

**THE GMC**

# DIXIELANDER

**NEWSLETTER**

**February 2004**

## *A NOTE FROM THE PRES:*

Those of you who didn't attend the January GMC Florida Extravaganza (GMCES at Ft. Myers followed immediately by GMCSS at Lake Placid and both GMCDL and GMC Alumni at Lazy Days near Tampa) missed a great chance to get away from the cold weather and join in all the "cult" activities! While the flu kept me from fully enjoying the Lake Placid and Lazy Days events, all the reports I heard were enthusiastic.

Based on those favorable reports, we're planning to return to Lazy Days next year. We've already made reservations for a joint rally there with the Sunshine Statesmen for January 13-16, 2005. Our new Vice President, elected at Lazy Days, Ken O'Rourke, will have more information as the year progresses.

Since we're beginning a new year it's time for resolutions: (1) Personally, I resolve to do my best to meet the high performance standards set by my predecessors as President of the Dixielanders. (2) On behalf of the club, I resolve to try to achieve the following goals: (A) Get our web site on line. (B) Enable our younger members to participate in more of our activities. (C) Seek out and enroll as members more of the "lonely" GMC owners in our area.

A few comments related to those goals:

(A) We badly need someone who either knows, or is willing to learn something about web site operation to volunteer to be our webmaster. As much respect

and affection as I have for our Canadian friends, it's kinda embarrassing to have one of them the only one who's really done any work on our web site. I wish a lot of you would visit some of the other GMC clubs' web sites, like [www.gmcss.com](http://www.gmcss.com), [www.gmceast.com](http://www.gmceast.com), and, especially, [www.gmcws.org](http://www.gmcws.org). Those sites serve their members as wonderful communications resources; we need that ability to publicize our activities. Besides, hopefully we will be able to put the Newsletter on the web-site and eliminate a big mailing expense for the club.

(B) It's my opinion that we do not make enough effort to involve the younger members of Dixielanders in our activities. For very good reasons, we conduct most of our rallies primarily during the week, making it inconvenient for those still working to attend. Perhaps we can schedule more mini-rallies on weekends and at locations which would interest younger people and those with children. Perhaps we can plan some of our rallies to include children and grand children. Personally, I enjoy the company of younger folks just as much as that of my peers. Besides, we need to indoctrinate a new generation of GMC fanatics so we have a market for our excess coaches!

(C) I think we're all amazed that so many people manage to survive the ownership of a GMC without the support of fellow owners in a club. So, let's all strive to educate and enroll all the non-members we encounter. What I propose as a start is that we begin a visitation program: when any one of us learns of a non-member GMC owner, let's formalize a contact program where we'll provide a copy of our

newsletter, bylaws, a review of our recent rallies, and perhaps a copy of a couple of handouts similar to "What Every GMC Owner Should Know" to the nearest Dixielander. It will be the responsibility of that member to attempt to visit the newcomer to deliver the welcome package and sign them up. Let's discuss the idea at our next meeting.

If you have other goals we should set, speak up! An unstated goal is GET MORE VOLUNTEERS!!!

Hope to see ALL of you at Bean Station! (see registration form at end of newsletter)

**Ken Henderson**

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## ***MOVERS AND SHAKERS***

Ken Henderson	President
Ken O'Rourke	Vice President
Joanne Telgen	Secretary
Chuck Chambers	Treasurer
Don Leslie	FMCA National Director
Alan Martin	Alt. FMCA National Dir
John Nichols	Executive Committee
Harry Terrill	Executive Committee
Larry Wills	Executive Committee
Lew Ayres	Nominating Committee
Pat Hutchinson	Nominating Committee
Suzie Tase	Nominating Committee
Gene Dotson	Audit Committee
Marie Hudson	Audit Committee
JR Slaten	GMCM Eastern Rep.
Alex Sirum	GMCM Southeast Rep
JoAnn Fain	Photographer
Sandra Walloch	Newsletter Editor
	Webmaster
Judy Acosta	Sunshine Lady

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## **How Not to Paint a GMC**

By

Kirby Robertson

It started when Mary almost broke into a 1977 Eleganza that resembled ours. On the way home she strongly suggested that we change the colors of our GMC coach. After checking out various paints, I decided to go with a base coat and a clear coating.

