



ESCAPEES - CHAPTER 29 CAROLINA ROVERS OCTOBER 2018 NEWSLETTER



President, Craig Rickenbach
SKP#72083
[REDACTED]

Vice-President, Steve Gerner
SKP#94654
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Secretary, Don Smart
SKP#107136
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Treasurer, Terri Wirtz
SKP#93910
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Officer at Large, Steve Masterson
SKP#95338
[REDACTED]

Officer at Large / Rally
Coordinator - Bruce Long
SKP #60805
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Newsletter Editor, Dianne Wood
SKP #113382
[REDACTED]



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Fall Rally, at Palmetto Cove, was a great success. Lots of food, fun, food, and more food. We had a total of twenty-three rigs attended with thirty-eight members, two guests, and six new rigs join Chapter 29. We even had visitors from Mississippi and Pennsylvania who joined our chapter. I want to thank Linda Stevens and Bruce & Connie Long for organizing the Rally. Priscilla & Steve Phillips, who were co-hosts, could not make the Rally due to health issues. We wish them speedy recovery. Apparently there was this easy hike that several members went on together, at least that's what the literature said. I heard differently. Because of past experiences with hurricanes, the Chapter had finally gotten the locations repositioned so Fall Rally would be held on the West side of NC/SC. Then Florence came along which was predicted to go thru Palmetto Cove. We were all waiting with baited breath. We dodged a bullet with no damage to the Cove, then we had a member do a test drive to the Cove. We were informed a bridge was out that was supposed to be completed during the hurricane time. Panic two. After many phone calls, being passed from one DOT department to another, I actually got to talk to one who said "I know that bridge, I'll send you the truck route around bridge". Fortunately it only effected those members coming thru Charlotte. All was a go again.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (continued)

During the Spring Rally 2019, per our By-Laws and Standing Rules, we will hold election of new officers for Vice President and Treasury positions. Please inform Steve Gerner [REDACTED], Nominating Committee Chairperson, if you are interested. A list of Duties and Responsibilities, for each position, are included in this Newsletter.

We are specifically looking for Rally hosts for Fall Rally 2019 at Bear Creek RV Park & Campground in Asheville, NC. Please let Bruce Long [REDACTED], Office-at-Large/Rally Coordinator know of your interest. Rally Host Duties & Responsibilities are included in this Newsletter. If you are interested in volunteering as a Rally Host in the future please inform us of such a desire.

The chapter is always looking for new campgrounds and places to visit during Rallies. Please forward suggestions to Bruce Long [REDACTED], Officer-at-Large/Rally Coordinator. A list of Campground Requirements are included in this Newsletter.

Spring Rally 2019 – Spring Rally 2019 will be held at Raleigh Oaks Resort, Raleigh, NC April 4 thru 7. Rally Hosts will be Mike & Lorraine Tasto and Craig & Marie Rickenbach. Campground Deposit amount will be \$50.00 at time of reservation with a per night rate of \$45.00. Campground does not expect to have a rate increase but their corporate owners changed the discount rate from 15% to 10% thus the slight increase in per day fee from last Newsletter. They could only set aside 25 sites which we have to release back to the campground 30 days prior to Rally. Once these 25 sites are reserved further reservations will be at a first come first serve basis of any sites available which will still be at the Rally rate. We need to identify ourselves as Carolina Rovers, Escapees Chapter 29 at time of reservation. Their cancellation policy is: 7 days before scheduled arrival date is a full refund minus processing fee of \$25.00, less than 7 days' notice you forfeit the full deposit. Please reserve your site **ASAP** so you can be with our chapter. Campground has said these dates are the start of the Weekend Warriors and they fill up quick. We are planning something new A Pig Pickin' Dinner cooked on site.

ACRE (All Chapters Rally East) 2019 – ACRE 2019 will be held at Pine Mountain RV Resort, Pine Mountain, GA. Boot Camp is scheduled for April 26 to 28. Actual ACRE is April 29 to May 5. Rally fee will be \$65 per person. Call the campground to make your reservations (706-663-4329). The camping fee will be \$44 per day. Go to www.skpacre.com or email skpacre@gmail.com for more info. Please mark your calendars. ACRE is a blast!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(continued)

Fall Rally 2019 – Fall 2019 Rally will be held at Bear Creek RV Park & Campground, Asheville, NC October 3-6. This campground is in the heart of fall color change and as such fills up fast. We have 30 sites set aside but they request that reservations be made by July 1, 2019. Mention that you are part of the “Carolina Rovers’ Rally”. As of this writing the daily rate will be \$45.00 per day.

During the Chapter General Membership meeting I talked about the fact that campground fees are going up. It is getting difficult to find campgrounds that have the facilities we need, thus we wind up in “Resorts”. Also campgrounds are requiring disclaimers stating that “Campground rates are subject to change”. We do not sign any contracts that force campgrounds to hold rates. We are too small and could not suffer the guaranteed income a campground could require in a contract.

Craig Rickenbach
President
SKP #72083



Chapter Job Descriptions For Spring Rally Elections

ESCAPEES RV CLUB

Job Description: **CHAPTER VICE PRESIDENT**

Job Summary:

As a volunteer, elected position, the vice president assumes the duties of the chapter president in his/her absence and oversees membership.

Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Assume the duties of chapter president in his/her absence.
2. If insurance is required for a rally/event, contact Chapter Directors.
(See insurance information)
3. Serve as chapter Officer Nominating Committee Chairperson.
4. Obtains two volunteers to serve as an Audit Committee to work with treasurer to audit the financial records once a year at Spring Rally.
5. Sends welcome letters to new/potential members from Escapees National Office and answers inquiries from chapter Website.
6. Serves as the chapter Membership Committee Chairperson.
7. Other duties as may be necessary.

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Chapter Job Descriptions For Spring Rally Elections

Job Description: **CHAPTER TREASURER**


Job Summary:

As a volunteer, elected officer, the chapter treasurer maintains the financial records of the chapter.

Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Maintain an accurate account book. Computer bookkeeping is acceptable.
2. Timely deposit all money in the proper bank account.
3. Timely update the ledger, including the source of entry and the date.
4. Pay authorized bills in a timely manner.
5. Keep copies of receipts of income and expenditures for seven years.
6. Maintain chapter bank accounts, including reconciling of each account with its bank statement.
 - a. Notify the bank when there is a change of officers who sign the checks.
7. Give a treasurer's report at each chapter and executive board meeting.
8. Produce a balance sheet at least once a year to be published in the chapter newsletter.
9. Send Annual Treasurer Report to Chapter Directors. Form is located: <http://www.escapees.com/Chapters/ReportingForms.aspx>.
10. Assume the duties of Membership if there is no designated Membership Chair.
11. Maintain an accurate inventory and location of all chapter property.
12. Assume the duties of the president in absence of the president, vice president, and secretary.
13. Other duties as may be necessary.

