

SEPTEMBER:

9.01.15-Tuesday- Kentucky



On Sunday we were under threat of heavy rain, and we got it Sunday evening. Monday was cloudy but that was all. In our zest to overachieve and better prepare for jacks up on Monday we'd attached the dingy (HHR Chevy) to the coach and next morning after having a good but short breakfast we began to complete the preparations to leave Indiana. It was time to bring in the slides. Carla pushed the button and I positioned myself outdoors to watch for any problems only to hear the motor start and stop. Carla tried once again, same results. Over I went to check the status of the batteries, coach batteries were great but engine battery was only registering 11 volts, just short the 12.4 needed to start the coach. We concluded that the car was pulling a small amount of current from the coach all night, *another lesson learned!* Now, we needed a jump. Visited the camp office and she had someone come over and give us the jump we needed. We were finally leaving Indian Lakes at 11am. Bridge spanning the Ohio River we crossed on our way to Park City, KY. The bridge looked much less aged as we approached it. Cars are traveling above us in the other direction. Carla decided to take this view of the bridge. No idea on its name.

9.02-15-Diamond Caverns.

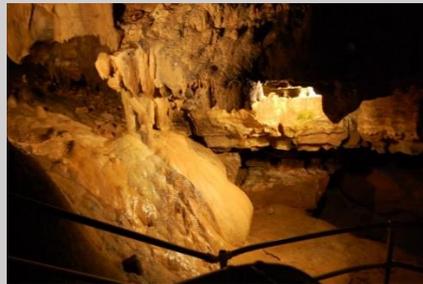
As always, this story begins at a Visitors' Center. Right now, we're the only one's here, that will change this weekend. You would think with so many traveling seniors' places like this would continue to have visitors after this coming Labor Day, but no. Even Diamond Cavern Campground begins laying off workers after the holidays. The campground, however, is open year-round.



When explorers first entered Diamond Caverns, they were amazed at all the twinkling stones, none of them were diamonds, however, but that did not stop them from naming the cavern Diamond Cavern. Gemstones of so many types would be found in this cavern. Mining these stones would come next. Les will be our guide for a tour that should have lasted about one hour. As you can see from the picture here and to come, this adventure will be one of a kind, but, as I've mentioned before, all the walkways and steps are safe but smaller children, and possibly many teenagers I've known, should be watched closely.



Unlike Mammoth Cave, this cavern is well lit. Mammoth cave could use a great deal more lighting. And while we're talking about caves and caverns, would you know what makes them different? *Answer is coming up.*



It doesn't take a great deal of text to caution everyone that we are going very deep into this cavern. The tour is one-half mile in length. Catwalks and raised walkways are everywhere. Sudden foolishness could cause a serious accident. In our Mammoth Cave tour, we were told that if a tourist had an accident or health problem it could take at least a couple of hours to get medical assistance there.



Without a doubt, before the caves and caverns were so heavily regulated, by the Parks Dept. and the owners, individuals could explore these venues on their own. Self-guided tours aren't going to happen again. In this picture you can get an appreciation of how deep we've gone, yet we're still very high above the cavern floor. The immensity of just how impressively big this cavern is, is emphasized by comparing Carla, at just over five feet, to the surrounding cavern walls, in the picture above.



Above, from ceiling to floor is a giant Stalactite. That's the huge dark column in the center of the page. How long would it take for something like this to grow this big? *I don't know!* But Geologists say that a Stalactite that's one cubic inch, that's 1 in by 1 in by 1 in tall, takes about one-hundred years to grow one cubic inch. This is about twenty feet tall and six feet in diameter, *do the math*. Need I mention that we've been going down for some time now and, as you can see in the picture below, were not there yet. Above you see what looks like a man-made opening but not so. Water from the shallow oceans that covered Kentucky millions of years ago, began to dry up. Sink holes developed and the ocean waters picked up calcium and other minerals that seeped through the earth. Seeping deep enough the waters and minerals began eating away at the limestone layer of earth, and as it ate away at the layers of limestone small tunnels and canals developed and after a couple of years (millions) passage ways like this and the ones you find in Mammoth Cave were born.



Yes graffiti! You see stuff like this in most caves. J.B. Sanders was nice enough to leave his mark way back in 1869.

The remains of the graffiti are not very consoling; however, I really am awed when I come across something like this, done by an everyday guy, over one-hundred-fifty years ago...*Priceless in its own way!* Both pictures above bode the question from awhile back. Cave / Cavern, difference?



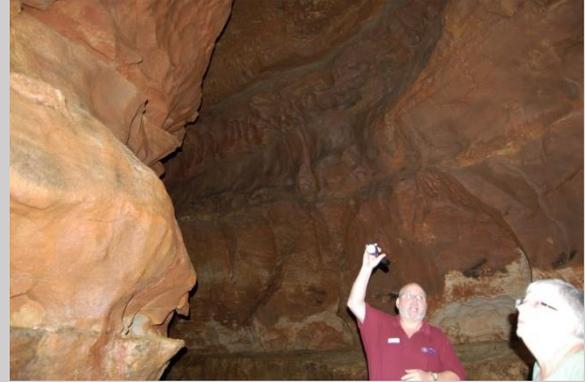
Cave is simple, it's a dead area. Basically, just a rock with no growth of any type. A cavern, on the other hand, is alive. Generally, water is in the area and you find Stalactites and Stalagmites. Caverns are in a constant state of change, although it may take a million years to notice.



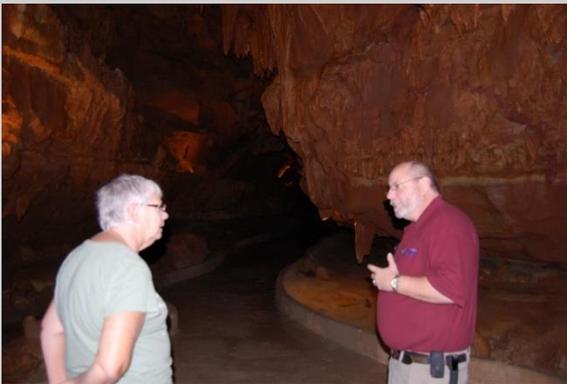
Courtesy of Mother Nature is pop-corn formations. At first, I thought it was another man-made wall décor, but not so.



What can I say, Mother Nature doing so many creative designs on her own? Notice the delicately curved stalactite, bottom center in the picture above, and see how translucent this millions year old structure handles the light.



Finally, we've reached the stairway to nowhere. Many caves and caverns have a parallel passage that will take the tourist back a slightly different way from the passage they took to get here. Diamond is a small two-mile cavern and to exit the cavern you must revisit what you'd already seen, to enjoy once-again on your way out.



Les was exceedingly patient with us. Our tour was supposed to last just about 60 minutes and I'm pretty sure we pushed him to 90 minutes. As he mentioned, and I'm sure most tour guides would agree, that it's almost impossible to handle groups of 16 or more and give them all the attention they're looking for. On the other hand, tour guides, with smaller groups, have a chance to expand on their depth of knowledge. We saw this on the way up but this is a better picture of it. Nothing more to really tell about this stalactite except for its beauty and mass. Just trying to imagine anything hanging from the ceiling and growing for the last several million years can't help but make anyone feel about as significant as a piece of dust on the floor. A cavern has a lifespan of millions of years and even then, someone will happen upon it and only try to imagine the thousands of tourists that have gazed upon it as we have. This cavern and this stalactite will be enchanting millions until the end of time. *Pretty close to immortal...Priceless!*

Time to go home.



In a day or two we'll be touring Mammoth Cave Historic Tour and hopefully in a week or so the Mammoth Cave Grand Avenue Tour, which is a four-hour tour.

9.03.15-Mammoth Cave.



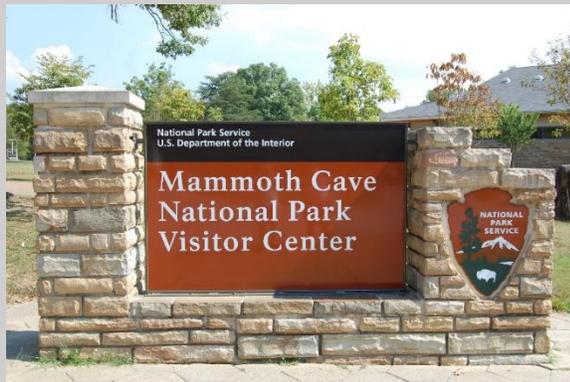
When we call this a cave it is just that, a cave. A cavern, on the other hand, would be comprised of stalactites and stalagmites, growing from and to the ceiling.



