

2017 Calgary Stampede



**Special Military Active Recreational Travelers
(S*M*A*R*T)**

2017 Calgary Stampede

June 24-July 30, 2017



This Journal was prepared through a collaborative effort of several members of the travel group and contains photos from many of the 44 individuals. The contents are solely for the entertainment and use of the 2017 S*M*A*R*T travel group and not to be used for any commercial purposes.

Errors, omissions and misspellings are purely unintentional and solely our responsibility.

Introduction

This Journal captures only a few of the events and memories of the summer. Each family will have many more stories and photos to share with family and friends.

The Journal is intended to jog our memories of where we were and what we did and contains only a small portion of the thousands of photos taken. Our group assembled thousands of photos from a variety of cameras. We encourage members to utilize other technological wizardry such as Facebook, Dropbox, Flickr etc to make more photos available to all. Please post your best photos on SMART's Facebook page.

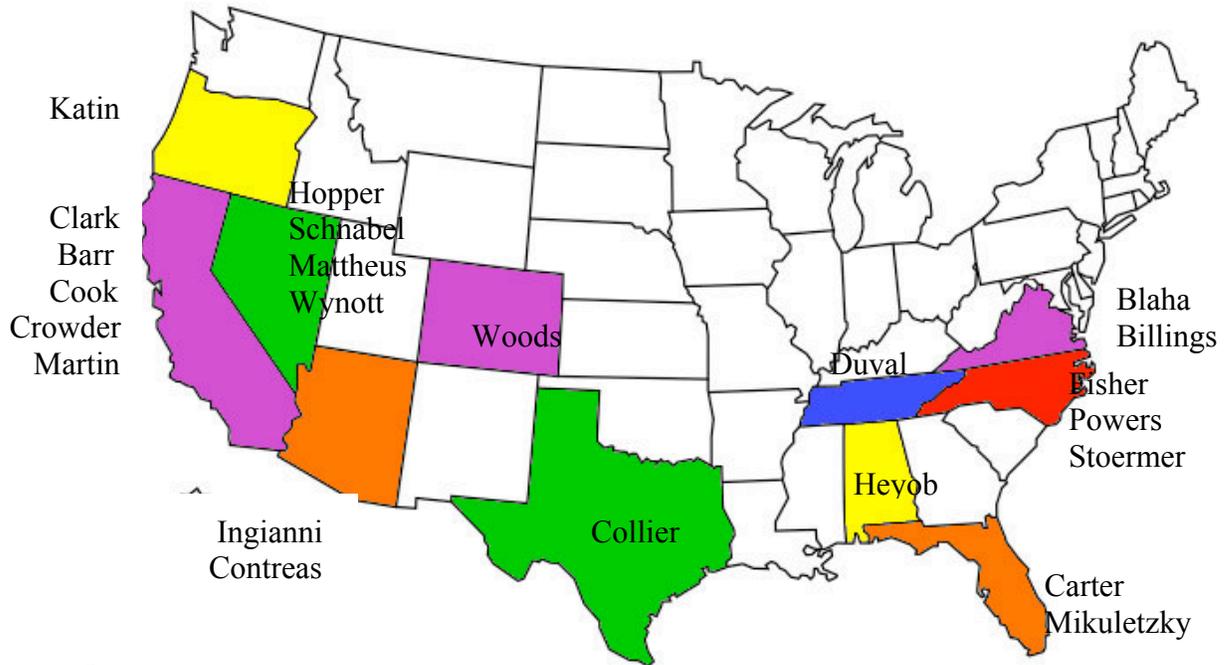
Soon this journal will also be placed on the SMART web site Caravan section so you can notify your friends and family where they can read it.

For most of us this was an unforgettable experience and one we will remember and talk about for many years. We love our country and our closest neighbor Canada. This summer we experienced some of the best of both.

One of our participants, Jenny Schnabel, writes weekly poetry for the Nevada Appeal newspaper in Carson City. She kindly wrote poems throughout our adventure and they are included where appearing in the Journal.

We all owe a special thanks to Wagon Masters Jon and Nancy Katin and Carl and Gwen Hopper for their superb planning and execution. They have been planning this for more than a year. Their prior experience and familiarity with the entire region was invaluable. No one could have led us better.

We Came From Many States



The Great Adventure!

Arriving from all over the USA, 22 rigs gathered at Dick's RV park in Great Falls, Montana in the last week of June 2017. Most of our group arrived early. After an organizational meeting where we introduced ourselves to all, we went out to a nearby Golden Corral as a group. No one left hungry.

On Sunday we car-pooled to the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center located on the banks of the Missouri River. In 1805 Lewis and Clark encountered a major obstacle in their journey up the Missouri in the Great Falls described by the Indians. Expecting one large water falls requiring about half a day to bypass, there were actually 5 waterfalls over the next 18 miles and a strenuous month long portage. The center exhibits describe the events very well.



Next we drove to the Charles M Russell Art Museum, a famous Cowboy artist. We began with a picnic on the lawn in gorgeous weather. Yard-long Subway sandwiches fed our large group very well.



Another very knowledgeable guide described Russell's life 1864-1926 and his art in oil and water-colors, sculptures and other media. One did not have to be an art expert to understand and appreciate his work.



Temperatures reached 82 F today and by the end of the day the snow in Glacier National Park next on our schedule sounds more appealing.

Our first caravan move to a second campground was a comfortable 160-mile trip to St Mary, MT. We traveled in multiple groups of 3-5 rigs 20 minutes apart. It was mostly flat prairie lands with plenty of rolling hills some quite steep. We began seeing snow covered mountain tops about 60 miles away.

Arriving at Johnson's RV park in St Mary, MT was an adventure in itself. The park is located on a large hill and some of the turns are tight. A little rustic but very adequate. We are parked between very wind-blown quaking aspen trees.



The East entrance to Glacier National Park is very close. The view is fantastic.



Poem #1

*We're headed up North
From Great falls today
Per our instructions
From Jon and Carl
We are on our way.
Five groups in all
A caravan we will be.
We've got our directions
We are going to St. Mary's
Blue skies greet us*

*There is excitement in the air.
We're off on our adventure.
To Canada, I declare.
Our prayer is for health & safety
As we drive along the road.
Our minds alert
And our eyes observant
There's a story to be told.
In front of us, a doe & her fawn
Crossed the road
Leaped over the fence*

*It was quite a show.
One of many
I will attest
Soon to be surrounded by nature
What will come next?
A sea of green as far as the eye
can see
Dotted here and there
With herds of cattle
Snow capped mountains
I can see.*

After everyone was parked we had a short social hour in our chairs.



It rained for a while and blew all night. It was windy and overcast this morning but as we waited for our tour buses the sun came out and brightened up the day. Sun Tours is solely owned and operated by members of the Blackfeet tribe. Our driver Jeremy who is a member of the tribe and has a degree in forensic anthropology was a wonderful guide. We learned as much about the Blackfeet culture as we did about Glacier Park. We learned about Nafi, the old man, and how the land was created.

We toured along the north shore of St Mary lake, entered the National Park using our



Golden Age cards and took many photos of the mountains surrounding us.

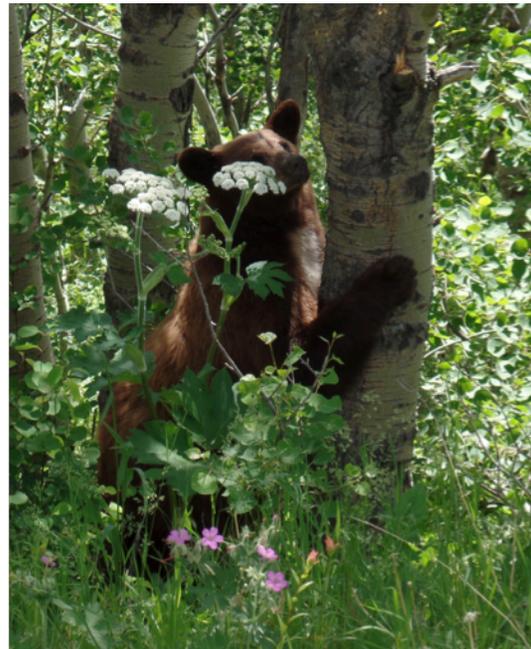
Unfortunately, we were only able to go 12 miles on the Going-To-The-Sun Road as the snowplows haven't completely opened the road. We covered probably only 1/3 of the route before we had to turn around.



Stopped several times for photos and had nice lunch at the Many Glacier Hotel. Like many other hotels and lodges in various wilderness parks this 300 room hotel built 100 years ago by a railroad baron offered luxury accommodations to wealthy folks. Great scenery. Later this day we learned that the road will open this evening.



Our biggest surprise occurred on the way home...a large cinnamon colored, black bear just a few feet off the road. We saw it first in the first bus but the second bus got the best photos. No one got off the bus!



We ended the day with a chili cookout provided by the Wagon Master and Tailgunner. Our meal was complete with homemade cornbread and multiple cookies.



