



OFFICERS 2023-2024

President  
Mike Sanders  
704-654-0867  
[jmsblueknight@gmail.com](mailto:jmsblueknight@gmail.com)

First Vice President  
Duane Lindsey  
home: 518-365-3611  
[duanelin@aol.com](mailto:duanelin@aol.com)

VP of Membership  
Gary Smith  
Phone: 423-464-1276  
[gsmithfl@bellsouth.net](mailto:gsmithfl@bellsouth.net)

Secretary  
Donna Mailliard  
Phone: 423-508-2677  
[donna@mailliard.com](mailto:donna@mailliard.com)

Treasurer  
R.O. "Dick" Wolfe  
Phone: 941-224-9180  
[wolfenas@aol.com](mailto:wolfenas@aol.com)

National Director  
John Shields  
951-231-3390  
[johnandsheri@verizon.net](mailto:johnandsheri@verizon.net)

Alternate National Director  
Gordon Owenby  
Phone: 904-424-7485  
[gowenby@comcast.net](mailto:gowenby@comcast.net)

Newsletter Editor Sheri Shields  
Phone: 951-265-6172  
[shieldsfamily6@verizon.net](mailto:shieldsfamily6@verizon.net)

A Chapter of Family Motor Coach Association

Web: [www.MIRVClub.com](http://www.MIRVClub.com)

## President's Message

Greetings Monaco Friends,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

We certainly have a lot of catching up to do.

The Pre-rally in Gillette was quite successful. Hats off to Gary and Nancy Smith and Sharron Riley as Rally Masters. Twenty-nine coaches attended the rally with most staying for the FMCA Convention. A few rally highlights include tours of the Durham Buffalo Ranch and the Eagle Butte Mining Site, great seminars, fabulous decorations and of course great food and fellowship. Lots of laughter was had by all playing Nickels and dancing the night away to the sounds of Pete DeJesse. A special note of thanks to all of the volunteers who helped with parking, decorations, serving food, presenting seminars and providing craft classes. Yes, another successful rally.

Did I mention successful rallies? The 2023 MI Balloon Fiesta was awesome. MI is extremely fortunate to have Denise and David Hillemann as the new Balloon Fiesta rally masters. Despite a few challenges such as the AIBF price increase, Denise and David took the ball and ran with it. Their goal, alongside with their co-rally masters Deba and John DeBuc, was to host an outstanding Fiesta and boy did they! There were coffee and pastries for the early morning Dawn Patrol watchers. Past friendships were strengthened and new friendships were made with the social hours and dinners. Thank you Denise, David, Deba and John. MI truly appreciates all of the hard work. The Fiesta was everything all of us could have imagined.

Continued on Page 2

Over 500 balloons participated this year. There were nightly (500 drone) light displays, fireworks and many, many more balloons of shapes and sizes. Opportunities for balloon rides, meeting the pilots and crew and even the opportunity to be a part of a balloon crew with on the job training were available to enhance the balloon fiesta experience.

MI will be hosting several rallies in 2024. By now, you should have received the Save the Dates email. I hope your travels will include attending one or more of the rallies. The MI website (mirvclub.com) will have the most current rally information and will be updated on a regular basis.

The Executive Board approved starting a Facebook page and details are being worked out. You will receive an email with information as soon as the Facebook page is up and running. This will be a great way to connect and exchange information.

All MI officer positions will be open next year and elections will be held in Branson. If you are interested in holding office of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, VP of Membership, National Director or Alternate National Director, please contact Nancy Smith (nsmithfl@bellsouth.net), Nancy Owenby (nancydee3777@yahoo.com), Sheri Shields (shieldsfamily6@verizon.net) or Karen Lindsey (saanenfana@aol.com).

Unfortunately, no one has stepped up to be rally masters for a pre-rally in Tucson or Redmond. It is not too late, so if you would like to take on the job as rally master for either of these events, please contact me at jmsblueknight@gmail.com. The Executive Board will assist with the planning if requested.

If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns, please contact me at jmsblueknight@gmail.com.

Sharron and I hope to see you at one or more of the 2024 MI rallies.