Visitor Center

In the beginning MYA, millions of years ago, Geologists theorize that there was only one massive land mass and they gave it a name, Pangea. If you could estimate Kentucky's place in Pangea you would also find the Equator just north of it, yes! Kentucky was very similar to South America.

Pangea was covered by a shallow sea for millions of years. Over time the seas began to dry up and as a result of lime deposits in the water and sinkholes that developed, the torrents of water made its way down into the earth and ate away at the soft limestone layers of earth. This all happened only a few million years ago. Much of the water that created the "Mammoth Cave System" came from the Green River. Not so long ago, about 5000 years, the cave was to see its first human cave dwellers. They treated the cave as their home, lived in it and explored a little. That went on for about two-thousand years and then they left, ceased to live in the area. The cave was rediscovered again around 1800. It was alive once again. It was mined mainly for its saltpeter, contained within its walls. Saltpeter was the principal ingredient in the manufacture of gun powder, which would be in high demand in a few years with the war of 1812.



Sadly, enslaved persons did all the work. By the mid 1800's the Cave grew into a tourist attraction. It wasn't a Disney World, but people came from around the country and even Europe. I apologize for some of my photos. Lighting in the cave is minimal and usually require a 3-4 second open shutter. *Remaining still is difficult, especially without a tripod for support.* In 1938, Steven Bishop and co-owners Matt and Nick Bransford and family members would be guides to the cave for the next one hundred years. People gladly came and paid for guided tours of the cave. The National Park Service would acquire the property finally and manage it thereafter. At the time that the Park Service acquired the Cave only about forty miles had been discovered. Currently the Cave has around four hundred five miles of passageways, but Geologist estimate there it could eventually grow to another six-hundred miles. The current four-hundred miles are in a patch of earth of forty-nine square miles, roughly seven miles by seven miles.



It's very difficult to catch a live action shot and keep the shutter open for several seconds. On top of that you must watch your back so that others, who like you, can barely see where they are going and run into to you. All in all, I hope you can appreciate as much as I was able to capture. The cave in many areas is just short of pitch black. Some passages are less than sixty inches in height, then there are those passages that are so narrow many healthy eating individuals would be severely stressed to get through. This is one area where the ceiling height hovers around five feet for about thirty feet. Once you've made it to the end it's not bad going. This section is aptly called "tall man's misery." The section known as "Fat-man's misery" was so dark I could barely keep my face from meeting with the limestone walls barely inches away. Needless to say, taking a picture was impossible.



At this point in this tour we're three-hundred feet underground. Temperature is a constant fifty-five degrees. The cave does go deeper. In the picture above is a computer generated 3-dimensional depiction of the passages in this cave. Try to imagine, if you can, the hours on the face of a clock superimposed over this picture. We entered this cave at the 9 o'clock position and at the time this picture was taken we were in the 7 o'clock position. Only the major passageways are depicted here.



The orange looking lines, layered like spaghetti on the map above is a very good representation of just how intertwined all these tunnels are. Our tour was to cover two of the four-hundred-five miles in a period of two hours. I believe someone mentioned that no one has seen, first-hand, all the passageways in person. Below, Mother Nature, has for the most part, done all that can be done and now the Parks Service will do the rest. In many of the locations you'll see the walls almost pressure blasted smooth, which would not be the case.

All this was done over the course of millions of years of high velocity water pressure. There are many areas still very jagged and rough looking, and will, most likely, stay that way. In the picture above you'll see how the tunnels intersect. Therefore, they do not have self-guided tours; who knows how many would get lost in this maze. So much more to write about and very poor pictures to show, but it's time to end this text in hopes that many of you will make the effort to experience these caves and caverns personally.

Just a few words of caution. Dress warmly, wear climbing or hiking boots or shoes. A small LED flashlight would be advisable and be extremely conscientious of kids you bring with you, these caves are dangerous and could be very unforgiving.

Later today, Friday, it will be Karaoke, Bingo and an Ice Cream social at the club house. Saturday is equally as busy with a member appreciation breakfast followed with an ice cream social then it's pizza, beer and a movie in the coach.

9.06.15-Diamond Caverns RV Resort

We travelled 225 miles and arrived at Diamond Caverns around 3:30pm Central time; *love Central Time!* We're camped just down the road from Mammoth Cave NP.



Today, as always, first day after arriving, it's off to Walmart for shopping. Can only receive two channels NBC and CBS, could be worse, but we picked up some additional videos to be on the safe side. WI-FI, very happy to report, is very good. One of those rare campgrounds that provides the Wi-Fi they advertise. The signal is strong enough, in your coach, to access emails and download pictures for blog work...*priceless!*



Now it's time to go to the pool and relax for a bit. About 3:30 Central Time, just got back from the pool. Once in, you were OK; not much warmer than low eighties. It goes without say that the pool should have a heater, and I think it does, but not on the day we went it. Water temp around low 80's. The mini golf course, next.



9.07.15- Labor Day:



Well we took in the Karaoke but did not participate. One of the 1st campers we met up with was Dave by the pool. He was getting his "Passport" camper ready for the big weekend. He's mostly into guitars but Cathy, his wife, is an avid singer and mighty good too. We enjoyed the music for a couple of hours and left around 9pm, *seniors go to bed early!* The next day on our walk we came upon, Larry, working outside on a model airplane, *the kind with an engine that fly and break on landing, eventually.* They've been full-timers for only a year and have a Tiffin Allegro Bay Motorhome, diesel. Amazing how so many modify their homes so nicely, yet the manufacturers consistently outfit, even the more expensive coaches, with couches and recliners in their attempt to make them able to sleep six to eight people. Don't they know that there is something called inflatable beds?



Ninety-nine percent of the time only two will occupy a coach, so why do coach manufacturers continue provide for so many sleep accommodations. Currently RV maker are positioning a drop-down sleeper over the cockpit area, which sleeps up to two safely, which will easily accommodate the grandchildren. So now makers should work on expanding the livability of the coach for the owners. Larry removed the couch that sits four *uncomfortably* with matching rockers and took out the bench-style dining table with a desk-table unit...*Awesome, beautiful and functional!* Larry used to be in the RV business so he's a little more confident about making renovations.

Look at the windows in the coach. They had someone apply insulating heat reducing panels in most of the windows in the coach. From the inside you would never know the windows were covered. The panels also provide an extreme amount of privacy.

9.09.15-Mammoth Cave - Four Hour Tour

Eric Elder is welcoming us to the Grand Avenue, four-hour tour.



This tour should not be taken lightly. They have given it a difficulty level of strenuous. Of the twenty-five individuals present, we were the oldest. To his credit when he was rattling off all the precautions, he was nice enough not to be looking directly at us. Below you see the candle-smoke etchings of Mr. Wallace. He was a Civil War Soldier and stayed at the original Mammoth Cave Hotel. Not much is known about him. *The hotel did keep a ledger on its visitors, and the only item on him was the title "Drunk."* Eric does stop after about twenty minutes of touring to talk to us once he finds an unusual location. Here he wanted to make sure that all of us knew that above us, below us and all around us *is limestone.*



Of the over one-hundred pictures I took on this tour only about one-third were worth showing and only about twenty were as perfect as should be. We were always in motion and even if I broke rank to take a picture, I needed a 2-3 second shutter for any picture at all. My Nikon does do an awesome job with little light. The light in the cave is about the same as you would have at night trying to find your way around your coach with only a match for a light.



Above is an example of gypsum. This compound was heavily mined in the late 1800's. It takes forever to grow naturally, and humidity is detrimental to it. On this tour the cave is not as big as we'd seen on the Historical Tour and much of our walking was in caves about this size.

