

Lifestyles

Tennessee wanderlust

By Emily Weathers Kennedy

Americans love their time off of work. Whether it's a weekend to find leisure activities at home or a grand vacation, leaving the work environment is essential for peace of mind. According to a 2014 study by Forbes, not taking time off is a bad idea, both for productivity and the economy.

I am not certain when my worldly wanderlust was replaced by a great desire to experience places closer to home. For many years I pined for Europe, particularly Britain, where I spent a summer working during college. But, I had this idea that if I couldn't take the whole family, I did not want to go at all. Jobs, braces, kids' cars, college tuition—all pushed the grand tour into the background. But after these responsibilities waned, something else set in. Call it contentment. Call it nesting. Suddenly I realized that I had the world at my fingertips with the Internet, but with the little time off my husband, Kerry, could accumulate, I just wanted peaceful time with him close by.

Then there was also Cella. Last year Kerry and I found our "dream travel trailer," a 1989 Airstream Excella we restored and put our personal touches into to create a mini home away from home. We christened her Cella and outfitted her with things we loved the most (as opposed to cast-off household items). We decided that our adventures would be spent inside her aluminum walls and outside as far as we wanted to drive. Last summer we made our maiden voyage to Florida. This summer we wanted to start closer to home in the beautiful state parks of Tennessee.

Our first trip coincided with our June anniversary. Three hours seemed an acceptable travel time, so we set out for Fall Creek Falls in Van Buren and Bledsoe counties. Even along the way, Pulaski, Fayetteville, and Winchester offered interesting shops and cafés, and the rolling scenery through Franklin County was even more gorgeous than Northern England and Scotland, my heretofore favorite terrain.

Because we had never stayed in a state park before, we had no idea what campsite to book. So, what looked like the perfect spot on an end on a map turned out to be on the edge of a cliff with only a concrete tire bumper between Cella's wheels and the great beyond. Kerry backed in, glanced behind us, shook his head, and gave me a graphic description of our tumbling down the hill in our little house. Luckily, the campground found us another spot, and this one was perfect. We had trees on our

awning side giving us the privacy we wanted.

(Lesson Learned #1: Ask details of park employees before booking a camping site. Our little mishap allowed us to move to a less populated and more level site, but we were lucky that it happened to be available. For families, camping close to others with children could be ideal; for empty nesters, it may not be.)

Fall Creek Falls boasts some of the most glorious mountain scenery in Tennessee. We took one of the hiking trails to see the actual falls but kept climbing higher to reach the nature center. Some hikers chose to climb down to the actual falls. We could see people splashing underneath the roaring water and in other spots in the rushing creek.

Along the trail, we hiked up and down with mostly nature-created steps of stone and tree roots. Where these were not plentiful, the trail was carefully preserved from erosion by railroad ties.

The map to the nature center stated that the destination was .9 miles from the start. I'm pretty sure this figure was erroneous!



Above: Campsite of Kerry and Emily Kennedy at David Crockett State Park.



Top photo: Fall Creek Falls, at 256 feet, is one of the highest waterfalls in the eastern United States. Other waterfalls within the park include Piney Falls, Cane Creek Falls and Cane Creek Cascades. **Above left:** These two barn owl sisters, rescued by David Crockett State Park rangers, are inseparable. **Bottom left:** Kerry Kennedy beside the water powered grist mill at the David Crockett Park museum. **Above right:** Emily and Kerry Kennedy overlooking Fall Creek Falls. **Bottom right:** Emily Kennedy crossing the swinging bridge at Fall Creek Falls State Park.

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Tennessee wanderlust, part two – David Crockett Park

By Emily Weathers Kennedy

Part One of our foray into Tennessee state park campgrounds in last week’s “Lifestyles” section left us hiking at Fall Creek Falls State Park in Van Buren and Bledsoe counties. Amid rumbling thunderstorms and hard driving rain, we toured the nature center and were able to hike back to our campsite in only a lingering drizzle. We used the rest of the rainy day as an excuse to explore the terrific shops in the park.

We left Fall Creek Falls for our own David Crockett State Park for the last two nights of our trip. Although we had visited that park our entire lives, we had no idea what to expect as campers. We were delighted to find the campgrounds wonderfully outfitted to suit most all needs. Our site was on Shoal Creek, which was beautiful and being enjoyed fully by families.

