

# Roughing It Smoothly®



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- Cruising the BRP
- New for 2005
- The Tiffin Management Team





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## 30 Years — Making a Difference

There are some people who will make a positive difference no matter where they are in this world. By their very nature they are going to figure out the best way to do something and then give it that 110% effort. In my column this time, I would like to recognize eight employees who have made a difference at Tiffin Motorhomes. This is a special recognition because it is their 30th anniversary with the company. My thanks and respect go to each of you.

**Larry Joe Hill** (Nov. 21, 1972). From the beginning I knew he was one of the men I wanted to be a part of this company be-

This simplified the hanging of the skin. Larry Joe became a very good machinist who maintained and operated the roll forming equipment. After we quit using aluminum siding, Larry Joe went to the trim department for windows and doors. He is now using his talent in the millwork shop. His son, Larry Joe Hill, Jr., works in the trim department. They are one of many father-son teams here at Tiffin Motorhomes.

**Wilbur McKinney** (March 17, 1973). Wilbur and I are the same age. He left Pace Chevrolet and began in our welding shop just three months after we be-



From left-to-right: Wilbur McKinney, Mickey Collum, Danny Inman, Bob Tiffin, Don Holland, Jack Elliott, Wade Humphres, and Larry Joe Hill, Sr. Not shown: Norris Lewey.

cause he was an expert metal hanger. For nearly 20 years before we switched to fiberglass, the exterior walls were formed aluminum held in place with screws, pot rivets, and staples. Larry Joe was a very good organizer on the assembly line. He would set up the job so that each piece of metal was positioned and ready to go on in sequence. At first we bought the metal in sheets; but as we increased production, we bought the aluminum in rolls and installed roll-forming equipment.

gan production when we were starting to build one unit a day. When Grady Pharr, Theron McKinney, and David Stidham left, Wilbur became the foreman and served in that position for many years. He was a good manager who exercised sound judgment and did a lot of engineering with Brent Bullard before we had engineers with degrees. Wilbur instituted the use of jigs in making frames and later introduced a front-end jig which was more complicated. We used that basic design

for 20 years. He is not only a good engineer but also a good engine mechanic. Several years ago Onan had a fuel delivery system problem with their generators. Wilbur and Brent took the carburetor apart and discovered that it needed to have a seal or O-ring added to the design. They conveyed their finding to Jerry Jorgenson at Onan who fixed the problem. That was just one of many things. Wilbur now drives the delivery truck for the fiberglass plant.

**Don Holland** (May 1, 1973) came to us from Iuka, Miss. He was one of the original group that came together to launch this company. Don was hired by Theron McKinney to work in the electrical department. He is very meticulous in the way that he plans and organizes his work. If we had a slow place in the assembly line, Don was our “go-to” guy to solve the problem and speed it up. He is now the foreman of our woodworking shop. In that position he still has the valuable skills to analyze production methods and build a quality product. He understands how important our cabinet quality is because it is the first thing that customers notice when they enter a coach. Don also likes to drive and frequently delivers coaches on weekends. We appreciate Don very much. He does a great job for Tiffin Motorhomes.

**Mickey Collum** and **Danny Inman** applied for positions at TMH on Tuesday, March 26, 1974. It was a great day for Tiffin Motorhomes when they walked into this plant. I knew Mickey from softball league and had sold him supplies for his mother’s home when I was in sales at Tiffin Supply. I knew his mother, Ethel, a fine lady. His father died when he was young. Mickey’s skill was framing and building cabinets. I knew that he had built sidewall and cabinets for Commodore and Sunliner — we definitely needed Mickey’s talents. If a problem develops in cabinet production, he can solve it. When we combined the plants, Mickey was named foreman of the cabinet shop. He builds fine cabinets and gets them produced on

*Continued on page 20*



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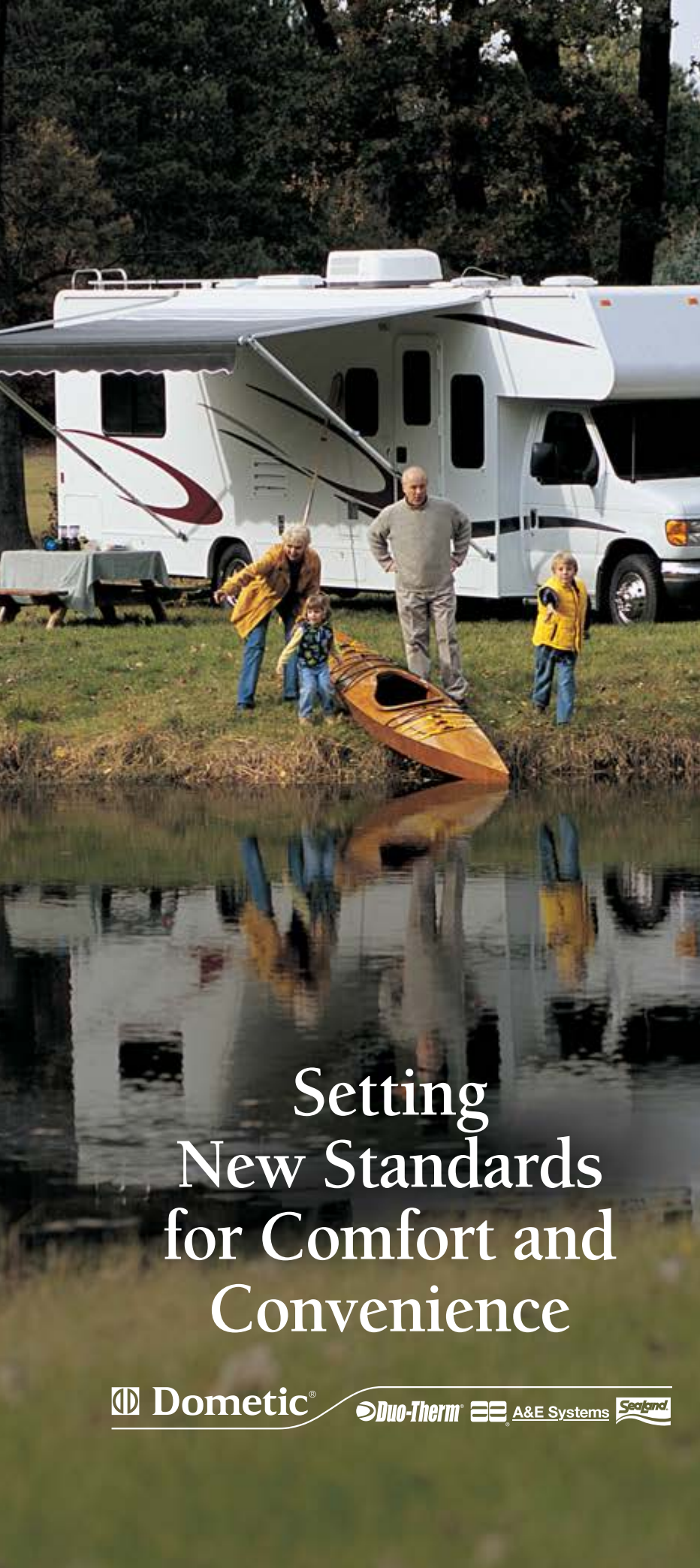
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# Going Wireless

Staying connected when you are on the road

by Jonathan Thompson

A major revolution has occurred in communications technology. Checking email, browsing the web, and chatting with your friends and family online have become daily routines. We are now dependent on the Internet in both our business and personal lives. But how do we stay connected when we're on the road? Go wireless.

But what is the wireless Internet? Consider your wireless phone with a conversation transmitted between two people no matter where they are. The wireless Internet is the same, however, data, rather than voices, is transmitted. Just like with a wireless phone, you must be in a certain area that supports wireless data service in order to access the Internet, and you must have a device that is compatible with that service.

Now you know what the wireless Internet is, but you don't know how to start accessing this revolutionary technology. Don't worry. It's easy! There are several wireless Internet service providers available today. For mobile RV Internet users alone, there are three options. All you need to do is make the best choice to meet your needs.

If you recently have purchased a wire-

less phone, it likely has wireless data service capabilities. Carriers such as Cingular, T-Mobile, and Verizon offer services that allow you to check your email, news briefs, stock quotes, and sports scores right on the phone itself. Unfortunately, the phone's size, small screen, and lack of a standard keyboard for any data entry create a gap between standard wireless phones and your desktop or laptop computer. A "smart phone," on the other hand, provides the best of both worlds.

A "smart phone" is a wireless phone that has personal digital assistant (PDA) features including a larger screen, handwriting recognition or keyboard input, contact and schedule management, and the flexibility to install custom applications of your choosing. While these devices typically have built-in web browsers and email applications that provide a better user experience than an ordinary wireless phone, their limited data storage capacity prevents them from completely replacing a desktop computer. Currently, the most popular "smart phone" is the PalmOne Treo 600, which is available from T-Mobile, Sprint, AT&T, and Cingular.

If you don't have a "smart phone" you can still access the Internet with your laptop simply by using your regular wireless phone as a modem. First, your service carrier will provide you with a special data cable to connect your wireless phone to

your laptop. Next, you install the appropriate drivers onto your computer. Finally, you connect to the Internet. It's that easy. Check with your service provider via specifics and restrictions related to your phone. Connection speeds will vary, but the average speed is similar to a standard dial-up connection. Unfortunately, using the data cable to access the Internet will prevent you from using the regular functions of your phone. To circumvent this problem, you can purchase a PCMCIA card from your carrier that, when inserted into your laptop, gives you a dedicated Internet connection wherever you have a signal from your wireless carrier — and without tying up your wireless phone service. While connection speeds are faster with the laptop card, they will vary by carrier. Most data service providers offer laptop cards. Again, check with your carrier for more information.

Another option for connecting to the Internet while you are on the road is to work in a "wi-fi hotspot," a wireless Internet access point that provides service in a contained location. This means you will have access to the hotspot when you are in close proximity to it and within its broadcast signal radius. In order to use the service, you must first purchase a wi-fi card that installs software on your laptop or desktop to help you find and connect to the closest

*Continued on page 8*

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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

hotspot whether it's a local network provided by a small store, or a national network provided by a service provider. Wi-fi hotspots are sprouting up everywhere. Many RV parks and service centers now provide this service to their patrons. T-Mobile currently has the largest commercial network, with hotspots available at most Starbucks coffee shops, Border's bookstores, and Kinko's business centers. You also may be required to pay daily or hourly access fees depending on your location, so check with the service provider before attempting to connect.

You also can use both wi-fi hotspots and wireless phone services to ensure you have service when you need it—whether you are parked or on the road. Some wireless phone carriers offer data plans in a “pay as you go” format that accommodate this strategy. If you are thinking of using a wireless data service from a wireless phone company, check their coverage map to see if your destinations are in their area of service.

The third and last option is satellite Internet service. Starband offers a system that is very similar to the RV satellite television

kits. These systems are quite expensive but will give you fast Internet service as long as you have a view of the Southern sky. Once your dish is installed, you connect it to a special Starband modem that connects to your desktop computer or laptop.

So how do you decide which service is for you? Ask yourself some basic questions about your needs and capabilities before making a decision.

First, what kind of access do you need? Do you only need to check your email on the road, or do you need to have broader access to find out information about your next destination, pay your bills, and read the news from back home?

Second, do you need continuous access, whether you are parked or moving, or are you content with going to a ‘hotspot’ or using satellite service at limited intervals when you are stationary?

Finally, what kind of equipment do you currently have? Do you already own a laptop? Is your cell phone data-capable? Do you have a “smart phone?” What is your budget for equipment and monthly services? The last question could be the deciding factor for you. Check with the local library in town, as most libraries offer free Internet service.

Going wireless is a simple solution to staying in touch with the world while you are on the open road. Simply look at all your options so you can make the decision that is best for you.

## Total Loss Replacement Coverage

by *Angela Wirth*  
RV Insurance Specialist

Do you have the best coverage for your RV? Will you suffer economic loss should your motorhome be lost to a catastrophic incident?

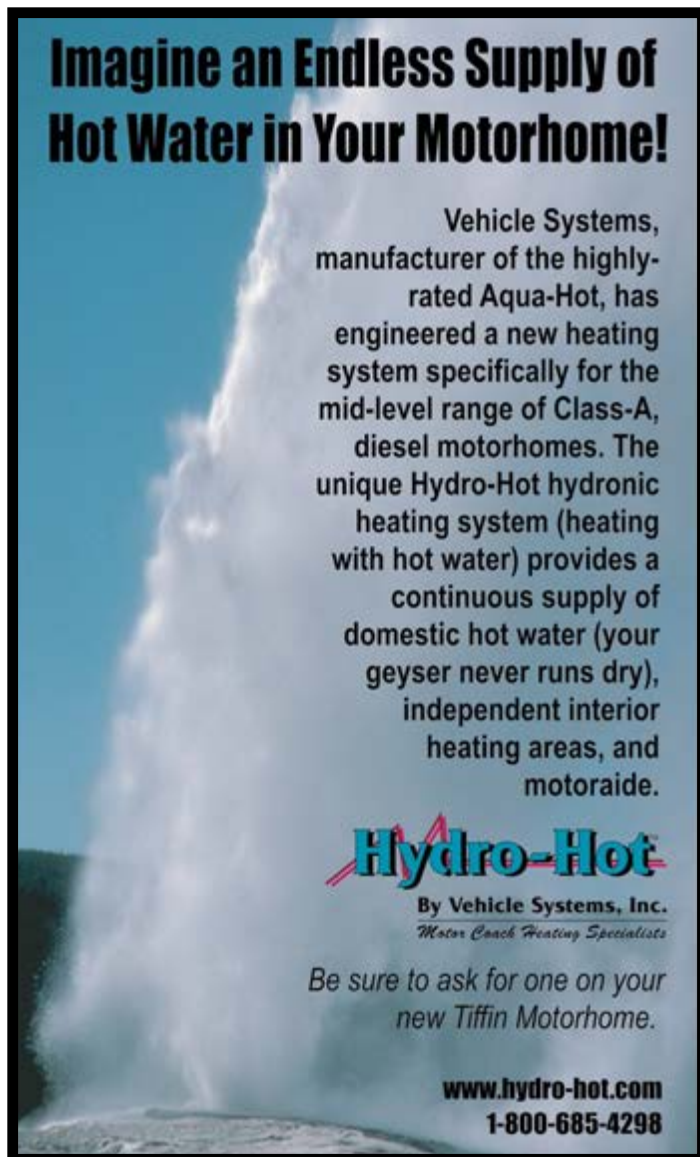
Original Replacement Coverage may be your best solution for insuring your motorhome. If your unit is two years old or newer, check into purchasing total loss replacement or guaranteed purchase price.

Original Replacement Coverage (or total loss replacement coverage) means that in the event of an incident where you lose the unit during the first five model years to either fire, wind, theft, collision, etc., your RV is replaced with a brand new, current model year. After your RV is five years old, Guaranteed Purchase Price Coverage comes into effect and you would then receive the purchase price as indicated on your policy in the event of a total loss. This means that there is never any depreciation. For instance, if you purchase a brand new unit in 2004 for \$100,000, put replacement coverage on it, and you total it in an accident in 2008, the insurance company will get you a new comparable 2008 to replace it. If it is totaled in 2009, the company guarantee's \$100,000.

On the other side of the coin, let's assume that RVs depreciate at 10 percent a year. In our example, without replacement coverage the owner of the aforementioned RV would receive \$50,000 in 2009.

You should always deal with an RV insurance specialist when purchasing insurance for your motorhome. After all, you don't go to a GP if you need surgery for an ulcer, and yet they're both doctors. Get the best advice and see an RV specialist. You've spent your hard-earned dollars for a lifestyle you have been waiting to experience. Don't risk losing it.

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# The 40-Foot Quad-Slide Allegro Bus

by Johnathan Ragsdale

Across the country, from what routinely appear to be provincial venues, true creative genius often flows. Such is the case with Tiffin Motorhomes in Red Bay, Alabama. Rising to the occasion with the 2005 Allegro Bus Quad Slide-out, Tiffin has positioned itself as the industry's pacesetter for affordable, state-of-the-art luxury coaches.

