

## Letter From the President

By Katie Mathews  
.....

*This is being written in the town of Alpine, Texas – the home of historic Fort Davis that was originated in 1851 as a stop on the Overland Trail specifically to help with safe travel on the old El Paso – San Antonio Trail.*

I'll begin with a great, big THANK YOU! To all of the Coach House employees that made the Factory Rally such a success in January. The event was well planned and the weather, though a little cold for Florida, was lovely.

LB Blanchard left Coach House following the Rally and intends to pursue his photography business. I know that many of our CHOC members will miss him!

Max and I purchased our third Coach House just before the Rally- a 2008 241 XL – and are thoroughly enjoying our travels. We have been exploring South Texas for nearly two weeks. We began in Galveston . We camped on the East end and watched the ships entering and leaving the busy Port.

Our next stop was in Baffin Bay- a lovely place - to visit some dear friends and enjoy excellent seafood. Then it was on to Brownsville; the Rio Grande Valley; Falcon Lake; Lake Amistad near Del Rio; and a visit to Big Bend National Park. It is one of the largest of the Parks and seemed to me to be a blend of Death Valley National Park and the Grand Canyon. The largest motorhome allowed to travel up into the Chisos Basin area is 24 foot and we were able to see that area.

The CHOC Rally in Charlotte will soon be a reality and we look forward to seeing everyone. Vicky Ferrari, CHOC Rally coordinator, has worked diligently to bring us another 4 day, Monday to Friday Rally. See you there!

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE COACH HOUSE OWNERS CLUB

# CHOC Talk

MARCH 2009 · NUMBER 38

## CHOC CHARLESTON RALLY MAY 4 – 8, 2009

There's still time to sign up for our Coach House Owners' Club Spring Rally at The Campground at James Island County Park May 4 – 8, 2009, the perfect location for exploring historic Charleston and the Lowcountry. Located just minutes from the heart of Charleston, James Island County Park has open meadows, miles of paved trails for walking, biking and skating, 16 acres of freshwater lakes with fishing, pedal boat, kayak and bicycle rentals, tidal creek fishing and crabbing dock, and dog off-leash areas.

Our schedule will include a comprehensive tour of Charleston, Patriots Point Naval and Military Museum in Historic Charleston Harbor, and a boat tour to Fort Sumter. For the first time, in addition to our scheduled activities, we are featuring several optional activities, including programs sponsored by the staff at the Ravenel Caw Caw Interpretive Center and James Island County Park, and a tour of Magnolia Plantation. Breakfast and dinner will be provided every day either in Edisto Hall, a beautiful facility within the park, or at the campground's activity center. Monday will feature our traditional wine and cheese welcome reception and pot luck dinner and a talk by a naturalist from the Ravenel Caw Caw Interpretive Center. Every evening features different entertainment.

*(continued on page 2)*

## The State of the RV Industry and CHOC

No big surprises here. The state of the RV industry is lousy. The list of manufacturers who have either stopped production or closed includes companies such as Monaco, Country Coach, Blue Bird, Big Foot, Travel Supreme, NuWa and several others.

Fleetwood, the nation's second largest manufacturer of RV's, has been delisted from the NYSE for failing to keep its per share price above one dollar per share. It's now a penny stock!

According to the RV industries own figures, the industry overall shipped 30% fewer units in 08 compared to 07. RV sales dropped off all year and November 08 was down 46% compared to November 2007. The industry's projections are to ship 50% fewer units in 09 compared to 07. Recovery is seen as starting no earlier than 2010.

The combination of severely reduced sales and the absence of financing has hurt the industry. Those who expanded during the glory days of the 2002-2004 are being hurt the most as financing dries up.

*Continued on page 3*

## RallyTalk

### A Letter to CHOC from Steve Gerzeny

To help dispel rumors, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly discuss Coach House's position in the RV Industry as well as to give CHOC members a snapshot of our Company. Coach House, like most manufacturers had a challenging 2008. The landscape of the RV Industry is continuously changing, but remains strong and should survive these tough economic times. Over the past 25 years, Coach House has seen our share of up and down markets. In each downturn we have adjusted our business model accordingly to roll with the punches. These tough economic times are no different. While most RV manufacturers have ceased production for extended periods in response to the slow-down in the industry, we have adjusted by building a smaller quantity than in years past. Coach House continues to build luxury touring motor homes engineered to industry leading standards in performance, convenience and design. The banks and industry lenders are tight with their money and this has created challenges in wholesale and retail financing. We continue to be optimistic and work through these tough times one day at a time.

