

“The Roadrunner Express”



Volume 1 Issue 2

December 2016



OFFICERS

Presidents

Ed & Carolyn Thomas

1st Vice Presidents

John & Jean Weicherding

2nd Vice Presidents

Bud & Sue Swift

Secretary

David & Barbara Wilkie

Treasurer

Fay Hubbard

CHAPTER ESTABLISHED DECEMBER 5, 1970

Life is meant for good friends, and great adventures!

DECEMBER 1—4, 2016 CALOOSA WINNIES CAMPOUT REVIEW

Oak Haven RV Resort near Port Charlotte, FL was the destination for the Caloosa Winnies Christmas celebration! This is the 10th year we have celebrated Christmas at this park and the residents are always so welcoming to us! Co-hosts for the weekend were Charlie & Karen Autry, David & Barb Wilkie. Our parking crew did a great job getting everyone into their sites. THANKS to Bud Swift, Lew Fish, Dave Wilkie and Dave Nobert for an excellent job!

Thursday kicked off with Happy Hour at 4:00pm. The tables were decorated in red with colorful and festive Christmas trees and pine branches. Dinner was served by the hosts, turkey was the main



Ed Thomas, Fred & Janet Fowler, Charlie Autry

course with MANY side dishes provided by the members! Joining us for dinner was Karin Reilly. Karin and her husband Carl are joining our chapter and we are delighted to have them with us!

Our traditional Ice Cream Social followed dinner with the volunteer “scoopers” pictured to the left! Members made sundaes, as we welcomed many of the Oak Haven residents to join us for the goodies!

Soon it was time for Bingo, our activity for the evening. Bud Swift (on the right) was our master Bingo caller while Jerry Miller took charge of the money details and passing out cards. The games were fun and the winners were evenly split between the Caloosas and the residents! The coverall pot was won by a resident and he went out the door with a big smile on his face!



Friday morning the hosts and other volunteers were busy in the kitchen getting ready for our pancake breakfast. We heard a loud SQUAWK outside and found the culprit! A huge hawk was in a tree nearby sounding the alarm for everyone—time to eat! By 8:00am everyone was lined up and ready to enjoy the pancakes, sausage and fruit.



Barb Wilkie, Dave Nobert, Bud Swift and John King in line!

THANKS to the cooks, for a great job, and the cleanup crew for getting that job done in record time! It seems Charlie Autry had dishpan hands after washing all the equipment!



Inside this issue:

December Event	1-4
Keys Adventure	5
Birthdays & Anniversaries	6
New Members	6
Book Club	6





The Saturday morning road trip began about 8:45am as a caravan to visit a very unique place, literally in the middle of nowhere called Ona, FL. The destination was this castle on the left called Solomon's Castle. Howard Solomon was an extremely talented and creative man making sculptures, pictures, statues, etc. out of SCRAP parts! The outside of his castle pictured on the left

was built using discarded aluminum printing plates! We were in for quite a tour and lesson in creativity.



Some of our group waiting for the tour!



This property Howard bought in 1972 for a very low price as he wanted to live away from the cities. Well, it wasn't long before he discovered why the land was so "reasonable". Seems the Florida summer monsoon rains came—it turned out he was in the middle of a SWAMP! So he closed up for a few months and went back to his hometown of Rochester, NY. He began making sculptures from scraps when he was 4 years old. Things like oil drums,

gears, discarded car, bike & truck parts, machinery, all things that were "junk" were his treasures—reborn! One can not imagine the things he made with scraps, like the train in the picture on the right!



The castle and museum were built as a tourist attraction and he decided there had to be a restaurant to accommodate his visitors. So he built the "Boat in the Moat" restaurant in the middle of the creek that flowed through the property. See that picture above on the left! He made dozens of stained glass windows all over the museum like the one on the left, as well as pictures like the picture on the right! All the sculptures, pictures, etc. had names and explanations what they stood for. Sadly, Howard passed away this summer at age 81, but his family and dedicated tour guides will carry on his legacy. Needless to say, our hour long tour by the excellent guides made this quite an adventure for us! After walking the rest of the property it was time for lunch! The gardens outside the "Boat in the Moat" were a beautiful setting to enjoy the warm



weather! The menu was extensive, and SOME of us only had DESSERT as it was so tempting! It was a fun day and hard to resist the Florida December weather!



If you are reading this, we would invite you to visit Solomon's Castle near Bradenton or Arcadia. You won't be disappointed! Soon we were on the way back to Oak Haven for free time.





Friday Happy Hour began at the usual 4:00pm at the clubhouse, and soon we were off in a caravan for dinner! The chosen restaurant—La Fiorentina—a new Italian Steakhouse. The atmosphere made you think you were in Italy at a fine dining restaurant. The food and service were wonderful and a great meal was enjoyed by everyone!

