

Subject: Back Home for the loop to Quebec

Date: Fri, 28 May 1999 19:06:20

We were back in Fredericton for a night and stayed in the boatyard. It was nice to see the boats in the water. We had lots of visitors and saw a friend's new boat. We took the RV to a mechanic friend of ours and he check her out pretty good. Everything seems to be ship shape. We made it back to the boat yard by 2 so we were able to be crew on a couple of boats. Norman Raine took Bonnie and I went with Layton McClare. They had a bunch of visiting dignitaries. Most of which had never been on a boat before so we went as crew. The day was almost what some people call PFC (P... Flat Calm.)

We did get out on the water. Probably our only sail for a year. (sigh). Anyway we got off the boat and jumped into Millie for a run to my mother's place in Sussex. We are now visiting with them. Our visit in the boatyard did remind us that the Charity Race is this weekend so we will probably come back to the boat club for Sunday and then we are going to be heading toward the Gaspé coast.

We are on planning on spending a night or two at Mount Carleton then swing through Campbellton and around the coast of the Gaspé. With any luck we will have a visit with a friend in Gaspé before we continue on.

Subject: Bugs, bugs, and more Bugs.

Date: Wed, 02 Jun 1999 10:30:30

I wonder if they have full immersion baptismal size bottles of Deep Woods Off!!



Summit of Mt Carleton

was BLACK. We had time to eat an apple and drink some water before the rumbles of thunder started. TIME TO GO!!

Yes, we made it to the top of Mount Carleton. Great view. For those who have never had the pleasure it actually is not a bad trip. Didn't realize I was in that bad a shape though. The walk was tougher than I thought. It was a 4.4 kms (all up hill). The day we did the walk on Monday, it was HOT. The walk looks like a road that has been cut out through the woods. As you get higher it gets rockier. You are still sheltered by the trees until the last 300 yards then you get to climb rock. We proved to be extremely average it took us almost exactly the 1.5 hours it suggests that it will take.

The wood sheltered us from the wind and it was HOT. We were walking up in shorts and T-shirts and soaked with sweat. We got to the top and it was an incredible view. There is a building that was the Fire lookout shack that is still there. We went up and looked out. The east side where we came from the sky was cloudy but not too bad, the west side

The down hill trip was an easy walk and we zoomed down in about an hour and 10 minutes. The last 15 or so we had showers and it was COLD water.

Mount Carleton hosts all manner of bugs (Wasps, no-see-ums, black flies, mosquitoes) all of which decided to pay us a visit inside Millie.

When we arrived at Mt. Carleton there was major construction at the gate house. There were no rangers around so one of the construction guys just waved us forward. We followed the signs to the trail and the only vehicles we saw were three military transport trucks(?). After our walk we went in search of a place to stay. We found a couple of nice tent sites but nothing for an RV. We did eventually find a place that was nice and flat and had picnic tables and a nearby lake. We stopped and made supper. The ranger showed up and said we had to move. We were in the Group Camping area. The Ranger said to go to Anderson Lake and there would be someone by in the morning to get our camping fee. No problem. We finished supper and went searching for Anderson Lake. We eventually found it, IT HAD SHOWERS!!! We drove by one of the Ranger trucks and the rangers seemed to be visiting with friends. We waved ok they know we are here.

Showers are wonderful things. I was sitting on the picnic table waiting while Bonnie was having her shower and was thinking about getting out the BBQ but the bugs were just not allowing it.

We ate inside and slept soundly, then got up and went to bed. We actually woke up early and felt great in the morning. We had breakfast. The rangers drove by and picked up the garbage.

By 9:30 we were ready to go. The rangers had not showed yet. So we were off toward the gate again. VERY SLOWLY off toward the gate. The interior roads in the park are ungodly. Our first case of some of the contents of the refrigerator being tossed on to the floor happened here, three times. We were doing 20Kms/hour at the time(12miles an hour for our American friends) Alaska should be a picnic compared to this. The ranger waved at us from his truck as we drove up to the gate.

So we were off to Quebec. The road leading to Mt. Carleton from the south is paved, proceeding north is another story it is dirt. There are very large soft spots in the road. There was a grader there flattening down a section. We had a pulp truck loaded ahead of us so we were following him. He stopped to talk to the grader operator.

There were two more trucks coming the other direction and seeing as this was a one at a time we let them go. (They have to make a living traveling, we try to stay out of their way) The first truck through stopped by the first trucks and told them how to get through. We watched the route they had taken and follow their tracks (we have almost the same wheel track as they do). We started to get that sinking feeling and FLOORED IT. We did make it through, looks like they did lose a tractor trailer in the hole not long before, there were actually two very soft spots but we made it through.

Campbellton was a friendly place so we stopped and got groceries (Including a box of tea for my brother John, he doesn't drink tea, he barter's it for homemade chocolates!!) We had King Cole Tea mentioned several times as something very special. We have Campbellton listed as our first day of our official odyssey. We gassed up and continued on into Quebec. As we crossed the bridge the first sign to meet us (10 feet off the bridge) SEX SHOP 2 km!! Ah to be in Quebec!!

We drove up the edge of the Restigouche river and around the Gaspé coast. Wonderful scenery and we

stopped in Pasbebiac at the beach. It is a nice beach (water is a tad cold) with sun bathers in one end and fisherman at the other.

We tried to get crab at the fisherman's wharf in Grande Rivere but they didn't have any. But LOTS of lobster. We continued on to Perce and went looking for the campground. The provincial park is downtown and would be an easy walk everywhere. It doesn't open until June 5. We went back out to Cote Surprise and camped there. The rock is right there in front of us, with a flashing green light off the south edge.

Today we will head down into the town and walk around, then head off to Gaspé to visit Lisa Mullin, a friend from Antigonish.

