

Cowboys and Cajuns Gathering February 2015

Under the benign eye of 5W member, Mary, twenty-seven 5W ladies from across the globe gathered to enjoy learning about Cowboys and Cajuns.

In San Antonio our hotel was situated on the River Walk and we enjoyed both the boat rides and walking along this lovely area. We also made sure we were back in time each day to enjoy Happy Hour there! At Happy Hour one evening, Margaret, (who goes into withdrawal if away from a piano for too long), entertained us with her virtuosic piano playing.

In San Antonio we were feted as honoured guests at the small town of Blanco and given welcome packs that included a hand crocheted scarf. At our delicious Chuck Wagon lunch, cowboys entertained us with tales about their lives as cowboys and actors.

We attended the San Antonio Rodeo; here the Australian contingent - well fortified by their daily intake of Vegemite - cheered loudly for the Aussie competitor. We had the myths of the Alamo dispelled and enjoyed the museums, art galleries, churches and restaurants of the area.

After a somewhat fraught start to the day, when one 5W member was trapped in the lift with the hotel manager, and Mary, with a very anxious eye on the clock, had to ring the fire brigade to come and release them, we took the Greyhound bus to Lafayette- oh, the trials and tribulations of being a Leader!

Leaving cowboy hats and boots behind we joined a Road Scholar programme at Lafayette learning about both the city and country Mardi Gras. In cold and very wet conditions we cheered the floats and bands and caught our Mardi Gras beads - we were all soon covered in 'bling'.

Next morning at a local farm, we were warmly welcomed and given shelter, warmth and morning tea, while we waited to witness the chicken chasing, revelry and 'whipping' that are part of the country Mardi Gras. We were then invited to a neighbouring farm to join in the communal Gumbo lunch.

The Road Scholar folk taught us Cajun dances and that evening we launched ourselves on the local population much to their amusement (and some consternation).

On to New Orleans to enjoy the historic French Quarter, the wonderful street musicians and our Farewell Brunch at the Court of Two Sisters complete with jazz trio.

We laughed, we saw, we experienced and learnt much but the most enduring memories will be of times shared with 5W friends - both new and old. I do hope to meet you all again some day, somewhere.

A very big Thank You to Mary for your hard work in organizing such a wonderful, friendly and memorable Gathering.

Frances, Australia