Now in its second year of production and already an excellent coach with owner-pleasing features, this 2005 model offers several new standard and optional enhancements (see pages 34–35) that include ZF-IFS independent front suspension, a built-in GPS navigational system with a 15-inch color display, side-view cameras activated by the turn signals,

The ergonomically designed cockpit places all interactive controls at the driver's fingertips and displays data in easily read instrumentation. The Total Control Navigation System is not displayed in this picture.



natural cherry cabinets, and chic “Rain Glass” in the shower door.

When asked by *Roughing It Smoothly* to review this new quad-slide coach, I was already aware of the excellence associated with Tiffin's coach building capabilities, a level of excellence that goes far beyond the plethora of cutting-edge enhancements that have been added to the 2005 Allegro Bus. To be able to fully describe Tiffin's design and construction efforts embodied in this coach, I began by delving into what lies well below the surface of the gleaming full body paint job that comes standard on the Allegro Bus.

Beginning with the Freightliner XC raised rail chassis, the 40' 3" long (bumper to bumper) Allegro Bus has a GVWR of 34,000 pounds with IFS. The cargo carrying capacity is more than sufficient for even those full-timers who want to bring it all with them. Powered by a Cummins turbo-charged diesel that yields 400 horsepower and develops 1,200 pounds-foot torque, the Allegro Bus is engineered to tow another 10,000 pounds of towed vehicle, trailer, toys or whatever, above and beyond the GVWR.

The engine by itself represents a level of prowess that is underscored by an engine braking system that is not simply a downstream exhaust type of device. The exhaust brake system is internal to the engine and offers two levels of engine braking (high and low). The engine brake is so efficient that even when towing (with the engine brake placed in the low setting), it dramatically slows the coach on a downgrade.

The air ride suspension system is by NewWay, a system that continually monitors and compensates for the trauma of rough roads as well as the centrifugal force created in curves. Bilstein shocks augment the NewWay system. The option of independent front suspension is also offered. On the Allegro Bus the standard over-the-road brake system is air.

Another departure from the status quo involves the forethought that went into Tiffin's next decision. The interior height (floor-to-ceiling) has been increased to 84 inches (7 feet!). Along with the generous lateral space contributed by the four large slide-outs, the living areas now have an unprecedented spaciousness complemented by this new interior height. The interior height gain was achieved by adding only





The double slide-out in the living room offers a spaciousness that accommodates entertaining several guests at a time. The seven-foot ceiling height adds an unanticipated openness to the living room. The entertainment area is served by the adjacent galley.

three inches to the total exterior height which now measures 12'7" (this includes the dual, centrally ducted room air conditioners).

Full-body paint is now a standard feature on the Allegro Bus. Since consumer demand for full-body paint has tripled in the last two years, TMH also offers this feature as an option on the 2005 Allegro Bay and the 2005 Phaeton. Therefore, it is important to note in some detail the multi-step process that is associated with applying full-body paint.

Until June 1 of this year, all painting was done in the primary manufacturing plant at Red Bay. To be able to offer full-body paint on four of its brands and to do so in a timely fashion required to support the increased production and growth rate Tiffin Motorhomes is experiencing, a new 100,000 square foot state-of-the-art down draft paint facility has been added by Bob Tiffin. It includes sixteen paint booths and the addition of 75 skilled painting specialists. The new facility is in Belmont, Mississippi, only a few minutes away Red Bay.

The paint schemes offered for the Allegro Bus include NASA (yes, after the US space agency), Stone, Delta, Sunlit Sand and Silver Sand. Regardless of the exterior paint and graphics scheme, a base coat is first applied and cured in a carefully controlled heat booth. Next follows a series of paint applications created by masks to produce the five different graphic designs. After each color is applied that area is masked over to allow the application of the next color. After all of the colors have been applied and cured, the coach receives a full buffing. The final touch

is a full surface application of clearcoat and a complete buffing to create a depth and elegance in the paint that adds not only beauty but also long-term value.

The driver and the cockpit passenger will find the excellent road manners of this giant quad slide coach beyond question. To begin with, the visibility through the single piece windshield (no center post) is exceptional. Someone equated it to watching a 42" wide screen television after watching a 20" television. The world outside is there in all its glory, in full view, unimpeded by any visual interference (no center post).

The excellent visibility along both sides of the coach provided by the split mirror system will be appreciated by anyone who pilots this Star Ship. This exterior mirror system can be further augmented with optional optical cameras (one on each side of the coach) that are activated with the turn signals. When this occurs, a video presentation of what is occurring down along the side of the coach is displayed on the dash-mounted monitor. The monitor features a color display that includes rear coach audio.

Six-way power adjustable seats are standard on both cockpit captain chairs. The passenger seat also includes a power adjustable footrest. Through the adjustable brake and accelerator pedals, each pilot can tailor the controls to their own unique body size. Even the front visors are power adjustable and can be lowered or raised with the touch of a button by the passenger or driver. However, the driver can operate either of these visors with a toggle switch.

The ride (be it city, highway, or mountain roads) is excep-

tional. It is smooth and very quiet. There to be no wind “weepage” anywhere in the cockpit (weepage being the sound created when wind from the outside leaking by posts and closed windows).

The optional hydronic heating system offers three heating zones. Two zones are used to heat the coach’s interior, while the third zone heats the holding tanks and storage bays. Using a closed loop system filled with fluid, a small diesel-fired boiler circulates the fluid to the three heating zones. This very efficient heating system consumes about a pint per hour from the main diesel fuel tank. This system also heats all of the water for kitchen and bath use as well as pre-heating the diesel engine during cold weather (however, a block heater is standard). Over-the-road heat from the engine can be transferred and used as the heat source for domestic hot water and for the fluid that’s circulated through the three heating zones. This is pretty slick stuff!

The new personal computer mounted in the center console merits special mention. It was added to accommodate the GPS vehicle navigational system software, but it also comes with Windows pre-installed. The system comes equipped with an infrared-connected keyboard that frees the operator from having to be hard-wired to the computer. The screen is a 15” LCD. The Total Control Navigation System features include direction to any address nationwide, spoken instructions including street names and distance to next turn, route recalculation (it actually gets you back on track within seconds of missing a turn or going off route for any reason), and routing around delays and congestion to avoid busy roads. And to top all of that, it gives you control over displaying these features: current road, cross-roads, time, elevation, nearest town, and Lat/Long position. It will also give you advance warning to make lane changes for safe exiting off of major highways on your designated route. This software provides you with an unprecedented “comfort zone” to navigate your ship with confidence.

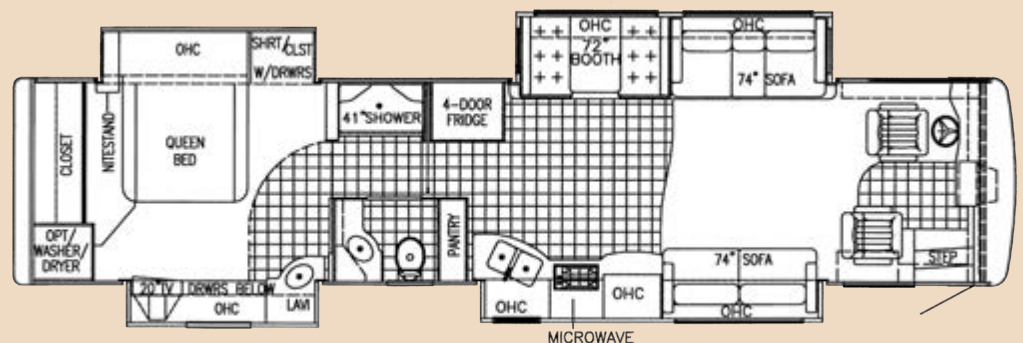
Setting up the Allegro Bus at a campsite is a breeze. For example, the optional power latches on the exterior storage bay door makes accessing equipment and items stowed below a snap. Extending (or retracting) the four slide-out rooms requires only a couple of minutes to complete, a process that includes leveling the coach with the four-point HWH computer-controlled leveling jacks. Touch the extend switches and the rooms quietly and effortlessly glide out. Setting up camp is easier than ever



Tiffin Motorhomes offers a choice of five hardwoods in the Allegro Bus. This galley features natural cherry with Gibraltar hard surface counters.

before with a water line and a shore-power cable that are mounted on motorized reels.

The in-motion satellite receiver (optional) means that a favorite program can be enjoyed regardless of where you might be, including while motoring down the road. And because the Allegro Bus features as standard equipment a 7.5 Onan Quiet Diesel genset and a 2,000-watt inverter that provides 110-volt electrical power from the house battery pack, this motorcoach maintains full electrical independence even under stand-alone RV camping conditions. The dual 15,000-BTU centrally ducted roof air conditioners with heat pumps along with the optional hydronic heating system or the standard dual forced air furnaces are designed to handle all temperature extremes that might be placed on the coach by those RV enthusiasts who enjoy four-season camping. And because this unit features large-capacity tanks (fresh water 90 gallons, gray water 70 gallons; waste water 35 gallons), stand-alone camping can be enjoyed for days on end. One last design feature that will give the coach user a feeling of independence is the fact that mega distances can be traveled before refueling is required. The 150-gallon diesel tank that can be filled from either side of the coach achieves this nicely. As with all of the products Tiffin Motorhomes builds, the Allegro Bus Quad Slide merits a resounding “good job.”





## SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2005 Allegro Bus Quad Slide

Base MSRP\* \$251,020

MSRP as tested with options \$272,160

### STANDARD FEATURES

Air Horns  
Power Cord Reel  
Automatic Satellite Dish  
TV antenna  
CB Antenna  
Power Fantastic Roof vent w/3-speed fan  
2-15,000 BTU Low Profile Roof A/C w/Heat Pump  
Roof Ladder  
Backup Camera and Monitor  
Water Filter  
Ultra Leather Love Seat  
Booth Dinette w/Solid Surface Table Top  
Polished Solid Surface Countertops  
Solid Surface Sink Covers  
Single Lever Sink Faucet w/Built-in Sprayer  
Double Bowl Stainless Steel Sink  
Stainless Steel Convection Microwave  
2-Burner Glass Cook-top  
4-Door Stainless Steel Refrigerator w/Ice Maker  
Medicine Cabinet w/Vanity Light  
Solid Surface Vanity Top & Bowl  
Fiberglass Molded Tub or Shower  
Skylight in Shower  
Electric Flush Toilet  
Cedar-lined Wardrobe  
Decorative Mirrored Headboard  
Bed Comforter w/Throw Pillows  
Inner Spring, Pillow-top Mattress  
Large Flat-Screen Color TV (bedroom)  
Carbon Monoxide Detector  
LPG Leak Detector  
Soft-Touch Vinyl Ceiling  
Raised Panel Cabinet Doors  
Soft Cloth-Covered Cabinet Shelves  
Porcelain Tile Flooring (galley, bath & entrance landing)  
Wall-to-wall Carpeting (bedroom & living room)  
Blackout Day/Night Shades (bedroom and living room)  
12-volt Fluorescent Lights  
Power Roof Vent w/3-speed fan, wall-mounted switches  
Deluxe Surround Sound  
Plumbed for Washer/Dryer  
Central Vacuum Cleaner  
Tank Level Monitor System

Smoke Detector  
10-gallon DSI Gas/Electric Water Heater  
Air-Driven Step Well Cover  
One 42M BTU & One 20M BTU Ducted Furnace  
Entry Door Light  
Step Switch & 12-Volt Disconnect Switch  
Passenger Seat Console Box w/Built-in Magazine Rack  
Beverage Tray  
Power Ultra Leather Driver Seat  
Power Ultra Leather Passenger Seat w/Footrest  
Automotive Padded Dash  
Single In-dash CD player AM/FM Stereo  
12-Volt Dash Receptacle  
Tilt/Telescoping Steering Wheel  
Dual Dash Fans  
Power Sun Visors  
Large LR Flat-Screen Color TV  
Panasonic VCR  
Fire Extinguisher  
Dual Fuel Fills  
Full-Body Paint  
One-Piece Tinted Windshield  
7.5 kW Onan Generator w/Manual Slideout  
Heated Power Mirrors w/Remote Adjustment (Chrome)  
Single Motor Intermittent Wiper  
Fog Lights  
Deadbolt Front Entrance Door  
Double Electric Step  
Dual Pane Tinted Windows  
Exterior Patio Light  
Electric Door Awning  
Window Awning Package  
Slideout Awnings  
Pass-thru Basement Storage  
Luggage Compartment Lights  
Docking Lights  
Heated Water and Holding Tank Compartments  
Four 6-Volt House Batteries  
2,000 Watt Inverter  
Custom Full-width Mud Flap  
50-Amp Service  
Park-Ready Telephone  
Cable-Ready TV  
Black Holding Tank Flush System  
Exterior Rinse Hose w/soap Dispenser & Paper Towel Holder  
110-Volt Exterior Receptacle  
Undercoating  
Spot Light w/Remote

### OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Independent Front Suspension  
Side View Cameras  
Keyless Entry w/Luggage Locks  
Storage Compartment Slide-out Tray  
Exterior Entertainment Center  
Total Control Navigation System  
32" LCD Television  
Free Standing Legless Dinette  
Washer-Dryer  
Magic Bed Sofa  
Ultra Leather Magic Bed  
Extra Fantastic Roof Vent  
King Size Bed  
Hydronic Heating System

### OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

In-motion Satellite Dish  
Handheld CB Radio  
6-Disc In-dash CD Player AM/FM Stereo  
Cloth Magic Bed  
Cloth Automatic Versaflex Sofa  
Ultra Leather Automatic Versaflex Sofa  
Computer Desk – Driver Side  
Drop-in Oven w/3-burner Cooktop  
Oak Cabinetry  
Natural Maple Cabinetry  
Walnut Cabinetry  
Cherry Cabinetry

### MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 276"  
Overall Length (approx.) – 40' 6"  
Overall Height w/Roof Air – 12' 7"  
Interior Height – 84"  
Overall Width – 101"  
Interior Width – 96"

### WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 34,000 lb.  
GAWR (Front) – 12,000 lb.  
GAWR (Rear) – 20,000 lb.  
GCWR – 44,000 lb.  
UVW – 27,800 lb.  
Trailer Hitch Capacity – 10,000 lb.

### POWER TRAIN

Engine – 400 HP, Cummins w/exhaust brake  
Torque (Lbs.-Ft) – 1,200  
Transmission – Allison 3000MH 6-speed Auto w/Lock-up (torque converter)

Tire Size – 275/80R 22.5"  
Alternator (Amps) – 160

### CHASSIS

Frame – Freightliner XC  
Brakes – ABS Air brakes w/Automatic Slack Adjusters  
Suspension (Front) – IFS / Air Ride  
Suspension (Rear) – Air Ride  
Leveling Jacks – Fully Automatic (STD)

### CONSTRUCTION

Body – Laminated floor, side-walls and roof  
Support – Steel/Aluminum reinforced structure  
Front/Rear Caps – Fiberglass  
Exterior side panels – Gel-coat fiberglass walls with graphics/full body paint

### ACCOMMODATIONS:

Sleeps – Four adults  
Fuel Tank (gallons) – 150  
Freshwater (gallons) – 90  
Black water (gallons) – 35  
Grey water (gallons) – 70  
LPG Tank (gallons – filled to 80% capacity) – 35

### 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](http://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.

## He told Ross Perot, “You might not be able to afford me.”

**B**efore Norman Spray retired in 1995 after a successful 45-year career that moved from news reporting to industrial journalism, wife Barbara cashed into a “fun money” investment account she’d been managing for 20 years to buy a 1995 Class B motorhome. “We’ve had too many years of airplanes, airports, and city centers,” she announced. “Now we’re going to *see* the country—and we are taking our dogs with us!”

Having been accustomed to a business lifestyle requiring fastest movement from Points A and B, Norman was skeptical. That changed quickly after first-year trips from their home in Bedford, Texas, to California and a glorious fall tour of New England. Before they traded the Class B in on their Allegro in 2001, they’d logged over 115,000 miles touring the U.S., the Canadian Rockies, middle Canada and, yes, Alaska. That was “roughing it smoothly” compared to earlier parenting days of tent, open-air and “run-for-the-car-a-storm-is-coming” camping. But it was, Norm often said, an exercise in “true togetherness” that resulted in his “Ph.D. degree in head bumping.”

**Norman Spray**, 165,000 miles and counting since 1995. His trip down the California Baja was an epic journey. Don’t miss it in the fall issue.



