

Head 'em up, Move 'em out!

Contributed by Larry Lawless
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Today the journey begins. I leave for Colorado this morning. Everything's packed and ready (...what have I forgotten, what have I forgotten....).

I'm taking a nice leisurely pace up to Boulder. In my drum corps days I've been known to drive 15 hours a day, but I was a lot younger then. The first leg goes from Stephenville to Lawton, Oklahoma. Yes, I know, that's out of my way, but Lawton is the home of the Percussive Arts Society Headquarters and Museum. I've been a member of PAS since I was in high school. This very fine organization has done much for the promotion of percussion and drumming over the years, and for the past 14 years, they have been based just 3 hours up the road from Stephenville, and I've never made the trip. Next year, they move to Indianapolis, so I thought I should see the museum while I can. Also, Dr. Jim Lambert of Cameron University has graciously consented to let me practice for a precious hour on his marimba. One of my concerns on my trip is losing the conditioning (translate calluses) I have built up in my hands getting ready for 9 hour rehearsal days in Boulder. Since I won't have time to practice this morning, this will be one less day I lose.

Next, on to Amarillo, home of the 72 ounce steak, and ... well .. I'm sure it's a wonderful town with lots to recommend it, it's just a good stopping place to get some well needed rest for me. The next day, up the panhandle of Texas into New Mexico, through the Raton Pass into Colorado, stopping at Colorado Springs. I could probably make it on to Boulder, but this day is the vacation part of the trip for me. This gives me a chance to get a little acclimated to the altitude (trying to record while feeling the effects of altitude sickness is not my idea of fun), see some sites, kick back a little before the intensity happens. Then finally, on to Boulder, arriving at Doug Walter's house sometime the afternoon of the 13th. I'm getting there a day ahead of everyone else (except Doug, of course) to make sure the hotel is all set, check out the rehearsal and recording space at the University, and hopefully get reacquainted with the marimba bars.

On Friday, the 14th, I will go to the Denver airport to pick up David and Bart who are flying in (Rich is driving down from Minnesota, bringing his drum set) and then we go see Doug and Dan perform with the Colorado Music Festival. They're doing The Planets by Holst, should be a nice way to start the adventure.

A funny metaphor about this trip has occurred to me. When I head out of Stephenville north on Highway 281, there are some nice little hills just outside of town. At Mineral Wells, the hills turn into bluffs, Lawton has Mt. Scott at 2464 ft., then the Raton Pass at 7834 ft., to Colorado Springs and Pike's Peak and Boulder itself sitting at over a mile high nestled against the Rocky Mountains at well over 14,000 ft. The further I go, the higher I get, topographically, emotionally, and, hopefully musically. The Rockies were a great obstacle to early pioneers trying to get across to Oregon and California. For me, they are the destination. Lord, I love mountains ... how can you look at those natural steeples and not see the hand of God.

More tomorrow ...