

ROAM

GMC GREAT LAKERS MOTORHOME CLUB



REMEMBERING JOHN SHOTWELL

Tributes to a long-time
club member
p. 8



MAY AND JUNE RALLY DETAILS

Have you booked
your campsites yet?
p. 11

EDITORIAL

It's Spring!

The sure signs of spring are here--the ground is muddy and we have more than 12 hours of daylight. And GMC owners are starting to take their coaches out of hibernation!

I suppose each owner has their own formal or informal checklist of tasks to get their coach ready for the touring season. This year, how about adding another item to your list - **is your coach listed in the GMC Motorhome Registry?** This is especially important for new owners. If your main driver or parts coaches are not included or up to date, please take a few minutes and visit www.gmcmhregistry.com. **Add your stewardship to GMC history!**



Above: This cardinal perched on Henry & Sharon Van Wyk's 1975 Eleganza II, Hilda, is a sure sign of spring! Image by Henry.

Billy Massey, of Lake Brownwood, Texas, is the current Registry caretaker. He lists statistics on the Registry website, but I'm curious and have more questions. I'd like to write a more in-depth article about the Registry. Are you curious too? **Email me your questions at newsletter@gmcgreatlakers.org and I'll see if I can find the answers!**

I hope to see you at our May 49th Birthday rally in Zeeland, Michigan!

Janet

WHAT'S INSIDE

Board & Contributors	4
History of the GMC Motorhome Registry	5
President's Page	6
In Memorium - John Shotwell	8
2025 Rally Season Schedule	10
May Rally Details	11
June Rally Details	13
Treasurer's Report	14
Membership Report	14
Sunshine & Rainbows	14
John Shotwell's Famous Bourbon Slush	15

Seen on Facebook:

"Changing the sheets on a camper bed should be an Olympic event."

Cover: Dan & Faye Smith's 1976 Glenbrook, in Hilton Head, SC. Image by Faye.

Board of Directors & Contributors

Steve Johnson-President
Milford, MI (248) 378-3177
president@gmcgreatlakers.org

Sharon Giannosa-Membership
China, MI (810) 650-7923
membership@gmcgreatlakers.org



Jeff Rider-Vice President
Troy, MI (248) 877-1966
vice_president@gmcgreatlakers.org

Joe Gillen-Treasurer
Livonia, MI (734) 788-6695
treasurer@gmcgreatlakers.org



**GMC
Great
Lakers**



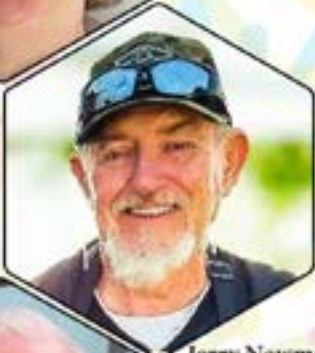
Faye Smith-Secretary
Mason, OH (513) 235-7543
secretary@gmcgreatlakers.org



Sue Aubuchon-Sunshine Person
Ortonville, MI (248) 227-3235
sunshine@gmcgreatlakers.org



Rob Matras-Webmaster
Plymouth, MI (313) 363-9810
webmaster@gmcgreatlakers.org



Jerry Newman-Past President
Cincinnati, OH (513) 235-7848
newmysr@gmail.com

2025

Janet Leslie-Newsletter Editor
Saline, MI (734) 864-6287
newsletter@gmcgreatlakers.org



Bill Helmore-Historian
Rochester Hills, MI (248) 804-0370
historian@gmcgreatlakers.org

The Wheels that Bond Us

Articles on Core GMC
Motorhome Topics

by Janet Leslie

with info from Becky Johnson and Billy Massey via www.gmcmhregistry.com

So many elements of GMC Motorhomes and their community bond us as owners. It feels like being adopted by a large extended family who often smells of axle grease and wood smoke.

When Becky Johnson sent me her tribute to John Shotwell, she included some extra information about his stewardship of the GMC Motorhome Registry. This 32-year passion project honors each of our coaches for it's individual history.

