

Saturday, February 2nd, day two.

Our plan was to walk over to Fort Wilderness from the WL using the fitness trail, so that's what we did.

We had done this same walk during our May 2012 trip and this year's pictures look very similar. We both like the Trails End Breakfast Buffet and Fort Wilderness is sort of my touchstone at WDW.



While we were walking by the "Tri-Circle-D Farm" a CM who was picking up horse droppings offered to get us some rakes so we could experience the "fun" he was having. I told him we'd be right back after breakfast to help him out. I really fooled him, our plan was to take the boat back to the WL.



The white beach sand in the corral really helps the CM locate the horse/pony droppings.

We only had to wait a few minutes to be seated. Here's NHshorty waiting patiently.



Breakfast was great, reasonably priced, and quick just like every other time we've been there.

The next picture takes some explanation, so bear with me. I take a lot of pictures during my WDW trips, but I have never taken a picture inside of a restroom for the obvious reasons. But, there have been two restroom pictures I've always wanted to take:

1. The first one is the men's room in Harambe Village. The transition from a third world village atmosphere to a clean modern public restroom is jarring. It's probably better to be jarred a little than have to deal with a third world public restroom.
2. The second restroom picture I've always wanted to take is of the tile mosaic in the men's room at Pioneer Hall. Pioneer Hall houses the Trails End Restaurant and the Hoop-Dee-Deo Review and today the men's room was empty so I seized the moment.



The tile mosaic depicts a group of cowboys getting ready to start their work day. Look closely at each cowboy's pose, especially the two at the right. I find it quite reminiscent of the famous Bean Scene in the movie "Blazing Saddles". Just saying.

So, after our hardy breakfast, NHshorty and I wandered down to the FW marina and hopped on the boat running between FW, the CR, and WL. Our time on Bay Lake was quite enjoyable; however, I noticed there is some new construction going on to the east of Fort Wilderness. I immediately recalled the rumors of last year that the DVC was going to build something on the site of the old River Country, but that is to the west of FW. So this construction crane is not where the rumors would have DVC building. Later in the day, using the Blue Streak, we figured out where this crane was.



The boat ride from FW to the CR to the WL was very pleasant. To us the temperatures seemed like a warm early fall day in NH; however, to the locals it was freezing. A fellow passenger on the boat remarked that they couldn't believe "Disney is using open boats in weather like this?" It's all relative I guess.

The grounds around the pool area of the WL were beautiful. There were a few hardy souls in the pool.



Getting back into the WL lobby we noticed some new chairs there weren't there last time. Being DIY-TV and HGTV addicts, we have pseudo-expert-amateur-interior-decorator-ninja-knowledge and immediately began to critique these new chairs. Cutting to the chase, I had to restrain NHshorty to prevent her from calling the management to complain about these hideous things. The backs of these chairs are about 5 feet tall (note full size adult in the picture for scale). They totally block some sight lines, they are completely out of scale with the other lobby furniture, and there were no hidden Mickey's in the fabric pattern. Our day was ruined. Well, not really.



Speaking of hidden Mickey's, we went looking for a special one in the "lobby" area of the WL Villas. We had seen this one a couple of years ago when NHshorty and I were in the world with my kids. It's hidden in one of the carved beams.



Here's the beam



Here's the Mickey

This is covered walkway between the WL and the WL Villas. NHShorty posed with the Mickey topiary.



And now on to Disney's Hollywood Studios!!!!!!



Everything was going great. I breezed through the turnstiles using the cast member pass, I was snapping away with my camera, and I turned looking for NHshorty and found her looking annoyed on the wrong side of the gate. Her partially used up 10 day park hopper had apparently been completely used up at the MK yesterday. Luckily for us (really her because I was already on the right side of the gate) she had the paperwork for her DVC Annual Pass in her backpack. So I exited DHS having just entered 2 minutes earlier (my quickest visit ever) and accompanied NHshorty to Guest Services so she could activate her annual pass.



Our plan was to not activate our annual DVC passes until our trip in April so that we can squeeze in 1 or 2 trips in early 2014. We actually debated a little bit before finally deciding to activate and use NHshorty's annual pass at guest services. As a side benefit, we were able to see how the activation process works so we know what will happen when I activate mine in April. If you are wondering why this is important, you can PM me.

Hollywood Studios was not terribly crowded, but it was a Stoopid Shoes target rich environment. Thank you again, Ollie, for this great diversion. Here are just a few we spotted.



Here's a crowd picture to give you a feel for the crowd level.



First stop after we both got beyond the turnstiles was Tower of Terror to grab some fast passes. Then we ambled down to Rock and Roller Coaster so I could ride it. RRC is not a favorite of NHshorty, I got in the empty single rider line and was in the studio with the boys in seconds. The CM's were having some fun by adding audio comments over the PA system to the studio movie. So in the movie when Steven Tyler suggests getting backstage passes for the "fans in the studio", the male CM voice says "watch me have a great idea and ask for backstage passes for our fans" then Tyler puts hand on his forehead and says "I have a great idea....." I wouldn't want the CM's to do this all the time, but it was pretty funny this time.

After my ride on RRC, it was ice cream time. NHshorty wanted a strawberry cone and I was hankering for a Mickey Bar.



This is a rare picture of a Mickey Bar in my possession still in its wrapper.

By now our fast passes for HTT were valid, so we scampered up the ramp, past the empty water garden, into the lobby, and right into the library. It was just that fast. The wait beyond the library was pretty short and here's the picture.



By now we were closing in on our 1:40 ADR at the 50's Prime Time Café. So we headed over to start our experience next door at the Tune in Lounge. We really like this lounge and recommend it highly.



We were seated on a 50's style couch with a bi-level coffee table with Mickey shaped hardware. Cool.