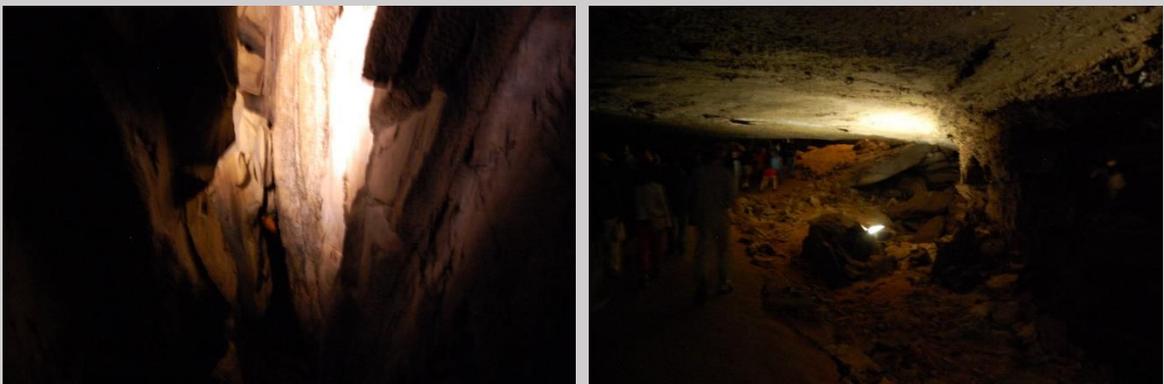
This was our first stop and we all needed it. *Little did we know that the worse lay waiting ahead of us.*



The cave here did have a low ceiling but came with water and restrooms. Size wise it was almost as big as a football field. Below were still hanging out some taking pictures and most in the bathrooms.



Over to the right side of the picture below, many of us were resting, thinking that we were tired at this point. *That is to change very soon!* You need light for algae, and there's no sundown here. However, not that many years ago the lighting used in caves was incandescent light which did emit a great amount of heat. Combine that with the moisture found in some places and you get algae. This problem, once everyone realized it would be corrected minimally with fluorescent lighting and now much of the lighting is LED, which is why the camera may pick up a bit more yellow than wanted. Oh, did I forget to mention that even though some portions of Mammoth Cave might be two-hundred feet in width, some other sections, *quite a few actually*, are around fifteen inches wide.



Again- what kind of rock? **LIMESTONE!**



Ceiling here, as you can see, is a little more than five feet. *Being short here is a plus!* In the picture below we had just come down a steep walkway, *I'm getting a little behind, must catch up to Carla.*



Stalactites can be seen here, left side of picture. Remember never to touch. Your skin contains oils and these oils will adhere to the stalactite and when additional water flows over the stalactite it will not adhere to it and, as a result, will cease to grow. As I mentioned in a previous post it takes almost one-hundred years of time for a stalactite to grow one cubic inch. A touch is not worth it. These have ceased to grow for lack of moisture. Next Eric is pointing out to us one of the side effects of the early prospectors. Old timers used kerosene to keep their lamps aglow.

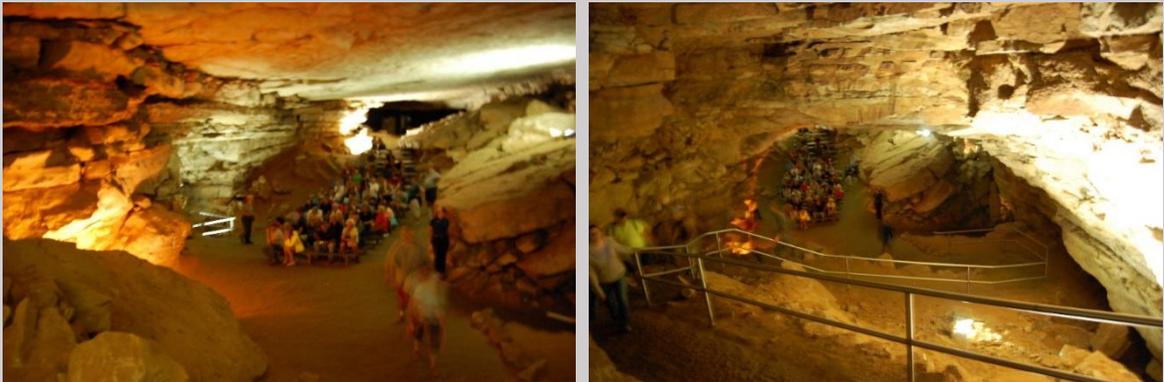


If kerosene wasn't available, they would use chicken fat or bacon fat. *They got all the light they needed but it came at a price.*

The bright spot in the center of the picture is about eighty feet from us going down again. Below is more gypsum again. Below and above are another couple of walkways in the cave



The Civil Conservation Corps built these pathways. Called the CCC it was comprised of young men 18-28 who diligently worked for years in 55-degree temps to provide us with these comfortable paths.



In these pictures we are going up, I mean way up, and just happened to come into contact with another group taking the Frozen Niagara Falls Tour. In this tour we will be challenged with almost 700 steps, some going up and coming down in very steep angles. Below is a second picture of the one above. What you don't see is how much more we had to climb before reaching the top.



Our steps from above turned to a walkway so steep it was impossible to go forward without pulling yourself up using the arm rails.

Going down was equally as steep using the rails to keep yourself from overstepping the person ahead of you. We all finally made it to the bottom, everyone is breathing heavily, *especially us!* Both above and below you'll see the process of layering Mother Nature used in forming the layers of limestone over millions of years.



The "thin" layers of limestone tend to break off until a thicker layer comes through. All this stone was once in the form of a watery substance until that substance dried and hardened to what we see today. For the most part very, little breaks off anymore, *although I do think about it whenever we walk under sections like this!*



Above we continue to see algae which formed over a hundred years ago. It will eventually die off. Once again, we're faced with steps. We've been told in all we will be climbing at least 670 steps all together. *More steps, what else!* However, the reward more than compensates for our sore feet and aching knees. Below is an excellent example of a "Column." That's a Stalactite and stalagmite which, over the course of millions of years, have finally met in the middle.



From here on the column would only continue to grow thicker, if moisture were present. Once again this is not a cavern but a "cave." For the most part water has ceased flowing into this cave from the surface. Occasionally on this tour we've come across "leaks" in the ceiling in which water is coming in, but not many. Now we're getting to the best part of the tour. What you see above is Stalactites from the ceiling turning into "*bacon*" which is in the lower center section of the picture above and center of picture below.



More of the same except the pictures are getting a little more intense.



We are going down more stairs, *what else is new!* But from what we are seeing, this will be the best part of the entire tour. The cave continues to impress. As you can see the effects of some algae is still visible, green-like area. At this point I wish we could get off and just follow this cave structure just to see the cave without walkways and stairways.



The grand finale of this tour is visiting "The Frozen Niagara." Viewing this would mean having to endure an additional forty-nine steps going down, and, of course, going back up again. But the side trip is well worth it. Below is a natural formed canyon about two-hundred feet deep with a small body of water at the bottom. Currently we're on the second of four levels in this cave. The water you see in the picture is the lowest level of the cave. Remember just a few million years ago the ground over the cave was a shallow ocean. As it began to dry up and flow underground, we're told the Michigan river flowed overhead. So much trivia, I only wish I could remember all of it.



Above, once again, are Stalactites many of them, millions of years old, whereas below you'll see a multitude of them possibly a few thousand years in age. Both above and below are pictures of the "Frozen Niagara. The lighting at the bottom was virtually non-existent. I did take 2-3 time-lapse shots, but they were too blurred to print. Above is the upper falls and the picture below being of the lower falls. *Best I could do, sorry!*



Below, once again to Carla's right between her and the "column" formation, right off her elbow, is called a "drape. Depending on how the water flows from above and how it is forming over the millennia, Stalactites take on many interesting forms.



There's always that final photo that says it's time for us to leave.

9.15.15-Corvette Plant and Museum-in Bowling Green, KY.

Welcome to a destination I have been waiting for some time, the Corvette Plant in Bowling Green, KY.



be in the engines in the different versions.

The picture above is all you're going to get. No picture taking is allowed in the plant itself. The pictures I will be using are from the Corvette Museum. First and foremost is the Corvette Stingray. This is the entry level corvette. It takes 3.5 days to build each car and they produce 17/hour or 170 every day. Price range on the model is \$55,000 to \$60,000 for the convertible. I believe our tour person said they make three versions of this corvette. The difference would

The Z06 model: They all take the same time to build, the price however, will set you back \$80,000 for the convertible. *It does get better, however!*

The Z07: This model for the performance person runs around \$130,000 for the convertible.

