

Here is the list of contestants for the "Tell Me a Story" contest.

The topic for the stories was:
Funniest thing that happened on my search for Forrest's chest.

The rules for entries were the following:
Up to 500 words. Less is fine.
Words only. No pictures or sounds or links.

You will have to return to the voting page on the blog to vote.

1

by Donna McChesney

THE PEEPING TOM

Our cabin backed up to the Madison River in Montana. The yard light cast a soft yellow glow on everything and the river shushed me to sleep. I woke thirsty, so made my way to the kitchen. Coming back with a glass of water, I glanced out the big picture window, as I do each time I pass it. There, standing six feet tall, was a man looking in!

I threw the water in the air, did a Mississippi two step to my cousin, Jim's bedroom, and jumped in bed, screaming, "There's a man at the window trying to get in!"

Jim, still half asleep, looked up at the tall bedroom window. " No! Not that one, the den window!" I screamed, pulling the covers off him.

Moving slow, he rolled out of bed and reached for his jeans. He was moving too slow so I pushed him as he bent over and we both ended up on the floor. After a dirty look, he stood and walked to the end of the hall and peeked around the corner, he pulled back like a snake bit him.

His wild eyes told me the burglar was still there!

"Stay here." He ordered. No problem. He came back with his rifle and peeked again.

No sight of our boogie man. He lowered his rifle and stepped into the den. I followed close behind. Everything appeared normal, now.

Jim went to the back door to make sure it was locked. As he reached for the knob, a man's shadow appeared through the thin curtains of the door window and the door knob rattled! Jim backed up fast, knocking me on the floor, and he fell on top of me. We were all arms and legs as we both crawled back to the hallway.

"Well," Jim said, " the doors are locked, he can't get in. You try to sleep, and I'll sit here incase he does."

That didn't happen, though. I turned my lamp on and stayed petrified on my bed the rest of the night.

When dawn came, Jim, the great protector, was stretched out on the floor, sound asleep. I nudged him with my toe and he jumped straight up, leaving the rifle on the floor, thank God. "Some guard, you are!" I shrieked, mad that he got rest while I cowered in bed all night, with the covers over my head, needing to potty.

We dressed and went to the Café in the campground. Jim asked the owner/chef, Mike, if they had problems with burglars then we both proceeded to tell of last night's adventure, at the same time.

Mike listened, totally enraptured till Jim and I got to the door rattle part.

Mikes face started turning red, then he started quivering, then his body did a spasmodic jerk and out burst the loudest roar of a laugh I ever heard! Tears rolled down his eyes and as he brushed them away, he apologized for the outburst.

"Sorry, folks, didn't mean to sound uncaring. That was our resident bear. He likes looking for food people leave out for him!" Mike explained, still dabbing his eyes.

"A bear!" Jim exclaimed, as he turned to look at me, accusingly.

"Hey," I said defending myself, "I didn't know!".

Our breakfast was free that morning. We ate our pancakes in silence as we heard Mike recant our story over and over again as hungry campers came in to eat.

Needless to say, we stayed an additional four more days. We were having too much fun, but never saw the bear again.

We did find a Grapette bottle in an old half buried trash pile. The adventure, and bottle will be treasured forever!

2

by Stephanie

Our search took us to a storm drain outside The Gusher in West Yellowstone during a snowstorm. We waited all day in order to sneak over there at night and tip up the storm drain to see if the chest could possibly be inside. There's a snowmobile expo going on so the town is full, so we set our alarms to get up in the middle of the night. We realized the night before, that these grates were just too heavy. So we ran into Bozeman and bought some chain and were planning on using my dad's hydraulic wheelchair lift to pull it up.

We go over to The Gusher trying to be as quiet as possible. All the sudden, this lady comes up to us at 4am crying with no coat on and asking to get in our truck that someone's after her. So we get her in and I'm trying to calm her down. My husband and I just look at each other, like..this can't be happening...she said she was telling this guy how she was an FBI agent and there were terrorists in the town and she was here to stop them. So she said that the guy was upset about it and threw her in the back of his truck. She escaped and hid in a snow bank till she saw us.

I can't lie....I had flashbacks to myself having one too many a time or two and take a few minutes to laugh at myself while I soberly tried to comfort her. We asked her where she was staying and she said the Three Bears. So we went over there and there was a cop there. We figured he had something to do with her and so I told her I was going to go talk to him. He said that the guy she was with(NOT her fiancée lol)....was just taking her home and even gave the cop her room key. I got her out and to the cop and we left. We figured our storm drain was a lost cause that night, but figured maybe if we get arrested for the storm drain during this trip, he will remember our good deed.

When we got home, we unpacked the truck and found \$160 strewn around the backseat and a book of stamps. The moral of this story: When you're searching for treasure, look for drunk FBI agents in snowbanks and at least you'll end up with gas money.

3

by Joe Watkins (blazeseekerjoe)

Excerpt from "In the Wood" ©2013

Somewhere in the mountains north of Santa Fe.

We had walked right by the carving on the Aspen tree several times without noticing it. I was in mid-sentence when I suddenly stopped speaking and started pointing in a rather animated manner. My father's eyes widened following the direction of my extended arm settling squarely on the intricately carved blaze: a cryptic symbol resembling a sideways delta or mountain above a very clearly carved 09. I am pretty certain that 09 is the year Forrest "secreted" his treasure and the date is why I found this blaze so compelling. (AT THE TIME OF THIS WRITING I BELIEVED 09 WAS THE RIGHT YEAR. SINCE THEN NEW EVIDENCE SUGGESTS A PURPOSEFUL CONFUSION BY f TO KEEP FROM REVEALING THE EXACT YEAR HE HID THE TREASURE AND NOW I HAVE NO IDEA IF IT WAS 09 OR NOT.)

My father had come with me to search for treasure and for all I knew he thought I was losing my mind. But he had been the first person other than my wife to whom I had revealed my interpretation of the poem. And his immediate reaction was to tell me that I had to go look. Initially I suspected that he just didn't want me roaming around in the mountains by myself but over time his interest in the Fenn treasure became obviously genuine and I think he had come to enjoy the thrill of the chase as much as me. Besides, the whole treasure business clearly had a lot to do with Forrest and his father's relationship. It would be very appropriate to find the treasure with my own father.

This was my second search trip. On the first I was looking in what I ultimately concluded was the wrong creek. But on this trip I found what I still believe is possibly the creek referred to in the poem. It was early April; much of the creek was still frozen solid. We had been up and

down the trail that followed the creek into the mountains for three days. When we noticed the blaze we discovered some renewed enthusiasm and began frantically searching. To our dismay we found the ground to also still be frozen. Digging was very difficult. Although he “never said it was buried” he never said it wasn’t.

After exhausting ourselves physically in a madcap scramble to inspect every square inch of the area we resolved to go back to our hotel, rest up and return the next day with a metal detector. The frozen ground was too difficult to dig around in randomly. If we got a reading with the detector we could dig in specific spots, this seemed to be the most logical approach given the conditions.

So we returned to the blaze armed with a rented metal detector and a few shovels. We started scanning the area around the tree. I thought that if this actually was Fenn’s blaze that the treasure would be buried right next to the creek beside the tree. And as we scanned the ground with the instrument it beeped loudly right in the spot I thought the treasure would be in. It was picking up something made of metal. Could it be an old bronze chest full of gold?

Even when I first laid eyes on the blaze I really did not think this was the blaze. I suspected it might have been carved by another searcher, planted as a dummy to throw others off. Heck, though I had refrained from dirty tricks of this kind I had certainly entertained such thoughts. But most likely this was carved by a hiking club or family that visited in 09 and was probably completely unrelated to the Fenn treasure.

On the other hand here was a blaze. And here was the only blaze I had yet found. And it was precisely where it should be if my interpretation was correct. And it was on an Aspen tree; Forrest had sent some pictures to Dal of carvings he had done on Aspen trees. Also, Aspen trees are known to guard ancient treasures.

As we listened to the metal detector screaming at us that there was indeed buried metal right in this spot the excitement mounted. It was an edge-of-your-seat kind of feeling as we dug through frozen dirt, chipping away at it little by little. I started digging furiously until my shovel hit something metal. My dad and I looked at each other, both wide eyed and jaws dropped. I grabbed a smaller shovel and stabbed the dirt away from the metal that I could now see. It was dark metal. As I slowly removed the frozen dirt from around the object I suddenly recognized what I was looking at. I reached down and grabbed a hold of it and pulled up . . . a horseshoe.

Letting the disappointment wash over us we took a few moments to gather ourselves. We continued to search the area thoroughly. Then digging in another spot where the detector was going off I pulled out an old beer can, the brand . . . Lucky.

We had not found any treasure. All we had unearthed that day were a horseshoe and a Lucky brand beer can; the only thing that we had discovered is that the gods of luck have quite a sense of humor.

4

by CindyM

The continental breakfast was greatly welcomed in the motel in southern NM after traveling what seemed like endless hours through west Texas the previous day. Stopping only for gas, there was no time for a proper meal.

On that morning an elderly gentleman sat at the table nearby. Beside him on the floor was the largest spotlight I had ever seen and what appeared to be a machete. He was, in fact, better equipped for treasure hunting than myself.

The man explained that he had recently purchased part of a mining claim nearby and was in from Austin to do some prospecting. He then pulled out a necklace with various gemstones including turquoise and coral. He placed the necklace in the center of the table and asked, "What do you think? "

As I smiled at those familiar words, my travel partner and good friend Gwen snapped up the necklace and inspected it. With her discerning eye and outspoken manner she replied, "I hope you didn't spend too much on that, dude,, the clasp is broken!" And she promptly handed it back to him thus ending the encounter. (I have since developed a keen interest in minerology due in part to that necklace.)

A short time later, as we loaded up, the old gent joined us again at our car. As he caught a glimpse of the back cover of my copy of TTOTC, which I clutched tightly to my chest, his face broke into a huge smile and, touching the photo of the treasure chest, he asked teasingly, "Did you write this? " The words Fenn had written came to life in my mind and I grinned and answered, "No, but I like to think of it as my unauthorized autobiography."

Not knowing where we were going or why, the prospector's final words to us as we drove away were, "I believe you girls are headed in the right direction."

I took this final exchange as an omen that I was on the right track. Needless to say, I found no beautiful bronze chest on that trip nor on my many subsequent searches. But hope and optimism, unlike common sense, spring eternal.

5 by tomwhat

Forrest's father had given him a single shot .22 on their first day in West Yellowstone one year, and told him that he had to eat anything he shot, so be careful. Well Forrest was a pretty good shot, and soon had two fine squirrels. He gathered some firewood with Skippy and they had themselves a feast for lunch while their parents unloaded the car and prepared the cabin for summer.

They were sitting around the coals wondering what the summer would hold, when they overheard their mother complain that someone must have borrowed the cabin's cookware over the winter because they didn't have any pots or pans. Forrest's father grumbled that he was out of cash and it was Sunday so he couldn't cash his paycheck. He'd have to go into town in the morning. It smelled like cold beans for dinner.

Forrest looked at Skippy, and they were off like a shot. If they could save the day, it might get them out of a paddlin' that they knew they would be deserving by summer's end. They hopped on their bikes and rode into town. Being early in the season yet, everything was closing up early except West Yellowstone's small but thriving Chinatown. They wandered into a store and gawked at all the imported goods, brightly colored spices, things with labels they couldn't possibly understand. They eventually found what would pass for the kitchen department. The shop owner saw them eyeing some new pots and exclaimed "Yes! Yes! You like you buy!"

Forrest and Skippy looked at each other with instant disappoint. They forgot they were broke. "We don't have any money.." The shop owner's smile disappeared "No money you go now!" Dejected, they walked outside. Forrest's eye fell on the two squirrel pelts he had forgot he sat in his bike basket to cure.

He grabbed the pelts, ran inside, and after some heated negotiations, walked proudly out of the store holding two well used but perfectly serviceable Chinese pans.

Skippy looked at Forrest and said “you should write a book.” Forrest asked “But what would be the title?” Skippy grinned and said “Isn’t it obvious? ‘Two fur two wok’.”

6

by Laura

My first search was in West Yellowstone !!! We got to the spot that I had study over and over for a year!!! So you as a fellow treasure seeker knew no rock was going to be unturned !!! We searched the area looking for the blaze for some 3 hours !!! I was becoming extremely discourage, I kicked a huge boulder, to my surprise it was of heavy plastic and it was hollow it echoed when I kicked it!!!! OMG!! My heart skipped a beat , I found the treasure!!! When I pushed the dirt away here are about 8 tent stakes holding this huge boulder , my husband at this points wants nothing to do with tampering with anything on federal land. Mind you we are in the middle of a heavy bushed tree forest. No path for this girl, about a good 4 miles from the road. My husband is yelling @ me get away from that, you are going to get in serious trouble. No way was I letting this go, I had to walk back to the car , I couldn't pull any of the stakes out of the ground , tearing up our trunk I find a tire iron, racing back to the boulder full steam, mind u I'm 50 something with an extra 50 pounds on my butt. This was no easy chore for sure, I was pink in the face, sweating and shaking , I just knew I found it, the stakes where about 24 inches, I pulled and tugged, with my husband yelling in the back round, first steak pops out , I get on the ground it won't left far enough for me to see under, crap, I work on another, no easy task , second one pops out, I take the tire iron , forcing to see under , now I know why you need a flashlight I can't see anything , omg! Heart racing. Hands shaking , I knew I had it, who else would put a huge plastic boulder in Yellow Stone but Mr Fenn, the third pops out, back on the ground, I see it a square box inthe middle , fourth pops out , my friends the first light hits under the boulder it is a box silver in color with iron looking snakes coming out of it, it's an electric box running some of the cameras in the trees of Yellowstone , Yes , Uncle Sam is watching us.. I completely freak out I just tampered with federal equipment . Running back to the car, dirty, sweating, huffing and a puffing, my husband races off . We get about 20 miles down the road, and here comes sirens behind us. I am completely freaking out, crying, and , my husband is

furious with me. The trooper was very nice checked our ID's and asked, what where you doing of course I said "LOOKING FOR FORREST FENN'S TREASURE" he just chuckled, we figured that what you where doing, we all had a good laugh watching you struggle . We just figured we keep watching and laughing, needless to say I didn't find IT.