Poem # 2

*A Sun valley tour
The very next day
Be there at 8:45
So we can be on our way
Our guide was Jeremiah.
He played the bullfrog song.
He was 88 1/8 Blackfeet Indian.
We could sing along.
We went up the sun road.*

As far as we could go.

*Saw glaciers, streams & lakes
Took pictures by the road.
We stopped at Many Glacier
Had lunch with our neighbors too
The historic lodge & dining room
Presented a picturesque view.
We had a glimpse of nature
A bear along the road
Quick, just take a look*

He was surely on the go.

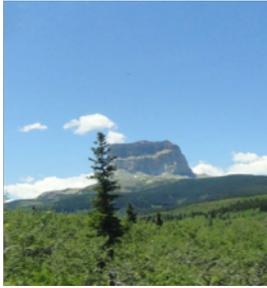
*Now we know about the Blackfeet
Their customs and their ways.
He sang his Blackfeet goodbye
song
He really made our day.
What a wonderful trip
What a beautiful day
But on to our next adventure
Tomorrow is a brand new day!*

Onward to Canada... many of us spent the morning at the Glacier National Park Visitor center since it was just a short travel day (47 miles). Time well spent! Good Discovery Channel video about the park and multiple exhibits about bears, coyotes, wolves and Native American cultures. We learned more about Nafi, the old man and how the land was formed.

View from the visitors center.



The trip across the border to Waterton, AB was slow, short and absolutely beautiful. We had no difficulties at the border and most of the trip was a photographic event. Chief mountain was the closest marvel as we crossed one mountain range and entered an incredible large valley with 50 mile vistas.



For the next two nights we are staying at a Canadian National park in Waterton, Alberta. We are surrounded by gorgeous mountains. The spaces between RV's are larger than normal and most have communities of Richardson ground squirrels. Canadians call them gophers as they look more like a gopher than a squirrel.



There are deer wondering through the park and a woman in a red golf cart and multiple border collies has been hired to chase the deer away. She directs the dogs with whistle signals and they seem to enjoy their work.

Warm weather, gusty winds, occasional sprinkles followed by bright sunshine and zero wind.

Great weather for an outside social period before dinner



Remington Carriage Museum. Rained during the night and was cool 50F this morning with very overcast skies. We car-pooled 25 miles to Cardston, AB to visit the Remington Carriage Museum, the largest collection of horse-drawn vehicles in North America. Rated the best Indoor Attraction in Canada.

By the time we arrived the sun was out and it was a beautiful day. We began with a film about the major role of the carriage industry in both the US and Canada. The largest companies were Studebaker in USA and McLaughlin in Canada. Everyone had a carriage ride around the area where we saw multiple mule deer including a buck with a large rack. The museum is beautifully decorated and just fun to enjoy.



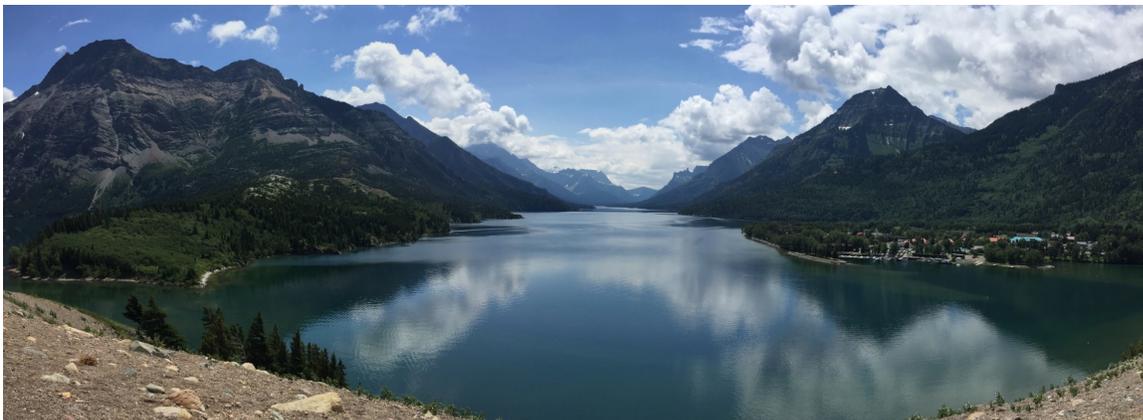
Remington was a Cardston rancher and business man who bought an old sleigh to bring Santa Claus into town in a 1957 Christmas parade. He began collecting and personally restoring carriages for the next 30 years. Before he died in 1987 he gave the entire collection to the Government of Canada. More than 300 vehicles are displayed and in storage. Some are rented out for special occasions. Many of the vehicles are valued at \$400,000 and one formerly belonging to a Vanderbilt at \$1.2m



The Restoration shop not only can make any carriage part using period tools they also make carriage kits for sale. After nice guided tours we enjoyed a soup and salad lunch and wandered around on our own.



On the way back to the campground some of us stopped at the Prince of Wales Hotel perched on a hilltop nearby to gawk at the view. It is spectacular and worth the trip to Canada just to view.



Poem #8

*Crossed the border
From Montana today
We are now in Canada
We are on our way
Again we've seen a doe
With her little fawn,
Jumping through tall grasses
No need for alarm
Here we are again
Bordering the Kootenai Trail
Last time we were on bicycles
And it started to hail.
We jumped under some trees*

*Waiting for the storm to pass
But it wasn't too long
We were wet on our ass
Now what do you guess?
It wasn't crumpets & tea.
But only Honey Brown ale
We were waiting to see
The Remington Carriage
Museum
We did today.
The old horse and buggy
We trotted away.
Jeremiah in the workroom
Showed us what he did.
We learned about restoration*

*With all of his wood
Levi guided us through.
It was quite a tour.
Had croissant sandwiches
And soup de jour.
Then we were released
To go on our own.
So for us it was Waterton.
Jon and Nancy drove us home.
Tomorrow it's Granum
The Canadian barn dance
We'll do
Ed and I have done this.
You will love it too!*

Our next move was a short 76 miles to Granum, AB...we're getting closer to Calgary. Nice drive across open plains country with the horizon lined with mountain peaks.



We'll spend the next 4 days in Granum, AB.

At 4 PM we drove almost an hour to the Great Canadian Barn Dance, a place in the middle of nowhere for a most enjoyable Dinner Theatre.

This place is a family run operation for the past 33 years. No alcohol is served and the buffet dinner was very good.

Grace preceded dinner. Roast Pork and beef with lots sides and salads. After dinner the family entertained us with nearly 2 hours of music...Country western and mostly popular 60's 70's and 80's music. Everyone enjoyed it.



A very musical family, Dad, Mom, Mom's father(83), 19 year old son, 18 year old girl friend who graduated from high school yesterday and one other older man. The younger members all played multiple instruments and everyone sang. Incredible talent!

Poem #4

*The Prince of Wales
We waved goodbye.
The beautiful scenery
You could get high.*

*Green fields forever
With wind mills all around.
Picturesque little farms
The road goes on and on.*

*Off to the Great Canadian Barn
Dance
We will go.
Great food and entertainment
Music legends to behold.*

Canada Day July 1st 2017 Virtually every community in Canada has a community breakfast on Canada Day. Today is the 150th anniversary of the founding of Canada.

Except for a few sleepy heads, some of us drove about 1 mile and enjoyed blueberry pancakes, sausage, OJ and coffee for \$3 (\$2.28 US \$). Nice chance to talk with local folks. Next, we all carpoled to Fort MacLeod, for a much larger 150th celebration at the restored fort. It's a small town and was not crowded. Friendly folks, free small Canada flags, Maple leaf stickers and lapel pins.

Watched a drill team in period 1885 uniforms fire multiple cannon demonstrations, Indian music and dances and mounted horse riding. We received Indian blessings and welcomes from the mayor and other officials. Just prior to a Bar-B-Q lunch we watched a female drill team in Royal Canadian Mounted Police uniforms perform a mounted Musical Ride with intricate riding.



It was hot 85 F and clear blue skies. Shade was at a premium and after lunch most of us were ready to seek cool locations and perhaps a nap. A very enjoyable morning among our friendly neighbors, with which we have so much in common.

Poem #5

*The spirit's upon us
It's Canada's Day.
Food, fun and festivities
We all like to play.
Fort Macleod it was the best
North West Mounted Police.
Were put to the test.
Raised Canada's colors.*

*High in the sky
Shot off their cannon.
Had smoke in our eyes.
The Indians danced
In their tribal best.
They were all ages
The drums played the rest.
The drill team performed*

*On their musical ride.
Dressed to the hilt
They rode side by side.
All in all, it was a wonderful
day.
It ended with fireworks
exploding
In a big bang of a way!*

Like our 4th of July celebrations, Canada Day usually ends with a community fireworks Grand Finale. With our northern latitude, late sunset and long twilight period the fireworks began at 11 PM... an hour after some of us were in bed. Since the campground, golf course and open areas are on the edge of town, we all at least heard the fireworks at the golf course next to our campground?

