

MAY 2018 BLOGS/JOURNALS

5.12-Nice to be back again. Since my last entry in April much has happen. For one thing it's now May and Carla and I are in our twenty-second month here in Florida. To make matters worse the Web Site has been down for the last three weeks. I guess it wasn't the Web Site but rather the server. It's been hair raising logging in each day to a message board stating, "this Web Site has been deleted."

On May 9th I went in for my final chemo. The results of my blood work qualified me to skip the two booster shots I normally have after chemo, so the trip has finally come to an end. On the 29th I go in for a PET Scan and within a few days from then we transport the results to the surgical team in Tampa. If nobody finds any surprises, we could be on the road before my birthday in June. Both Carla and I are so thankful for HIS watching over us these past twelve months. We've had an amazing life together, some years were a little more challenging than others, but, all in all, it's been a Wonderful Life. Once again, it's very nice hitting the keys again.

5.17.19



Tomorrow, on Friday 18th, we're going on our first field trip in over a year, if not, almost two years. We'll be traveling with Abby and beau, Michael, and will visit Chiluly St. Pete. We've been to this type of exhibit before in Seattle but, to the best of our knowledge, Abby has not seen something like this before. We're now residing in Orlando, Clermont, at the Orlando Thousand Trails RV Park. We arrived a couple of days ago and are now living with 50-amp juice and it's a very big RV Park. A little glitch. We heard back from Abby and Michael, by text, that meeting on Friday was not possible. Plan B would be to reset the trip for Saturday. And as the best laid plans would turn out, Saturday was the day we would go to St. Pete.

5.18 Friday Such a beautiful day. Our hopes is that Saturday will be equally as nice. We've been going by signage off the highway advertising Lakeridge; a truly nice experience.





This signage was at the foot of the driveway. As we looked ahead it was like tripping in California.



The outside temperature today was 85, just perfect. What's hard to believe is that s vineyard began in 1988, by a CPA. This is the tasting bar; we'll return here after the tour is complete and sample their products. They've been winning awards since almost their beginning in 1988, I think. Our tour will begin on the upper level. We'll traverse the catwalks from above so as not to get in the way of the workers below. Picture looking down at the main level. In the back of the picture is a 250-gallon drum for aging wines. This system is no longer used and has been replaced with stainless steel drums as we'll soon see.

This is Stuart, he'll be our guide on this tour.



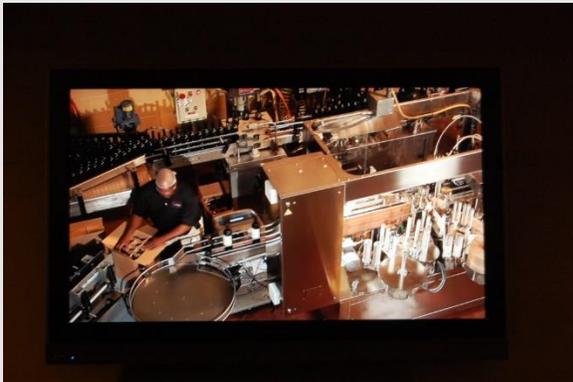
Above are the newer two-thousand-gallon storage drums and below are the even newer twenty-five thousand-gallon drums. The grapes are harvested, then thrown into these metal grinding machine where they are squished into a juice.



This is the owner of the winery, forgot his name. He started as a CPA and is now into grapes. Below is his father. As the story goes only his father enjoyed the wine that he, the father, produced, but he was the owner's inspiration.



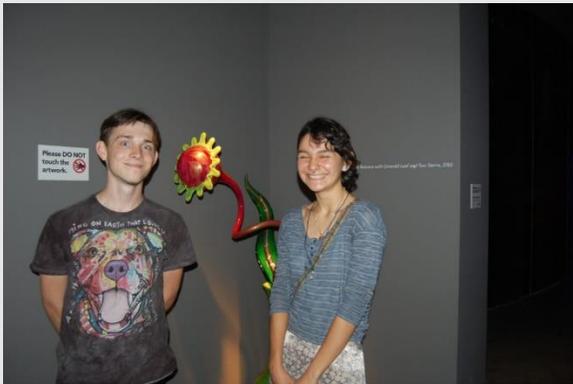
The grapes are harvested and collected, and the process begins. This is a video we're looking at showing the bottling process. We'll see this machine again shortly



This winery bottles over 2.5 million bottles annually. Florida's hot, humid weather is not conducive to using wooden kegs, therefore the stainless steel insulated and individually cooled containers. Below is the bottling machine that does all the bottling. Just looking at the simple and small bottling machines you'd think this just a family operation. On the contrary; this is the seventh largest winery in the US.



