

THE BIG BENDER

BIG BEND FLORIDA UNIT 153 REGION 3



Volume 41

Number 5

April 2015



President

Jim Hentz

A few words from Jim.....

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Bill Coleman

2nd Vice President

Unfilled

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Treasurer

Martina Pelley

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Membership

Mary & Chip Adams

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Chris Duncan

Spring has arrived and along with it the Airstream community has been busy. The Florida State Rally was held in St. Augustine with a number of Big Bend members participating. Katherine Kamiya & Chip & Mary Adams each prepared a report on the happenings in St. Augustine. The Georgia Plantations and More Caravan headed by Winston and Carol Montague arrived Tallahassee on Monday, March 16. Members of Big Bend were invited to welcome the 22 Airstreams arriving at Bradley's Country Store and to stay for dinner. Dinner was a special treat consisting of Bradley's smoked pork chops and their famous smoked sausage. While camped at Bradley's the caravaners toured Goodwood Plantation., Tall Timbers, and Pebble Hill. Big Bend members participating in the caravan are Wally and Carol Welch, Gary and RoseMarie Anderson, Jay and Ella Thompson, Jack and Kay Garrett, Jack and Sherry White, and, of course, Winston and Carol Montague. Greeting the caravan were Bill Coleman, Allen Gallina and Vickie Hooks, Don and Sandy Wood, and Hugh and Judy Cowart. Hope I didn't miss anyone.

A couple weeks ago I received on behalf of the Big Bend Florida Unit a Certificate of Appreciation from the US Marine Corps Reserve expressing their gratitude for our support of their Toys for Tots Program.

Congratulations to Lamar Waymire on his recent retirement. To celebrate his retirement, he and Amy toured Florida in their Airstream. Craig and Monica Brinkley accompanied the Waymires' for part of the trip. Best wishes go out to Lamar for a happy and wonderful retirement.

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A Few Words from Jim....continued

Pat and I regret not being able to attend the March rally at Stephen Foster. I understand that it was determined that no one in Big Bend can carry a tune. Jim and Sheila Skipper and Don and Sandy Wood had a wonderful program and a summary is elsewhere in this newsletter. My thanks to Katherine Kamiya for the summary.

Our next rally is April 24-26 at the COE Eastbank Campground, Lake Seminole. Lamar and Amy Waymire and Pat and I are the hosts. See the program elsewhere in this newsletter. Hopefully, we will have good weather so that those who wish to do so can drive out to my farm for lunch on Saturday. A shooting range will be available for those who want to practice with their weapon. You will be out in the woods so dress accordingly. I have a porta-potti in the cabin for the women and lots of big trees for the guys.

Following the rally is the Region 3 Rally in Ladson, SC. If you have never been to a Region 3 Rally I encourage you to attend this one. There are lots to see and do in the Charleston area. A caravan will depart from Eastbank on Sunday heading to Ladson with stops in General Coffee SP on Sunday night and Skidaway SP for Monday and Tuesday night. Hope many of the Big Bend members will attend.

Hope all are in good health. Let's go camping.....

Jim



Find us online at **Bigbendfl.wbcci.net**

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Florida State Rally

On March 3rd, the 42 annual Florida State Rally took place at the St. John's Fairgrounds outside of St. Augustine. 14 Big Bend Members attended.

Chip and Mary Adams

Bill and Anniedia Daws

Gordy Johnson and his guest, Sabrina

Jim and Bonnie Lewis

Kathryn Lord and Andrew Miller

Jim Weilhammer and Katherine Kamiya

Don and Sandy Wood

Ron & Karen Rush

Thanks to Mary & Chip Adams and Katherine and Jim Weilhammer for their comments on the event!

168 Airstream units came together at St. Johns County Fairgrounds in Jacksonville, FL March 3-8 for the Florida Rally.

Rally entry fee included a trolley tour of St. Augustine and all of its historical sites, a boat ride to view the harbor, city, fort, Anastasia Island and lighthouse. Those riding Thursday had beautiful weather, but the Adams and Woods, who rode Friday did so in cold, wet, and windy conditions.

Two entertainment highlights included a delightful deaf dance troupe from the Florida School for the Deaf & Blind, and members of the St. Augustine's Historical Society wearing period dress while sharing the history of St. Augustine and the celebration of their 450th anniversary.

Members of Big Bend followed Gordon Johnson to Cory Bell's Seafood Restaurant on the Beautiful St. John's River in East Palatka for wonderful food and fellowship on Saturday.

