

THE AMERICAN WAY

American Coach®

CHAPTER OF FMCA

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 2, SEPTEMBER 2008

President's Message

By Chip Aiken

Greetings to all American Coach Chapter Members from Northern Minnesota where Annette and I have spent most of the summer relaxing and playing campground host. As I write this, it's hard to believe that it's late August and summer is on a downhill slide.



It's been more than a month since the pre-rally in Austin, Minnesota and FMCA's 80th International Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota. Unfortunately, we did not have the attendance we would have liked at the pre-rally but, I believe that the members of the 53 coaches in attendance enjoyed themselves. I'd like to thank everyone that attended. I know how costly it is, given the price of fuel these days, to make the trip to these rallies.

Bob and Diana Gay pulled out all the stops to make the pre-rally the best it could be with the facilities we had at the Mower County Fairgrounds in Austin. They worked very hard and, I'd like to thank them for all they did to put on a successful pre-rally. **Thank you very much Bob and Diana!** We had no sewer hook-ups and, air conditioned facilities were in short supply but, everyone made the best of it. We were entertained by the Spamettes with their unique variations of popular songs. As usual, there was no shortage of food. Many toured the Spam Museum on their own. Even though you can only learn so much about Spam, I have to say that Hormel did a real nice job in creating the museum. Ok, I wanted to say it was "tastefully done". A Clam Chowder Cook-off provided lunch one afternoon. See Merritt Mosby's article for more on the cook-off.

We had one American Allegiance in attendance. This was also the first time that we allowed "Buddy Coaches" at the pre-rally. Sheri and George Tomazewski sponsored Angelo and Helen Lapolla in their Pace Arrow. We hope they had a good time and found us to be a friendly bunch.



Twenty-seven coaches caravanned from Austin to the Minnesota State Fairgrounds in St. Paul. We were challenged by road construction, road closures and detours all the way. There always seem to be a few problems with caravans and this trip was no exception. The road construction caused many to be split up and detours added to the frustration of getting there. All this led to a few coaches going astray but, in the end everyone made it without incident. Logistically, there was more confusion when they put the non-electric and 24 hour generator at the very south and southwest corners, the electric at the extreme northeast corner of the grounds, and the American Coach Ambassadors near the western edge. Even though we were all spread out, we had fun socials and enjoyed each other's company.

Continued on page 2

Because of the low attendance, the dealers did not attend the pre-rally but all members were offered an additional cash incentive coupon that they could take to the FMCA Rally and use toward the purchase of a new show coach. Justin Humphreys tells me that the dealers sold approximately twenty coaches during the rally/convention. The dealers in attendance selling American Coach were Lazy Days, Beaudry RV, and Tom Johnson's.

It's my pleasure to introduce the new officers elected at the last pre-rally: Chip Aiken as President, Tony Steller as Vice-President, Annette Aiken as Secretary, Sheri Tomaszewski as Treasurer, and Leslie Pettinger as Western Area Director. Bob Gay is staying on as the Central Area Director, and Jim Graham was elected to the position of Eastern Area Director in addition to being the Immediate Past President. Bill Ferguson will continue as the National Director and Linda Laymon as Alternate National Director. Becky Popp agreed to stay on as the Nominating Committee Chairperson, however, she'll be looking for two new committee members since the existing ones were Annette and Sheri who now have other responsibilities. We also have a new Membership Chairperson, Wendy Holloway. Wendy is a relatively new ACC member and has jumped right in to help out the chapter.

After the election of officers, Marcia Bratsburg stepped forward and volunteered to take on the Eastern Area Director's duties. Pending a By-Law change voted on and approved by the membership, Marcia will be appointed Eastern Area Director. Marcia's already in the thick of things working on our next two pre-rallies with Jim Graham's assistance.

One other By-law change voted on and approved by the membership was the inclusion of the American Allegiance as a qualifying coach for membership in the chapter. We hope to welcome many Allegiance owners in the future.

Ok, by now you may be wondering if this will ever end, but stay with me a little longer—I want to talk about a few very important subjects. The first regards the success of our chapter. In the future, I'd like to survey our members and find out what can be done to improve

our American Coach chapter and to increase the attendance at the pre-rallies. Meanwhile, I know there are many reasons why such a small percentage of members attend each pre-rally. We have all been hit by the rapid rise in fuel costs and I know this has made many rethink how often and how far they travel. I won't elaborate here but, please read Tony Steller's article on the subject. What I want to encourage is for anyone and everyone in the chapter to contact me by email or by phone and tell me what you believe will improve your chapter and what it would take to entice you to attend the pre-rallies. The success of the chapter, support of the dealers and support by American Coach Service all hinge on attendance. I can be reached by email at president@acc-fmca.com or by phone at 952-807-2290. I'd love to hear from you.

Secondly, I'd like to ask everyone to check your membership information and update the address, telephone number(s) and especially email address. Occasionally, we need to send out important and timely information and we're finding many email addresses that are wrong or non-existent. It's *EASY* to update your membership information at our website: <http://www.acc-fmca.com>. Login using your **ACC# as your Username and your last name with the first letter capitalized as your password**. Once logged in, click on "My Details" and you'll see your membership expiration date and all your personal information. *(Continued on page 4)*

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Message from the Vice President

By Tony Steller

Hello and greetings from beautiful downtown Austin Minnesota. I want to thank each and every one of you for your vote of confidence in electing me as your Vice President. It was a short campaign, I made no promises. On the other hand, it is my intent to do all things necessary to continue in the fine tradition of the ACC having a great party and lots of fun. I have been duly briefed on my duties—do's and don't's. Nuff said of politics.

Lynne, my better half, and I joined the ACC in 2003. Our first rally was at the Pechanga RV Resort in Temecula, California. We had a great time and made many friends. Over the years, we became accustomed to the good times everyone was having at the ACC rallies and Austin, Minnesota was more of the same. Thanks to Bob Gay and his crew, everything was perfect—even the cocktail parties. We soon forgot the long drive from California (never-never-land) under the able direction of Merritt Mosby. Thank you, Merritt for the great caravan. We met and partied with many friends that we hadn't seen in a while. The food and the entertainment, especially the "Spametts", were just great. And, the trip to the heart of Amish country was a memorable experience. We could not have come more up-close and personal than driving right onto the Amish farms to view the things they do and make to earn a living the hard way. Thanks Bob, you did a great job for all of us.

