

Sent:

Friday, August 21, 2009 1:04 PM

Subject:

Postcard 21

The world has righted itself. This was the view from our balcony ~~this~~ yesterday morning in St. Mary. Our day started with a cinnamon raisin bagel and a mug of French Roast from Montana Coffee Traders. Behind breakfast are the creek, trees, St Mary Lake and a Rocky Mountain. The air is cool and the sun is warm. And we found a place we can send email for \$3, as long as we don't mind the drive.



Into Glacier National Park for our adventure, traveling on the Going to the Sun Road.



We were immediately greeted by the Bear Sign. Everyone up here talks about bears, sighting bears, shooting bears, dealing with bears. We don't need to see the Bear Sign.

We stopped at the Visitors Center to ask about hikes – just a couple of suggestions for some short tramps to magnificent vistas, please. And oh, by the way, choose some with a real low probability of bear contact. Ranger Heather is immediately sympathetic to our inquiry. “Sure! Here’s one at St Mary Falls that is beautiful, and here’s another at Logan Pass that’s very popular and full of other hikers.” Sheila and I look at each other. Sounds good. We turn to go...

...“Oh”, Heather says, “there are a couple things you might want to keep in mind.” We turn back. “It’s a good idea to talk and clap the whole time you are hiking. You feel stupid but get over it. You want the bears to hear your voices.” “Well”, we say, “we thought there weren’t going to be bears on those trails.” “But”, Heather says, warming to her work, “but there might be. And if it’s a grizzly with young you’ll want to know how to act. Back slowly away, talk in a soothing voice right at the bear, explaining how you mean no harm and you’re leaving now.”

“We talk our way out of it?” we ask, incredulous. “Probably”, she says. “Probably?” we say. She reads our anxiety like a con artist and goes for the kill: “If it should turn into an attack, this is when you put your arms on the back of your neck, lie on your stomach and play dead. Only do that if it’s a real attack, of course, they’ll bluff attack a few times before the real one just to scare you off.” We gasp. “Should we carry pepper spray?” She says “oh right, very useful – and we sell it in the bookstore” (the bookstore?).

We are already in full retreat from our hiking plan when she adds, “Naturally, if it wants you as prey it will just stalk you like a cougar. Have a nice hike!”

We had a lovely drive.



St Mary Lake



The *Cousin It* plant



Logan Pass



McDonald Creek was so clear we could see to the bottom from the road.



Roadside lunch



On *Going to the Sun Road*



Lake MacDonald

D&S