

# GMC WESTERN STATES NEWSLETTER



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## President's Message

GMC Western States is known for fun rallies and the “Survivor II” Rally at Emerald Desert RV Resort in Palm Desert was no exception. Dave and Donna de Graffenreid and Pat and Sharon Cerrina put on one heck of a fun Rally. From water competitions to scavenger hunts, there was never a dull moment as the Tigers, Leopards, Giraffes and Zebras squared off to see who would survive. The teams shared the cooking and cleanup duties for the meals and competed in various games and activities that produced lots of fun and laughter – and also created some high quality meals. Thanks you Survivor II Rally Hosts for a job well done.

The Fall Rally is the time when we elect officers for the coming year. Lillian Trubert has stepped down to relax and enjoy the rallies a little more. Melissa Fisher has been elected to serve as our First Vice President. Judy Cherry also stepped down as Secretary. Carol Minnie was elected to serve as Secretary. All other officer positions remain the same with me continuing as President, Dave de Graffenreid as Treasurer and Jim Hupy as Technical Vice President. Thanks to Lillian and Judy for their service over these past few years and thanks to Carol and Melissa for taking on these offices.

When I agreed to take the job as President of the GMC Western States last year, I did so because I want to make a difference. I want to help reverse the decline in membership by introducing ideas and activities that can make the Club more attractive to prospective new members – especially younger ones. We all know that the GMCWS Club is made up of very knowledgeable, friendly and fun-loving people. Spreading the word about our group and generating interest in membership is difficult without effective communications. The communications needed are primarily between the members but also between GMCWS and prospective members. My goal is to make communication easier and to make access to information readily available.

The internet and the tools it provides us will serve as that communication medium. We will be using the web site to communicate with you more than we have in the past. If you don't use the web site and your email, you will be missing a large part of what is happening with debates and decisions about what the Club's future holds. We will, of course, continue to publish the Newsletter. A paper Newsletter is nice but it is much cheaper, faster, and easier to use the internet.

Each copy of the Newsletter costs between \$500 - \$1000 to produce and mail. If we want to introduce an idea and have any kind of discussion about it we would have to produce Newsletters much more frequently than our current 4 times per year



## President's Message

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and you would have to either phone or mail your comments back to us. With the "blog" section of our web site we can present an idea and you, as registered members, can reply to the author and to the replies from other members.

I will work with you to make the use of the web site easier – especially for those who are not very tech-savvy. I have already presented one rally seminar about the web site at Emerald Desert and I promise to conduct as many more as we need at future rallies. Additionally, I will be writing 'posts' on the web site that will explain, step by step, how to do things.

Please, if you don't have an email address, get one and let us know what it is. If you already have an email address, give it to us so we can communicate with you. Everyone who has an email address and a userid on the site – please update your profile and select "email only" for the Newsletters and save the Club some money. And don't forget to encourage people you meet to join our group and join in the fun!

- Armand



## Secretary's Report

By Carol Minnie

The GMC Western States Membership meeting was called to order by President, Armand Minnie at 4:00 p.m., October 2, 2011. A motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes was made by Chuck Botts and seconded by Dave de Graffenreid. The minutes were approved without any corrections.

The Treasurer's Report was dispensed with although it was noted that there is plenty of cash on hand. The Treasurer will present a full report at next meeting in April 2012. Secretary Judy Cherry was not present so Carol Minnie served as Acting Secretary and gave the Secretary's Report noting that there are currently 277 members.

### New Business:

A Nominating Committee has been formed and consists of: Cass Jones, Lynda Harris and Frank Condos. A motion to approve the Committee was made and seconded (Helen Wykle/Mary Botts).

Jim Kanomata, who has been the Western Area VP for GMC Motorhomes International for the past 4 years, announced that Frank Condos will now be the Western Area VP. Thank you, Jim, for your service on behalf of our group, and good luck to Frank in his new role. Frank commented that GMCWS has a good relationship with GMC International and that their Convention Director, Kim Weeks, is very competent. Their next rally will be in Shawnee, OK the last week in March, 2012.

Judy Cherry is retiring as the GMCWS Secretary and Lillian Trubert is retiring from her position as First Vice President. The Club presented Lillian with a gift of appreciation, and will send one to Judy as well.

