**Gillette Wyoming June 2012**

**Friday June 15th Day 1 - Home to DogPatch to Penticton**

We decided to go straight up to Penticton instead of going to Traveland where we were supposed to meet up with other RVs going on the caravan. Up at 6:30am, to get to the Aldergrove border by 8:00am. We had our usual ‘travel day’ McDonalds Egg McMuffin for breakfast. Yum yum? Down to DogPatch, hitch up and back through Aldergrove to Coquihala and then the connector to hwy 97. Arrived at Midtown and we were actually able to get full hookups. Had a chance to wash Perigord. Then to Earl’s for dinner & their delicious clam chowder. We found that it was even better then on the Oregon coast.

**Saturday June 16 Day 2 - Penticton**

We woke up early to people arriving for work, had some breakfast. I vacuumed & washed the floor. Carol & Brian Anderson came over to say hi. They are staying at the Oxbow RV Park, and just came to see who was here. Susan & Bob Plumb, from Bellingham WA, arrived. They were supposed to have been the only ones that were going to Traveland but they didn’t either, but stayed in Eagle Wind in Aldergrove instead. It started out that Traveland would put on a brunch for anyone staying there for the Caravan, which then turned into only coffee & donuts. Anita & Bill Osborne also arrived. They apparently did the Coquihalla to the connector & then 5A to Princeton & then up to Penticton. Said it was a nice drive. We’ll have to do that one day. Joe noticed that the dash air & vent was loose so asked Vern, one of the techies, if he could look at it. Vern fixed it and Midtown did not charge us for Vern’s time!! Nothing had been decided about meals for while we are on the road, so I went to ask Anita what she thought. She suggested that we all do our own thing which I also thought was a good idea. Nothing had been decided earlier, so I did not go shopping until I find out what was happening, so I quickly took off to get what Joe & I would need for meals. I was a little late in coming back but people had waited for me. I quickly put stuff away & changed. George & Kalvin, from Midtown took everyone for Chinese a buffet for dinner. Kalvin’s wife & 2 daughters were also there. Bill & Geri came from Winfield just for the dinner since they are not able to do the rally. Bill has some health issues that are being looked at. Another couple from Kelowna came as well just for the dinner.

**Sunday June 17th Day 3 – the Un-Father’s Day – Penticton to Revelstoke**

The caravan left about 9:00am to head to Revelstoke. We just did our own thing and would meet people at the next campground. The other 3 RVs were going together as they like to stop on route for lunch & stretching!! We fueled up just east of Sicamous at a Husky where someone told us that there had been a slide just 8km east of Revelstoke. The campground we were heading to was just the other side of Revelstoke. Brian & Carol showed up to also fill up their Mountain Air gasser. Carol & I went inside to ask if they had heard anything . They had only heard that they hoped to have it cleared by 11:30am. Hopefully it will all be done when we get there. As it turned out we ended up stopping not far after we got back on the road. Had to wait for about 30 minutes. Must be the slide but not sure. Got on the way again & saw a few rocks on the side of the road but thought that that could not be the slide they had talked about. Too small. We then saw a car in the ditch & and ambulance etc.etc., so thought that must have been the reason for the hold up and not the small rock debris???? We finally arrived at the campground, Canyon Hot Springs Resort. Resort????? To start with we took the wrong road into the park as we found out later that there was an ‘Enter Here’ sign further on. Anyway.... we couldn’t see any ‘office this way’ sign or anything to indicate where the office was, so continued along until we saw an area where some RVs were parked. We saw a building that looked like an office but turned out to be the restrooms/showers. I got out, to have a look, and found another building but there was no one around and then thought it must be a private home. I went up to one of the RVs that were parked there and they said that the office was up the hill that we saw as we came in. Joe had already gone too far to be able to get out of this area, so we had to go around the dump station which was a VERY tight fit with the Toad on. We had to slowly back up a couple of times as there was also a tree in the way. But we did it without any damage to Perigord. We drive up the hill to the office and hear from them that we now have to go back down to the campground we were at earlier. I mentioned the lack of signage to the office and she said that there was a sign on the tree as you came in. Later found the sign as we were leaving the next day but at the other road where we were supposed to enter??? Finally got down to the campground & our spot was on the grass as all the spots were. Got set up and the other rigs started arriving. Also saw a LOT of Adventurers & other rentals coming in. Saw a lot of Adventurers on the road, so Mr. Epp from Fraserway must be doing okay. We had been warned about bears but didn’t see any. Had the Safeway chicken and salads that I bought the day before. Very hard water!!!

