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New Model Introduced

The Coach House Platinum family is growing again with the introduction of the new Platinum 282 XL motorhome.

The new model is 27 feet, 10 inches long and features two slideouts, according to Coach House vice president Steve Gerzeny. The front slideout houses a power sofa, and the rear slideout contains a full-time queen-size bed, the first ever in a Coach House product.

With the rear slideout retracted, the queen bed fills the entire rear portion of the

coach. With the rear slideout extended, the queen bed moves out, providing aisle space at the foot of the bed with access to a large bank of closets and drawers.

The queen bed itself is always in the "ready" position, requiring no setup or folding down of sofas, as in previous models. In fact, sheets and bedspreads may be left in place while the slideout is operated.

The new model will make its official debut at the R.V. Industry Association trade show in early December.

Future CHOC Rallies

Feb. 2-4, 2004 CHOC Pre-Rally and Fish Fry at Pauline and Bob's Home in Myakka City, Fla.

Feb. 4-7, 2004 FMCA Southeast Area Rally, Brooksville, Fla.

April 15-18, 2004 FMCA International Rally, Claremore, Okla.

September 2004 CHOC Fall Rally, Decatur, Ala. Precise dates to be announced later

Fall 2004 CHOC Homecoming Rally. Location and dates to be announced later

Complete information with dates and costs will be announced in future issues.

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

Letter From The President

By Pauline Stevens, President

The Homecoming Rally is over. We had a great turnout. I was pleased to see that we had 39 coaches. I hope that everyone had as good a time as Bob and I did. I would like to thank Coach House Inc., R.V. World, the Board of Directors and all the volunteers who worked so hard to make the rally a success.

I would also like to thank Clair and Billy Glossner for the Sunday Devotional. The service was great, and we all got a blessing from it. I hope we can do it again.

R.V. World gave us a five-wheel electric scooter to raffle off. We raised \$510 for our charity, Habitat for Humanity, and the club voted to match that amount. One half of the money goes to National FMCA Habitat Fund and the other half is being used to replace the tools that were stolen from the Sarasota chapter. Bob and I are proud to be the ones to carry out these tasks.

We have changed the Spring Rally to Claremore, Okla. We will hold our rally together with the FMCA International Area Rally. This is our area. We will be holding our business meeting there. I hope we see some of our Western family there. Karin Peuhsner and I are currently working on plans to continue the rally on to California, ending at Lake Tahoe. Details will follow at a later date.

I am working on getting all the club members copies of the by-laws. Also, our secretary has updated the roster of our members and I will happy to mail you a copy if you want one.

Remember, your dues are due in January.
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Group Gathering

Rally attendees pose for a group photo on the steps of the Ringling Museum.

39 Units Roll to Nokomis For Annual Homecoming

By Bill Johnson

By 4:30 the afternoon of Oct. 30, about 39 Coach House RVs bearing 72 of our 100 active CHOC members had gathered at the Encore Park in Nokomis for our annual homecoming.

During the social hour over wine and cheese, old friendships were renewed and new ones begun. A number of the attendees were "First Timers," and they were warmly welcomed. After the evening meal, the annual membership meeting was held with the election of officers for the coming year as well as other matters pertaining to the club.

At random times during the entire weekend, a drawing was held for one or more of the many door prizes that included, among

other items, 15 pairs of canvas folding chairs. The drawings generated a lot of interest as well as much good-natured kidding among winners and losers.

The weather was perfect for the entire weekend, which made our outings to the Ringling Museum of Art and the Mote Marine Lab in Sarasota more enjoyable. There was also adequate "down time" to share ideas and tips on things to do and places to visit.

The weekend wound down on Saturday night with a steak dinner followed by music and dancing until the "wee hours" — well, at least until around 8:30, when the last of the group turned in for the night.

Most everyone enjoyed a Sunday morning breakfast and a last chance to visit with friends old and new before departing.

Club News

'America's Most Scenic Drive' Is Memorable

Continued from last issue

By Wally Antoine

We go over bridges from one side of the Mississippi to the other. One side will have a big city and the other side will be barren or farmlands. One of the nicest towns is Guttenberg, Iowa. It is on a high cliff overlooking the river. In 1890 the town fathers made the railroads locate under the bluff; leaving the shore to the use of the people. We saw a great many orchards with the apple blossoms just coming into bloom.

Our next stop was La Crosse, Wis. As Memorial Day was coming up, we went backwards to DeSoto to a Corps of Engineers Campground right on the river. Very reasonable, and we stayed the weekend. It rained that night and got cool. The thermometer got down to near 45 degrees. That is cold for us Floridians. We toured the area. We went 40 miles south to Prairie de Chien just for dinner and a stop at an outdoor outfitters store like L.L. Bean.

We saw some flooding, but not enough to interfere with our trip. The roads and interstates have all been constructed high enough to eliminate any problems. The river has 29 locks and dams between Minneapolis and Granite City, Ill. This system controls nearly two thirds of the nation's watershed. We were not allowed close to any dams and locks. Security has been strengthened since 9/11.

We drove through many small towns and noticed the flood protection that they have. Some have 10-foot-high vertical barriers to receive planks at flood time.

Sunday we went to La Crosse, Wis. We stopped at a library and we got 75 e-mail messages.

