



Message from the Prez:

What a tough year we've had - - - losing several of our longtime members - - - Bob Moss, Clarence "Smitty" Schmitz, and Wilf Stemmler. How lucky we were to have them as friends and share all the good times over the years. They will remain fondly in our memories.

Graham and Mary Catherine Ricks organized a "mini rally" in Key Largo at the end of January -- but they did so much work, it was difficult to tell that it was a "mini". We enjoyed an activity fair, a group luncheon, several potluck type gatherings, and a wine and cheese hosted by Point of View RV Resort. We gained several new members before and during the rally. Many Royale Coach Club folks enjoyed boat rides, a trip to Key West, bike rides and many other activities. Many thanks to Graham and Mary Catherine for all of their hard work.

At the start of the Hilton Head Rally in April, Bill Sage rendered his resignation, effective immediately. Nominations were opened at the general meeting and I was elected president. Because it is okay to hold 2 offices in the same club, I will continue to serve as Royale Coach Club Secretary as well. Thank you for your confidence -- it is an honor to be your president.

The weather gods smiled down on us once the Hilton Head Rally started. The boat trip aboard the Spirit of Harbour Town and the trolley tour of Savannah were enjoyed by the group. Many of us rented bicycles and enjoyed the 50+ miles of bike paths - - to the beach, on the beach, and to/from area restaurants. Rita Creel embroidered make up bags for the ladies and provided the green backpack bags. She also made another quilt to raffle out of her magic hat. Thank you, Rita!

Thank you to Liberty and Prevost for their continued sponsorship of the Royale Coach Club. Gary Patterson of Liberty was in Hilton Head showing off the brand new Emerald coach, and we were all excited to see this new line of coaches. Prevost sponsored our bus trips and Capital Tours did an excellent job of getting us to our activities in style.

Jim and Jenny Evans are gearing up for the fall 2014 rally in Dundee, OH -- Amish country....
Sept 21 - 26. Slots are filling up quickly for this Midwest rally. I hope to see you there!

Thank you to all of the officers of the Royale Coach Club. Much behind the scenes work goes on to keep things moving:

Bo Reahard (2nd VP) is constantly updating the web site and helping rally masters get rallies off the ground. Jim McNulty (1st VP) is lining up future rally locations and hosts. Graham Ricks (Treasurer) is keeping the books, sending checks, etc., etc. Ron Kitchings (National Director), Mary Habicht (alt. National Director) and Wayne Bost (director) know lots of history of the club and are very helpful. Kally Kitchings is wearing 2 hats -- Newsletter Editor and Sunshine Reporter -- sending cards out for the Royale Coach Club. Thanks to each and every one of our officers for all that you do for the club.

Wishing you safe travels as you enjoy using your motorhomes. Keep your eyes open for good places for future rallies -- having a variety of rally masters keeps the Royale Coach Club interesting and unique.



Key Largo – A Winter Rally Beach Gathering



Rally Recap – Kally Kitchings

For the second year in a row Graham and Mary Catherine Ricks organized a wonderful food filled, limited schedule, fantastic location and absolute fun gathering in Southern Florida. Last year was Everglade City and this year was Key Largo. Thanks Graham and Mary Catherine for all that y'all have done.

I have been accused during my lifetime of making grand entrances but the entrance that Ron and I made to Key Largo tops them all. We were not about to let a broken-down-on-the-side-of-the-road-coach keep us from attending this rally so we just had the tow truck deliver us to the Point of View RV Resort so we could join in all the fun. It was just a few days later that we were up and running thanks to the help of our rally friends, Allison Transmission and a credit card!! It sure was good to hear that engine start and see that transmission go into gear. Sure don't want that to happen again.



All the ladies loved the shopping, shopping, shopping! As you can see from the below photo many of us had the same taste in shoes.



Oh, and did I mention food? The entire time on Key Largo I only had to “cook” one time for our pot luck. All other meals were eaten out - - - that’s my kind of rally! There were many organized and many unorganized outings to restaurants and even some bike rides to Starbucks.



