

THE GMC

DIXIELANDER

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2002

*In Memory of those
Dixielanders that have taken
their last one-way trip:*

- Lanier Foote*
- Mary Ann Denham*
- Mary Lou Henderson*
- Jerry Lader*
- Dorothy Linn*
- Russell Norris*
- Joe Halcomb*

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A Note from JR:

Hi Guys,

As I sit here at a now almost empty Alabama campground, the deep throaty roar of our magnificent coaches are now a recent memory. Amid the wind whistling through the pines and the birdcalls high in the trees, I think how fast this past year has passed. I've heard that agony is an eternity and that bliss is a fleeting second and that holds true with my reign as president. It's almost impossible to realize that my term is almost over. It is through the help and support of my board and of the members of the finest club in existence that has made this time so special.

As I sit here looking at the empty sites, I realize how many wonderful friends I have made and especially those that have been taken from us all. Thanks to each and every one of you for

allowing me to serve as your president.

Thanks Guys.....JR

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Sick and Recovering:

We wish you well and a speedy recovery;

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Jack Brown | Lou McDowell |
| Bonnie Terry | Ed Vierling |
| Herb Haught | |

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Next Year's Rallies:

Dixielander Rallies for 2003

Spring: Bean Station, TN at Al & Marty Samsel's, Host: Al & Marty Samsel and Ray & Trula Bingham **May 1st-4th**

Summer: Perry, GA at Twin Oaks Campground
Host: Chuck & Sue Chambers, Joe & Allene Burdette, Jerry & Audrey Holloway, and Burt Black. **June or July**

Fall: Bowling Green, KY at Beech Bend Park
Host: JR & Jeanne Slaten and Harry & Linda Terrill. **Sept 18 - 20**
(All Dates subject to change.)

Rally suggestions are needed for coming

years. If you would like to host a Rally, or have a suggested location or any other ideas to enhance our gatherings next year, please contact Bill Hutchinson. We will help you with the administrative and arrangement details. (e-mail - hutch1318@mindspring.com) The Sunshine Statesmen and The GMC Classics have expressed an interest in a combined rally at some time in the future. Bill Hutchinson and Dave Greenberg of The Sunshine Statesmen are currently discussing a possible Jan, 2004 joint rally somewhere in Fla. More info will be provided as it becomes available.

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Dixielander Jackets:

There is a limited supply of the current Dixielander jackets with epaulets. The available price and sizes are as follows;
Small - Large- Ex. Large \$78 + \$5 ship = \$83

New Style (without epaulets) same price \$83
Contact Allene Burdette, (770) 482-2640

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Treasurer's Report:

Balance brought forward:	<u>\$5865.72</u>
Income:	
Dues & new members	406.50
Rally fees:	<u>274.50</u>
Total	681.00
Balance before expenditures	<u>\$6546.72</u>
Expenditures:	
J.R. Slaten - Stamps	20.40
R. Staub - Badges	22.15
K O'Rourke - Newsletter	231.23
Memorials -	150.00
 Total Expenditures:	 423.78
 Ending Balance, 10-19-02	 <u>\$6122.94</u>

Respectfully,
Chuck Chambers, Treasurer

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Technical Tips:

WHAT TO ASK FOR WHEN YOU REBUILD YOUR TRANSMISSION

ORIGINAL GMC TRANSMISSION

You should rebuild the THM-425 transmission just like it was when it came with your coach if at all possible. The original transmission had some differences from a THM-425 transmission in a car. Put back the parts that came out of the transmission if you can. There is a risk when switching parts.

SIX (6) DISK CLUTCHES

The forward (first gear) drum and the direct (third and reverse) drum clutch packs in the GMC THM-425 had six clutch plates, and most of the auto transmissions had five. This gives you a 20% more clutch area in these areas. It is possible to put the 6 clutches in a car transmission, but the rebuilder must use thinner separating plates and machine down the "apply" piston to allow room for the extra disk. These are available but require extra effort to find and install. However, the five-pack drum clutch is adequate for the TZE GMC.

