

Letter From The President

By Pauline Stevens

Our annual fish fry was a great success. We had a good turnout and the weather was pretty, but cool. Everyone brought such good things to eat at the pot-luck on Wednesday, and we all ate a lot of fish the next night. Several played games (Spinners) and some just rested by the pond. I want to thank all the members for their help during the rally. It was so nice to see our friends and club members Juan and Peggy Galvez — we sure missed them at the earlier rallies, and pray God's speed in getting their lives back together.

Our April rally will be held at Elijah Clark State Park, which is near Lincolnton, Ga. Ann & Freddie Lott will be our hosts. If you need more information, email them at falott@nu-z.net or contact me.

Freeman and I are looking into having our April 2007 rally in York County, Pa., near Gettysburg. Margaret Stoffer will be our host. This is still in the planning stages, but we're planning on late April, I think. We will have more information as the date gets closer.

Coach House, Inc. is now working on the '06 Homecoming Rally and we expect to have it in Tennessee. Final place and dates will be announced in a future newsletter, but this rally is normally held the end of October.

Marlene states we now have 138 paid members — our club started with approximately 60 members, so we've more than doubled in size.

We need some new officers for 2007. Elections will be held at our National Rally in October in Tennessee. If you are an organizer, leader or just a servant-type person, we'd like you to consider running for office. It's been very satisfying to coordinate fun events for so many wonderful people. Our current slate of officers have done a great job and some will stay on, but now it's time for some new faces and

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CHOC Talk

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Coach House contingent gathers for a group photo at the FMCA Southeast Area rally in Brooksville, Fla., in early February.

Rally is fun despite weather

By Paula Bailey

Fourteen CHOC members, one cat and five dogs braved the unpredictable weather at Brooksville, Fla., to attend the Southeast Area FMCA Rally at Hernando County Airport February 1-5. Karin Peuhsner did an excellent job coordinating CHOC's activities, beginning with lunch at the Masaryktown Café, where we met so that we could all enter the grounds together and park together. Later in the week, Karin made arrangements for us to all meet for dinner at a microbrewery nearby. The food was so good that some CHOC members went back the next day for lunch!

This particular rally was all dry camping — and the nights were cold, so our furnaces and generators got a good workout. We had a couple of "soggy"

days and nights, but the majority of the days were warm and sunny.

The "Mardi Gras" theme of the rally featured a Mardi Gras parade which included candy and beads being thrown to the spectators. I think we all were able to refill our candy jars and we collected some "beautiful" necklaces for our granddaughters. The parade coincided with our wine and cheese party, so we all had a ringside seat to view the festivities.

FMCA rallies offer so many things for the attendee. In addition to meeting new friends and renewing old friendships, one of the major advantages is the very informative seminars that cover a wide variety of topics. The vendors' tent gives us the opportunity to see (and purchase) so many wonderful products and a chance to speak one-on-one to

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CLUBTalk

Katrina aftermath 'like living in a war zone'

By Paula Bailey

Upon returning to their Bay St. Louis, Miss., home from a 7-week trip to the Northwest, Juan and Peggy Galvez learned that Hurricane Katrina was heading up the Gulf of Mexico, but was predicted to turn east toward Jacksonville before reaching the coastline of Louisiana and Mississippi. They unpacked their 23-foot Platinum in order to clean it from their trip and get it ready for the next trip. Unfortunately, that "trip" was much sooner than expected — in fact, three days later — when Katrina decided that her final destination would be the Louisiana/Mississippi coast and they were told to evacuate their home.

Living just one block from the ocean, but knowing that their home was 18 feet, 8 inches above sea level, Juan and Peggy felt that their home was high enough to avoid flooding from a storm surge — besides, this was probably just a "false alarm," just like the other times



This is the scene that greeted Juan and Peggy inside their house.

in the past. Since they would only be gone for a couple of days, they just packed a few things — a couple of changes of clothes, a few groceries — and got in their Platinum and headed to Milton, Fla., at 2 p.m. on Aug. 28. Luckily, they had called ahead to a KOA campground and made a reservation — which was a good thing, because all hotels, motels, campgrounds, etc. were completely booked due to the evacuations. They arrived at the campground at 12 midnight — it had taken more than 10 hours to travel 180 miles!

