

Southeast Bus Nuts Newsletter

Spring 2024

Denise's Diary

Hello Fellow Bus Nuts! I hope that you had a pleasant Holiday season and brought in the New Year ready to hit the road in your buses! We started the year off with a taste of New Orleans having our Post-New Years Rally in Louisiana hosted by **Patrick** and **Gena Boudreaux** (and Sheriff Patrick Jr). What a fantastic gathering! I was very impressed with the state park amenities and ability to handle all of our big rigs. We ate well as we always do at our rallies. When we were not eating out our Treasurer **Craig Bowen** was in the kitchen working his magic. He fed us breakfast two mornings including pancakes and omelets, and for one dinner his delicious seafood boil.

Our two nights of eating dinner out included a great seafood restaurant and a dinner aboard The Creole Queen. Their food was amazing according to **Kevin Clark** who might have gone to the buffet at least three or four times! A wonderful live jazz band was playing music during our dinner on the Mississippi. And our group really liked the two passenger vans we rented to shuttle us there. And of course our game night was so much fun—we all learned to play the dice game “Bunco”. Everyone picked up on it quickly.

I want to recognize and officially welcome **Bob Neubert** and **Julie Iooss**. Although they joined SEBN in 2022 this was the first rally they were able to attend. Also new members **John Fahnstock** and **Sandra Fulger** who have attended past rallies but just took the plunge and joined us. Congratulations are also in order for Bus Nuts **George** and **Clairevon Nixon**, who arrived in their new 2001 Prevost XLII Marathon. She is a beauty!



President Denise and husband Ray at the WWII museum.

We did have our usual business meeting, and we had a few emotional moments. Long time member **Herb Bates** announced that this was to be his last rally. He's reluctantly hanging up the keys. He has been a member of the SEBN since 1998. The ‘Bates Motel’ is a staple at our rallies and we sure are going to miss seeing Herb and his family. He made the best French Toast too! His bus is for sale so please spread the word and send any potential buyers his way!

Another touching moment we experienced during the meeting was when past president **Manny Montesino** handed off the official gavel that belonged to our beloved Past President **Charlie Bukoski**. Bus Nut member and chaplain **Judy Bukoski** came across the gavel when she was packing up her home and preparing to move. She donated the gavel to the chapter and as such we will ensure that it continues to get passed on to the next president, etc.

Thanks, Judy, for all you have done for the BusNuts!

We also had a few guests in attendance: Chris and Josh who are friends of Dan Aldridge. They both drive MCI coaches and actually stayed at the park with us during the rally. We hope to wow them enough that they make the decision to join our chapter.

I will also say that we definitely felt a void in our Game Night, as our connoisseur **Mike Heron** and wife **Carol**, were not in attendance. Mike and Carol had not missed a rally in years. Mike, we did our best to fill your shoes, but you might hear there was some chaos and confusion. But we eventually got it together!

(Cont'd)

Spring Rally - April 25-28
LAKE PINES RV PARK
Midland (Columbus) GA
See p. 5 for more detail.

Denise's Diary (Cont'd)

There was so much to do in New Orleans and surrounding area that we needed another week. Aside from touring the city and eating yummy beignets, some members visited the WWII Museum, Bourbon Street, and the Tabasco farm. New Orleans definitely warrants a return visit.

Aside from my ramblings, I hope that by my sharing of these events you may be encouraged to join us at a future rally. If you are not able to travel any distance, I have a solution. Just give me a call and we'll coordinate having a rally near YOU. We welcome any and all suggestions for locations for future rallies.

When we left N.O. we headed back to Florida to the FlyWheeler's event at Fort Meade.

With us were **Kevin and Camellia Clark, Jerry and Patsy Hodge, Jess Burrier and Karen Jimenez, and Dan Aldridge**, all of whom stayed on-site. The rains came down pretty good and it became quite muddy. Others with us were **Manny Montesino and Norm Scanapico**. Fortunately the grounds dried up by the end of the event and we were able to drive our buses out without getting stuck and needing tows.

Hope to see you in Columbus!

Denise Aldridge, Chapter President

FMCA Director's Report Hello fellow Bus Nuts. I hope this finds all of our members doing well! I do not have any FMCA news to report this quarter, so I'll share a short account of our adventures instead. We did not attend the FMCA SE Area rally in Lakeland earlier this month due to a conflict in our schedule. But Kevin and I were able to celebrate our 42nd wedding anniversary on February 13th with a short trip to Margaritaville in Auburndale.

Thanks again to the **Patrick Boudreaux** family for the amazing rally in New Orleans. We had a wonderful time there, and our trip home was filled with good food, laughs, great company with great friends. I was not able to make the

Flywheelers leg of the trip but Kevin had a great time with the group, being a bachelor for the week, l.o.l. It was his first time doing a complete dry camp in the bus for that long and he did learn a few things ...battery life being one of them (see p. 6). We are looking forward to seeing everyone in April!

