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THIS IS A SAMPLE OF THE NKK FULLTIMERS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



The *Traveling Times* is the official newsletter of the Fulltimers Chapter and is published quarterly in two versions—a colorful PDF and a black and white hard copy. Chapter members have their choice of delivery method. Many receive it as a PDF attached to a personal e-mail message. Or they download the PDF from the FILES SECTION of the FULLTIMERS YAHOO GROUP FORUM. Some receive it via the US Postal System. Needless to say, the vast majority of our members prefer the PDF-version.

The table of contents on the left is representative of the regular articles, reports and items of interest found in the *Traveling Times*.

REPORTS FROM THE FULLTIMERS CHAPTER OFFICERS tell about the "who, what, where and when" of events past and future, and report on the business conducted on behalf of the chapter. Additionally, the Minutes of the Annual Fulltimers Chapter meeting and the Annual Financial Report are published in the issue following the Newmar International Rally.

RALLY INFORMATION FLYERS AND REGISTRATION AND DISCLAIMER FORMS of scheduled rallies are published as soon as the registration period opens.

NEWS ABOUT OUR MEMBERS extends congratulations on member's successes; announces members' major life changes, illnesses or deaths; shares personal joys and experiences; and gives new chapter members a chance to introduce themselves with a short bio.

IN OUR REAR VIEW MIRROR accords members the opportunity to write about a favorite campground or tourist site they have visited.

TIPS AND TIDBITS is a myriad of suggestions, innovative ideas, lessons-learned, unique approaches to a situation, solutions to problems, websites that give good information or a useful product, and extraordinary road conditions or routes to avoid.

FULL LENGTH FEATURE ARTICLES pertinent to RV traveling and our lifestyle are always in demand and our chapter members are very good at contributing valuable news and insightful information.

To give you an example of the quality of reports and articles found in every *Traveling Times*, the following pages are extracts from recent editions. If you like what you have read and want to be a Chapter member, just click on [Membership Application Form](#) to join us!

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACT DATA UP-TO-DATE?

If you answered "I DON'T KNOW" or "No" please get in touch with the Fulltimers Chapter Secretary:

John and Nancy Kelker
 jjnjkelker@compuserve.com
 1327 E Washington Ave, PMB 292
 Harlingen, TX 78550-5684

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER!

IT WILL ONLY BE "NEWSY" AND INTERESTING IF YOU CONTRIBUTE.

Next edition will be for:
 Month / Month Year

Dead line is: Month Day, Year

Send articles to:
 Barbara Nuehring
 TTEditors@TheDreamHunters.net
 or call 520-405-3325 to get a current local mailing address.

President's Message



GOALS FOR OUR CHAPTER

By: Randall and Viki Goodner

Last March we agreed to let Bob and Bonnie present our names for nomination as Chapter President. Since that time, we have been working hard to have several new approaches ready to present at our Annual Meeting. While this was, admittedly, a bit presumptuous, we didn't want to waste any time in putting our ideas into place. We wish we could meet with each of you personally to present this information, but that is simply not possible. Therefore, we'll do our best to present them here in an abbreviated form. There are several articles within this issue which address the things we are trying to accomplish for our chapter. Please make every effort to read them all.

FULLTIMERS CHAPTER GOALS

Naturally, our primary goal is to ensure the Fulltimers Chapter remains a vibrant, healthy organization and one in which members will eagerly want to participate in our activities.

In order to accomplish this, we have developed seven goals for the Fulltimers Chapter in 2009-2010:

1) Gain an understanding of our members' desires for the chapter and for chapter rallies.

This starts with members participating in the NKK Fulltimers Chapter Rally Survey that is on page 19. Please fill out the survey then mail/e-mail it back to us as soon as possible. Our addresses are on page 2. We will publish the results and conclusions in an upcoming issue and will take our direction from your responses. Of course, please feel free to contact us by e-mail or phone at any time and share your thoughts, suggestions and comments. We eagerly seek your insights and ideas.

