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- Five Days in Utah



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110,000	\$ 866.00	475,000	\$ 2662.00
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Roughing It Smoothly® magazine is published four times a year by Book Production Resources for Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc., 105 2nd Street NW, Red Bay, Alabama 35582. BPR offices are located at 9302 Alanbrooke Street, Temple Terrace, Florida 33637. Printed in the United States of America. Postage paid at Miami, Florida 33166. Postmaster: Send all changes of address to Book Production Resources, P.O. Box 292912, Tampa, Florida 33687-2912.

This issue of *Roughing It Smoothly®* has a postal distribution of approximately 35,000 copies and a dealer distribution of 10,000 copies. It is printed by Universal Printing Company, 3100 N.W. 74 Avenue, Miami, Florida 33122.

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How It All Began

Many people over the years have asked me, "How did you decide to get in the motorhome business?" Well, I guess the way it happened probably does make a pretty good story.

In 1965, my dad, Alex Tiffin, had been in the building supply business for about 25 years. He and a partner decided to buy a state-of-the-art cotton gin and the partner agreed to run the operation. After a few months, the partner decided he didn't really like that kind of work, so my dad drafted me at 23 to learn how to operate the equipment and run the ginning operation in the fall during cotton harvest.

Judy and I had been married about four years then and we had two little boys, Tim and Van. It wasn't long until she was coming to the gin to help out, bringing the boys with her. Judy kept the records and eventually became the cotton buyer. Cotton ginning turned out to be quite an experience for all of us. On October 3, 1970, I was working on a load that had come in. I should have been using a wood paddle to push the raw cotton into the gin, but I got careless and used my finger to poke some into the rollers that was hanging back. The over-and-under rollers about an inch apart caught me and yanked me into the roller system all the way up to my elbow. One of the other employees got it turned off, but not before all the meat on my arm was torn up. The accident put me in the hospital for 22 days, but luckily the tendons were not severed nor the bones broken.

About the time we bought the cotton gin, the Commodore company came to the Red Bay area and opened a manufactured housing plant and an RV plant. They bought a substantial amount of their building sup-

plies from Tiffin Supply Company which allowed us to learn a little bit about motorhome construction. Commodore lasted about three years and closed, but several men from that plant started the Sunliner RV plant in Tremont, Mississippi. One of the managers, Ron Hass, went to Iuka and started another RV company called Safari.

In the spring of 1972 the cotton crop looked like it was going to be pretty good so we built a new cotton warehouse in July that was 100 x 200 feet. Then the weather



Clockwise from left: Bob Tiffin and sons, Lex, Tim, and Van, meet at 6 a.m. each morning for problem solving and to go over the day's production plans.

became unfavorable and we realized we were not going to be ginning much cotton. The Safari company had folded earlier that year. Near the middle of August I told my dad that we needed to go into the motorhome business and use the cotton warehouse to build them. He agreed and we got the incorporation papers finished in September 1972.

Early that fall, Theron McKinney brought 21 employees from Safari and served as our plant manager. Bill Emerson, who retired in 1999, became our purchasing agent and later the plant manager. Johnny Hargett was invaluable to the company because he knew the dealers throughout the country. Others in the chartered start-up crew included Larry Joe Hill, Fray Carnes, Jesse Vess, Dayton Kay, Monroe Thorne, Grady Baggett, Horace Stepp, David Stidham, Grady Pharr, and Paul Pitts. Of that group,

Larry Joe is still here and works as a forklift operator. Sylvia Massey served as the secretary and managed the office by herself for the first four years. She continues with us today. Fray Carnes worked on the assembly line and continued to work as a guard until he passed away in 2002 at the age of 83. His daughter, Barbara McDowell, has been with the company 29 years.

The Chevrolet company here in Red Bay still had several chassis in their inventory which we bought. We started five chassis into production and completed the first two in December 1972. The VIN numbers were CPY373J113110 and CPY373J114839. We sold the first one to Camper City and the second one to Geer Brothers.

With the experience the men brought from the other plants, we debated on whether to build with steel, aluminum, or wood. We decided on a 1-1/2 inch steel floor frame to go on top of the chassis. Theron and I decided that the sidewalls should be aluminum on 12-inch centers, and we still build them that way today because we warranty our frames for 10 years.

The Sunliner and Safari plants had used plywood framing to build the skirts from the floor down. I decided to use 16-gauge structural steel for the skirts covered with the same aluminum skin used in the walls. This feature became a "first" in the industry and gave a durability to our units that other manufacturers did not offer.

We built a big lean-to addition to the warehouse and used it for the welding shop. The foreman, Grady Pharr, designed a welding table with a jig that accommodated all three lengths: 21-, 25-, and 29-footers.

The floor frames were constructed upside down and then flipped over to attach to the chassis. Then we followed that with a 5/8-inch exterior grade plywood floor underlaid with a belly metal of aluminum or steel. As we built each frame, we mounted the generator and the extra fuel tank. The employees were saying, "These things aren't going to wear out." And they didn't! It is not unusual to see

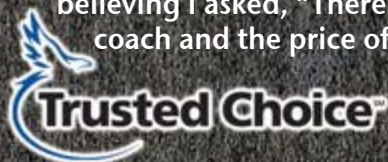
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Completely Frustrated!

INSURANCE! You have to have it but hope you never have to use it.

Don and Nancy Goin had quite an experience and here is their story, in their words. "The front tire blew, jerking the steering wheel to the left! We were sliding on the side for hundreds of feet before coming to a stop. We literally walked out of our windshield, completely unhurt! Our adjustor told us the unit was totaled, and asked us if we would prefer a check or a replacement for our motorhome? I had bought a used 1998 over 2 years before, now our insurance company was going to replace it with a brand new motorhome!" Still not believing I asked, "There's a \$140,000 difference in the value of our coach and the price of a new one. Who pays that?" He responded, "We do. That's what **REPLACEMENT INSURANCE** does." No frustration here!



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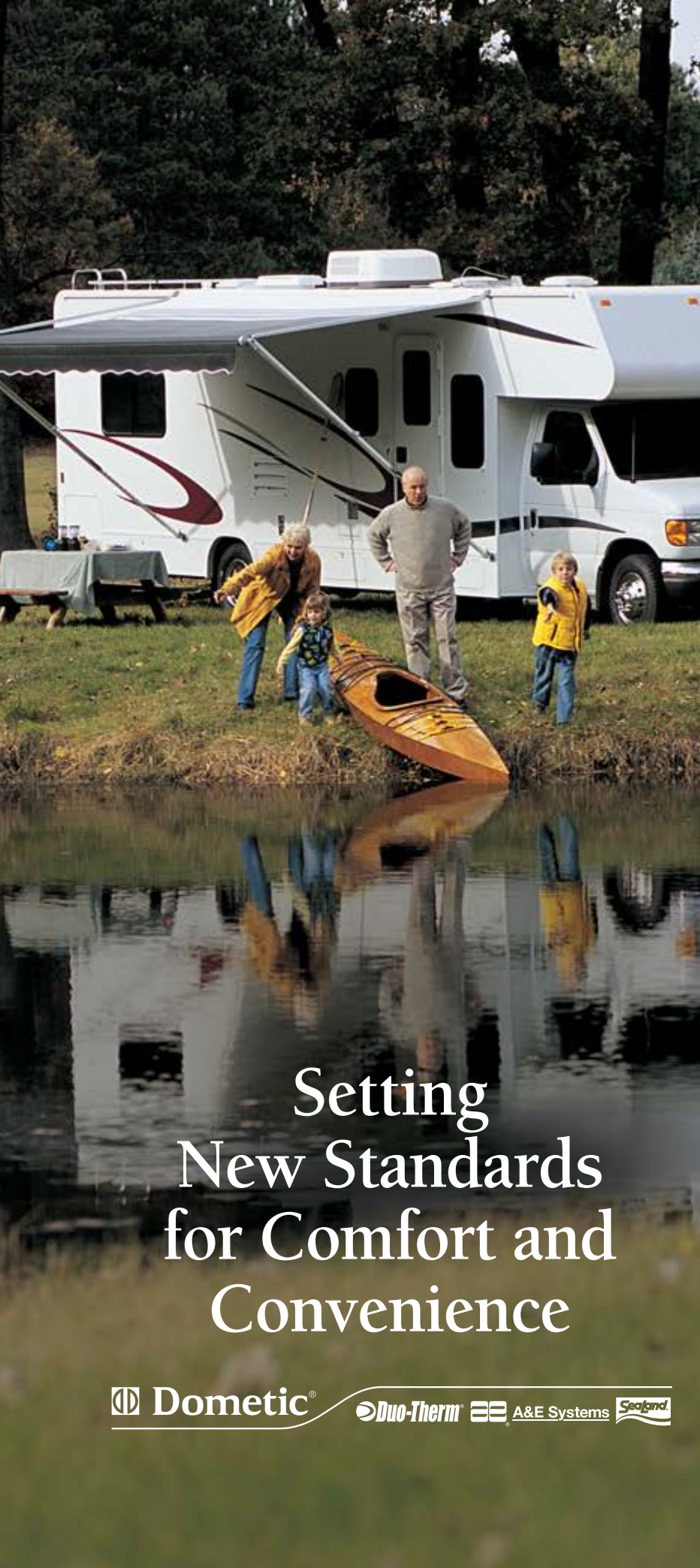
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Them's The Brakes

by Mark Penlerick*

Asking a few pertinent questions will help you decide whether a supplemental braking system is needed for your tow-behind vehicle.

1. How concerned about safety am I?

I think we all would have the same answer to this — a resounding VERY concerned!

2. Does my towed vehicle weight exceed the limitations of the braking capacity of my coach chassis?

The majority of manufacturers limit towed vehicle weight to 1,000 to 1,500 pounds (453.6 to 680.4 kilograms). Again, the question will likely answer itself knowing that even a small car weighs more than 1,500 pounds (680.4 kilograms).

3. Will I be faced with any liability if I do not have a brake installed on my towed vehicle?

Based on the last question you are certainly leaving yourself open to possible warranty issues on your coach if you are exceeding the specifications of your chassis. After answering these questions, you are probably leaning toward getting some type of braking system. I would recommend some type of supplemental braking system to everyone towing a vehicle. Forget what your campground neighbor

told you last night; forget everything you've read or heard; in fact, forget all of the manufacturers who would love to sell you a braking system and ask yourself this simple question: What is my peace-of-mind worth to me? To quote the popular TV commercials: Priceless!

LAWS

I do not like talking about laws because, in my opinion, brakes are a matter of safety and security, not a matter of whether governments are telling me I have to have them or not. I do have to address one shining issue about the laws that may or may not be on the books though.

I did a little research and found that none of the states that replied to my questions could absolutely tell me that brakes are required on a towed vehicle behind a coach. Most referred to their trailer towing laws, but stated that those are for trailers...hmmm. A couple of years ago there was substantial controversy over towing vehicles in British Columbia. BC started ticketing RVers with cars in tow that weighed more than 3,000 pounds (1,360 kilograms) if you did not have a supplemental braking system. After molehills became mountains that limit was changed as stated below.

BC's regulation now states that motorhomes (only) may tow motor vehicles via a tow bar without brakes hooked up on the towed motor vehicle, when the towed motor

vehicle's laden weight (weight of towed vehicle and its load) is:

- Less than 4,409 lbs (2,000-kg), and
- Less than 40% of the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of the motorhome towing it.

Note: The above is only applicable to tow bar brake requirements and does not apply to trailer towing, etc.

However, keep in mind that laws can and do change and that each province has its own regulations regarding brakes required on towed vehicles. Check the regulations and be on the safe side: go by the most stringent regulation.

TAKE A LOOK

When researching brakes, or any product for that matter, the first thing to consider is the company that makes the brake. What kind of service after the sale is available and what is their reputation for quality? The next step is to decide what type of brake is best for you and your towing set up. There are four basic systems to choose from: air, surge, hydraulic, and vacuum. Depending on your coach and towed vehicle, some of the types may be eliminated right away, making your choice simpler than you think.

DEAD PEDAL

You have undoubtedly heard this term before when brakes are part of a conversation. I pre-

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fer “unassisted brake” because it sounds a little more positive. There is absolutely nothing wrong with using unassisted braking to stop a towed vehicle. Auto manufacturers must adhere to federal guidelines for passenger vehicles that require their brakes be able to stop the vehicle without power-assist operating in the event of a power failure while using a limited amount of pedal pressure. This regulation works in the favor of supplemental braking because for *one*, we know the brakes are designed to operate and stop the vehicle without power; *two*, we know the force required to push that brake pedal is going to be consistent between differing vehicles; and *three*, we know the force required is not huge because the regulation has limited it so that weaker drivers are able to depress an unassisted brake pedal enough to stop their vehicle in the event of a power failure.

AIR

Air systems will either get air from an air source on the coach or will provide their own air supply. Either way they use air to actuate an air cylinder, which either pushes or pulls an unassisted brake pedal down. These air cylinders can either be permanently installed, removable, or part of a removable box that sits in front of the driver’s seat. There is also an air system that contains an air cylinder that must be

installed in the master cylinder of the towed vehicle. This system is only usable if your coach has air brakes to supply air to the cylinder. Air systems that supply their own air source can be used on any coach and any towed vehicle, while those that rely on the coach’s air supply obviously are only for use on coaches with air brakes. The brakes that are growing in popularity the most are the self-contained air units. These units are very versatile, easy to install, and easy-to-use.

SURGE

The surge brake is activated by the inertial force that a towed vehicle exerts on the coach. They are mechanical in nature so there is no wiring involved except for the installation of an indicator light in the coach that tells the driver when the brakes are being applied. When the driver slows using the brakes in the coach, the towed vehicle pushes the surge brake into the receiver of the hitch. Inside the surge brake are two sets of pulleys, which act like a block-and-tackle system running at about a 5-to-1 ratio with a cable around them that is attached to the brake pedal. The harder the car pushes on the back of the coach, the more braking you receive from the surge brake.