Report and photo by Mary and Chip Adams



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Report by Katherine and Jim Weilhammer

On March 3rd, the 42 annual Florida State Rally took place at the St. John's Fairgrounds outside of St. Augustine. The opening ceremony took place on Tuesday evening. There were 178 Airstream units attending the rally. .

The Florida School for the Deaf and Blind's dance troupe delivered an outstanding, crowd pleasing performance following the opening ceremony. Those in attendance made contributions to the school. The Executive Director of the school, Tanya Rhodes, sent thank you letters for these contributions.

Passes allowed free use of the St. Augustine trolley tour each day of the rally. Riders could hop off and on at the many stops along the route in St. Augustine. On Wednesday afternoon, there was a towing seminar given by the Reese Hitch Company. Boat tours of the St. Augustine harbor began on Thursday and Friday. Tim Maxwell from Zip Dee Awning Company gave a seminar and demonstration on Thursday afternoon. The Airstream dealer from Alachua, J.D. Saunders, brought four beautiful new Airstream trailers which were open for daily inspection each day.

Everyone seemed to really enjoy Buddy Canova who entertained on Thursday evening. There was a craft demonstration by Barbara Grimes on Friday afternoon. Michelle Reyna gave a presentation as the "Minorcan Woman" on Friday night. Saturday morning began with the traditional flea market for bargains, produce and craft goods. At noon, twelve Big Bend members lunched at Cory Bell's restaurant in East Palatka on the shores of the St Johns River. On Saturday afternoon, there was an open house tour of vintage trailers. Everyone gathered under the giant tent for a catered dinner on Saturday evening. Chad Light performed on Saturday night. Sunday morning opened with a non-denominational church service. On Sunday evening, the entertainment was provided by Anthea Manny.

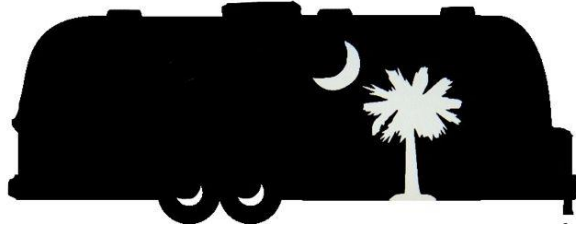
The 2016 Florida State Rally is scheduled to be in the Florida Keys. There are 200 sites being set aside for this event. The 2016 applications will appear in the *Blue Beret*.



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Region 3 Rally



"Low Country Reflections" April 29 - May 3

Ladson, South Carolina

Tours and Offsite Activities at the 2015 Region 3 Rally

Planning on attending the Region 3 Rally? The Low Country offers some of the best sightseeing opportunities in the southeast. The rally schedule will include open times to see the area. The Region 3 Rally will ensure there is plenty of time for *Adventure*. Several tours are being offered at a great discount and some require advance booking. Additional information is available at <http://wbcci.region3.org>.

If you are interested in the Beidler Forest walk or paddle, contact Beidler Forest at the number below. If you are interested in the Culinary Tours, Brews Cruise, or Distillery Tour, please contact the Region 3 Registrar. Registration IS binding, but may be transferred to other rally participants.

1. Beidler Forest Walk or Paddle - Book Ahead on your own

Come and enjoy the South Carolina Low country's "real swamp" experience!! The National Audubon Society's Francis Beidler Forest, located in Four Holes Swamp, SC - less than an hour from Charleston - contains within its 16,000+ acres the largest remaining stand of virgin Bald Cypress and Tupelo Gum swamp forest left anywhere in the world. Here, 1,000-year-old trees and native wildlife abound in a pristine sanctuary that has been untouched for millennia.

Self-guided Boardwalk tours \$10 each. Can be done at any time during open hours. (Senior Discounts available)

2. Harbor Boat Tour - No Advance Reservation Required

Discounts will be provided on the Charleston Harbor Tour. Climb aboard the *Carolina Belle* to enjoy the beauty of the Charleston Harbor and learn the rich history of the Holy City. Confederate and Union army Forts Moultrie and Johnson

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3. Culinary Tours -- Register Now! region3registrar@gmail.com. 32 tickets have been pre-booked for the Charleston Culinary Tours on Thursday and Friday afternoons. Cost is \$54/ person This 2-1/2 hour tour.

4. Palmetto Carriage Tours - No Advance Reservation Required

5. Charleston Brews Cruise - Register now at region3registrar@gmail.com 14 tickets have been booked on Thursday afternoon but can expand to 26 if there is enough demand. Register NOW. This tour includes transportation from, and return to, the Rally site. Cost is \$57/person. The tour includes a visit to 3 of Charleston's best Breweries, Free Tastings, transportation, snacks, water, and refrigerator space for any beer you may purchase.