7

by Cynthia

Frank...

I met Frank last October at Forrest's book-signing at the Collected Works Bookstore in Santa Fe. He was a seemingly nice fellow, had traveled from Phoenix to attend the book-signing, and was fairly new to the search...as was I, compared to Dal. We chatted a bit and had our pictures taken with Forrest...just before departing, he wondered if I'd like to go on a search or two with him the following summer somewhere in New Mexico. I agreed...

Fast forward to mid-July...Frank arrived in Santa Fe where he'd reserved a place for his "base", and I had agreed to meet him there early each morning. The past several weeks had been fun, scheming and planning our search areas based on one or both of our solutions to the poem's clues via emails and occasional phone calls. We agreed on the "basics": "in there", WWWH, HOB, heavy-loads water high. Still, since I live here and had done multiple searches between last fall and now, I felt a sense of responsibility...

Day one started off promising even though we were going into a section of Wilderness I was not familiar with...but, hey, I had my "good map" and brand new GPS to guide us. Found Pedernal...easy. Had to use my "good map" to find the first waterfall...pretty easy. Canyon down...easy. HOB...easy. Next was Echo Falls..."no human trail in close proximity"... shouldn't be a problem...had GPS which I should have learned how to use PRIOR. We stumbled upon a US Forrest Service employee...this wasn't her area so she didn't know where it was either. Dejected, we went home.

Day two had to be better...I was taking Frank to the Valles Caldera, an area I was familiar with and felt confident regarding our solutions to the clues. Our first stop was the visitor's center, to buy our day-hiking permits so we could hike to Alamo Bog, a perfect WWWH, then down Alamo Canyon, etc. NOT! No such thing as a day-permit to Alamo Bog, or most of the Caldera; at best, limited permits for fishing or back-country hiking. Jeeze, now what...I talked Frank into hiking back Las Conchas Trail to the end of the canyon, and maybe swinging around backwards to the Bog. He was a good sport and agreed...

After a couple hours, we reached the end of Las Conchas Canyon. Not only was there no easy way out to Alamo Bog, but heavy dark clouds had rolled in...I told Frank we had to go back. Dejected once again, we began our return. The thunder was increasing ...I told Frank we had to hurry...no breaks, I'm thinking, just go fast. We made it to the car in an hour, before the storm...not bad for a 72-year old fellow who had a hip replacement 3 months prior...and, surprisingly, he wants to search WITH ME again next month. Today...Frank was my treasure!

8

by E. C. Waters?

ID

On Easter 2014 at Nine Mile Hole, I was looking around the bank of Madison, taking in the view. See tweet here for photo: <http://bit.ly/TZI75B>. I spotted a corner of something sticking vertically out of the mud. Thinking it might be trash, I pulled it out of the mud with the intention of throwing it away. Now in my hand, it looked like a bit like a hotel room key. I dipped it into the river to clean off the mud. It was a woman's driver's license from Washington state.

I was on my way home, and stopped at a very small post office somewhere in Idaho to mail it back to the address on the license. I included a post card about fly fishing with my email address hoping she would receive it and let me know it made it safely.

A few weeks later, the email came. She had recently moved from Washington (where her brother was living) to Boston. Her brother kindly forwarded her mail. She told me her guide had stopped her group at that spot during a December snowmobile excursion in Yellowstone. At the quiet peacefulness of that location, she had pulled her cell phone from her hip pocket to snap a few shots, and unknowingly lost her license to the snow in the same motion. She told me that in her mind she frequently returns to that spot.

Of course she was very thankful to receive it even though she already applied for and received a new one. She was mostly relieved it had not ended up in the wrong hands for nefarious use.

9

by Norwegian

Three terminated scrapbooks ago I had a strange encounter. A usually agreeable animal with a white circular mane we call Dal circled the dark side of Yellowstone and returned as Dalminator. A native Montana recreator, and knowledgable about hiker babes and crazies, I threw down a warning to women - be careful if alone so you aren't a victim of terminator.

Dalminator reared, bared his teeth and scared the crap right out of me (HOB)! Accused of being a treasure-hater and afraid of becoming the next casualty of bloginator, I quickly deployed my bare-spray of words, and defended my turf. Dalminator stimulated that I become a fact communicator. So here you go Dalminator... Crazy Montana fact: The Unibomber was arrested in his shack exactly 1/2 mile from my family's log home in the mountains. Ted, the people-hater had been there for years spying on our family and steeling necessary tools of his trade.

10

by Cheryl

I have not searched my area yet but my home research has been interesting.....As a Genealogist(search of family history), in order to find our ancestors sometimes we have to learn what was going on around them in their own time period and thinking Forrest's favorite spot might be connected to something from the past. My son and i had been working on Forrest's poem, i told him he needed to look at the history of the area he was searching. After a couple of weeks he called me one night and said..."Mom i'am not doing to well on solving the poem"....i ask why not? He told me he was having to much fun reading about the history of the area and was spending hours doing that instead of focusing on the poem! I smiled to myself, after all these years of trying to get him interested in reading and history.

Now what makes this funny, is, he is in his mid 40s, full time job, married, two teenage daughters and always said..."Instead of reading a book, i'll wait for the movie!" And all it took was a poem and "The Thrill Of The Chase" to get him going! Well done Mr. Fenn, well done!

I used to love to travel to Nepal. It was my way of “grounding myself”. With blonde hair and blue eyes I always had natives staring at me and those bold enough would run their hands through my hair. There is a lot to be said about travel. One can merely just get there, look around and leave, or totally immerse themselves in the experience of the trip. I say I have not traveled much in the USA, but only because I always had a need to get from A to B. TTOTC caught me. I was totally immersed in my search. I felt I was the female version of FF (Amelia Earhart) flying into the mountains and landing on a small grass strip. Jumping out of the plane and running past the cemetery to the river just as the old steam train was coming down the canyon. The wind was blowing its background music in rhythm to the waters bending over the rocks and to the trains clickety clack and whooo whooo’s that echoed off the canyon walls. I was surrounded by the wise old mountains (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Oxford and Columbia) telling me to take my time and see what I could find. I found a bridge with a 1908 sign with Thomas Ehrhart, Senator fading with age. I found an old Pontiac car lying on its side on the bank of the river now heavily covered in leaves. I found a headstone for school district #2. I saw a flying saucer cloud in the night sky and a snow angel wanting to cry and fill the valley with needed water. I had wild mule deer eating potato chips out of my hand (what the blazes is that!). It was hard to leave, but when I did, I decided to go to Brooklyn (Iowa that is) and mail a letter to FF with the flying Jenny collectors stamp (I hope he got it??). They even hand cancelled it with this really big ink stamp. I wonder if I wasn’t really born 7/24/1897 instead of 7/2/1956. I can’t wait for my next escape. Thank You FF for getting me out of my tiny cocoon and allowing the transformation to flutter by.

And this really matters to no one but me.

12

by BW

Tell you a story. When I was growing up, my mother if she suspicioned I was doing something wrong and she questioned me, would preface her question with, "Don't tell me a story." To her she was saying, don't lie to me. Some things are too absurd to be true. You decide.

Having four children is hard enough when you are in your own home and surroundings, but a camping trip with 4 kids, a little black dog, one disgruntled husband, and me ,treasure seeker extraordinary, is a challenge!!

Having seen Mr. Fenn on the Today show, I decided this chase would be good for the family to do together.....you know all that bonding your supposed to do on camping trips.

Well we studied, shared information, disagreed, yelled, pouted, gave in and finally came to a consensus of opinion as to where we thought the treasure was hidden.

This would be a onetime shot for us , so we had better enjoy this trip and make enough memories to last a lifetime , and oh yea, find the treasure chest.

Everything packed in the car except the kitchen sink, we set our compass westward and of off we went driving into the unknown. That is how we Southern folks feel anytime we cross the Mason Dixon line or any other line.

After a two day travel of hard driving, and the children peeing in milk cartons to not waste time, we all arrive at our destination, tired but excited.

Our family is not the most well versed in techniques of “setting up camp” but we gave it our best shot and were finally ready for our first night’s sleep under the big sky.

When on a trip, I’m not sure which has to pee more dogs, or children. Anyway, it was my little black schnauzers turn. She is very good about staying close, especially in strange places but I always walk with her and let her meander about. Finding the right spot is difficult sometimes. I have always wondered what scent she is sniffing to find.

Thinking she should be back by this time, I started walking in the direction I thought she had gone, down a little slope. As I look up, I see her bounding up the hill. Something is different this time; she is acting a little strange. But as usual she leaps into my arms as she always does. As I hold her, I notice there is liquid running from her fur in front onto my shirt. She must have crossed a little creek down below while searching. As we walk back to the tent, I stroke her fur trying to calm her. She seems a little agitated. Schnauzers are high strung, as we all know.

The kids were in the tent, playing games and disgruntled was reading. All storms are preceded by calm. As I approach, everybody comes bailing out of the tent, grabbing their noses. There are not enough adjectives to describe the scene that ensued. Gagging and flaying themselves about as though they had apoplexy; I’m wondering what the blank is going on? They are all staring at me and pointing at Bailey.

Have you guessed what happened? Yes, Bailey got a full spray from an angry skunk on the front of her face and chest. One can only laugh at this, because people with Parkinson’s lose their sense of smell. I’m not sure who the joke is on me, my family or Bailey, but we laugh!

13

by mike obrien

Worth the Cold

We were camping at Madison Junction. It will be a great 7 days as long as I don't mention the treasure. My wife hates it when I talk about the treasure. I wouldn't say I was a fanatic, just love the idea of it.

Our friends also came camping with us none of which have heard of the treasure before. Their kids 10-11 and 12 would joke with me, coming back from the restroom they would ask if I've found the treasure yet. (haha)

There was something I wanted to see one late afternoon so I had my wife drop me off at the lot near the fairy falls trailhead. My friend also wanted to go on this adventure and so did his kids. I think my buddy brought his kids because he was sick of them playing their video games, even little Chris spent most of his time texting, oblivious to the sights around him.

By the time we reached the falls I had the kids and my buddy deep into the treasure, after spending an hour or so looking around, we decided to head back. We took the fountain flat trail toward Ojo Caliente. This trail was easy but long. We started to worry because we thought we were close to the end of this trail but a girl we stopped on her bicycle told us we had two more miles to go. We had been gone for about 3 hours now and our wives would for sure be upset. We finally reached Ojo Caliente and then realized we were still 4 miles from Madison Junction. It was 8:30 pm now, we were in good spirits, safe but still had a long walk. What we didn't know was that our wives had already called 911 and reported us missing to the rangers.

We lucked out and caught a ride from the girl on the bike. We had her drop us off at the amphitheater at Madison Junction so we could triumphantly walk back to camp. The kids had a lot of stories to tell and very excited to be back, we were gone for 5 hours and it was now officially dark. When we saw our wives they cried, then the yelling began, Mike and your stupid treasure, I was getting it from both sides, how could you be so reckless, how could you put these kids in danger, why were you gone so long, then I heard it again, you and your stupid treasure!

Unfortunately we had to talk to the authorities, Just don't mention any treasure I said. When things settled down we sat by the campfire, I was again told by our wives what we did was stupid, when all of the sudden, the youngest Chris shouted out, that it was the best time he has ever had anywhere, anytime and that he wanted to search for treasure again tomorrow- I could see the smile on his parents faces that for this little boy it was worth the cold. It was not a video game or a cell phone but the adventure, the wonder, the what if, it was the thrill of the chase for this little boy. It is the reason why we should all stop and dangle our feet in the Firehole or turn over a rock once in a while and for a minute I was out of trouble...but only for a minute.

14

by Michelle

Some may feel a “westerner” has an advantage over a “flatlander”, when it comes to “The Chase”.

But what we lack in experience, we more than make up for it, in the “imagination” department.

Having never been Fly Fishing, we had “gleaned” waders might be helpful. We didn’t have any.

But, that wasn’t going to keep us from “trying”.

Across, the river, was what we were sure, “secreted” the TC.

So, when nightfall came and all the “real” Fly Fisherman left the area, we approached our pull off, full of high expectations. Now, we hadn’t actually seen anyone “fishing” in this particular spot. It was just the “shortest” distance, across the river.

Three of us, in this tiny, economy, rental car.

But, “prepared”, we had come.

We had heavy duty, large, black garbage bags & duct tape, our version of “waders”.

One of us, over 6’, in the front seat, had to actually try to “unfold” himself, to get the garbage bags on his legs. Never mind, his knees, were already, indenting the dashboard. We stayed in the car, lest another Fly Fisherman drive by. Then, he had to lift his legs, with the

garbage bags, high enough, in this tiny car, to wrap the duct tape around the tops of the bags, at his thighs.

And, of course, there were still two other people, one with a steering wheel, in front of them, also trying to don their garbage bags & having to share the duct tape. At one point, we realized we may run out of duct tape, before we all actually had our garbage bags, “secured”.

Being a “flatlander”, I had brought my trusty “beach” shoes, that can be kept on, while in the water.

Because we were getting “low” on duct tape, I deferred to the others & tied my garbage bags to my belt loops. Being shorter, does have its advantages.

Once we had all gotten “dressed”, me with my beach shoes “over” my garbage bags, the other two with the garbage bags over their shoes, we “sneak” to the river.

Near the shore, of course, the river was shallower. But, there were tons of “rocks”, slippery rocks.

We all kind of held each other up, as we slowly started “feeling” our way, out to where the water was “deeper”, on up to about 2’ deep.

