

April brings another birthday for me and for my friend, Barbara. April also brings the celebration of the Easter Holiday, which this year will be celebrated during our Chapter 400 Spring Rally. It is also the month when we end up at our home base, Myrtle Beach, after all is done. All of the above events play out in a most enjoyable manner with a common thread of warm meaningful friendships!

We expected to see John & Barbara in Myrtle Beach, but since Barbara's birthday was a week ahead of mine, Bob & I drove from Ladson to Myrtle Beach to help celebrate it with her. Paul & Angie had already talked John & Barbara into joining us at the Rally. They planned to drive down, stay over night, which enabled them to join us on two of the tours and a pot luck supper. Then after the rally, Paul & Angie and Bob & I joined John & Barbara again in Myrtle Beach. The rally itself was outstanding, with great 4 o'clocks, wonderful tours, as well as some interesting activities. Most of this Newsletter will be about the people involved. It is how we help each other and of course, what we do for fun together.

Bob & I were the first attendees to arrive early and after us, people started to come in gradually. Our 4 o'clocks were small at first, but grew. The picture above was an early one, with George telling the story of a trip to the emergency room. We are all seniors and this can easily be our reality on the road. In fact the second picture is of Irene, who is still being treated for cancer and joined us for this rally. She gave a lesson on being prepared on the road with personal medical information. She is a real 'trooper'!

When Bob & I arrived at Briarcliffe for Barbara's birthday, something seemed to be missing? Our coach!! We drove up in the jeep of course and it really seemed strange not having the motor home with us! Picture of Barbara with her cake and with all of us with her.

Back in Ladson, more of our 400 family were arriving daily and things were beginning to take shape. Our president, Judy and host couples did a great job setting things up. Judy has another job as 'Beautician' for many of us and has set up 'shop' for at least a couple of days. We all line up for appointments, Bob & I included. Since Judy has been president, we have been making donations to the local 'food pantry', as a way of contributing to local communities. In this case we contributed food to one and made a monetary contribution to another.

We help each other in so many ways. The last picture is of Carol, one of our single members, who operates a Fifth Wheel all by herself and travels alone. In the picture she is getting some information from some of our more experienced members on traveling in the North East part of the US, where she plans on going this Summer. This kind of sharing is going on between members all the time.



Spring Rally Continued!

This was a very busy Rally, with much to do. One of my favorites was Mepkin Abbey, occupied by Trappists Monks since 1949. Originally it was a plantation donated by publisher and philanthropist, Henry R. Luce and his wife, the Honorable Clare Boothe Luce. We had a tour and witnessed the chanting of the Monks at mid day. It was so peaceful and beautiful there. Another great tour was of the recovered H.L. Hunley, a confederate submarine that sank after blowing up the USS Housatonic on February 17, 1864 and then sank killing the crew. This submarine experienced success and failure on the same day. Who would have guessed they were even thinking of submarine type ships back then? There is so much to see in the Charleston area. The picture of us on right was taken at Fort Moultrie, dating back to 1776. Barely visible over my shoulder is Fort Sumter. The sixth picture down shows one of our members sitting inside a full size replica of the Hunley, just as the crew did in 1776.

Lets see, what else did we do? How about our Easter celebration? Dinner? Of course, we always eat well!! Most of the women wore their home made Easter Bonnets for dinner. Above right is Osa with her decorated bonnet. We had turkey and ham with every one bringing their favorite side dish. Then there is the ritual of entertainment night, which includes the ever famous 'HR 400 Ensemble'. Several people were solicited from the audience to participate and Peg and Renee were among the selected. Some discovered for the first time that they had talent. On the evening that John & Barbara were there, Bob & I were actually talked into playing a board game with Paul & Angie and John & Barbara! This is something Bob & I have not been into. I had enough game playing with the pre-adolescents before I retired and have come to associate it with work, even though I thoroughly enjoyed what I did at the time.

As we came to the close of the Rally, we were in for one more surprise. Our hosts had scheduled our closing dinner at the fair grounds, with a catered dinner of 'Frogmore Stew'!! What is Frogmore Stew you ask? We were all certain that it included some part of the frog, but we were reassured it did not. It is a local favorite dish of the 'low country'. It includes corn on the cob, shrimp in the shell, potatoes, and sausage with a spicy taste and for the life of me I don't know why it is considered a stew? Maybe because it is cooked in one pot. Most of us just loved it!!!!

The morning after the end of the rally, people congregate around the coaches saying their good-byes until we meet again on the road or at the next rally, which in this case will be in Platte City, Missouri. Meanwhile, we head home to Myrtle Beach with Paul & Angie. There, we will keep some follow up medical appointments before heading West. Even though April is not finished yet, I will include the remainder with May in the next newsletter.

Pictures

