

Classic



GMC Classics


Chatter

Spring 2005

President's Message



*Lorren
White,
President*

When one thinks back about all that has happened in this past year, well you just have to say "GRRreat"! You wouldn't have expected less from **Ann Brieger** at the helm. What a good job you did Ann. What you accomplished will be with the club far into the future. You didn't have to make it such a tough act to follow!

I know there are several who do not know me coming from the North country, however, I am not new to the GMC motor home. I first bought one in 1977. It was a 1973 green Palm Beach with 7,000 miles. When I sold it I had put 42,000 miles on it in about five years. The GMC we have now was bought in Dec. 1993 and it had 60,000 miles. On our

first trip, it broke down and we had to be towed to a garage where we spent the night.

About four years later, the engine went out on a trip to Florida. From that point on I had a sick engine.

Bill Bramlet and **Gordon Dunlap** had been on me to put on fuel injection, which I finally did. This alone eliminated all the sick engine problems. Space does not allow me to mention all that I have done to the GMC, but, fuel injection should have been first.

"Are we there yet!!!" Sounds like what some of us were saying when the locals around Chico couldn't direct us to the Red Willows RV Park. Before it was over we were glad we found it, thanks to the hosts **Wayne & Charlotte Alumbaugh, Jim & Joanne Davis, Marvin & Gay Guelker, and Linwood & Sue Arthur**. Sorry for those that missed Jon Rutherford our entertainment. Thanks Sue.

The GMC classics are a fun group to be associated with and our

next rally, as I understand, is in Cowboy country and promises to be just that. April is wildflower month in Texas so I hope to see some of this beauty on the way down and back.

Looking through the new directory, I see a lot of names and faces we haven't seen for some time. Wouldn't it be nice if these faces would appear in Bandera. I sat in with the planning Hosts and I know it will be a rally you do not want to miss.

Thank you for the confidence you have shown in me as your new president. The coming year will be a challenge to me and I hope rewarding to you as we go.

Let's ride—see ya in Bandera.

Lorren





MY LIFE AS A GMC'ER

Part 3 of 3

By Virgie McHaney

The good old Onan generator never did work properly from the time we got our coach until the day we replaced it with a Honda generator. You know back in the beginning when I talked about our trip to Lexington for the GMC International. Well while we were there at the flea market we were told, by one of our Charter Classics members, that we needed to purchase a "bridge" (whatever that is) for the generator and we should never leave home without one. I guess he was right, because it is still in one of the drawer's in our coach and has been there since July of 1986. I suppose it worked!

Now about our replacement of the Onan. Corky found a source for purchasing a Honda Generator, which is a water-cooled generator, just outside of Des Moines, Iowa. Since we were going to the FMCA Rally in Ames, Iowa, we would just get one while we were there, have it installed, and everything would be great. He removed the old Onan before we left home. Now you understand this was in July and we had no dash air, but luck was on our side going while driving up to Ames because the weather was cloudy and cool.



Things do change, however, before we got there the weather took a turn for "HOT." The temperature and humidity was so hot and high that FMCA let you run your generation all day and night, but remember we had no generator because Corky had removed it before we left home. However, thanks again to the **Dunlap's** who hooked us up to his generator in his big coach, we were able to run our air conditioner at night so we could at least sleep.

After the Governing Board meeting, we drove down to the place we had purchased the new generator thinking they were ready to install it. We were told that it would be a week or two before

they could install the new generator. Not wanting to stay around waiting, Corky asked if they thought a "goat herder" could install one and they told him that with a little instruction from one of their technicians and the instructions that came with the generator, they thought he could install it himself. Arrangements were made to ship it back to Medina and we headed home.



Now you remember it was the hottest summer, no generator, and no dash air. However, we did have fans on our mirrors and we had the infamous **MO and Helen** wind wings. Being a true GMC'er, you learn to roll with the flow. We figured out that every 5-mile sticker we could spray ourselves with water from a spray bottle that we had put in the refrigerator during the night. With the help from the wind from the fans and our "**Mohelen's**" as we call them, we made it home in record time and not too much for the wear.

I guess by now you have had enough of the experiences we have had in our GMC. It may seem as if we have nothing but trouble, but remember this is a 1977 GMC and all of this happened over a period of 18 years. So if you stop and calculate, we have had more good times than bad. These experiences have been just stepping-stones and learning how to cope with them.

