

Travels

is a publication of the Chinook Camping Club—
Western Region

February 2004

Volume 1, Issue 1



Death Valley Days Rally—April 29 to May 2, 2004

Sign Up - Please register for this Rally no later than **March 15th**, by sending a deposit check to the treasurer: Bert Wall, 1822 Cypress Greens Ave., Henderson, NV 89012. One coach, two people \$200 (dep. \$150); One coach, one person \$150 (dep. \$125); Sun. brunch per person, \$30. (no deposit). **Rally limit is 20 coaches...please hurry!**



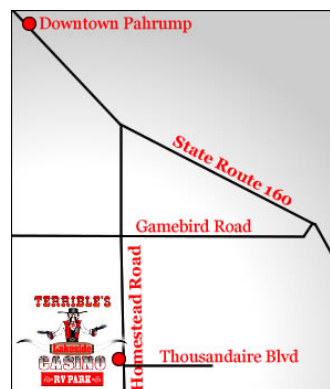
April 29, Thursday
Meet at the *Las Vegas Outlet Center* (formerly the Beltz Center) located on the corner of Las Vegas Blvd, and Warm Springs at **9:30 a.m.** (see map on page 5) A short meeting will be held to discuss the schedule for the weekend, and pass out ma-

terials and collect the balance of the rally fee, etc. (checks only please.)

Leave for **Pahrump** via Red Rock Canyon. We will tour the canyon on the Hwy 159 13-mile loop road after paying the \$5 fee at the gate. The loop is one-way, and paved with plenty of room for

our Chinooks. If there is interest after completing the loop we can stop at the visitor's center.

We then travel back on Highway 160 to Pahrump and **Terrible's Lakeside Resort and RV Park**. Arriving about noon our sites are grouped together around the Park's "Playland." Sites have full hook-ups and are steps away from the laundry (for full-timers). After lunch (not included) participants are free to explore the Pahrump area, visit the winery, play golf, or enjoy the amenities of the Resort. It is only one of four rated 10-10-10 in *Trailer Life* magazine in 2003 and featured in the March 2004 *Motorhome* magazine. *Check it out!*



(Cont'd Page 3)

Special Trips—Canada & Alaska

Last summer, Marion and Phil Beautrow from Santa Barbara took a 9,000 mile trip to Canada and Alaska in their '99 Con-

course. For those of you who have never traveled the “Alcan” it’s a lifetime adventure. A few tips: Buy “The Milepost” an inch-thick travel guide; put on some new tires, and a bug deflector; take your passport; plan



lots of time; get a Costco directory (they are everywhere).

Be prepared for spectacular scenery, wild animals of every kind, hundreds of miles of gravel roads, construction delays, and unlimited camping.

One of the highlights was the Kenai Fjords National Park all-day boat tour from Seward, AK.; wildlife viewing at its best.

The Cassiar Hwy is a

Duncan & Sally Fowler from Vashon, Is., WA ... also made the trip

So many trips over so many years -- north of the Arctic Circle, east to the Maritime Provinces, south to the border. It’s hard to pick a favorite, but one of our more frequently traveled routes, and definitely a great RV experience, is driving the Alcan – or Alaska Highway. Our first trip on the Alcan was in 1971 in a VW camper bus, and our most recent journey was this last June in our Chinook Con-

course. With each succeeding trip, we have marveled at the surface improvements and road straightening. It



used to be that you expected *at least* one flat tire, a few windshield chips and definitely a thick coating of mud,

130 mile “short-cut” from the Alcan back through BC...take it, and you will be in a time warp. See the bears in Hyder, AK

We marveled at the *huge* 5th wheels being towed by *tiny* pickup trucks. We called them “belugas” because they looked like gigantic whales.

Contrary to many stories, we didn’t get any damage to the RV. The trick was always drive according to road conditions and weather.

but not so this last time – we stayed intact and very comfortable in our little Chinook. One thing, however, that has not changed over the years is the wonderful scenery and the abundant wildlife, the sighting of which was enhanced by the long daylight hours around the summer solstice. This is definitely a trip we would recommend. Many people say they’d like to take this trip some day, but we say, “Don’t put it off – do it now (and later too)!”

“... definitely a great RV experience, is driving the Alcan-or Alaska Highway.”

Death Valley Days—Cont'd



Lakeside RV Park

Dinner is a pot luck in the “Playland” area so bring your favorite dish to share. Wine is provided.

