



SMART FMCA

Feb 2024

CHAPTER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE***Tony Mason***

In February 2024, SMART FMCA attended its first FMCA Southeast regional in Lakeland, Florida. Bob Zeller, Diane Adamson, Pam & Joe Faubion and Gina and I attended the rally. Together, we were able to put together a Pirate Themed Chapter Fair display, where first timer attendees at an FMCA event walk around and talk to the various chapters to see which one(s) they would like to join. The six of us explained what our chapters are about, what SMART is as an organization, and what SMART offers its members. Additionally, later during the FMCA SEA Rally, we had a Block Party at our campsite. All veterans were invited to come by and have drinks and snacks. We were lucky that the head golf cart driver was a veteran and rounded up veterans and brought them to our Block Party. In this relaxed atmosphere, we were able to socialize with Veterans, answer questions for them, provide information about the Florida Chapters, and share the caravans that SMART offers our veterans.

Gina and I, along with Pam & Joe Faubion are also travelling to FMCA's 108th International Convention in Tucson, Arizona to represent the SMART FMCA Chapter. We will do a Chapter Fair and have another campsite Block Party. We may have some of the Arizona Tumbleweeds joining us to assist in introducing more veterans to join SMART FMCA and SMART!

I strongly encourage all SMART FMCA members to login to FMCA and look at their events around the country. Pick one, attend it, offer to represent SMART FMCA at its Chapter Fair and invite all Veterans to your block party! Make sure you have trifolds with your information inside as well as other SMART literature that is available from SMART HQ. Let's all help SMART gain new membership. <https://www.fmca.com/fmca-events>

Safe Travels!

Tony Mason, President SMART FMCA

CHAPTER FAIR



BLOCK PARTY



ENTERTAINMENT



Steve Greer- Orlando Elvis.
An internationally renowned Tribute Artist from England. Steve performed hits from the 50's 60's and 70s.

Tony "Motown" Knight

Tony performs Motown, blues and a bit of country. He can turn a show into a party,



Them Sweeney Boys
Music and Branson-y feel comedy.
Recently on American Idol.

SMART FMCA CHAPTER

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The SEA (South East Area) Rally is held in Lakeland FL every year. Lakeland has many things to see and do. A couple of members visited The Silver Moon Drive-In Theatre. Silver Moon opened April 14, 1948 - the first drive-in theatre to open in Lakeland. The admission of 35 cents per person included a short subject, a cartoon and the latest newsreel. The Lakeland Ledger stated that the theatre featured 357 individual R.C.A. speakers - a new innovation at the time. An April 26-27, 1948 flyer advertised the theatre as "FLORIDA'S NEWEST MOST MODERN OUTDOOR THEATRE."



Another thing unique to Lakeland in 2024 is the traveling Norman Rockwell exhibition featuring ~300 pieces of his work. The exhibit is on display through May 26 at the Polk Museum of Art at Florida Southern College.



Polk County Sheriff's Office K9 Demonstration

An exhibit hall was full of vendors representing many popular RV equipment brands as well as service personnel available to install your new equipment purchases. It was difficult to decide which technical presentation to attend.

Polk County Sheriff's office taught various classes. One, Women's Basic Self Defense and Personal Safety taught techniques to enable women to escape less than desirable situations.



**FMCA 108th International Convention
FIESTA DEL SOL Tuscon AZ.
March 20 – 23, 2024**

Combine the great weather with four-plus days of engaging, entertaining, and educational activities and you have an RV festival like no other. Nearly 100 educational sessions are slated for the “Fiesta Del Sol” event, with topics covering travel, RV tech, insurance, health, lifestyle, and more. It’s not just the total but also the quality of these sessions that makes the program so impressive. FMCA’s seminar schedule features industry leaders and experts sharing their knowledge and insights with attendees.



**LET US KNOW IF
YOU ARE
ATTENDING
A FMCA RALLY
ELSEWHERE**

*We will post your info
and photos in the next
newsletter.*

UPCOMING CARAVANS

2024 Grand Canyon and Beyond

Come join fellow SMART members on April 13, 2024 for a 21 day Grand Canyon & Beyond Caravan. We will see and visit some of the most beautiful sites in all of Northern Arizona and Southern Utah. These sites have a natural wonder that is unmatched.

*We will make the most of this road trip by stopping at some of these majestic sites along the way. We will see red rock formations, canyons on the Colorado River, and some great gems of history. Additionally, we will learn a considerable amount of Navajo history and culture by visiting the sites in this area. **Registration is Open***

2024 The Great Atlantic Canada Maritime Experience

This caravan promises to be a truly remarkable adventure and will provide memories that will last a lifetime. Spend 74 days traveling throughout the four Canadian maritime provinces.

