

Dear Friends & Family, July 24, 2005

Greetings from Redding, California. Last time you heard from us, we were in Yakima, Washington, headed for Redmond, Oregon, and the Great North American RV Rally. After a one night stay in the Madras, Oregon, Elks Lodge parking lot, we finally arrived at the Rally. We were not sure whether we would love or hate the rally. Well, we didn't have to make that decision because we loved it AND hated it. First of all, the rally is unbelievably large with 5,300 RVs spread out over nine parking areas. Ours was 4.5 miles from the fairgrounds in a dusty field with no hookups and some kind of grain stubble everywhere. Yep, nothing like a week of dry camping in a hot, dusty field with a constant threat of a fire. They had school buses running every 15 minutes back and forth from each satellite parking lot to the fairgrounds, but there weren't nearly enough buses at the peak hours. There were two shows of big name entertainment every night, but it was a real problem when 7,500 people came out of the auditorium and wanted to hop on a dozen school buses. It didn't take us long to give up public transportation and ride our motorcycle back and forth. Can you imagine more than 13,000 visitors at the rally? And that doesn't count the staff and building after building full of commercial vendors.

But, if you are looking for products, solutions, or knowledge, this was the place to be. All the players were there and they brought their techs with them. We were having a problem with our large awning and the company quickly sent out a tech who worked on it for free for a couple of hours. We wanted specific suggestions about putting up an Internet satellite dish and, pow, a really knowledgeable gentleman was out to our coach, etc., etc. Anything you wanted looked at could be taken care of at the show and most of it was free and at your parking area. Need new tires? Want your oil changed? It was all available. We bought a trick new folding ladder, but couldn't carry it on the motorcycle so the vendor delivered it to our coach after hours.

You could talk to knowledgeable people about almost anything. Generally, the prices at the show were below retail and Oregon has no sales tax so the public was buying like crazy. We became friends with a couple parked next to us. They had a lovely older 38' single slide motorhome and on a whim, traded it for a 40' four slide model. They were not rich, but they parted with \$250,000 in a heartbeat as they were caught up in the fever of the moment. Well, that was the flavor of the Great North American RV Rally. We are glad we went, but we are not so sure we would do it again.

There were also unexpected little treats. Have you ever wanted to ride a Segway? Chuck sure has and did. What a novel experience. It's not like any other form of locomotion on the planet. Previous experience is of no help and yet, it is pretty easy to learn. Donna tried it and liked it, and Chuck was so enthralled that he kept going back and eventually talked his way into three rides. (See picture below.)



The Segway vendor had lots of demo units, but the one above is the new off-road model with bigger wheels, off-road tires, and a bigger battery. The only downside to this fun toy is the price. \$5,000.

That's it for the rally. We left one day early and headed down Highway 97 toward Redding. One night in Chiloquin, Oregon, and the next night with friends in Cottonwood, California, and then into Redding.

Have you ever lived in an RV in Redding in the summer? It's perfect for mad dogs and Englishmen. Our first day was 114 degrees, the next was 112, the next 109, and now it seems to have settled down to a miserable 106 degrees. In spite of the heat, we expect to be here for several weeks trying to sell more of our stuff that is stored in Redding storage units. We are running ads in the Nickel, Redding Record Searchlight, and Ebay. Both of our air conditioners are running 18 hours a day.

Our next fantasy is to head for the Coast, luxuriate in the cool fog, and eat our weight in crab.

Until next time, home is where you park it.

Chuck & Donna

