

Our Family Newsletter

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Reunion 2002

Family gathers at Lake Park

The day was a bit cloudy and threatening but no rain fell on the annual Hursey-Murphy family reunion held this year on August 17 at Lake Park, Coshocton.

Attendance at this year's affair was down just a tad, but the group made up in energy what it lacked in numbers. [See sidebars on page 4 for attendance list and next year's plans.]

The afternoon gathering at the Mary Margaret shelter included abundant sumptuous food, chatting with relatives and a short meeting during which attendees spoke a bit of their families and of the events of the year.

The only casualty was Gracie, who slipped and fell on the concrete, injuring her hip. Just to be on the safe side John took Gracie to the emergency room where they declared that she would be sore for a while but nothing was broken. John and Gracie returned to share the afternoon with the rest of the group. Hope you are feeling better now, Gracie.

Two new (prospective) family members this year were Julie's newly announced fiance, Lee Brooks, and his son Andy, from Wisconsin, just over the border from Julie, north of Chicago. Tim O'Neil also attended as a new family member for the first time, having just wed Esta in July.

The feast and visiting lasted well towards evening at which time many attendees gravitated to Bob's campsite in the campground.

As dusk fell the bonfire was lit



The entire group sits down to a sumptuous picnic dinner of chicken, beef, salads and Gracie's delicious pecan pie. BELOW: John, Gracie and Dick chat about old times.

and the group enjoyed a spirited campfire program of songs and jokes mostly by the younger set. Jamie Bell's rendition of "Singin' in the Rain" may have been the hit of the evening. Jamie's version owed nothing whatever to Gene Kelly.

Along with Bob, hardy campers included Julie, Lee and Andy, who pitched a large tent, and Esta and

Tim, who roughed it in the back of their truck. (Until, we discovered the next morning, the mosquitoes forced them to wimp out.) What's a few skeeters, guys?

On Sunday morning, those remaining, after a hearty Bob Evans breakfast, adjourned to the canoe livery where they prepared for the six-mile canoe trek down the Wahoning River from near Warsaw to Lake Park.

Those canoeing, by canoe, were: Karl, Jason and Joseph; Chris, Jamie and Timmy; Esta and Tim; Julie and Lee; Bob and Andy; Dave and Whitney and, last and least, Dick and Jim.

There were no mishaps on the enjoyable journey other than Julie and Lee getting stuck on a sandbar and straggling in fifteen minutes after everybody else. You sure it was just a sandbar, guys?

All in all a fun gathering. ■



What they did this summer . . .

[Family members spent the summer in many different ways. On this page, Dick and Minnie report on their month-long European adventure. On the opposite page is Julie's diary of a different kind of tour. Both are greatly abridged. Dick has promised us more reports for future OFN's. We hope to have the complete text of both journals, with more pictures, on Our Family Website sometime in the near future.

The tour d'Europe

WE wanted an open ended trip through Europe: buy one-way tickets and stay till we were exhausted or broke. But most travel agents thought we were weird, and no airline would do it. At least, not cheap. So we left on June 23, passports, Eurailpasses, and return tickets for July 24 in hand.

We wanted to see famous and historical sights: the Bayeux Tapestry and the D-Day beaches in Normandy, the Coliseum and the Sistine Chapel in Rome, Munich and maybe the Rhine valley in Germany, and the Hastings battle-field and Stonehenge in England. But the fun was in managing the daily nitty-gritty of food, shelter, and transportation.

We rode on every kind of train from the 200 mph French TGV to a local in Italy that stopped cold 10 minutes into our one-hour trip. (We had to leave the train and ride a bus the rest of the way. Never did find out why.) We took the night train from Paris to Rome, and again from Rome to Munich. Relatively cheap but less than comfortable.

None of our lodgings were as comfortable as the Motel 8 in Coshocton, and all cost more. But the B&Bs were quaint and the hotels much quirkier.



Our favorite picture: a cafe in Rome. Note the reflection of the Coliseum in the window.

In Rome we had a 30-inch diameter structural column at the foot of our bed, but also a view of the Coliseum from our window. In Dover, Matthew Arnold would have been right at home in the faded Victorian splendor of the Churchill Hotel and its balconies overlooking the beach.