Then we will be heading to Rivere-du-Loup and up the Saguenay to Chicoutimi and we were planning to go down to Quebec by the Larentides Provincial Park. The Park is closed because of forest fires at the present time. It is supposed to rain for the next few days so it may be open by the time we get there.

Subject: A visit with Lisa

Date: Sun, 06 Jun 1999 19:25:49

We made it to Gaspé (York West) and visited with Lisa and her folks for most of the afternoon. Lisa's parents are really nice people. We stayed in their yard that night.

The route to Lisa's is spectacular. The 17% grade out of Perce is, shall we say noteworthy. At that grade Millie's nose is 4 feet higher than her tail and it feels every inch of that 4 feet too. We did make it without even a cough or a sputter.

Sterling Keys, a boating friend, gave us a number of places to check out on the way through the Gaspé. As it turned out we were not really able to do any of the places he mentioned, (no crab at the wharf), Couldn't find one place, and the chef's school for dinner at 2 pm didn't seem to hit the spot either. This and it is raining a minor flood.

Lisa took us on a tour of Gaspé and showed us the church and around town a bit. The next day before we hit the road again she took us to a fish shop and got some cooked crab meat for dinner. (\$55.00 per kilo) We got a 1/2 pound to do for both of us. It was really great tasting too.

It was a rainy day so we put as many miles on as we could. We stopped at Saint Flavie, near Mont Joli. It was a fantastic drive around the Gaspé and down onto the lower St Lawrence river. With signs of warning of waves over road on one side and danger falling rock on the other, it was a glorious day. The rain was lightening up and the sun starting to peek through the clouds. Our camping guide says that overnight parking in the rest stops are as posted in Quebec. Our first rest stop showed a Parking 4h sign at the front gate so that was out for us. We stopped and I napped for a little while (I was quite tired with all the ups and downs and no shoulders on the road.)

One thing that I am noticing is that we are very wide and you have to pay real close attention or you drift out of your lane. At the end of a long day's drive I am mentally tired.

Anyway we were able to get gas and continue on. We were driving through a little town (Saint Flavie) and saw a rest area that overlooked the St' Lawrence and it was very pretty so we pulled in. And much

to our delight no ban on overnight parking.

We cooked up the crab meat (sauteed with a touch of garlic) and went walking round the town. It was a great little stop. We watched the sunset and CRASHED. We woke quite early (4:30 - 5:00) and decided to drive to another rest area and have breakfast. The early start did allow us to get another rest area where there were at least a few people who had stayed overnight. We tried to be quiet and after breakfast we were off to Rivere-du-Loup to get the ferry across the St Lawrence.

We arrived at about 9:30 and the ferry had left at 8. another ferry at noon. We decided to sit tight until noon. We walked around and saw a few boats up on land and a bunch more in the water near the ferry dock. This would be a great little spot to spend a night in a boat, VERY protected.

On the ferry over we spotted a whole bunch of Beluga Whales on the south shore of Ile Oux Lievres (the island in the middle of the St Lawrence that the ferry has to go around). They were a long way away but they are VERY WHITE!! We also saw seals following the Belugas. We landed in Saint-Simeon and fortunately the ferry crew were able to get most of the cars off ahead of us in line. They warned me to go very slow up the ramp as it appeared to be LOW tide and the ramp looked almost straight up. We did make an awful noise as the trailer hitch scraped down the center of the ferry but the crew weren't screaming so I figured the tanks were ok. (The first tank that would have been punctured is the Black water tank!!!) The Black water tank is the holding tank for the toilet. The Grey water tank is the water tank for the sinks and shower. I still had more than a dozen cars behind me so I figured the first chance I had I would let them go.

I did at the first time I had shoulders wide enough for me to pull off onto, 29 km later. We were able to keep reasonable speed up most of the hills but were very glad to dump the tailgaters. I'm still looking for that "Any closer and I FLUSH" bumper sticker.



One of Canada's oldest lighthouses

The road to Chicoutimi is very pretty (we went on the southern side of the Saganey River). We have not had Cell Service since leaving Campbellton. Candel didn't service this area. But in Chicoutimi we have full signal strength and digital service too. We stopped in a couple of rest areas and watched a "little" sailboat beating up the bay. (Beating is tacking back and forth going into the wind for those who are not sailing types) We noticed the marina in the cove opposite the rest area and thought that would be a great place to stay for the night. We followed the edge of the bay until we found the marina. There were five guys drinking out of brown paper bags against one wall. One of them came over to me when I got out of Millie and he greeted me in fine style. Between his OK english and my very bad french and our FYC membership card, he guided us over to the lawn where we camped out for the night. He showed me the showers and the laundry and gave us the combination to the door. We were set.

We showered and had supper and watched a large ore cargo carrier (several hundred feet long) arrive at the Alcan plant. There were already two other (1 cargo 1 ore carrier) on the

dock so they had to anchor out for the night. Our "little" sailboat arrived in while we were watching. A Benteau 36

The next morning we spent the morning doing laundry and watching the world go by. One boat Sirocco a 34' CS had a 7:30 am launch. They have a neat system. All of the boats have a cradle with wheels, and a ladder up the side. They have a front end loader (for the bigger boats and a farm tractor for the smaller boats) move the boats onto the down grade of a ramp and block the tires. Then the front end loader moves back about 80 feet and they attach a steel cable to the cradle and the front end loader and the loader backs up a bit, someone pulls out the block and then they gently guide the boat down the ramp and when the front wheels of the loader are touching the water the boat is floating free of the trailer. Once the boat is clear the loader pulls the trailer back into the yard. Slick. The whole operation took about 20 minutes from the time the loader arrived until the loader left. All the masts are stored up and there really isn't a place they could pull them.