One afternoon the Gould's, the Volberding's and Ron and I went on the six person glass bottom boat ride. It is amazing how clear the water is and what we were able to see on the bottom of the ocean floor. Plant life, fish (including a shark), jellyfish and even a sunken ship were viewable. The Volberding's also joined us to tour the Turtle Rehabilitation Center. It sure was interesting to see how they were able to nurse sick or injured turtles back to health and release them back into their native habitat.





I'm not quite sure what Laurel Volberding saw in the Turtle Hospital but whatever it was it scared her!

Many couples opted for the moonlit cruise on the paddleboat. Most everyone met in the campground and boarded a shuttle bus to get us to the boat.





Stanley was having fun on the back of the bus!

I can honestly say that if the boat was still out there cruising then Wayne Bost would still be out there dancing. Way to shake a leg Wayne!



And then there was the conch shell blowing contest! No one knew until the contest that Shirley Sage used to play the trumpet which basically guaranteed her first place in the contest. Stanley Reahard

came in a close second with Mary Habicht a distant third!!! But Ron - - - yes, my poor Ron - - - could not even get a toot out of the shell! There was a lot of laughter that evening.



The Conchettes playing their duet!!



The sunsets were magnificent!

There were so many different outings at different times I was not able to attend all of them. I did however capture a few more photos! Here is Charlotte Hatcher getting a poolside back massage and Ron Kitchings with his "wine go-bag"!



The fearless four on a long bike ride - - - The Ricks and the Kitchings!



No one could have asked for better weather!

In all, 51 coaches registered for the rally, but 16 of those had to cancel for various reasons, leaving an attendance of 35. Five new couples joined the club last year specifically to attend this event, and five more members were added in Key Largo. Ten new members from one rally might be a new record. Since this was not an official Royale Club Rally any of the new members that attended the Key Largo rally that attends our next rally in Hilton Head will be considered "First Timers." Sure hope we see all of them there!

Many thanks to Graham and Mary Catherine for once again organizing our unofficial winter rally. I wonder what they may have up their sleeves for next year!!



The phone kids have today when they are six.



The phone my kids had when they were six.



The phone I had when I was six.





Hilton Head – 2014 Spring Rally – Let’s Go to the Beach!



Rally Recap – Kally Kitchings

We’re late, we’re late, we’re late - - that is how Ron and I felt arriving at the Royale Coach Club 2014 Spring Rally. This was the first time since attending our first rally way back in 2002 that we did not arrive early - - - and I sure hope it will be the last time. So many people told us we had already missed out on several pot lucks and events. At least we did arrive in time for the first official function of the rally which was an appetizer pot luck at the spacious clubhouse of the Hilton Head Island Motorcoach Resort. There were enough appetizers to make a full meal - - - so I did!!

Our rally masters, Richard and Anne Gould, had the second day started with the first of four breakfasts that would be served. Then the day was our own to do as we pleased. Ron and I explored the island during the morning hours and then just relaxed during the afternoon. The evening was a wine and cheese gathering sponsored by Liberty Coach (Thanks Liberty!) Normally I would say the Wine and Cheese was “at” the Liberty Coach but this rally was a little different because the coach was not a Liberty. Liberty has teamed up with Emerald Luxury Coach out of Stephenville, Texas to supply new and exciting coaches to the market place. Emerald coaches are fashioned much like a Royale in the fact that the cabinetry is made from hardwood. To learn more about Emerald please go to: www.emeraldluxurycoaches.com . Here are two photos of Emerald Coaches from their website.



We all are very well aware of the mishaps that can happen to our coaches and the frustrations that ensue. Here is first timer Mike Meyer sticking his head out of his coach because he got locked inside!! Of course all the Royale men were there in a flash to get him “unlocked”!



The third day was full of touring and boating. The Prevost passenger coach picked us up at the resort (Thanks Prevost!) and took us to the landing to catch the Spirit of Harbour Town for our boat ride to Savannah, GA. The boat ride was relaxing and long enough that we were able to converse with all of our friends of the Royale Coach Club.





And we all had a strong enough cell signal to check our emails and facebook status!



We were given tickets for the Hop-On Hop-Off trolley that is a narrated tour bus of the city. Everyone loved the trolley and we sure learned a lot about the city of Savannah!



