



# Southeast Bus Nuts Newsletter

## Summer 2013

### Charlie Chat

Ahh, another great rally! It took place at Stone Mountain Park, near Atlanta.

Members used the rally to explore the area with their motorbikes and cars, while Judy and I took MARTA downtown to visit the 'World of Coca Cola'. We took the city bus from Buckhead down to the Five Points area. Great way to see the area, without worries about parking and driving in the city.

Attendance was 17 coaches, about the same as the Kissimmee rally. It appears that the price of fuel and the consistent increasing of age of our members is taking a toll. Judging from comments, it seems a great time was had by all. The staff at Stone Mountain was outstanding as was the catering company George Showman set up. A big thanks goes to George for setting the initial plans in motion for the park, as well as catering. It was easy for Judy and me to pick up the pieces while George was stuck in Hawaii. Also, a big thanks to all the folks who helped set up, serve and clean up. Everyone pitched in and got involved.

I recently spoke to a couple of other Bus Nuts chapters and they share the same story. One, in SoCal, said they used to get 90-100 coaches, but the number is down to 20-30 these days. They also tell me

the costs are about \$200 for a three day rally. Also, one of our members spent some time at The Great Outdoors near Titusville FL and was also told rally fees there are in the \$200 range. So, it appears our fees are in line with others.

The good news is that we had two guest couples and Lynn Silver's mom who attended, plus one visitor who drove in to check us out for possible membership and to get ideas for a bus he hopes to buy.



**Scenic Stone Mountain Park, east of Atlanta GA, was the site of the annual Spring Rally of the Southeast Bus Nuts**

A lot of us in the SEBN are headed out for the summer, and we wish safe and satisfying travel for all. Howard and Andy are headed westward for parts around Colorado and Texas. Mike Heron went to New Hampshire for the summer and we are going to Amana, IA to stay with a friend who bought a MCI 9 bus conversion. Since I convinced him to do that, I'm committed to helping him with alterations.

### NEXT RALLY

Great news! Our next rally, Halloween Oct 24-26, is at Costley Mill, near Conyers, GA. (See announcement on p. 8.) Beverly Bowman will be working on the details this summer and we'll let me know as soon as we get them. One thing for sure, is that it'll be less costly than the last two rallies. Although it is primarily dry camping, there may be limited power for some.

### FUTURE RALLIES

So far we're covered through next spring. New Year's at Arcadia as usual, February at Lazy Days hosted by

(Cont'd)

**Charlie Chat (Cont'd)**

Ed Fisher/Bob Thomas, the Spring rally in Georgia hosted by Mike Heron. Now we are looking for a host for the 2014 Halloween rally.

REMEMBER

Our web site, [www.SEBusNuts.org](http://www.SEBusNuts.org) always has the latest information. If you want to volunteer for hosting or just have a comment, click on the [Advisory Board](#) link and type away.

Safe travels and hope to see you at Costly Mill,  
Charlie

**Recent Rally Attendance / Coaches**

Arcadia 2011 (President's Reception)	20
Valentines 2011 (Titusville)	27
April in Carolinas 2011 (Palmetto Cove)	55
Halloween 2011 (Hoboken)	32
Arcadia (President's Reception) 2012	32
Valentine's 2012 (Lake Okeechobee)	18
April in Carolinas 2012 (Palmetto Cove)	33
Halloween 2012 (Hoboken)	35
Arcadia (President's Reception) 2013	40
Valentines 2013 (Kissimmee)	16
Spring Rally 2013 (Stone Mountain, GA)	17
	17

**•Secretary's Update**

Membership

Membership is now at 97 since we had 16 members who did not renew for 2013.

New Members since last Rally: None

Rally Guests: Brian & Marsue O'Connell, John & Deb Schmalshof, and Lynne Silver's mom, Hannah Harvey, Lakeland, FL.

Current Snail Mail: Eight members, however we are now printing newsletters in B&W to reduce costs.

Name Badges: Changed vendor to McBee's in

Calif. as the previous company was no longer meeting our needs. We are currently charging \$43 for initial membership, which includes 2 name badges and their first year membership fee. The new vendor's costs are slightly higher, so we may need to increase the cost of initial membership to \$45 to cover more expensive shipping costs. For those who may wish to order new nametags, they can be ordered directly from our website.