As the paint on the top and bottom of the coach was in good condition, I decided that only stripes would be needed. At the first paint store I told the sales person, what I wanted to do, adding that I needed all the help I could get. He was very knowledgeable and a self proclaimed "expert" (aren't they all). He sold me everything on the shelf and said I would need it. I didn't object because the cost was only half of what I expected it to be.

Back at home, the only place I could paint the coach was in the driveway, not the best choice to do some serious painting but you get by with what you have. So, I proceeded to the papering, taping, and other necessary preparations. I sprayed one color, let it dry, changed tape, paper, etc. On to the next stage which was striping. All was going fairly well until a large bumble bee came by and decided to nose dive into my new paint. Forgetting I had the paint spray gun in my hand, I accidentally shot the paint toward the bumble bee. With that he decided to take a swim in my newly painted coach. After much chasing of the bee with additional paint it decided to run down the side of the coach, (This is not recommended, sport fans). After the episode with the bee and Mary changing her mind about how wide the stripes should be, I decided to redo the paint. Be very sure you know what you are doing before redoing "clear-coat". Anyway, back to the paint store for additional paint, home again to restart the whole process again. The brown color didn't cover as well as I had expected so back to the paint store again. Cost of the paint is now escalating alarmingly after four trips to the paint store.

Process started again, this time it was gnats that decided to invade the paint job. If you look closely,

you can still see the little fellows. At this point I decided that road hazards and dirt would cover my mistakes

The moral of this story is to let the professionals do the job, but if you insist on doing the job yourself, take note of the following tips from an amateur.

- 1- Take plenty of time for the "preparation".
- 2- Use "top Load" spray gun.
- 3- Use a large enough air compressor to accommodate the CFM of the spray gun.
- 4- Paint in dust and bug free enclosure with low humidity.
- 5- Use brown paper instead of newspaper and masking tape from paint store and not Wall-Mart.
- 6- Use a good wax remover.
- 7- Follow mixing instructions to the letter.

**Editors Note:** I've seen the coach and it's a first class job.

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## GMC Rallies for 2004

- GMCWS March 15 - 20, Las Vegas, Palm Desert RV Resort Desert
- GMCMI March 21 - 27, Las Vegas, Silverton RV Park
- Sun State March 11 - 14, Grand Lake RV Center, Orange Lake, FL
- GMC Alumni April 21 - 25, 2004 Casino Magic, Bay St Louis, MS  
Host; Needed
- Dixielanders April 28 - May 1, Bean Station  
Host: Bobby Moore, JR Slaten
- Dixielanders June 15 - 18, Possible Maggie Valley (Not confirmed)
- GMCES June 21 - 26, Elkhart, IN
- GMC Alumni July 22 - 24, 2004 Jamestown Beach Campsites, Williamsburg, VA  
Host: Needed (Will try to move dates back to July 21 - 25)
- Dixielanders September (Don't know dates)
- GMCMI October 3 - 9, Marion, NC
- GMCWS October 5 - 10, Albuquerque, NM Balloon Festival

- GMC Alumni October 27 - 31, 2004 Renfro Valley, KY (Music City)  
Host: Don and Marilyn Roberts
- GMC Alumni January 19 - 23, 2004 The Great Outdoors Golf & RV Resort, Titusville, FL, Host: Ron and Suzi Tase
- GMC Alumni April 13 - 17, 2005 Cherry Blossom CC, Washington DC, Host: Needed
- Joint SS & 2005, Jan 13 - 16 Rally Park (Lazy Dixielanders Days)

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### **NOTE FROM PEGGY ANN MOORE**

Who fell off of the back porch while Bobbie was chasing her. Bobbie wasn't moving very fast, that's the reason he didn't fall.(Editor's Note)

