

Great Lakers Birthday Rally Recap, May 13 – 17, 2019 in Holland, Michigan



The Great Lakers had a great start to the 2019 rally season with our club's 43rd Birthday Rally held this year at the Dutch Treat Campground in Zeeland, Michigan. Zeeland is a small town near the famous town of Holland, Michigan. While our rally was held immediately after the conclusion of the annual Tulip Festival in Holland, we were able to enjoy all the beautiful tulip displays around town.

This year was the 90th Anniversary of the Tulip Festival in Holland. Each fall close to 1,000,000 tulips arrive from the Netherlands and are planted at Windmill Island Gardens, along the sidewalks in downtown, in the local parks, and along the street streets in the residential neighborhoods in Holland, Michigan. This year's weather cooperated nicely and we were able to see rows and rows of beautiful tulips everywhere. Many of the Great Lakers took time during the week to tour the De Zwaan ("the Swan" or "Graceful Bird") Windmill at Windmill Island gardens. De Zwaan Windmill is

America's only authentic, working Dutch windmill. The windmill was brought to America from the town of Vinkel from the province of Noord Brabant in the Netherlands to the city of Holland, Michigan. It was the last Dutch windmill to leave the Netherlands. It arrived in Holland, Michigan in October 1964 and took 6 months to reconstruct. The windmill grinds oat and corn flour when the winds permit. It was quite a treat to tour the different levels inside the windmill to learn about all its working components.

The Executive Board members hosted the Birthday rally. There was the usual coffee, fruit and pastries each morning of the rally, along with a catered hot breakfast, and a catered barbecue on our last night with birthday cake and ice cream for dessert! Many thanks to Joe Gillen who provided some of the yummy rally pastries! Rally meals and activities took place at the recreation building at the Dutch Treat Campground. Becky Johnson gave her GMC Motorhome presentation to rally participants that she gave earlier in May at Macomb County College, along with display boards and additional GMC videos. It was really nice to have a heated building with tables, chairs, and plenty of space all to ourselves. Each Great Lakers member who attended the May rally received a complimentary rally T-shirt. (There are a few leftover rally T-shirts so look for some future rally give aways!)

There were 46 participants registered for the rally with 20 coaches plus Tom Dixon's Casita camper. We had a few members who had to cancel, so we ended up with 42 participants and 18 coaches at the rally. Several Great Lakers members were first timers were at the May rally – John Calhoun and Becky Curless from Nashville, Indiana; Joe Gillen who came with his friend Frank from Livonia, Michigan, Dan and Gail DePrekel from Jenison, Michigan; and Doug and Natalie LaVerdiere from Rockford, Michigan. We hope you enjoyed your first club rally and are happy you are part of our club!

Many thanks to Sara Halley for setting up the rally location, and Becky Johnson and Bea Newman for organizing the rally food.

Submitted by Becky Johnson