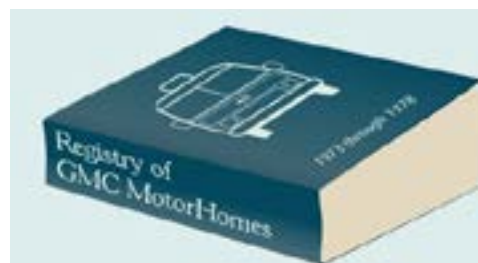
The GMC Motorhome Registry was created in 1993 by **Dave Greenberg**. He and Jan had just bought their second Palm Beach and were curious about what had happened to the first GMC motorhome they purchased in 1975 and sold 10 years later.

Dave met motorhome owners by going to various rallies and contacting GMC motorhome clubs around the country to gather VINs, models, owners, and location details. His goal was to create and maintain a historical database of as many of the original 12,921 GMC motorhomes manufactured between 1973 and 1978 as possible. The Registry includes both drivable and non-drivable motorhomes that have been scrapped or destroyed.

Dave passed the 'torch' of maintaining and continuing the then 8076-coach GMC Motorhome Registry quest to **John Shotwell** in 2011. Continuing his passion for the GMC motorhome community, John maintained the Registry from May 2011 to November 2018.

In 2018, the Registry was passed to the current coordinator, **Billy Massey**. At that time, there were 8137 records. Per a Facebook post by Billy on April 2, 2025, there are currently over 9,107 GMCs accounted for. **That is an amazing 70% of these 50-year-old vehicles accounted for!**

If your GMC motorhome is not in the Registry or has not been updated to include your current ownership, please go to www.gmcmhregistry.com to complete an online registration for your coach and to read more information about the Registry.



VIN Decoder	
Example: TZE167V102359	
T	Manufactured by General Motors
Z	Three Axle Motorhome
E	Gasoline Engine
Interior Code -	
0 - GM Interior from 1973 to 1974	
1 - GM Interior from 1975 to 1978	
1	2 - Twin Bed Interior for 1976 and 1977
3 - Transmode (sold without interior or windows)	
Model Code	
6	6 - Model 260 (26 feet long)
3 - Model 230 (23 feet long)	
7	Model Year
In this case it would be 1977	
V	Manufacturing Plant Code
V - Pontiac, Michigan	
1	First Digit of Production Series Number
All production started with a "1" in this position	
Second Digit of Production Series Number	
0	Since total production was less than 13,000, all GMC units had a "0" in this position
2359	Production Sequence Number
Reset to "0" each year	

President's Page

by Steve Johnson

The photo of Becky and I that accompanies this column was taken in 2019, the last time the Great Lakers had a rally in Holland, Michigan around their annual tulip festival.

By the time you read this newsletter, the signup for our 2025 rally there will have already begun so if you haven't done so already, dig up the registration form and send it in. I hope to see you there.

If you like "mechanical stuff" you will definitely want to tour the De Zwaan windmill which was originally built in the Netherlands in the 1700s before being moved to Holland.

The Great Lakers is a club made up of members who each contribute to the club using their individual talents. Some of us are on the board while others help by hosting rallies or guiding tech sessions. When everyone contributes, the benefits to all of our members increase. **Please consider one or more of the opportunities to volunteer that I outline below:**

G We have six rallies scheduled for 2025. Our club's custom is that the board collectively hosts our birthday rally in May. Phyllis and Steve Thornburg will be hosting our June rally in Granger, Indiana followed by Nancy Donaghue in July at Bellaire, Michigan so our year is off to a strong start. However, **we still need hosts for August in Holly, Michigan and October at Harrison Lake State Park in Fayette, Ohio.**

Perhaps you can contact Jeff Rider (vice_president@GMCGreatLakers.org) and tell him you would like to help with one of those.



In between is our September "Do nothing" rally at the completely refurbished state park campground in Algonac, Michigan. This one has no activities and no host... just an opportunity to camp together with fellow GMCers.

Above: Steve & Becky at the Windmill Island Gardens in 2019, the last club rally in this area.

G If you are on the fence about volunteering to host a rally, check out the new document “Guide/Tips on hosting a GMC Great Lakers Rally” on our website:

<https://www.gmcgreatlakers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Host-a-Rally-version-2.pdf>

Faye Smith and Sharon Giannosa put this together to help prospective hosts overcome intimidating concerns about not knowing what to do. If you think about it, hosting is not that difficult and has its perks too since you can make a rally whatever you want.

G Another volunteering opportunity is to **be on our nominating committee**. Each year all of our board positions are up for election and the nominating committee makes it happen. If you can help us run the elections that will choose the officers to manage the club in 2026, please let me know (president@GMCGreatLakers.org).