Mike Sanders

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email: [rita.sax@skymed.com](mailto:rita.sax@skymed.com) phone: 618-972-9886

## Vice President's Message

Greetings MI Members,

It has been a busy year. Unfortunately, we did not make it to the Pre Rally in Gillette, due to a accident in Indiana. Our coach is still at a body shop in Wakarusa waiting for parts. Due to the accident and low registration, I had to cancel the destination rally in Lake George. If enough people express interest I will try again next October.

Due to the fact we do not have our coach back yet our travel plans are uncertain. We are hoping to get it back in December. We hope to be in Tucson for FMCA and the MI pre rally, then on to Arkansas for the Eclipse rally. Our plans for the rest of year include, New Holland PA for the destination Rally, the Entegra Homecoming in Goshen in May, Nashville in June for the NIRVC event, Branson in July for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Rally and also in July, the Northeast Area Rally in Herkimer NY. Finally, off to Oregon in August for FMCA.

Duane Lindsey

Vice President Monaco International

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## V. P. of Membership's Message

I hope everyone is in good health and that you all have had a great summer traveling. Nancy and I started our journey on August 1st heading to the Monaco pre rally in Gillette, WY. After a 5-day delay waiting to replace a front tire on our RV we arrived in Gillette to host the pre rally. We ended up with 29 coaches in attendance, as a few of our members had issues with breakdowns or accidents and were not able to make the trip. I hope everyone stays safe and is able to get back on the road. Everyone who attended had a great time going to seminars, taking tours of the Durham Buffalo Ranch and the Mine, and craft classes. We also enjoyed the social hours and good food, participated in fun games, and had some great entertainment. The event also included MI give aways including cash and some fun items. This group graciously donated over \$1,500 dollars in cash as well as food and school supplies to The Council of Community Services in Gillette, which was our chosen charity for the rally. Great job everyone!

Make plans to join us at one of our future events and take part in all the fun.

Our current membership stands at 488 members. Please welcome all our new members.

Steve & Jan Bertling	Baldwin Township, NC
Steven & Sarah Burger	Littleton, CO
Bob Carani	Sioux Falls, SD
Pete & Debbie	Boca Raton, FL
Dan & Deb Foley	Rio Rancho, NM
Gary & Carolyn Hildreth	Banner Elk, NC
Jamie & Linda Hunter	Las Cruces, NM
Michael & Christine Leoniak	Livingston, TX
Mike & Barb Mulvenna	Phoenix, AZ
Dave & Pat Nothum	Green Cove Springs, FL
Jerry & Linda Pickett	South Holland, IL
Steve & June Singleton	Shell Beach, CA



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# National Director's Report

Greetings Monaco International members.

This past August, I had the privilege of serving as your National Director at FMCA's national elections, in Gillette Wyoming. Many items were discussed and voted on, which included changes to FMCA's Constitution, Bylaws, and Policy and Procedures. In addition, a new Executive Board was elected. The national elections had two candidates for each position, so debates were held, and we were provided the opportunity to question each candidate.

The following changes were made to FMCA's Constitution, Bylaws, and Policy and Procedures:

- A new strategic plan for gaining new members.
- A new procedure to modify the emblem which also requires that it be used on all official documents, publications, badges & websites. Any change requires Governing Board approval.
- A new membership category entitled "Pathfinder" which does not require ownership of an RV, for the first five years. This is to allow people looking to purchase an RV access to FMCA's knowledge base.
- A new policy on approval of logos for FMCA. These require the approval of the Executive Board.
- The use of a "doing business as" or DBA for FMCA. This will allow FMCA to develop a new name and logo that is more inclusive of trailers and fifth wheels, not just motor coaches.
- A new Mission Statement and Purpose Statement were developed. The idea was to make them simpler and more inclusive to all RV owners.

The changes to the Bylaws and Policy and Procedures will take effect immediately, the changes to the Constitution will need approval of FMCA's membership, so look for an email notification soon. Voting can be done via mail or online at [www.fmca.com/constitution-changes-2023](http://www.fmca.com/constitution-changes-2023) Further information is available on page 22 of the November issue of Family RVing magazine.