We left the boat yard and wandered our way toward Lac Saint Jean. I don't know what anyone thinks northern Quebec looks like but this wasn't my impression. There are a LOT of farms on very sandy soil. And flat with hills in the distance. (OK not prairie flat but flatter than Sussex)

Our first glimpse of impending doom arrived when Millie stalled part way out of crossroad joining a highway. We coasted out of traffic and the problem seemed electrical. I tried it again and Millie started and ran without a hitch. We drove to a look off on Route 169 (toward the park) and had lunch. If you are ever in the area of Lac Saint Jean you MUST go up to that look off. It is spectacular. We drove toward the park and stopped to get gas in Hebertville.

We drove 10 feet and died. I stopped and the problem was definitely electrical both batteries were reading good but there seemed to be no power to the ignition. I played with the fuses for a minute and nothing. So we called our Good Sam Emergency Road Service (ERS) number and started hoping. The Good Sam Club is an RVers club kind of like the Seven Seas Cruising Association. We are members. Given that this is an American organization we really wondered how good this was going to work. It worked great (Sort of) while we were waiting I started playing around with the fuse panel. Checking all of the fuses, and cursing CRC because they did not get me a manual like they said they would and I have absolutely no idea what fuse does what. I play with one and Millie starts and dies. I check the fuse again and it seems ok, but I went to the gas station and I replaced it anyway. Millie starts and seems to be ok. I drive around the parking lot and park nose into the building. Now what do we do we have a crash truck enroute and we are not sure if we are fixed or not. We call the ERS but the truck is supposed to be there in 15-30 minutes and there isn't time to cancel it. We wait and decide that looking at the building is probably not the best way so we start up and turn around and look out at the road.

The crash truck arrives and wants to tow us to a camp site and will take us to the Ford dealer on Monday. His english is bad and we end up using his phone to call someone to be translator. I explain what we have done to fix the problem and we are not sure if we should go back to Chicoutimi or on to Quebec our next stop. Rather than go back we decide to try to make it to Quebec. We thank the crash truck driver who seems very concerned about something and then says ok-ok and off he goes. Great. We start out to 169 stop at the corner and start down the road about 50 feet before Millie dies again. After wiggling more wires we get 60, then 80 then 20 then 200 then 10 then long enough to get into a Petrocan truck stop. We play with it again and then it seems to last pretty good. We decide that Chicoutimi with phone service is much better than the North Woods and no phone service. We start driving back to our Marina friends and see a mall where there is a cashstop and a grocery store (and on the corner a FORD dealership). We stop and get groceries and cash and start back down to corner. This

is 30 kms from our last problem.

We should have paid attention to the omen, Millie died in front of the Ford dealer. But we didn't. We made it another 2 km at a stop light in a 4 lane highway. This time it is dead so dead the 4 way flashers don't work. We call the ERS and Bonnie tries to explain what is going on while I'm tweeking wires. The ERS will not send another truck since the previous crash truck filled a towing bill and a repair bill. Wait a sec TOWing and a REPAIR bill! No. Ok says the ERS John will call you in 10 minutes. Meanwhile the Securite du Quebec show up and the girl in the passenger seat doesn't understand english at all but her partner went to school in Hartland NB at the NBII? (what ever that is). They called a tow truck and we waited. John calls us and Bonnie is talking to him. She does the whole nine yards of explaining all of the we did this that and the other thing, and before he hangs up I asked to talk to him. He answers my questions and then asks me two things, did the tow truck guy do a repair, and how long was he there. From his tone I don't think that company is doing any CAA work any more.

The tow truck arrives and we are now sitting in Ford dealership 2km from the lights. I am exhausted and crash at about 8:45 on Saturday.

Sunday we wake up to RAIN LOTS and LOTS of rain. We have a late breakfast and by 10ish the rain has cleared and starting to dry. I'm sitting here going through my head about all of the electrical work I did the other year rewiring the engine on our boat and what applies and what doesn't.

This time the power in the Fuse panel is completely dead. 0 volts anywhere. After spending 30 minutes peaking and poking with a multimeter I have an inline fuse that has power going in an nothing coming out. The fuse is ok but the top end is not making a contact and no power is traveling. I removed the circuit and if I short one wire to the other I now have power to the panel.

After a couple of trips to the Canadian Tire that is on the other side of the mall I now have full power to the panel and Millie is running like a top. Quaint phrase since all we do for the next hour is drive in a circle around the mall parking lot not venturing too far from the Ford dealership. Since Sunday shopping is a real entity here we now have a filling parking lot so we stop in front of the dealership and go and visit the mall.

It isn't a big mall so we are back and waiting for it to clear. We have started Millie a half dozen times since and everything seems fine. I called an RV friend and asked if he were in this situation would he go or stay, he said stay. So tomorrow (Monday) I will talk to our Ford friends and see if they have any suggestions or can they tell if it is fixed or broken.

Subject: MADE IT!!

Date: Wed, 09 Jun 1999 09:14:07

Would everyone on the list who sees Fred Mosher say "Mike says thanks for all of the lessons in trouble shooting on the boat."

The Ford dealer guy said if it is working there is nothing they really could do to check. So we basically could go or stay in the area and test. Bonnie was itching to go so we drove toward Chicoutimi and if we lasted until we got to Route 175 we would turn south toward Quebec City. We turned.

Route 175 on the map is a line through the park almost straight from Chicoutimi to Quebec City. We

were expecting roads very similar to the road up. Narrow no shoulders, winding, hills but great scenery, and absolutely NO phone service. What we got was much different. Route 175 is the truck route between Chicoutimi and Quebec. LOTS of passing lanes, mostly good shoulders, nice scenery and DIGITAL phone service the whole way. This phone service made me feel much better, every time the cruise control couldn't decide if it needed to give it gas or coast, I was looking for a pull off spot because the engine was going to die. It didn't and the trip thru the park was great.

