



Our trip this year was six weeks long in a 27-foot RV during June and July. We purchased the recreation vehicle to travel to State College, PA to attend the 50th wedding anniversary party for Ron and Hope Coder. Hope is Doreen's "since birth" childhood friend. We departed on our 26 state (plus Canada) 9,000+ mile trip the day after school let out for the summer on June 7. We figured since we were going to the east coast, we might as well visit our friends and family from New York to Virginia and back. We felt RV'ing it was less expensive than flying to all of our planned stops.



Since the RV sleeps four people comfortably, this was a great opportunity to take a grandchild on a cross country adventure. We invited Kathleen and allowed her to bring a close friend along to keep from becoming too bored. She selected her best friend from high school, Regina. We tried to expose them to culture along the way as well as the beauty of our great country as we traversed the various states. Their favorite parts of the trip were the amusement parks, naturally.



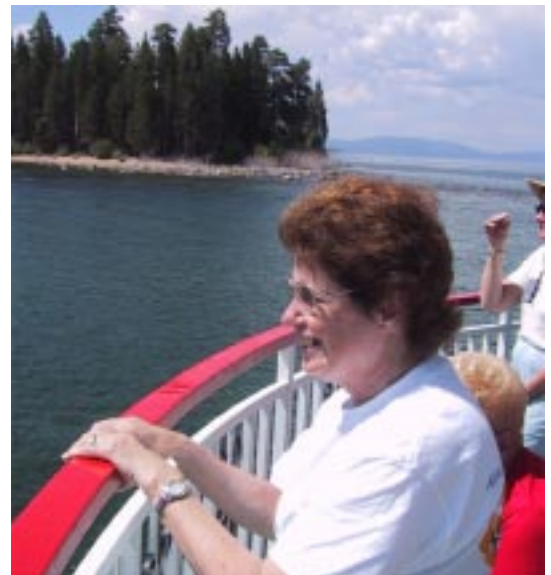
Kathleen →
and Regina



Kathleen ↑
giving Aunt
Elizabeth a
birthday hug

Day 1 - June 7 Lake Tahoe NV

Our first night was spent at Zepher Cove, located on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe. Doreen's aunt Elizabeth Hughes had her 90th birthday party there. Almost all of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren attended. The gala affair included a trip on the M.S. Dixie II paddle wheeler across the lake to Emerald Bay.



Day 2 - June 8 Elko NV

We departed Tahoe early, travelled through Carson City, picked up I-80 east of Reno and spent the day driving through wide open Nevada desert. In Elko, we found a casino with RV parking facilities which were very nice.

Day 3 - June 9 Salt Lake City UT

Then, on to Salt Lake City through another long day of open desert. This time we also saw the Utah salt flats. We spent the night in a KOA where the girls spent most of their evening in the swimming pool.

Day 4 - June 10 Laramie WY

It was a very beautiful day driving across southern Wyoming but when we arrived at the Laramie KOA, the wind and storms were blowing by. Ron's son Michael and grandson Adam drove up from Denver to meet us and we all had Pizza that night for dinner.



Regina & Kathleen in western Wyoming



Storm clouds over Laramie



Ron, Kathleen and Adam in Laramie Wyoming

Day 5 - June 11 Denver CO

We drove from Laramie down through the Rocky Mountain National Park along the Cache la Poudre River. As we were approaching Fort Collins, something hit the window in the sleeping area above the cab. Glass shattered all over the girls while they were sleeping. Luckily, we were able to get it replaced in a couple of hours and we were on our way to Denver again. We arrived at Mike and Vickie's house that evening.



Day 6 - June 12 Denver CO

The big deal today was our trip to the Six Flags amusement park at Elitch's in Denver. We ate lunch in the parking lot (tail gate party) and then the kids spent the day having fun. Ron stayed off the rides because of his neck injury, however, there was one ride that didn't jerk you like the roller coasters. You are strapped into a sling, hoisted up about 20 stories, and dropped! Then you swing back and forth on the cable for awhile. If little five-year Anna can do it..... a moment of insanity struck him and he did it. We also watched five-year old Anna jump off the diving board in the deep end of the pool during her swimming lessons.





Day 7 - June 13 North Platte NE

While visiting the north western corner of Nebraska, we were able to see an authentic sod house from the early pioneer days and the Pony Express museum.

Day 8 - June 14 Omaha NE

While passing through Lincoln NE, we visited Fern Jones' sister, Erma Hoppens. Fern is Doreen's stepmother. Then we spent some time in the USAF Strategic Air Command (SAC) museum near Offutt Air Force Base. Ron was stationed at SAC Headquarters from 1960 to 1962. His son, Dennis was born in the base hospital there. We spent the night camped by Offutt Lake on a military RV facility. That night, the girls saw and caught their first fireflies or lightning bugs. They were genuinely fascinated.



