

JOLLY RAMBLERS HEAD WEST TO LENA

DATELINE LENA, IL. Aug 12 to 15, 2009 by GC. The Jolly Ramblers trekked to the Le-Aqua-Na State Park in this beautiful western region of Illinois. Fourteen units were the recipients of the best August camping weather in years. Our hosts, Chuck and Betty Baumann (thanks for the tent), and Herb and Helen Cozad, greeted arriving units. Members assisted arriving units in parking. Plenty of great spaces were available. Some even enjoyed satellite reception, although the activity schedule didn't leave much TV time. Wednesday began with a short trip to the close-by active wind farm for a tour and presentation. We learned a lot about these energy monsters and got kinks in our necks as we watched the huge blades turn in the wind. We returned to enjoy an evening of karaoke (the singing will improve with more practice and less bashfulness). Giving our vocal cords a rest, we watched a beautiful sunset, then sat back in our comfy chairs by the campfire and enjoyed a night-time big screen showing of the Statler Brothers Farewell Concert (I heard singing-along in back of me).



Thursday began with a cool, sunny morning, a fresh cup of hot coffee, and pastries provided by our hosts. It was a morning for a big yawn, a body wake-up strrrrettch, maybe a nice walk around the campground, and a comment like: "What a great morning!" We proceeded to caravan along the historic Stagecoach trail, passing through Galena (thank you GPS), and on to Dubuque to visit the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. It is a beautiful facility with film shorts, educational presentations, and live fish and animals living in natural habitat displays. We returned to prepare for, what we Ramblers love, FOOD! Our potluck featured homemade barbequed pulled pork. Everything was excellent. We once again drew up those comfy chairs by the fire to enjoy our night-time entertainment of the movie RV. It became a two part feature, having to stop it to comply with our campground's rule for quiet time. This group would party all night, if allowed.

Friday - and again a gorgeous day and great breakfast. Then we're off to Elizabeth to hear about the Blackhawk war and its impact on this early enclave of pioneers. We enjoyed a film of the event at the welcome center and then visited the small fort that warded off an overwhelming number of Indian attackers. After a short visit to Elizabeth's railroad museum with its caboose and miniature train displays, we traveled to our next event - pies. And they were delicious. Some of us even had a light lunch before enjoying the homemade yummy pies at Karen's Deli in Stockton. This probably led many to enjoy the weather by napping in chairs outdoors, or inside on couches and beds. After-all, we had to prepare our bodies for the Friday Fish Fry in Pearl City (some of us did not eat fish, but those that did, said "wonderful").

Unfortunately, we had to exit early on Friday to head home for a family reunion. But I hear that another great day was enjoyed by all and great birthdays were celebrated by Ruth Dennis and Jean Erdmann.

The next outing for many, will be heading to the Michigan State Rally in Mackinaw City in September, while others will be enjoying the early fall colors at the State Park in Kankakee. Hey, you guys, take notes and pictures for me!

For us, we'll be with this great group again, down the road, at Mulberry Grove in October. Safe travels to all!