

Southeast Bus Nuts Newsletter

Summer 2020

Craig's Comments

I hope this finds you all healthy and happy! 2020 has been a challenging year, to say the least.

First, we had to cancel the Spring Rally in Alabama.

Now the Fall Rally, to be held at Stone Mountain State Park outside Atlanta, has succumbed to the dreaded pandemic. Stone Mountain Park has suspended all their activities for the remainder of the year, not leaving us anything to look at but "closed barricades".

How about Palmetto Cove in the Carolinas?

They have offered to work with us for a limited get together in October.

Limited, meaning we won't be dining together, or rubbing elbows on Saturday night in the hall, and also there is Limited Space Available, due to October being a busy time for the campground with the fall foliage under way.

We are tentatively looking at Oct 21 – 25, however they need a coach count FIRST to work us into a secure date. If you are interested in an informal 'non-rally', send me a note or call me right away and I will do my best to patch something together.

The Post New Years Rally will be held January 14 through 17, in Auburndale, Florida.

Manny and Darlene Montesino have secured the Five Star RV Resort for us there.

Ever been there? Not a chance! This is a brand-new park scheduled to open Jan 04 and the SE

Bus Nuts will be the first rally to grace its facilities! The pricing looks to be very favorable for us. Details will be forthcoming.

This is election year, and the nominating committee has put together a list of candidates for your consideration. With the cancellation of the fall rally, we will be conducting the election process via email this time around. **Mike Heron**, committee chairman, will be administering the elections and will be responsible for tallying your votes.

You will see Mike's list of the candidates on the following page. This is not necessarily a definitive list. If you

have an interest in serving, please contact Mike and let it be known.

At the time of this writing, we need a new FMCA National Director. This is a required post to keep the Chapter viable under FMCA By-laws. Not sure what those duties are? Contact Mike and he'll see that you get the information needed to consider the post.

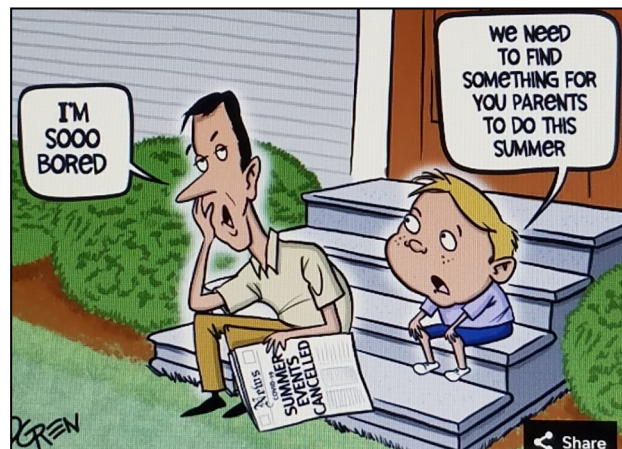
Many of you have been traveling the country and most likely

enjoying the lighter than normal traffic. I look forward to reading about your adventures in the following pages. Unfortunately, Bev and I have nothing to add to those delightful tales of adventure. Our bus has not even been started since the January rally. Healthwise we have no issues but we have had more travel plans sent back to us marked 'cancelled' than we care to recall.

Hope to see all our friends out there on the road soon.

Godspeed and
Safe Travels!

Craig Bowen
Chapter President



Nominating Committee Report and e-Mail Ballot

The Nominating Committee of the Southeast Bus Nuts is composed of **Craig Bowen**, acting in place of Immediate Past President Bryan Bowman, **Judy Bukoski**, and **Mike Heron**, Chairman.

The nominees for a two-year term beginning January 1, 2021 and running through December 31, 2022 are as follows:

President: **Manny Montesino**
Vice President: **Denise Aldridge**
Secretary: **Ron Daniels**
Treasurer: **Craig Bowen**
FMCA Director : TBA

By way of background, **Manny Montesino** has been VP under Craig Bowen for these past two years. He and wife Darlene, chapter chaplain, live in Winter Haven FL and have been SEBN members since 2009. He is the owner of Manny's Locksmith, a mobile lock and security business serving central Florida since 1991.

Denise Aldridge and husband Ray joined SEBN in 2013. She and Ray hosted the January 2019 rally at The Great Outdoors. For the past 16 years she has served in various management positions with the City Of Orlando, culminating with the job of City Clerk. She holds an MBA from the University of Phoenix. Ray and Denise live in Orlando.