TAN CLUTCH PLATES

Ask for brown clutch plates, the green clutch plates are not as good for a heavy duty application like our motorhomes.

DIRECT CLUTCH RETURN SPRINGS

The auto transmission used anywhere up to 16 springs. The motorhome transmission used 14 of these springs in the Direct Clutch Piston Assembly and 16 in the Forward Clutch Piston Assembly.

ALUMINUM APPLY PISTONS

Many automobile transmissions used a steel piston made up of several parts and did

not have the extra support ring for pushing on the clutch plates. As a result, the clutch separator plates are often bent and broken for lack of support.

METAL SEALING RINGS

Often teflon sealing rings were used in manufacture because it was easier to get a seal on the assembly line, and sometimes rebuilders use them if the transmission shows wear. The metal rings will last much longer without giving trouble. Never reuse the old seals, metal or teflon.

NEW DESIGN FORWARD CLUTCH CENTER SEAL

The original transmission came with a LIP SEAL on the forward clutch and the new and improved seal is a CHAMFER SEAL which has no lip, use this one.

REBUILDING OF THE CLUTCH PISTON ASSEMBLIES

This assembly requires a special tool for rebuilding and many rebuilders do not have such a tool. As a result, they just do not always rebuild this unit, ask if they did.

THRUST WASHERS

Most of the rebuild kits that the rebuilders use, do not supply the thrust washers. These washers should be replaced on a rebuild for a good job.

WORN BEARINGS

Again, most kits do not include these bearings, The transmission will be loose without the replacement of these bearings.

SOLENOIDS

New solenoids are still available, use a new one.

PLASTIC GUIDES ON THE "APPLY PISTON"

The problem with the later transmissions is that the plastic guides for the return springs on the "apply" pistons distort

with heat and interfere with the "apply" piston returning causing slippage. If these guides are there, they should be removed.

NEOPRENE GASKETS

The chain cover and the pan gasket should be neoprene and not cork. The cork ones leak.

CONVERTER, CONVERTER SEAL AND SUPPORT BUSHING

Many people think that we should only use HD (heavy duty) converters in our GMC TZE's, if you think so, now is the time to change it. Use a converter that is 13" in diameter (no less than 11"), and has a stall speed range of 1900 - 2300. You should pay somewhere in the range of \$100 to \$200. When the converter is removed you should definitely change the converter seal and also the support bushing located in the front pump.

SWITCH PITCH

The "switch pitch" transmission (SP THM-425) has the advantage of switching your torque converter stall speed between 1800 and 2300. This with a high ratio final drive will give the best of all worlds. This gives high torque at startup and climbing situations and high speed efficiency at highway speeds. The "switch pitch" will require the above modifications since it was only available in automobiles. The GMC motorhome did not come from the factory with "switch pitch" transmissions installed.

WHAT A REBUILD TRANSMISSION SHOULD NOT HAVE

- Green Clutch plates
- Teflon rings (never reuse the old ones)
- Old thrust washers
- Gaskets that are not replaced
- Two "O" rings in the filter tube-to-case
- Cork Gaskets
- Old converter seal
- Old front pump converter support bushing.
- No Plastic parts, spring retainers, seals.

EUFULA LAKEPOINT RALLY

Eufaula, Alabama October 17 - 19, 2002

Amid the 80ft pine trees with sites large enough to hold four coaches, came a parade of 62 GMCs. The weather, as promised, was perfect. Warm and sunny days with cool and pleasant evenings made camping a genuine pleasure. With 62 coaches and over 120 people, the Eufaula rally has become the Dixielanders largest, and some say possibly best, rally ever.

Ken, Elaine, Bill, Pat, Chuck, Sue, Jane and Jim have gone the extra mile to host an award-winning weekend. Happy hour and an impromptu pot luck dinner started nearly 30 early arrivals out on the right foot Wednesday evening.

Thursday was kinda laid back, waiting for the rest to arrive. Thursday evening we enjoyed happy hour and then we overindulged on Elaine's homemade Southwestern soup. Dinner was followed by time to renew friendships and exchange experiences since we last met.