On a more serious note, we had 52 coaches at the Austin rally. This was a relatively small number compared to some of the ACC events we have attended in the past. Yet, thirteen coaches - 25 % of those attending - were first timers! A hearty welcome and congratulations to you all! We had a great time.

Because of the low attendance, there were no dealers at this rally. However, the beautiful new 2009 coaches were on display and a coupon was given to everyone as a purchase incentive at the FMCA Rally.

I am an eternal optimist. Many people who did not attend had prior commitments or expressed a concern over the price of fuel, the lifeblood of our coaches. I am convinced that our political leaders have heard the message loud and clear, and steps will be taken to remove the restrictions now in place that are responsible for the high costs of imported "liquid gold".

Oil prices have dropped substantially in recent days and I am betting on the trend continuing, even after Election Day! In the grand scheme of things, fuel costs are still a small part of the cost of traveling in these beautiful coaches of ours. So, dust off that great coach of yours, pull it out of storage and let's get together. Your friends are waiting for you! Traveling in an American Coach is a unique life style. *We have worked hard, raised our children and devoted our life to everyone else except ourselves. So now is the time to come out, enjoy life and see this beautiful country of ours in a way very few can.*

When you receive this newsletter, look at the address label on the back cover. If any of the information is incorrect, or if your email address or phone number has changed, please contact our membership chairperson, Wendy Holloway, with the correct information. And, if you have not paid your membership dues as indicated on the same label, please do so. We hate to loose you. It is OK to pay multiple years in advance and save the hassle.

Thanks for reading these ramblings. Lynne and I hope to see each and every one of you at the next rally. Until then, travel safe and enjoy this great country of ours.

Tony Steller



President's Message, continued from page 2

You can edit and save it yourself, saving Wendy Holloway a lot of work. The website is there for your benefit—I encourage you to use it. If you don't have access to the website but can send an email, send your updates to membership@acc-fmca.com. Please see the message from Wendy Holloway, your new Membership Chairperson, on membership updates. Also, please insure that your dues are up to date. They are always due January 1st and we still have a very large number of coaches not paid for 2008. This is another good reason to review your expiration date on the website.

Last, but not least, please put the next two pre-rallies on your calendar. The first one will be on March 10 – 13, 2009 at the Stone Mountain RV Resort and Park near Atlanta, Georgia. If you have thought about bringing your children or grandchildren to a rally, this may be the one since Stone Mountain offers attractions such as rides, entertainment, and recreation like golf, fishing and hiking. Stone Mountain is listed in Frommer's Guide as one of "500 Places to Take Your Children before They Grow Up". I know there's a kid in all of us. Visit their website for more information at <http://stonemountainpark.com>. Then, next summer, plan to attend the "Coming Back Home" pre-rally in Decatur, Indiana.

Take your coach back to its place of origin. The dates for this pre-rally are July 13 – 17, 2009. This one will be a day longer due to the anticipated popularity of this location. Look for more details in this and the next newsletter from Marcia Bratsburg. Also visit our chapter website at <http://www.acc-fmca.com> to get more information and to register for both rallies. I encourage everyone to register early for both of these popular rallies.

At the Austin pre-rally, Scott and Alice Good volunteered to organize youth activities at any rallies they're attending. In Austin, they had their projector and portable DVD player. The very large white walls of the buildings made for a great backdrop to show movies on a large scale. We had the use of the fairgrounds popcorn maker so everyone who watched the movie had drinks and popcorn. Thank you, Scott and Alice for volunteering. As of this writing they aren't planning to attend the Stone Mountain pre-rally but expect to be in Decatur next summer.

I hope that, wherever your travels take you to, you have fun and enjoy these beautiful American Coaches. See you down the road and hopefully at the chapter website at <http://www.acc-fmca.com>. *Chip Aiken*

And here are some more photos of the Austin rally.



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By Chip Aiken

That being said, I want to personally thank the outgoing officers and chairs for their efforts over the past two years: Jim Graham as President, Doty Graham as Secretary (4 years), Willie Morris, Western Area Director (four years), John Farrell, Eastern Area Director, Ladelle Taylor, Alternate National Director, Leslie Pettinger, Membership Chair. Thank you one and all for your contributions to ACC.



A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a white t-shirt with a graphic, is seated at a light-colored wooden table. She is focused on her work, typing on a laptop. On the table, next to the laptop, is a clear glass vase containing several white lilies. To the right of the vase is a black and white inkjet printer. A small, clear plastic water bottle is also visible on the table. In the foreground, an open magazine or book with several small photographs is lying flat. The background features a wall with patterned wallpaper and a window with horizontal blinds. A white speaker is mounted on the wall above the window. The room appears to be a home office or a dedicated workspace.

Mark Your Calendar for the Decatur, Indiana Rally on July 13-18, 2009!

Coming Back Home is the slogan for our July, 2009 pre rally to the FMCA rally. The North Adams Community School in Decatur has opened up their high school campus for our rally. We will be camping there as well as using the classrooms, cafeteria, tennis courts, and, even the swimming pool. The superintendent of schools, the mayor and the Chamber of Commerce are joining together to welcome you to Decatur. Plans are in progress to make this a super rally with American Coach and your favorite vendor's there to help!



Watch for more information in the next newsletter and online at ACC-FMCA.com and plan on COMING BACK HOME!

A Chance Meeting

by Merritt Mosby

Recently, while parked at Outdoor Resorts in Indio, California, I met Dr. Robert Roper, John Crean's personal physician. The late John Crean was the founder of Fleetwood. Dr. Roper mentioned that John had written an autobiography called *The Wheel and I*. I was very interested in reading it so, he kindly gave me a copy. It turned out to be a very good book.

I've always found small family business to be exciting and intriguing. John Crean's story was both of those things and more. He started with a series of small businesses and ended by turning Fleetwood into one of the largest recreational vehicle manufacturers in the world. Wow!

