

Around the Rally Scene...



with George Lanegraff



by Mary Barton

As many of you know, Marathon Coach and Marathon Coach Club International hold some of the finest rallies in the recreational vehicle industry. For the past seven years, a familiar face around these popular events has been rally consultant George Lanegraff.

George began event planning in the 1980's as Vice President of Operations with Thousand Trails, a private membership resort company. In addition to his current position with Marathon, George also serves as rally master for Prevost Prouds, a motorcoach club for owners of buses built on Prevost Car chassis. George occasionally conducts rallies for other converter companies, but because he is employed full-time as a technical college administrator, he doesn't have much free time to devote to other activities.

"In my role with Thousand Trails," George said, "my responsibilities included organizing a variety of corporate events, small and large, from horseshoe tournaments to Roy Rodgers/Dale Evans concerts. As a rally master, my 'high' comes from delivering a rally experience that exceeds expectations; this always entails interacting successfully with club officers and staff, as well as with rally hosts, to orchestrate a five- to six-day, well-organized event."

Some of the more memorable events George has put together resulted from the positive reaction he received after the event from the rally hosts and attendees. A successful experience depends to a large degree on where rallies are held, but the favorite rallies of attendees often reflect the character of the people who participated in the activities.

"The New Orleans French Quarter Festival Parade was a positive 'first-time' activity for many," George said. "Assisting the hosts with a very impressive Washington, D.C. rally was a real memory maker, too. Locations with 'destination' labels usually offer more than other areas, which allows me to 'tap' upscale resources

(such as catering), but the fellowship/friendship goal within the club really can be achieved at any location. The Florida Keys rally afforded attendees a super good time, and the Calgary Stampede/Banff National Park event was a truly delicious experience."

George said that working with the Marathon contingent has been an outstanding experience, and he believes the success of the rallies are evidence of the time and effort of all who work on them.

"Marathon rallies set the benchmark for quality," he added. "Part of that success is a result of us integrating the information we received in our 2002 member survey, which clearly defined the areas that members wanted rallies to focus on. The other reason for the club's success is because of the conscientious efforts of the rally committee, who closely monitor all aspects of the rally planning process. Talk to those who go to rallies regularly and they'll tell you they attend because the events are first-class: they're well planned and very organized. Rally hosts expend a lot of time and energy to make their events successful. Because the bar for "fun" has been raised to a very high level, we must consistently try to create a warm and friendly environment at every rally."

Marathon Coach Club International continually strives to seek out fun, inviting locations for its rallies, as evident by the upcoming 2007 Boston and San Diego rallies. If you are new to the club, please consider attending one of these events.

George resides in the Seattle area with his wife of 42 years, Molly (Kelly), whom he met his junior year in the homeroom of their high school. The Lanegraff's have three children: twin daughters, Jennifer and Beth; and son, Marc. Their 7 grandchildren, ranging in age from 8 years to 15 months, keep George and Molly busy. •