2) Ensure that the *Traveling Times* remains a resource of relevant and valuable information.

The newsletter is a valuable resource for sharing information and generating enthusiasm for the chapter and its activities. As it states in every issue, "This is your newsletter." You are a critical part of making this chapter and this newsletter successful and enjoyable. We welcome your articles.

3) Increase chapter membership.

Attrition, for whatever reason, is an inescapable reality. The two of us have been kicking around ideas for attracting new members to our chapter and keeping the ones we already have. We welcome any ideas you may have. Give it some thought, and let us know what you come up with.

4) Hold regular, fun-filled rallies that are accessible and affordable.

We will make every attempt to create two rallies in *each area, each year*. For those unfamiliar with the areas, they are western, central, and eastern. Again, we'll use your survey responses to guide us. Our hope is to schedule them in places and at times that will make attendance accessible for the majority of fulltimers.

5) Experiment with different types of rallies.

From our experience, people still enjoy our traditional rallies. A well planned rally with the ability to meet old friends and make new ones are still thrilling and joyful experiences. But it is time to try some new approaches. Read all about them on page 17.

6) Schedule and publish rallies at least one year in advance.

By doing so, members will be able to include them as part of their travel plans.

7) Help Fulltimers Chapter members plan and implement quality rallies.

During the past year, there seems to be a reluctance for members to take a role in hosting or co-hosting a rally. Our goal is to work with members and provide tools, Ready-to-Go Rallies, and assistance so that they can feel comfortable and confident about hosting a successful rally. Again, the chapter needs YOU, not someone else. You can do this, and we will help you. Besides, it will be fun!

CONCLUSION

Certainly, accomplishing these goals is not a one-time event. It will require consistent, on-going efforts and flexibility as circumstances and preferences change with time. Most important, it will require *active participation* by our members.

We hope you will take the time to contact Bob and Bonnie Schruise <schruise@juno.com> and thank them for the outstanding job that they've done for this chapter over the past four years.

Please know that we are very excited to be serving in this position! With your assistance, we will do our very best to continue the wonderful traditions of this chapter—**FUN & FRIENDSHIP. TT**



Bonnie and Bob Schruise,
President 2006-2009

*Farewell, but not Good-bye!
Many, many thanks
to our outgoing Board Members.
The work that you did on behalf of our
Chapter will long be remembered.*



Kim and Dale Wilson,
Treasurer 2007-2009

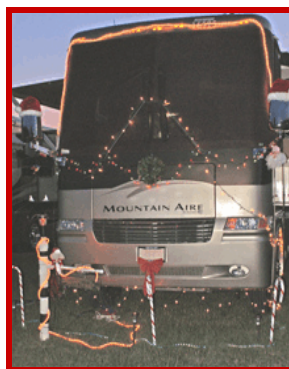
Bill and Hillary Bennett, Vice President 2006-2009
Carole and Dick Cole, Yahoo Group Moderator 2000-2009
Jerry and Jane Hirschman, Eastern Area Coordinator 2007-2009
Bill and Barbara Dippel, *Traveling Times* Editor 2008-2009

MEMORIES OF *Christmas in July*—FULLTIMERS ANNUAL RALLY 2009

Photographs by Dick Rogers



Annual Business Meeting



There's no place like
home for the Holidays!



Christmas Dinner
with the Family



Christmas Cookie Decorating



Reminder:



The *Colorful Fall Rally in Salt Lake City* registration deadline is September 15th
Rally details can be found at <<http://pdfs.newmarkcountryklub.org/SLC09F.pdf>>
Registration Form can be downloaded from <<http://pdfs.newmarkcountryklub.org/SLC09.pdf>>
Both are also found on the Files Section of the Fulltimers Chapter Yahoo Group
or by request to Lee and Barbara Nuehring at <RVers@TheDreamHunters.net>.