614(1012)

- a. Signs up new members and collects appropriate dues. Sends new member info to Newsletter/Directory Editor for updating of databases.
- b. Maintains list of current paid members and records of current/future dues payments made by members.
- c. Registers members, collects fees, pays bills and creates financial report for Rallies.
- d. Maintains Primary ownership of bank account and insures that a current officer is co-owner on the account.
- e. Maintains inventory and places orders of shirts/patches.
- f. Works with Audit committee, organized by VP, to audit the financial records once a year. Then forwards Annual Treasurer Report to Chapter Officers.
- g. A 990 worksheet shall be completed and emailed to National Escapees by January 31 each year. This is to keep our chapter in compliance with IRS rules regarding organizations. National Escapees handles the reports to the IRS for all chapters. Currently, the report shall be sent to Teresa Moore 

Chapter Job Descriptions

Rally Hosts

Job Summary:

As a volunteer, the rally host (along with a co-host) will plan the chapter rally for enjoyment of chapter members and other Escapees members.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Things to consider while planning a rally. Add/subtract items as you progress thru the planning.

- Before the rally create a to-do list and assign tasks between the rally masters.
- Visit local Information Bureau to ask if they are able to make up local information bags. They are also a great source for recommending local restaurants that can cater meals or handle large groups. They can suggest local attractions to see/visit and activities happening during the rally time frame.
- Call or visit local small businesses, Camping World or RV dealer and ask the Manager if they would be willing to provide door prizes or sponsor a breakfast or dinner.
- Create a grocery list.
- Create volunteer signup sheets. (This is something we have not had to do but is done by other chapters and it promotes people to help)
- Seek advice from Rally Coordinator.
- Greet all guests, making everyone welcome.
- Hosts along with Rally Coordinator will check the condition of the rally site at the end of the rally.
- Hosts will send a rally report to the newsletter editor.
- Meet with the Treasurer at the close of the rally to submit your receipts, get paid and summarize the finances.
- *Have fun too.*

Things that must be included.

- Establish a rally fee, typically \$5 to \$10 per person. Rally fees are generally collected by Treasure during Thursday Registration. Submit a tentative agenda 5 weeks prior to Rally Coordinator for approval for content and potential Budget. Generally an amount being spent over \$100 needs prior Officers approval.
- In preparing an agenda, the following are to be considered. Registration is typically on Thursday, 4:00 – 5:30. Social Hour most days 4:00 – 5:00. Officers Meeting Friday morning 10:00 – 11:00. Membership Meeting Saturday 10:00 – 11:00. All times are just guidelines which can be adjusted depending on other planned activities. President usually sets Officers Meeting date/time which you will be informed of. An Officers Meeting and a General Chapter Meeting MUST be scheduled at every rally.
- Provide a tentative agenda to Newsletter Editor four weeks prior to rally for publication to members and posting to chapter Website. Two weeks prior to rally obtain President's approval of final agenda. Upon approval forward to Newsletter Editor for distribution to members and posting to Chapter Website. If any changes need to be made they can be announced during the Thursday Welcome/Social.

Guidelines for Recommending Campgrounds for The Carolina Rovers Escapees Chapter 29 Rallies October 5, 2018

- Rallies shall be held within the borders of North Carolina or South Carolina unless otherwise approved by the Officers. Spring Rallies shall be held in April on the East side of North Carolina/South Carolina and Fall Rally shall be held September or October on the West side of North Carolina/South Carolina. Rallies may be staged along the borders of Virginia, Georgia or Tennessee with prior Officers approval.
- Campground should have a covered, preferably enclosed, rec area able to accommodate 50 to 60 people.
- FHU are preferred with 30 and 50 amp.
- Proximity to attractions would be nice.
- Cell Phone access is important.
- Wireless access is a nice option.
- Kitchen is nice but not a must have.
- Handicapped accessible buildings.
- Pet friendly.
- Welcome big rigs, can campground handle 45' Motorhomes/5th wheels.
- Inform the Rally Coordinator or any Officer of your recommendations with as much info as possible. Rally Coordinator or Officer will contact campground to verify facilities and negotiate for the Rally.
- Recommending a Campground does not automatically make you the Rally Host. If you want to volunteer to be Rally Host inform the Rally Coordinator or the Office you are informing of your wishes.

..And Now a Word from our VP

Greetings to all "Carolina Rovers"

In June we made a decision to move to a "continuing care community" located in Evans. Having made that decision we found that there were a lot of "things" that would have to be done before making the move. The greater part of our summer has involved making those preparations.

In July we camped at the "Barnyard Flea Market Campground" near Columbia, SC to celebrate Mariann's birthday. We camped on the weekend so that we could browse through the flea market. Unbelievably, we did not buy one single thing!

In August we made a trip to Ebenezer Park where we visited with the Rickenbach's and Brinkers for several days. We enjoyed a nice lunch one day at Sonny's BBQ. There was also a fair amount of time spent just sitting around and chatting!

In preparation for our upcoming move, I made a trip to Birmingham, Alabama in September to deliver several antique radios and other electronic items which I donated to the "Alabama Historical Radio Society". The gentlemen at the society are like little kids at Christmas when you open the back of your truck and they see all of the antiques! The society has an awesome museum located in the Alabama Power headquarters atrium in downtown Birmingham. If you appreciate old radios the museum is a nice place to visit.



One of the antique radios delivered to the society



On the return trip from Alabama I stopped to visit Don & Beverly Jackson and to drop off some of the VA Hospital blankets for them to bring to the rally as I was not sure at the time that we would make the rally. They treated me to a nice lunch at the local IHOP and I was soon on my way home.

..And Now a Word from our VP **(continued)**

The fall rally went well; a good time was had by all. We had many new members join our "family" during the rally and I'd like to welcome them all. The planned trip to the Asheville VA Hospital to deliver the blankets was aborted when Mariann and I decided to turn tail and leave Palmetto Cove two days early due to the impending storm. We did not want to get caught in the mountains as hurricane Michael looked like it was coming up through the southeast and possibly right over top of Augusta and Evans.

Plans are now underway to get the blankets delivered at another time. We will persevere and complete this project somehow!

Hurricane Michael, which had slackened to a tropical storm, did go right over the top of us early in the morning of October 11th. We had a lot of rain and some wind but no serious damage was done in the immediate area as we remained just to the west of the storms "eye".

Our trailer is now being prepared for it's long winter "snooze" but will hopefully be ready in the spring for the rally at the Raleigh Oaks RV Resort in Raleigh, NC. We look forward to seeing everyone at the rally.

I'd like to remind everyone that we will be holding elections for the Vice President and Treasurer positions at the spring rally. I will accept nominations for these positions at any time. Please consider becoming an officer of the Chapter. You may email your nominations to me at XXXXXXXXXXXX@XXXXXX

Lastly, Mariann and I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Steve Gerner #94654
Vice-President



Escapees Chapter 29 Minutes - General Membership Meeting October 6, 2018

Board members present:

Craig Rickenbach, President
Steve Gerner, Vice President
Don Smart, Secretary
Terri Wirtz, Treasurer
Dianne Wood, Newsletter Editor

President:

Craig Rickenbach opened the meeting at 9:18 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and introduction of Officers. Craig then made the following announcements:

- Thanks to Linda Stevens and Bruce & Connie Long, the Rally Hosts, for doing an excellent job staging the Fall Rally.
- Members John & Sue Martin, who live in New Bern, could not attend because of the extensive devastation in their community. Although their home survived, they have a neighbor whose home was destroyed, and who is temporarily living in the Martin's RV.
- The get well card passed around for members to sign was for Jim Jackson, a chapter member who is very active in the club. Jim is in the hospital with a blood clot in his arm.
- Raffle to be held during meeting for two free night certificates donated by the campground.
- Spring Rally April 4-7, 2019 at Raleigh Oaks RV Resort. See newsletter for details. Rally hosts will be Mike & Lorraine Tasto with support from Craig & Marie Rickenbach. Tentatively there will be a pig roast at the rally. There will be a rally fee to be determined. Sky Med will provide breakfast one morning and make a presentation of the Sky Med medical evacuation plan.
- Reservations for the Spring Rally should be made ASAP since the club is limited to 25 sites.
- Fall Rally October 3-6, 2019 will be at Bear Creek RV Park & Campground in West Asheville off I-240. Deadline for reservations is July 1, 2019. Club will have 30 sites. Rally Hosts are needed for the fall.
- ACRE (All Chapters Rally East) will be April 29 – May 5, 2019 at Pine Mountain RV Resort in Pine Mountain, Georgia. It is being held in Georgia and Steve Masterson is the current President of ACRE. Registration for ACRE begins January 1, 2019. Boot Camp, presented by Escapees, will be April 26-28, 2019 prior to the rally. RV Weigh will be available at the same time. Registration for Boot Camp must be completed thru the Escapees.com website. Complete details will be in the newsletter.
- Elections for Vice President and Treasurer will be held at the conclusion of the Spring Rally general membership meeting. A volunteer is needed for Chairman of the Nominating Committee. Question was asked: "Why are dues checks made payable to Terri?" Craig explained the reason for this. Two volunteers, other than Board members, were requested by Craig to meet the requirement for an annual Treasurer audit at the end of the fall membership meeting.

General Membership Meeting

(continued)

- Chapter officer job descriptions will be in the next newsletter and posted on the website.
- The 59th Escapade will be in Tucson, Arizona March 17-22, 2019. Details are in the Escapees Magazine.
- The cost of campgrounds is rising because of the need for bigger campgrounds to meet Chapter needs. It is necessary to go into resorts to find the facilities and amenities needed, and be able to negotiate a suitable number of sites to be set aside for the rallies. Choices are limited.

Secretary's Report – Don Smart

Secretary read the minutes of the General Membership Meeting of April 21, 2018. Motion to accept the minutes was made, seconded, and unanimously passed.

Vice President's Report – Steve Gerner

- Nominations for Vice President and Treasurer are needed. Steve Gerner is not sure he will be able to continue as Vice President. Terri Wirtz is undecided whether she will run again for Treasurer.
- Request was made for two members, other than officers or their spouses, to do the Treasurer audit at the conclusion of the meeting. Michael Tasto and Helen Young volunteered.
- Blankets made at the Spring Rally for veterans in the Asheville V.A. Hospice will be distributed Tuesday, October 9th at 10:00 AM. Chapter members are encouraged to participate.

Treasurer's Report – Terri Wirtz

- There is money in the account
- Congratulations to Linda Stevens and Bruce & Connie for not exceeding the income for the rally. \$3.16 added to the treasury prior to the meeting.
- There is not enough in the account to pay for another free rally. Until remitted dues accumulate, another free rally will not be held. Sufficient funds need to be held for t-shirts, patches, and other expenses.
- The Treasurer's Report will be attached to the next Secretary's Report. Beginning balance \$1,345.38 at April 29, 2017. Ending balance as of October 7, 2018 is \$1,273.96.
- Shirts are still available for members who want them. Terri will check availability of size 4XL for those who want them. We are out of patches. The treasury does not have enough funds to place an order at this time. They will be available at the next rally.
- Terri asked new members David & Robin to introduce themselves.
- The chapter gained 8 new members this year, lost 10 members who did not renew membership.
- If dues are not paid by Spring Rally, members are removed from membership.

General Membership Meeting

(continued)

Officer at Large Report – Steve Masterson (absent)
No report

Newsletter Editor – Dianne Wood

- There are 591 people on the mass mailing list.
- For couples, each individual is now on the mailing list if each has an email address.
- Each year Dianne requests an updated listing of all Escapee members in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Virginia in order to send emails asking if they would like to be added to the Chapter mass mailing list. However, Escapees will no longer provide a list because of privacy laws. We will still be able to pick up Escapees member inquiries thru the Chapter website.
- Members always get emails first, then non-members.
- New directory will be available in couple weeks and emailed only to members. The directory is never posted on the website. Members may decide what information they wish to appear in the directory (Phone number, address, etc). Email address is required to receive the newsletter.
- New member pictures will be taken by Steve Wood for the directory after the meeting.
- New newsletter sections are “Member Classifieds” and “Cautionary Tales.”
- Each newsletter will also include member RV services recommendations.
- Dianne explained what a “convergence” is. Members should email convergence details to Dianne for dissemination to club members.

Sunshine Report – Helen Young

- Card being circulated for Jim Jackson.
- Any member who knows of a happy occasion, illness, etc. should let Helen Young or Dianne Wood know so that the Chapter can send a card.

Old Business – None

New Business

- Group photo to be taken at conclusion of meeting.
- The Rally Coordinator, Bruce Long, would welcome any suggestions for future rally locations. The Rally Guidelines will be published in the newsletter so that each member knows what is suitable. Making a suggestion does not obligate member to contact campground or be a rally host.
- Door prize: #1 Bobbi Jo & Arnold O’Neal #2 Michael & Lorraine Tasto (drawn by Michael Tasto!!)

Meeting adjourned at 10:27 AM.

Don Smart
SKP #107136



Treasurer's Report

October 6, 2018

ESCAPEES Chapter 29		October 6, 2018	
SEMI-ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT		Terri Wirtz	
April 27, 2018 - October 6, 2018			
	Debit	Credit	Balance
Beginning Balance			\$ 1,202.70
Spring 2018 Rally*	\$ (184.40)		\$ (184.40)
Fall 2018 Rally	\$ (166.84)	\$ 195.00	\$ 28.16
Membership dues collected by year			
2018		\$ 15.00	
2019		\$ 70.00	
2020		\$ 25.00	
2021		\$ -	
2022		\$ -	
Membership Dues Collected 2018-2022			\$ 110.00
T-shirts, patches	\$ -	\$ 197.50	\$ 197.50
			\$ -
Ending Balance			\$ 1,353.96
*Spring 2018 Rally expenses prev. reported \$70.77	\$ 70.77		
*Total Spring 2018 Rally expenses	\$ 255.17		

Terri Wirtz, Treasurer
SKP #93910



Note: This is the final report which includes additional rally fees and t-shirt sales which were not included on the version read during the general business meeting.

New Members

Welcome to our new couples who joined Chapter 29 during the Fall Rally! We enjoyed meeting you and look forward to seeing you at our next rally.



