

Western Road Runner



Is a publication of the Chinook RV Club



June 2005

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To the members

- Thanks for your support and attendance at the Rallies
- Please contribute articles and photos to this Newsletter. Send or E-mail them to the Editor, Phil Beautrow. His address is on the last page.

Spring in the Desert

A trip to Pahrump

Once again this year Chinook Owners from "all around" gathered on the shores of the beautiful lake at the most "Terrible" RV Park in Pahrump, Nevada for yet another occasion for relaxation and camaraderie.

This year, Bert Wall, our "inside man" for the Las Vegas area made our reservations a month earlier than last. This master stroke of planning resulted in our enjoying very temperate weather – around the mid-sixties during the day, as I recall. This year, our temperatures were much lower than last year when temperatures in early May topped 100 degrees in Death Valley, and all participants expressed their appreciation. This year veteran, now "two-timers", Jerry and Jane Earley, Ole and Barbara Jensen, Barry and Lena Prentice, Barbara Todd and Bert and Marta Wall came back for a second visit. Joining them for their first Pahrump Rally were Ray and Linda Blackburn, Barbara Brown, Margaret Fisher, Bill and Dolores Graham, Bob and Cris Lee, John and Pam Sebastian and Jim and Janice Still, for another even dozen Chinook coaches.

Some of us came a day early, and most of us ventured into Death Valley to view the wildflowers, said to be the best in over fifty years because of the unusual rains that the area had experienced earlier in the winter. In fact, there had been so much rain this winter, that there was a shallow lake covering the lowest parts of the Valley extending for five miles. Since it was reported to be no more than a couple of feet deep, we dubbed it "Lake Knee-deep". Supposedly canoers and kayakers were told that if they accidentally tipped over, they could simply *walk* back to shore.

Some of us visited Death Valley on Thursday while others made the 200 mile round trip on Friday. The only drawback to making the trip to see the wildflowers and lake was that the main road into Death Valley from the east (our usual approach) was washed out, so we had to take an alternate route into the Valley from the South. On Friday evening we enjoyed our usual Potluck Dinner characterized by great variety and copious quantity.

After dinner Barbara Jensen and Jane Early, our hard-working hosts for



this “not-to-miss” event. They have really worked very hard to line up an awesome schedule of sightseeing and other social activities. In fact, many of us are going to show up a day early to take part in the Early-bird schedule. We can hardly wait!

On Saturday, we took our time packing up and then headed off in different looking forward to next year when we once again have reservations for March 30th to April 2nd at that “Terrible” place again. We hope to see you there!



The Beach, Right behind Our Sites at Terrible's Lakeside RV Resort in Pahrump



A Carpet of Wildflowers Only Seen Very Infrequently – Once Every Fifty Years Or So



The Beach Scene at the Lowest, Hottest Place in the United States



Great Conversation and Great Food at the Potluck



Second Annual Rally in Chula Vista brought us up to date on their planning for this “not-to-miss” event. They have really worked very hard to line up an awesome schedule of sightseeing and other social activities. In fact, many of us are going to show up a day early to take part in the Early-bird schedule. We can hardly wait!

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A Sampling of the Chinook Coaches Gathered on the Sunny Shores of Terrible’s Lakeside RV Resort





Are You Interested in Joining a Club-Sponsored Trip to Alaska Next Summer?

A few members of the Club have "floated" the idea of a Club-sponsored trip up the Alcan Highway to Alaska next summer (2006). We are aware of a few Members who have already made the trip, and we're hoping to enlist their experience and expertise in helping to plan such a trip.

We envision that the trip would probably take at least six weeks, depending upon how the travelers elect to return to the "lower 48" – by the Alcan Highway, again, or by the Alaska and British Columbia Ferries.

How we would plan and format the itinerary will depend a whole lot on how many coaches will be going. So we need your input and expressions of interest.

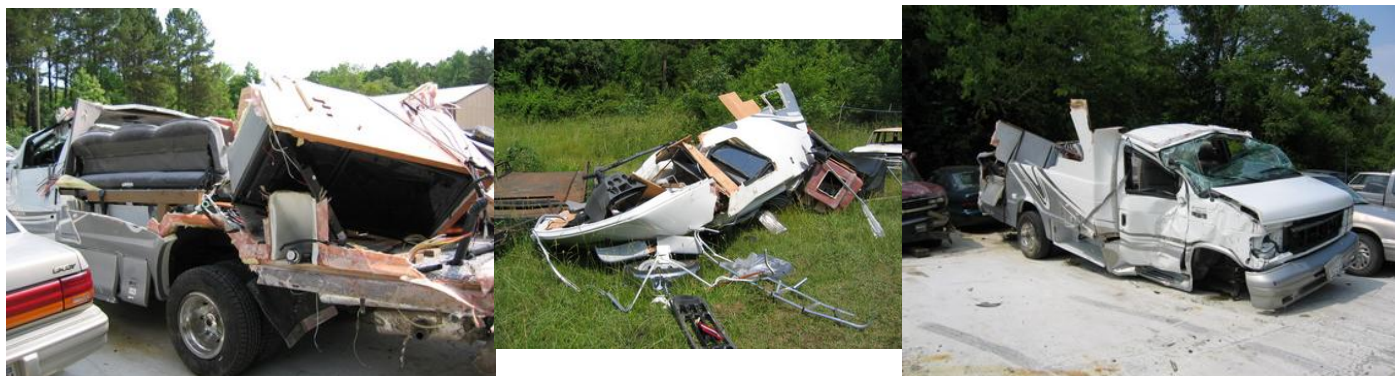
Please e-mail your comments and commitments, including any offers to help with the planning and execution, to our illustrious Newsletter Editor, Mr. Phil Beautrow at kg6kb1@verizon.net or write him at 120 Cedar Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93108.