**Monday June 18th Day 4 – Revelstoke to Bucars RV near Calgary**

Left at about 9:00am to head towards Calgary. Went through the Rockies and saw beautiful vistas but not much wildlife. It was somewhat cloudy so we did not see a whole lot other then a deer and some mountain sheep that were really moulting a lot, but not much else. We took the Stony road bypass to get to Bucars in Balzac, AB. Our version of Streets & Trips did not have the new, as I found out later, extension to Stony Trails, so we ended up on another road past residential areas & malls. We did eventually get to Hwy 2, so weren’t too far off. Found Bucars and had to park in the gravel lot near the buildings. A couple in a Ventana 34’ were already parked and once we were parked came over to say hello. They are from Terrace & had come from Edmonton this past Thursday. Alma & Jim, so that now made 5 RVs in our caravan. Others showed up & we found out that, when Bucars was closing, that we could park beside the building & get electricity but nothing else. They did have a hose that you could use to fill your fresh water and also a dump area. We decided to stay in the gravel parking area and dry-camp. That way we could use our satellites as we would not if we were parked beside the building. Happy Hour was at Anita & Bills. They were actually able to get all of us in the coach.

**Tuesday June 19th Day 5 – Buchar’s to Swift Current**

Bucars opened early just for us and put on breakfast which included huge Costco blueberry & apple muffins, croissants, mango juice, fruit & coffee. Not bad at all. Joe and I had to get fuel, so everyone else left while we headed to a Petro station someone had mentioned. We arrived at the Petro station & there was an Allegro Bus there with dealer plates & a sold sign, in the diesel bar, so we had to wait till he was finished. He must be passing it on to the new owners today. He left & had to actually back up as he could not make the turn out of the gas station. When we left Joe had no trouble turning to get out as we have a 61% cut on steering wheel. Finally we are on our way towards Swift Current SK. We take the new 201S route, which bypasses Calgary. A much easier drive.

We are definitely starting to enter the Prairies as Joe hardly has to turn the steering wheel. There are still a few hills and cattle ranches but the trees are becoming smaller. We finally cross into Saskatchewan. The Trans Canada Highway (TCH1) is, as we remember it from other trips that we have done across Canada, straight & bumpy.

We finally get to Swift Current and, as we like to do, fill up Perigord before we go to the campground, so we don’t have to do it in the morning. Just after getting off the highway we see a Husky truck stop. Then head off we go to find the Trail Campground. Easy to find the park BUT does not look to great. Go into the office and find the wife in there. She said that her husband has just gone off to do something at home. She told me but I can’t remember what it was. Something to make the park better??? We are given a choice of sites. Just tell her which one we want. We head off to find the lane we need to go down and find the sites, to say the least, interesting. The sites are long enough although there are trees with low hanging branches, so it would be impossible to drive out the front of the spot. The sewer is also wayyyy at the back, so we have to use the extension as we do need to empty the grey water tank. The electric, 30 amp, is shared with two sites, so one site has to run the power cord under the rig. We actually have to unhitch the Toad, so we can get at the water/electric/sewer and also because we will have to back out of the site because of the low hanging branches. I went into the office, before we parked, to mention the trees & low hanging branches, so she phoned her husband to come and cut some of them. He arrived but we had already decided to back up out of the site, so he left our site alone. He was trimming some of the other sites but stopped because someone, not sure whom, was complaining about him doing that!!! CRAZY. So much for pull-throughs. Not sure what they thought we could do??

We start to set up. Joe lowering the jacks while I check out how it is going and I see that the back driver’s side jack is about 8 to 10 inches deep in muck. As it had rained and was still raining the ground was pretty soft and mucky. SOOO .... we decide to not put the jacks down & only open the driver’s side main slide & the driver’s side bedroom slide. We then thought that maybe putting some wood, that was at our site, underneath the jacks, might help. We put the 2 slides back in and had problems with the main slide as Joe had to push on it to make it come in all the way. The wood is 4x4s, so pretty sturdy. Or so we thought. When Joe started putting the jacks down they started cracking and I thought maybe splintering., so onto the next plan. No jacks & only the driver’s side bedroom slide which made for a very cozy evening. Happy Hour was at Bill & Anita’s picnic bench where we met the people from the All Star & the other Dutch Star. At night it rained & rained. Are we having FUN yet??

