

CHARLESTON RAGTIMES

April 2024 (issue #4)

Voice of the 41st S*M*A*R*T National Muster in Ladson, SC



During the Muster, this newsletter will be published daily during the early evening so it will be in the attendees' morning email each day with the day's activities. A few copies will be posted.



DANCING TO CHARLESTON

2024 S*M*A*R*T
National Muster
Ladson, South Carolina



Charleston, South Carolina, is known as the Holy City because it has over 400 churches. What do you want? We are in the Bible Belt. This charming city has historic structures, monuments, and incredible museums, all boasting the history of Charleston. There are fancy restaurants, awesome shops, exciting tours, sandy beaches, and multiple landmarks to explore, including Fort Sumter where the Civil War began 163 years ago on April 12, 1861.

SMART 41st NATIONAL MUSTER

Monday, September 16 – depart September 21

The Exchange Park, 9850 Hwy 78, Ladson, SC 29456

Come share and enjoy the military camaraderie that SMART provides. We are inviting early arrivals in order to enjoy the variety of tours available. There will be interesting seminars, games, crafts, and friendship experiences along with some great entertainment experiences.

We will have time for great food (5 meals), opportunities to meet with folks in our chapters, make new friends, and enjoy SMART and local area experiences. The high value seminars are pertinent to RVing, life, and our shared military backgrounds. Vendors at the muster will provide high quality RV and lifestyle items for sale.

Stay through Saturday morning to enjoy Friday night Closing Ceremony festivities, dinner, and the last night door prize baskets as well as the \$750 Grand Prize drawing toward a SMART caravan of your choice.

We set the schedule so that you can take advantage of the many tours that Charleston has to offer. You can arrive 5 days ahead of time at noon on September 11. Opening Ceremonies, the golf tournament, chapter meetings and the First Timers Session take place on the first day, September 16.

The POW/MIA Ceremony continues to be a moving experience. The Flag Retirement Ceremony will continue to be an exceptional tribute to our Nation's symbol.

Contact for any questions:

National Muster Master: John Steinbauer
jfs9840@gmail.com (210) 386-9018

Assistant National Muster Master: Lonnie Alley
lonniealley@earthlink.net (910) 709-9477

Chair of East Region: Leroy Armacost
leroyarmacost@bellsouth.net (904) 254-0898

Average Weather in Ladson, SC in September

9/12 71°/83°

9/13 72°/84°

9/14 71°/84°

9/15 71°/84°

9/16 71°/83°



9/17 71°/82°

9/18 71°/83°

9/19 70°/82°

9/20 70°/82°

9/21 70°/82°

Be on the lookout for Occasional Rain



Message to all Chapters & Individuals

The Prize & Raffle Committee would be happy to accept donations for our National Muster from Chapters and individuals. Baskets that include items from your local area are fantastic. If you would prefer not to give a basket, gift cards are always appreciated.

Everyone knows one of the best things about attending our National Muster is the opportunity to hear from experts from a variety of manufacturers and other camping venues on a wide range of subjects. It also provides a great opportunity to purchase items you may not find elsewhere. Every effort is being made to invite these individuals to make sure we have what members want. In support of this effort, you are invited to let me know if there is a special subject you want covered or manufacturer you would like to have attend and we will work to try and make it happen. Even better, if you have a personal contact with someone, please let me know that, too, at kar154@aol.com or (843) 446-5648.

Phil Millonzi, Vendor Coordinator

RE M I N D E R !!



Start saving non-perishable food items for our food drive, any kind of school supplies, lap robes and skull caps for our veterans and service members. This year, we will be supporting the Ladson school district as well as the local food bank. We will also contact the VA Hospital to donate the lap robes and skull caps.

TOURS

Your National Muster Staff has been working diligently to identify the best tour and sightseeing options for the Charleston area for over six months. After negotiations with multiple companies, we believe you will find these options will meet your sightseeing and tour desires.

We are providing three options for your convenience. However, since Charleston provides such a wide range of tour and sightseeing options, you may decide there are other tour operators that may meet your personal situation both from an interest and financial standpoint.

First, for those who prefer transportation from Exchange Park for a tour and return, we have partnered with Charleston Convention and Group Services, Inc. (CCGS). They have been providing tours since 1986 and specialize in supporting military reunions. CCGS has developed tours and a schedule to match the times specifically designated for tours during the National Muster schedule. Thursday, 12 Sep, to Sunday 15 Sep, and Wednesday 18 Sep. To see the tours, prices, and terms and register go to: Charleston Convention Group Services

For those who rather drive on your own, carpool, or go by a taxi service like Uber, Lift, or a traditional taxi company, we suggest two options: Viator or Information, Tickets, and Travel (ITT).

Second, Viator is a worldwide tour company who offers a wide selection, excellent prices, and terms at: Viator Charleston Tour Options

All you have to do is go to their website and make your reservations.

Third is one military members are familiar, ITT through military bases. While this option may be the most cost effective, the process only works if you purchase the voucher(s) in person and is somewhat complicated. ITT caters to military members who are in the local area since tickets must be purchased in person, and are non-refundable. In order to purchase the vouchers from ITT these are the recommended steps.

1. Review the tour options on the ITT website at <https://www.jbcharlestonorc.com/tickets>
Note: The ITT website does not provide any detailed info about the specific tours; therefore you have to check each tour operator's website by searching the internet or viewing tours listed on Viator or another tour sales operator.