Katrina made landfall that morning (Aug. 29). Exhausted, worried and frustrated, they unsuccessfully tried to find out about the status of their home. Of course, the only information they could get was what was on TV. Finally, one of their sons, who lives in Houston, called to say that he had been able to see their home on the internet and told them how to find pictures of the Bay St. Louis area, specifically, their neighborhood and home. In looking at the pictures, they could tell that there had been some damage, but it looked like just a portion of the roof had lost the shingles — everything else looked intact. "No one was being allowed into the area," said Juan, "so we didn't try to get home for a few days. We decided to move our motor home to the Pensacola area, where some of our relatives lived."

One week after Katrina had made her "visit," their son from Houston was able to get to Bay St. Louis. He called and reported that their place was in fact heavily damaged. At this point, Juan decided to try to get there, too. Of course, all roads directly leading to the area were closed due to debris and flooding, so he decided to try to get to the house by circling northward and then coming straight south to Bay St. Louis. The problem was, traffic was so heavy, cars were just creeping along. Also, gas was



Juan and Peggy Galvez are still smiling despite their ordeal.

practically nonexistent. A person had to know just how far they could get on a tank of gas and not risk getting stranded. Three times Juan had to turn back due to unavailability of gasoline.

Ten days after the storm, Juan was finally able to get to what was left of their home. Two of their sons met him there, and what they saw was devastating! "Not only was there so much debris outside the home you could hardly 'wade' through it," Juan said, "nothing inside the house was intact. All of our clothes — gone. All of our pictures, files, paperwork, dishes, fine arts paintings and watercolors, pottery and family heirlooms — gone. All of our furniture — waterlogged or gone. In fact, almost everything — gone."

Juan's woodworking shop was a total loss; all the expensive machinery and tools were destroyed by salt water. "Even our fireproof safe, where we kept our valuable papers, everything inside — waterlogged! You're frustrated, numb, depressed, devastated, angry and extremely sad. You feel so overwhelmed and it's hard to know just what to do first."

Peggy came to the house a week later. They moved their Platinum to Peggy's brother's house in nearby Pass Christian in order to be nearby and for easy accessibility to their home.

"It was just like living in a war zone," said Peggy. "The area was heavily

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RALLYTalk

A dog's life at annual Fish Fry

On January 25, 2006, Mom and Dad took delivery of their Coach House Platinum and I began my adventures as an RV dog. Our very first trip was to a CHOC rally called a fish fry at the home of Pauline Stevens and Bob Schneider in Myakka City, Fla. Sounded pretty boring to me, as I don't eat fish. I thought the trip might be fun because I love to ride in the car, but no one told me about the scary noises pots and pans make when you cross railroad tracks!

We arrived safely, and there were 19 coaches in all at this gathering. Things seemed pretty boring until I saw Daffy, Minnie, Quacker and Squawker. Boy, would it be fun to chase those geese into the pond! Mom had other ideas, and said I had to be on my best behavior because we would be meeting lots of new friends. She was right: Clarence, Penny, Tonya, Gretchen, Gunther, Gretel, Chummy, Sophie and Scout were all at the party, and sometimes we got to play together. They explained to me a rule about no barking between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. All



Belle poses for a photo with her people, Jim and Doris Greene, at the Fish Fry in Myakka City.

seemed to be enthusiastic about being RV dogs. Mom said a cat named Troubles was our host, but I didn't get to meet her. She must have been busy entertaining Tiger, Kitty, Tigger and Maynard.

Mom and Dad kept talking about how terrific it was to be with experienced RVers who could explain why the furnace and coffee maker wouldn't work at the same time. I got to visit some other coaches, but the pot luck, fish fry and breakfasts were off limits. I did go to the wine-and-cheese party, but nobody dropped any good food.

On the last night, Albert Spellman won

the 50/50 drawing and donated it back to the club for the charity fund. Maybe I should talk to Troubles and suggest a contribution to the U.S. Humane Society — not all animals are lucky enough to have an RV.

