

# Tennessee Motor Coach Association

Summer 2006



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## Red Hot Rodeo!



This year's **2006 Drivers and Mechanics Rodeo** was a red hot event in more ways than one. Daily temperatures at the **Paris Landing State Park** were in the high 90's each day making the allure of the Kentucky Lake almost irresistible to our attendees. The fierce competition unfolding between the 21 contestants proved that the heat was not the only thing making our event a scorcher. Would **Ronnie Holt**, three time previous driver's champion, win the award again and would mechanic's champion **Chad Schumacher** make this year his third championship? There were several first-time attendees and a couple of regulars who were looking to create an upset this year. Only time would tell the outcome.

Our event kicked off with a Golf Tournament as eighteen brave players battled the heat to tackle the challenging **Paris Landing Golf Course** which lies adjacent to the sparkling Kentucky Lake. This year's golf event was sponsored by **Prevost Car**. Using a scramble ball format and a shotgun start allowed our teams to be made of both skilled and beginning golfers. Prizes were awarded to the team with the lowest score and the team that showed the most spirit. We also awarded prizes to the player with the longest drive on the 7<sup>th</sup> hole and the player that got the closest to the pin on the 4<sup>th</sup> hole. The awards were presented at our Fish Fry that night sponsored by **ABC Companies**. The team with the lowest score was Scott Crawford, John Stancil and Jay Oakman. The team that showed the most spirit was Lonnie Mackenspang, Gary Meyers and Robbie Wilson. Glen Collins won the Prevost putter for getting the closest to the pin and Scott Crawford had the longest drive. A special thanks to Donna Arnold for supervising the golf tournament and driving the refreshment cart.

Wednesday morning those not involved in the Rodeo testing were off on an adventure to the area called the **Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area**. Surrounded on three sides by water, this vast area has an abundance of wildlife and activities for its visitors. Our group's first adventure was the drive through the **Elk & Bison Prairie** where these magnificent wild animals roam free as they would have many years ago when the early settlers and hunters made this area their home. To add to our group's trip back in time was the visit to the "**Homeplace**," a working 19<sup>th</sup> century farm. Staff at the Homeplace dress in period clothes and demonstrate the daily farm life of a typical 19<sup>th</sup> century farm.

Back at the park our contestants were beginning their written tests. The driver's test consisted of 100 general knowledge questions, a logging exercise and a personal interview where they were asked questions relating to the handling of a motorcoach and its passengers. The mechanics had 85 general knowledge questions, a part recognition test and an exercise to identify defects on a coach. After lunch sponsored by **Covington Detroit Diesel/ Allison**, our contestants were given their first look at the course. First they received a walking tour of the course and then toured the course by motorcoach.

Wednesday afternoon's activities took our group to a very unique location, the "**Bird Song Resorts.**" What makes Bird Song so unique? It's the home of **Tennessee Freshwater Pearl Farm**, the only place in North America that produces these cultured gems. **Bob Keast** and his staff opened their facility to our group and gave us a wonderful tour of the facility. The process by which they produce pearls from the native Tennessee River mussel took 25 years to perfect. Today, it is a 6 year process to create a freshwater pearl from a river mussel. After our pearl tour our group enjoyed a BBQ dinner at the lake pavilion sponsored by **MCI**. The highlight of the dinner was Chris Levering's rendition of "Happy Birthday" that he sang to our host Bob Keast who was celebrating his special day with our group.

After dinner our group had a refreshing sunset cruise up the lake aboard pontoon boats. After the extreme heat of the day this was a very welcome outing. Our flotilla of boats came together on the lake and Bob Keast gave the history of the lake and civil war battles in the area. A Tennessee Wildlife Officer was very amused as he came along side our group of seven boats tied together. All I could think about was the country song "Redneck Yacht Club," because I am sure that is what we resembled floating along tied together. As the sun set, our group headed back to the marina for the end to a wonderful day.

Thursday morning brought the conclusion of our event with the skill course portion of the testing. This year's course was laid out in four connecting parking lots. The contestants had to make their way through the 8 skills, missing cones and barriers to score their points. The contestants were all concerned about the tight course and the **Setra Coach** which they would use to maneuver through the course. Very few of the contestants were familiar with the Setra Coach so we allowed each one to take a five minute drive in the coach through the state park prior to the skill course. Each driver and mechanic took his turn through the course as onlookers cheered. Our on-board judges were **Sgt. Ken Sutton** and **Officer Virgil Goad** of the Tennessee Highway Patrol. By noon all of our contestants had taken their turn through the course and all that was left were the results. As our group enjoyed the cookout lunch sponsored by **Setra**, the scores were tabulated. TMCA president Chris Levering began with the mechanic's scores. In an upset, the first place in the mechanic category went to first time contestant **Kenneth Hickey** from **Barkley Travel Services** in New Albany, MS. Now what about the drivers? In another upset, first time participant **Richard Gibson** from **Komfort Koaches** in Owensboro, KY, took first place in the driver's category. Trophies and prize money were given to the top five in each category. See page four for the top winners. To make sure no contestant went home empty handed our associate members were very generous in providing gift packages for each participant. Packages included a variety of jackets, shirts, caps, hotel stays, theater tickets and meal vouchers.

