

Where in the world is Ken Knutson?

Associate editor Ken Knutson isn't at his desk today.

He and his 7-year-old son, Wyatt, are headed toward Erie, Pa.

The 460-mile trek is the first leg of their journey to visit a town of 2,032 in Berkshire County, Mass. From there, the pair will head to another hamlet in Cheshire County, N.H., numbering some 4,046 residents.

Why am I informing you of the Knutson family vacation plans? Well, Ken isn't taking this trip primarily for pleasure. He's visiting two of the four other towns named "Hinsdale" in the United States. In the summer of 2017, Jim Slonoff and his wife, Ilene, will travel to the one in New York and I will head to the one in Montana.

Don't worry — we haven't run out of stories to write here. We're embarking on this project in honor of our 10th anniversary on Sept. 28.

When we first started talking a year ago about how to celebrate the milestone, Ken suggested we travel to the other Hinsdales and write about them. I thought he was nuts and dismissed the idea, figuring his wife would never agree to take their three young boys on an 1,850-mile road trip. (I was right, by the way, which is why just Ken and Wyatt are in the car right now.) Jim agreed it was a crazy idea.

But Ken was persistent, working the idea into conversation or bringing it up at a staff meeting every couple of months or so. I kept saying no, figuring there was no way my spouse would agree to this scheme either.

Then, at some point, Ken mentioned he might make it a father-son trip. And it occurred to me I could take a mother-daughter trip (at that point, I was thinking of going to New York, the closest other Hinsdale). Without having to convince our spouses this was a good idea, the crazy plan started to seem like a possibility.

The clincher was when Jim agreed to make one of the trips and Dan agreed to drive 1,202



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miles to Montana, with the incentive that we would visit Mt. Rushmore and his Uncle Glen on the way.

So here we are, with Ken en route and Jim and I already plotting our respective trips next summer.

Ken will be providing updates on his trip, starting today, through

Twitter and Facebook. Readers will learn more about his travels and the two easternmost Hinsdales in a six-part series that will run July 14-Aug. 18.

Jim and I have another year before our trips, but that hasn't stopped us from making some initial plans.

I am pretty sure I am going to have to trump Jim's annual Fourth of July trip to South Haven to attend the Milk River Days in Hinsdale, Mont.

With a bank, post office, bar and cafe, ice cream shop, pottery shop, gunsmith, leather-smith, beauty parlor, gas station and convenience store making up the bulk of the downtown, I'm not sure I'll have much to do there if I don't go for the celebration.

Jim is less interested in selecting dates for his trip. He's much more preoccupied with finding ways to prove his Hinsdale is the best of the four destinations.

"My Hinsdale is going to be better than yours because my Hinsdale has two historians," he said.

Or "My Hinsdale has a Hinsdale Central."

Frankly, I think Ken got the best of the destinations, with one town on the Appalachian trail and another with a mountain and a state park. But I don't want to steal his thunder by revealing too much.

So check our Facebook page, follow us on Twitter and great ready for an armchair trip to destinations way off the beaten path that you already know by name. (Not as cool as this one, of course.)

— Pamela Lannom is editor of *The Hinsdalean*. Readers can email her at plannom@thehinsdalean.com.