

HTC Newsletter

Issue 51 Volume 1 January 2024



For fun and fellowship

Dear Handicapped Travel Club Members,

As we bid farewell to the old and welcome the promise of the new, I find myself reflecting on the remarkable journey we've shared as members of the Handicapped Travel Club. It is with great enthusiasm and gratitude that I write to you as we stand on the threshold of a brand new year, filled with endless possibilities and opportunities for adventure.

In the spirit of reflection, let us take a moment to celebrate the incredible joy we have discovered in doing what we love, despite the challenges that life has presented us. Our club stands as a testament to the indomitable spirit that resides within each one of us, a spirit that propels us forward, breaking barriers and embracing the great outdoors with open arms.

I am continually inspired by the stories of triumph over adversity within our community. The sheer determination to not let physical limitations hinder our pursuit of happiness is truly commendable. Whether it's hitting the open road in our RVs, exploring new destinations, or reveling in the beauty of nature, we have proven time and again that the human spirit knows no bounds.

This past year has taught us the importance of embracing the motto that has become the heartbeat of our community: "G.O.A.L." - Get Out And Live. This simple yet powerful mantra encapsulates the essence of our shared journey. It is a reminder that life is meant to be lived to the fullest, regardless of the obstacles that may come our way.

As we embark on a new year, let us carry the spirit of G.O.A.L. with us in every adventure we undertake. Let us encourage one another to step outside our comfort zones, explore uncharted territories, and savor the richness of life. Together, we can overcome any challenge that crosses our path and revel in the boundless joy that awaits us.

I am immensely proud to lead such an extraordinary group of individuals who embody the true meaning of resilience, camaraderie, and the pursuit of happiness. Here's to another year of breaking barriers, creating lasting memories, and proving that a handicap or disability can never define the limits of our dreams. May the coming year be filled with health, happiness, and countless opportunities to Get Out And Live.

Wishing you all a joyous New Year!

Please contact me if you have thoughts to share, questions to ask, improvements to be made, etc. (President@handicappedtravelclub.com).

Warm Regards,

Loretta Spotts Club President Handicapped Travel Club



2023 HTC Annual Rally Wagon Master Report

Friday, October 20th under sunny blue skies, HTC Members gathered on the eastern slopes of the White Tank Mountains in the Sonoran Desert on the outskirts west of Phoenix for our five day annual rally. Members here came from: Wisconsin, Washington, Idaho, Colorado, California, and Arizona; from 10 miles away in Surprise, and far away, 1,800+ miles in Wisconsin.

In anticipation of hotter weather in the Valley Of The Sun, we setup a misting system. Under the Ramada shade with a light misty breeze, we kept cooler and socialized. It was good to be together with friends, long time and new. We welcomed new members and first time attendees: Mike and Janice, Mike and Sandy, Ray and Fayedra, Giancarlo and Barbara, Patricia, and guests: Jackie, Echo, Cassandra, David and Erna ... wonderful!

The HTC Rally was dedicated to Clark Bostwick, he passed this year. During the rally opening, Roland Winters delivered a heartfelt tribute. Clark's daughter spoke of Clark and his life; she noted the importance of travel and the tavel club in Clark's life.

City colleagues of Roland's, Mayor Skip Hall and Vice Mayor Chris Judd of Surprise, AZ welcomed our club to the regional park, sharing information on the importance of the wildlife habitat and conservation efforts for the White Tank Mountains area. The first evening we enjoyed pizza together; courtesy of Barro's Pizza in Surprise.

Over the next days, we upheld rally traditions, including: RV open house days, wheelchair races, mock horse races, karaoke night, evening campfires, 50/50 lottery, poker run, and the silent auction.

On RV open house days, we had an opportunity to look at accessible RVs. RVs made by: Newmar, Winnebago, and Thor. RVs with wheelchair lifts, accessible rollin showers, grab bars, lowered light switches, openness for wheelchairs to move around, and accessible upfront seating with great views. On evening two, karaoke tunes filled the air.