On Memorial Day we started out for Minnesota. We visited the log cabin in Pepin, Wis., where "Little House on the Prairie" author Laura Ingles Wilder lived as a youth. Further on, about 11 a.m. we came across a Memorial Day Service at a Lutheran church and cemetery. We stopped and participated. We also toured the old

Lutheran church. Have you noticed we love churches of all types?

We didn't spend much time in St. Paul or Minneapolis. Two busy cities. We were busy finding our way to a friend's house to spend the night. We did find their farm in Anoka, Minn., and had a nice visit. The next morning we were on our way to Lake Itasca and the final stop on our Great River Road excursion. We stopped at V.A. Hospital for a medicine refill. This necessitated an overnight stay. We got an early start and reached Lake Itasca State Park in the morning. We got a campground and after lunch, we did our thing: We walked across the Mississippi River! It is about 20 feet across and about 15 inches deep with a rocky bottom. I put on my socks to do this trip.

Hundreds of people come here every day. Some we talked to were surprised that we had followed the Great River Road all the way from Natchez — about 2,000 miles.

There was a group of grammar school kids there from North Dakota, about 75 miles away. They were a treat and they posed for a group picture.

We dry-camped at the Bear Claw Campground. They have community water and sewage facilities. It is very adequate for us old-timers.

Lake Itasca State Park is a huge place — about 50 square miles. We visited the new visitors center and took pictures of an iron gate that contains flowers, birds and animals found in the park. We took pictures of twin flowers in the gate. We also hiked a trail that was supposed to have twin flowers. The Swedish people gave their daughters flower names. The twin flower in Sweden is called the Linnea flower. Edna's middle name is Linnea and one of our granddaughters is named Linnea.

We hiked a couple of miles down a nature trail but found no twin flowers. It might have been too early in the spring for them. We did see a real log cabin. The joints were terrific. They sure knew how to build them in the old days. We saw some other beautiful flowers and a lot of fern.

We took a tour boat in the afternoon and it was windy. The tour guide pointed out sites of historical interest. We went the

entire length of Lake Itasca, which is nearly 33 miles, to the headwaters of the Mississippi. The guide gave us an interesting story about a man named Schoolcraft, an explorer who founded towns, churches, schools, etc., and also fought for the preservation of the woodlands. He proved that the headwaters of the Mississippi really were here. He did this with the help of a local Indian chief. He also got a lot of Indian stories. He passed all this information on to his cousin, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, back in Massachusetts. Longfellow used these notes in writing the Hiawatha story.

We departed Lake Itasca in the afternoon and headed for New England. We stopped at an Indian casino, where we spent the night at their free campground.

In the morning we were on our way and stopped at Cohasset, Minn. We took a few pictures and went to the town hall. We were interested in Cohasset, as Walter's ancestors settled in Cohasset, Mass. Both towns kept the Indian name of the local area: Cohasset, land of big waters.

Our Platinum keeps being noticed wherever we go, and especially on this trip, as we were traveling in a new territory. Fellow RVers were very impressed with the Platinum when we gave them tours.

When you decide to take America's Most Scenic Drive, we suggest you purchase The Great River Road Map. It features 151 points of interest, making the trip interesting from start to finish.

Editor's Note

Well Done, Bill

Our thanks to Bill Johnson for a great job of putting together our CHOC Newsletters for the past two years. We wish Bill and Joan good luck in their new home. With some input from the membership, we will try to continue publishing articles that are informative and of interest to all.

Freeman Nevins

Report From The National Director

By Bob Schneider

We were happy to have Max Durbin, FMCA National Vice President, International Area, at our Homecoming meeting in Nokomis. He spoke to us about all the benefits that are available to us as members of FMCA. I think everyone was pleased to find out how much is offered. If you missed the meeting, and need more information, go to www.FMCA.com. You can find everything there.

We are happy to be taking part in the FMCA International Area Rally in Claremore, Okla., on April 15-18, 2004. If you haven't registered, you can do so and get all the information at the FMCA website. Prior to April 3, 2004, the registration fee is only \$100 for four days.

I will present the check for Habitat to Humanity to FMCA at the International Rally in New Mexico in March 2004. In addition, I will tell them about the tools we gave to the Sarasota chapter, in the name of our chapter, to replace those which were stolen. The details are in the President's letter.

President's Letter

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ary 2004. They are \$10 for existing members and \$25 for first-time members. Please send them to our treasurer, Barbara Kedanis, at 2845 Cloister Street, North Fort Myers, FL 33917. Thanks.

As you know, we elected officers for the coming year. They are: Pauline Stevens, President; Karin Peuhsner, 1st Vice President; Pierre Berard, 2nd Vice President; Freeman Nevins, 3rd Vice President and Newsletter Editor; Jeanette Riley, Secretary; Barbara Kedanis, Treasurer; Bob Schneider, National Director; and Marlene Wolsky, Alternate National Director. Thanks to all for joining the board of directors.

We will miss Juan Galvez and Bill Johnson — they did an outstanding job. Please send newsletter articles to Freeman Nevins at fjnevins@aol.com or 442 NW 98 Court, Miami, FL 33172-4037. Don't be bashful. We need articles that are of interest to all.

In closing, a remembrance to all who are sick or have lost a loved one.

See you in Oklahoma. Have a safe trip.

Pauline

Rally News

More Photos from Homecoming Rally