Arnold & Bobbi Jo O'Neal



Bob and Linda Thomas



Rick and Gwen Matthews



David & Robin Hyatt



Dwight Berner

Jack and Sue Trimmier
(Picture Unavailable)

Greetings From A Friend

“I received a nice card from my ESCAPEES family prepared at the fall rally. It was signed by a bunch of friends both old and new members. I’m really sorry we couldn’t be at the rally. I broke a front tooth eating corn on the cob. I took my tooth to the dentist to be repaired. A nurse said I needed to be in the Emergency Room. My left arm was swollen up real bad from my shoulder to my finger tips and red. Well, Linda drove me to the hospital Emergency Room. Turns out I had a blood clot in the shoulder. I was put in a room for 3 days and 2 nights. I was on IV’s for Pradaxa and then on Eliquis pills, 2 a day for a week and now on one permanently. My arm is going down in swelling but not back to normal. They checked my Defibrillator/pace maker and it hadn’t been checked since it had been installed a year ago. It was set on 40, the lowest it would go. They increased it to 50 and said it would be set on 60 at a later date. No one could believe I had “fallen through the crack” and it had never been checked. No wonder my blood pressure was so low and my heart rate was low and no one had tried to figure out why. I’m feeling better than I have felt in a year and I’m in a more pleasant mood.

My mother will be 100 on November 25. (1918).”



James JacksonSKP #16911

TRAVELER'S CORNER

Fall 2018

By Ron Johnson #104509



Ron Johnson



Bird Watching at Cages Bend Campground – Gallatin, Tennessee

**Alley Creek Campground
Lake O' the Pines, Texas**



TRAVELER'S CORNER (continued)

By Ron Johnson #104509

Selma, Alabama

Edmund Pettus was a General in the CSA, Grand Duke of the KKK and later elected to the U.S. Senate. The bridge, named for him, opened in 1940. It was the site of the infamous Voting Rights March in the 1960's and a center point in Civil Rights history.

Edmund Pettus Bridge



Live Oak Cemetery is an historic cemetery in Selma, Alabama. Founded in 1829 and expanded in 1877, the cemetery contains a variety of famous burials and a number of Confederate States of America connected features (civilwaralbum.com)

Cemetery Drive way



The graves of confederate soldiers are to the south of the monument and the cannons point toward the north, forever protecting the men who died for their cause.

The Confederate Circle Monument

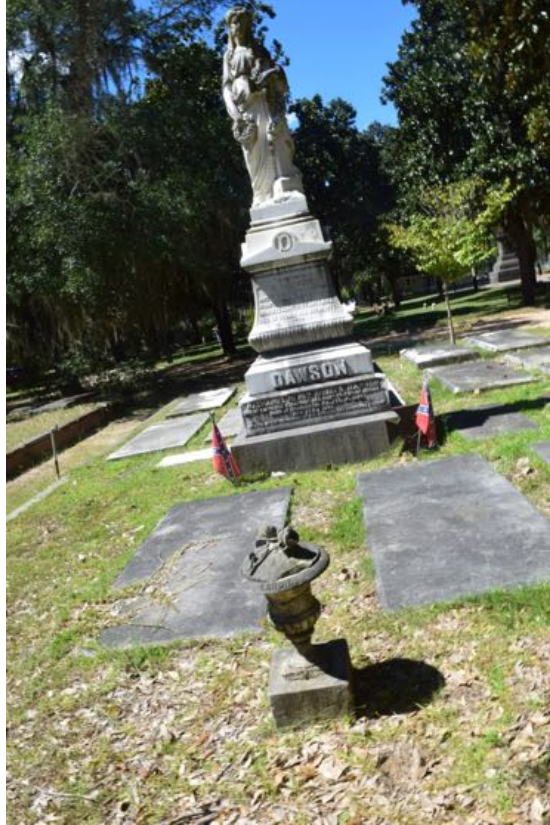


TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Ron Johnson #104509

Elodie Todd Dawson monument and grave: She was the half-sister of Mary Todd Lincoln, making her President Abraham Lincoln's half sister-in-law. One source states the sculpture was named one of Alabama's "most photographed cemetery monuments."

Elodie Todd Dawson monument and grave.



National Infantry Museum – Fort Benning, Georgia

The National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center chronicles the history of the American Infantry from its formation in 1775 to the present (nationalinfantrymuseum.org).

The Hall of Valor pays tribute to American Infantrymen who have received the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest award for bravery. First authorized during the Civil War, the United States Army Infantry has produced more Medal of Honor recipients than all other branches of service combined.

The Vietnam Memorial Plaza contains a ¾-scale replica of the Vietnam Wall on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

(Pictures on following page)

TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Ron Johnson #104509



**National Infantry Museum
and Soldier Center**

Hall of Valor



Heritage Walk

TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Ron Johnson #104509

Vietnam Memorial Plaza – the Vietnam Wall



World Trade Center Beams from 09.11.01



The beam on the left is from floors 93-99 of the North Tower of the World Trade Center. The beam on the right is from floors 77-85 of the South Tower.

TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Ron Johnson #104509

Fort Mitchell, Alabama

The Chattahoochee Indian Heritage Center: The 21-foot-high steel and bronze sculpture represents the Sacred Fire. It is surrounded by other symbols sacred to the Creeks. Four granite blocks represent four ears of corn placed on the fire, and at the base, four granite slabs point in the cardinal directions and represent the four logs of the fire. The entire sculpture is set inside a ring of four planting beds representing the four cardinal directions and holding four large horizontal bronze panels (one shown in foreground) inscribed with names listed on the Creek Indian census of 1833 (encyclopediaofalabama.org).

21-foot-high steel and bronze sculpture representing Sacred Fire



Elberton, Georgia

The Georgia Guidestones is a granite monument erected in 1980 in Elbert County, Georgia. A set of 10 guidelines is inscribed on the structure in eight modern languages, and a shorter message is inscribed at the top of the structure in four ancient language scripts.

One slab stands in the center, with four arranged around it. A capstone lies on top of the five slabs, which are astronomically aligned. An additional stone tablet, which is set in the ground a short distance to the west of the structure, provides some notes on the history and purpose of the guidestones. The monument is 19 feet 3 inches tall, made from six granite slabs weighing 237,746 pounds in all. The anonymity of the guidestones' authors, and their apparent advocacy of population control, eugenics, and internationalism, has made them a target for controversy and conspiracy theories (wikipedia.org/wiki.org).



TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Linda Stevens SKP# 114064

Checking off another trip from my "Bucket List!" It was two months of fun doing Utah state & national parks, monuments, Arizona parks and Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado - 5,284 miles round trip from Asheville NC! I started in the flat lands of Dillard, GA, at the RV Rally in April. From there it was on to desert landscapes, flaming red rocks, beautiful Lake Mead (NV) & Lake Powell (AZ), hoodoos and Indian ruins!

I arrived at Lake Mead and spent some time at Hoover Dam. A few days later, Pat flew into Las Vegas and joined me. Then it was off for the two of us! Our first stop was Valley of Fire State Park in Utah. We drove through, admiring rock formations so red they looked to be on fire - amazing! Then it was on to Zion National Park. We stayed at Zion River RV Resort in Virgin, Utah, which we used as a hub for local trips throughout the week. Thanks to the Corps of Engineers - and the 3 camps of Civilian Conservation Corps 1933-42 - there are roads, trails, flood control devices, an amphitheater, buildings & a stone pillar entrance to Zion. According to the National Park Service, each camp housed about 200 men. Across the country, the CCC put 3 million men to work during the Depression! After the CCC shut down in Zion in 1942, many of these men applied their skills back home and later in the military during WWII. We hiked up to Sunset Point to watch the sunset. Hikes included Emerald Pool, Observation Point, Riverside Walk Trail, and my favorite, Weeping Rock. This was a rock alcove with hanging gardens. Hikers could walk underneath and behind the waters streaming down from above.

