



Bird Tracks

Summer 2013

SA Nest Design

July - September, 2013

Blue Bird Chapter FMCA

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President's Message

by Charlie Vaughn

STOP whatever you are doing and sign up for the 4th Annual Reunion in Sevierville, TN. by calling River Plantation RV (865-429-5267) to reserve your campsite.

Next, send in a check for your rally fee to: Blue Bird Chapter of FMCA, 3590 Round Bottom Road, Cincinnati, OH 45244. I mailed each member the forms and they are available by downloading them from this newsletter. I look forward to seeing you.

Members who have already committed to attend are as follows: Tom and Sandi Bay (Hosts), Ross Dover, Barry and Lucy Grim, Barbara Hanke, John Smith and Sheila Ciampi, Dan and Bobbie Jensen, Jim and Jean Thompson, Garland and Sharon Kirby, Charles and Martha Vaughn. Maurice and Rozanne DeShazer, Ron and Dorinda Rueckwald. Please join the crowd at the 4th Annual Reunion.

I want to remind you that the club has always had a policy of allowing coach owners who do not own a Blue Bird to come to our rallies as a guest of a Blue Bird Chapter member. So go ahead and call a friend and ask them to join you on the road and enjoy one of our Blue Bird Rallies.

Plans are finalized for Garland and Sharon's rally in Creede CO. All the information is on the website.

We are working on getting a hands-on tech to attend the Sevierville rally. If you would e-mail me regarding any needs you already know need repair, it may encourage them to attend. I will keep you posted.

I am seeking individuals who are willing to help with future newsletters. All skills are needed, i.e., editor, proofreaders, writers and graphic artists. Our newsletter is very important to the chapter. I need your help.

Travel Safely, *Charlie*



From the Editor's Desk

It's SUMMER in *Bird Tracks*' land! Whether you're on the cool Oregon Coast, as we are, or enjoying the majestic Rocky Mountains or Great Smokies ... or in one of the warmer locales near the ocean or the desert, we're certain you're celebrating summer with gusto in this great country of ours. If you're living in your motor home because you love to travel, you'll have ample opportunity with the wonderful rallies being planned!

I have enjoyed editing *Bird Tracks* these past two years. My team will put together one more issue, scheduled to be published October 1, 2013. After that, it's someone else's turn to take the reins and put together their own staff. Let Charlie know of your interest!

So what am I going to do with all my spare time? I've just completed my first novel, and am working to publish it on-line with Amazon once I'm through with the editing and formatting stage. I've always written, but more with a journalistic bent or else in the theater arena. Traveling in our Blue Bird has opened new horizons for me, and this book will be the first in the *Bird Treks Mystery Series*. The books will follow Maggie and Ben Graham as they travel in their Blue Bird Motor Coach, named *Bird Treks*! The first tale is set in the magnificent redwood forests of northern California. I'll let you know once I have it online and available for purchase. I've printed an excerpt in this issue of *Bird Tracks* to pique your interest.

The other activity which is keeping me out of the bars is a *Comedy Cabaret* series I'm creating, writing one-hour comedy routines or plays to be performed at RV resorts (or other intimate settings). I'm gathering a group of thespians, *The Troupe d'Trailer Trash*, to offer these performances in a Readers' Theater format. We're a fledgling group, but are having great fun. We've performed twice thus far, once in Oregon and once in California, and have our third play scheduled for July at Pacific Shores Motor Coach Resort in Newport, Oregon.

Now I realize I'm being shameless with all this self-promotion. However, everyone in our club has a story to tell, and interesting hobbies they've embraced. Yes, we all love to travel. But there's much more to our lives than being on the road. Martha Rowe Vaughn is a published author, and I've had the privilege of reading two of her wonderful books. You just see a snippet of her life with her contributions to this newsletter. Ann Ward is an incredibly talented artist. Neat Scott is the folk art queen! We need to know the stories of our members! If I could give any advice to my successor, it would be to print a biography of a member in each issue!

That said, take a look at the tributes to Joanne Dover and James Baber in this publication. Martha wrote about James earlier this year -- Praise be! We dedicate this issue to the two of them, as well as any other members we lost this past year. God speed. Keep on trekkin'!

Birthday and Anniversary wishes to those celebrating in July, August or September. Sending sunshine thoughts to all of you --

Jenise Harper

Richard's Ramblings

by *Richard Ramsey*



Travails of owning the Bird -- Sue's banned from the motor home. First, I had to make a trip back to Columbus (Coach Craft) after Sue got to Lake Point RV Resort and asked, "Why didn't he take these two shades to fix?" I thought we only had one shade

that would not work, but NOOOOOOOO, we had three shades that did not work. So, after venting a bunch of built-up frustration, I got in the car by MYSELF and drove 100 miles round-trip back to Columbus with Sue's other two shades to be fixed. I drove by myself and would not allow the *vixen of motor home chaos* to go with me. For the fourth time, they could not fix my blinds while I was there, so another trip is in order. Supposedly they have to order some parts. I have a small fortune in repair cost on these Roman Shades. If I knew then what I know now, my coach would have **new** shades.

Then this morning, I discovered the shower head was broken. It worked great the last time I took a shower in the bus, so it is blatantly obvious to me that Sue tore it up. She denies it of course, but there are only two people who have taken showers in the coach and I know I did not break the shower head. I made a command decision to ban Sue from the coach forevermore. I hope she doesn't mind sleeping in the car.

Selling the Bird -- Sue is sad. I have mixed emotions. Our beloved LXi of 6.3 years is sold. The new owners are recuperating from the wreck of their previous Blue Bird, lucky to still be walking and talking -- but then the selling point of a Blue Bird is how well built and safe they are! The LXi is the most comfortable motor home I have ever owned. I kept the LXi two years longer than any other coach. I put about 70,000 miles in those six years. This coach is the only coach which has been to the West Coast (three times), and Newfoundland. All the other coaches never made it more than a long day's drive from home, except when I took the '94 bird to the Maritime region of Canada. Oh well, our traveling

days are over except for short trips less than 350 miles in the toter trailer.