Unique to the Z06 and Z07, for the person buying one of these, the plant will allow them to sit in and watch their car get built. Additionally, the buyer can even build his own engine that will go in their car, under the supervision of a plant professional. This is an assembly plant. All the parts are made someplace else and shipped here then assembled here. What is built here are the engines. *All the engines for these cars are built from the ground up at this plant.* A little more about this GM Plant. Originally this was a Chrysler AC manufacturing plant. Then in 1979 GM purchased the plant and in 1981 began assembling Corvettes here. Bowling Green, KY is the only Corvette home. The first Corvettes built in Detroit cost around \$3500. They are now sixty years old with more than 1.5 million having been produced during those years. GM spent \$131 Million dollars a few years ago in order to begin producing the NEW Stingray. Currently they are expanding by creating a new building exclusively for a new paint shop. *My question is; if all the parts are made someplace else and come to the plant pre-painted, why do they need a new paint-shop? Whatever! Should have thought of that question when we were there.*

The origin of the name "Corvette"



His name was Myron Scott.

A Corvette was a class of WWII fast attack Destroyers. GM also offers, which I never knew before, a body kit for the 2014 Vette. Don't know any more about this, strictly FYI.

The Corvette Museum

The introduction of the Corvette had its growing pains. When it was first debuted at the New York Automotive Show, it won mass appeal. the car, however, was mostly show and did not have the power plant in it to win a serious race. Zora Arkus-Duntov- *Who? Yes I said the same thing.* He wrote a letter to GM telling them that they had created a very pretty sports car. Then he proceeded to tell them all the other aspects that would be needed to transform the Corvette into the racing dream machine they were hoping to build. In 1953 he joined GM, on the Corvette team, and began to transform the Corvette and eventually making it the biggest selling sports car in the world. You would think that the fifties would be the end of any Corvette worries, not so. In the late fifties, the Corvette branch of GM was losing money, lots of money, like over one-thousand dollars per car. Currently, GM was thinking seriously of ending the line. As luck would have it, someone at GM suggested Bill Mitchell might help.



His roll on the Corvette Team would be to put the Corvette back into the black. His first year at GM the Corvette broke even and in his second year it would be a money maker. He was a real fiscal conservative, which is what GM needed to make this turn around happen. The rest is history. As a side note, even Mother Nature had a roll in the Corvette History. In February 12, 2012 at the Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, KY a sinkhole would develop in the museum itself.



In a matter of a few minutes it would gobble up many of the museum's classic Corvettes. What many Corvette enthusiasts might not know is that the museum is non-profit, it relies on donations, admission fees and any profits from the Gift Center to pay its way.



Why this tidbit of information? The museum does not own all the cars it has on display. Most of the cars have been donated and many are on loan to the museum. One was the white 1992 Corvette, the "Millionth Corvette" manufactured. It was fully restored. Rick Hendrick-Every year GM inducts various individuals into its Corvette Hall of Fame. In 2015 Rick Hendrick was inducted. This honor doesn't come lightly.



As you can see from the picture above, from his Corvette Collection, he's a real Enthusiast. He owns Hendrick Automotive Group which has dealerships in thirteen states and employs over ten-thousand people. He also owns Hendrick Motorsports and his cars race and win at NASCAR. *Personally, his most impressive, and very successful driver, was Mark Martin.*

Dale Earnhardt Jr. (#8) also raced under the Hendrick Banner and, of course, raced GM cars.



Dale Sr. (#3) raced GM cars also, but not in the Hendrick family of drivers. I don't believe being an enthusiast alone would merit induction, you must also to be a philanthropist, and do some good in the world, as well, which he has.



He bid for and won the car above, I believe, at a Charity Auction. He paid over One-Million dollars for the car.

THE LINEUP: (not all the cars by far.)

1953, The original production year.



1954



1955



1957



If there was any chance of acquiring a Corvette, this (the black Vette) is the model I'd love to have. Even at my age, I can still dream!

1965



1967



1968- The Fifteenth Anniversary car

1974



1978-The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Car... 1983-Corvette is now 30 Years Old.



1992-The Millionth car, had a brush with Mother Nature.



The Corvette above after being restored from the sinkhole incident.



You're right, just checking to see if you're paying attention! It's a 50's model but could not find a actual date for it. I'm pretty sure it's 1953.

9.18.15

We will be saying good-bye to Scott, Vanessa and Kora. They joined us as neighbors, about a week ago. We really did not get much of a chance to spend much time with them, but those few occasions were very enjoyable. The idea of having long-term neighbors, is a sticks and stones lifestyle. For better or worse we take pleasure in having met this beautiful family and hope we might cross paths with them possibly in Florida. We may not be seeing Dave and Cathy again, remember she loved karaoke singing, since the season is over, and the karaoke goes with the season. They're seasonal at this park, not travelers. Nancy and Larry left last week. Their home campground is in Louisiana, not Florida like us, chances are a little slim in crossing paths. Whether good or bad, the one constant about this way of life is that we are always either saying hello or good-bye. The next couple of days will be quiet especially in preparation for our departure this coming Monday morning. It will be jacks-up and on the road by 9 or 10 am. Whereas Scott and family will be traveling 280 miles to Pigeon Forge, TN, we'll be covering around 250 miles going south to Hohenwald, TN staying, of course at another Equity Lifestyle Properties, called Natchez Trace RV Resort.

9.23.15

Every month it comes, sometimes twice a month, jacks up and move out. The trip this time, however, would be a little more intense. As we got into the HHR/Chevy to bring it behind the coach to be towed, we noticed the manual shift was very stiff. Reverse was just barely useable; last thing I wanted to deal with would be a new transmission. The trip to Natchez Trace in Hohenwald, TN would be about one-hundred fifty miles and take about four hours, that includes visiting the TN Visitor's Center and re-gassing the coach. By the time we reached Natchez Trace and unhooked the HHR we only had first gear that could be used with difficulty. Traveling in first gear we found our site and left the car parallel to the roadway and called the nearest GM dealership twenty-three miles away in Lawrenceburg, TN. He estimated worst case scenario would be \$2600 for a new transmission. We called Good Sam's for tow assistance and they offered four numbers to call. We called Mike and he was about halfway here already. He was able to drive the car onto the flatbed and had doubts that our transmission needed replacing. GM concurred. The extended warrantee on the HHR covered half the repairs and most of the rental expense for a loaner car. Altogether out of pocket was \$300, the deductible we had on the HHR...*Priceless!*

Unofficially we met our neighbors in the site next to us. He, Charlie, and his wife Miriam, had removed their HEAVY washer/dryer from its position at the back of their coach in hopes of tracking down a dripping sound he heard the night before.



Miriam came over the next day to introduce herself to Carla, I had met her yesterday. They both still work for a living, as they travel. Her husband Charlie was talking to his boss. Two very talented individuals. She's a medical translator and he's an IT with a start-up company and they both work out of their coach, a Winnebago Destination Diesel. They joined us for a small cookout that night, and they survived my cooking. As the evening grew later, he told us that he had graduated from West Point, *Awesome! I've never met a West Point graduate.* He had an exciting career in the Tank Corps and is now in the computer industry. Just like us, they also move from time to time but do not, yet, participate fully in the Thousand Trails member program. We got the HHR back two days later. On the 25th we returned to Lawrenceburg to complete some paperwork for both the HHR and loaner.

To our surprise we heard about the 2015 Middle Tennessee District Fair. It's sponsored by the Rotary Club and were told that once the fair opens Lawrenceburg closes shop and enjoys the fair. It's a must attend so we will take it in next Thursday, Senior's Day, and save \$2 on each ticket and enjoy free food, doesn't get much better than that. Right now, Friday 25th, it's raining, and rain is scheduled for the next few days.

9.25.15-Our Lady of the Caves CC

Saturday and in two days we'll be, once again, heading out to a new campground. Next one will be Natchez Trace in Tennessee. What I haven't spoken about in the last three weeks is Church services in Kentucky.



