



Southeast Bus Nuts Newsletter

Sept-Oct 2015

Ed's Editorial

I hope everyone had a great summer of travel. Our summer trip was interesting to say the least. We left Urbanna, VA in mid-July, with a week in Oshkosh Wisconsin at the Experimental Aircraft Association convention, then 82 miles over to Madison Wisconsin to the FMCA International convention, then out to the HWH hydraulic factory in Moscow Iowa.

To give you an idea of the size of the EAA convention, there were over 550,000 people in attendance, 10,000 aircraft on the ground, and about 50,000 camping units there. The big event was on Thursday when I had an atrial fibrillation attack (abnormal heart rhythm) on the shuttle bus back to the coach after purchasing some items for our Bonanza airplane. Although all is well now with the A-fib, for all practical purposes it ended my flying career at 49 years.

Below, Anke will give a report on the FMCA convention in her role as your National Director.

The reason our next stop was at HWH was to get our front slide properly repaired. It jammed at the Arcadia rally because the hardwood flooring (which I had installed) got wet and swelled enough to jam the level floor. When the floor jammed, the 5000 psi in the hydraulic system bent a lot of structural slide parts, so that the slide never worked correctly after repairs made in Florida. The experience at HWH was terrific. They did a great job, keeping us up to

date on progress as the work was completed, and big surprise, their bill was less than 1/2 of what I had planned, and they did more work than expected.

We rented a cabin on Lake Rathburn somewhat nearby while they worked. When the project lasted more than a week due to the unseen damage, we drove home in the tow car, and I went back two weeks later to retrieve the coach.

Our Spring rally at St. Augustine beach went off well, and we had 15 coaches in attendance. A highlight was having André Normand as our guest, who met with the guys at our usual "tire kicking" session (See article on pp 5-6). André was president and partner in Prevost until he sold it to Volvo. We enjoyed him and his wife, and they enjoyed taking part in our activities. Other highlights of the rally, in addition to the beach, were a privately guided boat ride and tour of Fort Matanzas, Park Ranger talks on the beach, toss games on the beach, trolley tours of St

Augustine, and evening fun and games. I encourage everyone to join the caravan to Twin Oaks in Hoboken after the Brunswick Halloween rally. The distance is only about 45 miles, and it will be a nice way to top off the Fall rally.

Ed Fisher, President



With the Atlantic in the background, several Bus Nuts gathered for libations on one of the decks at the Bryn Mawr Ocean resort. From left, Jeff Bukoski, Judy and Charlie Bukoski, Suzanne and Bryan Bowman (standing), Carol Heron, Deb Bukoski, and Anne and Doug Pearson (FMCA reps).

See page 8 for details regarding the Halloween Rally set for Oct 29-Nov 1, 2015

National Director's Report

The National Officer election results are as follows: President: Charlie Adcock incumbent - unopposed; Vice President: Jon Walker incumbent - unopposed; Treasurer: Percy Bell - unopposed; Secretary: Gaye Young elected over John Ferrari.

Membership as of May 31, 2015 stands at 72,754, and the rate of decrease is slowing. Problem is not recruiting new members, it is retaining them, even though the retention rate is a respectable 83%. In the period June 1, 2014 to May 31, 2015, some 10,157 new members recruited, and 13,799 were lost. The Membership Corporation of America has been engaged to work on this problem.

Our Treasurer reports that it is not reasonable to get a fair representation of financial results this year by comparing this year to last, due to some accounting procedures that were changed to provide needed improvements. However, FMCA's financial position is strong, with cash balances of \$546,000 and investment account balances of \$8,987,000.

There were two bylaws revisions approved and six policy and procedure changes approved. Any member interested in reading these can see them in my records at the upcoming Fall Rally The **FMC Assist program**, which is a medical evacuation program, was reinstated by the Executive Board in Redmond last August as a member benefit. Monthly payments for this comes from earnings (no principal) of the investment account. I attended a meeting on FMC Assist, and I believe it is equal or better than any available outside FMCA. It is administered by Seven Corners Insurance company, phone 1-877-202-4176 in the U.S., and collect worldwide, 1-317-582-2619.