This year's newly elected Executive Board is as follows; National President Gary Milner, National Senior Vice President Paul Mitchell, National Secretary Pamela Richard, and re-elected National Treasurer Barbara Smith. Board members will each serve two years in their elected positions. Congratulations to our new board!

Now, on to more important news. We had a great time at Monaco International's pre-rally in Gillette Wyoming. There was good food, entertainment, tours of the Coal Mine and Durham Bison Ranch, the always popular social hour, seminars, Aqua Hot services, and even a new game. Gary and Nancy Smith, and Sharron Riley did an amazing job! Your hard work and preparation were appreciated by all who attended.

Merry Christmas,  
John Shields



## **SAVE THE DATES - 2024**

### **Total Solar Eclipse Destination Rally**

April 4 -9

Hot Springs, AR

### **Pennsylvania Dutch Country Destination Rally**

April 21 – 25

New Holland, PA

### **Muskogee Destination Rally**

May 13 (arrival) – May 17

#### **INTO Rally**

May 17 – 21

Muskogee, OK

### **Monaco International 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Destination Rally**

July 15 – 19

Branson, MO

### **Balloon Fiesta**

October 9 – 13

Albuquerque, NM

Additional rallies will be announced as they are scheduled. If you are interested in being the rally master for a pre-rally in Tucson or Redmond, please email Mike Sanders at [jmsblueknight@gmail.com](mailto:jmsblueknight@gmail.com).



**Destination Rally Preceding INTO Rally  
Muskogee, OK  
May 14 (arrive) – May 17 (INTO begins)  
Hatbox Event Center**

**Monaco International RV Club is hosting a Destination Rally prior to the INTO Rally in Muskogee, OK. The rally fee of \$199.00 includes 3 nights of camping with full hookups (utilities are at the rear of the site), a Welcome Dinner, an ice cream social, tour of the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame & Museum, a tour of the Butterfly Papillion, games, lunch at The Amish Restaurant and Store (\$) and a day trip to Tulsa for a guided tour of this historic city. Tulsa is fifty miles from Muskogee and transportation will be provided.**

**Rally fee for 2 people in coach - \$199.00**

**Rally fee for 1 person in coach - \$149.00**

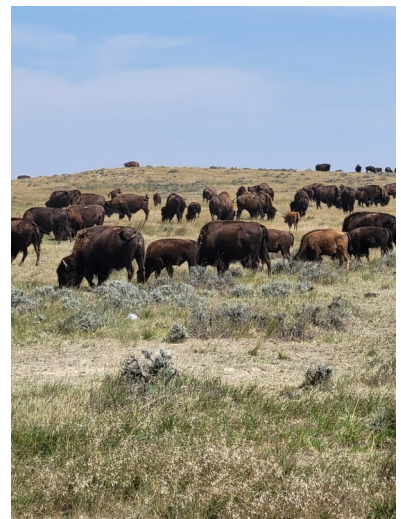
**Cancellations: There will be a \$25 cancellation fee on all cancellations. Cancellations must be received prior to April 20 for a full refund minus the cancellation fee.**

