

NEWS DRIFTS



July 2023
Volume 21, Issue #1

Catch-up & Updates

OK, we are a bit behind. A double issue to cover May in Didsbury and the 2023 Caravan. Our early spring trip to Utah in the motorhome (through snow, sleet, and then sunshine), and then another to Vancouver Island with the truck and trailer, followed by hosting the Didsbury rally made for a busy few months. Combine all that with Anne's fractured metatarsal in her foot, and the aircast, it just mixed things up a bit. Well that's the excuse — it's not that we are getting older and slower ...



We have unfortunately lost a number of members over the last while. The Herberts, Bostocks, Lucases, Newmans, Almonds and Wong have all retired from RVing and the group. So sad to see them go as they were all active members and will be missed. We wish them all well.

That brings up the perennial request. Invite some friends to come join our group. We always have a fun time, are welcoming to all RV types, and many good friendships are made. Think about it and promote the group to your neighbours in the campground when you're out and about.

The July rally in Three Hills hosted by the Nels has 10 coaches signed up including 2 guests, so that will be a fun and busy event. Following that in August is the salmon feast at RV There Yet? hosted by Kellams and Frasers, with salmon provided by Bob Bishop (fresh caught by his sister and air freighted).

Also in August is the FMCA 107th Annual Convention in Gillette Wyoming. Anne and I will be attending and will relate the experience the next time we get together. They are planning for 1,000 coaches (!!), and have quite the line up of interesting seminars and entertainment.

Enough from me and Anne ... we look forward to seeing you all at one or more events this season. Drive safe and keep the shiny side up, and rubber side on the road.

Remember, if you have some interesting RV stories, send them to us and we will include them in a future issue ... travels good and bad, things to see, and the occasional bad RV related joke are all welcome!



In This Issue

- 1 Catch-up & Updates
- 2 May Rally @ Didsbury
- 3 Caravan 2023 !!
- 4 to 7 Caravan 2023 !! cont'd
- 8 Upcoming 2023 Events Caravan 2023 !! cont'd

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General Info

Southern Alberta Drifters is a registered chapter of the Family Motor Coach Association. Membership is open to any FMCA member in good standing.

All cheques, registration, and sign-up forms, should be sent by e-transfer to southernalbertadrifters@gmail.com or mail to our Treasurer:

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May Rally @ Rosebud Valley Campground, Didsbury

Day 1 at Didsbury started with some confusion. The sites we had been assigned were still partly occupied by a broken-down unit that could not be moved. And, the office did not open officially until 5:00pm or so (casual there!). But it lucked out that when Hosts Stephen and Anne arrived, the operator happened to be home from her day job for lunch, so an interim plan was developed that would be finalized when she returned later in the afternoon. The end result was a better solution in many ways, so all's well that ends well. There were 4 coaches: Picks, Nels, Mcleods (C & C) and Burgess.

Once everyone was set up and the tall tales of winter on a roll, we broke for dinner. Pizza night! The local shop provided an excellent tasty spread, and everyone was full.



Friday morning breakfast, by request, was Anne's 'famous' Baked French Toast. Unfortunately we all had a lot, so there was only a small bit of leftovers for Gerrit to take back to his coach! Then it was off on a road trip to the Custom Woolen Mills. We broke into 2 groups for the tour, and learned lots about processing wool on machines that were made before any of us were born. The newest machine dates from the 1920s !! A few items from the shop were purchased, then we all got to meet the local llama and consorts before heading back to the campground. Back at the camp we had a cameo appearance by Ray and Rosemary Herbert. We all then displayed our culinary expertise, and as usual the pot luck spread was both tasty and filling with lots to choose from. Then some time around the fire before the Herberts headed home and we retired to our coaches.



Saturday breakfast was handled by Gerrit on Stephen's Blackstone griddle. The club's big griddle is superior, but as we didn't have the trailer and we only had 4 coaches, this unit served very well. So well that Gerrit decided to purchase one! It was a camp day with some short town trips to shop, a round of Card Bingo and relaxing. In the afternoon, we had a cameo appearance by Ron and Lane Kellam, who were talked into joining us for the burger bash dinner. Again the lack of the big BBQ in the trailer ... cooking up 16 or so burgers on Stephen's small unit took some time and frustration, but while dinner was late, it was very tasty and there were few leftovers.