While you are thinking about elections, perhaps once the nominating committee is formed you may want to put your own name on the ballot for one of the seven board positions.



G Last, but certainly not least in volunteer positions, is a once in a lifetime opportunity that spans from this year into next.

Back in December last year, I asked to hear from Great Lakers members who would be interested in helping to plan special activities that we could do next year to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our club.

Bill Helmore, our only current member who was there in 1976 when our club was formed, quickly volunteered to help. Unfortunately, Bill is the only one that I heard from and he can't do it alone.

Does this mean that we will treat 2026 as “just another year” or are more of you going to step forward to help? If we are going to do anything more than our customary 6 rallies throughout the summer of 2026, planning needs to begin soon.

So, I'll ask again... if you can help us make 2026 something special, let me know. Otherwise, our 50th birthday may be just another, kind of like number 49, rather than the historic milestone that it deserves to be.

We are a club who survives by the support of members who volunteer to occasionally do one of the many tasks that keep us together. I sometimes feel like a broken record when I continue to harp on this topic, but the need is still there.

Can you help this year?

Steve



John Wheeler Shotwell

October 17, 1940 - February 24, 2025

by Becky Johnson

Former GMC Great Lakers member John Shotwell from Ridgeville Corners, Ohio passed away at his home on Monday, February 24, 2025.

John and his wife Patricia purchased their 1978 GMC Royale in 2006. They flew to Santa Fe, New Mexico and drove it home – thankfully it was an uneventful trip!

John was most interested in the GMC motorhomes because of their unique FWD design and Oldsmobile Toronado powertrain.

With an aim to gain as much knowledge and experience with his GMC motorhome as possible, John and Patricia were members of several GMC motorhome clubs, including the GMC Dixielanders, GMC Eastern States, GMCMI, as well as the Great Lakers.

John and Patricia joined the Great Lakers club in 2013, with John serving as club Treasurer from 2017 through 2019, and club Director-at-Large from 2020 through 2021.

While John enjoyed participating at events with many GMC motorhome clubs, he especially enjoyed the exclusive technical focus of the GMC Eastern States Club, serving as their VP - Policy & Procedures, and club Treasurer for several years.

Continuing with his passion for the GMC motorhome community, John maintained the GMC Motorhome Registry from May 2011 through November 2018. The GMC Motorhome Registry was created by Dave Greenberg in 1993, Dave passed the 'torch' of maintaining and continuing the GMC Motorhome Registry to John Shotwell in 2011, who then passed on the Registry to Billy Massey in 2018.

John and Patricia traveled a total of over 29,000 miles in their GMC motorhome, averaging about 3300 miles per camping season. Outside of their travels, John spent many hours refurbishing and renovating their GMC, always looking for ways to

improve it without completely changing the original design. He's the only person I know that removed the complete interior of his GMC not once, but twice! One time was to completely replace the interior wiring, while the other time was to rebuild overhead cabinets and reposition exterior walls to gain more usable interior space.

John was meticulous in everything he did on his motorhome. Because John's interests were always very technical, he was most interested in participating in the technical aspects of various GMC clubs. During the years that GMC Eastern States held work rallies at Bean Station, John was always an active participant.

At Great Lakers rallies, John was known for his friendly demeanor and was always willing to help others based his own motorhome experiences. Not only did he use rally opportunities to learn and share knowledge, John gained numerous friendships within the greater GMC communities around the country.

One of the things John often brought with him to GMC rallies was his famous frozen Bourbon Slush – especially in the hotter weather. You knew John considered you one of his friends if he offered you some of his Bourbon Slush! (see page 15).

We will miss being with John at GMC motorhome events, along with other long time club members who have passed before him.



Above left: John as many remember him. Above: John & Patricia with their 1978 Royale. Right: The "meticulous craftsman" working on his coach.

Remembering John Shotwell

By Richard Waters

I was deeply saddened to learn that John Shotwell passed away on February 24, 2025, at the age of 84. I mainly knew him from attending rallies, particularly the GMC Eastern States work rallies hosted by Blaine and Diane Merrill at their amazing Way West Airpark home, hangar, and garage in Indiana. Those gatherings ended around the time COVID hit, but the memories remain.