Health Report

No get well or sympathy cards sent out since our last meeting.

**Jim & Cindy Threatt** sent a note that due to health reasons, they could not attend this rally.

**Linda Karlsson** is having problems again with her right ankle. She had surgery 5 years ago and sees her ortho on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May.

\*\*\*\*\* **PLEASE call or E-mail me if you hear of any deaths or members ill or having surgery so I can send cards and coordinate memorial gifts or contributions.**

Respectfully Submitted, Judy Bukoski, Secretary

(Editor's Note: Since Judy filed this report we have had word that longtime member **Mike Cilio** is facing possible amputation of a toe due to a lingering infection, and longtime Halloween rally campground owner **Ira Crews** has had a stroke and was hospitalized.)

•Treasurer's Report

Vice President/Treasurer **Marty Nixon** reported that the post Spring Rally balance in the club treasury was \$4800.

Thank you note from Beverly & Syl Bowman

Dear Bus Nuts,

Syl and I would like to say, "Thank You", for the cards, calls and your prayers concerning the death of our precious grandson, Joshua "Brady" LaGrand on 2/9/2013 at age 27. Many knew and can remember Josh and his brother Steven being with us at some of the Florida rallies. They were just little boys about 8 & 9 the first time they were with us in Starke, Florida. We had an MCI shell and they enjoyed playing in the large bays.

(Cont'd)

Josh had been working at Costley Mill Park with me as our location representative for about 3 years. He worked for the first two years mainly with the movie scouts and media and company picnics, as I was still handling the weddings. In 2012, I started letting Josh meet and talk with prospective brides and grooms. He told me that was a lot more to learn. He was doing a great job in all areas and was a fast learner. Several movie scouts came and visited with us at the funeral home and all said what a fine young man he was.

Needless to say, we MISS HIM VERY MUCH and he lived on our property too. God had his reasons to take him home, but we had the peace and assurance immediately that he was in Heaven with his mom and Jesus. We don't know why bad things happen to good people, but we've chosen to trust God for daily strength, and He is giving it to us.

Thanks, Love, Hugs, and Prayers,  
Beverly & Syl Bowman

p.s. Thanks to Charlie and Judy for taking over at the Feb. Rally for Bryan & Suzanne. We were all on our way to Kissimmee when we got the tragic news.

### Every Bus Nut's Worst Nightmare

Lurking in the backs of our minds, never very far from our conscious thinking as we motor down the highway, is the fear that our venerable diesel engine may someday quit on us. Some of us obsess on this, fearing that it might happen at the very worst moment, perhaps in the middle of the desert, or in a long tunnel, or in an area of one-lane highway construction, somewhere where we will block traffic and draw untold scorn.

Fortunately, our Detroit Diesels are known for their dependability, often slowing or giving warning that something may be amiss. But occasionally it does happen. Just ask members Ed Gallant, Dick Mikuska, Kirby Karlsson, or friends of the late John Dowling. All were left along the side

of the road, with that dry mouth and sick-to-the stomach feeling that the old girl had spit the bit. It happens. Fortunately not too often. But what do you do?

Many Bus Nuts are frequent visitors to the Bus Conversions Bulletin board <https://www.busconversions.com/bbs/index.php?board=1.0> and are following the plight of **Chris Dunphy** and **Cherie VeArd**, full-timers known to many of us as 'Technomadia' for their computer work. They have been frequent speakers at the annual Arcadia rally. The 8v71 motor in their GM4106 quit in the wilds of Montana last week.

It is very educational to see how different people handle these emergencies. Here are some of the steps they have taken to date:

1. Before calling their road service (Coach-Net) they went on line and on the cell phone to get references as to which DD shop in which direction would be best for them to be towed to.
2. Bus Nuts from all over the US and Mexico came forth with suggestions, many based on personal experience with repair facilities.
3. Once towed to a respected shop in Billings they solicited more advice on whether to rebuild or replace their engine. This was after the two-stroke pros told them the engine had sustained major damage.
4. Since they are full-timers and their bus is their home, they had pre-negotiated with the garage to be able to stay in the coach while they continued the tear down and diagnosis.

At this time the jury is still out on which course of action they'll take, but it is very reassuring to know that there is a wonderful support group available on-line to offer insights and advice. Of course, sometimes there is conflicting advice, but sifting through the choices and not operating in a vacuum is reassuring.