The only thing I really wanted to see was the bench that Forrest Gump (Tom Hanks) sat on as he told most of his life story to strangers in the movie Forrest Gump. Unfortunately I found out the bench is no longer there but I did get this photo of the bridge that Forrest and his followers ran across in the film. That made my day!



Lunch was on our own and there were plenty of restaurants to choose from. I know that Wayne and Avis Bost really enjoyed their meal at Paula Dean's place. There were some restaurants on the river and we could view all the barges traversing the river.



Friday was a day on our own. As for Ron and I along with Mike Lein, Bill Bunch, Jim McNulty and Wayne Bost, we grabbed our clubs and played a round of golf. Mike picked a beautiful golf course to play on and I think I will leave that task for him in Dundee, Ohio also (Mike, hint, hint!)

Our last day of the rally was spent touring the Antebellum Homes of Beaufort, SC. Our tour guide was very informative about the homes and the area. We were on the walking tour which I am very glad of because I don't think a Prevost bus could have navigated this street!



Our last meal was at the Chart House restaurant and was simply delicious. There was wonderful conversation and a lot of laughter. Once again my table was accused of having “way too much fun!”



Final Dinner - - - Final Good Byes!

And I must mention another “first” for the Royale Coach Club. We now have the first mother/daughter members to the club - - - Rita Creel and her daughter Amanda Godfrey!!



Many thanks to our sponsors Liberty Coach, Emerald Coach and Prevost for all that you do for our club. And many thanks to Richard and Anne Gould for all the effort and hard work it takes to put on a rally.

Y'ALL DID A GREAT JOB!!!!



EMERALD LUXURY COACHES ATTENDS ROYALE COACH RALLY

Stephenville, TX, - Emerald Luxury Coaches would like to say thank you to everyone for allowing us to be a part of the recent Royale Rally in Hilton Head, SC. It was a great pleasure to meet and visit with wonderful people who enjoy their Prevost Coach! We truly appreciate the fun and fellowship while viewing the beautiful coaches! We feel a kindred spirit with the Royale Group as we share the passion for an elegant hardwood coach offering the warmth of home. We would like to extend an invitation to stop in and see us if you are ever passing through Stephenville, Texas.

Emerald Luxury Coaches is a new brand and a new concept in motorhome conversions. We have been building our business since 1996, when we started producing high-quality trailer conversions. We are built on the renowned Prevost X3 chassis and body shell. The Emerald concept provides our customers with a thoughtfully designed menu of choices in optional equipment and design features. Starting with the best shell in class, we maintain that level of quality throughout the conversion process – using only the finest and most durable equipment, hardware and materials.

Emerald CEO John Walker is first and foremost a craftsman who insists on high-quality work and meticulous attention to detail – a continuous pursuit of perfection that inspires everyone on the Emerald team.

Each conversion is completed in our state-of-the-art 176,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility on 18 acres in Stephenville, Texas, which is about 60 miles southwest of Fort Worth. The facility was designed and built exclusively for Emerald production. The result is a high-quality, luxurious, easy to use, and durable custom-built Prevost Coach priced at a great value.

Emerald Luxury Coaches are available through one of our dealers, Transwest RV in Frederick, CO or Liberty Coach in Stuart, FL so come and see what these coaches have to offer.

“These retail partners not only distribute our remarkable coaches, but also play an integral role in making the Emerald shopping and ownership experience unique and personalized for each customer. They also give our customers more opportunities to be closely connected with us, through the dealer that is closest to their home.”

We are very excited with our new program and invite you to come experience Emerald Luxury for yourself. For additional information, please visit our website www.emeraldluxurycoaches.com or call us at 254-968-5733.

Well, in case you're thinking of being a rally master I thought I'd jot down my learnings.....it may help you to get off the fence.

You may not know it, but I'm an introvert. So I'm surprised to say that one of my favorite parts of the rally was on the first day or so, greeting folks after they pulled in and handing out the "goodie/info" bags. You get to meet everyone with a bit of time to chat and find out a little about them and their recent travels. I think this was the first rally that I absolutely knew who everyone was -- it was fun, and much less stressful than I had envisioned.

Probably my biggest lesson was one that I should have known ahead of time: make sure every little detail is written down in the contract!

