

# CALOOSA WINNIES OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA Local Chapter

December 3—6, 2015 the Caloosas celebrated a milestone 45th anniversary weekend at Oak Haven RV Park in Arcadia, FL. The actual date of the charter is December 5, 1970 and the celebration party was held on December 5, 2015! With 22 coaches in attendance the weekend kicked off on Thursday with Happy Hour in the clubhouse at 4:00pm. Co-hosts Lew Fish, Fay Hubbard, Jorge & Orte Gil, Dave & Barb Wilkie helped set up the snack bar and welcomed everyone to the festivities! The clubhouse was beautifully decorated by the residents of the park, including a special tree decorated with doves of peace - especially poignant for the current world situations. New members Fred & Janet Fowler were welcomed to the group! It was also a pleasure to welcome back Wes & Sally Sims who



have been absent for a while, it is GREAT to have you back with us! The dinner menu included Chicken in Soup Gravy, and lots of dishes provided by the members.

After dinner our traditional Ice Cream social was held with the hosts doing the “scooping” while the members made sundaes! The residents of the park were invited to join us for ice cream and also take part in our bingo games! Bud Swift did an excellent job calling the numbers and several members won the games with the final coverall going to one of the residents! The rest of the evening some folks who are the “Nickels Nuts” played some games and had a rousing time!



Friday breakfast found the cooks making pancakes while the ladies set up the rest of the counter with all the fruit, sausage, juice, and pancake toppings! Everyone was fed in record time with the specialty blueberry pancakes provided as requested!



At 10:00am it was “Craft Time” with Carolyn Thomas providing the idea and materials to make Christmas Angels or Trees out of paper-back books! Ed Thomas did the supervising of the spray paint booth! The results of the project were just wonderful and colorful!



Angel made by Corinne Wightman

Of course much lively conversation was also enjoyed as we worked on our angels & trees! THANKS to Carolyn & Ed for leading the project!

After lunch we all headed out for an airboat excursion at Myakka River State Park. The weather was threatening rain but we ventured on and were lucky to arrive at park—dry—and ready to cruise! We boarded the boat and soon we



were off to explore the river. Along the route we saw many birds, and the captain told us the history of the area.



Alligator  
Photo by Wes Sims

At the end of the cruise we walked and drove around the park where we saw many animals including lots of deer! It was a fun afternoon, and soon we were off to meet at Der Dutchman Restaurant for dinner in nearby Sarasota. This great restaurant serves delicious food and includes a bakery and gift shop which we all took advantage of while visiting! After returning to the campground many of us played games for the rest of the evening!



L to R: Dave & Barb Wilkie, John & Jean Weicherding, Ed & Carolyn Thomas, Sue & Bud Swift, & Jerry Miller

Saturday was our big celebration day starting off with a counter full of AWESOME breakfast food contributed by the members! As always, a huge spread made by the best cooks! At 10:00am it was time for our business meeting. Our meetings are always lively and include business but with lots of laughs! We don't take ourselves too seriously, but we get the job done! During the meeting the new officers for 2016 were installed by Nancy Miller. Officers for 2016: Ed & Carolyn Thomas, President; John & Jean Weicherding, 1st VP; Bud & Sue Swift, 2nd VP; Dave & Barb Wilkie, Secretary; Jerry Miller, Treasurer. Gifts were presented to Dave Nobert & Janice Cummings for their 2 years of service as Presidents. Dave & Janice presented a gift to Nancy for her work with them, a beautiful wooden wine box created by Dave—and a

Culver's gift card! There was some discussion about the upcoming February rally and our greeter duties. We hope to have a plan ready by January—plans are still sketchy waiting for details from the state club officers. Working together, the Caloosas will get the job done!

### The 45th Anniversary Party

The Caloosas began to celebrate the milestone anniversary party by welcoming many of our members who we deemed Honorary to our chapter for their many years of support before they had to give up their coaches for various reasons. It was so wonderful to see them again! Jim & Merrelyn Brand, Bill & Janet Burbage, Bill & Sue Fuss, Phil & Shirley Halstead, Gene & Lois Hogan, Bill & Doris Palmer joined us! The ham dinner was served at 1:00pm with lots of side dishes provided by the members. A group picture was taken to commemorate the event! Nancy Miller read a recap of the Caloosa history back to



the formation of the chapter and many years of events that were entertaining as well as informative. A trivia game was passed out to everyone with questions on what life was like in the 1970's! Soon it was time to cut the beautiful cake donated to us by George & Hilary who manage Oak Haven Park. This was the 9th year we have held our Christmas celebration at Oak Haven! The cake was cut and members helped pass out pieces to everyone—it was DELICIOUS to say the least! More conversations were carried on for the rest of the afternoon and it was such a great event! We are lucky to have such a GREAT chapter with many wonderful friends!



George & Hilary, managers of Oak Haven

At 5:30pm it was time for our Happy Hour and heavy Hors D'Oeuvres. We held a 50/50 drawing with 3 members winning part of the collection.

### CHARITY AUCTION MAKES HISTORY



At 7:00pm it was time for the “elves” to take over the clubhouse and begin our annual charity auction! Dave Wilkie and Dave Nobert had on their official hats and we were off and running! The room was filled with plenty of laughter, ooohs and aaahs—as we witnessed everyone opening their surprise packages. Some of the gifts received BIG bids—such as handmade wooden items contributed by Dave Nobert, an original drawing made by Frank Cipolla, an RV GPS, and all the colorful wrapped packages!



Carolyn Thomas made snowmen out of men's socks for table decorations that were just the cutest things! We even auctioned them off and raised a nice chunk of money for them! Diane Cipolla gave a presentation about our charity, Joshua House, which is a home for abused children. We support this charity every year, and this year was EXCEPTIONAL! The final tally was given by Treasurer Jerry Miller—**\$5411.00** was the total raised!! What can I say—the Caloosas are the most GENEROUS folks, opening their wallets for a great cause!



John & Jean shared their prize!!



Jorge & Orte got a tree decoration!



Frank & Diane got their prize!



Marg got Frank's drawing



Jim & Sally won the cutting board made by Dave Nobert



New member Fred Fowler bid and won!



Janice got her snowman!



New members Joe & Mary open their prize!

As you can see from the pictures we had a MARVELOUS evening with lots of fun and laughs! The crowning glory of the entire weekend was raising so much money for the charity. THANKS to all the Caloosas for being so generous to those young children in need!

Sunday morning was our great breakfast of donuts and bagels! We do let ourselves indulge on Sundays! I have to thank the co-hosts for doing such a TERRIFIC job this weekend! There is always work—and fun—associated with our chapter outings, but with so many willing hands—it's such a pleasure to have these events! When you have a few minutes—check out the [www.winniegators.org/Caloosa](http://www.winniegators.org/Caloosa) website for the pictures taken this weekend! THANKS to Jerry Miller (who got a new camera recently) and to Walter Feldgoise who snapped away at our auction—we appreciate the pictures!! Also thanks to Wes Sims for sending us pictures from the boat trip!



Looking ahead to 2016, there are many great events on the calendar for the Caloosas! Anyone can join us for a camping event—our schedule is posted on the WG website and also on the WIT Club website Who's Inviting Travelers. Special THANKS to the new officers for taking the responsibility seriously with your position. We will continue to support you with the Caloosa spirit! A special thank you to David Nobert and Janice Cummings for their 2 year term being Presidents.

January 4—7, 2016 the Caloosas will meet at Lazy Days RV Park in Seffner, FL for more exciting adventures! What a great way to start off the new year!

Nancy Miller  
Wagon Queen