John Crean was born on July 4, 1925 in North Dakota in the middle of the depression. In his autobiography, he shares tales about staying in a hobo camp with his father when he was a boy, his battle with alcoholism, stealing parts to keep his car running, fights, rowdiness, and a whole host of troubles a kid might go through. In spite of his humble beginnings and troubled childhood, he became a successful businessman.

The book highlights other accomplishments such as creating the Baja 1000, driving racecars, producing movies and hosting a cooking show. He also perfected Venetian blinds for the RV industry.

It was exciting to read about his passion for being a successful RV manufacturer. Beginning with trailers, he created the floor plans, built, marketed and sold them. He built the proto type Bouncer in his shop at home.

John also talks about his love affair with his wife Donna, about his family and of life in Southern California. He even mentions Bill Cosby. There are quips by Steve Allen, Milton Berle, Buddy Ebsen and an introduction by Stan Freberg. The current President & CEO of Fleetwood, Elden Smith is mentioned nine times in *The Wheel and I*.

As an owner of an RV, I think you'll like this book a lot. The book is hardbound, 428 pages and an easy, fun read. You can order a copy by sending \$30.00 (this covers shipping and handling also) and your request to:

Marge Freeman
Crean Family Trust
P.O.Box 8449
Newport Beach, CA 92658

Merritt Mosby

A Message from the Membership Chairperson

By Wendy Sue Holloway

A dues increase was voted on and approved at the Pahrump, NV pre-rally in February, 2008 and will take effect 1/1/2009. Any member wanting to avoid the increase may pay as many years in advance as they'd like at the current rate of \$12.00/year. This offer is good until 12/31/2008. After that the rates will be as follows:

1 Year @ 18.00

2 Years for \$32.00 (\$16.00 / year)

3 Years for \$42.00 (\$14.00 / year)

***** **REMINDER** ***** **REMINDER** ***** **REMINDER** *****

Please look at the address label on your newsletter for your membership expiration date. The date will reflect the **LAST DAY** your membership is current. Since our dues are due at the beginning of each *calendar* year (example 1/1/2009) your label will read 12/31/2008.

All dues should be mailed to:

American Coach Chapter of FMCA

3590 Round Bottom Road

Cincinnati, OH 45244-3026

PLEASE WRITE YOUR ACC # ON YOUR CHECK! I'll be awaiting your monies!!! Wendy Holloway

Treasures's Report

By Sheri Tomaszewski

This is my first "official" Treasurer's Report since being elected at the Austin rally and, I'd like to provide some additional information on our accounting.

Both accounts, the main checking account and the CD account have been reconciled through July 31, 2008. I have just completed an update of the account categories for the 2007 and 2008 rallies so we can have better reporting on all the rallies. This should help us in comparing income and expenses for each rally and assist us with budgeting for future rallies.

The Austin rally has come out almost even, having generated \$207.71 more in expenses than we received from rally fees and the support from the dealers and Fleetwood. Due to our reduced registration for this rally, we had no dealer presence, but Beaudry, Lazy Days, and Tom Johnson were generous enough to pay half the fee they normally would have for coach displays. We really appreciate this support. Of course, we are always grateful for the continued support by Fleetwood. The sponsorship money has a big impact on keeping our rally fees as low as possible.

We all enjoyed a great rally, and hope this challenging economy won't keep you from attending the next one at Stone Mountain. Your support of the club at the rallies really makes a difference in both the financial and fun factors!

Anyone having questions regarding the current Net Worth Report or these comments may contact me at 602-524-1690 or treasurer@acc-fmca.com.

Sheri Tomaszewski

Good News—Bad News

By Justin Humphreys

I hope this letter finds everyone out and about in their American Coach and safe and sound! It has been just two months since we last saw each other in Austin, MN. Time flies when you are having fun!



During the ACC Pre-rally in Austin, MN, we launched our new 2009 Traditions and Eagles for the first time. The response was great, but as always, the feedback was even better. The men's and women's feedback sessions at the rally were extremely valuable as it gave us an immediate response on the new models and features - both good and bad.

As you know, the economy has not been the best these days. In fact, the RV Industry is experiencing the biggest slow-down in almost twenty years. It is during times like these, that companies like ours benefit from customers like you. When times are tough, many of you become our biggest cheerleaders. I get email after email from our owners asking how they can help promote our products or help increase attendance to our rallies. American Coach is very grateful for this support.

Year to date, American Coach is off about 15% in an industry that has experienced a 40% reduction in sales. Because we are outpacing the industry, we have picked up some market share. In short, it is a good news/ bad news update. The bad news is that our sales are down; the good news is we are selling more than the other guys. I am convinced that the reason we have increased market share is in large part due to the support we receive from our owners and clubs.

Despite the tough economic times, there is plenty to be optimistic about. American Allegiance has been a huge success. Last week we introduced a brand new floor-plan for Allegiance, the 42T, at our National Dealer Meeting in Las Vegas. The floor-plan features a full wall slide with a rear bath sporting a huge walk-in closet. In addition, we introduced a new full wall slide in the Eagle and Tradition that feature a passenger side dinette in a full wall slide floor-plan. Both of these floor-plans can be viewed on our website at www.americancoach.com.

We hope to see many of you at the ACA Rally in Tucson this November. It should be a great time for everyone. On behalf of 1,200 hard working families in Decatur, IN, we would like to thank each of you for your continued support of American Coach!

Justin Humphreys

Holding Tank Tips

By Mark Polk

One golden rule for the RV holding tanks is to never dump the black water tank until it is at least two thirds full. You want the tank nearly full so the weight and gravity will force the contents of the tank to drain properly. Another golden rule is to never leave the black tank valve open at the campground and expect the toilet to drain or flush like the toilet in your home. It won't work. When the tanks are full, or nearly full, always dump the black tank first, followed by the gray tank. Dumping the gray water tank last will help to flush the sewer hose out.

You should always use toilet paper designed for use in RV's. This toilet paper breaks down and dissolves in the holding tank chemicals. False holding tank readings on your monitor panel are caused by the holding tank probes being covered by toilet tissue and other debris. If flushing the tank doesn't solve the problem, add some water and a couple bags of ice to the holding tank. Drive around for awhile so the ice cubes can scrub the sides of the tank.