Travel in their 33-foot Allegro is “a dream” by comparison, Barby says. They’ve logged nearly 50,000 Allegro miles on trips to New England; down Baja California; the Great Smokies; the upper Michigan peninsula; and several times to New Mexico. Though they did not tow it on the trip to Baja, they often hitch a 2000 Geo Tracker behind.

Holder of a degree in journalism from Tulane University in New Orleans, Norman reported for newspapers there and in San Angelo, Texas, before joining United Press International in Dallas in 1953. His career in industrial journalism began with a four-year stint as an award-winning editor of company publications for Bell Helicopter Corp., then doing magazine articles and public relations work on assignment for computer and office equipment manufacturers. He later established a small marketing communications and public relations agency specializing in agricultural work. A daughter, Rhonda, began her career in that agency and wife Barbara became administrative vice president for Norman Spray Editorial Services after the last of their three daughters was out of the home. “Barbara organized us into a business,” Norm says, “and that was a good thing. I was a writer, for goodness sakes, not an administrator. Without her, I may never have been able to retire.”

Norman claims to be one of probably few men who ever told Ross Perot, the Dallas billionaire, “You may not be able to afford me.” In the early ’60s, Norm was assigned by IBM to work with Perot, then an IBM account representative, to develop “case history” success stories featuring IBM customers serviced by Perot. Soon thereafter, Norman says, Perot telephoned. “Norm, are you still doing technical writing?” he asked. Perot explained that “I’ve started my own little company and I need someone to develop manuals that tell hospitals how to handle Medicare data for processing.”

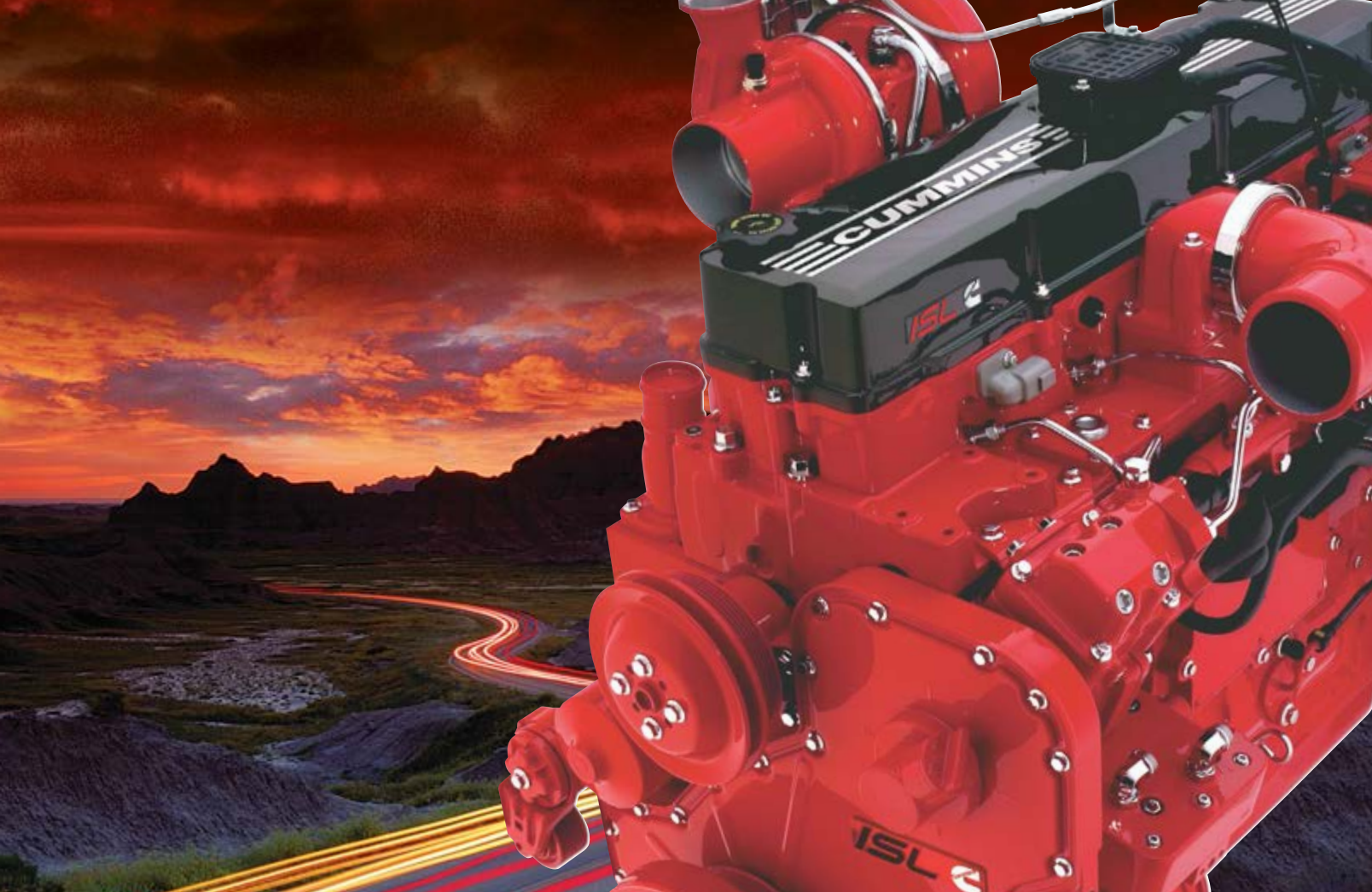
Norm said he told Perot that was not exactly the kind of writing he did and, anyway, “You know, IBM pays me well. You might not be able to afford me.”

After all, Norm laughs, “I was getting \$125 a day, a pretty good rate for free lance journalists in those days! I never heard directly from Perot again,” he added, “but I certainly heard plenty about him. You could say it was one of the biggest blunders of my career. Perot was thinking big. I wasn’t. But I was right about one thing. He did not need me, a lone free-lancer. He needed an organization. And he certainly built one!”

*Editor’s Note:* In the Fall issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*, Norm and Barby Spray will take you “Bumping Down Baja,” a personal story about finding Norm’s first cousin whom he had not seen in 52 years. Norm’s writing style will prove to be a wonderful travelogue for those of you who may want to enjoy the same adventure. Don’t miss it!



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Tim Tiffin, TMH's General Manager, gets additional information by phone to help team members, David Humphries and Tony Horton, make a final decision.

## Tim Tiffin, General Manager

**“I can remember** daddy pouring the concrete on the original building in this plant and running the concrete finishing machine,” Tim recalled. That was in the fall of 1972 and Tim was 10 years old. Little did he know what was in his future, the future of the Tiffin family, and indeed, the future of the city of Red Bay, Alabama.

Tim's business training really started about six years later at Tiffin Supply Company, a building supply firm that his grandfather, Alex Tiffin, started in 1940. It was where his father had learned the retail business and gained his early experience in customer service that later became the cornerstone of Tiffin Motorhomes' business philosophy.

“Our first models were boxy and square, really just glorified campers. Van and I were pictured in the first brochure in 1973, peeking out from the overhead bunk above the driver's chair. We have always used our motorhomes to gain firsthand experience about the design and service,” Tim said.

“I remember our first family trip to Pickwick Lake. I was 11, Van was 8, and

Lex wasn't born yet. As a family, we took our longest trip in 1978 to California. We are a sports-minded family, so we began using the motorhomes to go the Alabama football games on the weekends. After Van became the Tide's place kicker in the eighties, we never missed a game,” he said with a subdued enthusiasm.

Of course, all three sons were destined to enroll at the University of Alabama. Tim was the first in 1980, earning a degree in marketing in 1984. Although he worked summers loading and unloading trucks in the shipping and receiving department, Tim still started on the bottom rung of the ladder when he graduated. He made appointments for customers who were coming to the plant for service. Then he moved to purchasing and procurement. “I guess I did a little bit of everything in the plant and the office,” he remembered.

After 14 years of “learning the ropes” in positions with increasing responsibility, Tim was promoted to general manager in 1998. As the manager of overall plant operations, six managers report to Tim: Horace Stepp, plant manager; Jerry Wil-

liamson, sales manager; Brad Witt, industrial engineering manager; Tim Howe, director of human resources; Brian Thompson, controller; and Greg Thorn, procurement manager.

“And I report to Bob Tiffin,” he smiled. “Daddy and I meet for regular long-term planning sessions, and we meet every day at 7 a.m. to bounce ideas off each other.” It is obviously a great relationship that both men enjoy.

Tim constantly monitors how the plant is operating to ensure that the daily production quota is being met. Working with each of his managers, he brings together the key people to solve problems and remove bottlenecks to production.

Quality and product reliability are the watchwords on the production line. “Although I do bring in engineering consultants on occasion, we have an excellent engineering staff made up of 20 engineers and CAD technicians. We have invested a lot in engineering and software. It is the only way to build the quality product that our customers expect,” he explained.

In the last six years under Tim's watch, the company has developed a larger parts and service organization. TMH has more parts-service technicians on the phone now taking orders for customers and dealers, and providing personal service to solve customers' problems one-on-one. “We try to take care of our coach owners when their problems arise, whether they are on the road, at home, or in a dealer's facility,” Tim emphasizes. “When a person buys a coach from us, we believe they deserve the best service we can possibly offer.”

Tiffin Motorhomes has instituted formal training programs for service and repair both for in-plant personnel as well as technicians at dealer locations. East of the Mississippi, 50 percent of dealers have sent their technicians for training at the Tiffin plant. West of the Mississippi, that factor rises to 30 percent.

When one generation transfers the reins to the next generation, it is inevitable that management style will change. When asked about that, Tim said, “Dad is more the entrepreneur and sales person type. He was deeply involved in every aspect of the plant's management,



organization, and production. He was the hands-on owner. When Van and I got involved in the company's management, it gave dad more time to spend with visiting dealers, customers in the plant, and at rallies. He has a phenomenal talent for customer service and letting our customers know how much we care about them. In plant management, my style is different in that I encourage the people we hire to do their jobs while I take the role of coach, problem solver, and monitor. We have become a complex organization requiring highly trained, professional managers. This is an exciting time for TMH."

A tour of the plant will confirm to even the casual observer that the manufacturing of motorhomes is a high-tech industry. From the five model lines offered, the manufacture of a coach with its many options begins with a detailed order from a dealer. The production line consists of 26 work stations. It is a tribute to procurement, engineering, and scheduling that each specified cabinet design, floor covering, furniture selection, appliance, and sub-assembly arrives at the right station at the right time to become part of a particular motorhome as it moves down the production line.

While many would wonder why the general manager's job would not be a sure way to get ulcers, Tim Tiffin finds his job

satisfying. He enjoys the challenges of recruiting talent and bringing the right person into the production scheme at the right time.

He realizes how critical it is to the company's continued success for product research, the development and acquisition of technology, and the correct assessment of customers' expectations to all come together to create a product that leads the industry in innovation, quality, and reliability.

"We will be building coaches in the future that approach the reliability of a car. We are getting a lot better in how we design our coaches and how we execute in production technology," he affirms. "We know change is a given and we are focused on doing it right every time. It is really satisfying to me at this time of year to see the smooth flow of production only one month after the model year change-over. It is exciting to see people develop, do well, and excel in their jobs. I see the pride they have in their workmanship—and that is priceless." Tim Tiffin speaks with an assuring confidence.

And the future?

"We plan to stay in all the markets with the five model lines we now offer: the Allegro, the Allegro Bay, the Phaeton, the Allegro Bus, and the Zephyr. We will strengthen our brands, with each brand

clearly telling its own story in addressing its target market. You will see our participation in the diesel market growing. Ten years from now, and maybe sooner, you will see alternative fuels and hybrid vehicles," he predicts.

Tim Tiffin is clearly a leader with vision who is building leadership talent in each department at TMH. The company is building stronger relationships with its dealers by providing support in training and effective sales management. Marketing has taken giant steps forward with a dynamic, interactive website, and current coach owners and prospective clients now receive a quarterly corporate magazine that provides important maintenance information, product evaluations, travel stories, and ways to get the greatest use and enjoyment from their coaches.

Putting in 10 hours a day, how does this general manager relax?

"When I leave here each day, I turn the plant off. I go home and help the kids with their school work." An avid tennis player since middle school, Tim still plays singles and tries to work in matches a couple of times each week. He and his wife Lynne have four children.

And what does this general manager advise for his loyal customers? Keep on Roughing It Smoothly!

A meeting in the Engineering Conference Room puts a lot of heads together to solve problems quickly. Clockwise from bottom left Mark Swint, Derald Dancy, Rodney Johnson, Paul Madrigal, Tim Tiffin, Horace Stepp, Steve Hamley, and Brad Witt



# Grilling it All

## Grilled Chicken with Lime Butter Sauce

by Maureen Callahan

The kitchen is no place to be on a hot summer day, so turn up the grill and make the whole meal, from appetizers to main course to dessert, right over a hot fire. It's easy. And grilling naturally lends itself to thin tender cuts of meat like breast of chicken, steaks, and chops. Not only does the high heat sear in flavor but it also adds smoky notes that enhance just about any meat. Grilling is also a great way to compliment the flavors of fresh summer vegetables and fruits. So throw some chicken breasts on one side of the grill and some fresh asparagus spears on the other side of the grill and let them sizzle and sear until tender. A Grilled Tomato Bread can be served along with the meal or as an appetizer. Brushed with oil, garlic, and fresh cut tomatoes, it's a tasty starter for any outdoor meal. Then, when you're ready for dessert, pull some pineapple wedges from the refrigerator and let the grill work its magic once more. The best news: If you do a little bit of prep work early in the day, the meal can come together in less than 15 minutes. And clean up, since it only involves one appliance, is a snap. Enjoy!



## Grilled Chicken with Lime Butter Sauce

Instead of christening grilled chicken with the same old bottled barbecue sauce, try this light butter sauce enhanced with the flavors of lime. Place an ovenproof dish directly on the cooler side of the grill and let butter melt as the chicken cooks.

**Serves 2**

- 1 tablespoon butter**
- 1/2 tablespoon fresh lime juice**
- 2 (5-ounce) skinless boneless chicken breasts**
- 1/4 teaspoon coarse or kosher salt**
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper**
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped parsley**

Preheat grill and prepare by brushing grate lightly with oil.

Place butter in a small baking dish or ramekin and set on the side of the grill to melt.

Season chicken on both sides with 1/8 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Grill over medium heat for 6-8 minutes or until chicken is opaque throughout, turning once halfway through cooking time. Remove from grill and keep warm.

Stir lime juice and remaining salt and pepper into melted butter. Add parsley and drizzle sauce evenly over warm chicken breasts. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 209; Protein 33g; Carbohydrates 1g; Fat 7.5g; Saturated fat 3.3g; Monounsaturated fat 2.8g; Polyunsaturated fat 0.6g; Sodium 369mg; Cholesterol 97mg; Fiber 0g

**Grilled Asparagus:** Trim the rough ends off a small bunch of asparagus and toss with one tablespoon of olive oil, salt to taste and fresh ground pepper. Grill on a vegetable rack for 4-5 minutes or until tender, turning frequently. (Green beans or thickly sliced rounds of zucchini take well to the same treatment.)

**Grilled Citrus Pineapple:** Cut a peeled small pineapple in half and reserve half for another use. Slice remaining half lengthwise into four thick wedges. Place in a zip top plastic bag with one tablespoon each: orange juice, honey, and canola oil. Add 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon and marinate until ready to cook. Brush a cleaned grill lightly with oil and cook pineapple for 3-5 minutes, turning once halfway through cooking time. Remove from grill and toss with 1/4 teaspoon finely grated orange zest and serve, if desired, with ginger ice cream. (To make ice cream, soften 1 cup of vanilla ice cream and stir in one teaspoon of finely chopped crystallized ginger. Freeze until needed.)

**Grilled Tomato Toast:** Slice a mini baguette on the diagonal into 1/2-inch thick slices. Brush slices with olive oil and grill over high heat for 2-3 minutes or until lightly toasted on both sides. Rub with a cut clove of garlic. Cut a small tomato in half and rub tomato over bread letting the juices and small pieces of tomato soak into the bread.

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

Photography by FRED THOMPSON, Temple Terrace, Fl. • Food Styling by JOHN MCCLURE, Food & Beverage Manager, Lazydays, Inc. Tampa, Fl.