We are now in Quebec city and have spent a couple of days in a campground NEAR the bridges. From the new bridge it was about a 15 minute drive to get here but we can see them clear as day about a kilometer away. Our first day we were in the campground by noon, so we walked across the Old Quebec bridge. This is the replacement bridge for the one that fell twice during construction. The pieces of fallen bridge provide the engineers the materials for their iron rings. This one is quite the structure. The designers must have had investments in a paint factory. She is definitely looking old and time for it to be replaced. We walked by the Aquarium and up to St Louis street and tried to find someone to explain the bus system to downtown. We eventually hailed a cab to old Quebec.



Montmorency Falls 98 feet higher than Niagara Falls.

We walked most of the streets in the Old city and even found the street where Bonnie's mother rented a room while she was a private nurse. This was shortly after she finished her nursing training. This would have been during the Depression and nurses was one of the frills you could do without. She had a school friend called Bates that was connected in the Quebec establishment that got a job tending to Grandmother Dunn. This would be grandmother to the Dunns that have the summer house in St. Andrews. Bonnie's mother would fill in when Bates needed a day off.

We had a great time getting back to the campground by bus. There supposedly is a bus that does it but the information we had was look for a blue and white bus that said St.

Nicolas on it. Great we could do that. Looking for a blue and white bus was easy EVERY metro bus in the city is blue and white. We eventually got help from the help desk at the Hilton. And learned two things it was not a city bus that would be going to St. Nicolas and it should say Etchemin on it. OK by this time we should have seen two buses go by. We were about to miss the last bus (according to the time, we had yet to see any bus with either set of directions on it yet). When a bus that was not a city bus showed up. I stuck my head in and asked if the bus was going to St Nicolas. He looked at us and said "You camping at Imperial, Oui." ON we jumped and made it back on the last bus. The bus company is called "Autocars des Chutes" and the bus was labeled St-Etienne. But it is a blue and white bus!

The next day we decided to go on an all day Gray Line tour. I had never been on one and Bonnie said they were good. IT WAS POURING blowing hard and miserable most of the day. We drove around old Quebec and was quite impressed at the ability of the driver to move a full sized bus through the construction in the old streets. A good time was had by all. We did a pretty good job the day before on our own walking tour. The afternoon was a trip around the Isle of Orleans, the Montmorency falls (98

feet higher than Niagara), a copper smith art/museum Albert Gilles on Route 138. Go if you have the chance the artwork is truly worth the trip. The Basilica Sainte Anne-de-Beaupre is quite the church and back to have a slice of bread and Maple Butter. The bread was done in the wood ovens on the street and was for sale. We needed bread so we bought one of the loaves that was half white half whole wheat. The Maple butter was actually maple butter spread a combo of margarine and maple butter (we passed on it). The maple products in this store seemed EXPENSIVE.

Anyway, would we go on another Gray Line tour. Probably. I generally classify things as Expensive(Paid for more than you got), reasonable(paid a reasonable amount for reasonable service), or Cheap(got more value than you paid for). The Gray Line was reasonable.

We are leaving Quebec today and are planning to get to the outskirts of Montreal sometime today. Then the next day stop at the Biodome for a visit and then head into Ontario for a visit. With a day at Cornwall Upper Canada Village.

Subject: Ontario!

Date: Fri, 11 Jun 1999 10:38:41

We expected to stop east of Montreal, but we made it to the Biodome by 3pm. We had a great time. This was the second time we were there and they are doing a good job at keeping it up to date. I have a particular love for the tropical climate (WARM, MOIST, and LUSH). Bonnie likes the Penguins in the Antarctic area. We always spend a lot of time watching the large fish in Laurentian lake.

We stayed until closing at 5:30 and then had supper in the parking lot waiting for the traffic to calm down. Then it started picking up again in the parking lot (Expos Game). We bailed out of the parking lot and headed toward Ontario. We ended up in Ontario and it was starting to get dark when we saw a sign to a Service Center. We needed gas so we filled up and pulled in it was full of trucks and noisy. We decided to try to find another place to stay. Glengarry Provincial Park was the next exit, so we headed there.

Before we got to the park there was Creg Quay Marina. We stopped showed our FYC card and asked if we could stay in the overflow parking lot. Sure no problem. It was a great night. We woke early and hit the road to Upper Canada Village.



Carding machine at Upper Canada Village.

Upper Canada Village is a great place to visit. They have a working water powered woolen mill. It takes 6 weeks to go from the raw wool to have a finished blanket. Washing, Drying, Carding(3 times), Spinning, weaving and fulling the blanket. It was an interesting show.

Upper Canada Village is a great place for a visit. Upper Canada Village shares the same kind of origin as Kings Landing. They were making a power dam and flooding out 6 communities and they moved the old buildings to a park.

Beside Upper Canada Village is the Chrysler Battlefield park, where in the war of 1812 the

Americans were marching a force of 8000 toward Montreal. An observer force of 800 redcoats, recruits, and indians were in following. At Chrysler field the 8000 turned back to take care of the observer force. Unfortunately they choose a spot that was ideally suited to the "Thin Red Line" and were soundly defeated. They retreated back across the border and that was the last attempt at taking Montreal.

The other thing at the Upper Canada Village is the Rose Garden. Many of the Roses are in blossoms are in bloom it was great and worth a visit.

We are going to be visiting with Lois and Herb Underhill, family of Bonnie's that lived near Jones' Falls.

Subject: New thing added to our list.

Date: Sun, 13 Jun 1999 11:23:29



Peterborough Lift Lock

Bonnie and I always thought it would be neat to cruise the canals in Ontario some summer and the visit to Lois and Herb's took it from something on our "might do" list and put it on our "will do" list.

