

# Royale Coach Club

Newsletter

Winter 2015



**PREVOST**

The ultimate class.



Prez says:

Years ago, my mother visited Mackinac Island and told me about it, so I always wanted to see what it was like. Well, my wish was granted during the fall 2015 rally in Michigan. That was one of the many interesting activities available to us during the rally.

The campground in Suttons Bay had us situated all around a pond for the first few nights of the rally. It was a great location from which to explore the area: wine tasting; hikes along Lake Michigan and Sleeping Bear Dunes; bike riding; and local shopping and dining.

Many coaches arrived early (if you are on time to a Royale Coach Club rally, you're late!) and were treated to a lovely party on Lake Leelanau at the home of Jim and Mary Jo Grogan. Jim gave the hardy souls an interesting narrated tour/boat ride around the lake, which was much enjoyed by all who participated.

We all enjoyed a delicious dinner and party at Bo and Stanley Reahard's house right on Lake Michigan. We relocated to Hearthside Grove, a very nice motorcoach resort in Petoskey, MI. We had a nice tour of Castle Farms, in Charlevoix, MI. Castle Farms is a French Renaissance style castle, which was built in 1918 as a dairy farm by the CEO of Sears & Roebuck as a model to showcase Sears' equipment. The farm fell into disrepair and had an interesting history ending in its restoration since 2001.

From Petoskey as our new home base, we explored Mackinac Island, Traverse City, Charlevoix, and Grand Bay. Of course, the highlight of the week was seeing all of our old and new friends in the Royale Coach Club and getting to catch up after a busy summer. Many couples were continuing on to the rolling rally – heading out to Colorado. I hear they had a marvelous trip.

We held elections at our general meeting and there are several new faces in our slate of officers. Thanks to these folks for their willingness to serve the club, and also to John Habicht (Newsletter Editor) and Kally Kitchings (Sunshine lady).

We have some exciting rallies coming up in the next 2 years so check your email or the web site to stay in touch. We are lucky to have a variety of people volunteering to be rally hosts and to them I say,  
“THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!”

Safe Travels,

Anne Gould, President





## Highlights of Michigan Rally

*[Editor's Note : I was not at the Michigan Rally and several people provided notes and photos on the happenings. I would like to thank Bo & Stanley Reahard, Matt Tucker and Chris Stroup. In particular Stanley provided the majority of the information for the write-up below.]*

As most Royale Coach Club members know, if you arrive on the start date of the rally, you're already late. The first part of the rally was



staged at Wild Cherry Resort in Leland, Michigan. On the day before the official start of the rally, dear friends of Bo and Stanley Reahard, the rallymasters for the Michigan rally, graciously hosted the early arriving Royale members at their cottage on Lake Leelanau. Jim and Mary Jo



Grogan invited everyone for a picnic supper and boat rides around the lake (weather permitting). The weather did not cooperate at first but the rain stopped about an hour for the picnic. The Royale Club members were able to enjoy a lovely evening. The weather also finally allowed Jim to take a couple of boatloads of



people around the lake and point out interesting sights to everyone. Local entrepreneurs brought their brats and hot dog wagon to the party and everyone appreciated the typical local fare. Mary Jo's chocolate chip dessert was a huge hit.

On Monday, Bo and Stanley celebrated their 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary and Mark Keuning's birthday at a dinner



hosted at their cottage, The Promised Land, overlooking Lake Michigan. Bo's hosting company, Compass Media Group, donated all of the cocktails and adult beverages for the evening prior to a catered dinner. The rainy weather thwarted plans to have seating on the deck but all 56 members were able to be seated inside for dinner. A photographer from Traverse City took photos of most of the couples in attendance (Bo and

Stanley will share them on the website). The first timers were welcomed to the rally. Both sponsors were present at the rally. We were also happy to welcome representatives from the Royale's sponsors, Millennium and Prevost, Robert Jones and his wife, Susie, from Prevost and Jim Brennan & Walter Kowal from Millennium. Millennium sent Walter as technical support to the rally and several members have used their expertise on coach repairs. Chris Stroup from Millennium joined the rally in Petoskey.