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## 30 Years — Making a Difference

*Continued from page 4*

time to feed into the assembly line production. He oversees the installation of the cabinets in the motorhome. We call this function “cabinet-set.” Mickey has a fine wife and two fine daughters. Like all of our 30-year veterans, he is an asset to this community and a fine citizen.

**Danny Inman** (March 26, 1974) came to TMH from Buccaneer Mobile Homes and started in the electrical department wiring dashes and tail lights when we had only eight building stations. Now we have 26. After ten years in various production phases, Danny went into sales-service. In the early nineties, the company divided the U.S. into sales-service territories and he became the manager of the Southeast which includes Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee. Danny’s product knowledge is amazing. He is never too busy to take care of customer needs on any age motorhome, whether it is here at the plant, over the phone, or at shows.

Danny addresses every coach owner’s problem as if that person were his personal friend. He has taught us all a lot about how to give our customers the best service possible. Danny was one of the first service men we took to an Allegro Rally in Marianna, Florida, in the late seventies. After great success in service, we moved him into sales. He calls on our dealers two to three times a year to provide assistance in customer relations and to help salespeople increase their product knowledge. Danny is always stable, always the same day in and day out, never wavering in his loyalty to the TMH organization and to its customers.

**Jack Elliott** (July 1, 1974) and I met at the Eastside Church of Christ one Sunday 30 years ago. He asked about a job and I told him we needed a purchasing agent. I was still trying to do all of that by myself. I got Jack started in the job and he handled it well along with Kelly Hester who worked in that department. Then we hit the energy crisis in 1979 and we had to downsize. I asked them to deliver motorhomes until business picked back up and they willingly did so. I stepped back into purchasing to lower our labor overhead. When busi-

ness picked up again, Jack went into the parts department where he did a great job filling orders for dealers and customers. Then six or seven years ago Jack found a new niche when he began to help the sales team set up our major shows including Louisville, Harrisburg, and the two FMCA shows. These shows require intense advance planning and coordination which Jack handles for us. He also handles the sales-service oversight for five dealers. Jack and his wife, Brenda, have two sons and live here in Red Bay. They are outstanding, dependable citizens. We simply cannot run this plant without the dependable service and loyalty of employees like Jack Elliott.

**Wade Humphres** (September 3, 1974) started as a clean-up person on the assembly line. His thoroughness in doing every task he was assigned soon called attention to his determination to move up in this organization. He was soon installing accessory parts and then worked as a utility person for several years. His being quick to learn many different jobs soon led to his promotion as a supervisor on the assembly line. We knew that Wade would be well-suited to working with coach owners because of his calm, pleasant nature in working with his fellow employees. He served very successfully in the parts department and later as a service technician taking dealers’ orders over the phone, where detail and follow-through is a must. When we needed to fill the service manager’s position four years ago, I was sure that Wade would be the right person for the job. Wade is a good listener and always patient with our coach owners who often are very frustrated when they first arrive at the plant for service. He has got the ability to give them the calm assurance that their problems will be fixed as quickly as possible, and he has a smile on their faces before they leave. Wade is married to Linda and they have two children, Jonathan and Stephanie. TMH is a family affair for the Humphres: Jon works in the Return Parts Department and Stephanie works in Billing and Insurance Claims.


**Norris Lewey** (June 6, 1974). When I first saw Norris, I thought, “He’s just too lit-

tle to do anything.” He’d have to use a belt to keep a size 24 pants on his frame. But he proved he was a worker. We started Norris in flooring and soon moved him to utility. Then he began working on the service teams that went to rallies. He quickly became the lead person with one of the rally crews and he showed us all how to do a great job getting along with our customers. He was “Mr. P.R.” Norris knew how to take care of people. That skill won Norris his first term as a Franklin County commissioner eight years ago. He just won his third election in absentia because he is currently serving with his Alabama National Guard unit in Iraq. The governor appointed his wife, Brenda, to serve until he returns. In Franklin County, his political success was unprecedented—most county commissioners do not get re-elected after serving one term. Norris then went to our repair department, and as we got larger he became the customer liaison to greet coach owners at the campground and determine their service needs. Norris began his tour in Iraq in January and we look forward to getting him back early in 2005. Norris is the “info center” during deer season, an important time for many of our employees who like to hunt. He always comes in early to make coffee and we meet in the kitchen for a report on deer season: how many he killed and how many he dressed out for others. In December, Norris makes his famous deer stew just before we break for Christmas.

### Important 800 Numbers for Your Wallet

Workhorse Chassis	877-946-7731
Freightliner Chassis	800-385-4357
Ford Chassis / Engine	800-444-3311
Spartan Chassis	800-543-4277
Caterpillar	800-447-4986
Cummins	800-343-7357
Allison	800-352-5283
Onan	800-888-6626
Shurflo	800-762-8094
Norcold	800-543-1219
Dometic	219-463-4858





## Critical Information for Cruising the BRP in Your Motorhome

1. The tunnels on the parkway are oval shaped, meaning that for motorhomes the highest point of concern above the pavement is in the center and the lowest point is above the right edge of the pavement. Three tunnels between US 19 (Soco Gap at Milepost 455.7) and the southern terminus at Oconoluftee (Milepost 469) are too low for most Class A Tiffin-built motorhomes. Current models range in height from 11'8" to 12'4".

If you are beginning your trip from the southern end of the parkway, do not enter the parkway at Oconoluftee (Milepost 469). Enter via US 19 or US 23. If you are completing your trip and approaching the end of the parkway, exit at US 23 or US 19. The minimum heights are: Lickstone Ridge Tunnel, 11 feet, 1 inch (Milepost 458.8); Bunches Bald Tunnel, 10 feet, 6 inches (Milepost 459.3); and Big Witch Tunnel, 11 feet, 6 inches (Milepost 461.2).

2. The speed limit on the parkway is 45 mph. That's for cars. When descending from higher elevations and going through the usual curves, you should probably reduce your speed to 35 mph.

3. When ascending to higher elevations on the parkway, you may find cars aggregating behind you. Show them your best RVing courtesies and let them by at the first overlook parking area.

4. The parkway is all two-laned. By my measurement, a lane is 10 feet wide. Tiffin motorhomes are 8-ft, 5-in. wide. Quick math shows you have about 9 inches on either side. You'll get used to it, but a true center steering system would be an asset.

5. If you are 62, be sure to purchase a Golden Age Passport before you travel on the BRP. It will cut your campground fee in half: \$14 to \$7.

6. There are no hook-ups at the NPS campgrounds on the BRP. However, each campground has a freshwater supply and dumping station in a convenient pull-through.

# Cruising the BRP

The Blue Ridge Parkway—469 miles of relaxation.

by Fred Thompson

**I**xperience a special serenity as I watch the mists rise through the valleys and coves to the crest of the Blue Ridge. With the mists hanging in the trees, walking a trail in the early morning or late afternoon light under the forest canopy is a calming, reflective experience. We lived in Athens, Georgia, for 30 years and rarely missed spending a few days on the parkway every year. Carolyn would usually say, "Fred, when you can see the mountains, I can see the stress go away."

So this was a special trip for me. I wanted to see if it were practical and safe to travel in a Class A motorhome on a parkway that originally was designed for automobiles. We began our BRP experience at the intersection of US 23 just a few miles east and north of Sylva, N.C., at Milepost (MP) 443. We were traveling in a 2004 Allegro 32 BA, on a Workhouse chassis with a 340 hp engine and a 1000 MH Series 5-speed Automatic Allison Transmission w/OD. We towed a 1996 Saturn SL2.

Since it was about 6 p.m. when we arrived at the parkway, we decided to drive to the Mt. Pisgah Campground at MP 408.7 before darkness could overtake us. In the first 12 miles we climbed 2,677 feet to Richland Balsam, the highest point on the parkway. The overlook parking lot was empty and I could not resist stopping. The evening mists had already settled into the valleys making the mountain tops look like islands in a frothy white sea. The coolness reminded me why I had packed my windbreaker and a sweat shirt. But we still had 22 miles to go, so we didn't stay long.

Our next stop at Mt. Pisgah allayed one concern: the National Park Service (NPS) had accommodated Class A motorhomes with very adequate pull-throughs, a good sign that big rigs really are welcome on the parkway. We found a nice spot. I leveled the motorhome and put out the slides in the living room and bedroom. Carolyn began preparing dinner while I developed a workable MO for touring the parkway the next day.

Because this travel column is titled "5 Days State-by-State," I originally planned to stay only one night in each campground as we traversed the BRP from south to north. I quickly realized my mistake as I mentally recited Robert Burns oft-quoted line: "The best laid schemes of mice and men / Gang aft agley."

So here is the new MO: There are nine campgrounds on the BRP. Two, Linville Falls and Julian Price, are only 20 miles apart—so you may want to select one and not the other. For this trip it is **essential** to tow your dinghy for daytime cruising. If possible, plan to spend two nights



## The Blue Ridge Parkway: A Brief History

These are old mountains. No granite peaks jutting toward the sky far above the tree line. They are comfortable, liveable mountains. Certainly the mountain people had a difficult life without modern conveniences, transportation, and medicine that we today take for granted. But the Blue Ridge is a nurturing land — they learned its ways, to live from and with the land.

Mountain families treasured their privacy. While homes in subdivisions today may only be 10 feet apart, a mountain couple might have considered 10 miles a little too close. Daniel Boone did. Paths, not roads, connected the cabins from which wisps of smoke rose throughout the year to mingle with the blue mists that filled the coves and valleys in the morning hours.

By the early 1800s most of the warring Indian nations had left the mountains with the exception of the Cherokees in western North Carolina. Those who settled in the Blue Ridge primarily were descendants of the Scots-Irish, British, and Germans who had moved southwest into the region from Pennsylvania and west from the Virginia and Carolina piedmont—hardy, resourceful people.

When the Civil War began in 1861, the mountain people were divided on the issue of secession. Very few, if any, owned slaves. Some did leave the mountains to fight on both sides. But the insulating terrain allowed most to ignore the war with the exception of occasional deserters, renegades, and scouting parties.

After the Civil War as cities began to grow at an exponential rate, timber companies bought up the land for its vast reserves of lumber. The absence of conservation policies left hundreds of thousands of acres denuded and erosion turned the once clean rivers brown. The influence of George Vanderbilt, Gifford Pinchot, and Carl Schenck began slowly to make a difference through the training of foresters and the establishment of the Pisgah National Forest. The mountaineers fierce independence continued, but they often had to seek outside work.

With the onset of the Great Depression, many from the Blue Ridge took advantage of President Roosevelt's "New Deal" and joined the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps to build parks, highways, and water conservation and erosion control projects. Just a few months after FDR's inauguration in 1933, he visited the CCC camps in the Shenandoah National Park with Virginia Sen. Harry F. Byrd. The senator suggested that the Shenandoah should be connected to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park with a federally maintained parkway. Roosevelt responded favorably and by October of that year meetings were held by the governors of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee and the directors of key federal agencies including the directors of the Public Works Administration, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Public Roads, and Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

The meetings generated a proposal to Secretary Ickes and a request for \$16.6 million, but still lacked a route endorsed by all participants. In November 1933 the president approved the parkway on the condition that the participating states bear the expense of surveys and land acquisition, and then deed the right-of-ways to the federal government. The following month \$4 million was allocated for the parkway and the secretary announced a hearing in February 1934 for the states of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee to submit their route plans.

North Carolina and Tennessee proposed totally different routes, forcing continued deliberations throughout the year. In November, to the great consternation and disappointment of Tennesseans, Secretary Ickes announced that the parkway would run entirely in Virginia and North Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

in each campground. Break camp early enough after the second evening to reach your next stop by noon. Since check-out time is noon, you will get first choice on the available sites. Set up, have lunch, unhook your car and go exploring for the whole afternoon and the next day. The daily itineraries will take you by car about half way in either direction between the campgrounds. In the suggested mileage spread, there is too much to see in a day and a half. So pick and choose or plan to stay longer. Check the bulletin boards for ranger-led walks and evening campfire programs. They are worth your time.

If you are 62+ and do not have a Golden Age Passport, be sure to get one before you begin this trip. Usually a ranger at a NPS campground entrance can sell one to you. Price \$10. It will reduce your fee from \$14 to \$7 at all of the BRP campgrounds.

Now let's backpaddle for a few minutes and talk about the bibliography which you will find in a sidebar. If you are a history buff and really want to know about how the parkway evolved and developed, get Harley Jolley's book. For light history, good sidebar stories, and a brief description of what you will find at most of the overlooks, buy the *Guide to the Blue Ridge Parkway* published by Menasha Ridge Press. For a more thorough discussion of the culture and folklore that emanates from every overlook parking lot, buy the new revised edition of William Lord's *Blue Ridge Parkway Guide*. Lord was a ranger and naturalist who first published his guide 40 years ago. It is still top-notch.

While the BRP can be enjoyed from your car and short stops at the overlooks, you will miss so much if you don't put some hikes into your plans. I recommend two books. First, Leonard Adkins' book, *Walking the Blue Ridge*, offers a thorough introduction to hiking in the mountains. Using the milepost markers to locate trailheads, he has documented nearly every trail that intersects the parkway with detailed trail mileage notation marking what you will see as you hike. You would have to wear a blindfold to get lost. Adkins rates each trail for difficulty and states its length. Randy Johnson's book, *Hiking the Blue Ridge Parkway*, presents his trail descriptions in paragraphed prose that make it more difficult to follow as you are walking. However, he provides excellent maps which the Adkins book does not offer. If I were planning a day of hiking, I would read Johnson's book the night before and take it along for the maps. Then I would take Adkins book with me for the trail mileage detail.

For a guide to wildflowers and birds, see Alderman and Simpson in the bibliography. Both books are well-illustrated with good descriptions.

For a book to take home to read and reminisce about your trip, you can't go wrong with Scott Graham's *Blue Ridge Parkway: America's Favorite Journey*. The reproductions of his marvelous photography are worth the price of the book — plus

Elizabeth Hunter's historical prose and parkway portraits are thoughtful and engaging. If you still want more, add Ron Fisher's book published by National Geographic Park Profiles. What can I say—if it's National Geographic, it's gotta be good.

When you arrange your schedule, keep in mind that Brinegar Cabin and Mabry Mill demonstrations are open only on the weekends and Explore Park in Roanoke is open Wednesday-Sunday.

Before you get too far away from a supermarket, be sure to buy all of the ingredients for "Grilled Chicken with Lime Butter Sauce" from our *Gourmet Quick & Easy* on page 18.

**DAY 1.** Let's get an early start. You'll need a small backpack. Take several bottles of water and a lunch that focuses on carbs and calories to fuel the hiking. Drive 42 miles in about 75 minutes back toward the southern terminus of the BRP to **Waterrock Knob Overlook** (MP 451.2). The Visitor Center provides exhibits, a comfort station, and panoramic views of the Smokies. The main feature of this overlook is a half mile trail. It is moderately strenuous but there are three benches on the way for rest stops. The Knob at 6,400 feet marks the intersection of the Plott Balsam and Great Balsam mountain ranges and is the highest of the trails along the BRP. The rich aromas of red spruce and Fraser fir will make you eager to draw every breath deeply. The views to the northeast and southwest are overwhelming—perfect for capturing majestic sunrises and sunsets.

As you head back northeast toward Mt. Pisgah, there are several notable overlooks with trailheads. Pull into the **Richland Balsam Overlook** (MP 431.4) and learn about the decline of the Fraser fir. If you are up to another hike, take the Richland Balsam Self-Guiding Trail from the **Haywood Jackson Overlook** (MP 431), 1.4 miles round trip. At MP 422.5 a short but strenuous trail to the Devil's Courthouse will give you a commanding 360-degree view of Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Keep William Lord's *Guide* nearby to enjoy the folklore and history found at every overlook.

At MP 418.8 you can pull into the **Graveyard Fields Overlook**. The forces of nature and the carelessness of man have produced an unusual ecology (see William Lord). Three waterfalls, a beautiful stream, and mountain laurel, rhododendron, and other flora make this 2.2-mile loop worth the time and effort.