Above, this is not a Cathedral or anything like that, as you can see. This little church is like stepping back in to the early 1900's. At full capacity possibly one hundred would fill all the pews. The altar area alone measures possibly twenty by thirty feet.

Another positive, but that it is a very personal experience. It's a small parish, I suppose, although services have almost full attendance, imagine a church being full. When was the last time we saw a full church except for Christmas and Easter? We did attend Our Lady of the Caves CC. The service was a HIGH Mass, which I haven't seen in decades with a strong emphasis on chanting everything, even the gospel. Attending here even once was plenty for me, even though it was considerably closer for us distance wise. Did I mention that most of the recitations of prayers are in Latin? It might be that that church is one of those few churches that follow the Church as it was in the sixties, prior to the second Vatican Council.



It's old fashioned in the manner that the priest and deacon provide the service for the parishioners. We receive the Holy Eucharist kneeling at the altar rail, haven't done that in forty years. You may receive Holy Communion the old way but with a new twist. The Priest, deacon or Eucharistic Minister will dip the Eucharist in wine prior to placing the Host on your tongue. You also may receive the conventional way. In this church the Priest and Deacon deliver the host. Alter servers also participate, as I used to when I was a server, by placing a golden tray under your chin. The Deacon reads the Gospel, as is done in many churches, but every week the sermon is given only by the Priest.

This was an item that always irked me back in Florida. The Deacon there was very knowledgeable, but the least the priest could do for the parishioners, who attend church that day to hear the word of God, and to receive a sermon or homily by the boss of the Parrish, the priest. I'm not certain about the Sunday services as far as a choir participating. At the 5 pm Saturday evening service there is no choir, at least none that I could discern, since those attending could be heard for a change. We do sing possibly three hymns during the service but that's about it. Participation with the parishioners is much more noticeable. Another point of interest the small church does not need mikes and loudspeakers. There's not even a mike at the pulpit. At all times do you feel as one during this service. It's too bad that the Church feels the need to build such large expensive churches. From many of the BIG churches we've attended, I would say the return on investment on this homey Parrish facility should be awesome. Wouldn't you think more churches like this one, maybe a little bigger, but many more of them would serve the Church better. Just my opinion, but attending this service, regardless of how far you must travel, will be well worth you time. One the service is over you will leave very satisfied.

9.23.15-Natchez Trace RV Park

Welcome to Natchez Trace RV Park. It's a huge resort with well over 500 sites for trailers, coaches and even tenting.



We did take in the Lawrenceburg Fair, for what it was worth.



This campground is heavily populated with annual or seasonal campers. Some here have gone to great lengths to make themselves comfortable stay. When we find the campground, with the babbling brook we'll probably do the same.



This complex is a group of 3-4 buildings all joined together. The banquet hall below with game rooms, TV/Senior center and even a movie house. (First for this) The banquet hall also doubles for the Bingo hall. Activities for adults and children especially, during the season, go on here every day. The staff here works hard to provide as much as possible with limited budgets.



Yes, you guessed it, an in-ground pool. Looks like new construction. Closed for the season. Below is the A/V room. No DVDs, but a ton of VHS movies. *I said yuk also*, but then we found so many great titles it was awesome. As I've mentioned before, we never turn on the TV before 5 PM, mainly to get the national news. Since there's no outside aerial reception here, it's movies after supper, unless something else is planned.



In this room you'll find, not only ping pong, but pool and air hockey. The pool table, unlike most you'll find at the Thousand Trails RV park, looks a little worn and the air hockey table looks very much used, *but that's great*.

It usually means they are free and because they are free people use them, unlike the other parks whose tables look brand new because they feel they have to charge for us to use them. *Thank you for the free tables and we did use them quite a few times during our stay.*



This, above, is the senior activity room. Rarely see more than one or two here at a time. But it is good they have such a room.

Below is the air hockey table, ready for us to use. I forgot to mention, for the young aggressive campers, they offer a racket ball court. Don't recall seeing to many of these in our travels. Also, an exercise room, not that we'll ever have use for one of those.



Getting to the end of our discussion on this park, but I wanted to re-mention the movie house. The doors were locked, only open when they are showing a movie. The park has much more to offer than I have mentioned. As you enter the park, there's a lake here as well. Mini-golf, valley ball and some other outdoor activity sports also. The weather's been dampish and cool to cold, so Carla and I have pretty much stayed in except for our jaunt to the fair. Yes, yesterday we enjoyed the Lawrenceburg, TN fair. The day began cool at 65 degrees. Projected was rain, only 10%, acceptable. Well we enjoyed the senior meal, that was free, and then meandered around the fairgrounds till just around 7pm, in anticipation of the Trace Atkins show. Well by 2pm it was raining steadily, but we were involved with 4-H Dog shows; very enjoyable but getting chillier and dampish. Had a nice supper before the show and then it was off to the cheap seats in the grandstands. As it turned out they were the best seats in the house since it did nothing but pour for the rest of the evening. Trace Atkins was good but wouldn't go again, even for free. He's not nearly as entertaining a Mickey Gilley or Johnny Cash of old. Enough on the fair. If time permits, I'll try to get a blog on it, but not till later. Right now, Sunday, except for power, water and slides, we're ready to pull out. We should be able to be on our way by 10 am tomorrow morning.

We'll travel about three hours and plan to overnight at Cracker Barrel in Cookeville, TN. Next day, Tuesday, we'll go the rest of the way into Maggie Valley, NC, where we'll be staying for two weeks at Pride Campground.

OCTOBER

10.02.15-Maggie Valley, NC

Well here we are again, Friday before our Monday travel day. In general, this has been a rather quiet week for us. Reviewing the travel route for our excursion into Maggie Valley, NC takes time and sometimes a little discussion before deciding on a proper route. The GPS also plays an important part in the decision making. Maggie Valley has a special meaning for us. Back in 2007, remember the year before the Great Recession, we owned a Log Cabin just outside of Maggie Valley, and we called it Cobbler's Cabin.



In the past I've owned several homes, but even though this was not a full-time residence, I still miss it quite a bit. This part of North Carolina does get snow, but much less than Conn., where we eventually moved away from. We enjoyed New Year's Eve on the weekend of this snowfall, back on Jan. 1, 2008. It was on this weekend that Abby first experienced snow. The night before, after we all brought in the New Year, it began to snow lightly, then a bit more. Within an hour the decks had three inches of light snow on them and Abby, in jammies, robe and slippers, was sliding up and down the 6-foot-wide decks and making tracks everywhere. As we all can see, the snow barely covered the ground but the next morning Abby had to try out sledding down the roadway out front.



The make-shift snow sled functioned as we hoped it would, and, at times, a little faster than we anticipated. On the right side of the roadway was a steep slope, and down the road a bit was a sharp turn. The box-sled had minimal navigational abilities. But that was seven years ago and in just a few days little Abby will be turning eighteen.

But with all the good memories life is not always fair and the Recession brought an end to that part of our lives. We we're the few fortunate ones who were able to find a buyer for the cabin. The cabin, for all it was worth, was awesome. Our Broker was fortunate enough to find us a buyer who would be willing to pay cash for the cabin. Remember those days, vacation home loans were but a fading thought. Only problem, we like so many others during those days and the years to come, did take a bath when we sold. But the memories and pictures will always be with us, even though another Log will never be. Thanks to Him, He has always watched over us in all our endeavors, and we are still enjoying a life most could only hope to experience.



Next day we had rain and very overcast. When the weather permitted, we took a walk around the grounds and met Hiram and wife Linda. They have a Class-A Georgetown 37, like what we had but a tad big bigger. The weather continues to be inclement. We're excited today, Saturday, to revisit St. Margaret's of Scotland Catholic Church. I'll never forget how awed we were the first time we attended Mass at this church.

10.06.15- Pride RV Campground, Maggie Valley, NC



For a change we are camping at a private resort, called Pride. As you will see in a couple of pictures, it offers new arrivals with plenty of space to leave their rigs while they go inside to check in. We are getting a special rate of twenty dollars a night as opposed to the forty plus we would be paying as a private cash customer. Most all their RV sites are pull throughs, even ours, but it was best for us to do a back in on account of the tree you see in the picture.