Before we got to Lois and Herb's we stopped in Brockville and had lunch. After lunch we walked around and took a few pictures of the various old buildings. Some of the churches in the town square have really neat and colorful designs in the shingles.

We stayed with Lois and Herb Underhill, Bonnie's cousin, and they took us to the Jones Falls Locks which is a hoop, skip, and jump away from their place. An amazing structure.

Long curved power dam feeding one of the first hydro dams in the country via wooden pipes. They live on one of the lakes that form part of the Trent Severn Canal system.

We stopped in Peterborough to see the Hydraulic Lift lock. There are six in the world, two are on the Trent Severn. The one at Peterborough is the tallest lift in North America. We were lucky enough to make it there and look it all over. Just in time to see a couple of boats go through the locks so we got to see them operate. Quite amazing considering their age and when they were first installed (First opened in 1904) It is really something to see. If you are around you should try to wait until a boat goes through the lift.

Subject: Lake Simcoe and Stratford.

Date: Sun, 13 Jun 1999 23:50:30

We stopped in Lake Simcoe last night at Sibbald Park. A campground of Toronto. Over 950 campsites

(Bonnie says 961) it is a LARGE place. The poor attendant at the front gate must have had one bad day. We pulled up and expected to see a FULL sign but when I got in line there were about 20 people in line and one attendant. Every one of the campers ahead of me in line were less than 25 years old and were expecting at least 6 people at a camp site and two vehicles. One car was registering and one was provisioning (going to get BEER!!) The banter from the attendant was almost mind numbing. No 6 people are not allowed at one camp site, you will have to take two and the other car will have to register here, You might not get two sites together. You have to go put this on your site to mark it taken and then come back here to wait for your friend. The beer store is down on route 48 at the lights turn right go a mile and the store is at the end of the mall.

He looked at me and said "And you would like the Radio Ban area right!", Nothing with hydro and we are full but we just opened up a new section. The computer won't let us book an RV into this site but if you can get in great if not figure out which one you can get into and come back. We fit into the first one just fine. He had short hair no sense in making it thinner.

You could tell this was a campground of a multicultural area. Pickup games of Crickett and Soccer were busy. The smells from the BBQs were wonderful. On our way back from the store with hotdogs Bonnie was wondering if she could faint hunger and beg for food. The Indian cuisine smelled fantastic, only to be augmented by the Caribbean food available by the next picnic table. It sure made the beans and wieners look pretty pathetic. Sigh.

We left Sibbald Park campground and were bound for Stratford. We made it and started looking for the campground. We didn't have a map of Stratford so we went looking for streets that matched the names in the directions given by the Trailer Life campground guide. We ended up in downtown so while we were here we figured we could take a swing by the theaters etc. We ended up on a one way street heading up to the Festival Theater. The Theater had just gone in for the 2pm matinee performance and cars were everywhere. Including one that was parked in a no parking zone making the road about 8feet 2 inches. We are about 8feet 1 inch wide (the awning overhangs about 8 feet up so that was out of the way). There were cars filling in behind so there wasn't much I could do but go forward. WE both INHALED and squeezed forward. We heard this scream of terror as someone ran up to the car parked in the no parking zone and he watched very closely while getting whiter and whiter as we inched through. We made it without a scratch (to anyone).

We eventually did find the campground and left the RV as we walked into the theater area. The parks and gardens in the downtown are truly beautiful and I can see why Stratford won it's category in the Cities in Bloom competition last year. We walked all over downtown and around the city hall and the theaters. We stopped and listened to the Jazz Festival playing in the park.

Balzaks Coffee Shop is a neat place with it's Tin ceiling and walls. If you go you should have the Iced Mocha. TO DIE FOR on a hot day. The lemonade is good to but the ICED MOCHA is the thing to have.

Subject: Tillsonburg and Saint Catherines.

Date: Wed, 23 Jun 1999 19:06:57

We stopped in Tillsonburg to visit with Jason and Tara. We just stayed the night so we didn't have time to do much. We saw a number of Amish people traveling in their horse and buggies and the shoulders of roads between Stratford and Tillsonburg are tracked by their buggies.

Tara and all her family are what I call "animal people", I just couldn't picture them without at least one animal around. Tara has a dog named Ellie. Ellie and Tara were doing an obedience training called "Agility Training". It is basically an obstacle course composed of tire tube rings, tunnels (like gigantic clothes dryer hose), A frames, Bridges, jumps that look like miniature horse jumps, and rows of gates that the dogs are supposed to weave through. We went and watched as the people would decide what course they would like to do and then try to guide the dogs through the equipment. It was interesting to watch and is really a combination of skill between the animal and the handler.

While we were watching, an Amish buggy drove by and we could see a couple of small children in bonnets peeking out to see the people training their dogs. I wonder what they think of it. In some ways I envy them, their life is simpler and certainly a lot more civilized than the crazy one we left in Fredericton. But our crazy life was our own making, and it seems silly that the easiest way to correct a too busy lifestyle was to hit the "eject button" and go to Antigonish. We loved our time in Antigonish and it was certainly a great way to make a transition. I envy the "simplicity" of their lives (but I would assume that they are just as busy as we were just in a different way). We are still in the process of changing between work and retirement mind set (whatever that means).

We are very comfortable in Millie and we are having a good time with her but she is not "home" yet. She is our abode for a year and that "defined" a time may mean that she will never be "home". Home is still Oromocto to Bonnie too.