April 30, Friday

This is an open day to do exploring, gambling, fishing, bingo or just to Chinnook with others.

May 1, Saturday

We leave for **Death Valley** about 10:00 a.m. Our trek of about 65 miles will take us to the **Furnace Creek Ranch Resort**. Since Death Valley is a National Park, everyone must register with the Park Rangers and pay the \$10 fee. (not included in the Rally fee) or bring your NP pass and get free admission! Our site for the night will be near the Ranger Station and Furnace Creek Resort. There

are many attractions to visit such as Dante’s view,



Dante’s View

Scotty’s Castle, Ubehebe Crater, etc. Be back by **5:30 p.m.** we will have a BBQ in the date grove under the stars. You will have a choice of three entrees each including salad, baked potato, baked beans, roll & butter, desert, and coffee or lemonade. We will have a membership meeting after dinner.

May 2, Sunday

This is the last day of the Rally, and you have two choices: get going early and visit more places in the Park, or sleep in and have Sunday Brunch at the **Furnace Creek Inn**. You make this choice after your reservation has been made.

The Indio Rally

The First Western Region “Mini-Rally” was a success. It took place in Indio from January 7th to the 11th. It was part of



the 16th annual FMCA Rally at the Riverside County Fairgrounds.

Charlotte and Bob Adler, Barbara and Ole Jensen, Lena (our VP – Membership) and Barry (your “Prez”) Prentice, Ray and Carol (our Secretary) Skillings, and John and Willie Turchan all met at



the rendezvous point at 8:30 on Wednesday morning. We

then caravanned to the entrance point for the Rally and were parked all together in a very convenient location. Shortly after, Kathy Bailey and Jan Olmstead joined us to complete “Chinook Row” as did Marta and Bert Wall (our treasurer).

Wednesday happened to be Carol Skillings’ Birthday,



so naturally we couldn’t let the day go by without celebrating with her. All fourteen of us went to a local restaurant for an impromptu party

(Cont’d Page 4)

The Indio Rally (Cont'd)

for Carol to wish her a "Happy 39th". Thursday, Friday and Saturday were spent chatting, attending some of the many seminars, watching the annual "parade" topped off by enjoying the evening

entertainment each night.

The event offered us all a chance to warm up (or even thaw out), chat with fellow Chinook owners (there were other Chinooks there

from as far away as Ontario, Canada!), learn from the many seminars and vendors and just plain relax. Everyone who attended thought the event was well worthwhile and are looking forward to

"Everyone who attended thought the event was well worthwhile and are looking forward to next year."



Front row from left: Charlotte Adler, Carol Skillings, Cathy Bailey, Barbara Jensen, Willie Turchan, John Turchan
 Back row from left: Bob Adler, Ray Skillings, Jan Olmsted, Ole Jensen, Lena Prentice, Barry Prentice

Annual Rally Planned

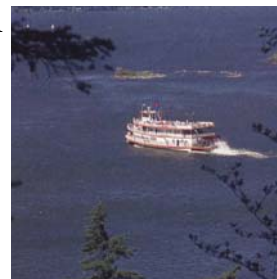
Please "pencil in" the **second weekend in September**. We are planning the annual Rally in Hood River County Oregon.

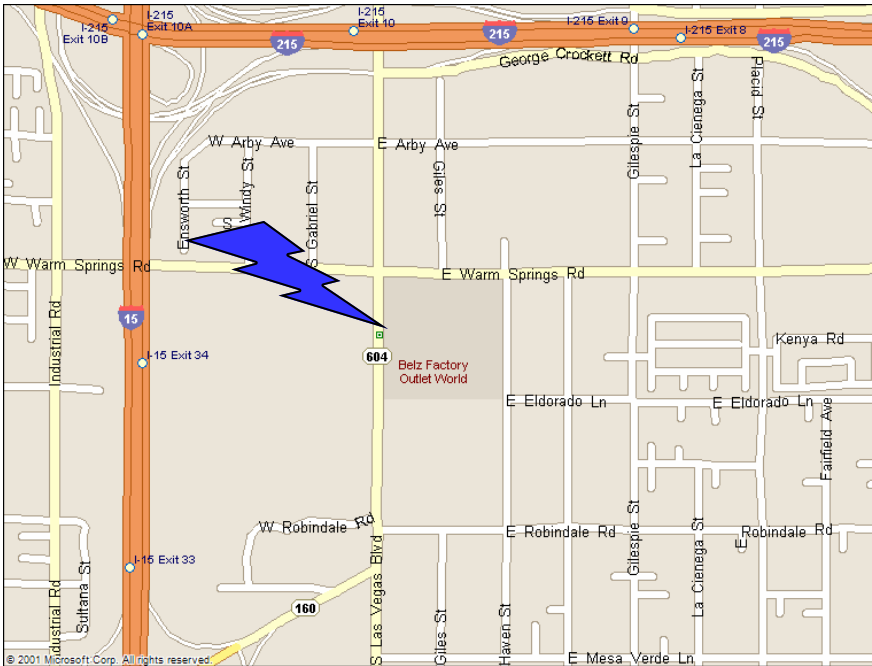
This is an area of the Columbia River gorge which separates Washington and Oregon.