Grease and residue can build-up in the gray tank and cause a foul odor, not to mention how it is affecting the tank and valve assembly. When the tank is empty, you can add some dishwashing liquid and a couple gallons of water to help break down this build-up.

*Mark Polk is the owner of **RV Education 101** and produces how-to manuals and DVD's for RV owners. You can learn more at rveducation101.com.*



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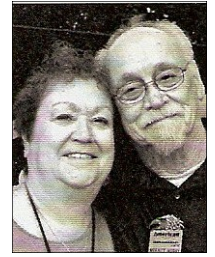
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Heritage

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The Great West Coast Caravan Was Great Fun

By Merritt Mosby



What a fun time we had at the Austin, MN, ACC Rally! But, I'm getting ahead of myself. There were four American Coaches from the west coast that caravanned 1800 miles from Reno, NV to Austin, MN. If we used the mileage from our home, it would be even farther. Cross country caravans are becoming smaller and less frequent but, we had a mission. You see, we were the West Coast Clam Chowder Cooking Team. Bob & Nan Simpkins with daughter Tish and grand-daughter Xzena, Mike & Leslie Pettinger, Lynne Willenburg & Tony Steller and of course Carita and myself made up the participants. Along the way, we stopped at the Great Salt Lake, the Kennecott Copper Mine and the Great Platt Arch. We also had five pounds of fresh Oregon Clams on board.

We arrived at the ACC Rally at Austin, MN on July 3rd, saw the Fourth of July parade, the Spam Museum and some even went up to the Great Mall in the twin cities area. Put your hands together for the rally masters, Bob & Diana Gay. They put on a great rally and the Amish Tour was a huge success as well. All of the new officers, directors and chairs are in place. Thanks for the past leadership and much success for the new régime.

The ACC Austin rally numbered less than sixty American Coaches and the FMCA rally at St Paul numbered just 2,437 member coaches. The RV industry seems to be going through a transition period with many more changes on the horizon, I'm sure. The good news is that American Coach sold twenty-seven coaches between the ACC and the FMCA rallies. Way to go AC. Did you know American Coach was a Super Star Sponsor and covered all of the Tram Services for the FMCA 80th International Convention at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. Thank you, American Coach.

Now, back to the Clam Chowder Cook Off. There were seven contestants; five used clams in their chowder. There was one Gumbo and one Chile. Our team didn't come in first, second or even third. Damn it must take a West Coast pallet to recognize perfection. Congratulations to Jim & Doty Graham for their wining entry. The judges were Kelly Olson with the Mower County Historical Society and Laura Helle with the Hormel Spam Museum. Some of the tables were decorated with seashore themes, the aroma was great and everyone enjoyed a fun experience and a cup or two of "Chowder".

Merritt



Thanks to the ACC Members That Attended the Austin Pre-Rally

Bob Gay, Central Area Director

We want to thank everyone who helped us put on a great rally in Austin, Minnesota. Although we had planned on having more coaches, we understand the reasons for not attending and, we were thankful for the members who made the trip. The pre-rally provided an opportunity for the smaller group to interact and bond in ways a larger group might not have been able to.



There are often glitches in the best made plans of men and our rally was no exception but, everyone pulled together and made our time in Austin memorable. We had great weather most of the week. Those who came early enjoyed the 4th of July activities including a BBQ lunch and the local fireworks display. The "Clam Chowder" cook-off was a lot of fun with Jim and Doty Graham being the winners and everyone enjoying samplings of each of seven different entries. The judges were local gals so there was nothing "set up" so our president would win. A DJ provided music during one evening and the Spamettes performed for us on another evening. We were delighted to see the majority of members having a great time.

There were many people who helped make this rally a success, and though we can't name every one who played a part, there are a few who should have special recognition. Robert and Judy Stevens set the tone for the week with a mixer on the first night. It helped us get out of our comfort zone and meet new people. Throughout the week, we often heard someone call out to another using their mixer names. This is an example of the bonding that took place and so we say, thank you Robert and Judy for a job well done. Bob and Trudy Shafer were a tremendous help in many of the daily tasks of setting up, whether it was ice coolers, covering or wiping tables, decorating, or generally being available for any immediate aid or errand. To you two, we say thanks again.

Recognition and special thanks must be given to Jim and Doty Graham and their grandsons who spent a good deal of time in helping get tables set up. I can't forget the girls who helped with the door prizes. Their assistance was invaluable. A big thank you to all of the members and sponsors who donated the door prizes that helped make this rally a success. Thank you to Randy and his crew, Paul and John from Spartan, Darrell Williams with Carefree of Colorado awnings, the Gold Heat and Girard awnings representatives, Suzie and Justin from American Coach, the ladies who worked the registration tables, the parking crew, those who shared golf carts and "crickets", Ron Osmond and the Mower County Fairgrounds crew, Willy of HyVee and his catering folks, Cheryl Corey and her staff in the Austin Visitors Center. We truthfully could not have done it without you. Last but not least, we thank the members who attended. You made the pre-rally what it was. Thank you for being understanding and positive in your comments. It was a joy working with all of you.



May God bless you and keep you safe as you travel and we hope to see you soon somewhere along the way.

Bob Gay

JOIN US for the 2009 FMCA Perry, Georgia, ACC PRE-RALLY!

By Marcia Bratsburg

Are you ready for LOTS OF FOOD AND FUN? We're gathering March 10-14 at Stone Mountain Park near Atlanta. Stone Mountain is Georgia's largest campground and most visited attraction. Cited by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* as one of "35 Natural Wonders in Georgia You Must See Before You Die," Stone Mountain Park is located just 16 miles east of downtown Atlanta. The five square mile park is home to the world's largest piece of exposed granite! Stone Mountain Park offers a variety of attractions, entertainment and recreation.



Stone Mountain Park offers over a dozen fun, family attractions. Highlights include:

- ♦ Travel to the top of the mountain on the Summit Skyride and experience the most unique view of Atlanta.
- ♦ Be dazzled by the 25th Anniversary edition of the Lasershow Spectacular™.
- ♦ See the sights by land and water during the Ride the Ducks™ tour.
- ♦ Ride the Scenic Railroad on a lively five mile trip around the mountain.
- ♦ Enjoy a cruise around Stone Mountain Lake on the Paddlewheel Riverboat.
- ♦ Experience a movie like you never have before at Georgia's first 4D Theater.



