

Ursula's column *continued from page 6*

The food was awesome. For supper I had fish and chips. My mom had the same thing and we shared some butternut squash soup which was wonderful.

My mom and I got up just before 7 a.m. and went out for a short walk and I got some pictures before breakfast.

For breakfast I had pancakes with some kind of fruit spread or butter with fruit mixed in. It was awesome. My mom had an egg omelet with veggies mixed in, she let me sample some. It was very tasty. Like I said, they have great food. The view was awesome from where we sat in the dining room. It is worth going back. Who knows maybe I will get to go back and do some more exploring outdoors with walking or hiking.

On to the smoke jumpers.

This is the second time that I have been there and I know I already wrote one story about them, We left Sun Mountain Lodge about 9 a.m. heading back into Winthrop for a little more shopping before the smoke jumper tour.

They have a glass shop which is another favorite of my Mom's. A couple owns this little shop. The husband hand blows different things to sell from vases to glasses. I bought a few necklaces made from blown glass with different designs. He even makes magnets with the hand blown glass. My mom bought a couple of those. It is a very interesting shop.

After shopping we headed out for our tour of the smoke jumper base, where we met our tour guide. They first start out with the history of the place. Now, don't worry I am not going to go into all that.

He did mention that some of the Army guys who came to train for smoke jumping

did not make it all the way through because it is very vigorous, even some of the fire fighters have trouble completing the training.

In case you are wondering what smoke jumping is, it's fire fighters who jump from airplanes near the location of a fire.

However before they can be smoke jumpers they have to go through several weeks of training, they practice jumping off a roof with their parachutes. Other training includes pushups, sit-ups, running, walking, and then walking for about half an hour with their heavy packs.

Once they have that down then they can go on a job. They send out about eight smoke jumpers at a time.

They also have a spotter that tells them the safest place to jump from the plane. Before jumping, the spotter throws wind indicators out and then briefs the jumpers on the wind conditions, then they get into position to jump.

Then once they jump all of their gear is dropped from the plane with a three-day supply of food, water and the tools they will need to fight the fire. If they are stranded for more than three days they have to be able to find food and water until help arrives. Should their parachute get stuck in a tree that person is responsible to climb the tree and retrieve the chute.

They also have to be able to carry all of their own gear out of the woods. So by time they pack the chute and the jump suit the equipment gets pretty heavy.

This time the plane was not on the base. During my last visit we got to get on the plane. These fire fighters are ones that help to protect our forest.

Let's be thankful for them.