HYDRAULIC

These brakes also operate on the surge or inertia of the towed vehicle on the back of the coach. The difference here is that instead of a mechanical cable running back to the brake pedal, it actually comes with a master cylinder of its own and taps into the brake lines of the towed vehicle. When the towed vehicle surges forward, the master cylinder pushes brake fluid directly to the front brake calipers thus applying the towed vehicle’s brakes. Based on this explanation, you can tell that this system will also work on any coach and any towed vehicle with normal hydraulically actuated brakes.

VACUUM

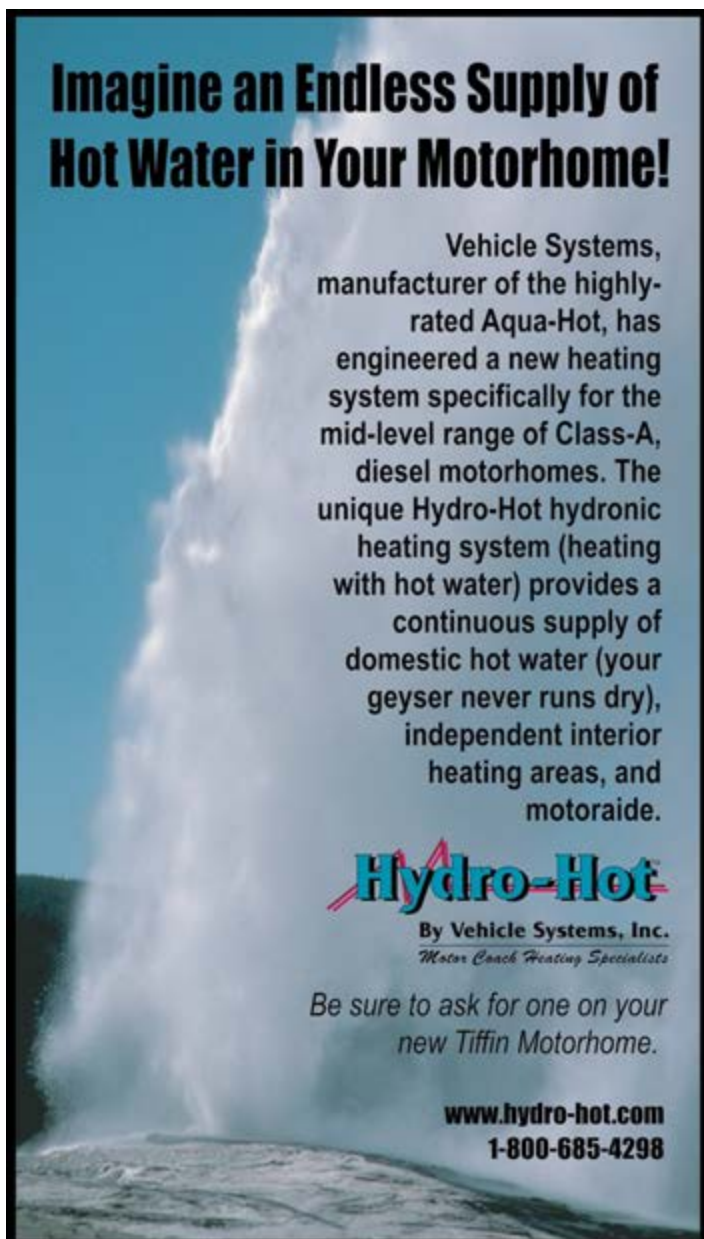
There are several vacuum-assisted supplemental brakes on the market today. Some models require tapping a vacuum source on a gas-powered coach to supply vacuum to the towed vehicle’s master cylinder. While you are towing, your towed vehicle actually has a “live” pedal or, in our case for consistency, we’ll call it an assisted pedal. Other brakes actually contain a vacuum pump that supplies the vacuum needed in the master cylinder. These brakes are actuated electronically and the pedal is pulled down by the use of a cable or pushed using a vacuum cylinder. These units are self-contained but are available as individual components for those who would like a permanent installation of the brake.

FEEDBACK

I feel it is essential to have feedback in the driver’s cockpit from the brake in the towed vehicle. Most brakes come with some sort of hard-wired light or switch that must be installed in the coach. It is invaluable as it shows when the brake in the towed vehicle is being applied. For those who do not want to take the time to install and wire a light in the coach, some companies offer a wireless remote indicator light. You simply plug the receiver into the coach’s power outlet, plug the transmitter into the towed vehicle’s power outlet, and tie into the cold side of the brake switch in the towed vehicle. By tying into this wire, you get a true indication of when the brake is actually being applied. The remote unit will work in conjunction with any brake on the market!

CONCLUSION

OK, I’ve outlined the basic types of brakes, now all you have to do is match the features you want with the vehicles you have and you’re set. Keep in mind that most brakes on the market are all good brakes. They all provide some degree of assistance. It’s up to you to decide how elaborate or how simple you want the system. Your local dealer or the manufacturer can answer all of your technical questions. However, only you can answer the big one: “What is my peace-of-mind worth to me and my family?” You know the answer will be: Priceless!



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A Coach for All Seasons

ALLEGRO 28DA

The CCC on this 28-ft. coach is nearly 4,000 pounds. WOW!

"We took this coach to the Rockies in January and slept toasty warm when the temps dropped to seven degrees above zero."

by Lazelle Jones

There's no better place to test the mettle of a coach than the Rocky Mountains during the month of January. After getting our hands on a copy of the all-new Allegro 28DA, that's exactly where we headed. In a week-long trip that covered 1,500 miles, we challenged this new model in the kind of environment where some extreme RVers may elect to spend some time.

During our sojourn, we discovered that this Class A, gas powered, double slide-out motorhome is without a doubt a four-season coach. It is capable of providing all of the luxuries that today's discerning motorhome enthusiast expects and that's just the beginning. With a long wheelbase of 208 inches, this downsized Class A motorhome is a pleasure to drive, park, and navigate.

With their eye always on the bubble, Tiffin Motorhomes of Red Bay, Alabama, has incorporated all of the amenities, creature comforts, and utilities in the 28DA that are found in much larger units. Even with its abbreviated length, the livability in this 29-foot, 101-inch wide motorhome is not compromised. Let's see how they've done this.

Platform and Coach Construction

By electing to build on the Ford Super Duty F-Series 20,500 lb. chassis, Tiffin employs a foundation that yields excellent road manners and handling characteristics (more on that later). This longer wheelbase also allows Tiffin to create exterior basement

storage totaling 72 cubic feet accessible though twelve insulated bay doors. The engine is the Triton 6.8-L V-10 that develops 310 horsepower and yields 425 foot-pounds of torque, plenty enough to tow up to 5,000 pounds of dinghy, trailer, etc. A Class III hitch receiver is standard. During our travels we experienced 7-plus miles per gallon. This included a broad spectrum of driving conditions, from 75-mph Interstate speeds, to city driving, to ascending mountain passes. This is a very respectable number and with the 75-gallon fuel tank, an excellent driving range between refueling stops. Good job Ford!

When building this Allegro, the Tiffin process goes like this. After adding steel outriggers to the chassis, a welded steel frame is then added to create the basement storage compartments. The heated holding

tanks are located just aft of the rear wheels to ensure equitable weight distribution. The interior floor is made of seamless Weyerhaeuser Structureboard.

The walls feature welded aluminum members with foam core insulation that is cut to fit between the grid pattern created by the metal frame. Vinyl covered luan panel is used for the inside wall and high-gloss gel coat fiberglass is used to create the exterior wall. The frame and foam insulation is then sprayed with a quick drying water resistant adhesive, the interior and exterior wall surfaces are laid in place (creating a giant sandwich), and the entire structure is then vacuum-laminated to create a single, strong unitized structure.

The side walls are set on top of the floor and the two are lagged together using zinc plated lag screws. The roof is also a vacuum-laminated structure. The front and rear end caps are single pieces of molded fiberglass. The cockpit area is reinforced with 2-in. x 2-in. tubular steel.

A coach is only as good as the service and utility it provides and here again the Allegro passed our real-world test. Spending nights in temperatures that dipped to 7-degrees above zero, with a wind chill factor of "who knows what," we slept warm and toasty inside. This is not to say that the 35,000 BTU forced-air furnace didn't work through most of the night, but it did the job and did it well. With air registers lacing the coach front to rear, the greatest heat transfer to the outside was probably the windows; but even that was minimized by drawing the track mounted curtains around the windshield and pulling down the day-night accor-





dion style curtains in the salon area. We also liked the fact that this unit did not have a window above the head of the bed, which also helped us to sleep warmly.

All of the nights in the mountains were spent doing stand-alone camping, utilizing the 5.5kW gasoline genset to satisfy our A/C electrical needs. Although the optional 5.5kW genset (4.0kW is standard) is located all the way to the rear streetside corner of the unit, Tiffin engineers have successfully muffled the exhaust and held the operating noise of the generator to a minimum. It was barely noticeable—even in the bedroom. This is good design!

The genset is capable of powering everything onboard simultaneously: television, microwave, 110-volt receptacles, and the dual 13,500 BTU air conditioners. For obvious reasons, we didn't operate the air conditioners. The house battery powered the furnace blower all night long and was charged by the alternator as we motored down the road or when the genset was operating. The unit is wired for 50-amp shore power and accommodated with a 25-ft. shore power cable.

Another component we noted as being especially quiet was the demand water pump. The freshwater system plumbing was tight (no pressure drop-off), evidenced by the fact that the only time the pump came on was when a demand was placed on it by the marine style toilet, shower, or sinks. The 6-gallon gas/electric water heater provided an endless supply of hot water, regardless of how many showers were taken. The 24-gallon LPG tank provides plenty of fuel for the 3-burner cook-top, furnace, water heater, and two-way (AC/LP) 8-cubic foot refrigerator. Even after using the furnace as much as we did, the effect on the level of LPG (per the LP level gauge) appeared to be minimal. The bottom line is that the Allegro 28DA performed very well under stand-alone, very cold camping conditions.

Livability/Functionality

This is an area that Tiffin has really turned into a discipline. They have it down to a science. With the double slide-out rooms extended (dining/refrigerator up front and the queen bed slide in the rear), the coach offers an amazing 277 square feet of living space. But this is not to say that livability is compromised when the slides are retracted. Because the coach is 101 inches wide, there is no need to extend the slides if you pull into a rest stop to prepare lunch or take a nap. The amount of interior living space available with the slides retracted is totally adequate. Should you want to minimize the furnace run-time in really cold weather, this is a way to do it.

The front slide features a dinette with upholstered bench seats with large pull out drawers below. A sleeper sofa can be ordered in place of the dinette. The overhead cabinets above the booth dinette and throughout the living area offer generous storage. An upholstered barrel chair is positioned on the curbside just forward of

Top: Along with gauge displays for all engine functions, the fully appointed cockpit includes a built-in monitor for the back-up camera and the control panel for the leveling jacks. *Middle:* Both the driver and passenger seats rotate to face into the living area, adding depth to the room. A barrel chair, not shown, is positioned to the right of the entry door. *Bottom:* In the unit tested, the galley included a convection microwave oven, a 3-burner cook top, an exhaust hood, and a double sink with covers to provide extra food prep area. *Opposite page, top:* The slide-out contains an 8-cu.ft. refrigerator, a pantry, and a dinette with sliding drawers underneath. A hide-a-bed couch can be ordered to replace the dinette. *Middle:* The vanity and toilet on one side of the aisle and the shower on the other. Pocket doors allow you to close off the galley and bedroom to create a bathroom compartment. *Bottom:* The queen bed slides out to provide easy access to the wardrobe, overhead cabinets, and make-up vanity-mirror compartment. The 20-in. television and a window over the headboard in the slide-out are optional.

the main entrance. Spin the two cockpit captain chairs around to face aft and instantly the amount of useable, livable interior space is multiplied several times. The 25-inch television is located out of the way, above and in the center of the dash.

The galley is a full-service venue with stacks of roll out drawers, cabinets, and cupboards, plus an optional large pots and pans drawer below the cook-top. An oven (the standard feature) is sacrificed when the large drawer is selected. There are two large pantries, one a floor to ceiling unit located between the refrigerator and the dinette. The other is a floor to countertop pantry that rolls out, providing easy access to the items stored inside. A twin tub galley sink includes attractive covers that provide additional countertop area when the sinks are not being used. The convection microwave oven with a power hood is positioned above the cook-top. For any chef, be it the someone who raids the fridge at night, or the gourmet in pursuit of a culinary masterpiece, this galley can support all endeavors.

The center aisle bath is configured to become a coach-wide bath when the pocket doors next to the galley and bedroom are pulled and locked. The shower with skylight above is large. The lavatory cabinet and a mirrored medicine cabinet are located in the same enclosure with the toilet, as is a power ceiling vent and a second switch for the water pump.

The bedroom is generously appointed with amenities. The 60 × 76-inch queen size bed lifts up to provide a huge storage area below. Along with the bed, the dual night stands extend and retract when the slide-out is activated. At the foot of the bed is a vanity. A large wardrobe with an optional 20-inch television above shares the streetside wall with the vanity. A window stretches across the rear wall. A large mirror can be ordered to replace the window which will visually make this already commodious area look even larger.

Driving Impressions

Since getting to where you are going is half the task, it should also provide half of the pleasure. Visibility through the massive windshield is augmented by a user-friendly exterior side mirror system and a rear coach video camera with a dash mounted monitor. Tiffin has done another good turn by adding a window on the curbside wall near the floor of the cockpit to allow the driver to check on small vehicles adjacent to the forward section of the coach (the more information the driver has, the better). In the slide-out wall immediately aft of the driver, Tiffin has located a large window that allows the driver to look back and see what is going on in the coach interior in what otherwise would be a blind spot. It also provides additional outside ventilation when the slide is extended. A matching window is located on the opposite side of the slide-out.

The Triton V-10 along with the 4-speed automatic transmission launched the 28DA nicely. The Ford power train did just fine on sections of the road over the mountains where the grade was a whopping 12 percent. When responding to gravity on the downside of these byways, the engine braking system minimized the need to apply the ABS brakes. The long-and-short of our driving experience is that the unit preformed very, very well.

Summary

So what should be construed by those reading this review? Simply put it is this. The Allegro 28DA is a well-built coach that offers a very functional floor plan. It is packed with appointments and amenities that will provide its owner with many years of enjoyment and good service. And the thing that most notably underscores the 28DA is that it carries the Tiffin name — which is known throughout the industry for superb customer service. It's a good coach and a good deal. See for yourself.



SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2004 Allegro 28DA

Base MSRP* \$84,980

MSRP as tested with options \$89,922

STANDARD FEATURES

Emergency Start Switch
Cruise Control
Tinted Windshield
Heated Power Mirrors
Exterior Graphics and Paint
Double Electric Step
Slide-out Awnings
Park Telephone/Cable Ready
Exterior shower
Undercoating
TV Antenna
1-13,500 BTU Roof AC
Roof Ladder
Spare Tire
Snack Beverage Tray
Single CD Player; AM/FM Stereo
12-Volt Dash Receptacle
Dual Dash Fans
25" Color Television
Single Lever Galley Faucet
3-Burner Cook-top
Double Bowl Kitchen Sink
Microwave
8-cubic ft. Refrigerator
Inner Spring Mattress
Mirrored Vanity
Phone Jack
Fantastic Power Roof Vent (3-speed)

OPTIONAL FEATURES

(on unit tested)
5.5kW Onan Generator
2nd 13.5 BTU Roof AC
Rear Backup Camera
Awning
Sharp Convection Microwave
Natural Maple Interior
Pots and pans drawer under cook-top
Booth Dinette Drawers
Bedroom Television

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 208"
Overall Length (approximate) – 29'1"
Overall Height w/Roof Air – 11'9"
Interior Height – 80"
Overall Width – 101"
Interior Width – 96"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 20,500 lb.
GAWR (Front) – 7,000 lb.
GAWR (Rear) – 13,500 lb.
GCWR – 26,000 lb.
UVW – 15,100 lb.
Trailer Hitch Capacity – 5,000 lb.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – 310 HP, 6.8L V-10
Torque (Ft-Lbs) – 725 @ 2650 rpm
Transmission – 4R100
4-Speed Automatic
Transmission w/Overdrive
Tire Size – 245/70R 19.5"
Alternator (Amps) – 130

CHASSIS

Frame – Ford Super duty F-Series
Anti-lock Braking System (ABS)
Suspension (Front & Rear) – Leaf Springs
Leveling Jacks – Standard

CONSTRUCTION

Body – Laminated floor, sidewalls and roof
Support – Steel/Aluminum reinforced structure
Front/rear body panels – One-piece fiberglass caps
Exterior side panels – Gel-coat fiberglass walls with graphics/paint

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Sleeps four
Fuel Tank (gallons) – 75

Freshwater (gallons) – 53
Black water (gallons) – 40
Grey water (gallons) – 45
LPG Tank (gallons, filled to 80% capacity) – 24

MSRP

MSRP is the manufacturer's suggested retail price and does not include dealer prep or options. Manufacturer reserves the right to change or discontinue models offered, standard features, optional equipment, and prices without prior notice. Dealer prices may vary.

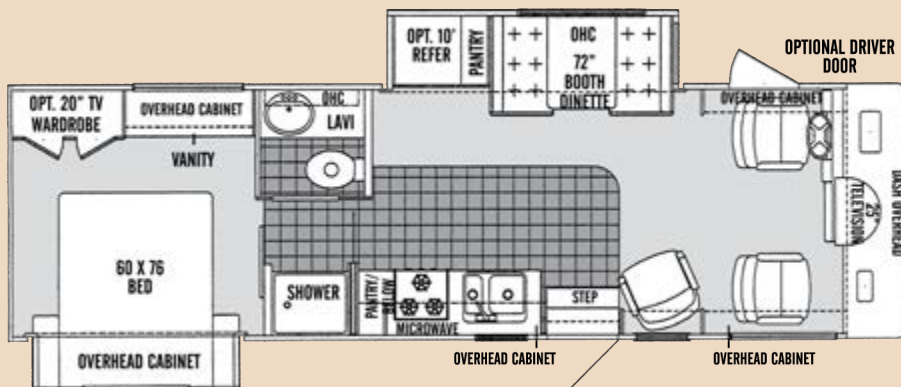
UVW

This is the approximate weight of the vehicle with a full fuel tank and a half-full of fresh water tank.

DEALERS

To locate the Tiffin dealer nearest you, go to www.tiffinmotorhomes.com and click on "dealer locator." If internet access is not available, call 256-356-8661 and ask the operator for the Tiffin dealer location nearest to you.

28 DA



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Old Fashioned Comfort

A ROAST FOR TWO

by Maureen Callahan

There's just something cozy about sitting down on the couch and relaxing while dinner cooks itself in the oven. It could be anything roasted—a chicken, a spice crusted breast of turkey or even a pot roast. Yet, when it's just two for dinner, a huge roast or a whole chicken can seem like way too much food and way too big an investment of time. That's why pork tenderloin is such a perfect alternative. Not only is the cut lean, but tenderloin takes only minutes to roast rather than hours. To jazz things up a little bit, we've filled a small pork tenderloin with a savory-sweet stuffing of dried fruit, garlic, and walnuts. Since the meat is flattened before it's stuffed, you'll end up with a colorful center pocket of flavorful stuffing. It may sound complicated, but don't panic. This is an easy meal to pull off. Dried fruits are rehydrated in a little chicken broth and seasoned with sautéed garlic, herbs, and spices and rolled up into the tenderloin, secured with twine, and seared in a skillet.

Continued next page

Cherry-Plum Stuffed Pork Tenderloin

Serves 2

- 1½ tablespoons olive or canola oil, divided**
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced**
- ⅓ cup chicken broth**
- 1 tablespoon golden raisins**
- 3 tablespoons dried cherries**
- 4 dried plums (prunes), coarsely chopped**
- 1 tablespoon fresh or 1 teaspoon dried thyme, divided**
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt, divided**
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided**
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped walnuts**
- 1 (12-ounce) pork tenderloin, trimmed**
- ½ pound tiny creamer potatoes, scrubbed and halved**

Preheat oven to 350°.

Heat ½ teaspoon oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic and sauté 1 minute. Add ⅓ cup chicken broth, raisins, cherries, plums and ½ tablespoon thyme. Reduce heat and simmer until fruit softens and liquid evaporates, about 5–7 minutes. Remove from heat and stir ⅛ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon of pepper and let cool.

Place pork tenderloin on a cutting board and cut off narrow end, about 3–4 ounces, and reserve for another use. Slice tenderloin in half lengthwise, cutting to, but not through, other side. Open halves, laying pork flat. Slice each half lengthwise, cutting to, but not through, other side. Spread cherry mixture onto pork leaving about 2-inches of space on sides. Sprinkle with walnuts and roll up pork, jelly-roll fashion, starting with a long side. Sprinkle pork with ⅛ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper and secure or tie roast at 2-inch intervals with cooking twine, making sure to wrap the narrow end back on itself to keep roast about the same thickness.

Warm 2 teaspoons oil in a large ovenproof skillet over medium high heat. Sear pork on all sides, about 3–4 minutes, making sure it browns nicely.

Toss potatoes with remaining 2 teaspoons of oil and remaining ¼ teaspoon each of salt, pepper. Sprinkle with remaining ½ tablespoon of thyme and place in pan around pork, cut sides down. Roast in a convection fast bake oven for 12–15 minutes or until pork registers 150° F on a meat thermometer or is slightly pink in the center. (For a conventional oven: cook roast at 325° F for 18–20 minutes.) Place pork on a platter and cover with foil; let rest 5 minutes before cutting. Slice into ½-inch thick slices and serve with potatoes.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 443; Protein 27g; Carbohydrates 43g; Fat 17g; Saturated fat 3g; Monounsaturated fat 9g; Polyunsaturated fat 3g; Sodium 621mg; Cholesterol 63mg; Fiber 5g



Throw some tiny creamer potatoes in the pan to roast along with the pork and before you know it, dinner will be ready. Follow the repast up with some fresh spring strawberries (marinated here in a little fresh orange juice and orange zest) and the whole event is a delicious spring meal fit for an intimate celebration.

TIPS AND VARIATIONS

Cooking tip: For a moist, perfectly cooked roast, be sure to use a meat thermometer. The ideal strategy is to pull pork out of the oven when the thermometer reaches 150° F, or while the roast is still cooking. Allowing the meat to stand 5 minutes at room temperature allows it to finish cooking slowly (temperature will rise to 160° F) and gives juices time to redistribute back into the roast.

Variations: Make the stuffing mixture with a little bit of extra chicken broth and use it as a savory-sweet chutney. Serve it warm over grilled chicken, turkey tenderloins, or bone-in pork chops. Or use the chutney as a sandwich spread to accompany sliced meat.

Leftovers: For lunch or supper the next day, cut the reserved end of the pork tenderloin into thin strips and stir fry in some peanut or canola oil with minced garlic, shredded carrots, snow peas, and sliced shiitake mushrooms. To make a sauce, stir one tablespoon of corn starch into a small bowl with 1/3 cup chicken broth and 1 tablespoon soy sauce. Pour corn starch mixture into skillet over stir fry and cook until thickened. Serve stir fry over cooked jasmine rice or soba noodles.

Strawberry Pound Cake

Place one cup of sliced strawberries in a small bowl and sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of powdered sugar, 1/2 teaspoon finely grated orange zest, and 1-1/2 tablespoons of orange juice. Cover and chill for at least 30 minutes. Slice a store bought pound cake into three 1/2-inch thick slices. Cut slices in half on the diagonal to make 6 triangles; place triangles in a large dry nonstick skillet. Cook over medium heat until cake begins to brown lightly on both sides, about 2-3 minutes total. To serve, overlap 3 cake triangles on a plate and top with berry mixture. Garnish with a sprig of mint or a dollop of whipped cream.

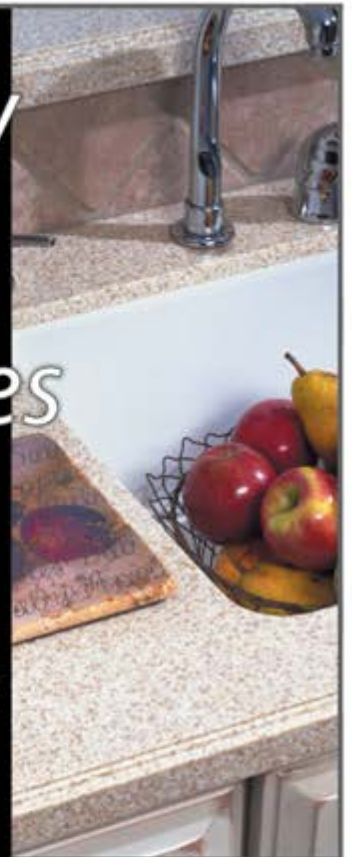
Award winning food writer MAUREEN CALLAHAN studied at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. A native Floridian, she now resides in Denver, Colorado.

Photography by VICTOR JUNCO, Tampa, Florida

Food Styling by CAROLYN BREUER, Temple Terrace, Florida

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Making a House Feel Like Home

by Fred Thompson



Last month at the FMCA Convention in Albuquerque a retired couple with 13 years of full-time RVing experience came to check out the Tiffin display of 18 units. After they had visited three Allegro Bays, I engaged them in conversation.

“What do you like best about these motorhomes?” I asked. They owned a 1996 Allegro, and he answered quickly, “The engineering design is practical and they’re built solid.”

“My motorhome feels like home. It’s not glitzy—it’s just comfortable, and I like being in it,” was the feminine response. “And that’s the way these new ones feel, too,” she continued. She was a bit surprised to learn that the CEO’s wife, Judy Tiffin, was the interior designer.

“Where did she get her interior decoration training?” the full-timer asked. “At home,” I answered with a smile.

“You said ‘my motorhome *feels* like home’ and I can tell you that Judy Tiffin *knows* how to make a place *feel* like home,” I said as she began smiling, too.

The middle child, Judy has a sister five years older and a brother 10 years younger. She was only 10 days old on April 1, 1944, when her father, A.M. Nix, shipped out to France on the Queen Mary to fight the Germans. When he returned, they bonded quickly.

“Daddy taught me how to fish, and I still love to fish today,” Judy opened the interview with quick snapshots into her life. “I like fly fishing best. I put a popping bug in front and follow it 18 inches behind with a willow fly.” She must have transferred her love for fishing to her son, Van, who has two trophy fish on his office walls.

“Daddy opened a Dairy Bar in Red Bay in 1956 and I started working there when I was barely 12. Later on, Bob would come and hang out at the Dairy Bar and that’s where we first got to know each other.”

Bob played tackle on the Red Bay football team. In the fall of his senior year, he hurt his knee in a tree cutting accident. Advised not to dress-out that weekend, he asked Judy for a date to go to the game. It was a beginning.

Two years later they were married by her Granddaddy Nix, a Baptist preacher who lived a few miles away in Belmont, Miss. Tim was born the next year.

Listening to the interview, Bob added, “We really just grew up together.” Forty-three years later, he shows appreciation, admiration, and respect for Judy’s many talents and skills. On the counter in the kitchen was a huge bouquet of flowers Bob had presented on her birthday.

“Judy did a really good job of raising our children,” he continued. “I was at the plant or the cotton gin nearly all the time, and she devoted full time to raising them.”

“But you were always there for them, and had a strong influence on their spiritual training and outside interests,” she countered.

Continuing to live in their hometown, Judy and Bob added Van to the family in 1965. Three years later, Judy started buying cotton for the The Gin Company. After the cotton was classed by a government agent, Judy would buy it from the farmer and sell it to the cotton buyers in Selma, Memphis, or Montgomery.

“It was the dirtiest job I’ve ever had. No one could get that dirty cleaning their house,” she remembered vividly. “The gin generated so much lint and dirt into the air. It just layered onto you. I usually kept the boys with me at the gin, and it kept poor Van’s allergies going all the time.”

The company usually ginned 120 to 130 bales a day. Bob and Judy still remember all the facts and figures from the business. “It takes 1600 pounds of seed cotton to make a 500 pound bale.” And they can still reel off the specifications for classifying cotton.

Judy remembers Bob’s accident at the gin as if it happened yesterday. “The gin made so much noise that I could not hear him hollering. It took three weeks to get him out of the hospital. He was supposed to go home for several weeks to recuperate. But he didn’t.

