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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Everyone,

I hope this letter finds you healthy, happy, and enjoying your travels! I can hardly believe that it has been several months since our spring rally in Lafayette, Louisiana. What a great time we had there. From the swamp, to the Rip Van Winkle gardens, to the Tabasco Factory, and everything in between it was a fun filled adventure. As it always is and always will be, the best part of any rally is seeing old friends again, making new friends, and the fun we all share. I am looking forward to our next adventure!



This summer seems to be flying by. Bill and I have just returned from the FMCA National Rally in Indianapolis. The rally ran from July 12–16. It was a wet start as Indianapolis had approximately five inches of rain on Monday into Tuesday. We arrived in the rain but the weather changed on Wednesday and was lovely for the rest of the time we were there. It is really something to see so many coaches in one location. The total number of coaches was around 1500. There were lots of interesting seminars to attend and items to buy from all the vendors. It is a great experience and one that I would encourage all of you to attend, if you have the opportunity.

Next up will be our fall rally in Pine Mountain, Georgia on October 30 – November 3. I want to express my deepest gratitude to Ruth and Bill Ristow who volunteered to help me organize the rally and who ended up doing all the real work. After our spring rally, Bill and I decided to put our home on the market and move to a more rural spot. We have lived here 30 years so that meant going through lots of “stuff” and it is much more time consuming and exhausting than we thought. Ruth and Bill picked up and finalized the plans for the rally and have put together the registration material and removed a lot of stress from me. This will be a great time in a lovely location, and they have planned some interesting and fun activities for us. I am looking forward to a wonderful rally!!

I would like to take a moment for some personal reflection. This fall will be my last rally as your president and I want to thank you all for the support and encouragement you have shown me. When I started, four years ago, I was a bit apprehensive and more than a little nervous, but you were all so very forgiving of my missteps and encouraging to me that it became a really rewarding and fun experience. The CHOC boards that I have worked with have been the very best and so supportive. We are growing our membership, have moved into the electronic age, and who knows what exciting things the future will bring us. Also, I want to thank Coach House for their support of our club and all that they do for us. They are the ones who brought us all together in the first place by making a great product and we look forward to their continued support. I know that you will all give the same support to our new president, who will be elected at our fall rally business meeting.

I will see you in Pine Mountain and always remember: “Those people who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do” – Isaac Asimov

Thank you once again for a WONDERFUL four years!!

Melody Thompson

2017 Spring Rally Highlights

The 2017 CHOC Spring Rally brought CHOC members together from across the country to Lafayette, LA. Many of our members live in Florida, but we also had attendees from California, Wisconsin, New York and other states closer to Louisiana. Although family commitments prevented Candy and Dennis Murray from attending the full rally, they managed to stay at our campground briefly before the rally. It was a pleasure to meet them. Quite a few people come to our rallies a day or two early to socialize. It is also a good time to see modifications that other members have made to their coaches. For instance, David and Donna Burkey modified their step to have a removeable second step that folds up for travel. An early arrival also allowed some to have repair work done by the local shop that actually had onsite service at your campsite. Cajun Palms RV Resort was well groomed with level sites. The meeting room was spacious and convenient to the campsites. Many stories were shared with old and new friends.



On Tuesday morning we toured the plantation of Joseph Jefferson who was a world-traveled actor. It had a large old oak tree that President Grover Cleveland napped under and the Rip Van Winkle Gardens with live peacocks. One of the homes on the site was destroyed when oil drilling accidentally broke into the local salt mine causing the lake to be sucked underground in 1988. All that is visible of that house is a leaning chimney sticking out of the lake. From there we took the bus to the McILHENNY tabasco factory for lunch and a walking



tour. Who knew how bad smelling fermenting tabasco sauce could be! The company grows its own pepper plants and is active in local environmental conservation. Their rookery is home to many large birds.