**If you are staying for the INTO Rally, you will not have to change sites (May 17 - 21).**

**GO TO [MIRVCLUB.COM](http://MIRVCLUB.COM) TO REGISTER.**

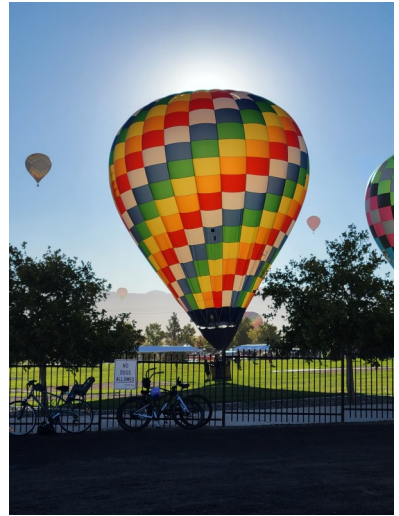


# Roaming to Wyoming





# Balloon Fiesta

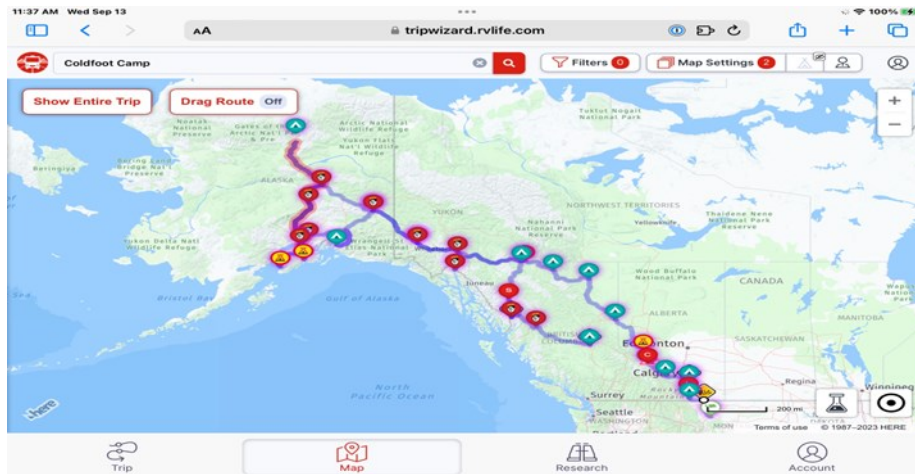


# Member's Travel Log

ALASKA – Not the Final Frontier! by Rita Sax

This summer, we took one of our bucket list trips to Alaska. When I say “We”, I mean my husband, Bill Sax, my granddaughter Micaela “Mica” and myself. Alaska, I found out was on Mica’s bucket list as well, since she was 9 (she is 13 now) so we brought her along.

This is the map of our Alaskan trip through Canada and Alaska. Approximately one month in each country.



Before we got to our official starting point, we took Mica to Mount Rushmore, Sioux Falls, and Devil’s Tower, where we invented a game with our family called “Where’s Mica”. These were places we had taken her cousins, but she hadn’t seen them. Mica climbed rocks, and when we took pictures she was difficult to find, so instead of “Where’s Waldo” we played “Where’s Mica”. As you can tell by the picture below you can see she ate so much, she became full-figured.



We decided to take a guided caravan with Adventure Caravans, and I am glad we did. We would have missed out on so much if we had not gone with them. There were so many things we did, we would not have known about, or probably would have dismissed due to cost. We also met so many new and great friends.

First, we all met in Montana and had a nice group dinner the day before we left for Canada. Next day, our tail gunner, whom we affectionately referred to as “Thumper” came around and thumped our tires to make sure they were ready for our trip, and he did that every morning before leaving. He was like an alarm clock.

Our Wagon masters always took off first in order to get to our overnight stop first. We were given a time span to leave the campground in order to get to our next stop before the tail gunner. The tail gunner was the last to come in; in case anyone had any problems.

When we left the campground, we radioed into the tail gunner, that we were leaving. We set our odometer to “0” and put our headlights on, which is required by law in Canada. And off we went. These are just some of the differences of traveling by yourself and traveling with a caravan. We could stop wherever we wanted, sightsee, take pictures of scenery or wildlife, on our way to our next stop. We didn’t travel in groups, unless we chose to.

We matched our odometer readings with our guidebook when we took off. It told us where to turn, where there were good eating spots, good turnoffs, things to see, good picture areas, etc., and it got us to our ending location.

Mica was asked by our wagon masters to paint a rock at each campground, that we left at that campground as proof that we were there.

We stopped at places like:

Ft Macleod, Alberta (AB), Canada – where we saw Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump & the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Museum. The Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump was where the Indigenous people would do their “hunting” before winter. They would get a young brave to dress as a buffalo, and others as wolves that would chase after the buffalo. The buffalo impersonator would run out in front, guiding the herd off a cliff. They would get killed as they landed on top of one another. Unfortunately, one day, the impersonating buffalo, fell off the cliff too, and the buffalo fell on top of him and killing him as well. The Indigenous people from several tribes in the area would butcher and prepare the 300 buffalo as food for winter, strip them of their hides for warmth and cloth, and use their bones for tools. They used every part of the buffalo and only killed as much as they needed to survive the winter.