When delivery day came about, I thought we were not going to be able to depart. I pulled the Bird out of my Toy Box with the car hooked up, and Sue starts yelling, "The Cat! The Cat!" I stopped, and the cat that I hoped Ron and Dorinda were going to adopt was on top of the motor home, and refused to come down. I climbed up on the roof with great difficulty and grabbed that darn cat. I then yelled ... Well, let me say that I yelled very politely and gently to Sue to climb part way up the ladder and get the cat. Sue informed me that she could not. To which I answered, "As crippled as I am ... if I can do it, so can you." "No, I cannot," she replied. To which, I said, "If you do not try, then you will never do it." To which she said --- well, never mind. I dropped the cat down on Sue and ... well, we left together, much to my surprise.

The coach was delivered. The check has been deposited. The lonely trip home completed. The Toy Box looks empty. I am now motorhome-less. The trip home was sad. Sue drove and I basically rode, silently, engrossed in my thoughts of life after Blue Bird. I reflected on the great people we had met. I further reflected on the adventures of discovering new places of wonder and beauty.



Thoughts on owning a 'toter trailer' -- I checked with the parks that I have reservations with and they will allow me to come in my toter trailer in case I sell my bus. The rally organizers may ostracize us, but, hey, we are lovable, and they are nice people. Some of our Blue Bird friends asked what we were going to do. I told them there was only one thing to do. I would hook up my toter trailer behind their Blue Birds and then I could afford to go traveling with them. Look at the fuel savings by being towed by a Blue Bird.

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Richard's Ramblings, *Continued*

I just realized that I will probably be asked to leave some of the RV organizations that I belong to. FMCA requires you to have a motor home, which I will not have. Then the other organizations that I belong to (like the Family of Friends) require a membership in FMCA. Therefore, they will cancel my membership. Oh well, life goes on. Is the toter trailer as convenient as the motor home? NO. It is basically one step above a tent, but all I need is a bedroom.

Sue and I are having lively discussions about how to walk in the travel trailer. Sue walks heavy and when I ask her to tip-toe so that I do not get thrown out of my chair, she takes offense and a lively conversation ensues. Did I say conversation? The fact that I start singing, "I feel the earth move..." may not be in the best interest of improving relations!

In preparation to go to the beach, I found that the best laid plans of mice and men sometimes do not work. I hooked up my new LONGER truck to the travel trailer and found that my travel trailer was a PRISONER of the barn. I could not make the turn without the travel trailer hitting a tree. With the old Chevy truck, the turn was no problem. However with the new truck, which is about one or two feet longer, this is not the case. Fortunately, I stopped within an inch of the tree.

After several unsuccessful attempts to back up and reposition and re-angle the truck and travel-trailer in relation to the tree, I gave up. I got the tractor and pushed some trees and stuff out of the way. I proceeded again and missed the tree by the hair on my *chinny-chin-chin*. Next I had to make an 180-degree turn with one of my ponds in the way. It looked like I might not make it, but I squeaked by. If the pond had been a foot closer, my travel trailer would have forever been a prisoner of the barn.

Finally, we got on the road, arrived at the beach and, after an eternity (it seemed), I got set up. To say that Sue and I got on each others nerves while backing and setting up, is being polite. Of course, it was all Sue's fault!

Fun in the sun -- Each afternoon we would go down to what we call the cut and watch the boats come in and out, and the people fishing. The cut is a canal that boats use to enter the Gulf of Mexico. We analyzed each boat as it passed by and scrutinized the passengers. We also watched and critiqued the people fishing and throwing cast nets. We determined that it is definitely true -- a redneck actually thinks that, when he is 100-pounds overweight with a huge beer gut, he is SEXY. We see a lot of people who should put on a shirt! Heck, maybe a MuuMuu!



One day we decided to go 'scalloping' and left about 10 a.m. We would have gone earlier, but we woke up at three a.m. to thunder that lasted until about nine a.m. At that time, we checked the radar and it was clear. After fueling the boat, we headed to St. Joe's Bay. We probably were out there about two hours and began to hear thunder. A quick check of the radar on the I-Phone showed heavy rain west of St. Vincent Island, which was about 10 miles from where we were. However, we also saw severe weather to the north about 30 miles away. So, in a rare moment, we used good judgment and went in.

The boats were lined up to get loaded at the boat ramp, but because of the rare lucid moment of good judgment, we were number four in line to load the boat on the trailer. We pulled up to the shore and everyone jumped out and left me to drive the boat. *Tight* is not an accurate description. It was like threading the eye of the needle to maneuver the 25-foot boat through the maze to the waiting trailer. I surprised myself by doing a good job and not wrecking anything on the way. However, I missed the trailer on the first two tries. I finally hit the runners and loaded the boat on the third try, with a little help from my friends. Ray then pulled it out and I jumped off and climbed into my truck, while watching bolts of lightning to the west of us. Boy, we just dodged the bullet!

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Richard's Ramblings, *Continued*

Fun at the beach = Work at home -- Sue mentioned to our friend Ricky that she would love to have a couple of chairs at the beach house that were high enough so she could see over the porch rail while drinking coffee. Oh course, my thoughts were, "COFFEE? AT THE BEACH?" It was obvious that I would have to fall off the wagon, so I could enjoy those chairs as they were meant to be enjoyed. Oh, by the way, on our front porch of the beach house, we have a small window through the trees where we can see the Gulf. That window is hidden from your view when sitting in a regular chair. Sue wanted chairs that would be perfect for watching the waves through this gap in the trees.

