



S★M★A★R★T

E-NEWS



“Seeing the Country We Defend”

SMART HEADQUARTERS

SMART BI -MONTHLY SUPPLEMENT

FEBURARY 2025



The 42nd National Muster in Mineola TEXAS

has announced their TOURS!

GO to the website and sign up for these great Tours!

(call or email HQ if you have already registered)

Tour #1 TEXAS Freshwater Fisheries Center

Thursday Sept 11, 8am-2pm

\$35 per person, Transportation Included

(lunch available at additional cost)



Tour # 2 East Texas Oil Museum

Friday Sept 12th, 9am-2pm

\$35 per person, Transportation Included,

(lunch available at additional cost)

Tour # 3 Caldwell Zoo and Tyler TX Rose Garden & Museum

Saturday Sept 13th 9am-4pm

\$60 per person, Lunch Included,
Transportation Included.



See more info at SmartRVing.org

Transportation is limited to 45 people per Tour so sign up Quick!

See Ya There!

Early Bird Registration is by May 1st



A Message from your

SMART President, Melody Thomas

We had the privilege of joining the Arizona Tumbleweeds and Arizona Roadrunners at a muster in Ehrenberg. The annual RV show in Quartzsite was happening nearby and we all got to wander the big tent and buy the items we needed. The most incredible transformation takes place in Quartzsite every year. The desert swells with RVs parked every which way. A town of 500 grows to over 150,000 from January to March. It is a marvel to see.

The muster started with a potluck dinner followed the next day by a potluck breakfast. This was a new treat for us as we had never been to a potluck breakfast before. It was, as always, filled with delicious foods and treats to include a waffle station manned by William St. Bernard.

We enjoyed another potluck dinner and then joined in on their chapter meeting. Important matters were discussed and travel plans made. The group included a newlywed couple of just three months, two new members within the last year, and a prospective member we introduced to SMART as he rode his bike around the campground. He saw us sitting around the campsite, stopped to find out more about the group, and joined us for breakfast the next day.

I am always amazed at how nice the folks in SMART are. We were warmly welcomed to the group and treated as regular members of the chapter. This is what makes SMART so special. The camaraderie is priceless. We need to share this incredible club with everybody. Get out there and have fun. Let everyone in the campground see you having fun. Invite them to join the group. Then put booklets in the laundry and community rooms. Hang out banners. Fly your SMART flag. Award campgrounds a certificate of appreciation.

When people don't renew their dues, I ask them why they aren't staying with the best military travel club around. Some have medical issues that prevent them from RVing. Some have family issues they need to take care of. It's the ones who tell me they decided to leave because they didn't feel welcome that really upset me. There is no reason for someone to sit alone at a muster. Be sure to greet new members and invite them to continue coming. Call them and remind them about events. It's not enough to just recruit people to your chapter. Making them feel welcome will make them want to stay. Ensure everyone in your group is engaged and feeling welcome. *Melody Thomas, SMART National President*



From the desk of the 1st Vice President

As I write this article many of our SMART members are digging out from the January snow storm and thawing out. Now is a great time to visit the SMART Website to review the many SMART caravans posted, sign up and enjoy the fellowship and comradery with fellow SMART members. Additionally I would like to encourage everyone to seek out potential SMART members. Let's have them enjoy all the fun and fellowship we have. While you are visiting the SMART Website it's a great time to sign up for our National Muster this September in Mineola Texas, it's always a fun and informative experience for all. In closing I ask that you all travel safe and stay SMART.

David Weis 1st VP



I am honored to serve as 2nd Vice President and look forward to a great new year. As we set goals we must continue to concentrate on Recruitment and Retention. Chapter Presidents the delinquent member list should be reviewed by you monthly, and send a reminder to members that their dues are due. We cannot afford to lose members, if they are not renewing, please ask them why they are dropping their SMART membership. If anyone has any new ideas on recruitment and retention please let me know and I will be happy to bring your idea to the Board of Directors. As we travel this great country be on the lookout for potential members; leave a

Traveler Magazine and present them with a membership Application form.

LeRoy Armacost, 2nd Vice President



Early Bird Registration is by **May 1st** for signing up of the **42nd National Muster in Mineola, TX.**

The drawing will be at National and you could get your registration FREE.