It is of extreme importance that you phone them if you have a claim, or think you might have a claim before any costs are incurred. The company makes all arrangements, and pays all of the bills. They will not reimburse for costs that occur before calling them. To set up a file and begin the claim process, you must phone the Seven Corners company at the appropriate number above, tell them you expect to have or have a claim, and give them your FMCA number. That's the whole procedure and they will

They will return the incapacitated family member or their mortal remains, their family members, pets, and motor home to their home, whether or not they are traveling in a motor home. And they will do this from anywhere in the world, with the exception of the motor home. Worldwide maximum benefits are:

Emergency medical evacuation/repatriation- up to \$500,000;
Emergency medical reunion - Up to \$50,000;
Return of mortal remains- Up to \$50,000;
Return of dependents- Up to \$50,000;
Vehicle return (North America only) - Up to \$5,000;
Pet return- Up to \$1,000;
Prescription med and glasses replacement- \$500;
Assistance service- Included.

There are many more services and exclusions related to this policy that are described in the company brochure. You may phone FMCA for a copy, and I will have some at the SEBN Fall rally.

Just don't make an expensive mistake and lose coverage by not having Seven Corners set up a file.

Anke Fisher,
FMCA Director



FMCA

FAMILY MOTOR COACH ASSOCIATION

Secretary's Report

As of September 1, the SEBN Chapter has 66 current paid members. We have six members who prefer to receive the newsletter by snail mail.

A sympathy card was sent to Susan Coker acknowledging the death of her father.

We received a nice note from Pat Thompson (Turley's widow), who now lives in Michigan. She still wants to receive the newsletter to keep up with the chapter and its members. If anybody wants to send her a card now and then, her address is:

Patricia Thompson, 11625 U.S. Highway 23,
South Ossineke, Michigan, 49766

There are no meeting minutes because we have had no business meeting since the last newsletter. Our annual meeting will be held in Brunswick. Please advise me of sickness, distress, or death in any member's family so I can acknowledge it.

Don't forget to register for the Autumn Rally!

Anke Fisher, Secretary

St Augustine Rally Photos



Cynthia and Jim Threatt, left, were opposite Ellen and Howard Best at Thursday's restaurant excursion.



A Florida Park Ranger educated us about the fragile nature of the sand dunes on Friday.



Cal Arter and companion Shannon won the 50-50 drawing Friday night.



Judy and Charlie Bukoski served as cashiers at Saturday night's exciting horse races.



We had a special tour of pivotal Ft Matanzas on the Matanzas River on Friday morning.



Posing at the fort: from left, Suzanne Bowman, Carol Heron, Judy and Chas Bukoski, and Renea Kirk.

More From St Augustine



Bryan Bowman called the exciting Bingo game on Friday. Prizes were camping gear and tools.



The activities center at Bryn Mawr Resort was roomy and had all the amenities.



Folks at the horse race game each started with \$400 in scrip. The 'betting' was fast and furious.



Couples teamed up in the beach games. Left are Ann and Doug Pearson, and Suzanne Bowman judges their throw.

St. Augustine Rally Report

It's not often that you can camp and enjoy a Bus Nut rally right on an Atlantic beach, so this past April 30-May 2 fifteen coaches pulled in to Bryn Mawr Ocean Resort in historic St Augustine, FL.

Thursday was arrival day for most attendees, and that afternoon, after impromptu gatherings and beverages, most of us carpooled down the coast to a restaurant in Flagler Beach for some excellent seafood.

Friday highlights included beach games, then a fascinating talk by a Florida State Park Ranger, who told us about the importance of the sand dunes and berms, and the annual tribulations of the giant Sea Turtle, whose hatchlings must march from the dune to the surf, at night. Many do not survive.

Friday night we had a lovely steak and chop fry, followed by a lively game of Bingo, called by **Bryan Bowman**.

Saturday we had shuttle tours of old St Augustine, and the narration was very insightful. One of the town's features is Castillo San Marcos, the oldest masonry fort in the US. St Augustine has been under rule by Spain, England, Spain again, then the US.

That night we had a catered pork BBQ dinner with all the 'fixins'. We watched the national telecast of The Kentucky Derby on TV just to get us in the mood, followed by "A Nite at the Races", organized by **Mike Heron**. Each member started with \$400. in 'funny money', and we proceeded to have four simulated thoroughbred horse races up on the big screen. There was excitement in the air during the final race, the "Ed Fisher Handicap", where **Suzanne Bowman** took home the prize for most winnings (all in fun.)

Thanks to **Ed** and **Anke** Fisher for a great rally!

Former Prevost Leader Attends Rally

Paul Normand bought the Prevost Car Company from the family of Eugene Prevost, the founder, in 1957. After a time he brought his son André into the business, and he eventually became president. They took on two silent partners and proceeded to change the manufacturing and purpose of the vaunted Prevost, including making specialty shells available to high-end converters, as well as continuing the famous seated touring coach.