In my mind we are kind of half way between this nebulous called "retirement" and the working world. I don't wake up thinking about if it is time to go to work anymore. When we are not visiting we seem to fall into a go to sleep with the sun and wake up with the sun mode. When we are visiting we seem to adjust to those around us. Today is physically Wednesday but it is more like a Sunday. My brother Dan and his wife Ruth are working, Craig and Ian are in school (exams) and Adam is with his worker. Bonnie and I are sitting around, me with my journal and Bonnie working on a puzzle in Dan's living room in Saint Catherines. Ian was going to call if he wanted a drive from school. No call yet and the bus leaves his school in an hour so I guess he decided to stay there.

We have been visiting with Dan and his family for just over a week. We have spent a lot of time with them. Dan and I were never very close. He went to university courtesy of the Canadian Forces before I really remember him ever being at home. I was a lot younger than Dan. Bonnie says I have infantile amnesia up to about 18. It is only partly true but for some reason I do remember very little from my childhood. We arrived last Tuesday just in time to go out to dinner with them for their 25th wedding anniversary. We went to a Japanese restaurant which was great. We have checked sushi off of our checklist in life and added burdock to our list of culinary delights. Boy are we going to have fun when we get home. Bonnie loved pulling burdock at the house now it will be harvest time too!!

Dan is working at a appliance store called Home and Rural in Niagara Falls. He is really enjoying the new job and I went and helped him rearrange the store one evening. There is a wide range of stuff from the basic to some really nice stuff. One night Bonnie, Ruth, and I went to pick up Dan and then walk around Clifton Hill (the glitzy street in Niagara Falls), Dan had a customer so we walked around and looked at some stuff. Our taste somehow tends toward the \$3600 ranges not the \$450 ranges. If we were remodeling our kitchen at this moment and had \$15,000 burning a hole in our pocket we could have a nice bunch of appliances.

This kind of brings us back to our journal.

We went to Niagara on the Lake (A great tourist town) and got tickets to the Shaw Festival. We toddled around and visited with Dan. We got to see where Ian goes to school, and where Ruth works. We were here for Craig's birthday and Bonnie and I helped Craig and Ian with studying math for their exams. Dan drove us around a lot of the country side and we saw lots of orchards, and wineries. The Welland Canal is really something to see in operation. The Welland Canal is between Saint Catherine's and Niagara Falls so if a ship is passing through, the traffic bridge is up and traffic waits. We were coming up to lock 1 when one of the lake freighters was just coming out of the lock. We had a 15 minute wait anyway so we went over to the pull off area and watched them come out of the lock. It is really neat to see a Lake Freighter up close (within touching distance) moving nearly silently though the water.



Lake freighter bumping its way into the lock.

Lake freighters are custom built just to fit the locks and not leave much room at either end. Max room 27.5 feet draft, 730 feet long and 75.5 feet wide. By the time the bridge section makes it to where we were standing, which takes a little while at 1-2 knots, one of the people from the shipyard comes up to look at the ship. He tells us a little about it, this one is an ore carrier, double hulled (about 4 feet between hulls), the cargo portion of the ship looks to be five or six years old. The stern is much older. Apparently it is quite common to replace the cargo section of the ship several times during the life of the bridge of the ship. There is a "new" ship at the front of the shipyard next to lock 1 (The entrance to the Welland canal from the Lake Ontario end.). The ship is still not quite done and you can still see about half of the large propeller in the stern. It is enclosed, which surprised me. My guess is that it will probably reduce the propeller walk to make it easier to control in the locks.

If you look down Dan's street toward Hartzel Road you can see the stacks of the ships moving between lock 2 and lock 3. Lock 3 is set up for tourism and has a visitor center for people to watch the process of moving a ship through a lock. We were there in time to see a lake freighter untie from the staging area and move into a lock. It was INTERESTING. First they use the engine to kick out the stern and then they BUMP the nose of the ship up the edge of the wharf until the nose is aligned with the entrance and use their bow thrusters to stop the bow from hitting the opposite side of the lock and then move SLOWLY into the lock. Once there, they rig bow, stern, and two spring lines. (All Large steel cable on hydraulic winches. Once secured they close the doors and flood the lock.

Ian is working at a summer camp as a lifeguard and he had to get a TB test (negative) before he could work at the camp. Never knew you had to do that.

We went to the play last Friday for the 2 p.m. matinee (Heartbreak House). The Festival Theater was not full but had a pretty good audience. The theater is really nice and modern. The grounds are very pretty and they serve REALLY good deserts. We were good and didn't have any.

We did walk around Niagara on the Lake and found some nice kitch, and some really nice stuff too. We are thinking about changing this from the North American Odyssey to the North American Bakery Tour. We have been having GREAT visits to bakeries and Niagara on the Lake has a good one.



The next day we did a drive to Niagara Falls as far as the Butterfly Conservatory and the Botanical Gardens. Our first trip to a Butterfly Farm was actually in Saint Martin NA. It was a really interesting experience and if you have the chance to go you should. The one in the Caribbean was at the low end of facilities and served up with GREAT British humor courtesy of one of the owners. It was also first and foremost a farm. When you went in they had specific plants that the butterfly fed on and they were really growing them for harvest to be sent to conservatories. This is the other end of the supply chain. The Conservatory here does grow some of their species but buy most. It is worth the visit you do get a chance to see pretty, and interesting insects up close. Also you get

to see tropical plants as most of these butterflies are tropical species and the tropical plants are well worth the visit.

Plan on spending quite a bit of time at the Botanical Gardens they are really pretty. Bonnie really liked the annual gardens. Different seed companies provide seeds and the flower beds are maintained by park staff. Very pretty.

We drove down to Niagara Falls and were pretty amazed by the number of people along the road by the falls. The last time we went it was February a lot less people. It was getting late by the time we made it to the falls so we drove by the RV parking lot a LONG way from the falls. To get back to Dan's all we have to do is follow the Welland canal until we get to lock 3 and turn into Saint Catherine's. Getting lost is difficult Lake Ontario on the north side, Niagara river and the US on the east, Lake Erie on the South and the Welland Canal on the west. Roads are pretty much east-west or north-south, with exception of Route 55 the road from Saint Catherine's to Niagara on the lake (straight North-east).