The next stop is a side trip. At MP 411.8, take US 276 south for four miles to the **Cradle of Forestry**. George Vanderbilt's noble conservation efforts eventually established the Pisgah National Forest. In 1895 he retained German forester Carl Schenck to manage his extensive mountain holdings. From 1898 to 1913, Dr. Schenck trained 300 foresters. He wrote the curriculum and formulated the scientific practices that became the foundation of modern forestry. Administered by the U.S. Forest Service, the 6,500-acre National Historic Site has

In September 1935, construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway began on a 12.5-mile section immediately south of the Virginia-North Carolina border, linking the Shenandoah to the Great Smokies. Along its 470-mile route, the BRP traverses six mountain ranges of the great Appalachian chain, enters four national forests, provides access to three wilderness areas, crosses six major rivers, and passes through five ecological zones.<sup>2</sup>

The federal legislation that finally made the parkway an official entity and permanently named it the "Blue Ridge Parkway" squeaked by in the House and later passed in the Senate. It was signed into law by FDR on June 30, 1936.<sup>3</sup>

In June 1939, National Parks Service Director Arno B. Cammerer reported that 113 miles of the parkway were graded and surfaced, an additional 20 miles graded, and 90 miles were under grading contracts. The first section of the parkway opened for travel was the segment from Roanoke to Asheville. During the following year a continuous paved section between Adney Gap, Virginia, and Deep Gap, North Carolina, was opened and bids for concessions to operate motor services and eating facilities were solicited.

By June 1941, significant progress had been made with 140 miles paved and open, 150 miles graded and hard surfaced, and another 170 miles graded or under grading contracts. Some 750,000 motorists had used the parkway and its facilities during the preceding twelve months.<sup>4</sup>

With the exception of the section around Grandfather Mountain, the 469-mile parkway was largely completed by the early 1970s. The average elevation of the parkway is 3,000 feet. It embraces several large recreational areas, interprets mountain folk culture, and preserves scenic resources.

Over the years the National Park Service developed a five-fold mission for the parkway which has become one of the country's best known and most heavily used recreational areas established by the bureau:

(1) to link the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks through the mountains of western Virginia and North Carolina, (2) to provide quiet leisurely motoring, free from the distractions and dangers of the ordinary speed highway, (3) to give the visitor an insight into the beauty, history, and culture of the Southern Highlands, (4) to afford the best type of recreational and inspirational travel, and (5) to protect and preserve the natural scenery, history, and wildlife within the Parkway confines.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, in 1987 the section around Grandfather Mountain was completed using innovative engineering technology to build the Linn Cove Viaduct which protected the fragile ecology of the mountain. Today we can enjoy 469 miles of uninterrupted mountain scenery from Rockfish Gap in Virginia to Oconoluftee near Cherokee, North Carolina, thanks to the vision of many dedicated public servants and thousands of dedicated construction workers who knew they were contributing to a national treasure.

### NOTES

1. Victoria and Frank Logue, Nicole Blouin, *Guide to the Blue Ridge Parkway*, second edition. (Birmingham, Ala.: Menasha Ridge Press, 2003), p. 7-9.

2. J. Scott Graham and Elizabeth C. Hunter, *Blue Ridge Parkway: America's Favorite Journey* (Johnson City, Tenn.: J. Scott Graham, 2003), dust jacket.

3. Logue and Blouin, *Guide to the Blue Ridge Parkway*, p. 9.

4. Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss, *Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s: An Administrative History*. (Denver: National Park Service, 1983), pp. 81-83. [www.cr.nps.gov/history/online-books](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online-books)

5. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

MOUNTAIN LAUREL

FLAME AZALEA

RHODODENDRON





a visitor center that offers exhibits and a film, plus a guided tour of the students' cabins and classrooms. A fee is charged.

By now you've had a full day. The cook probably prefers to dine out, and the best of the restaurants on the parkway is at Mt. Pisgah. My favorite is their Apple-Walnut Crusted Pork Loin.

**DAY 2.** Two places to go today: **George Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate** and the **Folk Art Center**.

First, the **Biltmore House** could easily be an all-day destination. The eight children of William Henry Vanderbilt tried to out-do one another with their opulent homes in New York City and Newport, R.I. The youngest, George Washington Vanderbilt, conservation-minded and intellectual, took the prize with Biltmore House. Designed as both a home and a business venture, Biltmore House opened on Christmas Eve 1895. The 250-room French chateau-styled home is billed as the largest private home in America, covering 175,000 sq.ft. Ticket prices for the self-guided tour of the home are \$39 for adults and \$19.50 for children (6-16). For

an extra \$7 you can get an audio tour with headset which is well worth the charge. Segments of audio may be selected for each room in whatever order you choose. The house tour will take 2-3 hours. Summer hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. There are six speciality tours which you will find online at [www.biltmore.com](http://www.biltmore.com) or call 800-624-1575. The grounds include three restaurants, an ice cream parlor (don't miss this!), and the Victoria Bake Shop. Other areas which you may visit at no charge include the Greenhouse and Gardens, the Biltmore Winery, the Stables (gift shops and crafts), and walking trails. If you decide to have dinner in Asheville, try Tupelo Honey Café (828-255-4863) at the corner of College and Haywood for casual dining, or The Market Place (828-252-4162), 20 Wall Street, for more formal dining, both downtown.

Second, the **Folk Art Center** at MP 382 displays the work of the 900 juried members of the Southern Highland Craft Guild. Exhibitions of members' work change throughout the year. A three-month exhibit titled "150 Years of North

Carolina Quilts" will open on Oct. 2, 2004. You can check other exhibitions at [www.southernhighlandguild.org](http://www.southernhighlandguild.org). Media includes implements for the house and farm; woven items for clothing, bedding, and table linens; quilting; furniture; wood-carving; woven vessels; pottery; toys; dolls; and much more. Check out the lacquered and polished walking sticks made from local woods. You will need one for the rest of this trip. The 31,000 sq.ft. Folk Art Center is a joint effort of the Guild and the National Park Service. The Center houses the galleries, a library, the Allanstand Craft Shop, and an information center and bookstore for the BRP and the NPS. Free admission. No food service. Pull-through motorhome parking is clearly marked.

**DAY 3.** You are leaving behind many good trails in the Mt. Pisgah area. Stay if you have the time. Otherwise, it's time to move on. The next campground on the BRP is **Crabtree Meadows** at MP 339.5. With only one or two stops for irresistible vistas, you should be able to make the trip in two and a half hours. Once you have established your campsite and unhooked your car, pack a lunch and backtrack 25 miles to **Craggy Gardens** at MP 364.6. There is really no adequate parking for a motorhome at the Craggy Gardens Visitor Center or I would have suggested that you make this a lunch stop on the way to the campground. From the Visitor Center, a self-guiding trail winds through rhododendron thickets to Craggy Flats and then on to the picnic area, a one mile moderately difficult hike. The picnic area has restrooms and water. For another short hike, drive a half mile to the **Craggy Dome Overlook** at MP 364.1 and take the 1.2 mile (round trip) Craggy Pinnacle Trail. This is the trail to see the gardens in full bloom in June and early July (you may want to save this trip until next summer).

To finish out the day, go to **Black Mountain Gap** at MP 355.3 and take NC State Hwy. 128 to the summit of Mt. Mitchell. During the summer months, **Mt. Mitchell State Park** offers several ranger- and interpreter-led programs which change weekly. At 6,684 feet, Mt. Mitchell is the highest point in the U.S. east of the Mississippi River. On clear days the views are breathtaking and the sunsets viewed across several mountain ranges are memorable. The park's full-service restaurant operates from May through

## A Bibliography for Traveling the Blue Ridge Parkway

*Blue Ridge Parkway Guide*, William G. Lord. Menasha Ridge Press, Birmingham, Ala.

Rockfish Gap to Grandfather Mountain, Milepost 0.0-291.9. ISBN 0-89732-118-9. \$8.95.

Grandfather Mountain to GSM National Park, Milepost 291.9-469. ISBN 0-89732-119-7. \$8.95.

*The Blue Ridge Parkway*, Harley E. Jolley. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tenn. ISBN 0-87049-100-8 (pbk). \$16.00.

*Guide to the Blue Ridge Parkway*, Victoria & Frank Logue, Nicole Blouin. Second edition. Menasha Ridge Press, Birmingham, Ala. ISBN 0-89732-550-8 (pbk). \$13.95.

*Walking the Blue Ridge*, Leonard M. Adkins. Third edition. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill. ISBN 0-8078-5490-5 (pbk). \$16.95.

*Hiking the Blue Ridge Parkway*, Randy Johnson. Falcon Guides, Guilford, Conn. ISBN 0-7627-1105-1 (pbk). \$16.95.

*Wildflowers of the Blue Ridge Parkway*, J. Anthony Alderman. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill. ISBN 0-8078-4651-1 (pbk). \$9.95.

*Birds of the Blue Ridge Mountains*, Marcus B. Simpson, Jr. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill. ISBN 0-8078-4363-6 (pbk.). \$19.95.

*Blue Ridge Parkway: America's Favorite Journey*. Photography by J. Scott Graham. Essays by Elizabeth C. Hunter. J. Scott Graham, Publisher. ISBN 1-890483-12-5. \$39.95.

*Blue Ridge Range: The Gentle Mountains*, Ron Fisher. National Geographic Park Profiles, Washington, D.C. ISBN 0-7922-7352-4 (pbk). \$15.00.

October, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. If you've done the hikes, the hearty meals offered here can satisfy your appetite.

**DAY 4.** If you are in good shape for a strenuous hike, a 2.5 mile loop trail begins in the Crabtree Meadows campground and drops rapidly to Crabtree Falls. The views are quite impressive, but the climb out will test your mettle. About 8.5 miles north of Crabtree Meadows you will come to Gillespie Gap and NC 226, where you will find the **Museum of North Carolina Minerals** (MP 330.9). Recently renovated, the museum introduces the treasures found in the Spruce Pine Mining District through interactive displays on the wide variety of minerals and gems found in the region. Work is continuing on a new display that will take you deep inside a mountain to see how gems and minerals are formed. Gillespie Gap was an important stop for Revolutionary War fighters on their way to the Battle of Kings Mountain. In mid-September the museum hosts an encampment of reenactors of the "Over the Mountain Men," who distinguished themselves during the Battle of Kings Mountain (see [www.ovta.org](http://www.ovta.org)). Many historians mark the battle as the turn of the tide in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War. Call the museum at 828-765-9483 for exact dates and times. The N.C. Mineral and Gem Festival will run from July 29 - Aug. 1 at the Pinebridge Coliseum in Spruce Pine, N.C.; 10-6 daily, Sun. 12-5.

From the same intersection, you can drive 12 miles north on US 226 to the **Penland School of Crafts**. The school's gallery presents functional and sculptural work in books, clay, drawing, glass, iron, metals, painting, papermaking, photography, printmaking, textiles, and wood. In addition to the sales area, the gallery has an ongoing series of invitational shows. Tuesday - Saturday, 10-5; Sunday, 12-5; closed Monday. Special tours of the school are offered Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. and Thursday at 1:30 p.m. Call 828-765-6211 for required tour reservations and explicit directions. You can get lost in the mountains!

Another "must" for today is **Linville Falls** at MP 316.4. But be sure and stop at the **Chestoa View Overlook** at MP 320.8. It is one of my favorites for enjoying the beautiful valleys below the Blue Ridge. A short trail from the parking area

offers more great views. Two trails leave from the Linville Falls Visitor Center. The **Linville Falls Trail** (2.1 miles round-trip) will present you with four spectacular views of the upper and lower falls; it is less difficult than the **Linville Gorge** and **Plunge Basin Overlook** trails. Be sure to read both the Adkins and Lord accounts of the Linville Falls Recreation Area. If time permits, you may want to do the 3/4-mile hike down to the river. Another option is **Linville Caverns**. It's not Mammoth Cave, but it is a very interesting cave experience with capable guides. The cavern is a constant 52 degrees and drippy - so bring a rain jacket with hood. Admission is \$5 adults, \$3 children.

There are no restaurants (except the Crabtree Meadows Coffee Shop) within reasonable driving distance tonight, so somebody may have to cook!

**DAY 5.** Pull in the slides. Raise the leveling jacks. Let's go to the **Julian Price Memorial Park** (MP 297) which offers the largest campground on the BRP. It's only 43 miles up the parkway, so now is a good time to pour that second cup of

coffee and do some reading to assure that you can enjoy to the max this next section of the BRP. In Randy Johnson's *Hiking the Blue Ridge Parkway*, read pages 151-196, which covers the history of the Cone and Price Parks as well as the Grandfather Mountain controversy and the Linn Cove Viaduct solution. Blend in pages 81-92 from Logue and Blouin, *Guide to the Blue Ridge Parkway* and you will have an excellent primer on what you are about to see. Johnson will also provide maps and tell you about the trails you won't want to miss. Adkins on pages 127-156 will give you the mileage detail and what to look for on each trail. Now, proceed south on the Parkway to the Linn Cove Information Center (MP 304.4). The viaduct at 1,243 feet long is an engineering marvel. Opened to traffic in September 1987 - the Parkway's 52nd anniversary, it completed the BRP with a 7.5 mile section that preserved the fragile ecology of Grandfather Mountain. A short trail from the information center takes you under the viaduct, allowing you to see the piers that were the only infringement into the

Linville Falls at Milepost 316.4







Known as the “Denim King,” Moses Cone and his wife, Bertha, created an estate with carriage trails and extensive apple orchards.

mountain. You may drive via a toll road from US 221 almost to the summit of the mountain. Be sure to read William Lord’s account of *The Grandfather*. A swinging bridge connects the two peaks. The viaduct visit followed by the drive up Grandfather Mountain should complete your day. Drive into Blowing Rock and select a restaurant for a pleasant evening repast. Build your energy with a good night’s rest and get ready for hikes tomorrow.

**DAY 6.** The **Price Memorial Park** encompasses 4,200 acres with elevations between 3,400 and nearly 4,000 feet. The Price trails combined with those at **Moses H. Cone Memorial Park** and the **Tanawha Trail** to Grandfather Mountain could keep a good hiker walking for two weeks. So selectivity is the key here. An early morning walk on the 2.5 mile **Price Lake Loop Trail** would be a re-

freshing way to start the day. Adkins rates it as moderately easy—so figure about an hour and a half if you’re not in a hurry. But if you want to do only one trail today, pack a lunch and hike the **Boone Fork Trail**. It is 4.9 miles round trip and highly recommended. Adkins calls it “one of the most quiet and pleasurable trails the Parkway has to offer.” Figure about three hours, four with lunch. Be sure to take Adkins with you for mileage descriptions. If you visit the Cone house first, ask volunteer Peter Morris in the bookstore how to find Hebron Rocks near this trail. You may want to spend the rest of the day reading a good book on a flat rock in the middle of Bee Tree Creek. These are good places to go wading, so add a towel to your backpack. To absorb some of the mountain culture, I recommend *The Man Who Moved a Mountain*, by Richard C.

Dauids. You will find it in the bookstore at the Moses Cone home. The first floor displays the work of artists and craftspeople from the Southern Highland Craft Guild—but different artisans than the ones you saw at the Folk Art Center in Asheville. Good selections of pottery, woven products, jewelry, wood, and more.

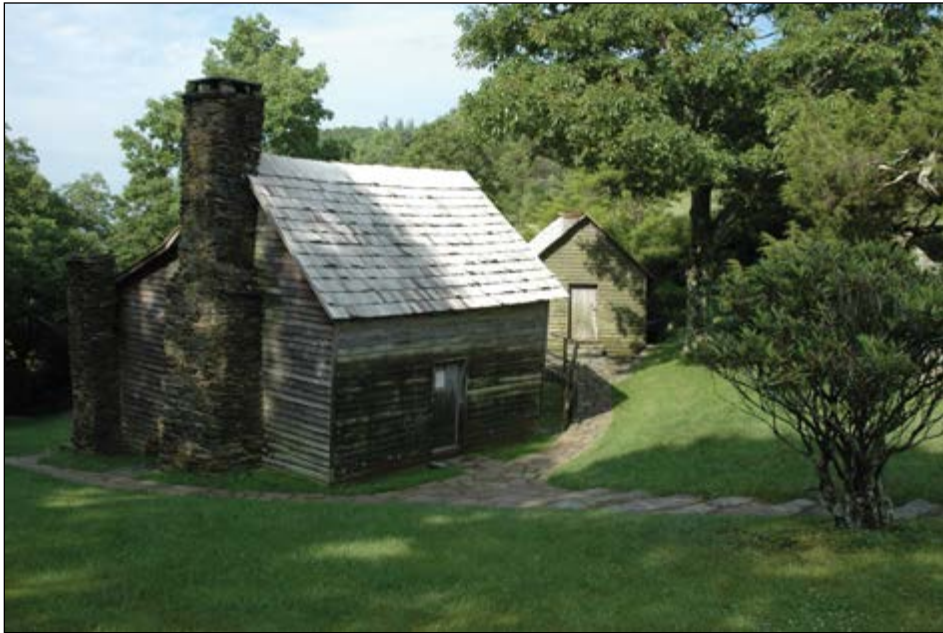
By now it must be time for dinner, so fire up the grill and serve “Chicken with Lime Butter Sauce” from page 18 or head for a good restaurant.

