

THE BIG BENDER

BIG BEND FLORIDA UNIT 153 REGION 3



Volume 41
Number 2
January 2015



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A few words from Jim.....

Thank you to all the Big Bend Florida members and guests that attended our annual community outreach event on December 6 at the Wakulla Springs Lodge. I believe it is safe to say everyone had a wonderful time and enjoyed a delicious dinner. The process of paying for the meal could have been a little smoother but that should not take away from the evening. We had 34 members and 3 guests attend with a huge array of toys donated to the Toys for Tots program. Captain Bruce Acker, USMC Retired, who was representing the Marine Corps League and sponsor of the Toys for Tots Program, came down to join us for dinner and gave a short update on the Toys for Tots program. Fortunately he was able to haul off all the toys donated by our members.

Attending their first Big Bend Florida function were Jeff and Cheryl Hurt from Alachua. See their picture and bio elsewhere in this newsletter. Here's hoping we will get to see a lot more of Jeff and Cheryl at future unit rallies. Helene Werner and Lois Berry, long time Big Bend Members, were in attendance. Helene advises that she and Rob have purchased a home in Tallahassee and will spend winters here and summers back in Michigan. Bob and Dorinda Paynter were guests of Don and Sandy Wood. Big Bend members in attendance included Charlie and Annette Hurst, Jim Weilhammer and Katherine Kamiya, Winston and Carol Montague, Wally and Carol Welch, Tom and Karon Beyer, Craig and Monica Brinkley, Bill and Linda Coleman, Allen Gallina and Vickie Hooks (thank you for the delicious red velvet cake), John, Gayle and Chris Duncan, Lamar and Amy Waymire, Bill and Frankie Worthington, Jay and Elna Thompson, and Gary and RoseMarie Anderson. Many drove long distances to attend and it was greatly appreciated.

Big Bend Florida Unit has two more members that recently joined. Katherine Lord and Andrew Miller of Tallahassee and Edwin and Michele Waide of Tifton, GA are our new members. A warm welcome to both couples and we hope to see them at an upcoming rally.

Don't forget the no host rally at St Joseph Peninsula SP January 16-19.

Finally, Gary and RoseMarie are the proud grandparents of a new granddaughter born on December 13, 2014. Mother and daughter are doing just fine. Congratulations to the family.

Hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and will be blessed with good health and much happiness in 2015. Let's go camping.....

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Toys For Tots



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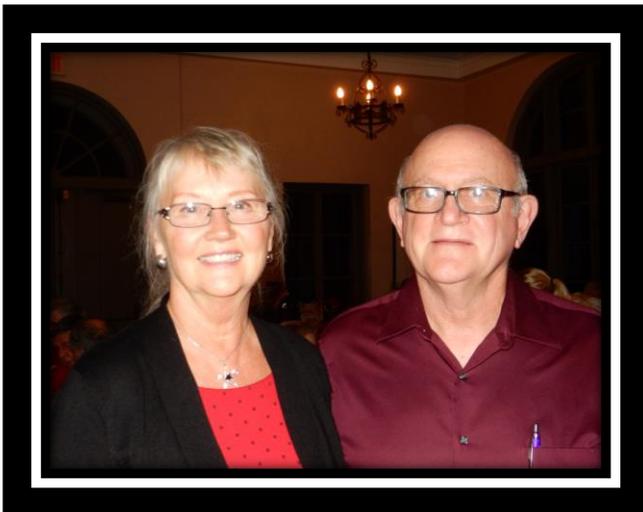
Look at this!

There is a **change in the reservation procedure for the Uchee Army Campground at Fort Benning, Ga.** On our way to Boston last month, Pat and I stopped by the campground to coordinate our rally. They have agreed to reserve 15 campsites all in the same loop. You can now call Uchee Campground directly. Tell them that you are with the Big Bend Airstream Club and your sponsor is James Hentz, US Army Retired. We will be in Camper's Cove. Their telephone number is (706) 545-4053. The cost for full hookups and cable is \$24. If you are retired military or DOD civilian and have a senior pass the cost is \$19. For the record the campground is actually in Ft. Mitchell, Ala. For GPS purposes the address is 7 Uchee Creek Road, Ft. Mitchell, AL 36856.

Want to attend a Unit Rally?

