

Earl's Diary - Monday - May 20, 2013

Dear Loyal Readers;

Here we are all packed, hitched and ready to leave Branson, MO. Our trip to St. Louis was uneventful. We stopped a couple times to stretch and once to eat lunch. We arrived at the Red Barn RV Park, just outside St. Louis - on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River (in a town called Edwardsville). It's a nice little park with gravel drives and pads AND green grass.

I might say the whole day was uneventful, but THAT night it was anything but uneventful. The day remained cloudy and became very windy in the evening. Finally about 7:00 a lightning show started all around us. At 10:30 we had a deluge of water falling from the sky! It not only rained VERY HARD for over any hour, but lightning blazed and thunder roared for the first half of the night. We heard the next morning that over an inch and a half had fallen during the night! No wonder they don't need to water lawns.



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Dear Loyal Readers;

This morning the day was bright and sunny. As we looked around, we saw water puddles around us. Fortunately the RV park has lots of gravel drives, and the water seems to drain off quickly into the field next door. What a muddy mess it was!

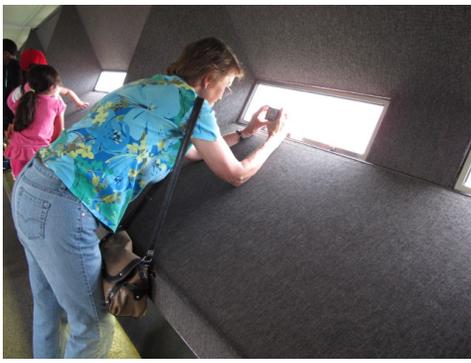
Our plans for the day included the famous Gateway Arch, and a visit to Anheuser-Busch brewery. Since it is about 20 miles into town we decided to make a full day of the visit. I didn't really know what to expect when I saw the Arch, and was surprised to see that it sits in one well landscaped park. My pre-visit expectations were: Did it span the Mississippi River? Did it cross over something? I really didn't know what to expect. Although it only sits in one park, it still is most impressive.



The arch sits in the middle of a beautifully landscaped park with lots of large shade trees and green grass. After a walk in the park we descended under the arch to catch our ride to the top. WOW! Those funny little trams are certainly interesting. There are 8 little individual pods that hold five people. These individual pods are connected together like a little train. It takes 4 minutes to reach the top. From the top, on a clear day it is reported that a person can see off in the distance for 20 miles.

Just what can you see? Let me show you:





Here's probably everything you didn't want to know about the arch. The Gateway Arch (as it is called) was built between 1963 and 1965. It is a sandwich make of stainless steel on the outside, carbon steel on the inside, and concrete in the middle. The arch itself is 630 feet tall.

The Museum of Westward Expansion is beneath the Arch and completely underground. It charts the history of the American West from the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 to the closing of the frontier in the 1890's. Thomas Jefferson is given recognition through the naming of the memorial - Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. Exhibits show artifacts used by farmers, buffalo hunters, miners, cowboys, and others who played a role in westward expansion. Of course, our poor treatment of Native Americans is also on display. (Earl's Editorial: I'm certainly glad they are getting even with the white man by constructing all their many casinos throughout the land! Oh Ya! Take that white man!)

After visiting the Arch, we traveled 2 1/2 miles to the south to take a tour of the annhueser-Busch brewery. We, along with about 40 other people were herded from one point to another in the one hour, 10 minute tour. We saw a lot of the plant but very little of any production. I know the tour guides tried to make it interesting, but, they talked too fast and tried to get the group through in the time allotted. They were well informed and we viewed the important parts of making beer. (That's just my opinion. A-B did a wonderful job of preparing the plant for multitudes of touring visitors.)





When we went to the stables we saw two horses hiding behind stable stanchions. This was NOT a good photo OP. Here is one of the wagons they used to pull in the old days. Also here is one of the harnesses. We did learn that the Clydesdales to be considered for a "hitch" must be at least 4 years old, have 4 white feet, a white blaze on the forehead, black mane and tale, and weigh between 2000 and 2500 pounds. More horses could be observed by traveling to the farm about 20 minutes south of the brewery. We did not take that opportunity.



The big beautiful brick buildings were well maintained and the grounds well taken care of and manicured.

A quick view inside the 6 story packaging department.

Oh yes, we did get to sample 2 beers at the conclusion of the tour. Since I'm not a beer drinker, I did ask for a Bud Light. On a whim, I also tried one called Apple Crisp. It had a definite apple cider flavor.



After our day's adventures, we were well pooped and ready for lunch, or early dinner. We stopped at Red Robin. The burgers were just OK - but not an exciting dining experience. We did stop at McD's to do some internet work. The internet at our RV park is non-existent since last night's light show.

It was an interesting, educational day. Tomorrow we pack up and head for Hannibal, MO to see what we shall see. We will be there two nights.

That's about it for this day. Thanks for coming along with me. Bye for now - - Earl