Saturday morning breakfast it was potluck time! LOTS of wonderful dishes by our terrific cooks! Soon after kitchen cleanup it was time to have our business meeting! These meetings turn out to actually be fun with input from members that create lots of laughter! President Ed Thomas does manage to hold court and we do get the chapter business done. During the meeting, Director David Nobert presented the Slate of Officers for 2017. The vote was unanimous for Ed & Carolyn Thomas, President; John & Jean Weicherding, 1st VP; Bud & Sue Swift, 2nd VP; David & Barbara Wilkie, Secretary; Fay Hubbard, Treasurer. David then proceeded to install the officers to make the election official. A HUGE thank you to Jerry Miller for 4 years of service being Treasurer. The meeting was adjourned, and the discussion about our responsibilities at the February State Rally began. Our duty will be the Greeters again this year, work schedules and information were handed out to each couple with brief explanations of how we proceed. At the January meeting more discussion will take place with more details.



Next on the agenda after lunch was Craft Time! These snowmen and Snoopy dogs were made by many of the members!



They are just adorable! Great ideas by Carolyn Thomas and Fay Hubbard. The Snoopy's were filled with candy, and all the creations will be donated to Golisano Children's Hospital. Don't you agree they are the cutest things???



THANKS to Carolyn & Fay for bringing and donating the materials.

Soon it was 4:00pm and Happy Hour time—our popular event! Dinner was served at 5:30 and the menu main dish was Ham, served by the hosts. LOTS of luscious side dishes prepared by our cooks accompanied the meal, including a wide variety of DESSERTS!!! (For some it was the starting point of the dinner line!!) After the hosts did a quick job of cleanup in the kitchen it was time for our main event of the evening—our charity auction!

For the past several years we have supported Joshua House, a Florida company that has no state or federal funding—just surviving on private donations. They house children who are neglected, abandoned and abused that no one else will step in to help save them. Most of the children are taken in with not so much as a toothbrush, and our group is really happy to help them with our donations from the auction. Of course anything the Caloosas do is usually done with some comedy, and this auction is no exception!



Here you can see our head elf on the left, David Nobert, and on the right, his 2 equally funny and talented elves, Dave Wilkie and Bud Swift. Jerry Miller is in the background “making a list and checking it twice” for the winners of each prize! Each member has an auction sign they raise when they are bidding, and it gets quite hysterical at times when husbands and wives are bidding against each other!! Of course some members bid against each other to just raise the bids higher—and some get caught and have to PAY UP! Some of the comments heard around the room are” Oh, it’s not an annuity”, “Long ride home tomorrow”, “For \$100 Carolyn will help you fix it”, “Anyone want a lopsided bag”, “Got more value with all the tape”, “Have to bid in Euros”, “I’ll give everyone a peek”, “Who wants to bundle it”, “It’s a baby bowling ball”. Hysterical time!





Needless to say, there was so much laughter in the room it as deafening at times! In the picture at the left is Sue Swift opening her wallet to assess the funds for a purchase Bud Swift bid on! No problem, Sue, Jerry accepts checks!! (I think it was Sue who made the comment “Long ride home tomorrow!”) HA! Just kiddin’, Sue! You were a trooper!!

Several hand made crafts were on display and in the auction. John Weichering, and David Nobert made wooden items that went for high donations. One of our members who as not able to be with us donated an entire Christmas Village with about 30 pieces, and Howard Melton had the winning bid! Nice prize, Howard and we thank you!



Sharing in the laughter: L o R: Susan King, Bruce Kanoza, Barb Kanoza, Karen Autry, Sylvia Lundin, Charlie Autry, Roger Gardner.



In the picture on the left is Janice Cummings checking out her prize with Mary Heitman, Dave and Bud looking on!

It was a fun filled evening once again and we thank all our members who were present and made the donations. AND you all got some good STUFF!! In addition, we also received donations from other members who were not able to join us, and we so appreciate their generosity as well. (Just a note—Diane & Frank—we missed you this year with all the comedy you provided last year!) (You had to be there to witness it!!) Anyway, thanks to the totaling efforts by Jerry Miller we are PROUD to announce we raised \$3483.00 for Joshua House!

Sunday morning at 8:30am our usual donuts, bagels, coffee, tea were ready for everyone to indulge themselves!! A HUGE thank you to the co-hosts for working those early mornings to prepare breakfast, and doing what ever needed to be done to make this another successful weekend!

The Caloosas invite travelers to join in with us—especially now that the “snowbirds” are winging their way south! Our schedule is posted on the website: www.winniegators.org, Caloosa Winnies. Also check the WIT Club website as we post there also at “Who’s Inviting Travelers”. Our next adventure will be January 2—5, 2017 at Lazy Days RV Park in Seffner, FL. The agenda is also posted on the Winnie Gators website. The theme is “Sports Night” and there will be several games to test your skills, (or not!) at various locations around the rally hall. It will be fun with PRIZES awarded!! Also bring your Ugly Sweater and get into our contest! Bring your dancing shoes and come visit with us—our welcome mat is always out!

Remember our November meeting when the Calendar Girls entertained us At Gulf Waters RV Resort? They perform to raise donations for “Paws for Patriots” and here is an article about a new addition for the Lee County area! How AWESOME is this??? Once again, THANKS to the generous Caloosa Winnies for helping make this happen!!!




