

## My Visit to Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Aug. 7, 2006

I arrived in Sioux Falls, SD at the Block house. No one was home and the postman left me on the stairs alone. I could hear a scary sounding dog barking. Perhaps the postman didn't want to meet it. Linda got home from work late and was so excited to see me again. I met her in Atlanta recently. She had thought I might have to spend the night at the post office. We were both tired so she tucked me in my cozy sleeping bag for a much needed rest.

Aug. 8, 2006

Today I'm going to work with Linda. She's alone right now. Son #1, Jordan is in Missouri finishing Basic Training. Son #2, Ben is fishing with his Grandparents at the Missouri River, near SD's capital city Pierre (most South Dakotans say "Peer"). Linda's husband, Tom, is in Sturgis over 350 miles away. I'll try to do my best to keep her from feeling lonely.



Here we are at the office door. I'm doing my best impression of Vanna White.

It was a very busy morning. I hope they all aren't like this. Linda got a phone call in the middle of her bath. She had to deliver a LCD Projector to a hotel. She rushed around and I thought she might forget me—but she didn't, she needed my help.

We drove to the office to pick up the projector and found a delivery man waiting. Don't they know the office hours?—they're right on the door! Anyway we helped unload the very large case, picked up the projector and rushed off to deliver it. Then a quick trip to

the bank, and for a treat, Caribou Coffee. We made it back to the office by 9:00am, official opening time.



Here I am waving out the window of Linda's car.

Linda said we had to take this picture because South Dakota is a prairie state and the people here rely mainly on their cars for transportation. Cities and towns are many miles apart with nothing but fields in between.

Later in the day I asked if we could visit Mt Rushmore. Linda explained that it was over 350 miles away, and that this week is the 66<sup>th</sup> annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. During this week approximately 500,000 people will attend the rally and visit the Black Hills. To put this in perspective, in 2005 the population of Sturgis, SD was 6,260, Rapid City, SD 62,167, Sioux Falls, SD (SD's largest city) 141,000, the entire state of South Dakota only 754,844. Linda said we could design a Sturgis Rally outfit. So we designed a logo with copyright free graphics and reverse printed it onto transfer paper. After we got home, Linda worked on the pattern.

Aug. 9, 2006

I met the girl who models for Linda. Poor thing, no ponytail, frizzy hair, but that's not the worst—Linda tapes paper to her! I told her it must be awful, like ripping Band-Aids off all the time. The girl said, "It's not that bad, and I get to try on lots of neat clothes before anyone else does."



Here is Frizzy Crissy with my pattern pieces taped to her.

Linda will carefully take them off, and trace them, adding seam allowances. Then we'll cut the fabric, iron on the transfer and sew it together.

Aug. 10, 2006

Between calls and equipment rentals, we stitched the outfit together. I was a little jealous that Frizzy Crissy kept getting to try it on, until I saw the pins, ouch! Linda said that I can try it on after the snaps are on, probably tomorrow. Ben gets back from fishing tonight.

Aug. 11, 2006

Payroll at Block Productions, so we had to go to work. BP is a fairly busy office for a small business. They have been working on inventory for about six months; events/jobs have kept everyone so busy they haven't finished yet. Linda said maybe I can help. Tried on the Sturgis outfit, cute! But it could use some appliqués and a belt. Linda is looking for some trims. Ben caught the biggest fish of the group, a 24" northern pike.

Aug 12-13, 2006

The weekend weather was not great, muggy drippy sometimes rainy. Linda was having back trouble so we stayed at home and watched movies. We did finish my outfit and Linda edited these pictures to show how we did it. She continues to learn from every outfit she designs and makes. This time she said she learned that if we wanted to add appliqués it would be easier to iron them on before we sewed it together (Oops). It still turned out great and it really did need them.



