



NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT March 24, 2009

Hi Everyone!

As I write this I have just returned from the FMCA Annual Winter Convention held this year in Perry, Georgia. Although the weather was cold until the 16th, the following days after the 17th were quite warm and enjoyable. For those of you who have memories of Perry, as far as I know nobody had to be towed out. Attendance figures were good, 2,774 Family Coaches and 504 Show Coaches. The number of vendors were more than expected. In fact, a separate building had to be opened up to give the late registering vendors room to display their wares. The attitude of the vendors was generally good, and it appears, anecdotally, although people may not be buying new motor homes, they are in fact upgrading their existing ones.

Entertainment was good. In fact on the night of March 17th, a Tuesday which of course was St. Patrick's Day, we were entertained by a group of Irish singers, dancers and a comedian from Dublin, Ireland who were on a U.S. tour. On the Wednesday night "Restless Heart" appealed to many in the crowd, (but not to all), and the comedian Gerry Farber, on Thursday night was also quite enjoyable. The total mood of the Convention was generally upbeat, and people seemed to be having a good time.

The next National Event, of course, is the Annual Summer Convention in Bowling Green, Ohio, which officially starts on Tuesday, July 14th. As you are no doubt aware, our Chapter has been chosen to provide pre-security for the Convention. We already have a list of people who have volunteered, but we still need more. If you wish to take part, please let me know by phone or e-mail, which you will find at the bottom of this report. You will be sent a Volunteer sticker for your windshield, which will allow you entry to preferred parking. It looks like entry will be on Tuesday, July 7th, but I will have details about that as the matter progresses. Pre-security basically involves in looking after the indoor and outdoor exhibit areas, as they are being set up and preventing people who might wander in on their own, with the setups going on, of course, it is important that

people not get injured by interfering with those workers who are assisting and starting the Convention. Once the volunteer duties are completed, probably on the Sunday, then you are free to enjoy the rest of the show.

Also Bowling Green will be elections for the National Offices of President, Secretary and Treasurer. The nominated candidates names and their resumes will be in the upcoming Magazines.

Our Annual GLASS event is commencing May 21st and running through to May 25th, which is the U.S. Memorial Day. GLASS, of course stands for Great Lakes Area Spring Spree. Our own members Laura and Greg Baker are the co-hosts, so please show your support for them by attending. Reservations can be found in the current Magazine, or you can go online to the "Michigan Knights of the Highway" website. Once again, our Chapter will be serving ice cream. Remember, of course, any surplus will be divided amongst the Chapters participating.

Unfortunately, our total membership is dropping. We are now less than 110,000 members. Magazine revenue is also decreasing, and of course, that revenue is what helps pay for our member benefits. If each member went out and recruited one new member, we would have absolutely no difficulties with membership or finances. Do not be afraid when you meet up with a fellow motorhomer in a rest area, at a truck stop, in a restaurant or wherever to invite them to join FMCA and provide them with a Magazine showing them the benefits of joining. Remember also that for your first member signed up each year you get a free FMCA Atlas and after that you receive merchandising coupons. Also on the national scene, I am sure you have heard of several manufacturers that are either in c. 11 (bankruptcy) and trying to work their way out and/or have essentially closed their doors. Even Flying J is under the bankruptcy protection of c.11. Chapter 11 in the U.S. allows companies to reorganize and gives them breathing time in order to get their affairs in order, and presumably emerge stronger than before. Let us hope that the economy on both sides of the border improves so that we can all maintain our love for motorhoming and the open road.

Now that winter is gone (hopefully) let us all look forward to a great season of enjoying our motorhoming lifestyle.

Kathy joins me in wishing you all the best for the upcoming camping season.

Thanks!



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