Camellia Clark, National Director

Treasurer's Report

As of February 1st the Southeast Bus Nuts account balances are as follows:

Bank of the Ozarks checking	\$5766.54
PayPal	\$235.53
Subtotal	\$6002.07

We have a pending rally refund of \$331., so our net available balance is **\$5671.07**

We recently purchased a new credit card reader to accept credit payments at rallies. The old reader was no longer supported, as we found out at the recent rally in New Orleans!

Craig Bowen, Treasurer



Some 14 buses/couples ventured over to New Orleans for the 2024 Post New Years Rally.

Secretary's Report

As is our routine, the membership met on Saturday morning of the rally. After approval of minutes and a treasurer's report, upcoming rallies were discussed. The fall rally

is set for October 24-27, 2024 at Salem Breeze RV Park in Winston Salem, NC. Our chapter VP **Bo Nobel** and wife **Nancy** have agreed to be hosts.

In other business it was mentioned that the chapter bylaws are being reviewed by officers, the pictorial roster kept by Linda Karlsson is being added to the website, and it was mentioned that there are quite a few members whose dues are past due. If you are in arrears your membership may be terminated after 90 days. The Secretary will be e-mailing members whose dues remain unpaid.

A Nominating Committee was formed by the President and consists of Immediate Past President **Manny Montesino**, current VP **Bo Noble**, and Newsletter Editor **Mike Heron**. If anyone would like to volunteer for an office please contact Manny.

Long time member **Herb Bates** was recognized as a long term member who is stepping out of the bus hobby. He will be greatly missed.

Lisa Sawyer, Secretary in absentia

New Orleans Rally



Rally hosts Patrick and Gena Boudreaux head the table at Deanie's Seafood restaurant on the first night of the New Orleans rally. That's Gena's Mom on her right. An enjoyable Dutch treat dinner!



Four BusNut ladies pose with king-sized bottles of Tabasco at the Avery Island bottling plant for the famous hot sauce. From the left they are Patsy Hodge, Karen Jimenez, Julie Iooss, and Denise Aldridge.



Judy Bukoski donated her late husband's presidential gavel to Past President Manny Montesino, left, and current leader Denise Aldridge.



A member since 1998, Herb Bates and daughters went to the wrong restaurant the first night, but still ate well. We will miss Herb and his "Bates Motel" bus.



New members Bob Neubert and Julie Iooss pose before boarding the paddle-wheeler Creole Queen for the Friday night dinner cruise.



George and Clairevon Nixon brought their new-to-them 2001 Prevost Marathon XL-II to its first rally. A really

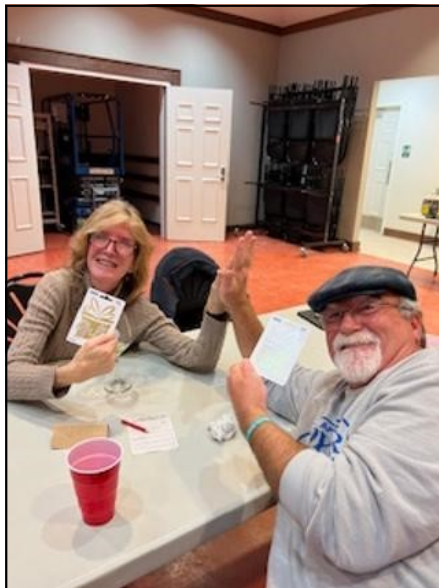
More from New Orleans



The Mississippi River dinner cruise on Friday-featured fine dining and included delicious Creole and Cajun cuisine. The sounds of a lively jazz band filled the air. It was a festive night!



After Saturday's delicious Cajun seafood boil by SEBN's executive chefs Craig and Beverly Bowen, the group settled down to a serious game of "Bunco" where you roll three dice and try to get a match. Money changed hands!



The meeting facility/clubhouse at the Bayou Segnette State Park was modern and roomy. Winners of the Bunco game were Tammy Bartley and Dan Aldridge.



Our rally "Sheriff" was Patrick Boudreau. He was paired with Beverly Bowen for a round of Bunco and they also finished in the money in the fun contest.

Craig Bowen won the 50-50.

SEBN Spring Rally

Save the date! April 25-28 Midland (Columbus), GA

Lake Pines RV Park

<https://lakepines.net>

Situated in 20 acres of pine forest!

Register now on our SEBN website - \$310 for two persons
(www.sebusnuts.com)

Only six hours from Orlando - Only two hours from Atlanta

We have some 20 sites reserved, and great meals are planned. We'll feature a Dutch-treat dinner at the famous Ezell's Catfish Restaurant, a catered steak dinner by Burt's Butcher Shop, and several other meals by in-house chefs! Nearby Ft. Moore (formerly Fort Benning) has a fascinating Infantry Museum, the Civil War Naval Museum, etc



Set along the Chattahoochee River on the Alabama border, Columbus has become a popular spot for outdoor lovers with the longest urban whitewater course in the world, and a zip line across the river. The thriving downtown is a mecca for attractions, restaurants and shops for curious Bus Nuts!.