We're lining up entertainment that will have you kicking up your heels while still giving you time to relax and catch up with your ACC family and friends. Bring your kids and/or grandkids. There's fun for the whole family!

You'll be provided breakfast on three mornings, dinner on three evenings and a luncheon for the ladies! Register now for a tour of CNN Studio and the World of Coke. We'll load the bus for a guided tour of downtown to visit CNN, enjoy lunch on your own at the CNN Food Court, and then a walk through Centennial Park to the World of Coke - all for only \$53 per person! Register early for your place among the 52 spots we have confirmed!



GOLF anyone? Sign up for golf at Stone Mountain Golf Club. Jim Graham is lining up a golf outing you won't forget. This is a beautiful course managed by Marriott Golf. For the outdoor lovers, bring your fishing poles and hiking shoes. There is fishing on Stone Mountain Lake or you can **hike** one of Stone Mountain Park's many wooded trails.

Get your FMCA-ACC Name Plaque! See the registration form for an example! Come early! For \$25 per night you can come as early as the 8th! Just call the campground direct at 770-498-5710 and mention you're with the FMCA-ACC Pre-Rally group!

Won't you join us! Register NOW to insure your space!

Marcia Bratsburg



**American Coach Chapter of FMCA Pre-Rally Registration for
March 10—13, 2009
Stone Mountain, Georgia**

Early registration deadline: Jan 30th, 2009--- **Registration Deadline: Feb 10th, 2009.** For early arrival, call Stone Mountain Campground direct at (770) 498-5710. If the rally sells out earlier than Feb. 10th, you will be placed on a wait-ing list and notified by email. All confirmations will be by mail. To be registered for any rally, your registration and payment must be received by the deadline. Cancellations and refunds after Feb 28, 2009, will be considered on an *if possible* basis.

Names of Persons Attending

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

FMCA# _____ ACC# _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (home) _____ Phone (cell) _____

Email address _____

Coach Year _____ Model _____ Length _____

Is this your first ACC rally? Yes _____ No _____

How many ACC rallies have you attended? _____

Are you handicapped or do you have special needs? _____

Note: For handicap parking, a copy of the handicap form must be in-cluded with payment.

If you want to park near friends, please list the names below.

See example of ACC name plaque below (plaques paid for by ACC). Includes two suction cups for easy mounting on windshield (same size as your FMCA plaque).



Print name(s) as you want printed on plaque.

	Before <u>1/30/09</u>	After <u>1/30/09</u>	
Rally Fee			
2 people	\$225.00	\$250.00	\$ _____
Rally Fee			
1 person	\$175.00	\$190.00	\$ _____
Additional			
Guests	\$75.00	\$95.00	\$ _____
Non-member Buddy Coach			
FMCA # _____	\$225.00	\$250.00	\$ _____
Non-member rally fee—2 persons	\$450.00	\$500.00	\$ _____
Children under 16 years of age are free, except for golf and tours but, we need the number. _____			
Golf, \$40.00/person # _____			\$ _____
CNN Studio/ World of Coke Tour			
\$53.00/person # _____			\$ _____
Total Enclosed			\$ _____
Make checks payable to: ACC-FMCA			
Mail to: Marcia Bratsburg			
2551 Timber Trail NE			
Kalkaska, MI 49646			

American Coach Chapter of FMCA
Stone Mountain, Georgia ACC Pre-rally
American Coach Service Request

Fleetwood Motor Homes of Indiana is offering to perform minor warranty repairs on your Limited, American Eagle, American Dream, American Tradition or American Heritage motor home. Time available and the number of coaches in attendance will determine how much service work can be performed at the rally.

- ◆ Please check in with the service scheduler upon arrival. He may need to coordinate your appearance while service is performed.
- ◆ Please limit problems to six items per coach...functional items only. Painting and items that are not functional will not be addressed at rallies. This is a long-standing policy of the Service Facility.
- ◆ Please explain each item in detail so we can determine whether parts are needed.
- ◆ Submit this list promptly! Fleetwood must have your list at least three weeks before the Rally to obtain parts, and transport them to the Rally.
- ◆ Repairs will be scheduled in the order received.
- ◆ “Add-on” items (items added at a later date) will be added to the end of the schedule as time permits.
- ◆ Chassis problems- Please note your coach type of chassis. List only the two problems. Some chassis repairs cannot be performed at the rally. Some chassis repairs may be subject to charges to the customer.

Note* Coaches not registered as part of the rally will not be worked upon until all rally registered coaches have been serviced.

Here are some of the changes:

- ◆ Because we are not equipped with required fall-protection at rallies, no Fleetwood associate will be allowed to get on top of a motor home roof at any time.
- ◆ No Fleetwood associate will be allowed to work under a unit at a rally.
- ◆ Repairs requiring lifting/jacking of motor home will not be performed at a rally.
- ◆ Certain repairs of doors or windows or windshields cannot be performed at a rally.
- ◆ Awning tension adjustments must be done by the awning manufacturer. This includes the replacement of awning fabric.
- ◆ Chassis repairs must be done by the chassis manufacturer.

As has always been our policy, the following are some other items we cannot address at rallies:

- ◆ Paint and body repairs.
- ◆ Installing accessories.
- ◆ Cosmetic/Appearance repairs.
- ◆ Water filters and maintenance services.

Please remember that not every problem can be resolved at the rally. Should additional work be required at a shop facility, the Service Department will assist you in determining your needs and schedule.

Fax the repair request form to: 260-728-2951 or mail to the address on the request sheet.

American Coach Chapter of FMCA Service Request

For American Coach Service Use Only

Group _____ Day/ Time _____ Control _____ Site # _____

Stone Mountain RV Resort & Park ACC Pre-Rally March 10 – 13, 2009

Your Deadline is: February 10, 2009

Please read the instructions before completing form and fill in with complete numbers where indicated

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone # _____ Cell # _____

Model/Year _____ Chassis VIN # _____

Coach serial # _____

I will arrive on the rally site on _____ by _____ AM _____ PM _____

I will be going to the FMCA Rally Perry, GA YES / NO

(We need this information for our scheduling of work.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

DO NOT SEND THIS FORM TO THE RALLY MASTER! SEND OR FAX TO THE FOLLOWING!