André is a winter habitué of St Augustine, and lives adjacent to SEBN president Ed Fisher, in an RV park right on the beach. Ed and André struck up a neighborly friendship after realizing they both drove late model Prevosts. Since Ed was hosting the spring rally of the Bus Nuts at his beachside resort, he invited André to participate and say a few words at the rally about the company and its growth, up to the point where he and his father sold it to Volvo Group in 1995.

One big reason for Prevost dominating the North American tour bus industry in the face of less expensive newcomers like Setra and Van Hool is because those buses do not hold up to rough roads in the northern US and Canada. André acknowledged that they are popular in Europe, but the distance between cities is smaller and those buses do not rack up millions of miles as we do in North America.

One of André's big contributions in managing Prevost was the decision to make shells available to upscale motor home manufacturers. He persuaded his partners that a goal of 24 shells a year was realistic. After a few years, they were

shipping 400 shells annually!

In the beginning they would 'loan' a new shell out to a prospective conversion company, and give them a chance to prove they could make a luxury motor home that would be consistent with the Prevost reputation. It was standard practice for André or an associate to make unannounced visits to each of the several conversion companies to check on quality, etc.

Another of André's major contributions involved the manufacturing process. Since not all coaches were going to be made for tour companies, a standard assembly line like that of MCI was not the optimal build method. Instead each chassis/body was on a large dolly (transporter) and these would go to certain stations while

skipping others. For instance a shell would skip stations where traditional seats, racks, lavatory, a/v, etc. were installed and go right to a paint booth. Also, the seated coach industry required the extremely durable Imron epoxy paint, but the shells were strictly base coat/clear

coat, which gave customers more paint scheme options. So the transporter would take the shell to a different paint booth than the seated coach.

The company has had as many as 22 converters/motor home manufacturers as its customers, but over the years the ones that have converted the most are Marathon, Liberty, and Millennium (formerly Vantaré and Featherlite).

One attraction to the Prevost shell was the fact that the main heating and cooling system lines were already tapped with valves and ready to be adapted to motor home configuration – no cutting into these systems was necessary. Also the Prevost shell floor has the driver and co-pilot on the same level.

(Cont'd)



Southeast Bus Nuts president Ed Fisher, standing, left, welcomes André Normand, who sold Prevost Car Company to Volvo in 1995. Normand spoke on company history at the rally.

Prevost, continued

Other appealing reasons for a converter to start with an H series Prevost shell, André said, include the stainless steel chassis and components, the oversize insulated bays, the adoption of the independent front suspension, and the coupling of the electronic DD Series 60 engine with the Allison B-500 World transmission.

André retired from Prevost by Volvo after a few years working under them. “When you do what you want for 30 years, and you end up with a company that thinks very differently, and doesn’t do everything you want it to do, you cannot stand it. So I retired – relatively young!”

As one of the Southeast Bus Nuts says about his late model Prevost, “It’s as roomy and comfortable as a penthouse, and it drives down the road like a Cadillac.”



Recent Rally Attendance / Coaches

Valentines 2013 (Kissimmee)	16
Spring Rally 2013 (Stone Mountain, GA)	17
Halloween 2013 (Costley Mill GA)	21
Arcadia (General Meeting) 2014	32
Valentine’s 2014 (Lazy Days, FL)	25
Spring Rally 2014 (Charleston)	23
Autumn 2014 (Hoboken)	32
Arcadia (General Meeting) 2015	34
Valentine’s 2015 (Myakka City)	13
Spring Rally (St Augustine)	15
Halloween Rally (Brunswick, GA)	?

Leaky Roof?

After years of coping with small leaks here and there inside our coach, your editor decided to recoat the top with a two-part rubberized material called ‘EPDM Liquid Roof’. This material seemed to get consensus approval on the Bus Conversion Bulletin Board. After you mix the catalyst it has the consistency of thin mayonnaise. You use a roller and spread it around. It is very sticky, very messy and very expensive. But it truly seals everything it covers. No more leaks!



If SEBN members want to con-

sider this option, feel free to contact me for specifics: mikeheron@bellsouth.net

Two important caveats: pressure wash the roof first to get it super clean, and do the job indoors to keep leaves off, and especially to keep rain off for two days.