Wheelchair Races; "there was a man", a wearer of white hats and cowboy boots, he endured race heat after heat, out speeding and cornering the "Wild Bunch" and mild bunch, for the win. Congratulations Roland!

On the third evening we shared a potluck dinner. Thanks everyone for bringing your delicious dishes.

On several evenings dusk arrived, the night sky twinkled and shined displaying stars above. We circled our campfire beneath White Tank Mountains with fire light warmth on our faces telling stories of travel and adventure, sharing jokes, and listening to the endlessly scary tale of the captain and his crew on a "dark and stormy night".

One morning we walked/rolled the Black Rock and Waterfall Nature Trails. Both trails were very rollable either earth/gravel or smooth paved cement. We walked along chatting and observing the natural setting, rock formations, ancient petroglyphs, sage, mesquite, birds and lizards.

On the final evening an Arizona BBQ dinner covered by HTC and SkyMed was shared; BBQ shredded brisket, pork and chicken, baked beans, coleslaw and mac n'cheese; savory, plenty to eat, enjoy, and leftovers to share.

A big thanks from your wagon masters to all our nice, friendly, thoughtful members: helpful whenever possible. Additionally, thanks to previous wagon masters for sharing their knowledge: Bill and Barb, Roland and Carroll, Don and Sharon, Mark and Karen, Mike and Kelly, Brad and Teresa, and Rick and Doris.

— Will and Jessie

2024 HTC Annual Rally in Oklahoma

Greetings and Happy New Year from your 2024 Wagon Masters Mike and Kelly Hodge,

The 2024 National rally will be held September 20th with checkout by noon September 25th in the central region. We have chosen historical Guthrie, Oklahoma as the site for the fun and friendship.

We have made arrangements with Cedar Valley RV Park to hold 12 spots and we have the Event Center rented for the whole rally. We will be putting information below for you to call and make your own reservation (see page 4). All sites are pull through with full hookups and concrete pads. Just mention the date and HTC. It wouldn't hurt to say that you would like to be as close to the Event Center as possible.

We have some ideas this year for some new and fun activities along with some of the old favorites. Since we have had the silent auction for several years, we are going to try something new and exciting. It will raise a little bit of money for the club, but it will also be a fun way to get to know everybody a little better. We are looking into some entertainment and outings. We are planning some events where you will need some nickels and another one that needs a couple quarters.

More information will be coming when the time gets closer. We are so looking forward to being your hosts at the 2024 rally!

\$43.99 per day. Reservation and one day's fee due to the park one month before your arrival.

Cedar Valley RV Park CedarValleyRVPark.com

Ask for Kunal 405 282-4478

2024 Handicapped Travel Club (HTC) Rally Registration

Rally starts 3pm, Friday, Sept. 20th ends Noon check out Wednesday Sept. 25th

Cedar Valley RV Park
725 Masters Drive Guthrie, OK 73044

CedarValleyRVPark.com

For our records and planning please send your names and how many will be attending to mkhodge@gmail.com or contact wagon masters, Mike and Kelly at 715 570-6650. You can also use this form by copy and paste to above email. Even if you are considering coming let us know so we can plan accordingly.

You will need to book your campsite reservation by calling Kunal at Cedar Valley RV Park at 405 282-4478 and let him know it is for the HTC Rally and you would like a spot near the event center.

Camping RV pull through sites are at the daily rate of \$43.99 per night with full hookups and concrete pads.

You can reserve your campsite now.

Reservation and one day's fee is due to the park one month before you arrive at the park.

This is a popular campground and fills up rapidly, so please don't miss out on the Rally.

Names of those Attending Rally:

Rally Fee: \$30.00 per Person X _____ Persons = \$ _____

Please make cash or check payment for your Rally Fee to wagon masters at the rally on September 20, 2024.

Please provide your cell numbers and email address in case we need to contact you while you are traveling to the rally or need to notify you of any changes.