2. Once you decide which tour(s) you want, plan your arrival date for the muster so you have time to go to the ITT office at Jt Base Charleston to purchase the voucher(s). It will then be your responsibility to contact the tour company and make the reservation(s). The benefit of completing your part sooner than later is to have a better chance of getting the tour you desire. ITT assures vouchers will be available for each tour option, however, only the tour operator can provide info on the availability of specific tours and dates.

IMPORTANT: Please know if you purchase a ITT voucher and then decide not to go there are no refunds or exceptions. SMART only serves as a facilitator for purchasing tours via all options and does not receive any financial benefit. Each tour option (CCSG, Viator, and ITT) have their own tour purchase and refund terms and conditions and it is your responsibility to read and understand them. SMART staff will not attempt to negotiate or intervene if a dispute occurs either on your behalf or theirs. Members are free to arrange tours on their own without using these options.

Note: If you have already registered for the National and decide to change your arrival dates to facilitate tours and need to revise, no problem. Just go the SMART website, sign in and go to your reservation and make the change which will generate a new reservation with any payment due or refunds for site payments.

If you have any questions, you can contact John Steinbauer, Muster Master/Tour Coordinator at jfs9840@gmail.com.



TIPS OF THE NEWSLETTER

If you don't have a SMART name tag, be sure to order one from headquarters. Your name badge will be your ticket at National for all meals and tours.



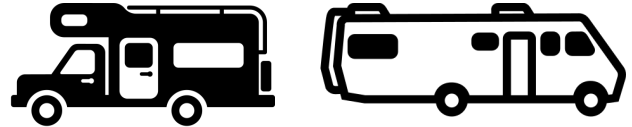
DON'T FORGET THE DATE!

You must register by May 1 in order to qualify for the Early Bird Drawing. Have your registration fee refunded to you!



MUSTER SUMMARY

Our 2024 National Muster will be held in Ladson, South Carolina, with Opening Ceremonies on Monday, September 16th, and Closing Ceremonies on Friday, September 20th.



Place: Exchange Park, 9850 Highway 78, Ladson, SC 29456. Ph: 843-572-3161

Registration Fee: Muster fee is \$100 per person for catered meals, entertainment, and other muster activities. A \$30 non-refundable administrative fee is included in each registration. Tour fees to be paid to the tour company.

Camping: Camping fees are \$50 per night. Sites will be assigned by registration staff with NO involvement by Exchange Park staff. All sites are back-in with full hookups (our parking crew will guide you to your site and will be glad to assist backing into your site). Big rig sites available. Long sewer and water hoses will be needed as connections are in the rear. Restrooms in the Exchange Hall will be available 24/7.

Earliest Allowable Arrival Date: Noon on September 11th. Muster departure date is no later than noon on September 21st.

Activities in the Charleston area during National Muster

September 13, 2024—Dancing on the Cooper, Mt. Pleasant Pier

Local bands perform a variety of live music

Tickets: \$10 pp at www.CharlestonCountyParks.com



January 20-September 15—Quilt Exhibit from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



“The Art of Abstraction: Modernism in Quilting”

The Charleston Museum, 360 Museum Street

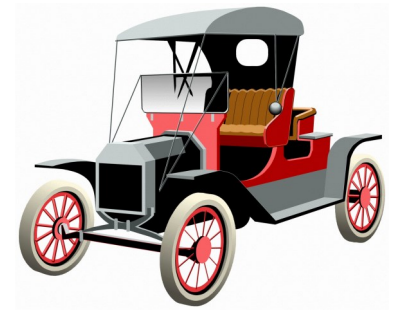
843-722-2996

September 21, 2024—Cars & Coffee, Fairfield's Village,

165 Village Green Dr, Kiawah Island, SC

9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Unique antiques & other cool cars



September 14, 2024—Cha-Cha Charleston! 2 shows: 5 p.m. & 8 pm (90 min)



Jazz Orchestra & Gino Castillo—\$10 to \$64 pp

Charleston Music Hall, 37 John Street

222.charlestonjazz.com 843-853-2252

FACTS ABOUT CHARLESTON

Charleston is the most populous city in South Carolina. It is the county seat of Charleston County and ranks 74th in the U.S. Population in 2020 was 150,277. The city was founded in 1670 and was named for King Charles of England. The French Quarter offers a 2-hour walking tour.

VENDORS//VENDORS//VENDORS//

While we are continuing to recruit vendors for the 2024 National Muster, we expect to have something for everybody. Currently we have 13 vendors pending registration with more expressing interest. Four vendors are members selling hand crafts.

Vendors showing their interest in the National Muster are:

- BLUE OX sales and repairs
- KLEENTANK repairs and cleans out holding tanks
- SCHMITZ SALES sells flags and banners
- SOUTHERNPINESRV services aqua hot water heaters and general RV maintenance
- RECWASHER wash and wax RV
- BARBARA TRENT BUSINESS badges and engravings
- DENNIS BAGGETT BUSINESS. sells sewer saddle bags
- AUTO SHIELD CHARLESTON RV diamond shield removal and replacement
- MYRVSCHOOL seminars, driving lessons and RV scales
- KAREN KERNER BUSINESS sells small crafts
- PLUMMOON CRAFTS sells homemade goods
- SHELENE ARMACOST sells seasonal wreaths.
- PAT HAYNES sells military hats, banners and memorabilia.

This is a great opportunity to get your annual AQUAHOT service, onsite repairs or coach cleaning and waxing. This will be an opportunity to get your rig weighed. Several vendors are also offering free seminars on various topics during the muster.

Anyone interested in becoming a vendor or knows someone that may be interested, please contact Phil Millonzi at kar154@aol.com. Registration fee is \$75 non-member or \$25 S.M.A.R.T. member.