I “thought” my beach shoes, would grip the rocks, instead, they were slipping on the rocks.

It was a real challenge to stay, upright.

But, we pushed on, in the dark, in the frigid, rushing, mighty, river.

And then, down I went. My garbage bags, filled like balloons, with the frigid, rushing water.

Now, I struggled with the weight of the water, that had filled my garbage bags, just to stand upright.

Luckily, it wasn't far to drive back to our cabin, where we had to sneak back in, lest any of our neighbors see us, so I could try to get warmed up.

Tomorrow's a new day!

15

by MichaelD

I had slept eight hours in the last three days, but it was perfect. I had solved it! At work the next morning, I appealed to my boss by reminding him that the Chase was much like his football obsession. This was my 2007 Fiesta Bowl. 7 seconds left on the clock. The score is 41-42 in favor of Oklahoma. Boise State lines up to go for the 2 point conversion to win the game, after a miracle touchdown. In a trick play known as the statue of liberty, the quarterback fakes the pass and hands the ball off behind his back to the running back...who trots into the endzone for the win of the decade. This was my Fiesta Bowl. I NEEDED the rest of the week off to go get the treasure chest!! I was positive I knew where it was. The rest of the crew chastised me, until my boss jumped to my defense! "It's no different than you going elk hunting, or you going fishing, It's his hobby.... Good luck." So thirty minutes later I had my Ford loaded to the gills with gear and beer.

By 8 pm that night, I was at my destination. The sun was just about to disappear behind the warm hue of the sandstone cliffs. I held myself against my will inside the car that night. I wanted to go search right then, but knew the daylight was all but gone.

Before dawn the next morning I was munching on granola bars while hoofing it to the waterfall I needed to rappel down in order to retrieve the chest. I had my 200 foot rope, a harness, and a one hour rappelling lesson. My heart raced as I approached the precipice. Due to the rounded nature of the sandstone cliff, I was unable to view my destination from the top. So I tied a triple square knot on the nearest Juniper that could hold my weight, and began to lower myself down the rounded edge of the water- carved sandstone.

At about a fifty degree angle, with the rope and harness the only things keeping me from plummeting 140 feet to my death, a thought occurred

to me. Would a 79 or 80 year old man carrying 22 pounds do this... twice? If he did...how did he get back up?... How am I going to get back up? So after a careful survey of the ground below, and the backside of what I now know is Horse Collar Arch, I pulled myself back to the top of the falls, and sat down to ponder the power of the Thrill of the Chase. I had convinced myself I was right to the point I was about to earn a "cat ass trophy" for stupidity. My Grandpa, who was in construction, used to say, "I cut the darn thing twice, and it's STILL too short!"

I think I finally get what he meant by that. From now on, I'll measure twice, and cut once.

16
by Riley

“Where did you put the batteries?” She was digging through the gear in the back of the van.

“What batteries?”

“The batteries for the flashlight!” I heard her open another bag.”Mr. Fenn said we need a sandwich and a flashlight to find it!”

I heard a clatter. “Honey? Those are my fishing poles. Stay out of there? Please? Is there a special sandwich we need to find?” I was hoping this question would distract her.

“GRILLED PIMENTO AND CHEESE! I have told you that!”

I knew at that point what I had done – I had married a crazy person.

“I don’t think they’ll have that at the Flying J. Do you know how to make one, Sweetie?”

“OF COURSE I KNOW HOW TO MAKE ONE! It told me what the Brown Home is!” her voice started to raise again.

“Love? How did a sandwich tell you about someone’s house?”

“It’s HOME NOT HOUSE! They were only served at a ONE restaurant. From there I looked on the map and the person that built the cabin there was Mr. James MEEK.” She hopped back into the front seat with a frustrated huff.

“Don’t you have to put it in something? How are you going to put a sandwich under a cabin?” I could not WAIT for this answer...

“I’m not. I’m going to use my thumb.” Her matter of fact answer left me stunned.

“You’re going to thumb the cabin? Did the sandwich tell you that too?”

“No! Then we’re going to look for the hole on Thumb road, and then we’re going to use – THE BLAZE – to find the treasure. That’s why I need batteries.”

“And what happens if we don’t find it?”

“We will find it. I’ve read TTOTC 14 times and TFTW 11. And if we don’t? This isn’t about the treasure. This is about the adventure we are going to have.”

I was not going to ask anything else for fear of losing the rest of her sanity.... we drive the last hour here in silence.

.....
.....

We searched all day today and since we are all gathered here I have seen a miraculous change occur. She’s back to normal. She’s once again speaking coherently and I can only attribute that to all of you. Thank you.

Tomorrow? I hope she will still be sane because I really would like to go fishing.

17

by Tom H

COFFEE WITH FORREST

I sat with my brother, it was quarter to ten
A coffee shop bookstore, our meeting with Fenn

In came a man, yes this might be him
The hat seemed right and from the side did the grin

Got up from the table, the time had come
But as I got closer I had question some

Hello to the man, "my name is Tom"
He smiled at me, what had I done?

And then I remembered the scant and tarry
As the man said hello, my name is Larry

It wasn't the man we had come to meet
But my day was made by such a greet

He didn't care and he didn't know
But was rather happy at the kind hello

Perhaps the treasure isn't really gold
But more important the greetings told

And Forrest kept his word and mine
At ten o'clock he was right on time

This time I knew that I was right
No doubt it was Forrest, such and obvious sight

Excited I was but remained very calm
As Forrest said "hi, you must be Tom"

I'll always remember the moments you see
As it wasn't just Forrest, my brother and me

For the rest of my life this moment will carry
Equally now, I'll remember Larry

by Starlight Reflections

If my husband had an Indian name I'm convinced it would be Charging Bull. He's a mountain of a man, about 6' 7" with his boots on and when he's focused on something it's full throttle all the way and boy watch out because he's coming through. You have to watch out for yourself, swinging branches, downed trees, elk/buffalo poop and all that stuff ya know. He's sharp as a tack and I'd closely liken him to a male counterpart of digginGypsy but on steroids.

Once on the trails to sneak in a breather; I'd tease him by saying in my deepest voice, "You sure be a burly man there me matey!" He'd play along putting on his best pirate face and broke out in a piratey kind o dance and song that would make Dal proud for sure. ;) Then it's abruptly silent and back to full throttle.

For me though it puts on a whole new perspective to the Buck Owens' song "I've gotta Tiger by the Tale" because I'm holding on flying behind as fast as my little legs will go. I'm usually trailing behind by at least 50 to 100 feet or so; kinda like the difference between a single engine Cessna to a Jumbo Jet. I give it all I've got, but it will never measure up. Guess it's a good thing I've got a bit of a full throttle attitude too =) or I'd still be up on those mountain tops all alone, cold, dirty, soaked and hungry. But I digress...

Full speed ahead because we're racing against the sun going down, several miles in we get to a lovely little spot and begin to cross a narrow rocky river about knee deep or so. He's leading the way crossing over and to his credit he does slow down just a tad to look for a more suitable spot for me to step since I'm half as tall and lighter than he is, when all of a sudden that mountain slips on a slick rock and down he splashes onto all fours into that beautiful cold rushing river.

He quickly looks up at me with the coldest look you can imagine and I lost it. That brave charging bull valiantly spurts out....Are You Laughing at Me???

Why yes, yes I am my quick burly man, I am.

Some people call it karma, that time I called it funny.

Needless to say life's never dull; it never slows down long enough for it to be. But after a long day on the trails he does take pity and slows his pace a bit for me to catch up and he'll even stop for a break to take notice of the tiniest of creatures to admire on our way back. On one such occasion, hoping to extend my brief respite, I looked down on the trail that had recently begun to thaw out and spotted a round mat of something an inch away from my foot. It was about five inches in diameter.

He looked at me and I took the end of my walking stick gently tipping it up to take a peek underneath and said, Ohh Honey look, it's a little nest for one of those cute tiny ground squirrels. He starred at me and said in a deep dead pan voice, "That's not a nest". I said yeah you're right there's no trace of a little animal...he said, "not quite."

I said well, what do you mean? what is it then? He said, "you don't want to know, breaks over let's keep moving" as he walks away. Well my curiosity got the best of me and I begged him to tell me what it was. Finally he gives in and tells me, "it's a hairball". Hairball I said. "Yes, it's a hairball" he says back to me while totally unaffected by it all.

H A I R B A L L ??! as I'm clutching my bear spray looking far in every direction through the tall trees as fast as I can while picking up the pace behind him. "Calm down! It's no big deal; see that's why I didn't want to tell you." Boy, that trailhead never looked sweeter to me I tell you, it

was almost as gratifying as that long hot shower I took to reward myself with when I got back.

We had our final solve in hand, stopped for lattes and headed to our search area. It had taken us a little over a year to close in on it and along the way had seen some spectacular country. Our search area was not too far off the road and not far from the visitor's center. We figured just like ff to hide TC practically in plain sight. So we are looking for TC just off the road in a small drainage area filled with giant tumbleweed and not really paying attention to anyone around us. Hey when you are obsessed nothing else really matters, right?! I was on one side of the footbridge and Hubby was on the other tossing tumbleweed as he went. All of a sudden I see a guy crossing the footbridge and I duck under some tumbleweed so he doesn't see me. My Hubby was not so lucky and the guy asked him "So you got the short end of the stick, huh?" and Hubby says something like "You have no idea!" I think the guy thought he was a park worker clearing the drainage.

So we look for a little bit longer and it was getting hot so I go up to the car to get a drink of water. The guy, who was wearing an orange shirt, was standing next to his jeep in the parking lot. I know he hadn't seen me earlier so I got some water and I waited to go back to look. But he wasn't leaving so I wandered off onto the trail so as not to look too obvious. While I walked the trail I could see tumbleweed flying into the air. What an interesting phenomenon that was! I came back to the parking lot and orange shirt was still there. He finally got into his jeep and started it and drove about half way around the parking lot and re-parked his jeep. He seemed very suspicious! Another searcher waiting for us to leave so that he could look? He finally left but did he watch from a distance and return after we left? Who knows but the TC has still not been found according to ff. I still BELIEVE that the TC will be found in Colorado, my state of choice.

20

by specialklr

I tried everything, logic, metaphysics, numerology and illogic. I couldn't get my answers to the clues. Until one night I had a hard time going to sleep because of visions of solutions going through my mind. Armed with the best of all approaches, I could confidently start my search at the only possible WWWH. Wending my way down the canyon and past the home of Brown I put in the most picturesque creek I have ever seen. Nothing but heavy loads and pools of water cascading down. Then all of a sudden there it was the most perfect and obvious blaze. Panting for air and heart pounding I looked down and there it was, in all its glory and splendor, the bronze chest.

It was heavy, but I scooped it up in my pack and I quickly split the scene. As I hastened back to my truck my heart was causing pain, I couldn't breathe. I couldn't call out for help. I fell on the trail and breathed my last breath.

The next thing I knew or saw was that beautiful gate with a man wearing a white robe and had a handsome white beard. He said his name was Peter and he was welcoming me into heaven. I was still clutching the bronze chest. Peter told me I couldn't bring that in with me. After explaining how important it was to me, all the hours spent researching and searching. Plus all the miles driven and dollars spent. He agreed to go ask if I could get an exception on my important treasure chest. When he came back, he said because it was so important to me they would let me take it in.

It was a beautiful and nice place. Everyone there started to gather around and welcome me. They were most curious about my chest, so I showed it to them. As they each peered in, a perplexed look came over

their faces. I asked them, "Why?" Finally one of them said, "Pavement?"
That was when I woke up.

21

by Rick

What did I ever do to end up with you people? Did I try taking over a planet or steal the king's daughter? Whatever it was, it must have been really bad because they sent me to you people.

It all began with a silly carving of a horse and 2 horseshoes in are local woods. Well sure enough come across a book with a horse and 2 horseshoes. That makes 4 horse shoes, enough to shoe a horse anyways. That's how fairy tales begin anyways:)

After reading the book felt like Forrest might have hidden it at his parent's grave. Well it's an old outlaw trick. Really was itching to dig there Should ask before you dig, seems the cordial thing to do. That's how I meant Forrest wasn't to eager about anyone digging there.

Dal seemed perplexed over that move, you're going the wrong direction he said to that effect. You would be to if you knew what was better for you, I thought.

Then the Today Show came out and knew we would see weird things. Maybe nothing like that church being blown up as they did in France over another hunt.

Sure enough some weird diggings and then that woman from Texas became lost. Looking at the satellite photo of that area, there was a nice convenient parking lot a few hundred yards from the waterfalls. No that's too easy I thought. It's up in Yellowstone.

After going to Alice's Wonderland and driving through South Dakota which is so remote

That little fun endeavor gave me a disconnection disorder for 3 days. Felt no connections back at home. Imagine your house and the people you know have no connections to you. Almost had to check into the hospital it was that bad. Finally it just all started to come back. There really is no place like home, thanks Dorothy for that one:)

Knew this hunt was going to be hard and long and usually races like this go to turtles. So now I sit here and plotting my next move.....
Without mystical callings fairy tales outlaw tricks weird ideas and strange places to go to.

22

by jdiggins

When I first began the chase, I thought Dal was stupid. It was trip two that humbled that opinion. Now, many more searches down the line, I think back; funniest thing, huh! That's a hard one!

As many of you will concur, the thrill comes in many different forms, and just like an inventor, we find ourselves, by accident, discovering more and more!

And I'm sure all who have searched have joined in the chorus of cursing Forrest, at least while you're hot, sweaty, dirty and wet...and tired...

Then, afterward, on the way home, silence ensues, you get lost in thought...oops! darn bunny...bad omen...

You're thinking of every step you took; thinking about the fun, thinking about the next time...

The twilight is fading to darkness, and the dirt road is twisty....oh, a straight part...yay, let's get a little road behind us...hmmm...what's that large black thing in the road?