**Wednesday, June 20th Day 6 – Swift Current to Weyburn Saskatchewan**

As I mentioned it poured last night, so when getting out of the rig one stepped into a small lake. What fun. Along with the wet dirt it made for an interesting time walking the dogs. As mentioned earlier, we had to back out of the site because of the tree branches hanging over the front of the site. We are one of the last to leave. Hitch up & away we go. As we leave the campground we see the other Dutch Star hitching up. We head onto TCH #1 and then east to Moose Jaw where we turn onto Hwy 39 towards Weyburn. The TCH #1 is getting worse & worse. Probably because of the trucks that are towing two 53’ trailer. Crazy that they allow that but I guess it saves on hiring another person & another truck. Hwy 39 is in better shape then TCH 1. Thank goodness it is a short drive today, only 4 hours. We see a Wal-Mart in Weyburn, so are thinking that if the campground isn’t too great that we will come back to it and dry-camp. Apparently Weyburn is the home of Tommy Douglas and also a hockey player. Somewhere, in town, there is a statue of Tommy Douglas. We head to Nickle Lake Regional Park, which is not marked too well, but do find it, and end up on a dirt road for a mile. Then we see a small hut with a lady in it. Brian & Carol are there ahead of us. As we are not Saskatchewan citizens we are charged $9 for a day pass. The total cost is $35+ for only water & electricity. We have to unhitch again, so do it before we leave the entry to the park. This is getting rather tiring having to unhitch each time. We get to our site & see that the connections are way at the front of the site this time. Luckily the power cable & water hose just reach. Put the jacks down & see that the passenger side jacks sink slightly but don’t bother with pads. I am able to get a TV satellite connection which is a surprise because there are a lot of trees around. At least we are able to put all the slides out and loving the SPACE!!! Anita said that we were supposed to have pull throughs here as well as full hook-ups. Not sure if they have complained about that. Happy hour is at Brian & Carol’s place and are able to fit everyone inside their rig. Not sure why we aren’t outside as it is sunny. We now meet another couple, Bromley, no relation to Denny Bromley, who are from Brandon, Manitoba. Seem like nice people. I think they said they owned a farm. There is actually room for ALL of us to sit down. A little crowded but 16 people actually fit. We see a couple of deer romping around the field in the back. I can see that the people that live here start up a baseball game. There is actually a baseball diamond in behind us. Jim from Terrace asks if he could sign onto our Wi-Fi, so Joe says sure, give him a few minutes to set it up.

Back to the rig and Joe changes the router security key. Things don’t work at all, so he has to set the router from scratch. Eventually it works again. Just a little frustrating.

 As we are crossing the border into the States tomorrow, we have to get rid of any meat, veggies, fruit etc., so have leftovers for dinner. It certainly is a headache to always have to worry about what we have in the fridge. Jus an aside here, it seems that when we go into the States, as I mentioned, we have to worry about meat, veggies & fruit but coming back into Canada it is cigarettes & booze.

**Thursday, June 21st Day 7 - Weyburn to Medora North Dakota**

Up at 7:30am, shower and breakfast. This is the longest that we have ever stayed on the road without a break for, at least, a couple of days. Today is nice travelling weather, sunny and a slight breeze. Thank goodness we are able to get the slides in although we were worried about the passenger side ones because the jacks dropped a couple of inches. We see that Jim & Alma have hitched up in the back of their site, so we did the same thing. We are the last to leave but see the All Star at the dump station. Head back into Weyburn to catch hwy 35 and down to the US border. While we wait at the border a fellow from Canadian customs comes and asks who we are & where we are going. Just out of curiosity. He mentioned that he had a caravan of 25 Airstream go through not long ago. At the US border they looked in our car and also asked if any veggies, citrus fruit, & money. Didn’t take long at all, thank goodness.