Ron Daniels will continue in the role of chapter secretary, a position he has held since 2015. He is a real estate agent, and he and wife Vicky live in Butner, SC,

Craig Bowen will shift from chapter president to treasurer, succeeding his wife Beverly. They live in Villa Rica, GA.

George Showman has been our FMCA Director since 2017 but has asked to be replaced, so the we are actively looking for someone who would be willing to attend the large FMCA gatherings and represent the Chapter. The rally fees for the national gatherings would be covered by our SEBN budget. Please contact me if interested.

Since our Stone Mountain Autumn rally and its annual meeting of members has been cancelled, our election must be carried out via e-mail. Please e-mail Mike Heron, Nominating Committee Chairman, at mikeheron@bellsouth.net and cast your vote for or against the above ballot. Per FMCA rules, 25% of members must cast ballots for the vote to be official. That is one vote per coach. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted.

Mike Heron
Nominating Committee Chairman

Secretary's Report

As of August 12, 2020

- Membership: 64 active (55 regular and nine honorary);
- Get-well card sent to **Cynthia Threatt** due to recent fall with injuries;
- Sympathy card sent to Ann in the passing of husband **Ed Gallant** (See p. 7);
- Sympathy card sent to Mike in the passing of **Jackie Abbey** (See p. 7)
- Get well card sent to **Carol Heron** following hip replacement surgery.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Daniels, Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Here is the Treasurer's report:

Checking Balance: \$3745.73

PayPal Balance: \$2242.93

(This includes \$2010.00 credit for eight members from the cancelled April rally)

(We also have an outstanding refund due from Stone Mountain Park for canceled October rally (\$1031.25))

Summary:

After the refund from Stone Mountain, the treasury will have \$7019.91 which includes \$2010.00 credit for eight members toward the next rally. The ending balance will be \$5009.91.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beverly Bowen, Treasurer

Member Updates

What we've been up to during these frustrating times...

Many SEBN members responded to a recent request on our Facebook page, to let their newsletter editor know how they have been spending the spring and summer in light of COVID-19 restrictions. Of special interest was whether they have gotten out on the road in their bus conversion in light of the pandemic, social distancing, etc. Here are some of the responses:

Herb Bates and **Reen Kukon** have made their way north in their bus out of Lakeland Florida into the Carolinas. They dodged the hurricane Isaias by sticking to the western North Carolina Mountains. On the itinerary: Maggie Valley and perhaps Virginia Beach. Herb mentioned that he was very pleased with the diesel savings that come from the TSD fuel card. His last fill-up the pump read \$115 but he was only charged \$92! Herb claims similar savings at selected truck stops. Several other SEBN



members have also started using the discount fuel card and very few are disappointed. Check it out at <https://www.tsdlogistics.com/services/fuel-program/>

Denise and **Ray Aldridge** are very excited. They just took possession of a Prevost coach that was owned by one of Jack Campbell's neighbors in Polk City. It is a cream-colored Hoffman coach conversion with teal highlights, a 1999 XL 45, and is in very good condition. They can't wait to bring it to their first rally!

Gina and **Pat Boudreaux** (and Patrick Jr) of Marrero, Louisiana have made four trips in the Gulf Coast Area this summer and are very pleased with the way their vintage 1947 GM bus conversion is running. Their summer destinations: Grand Isle, Franklinton and Livingston, LA and Tylertown MS. They are disappointed that the autumn SEBN rally has been cancelled, but will try hard to make the January event in central Florida.

Member Updates (Cont'd)

Jack Campbell and **Jackie** have been on the road for the last several weeks and are spending a very enjoyable time in central and northern Michigan. Their most recent port of call was Traverse City where they got a tremendous deal on 50 amp camping at the Fairgrounds. \$21.50 per night, water and electric. The weather has been mild and the sightseeing has been very nice. Jack also reports big savings on the fuel card: "Last fill-up, a big one, I saved \$80. over the pump price." Next stop, the picturesque town of Petoskey, MI.

Ron and Vicky Daniels of Butner NC reported that they have reacted to 'Busnut Fever' once again and purchased a 1995 Prevost Vogue. "We found it on eBay, and after several phone call inquiries, we purchased two one-way airline tickets to St Louis, MO. It is a Mitchell conversion that we have named 'Wild Thing', and once you see it you will understand the name."

