

# In a Nutshell . . .

The Official Newsletter of the National United Travelers, Inc.  
A Chapter of Family Motor Coach Association, Inc. (FMCA)



Issue 56

We're NUTS . . .

December 2011

## Chapter Officers and Appointed Positions

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Alt Nat'l Director 352-446-0079	Winnie Williams <a href="mailto:natdir@rvnuts.com">natdir@rvnuts.com</a>	Tech Support	Kenny Blackmon <a href="mailto:nutstech@rvnuts.com">nutstech@rvnuts.com</a>

## NUTS News and Announcements

**January Rally Location and Date Changed:** The January Rally is now being held at Lazydays RV Campground starting on Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup> thru Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup>. The NUTS rally will begin immediately after the end of the Tampa RV SuperShow.

### **From the Newsletter Editor:**

Sorry this is a long news letter but there is a lot of information to be passed to the membership. Please read it all.  
*Russ McGinnis, News Letter Editor*

Kenny Blackmon, our NUTS Tech, recently joined Camping Connection, Kissimmee, as their Service Manager. This benefits the NUTS two-fold: 1) since Kenny will no longer be traveling, he will be able to provide better turnaround to our email inquiries, and 2) the NUTS now have a connection to a great RV accessories, parts and service center, Camping Connection. You can still contact Kenny via our NUTS tech email address: [NUTStech@rvnuts.com](mailto:NUTStech@rvnuts.com).

### **NUTS President's Club card :**

It seems that Camping World is no longer honoring the NUTS President's Club card, so there will be no 10% discount. This problem will be investigated and you will be informed of the results.

### **Boat Parade at the Holtman's :**

We are sorry to announce that the Boat Parade canceled this year due to illness. *Carl & Nancy Holtman*

### **2012 Tampa Supershow and NUTS January Rally**

The Tampa Supershow is held each year at the Florida State Fairgrounds, at the southwest corner of I-4 and I-75. For the past 10 years the NUTS have participated as a group in this event. The NUTS move in on January 10, 2012 (Tuesday) and depart January 15, 2012 (Sunday). It is 5 nights of camping, 30 amp electric, coffee and

doughnuts, and 3 nights of entertainment. You have unlimited admission to the Super Show. The entertainment this year for Thursday night is The Malt Shoppe Memories, Doo-Wop and oldies sound. Friday night is Rick Arnold, oldies country music and old Rock N' Roll. Saturday is Ron and Kay Rivoli with their travel songs. Each evening the NUTS will have a happy hour. One evening will be a hot dog social, another will be chili/ soup, and usually one evening we go to Ybor City to the Spagetti dinner. Registration is \$159. Call the show office 813 741 0488, or visit [www.frvta.org](http://www.frvta.org) to register on line. Tell them you will be arriving with the NUTS. Please call or e-mail me, Gary Rankin to let me know you are registered (305 238 2277) [grankin@prodigy.net](mailto:grankin@prodigy.net) I need to know how many in our group for the parking crew. On Tuesday morning we will meet on the west side of the fairgrounds, off Orient Road. Gates open at 8 AM.

Following the Tampa Supershow will be the NUTS January Rally, January 15 and 16 at Lazy Days, 4 miles away. This has been rescheduled from Torrey Oaks to avoid the 8 day time gap between the two events.

**President's Column, November 2011 :**

I hope everyone enjoyed our first rally of this season at Southern Palms. Jackie & I hadn't played Put-Put Golf in years and we really enjoyed playing with Carol & Dallas. I thought the food and snacks at Happy Hour were good, as always. The only complaint I heard was form our digital scale. When I stepped on it Monday morning it groaned and said, "Back away from the table Jack....."

In October I sent an email discussing the idea of having Kenny Blackmon (Camping Connection) expanding his tech session to offer on site service during our rally. It appears that this was well received since Kenny and one of his technicians had enough work to return to our rally on Saturday. Anyone wanting Kenny to do some work or has a motor home related problem to discuss can speed this process by contacting him through his NUTS email address: [nutstech@rvnuts.com](mailto:nutstech@rvnuts.com) . If you let him know what you need prior to the rally, he can have parts and/or a technician ready and waiting.

I want to thank those members who took the time to fill out the survey and encourage any others who would still like to register their opinions to fill out the survey and mail it to: National United Travelers, 213-A East Eau Gallie Blvd #74, Indian Harbour Beach, FL 32937 or email your comments directly to me at [jack@barbic.com](mailto:jack@barbic.com). As you noticed, there is no place to sign your name on the form. I didn't want anyone with an idea or a complaint to be hesitant about voicing it.