Driving along hwy 85 we eventually enter Wiliston which seems to be a hustle & bustle town. We end up missing the turn off we should have taken but in a few minutes catch up with the road we need. The traffic is BUSY with trucks hauling heavy equipment. There are lots of trucks from out of state. We think it must be the pipeline as we see the name Enbridge a lot. As we head further out of town we see all sorts of campgrounds on just bare dirt, lots of mobile home communities and lots of dormitory style buildings. There are MANY of these campgrounds all over the place. Nice to see that there is work for some of the Americans!!!

We get to Belfield where we cross I-94 to full up at a gas station. Lee & Michele also show up in their Dutch Star. Head back to I-94 & onto Medora to the Red Trail Campground. The people that we are to meet here are already there with their Mountain Air. I go into the office and find out that we will have full hook-ups, so maybe I can wash some clothes. She asks us to unhitch as there are a lot of RVs coming in due to a car show this weekend in Medora., plus there is also an FMCA rally as well as our caravan. What fun! Her husband shows us to our site & we end up scratching the side of Perigord on some tree branches sticking out. Hopefully it wasn’t too bad. We end up being able to drive through but still have to unhitch as there is a spot behind us that someone may park in. The site is level & we are able to get a satellite!!! Also have 50 amp, so can definitely do a wash.

Not a bad park at all!!! Go into the office to ask if they have any beer and check out if they might have anything for dinner. No beer, no cigarettes. She said the licence is horrendously expensive for liquor. There is no grocery store in town, so just have pasta for dinner. We sit outside for a bit and read. A nice breeze and some shade and looking at a nice cliff. No one comes in behind us, so we really did not need to unhitch. Oh well. We’ll just drive the car in behind and hitch up there. No happy hour today and nice to get a laundry done. Things may be looking better.

**Friday, June 22nd Day 8 -- Medford ND to Spearfish South Dakota**

Up at 7:30am and it is a beautiful sunny day. Find out people are leaving around 9:00ish not 9:30am as someone mentioned that there would be winds up to 25 miles/hr. The small Bay Stars would have a problem with that but with our comfort steering we shouldn’t. We are almost ready to go anyway, so are on the road by 9:00am.

We see some beautiful countryside. Too bad we couldn’t spend a couple of days here to look around. Hwy 85, which we have taken all the way from the US border, is only 2 lanes but in most areas it is easy to pass as one can see for miles and miles and miles. The country side is changing too fairly dry and not many trees. Lots of dump trucks without their covers over the load, passing us and going the other way. We are getting a nice sandblast on the front of the rig. NOT NICE!! Hopefully we can get the rig washed & polished at the rally. There are all sorts of bugs baking on the front as well. I look at Streets & Trips and see that we are at 3050ft just south of Buffalo SD. The weather forecast was for possible thunder showers, so hopefully that will not happen.

Saw some deer or antelope with horns just before coming into Belle Fourche. Why a French name?? Will have to check that out. Get to I-90 and head east a few miles to the Elkridge RV Resort. WOW!! What can I say. What a beautiful campground. Cement pads, lots of space. There are a lot of kids in the pool. I guess sort of a destination place for families? What a nice change and a nice way of ending the caravan part of the trip. Even get the rig & toad washed so we look nice going into the rally. A bit costly but what the heck.

**Saturday June 23rd Day 9 – Spearfish SD to Gillette Wyoming**

Today we are off to the rally campground. This time we do have to try and stay closer as a caravan. We stop for fuel in Sundance WY, passing by Beulah WY? A nice easy in & out. We both get out and start talking about the caravan experience & sort of arguing & a fellow in the pump next to us smiles. I say hi and he says are you people arguing, laughingly. I say just a discussion. We all laugh.

 Dave has asked the RVs to meet at mile 138 on I-90 at a small parking area, so that we all come in together. He will be on an overpass, taking a video of us as we pass underneath. We are to wave our Canadian flags & smile!! Hmmm what are we getting ourselves into.

