

Earl's Diary - Tuesday - May 14, 2013

Dear Loyal Readers everywhere;

This morning the weather was delightful with a slight breeze blowing. We had lots of bread left from our dinner on Sunday. I suggested we make french toast and have breakfast outside this morning. That idea seemed to hit everyone's fancy. I took the bull by the horns and offered to cook the toast. Bob furnished the scrambled eggs and bacon. What a breakfast we had! The eggs were delicious with the mushrooms and cheese. Everyone ate their fill and we still had bread left. What to do next? Another french toast morning? From breakfast everyone went their separate ways.



I took a trip to the Rock Table Dam this morning. They had a visitor center which I spent some time exploring. Most of the center featured how the dam affects the whole White River system as it passes through Missouri and Arkansas. It collects water from several sub-systems and eventually flows into the Mississippi River (somewhere). I also spent some time becoming familiar with the town of Branson. I eventually found the post office tucked away in downtown historical Branson. It seems post offices everywhere are the same - lines of 3 and 4 people.

Alan wrote about Branson better than I ever could. I am using most of his blog for this day (used with permission). The following words are from Alan: "We arrived yesterday after a LOOOOOOONG day. LOOOOOOOOOOOOONG. We stopped at the Welcome Center when we crossed from OK into Arkansas. Real nice lady there. Very Friendly.

But we are here. First - we are staying at the self proclaimed America's Best Campground. I think that is a TAD too self serving. It is a nice place, but "best"????? No. I have seen "better" - but it IS nice and only \$27.50 or so a night. Reasonable. The pool is NOT heated - in fact barely thawed out. BRRRRRR. The Spa was just filled so it TOO is "a wee bit chilly". Perhaps later in the week.

Branson. Interesting little town. There are (so it seems) a HUNDRED theaters. Maybe 30-40. But a TON. It is like Las Vegas. There is even a "King Kong" ape attached to one of the towers. BUT, no casinos and a wholesome Las Vegas. The owners of the campground are VERY conservative. How so? Well, there is a sign on the front desk apologizing for any inconvenience BUT... they will not accept the new Golden Dollar coins as they do not contain "In God

We Trust” on the FACE of the coin. They don’t believe that they are legal tender and refuse to accept them. Ummm.... ok. The truth is that NOBODY uses them anyway. Shrug. We took a trip down the main drag – show venue after show venue. And between THEM are restaurant after restaurant. With a hotel/motel squeezed in. BUSY town.

When we arrived last night we had left over ribs from Earl’s Rib Palace which we attacked. And this morning our own Earl (who was a cook in the US Army!) did French Freedom Toast for the group.



Most of the group were in education. Earl had been a butcher for Goehring Meat company in Lodi (Really? Thankfully NOT related to Hermann). After it closed down, he went back and got his credential and

did first grade. Faith was a Kindergarten teacher. Hubby Don was a music teacher. Don’s brother Bob’s wife, Jackie, also taught primary grades and Michele was a teacher’s aide. WOW.

It is breezy here, and a bit on the humid side. VERY tolerable, just a bit more humid than we are normally used to.

In addition to the shows, there are other attractions – a Titanic museum, a Toy Museum, another Wax Museum, a Ripley’s Believe-it-or-Not and others. After breakfast our group split up.... and went their own way to see what this town was all about.”

Thanks Alan, for letting me borrow your words. Some day you can borrow my pictures. I did visit the Sights and Sounds Theater this afternoon and purchased a ticket to see “Joseph”. It’s reported to be very spectacular. We’ll see how that is Thursday afternoon.



That's about all I can report for this day. Thanks for coming along with me (and Alan). Bye for now - - Earl

Earl's Diary - Wednesday - May 15, 2013

Dear Loyal Readers,

Branson is indeed an unusual town. Let me share with you what Michele wrote in her latest blog. (Used with permission) She said it better than I could: "Branson is full of theaters, restaurants, and hotels, motels, and inns. I did notice a few restaurants and hotels that were closed and had "for sale" signs on them, so I guess the recession we are finally coming out of has had its effect here. The way they do shows at the various theaters is interesting, indeed! Most theater appears to book (at least) two acts that share the theater. One act will put on the 10 a.m. show and the other act will put on a show at either 2/3:00 p.m. or 8:00 pm. Most acts have appearances 3 to 5 days per week. Sometimes an act will have a morning or afternoon show for part of the week and an evening show for the rest of the week. And just because a theater is associated and named for a particular celebrity, it doesn't mean that that celebrity appears there all that often. Yakov Smirnoff, for example, has a theater, but only appears in Branson during the months of October and November. The latest show at each of the theaters in town appears to be 8:00 p.m. All shows let out at 10:00 p.m. and the sidewalks appear to roll up with them."

This is me speaking again. A tour of downtown Branson shows a definite lack of "chain" operations - except I noticed a Golden Corral, Staples, Red Lobster, and, of course Dairy Queen (Oh lovely day!!!) It was mostly local businesses and theaters. The other day I found out where "Generica America" is located. I'm not sure if they are located outside the city limits or not - but, there they were - all clustered together. There was Walmart Super Center, Target, Kohl's, Michael's, Appleby's, Lowe's, Barnes & Noble, etc. I thought Branson was in a time warp!

I had a most interesting experience yesterday. Only once before, in my lifetime, have I experienced the IMAX movie. That was so many years ago that I don't even remember what that experience was. Yesterday I attended an IMAX film titled "Rocky Mountain Express". It combined history of making the trans Canadian Pacific Railroad, with a modern day steam train making that trip. It was amazing what they can show on that 80 foot wide by 60 foot tall screen! The camera slowly floating over the rugged Rocky Mountains was most impressive - almost looking at 3D. One scene had the camera located near the vertical view of the engine's drive wheels. Those wheels, as they began to move, covered the whole 60 foot height of the screen! That HiFi surround sound - it felt like you were right there. I sat almost dead center of the screen. At times, I would have to look up to see what was happening - other times look down. This was a truly exciting adventure for me. We were offered "Bounce Back" tickets for another IMAX show at half price. I decided to take them up on the offer and will attend a film titled "Flight of the Butterflies" this coming Saturday morning.

That's about it for this day. Again, thanks for coming along with me on this journey. - - Earl