### Officer elections:

The Nominating Committee made the following nominations:

- President – Armand Minnie
- First Vice President – Melissa Fisher
- Technical Vice President – Jim Hupy
- Treasurer – Dave de Graffenreid
- Secretary – Carol Minnie

There were no nominations from the floor. Jim Kanomata moved to close the nominations. A vote was taken and passed to approve all officers.

### Future Rallies:

Our Spring Rally will be held April 24 – 28, 2012 at Casa De Fruita in Gilroy, California. Manny and Deo Trovao and Dave and Donna de Graffenreid will be Rally Host. Manny's family will do the cooking so look forward to some great meals. There will also be an Art and Wine Festival.

Our Fall Rally will be September 25 – 30, 2012 at Springville, Utah, East Bay RV Park, Hosted by Les & Sharon Watson.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

## GMC Western States Fall Rally Report

### Emerald Desert RV Resort - Palm Desert, Ca – October 1-5, 2011

by Lillian Trubert, Rally Reporter

If you want to put it in a nutshell, this Rally was a 5 Star event all the way. Dave and Donna De Graffenreid, with the help and input of Co-hosts Pat and Sharon Cerrina) promised us a fun rally in a great place with lots of activities and seminars, and they delivered par excellence. They even got a lot of us so involved and excited, we began to look ten years younger and started acting pretty frisky! I hope you can all enjoy that visual picture in your mind's eye.

On Day 1 before we knew it, we had been introduced into the world of succulents (Dave DeGraffenreid), painted masks and decorated the club house, and all came away with an ever lasting succulent plant friend if you managed to learn the secret of propagation. Upon opening our welcome packet, we discovered what tribe we had been assigned to: Giraffe, Leopard, Tiger or Zebra. We donned our identifying visors, which some of us wore around our necks or other parts of our body and began a 5 day quest for supremacy through a demanding series of tests of a very serious and demanding nature.

Fortunately, the Rally Host Happy Hour was at hand and the Margarita Bucket, soft drinks, chilled water, juices and wine bar were at the ready. After a catered dinner of chicken and ribs, we were more than ready to meet our tribe. We selected our Tribal Leaders and began planning our winning strategies. The big surprise was that we would be looking for 25 "Idols" worth 15 points each and beautifully made to look like mystical mask-like symbols of ancient power. We later found out it was an awesome feeling to hang these potent icons around our necks. Our Tribal Leaders then served us ice cream sundaes.

Day 2 certainly ratcheted up our adrenalin. Those of steel determination started the day with a 7:00 am walk (Freddi Condos) around the beautiful grounds of the Emerald Desert RV Resort. After a Pancake Breakfast made and served by the Zebras, we attended our first Tribal Council Meeting (Sharon Cerrina) to prepare ourselves for the day to come. Then the ladies rushed off to make paper leis for the coming festivities with Donna DeGraffenreid and see a funny video by Jeanne Robertson. Meanwhile the men learned about the "New GMCWS Web Site (Armand Minnie) and "GMC cooling systems" (Steve Ferguson). We had our first rest and relaxation break which we took each day at 12pm to 1:30pm. After a swap meet and open house from 1:30 to 4:00 during which everyone bought or sold stuff including our special vendors and toured coaches like "looky loos". Then we had one of our famous Business Meetings. Our members are not shy suffice to say. These Meetings are really worth video taping for "Americas Funniest Videos." Tiger Happy Hour and Leopard Tri-Tip Dinner and Dessert were eagerly consumed before we commenced the evening Survivor Games and Challenges: Return of the Giant Puzzle, Jumping Beans Challenge, Jokers

and Marbles Play Off and Pool Table Challenges. Where was that video camera?