#### **Dixielanders:**

When an old lady decides to do a back flip off her porch, she doesn't deserve so much attention. I appreciate all the prayers, cards, e-mails, etc. Thanks to all of you. I'm getting better each day, thanks to nurse Bobbie **Peggy Ann**

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### **Our New Editor:**

If you would like to include something to the next *DIXIELANDER* issue (all suggestions welcome), please call or send it by snailmail or e-mail to:

Sandra Walloch  
120 McBride Trail  
Fayetteville, GA 30215-2623  
Phone: 770-460-5044  
E-mail: dwalloch@peoplepc.com

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### **Dixielanders Minutes**

Rally Park, Florida January 24, 2004

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by

President Ken Henderson. All members were asked to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

An e-mail was read from Ike Grove re: his resignation as vice president due to the illness of his wife, Jan. Ken O'Rourke was nominated by Bill Hutchinson and the nomination was seconded by Flic Acosta. The new vice president office was voted on and passed unanimously, Ken is our new Vice President. We are in need of a new newsletter editor (we have a volunteer, Sandy Walloch) and in need of a webmaster. We will hope for a volunteer.

The treasurers report will be in the next newsletter.

The minutes, read by the secretary, were approved as read.

Under new business:

1- A new roster is being readied and we are requested to make corrections, additions and deletions after this meeting.

2- Future rallies were discussed:  
Bean Station in May  
Further rallies were discussed- possibly meeting in Montgomery with the Watsons and another one near Cincinnati. Plans will be made through our new Vice President.

3- Don Leslie reported that FMCA dues are due March 31<sup>st</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 am.

**Joanne Telgen  
Recording  
Secretary**

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## ***Dixielander Charter Members***

Following are the 24 original charter members of the Dixielanders. It is my

understanding that there were other people that joined the club at the same time but were not on the FMCA roster as being "Charter Members". Our thanks to those on this list for forming the club and also to those who have carried on the tradition of contributing Dixielanders. It's through your efforts that our Club has persevered.

**"We the undersigned do hereby apply for membership in and the formation of the GMC Dixielanders chapter of FMCA. We also confirm by our signatures that we are active members of the national FMCA."**

Jim & Louise McDowell	Bob & Inez Conway
Dan & Sue Williams	Joe & Aillene Burdette
Dean & Betty Moore	Ed & Marty Laird
George & Mary Nell Morris	Warren & Glenda Kelly
Stephen & Virginia Obermier	James & Virginia Martin
Don & Rita Robinson	Gordon & Lilian Hodge
Carl & Lorraine Mudd	John & Mary Donaldson
Ray & Trula Bingham	Bill & Joanne Telgen
Al & Marty Samsel	Roscoe & Shirley Trivett
Eugene & Betty Coulton	Ansil & Glenna Newport
Bill & Louise Bailey	Dale & Wanda Summers
Robert & Carolyn Cox	Milton & June Peacock

**The charter was received November 21, 1988**

## **15 Year Anniversary**

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## **An Interesting write-up on a GMC- Can you improve on it?**

For those owners of other brands and those who do not 'know' the GMC here is a brief description.

These GMC coaches were delivered in both 23 and 26 foot lengths from 1973 thru 1978. They were built on the GMC coach (bus) assembly lines and came in both the motorhome version, finished by General Motors, and Transmodes which were finished by other motorhome company's. The Transmodes often were used as airporters, ambulances, radio stations and mobile banks among

other things but most have since evolved to motorhome use. Because these coaches are front wheel drive, the chassis (frame) could be centered between the wheels rather than above the suspension components and drive line. This allowed for a lower and more stable vehicle (at the expense of under floor storage).

The engines and transmissions were derived from the current model year Oldsmobile Toronado and share both the drive line and a surprising number of suspension and steering components. The earlier units having the 455 ci engine (1973 thru 1976) and the later units the 403 ci engine (1976 thru 1978), both equipped with the Toronado 3-speed (Hydramatic 425) automatic transmissions.