We need a few people to volunteer for an Entertainment Committee. This would involve choosing and scheduling the various games and entertainment. Since we currently have only one activity scheduled for the January Rally we really need this to happen quickly. Wait, don't say "No way" or "I've done that already, let someone else do it", this won't be a lifetime position or anything like that. What I envision is a loose knit group that would, using the survey results and working through the 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, come up with different activities and entertainment ideas, try them and see what works and what does not. Committee participation would be the way that a person could say, "Hey, let's try this" and then make it happen. People would circulate in and out of the committee as they wish.

Our next rally will be Jan 15 & 16 at Lazy Days RV Campground, looking forward to seeing you there. As always, if you have comments or questions, feel free to contact me.

I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Future NUTS Rallies :**

Winter 2012	15 – 17 Jan 2012	Lazydays RV campground	Seffner,FL
Spring 2012	30 Mar – 1 Apr 2012	Paradise Oaks RV Resort	Bushnell,FL
Fall 2012	2 – 4 Nov 2012	Grand Lake RV Resort	OrangeLake,FL
Winter 2013	20 – 22 Jan 2013	Lazydays RV Campground	Seffner,FL
Spring 2013	5 – 7 Apr 2013	Paradise Oaks RV Resort	Bushnell,FL
Fall 2014	1 – 3 Nov 2014	Southern Palms RV Resort	Eustis,FL
Winter 2014	20 – 22 Jan 2014	Torrey Oaks RV Resort	Bowling Green, FL
Spring 2014	4 – 6 Apr 2014	Citrus Hill Campground	Dover,FL
Fall 2014	31 Oct – 2 Nov 2014	Travelers Rest RV Resort	DadeCity,FL

## NUTS Rally Survey Results

**Comment:** This is your club, but for it to continue to thrive and grow will depend on your actions and interests in it. I have been in clubs where meetings become so routine that people lose interest, membership decreases and the club disintegrates.

At the start of this new season, I would like to better know what your interests are. I am asking for your ideas on what the club should be doing to stimulate interest, activities and hopefully increase membership.

The Second VP is in charge of the activities and depending on the response the Second VP could form an Activities Committee if he /she would desire. I have listed a few ideas below for your consideration. I would encourage you to add ideas of your own to the list.

### **Entertainment**

**Golf:** Will continue as usual.

### **SURVEY Results – 18 Responses**

#### **Afternoons:**

- There is usually an activity, lecture, class, etc. Do you participate? Y\_17, N\_0, Usually 1

Do you enjoy these activities? Y\_18, N\_0,

Do you have suggestions for an activity, lecture, class, etc?

**Classes on: Basic Electricity ( there is a member that can do this), Health, Wellness, Safety, One day trips, Summer RV trips, FMCA benefits, Local Attractions, Interesting trips people have taken, RV problems and how they were solved, Line dancing, RV safe driving tips (By State Trooper or Sherriff), New Places to travel (or just interesting).**

- There has been limited vendor activity in the past. Would you like to have more vendors conducting classes or demonstrating their wares: Y\_12, N\_0.

If there is an interest in having more vendors, do you know of someone who would like to conduct a class or demonstration at one of our rallies? If so, have them contact the Second VP to set a date.

- Since the Board doesn't want this to get out of hand, all vendors who are not NUTS would be very limited and would only be allowed at the discretion of the Board. Do you agree with this proposal? Y\_15, N\_0,
- How about a swap/sell table? The thought is that we all have parts, accessories and miscellaneous stuff that we may want to get rid of or maybe trade for other stuff or sell outright. Would you be in favor of this? Y\_16, N\_1,

#### **Evenings:**

We often have our NUTS BAND provide music one night and usually hire a band, DJ, etc. for the second night.

- Should we broaden the types of entertainment for the second night? Y\_11, N\_5,
- If so, what type of entertainment would you like to have?

**Game night or afternoon games, Varsity Performers, School Groups, Magician (3), Comedy act (3), Games, Singer, Local drama club (Who done it skit) or school band –give them a donation-,**

**Comment “People don't stay long enough the second night to warrant a hired band”\_**

#### **Other Evening Possibilities:**

- Movie Night (Rent a projector, show a DVD) Y\_3, N\_10,
- An occasional skit Y\_12, N\_1,
- Your ideas: **Casino Night, Card Night, Board Games Night, Magician (in FL, Jan- Mar) Stuart Rudnick, has a website, Dinner Cruise, Local restaurant (pay your own bill), Bingo (profits go to the club), and the one I liked, Ask Rita, she's good at it**

We presently do not set aside time to games. Would you like that included in the rally agenda? Y **\_11**, N **\_5**, Below are some various games for you to consider as well as a place to provide your ideas.

