

Marian Wisberg  
5000 Kings Valley Rd.  
Crescent City, CA 95530  
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Dear Wendy,

I've almost caught up now writing friends and relatives to let them know where we are and why and to give them our mailing address. We've completed the first stage of our move to Idaho and all went smoothly with only one minor crisis. We're storing our stuff in Crescent City in northern California because Jack's parents live here and because it's half way to Boise. Because I still don't drive (on the highway) getting two trucks and two trailers moved the first 600 miles took some careful planning. On our first trip north we took the travel-trailer and the welding truck with the welder in it. Both the welder and the trailer are heavy so that was all Jack felt it was safe to haul on the first trip. We unloaded the welder at Jack's parents and the travel trailer at a pleasant, uncrowded trailer park with a country setting. Then we drove the welding truck back to Monterey, put it in storage and went back to our cabin and loaded the utility trailer with tools and outside equipment and the heaviest boxes. (I feel noble for reducing our books and National Geographics to 3 apple boxes). We took this load to town and packed it in the welding truck. (Because the road to the cabin is so rough we couldn't drive the welding truck up to the cabin to load it.) Then we returned to the cabin and packed our household stuff in the utility trailer: old pots and pans and dishes and bedding and clothes and (luxury, luxury) my favorite Good Will patched naugahyde Lazy Boy chair. Then we said our last goodbys to the mountains of Big Sur. We felt satisfied that we had completed our karma there and tried to leave the cabin and property clean and orderly. When we phoned our landlord in Chicago he said he didn't plan to sell the place so if we ever wanted to come back to it he'd kick out his new caretakers which made us feel good but we won't return. The landlord hasn't seen the property for about 12 years but he said he just happened to be flying to San Francisco in a couple of weeks and would take a trip up to the mountain to see it.

Our timing couldn't have been better. Even though March and April are normally rainy months in northern California we had warm dry weather on each of our trips. Our move went smoothly because we had plenty of time to plan it.

We expect to stay here in Crescent City another few weeks while Jack helps his Dad with some projects and finishes up some of his own. (He's painting the roof of the trailer today.) Then we plan to store the 4-wheel drive and utility trailer at Jack's Dads and take the travel-trailer pulled by the welding truck (it's a one-ton with dual back wheels and lots of storage compartments for stuff we like to have on the road.) We will use

(take) the summer to look for a house to rent or caretake for the winter. When we find a house we'll come back to Crescent City and get the 4-wheel drive and utility trailer with essential household stuff. We don't expect to complete the move until next spring.

Whenever Jack tells anyone we're moving to Idaho they all say, "It's cold in Idaho." I tell Jack it must just be Mara's devils trying to frighten us. After all there are lots of old people and babies who live in Idaho and they seem to be getting along OK. Also, per capita Idaho has more millionaires than any other state and that must mean Idaho's got something special to balance the cold weather. I remember the one thing I most feared when I was preparing to go to Tassajara to live. It was the fear of how I'd survive the winters in unheated cabins and zendo in that dark cold valley. I discovered the cold was exhilarating and not a big problem.

Now I think of you and Bob selecting Sweden and New Hampshire as your homes. There must be berths in warmer states.

I don't know if we'll like Southern Idaho but it should give us a central location where we can look over the area more thoroughly to try and find the place that fills most of our top priorities: inexpensive rural rentals, mountains, rivers, lakes and deserts nearby. Southern Idaho offers one advantage that none of the other Western States have: dozens of hot sulphur springs, many primitive and many developed. Hot springs have risen on our list of priorities as we've gotten older--particularly as I've developed an annoying case of arthritis in my shoulders and hips.

The post card is so you can send me a brief note to let me know when Bob is safely on American shores. It must be hardest of all for you not knowing in between telephone calls how Bob is doing.

Good luck on your search for your own home. By the time Bob gets home from this trip he should be really happy to have a ball-and-chain to encourage him to settle down.

Fondly  
Maurin