He went right back to work.” She glared at him disapprovingly even now. “I treated and dressed the wounds every day with silver nitrate and peroxide. Peroxide will clean out a wound and keep the infection out.”

Bob made no defense for his stubbornness 33 years ago. But he experienced no disability from the injury and claims today that he can throw a football 40 yards.

“You know football is serious business in this state,” Bob told the New York photogra-

Daddy
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to fish, and I still
love to fish
today.

pher who accompanied me on the interview. “Naw,” Pete suppressed his smile and tried to fake a Southern accent. “I never would have guessed from all the Bear Bryant and Alabama stuff on the walls at the office.”

In 1975 Bob and Judy decided it was time to complete the family and they added Alex, named after his Grandfather Tiffin. “It took me 10 years to get over Tim and Van before I could have Lex,” Judy laughed. “Tim loved to pick on Van until he had all he was willing to take, and then they would go at it. The Lord only knows how many times I had to separate those two.”

Grandpa Alex and Granny enjoyed participating in the raising of the two older boys and gave them jobs at the lumber yard. “Grandpa told Van not to tell people how much he was being paid,” Judy related. “‘Don’t worry, Grandpa,’ Van said, ‘I’d be ashamed for anyone to know.’ Tim was shocked and couldn’t believe Van had said that.” Bob laughed heartily again at a family story he no doubt had told himself.

Judy continued in her role as cotton buyer until 1977 when Bob sold the gin to a company in Georgia. As Tiffin Motorhomes began to build one motorhome a day, Judy added another job title to her resume which already included wife, mother, and cotton buyer. As interior decorator, she selected and coordinated the materials for curtains, sofas, chairs, bedspreads, and carpeting. Since the motorhomes at that time were much smaller and simpler than now, and there was only one model, not five, Judy did not regard the new responsibility as overwhelming.

Sewing had always been a practical hobby for her, which made planning the production facility to create curtains, coverings for sofas and chairs, and bedspreads simply an extension of her homemaking skills. She saw her job as making a coach *feel* like a home. The early Allegros were designed for families and some could sleep as many as eight with the pull down bed above the driver, the bedroom in the rear, the sofa bed, and the dinette which made a double for children.

In the late eighties and early nineties a new market demand began to strongly influence the floorplans and amenities offered in

Class A coaches. Instead of accommodations for six or eight, empty nesters wanted floorplans designed just for them. The “one model fits all” plan over a short time expanded into three, then four, and finally five model lines — all of which greatly increased Judy’s interior design responsibility. She took it in stride.

To find a broader variety of materials, she began to make regular seasonal trips to the textile manufacturers showing in North Carolina. Her assistant who traveled with her marveled at the number of fabric shows and buying appointments Judy scheduled in one day. How could a woman in her fifties completely wear him out, he wondered. Judy was aware of the adage, “time is money,” and wasted neither.

Lighting and plumbing fixtures, valances, day-night shades, molding, counter surfaces, etched glass, ultraleather, multiple slide-outs — all figured into a more coordinated, complex interior design to please buyers who wanted more luxurious coaches. But she realized, too, that the company’s bread-and-butter market was the dependable and sturdy Allegro. “You don’t forget your roots,” she thought, as she continued to tastefully coordinate the features and amenities of the Tiffin foundation model.

Judy’s flair for interior decoration had another side which was not apparent when you walk through the five Tiffin product lines — Antiques! She and Bob began collecting while they were still living in Red Bay. But the collection took a serious turn in 1995 when they saw an 1888 three-story Victorian for sale on historic Wood Avenue in Florence, Alabama, almost an hour’s drive from the Red Bay plant.

“When Bob saw the woodwork, he fell in love with it,” Judy said. The wainscoting, the double-entry doors, the stairwell with landing, the floors — the whole house exuded a craftsmanship and character that was irresistible to her husband. “This is Bob’s house,” she explained as we began the tour. “It took me a while, but now I’ve got my special places.”

The house was known throughout Florence as the Town Club, and had been used commercially by its former owners for special parties, dinners, and wedding receptions. The wainscoting posed a special problem. It had been covered with several coats of lacquer, turning it almost black. Judy supervised a team of workmen who for several months stripped the dark lacquer, revealing the beautiful natural oak which you see today.

Bob supervised the exterior renovation and the structural changes. The house needed a new roof — and that did not mean black felt and shingles. The job required a specialist who could fabricate the unique metalwork required for Victorian architecture. Bob studied the detail the house needed and eventually found the right craftsman. It was a restoration so tedious that the craftsman

Bob and Judy’s century-old Victorian on Florence’s Wood Avenue lends itself to gracious entertaining. Behind Judy is an original mural of the *Forks of Cypress*, an antebellum home which burned several decades ago.

She saw
her job as making
a coach feel like a
home.



made Bob promise never to tell who did the work. “That roof will last a hundred years,” he beamed.

Thinking ahead for their later years, Bob had workmen tear out the back stairwell and install an elevator serving all three floors. It came in handy when they had to get their furniture up to the second and third floors.

Serious and knowledgeable collectors, the Tiffins found time to make trips to favorite dealers, especially those in southern Pennsylvania. Judy knew that restoring a Victorian of this caliber demanded many period pieces to validate its character. She began to assemble their eclectic collection into the generously-sized rooms, so that each piece now appears to belong in its appointed position.

Judy’s skill for decorating in the Victorian genre was not innate. As you walk through their home, the bookshelves and tables on the second and third floors bulge with books about architecture, antiques, fabrics, and interior design. She absorbed and applied until the rooms began to reflect not only the romantic aura of a Queen Anne Victorian, but also the comfortableness that made the big house *feel* like a home. Somehow she removed the formality and stiffness usually associated with the era.

They both agreed that the unfinished attic should be used for plain old “fun space,” with the grandchildren in mind. The huge timbered roof beams were enclosed and the high ceiling in the spacious game and play room was fitted with a skylight. It was the right place for the big screen television to watch the Alabama football reruns (they usually attend all the games during the fall).

And what about those special places she mentioned. The attic now accommodates Judy’s sewing room. Practically, she installed a large cutting table with an acrylic top printed with measuring scales. And traditionally, there is a small antique rocker that she enjoys while knitting and sewing. And a private space? Yes, Judy has a sitting room on the first floor near the back of the home. It’s for reading or just taking a nap. “I’m trying to retire, but I’m having to get used to the idea,” she admits.

Like any proud grandparents, Bob and Judy are enjoying watching their grandchildren develop and grow up. “Tim and Lynne have two boys and two girls. Trent is into tennis and Brock soccer. Hannah is a gymnast and Laura is an artist,” Judy explained.

Van and Michelle have Van Leigh, Jr., and Shelby. “Shelby and Leigh spend just about every Sunday afternoon with us. Leigh is taking after his Dad in learning to kick field goals and extra points. He plays for the Muscle Shoals High School football team,” the grandfather said. For the uninitiated, Van still holds the field goal record at Alabama, where in four years he never missed an extra point. “Shelby is my little homemaker. We like to knit, sew, and cook together,” Judy says.

“Lex and Denisha do not have children yet. There may be more grandchildren in our future,” she said.

Bob and Judy try to go to as many of their grandchildren’s games as possible. Participation is not just a tradition in this family — it’s a must.

And what else does this energetic grandmother have in mind?

“One of my favorite vacation places is northern California. I like the climate in the Napa Valley. And I love Santa Fe. The air smells so wonderful. I don’t think I’ve ever been any place I didn’t like. When I go with Bob to RV shows, I take off and vis-



The third floor turreted porch offers a commanding view of Wood Avenue and has become the traditional location for the neighborhood’s outdoor Christmas tree.

it antique, yarn, and quilt shops, and museums. But I still like to examine the competition to see what we are up against,” she says, not having shed that business mantle completely.

“I admire people who get in a motorhome and just go — they are still learning. They’ve got interests and they are inquisitive. Bob and I like to go, too, when he feels like he can take off. Last fall we flew to Albuquerque and picked up a motorhome. We went to Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico, and then on to Durango, Colorado, where we rode the train from Durango to Silverton. Then we went to Prescott, Arizona, and finally to Pomona, California, where we sold the motorhome and flew home. In 1993 we took a motorhome to Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, and back. Great trip!” she remembered. “We took our first long motorhome trip back in August 1975. Lex was only two months old, Van was 10, and Tim was 13. I can’t enumerate all the trips we have all made since that first trip. It surely has been a good ride.”

Their home on Wood Avenue is just a few blocks from the University of North Alabama campus. “I love to take classes, and I may enroll for one or two this fall. I am a work still in progress,” she concluded.

Two for the Road: Dorothy and Codee



Still enjoying the RV lifestyle at 80, this grandmother isn't ready to settle down! Her family numbers five children, nine grandchildren, a sister and brother-in-law, and Codee, a beloved 8-year-old Doberman. Codee is the only one who sees Dorothy Votava everyday.

A Kentuckian by birth, she and her sister, Mary, grew up in Chicago. "As a family, we did a lot of traveling in the south," she said. If there is a gene for traveling, Dorothy inherited it.

Dorothy and Edward Votava married in 1943 and began their family the following year. Sixteen years later their family included Carol, Tom, Terry,

Russ, and Patti. Outdoor recreation was always a part of raising their family as they enjoyed boating in the warmer months on the many lakes in northern Illinois and Wisconsin.

As a foundry consultant, Ed Votava's work took him to many parts of the country. In the early seventies, they bought a Mini Midas. "He had to travel and we made those trips in the motorhome whenever we could. We enjoyed it together," Dorothy remembered.

It wasn't long until they upgraded to a Class A motorhome and began to take some very serious trips: the western states were particularly appealing along with many of the national parks. "We did Mexico by ourselves in the early eighties. Down the east coast and back up through the middle," she recalled. "One of our most memorable trips was the California coastline on Route 1. We did it heading south so we would be in the outside lane. As the passenger, I got all of the panoramic view as Ed drove."

"We could do things back in the seventies and eighties that you probably couldn't get away with today," Dorothy said. "We parked the motorhome in New York City's Central Park and had an Easter dinner with our grandchildren. With Patti and one of the grandchildren, we parked on the beach near Sebastian, Florida, and had Thanksgiving dinner."



As with most committed RVers, Dorothy and Ed found a favorite winter spot at the John Prince Campground in Palm Beach County, Florida. The campground had a special appeal because of its proximity to her sister and brother-in-law, Mary and Ed Palmer, in nearby Lake Worth.

Sadly, the 17 years of motorhoming together came to an end in 1989 when Ed passed away. "After my husband died, my son brought me down to Florida in the motorhome and left me here at the John Prince Campground. There were so many friends in the campground who had been coming here for the same number of years that Ed and I had," she said.

Dorothy decided then not to give up the RV lifestyle. She returned home, sold her house, gave the children what they wanted from the home, and became a full-timer. "It was time to cut loose. I could enjoy my friends at John Prince, travel to wherever I wished, and visit with my children and still stay in my own home. Having my sister, Mary, nearby for the winter months was a special advantage."

Dorothy and Mary enjoy the winter months by hitting the Saturday yard sales in Palm Beach County. No big items — just special items like Waterford glass and a real pearl necklace. "Mary is good; she can spot stuff," she laughed.

Up until 1996 Dorothy had her share of problems with motorhomes. But in visiting with other RVers in campgrounds, she kept hearing about the superb customer service that Bob Tiffin guaranteed his customers. "I bought a used 1995 Allegro and took it to the Red Bay plant to have them put everything in perfect shape," she said. "They were wonderful! I knew I had made the right decision after my first trip to Red Bay. Now when I leave Florida each spring, I head for my scheduled appointment in Red Bay to get everything in perfect shape for the coming year."

Asked to recommend one of her favorite spots to other RVers, Dorothy immediately said, "Santa Fe!" Why? "The FOOD, the shopping, the jewelry," she exulted.

In 2000 Dorothy celebrated the millennium by trading for a new 36-foot Allegro Bay. With a Chevy Cavalier in tow, it is larger than any rig she had driven before. Did that bother her?

Continued on page 36

Codee has proven to be a wonderful traveling companion. She also provides a degree of friendly security. As with most full-timers, Dorothy treasures the friends made in campgrounds throughout the country, often over a morning cup of coffee.

Utah

by Jonathan Ragsdale

Utah's Scenic Byways

It's a fad among travel writers to choose a favorite highway and write about it. There's nothing wrong with that, especially for those of us who love the highways and back roads that ribbon their way through Color Country (also known as the state of Utah). A case in point is a giant loop that RV enthusiasts have for years been taking in their quest to explore southern Utah's canyon lands. It's a drive that can be enjoyed year round, with the only caveat being to check the weather and road conditions during the winter months.

The route begins in St. George, a delightful town that sits in the very southwest corner of Utah. From here it loops its way through Zion National Park, over to Bryce Canyon, up through Capitol Reef Monument to Green River and Price, Utah, before heading south through the scenic town of Circleville where Butch Cassidy was born, raised, and perfected his skills as an outlaw. In fact, there's almost a cult type following today among those who believe that Butch Cassidy did not perish in South America with the Sundance Kid as historians would have us believe. Instead, Butch returned to southern Utah and lived out his life under an assumed name. In any event, the cabin where he was born still stands today.

■ DAY ONE: ST. GEORGE AND LEEDS TO ZION NATIONAL PARK (45 miles)

St. George is a very pleasant city of 50,000 where many RV snowbirds spend the winter months. But the outlying areas often go undiscovered. Near Leeds, Utah, only 14 miles northeast of St. George on I-15 at exit 22, you will find one of the most scenic spots in the Old West, an old silver mining town (c. late 1800s) called Silver Reef. Housed in the original stone Wells Fargo Bank is a museum that features artifacts from the area's past, plus a gallery displaying the work of Jerry Anderson, one of today's foremost sculptors of Western subjects. Old buildings on the main street that once teamed with lucrative businesses now beg to be photographed. Looking to the east you will see the distant ridges of Hurricane Mesa and Zion National Park just beyond.

While passing through Leeds, stop and try out the cookin' at Molly's Restaurant, or head on down the street to Norma's Country Kitchen, a shop that features freshly baked bread and other country goodies. In fact, you can spend the night here in



The original Wells Fargo Bank in Silver Reef houses the Jerry Anderson Gallery which displays some of his 47 life-sized bronzes and many of his limited edition pieces. Shown above is *Ancient Artisan*, a half-life size bronze.