Ricky built the chairs for Sue out of Cypress -- a type of wood that does not rot. so these are life-time chairs. Well, in my case, my life-time and my children's life-time! Now it's my turn. I bought some solid-white-stain. I thought Sue was going to help me, but she came down and immediately realized that there was work involved, and she disappeared until the deed was finished. I found a

spray gun that I bought 15 years ago and never used. (However, the dirt dabbers had found the gun and used it for their purposes, which was diametrically opposed to what I wanted to use it for.) I filled it with paint. The first air compressor I tried did not have enough pressure to do squat. So then I hooked it up to my big air compressor. It had plenty of air pressure and volume, but the spray gun would not work. The dirt dabbers saw to that. Armed with a small awl and mineral spirits, I disassembled the gun and sorta' opened it up. I attempted to paint with it, but gave up and got a plain ol' paint brush. But, you could see the brush marks. So, I went back to trying to fix the air-paint-gun. I poured out the paint and filled it up with mineral spirits. After about 30 minutes of poking and prodding, I got it to work, after a fashion.

While doing this, I was wearing shorts. I was wearing a short sleeve shirt. **BIG MISTAKE.** After completing the task, I was a **WHITE MAN.** My legs were white. My arms and hands were white. My new shorts were white. My blue shirt was white. My shoes were now white. The floor of the back porch was white. My grills next to where I was working were white. And, believe it or not I actually got some of the paint on the table and chairs.

Sue made me feel real good. She came down and looked at them and said, "I believe they need another coat of stain." I got news for Sue -- SHE can do it. She said she wanted the chairs stained a washed-out-white and, by golly, that is what she got. Because we bought washed-out solid-white stain. That description doesn't make sense to me, because if it is a stain, then how can it be solid?

It is apparent that I do not have any hope of a career as a painter. I always wanted to be a kept man. Now, lets see if Sue can keep me in the life style that I have grown accustomed to!?!

Time for me to go and do whatever.

Richard



TECH TRACKS

by Ron Rueckwald

DISH ORGANIZER

Aaarrrrggghhhhh! That's the sound emanating from the galley every time a dish was needed, usually one of the larger dishes on the bottom of the stack. Galley cabinets don't have lots of room as we do at home, but we found ways to tuck items in available spaces. Oh, we bought washcloths to place between the different sizes of chinaware, but that only solved the rattle problem and actually exacerbated the access problem, as well as looking like a garage sale.

Well, after an adequate amount of time to build some real irritation, a solution was born. Fortunately, we use Corelle-ware, which is light, durable, and nests well. That made it easier. A design came forth. First you have to decide what groups of plates to arrange in the oddly shaped space available. Make a cardboard template to get the right shape. Then buy some 1/4" plywood, cut, and glue together. Once together it is amazing how strong it is. Cutting a shallow rabbet in the sides for the shelves makes it easier. Cover the whole thing with trunk liner bonded with 3M spray-on contact cement. To keep the dishes from sliding off the shelf, make some stops out of some small angle aluminum stock, epoxy or bolt (tiny bolts) them to the edge and cover them with trunk liner, too. The whole assembly sits inside the cabinet without any mounting hardware. It doesn't move.

The result is a wonderful addition to the preservation of domestic tranquility. Works great. One of our Blue Bird guests exclaimed, "I WANT one of those" within about six microseconds of having seen it. It would be nice to pump them out in quantity, but these busses are mostly different. Here are some pictures of

the process as built for our '95. Now having reached the "aaarrrrggghhhhh" level on the new-to-us '00, it is time to do it again.

By the way, trunk liner is hard to find, but there are some sources. You can get it by the foot at Parliament, Holland, and perhaps most RV shops, and some marine stores where they call it "hull liner." However, for a small project like this, it is better to get the flimsy stuff without a harder backing that makes it difficult to wrap around the shelf edges. A source for that is Midwest Fabrics: midwestfabrics.com. Search for "trunkliner upholstery." Too bad they don't have lots of colors.



Azalea Blossom Rally

Pine Mountain, Georgia, April 2, 2013

By Martha Rowe Vaughn (Photos by Susan Crocker)



Have you had an owl fly so close over your head that your hair moved in the wind? Have you seen flower sculptures made of copper and paint that were so real looking that you couldn't tell the sculpture from the actual flower? If you haven't experienced these, then you should go to Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Georgia. Thirteen Blue Birds and Friends nested at Pine Mountain RV Park for an Azalea Blossom Rally that featured wonderful experiences in the area and fabulous food, food, food.

Gardner and Judy Wright and Charlie and Peggy McKeehan were hosts for the rally. We were fortunate to see hundreds of gorgeous azaleas and blooming flowers at our first day at Callaway Gardens. How did the Wrights and McKeehans manage to make everything bloom just in time for us? The colorful butterfly house was a step into the tropics out of the cold weather outside. Gorgeous butterflies from all over the world flitted about our heads and landed on neon-bright flowers. Callaway Gardens offers so many interesting things to do. One could easily spend a whole week golfing, hiking, bicycling, swimming, walking, and zip lining! My favorite event was the Raptor Show with owls, buzzards, and hawks flying over my head—a rare opportunity to see these magnificent animals on the wing and UP CLOSE! Put Callaway Gardens on your “bucket list” and take the grand children with you. We loved it.



Early Thursday morning we carpooled to Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia. We were honored to attend a graduation ceremony of the latest class of U. S. Infantrymen held in the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center. The soldiers wore their dress uniforms and looked so proud of their achievements and so young. It was touching to see them greet their families after the ceremony.

We met with a docent who led us through the Museum that pays tribute to the soldiers of the U.S. Army who have fought for our freedom. The infantry is the last unit to engage in a war and The “Last Hundred Yards” exhibit depicts the changing methods of war and war equipment and the bravery needed to finish a battle. It was moving and informative.

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Azalea Blossom Rally, *Continued*

Other exhibits had the actual accounts from soldiers of their experiences in the different wars along with their pictures, equipment, and guns. One area recreated the feeling of being in a trench during World War I. Relic equipment and uniforms from all the wars were on display.

