

Back on the road again...



After a 13 year hiatus of RV travel vacations with our daughters in their grandparent's motor home, my husband Rick and I purchased an RV back in February of this year. We had three requirements, the first, that it be less than 21 feet for easy towing, the second, that it be equipped with a toilet, shower and sink, and the third, that it have a queen-size bed. Summer at home, is very busy. We live in the country, on a 100 acre parcel of land. There are never enough hours in a day, and subsequently, we find ourselves working most of the time. We thought that an RV would be an interesting and new way to travel and give us some fresh new perspectives on life away from home.



We investigated different ways of 'dry camping' or 'boon docking', also called 'dispersed camping'. We joined an RV group called Harvest Hosts. Dry camping or boon docking requires being totally self-contained in your unit, not needing hydro, (unless supplying your own via solar or generator), water or sewer hook ups. Harvest Hosts are people all across Canada, the US and Mexico who very generously offer self contained RV'ers a place to stay for free, for 24 hours. Many of the hosts are proud owners of orchards, farms or wineries. You pay a small yearly fee to become a member. It is a very well organized club. Once your membership is activated, you are given a member number and access to all of the individual hosts and their respective websites, amenities, and maps of where they are located, (www.harvesthosts.com). As RV users of Harvest Hosts, we undertake to respectfully, dry camp on their premises, and also to check out their produce or wines and support them with a purchase. This is not mandatory but very difficult not to do, as there are so many unique and varied items to purchase, that you often times cannot find anywhere else.



After getting our RV ready for travel, Rick and I set out on our first venture to Michigan. Not too far from home for the first trip, in case we ran into any problems. We travelled around in a circle (or the 'Thumb' as it is known to the locals) starting off our first night in Flushing, then Frankenmuth, then on to Bay City, and then to Bad Axe. Frankenmuth was quite a surprise, a Bavarian city right out of a fairy tale. We attended St. Lorenz on Sunday morning; a Lutheran Church built in the 1800's and an amazing architectural achievement, very beautiful!

The next day we travelled on to Bay City and toured the area and carried on to our last Harvest Hosts, Dizzy Daisy Winery, www.dizzydaisywinery.com, in Bad Axe. We were warmly greeted by Janice who made us feel right at home. When we were settled in and enjoying a lovely sunset and view, Janice and her husband Harold Kociba, asked us to join them for a wine tasting at their store. Wow, were we in for a treat. Harold and Janice make over 35 different wines made from grapes, berries and other fruits many of which they grow themselves, on their premises. Their best seller is Bad Axe Passion, a special blend of grapes, followed by Black currant and then Dizzy Daisy Delight. They make pear wines, raspberry, red currant, pineapple and the quintessential cherry wine that tastes just like a piece of cherry pie, just to name a few. We have tasted fruit wines before and even made a few that were quite good, but nothing prepared us for the amazing fresh fruity flavours that were enhanced in the wine making process. Harold and Janice have perfected their craft. Their winery might very well be the hidden jewel of Bad Axe, but certainly not to the locals as we met a few who ventured in for their supply of fruity delights. They are that good! Unfortunately, because of Canada Customs, we were not able to bring back more than two bottles. Harold and Janice were the most gracious hosts. If you have an opportunity to visit Michigan, their vineyard is a must stop!!

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For the remainder of our trip, we travelled along Lake Huron staying at Lighthouse County Park in Port Hope and then Wagener County Park near Harbour Beach. Because we travelled in early June, other campers were non-existent, likely because schools were not yet closed for the summer and the nights can still get quite cool. We used our heater all but three nights out of nine. The lovely lake views from these County Parks were wonderful. The lighthouse museum was a great visit and included in our camping fee. We ended up in Fort Gratiot for some last minute shopping and then on to Port Huron, then the three hour trek home.



Overall, our first RV excursion was very enjoyable and better than I had anticipated. As much as we love being home, close to church, family and friends there is that 'nomad' part of us that can't wait to get back on the road again...

By Carole Cole




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