May Rally @ Rosebud Valley Campground, Didsbury

... cont'd from pg 2



Sunday morning came far too soon for farewells from this first of the year rally. A continental breakfast of sweet rolls, fruit and yogurt closed out the culinary portion of the event.

The four coaches rolled out, stopped in town to dump, and off home to prepare for the next event ... the 2023 Caravan!



Caravan 2023 !! ... June 16th to 27th

Well wasn't that a party, oops Caravan! Smoke, rain, floods, evacuations, Irish Cream, sunshine, mechanical issues, camp fires and glow pits ... and a whole lot of good food and good times! The Nels, McLeods, Gonzis, Picks and Bishop know how to have fun. Thanks to Carr for all his work to arrange this event.

Day 1 was in Rocky Mountain House at the Black Sheep Camp. It was a lovely afternoon, and no smoke! After all the reports of smoky conditions in this as well as so many other areas, we were a little concerned how it would be. After Happy Hour and the organizational meeting, we broke for supper 'on our own', then after a bit of wood chopping had a nice fire to sit around, and chat.



Day 2 was planned to take in a tour of the Historic Fort, but with the rain and the majority of the place being outside, that was cancelled. So participants headed into town to shop and sightsee. The Farmers Market also figured into a few of our stops. It was a very rainy day overall. We had aligned the Nels' and Picks' coaches nose to tail, so we put both awnings out creating a protected nook for meals and games. That afternoon it was Card Bingo in the alcove between the two coaches. It started out in the sunshine, needing the awning and an umbrella for shade. Then the storm rolled in! The cards got a bit wet as we sorted out the awning angles, and luckily it was not windy. Dinner that night was 'Potluck #1' and as always, it was a great success, with wonderful contributions from everyone. The weather even co-operated and it quit raining, so we were able to enjoy a nice fire afterwards.



Caravan 2023 !! ... June 16th to 27th

.... cont'd from pg 3



Day 3 ... well it was a cool and rainy night that would not let up, so after the very wet morning coffee gathering, plans for the day were left loose and on our own. Anne and I drove out to the Fort, but did not go in, then checked out the adjacent campground that is convenient to visit the Fort, but sadly not really conducive for larger units. It was "Dinner Out" night and other than Picks (dogs issue), all headed out for a meal at a local restaurant ... Father's Day so reservations were made previously. Unfortunately meal reviews were muted. The evening gathering was hosted indoors at Picks', due to the rain and cold. 10 bodies inside a 36 foot coach is cozy and friendly! As per the saying re RVs ... 6 for drinks, 4 for dinner, sleeps 2.



Day 4 ... a travel day. After the morning coffee session, the breakdown began and Carr and Carol as Wagonmaster hit the road early to make sure all was set at the next campground, Willey West Campground near Drayton Valley. We set up in the group area in the rain, and soon gathered in the cook house. A sheet of plastic taped to the wall, closing off the window from the wind, and Gerrit's glow pit (ok, after a few whacks on the propane tank, it classified as a fire pit) made the space nice and cozy. The campground operator dropped in with a bottle of Irish Cream to welcome us! It was dry camping so a few generators ran to cook up dinner and run furnaces off and on. Back to the cozy cook shack after dinner for treats brought by Anna to enjoy around the firepit.

Looking back when leaving .. our campsites were IN the trees!



That's one big hill going down to the campground!



Caravan 2023 !! ... June 16th to 27th

.... cont'd from pg 4



Day 5 started with rain. Following the morning coffee session, warmed up by the firepit and the Irish Cream in our coffee (and thanks for the daily supply of biscotti Anna! ... and for the 'doggy bag' for the road!), some trips to town were required. For us, our wine supply had dwindled, and we wanted to tour the town. For the Nels, they needed a ladder to get into the coach as the steps refused to come out! We had a round of Card Bingo in the afternoon, this time a bit drier in the cookhouse, then the set up for a 'Potluck Dinner #2'. About then the park operator came by and advised we should relocate. The river had been rising all day and in past years the group area had flooded. Not that it would for sure this year, but better to move now in daylight, than at 2:00 am in the dark with wet feet! We moved to campsites nearby the upper cookhouse, and soon had the glow pit going and tables set for the Potluck Dinner. All the new sites had power (except for the Picks) so a step-up in accommodation, in both elevation and style. It cleared up a bit for the evening, and the talks around the fire went on for a time while we digested the great spread that had been laid out.