To read more about Chris and Cherie's situation, and find out if they rebuilt or replaced the engine, check their blog: [www.technomadia.com](http://www.technomadia.com)



# Stone Mountain Snapshots, May 2013



Many of the sites at the rally section of Stone Mountain Park had decks with grills.



Our Spring Rally utilized a spacious pavilion for meals and social gatherings.



Suzanne and Bryan Bowman pose for a shot near Stone Mountain Lake, which abuts the campground.



Most rally participants took the duck tour, which was on land and water!



That's Ken Siems on the left, and across the aisle are Harriet Chaires and Steve Siems.



Marty Nixon and Debbie Spear had great seats for the laser show on the famous carving on the side of the mountain.

## Member Spotlight

An occasional feature of this newsletter is to profile both a newer member couple and a more long-term coach couple, an effort to get us better acquainted with each other.

### Newer Members

#### Steve Siems and Harriet Chaires

beautiful Neoplan Spaceliner is their first RV. They had been impressed with brother Ken's Prevost and started looking at used bus conversions. The Neoplan jumped off the page at them and they flew to St Louis to look at it. Smitten, they drove it back to their home in Ft Lauderdale, Florida, and the adventure began.

It was an original conversion by Pegasus in 1991, but the coach needed updating. Five years later, with a new interior, electrical system, generator and plumbing, they thought they were ready to really roll.

Their first substantial trip took them to Seattle by way of Elkhart, Indiana. On the six week trip home from the west coast Steve found he was not happy with the Detroit 8v92 TA power plant when it came to climbing the Rockies. Next stop: John Silver's shop in Lakeland FL for a Detroit Series 60 transplant. Now he can climb Fancy Gap in VA at a steady 57 mph—and that's in a 57,000 lb coach!

Steve found the SEBN through FMCA, and he attended our winter rally at River Ranch FL about four years ago. His favorite feature on the coach is the driver's door, and his dream trip is another western swing to take in the redwoods, Lake Tahoe, the Black Hills, and the upper Midwest.



**Steve Siems and Harriet Chaires, Ft Lauderdale.**

He's very proud that the Neoplan was featured on The Travel Channel's Mega RV Review 2013.

Steve and Harriet's typical bus use in a year is a couple of winter FL rallies, and a summer of sightseeing. They are developing a summer place in Hillsville VA and will base there in future summers.

### Longer-term Members

When **Leonard Jelkren** was a boy growing up in Sioux City, Iowa he fell in love with the sound of big diesel engines, idling, pulling a load, etc. He'd ride his bike across the Missouri River bridge and into Nebraska where there was a big truck stop on US Rte. 20. He'd fantasize about driving a big rig, maybe a P.I.E.—Pacific Inter-



**Leonard Jelkren**

mountain Express. How exotic!

A career in aviation sidetracked him for a bit. He has a private pilot's license and is a certified Airframe and



**Pamela Jelkren**

Power plant mechanic. But he eventually grew disillusioned with commercial aviation, and ultimately opened his own Orlando area trucking business—back to the world of big diesels. He and Pamela were RVing in an old Superior motorhome when bus conversions came to his attention. They attended a SEBN rally at the Florida Boys Ranch and was impressed with old timers Bud Tatum and Harold Wemmer. He also liked that many members, like him, could actually turn wrenches, and many also had a background in aviation. The search for a bus began.

Perhaps more than most members, Len and Pam wanted to rescue an old bus and inexpensively fit it out to their needs. They went from a basket-case MC-7, to an MC-8 with a rebuilt engine, and then got a MC102a3 for its wider stance. He was eventually persuaded to focus on a fresher 102 and patched up the big DD 8v92 in the newer bus. Over the preceding 10 years they had picked up a trailer load of scratch and dent appliances and RV furnishings, including a generator. Now they roll down the road in style, without needing a second mortgage. His favorite feature is that big Detroit Diesel—”There are no more hills!” Their dream trip of the future is to attend the legendary Jerusalem Ridge bluegrass festival in Kentucky. “It's the biggest and best!”

## **Busing the 'Best' way!**

Now that summer travel season is upon us, and many SEBN members are venturing out to see this beautiful country, we are pleased to reprint part of a safe bus driving seminar conducted by Howard Best at a 2008 bus rally. Here are three 'on the big road' tips.

