

THE BIG BENDER

BIG BEND FLORIDA UNIT 153 REGION 3



Volume 40
Number 2
December 16, 2013

A Word (or two) from the President.....

December is flying by quickly and 2013 has been a successful and fun year of Airstreaming for the Big Bend Unit. It is always exciting looking forward to a new year and 2014 is no different.

On December 07 we had 27 Big Benders attend the Christmas dinner held in Marianna at Madison's Warehouse Restaurant. The Anderson's, Coleman's, Nancy Davis, the Daw's, Duncan's and Chris, the Hentz's, Montague's, Thompson's, Waymire's, Weilhammer's, Welch's, Woods and Derinda, and the Worthington's. The toys that our group brought to the function will be distributed to children in the Jackson County area through the Marine Corps League Toys for Tots program. Everyone brought a thoughtful gift that will genuinely be enjoyed by the children at Christmas and beyond. Thank You.

The rallies of 2014 are starting. January 17-20 starts the year with the Unrally Rally that will be held at Grayton Beach State Park. It will be quite a large group that will join together for the week-end.

February 14-16 Big Bend will meet for the Rally at St. George Island - Hosted by Martina, Jim and Kathrine. This is a buddy rally so bring friends. There is quite a bit to see in Apalachicola for those who want to leave the island. Apalachicola was once the third largest port in volume in the United States and the town still has many homes and historical sites dating back to the 1830's. Maps are available on line or at the Visitors Center located at 122 Commerce St. In addition the Dixie theater has two different plays scheduled for Saturday - Almost Maine @ 3 p.m. and Mrs. Mannerly @ 8 p.m. There is an art museum and a maritime museum along with the Orman house of 1838. Your golden age passport should get you into this house. The Raney house (1838) museum is owned by the Apalachicola Historical Society and can be toured Friday 1-4 and Saturday 9-5. There is no charge. Donations are welcomed but not requested. Apalachicola has a cemetery that dates back to 1831 and is always an interesting walk. If the town is not your hot topic another option is the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve. Apalachicola Bay at 246,000 acres is the 2nd largest research reserve system in the nation. A tour of the facility will enlighten you on the flora, fauna, fish and turtles of the area. Tours are held T-S 9 to 5. The phone is 850-670-7700.



2013-2014 Officers

President - Gary Anderson

1st Vice President - Jim Hentz

2nd Vice President - Bill Coleman

Treasurer - OPEN

Membership - Jim Weilhammer

Secretary/Webmaster - RoseMarie Anderson

Historian - Chris Duncan

Trustees - Martina Pelley, Chip Adams, Amy Waymire, Wally Welch

THE BIG BENDER

BIG BEND FLORIDA UNIT 153 REGION 3



March arrives and with it the annual **unit caravan**....Touring the Antebellum Trail. Jim and Pat have scouted the route and researched the area - it is going to be a great trip. Do not miss the Unit Caravan in March as well as the unit rally at Veterans State Park in Georgia. The New Year is almost here and the start of a year is always exciting, challenging and a fresh start. Let's get ready to see new areas, hook up the trailer and enjoy.



What is the January Unrally-Rally all about?

Jim Weilhammer answers: For the past three years, five families in our unit have camped along the "forgotten coast" of the Florida panhandle..... like all the snowbirds from the northern states and Canada.

This year the group voted to travel to Grayton Beach State Park. This no-host, unofficial rally has no sponsorship. Unlike the official February rally, I will not be promoting this rally in the media. Your friends who are not Big Bend Florida members, might wish to join us at the campground or in the cabins.

Big Benders will start arriving on Thursday evening; Katherine and I have reserved site 45 in the new section of the campground. This is a site with a nice cement patio and we will bring two gazebos. The new section has water, electric and sewer hookups. The older sites do not have sewer hookups. There is a large, well-kept building which has public restrooms and showers.

Friday evening

We would like to invite everyone to come to site #45 for an open grill. Please bring a dish to share and the meat and/or fish you wish to grill. Two families will be bringing grills and we may need two more portable grills. There is a picnic table at each campsite.

Saturday morning

Bring your breakfast meat and eggs to site 45 for another open grill. Bring a dish to share.

Sunday evening

Dinner at a restaurant in Seaside or Grayton Beach.



THE BIG BENDER

BIG BEND FLORIDA UNIT 153 REGION 3

Items to bring

Firewood for the fire pits at each site
A portable grill
Bikes
Surf fishing gear
Electric heaters for the interior of your camper
Chairs
Warm outdoor clothing



Activities

Biking is great here. There is a flat, paved, safe bike path from the campground to Seaside. Hiking is another feature at the campground. The beach attached to the park has been mentioned in travel media as one of the most beautiful in the world.

