

HTC Newsletter

Issue 53 Volume 2 April 2026



For fun and fellowship

Hello Fellow Handicapped Travel Club Members,

It's been a busy Winter. For some folks, it has been harsh and dangerously cold. In California, we've been lucky to face fog, and rain only. We traded good weather for higher taxes.

Our club is fortunate to welcome Bill Zhang as our new Eastern Director. Bill will be an excellent diplomat, representing our club at the upcoming Escapees Escapade in Maine. He will also help to rejuvenate our Eastern membership. Thank you, Bill, for your willingness to help.

Our latest lunch get together was in Stockton. We were happy to have Patricia Zielinski join us for the first time. Bonnie and Ed Pearson, Don Bonney, Barbara and I were there to welcome her. Despite the challenge of coordinating schedules, and choosing a convenient location for all, it's worthwhile to join with fellow Handicapped Travel Club members in person. Let's all make an effort to create these moments for lunches, or, camping trips with folks in your area.

The 2026 National Rally for HTC is coming October 11-15 (check out 10/16/26) at Orange Grove RV Park in Bakersfield, CA. Early arrivals and late stays are always welcome with prior arrangements at the time of registration. The club rate will be \$55/night. (Registration after August 30 site rate is approximately \$75/night) All sites are pull through. Entire facility is accessible and very well kept. The clubhouse has a full kitchen that should help with your meal prep. Dogs are welcome in clubhouse, and in the 3 dog parks.

Please plan to submit your registration by August 30, 2026 to receive the club rate, and be parked with our group. Guests are most welcome, and need not be members of the Handicapped Travel Club. Hotels nearby have limited number of accessible rooms, so please book early. Airport is 12 miles away, and hosts flights from American and United airlines.

Please plan to bring one dinner pot-luck item, on another evening bring an appetizer item, silent auction items, quarters/dimes/nickels for games. Rally fee will be \$35/person. We will reserve RV sites from your registration forms, and you will pay the RV park on arrival.

We're looking forward to hosting our rally. These yearly gatherings are a huge treat; a rare opportunity to share in person visits. We are a wonderful group of hearty souls. Please keep in touch with each other via luncheons, mini rallies, phone calls ... Let's celebrate and share good times. G.O.A.L. Get Out and Live

Please contact me if you have thoughts to share, questions, improvements, etc. (gicuciz@att.net).

Cheers,

Giancarlo Cuciz President, Handicapped Travel Club



2026 Handicapped Travel Club (HTC) Rally Registration

October 11 to October 15.

[Orange Grove RV Park](#)

1452 S. Edison Bakersfield, CA 93307



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Rally starts on Sunday, October 11 and ends Thursday, October 15. Departure time is Friday morning at 11:00 October 16 unless prior arrangements made to arrive earlier, or stay longer (\$55/night) payable to Orange Grove RV Park on arrival at RV park. We will reserve your site, no need to call the RV park.

Guests are welcome and need not be HTC members.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: August 30, 2026

(Late registration is OK, but nightly rate approximately \$75/night, and RV likely not parked with group.)

Wagon Masters: Giancarlo and Barbara Cuciz

925-989-2330

GJCuciz@att.net

Name(s) of those attending: _____

Your contact information Email: _____

Phone: _____

RV Year/Make/Length: _____

Date of your Arrival: _____

Date of your Departure: _____

Rally fee is \$35/person, payable in cash to Wagon Masters at rally.

Rally Fee: \$35.00 per Persons X _____ Total Rally Fee = \$ _____

Example. For two people, \$35 X 2 persons equals \$70.

To attend the Rally, **Please send Rally Registration** to Giancarlo and Barbara Cuciz at GJCuciz@att.net.

Giancarlo and Barbara Cuciz

16551 Los Positas Way

Tracy, CA 95304

Please bring: Coins for games, **Silent auction items**, bring one dinner item for potluck dinner evening, and bring one appetizer item for appetizer evening.



Gordon's Cruise to Hawaii

This is an article by Gordon Bornkamp, an HTC member who recently took a cruise to the beautiful Hawaiian Islands to be with family.

Over the past year, my wife Laura and I have taken two cruises together, and I wanted to share our experiences traveling while living with ALS. I am 86 years old and was recently diagnosed by the VA with ALS after previously living with PLS for several years. I can still walk short distances with a walker, but I am no longer able to speak. For travel, I rely on an electric wheelchair.

Our first cruise was a 31-day Princess Cruise sailing from California. We booked an accessible stateroom with a balcony. At that time, I was using a 55-pound electric wheelchair that was 25 inches wide. I am 5 feet 9 inches tall and weigh 155 pounds.

This cruise went very well from an accessibility standpoint. I could enter and exit the balcony in my wheelchair, and there was plenty of room in the stateroom. I was able to shower using the grab bars and transfer from my wheelchair. The toilet was challenging but manageable by using the grab bars and positioning my wheelchair close beside it. I could also transfer into bed by parking the wheelchair close and sliding sideways after lifting the armrest.