Friday morning began with a pancake and sausage breakfast, followed by a large flea market. Most of the day was taken up by sightseeing antebellum mansions, playing golf, and general GMC on site seminars. The evening continued with hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, and then a catered southern style pork BBQ dinner. The evening was capped by a fantastic performance by a local Bluegrass band, "Back Step".

Saturday, not to be outdone, began with ham, eggs, grits, red-eye gravy, and biscuits. (Try to find that above the Mason Dixon Line). After breakfast the men had a tech session led by Ray Bingham, while the ladies attended a crafts seminar presented by Jo Telgin on the making of Christmas Reindeer centerpieces. The afternoon was filled by golf, chat sessions, mini bull sessions, and the occasional sound of a snore. An early happy hour made a trip to the Lodge for a catfish and chicken buffet possible. After we all had our fill of fresh catfish, we returned to camp for an old fashioned sing-a-long around the campfire. Led by Jane

Watson and Steve Ward, we sang a variety of songs. We sang some songs that I knew, some songs I think my daddy probably knows, and some songs that I think my children could sing word for word. In other words, we had a variety of songs that would satisfy any song lovers taste. This was a very special ending to a very special weekend.

Sunday morning offered a leftovers breakfast which ultimately leads to hugs and kisses, best wishes, and farewells. Amid the "take cares", "have a safe trips", and "see ya in the springs", were a few "we have to get together for lunches".

As the population of Alabama increases and the Snowbirds settle on the emptying sites, we say our final good byes and head home already preparing for the holidays. And as I said in the beginning, "This was the largest and one of the best rallies the Dixielanders have had"; but this is only a prelude to what is yet to come.

Thanks; take care.....JR

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The Workers:

Outgoing Board

President: JR Slaten
Secretary: Korkey Rice
Executive Committee: Ray Bingham
Betty Davis
Carolyn Wills

Incoming Board of Directors

President: Bill Hutchinson
1st Vice President: Lew Ayres
2nd Vice President: Ken Henderson
Secretary: Jo Telgen
Treasurer: Chuck Chambers
FMCA National Director: Don Leslie
FMCA Alternate National Director: Allen Martin

Executive Committee: Betty Davis
Harry Terrill
Larry Wills

Nominating Committee: Judy Acosta

Joni Haught
Ken O'Rourke

Auditing Committee: Gene Dotson
Marie Hudson

Photographer: JoAnn Fain

Editor in Training: Ken O'Rourke

(734) 455-2043

Dennis & Brenda Ray
(850) 892-2566
denbren@funiak.com

Dave & Jan Greenberg
davegreenberg1@juno.com

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Corrections to Roster:

Bill & Rita Crowell
1415 Pierce Rd.
Waverly Hall, GA 31831-2037
(706) 582-3555

Ed & Dianne Gibson
GIB3133@PREMIERNET.NET

Alfred & Chris Smith
(864) 242--9285, Fax: (864) 234-5603
Cell: (864) 346-5294
ASmith@aol.com

Jerry & Rosemary Wheeler
Fax: (336) 922-6788
JRWheeler7@earthlink.com

Jim and Betty Algar
Cell: (803) 360-5005
ALGARJim@aol.com

Ken & Larosa Rose
KRoseSA@aol.com

Bill & Barbara Wessels
523 Lexington Ave.
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
Fax: 717) 691-6871
Cell: (717) 805-3306

George & Shirley Rowe
9198 N. Canton Center Rd.
Plymouth, MI 48170

Publisher's Information

Any information you wish to have included in the next ***Dixielanders*** Newsletter? I'm particularly interested in human interest articles. Please send information to:

Ken O'Rourke
519 Huntington Rd.
Greenville, SC 29615

E-Mail: electmosq@aol.com
Phone: (864) 297-1893

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Brake, Fuel, Transmission Tubing Replacement:

Rust is a major problem for our aged motorhomes and the following is one of the sources for replacements, stainless or OEM steel.

