

Running on Empty), a respite care program, receive recurring funds of \$500,000. Currently, Project C.A.R.E. has been implemented in 40 counties in the state. In addition, Governor Perdue has recommended a budget reduction of \$200,000 for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG). The reduction would only affect "volunteer program development," that is funded in only eleven counties in North Carolina. The HCCBG would continue to maintain its current level of funding of nearly \$31.7 million. The HCCBG supports core aging services such as home delivered meals, transportation and adult day care. Finally, the Senior Center General Purpose Fund has received a reduction of \$660,000 in state funds. This reduction would shift the focus of financial support to certified Senior Centers of Excellence or Senior Centers of Merit. Out of 162 centers in the state, roughly 85 non-certified centers would lose funding.

The 2011-2012 legislative priorities for the STHL include: providing funding to sustain Project C.A.R.E., increasing funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant by \$5 million, increasing funding for senior centers by an additional \$2,000,000 in recurring funds, providing Dental Care for North Carolina's Adult Special Care Population and mandating pre-employment and random drug testing for employees of nursing and assisted living facilities.

One delegate and one alternate represent every older adult in the state's 100-counties. Please feel free to contact your local delegate, John Thompson, at 726-7221 or email johnth@ec.rr.com or contact alternate Conni Simpson at 876-1881 or at csimpson36@embarqmail.com. You can also contact Tonya Cedars, the regional AAA Director, at 1-800-824-4648 and visit the STHL website at www.ncdhs.gov/aging/sthl.htm. The next STHL meeting will be June 2011.

Escaping the Cold

By Tom Powers

When a friend calls and says, "It's really gotten cold here, and we're thinking of heading to Florida for a few weeks. Want to join us?," having an RV in the yard makes that decision so much easier. After just a few days of overpacking, we were off to warmer climates.

Our first stop was *The Villages*, a retirement community north of Orlando that you may have seen advertised on TV. Most folks make the same assessment when first seeing *The Villages*—"This is Disney Land for adults!" It is a fun place—a huge development with two town centers surrounded by shops, restaurants and entertainment—where you can't help but find something that will interest you. Besides live entertainment nightly on both of the town squares, each center also has a bowling alley and a movie theatre. There are 29 executive (nine-hole) golf courses that offer free play to residents, nine championship courses and plenty of planned activities to keep you busy. Residents get around in golf carts of unique custom designs. We're sure it's a nice place to live, and we know it's a great place to visit in the spring and fall when the Florida weather is ideal. There are hotels on the premises, and private homes can be rented.

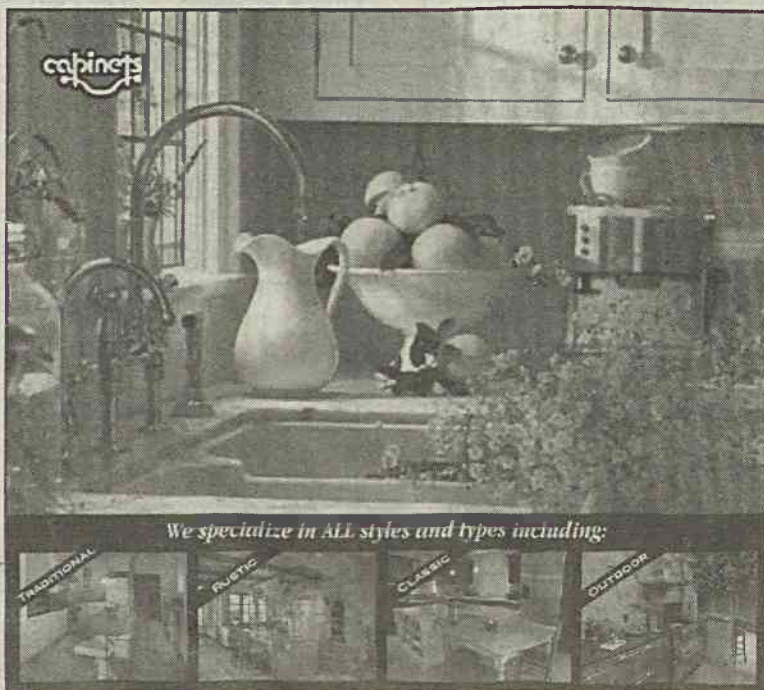
Next was Sarasota. We had been there only once before, but it had instantly become our favorite Florida destination. The beaches are white sand with calm surf, and like most of the public beaches along the gulf coast, they all have restrooms and a snack bar. Sarasota is known for St. Armands Circle—a unique shopping and dining experience—and also for the Ringling Museum, which is well worth the time to see. We were surprised to find out this trip that Sarasota also has a large Amish population. Although in traditional clothing, they have exchanged their horse and buggies here for three wheel bicycles. To me Amish means good home cooking, and there are two restaurants in Sarasota that proved me right. Yoders was our favorite because of the home-cooked pies, and I must admit that the four extra pounds I brought home with me probably had a lot to do with the two cherry pies I consumed that week.

Titusville was the next stop, where the Kennedy Space Center is the main (and only) attraction. You can easily spend a full day at the center without an idle or boring moment, and if you get lucky, you might see a rocket launch. We got lucky and were able to watch a Delta 4 rocket take off, an awesome event that left me imagining what a shuttle launch must be like. The next, and possibly the final, launch of the shuttle is scheduled for April 19, when the Endeavor will take off for the International Space Station. The shuttle Atlantis is scheduled to launch in June, but it has not yet been funded. If you are lucky enough to be there at the right time, the best place to view a launch is on the parking lot of the Space Center or along the entrance road. And a trip to Titusville wouldn't be complete without dinner at Dixie Crossroads. This is a seafood restaurant similar to The Sanitary; however, Dixie Crossroads is famous for its Rock Shrimp. If you are not familiar with Rock Shrimp, they resemble small lobster tails with a sweet taste similar to lobster.

St. Augustine was our next stop, and every time we come here we find out more about the city and enjoy it even more than the last time. If you visit the famous Ponce de Leon Fountain of Youth, the most famous site in St. Augustine, you will be surprised to find that the fountain has dried up and Ponce de Leon probably was never there. Yet people are still standing in line to buy tickets, and even though you won't see what you thought you would, you will get a good history lesson about this country's oldest city. There's a lot of history here from the Spanish occupation to the founding of the Flagler hotel, railroad and college. Some local trivia—Henry Flagler's third and final wife was Mary Kenan from Wilmington, North Carolina, and a relative of Owen Kenan of Kenansville.

Our final stop was Savannah for the St. Patrick's Day celebration, and what an event! Savannah boasts the "longest parade in the country." It was 3-1/2 hours long and had more bagpipes in it than I thought existed. With a huge crowd attending, we were lucky to be staying on Tybee Island and taking the shuttle in. We had eaten previously at Paula Deen's Lady & Sons as well as Uncle Bubba's, but we found our favorite restaurant this trip—the Crab Shack on Tybee Island. A unique indoor/outdoor restaurant featured an alligator pond out front, large platters of assorted steamed seafood and unusual entertainment. In the middle of our meal a Caribbean Junkanoo band came dancing through in full festival dress, weaving between the tables and playing various horns, whistles and drums. Later on a Fife & Drum Corp came through single file clad in kilts. It's noisy, it's different and it's fun.

Returning home, we settled into the living room, looked each other in the eye and said, "Gee, it's good to be home." That was immediately followed by, "We need to start planning our next trip."



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