A Master Craftsman with a Sense of Humor

John's GMC Motorhome was a testament to his meticulous craftsmanship—it was beautifully done. The exterior paint, interior woodwork, stainless steel exhaust, and other details showcased his incredible attention to detail.

But what always made us laugh was his instrument panel—or rather, the lack of one. He'd show up at rallies with just a speedometer, heater controls, radio and a couple of stray instruments sitting on a platform where the panel should have been. I have no doubt that when he finally got around to finishing it, it would have been outstanding.

A Dedicated Treasurer

John served as the treasurer for the GMC Great Lakers for several years and for the now-defunct Eastern States club as well. At various rallies, he had a knack for collecting dues—persistent but never pushy.

A Great Sense of Humor

John had a great sense of humor, especially when talking about his retirement job as a clerk handling customer payments for the Ridgeville Township Water and Sewer District in Ohio, where he lived.

He used to joke that their method for dealing with delinquent customers was simple:

“Send a backhoe over, dig a hole, and block their sewer line. If they flushed their toilets, the water had nowhere to go.”

We used to tease him, saying:

“What are you going to do if someone falls behind on their club dues—send the backhoe to their place?”



His Contribution to the GMC Motorhome Registry

In 2011, John took over the World-Wide GMC Motorhome Registry from its founder, David Greenburg. While managing it, his hosting service went out of business. He mentioned the issue to me at a rally, and I volunteered to host the registry on my account.

I was happy to do so at no cost to him and continued hosting it until he eventually transferred the registry to Billy Massey. Sometime after the transfer, I unexpectedly received a check for \$150 in the mail from John—apparently as an unsolicited payment for hosting the registry. At the time, I was building a garage for my GMC Motorhome, and that amount happened to be just about what I needed to install a 50-amp outlet for it. In his honor, I named and labeled it: **The John Shotwell GMC Outlet.**

A Life of Adventures and Friendships

John also shared some great stories about his days as a door-to-door aluminum siding salesman, working for the company he co-owned with one of his many friends.

I followed John home from the Eastern States work rally in May of 2018 which was the last time I saw him as he turned off the highway to head to his house. We did keep in touch for a time via email. He lived a life full of adventures, friendships, and laughter, and he will be greatly missed by all of us who knew him.

2025 Rally Season

MAY BIRTHDAY RALLY

May 15th to 18th, 2025
Dutch Treat Camp & Recreation

10300 Gordon St., Zeeland, MI 49464
<https://www.dutchtreatcamping.com/>
616-772-4303
Hosts: Great Lakers Executive Committee
Book online or call for a reservation.
Sites are still available and we're actively planning meals and activities.

JUNE

June 19th to 22nd, 2025
Elkhart RV Resort

50707 Princess Way, Granger, IN 46530

509-957-2941
Hosts: Steve & Phyllis Thornburg

Sites are sold out but you can call for possible cancellations.

JULY - Christmas in July

July 17th to 20th, 2025
Chain O' Lakes Campground

7231 South M-88, Bellaire, MI 49615
<https://www.chainolakescamp.com/>
(231) 533-8432
Host: Nancy Donaghue
Call for a reservation, ask for Cameo, and mention that you are with the Great Lakers.

AUGUST

August 13th to 20th, 2025
Groveland Oaks County Park

14555 Dixie Highway, Holly, MI 48442
<https://www.oakgov.com/community/oakland-county-parks/parks-trails/groveland-oaks>
248-634-9811
Hosts: Tom & Sue Aubuchon
We have reserved a group site for 20 coaches - camping cost is included in the rally fee. After the 20 are gone, book through the park.

SEPTEMBER

September 11th to 14th, 2025
Algonac State Park

8970 River Road, Clay Twp., MI 48001
<https://www2.dnr.state.mi.us/parksandtrails/Details.aspx?id=433&type=SPRK#overview>
810-765-5605
Hosts: This is formally a "do nothing" rally, but the Giannos and Riders will be adding some fun to the weekend.

OCTOBER

October 16th to 19th, 2025
Harrison Lake State Park

26246 Harrison Lake Road, Fayette, OH 43521
(419) 237-2593
<https://ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/plan-a-visit/find-a-property/harrison-lake-state-park>
Hosts: **Seeking hosts! Why not you?**
Make your reservation in April through the website link to the Ohio State Park reservation system.

For rally questions please email Jeff Rider at vice-president@gmcgreatlakers.org.