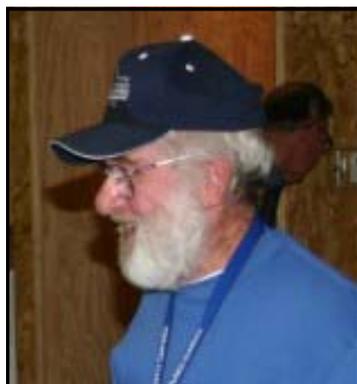
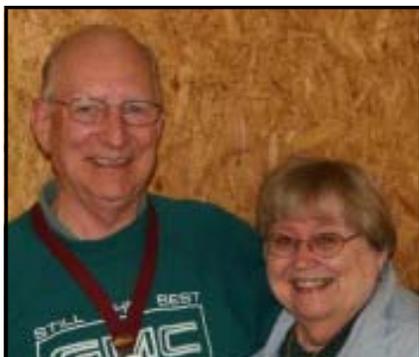
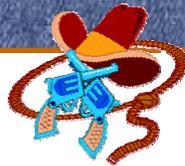
I guess the big question might be why do we still love our GMC? Because of the wonderful people we meet and the coach. I can truly say that I wouldn't trade the experiences we have had, the wonderful times, and true friends we have made over the years for anything. It has been great and we hope it will continue for many years to come.

It Ran Good . . .

Being an owner of a front wheel drive motorhome with Olds power, we attended several GMC Classic rallies with friends who were GMC owners

I aired up the tires and air bags, started it up, and drove around for a bit . I PURCHASED THE COACH and the lady said, "GET THAT WHITE ELEPHANT OUT OF HERE!!! (?????)." ...but you know ... **IT RAN GOOD!!!**

More of this article, by **James Harper**, in the next Chatter.





Fred Hudspeth
Technical Seminar Coordinator

GMC Classics

TECH EXCHANGE

Red Willow RV Park —Chico, TX
January 20-23, 2005

This record of the Tech Exchange is presented as a service to GMC Classics members and guests. Accuracy is not guaranteed. Independent verification is urged.

*At Chico, we were pleased to have two guests present from outside our region - **Bill Bryant**, from Pleasant Valley, NY and **Al Hamilton**, from Lansdowne, Ontario.*

GMC Motorhome History:

Bill Bryant over many years has collected historical documents and hardware on the GMC Motorhome. He is always ready to share some of the knowledge he has acquired. He did that with us through a question/answer session over the better part of an hour. Thanks for your contribution, Bill.



Bill Bryant

Here is a representative sampling of answers Bill gave in response to questions from the audience:

The GMC Motorhome was one of five RVs to use front wheel drive. The GMC Motorhome was the only one to have the front track widened more than

the design used in the chassis for the base vehicle (the Olds Toronado/Cadillac Eldorado) for the GMC Motorhome.

Bill said, other than a likely cost factor, he does not know why the front track was not widened more to match that of the rear wheels.

Contrary to popular belief, the 23' Birchaven was not named nor in any way influenced by Alex Birch, an engineer on the GMC motorhome project team. The Birchaven was a name that originated with Coachmen Industries, the upfitter for many 23" transmodes.

Memo Item: The person who bought the rights from Alex Birch to resume fabrication of screen doors for the GMC Motorhome is **Robert Burkitt**. Bob lives at 11382 Marlette Drive; Cincinnati, OH 45249-2210. Phone: 513-530-5021. Email: bob.burkitt@xtek.com. No one present had any information on the production status of the doors.

Bill authored a series of three articles that appeared in the FMCA Magazine, February, March and April 2004. You can read his excellent historical perspective of the GMC Motorhome in those issues; you can also contact FMCA for reprints of the article (www.fmca.com; 1-800-543-3622). He said if the articles appear to have a somewhat generic "sound", it is because he had to write them to appeal to the broad cross section of the FMCA membership. Bill said he has a massive amount of additional information.

A hydro pneumatic suspension system was initially considered by the project team for the rear suspension of the GMC Motorhome. The design had a lot

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in common with that used on the Citroen car. The cost of that system, however, was too costly compared to the airbag system developed for the production vehicle.

There were fifty five "Coca Cola" GMC Motorhomes produced by General Motors (i.e., they were not transmodes).

Bill said the TZE number is also stamped (inverted) on the driver-side frame rail below the window aft of the driver seat.