New Southeastern Guide Dog puppy

The Calendar Girls have a new sponsored Southeastern Guide Dog puppy, Anchor. He's the 17th sponsored puppy by this group and will be raised in Lee County by his puppy raiser, and will attend some events they perform at.

The Calendar Girls want to thank SW Florida for their generosity in helping change veterans lives in a positive way.

For information go to www.calendargirlsflorida.com, and for Southeastern Guide Dogs go to www.guidedogs.org.

ANCHOR FUTURE SUPERHERO
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS



CALOOSA CAMPING IN THE KEYS—MARATHON, FL

November 19, 2016 was the first day of an unofficial Caloosa gathering at Jolly Roger RV Resort at Marathon, Florida! 18 Caloosa members and other Winnie friends made the trip to a beautiful place on the water to enjoy Thanksgiving week together. Our group had another week there last April and quickly made plans for this week after such a wonderful time! The challenge was how to have an actual



Thanksgiving dinner in RV's and outside! We were up for the challenge as you will read later. We always start off with Happy Hour at the pavilion each day at 4:00pm, and the weather was warm and sunny, but REALLY windy! Lucky for us the pavilion we were allowed to use had roll down shutters to keep us cozy! Potluck dinner was the menu for the first day with LOTS of great food! Each day we planned for the next day—but the agenda was very casual so everyone could just relax and not have to be busy! One day we

had a grill out—everyone cooked their own meat and contributed side dishes—trust me—we never ran out of food! The wind finally died down after a few days and we enjoyed the view in the pavilion of the water! Some members took a day



Rick Moseley showing off his steak and Bill Hardiman checks his steak too!

trip to various local attractions and most everyone took a trip to Key West for a day. There were “hot” games of Nickels in the evenings, along with Domino games, cards, etc. Most evenings we observed an old camping tradition from when we were kids, roasting marshmallows over a campfire! THANKS to Ted Fumia and Rick Moseley, we had 2 fire pits that worked for the fun and atmosphere but without the wood smoke!! Watching the sunset each evening was just delightful and so colorful!



Karen Autry, Rob Chapman & Ben Collier grillmasters!



Some of the ladies went to a local ceramics shop to make a project! FUN!



Thanksgiving Dinner proved to be a HUGE success! The cooks did a MARVELOUS job—turkey was done on time thanks to Nancy Miller, and Don Levine. To the left is Ted Fumia carving one of them and dinner was served ON TIME at 4:30pm! So many GREAT food dishes—so little time! It was all GREAT and we were THANKFUL to be able to enjoy this day with such GREAT friends!! As the sun set on our week and it was time to leave, we started a list of folks who want to return next November! We'll be back.....



Thanksgiving dinner!



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3 Terry Gilford
9 Rich Beck
11 Fred Fowler
11 Bud Swift
13 Nancy Miller
21 Barb Kammeraad
27 David Nobert
29 Natalie Amos



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

2 Walter & Belinda Feldgoise
4 Roger Gardner & Sylvia Lundin
10 Herb & Dede Varner
11 Bud & Pat Rucker
20 Jorge & Orte Gil
23 Howard & Susan Melton
31 Jerry & Nancy Miller



“Roadrunner Readers”

Chairman, Corinne Wightman
 Future Schedule

January “The Everglades: River of Grass” by Marjory Stoneman Douglas
 February No selection—State Rally
 March “Fearless” by Eric Blehm
 April “The Whip” by Karen Kondazian

NEW OFFICERS 2017

Presidents: Ed & Carolyn Thomas
1st VP: John & Jean Weicherding
2nd VP: Bud & Sue Swift
Secretary: David & Barbara Wilkie
Treasurer: Fay Hubbard



THANK YOU for volunteering!!



FUTURE MEETINGS

2016
 December 30—January 1 New Years Celebration. Seffner FL (Lazy Days Event)
2017
 January 2—5 Lazy Days Rally Park (Official Caloosa Meeting)
 February 23—26 Sarasota FL Fairgrounds—Florida State Winnie Gators Rally
 March 13—16 Lazy Days Rally Park, Seffner FL
 April 21—25 Grand Oaks RV Resort, Weirsdale, FL (Caravan 1st location)
 April 26—30 Seasons in the Sun Resort, Titusville, FL (Caravan 2nd stop)
 May 1—3 Okeechobee KOA, Okeechobee, FL (Caravan 3rd stop)
 (Caravan information will be discussed in future meetings. Participation in any or all segments of this event will be allowed.)
 October 12—15 Gulf Waters RV Resort, Ft. Myers Beach, FL
 November 13—20 Jolly Robert RV Resort, Marathon, FL (week long event)
 December 7—10 Oak Haven RV Park, Arcadia, FL
 Agendas for all events will be available one month in advance via email, and at meetings.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Pete & Sue Leto
 Bob & Kuci Manz



Bill & Katie Tolstyka
 Carl & Karin Reilly



**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EVERYONE AND ENJOY THIS TIME
 WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS! WISHING YOU HAPPINESS,
 HEALTH AND WEALTH FOR 2017!**