Itinerary Highlights

St. George Leeds

Molly's Restaurant
Norma's Country Kitchen
Silver Reef Mining Town
Jerry Anderson, sculptor

Zion National Park

Massive sandstone formation
The Narrows
Weeping Rock
1.2-mile Tunnel
Hoodoos

Bryce Canyon National Park

Ruby's

Kodachrome Basin

The Canyon Lands

Escalante
Boulder
Torrey

Hole-in-the-Rock

Anasazi State Park Museum

Capitol Reef National Park

Fruita Campground
Fruita Historic District
Waterpocket Fold
Wildlife

Green River

John Wesley Powell Museum
River rafting
Ray's Tavern

Price

Nine Mile Canyon
Petroglyphs
Pictographs
Fremont Culture

Farlino's Restaurant

Tavaputs Plateau

Tavaputs Ranch
High country trail rides
Wildlife

Circleville

Butch Cassidy's cabin

Pinewoods Resort

County Court House
The Country Store



While you will find good country cooking at Norma's, the items you can take with you are irresistible.

Leeds at Zion West RV Park (435-879-2854). The facility offers 50-amp shore power, a laundromat, showers, and a massive grassy area shaded by giant cottonwoods. Don't be surprised if you pull in after dark and see deer leisurely feeding in the hay fields immediately adjacent to the park. This is good stuff!

If the day is still young, drive five miles southwest from Leeds on I-15 to Utah Hwy. 9, and begin a new visual adventure. Winding east, Hwy. 9 takes you into the small country hamlets of Hurricane, La Verkin, Virgin, and Springdale and into one of America's prime national treasures, Zion National Park. Looking at the massive formations of Navajo Sandstone that jut thousands of feet into the air, it is hard to believe the area was once covered by an inland sea. Pushed up over time by movement in the earth's crust, the sandstone was carved by the sculpturing talent of the Virgin River, creating a magnificent geologic feature called The Narrows. With



The Narrows in Zion National Park

walls on either side that rise 2,500 vertical feet, it's amazing to see the Virgin River appear out of the face of the Navajo Sandstone.

Watchman Campground provides an excellent place to RV camp inside the park (Class A coaches up to 40-ft., \$18/night in section E8, elec. hookup only, 800-365-CAMP). From here hiking and bike trails go off in every direction. If you visit in the off-season (September through May), you can drive your coach up to the lodge and enjoy excellent gourmet dining: breakfast, lunch, or dinner. A short hike off the paved road is a most unusual geologic feature named Weeping Rock. After passing through a thousand feet of sandstone, the water that was once rain or melting snow is blocked and redirected to the face of the cliff by a thin horizontal barrier of slate. Flowing laterally along the slate barrier, the water oozes out of the side of the sandstone cliff, making the rock appear as if it is weeping.

Continuing east on Hwy. 9, you ascend a series of switchbacks that lead to the entrance of a 1.2-mile tunnel that was built around 1930. Tell the employees at the park entrance that you will be transiting through this tunnel in your motorhome. You will have to purchase a tunnel pass for \$10. Park rangers lead single file caravans through the tunnel to the other side.

On the east side of the park you will encounter a totally different kind of geologic formation called "hoodoos." These sandstone fingers poke a hundred feet or more

straight into the air. Covered with a cap of metallic minerals, rain and melting snow are prevented from reaching the crown. Instead, the water runs off the metallic top and down along the sides, carrying away the soft sandstone material below and forming a stalagmite-type creation. At the junction of Hwy. 9 and US 89 you make a left hand turn and head north.

■ DAY TWO: ZION TO BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK TO KODACHROME BASIN (122 miles)

Named after Ebenezer Bryce who in the late 1800s summered his cattle along the edges of this spectacular canyon, Bryce Canyon is one of the most popular spots in the West. At an elevation of 8,000-plus feet, the wind, rushing up through the red-rock pinnacles and breaking over the rim, sounds like surf as it washes the tops of the ponderosa pines and cedars. Be sure to schedule a day hike into the canyon from Sunset Point, Sunrise Point, or Inspiration Point, places with very colorful-sounding names. The canyon continues to be sculptured by the erosive effects of wind and water. The vibrant reds and pinks attract millions of visitors from around the world every year.

Just before entering the park you will see a lodge called Ruby's. Named after Reuben Syrett who opened the resort in 1919, Ruby's is still owned and operated by his descendants. The food is excellent, with an all-you-can-eat cowboy buffet—breakfast, lunch, and dinner—for about \$6, \$8, and \$12, respectively. Inside the lodge you can book canyon and rim horseback rides, chuck wagon cook-outs, helicopter tours of the canyon, and ATV rentals. Ruby's puts on a rodeo twice a week. There's a great petting zoo for kids of all ages (3 to 103), shops, two service stations and plenty of RV camping, both inside and outside the park. During the summer months it's wise to make a reservation well in advance. Ruby's RV Park & Campground can be reached by calling 435-834-5301 (April–October) and 435-834-5341 (November–March). Call 435-834-5322 for reservations and information for the park campground.



Bryce Canyon in winter.



The colors created in Kodachrome Basin by the brilliant western sun leaves travelers in awe.

Spending just one day at Bryce Canyon may not be enough.

About forty-five minutes from Bryce Canyon, and eight miles south off Hwy. 12 at Cannonville, is Kodachrome Basin. Named by the National Geographic Society in the late 1940s, Kodachrome Basin earned its name because of the brilliant colors created by the ever-changing angle of the sun. Bring everything you will need with you because it's a long way back to a store. Permits: day use, \$5; overnight camping, \$14. An arm load of firewood (literally all you can carry) costs \$3.50. There are hot showers, clean bathrooms, and telephone service. A park ranger resides permanently on site. Camping reservations 800-322-3770.

■ **DAY THREE: SCENIC BYWAY 12
—KODACHROME TO ESCALANTE TO
BOULDER TO TORREY**
(107 miles)

A ribbon of pavement winding its way through awe-inspiring scenery, taking you through the towns of Escalante, Boulder, and Torrey, Utah Hwy. 12 takes you through the very heart of Utah's Canyon Lands, showing you the nooks and crannies that beckon the motorhome enthusiast to come and explore. Its rich history spans the early days of the Anasazis (Ancient Ones), near the time of Christ, to the Mormon pioneers who settled this vast expanse in the 1800s. More visitors come each year to discover this magnificent playground. Even those who are casually interested may find it difficult to restrict their visit to one day.

The BLM Office on the edge of Escalante is a good place to plan your visit. Area guides will suggest places to visit and

things to see and do, and counsel you on roads where motorhome travel is not advisable. Keep in mind that the raw beauty of the Canyon Lands belies a message of caution: don't wander off the highway on your own unless you have the right kind of vehicle, plenty of water, and have told someone where you are going and when you will return. If you are ready to make camp, the Escalante State Park offers 21 sites for RVs with a maximum pad length of 55 feet. No hookups. Dump station and modern restrooms with showers. \$12/night. 800-322-3770.



Traveling south through the high desert, determined settlers built a trail down an impassable cliff to lay claims to the richer farm lands in the Colorado Valley. The treacherous route became known as "Hole-in-the-Rock."

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One interesting destination is a place called “Hole-in-the-Rock” that’s reached after a 55-mile drive southeast from Escalante along a rugged dirt road where high clearance 4WD vehicles are recommended. If you have come prepared with such a vehicle in tow, what you will see is unbelievable. Around 1880, a group of Mormon families with their wagons, horses, and a thousand head of cattle built a trail literally down the side of a 2,500-foot cliff to the Colorado River, where they crossed and went on to settle the valley. Today as you look through the Hole-in-the-Rock that once led down to the river, you will see the waters of Lake Powell. The hike down to the lake is difficult, but is possible with careful preparation.

Only 20 miles but a solid hour’s drive east of Escalante is the town of Boulder, where the Anasazi State Park Museum is located. A thousand years ago the Anasazi civilization spread from the Rio Grande River in New Mexico to where Las Vegas is today. Their dwellings survive only at Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon, and here at Boulder. From the museum, the drive over Boulder Mountain to Torrey takes another couple of hours. From the 10,000-plus foot elevation reached on Hwy. 12 you can see all the way to the Henry Mountains, the last mountain range in the United States to be named.

■ **DAY FOUR: TORREY TO CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK TO GREEN RIVER (105 miles)**

Turning right off Hwy. 12 onto Hwy. 24, you will travel east on this new Scenic Byway as it meanders and parallels the Fremont River. Within minutes you will enter the Capitol Reef National Park. On your way to the Visitor Center, you will pass geologic formations named like Chimney Rock, The Castle, and Twin Rocks. The Fruita Campground offers 70 sites on a first-come first-served basis, each equipped with a picnic table and grill but no hook-ups. \$10/night. The sites usually are filled by early to mid-afternoon during the summer. Near by is the Fruita Historic District with its nineteenth century schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, and orchards where you can actually pick and eat fruit free of charge while visiting. A 25-mile round trip drive takes you to the Waterpocket Fold, a twisted, uplifted land formation known as a



Wild turkeys meander through the brush in Capitol Reef National Park. Visitors should keep their camera loaded. A telephoto lens may be useful here.

monocline. John Wesley Powell first wrote about it during his trip down the Green and Colorado Rivers in the late 1860s. Capitol Reef is an area replete with petroglyphs and wildlife (mule deer, wild turkeys, marmots, desert bighorn, golden eagle), so keep your camera handy. For more information about Capitol Reef, call 435-425-3791 or visit www.nps.gov/care.

Exit the park on Hwy. 24 along the Fremont River to Hanksville, and then bear north for 44 miles to I-70 (an hour’s drive). Travel east on I-70 to Green River, Utah (another 15-minutes). You will be traversing what is called the San Rafael Desert, an open rangeland used by ranchers to graze their cattle during the wintertime when the high country is packed with snow. The town of Green River offers its own unique menu of opportunities, including the John Wesley Powell Museum on the banks of the Green River. Here the entire story is told about how Powell and his men navigated in small boats down the Green and Colorado Rivers, from Wyoming down through the Grand Canyon. They lived to tell about it and Powell, a one-armed Civil War veteran, made this trip not once, but twice. Amazing!

Ray’s Tavern in Green River claims

world fame for its charbroiled steaks and burgers and caters to the river rafters during the summer months. Holiday Expeditions, one of the premier river rafting and expedition companies in the West, offers adventures that can last up to seven days with trips originating May 24 through August 21. For those who want a very civilized taste of river rafting, they offer one- and two-night adventures where they set up camp and cook all the meals (gourmet meals, we have eaten them), as they let you see the Canyon Lands from a whole new perspective. Their telephone number is 800-624-6323. There website is www.bikeraft.com. It’s so easy and rewarding. You should think about doing this.

There are several RV campgrounds in Green River that offer full service facilities. They include:

- KOA–Green River
800-562-3649
- Shady Acres RV Park & Campground
800-537-8674
- United Campground of Green River
435-564-8195

■ **DAY FIVE: GREEN RIVER TO PRICE TO CIRCLEVILLE TO CEDAR MOUNTAIN AND CEDAR CITY (265 miles)**

From Green River go five miles west on I-70 to exit 156 and turn north on US 6-191 for a 60-mile drive to Price, which is a matter of minutes away from Nine Mile Canyon. Literally an outdoor museum, the canyon has some remarkable examples of petroglyphs (carvings on rock faces), pictographs (paintings on rock faces),



At the Tavaputs Ranch, a trail ride through the mountains may be the highlight of your Utah experience. The vistas (and the elevation) are breathtaking!

and remnants of dwellings from the pre-historic Fremont Culture that have remained untouched through the centuries. The 40-mile trip through the canyon on a level dirt road will probably require most of the day. There are no services available. Bring a picnic lunch, water, insect repellent, binoculars, and camera. Your effort will be well rewarded.



This petroglyph in Nine Mile Canyon attests to a rich prehistoric culture.

If you have a couple of extra days, a unique opportunity presents itself for wannabe cowboys to have a first-rate guest ranch experience. Owned and operated by Butch and Jeanie Jensen, the Tavaputs Ranch is a working cattle ranch where guests can be involved in the cowboy life as much or as little as they choose.

While the 15,000-acre summer ranch and lodge is 50 miles away up on the Tavaputs Plateau, ranch headquarters are in Price where you can safely leave your motorhome. The Jensens transport their guests to the lodge in 4WD SUVs. If you'd rather, you can take a 20-minute flight from the Price airport to the ranch and get an air tour before landing at Butch and Jeanie's airstrip on top of their mountain. Their lodge overlooks Desolation Canyon on the Green River where it's not at all unusual to see bear, elk, deer and even a mountain lion. And, oh, how Jeanie can cook! You can put on five pounds in two days. Her ranch cookin' is served round the clock and all meals are included in the per person rates. Call 435-637-1236 for more information and reservations, or visit their website <http://www.tavaputsranch.com/>. You need to check this out.

Before leaving Price, there's one last stop downtown that needs to be made. It's Farlino's Restaurant. Sam Farlino's grandfather came from Italy and his Italian fare is as good as that found in Tuscany or Naples. Farlino's is the place where Butch and his wranglers go for breakfast or lunch everyday and traditional western fare is also one of Sam's specials. Parallel parking for motorhomes can be found on the side street.

The drive from Price to Circleville, Utah (Utah Hwy. 10 to I-70 to US 89 and then

south) takes a couple of hours. About two miles south of Circleville on the right side of US 89 in a grove of trees is Butch Cassidy's cabin. If you decide to walk the quarter mile through the field to the cabin and look around, note that you are on private property and be sure to abide by any signs that are posted. Yes, this really is the birthplace of one of the characters popularized by Robert Redford

and Paul Newman in the classic 1969 movie, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. It's a true piece of Americana.