Sunday morning July 2, 2017, another beautiful morning and a pancake sausage breakfast served by the Wagon master and Tail gunner.



Today we car-pooled to Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



It may be the oldest, largest and best preserved of the many buffalo jump sites across the Western Plains. www.headsmashedin.org



Archaeological evidence indicates the site has been used for more than 6000 years. We watched a very good video about the significant efforts the indigenes people went through to direct buffalo herds to the cliff. Horses were only available the past 300 years. Built into the side of the hill, the visitor center has exhibits on multiple

levels and elevators to the top where the grasslands view is incredible.

Of interest is that during the 6000 years of use there is one 1000 year period where it was not used. There are lots of guesses but no one really knows why. In some places buffalo bones were 10 meters thick.

After a nice social hour in the sun and shade we had a super pot-luck dinner. With 22 couples the variety was tremendous and super good.



Poem #6

Head Smashed In Buffalo

Jump

It says it all.

Lured by the Indians

The buffalo took a fall.

Ever so scared

The buffalo were.

Great spirits to the Indians

Down off the hill.

Lured by the runners

They worked for days.

Setting rocks and small trees

To guide their way.

It really seems awful

They died in a pile.

But it sustained the Indians

From starvation.

Through their winter

And to travel more miles.

It all seems amazing

Here in Fort Macleod.

The Canadians and Indians

To them we applaud.

Monday 3 July 2017 We begin our second week with another beautiful day with clear skies and 80 F plus temperatures. Today we car-pooled about 60 miles west to Frank Slide Interpretive center.

At 4:10AM on April 29, 1903, 90 million tons of rocks slid down Turtle Mountain in less than 90 seconds obliterating the eastern edge of the town of Frank, the Railroad and the coal mine. It remains the deadliest landslide in Canada's history as about 90 people lost their lives. Many are still buried under the rocks.



The rocks flowed out about 1.5 miles and about 2 miles wide and looks very much today as it did in 1903. Only a few homes were destroyed and most of the town of 600 was not damaged. Fourteen coal miners dug themselves out by 5 PM the same day. A small river at the foot of the mountain was not blocked as the rocks flew across at 70 mph.

A very knowledgeable staff member described the events to all of us and a short film recreated the events. A remaining portion of the mountain is under constant radar monitoring because it may well slide in the future. It was worth the long drive to learn about this tragedy and the heartbreaking events that occurred.

On the way back some of our group visited a Coal Mine into the mountain.

Many of us also stopped at the Leitch Collieries, a few miles down the road. This was one of the largest and most ambitious mining operations in this area. It opened in 1909 and closed in 1919 due to hard times. In its hay-day it was processing 2000 tons of coal a day and had a large capacity electric power plant. Only ruins remain.



While not part of the day's schedule, many of our group stopped at a WalMart in Pincher Creek.

Poem # 7

*Franktown, Franktown
We came to see.
Such a disaster in 1903.
While the town
They were sleeping.
All snug in their beds.*

*4:10 All the rocks rumbled
down
And 90 were dead.
Yes, it was good.
When the miners came out.
Some families were saved
And others were not.*

*Buried beneath rock
For a mile or more.
Whole families were gone
They were no more.
Mother nature is odd
We know so well.
No rhyme, no reason
But a story to tell.*

4th of July We spent the morning caravanning about 100 miles to Mountain View Campground just outside Calgary. Our route was on 4-lane Highway 2 past beautiful fields of Rapeseed (Canola oil) and lots of hay fields. We even saw one Marshmellow farm.



It was an easy drive and many fueled at a convenient Flying J station before arriving at the park.

To commemorate the date our leaders prepared a very American 4th of July Picnic. Grilled burgers and hotdogs with all the trimmings. Lots of Red-White-Blue today as we all wore our 4th of July shirts.



Wednesday July 5th Calgary by Bus. We boarded our bus about 8:30 this morning. Our bus was a beautiful brand new 2017 bus that still had the new car smell. The bus company owner, Tony, was our driver and running commentary guide. We learned that 110,000 US citizens live in Calgary, most associated with the booming oil and gas business. The movie " Fargo " was filmed in Calgary.



Our first stop was Fort Calgary, a historic fort built in 1875 to establish law and order in this area. Watched an interesting movie and toured lots of great exhibits. Our docent was very interesting and held an impromptu style show with three of our members wearing Red RNWMP coats. We were a little rushed and could have spent more time there.

Down town art work



Next we continued through the downtown area, past the Stampede grounds to the Calgary tower... a prominent landmark, with a rotating restaurant at the top. Elevators whisked us to the observation deck for a premier view of the entire city and surrounding area. A portion of the observation deck has a transparent glass floor so one can look straight down at the street traffic 525 feet below. Not everyone took advantage of the view.



At 11:30 we were all seated in the rotating restaurant with a specially prepared multicourse menu in front of us. It was a special lunch in spectacular surroundings.

Properly fed, we returned to our new bus and continued further west to Heritage Park... "How the West was Once". We spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying this quaint village and heritage area. Seventy percent of the buildings are actual period buildings restored and furnished with products, furniture of the 1800's. Many very helpful guides in period dress answered our questions.

The automobile museum was a big hit with the men of our group. Restored vehicles in showroom condition included Cords, Auburns, Fords, Buicks, Oldsmobiles and every antique gas pump imaginable.

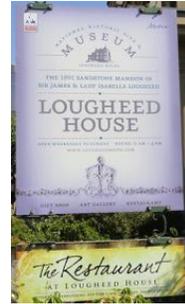


Train rides, horse cart rides and courtesy bus service and even a small amusement park are part of the venue. One hundred twenty seven acres with 180 unique exhibits. Great way to spent a beautiful afternoon. www.heritagepark.ca

Longheed House Calgary. Another clear sky, warm beautiful day.



Because of the heavy traffic downtown we rode a school bus to the center of Calgary to visit the Longheed house. Built in 1891 for a Canadian Senator, it was built with electricity, indoor plumbing, natural gas heat and all sandstone construction. Impressive at the time and impressive today. As arranged by our Tail gunner we had a white-linen, first class lunch and a interesting tour of the 14,000 sqft house.



There was a touch of Downton Abby throughout the house.

We also had another glimpse of the heavy traffic in Calgary.



We were told parking downtown is next only to New York City, with folks paying \$650 per month or more. Public rail travel in the center of the city is free. There is also an interesting Car2Go system of small Smart cars that rent by the minute. Multiple Car2Go cars are parked anywhere where it is legal. As a participant approaches the car unlocks and you pay approximately \$.41 per minute until you park it



somewhere else.

Calgary Stampede Parade. Our transportation issues were handled nicely with the use of school buses. The Stampede begins with an incredible city parade. We boarded our yellow bus at 8 AM today that delivered us to the center of the city just a block from our arranged bleacher seats. We were in our seats with our white



Stetson hats and water bottles before 9 AM.

With more than 100 entries, 200 horses and dozens of marching bands we were in our seats until after 11:30. It was hot but comfortable and very enjoyable. Multiple police and helpful ushers were in abundance. The many different floats emphasized the diversity of Calgary with multiple ethnic groups from Asia, Africa and even Viking outfits. Lots of western themes, cowboys, Indians, stagecoaches and beautiful horses and colorful costumes. Our cameras and smart phones got a good workout.



After the parade, our yellow bus delivered us to the Stampede grounds. Most of Alberta's residents appeared to have the same idea. We spent the next 3 ½ hours perusing the attractions, vendors and amusements of the Midway and surrounding areas.



Food and drink were abundant. Some of us watched horse shows in an air-conditioned arena. Many walked 4 miles or more. Finally our yellow school bus returned us to our campground where we ended the day with a Bar-B-Q dinner served by the Campground but paid for by the caravan.

Rodeo Day, Saturday July 8th . Breakfast at the Campground this morning and we are ready for another full day. Our members from southern and western states are used to hot weather and the 80's here while slightly uncomfortable are tolerable so far. It is quite unusual here however and Alberta is under heat warnings. The neighboring province, BC is fighting massive forest fires and have evacuated some areas.

Before noon we bused to the Stampede and took our reserved seats in a shaded portion of the arena. We watched numerous Rodeo events all afternoon. These are world-class riders. Officially this is the second day of the Stampede.

The opening ceremonies were impressive with multiple riders racing around the arena with flags, Indian dancing and even a two Canadian Military jet fly-over. Everyone stood for the Canadian National Anthem... "O-Canada". Video coverage might capture the activities but still photos can't. An unusual event raised several young cow-girls out of the grandstand and flew them by cables in the air over to the arena floor.



A sea of white hats



Rodeo participants came from all over the world, down-under and the majority from western USA. Several world-class riders are only 19 years old. The wild pony events featured young folks younger than teenagers.