Doreen with Erma Hoppens in Lincoln Nebraska



Kathleen and Regina at Offutt Lake



Day 9 - June 15 Iowa City IA

When we departed the Air Base, we noticed one of President Bush's Air Force One 747's parked on the tarmac - far, far away. It's the bigger one on the left. While in eastern Iowa, we took in the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and museum.

Day 10 & 11 - June 16-17 Indianapolis IN

While in Indianapolis, we visited the Speedway museum and took a lap around the 'Brickyard' in a bus. In the 1940's and 1950's, Ron's Uncle Barney Christiansen built race cars. One of his cars was featured in the 1947 Bud Abbott-Lou Costello movie "Buck Privates Come Home." The number 17 Offenhauser midget in the movie was built by Barney. He also built the 1950 Winn's Friction Proofing Special driven by Johnny Parsons, the winner of the 1950 Indy 500. Barney was the chief mechanic that day. This story is mentioned here because we found that very car in the museum. Boy, was Ron excited? The last time Ron saw Barney alive was in April 1958 in his Western Avenue garage in Los Angeles. He was constructing a sprint car for Sheraton Thompson. The driver was a young Texan, A.J. Foyt.



Day 12 - June 18 Dayton OH

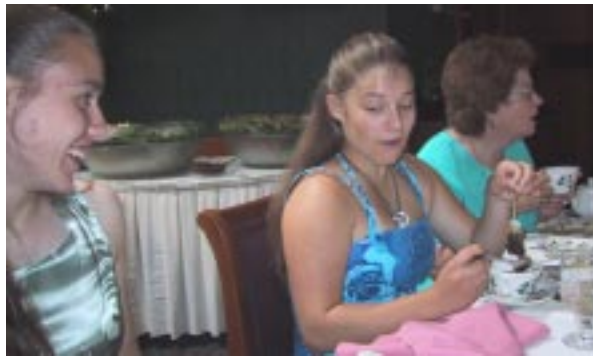
We camped this day on another military RV park at Wright Patterson Air Force Base and visited the US Air Force museum. Along with early WWI and WWII planes, and AF experimental planes, they have the presidential aircraft used as Air Force One's for FDR, Truman, IKE, and JFK. They have JFK's Boeing 707 tail number 26000 on display. This is the plane that carried his casket back to D.C. from Dallas. We could go through the interior of these planes. FDR's was rigged with a special elevator for his wheelchair.

Day 13 - June 19 Mercer PA

When we hit Pennsylvania, we hit rain - big rain. We spent the night in Mercer where we saw many Amish folks. Grove City is just down the road from Mercer. This is where Doreen attended college. She had great fun showing the girls around the campus. By a good luck of fortune, she happened to bump into a former classmate, Nancy Lee, who works on campus. They hadn't seen each other since graduation and ironically, they recognized each other right off the bat.



Doreen and Nancy Lee at Grove City College



Great Party!



Day 14 & 15 - June 20-21 State College PA

While in State College, we visited the church where Doreen's father was the minister from 1931 to 1947. During that period, in 1943-45, he served as a military chaplain in the Army Air Corps. The girls actually had great fun exploring the nooks and crannies of this old church including the old bell tower. The present minister shared some of the certificates and other items they have on display concerning Doreen's father. The next day we attended the 50th wedding anniversary for Ron and Grace Hope Coder. The ONE and ONLY time the girls had to wear a dress on this trip. Doreen saw and visited with childhood friends she hadn't seen in over 50 years. What a happy time for her!



Day 16 & 17 - June 22-23 Niagara Falls Canada

We camped on the Canadian side of the Niagara River for two nights. The first night there, we went to a dinner show called 'Oh Canada Eh!' The performers were also our table waiters. The food and the show were great. Dudley Do-right of the Royal Canadian Mounties, (our waiter) brought the girls a real special drink, with four cherries no less! The next day we took a tour of the Falls area. The highlight was a ride under the falls in a boat. Even though they issued throwaway raincoats, we got WET!





What a drink!
Even the
woman next
to Kathleen
was amazed.



Day 18 - June 24 Oriskany NY

We belong to the Educators' Bed & Breakfast organization. We offer our home for members to stay and we stay with other members on some trips. Through this organization, we met up last year with Dick and Jane Rappleyea, a couple in Oriskany who have become good friends. We visited with them on this trip. Oriskany is near Utica & Ilion where some of Ron's ancestors settled in 1835. We stopped by the house in Ilion where Kathleen's Great great grandmother was born.