Wednesday was the business meeting day with a quiet afternoon in camp. Renee Rodeck relaxed with her needlework. During the social hour Zane Creamer



passed out tasty hors d'oeuvres. After the catered dinner, a local zydeco band played music that was enjoyed by all. Eventually, quite a few moved onto the dance floor.



I consider the Thursday tour of the Champagne's Swamp to be the highlight of the rally. Our group fit nicely into two good-sized flatboats with quiet motors. We glided through tall cypress trees looking for alligators, pleasantly surprised to find lots of



unusual birds. The Black-bellied Whistling-ducks sported a bright pinkish-orange bill. A Yellow-crowned Night Heron posed confidently as we slipped by his roost. We saw both Great Blue Herons and



Little Blue Herons. A Green Heron stalked his lunch from a log leaning into the duckweed. Several Roseate Spoonbills flew overhead. A Common Moorhen made its way through low aquatic plants. Anhingas dried their wings after diving for fish. Other birds included a Bald Eagle, an Osprey and a Red-bellied Woodpecker. And everyone got as close as they wanted to plenty of big alligators.



After lunch at a local restaurant, we toured the Vermillion Village where people in period costumes explained life in the 1800's.

Back in camp we enjoyed our last catered dinner and the 50-50 raffle which was extended to include Coach House swag for al-



The Long Way Home

Marg and I have been looking forward to touring the SW US national parks for some time. Having taken two commercial RV tours, we thought we might be able to save some cash and design our trip to better meet our schedule and give us a little more time at each stop. Now that we are home, I thought that CHOC members might like a quick report on our experiences with our trip home from the CHOC rally.

Since we had not been to any of these parks in many years, if ever, we looked at the itinerary offered by both of the commercial tour companies. We sequenced all of their stops beginning with the Grand Canyon South Rim to reduce travel miles coming from the east coast. We added an extra day over the tour groups at each stop because we had felt pressed for time on previous tours. That worked well. We either saw more things or had an occasional day to relax or do laundry or repairs. We went to the same or similar attractions as the tours but spent less than half of the tour prices.

One reason we did not want to use the tour companies for this trip was their scheduling during what appeared to be very hot months. We still ran into heat, but since it was snowing as we entered the Grand Canyon South Rim on May 9, I think we did OK minimizing hot weather. Our fear of the heat also prompted us to reserve our campsites knowing they had electric hookups to run the air conditioner. This was definitely a wise choice, as we encountered several problems with our nine year old coach that made electricity a requirement. Having reserved campgrounds also made it possible to send repair parts to a future campground. If we had been on a commercial tour the company would probably have helped to locate repair facilities. Without that help and with limited phone or Internet connections we just made do with our problems or fixed them ourselves.

We would recommend starting the planning process by early January. Some popular campsites begin to fill up early. Some attractions such as photographic tours also fill. Planning earlier may also allow you to find others to join you. We invited the CHOC Facebook group but only got two that wanted more information. It would have been nice to have had a few other coaches travelling together to share knowledge and resources. (We did have a great time with CHOC members George & Diane Abosamra when our travels just happened to overlap in the same campground near Mammoth Cave.)

We used Google Maps and Excel spreadsheets to document our itinerary and to replace the trip logs provided by commercial tours. I would do it again, but I recognize the planning work done mostly by Marg may be worth the extra cost if you do not have the time.

Charlie Hedstrom

Coach House Owners' Club Fall Rally
Monday, October 30 – Friday, November 3, 2017

We will be staying at:

Pine Mountain RV Resort
8804 Hamilton Road
Pine Mountain, GA 31822
(706) 663-4329
<http://www.rvcoutdoors.com/pine-mountain/>

You must make and pay for your own reservation at Pine Mountain RV Resort. Be sure to mention your CHOC affiliation to get the rally rate, which will be between \$44.00 and \$46.00 per night, depending on the number of reservations. The activity building where we will be gathering is within walking distance from the campsites and is handicap accessible.