Chinook RV Forum available

If you would like to chat with others and review issues, check out photos, etc. Yahoo has a forum set up specifically for Chinook owners. Go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/> A page comes up: Under "Find a group" type in: "Chinookrvs" and click. A new screen comes up with group "Chinookrvs" listed. Click on that and it should take you there . to a place where you can join the group. Since this is a "members" group you will have to give a name and set up a password. But it will be worth it.

Spectacular Chinook Crash

This is from Bob Nestor driving a 2005 Concourse in his own words: "Test" was conducted by a trucker driving a Kenworth who fell asleep while attempting to get home for the long weekend. He impacted the left rear of my Chinook at much higher speed than me - I was driving the posted limit at the time. The impact put me in to a skid to the left while lifting the rear of the Chinook and placing severe strain on the right front wheel. At some point the right front wheel sheared off and I believe it exited the scene traveling beneath the RV but followed me and the RV to our final resting spot.> Correcting for the skid and missing a right front wheel committed me and the RV to the ditch on the right side of the Interstate. When we arrived there the right front end impacted the shoulder of the frontage road causing the RV to flip over the frontage road and land on its back on the far side. Witnesses say at that point we (me and the RV) did five or six barrel rolls finally coming to a rest on the left side of the vehicle. I managed to undo my seat belt and had to kick out what passed for a windshield so I could squeeze out of the wreckage. The only injuries I received were minor cuts on my arms and scalp which I got while squeezing out past the windshield. According to the State Troopers who were on the scene they believe I set a new record in Arkansas for longest jump by an RV - 23feet." The first comment the insurance investigator made when he saw the remains at the impound lot was, "the construction of this RV saved your life, if you decide to get a replacement you'd be stupid not to get another Chinook."



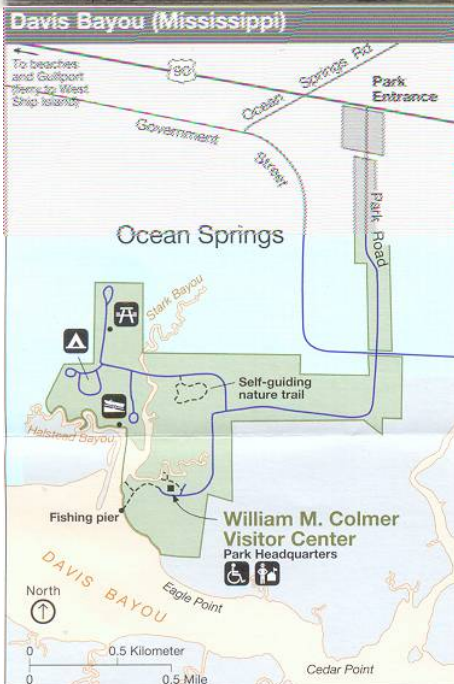
Special Places

By Marion & Phil Beautrow

We have traveled all over the USA, first in our 1989 (*18 Plus*) Chinook, and then in the present 1999 Concourse Model. Here are a few of the "special places" that we thought you might like to visit.

We just returned from an extended trip to Mississippi. **Gulf Islands National Sea-**

Gulf Islands



shore is a wonderful destination located in Ocean Springs, MS near Biloxi. There are signs on I-10 and Hwy 90 that lead to the Park entrance.

Davis Bayou is a unit of the National Seashore and has a great, spacious RV Park. If you have the *Golden Age Passport* the fee is only \$8 per night. There is water/ electricity for all 51 sites, and a fixed dump station. No reservations required: first-come, first-serve basis. We stayed there four nights. There are birds of every shape, size and color, alligators and fire flies! You can do all the walking your legs can stand. Or, just sit, play cards and enjoy the outdoors. There were a few bothersome gnats, but the mosquitoes weren't very active in May.

You may not be familiar with this place, **Grand Gulf Military Monument** but it played a critical part in the civil war. It is located on the Mississippi River, just west of Port Gibson. It has two RV areas with 42 full hook-up sites. There are all sorts of historical attractions on the 400 acre site.

This is also your stepping stone to **Vicksburg National Military Park**. Here you will see monuments of this famous 46 day siege that resulted in the July 4, 1863 Union Victory. We had no trouble doing the driving tour with our Chinook. An outstanding exhibit is the U.S.S. Cairo. This is a sunken Union ironclad that was raised from the river and restored.

The 440 mile **Natchez Trace Parkway** runs from Natchez MS to Nashville TN. You will love driving your Chinook on an excellent, truck-free, scenic Parkway. We won't go into more details, but if you are in western MS it's very worthwhile.

