

Well, the big event this month is the HR 400 Club Spring Rally from 2/10/10 through 2/17/10 in Baton Rouge, LA. This rally was scheduled specifically for the Mardi Gras Celebration. We thoroughly enjoyed our time thanks to the two couples who hosted this rally: the Barbie's and the Delamater's. Shirley & Buddy Barbe are from this area of LA and, through them, we received a guided tour of the 'local Mardi Gras' celebrations. We actually felt part of the celebration, which you will get a sense through the pictures. The pictures tell it all.

First of all we had to travel to Farr Park in Baton Rouge from Edinburg, TX. On our way we stopped at Aransas Pass, TX for 2 days and visited with Jerry & Terri Hopman, who own a site there. The weather was not very cooperative as it was cold and rainy a good part of the time. From there we moved on to Beaumont, TX for one night. We thought we were alone until suddenly we were surrounded by familiar coaches. It appears we were the only ones not aware of the rendezvous. We were joined by the Brocks, the Woodies, and the Jones. Needless to say we went out to dinner together. See picture at right. From here it appeared we had a mini caravan to our next stop, as the Jones and Woodies traveled with us to Duson, LA and Frog City RV Park. We stopped here to visit with Jim & Lynn, managers of this park and former managers in Elephant Butte, NM. Because of business issues, we did not get to see them until the last day. Our second reason for stopping was to attend a live radio show held at Liberty Center Theater in Eunice, LA. I couldn't resist taking this picture of Ron, nodding off briefly during the performance. From here we drove directly to Farr Park in Baton Rouge, LA. This county run RV park is part of an equestrian center that we would never have found, without the help of the Barbe's. It was close to everything we wanted to do, had water and 30 amp electric, and plenty of room. There was no enclosed room for our gatherings, but that minor inconvenience was outweighed by the fun time we had. The last picture is where some of our bigger coaches were parked, including ours. We were in Baton Rouge for 11 days and had a blast, despite the cool weather. The Barbe's have family and close friends here who opened their homes to all of us, which in itself was unbelievable. Can you imagine telling a family member you want to invite some friends over, and they ask how many and you come back with 48! Louisiana people abound with warmth and hospitality. We all felt we were part of the Mardi Gras Celebration, not just on lookers. We attended 4 parades in all. The first was the Southdowns Night Mardi Gras Parade. The second was the Spanish Town Parade. The third was in the town of Port Allen, on the West side of the Mississippi, across from Baton Rouge. The fourth was in Eunice, LA which was about 60 miles west of Baton Rouge. We were told that the experience of this parade would be close to what the New Orleans celebration would be like. The parade pictures will tell all and will be placed in the order just mentioned.



We ate delicious Louisiana food the whole time and I for one took full advantage of what the area has to offer, especially *Gumbo*. We did some local touring as well, but the main focus was the parades. After the rally was over we headed for Myrtle Beach, SC via Elko, GA. In Elko, we would make preparations for the Pre-Rally to the HR International Rally scheduled to take place in July of this year. Bill & Peg accompanied us for the purpose of assisting us, which we really appreciated. In fact they followed us all the way to Myrtle Beach, SC and then went on to visit family in North Carolina. Arriving in Myrtle Beach on Feb 26th, we connected with chapter members, Paul & Angie who arrived one week ahead of us. It has been quite a cold and stormy Winter everywhere, but we had a good time in spite of it.

Chapter 400 Spring Rally



Starting from the top, we have Buddy & Shirley hanging plastic tarps around the pavilion to protect us from the wind. Next are friends of the Barbes preparing a home made Jambalaya meal for the opening of the rally and the group enjoying the meal. The following picture is a float in the night parade; which is followed by a picture of the morning snow on our Jeep. The last row is a float in the Spanish Town Parade, (Bob is in the picture trying to catch more beads for me), but as you can see I had plenty! Starting on the other side, the parade is over and Anita (Buddy's sister) has her cooler filled with beads.

If you are wondering what she is going to do with all those beads, they will be recycled in the next year's parades. The next picture was taken near Anita's home on the flood dike overlooking the Mississippi and Baton Rouge. The tall building across the river is the State Capital. Anita spontaneously invited us to her home in Port Allen to watch the Super Bowl. The rest of the pictures on this page are of the Port Allen Parade. It happened that it was also Valentine's day. Don & Marie Fabrot (close friends of the Barbe's) invited us into their home (3rd picture down) which we used as a base. It was only one block from the parade. Needless to say the theme was *loving couples*. The next 3 pictures are of them in their home, preparing the wonderful spread of goodies and the traditional *Mardi Gras Drink*, the *Hurricane!* We all brought something to contribute and they made home made *chicken and sausage Gumbo!!!! Yum!!!!* We brought our chairs and items of comfort while we waited to watch the parade, which passed us twice. See last picture below with our crew lined up waiting for it to start.



This was the parade we really felt a part of and you can see why. Some of our members even rode on a float in the parade. In the pictures below, Judy can be seen in the green top and the picture next to her is Osa and Dot. They really enjoyed the experience. The next two pictures are of a St. Valentine's Day Float. Finally at the end of the day, a group picture was taken wearing all our beads!!



At the end of the rally we had a closing dinner; where Bob was given a certificate of appreciation for all the work he has done - not only as president, but ongoing with the chapter website, the Yahoo group, computer trouble shooting with members, and much more. I too received a certificate of appreciation for my efforts in photographing chapter events, but of course the camera was around my neck. It is nice to be appreciated!