**DAY 7.** Let’s move on. I suggest you change our MO this morning. Instead of going directly to **Doughton Park**, stop at the **Cascades Parking Overlook**, part of the **E.B. Jeffress Park**, at MP 271.9. Read Johnson, pp. 147–150, for an excellent description of the area and a good map. You will want to see the Cool Springs Baptist Church and the Jesse Brown Cabin.

With ingenuity and the ready availability of chestnut, mountaineers created four commonly seen fences in the Blue Ridge Mountains: the buck rail, the snake rail, the twin post and rail, and the picket. The picket fence was used primarily to enclose the yard around the house. The other designs formed enclosures for livestock. These fences may be seen at Groundhog Mountain, Milepost 188.8.







Martin and Caroline Brinegar raised three children in this cabin. Milepost 238.5.

Using Adkins, hike the **Cascades Trail** and the **Tompkins Knob Trail**, rated easy to moderate. The Cascades Trail is a self-guided, interpretative trail describing the area's ecology and leading you to a beautiful waterfall. From here let's scoot on up to Doughton Park and find a campsite. Should be about lunch time. The menu at the coffee shop offers limited fare. If you plan to have dinner here, arrive by 7 p.m. because they close at 7:30.

**Doughton Park** offers 30 miles of trails, from easy leg-stretchers to difficult, strenuous routes for the serious hiker. Review Johnson and Adkins and pick and choose as you wish. In any case, visit the **Brinegar Cabin** at MP 238.5. But first take a moment and read William Lord's story about Martin and Caroline Brinegar. They were a resourceful couple who lived exemplary lives. The cabin is open for demonstrations on the weekends during the summer months. You can hike to the Brinegar Cabin from the RV campground, 2.2 miles round trip, good views of the mountains from open meadows. Difficulty: easy.

Don't let the day get away from you before you backtrack to the **Northwest Trading Post** at MP 258.6. The Post exhibits the work of over 500 active artists who live in an eleven county area and are members of the Northwest Development Association. The Post is a NPS concession operated since 1974 by Faye Dancy. In a new building, she can offer interesting sto-

ries to go along with crafts such as handmade brooms, baskets, carved figures, jewelry, handmade dolls with a period look of 75 years ago, pottery, quilts, hats, dough bowls, and much more. And things you can consume: jams and jellies made by locals, homemade cakes, fudge, candies, and ham biscuits (and they are good!). Faye helps local craftspeople sell and market their creations. The Post is a non-profit concession, and funds above expenses go to local charities, the library, hospice center, and the performing arts.

Just a few blocks away from the Post in

the village of Glendale Springs you will find the **Church of the Frescoes**. Created by Ben Long, this life-sized depiction of "The Last Supper" is permanently enshrined in the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. No admission charge. A church member is present to answer questions.

If you are in the mood for a nice restaurant, the Glendale Springs Inn and Restaurant is within a block of the church. Lunch, 11-2; dinner, 5-9; closed Mondays; entrees \$13 - \$25.

**DAY 8.** The drive to the **Rocky Knob Campground** is 72 miles, probably about 2½ hours with a stop or two. In 20 miles at Cumberland Knob you will cross into Virginia. The first notable attraction is the **Blue Ridge Music Center** at MP 213.3. Concerts featuring old-time mountain and bluegrass music are free. Call 336-657-8161 or 540-745-9662 for information. Except for performances, the Center is closed. At **Groundhog Mountain** (MP 188.8) the NPS has an interesting exhibit of the four types of fences seen along the Parkway which were usually made of chestnut split rails: the buck rail, snake rail, twin post and rail, and picket. There is room to park the motorhome. If your unhooking routine is not troublesome, take a spin to MP 189.9 and visit the **Orelena Puckett Cabin**. Born in 1839, she delivered hundreds of babies and folks claim she never lost a one. She lived to be a 100, but none of her own 24 children lived beyond infancy. At MP 191.9 you will find one of Bob

The Poor Farmers Market in Meadows of Dan displays fresh produce every day during the summer.







Nancy's Homemade Fudge located in the Meadows of Dan village offers a variety of sweets that will satisfy every fantasy. Her "melt-in-your-mouth" fudge is shipped throughout the US and Canada.

Childress's "rock churches." He is the subject of *The Man Who Moved a Mountain*, the book I recommended to you two days ago. You will see another one of his churches at Mayberry (MP 180.1) where you may find Dr. Harold Spangler teaching the Wednesday night Bible study at 7 p.m. A retired N.C. pediatrician, he and his wife operate a nearby B&B. Be sure to read Lord's stories about this area. Go ahead and find a good campsite at Rocky Knob and then come on back to Meadows of Dan for lunch. We've got a full afternoon ahead.

The first stop is the **Poor Farmer's Market** in the Meadows of Dan village. This is the modern version of the country general store. Go through the side entrance into the deli and order up a sandwich and drink that you can enjoy in a rocking chair on the side porch. You can finish up with a double-dipped ice cream cone. You can't miss the fine display of local produce under the front shed roof. The local black cherries, peaches, squash, tomatoes, onions, and cukes stuffed our fridge. On a back wall is an extensive selection of books addressing regional history, folklore, and cooking. Then just a short distance beyond the Market is **Nancy's Homemade Fudge**. Nancy Galli is a wonderful example of resourceful entrepreneurship. In 1987 she began making fudge in her home kitchen and sold it in local stores from baskets lined with her signature red-checkered cloths. Each

week she made her rounds and replenished the baskets. A year later she hired her first employee and rented space in the village. Five years later she had 10 employees. In 1999 she built a 30,000 SF facility to house her candy kitchens, warehouse, and shipping department. With stores all over the U.S. selling Nancy's Fudge, she now employs 22. Made from only the highest quality ingredients, her fudge will "melt in your mouth." After you buy your own favorites, you can surprise your best

Ed and Lizzie Mabry brought industrialization to the mountains in 1910 with a design that powered a saw mill, a grist mill, plus a bandsaw and joiner for making wagon wheels.



friends with a box. Nancy ships anywhere in the U.S. and Canada. Just a mile up the Parkway is **Mabry's Mill**. The demonstrations and exhibits are in full swing on the weekends. Do a walk through the area and plan to see the exhibits tomorrow.

If you're still game for a walk, go back to the campground and take the **Rocky Knob Picnic Loop Trail** (1.3 miles round trip, see Adkins). Moderately easy, it will put you back in touch with nature before you turn back the covers.

**DAY 9.** The **Mabry Mill Restaurant** has a breakfast menu that will challenge any appetite. My favorite is the Sweet Potato Pancakes with Virginia Smoked Ham. The dining area will take you back to the 1950s. Visualize a Buick Roadmaster, a Hudson, a couple of '53 Chevys, and a '55 Ford Fairlane Coupe in the parking lot and you're there. After that second cup of coffee, it's time to explore Ed and Lizzie Mabry's domain. Ed built the mill in 1910. Formerly a chairmaker, miner, blacksmith, and farmer, he and Lizzie invested their money and brought industrialization to the Blue Ridge. In addition to grinding buckwheat and corn, the power generated by the big overshot water wheel operated a saw to reduce logs to boards, a double-bladed jig saw for cutting out wagon wheels, and a joiner. Eugene Webb, the current miller, will demonstrate how water diversion can increase the speed of the wheel to generate more power for the sawmill. Get a copy of



“Mabry Mill Then and Now” at the Gift Shop for a good explanation and diagram of how the mill could produce cornmeal, grits, and bran in the same operation. A few years ago OSHA terminated the grinding operation for safety reasons. Although it is produced elsewhere, you can still buy stoneground buckwheat flour and cornmeal at Mabry Mill. The blacksmith will be producing horseshoes and implements, the sorghum mill may be in operation, and in the cabin you can see chair weaving. The still is down in the gulley, but the revenueurs have put it permanently out of operation.

This afternoon would be a good time to move the motorhome just 47 miles to the **Roanoke Mountain Campground** at MP 120.4. About thirteen miles up the road at MP 154.5, you will come to the parking area for the **Smart View Loop Trail**. See Adkins and Johnson for mileage details. Easy to moderate difficulty. About 350 yards down the trail is a picnic shelter, so you may want to put some lunch in your backpack. In about a mile you will arrive at the Trails family cabin which was built in the 1890s.

Since the campground is practically in Roanoke, you may want to take advantage of some big-city, upscale dining this evening.

**DAY 10.** At MP 115 you will find a 1.5 mile road across the hills into Virginia’s **Explore Park**. The 1,100-acre park is an outdoor living-history museum that fo-



An impressive memorial at Bedford, Va., honors the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces during the D-Day Landing in France on June 6, 1944. It is located just 13 miles off of the parkway.

cuses on three centuries of Virginia’s history: 17th Century–the Toter Indians; 18th Century–Early Settler’s Cabin; and 19th Century–the Valley Community. In the Indian village, you will see an authentic wigwam made from tree bark and furnished with bed racks and furs. The settler’s cabin is a crude log home with dirt floors. It took hardy people to survive here. The fort was opened this summer. The valley community includes the Hofauger farmstead, barns, the one-room schoolhouse, blacksmith’s shop, doctor’s office, and grist mill. All of the historic areas have interpreters who are excellent storytellers. The

reception area includes the Taubman Welcome Center, the BRP Visitor Center, the Mountain Union Church, and the Brugh Tavern (call 540-427-2440 for hours and menus). Located on the James River, the park offers fishing, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, and mountain biking. A rental center provides equipment. Special events this summer are the **Roanoke Fiddle & Banjo Club Summer Concert Series** on Saturday, Aug. 7, 6–10 p.m. and the **Appalachian Folk Festival**, Sept. 4–6. For additional information call 800-842-9163. Explore Park is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. from April through October (weekends only in April). General admission (12-59) \$8.00, Seniors (60+) \$6.00, Children (3-11) \$4.50, tots two and under admitted free.

**DAY 11.** Another short hop of 35 miles will put you in the campground at **Peaks of Otter**. There is a full day of things to do here. First, be sure to read Logue & Blouin’s *Guide to the BRP*, pages 39–44 and Johnson’s *Hiking the BRP*, pages 81–92. At the very least, hike or ride to Sharp Top, walk the trail around Abbott Lake where you will see the Polly Wood’s Ordinary, and visit the Johnson farm. At Sharp Top you are 1,400 feet above the lake, giving you a great view of the surrounding country. The interpreter at the Johnson Farm will make life a century ago come alive. Be sure to stop at the Visitor Center to check on the evening ranger talks and programs.

The restaurant at the Peaks of Otter

An interpreter at Roanoke’s Explore Park explains the hardships of life in an 18th century primitive cabin that the settlers constructed with native materials.





Lodge has a good reputation going back over 50 years. Their Friday evening seafood buffet is renowned as are their desserts. The restaurant is open every day.

Just 13 miles from the Peaks is the town of Bedford. With a population of only 3,200 in 1944, Bedford lost 19 of its young men in the D-Day landing June 6 at Normandy—the greatest single sacrifice of any of our nation’s communities. The **National D-Day Memorial** will fill you with gratitude for the commitment and bravery of our armed forces to insure freedom and peace in the world. Take Va. Rt. 43 from the campground into the center of Bedford. Turn right on Pinecrest for two blocks, then left on Rt. 122 to the memorial. Adults \$5. 10–5 daily. Allow two hours.

**DAY 12–13.** There was probably too much to do yesterday, so you may need a half day to finish up your visit to the Peaks. But when you’re ready, it’s only 25 miles to the **Otter Creek Campground** at MP 60.8 where you’ll find several places to wet a line (Va. or N.C. fishing license required). Basically, the **Otter Creek Recreation Area** which is connected by trails to the **James River Water Gap** is a great place for some laid back R&R. Some of the campsites are adjacent to the creek and the easy-to-moderate trails are nothing short of beautiful whether it is spring, summer, or fall. Study Johnson’s guide, pages 58–67, both for the trail recommendations and the history of navigation on the James River and the Kanawha Canal. Also see Logue and Blouin’s *Guide*, pages 32–35. During the summer there are regularly scheduled programs and guided lock tours plus the annual James River Batteau Festival. The **Trail of Trees Self-Guiding Trail** and the **James River Self-Guiding Trail** are easy walks and highly recommended by Adkins. The 3.4 mile **Otter Creek Trail** begins at the campground and terminates with a loop around Otter Lake. Get a camping neighbor to drop you at the lake and then walk back to the campground. The Otter Creek Restaurant is located next to the campground.

**DAY 14.** Well, we’re not done yet. A visit to this area is not complete without seeing **Natural Bridge**, which is just 20 miles from Otter Creek. Thomas Jefferson was the first American owner, buying it for just “twenty shillings of good and lawful money” on July 5, 1774. A visit to Natural Bridge is really a full day event. Unlike the Parkway, it is totally commercialized. Visit their website at [www.naturalbridgeva.com](http://www.naturalbridgeva.com) to plan your day.

If you are a full-timer, or just have the time to linger longer, stay a few days at the **Sherando Lake Recreation Area** (Sherando Lake campground). Camping loops B & C have electric service but not water or sewage connections. No pull-throughs but they can handle the 40-footers. Built by the CCC in the mid-thirties, the buildings of native stone and timber give me that feeling of durability and comfortableness. See Johnson, pages 39–44 for maps and trail descriptions. \$20/night. \$10 for Golden Age Passport.

That’s about it folks. I hope I have made you fall in love with the Blue Ridge Parkway. If you can’t do the whole trip, plug into the trip at any point a major road crosses the BRP. It is a treasured place to relax and renew mind and body.

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Please evaluate this travel story as to its length, detail, and style. The length of this story was an experiment and may be overwhelming to some. Send your postcard to P.O. Box 292912, Tampa, FL 33687-2912.

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## Bringing New Models to Reality

### Engineering at Tiffin Motorhomes

**T**ransforming new ideas into reality is the challenging role accepted by the engineering department at Tiffin Motorhomes. In a nutshell, the engineering department is responsible for designing and documenting new floor plans and designs, implementing changes and new designs onto the production floor, recommending and justifying new equipment, specifying the proper raw materials, and determining the most efficient processes to build the motorhomes. The engineering department works closely with the quality and service departments to implement needed product or process changes as soon as possible.

The engineering department, as well as the entire Tiffin Motorhome organization, has grown significantly in the last two years. In January 2002, engineering included a total of nine people. Today, the department has 31 people in five groups. The demand to produce more coaches and develop more innovative designs necessitated the department's growth.

The engineering effort at Tiffin Motorhomes is led by Van Tiffin. Van surveys customers and researches market trends to accurately address customer demand and expectations. Van also plays a key roll in the development of new designs, quality implementation, and productivity improvements.

The engineering department at Tiffin is organized into five groups: design, electrical, and industrial engineering teams; a research and development team; and a materials documentation team. Each work day begins with a meeting attended by repre-

**Editors Note:** As the new 2005 models began to roll off the production line last month, I asked Brad Witt, TMH's Industrial Engineering Manager, to explain for the *Roughing It Smoothly* readers the complex processes required to engineer and manufacture a Tiffin motorhome.

PHOTOS BY PETER FINGER



Brad Witt takes a critical measurement on the slideout from the R&D mockup of the 2005 Zephyr.

As the model year changeover takes place, an engineer is assigned to each work station to assure a smooth transition. Below, the slideout installation is carefully checked.



sentatives of the three engineering groups, a representative from the purchasing department, and the production manager. The meeting focuses on ECRs (engineering change requests) and ECNs (engineering change notices) and communicates forthcoming product or process changes to keep everyone working together in a fast-paced, ever-changing environment.

The design department consists of nine engineers. This group uses 3D models to document new concepts and floor plans and to develop working drawings for all major components. These working drawings are used by the operators on the shop floor to actually build the specified parts.