People everywhere were great. Fellow passengers on trains and people on the street were universally kind and willing to answer questions. Most hotel clerks, waiters, etc. had some, often very good English. Otherwise, people seemed happy to try to communicate in pidgin.

The many battlefields, monuments and cathedrals that we saw were indeed impressive. We craned our necks in the Sistine Chapel and strolled through field where

the battle of Hastings took place in 1066. We walked on the once-bloody sands of Omaha beach and strolled past the mysterious monoliths of Stonehenge.

But the best memories are in the little things. A beer in a Munich beer garden. A few minutes in the close of Salisbury Cathedral on a sunny Sunday morning. Delight in the face of a French school girl when we compliment her on her English.

And the ragged and rain-starved grass of our front yard when we returned home. *Dick and Minnie*



William I built Battle Abbey on top of this hill to mark his victory in the Battle of Hastings, 1066.



On a sunny Sunday afternoon we rested a few minutes on a bench at Salisbury Cathedral.

The “Tour de Corn”

I thought “What a great way to force myself to get in shape, riding a bicycle!” Before I knew what was happening I was signed up and on my way to “Survivor on Bicycles” or, as sometimes called, “The Tour de Corn.”

Saturday, July 20: D minus one. We left Davenport, Iowa, on busses on our way to Sioux Center, the city where the ride begins. The bus ride was long and boring across rolling hills of farmland. About five hours later I came to a startling realization that I would be riding a bike all these miles back. I wondered what I was getting into, but was not yet worried, just a little nervous.

Sunday: The Long Journey Begins. Got up at 5 am to pack up camp and get on the road. It was going to be another hot day and we wanted to get as many miles under us as possible before it became unbearable. At 53 miles, this was to be the shortest day of our week. It was quite a sight seeing a never-ending stream of bikers heading up the road. At around 15,000 riders on any given day (some people chose to do 1, 2 or 3 day passes rather than the whole week), this is the largest bike ride of this kind anywhere in the world. Sioux Center residents sat out in their yard in their pajamas to send us off.

Monday: The long hard ride. Got up at 5:00 again and started off the day with a long, long hill that seemed to never end. Made it to the top and then Meg and I high-fived and almost ran into each other. Decided not to high-five anymore.

Travelling north against a tough headwind. Getting used to the biker terminology of the ride: “car up”, means there is a car coming ahead, “car back” is a car coming from behind, “Rumbles!” means there are rumbles strips on the road ahead (hit a few of those when I wasn’t paying attention). Bikers also have been known to call out “sun up” when the sun rises over the horizon for us early birds, and “Road kill” to warn others of, well, road kill, and various other things seen on the road.

Tuesday: Hey Julie, it’s your birthday! The day started off good. Had breakfast then hit the road, and took it easy. There aren’t too many hills today. Meg told all passers by that it was my birthday so I got lots of greetings. Heard someone else say it was their birthday the next day. So I’m not the only idiot that does this for fun on their birthday!

I got the nickname “Rain man” from Meg because I kept track of mileage on my bike computer and always knew how many miles we had gone and how many were left. Took it one step too far when trying to compute how

many miles we had to the next town. Me: “Ok let’s see, today’s mileage is 72 miles, we’ve gone 54, and there is 12 between the last town and the next town, so that means...” Meg: “OK, rain man, just give me the number”. Me: “It’s um, I don’t know.” Lost the rain man title.

Got into camp. A big sign with “Poor Man’s Shower” on it was hanging over a tarp-enclosed square in the middle of this mock-town. You had to masochistically pull a chain to get the icy water to come out of the showerhead and onto your head. We took turns using the water and screaming.

Wednesday: The Wall. Woke up and couldn’t move. Actually hoped I was paralyzed so I wouldn’t have to ride. Alas, was able to move my toes, so paralysis was out. Meg groaned from the other side of Bellagio (the tent), “Hey can we start a little later today?” I was happy to comply. We named the tent Bellagio after the hotel in Las Vegas, because it was a huge tent. Got a late start, and left around 8:00. We have to have our bags on the truck no later than 8:00, so we put the bags on and skipped breakfast. It was 9/11 remembrance day, and the ride

out of town was awesome. The town had lined both sides of the road with large American flags for about a half of a mile. It was beautiful.