Like the Toronado, the front suspension is twin A-Arms sprung with torsion bars running back under the front seats (near the ground). The rear suspension is what I call a 'bogey' type. Each side has two semi-independent rear wheels. The front bogey supported with a leading link and the rear bogey with a trailing link, very similar to the trailing link on a motorcycle. Between the two is one air bag that acts as the spring. Air pressure is provided by a 12 volt powered one or two cylinder air compressor and is adjustable from the drivers position or automatically as road conditions demand. Since the air bag is mounted between the bogeys, not to the frame, road noise is greatly diminished as is the tendency for the vehicle to rock. This is no more apparent then in the sales lot when one steps into a GMC after being in some other SOB (Some Other Brand or Some Other Box). It's actually hard to make a GMC rock.

As the bogey assemblies mount to the outside of the frame rails no suspension components cross the width of the coach except the front sway bar.

The frame rails are about 7 inches tall and the exhaust system is routed down the inside of the passenger side frame. The coach is mounted directly above the frame and the waste water tank and both 25 gallon fuel tanks are mounted between the frame rails. The fuel tanks are plumbed as one tank and only one filler is used although the plumbing scheme provides for about 5 gallons of reserve fuel

to be available from either tank.

The body is constructed of a blend of aluminum and fiberglass. Typically the large flat panels are aluminum and the areas with compound curves are fiberglass. Other than the vehicle chassis (the frame) which is steel, all of the coach frame is aluminum. The firewall is aluminum as all areas requiring metal structural sheets. No structural wood is used anywhere except in the floor which is made rigid with 3/4" plywood, which is clad on the exterior in aluminum for weatherproofing. The roof is one piece of aluminum on aluminum structural members. These GMCs are very solid.

Only one door is provided on the GMC although in the movie Twister, that GMC has a driver's door! On the 23 foot unit the door is behind the passenger front seat while on the 26 foot unit it is somewhat further back. Unlike most other brands the floor sits very close to the ground. Although no step was provided by GMC, some owners have added one. Consider that next time you climb into a modern RV. Probably only the Vixen Motorhome has a lower floor.

The GMC has windows, lots of BIG windows. Ours has a couch behind the drivers seat, the back of which can be lifted and attached to the ceiling providing a suspended bed with a bed below it. Behind the passenger side front seat is a four seat dinette which also makes into a bed. Behind the dinette is the door. The 12 vdc / propane compressor type refrigerator is next with the central vacuum system installed under the fridge. Next is the bathroom with shower, the electric water heater (assisted with a engine heat exchanger) being installed under the bathroom sink. At the rear of our GMC is the master bedroom with the propane tank and fresh water tank mounted on the rear of the right side of the vehicle. The rear bed makes into a dinette type area but most owners always keep it set up as a bed using the area under the bed for storage. Behind the bunk bed on the drivers side is the kitchen counter, sink and gas stove with microwave oven with the gas furnace mounted under the counter. Then we have dresser type drawers with the air compressor system and a high current 12 vdc power supply/charger(Buzz Box) and the 130 vac,

40 amp circuit breaker panel in the bottom drawer area. On the rear left (drivers) side is mounted the ONAN 6 kw generator set and a very large storage battery (4D) that provides coach power when other power is not available.

All lights, fans, the water pump, furnace and refrigerator run on 12 volts DC, only. The only items that don't run on 12 volts DC are the microwave oven, the regular oven's electric warmer, the water heater and the roof mounted air conditioner. (In reality the refrigerator uses a 36 volts ac compressor but the power still comes from the 12 volts DC thru an inverter. The refrigerator does not have to be level to operate!)

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## GMC Modifications Needed

(Have you done these? Let me know if you have any others.)