5.19 Chihuly creations in Tampa, FL



This is our second field trip in the last 22 months. We are joined by Abby and beau Michael.





This is a self-guided tour, and, as such, it's like walking through a museum. Below are just a small sampling of the many beautiful glass creations at Chihuly; Enjoy.



Above is a ceiling arrangement. not an easy picture to take. Actually, Abby took many of these pictures, feels like old times.





It only took us about an hour to complete the tour when we came upon a video on the art of glass blowing. This should really be at the beginning of the tour, not the end. We never did finish the video since it was time for us to leave the studio and proceed across the street, to experience the actual process itself. Below is one of the Chihuly work stations, but I sure it's not where all the big stuff is created. These two guys below, names I've forgotten, will demonstrate how to turn liquid glass into a piece of beauty. These guys, let's call the Blue and Grey, are working with two ovens. Blue is in the first which has a temp of over 2300 degrees and behind him with a grey door you see the second oven with a temp of 2000 degrees. It's difficult to see clearly, but on that white marble slab are 12-15 glass rods with a strand of red in them.



Above Blue has heated those twelve-inch glass rods and rolled them up and around a chunk of molten glass from the back oven. This oven has a constant supply of molten glass available to be worked into a new creation. After about ten minutes he has the colored glass rods in an almost perfectly round design. Back, centuries ago, the iron tabletop used to be a three- or four-inch slab of marble, but that was then.



The guys will continue to stretch and twist this material for as long as they feel they need. I think we were expecting to see a flower creation, or vase but not to be. Instead we saw the creation of a glass stalk, as seen below. In the next several days they will be adding to this stalk other things of beauty and stick them to this stalk.



Being seniors we we're hungry, so we found a grilled cheese joint, which was very good.

JUNE 2018 JOURNALS

6.05.2018- Tuesday We got started this morning around nine am.

The trip went well. We drove through Florida and into Georgia around noon time. We're breaking a little more often than in the past because of me. We arrived in Perry Georgia, at Cracker Barrel just a little after 2:30, following our schedule pretty closely. Total mileage today was 280 miles. Weather was 88 to 90 and overcast. We are still in quest for cooler temps. Wednesday was a long ride but uneventful; Thursday made up for it.

6.7 Thursday - Tuesday and Wednesday's

rides were uneventful which was just great but Thursday began with us witnessing a car speeding down an unfinished road going close to 100 mph. The minute I saw the speeding car I said there's never a cop around when I see something like this. Within seconds at least a dozen State Troopers came screaming by at high speeds then a hand full of local police got in on the chase as well. Needless to say they were out of sight within seconds so we did not give it another thought. About an hour later we were caught up in another slow traffic situation. Low and behold it was speedy Gonzales with at least a dozen or more law enforcement vehicles causing our four-lane highway to be reduced to a single lane. The incident did break up the ride for this day.

6.8 Friday - Today was another 300-mile trip. With no Cracker Barrel in the area we settled for a night's stay at the local Walmart.

6.9 Saturday - arrival day.

Today we arrived at Neshonoc Lakeside RV Park, and we're just a few feet away from the Wards'. The coach you see to your left is, of course the Ward's. If you look way over in the 3 o'clock position you'll see our coach. It looks further than it really is. Later this evening we'll be going over to their coach for dinner.

6.10 Sunday. -We did Mass today as opposed to our usual Saturday. A little later we joined up with them again and toured W. Salem, WI and visited the St. Joseph the Workman Cathedral. I'll have a special blog on this venue in a day or two. I'll also have a special blog on our W. Salem tour as well. That evening the Tom and Sue joined us for talk, game of Scrabble and Carla's famous pizza. It was a very enjoyable evening. No one kept score on the Scrabble game but that was just fine.

