

CAMPING TODAY

THE VOICE OF FAMILY CAMPERS & RVERS

DECEMBER 2025 ISSUE

06

NATIONAL OFFICE UPDATE

Change in renewal notice policy

12

CAMPVENTION 2026

\$25 discount ends December 31st.

22

WINTER FUN

Sharing out door activities with
Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi.

Printable PDF



@officialfcrv

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<https://fcrv.org/camping-today-submission-forms/>

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Camping Today' Submission Forms

[‘Camping Today’ is currently scheduled for release on the 15th of each month.]

[All content must be submitted by the 1st.]

Contact FCRVOFFICE@gmail.com if you have any questions or problems submitting material.

[Click on the hyperlink below for the type of ‘Camping Today’ submission you’d liked to send.](#)

[Articles](#) - [Event Recap](#) - [Birthday Shoutout](#) - [Milestone](#) - [Farewell](#) - [Event Submit](#)



YOUR CHAIR AWAITS



- International Camping Club
- Non-Profit Member Owned
- National & Local Events
- Wildlife & Conservation
- Scholarship Programs
- Youth, Teen, Adult and Retiree Programs

WWW.FCRV.ORG



Dear FCRV Member

As a Member of Family Campers & RVers, you're part of the history, heart, and heritage of an organization that has shaped family experiences for generations. When you think back on your years with us, certain moments probably rise to the surface: a campfire that kept everyone talking long after sunset, the kind of laughter that only happens among friends who've become family, the pride of watching our youth grow into capable leaders, and maybe even a few harmless pranks that turned into legendary stories. Above all, there's the steady comfort of knowing that wherever you traveled, you belonged to something special.

These moments define FCRV. They're the threads that tie together our chapters, our states, and our families. Your commitment over the years helped build a community rooted in fellowship, outdoor adventure, conservation, and youth development.

Today, we're at an important moment. Our programs, many of which you helped build, still make a meaningful impact. But like many long-standing volunteer organizations, we're facing rising operating costs, an aging membership, and fewer active supporters carrying the day-to-day load.

We are reaching out with respect for you and for the history you helped create. Our goal is straightforward: to protect FCRV's legacy and keep its programs active and available for as long as possible.

Our Wildlife and Scholarship Funds remain well-positioned to serve their missions. The challenge lies with our General Fund, which supports the everyday work that keeps FCRV running. This fund is now at a critically low level. It's not simply lean. It needs attention from those who understand the value of what FCRV provides.

The General Fund keeps the organization moving. It supports programs, events, communications, and the national structure that holds everything together. It's the quiet backbone of FCRV.

Right now, it needs our collective support.

A gift to FCRV isn't just a contribution. It's a statement that the community you helped build matters. It helps protect the experiences, friendships, and opportunities that shaped so many families, including your own. It ensures the next generation can discover the same sense of belonging and joy that brought all of us together in the first place.

If you're able, a donation of any amount will help strengthen FCRV's foundation and sustain the programs that define who we are. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, your contributions may be tax-deductible. [This link](#) as well as in the back of this 'Camping Today' issue, you'll find a simple donation form.

Thank you for your years of dedication, your membership, and your belief in the values that built this organization. With your support, FCRV can continue to bring families together, encourage conservation and wildlife education, and celebrate the camping lifestyle we all love.

If you prefer, you may also consider including FCRV in your life estate planning. Every form of support helps ensure the organization you helped shape continues to thrive.

Thank you again for all you've given to FCRV and for standing with us as we work to strengthen its future.



From The President



Dear Family,

As the year ends, let me wish each of you Happy Holidays. May the joy of the season bless your home and family. May the joy of the season bless your house and family. Joy and Happiness to you through the season and the New Year.

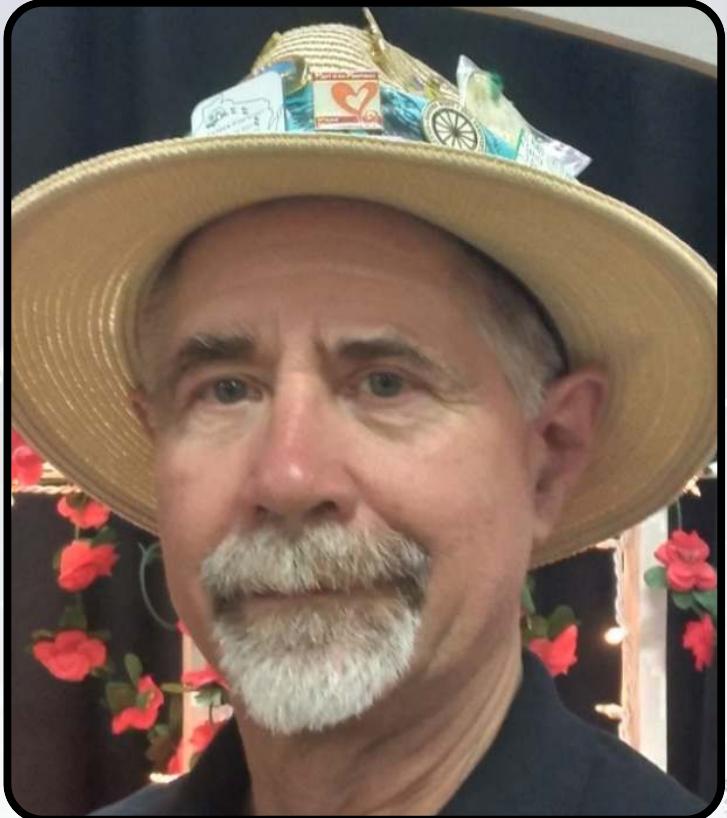
We are assessing how changes impact FCRV. We all know that an increase in dues is a necessary thing. This is a decision that we do not take lightly. We know that no single item will make FCRV whole. I believe that it will take an increase in dues, each of us striving to increase membership numbers, and working to make Project Keystone a success in getting our name out to the world. I ask that you keep an open mind to the changes that are being made to keep us relevant in this business climate. Let's be realistic, we have a lot of work ahead of us to stay relevant in today's climate. I would like to thank the Membership Committee for the work that they have done in the in-depth discussion on dues. Your input here is beyond valuable to FCRV. Thank You for this work.