Zion NP provides free shuttle buses at 9 different stops every 10 minutes, including areas to hike at all levels of ability. They also provide information for "driving-only" trips, when hiking is not an option.

All four of the Utah National Parks (Zion, Bryce, Capitol Reef & Canyonlands) offer "Dark Sky" viewing areas. Some provide ranger-led programs, too. We checked out the "Dark Sky" area at Zion, and hung out until 10 p.m. enjoying the show. If you go, bring blankets, flashlights and bug spray.

After 5 fabulous days at Zion NP, we headed to Bryce/Zion RV Campground in Glendale, Utah. We hiked mountains near Kanab, making it to the top of Toadstools Trail in the Grand Staircase - Escalante National Monument (<https://www.hikingproject.com/trail/7032489/toadstools-trail>). What an experience! We were glad we had been in fitness classes before the trip! Also, Linda was trying out her "new knee" from surgery four months earlier - it did beautifully! We also took a local-guided tour of Peekaboo Slot Canyon outside Kanab. Our guide was superb. She even took us on an additional climb, which became a great "Outward Bound" experience!

In planning our Bryce Canyon NP experience, we had to consider how to get from Kanab to Bryce with our 38-ft RV & toad. The RV size restrictions on US 12 - Scenic Byway Zion - Mount Carmel Tunnel forced us to go way around to get to Bryce Canyon National Park via Rts. 89 & 12 - an extra 300+ miles! But we got to see beautiful scenery, so it was worth it. At Bryce Canyon National Park, there are also shuttle buses to take you to a number of viewpoints of the remarkable, endless hoodoo formations in red rock. Some of these hoodoos were 10 stories high. The elevation at Inspiration Point was 8300 ft. Bryce is one of the three parks in the "Grand Circle" which everyone should see at some point in their lifetime, the other two being Zion NP and Grand Canyon.

TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Linda Stevens SKP# 114064 (continued)

In Bryce Canyon, we hiked Fairyland & the Rim Trail, both of which offered stunning views of pinnacles & spires on the floor of the canyons.

From Bryce, we went to Kodachrome Basin State Park near Cannonville, UT for more gorgeous geologic formations. As described on the website, "67 monolithic stone spires, called sedimentary pipes, accentuate multihued sandstone layers that reveal 180 million years of geologic time. The color and beauty found here prompted a National Geographic Society expedition to name the area Kodachrome, after the popular color film, in 1948."

While we were in the area, we attempted to hike the Butch Cassidy hide-out, Robbers Roost, near Bryce. Unfortunately, the trail was poorly marked and became impossible to climb. No wonder it was a good hide-out for them!

Our next journey was on Scenic Highway 12 to Torrey UT and Capitol Reef National Park for 2 days. We stayed in Torrey at Wonderland RV Park. We marveled at Torrey's ingenuity at budget-cutting, by using a fake Torrey Police officer sitting in his cruiser, watching for speeders!!

Capitol Reef is known for its "water pocket fold"- which is a 100-mile warp formed 50-70 million years ago where the Earth's crust collided. This created amazing canyons and wash trails for hikers. Along the Grand Wash trail, we saw petroglyphs. Also, Mormon pioneers in the 1800s-early 1900s carved their names and dates into the sides of the mountain rock along the wash. This became known as the "Pioneer Register."

We took a walk to Hickman's Bridge, but had to skip Cassidy Arch, which was a bit too strenuous for us. However, one could see Cassidy Arch from below, so it wasn't too great a disappointment! At Hickman's Bridge, there was a natural rock formation 133 feet across what is now just a small stream. We also hiked parts of Sulphur Creek, a narrow trail with 3 waterfalls and beautiful views.

In Capitol Reef NP, we traveled to Fruita, an 1880s Mormon settlement where the Fremont River and Sulphur Creek meet. The fruit trees planted there still yield produce for pies & preserves.

From Capitol Reef NP, we took SR Hwy 24 to Panorama Point, and then to Goosenecks Overlook State Park. It was a very small park with a breathtaking view of the San Juan River. There was a Navajo family selling beautiful handmade jewelry on the side of the road. Such roadside merchants are tolerated in the parks but not encouraged. We were able to say a respectful hello and thank you to the aged grandma sitting in the pickup of one of the merchants, making necklaces for sale. We had a sobering conversation with two of the Navajo merchants about the recent takeover of 80% of Bears Ears National Monument for mining/commercial development. They showed us Bears Ears in the distance. It is a sacred region to the Navajo and other tribes. We saw tears in their eyes as they described the pain of losing land after so many decades of preserving it. Like other indigenous tribes, the Navajo do not like their pictures to be taken, so we respected that and moved on.

TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Linda Stevens SKP# 114064 (continued)

Our next visit was to Arches National Park & Canyonlands National Park. We used Shady Acres Campground as our hub RV home. Arches NP has over 200 arches. Hikes to a few can be reached from the main park roads. We stopped for short hikes at Balanced Rock, Delicate Arch and Landscape Arch. In 1991, a 60-ft. slab of rock fell off Landscape Arch, dropping 180 tons of rock to the canyon floor! Landscape Arch is believed to be the longest natural rock span in the world, 290 feet long. We also stopped to see "Double O" Arch, Tunnel Arch, Skyline & Broken Arch. An unforgettable day! Try to go to Arches NP in the middle of the week and early in the morning, as long lines of traffic into the park and the crowds on the trails can make it difficult to fully enjoy the experience.

On the way to Canyonlands, we stopped at Dead Horse State Park, where we hiked to a breathtaking view of the Colorado River and Canyonlands National Park. We learned the tragic story of the park's name and contemplated a mysterious sight on the plateau which sealed the horses' fate.

Canyonlands National Park is one of the best-kept great park secrets in the West, in our opinion. It is divided into 3 "Districts," which are bounded by the Colorado River. We saw 2 of the 3 - "Island in the Sky" and "Needles." The third, "The Maze District" is in a remote area, not accessible except by special hiking permits and providing proof that you can do it on foot! Rangers say it can take three or more days to reach stranded hikers in The Maze District. We started at the northernmost district, Island in the Sky, taking a short hike to Mesa Arch. The Grand View Trail was a 2-mile round trip - as stated, grand views! We took Murphy's Loop deep into the canyon, hiked around the rim of Upheaval Dome (said to be location of meteorite impact), and the Green River Overlook, 6000 feet high.

We drove the "Trail of the Ancients" through the Indian Creek Corridor to the Needles District. Needles is at the southern end of Canyonlands NP. We stayed in the Blanding/Monticello area. The Needles area was carved out by the Colorado River 195-200 million years ago. In Monticello, we drove through Monument Valley, viewing large formations in rocks carved by wind on sandstone. The shapes were named Hen on Nest, Lady in Tub, Castle, Soldiers, & Battleship. The curving roads to the overlook included signs like "Watch for wildlife on Roads" and "Free Range Cattle." Indeed, we came upon cows on the road, nothing more. We hiked around Needles Overlook but the walk was cut short when black storm clouds came closer, and we forgot how to get off the trail and back to the parking lot! It all worked out with the help of a few fellow hikers!