We watched bronco busting, bull riding, barrel races, calf roping, steer wrestling and many other events. These participants follow a rodeo circuit and have long records of achievements. Staying on a bucking horse for 8 seconds must seem like a lifetime. Prize money ranged from \$5500 to \$1500 and more for the contenders. One announcement indicated one rider earned more the \$11,000 in about 11 seconds.

When we returned to Mountain View Campground, we ended the day with an excellent steak supper catered by the CG.



Not all of us were in bed before dark. Thanks Merlin Billings.

Sunday July 9th. Quiet day began with another pancake and sausage breakfast at the Campground. A day for laundry, shopping and resting to get ready for one of the biggest Stampede events tonight...Chuck Wagon Races!

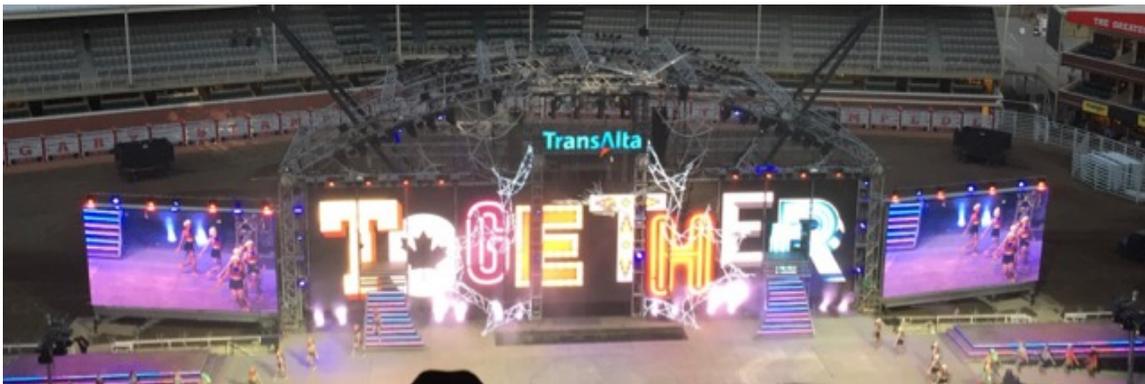
Wow! What a night! We began with a yellow bus ride through lighter late afternoon traffic and then joined more than 12,000 Rodeo fans in the Stampede Arena. Our Wagon Master had reserved the best seats in the house..."on the 50 yard line" dead center with the stage and in the top section where we could see the entire



track.

Chuck wagon races are one of the most exciting events of the Stampede. We watched nine heats with 3-4 Chuck wagons competing along with their two out-riders. All the horses are thoroughbreds, lean and fast. In between races the track maintenance equipment (impressive in its self) kept the track immaculate and fair to all participants. Several of the riders are multiple generations of their families. Grandfathers, sons and grandchildren. A 50-50 drawing raised more than \$20,000 for a charity. Very large prize money awards. We learned later that two wagons had mechanical problems and sadly one horse broke a leg and had to be put down.

During a slight intermission, the arena was transformed into a giant stage show beyond a word description. It was like a military operation, choreographed with multiple large John Deer tractors moving giant video screens, fireworks trailers and a "battleship" sized entertainment stage to the center. Since most of us are familiar with moving large rigs and with our military appreciation for precision plans we



were impressed. And when plugged in... it all worked!

The evening theme was “Together” and the opening ceremonies were most impressive and impossible to describe in words. Our videos will convey only a



portion of the grandeur.

On a more serious note, as Americans, we were all impressed by the major role the First Nation people play in every ceremony we’ve attended. Ceremonies began and end with First Nation elders in native dress offering prayers and best wishes.

For the next couple of hours, we were entertained by hundreds of dancers, high wire acts, incredible gymnasts, singers, bands, light shows, fireworks and very loud music. A Broadway show on steroids! Even a full moon rose in front of us.



What a Finale!



The evening will certainly be one of the major highlights of our caravan.

<i>Poem #9</i>	<i>Be beat.</i>	<i>That was the show</i>
<i>Sunday night came</i>	<i>The show it was spectacular</i>	<i>Together into the future</i>
<i>We were prepared to our show</i>	<i>Starting with the Indians</i>	<i>For Canada their home,</i>
<i>The chuck wagon races</i>	<i>And the drum beat.</i>	<i>Kudos to Jon and Carl</i>
<i>And the bus</i>	<i>Winter snow, acrobatics</i>	<i>For really 7 wonderful</i>
<i>We did go</i>	<i>Tight rope walking, northern</i>	<i>Days</i>
<i>It finally cooled down</i>	<i>lights</i>	<i>We saw the best of Calgary</i>
<i>We really had great seats</i>	<i>Dancing and a light show</i>	<i>3 cheers for them</i>
<i>The chuck wagon races were off</i>	<i>In a giant bubble</i>	<i>I say,</i>
<i>And the finale couldn't</i>	<i>It was the best</i>	<i>Rip, Rip Flooray!</i>
	<i>But I like the unity</i>	

After heat warning high temperatures the last few days, a cold front moved in during the show bringing us appreciated cooler night-time temperatures.

It was a late night for all of us so it was good the have a slow day following to rest up. It rained during the night and continued through the day and we were glad we did not have events planned at the Stampede grounds. The evening show at the grandstand was a mess and mostly rained out.

Ready for Banff. The rain continued through the night and into the morning of our departure from Calgary. We disconnected in a slight drizzle but quickly left the rain behind us. It was an easy 100 mile drive to the mountains surrounding Banff.



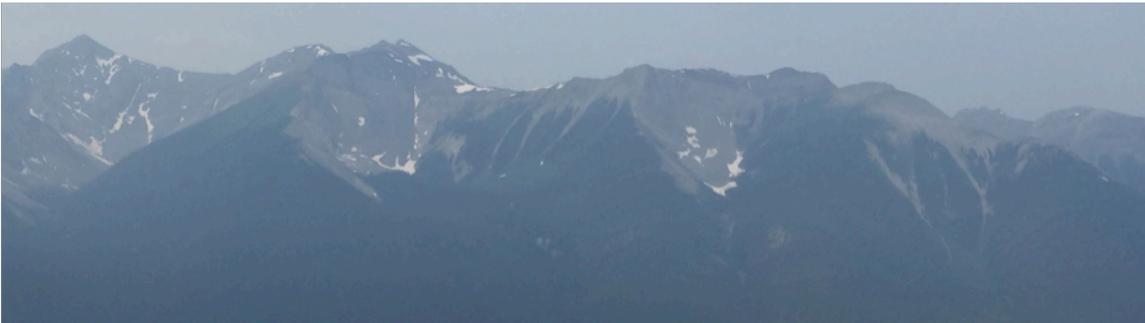
Overcast skies but clear dry highways.

For the next 5 days we parked in one of the Tunnel Mountain campgrounds in Banff National Park. Surrounded by trees in clear mountain air. We love it. After our social period we had another wonderful pot-luck dinner.



Banff Familiarization Day. After a few sweltering days in Calgary we welcomed a cool 48 F this morning. Our caravan jackets were in evidence. At 9 AM we boarded a nice tour bus (no more yellow school buses) and drove through the Banff area with a very knowledgeable tour guide, Ward Cameron. He has served as a guide for more than 25 years and has his own weekly Podcast about the area. Our first stop was at the Banff Gondola station at Sulfur Mountain where we rode in 4 person gondolas from about 5200 ft above sea level to more than 7000 ft. The views on the smooth quiet ride and the panoramic views from the top were spectacular in spite of the forest fire smoke that has drifted in from British Columbia.

Carl and John waving at the top of Sulfur Mountain!



The adjacent province, BC, has declared multiple emergencies and evacuated many communities. Severe weather, and lightning storms have started as many as 194 fires in a single day. Unfortunately BC has not had the commensurate rainfall we endured the last couple of days.

Our guide told about several movies that have been filmed in Banff, including *River of No Return* starring Marilyn Monroe and Robert Mitchum. We saw the waterfalls featured in the movie and stood at the place where the pursuing Indians were filmed.



We drove past the grand Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel a principle landmark for more than 125 years and a UNESCO world heritage site. We were told Marilyn was denied access to the formal dining room as not properly attired. Our guide noted that Banff is no longer a location for many movies because so many tourists recognize the local scenery.



After a full morning of touring we stopped at Lake Minnewanka for a sandwich lunch provided by the Wagonmaster. By afternoon we had full sunshine and temperatures in the mid 70's F. We ended the day with another great social hour and a group photo.



Banff has a year around population of about 7500, but during the summer season it swells to 20,000 or more. The quaint downtown area is full of interesting shops and pubs and well worth a stroll. Parking is at a premium but a free shuttle bus service is available from the campground and to all the major tourist spots.