We get to the CamPlex & line up in order for us all to get parked together. We wait for awhile as there is another caravan ahead of us. It is WARM! We pay an extra $25 for 50amp as we re sure we will need the A/C. Crazy how they worked this out as if one had booked the 50amp from the beginning it would have cost only $25 or so more for the whole time that we are here and included the 2 extra days of early arrival. We paid, I think, $515 for 30amp. We finally get parked. Are able to drive through another site, so front in without having to back up. We get set up rather quickly & get the A/C on quickly as it is HOT!! Turns out that we will have the A/C on for pretty well all the time we are here. One day it gets up to 109F. Unbelievable & thank goodness for 50amp & A/C.

Tonight there is a dinner, at a BBQ place, for all the Canadians. There are 2 long tables full. We are seated at a table that has 2 couples from the east part of Canada. One from Hamilton Ontario, the Region 8 director, and the other from New Brunswick. The waitress brings out 3 plates, per table, full of meat. Pulled pork, smoked turkey, BBQ beef roast, beef ribs, kielbasa sausage. All delicious with 2 choices of BBQ sauces, one honey & the other medium spicy. They also serve potato salad & pasta salad with it. Not bad at all.

We all head back to our rigs to the A/C. We notice that the mattress has changed pressure as Gillette is approx. 4700ft. Our mattress is a sleep comfort air type, so the difference in altitude must affect it.

**Sunday June 24th Day 10**

We get to sleep in a little. Yahoo! We have a day to ourselves, so go shopping for groceries. IT IS HOT!!

**Monday June 25th Day 11 – day 1 of rally**

Up at 7:00am to get to the Service Desk with our service order. First we register and get a package of stuff including a whirligig with the Newmar name on it. Not sure what we will do with it. We are then sent to a First Timers table to get an introduction to what I am not sure. We are shown to a table where there is a lady to explain things to us. She goes through the booklet, that we were given with our package of goodies, as to what some of the things we should be aware of. All of this info was in the booklet, so I guess it was just to make us feel welcome. It almost felt like one of those time share meetings that one can go to and get a free dinner but you have to put up with the sales spiel.

 We then head to the Service area to give them our list of things we would like or need to have fixed. Of course being the first day there is a line up. We get a number and are able to sit down while we wait. I go get some coffee at a small snack shop in the complex run by students. We finally get called and show them the list. Not sure when they will be able to get to us but they have our cell number, if we remember to listen for it.

We go check out the vendors that are already set up. The Silverleaf people that Joe is interested in are not there yet but are expected tomorrow. We look at getting Perigord weighed, something we have been wanting to do. Mainly for what tire pressure we should have. First we go and extend our stay till Sunday July 1st as we figure most of the 250 rigs will be leaving Saturday. That way we will avoid the rush. Set up the weighing for Sunday at 9:30am, so we can leave once that is done.

At 3:00pm we go to the Opening Ceremonies. Not sure what to expect but think that maybe they would introduce the Millers. No such luck. All the high mucky mucks of the company are introduced. About 4 of them & some of them speak. After this has finished we are asked to go into discussion groups by region. Our region directors, Dave & Joanne, aren’t there as they are running the clothing shop. Just as we get together, we get a phone call that the techies are at our rig, so we leave. That was fast. There are two of them, one seems to be an apprentice. They start with the entry door which takes most of the time. He finds something wrong with a thingy on the door frame that he fixes as well as something else, so that I don’t have to slam the door as hard as I have been. I’m always afraid of breaking something especially a window. They are also able to put Joe’s side mirror in about 3 or 4 inches. Fantastic as going through customs has been rather interestingly tight. This should help. We won’t see if it is better probably at all this year as we won’t be going through the border, hopefully. They also fix the big Newmar angle iron stiffener on the mud flap that was starting to come off. They also showed Joe how to take the security light cover off to replace the bulb. It’s nice to have all the stuff fixed. They need to order some wooden plugs for the door frame & should get them in on Wednesday, so will be back then.

We don’t have any seminars to go to today, and no dinner, so just relax in the comfort of an A/C Perigord.

**Tuesday June 26th – Day 12 – day 2 of rally**

Today we get breakfast from 7:30am to 8:30am, so up at 7:00am once again. Breakfast isn’t bad at all. Biscuits & gravy, for those that like that, scrambled eggs, hash browns, sausage & bacon, coffee & juice.

Strange that they only give you an hour for breakfast but I think there is a seminar here at 8:30am, so we have to be out of this room.