Cell Numbers: 1) _____ 2) _____

Email Address: _____

For non RV'ers. there are many motels, hotels available nearby in Guthrie, OK

Territorial Inn 405 282-2100 La Quinta 405 293-6000 Sleep Inn 405 260-1400 etc.

Message from our Treasurer

HTC has a new special interest group within the Escapees RV Club.

Details can be found on the HTC Club website at <https://handicappedtravelclub.com/escapees/>.

Message from our Newsletter Editor

In this issue, starting on page 6 you'll notice a look back at the HTC archives, this will allow new members an opportunity to enjoy some of our historical travel stories. If you have travel stories to share, please send to the editor; see details on the last page of the newsletter.

Future Events

Monthly on 3rd Wednesday

Monthly Zoom Meetings

Online/Virtual

The monthly zoom meeting is scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday every month at 4:00 PM pacific time/ 7:00 PM eastern. Be sure to adjust for your local time zone:

4:00 pm PST

5:00 pm MST

6:00 pm CST

7:00 pm EST

You should have been receiving an email from BradBartz@hotmail.com the Monday before the zoom meeting with the connection information. It's the same each month. If you're not receiving the monthly reminders, please email BradBartz@hotmail.com

2024 September 20

HTC 2024 Annual Rally

Guthrie, Oklahoma

The 2024 HTC Annual Rally will be held September 20th to September 25th in historical Guthrie, Oklahoma. More information will be coming when the time gets closer. See pages 3 and 4 for rally information and rally registration form.

Your Rally Wagon Masters are Mike and Kelly Hodge (715) 570-6650.

New Members - Welcome!

Cynthia & Eldon Betz

Wilder, ID

Rememberances

Michael Lynn Snuffer

1957 - 2023

Two travel stories from the HTC Archives.

The Blue Whale

by Mike Hodge

Welcome to open mic! I am Mike Hodge from Wisconsin and have been a member with my wife Kelly since 2000. I've been called many things, but writer is not one of them. However, I will tell you the story of how we began in the club. Many of you have heard this story and are already bored, I'm sure, knowing he's going to repeat the same story.

Kelly and I decided we would bid on a seventy passenger school bus with a lift in it. We decided if \$2,500 would buy this bus we would convert it into an accessible RV. Well, we ended up with the highest bid and off to the races we were to make this into our moveable haven getaway.

We had limited resources of knowledge on this topic, but my father-in-law was an electrician, and Kelly and I work great with grid paper and a ruler. We designed it all out so we could have a full size bed in the back, a booth that drops down into a bed in the front, and counters and cabinets on the right as you walk toward the back. On top of it all, an electric wheelchair had to get around and alongside the bed. This 1984 International gas engine bus was going to be converted. We were determined.

We had our son Gavin in the 8th grade at the time and he was raring to help out. I'll just say we started with tearing out the bench seats, which was no easy task, and we just kept going. We had a fuse box put in and electrified the bus, plus we put in a propane heater and a back up battery that ran the heater blower. We also put in a couch that converted into a flip out bed and above that we put in a bunk that a military person would have loved to sleep in.

Years before when I was a kid, my dad, brothers and I had converted a 1964 school bus for a hunting trip out west. That bus was still around and was not being used, so we went in there and took out two bunks and some top racks that some older folks used to see in old buses, and we used them in the 1984 bus. This was before I got hurt and became a C 4/5 quadriplegic, so I got to do some of the work on that old old 1964 bus, and also I got a pheasant that year on the hunting trip.

For the 1984 bus, two things, we had to pay some money for the carpet, and it was mandatory that we paint the school bus a different color other than yellow for the bus to be considered legal. The blue paint job cost more than the bus, ouch! Now we had \$5,500 into this monster bus we called the Blue Whale. We completed our bus upgrades in 1999, and saw an ad for the Handicapped Travel Club rally in Lake Delton, Wisconsin near Wisconsin Dells. This was only an hour and a half away, so we thought we'd take our maiden voyage and check this organization out. The club's motto "Get Out and Live" was a perfect motto that I needed to explore.



