The South Mid West is getting ready for the

**37th Annual SMART NATIONAL MUSTER**

*In Shawnee, Oklahoma*

(1700 W Independence St, Shawnee, OK 74804)

**Arrival: Sept 20th**

Tour #1—Sept 21
Tour #2—Sept 22
Tour #3—Sept 23

**Opening Ceremonies Sept 22 - 6:30pm**

Vendors /Seminars /Food/FUN/Games

Sept 23,24,25,26

**Closing Ceremonies Sept 26 - 6:30pm**

*Departure: Sept 27th*
SMART National President

It is the Winter season and perhaps a little less RV traveling is going on, but there is plenty going on behind the scenes in SMART.

In the financial area, cancellation of the Maritimes Caravan due to not having enough registrations resulted in reduced anticipated income, requiring a re-examination of the budget. Your leadership team has worked out a revised budget to keep us in the black. A reduction in the cost of liability insurance due to our lower membership numbers helped in reducing costs, while the donation of two vehicles and a couple of cash donations helped on the income side. We are still learning how the new vehicle donation program works, but we do know that when a member decides to donate a vehicle it happens quickly and smoothly for the donor. If you or a neighbor has a vehicle you no longer need, donation is a very easy way to make it disappear fast, AND you will receive the required paperwork to claim a tax donation after the vehicle is sold.

Check elsewhere in this edition of the E-News for information on a new member recruitment partnership with Camping World/Gander Outdoors. This initiative has exciting possibilities for making SMART more visible to veterans who are buying RVs, and thus to increase our membership.

Each year we have a few Region Director positions up for re-election. In 2020, the Southern and At Large regions are up ... SE, SC, SMW, SW, and At-Large. Each director serves a two year term, and can be re-elected for a second term. If you are a member of one of these regions, consider running for the RD position. All members (Veteran and Veteran Spouse memberships) are eligible to serve as Region Director. Resumes must be submitted to HQ NLT 30 April.

Finally, don’t forget to complete your online registration for your upcoming Regional Muster, most of which are scheduled during April. And of course, the National Muster in September in Shawnee OK.

I hope to see you at a Muster soon! Paul Rider

Attention all Members,

Resumes for SMART 2nd Vice President and Southern and At-Large Regional Directors should be sent to Headquarters by April 30th, 2020.

(Directors may be elected to the same office not to exceed two consecutive terms) They must also turn in a Resume again to HQ by April 30, 2020

(Refer to SR 06 for more information)
A note from our new 1st Vice President

If you haven’t yet heard, some exciting things are happening within our organization. First, Willie Pollard, Richard Palmer, and several other members have been working diligently to establish a working relationship with Camping World and Gander Nationwide to assist us in increasing our membership. These two organizations have agreed to give each veteran who purchases an RV a free 1 year membership to SMART. I won’t go into detail here because you will learn more from them in future E-News and Traveler editions. As a result of this initiative we could see younger Veterans joining our ranks that are still working and may even have young children. We need to start thinking about possibly scheduling musters over a weekend to accommodate those that are still employed and also come up with activities for children.

We also have a program available to donate old cars, motorcycles, boats, etc., to raise money for SMART. I know everyone has seen old vehicles in their communities that are just sitting around slowly rusting away. Why not see if the owners would be willing to donate them. The organization we contracted with will do all the work to include transporting the vehicle. It’s a good way to clean up some old vehicles plus make some easy money to support our organization.

If you haven’t signed up for our National Muster in Shawnee, OK this year now would be a good time to send in your application. All indications are this is going to be one of the best national musters ever and you wouldn’t want to miss out on all the fun.

Here’s wishing everyone safe travels and we hope to see you at one of the upcoming local, regional, or national musters.

Carl Hopper, 1 VP

SMART SURVEY

SMART members, At the 2019 National, a Membership Survey was passed out for the attending members to fill out. We also have emailed each member a copy thru Vertical Response. This survey will give us, the Membership and Publicity Committee a look at where we need to help improve Recruiting & Retention. The link below is to be copied and pasted in your browser and then opened. Once opened there are instructions as to how to fill it out and return it to me, Richard Palmer, R&R Coordinator.

https://www.smartrving.org/nat/PDFs/SmartMembershipSurvey.docx
A message from our New 2nd Vice President

As we begin the New Year I hope retention and recruiting is registering with all members of S.M.A.R.T. We have an opportunity to take the organization in a direction that will increase membership and hopefully give members the incentive to remain in S.M.A.R.T. and share the dream. It’s my hope that every member that reads this e-news will think positive and not dwell on the past experiences and hearsay information.

