

Look for Coach House's new Web site at www.coachhousesrv.com

Letter From The President

By Bern Wolsky, *President*

As I sat down to write this, quite a few different thoughts fought for precedence, so I decided to make this President's Message a heart-to-heart talk with the membership.

First of all, the bad news. Our First VP and former Rally Coordinator, Jerry Wolff, has submitted his resignation, for personal reasons. Much of the success with rallies during our first year was directly attributable to Jerry's efforts. He brought years, if not decades, of FMCA experience to his job. Jerry will be sorely missed by this Club. We must, however, move on. The Board appointed Mary Ann Kennedy as First VP and Pauline Stevens as Second VP; both appointments are subject to membership approval at our convention meeting in November 2001. Carole Blascak will continue as Third VP and Rally Coordinator.

We are moving forward with Rally planning. As you can see in the Event Calendar, we are scheduling two more rallies in 2001 and hope to schedule four rallies in 2002. This is a moderate and attainable goal. Marlene and I were members of the FMCA Capitol Chapter in the D.C. area. With more than one hundred members we scheduled at least nine rallies a season — almost one a month except for the summer. But EVERYONE has to step up to the plate and take their turn at bat. The Board has been doing most of the work and members begin to consider this a constant. For example, at the last November meeting a non-member approached Marlene about 10 p.m. one evening and said, "You're a Board

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The future of the Coach House Class B motorhome depends on many factors.

To 'B' or Not to 'B'

By Wes Knadle
Coach House Factory Representative

That is the question we have been hearing a lot. Will Coach House continue to build class B motorhomes? The answer is uncertain, for several reasons:

1) Dodge plans to discontinue its current van products. This was originally announced for model year 2002, but has been extended until model year 2003. Sources say it will be replaced by a Mercedes copy vehicle brought in under the Freightliner name, a product that is boxier and looks like a small panel truck. It has one engine type, a 5-cylinder diesel. The vehicle has potential, but the question is: Do we want to use this chassis, or

Ford or Chevy, with their own limitations?

2) The class B segment has always had the smallest share of the motorhome market at around 5 percent, and in the last 10 years or so, the most competition (14 manufacturers, the same number that build class C's, which have 25 percent of the market). Competition has been so stiff that three known manufacturers have gone out of business this last year.

3) Because of low/slow market penetration, many dealers will not carry class B's.

4) In keeping with our tradition, we build a top-quality product, but most competi-

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Club*News*

Musings by Mary Ann

By Mary Ann Kennedy
First Vice President

It was “touch and go” at my first convention rally meeting. I was ready for flight! That was November 1999.

Being a *single*, I brought some baggage and trepidations with me. Would anyone talk to me since I wasn't part of a couple? I'm so beautiful, you know, that many of the wives would be jealous and I would not be included in their group. Oh well, I always have one or two of my canine

companions with me. We do lots of walking.

There wasn't much time for walking. We were kept busy all day that Saturday forming this organization — constitutional bylaws, policies, meetings (rallies?), parent organization (FMCA), Coach House support, on and on. Many of us learned a lot about the workings of a motorhome organization. For a large group, 60 coaches, there was discussion and if not always consensus, at least majority agreement. Things moved forward.

Then, much to my surprise, after opening my mouth a few times as to procedures, parliamentary and otherwise, I found myself on the Executive Board as Alternate National Director. And in March 2001 I became First Vice President.

All of the Board meetings the first year

were a pain, but we all hung in there — by no means agreeing all the time. It was not easy, folks, to form a new organization. You (members) may not approve of everything that we did, but we always had your best interests at heart. Yes, we made some mistakes; then we circled the wagons and came together for the best interests of the organization — CHOC.

Now we have been through our second annual International CHOC meeting. It was much more relaxed this time. More on that later.

Oh, by the way, remember “touch and go?” Well, I didn't go. After two national CHOC meetings and two rallies, Sun-N-Fun and Ohio, and many Board meetings, *I'm glad I stayed!*

How about you?

President's Letter

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member — would you please make me a cup of coffee.” That's not the way it works, but not everyone seems to understand that.