As we went into breakfast there was a sign board with the Newmar Kountry Klub numbers that won a prize today. Our number is there, so after breakfast I go and get our prize. We win a 15% discount off any MCD product. Hmmm..., wonder if we could use it retroactively as we just had all the blinds changed in Perigord with MCD blinds. I’ll have to find out once we get home. I’m thinking that every rig at the rally probably gets a prize. Joe stays for the Freightliner Fire Side Chat seminar as Perigord has a Freightline chassis. After I pick up the prize we won, I go & check out the new rigs. There are actually none that I like, even the expensive King Air & Essex. A lot of the rigs now have a 1½ bath with the main bath in the back of the coach. To me it is a waste of space. Any guests could use the one bathroom we have. I’m quite happy with the setup we now have. With one of the two couches removed & a desk built & installed, and the euro chair that does double duty. I go and find someone to ask as to what we can do about the outside fridge/freezer as it is hard to get into if one is by themselves. It is on a big pull-out tray, which is great, but it will not stay put as it keeps sliding back in, no ‘brake’, & the cover will also not stay up with the slide out. I am taken to the service area & introduced to a service fellow who explains to me that there is nothing that they can do. He did try to come up with an idea but after thinking about it said it would not work. So I guess we are stuck with the way it works now.

I have a Genealogy seminar, so head to that. The lady doing the seminar is a very good speaker & gives us some good tips. I leave early to find Joe.

Back to rig for lunch & nap. Lots of naps with this heat!! Joe was going to go to a couple of seminars in the afternoon but decided not to as his back was bothering him. I have one at 2:15pm on “Don’t Go Without Velcro”. It wasn’t bad, some interesting hints but it was mostly about a product the fellow was selling.

Dinner put on in the complex sponsored by two of the vendors, from 5:30pm to 6:30pm. Dinner is HUGE chicken breasts, veggies, sort of scalloped potatoes and yogurt & fruit for dessert. Lemonade, Iced tea, coffee and they always have water & ice. After dinner there was a ‘Trivia’ contest with 24 teams. We stayed for a bit to listen to it and were actually able to answer most of the first bunch of questions but left before it was over.

**Wednesday June 27th – Day 13 – day 3 of rally**

Up at 7:00am again to get there in time for breakfast of donuts, yogurt, and boiled eggs.

Today Joe is going to an Oasis seminar, which is our hot water heating & furnace system. We have had a lot of problems with it but hopefully all has been fixed. Just an aside here, the techies at Midtown found that there was a tube missing from the container........ that should have been there when it was installed at the factory. I didn`t bother with any seminars today as most were crafty things which I am just not into.

This afternoon is the first of two ice cream socials. The ice cream is supplied by Schawn and put on by an insurance company. We are outside, which is crazy, as the ice cream will melt before it hits ones mouth. Anyway, we line up and actually have a choice of about 6 different types of ice cream bars. Pretty tasty.

The techies come to finish off the plugs in the wood on the door, so all is done now.

In the late afternoon there is a Canadian group – gathering with appetizers. They brought in pizzas, so now we don’t need to worry about dinner. We brought some cheese & crackers & grapes, the only fruit that there was which surprised me.

**Thursday June 28th Day 14 – day 4 of rally**

Up at 7:00am again for breakfast of donuts, biscuits & gravy, hash browns, and sort of an egg casserole. Quite tasty.

Joe was going to go to a Silverleaf seminar but found out earlier that the cheapest version of it would be $400US, so not interested any more. I go to the 2nd Genealogy seminar put on by the same lady as the first seminar. She is good & again I get a little more information of how to go about finding information on your overseas ancestors. The rest of the day we have to ourselves.

**Friday June 29th Day 15 – day 5 of rally**

No breakfast being put on, so have our own in the rig.

I had forgotten to put the general meeting on our schedules I created, so we missed it. Apparently did not miss much other then the chance to win a prize as we had to be there to win it. No one said our name or number had been called, so most likely did not win anyway. Apparently Alma from Terrace did win a quilt. Nice as I heard she is a quilter.

