



Randy Brooks

...Back in Branson after hanging from the cross in role of Jesus in “The Promise.” He starred for 30 years in Glen Rose, Branson and New York and Europe.

THE IDLE AMERICAN

Away From It All...

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

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If we weren't totally "away from it all," we were on the outskirts, kind of like the characters in the delightful 1953 Broadway musical "Brigadoon."

Only the long of tooth remember the tale of two New York guys stumbling across a delightful village in the highlands of Scotland that came alive for only one day each century and very much alive it was with love, music and goodwill.

That was the atmosphere our church group of 40 senior adults found in Branson, MO, where we enjoyed four blissful days, opting to let the rest of the world deal with its many problems....

Oh, the outing--called "Meet You in Branson"--didn't start out well. Our soon-separated "convoy" may well have traversed four states at various times on the 465-mile trek.

Smiles and good cheer abounded, though, and we were Lord-favored by perfect weather, grand entertainment, delightful hosts at the smallish Carriage House Inn and even hints of approaching fall. Crisp mornings seemed tailor-made for strolls, even if short ones.

There were scant signs of leaves abandoning green for flaming colors of red, orange and yellow. Even without the breathtaking foliage soon to envelope the Ozarks, there still were enough "trip highlights" to illuminate an airport runway....

For Randy Brooks , it was nothing short of a homecoming. Now living in the Metroplex-- the man who played the original role of Jesus in "The Promise," a long-running pageant in Glen Rose, TX--thrilled us in song.

During our Sunday visit to the College of the Ozarks, he warmed many hearts with a hymn-sing in the beautiful Williams Chapel that was built by students over a 12-year period in the 1940s-1950s. (Following Glen Rose, Randy played the Jesus role in Branson for several years, winding up with another long run in New York City before COVID spelled the end of the pageant in Europe. He felt it was time to end the 30-year run, but still sings for various groups. He does so without solicitation, and at age 71, is ever popular.)....

We dined at COFO's Keeter Center, where culinary students are trained to prepare sumptuous meals. It was a stunning buffet, with the dozens of student servers pausing to sing "The Doxology" for our mealtime prayer.

Speaking of food, all was super-good We particularly enjoyed Pickin' Porch Grill and Danna's BBQ....

Pickin' Porch is tucked away at the back of the Branson Craft Mall, a place known for its gigantic rocking chair in front. We cast our vote with locals who claim its hamburgers to be THE BEST. Coupled with uniquely-flavored French fries, the combo is incomparable....

“Queen Esther” was worth the trip. We saw the 670th performance of its nine-month, 679-show run. More than 6,000 attended sold-out performances for five shows during the final full weekend.

“David,” called master poet, fearless warrior and anointed king, opens March 8, 2025, running through January 3, 2026. The Sight and Sound Theater continues to set the standard for bible-based productions, having done so since opening in Branson in 2008.

Our bunch loved SIX, a half-dozen brothers whose “production” of instrument-like sounds is as impressive as their grand voices. They also raved about Pierce Arrow’s Decades Show, Nashville Roadhouse and acrobats of China....

Motel management turned over the lobby to us for Brooks’ mini-concert on our final night.

We crowded chairs into the small lobby to enjoy Randy’s songs. This tied a ribbon on our trip. When the songs ended, the motel staff served ice cream and cake to our group!

There were no accidents, reports of sickness or disharmony of any kind. Friendships were strengthened and new ones made. I didn’t hear the word “politics” one time. One guy did lose his comb, though. He didn’t need it, anyway, but maybe he liked to carry it as a reminder of that long-ago time when he had a good stand of hair....

Dr. Newbury, longtime university president, continues to speak and write. The Idle American, begun in 2003, is one of the nation’s longest-running syndicated humor columns. Contact: 817-447-3872. Email: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Website: www.speakerdoc.com.