Day 3 found the walkers walking, the Giraffes cooking a Tri-tip Hash and Scrambled Eggs Breakfast and the Tribal Council Meeting (Sharon) finishing up in time for the ladies rushing off to their book club meeting (Lillian Trubert) to discuss Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen. Our ladies can really liven up these discussions with insight and shared experiences. Next Spring at Casa de Fruta we will be reading One Thousand White Women by Ken Furgis, so get your name on your library reserve list. You'll be surprised by the book! The ladies also held a \$1 mini swap meet (this is being very well received, so bring your extra stuff you are willing to sell for a dollar so you can buy someone else's stuff) and no cost book exchange. The Technical Sessions included "Restoring Frank's Folly" (Frank Condos), "GMC Front Suspension" (Steve Ferguson) and "Chevy One Ton Kit" (Manny Trovao). After our rest, Survivor Games and Challenges featured a Scavenger Hunt looking for predetermined semi-impossible GMC items. Someone actually had a "Don't Mess with Texas" GMC beer can cooler. Lots of angst was created here, but we knew Happy Hour was not far away. In the meantime John and Dee Lockwood gave an intriguing revue of their latest adventure: "Nine Time Zones, 54 Degrees Latitude and 200,000 Miles." Wow! The Tigers were ready with a Happy Hour and Pizza Dinner. And then came the GMC Talent Challenges Night. All the tribes had amazing entries in this Challenge. It can truly be said, "You had to be there," as mere descriptions of that night could not possibly suffice. The only fatality was a broken arm due to excessive dancing.

Day 4 found Steve and Nancy Ferguson walking with Freddi's faithful band. The Leopards were on the spot (not a subtle pun) with a Fruit, Yogurt, and Cereal Breakfast followed by the daily Tribal Council (Sharon.) The ladies retired to the lovely Garden Room again to see a chick flick ("My One and Only") and take a personality test which could help them understand their husband better or not (Lillian Trubert) while the men and some interested ladies attended the seminars "Nuts and Bolts" (Jim Rowe), "Installation of a Diesel Engine" (Bill Hubler) and "Awareness of Front End Components" (Jim Kanomata.) After a break for rest and relaxation, Jim Hupy taught about "Adjusting the Ride Height." The afternoon Survivor Challenges featured a Hula Hoop Race, Putting Green Challenge and Treasure Hunt with Giraffes, Leopards, Tigers and Zebras running all over the place to find clues leading to the remaining "Idols" in the hopes of finding the first one. It should be noted the poor plants and bushes on the grounds were relentlessly parted and beaten by all of us looking for those "Idols", but Charlie Kanenbley definitely was lead warrior in this event. The Giraffe Happy Hour and resting chairs came just in time followed by a Zebra

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Grilled Burger and Dessert Dinner extravaganza. And then we had a Karaoke Challenges Night. Karaoke filled the night air. The following: Steve Ferguson, Ralph Mundia, Jim Harding and our own chanteuse, Freddi Condos, can all sing.

Day 5 was the big day. The walkers arrived in time for a Tiger Burrito Breakfast, the Tribal Councils gathered for one last massive bonding ceremony and pledged to continue onward to the summit. But first the ladies had to make some name tag necklaces (Dorothy Hooton) and the Technical info had to be dispensed. “GMC Instrumentation” (Chuck Garton) and “Our Living Space Remodel” (Armand Minnie) rounded out all the great seminars. The afternoon clouds cleared and the Survivor Pool Games and Challenges went off with a “Wet Tee Shirt Contest” (Pat Cerrina), Raft Races, Tube Races and Beach Ball Races. The Giraffe Happy Hour featured a Tropical Drink Bucket and was followed by a catered Hawaiian Luau Dinner with a Special Sherbet Dessert. So we had dessert in the desert but it wasn’t deserted, and enough meat for days to come while driving home! By now the points had been totaled. OK, the big winner was the Tigers. But wouldn’t you expect a tiger to beat a giraffe, leopard or zebra? The GMC quilt raffle winner was drawn (Adelle Harding), and we received our awards. Those coveted “Idols” were given to the names drawn as a final “coup de grâce” prize. I wonder what will happen if I wear mine to bed. And I wonder what will happen to the 3 “Idols” that were never found. Some lucky person may have flipped out at the Emerald Desert RV Resort after we left.

On day 6 after a nice Rally Host Continental Breakfast in the morning, we bid our “adieu” and hit the happy trails ahead. What a great time was had by all of us. It must be added that a lot of hard work went into this well planned rally. Donna and Dave DeGraffenreid had the dream and choose very capable co-host in signing on Pat and Sharon Cerrina as co-host. These people were everywhere; no job went without their enthusiasm and energy. They inspired by example and enthusiasm. They were fearless teachers, carpenters, cooks, organizers, playmates and visionaries. Our great big GMC Western States thanks goes to them as their lasting prize in return for the many prizes we received. We are all lucky to have shared this experience together. And that is the final nutshell!