Even though it may not be a Thousand Trail Resort, it does participate in the Equity Lifestyle Properties. Equity buys privately owned campground groups which it offers to its members for free or if its an Encore Park, a premium price. With a slew of other parks in the US it will negotiate special rates for Equity members.



The club house which is to the left of the arrival parking area. This week was very special for us since we had my brother Dennis join us for almost a week. Pictures of Johnathan Creek River. It will cost you a tad bit more for a site by the river, so don't be a cheapo like me, pay the premium price and enjoy the sounds of the babbling brook. Over the course of our two-week stay we saw six tent-campers pitched by the stream.



It's not that difficult viewing this lifestyle from a distance, but if you're thinking of jumping into this experience, it's best for you to spend a week or so doing it for real just to assure yourself you're ready to go from a stick and stone home to living under four-hundred square feet, twenty-four-seven.

Above is a distance shot of Johnathan Creek, the babbling brook I'd be looking for. Just trying it out for size. The campsite is open year-round. The last three days of our stay here gave us an idea of cooler temperatures we haven't seen in a while. In the morning we woke to the low thirties, I mean low thirties, with highs around sixty-five, not that bad. The coach did extremely well. With only the fireplace, temps inside hovered in the high sixties during the night.



Generally, I don't usually make it to the front of the camera, but I could not resist just sitting back for a few minutes and enjoying the splendor of this location. Once again, a wider view of this campground and the stream. We also chose this park because of its proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway, after all, it is October and its leaf viewing time.



The views were as awesome as expected. We were also fortunate to experience some of the coldest temps in two years. This weekend we woke to 32 degrees but, from the inside of the coach, you'd never know it was that cold. The Fireplace did most of the work and occasionally the furnace kicked in, priceless! So many things happening, yet we're finding plenty of time to just relax and enjoy this beautiful campground. Today we plan to take a short trip along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Foliage is just beginning to turn, and it should be a very pleasant trip. We'll be repeating this trip when my brother Dennis arrives for a five-day stay with us. Next day we had rain and very overcast. We just learned that this campground and many others in the area, are open all year round. It would not be a hardship for me to spend a Winter in this area.

10.08.15-Blue Ridge Parkway- foliage time.

Just a short peak at the beautiful fall foliage. I could fill a book on just this side trip alone.



There's not going to be much to say about a trip to view foliage. But here we are on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Below is the Fed Cove Overlook, elevation 4550.

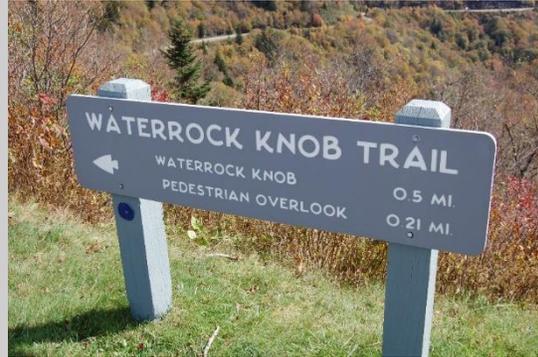


Next is Thunder Struck Ridge, elevation 4780. Below is Hornbuckle Valley, who came up with these names? Elevation 5105



Cranberry Ridge is getting a little hazy at 5475 feet.

This is the end of the road as far as climbing higher, I hope, except for a small mountain path to the right.



We've reached the visitor's station. Yes, we're going to try it. May stop after we reach the Pedestrian Overlook, we'll see! Below, wow this looks easy, not what I was expecting.



Great view, still going up. View of the Visitors Complex.



Thank you, Park Rangers, for thinking of us old folks. A selfie, yes with a camera. Really wish I had at least one longer arm, altitude here 6046 feet asl. Well, we climbed another fifty feet and now were at 6046 feet above sea level. I'm happy! However, as in all our field trips, there's comes a time we must head home.

10.11.15- Dennis comes in tomorrow

Dennis comes in tomorrow, Monday the 12th. He was with us only a short while ago but this time he'll be experiencing living in a camper 24/7 which, I feel is important, if he's contemplating buying one for himself.

10.14.15- Blue Ridge Parkway

Today Wednesday we experience, once again, the Blue Ridge Parkway, this time with Dennis. We gave Dennis a chance to relax and rest yesterday, but today, we do a field trip. Just a couple of pictures of the Blue Ridge Parkway again, this time we have Dennis with us.



Always thought I was a little taller than him. Thank goodness Abby wasn't here, she'd make us both look short. Yes. I think he's going to like this trip. Unlike the time we came before, this time Carla packed a lunch. So awfully nice when someone offers to take a picture of all of us. We do selfies when needed but you rarely see background very much. Dennis really enjoyed the trip immensely.

10.14.15-afternoon-Quest in search of Soco Falls,

Before we left, the Blue Ridge Parkway, a visitor had mentioned visiting Soco Falls, on the Soco road which is the way we will be returning to Pride.



We were told getting to the falls would not be easy, they were right.

The path begins as a slight slope with a handrail, but that soon changes to a very rough, steep, roots and bolder ridden path, but we, like everyone else, make it. It took a little while for us to find it, but here we are. *Yes, climbing is needed.*



It's worth the climb to see the falls. The trail was treacherous in places. As you can see in the picture below it was well worth the path challenge. This would be the first time we'd ever seen Soco Falls. Now you've seen Soco Falls as well. Not sure if the sight was worth all the effort it took for us to find the falls, but the hike down to the falls was awesome. Like many of our other trips, *this is one of those you do NOT want to let children take off on their own.*



If one was adventurous enough you could drop down even lower to be a little closer to the falls, but I'm OK with where we are. Now, we must climb out of here. I'm tired and am anxious to get back to the coach.



The trail back up, you might think would be less challenging than going down, but no. Rock and roots protrude in every direction. Weak ankles should not try this. Dennis passed on the falls. Give him time, he'll get into all this sightseeing stuff.



I'm hungry ...Ice cream anyone?

What do you think of the burning bush shrubs on Johnathan Creek Rd in Maggie Valley! Long day, time to get back to Maggie Valley and the coach.

10.14.15-FMCA Rally

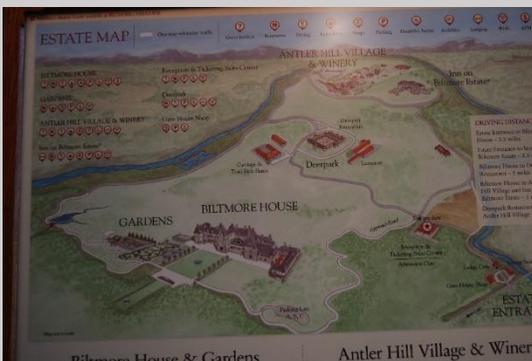


You're right! It looks about the same as it did before; we had it waxed. However, at least now we are certain when the last time it was treated, and that's important. We arrived home in midafternoon a little exhausted, but very satisfied with the trip. Tomorrow, the 15th, we will do a first with Dennis; attend a FMCA Rally. FMCA is Family Motor Coach Association, a must to be a member for all full-timers, part-timers as well. To our surprise we discovered they would also have a big RV Show as well. Dennis was taken by this Forest River Sunseeker 2800QS. His hope is to acquire a Fleetwood Southwind soon, but should that fall through, this rig is a beauty. End of the week is coming, once again, but Friday, the 16th, we will visit the Biltmore Estate. I know, those of you who have been reading our blogs, remember we visited here a few years back.

10.16.15-Biltmore Estate



This is never a dull tour. They've instituted a new system for those who chose the self-guided tour, the only way to go. For a mere \$10 each, you are exposed to so much information vital to the mansion. The tour lasted about three hours and we were back at Pride by late afternoon. The House and its gardens encompass about eight-thousand acres of the total land mass. It's next to impossible to capture a full picture of this building.



We first visited this venue several years ago with Abby. This time we visit with my brother Dennis. Everything of this building is huge. This porch, overlooking the over 125,000 acres of grounds, is massive by itself. Carla and Dennis enjoying the views, like everyone else.



In a few minutes we will go back inside and continue our self-guided tour.

In total the house has over two-hundred-fifty rooms. Maids and butlers' quarters were on the top floor, and of course, separate. This beautiful home was completed in 1895. This project was the brainchild of George Washington Vanderbilt. House rules mandated that I could not take any pictures of the inside of the house. Did not learn that until after I snapped a couple and was told no more.