Any questions, please call Denise Aldridge, chapter president, at 407-466-4431

In Memoriam....

Prayers for members **Jack Campbell** and son **Jerry** on the loss of their wife and mother, **Jackie**, last month, She was a sweet lady and we all will miss her. I am honored to have crossed paths with this Bus Nuts family. Here's a quick story about Jack and Jackie that you may have already heard. Back before our retirement Ray and I were those



typical BusNut members that only had the time to get to a rally and then go home quickly to get back to work. I remember it like it was yesterday. When we were preparing to return from a spring rally in Columbia, SC. I noticed that Jack and Jackie were not. I

was curious as to where they were going next, and I asked Ms Jackie. She simply replied "We don't know yet, we are staying here for a few more days until we figure it out." Jack stated, "We don't know if we'll be turning left or right when we leave the campground." I responded to them both that they were my inspiration and that one day I wanted to be them. Thank you Jack and Jackie for sharing your knowledge, wisdom and wonderful friendship with so many Bus Nuts. You inspire us all to keep on busin'!

Denise Aldridge, President

Longtime member **Mike Mingus**, 75, passed away this past autumn, after a period of declining health. He was a longtime member of the SEBN from Bishopville, South Carolina.

He loved his Eagle bus conversion almost as much as he did his favorite musical artist Jimmy Buffet, and The Drifters, the 1950s DooWop group he helped tour and manage, back in the day.

Mike is survived by his wife Kathy, two sons, and two grandchildren.

Rest in peace old friend.



Kevin Clark, center, had plenty of help at the Flywheelers convention at Ft Meade FL, which several BusNuts attended after the New Year's Rally. All camping at Flywheelers is without hookups, and going several days on batteries and generator can be difficult...

Bus Trivia:

Approximately how many Prevost coaches, including conversion coaches, are on North American roads today?

Approximately ten thousand are out there!



New Orleans Bound: From left: **Camellia Clark**, **Patsy and Jerry Hodge**, **Ray and Denise Aldridge**, and **Kevin Clark** at Champy's restaurant. The group also caravanned together from the New Orleans rally to the Ft Meade area in Florida, where the annual Florida Antique Engine Club puts on its show of old tractors, autos and antique motors. The event draws thousands of visitors, many of whom camp on the surrounding 240 acres of meadow in their RVs. It rained, and it got muddy but only one pickup got stuck!

Future Rallies—Hold These Dates!



Spring Rally

SAVE THE DATE April 25-28, 2024
Midland (Columbus), Georgia

<https://lakepines.net/>

Family owned since 1967. Situated on
20 acres of pine forest.

Big rig and rally friendly.

Register at www.sebusnuts.com
Rally fee is \$310 for two folks in one
bus/RV –three nights of camping!

Fall Rally – Winston Salem, NC
October 24-27, 2024

[https://
www.coolbreezecampground.com/
salem-breeze-rv-park/](https://www.coolbreezecampground.com/salem-breeze-rv-park/)

Rally Center is complete, this will be
a great place for RV Clubs & Rallies,
Lots of area attractions like Old Sa-
lem, RCR Racing Museum & Shop,
The Winston Cup Museum, Bob Tim-
berlake Gallery, Childress Vineyards,
Lexington BBQ and much more!

*Salem Breeze
RV Park*

Future Rallies

Post New Years Rally

January 2025

Watch this space for info regarding
future rallies.

Southeast Bus Nuts Leadership

Chapter Officers (through Dec. 31, 2024)

President– Denise Aldridge denisea2@cfl.rr.com
Vice-President—Bo Noble bonoble@outlook.com
Treasurer - Craig Bowen CBowen3117@gmail.com
Secretary—Lisa Sawyer lisaasawyer@yahoo.com
FMCA Nat’l Dir—Camillia Clark kc72761@aol.com

2023 Advisory Committee:

(in addition to Chapter Officers)

Judy Bukoski, Chaplain
Mike Heron

Past Chapter Presidents: Art Hempen, Gene Brotherton*, Russ Drummond*, Howard Best, Mike Jackson*, Lewie Hinman*, Bill Zibell, Andy Metro, Ray Stiltner, Gerald Ensley, Jack Campbell, Mike Heron, Duane Britt*, Charlie Bukoski*, Ed Fisher, Bryan Bowman, Craig Bowen, and Manny Montesino
(* denotes deceased)

Visit our website:

<https://www.sebusnuts.com>

This newsletter is now posted on the above website, FYI.

Newsletter Editor: Mike Heron

Please send stories, updates and photos to:

mikeheron@bellsouth.net

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