There is a dinner put on tonight, so we get there early and line up. Other people start lining up as well. As we are blocking traffic there are people passing in front of us to get through. Only 2, of the 25 some odd people that came through, said excuse me. Very surprising as I always thought the Americans were polite but now wonder. They open the doors to the dining area and lead us to the trough. Not sure if this is faster but not as nice as the way that National did it by table, so you could at least sit down and talk to people while you waited. Dinner is again put on by a couple of the vendors. This time it is salad, veggies, baked potatoes, and beef roast. Not bad when trying to feed 250 coaches times 2 people per coach. I must say that the food has been quite good.

 We were surprised that we never did hear any of the Millers, owners of Newmar, speak. I guess if we had gone to the Sunday evening service or the general meeting we would have. The Millers are **Amish/Mennonite and their mission is “**to honor God in all business activities”.

**Saturday June 30th – Day 16 – end of the rally**

Today is the day that most people leave. Our group is heading in different directions. Some to Yellowstone, one to Banff, others heading home.

As we are staying till tomorrow, we decide to drive to Spearfish Canyon and Sturgis to see what it is all about. It is quite beautiful but we have seen nicer areas. I can understand that people that live in this area, where it is dry & hot and not much vegetation, would love this as we have gone from barren land in Gillette to green trees, a small river & cliffs. I guess we are spoiled with the greenery in BC & the west coast. We have the A/C going full blast, so we are not getting very good mileage in the CR/V. We go through Deadwood & both of us think that we have been here before but going the other way. We think it was quite a long time ago when we were coming back from Bill & Sylvia’s by car. I don’t think we have a log of that trip, so hard to know. We head to Sturgis to look around as this is where the motorcycle weekend is held every year. We heard that it is in August and that there are thousands of motorcycles from all over North America that come to it. Sturgis wasn’t what we expected at all. A little disappointed I think. We look for a local restaurant but can’t seem to find anything but saloons or McDonalds so McDonalds it is. I drive back to Gillette. We left the dogs back in the rig, so at least they were cool.

All of our group, except Bill in the older Dutch Star, have left. Although there are quite a few other rigs that also extended their stay.

I go shopping for our trip home. We both decided to forgo the Yellowhead Highway trip as Joe had heard, from someone that had done it, that the campgrounds weren’t too great. Let’s just head back to DogPatch and hopefully some cooler weather. Not sure if we should be saying that as it could turn out to be rainy, but humid weather. Who cares!!

We hitch up the toad as there is no one behind us and will save time in the morning.

**Sunday July 1st Day 17 – Gillete WY to Bozeman MT**

Today we are free, free at last. We decided that caravanning was not for us. We like to go at our own pace.

We are getting Perigord weighed today at 9:30am this morning, so we were up at 7:45am. It is once again warm or should I say HOT. The weighing took about 15 minutes, so we were on the road by 9:30am as we got there at 9:15ish.

As we drive along we can see a lot of hazy smoke in the air. The worst that we had seen while here in Gillette. We think it must be from the Colorado fires. It is warm but the dash air seems to work quite well, so it’s not too uncomfortable.

We see quite a bit of road kill that has been there for awhile, mostly deer. I guess they don’t clean up the freeway too frequently.

Today we saw our first mountains with snow on them. Interesting how we miss that.

While still in Wyoming on Indian land (Crow?) we saw a car with a young mother driving with a kid on her lap, all the windows smashed in. I guess there is no policing of such cars on the road in the Indian reservation!!! Absolutely crazy.

Arrive at Sunrise Campground in Bozeman Montana. At first it looked like not a nice park but got into the office and the lady in the office was very friendly. Her husband would be showing us to our spot. The site turned out to be not so bad at all. We have 50amp, pull-through with all services. We’re able to get our satellites working which is good. Another RV comes beside us & it turns out to be from BC. When I talk to them they say they are from the Squamish area, Garibaldi Highlands. They have had the trailer for only one month & are heading to Ontario. They left their golden lab dog at home. Nice people. I keep looking at the sky thinking that we are in for a thunderstorm. It turns out to be windy but no thunder or lightening. Thank goodness, as Stanley does not like that at all. It is starting to get cooler outside, so turn off the A/C & open the door & some windows. But it doesn’t seem to be getting any cooler inside. Hmmm... I guess the wind is blowing the wrong way. It is still 73F inside & 63F outside. Perigord is definitely well insulated.