6.11 Monday. Today would be a full day. The Tom and Sue are great planners. As you have seen in the past, we have a tendency to visit churches and Cathedrals whenever possible; today would be no exception. Today we would visit Rose Chapel at the Convent of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Our tour guide would be Sister Sarah, a nun in residence at the convent. I will not go into detail on this venue since I will be devoting a special blog to it. Sister Sarah gave us a great amount of time answering our many questions on both religion and the Rose Chapel. We left the Chapel and picked up Tom who was having a physical at this time. The day was complete, as far as I was concerned, but Tom had another venue he wanted us to experience, the Neshonoc Lake, where he and Sue once lived. It's been so many years since Carla and I have been on the water., it felt so good. The air temp was in the high 70's and the sky was blue with some intermittent clouds. A perfect day. He took us, Carla and I, (Sue had to pick up her glasses) around the full circumference of the lake. Some of the homes along the shore were awesome to behold. I haven't had such a full day in months, but it did not end after the lake ride. We got together with them, once again, for dinner at a "pork restaurant." Carla and I both had way too much to eat but every bite was delicious. The next day was strictly R and R. I did not realize how tired I could be. Just not used to having so much to do. Later that evening the Ward's did come over and we enjoyed a short card game or two of "King's Corner." The next day, Wednesday, was departure day for both families. We would leave just before 9AM and arrive in Forrest City, Iowa, at Winnebago, around 1PM.

6.17.2018- Sunday Spoke to both my kids today.

That may not seem like such a big deal to you but to me it's a red-letter day. Not to be left out but also the entire Ozdarski family, Cindy and, of course, Abby. Something we both enjoy but eat only rarely is French Onion Soup. Today we thought we'd treat ourselves so we used a couple of good size onions and made enough to go for at least two meals. That did not work. The soup was so good, except for about a half bowl, all was gone in one sitting. Made it using the crock-pot. It did haft to cook for about four-hours, but it was well worth the wait. This will be our final day at Winnebago in Forrest City, IA. We have been told we must vacate the site by 8am tomorrow morning and be on our way to Cedar Rapids, IA. We're looking forward to the trip. The folks there are closer than family. The MacDougall's' have been in both our lives for over thirty-years, they actually introduced me to Carla way back when.

6.20 Wednesday

This is our third day here in Cedar Rapids, IA, and the last two we've had rain. Everything here is just so green. I believe we're to have one more day of rain and that should be it, not complaining, Don and Joyce are treating us like royalty.

JUNE 2018 BLOGS

6.10 Sunday



There's not much to talk about in this blog. The Wards have taken us on a car-tour of W. Salem, WI. The day was just perfect for sightseeing.

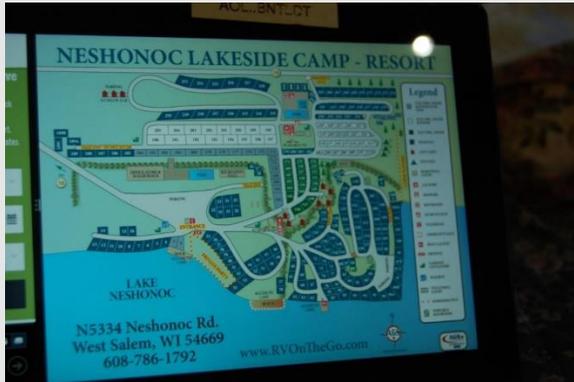


The only time we actually got out of the car to experience a venue was at an open garden area that runs parallel to the LaCrosse River. The garden was broken up by countries. Below, of course are Tom and Sue. This was an actual water-wheel. Not sure if it has any practical use, except for looks. Below are a couple of sight-seeing tour boats, possible water-wheel-looking, not sure.



I may be mistaken, but I think this is the entrance to the Japanese Garden section. There were many more pictures but they all seemed a little redundant. It was an excellent stretch of the legs.

6.9- NESHONIC LAKESIDE RESORT



The Neshonoc Lakeside Resort is located in West Salem, WI. It's an Encore Resort, which are usually a step or two higher in quality than an average Thousand Trails Resort, and so it is here. As you can see from the resort map this RV Campground is spread out over many acres of land. We arrived on Saturday but must leave by Wednesday. Our stay may be short but full of memories of the campground and our friends Tom and Sue. The high point of the property is, of course, the lake. Tom and Sue lived on the shores of this lake about 4-5 years ago before they sold it all to be full-time RVers. The first night here, had campers in front of us, but their stay ran out and we got our view. Behind us were the Ward's coach and just behind them was the upper level pool which was active from early morning until dusk.



