

## Ohio Valley Christmas Newsletter

17 December 2023

Merry Christmas to everyone in the Ohio Valley Chapter.

Kathy and I wish each of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. Hope you have some nice plans to visit family. We are off next week to go the GA where our son and granddaughter live. We will go thru Tennessee and visit more family there. Weather looking good so far. Last year we went down there and missed one of the rare White Christmases here in KY.

Trying to make some plans for next year. The Rocky Top Chapter has reformed and I am definitely looking at doing some things with them once they get organized. I have been talking to a few other Ohio Valley members about ideas for next year's musters.

Still working a couple ideas but I am planning to host a muster at Camp Carlson, the Fort Knox Famcamp. I visited there this fall and was much impressed with the staff and their interest in working with us. That was not the case a few years ago when I tried, so I was happy. Most people know the Kentucky Derby is the first Saturday in May. But the Derby is preceded by 2 weeks of the Kentucky Derby Festival. So I am planning the muster to fall in the middle of that festival. Tentatively I am looking at 24 to 28 April 2024. But I can't actually make reservations until 90 days out so can change those dates if they make a difference in your ability to come or not. One catch about reserving at Fort Knox (every Famcamp has different rules based on the current Commander) is I have to pay \$30 deposit for each site when I make the reservation for the group. Luckily, that is refundable if I cancel a couple weeks out. So I need everyone to send me a note if you even think you are interested in coming. If you can only come if I slip the dates one way or the other let me know that too. Then I will block us some sites. When you register for the muster, you will include the \$30 campground fee when you pay the muster fee and pay the rest when you check in. If you want your own reservation, let me know and I can transfer the registration to you. Fort Knox requires an ID card to register. That can be active duty or retired military, a DoD civilian ID or a VA ID only if you actually receive a check from the VA. Since the Famcamp is not on post, I can host any veteran with my ID as we do have a few members who are Vets without a military ID and we have always been able to host them so they can attend. All Fort Knox sites are 30/50 amp full hookup sites. Most are backin but they do have a very few pull through sites reserved for handicap tags. If you need one of those, let me know and I will reserve one. So let me know if you are interested but you are not locked in. I will block that number of sites. More details on what festival activities are taking place will come later. They typically have balloons both hot air and gas, live music and food along the riverfront. All activities are free with a Derby Festival Pin which I will ensure you each get. This is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Derby so big plans are in the works. And there are lots of other things to do if you are not interested in the Derby. More to follow but I need your interest before the end of January.

Later in the Summer, I am talking to another chapter member about a muster in southwest part of KY. We are still looking at places and activities and dates. I also still want to work with the Rocky Tops to Co-Host a muster in east Tennessee somewhere in mid September. Then those of us continuing to the National in Ladsen, SC can go from that muster on to National. It was great having so many chapter members present this year's National in Amana.

BTW, The December E-News has been published and has lots of information about the future of SMART and the Caravans planned for the next couple of years. You can access it from the SMART website on the front page near the bottom. The last years worth of E-News and Travelers are available there as well. In January, the only hard copy of the SMART Traveler is published. Everyone should get one copy but if you want more (they make good handouts to people interested in SMART) just contact HQ. If you go by the office in Pensacola, you can pick up a stack. Or they will mail some to you for the cost of the postage.

As I looked back over our chapter founding in 1988, I saw they started with dues of \$5. Those remain our dues after 35 years. It may be time to consider raising them to \$10 or so which puts us in line with other chapters. But for 2024, I have sent out a separate email to those that owe dues. If you got it, your dues are still \$5. If you didn't get an email, you are good for 2024. That will be a topic for our first muster since that requires a change in our SOP. We will also need a new Vice President since Reese is the President of the Rocky Tops and we could use a secretary willing to write some more interesting newsletters.

That's about it for now. Thanks again for the great participation at the National and I hope we can get some attendance at chapter musters as well. And send me a note if you think you might be interested in Fort Knox in April. Paying your deposit won't happen til you actually register for the muster.

So Have a Very Merry Christmas

Ed and Kathy Pate