Friday night Ruth and the kids headed to Church camp and Saturday night after Dan got off work we drove down to Camp Oneida (and it survived us staying on it's grounds for a whole night!!)

We didn't want to push it so we drove everybody home late Sunday afternoon. Dan was navigator and we followed the edge of Lake Erie back to the Niagara River and followed the Niagara River to Niagara Falls. We drove by the falls and down the roadway along the Niagara River, until we got to this bridge we had to go under. It said 3.3 meters 10 feet 9 inches. We are 10 feet 8 inches. What we didn't know was if this included the covers for the roof air vents or not. We proceeded very slowly to make sure that we would hear a clunk rather than feel the CLUNK under the bridge. No damage or scrapes although Bonnie did say she could see the pattern in the structures under the bridge through the translucent covers. I think we should stick to 3.5 and up. Sleep claimed all of the passengers except for Bonnie and Ian by the time we made it home. But by this time we made it all of the way around the peninsula from before Welland on Lake Erie, all of the Niagara River and along Lake Ontario to Saint Catherine's.

Before we go I would like to do a trip down the Welland canal and visit all of the locks. The bridge was up at lock 1 on one of our many trips across so we stopped to watch. A little sailboat (24-26 ft) and a US coast guard gate vessel came out. That answered the question about if small craft were allowed in the Welland Canal. I smiled and thought "OK someday I'll be doing that too." I don't know when we

will do it, but the count down is on.

Dan's manager is away this week so he is the stand in manager. That means they are also one short covering the store hours so he has to cover extra time. We went down to pick him up and the four of us went out for a night at Niagara Falls. Dan and Ruth came to Saint Catherine's after Dan left the forces so this place was a tourist attraction then and they still like to go to stuff in the area and play tourist. This place as lots of stuff to play tourist at. Clifton Hill is the amusement street. Lots of lights and fun houses. We went up the ride that is basically a rotating glass elevator. It takes you up high enough for you to see lots of lights and the Falls from the summit. We went to the Casino and I came out with double my money!!!

Ok so I only bet a dollar. But I doubled my money!!!!

Bonnie wouldn't let me get away with not telling you that I was up about \$20 at one point.

Apparently the number of falls jumpers has increased since the casino went in, listening to Dan and Ruth it sounds like a nightly occurrence, it isn't. They have multicolored lights that light up the falls at night. They go off at midnight, at least they did the night we were there.

Yesterday we went on our own version of a wine tour. We picked out a few wineries and started traveling. Inniskillin was our first and we spent lots of time there. They gave one of the best tours of the day as well. If you only could go to two wineries I would say try this one and the Hildebrand Winery. They gave us a 45 minute tour of the winery and fields as well as tasting a couple of wines. The wine tasting room is upstairs over the boutique. It is full of old props from the Shaw Festival. We had a great time looking at all of the old props. A lot of them had instructions on how it was to be made, what play it was in, or just fun notes made by the Shaw set builders. She got a great kick out of one of the sculptures. It was made out of styrofoam and since styrofoam doesn't handle moving around well it is painted with "piggy poo". "A disgusting mixture of Paint, plaster and glue". She has been talking about piggy poo ever since.

We hit four wineries in one day and were happy with that number. Niagara AirBus offers an 8 winery tour. (We met up with the same bus driver at 3 of the 4 we went to.) Eight would be too many for us. Anyway the Pilliteeri Winery was given by the nephew of the Sicilian uncle who owned the winery. It was a hilarious tour. One of the great one liners was about Italian wine "doesn't matter what it tastes like as long as it puts you to sleep after the second glass."

Three of the four wineries were all going grapes (the fourth was a fruit winery), all were doing the same thing, and every one did it slightly different. Growing grapes was the key to quality wine. Everybody has a different technique for growing the grapes. Some growers only want one trunk per plant, others think two give a better grape. Others make sure there are no other plants between the rows of grapes, others only till every other row and leave the weeds growing in the other row and plant the grapes closer together "grapes need competition to grow strong and healthy." Everyone was doing the same thing only just a little different. We had a great time visiting the wineries, we should hit the BC wine country just at harvest time. Looking forward to it (hic).

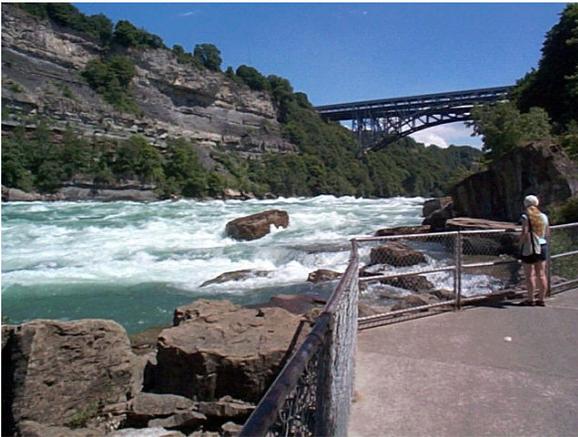
Subject: More Niagara falls stuff.

Date: Sat, 26 Jun 1999 14:29:12

Dan and Ruth are Stompers fans. The Stompers are the farm team of the Blue Jays and a pitcher named Carpenter was down from the big leagues. We got to see him pitch for four innings before a relief pitcher came out. After the game we toured a few used car lots. With Dan working in Niagara Falls, one vehicle is tough at times. We have been able to time picking Dan up in Niagara Falls with our tourist visits to help out a little.