Just a reminder. Campvention 2026 needs volunteers for Team Leads and would welcome anything that you would volunteer to do. If you are willing to help, please reach out to the team and look at the open positions. Your help will be welcomed. Remember that many hands make the work load a lighter load to carry. Let me thank you in advance for those that reach out and volunteer to help.

Let me again say may the joy of the season light your day throughout the year to come and may joy fill your life.

Your Chair Awaits, See You at the Next Campout

Gerry Pfirsch
FCRV International President





National Office Update



A long-term initiative to reduce operating costs by several thousand dollars annually through the elimination of postage, mailing supplies, paid software, postage machine licensing, and associated labor has been underway throughout 2025. This transition represents a key step toward ensuring FCRV's financial sustainability.

Earlier this year, FCRV began shifting from three physical renewal reminders to a blend of mailed and electronic notices as part of our testing phase for updated systems and processes. One reminder has already been converted to email, and a second will move to electronic delivery in January. We plan to continue this gradual, phased transition until all three reminders are fully electronic. This approach gives members time to adjust while allowing us to collect and update email addresses as needed. It is important to ensure that your email address is up to date with National. If you are unsure, you can always reach out to your State, Provincial, or Regional Directors to verify and update it.

Beginning with the November end-of-month cycle, members will also start receiving their Proof of Membership letters electronically. During this testing phase, hard-copy letters will continue to be mailed; however, once we are confident that the electronic process is functioning reliably, we anticipate discontinuing the physical mailings and moving to a fully digital method of providing Proof of Membership letters.

While this transition represents a critical advancement toward greater efficiency and sustainability it is important to recognize the trade-off involved. The personal, human element that has long characterized our membership interactions is inevitably diminishing. I encourage leadership at all levels to remain mindful of this shift and to take a more active role in engaging directly with members, ensuring that the organization continues to provide the warmth and personal connection that define the FCRV community.





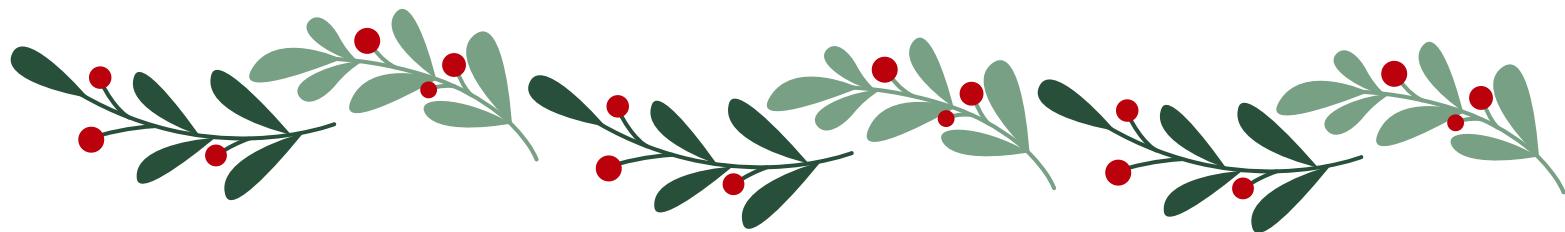
Trustee Messages



FCRV Recording/Corresponding Officer

Teresa Walorski

Hi! Hope you are all staying safe and warm. Some of you out there are still camping! Lucky! We all want to help foster a sense of belonging and strategic planning by getting together even in the winter when we are not camping. This is the time of year to give thanks for all we have and all those in our lives. Enjoy the Holiday Season, we all appreciate all you do for FCRV.



Trustee Messages



Vice President Programs

Ed Shaneyfelt

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and didn't stuff themselves too much. The turkey is what was supposed to be stuffed. With Christmas right around the corner I hope you did your best to be on the nice list. It would be better than getting a lump of coal.

As this is the off season it is still not the time to completely shut the camping mind down. Look at your schedule for next year and plan on attending your Chapter, Provincial, State, Regional, or National Campvention.

Make sure to have a plan for your rig by having a checklist of what you need to have and what you can do away with. If you're in the regions where you have to winterize make sure to un-winterize in the spring.

It is a good time to think about the different programs also. Plan a conservation campout or activity. The CAMP program has stuff that as a chapter you can do year round. DASAT has some good safety plans that can be implemented in case of an emergency. Remember the youth and teens also when you are doing activities or planning something. Try to have a joyous Holiday Season.

Until next time...



Merry Christmas

Wishing you a
season that's merry
and bright!

*To the Early Risers,
from Beth*



Hank Nathan International Scholarship 2026



NCHA/FCRV Hank Nathan International Scholarship 2026 Is Now Open!

Greetings from your Hank Nathan Scholarship Team.

Requests for applications will be posted in the December-April issues of Camping Today. The portal submission closes on May 1.