Talk about scenic...wow. We plan to stay at the **Bridge RV Park and Campground** in WA just over the Hood River Bridge.

We hope to have a River-

boat Tour on a stern-wheeler and an excursion train on the Mt. Hood Railroad. But, ...stay tuned for further details.





We Need A Name

If you have any suggestions for the name of this newsletter, please send them to the editor. We have received several so far, but, would like to reserve judgment until the next issue is published in June.

On the Lookout

Your VP Rallies is on the lookout for interested members to form a Rally Committee in *your area* of the Western States to host a 2004 mid-summer Mini-Rally or a 2005 Rally. We all live in areas that have a unique and special beauty with new and exciting areas to explore. Coordinating a Rally isn't a tough job but you do need to be close enough to the area to research campsites, attractions and meals. It becomes even easier if there are 3 to 5 members working together. A terrific side benefit is getting to know each other a little better. Don't forget the local Chamber of Commerce! They know the area, have great tips and are always willing to help. And, you already have a great resource in those that have put on a Rally before you. During our membership we should each anticipate taking an active part in the coordination of at least one Rally. Please think this over and let me know your thoughts. I look forward to hearing from you soon! You can contact me, Carole "CB" Davis at home, 541-549-2033, at work 541-549-6000 or by email at cb@reedbros.com. Thanks!

TLC We have suggested to your Newsletter Editor, Phil Beautrow, that he set aside a page in each issue for topics of a more technical nature, designed to interest those "techies" among us who might be more into the mechanics (inner workings) of our Chinooks. I have given this column an acronym for a name so that each of you can name it as you wish. Some suggestions might be, "Travelers Love Chinooks", or "Techies Love this Column", or the familiar, "Tender Loving Care" for your Chinook.

Whatever you would like to call this column, John Turchan has agreed to be the editor, and I know that he has some topics already in mind for future issues, but I thought I'd "exploit my position" as Club President and sponsor of the Indio "Rally Within A Rally", to begin this column by expounding on a topic which should be of interest to all motor coach owners since it intimately involves your safety on the road.

Weight and Balance and How They Effect Tire Safety and Performance

As many of our readers know, our Chinook Glacier is the third motor coach that Lena and I have owned, and we never hesitate to tell everyone that we like it the most! As long-time members of the Family Motor Coach Association, we have attended several of their Regional (like the Western Region Rally in Indio in January) and National Rallies. At these rallies I have attended the Tire Safety and Performance seminars presented by the Recreational Vehicle Safety Foundation. Their experts in this field always put on a very interesting and informative seminar, and at the end of each rally, they set up an arrangement of individual scales upon which they then can weigh each of the wheels on your coach *separately* in order to provide you with accurate information on the loading that you are placing on each of your tires.

Now, if you haven't attended one of these seminars, your next question is bound to be, "why should I care about this much detail, especially if my coach builder has put it on a chassis that is rated to carry the weight?" The short answer is that what *you* do with the coach *after* you bought it probably has more to do with your tire performance and safety than anything that the manufacturer did during design or production. You see, statistics show that time and again the vast majority of tire failures (especially the dramatic ones, like blowouts) are caused by tires overheating because they are either overloaded or under inflated, or both.