The design engineering group is always searching for ways to build a better quality, stronger, and more dependable motorhome. Two design engineers create the sub-floor and storage areas. One designs all plumbing systems. Three are responsible for cabinet design. And three engineers design the walls, roofs, floors, and end caps. This group works closely with purchasing to make sure the correct raw materials are purchased to build the motorhomes.



## IN YOUR CORNER

The six-person electrical engineering group is responsible for designing and specifying all electrical wiring components in the motorhome. This group spends a great deal of time documenting wiring methods, implementing improvements in the quality and consistency of wiring harnesses, and assuring compliance with all electrical codes.

The industrial engineering department ensures that production systems are in place to efficiently manufacture motorhomes on the assembly lines. This group has six engineers, each of whom oversees a specific physical area within the production plant. The industrial engineers are responsible for recommending manpower levels, purchasing and implementing new equipment, designing and implementing fixtures, and writing detailed work instructions for use by the operators on the shop floor. The industrial engineers continuously study production processes to find ways to improve efficiency and quality in motorhome production.

The research and development (R&D) team is made up of five skilled craftsmen. Each of these craftsmen has a certain area of expertise where his skills and ideas are utilized. This team physically proves any “new” or “different” design concept created by the design engineering department. The R&D team assembles full scale models of new floor plans and develops molds that will be used to manufacture new fiberglass parts.

Four people on the materials documentation team compile the bills of materials (BOMs) for the new motorhomes and maintain the BOMs on existing motorhomes. The BOM for a motorhome includes thousands of components, making the team’s responsibilities very complex and difficult. The BOM is a useful tool for the purchasing and costing departments. This team also plays a key role in developing new software to improve communication and productivity.

Engineering at Tiffin is a continuous flow of projects and tasks. “Model change” is the busiest time of the year when production of one model year stops and production of the next model year begins. “Model change” usually takes

place during the months of April and May each year as major design changes are introduced into production. Detailed drawings are modified by the design engineering department; electrical systems are redesigned by the electrical engineering team; production processes are re-evaluated by industrial engineering; R&D prototypes new features introduced by the model changes; and BOMs are modified by the materials documentation group.

Another task that keeps the engineering department busy is the introduction of new floor plans in the months leading up to the November dealers’ show in Louisville. The development of each new floor plan takes several weeks. Starting with a concept drawing, the design group performs the first steps required to produce a new floor plan. By expanding the drawing into a 3D model of the new motorhome, the team can produce detailed drawings of the major components of the motorhome. These components include the sub-floor, laminated floor, sidewalls, slide outs, roof, and cabinets.

The electrical engineering department designs and documents the electrical systems and components for the new floor plan. The industrial engineering group determines the manufacturing processes that will be used to efficiently produce the unit. These three departments work to eliminate as many issues as possible to ensure a smooth transition onto the production floor.

As the design process nears completion, the research and development team prototypes any “unproven” ideas and assembles a full scale model of the new floor plan. The engineering departments and production teams evaluate the model to uncover any overlooked issues that need to be reviewed and addressed.

At this point the materials documentation team produces the BOM and releases it to purchasing. Raw materials are ordered and production of the new floor plan is scheduled. During the initial production runs, the new floor plan is followed closely through each area of the production plant by designated members of the engineering department. This ensures quality while the operators are becoming familiar with the new floor plan.

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## Freightliner Engine Compartment Inspection

by Ron Anders

An important maintenance routine is a thorough inspection of the engine compartment. Access in some motorhomes is a simple matter of lifting the bed frame. You may have to remove several screws or disassemble the bed frame. You may ask, "What am I looking for?" The answer is "almost anything," but here is a partial list:

**1. Loose hose clamps.** These can loosen and cause leaks. Grab the hose where it is mounted to an engine component and see if you can move it.

**2. Routing of wires and hoses.** Make sure there is adequate clearance from hot or moving components. Check for broken tie bands. Make sure hoses and wires are not against sharp edges of frame rails or other parts of the chassis.

**3. Nesting animals.** Critters love to make a bed in the engine compartment, especially when the unit has been in storage. An owner who found his entire engine compartment full of walnuts had quite a time cleaning them out, but luckily he found them before he started the engine. That was one industrious squirrel.

**4. Check wiring for damage.** For some reason, rats and mice love to strip insulation off electrical wiring.

**5. Check the engine fan** for cracks or chips due to foreign objects striking it.

**6. Inspect the air intake** piping for loose clamps, damaged or cracked hoses.

Most dealers will charge you for making this inspection. But whether you do it yourself, or have a dealer do it, it could mean the difference between enjoying your next trip or being stuck in the middle of nowhere.

## Q&A

**Question:** How can I tell if my 110 volt to 12 volt converter is working properly in order to charge the house batteries?

**Answer:** The easiest way to test the converter is with a simple 12-volt lighted probe tester. Find the 4 gauge red wire under the positive terminal of the con-

verter, loosen the screw holding the wire and remove wire. The wire will have 12-volt power on it so tape it or keep it from touching a metal ground. Ground the test light and touch the positive lug on converter with probe. If you have the coach plugged to 110-volt or running the generator the test light will light up if the

converter is working. If the converter has 12-volt power coming out of the positive lug and batteries are still not charging, the circuit breaker has probably tripped and needs to be reset. The breaker is between the converter and the disconnect solenoid.

—Don Boyd, Tiffin Service Specialist

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# TMH Makes Many Options Standard and Adds Exciting New Ones

## It has been the policy of Tiffin Motorhomes

for many years to seek input from our current coach owners about new features and changes they would like to see in our five brands: Allegro, Allegro Bay, Phaeton, Allegro Bus, and the Zephyr. We want to thank all of you for your feedback, your calls, and patiently filling out our questionnaires at the Red Bay campground and at our rallies. You will see many standard features and options in this new model year reflecting your suggestions and requests. We know how important it is to listen to our customers who enjoy, use, and put our coaches to the test.

## ALLEGRO

- Upgraded TVs to flat screen in both the living area and bedroom
- Ceilings enhanced with padded vinyl (same material used in our high-end diesels)
- Atwood auto-leveling jacks which function simultaneously in all four positions
- Two new exterior graphics packages: Chili Spice and Mocha Frost
- Three new interior design packages: Beaches, Marine, and Cappucino
- Shower door enhanced with translucent rainglass

### OPTIONS MADE STANDARD

- Backup camera with in-dash monitor
- Patio awning
- Storage drawers under the dinette seats

## ALLEGRO BAY

- Three new interior design packages: Seafoam, Mocha, and Palm Beach
- Three new exterior paint designs (all graphics are painted and finished with clearcoat):
 

Silver Sand	partial paint*
Fire Red	partial paint*
Regal Blue	partial paint*

\*Partial paint receives a full body buff for higher gloss finish, but the white gel-coat fiberglass is the base color.

### NEW STANDARD FEATURES

- Laundry hamper in bedroom
- Solid wood dining table with high quality finish
- Framed mirror headboard in bedroom
- Simulated ceramic floor in kitchen

### 2004 OPTIONS MADE STANDARD FOR 2005

- Two larger Gibraltar solid surface vanity sinks
- Water filter
- Home Theater Sound System w/DVD/CD

### NEW OPTIONS

- Three new exterior graphics packages in full body paint:
 

Silver Sand	full body paint*
Fire Red	full body paint*
Regal Blue	full body paint*
- Freestanding dining table (no legs) and chairs with a six-door vanity storage
- Simulated plank wood flooring w/memory (dents from pebbles or debris will bounce back)
- True center steering system
- Chrome mirrors

\*Full body paint is finished with clear-coat and buffed to a premium gloss finish.

## PHAETON

### MAJOR NEW FEATURES

- The Phaeton's front and back caps were fully re-tool-ed for a totally new design.
- Ceiling height now a full 7 feet, which also adds 4 inches of interior vertical space to all mounted wall cabinets
- Three new interior design packages: Bronze, Platinum, and Palm Beach
- Three new exterior paint designs (all graphics are painted and finished with clearcoat):
 

Titanium Pearl	partial paint*
Forest Rose	partial paint*
Sunlit Sand	partial paint*

\*Partial paint receives a full body buff for higher gloss finish, but the white gel-coat fiberglass is the base color.

### NEW STANDARD FEATURES

- Roof drainage system built into the sidewalls to remove AC condensate and roof water
- One piece windshield
- Laundry hamper built into bedroom chest of drawers
- Exterior amber patio light next to entry
- Flat screen televisions in living room and bedroom
- Stainless steel galley sinks with pullout extendable sprayers in the faucets
- Enhanced satin nickel finish for plumbing and lighting fixtures, and cabinet hardware
- Armstrong simulated plank-wood flooring for kitchen and bath areas (ceramic tile still an option)
- Wall switches for all ceiling exhaust fans

- Shower door enhanced with translucent rainglass
- New headboard with inlaid mirror
- Michelin 275 tires
- 350 hp CAT diesel engine (was a 330 hp)

### 2004 OPTIONS MADE STANDARD FOR 2005

- Dual pane windows (reduces noise and condensate, adds insulation)
- Water filter
- Custom-designed mud flap
- 2000 watt inverter
- Home Theater Sound System w/DVD/CD
- Convection/Microwave
- Ultra leather powered driver's chair
- Four door refrigerator

### OPTIONAL

- Three new exterior graphics packages in full body paint:
 

Titanium Pearl	full body paint*
Forest Rose	full body paint*
Sunlit Sand	full body paint*

\*Full body paint is finished with clear-coat and buffed to a premium gloss finish.

### NEW OPTION FOR 2005

- King size bed

## ALLEGRO BUS

### NEW FEATURES

- Ceiling height now a full 7 feet, which also adds 4 inches of interior vertical space to all mounted wall cabinets
- Three new interior design packages: Mineral, Chestnut, and South Pacific
- Five new exterior graphics packages in full body paint:
 

Stone	full body paint*
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Delta	full body paint*
NASA	full body paint*
Silver Sand	full body paint*
Sunlit Sand	full body paint*

\*Full body paint is finished with clear-coat and buffed to a premium gloss finish.

#### NEW OPTIONS FOR 2005

- Dishwasher on some models
- Side view cameras activated by the turn signals
- Natural cherry for all interior cabinetry and woodwork
- Storage bay doors activated by keyless entry system
- Rearview mirror with compass and outside temp displays
- Independent front suspension
- 32" LCD television in living area

#### 2004 OPTIONS MADE STANDARD FOR 2005

- Automatic satellite dish
- Dual 15,000 BTU low profile AC with heat pumps
- 50-amp power cord reel
- Garden hose reel
- Pillow-top mattress
- Window awning package
- Washer-dryer ready

#### STANDARD FEATURES ON ALL ALLEGRO BUSES

- Full body paint
- Upgraded dash design and steering column
- Sony color in-dash backup monitor
- Home Theater Sound System w/DVD/CD; all speakers hidden in cabinetry.
- Upgraded driver and passenger chairs: both Ultraleather with full power; passenger chair with power footrest
- Exterior amber patio light next to entry
- Laundry hamper in chest of drawers
- Upgraded fabric for windshield privacy curtains
- Shower door enhanced with translucent rainglass
- Custom reversed-arch headboard in bedroom

- Map light for passenger chair

### ZEPHYR

The Tiffin Zephyr was first offered in 2000 and continued through 2001 and 2002. Only 12 units were built in 2003. After a total redesign as our premier luxury coach, it is offered in 2005 in one floorplan, the 45-ft QDZ. All of the features below are standard.

- Spartan K2 chassis with tag axle; 500-hp Cummins engine; Allison 4000 transmission
- 295/80 Michelin tires with aluminum wheels
- Quad slides
- Full body paint
- Three 15,000 BTU low profile AC units with heat pumps
- Hydro-Hot system with 8 heat exchangers to provide continuous hot water and warm the floors; the system offers three zones for heating the coach at different temperatures
- 10,000 watt Onan generator with automatic slide-out and auto-recharge; as house batteries get low, the Onan EGR-1 will auto-start and recharge the batteries
- 3000 watt Xantrex inverter
- Keyless entry
- Maintenance-free batteries: 4 coach and 2 engine bat-

teries designed for diesel operation

- Slide-out trays in basement operated from either side
- Marble floors and sculptured carpet
- King-size bed
- All crown moldings, cabinetry, and window treatments are created with solid natural cherry, cherry, oak, walnut, and natural maple.
- Gibraltar solid surface counters with inlaid color features and routed end treatments; all cutouts are laser cut for perfect fit
- Freestanding Gibraltar dining table with six-door solid cherry sideboard
- In-motion satellite system for continuous television reception
- LCD televisions: 32" in living area and 23" in bedroom
- Home Theater Sound System w/DVD/CD; all six speakers hidden in cabinetry; separate speakers and stereo system in the bedroom
- GM's On-Star 24/7 service
- Left, center, and right backup cameras actuated by the turn signal
- 3-segment mirrors, 2 controlled by remote; top and bottom are convex.
- Full-power luxury driver's and passenger's seats with seatbelts built into the

chair; extra large buddy chair with powered footrest

- Auto awnings over entry door and patio, with 25 mph wind-guard auto retract system
- Push-button retract systems on water hoses and 50-amp power line
- Power sun visors for driver and passenger
- Multi-level lighting system in bedroom with full control panel for lighting throughout the coach
- Power air-driven stepwell cover, with driver and passenger controls
- Dometic double-door side-wise 14 CF refrigerator-freezer-icemaker
- Vacuum cleaner system
- Two high-intensity docking lamps; exterior amber patio light next to entry
- Dual pane windows

#### OPTIONAL

- Total Control Navigation System

### FULL LITERATURE

Complete brochures for each brand will be available August 15. Please make your requests through the Tiffin website ([www.tiffinmotorhomes.com](http://www.tiffinmotorhomes.com)) or call 256-356-8661. The website will also be updated August 15 with all information and floorplans for 2005 brands and models.

### *The 2005 Zephyr*







## The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

*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.

**Please note the tear-out postcard at this opening.** Share your experiences with the Allegro family. Tell us about the interesting places you have visited, people you have met, and what you have learned that will benefit your fellow travelers.

Feel free to use the postcard to send us your questions about problems you have encountered with your rig. Unless you indicate otherwise, we may elect to print your question with an answer when it will benefit others.

So don't be shy about picking up your pens (or keyboards) and writing. Send email to [fred@bookproduction.com](mailto: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.

Keep on *roughing it smoothly!*

—Fred Thompson, editor

### READER STORIES . . .

#### Snakes Alive!

In the summer of 2002, we were camp hosts at a local state park. We had been there for four weeks in our 1999 36' Allegro Bay. On our last night, I was awakened by a couple of small noises about 2 a.m. Thinking that someone might be trying to take our bikes which were parked outside the bedroom window, I got up to investigate. When I tried looking out the living room window, the night lights along the floor caused a glare so that I wasn't able to see outside. So I went over to the step well to turn off the night light. There on the second step was a SNAKE!

I knew if I did not remain calm my husband would be shocked out of his sound sleep. So I quietly woke him and told him we had a snake inside the motorhome. By the time we got back to the living room, the snake had disappeared. So we started looking for it. Do you know how many places there are for a snake to hide? We didn't find him, so we sat down to have some coffee. I walked over to get something off the dashboard—and there was the snake—sticking its head out from the air vent in the firewall in front of the passen-

ger seat. That time, I did squeal! The snake ducked back into the vent, so my husband went outside, got some wood, and blocked the vent so it could not return.

Thinking the snake was gone, I went back to bed. But my husband stayed out on the sofa. A short time later, I heard this *loud* thumping. While my husband was lying on the sofa, the snake came out from behind the sofa (we never did know how he got back in) and slithered across the carpet to try to get back into the air vent. My husband beat the snake senseless with a broom handle (which he broke!) and then tossed it outside. He promptly cut its head off. When he measured the dead snake, it was 3 feet long (even without its head). We later learned that it was an eastern fox snake (a protected, harmless species).

The noises which originally awakened me were both sets of keys, an empty soda pop can, and the TV remote which had all been on the kitchen counter and had been knocked into the step well by the snake.

We had a *logical* solution for this problem. We traded in our Allegro Bay and took delivery on our new 2003 Phaeton within

the week! You can be assured we put screen over the air vent in our Phaeton so we'd have no more middle-of-the-night surprises.