How to Apply:

Applications will only be accepted online at the following address: <https://fcrv.org/hank-nathan-ncha-fcrv-scholarship/>. The application MUST include the FCRV member holder's name, membership number, postal mailing address, and most importantly, an email address at which the applicant can be contacted. Pay special attention to the entire website and follow the directions closely.

Section 1. Must be filled out by all applicants.

Section 2. Is only for applicants graduating from high school this year and applying for a scholarship for the first time.

Section 3. Is only for applicants currently enrolled and continuing their college education.

Section 4. Applies to those returning to school for continuing or advanced education.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Parents, guardians, or applicants must be members of FCRV for 18 full calendar months or longer.
- Applicants must be enrolled, or accepted, into an accredited undergraduate, graduate, or trade school course of study.
- Part-time and trade school students must carry an equivalent of 11 credit hours or less. You will be evaluated accordingly.
- Applicants should have a minimum 2.3 GPA (grade point average) on a 4.0 point scale. All applicants are given equal consideration.
- A current, complete official transcript of grades must display student name, school name, grades, credit hours for each course, and terms in which the courses were taken.

Recommendations:

Two online recommendations are required and must be from a non-relative. Both may come from any FCRV member including trustees, regional director, state director, or non-elected member. Your second recommendation may come from a school official, coach, band director, club supervisor or an immediate supervisor if you are working. Your application will be complete when all required materials are submitted electronically on or before May 1. Scholarships are for one year. Recipients may reapply each year they meet the eligibility requirements. **If you've already submitted four letters of recommendation from 2 previous scholarship applications, those are still on file, and you do not need to submit any additional ones unless you want to include an update to your file.*

Scholarships

Annual Scholarships are non-competitive. That means there is no competition between applicants. Each applicant's score is individually tallied. A scholarship will be awarded to every applicant who meets the standards determined in advance by our rating scale. Scholarship values will range from \$1,000 to \$4,000+ (American). Scholarship values are determined each year by the controller in collaboration with the Scholarship Board of Directors.

Consideration is taken for GPA (Grade Point Average), maturity, leadership, related activities, and goals of the candidate as based on the objectives of FCRV. Special consideration is given to applicants who major, minor or explore elective classes in fields related to forestry, conservation, wildlife, ecology, or outdoor education training.

The Board of Directors will announce the recipients at or after the Annual General Meeting held at Campvention in Huron, South Dakota. All scholarship recipients will be posted in *Camping Today* so that the members who donate to the scholarship fund can see who is getting an FCRV Scholarship.

Applicants will be notified in writing as to the amount they will receive along with further instructions after May 1st.

Welcome New Members

Family Campers & RVers would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members:

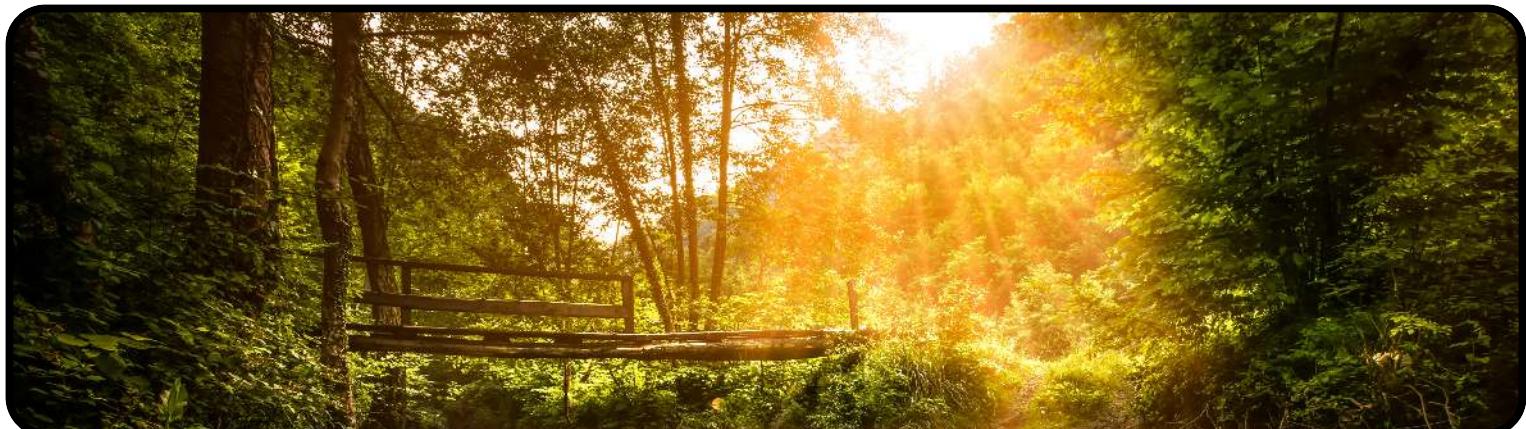
House, Kevin	Janic, Brana	MI	Referred by: Chris House
Carr, Bob	Carr, Vicky	VA	Referred by: Internet: Google
Line, Tim	Line, Lindsey	TX	Referred by: Betty Andrews
Treida, Norman	Treida, Glenda	TX	Referred by: Bill & Anne Zaczek



Trustee Meeting Notes

These notes are now being stored in the Virtual Office by National and sent via email to the executive and advisory boards. These notes can and are encouraged to be shared throughout the organization. The archive and single page notes are set up as a shareable link that is viewable by any 3rd party.

A history of past minutes can be found [HERE](#).





Campvention 2026 - Huron, South Dakota

[More Info](#)[Register](#)[Forms](#)

[Click here for event info & registration](#)

Join in on the discussion at the 2026 Campvention
[Facebook group](#)

Click the link above or scan the code below.



