

**June 7—On Our Way to Israel!**

Omaha-Phoenix, 6 a.m. CDT Tuesday – 6:48 a.m. MDT Tuesday (2 hours)

Phoenix-Philadelphia, 8:55 a.m. MDT Tuesday – 4:49 p.m. EDT Tuesday (6 hours)

Philadelphia-Tel Aviv 9:15 p.m. EDT Tuesday-3:15 p.m. Israel Time Wednesday (10 hours)

Steve and I left home in Blair at 3:30 a.m. to go the 20 miles to the Omaha airport. It was very dark (oh-dark 30) but in our headlights we saw a little red fox crossing the road ahead of us. Later there was a bigger animal, probably a raccoon that nearly ran into us.

There are thirty people on our tour, all connected in one way or another with Country Bible Church of Blair, Nebraska. For our journey out, we all are wearing our yellow Israel tee-shirts: Sababa! (Awesome!). We took a picture with the Omaha World Herald newspaper.

As we flew toward Phoenix, the sun had risen, and we saw the Grand Canyon below. It seems crazy to travel west before going east to Israel, but Phoenix is the hub city of US Airways and the trip is \$200 cheaper than using other airlines or routes.

As we left Phoenix for Philadelphia, Steve looked out of the window and remarked, “Those aren’t clouds, they are fire!” We saw walls of fire on the ground, with smoke billowing high. There are thousands of acres being burned by wildfires. Last Saturday, coming home from Ames, Iowa there were strong southwest winds—those same winds are making the Arizona wildfires out of control. (We had been in Iowa for our granddaughter Hazel’s birth June 1, 2011, caring for our 3 year old grandson Evan while Ashley, Jon and Hazel were in the hospital).

Philadelphia is the home of Ben Franklin, the Liberty Bell, and Betsy Ross’ house. We had quite a layover there, but we didn’t leave the airport. We saw a life-size Liberty Bell made of Legos™, and also learned that the real one cracked after 90 years of continuous use—ringing for every celebration the nation or city had.

We went through air security in Omaha, but we went through Israeli customs in Philadelphia. We had no cell phone coverage for Alltel in Phoenix, but Philadelphia had fine cell service—4 “towers” or bars showed on the phone. We talked to Grandma, and to our son, Andrew—Andrew has an early Guards today—he is part of the band welcoming home some soldiers from Afghanistan –or it might be to make up the missed Guards time for the cancelled weekend when the US Budget ran out earlier this year. We talked to Jon and Ashley. Hazel only wakes up two or three times a night. My sister Donna, who lives just north of Herman, NE said they weren’t flooded but Rich’s boss was moving his heavy equipment by their house to avoid water. Jon goes to Guards Friday, so Andrew is on a special deployment. I spoke to my brother Ken: he and Kay are leaving for England for their walking tour (June 14-July 6). In England the high temperatures will be in the low 60’s to the upper 50’s, with nighttime temperatures down to 33<sup>0</sup> F. They will be walking 12-15 miles a day. Ken said to wave on our way home—we should be flying overhead on their third day walking in Scotland.