We also saw "Newspaper Rock" - state historical marker showing carved names and dates similar to the Pioneer Register in Capitol Reef NP.

In Bluff, Utah, we stayed at Cottonwood RV Park. It was a largely barren area with a lot of poverty apparent, along with swirling "dirt devils" & "sand tornadoes".

TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Linda Stevens SKP# 114064 (continued)

While there, we drove the Moki Dugway up a mountain. This ride (car only!!) was recommended to us for the views at the top. Unquestionably, it was the most dangerous part of our trip. Picture this: A steep, winding road, 11% grade, two lanes. Narrow curves. On the right side of the road, cars are pressed against the mountain. On the left side, there is a steep cliff drop-off with no guardrails. Halfway up the mountain, around a curve, we met up with a road grader coming down. There was no room to pull over or pass. The driver refused to move out of the way for us to pass him and he kept coming at us. We nearly went into a ditch, hugging the mountain. That man was not about to back off! He came within inches of hitting our car as he passed - AND he nearly went off the cliff on the opposite side! We were pretty shaken up. The cars behind us were stopped as well, as we tried to figure out our maneuvers. We think the road grader driver got an earful from the other motorists as he continued to "snake" his way down the road. We couldn't understand why there wasn't a road crew managing traffic, but we were glad there were no casualties. Because of the road grading work, we never did get to the top of the road for the view. Very scary!

Later we drove to the Anasazi State Park Museum, to see Puebloan artifacts, a museum and the Coombs Village site, an ancient Anasazi village. We also went to Natural Bridges National Monument, located west of Blanding, Utah, where folks could drive to bridge areas, take short hikes to bridge formations and picnic.

We were urged by friends to travel to Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado, a brief trip from Bluff, and the drive was well worth it! As described on the website, there are "well-preserved Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings, notably the huge Cliff Palace. The Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum has exhibits on the ancient Native American culture. Mesa Top Loop Road winds past archaeological sites and overlooks, including Sun Point Overlook with panoramic canyon views. Petroglyph Point Trail has several rock carvings." We took the ranger-led narrative tour along the Pueblo ruins, where there were 8 "kivas" - square towers - with round dwellings & about 60 rooms! These were built by hand using molded bricks, under towering rock ledges, with access from below using "hand to toe" climbing above the cliff face! Later, rope ladders were added to scale the walls. There were storage areas and gathering places built, as well.

The museum at Mesa Verde NP was amazing. Decades ago, scientists constructed dioramas showing, in miniature, scenes of everyday Puebloan life at the Cliff Palace and surrounding area. The dioramas depicted how houses were built using thatched roofs, women grinding grain after the harvest, underground temple rooms, crescent-shaped villages and a Sun Temple that marked the seasons! It is believed that the Cliff Palace was abandoned as Puebloans left the area due to many years of drought.

We then left Utah and headed to Page, Arizona for some fun in the Lake Powell area. On the way to Page, we saw parts of the Vermillion Cliffs National Monument, with stunning views of sandstone carved into beautiful swirling shapes and colors creating striations in the rock and colorful patterns in the mountains resembling Navajo blanket weavings.

TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Linda Stevens SKP# 114064 (continued)

In a trip full of fantastic beauty, our time at the Upper Antelope Canyon Navajo Tour ranks at the very top! <https://navajotours.com> We discovered that, at the height of tourist season, you have to reserve months ahead to get a spot when the light is best inside the canyon (shh... the best times are between 12-2 pm). The Navajo own the canyon, and control this guided tour with buses and knowledgeable tour guides throughout the day. Even though it was crowded going through the slot canyon, the guides were excellent at helping us get fabulous photos of a truly magical, spiritual world. During our 9:30 tour, there was added excitement when a snake dropped from above, landing on a tourist's head! The area was evacuated immediately so that a tribal member could (respectfully) remove the snake with a stick and take it outside. The snake was harmless, but tell that to the unlucky tourist who got to know it up close and personal! (There is a Lower Antelope Canyon tour, but it involved climbing ladders and stairs, so we opted for the other tour.)

We ended our tour of the "Grand Circle" at the North Rim & South Rim of Grand Canyon. We stayed in Williams AZ. We did a lot of hiking at the North Rim, and enjoyed the less populated viewing areas, compared to South Rim the next day. While both rims were beautiful, we found South Rim to be too commercialized and way too crowded with tour buses for our taste. If you can do only one, we suggest North Rim between May and September.

Our last stop together was for 5 days in the Sedona area; we stayed at Thousand Trails in Cottonwood. We saw three of the famous vortex sites around Sedona, watched the sunset next to the local airport, checked out the winery trail and shopped/ate in Sedona! After Pat flew home from Phoenix, I stayed in Sedona two more days, to visit the 4th vortex site and get ready for the long trip home!

Over the next six days, I traveled home with the kitties to North Carolina. In conclusion, I was continually amazed by the beauty all around us in southern Utah and Arizona. Mother Nature has spent eons working her magic! I'm thankful for the opportunity to complete another journey on my "Bucket List!"

Linda Stevens
SKP# 114064



Note from Editor: Rather than including Linda's pictures with her articles, I chose to place them in collages at the end of her article. I'm sure Linda would love to share more stories and pictures if you'd ask.

TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Linda Stevens SKP# 114064 (continued)



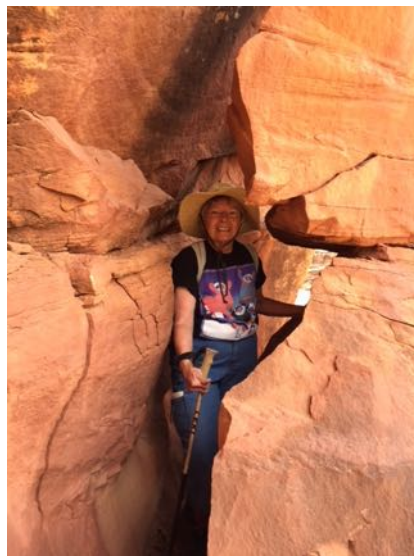
Slot Canyon in Kanob



Toad Stools Wash Trail



Peek-a-boo hole in rock



Close quarters on a hike



Balanced Rock / winds wore away sandstone forming the boulder balancing

(Continued on Next Page)

TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Linda Stevens SKP# 114064 (continued)



Mesa Arch



Canyon floor as far as the eye can see



HorseShoe canyon as the Green River formed



Storm coming at Needles Overlook

TRAVELER'S CORNER

By Linda Stevens SKP# 114064 (continued)



Slot in Page, AZ slot



Navajo Guide, Page AZ



Made it to the top of the mtn. with views below - arms outstretched....what a new knee performance!



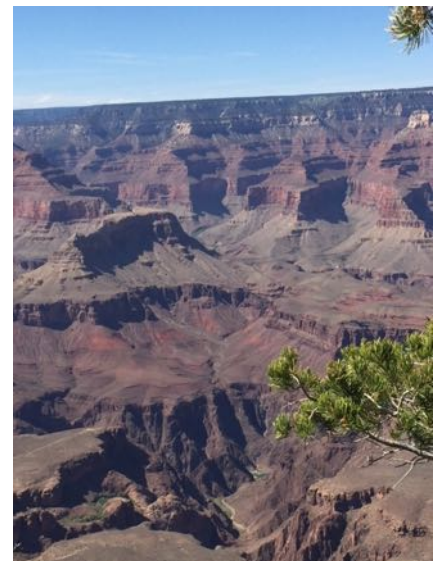
Amazing rocks/canyons - flat to.....