**Monday July 2nd Day 18 –Bozeman MT to Spokane Valley**

It certainly was warm last night. Neither of us slept well at all. I even put on the little fan we have but it was only stirring up the warm air. I put the A/C on about 1:30am, so we were finally able to sleep. When I got up with the dogs, at 5:00ish, it was 50F outside & still 66F inside. One day maybe we will figure out the A/C. We were to get up at 6:30am but changed it to 7:00am as we will gain an hour today going into Washington. Have breakfast & on the road by 9:30am. We do I-90 all the way to Spokane Valley. We see some beautiful scenery and a deer by the side of the road that may not last the day?? We cross over a river, called the “Clark Fork”, many times travelling through Montana. Quite a wide & pretty river. Lots of road work where they have our side of the freeway closed for miles with no one doing anything except one or two spots. We are sharing the opposite side of the road with the traffic going east. In one area it went on for 12 miles with only one mile being worked on. Why not finish one area & go onto the next??? Curious. Reminds us of roadwork in Newfoundland. We get to the Coeur d’Alene Idaho area and, although we have been through here before, are surprised at how large the lake is. We fill up with fuel here as one never knows where it might be possible to fill up again.

We head off to the Spokane KOA. I can’t remember if we have been there before, in 2003, with Harvey, or some other campground. When we arrive there we both say this is the one. It looks the same as we remembered it. Not a lot of work done to upgrade it. The only thing I can think of is that they now have 50amp power which we will need for the A/C. It’s not as warm here as it was in Gillette, thank goodness, but still warm enough. The park has lots of kids in it as most KOAs do. They seem to cater to families. The park must be almost full with lots of overnighters. We are a little concerned about leaving in the morning as one of the RVs we will have to drive by, has his side mirror sticking out on the road & there is a fenced in garbage area across from him, so , if they are still there when we leave, it will be tight to get by them. Most KOAs now have a fenced in doggy area, where they can run free. The only problem is that there is a lot of doggy doodoo that people just have not picked up. One of my pet peeves I guess. People go into these and start talking to other people & not paying attention to what their dog is doing.

Back in Perigord I start packing up stuff as we hope to go to DogPatch tomorrow & then straight home. I notice that the mattress is again pretty soft. Must be because we have dropped 2000+ feet.

**Tuesday July 3rd Day 19 – Spokane Valley to DogPatch**

Not a good night. There was thunder and rain, so woke up at about 1:30am to put the awning over the passenger side slide, and let the dogs into out bed. Neither of them like the thunder, not that I blame them. Also most KOAs are between the highway & a railroad, so lots of noise.

We do the usual things to get ready to go and hear the neighbours starting there engine. Thank goodness they are leaving ahead of us. Great! That will make it easier for us to get out. We are on the road at 8:10am. Not bad. It is windy today but with the ‘comfort steer’ Joe has no problems. Harvey would have been all over the road.

It is pretty countryside for most parts. A lot of wheat and some potato fields. We arrive at the Columbia River and what a view. We actually drop down to 700+ft but then start up towards Snoqualmie Pass. Our first rain while driving, in days!! We must be heading to the west coast.

We have been on I-90 all the way since Spearfish North Dakota till we get to Seattle. Some parts we had done before, many years ago, and some are new to us. We are surprised at the number of areas, on

I-90, that can be closed. It must be because of snow drifts in the winter as we see lots of snow fences along the highway.

 Joe is really happy with the way the mirror was adjusted on his side of the coach. Should make going through customs a little easier, hopefully.

We hear, not sure when, that Moose Jaw & Swift Current had a tornado, or bad storm, go through. Luckily we weren’t there then.

We had met Dave & Joanne at the Aldergrove, Eagle Wind rally in September 2011 as well as Brian & Carol from Delta and Bob & Susan from Bellingham,, & Bill & Anita at the Sunshine Valley Resort, informal rally, near Hope in May 24th 2012 weekend. We had also met Brian & Carol at the Aldergrove rally.

Another fellow, Bill, originally from Penticton but now Alberta somewhere comes in today. This makes 10 coaches.

LOTS of carcasses along the side of the road. Smoke from , we think the Colorado fires. Lots of WIND at the campsite most days & HOT. Hits 100F or above the majority of the days.

Speed on I-90 is mostly 75.