Members’ Summer Sojourns

Many SEBN members use the summer to leave the hot, humid weather, and branch out to more temperate areas. Here’s a partial list of itineraries from some of our members, several of whom will be at the Halloween Rally in Brunswick GA to personally relate their recent touring experiences:

Herb Bates and Reen Kukon (FL)—Colorado, Vermont and New Hampshire;

Howard and Ellen Best (GA)— three months to the Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick and back, including New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine; **Bryan and Suzanne Bowman (GA)**; New York City, Cape Cod, Niagara Falls, Michigan and the Great Lakes;

Charlie and Judy Bukoski (FL)—a month in Wyoming and three weeks in Colorado;

Ron and Pam Daniels (NC) ventured west to Oklahoma City, and south to Destin FL on two separate outings;

Ed and Anke Fisher (VA)—Oshkosh and Madison, WI, and Moscow, Iowa;

Tom and Karen Hamrick (NC) started in spring: New Mexico, Arizona, California, Oregon and Washington, and points in between;

Mike and Carol Heron (GA)—spent an eighth summer camping in the mountains of New Hampshire;

Kirby and Linda Karlsson (FL)—tasted the Alaska Highway to Ft Nelson, British Columbia, then saw the Pacific Northwest, Idaho, Montana and WY;

Andy and Anna Metro (FL) - out three months to Canada, accompanying Howard Best, above;

Marty Nixon and Debbie Spear (GA)— a six-month circle that took them out to Arizona, north through Glacier National Park, on up to Alaska, and back through Yellowstone, then the Great Lakes;

George Showman (FL)—The Dakotas, Yellowstone, Wyoming, Seattle and the Pacific Northwest;

Steve Siems and Harriet Chairs (FL) have spent the summer working on their new property near Fancy Gap VA in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Member Spotlight

A recurring feature of this newsletter is a brief profile of a newer member couple and a more long-term coach couple - an effort to get us better acquainted with each other!

Newer Couple



Craig and Beverly Bowen are native Ohioans who moved down to Georgia 18 years ago. He was an Eagle Scout who tent camped all his young life. But there was a Bluebird dealer just up the road, and he knew they were built to see the world. He'd wanted one since he was a kid!

He found an older 38 foot 'Bird and completely re-did it, but always had a question in his mind about the venerable DD 8v92 that pushed it down the road. It was tired and it slobbered.

A friend told him about a big MCI DL-3 that member **Ray Cox** had been converting, and he was very attracted to the larger size, the electronic DD Series 60 engine, and all the fundamental mechanical work Ray had done so far. So Craig bought the 1995 coach and proceeded to put in the interior that he and Beverly had always dreamt of. He is especially proud of his four ducted roof airs, which are quiet and effective. They also installed a cross-over aisle to the bedroom, which gives much more privacy than the 'shotgun' layout of the old bus.

Their pattern of bus use is to go out once a month all year. Beverly has driven the bus and knows she can get them off the road if Craig has a health problem. They've been members of SEBN for six years and plan to be at the Brunswick rally. And they hope to make many more rallies in the future!

Longer-term couple

Howard and Ellen Best, below, joined the Southeast Bus Nuts in 1990. There are few living members with longer tenure. He was our fourth president, with wife Ellen, his bride of 55 years, as secretary-treasurer.

Howard's career was with United Parcel Service, and he has had decades of experience driving big rigs and managing maintenance for the famous company. He took early retirement to live out a dream—they wanted to full-time in a bus of their own design and configuration. When he bought his venerable MC-8 ("Friendship IV") he used it for a year or two as a charter, then he bore down and undertook the conversion. He turned every screw and tightened every bolt. And when it came to the drive train, suspension, etc., he did all his own work.

Since hitting the road in 1987 they have been to Alaska twice (usually leading a small caravan of intrepid bus conversions) and have been in every state. They've logged 397,000 miles, and bought 66,705 gallons of fuel doing it.

Howard has recently erected a steel building in Kingston, GA that serves as their base. It includes an oversized garage with a pit, and as long as Howard can get over that pit a couple of times a year, he knows that his rig is safe and well maintained. Howard and Ellen rarely miss a club rally, and are often co-hosts or cooks. He has helped scores of members, and has earned the unofficial title. "King of the Bus Nuts"! Truly one of a kind!



SE Bus Nuts Annual Halloween Rally

Last Chance to Squeeze in!

Six camping sites remain until our block is released on September 29th. You might get in after that, but may not be grouped with us!