<i>Poem # 10</i>	<i>The next day at 8:45</i>	<i>We continued on with our</i>
<i>Rain, rain</i>	<i>We board our beautiful bus</i>	<i>Banff bus tour</i>
<i>Such a grey day</i>	<i>The countdown of our numbers</i>	<i> The beautiful Bow falls</i>
<i>But we're headed for Banff</i>	<i>All accounted for, a must</i>	<i>The hoodoos, <u>Lake Minnewanka</u></i>
<i>We're on our way</i>	<i>The 1st first on the agenda</i>	<i>Where we lunched on the beach</i>
<i>Funnel Mountain Campground</i>	<i>Was the Banff Gondola <u>flight</u></i>	<i>We were hungry for sure</i>
<i>The nicest campground yet</i>	<i>Up, up <u>and away</u></i>	
<i>Privacy in the woods</i>	<i>Rugged mountains & a view</i>	
<i>With the surrounding beauty that we felt</i>	<i>It was a beautiful sight</i>	

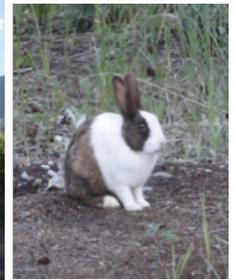
Thursday July 13th. Our day began with beautiful clear blue skies and virtually unlimited visibility. The forest fire smoke of yesterday was gone, perhaps due to a wind shift. It was a great day to explore downtown Banff and surrounding area. Everywhere we look today, we are surrounded by incredible mountains.

In late afternoon we car-pooled a half hour to Canmore a larger town similar to Banff also surrounded by mountains. We enjoyed a nice dinner at the Drake Inn and dressed in layers we boarded rubber rafts for an evening on the Bow River. Getting 44 people our age aboard 5 rubber boats was an adventure in itself.



It could not have been a more perfect evening... pleasant temperatures, no wind, unlimited visibility and a calm placid river. For more than 2 hours we rafted down river watching the banks for possible wild life and reviling in the mountain scenery. Unfortunately no Elk made their appearance but we saw multiple animal tracks on the river bottom in very shallow water. No one got wet and it was a continuous "Kodak moment."





Poem #11

Today we are free

To be off on our own

To roam the beautiful streets

And be in our own zone

We all got together

A little after 4:00

Carpool to Canmore

For dinner

Oh what a score

Up the lazy river

You just might say

We boarded our rafts

There was a gentle current

To carry us along

Row, row, row your boat

That was the song

Looking for wildlife along the shore

But nothing did we see

Except for their prints

Along the shore

Banff National Park and Yoho National park. Another perfect day for sightseeing. Our guide was again Ward Cameron and as a naturalist, gave us a continuous description of the scenery, the animals of the area and measures to reduce animal traffic accidents etc. He described the building of “cross-over’s” and Underpasses to permit wild life to cross the 4-lane highway.

Traveling first to Moraine lake, the road was already closed to automobile traffic by 10 AM. Fortunately bus traffic was allowed so we could join the hundreds of tourists already there. In spite of the crowds it’s a beautiful place and we captured multiple photos. The glacier fed lake has a beautiful emerald color. Next we visited Lake Louise and the Victoria Glacier.



Next we crossed into British Columbia and through Kicking Horse Pass and learned about the spiral tunnels. When the first transcontinental Canadian railroad crossed these mountains, deemed an impossible route, the initial grade was $4 \frac{1}{2} \%$, too steep for safe travel. By tunneling through the mountains in a spiral race track the grade was reduced considerably. With multiple tunnels passing under and over the route, a single long train can be sighted at three different spots.

Our next goal was Emerald Lake, a real jewel of these mountains. It was a great place to enjoy a nice box lunch that came in a bag. In addition to being a spectacular sight, the area is an early world heritage site due to a shale deposit that dates to 550 million years ago and the thousands of fossils uncovered here caused a major revision in various scientific theories of evolution.



Our next stop was at a Natural Bridge where the river cut through a solid road barrier and creates a pleasant scene with the sounds and sights of rushing water.



Finally, we took an adventuresome road to visit Takakkaw Falls. A spectacular 1300 ft waterfall fed by a glacier at the top of a mountain. To reach the falls our bus was required to make three switch backs that are too tight to make in any vehicle longer than 22 feet. Our 45 ft bus had to back up the middle section and back down the same section on our return. A few inexperienced automobile drivers complicated the situation and required some traffic guidance from our tour guide. It was worth the hassle. A spectacular falls. Many of our group walked close enough to feel the spray and sense the significant drop in temperature.

Poem #12

We took the tour bus

Out for the day

The driver was tricky

At the switchback

He backed up the going

The wrong way

We were in awe

As it was done

What great maneuvers

The turn it was made

Lake Moraine was gorgeous

Yes a bright blue

We hiked just a bit

For just the right view

Then it was Lake Louise

It was bright green

Little red canoes dotted it

It was a great scene

Emerald Lake the

Natural bridge & Takakkaw Falls

The wonder of God's hands

He captured all

Ward our tour guide

He was so good

With his information

We learned more

Then we would

Yes, it was a great

And wonderful day

Now it was on to our cocktail

To relax in our own way

Saturday July 15th. Last day in Banff. A free day for side trips, rest, laundry, couples photos and whatever. By late afternoon we gathered together for movement instructions, social hour, couples photos and to enjoy the aroma of 44 wonderful steaks cooking on several grills. The tables were covered with many side dishes.



Mmm-good! We were so enthralled with the atmosphere that we forgot to take photos of the rest of the dinner and wonderful side dishes and desserts. With several grills going, multiple chefs cooked steaks to order. It was a premier evening enjoyed by all. Robert Woods did a very professional job of taking couples photos.

Our western horizon has more smoke tonight and we are seeing bits of ash from the fires still burning in BC. Another fire is about 20 miles away but contained. We don't expect any impact on our travels.

Sunday July 16th. Beautiful morning in the campground... blue sky pleasant temperatures. Good day for travel through the Canadian Rockies wonderland. It was a long travel day 224 miles but very scenic. Every mile photographic.



After about an hour on Highway 1, we shifted to Highway 93, the road to the Ice fields. After cresting a summit we encountered significant smoke from BC forest fires. The temperature dropped noticeably and some even encountered sleet. We all drove in rain with very overcast skies.

By the time we reached Jasper, the sun came out and our blue skies reappeared. By mid-afternoon we were all parked in a very nice KOA in Hinton, AB. The owner of the campground gave us an interesting history of the property from the mid 1800's to present time. He bought the former trading post property from a brother of Charles Bronson.

Lot of Miles...Lot of Smiles. Monday July 17th we car-pooled to the Columbia Ice Field about 100 miles away. It was well worth the effort. Clear blue skies and excellent visibility, we dressed warm knowing we would be walking on a glacier. A few of us saw a black bear en route. The Columbia Ice Field and the Glacier Discovery Center is a very popular place in July, flooded with tour buses and multiple tour groups of many different nationalities. While we had reservations, several booked activities were delayed slightly due to the crowds.



We first boarded a 56 passenger tour bus for a 4 minute ride from the Center to the Ice field. Leaving the standard tour bus we boarded a massive, all-terrain, 6-wheel drive, Ice Explorer vehicle down a 32 degree grade and out on the top of the Athabasca Glacier. We learned a lot about glaciers and could see where this glacier has been receding since 1847. The moraine piles of rocks and sand at both the terminus and the sides are enormous. They clearly display the mountain decimating power of the glacier. Most of our group ventured out on the ice and could feel the cold wind created by the ice itself.





Returning from the ice we were treated to a very nice buffet lunch in the Altitude Restaurant in the Discovery Center. We were well fed.



Next we were bused to the Sky Walk, a rather new facility overlooking a very deep gorge and cantilevered out from the canyon wall. Wonderful view, interesting construction. With a glass floor one can look down over 500 feet.



On the way home at least one car-load of our group got exceptionally good photos of a black bear. Long day but great in every aspect.

Lake Maligne Cruise. Early morning departure for a long drive to catch the first boat cruise on Lake Maligne at 8:30 AM. It was another beautiful day but perhaps with more smoke than before. The tops of the mountains appeared as ghosts due to the haze.



Lake Maligne is a large, very isolated body of water, at about 5500 feet elevation and well off the beaten path. After some minor delays we boarded two large boats and traveled the length of the lake with a tour guide describing the lake and the surrounding mountain ranges and glaciers. We stopped briefly at "Spirit Island" a small non-descript island that was featured in a Kodak promotion with a billboard size picture in Grand Central Station in NYC. It supposedly captures the spirit of western Canada.



After a 90 minute cruise and a cup of coffee, we reassembled and drove to Miette Hot Springs in another remote wilderness location. Miette is one of several hot springs in this area but reportedly the hottest. Water flows out at 129 F and is cooled to a comfortable 104 F when it enters a swimming pool. Many of our group took advantage of the warm water luxury. We also had a great sandwich lunch at the concession stand.



The area around Miette has multiple signs about Caribou and mountain sheep and goats. There were multiple mountain sheep grazing around the hot springs area. These are yews and look goats but actually are mountain sheep.