But wait, there’s more! A purple heart was awarded to Annie Mundia for being wounded in action (while jitterbugging with Ralph). A purple heart is also awarded to Donna de Graffenreid for hobbling through the week on a torn meniscus in her knee. Upon arriving home, she was given an X-ray and a MRI which determined the damage. Subsequently, knee surgery is on the horizon. Think both ladies would appreciate a card, for they are truly GMCWS hard core troopers.







# GMC WESTERN STATES TECH CENTER



## SUSPENSION

by Jim Hupy, Technical Vice President

**E**merald Desert RV Resort on Frank Sinatra Drive in Palm Desert, CA. kinda sounds like an exotic location where you might see an occasional Rat Pack member or a starlet in dark sunglasses and a head scarf in a 57 T-Bird with the top down. Instead we find a very large RV park, lots of trees, a first class facility, good food, great times, and a home remedy for fire ants. There were millions of them. Folks that live around them know that Comet cleanser will eradicate them. Just sprinkle it around on the concrete pad and it works. Who would have thought that would work? I drove over 3100 miles to get there, used 301 gallons of 87 octane doing it. I have never been to Palm Desert, I imagined it like Vegas in the 1950s, remote 2 lane highways, old gas stations 100 miles apart. Funny how your imagination can set you up. Instead, I find a modern multilane freeway, strip malls, hundreds and hundreds of windmill power generators all turning at once. What a sight. Didn't care much for the cross wind that was turning the propellers. Kind of a sneaky way to get into a technical subject. Steering and handling and wheel alignment.

We all drive coaches that were engineered when bias ply tires were the only thing available. During the manufacturing run of the GMC, radial ply tires made their entrance into the market. Many of the coaches were retrofitted with radials by their owners. This prompted a Technical bulletin by GM that warned about cracking wheels caused by the additional side loads that the radial tires placed on the wheels because the treads stayed planted so much better than the Bias ply tires. GM recommended only one brand of radials, I believe that they were called Siberling. I don't know if that company is still in business. Now most of the coaches that I see have either Eagle or Alcoa Alloy wheels on them. Some coaches are still running around with OEM rubber suspension bushings, ball joints, tie rod ends, sway bar bushings and sway bar links. Combine that with 35 year old bogie pins and bushings, ride height incorrect, front and rear wheel alignment out of whack, grooved pavement, truck ruts, cross winds, 70 mph speeds, and you are in for a very tiring trip.

Fortunately, there are solutions to most of the problems. I will take the issues one at a time. The first issue is the tires. Millions of miles driven by hundreds of GMC enthusiasts has yielded some information that might be of use to us. Tire brands don't seem to be super critical, but an awful lot of GMC owners seem very happy with B.F. Goodrich T/A commercials load range E, and another large group seems content with Michelin Steel belted under the treads with fabric sidewalls. Other brands seem to work well too. What is critical when it comes to tires is that they be properly inflated for the load that is carried in your coach. What works well on a 23 footer, may not work as well on a 26. Some of us have heavily laden coaches, and some have lightened their coaches. Inflation pressures need to reflect the differences. All major tire manufacturers have recommended inflation pressures based on load carried. There are web sites that the manufacturers maintain that should be consulted when inflating your tires. Wheels need to be considered when tires are inflated also. Suffice it to say that whatever inflation pressures you settle on, high inflation pressure contributes to poor handling, particularly on the rear of the coach. Be sure to check the air pressure before moving the coach when you begin your trip.

Next comes correct ride height. I make it a point to bring my ride height gages with me to all rallies that I attend, and will check your coach if you ask me. I very rarely find a coach that is correct. Usually the rear end is too high, and the front end is too low. When the rear end is out of specs., the coach is adversely affected by passing trucks and side winds. When the front end is low, the alignment is affected. I have found by measuring many coaches that the front end is sometimes as much as 3 inches low. Combine that with worn suspension components and handling suffers greatly. The correct specifications can be found in the appropriate manual for your coach, along with the factory reasons for them. How the coach looks from the side is not as important as being correctly adjusted. I often have owners tell me that they didn't like the "look" of their coach, so they just lowered it. Probably not a valid reason for doing so.