It seems there is always some sort of special event going on whenever we visit the studios. This time it was a dance competition. The place was crawling with adolescent girls wearing tons of stage makeup and severe hair-dos accompanied by hoards of stage mothers. Certainly an improvement from the cheering competitions we've encountered from the not-doing-a-cheer-for-every-little-thing point of view. The competition was staged in the Indiana Jones Theater. It seems that more than a few of the stage mothers had discovered the Tune In Lounge. Tippy stage mothers just added to the ambiance.

We only got half way through our beers when our name was called. We were seated at a table for two in a corner.

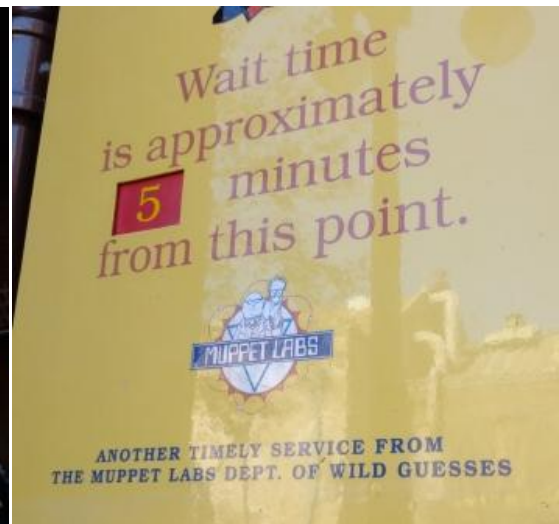


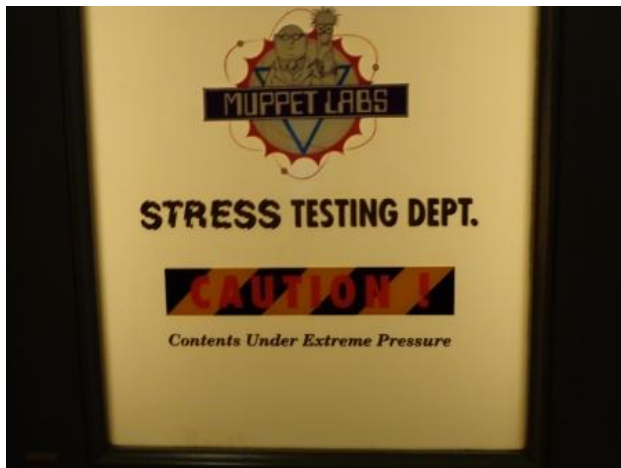
NHshorty had the Pot Roast and I had the sampler. Since I am not a big fan of Pot Roast, I asked that another piece of fried chicken be substituted. This request was not a problem at all. Bottom line: We were stuffed with comfort food.

Waddling out of the Prime Time, we headed for Star Tours to grab fast passes and continued to the Muppet Theater.



I've enjoyed Muppet-Vision a bizillion times, but the place is full of little puns that crack me up. This time it was the wait-time sign and the doors along the entry hall.





We were feeling a little homesick, so we followed up our visit to Muppet Labs posing for a picture with an old NH friend.



Finally it was fast pass time at Star Tours. This was the first of four rides on this ride.



Following our first Star Tours ride, we wandered around until we sort fell into the Art of Animation exhibit. It had been years since we'd done this and it was a nice break. We then sauntered back toward the hat and ran into our favorite landscapers, Mulch, Sweat and Shears. This was the first of two shows we watched.



After rocking our faces off, we hit Star Tours again for rides number two, three, and four. Even without fast passes the rides two and three were walk ons and ride number four, we just didn't get out of our seats. They let us just stay seated and ran it again. And NHshorty was picked as the rebel spy! "Help me, NHshorty, you're our only hope."

I started to feel like I had a fever, and since the only cure for my fever is cow bell, we headed back to the hat to catch Mulch, Sweat and Shears next show.



Mulch, Sweat and Shears helped me feel a lot better and the fact that their landscaping equipment did not include a snow blower, plow, or a salter/sander I totally forgot about the cold and snow back home.

It was now around 5:30 and we had a 7:30 ADR at the Yachtman's Steak House. The problem is that we were still full from our late lunch at the 50's Prime Time Café, so we ended up cancelling our ADR. There's \$20 down the tubes.

We had plans to go to back to the MK, but NHshorty, who had had hip surgery right after Christmas, and I were approaching the wall. So it was back into the Blue Streak and a quick drive back to the WL with a side trip to find that crane we'd seen earlier.

I can't remember all the road names in WDW, but since I always have a car I've developed this mental map and have assigned my own names to the roads. So, we blasted up Port Orleans Road past the new kennel. At the lights of the road that leads to FW, we banged a left and then went into the Osprey Ridge Golf course. This golf course is between FW to the west and Golden Oaks to the east. For those of you not familiar with Golden Oaks, it is a collection of private homes that cost billions of dollars. From the golf course, we could see that the crane was within the Golden Oaks area. A little post-trip internet research yielded this little tidbit:

“Four Seasons Resort on the Horizon

Construction is underway at Four Seasons Resort *Orlando at Walt Disney World® Resort* as the 11th floor emerges from the 26 acre site adjacent to *Disney's Osprey Ridge Golf Course*. One can already see the infrastructure taking shape for the 444-room resort which will feature a conference centre, several exciting dining outlets, a Tom Fazio-designed golf course, a full-service luxurious spa and fitness centre as well as various pools. The resort is currently on track to open in 2014.”

So, that's what we saw from the boat on Bay Lake.

With all the exploring in the Blue Streak and the walking at HS we were pretty tired. So, we retired to our room and then went to the Territory Lounge off the WL lobby for beverages and flat breads.

Tomorrow: Check out, EPCOT, and flying north.