Several of us decided to try our skill at the weapons firing simulator. Shooting M-16 rifles, five of us at a time shot at shadowy figures at different distances. The simulator rifles are used to train infantrymen instead of using expensive ammunition. Some of the figures moved and others were still. It was not easy to do and it is a good thing no one is depending on us to protect them. The highest score was 14 out of 20 and the lowest was 3 out of 20 shots. We all had a laughing good time, though, and came away with a deeper appreciation of the skill needed to be an effective soldier. The National Infantry Museum is a must see. Add it to your bucket list, too.



The next day brought us a different view of war. At the National Civil War Naval Museum in Columbus, we learned about the battles by the Union and Confederate Navies. Most of us have been exposed to the great land battles that took place during the Civil War, but few elementary histories mentioned much about the navies' part in the war. Port Columbus was a thriving industrial city and port located on the Chattahoochee River, 200 miles inland. It supplied uniforms, shoes, firearms, steam engines, cannons, swords, and iron for the ironclads—ships that were encased in iron over wooden hulls. Two resurrected hulls, the CSS Jackson, built for coastal defense and the CSS Chattahoochee, a gunboat built to protect Port Columbus, are on display. The largest collection of Civil War Naval Flags is at Port Columbus. These include the Confederacy's First National Flag and the enormous CSS Atlanta flag. We thoroughly enjoyed the museum and hope to go back at some point and take the grandchildren. They would love exploring the recreated cabins and decks.

The Springer Opera House in Columbus was our next stop with an artistic view of a bygone era. Built in 1871, it was a stop over between New York and New Orleans for entertainers. Many famous performers, such as Tom Thumb, W. C. Fields, and more recently Burt Reynolds have entertained at the Springer. Although renovated and enlarged for today's patrons, the Springer Opera House offers a wide range of performances all year. We toured the Springer and enjoyed seeing the areas behind the stage. The theater is magnificent and it was easy to see why it is designated a National Historic Landmark and the State Theatre of Georgia.

The next day's visit to Warm Springs and Franklin D. Roosevelt's Little White House brought back so many memories of a scary time in my young life. President Roosevelt was stricken by polio in his 39th year in 1921. My cousin contracted polio in 1957 when he was four years old. Exhibits at the museum displayed many artifacts from the years Roosevelt spent at Warm Springs "taking the baths" and hoping the mineral-rich warm waters would cure him. The advance of preventative medicine was also shown. How I remember the summers when we could not go swimming because of the polio scare. When my cousin became sick the whole family was devastated. Then came Jonas Salk's miracle shots followed by the widely distributed sugar cubes. My cousin was lucky. He survived with no aftereffects.



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Azalea Blossom Festival, *Continued*

The preventative came too late for President Roosevelt. He faithfully worked his limbs in the warm waters, but it was no cure for him. In the Little White House, the chair he died in while sitting for a portrait is right where it was on that sad day. The Little White House is endearing. It is so small and humble, the kind of home that anyone might have. The fact that the President of the United States

lived part of his life there amazes me. It was a different, gentler time.



Blue Birders love to eat. My best calculation is this was a four-pound rally. That's how much I gained and have yet to lose. We started out with a catered, scrumptious barbecue dinner at the clubhouse. Delicious! Breakfast the next day was billed as coffee and donuts, but instead we were treated to fabulous pastries from a local bakery. The freshly baked aroma and taste was heavenly. From the chocolate-filled to the cream cheese and spinach-filled pastries,

breakfast was wonderful. Of course, we out did ourselves at the potluck supper that night. Blue Birders are great cooks and no one left hungry.

The Fife and Drum Restaurant at the National Infantry Museum provided a separate room and a huge table for the 26 of us along with very good food for lunch. Stopping at the Brothers General Store after the Springer tour, we indulged in ice cream concoctions—much needed to pick us up in the afternoon, never mind we had eaten a filling lunch at Houlihan's.

After the morning in Warm Springs, we rolled in for the lunch buffet at the Bulloch House. Fried chicken, fried green tomatoes, broccoli casserole, cabbage casserole, salad, desert—the list goes on and on. Great country cooking, Southern style.

Warm Krispy Kreme donuts and coffee and juice greeted us on Saturday morning. Who can resist Krispy Kreme? Growing up near the original bakery, they are the ultimate donut to me.

Our Farewell Dinner on Saturday night was at the Carriage and Horses Restaurant very near the campground in Pine Mountain. We were treated to yummy Hors D'oeuvres and glasses of wine. Dinner was roast pork or baked chicken with vegetables followed by cheesecake. Dinner was a wonderful ending to a most fun and fat-filled rally. S'cuse me, I meant fact-filled!

Thank you, Gardner, Judy, Peggy, and Charlie for an interesting and entertaining rally. It was absolutely wonderful!

In Memory of JoAnn Dover

Submitted by Shirley Vance

Ross, JoAnn, Tommy, and I have traveled many places together for the past fifteen years. JoAnn was always ready for a road trip in their motor home. She was a quiet person, a caring person, and never spoke ill of anyone. JoAnn enjoyed such simple things that are dismissed by the busy pace of life, such as the beauty of the clouds (she loved finding and bringing my attention to shapes in the clouds), or just a scenic drive. In her later years when her memory began to fail, she could distinctively recall the words of beautiful hymns. She would smile and sing with all of her heart.

What we all loved about JoAnn was her heart for “Rossy”. In her eyes, Rossy could do no wrong. Their kind of love comes but once in a lifetime. Their love for one another has forever marked our lives. Ross was truly an example of a husband who loved unconditionally.

So, JoAnn, we are very honored to celebrate your life. We love you, we miss you.



“Miss Me but Let Me Go”

*When I come to the end of this beautiful road we travel
and the sun has set for me,*

Miss me a little but not too long, why cry for a soul set free?