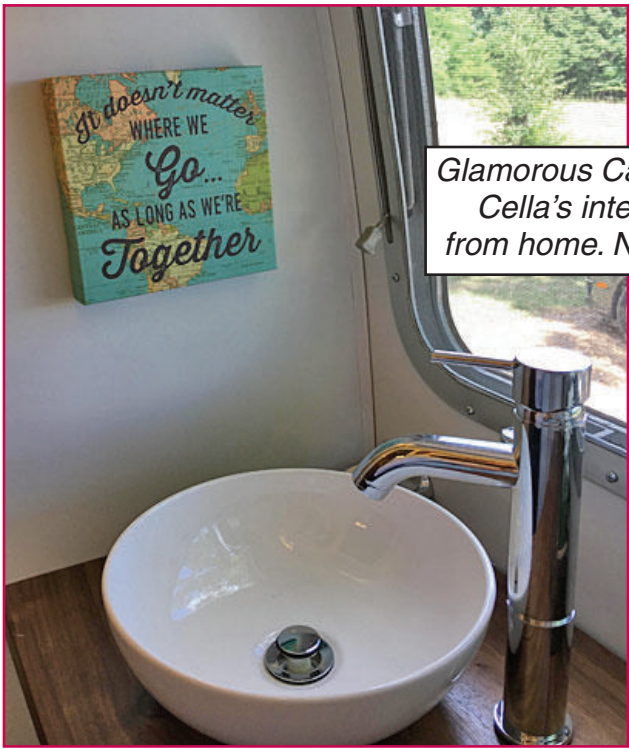
David Crockett also boasts beautiful cabins on Lindsey Lake. When we drove by them we saw people on paddleboards, canoes, kayaks, and pedal boats. People were also fishing, sunning, and enjoying the scenery.

Nearby we visited the David Crockett museum, arguably our favorite part of the park. Not only do they have fantastic vignettes featuring the life of David Crockett (Who knew Crockett’s disdain for Andrew Jackson cost him his political career?), they also have rescued owls and birds of prey that live in aviaries beside the museum. A delightful young lady ranger, Addison Nichols, talked to us about them as we were leaving and admiring them. Her enthusiasm and breadth of knowledge about the birds were impressive.

We left David Crockett State Park after enjoying a Father’s Day buffet at Crockett’s Mill restaurant. We were rested and thrilled with our first camping experience there. It struck me that I have lived in Lawrence County most of my life and have not known what all it has to offer. People don’t have to camp to enjoy David Crockett Park or Fall Creek Falls for that matter. For us though, the camping (or “glamping” since we are not roughing it in a tent) will compel our exploring more of Tennessee’s state parks. We can’t wait to go to another one nearby. We call it Tennessee Wanderlust. *You can read past Lifestyles articles and more on Emily’s my website [atemilyweatherskennedy.com](http://www.noalastudios.com/shoals/read_online?i=noala-septemberoctober-2016). See http://www.noalastudios.com/shoals/read_online?i=noala-septemberoctober-2016, page 88, for her feature article on her Airstream Cella for No’Ala magazine.*



Our neighbors on beautiful Shoal Creek in Crockett Park.



Glamorous Camping = “glamping”. Cella’s interior is home away from home. No need to “rough it”!



Emily’s camping lessons learned

(even glampers need the fundamentals)

Lesson Learned #1 (from back at Fall Creek Falls) – Quiz park employees for details before booking a camp site. Those online maps don’t tell you everything!

Lesson Learned #2: A smart phone on trails is essential. Besides being handy for photography, various Apps can tell you distance as well as show maps of terrain.

Lesson Learned #3: Bring rain gear when hiking, and rain is predicted. And for heaven’s sakes, take bottled water & first aid treatments. I fought mosquitos and lost.

Lesson Learned #4: Revisit Lesson Learned #1 and book early to get choice sites at your next destination. Campground #2 at David Crockett had many more campsites that were larger and better suited for empty nesters.

Showtimes for:
July 14 thru July 20

SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING

FRI-SAT: 1:30 / 4:15 / 7:00 / 9:35
SUN: 1:30 / 4:15 / 7:00 “PG-13”
MON-THURS: 1:30 / 4:15 / 7:00

WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES “PG-13”

SPECIAL PREMIERE THURS (13TH) 7:00 PM
FRI-SAT: 1:30 3D / 4:00 / 6:45 3D / 9:35
SUN: 1:30 3D / 4:00 / 6:45 3D
MON-THURS: 1:30 3D / 4:00 / 6:45 3D

BABY DRIVER

FRI-SAT: 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30 “R”
SUN: 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00
MON-THURS: 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00

DESPICABLE ME 3

FRI-SAT: 1:45 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:15 “PG”
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