



## ***Southeast Chapter Newsletter***

***... News of upcoming events and chapter chatter for February, 2006***

[www.southeastaca.org](http://www.southeastaca.org)

Another successful fall rally season continued with the January extravaganza at **Rally Park**. As usual, we had great fun and camaraderie - enjoyed great entertainment - and all made time to kick tires at the American Coach display at Crown Club.

Our hats off and thanks!!! to the many chapter volunteers and the Rally Park Staff who all worked so very hard to make this event possible. It takes an army to coordinate an activity of this size, and everyone did their part to see that all in attendance had a wonderful time.

The next chapter activity is taking place (February 16th to 19th) -perhaps as you read this- at **the Disney World Fort Wilderness Campground in Orlando**. Unfortunately, this one sold out almost immediately. As of our last tally, 40 coaches are slated to enjoy all of the Disney Amenities, the Hoop Dee Doo Musical Revue, and explore all of the shopping at the hundreds of venues nearby. Your Rally Hosts are: Jackie and Mark Belcher, Phyllis and Harold Watson and Pat and John Leszewski.

The next event - March 19th to 22nd- is at **Blueberry Hill RV resort in Bushnell**. Your rally hosts, Mary Ann and Howard Goodhand and Barbara and Jim Youngblood, have left no stone unturned in planning a fun time. Don't forget- We're all going to the **Webster Flea Market** on Monday as well- RV spaces are left at this time- don't be left out !!!!!.....

The final official Southeast ACA activity of the 2005-06 Rally Calendar will take place 1,986 miles away at **Butterfield RV Resort and Observatory**- April 22nd through 25th in Benson, AZ. Your Rally Hosts are Elaine and John Dufour. They have pulled all the stops to ensure that we'll have a great time- their article appears later in this issue.

**The spring National event follows in Tucson, AZ**. All details are in the National ACA newsletter- But, for planning purposes, it is April 25th through 30th. There is a limit of 300 coaches- so sign up early. Many of the Southeast members who have already signed up are planning on an extended stay in the area, to enjoy the multitudes of beautiful parks and recreational activities.

Looking into the future- the board of directors of the **Southeast American Coach Association** has been asked, and has agreed to host, the spring national event- May 13th through 18th, 2008. Committees are being formed as we speak/write.

The rally is scheduled to take place at **The Greater Gulf Fairgrounds in Mobile, AL**.

**Doug Thompson & Vic Schneider** are co-chairman-- and we'll be needing lots of help. (lots and lots!!!)

**Dan Lee** has agreed to be Treasurer, **Ron Wilkinson** will be handling Registration, **Gary Mau** and his team will chair the Parking committee, **Jim Graham** will chair Food and entertainment and **Charlie Bowen** has agreed to chair the Vendors committee.

Will be looking for many more folks to help with these committees and lead others.

All who want to be involved should contact Doug, Vic or any of the above mentioned chairman.

### **Opinion Survey:**

Over the past year, attendance at the average rally has decreased visibly. Very concerned, your executive committee considered several factors- such as venue-driven increases in rally fees, increases in diesel fuel costs, and of course the terrible weather related events of 2005.

No single factor could be adjudged as the "root cause", so we decided several months ago to conduct a survey of our members at the January Rally at Rally Park/Lazy Days, to determine if it was something we were doing wrong, or if multiple factors had contributed to this condition.

We recruited long time members **Jim and Barbara Youngblood**, and our new rally coordinators **Mary Ann and Howard Goodhand** to conduct a survey- to determine if our current direction regarding rallies and events was still valid.

The results of this survey follow:

## **And the Survey says.....**

An informal survey was prepared to obtain input for scheduling and preparing future rallies for our membership.

This survey was placed in each attendee's bag at the January Lazy Days rally, and it was requested that it be completed and returned for tabulation.

The results are as follows: Of 135 surveys issued, 51 were completed and returned. We hope that you agree with the results!

(1) Over half of the responders' attended 4 rallies each year. (2) The majority felt that the number of rallies that the Southeast Chapter holds each year is just right. (3) Everyone agreed that a rally should be 3 nights/4 days. (4) Everyone would be willing to begin a rally any day of the week. (5) In order of importance for attending a rally – location was first, cost was the second parameter, distance to travel was third, activities and entertainment were tied for fourth. (6) The majority voted that the rally fee should be between \$200-250.

In an effort to hold down the cost of a rally, we asked several additional questions: 31 respondents agreed that the number of evening meals catered should be reduced, 12 disagreed; 23 agreed that NO meal should be catered, 10 disagreed; 25 agreed with less entertainment, 12 disagreed; 31 agreed that we should have pot luck dinners, 11 disagreed. (8) Currently most chapter rallies are held in Florida.

The majority wished to stay in Florida during the winter months. If we wander out of state for a rally, Georgia and Alabama were the majority suggestions.