Example I: In November, Richard and I had met with the manager at the Chart House Restaurant. He wanted to show us a room upstairs for our group dinner, but we told him (adamantly, looking him in the eye) that if there was no elevator we would need to be downstairs. He showed us a nice area on the main floor and we were happy with the location. He didn't put that detail in the contract -- I should have caught that -- and when we showed up - - they showed us into our room upstairs! Some prom kids had our spot! This restaurant was close enough that a simple visit/walk through earlier in the week probably would have corrected this issue

Example II: Even though you have lined up a caterer for meals, like breakfast, don't assume they will bring plates and eating utensils. Who knew? Luckily we caught on to this fact ahead of time.....

Don't be afraid to ask for help -- if you need a hand setting up tables or something, just ask! People in the Royale Coach Club are more than willing to lend a hand.

Save yourself a lot of footsteps: as you get registration forms in the mail, set up an email group for all the folks attending the rally. During the rally, when an impromptu meal/gathering/outing is drummed up, instead of running around (like I did) to communicate, you can just send an email. So simple!

But, after all was said and done, the people in our group are so helpful, kind and understanding; there really is nothing to worry about. I worried way too much. Being the rally master was kind of like being the mother of the bride -- you think it will be stressful but in the end it has gone by too quickly and was really lots of fun.

Travels by Max



I LOVE THE BEACH!

By Maxamillion "Max" Kitchings

Oh I really love to go to the beach and my folks took me twice this year! The first time I got to go to Key Largo and the second time I went to Hilton Head. I just love to wiggle my toes in the sand and swim in the ocean. I try not to swallow any of the water though because it is really salty. When I was on the beach I did not see any of my Royale friends so I don't know if they are as fashionable as I am. Here is a picture of me in my new swimming suit that mom bought for me. I have asked and asked but no one will really tell me . . . Does it make my butt look big?



I got to see so many of my old friends and then got to meet so many first timers at the two rallies. Mom always mentions her old friends and first timers in her newsletter and she told me I could introduce all my old and new friends in my letter this time. Here are some photos of many of us meeting and having a good time.



Here I am with Bonnie and Clyde Wilson.



And here is laid back Cosmo McCurdy



Lexie Bunch just wanted to kiss me hello!



Belle Habicht wanted her photo all by herself! Isn't she pretty??



My good buddy, Biscuit Barbeau



My new friends, Centary and Harley Stuffer



Misty and Lily Solberg just didn't know what to think of me.



Zoe Godfrey



Bridget Godfrey

Two Cool Dudettes



Jasmine and Sophie McNulty



Toby Harriman

Dallas Harriman

and Me!

Brand New Friends!



I don't know who this was but mom told me not to get too close - - - so I didn't!!!!

That's all the pictures that I have of my old and new friends. At the next rally in Ohio you will be able to call all my friends by their names. I am really looking forward to seeing all of them again.

Until next time, safe travels!

Maxamillion "Max" Kitchings



Kitchings Transmission Troubles

Enough to Make Me Want to Pull My Hair Out!!!



You would not believe what we have been through. For those of you that attended the Key Largo rally you are aware that we had to be towed into the park because of a transmission modular that went bad. For those of you not at the Key Largo rally, we really made a grand entrance. I have always had a fear of breaking down and having to be towed. Well that was just the start of our problems. After enjoying the wonderful week at Hilton Head with our Royale Coach Club Family we were heading back to Texas and were just west of Mobile, AL at 9:30 in the morning when we lost all power, zilch, none, dead!!!!!! There was an exit and we took it but unfortunately we did not have enough momentum to get us to the top of the hill. The passenger side tires were off the road in the grass and dirt but drivers side tires were still in the road. The engine was still running but the bus would not go into gear. Ron immediately got on the phone with Prevost and they found an Allison dealer 18 miles away (thank you Prevost.) I then got on phone with Good Sam's for the tow truck.

I HATE TOW TRUCKS!!!!!! BUT I LOVE GOOD SAMS!!!!