They advertised their 20014 Sprinter Citation on RV Trader, and sold it in less than a week. Since then they have enjoyed several trips in their 'new to them' coach:

- In May they went to Myrtle Beach;

- In July they went to an RV resort in Tabor City NC, a very nice campground, just 30 minutes from North Myrtle Beach. There is a great ice cream creamery there!

- Also in July they went to KOA Lumberton, NC and camped next to **Jim and Cynthia Threatt**. They had a great time, but unfortunately Cynthia took a spill and fractured some bones.

- In August they enjoyed a trip to Cape Hatteras on the beautiful Outer Banks at Rodanthe. Much to their surprise they bumped into **Bryan and Suzanne Bowman**, who were camping just three spots below them!

Their next scheduled trip is in September to Huntington Beach Park, SC

Ron and Vicky hope all of their BusNut friends are staying safe and healthy, and look forward to seeing many of you at our next event.

Rick and Tammy Bartley are enjoying a family bus vacation with their daughter and grandsons (aged one and six). They fetched them over in Dallas, Texas and are hitting all the state parks on their way back to central Florida, where they will spend a couple of weeks at the Bartley's lakeside home, swimming, boating and fishing. Their MCI 102-E3 bus has been running great except for a tire situation which he describes elsewhere in this newsletter.

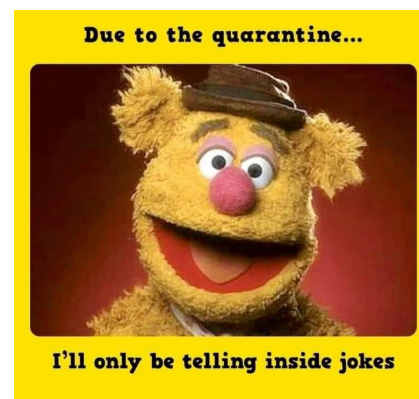
Kyle and Nancy Brandt of Greer SC have been kept busy during the COVID-19 quarantine by replacing all the tires on their Newell bus. Himself! He bought a couple of exotic tire tools and muscled the old rubber off and the new rubber on. See the photograph. Very impressive. They have ventured up to nearby Palmetto Cove for a night or two.

"They are doing a great job of keeping all the campers safe – they are only using every other camp site."



This new tool breaks the bead of the tire from the rim.

Jimmy and Sadie Clay of Manor Hill, TN have not had a chance to go anywhere this summer although they have started their bus up from time to time. Jimmy has been playing a little golf, but a lot of time has been taken up with doctors working on Sadie's immune system. They were disappointed that the spring rally they were planning to host near Huntsville was canceled due to the virus.



Member Updates (Cont'd)

Leonard and Pam Jelkren took their MCI 102A3 bus out for a short spin this summer and found the engine smoking badly. It shut down, and after a tow back home in Oviedo, FL they found the engine had been ruined. A blown oil line to the turbocharger was the start of the problem. It is now due for a major overhaul or replacement. Leonard is currently mulling over whether he should pull the engine and install a new DD 8V92TA, which he has in a crate, ready to go, or whether he should just hang it up. We're all pulling for the overall. Go get 'em Leonard!

Jim and Cynthia Threatt have been stuck at home in Olanta, SC since Cynthia fell at a KOA on a recent trip and sustained a couple of broken bones, including her pelvis and one arm. This has kept them close to home dealing with doctor appointments and therapy, etc. Jim is persevering as the main caregiver. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Cynthia in hopes of a speedy recovery.

Eric Johnson of Ohio has been sticking close to home because his usual staging and A/V business for concerts and shows has dried up with the COVID problems. However he has



developed a new product called a Freedom Tour which is a large outdoor pyrotechnics and light show where skydivers pop in and music groups play. Unfortunately three of these have been cancelled due to the virus, but autumn shows are still a possibility. He's hopeful that soon things will quiet down and he can get his productions back on schedule. His Eagle bus was going to be used to pull a large stage to a big field and people would drive their car in and observe from a distance. Fascinating!

Ivan and Sylvie LaCroix of Granby, Canada are very pleased with the paint job they recently put on their MCI 102 DL 45. He once again used a hybrid paint from pickup truck bed liner to put a durable, attractive finish on their new (to them) bus. YouTube users may recall seeing 19 episodes Ivan has recorded on the external and internal repairs to his bus, making it into a

beautifully painted shell ready for conversion. Their plan is to utilize solar power for off-grid use for both travel and full-timing.