Tuesday during the day was open for everyone to enjoy the local wineries, golf, attractions, etc. In the evening, dinner for the group was unique in that everyone did not eat at the same restaurant. At dinner the previous night, each wife had drawn a colored chip from a bowl. The chips in the bowl were four different colors. Each color chip represented a restaurant at which that couple would dine. No one knew where they'd end up until they got an email the next day telling them where to go for dinner. And no one knew who would be in their group which meant that you may be dining with Royale members that you previously hadn't had the opportunity to meet and interact. Originally, the "drawing of the chips" was to be done during the cocktail hour on a cruise on Lake Michigan but Mother Nature cancelled those plans because the cruise was cancelled.

Again, Wednesday was open for everyone's enjoyment, albeit a cold and rainy day. After breakfast was in the Wild Cherry Resort clubhouse, many people traveled to Traverse City for shopping and sightseeing.





Everyone went to dinner and a musicale at the Bella Fortuna Restaurant in the evening.

Thursday was moving day. The rally was leaving Wild Cherry Resort and moving to Hearthside Grove in Petoskey for the remainder of the rally. After settling in, everyone boarded a bus for Castle Farms in Charlevoix for a tour and a Mexican buffet. The group broke into three smaller groups for a wonderful tour of the farm and even got to meet the



owners. Built in 1918 by Albert Loeb, the acting President of Sears, Roebuck, and Co. as a model dairy farm, Loeb Farms was modeled after the stone barns and castles found in Normandy, France. At its peak the farm was the largest employer in Charlevoix County,



with over 90 people on its payroll. It had over 200 head of prize-winning Holstein-Friesian and 13 pair of Belgian draft horses. After the farm closed, the buildings fell into severe disrepair and went thru several owners. Linda Mueller purchased Castle Farms in 2001 and began an extensive restoration project. Today they host about 250 weddings a

year on this gloriously restored venue. Richard and Linda have a real love for children and have added many activities geared specifically for families, including an extensive model railroad in 2008. They were delightful hosts for the Royale group.

After a hearty breakfast at Hearthside, everyone boarded a Prevost passenger bus for the trip to Mackinaw City and the ferry to Mackinac Island for the day. Mackinac Island is accessible only by ferry boat or plane and is unique in that no motorized vehicles are



allowed on the island. All transportation is provided by horse and carriage or bicycle. It is also home to the Grand Hotel, established in 1887 as a summer retreat for visitors who arrived by lake steamer from Chicago, Erie, Montreal, Detroit, and by rail from across the continent. In the 1890s Grand Hotel's Front Porch – longest in the world—became the principal meeting place for all of Mackinac Island, as well as a promenade for the elderly and a “Flirtation Walk” for island romantics. As visitors, the group enjoyed strolling on

this magnificent porch and feasting at the lavish buffet put on daily at the Grand. After a long day of touring, Millennium Luxury Coaches outdid themselves in providing a lavish spread for their cocktail party. It was a perfect break for



fellowship. Thanks Chris and Walter for setting up a lovely evening for the group.

On Saturday, after another terrific breakfast at Hearthside, the Royale Club members met for a business meeting in their theater. Naomi Theisz filled us in on their tentative schedule for next October in Tucson. Bob Chalk told us about an upcoming rally that is not a Royale Rally but is being organized to follow the Lewis and Clark trail in May of 2016 (anyone interested in this can contact Bob, [bchalk1017@earthlink.net](mailto:bchalk1017@earthlink.net)). The meeting was adjourned so that Bill Sage could meet with those intending to do the Rolling Rally

starting the next day in Wisconsin. The rest of the day was free for everyone to explore the area around Petoskey, Charlevoix, Harbor Springs and environs. That evening there was a lovely farewell catered dinner in the Hearthside Clubhouse, which is spectacular. Door prizes were raffled off and the group sang our traditional "Happy Trails" song as we waved our napkins in the air. Apparently no one wanted to leave as many visited until long after dinner.