Although we are scheduling rallies for next year, we do not have volunteer rally hosts for all of them. Carole needs help. **We need volunteers to host rallies. We also need volunteers to run for office.** I hope to set in motion an organizational model where officers serve for a year, or two years, and then move aside for someone else. This is the best way to share the burden, and also increase the experience of all club members. This is not meant to exclude any officer who really likes their position from serving several years if elected on a yearly basis. Everyone can do it — all it takes is effort and willingness to try. Last year, Barbara and Lex Barnes had a delightful rally in Springfield, Ohio, that everyone thoroughly enjoyed. Eight coaches attended.

Who Will Volunteer?

Another thought occurred to me. Although our club is a Chapter of FMCA, in the seventeen months we have been active not one other member besides Marlene and me have attended an FMCA rally or convention. Correct me if I'm wrong about that. Most recently, in

February, we attended the Southeast Area (SEA) Regional Rally at Brooksville, Florida. SEA holds this rally annually, usually in the first week of February. It is very popular and usually attracts about 2,500 coaches, including the top officers of FMCA. You can usually find cutting-edge RV products and coaches, but the main attraction for me is the schedule of seminars. We attended two: (1) “How to Conduct a Rally,” by Richard Coe, a top officer of Encore RV Parks, which owns twelve first class RV Resorts in Florida, and (2) “Running a Rally,” by FMCA Executive Director Don Eversmann, on FMCA support for Chapter Rallies. Both seminars were outstanding — all CHOC members would benefit from these seminars or from many of the others offered. We attended a seminar on Digital Photography in Brunswick, Maine — also outstanding.

CHOC is planning to attend the SEA Brooksville Rally in February 2002 as a group. Please join us. You will be exposed to the extraordinarily good FMCA planning and organization. We will rendezvous somewhere near Brooksville, probably the nearest Wal-Mart parking lot, and drive in together to be parked together. Leave when you wish. Granted, most of the coaches attending such functions are behemoths,

some with up to five slide-outs. All this does for us is make us realize how fortunate we are not to be burdened with the responsibility for driving/maintaining/storing, not to mention purchasing, such a vehicle. Our Coach House Vans are completely capable of attending such events, even though dry-camping is the order of the day. Two caveats: (1) your vehicle should have a generator to dry-camp and (2) at the Brooksville SEA Rally, public showers are NOT available. This will present members with a chance to try out their Coach House Van showers, or to try Comfort Bath products (call 1-877-9COMFORT and request a brochure). We dry-camped in Brunswick for *six full days!* Without taking on water, fuel, or having our black/gray tanks emptied. While such a long stay requires planning and discipline, two- or three-day stays are a piece of cake. But again, you should have a generator if you are planning to dry-camp.

Dues Reminder

PLEASE pay your CHOC membership dues when they are due. Membership runs for the calendar year and dues are payable in advance for the upcoming year on 1 January.

Happy traveling!

Technical *Tips*

Carrying Extra Gas Is Risky Business

By Robert E. Luby

Many of us will be taking long trips with our vans. Along with “other” things, the thought occurs that maybe we should be packing some extra gas. The temptation is to get a couple of the red plastic containers that we use to store gas for lawnmowers. They seem the perfect solution — available in 1, 3 and 5 gallon sizes. There are also metal cans similar to what paint thinner is sold in.

If you feel you must carry extra gas, you must be aware of the problems with gasoline: Its fumes are highly flammable and are heavier than air — which means they will stay on the floor. Sparks from your furnace, cooking, smoking, etc, could ignite you and your vehicle. Gasoline fumes can also be deadly to breathe and often make people sick. The odor from one drop of gasoline seems to last forever and is very difficult to mask. In the event of an accident (it does happen), the very last thing you need is loose tank(s) of gasoline to either be punctured or flying like a loose cannon ball inside the van.

Carrying jugs of gasoline on the roof is also not advisable — any fumes will easily enter the roof vent when it's open, to say nothing of where it will end up in even the slightest fender bender. Strapping cans to the ladder or carrying them under the hood are also terrible ideas.

Considering the above, if you still think you will need “extra gas,” use one of the round, dome-top cans that are available in most hardware and auto stores. These containers, although more expensive than their plastic or tin relatives, will at least withstand some abuse — they might be acceptable in an emergency situation.

If you are traveling in an unfamiliar area, a better solution than carrying extra gas is to start looking to refill when your gauge hits halfway. Stop, relax and refill.

