

## CALOOSA WINNIES Local Chapter

March 19—22, 2015 were the dates for the annual Florida State Winnie Gators Rally, which was held at Central Florida Fairgrounds in Orlando, Florida. The theme for 2015 was “Leprechaun Holiday” and 31 Caloosa coaches attended to share in the fun and duties assigned to the group. The Greeters duty was one of our assignments, several members arrived early on Monday to begin the set up process. President David Nobert and his crew set up the entrance to the building with decorations including a huge rainbow with pots of gold at the end of the rainbow! There were leprechauns EVERYWHERE which made the inside and outside of the building such a welcoming scene! The ladies made sure the shamrocks were hung with care and Jerry Miller headed up the process of greeting and being ready to verify reservations with the teams assigned to the tasks. Meantime David Nobert assisted by the other officers and helpers had the field ready with stations for greeting as people arrived on the scene.

The other task the Caloosas had was to oversee the food serving and setup. With many willing hands and cheerful members who wanted to help—the set up was smooth and organized in a short time! In this photo Betty Kunze and Sharon Beck were setting up tables for Thursday lunch! By Wednesday afternoon the tasks were done and we were off to check out the rest of the rally.



On Tuesday evening the Caloosas held their annual Pizza Party complete with adult beverages. THANKS to Janice Cummings & Sue Swift and the rest of the team assisting the drinks were iced, pizza ordered and we celebrated another fun event!

The greeting duties went very smoothly thanks to advance preparation by Jerry Miller and David Nobert. All the members had their assigned times to help and THANKS to Everyone for doing such a GREAT job! Wednesday evening the Caloosas went out to Olive Garden for dinner which was a great time!



Thursday the excitement was building as the Opening Ceremonies were held at 11:00 am! The room was full of participants and the Florida State Winnie Gators officers were ready! The officers were introduced by yours truly, serving as Master of Ceremonies as they paraded down the middle aisle.

Special thanks to Bob & Kathy Olson for greeting the many participants with Leprechaun candy as they spoke to everyone and had fun showing off their costumes!



FSWG Presidents Ted & Janis Fumia—dressed in GREAT theme costumes led the opening ceremonies and the rally was officially underway! With about 500 people in the room it was quite an amazing sight from the stage with all the green costumes! The officers, chapter presidents and guests were introduced as well as the vendors and dealers who were displaying Winnebago products. At the end of the ceremonies, lunch was served with the help of South Florida chapter members.

The Friendship Walk was held at 2:00pm with many people paying their 50 cents to take a chance on winning a basket! All the baskets were donated by chapter members and we THANK them for the contributions! This was a lively event and THANKS to South Florida chapter for hosting it! Many seminars were also on the schedule with a variety of topics and were well attended.



At 4:30pm on Thursday was the Row Party event which was a HUGE Happy Hour with the Florida Chapters providing all kinds of food and the FSWG club providing the beverages! Part of the fun was the “jail” that was set up to catch folks not obeying the Leprechaun Laws! One could get tossed in jail for any made up reason and one had to pay money to get bailed out—and the funds were given to our charity! Here in the picture Caloosa President David is “locked up” with Kathy Olson and others in the background! At times the “jail” was really overcrowded! One would think they LIKED it in there! During the evening Ken Perry & Cheryl Conito, “Still Kickin’ Too” played and sang music for the crowd!

During the Row Party event President Ted and his staff awarded door prizes to the winners drawn from the registration cards. THANKS to Janice Cummings, the Caloosas were well represented with donations of baskets! Janice made over 30 baskets, all with different themes!! It was so great to see the smiles on the faces of the winners! THANKS to the Caloosa members who donated dollars to allow Janice to make so many baskets! (Janice likes to shop so it was a good thing for her!) All Row Party participants joined in and circulated the room to share in friendships! The Caloosas tables were set with a wide variety of food—THANKS to everyone for taking time to get so creative! There was a long line waiting to sample the variety of food we displayed! Later that evening it was time for Bingo which is a really popular game for your rally! Again, South Florida chapter members hosted the event and did a GREAT job!!