If you have already signed up for National and want to add a Tour please call or email smart@smartrving.org to add your Tour to your registration or **click on the online registration form and add your Tours to your registration.**

Up Coming Musters for February

Feb 10-14 Sunshine Muster, Okefenokee Pastimes RV Park Folkston, GA
Contact Cathy Korvas 321-750-4992 ckorvas33@yahoo.com



Feb 12 AR Hogs, Valentines Matinee Dinner @ Murray's
Contact Richard Engels 501-772-0131 liepsh@aol.com



Feb 13 White Sands Panhandlers, Luncheon Sonny BBQ
Contact Chuck Kuzma 850-803-8761 ckuzma116@cox.net



Feb 17-21 MS Magnolias Muster, Hollywood Casino Bay St Louis
Contact Nancy Arce 985-290-8219 nancyarce33@gmail.com



Feb 23-26 AZ Roadrunners Muster, Casino del Sol RV Park
Contact Erwin Greven 505-280-0152 egreven123@msn.com





Join the **I-GOT-ONE** campaign!

Anyone who recruits one new person to SMART membership will receive this special pin. These will be awarded during the ceremonies at SMART National Muster. Let's see a long line of awardees at Mineola, Texas! (new members under the test program do not count until they pay their \$65)

RECRUIT 5 NEW MEMBERS and GET A YEAR FREE MEMBERSHIP

SMART is a Not-for-Profit 501(c)(19) Veterans' Organization,

and gifts are tax deductible. Consider a lifetime gift for a tax deduction or make a gift directly from your IRA to SMART without having to pay tax on that portion of your IRA distributed to SMART. You can also consider an after-death gift to SMART in your will or trust, or name SMART as a beneficiary of part of your IRA.



2025 SMART CARAVANS

2025 ALASKA CARVAN

We have TWO openings on the 2025 SMART ALASKA CARAVAN. If you would like to go on this GREAT Caravan Please let David Weis know Now!

dweis74@hotmail.com



Its not just the wildlife that makes this trip unforgettable it's the small colorful towns and villages with friendly folks. If you have never been to Danali National Park here is your chance! We will be panning for Gold and Dog Sledding, taking a train ride, so come on along and sign up today!



Cost Couple : \$10,750. Single \$7700

Start: July 01, 2025 End: September 02, 2025
Then Caravan to the 42nd National Muster



Venice of America Caravan

May 23– 29 2025

7 Day In Place Caravan

Arriving 23 and departing 30 May 2025,
Single \$825. Couple \$1250. Guest \$430.

Wagon Masters: Kathy and John Steinbauer jfs9840@gmail.com 210-386-9018 will lead this **“In Place”** caravan in famous Ft Lauderdale. With over 3000 miles of canals, and rivers, you will learn the history and see the modern wonders of this historic and famous city. The city was founded in **1838 as a Seminole Indian trading post** on the banks of the New River which is now the center of tourism.

You will see the homes of the rich and famous and their mega yachts when you **cruise the new river to the Atlantic Ocean on the Carrie B paddle wheeler**. Sightseeing will include Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale where Squadron 19 was launched and lost over the Bermuda Triangle, now a WW II Museum. On the New River water taxi you will visit the river walk and dine and tour several attractions.

For adventure, you will take an **airboat ride at Hollywood Park in the Everglades** seeing wildlife and watching the Gator Boys wrestle alligators.

A day trip will go to Key Largo and the Everglades National Park to tour the only remaining cold war Nike 9 Missile Base.

There will be time to visit the world famous Seminole Hard Rock Casino, Margaritaville Beach Resort, National Dive Museum, and the famous Elbo Room on Ft Lauderdale Beach.

If interested, go deep sea fishing, snorkeling, scuba diving, and many more interesting and fun activities on your own. We will be camping at beautiful **CB Smith County Park** near Ft Lauderdale.

This caravan will be packed full of included tours and meals with time to venture on your own and will be limited to 15 registrants .

We have openings for this caravan





2025 Louisiana Caravan Laissez Le Bon Temps Rouler!

(Pronounced LAY ZAY LE BONE TUM RULE EH)

Dates March 25th to April 25, 2025

(Let the good times roll!)

Louisiana Food and Music Caravan

If you are looking for fun and unique things to do then you should join us on this Louisiana Caravan. Louisiana is a melting pot of cultures including French, African, Canadian, and American peoples. The Pelican State is not short on amazing sites, awesome culture and epic fun.

This caravan begins in Natchitoches, the oldest town in the Louisiana Purchase. You will tour plantations, see where Steel Magnolias and other movies were filmed, and eat the famous Natchitoches Meat pies. We then travel to the I-20 corridor starting at Shreveport and continuing to Ruston, Monroe, and Vicksburg seeing all the sites along the way including a WORLD HERITAGE CENTER at Poverty Point and tour one of the three vineyards and wineries in Louisiana. We will visit the birthplace of Delta Air Lines and first bottled Coca Cola. We will visit a civil war battleground and then make our way down the Mississippi to New Orleans stopping at several interesting places on the way. There will be a Cajun Cooking class in Vidalia where you will learn to make Jambalaya.