## Highlights of Rolling Rally

*[Editor's Note : I did not participate in the Rolling Rally to the end, dropping out in Creede, Colorado. Shirley Sage provided notes and photos for the rally after that. Also, since this rally was less structured than the Spring and Fall rallies, people were "doing their own thing" and not necessary as a group, although Bill and Shirley did schedule some group activities. Therefore, some of the days don't have much in the way of "Highlights" since I didn't think you would want to read about my personal adventures.]*

Bill and Shirley Sage had set up an 18 day Rolling Rally with stops in Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Colorado. Activities had been planned at the various locations by Bill and Shirley and this was a Pay-As-You-Go rally with everyone making their own campground reservations. The campground itinerary of the rally was...

- Day 1 - Holtwood Campground, Oconto, WI August 30,31
- Day 3 - Dakotah Meadows RV Park, Prior Lake, MN September 1,2,3
- Day 6 - Famil-e-fun Campground and RV Park, Mitchel, SD September 4
- Day 7 - Lazy J RV Park and Campground, Rapid City, SD September 5,6
- Day 9 - Terry Bison Ranch RV Park, Cheyenne, WY September 7
- Day 10 - Lake Pueblo State Park, Pueblo, CO September 8
- Day 11 - Mountains View at Riverside RV Resort, Creede CO September 9,10
- Day 13 - Alpen Rose RV Park, Durango, CO September 11,12
- Day 15 - Montrose Black Canyon KOA, Montrose, CO September 13,14
- Day 17 - Gunnison KOA, Gunnison, CO September 15,16

On August 30, most of the coaches arrived in the afternoon at Holtwood Campground in Oconto, Wisconsin, after having attended the Michigan Rally. That evening, several of the couples went to Dockside Restaurant on Green Bay off of Lake Michigan for dinner.

On August 31, the group carpoled to Lambeau Field (the Green bay Packers'



stadium) for a tour. A guide related the history of the Packers' field and Lambeau



stadium. One of the stops was a private suite on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor (there is also a 6<sup>th</sup> floor with suites). The people who view the game from these suites do so in warm comfort. The guide took everyone through the tunnel the Packers use to enter the field and onto the field.

On September 1, the coaches left Wisconsin for the Dakota Meadows RV Park in Prior Lake, Minnesota, arriving in the afternoon. Mall of America is nearby. That mall is huge! It even has an amusement park with a roller coaster, zipline and rides in the center of the Mall.

On September 2, the group went to the Chanhassen Dinner Theater for dinner and the play Mary Poppins.



On September 3, the group went on a cruise on the Steamship Minnehaha on Lake Minnetonka. Before the boat ride, we had lunch at the Bayside Grill where we caught the boat. After lunch, we all boarded the 1906 Minnehaha for a cruise on Lake Minnetonka. When it originally was in service, it visited 26 spots on the lake with 5 other boats. The boat was sunk in 1926 because it was no longer needed. A total of 6 boats were sunk. The Minnehaha was discovered in 1979 and raised in 1980. The boat was built using cypress





wood. The time in drydock was worse on the condition than the 50+ years in 80 feet of water before being restored. After the cruise, many of us bought drinks at the Bayside Grill *[Editors Note: I had a Bayside Bulldog... absolute vodka and rootbeer].*

September 4<sup>th</sup> found the group moving to Mitchell, South Dakota, to the Famil-E-Fun campground for a night. The group went to the Whiskey Creek Wood Fire restaurant for dinner.

September 5<sup>th</sup>, we were on the road again. This time we headed for Rapid City, South



Dakota, to the Lazy RV Park (now called the Rapid City RV Park). The RV park sits up on a hill overlooking the valley. In the evening, the group sat around outside to socialize.