(9) Locations were listed of past rallies and requested that all locations be marked that you would return: 44 Lazy Days; 30 Sun N Fun, Sarasota; 28 River Bend, Ft Myers, 28 Top Sail, Santa Rosa Beach; 28 Outdoor Resorts, Lake Toxaway, NC; 28 Rock Crusher, Crystal River; 27 Pelican Lake, Naples; 27 Blue Water, Key West; 22 Bulow, Flagler Beach.

(10) And finally, other activities you were interested in: 14 want to play golf, 14 want to attend luncheons, and 31 want to see local attractions. (11) 7 people indicated that they would be willing to host a rally, 12 would pitch in to co-host, and 23 would serve on a rally committee.

Along that line, Howard and Mary Ann Goodhand are the new **rally coordinators**. They will be looking for those people – and others - to assist in hosting 2006 events, and in planning for the 2007 rally season.

We cannot Succeed without "U". Please call or email them with your suggestions or to volunteer. (302) 632-7046. email: maryann@southeastaca.org.

Your executive board would like to sincerely thank the team that administered and compiled the results of this survey. The information gleaned from this effort will be used in the planning steps for future rallies.

It was gratifying to know that 1. The number of rallies (8 total per year) was considered as appropriate by the majority of those responding, and that 2. Most members would like to keep the rally costs lower by having community or pot luck dinners instead of having all meals catered.

We will continue to refine and study these results, in an effort to plan rallies that you consider fun and worth while to attend.

## **More on our pre-rally in Benson, AZ**

The rally is set to take place at the **Butterfield RV Resort and Observatory**. (Off of I-10) Arrival is April 22nd. All sites are assigned- a welcome cocktail get-together starts the fun- followed by a Pizza Party!!!

On April 23rd, a full catered breakfast will be cooked and served by the Benson High School Catering students. They are looking forward to putting on this event for us.

Following breakfast, 16 tickets have been reserved to tour Kartchner Caverns (\$18.95 per person extra- make separate check out to Elaine Dufour.) The initial tour is scheduled for 11:40am on Sunday- The maximum is 16 persons per tour group- but, we may have enough for another one as well.

On April 24th, breakfast and lunch are on your own- but get ready for a real Western Treat!!! We'll all head for the Triangle T Guest Ranch in Dragoon around 4pm. We're going to enjoy a beautiful sunset cocktail hour with entertainment- followed by a western barbeque and yet more entertainment. Sunset and Stars are a featured event.

## **Report filed by Rally Hosts Elaine and John Dufour**

### **Election of Officers:**

As you are aware, January of each year has been designated as the rally for our annual election of officers. Our nominating committee worked hard this year to seek out members willing to serve as members of the executive committee, and are to be commended for their efforts and energy. The nominating committee members were: Reggie Hedrick, Jim Youngblood, Mike Kidder and Ron Wilkinson.

**Results of the election: January, 2006**

**Doug Thompson, President**  
**Pat Leszewski, Vice President**  
**Dan Lee, Treasurer**  
**Donna Keefer, Secretary**  
**Ron Wilkinson, Membership Chairman**  
**Mary Ann and Howard Goodhand, Rally Coordinators**

**Presidents Report:**

It is a great honor, and tremendous responsibility to have been elected as your president. You can rest assured that I will work dilligently during my term to ensure that the club remains on track, and to work with the executive board helping to provide the most creative and fun rally opportunities that we can.

We must never forget that this is a social club, and to that end- we all attend functions to have fun; to enjoy interacting with our fellow members and friends; and to learn more about the wonderful coaches we are all so fortunate to be behind the wheel of, as we diesel down the roads of America.

Your executive board is planning some really great events this year, and we are always looking for volunteers to help make these activities fun for all. Be sure, if you have a suggestion for a venue, that you email or pick up the phone today and contact Mary Ann or Howard Goodhand to communicate your ideas.

In the "other things our club does" category- don't forget we've given back to the community- and had fun at the same time- with the adventures and activities of the **Pink Ladies**. I have asked Jo-Anne and Vic to continue to head that project during my term as your president. News of the next event is also in this newsletter.

Thanking you again for the opportunity.... Please pick up the phone or email me if I can be of help in any way....

**Doug Thompson, President**  
*doug@southeastaca.org*

**Vice President's Report:**

I want to thank the Southeast Chapter for all of your assistance throughout the past two years in helping me coordinate some great rally locations and rallies. I enjoyed the challenge and I know we are in good hands with Mary Ann and Howard taking on the task.

As I move on to my new venture of being our Vice President, I am looking forward in assisting our President with ventures and tasks throughout this upcoming year.

I am currently working on an idea of having American Coach identification plates made up with the ACA logo and our names printed on them. These would be placed in our front windshields. We could all be identified as we arrive and speed up the checking in process at the rallies- as well as have others know where we are located.

Once I find out the details and costs, I will pass on to all members as well as to all the other Chapters.

We're getting ready for the Disney rally this month. There are 40 coaches signed up to attend. We plan to have social hours, potluck/grill out dinners, the Hoop Dee Doo Revue show/dinner-- and lots of free time to enjoy the many wonders of Disney.