Thursday: The Road to Perdition. Started out the day as miserable as I was the night before, despite a great pancake breakfast at the Elks, and, for once, good coffee. Let Meg and Kathy get ahead of me because I didn’t want to talk to anyone. Felt like I was on the road to hell, or in a bad Stephen King novel. Riding, riding, every day, riding until one by one we all dropped dead in our tracks. Thought the only thing that could make it worse was if there were snipers taking shots at the slow ones. That reminded me of one of the teams, The Donner Party, whose slogan is “We eat the slow”. I was sure to get eaten today. Compared this to “Survivor”, and thought that living on an island in the Caribbean would be cake after this challenge.

Every part of you hurts, not just your legs. Yes, my thighs are on fire, but my knees also feel like they are about to burst, my hands get numb from leaning on my handlebars, I can’t even tell you how much my rear end hurts, I’m hungry and thirsty all the time and most of us are also sunburned. But some part of you (the crazy part) keeps you going over that next hill, around that next corner, through the next town. You just keep on riding.

Friday: A blur of towns. Throw out the daily route maps. Ignore the weather forecast and the total feet of



Julie

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climb for the day. It doesn't matter anyway. By this late in the game, 60 miles feels like 80, and we just pedal rain or shine. We wake up. Ride. Go to sleep. Eat. Start all over again. Somewhere in another life I was a comfortable and I lived in a house. Now I just sit on a bike all day.

Saturday: I'm on My Way Home! Woke up to a thunderstorm and hoped it would stop before we had to leave. It didn't. Left town in a downpour with thunder and lightning all around us. Thought this was a really bad idea to be riding a metal bike in a lightning storm, but at least we weren't under trees. The rain wasn't bad at first, but soon became a torrential downpour. I was soaked through instantly. Water ran into my eyes, off of my nose and down my back. My shoes squished with each stroke of the pedal. I just kept my head down and tried to think of ways it could be worse. That didn't keep me entertained for very long, as I had trouble thinking of any way this could be worse. I don't why, but RAGBRAI makes us do things we would never think of doing under normal circumstances. Ride in a thunder and lightning storm? Are you nuts? Torrential downpour? Are you crazy? Apparently, there are thousands of us who are.

Another day. Hills. Tacks strewn in the road. More hills. Until, finally, blessedly: NO MORE HILLS.

After a final downhill glide. I saw a glimpse of what I believed to be water between the trees ahead. Is it, could it be the Mississippi? YES! Although I was ready to throw

my bike into the river, instead I rode to the finish and watched the traditional front tire dipping in the river with a lump in my throat. I made it. What a relief, a joy, a feeling of accomplishment. I can't describe all the emotions going through me as I stood by the river. It was a mind over body experience. I think my body had given up on Thursday, but my mind kept it going for two more days. Every bit of inner strength I had found within me to finish vanished by that river and I felt weak and drained, almost unable to walk to the staging point for the busses. Within an hour, we caught a bus back to Davenport, and HOME.

Looking back on the trip, I am proud that I did it. I feel like I survived one of the toughest physical challenges a person can go through. It's a great feeling of accomplishment. Although I don't think I'll attempt it again next year.

Julie

REUNION ATTENDANCE

A total of 34 people attended the 2002 reunion. They were: John and Gracie Murphy; Dick and Minnie Hursey; Karl and Melodee Hursey, with Jason and Joseph; Andrea and Bob Segetti; Bob Hursey; Geri and Chris Bell, with Maggie, Katie, Jamie and foster children Timmie, Jenny and Mia; David Hursey with Whitney; Celia Babcock with Ashley; Carla and Sean O'Neil with James and Connor; Esta and Tim O'Neil, Julie Evanko and Lee Brooks with Andy; Jim and Margie Hursey.

NEXT YEAR'S REUNION PLANS

The first order of business was to decide on next year's gathering. There was sentiment to move the affair around and it was decided to heed a previous invitation from Marilyn to have it in Clyde, Ohio. It will be on the third Saturday of August, 2003, so mark your calendars now. Watch for more details as plans are developed. We will see you up there next year, Marilyn.

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Our Family Newsletter is published irregularly by Bob and Jim whenever we have enough material. Send us your contributions. E-mail preferred but not necessary. Send address changes to Andrea.

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