Mike and Kelly and their Blue Whale

Mandy and Gretchen Wenzel hosted the rally so off we went in our comfy Blue Whale in the year 2000; many moons ago. We dove into the HTC rally to find out what the HTC club was all about. It was so cool to see so many friendly people who had different needs and different RVs. We explored every RV and camper, which showed us better ways to improve our travel experience. That is one of the best things about this club. You get to see a lot of different equipment and ways people have implemented adaptations. Friendly people who want to help you out; throughout the country. This national rally was a big hit for us, so we've been members ever since. We however have only taken the Blue Whale to three rallies, two in Wisconsin and one in Branson, Missouri.

We attempted to go to the Florida rally, but had engine problems along the way. Now the Blue Whale sits at a campground in Wisconsin. It still runs great. We now use our minivan to go to rallies because of the gas prices and the old bus being old and rattly and not as comfortable for distance travel. We get the best of both worlds, now camping locally with our grand-kids and friends here in Wisconsin. Then when the rally comes around if we can make it, we take the air conditioned minivan on the road and stay at hotels and drive to the campground where the rally is held to see our friends. Sometimes we rent a cabin at the campground. At the Toppenish, WA rally in 2004 we rented a tipi to sleep in. As you all know sometimes to Get Out And Live you need to be a little creative. I blame and thank the HTC Club for breaking us out of our comfort zone and thrusting us into the wild blue yonder.

Until we meet again, stay safe and I hope you bust out and take in a HTC Rally.



Cross Country Travels to Alaska

by Jim Walgren

In August of 2017 Janet and I drove our 36' Four Winds Infinity RV to Houston and attended the Ability Expo, a big consumer show spotlighting products and services. We passed by a booth that provided travel services geared to those with disabilities. Easy Access Travel puts together cruises that cater to those with disabilities. We have traveled with their group to the Caribbean. Debra Kerper, the owner, makes all the arrangements for accessibility including: rooms, transportation and excursions. You meet some of the nicest people in the group as you travel to some of the world's most exotic places. One of my bucket list places to visit is Alaska, and it just so happened that she was organizing a trip to Alaska for the following year. Janet and I secured a spot and the planning started. We would be boarding the cruise boat at the port of Seattle.

Our daughter had moved to Seattle so we decided to visit her and then set sail for Alaska. We decided to make this a trip for the ages and drive the motorhome from Austin, Texas to Seattle, Washington. We gave ourselves a month to get there, and a month to drive home after the cruise. Naturally, we would hit national parks on the 2,000 plus mile journey up to Seattle and on the way back to Texas. We left Austin on July 5th and visited: Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado, Arches National Park in Moab, Salt Lake City, and countless side trips along the way. We normally would cover 150 miles a day, and then stop and sightsee for a few days. That really allowed us to travel without feeling rushed or stressed.

On August 1st we pulled into Lake Pleasant RV Park in Bothell, Washington which is North of Lake Washington and near Seattle. We had 3 days to rest up before the cruise to Alaska. While we are on the cruise, our RV would be at the RV park's onsite storage area plugged into power. We had prearranged to meet with HTC members Jack and Joan who we met at the Texas HTC rally. They treated us to a spectacular seafood restaurant and really made us feel welcome in Seattle.

We boarded the ship on August 4th and set sail for Alaska. Our itinerary included stops with excursions in: Ketchikan, Juneau, Skagway, and Victoria, BC. Along the way the ship would pass breathtaking views of snow covered mountains, glaciers, and temperate rain forests. Our balcony room allowed for perfect viewing. The accessible rooms on the ship are incredible. I have always envisioned cramped tiny spaces on these ships, but they have really improved their accessibility. Each port of call had excursions planned that would accommodate my power wheelchair. We enjoyed outings that allowed us to explore local sights, wildlife, shopping and of course, food. The highlight included boarding a smaller boat and going whale watching. The weather on this particular day was cold and rainy, but the climate controlled vessel allowed for comfortable viewing. The whales did not disappoint. We even got to view a whale totally breaching the water and splashing onto it's side. In Skagway we boarded a train which traveled into the Yukon territory of Canada.