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Finally comes the subject of suspension alignment. The specs that are in the manual were written with bias ply tires in mind, and radial tires require a slightly different approach. Experience has taught us that the Caster recommendation the factory recommends is not enough. The straight ahead handling of the coach is improved a good deal by replacing the upper control arm bushings that are towards the rear of the wheel openings with eccentric or offset bushings that will allow us to achieve 3 or 4 degrees of caster. Camber seems to work best at 0 degrees, and toe in 0" to 1/16" toe in, but not much more than that. All these adjustments need to be performed on a front suspension that is in good condition. That means no worn out parts. If the control arm bushings are sloppy, or the ball joints worn, or the tie rod ends are worn, the alignment will not stay in adjustment. An unworn suspension, properly aligned, at the proper ride height, with the tires properly inflated, is pleasant to drive.

Finally, the rear suspension needs to be understood. When the front/rear tire encounters a bump in the road, like an expansion joint on a bridge, the tire and wheel moves in an upward arc that is dampened in both directions by the shock absorber and the air bag. Ride height is established by inflating the air bag until the slot in the rear of the frame is a specified distance from the ground. That requires around 100 psi of air pressure in the OEM bag. If you over inflate the bag to raise the rear ride height, the bag is more rigid and the ride is stiffer. When a quadra bag system is fitted to the coach, there are two smaller bags that have a rigid mounting plate between them, preventing the front/rear wheel & tire from affecting the rear/rear tire & wheel. The air pressure required to achieve proper ride height

with the quadra bag system is less than the OEM system. Around 90 psi on the ones that I have worked on. The rear ride is less harsh as a result. Some owners prefer the softer ride. Bogie arm axial play is adjustable on the GMC and this is another place where I frequently see a good deal of wear. This axial play can be adjusted, but often times the bushings and pins are worn. The fix for this is to remove the rear suspension, disassemble the bogies, and replace the bushings and sometimes the pins as well. They are all 35 years old and subject to a huge amount of stress and infrequent lubrication. If the axial play in the bogie arms is not correct, and/or the pins and bushings are worn out, little good can be served by trying to align the rear suspension. The shop manual is your best source of specs for this. I have found that the frame is often very rusty directly under the mounting surface for the rear suspension. Alignment on the rear suspension is accomplished by either bending the bogie arms with hydraulic equipment, or by shims placed between the frame and the bogie box.

This technical article is not intended to provide you with the expertise to do your own alignment. It is to give you a perspective into how and why your coach is difficult to drive and some suggestions as to where to look for obvious problems. Many GMC groups schedule "work rallies" like Bean Station and others. Most Clubs could do the same on a regional basis. This is one good way to get to know each other and have better running coaches in the bargain. Look for more in depth Technical presentations in the Spring Rally at Casa de Fruta. These rallies are not all Mai Tai's and Yatzee. Pay your dues, come to the rallies, have a great time and lets keep these GMC's well maintained and on the road.

## MESSAGE FROM:

**Melissa Fisher – 1st Vice President**

I am so pleased that so many wonderful ideas are coming in for our future seminars. I would still like to get a lot more. Mostly, need to find out your talent(s). Please send me information on:

1. Your choice of seminars and your expertise in that or other areas;
2. Expertise of others that you are interested in hearing;

We will pursue doing some programs that are available to all that maybe interested (as suggested).

I am excited about this new experience and again, thanks to everyone that have provided great ideas. Hope to hear more especially from those of you that have not shared your talents...new ideas are welcome. Also please advise me of any programs that you have had enough of.

I will have a contest to rename "non-technical/women seminars" to..?? (give me your ideas). Bring your suggestions to the next rally and we'll select a winner. Hope to see you at Casa de Fruta in April 2012.

Waiting to hear from you!

# Coaches for Sale

We welcome your ad. Ads will run for one year unless we are informed otherwise. Please inform us if your coach is sold before the ad runs out. The last four digits at the end of the ad represent the expiration date (month/year).

Contact: **Freddi Condos**, 559-683-5185, [frettyc@sti.net](mailto:frettyc@sti.net)

## 1974 GMC GLACIER (26')

(58,300)- Fixer upper with side bath and 455 Olds Engine, original transmission, power steering and adjustable steering wheel. All new wheel bearings, new brakes front & rear. Exterior body in good condition, steel wheels, good bumpers, mechanically sound, needs work on interior and new gas lines.