**PAY BEFORE
DECEMBER 31, 2025,
TO RECEIVE A
\$25 DISCOUNT (\$340.00)**

CAMPVENTION 2026
“Where The Flock Gathers”

Heartland Region invites you to the 66th annual FCRV Campvention, to be held at the South Dakota State Fairgrounds at Huron July 5th to the 11th, 2026. Early bird days are July 3rd and 4th.

In addition to renewing old friendships and making new friends, you'll discover the rich cultural heritage, Native American and pioneer history, and the beautiful scenery of the Huron area. Huron's history is on display through its colorful outdoor murals as well as several historic museums and buildings. The city offers family entertainment (including a water park), numerous recreational opportunities, water activities (such as fishing, paddle boats, swimming), and walking trails.

Huron is located in the east central part of the state, but you are encouraged to come to Campvention early or stay late, to see the iconic Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse Memorial tribute to the Native American tribal leader, both in southwest South Dakota; the 50-foot sculpture, “Dignity of Earth and Sky,” along the Missouri River near Chamberlain; DeSmet, home of Laura Ingalls Wilder, about 35 miles from Huron; and the world's only Corn Palace (with exterior murals covered in corn, grains and grasses), in Mitchell, about 55 miles from Huron. And South Dakota has so much more to offer travelers!

Heartland Region 3 FCRVers are planning many familiar Campvention activities and adventures, along with special programs and activities focusing on local conservation and wildlife. They invite you to come and discover all that Campvention 2026, Huron and South Dakota have to offer!

Retiree Rally 2026 - Mineola, Texas

[More Info](#)[Register](#)

[Click here for event info & registration](#)

[Join in on the discussion at the 2026 Retiree Rally Facebook group](#)

Click the link above or scan the code below.



Retiree Rally 2026 "Circle The Wagons"

Are you ready to join us to CIRCLE THE WAGONS next March? This rally is open to all members of FCRV, not just to retirees! There is so much fun awaiting you, so invite your camping friends and introduce them to our FCRV family. There is so much to see and do while you are there, and the amenities are 1st class! We will be updating you each month. The RV sites are very special as they are in front of the Center where we meet and form a double round ring that allows for SHORT WALKS. The sites have FULL HOOKUPs with BOTH 30 AND 50AMP, as we will CIRCLE THE WAGONS!

The 54th FCRV INTERNATIONAL RETIREE RALLY will be held at the Mineola Civic Center, 1150 N Newsom Street, Mineola, TX 75773.

Rally Dates: March 23 – March 29, 2026

Early Days: March 20th - March 22nd

Come early, as this is a fun place to explore!

We are excited to have Harlan Nigh and Lori Springer co-hosting with us. We are working on the details, and we have a good group of people who have offered to chair the committees. We need more volunteers to help make this a success. Please feel free to contact us with any help or suggestions.

Ken: ken.andrews1348@gmail.com

Betty: UBetUKen2@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you in Mineola, in March of 2026

MERRY CHRISTMAS

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS
ED & ANGIE
SHANE & YFELT

May joy embrace you and your family during the holidays & peace to you in the New Year.



PAUL & BETH
2025 RETIREE K & Q



Event Schedule & Recaps



[Click Here For Full Event Calendar](#)



Event Schedule & Recaps

Family Campers & RVers - FCRV
Published by Forrest Camperson · Just now ·

Cheryl Chapel Martinez ▶ Colorado Family Campers & RV'ers (FCRV)
December 10 at 12:18 PM ·

Campfire Coyotes Christmas Gathering. We still enjoy our friendship and food, even when we're not camping. At Debi Melton's

Family Campers & RVers - FCRV
Published by Forrest Camperson · Just now ·

MaryAnn Glover ▶ Colorado Family Campers & RV'ers (FCRV)
December 10 at 10:28 AM ·

Woodland Wookies had a very festive evening for December fun at Forest Bend Farm in the Black Forest, hay rides & s'mores with hot cocoa!

Family Campers & RVers - FCRV
Published by Forrest Camperson · Just now ·

Johnny Woodward ▶ Florida Family Campers(FCRV)
December 11 at 12:10 PM ·

A few Golden Lakers made it camping this week. Weather was a mixed bag but it is almost winter.

Family Campers & RVers - FCRV
Published by Forrest Camperson · December 4 at 5:00 AM ·

The CO Trailblazers camped in La Veta, CO, at the We RV Champions RV Park. We played Polish Poker, Mahjong, Right-Left-Center, and a new game, Five Crowns. We had sever... See more





Camping Tips
and Recipes
FROM YOU!

CAMPFIRE KNOW-HOW



Bonus: Winter Campfire Drink

Hot Spiced Cider (No Alcohol Version)

2 cups apple cider

1 cinnamon stick

2 cloves

1 orange slice

Heat in a pot on gentle coals for 5–10 minutes. Perfect hand-warmer.



Campfire Know-How is looking for your best camping contributions! Share your favorite recipes, handy tips, activity ideas, or tried-and-true advice for life around the campfire. Got a funny camping story or meme you've created? We'd love to see those too! Submissions are welcome in any form; photos, artwork, videos, or written pieces. Let's hear from you and keep the spirit of camping alive!