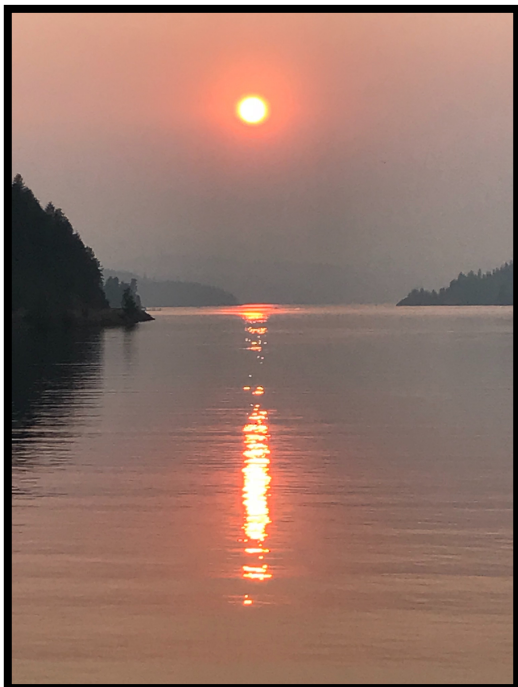
Once our cruise was over we returned to Seattle. Our son



Cruise Ship
sailing from Seattle

flew in and we had the whole family there to continue to see sights around Seattle. We left on August the 15th to continue the trip in our motorhome. Our plan was to head east on I-90 with stops in Yellowstone, Little Bighorn, Mt. Rushmore, and then on to Indiana for the HTC rally. We spent a week at each park and had a wonderful time. Unfortunately, due to an unforeseen health issue we had to cut our trip short and did not make the rally.

If you have not been on a cruise and are thinking about going, Janet and I have really enjoyed our various trips to different countries. Combining RV and cruise travel was the perfect combination.



1998 Play-Mor 29-Foot Travel Trailer With Wheelchair Lift

\$7,000 or best offer



Questions contact Ed Pearson at:

Phone 916 709-3757

Email ecpearson2019@outlook.com

29-foot Travel Trailer by Play-Mor

Wheelchair Lift by Ricon

Smooth rolling wood floor

Air Conditioner

Refrigerator, microwave, gas cooktop

Bathroom, sink, shower

Dinette, sofa, queen-size bed



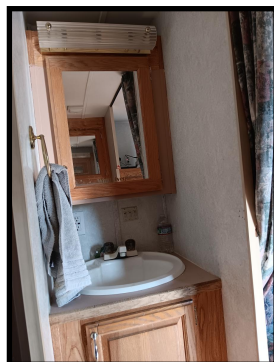
Trailer History: A friend of mine bought this trailer in 1997 for around \$23,000, list price. He used it sparingly over the years and stored it in his warehouse for 4 years before I bought it for \$10,000 in 2013.

A few repairs were required in the trailer's early days, but a lot of travel and age add up. This rig is 25 years old and has required some major repairs as most older RVs do.

Since I bought the trailer 10 years ago, I've spent \$25,000 on service, repairs and upgrades. Major items include: new refrigerator in 2023, new air conditioner, rebuilt roof, new springs and shackles, black water tank replaced and repositioned, new tires, the list goes on.



Receipts are available. I mention these things because when I'm on the road I want everything to be dependable and working right. This rig has served me well and is in good shape.



Newsletter Submissions: Please submit material for inclusion in the newsletter to the editor William Robinson at email address: Editor@handicappedtravelclub.com. If possible, send submission materials in two weeks prior to the quarterly publication months, which are: January, April, July, October.

If you need to send submission material via USPS paper mail, call Will at 425 889-0183 for mailing address and coordinating receipt of paper mail.

Advertising: \$100 for full page; \$50 for 1/2 page; 1/4 page \$35; 1/8 page \$20.

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