Mind you, as a passenger, it's already a bit unnerving...it's coming fast...I look at my husband like.."are you seeing this?" Nothing said though...Now I have my hands on the dash trying to see the fast approaching black blob right in front of me. I look again to my husband...I look back to the blob...then he swerves into it! Kaboom! Cow poop explosion! It rained wet nasty cow poop muck all over our windshield, hood, windows....it literally covered our truck! Some farmer had just mucked out his big rig trailer, leaving a treasure for us! We both

started cracking up, and literally, could not stop laughing for at least the length of the rest of the dirt road!

We giggled on and off the rest of the way home, and at a rest stop (we didn't care to wash it) I told my husband when I got out that something smelled like fire...but weird. He layed on the hot asphalt, looked around under the truck, then came out with a smirk..."It's burning cow poop on the tailpipe!"

Needless to say...The truck still has a faint odor every time you pass by it....:)

We were fortunate to find an available campsite so close to our search area and quickly set up camp so we could get to our spot and search. The campground was trashy but had potential with a man-made lake and a couple dozen sites. We searched until dinner time getting all sweaty and tired and a few cactus punctures.

At the campsite, we got a fire going and poured some tasty beverages. Shortly, this feller comes over introduces himself as Jimmy and suggests that we come meet his wife and hang out around their fire. Jimmy seemed nice enough and they had a new 5th wheel rig that they were camping in. After a bit, we went over agreeing with each other that we wouldn't stay long. Jimmy introduced his wife and her sister who were both wearing sunglasses – yes, it was night time and we were sitting around a campfire. He offered a couple Budweisers and we started with a question about the Sheriff to whom he was talking as we pulled in. Jimmy said they were looking for someone, that's all he knew. Then he told a confusing story implying he was from Georgia and we assumed they were out of town campers, though he kept saying his home was just down the road from the campground. He asked what we were doing up there and we carefully avoided anything that sounded like treasure hunting. Thankfully the conversation turned less personal and we shared some usual campfire stories. We talked about the lake and he went into this long tale of how he and his brother used to catch Bullfrogs by snagging them with a large treble hook and fishing pole. They would cast the hooks and Bullfrogs would jump in after them. Then they would set the hook and reel in the frogs. He said they “caught hundreds that way, but the thing about Bullfrogs is you can't tell when they're dead. The only way to tell when they're dead is you have to bang their heads on the bumper of your car until their tongues hang out! That's the only way.” Well, that about did it for us and we found a way to make a quick exit.

It must have been about 2am when the hollering started in Jimmy's campsite and went until he drove off in his truck. Unrelated hollering erupted in another site nearby and went on and on for hours. I laid there unable to sleep thinking what a great idea to get up early and break camp before Jimmy and his strange crew awoke. When we finally got up, Jimmy, his ladies and his truck were gone. But before we could get out of Dodge, Jimmy comes barreling back into the campground. We quickly loaded the rest of our goods and went over to say goodbye. Jimmy was drinking a beer and acting as though everything was just fine.

Moral of the story: There's always more to the story.

24

by Sharron

BUFFALO HUNT

My family thought I was crazy when I began babbling about a treasure chest, hidden by an eccentric gentleman, who was an icon in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Well, you would have thought I was talking about Martians landing on the moon. They all laughed and made fun of the whole idea for several months, until they finally saw that it just might be true. Once they bought into the idea...off we went to the wilds of Yellowstone.

Of course I knew exactly where the chest was hidden. I based this on my hours poring over Forrest's books and blogs and the self-important idea that I would be able to solve the poem with my brilliant deductive powers.

We gathered up our gear including bear spray.

"What" my husband said, "Do we need bear spray for? "

"For Bears, silly. Just in case we get charged by a 600 pound brown bear."

"Great. Just what I always wanted... to be in the wild with 600 pound bears."

We picked our son and daughter-in-law up in Bozeman and began our wild adventure. The day was perfect, and as the exquisite Montana scenery passed by, we sang "Good Day" at the top of our lungs.

We reached our destination, the Lamar Ranger Station (House of Ranger Brown) in the Lamar Valley, only to be confronted by two gigantic herds of buffalo. I'm thinking...bear spray just might not do the trick here. Okay, (Not for the meek) we bravely started across the valley. As we got almost all the way across, a huge bull buffalo began to stare at us, snort and paw the ground. I'm scared and shaking and all of a sudden my husband looks at me and says, "What the heck are you wearing?" I look down and I am wearing a bright red shirt! I rip it off leaving a white t-shirt on, and hide the matador red shirt behind me. Then we all ease past the angry buffalo towards the creek ahead.

I'm still so scared, I decide to retreat to the truck while the others forge on to look for the treasure across the cold creek. As I head back, I am thinking wow, that was close and now I'm safe. Really? Just as I get near the road, here comes the biggest buffalo I have ever seen wandering down the road between me and the truck. I side step across the rest of the valley and he lumbers not ten feet behind me on his direct path to the herd.

Finally, I collapse in the truck and wait out the thunderstorm that whips across the valley, drenching my family. They have crossed the creek and seen a fabulous water fall with its mist creating a blaze in the sky, all to no avail. No one found the treasure that day or the next, but the treasure we found laughing about the "red flag" shirt and the buffalo was priceless.

25

by Ellen

Once Upon a Time...there was an old woman (that's me) who lived in a shoe (not really) and when she read a special book ("The Thrill of the Chase") with it's magical Poem, she quickly said to her husband "let's go".

Off they went on their white horse (white van to be accurate) and started to drive to that far off land where the treasure would be found. It really was a long distance as they lived many time zones away (East Coast), and when they hadn't even gotten more than 300 miles west of Toledo, their wonderful air conditioning started to sputter and smell.

Okay, back to the real world! "No air conditioning" during an unusual May heat spell is not supposed to be in my fairytale! Hope the gold doesn't melt on our way home like the Wicked Witch of the West did, I thought!

On Mother's Day 2013 we approached the Tom Miner Bridge over the Yellowstone River, but since I knew the dirt road we were heading towards was once an old toll road, I half expected that fearsome troll (Three Billy Goats Gruff) to appear. Perhaps he was busy, so we crossed and proceeded down a narrow dirt road with ruts so deep I thought we were now on "Mr. Toad's Wild Ride" at the Magic Kingdom.

We arrived, parking near the "outhouse", noting there were a few other cars and one tent placed near where we needed to climb the path up and alongside our creek. I had figured it was going to be "a walk in the park", where we only had to walk 500 feet at most until we saw our Blaze.

Off we went, looking intently for that Blaze, but after we had hiked well past that 500 foot mark, my husband kept saying "let's see what's around the next bend". After a few hours, many miles and more importantly, an altitude change of an estimated 1,500 feet later, we realized that our Blaze must be in "Neverland".

Definitely not "city slickers", but we sure left our common sense checked near the outhouse. We were down to our last partial bottle of water, my lungs rebelled with each breath and, while I was happily taking photos of the animal carcasses I came across, we had ignored the "Attention" sign about bears emerging from their dens.

Finally arriving back to the parking area, my husband spoke with the man who was living in that tent. "Bob" happily lifted his shirt and showed my husband the scars he had on his chest from his encounter with a grizzly. Stroking his grizzly beard, he added that his mauling was his fault, as he came up the hill and startled Mama grizzly and her cubs.

When my husband asked where it had happened, Bob looked up, pointed to the crest of the creek trail we had just explored, smiled, and said "WHY, JUST RIGHT OVER THERE!"

On our trip we had a few funny things that happened. Usually on our trips, I collect rocks and the rental car is always filthy when we return it and I always wonder what the people cleaning it must think. It always seems that we are traipsing in the woods and are getting dirty and muddy. This time was no different and one evening when we arrived back at the hotel, I made several trips back and forth from the car to the room getting stuff out. I noticed that there was a dirt track that lead directly to our room from the outside. I immediately took off my boots and thought how terrible it was that we made this mess on their carpet and felt bad about it. The next day when we got back to the hotel, the trail of dirt was gone and I was glad, especially that there wasn't a note saying "stop making a mess" or "keep the rocks outside." Very nice people in W.Y.

27

by Tik

I give you calamity of the tent:

I remember when I was young we lived on a farm. My sibs and I made our own fun. Now talk about imagination and adventure! A ditch in the cow pasture became a slide once we slide down it enough. A bow was made out of a green tree branch and twine tied to make the drawstring.

Arrows were tree branches rubbed on a stone until it had a pointed end. One of us figured out the pail of tractor grease made great war paint but our bottoms figured out that the grease was not war paint or camouflage! We were all blonde ages 3-6. Getting the grease off us was no simple task as I remember. Adventurous independent Indians we were, we tracked all sorts of meek creatures and imaginary folks.

We played hide and seek in the tall corn or wheat. The hay and straw in the barn was a universe for imagination beyond compare. We were outside all day playing, except for chores of course. So I guess when I first came across the TOTC, it took me back to a time when adventure and imagination roamed free. On the first search, a little of that time was with me. After a lot of due diligence researching, reading, checking the weather, cleaning and getting the car ready for the trip, and deciding I was not going to pack a lot of clothes because I needed my camping/adventure gear I told everyone I was leaving on a road trip-not far but too far to walk- I headed off to the great Rockies somewhere north of Santa Fe. When I landed at my starting point I did not think about the treasure much, being more in awe of the majestic scenery. I have been to the Rockies before, always a different place and they always amaze with the beauty and grandeur of the nature held within them. So first things first-I make a sandwich and drink a soda. Then time to get the tent up. I have put up many tents but this one took the cake. It was new and usually I check them to make sure all parts are there...this time guess what, NO tent stakes. I spent at least a good 3 hours trying sticks, some long screws I found in the car t!

runk, and rocks but to no avail. Other campers were watching me obviously intrigued and laughing. The nearest town was too far away at this time of night so guess what? Yep...just like a lot of other searchers I spent the night in the backseat of my car!! But when the sun over the mountain woke me the next morning and I finally got to check my location for the treasure, the opportunity to see nature's handiwork has no words. There is more to the adventure but my tiredness has turned to weakness so the rest of the story will be another saga.

I went Mesa Verde National Parks, last year. I pack everything for this trip along with water camel backpack. We finally, get to our destination to take one of the trails. I decide, not to of take my water camel backpack. I ask my wife to take the ice chest backpack, because it was full of bottle water. We started hiking down Spruce Canyon Trail and made it all way down. I saw sign that was blocking the path, not to go further. I said to my wife. look this is the place were the meeks don't go. instead of going back up, we decide to ignore the sign and go on. Then my wife ask me, why I didn't take a bottle water. I said, I was not thirsty and I will get some later. We went further down the path. I finally, ask my wife for some water. and instead of getting me a new bottle from the ice chest. she gives me a quarter of water that was left. wondering why, but didn't question it. We went far down the canyon and I got thirst again. I ask my wife, can I have a bottle of water. she said "no, I took them all out." "do you think I was going to carrier that heavy load for you." she was right, she did take them out. We walk back up that canyon, but we still to far down that canyon. We were at least 2hrs to make it back to the top. I see my wife going farer & farer away from me. my energy was gone. my libs were dry and was puking out nothing. finally, I made back to the bridge, I decide to take the left path, thinking it was short. I got to the point, I only made it half way up. I stop, threw my backpack down and wait for my wife to come back down with water. I decide to eat my banana to see if that will help me, but made it worst. finally, I hear a couple coming up the path. I said to myself. my wife is coming back and no need to intrude them. they said to me "what a beauty view". I said "yes it is, I will never forget about this moment." then they went up there happy way. I was getting desperate, and wondering where my wife is. then I remember I had a walkie talkie. I called her and ask if she ran into the c!

ouple, yet. she said yes and though everything was ok, because she ask if they ran into me. The couple said yes, he was seating down and

mediating. I said yes, I'm mediating for some water, hurry!!! finally, she brought me a small cup of Gatorade. I was desperate, even for a small cup. I toughing it out walking back up. my wife said "I just safe your life, your lucky that I came on this trip."

The day we left on the search I saw 7 eagles flying in a circle above my house. They were gliding on the fresh morning breeze with the sun reflecting off their wings like they owned the sky. It seemed as if they had picked that very place just so they could watch me making sure that I would get off to the treasure hunt. I took it as an omen seeing as how my great grand father always used to tell me that they were our ancestors that had once been here before and now had been set free to watch over the earth and the sky. The journey to the area where I would search came off without a hitch and we arrived at the trail just as the sun was peaking its head above the horizon. The morning was fresh and there was a cool wind blowing in my face. I could feel the morning dew in the air and could smell the pines and the cedars as the sun started to warm the air. There were wild daisies with blue and yellow flowers in the meadows and I could hear the water bubbling in the creek nearby. As I checked my gear to make sure that I had not forgotten anything Cathy came around the truck with a flashlight in her hand and a bottle of water. You be safe in there she exclaimed as she gave me a kiss! I will see you back here in 3 days. Remember if you don't come out by then I'm supposed to call in the rescue. Ok I should be back by then. See you here in three days. As she drove away I wondered to myself what the heck was I doing. The words in the poem kept whispering to me as I have gone alone in there. If nothing else this should be one heck of an adventure. As I started down the trail I was thinking about how I looked and wondered how I blended in. I was dressed in full camouflage. The only things that wasn't were my boots and my gun and they were both brown. I didn't want anyone to see me and I would stay away from anybody that would get close. If I saw anyone I would make sure there was a rock or tree between us and I would change direction. I took my compass out of my pocket checked direction and headed down the trail. It took me down the ridge a little ways and dropped over the ridge. The timber started getting thick and the trail was getting faint and basically disappeared. There were

downed trees I had to work around and openings that I stayed away from because of visibility. Movement when crossing these areas is the first thing noticeable to the eye. As I traveled I kept an eye out for edible foods. It was the wrong time of year for berries but there were a few mushrooms growing along the path. I picked a few and nibbled on them as I worked my way through the mountains. As I got deeper into the forest I started seeing Deer then I started seeing Elk. The streams became more frequent that I had to cross the terrain became more rugged and the cliffs started to appear around me. I started seeing shadows that were moving in front of me. I saw a big bear in the trail ahead of me. He looked all shaggy with blonde hair. It disappeared! I couldn't believe the size of it. It was huge. I wondered if I was going to end up bear food. Further along I saw another shadow my heart skipped a beat. I was getting scared I didn't like the idea of being bear food. I continued on all at once there was an Indian standing in the trail he had long black hair that ran all the way down his back he had 1 feather in his head band that circled his head with a long brown chiseled face. He spoke to me in a language I didn't understand then he motioned me to follow him. We followed a small path along a cliff. Then we came to a small clearing. He had a campfire there with some food cooking. He took some meat off the fire that was cooking on a stick and offered it to me. We both ate in silence. I looked around and there were tall rock bluffs all around with rocks sticking out. They looked rainbow colored to me. There was a rock formation in the clearing away from the cliff it looked like a globe was on top that was glowing in the firelight. I could hear water trickling somewhere nearby. He was telling me some kind of story from long ago when I fell Asleep. When I woke in the morning everything was gone. Maybe I ate the wrong kind of mushroom.

