

Foothills Travelers Newsletter, June 2025

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June 22, 2025

Hello, everyone! I'm taking a shot at a more formal 'newsletter' for the Foothills Travelers. I'm not sure of the frequency for future newsletters, but I doubt I'll send them every month. It will most likely be driven by FRVA National and chapter activities, club news, rallies, etc. If you have any information you would like to share with the club please feel free to share it with me and I'll include it in the newsletter. **This newsletter has several topics of importance so please take the time to read it through and let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.**

Our rally in Lancaster, PA was wonderful and I wish more members could have attended. I want to thank Jerry Sneed for once again acting as the rally host and tour guide extraordinaire as he always has for this rally. His experience in the Lancaster area is vast and his personal relationships with many of the Amish community make this one of our best trips and a real life 'Excellent Adventure!' We had five coaches and ten members who participated: Daryl and Rose Cook, Don and Pat Crum, Greg and Saunie Hall, Dwellion and Jacky Howard, Jerry Sneed and Sandy Herman. Everyone headed out from home on Saturday or Sunday, May 10th or 11th, and we met up at Candy Hill Campground in Winchester VA on May 11th. We left together the next morning for Old Mill Stream Campground in Lancaster, PA. Old Mill Stream has about 125 RV campsites along with tent camping sites and cabins. Old Mill Stream is part of the Dutch Wonderland Amusement Park and the amenities are nice. Mill Creek runs along the northern edge of the campground with a very picturesque Amish farm on the other side. It was a beautiful place!

Our week included drives through the beautiful countrysides, visits to Amish shops, The Green Dragon Farmer's Market, the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, restaurants, and farms and all were captivating! There were also a few truly standout activities. One of them was attending a spectacular production of 'Noah' at the Sight and Sound Theater. It's difficult to describe it except to say it was **FANTASTIC!** We also had dinner at one of the largest buffet restaurants anywhere, the Shady Maple Resort. It seemed like the buffets were a mile long with just about everything you could imagine. But having dinner prepared and served to us in the kitchen of the Stoltzfus family home was truly memorable! Jerry has known this Amish family for many years and they were very welcoming!

One of my most favorite meals though were the hotdogs and hamburgers with all the fixn's at the campsite. Daryl was the 'grill master! Dinner was topped off with a campsite charcoal peach cobbler prepared by Jerry! We had such a good time together, just like we always do! Are you ready for next year?





[CLICK HERE](#) to see all the photos I took during this trip, including Jacky's and my stop in Gettysburg.

Recently, everyone received a list of campgrounds from Eleanor. I created an electronic file for this information and confirmed that all the campground names and information are correct. It would be great if everyone could send me the names and city of your favorite campgrounds so I can include them in the list. I have attached a pdf file that can easily be printed and a larger Excel file for use on your computer that has hyperlinks for the websites and Facebook pages. Maybe this list will help chapter members to suggest and volunteer to host future rallies.

Speaking of rallies, we have only one chapter rally scheduled for the remainder of the year, and one regional rally. Our chapter rally at Palmetto Cove in Cleveland, SC is September 25th through the 28th. **If you have not already reserved your campsite please do so now.** Call Palmetto Cove at 864-836-6221 and tell them you are camping with the Foothills Travelers.



The regional rally is the GEAR Rally at Ocean Lakes Campground in Myrtle Beach on November 5th through the 9th. Again, if you have not already registered for this FRVA event please do so now. **FIRST**, you must call Ocean Lakes to reserve your campsite at 877-510-1413. Sites were limited so I hope some are still available. Once you have your campsite you must register for the rally at the FRVA website or by [CLICKING HERE](#). **To repeat, you must reserve your Ocean Lakes campsite FIRST, then register for the rally at the FRVA website.**

So far, the Foothills Travelers has scheduled only two rallies for all of 2025. The first was our May rally in Lancaster, which was amazing, and Palmetto Cove is scheduled for September. But just two rallies in all of 2025? That's not what a camping club is all about! Jacky and I have spoken with numerous chapter members about this issue and what they feel the problem might be, and everyone seems to have a similar opinion. My takeaway is that chapter members, by and large, feel hosting a rally is a very time-consuming task that requires much effort, especially when considering preparation of meals. Eleanor, Jacky, and I had the opportunity to speak with numerous other chapters during the chapter fair at the International Convention and Expo in Perry and many of those folks expressed the same. Everyone stated that camping should be leisurely with no stress. Therefore, they feel hosting a rally isn't for them! However, it was interesting to hear that one chapter, which had about the same number of members as the Foothills Travelers, has rallies scheduled almost every month of the year and has no membership fees and no rally costs, while expenses for meals and activities are paid for by each member.

Recently, Eleanor had lunch with Tom and Annette Larson and they brainstormed ideas that can make rallies easier and more enjoyable to host. I'll share their ideas and some of my own here and ask that everyone respond to Eleanor and myself with any ideas you have. We absolutely must kick start our rally planning quickly.

- **NOTE!!** I recently learned that FRVA will provide free liability insurance for chapter rallies. However, there are numerous requirements to be eligible for this free coverage. While it's easy to qualify, FRVA **MUST RECEIVE** a blank copy of the campground's contract at least 3 months prior to the rally date. This is a big reason why we need to plan ahead!
- Change the name of 'host' to 'Camping Coordinator' (CC) or Camping Club Organizer (CCO).

- The CC would be responsible for picking the month and dates for their rally, choosing the campground and determining the costs for camping, communicating the details to members and tracking RSVPs.
 - Keep in mind you will need to have as many campsites as you expect members to attend so the farther out you plan the more likely it will be you will find a campground with enough campsites. If your schedule allows, just ask the campground when they have X number of campsites available. A good number for planning, based on our more recent rallies, might be 10 to 12 coaches
 - We have members who have all types and sizes of RVs with some up to 44 feet long. You will need full service with 30/50-amp electrical service. The good news is that many campgrounds now have all sites with 50/30-amp full service.
- Since most of our members are retired, consider a rally on weekdays. While Jacky and I were in Gettysburg there were two FRVA chapters from New Jersey that had their combined rallies from Monday to Thursday. I was told this was their norm.
- The CC can research restaurants and attractions in the area and create a suggested agenda for the rally. It is not necessary to plan something for every minute of the day as 'free time' and fellowship time is always appreciated.
- Members will be responsible for the expense of most meals and outings unless otherwise arranged. Possible exceptions (CC's choice) would be a Potluck dinner one evening.
 - A theme can be suggested like Mexican, Italian, Irish, French, etc., a signup list would be emailed to members for review and they would decide what they are bringing and advise the CC.
 - Comfort Food Potluck: mac and cheese, chili, grilled cheese and tomato soup, chicken pot pie, apple pie, etc.
 - Fall Harvest Theme: pumpkins, apple dishes, turkey
 - Winter Warmup Party theme: cozy soups, bread, stews
 - Grill out at the campsite! Hamburgers, hot dogs, brats, chicken, or chicken.
- CC may organize card/board games.

I have attached several example documents provided by the Florida Gators chapter, a Rally Hosting Guidelines, Rally Agenda, and Rally Expense Report.

Finally, we have needed a new chapter logo since FMCA changed its name to FRVA. Personally, I don't like the new FRVA logo at all and didn't want to use it. So, I've modified the Eastern Area GEAR logo for our use and an example is below. I don't think that will be a problem but I will check with Eastern staff just to make sure. Please let me know your thoughts on this logo along with any thoughts or opinions.



Wishing everyone a great summer!

Dwellion