Mike and Kathy Mingus of Bishopville, SC have not been able to do any busing this spring or summer, in part due to a malignant mole recently removed from Kathy's calf. Recovery has been slow but things are starting to look better. Their Silver Eagle 01 is ready to roll when they are!

Bo and Nancy Noble of Matthews, NC have been making good use of their bus, a Custom Coach MCI conversion. They've been spending quality time at the family's private



campground and swimming hole on a nearby creek. Nieces, nephews and grandchildren all love the bus!

Donna and Jesus Osorio of Cartersville are back in their Georgia home after spending the winter at their property in Bushnell FL. He did take the bus down to Stuart because of a broken toilet, but otherwise they have kept close to home. They usually take a big summer trip to New York state to visit family, but the virus and some anti Southern disease hysteria have kept them at home.

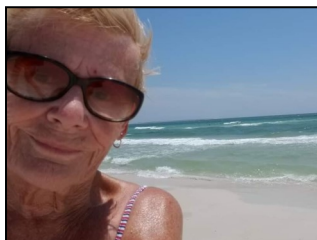
George Showman has been extremely busy overseeing the rebuilding of his beach place on the Gulf of Mexico. Readers will recall the Orange Beach vacation home had been obliterated by Hurricane Michael in 2018. He now has substantial construction under his belt and perhaps at the end of the autumn it will be fairly complete. Best of luck, George!



Major reconstruction!

Member Updates (Cont'd)

Judy Bukoski of Polk City, FL was able to take her new motorhome up to visit her son and other friends in Florida's Panhandle this summer. "Among the other things I got to do was stay two nights at the Tyndall AFB Family Campground before heading to Mexico Beach where I parked on our friend



George Showman's driveway. I had a hook-up there and stayed for two nights. The Gulf was wonderful and the beautiful beach is directly across the road from his place, so I have to admit, I think if I had stayed there a day or so longer, I may not have left at all. Had a fabulous two weeks in God's country."

Darlene and Manny Montesino wrote: "We had hoped to go to Fort Wilderness (Disney World) but they have only recently opened. We did go camping one weekend with a few friends to Tropical Palms in Kissimmee, but the management was a bit extreme with their rules and have gotten rather strict about what buses they will allow in. Other than that we need to get some type of awning for our Eagle—the Florida sun is brutal!"

Jerry and Rosemary Campbell offered: "We've been home, safe distancing. We have finished a few projects here at the house (Polk City). The most exciting was installing a split unit on our sun porch. We enjoy it so much. That being said we had to cancel a trip to NY for July 4th, and we also missed our granddaughter's graduation party in NC. We are looking forward to this COVID disappearing!"

Kevin and Camilla Clark took their Prevost up from Oviedo, FL to Stone



Mountain GA last month for its first trip since the Dillard rally last year! "We had to do a little

maintenance first, of course, and put on two new tires on the back axle, as the others were dated a little older than we wanted to travel on. We had put the other six on last year before the rally. She performed flawlessly, and staying a little under 70 mph most of the way, we managed to get 6.5 m.p.g.!"

Dale and Dawn VanPatten, Kalamazoo, MI report that they haven't been out in their bus for quite a while, partly because many of the parks are fully booked. However they have used the downtime to install all new leveling valves on their GM4106 and also new air bags.

Linda and Blake Wright of Brechin, Ontario have been sticking very close to home out of an abundance of COVID caution. They did not make their annual pilgrimage to Florida this past winter. However they are working on their MC-7—they are installing a mini-split air conditioning system. Perhaps a trip to the Maritime Provinces is in the future...

Kirby and Linda Karlssen are traveling to Alaska with **Steve Siems** and **Harriet Chaires** and **Lou and Renea Kirk**. We ex-



pect to get a full report from Linda, complete with photos and thrilling tales of life on our last frontier. For now, all we can report is that they spent considerable time on the west coast, waiting for the US-Canada border to open to permit travel. Some of the time was spent profitably at the Marathon facility in Coburg, Oregon, where they all had various maintenance items performed on their coaches. We did hear that they were eventually able to cross and did in fact make it the 1,300 miles across the AlCan Highway to the Alaska border. Stay tuned. The photo above is Kirby at the wheel of his Prevost on I-80 in Wyoming.

"The dumbest thing I ever bought was a 2020 planner!"

Anon.