The next day, the group visited Mount Rushmore National Park. Some people visited during the day and some went for the evening show *[Editor's Note : We went at night and I'll describe some of what occurred in the evening].* Mount Rushmore has the Presidential Trail which passes close to the base of the mountain so that you are looking almost straight up at the faces. The trail is 0.6 miles long and has 422 steps. For the show, there was a film, the lighting of Rushmore with spotlights and the lowering of the flag by veterans (all





veterans had been called to the stage). This show is a very moving experience.  
September 7<sup>th</sup> had us on the road to Terry Bison RV Ranch in Cheyenne, Wyoming,



for a one night stopover. For dinner, the group went to the Terry Bison Ranch Steakhouse on the premises.

The next day was another one night stopover at Lake Pueblo State Park in Pueblo, Colorado. We drove to the entrance to Lake Pueblo State Park campground on the south side of the lake. There we were told the Royale coaches were in Yucca Flats in the campground on the northern side of the lake. No big deal. It was only about a 15 minute drive to get to the campground. It's scenic (for easterners) but it's starting to look dry and parched with little grass (much to the consternation of the dog). Everyone carpoled to





Rosario's Riverwalk restaurant in Pueblo for dinner. After dinner, it was a very nice walk around the Riverwalk area before heading back to the campground. One great thing about the campground is the low light pollution. It is very dark where we are in the campground. *[Editor's Note : We sat outside the coach for awhile watching the stars. We saw several shooting stars and one satellite].*

*On the road again...* On September 9<sup>th</sup>, we were on the road to Mountains View at riverside RV Resort in Creede, Colorado. In the evening, everyone gathered in the



clubhouse for a pot luck dinner. Creede is at 9,000 foot elevation and some people noticed that the breathing is slightly more labored than at the lower elevations.

Lake City was visited by a caravan of Royale cars on September 10<sup>th</sup>. The road passes nearby Clear Creek Falls and many people stopped either on the way there or way back. Everyone had lunch at the Packer Saloon Cannibal Grill. Lake City is many shops for the



tourists and we were no exception. Later, after returning to the RV resort, everyone met at the Antler's restaurant for dinner.

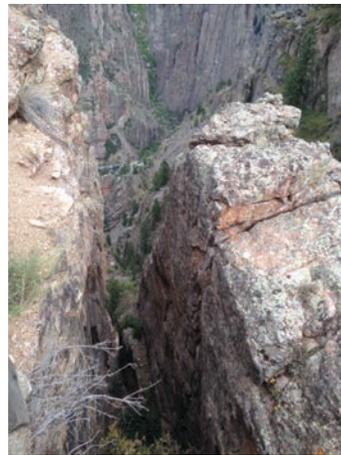
The next stop for the Rolling Rally was Durango, Colorado. A couple of coaches decided to drop out of the rally at this point and remain at Creede [Editor's Note : Including us]. The remaining coaches travelled to Alpen Rose RV Park in Durango. The drive was beautiful and it was an evening to relax.

Ron and Kally Kitchings had offered to have a dinner at their home (Rockin' K Hideout) in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. September 12<sup>th</sup>, couples who had traveled to the Durango campground and the couples that had stayed at Creede came. The view of the San Juan mountains from their home is spectacular and everyone enjoyed dinner. John Strickland sure liked that peach pie and ice cream!



On September 13<sup>th</sup>, the drive up the Million Dollar Highway was beautiful and awesome, but scary. The coaches were literally right at the edge of the road as they maneuvered the hairpin curves! The aspens were just starting to show their color. The road was narrow and often there was no shoulder plus an immediate drop off. Denny McCurdy told Richard to stop talking on the CB and keep his hands on the wheel! Some stopped in Silverton for lunch/shopping but everyone eventually made it to Montrose.

The next day was spent exploring the area, particularly the Black Canyon of the Gunnison river. It became a national park in 1999 so not many people know about it. It presents itself as an impressive mini Grand Canyon.



September 15<sup>th</sup>, on to Gunnison today. The drive took the coaches past the largest lake in Colorado, a reservoir on the Gunnison river. At the Gunnison KOA there was a pot luck at the pavilion which consisted mostly of leftovers from the Kitchings. It was still delicious. Good thing there was a roof as an afternoon shower decided to join us.