- ~ Macerator
- ~ Vacuum boost pump
- ~ Converter to replace the "Buzz Box"
- ~ Screen Door
- ~ Ni-Cad wire replacement (AWG)
- ~ Shut-off valves for the air bag
- ~ Trans temp gauge
- ~ RPM Gauge (Tach)
- ~ Rod between front fenders, between both headlights (prevents middle age spread)
- ~ Elect Fuel pump (Auxiliary)
- ~ Driving lights
- ~ New seats, driver & Passenger
- ~ Gutskie accordion fold curtains
- ~ Onan prime button
- ~ New Microwave
- ~ New Radio
- ~ CB radio and transmitter
- ~ LED's for tail and top lights
- ~ Drip rail over door
- ~ Tinted windows (cuts down heat)
- ~ 16" Alcoa's and 16" tires
- ~ Change lighting to fluorescent
- ~ Use synthetic oils all the way around
- ~ Metallic brake pads
- ~ Exhaust Headers

- ~ Rock deflector in front of radiator
- ~ Battery tray (Ragusa)
- ~ Ragusa folding step
- ~ Ragusa front air intake
- ~ Engine side air vents
- ~ Water pressure accumulator tank
- ~ Auxiliary Air compressor
- ~ Stainless Steel air tank
- ~ Water accumulator and pressure gage for compressed air system.
- ~ Air hose (50') from air tank to inflate tires.
- ~ Detachable Steering Wheel
- ~ New Seats for Driver and Passenger
- ~ Rain deflectors inside front access doors.
- ~ Rear View TV camera
- ~ Hidden locks for access doors.
- ~ 20 amp plug to run 2nd A/C unit from shore
- ~ LED lights
- ~ Ramco mirrors
- ~ Driving lights, front
- ~ Separate back-up lights
- ~ Louder turn signal clicker
- ~ Back-up beeper
- ~ Square headlight conversion
- ~ Keyless entry locks
- ~ Lighted door handle
- ~ Rear wheel disc brakes
- ~ Dual rear wheel air bags
- ~ Front wheel extenders
- ~ Engine conversion to Electronic ignition
- ~ Rostra electronic cruise control
- ~ New digital dashboard
- ~ Digi-panel systems monitor
- ~ Fantastic Fan conversion
- ~ New Grill
- ~ Electric windshield wipers
- ~ New headlight bezel and square headlights
- ~ Larger Chevy taillights
- ~ Change out all rubber hoses and trans lines
- ~ Then there's the whole interior to use your imagination with.

And the list goes on and on.

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## An interesting comment on GMC's

I think I've recounted a few times about one of my more memorable experiences at GM. I was a ride and handling engineer at the Milford Proving Grounds during the development of the GMC (I was on a different product) and recall seeing the development engineers putting a GMC into a broad slide maneuver on Black lake at what appeared to be about 60 to 70mph. Due to the low center of gravity, the coach slid like a car without a trace of potential roll-over!! It truly was one of those things you never forget--especially the sound of the howling tires. There are some more great stories about these maneuvers which I have since heard. In real life of course, a vehicle can get "tripped" by things like grass and curbs--but the base design has everything going for it to help you

### **Over steer and Under steer:**

I've read a few comments over time on the GMC Net about the GMC having over steer. This is far from the case. For most vehicles (race cars excluded), some under steer is preferred, it basically is a stabilizing force during handling maneuvers such as lane changes and expressway ramps. This may bore most of you, but I need to set the record straight. Unless you are skidding out of control, over or under steer is controlled by 2 things--suspension geometry, and compliance. The facts for the GMC are that the front suspension has LOTS of geometry AND compliance under steer. The rear has no geometry steer and some compliance under steer. With age, geometry steer doesn't change much. In the front, worn bushings will increase the compliance under steer--a good thing. In the rear, the front bogie will increase under steer with wear, while the rear bogie moves to over steer. If they both wear at the same rate, then the coach will move to slightly more under steer. The bottom line is that the coach is very stable when new, and with wear on the suspension components actually can get a bit more stable, but lethargic. If you are in an out of a controlled skid, none of those things affect you whatsoever (and the terms technically don't apply).

At that point, weight distribution and tire characteristics are in control.

**Bob de Kruyff** 78 Eleganza, Holly, MI

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## **Lazy Days - Rally Park Rally**

Fabulous ---- Fantastic ----- That is only two words to try and describe the January Rally at Lazy Days Rally Park in Tampa, Florida. We were very fortunate to be able to attend and enjoy all the folks who were there, eat way too much good food, attend some great seminars, and all in great weather. 46 GMC coaches came (plus 20 from the GMC Alumni club), the Lairds had to drop out because of motor problems and the Hendersons had illness hit both of them. We missed all who didn't make it.