Remember the love that we all shared,

*Miss me but let me go, for this is a journey we all must take
and each must go alone.*

It's all part of the Master's plan, a step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sick at heart,

Go to the friends we all know and bury your sorrows in their love,

Miss me but let me go.

Our loss is Heaven's gain-

James Baber: We will miss you!

James was born on June 25, 1928 in Dublin, TX to parents Otis Baber and Ola Lou (Ward) and entered into Heaven on May 23, 2013 at the age of 84. James enjoyed traveling in his motor home, hunting, NASCAR and working on vehicles. He graduated from Pascal High School in Ft. Worth and was employed for 35 years at Southwestern Bell. He was a member of the Tool Volunteer Fire Department, a reserve officer of the Tool Police Department, the Pioneer Club, Elks, VFW, and American Legion. James was Methodist by faith and a charter member of the Cedar Creek United Methodist Church.

My Friend Jim

by *Randy DuPree*

A few weeks ago we got the sad news that Jim Baber was sick. I have known Jim for a long time, close to 25 years. Everybody knows by now that Jim passed away. I think Jim was 84 or so.

Jim was a tough old Texan; nothing slowed him down. If he had a problem with his coach, he fixed it and continued on. If you had a problem with your coach, he would be right there, pushing you out of the way to get in there to fix the problem.

Did you ever shake hands with Jim? His hands were big, strong and scarred. I do think he could pinch your hand off if he wanted to!

Opinionated?

Not Jim!

Hahahaa! Yeah, right!

He loved the Wanderlodge owners, the Vintage Bird groups and the Family of Friends.

Everyone has a story about Jim.

Some are funny, some are serious, some are downright scary!

James was preceded in death by his parents Otis and Ola Lou Baber and his wife Charlotte Stone Baber. He is survived by his daughter Annette Miller and husband Wade of Ames, IA, two sons; James Baber of Carrollton, John Baber of Garland, six grandchildren; Matthew, Kevin, Jessica, John Jr, Jason, James, seven great-grandchildren, other loving family members, many friends, including the special lady most Blue Birders know, Sally Baze.



I remember his story about driving through Louisiana. He was driving an SP36 and Sally (Baze) was along. He went to sleep and woke up driving in the median, in all that mud, cruise control set at 55 mph. He never touched the brake, just gently herded that bus back onto the road and continued on.

A few weeks later, I was driving that same road, and I checked out the tracks in the median where he ran off the road. The ruts were deep. It's hard to believe that anyone could have driven out of that mess!

Jim, you will be missed. God Speed, Sir ...



Sunshine and Mists

by Brenda Rodgers

Hello to all of you from Georgia – the Peach State, and from Fort Valley in Peach County! Peach season has arrived with an abundant supply of delicious peaches, and, of course, great peach ice cream! We have just celebrated the annual Peach Festival, including the world's largest peach cobbler. Be sure and check it out on the internet.

We extend get well wishes to Brenda Horvath. She has recently encountered some heart problems, and would appreciate your prayers.

It was good news to hear that Chris Giffen is responding well to her recent treatments. She would like to thank everyone for their prayers and support.

We send our condolences to Glenda and Leroy Wilson in the loss of Glenda's Dad, Mr. Winfred “Wink” Frasier, on May 29. Mr. Frasier was 92. He had a long and successful career, including service in World War II. He also spent many years working with Wilson Ambulance Service and 37 years working with Glenda and Leroy at W.L. Wilson & Sons Funeral Homes.

We send our love to Sally Baze in the loss of James “Jim” Baber on May 23 in Texas. James was retired from Southwestern Bell. He was a charter member of Cedar Creek United Methodist Church. James and Sally attended most all of the Blue Bird Chapter Rallies for many years. They were recognized with a gift from the Blue Bird Factory for being the only couple to attend 100% of the All Birds' Reunion Rallies. Those of you who attended the Rally in the Valley last year will remember the amazing collection of Blue Bird memorabilia displayed by James and Sally. Please keep Sally in your prayers.

We send deepest sympathy to Larry Berberich in the loss of his precious wife, Sandy, on April 19, in Sarasota, Florida. Larry and Sandy have had Blue Birds for many years. We always enjoyed their visits to the factory.

We were all saddened to learn of the death of Ross Dover's wife, Jo Ann on May 7 of Dacusville, South Carolina. They were married 59 years. Jo Ann and Ross supported the Chapter Rallies over many, many years and served as hosts several times. Ross and Jo Ann have two sons, Keith and Chris, a daughter-in-law, Jeni, and six grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Nine Forks Baptist Church, 3207 Earls Bridge Road, Easley, SC 29640.

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Sunshine and Mists, *Continued*

We extend deepest sympathy to Steve and Debbie Mitchell, and Theresa Seagraves in the loss of their Dad, Harvey Mitchell, who passed away in May. Many of you will have fond memories of the great rallies sponsored by Parliament Coach in Clearwater, Florida. Harvey and Pat Mitchell were great friends to us over the years. At the time of his death Harvey was 73.

Beth Lamb advises that she and Ronnie's son, Andy, and his fiancée, Laura, will be married on July 6.

We send Happy Birthday wishes to Mr. Albert L. (Buddy) Luce, Jr. on his 91st birthday in July.

I hope you are making your plans to attend the Rally in the Valley in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, in October hosted by Tom and Sandi Bay. We will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Blue Bird Wanderlodge. (A fun fact: the first Wanderlodge that was sold had a price of \$12,000!)

Best wishes for a great summer with fun and safe travels.

*Warmest regards,
Brenda*

**Ten coaches in our
Family of Friends
Blue Bird Chapter of FMCA
participated in a rolling rally
down the Natchez Trace
last November.
Family Motor Coaching magazine
will publish an article in July
about that rally.
Be sure to check it out!!!!**



Cooking is for the Birds!