You would think simply calling a towing company for a tow truck to tow a bus 18 miles would be a fairly simple process. Think again. Between not having the correct tire saddles with the “first” brand new tow truck (it had 1600 miles on it) then the front tires of the “second” tow truck coming off the ground and not being able to winch the bus close enough to the tow truck to keep it from going sideways down the embankment, they finally figured out they needed the BIG MAMA to tow us the 18 miles. It is now approximately 3:00 in the afternoon. They disconnected the drive train and got us on the hook of the “third” tow truck. Sounds like we were on our way, doesn’t it???? Well the third tow truck had to go to a truck stop for fuel

before they could deliver us to the Allison dealer - - - but at least we were on our way. In the below photo you can see we are headed to the Pilot Truck Stop.



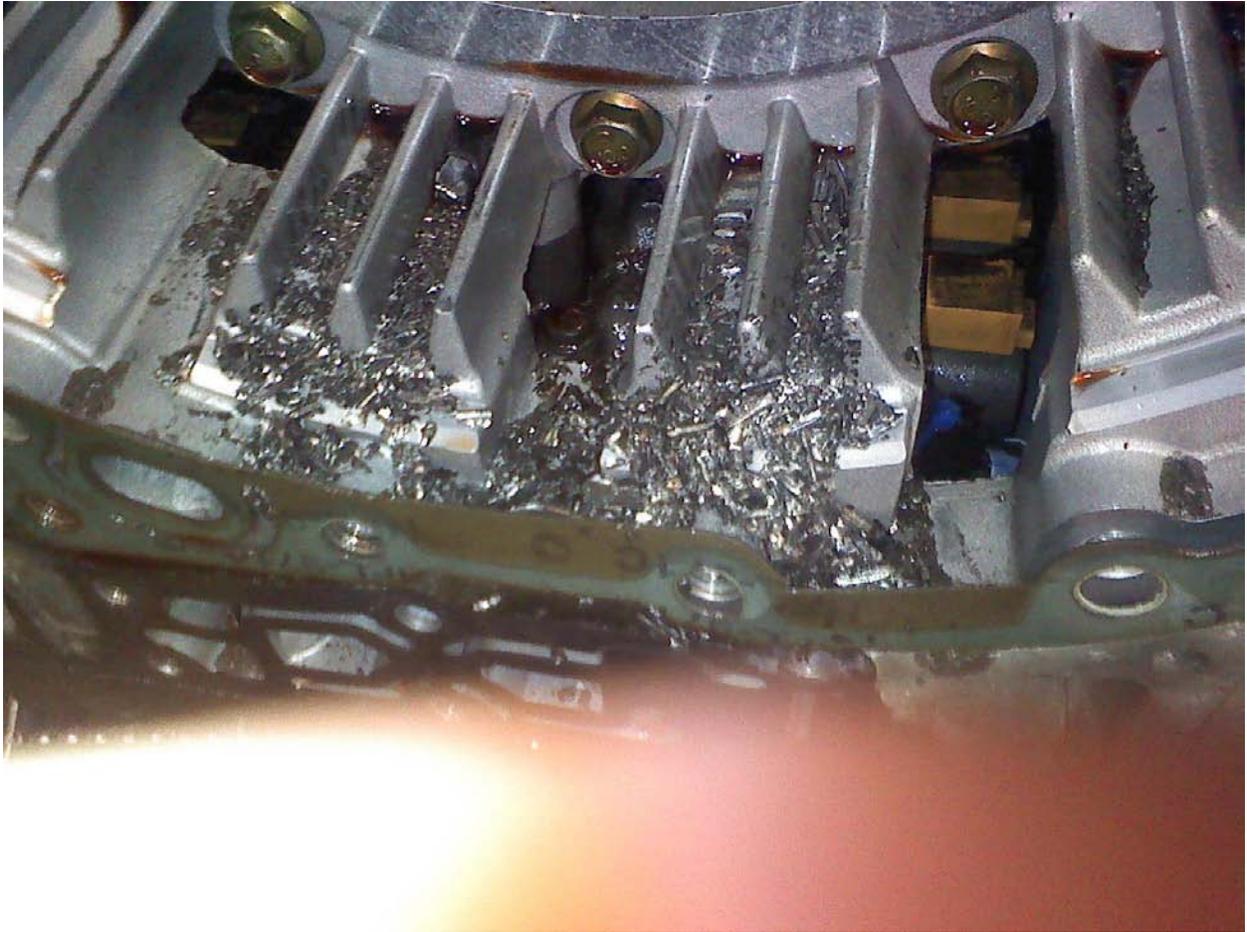
We get to the Pilot Truck Stop and driver discovers the previous driver had taken the fuel card out of the truck. The story gets better from here. We offer the driver \$50 for fuel but he refuses. Come to find out he did not even need fuel . . . The fuel gauge did not work so he actually had plenty of fuel to get us where we needed to be. While at the truck stop the driver decided to move the boom that was on the top of the truck to the front of the truck for better weight distribution. When he moved the boom the two stabilizer bars in the tow truck shifted, rolled and tore the fender off the tow truck with the stabilizer bars coming to rest on the rear tires/axle of the tow truck. He couldn't move. These stabilizer bars are made of pure steel, 8 inches thick, and 10 feet long and weigh 2,500 pounds each. He had to call another flatbed tow truck out and use the boom to pick up the stabilizer bars and place them on the flatbed truck before we could move. At this point we are blocking two fuel lanes and the driver did not even purchase fuel. Do you think Pilot was a little unhappy??? Notice how dark it has become . . .