Engine Removal/Installation:

Several in the audience commented on methods they have used to remove/reinstall the engine.

Chuck Olhausen, who could not be present for the Chico Rally, provided some pictures of the rail system he built for his recent engine overhaul project.



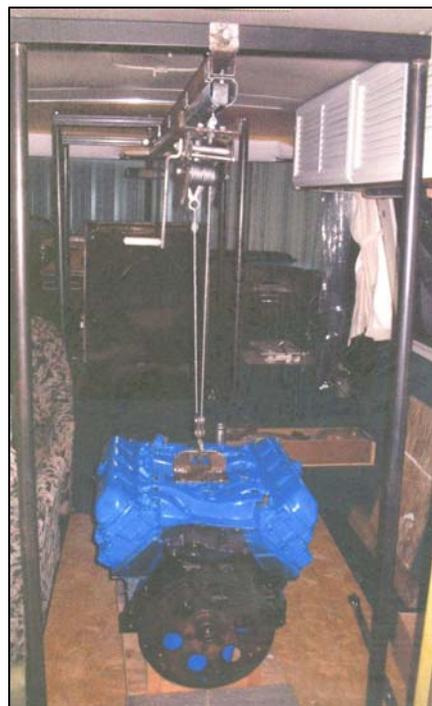
View of top rail construction.



Moving engine into place for rail lift.



General view of system.



Engine ready for transport.

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Engine being lowered into position.

Thanks, **Chuck**, for taking the pictures and sharing them with us. Chuck experienced engine failure during his trip to the Uvalde rally. Upon investigation, he found that the thrust bearing had failed and caused a loss of oil pressure. He attributes the bearing failure to a ballooned torque converter. He had a transmission failure returning from the Grove, OK rally, Spring '04; he repaired the transmission and replaced the torque converter but at that time had no reason to suspect engine damage.

Some owners commented that they used the procedure described in the service manual for engine removal from the bottom side. *See Pages 6A53 - 6A57, GMC Motorhome Service Manual X7525.* The engine can be removed with the transmission and final drive attached but it is recommended in the manual that the transmission and final drive be removed before removing the engine.

"Dirty DC" Power and Engine Management Computers:

Byron Maxwell reviewed his experience with the OEM alternator and the computer for his multi-port fuel injection system. When he was unable to get satisfactory performance with the system, he investigated possible causes and found the OEM alternator to be the problem. It does not convert AC to DC as clean and as efficient as alternators built for mid 80s and later vehicles. Because of emissions control

requirements about that time, automobile manufacturers converted from carburetion to fuel injection and designed electrical generating systems to be compatible with the engine management computers. Byron retrofitted an alternator from a mid-80s GM product and had no further problems with his engine management computer. **Ken Thoma** commented that he had the same experience on a throttle body system. He installed an alternator from a 1993 Chevrolet product to solve his problem. Ken said he had the alternator converted to a "one wire" terminal design at a cost of about \$50.

Random Notes:

Adjusting Ride Height:

In discussion of the correct ride height for the motorhome, it was emphasized that rear suspension height **MUST** be set correctly before attempting to make front ride height adjustments. This is not conspicuously addressed in the service manual that I could find; however, I have heard several owner presentations on this and agree completely. Do this as follows: (1) lift vehicle and position jack stands under front cross member (2) remove front wheels (3) using a "knife edge" (such as piece of angle steel as suggested by **Gordon Dunlap**) on a floor jack cradle, lift the vehicle at the center of the crossmember (4) lower the jack stands and lower vehicle with jack to proper front ride height (*see page 3A19 GMC Motorhome Service Manual X7525*) (5) Turn ignition switch to "run" position and place ride control to "travel".

(6) Check and adjust rear ride height per page 4-34, *GMC Motorhome Service Manual X7525.*

Now, proceed to adjust front ride height:

(7) Reinstall front wheels (8) Drive coach forward and apply brakes several times to remove camber "bind" in front wheels (9) Check front ride height per page 3A-20, *GMC Motorhome Service Manual X7525.*

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(10) If height needs adjusting, lift vehicle with floor jack until wheels clear the floor and support with jack stands. **STOP - UNLESS YOU HAVE THE CORRECT TOOL FOR THIS JOB - SEE GM TECH SERVICE BULLETIN 73TM - 2, 25 JUNE1973.** The GM tool shown was originally from Kent Moore Tool Company. It is available from SPX Corporation as J-22517-C (supersedes no. shown in OEM manuals and TSBs), about \$175, ex. S&H. Contact SPX @ 1 800 345 2253; www.spxkentmoore.com/

(11) With the correct tool, unload the torsion bars and turn the adjusting bolt CW to lift or CCW to lower ride height (12) Repeat steps 8 - 11 as needed to achieve proper front ride height.