Well, it seems everyone had a great time at the fish fry, and Chummy told me all about the next party in Georgia. His Mom is going to be sending out information. I think I would like to go to that party, also — if Mom would only do something about those loud pots and pans.

See you along the roads.

Belle



Coaches line up next the pond at Bob and Pauline's place in Myakka City.



Watching the fish cook.

RALLYTalk

Spring Rally In Georgia April 19–21

CHOC's Spring Rally and Meeting will be held April 19–21 at Elijah Clark State Park in Lincolnton, Ga. This will be a very laid-back, informal rally that will provide time for socializing and just enjoying this beautiful park. Activities will start on Wednesday, April 19, with a wine and cheese get-together at 4 p.m., followed by a chicken dinner. Members with last names starting with A-L should bring a dessert, and those with last names M-Z should bring a vegetable.

Thursday, April 20, will begin with a continental breakfast at 8:30. Lunch will be on your own. At 4 p.m. we will have a short business meeting (all CHOC members are invited to attend). At 6 p.m. we will have a pizza party with games and socialization. Prior to departure on the morning of April 21, there will be donuts and coffee.

Elijah Clark State Park is located at 2959 McCormick Hwy., Lincolnton, GA 30817. The rally fee (which includes the campsite fee) is \$70 for two people, \$60 for one person. Directions: From junction of I-20 and U.S. Highway 78 (Exit 172), go northwest 2 miles on U.S. 78 to Hwy 43. Go North 19 miles to Lincolnton. Turn right onto U.S. 378 and go northeast 7 miles. Campground will be on your left.

Please see the registration form on the back page of this newsletter.

National Director's Letter

By **Bob Schneider**
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Pauline and I just finished a very busy month. We went on a cruise, went to the Brooksville Southeast Area Rally, hosted our annual fish fry at our place for 19 coaches, and then headed to the Keys for a few days. Soon, we'll be heading to Georgia for our April rally.

There's not much going on Board-wise from FMCA right now. We are busy getting ready for the June 30–July 3 rally in Gillette Wyo. I would like to encourage all of our western CHOC members to join us at the rally. Several other CHOC members will be there, and you will learn many new things about RVing and have a great time. All sites will have full hook-ups and there is a very nice handicapped area. The application is in your Family Motor Coach Magazine, and you can either mail in your reservation or call them. There will be several side trips offered to see the area — my favorite is the coal mine tour.

To our western Coach House owners who are not members of FMCA: If you would like to come to the Gillette rally, you can call FMCA and register as a non-member. You will have to pay \$125 (rally fee) plus a new member fee of \$45. Next year, should you be interested, your membership fee will be \$35. The number for FMCA is 1-800-543-3622 — ask for Kathy Anderson. When asked how you heard about this, tell them Pauline Stevens suggested you call, and give them our number F268086. We are still work-

ing on a western sub-chapter and this would give us an idea of how many are interested.

Pauline and I will be in Reno and several other places out west the end of April. We would like to meet our western CHOC members, so if you can't make the rally in Wyoming, get in touch with us and maybe we can meet somewhere.

Travel safely, and we hope to meet you all in the future.

Brooksville Rally

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very knowledgeable people about their products and services. And, the nightly entertainment is varied and first-class.

Thank you, Karin, for all of your hard work and a job well done!

President's Letter

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new ideas. Please consider serving for at least one term. If you are interested, please contact Bob Schneider (srqbobs@aol.com, 941-322-2003) or Bill Johnson (wjohn1075@mac.com, 863-679-6908).

Bob and I will be working with the International Area board of directors at FMCA's International Area Rally at the CAM-PLEX in Gillette, Wyo. We hope to see many members there. If you plan to attend and want to stay over for July 4th to see the parade and fireworks, it will cost \$18 per night and you can stay until the 7th if you wish in order to avoid the holiday traffic.

Drive safely wherever you travel. We hope to see you all in Georgia!