In closing, we are approaching the time of year to start getting ready for the summer months of travel. I wish you all well and safe traveling. We hope to see you in Tucson in April.

**Pat Leszewski, Vice President**  
*pat@southeastaca.org*

Treasurer's report, filed during the business meeting at Lazy Days, Tampa:

General Account:	\$ 5,986.57
Rally Account:	\$42,414.51
Charity Account:	\$ 1,778.75
<b>Total SEACA Balances:</b>	<b>\$50,089.83</b>
<b>Committed Rally Expenses:</b>	<b>\$33,262.77</b>
<b>Total Available Funds:</b>	<b>\$16,827.06</b>

Respectfully Submitted:

**Dan Lee, Treasurer**  
*dan@southeastaca.org*

**Pink Ladies Report:**

Once again Puttin on the Pink hits a high note with a smashing performance by the Pinkette's- joined by the Pink Panthers.

Bingo, a Chinese auction, a Silent auction and plenty of home baked goodies made for a delicious fun filled evening at the January Lazy Days Rally. Hope Lodge residents donated 2 beautiful quilts and some wonderful paintings and craft items for the silent auction.

Judy Benton made a beautiful afghan for the raffle (which brought in over \$400). Thank you to all who helped and gave so generously including-- American Coach who gave many apparel items for the Silent Auction.

This year we raised \$ 8,700, and once again the Wallace's will match funds, for a grand total of \$ 17,400 going to Hope Lodge.

On Friday the staff and residents of Hope Lodge opened their doors to The Southeast Chapter. We were able to see the screened in patio that was built with the monies we gave to them last year. They decorated the dining room with pink tablecloths and fresh pink flowers for our visit.

They conducted tours and showed a short happy film about the lodge. Erica Wallace joined us for a wonderful afternoon.

### **PINK LADY ALERT**

If you're going west in April- be sure to sign up for the Pink Ladies Luncheon. It's going to be held at an old **Opera House**. You won't want to miss this decked out cowgirl event!!!

*Jo-Anne Schneider*

### **News Items Needing Your Attention:**

The American Coach Association National Survey 2006 is in the January National Newsletter. It is also available on the ACA Web Site. It is important you get your survey in by February 13th. (hopefully that date won't have passed by the time you read this.... )

This survey will be used by your National Board of Directors to help set the direction for the future of the national organization. It should only take about 5 minutes to do on the web site.... please take time to participate...

### **Election time for the national officers is here again!!**

Ballots will be mailed to all current ACA members on February 14, 2006. **PLEASE take time to vote!**

(As you know- Vic Schneider is currently a national officer, and is running again for Vice President- His thoughts are expressed herein: )

Hi: I'm Vic Schneider- currently Vice President of American Coach Association. I'm writing this message to ask for your vote in the upcoming election, as I feel we are looking at critical times for our national club. If I look back- not too long ago, we could fill our fuel tanks for \$150. Now the same fuel costs us \$350 or more and I don't think we'll see fuel prices much lower in the near future.

The ACA National Board of Directors is concerned as to how these added costs will affect members traveling and future rally attendance.

We included a survey in the January Newsletter- to get your input as to how we should address the current situation, and help keep our organization healthy in the future. For this and other reasons, I would like to continue on your board of directors, helping to make decisions for the betterment of ACA.

One of the major things I was able to do last year as Chairman of the Insurance Committee was reduce our insurance premium for ACA's coverage. I shopped the policy and duplicated the previous coverage for \$4,462 in the past we had paid \$9,761.79 a saving to ACA of \$5,300.

In conclusion, thank you for taking the time to read this note. Please make sure to take time to vote in this election. I would appreciate your consideration. Thank you!!!

Yours truly,

Vic Schneider, Vice President American Coach Association

### **Website:**

Our chapter website- **[www.southeastaca.org](http://www.southeastaca.org)** - experienced the most traffic and visitors we've ever had in January, '06- one year after we launched the new site.

Your webmasters- Dan Lee and Doug Thompson, are doing all they can to make this site user friendly and to maintain a complete repository for up to the minute information regarding your club and its events.

It contains downloadable rally schedules, registration forms, membership information and pictures of events we've had. Stop by any time- and feel free to email them with comments or suggestions. **Remember: The generic password vaporizes on 3/31.**

### **Newsletter editor comments.....**

For just over two years, I've really enjoyed being your club newsletter editor. Unfortunately, licking all of those stamps and envelopes has finally taken its toll on the Thompson family, so we will be turning the reins over to the new club secretary, beginning with the first '06-'07 newsletter publication- around mid-July.

I sincerely appreciate all of the help and cooperation you've given us during this time in contributing articles and information- and hope that you will continue by helping **Donna Keefer** out as she settles in for lots of typing.... folding.... stuffing.... proof reading.... and fun.

Thank you again-

*Doug Thompson*  
[www.rvzoomin.com](http://www.rvzoomin.com)