Ruth's birthday was the 24th and I made a Peanut Butter Chocolate cheesecake for her birthday cake. We also decided to make up a stir fry for supper and it was good (mild but good)

We did a trip down the Welland Canal. This is an example of almost all possible things you can do to bridges that span a shipping lane. Bridges go straight up out of the way, the whole length lifts from one side, they split from the middle and come up. They have a tunnel under it, I don't remember if they have a swing bridge but I think they do. They have three double locks to allow ships to go both directions at once. Worth a day to explore by themselves. In all 11 road and rail bridges cross the canal. The lift bridge goes up 120 feet in the air. You can see that you are going to be stuck in traffic from a good distance away.



Great Gorge Adventure Boardwalk

We stopped by Niagara Falls to really walk by the falls and do another tourist thing day. We went to the RV parking lot (WAY out in the boondocks, they even have a sign that says "No you are not lost, follow the signs to the park and ride lot 1.5kms on left"). Parking is free with the cost of the people mover pass. We had a great time hopping on and off the People Mover buses. We got off the bus at the greenhouse and walked along to the Falls and got SOAKED by the spray blowing off the falls. What was really funny if you tried to stand behind one of the cement pillars for the fence to stop your front from getting wet your back got soaked. We were stopped and watched the Maid of the Mist tour boats take lots of tourists up close to the falls. They give the passengers clear blue thin plastic

raincoats to protect them. The people that take the tour under the falls get yellow ones. There were several people that had grocery bags full of plastic raincoats. By the time we were done watching the falls we were well and truly soaked back and front.

In the hot dry weather we were dry a short distance later. We had done the under the falls thing before and the Maid of the mist was not a big attraction for us either so we got on the People Mover and rode down to the gorge walkway. A 1000 ft long boardwalk along the edge of the rapids down a couple of miles from the waterfall. It is spectacular to see the raging river.

We then road the People Mover to the end of the line to see the Brock Memorial. This is a REAL tall tower that you can actually climb up inside of. But this is a government run thing that closes at 5. They wouldn't let us up the tower at 4:45. It is on the edge of the Niagara Escarpment and promises a great view. We stopped back a the flower clock by the Ontario Power plants where there was a half dozen old (Model T style) cars. They were all from Ohio and were on their way back from Toronto. NICE cars.

We road the bus back to pick up Millie and were back in time to see Ruth and Ian off to deliver Ian to the Summer camp where he is working this summer. We made plans to meet at Dan's work to go and

see the fireworks held at the falls on Friday nights. We picked up Dan and Ruth had called to say she wasn't going to make it and to go without her. We went up the Minolta Tower which is 300 feet off the ground overlooking the falls. There was already a big crowd waiting for the fireworks to start when we got there. All the prime spots looking at the Canadian Falls were taken. Bonnie had a spot where she fit in next to the wall and Dan and I looked over her shoulders and had a great view of the US falls and could see the Canadian falls if we kind of looked off to the right and stretched. Not the best view but pretty good. The lights that light up the falls were changing color and changed to all white. The first BOOM of fireworks revealed their position in front of the US falls!! We ended up with a great view.

We left Ontario and headed to visit my brother John in Chelmsford Massachusetts via northern New York, and northern Mass along the Mohawk Trail suggested to us by Lois and Herb.

Subject: Howe Caverns and Mass

Date: Wed, 30 Jun 1999 10:42:56

Our trip through NY was all "back" roads, the first day the highest speed limit we saw was 40 mph. Really pretty country. We stopped in the finger lakes region at Cayuga State park. We had drove through some very hot and humid weather and that night after we went to bed, several thunderstorms went through. It RAINED REAL HARD.



Calcite formation in Howe Caverns

We picked up speed the next day with a couple good stretches of 55 mph and stopped at the Howe Caverns. The Caverns are geological formations in the limestone, formed by water flows over several thousand years. The Caverns are over a hundred feet down into the rock. They were found by a farmer called Howe in the late 1800s when he noticed his cows standing around a bunch of bushes rather than getting shade from the trees. The bushes were venting cool air from the caverns. He followed the cool air until he got into the caverns. Over the years he had tours for 50 cents a day (back when 50 cents was a week's pay.) The tours lasted 8 hours and included a picnic lunch packed by Mrs. Howe. Howe made some bad investments and ended up losing the caverns. Eventually the mouth of the cavern was blown off by a cement company mining limestone, and they had to put in an elevator shaft.

They have built in a red brick walkway and electric lighting throughout. They also have a several boats that they use for tours. The underground river is only a couple of feet deep and but 42F so it is real cool. They take you down the river by pulling steel bars set into the rock except for one place where they pole for 50 or so feet. There were more people on our tour than would fit in one boat so we went in the second boat with a girl smaller than Bonnie as our guide. She urged everyone to sit still and not grab the rock. She balances quite well while the boat is moving along but when someone shoves us off a rock she can loose balance and fall in "did it twice and didn't like it either time." It was a worth the \$12 a head for the tour.

We stayed in Arrowhead RV park and Marina in Scotia NY. It is on the Erie Canal system and we saw

a couple of boats heading back up to Lake Erie. One was a 42 foot motor cruiser and the other was a 38 Island Packet with her mast down. They were both traveling and trying to make time. The motor cruiser stopped at the Marina overnight and had 3 guys on board they had been traveling for 13 hours and were stopping for a shower, sleep, and were gone by 7:30 the next morning. We had just filled up for 1.08 per gallon at the gas station in front of the Marina. Gas on the dock was \$1.48.

We came through route 2 (Mohawk Trail) in Mass and had a great time traveling along the windy roads. Millie only hesitated once in the hills on a 15 mph switchback. She has been working pretty well.

The end of route 2 is a real highway and we made it to John's by 3pm.

We should be pretty well settled here until July 6, then we are off to Hartford(Mark Twain's house) and then into Pennsylvania.