6. Charleston Walking Tours - No Advance Registration Required
Discounts may be available on walking tours of downtown Charleston. Details will be included in your registration materials. No advance registration is required.

7. Charleston Distillery Tour - Express Interest at region3registrar@gmail.com A tour of 3 of Charleston's premier distilleries can be arranged for Saturday. Transportation from, and back to the Rally site will be included in the cost. Cost will be similar to the Brews Cruise. We need to know if sufficient interest exists for this tour. 14 are needed to book this tour.



Remember the beautiful quilt Vickie Hooks created? (See the March issue of the newsletter)

After a little prompting, Vicki contacted the Blue Beret with some photos and a story about her quilt.

Hopefully we will see it in a future issue of the Blue Beret!

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Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Center



Bob & Dorinda Paynter hosted the Karaoke Party on Saturday



Martina Pelley received a standing ovation for her amazing medley of hits from the 60's 70's & 80s.

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Martina Pelley, Dorinda Paynter and Sheila Skipper line danced to several Rock & Roll and Country Classic songs.



The Big Bend Florida Unit Mixed Quartet (Jim Skipper, Sheila Skipper, Dorinda Paynter, Martina Pelley) attracted a large crowd of campers from surrounding campsites. Afterward they signed autographs and posed for pictures. Park ranges asked them to return for the music festival at the park.



Jim W. received many requests on Saturday night at the Karaoke party, but he sang anyway.

He was late leaving to return home because he could not locate the parks dump station on his GPS.

He was seen on Sunday morning trying to get Katherine close to the dump station. Jim was saying, "All the other wives do this part"



Thanks to Jim Weilhammer for the fun photos & comments

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Contributed by Katherine Kaymira

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park welcomed early birds with cloudy skies and intermittent rain. The clouds parted long enough to enjoy an intimate pot luck dinner on Friday night co-hosted by Sandy and Don Wood and Shelia and Jim Skipper. Health issues prevented several members from participating at the last minute. Cheryl and Jeff Hurt, Connie and Bear Schenk, Martina Pelley, Jim Weilhammer and Katherine Kamiya shared a warm fire and delicious food.

We awoke Saturday morning to clear blue skies and cool temperatures. Mimosas (thanks to Connie and Bear) started a perfect breakfast of biscuits with sausage gravy and tropical fruit. After a sleepless night, Cheryl and Jeff decided to leave Saturday morning to return home to treat spring allergies. The day warmed and welcomed visitors to the banks of the Suwannee River. The craft demonstrators included a weaver, jeweler, dulcimer maker and fabric artist. While hikes and shopping tempted some, others took much deserved afternoon naps. We gathered for an early dinner with new Airstream friends, Lorraine and Charlie Simpson who were traveling through the area on their way back home to the Blue Ridge Mountains. We enjoyed a delicious stew, red velvet cake and cheesecake. Sandy's daughter and son-in-law, Dorinda and Bobby Paynter joined us with their karaoke equipment. They performed together and their energy was infectious. Connie, Bear and Katherine were an appreciative audience and everyone else joined in with song or dance. Sandy was the "karaoke ambassador" and invited others in the campground to join us. Our ranks grew as did the fun.

Sunday was another beautiful day and after a continental breakfast most of the group packed up to return home. Our group was small but it did not limit our enjoyment. We left with music in our ears and a new spring in our step.



Cheryl & Jeff Hurt



See ya'all next year!

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April 24 – 26

East Bank Campground, Lake Seminole

Hosts: Lamar & Amy Waymire & Jim & Pat Hentz

Friday night

5:00 PM - Social hour

5:30 PM - Pot Luck

Saturday morning

8:30 AM - Grits in a bowl with available toppings of eggs, sausage, and cheese (bring a bowl)

10:30 - travel to Hentz farm

Saturday lunch at the farm – (Hotdogs, drinks, chips & cookies provided)

Saturday evening

5:00 PM - Social hour

5:30 PM – Dinner – Grilled pork chops, green vegetables, macaroni & cheese, and dessert

7:00 PM – Fellowship



Sunday breakfast

8:30 AM – Yogurt, mandarin oranges, and coffee cake

Be sure to bring your own utensils, drinks and chairs.



Please help your hosts with food planning by letting them know how many will be attending. Also notify Bonnie Lewis with your campsite number.

