

Well on July 3rd, we left Anne & Henry behind to do their Trailer Life work, and our five HR couples left for Amana, Iowa for the Summer Rally. This was a one day trip with a total of 339 miles. It was actually a great day to travel, in full sunshine and cooler temps. We made a few *necessary* stops along the way, both for the coach fuel tanks and the drivers.

We actually arrived a few days early, as the rally actually started on 7/6. Kaaren & Lyle really did a great job. We had a wonderful time and on top of that it was very educational. The Amana Colonies are comprised of families who are descendants of a religious group known as the *Community of True Inspiration*. These people came to this country in the 1800's from Germany, having split off from the Lutheran Church. I was very impressed with how they weathered the impact of modernization in the world around them. There are shops, restaurants, museums, churches, wine cellars and a brewery within the five villages, all welcoming visitors. Every place we went, someone was more than willing to give us a little history and answer questions. Of special interest was the church, but no pictures were taken at their request.

Amana Colonies RV Park was within the colonies. We had ample space, full hook ups and a large indoor area next to the office for our scheduled events. You knew you were in farm country, however as everyone walked around the coaches and the hall holding a fly swatter!

Rally events included a wonderful historical presentation by Jon Childers, an Elder in the Colonies. We participated in the heritage tour, had pot luck dinners, and a couple of meals catered by a local restaurant. In addition, we experienced presentations, one at an original communal kitchen, now a museum, and the Amana Community Church, which continues as their church today. Contrasting with the Catholic Church, their church is very plain. There are no pictures, statues, stained glass or anything. These are viewed as distractions to what is important in worship. I found their simplicity refreshing.

On top, at the left, is our group picture, which is usually taken at our rallies. Below that is a small group having dinner at one of the local pubs in the colonies. Next to that is the Elder, Jon Childers, giving his presentation. The building below is of the Amana Church with Bob, Shirley and Buddy in front. Now the picture next to that is of Shirley Barbe and I on a giant sized chair with foot stool. A more interesting picture than this would have been Shirley and I climbing up on it!! The next picture is Bob and the Barbe's watching a craftsman making brooms in the broom shop. We also attended a wine tasting event and don't ask me why, but my Bob tasted all the samples!!!! He doesn't drink wine!!! He said he just wanted to know if he was missing anything? The answer was, "No".



NEWS FLASH!!!!

All right, I know I have some explaining to do! Well, before we left for Amana, Iowa, we offered ESC the opportunity of using our services as Camp Hosts. From our observations, it seemed a win, win situation for both of us. For various reasons we are content to sit still for the Summer and we only ask for free camping. We want these folks to do well too, as all of us RV'ers need a service we can rely on. We look at it as a fun experience for us as well.

So, on July 14th we headed back to Elkhart along with Ed & Kaye and Bill & Peg. Walt & Judy Kaiser never left Elkhart, as they needed to stay and have some work done. The first task we accomplished as 'camp hosts' was to rescue two goldfish! Yep! That was what I said. Bob went out to check the sites one morning and found a carry case with 2 goldfish sitting nearby getting hot in the sun. The owners were long gone! They were probably supposed to move from the 5th wheel into the truck....but never made it. Sooo, now Whiskers has two pets of his own. This should prove interesting! We call them "Sunny" and "Lucky".

From that point on, the camp ground just got busier and busier. The flood gates really opened when the HRRVC International Rally ended on July 22nd. JD, from ESC, was at the rally successfully drumming up business! Coaches started streaming in and it really hasn't stopped. ESC staff, as well as customers, seem to really appreciate our service.

Another significant happening this month was that Stephanie, Henry & Anne's granddaughter, was married! Even though we knew there was talk about a upcoming wedding, the sudden decision was somewhat of a surprise. We were so happy that we were here and could easily attend. Henry & Anne were working in Maryland and could not be here but thanks to Wendy & Enrique, they were able to see and hear the ceremony via 'Snype'. That alone was fascinating! In addition, Wendy celebrated her birthday, which meant we had a good sized group going to dinner for that event.

As far as our 400 friends are concerned, Ed & Kaye are still here at the end of the month of July. So is Walt & Judy, and our new friends, Jim & Yvette Chandler. The Chandler coach is coming along well at the end as of July.

The pictures from the top are: a) our camp host site b) Stephanie & Rob c) the wedding ceremony at home d) Henry & Anne watching the wedding using Snype e) Rob giving Henry & Anne a close up of his ring f) the wedding cake g) Wendy's birthday cake h) group picture h) New pets, Lucky & Sunny, plus the Lee's new dog Zoie!

That kind of wraps things up for July! Keep cool!!!!

