

Meeting Nola Rae By Robin Estes



Nola Rae!! International Mime Artist!!! Featured staff member!!!! He would entrust such precious cargo to me! And a question-How do you talk to a mime for five hours?

I told him before he made such an important decision he needed to know a few things about me. First, I had never been to Chicago's O'Hare Airport and anything that had the name Chicago and involved driving scared me to death. Second, I am easily lost. My kids say, "Travel with mom and see the world." If she didn't mind possibly visiting Indiana or Michigan before Wisconsin, I'd give it a try. Being the brave clown that he is- Richard said, "Go for it."

On the appointed June morning I actually found O'Hare Airport and the correct terminal without getting lost! Lookin' good! We didn't know each other so I came prepared. As the passengers came out I held up my "Nola Rae" sign as I had seen done in countless movies. There are a lot of people who

come through those doors! Finally a tiny sprite of a lady came through the doors and looked around. Her face lit up with a big smile as she saw my sign and she began talking. Yes-Mimes do talk!

When we got in the car I explained about being directionally impaired and we began our Great Adventure. As we drove around the airport roads we both tried to decipher the signs and arrows looking for one that said Route 90 - West - to Wisconsin. We found one that said Chicago and I explained - No Way - I'm not going there! We circled the entire airport and came to a dead end. I was lost INSIDE the airport!

We turned around in a lot reserved for limos and cabs waiting their turn to pick up passengers. We smiled and waved and laughed a lot. In desperation I took the Chicago exit. At least we would be out of the airport! Duh! Just past that exit there was the sign, Route 90 - West - to Wisconsin. We were on our way.

The rest of our trip to La Crosse was really uneventful. Nola was delightful and funny. She has a really wicked sense of humor as anyone who has seen her perform knows. We did stop at the Cracker Barrel for lunch and I introduced her to turnip greens. She said she had never eaten leaves before but they were quite good.

I had a wonderful week at Camp and Nola stole everyone's heart and left us all with sore muscles. I actually got her back to O'Hare on time-first try-and found my way back out.

You know, now that I think about it, the next year she flew right into La Crosse. I wonder why?