This event was a wonderful outing and we would like to thank the **Paris Landing State Park** for allowing our group to take over their beautiful conference facility for this event. We would also like to thank **Bob Keast** and his staff at **Bird Song Resort** for hosting our evening outing, as well as each one of our meal and event sponsors and all those associates who provided items for the contestants. I would also like to thank Gary Davis, Billy White, Nathan Zimmerman and Patty Hurley for braving the heat to help setup the course and Lonnie Mackenspang, Billy White, Gary Davis, Cliff Crowder, Cecil Morgan, Scott Crawford and Jane Derthick for their help with the driver's and mechanic's testing. The following pages contain many photos of our event, and as you can tell we had a wonderful time. If you did not attend you missed a whole lot of fun! See you next time.



**Picture's are  
worth a  
thousand words!  
"or laughs"**



# 2006 TMCA Rodeo Contestants

## Drivers



1st

Richard Gipson  
Komfort Koaches



2nd

Kevin Creasy  
Coach USA



3rd

Lawrence DeFreece  
Greene Coach



4th

Toby Tyler  
Blue Grass



5th

Ronnie Holt  
Greene Coach



6th

Joe Reese  
Premier



Dennis Grimes  
Anchor Tours



Mike Lane  
Wise Coaches



Winston Poochoon  
Coach USA



Rex Gardner  
Blue Grass



Billy Casteel  
Greene Coach



Bill Browder  
All Points USA



Fred Heaton  
Gentry Trailways



Gary Nicely  
Blue Grass



James Hospon  
Callahan



Jimmy Grubbs  
Barkley Travel



Larry Crowell  
Callahan



Leo Fields  
All Points USA

## Mechanics



1st

Kenneth Hickey  
Barkley Travel



2nd

Chad Schumacher  
Gray Line



3rd

Jeff Jones  
Wise Coaches



4th

Billy Berry  
Callahan



## Event Sponsors

ABC Companies  
Bird Song Resort  
Covington Detroit Diesel/Allison  
Motor Coach Industries  
Prevost, Car  
Setra of North America



**Special Thanks to Sgt. Ken Sutton  
& Officer Virgil Goad**

## Gift Sponsors

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Cracker Barrel  
Derby Dinner Theatre  
Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre  
Edens Resort  
Embassy Suites-Brunswick  
Fee/Hedricks Entertainment  
Fiddlers Feast  
Fixin 2 Rain  
Galt House  
Gatlinburg CVB  
Gaylord Opryland  
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Motor Coach Industries  
Mansion America Theatre  
Middle Creek Valley Chalets  
Music Road Hotel  
Nashville CVB  
National Seating  
North Point Hosp.  
Paris Landing State Park  
Prevost Car  
Renfro Valley  
Ripleys Aquarium-MB  
Rutherford County CVB  
Smith Family Theatre  
Southeastern Speciality Underwriter  
TN Aquarium  
TN State Parks

*Thank You!*

*Thank You!*

*Thank You!*

## **New Members-Associates**

**Courtyard By Marriott/** Gettysburg, PA/ (717) 334-5600/ Linda Wellborn  
**DeGray Lake Resort State Park/** Bismark, AR/ (501) 865-2851/ Kathy Ritter  
**Divine Dinning Group/** Myrtle Beach, SC/ (800) 365-1773/ Lori Thompson  
**Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau/** Ligonier, PA/ (800) 333-5661/ Linda Mauzy  
**Mississippi Development Authority/** Jackson, MS/ (601)359-3297/ Sharon Robinson  
**Ocean Plaza Beach Resort/** Tybee Island, GA/ (912) 786-7777/ Mary Pat Kloenne  
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**Toby's The Dinner Theatre/** Baltimore, MD/ (410) 649-1669/ Kathleen Van Geluwe  
**Tuscarawas County CVB/** New Philadelphia, OH/ (330) 602-2420/ Tiffany Gerber

## **New Members-Operators**

### **Cline Tours, Inc.**

P.O. Box 1498  
Ridgeland, MS 39157  
**(601) 605-4487**  
**John McCommon**

### **Mountain Home Charter Service**

3933 Hwy 62 West  
Mountain Home, AR 72653  
**(870) 508-5331**  
**Scott Lumbert**



### **Passing of TMCA Founding Member "Jack Sharp"**

James "Jack" Sharp founding operator member of the Tennessee Motor Coach Association and owner of Clinton Bus Company passed away on July 15 after declining health. Jack purchased Clinton Bus Company in the 80's and provided school bus service for Anderson County for around 20 years. In 1994 he purchased his first used motorcoach and quickly grew his fleet to include 8 motorcoaches. Jack is survived by his wife Carolyn and daughters Elaine Shoffner and Jackie Ingram and three grandchildren.



### **Retired Greene Coach driver takes his last bus ride.**

Retired Greene Coach driver George Edward Shaw past away on August 7, at the families request a Greene Coach motorcoach lead the procession through the cemetery to his grave site. Mr. Shaw drove for several other East Tennessee motorcoach companies during his career, including Appalachian Tours, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Coach, East Town Charters and Bristol Jenkins and was personal bus driver for some country music entertainers.

Appalachian Tours owner, Hilda Tester commented that "George Shaw was an excellent coach driver and knew how to keep a group entertained. He never was at a lost for words, jokes or stories." Lou Ann Emerson, owner of 20th Century Coach added "George was an employee of 20th Century Coach from it's beginning in 1982, and left due to health problems in 1990. George was a good driver and had a great personality that the customers loved". Mr. Shaw's eulogy was given by Russell Ooten, owner of Greene Coach Company.