Memo: Jim Anstett, Loveland, CO wrote a procedure for adjusting the ride height for the November 1999 edition of GMC Motorhome Marketplace. It is one of the best I have seen. I based some of the steps above on Jim's procedure.

Digital Projector Technology:

I mentioned that GMC Classics will purchase a digital video projector to use with laptop computers, DVD players, etc. at rallies. There are two major technologies that are the basis of these devices. One is digital light processing (DLP) and the other is liquid crystal display (LCD). Projectors that are to be used in heavy duty (i.e., many hours per day) generally use DLP technology. They are also more expensive than LCD projectors; however, through a detailed Internet search, we (i.e., **Billy Massey** and I) were able to buy a DLP projector for only a small amount more than a comparable LCD projector. The projector we purchased has more than double the light intensity and substantially better clarity than the one I borrowed and used for the Chico tech session.



This way to the Tech Session.



Some of the audience at Chico.

Your club welcomes your comments and suggestions for Tech Exchange subjects. You are also welcome to make a presentation on a technical subject of your choice. Advise what you would like to present and when.

Call or email Fred Hudspeth at 903-509-2495 and fbhtxak@aol.com respectively.



Winter Rally 2004 — Red Willow RV Park, Chico, Texas

Host's:

Joanne & Jim Davis, Charlotte & Wayne Alumbaugh, Gay & Marvin Guelker, and Sue & Linwood Arthur

Rally Attendees:

Bud & Judy Allen
Wayne & Charlotte Alumbaugh
Linwood & Sue Arthur
Phillip Atkisson
Vic & Gwen Ayres
Bill & Nita Bryant (*From upstate New York. Bill is recognized as the official historian for GMC Motorhomes.*)
Al & Ann Brieger
Jim & Joanne Davis
Gordon & Emmy Dunlap
Bruce & Georgene Farrill
Buzz Fischer
Harry & Nancy Fulks
Marvin & Gay Guelker
Al Hamilton & Nancy Berry (*From Ontario, Canada. Al is the editor of the GMC Heritage Cruisers Newsletter.*)
James & Redonia Harper
Justin Hill
Carroll & Ethelyn Hodges
Richard & Jaye Hodges
Fred Hudspeth
Ed & Jo Ann Johnson
Doran Jones
Jeff & son, Sammy Kollmeier (*New Member*)
Ed & Kandy Lilly
Billy & Debbie Massey
Byron & Angela Maxwell
Eugene Mazzurana
Corky & Virgie McHaney
L.D. & Johnnie McWilliams
Willard & Joyce Murdock
Charles & Minnie Myers
Quata Powers & her son, Ron
Jerry & Frances Reeves
Tom Schlich (*New Member*)
Ken & Ruby Thoma
Carolyn Tipton
Norman & Margaret Treude

Larry & Linda Turner
Tommy & Ann Walker
Charles & Janice Wersal
Lorren White
Billy & Lillian Wortham
Dot Siniand (*Gwen Ayres' sister*)
Boyd Mooney (*Came for a visit Friday afternoon. He is active with the North Texas Lunch Bunch.*)

Winter Wonderland Red Hat Tea



34 ladies were treated to a beautiful Winter Wonderland in Chico, Texas, led by our Queen Mother, **Emmy Dunlap**.

Carolyn Tipton is the Historian and is in need of things for the scrapbook. If you have any pictures, newspaper articles, etc, please get in touch with her or bring them to a rally.



Carolyn Tipton



Johnnie McWilliams read "When I'm an Old Lady."



Gwen Ayres and sister, Dot.



Linda Turner, Kandy Lilly, Ann Brieger, and in the background is Sue Arthur.