**Card games:**

- Euchre, Y **\_3**, N **\_1**,
- Three–thirteen, Y **\_1**, N **\_2**,
- Hand & Foot, Y **\_6**, N **\_1**,
- Your favorite card game: **Hearts, Pitch, Old Maid, Poker, Nickel, Phase10,**

**Board games:**

- Triominos, Y **\_0**, N **\_2**,
- Mexican Train, Y **\_4**, N **\_2**,
- Your favorite board game: **Joker, Rummy Que?,**

For games, should there be teams and prizes? Y **\_1**, N **\_7**, or just for fun? Y **\_12**, N **\_0**,

There could be more than one activity going on at the same time.

**Here is space to provide any other ideas that you may have:**

**Loved the crafts, Dance classes, 3-day rallies with pot luck (club provides meat), VP should move up to Presidency (someone in training all the time).**

**Technical Support Jack’s comment: This seems to have gone well. As a reminder, in the future you can submit your problems/questions to [NUTStech@rvnuts.com](mailto:NUTStech@rvnuts.com) and Kenny will respond.**

**If you need parts/service, use the [NUTS Tech](mailto:NUTS_Tech) email address to give you and Kenny a head start on getting it arranged for the next rally.**

Those with email have received my previous note explaining “on site service” that could be a part of our rallies. I believe that Camping Connection through Kenny Blackmon can provide the NUTS with an expertise on National products that no other RV repair facility can match. Kenny staff includes technicians that worked at National Lakeland service center. In addition Camping Connection’s techs have the RV industry training and knowledge to service just about any brand of motorhome on the road.

Thanks for your input

*Jack Barbic, President*

**From the First VP:**

I want to express my sincere appreciation to Nancy Holtman for all her hard work on our door prizes for the November rally. They were beautifully done! I also want to thank all the people who helped set up and decorate, it was an amazing transformation! A special thank you is given to Anne Cousins for her delightful class on making paper butterflies. I do appreciate those of you who participated in the America the Beautiful photo contest.

The theme for the January rally will be "Snowmen" or to be politically correct "Snowpeople". It would be fun to see how many "Snow" queens and kings will compete for the "Snow Person" of the year on Monday night, January 16, 2012.

We will have a jewelry making class by Margaret Schwalen teaching us how to make a bracelet of the 23rd psalm or another of your choosing also on Monday. Either kit will be \$15 and she will offer a \$5 discount coupon for those taking the class to put towards perhaps earrings.

Wishing you all a healthy, safe and Joyous Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Jackie Barbic, 1<sup>st</sup> VP*

## **Comments From Past President, Chris Ebaugh :**

### **NEW NUTS Members Needed**

*A bit of history.* During the early years of the NUTS, several of the local dealers provided buyers of a National Product a letter about the NUTS. Through these notifications as well as NUTS telling friends the membership seemed to grow and new members seemed to arrive and replace those that moved on to different coaches or for whatever reason left the organization. During this period, National RV also provided support to the NUTS in the form of gifts or presentations to members at the rallies, they also supplemented the club with payments for each rally. About 6 or 7 years ago Lazydays also got interested in the NUTS, we were a medium sized organization, many members had purchased their National Product from LAZYDAYS and through one of their salesmen they offered to also sponsor our group with a supplement for each rally and on various time also provided some gifts, Hot Dog or Ice Cream socials at the rally, display coaches and sales support, etc. The NUTS were a cordial organization and well worth the support as we were all ripe for possible purchase of a new or used product. Everyone knows what happened to National RV, so of course we lost the support provided by the National organization and additionally we lost the source of information about NUTS that had been provided to new purchases of the product. LAZYDAYS has continued its support of NUTS, but since they sell so many different brands, they do NOT routinely provide any letter or information about the NUTS to anyone purchasing a motorhome from their organization.

The Motorhome industry, just like the entire economy has slipped in the last few years. Many manufacturers are gone, as well as many RV Dealers. The remaining dealers must look at their limited amount expenditures and advertising costs in order to keep their head above water and remain in business. Sponsorship of RV Clubs had been a good source of RV buyers. And it is still fertile ground, but as the number of members and number of attendees at the rallies, it is looking less and less promising and causing everyone to consider the best way to spend advertising dollars to get the best results. LAZYDAYS has already reduced their Ambassador Participation at RV gathering and are only scheduling participation at the very LARGE events in 2012. The Free 3-Day Camping certificates for the LAZYDAYS Campground was well received; however, now it is showing that 80%+ of the users are RETURN users. In other words, people aware of the program are seeking out an a LAZYDAYS Ambassador at an event for the sole purpose of receiving a Free Camping Certificate. They are NOT, at this time completely doing away with that program, but as they state, "Sales programs REQUIRE constant changing". New ideas and new enticements are necessary to attract new customers.