Yahoo Moderator's Postings



REACH OUT AND TOUCH EVERYONE

By: Dick Rogers

It is a privilege to “moderate” the Newmar Fulltimers Chapter Forum on Yahoo. It is a responsibility that I do not take lightly. My job is to make sure that our forum is a functional, secure communications tool beneficial to our chapter. Communication is the mission that I see for our Fulltimers Chapter Forum.

The forum's membership is increasing! We have grown from reaching less than 30 percent of our members to connecting with more than 70 percent of our chapter members through this medium. If you have a computer or laptop; read and send e-mails to your family and friends; use the web to stay informed about what is going on in the world or to advance your knowledge about subjects that interest you; and you are not subscribed to the Fulltimers Yahoo Forum—you are missing a great opportunity for “reaching out” and staying in touch with fellow Fulltimers Chapter members. The forum is the fastest means of communication we have available to our chapter members who are spread out across the United States and Canada and even down into Mexico.

All messages dealing with the full-time RV lifestyle are encouraged. Messages considered not appropriate for the Fulltimers Yahoo Forum are: forwarded e-mails; political messages; religious e-mails; jokes; and chain letters. We all get enough Spam sent to us directly. As a courtesy to our members who use Pocketmail or slower connections, and for security, attached files are not permitted.

The Fulltimers Yahoo Forum has two levels of participation. Only you can decide which level best fits your social networking needs:

LEVEL 1 are those members who only want the capability to send and receive e-mails through our Fulltimers Chapter Forum. These members do not need a Yahoo user name and password (Yahoo calls it a Yahoo ID) to receive e-mail messages from other chapter members via their e-mail program.

LEVEL 2 are those members who have a Yahoo ID. Not only can they send and receive e-mails through our Fulltimers Chapter Forum via their e-mail program, but they have access to the forum via the Yahoo Group Website and all the wonderful online features that the Fulltimers Chapter Forum has to offer. Check them out:

- ✓ The **MESSAGE SECTION** contains postings as of five minutes ago and going back to the year 2000 which are searchable by date, author, subject or keyword.
- ✓ The **FILES SECTION** has many items of interest: rally information and registration forms; current and past issues of the *Traveling Times* newsletter; a very informative Rally Resource section; the Fulltimers Chapter Bylaws; and the chapter logo-products order form.
- ✓ The **PHOTO SECTION** is where our chapter members can share, upload and download pictures.
- ✓ A **DATABASE** is available for our members to post their location as they live and move around the country.

Our Fulltimers Chapter Forum is a private—**CHAPTER MEMBERS ONLY**—site. This means anything you read or post on the forum is only available to our Fulltimer Chapter Members. Additionally, no one can view members' names or e-mail addresses. Your security and privacy are high priorities to me.

Recently every member of the Fulltimers Chapter with a current e-mail address, that was not already a member of the Forum, was sent an invitation to join. Many of you did. You'll be glad you did.

If you were traveling or offline for some reason, and your invitation was lost or expired before you had a chance to join, please drop me a note at <dickrogers@escapees.com> and I will send you another invitation. Remember our group is a closed group. You cannot search Yahoo and find it as it was created years ago as an unpublished/private group. **TT**



SOUTH OF THE BORDER: DOWN MEXICO WAY

By: Don and Donna Beck

WHY GO?

There are several easy answers to that question: to see a country which has stunningly beautiful places just as in our United States; to experience the colorful culture of Mexico which is rich with history; to get to know the people who are warm and friendly; and to enjoy a great temperate winter climate. Plus the cost of living is much less than in the United States.

Visiting Mexico in your RV can be a fun, exciting and rewarding experience. So you've read all those scary stories about the drug wars and murders, making you question whether you should go. Well, life is full of risks. As fulltimers there are risks in traveling anywhere, so we just use the same cautions in Mexico that we use in the United States or Canada. If it doesn't feel right, we don't stay. We don't frequent border towns or night clubs where much of the violence occurs. We don't take illegal drugs or associate knowingly with others who do. What we do is strive to remove ourselves from as many of the trouble spots as possible. It is that simple.

