

Pakenham couple treated German travellers to Canadian hospitality

Dave Mohan

Seventeen years ago, while travelling in Holland with a small group of friends, a Dutchman our age befriended us. Within a few hours, Aad had shown us impressive sights we would have missed as tourists relying on a guidebook.

It was that nostalgic thought that prompted my action recently on seeing a strange Volkswagen RV on the 417 West, while driving home to Pakenham with my wife, Bryde after work. On overtaking the RV (clearly not from these parts), with its Munich, Germany plates, I asked Bryde to use our daughter's doodle pad to greet our soon-to-be friends. So, at 100 kmh, we managed to invite Chris and Silvia over to Pakenham for a visit.

At this point, most people hearing this story roll their eyes. My motivation was simple; it was my turn to offer these visitors an experience they probably wouldn't have had if they continued on to Algonquin park that evening as planned!

It was a somewhat absurd experience to see this purpose-built RV following us home to the village as if in some sort of sci-fi tractor beam. Bryde and I were laughing out loud in our car, imagining what these people, (who obviously were open-minded enough to accept our strange invitation) might be thinking of us and our motives.

Emerging from our vehicles, introducing ourselves and our respective lives, we were impressed to hear that Chris and Silvia had taken two years leave from their work to travel throughout North and South America. There wasn't a heck of a lot one

could help them with, very well prepared with a custom-made RV containing all modern conveniences - a truly an impressive vehicle.

Happily, our friends accepted our invitation to stay over, see our community and partake in an impromptu potluck barbecue, which soon snowballed to include an unofficial welcoming committee; Angela and young Hilary McCann who made our guests feel truly welcome by speaking in their native tongue, and dear and indulgent neighbors, Pat

and John Melliush who suggested we have the barbecue at their wonderful riverside property. The list of friends who met Chris and Silvia that evening grew to 10.

The night ended with our guests retiring to their RV and the next morning, we greeted each other like old friends and were happy to hear that they had enjoyed an early morning dip in the Mississippi. After a quick coffee and toast in their vehicle's kitchen, we said our good-byes. I was quietly impressed to see Chris

and Silvia carefully spool-up their GPS and laptop, discuss the best route before starting their RV. Instead of backtracking on Hwy 20 and 417, they of course drove towards Arnprior - it was closer.

Dave Mohan is an Aeronautical Information Specialist at NAV CANADA.

For more details and pictures, please see the following link: <http://mankeitravel.com/mankei-tour/berichte/index.htm>
Click on Ontario for more pictures.



The Mohan family from Pakenham is shown here with their newfound friends from Germany (photo above). Dave and Bryde Mohan befriended the couple recently when they spotted their unique RV (photo right) on the 417.

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