The road south to the junction of US 89 and Hwy. 14 is a leisurely drive. After turning right onto Hwy. 14, you will come to Pinewoods Resort, a premier destination for summer and winter and well worth the stop. Operated by Brian Romney, Pinewoods offers ATV and snowmobile rentals and the opportunity to get off the beaten path and see some of the West's most spectacular vistas. Taking one of Brian's guided ATV or snowmobile tours is an excellent way to learn about what you will be seeing. Visit www.pinewoodsresort.com or call 800-848-2525. Oh, yes, Pinewoods serves excellent food. You can't go wrong.

Not counting the side trips, you have traveled 644 miles, an average of only 130 miles per day. We have toured only a fraction of the interesting and entertaining places in this beautiful state. You could easily spend two weeks on this loop. But I hope this "starter trip" will be the beginning of



Paul Newman and Robert Redford will not be there to greet you, but a little knowledge of the history and folklore about Cassidy and the Kid will make this an interesting stop.



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1203

Helpful Products and Techniques to Keep Your Coach in Top Condition

by **Scotty Martin**
Tiffin Service Specialist

Over the years, I have seen 20- and 25-year-old motorhomes come in for service that looked almost brand new. Keeping your "home away from home" in top-notch condition will increase the residual value and give you great pride in owning your coach. Following are a list of products that we use here at Tiffin Motorhomes when we are asked to put a coach back in top shape

Camper's Choice Black Streak Remover. If a coach is not washed regularly, you may notice black streaks on the sidewalls caused by particles in the air which accumulate as residues with the evaporation of moisture. This streak remover will break those residues loose and leave the surface clean.

Camper's Choice Awning Cleaner. Mildew is the major enemy of awning material. It will eventually cause it to rot. Depending on the climate, your awning may pick up dirt and stains. Used regularly, this cleaner will keep your awning material in good condition.

B.E.S.T. makes several products that will help keep your motorhome looking new:

B.E.S.T. Wash & Wax. A combination product, add this to your wash water as directed to wash the exterior of your motorhome. It will leave the fiberglass exterior with a clean, glossy finish.

B.E.S.T. Rubber Roof Cleaner and Protectant. Designed especially for cleaning a rubber roof, the product will also protect the roof from the sun.

B.E.S.T. Bug-Off. When the summertime bugs make an ugly mess on the front of your motorhome, this product will dissolve the residues they left behind.

BLACK CAT Tire Dressing. This invaluable product will prevent your tires from dry-rotting and add the finishing touch to the detailing of your motorhome.

Goo Gone. The solvent or all solvents. Goo Gone removes grease, tar, gum, and old bumper stickers (in case you've

changed your politics). It is safe on any surface.

Gel-Gloss One Step Cleaner and Polish. Designed for the fiberglass exterior of your motorhome, Gel-Gloss will clean, seal, and protect the surface.

Slide-Out Rubber Seal Conditioner. Applied regularly, this conditioner will prevent the slide-out seals from tearing, sticking, or drying out.

RV Fresh. This will keep your motorhome smelling nice and fresh. It may be used on carpet, furniture, and bedspreads.

Spring Fresh. This product will prevent odors and clean your fresh water system.

Taking Your Motor Home Out of Storage

by **Billy Nichols**
Tiffin Service Specialist

If your motorhome has been in storage for the winter, follow these steps to put it back in operation for the traveling and camping season.

First, change the water filter. If your unit has one, you will find it in the storage compartment with the water pump or under the kitchen sink. Most Tiffin dealers stock the filters along with the many maintenance products you will need. If you do not live close to your dealer, call Camper's Choice at 800-833-6713.

If you winterized your system with anti-freeze, hook up to city water to fill and rinse out the lines. While doing this, turn the by-pass on, take the plug out of the water heater, and rinse it out really well.

Put a half gallon of Clorox or a box of baking soda in the fresh water tank. Rinse thoroughly to get all the residue out of the tank.

Blow out the exhaust on the water heater and furnace with compressed air to be sure no spider webs or other debris has clogged the exhaust. Check the LP system by turning it on and operating all of the gas appliances for a short period of time.

Check the refrigerator by taking the cover off the bottom of the burner tube and blowing it out with the air hose to clean it out.

Check water in the batteries. Check connections on the batteries, clean them if necessary, and make sure all the connections are tight.

Remove the outside covers of the air conditioners on the roof and blow them out with an air hose. Remove the dirt and dust build-up around the fans and compressors.

Check all fluid levels on the engine and make sure all is well before you start your trip.

Q&A: Programming the Xantrex Inverter

I would like to know more about how to program and operate the Xantrex inverter on the 2003 Phaeton. Can you publish the instructions in the magazine, as I believe this would probably help a lot of people. Thanks. — Ron Walker, Port Clinton, OH

The 2003 Phaeton came standard with a Xantrex Freedom 458 Inverter/Charger and a Freedom Remote Panel. This remote panel is used in conjunction with the inverter/charger to control and monitor the operation of the unit. The Freedom unit is both a DC and AC inverter, and a 12 volt DC battery charger. The unit can either invert or charge; it can not do both functions at the same time. The Freedom Remote Panel will report different measurements depending on which mode the inverter/charger is in. When charging it is a charger display panel, and when inverting it is a battery monitor and inverter display.

When the motorhome delivers AC power to the inverter/charger, either from shorepower or from a generator, the Freedom unit becomes a 3-stage battery charger and allows the circuits on the inverter to be powered from the AC source (AC pass through). In this situation the AC IN light will be on and the CHARGE light will be lit. This happens automatically when an AC source becomes available (hooking up to shorepower for example). At this time the Freedom remote panel displays charging information and the BATTERY STATE indicates which stage of charge the unit is in. Whenever the charger light is on, the DC VOLT indicators will show charger output voltage, and the DC AMPS will show how many amps the charger is putting out. The charger will also handle any DC loads that are required, thus keeping the batteries full.

ly charged.

When no AC power is available and the INVERTER light is on, the unit is in inverter mode. In this situation the circuits connected to the inverter are being powered by the batteries. The remote panel now displays the battery voltage and amperage draw from the batteries. The BATTERY STATE now reads like a fuel gauge for your batteries, and the lights will move from 'full' to 'empty' as the AC loads draw the batteries down. When a red light appears under BATTERY STATE, the batteries need recharging.

The Freedom inverter/charger came pre-configured with the correct settings for the Phaeton. The set-up should only have to be changed if there is a change in the system, for example if the number and type of batteries is changed. For an expanded overview of how to set-up, read and understand your Freedom inverter/charger, please download the "Freedom Remote Quick Guide" available from the Support section of www.xantrex.com.

Q&A: A Slide-Out Problem

by Richard Blanton
Tiffin Service Specialist

Several owners have asked what to do if the slide-out is stuck in the out position due to a 12V power failure or other difficulty.

The slide-out hardware we have used since 2000 is made by Power Gear System. These systems have a brake switch (a brass lever) located at the end of the slide-out motor (which is inside the storage compartment under the slide-out). The motor will be next to one of the geared slide-out rails. This switch will only rotate about 1/8 inch. The switch engages and releases the brake holding the slide-out box in place. Once you have the switch in the release position, you can use a 3/4 inch socket and ratchet or a 3/4 ratchet wrench, placed at the opposite end of the motor, and turn it until you have the slide-out in the desired position. If you don't have a socket and ratchet, you can also use an adjustable wrench. Once you have the slide-out into the desired position, be sure to turn the brake switch back to the engaged position.

For slide-outs on 1998 and 1999 models, please call a service technician at Tiffin Motorhomes for instructions on releasing a slide-out which is stuck in the out position. The motor on these models is in a difficult

position to reach. Call 256-356-8661.

Service Bulletins & Recalls

by Liz Jones
Tiffin Recall Manager

Currently we have three service bulletins and one recall. The service bulletins are as follows:

TIFF SB-01 Engine Battery Cables

TIFF SB-02 Engine Block Heater Wire Loom Retrofit

TIFF SB-03 Sealing of Bedroom Adjustable Roller

The recall is:

03V-149 Ford Brake Warning Indicator

Everyone under the recall should have been notified via mail (assuming their address hasn't changed). If you would like a copy of the Vehicle Identification Numbers on any of these service bulletins or the recall, please e-mail your request to liz.jones@tiffinmotorhomes.com. If you do not use email, call 256-356-0205. Please specify which recall.

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FULL BODY PAINT



by Fred Thompson

The jargon in the motorhome industry creates an ever-expanding list of terminology. The RV salesman had shown the couple, who were first-time buyers, four Allegro Bays. Two had striping in three colors on top of the white gelcoat fiberglass. The other two had been painted stem-to-stern, top to bottom with a base coat and three colors, and then finished off with clearcoat.

While the salesman was answering their questions and explaining the features of the different units, they were inside the motorhome. Back in the office, he began to price out the options to present them with a quotation. Then he popped the question, "Would you like full body paint?" She shot back, "I thought this was an RV dealership, not a health spa." A good laugh followed.

Full body paint was first offered by Tiffin on the Allegro Bus in 2001. When the 2005 models start coming off the line in July, the option will be offered on all models except

the Allegro. At Tiffin Motorhomes, customer demand drives production and the development of new facilities to meet the market. In the final analysis, full body paint not only creates a more beautiful coach, but most appraisers agree that it adds residual value when you go to trade or sell.

Today, running at full capacity, the plant can turn out three full body paint jobs per day. The company is developing a new 92,000 SF plant that will open in June, part of which will be devoted to 10 state-of-the-art paint bays. Output capacity will be doubled and still leave room for expansion.

Supervised by Tim Lindley for two years, this department now has 54 employees. As Tim evaluates his roster, he tells me that 35 percent have 10+ years of experience in automotive and RV painting, 30 percent have 5+ years, and 35 percent are between 0 and 5 years. Each team of eight generally has two trainees. Tim is assisted by two lead persons, Jason Hiser and Alan Lindley.



The management team for the Full Body Paint Department at Tiffin Motorhomes. All are team leaders except as indicated. *From left to right:* Derek Cleveland, Robert Borden, Jason Hiser (lead person), Steve Watts, Tim Lindley (department supervisor), Lance Grissom, Brian Pearson, Ranae Morrell, Alan Lindley (lead person), Ricky Webb, and Joey Keeton.

As we walk through the work stations, it is easy to detect everyone's pride in the quality of workmanship. Tim provides direction tactfully and encourages generously. Everyone realizes that a prospective buyer's first impression of *our* motorhomes will be based on the quality of the paint job. During my visit I learned that it takes 90–100 hours to produce a full body paint job.

Let's take a detailed look at the process. When a coach rolls into the department, it first receives a high pressure air blow-off followed by the application of a chemical cleaner to break down any oil or other agents that adhered to the fiberglass exterior during production.

Some of the exterior hardware is removed and all other objects or surfaces not to receive paint are carefully masked, which includes the windows, wipers, rubber trim, and lights.

The sidewalls are then coated with a dye to reveal any imperfections in the fiberglass — pinholes or stress cracks. A filler is applied and the patched areas are sanded to make them perfectly smooth. A crew moves in and spends several hours sanding and scuffing the entire motorhome to make the surfaces paint receptive.

A prep crew takes over and uses high pressure air to remove the sanding dust. The coach is washed with a water-based cleaner and any final masking is done before the unit is moved into the paint bay. Quality control checks are made after each distinct process.

The painters now tape off the windshield and cover the tires. A final high pressure blow-off is followed by "tacking the surface" with specially treated cloths that attract any dust or particles. A special sealer is then applied to the doors and the front and rear caps for extra protection against rock chips and scratches.

To keep the paint bay free of particles, all air is inducted through powerful filters and evacuated through exhaust fans at the top of the compartment.

Now it is time to apply the full body base coat. It is the primary color over which the accent colors will be applied. Six painters suit up and don their masks and goggles. Special lighting units built into the sidewalls of the bays are turned on to produce an even illumination across the entire expanse of the motorhome's sides and caps.

Applying the base coat takes one-and-a-half hours and is followed immediately with a 10-minute bake cycle that takes the temperature in the compartment to 130 degrees Fahrenheit. After the cool down, the painted surface is dry to the touch.

Now the fun begins. The eight person team spreads out around the motorhome and begins to unwind 30-inch wide rolls of adhesive-backed striping material which will become the painting masks for the three accent colors. Starting on the bottom edge of the motorhome, the first roll is stretched the entire length and includes the wheel wells and storage bays. The process is more exacting but similar to hanging wallpaper horizontally.

Working nimbly with retractable razors, the strippers slice and tuck the yellow masks as they go over doors, wheel wells, vents, and slide moldings. Masking tape is used to extend the mask's edges around the interrupted surfaces. The masking process is complicated by making the designs identical on both sides of the motorhome. The ending points on each side front and rear must be the same distance from the bottom edges in order to align with the stripes that connect across the front and rear caps. An-



With the base coat of paint completed and dry, Robert Borden, Randy Page, and Craig Rogers align the first roll of striping masks over the storage bay doors and wheel wells of an Allegro Bay. After the adhesive backing is carefully removed, Randy Page presses the air bubbles out of the mask with an edging tool. Renae Scott does the detail work in fitting the mask over molding.

other complicating factor is extending the stripes around the sides of the slideouts. Painting a motorhome just one color would be a piece of cake. Painting it with four colors demands exacting skill and patience.

After the first roll is completed, the strippers unfurl the next roll and go through the process three more times until the entire motor-

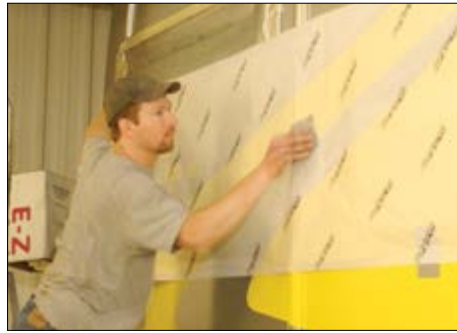
home is masked for painting. The entire masking is completed in about two hours. The paint bay is cleaned again before the spraying begins for the three accent colors. After each color is applied, it is carefully covered before the next application. The striping is removed revealing the base coat again. The coach is now prepped for the clearcoat which will enhance all of the colors and give them a vivid appearance. Since the masking over the windows and hardware may have become saturated with paint, remasking is done at this point to assure that the clearcoat is applied only to the painted surfaces. After another high pressure air blowoff, the area to be coated is “tacked,” or wiped down with a special chemically treated cloth.