30

by William

Trusty Bear Spray

Our story began in Florida.

We wake up at 4:00am half asleep but with a eagerness for the The Thrill. We packed the night before to make sure we didn't miss out on anything we might need. With a stop of coffee and the local Dunkin' Donuts for some Joe we finally head off for the airport.

We check our bags and make our way to the terminal through the aggressive Security before I realized I forgot to bring my rifle that I so wanted. I didn't want to return home to retrieve it and way to early to have someone bring it to us. So off on our adventure begin.

We landed in Bozeman Montana for the first time and what such beauty, the grass was a beautiful green that chase the hills all the way to the peaks. This is a far cry different from the flat lands of swamps and gators. Buffalo roam peacefully and big ram horn cross streams with a magnificent stride through the creeks. We final get to our search area with a pit stop at the local store and the store clerk hinted sense we forgot our rifle that bear spray was the best alternative , so we purchased the spray with a lot of doubt in my mind but my wife that has never encountered a charging bear was having the best time of her life making fun of me for being so paranoid in the wood. As we walked the trail she would rattle the bush and yell " what was that " I would jump and with a bewildered look I would turn around and she would be laughing up a storm. I believe a marriage if a fight for status quo and evidently she was winning.

As we headed up the trail I hear more bushes rattle and figured it was her and I wasn't going to let her get the best of me again but by that time I heard a growl and realized that it wasn't my wife so when I looked up 100 yards there sat a nice size Brown female bear and clearly no thought ran through my mind to see if there was a treasure chest under her. I turned to look at my wife and her emotion did a 180 degrees turn and she was going to make a run for it. Needless to say she didn't run and we slowly walked back to the car.

That day I aged a year but what seemed so simple at the time I now hold a memory that will last my lifetime. My wife and I look back and laugh at the moment and realized that is what this chase is all about. Treasure is what you make of it and memories you take with you.

A New Leaf:

I'd been working the Forrest Fenn treasure hunt for 3 years. Admittedly there were times in which I became a curmudgeon, like when my kids wanted to stop for the bathroom, but I kept driving another 182 miles. Or the time my wife had a caffeine headache and I wouldn't pull over for coffee until we reached the search destination.

This time was going to be different! I had the perfect spot, after all how smart can this Forrest guy be anyway? So I said "Get in the van for a fun new search adventure." They just looked in disbelief. "Did you just say, fun new adventure?"

"Yes," I said in a questioning tone.

"Every time we head out to the newest and best spot since the last newest and best spot, all you do is drive straight there, no stopping for bathroom breaks, coffee, food etc.."

I quickly interrupted because I knew the list was only going to continue with previously broken promises.

"This time is going to be different, I've turned a new leaf." I said. They all stared intently at me and said, "No rushing this time?"

"OK, I promise." I said.

Their mood softened, we loaded into the van and we were off.

We traveled the highway only 10 miles when my kids saw an elderly gentleman with a flat tire. My youngest son said, "Dad, Do we have time to stop?"

"Why of course we can stop kids, I've turned a new leaf!"

The kids all cheered and my wife smiled.

I hopped out and changed the flat for the man. He was very appreciative and said, thank you. He informed me he had an expedited time table and there was no time for small talk. He quickly shuffled to his drivers seat. I called out as he walked away, "Any time I can be of assistance I'd help you again!"

When I returned to the van, my kids were proud of me. I told them we should stop at the next rest area and get mom a coffee.

This turning a new leaf was really something to chew on, yes definitely food for thought.

Well I must admit being considerate to others certainly slowed my ETA, but made the journey more pleasant.

When we finally arrived at the remote location, my kids noticed the same car we had helped with the flat tire earlier.

Just then we saw the elderly gentleman shuffling out of the woods carrying a heavy backpack. We approached in disbelief. The man asked if I would carry his 42lb backpack to his vehicle and place it in his trunk. In total astonishment I looked straight up to the heavens with my mouth wide open, a leaf slowly floated downward from the canopy above and landed right in my mouth. My wife laughed and said, "At least you got your face time with forrest!" That made me smile, and the stem stuck out between my lips.

32

by Littlehunter

For the past few months the thrill of the chaser has been the story of both my parents and I.

I've only been on one adventure myself, unfortunately, but let me tell you, it was one of the funniest and one of the most fun adventures I have been on.

Why is this?

Well, let me tell you something about my parents, they're very eccentric when they find something they enjoy, everything becomes a challenge and a quest and suddenly I'm wondering if maybe we are all beginning to lose it.

My father was set on one specific location as to where he thought the treasure might be, a couple hours into our outing I come back from hiking around searching to find him underneath a tree. His hair is pretty long, mind you, and his beard for that matter, so when I come around looking for him and see him peaking out from the underside of a tree I can't help but burst into laughter. Twigs, dirt, and possibly some pebbles found their new home in his hair.

"Uh, dad, I don't think it's in there. You would've found it by now."

He just looked up from his little cave, exhausted, but determined to keep searching.

On our return trek my mother was seeing for sale signs on the trees, needless to say there weren't any. We were in a hurry to find our water

and Gatorade that we had stashed after this occurrence, wary of what she would see next.

Later on in the evening, I glance back to find both of my parents crawling on their hands and knees looking disheveled, we were all pretty spent, but I didn't expect to see this.

"Are you okay?"

They both look up, and my mom speaks, "We should take a break."

I laugh a little more, though it's hard when I'm still catching my breath.

The best part of the trip seems to be when the vehicle is in sight. My mother saw it first, because she just had to be in front otherwise, as my father says, she begins to fall over, break a leg, or start screaming about everyone going too fast; and when I look up from my feet, trying to force them to continue moving forward, I see her drop to her knees and bow to the ground.

"Hallelujah!" It was partially an exaggeration, but it explains the relief of accomplishing reaching the vehicle.

My father and I started chuckling pretty hard as we dragged ourselves to the jeep, sharing my mothers relief to finally be back, our treasure was making it out alive!

Jul 27th, a cold morning on the creek. The ford (below the home of Brown) was about twenty feet across and the depth was difficult to discern. I guessed it to be about three to four feet deep. I began weighing our options. In the bad category - if we got stuck it would be the end our quest. A foreboding truck sat abandoned 50 feet from the crossing, evidence of a failed attempt? There was one more nagging reason not to cross..... I repressed it at the time, and for now, I'll withhold it.

On the good side, the side that can only be evaluated by someone enjoying TTOTC, - above the waterfall ahead I know of only one point a person can stand below 10,200 feet and see the blaze. I know this very point puts Forrest in the middle again and embodies three of Forrest's diversions, fly fishing, bronze work and history. Lastly, I know the poem led me here. Well..... next thing I knew we hit the water Jeep first.

There was only a brief moment of panic as water rushed over the hood – yep, three to four feet deep -but before I could exhale we were on the other side. With steam pouring from under the hood and a check engine light, we drove another three hundred yards to the home of Brown. From here our meekless quest began.

Without boring you with descriptions of wondrous scenery, and keeping the story short - four miles, three glaciers, a half mile of loose scree, and eleven hours later we reemerged from the majestic wood. Tired and weary we approached the ford and what I had repressed earlier was now weighing heavily on me. For the last few hours I had been chewing on it - literally.... Melting Snow! Now the creek was four to five feet deep and moving with much greater force and attitude.

A quick weighing of our options determined we would spend the night and ford the creek in the morning. With this idea in mind we began nesting in the jeep. After a half hour of padding and re-padding, stuffing and re-stuffing my oldest son determined his nest would never do, and with an hour and a half of sunlight left, he departed for camp. We had seen no sign of bears, or any animals for that matter, so not much weighed against this idea. Well... unbeknownst to us, Fish and Game had their own ideas weighing about 600 pounds. Fortunately, my son happened upon the scene just in time. Halfway down the road Rangers were releasing two grizzlies. Thank Thor he was not ten minutes later, he - my son not Thor - may have been the first meal those bears had in days.

In spite of a poor night sleep - %\$#@!^& seatbelt buckle - we had a great trip. The next morning the Jeep had no problem crossing the ford, and the scenery was spectacular. Thanks Forrest!

A Husband, A Treasure, A River, and A Truck

My husband and I awoke early on a Saturday and snuck out of the house before the kiddos awoke. We had told them we would be going, but didn't want to wake them. It was time for treasure hunting. I usually go alone, but this time I *knew* where the treasure was for sure and needed my burro ... I mean husband ... to carry it back for me.

We drove to the Pecos Wilderness and watched as the sun rose over the mountains. What a glorious morning ... cool, no rain, quiet. We arrived at my secret spot and began our trek towards the Pecos. The river was running swiftly and sparkled in the sunlight. We walked along quietly looking for my "blaze." I soon became lost in the beauty of the Pecos and its land.

I told John that Forrest wouldn't have walked this far. We must have passed the "blaze." We continued on. At times, the path became hidden, but we forged on. Other times, we sat beneath a tree, rested, and enjoyed the life-giving water. I told John we would continue to where the Pecos converged with another stream and then go on to the Tererro General Store. John was beginning to think I had no idea where I was.

After hiking about 1 ½ hours, we ran into two fisherman at a gorgeous spot with huge boulders. We asked how much further it was to the store. They guided us back to the path along the stream. I told John that I was starting to get tired and that I didn't know if I could make it back to the car. He said, "Well, you have to." I said, "There are other ways." He just looked at me. We continued on through another canyon and found our way to the General Store. I told John I would find us a ride back to our car. He said, "I have never asked for a ride and I'm not going to start

now! I said, "Fine, I'll see you back at the car." He followed me to the store.

I smiled a big ole smile and asked with a nice Kentucky twang, "Is there anyone in here, who might be able to give me a ride back to my car? My body is too dang tired to get me back there." I had several offers and accepted one from a nice man. Well, John wasn't about to allow me to drive in a truck with someone he didn't know and hopped in as well. It turned out the man was the owner of the Tererro General Store and he told us many tales as we drove through the wilderness back to our car. I learned more about the Pecos Wilderness on that short truck ride, than what I've read in books!

I also promised John that I would never tell anyone we got a ride from someone. :)

35

by 23kachinas

SOUTHWEST REMOTE VIEWING CLUB

I'd hemmed and hawed about telling my remote viewing club friends about my Fenning adventures for months. You see, we get together one Saturday a month and practice seeing things remotely and then discuss them along with other experiments with matter and mind.

The first meeting they ever invited me to I bent a spoon in half within 5 seconds of the word go. I was so proud of myself but then I watched in amazement as people struggled to use their minds to bend a simple spoon. After a while a majority of people bent their spoons and I felt I was in good company as strange as it seemed.

Another exercise we have done is pulling up a picture on people's cell phones and guessing about the scenery. It's astounding how accurate these observations are, which is why I never wanted to tell them about the treasure hunt.

Well, one day I decided to get over my reservations and tell them about the hunt. Everyone was interested and several suggested having this as our next meeting topic. I was asked to bring a picture of the chest with no words attached.

So I showed up with a picture, and everyone crowded around as it was placed on the wood table. The lighting was low and for a moment it felt like we were all in middle school playing the Ouija board. Some giggles but mostly game faces on.

The facilitator Lucy told everyone to close their eyes and begin to allow messages through as to the location of the chest. It was only silent for

less than a minute when the oldest woman in the group laughed and said, “you’re never alone!” It broke my concentration and I tried to ponder the significance. You could feel the room energy building up just like popcorn in the microwave right before you get all of the pops but before the popcorn burns.

“Warm water,” said the swim coach. “Heavy loads,” said the construction worker. “Home of Browns,” said the real state agent. “I can be brave,” said the actor.

Everyone but myself had contributed. I thought maybe I didn’t have what it takes. I sheepishly asked, “Did anyone see the blaze?” No one confirmed my thought.

Lucy led us into the discussion part of our remote viewing exercise. Did anyone resonate with others observations? The faces were all frozen as if holding back information. The room fell silent as no one spoke a word.

“Did you hear about the highway construction this upcoming weekend?” asked the delivery driver. A collective sigh of relief occurred as everyone agreed it was too advanced of a session for us. We just didn’t have enough training to actually find the treasure with remote viewing.

What’s our topic next time? A mixed chime of excuses arose from the air. It was clear no one could make it next month. Most of them cited travel plans, to where I do not know.

No Place for the Meek

A retired librarian, my life is, by most standards, rather dull and unexciting. So when my son called and insisted that I accompany him on a treasure hunt to New Mexico, I was shocked. I hadn't been on a plane in over forty years, am completely out of shape, and honestly, more than a little apprehensive. But how many sons want their sixty-five year old mother to accompany them anywhere?

