

MY SHORT LIST OF FIVE MOST INTERESTING PEOPLE
ON THE COAST TO COAST WALK

JACK WOLTERS (Arizona) – We met Jack at a Presbyterian church in Wickenburg, Arizona. The Mattsons, Goodmans and Jack Wolters all happened (??) to be visiting this church on this particular Sunday. Jack came in and sat on the same pew with us. Short version of the story: he found out we were with Habitat; he was a personal friend of Millard Fuller, Founder and CEO of Habitat; he invited us to lunch after church; he scolded us for not raising money to build more houses; he gave us a personal check for \$2,700 (we had told him our walk would be about 2,700 miles), and called Millard Fuller to inform him of our walk.

HELGA (New Mexico) – Helga was a 76 yr-old German lady with a traveling spirit. Dick and I were walking a lonely stretch of NM highway when Helga pulled over to the side of the road. She traveled with a dummy strapped in the front passenger seat. She got out of her vehicle, introduced herself and inquired about what we were doing. She then shared her fascinating story. She showed us her handmade maps of the several routes she and her dummy had traveled across the U.S. For many years she was a “nanny” in New York, but now she was a free spirit. She was one of several “adventurers” we would meet along the roads of America.

BESSIE AND ART (Mississippi) – We pulled into a RV Park near Columbus, MS, and met the owners, Bessie and Art Shaw. Bessie, 81 and Art, 86, just celebrated their 66th anniversary. Bessie is a talker and Art is deaf. Bessie’s advice for a long marriage: “lots of give and take”. They liked us for some reason and invited us to stay an extra night at their RV park at no expense. They even enticed us to stay by promising a fish fry, so we stayed. We enjoyed an evening in their home, listening to their stories of long ago. The fish, Bessie’s homemade slaw, eggplant puffs, and her special sweet potato pie, all contributed to a most memorable evening.

GIGI AND DON (Alabama) – This couple gave up good jobs in at the Nevada Auto Testing Center near Carson City, NV, to chase a personal dream of owning their own RV Park. Our paths crossed at the Kountry Air RV Park near Prattville, AL. They made my short list of most interesting folk because we share a kindred spirit, risk-takers willing to walk into the unknown to chase a dream, eager to see what lies around the curve. We enjoyed getting to know Gigi and Don better while cooking chile rellenos outdoors and roasting chestnuts over an open fire.

TRIP MCKINNON (Georgia) – This 43-year-old pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Waycross, GA, was formerly a teacher for severely challenged Special Ed children. This is his first pastorate since graduating from seminary in Richmond, VA. We attended church at First Presbyterian and were made to feel especially welcome and spiritually cared for. We were honored guests in their home for Sunday lunch. Pastor Trip walked with us for a few miles near Waycross. As we ended our walk at Jekyll Island, GA, he and his fine family were there at the beach to greet us and to grill hotdogs for the big celebration. Rev. Trip is a compassionate and energetic man. He is also a certified judge for BBQ cook-offs. Now there’s a certification I would like to acquire.