May 2025 Great Lakers 49th Birthday Rally

Dutch Treat Camping & Recreation: Zeeland, Michigan

May 15-18, 2025

Hosts: Great Lakers Board

What better setting for our first rally of the year but among the tulips of spring!

Our rally is just after the close of the annual Holland Tulip Time Festival, so there still be wonderful blooms to see. We have an optional group tour planned for the **Windmill Island Gardens**. Tour five stories of the DeZwaan windmill, the only authentic Dutch windmill operating in the United States.



Or walk in the sand at Ottawa Beach in Holland State Park.

Dutch Treat is a private campground, and offers a number of amenities:

- G** In-ground Swimming Pool
- G** Fishing Pond
- G** Boat Rentals
- G** Game Room
- G** Activity Field
- G** Playground
- G** Camp Store

Above and right: The Holland area in Spring. Pictures by Ron Bolser.



About the
Dutch Treat
Campground

This is our annual birthday rally, so all attendees will receive a Great Laker gift and enjoy birthday cake. Join us - sites are still available!





Great Lakers 49th Birthday Rally

Dutch Treat Camping & Recreation, Zeeland, MI

Thursday, May 15 through Sunday, May 18, 2025

10300 Gordon St., Zeeland, MI 49464

616-772-4303 | <https://www.dutchtreatcamping.com/>

Hosted by the GMC Great Lakers Board

Registration Deadline: Thursday, May 1, 2025

Book your campsite directly with the campground by phone or website



Personal Information

Member 1 Name	<input type="text"/>	Member 2 Name	<input type="text"/>
Member 1 Email	<input type="text"/>	Member 2 Email	<input type="text"/>
Member 1 Phone	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile <input type="checkbox"/> Home	Member 2 Phone <input type="text"/>
Guest 1 Name	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Age 18+ <input type="checkbox"/> 12-17 <input type="checkbox"/> Under 12	
Guest 2 Name	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Age 18+ <input type="checkbox"/> 12-17 <input type="checkbox"/> Under 12	
Guest 3 Name	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Age 18+ <input type="checkbox"/> 12-17 <input type="checkbox"/> Under 12	

Emergency Contact Information

Name	<input type="text"/>	Phone	<input type="text"/>	Relationship	<input type="text"/>
------	----------------------	-------	----------------------	--------------	----------------------



Rally Information

Arrival Date	<input type="text"/>	Departure Date	<input type="text"/>
Site Number	<input type="text"/>		
First Rally?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Member <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor	

Rally Fees:

Includes 2 breakfasts and 1 catered onsite dinner

Per Member or Guest (Age 12 and over)
Per Child (Under 12)

Number	Fee for Each	Total
	\$50	
	Free	\$0
Tours and Events	Windmill Island Gardens	\$13 for Adults Pay at Garden

Optional - tour the last working windmill allowed to leave the Netherlands in 1964, set amongst 36 acres of exhibits, gardens and natural areas.

Total Rally Fees

Mail To: Jeff Rider, GMC Great Lakers VP, 6909 Montclair Drive, Troy, MI 48065-1654

Waiver: I/we hereby waive, release, and discharge any and all claims for damage, personal injury, death or property damage which I/we may have, or which may hereafter accrue to me/us, as a result of participation in this rally. This release is intended to discharge-in advance-the GMC Great Lakers Motorhome Club, its officers, rally hosts, volunteers, and agents from any and all liability arising out of or connected in any way with my/our participation in activities at this club rally even though that liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of those parties. It is understood that activities such as the ones I/we may participate in may involve an element of risk and danger of accidents. In knowing those risks, I/we hereby assume those risks. It is further agreed that this waiver, release, and assumption of risk is to be binding upon my heirs and assigns. I/we agree to indemnify and to hold harmless, the GMC Great Lakers Motorhome Club, its officers, rally hosts, volunteers and agents from any loss, liability, damage cost, or expense which they may incur as the result of my/our death or any injury or property damage that I/we may sustain while participating in any activity at this rally. It is my express intent that this Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement shall bind the members of my family and spouse (if any) as well as any guests, including children that accompany me/us. By signing this release, I acknowledge and represent that I/we have read the above waiver of liability and hold harmless agreement, understand it, and sign it voluntarily.