We headed our rental car to the John Dunn Bridge. I was nonplussed at what the maps listed as roads! In Indiana we would have referred to some as mud ruts. My son had explained about how important this bridge had been at one time. I knew we were headed to the Black Rock Springs; what I didn't know was that it was a fairly good distance down some pretty rough terrain. As soon as we got past the easy part of the trail, I balked! "Look, I can't do this! I have severely arthritic knees, bad feet, am 70 pounds overweight, and am completely out of shape!" "You go on and I will just sit and take in this beautiful canyon." My son was adamant that I could do it: he would help me and we would take it slow. After

balking only a few more times at particularly difficult areas for me, we neared the springs. At this point Son informed me that the last time he was here, there was an old naked man in the spring. Oh, Great! Just what I needed!

Luckily, we were alone. Since I can't jump because of my knees, it took me a good ten minutes to figure out how to get into the springs. (We had come prepared and were wearing bathing suits!) We enjoyed the warmth of the springs and the beauty of the Rio Grande for some time; kayakers were drifting down

the river and the sun was glorious. Son left to explore a cave above the spring and thankfully did not ask me to accompany him. As I was reveling in this awesome natural experience, I heard voices and looked up to see a young couple approaching. I don't know who was more surprised! It took me approximately 10 seconds to get out and get a towel around me! I gathered our things and made a quick retreat. I don't know if they stayed or not. I do know I had never moved that quickly before!

We only had three days and searched several locations around Taos. I was happily shocked to see what appeared to be an Alpine village in Red River, thrilled to see the glorious topography of New Mexico, scared to drive some of the mountain roads, and absolutely thankful to have shared this wonderful experience with a loving son. Did we find the treasure? Yes, in my mind, I think we did. Thanks, Forrest!

Okay ... let's get one thing straight. I'm a city girl. I love to dress up, wear short skirts, makeup, and jewelry. I don't camp, I don't like bugs, and I don't like to get dirty. So, when I heard about this treasure hunt I was interested in the shiny things, but not so much the going out in the wilderness thing. But, the only way to get the gleaming things was to go out in the scary wilderness. Hmmm Well, those luminous things won out and I knew I would be going way outside my comfort zone.

Now, I'm not completely opposed to the outdoors. I do walk my dogs every day - around the same loop in my neighborhood. So, deciding to go to Manby Hot Springs, by myself, was complete terror for me! Have you driven down that crazy dirt road ? The one with all the potholes? Roads aren't supposed to be like that! And, there were no signs saying which way to go. Luckily, I ran into (well, not literally) a man walking his dog and he pointed me in the right direction. Finally, upon arriving, I found the start of the trail.

I looked over the side into the gorge and said, "I am NOT going down there. No, I am not going down there ... not for any darn treasure ... with gold ... and pretty necklaces ... and antique pieces ... okay ... I'll go down." I start walking down in my cute jean skirt, blue top and yellow sunhat. How do people walk down these supposed "trails" that are filled with giant boulders, cactus, and dirt? I thought the trail would be paved and smooth.

It looked to be at least 5 miles to the bottom. I tried not to think about it and kept up my mantra ... "jewelry ... jewelry ..." Finally, I made it to the river. Hmmm ... I couldn't find the service people anywhere. I thought these hot springs were for soaking ... and where do they keep the towels and the showers? And, what are these silly rocks that are forming three circles? I looked all around ... nothing ... just a river,

canyon, and rocks. I sat down on a rock to think. As I was thinking, I saw an old man and his dog coming down the trail. I watched as he came closer, passed me and went to the biggest rock circle. All of a sudden, he completely stripped! OMG! I've never seen such a wrinkly, old, naked man before! He sat in the water and smiled at me and waved someone over. I looked behind me. No one else was there. OMG!

Well, for goodness sake. I am city girl. I promptly got up and started walking back up that trail in my cute jean shirt, blue top, and yellow hat thinking ... "Why couldn't it have been Simon Baker or George Clooney ... or"

It was a good day for the hunt. We had spent an interesting night at a local motel whose amenities bordered on the unusual to say the least. The day before my party of 14 had checked in to be greeted by an empty desk and a note that stated "gone to Rodeo call this number" So we did and before long a tough looking woman arrived to get us settled. The rates were a little different than what were advertised and my stepmother and hostess started to square off in what would surely become a full on brawl if the rodeo lady had her way. Sensing we might be spending the night in Raton if we didn't agree to the terms I assured the receptionist that terms and accomodations were just peachy keen and could we get our keys to the rooms. My father could not get the key to work on his room so the lady was called in. She tried to get the key to work but was unsuccessfull. She stated, "There's another way" and started to open the window adjacent to the door. My father who uses a cane said, "I hope you don't expect me to crawl through the window" and she replied, "No, I expect your grandson to." My son hopped through no problem and viola the door was opened. The lady smiled. Service with a smile, I like that. "Now", She said, "I'm going to be honest with you, one of the other two rooms doesn't have airconditioning but, " raising her hand to fend off the protests that were welling up in our throats, "they are adjoining rooms and you only have to open the door between the rooms and quick as you please you have two airconditioned rooms." The lady smiled again. That smile was starting to lose its appeal. Just as she stated one of the rooms did in fact have airconditioning, it was a portable unit whose hose was duct taped to the window. Sometime in late afternoon, the duct tape came off and the hose fell to the floor. As any conscientous lodger would do I went to the office to see if it could be fixed. Again our hostess with her ever charming personality had a solution. She slammed a roll of duct tape on the counter and asked if one of my boys could tape it or did she have to come down and do it herself. Needless to say one of my boys taped the hose to the window. And so passed our first night there.

Ah yes, it was a good day for the hunt. The day was bright and full of promise as our party minus my father set off on road 204 past the Chase ranch to the gate separating it from Philmont. We opened the gate to the watching eyes of many boyscouts and made our way past them to Elliott Barker. We drove slowly and the kids suddenly saw something shiny in the meadow grass. "A plane" They shouted and we stopped the vehicle with everyone spilling out and kids racing to the spot. I walked up to the twisted metal just in time to hear my nephew tell everyone that he was pretty sure it was a fuselage to a single engine cesna. Suppressing smiles, the adults said nothing until the kids had gone out of earshot and then I stated, I'm pretty sure its some rusted piece of metal to an old stock tank. but since imagination is more important than knowledge it didn't seem prudent to correct my nephew. I remembered how excited we all were when we thought it was a plane. At the edge of Elliott Barker we parked the car and passed through the gate into the Valle Vidal. Except it wasn't, just yet. We suddenly found ourselves on Ted Turner's land at the Rich cabins used by Philmont. Scouts gathered around us as I asked if this trail bordered the Valle. The scout ranger, obviously from back east pronounced it "Vaul" and asked if we had come up through "Bahker" He was pretty nice though and let us pass through and we trudged up middle ponil canyon amidst wildflowers abounding everywhere. At 36 degrees, 41 minutes a huge trunk of a burnt out tree stood but no treasure. It seemed we were nearing the mouth of middle Ponil canyon and I was just so sure that mountains I knew rimmed the Valle were going to jump out at us any second but that never happend. The walls of the canyon were too high. Rain drenched us twice and I fell on my butt and slid down in the mud. A party of scouts weathered out the downpoor with us under some trees all of us standing together without a word spoken listening to the rain and wood cracking sounds that echoed down the canyon. For the rest of walk I was especially attentive to my nephew, not wanting to curb his enthusiasm, and listened to all his ideas intently as any good auntie would. Well an exhausted and treasureless troop of wet searchers finally made it back to our motel that evening.

On the last day, I was preparing my shower and had turned the hot water on when all of a sudden it just went off. The cold water was still on but nothing coming out of the hot water faucet. Turning the water off and muttering that the manager probably had a switch in the office that she flipped when she felt it was time for guests to check out. The next second we could hear the voice of the manager as she walked by the room telling guests she had turned the hot water off and probably wouldn't be back on til the afternoon. (Having water problems, she said but good news the toilets would now flush) What she didn't know was that I was used to taking cold showers back at home. Every time I ran out of propane, we would suffer until next payday or longer depending on what my other immediate bills were. So, I just took a cold shower. No problem. Then one of my sisters decided she would take a cold shower too. When her hair was all soaped up, the cold water suddenly turned off. She came out of the shower going " There's no water at all, how am I going to rinse my hair?" We called the office and told the manager about it. After expressing surprise that someone was showering because there was no hot water, she agreed to turn the water on for five minutes but that was it. She also agreed to letting us stay a little past check out time but looked very put out about it. I told my dad to remind me not to recommend this place to anyone. But, you know what, the bikers staying at the motel with us seemed to love the manager. She was a biker too. We could tell by the Harley she had parked next to the office and the black leather chaps she was wearing when she was strolling past the rooms telling everyone about the water problem. The whole situation was pretty ridiculous and we've been laughing about it since we left.

On the way to Taos, we stopped at the Cimmarron canyon at the bridge near the entrance to Tolby creek and my dad and nephew stood together looking up at the dam to Eagle Nest Lake. On their way back to the cars, my father passed me and I said, "Having a nice grandfather, grandson moment?". He told me, "Yes, I asked him how he liked the trip and the treasure hunt and he replied that it was ok but he felt that the research could have been a little more thorough."

“Whaaat?!!” “Why that little.....” Everyone busted out laughing as I glowered at fuselage boy standing a ways off and out of earshot who hadn’t done a lick of research himself. As the laughter started to sink into me I became infected and started laughing too. After all, kids say the darndest things and he was right, until the treasure is found the research can always be a little more thorough.

My sister recently went through this area again and saw our motel closed and boarded up with the section that we stayed in collapsed. Sad but not terribly surprising. I’m just glad it didn’t happened two years ago.

If a Bare Poops in the Woods, and Nobody hears it, did it Happen?-2

With late start and bag of fresh plums I drove toward my treasure-hunt, assuming the little ache that had started in my stomach would pass as I began hiking. Had I eaten too many?

Passing the ranger's hut, at the trailhead, sweatshirt around waist, camera around neck, and a full daypack, I had near canyon solitude. My stomach felt better, so I ventured one more juicy plum.

I tied my camera strap to my belt to keep it from bouncing around as I walked.

Then my stomach grew painful, and began to grumble again. Rather quickly, I had a sense that a Port-O-John 100 yards away, was still gonna be at least a long field goal from being close enough. Note to self: I don't care if they're small, six plums is TOO many!

As I urgently tried to release my belt, the knotted strap wouldn't let me out; I got desperate! So, like a coyote squeezing under bobwire, I slipped out of the camera straps, backpack, and sweatshirt, dropping my ...apparel to an appropriate altitude, at trail-side.

Immediately, I hear approaching human voices.; *#@\$%! So there I am, and although not even dusk yet, the full moon is out. I have clothing and hiking accoutrements tangled (like manacles) around my ankles, digestive, uh ...urgency at LEVEL NINE, and Life's Most Embarrassing Moment about to walk around that bend in the trail.

I frantically yanked my feet out of my shoes and left everything in a jumble beside the path. Ever tried to sprint with your knees together? It's tricky!

Scrambling thirty feet behind those trees with a moment spare before three women rounded the bend. While hunkered down behind young aspens, they paused at my gear, looking around, perplexed.

One of them picks up the pants (and.., skivvies) and shoots the others a look somewhere between amused and disturbed. They quickly collected everything, and one mentioned taking it to the ranger.

Now, I thought about saying something regarding personal property rights, but I was wearing nothing but a tee shirt and socks, hiding in a thicket;... and found myself struggling to find the most appropriate words to communicate with these gentle-womenfolk. And then there was the whole ...digestive ...situation...

In my pack was my emergency toilet paper, car keys, and cell phone; %*#@#! I tied several aspen branches together with one of my socks, to at least provide a bit of cover. I called it my "modesty shield." By the time I was ...um, tidied-up and outfitted, (and the mosquitoes had lightened my weight by about a quart,) dusk had arrived.

I descended the mountain, thirty feet off-trail, in sock-feet, wary of hikers, side-stepping sharp rocks and elk scat.

Finally back to the ranger's hut. The equipment was leaning up against the door of the unattended hut. I got myself reassembled behind a bush, only missing a single item! If I make it back there for another treasure hunt, I'll keep my eyes open for those missing skivvies.

by Need-to-Focus

My confidence was high my first trip and with breathless excitement I trekked across the frozen crust of snow in the early March dawn. My pack was heavy with 'gear'. Soon the sun was blazing and it quickly warmed the winter air. I began to break through the crust and discovered that snow depths were 2-3 feet on the north-facing slopes. I imagined I was on a K2 expedition. Post-holing to my knees, I gasped for the thin mountain air, stopping to rest every few feet.

Several hours later I arrived on top of a barren wind-swept mesa. It looked nothing like I imagined, based on my countless hours of peering at Google Earth imagery. Where I thought there was a hidden geothermal spring I found a frozen stock pond. Where there should have been deposits of petrified wood, amazing fossils, and a cave, I found frozen cow pies. That feeling of thrill and pride in my genius-solve began to turn into the realization of my own silly naïveté.

Even though I had gravity working for me on the return I worked up a fierce sweat. I tried walking on top of bushes, but that really didn't keep me from sinking deep. Then I did a face plant. The cold crust on my face and torso felt surprisingly wonderful and refreshing. I rolled onto my side and just lay there, my feet uphill, resting. Perhaps I was lying on the Chest, I thought ... the silence of the place enveloped me, and I began to feel sleepy and strangely happy. Then I realized that I must avoid hypothermia, keep moving and get back to my truck.