Can you guess who the "Mystery Hatter" is? Here's a clueher initials are MJ or is it **J M?**



Margaret Treude and Charlotte Alumbaugh

Friday night the Classics were entertained by Jon Rutherford. He has been singing, writing, and playing country music since an early age. He has become familiar to audiences as a singer, actor, and model, both on television and in print ads. You can read more about Jon at <http://www.jonrutherford.com/jon-rutherford.htm>



Emmy Dunlap and Jon Rutherford

New officers were installed on Saturday night. What a great job everyone did in 2004.



Ann Brieger, outgoing President.



Kandy Lilly —new use for Duct tape.



Classics E-Mailing List

If a club member has a bit of news that he wants all the members to know about, the Classics E-Mailing List is the tool to use.

If you have something for the E-Mailing List but want someone else to send it, please send it to me and I'll post it for you. Email: webmaster@gmcclassics.com

This will circumvent the HIPPA ruling and keep the club and officers out of harms way with the legal system.

We need someone to take care of informing those that do not have internet connections about urgent news that is sent over the E-Mailing List. A Sunshine Lady would be nice, or maybe a Mr. Peppermint. Any volunteers?

Billy Massey

RED HAT ROUND-UP



Bandera, here we come. "Get ready for our **Red Hat Cowboy Brunch**".

Put on your Red Hat Cowboy clothes. We are going to have a **RED HOT** time in Bandera.

We will be having a Tx-Mex brunch and show off our Red Hat Cowboy duds. There will be a \$3.00 charge.

We are planning on between 50 and 60 Red Hatters. Be sure to bring your door prize and appetite. **DO NOT BRING YOUR TEA CUPS. WE WILL FURNISH CUPS.**

We will also have some special prizes!!!!

PREPARE TO BE PAMPERED!

Queen Mother,

Emmy Dunlap



NEXT RALLY

Dates: April 14-17, 2005
Cowboy Theme
Location: Bandera, TX
Site: Skyline Ranch RV Park
Hosts: Larry & Linda Turner
Corky & Virgie McHaney
Ed & Kandy Lilly
Harry & Nancy Fulks
Al & Ann Brieger



Reservations are due by April 4, 2005
(See inserts for reservation form and schedule.)

SUMMER RALLY

Dates: July 21-24, 2005
Location: Thackerville, OK
Site: Red River Ranch RV Resort
Hosts: James & Redonia Harper
Jerry & Francis Reeves
Willard & Joyce Murdock
Bill & Lillian Wertham

MINI RALLIES/CARAVANS

Branson, MO
May 4-9, 2005
L. D. McWilliams is the contact for this mini-rally.
903-871-2648 or email: lmckilli@yahoo.com.

Colorado Caravan
June 9-16, 2005
Linwood & Sue Arthur are the contacts for this Caravan.
972-539-8202 or email: larthur539@msn.com



FMCA's 74th International Convention Caravan
Aug 15-18, 2005
North Dakota State Fairgrounds, Minot, N.D.
Gordon & Emmy Dunlap are the contacts for this trip.
903-295-6828 or email: emmydunlap@aol.com

More information on these Mini Rallies/Caravans is available on the website: www.gmcclassics.com/events.html



"Classy Fieds"



1976 Eleganza - Owned since 1987. Lots of upgrades. 28,000 miles on rebuilt engine, transmission, final drive, and radiator. New tires. Ready to roll on your cross country trip. \$19,500. **Willard or Joyce Murdock** in the Dallas, TX area. 972-291-4864. More information and lots of photographs can be seen at www.gmcclassics.com/murdock/



1978 ROYAL - 26' Rear Bath with 403 engine. 115k miles. Always garaged, original paint, beautiful walnut cabinets, no smoke or pets, HD sway bars front and rear, Bilsteins, Ragusa Tranny pan and temp gauge, Peck 346 final drive, Thorley headers on 3" exhaust system, overhauled Onan. Many more upgrades. Must see (Houston, TX area) to appreciate. \$21,500 **Harry Driskell** at 936-636-7100 hnmdris@earthlink.net

Thorley Headers Kit includes headers, gaskets, adapters, bolts and a good set of GMC specific instructions. Everything you need. **Corky McHaney** - Medina, TX 830-589-2431 jvmchaney@78055.com



The **Classics Chatter** is a quarterly newsletter for the membership of the GMC Classics. The club is a chapter of the Family Motor Coach Association and primarily draws its membership from Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Its purpose is to promote the preservation of the GMC Motorhome and to bring its owners together for their exclusive enjoyment and common interests.

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