

## DON AND MARY'S REFLECTION ON BRANSON 2011

We arrived Thursday early afternoon, to find out the room that we reserved the building was hit by lightning and they were not using any rooms in that building, the front desk was very obliging as usual they put us up in a suite. We had Don's brother and daughter with us the suite looked great there was only one minor problem, Don's chair would not fit into the bathroom the door way was too small. The desk manager took us to another suite, the only problem with this one was the bathroom was like a closet, and Don's chair was not going in there either. They asked us to give them a little bit and they would decide what to do with us. In about 15 minutes the desk manager was back with the hotel manager, took us to the fourth floor, lo and behold Don could get into the bathroom fine no problems. So they gave us the adjoining room for Don's brother and daughter. This is just a small reflection on how kind and helpful the total staff is when we go to Branson. Whoever picked Stone Castle Inn did a wonderful job.

Thursday evening we went to Lamberts. We found out when we got there that they only had one large table that had chairs around it the other large tables had long bench seats on each side, at this large table we had 7 power chairs, and 2 regular chairs, the additional power chairs sat at ends of booths that our people occupied, we were all served approximately the same time and par for the course we all came out with belly aches from eating too much.

Friday morning we got down to the meeting about 8:45am and there was Annie and RB and Wilma, and Linda getting everything set up for everyone, Mary had made centerpieces for the table and we came down to get them put on the tables with Annie help with the centerpieces and other decorations that other people had gotten the room really looked Americana there was state maps from Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Alaska, Kansas, Nebraska, Washington DC , California, Iowa, and Missouri. Our speaker for Friday was Greg Corpier , and R.A.L.P.H. Greg showed the latest video that was professional done which was a brief history of how Ralph began as Don's assistant and where he is headed for today. Greg is currently working on a voice activated power chair that will assist a person with not only their needs, but will also keep track of their vital statistics. Greg did a good job with his presentation even though we might be a little fond of him, there were several good questions, and at the end of the presentation he told everyone that he was planning on being with us until Sunday , lunch arrived just as Greg finished and lunch was fantastic. Friday afternoon, several survivors and supporters sat around and visited in our meeting room more than I have ever seen in our previous two years that we have been there. A lot of laughter

from 4 different areas of the room at different times. We did notice that Greg was visiting with several different survivors. We ended up going to our room about 3, to be back down about 4:30, supper was at 5 consisting of fantastic food. It was a hot dinner and everyone enjoyed the food. Friday evening we left the group, and took Don's brother and daughter, and Greg to go see the Titanic exhibit, if you have never been it is quite interesting, not nearly as romantic as the movie, but very informative, you walk in the door and feel the iceberg towards the end of it you get to put your hand in the cold water and see how long you can hold your hand in it.

Saturday we got down to the meeting room about 9:30am. Our guest speaker was to speak at 10:30am. Everyone made it on time for the speaker. Marion Trimble, with ILC, she gave us some very informative information on how disabled people have rights too. Launa also is based out of the same office in Springfield but actually works in Washington DC September through May she is a lobbyist for the disabled. Launa told us that each one of us needs to know our congressman and our senators and they need to know us. She says the best way to get to know them is to invite them to your home for a meal, so they see how you have to adapt to life not life adapting to you. The information that both the ladies presented was good for everyone especially the ones of us that live in MO. After the ladies was finished lunch arrived, and was very tasty.

Saturday afternoon we broke into our sessions, of survivors and supporters, there were about 18 in the survivors session that was headed up by Judy Eads, there was 8 in the supporters session headed up by Don Eads. We met from 2 to 4pm Saturday afternoon. My Don said that Judy did an outstanding job involving everyone in the conversations, and Don done an equally good job of involving everyone, our compliments to the Eads for a job well done.

Shortly after the sessions broke up, Branson Linda did a fun job of entertaining a bunch of us with some of her stories, if you want to know any more about her stories you will have to contact Linda the only thing I will say if you are confined to a chair and your vehicle breaks down you have to call the "Duck".

Supper arrived about 5 and boy did it smell good. Fried chicken, barbbqued ribs and all the trimmings. Then we had peach or blackberry cobbler for dessert. After they fed us, we had entertainment, Tim Hadley, sang for us and it was wonderful. We all sang along laughed, and reminisced back when.

We had been selling raffle tickets since Friday morning, at 50 cents a ticket. You bought your ticket placed it in the sack of the item that you wanted to win, as Tim got

ready to leave he drew the winning ticket out for a grand prize of a flat screen tv and low and behold Evert Klaus won the tv. We made over \$200.00 selling 50 cent raffle tickets that is a lot of tickets. One thing I can say though, we have a good start on next year's raffle as many times as RB won! He has plenty to donate. It got to be very comical Don Eades would say "Get ready RB!" and they would pull his name. The Raffle not only made us some money but was a whole lot of fun for everyone. I know I really enjoyed my huge coffee cup, Don doesn't drink a lot of coffee, so I make a pot, pour him a cup and put the rest in my cup!

We had a business on Sunday morning at 11 we were introduced to our new web master Tim for our new website that he and his mom Wilma have spent a lot of time working on already. Anyone that has not seen the website yet you need to go and look at it nice job guys, we found out that we would be going to Stone Castle Inn for the next five years. The service we received from the staff is to be commended. Several said to us on our last morning that they were looking forward to seeing us next year and we are looking forward for that too. I am already looking at pirate stuff for next year. Lunch followed with leftovers from Friday and Saturday, Sunday afternoon everyone was on their own, Sunday evening Don and I went to Yakov's dinner show. The show was a story about the Moscow narrated by Yakov on the big screen. The dinner was good except anyone confined to a power chair or scooter has no table to eat off of. When Don saw the situation he elected not to eat supper this disturbed me greatly, but Don being Don said everything was fine just eat. We got back to the hotel as everyone was finishing supper. After supper several of us started in taking down and packing, the food that was left over RB delivered to a worthwhile organization.

We got up Monday morning after breakfast went in to see if we could help finish up cleaning. We said our goodbyes and went back and started packing our own stuff. I made our reservations for next year, and hope that lightning doesn't strike twice. So we may get the room better accessible for Don. We are already looking forward to arriving back in Branson on June 8 for our reunion on the 8,9,10 of June 2012. We missed a lot of old friends this year and hope they can make it next year and we made a lot of new friends that we are looking forward to visiting again next year.

Love and Hugs to everyone and just think we only have a little over 11 months to go.

Don and Mary