Our vans can travel quite a distance on one tank of gas, but in certain areas of the West, Canada, Mexico and Alaska, gas stations can be pretty spread out, and hours of operation are not consistent.

Prevent Future Lockouts Today

Ever have that nagging feeling that you just locked your keys in the van? If it hasn't happened yet, consider yourself lucky. I remember trying to help someone who had hidden an extra key but had it tucked away *inside* the vehicle — not much good there. Another had the extra key neatly hidden under the hood (which could only be unlatched from *inside* the vehicle).

You can't always depend on the co-pilots these days, because they either don't have their keys or left their bag inside the vehicle.

Breaking a window is always a solution — an expensive solution that can be avoided.

The solution is to have the extra key in a place that is *not* locked — wallets or purses are not a good idea. All the magnetic key holders that I've seen are not reliable — they get knocked off when you hit a pot hole or curb, don't stick very well because of undercoating, get taken off by mistake during vehicle servicing, etc.

I would suggest the following method of securing an extra key to your van:

First, make sure that the extra key fits and works in the lock — we had four keys made for the front door and none of them worked. If the key fits but doesn't work, generally you can hold both the new and old key together and see where it wasn't filed properly — most of the time, the key stops (vertical cuts) are a little off and can be easily fixed with a hand file.

Second, find a hiding place, taking into consideration what the conditions most likely will be like when you find yourself locked out — weather, parking lots, etc. Don't try to be too creative in determining a location — there are many places where the key can be attached without being obvious.

Third, attach the key with a slotted screw that can be undone with a dime — a worst-case scenario would be that you would find yourself looking for change or a screwdriver. Be careful of where you drill holes, staying clear of all tanks and lines. If you don't want to use a screw-type fastener, tape the extra key on securely with electrical tape.

Fourth, *show* and *tell* your co-pilot where the extra key is. That way, if you forget its location at the critical time, at least one of you will be of some use.

Calling All Singles!

SINGLES! You are important to CHOC.

We want to know who and where you are when you come to our Rallies.

At the April Rally in Tarpon Springs, ask for Mary Ann Kennedy. She will be hosting a Wine and Cheese tasting for those attendees who are interested.

Actual location (site) and time TBA upon your arrival, probably late afternoon Saturday before dinner.

See you there.

Class B Future

Continued from Page 1

tors build an entry- or mid-level and less expensive product. Most sales representatives will not familiarize themselves enough with a quality product to properly present and sell it.

5) There has been tremendous interest in our new 23-foot Platinum Class C. “RV Business” just announced this product as “one of 21 RV's to Watch for 2001.” Other publications have written similar articles, and the level of interest has skyrocketed.

In conclusion, there is no quick, clear answer. Currently, we are still building class B motorhomes, but the direction we will take has yet to be determined. So to “B” or not to “B” will still be the question until a definitive answer comes from Chrysler, and all possible options have been weighed.

'Loyalty Coupons' Coming

Watch for your \$1,500 loyalty rebate coupon, coming soon from Coach House. Every registered owner will receive a coupon, good for use by May 31, 2001, for \$1,500 savings on a new Coach House.

CHOC*Talk*

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Calendar

April 20-22, 2001

CHOC Spring Rally
Hosts: Bern and Marlene Wolsky
Tarpon Springs, Florida

September 28-30, 2001

CHOC Fall Rally
Hosts: Carole Blascak and Dan Regan
Tropical Palms Resort
Kissimmee, Florida

November 2-4, 2001

CHOC Annual Convention
Host: Carole Blascak
Stay-N-Play Resort
Nokomis, Florida

First week in February, 2002

FMCA Southeast Regional (SEA) Rally
Brooksville, Florida (see FMCA
Magazine for details)
Hosts: SEA

Dry-camping (some hookups available
for handicapped)

April 2002 (dates TBA)

CHOC Spring Rally
Hosts: Bob Schneider and Pauline
Stevens
Suwanee, Florida

September 2002 (dates TBA)

CHOC Fall Rally
Hosts: Bern and Marlene Wolsky
Cherry Hill Camp Ground
Near Washington, D.C.

November 2002 (dates TBA)

CHOC Annual Convention
Host: Carole Blascak
Stay-N-Play Resort
Nokomis, Florida