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium sauce pan, melt butter. Add milk and 2 tablespoons taco seasoning. Remove from heat and add potato flakes until incorporated. Press mixture into the bottom of a 10-inch pan.
2. Bake for 7-10 minutes until it just BARELY turns golden brown.
3. In a medium skillet, cook beef and onions until beef is browned and cooked through. Drain. Add Salsa and remaining taco seasoning. Cook until bubbly.
4. Pour into crust. Bake for 15 minutes, or until crust is golden brown.
5. Let cool for 5 minutes. Top with cheese, lettuce, and tomatoes. Cut and serve with sour cream.



Taco Pie (Rozanne DeShazer)

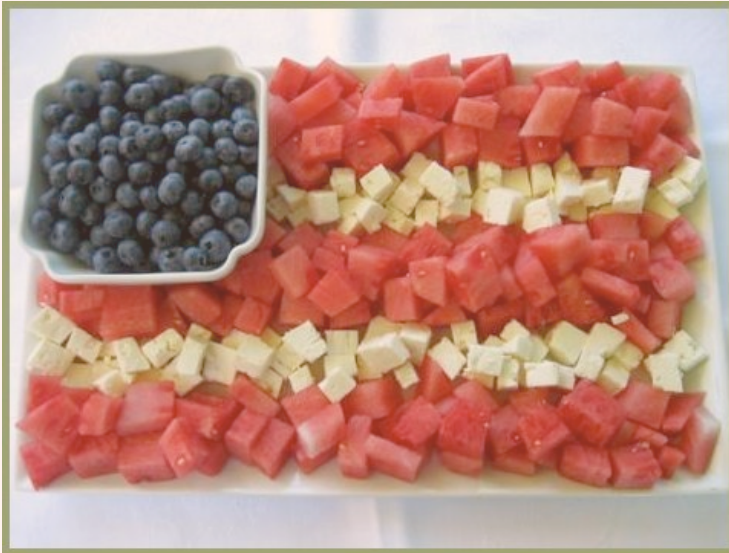
Do you have leftover potatoes and no taco shells or tortillas? Then this is your recipe! I always have leftover mashed potatoes and now I know a way to use them! I love this because it is so simple, different, but tastes absolutely delicious!

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup butter
- 2/3 cup milk
- 1 package taco seasoning mix
- 2 1/2 cups mashed potato flakes (you could also use left over mashed potatoes and omit the butter and milk)
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup salsa
- 1 cup shredded lettuce
- 1 medium tomato, chopped
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- Sour cream, optional

Neat Scott found some
'Berry Good'
Fourth of July creations for you.
Just check the goodies
on the next page ...
Give them a try and WOW your
Independence Day guests!

Cooking is for the Birds, Continued



Raspberry Pie Day

Raspberries were one of the first European plants brought to America. They belong to the rose family and are usually red or purple - although you can also find gold and black. These sweet berries have tiny edible seeds and an intense flavor and aroma. This makes them perfect for flavors and syrups, but their most common use is in preserves and pies. They like to grow in the northern temperate zones.

1 (9 inch) baked pie shell
1 qt. fresh raspberries
3 heaping tbsp. cornstarch
1 c. sugar

1 to 1 1/4 c. water (depending on juiciness of berries)

Sort the berries, dividing them equally. Reserve the best to place in the pie shell. Mash the remaining berries; you will get 1 cup. Put mashed berries, cornstarch, sugar and water in 2 quart pan. Cook and stir until thickened and glossy. Refrigerate 1 to 2 hours. Stir a few times while it is cooling. Line pie shell with dry whole firm berries. Pour the cooled topping over the berries in the pie shell. Smooth. Chill several hours until set. Serve with Cool Whip, whipped cream or ice cream.

**FALL COLORS IN THE MOUNTAINS OF TENNESSEE
FOURTH ANNUAL FAMILY REUNION
Hosted By: Tom & Sandi Bay**

**Tuesday (Oct. 29) Check in 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
BBQ. Dinner at 6:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday (Oct.30) Full breakfast at 8:00 a.m.
Free day
Pot luck dinner at 6:00 p.m.
Bingo with prizes after dinner**

**Thursday (Oct.31) Full breakfast at 8:00 a.m.
Business Meeting 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon
Fall Festival Party and Dinner at 6:00 p.m.**

**Friday (Nov. 1) Cont. breakfast at 8:00 a.m.
Ladies Luncheon at 12:00 noon**

**Saturday (Nov. 2) Full breakfast at 8:00 a.m.
Tech session 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.**

Sunday (Nov. 3) Farewell

All meals listed are included in the rally cost and served at the River Plantation Convention Center.

Cost of the rally is \$ 225.00 for two people. Additional person is \$ 112.00. Please send your registration and check to Treasurer, Blue Bird Chapter of FMCA, 3590 Round Bottom Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio 45244

**Please make your own reservations:
RIVER PLANTATION R.V. CAMPGROUND
1004 Parkway, Sevierville, TN 37862**



Phone: 865-429-5267

Registration Form

4th Annual Family of Friends Reunion

RIVER PLANTATION R.V. CAMPGROUND

1004 Parkway

Sevierville, Tn.37862

Phone: 865-429-5267

Names: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ **Cell** _____

The cost of the Rally is \$ 225.00 for two members. The cost for one member is \$ 112.00. You are welcome to bring a guest for \$ 112.00 each.

Number of Persons attending the Rally:

2 MEMBERS \$ 225.00 AMOUNT _____

1 MEMBER \$ 112.00 AMOUNT _____

GUEST(S) \$ 112.00 each AMOUNT _____

TOTAL _____

Please send your registration and check to Treasurer, Blue Bird Chapter of FMCA, 3590 Round Bottom Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio 45244

Please make your own reservations:

RIVER PLANTATION R.V. CAMPGROUND

1004 Parkway

Sevierville, Tn.37862

Phone: 865-429-5267

<http://www.rvcoutdoors.com/river-plantation/>

A Gathering of Birds! Colorado adventures!