### Interstate entrance ramps

When coming down a ramp to get onto the interstate, I try to look to the left side and behind me to adjust my speed and pick my spot well before I am up to speed and approaching the merge point. Adjustable mirrors are great here, but just craning my neck or moving my head a bit helps. It's a pain to have to lose steam and slow down, because in our rigs it will be harder to merge at decent speed. Sometimes there's just no hole, and slowing is inevitable. I try to remember that while it is called 'merging', it is really yielding to oncoming traffic.

### Interstate exit ramps

I get in the deceleration lane as soon as possible, and begin indicating my turn early. This helps truckers and heavy vehicles behind you. I pay careful attention to the exit speed sign, because not all exit ramps are appropriately banked. The suggested speed is posted for a good reason. Lots of times a sleepy trucker will come barreling off of these ramps and have real problems. Just look at the scrapes on the concrete barriers or guardrails to see what can happen. With our roof airs, etc. we tend to be a bit top heavy, so I take it easy.

I keep my eyes peeled for 'exit-only' lanes, which always have a yellow bar on the sign, and must be posted at least two miles away from the ramp. If I am not planning to exit, I get over to the left a.s.a.p.

### Which Interstate travel lane to use?

After 25 years of driving my bus, I find that the right hand lane is usually the safest. It simply gives you an emergency 'out' – the breakdown lane – if someone stops short in front of you, or should you suddenly lose power, air, or develop some other emergency. In most cases, if you are in the center or left lane, you may not have immediate access to the emergency lane. Some drivers say they have better options in the center lane of a three-lane highway, but many times I find vehicles on my

left and right, hemming me in. That isn't the case when you are in the right lane. I know that construction barriers and stopped vehicles occasionally crop up in the breakdown lane, but most of the time it's there for the taking. And I have needed it in the blink of an eye at times.

Another reality of today's economy is that many of us are driving slower than in the past to get greater fuel economy. In the past we kept up with the traffic, but many of us today are squeezing another ½ to one mile-to-the-gallon by cruising 55-60. At this speed it's just better to be in the far right lane and let the rest of the world go by. I take pleasure in knowing I'm safer at a slightly lower speed, and I'm saving money.

While traveling happily down the interstate in the right hand lane I occasionally come upon a vehicle in the breakdown lane ahead. Incidentally this is a good job for the co-pilot. She will often see construction, obstructions, debris and broken down vehicles a few seconds before the driver, because of where she's sitting.

Train your co-pilot to scan ahead and help you prepare for that situation. When approaching broken-down vehicles during the night time, I get over to the left one full lane. During the day, I get over a half lane. This will prevent a four wheeler from passing you on the right and endangering anyone working on the stopped vehicle. Of course day or night we must get over one **full** lane for emergency or police vehicles on the shoulder or breakdown lane, for the safety of the officers, etc. That's becoming law in many states.

One disclaimer – I admit that if I am passing through an urban area with many on-ramps ahead I will temporarily take the center lane, rather than constantly having to get over to the left to allow merging vehicles – especially truckers – to comfortably join the travel lanes. 'Trucker courtesy' is important here. I figure if we give them this courtesy, they'll extend it back to us when we're merging. Safe and happy busing!

H. B.



**Howard and Ellen on the road in N.H. in '08.**

## July-August checklist

Many of us are on the road for summer vacations, or are planning to be, and your editor thought that a few simple reminders might save some grief down the road!

•During these hot days it is especially important to check air pressure in your bus tires (and those of your tow vehicle) before shoving off.

Low air pressure is one of the leading causes of tire blowouts. The flexing of the sidewalls in an under-inflated tire causes extreme heat to build. On middle and old age tires— say 5 to 8 years from date of manufacture—this makes them even more susceptible to failure;

•Our cooling systems are really put to the test these days, so make sure all belts and hoses are up to snuff. A loose fan belt will slip on the miter box pulley and insufficient air will be pulled through your radiator(s). At the least this will ruin your fan belt, and usually leads to a

high temp shut-down. This in turn can lead to a cracked head. It goes without saying that most Bus Nuts should travel with extra anti-freeze and distilled water in the event coolant is lost;

•Bus Nuts and RVers everywhere should be cautioned about voltage drop in busy campgrounds during the hottest time of the day. Brownouts can play havoc with the sensitive electronics we carry, including the air-conditioners we rely on. Test the voltage at the post before you hook up, and if low, say under 108 v.a.c., ask for a different site, or go to a different campground.