.....towering Grand Canyon



Grand Canyons



RV History

A friend sent me a link to this Smithsonian article about the history of RVs. It's a little long for our newsletter but below is a link so that others might enjoy it.

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/brief-history-rv-180970195/?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=socialmedia

Hugs
Terri Wirtz #93910



Classifieds



This is a new section provided for chapter member's use. If you would like to list something for sale, please provide detailed information, member name and contact, and pictures. Members are asked not to list more than 5 items.

2018 Fall Rally Pictures

Due to the length of this newsletter, the 2018 Fall Rally Pictures are not going to be placed in the newsletter but will be published on the Carolina Rovers website instead. You may find the pictures in our website:

<https://carolinarovers29.weebly.com> Tab: Rallies

Cautionary Tales

Shock Absorbers for Towable RVs

This article applies specifically to those towable RVs with OEM Lippert Industries standard shock absorbers installed, although it could apply to other towable RVs.

During my monthly chassis inspection I found one shock absorber on my Heartland Big Horn Fifth Wheel disconnected from the frame. Because the RV had about 40,000 miles on it I decided to replace the shock absorbers which raised the question of should I use the same OEM shocks as replacement, or install an upgraded, sturdier shock.

Even when the RV was new, the OEM shocks seemed weak, doing little to reduce “hitch surge” caused by the motion of the trailer feeding back to my tow vehicle.

My Research indicated the Monroe Gas Magnum Shocks (555001) would probably be a good upgraded replacement for only a few dollars more per shock than the Lippert standard shocks.

Because I was not sure the replacement shocks would fit on my RV I purchased two at Pep Boys and two at NAPA, in the event I had to return them. I paid just north of \$50.00 per shock but the same shocks can be purchased on line at a lower price.

The Monroe 555001 shocks were easy to install. The problem was removing the old shocks (no surprise) and I ended up cutting the old shocks, just for expediency.

Specifications I considered during my research were the shock’s compressed length, extended length, and the length of both stem mounts. Another important consideration is whether the new shocks installed would require additional bushings.

(Continued on next page)

Cautionary Tales (continued)

When comparing shocks I could find no commonality in some specifications between the different shocks. For example, the OEM shocks were rated at a specified PSI, but the Monroe shocks were rated at tensile strength.

At time of this writing I have towed the RV about 2,000 miles and have been pleased with the Monroe shock absorbers.

If you are considering replacing shocks on your towable RV the Monroe 555001 shocks may be a good choice for an RV up to about 15,000 pounds (my RV GCWR is 15,500). For RVs over that weight, such as the Heartland Landmark, or the Jayco Pinnacle reviews I read seem to suggest the Bilstein brand of shocks may be a better choice because of the RV weight.



Ron Johnson #104509



Editor's Note:

Cautionary Tales includes reports on issues that we as RVers need to be aware of on the road or through RV internet sites. As an RV family, it is our responsibility to pass on information to each other and help us all stay safe on the road. As we publish these in the newsletter, they will also be posted on our web site for future reference. Thanks this month to Ron Johnson for his submission.

RV Service Listings

We are providing chapter members with a list of RV service centers / businesses that we have used that we would recommend. Below is the list we collected so far. If anyone wishes to add to this list, please send to me and I'll repost in the January Newsletter. Please include the vendor's name, address, phone number, and email and website if available. Member contributor's names are in { } in case you need more information. This list will also be posted to our web site.

Note: This list was not sanctioned by Escapees, Inc. or Chapter 29, but merely provided for the assistance of our members while traveling.

- AZ *Unlimited Collision & RV, 8112 North 75th Ave., Peoria, AZ 85345* {Raymond Nuzzolo}
623-979-7565 www.unlimitedcollisionaz.com Attn: Matt Gorges
- FL *Randy's Mobile RV Service, Inc., Howey in The Hills, FL 34737* {Raymond Nuzzolo}
352-324-0288 407-497-7266 (Cell) Attn: Randy
- GA *Maxie Price RV - 4601 Atlanta Hwy, Loganville, GA 30052* {Don Jackson}
770-554-2000 maxiepricerv.com
- NC *Bob's RV Repair , 5929 Old Greenlee Rd., Marion, NC* {Jan Austan}
828-724-4522 or 828-460-7352
bobsrvbodyshop.com
- NC *Shaw RV , 1650 US HWY 1, Youngsville, NC 27596*
919-556-6553 shawrvnc.com
- NC *GGT RV (Golden Gait Trailers), 5051 Davidson Hwy, Concord, NC* {Steve Wood}
28027 704-743-5280 goldengait.com
- NC *Country Roads RV Center- 2609 Enterprise Rd, Lexington, NC 27295* {Steve Wood}
336-775-2100 CountryRoadsRVCenter.com
(Does not service motorhomes (engines) - 5th wheels, travel trailers, and house portion of motorhomes only)
- NC *RV & Camper Refrigeration, Inc., 5808 Stockbridge Drive*
Monroe, NC 28110 704-821-9119
www.rvcrcarolina.com www.coolyourcmper.com
Attn: Sam Obermiller
- NC *Truck Fleet Painting (for body work), 5301 Stowe Lane,* {Steve Wood}
Charlotte, NC 28262 704-455-5315 truckfleetpainting.com
- NC *Snider Fleet Solutions (tire service), 300 E. Meadowview Rd.,* {Steve Wood}
Greensboro, NC 27406 336-275-7188
(Note: this is a national company and more locations can be found
by visiting sniderfleet.com)

Carolina Rovers - Upcoming Events (continued)

2019 Spring Rally - Chapter 29

When: April 4-7, 2019

Where: Raleigh Oaks RV Resort
527 Highway 701 South
Raleigh, NC 27524

Rally Hosts: Mike & Lorraine Tasto
[REDACTED]
Craig & Marie Rickenbach
[REDACTED]

Rally Fee: TBD

Campground Fee: Deposit \$50.00; early/late rate \$45.00 per night

Name of Group When Making Reservation: Carolina Rovers - Escapees Chapter 29

Phone: 919-934-3181
www.raleighoaksvresort.com



Disclaimer - Although not expected, campground rates are subject to change.

2019 Fall Rally - Chapter 29

When: October 3-6, 2019

Where: Bear Creek RV Park & Campground
81 South Bear Creek Rd.
Asheville, NC 28806

Rally Hosts: Notify any Chapter 29 Officer if you are interested in serving as a Rally Host.

Rally Fee: TBD

Campground Fee: \$45.00; early/late rate, per night

Name of Group When Making Reservation: Carolina Rovers Rally

Phone: 828-253-0798
www.ashevillebearcreek.com



Disclaimer - Although not expected, campground rates are subject to change.

