

## **Rough Riders President's End of Year Report 2021-2022**

### **Mission (restated here for information only)**

The 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment Rough Riders, Inc. (hereinafter "Rough Riders") is formed for the purpose of creating and perpetuating a living memorial to the unique accomplishments of President Theodore Roosevelt and the members of the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment known as the "Rough Riders."

As the City of Tampa was selected as the assembly and embarkation site of the U.S. military in 1898 for the ultimate liberation of Cuba, it is most appropriate for the citizens of the Tampa Bay area to form this organization.

It is the intent of the members of the organization to develop ways to celebrate this great moment in American History by such activities as an annual festival; to collect and display artifacts of the era; to educate and emphasize to generations to come the importance of this feat by military forces; and to create other memorials as shall be appropriate from time to time.

### **Membership**

**Membership** – Our membership status is strong. Our membership for the 2021-2022 year was 620 total members including 523 Full Members, 37 Absentee, 23 on leave of absence and 37 New Members. During the year we had 8 deaths and one resignation. At the September Board meeting we removed 22 from membership - those who decided to not renew. New member applications for 2022-2023 will more than replace all of these losses.

**New Member Class of 2021-2022.** The new member class of 2021-2022 was 37 Recruits. Of those 37, 34 are returning for a second year, a 92% retention rate. 30 of those 34 fully completed all New Member Requirements detailed in Standing Rule 2. The remaining 4 will be given an extended time to complete their final requirements.

### **Charity**

**Charitable Contributions** – As a 501c(3) we proudly donated just under \$34K to charities (a record amount) this past year. We accomplished this through a combination of the club's budgeted amount for charitable contributions and adding to that each time we had a fundraising opportunity. These included Special Olympics donations at the Golf and Sporting Clays tournaments, Wreaths Across America to fund wreaths for VA cemeteries, a fundraising social at the OCC for Honor Flight, a fundraising social for Meals on Wheels at Coyote Ugly and The Trolley Hop to raise funds for "A Hope to Dream". A complete list of the charities we donated to is attached at the end of this report.

**Teddy Bears** – Our signature charitable activity – our Teddy Bear Program - is strong. We collected, sorted, stored and distributed thousands of Teddy Bears as we always do. We conducted over 70 teddy bear-related events this year and our stockpile of bears as we head into the fall is in great shape.

**Education** – This year we continued our longstanding scholarship program donated \$15 in scholarship. Combined with the charitable contributions we donated just under \$50K this year to causes throughout our community.

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### Historical

**History Tours** – This year we scheduled and completed two historical tours. We had numerous members from the previous two classes that had not had the opportunity to participate on these tours due to Covid so we doubled up and provided two tour opportunities this year. We even had a new member of the class of 2022 step up to be one of our narrators.

**Key West Trip and Marker** - we started the year making the October pilgrimage to Key West where we visited the graveyard and the grave of Rough Rider Trooper Frank Booth. While visiting the basilica we notice the Historical marker there is great disrepair due to corrosion. That observation started a project with will be complete in October 2022 to completely refurbish and rededicate the marker. Even though the traditional Key West parade was canceled the Rough Riders did our own parade along the waterfront, distributing beads and ending with a flag salute ceremony at Mallory Square at sunset.

**Artifacts Display Cases and Artifacts** – with history being a prime focus of our club we embarked on a major project to acquire used display cases, rehabilitate them and then develop a museum-type display within Bartley Hall to display our artifacts. We were able to acquire several additional artifacts throughout the year including two Krag rifles, one of which is a model 1896 Carbine.

**New Historical Markers** – Another history project led by Kent Gallamore is to acquire and install three new historic markers in Tampa to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rough Riders' presence in Tampa. We funded one of these markers from the 2021-2022 budget and campaigned with Port Tampa Bay for the funding support for the other two markers. We were approved for that funding and the project is underway for completion in June 2023.

**Annual Festival** – In accordance with our mission statement, we conducted an Annual Festival in June. We bookended the 12-day festival with our Fishing Tournament at the beginning and a mini-clays shoot with a wild beast feast at the end. We received official proclamations from the Mayor of Tampa, the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners. We partnered with the City of Tampa for the rededication of a Rough Riders historic marker in Gaslight Park. The signature event of the week was the Night at the Museum event where we partnered with the Krewe of Mambis and the Buffalo Soldiers to open Bartley Hall to the public to see the displays and artifacts, enjoy meals from food trucks and obtain drinks from the Bartley Hall bar. We showed the movie "Night at the Museum" to the enjoyment of many people with a wide variety of ages, from small children to senior citizens.

**Original Rough Riders** – since we made history the priority this past year, we added the name of an historical figure to each of the new member's pins. We had them research the original members and answer spot quizzes early in the year. Each original Rough Rider we designated was researched and one was selected for most weeks to be featured in the BullyGram. The results of all that research now resides on our club's web page under the section called "Original Rough Riders".