Submit here: <https://fcrv.org/campfire-know-how>

Christmas for Our Outdoor Friends



Christmas for our Outdoor Friends

By Joe Boswell, International DASAT Director

Winter is fast approaching and everyone is beginning to prepare for the holiday season and attempting to find a perfect gift for that special someone. So, what do you do for the person who has everything or frankly does not need a thing? Take a different approach to the holiday season. How can you help and yet be mindful of others and the environment in which you live? During this time of year as the cold winter months take a strong grip upon the outdoor environment take a moment to reflect. Where is all of the wildlife that used to visit your yard? When was the last time you really looked out the window? The animals of summer time are scrambling for food. Many of the birds have already flown south. Others have sought out shelter from the cold winter nights. When was the last time you offered food for the wildlife? Let us explore a "wildlife-friendly" Christmas tree. What you may ask is that? A wildlife Christmas tree offers the birds, squirrels and even deer nourishment. When was the last time you put up a bird feeder and kept it filled with food? Or did you put some apples out on the ground or salt block out for the deer. (No hunting of the deer, this way, please). Creating edible treats can become a family project. Encourage your extended family and community to join the fun, helpful, creative project.

Start this new holiday adventure in your yard by stringing popcorn and placing it on one of your smaller pine trees. "Then add slices of apples, oranges, or pears that have been dried." Now add a cranberry garland to this tree. Remember when you string these items use string, not fishing twine as this will become tangled and dangerous to your outdoor family. Consider adding peanut butter to pine cones and rolling them in birdseed. This is a favorite treat for outdoor animals.

That pine tree in your yard will become a favorite place for the wildlife visiting your yard. Remember they are foraging for food because the grass and other sources of nourishment have all dried up and are no longer available. Many times they are looking for food and fresh water. By making a "wild-life" friendly tree you are helping these outdoor furry friends.

Make this part of your holiday gift giving. How about gifting 5 pounds of bird seed and a bird feeder or corn for the deer. This will be a holiday treat from you to those wild visitors. Seniors enjoy watching the wildlife outside through the window. This can be a teachable moment for children as well. Watching at a safe distance is always an adventure. When the temperature outside is too cold for outdoor activities, watching a deer eat popcorn from your "wildlife-friendly" tree can be exciting. Quiet now as the animals in your front yard or back yard are feasting thanks to your loving kindness. Look with amazement and wonder as you enjoy the benefits of your generous gift.

When the holiday season passes, continue this effort to help out the wildlife. Get your whole household to participate. This is a great activity for children and grandchildren. By luck maybe the next time you look out the window you might be surprised by the response from the animals you have fed during this time of year. They know where to go for food, and are grateful for the special treats. If you keep this up they know where they are accepted and who is being kind and looking out for their welfare. Your decorated tree will not only bring cheer to the animals but will also provide you with something to watch out your window.

Christmas for Our Outdoor Friends

Before long a new year will be upon each one of us. Do we always have to do the same old thing the same old way? Think of new ideas and take a new approach to the holiday season. This article may have taken a different direction away from DASAT for a moment. But keep in mind that Wildlife is one of our program areas. It is important that we realize the importance of Wildlife, Conservation, and DASAT.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season.

Inspiration from:

The Scoop, Charles County Senior Center News, December 2025

Additional Information:

<https://wilderchild.blogs.news/decorating-outdoor-edible-tree-for-the-animals>

<http://backwoodsmama.com2021/12/decorate-tree-wildlife.html>

<http://chirpforbides.com/how-to/how-to-have-a-wildlife-family-christmas-tree/?/srltid=AFmBOop4tIXuGv1bfthj9w-KANi6nJ5WLxCkneChC-mdsB7w4h90fTa>



Tis The Sea-Sun

Happy Holidays From:
Craig & Shari Weber



Winter
is
Coming

Warm Hugs from
Northern Lights
Chapter



Winter Activities with Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi

What Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi Is Doing This Time of Year

As winter approaches, Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi continues to spend time outdoors with their members and the surrounding community through simple, seasonal activities. We wanted to share a couple of the things they focus on this time of year, both as a snapshot of what's happening locally in Huron and as inspiration for similar low-key activities FCRV chapters might enjoy in their own communities.

GPS and Compass Navigation Activities

One activity Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi returns to regularly is GPS and compass navigation. They've developed a few different courses, including routes that guide participants to murals around Huron and another that winds through the Maga ta-Hohpi Waterfowl Production Area. Participants move from point to point using coordinates or compass bearings, learning basic navigation skills along the way.

Virtual Geo Caching of Murals On The Town				
The coordinates will get you within 30-80 feet of the location. At the location, use the painting or plaque to find the answer to the 16 questions.				
The latitude/longitude of Huron's Murals on the Town, Horizontal datum is WGS 84				
Updated October, 2025 Maga Ta-Hohpi Friends Group				
Latitude (dd mm.mm'mm)	Longitude (dd mm.mm'mm)	Question	Answer to Question	Remarks
44° 21.777' W098° 13.819'	W098° 13.819'	What direction is the eagle flying?		
44° 21.846' W098° 12.841'	W098° 12.841'	Do all the women have on hats?		
44° 21.802' W098° 12.301'	W098° 12.301'	How many automobiles in race?		
Removed				
44° 21.660' W098° 12.838'	W098° 12.838'	How many stars are there?		
44° 21.795' W098° 13.119'	W098° 13.119'	What bird is sitting on a post?		
44° 22.203' W098° 12.906'	W098° 12.906'	What did A.E. Copper & E.L. Ebbert release?		
44° 21.782' W098° 12.756'	W098° 12.756'	What did Ernest Sutton do?		
44° 21.791' W098° 12.785'	W098° 12.785'	What frame is the man reading a newspaper in?		
44° 22.162' W098° 11.941'	W098° 11.941'	What gets filled on Saturday nights?		
44° 21.871' W098° 12.787'	W098° 12.787'	What is leaning against the wall next to the window?		
44° 21.785' W098° 12.839'	W098° 12.839'	What is written on the window above J.C. Penny Co store?		
Removed				
44° 21.817' W098° 12.996'	W098° 12.996'	What's the name at the top of door way?		
44° 21.890' W098° 12.824'	W098° 12.824'	What type of caps and color are at the bottom center		
44° 21.830' W098° 12.804'	W098° 12.804'	What was erected in the summer of 1883?		
Removed				
44° 21.908' W098° 12.862'	W098° 12.862'	In 1890 what was the longest and highest?		
44° 21.909' W098° 12.866'	W098° 12.866'	Where is the first state you located?		