Another view of the pool complex. There is also another pool area, equal in size but not quite as active, at the entrance to the campground.

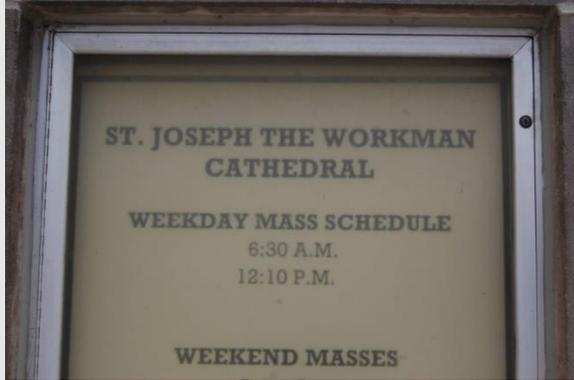


Here, as at almost all campgrounds, you'll find horseshoes, a boat launch, Volleyball, recreation hall and many other outdoor activities. We did not use it, but each campsite also has a campfire ring and wood is for sale at the office. This campground is not a year-round facility, winters prevent that. But many stay for long periods in trailers, coaches and cabins for rent, for those not into the RVing lifestyle.



6.10.2018- Saint Joseph the Workman Cathedral

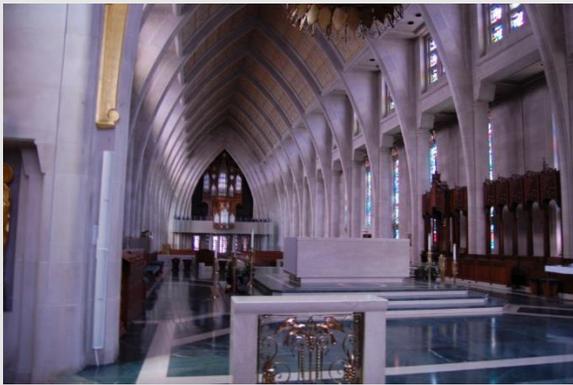
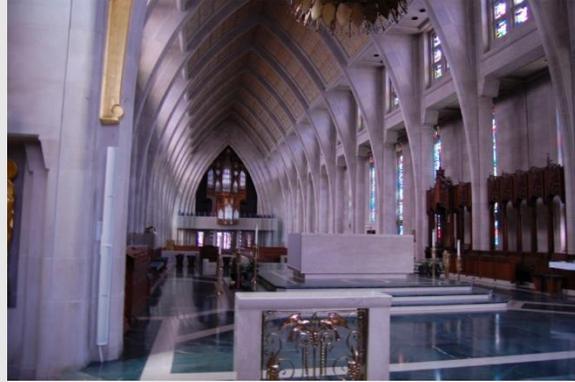
Back in 1863 the parishioners of St. Mary's Church in Lacrosse, WI met and decided they needed a church. The German speaking parish had only been established in 1856, but, I guess, they were getting tired of having Catholic services in the local courthouse. Father Henry Tappert headed up this effort.



As part of this effort it was decided that French and English members of the parish would remain parishioners of St. Mary's and the German speaking members would be members of the new church and parish. The new parish would be German speaking and under the patronage of St. Joseph, husband of Mary. Property was needed to begin new construction so the new parish collected \$1500 and purchased the land at Sixth and Main Streets.



The new St. Joseph Parish would have Father C.J.F. Schraudenbach as Pastor. The parishioners wanted instructional lessons for their children so a school was begun in the basement of the church in 1864. Construction on the church did not begin until 1869 and all worshipped at St. Mary's in the interim.



In 1868 La Crosse was designated by Pope Pius IX to be a new and separate diocese. The first Bishop of the Diocese would be Michael Heiss. He chose St. Joseph to be the cathedral parish of the diocese.



By 1870 construction had finally begun on the new St. Joseph Cathedral. By 1875 the parishioners had finished construction and had completely paid for the construction of the new church.