Incidentally, our Phaeton is our fourth Tiffin motorhome. We organized our local Allegro Motorhome Chapter in 2000. We are the Black Swamp Allegros, Chapter No. 140, named in honor of the original black swamp area of northwest Ohio. We have ten couples in our chapter who are having a great time and going strong.

Dick and Connie Isbell  
Oregon, Ohio  
[applebell1@toast.net](mailto:applebell1@toast.net)

*Editor:* You have given the Tiffin sales manager a great idea for increasing sales in 2005. We are checking pet stores now to see if we can order a supply of harmless snakes.

#### A Long Drive Home

My husband died in 2000 in Alaska after an unanticipated 3-week illness on our first big trip in our motorhome. After a close friend came to accompany me, I drove the motorhome 6,000 miles back home to Florida. Since then I have made three long trips in it. I am enjoying the magazine immensely. Maybe you could run more information on how to care for your older motorhomes. There are still lots of owners of 70's and 80's units. My husband and I had a terrible time finding a good used one — your owners keep them!

Marilyn Green  
Beverly Hill, Fla.

*Editor:* I have asked Danny Inman (see page 4) to provide regular information in coming issues for maintaining units built in the 1970s and '80s. Thanks for your suggestion. And we admire your spunk in driving your coach home after your unfortunate loss.

#### Drawers Under the Dinette

I was glad to see in the April issue, page 11, that the newer Allegro has drawers under the dinette bench seats.

But you stole my thunder! We

just purchased our first Tiffin motorhome, an Allegro 2001. We love it — but the impossible-to-use space under those benches was not fun. We had a kitchen re-building company make us two slide-out drawers. They make so much sense, and the cost was only \$126. A small price to pay. I took the enclosed picture so I could suggest that you put drawers under the benches.

"Great minds. . . ." You know the rest. But I am writing anyway hoping to give other people the idea to put in the slide-out drawers just as we did.

Thanks for a great coach.

Larry and Faye Kennedy  
Phoenix, Ariz.

*Editor:* Sorry about the thunder. But we agree about "great minds."

#### Those Toll-Free Numbers

We like all the information and stories and think that *Roughing It Smoothly* is a great magazine. Could you please supply us with a list of toll-free customer service numbers for the main components in your motorhomes?

Lynn and Jo Weger  
Durango, Colo.

*Editor:* We sure can. See page 20, this issue. And thanks for the request.

#### Restoring the Shine

We have a 1994 Allegro that has served us so well. It's showing it's

Larry Kennedy and a local cabinet maker recaptured lost space under the dinette seats for only \$126.



age, especially on the exterior, e.g., dull appearance and cracks in the stripes. What is recommended to restore the shiny surface?

Thank you,

Bob & Bonnie Beck  
Wichita Falls, Kans.

**Tiffin Customer Service:** To restore the color on the fiberglass, I would highly recommend using GEL-GLOSS RV CLEANER and WAX. This is a one-step cleaner that cleans, waxes, seals, and protects the exterior surface of fiberglass coaches. As for the decals, there is not much that can be done once they crack and begin to peel. Our Parts Department can send new decals out. For the decals that you need, have your VIN# available and call Loyd at 256-356-8661, ext. 342, and he will assist you.

Scotty Martin,  
Tiffin Service Specialist

#### READERS COMMENT ABOUT ...

##### Internet address to ask questions.

It would be nice to have email addresses for service techs at the plant to ask questions about problems. Mike McManigal, Farwell, Tex.

**Editor:** You can do that now. All addresses are firstname.lastname@tiffinmotorhomes.com

##### Maintenance calendar

Could TMH publish maintenance calendars for all years and models based on time and mileage, like they do in auto manuals? Dale Young, LaGrande, Ore.

**Editor:** Sounds like a major project, but I will make the suggestion at the plant.

##### Travel articles

The magazine is well thought out with easy to relate to material. I especially like the tour agenda with Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, etc. John and Barb Schelfhout, Green Bay, Wisc.

**Editor:** Thanks. I hope I did not wear you out with the 14-day travel agenda for the Blue Ridge Parkway!

##### Don't waste space

The magazine is a good start, but don't waste too much space telling us how good Tiffin Motorhomes is. We know that. Don't let the magazine be a sales catalog. John Schaefer, Seguin, Tex.

**Editor:** Thanks for your candid admonition. I will try to keep the editorial quality high. Keep letting us know how we're doing.

##### What's new

We especially like the articles about the new coaches that are coming out. Pat and Maxine Carroll, Great Falls, Mont.

**Editor:** By late August you can go to [www.tiffinmotorhomes.com](http://www.tiffinmotorhomes.com) and request 8-page color brochures on each line of the 2005 coaches.

##### TMH appreciates owners

It is nice that you have decided to publish this magazine. It makes owners feel appreciated. Please keep featuring articles on preventive maintenance. Richard Laiten, Crystal City, Mo.

##### Owners appreciate TMH

We own a 2000 Zephyr. We have a home in Oregon which we use from May 1 to Oct. 31. Then we winter in Desert Hot Springs, Calif. My husband is a retired government worker and I'm a retired teacher. We love our motorhome and we are so grateful to Mr. Tiffin and his company. Duane and Pat Johnson, Nehalem, Ore.

**Editor:** Thanks for your postcard. From your note and the one preceding, I think we have a "Mutual Admiration Society," with apologies to Mr. Schaefer.

##### Amateur radio operators

We are to take delivery of our new

38-foot Phaeton in about a week. Maybe you can help. We are both amateur radio (ham) operators and would like to know how other motorhome hams have installed radio equipment and HF antennas. With the diverse population of Tiffin motorhome owners, somebody must have shared their successful installations with you. Dick Noble, Newport, Wash.

**Editor:** Since RIS has been in operation only seven months, we haven't built a databank of information on subjects of interest to coach owners. Hopefully, this entry will find the person who has the info you need.

##### Dealer customer service ratings

We would like for TMH to develop a Customer Service Rating System for their dealerships. We have invested a solid six figures in our motorhome and would like to know the quality of service offered by Tiffin dealers. Dealers are the first line of contact for your customers.

##### Another Vintage Allegro

We noticed in your first issue an article about a lady with a 1978 Allegro 32-footer. I just had to write and let you know that there is another Allegro here in Alabama that is a "Classic."

We purchased our 1979 Allegro from Bankston Motorhomes on Dec. 27, 1986. It is in number one shape. We would not be afraid to load up

and hit the road. It has traveled to many craft shows, state parks, and makes an annual round trip to Louisiana. This Allegro has its original paint, carpet, and engine. We have all of the original papers that came with our Allegro, all of the booklets for the appliances, and even the original sales slip from Bankston. We keep records on all maintenance. It is washed and waxed twice a year. My husband does all service, such as engine, brakes, heating, refrigerator, and cooling to make sure that everything is done properly. I made new curtains and seat covers for the dining booth. My husband even built a dumping station so that he could completely clean out the tanks. We have never put antifreeze in the lines because we blow them out every winter. I just wanted to let you know that we are very happy Allegro owners and are proud of how we have maintained and enjoyed our 1979 Allegro motorhome. Please convey our best regards to all employees at Tiffin. We have always been treated kindly when we visited Red Bay.

Huey and Carolyn Waldon  
Harvest, Ala.

##### And a 1990 22-ft Class C Allegro

I bought my Allegro three years ago from its second owner. I have driven it around New York state and to my home in Tarpon Springs, Fla. It only has 22,000 miles on it. I love it!

Gene Ferrara  
Hicksville, N.Y.

The Waldons' 1979 Allegro 32-footer—almost like new and ready to go.





## ALLEGRO CHESAPEAKE SPRING RALLY

by Gail and Jimmy Johnson

If you missed the Chesapeake Rally at Urbana, Virginia, in April you missed experiencing a lovely area of our country! They say "Virginia is for lovers," but we loved Virginia!

Urbana is a quaint little village nestled on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay. It is the home of BethPage Campground, a truly delightful facility for the 100 plus coaches that arrived for the four day rally.

Meals, meetings, and orientations were held in the large meeting hall, a historic building on the property which had formerly housed a dairy barn!

We enjoyed meeting friends from all around the country. The overall impression we came away with was of how very easy it was to meet and come to know our "Allegro family" from near and far. From

Allegro Friends assembled on the deck of the Chesapeake Bay cruiser which took them to Tangier Island, a step back in time.

Gail and Jimmy Johnson, secretary and president of the Allegro Club, with (left to right) Arnold & Jean Riding, and Larry & Elaine Gomes take a moment to make a photographic record of their trip.

informal gatherings around our nightly campfire to joining in a friendly game of washers, the people we met quickly made us feel like old friends.

Perhaps the highlight of our stay was a daytrip to Tangier Island, which involved an hour-long boat ride to that peaceful spot. Stepping onto the island in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay was like stepping back in time. With no cars on the island, bicycles and golf carts provided a means of touring the three-mile-long strip. The mouth-watering aroma of fried crab cakes tempted us as we strolled past local restaurants on our search for the perfect souvenir. Everywhere we saw evidence of the little town's dependence upon the sea—crab traps, nets, boats of all kinds, and advertisements for local seafood spoke to us of a different way of life than we have experienced.

The Chesapeake Bay touches so many interesting and historical areas that we could have spent two or three weeks there and not seen it all! During our free time we took a quick trip to historic Colonial Williamsburg. On another morning we went north to Fredericksburg, home of Mary Washington College and site of a famous Civil War battle of the same name.

We must offer a word of thanks to Tiffin Motor Homes for sending their technicians to do minor repairs for those who needed service. Those guys were so very helpful and courteous.

We want to give credit to Kello and Elaine McAnally for their work planning and supervising this rally. We also extend our thanks to the BethPage staff for their helpful and hospitable treatment of our group.

We sincerely look forward to seeing you and getting to know you at future rallies. As the new coordinators of these activities, we solicit your suggestions for ways to make our rallies even better! We are here to serve you, our Allegro family, and we will strive to do that effectively!

Our hope is that you all will keep on "roughing it smoothly," and that we will see you in August at the Amana Rally in Iowa!

## ATTENTION ALLEGRO CLUB MEMBERS

There are several changes of which you should be aware. As of May 17 Verbon Jones joined us as Club Office Manager. He brings extensive experience in management, accounting, retail sales, and advertising. You will see many positive changes as we begin to implement several of his fresh ideas.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, our mailing address has changed. All Club correspondence should be directed to PO Box 1429, Red Bay, AL 35582-1429. Also please note the following phone number (256) 356-8522 as the only number you need to use to access anyone in the Club office.

Cindy Enlow, former Club Office Secretary, has decided to pursue other vocational opportunities and left this office May 18. Cynthia Skinner assumed her duties on June 21.

We regret to announce that the publication of the July issue of the *Hotline Newsletter* will be delayed. The Club office is currently dealing with several sudden, unexpected technical and personnel concerns which have hindered the normal printing and mailing of the Club's quarterly communication. This office currently has no access to the Club's membership database, a situation which has hindered us since May 18. It appears that efforts to process new membership applications ceased very early in May preventing the database from being current. We have contracted with a technical consultant to provide us with a software package which we hope will enable quicker, more efficient information management. Once we have this new tool available to us, we can begin catching up on the new membership information. We also hope to have the old database available for use soon.

These matters will take some time to work through. We solicit your patience and understanding as we address these issues which we view as opportunities for the Club to become stronger and more responsive to your needs.

— Jimmy Johnson, President

## MEMORIALS

Please accept our sympathy in the passing of your loved one. May you find Hope in His Word, Strength in His Presence, Comfort in His Mercy, and Peace in His Love.

**Jack Buddles**, Chapter 28, Allegro Ramblers of Eastern Michigan

**Gib Clark**, Chapter 39, Space Coast Allegros, Melbourne, Florida area

**Barbara Fleming**, Chapter 66, South Alabama Allegros, Mobile, Alabama area

**Al Sumpton**, Chapter 28, Allegro Ramblers of Eastern Michigan

**Zola Webb**, Chapter 60, Allegro Fun Seekers, Amarillo, Texas area

## CLUB BENEFITS

1. The International Allegro Family Hotline Newsletter is published quarterly to keep our membership informed about rallies, caravans, chapter news, safety information, factory news, and other informative and helpful information.

2. The opportunity to purchase insurances at discounted rates:

- A. Emergency Road Service through Coach-Net at 1-877-801-0333.
- B. Long-term care, trip cancellation, motor home replacement coverage, and motor home and other vehicle liability, etc., through Farm & City at 1-800-331-1520.
- C. Transportation in case of medical emergency for you and your spouse with medical personnel through SkyMed at 1-800-475-9633.

Your Allegro Club membership must be maintained and kept up-to-date in order to continue receiving the discounts.

3. The Allegro Store will carry a selection of shirts, caps and jackets with the Tiffin name brands embroidered on them. Many other items will be added to the store soon.

4. Allegro Club members have the opportunity to attend several rallies or caravans throughout the year. Our rallies are usually a package deal which includes your campground fees, entertainment, most meals, transportation to and from planned activities, suppliers' seminars, plenty of door prizes, dealers display units for your viewing, sales representatives from Tiffin

Motorhomes, Inc., to answer questions about your motorhome and much more. Servicemen from Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc., attend the rally to do minor repairs to rally-goers coaches. We also schedule some free time at our rallies for rest, shopping, or to do things on your own.

Recent rallies have been at Gulf Shores, Ala., Chesapeake, Va., Gettysburg, Pa., and Renfro Valley, Ky.

Future rallies are currently scheduled for Myrtle Beach, S.C., Branson, Mo., Mackinaw City, Mich., and Amana Colonies, Iowa. Caravans have been conducted into Canada, Alaska, and Mexico.

5. Local Allegro Club chapters are also available to International members. These provide fun, fellowship, and entertainment on a local basis each month. But you must be an International Club member in order to join a local chapter.

6. Starting immediately we have a new Happy Camper 1/2 price club for an incredible savings for our Allegro Family Membership in good standing. The price to you is \$29.95 for your first year (a \$20.00 discount) and only \$39.95 every year thereafter when you renew. (See ad in our Allegro Family Hotline in regards to the New Happy Camper 1/2 price club.)

7. A 10% discount is available to current Allegro Club members at Tiffin's Campers Choice Store on parts and accessories for your motorhome. You must ask for the discount and provide your membership number.

For more information call (256) 356-8522.

Contact Information for the International Allegro Family Motor Home Club, Inc.

PO Box 1429, Red Bay, AL 35582-1429  
Phone: (256) 356-8522  
Fax: (256) 356-9746  
jimmy.johnson@tiffinmotorhomes.com



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**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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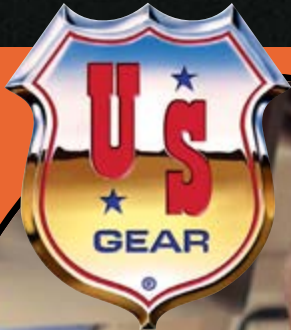


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**Bob & Bobbie**

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With more Gross Vehicle Weight, it's designed to accommodate upgrades, slide-outs, extras and over-sized egos.



### Workhorse W Series

When we built the new W24 gas chassis we kept one thing in mind. You. With the most carrying capacity of any gas chassis, it offers a more luxurious coach comparable to that of a diesel. More towing capacity means more upscale amenities for your coach, such as heavier marble counter tops, heavier cuts of wood or that armoire you've always had your eye on. The power of the W24 gives you a higher standard of living, which no other gas chassis can offer, so you'll never have to settle for an inferior interior.

The upgraded Allison 2100 Transmission was designed specifically for the W24. Preferred by diesel pushers, it's fully equipped to handle the W24's larger towing capacity and give you the diesel-sized standard of living you're looking for.



### Allison 2100

Not only is it the most powerful gas chassis, it's the most advanced. The new Arens Controls push button electronic shifter is now available on the W24. Also,

the upgraded 50 degree wheel cut is an industry best. Not to mention our upgraded brakes, axles, springs, 22.5" Michelin tires and our specially designed Allison 2100 transmission.

Even though the W24 is the biggest and most powerful gas chassis, it still provides the great qualities our drivers have come to expect from the W Series. So if luxury is what you're looking for in an RV, stop by your local Workhorse dealer for more information.



With a GCWR of 30K, the W24 offers 2 tons more towing capacity than any other gas RV.\*



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