Some of the activities scheduled:

*In **New Brunswick** you will see majestic brown-sugar beaches, culturally rich Acadian villages, quaint coastal islands and vast tracks of forests brimming with wildlife. It is also home to the world's highest tides at Hopewell Rocks. During low tide we'll walk among the "flowerpot" formations. We'll visit the beautiful Kingsbrae Gardens – a multi-award winning, horticultural masterpiece. Those brave of heart will have the opportunity to traverse the ocean bed to Ministers Island during low tide.*

***Newfoundland**, which is impossible to adequately describe briefly, is where you will have 33 days to explore some of the most unique geology, breathtaking vistas, wildlife galore, icebergs, whales, and puffins. You will immerse yourself in the region's extraordinary history while touring the ancient Viking settlement of L'Anse aux Meadows. And shhh ... we'll visit a Secret World War II Officers Club and a World War II Bunker.*

*In **Nova Scotia** we'll attend a variety of unique offerings to include; attendance at the Royal International Tattoo, enjoy a Ghost Tour of Annapolis Royal National Historical Park, and, whether you are a believer or not, Oak Island. We'll take a memorable underground mine tour and attend the Men of the Deeps Concert. You'll have time to explore Cape Breton, rated one of the world's most beautiful road trips with 22 stops for unique crafts or sightseeing. There will be whale watching tours, city bus tours, and a harbor cruise on a tall ship. We'll attend the 159th Antigonish Highland Games to watch competitions of traditional Scottish Heavy Events plus Pipe and Drum, and Highland dance.*

***Prince Edward Island** is the home of Anne of Green Gables. We will attend the Musical and tour the places that inspired the legend. Spend an afternoon at the stunning Cavandish National Park. You can enjoy their Lighthouses, museums and some of the finest seafood in the Maritimes.*

*We will conclude our trip back in Trenton where Tina's Great Maine Lumberjack Show has extended their season for us. On our last night we will enjoy a lobster dinner and distribute your memory book to share with friends and family back home. Join us on this caravan and make memories that will last a lifetime! **Registration is Open***

** NOTE For the long ferry there will be a few rooms available that will allow pets or separate kennels for pets only – as the date draws near we will advise on availability and pricing.*

2024 Veterans Unite in Branson

November in Branson turns into America's Christmas Tree City! Tinsel, Lights, and Ornaments cover the entire town, but this isn't all they have to offer. We are also privileged to learn from Honor and reconnect with fellow Veterans from around the Country at this event.

*Branson's Veterans Homecoming week is America's largest Veterans' Day celebration, and we'll be there to participate from November 6th until November 15th. Although events do change from year to year, there's always a handful of activities to keep the focus on Veterans. Throughout the entire week of celebration we'll enjoy various planned activities and shows. We're in the early stages of planning this exciting and fun filled week and now is the time to make your plans to attend. **Registration is Open***

2025 SMART Caribbean Cruise

First SMART at Sea Cruise on board the beautiful Celebrity Eclipse. Celebrity is known for its fine dining, service, and spacious public areas. There are also nightly shows and entertainment throughout the ship. Special perks for early booking.

*9 nights Roundtrip from Fort Lauderdale Ports of call include Labadee, Puerto Plata, D.R., St. Thomas, St. Maarten and Antigua **Registration is Open***

2025 Civil War: Chasing John Wilkes Booth

Our 22-day caravan will begin in Richmond – the heart of the South – and end in Washington, DC, where five days after the Civil War ended, the assassin murdered President Lincoln and shocked the nation. Through guided tours and notable speakers, we will explore how Booth and his network of conspirators attempted to decapitate the Union government and throw it into a state of panic and confusion.

We have chartered a private John Wilkes Booth Escape Route Tour! Our guide is a Lincoln Assassination historian and expert on all of Booth and Herold's haunts along their flight path. Our guided tour will include Ford's Theatre and continue as we visit Surratt's Tavern and Dr. Mudd's Home. This experiential tour is a must for Lincolnites or those with an interest in Civil War history.

We will also go beyond the traditional Civil War topics to explore how women went from Southern Belles to battle axes. Along our route we will visit notable Civil War and other American historical sites such as Richmond White House of the Confederacy, Gettysburg National Military Park, Harpers Ferry, Appomattox Court House, Jefferson's Monticello, Michie Tavern, Marines Friday Evening Parade, and much more.

*We will end our 500 mile caravan with a moonlight dinner cruise. We will enjoy delicious cuisine and live entertainment on a dinner cruise along the Potomac River and view the famous sites of the nation's capital during September's full moon. **Registration Just Opened***

For additional information or to sign up for any of these caravans go to: www.smartrving.org/Caravans

WATCH THE WEBSITE FOR NEW OFFERINGS

MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Jerry and Sachiko Mueller..... Feb 12th
Pete and Joanne Peterson Feb 26th
Joe and Pam Faubion Feb 27th

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Suki Billings Feb 5th
Lyle Brown Feb 15th
Brenda Hitt Feb 16th
John Steinbauer Feb 24th
John Ingianni Feb 25th
Paul Rider Feb 26th
Cliff Meier Feb 27th