We are currently on our third trip into Mexico, but the first by ourselves. Our first two trips were with groups, once as part a Newmar Kountry Klub Special Event and once with the Escapees "Mexican Connection" chapter. Traveling with a group can improve your sense of security when charting new territory. On both of our prior trips we went for a week and stayed for a month. This trip we are staying for the winter.

GETTING READY

Once you decide you want to go, what do you do first? Well, make sure you and your rig are up to the trip. First of all, if your rig runs on diesel and was first sold as a 2008 or later model, you may require low sulphur diesel. This is a problem to find in Mexico (although we are told it is beginning to show up). In this case you will want to limit the length of your trip so that you can make a round trip without needing a fill-up. This could be up to 400 miles or more in-country and then return depending on the size of your fuel tank and mileage. (In a pinch we have been told that you could run up to a half a tank of the regular diesel without doing damage. Research that! You are the only one who can decide if that is an option for you.) Your vehicle should be serviced and in top condition. Don't forget your tires! The time to replace anything that might need it is before you leave—not trying to find a service place on the road.

Passports or passport cards are required in all instances now. Be sure yours is valid for six months or longer beyond the date you plan to return. Other than short jaunts across the border for 72 hours or less, you need a tourist visa which is good for six months. These are easy to obtain at most border crossings for a little over \$10 each. It must be returned when you leave Mexico.

Except for a portion of Baja and the state of Sonora, you will need a car permit to ensure you will bring your car back out and not sell it in Mexico—avoiding the tax man. Motorhome permits are for ten years, so no need to renew for a long time. Car permits are good for six months. The car permit must be returned when you leave Mexico. The permit (hologram) must be removed from the vehicle by the appropriate Mexican official **ONLY**. If you return to the United States through a different crossing than where you entered Mexico, you may have to hunt for the place to go to have the permit removed. Not hard, just something to keep in mind.

Tip: Keep a copy of the permit receipt handy. You may be asked for it at checkpoints to verify your VIN.

If you have pets, you will need a certificate of health from a veterinarian stating your pet is in good health and is current in all required vaccinations. It is needed more on the return to the United States than for entry into Mexico. We have never been asked for these documents by anyone on either side, but we always have them available if need be.

WHAT TO TAKE

Most of what you want to use and eat is available in Mexico. Just as in the United States more is available in larger cities than in small towns. Most larger cities in Mexico have a Wal*Mart Supercenter, Sam's Club, Costco and other stores you know and like. Naturally, there are no guarantees you will find all the same things, but for the most part you will.

The things we always take with us to last for the duration of our stay are: kitty litter (she's picky and her brand isn't always available); cat food (ditto the picky part); horseradish (we have never found this in the stores and like it when we get fresh shrimp); ink cartridges for our printer; and our prescription drugs. Make sure your medications are in the original prescription containers. Get copies of your prescriptions from your doctor to carry with you, just in case something should happen to your medicines. A lot of people get their prescription drugs in Mexico, but we have no experience in this, so cannot advise.

Lots of pesos. We find it cheaper to pay with local currency. We use ATMs in Mexico and withdraw from our checking account in pesos. We get a better exchange rate that way. Anyplace you pay with a credit card in Mexico there is always a charge for that privilege. Most Pemex stations (the only fuel stations in Mexico) do not take credit cards—you will need 3,000-4,000 pesos to fill up a 150 gallon fuel tank.

Tip: Know the official exchange rate before crossing the border. There are lots of currency changers near the border who can offer good exchange rates also.

WHAT NOT TO TAKE

Don't carry illegal drugs, guns, or ammunition. Finding those things in your rig or on your person is a ticket straight to jail with no stops along the way! Mexico has a list of things allowable just as the United States does. Mexico maintains a website which is available in English and covers so much information, it is a must to read all of it. Another good website is the one by the United States Customs. It guides you as to the things you can and cannot bring back into the United States.

