

Oceano Elks Campout July 2021

For our July outing, The Happy Wanderers of the Simi lodge ventured north to the cool beachfront of the central coast, landing at the Oceano Elks #2504 campground and rest area.

A small advance party arrived Wednesday afternoon at the Santa Maria Lodge to prep for early entry the following day. Thursday morning found us assisting the lodge volunteers with traffic control for their community foodbank drive thru. That done, we proceeded to Oceano to set up our 20 rigs and 50 people for the campout. Tables, chairs, barbecues and E-Z up shades filled the area by mid-afternoon. Members, their kids, and even grandkids joined in for this adventure.

Our first group meal took us to Old Juan's Cantina, an easy 5 minute walk from the lodge. All enjoyed the food, spirits and comradery that makes this an always fun excursion. Afterwards, back to the camp to relax around the campfires with s'mores and stories.

Friday brought 8 golfers to the greens for an 18 hole sun and fun day. Others explored the flat stretch of beach only a half block from our camp. The state park across the street afforded a large lagoon and walking trails for the curious. Back at camp, Cornhole, Jenga and games of Left, Right, Center engaged the gamblers in the bunch. Still others challenged themselves by 4 wheeling out in the sand dunes.

For Friday's dinner, we supported the Oceano Lodge by participating in their monthly Cook To Order Dinner. New York and Ribeye steaks, chicken, salmon or Mahi Mahi as entrees with salads, huge baked potatoes and sides were heartily enjoyed. As with most restaurants, 50 diners coming in at one time overwhelmed their small staff. We helped out as necessary to assist them in getting everyone served in a timely manner. Music and dancing followed dinner. A long but fun day for all.

As is tradition, Saturday morning started with Bloody Marys, Mimosas, Screwdrivers and Tequila Sunrises. Add to the mix fresh fruit, donuts and assorted pastries. Yum! What's not to like? On your own local shopping and exploring for some, and just plain do-nothing relaxation for others. The games continued with a fierce Cornhole championship. Chris Trauger grilled up hot dogs for all at lunchtime. Dave Francis entertained at his portable Tiki bar complete with the popcorn machine. An added treat was provided by camper Frank Padilla Jr as he amazed both young and old with his many magic tricks. Dinner time came along, and all enjoyed a giant pot luck appetizer with every food imaginable. Great food and great fun with all of our friends and family. 50/50 and fines from the hilarious Secret Sheriff Sally Slattery.

Sunday was a lazy recovery day. Breakfast at the lodge. Nothing organized planned, just do what you want. Many enjoyed the cozy Elks lounge, afternoon mingling with local lodge members and swapping stories over libations. Some campers returned home, while others stayed one more night to enjoy the cool fog shrouded setting.

Monday morning came too soon. The party was over. Time to return to the heat and regular life...until next year. Many thanks are in order for the entire staff of the Oceano Lodge. ER Scott Alguire, Camp hosts Jaylene, Rick and Bev, Ray and Nancy, bartenders and volunteers who all made our outing most enjoyable.

Please check out the relaxing photos by Dave Berthiaume and Ron Russell at www.happywanderers.net

Submitted by Russ Moon, roving Bugle correspondent.