HOW TO DRIVE IN ATLANTA

1. You must first learn to pronounce the city name, Atlanta. Old-timers are still allowed to call it Alana.
 2. The morning rush hour is from 5:00 am to noon. The evening rush hour is from noon to 7:00 pm. Friday's rush hour starts on Thursday morning.
 3. The minimum acceptable speed on I-285 is 80 mph. On I-75 and I-85, your speed is expected to at least match the highway number. Anything less is considered 'Wussy'.
 4. Forget the traffic rules you learned elsewhere. Atlanta has its own version of traffic rules. For example, Ferraris and Lamborghinis owned by sports stars go first at a four-way stop. Cars/trucks with the loudest muffler go second. The trucks with the biggest tires go third. The HOV lanes are really designed just for the slow Floridians passing through who are used to hogging the left lane everywhere.
 5. If you actually stop at a yellow light or stop sign, you will be rear ended, cussed out, and possibly shot. Unless there is a police car nearby.
 6. Never honk at anyone. Ever. Seriously. It's another offense that can get you shot.
 7. Road construction is permanent and continuous. Detour barrels are moved around for your entertainment pleasure during the middle of the night to make the next day's driving a bit more exciting. Generally, city roads other than the main streets have more potholes and bumps (usually speed bumps) than most dirt roads in the countryside.
 8. Watch carefully for road hazards such as drunks, possums, skunks, dogs, barrels, cones, furniture, cats, mattresses, shredded tires, squirrels, rabbits, and crows.
 9. Be aware that spelling of street names may change from block to block, e.g., Clairmont, Claremont, Clairmonte.
 10. If someone actually has their turn signal on, wave them to the shoulder immediately to let them know it has been "accidentally activated".
 11. If you are in the left lane and only driving 75 in a 55-65 mph zone, k, e.g., you are considered a road hazard and will be "flipped off" accordingly. If you return the flip, you'll be shot.
 12. If you drive or pull a camper expect to slam on your brakes every block or so. The vehicle 5 lanes over will want to take the off ramp, do not blow your horn, you will be shot.
- MOST IMPORTANT:** If you get LOST, Look for a road named PEACHTREE... Then you are somewhere in Atlanta.

Submitted by Steve Wood #113382 - taken from FaceBook



50 and Over RV'ers

HONEY WAGONS AND ASSORTED KNOW-IT-ALLS

I believe people are basically good. And they want to help.

And then there are people in RV parks. They are basically good, too. And they want to help. But I sometimes would rather they be in their own campsite at certain points of the camping process. Such as when Karen and I pull into our campsite. Nothing draws a crowd faster than a guy with a long camper in a short camp site. (And I think I speak for campers everywhere when I say pull-thru sites are like little get-out-of-jail-free cards from God). Back-in sites have become a sort of playing field for a really bizarre spectator sport.

A reader asked me recently my top suggestions for surviving the kind of trip we're on. I told her, No. 1, never hike alone. No. 2, expect the unexpected because mechanical failures will and do occur. And 3, people show up in your campsite when you least expect them to, and always when you don't want them to.

When we pull into a campground we apparently give off a scent, like a dog. It's not that we can't back our rig into our campsite. It's just that everyone else thinks they can do it better and faster. And, not to be judgmental, but I sort of find those people really, really insufferably annoying. Nothing brings out the machismo faster than a man who has sniffed out the opportunity to be a hero — especially when there are others around to watch him look like a hero and me look like a newbie.

You can't really tell a fixer "Thanks, but I've got this," because he's got this, too, and his way works better than yours.

MR. EVERYTHINGS

Even more annoying than a fixer is someone who shows up and won't leave. We've had a few of these. One time, a guy was waiting for us in our campsite before we even backed in. Not only does this kind of person want to help get you backed in, he wants to tell you where he's been, what he's done, how much he paid for his rig five months ago and how many girlfriends he had in junior high.

"Traded in a little 50-footer with a hot tub and three bedrooms for this big boy," he said, pointing to his three-story motor home with a deck, a garage and 15 slide outs. "Man, I love retirement. The wife loves it, too (The wife?). Except the camping part of it. So I knew I had to spring for the 100-footer."

"Great, great. How do you get it under low clearance bridges?"

HONEY WAGONS AND ASSORTED KNOW-IT-ALLS

(continued)

"Got me one of those brand new, state-of-the-art, Shrinkage Hydraulic Collapse Systems. This bad boy goes as low as some of those Indian Princess pop ups. That was my first unit a lifetime ago. Now I've got grandkids and I take them fishing with me and we've got sixteen ATVs in the back end so everyone can have a great time, even the wife's great grandmother."

"Great, great, well, I think my wife is calling me for dinner. Haven't had a bite since we got here. Yesterday. DID YOU NOT SEE ME PASS OUT FROM LACK OF FOOD AND INTEREST ABOUT 24 HOURS AGO?"

BLACK TANK NIGHTMARES

Working stiffs like me forced to somehow eke by in a fifth-wheeler are often responsible for things they wouldn't otherwise be responsible for. Like emptying black tanks. You might have seen the improper emptying of a black tank in the Robin Williams movie "RV" (subtitled "The Life Story of Jimmy Patterson"). I don't care how sick your second cousin is, prayer is never more needed than right before you pull the lever that opens the black tank.

The campground we are in this week in Connecticut does not allow the personal dumping of black tanks. Twice a week, they pay a woman - yes, a woman (and no, whatever they pay her is not enough) - to come to the campground driving what is called The Honey Wagon. It is her job to pump out sewer systems in the rigs of customers who pay for her services. I hear by day she's a politician, so when she gets here at night, she's already up to her elbows in the stuff.

Her visits are preceded by a certain aroma that cuts through the night air. It's the kind of smell that makes your wife turn to you and say, "Did you...?" And, just as you are about to turn and say, "Hey now it wasn't me!" out from behind the camper next door speeds Super Honey, riding a Polaris towing the kind of large tank usually reserved for mobile car washers. Except that's not soapy water in there! She wears plastic gloves and a mask and vaguely resembles some sort of sick super hero from a Marvel movie they haven't thought of yet. Hopefully.

HONEY WAGONS AND ASSORTED KNOW-IT-ALLS

(continued)

COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT MY GATE CREW

So, back to dramatic arrivals. Karen leaves little doubt we have arrived in a new campground.

I couldn't do it without her unique hand signals, which bring to mind an eight-year-old trying to learn how to guide a 737 in and out of a gate at Southwest Airlines KidsKamp. My favorite hand signal is when she stands right behind the hitch and extends her arm out straight, perpendicular to her body and parallel to the ground, and then closes one eye and mutters something important. I still don't know what this means.

Since we don't always use a walkie -talkie system, it's often necessary for her to use verbal commands such as, "OK, back up now," and "OK, stop backing up now' and "You need to turn right."

Great, I need to turn right, what? The back of the truck? The front of the truck? What!?

And my favorite, "OK, cut your wheels."

Got it.

I'm just gonna call that know-it-all guy over there who's just dying to come help save the day, thanks.

Jimmy Patterson
Clinton, CT
50 and Over Rv'ers

Note from Editor:

After reading the above article in FaceBook I realize I could relate to each of his situations - and it gave me a good laugh for the day. With Jimmy Patterson's permission, I was able to re-print it here for your enjoyment. Hopefully, he will continue to write and post on FaceBook "50 and Over RV'ers" - takes the pressure off of thinking we were the only ones running into these situations.

Dianne Wood