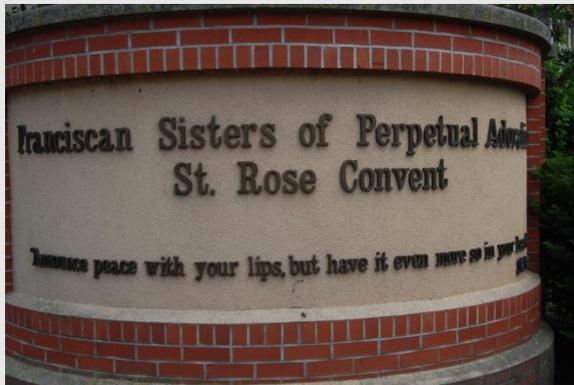


Once completed new spires were added and by 1884 a new pipe organ was installed as well as the completion of a new school. Eventually all the buildings and facilities at St. Mary's Parish were moved into the new cathedral and St. Mary's would be associated with Lacrosse University. In 1964 the Holy Cross School would be raised and in 1969 a new Cathedral School would be constructed.

6.11 The Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Help

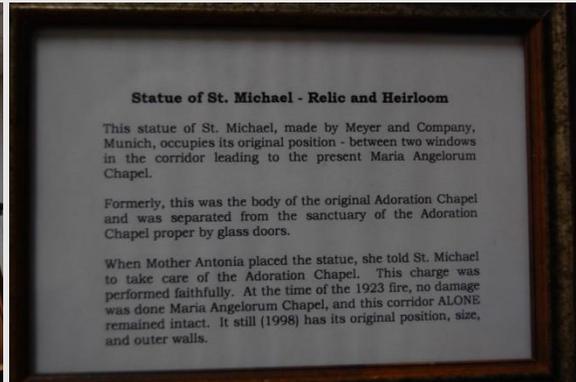
The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. We do this quite often, visiting a church or cathedral, today would be no exception. This year, more than any other we'd enjoyed together, we were made to realize that every day is a gift from Him and as such we should find venues that reflect our thanks for his giving us another day to enjoy.



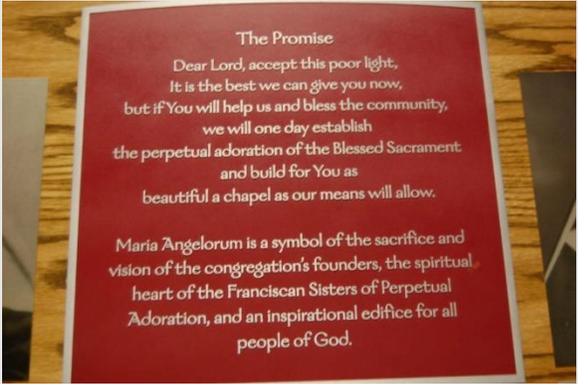


The Sisters are part of the Franciscan orders of priests, sisters and laity. It's a big complex and at present fifty nuns, of all ages, reside at the convent. It is also their corporate headquarters. The building above also goes back almost equally as long.

6-11-This is the reception hall. You'll notice Tom is absent, he had a Doctor's appointment to attend. Within a few minutes we were greeted by Sister Sarah. She was totally knowledgeable of everything in the building and its history. In the bottom picture is a statue of St. Michael. In 1923 a fire threatened to destroy the entire the St. Rose Convent, one sister died. The Statue of St. Michael was to guard and protect the sacred chapels at this end of the convent. Even though the fire destroyed the entire west wing of the facility and fire abruptly stopped when it approached the St. Michael statue.



6.11-The Angel Gabriel is represented here was the angel that appeared to Mary way back in the beginnings.



Sister Sarah talking to Carla. The pews and stations of the cross were all done by local artisans in Lacrosse, WI. That also includes all the wood furnishings like the pulpits. All the windows in the chapels are stain glass. They were imported from the Royal Bavarian Art Institute of Munich, Germany.





6.11-Back in 1865 a promise was made by Mother Antonia Herb that a chapel would be constructed and that "perpetual adoration" would also be promised. Since the completion of the original chapel and least two Franciscan Sisters have prayed in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament since 1878.



