Just a Walk In The Park - event report June 23 through July 12, 2010 Or, How I spent my summer vacation in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

ON THE ROAD - June 23:

This summer our usual Wyoming vacation would be augmented by focusing on some progun rights activities, briefly identified as a Walk In The Park, or WITP. To kick things off I got Cathy an accessory for her new Toyota 4Runner, a trailer hitch cover. Not just any cover but a gun related one that looks like a large cartridge head and head-stamped, "Wyoming Woman - On Target". She did not notice it until the third day on the road and then only after she found the strategically placed anniversary cards.

On the way out we had to stop at Cabellas at Sidney, NE. Cathy checked out the fishing stuff and I checked out the guns. This sign was posted PROMINENTLY at many locations in the store. I assume the warning about folks with CCW permits not needing to have their guns checked applies ONLY to those being carried concealed and not the ones brought in for service? There was a standard bullet trap at the front door to clear and inspect all guns.



Next, while blasting through Champaign County, Illinois we noticed some of the "Burma Shave" pro-gun signs from the Champaign County Rifle Association - Guns Save Life dot-com project. We slowed down to just below Mach-1 to take a few photos. Does anyone have a friend of a friend who owns land along well traveled roads in Maryland?

Our second night stop, at North Platte, NE. We met up with some gun friendly folks; a couple on Harley's traveling across country, a couple of farmer families who grew Sunflower seeds and shot .50BMG and then, of all the blind luck, the guy who was behind the Burma Shave signs at www.GunsSaveLife.com. He did not have a card and I forgot to write down his name, but it was nice meeting him again - the first time was through a news article about this project several years ago.



In Wyoming;

On our first Sunday in Wyoming we went to Bondurant, WY for the fund raising BBQ lunch at the St. Hubert the Hunter church. Since St Hubert is the patron Saint of hunters, this fit right in. http://www.sublette.com/history/historicbuildings/sthubert.htm There, we meet Dr. Olsonan eye surgeon - and his wife from Hoback Ranches, just down the road, and Salt Lake City. He told us of his self defense episode while camping one year, where an handy pistol saved the day. He understands self defense.

Monday, June 28;

At our mutual request a meeting was held with Jackson, WY Police Chief Todd Smith and Lt. Bob Gilliam at Snow King Resort to discuss WITP activities. They wanted to check me out and confirm that safe and sane activities would be the order of any WITP actions. All went smoothly.

Later that day Cathy and I took a short walk (10km +/-) in Grand Teton National Park with Tom Ninnemann, the Jackson Radio News - reporter/producer. At the Murie Ranch in the park we met a US Marshal who was waiting for his VIP party to escort at an outing at the ranch. He didn't bat an eye regrading my open carry.

Tuesday, June 29;

We got a call from Nicki McDermott, president of the Jackson JC's, the sponsor of the Independence day Pancake Breakfast and the Jackson Hole Independence Day fireworks display. She wanted to discuss the possible WITP activities to be sure they would not disrupt any of the public events. No problems were expected after that cordial discussion.

A series of radio Interviews began later that morning. Cathy and I visited at KZJH-FM with Brian Karr; Brian was nervous and concerned about his middle of the road audience, but the 6-8 minutes of discussion went well. Brian even volunteered that it may be time for him to take me up on my invitation to come to the range for some quality target time.

Wednesday, June 30, more interviews;

- KMTN-AM/FM with Del Ray and Jake, Approximately 30 minutes of wide discussion went well.
- KCHQ-FM (Q-102) with Dave Plard news director, approximately 10 minutes for news stories.
- KUGR-AM Green River WY, with Al Harris owner, approximately 25 minutes live interview.

Thursday, July 1;

Cathy went fishing on the Snake River below Jackson Lake Dam and being her driver & security, I was not fishing. Instead, I watched grizzles chase the elk around the meadow below Jackson Lake Lodge. I was open carrying with lots of tourists and park rangers nearby and with no direct comments from anyone.

Friday, July 2;

The morning news report on local radio from Tom Ninnemann, included a 30 second report on the upcoming "constitutional" walk in the park, all in all a good piece. I have it recorded.

PM - Cathy and I took an energetic WITP to Grand View Point at Jackson Lake with Tom Ninnemann and family; It is good to personally know a lot of local media folks. I was OC'ing on the trail. At dinner afterward at Leeks Marina I WAS NOT OC'ing because I wanted a beer with my pizza. HOWEVER, I noticed a NO Firearms sign posted at entrances. I confirmed that this was the choice of the Park concessionaire and not because it was an official occupied park office.



