



## PARK PICKS

The Leonard family stayed in a different RV park nearly every night of their cross-country tour. Here are a few of their favorites:

### HACIENDA RV & RALLY RESORT LAS CRUCES, NM

[www.rv-parks-in-new-mexico.com](http://www.rv-parks-in-new-mexico.com)

"They had the best showers and a great breakfast," Kerry says of this park, which is about an hour from the Mexican border, off I-10.

### FORT YARGO STATE PARK WINDER, GA

[www.gastateparks.org/info/ftyargo](http://www.gastateparks.org/info/ftyargo)

This forested retreat, between Atlanta and Athens on Georgia Highway 81, is a charming rustic getaway, but sleeping in the woods made the Leonards nervous. "We're such scaredy-cats," Kerry says. "We were staying there on Thursday, February 12, which meant at the stroke of midnight it became Friday the 13th. When I told my grandmother, it didn't really help her jumpy nerves."

### NORMANDY FARMS FAMILY CAMPING RESORT FOXBORO, MA

[www.normandyfarms.com](http://www.normandyfarms.com)

Kerry calls this 100-acre Boston-area RV park "the nicest place we stayed." It has a gym, a game room, four swimming pools and, as she puts it, "a big souped-up lodge."

## IN IT TOGETHER

This new closeness between grandparents and grandchildren wouldn't have happened without the RV, Mike says: "Being in the RV sort of drew a boundary around the family. We were all in it together. When we sat around at night, it was like, 'Just look at what we have here. Look at this day. Look who's in this room. It's precious.'"

And the close relationship has continued

since the trip. Jack and Marge left their Phoenix apartment and settled into the Chicago suburb of Glenview, right next to Winnetka. Now the grandkids have regular visits. Matt and Margarita drive Jack and Marge to the Arlington Park racetrack to see the horses, and Kerry takes them to dinner about twice a month. During a recent dinner at a local bar and grill, Kerry and her grandparents had such a good time that Jack was worried they'd get kicked out. "A lot of heads were turning," Kerry recalls. "It's not often that you see a 28-year-old woman and two octogenarians out to dinner, wiping tears from their eyes because they're laughing so hard."

In May, the whole crew got together for a week-long reunion tour, taking RVs from Cleveland to St. Louis as Mike did readings and signings for *The Ride of Our Lives*. Marge was self-conscious about meeting readers because she thought the book presented her as a potty-mouthed eccentric. "Maybe I imagine it, but sometimes I think that people look at me funny," she says. "Like, 'What kind of life has she had?'" But readers treated Marge like a celebrity. "They came up and said, 'You're so funny. You remind me of my mother. I wish you could have met her,'" Mike recalls. "She sort of deflected the attention, but you

could tell she was enjoying it." While in St. Louis, they did a live satellite appearance on the *Today* show, during which Marge cracked up former co-host Katie Couric by asking if she had the latest dish on Jennifer Aniston and Vince Vaughn.

For Mike, the book tour was a way to pay tribute to his parents. He loved seeing Jack and Marge soak up the attention. "It was like 'Fanfare for the Common Man,'" he says. "These aren't famous people with a monument made in their honor, but they gave me a happy childhood, and that's worth some applause." **RV** [www.mike-leonard.com](http://www.mike-leonard.com)

... AND THE ROAD AHEAD (from left) Jack tests out his lobster lunch in New London, Connecticut; Megan with Josephine Ann in Chicago; Margarita, Marge, Matt and Jack meet the newest member of the family; proud grandpa Mike with Josie.