Mail to: Fleetwood Motor Homes Or fax to 260-728-4574 or 260-728-2951

1420 W. Patterson St.

Decatur, IN 46733

Any questions about repairs call Service Center Phone # 877-735-6303.

Eating and Drinking Our Way Across America

By Jane Lihou

We were driving south along the Oregon coast, amazed at the panoramic views, even though we've been up and down Highway 101 probably twenty times. Every summer, when our children were younger, we would drive from Huntington Beach, where we lived, to vacation in Montana and we always took the Oregon coast one way. Now, on one of the very few straight stretches, we see a sign for a winery and I said to Jerry, "Isn't that where we bought some wine and they were filling the bottles with a garden hose?"

"It sure is. Remember, it tasted really good at the winery so, we bought a couple bottles and when we opened them at home, it tasted like ----, he said.

I remembered the dinner. We had friends over and were bragging about this great wine we found and we had saved it for our best friends. "Ha, that was so funny when we all tasted that wine! It was horrible." After that experience, we never bought wine where there wasn't a vineyard surrounding the tasting room and, of course, a modern bottling system.

A few miles down the road, we drove by the only artichoke farm we have ever seen outside of California. I said, "Do you remember those artichokes we bought there?"

"Yeah, they were pretty bad." Jerry said as we drove by

Wretched wine and stringy artichokes aside, we have made so many more great discoveries than duds and the misses do not keep us from pulling over every time we see a winery, a fruit and vegetable stand or a seafood shack.

Of course, it was much easier to pull the car over than it is to maneuver a 42 foot coach and tow vehicle onto the side of the road. Now, we look for local specialties wherever we are parked for a few days and, we have found some of the best food and wine. We always stop at the Tillamook Cheese Factory, even though they no longer serve the best and creamiest soft serve ice cream cones ever. They do, however have a huge assortment of flavors of hard ice cream. We visit the Blue Heron Cheese factory just a block away where, ten years ago, we discovered their brie cheese. It use to be a very small, quaint storefront and now it's a tourist destination with one of those stinky petting zoos and their own wine label (no vineyards) but, the cheese is still very good.

We are in Newport, Oregon and we will be going to the oyster farm to buy an assortment of oysters. Last year when we were here, we ate lunch at a small restaurant across from the wharf and had these perfectly pan-fried, panko crusted oysters. They were crunchy on the outside and soft and creamy on the inside. The waiter told us about the oyster beds on the back side of the bay so, after lunch we drove over there and bought a bunch of oysters. We stopped at the kitchen store to pick up an oyster knife and got a short lesson in how to use it. At home, we placed the oyster inside a kitchen towel and pried open our first oyster in the shell. Oyster juice and pieces of shell sprayed over the kitchen and, we quickly moved the operation to the picnic table outside. The first ones we opened were pretty mangled but, we got the hang of it and, we had delicious raw oysters on the half shell for dinner.



Tonight, we will end our fried oyster dinner with some Tillamook ice cream with blackberries that we picked along side the last RV park we stayed at. We have seen blackberries everywhere on this trip—along side nearly the entire length of Highway 101. They are perfectly ripe and juicy and sweet and grow on dangerously prickly vines but worth the bloody arms.

We noticed that it is the season for Dungeness crabs and will be buying some of those before leaving the coast. And, we picked up some wonderful Pinot Noir from the Willamette Valley to have with a wild Coho salmon we bought in Portland and will barbeque on a cedar plank. And, we'll continue to search for great local food and wine during our travels.

Jane Lihou

Recipe Corner

Do you have a favorite recipe? Send it to us at newslettereditor@acc-fmca.com.

Autumn always makes me long for those chilly day meals that my mom would make. We had a dairy farm in Minnesota so, it was usually beef, and on a cold day, slowly braised so the wonderful aroma filled the house. These short ribs are my favorite slow cooked beef. You can serve them with mashed potatoes but, here I use egg noodles—your choice. And these cookies would make a perfect ending to a fall day. They are old fashioned soft, pumpkin cookies, covered with a simple icing. I only make these when I can give some away because, once you frost them, you can't stack them for storing, but, your friends will love you.

Braised Short Ribs

12 short ribs (about 5 lbs.)	2 Tbsp flour
Salt and pepper	1 Tbsp minced garlic
2 Tbsp oil	1 1/2 cups red wine such as Merlot
2 large carrots, diced	1 1/2 cups low sodium chicken broth (if not low sodium, taste before adding additional salt)
1 large onion, diced	1/2 tsp dried thyme
2 small leeks, white and light green parts thinly sliced	2 bay leaves
2 tsp sugar	

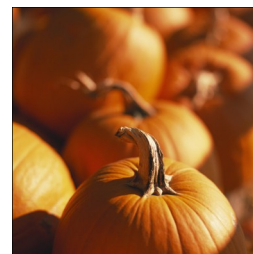
Season ribs with salt and pepper. Heat oil over high heat in a stove top, oven safe casserole large enough to hold ribs in single layer without crowding. Brown ribs on all sides. Set ribs aside.

Pour off all but 1 tablespoon oil and add carrots, onions and leeks. Cook over medium heat until softened. Add sugar, flour and garlic. Cook 1 minute. Return ribs and any juices to pan and add wine, broth, bay leaves and thyme. Bring to simmer.

Bake at 300 degrees, covered until ribs are just tender but not falling apart, about 1 hour, 15 minutes. Skim fat off, season with salt and pepper to taste and serve with buttered egg noodles.

Iced Pumpkin Cookies

1 Cup unsalted butter	1 tsp baking powder
1 Cup sugar	1/2 tsp baking soda
1 cup cooked pureed pumpkin, fresh or canned	1/2 tsp salt
1 egg	1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp vanilla	1/2 tsp nutmeg
2 Cups all-purpose flour	1 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
	1 cup raisins



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add pumpkin, egg and vanilla and mix well. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir into butter mixture until well blended. Add nuts and raisins. Drop by teaspoonful onto baking sheet, about 2 inches apart. Bake about 15 minutes until golden. Cool and frost.