Sunday; July 4 - Independence Day - The full WITP day;

Just before the 8AM opening of the at Pancake Breakfast I arrived OC'ing and looked for others. We saw;

Hap Johnson and wife - JH Security (Harley Rider) **Anthony "Tony" Copper** - Command Sgt.Major (Ret), Delta Force, military and law personnel training (not photographed) **Alan Horwitz** - formerly of Germantown, MD, former Peace Officer, now retired to Jackson.



Several others were seen but not identified.

Officials seen there were; Jackson patrol officer Andy Pearson on foot around the area most of the day, Jackson Police Chief Todd Smith and Teton County Sheriff Jim Whalen

Then there was...
The Crazy Lady from Chicago / Rafter-J Jackson.

At first this genuine, hard corps, anti-gun Nut-Job approached Hap (blue American Flag shirt) and started hammering on him; "Is that thing loaded with real bullets, are you aiming to shoot the 5 year olds around here, Defending yourself from the 'Government' to stay out of FEMA camps", Yaddah, Yaddah. I stepped in to say her argument was not with Hap but with me, saying, "my name is Bob and I organized this, what is your name"? At that point she refused to identify herself though she let slip some identifying information later on. She had all the talking points and the hot buttons at her disposal; she was well scripted. She even got into the deficient penis line about needing to supplement for that with a firearm.



When she started physically poking Hap and saying she would "make him draw his gun", things got a little tense but Haps firm warning to not touch him calmed her down. She then dragged hubby aside to sit on the bench with Ben. I guess she can be as familiar with Ben (hand placement) as she wants, bronze Ben will not complain. Her husband would actually try to talk about the issues and not violently berate the persons in the discussion. This lady really needs to read the article "Raging Against Self Defense" A Psychiatrist examines the Anti-Gun Mentality by Sarah Thompson, M.D. http://www.gunlaws.com/HoplophobiaAnalysis.htm

Officer Andy was watching the whole thing. Later Chief Todd told us the lady had originally approached Andy asking, "Where are the gun guys", she sought us out and then blamed us for "ruining" her day. Officer Andy said we "did good", ignored her taunts and made her madder.

Overall this part of WITP went exactly as planned. I had hoped for 2 to 10 folks OC'ing and expected 2 or 3 anti's. The crazy lady made up in heightened attitude for the lacking quantity of anti's. The parade part of the day did not see any OC marchers because we could not get enough confirmed and identified in advance to submit our "unit" for the parade. Perhaps next year. We did stay around for the parade and most of the band concert and talked to a few folks.

After a brief rest, lunch and organization, it was off to Teton National Park for our "Constitutional" as Tom would say. We walked north along String Lake to the upper bridge crossing and paused to talk to some folks. One fellow and his wife, Bob and Vickie from Pinedale, WY, commented that at least someone was "Packing" and naturally this lead to a 10 minute conversation. We exchanged information and comments and I gave him one of the WITP flyers.

Just a few miles south we then walked around the Jenny Lake area, visited the general store and gift shop which were not marked regarding firearms. I checked out the ranger station which was properly marked. Some of the larger signs, as this Jenny Lake main sign, still contained the warning, "firearms and hunting - prohibited". It will take them some time to get to all the signage that needs correction. No problems.





Wednesday, July 7 - Yellowstone Park;

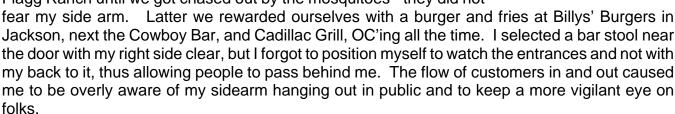
We took a road trip to Yellowstone to visit the gift shop at the West Thumb basin and renew our Yellowstone Association memberships. Walking around the geyser basin we met a large family from Colorado and helped them by taking a family group photo at the "Abyss Pool". The father commented on my OC'ing and said he wanted to carry, but his CCW permit is still pending. I commented that Wyoming was an open carry state and he acknowledged that but replied they were traveling by mobile home and carrying in that type of vehicle is very difficult because of the requirements regarding access to firearms.

Shortly thereafter, while waiting outside the Gift shop which is also a posted park employee hangout, I talked to a ranger at length about park events. No comment was made about the sidearm.