Driving out, and a thousand feet lower, a movement off to my right caught my eye. Running urgently toward me at full speed, was a large pronghorn. Then he stopped, turned sideways and began to paw at the ground. I felt that all of the forces of the Universe had combined to work through this beautiful animal and let me know that this was where the Chest was buried. I brought my truck to a sudden halt. Wasting no time I

got out, slid down the embankment on my can, and ran across the sagebrush. In a state of heightened glee and confidence I hurdled a beautiful brown conglomerate boulder, skipped over a dry arroyo, and topped the horizon where the sun hit me in the face. I looked quickly down and noticed that the antelope had gone in peace. I realized then that my treasure was not just my family, my health, this beautiful country, but also that I can laugh at myself. Then I remembered a speech Steve Jobs gave to a bunch of Harvard graduates “Stay hungry, stay foolish”, he advised. I guess I’m O.K. after all, I reasoned. As the sun dipped out of sight my thoughts drifted back to the poem... ‘but, what does it mean to “So hear me all and listen good”?’

41

by Peter

In July my wife Tracey and I went to visit my sister Karen and her husband Bill in Colorado, and to check my spot while out west. During the first few days the four of us went to Red Rocks, Garden Of The Gods, Paint Mines and Rocky Mountain National Park. What wonderful places to see, and this is the farthest west I have ever been. I'm 59 and never saw an aspen tree until this trip. They are beautiful trees, I love them. My wife has seen them before and sis says in the fall they turn a copper brown color.

Prior to entering R.M.N.P. we picked up some munchies and drinks. When we reached the upper regions of the park I noticed our un-opened bag of carmel Chex Mix had inflated like a mylar party balloon ready to burst. We waited till later to open it.

At one of our stops to take photos Tracey had her eye on a shot of an adjacent mountain but without all the foreground, so she began walking to get the foreground behind her. Apparently she missed the sign stating stay on the walkways to prevent damage to the fragile tundra. Karen and Bill stayed on the walkway and I was slightly delayed but soon arrived to see my wife breaking the rules, and that's not like her at all. Tracey is deaf and just kept walking without looking back so I went to get her before the Rangers saw her damaging the tundra. We headed back to the walkway and waiting for us there are two Rangers and I'm thinking we're in trouble. They were nice about it and simply reminded us to stay on the walkways. The rest of the trip was great. If Bill had not pointed it out to me, I never would have seen the cell towers disguised as trees. Nice touch Colorado.

Then THE day arrived. The day I would look for and hopefully come back with the chest. Tracey went too. We had to drive a while but finally arrived near the spot. After a 0.6 mile walk (littered with the burroughs/

tunnels of some critter which made walking difficult because of the sudden sinking footfalls) we arrived at the spot. I immediately searched the GPS co-ordinance spot... nothing. I continued searching the Blaze area clearing many tumbleweeds... nothing. I began looking underneath pieces of wood near the Blaze, some could be rolled, some I pried up to look under. My lever was a log about the size of an over-sized baseball bat and while prying up one log the lever tip broke off and the remaining portion hit me on the forehead between the eyes. Except for the mark and the bump I was ok and continued to search. After thoroughly searching the spot I came to the conclusion that someone got it before me and didn't tell. Oh, there is the slim chance that I was wrong and it wasn't here at all.

42

by inthechaseto

OK! OK! I'll get my story told- just so ya all
stop bugging me to give my solve away -

As I have gone alone in there — — - So I went all alone – sad

and with my tre a sures bold — — - So, as sure as heck, I took a tree
with me , right in front of everybody

I can keep my secret where I can't keep a secret fur nothin – so did'nt
even try

And hint of riches new and old So I called out Rich. noone came; then
called out – old Rich and new Rich = but nobody came.

Begin it where WWWH So I started on the computer

And take it in the can yon down Where is my can of beer – oh yeah –
down the hatch

Not far, but too far to walk Who wants to walk when you can ride?

Put in below the home of Brown That was easy – a fish

From there it's no place for the meek It's not meek drinkin all that beer

The end is ever drawing nigh Does that mean my hangover is goin away

There'll be no paddle up you r creek I won't be paddled for drinkin too much?

Just heavy loads andd water high Oh man – whats tat about

If you been wise and found the blaze — wise eyes – blazing saddles – oh yeah were ridin not walkin

Look quickly down, your quest to cease – What is my quest – I think I forgot – but what ever it is – it's gonna stop

But Tarry scant with marvel gaze Look hard – better get the hick, I mean heck outta here

Just take the chest and go in peace Thar's no peace – he must have been meanin a party

So why is it that I must go and leave my trove for all to seek – What? I didn't think I was goin anywhere and noones lookin fer me – yet

i've done itred and now im week Im alway tired and week or so late

so hear me all and listen good listening is not something I do well – hear you – you been yakin so much it's hard

your e fort will be worth the col.d Theres gona be a fort soooooon with no heat

If your brave and in the wood Who wants to go into a piece of wood – and who would need to be brave – to do something so stupid

I give your title to the gold Awh heck – and here we go – in the end the gold wins

43

by James

What a Mess!

We started the TH in Montana, Monday 8/4 in drizzling rain, 2:15 pm. FNG=ForecastNotGood. Our goal for camp was the upper trail where “the creek” crossed or abouts. Grizzly Country.

I told the guys (my 2 sons), for the last 6 months, that it was a 3 mile hike... (Well, in a straight line). They’re in their 20s and in way better shape than me). About 1-1/2 miles in at a steep switchback we stopped to rest, again. Topo maps lie by the way. Seriously.

Might as well tell you I couldn’t decide whether the guys were laughing or concerned about how red my face and neck was getting. I’m 50. The fact that I had Krueel on wasn’t helping. “Dad, you’re seriously RED. Just sit down and take that jacket off!” So I did. Plopped down right on the side of the path and in some “mess”. Didn’t know it at the time.

On the way up we had cell service... taking pics and texting my wife to keep her informed about us, each time telling her this might be the last contact for 3 days. Absolutely beautiful, each moment, whichever way we looked. My guys have NEVER been to this part of the country and especially not the wilderness. Even though they didn’t say much the look on their faces became a special moment for me, they were glad they had come along.

At the trail switch sign, through the flats and over a ridge... there was a herd of roaming cows. What? Anyway, forward we moved through another fence line. More cows. I said, “man it stinks !” “Naw Dad, that’s the mess on your butt and the backpack” my eldest said coldly and honestly. Oh great! I have a backpack full for 3 day rotation all “smeared up”. That’s not going away soon!

Finally, GPS spot for camp, rain has stopped enough for setup, building the fire pit and eating. Everywhere we wanted to set camp... patties. Map trails are called livestock/games trails. Rain and drizzle most of the night. Miserable, smelly.

Up at 6:30, built fire to dry, eat and bathe in the cold creek. Broke camp

about 8:30, headed out downstream following the soggy game trails south. Found the blaze. Multiple pics. Played around a bit after the revelation. Ate and here they came. Yet another herd wanting their spot (This isn't their spot, this in Forrest' special area). Should have known, game and cow excrement everywhere again. Now I'm a Texan and use to cow patties and other such stuff, but this here in Montana never dries out it seems...

Headed downstream, dodging when able, to my cold treasure spot. I was heading into the water. From the ridge line my sons were waving their arms saying, "Noooooo!" Then I heard with chaffing chuckle, "DAD, what are you doing? Are you crazy, treasure hunting or washing off the poo?"

Now it's your guess.

I Married Forrest Fenn

Forrest Fenn doesn't know this and has not formally even met me, but I think I married him by mistake. That is, I first married another cute, younger guy named Russ, and he was wonderful and all, but as soon as we moved to New Mexico last summer I told Russ casually that I heard that this guy named Forrest Fenn had written a book and hidden a treasure. Russ did not seem too impressed initially and even skipped the book talk at Collected Works with Forrest Fenn, Michael McGarrity, and Douglas Preston. Fine, that was when Russ was still Russ.

Shortly after that I think it nagged in my Russ's "guy-wired" brain that some guy named Forrest had hidden a treasure somewhere in the Western U.S.! Russ wandered one day off the plaza and bought himself a copy of TTOTC. Innocent enough, right? Lots of people buy that book. No big deal.

Meanwhile as Russ began reading the book, I had visions of exploring the Southwest and backpacking with Russ, casually meandering wherever we wanted to go. I thought, okay, we can day trip, camp out casually, and see some nature. One day I said to Russ as I had been studying local hiking trails: "I just found this great place we can hike this weekend!" (To which Russ typically said, oh that sounds great, honey!) Instead Russ said: "I have a better idea ... I know WHERE Forrest Fenn's treasure is!" What?! Yowza, we're going to be rich, let's go!! Those were innocent times.

Soon, however, this theme took on grand proportions. Russ was consumed by the book, the puzzle, the difficulty of the task, and as many people are hooked, he also began to live, breathe, eat, and sleep Forrest Fenn. The moment I realized that I was, in fact, possibly

becoming far more married to a guy named Forrest Fenn than to the man I formally recognized as Russ, was when Russ said, for the 10th time or so: "I know exactly where it is?! Let's go!" Hmmm, I thought. What does "exactly" mean anyway? And who IS this man who has come and hijacked the dreams, vision, and attention of my husband?! That darn Forrest. (Secretly FF became a new swear word in my head as I began to curse and dread each new twist and turn that Russ took in knowing just exactly, yes exactly (NOT), where the treasure is... NOT.)

Soon I was backpacking for my first time miles into wilderness areas carrying bear spray and pondering signs at the trailhead warning of grizzly bear sightings. One time we even camped out hours away from civilization with a stash of Pine Sol and mothballs surrounding our tent because Russ had researched what scientific experiments have demonstrated actually repels the big brown critters. And that, my friends, was the precise moment I knew that Russ, my first husband, had become Forrest Fenn, my second husband. That darned Forrest!

Charmay and (Michael McGarrity) and Me

At the Collected Works bookstore Michael McGarrity is giving a talk on his new book "Backlands." It's a small, intimate group of people gathered and he opens with "who has read my latest book?" Almost every hand goes up except mine and I think about raising my hand to join the crowd but resist. I am sure Michael notices that I am pretty much the lone holdout but how could that possibly matter? He'll never see me again ...

After Michael's talk, we cross the street to the San Francisco Bar and Grill for dinner. There are hardly any people in the restaurant but, strangely, we are seated in a booth that backs up to the only other party in the place. Halfway through their famous hamburger (add green chile and cheddar cheese but hold the onion, lettuce, tomato and pickle), I hear about eighteen inches from my ear "Oh, Charmay!"

I thought "it couldn't be!" but turned my head slightly and recognized Charmay from the TFTW pictures. I made really big eyes at my wife and nodded my head in that direction – I got a blank stare. So I leaned in and whispered "its Charmay." Another blank stare. So I tried it louder(but still at a whisper level) "ITS CHARMAY!" Blank stare again. Fine. Never mind. Whatever. Hasn't everyone memorized the all the Forrest Fenn books? And Robert Redford's Outlaw Trail?

Then Michael McGarrity enters the restaurant and seems to head straight for our table but swerves at the last second and sits with Charmay and the several other people in the both behind us.

Holy Cow (Bessie)! Right behind me are two of Forrest's friends who have seen the chest! There has to be a way to get some really good intel out of this situation. But soon Charmay leaves and Michael stands up... but instead of leaving, he pulls a chair from a nearby table and sits at the end of our booth! He has recognized us and asks what we thought of the Collected Works talk and soon the other people at the table are bantering back and forth on his previous books and how the new book fits into the series. I stay quiet and start to dream up Search questions to ask him, waiting for a break in the flow. Maybe I'll ask what wonderful objects he saw in the chest ...

Then Michael pauses and looks over at me but before I can say anything, he asks something like (and I forget the exact phrase) "so, you haven't read any of my books?" My mind goes blank in embarrassment and all my pre-thought out questions flitter away. I can't even think of the obvious response "because I spent the last year reading and rereading TTOTC." So I mumble the clever "I don't know" and Michael turns back to obviously better read members of the table and the banana is gone.

The “Spill” of the Chase

My problem is I’ve had funny things happen to me in each search.

As Forrest might ask, “Which do you think is funniest ?” :

- When my brother-in-law and I slept on the floor from 2am-5am of the Albuquerque Airport waiting for the rental car branch to open after a flight delay, drove to Santa Fe and “freshened up” in a Burger King bathroom just in time to meet Forrest Fenn...
- When I bedded down with a searcher from England because the hotels in Red River closed at 8pm as it was “off-season”...
- When I “prevaricated” to the gentleman who had rentals on the other side of Scull Bridge and talked him into giving me the gate combination to “review for future vacations”...
- When I ate Native NM cuisine and didn’t realize their definition of “hot” meant “slap-your-momma” kinda hot...
- When I took a hitchhiker to UNM from the airport “in hopes of good karma”...
- When I ran into a naked man at Blackrock Springs
- When I was chased off private property by hunters

Every searcher has stories...

My “spill” involved the brilliant idea to rent a brand new red Chevrolet Camaro in November 2013 while searching the Chama River area. Being from Indiana, you often have frozen ground in November, and the Camaro was calling my name... So, off I go in the REAR-WHEEL DRIVE Camaro down the Forest Roads surrounding the Chama River. The roads were treacherous, but the Camaro was handling well.

I reached an area, however, where a washout had occurred of the road in front of me and I wasn’t about to go get stuck, so I started to turn around when my wheels started spinning in wet sand... I couldn’t get out... I was 3 miles in the desert, alone. Luckily I was able to get “1 bar” of cell service, call Budget and find a tow truck to come out. Problem was, I couldn’t describe where I was. I was a “blue dot” on a map... I ended up texting the tow truck driver a photo of Google Maps and my

“blue dot” and started walking to the closest intersection. As my cell phone died, the tow truck driver said “Set a couple of bushes on fire so I can find you”... I was already a mile from my car and another 2 miles to the closest intersection with no lighter; My Boy Scout headmaster would have been ashamed...

As the sun sets early in the mountains, it got cold quick. I was well dressed, but quickly realized I could be something’s meal. A mountain deer was hopping along a short distance away going my direction. He kept me going, though I realized he was quicker than me, and I would have been a fattier meal than him. Juan, the tow truck driver, arrived shortly commenting I was the 3rd searcher that week to be towed... Only after a bottle of water and warm fireplace later, I laughed...