Evacuated to the campsites and the 'new' cook house



Day 6 was a moving day. We checked out the group site down by the river, and while the water had risen higher overnight, it was still far from flooding the area. We could have stayed put, but better safe than sorry! And then we had power too ! The McLeods headed out early as always, to check us all in at Deep Creek Campground in Sangudo. As tail gunners we arrived last (we did a poor job as for most of the way Gonzis were behind us, but I did not recognize the front view of their coach!). But they knew Sangudo better than us, so they managed to get ahead of us in town, so we did then arrive last. I went to check in and found Carr sitting in the sunshine with an ice-cream cone. Maybe the weather is changing!? We set up the row of rigs with an empty spot beside the Mcleods for group gatherings (we had 6 sites booked and as no refund, we kept the spot). The river here was definitely in flood mode as well. Happy Hour was a Wine Tasting and Cheese event, which was a lot of fun. Bob and Elsabé took on the roles of bartender and server. There were 4 red wines and 1 white, and we tried them all one at a time, and rated them. Dinner, a fire, then bed for all of us after a 'long' 100km drive ...

Where we camped ...



Caravan 2023 !! ... June 16th to 27th

.... cont'd from pg 5



The judges tallying the scores ...

Day 7 - watch the river rise! and listen to all the radio alerts about the many evacuations in nearby areas. After the coffee group, we headed out to Mayerthorpe and the Fallen Four Memorial and a local hardware store for Gerrit as the steps were still an issue. The afternoon was filled with Ladder Golf and repairs to Gerrit's steps. It was supposed to be another night out for dinner in town but after the less than stellar experience the previous time, plans changed. The Picks picked up some choice steaks at the local butcher, and some bison sausages. With Bob Bishop's big grill, pasta salad (Elsabé), Caesar salad (Anne), baked beans (Anna), there was quite the spread.



Flooding everywhere !

