

Messing About on the River.

These September days are glorious. They are still extremely sunny, but there is a coolness in the air which makes it easier(1) to be outside. On Sunday, we took a trip to Leavenworth, a nearby town. I often go there for a change of scenery. It is very mountainous and well kept(2). The town has been deliberately made to look German, and the calendar in Leavenworth is full of special German-style(3) celebrations. The reason we went, was to go to the park. What makes it special, is that part of it is an island, called Black Bird Island. It is surrounded by the Wenatchee River, and accessible from one bridge. As you cross the bridge, you enter into a gentle forest that has a maze(4) of pathways. We walked until we could see the river through the trees, went down an embankment, and chose a spot on one of the rocky, sandy beaches. I found a shady area to sit and take photos, while my kids took off their socks and shoes and got straight into the water. They became hunters, hunters of fish and unusual stones. We also took our metal detector, to see if we could find some treasure. Well, a coke can and an old nail aren't exactly treasure, but it was fun to hear the metal detector come alive and make noise. The embankment next to us was actually full of natural treasures. We found a snake, empty birds' nests, a bird's egg, and a little den full of seeds; it must have belonged to a mouse or some other rodent. The hours flew by(5); and before we knew it, we had to leave. It was a perfect day of simple relaxation and childlike discovery.

1. 'To make it easier' is a phrase that we use often in English.
 - a. The new parking area makes it easier to access the shops.
 - b. On-line shopping makes our lives much easier.
2. 'Well kept' means 'well looked after' or 'neat and tidy'.
 - a. My neighbor's garden is so well kept; it looks like a park.
 - b. The baskets of flowers outside that shop are really well kept.
3. 'German-style'. The use of '-style' is very common, and almost any noun can be put in front of it to add sense to a sentence. It is correct to do this, even if you the phrase appears 'made up' or 'newly created' by you. It is an informal grammar structure.
 - a. I love their French-style house; their English-style garden compliments it.
 - b. Their 1920's-style wedding was very classy.
4. 'A maze' means the same as 'a labyrinth'.
 - a. You can pay to walk around the corn maze, and try to find your way out.
 - b. The hotel was like a maze; there were so many hallways that you could get lost easily.
5. 'The hours flew by'. Time is often expressed with the verb 'to fly' to give the meaning of it going quickly.
 - a. The summer flew by; before we knew it, it was over.
 - b. The time I spend with my sister always flies by because we have so much fun.

Questions? Comments? Email me at acupofenglish@hotmail.com You are all welcome to join my FACEBOOK page called Anna Fromacupofenglish