Where is my hammock?

No matter the situation you can always find the humor...

On one of my searches I was prepared for the possibility of an overnight stay and along with my other gear I was carrying along with me a blue water proof 300 LBS capacity nylon hammock and a matching sleeping bag. As night started to set in I decided to make use of the hammock and found two trees perfect feet apart to tie it up and sleep in for the night. I layed out the sleeping bag on top, tucked my boots and snowshoes underneath as if putting them under a bed, and layed my backpack down beside me. With my flashlight in hand I layed down for a nights rest. I quickly started questioning the 300 LBS capacity hammock as it started to cocoon me. I was wrapped up like a banana with my arms on my chest hugging the flashlight. At times during the night I heard rustling and thought that if it was a bear than he would have to peel me out or eat the hammock too. Drifting to sleep, I could not help but smile as I imagined Yogi Bear telling Boo-Boo to get the hot sauce for the hanging bear burrito. The next morning I made my way out, but the ropes were frozen and I couldn't get the hammock down. The curiosity of sticking my tongue out on the rope to see if it would actually stick crossed my mind. Than I remembered the movie The Christmas Story and didn't want to be that kid! So leaving well enough alone I packed up the rest of my gear and headed on my way.

I didn't give much thought to that hammock until a couple weeks later out searching again with a fellow searcher. Taking a different route than last time, we came to a clearing where you can see everything; running water from the creeks, mountains in the distance, and the trees on sides of mountains. As he's looking out he stops and asks, "Was your hammock blue? Cause I think I just found it." I looked up and there it was 8 feet up still tied to the trees like shoes hanging by the strings across a telephone wire, out of place and hard to get to. Why was the hammock 8 feet up? Because that's how much the snow had melted. Amazing what snowshoes allow you to do! It's become a joke now

whenever we see it. I've tried to sell it a couple times too! Telling the potential buyer pick-up only. If you're out searching in my area and find yourself in need of a place to scurry up from a bear, there just might be a place for you to hang out for awhile and hope Yogi forgot the hot sauce.

by The Wolf

Last year, I had taken my oldest son to search and we found this really interesting owl blaze and I figured out on the plane ride home where it actually was buried (sound familiar?). So I convinced my wife and youngest son to go on an adventure of a life time. The plan was very simple, we were there just to retrieve the treasure chest. After five days in Taos and no treasure, my family revolted and asked me never to say the words “Forrest Fenn” ever again and made me promise to permanently retire from searching.

After about 6 months, I felt that taking a little peek at a blog while she was at work couldn't harm anything; I just had to ensure that when she was home, she received the full attention she deserved. A simple plan right?

Well a little blog reading proved that nothing much had changed except Forrest Fenn released his new book, too far to walk, which received discussion on two topics: how far is too far to walk and the new treasure map that didn't include Canada. I felt insulted! How could Mr. Fenn just wipe an entire nation, my nation, out of the search?

One day I discovered an awesome creek that had a waterfall that flowed into the Rio Grande River near Pilar, New Mexico, named Agua Caliente. The Spanish translation was “hot water” or “warm waters.” I remember thinking to myself, “had I found the Holy Grail of the first clues?”

Soon something awesome happened, it all came together, I believed that I had constructed the ultimate solution but there is no way I could search for it since I promised my wife never to mention Forrest Fenn again. I was contemplating how to deal with this conundrum when I realized something very important. So important in fact, that it could affect the very fibre that weaves our family existence. I still had one child

left that has not experience the thrill of the chase! My son Alex was at university when we first searched and he was working when we went the second time. I decided to plead to her sense of family fairness and explained that she couldn't just exclude one child from this adventure. She briefly paused, indicating that I had her undivided attention, so I went for the jugular and used my ace in the hole argument, "and besides he is really lucky". Somehow Alex wins seemingly everything, but to be honest I think his luck is just some freaky statistical phenomenon, but it is what she believes is all that matters. It was this reluctant acknowledgement of his luck that finally convinced her and the next thing I knew I was on a flight to meet my lucky son in Santa Fe.

On the drive up to Pilar, NM, we had a good discussion about school, girls and life in general. Once we arrived, we confirmed the location where the Agua Caliente Creek worked its way into the Rio Grande, which is the Canyon I would take down stream to the Embudo Rail Station. The station has been converted to a brewery and I feel this brewery is the home of Brown Ale. Beer has never been discussed before as a link to the home of Brown but Forrest did say you "might want to bring along a six pack to help celebrate the thrill of a breath taking discovery".

I enthusiastically explain to Alex the history of this railroad station and how Alex's great grandfather was once a railroad station master. This conversation brought back fond memories and I hoped to convey the importance of this nostalgic moment with my son. He did not seem to be as excited as I was, but we really weren't here to reminisce; we were here to find that treasure. I explained to him that we now need to use our imagination. We have to imagine that the road leading back to the north along the Rio Grande was actually the original old Chili Line railroad tracks. Further, we have to imagine going back in time when the steam engine was used. There once was an old steam engine named Canon Diablo that operated out of this station. What I found interesting is that Diablo is Spanish for devil which is no place for the meek.

Next we imagine hitching a ride on the Canon Diablo train and we follow the old Chili (worth the cold) line, north bound along the old railway grade past the old wooden water tower which is now a gravel road. Our imaginary train draws our heavy load of ore about a mile when we turn right and we look back like an owl and recognize the junction of the road and the railroad station as an “F”. I yell out, “this must be the blaze!” Our excitement escalates as we sense we are getting really close. We look down and our collective jaws drop. It can’t be, this is what I have always envisioned as his special place. After a brief moment of just staring in awe, we approach like zealots towards this amazing cave as it beckons to us. It is a manmade cave carved in sandstone and is one of the famous “Ra Paulette” caves which were highlighted on the Academy Award nominated “Cave Digger.” As we near the cave, I further explain to Alex that the man who made these caves does it all by himself, it takes several years to complete one of these caves and all he uses is a shovel and a trowel to create these amazing and artistic sandstone caves.

We are surprised that no one is around and that the door is unlocked, so we walk in and gaze around. This place is absolutely astonishing, we stare in disbelief as to how just one person could sculpt such extraordinary art by hand. I become at one with the power of this place and I immediately understand this is what Forrest meant by his special place. To die in something like this would be absolutely amazing- wait did I just say that?! Well, you get my point. We climb the stairs and find a custom made bathtub made of ceramic tiles. This is no ordinary tub; this tub is a mosaic tile tub that consists entirely of rainbow colors. When I look down underneath the tub to the first floor I am drawn to the main hard wooden floor with a darker circle right under the tub. Say it isn’t so! The treasure must be “in the wood,” the wooden floor under that dark circle. Sure a circle makes perfect sense, an “X” would be too obvious but the T.S. Elliot circular reference is a perfect hint. I don’t even take the time to think how he managed to place it under there as I grab the ice axe and I raise it above my head. Alex cries out “ No don’t do it!” and before he could finish I struck the floor chipping out a large piece. I start

to swing frantically as I seemingly transformed into Jack Nicholson in the movie "The Shining". Small pieces of wood were flying everywhere and Alex said I looked like one of those wood chippers used in the movie "Fargo." I finally break through and I hear a metal on metal sound as my axe stuck the dirt. We desperately remove the dirt from around the object. We suddenly freeze in awe for a brief moment. We cannot believe our eyes; this is it! I gently pulled the round egg like object out of the uterus like soil. This jewel encrusted egg was no ordinary egg ... it was an alien egg! "Wolf ...Wolf ... Wolf" . I can hear a distant God like voice, fuzzy at first, becoming louder and clearer. "Wolf wake up, you are having a nightmare" my wife was shaking me and I realize that this was all a horrible dream. "What were you dreaming about," she asked? "Nothing, nothing at all, can't remember, you know how dreams are ...," I respond very nervously.

I lay back in my bed and stare at the ceiling and give a huge sigh of relief and I am grateful that I woke up just prior to staring into that beam of light and getting my face melted off, like that Nazi Gestapo agent in the Raiders of the Lost Arc. I wonder what was happening to me; why am I having such strange dreams and why are they all about Forrest Fenn? Then I give a little smirk as I realize that I am back living the thrill of the chase.

So four months ago I'm on facebook and I discover my biological dad that I haven't seen in over Fifty years, and his four daughters and one son... all grown but younger half siblings that I've never met before! I reconnect with them and I'm overjoyed to find that they are warm and welcoming. My dad invites my sister and my wife and I to come down from Utah to stay with them in Sante Fe for a week, and to celebrate his 50th wedding anniversary and meet the family. I'm loving this and life is great!

The itinerary includes family breakfasts & dinner parties, visiting art galleries, swimming, attending church to hear my brother's and sister's band, visiting and hanging out with family, oh and going with my brother on a treasure hunt for real gold with clues to its location furnished by my dad and deciphered from a poem! How exciting! My wife and I just finished a 20-mile hike on Mt. Timpanogos in Utah for the-fun-of-it without any prospect of finding gold, so yeah, I'm in, right?

So everything is going great; and the day of the hike, I find that we will be visiting 5 hot springs and traveling about 200 miles. Pretty stiff for a one-day shot at finding the treasure, so our clues from the poem had better be good, huh? After a cursory reading of this, we're pretty sure that the treasure can be found down-stream from a hot spring, and is sitting in an outhouse that might have been parched. The author has a sense of humor — house of Brown, up a creek with no paddle, heavy loads & high waters — lol, what else could it be, right?

So my brother and my wife and I head out and I'm jokingly offering to hold their feet while they bob for treasure, I mean they ought to have no problem going in head first for something of this value... even with their mouths wide open, you think? ;) Anyway, we're having fun, but by mid-

afternoon we still haven't found this thing... our analysis of the clues isn't as sharp as we thought.

Then we stop at a shining landmark... it's a waterfall! We get out of my bro's truck and decide to compare this to the poem. It's down the Canyon from a hot spring, not too far, but too far to walk. It's a house of Brown. There's no paddling up that creek. The only problem is that someone has to "put in" and endure the cold, and I hate the cold and I'm embarrassingly white as well. However, by popular vote, I get elected. Luckily I'm wearing short pants and only have to shed my shirt and shoes to begin my exploratory venture. So with loving family happily urging me on I slip into the stream and start heading for the waterfall.

As luck would have it, a crowd of curious onlookers form, and several women approach my wife and brother and ask, "is he looking for the treasure?" My brother responds, "How did you know?" and the women smile and explain that their husbands have already thoroughly searched that spot when it had much lower water levels. Naturally, neither my wife nor brother mentioned this to me, but just keep smiling and urging me on. After all, I'll learn the bitter truth after I've pulled my cold, white, freshly-wrinkled body out of the water, and then we can all have a good laugh together. ;)

No we didn't find the gold that day, but we did take home a lasting treasure. And even though I hadn't previously known of Forrest Fenn, I feel I know him a little better now; and — along with many others — I think I understand more of what he really relishes in the thrill of his chase.

50

by Toby

I'm searching for a shadow he calls the chase
The younger counterpart of an older face
The prize being part of a life well spent
A destined arrow that could be bent

The promise is gold but are you sure
Print says bronze, Can I endure
He drops a clue that moved I swear
Should I pick it up or do I dare

I take these trips, I know I'm right
Make the plan with perfect sight
I know I'm close or at least warm
Or is it just his undeniable charm

The question is "Do you believe"
It is my choice, or should you leave
One less foe for me to fight
I wish you well, unless you're right

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by mb4urk

Jenny, wake up, we are going on a treasure hunt to XXX? Well, that was at 7 a.m. on Good Friday of last year. Rubbing her eyes, my 23 year old was a bit baffled, but took quick to the task of packing for our 11a.m. flight to somewhere west of Toledo. The prior night before bed, I asked my parents to give me a sign from above if I should go on the hunt. Well, they surely did, I awoke at 3:33 a.m., which is a special number to me. There are nine siblings in my family, 3 girls, 3 boys, and 3 girls. Thanks Mom and Dad, you sent me to the wrong place, I forgive you this time, but can you send the coordinates on the clock this time?

So after a full day of travel, rental car, long drive in the darkness up the mountains in XXX, we checked into our hotel. When we checked in, the desk attendant said my husband had already checked into our room. I was shocked, as he was headed to Europe at the same time, and thought, wow, he must have taken another flight to surprise us. So without giving us a key, thank God, she told us what room to go to, and we knocked on the door. Well, after we heard more than one voice say can I help you, and a man in his robe answer the door, clearly that wasn't my husband, because if it was he clearly would have been in a heap of trouble. We returned to front desk, again, she directed us to another room, knock knock, surprise, not my husband again, and another man in a robe. Now this is really getting weirder by the minute, so back to the front desk, and I said there has to be some mistake, my husband was flying to Paris, and she finally called the room, and realized she checked in someone else with a similar name to our room. Finally after all that she upgraded us to the Egypt room, my daughter and I walked into a room with a sarcophagus and a phoenix rising from the ashes painted above the bed. It was too surreal because of the reason we were in xxx.

I wanted to go to the location at night, so we got in the car and drove through Forrest's Forrest, hairpin turns, creatures running across the road, and not a soul in sight. Thankfully my daughter had a map on her phone and she could tell me when to slow down for the many curves on

the road. She was getting nervous, but I told her Don't Give Up On Me Now, or the poor girl, what was her Mom getting her into?

Well, after that failed attempt, we went back to the hotel, and then I started to worry how I was going to drive back out of the mountains, and what in the world was I doing halfway across the country on a whim and a prayer? At least at night you have no idea of how close you are to the cliffs and the height of the mountains. I thought that maybe I could call a car service to come pick us up, I was that nervous. Finally I settled down and went to bed with all the animals howling outside. Thankfully at daybreak, I realized it wasn't so bad, we checked out our spot again, and headed back to the airport. And what a story we had to tell on Easter Sunday.

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