Icing

2 cups sifted confectioners sugar
1/4 cup butter, softened
1 tsp vanilla
whipping cream

Cream confectioners sugar and butter. Add vanilla and whipping cream—more cream for drizzling, less for frosting.

Speed Up Your Computer

By Robert Carson, ACC Member and Computer Technician



Recently, I've been getting many complaints about slow running computers. This is usually because of a virus in your computer. Most new computers come with an anti-virus program and the consumer thinks that this will protect them from all the problems that come with going online. Unfortunately, that's not true and I'll explain why. I will also give you some tools to protect your computer from slowing down.

First, you should review your current anti-virus software to see if it is still active. I've seen many new computers with Symantec, MacAfee, or other versions of Anti Virus software that has expired after the initial six month trial version ends. Once these packages expire, they will only protect your system against a known virus before the expiration. This leaves your computer exposed to any new virus that comes along. But, the anti-virus program icon is still showing up on your computer so you think it is working. The easiest way to validate your software is to open it and locate the 'update now' and check the status. If it's expired, it will usually tell you and then happily ask if you want to renew.

To renew or not is your call but, I and many others have been successfully protecting our systems for years using good, solid and most importantly, FREE solutions like SpyBot, AVG, Avast, and other CNET and TechNet approved programs.

Most common infections are still called a virus. These are bad programs that can produce a wide range of issues on your PC from images of bugs running across your screen to wiping out your entire system. Then there is spyware, which, as the name implies, captures information about you, where you surf on the Internet, contact lists, etc. and pushes this to people you probably would not associate with normally.

Along with viruses and spyware, one of the biggest threats to computer users on the Internet today is malware. It can hijack your browser, redirect your search attempts, serve up nasty pop-up ads, track what web sites you visit, and generally screw things up. Malware programs are usually poorly-programmed and can cause your computer to become unbearably slow and unstable. Malware can be broken down into several broad categories: adware, spyware, hijackers, toolbars, and dialers.

Your computer can get infected by malware in several ways. Malware often comes bundled with other programs (Kazaa, iMesh, and other file sharing programs seem to be the biggest bundlers). These malware programs usually pop-up ads, sending revenue from the ads to the program's authors. Others are installed from websites, pretending to be software needed to view the website. Still others, most notably some of the Cool-WebSearch variants, install themselves through holes in Internet Explorer like a virus would, requiring you to do nothing but visit the wrong web page.

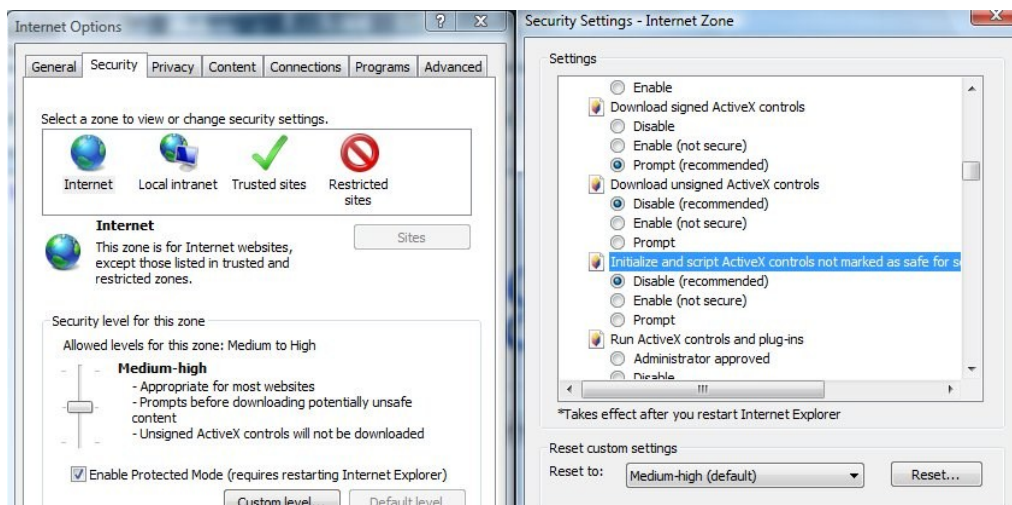
The vast majority, however, must be installed by the user and this usually happens while surfing the web and a pop-up shows up stating something like 'YOU'VE BEEN INFECTED BY A VIRUS' and click here to remove. By clicking to fix your computer, you inadvertently load the Malware. Unfortunately, getting infected with malware is easier than getting rid of it, and once you get malware on your computer it tends to multiply and reproduce itself.

So, the number one lesson here is READ and THINK about clicking on that pop-up before acting. If something pops up on your system, try to use the red X in the upper right hand corner to close the window, if that does not work then go into Task Manager and kill the process running the browser (CTRL+ALT+DEL) to get to task manager.

There are other preventive measures you can take to help secure your computer while surfing the web. To verify that your Internet Explorer security settings are set correctly, open up Internet Explorer and go to the Tools menu. Click on "Internet Options." Go to the Security tab and click on the globe labeled "Internet." Then click the "Custom Level" button. Make sure the following settings are as outlined:

Continued on next page

- ◆ "Download signed ActiveX controls" is set to "Prompt"
- ◆ "Download unsigned ActiveX controls" is set to "Disable,"
- ◆ "Initialize and script ActiveX controls not marked as safe" is set to "Disable."



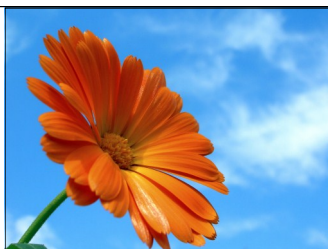
This will HELP reduce the likelihood of a virus auto-loading on your system without your approval.

Microsoft is now deeply involved in Viruses, Spyware, and Malware and is offering free tools along with updates to their Operating System and Applications to prevent these from infecting your system. The following Microsoft web sites will get you these free updates: Defender offers protection primarily against Spyware - <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/defender/default.msp> , for Malware review and removal - <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/890830> and another at <http://www.microsoft.com/security/portal/> .