Did you happen to notice the name of the tow truck company - - - Pitts & Sons! Well it really was the Pitts using them!! They finally got us to the Allison dealer and unhooked from the tow truck at 9:30 that night. Twelve hours to get us 18 miles. Thank goodness for alcohol!!!!

The next morning we met with the Allison people and they connected the computer to the coach and verified that the transmission was gone. They gave us a quote for them to rebuild the transmission and another quote for a new transmission from Allison. The difference between the two was three fold: money, time and warranty. We elected to have our transmission rebuilt by them because of money and time . . . Warranty was only thru their shop so would not do us any good except in Mobile, AL. We shut the coach down (with instruction from our faithful friend Graham Ricks because we had never shut the coach down in the 12 years we have owned her), put all of our food into the dealer's refrigerator/freezer (thank goodness they had one) and checked into a pet friendly motel for three days with expectations that it would be finished at the end of the week. We gave them the go-ahead to rebuild the transmission.

Mid-morning of the second day that the coach was in the shop we got the dreaded phone call that it could not be rebuilt. Apparently some kind of ring came loose and caused the gears to shift and then they all slammed together and just started shredding and then fusing together. Ron immediately went to the shop and this is what he found.



Now, Allison does not stock transmissions because of all the different configurations. Since we had no choice in the matter but to purchase a new transmission, we elected to drive back to Texas in the truck while Allison was building us a new transmission in Indiana and then ship it to Mobile to have it installed. We spent five days in Texas and three more days on the road going back and forth to Mobile to pick up the bus. But one good thing - - -

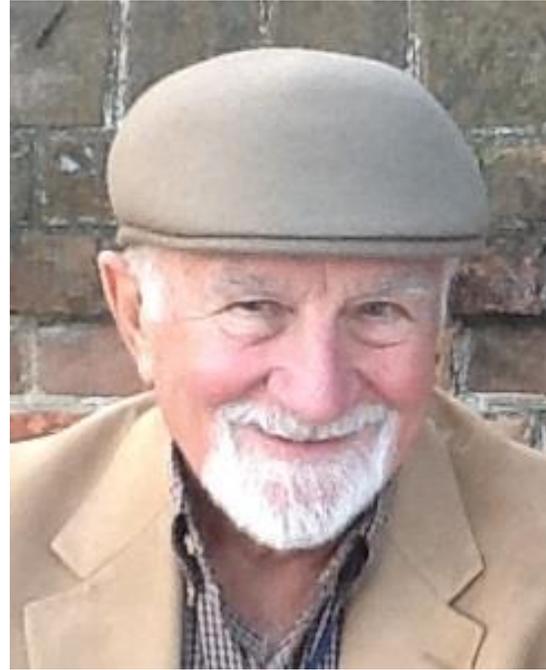
We have a two year warranty anywhere in the country!!!!

I sure hope this is THE END!!!

IN MEMORY OF OUR FRIENDS LOST



Bob Moss



Smitty Schmitz



Wilf Stemmler

Not Pictured – Terry Irwin