The six clearcoat painters put on suits and breathing equipment that make one think of the space program. In a one hour application they apply 3–3.5 mils of clearcoat. Once applied the coach goes through a 60-minute bake cycle that cures the paint and speeds the drying process.

The designs are created by two companies which submit complete comprehensives at least six months in advance of the model year change for each of the five models produced by Tiffin Motorhomes. Several designs are presented to Van Tiffin for each of the five Tiffin brands: Allegro, Allegro Bay, Phaeton, Allegro Bus, and Zephyr. Paint testing is done in the plant for the colors recommended by the design companies. Customer feedback helps determine the final selections.

Quality control takes place at every stage during the two-day process of painting a motorhome. It is imperative to remove any imperfections before the unit moves to the next stage.

With the painting process complete, the coach moves to the reassembly bay to unmask windows, lights, wipers, reinstall any exterior hardware, do minor buffing, and black all of the door jams. Nearing the final shipping point, the Quality Control Department directed by Lex Tiffin moves in to closely inspect the complete exterior of the coach. Under bright lights, trained eyes search for any imperfections. The inspectors mark with small strips of masking tape any flaws they can find and the coach is returned to the touch-up station for the minor repairs. A couple of hours later a QC inspector returns to make sure the flaws were corrected.



Robert Borden carefully positions the second roll of masks to perfectly align with the integrated design which has already been applied just below it.



After one of the stripes has been painted in one of the three accent colors, Brian Murray covers the painted area with a paper mask to protect the paint as the next accent color is applied by John Gordon.



The painters wear white suits for their own protection and to avoid any minute particles from flawing the clearcoat. The clearcoat produces a sparkling gloss finish in all of the colors.



Anthony Searcy buffs the clearcoat finish to create a luster and add a final quality to the full body paint job.

The options for every coach are specified by the actual buyer or a dealer. Each unit now has its own unique personality as it is driven to Final Finish. At this stage a team swarms over the motorhome to do a complete clean-up, inside and out. Two technicians slide back and forth on movable workseats installing a clear rock guard across the lower half of the front cap.

After Final Finish, the QC technicians follow a checklist that takes them over every inch of the coach before it is moved to the delivery line in front of the main office.

Tim Lindley knows everyone on his 54-person staff by first name. “From the first step to the last, it takes 100 percent teamwork,” he emphasizes again. “Every phase is critical. You can’t lower your concentration at any stage for even a minute and get the quality results that we demand from ourselves. It takes devoted people to turn out a good product.”

The proof is in the pudding!

A native of Red Bay, Tim Lindley completed his eighth year last December with Tiffin Motorhomes. He and his wife Barbara have two sons, Greg, 19, and Chris, 14. Greg works in the electrical department, making another of the many father-son combinations at Tiffin Motorhomes. “One thing that is really important to me working here,” he explained, “is that we know that we have the full support from top management to every supervisor, lead person, and every employee in producing the best quality product possible. That allows everybody to be proud of what they do.”

ALLEGRO FAMILY LATE SUMMER GETAWAY

Amana Colonies RV Park

Amana, Iowa August 24–28, 2004

by Jimmy Johnson, Club President

Don't miss this late summer getaway with your Allegro Family! It's going to be great fun and educational, too.

Come along on Willkommen! Explore the unique and fascinating history of the Amana Colonies, a National Historical Landmark, tucked among the rolling hills of eastern Iowa. "Gemutlichkeit" (in German indicating warmth, cheer, and friendliness) overflows in the quaint seven villages founded about 150 years ago.

Amana was inspired by the past. In Germany in the 1600s and 1700s, the Lutheran clergy started the persecution of the "True Inspirationists" because they refused to send their children to public schools and they did not believe in performing military duties.

In 1842 Christian Metz and three followers traveled to America to purchase land for the community members. They purchased 5000 acres of land from the Seneca Indians near Buffalo, N.Y. In the beginning it was hoped that the community members could purchase their own land, but they were unable to raise the money.

Metz proposed that a permanent constitution be adopted establishing a communal system. The system was adopted, and the community members shared the business and property of Ebenezer, near Buffalo. As time went by more land was needed to accommodate the 1200 community members. Leaders looked to the West where inexpensive farm land was available. Four men were sent to check out farm lands in Kansas and Iowa. They found what they were looking for in Iowa.

In 1855 Metz and his followers came to Iowa and built a village. The village was called "Blaib Treu" or "Remain Faithful". The leaders chose the name Amana from the Song of Solomon 4:8,

where "Amana" means to "remain true."

Five more villages were built: Middle Amana, High Amana, West Amana, South Amana, and East Amana. With the purchase of Homestead (the seventh village) in 1861 the community came to own 26,000 acres of land.

Farming was the principle means of livelihood. To meet the needs of the community and to produce goods for sale to outside markets, a calico works and two woolen mills were established as well as a grist and flour mill. Brick and lumber facilities were built. Basket-makers, bakers, tinsmiths, and other crafts people supplied a variety of goods needed by the community.

Mothers of children under three years old stayed home with the youngsters. Preschool age children attended a "kinderschule" while their mothers worked. The older children attended school year-round.

Members of the community attended German-language church services or prayer meetings eleven times a week.

As time went by, the economic pressures and some dissatisfaction with the communal system arose in 1932. Amana, a profit sharing joint stock corporation, was established. This was known as "the great change" which ended 89

years of communal living. For the first time the community members owned their own homes, worked for wages, or became proprietors of businesses. New businesses were established including Amana Refrigeration. Today the Amana Society farms the land and manages a variety of businesses.

As you can see, the Amana Colonies historical enterprise is a treasure to Iowa as well as to its visitors. You will enjoy this collection of distinctive villages, a National Historic Landmark. You are in for a unique experience seeing the artisans and craftsmen at work. The Amana Colonies were built on tradition and quality by people who believe in hard work and excellent craftsmanship. Don't miss this wonderful experience. See you in Amana!

Allegro Family Late Summer Rally Amana Colonies RV Park Amana, Iowa August 24-29

Motorhome with two people, \$452.69
Motorhome with one person, \$351.47
Each guest in member's motorhome,
\$99.37

**To join the Allegro Club, call
256-356-8522**



Six men's teams and two women's teams competed in the Allegro Family Annual Winter Golf Rally in Magnolia Springs, Alabama, Feb. 15–21. The competition was followed each evening with delicious meals in area restaurants.

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FROM THE ROAD

The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

We received nearly 1,000 cards from our readers responding to the first edition of *Roughing It Smoothly*. Since we could not publish them all, I tried to select representative ones that expressed your sentiments. I also attempted to answer the questions that I thought would be of general interest to everyone.

We were pleased by your overwhelming approval of the magazine. Please remember that *Roughing It Smoothly* is **your** magazine. We want to provide you with the stories and information that will make your RVing experience more enjoyable and satisfying. "From the Road" will serve as a Q&A opportunity to get your common questions before the experts at TMH, as well as a place for you to exchange information to help one another to continue to have a great RV experience.

So don't be shy about picking up your pens (or keyboards) and writing. Send email to fred@bookproduction.com and regular mail to P.O. Box 292912, Tampa, FL 33687-2912. If you have a pressing issue to discuss, call me at (877) 538-7467. Keep in mind that I am in Tampa, Florida, and not the Red Bay plant. For service, parts, and scheduling maintenance, call (256) 356-8661.

In this issue, I moved some of your questions to "Serious Tech Talk" since it was a more appropriate place for longer answers.

Keep on *roughing it smoothly!*

— Fred Thompson, *editor*

THE TMH CAMPGROUND AT RED BAY

Norris Lewey

Many of you who have stayed at the campground in the last five months are aware that Norris Lewey is not there. Norris was the first person from the service department to greet you when you arrived to have work done on your motorhome. Those who have visited many times just expected to see Norris and renew old friendships.

Norris has served his country for 34 years in the Alabama National Guard. His communications company was called to active duty on Dec. 7. They spent several weeks at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, receiving additional training and then shipped out to Iraq. He spent the first two weeks in Kuwait and on March 1 was stationed at Mosul, in northern Iraq. His one-year tour will be measured from the March 1 date when he arrived at Mosul.

Norris, 52, began his career at Tiffin 29 years ago. He and his

wife, Brenda, have two children, Candy Cantrell and Brandon Lewey, and two grandchildren, Aaron and Andrew.

Norris, a native of Franklin County, was elected Franklin County Commissioner seven years ago, and then reelected in 2000 for



a second term. It was the first time a commissioner had been elected to a second term in Franklin County in 20 years.

At the request of the three other commissioners, State Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow, and State Sen. Roger Bedford, Gov. Bob Riley appointed Brenda to serve the remaining year of Norris' second term.

If you would like to send Norris a card, please use the following address exactly:

SSG LEWEY NORRIS
BB CO. 115 SIGNAL BN
3RD SIGNAL BDE APO
AE 09334

Finding the Campground

Ala. 24 (4th Avenue) runs E-W through Red Bay. Just west of the downtown business district, take 4th Street north for approximately two miles. The Tiffin Campground will be on your left or the west side of the highway. In the business district, take 2nd Street north across the railroad tracks to enter the Tiffin Motorhome plant property.

The campground is open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. and is hosted by Ralph and Hildred Funderburk and Jimmy and Peggy Davis who serve two weeks at a time and then rotate.

Bearl DeFoor is serving in Norris Lewey's place until Norris returns from Iraq. He will visit you the morning after you arrive to discuss your service needs.

If you are there for warranty work, there is no charge during the time the warranty work is being done. If you stay beyond the warranty work period, or if you are having work done that is not covered by warranty, the charge is \$10 per night. Full hook-ups include water, sewer, and 20-, 30-, or 50-amp service. No cable or phone hook-ups.

The facilities include a coin laundry and restrooms with showers. Camper's Choice is located at the campground and

offers a full line of products for motorhomes.

YOUR POSTCARDS

I received more questions on the postcards which you returned than I could possibly answer in this issue. A list of some of the information that you requested follows and we will try to address those requests in future issues.

- A list of service suppliers throughout U.S.
- How to winterize your motorhome (Fall issue)
- Do-it-yourself maintenance that can be performed by most RVers
- More in-depth Tech Talk articles
- Dealer locations (see www.tiffinmotorhomes.com)
- Maintenance articles for older Class A Allegros (80s and 90s) and their appliances
- Articles on dinghy towing
- Articles on winter camping
- A section on traveling with small children
- Laws affecting motorhomes in the various states

CLASSIFIED ADS

Many of you asked that we run a classified ad section just for Tiffin-brand motorhomes in *Roughing It Smoothly*. We simply cannot do that because it would undermine our 100 dealerships throughout the U.S.

YOUR LETTERS

Judith Baird, Livingston, Tex. My first thought was, "Oh, NOT another RV magazine. After reading it, "What a great magazine!" It is interesting, informative, and relevant.

Alfred B. Smith, Mesquite, Nev. I would like to see a Tech Topics section to help owners solve minor common problems that develop.

Mrs. Danny Schumer, Bowling Green, Ky. I love David Toll's travel article on Nevada. I will

keep it on file under “Nevada” for our next trip out West.

Willard Crews, Florence, Mont. I was especially interested in the article about sealants since I did not know how much attention I needed to pay to this item.

Dan Gudas, Boerne, Tex. We love the entire magazine, particularly the maintenance tips and recommendations. Also enjoyed meeting the Tiffin family. This is one slick quarterly!

James W. Brimhall, Germantown, Tenn. Thanks for the review on the Phaeton. The scheduled maintenance article on sealants was not only helpful, but a reminder. The magazine is of high quality and very much appreciated and enjoyed. Please give us articles on maintaining different components and appliances, model reviews, what’s new & what’s coming. We would like to see dealer reviews.

Robert C. Stephenson, Ward, Ala. *Roughing It Smoothly* is a magazine with down home quality that we like very much. Especially enjoyed the story on the Tiffins, *Generations*.

Jerry Hudson, Utica, Ky. We enjoyed all of the articles, but we especially liked the letters from folks like us telling about their travels in their RVs.

Wakeman “Shine” Martin, Lake Wales, Fla. We like the new magazine very much. Tiffin motorhomes are the best; I have been an Allegro owner since 1977.

Drs. Sandi & Ray Priestino, Irmo, S. C. We hope the magazine will grow and become a big help to Allegro RVers. Please keep the articles and information for us and not Allegro testimonials—you are preaching to the choir. Print tips and articles about RVing written by the Allegro readers, especially things about dry camping. We live and work on the road and have never spent a night in a campground.

Dawson L. Burton, Mobile, Ala. We thoroughly enjoyed *Roughing It Smoothly*, especially the Nevada travelogue and the feature on the Tiffins. On future travel stories, please include a map. More tech talk and more recipes would

be nice. In features about the new motorhomes, please make sure the pictures and the floor plans match.

Don and Linda Patterson, Houma, La. We are the proud owners of a 2003 Allegro 31-ft. motorhome on a Workhorse chassis and love our coach. We recently experienced an unacceptable amount of front-end bounce that caused a separation in a weld on a 2” x 2” angle iron floor brace. This caused enough alarm to pursue the cause, and eventually the solution.

Walter Scott at Scotty’s Camper Sales in New Iberia, La., suggested we call the Customer Assistance Department at Workhorse and advise them of the situation. Steve at Workhorse listened to our concerns and directed us to a certified Workhorse dealer, assuring us that the work would be covered under our 36-month/36,000-mile warranty.

We went to G.M. Varnado and Sons in Baton Rouge, where the service manager greeted us and advised that the front shock absorbers would be changed and upgraded. Monroe Gas Magnum RV Gas-Charged Shock Absorbers (#557031) were installed. Within two hours we were on our way. While driving 110 miles to our home, we noticed no front-end bounce or negative effects on the driver and passenger comfort.

Our thanks to Steve at Workhorse, Bob Tiffin at Tiffin Motorhomes for building a great coach, Walter at Scotty’s Camper Sales for his always courteous cooperation, and Tony at Varnado’s for superb service.

Dean T. Haug, Portland, Oregon. The “Generations: A Family Business Model” article was a keeper. It is great to read about a president-CEO of a multimillion dollar corporation who can still be humble and believe in God.