The congregation, back in the late 1800's were not rich. However, to look closely at the construction you'd only wonder where the found and how could they afford all this marble. The truth is that they couldn't. What you see is not Venetian Marble but rather concrete walls and ceilings, to resemble and plaster. Every square inch of the concrete was meticulously hand painted, to resemble marble.



6.11-This is the back of the facility. I believe it forms a square with a privacy yard in the center. There is just too much to talk about in this blog but click on the link below and visit the Web Site for this religious order.

6.18-cedar rapids stay-They discovered first and we fell in love with the food and service as well. At the same time, it looks like we're going to get some more rain. Will take this time to do a short blog on Squaw Creek Loop B

6.18 Monday We arrived here at Squaw Creek Campground right about noon, a time we had projected. It was a short and very uneventful trip. Four weeks ago when we inquired into staying here for a this 2-week time period we were told there were no site vacancies. It's no wonder, this is such an awesome park.



What the campground does have is "Loop B" which is "first come first serve" accommodations. Carla and I both agreed that most campers in the Loop B would, most likely, be leaving on Sunday or at least Monday, and we were right. The pickins were very good. Sites available everywhere, but that would not be the case by end of week. We were able to find a very nice site just about half way through the loop. We had no sooner set up camp when we had a call from Joyce MacDougall welcoming us and inviting us to have lunch with them. Chicken salad, corn and so much more, not to mention excellent company.

6.19 Tuesday Having eaten so well we slept equally as well last evening. We're planning to meet up with Don and Joyce in the afternoon and end the evening with dinner at their home. Just short of a feast. Mashed potatoes, native corn, pork loin so tender a knife wasn't needed and more. We ate very well then enjoyed their company till dark set in.

6.20 Wednesday This is our third day here in Cedar Rapids, IA, and the last two we've had rain. Everything here is just so green. I believe we're to have one more day of rain and that should be it, not complaining, Don and Joyce are treating us like royalty. Needless to say, we're still kinda stuffed, so this evening we'll have a typical meal at home, hot dogs.

6.21 Thursday I believe we spent most of the day at home doing some shopping and taking care of some loose ends. Our day would culminate at the MacDougall's with a steak dinner. Next day, Friday would be a quiet day for us but it was definitely our turn to reciprocate on dinners, but where to take them, since this is not our neck of the woods? We would let them decide and decide well they did. A choice I would not have made based on the restaurant name; Mandarin Spice!



What on earth would a restaurant with a name like that, serve? Was I ever surprised? Don had Mongolian steak to die for, Joyce had orange chicken, Carla enjoyed sautéed shrimp and I feasted on teriyaki chicken, which I hadn't had for many, many years, Heavenly!

6.23 Saturday as everyone knows our routine for Saturdays is generally to relax, Mass, pizza and beer, and so it would be tonight. The MacDougall's' would be nice enough to join us just after we got back from church. As always, the pizza came out excellently and we enjoyed food, drink and company. for the evening.

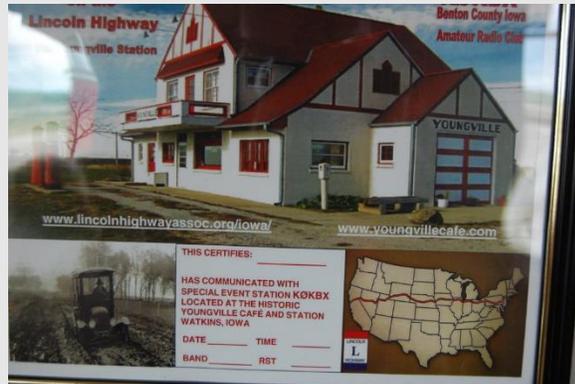


6.25 Monday. We have just a little bit of we time before we get together with Don and Joyce for dinner at Noodles. We were joined by Duncan this evening grandson to Don and Joyce. If I could buy a franchise, this would be it. Awesome food, great service and a very friendly atmosphere.



They discovered first and we fell in love with the food and service as well. At the same time, it looks like we're going to get some more rain. Will take this time to do a short blog on Squaw Creek Loop B. Here we are at the MacDougall's checking out Don's Pachysandra. Believe it or not there are one-hundred plantings. Really miss those days, LOL.