Calgary, AB, Canada – Heritage Park Tour, where there was an old-fashioned amusement park where Mica had fun, riding rides back from the early 1900's. It was a new and interesting way to have fun, versus television and video games now days. Tried some cinnamon rolls and Saskatoon bread, a berry grown in those parts. We had a great lunch at Calgary Tower, 626 ft tall, and looks similar to the Space Needle in Seattle. You could see the whole city from the rotating tower.

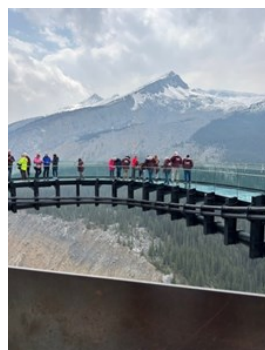
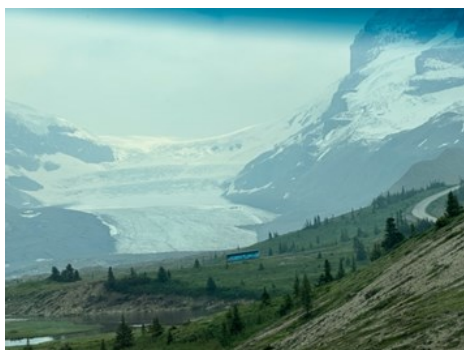


In Hinton, AB, Mica got the opportunity to do some horse back riding with one of our fellow caravan members.



Banff/Lake Louise, AB – What a beautiful lake, named for Queen Victoria's 6<sup>th</sup> child. It's beautiful shade of blue from the rock flour that gets in the water. Rock flour or glacial flour, consists of fine-grained, silt-sized particles of rock, generated by mechanical grinding of bedrock by glacial erosion or by artificial grinding to a smaller size. Because the material is very small, it becomes suspended in melted water, making the water appear cloudy, which is sometimes known as glacial milk. You can see the glaciers in the far mountains directly behind the lake.

The next day, we spent the night at the Athabasca Glacier. Where we walked on the actual glacier and walked out on the glass bridge hanging over the river/gorge. Now I didn't go out there right away because I am a little afraid of heights, not nearly as much as I used to be, but then my granddaughter shamed me into going out on it. I'm glad I did.



We then went to Dawson Creek, British Columbia (BC), we saw where the Alaskan Highway 1 (Alcan Hwy) was started and saw mile marker “0” on the Canadian side. It finished 1422 miles later near Fairbanks, AK.



Then to Watson Lake in the Yukon Territory, where we learned about the aurora borealis. We didn't get to see it because it was light almost 24 hours a day. There we also stopped at the sign forest. The sign forest was started by some of the U.S. Army Soldiers that were building the Alcan highway. They put up signs and the mileage pointing to their hometown. The caravan put one up, and we left a rock that Mica had painted.

This was a two-month trip, and there was still a lot more that we learned and saw. I am going to finish our trip in the next addition. So, see you in a couple of months.

Don't stop searching for new adventures and fulfilling your bucket lists!

# Classifieds

## For Sale

Blue Ox Patriot 2 brake system with remote control/monitor. \$700 OBO

Contact: John Shields 951-231-3390

## Help Needed

My flip-down TV in the ceiling of my Dynasty failed.

I'm trying to get another motor and bracket new or used. Has anyone else had this problem and found an after-market unit?

Bernard Burks, Monaco International member

To place a classified add, email [shieldsfamily6@verizon.net](mailto:shieldsfamily6@verizon.net)  
Adds must be less than 40 words and includes contact information.

## Notifications

### Tucson Pre-rally Update

Unfortunately, no one has offered to host a MI pre-rally in Tucson in 2024, however, there is still a possibility MI members will be able to participate with the Tri -Chapter Rally. The rally will take place at the Pima County Fairgrounds and the dates are March 10 -14. An email with registration information will be sent to MI members on Dec 10th, if there is availability at the Tri Chapter Rally.

## Closing Thoughts