Sometimes this is offered as part of a larger event, and other times it's incorporated into smaller outings or walks. The emphasis isn't on speed or competition, but on exploration and awareness of surroundings. People of all ages can take part, whether they're using a smartphone GPS app or a traditional compass, and the routes can be adjusted depending on what areas are being highlighted.

You can find an example spreadsheet of GPS locations, questions and answers for downtown Huron [here](#):

Geo-Caching Worksheet

You can use this as a template for creating your own "Virtual Geo-Caching" activity in your local areas!

Winter Activities with Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi

Bird Counts and Seasonal Nature Observation

Another winter tradition Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi participates in is the annual Christmas Bird Count through Audubon. This citizen science event invites individuals and groups to observe and record bird species in their area during a set period in December.

Beyond the formal count itself, the broader practice of winter birding and nature observation is something the Friends group returns to often. These outings tend to be relaxed and unstructured, with people walking, looking, listening, and sharing what they notice. It's a way to stay connected to the landscape during a quieter season and to pay attention to wildlife that remains active through the winter months.

You can find information on this year's annual Christmas Bird Count here:

<https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count>



Sharing Ideas Across Communities

These activities reflect the kind of programming Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi leans into during the winter: simple, outdoors-based, and rooted in curiosity. They don't require special facilities or elaborate planning, just time, interest, and a willingness to be outside.

We wanted to share a glimpse of what our partners are doing this time of year with their members and community, in the hope that FCRV chapters might try these activities in their own local areas! If your chapter does one of these, we'd LOVE to hear about it. You can upload a recap of the event along with pictures and video here:

<https://fcrv.org/media/>

Iceland Adventures History, Folklore and Myths

By Beth Muschinski

Our 1st tour was a Folklore Walking tour of Reykjavik. Iceland was settled by Norwegian Vikings in 874. I am 1/4 Norwegian, so I felt right at home...NOT! Now, who among you, while sailing the seas way back then, would look at this barren, forsaken island and say, "Hey, that looks like a GREAT place to live!" Well, it turns out those people were right.

The people settled and formed a government, making Iceland's parliament one of the oldest in the world. The parliament was established in 930 and the original parliament building stood in what is now Thingvellir National Park until the late 1700's. What is interesting, well, one of the interesting things about Thingvellir, is that it is the meeting point of the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates! Today, you can, and I did, "walk between the continents." This means that Iceland actually is split between two continents! The area between the plates is Thingvillar National Park which is Iceland's first designated National Park.

If any of you remember Bill Nye, the Science Guy and his show on tectonic plates, these are the upper mantle of the earth and can move. If the plates move together, mountains form. If the plates move apart, magma from below the earth's mantle can rise to fill that space and cause volcanic eruptions. Iceland actually gains about 1" per year of additional land and this occurs in Thingvillar Park. The distance between the plates is currently about 5 miles. More information is available at <https://www.thingvellir.is/en>

Back to the parliament; Iceland was ruled by several different countries over the years but finally became independent in 1944 after 98% of its population voted in favor of that independence.

Today, Iceland has a female president AND a female Prime Minister. The country has no army but is defended by the Icelandic Coast Guard and cooperation with NATO.

In addition to the history of Viking settlers, we learned several different folklore legends and scary bedtime stories and viewed amazingly OLD buildings. We also strolled through a cemetery with graves dating back to the 1700's. Interesting tour.

The Huldufolk (Hidden People) are elves living within the natural landscape and associated with specific hills and rocks. The Northern Lights are said to be the Huldufolk dancing in the sky.

Land wights are perhaps the most famous. The 4 mythical creatures, a dragon, griffin, bull and mountain giant are said to protect Iceland and are featured on the coat of arms.

For this Christmas Season, here are a couple Icelandic Christmas Folklore stories: The Yule Lads begin the Christmas season in Iceland. They are 13 brothers who are direct descendants of trolls and live in the mountains with their mother Gryla and stepfather Leppaludi.

The boys were originally criminal pranksters sneaking into farms and causing mayhem. Their names reflect their favorite form of mischief. "Door Slammer", "Sausage Swiper", "Candle Stealer", etc. The Yule Lads have reformed and now are a type of Santa. Icelandic children leave a shoe on the windowsill for each of the 13 nights before Christmas and the Yule Lads leave small gifts, treats or the dreaded potato in the shoe. Gryla also likes to kidnap and eat disobedient children.

The legend of the Yule Cat (Jolakotturinn): Toys were not readily available as gifts centuries ago and kids would be on their best behavior in order to be gifted with clothing. The Yule Cat, wild, monstrously large and pure black, was a terrifying creature roaming the snowy landscape during the Christmas season, preying on anyone (children especially) who hadn't received new clothes by Christmas Eve because they were naughty. The legend serves as a strong motivator for hard work, emphasizing that those who did not work hard did not have the new, warm clothes needed for the harsh Icelandic winter.

Each year since 2018, a 16' tall Yule Cat sculpture is erected every Christmas season in the Reykjavik town square. It is covered with 6,500 led lights and red eyes.