- ✚ Make campsite reservations
- ✚ Contact rally host with number attending.
- ✚ Contact Bonnie Lewis at jim-bonnielewis@cox.net with your camp site #

New Members



Welcome to Jeff and Cheryl Hurt from Alachua, Florida!

Jeff and Cheryl Hurt are residents of Alachua, Florida. They retired from teaching careers in Spring 2014 and Cheryl, a high school teacher, and Jeff, a Professor at The University of Florida, enjoyed close to 40 years as teachers of young people. Cheryl is a native of Tallahassee, Florida and Jeff grew up in Topeka, Kansas. They met as students at The University of Kansas. After becoming teachers they made their home sequentially in Topeka, Kansas, then Weatherford, Oklahoma and arrived in Gainesville, Florida in 1985. Their home is a small farm (The11AcreFarm) in northern Alachua County, where they enjoy gardening a variety of vegetables year round, caring for their two grand-daughters several days each week and visiting with their two adult children, Gabriel and Jessica, who make their homes close by. Gabe is a math teacher in Duval County and Jessica is an RN at Shands Hospital in Gainesville. Jeff and Cheryl both enjoy reading, musical concerts of all sorts, camping and hiking. A retirement interest is learning more about astronomy. Jeff is the great cook in the family and Cheryl keeps order in the ranks of living things they oversee, in addition to grandchildren, two horses, one donkey and three dogs.

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Off the Beaten Path
Craig and Monica Brinkley

In the prime of life with our children grown, life has taken on some great adventures. When our children very young we began camping in a pop up and thoroughly enjoyed camping. Being outside, cooking at the camper, and enjoying the parks we visited. As they got older and bigger we decided we were done popping up and bought a hard side camper which we thought would be perfect for us. Not! We just did not really enjoy the experience as much. We wound up just parking it and staying in a hotel and eating out. Last year we decided to camp at Stone Mountain, while there where we saw vintage campers and that changed everything. We started shopping for a new camper; we decided that we wanted to go back to a more rustic way of camping. That led to a search for a camper which eventually turned into a 2013 Airstream Flying Cloud RB last January. Guess what? We have fallen back in love with camping (Thanks Big Bend Unit) and have enjoyed more rustic campgrounds than resort style.

We knew we wanted to go on a week-long vacation in the fall, so we came up with the idea of going to an area we have never been before-Kentucky. The premise of our experience literally centers on US highway 127. Each year in August, the "World's Longest Yard sale" takes place on Hwy. 127 from Alabama to Michigan. On our trip, we stayed pretty much 50 miles in each direction of this road.

The first leg of our trip was Fall Creek Falls State Park in and around Pikeville, Tennessee which is just off Highway 127. We were treated to some pretty fall leaves, beautiful waterfalls and mountains! The air was crisp and it gave us the taste of fall that we were looking for. Did I mention no TV or football that Saturday when FSU was playing Notre Dame? It doesn't matter when you are in paradise!

The next leg of the trip was towing the Airstream up Highway 127 which led us to lots of pretty mountains and creeks in this very rural part of Kentucky. Make sure you have gas when you leave or you might not find any in this area; Talk about remote! Along the way we were treated to seeing Quilt Barns. This is where people will paint replicas of quilts on barns all along the highways and bi-ways of Kentucky. Our travel led us to the Lexington Area to Natural Bridge State Park which is about an hour East of Lexington. We were able to camp along a babbling brook! This park has a "Natural Bridge" that consists of a rock that goes from one mountain to the other. We took a sky lift which was a neat and cold experience! Did I mention NO TV?



While we stayed at the Park, we took day trips into Lexington. We went to Shaker Village. That was a pretty drive to where we saw lots of pretty horse farms and rock fences. Then we got acquainted with the Kentucky Horse Park where we were able to see some great race horses of the past. Lexington also has a rising craft beer industry. We were able to sample some of the local flavor, Budweiser and Miller better watch out!

The next day we went to Frankfort and toured the Buffalo Trace Distillery then back to Woodford Reserve Distillery. We learned about how spirits are made and the history of the area. We were able to sample some while we were there and were treated to a bourbon ball. So very good!

All good things must come to an end, so we vacated that area and headed to the Mammoth Cave area. Mammoth Cave has the right name; it is so huge and

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expansive! Words cannot describe it, but if you are in the area, it is a must see, so put it on your itinerary. After we left the cave, we wound up at Dale Hollow State Park in Southern Kentucky.



