

## **On the Road with Anne and the Bat**

I woke up to a bright fall morning; then lay there in bed wondering what to do with the rest of the week. I'd finished everything on my wife's to do list and it was only Wednesday. She would be busy with work all week and sitting watching TV was not on my list. Maybe I should take a trip in the Motorhome for the rest of the week. As the thought entered my head, I felt a stir at the end of the bed. I looked down and Anne, who had been asleep and enjoying the coolness of the autumn morning, was now sitting up staring at me.

Anne is an 18-pound black Tibetan Terrier. She is my constant companion and traveling partner. Anne and I seem to be connected in an intuitive way I have never experienced with any of my other dogs. As I look down to her at the foot of the bed, she gives me a nod of her head indicating "great idea."

"Ok Anne, how about we load up the Motorhome and head down to Pismo Beach?" With that comment, she was off the bed and sitting at the door. "Whoa, girl. Let's not get carried away, I still have to shower and get dressed."

My wife is younger and still working very hard with her business. I'm retired, giving Anne and me a lot of time to find adventures.

I got up and called the wife to let her know we would be gone a few days. Then I showered and we were off to Safeway. We got to the Motorhome and I started it up, so it could warm up while I checked it over and packed away the food. Anne sat and inspected every item of food as I put it away. I got to the last bag and there was an intensity building in her inspection. I reached in the bag and pulled out a box of her favorite treats. With a double nod of the head, she

turned and headed to the front of the Motorhome and her spot on the passenger seat. I hooked up the tow vehicle, and we were off to Pismo.

Pismo Beach is about a four-hour drive south on highway 101 from home. About two hours into our trip near Salinas, I was in the right-hand lane coming up on a small truck towing a tractor. I looked in my mirror to pass but a large semi-truck trailer was beginning to pass me. It was at this moment that a creature made its move and began flying around inside the Motorhome. My first thought was that it was a very large moth, but it was too fast. The space between my face and the windshield of the Motorhome is about three feet. It was in this three-foot by seven-foot wide space, (the width of the Motorhome.) that this creature decided to do its stunt flying. It would come to within a half inch of my face at the same time as the semi was passing on my left within inches out my window.

One bad move and it hit the driver-side window and fell within inches of my arm. It looked like a flying mouse. That's when I realized what it was: A bat. Within less than a second it was gone and flying again. It was as if it was attacking me, wanting control of the motorhome. It would brush my head and face. Coming up in a mile was an off-ramp. I slowed and drove with one hand waving my free arm like a lunatic. Finally, I made it to the off-ramp. Just as I started off the freeway, it disappeared.

I got off the freeway and found a place to park across from a small restaurant. I opened the two-foot by three-foot driver-side window. Then I went into the restaurant to get something to eat. I thought it would find the open window and leave. I couldn't drive two more hours battling a bat.

I sat in the restaurant thinking about all I knew about Bats. Weren't they supposed to awaken at dusk and sleep in the day? What about their radar? How did it hit the window? After about 30 minutes, I returned to the Motorhome and armed myself with a dishtowel. I started the Motorhome and went through it, making noise and hunting the Bat. Nothing. It must have taken the hint and left by way of the open window.

The rest of the way to Pismo was uneventful. Anne and I settled in and went for a hike in the sand dunes. It was beginning to get dark, so we returned to the Motorhome and I began to prepare dinner. That was when the bat resumed its attack. I opened the door to the Motorhome as well as the large driver-side window. I grabbed my dishtowel and mounted my counter-attack. It wanted to get back to the bedroom in the back of the Motorhome. I wanted to keep forcing it to the front and the open door and window. The battle raged for about 15 minutes. I waved the towel like a lunatic, hitting water bottles, salt, and pepper shakers, everything on the counters. Why would it not head out one of the openings to the open sky and the last vestiges of light before complete darkness?

Finally, it was gone. I closed the door and window and began cleaning up. The rest of the evening was calm and back to normal.

The next morning, I got up and prepared breakfast for Anne and me. After eating and doing the dishes, I decided to clean the inside of the Motorhome before taking Anne to the Pier at Pismo Beach. The last thing I needed to do was vacuum. Just as I was finishing, out of nowhere comes the Bat: The battle resumes. I opened the front door and grabbed my towel. We had been going at it for about 10 minutes when the gentleman in the trailer next to me came venturing over to see what the hell was going on. He peered around the corner of the open door. The Bat saw him and went after him with me right behind waving the towel like a lunatic.

The gentleman ducked as the Bat went by his head, made a quick U-turn, and started to come back at the door to get in. I shut the door. After a moment, I opened the door. Standing there was one shocked elderly man: My neighbor.

“Good morning.” I said

In an inquisitive and still surprised sounding voice he replied, “Good morning, was that a Bat?”

“Yes, it was. I’m not sure I would have ever gotten it out if you hadn’t come over and opened a second front to the battle. Thank you. Would you like a cup of coffee?”

“Thank you, I would.”

It was a beautiful morning and I brought out two cups of coffee and two Danish. We sat at the table and spent the next hour swapping camping stories.