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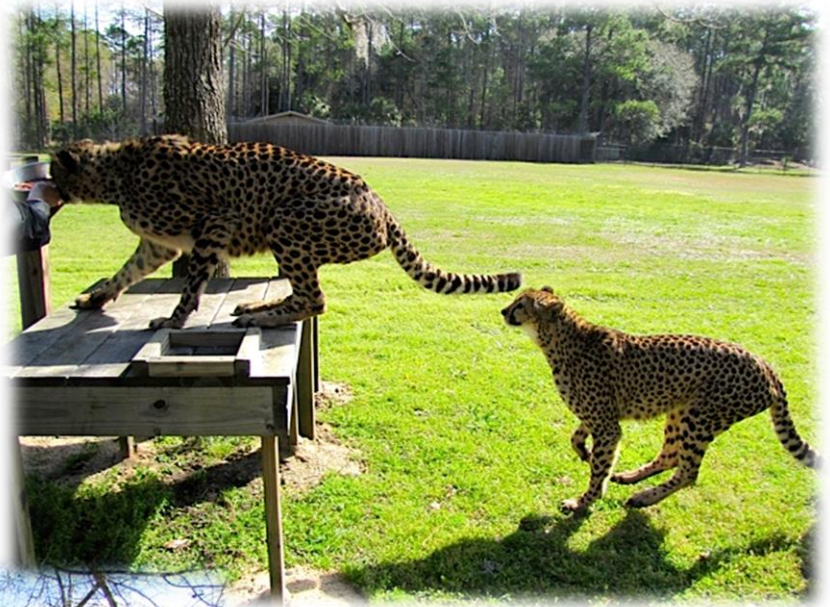


Hidden Gem of the Month

White Oak Conservation Holding

If you are like us and have always had an African Safari on your bucket list, you might love "Breakfast With the Beasts". Linda and I visited this White Oak Conservation program last month and had a roaring good time!

White Oak is near Yulee, FL, just North of Jacksonville, hidden deep in a wooded area off a well-traveled dirt road. It is a privately owned facility, accessible by reservation only. We fully expected a primitive camp with tents and campfires, but pleasantly encountered a upscale complex, a beautifully appointed facility used primarily for corporate events and programs. We were directed to a large circular event room helping ourselves to a lovely buffet breakfast, sharing with about 80 locals and tourists. After breakfast trams took us to get in place to view the cheetah run on a lure course, reaching speeds of almost 60 mph! There were five cheetahs (and a dog) with four events. Since they have never been in the wild, the cheetahs have been trained to chase a lightning fast dog toy. The cheetahs were so incredibly fast-almost invisible. After the run, the staff brought the cheetahs close to the fence so we could get an up close and personal view of these magnificent animals. We even got to pet them!



The tram then took us on a tour of the facility where we were given an up close look at endangered/threatened species of mammals and birds. White Oak is also an accomplished international breeding facility. The staff was knowledgeable and exceedingly accommodating.

All in all it was a wonderful experience very much worth the effort and cost and we didn't even have to lean Swahili!

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White Oaks offer various activities including in depth-tours bringing you face to face with the animals and people of White Oak's conservation programs. The tours are led by wildlife experts, who introduce guests to their conservation programs, facilities, and some of the 27 species, including rhino, giraffe, okapi and cheetah. Step on board our open-air tour vans or trolleys and experience White Oak with all your senses.

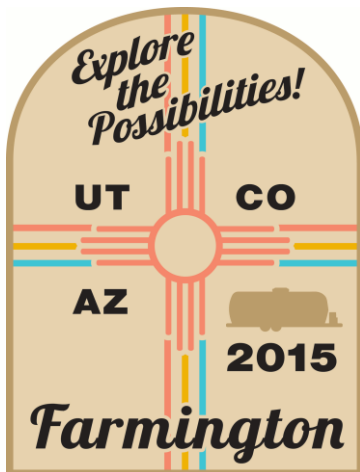
Schedule: Wednesday and Friday at 10:00am.
Must book at least two days in advance. Groups of 10 or more may schedule tours at different days and times.

<http://www.whiteoakwildlife.org/>

Attention Parents/Grandparents Summer Camps
<http://www.eventbrite.com/o/white-oak-conservation-7916632207?s=32694126>

Thanks to Bill & Linda Coleman for finding this month's Hidden GEM.

Photos and article by Bill Coleman



Wally Byam Caravan Club International, Inc.

58th International Convention/Rally

Farmington, New Mexico June 26 - July 4, 2015

Big Benders, make plans now if you plan to attend! Registration forms available at www.wbcci.org

Visit the Farmington [2015 Facebook Page](#) or farmington.wbcci.net for more photos and information

Join us for the Unit Caravan to South Georgia! May 17 - 24



Contact Bill Coleman (ourplantation@gmail.com)

Watch for a separate e-mail with all the details