*Poem #13
Burr, Burr
So all I can say
We are headed to the Ice Fields
To walk on a glacier today
Athabasca Glacier
It was just great
The ice explorer took us
We won't be late
We walked the skywalk
All around
Looking at the glacier scenery
Certainly we weren't downtown
All in all it was a
Wonderful day
A little cold
But worth it all the way*

*Now I want to tell you
It really was cold
No gloves on our hands
But a hand to hold
Off we boated on Maligne Lake
Across the water
To an island that was fake
Spirit Island it was not
But a little peninsular
With pine trees is all we got
But the spirit that we got
Was Canadian through and
through
From the mountains up above
To the glacier waters oh so blue
It really was quite beautiful
Yea a little cold*

*We all look anxiously
For critters on the road
Well, I will be quite honest
Nary a critter we did we meet
Until we descended upon
Miette Hot Springs
And saw a heard of big horn
sheep
Miette Springs was relaxing
Good for our body and soul
Warming our spirits thoroughly
Certainly after the cold
Then we all drove back to our
KOA
A little social cocktail
It was the end of a perfect day*

Ready for Edmonton. While the forest fires continue to be a problem in BC, they have not caused us any problems. This morning however the overcast skies and smoke caused the sun to appear as a red planet even many hours after sunrise.



We had an uneventful 174-mile drive from our KOA campground in Hinton to the Glowing Embers Campground (ominous name in view of the fires in BC) near Edmonton. Good level road surface, minimum traffic and uneventful except for our Wagon Master. As he entered the campground the steel pin connecting his "toad" Tow bar sheered and disconnected his car from his coach, damaging cables etc.

After all were parked, we had a pizza party in the nice atrium of the administration building. All we could eat and Canadian pizza is very good.



The best way to start a new day is with a good breakfast and our leaders prepared a great one... eggs, bacon, hash browns, toast and a pastry. Lots of work and lots of moving parts.



Kudos to all that shopped, cooked, served, helped and cleaned up.

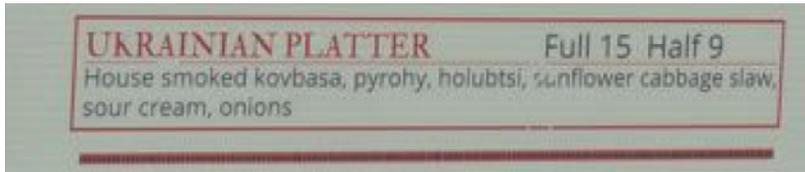


Immediately after breakfast we car-pooled to the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, a few miles East of the city. As arranged, we had guided walking tours of the restored village. It was quite spread out and our guides in period dress opened several of the buildings for us.

It was a warm, overcast day with a pleasant breeze for comfortable walking. We looked inside a school, church grocery and other places and had a ride in a horse drawn wagon.



After walking more than a mile, we enjoyed a Ukrainian lunch at Kalyna Kitchen in the red barn.



Our afternoon ended with another great Social hour.



Poem #14

Waved goodbye as we pulled out

Now it's off to Edmonton

There is no doubt

I really like Canada's manicured roads

There is no trash or litter

The greenbelt of road as we drive along

Prompts me to sing this Christy Minstrel song

Green, green, its green they say on the far

Side of the hill

Green, green I'm going away

To where the grass is greener still

Today we went to the Ukrainian Heritage site

It was a village

And they dressed up just right

We took a tour and wagon ride

Looked around churches and houses

We walked inside

We had the Ukrainian lunch

Sausage, pirogues, coleslaw

We lunched

It was traditional

I know it's true

But I'm glad for our American faire

How about you

All in all it was a good day

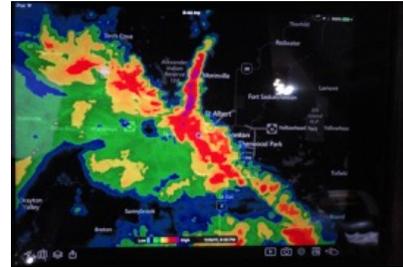
Now it's time to be social

3 cheers and a toast

That's how we play

While we knew it was a possibility, a massive thunderstorm blew in about 8 PM. Very high wind gusts and very hard rain shook our RV's and distributed any loose items around the CG. At least it removed the road dust from our rigs.

The weather radar picture looked ominous. After about an hours rain it was over and none of our rigs suffered any damage.



Fort Edmonton Park is a 158 acre living history museum of Edmonton's past. We car-pooled a short distance from our campground and began with a train ride pulled by a 1919 Steam locomotive.



The park has four distinct eras. We started in the Fur Trading Era represented by the Hudson Bay Company and a nice replica of the fort.



We moved on with a stroll through the Settlement Era with buildings and shops typical in 1885.



Around a corner we entered the Municipal Era circa 1905, with an operating streetcar system. Some of us were lured into a bakery for coffee and a mid-morning treat. A very special treat was a 4D movie in the Capitol Theater circa 1929 in the Metropolitan Era. Certainly a Highlight!

Perhaps most of us skipped the Ferris wheel and period amusement park enjoyed by the herds of noisy school children also visiting the park.

Costumed interpreters play characters in many of the buildings based on real life characters that lived in the area. The entire complex is beautifully arranged and very informative. In spite of slight drizzle it was a very enjoyable experience.



We ended our day with an evening at the Kingsway Royal Canadian Legion Branch 175, an organization with over 1000 members somewhat similar to our American legion. We enjoyed a very good buffet dinner and were warmly greeted by many very hospitable Canadians. A good live music group filled the dance floor after dinner.



Saturday and Sunday were free days. Time to scatter to all the many attractions in the Edmonton area. Many headed for the West Edmonton Mall, the largest in the world! Some visited the Alberta Aviation the Reynolds Alberta Museums. It was time for shopping, laundry and resting.





Poem #15

Well we had a storm

Early in the night

And our rigs were rocking

And rolling

Oh what a sight

We all turned out clean

I would say

The rain pelted all the

Dirt away

It was Evie's fault

That's for sure

She washed her rig

That day

It was the lure

Now we were granted two free

Days

To do what we want

It was the mall for us

And away we will stomp

A little sun a little rain

I guess we must do a

Little laundry

Oh, what a pain

Tomorrow it's Drumheller

It's all I know

To the Royal Tyrrell Museum

Yes what fun

And we will go

After our weekend in Edmonton, we headed south to Drumheller, AB just ahead of another thunderstorm cell. It was a very windy drive with strong prairie winds from the west. Uneventful except for encountering a large house headed the opposite direction.

James Cook leading a group of four large 5th Wheel RV's reported "rolling along Hwy 56 between Edmonton and Drumheller. A "Wide Load" pilot car passed in the opposite direction. We saw no wide load so we picked up speed. All of a sudden a flagman has the road blocked and tells me to turn right on a dirt road and go down and turn around; I asked him where and he says "I don't know". That was the wrong answer. We were in the process of backing the fourth trailer down the dirt road when the supervisor and house arrived and pulled off to let us go by".



By late afternoon we were all parked at the Dinosaur Trail RV park in a very interesting place... Drumheller, the Dinosaur Capitol of the World.

Dinosaurs. Another beautiful morning, blue sky, warm temperatures and no wind! We drove a short distance to the Royal Tyrrell Museum that must be to be the world's largest collection of Dinosaur bones in incredible visitor-friendly displays. It's extremely popular. When we arrived there were hundreds of folks already present. When we departed hours later, the lines were even longer.



Our first item was a final group photo in front of the museum.



We could quickly see why this place is so popular. Every display was artfully arranged in realistic settings and beautiful backdrops. Numerous videos describe the meticulous care taken to prepare fossils for research. This part of Alberta is especially rich in dinosaur bones and related fossils.



To top off another great caravan day we had brisket dinner at the Last Chance Saloon in Wayne, AB. It is actually the last building standing in Wayne that used to be a thriving mining town and a bit rough at times. We saw the bullet holes in the wall fired by the bartender above the heads of strangers that didn't want to pay for their meal.

*Poem #16
How aptly it's put
That we are here tonight
"The last Chance Saloon"
For a drink and a bite
Thank you to Jon and Nancy
Carl and Gwen too
Thank you Doug Blaha*

*For your rendition of all
We've been through.
We've had a lot of adventures
Traveling through Canada's
roads,
St. Mary, Waterton, Granum
Calgary, Banff, Jasper,
Edmonton*

*Drumheller where Dinosaur
tales are told
Thank you Bob for your pictures
And Allen, you helped me too
Thank you each and everyone
And Kappy Frauts to you!*

We have another day in the Drumheller area to investigate this extremely interesting area and a caravan pasta dinner provided by our leaders. Next we leave the Dinosaur Era and return to the United States with one more stop in Shelby, MT for our farewell dinner.

Unfortunately in order to send this journal to the printers in time to pick up copies for everyone by the weekend, the last two days will not be included. A copy of this journal will also soon be posted on the SMART website so you can tell your family and friends where they can read it.