AN ABSOLUTE MUST—MEXICAN INSURANCE

Your vehicle/motorhome insurance may or may not offer you comprehensive/collision coverage in Mexico. As an example, our motorhome insurance covers us in Mexico, but the insurance for our tow car only covers us within 75 miles of the border. Therefore we have to obtain collision/comprehensive insurance for our Jeep separately unless we are on a short trip over the border.

Mexico **REQUIRES** that all visitors purchase Mexican Liability Insurance. You can thank all those Americans who had a wreck and escaped back here without taking care of business for making that a requirement. It ensures you won't go to jail (to keep you from escaping back across the border until fault is determined) if you should have an accident while in Mexico. It is affordable and it is the law, so no arguments. There are a myriad of places that will provide you insurance at the various border areas. Our preference is to use a little Internet savvy and do our research on-line. We have been able to purchase from reputable companies on-line for less than at any of the border spots. Rates vary widely and the longer your trip, the cheaper the extended time frames of six months or annual policies. You should check this out for your situation.

BORDER CROSSING POINTS

There are many border crossings. Some are suitable for big rigs and some are not. Tip: make your first crossing on foot or in your tow car to check out the landscape before trying the route with your motorhome or with your fifth-wheel in tow. Sometimes a crossing is good, but the road to the next place may not be the best.

We have crossed the border at three different places with our motorhome.

From Laredo, Texas there are four border crossings. We were advised that the most northern Columbia bridge crossing is the only one really suitable for big rigs and for avoiding the narrow downtown streets and tight turns.

We have also been through the border at Nogales, Arizona. By far the best route we found was to exit southbound I-19 at AZ 189 or North Mariposa Road and take what is sometimes referred to as the western bypass. It is primarily a commercial truck crossing and therefore it is not open 24 hours a day, but it is very big-rig friendly. After crossing the border via the bypass you will drive about 20km into Mexico before you encounter the customs check point.

Another place we have driven into Mexico is the crossing from Lukeville, Arizona to Sonoita, Sonora. The lanes are wide and the route through the towns are not difficult for large RVs. Although there is a "Migracion" office at the border, you can only obtain visas there. You can get both the car permit and your visas at the "Banjercito" which is approximately 19km east of Sonoita on MX 2.

STUDY BEFORE YOU GO

There are a number of resources that will give you more information. Visit a library or bookstore and browse the stacks. An excellent book is *Mexican Camping* by Mike & Terri Church. It is *THEE* bible for RVers traveling to Mexico. It covers not only the roads and the border crossings, but also many of the campgrounds.

Google "rv travel in mexico" and you will get many pages of results. There are a number of websites that provide good information for free, plus ones that have books or maps to sell. You can start your cyber-trip at these websites:

Authors of many RV travel guides, Mike & Terri Church's website has lots of information:

<www.rollinghomes.com>

The Escapees "Mexican Connection" chapter website has loads of information available to non-members:

<www.mexicanconnection08.com/index.html>

You will find Mexican travel information and road sign translations on:

<www.ontheroadin.com>

Lurk and ask questions on the "RVing in Mexico & South America" forum at:

<www.rv.net.com>

There are many websites explaining and selling Mexican insurance. This is only one:

<www.mexicaninsurancestore.com>

The Mexican Customs website is at:

<www.aduanas.gob.mx>

The United States Customs website is at:

<www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel>

There is a new process we have not used yet. Through a Mexican website you can actually apply for your car permit on-line, provided you do it far enough in advance to receive the paperwork and permit through the mail. The website is:

<www.banjercito.com.mx/iitv/sitio/html/cte_cst_infoitv_ing.php>

ADIOS—UNTIL NEXT TIME

Hope this just whetted your appetite to take a step in the direction of our nearest neighbor to the south. You will be so much richer for the experience!

There is a lot more we want to share with you about RVing south of the border. Therefore, in the next issue of the *Traveling Times* we will continue this series and write about traveling in a big-rig through the various areas in the northern part of the country, RV resorts and parks, tourist and non-tourist places to visit, and the thrill of living the RVing life-style "down Mexico way." **TT**