Surf fishing is just a short walk across the road from the campground. Shopping is available in Seaside, Watercolor and the nearby outlet mall. There is a Publix supermarket which is located a couple of blocks northeast of Seaside. Seaside was the location for the 1998 movie, *The Truman Show*, starring Jim Carrey, Laura Lindley, Ed Harris and Noah Emmerich. There are some fine restaurants close to the campground. We have stayed at the cabins at Grayton Beach State Park. Our cabins have had well equipped kitchens with dish washers. The cabins were clean and located within the pine forest in another section of the park.

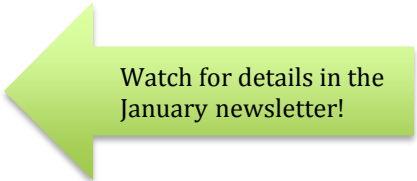
Weather

January temperatures on the coast are unpredictable, but we have had great weather the last three years. If it is too windy and cold, we may change the activities.

There is still time to sign up for the **Buddy Rally** February Rally at St. George Island

January 14 to 16

Hosted by: Martina Pelley, Katherine Kamiya and Jim Weilheimer



Watch for details in the
January newsletter!

Signed up yet for the Unit Caravan?

“ Following the Antebellum Trail Macon to Athens”

-Details on the last page-



Note to self: Email Rally Host AND Bonnie Lewis (jim-bonnielewis@cox.net) with campsite # after making reservation!

THE BIG BENDER

BIG BEND FLORIDA UNIT 153 REGION 3

Toys for Tots Christmas Party 2013 at Madison's Restaurant,



THE BIG BENDER

BIG BEND FLORIDA UNIT 153 REGION 3

Big Benders are on the MOVE! Check out the March activities

March Madness! Unit Rally at Georgia Veterans State Park March 21 - 23!

Bill Coleman has offered to organize a train ride on the SAM Shortline Excursion Train. Please phone (850-668-0113) or e-mail (ourplantation@gmail.com) Bill if interested. We might be able to get group rates if enough are interested.

Conductor's Favorite Train Ride <http://samshortline.com/event/197780?c=4580039&eventid=197780>

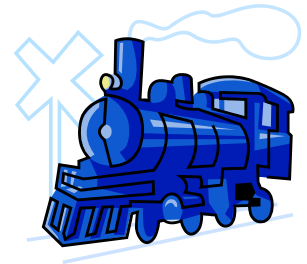
Saturday, Mar 22, 2014 9:45 AM to 1:45 PM

Seat Availability:

200 Coach seats, 48 Premium seats, 37 Sam Hawkins seats, 3 Wheelchair Spaces

Enjoy this ride from Ga. Veterans State Park to Plains. Plains is the small Georgia town made famous by President Jimmy Carter. You will return to Ga. Veterans Park in time for visiting the indoor and outdoor museums.

9:45 a.m. Depart Ga. Veterans State Park
10:40 a.m. Arrive Americus to pick up passengers
10:45 a.m. Depart Americus
11:15 a.m. Arrive Plains
(layover 1 hour)
12:15 p.m. Depart Plains
12:50 p.m. Depart Americus
1:45 p.m. Arrive Ga. Veterans State Park



Unit Caravan "Following the Antebellum Trail Macon to Athens".

The mini caravan scheduled for March 23 through March 29 is taking shape. We will spend two days at Macon, two days at Milledgeville, and two days at Madison.

At the conclusion of the Big Bend Rally at Georgia Veterans State Park on March 23, we will travel to Arrowhead Park at Lake Tobesofkee Recreation Area. Tobesofkee has two campgrounds so be sure and reserve a site in Arrowhead Park. They have 17 sites with water, electricity, and sewer at a cost of \$25. Water and electricity only is \$22. Macon has several antebellum homes most notably are the Hay House and the Cannonball House. Macon is proud to call itself home of Little Richard, Otis Redding, and the Allman Brothers. The Georgia Sports Hall of Fame is located in Macon.

On Tuesday, March 25, we will move to Milledgeville, the first capitol of Georgia. We will be camping at Little River Park, a little ways outside of Milledgeville. A "must do" is the trolley ride and guided tour that takes in the Old Capitol (1807), St Stephen's Episcopal Church (1841), Lockerly Hall (1839), and the Stetson-Sanford House (1825). The cost is \$10 per person and a private tour can be arranged for us if we have at least 14 desiring to take the tour. The Old Governor's Mansion (1839) is another "must see".

On Thursday, March 27, we will move to Madison. Our campsite will be Country Boys RV Park (Top of Georgia is having a rally this weekend at Country Boys). An "absolutely must do" is dinner at the Blue Willow Inn in Social Circle, Ga on Thursday night. A fabulous country buffet in an old turn of the century mansion. Three historic homes can be visited for the price of \$10; Heritage Hall, Rogers House, and Rose Cottage.

The caravan officially ends Saturday morning. Pat and I may proceed to Helen, Ga.

More Information to follow, e-mail Jim with burning questions. jdhentz@nettally.com