6.26 The Youngville Café, where we went for soup, sandwich and pie is on the Lincoln Highway; so, what is so special about this place and the Lincoln Hwy? This highway was the first in the country to stretch from the east coast to the pacific coast. It does go by different numbers along the way depending on the state and county it is in, but it is still the same road. Construction began in 1913 and was completed in 1928. The length of the road was 3389 miles long. It begins on the East coast, Times Square, NY and moves westward to San Francisco, CA. As the name implies it was dedicated to Abraham Lincoln. In short this was the Rt. 66 of its times.



As I said the Youngville Café is located on the NW corner of Cedar Rapids, IA and was probably the Howard Johnson or Cracker Barrel of its day.

Below we are enjoying desert.



This is a very small establishment with dining for a small group in the back.



These are the actual gas and diesel pumps of that day.



We returned home, back to the MacDougall's and were visited by a family of four deer. One of the two fawn this afternoon.

6.27 Wednesday Spiedie Chicken Day What an awesome day. For a guy who had aspirations of a "Parenthood" type family, this day was so nice to experience. The menu included a very special "Spiedie Chicken", potato salad, beans and fruit salad. Paul and Ivy, Son and wife to the MacDougall's with their three children also joined us. Duncan, grandson flew through quickly. He belongs to John and Meg. He's spending some quality time with the grand-parents. Everyone went back for seconds not to mention repeats on several of the wines produced by Paul.

6.28 Thursday - Meatloaf at the MacDougall's As we continue eating our way through this two-week stay, we will get to enjoy a meatloaf dinner with left-overs from the day before. An excellent meal enjoyed by all of us. As an extra Don has downloaded the final season of Downton Abby. Today we enjoyed episode ten, the final episode. Carla and I really loved this series. Now it feels like our good friends have moved away, never to be heard from again; Sad!



6.29 Three venues today.

St. Francis Xavier Basilica-This beautiful Basilica is located in the Field of Dreams town of Dyersville, IA As with this venue and the last two, I will be having separate blogs on each of the three. Please refer to the index on the right to access the blog on Field of Dreams

6.29- Field of Dreams field trip.



The Field of Dreams venue is located in Dyersville, IA and short distance from Dubuque. These are just a couple of pictures of how beautifully green and lush this part of the country really is.



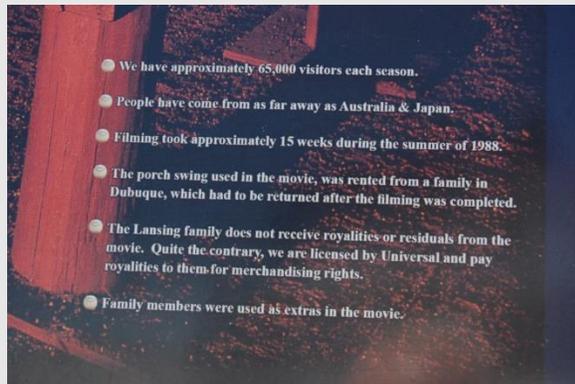
This is the farm house and the baseball diamond that's known to everyone. The movie made the farmhouse look considerably bigger, but it is what it is.



There's always someplace to pick up souvenirs. This place is no exception. We don't usually pick up stuff like this but this place was special.



The white picket fence, we're told was no in the movie but is there now. Families and kids are traversing all over the property. Kids and Dads with baseball hats and jerseys are pitching from the diamond.



The pictures explain themselves, the original owners of the property. Below some stats on the property and the movie.



Joyce and Don enjoying the luxury of an old fractioned glider; are these still made. And exactly how tall does corn grow? Carla is 5 ft. 3 in and the corn still has a lot more growing to do.



The diamond and batter's box were in use but we did have a chance to walk the bases, which we did. Below is a faraway picture of the complex from the entrance. The remaining pictures are for your appreciation. Iowa is a state as green as Boca and you can see forever.



6.29 Breitbach's Country Dining



The Breitbach's Country Dining Restaurant is actually in Balltown, IA near Dubuque and just a short distance from Field of Dreams in Dyersville, IA. You must not visit Field of Dreams and skip this Dining experience.