Upcoming RALLIES

- April 19–21, 2006** CHOC Spring Rally, Clarks Hill Lake, Elijah Clark State Park, Lincolnton, Ga. (CHOC)
- June 30–July 3, 2006** FMCA International Area Rally, CAM-PLEX, Gillette, Wyo. (FMCA)
- Aug. 14–17, 2006** FMCA 76th International Convention, Lowe's Motor Speedway, Charlotte, N.C. (FMCA)
- Oct. 26–29, 2006** CHOC Homecoming Rally, Holly Haven RV Park, Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Something to Think About

Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, wine in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "WOO HOO what a ride!"

CLUBTalk

Make your RV life simpler

By Paula Bailey

Our last issue featured a few things to make your RV experience easier. Here are a couple more things that have made my trips more enjoyable.

Receptacle Tester with 30-Amp Adapter — I've found an easy way to test the wiring in an electrical box before plugging into the outlet. I purchased a receptacle tester at Lowes (\$3.99). Now this tester only fits 110-volt (15-amp) receptacles, so I purchased a 30-amp male to 110 female connector from Camping World (\$2.99) and keep them together with my electrical cord. Now, whenever I'm ready to plug in, I test the

circuit with my tester before attaching my electrical cord. Easy, easy, easy — and now no worry about whether the wiring in the electrical box is correct.

Noisy Stove and Sink Cover — Sometimes when traveling down a bumpy road, my stove top and sink covers "rattle." Here's an easy way to stop them from doing that. I had purchased some of the rubber "waffle" material to line my cabinets and drawers, so I cut a couple of small strips from the left over scraps and put them on each side of the stove and sink tops, then closed them. Viola! They fit "tight as a drum", and no more rattles!

If you have some ideas that have made your RV experience better, easier



Receptacle tester (left) with adapter.



Sink lid with "rattle stop" installed.

and more enjoyable, we'd like to share them with our readers. Please send them to me at onderfulife@netzero.com.

Members rebuilding after Katrina

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patrolled by the National Guard. There was debris and destruction everywhere! There were checkpoints and curfews — just like a war zone!

"There were extremely long lines to get help from FEMA (to apply for assistance and a trailer), the Red Cross, ice, water, insurance, the building inspector, etc. Everything required waiting for long periods of time in long lines — it was so frustrating."

On December 10, more than three months after Katrina struck, they finally moved into their FEMA trailer. Until then, they had lived in their Platinum — and were so thankful to have it. "My first impression was that of total devastation at what I saw — to see everything that we had worked so hard for all of our lives destroyed or gone," Peggy said. "But even after losing everything, just having our Platinum, something of our own with our own things inside, was somehow comforting. It made us feel that we still had a little bit of 'home' with us.

"People have been 'angels.' CHOC's donation, along with donations from friends and relatives, were so welcomed and desperately needed. We can't thank everyone enough for their thoughtfulness

in our time of need. Complete strangers have given their time to help with the clean-up."

Juan stated that their house was pretty much "gutted" now. He was able to get one commode working, and they were able to salvage some patio furniture, so they have offered their house as a "base" for some of the volunteer workers. They meet at their home every morning and then disperse from there to their different assignments. "At least they can use our bathroom and eat their lunch on our patio if they wish," said Juan. "It's one small way we can show these 'angels' we appreciate how much they are doing for all of us."

There are still months and months of work left to be done. Right now, all the nails, staples, and paper need to be removed from the studs and rafters so that bleach and other chemicals can be applied to get rid of the mold and mildew. Then, the rebuilding can begin. This all takes time and manpower availability. "At this point, patience is the name of the game," Juan said.

Progress will be slow, and we send our thoughts and prayers to Juan and Peggy as they work through this very difficult time in their lives.

New MEMBERS

CHOC would like to welcome the following new members:

Arizona

Darlene Girolamo and Gerry Staszewski

California

Herb and Janet Peterson

Florida

Jo Brink

Bill and Elisa Carr

Bill and Margaret Comer

Jim and Doris Greene

Art and Carol Joye

Jim and Ruth Kovach

Ernest and Louise Pedersen

Carmen Thomas

Maryland

Joel and Sandra Weiss

Pennsylvania

William and Nadia Canty

Illinois

Don and Jan Zitzewitz

South Carolina

Bill and Betty Dronen

Texas

Tom and Judith Comstock

Virginia

Joe and Dorte Lowman

Washington

David and Madelon Hittle