After you have made your reservation, please email Ruth at rristow@wowway.com or call (847) 778-3421 to let us know you are attending.

Our first evening will be the traditional pot-luck dinner. Please bring enough to serve 6-8 people. If your last name begins with A-G bring Salad/Vegetable, O-Z bring Main Dish, H-N bring Dessert.

Reservations will include one catered breakfast, one grab 'n go breakfast, three catered dinners, one lunch at a local restaurant, entertainment and excursions.

Deadline for reservations is
September 15th.

If you have questions, please contact Ruth Ristow at rristow@wowway.com or (847) 778-3421

Planned excursions, all handicap accessible include:



Callaway Gardens



Roosevelt's Little White House



Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Site

Coach House Owner's Club Fall 2017 Rally....Schedule of Activities

Monday, October 30th

1:00 – 3:30 pm	Registration
5:00 – 6:00 pm	Happy Hour (BYOB)
6:00 – 7:00 pm	Pot Luck Dinner and Welcoming Greetings

Tuesday, October 31st

	Breakfast on your own.
8:45 am	Bus arrives at 8:45... Departs at 9:00 am
9:15 am	Tour Callaway Gardens
12:00 am	Lunch on your own at Callaway Gardens Discovery Center Cafe
1:15 pm	Bus departs for Roosevelt's Little White House
2:00 pm	Guided Tour of Roosevelt's Little White House
4:00 pm	Depart for Pine Mountain RV Resort
5:00 – 6:00 pm	Happy Hour (BYOB)
6:00 – 7:00 pm	Catered Dinner and Rally Updates

Wednesday, November 1st

8:00 – 9:00 am	Catered Breakfast
9:30 – 10:30 am	CHOC Business Meeting
11:00 am – 5:00 pm	Free Time. Lunch on your own Discussion groups & motor home visits
5:00 – 6:00 pm	Happy Hour (BYOB)
6:00 – 7:00 pm	Catered Dinner
7:30 – 8:30 pm	Musical performance by Tommy Joe Connor

Thursday, November 2nd

	Breakfast on your own.
8:00 am (EDT)	Bus arrives at 8:00... Departs at 8:15 am
10:00 am (EDT)	Tour Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site (9:00 am CDT)
11:30 am (EDT)	Depart Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site (10:30 CDT)
12:00 pm (EDT)	Lunch provided at Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center (11:00 CDT)
1:15 pm (EDT)	Walk to Tuskegee National Historic Site (12:15 CDT)
1:30 pm (EDT)	Tour George Washington Carver Museum (12:30 CDT)
2:00 pm (EDT)	Group 1 - Tour "The Oaks, Home of Booker T. Washington (1:00 CDT) Group 2 – Continue to tour museum or Tuskegee University Campus
2:30 pm (EDT)	Group 2 - Tour "The Oaks, Home of Booker T. Washington (1:30 pm CDT) Group 1 – Return to tour museum or Tuskegee University Campus
3:00 pm (EDT)	Depart for Pine Mountain RV Resort (2:00 (CDT)
5:00 – 6:00 pm	Happy Hour (BYOB)
6:00 – 7:00 pm	Catered Dinner
7:00 – 8:00 pm	Concluding Activities

Friday, November 3rd

7:00 – 9:00 am	Farewell Grab n' Go Breakfast
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CHOC Fall Rally...Pine Mountain, GA, 2017
Registration Form
Rally Registration...Deadline September 15, 2017

Pilot #1

Co-pilot #2

Name: _____

Address: _____

Best phone # to reach you (including at Rally): _____

Email address: _____

Emergency Contact Person* (not at Rally): _____

His/Her relationship to you: _____ & Phone #: _____

The following prices cover the activities and the meals on the accompanying
 2017 Fall Rally Schedule.
 It does NOT cover the campground fee.

CHOC Members**

One Coach with Two People....\$460.00	\$ _____	Do you have any food
Additional Guest\$230.00	\$ _____	allergies? _____
One Coach with One Person.... \$230.00	\$ _____	If yes, what are they?