I had asked if the family visits the Biltmore at all; I was told yes. Many times, they close off certain sections of the house to allow family members their privacy. Nice back yard. This, I believe, was called a courtyard. Food and beverages can be had out here. Getting back to the family members. I was also told that they have a separate residence on the property itself. Understandably that is not available to the public to view. On our drive through the grounds on our way home, I spotted a very large home off up on a hill. It was much too big for a servant's home but not nearly as ostentatious as the Biltmore, but we'll never know.



Just inside from the courtyard we found several rooms for gifts and souvenirs. This area is attached to what was once one of their stables. I believe this was the Carriage House Shop, but not sure. I can't even imagine the kind of money this family enjoys. This entire building, not to mention the thousands of acres of land, for one family to enjoy initially.



The gardens, even currently of the year, are breathtaking. We will be finishing off this week by taking Dennis to Joey's, in Maggie Valley, for breakfast, Saturday morning, then we'll enjoy a craft show to be topped with Mass, pizza, beer and movie that evening. What we did not expect were temps in the morning at 32 degrees, the freezing point. The coach did well, and Dennis slept well on our new twin-bed-size inflatable mattress. The fireplace did its job most of the evening while the furnace kicked in 3-4 times to keep us at a comfortable 69 degrees all night.

10.18.15-

We awoke this Sunday morning again with outside temps in the very low 30's again; we can expect the same for Monday. We were all up early this morning as it was time to bring Dennis to the airport for him to go home. The rest of today and Monday will be quiet in preparation of our leaving on a couple of days. Tuesday was a brisk morning but not as cold as the last two days. We get on the road by just about 10am, a little later than usual. We were going to take this three-hundred-mile trek in two legs, but Carla has suggested doing it all in one day. Just two-hundred miles into the trip we lost our directional. If we were only in the HHR this would be inconsequential, but we're a fifty-foot train on wheels, and with no directional we also lose our side cameras, very important in trying to re-enter the right travel lane, but we drove cautiously and had no incidents. Of course, we got here safely right around 4 PM. A couple of days after arriving our neighbor Bob Howe (wife Donna), came over and checked out our three panels of fuse boxes. Took about thirty minutes and he found it. They are full-timers but their daughter lives here currently. I thought they'd be around a few more days, but next morning we woke to find them gone. Within a month we'll be catching up with them in Florida.

10.20.15-The Oaks, Point South in Yemassee, SC.



This was supposed to be a two-day three-hundred-mile trip. I'm not happy with going more than two-hundred miles in a single leg, but it's always an option that we can always get off the road should I get tired. Above is the Club House. To the right is the registration office. We gave them a call, early on the 20th, to see if they could squeeze us in if we came in one day early; they were good with that.



Next is the inside of the club house. The campground has very good Wi-Fi but only in the Club House. With so many privately-owned campgrounds offering good Wi-Fi in your coach it's a little disappointing. Thousand Trails, at least here, thinks the coach owners use their own hotspots. It's the lifestyle we've chosen, and we must accept what is offered, especially for the price we pay.

Free pool is available, which is very nice, and we'll take advantage of it. Once again, the pool table looks well-worn; *awesome!* Well used means people are using it, so much better than those pool tables at some TT campgrounds that look brand new, and yet are several years old, but they are pay to play.



Today were taking a very nice walk around the park. The park navigates around a stream and river. I hope you enjoy the pictures to come. This is a very nice walk. The trail was easily navigable. Families would truly enjoy a one or two-week stay at this park.



The campground does warn everyone that gators are part of the makeup of the campground. This body of water, I believe, is not flowing. A little further in our walk we saw water that it was laden with a blanket of algae. This is an enclosed picnic area.



We've just arrived but I'm sure at some time we might spend some time in the enclosure. One of our neighbors here are a small concentration of mosquitoes. However, we came to the end of the trail. This is a Equity Life Style Property, and goes by the name of Thousand Trails for its RV campgrounds.



Not all TT enrollees get to enjoy all TT campgrounds at no charge. Some Encore parks, like this one thank goodness, is a freebee. The roadway into the campground, mighty big enough for even the biggest rig. Even a newbie will have no problem navigating this park.



At the end of every day, we can always count on Scoots to be standing watch over the comings and goings of people and rigs alike.

What a nice stay we've had. Scoots says good-bye as well.

10.24.15- Mass at St. Anthony's



Before we knew it, it was Saturday night. This week we'll attend Mass at St. Anthony's in Ridgeland, SC. This was a very nice little church, but we might drive over to Beaufort, SC.

10.25.2015 - Drive-In Movie

We're going to take ourselves out to a Drive-In Movie, just outside of town to see *The Martian*. Tomorrow, Monday, is a field trip day to Savannah, Georgia. We hope to find and visit the St. John the Baptist Cathedral, more on this later. All in all, Sunday was uneventful as we prepared to take in our second Drive-in movie of 2015. We arrived at the drive-in around 7:30 and it was scheduled to start in fifteen minutes. Unlike the last time when we used the car radio and ran the battery dead, this time we're using a portable and we had no problems with the car. The theater presented an excellent promo for Drive-in theaters and how important public participation was in order to keep them in the black. According to the promo, this theater last year had a \$140,000 expense to upgrade its projectors to high definition units. The movie we came to see was *The Martian*, and it did not disappoint. The movie could not have been better if we had seen it in an indoor theater, but then we would not have experienced the thrill of an outdoor presentation, *Priceless!* For the next three days we'd be enjoying the inside of the coach as the area battles storms from the Atlantic as well as storms up from Texas at the same time.

10.26.2015- John the Baptist Cathedral & Savannah, GA



Our principal purpose to visit Savannah was this Cathedral. In the past I've mentioned that this lifestyle is His gift to us. The very least we can do to give thanks to Him and devote a small amount of time and space on the many beautiful churches and cathedrals around the country.



The choir loft above the main floor. How about that awesome window dead center in the loft? Thank you for indulging me. Now for a small tour of this part of Savannah, GA. This beautiful water fountain is diagonally across the street from St. John's. Just a couple of pictures of how serene this park truly is.



I could hang out here the rest of the day. This is the former Chandler Hospital. This was Georgia's "first" hospital. It was founded in 1803 as the Seaman's hospital and Poor House. In 1931 this building was acquired by the local Methodist Church. The neighborhood here is turn-of-the-century. The properties are so well maintained they look brand new.



Must take just one more look at this beautiful park. My last employer and his wife were both from Georgia, and now I know why they love this area so much.

10.28.2015-

We finally see the sun, and it's a beautiful sunny day but the ground is drenched with water. Thursday and Friday were mundane, but Saturday we travelled to St. Helena's Island for church services. Beautiful, inexpensively built church. Excellent use of money. It took us forty minutes to go there but was well worth the time. We attended Holy Cross Church. The Saturday night movie was "Olympus Has Fallen." We'd seen it years ago and was still an excellent movie.

NOVEMBER

11.02.2015-

I don't know how we got to November this soon. Seems like just yesterday we were heading up to Iowa; guess we're having fun. We'll be back in Florida by Nov. 5th. Most of our journeys from one campground to another are uneventful, this time we would have a little excitement.

11.04.2015

We were about one-hour from our destination point, a Cracker Barrel in Wildwood, FL when a car passed us up tooting his horn and waving his hand, *so we waved back*; until the second car passed us by doing somewhat the same. US 10 going West is a very busy highway, and I really did not want to pull over in the break-down lane but decided to in order to check the coach and HHR out for anything unusual. It did not take long to discover that the HHR had experienced a blow-out in the front left side and all that remained of the tire were some rubber strips. Thank goodness for insurance. Placed a call to Good Sam's and they had a truck out to us in less than twenty minutes. There was a Walmart about sixteen miles down the road so that would be our destination for today for repairs. Decided to have two *new tires* put on the front of the HHR which left us with one good tire with no rim. In preparation for Alaska we had planned to take along a grown-up spare tire for the dinghy, so not all was wasted. Amazingly we felt no pulling or vibration while we were driving the coach with a dinghy with only three good tires. Thank Him for keeping us safe through this and the public for bringing this situation to our attention. Friday, we rested from all this excitement and woke up Saturday to a scheduled yard-sale. With only a dozen items we did not need, setting up was quick. It wasn't a complete loss; we sold a DVD for fifty cents. Still Saturday and we've just completed a walk around our area, Section D. Carla just discovered that Orlando TT has 867 sites, with something to make everyone's stay here pleasant. As in the past with TT Campgrounds you have the option to pick your own site, so we're in 140D.