The purpose for all of the words above is to let you know the background of this article. The LAZYDAYS Support has helped keep the cost of the NUTS Rallies at a reasonable price. It has been helpful to have the display coaches, the Ambassador and Sales help. In order to receive continued support from LAZYDAYS, the NUTS must be large enough and the rally participation must be sufficiently attended to present a formidable group that is worth the Dealer Advertising dollars they invest in the support. LAZYDAYS support has averaged \$900 a year.

The NUTS need to rebuild the membership. The members NEED to attend the rallies. The NUTS need to demonstrate that the support provided has been fruitful. Members need to show some interest, talk quotes with the sales support. I do NOT wish to imply that it is expected that someone will purchase a new coach at each rally, but when nearly no one ever views the display coaches it indicates to the Dealer that maybe it is not warranted to expend time, labor and expense to even provide them.

Enough about Dealer support, but now just on survival of the NUTS as an organization. The membership is getting smaller, the members are getting older. In order for the NUTS to continue, new and younger members are necessary to assume the duties of the officers and volunteers. Since we are no longer getting information about the NUTS provided to new buyers it means that the membership we have now has to be more proactive in getting others interested in joining. When members travel and visit campgrounds, other rallies, events or any place you meet other people you must SELL the NUTS to anyone you meet that you feel might have similar interest. I am not saying we need signs everywhere we stop, but RV'ers are generally outgoing and friendly people. Interesting people are encountered at nearly every camping stop. When you meet or chat with someone interesting, tell them about the NUTS, offer them a card they can send for information. I suggest that membership applications be provided to every member or attached to this Newsletter, that can be given to people you meet to make it easy for them to actually sign up.

If we do NOT RE-BUILD the NUTS membership. If we do NOT have a larger turnout at the three annual NUTS Rallies, we will soon find that we have no Dealer Support OR a NUTS organization. *Chris Ebaugh*

## **Second VP :**

Bob Varney, F414373, of Titusville, FL has “volunteered” and been appointed to serve as Second VP until the Annual Meeting in April 2012. Bob and Jean have been NUTS members since June 2010. Thanks for serving. Les

## **From the National Director :**

FMCA in general is in very bad shape. Membership keeps declining (under 90K), income continues to drop (dues and advertising), and the very structure of our organization is shaky, at best. The month-to-month operation seems to reveal more problems to overcome, rather than showing any signs of recovery and growth. I enjoy being involved in the Northeast Area and helping in the planning of our Area Rally, but it gets quite discouraging to find out how the entire RV industry is struggling to survive and, subsequently, so too are support organizations like FMCA. Growth in membership is the only real solution, but it's tough to convince people that by joining, their RVing experience will improve. Some new and better ideas for recruitment are vital.

The NUT's have been very fortunate. I think we can survive because of the core strength of our members, who really enjoy our Rallies, and the support we get from Lazydays, folks like Kenny Blackmon, and the other various vendors and crafters. They make our Rallies something special, a "cut above" the others. We are so blessed to have a lot of folks who truly want to see our Chapter prosper, and we will.

*Dick Higgins, National Director*

## **Secretary-Treasurer's Column**

Financially the Fall Rally was a breakeven event. I consider any rally with only a 5 % loss a breakeven. However, with 100 members on our NUTS roster, why didn't we have more attendees than 31 (including 2 guests)? This is one of the lowest attended rallies since I have been in office. I can only hope that this is a one-time event and not a trend.

Speaking of membership, we need to encourage our friends and those we meet in our travels to join the NUTS as Chris spoke of in his message. A larger membership base means we have more resources to work with as well as keeping fees down. So it's to your advantage to get more members. Towards that end, Russ suggested including a copy of the blue card in the newsletter. I thought that was a great idea, but requires an extra step and additional delay for me to receive the blue card and then send the prospective members an application form. Therefore, from now on we will include the application form in the newsletter as well as making it available on the website, [www.rvnuts.com](http://www.rvnuts.com). PLEASE print a few copies and pass them on everyone you think should be NUTS. ☺

As we approach the end of another year, it becomes my annual duty to remind everyone that dues for 2012 are now due. To make it easy you can add the dues payment to your registration for the upcoming Winter Rally at Lazydays. Many think it is necessary to send individual checks for the rally and for the dues. This is not the case, they both go in the same bank account and my Quicken program divvies up between dues and rally fees.