Classic Tube www.classictube.com
80 Rotech Drive 716-759-1014
Lancaster, NY 14086 800-882-3711

Be sure to specify GMC, Motor Coach, 23' or 26' and if you want stainless or regular steel.

Example: 1973-78 brake line (26') SS \$299.00

Note: they will give a 15% discount off of the above price if you mention GMC Dixielanders.

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New Members: (Add to your Roster)

Bob and Sue Berry
10 Greenbriar Ave.
Cartersville, GA 30120-2372
(770) 387-0937
F# Applied for

Jim and Ethyl Walters
179 Loretta Lane
Luthersville, GA 30251
(770) 957-9224
F162467
JEWalters@earthlink.net

Harry & Sandra Vordermeier
2836 NE 22nd St.
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33305
(954) 564-5865
F292930
harryvord@aol.com
1978 Royale

Don & Sandra Walloch
120 McBride Trail
Fayetteville, NC 30215-2623
(770) 460-5044
F238840
dwalloch@peoplepc.com

Ted & Sylvia Stinnet
1734 Antler Ave.
Owensboro, KY 42303
(270) 691-0554
F276369

Max & Jeanne Rockafellow
1425 Watersmeet Lake Rd.
Eagle River, WI 54521
(715) 477-1426
F149513
maxrock@newnorth.net

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Nashville - GMCMI Fall Convention -

The GMCMI Fall Convention held in Nashville, TN from September 15th thru 21st was small but great. Around 225 coaches showed up to weather the rain and temperate conditions, over 40 of them Dixielanders.

The Dixielanders were outstanding again. The Dixielander club with the help of several Great Laker members cooked and served a hamburger cook out fit for Royal GMCers. The hamburgers were delicious, the baked beans, potato salad, and fresh baked cookies topped off the best meal at the rally, according to an informal poll.

The Dixielanders shone again when it came to entertainment. Our own Marty Samsel, organized, choreographed, and directed a variety show that had the crowd rolling in the aisles one minute and wiping the tears from their eyes the next. Not a soul was seen leaving before the end of the performance, which buy the way, received a standing ovation. Oh yes, it was voted best entertainment of the three evenings.

The Dixielanders now have two officers on the board of directors for the GMCMI. Alex Sirum is the Southeastern States VP and JR Slaten is the Eastern States VP.

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A trip through the Maritimes:

Thinking about your next extended motorhome vacation? For your next late spring, summer or early fall trip, give some thought to visiting our northern neighbors in the Maritime Provinces of Canada

We recently made the trip and spent some 3-4 weeks exploring first the coastal towns of Maine and later the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Judy and we heartily recommend the trip.

Our Principal portion of the trip began in northern Maine with a visit to Campobello Island, which was the summer digs of the Franklin D. Roosevelt family. The Canadian Government maintains the area as a Provincial Park. Although entered from Maine, the Island is Canadian. Entry and exit is still simple and friendly despite 9/11 events.

The following day brought us to Calais-our port of entry into New Brunswick. After a brief stop to convert currency we were on our way to St Johns to see the city and "The Reversing Falls"; actually a huge navigable waterway affected by the bay's huge tidal action while passing over large rocky formations. After lunch, we were on our way for Fundy National Park and our first stopping point. Once we got the coach bedded down we drove to the nearby tourist seaport of Alma to experience some of the local culture. In addition to that, we got our first surprise; the changing Canadian weather. At the campground some 3-4 miles away we were perspiring, in Alma, the fog rolled in off the bay and we were forced to put on sweatshirts because of a 15-degree drop in temperature. Nearby are the Hopewell Rocks-a must on any trip through the province. It's here that one gets a true perspective on the enormity of the tidal action. The temperature was a cool 60ish.