One of our vacation rules has been to stay off the interstates *when possible*. Of course it is slower, but it mostly avoids the speeding, tail-gating bandit truckers.

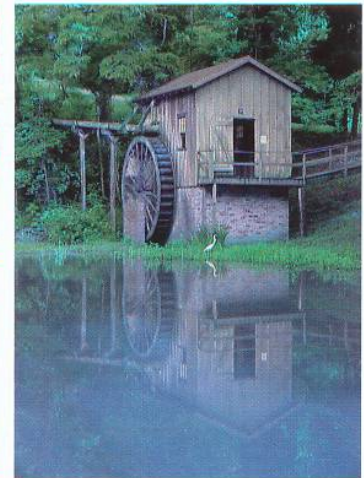
So give MS a try if you are in that part of the country and use country roads when possible.

GRAND GULF Military Monument

Port Gibson, Mississippi



*Open 7 days a week
8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
(except major holidays)*



www.grandgulfpark.state.ms.us





Technical Tips

Hosted by John Turchan

As a continuation of my previous columns I would like to share some suggestions for better maintenance of your Chinook:

Water Heater Maintenance

There are several things that you can do to make the water heater perform better and prolong its life. The foremost is replacing the anode when it is half gone. This is a magnesium or aluminum rod that purposely deteriorates or “sacrifices” itself to protect the tank from rusting out from water that contains high levels of iron, sulfates and other undesirable minerals. A new one will cost no more than \$10.

Turn off your water pump. When you remove the rod, it will drain the water tank, so you should either have a 1" pipe plug (or old anode) to put in the hole temporarily, or just let the water drain out of the system. You will need an 1 1/16" (or 27mm)



socket, an extension and a ratchet. A crescent wrench will not fit in the space. This is an odd-sized socket so you will probably have to borrow one from a friend!

Remove the heater cover by pulling out and twisting the plastic tab in the upper center of the cover. Next, spray WD-40 all over the rod head and remove the anode with the socket wrench. It will probably be rusty so be careful. If the rod is half eaten away as shown in the picture, it needs to be replaced.

If the old rod is serviceable, clean the threads with steel wool and wrap them with white plumbers tape several times. (Also, use tape when installing a new rod.) Carefully insert the rod in place, tilting it up slightly and *hand tighten*. Then use the socket



and tighten firmly. Put water in the tank and turn on the water pump or pressurize with a hose. Check for leaks.



Old rod removed



Half gone and must be replaced



Rod removed for inspection and the re-installed

See that the burner is clean and free of foreign material. Look at the pressure relief valve at the top of the heater. If it is corroded you might give the spring-loaded lever a few flips and drain some water out. Now replace the cover.

That's about all the maintenance you will need for the heater.

Strange Warning Lights!

This is an experience Marion & Phil Beautrow had while driving in Texas last month.

You are driving blissfully along when all of a sudden the bright red **ABS** warning light on the instrument cluster illuminates. To make matters more confusing, the warning light for **BRAKE** along side of it also comes on. You check the parking brake. It is off. So, you have to refresh your memory: ABS means the Anti-lock Brake System. You try the brakes, they seem to work ok. At the first opportunity you stop and read the Owners Guide, and you find this:

"With the ABS light on, the anti-lock brake system is disabled and normal braking is still effective unless the brake warning light also remains illuminated with the parking brake released. (If your brake warning lamp illuminates, have your vehicle serviced immediately.)"

This is really scary. We drive into a Ford dealership in a small town. The service manager is very helpful and comes out with a small computer which he plugs into the data



port under the dash. Yep, it's just as he suspected, a common problem. The computer code says that the Rear Axle Speed Sensor has failed. But, he tells you normal braking is not affected. This is not what the book says.

However, they don't work on RVs so you have to go to a RV repair shop. We argue that this is a Ford chassis but with no avail. We check the San Antonio yellow pages and call all the Ford dealers including one that specializes only in light and heavy duty trucks but they say the same thing: "You have to go to an RV dealer for service."

We find a dealer in New Braunfels TX...(ironically the same place that we bought the Chinook several years ago.) He says no problem. He keeps the part in stock because it has to be replaced so often. We bring it in the next day, and for \$85, the lights go out. It is a half-hour job. So hope you don't have a similar experience. Here is a picture of that small troublesome part.



Please send any tips you may have for future columns to: wilnjon@bctonline.com or phone me at (503) 632-1936.

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Barry Prentice, President
Carol Skillings, Secretary
Bert Wall, Treasurer
Carole "CB" Davis, VP Rallys
Lena Prentice, VP Membership
Al Enriques, Member at Large

For those with internet access the newsletter is posted on the site shown below. 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 (the old ink slinger):

[Phil Beautrow](#)

[120 Cedar Lane,
Santa Barbara, CA, 93108 -1729](#)

Thanks to those who have contributed photos and experiences in the past. Please send me articles and photos for consideration in future issues.



We're on the Web:

[http://chinookrv.com/
camp_west_news.html](http://chinookrv.com/camp_west_news.html)