Russ has included the 2012 dues form in the newsletter. Please be sure to indicate any changes that have occurred to your addresses, phone numbers, etc, especially your email addresses as that is becoming a primary communication avenue for the NUTS. In early March (after all input has been received), a new directory will be available. Those wishing a copy need to send a email request or a phone call.

That's it for now. See you at Lazydays.

*Les Stiles, Secretary-Treasurer*

**Pix from the Fall Rally :**



## Treasurer's Report

December 3, 2011

### Fall 2011 Rally

#### Rally Income

Registration fees	\$3,937.00
50-50 Raffle	147.00
Dealer support – Lazydays	300.00
Misc Inc – Putt-Putt Golf fees	105.00
Sheriff's Fines	<u>1.25</u>

#### RALLY INCOME

\$4,490.25

#### Rally Expenses

Park site fees	\$1,408.00
Food and Catering	2,680.07
Entertainment	250.00
Decorations	25.00
Prizes	125.00
Misc Expenses	147.00
Misc Exp – Putt-Putt Golf fees	<u>107.00</u>

#### RALLY EXPENSE

\$(4,742.07)

#### RALLY NET INCOME/(NET LOSS)

**\$ (251.82)**

#### BANK BALANCE

##### Beginning – March 31, 2011

**\$12,175.10**

Income \$ 5,965.16

Expenses \$(13,555.74)

##### Ending – December 1, 2011

**\$4,584.52**

Net Gain (Loss)

**\$(7,590.58)**

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Les Stiles, Secretary-Treasurer*

# *NUTS Rally Registration Form*



**Registration Dead Line is December, 31, 2011**

Theme is “*Snow People*”

The craft will be jewelry making class by Margaret Schwalen teaching us how to make a bracelet of the 23rd psalm or another of your choosing also on Monday. Either kit will be \$15 and she will offer a \$5 discount coupon for those taking the class to put towards perhaps earrings.

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ F #: \_\_\_\_\_

*First timer?* Yes

*Handicap Site?* Yes

Guest Name: \_\_\_\_\_ F#: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Coach w/ 2 people	\$150	\$	
Guest Coach w/ 2 people Non Members	\$165	\$	
Additional person(s) in Coach	_____ x	\$ 20 =	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$</b>	

*Please make checks payable to*

**National United Travelers, Inc.**

*And mail to -*

**National United Travelers, Inc. RALLY**

*218-A East Eau Gallie Blvd. #74*

*Indian Harbour Beach, FL 32937*

***National United Travelers, Inc.***

*A Chapter of Family Motor Coach Association*

218-A East Eau Gallie Blvd #74

Indian Harbour Beach, FL 32937



**Dues Renewal Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ FMCA# \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ (Required to receive a receipt)

Please fill-in below any changes that have occurred during the past year to assure Secretary's records are up-to-date:

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Motorhome Model \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Length \_\_\_\_\_ ft

*For Year* 2012

*Amount* \$ 15.00

**National United Travelers, Inc. (NUTS) RV Club**

**CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

***A Chapter of Family Motor Coach Association, Inc. (FMCA)***

**“We’re NUTS About Nationals”**



FMCA # \_\_\_\_\_ (Enter “Pending” if Applied For) Today’s date: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

First Name - Pilot: \_\_\_\_\_ Co-Pilot: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Web Page: \_\_\_\_\_

**MOTORHOME INFORMATION**

Manuf: \_\_\_\_\_ Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_ Ft.

*The National United Travelers is an FMCA International Chapter. Its primary purpose is to provide fellowship and support for National RV, Inc. motorhome owners. Membership is open to anyone who owns or has owned a National RV, Inc. brand motor home, or has been nominated by a Chapter member, and is a member in good standing with FMCA.*

*If non-National RV, nominated by:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Comments:

**Chapter dues are \$15.00 per calendar year for one or two people in a coach.**

**Please make your check payable to:**

**National United Travelers, Inc.**

**Mail this completed application along with your check to:**

**National United Travelers, Inc.  
Attn: Treasurer  
218-A East Eau Gallie Blvd. #74  
Indian Harbour Beach, FL 32937**

**If you have any questions you can email us at [treasurer@rvnuts.com](mailto:treasurer@rvnuts.com)**

**Check our NUTS website, [www.rvnuts.com](http://www.rvnuts.com)**