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, the group caravanned to Crested Butte on the last day of the rally. The women (Shirley, Kally, Gail and Kay) perused the shops while the husbands stood on the street making bets on which wife would emerge with a package. The original plan was to eat Gunnison but the group decided they'd rather do a cookout. Bill Sage had his Dad's invention with him, a hot dog rotisserie. A late lunch cookout of hot dogs on Bill's hot dog rotisserie and food others brought was the final event of the rally.



**Roy and Dale (Bill and Shirley) would like to wish "Happy Trails" to all who followed us on this adventure from Oconto, Wisconsin, to Gunnison, Colorado.**

# First Timers at the Michigan Rally

- Bill & Phillis Brewer - Granbury, TX



- Ed & Gayle Ferree - Saxonburg, PA



- Jerry & Joan Huzevka - Petrolia, Ontario



- Mike & Janet Prpich - Richards Landing, Ontario



- Terry & Deb Rohrbaugh - Red Lion, PA



- Fred & Mary Lou Stuffer - Marlton NJ



# New Royale Members in 2015

Ricky & Brenda Brady - Selma, NC



Steve & Janet Conaway - Whitehouse, TX



Vic & Ann Duhamel – Lively, Ontario

*No Photo Available*

Gene & Lauren Esnes - Boca Raton, FL



Ed & Gayle Ferree - Saxonburg, PA



Peter & Susan Grimm – Key West, FL

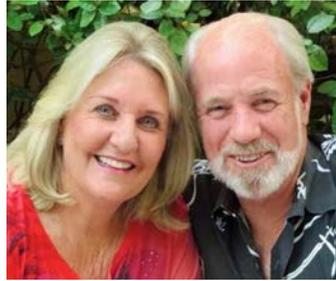
*No Photo Available*

Don & Joyce Harvey - Muldrow, OK

*No Photo Available*

Greg & Nanci Heinmiller - Boca Raton, FL

*No Photo Available*



Dan & Bobbie Jensen - Azle, TX



Tom & Connie Kossen - Edwards, MS

Conrad & Janet Mershon - The Villages, FL

*No Photo Available*



Dean & Heidi Miller - Springfield, MO



Mike & Janet Prpich - Richards Landing, Ontario

Lawrence & Hildegard Rebholz – Milwaukee, WI

*No Photo Available*

The logo for PrevoSt, featuring the word "PREVOST" in a stylized, metallic, blue and silver font with a 3D effect.

The ultimate class.

### PrevoSt Update

This is the first PrevoSt Update for the Royale Coach Club Newsletter.

I want to personally thank each of you for helping PrevoSt become who we are. PrevoSt motorhome owners, converters and clubs have all contributed to make our motorhome business truly world class. The Royale Coach Club is a significant part of who we are and PrevoSt is proud to be associated with all of you. Our motorhome business is the shining star of our brand and it makes us unique in the world of commercial coaches. My wife Susie and I enjoyed spending time with you at the recent rolling rally in Michigan. We really appreciate how welcoming all of you were to us. Bo & Stanley Reahard made us feel at home and they were excellent rallymasters. Northern Michigan is one of the garden spots of our country and they gave all of us a night to remember at their Promised Land. I especially liked the PrevoSt cookies.

Many of you may have heard that our President, Gaetan Bolduc will be retiring at the end of this year after more than 33 years with PrevoSt. We accomplished a lot during his years in a leadership position at PrevoSt in terms of product improvements and service support, ultimately elevating the PrevoSt name to the number one premium coach position in North America. PrevoSt is in a strong position and Gaetan is going out on top. His decision to retire was based on a desire to step back from the demands of his role as President in order to spend quality time with his family. Gaetan will transition from this role and will continue to support PrevoSt as a Senior Advisor.

