

We migrated from all points of the compass to Tifton, GA to attend the first Mandalay Travel Club Winter FMCA Pre-Rally prior to the FMCA National in Perry, GA. Between 13-15 March 2005 a total of 34 rigs had assembled at the Agrirama Center facility parking lot to be the first users of the 50 Amp-Full Hookups adjacent to the brand new Conference Center. Rally Master Ken Evans did a superb job of accommodating our requests for spaces next to friends and helping get us settled in quickly.

Starting promptly at 8:00 AM on Wednesday the 15th, the Mandalay Luxury Division Technicians started on appointments to address our service requests. These guys were terrific---working out of their rental truck loaded with parts, supplies and tools. They worked relentlessly everyday (even in the rain) to do everything they possibly could for us. Our hats are off to them---we owe them a great deal of thanks. Thanks again, guys---what a class act of support!!!

Heather Hockert's advanced planning provided for a full itinerary each day of the pre-rally. Her request for volunteers was met by an overwhelming response to help cover every activity and event. It's great when the club membership steps forward to participate in all phases of setup, execution and cleanup. Our travel club is becoming family.

Each morning we were treated to either a Continental style or a buffet type breakfast. A nice way to start the day. Our first luncheon at the Spring Hill Country Club (sponsored by Mandalay Luxury Division) preceded the Golf Outing. We hear that the course was not overly friendly to our group---we didn't set any new records; but, we got a whole lot of exercise (strokes/swings). No one volunteered to go back for a second try!

Dream RV from Bradenton, FL brought in a variety of new 2004 & 2005 coaches for display. You have to love those new horizontal opening basement doors on the newest of the 2005's. No more dirty shirts or scratches on the back. We hear tell we'll be seeing a new model with tandem axle in the not too distant future. We also heard that the new Mandalay Manufacturing Facility will become operational this fall. Can't wait to go on the new factory tour. The Dream Team participated in all activities and made a substantial contribution to our club's treasury. Thanks to Dan Wyle and his crew for their support and all the other Corporate sponsors as well. Thanks also to some of our 50/50 winners---thanks Dee & Pat Hood for the \$144.00.

The Mandalay Luxury Division Management responded to Carter Yoder's and Heather Hockert's recommendations by providing a much broader selection of Mandalay wearing apparel and other items. We had all types of jackets, pullovers, shirts, etc. to choose from when the store opened. We bought ourselves silly. There sure wasn't much to haul back to Elkhart, IN after we finished our shopping. We are all walking Mandalay advertisers---and proud of it too! The Luxury Division also provided a great number and wide variety of Door Prizes for our pre-rally. Congratulations to all the lucky winners. Our heartfelt appreciation and thanks to those at Mandalay who provided so much for us. Thank you especially for the neat umbrellas---they came in handy as soon as they were passed out at registration. Why does it always rain in Georgia when FMCA comes to Perry?

Lunch on the 16th was BAR BQ ribs and pulled pork with all the trimmings ala our sponsor Magnum Energy. This was followed by a series of technical presentations on Electrical Management/Protection Systems and Tow Brakes by David Sharkey of VIP Enterprises---a fellow Mandalay owner hauling a big business trailer behind his rig. We all need to seriously think about some sort of Electrical Protection System for our rigs to prevent damage from faulty/low powered sources. Many states and Canada require a Braking Assist System for our Toads.

Thanks to Bob & Pat Sholar, new Mandalay owners, representing Fantasy Tours, we now have the possibility of an Alaskan Caravan and a Mexican Copper Canyon Piggy-Back Train Caravan in the works. We need 22 rigs to make each of these caravans a reality. If we get our reservations in early we get to take advantage of discounts as well as guarantee train and RV Park spaces. Fantasy Tours sponsored an awesome ice cream social which lasted a couple of

days. Thanks for the great selection and all the toppings. We finished the 16th with a potluck dinner and country music furnished by the Carpenter Blue Grass Band---3 actual Carpenter brothers and a real bonifide carpenter by trade (sponsored by Workhorse Custom Chassis). Did anyone see the brother that was singing bass ever crack a smile?

Thursday the 17th was a cool rainy-misty day. It was a good day to take the all day SAM Shortline Excursion Train (sponsored by ONAN) to Americus & Plains, GA We got to see where former President Jimmy Carter grew up and where he launched his presidential campaign. We visited the old Carter Family Warehouse to munch on peanuts, browse/buy and step back into a whole lot of southern history. We visited the Telephone Museum to marvel at the old swithboards, longlines, crank phones and memorabilia from all over the world---biggest collection that exists, they say. We returned to the Agrirama Center just in time for a steak dinner and an evening of bingo. We played bingo til the prizes were all gone.

Friday the 18th was seminar day--SKYMED, River Park (electronics), Carrera Designs (our coach painters), Freightliner, HWH (levelers & slides-hydraulics) and Sharp Convection Cooking. Each seminar was led by a knowledgeable professional who fielded and responded to any and all questions. A lot was learned from the presenters and questioners alike. We have not all experenced the same things---it's good to learn from each other. At the next pre-rally it would be good to have an "OwnersOnly" seminar to share past problems and experiences with each other. Oh, if those rolling tires could only talk!

An Italian lunch was sponsored by Guardian. A wine & cheese social was sponsored by Freightliner Custom Chassis to prime us for the evening. This evening was the greatest! Heather outdid herself. She brought Mardi Gras and New Orleans to Tifton, GA---to include Cajun food and Dixieland Jazz Band. We ate ala Carrera Designs. We drank ala Mandalay. We danced ala Dometic Corporation. We had a party with hats and beads and all. We had a fun evening to remember. Our club is a social group and we are getting good at it.

We did manage to squeeze in a short business meeting led by Randy Nolte with a little assistance from a Robert's Rules of order expert!

Oh, well---it had to end---and---we had to get to FMCA National at Perry, GA some 85 miles north on I 75. So, Saturday the 19th at 10:00 AM our Mandalay Caravan left the Agrirama pre-rally site after many Thank You's and Good Bye's. What a wonderful time we all had together-----
THANKS to MANDALAY's great efforts!

But, there's going to be another Pre-Rally near Minot, ND in August---don't miss it!

And, there's going to be another Owner's Rally in/near Elkhart, IN in October--- don't miss it!