Aug. 14, 2006

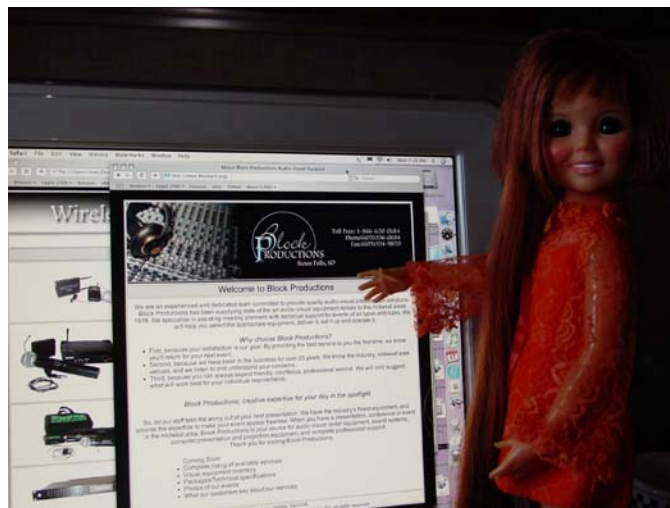
Back to the office lots to do—Tom's first day back. We have much to tell him about. He needs to be caught up to speed on what's been happening here while he was in Sturgis and Spearfish. After that Linda and I went to work on inventory. Practicing my Vanna White impression earlier really helped.



Here I am showing off a Sony Vega UHF wireless handheld microphone. It's hardly ever used on a stand like this, but it was just too heavy for me to hold. Linda is taking pictures of their equipment and creating a visual inventory for their web page.

Aug. 15, 2006

Today we revised some web pages and wrote the code to add in all the new items that we took pictures of yesterday.



Here I am checking for broken links and spelling errors. Linda especially needs help finding the spelling errors.

Aug. 16, 2006

We are going to the Sertoma Butterfly House! Warning, lots of pictures. We took Linda's Mom and Dad along. The butterflies weren't very attracted to me but two landed on Linda and hitched a ride the whole time we were there. She had to have an attendant remove them (visitors are not allowed to touch them). The attendant said they must have liked the colors she was wearing. We were warned to check carefully for hitchhiking butterflies because so many were escaping lately. It's really amazing to see so many butterflies in one place. At first you have no idea where to look because they are everywhere. I identified a green peacock swallowtail from the chart, cool.



Here I am with a really pretty one. Tom held me up so I could see better. Linda was frustrated with her digital camera. She could take shots of the butterflies or of people, but not have both in focus. There were beautiful blue morphs everywhere, flying very fast, disappearing when landing (they look like brown leaves with wings closed).



Here I am with two; on the bench Tom is holding my feet so I wouldn't slip on the angled wood. This one is like the two that held onto Linda for so long. The butterflies arrive at the house in cocoons. There is a glass window where you can watch the butterflies emerge. Attendants release them when wings are dry and they are ready to fly. We were there about 2 hours and were amazed to see so many emerge. Sadly all the eggs

must be destroyed by regulation. I think it would be very hard to feed all those hungry caterpillars, too.

Speaking of hungry, we all were, and decided to have lunch at a wonderful Chinese buffet.

Aug. 17, 2006

Here are the falls this city is named for. Historians and archeologists feel that this was a gathering place for trade since people first found the falls.



The stone we are sitting on is Sioux Quartzite and used to build many of the buildings in downtown Sioux Falls.



Here I am with a sculpture of a buffalo.

There is a domestic herd of buffalo near Sioux Falls, but it is too near the interstate highway exit to get a good picture. There is also a large herd in Custer State Park, not too far from Mount Rushmore. We had supper in the neatest little diner on Phillips Ave. It's called the Diner on Phillips and is styled like an old aluminum railcar-diner. They played lots of 50's songs, and the food was wonderful.

Aug. 18, 2006

Today we are driving to Mitchell, SD, home of the World's only Corn Palace. It is about 75 miles from Sioux Falls. The original Corn Palace was established in 1892 and called "The Corn Belt Exposition". Early settlers displayed the harvest on the building to show the fertility of the soil in SD. Now they are beautiful murals that are torn down and re-designed annually. The only years that were duplications were during wartime, and extreme hardship.



The theme this year is "Salute to Rodeo".



Here I am by a mural that shows how the murals are made. It's like a paint by number—only with corn.



Here are Linda and I and some buses out front at the Corn Palace.



This is probably the closest I'll get to Mount Rushmore, but if you go to see the Corn Palace, remember to go inside and look around. This mural was inside. Linda bought me a camera as a souvenir. It doesn't take pictures but it has pictures of South Dakota in it, like a Viewmaster and it's just my size!