George Godson, Mabank, Tex. We appreciate the thorough coverage that went into the magazine articles. Please do a feature on warranties that explains what Tiffin Motorhomes warrants and what the component manufacturers warrant, such as the Workhorse chassis.

Ray and Shirley Elmendorf, Whittier, Calif. Great magazine! Especially enjoyed reading about

the Tiffin family. The story is a good way to introduce Tiffin customers to their philosophy about business. The Phaeton article was great, but it described a different rig than the photos showed.

Richard Smith, Yoakum, Tex. Thanks for your background story on TMH, Bob Tiffin, and his whole family. We liked all of the articles in the first issue and the style in which they were written. “Serious Tech Talk” left out aluminum roofs. Some old RVs with low mileage are still on the road and are very serviceable.

David Day, Astor, Fla. Thanks for the history of the Tiffin family and the company. Great story about Nevada. We are going there in our motorhome in April.

George S. Keith, Church Hill, Tenn. We liked your story about Margaret Herron and her 1978 32-foot Allegro because we have a 1979 32-foot Allegro with only 39,850 miles. It is still in great shape with all of the original interior. We made a trip to Alaska in 2000. No trouble at all. Keep the section about maintaining the exterior and other items like that — anything to help us do-it-yourselfers.

Louis and Beverly Kuntz, Roswell, Ga. We liked the new magazine very much. Glad to see Tiffin Motorhomes publish something like this that is knowledgeable!

Martha Sue Brantley, Winter Haven, Fla. Keep the recipes coming in “Gourmet Quick and Easy,” but not quite so fancy. Be sure the ingredients are something we would normally have on hand in the motorhome. Thanks.

Charles and Nancy Spano, Richmond, Tex. We like the format of the magazine, the truth about your products, the history and the connection we feel to the family who owns the company and oversees the quality control. Please give us information about satellite systems and which service — DirecTV or Dish Network — works the best.

Bobby Gore, Lithia Springs, Ga. The new magazine is very informative. The President’s column was particularly good.

Lloyd Alexander, North Tonawanda, N.Y. “Smooth Sailing,” the comprehensive report, was excellent. I also like the Owner Profile and the 5 Days Through Nevada. We need more tech information, service and maintenance, etc.

Janet McCullough, Grandview, Mo. I enjoyed the issue very much — informative, educational, and interesting reading. Keep the same format. Enjoyed the article on Nevada. We need more “Serious Tech Talk” articles, and information on preventative and scheduled maintenance.

Loretta Pilkington, Pine Level, N.C. I love the magazine! Please ask everyone in the Tiffin RV family to write and suggest good campsites and things they have done at different campsites all over the U.S.

Darrell Allison, Santa Fe, N.M. Please do a Tech Talk article on the “care and feeding” of diesel engines and Allison transmissions.

Lawrence E. Taylor, Corsicana, Tex. The article, “Do Tow Bars Wear Out?”, was very meaningful to me. Late last year while towing my CRV, the pin in the receiver hitch came out. The “safety” key most likely wore out and broke. I was towing with the safety chains when another RVer pulled up beside me and motioned me over. Of course, when I came to a stop, the CRV crashed, only scratching the cover on my spare tire, but doing considerable damage to the CRV. . . . After reading the article by Mark Penlerick, I am carefully checking every bolt and pin on my tow bar and hitch.

Paul L. Bauereis, Lindale, Tex. Thank you so much for the magazine. It’s good to feel like we are a member of a forward thinking group.

Bob and Barb Vorse, Red Bay, Ala. In the early seventies we purchased our first Allegro from a couple in Florida. . . . It only had 1700 miles on it, and in our eyes was our dream. And that dream came to be a story we challenge anyone to top!

After putting several thousand miles on our 1973 Allegro, we decided to look for a larger motorhome — so where else could we

go but to Tiffin Motorhomes. We bought a 32-foot 1989 to replace our well-used 27-foot. Then we traded for a 37-foot 1991 Allegro. But our story really begins there.

We made several trips to Red Bay from our home in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, mainly to have our unit serviced. But little by little we found ourselves drawn to our new family of employees at Tiffin Motorhomes and the generous, kind, and helpful people of Red Bay, Alabama. We thought that this could possibly be our future retirement home. We bought some property just to the east of Red Bay on Bubble Gum Hill and installed the necessary “hook-ups” on the wooded lot. After a couple of years, it was retirement time and we lived in our Allegro while building our Red Bay home in the beautiful hills of Alabama.

Because of Tiffin Motorhomes and the fantastic people of Red Bay, we have the best of two worlds: a fixed home on Bubble Gum Hill and our Allegro rolling home. Our 1991 Allegro is still serving us well. And why not — it has been cared for by the thoughtful employees at Tiffin Motorhomes.

William Schuller, Shiloh, Ohio. I appreciate the consideration Tiffin Motorhomes has shown its coach owners by publishing this magazine to keep us informed with the latest about new models, technical information, and places to go and things to see.

George Gillette, Euless, Tex. We like the entire magazine. The “Generations” article about the Tiffins was outstanding. Please make this a monthly magazine. *Editor: To make RIS a monthly magazine we would have to charge you a subscription comparable to MotorHome Magazine. Would that be okay?*

Robert Burns, Port Aransas, Tex. I would like to have a lube layout chart for my motorhome. Can TMH furnish one? *Editor: Lubrication charts should be available from the chassis manufacturer or the service center that you use for chassis and engine maintenance.*

David Reynolds, Calhoun, Ky. In the “From the Road” section, add some of the problems customers have had and how they were fixed.

Editor: See “Tech Talk” in this issue. We have addressed problems that were raised by readers who used the return mail card supplied in the last issue. Questions that I can answer in a few sentences will be handled in this section.

Tom Watrous, Linden, Mich. Thanks for the articles on the Tiffins, the people profiles, different model reviews, and technical articles. I read *Roughing It Smoothly* from cover to cover. I am a retired engineer and I like knowing how things are built. Tell us about the processes/ techniques used in the Tiffin production system — maybe just a quarter-page blip per issue.

Editor: Thanks for your suggestion, Tom. Last month our photographer spent two days shooting in the plant to give us the material we need to do exactly what you suggested. The “Full Body Paint” is to be the first of many stories and “blips” that will tell our readers how their coaches are made.

Harvey Ploghaus, Yorba Linda, Calif. I like to do my own maintenance, so I would like to see some articles for people like me. Maybe Freightliner could do an article on chassis maintenance.

Editor: We have an article from Freightliner on “Engine Compartment Inspection.” If we can’t get it in this edition, it will be in the Summer edition.

OLDER ALLEGROS

Robert H. Miller, Madison, Wisc. I would like to see articles reviewing the past production models, starting with the first model year and moving up progressively through the years.

Editor: If Mr. Tiffin could have foreseen the company’s phenomenal success, he might have hired a company historian. Being a history buff myself, I like your suggestion. Maybe I can begin to piece together some stories that will be of interest. Thanks.

Donald and Wendy MacDougall, Vernon, Conn. We have

the first Allegro with the “doggy window,” and we hope you will do more features on the older Allegro motorhomes. We were in a campground in New Mexico where there were four mid-80s Allegros. In 2002, we drove our motorhome 13,500 miles to Alaska and back.

Editor: Thanks for your suggestion. I would like to urge our readers to pick up their pens (or keyboards) and write about their experiences in TMH’s durable motorhomes. Send your contributions to P.O. Box 292912, Tampa, FL 33687-2912, or email to fred@bookproduction.com

Jim and Judy Wells, Bessemer, Ala. Can you tell us how to upgrade things in our motorhome with some of the nicer appointments that you put in the Allegro Bus or the Zephyr? Can Tiffin sell the materials for do-it-yourself upgrades? Cost and available merchandise?

Editor: TMH will make repairs on all motorhomes they have manufactured. New features, like hard surface counters, for example, are only made to fit current cabinet designs and floorplans. “Upgrades” are called “restorations” at the plant and TMH does not have a division to do this. A few larger dealers, such as LazyDays in Seffner, Fla., have restoration departments that can undertake modernizing older units. For more information, call (800) 626-7800, Bruce Moreno at ext. 4365.

Ken and Brenda Robillard, Watertown, Wisc. Many Allegro units are just too good to junk. We need information on repair parts and newer components that are compatible with older units. *Editor: Call the TMH plant at (256) 356-8661 and press “one” for parts. You will get Ricky, Mark, or Lloyd who will be able to help you.*

FOR FULL-TIMERS

Editor: This section of “From the Road” is for full-timers to exchange and provide information that will be helpful to living full-time in their Tiffin motorhomes.

Errol Barber, Winnemucca, Nev. We would like to hear from

others who live on the road full-time about how to find jobs and earn money other than being a campground host. Thanks.

Robert G. Brilinski, Alpena, Mich. Can other full-timers supply names and addresses of campgrounds that offer free monthly rent for work?

Chuck and Teri Hruby, Bloomington, Ind. We would like to see articles about living on the road written by full-timers, or questions from those who want to be full-timers.

Editor: It’s a big decision. I hope you will get some good responses from full-timers who will give you the pros and cons, and how to do it right.

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Jane Hogg, New York, N.Y. Give us features on roads not too well known. I’ve traveled many of them.

Al Bender, Sandy, Utah. We travel the “two lane roads,” 50–55 mph, whenever possible.

Editor: Jane and Al evoked a nostalgic tone that made me think of Robert Frost’s well-known poem, “A Road Not Taken.” Again, I hope our readers will take up their pens and keyboards and tell us about those roads that allow us to slow down and reflect.

A Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

— Robert Frost, 1920

How It All Began

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units coming to the plant for service that are well over 25 years old.

The aluminum-framed walls were built on a 30-foot table using jigs. We finished the outside of the wall with aluminum siding and the inside with luan. We laminated the sandwich together with a polyurethane foam that was sprayed into the cavity. As it hit the air, it heated, expanded, and bonded all the components together. It made a very good wall. In fact, some who owned these earlier coaches have asked, "Why did you stop building 'em that way?"

Because the roof was made of aluminum and the coaches were just 90-inches wide, we built a flat roof from 1972 to 1990. They were easy to maintain.

As I recall, Horace Stepp drew the floor plans. Grady Baggett built the cabinets and set the inside walls. Grady and Theron assembled the cabinets. Monroe Thorne cut the steel members and worked in the welding shop with Grady Pharr. Larry Joe Hill hung metal and installed the windows. We set up three production stations in the welding shop and eight stations on the

assembly line.

We didn't have any logo decals or striping to put on the early units, so we called Lee Gault, a sign painter in Russellville, to paint a big "A" on the sides of the coaches and then the word "Allegro" on the front.

Johnny Hargett decided we should go to the Louisville show that December. We took the two units we had just finished and headed north, arriving on Monday. We had not reserved space inside the building so we set up outside in the parking lot. The next day we got 10 inches of snow. Around lunch time an RVIA official came out and shut us down. I asked him how we could become a member and he graciously took me inside and signed us up. We've been a member of RVIA ever since and have not missed a Louisville show. We sold both of those motorhomes at the show.

Johnny knew about 20 dealers and literally drove all over the U.S. establishing more dealerships. Before he left the company 10 years later, he and our sales staff had established a 100-dealer network. By spring we were building one motorhome a

day. At the end of the year, the company had built 243 motorhomes and barely scratched \$2 million in sales.

I continued to operate the cotton gin every fall for several years, trying to be in both places at different times during the day. One Ohio dealer who may not have known what a cotton gin was became confused when he would call the plant during the fall to speak to me, and the secretary would say, "He's at the gin. Can he call you later?" To him, "gin" meant an alcoholic drink and he thought I was hanging out at a local tavern. When he finally visited the plant, it so happened I was working at the cotton gin that day. In whispered tones, he leaned over and asked the secretary, "Is Mr. Tiffin an alcoholic?" Then later that day he found out what a cotton gin was.

The conclusion to this story is: "If we had experienced a good year at the cotton gin in 1972, you might not be driving a Tiffin motorhome today."

Keep on "Roughing It Smoothly."

Two for the Road: Dorothy and Codee

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"Well, the cement barricades in construction areas used to terrify me, but they don't phase me anymore. I still don't like to put oil in, but I have a checklist for beginning a trip and I follow it," she said.

One item on that checklist is to secure everything in the motorhome that could get loose and distract her. "Last year on my way through the east Tennessee mountains, I heard something banging around and crashing. I stopped the motorhome on the side of the road and went back to investigate and found my coffee pot on the floor. Suddenly, I realized that the rig was moving. It went down a steep embankment and through some trees. I had put it in "Park" but I had failed to set the emergency brake. It damaged the front cap and gashed up the sides pretty bad. The motorhome was driveable and I headed straight for Red Bay for repairs. I can't thank

Wade, Nathan, and D-Ray enough. They were great," Dorothy said.

And how about Codee? Actually, this is Codee II. She lies quietly by the driver's seat as the twosome travels. If Dorothy is friendly with others they meet, Codee is calm and interested. "But don't try to come into my motorhome without knocking and asking permission," Dorothy warns. "When I first arrive at a campground, Codee and I take a nice walk around the premises. While we want to be friendly, Codee's presence also says to strangers, 'Don't disturb this lady,'" she said with assurance.

Raising and training pets has been a life-long experience for Dorothy's daughters. Terry raises and shows Belgian Sheep dogs at her home in the north Georgia mountains. Patti trains dogs for clients. And Carol raises miniature horses in Rogersville, Tenn.

A major family trip is in the planning

stages for this summer. Tom, 57, is chief of police in Bowling Green, Ohio, and Rusty, 50, is assistant chief of police in Itasca, Illinois. They both are motorcycle enthusiasts. They will join their mother to visit some of the major western national parks including Mt. Rushmore, Yellowstone, and Jackson Hole. Rusty and his wife, Lynn, will ride on their Harley. Diana, Tom's wife, prefers to ride in the motorhome with Dorothy, as they follow along behind the cyclists.

Dorothy turned the interview around and asked me, "How long have you been married, Fred?"

"Thirty-seven years," I responded. "The best is yet to come," she counseled.

"If I had it to do over again, I'd do it all the same. I hope to keep full-timing in a Tiffin Motorhome until they throw me off the road," she grinned.

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