The folks here have been serving the public since August 1852. The current owner is Mike Breitbach. It's not that it hasn't had its share of challenges. On Christmas of 2007 and October 2008, they had to deal with fires.



You will experience some of the best German cooking anywhere, not to mention plate portions that will satisfy the biggest of appetites. Sauerkraut, sausage and coleslaw are specialties of the house.



I enjoyed a half-pound cheeseburger with bacon and fries. Carla, Joyce and Don enjoyed patty melts, with onion rings to die for. Even if you must travel out of your way for this eatery, you will not be disappointed. This is actually our spot. Just looking at the pictures it's easy to tell the difference. A big plus here is that the park only reserves Loop A.



Both Loop A and B offer electrical and water hook-ups, as well as, a very impressive fire pit. What B lacks is the sewer hook-up. Also missing is a cement pad, which is neither here nor there, as far as I'm concerned. The park does provide a pump-out station, several in fact, just outside the park areas as you enter or exit the parks.



6.29.2018-Kids are never forgotten. A very elaborate swing and climbing area is available to them and it's always in use. What you will not find here is a pool or even a pond, although I think there is a lake in Loop A if I'm not mistaken.

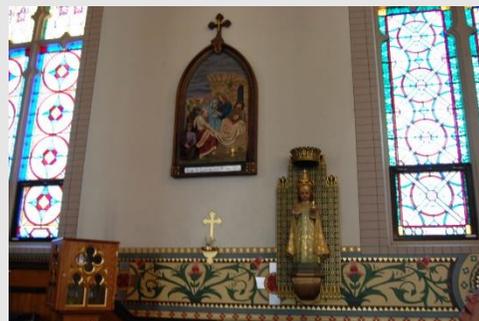
6.29 St. Francis Xavier Basilica



This would be the first church to be built in Dyersville, IA back in 1862. Hard to believe that the cost to the parishioners, back then, would be \$100,000. One-hundred years in the future a new south entrance would be constructed to accommodate the handicap. The cost of this build would be \$130,000.



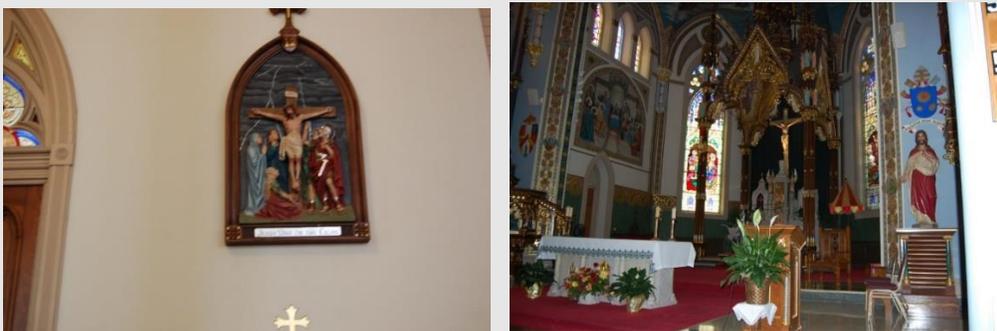
Even as the church was being build it had to be modified twice to accommodate the increasing number of Catholics coming to this area. Currently the parish counts approximately 1800 families or about 5000 parishioners. As you can barely see, the church has three alters.



6.29-In 1956 the church was elevated to a Minor Basilica by Pope Pius XII. This floor marking reaffirms that credential. This is the Papa; insignia of the Tiara and Keys, this will make this church a Papal Church. The construction of this church was built in the Ruskinian Gothic Revival architecture. One of the primary requisites to be honored as a Basilica is to be Debt-free. The parish was able to maintain this debt-free status almost from the beginning.



In 1935 the parish decided to build a rectory toward the back of the church. It would incorporate fourteen rooms. The church also offers the Tridentine Mass at twelve noon on Sundays, according to the 1962 Rite. This is the Altar of St. Joseph. The wood used in the construction of this altar was created using Bavarian wood.



Carla always enjoys the architecture in the ceiling. The church has 64 stained glass windows. This is the alter on the left of the main altar is the Altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The two steeples reach as high as 212 feet high. The seating capacity of the Basilica is 1000 people. At the time the church was dedicated it was only one of 12 Basilicas in the United States.