One picture is of a rabbit with horns, so I had to ask "what is it?" Linda said it is a Jackalope and is a fictitious cross between a jack rabbit and a pygmy antelope. Some say it can imitate the human voice and eludes capture by emitting sounds like, "there he goes".



While we were in Mitchell, we visited The Enchanted World Doll Museum.

The outside looks like a castle. Here I am near the drawbridge (front door). With a house full of guys, and not so many of my friends around, Linda thought I might be a little lonely. So we looked for some ideal girls.



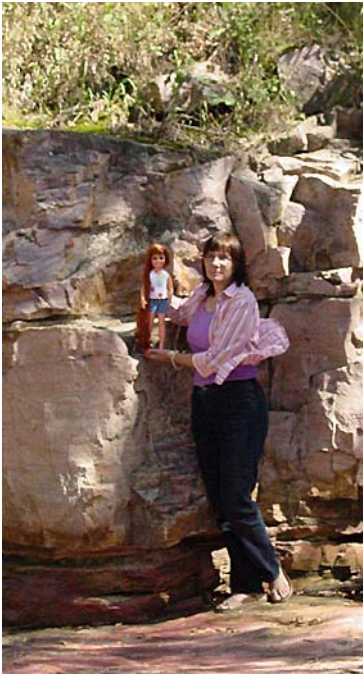
We found many Patti Playpals and even a Peter, but this case was all they had of my relatives. Hi cousin, Velvet!

Linda bought a tiny porcelain doll, and I got a soft teddy bear sheriff. We did a lot of walking and were tired. We had supper at the Bonanza. Some of the things we missed seeing in Mitchell were:

- Dakota Discovery Museum (Linda wanted to see the Oscar Howe Paintings)
- Mitchell Prehistoric Indian Village
- Model Car Museum (Ben's Choice)

Aug. 19, 2006

We are going to the Pipestone National Monument. Now we know that it is technically in Minnesota, but it is close enough and is a fun day trip. It is about 45 miles from Sioux Falls. It is an active and ancient quarry for pipestone, sacred stone to Native Americans. Carver's prize the stone which durable and soft enough to carve.



Here I am with Linda in an old quarry pit.

The pipestone left in this one is not of good quality so it has been preserved to show the quartzite above that must be removed to get to the red layer of pipestone, which can clearly be seen near Linda's feet. The Monument has maintained a beautiful hiking/walking trail.



There is a beautiful waterfall, and a stone tunnel. If you look close you can see Ben. We walked through some native prairie, although some introduced plants continue to thrive.



In the distance there is a cornfield, and in the right side a wind generator. Inside the monument building we were fortunate to be able to watch some of the carvers at work and saw a beautiful pipe being made. There are very old petraglyphs inside and some not so old ones outside. People carved their names in the quartzite just like at Stone Mountain, very, very old graffiti.

After we left Tom decided we should stop and see Devil's Gulch. This is the place that legend tells of Jesse James and his gang escaping a posse that was closing in on them after they robbed a bank in Northfield, MN. In the Garrettsen, SD park we drove to the bridge which now crosses the point where the James gang jumped across Splitrock Creek. Some say the horse was fatally wounded by a bullet, but that Jesse made it. Others say that's just plain silly, it would not have been that far out of the way for the posse to go around the area.



In this picture, you can see a chain link fence in the background. It's there for our protection. This is not a place for people with vertigo. The plaque commemorates Jesse's great escape. One thing is certain, no horse would jump it today, too much erosion and stone loss has made it impossible. Part of the palisades, it is a canyon like hike with waterfalls, really beautiful.

Aug. 20, 2006

I spent the day packing and getting ready to go to California. Linda and Tom drove to Sioux City to see some trains (Tom's hobby). Linda felt it was not a good place for me to go, very dirty, lots of old coal dust. So she showed me her favorite place in South Dakota.



This is a photograph Linda took of the badlands. She feels Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse are very beautiful sculptures, and what many people come to South Dakota to see. Nothing in the badlands is manmade, and she feels it is one of the most beautiful places she has been. It may be hard to see, but to the left of my shoulder there is a bright rectangle, that is a pick-up with a camper on, for scale. Eastern South Dakota was fun. Now I am off traveling again.

Love,  
*Crissy*