

Charles Summer 25 # 2: Our Journey Begins



Excited about our upcoming summer adventures, we left Toronto around midday on Monday, June 16, and with much perseverance, by the end of the day, we made it all the way to ...



Which was actually our plan. We'd been invited to a party to celebrate the 26 years that David Nairn had been the Artistic Director of Theatre Orangeville.

The TOV team had planned a fun Tiki-themed party to send him off, with leis available for everyone. The tributes began with several young women from the TOV Musical Young Company, who sang "For Good" to David, and ensured that there would not be a dry eye in the house.

Because Jim was the original Artistic Director of TOV, he was asked to be the first speaker, which he couldn't help turning into a bit of a roast.



But, David wouldn't have expected anything less, and they were still friends by the end of it.



After the party, we had a nice casual dinner with David and his amazing wife Leisa Way (who took this shot), and they even let us park overnight in their driveway!



Bright and not that early the next morning, we hit the road, eager to move on to our next adventure. Ready to enjoy the pastoral Ontario landscape, we pointed Charles east...



... and didn't stop until we got to ...



There, we had a great rendezvous with old friends Clive VanderBurgh and his wife Laura, his daughter Erin and her partner Nathan.



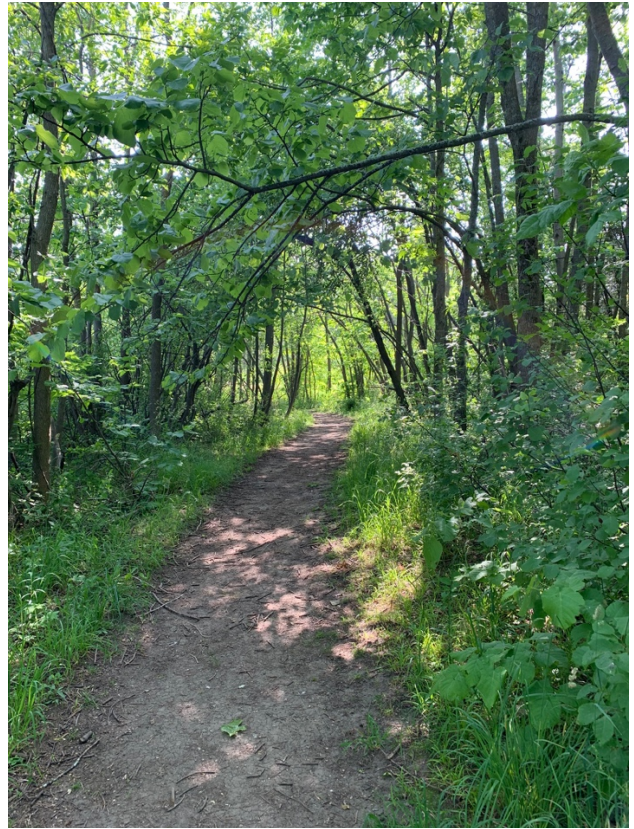
Of course, we couldn't sit still for long. We had miles to go before we would rest. We admired Ontario farmland as we travelled toward our destination ...



... all the way at the top of Lake Simcoe, McRae Point Provincial Park.



Despite our exhausting day of travel, we took a walk along the lake.



And when we returned to Charles, we felt we'd earned a bit of a rest.



With a peaceful, relaxing night behind us, we and Charles felt ready to get back on the road. We were officially in cottage country now, and we enjoyed seeing more and more Ontario lakes as we travelled.



Entering Muskoka...



... we drove between its distinctive carved rock walls.



And finally, after what must have been at least an hour, we arrived at our next stop.

Our friend Doug Gahm welcomed us to his cottage near Bracebridge.



The two old friends were obviously happy to see each other.

Doug kept us fed and entertained through to the next day. The weather wasn't the best, but we still got some spectacularly beautiful moments.



And of course, the company was great.



Once again, we hit the road, eager to experience more of Ontario at its best.

But you don't always get what you want.



We had a rainy drive through Algonquin Park...



And made it to our first “Boondockers Welcome” of this trip. This is an organization of people who generally are RVers and are happy to have travellers park on their property, in return for others who have offered a stopover for them on their travels.

In what could have been a very exciting addition to our blog, we got the directions wrong, and parked in an empty driveway that seemed to sort of fit the description. A while later, we heard honking, and a man in a truck told us that we were on the wrong property, and the owner was going to call the police! We explained why we were there and he helped guide us to the right property, the next driveway over. Whew!



Although a nasty thunderstorm rocked us through the night, the morning brought bright sunshine and we enjoyed our stay, once we were in the right place!

It was a beautiful spot
and well maintained.



The couple were
very nice – and they
even gave us a jar of
their own maple
syrup!



The other exciting thing about our stop was that it was just outside the town of Killaloe. We had never heard of it, but as we arrived, we realized we had stumbled onto a place of Canadian historical significance: The birthplace of BeaverTails! Also known as Canada's Pastry!



Of course, we had to try the town specialty, so Jim pointed me in the right direction.





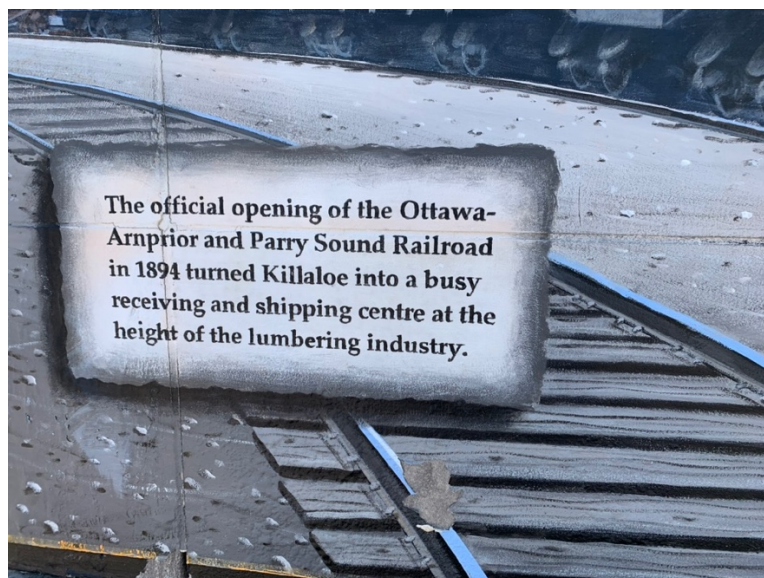
The man who ran this stand gave us the history of the BeaverTails as he made us each a "Killaloe Sunrise".

In 1978, Pam and Grant Hooker needed some money to continue building their home, so they decided to try selling Grant's grandmother's BeaverTails recipe at their local community fair. They were such a hit, soon after, they opened a booth in Ottawa's ByWard Market, and the business took off. Now there are 140 franchises and licensees in six countries!

No wonder. They were tasty! (Gone too fast to get a photo.)



Now that Jim's pointing finger was limbered up, he was on a roll. Turns out there was another "point" of interest in Killaloe.



Another interesting sighting along our way. You don't often see a horsedrawn plough anymore.



And a little while later, we crossed this bridge...



And discovered that we were in La Belle Province.



Not long after, we arrived at the cottage that Jim's sister Margaret rents each summer. We stayed for a couple of lovely leisurely days. You can imagine how exhausted we were.



It took us 5 days to get from Toronto to the Quebec border!

With any luck, we'll make it to the east coast before Labour Day.