For several years, PrevoSt has been working on a military project involving several entities within the Volvo Group. On June 11th, Mack Defense was granted a contract for the delivery of 1,537 trucks to the Canadian Armed Forces in five different configurations along with an option for 650 additional vehicles. The base chassis will be assembled in the Volvo Group's system of factories in France. Final assembly, installation of equipment, etc., will take place at one of the PrevoSt plants in Sainte-Claire, Quebec. We estimate that PrevoSt will need to hire over eighty new employees; over 60 in the plant and near 20 in the offices. The hiring will start at the end of 2016 with deliveries in 2017 & 2018. Our synergies with the Volvo Group come in many different forms. Mack Defense is a subsidiary of Mack Trucks which is wholly owned by Volvo.



Some of you may be aware that Prevest opened a new manufacturing facility in Plattsburgh, NY at the end of last year in order to meet “Buy America” qualification for X3-45 Commuter coaches to be sold to municipalities in the US. Commuter coaches are used in the outlying areas of major cities to bring people to the inner city at highway speeds. Prevest’s first coach from our new Plattsburgh, New York plant made a “Grand Opening” appearance in mid-October at the 2014 American Public Transportation Association Expo in Houston, Texas. This has been many years in the planning and the coach was well received. Our order board at this new factory is full for this year with 300 coaches to build for the city of NY. We have a dedicated Public Sector Sales Team that will work to secure new long term contracts with various cities throughout North America. Prevest will continue to build all of our motorhome bus shells at our main factory in Sainte-Claire, Quebec.

As I am writing these lines, we are making plans for our display at the Florida RV SuperShow in Tampa. If you attend this event, please make it a point to stop by and say hello.

Safe Travels,  
Robert Jones | Prevest  
Sales Manager, Bus Shells  
T: +1 800-981-7386 | P: +1 336-812-3504 | C: +1 615-585-56

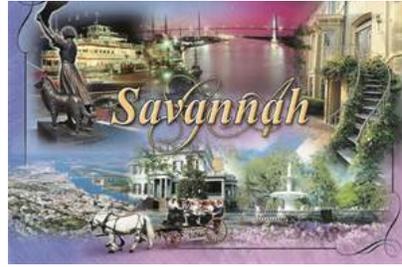


**2015**, what fun it has been! It is hard to believe that this year is almost gone. Millennium has to say it again of how fortunate we feel to be the sponsor of the RCC. We have enjoyed all the events from the mini rally down South, up to Pennsylvania and then over to Michigan. We have enjoyed lots of good food, laughter and funny stories! I personally have to say that everyone made my first Rally such a great one! I was sad that I had to miss attending the fall rally, but I know that Jim, Chris and Walter took good care of everyone. Honestly, I have to report that Mikey handled starting middle school better than I did and he is really having a good year so far. We are all looking forward to 2016 and what it will bring for all of us. I am still working on putting together a memory book of Millenniums first year with RCC. I would like to ask that anyone that wants to share your pictures with me please do. I would like to have it done after Thanksgiving. When it is completed I will send out a link for everyone to go view it on Shutterfly. Thank you all again for everything, it goes without saying that here at Millennium we have the best customers that truly are Family!

We have enjoyed being with RCC and look forward to making new memories.

Melanie

**Royale Coach Club's 2016  
Spring Rally  
"Life's a Box of Chocolates"  
in Savannah, GA"**



**Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, to  
Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Red Gate Campground  
136 Red Gate Farms Trail  
Savannah, GA 31405**

**Main Phone Number 912-272-8028**

**<http://www.redgatecampground.com/red-gate.html>**

John and I invite you all to join us for 5 days of relaxation at Red Gate Campground in Savannah, Ga. All sites have 50amps, water, and sewer.

Included in the rally fees are a Monday Welcome Party followed by a Ghost Tour. Wed, City Tour and Dinner at Paula Deen's. Thursday, a catered dinner/dance at the campground. And Friday, dinner at Mrs. Wilkes and an evening of music at the Old Savannah Theater. Breakfast served Tuesday – Friday.

Most of the activities planned by us will be in the evenings, except for Wed. This day we will be going in to Savannah for a tour, using Old Savannah Trolley Tours, before our dinner at Paula Deen's "Lady & Sons".