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### **Parade Events**

**Parades** - One of the most important ways we show the community our club is through our parade activities. In addition to our Key West walking parade, we conducted or participated in 14 other parades events. November saw us go to the SS American Victory for the Rough Riders Veterans Salute Parade. We then went to Ruskin for the VFW's parade. December saw us returning to the City's Santa Fest Parade and then our much-awaited return to the Outback Bowl Parade. January was the Gasparilla Children's Parade and the Gasparilla Parade while February was the Knight's Parade. March saw us in the Strawberry Festival Parade, our own St Patrick's Parade and off to the Springtime Tallahassee weekend. April took us to New Port Richey for the Chasco Fiesta and to Bradenton for the DeSoto Heritage Festival. May saw us in Washington DC for the National Memorial Day Parade while July took us to Lutz for the Independence Day parade. Trophies and awards for our club in those parades are now in the display case in Bartley Hall. Two of the actual parades got rained out, but the planning and deployment to those locations still occurred and consumed costs in dollars and manhours. 15 parade events in one year is probably a record.

**Float Committee** – you can't run all these floats in the parades without a robust and dedicated Float Committee. Under the overall leadership of Jeff Albritton our float teams did an amazing job with the fleet this year. The Parade Operations Team under Roger Blethen and Bob Bokee was the most visible team, ensuring (along with the OICs) that the floats were loaded and equipped with all the refreshments and supplies needed for every parade – and then cleaned up afterwards. The Fleet Maintenance Team under Richard Sanchez and Gene Gustafson ensured everything was mechanically ready throughout the year. They also started rebuilding one of the two WWII-era jeeps, recently completing a major brake job and radiator project. The Float Rebuild team tore the Yucatan float down to the frame and is now in the process of rebuilding it. The welding work is extreme and the hours to do that work have all been donated by Frank Kerney's company. Bully, Bully to all involved.

### **Other Events**

**Shooting Sports** – The Rough Riders of 1898 shot weapons for a living so this year we emulated that by conducting 10 events with weapons. With the Krag rifles we conducted a safety and familiarization training in the clubhouse, followed by three competitive live shooting events. We took our shotguns out six times including the Gasparilla Invasion Boat event, the Annual Sporting Clays Tournament and four very popular "Mini-Clays" events. A big shout-out to Michael Platt for organizing our expanded events with Krag rifles and to Todd Parry, Larry Miller, Chris Herman and Rusty Jenkins for all their detailed planning and coordination for the sporting clays event.

**Fundraising Events** – We conducted the four big fundraising events that we usually do. Golf in the fall, Sporting Clays in the winter, St Patrick's Week in the Spring and Fishing in early June. Some of these committees exceeded their financial targets while others got hindered by Covid or storms. All combined we met our fundraising goals for the year and the funds were critical to us executing the Charity tasks described above. A special mention to Sporting Clays and St Patrick's for exceeding their goals.

**Clubs** - Cigar Club, Pool Team, Bowling Team, Rough Rider Navy. These organized activities for our members all run like clockwork due to the constant leadership of those committee chairs. They provided specialized outlets for folks with common interests. Great job guys!

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**Social Activities** – Pre-Invasion Party, Gasparilla After-party, St Patrick's after Party, Socials, Christmas Party, Military Ball, Derby Party, Halloween Party, Trolley Hop, Wine Tasting. For those that attended any of the wide variety of social activities we conducted, you can attest to the excellent planning and coordination done by those committees and the professional and fun way in which they handled the events. Along with the previously mentioned clubs, these socials events provide much of the fun that comes from being a member of our club. If you couldn't find enough fun things to do this year, you might not have looked hard enough! Roy Reyes and Mark Palm planned and conducted an "EPIC" Pre-Gasparilla party with over 700 attendees. Chief Rick and his team took the St Patrick's post-parade party back to the clubhouse and set a solid benchmark for future parties at the clubhouse. The Military Ball in February exceeded all expectations and actually came in way ahead of budget – only costing the club less than \$15. A big Bully, Bully to all these committees.

### **Building**

**Bully Bar** – the Bully Bar was open 70 times in this past year. Our bar committee put in an extraordinary amount of time serving drinks to our members.

**Bartley Hall Bar** – the Bartley Hall Wetzone expansion project is nearly completed. Today we received the ordinance signed by Mayor Castor allowing us to operate the Bartley Hall bar as we have done with the Bully Bar. We are now crossing the "T's" and dotting the "I's" with the State of Florida and the insurance company to ensure we have completed every single requirement to be able to protect the club while serving to the club. A huge Bully, Bully to Rick Califano, Michael Hutchinson and Joe Dato for accomplishing all that needed to be done to get us through City Council and the Mayor's office.

**New Storage Sheds** – at the end of the 2020-2021 club year we procured three 53' semi-trailers. These three trailers were disassembled from their carriages and emplaced in the back storage area to give us over 1200 square feet of additional storage. We then moved all mobile storage units from the building and put everything under tent for the termite guys. Pests gone everywhere except for the Bully Bar.

**Float Barn** – The float barn got some much-needed improvements as well. A concrete slab was poured in Bay #2 and Mark Hampton sealed it. With the help of Paul Nevins, the backside of Bays 1 and 2 were both walled in giving us a better protected workspace.

**Paint** – thanks to the Board allocating some funding the building's exterior was finally repainted after years of needing it. Lighting as added to the front steps and the New Member Class added some classy, crossed sabers to the front steps pillars.

### **Quartermaster**

Saving one of the best for last, our Quartermaster Team overachieved this year. Led by Steve Egan the team brought in a record revenue for the club. This extraordinary revenue stream more than made up for shortfalls in other areas throughout the club, and they passed the old revenue record by over \$3K. I can't say enough positive things about Steve and the entire team and how proud and appreciative I am for their efforts this year. Bully, Bully