Unfortunately, there isn't enough space here for us to get into this subject in the detail which it deserves, however there are a few elementary steps that each motor home owner can take to enhance both the safety and performance of your tires. Here are my suggestions "for starters":

1. Look up your vehicle's GVWR – Gross Vehicle

Weight Rating – it's on a placard inside the coach (in our Glacier, it's inside the wardrobe closet), and it may also be on the frame of the driver's door. At the same time, also find the GAWR for each axle (yes, you guessed it, it's the Gross Axle Weight Rating, and it was on the sticker on the driver's door frame).

2. Next, look on the sidewall of your tires and write down their load carrying capacity. Presumably, if the tires are a matched set, then you only have to look on one of them to get this information.

3. Now, with your coach *fully loaded* as you would for a trip (full fuel, propane and fresh water tanks), drive it to a local truck scale and weight it **AXLE BY AXLE**. The weigh master at the scale should be able help you position it so that you get *individual axle weights*. In fact, the ultimate situation is if you can actually weigh *each wheel* so that you get individual wheel weights! If the scale platform is flush with the ground and if there is maneuvering room around the sides of the scale, you may be able to move your coach into four separate spots to enable you to get these four weights individually.

4. With your weight information, first add all the weights to make sure that you are not exceeding your Gross Vehicle Weight Rating. It's not good if you exceed this rating, for obvious reasons. If you do, then you need to look at removing some of your less essential "stuff" to get your total weight under your GVWR.

5. Next, look at your axle weights in comparison to the GAWR's for front and back, and again, if you exceed either one by very much, then you need to look at shedding some more "less essential stuff".

6. Now, if you were able to get the loads on the individual wheels, then compare them to the load carrying capacity of your tires. If you could only get axle weights, then approximate your wheel loads by dividing your axle weights in half and compare to

the load carrying capacity of your tires. In either case, if you are too heavy on any of your tires, then you should look at shedding load from over that tire.

Finally, if you don't already have one, go to a tire store that carries the brand and type of tire on your coach and get a set of inflation tables for your tires. Using the inflation tables, look up the load on each tire in the table and make sure that your tire is inflated to that pressure when the tire is cold (before you take off for the day). Incidentally, our coach came from the Chinook factory with a Ford sticker on the driver's door frame that gave the GVWR, the GAWR for each axle, the tire size and even the correct inflation pressure for the front tires and the rear dual tires. (By the way, the inflation pressure is different for the same load weight depending upon whether it is a single tire or one of a dual pair.)

After reading all this, one might be tempted to ask, "why should I go to all this trouble?" Well, there are many very good reasons in addition the obvious one of trying to avoid a blowout caused by under inflation or overloading.

If your tires are over inflated, that's not good either, because it leads to abnormal wear in the center of the tire tread resulting in your premature "investment" in a new set of tires. Besides it may also produce an unnecessarily harsh ride. On the other hand, if your tires are under inflated for the loads on them, then the opposite will occur, they will wear excessively on the outsides of the tread, again causing an earlier than desired trip to the tire store for a new set.

To conclude, way too many coaches are running down the road every day overloaded, because their owners never took the time to weight them after they had stuffed them with everything under the sun in preparation for their trip ("just in case we need it while we're on the road") and/or with under

inflated tires (because, after all, lower tire pressure gives us a softer ride, or who wants to get out in the rain to check the tire pressure anyway, we checked it last summer).

We urge every Chinook owner to take in a national or regional FMCA or Good Sam rally soon and attend the RVSF seminar on Tire Safety, then after the rally get your coach weighed "on all fours" by them so that you can be a safe, smart Chinook owner who gets many, many safe and pleasure filled miles from your tires.



is a publication of the Chinook Camping Club—Western Region

Club Officers –2004

- Barry Prentice, President
- Carol Skillings, Secretary
- Bert Wall, Treasurer
- Carole “CB” Davis, VP Rallies
- Lena Prentice, VP Membership
- Al Enriques, Member at large

For those with internet access the newsletter is posted on the site shown above. This will save the Club a considerable sum for publishing and postage. For those without internet access, we can mail you a black-and-white printed copy upon request to the editor:

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Santa Barbara, CA, 93108 –1729
(kg6kb1@verizon.net)

Thanks to those who have contributed photos and experiences. The next issue will be posted in June so please send me any articles/photos ASAP.

The Picture Gallery

These pictures were contributed by our members:



Rainbow in the Yukon - *Fowler*



Yakima Lineup - *Scheese*



Sikhs in Prince George, BC -
Beautrow



Weighing in – *Prentice*

