

*Excitement overwhelmed me when my husband, Wes, said he and some of the members of his church were planning a camping trip to the High Sierras in July since I had not been camping in years. I was ready for a respite from the constant heat of the California desert region I reside in. Wes is the unofficial cook for his church group as he has outfitted a horse trailer as a cook wagon just for outings such as they were planning. Our trip started out with a long drive through hairpin turns, narrow roads, lots of climbing, stops to let the transmission cool down, let the dogs out, etc. Our 200 mile trek took over seven hours. It was a relief when we reached our destination (after only one wrong turn). Now to unpack and set up! I started to unpack and suddenly felt faint. Gasping for air, I hoped I wasn't getting ill – since my cell phone was out of range the last four hours. Wes assured me it's only the altitude and I should adjust in twenty four hours. 24 hours? Just one of the many things my "memorable summer of '09" included. Another was the rest room facility which consisted of a shovel, a roll of t.p., and the instructions to find a tree, big rock or bush to go behind and make sure the hole is at least ten inches deep (like I had a ruler with me). The shower facility was at least solar powered – a black plastic bag on the roof of another horse trailer.*

*Our accommodations consisted of a canvas cowboy tent that looked like a teepee (but only 2 poles instead of 3) that we did manage to set up before my 24 altitude adjustment. The first night we were serenaded by coyotes trying to get at some cattle in the meadow about a mile away. I was extremely glad we had our dogs with us. Their barking would certainly warn us of any encroaching wildlife. Wes failed to warn me prior to the trip of the possibility of some unwanted visitors - bears.*

*In an effort to "go green" we opted to try insect repellent wrist bands instead of sprays. When it says "good for 72 + hours of protection," that is exactly what it means. About a half hour after 72 hours, it was open season on all exposed skin! The 200+ insect bites I had can attest to that.*

*To avoid having to exit the tent at night, I decided to upgrade our accommodations to a "bucket in tent" feature. This particular feature was working well until my knees gave out and I was literally stuck in the bucket. I tried for thirty plus minutes to break the suction hold that that silver mouthed item had on my posterior. Trying to get leverage from an inflatable bed is impossible and I did not want to tip over (obvious reasons!). I*

*decided to swallow my pride and wake Wes up for help. Guess what was the talk of the campsite the next morning.*

*In spite of all this, we had a great time. Twenty plus friends, cooking outdoors with the dutch ovens, the cool nights, beautiful scenery, a meadow for our horses, the creek running through the campsite, a million stars to gaze at, a great guitar player and our own cowboy poet added up to great memories.*

*Now about my cross country trip from Agua Dulce, California to Rochester, New York with a twenty-one month old child and a rambunctious nine year old... Maybe we'll save that for next time.*