For your free days here are some other ideas.....

- Visiting all the sites in downtown Savannah (using 2 day trolley pass, Tues/Wed or Wed/Thurs)
- Touring the plantations in the area
- Walking the National and State Parks
- Go to the beach for the day
- Golfing (we will set up one day of Royale golf)
- Hiking
- Ride your Bike
- Or just laying around the campground.... The days are for however you want to spend them.

Hope to see you in Georgia,  
Mary and John Habicht- 410-461-6677

## The Royales are going west, Fall of 2016.....

At the May 2015 rally club members voted to go west for a change and Nick and Naomi Theisz volunteered to run a rally in Tucson, Arizona, in October of 2016. Naomi was born and raised in Tucson so it holds a special place in her heart and they are delighted to be able to share some of its highlights with you.

A 10 day rally has been scheduled for Monday October 17 through Wednesday October 26. More information will be posted on the Royale's website. There will be a couple of empty days during the rally so that you can go off on your own to explore or re-explore some of the sights of particular interest to you.

The rally has been scheduled to occur eight days after the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta in case anyone is interested in attending that. If you've never attended the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, it is a bucket list event that is unforgettable. Tucson is about eight hours from Albuquerque so there is plenty of time to sightsee on your way to Tucson or you may just come early and enjoy the sunshine.

There are many interesting things to do in and around Tucson and Naomi has highlighted a few that are being considered. If something is of particular interest to you, let Nick and Naomi know. You can certainly Google any of them for more detail.

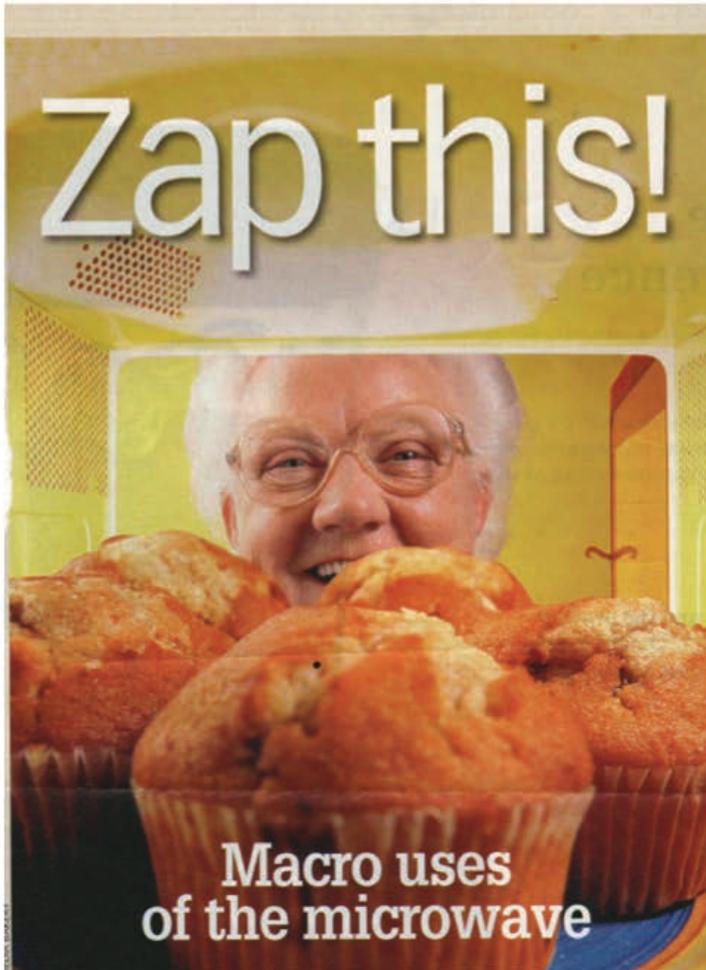
- Sabino Canyon State Park Recreation area
- Mount Lemon
- ASARCO Copper Mines
- Copper Queen Mine, Bisbee, AZ
- Karchner Caverns
- Kitt Peak National Observatory night viewing
- San Xavier del Bac Mission
- Arizona Sonora Desert Museum
- Old Tucson Movie location
- Tombstone AZ
- Colossal Cave
- Pima Air and Space Museum and the Boneyard (Graveyard of old planes, very interesting).
- Biosphere 11
- Titan Missile Base Monument

Again, this will be a fun filled rally. Please visit the Royale's website to for more information on the planned activities.