Everyone knows that New Orleans is a fun place. We will sample beignets at the French market and tour the WW II museum. We will then head into the heart of Cajun Country. We will tour Avery Island and learn how Tabasco Sauce is made. The Caravan will end at Poche's Fish Camp with a big crawfish boil.

**Wagon Masters: Johnny and Linda Leggett (318) 243-4084
johnny_leggett@hotmail.com**

**Assistant Wagonmasters: Paul and Melody Thomas (631) 258-6087
thomas4smart@gamil.com**

Couple \$4,600 Single \$3,500 Guest \$\$1,500

(This caravan is Full Get on the wait list)

PLANES, TRAINS, AUTOMOBILES & SHIPS

Dates: 16 June – 31 July 2025 (appx. 48 days)

Wagon Masters: Melody & Paul Thomas Tail Gunners: Johnny & Linda Leggett

Single \$ 4450. Couple \$5950. Guest \$1700

This caravan will start in Elkhart, Indiana, with a visit to the RV/MH Hall of Fame and tours of RV factories. Learn how your rig was manufactured. We then move into Michigan for many exciting activities. Tours will include a WWII Glider Museum, Henry Ford historical sites in Detroit and Dearborn, the Steam Railroad Institute, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum, the National Railroad Museum, and the Sault Ste. Marie Locks where almost 86 million tons of cargo move through every day. Mammoth freighters transport supplies from Lake Superior to the lower lakes and international markets. Train rides and boat cruises will provide additional adventure. The caravan will bring us to four of the five great lakes. The Gilmore Car Museum exhibits the largest automobile collection in North America with more than 400 vehicles. You'll have a chance to ride in a vintage automobile, drive a Ford Model T "Tin Lizzie," and dine in a 1941 authentic diner. No trip to Michigan would be complete without a stop at Mackinaw Island where the only form of transportation permitted are bicycles and horse drawn carriages.

Other stops will include a dark sky park for viewing the northern lights, a Dutch village, largest Amish flea market in the U.S., two state capitol buildings, visit to a parade float factory, and tour of a logging museum. The caravan will enjoy the EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. This annual event brings together aviation enthusiasts of all ages as they show off experimental and innovative aircraft. The AirVenture will have day and night air shows, rides in aircraft, and a mass hot air balloon launch. Green Bay will provide a tour of Lambeau Field where the Green Bay Packers play. We will end in Spring Green, Wisconsin, where the group will explore the most exotic and eclectic retreat built on a chimney rock. The House on the Rock is filled with a sprawling collection of the most unusual things including the world's largest carousel, a 200' sea creature, a variety of automated music machines, and so much more. And, of course, there will be happy hours, potlucks, campfires and meals shared in local restaurants. Come explore the Mitten and Badger states with us.

Contact Melody Thomas at thomas4smart@gmail.com

This caravan is Full get on the wait list





Unlock
EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS
ON YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE
WITH BLUE WATER!

MILITARY DISCOUNTS
Active and retired military save **10-20%** at over 55 Blue Water campgrounds.
Use promo code **25SMART** to book your next adventure today!

Plan Unforgettable Group Events

- ✓ 20% group discounts
- ✓ Dedicated group coordinator
- ✓ Waived site lock fees
- ✓ Conveniently grouped RV sites & rentals


Contact Eva Winther: ewinther@bwdc.com or call (443) 856-4811 to reserve your group getaway!

Seasonal Sites for 2025
Enjoy hassle-free RV fun all season long at one of our amazing campgrounds.
Contact Lisa Mannon: lmannon@bwdc.com or call (443) 664-3375 to reserve your spot today!

Attention all Chapters, please check out the campground page on our website for specials at any Blue Water Property.


Groups Get a 20% discount , call Lisa Mannon 443-664-3375 To set up your Musters!

2026 Caravans



Year of the National Parks!

Be on the lookout for the 2026 SMART National Parks' Caravans.




Our Wagon masters are hard at work putting together some great caravans for you!

“The Heart of it All” I hear there’s a cruise down the Ohio River, Ancient Indian Mounds, Presidential Planes, Natl Museum, re-enactment of the D-Day invasion, even take a ride in a Bi Plane, and visit Cuyahoga National Park and so much more! Mid July– to mid August 2026

A little secret I hear there will also be one to **“Yellowstone National Park & The Dakotas”** too!

These will fill up fast so stay tune for more info to follow....

The BEST way to TRAVEL is with your SMART Friends on a Caravan



FEBURARY SMART E NEWS

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