Member Updates (Cont'd)

Ed and Anke Fisher of Urbanna VA have once again taken a huge western summer swing in their Prevost Marathon. They ran out to the Grand Canyon with their son, daughter-in-law and grandson.

When we caught up to them they were en-route home, but only in St Louis, where they found a very serviceable RV park right downtown. All told, when they roll back home, they will have put on nearly 6,000 miles! They did not find campgrounds overly full or hard to reserve space in. There were only two glitches on the trip. First, their venerable tow car, a Saturn with 165,000 miles on it, gave up the ghost, but "it doesn't owe us anything"! The other problem occurred at Judge Roy Bean's museum in Langtry, TX where Ed tripped and bruised his face (and his ego!).



Marty Nixon and Kaydee Black haven't moved their Prevost H3-45 at all this spring and summer, but it wasn't just the COVID pandemic. They had moved into a very large home that needed rehab back in May, and have been working on the house, full basement, the grounds, and an outbuilding to bring it up



Marty's new homestead includes an outbuilding and room for his two buses.

to their standards. It's not far from their old address in Acworth, GA but at five acres, it's got plenty of privacy to store his two buses.

Gerald and Dorothy Ensley of Cropwell, AL have gone nowhere since the virus mess started. In fact, they have sold their Mercedes Sprinter, with only 12,000 miles on it, but have kept (for now) their MC-9 with the nice DD Series 50 motor. They have washed it, and cranked it up from time to time, but they're looking for a new home for it. They feel their

busin' days may be behind them. They do send their best wishes to all their SEBN friends.

Mike and Carol Heron have been quarantining at home since all this began. Their new (to them) Prevost Featherlite has been in storage at **Howard Best's** place up near Cartersville GA, where it can remain plugged in. Their being homebound was exacerbated by Carol's partial hip replacement last month, but they are now looking at some late August-September travel, perhaps up to New Hampshire, where they have had a camp for 13 years. **Howard and Ellen** are still living in their MC-8, "Friendship IV", on their property, inside their beautiful pole barn, and are doing fairly well healthwise. However they greatly fear that their busin' days are behind them. They send their best regards to all.

Past President **Byran Bowman** of Conyers, GA is helping his Dad, long time member **Syl Bowman**, dispose of their 1987 Prevost Country Coach. As most members know, Syl is in declining health and unable to enjoy his conversion. The coach was really priced to sell at \$35,000, and several buyers made offers sight unseen. A prospect was flying down from Maine with cash in hand at last report! Bryan and Suzanne have only made one trip this COVID season in their Winnebago Itasca, an enjoyable seven-day jaunt to the Outer Banks.

TRANSITIONS...

We regret to pass along word that long time member **Jackie Abbey**, wife of member Mike Abbey, lost her battle with Alzheimer's Disease this past July. They full-timed in their GM 4104 and were especially fond of the autumn rallies at Twin Oaks Music Park in Hoboken, GA. Notes of sympathy may be addressed to Mike at 2743 Highway 10, Clio, AL 36017.

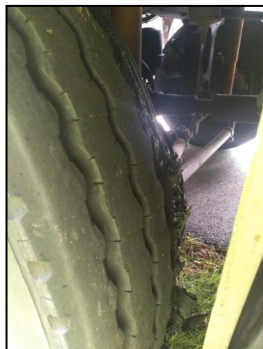
Also, former member **Ed Gallant** of Bostic NC passed away last month after a period of declining health. Ed and wife Ann were very supportive of SEBN rallies held at Palmetto Cove in Cleveland, SC, and co-hosted several there. Ed and Ann were also lifetime members of the Bus-sin' Buddies chapter out of New England. Notes of sympathy may be addressed to Ann at 391 Wells Mill Road, Bostic, NC 28013.

Road fixes, by Rick Bartley, MCI-E-3

Being relatively new bus owners, we're often amazed by things we didn't even know we didn't know. We're constantly learning. Here are a few things we learned on a very recent trip from FL to TX and back.

Our Goodyear tires were just about to turn five years old and we thought we might have a grace period of this year to get around to replacing all eight. Last year at our Titusville rally, our passenger side tag tire developed a bubble in the sidewall. We decided to begin the overall tire replacements by new tires on the steers and the older trued and balanced steers on the tag axle. We were totally surprised on this recent trip when the passenger side tag lost a 4' section of tread and in the process, cut the tag air bag. We learned that you can't predict when a tire will come apart. We wish we had replaced all 8 tires when the first tire failed with just a sidewall bubble, but I suppose that most bus owners share that lament after a major tire failure that might have been prevented.