You are invited to a “gathering of birds” in Alamosa, Colorado, the weekend of August 24. We will gather at the Alamosa KOA, 6900 Juniper Lane, Alamosa, CO 81101. (Reserve: 800-562-9157 or Info: 719-589-9757).

Nestled between the breathtaking San Juan and Sangre de Cristo Mountains at 7,550 feet, the Alamosa KOA in the San Luis Valley is your gateway to adventure. Come stay with us while you enjoy the Great Sand Dunes National Park, the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, and the Colorado Gator farm. Make your own reservations.

On Sunday, August 25, we will ride the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad’s Steam train. The Rio Grande Scenic Railroad’s Excursion Train takes passengers over an historic mountain pass to see the Rockies from the longest and highest standard gauge railroad in the country. LaVeta Pass is a majestic mountain pass with tight curves, untouched natural beauty and wildlife in the setting it was meant to be seen.

Excursion trains from Alamosa begin at the historic depot in the heart of Alamosa. On board, passengers can expect attentive service, wonderful scenery and lively conversation. Continuing the journey through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the train travels to LaVeta, a sleepy mountain town rich in history and culture, for a layover with enough time to enjoy the delicious food and quaint shops the community has to offer before the return ride.

If you want to join us on the train, call Karen James at 303-859-3822 or email Karen4247@aol.com. The cost of the train is \$79.00 per person. We hope to see you there!



Come early for Alamosa.

Stay for Creede!

Colorado at its finest!

BLUE BIRD RALLY IN CREEDE, CO

AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 2, 2013

Cost: \$100.00 per coach

Hosts: Garland and Sharon Kirby

Thursday, August 29 - Arrive in Creede, CO. Dinner will be at The Antler's Riverside Restaurant and Lodge. We will meet at 4:30 to car pool to the Antler's Restaurant. This meal is not included in rally fee and is optional. We will dine on the outside deck overlooking the Rio Grande River.

Friday, August 30 - Balloon rides Friday or Saturday. Breakfast will be served at 8 a.m. at 4UR Ranch for those who are not taking the balloon ride. This meal is included in your rally fee. The rest of the day is free. *(See activities below.)*

Saturday, August 31 - Breakfast will be served at 8 a.m. at 4UR Ranch for those who took the balloon ride yesterday. Balloon rides will be offered today, also. This meal is included in your rally fee. The entire day is free. *(See activities below.)* (We are intending to allow time to attend the theatre either Friday or Saturday night. On the night we don't see the theatre production, we plan to enjoy coffee and hot chocolate while we watch the sun go down on a Pool Table Road overlook.)

Sunday, September 1 - The entire day is free. *(See activities below.)* We will have a BBQ dinner at the Bear Lodge at 6 p.m. After dinner, we will have "family night." There is a pool table in the lodge, games, puzzles, and a wood stove -- if it is cold enough for a fire. We will have a fun night of relaxing, visiting, and playing games.

**Monday, September 2 -
Happy Trails!**



For a listing of activities in the Creede area, see the next page.

Here is a list of activities you may wish to enjoy while participating in the rally at Creede:

1. Riding in a balloon which leaves at 7 a.m. from the airport area across the street on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Enjoy the Balloon Festival activities all weekend. The cost of a balloon ride is \$150.00 per person.
2. Rafting on the Rio Grande River. We recommend Mountain Man Tours.
3. Rent an ATV or a Jeep and ride the trails around Mineral County.
4. Shop downtown Creede or other area towns.
5. Go to see the Great Sand Dunes National Park.
6. Go to Ft. Garland, Antonito, and Stations of the Cross at San Luis.
7. Go hiking. We can make reservations with a guide if you want one.
8. Go fishing/fly fishing. We can make reservations with a guide if you want one.
9. Go horseback riding. We can make reservations or you can contact Cottonwood Cove or Freemon's.
10. Drive in your own car around Bachelor's Loop, to Love Lake, to the Rio Grande Reservoir or up Pool Table Road.
11. Play golf at the Rio Grande Club in South Fork.
12. Ride the Denver and Rio Grande Scenic Railroad from South Fork, or the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad or one of the other railroad trips.
13. Go to the local theatre to see a different play.
14. Drive to Lake City, CO to see North Clear Creek Falls, Lake Cristobel and other beautiful scenery.
15. Drive over Wolf Creek Pass to Pagosa Springs and enjoy the natural hot springs or the local shops.
16. Visit Creede's Underground Mining Museum, the Creede Historical Museum and the Creede Cemetery.
17. If you enjoy museums, there are many in the area in Lake City, Ft. Garland, Antonito, Manassa, Alamosa, etc.
18. Go to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.
19. Get a manicure, pedicure, etc. at Ooh-La-La Spa.
20. Attend craft classes at Bristol Yarnworks Studio.



If you are interested in attending this rally, please contact Garland Kirby at Treasurer@BlueBirdChapter.Org. Hope to see you in Creede, CO!

To see the article written about Creede, please look at the April-May 2012 issue of ***Bird Tracks***.

CREEDE RALLY REGISTRATION FORM

AUGUST 29-SEPTEMBER 2, 2013

LAST NAME(S): _____

FIRST NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE: _____

CELL PHONE NUMBER(S): _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING RALLY:

2 MEMBERS @ 100.00 AMOUNT: _____

1 MEMBER @ 50.00 AMOUNT: _____

GUESTS(S) @ 50.00 each AMOUNT: _____

RALLY TOTAL: _____

ACTIVITIES:

_____ BALLOON RIDE(s) @ \$150.00 per person AMOUNT: _____
(Includes a breakfast with the crew.)

_____ THEATRE TICKETS @ \$33.00 per person AMOUNT: _____

ACTIVITIES TOTAL: _____

RALLY TOTAL \$ _____ ACTIVITIES TOTAL: _____ GRAND TOTAL: _____

Please make your check out to Blue Bird Chapter of FMCA and mail to Blue Bird Chapter,
3590 Round Bottom Road, Cincinnati, OH 45244

Booking the balloon rides will be on a first come, first serve basis. If you want to take a ride, we need to know as soon as possible in order to guarantee that you get a chance to take a ride. Therefore, please complete this form and let us know by Feb. 1, 2013. After Feb. 1, we will do our best to get you a ride.