Just down the street from us are a collection of camp model homes. These are here to rent. Here and there you will find some for sale. Have no idea how much they would run for. This is a large lake. Like so many Equity Lifestyle Properties water is very important. Kayaks, canoes and row boats are available to all of us staying here.



heavenly.

The idea that you need a hundred-thousand-dollar coach in order to enjoy the amenities of these campgrounds and this lifestyle, is a fallacy. The Dolphin coach above, is probably 25-30 years old. The AC is up and running and it has all you need to vacation for a weekend or all summer long. Something like this might go for around twenty thousand with all systems working. We spent years vacationing on Seabird Island, FL mostly on weekends in a fifty-year-old Mobile Home Trailer; *and each weekend was*

11.18.2015- In a few days we'll be packing it in, just as the Russell's had to leave yesterday, on their way to Miami. But it's also been a week of meeting more exciting individuals. Today we met, first time ever, a published author, W. R. Hill and wife Pat. Turns out he's a mystery writer and, of course, that's what Carla enjoys reading.



He's also done e-book publications. I have never promoted anything or anyone in any of my blogs, but this book deserves extra attention. As everyone knows, I am not a fast typist, and even slower reader, but last week I was introduced to, not only this book but the author as well. This is an Amazon Kindle book which means it's very inexpensive. I believe I paid \$3.99 for it to be downloaded to my Kindle. You can download it into your Kindle account on you tablet or PC. It was available in paperback so I also purchased the paper version from Amazon. It was a little more money, but sometimes I enjoy just holding a book instead of a reader. The paper version was under \$10.00, \$8.99 I think, *but don't hold me to it.* Once again, this book does not disappoint. A mystery novel hat is in third gear before the end of the first chapter. If you have a chance let me know what you think of it. He was nice enough to review and critique something I've been working on. Dennis. my brother on the other hand, had an epiphany. He woke up this morning with every intention to sort out and simplify his life...Awesome! He's also looking into probably purchasing an RV in hopes of broadening his life experiences...*Priceless!*

On Sunday at 2pm we're having someone come into price up installing new vinyl flooring. If it's not that expensive this would be the time to have it done before the new dinette gets installed. As you can see in the last couple of pictures, we have a mini shag which is what most coaches have, even many of the latest models. Replacing that with a wood vinyl looking floor will make the coach look much bigger and easier to keep clean. We'll see what happens. Monday we will be

leaving Orlando TT for Three Flags TT Resort in Wildwood, FL, up by the Villages. Three Flags TT Resort in Wildwood, FL

11.24.2015-



The next day we travel south, by car, to meet Dennis in Lakeland, FL as he looks over an RV, he's interested in. After that, it's that time of the year, once again. Wednesday we'll be spending Thanksgiving with Mary Ann, Carla's sister.



Dennis, of course, will be with us and will leave for home after dinner on Thursday. The Sunday after Thanksgiving we spend in Orlando with Abby and together, we'll take in, Handel's Messiah. I can only hope that everyone had as nice a Thanksgiving as we experienced. Mary Ann, Carla's sister, had us and my brother Dennis over to her home in Port Orange, FL for Turkey Day.

11.29.2015-

Sunday after Thanksgiving is our annual first day of the Christmas Season. On this day we enjoy a production of Handel's Messiah, at the Carr Theater in Orlando, FL. This is an event we've enjoyed for the last sixteen years.



After the production was over, as always, it was out to eat, this time at Golden Coral. In the picture above you'll find the four of us. The handsome dude sitting at the edge of the table, no not me, the young guy, is Michael, Abby's beau. Abby, of course is beside him. Michael has a roadmap laid out for the years to come. Valencia for two years studying business then UCF to pursue a career as a Physician Assistant. Abby remains focused on Art at UCF. We have two more weeks remaining here at Three Flags RV Park in Wildwood, FL then it's back to Orlando, but the time remaining will be very busy for sure as you will read about.

DECEMBER

12.07.2015-

We've waited for three months for this day. Shortly Eric and his crew from Re-carpet will be tearing up the tile and carpet we have and then will give our coach a rebirth with new carpet and vinyl wood flooring. It should be completed on Wed.



Above is what we used to have, below is the finished product, awesome!

St Timothy's in Lady Lake, FL to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.



There is no way to describe this church and the one below except extraordinary. In our travels this year we've attended Mass in churches with a max capacity of only one hundred to something like these churches...*Awesome!*

Later it's off to attend St. Vincent de Paul. Nothing planned for Sunday.

12.14.2015

Left Three Flags early this Monday morning for an appointment at Alliance RV for annual maintenance jobs. We arrived at 8am as scheduled and it's now 2:15pm and we're still waiting for our new 3pm appt. It's not that much of a hardship, the accommodations are comfortable, and the popcorn is fresh.

12.16.15

We will be paying our bill here at Alliance then traveling back to Orlando, Thousand Trails, for two weeks and leaving New Year's Eve day, celebrating New Years at Cracker Barrel in Titusville, wow!

12.17.15-

We left Alliance RV about 9:30 am and arrived back at Orlando TT about 10:30, in Clermont. We're back again in section D #73, only to find out there is no option for WI-FI in this area. Everything is a compromise. In the rest of the park you will bake in the sun, but you could have WI-FI! So, I intend to spend a great deal of time in the clubhouse. We enjoyed Christmas with Dennis, another Christmas on New Year's with Abby and family and lastly with Mary Ann in mid-January.



Yup, this is what a coach looks like at wrapping time. This was really my early Christmas present, the darker chair to the right. It's a rocker, which will stop me from trying to make the swivel, non-rocking chairs, into a rocker. Awesomely comfortable!



Back in the old day, those days of brick and mortar homes and lots of stuff, Christmas' used to be a tad bigger. Now we enjoy a much less expensive Christmas which will include very little stuff to box up. People ask us, do you have a Christmas tree, of course! Like everything in our lives, right now, it's in a more storable size, unlike the ten footers we'd had in the past.



Muffy and Scruffy, our Christmas stocking critters. They've been with us for almost twenty-five years and look no worse for wear and tear. Dennis, this year, would join us at Orlando TT Campground for Christmas. It's always been tradition for Carla and I to voyage to Boca and celebrate the Holliday with mom and Dennis, but this year mom and dad were with us in spirit.



I never thought family pets would make out at Christmas, sure enough one of Scooty's best presents was Wobbly, and we recommend it for anyone with a cat. No, this is not all I got for presents, but it's what I really wanted. But at over 3 ounces, 220 calories and 24 carbohydrates, I'm keeping it in the freezer till I lose five pounds before I devour this awesome snack. It doesn't take much to make Dennis happy. As you can tell we give mostly joke gifts, some have some relevance, but not many. In his hands he's holding a box of Archway Oatmeal Cookies with raisins of course. It's not that I mind his eating up my stash of Archways, just thought I'd give him some for the road back home later today.



Yes, this is Wobbly and Scooty at play. Wobbly can hold a small supply of cat-treats in his belly, and it's refillable. Wobbly comes with a hole on his backend, to enable the treats to fall to the floor for Scoots to eat. It did not take very long for Scoots to figure out this routine. This works out great at night, most nights. Another dumb gift. We're hoping Dennis will adapt this lifestyle, if not full-time, maybe part-time. I'm certain once he gets his feet wet in the RV lifestyle, he'll go full-time; we're just trying to give him options once he gets into retirement. Oh, the gift was an Alliance catalog. What we really wanted to get him as an Exit Book a must for all serious RVers, but we could not find one in time.



Yes, books abound everywhere. Carla is indispensable in our navigation needs. This Road Atlas, unlike the four others we also have, highlight Flying J, other gas stations, Cracker Barrels and various campgrounds. Even I got more than one gift, as you can see on my head.

It's been an exhausting morning, opening gifts, so it's time to enjoy a good steak dinner.