Week 1, Leaving Montana

The difficulty of leaving, and of major change in general, is one of those things that we humans easily forget. It makes sense, as a willingness to tackle change and new opportunities is certainly a trait that has aided our species, and our progenitors, in the push to the outer reaches of the tree of life that humans represent.

After two weeks of solid effort on the house, getting it ready to hand over to our renters, I was burned out and cross eyed, wondering what I'd gotten myself into, and why I didn't remember it being as difficult when we moved to Finland. See the previous paragraph.

After handing over the keys, we spent the following week on a final Montana adventure: the Butte 50, a trip to our land on the Dearborn River, and then back to Missoula for a send off party at Kadin and Melissa's new place and some last minute chores. It was a great final week, seeing family and friends especially, but it also served to increase the feeling of a never-ending run-up to, and preparation for, the move.

In any event, by the time we finally loaded up the truck with our bikes and bags and set off for Spokane, it was with a tremendous sense of relief. Little did we know, more drama was in store.

First, we found out that despite assurance to the contrary, shipping our bikes on the plane was going to cost $200 per bike, or $600 total. Given the general shoestring nature of this trip for us, the news was a blow, but we quickly shifted; we'll certainly get our money's worth while we're here. And it's worth noting that the first thing Alex did when we got to our new place was put his bike together and go riding.

Next was San Francisco, where we rented a car and went into town in order to productively pass a seven hour layover. We walked downtown -- what a hip city San Francisco is -- then drove across the Golden Gate Bridge, whose towers were shrouded in fog, and finally, took a brief walk on Fisherman's Wharf to end our excursion, or so we thought. Our GPS, which had been so helpful up to that point, took us on a heavily trafficked detour, which lost us about 45 minutes. Needless to say, it got pretty tense in the car, but we made it back to the gate just as they were starting to board our flight -- clearly too close for comfort, but it could have been much worse.

We all breathed a deep sigh as we sank into our seats on the big trans-Pacific plane, and from that point on it was smooth sailing all the way to Dunedin.