

Western New York

We're always looking for new places and things to do on our quilt adventures. Many of you have asked over the years, "how do you decide where to go?" Well, sometimes it's as simple as this!

Our friend and frequent TQ traveler, Marlene Bowman, had been pestering us for several years to plan a trip to Buffalo, New York (she was born and raised there). So, in early 2016, we started taking a serious look at Western New York. Naturally, Marlene was happy to send us links to all kinds of fun things to do. The primary draw, though, was Niagara Falls. After all, neither of us had ever been there! And there was an AQS Quilt Show in Syracuse in late July. That was the clincher. Decision made. We're going to Western New York!

In July 2016, we flew to Buffalo to scout out things to do and see. On that whirlwind trip we included the AQS quilt show in Syracuse, the Finger Lakes, Buffalo, Niagara Fall, the Erie Canal and about six quilt shops! With the subsequent cancellation of the AQS show we reworked our itinerary to go in June (much cooler and no kids on vacation) so we could instead attend the Genesee Valley Quiltfest.

Fast forward to June 1, 2017 and there we are, 55 strong, gathering at the Buffalo Airport for our Western New York adventure! We planned dinner that evening at the Fairdale Banquet Center. It was the perfect setting for a fast, easy dinner after a long day of traveling. The food was excellent. Usually it's the desserts that we rave about. In this case, though, it was the mashed potatoes and gravy! Many of the ladies declared the mashed potatoes the best ever!

Then we were off to our home for the next three days, the Hampton Inn in East Aurora. What a find that was. East Aurora is a suburb of Buffalo with a long history and a quaint main street with lots of shops and restaurants to explore.

East Aurora is also the home of the Roycroft Campus. That was our first stop on Day 2 of the tour. The Roycroft Campus is the best preserved and most complete complex of buildings remaining in the United States of the "guilds" that evolved as centers of craftsmanship and philosophy during the late 19th century. The Campus, designated a National Historic Landmark district (NHL) in 1986, contains nine of the original 14 structures including the Inn, the Chapel, the Print Shop, the Furniture Shop, and the Copper Shop. It was almost as if Elbert Hubbard and the Roycrofters never left. We had an interesting walking tour of the campus before heading to Buffalo to spend the morning with our step-on guide, Mike Conboy. On a driving tour through downtown Buffalo, Mike shared some of the history of the area and pointed out a number of architecturally unique buildings.

After lunch at the Elmwood Village District we returned to East Aurora so the ladies could visit some of the shops along the main street (including two quilt shops). Many returned for some additional time at the Roycroft Campus. Most everyone stopped in at Viddlers, the largest five and dime store in the United States. That's a landmark in itself. Dinner that evening was at the Roycroft Inn. The Inn is part of the campus and an exquisite example of Craftsman architecture at its best!

Saturday was our day on the water! Our first stop was in Lockport for a cruise on the Erie Canal. Mike was with us again for the day so enroute to Lockport he shared even more local history with us including interesting facts about the Erie Canal. After lunch we were off to our much anticipated visit to Niagara Falls. The weather was perfect. Clear, sunny and in the low 70s! We took a cruise on the Maid of the Mist where all of us donned long ponchos to protect us from the spray from the falls. Spray? Are they kidding? It was like a heavy rainstorm. We went right up to the falls. Beyond cool! As for those ponchos . . . they sort of keep you dry, but with the wind blowing the water in every which direction, most of us were drenched! After some additional exploration of other locations in Niagara Falls Park we returned to East Aurora.

Sunday already and it was time to leave East Aurora and head for the Finger Lakes. It rained off and on most of the day but we didn't care! Our journey took us to the Patchwork Garden Quilt Shop (a wonderful shop in a house with

lots of nooks and crannies filled with all things quilt) and then on to the Genesee Valley QuiltFest in Rochester. This show is held in odd numbered years (lucky us) and they had over 600 quilts on display and 60 vendors to visit. The quilts were fabulous and, based on the large number of shopping bags returning to the motor coach, the shopping was great too! Later that afternoon we checked into the Ramada Inn on Lake Seneca in Geneva.

The next morning, we were off to the Corning Museum of Glass. It was another off and on rainy day, but we don't let that stop us! We were told that the museum is one of the top tourist attractions in New York State. In route to the museum we stopped at Material Rewards Quilt Shop in Danville. The store was full of all kinds of fabric. Something for everyone. Yes, more shopping! Then on to the museum. We spent about four hours in Corning where our travelers had time to tour the museum, the gallery, and visit various glass demonstrations. In addition, many of them visited the Rockwell museum in Corning. No, not that Rockwell (as in Norman), but rather the Rockwell family, a prominent family in the Corning area. They had a wonderful collection of Western Art that Lynn missed, again, since she spent the afternoon in a glass blowing class making a holiday ornament! As we returned to Geneva late that afternoon, we stopped at one of the local waterfalls near Watkins Glen. Not Niagara, but nonetheless, spectacular. It was in a neighborhood between two houses! We could not imagine having that in our backyard. So much water! Our travelers were on their own for dinner and many ventured into town to try out some of the local restaurants. The Elm Street Bakery was beyond fabulous and several of our group visited it more than once.

Already Day 6 but once again we have a full day planned! We started the morning at Sonnenberg Estate on Lake Canandaigua (another of the finger lakes). We toured the mansion and the gardens. This is well worth seeing if you're ever in the area. From there we headed to the lake and an afternoon lunch cruise on the Lady Canandaigua. We gave our travelers a few free hours in the afternoon to explore and shop in Geneva where they discovered yet another quilt shop! Others stayed closer to the hotel to relax and enjoy the view of the lake.

Our Farewell dinner on our last evening in Geneva was at the Belhurst Winery. And, yes, of course we tasted wine before dinner! Once again, we had an excellent meal. We quilters do love to eat!

The week just flew and sadly it was time to say goodbye to Geneva and return to Buffalo for our flights home. But wait, we're not quite done yet! We stopped at a lovely quilt shop in Victor, NY (The Ivy Thimble) where many of us shopped and shipped! Then we headed for a quick side trip to Palmyra, NY to visit the Alling Coverlet Museum and have lunch.

And then, it was time to head to the airport. It was a great trip. We hope you enjoy the pictures we have included here and on our website.

Lynn and Pam