We have recently introduced two new exciting models, with a third in the works. All have received terrific reviews and we are very encouraged at the number of units sold so far in 2009.

I am confident in the direction in which Coach House is heading. Our products are the right vehicles for these times. They are small, quality built, fuel-efficient coaches that provide our customer with a versatile RV than can be used for many purposes.

We sincerely thank each of you for your business, support and being part of the Coach House family. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please feel free to call me at 1-800-235-0984 or via email at [steve@coachhouseserv.com](mailto:steve@coachhouseserv.com).

Sincerely,

Steve Gerzeny  
Vice President, Coach House, Inc.

(Charleston Rally - Continued from page 1)

New CHOC merchandise will be on sale throughout the rally. Coach House will feature several new coaches available for purchase. Additionally, Coach House will be performing repairs on coaches – remember to contact Jennifer at Coach House to get on the list.

If you would like to attend the Rally and have not yet signed up, send in your registration form now or contact Vicky Ferrari, CHOC Rally Coordinator, at [vicky.ferrari@ps.net](mailto:vicky.ferrari@ps.net) or (703) 622-8287.



Antebellum Cabins at the Magnolia Plantation

### Coach House Sponsors First Annual Factory Rally

CHOC members and other Coach House owners were treated to a wonderful time at Coach House's first ever rally held at the factory, January 9 – 11, 2009, in Nokomis, FL advance of the Florida RV Supershow. Nearly 70 coaches participated over the three days of the rally.

Friday got underway with a welcome wine and cheese social and a pot luck dinner. Entertainment for the evening was provided by our very own Dick Zarfos and the Truetones Barbershop Quartet. A bonfire and marshmallow roast capped off the first day.

On Saturday, we enjoyed the best "continental breakfast" we had ever had, thanks to Tom Molay. But Tom was only getting started because the pig roast and bar-b-que that evening were superb. During the day, seminars by 3M and Progressive Industries were informative and factory tours were educational. Saturday evening featured a campfire and sing-a-long with guitarist Debbie Opie and some impromptu Hawaiian dancing by, among others, David Gerzeny. Sunday we said goodbye, following yet another great meal prepared by Tom.

Because of the great success of the factory rally, Coach House plans to make this an annual event in January of each year. But, do not fear. CHOC will pick up sponsorship of the October rally which has been sponsored by Coach House for the past 10 years. San Antonio is a strong contender for October 2009.

## ClubTalk

### Vicky Ferrari Named Acting Chair of FMCA Governmental and Legislative Affairs Committee

In late 2007, Family Motor Coach Association President Connie Pool appointed CHOC member Vicky Ferrari to the FMCA's Governmental and Legislative Affairs Committee. When the recent illness of long-time Chairman Max Durbin caused Max to step back from Committee activities, Connie asked Vicky to serve as acting Chairman until Max was able to resume his responsibilities. Sadly, Max passed away on March 4, 2009. Max had asked Vicky if she was interested in the chairmanship when he ultimately stepped down. In keeping with Max's wishes, Vicky will now continue as Chairman of the Committee.

The Governmental and Legislative Affairs Committee has the duty and responsibility to be cognizant of and study local, state and Federal proposed legislation or ordinances that are pertinent to the interests, activities and rights of owners and operators of family motor coaches and members of other organizations having a common cause. The Committee is charged with keeping FMCA members informed of proposals that could infringe on the rights of recreational vehicle users and recommending action to the FMCA Executive Board to implement and advance the general and specific purposes of FMCA.



#### ( The State of the RV Industry - Continued from page 1 )

How does all this effect Coach House and the CHOC? I'm confident that Coach House will come through this tough patch. There's an old business adage that in a down turn it's best to be either the biggest or the smallest manufacturer in an industry. Coach House is one of the smallest Class C producers. They make a niche product. A top quality, high end Class C. Coach House's owners avoided the urge to expand too quickly. Most of Coach House's production is done by suppliers. Only the core assembly is done in house. This will allow them to weather this downturn better than most. Coach House has stayed true to their niche. They use an outside vendor to produce a major component of their vehicle (the one piece fiberglass shell). This is something they share with Porsche, a niche manufacturer noted for its ability to weather sales volume swings.