Speaking of cats, Reykjavik is the "City of Cats". Dogs were banned within the city limits from 1924-1984 due to a specific disease they carried that could be passed on to humans. Dogs were still allowed outside the city and used for farming. Cats were encouraged as they protected the city from the rodents brought in via the trade ships. Today, there are an estimated 12,000 cats within the city.

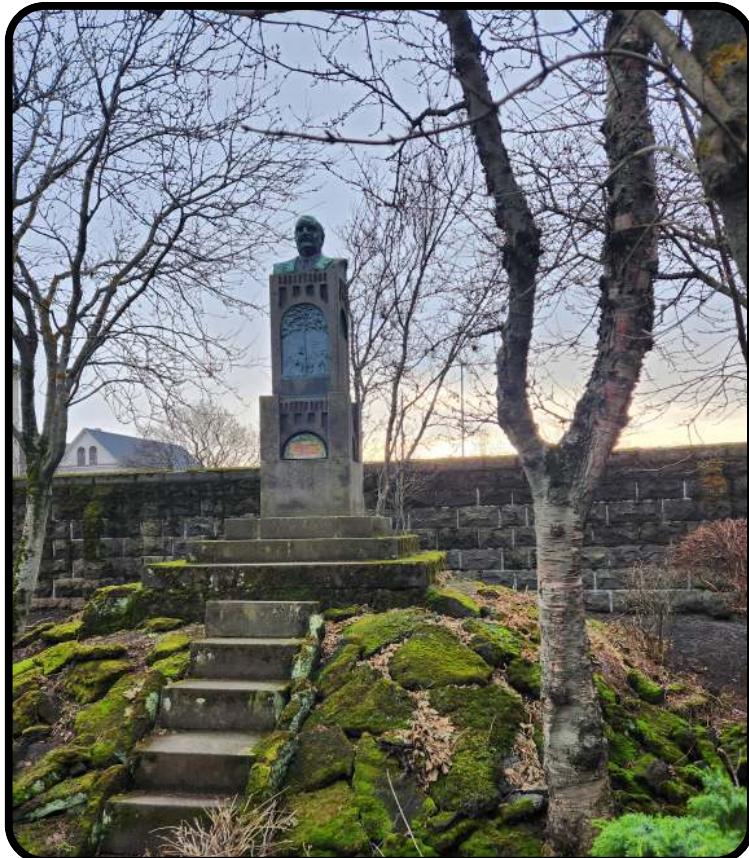
Iceland Adventure - History, Folklore & Myths

These cats are owned and/or cared for by the residents and are seen wandering the streets or curled up inside the stores.

More in depth information of Icelandic folklore is available at:

<https://guidetoiceland.is/history-culture/folklore-in-iceland>

On that cheery note...Merry Christmas and stay tuned for a new article next year.





Visiting National Parks



Visiting National Parks

By Pat Wittmeier

After the World Senior games ended, Joe and I, (yes, he was with me the whole time, successfully staying out of the way of 8 women!) went on to Zion National Park, then on to Bryce Canyon National Park. The formations in Zion were as different from those in Bryce like Niagara Falls is different from Victoria Falls. Both were stunning in their own way. Zion features magnificent red, pink, white and grey formations rising out of the desert floor, having been cut by the Virgin River to form slot canyons, monoliths, cliffs and valleys. Home to dozens of challenging hiking trails including the famous Angel's Landing trail, which I successfully climbed with my daughter Amy five years ago, Joe and I took on the Emerald Ponds trail, climbing to dizzying heights to see pools of water also formed by the Virgin River. Note to self: when you want to see pools of water, you should probably hike in the spring, rather than late autumn when there hasn't been rainfall in the desert for quite some time. But we did see deer, and Bighorn Sheep while eating lunch. After that we hiked the trail leading to the Narrows, a noteworthy hike which ends with the hiker walking directly up the riverbed in cold water. All hikers who take this journey are required to wear insulated hip or chest waders to prevent hypothermia. Joe and I decided not to challenge the rocks and slippery surfaces in the river, as we heard stories from other hikers about the uncertain footing and fall risks.

The following day we drove to Bryce Canyon National Park. Taking the shuttle bus in both parks is strongly recommended, as the parks' attendance is off the charts. (Zion alone is currently, at the end of the season, experiencing 12,000 visitors a day.) When we got off at the first shuttle stop, named Inspiration Point, what I saw as I climbed over

the rise of ground was enough to truly make me gasp. The Hoodoos, the Indian name given to the spires of limestone in the small valley before me, rose out of the ground like eternal sentinels, colored in the orange, reds and pinks of the desert, carved by the wind into astonishing formations. We descended into the valley on the Queen's Trail, where, down below, we saw a spire which to some looked like Queen Victoria in profile. We then headed to Wall Street, into a narrow slot canyon which had us rise out of the valley in a series of wicked switchbacks taking us up roughly 600 feet by the time we got to the top. Not recommended for anyone who is NOT in good health! After returning to the General Store in the park, we enjoyed an ice cream cone and returned to our hotel, where I discovered I had logged 14,500 steps that day.

After the stunning beauty of the National Parks, we headed south to the sparkle and glitter of "Sin City", also known as Las Vegas. As we walked the strip, visited some casinos and enjoyed the dancing Bellagio Fountains, I remarked to Joe that less than 18 hours ago we were walking in the wilderness. What a difference! And on that final day of our vacation, I logged 14,800 steps seeing all the manmade sights and lights of Vegas.