Nancy's Bread Pudding Recipe with Rum Sauce

Ingredients:

Pudding

4 cups Hawaiian or plain white bread
2 cups milk or preferably half and half
1/3-1/2 cup sugar
1 TBSP Vanilla
2 Eggs
dash of nutmeg
Mix eggs and sugar, then add milk and vanilla. Pour over bread and let stand for a minimum of 1 hour. Place in baking disk and sprinkle nutmeg on top.

Sauce

½ cup cream
½ cup butter
½ cup sugar
1 tsp vanilla
Rum to taste, about 2 TBSP
Cream butter and sugar, add vanilla, then rum. Heat and stir over low heat about 5 minutes.
Bake pudding mixture at 350 F for 30-40 minutes, until bubbly and hot. Cool. Serve warm sauce over individual pudding servings. Serves about 8-10.

A S*M*A*R*T Member's Prayer

God, bless our Travel Trailer, 5th Wheel or Motorhome,
safely guide us wherever it is we roam.

Help us to find all the roads we seek,
and please... help our plumbing not to leak.

Save us from all serious rig or engine trouble,
guide us away from any shop that might charge us double.

As we travel this... the "Country We Defend",
we ask for fair weather & the warm sun to be our friend.

Oh, God creator of nature's great and wonderful show,
we ask your help in keeping camp site and fuel prices low.

And... as the sun sets & our day's journey ends,
please lead us to good food & the fellowship of friends.

Now please provide our rig a well-earned rest,
for tomorrow is another endurance test.

We ask too, a blessing on all S*M*A*R*T folks, near and far,
then bless too our truck or little "toad" car.

AMEN

(Author Unknown)

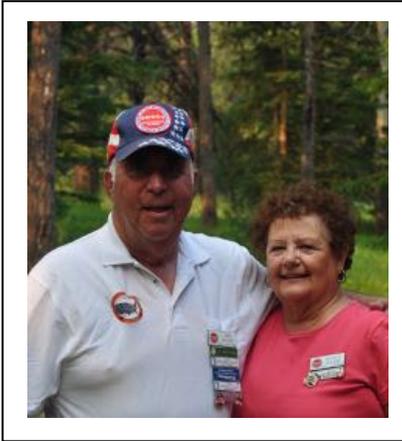
**The turkey shot out of the oven
It exploded-with a loud roar
There was Turkey all over the ceiling
Where there never was turkey before.
I cursed as I picked up the remnants
And I swore as I scoured and mopped
I'd never again stuff a Turkey -
With popcorn that hadn't been popped.**

Hand printed at the Edmonton Bulletin

Too Good To Miss !



2017 Calgary Stampede Caravan Participants



Wagon Masters

Nancy and Jon Katin reside in Albany, OR when not traveling. Rv'ing since 1967. They have 3 children, 9 Grandchildren & 4 G-grandchildren. Jon served 27.5 years in the U.S. Army initially in Infantry and then with the Engineer branch with 2 tours in Viet Nam, 2 years in Saudi Arabia and four years in Germany. After retiring from the U.S. Army Jon worked 14 years for the city of Corvallis, OR. Nancy spent more than 20 years as a travel agent and travel office manager.



Tailgunners

Carl & Gwen Hopper live in Carson City, NV, in Gwen's childhood home. They have 2 sons and 3 grandchildren with another on the way. Carl spent 34 years in the Army National Guard, both active and M-day. His assignments included tours in Washington, D.C., Germany, and Little Rock, Arkansas. After retirement Carl taught HS JROTC for 6 years. Gwen spent most of her career raising the boys and keeping the home fires burning. They have been RVing since 1978. With the boys living in Tucson, AZ and Atlanta, GA there is plenty of opportunity for travel.



Dick and Shirley Clark grew up in Illinois. Stationed in Chicago, Charleston, Long Beach and Bremerton. Started as an Engineman USN and later took a commission. After retiring, he worked as a boiler/machinery inspector for an insurance co and ran an office for 10 years. We have 3 children, and 4 grandchildren. We've caravanned since 1999. This is our 7th caravan.



John and Di Ingianniare from Surprise Arizona and RVing for 40 years together. We have two daughters and one married granddaughter. We served 21 years in the USAF with many great assignments like Fairbanks Alaska and Colorado Springs Colorado and Sacramento California. It seems each year we increase our time in our motor home and away from home. We continue to enjoy meeting and making new SMART friends.



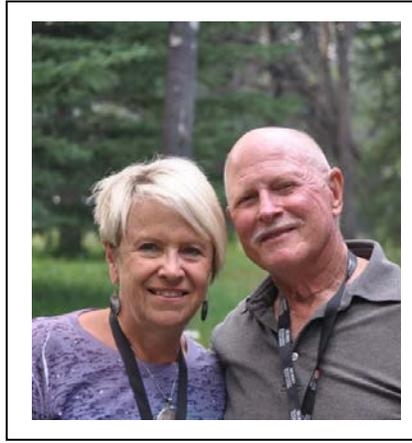
Dave and Edda Barr, Placentia, CA (Orange County). Dave is a Navy Veteran. He had a 38 year law enforcement career. Edda was a HS teacher until having children. Later, she went back to work part time as a teacher aid in the elementary school. They raised 4 children and have 8 grandchildren and one great grand child. They have been SMART members since 2011. This is their 2nd SMART caravan. They are also active in FMCA. Dave is currently SMART SW Regional Director.



Dave and Dot Fisher Dave is originally from Ohio and after flight training in Pensacola, flew helicopters on the East coast. After retiring ran a small business for 10 years. A native of Virginia, Dot retired from Department of Navy Service after 30 years. They met and married in 2011. They enjoy traveling and have been SMART members for three years. They currently live in Elizabeth City, NC. This is their first caravan.

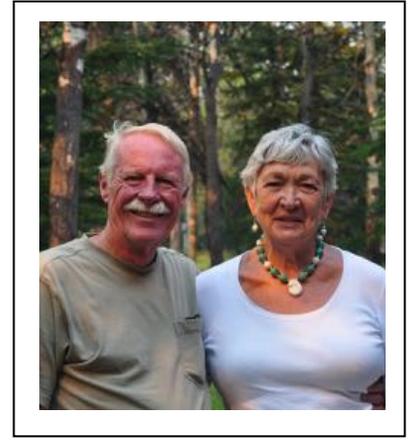


Judy & Allen Carter originally from NJ and have a home in Tuckahoe. LaBelle, Fl is home when not traveling. We have 6 children, 6 grandchildren. Five live within a few minutes of our NJ home and one in Charlotte, NC. Judy was a special education teacher, LDTC and principal. Allen was a AC mechanic, flight engineer and mostly a boomer in the AF and a school business administrator and farmer in civilian life. We love traveling, especially with our SMART friends, have visited all 50 states as well as many countries.

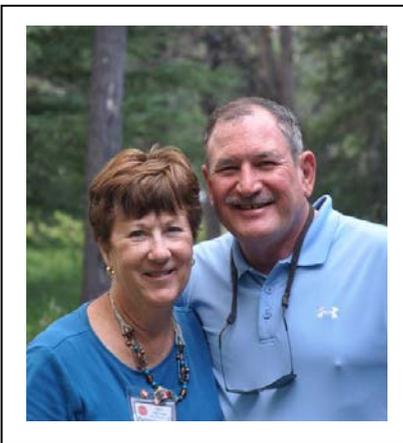


Jenny and Ed Schnabel,

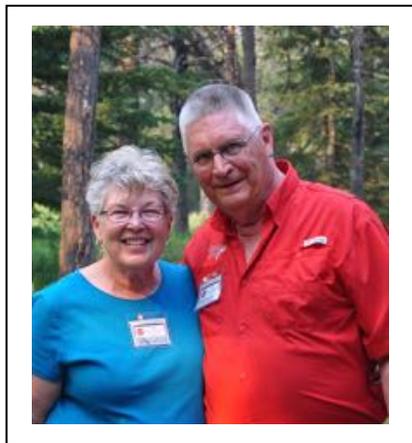
Married 3 years on the 12th of July. Live in Carson City, Nevada. My how times flies. Ed was an Army vet. Likes to hunt & fish. And golf you bet. Jenny she likes her poetry. Paints in watercolors and oil. Just wait and see. Yes , this is our first caravan. Ed and I and 2 Bassetts. That was the plan.



Robert and Joy Duval, married for 46 years, reside in Chattanooga, TN. RV'ing since 2002 and SMART members since 2010. Robert grew up in Vicksburg, MS, and Joy in Arkabutla, MS. Robert served a total of 32 years in the Navy, a tour in Viet Nam as a shipboard engineer, and Memphis, TN, in admin functions. Continued in the Reserve in NBC Warfare Planning and Disaster Preparedness. Robert worked for the TVA first as a boiler and turbine operator and in Labor and Employee Relations. Joy has worked in Personnel Admin and retail sales, owning her own shop,ladies apparel and home accessories. They have three children and four grandchildren. Robert is a volunteer on LST 325,.



