

## **Branson Memories 2001**

*Ann & Tom Post*

Hello All,

After sleep, sleep, and more sleep, I am beginning to feel almost human again. So, here goes my "book" of Branson Memories:

Tom and I left home at 4:30 AM on Thursday, June 7, and arrived at the Lawrence Welk Resort (LWR) at 4:30 that afternoon.

The group of early arrivals went to Golden Corral for supper. It was hilarious to watch Bob Eckert take charge and get the tables moved around for our group---the waitresses helped, but weren't sure at that point what kind of a nutty group they had allowed through their front door. LOL I believe there were 12 of us—Kathy & Charlie Greulich, Tommy & Judy Conrad, Phil & Bob Eckert, Everett & Betty Jensen, Joy & Harold Viaille, & Tom & and me.

Although this shindig didn't officially start until Fri. morning, the hospitality room was abuzz with activity after we returned from eating Thursday night. While Tom set up the table for registration & hooked up all his computer "stuff", Kathy set up the table with all of the pamphlets, coupon booklets, other Branson info that Linda DeRyke provided for us (thank you, Linda), & PPS info that Kathy had collected for us.

Meanwhile, I started "stuffing" the goodie bags for everyone. To go into the bags: Kathy and Charlie provided each polio survivor with a point of delicious barbecue sauce made by a local woman, & homemade jelly/jam (made by Kathy & Charlie) for each supporters goodie bag. I mad bookmarks with this year's logo on them and Tom laminated them(2 for each), an agenda (schedule) went into each bag, 2 pencils for each (personalized with "Branson 2001 Post Polio Reunion"), 2 fun notepads for each, a clothespin magnet for each that we had made, a couple of wrapped peppermint candies, spiced tea that Tom and I made for each survivor, and finally pinned a nametag on each sack. After Kathy got through setting up her table, she helped me finish my "job". We put the goodie bags by the registration table to give as everyone registered and paid their money.

If my memory is correct, before we all gave up and went to bed, two of the most childish—no make that the most child-LIKE ones had a power chair race down the hall and made the first Bransongoers' fender-bender. For those who didn't witness the event, the two racers were hmmm, I t hink, Millie and Tommy?!

On Friday, the hospitality room gradually filled with those of us who had a good night's sleep at the LWR and those just arriving. You can't imagine the

feelings, seeing those from the last 2 years and meeting the first -timers. There is such an instant friendship, bonding that takes place. No strangers!! Every year it feels as though we have all known each other all our lives.

Although they had planned to take a trip for their 30th wedding anniversary during this time, John and Linda Booth surprised us by popping in to spend Friday with the group. What a wonderful surprise. Kathy brought in all the goodies for sandwiches—she also brought those 'licious cookies. We visited, ate lunch, and spent the afternoon visiting (either in the hospitality room, lobby, or poolside), resting, sightseeing and/or shopping. We brought in fried chicken for supper. You bet—our group didn't go away hungry. LOL

The representative was there with the Redman Stand -up Power Chair for demonstrations throughout Friday and Saturday. It is an awesome chair!! (Thank you, Kathy, for arranging that).

On Saturday afternoon, Jim Faulkenberry, Disability Examiner and fellow PPSer, shared SSA Disability information with us in the Canteen. He made himself available through Sunday for those of us needing "private" sessions, guidance, etc. He was very, very helpful.

Following that, we all attended a sit-down meal in the Canteen (LWR restaurant). Everyone was here by that time ---44 for the meal, 48 total at one time or another during the weekend. There were even door prizes given at the end of the meal. Tommy and Judy donated the cutest stuffed dragon, 2 of Judy's beautiful cross stitch pictures, and a bag of her handmade scrubbies. They put everyone's name in a hat for the drawing. Although it was all out in the open and above-board, we thought it was a REALLY big coincidence that 3 of the 4 prizes went to Jim S., Millie, and Carol -Ann!! LOL

As we left the Canteen, we gathered out on the lawn for a group pic. I'm not sure which group was bigger---the posers or the camera clickers. LOL Then, our entertainment for the evening, José Gonzales (close friend of Jerry, "the humble one") performed for us in the lobby. He's adorable, cute as can be, and hilarious, too. Top-notch entertainment in my book!!! I really hope that Jerry can talk him into coming with them again next year and share his talent with us.

After "show time", we survivors had our meeting in the lobby, while the supporters met in the hospitality room. It was a great time of sharing, venting, and even more bonding. I think the ones in both meetings came away with some very helpful information.

Sunday was a pretty busy day for most of the group. Some of us caravanned to the Duck Ride at 10. Last year, 35 of us had a duck to ourselves. This year, however, our group was smaller, so most of our group was in the front. The rest of the duck was filled with individuals. It was fun having kids on the ride---the driver let them each drive the duck while we were on the water .

