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Texas woman makes Petoskey stop in her RVing life



Malia Lane of Austin, Texas sits at the shoreline at Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park in Hancock -- a place she calls her "heart's home."

Malia Lane decided, in 2001, that two weeks of **vacation** a year was just not working for her.

So she quit her full-time job, bought a recreational vehicle, and since, has explored states ranging from Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas to Maine, New Mexico, Oregon and now Michigan -- all on her own.

"As soon as I crossed into Alaska, I pulled over to the side of the road and just sobbed," she said, describing her feeling of accomplishment.

Lane, 60, originally of New Orleans and currently of Austin, Texas, said Alaska was stunning, but Michigan was something else entirely -- something she wasn't entirely prepared for.

She started her RV tour of Michigan's coast on the east side of the state. Lake Huron made a distinct impression.

"I thought, oh, my God, the dunes! Oh, my God, the lake! Why would y'all lie to me!" said Lane about Hoefft State Park near Rogers City, where campers can see the sun rise and set from one vantage point on the park's dunes. "I've lived in Maui, but I've never seen anything like this."

Lane has made her living since 2001 as both a temporary legal assistant and a virtual assistant for lawyers around the country.

Too, she maintains a website called Malia's Miles, on which she blogs about her adventures and reviews state parks she has stayed in for each state's departments of natural resources.

"What's great about Malia is that she's a full-time RVer. She knows what RVers are looking for when they're planning their trips," said Maia Stephens, recreation programmer for the Michigan DNR. "She's an invaluable resource for us."

In particular, Lane has pointed out confusing signage that led her, driving a 36-foot Itasca Sunflyer, to a dead end.

"Also, Malia is not from Michigan, and has not been born and raised here, so it's been great for us to get her perspective on things ... not only Michigan's topographical and geographical differences, but the different personalities you can find in each region of Michigan," said Stephens.

Northward up the coast of Lake Huron, Lane said everyone she met along the way assured her: wait until you get to the Upper Peninsula.

And along with the kindness of a stranger, who helped her with her car trouble, Lane was about to see what everyone was talking about: for Lane, it was Lake Superior.

"I started getting it at McLain State Park (in Hancock)," said Lane, whose RV was perched atop a bluff overlooking Superior. "By the time I got to the Porcupine Mountains, I got it. ... I got to the Porcupines, and it was zip. Stop. I don't

want to go anywhere else. ... Alaska was my biggest accomplishment. I saw lakes melting there. I saw the biggest baddest glaciers. But I would never live there. I would consider living in the Porcupines -- that's my heart's home."

But wait -- a woman, alone with her RV? Full time? How does she do it, and is it vacation every day, like eating ice cream for every meal?

Hardly, she says.

"Look, people think I'm brave. I'm not. I try to make that clear," she said. "I get depressed, I get anxious, I get scared, shaking in my boots. But please understand, don't let fear stop you. It can pause you, and you can go under it and around it, but don't let it stop you."

But she had to leave Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. She was meeting her daughter for a week at Traverse City State Park -- passing Petoskey State Park by.

She was only convinced to come back by a friend she had met in the Upper Peninsula, a Petoskey resident.

And it was a good thing she was convinced to come back.

"I'm in love with Petoskey," she said, as she is currently extending her stay in the area. "I'm so glad I'm here. When I was in Harbor Springs, I went, 'Yay. Ok. I'm revived.' Harbor Springs revived me."

To read more about Lane's adventures, visit her website at www.maliasmiles.com.

Link: <http://www.petoskeynews.com/sports/outdoors/pnr-fulltime-rver-explores-michigan-20111012,0,436940.story>

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Comments:

kerby at americanrv.com at 2:28 PM October 12, 2011

I've worked in an RV dealership in Grand Rapids Michigan for 16 years and have had many conversions with people (from all around our country) about the wonderful camping opportunities in this Great lake State.

I have always seen & felt the Rule of Reciprocity pervade through all RVer's.

This rule is especially important to share with the sceptical novice single RVer.

I don't hesitate to mention the Loners on Wheels RV club to all the single RVers I meet. Check them out @ www.lonersonwheels.com

livingourdreams at 10:49 AM October 12, 2011

I have been following Malia since she has been in Michigan, she is my hero! I have so much respect for Malia and every single lady out there that is following their dreams and living full time in an RV! I have recommended her to many of my single friends who are afraid to RV without a man, I tell them what would be worse at the end of your life laying in bed wishing you had followed your dreams or laying in bed KNOWING you did it, I would rather try and fail then not have tried at all! I have been reading everything I could get my hands on about full-time RVing, told my husband when I retire we are out of here, so here we are in Texas heading for our first Camphosting position in Mission Texas! People have asked me "what if your husband dies while you are on the road" I tell them I will keep going, I have a CDL and 11 years of experience driving a bus, I will continue on, he will do the same"! Because I know after reading Malia's Miles and becoming friends with her through her blogs, she is an inspiration to every single gal out there! I will always come back to Michigan in the spring and summer because I still love Michigan and I have family there, but before the snow falls we will be gone! I miss the beautiful fall colors but because of Malia's pictures I can still see them thru her eyes! Viola Cook