Required:

Member/s Signature	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/>
--------------------	----------------------	------	----------------------

GMC Great Lakers Motorhome Club, Inc., 2025

June 2025 Great Lakers Rally

Elkhart RV Resort: Granger, Indiana

June 19-22, 2025

Hosts: Steve & Phyllis Thornburg



We're going to Indiana! This tiny picture on the resort homepage suggests that they have hosted a GMC rally in the past.

As is typical of a private campground, there are extra amenities. They have an onsite restaurant, snack bar, and convenience store if you need a break from cooking or just want a treat.

Other amenities found at **Elkhart RV Resort**:

- G** Free high-speed WiFi
- G** Arcade/Game Room
- G** Basketball
- G** Hiking/Nature Trails
- G** Horseshoes
- G** Library
- G** Mini Golf
- G** Playground
- G** Restaurants
- G** Swimming
- G** Volleyball

Right: The 1974 GMC Motorhome at the RV/MH Hall of Fame, from their website.

About the
Elkhart
RV Resort



If you're looking for an offsite activity, the area surrounding Granger has plenty of options – you'll find a list on the campground website <https://rjourney.com/locations/in/granger/elkhart-rv-resort-llc-2/>

A walk through the flowers of the Wellfield Botanic Gardens sounds appealing, and I'm hoping to visit the **RV/MH Hall of Fame** in nearby Elkhart
<https://www.rvmhhalloffame.org/>

Admission is \$20 for adults, \$12 for older kids, and free for kids 5 and under. And the museum is pet friendly!





Treasurer's Report by Joe Gillen

March is a quiet financial month for the Great Lakers:

March 2025

Starting Balance 03/01/25 \$4,398.70
Ending Balance 03/31/25 \$4,326.23

Joe



Rainbows & Sunshine by Sue Aubuchon

Welcome Spring! Well...almost! Looking forward to warmer weather, and enjoying time with our Great Lakers friends. Hope everyone is doing well, and getting ready for a great rally season!

Since our last newsletter:

Hope You're Feeling Better!

Get Well wishes were sent to Sharon Van Wyk.

In Sympathy—Farewell and Safe Travels:

Condolences were sent to Patricia Shotwell. Her husband John passed away in February.

P.S. If you know when a member has a life event and would benefit from a little Sunshine, please let me know at sunshine@gmcgreatlakers.org, or saubuchon6419@gmail.com.

Sue



Membership Report by Sharon Giannosa

Watch your email for our 2025 Member Directory. **We currently have 176 members with 98 coaches!**

If you haven't yet renewed your membership, do it now! We'll publish an updated directory in May.

We are working on an online payment method, so in the meantime, if the convenience encourages you, please contact me at membership@gmcgreatlakers.org to pay with Venmo.

Welcome to our new 2025 members:

- G** Dakotah Colburn & Emily Thomas, Charlotte MI
- G** David Fleisher & Mike McKinley, Columbus, OH
- G** Rick & Ann Hayes, Fennville, MI
- G** Mike & Melissa Luyckx, Ada, MI
- G** Robert Maliszewski, Allen Park, MI
- G** David Rausch, Winamac, IN
- G** Michael & Denise Zahara, Livonia, MI

If you know anyone in our region who is the proud guardian of a TZE vehicle, encourage them to join us!

Sharon

Shotwell's Famous Bourbon Slush



Dissolve:

2 cups sugar with 2.5 cups hot tea

Add:

9 cups water
1 – 12 oz can Minute Maid lemonade (thawed)
1 – 12 oz can Minute Maid orange juice (thawed)
2 cups + couple extra Tbsp Jim Beam Straight Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey

Mix thoroughly, then freeze.

NOTES:

- G** Highly recommend using the specific brands listed – store brands do NOT taste the same!
- G** The recipe within a ½" of the top of a Tupperware 18 cup plastic container – 7" wide, 11" long, 4.5" deep.
- G** Here's the "must do" part – after it's been in the freezer, AT LEAST overnight (but not much longer), you must use a large spoon, and mix it all up again (you'll have to break up the frozen parts), and then put it back in the freezer.
- G** The reason to mix it up while it's partially frozen is the water separates to the outside of the container and the alcohol stays in the middle. Mixing it up again blends it together well, and will make it easier to dish up when you're to use it. Enjoy!

GMC Great Lakers Motorhome Club, Inc.
Newsletter Editor
511 Park Place
Saline, MI 48176