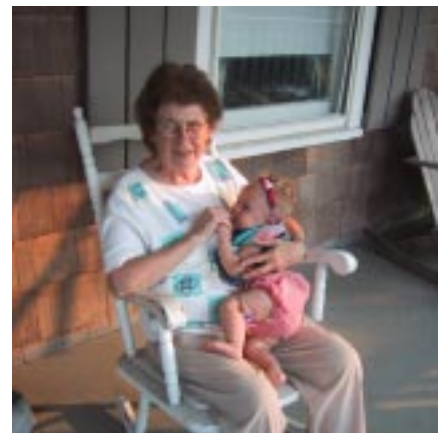


Dick and Jane Rappleyea

Day 19 thru 21 June 25-27 Southampton NY

It actually wasn't very far to drive through eastern New York and western Connecticut to Bridgeport where we caught a ferry across Long Island Sound to Port Jefferson NY. We then completed our trip to Tony and Sharyn's home in Southampton NY on the eastern end of Long Island. We spent three wonderful days with grandkids Carrissa, Emily, Jayden, and Mackenzie. The first day there, we took a small trip on Sharyn's father's 52 foot Ketch. He uses it for his sailboat charter business. The first mate (Andy from New Zealand) started the fun by jumping into the water. Even two year old Jayden jumped in. After a while this became too tame so the kids went to the much higher bow to jump. Andy jumped from the top of the mast but there were no other takers. The next day was spent at the beach and that night, Carrissa was inducted into the Girl Scouts at a bonfire ceremony on the same beach.





Day 22 - June 28 Baltimore MD

Today, we drove the length of Long Island, across the Verrazano Narrows Bridge and Staten Island into New Jersey, down to Delaware and into Maryland. As we travelled across the bridge, we were able to get a marvelous view of the Statue of Liberty.

Day 23 & 24 - June 29-30 Williamsburg VA

On our sojourn from Maryland to Williamsburg, we bypassed Washington D.C. But we took a side trip to Monticello and toured President Jefferson's home. One of Doreen's two suitemates at Grove City College, Nancy Hess, lives in Williamsburg with her husband, Irv. While we were there, Her roommate, Betsy Elder and husband Doug stopped by for a couple of days. The three gals had a great time remembering their college days and going over the pictures we took the week before. Ron took Kathleen and Regina to Colonial Williamsburg for a short visit to see how 18th century Americans lived. On our way to Virginia Beach, we visited the 1608 English settlement of Jamestown. We stopped at Ft. Eustus near Norfolk to get gas and food. Before we could go on to the Army post, the M.P.s at the gate inspected the RV from bumper to bumper inside and out. In every storage compartment and even under the hood.



Day 25 & 26 - July 1-2 Virginia Beach VA

We spent two wonderful days with Doreen's brother Bob and wife Carolyn. While there, tropical depression Bill came through North Carolina. We were on the fringes of that storm. The winds were strong, the surf was UP and it was raining. The girls were the only people on the beach and had the time of their lives in the ocean. Since the water currents were from the Caribbean, it was much warmer than the Atlantic waters off Long Island.



Day 27 - July 3 Charlotte NC

Actually, we camped in the KOA at Fort Mill SC just across the boarder from Charlotte. Tropical depression Bill rained so much, the campsite was extremely wet! The next morning, we stopped by the NASCAR museum in Morristown on our way to the Great Smoky mountains of Tennessee.

Day 28 - July 4 Knoxville TN

Our KOA in Knoxville was next to a stadium that had a fire-works show scheduled for the night of the fourth. It was a spectacular program right in our front yard. The next day, on our way to Toone, we stopped by Nashville to visit Vickie Peterson, Kathleen's grandmother's sister's daughter (or Kathleen's 2nd cousin). Vickie works for the state of Tennessee. She took us to the mall near her home where we purchased the girls each a copy of the latest Harry Potter book.



Day 29 and 30 - July 5-6 Toone TN

Ron's granddaughter, Crystal lives in Toone TN with her two children Felicity and Zachery. Toone is located about 100 miles east of Memphis. While we were there, we visited the civil war battlefield at Shiloh.



Ron with Crystal, Kathleen, Zachery, and Felicity at Shiloh



Crystal and Kathleen



Felicity

Kathleen and 2nd cousin Vickie in Nashville Tennessee



Crystal and Zachery

Day 31 - July 7 Little Rock AR

On our way to Little Rock, we stopped in Memphis to visit Kathleen's other 2nd cousin Ginger (Vickie's sister) and her family. That night, we camped at the military RV park at Camp Roberts. Cost - \$7.00.



Kathleen in Memphis with Cousin Ginger (at left) and her daughter Lindsey

Day 32 & 33 - July 8-9 Dallas TX

We spent an extra day in Dallas for the girls to enjoy the amusement park at Six Flags over Dallas. Then, on our way to Midland, we had a blowout near Sweetwater TX. This caused a six hour delay.