Safe Travels,  
Nick and Naomi Theisz, Rallymasters.



# Tidbits



for your  
home

an inexpensive heating pad you can use over and over—just be careful *not* to microwave on high power and burn the rice inside the sock or you'll stink up your kitchen.

#### Peels garlic

Nuke garlic cloves for 15 seconds. The water in the garlic steams and breaks down the bond between the clove and the skin for fast removal.

#### Peels veggie skins

Hard squashes and root vegetables can be tough to peel. To make the job easier, place the vegetable in your microwave for two to three minutes on low power and the skin should be more pliable for peeling and cutting—just be careful when removing the hot veggie so you don't burn your fingers.

#### Rescue stale bread

Wrap the loaf in a moist paper towel and zap it in the microwave for 20-second increments. The moisture from the towel will soak into the bread to make it taste fresh again, but not enough to make it soggy.

#### Saves stamps

To remove a stamp from a mislabeled envelope, put a drop of water on it, then microwave for 10 to 15 seconds. It should peel off easily, but it might need a bit of extra glue to stick to the next envelope.

#### Smooths crystallized honey

If your glass jar of honey has crystallized, simply remove the lid and heat the honey in the microwave in 30- to 40-second increments until it returns to its original smooth texture. Do not microwave your honey if it's in a plastic container.

#### Speeds bread-making

Yeast dough can take hours to rise at room temperature, but your microwave can proof yeast dough in about 15 minutes. Place an 8-ounce cup of water in the back of the microwave. Put the dough in a microwave-safe bowl in the center of the microwave and heat on the lowest power for three minutes. Let it sit in the microwave for three minutes. Heat the dough for three minutes more and then let it rest for six minutes. Your dough will have doubled in size and be ready for baking.

#### Toasts nuts

Put a handful of nuts in a microwave-safe bowl, toss with a little oil and microwave in 60-second increments, stirring after each minute. Overall cooking time varies depending on the type of nut, but expect it to take around five minutes. This trick also works for pumpkin and sunflower seeds. (4)

Sources: USDA, Good Housekeeping, The Huffington Post, Popular Mechanics, kitchen.daily.com, thetaylor-house.com, lifehack.org.

#### By T. Foster Jones

MICROWAVE OVENS PROVIDE a fast and expedient way to prepare a variety of foods. But they have a variety of other uses that might surprise you. Here are just a few. (Note that times and cooking levels will vary according to your microwave).

#### Cleans itself

Pour vinegar into a microwave-safe bowl and heat for two minutes. The liquid creates steam and makes messes easy to wipe away.

#### De-clumps brown sugar

When brown sugar is as hard as a rock, moisten a paper towel, place it in the sugar bag, then zap in the microwave for 25 seconds. The moisture from the towel will transfer to the sugar and make it easier to scoop.

#### Disinfects sponges

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), one of the most dangerous sources of disease-causing bacteria in your home is your dish sponge. Stick your

damp sponge in the microwave and zap it for 60 seconds. Doing this each week can help destroy general household germs.

#### Juices fruit

Before juicing an orange or lemon, microwave the uncut fruit for 10 seconds. The microwave will loosen the fibers inside the fruit and make it easier to juice every last drop.

#### Makes a heating pad

Fill the foot of a tube sock with rice, sew or knot the top closed and microwave in 30-second increments until it reaches your desired soothing temperature. The rice makes

#### The Costco Connection

Costco members will find a variety of microwave ovens at their local warehouse and on Costco.com. Costco also carries vinegar, brown sugar, sponges, socks, fresh produce, bread and bakery products, postage stamps, honey, yeast, flour and nuts.