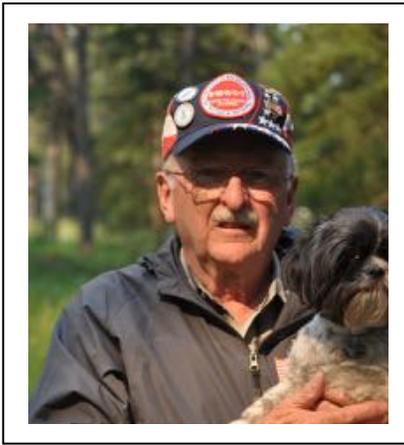
Jim and Lida Cook reside in Long Beach, CA. Jim served in the Air Force for 4 years in Okinawa and AF Police in Vietnam USCG Loran Station and in Montana for Missile field security. They have been married for 21 years & have 3 children and 3 grandchildren. Their first caravan. If you ever stay at Sea Breeze in Seal Beach please give us a call. Jim retired as a financial analyst and Lida is a retired teacher and educational



Bob Woods and Norma Paschich from Aurora, CO are new SMART Members on their first caravan. Bob served 2 years in US Army during Vietnam era (at the pentagon programming computers). He is retired from computer consulting and teaching. Norma is retired from IBM and is Jim Cook's sister. Bob and Norma have been together 23 years. They have four sons and four grandchildren.



Anne Heyob lives in Langstun on lake Guntersville near Huntsville, Alabama. Her husband was retired from the U.S. Air Force and Anne was an accountant for a large construction company. Anne has two children, twin grandsons and two new step grandchildren, two step daughters in Georgia who have three girls. She loves traveling, playing cards and reading. This is her fifth caravan.



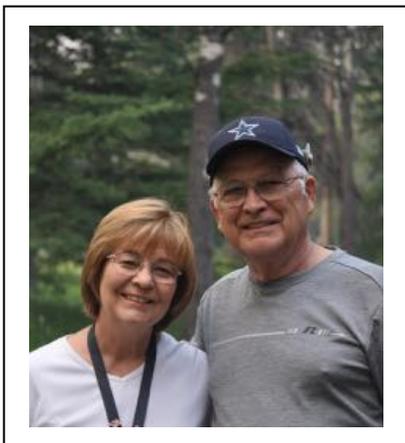
Merlin and Suki Billings live in Newport News, VA. Joining the National Guard to avoid the draft, Merlin served over 36 years of active and reserve US Army service. 2 tours of duty in Vietnam as an Army Aviator flying fixed-wing aircraft. After Vietnam he transitioned into rotary-wing aircraft and served 3 years in Germany, 7 years in Korea, and at several different stateside locations. Merlin and Suki have 5 children, 2 granddaughters, and 2 great granddaughters. Their youngest son, a graduate of the USAF Academy and is on active duty at McGuire AFB, NJ. Merlin travels with his faithful Shih Tzu companion, Coco, and this is their third SMART caravan together.



Scott and Evelyn Mattheus, both native Navadans, live in Carson City, Nevada. Scott served in the Nevada National Guard and retired from the construction industry. Evelyn is retired from State of Nevada Dept of Transportation and is a former realtor. They have a married daughter in Milwaukee who works in cancer research. They have been SMART members for two years and are members of Nevada Battle Born Chapter.



Doug and Lila Blaha grew up in Minnesota but after moving to Virginia 9 times during our time in the US Navy, call Virginia home. Our 4 married children and 9 grandchildren live in 4 states and gives us plenty of reason to travel. Doug served 31 years in the Navy, aboard six nuclear submarines and related shore assignments including four years in Norway as Defense and Naval Attache. SMART members since 2004, this is our 7th SMART caravan.



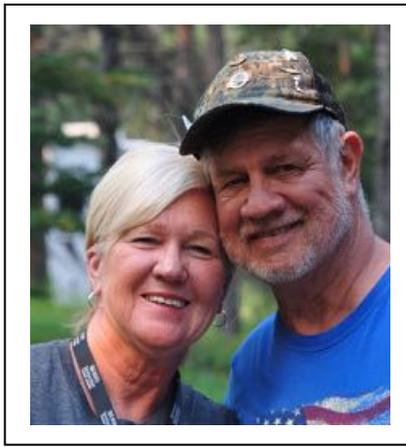
Jim and Theda Collier will be married for 49 years on Aug 11. They met in Long Beach, CA where Jim was serving in the Navy. After college Jim joined the Air Force and retired in 1992 and then worked for various consulting companies Theda has her CPA and worked for USAA for 22 years. They have two sons & 4 grandchildren and a border collier named Lady. They love to travel and are fulltimers wintering in San Antonio where they visit their kids and grandchildren. Looking forward to National at Rayne, LA and the 2018 Maritimes Caravan.



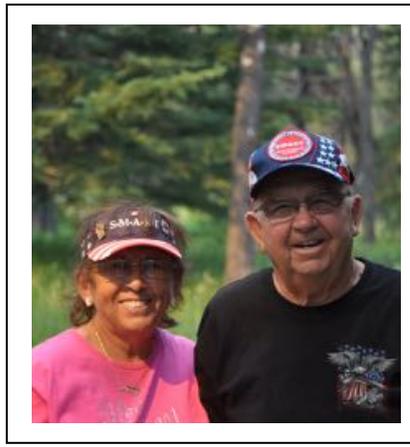
Robert and Dot Powers are natives of North Carolina. They have been married for 60 years as of last April and have 2 children and 4 grandchildren. Bob retired from the US Air Force in 1977. Dot retired in 2001 after 20 years with the State of NC. Our previous caravans have been to Albuquerque and Branson. Smart members since 2001.



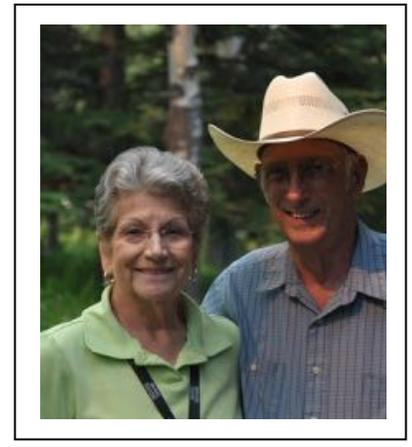
Ed and Connie Stoermer. Ed grew up in Iowa but spent 22 years in the Navy and became a Navy diver. Ed met Connie when his ship came to St Petersburg, FL and was doing diving exhibitions. Connie was a nurse and worked 29 years in the VA system. We have been married 50 years, have 2 daughters and 3 grandchildren. This is our first caravan but we have been to 2 National musters. Rayne. Will be their 3rd.



Walter and Pam Contreas are from the State of Arizona, residing in Yuma for the past 30 plus years. They have three kids and five grandkids. Walter served 25 years as a Marine and 20 years as a Juvenile Officer. His lovely wife Pam worked for SAMS Club and the Base Commissary off and on for 25 years.



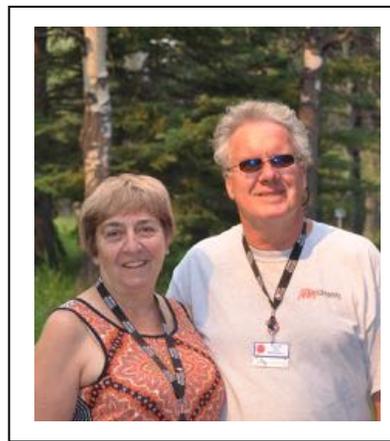
Steve and Marg Crowder. Mary and I met in Goose Bay Happy Valley Laborador, Canada and spent 33 years in the Air Force touring around the world. We have three children and one is in the U.S. Army. We also have four grandchildren. We have been in SMART nine years and are members of So-Cal, CA Warriors and Battle Born Chapters.



Ted and Carole Martin. Carole married Ted, a west coast sailor in 1969. Their marriage was blessed with 2 sons. Ted retired from the Navy after 26 years of service in 1990. He retired again from California Fish and Game in 2005. Carole was the mainstay homemaker thorough out. They enjoy their 5th wheel, travel and the companionship of SMART members. Fairwinds & smooth sea to all!



Barry and Donna Wynott. Barry was a traveling Airforce brat. He landed in Carson City, NV. Barry spent 4 years in the Airforce with stops in Utapo, Thailand and Barksdale AFB in LA. Barry has been and still is in the printing business. Donna grew up in Las Vegas, NV moving to Carson City just in time to meet the love of her life. She recently retired from the State of Nevada. They have been an item for over 22 years. Between them they have 4 children and 5 grandchildren. They enjoy RV'ing and have been SMART members for 2 years. They presently reside in Dayton, NV, near Carson City.



Carl and Shirley Mikuletzky grew up in rural South New Jersey. They married in 1973. Carl worked in the auto body repair trade and Shirl worked in the insurance industry. They both retired after working 30 years. They enjoy snow skiing, traveling and relaxing on the beach. They spend the winters in the Florida Keys and the summers in Oak Island , NC. Carl has been a private pilot for 20 years and owns 2 planes. We are enjoying our first caravan.