Queen Elizabeth Hoodoo
at Bryce Canyon National Park



Personalized garments; drinkware; clings; decals; kitchen & bath items. You can choose from our large graphic collection or use your photos or designs.

For FCRV branded items:

https://stores.inksoft.com/fc_rv/shop/home

For other items:

<https://stores.inksoft.com/marshallcreations16/shop/home>

Call or text: 410-533-0038
Marshallcreations16@gmail.com





FAMILY CAMPERS & RVERS 2026 CAMPVENTION

"Where The Flock Gathers"

July 5 - 11, 2026

South Dakota State Fairgrounds

1060 3rd Street SW, Huron, SD 57350



REGISTRATION:

Welcome to Campvention 2026. Everyone must complete a registration form, including second families and camp day passes. Submit payment with the completed form. All funds shall be in US currency, including checks and money orders. There will be room for you if you decide to come at the last minute. Simply bring this registration form with you.

**Refund policy: If you are unable to attend, all except \$30 will be refunded AFTER the conclusion of 2026 Campvention.

Registration deadline May 15th - Pay before December 31, 2025, to receive a \$25 discount (\$340.00).

	<u>Registration</u>	<u>At Gate</u>
One Family in the Unit	\$365.00	\$400.00
Extra Family in the Unit (separate pay)	\$185.00	\$205.00
Week Drive-in Day Pass (July 5 - 11)	\$200.00	\$215.00
Drive-in Day Pass (per day)	\$35.00	\$40.00

Early Bird Days: July 3 and 4 @ \$35/night (pay upon arrival – cash/check) The gates will be open Friday at 12 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Is this your first Campvention?: _____ Are you an FCRV Member?: _____ Member #: _____

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Spouse/Guest: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN YOUR UNIT:

Adults: _____ Teens: _____ Youth: 9 – 12 _____ Youth: 5 – 8 _____ Total number of people in Unit: _____

**Please list the names and ages of all youth and teens on the back of this form.

CAMPVENTION PARKING: (There will be no special needs sites available at the gate.)

Check if you are requesting a special needs site: _____ (Valid Handicap parking proof must be presented upon arrival.)

Please note the LENGTH of camping rig behind type:

Motorhome _____ 5th Wheel _____ Travel Trailer _____ Pop-Up _____ Number of slide outs _____

Electricity: 30 amp _____ 50 amp _____ (50 amp is limited. Handicap first. Then first come, first served.)

**Bring extension cords. Water available. Bring hoses and Y connectors.

CAMPVENTION HELP: Would you like to help with event(s)? Staff will follow up with a contact if yes: Yes _____ No _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: FCRV Campvention 2026

Mail checks and completed forms to:

FCRV Campvention 2026

137 Crandon Blvd.

Cheektowaga, NY 14225

For inquiries please call 316-830-2115
or 701-400-1322.

Confirmations will be sent via Email.
Please allow a month for processing.



54th FCRV INTERNATIONAL RETIREE RALLY
Mineola Civic Center
Circle the Wagons in Mineola
1150 N Newsom Street, Mineola, TX 75773
Rally Dates: March 23 – March 29, 2026
Early Days: March 20th - March 22nd

Please complete the following: (Please Print)

Last Name _____ First _____ Spouse/Other _____

Address _____ City _____ St/Pr _____ Code _____

Mailing Address of Other: _____ # of People In Unit _____

Cell Phone #1 _____ Cell Phone #2 _____

Email Address _____

Confirmation Send By: Pdf _____ Word _____ Mailed: _____

Mailing Address If Different From Above:

Registering For Camping: On Grounds _____ Off Grounds _____ Camp Pass _____

Is this your first retiree rally? Yes _____ No _____ Are you a veteran? Yes _____ No _____

Special Needs: Must have on file with the registrar: License registration including handicap Plate, or handicap placard. This area is reserved for wheelchairs, walkers, or those with limited mobility.

REGISTRATION FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE MARCH 1, 2026 DEADLINE.

Registrations received after March 1st or registering at the gate will incur an additional \$35 fee.

Early Days: Early days fee of \$45 per night per unit will be collected by the treasurer at the registration desk.

Included In The Fee: Full Hook-Ups, (30/50 Amp), Ice Cream Social, 2 Dinners, Entertainment, and a lot of fun.

	Early Registration	At gate
2 People In Unit	\$350	\$385
1 Person In Unit	\$320	\$355

Camp Pass Staying In Unit On Grounds as 2nd Family In Unit or Staying off grounds:

2 People	\$110
1 Person	\$ 80

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: FCRV/NCHA RETIREE RALLY

Mail to: Mildred Pauwels, P.O. Box 193, Dana, N.C. 28724

NO CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

Refunds: All but \$35 will be refunded if cancellation notice is received two weeks prior to the rally. After the rally deadline of March 1, 2026, only the camping fee will be refunded. A refund requested after the rally starts will be made after the rally has ended.

I Would Like To Volunteer For:

FOR REGISTRAR ONLY
REG# _____
CK# _____
CASH _____
AMT _____

Family Campers and RVers Donation Form

Tax ID: 16-0872172
501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

Donor Information

- Name: _____
- Email: _____
- Phone: _____

An acknowledgement letter will be sent to the above email address

Donation Details

Donation Amount:

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- Other: \$ _____

Payment by Check # _____ (made payable to Family Campers & RVers)

Optional: In Honor/Memory of

- Name: _____
- Please notify: _____
- Name: _____
- Address: _____

Acknowledgment

Would you like to be acknowledged in our publications?

- Yes
- No

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for your generous support! Your contribution may be tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Please retain this form for your records.