Microsoft has started pushing OneCare, which is a one-stop package. It's designed to be a single application that provides protection against, Viruses, Spyware, and Malware and provides firewall management, back-up & restore capabilities, and protection of your identity while surfing the web. The reviews are improving and it may be a viable solution for some. Read more about it at <http://onecare.live.com> .

If you suspect you have malware on your computer and would like some advice for removing it yourself, email me at rcarson@cox.net . I hope this advice keeps your computer running faster. *Rob Carson*

Rob Carson and his wife Toni are American Coach owners. Rob is a certified "computer geek". You can reach him at rcarson@cox.net or, look him up at our next rally.



Recycle Your Electronic Equipment

In these tough economic times, you might want to check your closets and cabinets for electronics that you no longer use. At secondrotation.com you can sell your old cell phones, gaming consoles, mp3 players and other gadgets for cash. Just go to the web site and type in your product name. Answer a few questions about the condition of your product and find out how much they will pay for it. Secondrotation.com will remove your personal data before reselling or recycling the device.

Another great web site for recycling your used electronic equipment is earth911.org. Log on to this web site and type in your zip code and the item you would like to dispose of. The site will give you a list of local places to recycle your specific item. This is a free web site that centralizes information on recycling your electronic products.

At the website sharetechnology.org you can review a list of schools, non-profit organizations and persons with disabilities who are seeking donations of used computers. The motto of this web site is *Reuse before Recycle*.

Welcome to ACC

FAQS about ACC

Q. What is the difference between the ACC (American Coach Chapter of FMCA) and ACA (American Coach Association)?

A. All members are owners of American Coach motor homes. The ACC is a chapter of FMCA (Family Motor Coach Association) and you must be a member of FMCA. The ACC has two pre-rallies a year so they may caravan and park together at the FMCA International conventions. Members of ACA do not need to belong to FMCA and are independent from any other membership group. ACA has two national rallies a year and has eleven regional chapters.

Q. Can I be a member of both ACC and ACA?

A. Yes, most American Coach owners are members of both organizations.

Q. Why do I have to be a member of FMCA in order to join the ACC?

A. FMCA by-laws require that members of a chapter also belong to the national association.

Q. What are ACC's roots?

A. The ACC was started by ACA members that wanted to park together at FMCA events and had their first rally in Gatlinburg, TN in 1993.

Q. Are the officers in ACC paid?

A. No, they are volunteers and only out-of-pocket expenses are paid.

Q. Do I have to be an original owner to have the American Coach service team work on my coach at the rallies?

A. No, qualifying service is available to all American Coach owners attending a participating rally.

American Coach Chapter of FMCA consists of members that are owners of an American Coach including American Heritage, American Eagle, American Dream, American Tradition and Limited Motor Homes.

We are the only American Coach chapter of FMCA and provide our members with camaraderie with other American Coach owners. Our primary goals are to foster good relations with the American Coach manufacturing and servicing facility. We bring its management, their technicians and coach owners together.



We meet twice a year, immediately preceding each of the two international FMCA rallies. The American Coach Service Team joins us at our rallies to perform repairs on our coaches. One or more American Coach dealers also join us to display the latest coaches, hopefully sell a few, and participate in the rallies.

There is a golf tournament, a tour of nearby points of interest, many cocktail hours, dinners, pizza nights and more.

We print a quarterly newsletter with the upcoming rally information and highlights of our previous rallies. This newsletter is also available online. Once you are a member of ACC, you will be able to join the American Coach Yahoo group where you will find valuable information about your coach and be able to ask questions about your coach. This is a fun group of American Coach owners and you will be glad you joined us.



Become a Part of Something Big!

New Member Application

To be eligible for membership in the American Coach Chapter, you must first be a member in good standing of the FMCA. You can join FMCA online at www.fmca.com or call 800-543-3622. You must also own at least a one third interest in an American Coach Heritage, American Coach Eagle, American Coach Dream, American Coach Tradition or a Limited Motor Coach.

Have you ever been a member of ACC? Yes ____ NO ____ If yes, what was your member # _____

Full Name (for database) _____

Co-Pilot's full name (for database) _____

First Name: _____ First Name: _____

(For your name badge)

(For your name badge)

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Coach: _____ Year: _____ Length of Coach: _____ # Slides: _____

(Heritage, Eagle, Dream, Tradition, Limited)

FMCA Member #: _____ You must be a member of FMCA to join ACC.

You can join FMCA online at www.fmca.com or call 800-543-3622.

You may also join ACC online at www.acc-fmca.com.

Send the completed form and a check or money order in the amount of \$27.00 (all funds to be in US dollars)

to: American Coach Chapter of FMCA

3590 Round Bottom Rd.

Cincinnati, OH 45244-3026

Renewal and Change of Address Form

Check your address label. If the date has passed you are behind on your dues. Dues are \$12.00 per year. You may pay more than one year at a time. You may pay your dues and make all the above changes at fmca.com and acc-fmca.com.

ACC member # _____ FMCA member # _____

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Co-Pilot Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Coach / Year _____

To renew an expired membership, change your address, phone number or e-mail address, fill out the form , enclose your check and mail to: American Coach Chapter of FMCA

3590 Round Bottom RD.

Cincinnati, OH 45244-3026

Note: *All changes must be sent to FMCA also. You may also pay your dues and make all the above changes at www.fmca.com and www.acc-fmca.com.*

Future American Coach Rallies

ACC Rally, March 10—14, 2009, Stone Mountain, Georgia

Caravan to FMCA Rally in Perry, Georgia, July 16—19, 2009

ACC Rally, July 13—18, 2009, Decatur, Indiana

Caravan to FMCA Rally in Bowling Green Ohio, July 20 –24, 2009

ACA Rallies

Tucson, AZ—Southern California Chapter, November 10—15, 2008

Note: We are now accepting ads for the ACC newsletter. E-mail or call Chip Aiken for rates.

Wendy Holloway, Membership Chairperson
3619 Clearwater Dr.
Lake Havasu, AZ 86406