You will need to contact Mountain Views RV Resort @ 719-658-2710 to make your campground reservations (\$35.00 per night). Please be sure to tell them that you are with the Blue Bird Rally, and when you will be arriving and leaving especially if you plan to come early or leave later than the rally dates.

Bird Treks Mystery Series (a 'teaser')

by Jenise Harper



Chapter 1

Maggie Graham couldn't remember the exact moment she and her husband Ben decided to adopt the RV lifestyle. They lived comfortably in a mountain community outside Denver. As small business owners, they had the freedom to vacation whenever, wherever and however the business and their modest but reliable income would allow. When the opportunity to sell the business arose, so also did a sense of adventure. Maggie always felt she inherited a bit of gypsy blood, which had been satiated by family trips around the country. Ben's dreams were focused on boating, especially after chartering several times in the San Juan Islands/Washington State.

Since becoming empty-nesters a few years before, they started considering lifestyle options. They were in their mid-fifties. The three kids were ensconced in professions they loved, and both Maggie and Ben felt the urge to expand beyond their Colorado horizons. But, what? Where?

"When?" was answered with the offer Ben received for his company. The piece of equipment he invented served a niche market in the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, and fit well with the product line of a larger, country-wide corporation. The offer was sufficient for Maggie and Ben to accept.

Ben suggested they buy a boat in Washington and live on it, since they loved their charter experiences. Maggie demurred, feeling there was much of the country left to see, and a boat in the northwest might curtail visiting other areas. What about a vacation rental here and there? What about chartering a boat in Florida or California or on the Chesapeake? What about traveling the country in a motor coach?

And there it was! Traveling the country in an RV! Why not? The consensus: "Let's do it!"

Ben took to the challenge of locating a motor home, mapping out all the dealers in Colorado. They attended RV shows, and called on owners with rigs for sale. One day Ben drove Maggie to see a Monaco he saw advertised. The drive from Denver to Loveland was lovely -- one of those glorious September days when the aspen leaves were just beginning to change color from green to red to gold.

"Here she is," the salesman beamed, "a real beauty." Maggie looked through the 38-foot rig. It was nice, very much like the others they had seen. As she stepped outside, she glanced around the lot, and spied another coach near the service area. It was green and tan and brown, and it called to Maggie. "What about that one over there?"

"Oh, we just took that in on trade for a toy hauler," the salesman explained. "We haven't cleaned her up yet. Are you familiar with Blue Birds?"

"I am," said Ben. "At least, I am familiar with their school buses."

Continued on the next page

Bird Treks Mystery Series, continued

The salesman responded that the luxury coach division of Blue Bird closed down in 2006, but the company continued its school bus division. "Quality either way," the salesman affirmed. "This one is a 2001, a one-owner rig. Would you like to see her?"

"Yes!" Maggie's enthusiasm was marred only by the cautionary look Ben gave her. "Oh, my," she exclaimed after entering, taking in the decor and length of the coach.

"Wow!" Ben was looking at the driver's console. "It looks like an airplane control panel!"

"Yep! Even has an altimeter," the salesman pointed out. "Those Blue Bird folks didn't miss a beat!"

Maggie was absorbing the details of the rig, and turned to Ben. "I love it!"

Ben stood there, shaking his head. "Maggie, this is 43-feet long! I thought we agreed to something around 38-feet."

"Don't you like it?"

"That's not the point. I DO like it. I like the quality. I like the all-steel construction. I like the fact that this is probably one of the safest motor coaches available. But it's too big!"

A week later, Ben drove the green, tan and brown Blue Bird motor coach into their driveway! Maggie christened it *Bird Treks*.

Maggie and Ben discussed how their journey should progress. Since it was nearly October, Ben suggested, "Let's head to the Redwood Forests of Northern California, and we'll work our way down south. We'll follow the sun!"

Maggie pored over catalogs describing RV campgrounds, and chose a park between Crescent City and Eureka, California, for the first phase of their travels. They reserved a space for the month of October.

The trip took nearly a week. They headed northwest to Grants Pass, Oregon, and then traveled southwest on the Redwood Highway to the California Coast and the redwood forests. Despite Ben's reputation for a lead foot on the accelerator, he chose to relish the journey, rather than rush it, and they meandered on secondary roads, as well as main arteries. The autumn colors were glorious; the scenery was varied and always interesting. Maggie picked up a leaf at each stop to press in her memory book -- a travel journal she would fill with vignettes to treasure in later years.

*Chapter Two will be printed in our October edition of **Bird Tracks**.*



Your Board of Directors:

President: Charlie Vaughn
President@BlueBirdChapter.org

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Treasurer: Garland Kirby
Treasurer@BlueBirdChapter.org

Secretary: Susan Crocker
Secretary@BlueBirdChapter.org

National FMCA Director: Jon Scott
NationalDir@BlueBirdChapter.org

Tracks' tidbits:

From Randy DuPree, Wanderlodge Owners Group (WOG)

Summer is here, and travels are well under way. We are all looking forward to the summer rallies. I'm not sure what plans the Vintage Bird Group has for this summer, but the WOG group has a few great rallies planned. We have a Michigan rally, and plans are underway for the big rally at Pine Mountain in October. One hundred fifty coaches will be there this year.

Formally RATs (Rally Across the Street), we now simply call it the WOG rally at Pine Mountain. You can see the rally schedule on WOG, plus get coach info, parts info, tech advice and even personal advice!