We are not receiving enough new members to compensate for the losses occurred the same month. As of the time I am writing this e-news, we have 671 Veteran members. Look at it this way. If every member successfully recruited one Veteran, that would bring 671 Veterans into this most rewarding organization. However, for us to retain those members, we must have meaningful ways at our Musters and at our Regionals and Nationals that would keep them excited.

Some of you have heard about the possibilities that Camping World and Gander may become partners with S.M.A.R.T. Actually, the possibilities are very favorable. As usual, however, when changes to a program occur, someone(s) will have negative thoughts from the past before seeing the possible progress for the future. In the words of a longtime member looking forward to the partnership, “We want to make S.M.A.R.T. a thriving club again”. With your help we can make it happen.

While working with two of the Camping Worlds and Gander that’s excited about the partnership, we noticed service banners hanging from the rafters at the entrance of the stores. What a difference progress makes. As we look at progress in the making, we must also consider the service members still on active duty, and the younger generation that served honorably who will be bringing family to our Musters.

The one thing that’s exciting to me is the possibilities that can arise with the partnership. I know some of you are wondering what the partnership can bring. Every Veteran that purchases an RV from Camping World or Gander will have their first year membership paid to S.M.A.R.T. by the store where they made the purchase.

When I first joined S.M.A.R.T there were approximately 54 Chapters and at last count we currently have 35. Let’s work together in making it back to the 54.

Willie Pollard

The January 2020 printed TRAVELERS are in.....

If you need TRAVELERS for RECRUITING please call or email HQ and we will mail them to you.
In the November Traveler, there was an article that provided a summary of what the STAR chapter is all about and you are encouraged to read it, if it was missed, or go to https://www.smartrving.org/star/index.php. Our chapter members and others who are successful in helping SMART grow have a strategy and one provided by Tom Wenz has worked well for him and others. Tom says “I travel with a box of Travelers and brochures, put my banner up and leave information with the park. I also look for potential members with decals on their RV, or a veteran’s cap. We were recently at Travis AFB, had a good talk with the manager and left information in the office and laundry room.” Check out the assortment of membership building tools on your member page of the SMART website and also SOP 15, Membership Action Plan.

This past Wednesday, January 22, the Cajuns presented their donation to the Keesler Fisher House Management. There were five donations made, four from the Cajuns and one from the Arceneaux Family. The Cajuns collected $1,250 during the past year for the Fisher House.

Cajuns also donated $50 each as memorials for the following Cajuns:
Bernadette Marino;
Christian Eck;
Earl Broussard.

The following Cajuns were present for the donation:
John & Gloria Cross;
Francis & Lynette Arceneaux;
Bob Pillion;
Douglas Barksdale.

Francis & Lynette presented donations from the Arceneaux family as a memorial of Francis’ last older brother.
Grand Frontier Caravan

"LETS HEAD WEST" On July 13, 2020 the Grand Frontier Caravan will assemble in Colorado Springs Colorado and begin our exciting tour of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Montana and South Dakota. Along the way we'll visit Pikes Peak, Royal Gorge, USAF Academy, Garden of the Gods, Rocky Mountain National Park, Wind River Reservation, Salt Lake City, Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park, Little Big Horn Battlefield, Devils Tower, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Custer State Park, Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse Memorial, Black Hills, Sturgis, Deadwood, Badlands National Park and Wall South Dakota following the historic routes of the covered wagons along the Platte River traveled by half a million pioneers in the mid 1800's.

Caravan duration is approximately 52 days, 18 RV’s and 1800 miles.

13th July—4th September 2020
Wagon Masters: David and Jackie Weis dweis74@hotmail.com
Assistant Wagon Masters: Steve and Sarah Colt compassfix@gmail.com
Cost: $5990 for 2 person
(We have a couple of spots open)

The 2020 Kentucky Experience

Dates: 1-31 October 2020
Starts October 1, 2020 in Bowling Green, KY
Ends October 31, 2020 in Georgetown, KY (depart 11/1)

31 days
4 Campgrounds
6 Wineries & 8 Distilleries
9 Meals

Louisville Slugger Museum + Factory & Corvette Museum, Wouldn't be a tour of Kentucky if we didn't include the history of the horse, the racetracks and the Kentucky Derby.
Join us as we visit this beautiful state and learn its history.
Cost is $4500 2/person, $3100 1/person $1500 guest
(We have a few spots open)

Wagon Master's:
Phil & Nita Taylor
Philnita.taylor@gmail.com
501-250-4317 or 501-250-6585

Tail Gunners:
Cliff & Jeanne Meier
sarmeier@yahoo.com
or jmeier44@yahoo.com
505-507-8188 or 505-259-8417
Washington DC Parade Caravan
July 1st—July 7th
Wagonamsters John & Kathy Steinbauer jfs9840@gmail.com cell (210) 386-9018
Costs: 2 per RV: $1100  1 per RV: $825  Guests: $300
(We have a few spots open)

Come be apart of the Washington DC Parade for our Country!