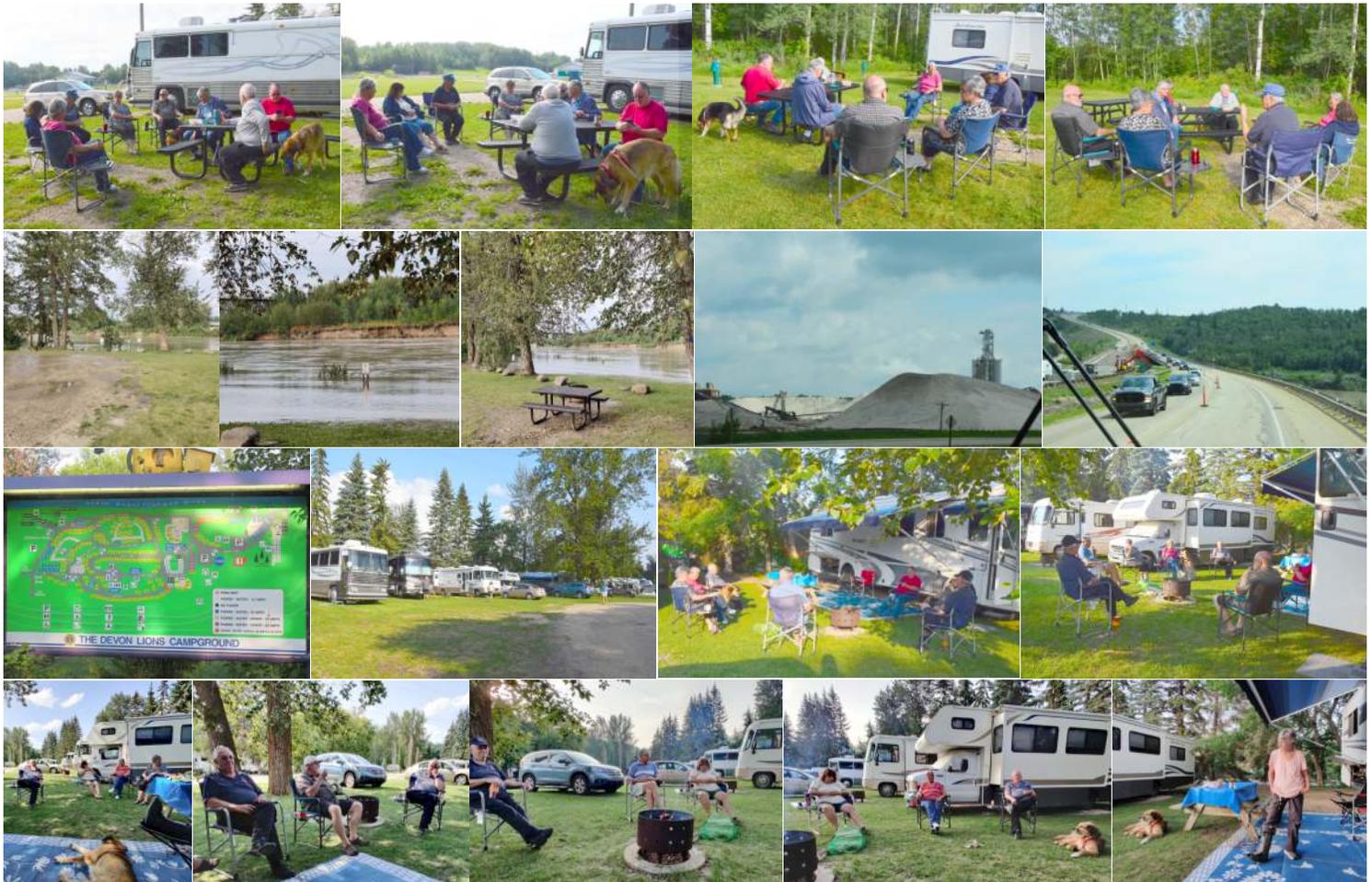


Caravan 2023 !! ... June 16th to 27th

... cont'd from pg 6



Day 8 ... a moving day but no rush, check-in isn't until 2pm and we didn't have far to go. Breakfast was at Picks' — bring your ingredients and cook on the Blackstone griddle, with leftover steak on the side for steak and eggs if wanted. A second round of repairs to Nels' steps (a small short circuit and smoke from try-one) and we were soon on the road for the Lions Campground in Devon, the last campground in the loop. An evening fire there after dinner on our own, and then off to coaches for the evening.



Day 9 ... a nice day in the Devon area visiting the Botanical Gardens, the nature park walk, the Energy Museum and such. After a pleasant day exploring, or in some cases, hanging/relaxing in camp, we got together for Happy Hour and exchanged 'reports' of our day's activities. The walks, museums etc all sounded very interesting. It was Pizza Night so the obligatory 2 Hawaiian pizzas (I was over-ruled on the suggestion of 1 of those ... even one was too many IMO!) and 2 other proper pizzas ordered ... a great last night feast was had. The evening wrapped up around the fire discussing the Caravan, and ideas for another in 2024. More on this later.

Day 10 ... departure. Everyone had places to go, people to see ... as the morning went on, one after another, everyone left ... other than Stephen and Anne who were staying over another night so they could go visit their daughter and son-in-law in Edmonton.

2023 Events

July 13 - 16

'Summer Heat'
Three Hills Campground
 • power & water & dump

*Organizers / Planners:
 Nels & C McLeods*

August 10 - 13

'Salmon Fest'
RV There Yet? Campground, Blackfalds
 • power & water & dump

*Organizers / Hosts:
 Kellams & Frasers*

September 14 - 17

'Another Year in the Books'
Centennial Park Campground, Claresholm
 • power & water & dump station
 • annual kite event, putt/putt golf, horseshoes, ladder golf
 • AGM, Elections for President & Treasurer
 • discussion/planning for 2024

*Organizers / Hosts:
 Kellams & R McLeods*

Caravan 2023 !! ... June 16th to 27th

... cont'd from pg 7



In spite of — or because of ? — the rain, the floods and all, it was a great trip! Lots of fireside chats, happy hours, good food, and games. This second caravan proved that it is a great event to add into the annual schedule.

See you on The Caravan in 2024!!

Thanks Anna for the photo contributions ! They helped round out the bits we missed !