Asking \$5,000

Contact Lloyd – [Lloyd.millie.Johnson@gmail.com](mailto:Lloyd.millie.Johnson@gmail.com)

970-222-1967 \_\_\_\_\_ **0612**

## 1973 CANYONLANDS (26')

108,216 miles, rebuilt 455 engine and carburetor at 82,770 miles, fantastic fan, roof pod, macerator, hitch, golf cart house batteries and much more. Asking \$8,000

Darrel and Arlis Tetzloff (925)937-2418

Walnut Creek, CA \_\_\_\_\_ **0312**

(03/12)

## GMC PARTS:

TZE torsion bar tool \$70

Carb from 455 engine with manual \$190

Hayden fan clutch, new, \$50

Distributor, standard, for 455 dist. Cap, drive gear, wires

#1112198, \$45

For TBI, Airtex E8228 fuel pump, new, Carquest life time

Warranty, \$99

Tool J-24187 for removing fuel tank locking ring, \$20

Watts IR-56 brass water pressure regulator/gauge, EXC, used \$50

Will provide photos and excess parts list by email upon request.

John Glatz – [outdog31@hotmail.com](mailto:outdog31@hotmail.com)

## 1977 GMC ELEGANZA II

Dash wrapped in leather, new instruments, auto window screen closer, Flexsteel furniture. China toilet, new water heater. All new cabinets built by Cinnabar. 36,000 miles on re-built 455 engine. Moto-stat sat dish, with 2 boxes and flat screen TV's, 2 VCR/CD players. Many mechanical upgrades. New frig, stove & microwave. Tire pressure monitoring system, alarm goes off with low tire pressure. Alcoa rims with white walls. Day/Night shades. Mascerator. Asking \$30,000

Contact Bill Deal – 619-417-8525

San Diego, CA \_\_\_\_\_ **0812**

# GMC WESTERN STATES RALLY SCHEDULE

**SPRING 2012**

APRIL 24 – APRIL 28, 2012

CASA DE FRUTA RV RESORT

HOSTS: MANNY AND DEO TROVAO

DAVE AND DONNA DEGRAFFENREID

**FALL 2012**

SEPTEMBER 25 – 30, 2012

EAST BAY RV PARK

SPRINGVILLE, UTAH

HOSTS: LES AND SHARON WATSON

## GMC Western States Officers

**Armand Minnie, Chapter President**  
520-744-1775, armand@minniebiz.com

**Melissa Fisher, First Vice President**  
925-447-8079, mr.erfisher@gmail.com

**Jim Hupy, Technical Vice President**  
503-362-158, jamesh1296@gmail.com

**Carol Minnie, Secretary**  
520-744-1775, carol@minniebiz.com

**Dave deGraffenreid, Treasurer**  
949-642-6827, davebamboo@aol.com

**Kerry Tandy, FMCA National Director**  
Cell: 406-360-5187, bewartz@gmail.com

**Gene Dotson, FMCA Alt. Nat. Director**  
828-465-0678, shawnee@charter.net

**Freddi Condos, Newsletter Coordinator**  
559-683-5185, frettyc@sti.net

**Lill Deal, Newsletter Publisher**  
858-270-3023, isoutput@pacbell.net

*GMC Western States Newsletter*  
Designed and Printed by Ideal Services, San Diego, CA

If you would like to submit an article or item,  
email Freddi: frettyc@sti.net

## NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION DATES 2012 GMC WESTERN STATES

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
<b>PUBLICATION DATES</b>	Feb. 29th	June 1st	Aug. 3rd	Nov. 4th
<b>INFO TO COORDINATOR</b>	Feb. 3rd	May 11th	July 13th	Oct. 12th
<b>TO PUBLISHER</b>	Feb. 13th	May 18th	July 20th	Nov. 2nd

FYI – Beginning with the first GMCWS Newsletter in 2012, Judy Booth will be our Newsletter Coordinator. I've enjoyed the opportunity to serve the Club in this capacity for several years. Kudos to all that have promptly provided articles that has made our Newsletter a stellar medium.

Freddi C

The GMC Western States Inc, chapter of the Family Motor Coach Association, is comprised of GMC Motorhome owners from all fifty states and the three southwestern provinces of Canada. The Chapter purpose is to promote the preservation of the GMC Motorhome with a technical program of professional seminars and published information and to further the mutual association, membership, enjoyment and common interest of GMC Motorhome owners, their families and friends. Web site: [www.gmcws.org](http://www.gmcws.org), Billy and Debbie Massey

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