We made a controlled stop westbound on I-20, two hours outside of Dallas, in the middle of nowhere, and assessed the damage after the right side of the bus quickly dropped. A narrow strip of tread had separated from the tag tire and the tag and drive axles were resting on the frame's bumpers. We were half in the sloped grass and half on the 8 foot wide road shoulder. The grass was green and damp and didn't appear to be a fire hazard, so I put out the emergency road triangles. We called our Roadside Assistance provider explaining we carry a full spare on a rim and are a 45' coach with no working air suspension over the flat tire. I then called Jackie Smith who manages the MCI Service Center in Winter Garden, FL for advice, as he's become a friend of us and our coach. He explained that the tires may be rubbing the frame and no matter who asks us to, don't drive the bus in its current condition. He then gave me the mobile phone number of the Dallas MCI Service Center's manager and said he would call him to advise him of our situation. Dallas MCI had a towing contractor that could tow the bus correctly by disconnecting the drive shaft, but when he learned our rear suspension was down, said it couldn't be done. Meanwhile we received the number and name of what would be five different roadside assistance trucks. When we were



Blown tag axle tire

ETA status of the provider, I would call each one and explain we were a bus and the right rear suspension was on the frame. All of them had been advised that we were just a lightweight camper with an issue and promptly called our insurer and cancelled. Of course I called Roadside Assistance and got a completely different agent and had to explain it all again. Seven hours later with darkness approaching, two local guys with a small old tire truck came out. I drove the drive axle tires fully up on the shoulder on a few timbers they had which gave clearance to barely get a jack under the frame. Tammy found a campground at the next exit two miles away that had space for us. I called Jackie and told him that with the spare on the tag axle, we now had an inch of clearance and I was going to drive 10 mph on the shoulder to the exit, stopping to check along the way.

We learned several lessons:

- Roadside Assistance isn't effective if they don't understand what's necessary for a bus. We will search out another provider.
- Having a friend to call makes a bad situation feel a whole lot better.
- If your air suspension is damaged, you may not be able to tow or move the bus without necessary tire clearance.
- Being 13' tall and 45' long, we can't be transported on a roll-on flatbed and fit under most overpasses.
- Having a mounted spare is worth all the trouble to store it.
- Safety triangles stored in a hot environment become brittle, because at the end of the day, they had all broken from the wind.

Stuck in this tiny town of Hallsville, TX we found a locally owned truck service center that would put an airbag on for us and it was four miles away on back roads that we could drive at 10 mph. MCI shipped me a tag axle airbag overnight after the old one was removed and ID'd. Just the drive axle air bags held us up on our 10 mph journey back to the campground and then back to the truck service center the next day for the installation. I found a Continental tire dealer 13 miles away who was excited to work with us and ordered the six new tires we needed from Dallas under the FMCA tire program. She and her staff were wonderful to work with. We learned from her that the FMCA price to members is actually a little lower than her dealer cost to obtain tires. We learned that there are good people who want to do everything possible to help you no matter where you are and that we were truly blessed to break down at mile marker 606 which seemed like the middle of nowhere, where all these resources were available to help us!

Save the dates:

The Southeast Bus Nuts will be holding their annual post-New Year's Rally at Five Star RV Resort, just off Interstate 4 in Auburndale, FL, about halfway between Tampa and Orlando

January 14-17, 2021

This luxury resort is under development as we go to press, but it is scheduled to open on January 1st. It will be near the USA Water Sports Complex on Lake Myrtle.

This rally is traditionally hosted by the new SEBN officers.
Check out the resort's website:

<https://fivestarrvfl.com/>



Information about rally schedule, registration and other details will be forthcoming soon!

Southeast Bus Nuts Leadership

Chapter Officers

President– Craig Bowen CBowen3117@gmail.com

Vice-President Manny Montesino locktech@tampabay.rr.com

Treasurer-Beverly Bowen Bbowen300250@gmail.com

Secretary—Ron Daniels ron.grandslam@gmail.com

FMCA Nat'l Dir –George Showman gshowman@aol.com

Advisory Committee:

(in addition to Chapter Officers)

Herb Bates

Judy Bukoski

Vicky Cates Daniels

Mike Heron

Darlene Montesino, 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, Charlie Bukoski*, Ed Fisher and Bryan Bowman. (* 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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