was interesting. After a few hours paddling around, it was starting to get real hot, so we called it a day and stopped for a nice lunch at

a local restaurant before



heading back to the campground. There we relaxed, swam and packed for the trip home the next day.

Unfortunately, Wednesday, July 27th arrived and we had to go home. We chose the scenic route along the eastern edge of the lake. Someday I'd like to go back and paddle the northern tip and part of the Erie Canal and visit Geneva, NY. For the ride home, we had our first day of rain. Nearly the whole trip, which made it, take longer. But that was no problem considering we had 11 days w/o any major rain. We did see some amazing horizontal lightning west of Albany. But the trip home was pretty much uneventful.

After working for 2 days, we took off that Sunday to enjoy the classical music at Tanglewood. It was a delightful afternoon of good music at our favorite music place. We bought tickets for the lawn (there) and there we relaxed some more. (www.bso.org and click on Tanglewood for the schedule)

I have been trying to take at

least part of one day during each week to do some paddling. I have also been taking some non-kayakers out or people who don't own their own kayaks. On Thursday the 4th of August, I took another friend out onto Congamond Lakes in Southwick, MA. These are 3 lakes that are around 400+ acres in total size. We put in at the public boat launch and casually explored the lakes.

It's always amazing to see the construction or remodeling of some magnificent homes on the lake shore. Even though I've



been on Congamond a few times before, it's always interesting. That Thursday we slowly paddled near the shores and lily pads/weed. We saw a few turtles in the water and one sunning itself on a log (see pictures). I did quietly paddle up close enough to take 2 pictures before he sensed me and jumped into the water. It's always amazing seeing wildlife in all different forms.

On Saturday of that week, a friend (Ernie and Deb) took us all on the CT River in his boat. We launched from Bruneles Marina in South Hadley (about 25 minutes north of us) and



traveled north to the Northampton portion of the river.

Ernie has a spot that he likes to sit and relax. It's just across the river from the Northampton Airport. We brought our stuff to shore, set up chairs and umbrellas and relaxed. We ate lunch



there, watched the skydivers and small airplanes, swam in the river. It was very clean there. The water was warm and the whole trip was very enjoyable. We then packed up the boat and Ernie took us sightseeing along the river north for about 10 miles. It is very interesting as there are many places where the water is shallow and people anchor their boats. It almost looks like a marina as there were so many boats. Also, some canoes and kayaks. I was shown

where the public boat access is so that we can put our kayaks in someday (hopefully this weekend). We had a great



time on the boat and hope to be invited out again.

Sunday brought more river



activities. We met another friend (Frandy) in the Gill/Greenfield, MA area at the Barton Cove public boat launch. We put all 3 of our kayaks in the water and Frandy's as well. The cove is just north of the Turners Falls dam, so we paddled north. There were a lot of power boats in the water, but we still enjoyed ourselves. One of the really neat things about Bartons Cove is the eagles nest in one of the trees on the island.

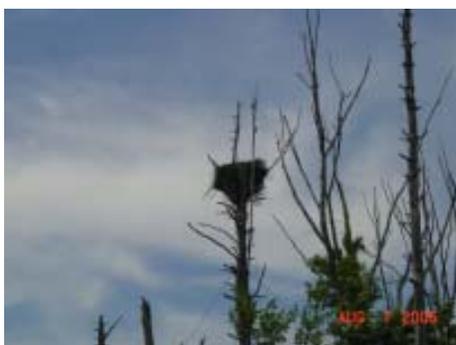
The nest is huge. It's made of many sticks and on top of a

tree that has guy wires holding it up. There is also a web cam on top. You can view it on the web at: <http://www.nu.com/eagles/default.asp> but we watched in real time. The eagle was not in the nest during our trip up the river.

We paddled about 2.5 miles up the river, found a sandy beach with enough room to sit on. We beached the boats, had lunch



and then went back in the water heading back to the cove. Jake did some fishing but was unsuccessful. We paddled around the other side of the eagle island. We noticed that there was a large solar panel and an antenna pointing towards to dam. The panel must charge a bank of batteries



that powers the web cam and transmits the images to a computer that puts them on the

web for Northeast Utilities. We didn't see the eagle on that side of the island but I did take some pictures of the nest (see the pics).

As Jake decided to try some more fishing, he looked up and asked me what type of hawk that was in the air. It had a



large wingspan, black/brown looking body and white head. It was the eagle. It circled around for a bit and then landed in the tree. It was most likely looking for prey. Seeing my first eagle was an amazing site and we plan on going back to the cove before the cold weather is upon us this fall. It's definitely worth the hours trip from here!

We do have 2 more camping trips planned. But more on those after they happen...As long as the warm weather continues, so do the adventures of Larry, Faye and Jake and occasionally Fuzzy too....If you are interested in trying kayaking or have one and want to join us when we go out, just drop me an email and we'll keep more in touch.

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