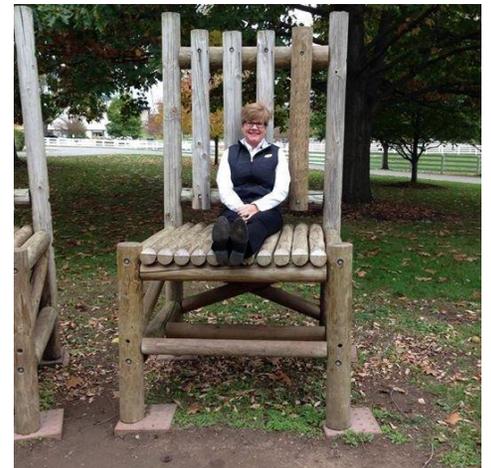
Dale Hollow Lake is a Corp of Engineers Lake that is in Tennessee and Kentucky. The park is one of the newer Kentucky State Parks that has a marina/boat dock, etc. It is in very rural Southern Kentucky. Did I mention NO TV?

One day, we toured the countryside and came across a town called Tompkinsville, Kentucky at lunch time. We spotted a place called Dovie's. Dovie's was an old fashioned hamburger place. It was in an old store front and the seating was a lunch counter. In the middle of it were 4 cast iron deep griddles where they literally fried the hamburgers in their own grease. The waitress would ask you, do you want it squeezed (grease out) or UN squeezed (grease in). I took mine UN squeezed so I

could soak up the experience! While there, we asked if there was an Amish Community nearby. The guy next to us told us where it was. The waitresses overheard the conversation and said, "Are you going to see the doctor or going for the food"? They began to give testimonies about the doctor being able to look into your eyes to tell what is wrong with you and prescribe herbs to cure you! We had to go check this out. The community is Vernon, Kentucky. It is a horse and buggy community with no electricity and modest living. Women in long dresses, men with long beards in pants and suspenders. The produce market there had their local produce and other food items for sale. We stocked up on peanut brittle and homemade bread along with some sweet potatoes. We chickened out on seeing the doctor, he was in but we decided we would leave it to fate for all is wrong with us!

Heading home, our next stop was an Alabama State Park called Lake Guntersville located on the Tennessee River. It was a beautiful setting with lots of ducks and a beautiful sunset. We stayed there to kind of rest and recharge for the long ride home the next day. Did I mention NO TV?

We found ourselves back home very blessed with no travel incidents or mechanical break downs. We had a wonderful time exploring God's creation getting back to the basics of camping. We cooked at the camper all but one night and yes, NO TV! Somebody commented on Facebook like our trip was like viewing Diners, Drive-In's and Dives! I



would highly recommend this part of the country to others whom have not experience it. Next year we plan to visit the Western Part of Kentucky to see what is "Off the Beaten Path"!

Members, if there is a special adventure you would like to share with others, write up a short commentary with a few pictures and send to Rosemarie (tango2020pc@gmail.com)

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Recipes from
November
Rally

SAUSAGE AND EGG STRATA***

Serves 8 as a meal or 16 as a part of a buffet

Preparation Time 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

16-oz. pork sausage, cooled, crumbled and drained of fat

10 eggs lightly beaten (or combination of eggs and egg whites)

3 cups of milk

2 tsp. dry mustard

8-oz, (2 cups) of shredded cheddar cheese

6 cups of cubed bread (use bread with a firm texture)

½ tsp. black pepper

1 tsp. salt

½ cup mushrooms, sliced (optional)

½ cup green onions, sliced (optional)

½ cup red bell pepper or tomato, chopped (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Spray a 3 quart baking dish (9" x 13" x 2") with non-stick spray.

In a large mixing bowl, combine eggs, milk, mustard, salt and pepper. In another large mixing bowl, combine the bread cubes, sausage, cheese and vegetables (if desired). Distribute the mixture evenly in the prepared baking dish.

Pour the milk mixture over the bread mixture in the baking dish, pressing gently on the bread to saturate evenly.

Casserole can be covered and stored in the refrigerator overnight or baked immediately. If the casserole is refrigerated, let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before baking.

Bake uncovered in a preheated 325 degree oven for 55-60 minutes until the strata is puffed and brown and a knife inserted in the middle comes out clean. Check the strata at 45 minutes and if it is browning too quickly, tent loosely with foil.