Hundreds of automobile and truck manufacturers have come and gone in the last one hundred years. Many who disappeared made magnificent vehicles, such as Bugatti, Duesenberg, Panhard and too many others to name. Making a good product is not enough.

Many of you have run businesses. You all understand that efficiently managed companies are the ones that survive tough times.

CHOC, will need to get along with less of the financial support we've received from Coach House in the past. I'm reassured that they're taking this tack. I would rather see Coach House use their resources to retain key personnel and get through this difficult time than deplete them subsidizing club rallies. CHOC will be OK paying for our own rallies. We'll be testing some changes at the Charleston Rally.

Rallies are for having fun visiting with old friends and making new ones. I firmly believe that rallies are first about fellowship. The events at the rallies are secondary to that

At the Charleston Rally, we will put on one of the suppers, a cookout. We'll be looking for volunteers to prep, cook and clean up. We believe we can put on a better meal than a caterer for less cost and have fun doing it. Another possible idea will be to put on our own breakfasts at future rallies.

Please don't misunderstand. We don't want to make the rallies feel like work, so we'll see what sort of interest there is in doing these things. I met a lot of people at the rallies who want to contribute in some way. If people will contribute as little as one hour at a rally, there will be more than enough folks to take care of breakfast and one supper.

Also open to discussion will be simply raising the price per rally or spending less on events. Bus transportation is one of the major costs at a rally. All this will be on the table for discussion at Charleston. Your opinion counts. Please share your ideas and feelings about this at the Charleston Rally or e-mail me directly at [madizazzo@yahoo.com](mailto:madizazzo@yahoo.com). You can also contact any of the other officers via e-mail if you prefer.

# CHOC**Talk**

Coach House Owner' Club Chapter FMCA

Coach House, Inc.

3480 Technology Drive

Nokomis, FL 34275

## Officers

Katie Mathews

*President*

936-564-1077; Cell 936-615-7119

Email – texaskatie34@aol.com

Jim Sullivan

*1<sup>st</sup> Vice President - Membership*

803-329.4611

jksullivan@rhtc.net

Vicky Ferrari

*2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Rally Coordinator*

703-779-0797; Cell 703-622-8287

vicky.ferrari@ps.net

Valerie Baselice

*3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President – Communications*

610-358-2249; Work 610-859-1529

vabaselice@sunocoinc.com

Phyllis Johnson

*Secretary*

Cell 850-866-8735

Paj0414@yahoo.com

Mike Dizazzo

*Treasurer*

203-740-2101

madizazzo@yahoo.com

Tom Comstock

*National Director*

254-947-8155

n5tc@embargmail.com

Shirlee Goddard-Berard

*Alternate National Director*

803-534-6428; Cell 803-515-4959

shirleegodda6428@aol.com

## NEW MEMBERS CORNER

CHOC would like to give a warm welcome to the following new members:

### FLORIDA

Dick and Luckie Evans

### MICHIGAN

Doug and Madelyn Dail

### MISSISSIPPI

Doug and Barbara Johnson

### Nebraska

Jerry and Pam Gardner

### NEW JERSEY

Wayne and Barbara Kennedy

### NORTH CAROLINA

Paul Herndon and Sandy Carter

Paul and Judy Leonard

### NORTH DAKOTA

Bill and Becky Congdon

### TEXAS

Karl and Marion Kerns

Dick and Andrea Copeland

Hope to see you all at the Charleston Rally!

## 2009 CHOC Dues Are Overdue!

If you haven't paid your 2009 dues, please do so immediately so you will remain a CHOC member. Send your check to:

Mike Dizazzo

14 Cawdor Burn Road

Brookfield, CT 06804

CHOC MEMBERS: A copy of the current roster has been included with this issue of CHOC-TALK. Please note this information is for club use only. We are making an effort to decrease the amount of expense related to postage, etc. Also we have found that regular mailings may not get to you in a timely manner since you are frequently traveling. Please make sure your information is correct. If you have any corrections to your information or need to provide us with an email address, please contact Phyllis Johnson by email

[paj0414@yahoo.com](mailto:paj0414@yahoo.com) or by phone 850-866-8735.

Thank you for helping to keep our records up to date.