Leaving the area we saw some foreign Asian tourists step off the thermal area boardwalk to take photos, a dangerous and prohibited action because of the possibility of breaking through the ground to boiling water below, not to mention damaging the park features. I warned them back with a whistle, gesture and saying it was dangerous and they complied. Shortly later I was approached by a woman who thanked me for doing that, saying her husband was about to do the same thing but his whistle was not as loud. We talked for a while and it turns out they are from Michigan, were pro-gun folks, she being a peace officer and had applied for a job with the Jackson Police Department, but had problems with the schools and her husband relocating.

We continued north to the Yellowstone Lake lodge and the Lake General Store for a quick lunch, open carrying all the way. This time it was time for another tourist to turn the tables and offer to take a photo of Cathy and I on the shore of Yellowstone Lake.

On the way back south Cathy fished the Snake River near Flagg Ranch until we got chased out by the mosquitoes - they did not



For this trip the only remaining task was to head back east to the hot & humid weather, higher fuel prices and crowded spaces. We did manage to stop at a few Culver's restaurants on the way back.

That about wraps it up. Open Carrying in Wyoming (and presumably elsewhere) is quite natural and something I could get used to. We encountered a great number of folks who supported and discussed firearm freedom issues. All the discussions of support were in a positive tone, no one was overly worried about an oppressive government or plotting anything, just supporting freedom and personal reliance. Future visits and then residence in Wyoming will bring more such actions, perhaps even Cathy will start carrying;-)

For your enjoyment, some words of others on the subject follow. Read on.

Open carry is more than open carry

Brian G. Jeffs, Board of Directors – Second Amendment March

It's true that open carry has many advantages: a faster draw, a larger caliber handgun and greater round capacity; sure it's been shown to deter crime, and it is immensely more comfortable to carry in warm weather, but it is much more than that.

Open carry brings gun ownership out of the closet. It shows your friends and neighbors, your state and your country that you are not afraid of taking on the responsibility of protecting yourself and the ones you love from evil. Open carry is a visible expression of our natural right to self preservation. Open carry makes a statement that we are not afraid to stand up to the "politically correct" ideology that has created a nanny state, where the government is there to help us if we just do as they say, and a pox on anyone that disagrees. Open carry can lead us out of this stupor and deliver us once again to the days when a man could stand tall and be proud of his community, his state, and his country.

When you open carry you are saying to the world, I'm my own man, I'm able and willing to defend myself, my family, and if need be my community, my state, and my country. It also states that I'm willing to stand up and speak truth to authority. It's shameful that we as law abiding citizens must stand up to authority, the very authority that we have empowered, when questioned about our lawful right to openly carry a firearm. But stand up we must. The open carry of a firearm speaks volumes and it's says much more than just open carry.

Who needs a gun in the park? Chapter 1;

From kdvr.com: http://tinyurl.com/2uh3rw5 - By Alexis Gentry - June 14, 2010

ESTES PARK (CO) - Authorities say a woman was assaulted while jogging in Rocky Mountain National Park Saturday.

The victim, a 20-year-old woman, told police she was running a trail in the area and stopped to take a break when she was attacked by a white male between 5'4" and 5'9". The suspect was wearing a black windbreaker.

The woman fought off the attacker and was later taken to the Estes Park Medical Center, where she was treated for minor injuries and released.

The attack occurred near the Glacier Basin Campground. Rangers performed a containment and increased patrols in the area.

Who needs a gun in the park? Chapter 2;

MAN SHOOTS GRIZZLY with .45 - Backpacker shoots, kills grizzly in Alaska park - AP Mon May 31, 6:48 am ET

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – A backpacker shot and killed a grizzly bear with his handgun in Alaska's Denali National Park, officials said.

A man and woman reported that they were hiking Friday evening when the bear emerged from trailside brush and charged the woman, park spokeswoman Kris Fister said in a statement.

The man fired nine rounds from his .45 caliber, semiautomatic pistol at the animal, which then stopped and walked into the brush.

The two reported the shooting to rangers, who restricted access to the Igloo Canyon area for fear that the bear was wounded and dangerous.

On Saturday, rangers found the dead bear about 100 feet from the shooting site. Park officials are determining the justification for the shooting. It's legal to carry firearms in that area of the park but illegal to discharge them.

Rangers said it was the first known instance of a grizzly bear being shot by a visitor in the wilderness portion of Denali, formerly called Mount McKinley National Park.