

Date: 9/15/2012 8:54:11 PM

Subject: Postcard

Join us today in Colorado Springs as we visit *Garden of the Mobs*.

We spent the night in a seedy room in the seedy town of Manitou Springs. The security lock was broken and the screws were loose so we twisted them back in with the cap of the free ball point pen that was lying on the desk. We didn't take turns on night watch but then we didn't have to – we were next to the ice machine and the bikers were thirsty. Morning came. Oh, we were out of bagels.

Manitou Springs hosts the back entrance to The Garden. We took the road in and Murray barely fit between the rocks.



We were on the west side of the rocks and they were black. OK, dark brown. We had no map and every road sign said "Visitor Center ->" so we followed them. They took us past the Trading Post. We stopped in. It was 8:15. The Trading Post opened at 8:30. We got back in the car to find the Visitor Center. We found it at 8:24. It opened at 9:00. Sensing a pattern here? In the parking lot a very nice couple from New York gave us their map, actually the freebie publicity flyer you get on your way in (when the Center's open) as this was now their 4th day at the park. I tried to give them a liter bottle of Gatorade. They declined.

We found the main parking lot. It was like Christmas at the mall, cruising for a parking place. The hordes were all over the paved trail in the center of the rocks so we found a hiking trail that circled the park. We had a map!



The sun got a little higher and we caught a nice view of Pike's Peak.



Then we found Siamese Twins Rock, the very politically incorrect name for this formation. It was probably named around the time that Zebulon Pike was naming a fourteener after himself. We will now call it Conjoined Twins Rock. Has a nice ring to it, no?

Here we are hiding behind Conjoined Twins Rock.



The mob had overflowed the paved trail and was now on the dirt. It was a flash flood of walkers, joggers, bikers, equestrians, big ones, little ones, old ones, young ones, some on phones, some not on phones but listening to hip hop and walking their dogs with or without a leash...



We fled deeper into the trail system. Whoops the trails stopped looking like the lines on the map. The names of the trails stopped matching the names on the map. But we were alone at last. And surrounded by houses. We so hate to backtrack.

At last we were back on the right trail. We knew it by the company we were keeping.



We found a real map and with it, the way back to the car.
"We Were Here".



There was a fist fight for our parking slot when we left but we didn't care. We drove back to the Trading Post – it was open now – and ate buffalo burgers with pepper jack cheese and green chiles. Sides of Cole slaw.

Note to prospective visitors: Your visit will be enhanced if you pick a Saturday (Sunday or holiday would probably work) with perfect weather, and use a cheap map.

That's almost certainly it for this trip.

D&S