The area outside the Caverns



The girls inside Carlsbad Caverns

Day 34 - July 10 Midland TX

When we departed Midland on our way to El Paso, we made an instant decision to divert to Carlsbad NM to visit the caverns. Everybody enjoyed the sojourn through the grand cavern and all of its sights.

Day 35 - July 11 El Paso TX

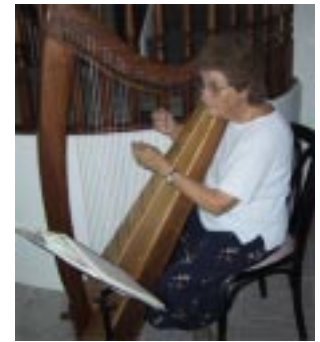
Our military campsite in El Paso was located at Fort Bliss. Doreen found this one to be her favorite place. The club house had a treadmill and other exercise equipment, a large television and other great amenities. The park sites were extremely wide and there was a tree in every site. Cost - \$13.00.



County Building Tombstone AZ

Day 36 - July 12 Tucson AZ

On our way from El Paso to Tucson today, we diverted to Tombstone AZ where we saw the OK Corral and visited the very interesting local museum in their 1882 county building. We spent the night at Ron's cousin Jim Owens' home. That evening, a monsoon came through town and dropped a half inch of rain (the first rain in five months). The girls found playing in the monsoon was great sport (cleaning the NY sand out of their sleeping bags). Ron and Jim spent some time discussing the Owens family genealogy. Jim also gave the ladies harp lessons and as you can tell, Doreen took it very seriously.



Day 37 - July 13 Scottsdale AZ

We stopped in Phoenix today for a visit with Kathleen’s other grandparents, Jim and Nancy Wright, then on to our friends, Don and Susan Stedfield’s home for the night. On the road between Phoenix and Kingman AZ the next day, we experienced our second blowout. Doreen was driving the RV on both blowout occasions so the girls both mandated Doreen drive no more - we get blowouts when she does. We stopped for repairs at the next place on the road which turned out to be Nothing AZ (population 4 - and we met all four of them). There really is nothing at Nothing AZ.

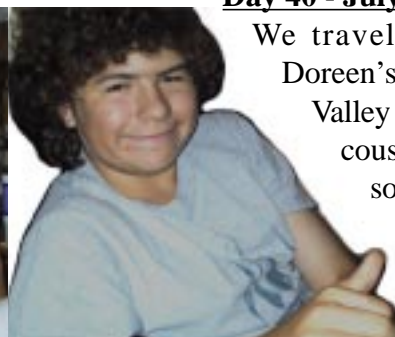


Day 38 & 39 - July 14-15 Las Vegas NV

On the way to Las Vegas from Kingman, we drove over the Hoover Dam. The second time Ron visited the dam. First time was in June 1948. We spent the next two nights with Ron’s stepmother Caroline. While we were there, it was in our schedule to attend the Sembach Air Base Germany Veterans’ reunion in one of the casinos. Anybody who was stationed there from 1951 to present was invited. Ron’s duty dates at Sembach were from 1962 to 1966.

Day 40 - July 16 Apple Valley CA

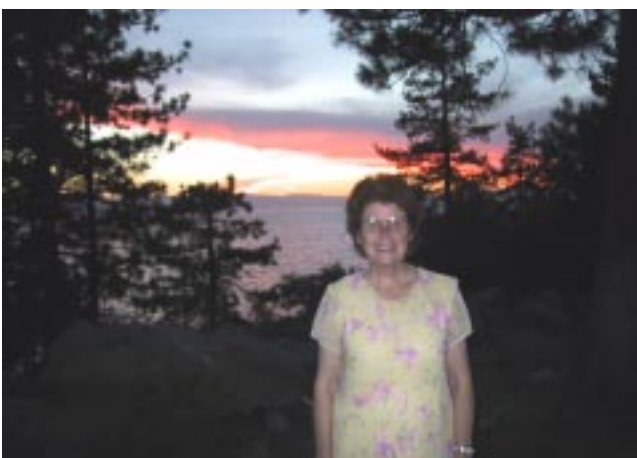
We travelled from Las Vegas to Doreen’s son John’s home in Apple Valley CA. Regina met Kathleen’s cousins Jason and Rachael. Jason is the “World’s Champion Video Gamer.” The girls unsuccessfully challenged him for the title.



Day 41 - July 17

By now, we were getting tired of the open road so we bypassed LA (Disneyland) and came straight home and unpacked.

This sure was a FUN (and tiring) TRIP!



to Wake US UP BEFORE
WE GET INTO CANADA
WE WANT TO SEE THE
COUNTRY LINE
THANKS
A LOT.
"THE GEEKS"