Breaking camp early, we headed for Provincial Highway 1 and turned eastward toward Prince Edward Island, an idyllic retreat. In our travels we have seen beautiful places all over but PEI matches all of them with their pastoral rolling hills and serene country atmosphere. Getting to the island requires crossing North America's longest over water bridge or boarding a ferry. Although the toll seems to be steep, they only charge one way-when leaving the island so ostensibly if one decided to stay you would never have to pay. PEI is the home of the Author L.M. Montgomery and her fictional heroine Anne of Green Gables. The childhood home and setting for Ms. Montgomery's novels are meticulously maintained on the North side of the Island and a great stop to put on ones travels here.

Leaving PEI, we boarded the ferry to Nova Scotia. Offloading at Pictou, we headed for Truro before finally stopping south of Halifax. We chose this Campground because of its full hookup including cable TV as by this time we were into TV withdrawal. With our car we set off the next morning for Liverpool primarily because Flic wanted to visit the Hank Snow Museum, as this was his boyhood home. Along the way we took the curvy shoreline drive, which took us into each of the coastal towns. After some 3 hours of this we decided to get back on the main highway and to our surprise, found that we had only traveled 2 exits. One needs to devote the day if you're into quaint fishing villages and lighthouses.

Halifax is a gem of a city with a long history. Unclaimed victims of the Titanic tragedy reside quietly in the cities main cemetery. An inexpensive bus tour is available that takes you on a tour of the main highlights of the city with a narrator detailing each of the highlights. Once the tour was over, we took the car and revisited the Victoria Gardens (we had been previously shepherded through by a bagpiper), the Citadel Fort, and some of the other high points. While there 2 cruise liners docked at the port and hulked over the lower part of the city like huge skyscrapers Our day was completed with a meal at one of Halifax's many fine restaurants,

The last part of the Maritime experience for us was Cape Breton Island. After setting up camp again outside of North Sidney, we made the Cabot Trail ride; about 180 miles of breathtaking scenery around the northern portion of the Island. The drive takes you past picturesque fishing villages; many of which can be seen from high vantage points for great pictures. We were treated to a whale watching boat trip and saw several pods popping in and out of the water.

All in all a wonderful trip. We've discovered the Canadians to be gracious people, friendly, outgoing, and willing to help a stranger.

Although seemingly expensive, the cost of travel is on par with U.S. costs once the currency exchange

is factored into the equation.

Flic Acosta

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Bylaws:

Bylaw changes proposed at Gadsden were voted down. A two-thirds majority was not met. The existing bylaws are still in effect

Honorary Members:

It has been proposed by the Executive Board that the position of Honorary Member be added to **Article III - Members** of the GMC Dixielander bylaws. Below is the proposed addition that is to be voted on at the May rally at Bean Station.

Honorary Membership: May be bestowed on those who have provided outstanding service to the chapter while holding full membership in the chapter. These members must be presented to and approved by the Executive Board. The Executive Board will then present these names to the chapter at the next scheduled business meeting for approval. Voting rights and dues will be the same as Family Associate members.

Judy Acosta is replacing Korky Rice as "Sunshine Lady". If you have any information on any members pertaining to illness or deaths please pass this on to Judy. Actually, if you have any good, happy information please pass it on too.

Judy can be reached by any of these methods:

Mail: Judy Acosta
807 Henderson Drive
Jacksonville, NC 28540
Phone: (910) 455-2491
E-mail: f.e.acosta@worldnet.att.net

Charter Member

We were honored with a charter member of

the GMC Dixielanders. Alfred and Chris Smith came to Eufaula in their beautiful coach. Although Alfred has been a member since the clubs beginning, the Eufaula rally was the first they have attended. Alfred holds the record for the least active Dixielander but I have an idea they will become more active.

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Terms of Office

It has been proposed by the Executive Board that the terms of the board members be extended to a maximum of three years. These offices will be voted on annually for a one year period, not to exceed three concurrent terms. The office of Second Vice President will be dropped.

This proposed change is to be voted on at the May Rally at Bean Station.

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"If you think health care is expensive now, wait until you see what it costs when it's free."

"When buying and selling are controlled by legislation, the first things to be bought and sold are legislators."

--P.J. O'Rourke (the Editor's brother)(not really)

"Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it."

-- Ronald Reagan (1986)

Bye-Bye, see ya next year