The kids got such a kick out of that. By the way, Tom got a good video shot of the back row people when we hit the water ---totally dripping!!

From 1 - 3, Millie gave us "do's and don'ts of computer etiquette (netiquette) and shared web page information. After that, Jim Sutton had virus protection and Microsoft shortcuts for us. We came away with our brains crammed full of great computer help!!

Our picnic late Sunday was held at Stockstill Park. Gleason Grimes and Jack Fenner were our chief chefs for the picnic. Great job, guys. Oh, and Pat and Toni did a wonderful job of supervising!! LOL The burgers were delicious!! We also had baked beans and Nacho cheese dip and chips. Then, for dessert, there was the "Branson Cake"—decorated beautifully!! Finally, we pigged out on S'mores, provided by Pat and Gleason. Not only were they fun and hmmm, good, but the melted chocolate that dripped down the front of my top came right out when I washed it. LOL They were definitely worth the 2 - year wait. Have I mentioned before that our group didn't go away from meals hungry??

Now, we all have to give the 3 Musketeers (Jim S., Millie, and Carol -Ann) a lot of credit—they showed GREAT restraint in waiting all weekend before they broke out the Silly String. The picnic was the perfect place (I'm sure the LWR staff appreciated the change of place from last year!!) for their little fun war. Oooh, I even got to spray some of the "silly" stuff on, now who was that? Carol-Ann, maybe? Very out of character for meek, mild, and proper me (yeah, right!).

On Monday morning, some of our group departed for home, one group went to Silver Dollar City, and the rest of us visited, rested, shopped, took in a show, or went sightseeing.

Monday evening everyone traveled through the countryside, winding roads, etc. to Kathy and Charlie Greulich's fully accessible home to visit and YES, OF COURSE, EAT!!!!!! They had prepared barbecued ham, baked beans, (Charlie's) macaroni salad, and a choice of blackberry cobbler or peach cobbler---or both, YEAH!! Everything was sooo good. Thanks, Kathy and Charlie. Of course, one of the big highlights of that evening was Toni and the pigs---hmmm, sounds like a good title for a song!! Tom caught part of that on video. The whole evening was a blast!!!

Everyone (except Tom and me) left sometime Tuesday morning. We had planned to stay an extra day to do some sightseeing and take in a couple of shows. Well, you know about plans, don't you? They're made to be changed. Yep. My scooter had been giving trouble the whole time and chose Tuesday morning after breakfast to go into a deep coma. Nothing brought it back to life. Sooo, the LWR was wonderful—when Tom mentioned what happened, they loaned us a manual w/c and gave us 2 complimentary tickets to the afternoon Welk Show. I'm here to tell you---it was tremendous. Absolutely

wonderful!!! The Lennon Sisters performed all the way through the show and Henry Cuesta (clarinetist from the original TV show) performed, also. The show started promptly, was 2 hours, 25 minutes, with a 15 -minute intermission. So, we were treated to 2 hours, 10 minutes of pure entertainment. This was the first year for this performance and it will be the same show next year—the Welk show does the same show for 2 years. Tom and I would highly recommend the show for our group next year—they'll give us a discount and it's on the premises, so no driving to and from it. Think about it.

Now, you talk about coincidence ---before the show started, a couple sat down beside us and we started talking. When Tom mentioned what group we had been with, the woman said that she had had polio when she was a child. What a small world we live in.

Well, now that I've written a book ---hopefully not too boring---I'll add one more thing and shut up. My scooter went to the shop first thing Thursday. It finally got fixed and we went yesterday to pick it up. Boy, have I been lost without it. It's a good thing I've been resting up from Branson, or I would have REALLY felt stranded!

Okay, you now have 2 opinions and memories (Tom's and mine) of the Branson Reunion. But Tom and I were only 2 of 48 attending, so hey ---you there---yeah, you other 46---what did you think?

We can't wait till next year.

Love,  
Ann and Tom

***An added thought from Loraine Bleck:***

Some of the extra things we did were:

We also enjoyed the Braeschler Sunday Morning Gospel Hour. One morning we saw some unbelievable sights at Ripley's Believe It or Not. Another evening we went to The Presley's. They put on a great show featuring lots of talented entertainers. Also, we stopped at the craft village (forgot the name of it). One of the most enjoyable things was driving around, exploring the beautiful hills surrounding the town. What incredible scenery to be remembered and warm the heart on a long winter's night when the wind is blowing across the plains of NE! There was so much to see and do and not near enough time. We thoroughly enjoyed every minute!

Loraine

[< BACK TO PREVIOUS PAGE >](#)