

More than 310 women descended on Charleston, South Carolina in late September for the annual RVing Women National Convention. With old and new friends coming together, we set out to make this a memorable experience for everyone—and we did!

The week opened with several tours of Charleston, including a rice plantation kayak tour and a ghostly night tour. Pre-convention programs also included the always popular maintenance class led by Rachel Harp.

This year we even offered a pet CPR class!

Our members thoroughly enjoyed the unique Low Country culture, starting with an introduction to the Gullah culture through dance, stories and song. Many gals ate grits or rice and hash for the first time, as our meals were designed to show off the local cuisine. “Awesome fun, great camaraderie, learned a lot” were comments heard throughout the week.

The dog park, a great help for our four-legged friends, was one of the most appreciated and visited places during the convention. The exhibit hall also was a popular place to be. Karlene Field outdid herself and brought in 26 vendors showing great products for RVers.

More than 120 first-timers attended block parties hosted by RVW board members. The following response from a first-timer was typical: “Definitely won’t be my last (convention). Thanks for all for you did. This was a great experience for me.”

Many convention attendees danced through the night after learning line dances earlier in the day. We also featured a variety show on Friday that had a hilarious RVW Board of Directors putting makeup on each other.

The best part of this convention experience? Seeing old friends and meeting new friends is always the best part of any convention. We travel all over to see our friends, and this year was no exception. Where gas prices made traveling by rig too costly, gals flew in and rented a rig on site or stayed at the convention hotel.

Kudos to the MidAtlantic Chapter for hosting this great gathering, the Florida Chapter for serving up their famous ice cream social, and the Ohio River Valley Chapter for filling our plates!

The phrase *it takes a village* is often overused, but it certainly applies to this convention. I would like to personally thank our committee chairs and volunteers for their time and an effort that everyone agreed has paid off in a wonderful way. We logged more than 7,300 volunteer hours preparing and hosting the event—an estimated savings of \$51,100 at \$7 per hour.

Several committee chairs gave of themselves—day and night, rain or shine—to park, taxi, register and answer questions for our attendees.

Stephanie Crowley and Jeanne Houck parked more than 200 rigs in just a few days without a hitch. They went the extra mile to allow friends to park together and ensure that all our rigs were set up just right.

Kathie Baker ran an extraordinary registration area and adjusted tours and camping stays to suit our gals who needed to change their plans. According to Sally Johnson, our treasurer, “she was magnificent!”

Nell Burgos and Kip Locati ran our taxis out of juice more than once while shuttling gals over the 170-acre park. Kudos from everyone!

A special tribute is due also to:

- Security
Char Ank
- Mistress of Ceremonies
Mary Gay Hutherson
- Host Chapter President
Bonnie Simkins
Kudos also to Thursa Stair and Dotti Pease
- Communications
Nancy Shoop, Carol Kramer, Mindy Burcham
- First Aid
Linda Brown
- Food
Dixie Emler, Susan Trippett, Linda Ippolito
- Program Booklet
Bonnie Simkins
- Go-Fers
Karen Popp
- Volunteers
Lea Sevigny and Linda Ippolito
- Scheduling
Ro Falco, Carolyn Callaway

- Memorial Service
Donna Twardowski
- Fundraising
Gretchen Vancura and Dixie Crownover
- Seminar Assistants
Lyn Rogers
- Logistics
Gail Gilvin and Ginny Gilvin
- Golf
Wendy Humphries
- Vendors
Karlene Field

It was sad to watch our old and new friends leave Charleston for points north, south and west on Sunday—but never fear, we're looking forward to seeing ya'll again next October in San Antonio, Texas!—*Judy Hashem, Convention Coordinator*