

Earl's Diary - Thursday - May 30, 2013

Dear Loyal Readers;

This morning we left Sioux Falls at 7:30 to give us time to stop at The Corn



Palace in Mitchell, South Dakota. This was to be a mid-way stop on our way to Wall, SD. We wanted to give enough time to explore this "so called Corn Palace". With much trepidation, and excitement at not knowing what to expect, we entered

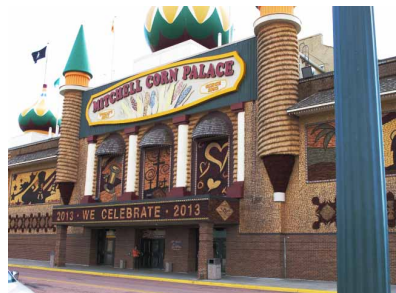


the building. The first sight at the outside of the building gave a hint of what was to come.

To quote their own brochure: "The World's Only Corn Palace stands as a majestic, uniquely American, folk art icon on the rolling prairies of South Dakota.



Mitchell's first Corn Palace was built in 1892, when the city of Mitchell was just 12 years old. Early settlers displayed their agricultural bounty on the building's exterior to prove the fertility of the soil and to attract immigrant farmers to settle here. Each fall a festival was planned to celebrate agriculture and the productivity of the people.



To this day, over 100 years later, the tradition of the Corn Palace and the Corn Palace Festival continues in Mitchell.

Each year a new decorating theme is chosen and the outside of the Corn Palace is stripped and redecorated with new corn and grains. Over the summer, 3000 bushels of rye, oat heads and sour dock are tied in bundles and attached. When the crop is ready, roughly 275 thousand ears of corn are sawed in half lengthwise and nailed to the building following patterns created by local artists.



The Corn Palace that now sits on Main Street is actually the third Corn Palace in Mitchell, but its purpose hasn't changed. It is a folk art wonder that attracts thousands of visitors each year and it is the center of community activity, hosting basketball games, stage shows, trade shows and a variety of other activities. The Corn Palace has evolved into a one-of-a-kind, multi-use facility with a charm and heritage unlike any other."





Well, that's the story. It's kind of CORNY, but that's what it's all about. You might say The Corn Palace is a Shameless SELF PROMOTING enterprise. It certainly attracts thousands of people to Mitchell each year. In the photos you will notice a gift shop located on the floor of the auditorium. Lots of people with their Impulse Buying Filter disengaged were spending lots of money. I guess that's one way of helping pay for all of this. I wonder how much of the city budget also helps pay the bills.



After about an hour, we headed on down I-90 for our stop for the night at a small town called Wall. With much more trepidation and not knowing what to expect we were searching for the Wall Drug Store. We had seen advertising signs for the past 100+ miles enticing us to be sure to see this "wonder of the world". Well, we arrived in plenty of time to browse through the place.



OK,

What's this Wall Drug Store all about? In my opinion it's a BIG tourist trap - but a BIG money maker with up to 20,000 people a day visiting the place on a hot summer day. My Impulse Buying Filter was securely in place as I wondered through the many mini-shops in this block long emporium. I didn't take any photos during this stop. Instead, I found a few on the internet that will give the flavor of the place. There is a little bit of everything at Wall Drug. They even have a drug section and prescriptions may be filled.

Exactly what can you find here? Sioux pottery, Black Hills gold, Western wear, boots, Western art, glassware, postcards, camping supplies, rocks, and all kinds of souvenirs. Visitors can view thousands of historical photographs and artifacts of the area, and enjoy the collection of Western paintings. Oh yes, there's also the food restaurant that serves buffalo burgers and homemade doughnuts. There is also an area to entertain the kids. They can plan to see the giant, roaring T.Rex, and the 6 foot jackalope. There is also a shooting gallery arcade, the Back Yard Mine, and the backyard waterpark. HEY! THIS SOUNDS LIKE AN AMUZEMENT PARK TO ME!



After a brief visit to Wall Drug we drove three blocks to our RV Park for the night. It was anything but fancy, but we were only going to stay there one night.

Just after we got our rigs set up for the night, it began to rain, AGAIN! And wind AGAIN! We were forced to eat dinner inside Alan and Michele's "White House" with the forces of nature howling all around us. I retired to my Peanut to work on diary pages. We had such lousy internet service that I couldn't even get on.

I went to bed early - with rain and wind still showing itself. In fact, it rained and blew all night long! In the morning it had stopped raining but the wind was blowing something fierce. The drive to Rapid City (a distance of 50 miles) was against a strong head wind. My next diary pages will tell what we did at Mount Rushmore.

Thanks for coming along with me, again. Bye for now
- - Earl



How did this all start? It's another Shameless Self Promoting enterprise! It was in December 1931 that Dorothy and Ted Husted bought the only drugstore in Wall. By the summer of 1936, the business had not grown much. On a hot day in July, Dorothy came up with a startling idea. She proposed that they put up a sign on the road telling people to come in for *free* ice water. The rest is history and the business just kept on growing! Another World Famous attraction? A National Treasure? Perhaps. We started seeing advertising signs clear back in Sioux Falls - and that was 300 miles back.