Friday morning the Greeter gate was closed as all the folks were in an accounted for! The food serving set up crew was still hard at work and the schedules were all on time and everything flowed THANKS to the Caloosas who just pitched in and got it DONE! I’m sure that Sharon Beck and Karen Autry will not want to make another 100 cup pot of coffee EVER! They did such a great job organizing the task! Breakfast was catered by Golden Corral and servers joined in to help from Funtimers chapter. The days events were off and running with many seminars, and at 11:00am the Caloosas kicked off the Pet Parade! With about 40 some dogs in the parade, it was another very lively event! The Arts & Crafts Show hosted by Florida Sunshine Chapter was held with many different entries! The winner of Best of Show was our very own David Nobert with his wood creation! Congratulations David once again!! At 2:00pm the Buccaneer Winnies served the Ice Cream Social, sponsored by Farm & City Insurance. It didn’t take long for over 500 cups of ice cream to disappear!

Friday evening at 5:30pm Ted welcomed everyone back to the main hall with some announcements and dinner. The Caloosa food crew was busy getting organized for serving. Thanks to Golden Corral the food was delivered on time and served with the volunteers from the DuBol Winnies and Suncoast Winnies. Everyone was served the Italian dinner in 16 minutes! THANKS again to the servers and their quick action!

Door prizes and awards were handed out before our evening entertainment! Brought back by popular demand the group “The Marlins”, 4 brothers who performed 90 minutes of music and fun! They have entertained us several different years and the crowd all stayed to enjoy the show! A standing ovation was their reward for an outstanding performance!



Saturday morning events were off to a fast start with breakfast being served at 8:00am with the assistance of the Mid-Florida Winnies. Once again, the chapter volunteers do a great job with smiles on their faces—especially at 8:00 in the morning! Next on the agenda were the Games of “skill and luck” hosted by the Funtime Travelers chapter! Lots of Leprechaun themed games led to lots of laughs and fun! The Book Fair was held and hosted by Panhandle Winnies and lots of trading of books took place. Throughout the week various seminars were held. Tom Pilgrim, Senior Trainer for Winnebago dealers, joined us all the way from Forest City , Iowa to provide valuable information regarding the care and maintenance of our coaches. All the seminars were well attended and we thanked all vendors for supporting our rally.

Saturday afternoon at 2:00pm, the ever popular “Wine & Cheese” Party was held in the main hall, hosted by the Buccaneer Winnies. THANKS to the Bucs for doing a fine job! At 5:00pm the hall began filling up once again for dinner. The announcements were made and dinner was prepared by Golden Corral again, and served with the volunteers of the Caloosa Winnies! Once again the lines went very fast with our excellent servers in place. Some announcements were made, awards given out and the ceremony for installation of officers for the next year was made official. Soon the evening entertainers took the stage, The Caribbean Chillers, a Jimmy Buffet Tribute Band! Jerry Miller and some of the Caloosas handed out blinky rings to the ladies which turned out to be a big hit! Soon the room was all aglow with blinking rings!! The dancers in the audience took over the big middle aisle and had a great time. Shortly before the band took a break, the LUUZERS Bartenders had the drinks ready—of course including Margaritas! That was a special surprise for the crowd and within minutes—they were gone! The band played for several hours and the music was enjoyed by all—especially the dancers!



L to R: Dick Behrens, Bud Swift, Head LUUZER Bartender David Nobert, Jeff Allerman, Jorge Gil, Nick Sanborn, Ginny Sanborn! THANKS to the Caloosas for pitching in to help!!

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Sunday morning breakfast of everyone’s favorite—Dunkin’ Donuts, was served by the Buccaneer Winnies and Florida Sunshine Winnies. The Winnie Gators business meetings were held and closed out an exciting and fun rally! The Caloosas helped with the cleanup process and soon we were all packed up and ready to head for home.

The Caloosa Winnies did an outstanding job with all the duties they were asked to do. It takes many people to organize and execute THE PLAN, to coordinate all the events and make sure they are all carried out on time and successfully! The Florida State Winnie Gators officers did an excellent job presenting this rally, and since they are mostly Caloosa and Buccaneer Winnies members it was easy to coordinate the planning and execute the details. The 2015 FSWG officers are PROUD to have served the club for about 10 years including many different officer positions, and know we did our BEST job carrying out the long standing traditions of the club.

The Caloosas next meeting will be held April 30—May 3 at Alligator Park in Punta Gorda, Fl. This will be our traditional Kentucky Derby Party—hats and all!! Anyone is welcome to join us, please check our schedule at [www.winniegators.org](http://www.winniegators.org) or Who’s Inviting Travelers at [www.witclub.com](http://www.witclub.com).

Submitted by  
Nancy Miller