Oct. 29-Nov 1, 2015

Coastal Georgia RV Resort

Brunswick, GA (I-95, exit 29)



Those 24 coaches who have registered and paid, to date, are:

Herb Bates & Reen Kukon	Howard & Ellen Best	Craig & Beverly Bowen
Bryan & Suzanne Bowman	Syl & Beverly Bowman	Charlie & Judy Bukoski
Jack & Jackie Campbell	Jerry & Rosemary Campbell	Ray & Peggy Cox
Ron & Pam Daniels	Ed & Anke Fisher	Mike & Joan Fryer
Mal & Mary Harper	Mike & Carol Heron	Mike & Kathy Mingus
Manny & Darlene Montecino	Marty Nixon & Debbie Spear	Jesus & Donna Osorio
Junior & Bertha Showman	Ken Siems & Pam Maichuk	Jim & Rita Thomas
Jim & Cynthia Threatt	Perry & Ann Watson	Dexter & Gwendolyn Wingfield

The rally fee is \$89 (exclusive of camping) per coach (two people). This will include: Three cooked dinners: Thursday - Sloppy Joes with salad and chips, Friday - home-made Brunswick Stew, with six varieties of corn bread, Saturday - homemade Low Country Boil with local shrimp. Three breakfasts, including one Pancake & Sausage. Three evenings of entertainment: Thursday, a sharing of our summer travels; Friday, a professional ghost-story teller; and Saturday, a fun game-show night. In addition, attendees may choose these extra-cost options: • Reduced price ticket for a 90 minute narrated trolley tour of St. Simon's Island on Friday. Regular price \$20 p/p - our rate is \$15. p/p • Ladies Lunch on Saturday at the historic Jekyll Island Club Hotel (Dutch Treat - luncheon entrees range from \$12-14.)

To register, simply go to our club's website: www.sebusnuts.org and pay via PayPal or credit card. Or send a check made out to "Southeast Bus Nuts" and mail it to 5337 N. Socrum Loop Road, Suite 236, Lakeland, FL 33809-4256. Note - You must call the campground - Coastal Georgia RV Resort - to reserve and place a deposit on your site. We have a special rate of only \$35.70 per night (three nights) in this nearly new park. Each site is paved and has full hook-ups. The clubhouse and all facilities are first rate. Check it out at www.coastalgarvresort.com Their phone number is (912) 264-3869. Be sure to state you are with the Bus Nut Rally. Hope to see you there!

Mike & Carol Heron, hosts, along with co-hosts Howard & Ellen Best, Jack & Jackie Campbell, Ray & Peggy Cox, Ron & Pam Daniels and Marty Nixon & Debbie Spear

- Save the dates! -



Arcadia Rally

Dates for Arcadia 2016: this December 29-31

The location once again is the
Turner Agri Center, 2250 NE Roan Street
Arcadia, FL 34266

The Southeast Bus Nuts have traditionally comprised about one-third of the 100 or so coaches who migrate to this large rally from around the US and Canada, which is entering its 15th year. SEBN members Bill and Brenda Phelan are hosts of this independent rally.

Check their website for periodic updates, agenda, etc.:

www.arcadiarally.com

Late Winter Rally



Masonic Park, Wimauma, FL—about eight miles east of Ruskin on U.S. Rte. 301

www.masonicparkflorida.com

February 25-28, 2016

Featuring some really good home cookin'
Your hosts, Jack and Jackie Campbell. Co-Hosts,
Herb Bates and Reen Kukon.

Spring Rally



We have no date or location for this annual rally because we are still looking for host and co-hosts. (These are the folks who pick a time and place.)

If you'd like to pitch in, contact Ed Fisher, chapter president. aandedfisher@gmail.com

Past spring rallies have been held in Charleston ('14), Stone Mountain GA ('13) and Palmetto Cove SC ('12). Perhaps it's time to return to the Carolinas?

Southeast Bus Nuts Leadership

Chapter Officers:

President— Ed Fisher aandedfisher@gmail.com
VP—Bryan Bowman bbowmanga@gmail.com
Treasurer— Marty Nixon nixonmarty@aol.com
Secretary/FMCA Nat'l Dir—Anke Fisher

Advisory Committee:

(in addition to Chapter Officers)

Charlie Bukoski
Judy Bukoski
Pam Daniels
Mike Heron
Beverly Bowman, Chaplain

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, and Charlie Bukoski. (* denotes deceased)

Visit our website:

www.sebusnuts.org

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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