RECRUITING  RETENTION

As I accepted the Recruiter of the Year I knew that by tying with Al Haynes I was doing something right. I was looking at the future growth of SMART. I read over SOP-15, Membership Action Plan, and started to come up with ways for all members to attract new members. I left ‘Recruit’ out because some are turned off by that phrase. Let’s attract new members to SMART.

My first success was through Social Media. There are a lot of military members out there on Social Media. Once you make contact, follow up. Build their desire to camp with military veterans and their families.

I have created Recruiting Kits, SMART bags with a Traveler, Pamphlet, application, a pen to be given to a prospect. Each chapter president can request more from HQ.

I decided to go to Camping World at their RV sales event along with 2nd VP Willie Pollard and Alamo member Mike Mosley. We were given a table and we started to explain about SMART to those who approached the table. You would be surprised how many people didn’t know about SMART. We signed up 4 that weekend. Then I came up with an idea to create a Partnership with Camping World/Gander RV where for every unit sold to a military member, active duty, retired, or honorably discharged, CW will pay for that members first year membership to SMART. There are over 140 CW stores across the nation. I have been in contact with CW CEO. The process is under review. If one half of the stores sign up one member a month, do the math. We will grow.

At this time, there are members who chose to go to an RV show and set up a table to sign up new members or just get the word out. This is the time of the year for RV shows. All you have to do is ask and the dealer says yes.

Remember, Recruiting is only half the process. We need to provide positive first impressions and encourage involvement. These actions will help to retain the member not only for the first year but years to come. Richard Palmer Recruiting & Retention Coordinator
A note from the NMW Region Director:

Many of our North MidWest SMART members have gone south for the winter. At this time we are missing below zero temperatures in the mid west. Linda and I are in Arizona with club members near by. Some club members are in Texas visiting with each other. Each group is doing what our motto says “Seeing the country we defend.”

One of the many sights we have seen is the Great House at the Casa Grande Ruins. It is 650 years old and a great example of our rich history. Great effort has been taken to preserve this structure. If at all possible, I encourage everyone to get out and see this great country.

It is not too early to sign up for the 2020 National Muster in Shawnee Oklahoma. The planning being done will insure everybody who attends will have a good time. It’s central location in Oklahoma should help insure a good turn out. I know I am looking forward to being there, and meeting up with old friends, as well as new members! Ernie Owen

Military Campground of the Year Award
Special Military Active Recreational Travelers Club
Naval Air Station Key West, Florida – Sigsbee

On behalf of SMART, John Steinbauer presented the SMART Outstanding Large Campground Award for 2018 to and congratulated Shannon Rodriguez and the office staff. All were very appreciative of the award and commented they will continue to strive to meet the high standards the award represents.

Before the presentation, John Steinbauer explained the significance of the award and how SMART members vote on-line via the SMART website after visiting military campgrounds. The ratings are then tabulated and awards are given annually for small, medium, and large campgrounds. SMART members are then able to review the ratings for each campground when determining which campgrounds to visit.

Left to right, SMART Past President John Steinbauer; Campground Manager, Shannon Rodriguez; Campground Office Manager; Kim Watkins, Kathy Steinbauer; Office Assistant, Susie Buck; Campground Office Assistant, Mia Cazimero, and SMART member Barney Bender.
Everyone recruit One person into SMART.....
The **I GOT One** Campaign has started!
Recruit just one new member into SMART and get your free **I GOT One** pin and be first in line at dinner during the National Muster in Oklahoma. You must wear **I GOT One** pin to each meal to be recognized.

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**Campground Ad Campaign**

also is underway....If you get 5 campgrounds to join our website campground ads agreement for $25 year you receive a **FREE SMART T Shirt**

so as you travel ask the campground owners if they would like to support SMART. Buying an ad for $25 a year gets them on our website with a link to their website and in our Electronic Bi- Monthly Traveler sent out to all our members. Go online and print out a Campground AD Agreement and give it to the campground and have them mail it to HQ with a check for $25. Don’t forget to put your name in the bottom corner of the agreement so I know who referred them.

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**2020 National Polo Shirts will go on sale next month.**