Non-Members and Guests

One RV with Two People.....\$510.00	\$ _____
Additional Guest\$230.00	\$ _____
One Coach with One Person....\$280.00	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

*Emergency Contact...this should be a family member or friend...not at the rally...who we will contact for you should you have an emergency – health or otherwise – and cannot do it yourself.

**CHOC membership requires owning or previously owning a Coach House RV, membership in FMCA and a fee of \$25.00 per year. Download the registration form here:

<http://coachhouserv.com/owners-club.php>

IF YOU MUST CANCEL: CHOC will only refund expenses for which CHOC is able to receive a refund.

NO REFUNDS after **September 30, 2017**.

**Checks should be payable to “Coach House Owners Club” and mailed, with this sheet, to
 Ruth Ristow at 725 N. Spring Street, Elgin, IL 60120.**

From the Treasurer



The Spring Rally completed with a surplus of \$774. We collected \$132.50 from the 50-50 raffle, giving us a total of \$219 in reserve for charity. When we have \$500 available for charity, we will make a contribution to a charity of the club's choosing.

Here is the current status of our funds:

July 2017 Update	
Bank Balance as of 7/23/2017	\$ 10,007.43
Money Allocations for Remainder of 2017	
Our minimum: Money available for early rally expenses	\$ 6,000.00
Charity Fund	\$ 219.00
Reserve for Future FMCA travel	\$ 1,343.82
CHOC Contribution to the Fall rally fund	\$ 500.00
Additional Fall rally funds (left over from Spring rally)	\$ 774.00
13 new member badges + new officer badges	\$ 350.00
Projected 2017 Year End Surplus	\$ 820.61

Margaret Hedstrom

New Member Corner



We are very pleased to welcome the following new members to the CHOC club.

Mike & Patti Augustine, Stuart, FL	Nancy Avery, Vestal, NY
Dan & Fran Byrne, Jonesborough, TN	David & Karen Cherni, Tallahassee, FL
Doug & Mary Danneman, Durham, NC	Barry Duncan & Donna Wilkins, Branford, FL
Jack & Jen Eiermann, Venice, FL	Sam & Brenda Farr, Waycross, GA
Jim & Cheryl Gaston, Venice, FL	Sandi Gresham & Dan Bannister, Bradenton, FL
Ross & Pam Hendrix, Ormond Beach, FL	Keith & Suzie McVaney, Greenwood Village, CO
Mike & Jackye Moody, Orange Park, FL	Dennis & Candy Murray, Williamsburg, VA
Randy & Helen Paul, Wildwood, MO	Michael & Elizabeth Robert, Aurora, CO
Pat & Katie Spyke, East Lansing, MI	Craig Wiggins & Lisa Shamer, Green Cove Springs, FL

We hope all of you will join us at our fall rally so we can get to know each of you. Club membership now stands at 117 coaches.

Jan Zitzewitz

School of Hard Knocks Tips

We had trouble charging our coach batteries this summer on our Sprinter chassis and we have heard of similar issues on a Ford coach, too. In both cases the service people were too quick to put in a new alternator, which did not fix the problem. In the Ford the problem turned out to be the battery isolator that is often installed under one of your cab seats. On our Sprinter a new cable from the alternator to the battery fixed it. If you are seeing a low charging voltage, changing the alternator may seem appropriate, but ask for an alternator test that checks the voltage at the alternator itself, not at the batteries.

The second tip is to not be overly forceful when raising your Fiamma awning. That little white loop that your crank fits into is made of plastic and will break with excessive force. Replacements may be purchased from Fiamma on the Internet, but you may have difficulty removing or installing the pin that holds the loop in place.



CHOCTalk

Coach House Owners' Club Chapter FMCA

Coach House, Inc.

3480 Technology Drive

Nokomis, FL 34275