Wednesday and Thursday were a regular parade of coaches coming in. We all got together for heavy hor d'oeuvres provided by the Rally Park. Then we had entertainment with a Patsy Cline imitator and some of our group participated (Flick Acosta does a mean belly dance. And, of course, we had a ball getting to meet and greet those we haven't seen in a while.

Friday the Park provided breakfast, lunch and dinner. We had a varied choice of seminars to attend. Most of these applied to various brands and sizes of coaches. One of those we attended was on how to maintain your coach. The speaker had been in the business for 28 years and knew how to get the attention of the folks. He told of the need to check the coach roof from time to time. Said that wasps loved the vents on roof air conditioners and to make sure you didn't get caught as you might go down faster than going up. but if that happened, as you slid down the windshield, be sure to watch out for the wipers as they are killers !!!!!

The ribs and chicken dinner was huge and delicious. Afterwards we were entertained by 6 singers and dancers who were truly awesome. the songs were the ones we all knew and enjoyed. they changed costumes for each number and did the job faster that we could blink.

Saturday was again a great weather day. Breakfast and lunch were provided by the park. We had our choice of seminars. Again there was time to wander

around to visit and see so many. 'Course the guys had time to swap stories on what went wrong and how they fixed it. Dinner was New York strip steak with all the trimmings. Excellent entertainment again. Three guys playing 30 instruments and sang lots of songs. Many laughs and true enjoyment from a very professional group. Sunday morn was a great breakfast and time to say so long until the next rally. Now, so many really enjoyed the rally that reservations were made for next January so we can return. The Sunshine Statesmen are going to co-host with the Dixielanders. So, mark your calendars and make plans for another super rally, we have 100 spaces reserved.

**Ellen Springer**

**(Editors Note)** Even though the Rally was a little pricey, it was most likely the rally that we got the most bang for the buck. The entertainment was top notch and professional and the food alone was worth the price. Besides, the ladies weren't burdened with chores. In fact there isn't a need for club Hosts, everything is taken care of. If you plan on going next year call Eike Van Horn at 1-800-905-6627 to make your reservations. We don't have a price yet but it will be in the area of \$200.

**Ken**

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## FMCA DUES REMINDER

Thanks to Don Leslie

FMCA annual family membership dues were raised from \$25 to \$35 effective January 1, 2004 by a favorable vote by 270 of 412 Chapters voting.

There is however, a grace period until March 31, 2004 for renewal extension at reduced rates for up to five years beyond your current expiration date, as follows: Contact FMCA Membership Services Department at 800-543-3622 or "<http://www.fmca.com/>" for online signup.

RENEWAL

EXTENSION BY MARCH 31 AFTER MARCH 31

1 Year \$25 \$35

2 Years \$47.50 \$66.50

3 Years \$67.50 \$94.50

5 Years \$100 \$140

Editors Note: You save \$40 for 5 years sign-up

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## Treasurers Report:

BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD 9-15-2003

**\$6813.42**

INCOME:

Dues and New members 1228.55

BALANCE \$8041.97

EXPENDITURES:

Ray Bingham--P.A. repair 15.00

Bill Hutchinson--Website 95.00

Robert Staub--badges 63.50

Ken O'Rourke--newsletter 202.88

USPS--stamps 14.80

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$391.18

1-31-2004 ENDING BALANCE **\$7650.79**

Respectfully submitted,  
Chuck Chambers, Treasurer

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## FOR SALE:

1976 Palm Beach TZE166V102852, Dual Air, 6kw Onan, new commode and water tank and drivers windshield. 100,000 miles covered storage and started once per month, 455 original engine, otherwise all original. Call A. M. Davis in Hazel Green AL, (256) 282-3589. He is willing to negotiate.

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**Th-Th-Th-Thats All ,Folks**

**See you at Bean Station**

**And a great big WELCOME to our new Newsletter Editor:**

**Sandra Walloch**