•The well-prepared Bus Nut will have extra oil, a can of diesel fuel, fuel filters, and oil filters for both the DD in the back of the bus, and the generator in the side. And when boon-docking, keep the genny cooler by opening the access door if possible . A little extra noise is tolerable if you can rest assured that the gen-set is getting good air.



## For Sale

*From time to time, the newsletter is asked to post notice of members' buses or bus-related equipment for sale. Address submissions to [mikeheron@bellsouth.net](mailto:mikeheron@bellsouth.net)*

**MCI parts**, Pumpkin for MCI, 4:11 ratio; also 4.10 rear from MCI 12, ring and pinion gears only from MCI 102C3, rear Lights from MCI 12 (just like 102C3) Jack Campbell at 863-206-3838 or e-mail [earl1090@verizon.com](mailto:earl1090@verizon.com)

Two stock right and left MCI 96a3 side mirrors, \$10 each. Call 404-423-7919 or send e-mail to [grammie\\_60@bellsouth.net](mailto:grammie_60@bellsouth.net)

**Converted GM4903**, 1969 model, automatic, 8v71, loaded with all amenities, recent engine rebuild, six new tires, ready to hit the road.. Asking \$15,000. Call Ed Gallant at 401-575-3859 or e-mail to [.edannbus@aol.com](mailto:edannbus@aol.com)

**01 Eagle**, converted in the '90s, and beautifully outfitted, powered with a DD Series 60 engine (62,000 trouble-free miles), electronic transmission, Eagle Model 15 dash with complete ultra instrumentation, beautiful interior, solid surface counters, hardwood floors, hydraulic jacks, 15 kW generator, good tires, Imron paint. Asking \$40,000. Ed Fisher 804-370-4066, or [aandefisher@gmail.com](mailto:aandefisher@gmail.com)

# SEBN ANNUAL HALLOWEEN RALLY

## Hold the Dates!

Our annual Halloween Rally will be held this year **October 24 - 26** at Costley Mill, the charming plantation/catering facility/movie set owned by longtime members Syl and Beverly Bowman, in Conyers, GA, about 30 miles east of Atlanta just off Interstate 20.

Nestled in nature, resting along the banks of Big Haynes Creek, Costley Mill Park offers a retreat from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Only minutes away from Olde Town Conyers.

In addition to hosting picnics, family reunions and many many wedding receptions, the Bowmans have experience working with several film and television producers, including The Georgia Film Commission. Several commercials have been shot there, including Jeep and Lotto TV ads. More recently, they have hosted TV Shows filming on location, including Vampire Diaries, the new Teen Wolf series and American Pie.



Syl Bowman's garage, where he parks his Prevost, is a Bus Nut's dream!



**The Bowmans have already hosted one SEBN rally about eight years ago. There is level parking for 45 rigs.**



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW, AND PLAN TO JOIN US!**

## Southeast Bus Nuts Leadership

### Chapter Officers:

President– Charlie Bukoski [chasjudy@bukoski.net](mailto:chasjudy@bukoski.net)

VP / Treasurer– Marty Nixon [nixonmarty@aol](mailto:nixonmarty@aol).

Secretary--Judy Bukoski [judy@bukoski.net](mailto:judy@bukoski.net)

FMCA National Director-Bertha Showman  
[jrbmshow@aol.com](mailto:jrbmshow@aol.com)

## Advisory Committee:

Howard Best

Jack Campbell

Dorothy Ensley

Mike Heron

Leah Johnson

Chaplain: Beverly Bowman

Past Chapter Presidents: Art Hemen, Gene Brotherton\*, Russ Drummond\*, Howard Best, Mike Jackson\*, Lewie Hinman\*, Bill Zibell, Andy Metro, Ray Stiltner, Gerald Ensley, Jack Campbell, Mike Heron, and Duane Britt.  
(\* denotes deceased)

Visit our website:

[www.sebusnuts.org](http://www.sebusnuts.org)

This newsletter is now posted on the above website, FYI.

Newsletter Editor: Mike Heron

Please send stories, updates and photos to:

[mikeheron@bellsouth.net](mailto:mikeheron@bellsouth.net)

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