Because of the motion of the ship, I did not use my walker on either cruise. We chose not to dine with others because I have difficulty swallowing and can choke easily. Instead, we ate mostly at the buffet, where I had no trouble maneuvering my wheelchair around the tables.

Getting off the ship was generally not a problem. I was able to use the gangway—even when the end had about a 30-degree incline—by using the braking effect of the wheelchair's motor. However, at some island ports we were unable to go ashore when smaller tender boats were required.

This year we took a 14-day cruise from California to Hawaii on Carnival's Radiance. The Radiance headed out to sea from Long Beach, California with island stops at: Kahului on Maui, Honolulu on Oahu, Nawiliwili on Kauai, and Hilo on Hawaii. We met our son for lunch in Honolulu, which was very special.

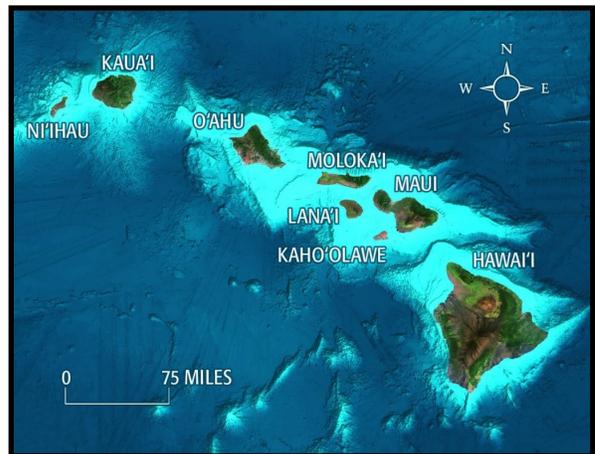


We again booked an accessible cabin, though it was noticeably smaller than the Princess stateroom. By this time, Medicare had provided me with a Quantum wheelchair weighing about 155 pounds, which is very comfortable. However, we encountered a new challenge when disembarking. The final eight feet of the gangway had about a 45-degree angle. At that angle, the wheelchair automatically shut down and locked. I became stuck halfway down, which was frightening, until we learned how to unlock the wheels and guide the chair down manually. Fortunately, returning up the gangway was not a problem.

Despite these challenges, the islands were warm and beautiful, and it was wonderful to travel together. It is always good to be back home after our adventures. Even while we are cruising we keep it in touch with our children on zoom every weekend; we've been doing this for 4 or 5 years.

By Gordon Bornkamp

Gordon and his wife Laura have been HTC members since 2019. They're RV travel history includes over 20 years of experience ... traveling in the United States ... California, Nevada, Arizona, Oregon, Alaska, Maine ... and the Maritimes, and Mexico.



Carnival Cruises: <https://www.carnival.com/>

Carnival Cruises Accessibility Information: <https://www.carnival.com/about-carnival/special-needs>

Princess Cruises: <https://www.princess.com/>

Princess Cruises Accessibility Information: <https://www.princess.com/faq/pre-cruise>



HTC Members Patricia, Barbara, Giancarlo, Ed, Don and Bonney enjoying lunch together at a Mexican restaurant in Stockton California.

Message from our Treasurer

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

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

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.

HTC 2026 Annual Rally

Bakersfield, California

October 11th - 15th

Our 2026 HTC Annual Rally will be October 11-15 at the [Orange Grove RV Park](#) in Bakersfield, California. Bakersfield is an agricultural area with oil field, Basque, and railroad history.

We're excited to be your wagon Masters, and want to provide a chance to reunite, celebrate our club, and enjoy our traditional plus some new activities.

The RV park will extend the rally rate of \$55/night to our group, including any early arrivals or late departure dates. We will need a final roster of those coming by August 30, 2026. After August 30, you're welcome to sign up but nightly rate will be about \$75/ night, and you may not be parked with our group.

RESERVATIONS for RV Park will be done by WAGON MASTERS. Once the registration sheet is provided and completed, we'll notify the RV park. You'll pay them upon arrival.

Rally fee will be \$35/person, also payable upon arrival.

Non HTC guests are most welcome.

Orange Grove RV park provides a big Western themed meeting room, wood stove, full kitchen, swimming pool, very clean and accessible bathrooms and laundry. All sites are full hook up, pull through. Propane, and RV wash area, dog parks are available.

There are hotels 2 miles from the park. Airport is 12 miles away, hosting American and United airlines.

Please save the date and come join the fun. This yearly rally is a real treat, and gives us a chance to enjoy each other in person.

More information to follow, with updates via the zoom meetings and through the newsletter.

Barbara and Giancarlo Cuciz, your Wagon Masters

925-989-2330

GJCuciz@att.net

New Members - Welcome!

Steve Bufty

Livingston, Texas

Elisabeth Williams

Williams Bay, Wisconsin

Newsletter Submissions: Please submit material for the newsletter to the editor William Robinson at email address: Editor@handicappedtravelclub.com.

If possible, send submission materials by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Quarterly publication months are: January, April, July, October.

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

This newsletter is published by the Handicapped Travel Club.

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