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HAM AND POTATO CASSEROLE***

Serves 8 as a meal or 16 as a part of a buffet

Preparation Time 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

1 1/2 lbs. cooked ham cubed or 16-oz. turkey or pork breakfast sausage, cooked, crumbled and drained of fat

6 eggs, lightly beaten (or combination of eggs and egg whites)

1 1/2 cups of biscuit mix

3 cups of milk

8-oz. of shredded Swiss or Cheddar cheese

4 cups of frozen loose-pack hash brown potatoes, defrosted

3/4 cup of diced red bell pepper or tomato

1 cup chopped onion

2 Tbsp. finely chopped parsley

1/2 tsp. black pepper

1 tsp. salt

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray a 3 quart baking dish (9 x 13 x 2 inches) with non-stick spray.

Mix together potatoes, ham or sausage, onions, red bell pepper or tomatoes, 1 1/2 cups of cheese and parsley in a large bowl. Spread evenly in baking dish. Alternately you can layer ingredients in the order given starting with the potatoes and ending with cheese.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the eggs, biscuit mix, milk, salt and pepper. Pour the milk mixture over the potatoes.

Casserole can be covered and stored in the refrigerator overnight or baked immediately. If casserole is refrigerated, let it stand on the counter for 30 minutes before baking.

Bake uncovered in a preheated 40 - 50 minutes until a knife inserted in the middle comes out clean. If casserole is browning too quickly, tent the baking dish with foil.

This is a good brunch dish that can be prepared ahead of time.

Thanks to Katherine Kamiya for sharing these delicious recipes!

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2015 Rally Schedule

*Have an interesting idea for a weekend Rally?
Contact Jim Hentz!*

January 16-19 **No Host Rally @ St. Joseph Peninsula SP, Port St. Joe, FL**
Reservations: www.floridastateparks.com or 1-800-326-3521

February 13-15 **Unit Rally @ Rainbow Springs SP, Dunnellon, FL**
Reservations: www.floridastateparks.com or 1-800-326-3521
Hosts: Craig and Monica Brinkley & Tom and Karon Beyer

Feb 24-Mar 1 **Alumaflamingo. Sarasota, FL**
Reservations: www.alumaflamingo.com or 1-802-877-2900 ext 4

March 3-8 **Florida State Rally @ St. Augustine, FL**
Reservations: Blue Beret Application

March 27-29 **Unit Rally @ Stephen Foster SP, Live Oak, FL**
Reservations: www.floridastateparks.com or 1-800-326-3521
Hosts: Don and Sandy Wood & Jim and Sheila Skipper

April 24-26 **Unit Rally @ East Bank Campground, Lake Seminole COE, via Chattahoochee, FL**
(Buddy Rally)
Reservations: www.recreation.gov or 1-877-444-6777
Hosts: Jim and Pat Hentz & Lamar and Amy Waymire

April 26-29 **Caravan to Region 3 Rally (From Lake Seminole to Ladson, SC.)**
Reservations: To be announced

April 29-May 3 **Region 3 Rally, Exchange Park, Ladson, SC**
Reservations: www.region3.wbcci.net

May 15-17 **Unit Rally @ Fort Clinch SP, Fernandina Beach, FL**
Reservations: www.floridastateparks.com or 1-800-326-3521
Hosts:

May 17-24 **Stupendous Seashore and Swamp Unit Caravan**
Hosts: Bill and Linda Coleman

June 26-Jul 4 **International Rally @ Farmington, NM**
Reservations: Blue Beret

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Sep 18-20 Unit Rally @ Uchee Army Campground, Fort Benning, Ga

Reservations: Call Uchee Campground directly (703) 545-4053 and advise them you are with the Big Bend Airstream Club and your sponsor is James Hentz, US Army Retired, and we will be in Campers Cove.

Hosts:

Oct 16-18 Unit Rally @ Topsail Hill Preserve SP, Santa Rosa Beach, Fl (Elections)

Reservations: www.floridastateparks.com or 1-800-326-3521

Hosts: Jim Weilhammer and Katherine Kamiya

Nov 6-8 Installation Rally, Sugar Mill Campground, Thomasville, Ga

Reservations: 1-229-227-1451

Hosts: