

Roughing It Smoothly®



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- A Fall Story in Vermont
- Derald Dancy, Tiffin Management
- A Summer Visit to Idaho

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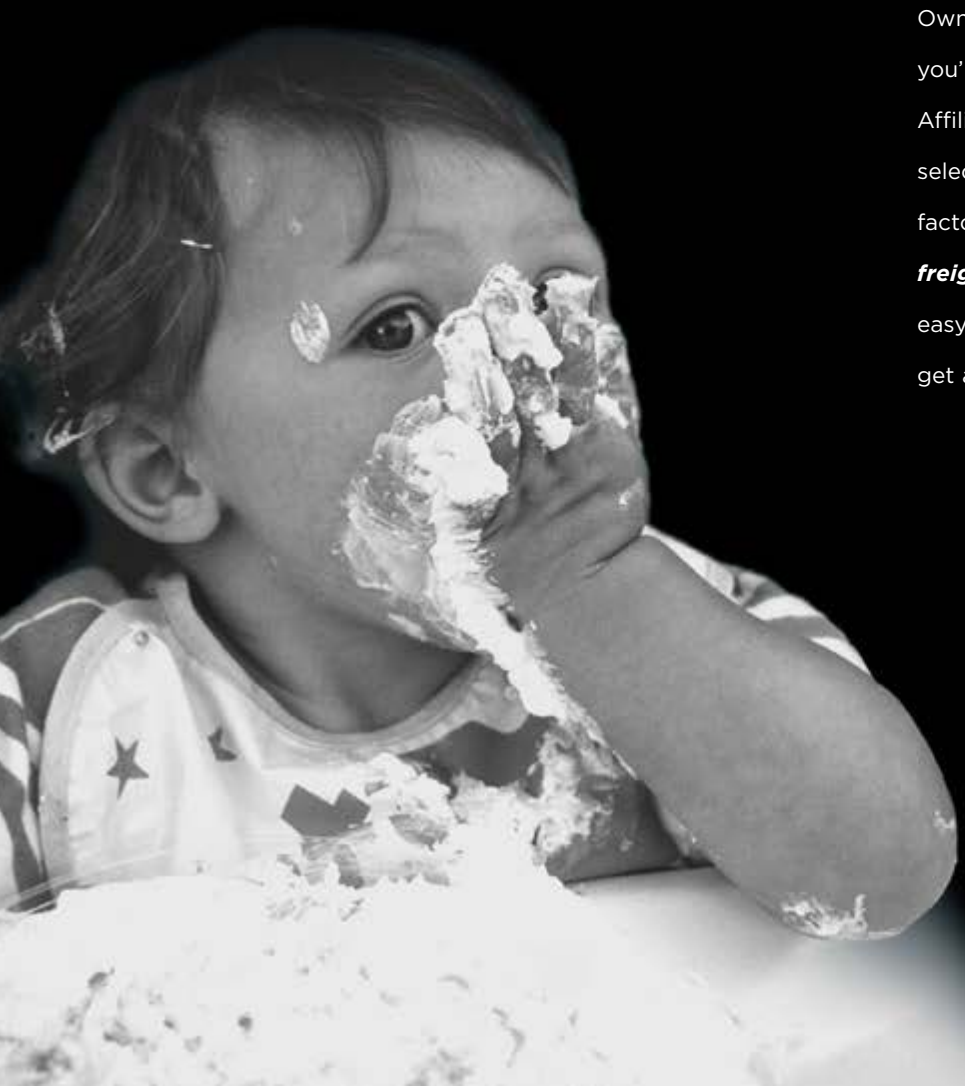
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Roughing it Smoothly®

July 2005

Volume 2, Number 3

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Bob Hardin: *I'm just glad I know him.*

by Bob Tiffin

EACH OF US can think of at least one person we have known over the years and say, "I'm just glad I know him or her." I can think of several, but one person who always comes to mind is Bob Hardin. His patience, skill, and ingenuity have meant so much to me, my Daddy, and Tiffin Motorhomes over the years. More than once he's "pulled my bacon out of the fire." But rather than me trying to tell you this story, I would like you to hear it in first person. So here's Bob Hardin.

I've known the Tiffins since I was a kid in high school. I'm 71 now — about eight years older than Bob. Emma and I got married when I was 17. We were high school sweethearts. On Sunday afternoons in the summertime, we used to go by and get Bob and his younger brother, David, in my '32 Ford with a rumble seat and take them swimmin' down at the creek. I guess Bob was about nine then.

After high school, I went to the Commercial Trade Institute and finished up there in February 1956. Although I wanted to be in business for myself, in order to get some really good experience I accepted a position with Flint Refrigeration in Huntsville when that town really started growing. I spent the week working in Huntsville and the weekends at home in Red Bay. Flint liked my work and had me take the company truck home with me on weekends so I could do emergency calls if needed. The truck was all painted up with the Flint designs and several AC logos on it.

Mr. Alex, Bob's daddy, was building houses in Russellville. The owner of one of the houses he had sold was having trouble with her central air system. Earlier efforts to fix it had been unsuccessful and she decided she wanted a "factory man." There wasn't a "factory man" in Franklin County. But Mr. Alex saw my Flint truck

parked outside Tiffin Supply with me in my company uniform and it clicked in his mind, "Here's the man to get that lady's air conditioner fixed."

So off I went to Russellville. When I got to her house, the first thing she asked me was, "What company do you represent?" Mr. Alex had forgotten to tell me what brand her air conditioner was. My truck and uniform had a Westinghouse logo on it. She finally let me see her air conditioner, and I quickly responded, "Oh, yes ma'am, Westinghouse makes this brand." It really didn't take much to get it fixed and I left with her thinking that a "factory man" had taken care of her problem. I

went back to Red Bay and told Mr. Alex, "The next time you send me out as a 'factory man' you be sure to tell me what factory I'm from!" We chuckled about that visit for a long time.

After I came home from Flint Refrigeration Friday afternoons, I would work on my own accounts that were outside of their territory. It wasn't long until I was able to start Hardin Heating and Cooling in Red Bay. I had specialized in wiring control systems at Flint which helped me generate more work beyond the HVAC business.

Tiffin Supply continued to expand in a lot of directions and Mr. Alex always called on me to do the wiring and wiring



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control systems. Besides building houses, they went into the cotton ginning business which required my services. It was always a good relationship for both of us.

The cotton crop failed the summer of 1972 from drought just after Mr. Alex had built a new cotton warehouse. It was late that summer that Bob got interested in building motorhomes. Mr. Alex called me and, sounding a little skeptical, said, "Bob wants to try building motorhomes in that cotton warehouse we just built. Go down there and put four of those big blower-heaters up in the corners so they can work down there this winter." I got the job done, and as you know, Bob and his company built their first two motorhomes in December 1972 in that warehouse.

Well, a year later in October the cotton crop was doing pretty good. And so was Bob's motorhome business. Knowing Mr. Alex had sounded a little skeptical about putting in the heaters, I decided to kid him a little. "Well, Mr. Alex, the cotton crop is doin' pretty good. You want me to get down to the warehouse and take those heaters out?"

Leaning back in his chair and rolling that pencil between his hands, he spurt-

ed out, "No, no, absolutely not! Bob has turned that business around and it's profitable now."

From then on, Bob had his daddy's backing one hundred percent.

When Bob was getting the company started, he came to me and said, "Bob, I'm gonna need a battery box, a generator box, and wheel wells for these motorhomes I'm building."

"What sizes, Bob?" I responded.

"I don't know," he said. "Come on down here and we'll do some measuring."

We measured and I went home and made patterns. We had to change the wheel well pattern twice, but the battery and generator boxes worked from the start.

"I'll buy everything you can make," Bob said with some excitement. "Whoa," I said. "You've got to write down your orders including the sizes of everything you want me to build." That order and supply system worked pretty good for quite a while.

Over the years as Tiffin Motorhomes has expanded many times, Bob has called on me to plan, supervise, and build the electrical, gas, and air systems for their buildings.

When Bob bought the Belmont mobile home plant in 2003 to use for the

new full-body paint plant, he came to me to do the electrical control systems, plus the gas and air lines. From January to May, just myself and one other man did the job. Then for the last three weeks, I added two more electricians to get the job finished in time for the start-up. That paint plant is one beautiful operation.

Since Bob is known throughout the motorhome business for his good service, it didn't surprise me a bit when he decided to build this new parts and service facility that is over 100,000 sq. ft. As the contractors were hanging the steel, Bob asked me to supervise the electrical, gas, and air service in this building. I'm 71 now, but I still climb, weld, and go up and down on these lifts. I really enjoy what I do. Bob and I understand each other. It's communication. I guess we kinda think alike.

When he asked me to do this job, I said, "Sure, get me two or three scissor lifts, one fork lift, and about five men, and we'll get it finished when you need it." It's just like it's always been. We look each other in the eye with a hand shake. We don't need complicated contracts.

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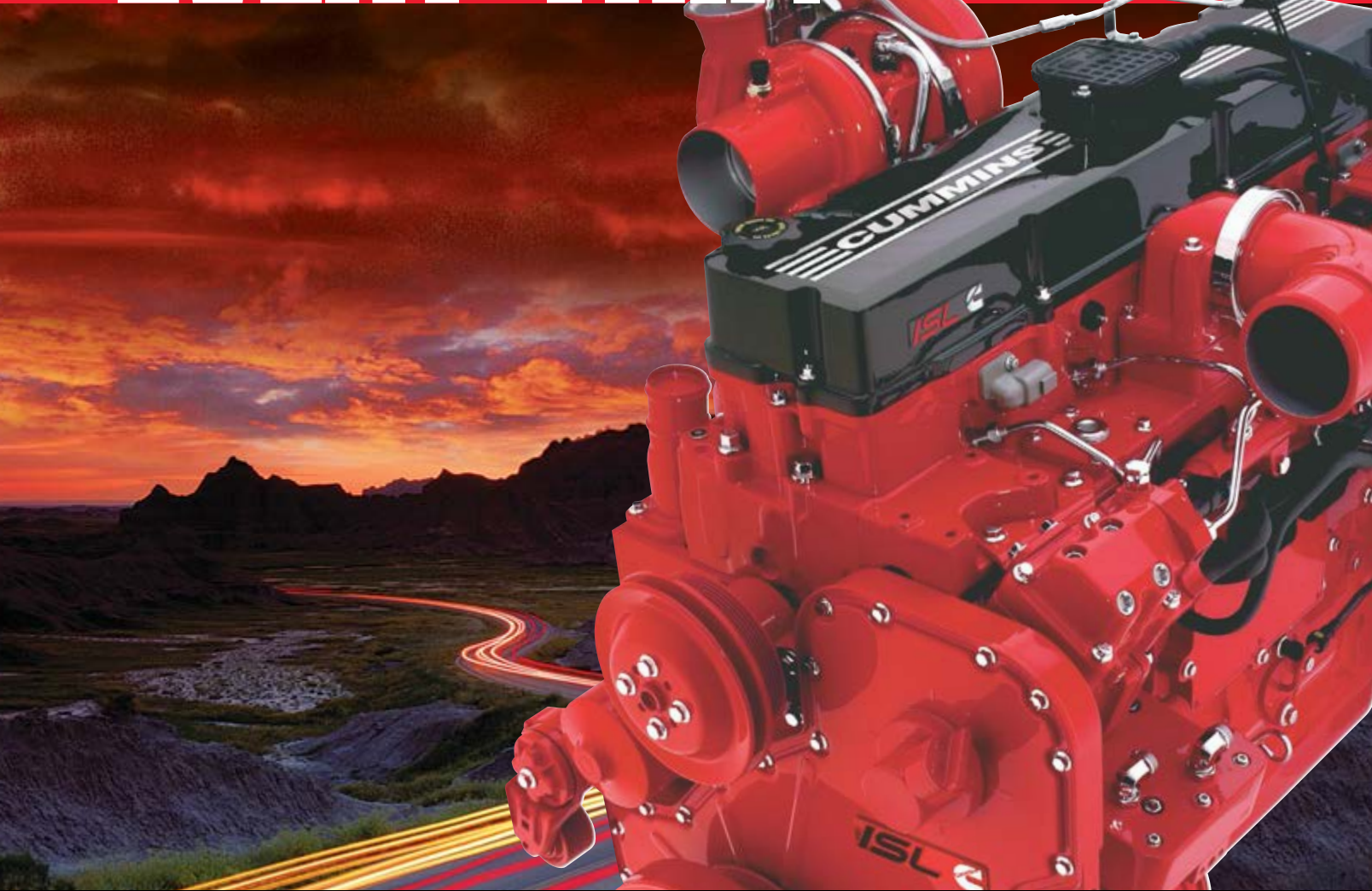


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It's Time for Georgia Peaches

JUST NORTH OF Macon, Georgia, last July as we were traveling back to Tampa, I-75 suddenly became a parking lot. We checked our map for an alternate route, and saw US 341 several miles to the west. After crawling to the next exit, we thankfully zoomed away on Hwy 42 to US 341. What we didn't realize was that we were about to make a "find."

Along the main street in Musella, Georgia, is Dickey Farms, the state's oldest, continuously operating peach packing house. After you have tasted a fresh Georgia peach, you may not be satisfied with any other region's fruit. The open deck of the packing house faces Old Hwy 341 North. On the west end of that deck, Dickey Farms serves the best peach ice cream cones you ever licked. Big fans kick up a breeze while you take a rocking chair and enjoy.

There is a size to please everyone. 4-oz. cup, \$1; 8-oz., \$2; 16-oz., \$4; and 32-oz., \$8 (put that one in your freezer because you'd be sick if you ate that much!). Cones, \$2.50; waffle cones, \$3. The ice cream is made fresh daily. Plus you can try frozen

The Red Globe freestone peach that comes in during late June or early July has just the right combination of sweet and tart.



peach lemonade: small, \$1; large, \$2. All prices are the same as they were last year.

Dickey Farms offers 20 varieties that start ripening in May. Eight varieties (all freestones) will start coming in about the time you receive your magazine:

Red Globe, July 1-15; Contender, 7-17; Cresthaven, 14-17; Sunprince, 15-25; Summerlady, 16-26; Jefferson, 20-30; O'Henry, July 29-August 10; and Flameprince, August 7-17.

Call toll free 800-PEACHGA or you can order online at www.gapeaches.com.

Blue Ox Offers Money-back Guarantee on TruCenter® Steering Control

Blue Ox is so certain you will be satisfied with their TruCenter® Steering Control that they are offering a 60-day money-back guarantee.

The system improves steering and vehicle control and reduces driver fatigue when the driver encounters strong winds, a tire blowout, uneven highway pavement, passing trucks, and low or soft shoulders. To activate, the driver pushes a dash-mounted button to trim steering to a true center position. The adjustment made "on the go" counteracts temporary problems such as off-camber roads or high cross winds.

TruCenter® Steering Control uses gas spring technology and is zinc plated. Both features improve the durability and reliability of the system. The system offers bolt-on installation, making the

unit transferable from coach to coach.

The TruCenter® Steering Control is offered by Tiffin Motorhomes on both the Allegro and Allegro Bay. For a factory-installed system, the 60-day money-back guarantee starts on the date the coach is purchased. For more information, call (402) 385-3051 or email info@blueox.us

Freightliner Chassis Owners Club Tops 6,000 Members

The Freightliner Chassis Owners Club (FCOC) has increased its membership to over 6,000 members and continues to add new members at a rate of 300 per month.

"The growth in our owners club has been phenomenal," Ken Hawk, president of FCOC said recently in making the announcement. "More and more people are realizing the freedom and adventure awaiting them on the open road and the enjoyment of the RV lifestyle."

"There are over 350 Freightliner dealers and 66 Oasis dealers to support every maintenance and service need any of us might have," Hawk pointed out, "giving the owner great confidence in the Freightliner chassis."

Another great advantage of club membership is the DaimlerChrysler Affiliate Rewards Program. This program allows FCOC members to purchase or lease select models from the Chrysler, Jeep, or Dodge brands at below factory invoice.

Continued on page 10

**New Phone Number for
Tiffin Parts and Service
256-356-0261**

Tiffin Motorhomes is pleased to announce the opening on July 11th of its new Parts and Service Department, a 105,000 sq. ft. facility located next to the Allegro Campground.

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Sample Motorhome Rates!

Value	Annual Price	Value	Annual Price
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50,000	\$ 614.00	325,000	\$ 1841.00
60,000	\$ 680.00	350,000	\$ 1948.00
70,000	\$ 717.00	375,000	\$ 2235.00
80,000	\$ 755.00	400,000	\$ 2342.00
90,000	\$ 791.00	425,000	\$ 2448.00
100,000	\$ 827.00	450,000	\$ 2555.00
110,000	\$ 866.00	475,000	\$ 2662.00
125,000	\$ 926.00	500,000	\$ 2769.00
150,000	\$ 1026.00	575,000	\$ 3090.00
175,000	\$ 1219.00	600,000	\$ 3197.00
200,000	\$ 1318.00	650,000	\$ 3411.00
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Many FCOC members have taken advantage of this program to purchase new vehicles to tow with their motorhome.

The first year of membership is free to Freightliner chassis owners who are also members of FMCA. Members receive a bi-monthly newsletter regarding upcoming RV events, technical articles, invitations to special events, rallies, and club-exclusive caravans.

“The growth of the FCOC is indicative of our commitment to our owners, to provide them with the highest quality products and services available,” Jack Conlan, president of Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp., said recently. “We encourage all Freightliner chassis owners to join the FCOC.”

For membership information, call 864-487-1700 or go to www.freightlinerchassisownersclub.org

Gas Prices Not Too Bad Compared to 20-year Hikes for Food and Housing

Does filling up the motorhome's fuel tank make you think about adding the price to the “assets” column of your financial report?

To add some perspective to the summer travel season, a U.S. energy firm researched the consumer price growth of common products and compared them to the growth chart for regular unleaded gas. With prices well over \$2.00 per gallon, it looks like we still are getting a bargain.

Since 1982, the increase in gas prices is 25 percent lower than food, 50 percent lower than housing, 70 percent lower than medical costs, and 80 percent below college tuition costs.

Take recreation and consider the increases in concert tickets or a major league baseball game. Last year an outing to a major league game for a family of four, including tickets, parking, food, drinks, programs, and baseball caps cost \$165. That's 70 percent higher than it cost just 10 years ago.

Ten years ago the typical concert ticket for a 1970s-era band was \$26. Today Paul McCartney commands \$90 per seat and the Rolling Stones can easily top \$100.

The research firm concluded that gasoline was “America's liquid bargain.”



TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRED THOMPSON

Derald Dancy had a long history of supervising major projects before Tiffin Motorhomes brought him to Red Bay as Director of Engineering.

An engineer's career path can have some ups and downs, dips and turns, struggles and exhilarating achievements. But a fortuitous assignment in November 2003 took Derald Dancy out of the big cities and made him a country boy.

Tiffin Motorhomes had just purchased the manufacturing facilities of a defunct mobile home plant in Belmont, Mississippi, just six miles from its assembly plant in Red Bay, Alabama, with the intention of converting it into a painting plant for its motorhomes.

Robert Half Management Resources was retained by TMH to oversee the project, and Dancy began a Monday-Friday commute from Memphis to Red Bay to serve a

six-month stint as the consulting engineer to take an existing 115,000 sq. ft. building and convert it into a state-of-the-art painting plant for Class A motorhomes.

With detailed engineering plans to cover every facet of the conversion to install 15 paint booths, Dancy coordinated the work of industrial engineers, the management of bids, and the oversight of teams that brought about the transformation of the facility in less than seven months. Working daily with the prime contractor, Global Finishing Solutions of Carrollton, Texas, Dancy was pleased to see the new facility completed three weeks early in time for the 2005 model year changeover.

The management success of the project did not escape Bob Tiffin's notice. Derald

Dancy was offered the newly created position of director of engineering. Fascinated with the complex engineering required to manufacture motorhomes, Derald accepted the offer and moved to Red Bay.

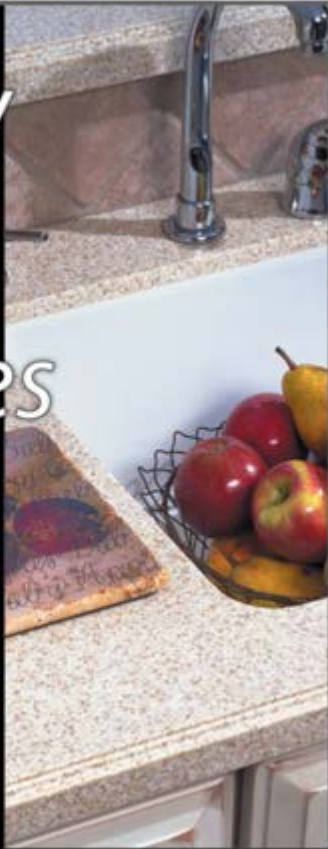
His career path to the top engineering job at TMH began with his graduation in 1979 from the University of Memphis with a B.S. degree in engineering technology. He enhanced his business skills by adding an MBA to his resume from Christian Brothers University. Derald began his professional career as a project engineer with Haden-Uniking to design and fabricate conveyor systems for the automotive assembly lines at GM, Ford, and Chrysler.

In 1983 he took a six-month leave-of-absence to build his own home. He enjoyed the experience so much that he got a general contractor's license and started his own residential construction compa-

Derald Dancy and Jamie Myrick, product engineer for cabinet construction, take a few moments to visit on the assembly line.

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ny, operating in his home town from 1983–1994. The sub-contracting labor market eventually led him back to his professional engineering career.

Two years with Durand Rauté, a plywood processing equipment company, followed by four years at American Metal Products as director of engineering, led to a major assignment to move an entire plant from La Follette, Tennessee, to Mexicali, Mexico.

After completing his first full year as director of engineering, Dancy continues to enjoy the challenges presented at TMH. “This job will never be monotonous. If you work for a large engineering management company, you are likely to get pigeon-holed into a speciality. Here you get to work on a wide range of projects,” he said.

The latest project is the new parts and service center, a 105,000 sq. ft. facility next to the Allegro Campground. The new 40-bay service center will include a body and welding shop, a cabinet shop, two state-of-the-art paint booths, and a well-appointed customer lounge. Along with the expanded parts department to serve the adjacent service bays as well as a shipping department to serve Tiffin’s nearly 100 dealers across the U.S., this division of TMH will require 105 employees.

“I really oversee two types of engineering,” Dancy explained. “One is product engineering which deals with the form, fit, and function of the motorhome. Our product engineering manager is Rodney Johnson. Then we have process engineering which deals with ‘how we do it,’” he continued. “Our process engineering manager is Brad Witt. He is concerned with the equipment we buy, the assembly procedures we use, and the raw material requirements.”

“With all of their features and options, motorhomes are becoming more complex every year. In addition to good engineering, our best strategy is to specify accurately, install correctly, and inspect thoroughly,” he explained.

Currently, a major ongoing project is the development of two assembly lines: one for diesel brands and one for gas brands. Approximately one-third of that changeover has been completed with a goal of December to finish the project. More workers are required at each station to assemble the diesel units, which creates an uneven labor supply when gas and diesel units are manufactured on the same assembly line. Ten units are built each day on the single line. The double assembly line will eventually increase production to 16 units per day.

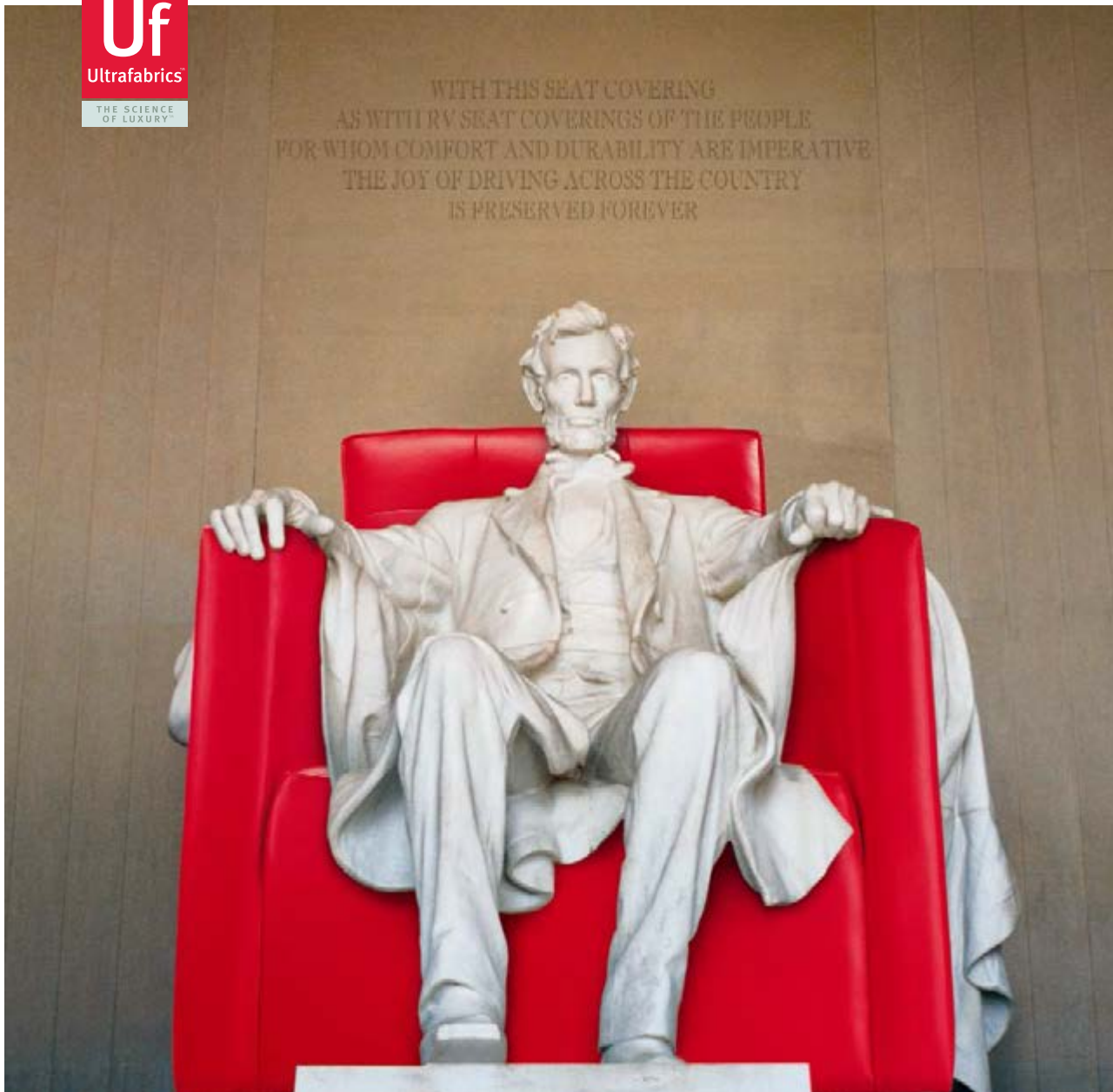
Dancy is also in charge of implementing the company’s MRP software. That acronym stands for “Material Requirements Planning.” A cross-functional team of 15 people from all departments throughout the plant maintains the database of all of the thousands of parts and materials required to build a motorhome. When an order for a motorhome is entered with its choice of options, the MRP software distributes to purchasing all of the parts and materials that must be acquired to build that specific unit, including the chassis with its engine and transmission. Then instructions are issued for all of the sub-assemblies to be manufactured in the proper sequence at the proper time to meet that specific unit as it moves down the assembly line.

What does this director of engineering foresee for Tiffin Motorhomes five years down the road? “I see us approaching in our motorhomes the automotive quality that you see today in fine automobiles.

Continued on page 35



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FOR WHOM COMFORT AND DURABILITY ARE IMPERATIVE
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IS PRESERVED FOREVER



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The 42' Quad-Slide Allegro Bus

THE LEGACY CONTINUES

Text by Jon Ragsdale

Photography by Peter Finger

Those well informed about the U.S. motorhome industry are still surprised to find a plant producing 3,000 class A coaches a year in the rural community of Red Bay, Alabama. With more than 1,000 employees, Tiffin Motorhomes designs and builds state-of-the-art luxury motorcoaches that compete head-to-head across North America with the best of the best. Opening their doors for business in 1972, Tiffin continues along a success path that passed a major milestone in February: the production of motorcoach number 50,000. Amazing!

Headed by Bob Tiffin and his three sons, Tim, Van, and Lex, the company markets a cutting edge lineup of five brands:

two gas burners – Allegro and Allegro Bay, and three diesels – Phaeton, Allegro Bus, and Zephyr. The 42-foot Allegro Bus is one of two flagships with knock-your-socks-off curb appeal.

Unparalleled in livability, luxury appointments, visually correct exterior aesthetics, creative interior design and excellence in quality, the 42-foot Quad Slide Allegro Bus is offered with a MSRP of \$305,200. When fully appointed, the suggested retail price is a highly competitive \$317,100. To experience for ourselves what the discerning motorcoach enthusiast can expect from Tiffin Motorhomes, we ventured south to Red Bay to see, drive, and enjoy the Allegro Bus. In a word – impressive! It's a gorgeous unit. Forty-two feet, six inches



long, 101 inches wide, four full slide-out rooms (all are substantial slide-out rooms, not just a closet or wardrobe to create the appearance of same), built on a Freightliner chassis with a tag axle.

Although we came to test drive the 42-foot coach, the Allegro Bus is offered in three different lengths: 38, 40, and 42. Two floor plans with either two or three slide-outs are available in the 38-foot models. Three floor plans with two, three, and four slide-outs are available in the 40-foot models. The 42-footer is offered in a single floor plan with four slides.

The 42-foot coach is the only model that features a tag axle for added support and excellence in over-the-road performance. At the touch of a button, the pressure applied to the tag axle can be dumped to facilitate making tight turns, backing up, or allowing more traction to the drive axle. The GVWR of the 42-foot Bus is 44,600 pounds, with an additional 10,000 pounds of towing capacity available. This unit has a cargo carrying capacity that is in the process of being determined. But if we look, for example, at the 40-foot Bus, the unloaded vehicle weight is 24,820 pounds, which means that over 7,000 pounds is available for fluids, passengers, cargo, and miscellaneous gear. Projecting that ratio on the 42-foot Bus, the cargo carrying capacity should be close to 9,000 lbs. Designed into this coach is 138 cubic feet of

Left: With the double-slide and seven-foot ceilings in the salon-galley areas, the living space nearly duplicates a similar space in a site-built home. *Top to bottom:* The captain's and passenger's chairs offer six-way powered adjustments with the back angle lever-adjusted. The passenger's chair also offers a powered leg rest. Both chairs can be fully swiveled to increase the seating arrangements for visitors. With showing off the natural cherry cabinets, the galley is very functional with solid surface countertops, a two-burner gas-on-glass cooktop, and a double stainless steel sink with extendable swivel sprayer. The oversized microwave convection oven can handle a roast and even a cake. The dinette comfortably seats four and can be converted to a bed for children in a few moments. *Not shown:* the four-door stainless steel refrigerator and the spacious slide-out pantry.

Props for interior photography furnished through courtesy of Crystal Page, The Tradition of Charm, 115 Fourth Avenue SW, Red Bay, Alabama 35582

basement storage space that includes an optional coach-wide slide-out tray, making even the gear and items stowed at the very back of the tray easily accessible. An optional outside entertainment center is also offered.

The over-the-road performance and driving characteristics of this unit we found to be beyond reproach. The 400-horsepower Cummins ISL turbo-charged diesel engine develops 1200 lbs.-ft. of torque. With the 6-speed push button 3000MH Allison transmission, these two power systems yield the type of synergy and responsiveness that makes long hours behind the wheel on travel days anything but tiring. Even with its size, this unit responds quickly to the touch of the accelerator when engaging hills. And on those five to seven percent downhill grades or when approaching an off-ramp, the two selections offered on the exhaust brake do an excellent job of slowing this palace on wheels. The unit performs effortlessly at the highest of Interstate speeds.

The touch button control really gets the job done as it permits the brake and accelerator to be tailored specifically to the body language and unique dimensions of each driver. With the 6-way power adjustable seat and the tilt steering wheel, the cockpit becomes a custom fit for any driver. The single piece (no center post) massive windshield presents a picture window view of the world outside. We found the cockpit area to be totally free of any sounds that would indicate outside air might be passing around the tightly sealed glass. And with the independent front suspension, the air-ride suspension that is augmented with torsion bars, and Bilstein shock absorbers (each shock is tuned specifically for this coach), the ride on a scale of 1 to 10 is easily an 11.

The instrumentation and controls on this hi-tech coach have been kept simple and friendly. Tiffin knows the presentation that greets the driver doesn't need to look like the cockpit of a 747. Large gauges with easy-on-the-eye white faces display operating data

quickly and efficiently. No searching around a myriad of instrument clusters, lights, bells, and whistles to get the information the driver needs.

To enhance side and rear coach visibility, in addition to the power-adjusted side mirrors, side-coach cameras are activated when the turn signal lever is selected, providing the driver with a real-time image on the color backup monitor of what is taking place along the side of the coach. The backup monitor includes audio so the driver can hear what is going on at the rear of the unit when backing up. Yes, the folks at Tiffin have thought of everything.

Tiffin Motorhomes has selected Freightliner's tag axle chassis for the 42-foot Allegro Bus because of its reliability and the company's superior service network. Freightliner has earned Bob Tiffin's trust and respect and the right to provide the foundation for this luxury coach.

New slide-out technology recently introduced accommodates the larger and heavier slides. Tiffin engineers designed the galley slide to take advantage of the HWH hydraulic scissor device which mounts above the floor in an enclosed housing on either end of the slide. It adds significant dimensional stability to the overall coach structure. The other three lighter weight slide-outs use the well-proven electric mechanisms as the motive force for extending and retracting.

The leveling system is all hydraulic. Simply by touching the auto-button on the leveling system key pad, the computer program determines the correct extension for each jack to perfectly level the coach. The slide-out rooms cannot be activated unless the engine ignition key is in the off position, a good safety feature that prevents the possibility of a slide-out ever accidentally deploying while the coach is rolling down the road.

The walls, floor, and ceiling structures are vacuum laminated, with the infrastructure of each incorporating the use of welded tubular steel and aluminum with perfectly cut block foam insulation sandwiched between the fi-



Top: With the rear double-slide, the master bedroom takes on a new dimension with ample space on all sides of the queen-size bed. The slide-out is large enough to accommodate an additional closet for shirt-length clothing. The double sliding mirror-doors enclose a cedar-lined closet. *Bottom:* The starboard slide houses a clothes hamper, four large drawers, and a full second

lavatory with medicine cabinet above and cabinet storage beneath, all capped with solid surface countertops. Beyond the French door you can see the oversized, rain glass enclosed shower. Day-night shades are attached to the French doors for privacy when the bathroom suite is occupied. The 24-inch flat panel color television is served with a separate DVD player.

berglass exterior and Luan wood interior panels. Placed on a vacuum table, each of these structures has a vacuum drawn on it during the curing of the adhesive that laminates the constituent parts together. When completed, the unitized characteristics of the walls, roof, and floor yield exceptional strength and high insulation values. This construction technology will provide reliable service over the life of the coach.

While our evaluation coach was a 2005 model, we did get an opportunity to see some of the new features on a 2006 prototype. The galley offers a new and truly dynamite standard feature. Tiffin Motorhomes calls it their "island slide-out." At a 90-degree angle to the exterior wall, a solid surface counter extension slides from under the forward end of the galley counter, creating a massive L-shape galley configuration. This new feature houses a tier of three deep pull-out drawers that yield copious amounts of additional and very accessible storage.

The décor of the salon area offers a standard 83-inch ultra-leather sofa with two ultra-leather rocker-recliners enhanced with beautifully coordinated fabrics for the valances and pillows. Porcelain tile, luxury carpet, day/night shades, solid surface counter tops and hand-crafted cabinetry with solid wood raised panel doors adorn every venue and corner of this coach.

This coach came equipped with the optional 32-inch LCD television mounted above the dash for easy viewing throughout the salon, galley, and dinette area. With the hidden surround sound speakers, the home theater system ranks at the top for motorhome entertainment. The optional in-motion satellite receiver kept us up-to-date with the news and our favorite programs no matter where we were.

The bench dinette features color-coordinated fabrics, a solid surface table top, connections for your laptop just under the edge of the table, and a huge storage drawer under each bench. The free-standing dinette with a four-door

hutch is an option.

In addition to its custom-designed Gibraltar solid surface countertops with generous drawer space underneath, the galley designer added coordinated solid surface backsplashes, mirror surrounds, and under-cabinet lighting. The deep double sink with extendable sprayer and sealed twin-burner glass cooktop complete the countertop layout. At eye-level, Tiffin offers as standard equipment a large convection microwave oven along with generous cabinets. Tucked away to the right of the sink is a concealed slide-out pantry. Positioned immediately just opposite the pantry, the four-door stainless steel refrigerator with icemaker is standard equipment.

The walk-through bath closes off with heavy sliding doors to create a private suite. On the driver's side, the architect created a separately enclosed toilet with solid surface sink and countertop along with designer lighting, medicine cabinet, and under-cabinet storage. An optional powered vent was added. The oversized shower enclosed with rain glass is standard.

The master bedroom is a retreat! This coach was equipped with the optional king size bed with pillow-top mattress which is mounted into the driver-side slide-out. Across the rear of the coach, a 75-inch cedar-lined closet is enclosed with double sliding glass doors. In the back corner on the passenger side, an optional washer-dryer is positioned next to the clothes hamper which flips out of a solid surface-topped credenza that also houses a chest-of-drawers. Completing this slide-out is a second solid surface lavatory with mirrored medicine cabinet. A 20-inch television with a dedicated DVD player is positioned overhead along with several cabinets.

Fore and aft, the cavernous interior with its seven-foot high ceilings is replete with appointments that underscore luxury, livability, convenience, and functionality. Tiffin offers five hardwoods and finishes including Natural Maple, Natural Cherry, Stained Cherry, Walnut, and Oak. Three décor



The toilet is fully enclosed with a dedicated lavatory cabinet, solid surface countertop and sink, and mirrored medicine cabinet with designer lighting.

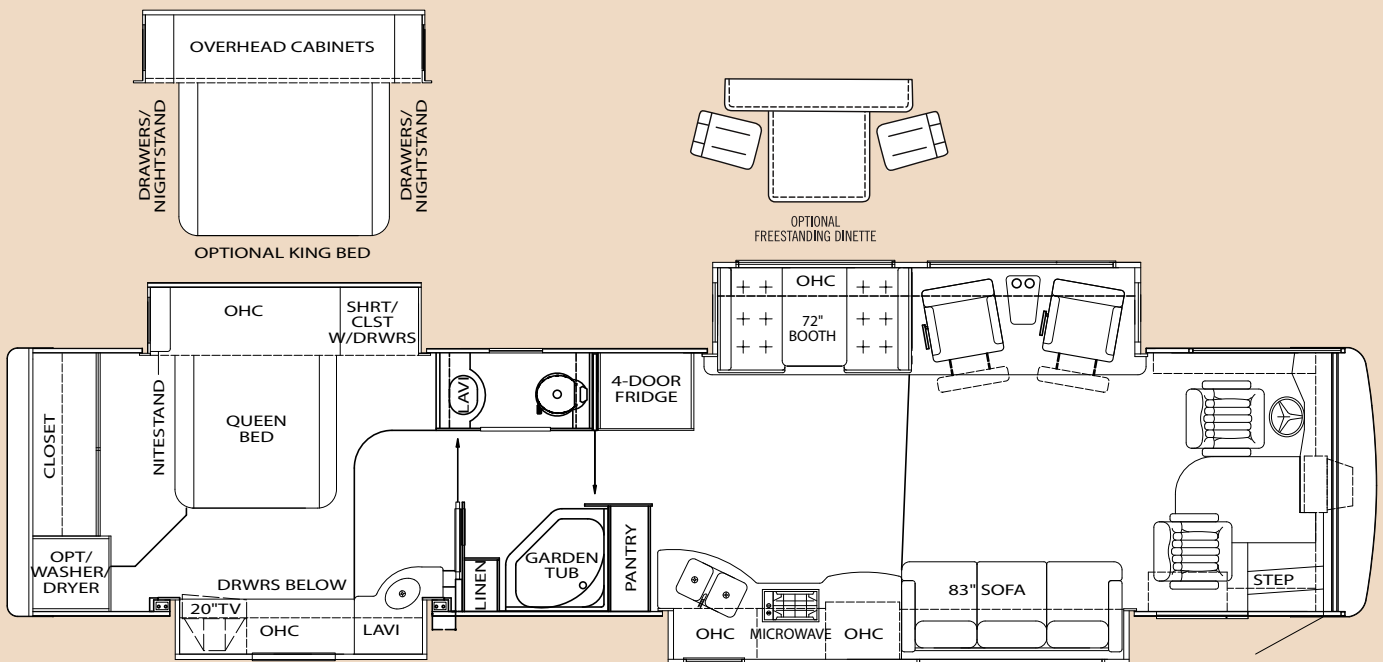
packages are offered: Chestnut, Mineral, and South Pacific. The company leads the industry with five full-body exterior paint and graphic schemes. The test coach had natural cherry which emphasizes the beautiful grain of that wood.

The heating and air conditioning systems include as standard, three 13,500-BTU roof ACs (with heat pumps) that are centrally ducted through a common plenum to deliver cooled air to the many registers that lace the ceiling front to rear. Tiffin uses the Hydro-Hot hydronic system as a standard feature on the 42-foot Allegro Bus. This system performs a number of important functions:

- (1) utilizing diesel fuel, the system provides on-demand hot water at three gallons per minute;
- (2) it heats water for heat exchangers that provide moist heat to three zones in the coach;
- (3) it preheats the diesel engine on cold mornings;
- (4) as you motor along, it utilizes the heat from the diesel engine to heat the interior of the coach.

A 10.0kw Onan Quiet Diesel genset, 50-amp shore power service, a 2000-watt inverter, and individual house and chassis battery packs together service the electrical power requirements for the Allegro Bus. The sizes of the holding tanks will support many days of stand-alone camping. With refueling access available on both sides of the coach, the 150-gallon fuel tank means you can motor across the entire country and only have to fill up three times.

In summary, this coach is a full-timer's dream with luxuries and conveniences that Tiffin has included at very competitive pricing. If you are into touring on a more limited basis, you will find this 42-footer full of comforts that will make your trips a delight. Backed by Tiffin Motorhomes' renowned service, we think this coach is a sure bet in the 40+ market.



SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2005 Allegro Bus 42QDP, Quad Slide

Base MSRP: \$305,200

MSRP as tested with options: \$317,100

STANDARD FEATURES

Automotive

Cast Aluminum Wheels
Michelin Tires
Air Ride (4 bags)
Allison 3000MH 6-Speed Auto w/
Lock-up (torque converter)
Cummins 400 Engine/Side Radiator
Air Brakes w/Auto Slack Adjusters
ABS Brakes
Fully Automatic Leveling Jacks
Cruise Control
Emergency Start Switch
Compression Brake

Structural

Laminated Floor, Sidewall and Roof
Steel/Aluminum Reinforced Structure

Exterior

Fiberglass Front & Rear Caps
Dual Fuel Fills
Full Body Paint
Large One-Piece Tinted Windshield
10kw Onan Generator with Manual
Slide-out
Heated Power Mirrors with Remote
Adjustment (Chrome)
Single Motor Intermittent Wiper
Gel-Coat Fiberglass Walls
Fog Lights
Deadbolt Front entrance Door
Double Electric Step
Dual Pane Tinted Windows
Exterior Patio Light
Electric Patio Awning
Window Awning Package
Slide-out Awnings
Pass-thru Basement Storage
Exterior Flip-up Storage Doors w/
Gas Shocks
Single Handle Lockable Storage Door
Latches
Heated Water and Holding Tank
Compartments
Luggage Compartment Lights
Docking Lights
Four 6-Volt House Batteries
2000 Watt Inverter
Custom Full-Width Mud Flap
50-Amp Service
Power Cord Reel – 50 Amp
Park Telephone Ready
Cable Ready TV
Black Holding Tank Flush System
Exterior Rinse Hose w/Soap Dispenser
and Paper Towel Holder
110v Exterior Receptacle
Undercoating
Fiberglass Roof
Spot Light w/Remote
Air Horns
Automatic Satellite Dish
TV Antenna
Power Fantastic Roof Vent w/3-
Speed Fan
3 – 13,500 BTU Low Profile Roof
A/C w/Heat Pump
Roof Ladder

Sony® Color Backup Camera and
Monitor
Water Filter

Driver's Compartment

Entry Floor Light
Step Switch & 12v Disconnect Switch
Automotive Padded Dash
Lighted Instrument Panel
Power Ultra Leather Driver Seat
(Flexsteel)
Ultra Leather Passenger Seat w/
Power Footrest (Flexsteel)
Passenger Seat Console Box w/Built-
in Magazine Rack
Single In-dash CD Player AM/FM
Stereo
12v Dash Receptacle
Tilt/Telescoping Steering Wheel
Dual Dash Fans
Windshield Privacy Curtain
Power Sun Visors
Panasonic VCR
Fire Extinguisher
Beverage Tray

Living Area / Dinette

Cloth Easy Bed (Flexsteel)
Booth Dinette w/Solid Surface Table
Top

Kitchen

Polished Solid Surface Countertops
Solid Surface Sink Covers
Single Lever Sink Faucet w/Built-in
Sprayer
Double Bowl Stainless Tall Sink
Stainless Steel Convection Microwave
2-Burner Glass Cook-top

Bath

Two Medicine Cabinets w/Vanity
Lights
Solid Surface Vanity Top & Bowl
Fiberglass Molded Tub or Shower
Skylight in Shower
Electric Flush Toilet

Bedroom

Inner Spring Pillow-top Mattress
Bed Comforter w/Throw Pillows
Decorative Mirrored Headboard
Solid Surface Night Stand Tops
Cedar-lined Wardrobe
Flat Screen TV
Laundry Hamper
Carbon Monoxide Detector
LPG Leak Detector

General Interior

7-foot Ceilings
Soft Touch Vinyl Ceiling
Raised Panel Cabinet Doors
Soft Cloth Covered Cabinet Shelves
12v Fluorescent Lights
Enclosed Surround Sound Speakers
Plumbed for Washer/Dryer w/Cabinet
Power Roof Vent w/3-Speed Fan
Wall-to-Wall Carpeting in Bedroom
& Living Room

Black-out Day/Night Shades in
Bedroom & Living Room
Porcelain Tile Flooring in Kitchen,
Bath & Entrance Landing
Hydro-Hot Hydronic Heating and
Water system
Tank Level Monitor System
Smoke Detector
Central Vacuum Cleaner
Air Driver Step Well Cover

OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

In Motion Satellite
Side View Cameras
Keyless Entry Door System
Exterior Slide-out Tray
Rear Mirror w/Compass
In Dash 6 CD Changer
32-in. LCD TV
Washer Dryer
Optional Fantastic Fan Water Closet
King Size Bed

OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE ON THE ALLEGRO BUS

Exterior Entertainment Center
w/13" TV, AM/FM/CD Player &
Speakers
Extra Fantastic Fan
Handheld CB Radio
Free Standing Legless Dinette w/
Solid Surface Table Top w/Built-
in Cabinets
Drop-in Oven w/3-Burner Cook-top
Dishwasher (NA available w/Drop-in
Oven)
Oak Cabinetry
Natural Maple Cabinetry
Walnut Cabinetry
Natural Cherry Cabinetry

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 306"
Overall Length (approx.) – 42'6"
Overall Height w/roof air – 12'7"
Interior Height – 84"
Overall Width – 101"
Interior Width – 96"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 44,600 lb.
GAWR (Front) – 14,600 lb.
GAWR (Rear) – 20,000 lb.
GAWR (Tag) – 10,000 lb.
GCWR – 54,600 lb.
UVW – 32,800
Trailer Hitch Capacity – 10,000 lb.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – Cummins 400 w/Side
Radiator
Torque (Lbs.-Ft. max. net) – 1200 @
1,300 rpm
Transmission – Allison 3000MH

6-Speed w/Lock-up (Torque
Converter)
Tire Size – 275/80R 22.5
Alternator (Amps) – 160

CHASSIS

Frame – Freightliner
Anti-lock Braking System (ABS)
Suspension (Front) – IFS w/Air Ride
Suspension (Rear) – Air Ride
Leveling Jacks – Hydraulic

CONSTRUCTION

Body - Laminated Floor, Sidewalls
and Roof
Support - Steel/Aluminum reinforced
structure
Front/rear body panels - One-piece
Fiberglass Caps
Exterior side panels – Gel-coat
fiberglass walls with full-body
painted graphics

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Sleeps – Four adults
Fuel Tank (gallons) – 150
Freshwater (gallons) – 90
Black water (gallons) – 46
Grey water (gallons) – 70
LPG Tank (filled to 80% capacity) –
24 gal.

MSRP

MSRP is the manufacturer's suggest-
ed retail price and does not include
dealer prep or options. Manufacturer
reserves the right to change or dis-
continue 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, engine
oil, and coolants. The UVW does
not include cargo, fresh water, LP
gas, passengers, or dealer-installed
accessories.

DEALERS

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

PLEASE NOTE

All options may not be available in
all models. Because of progressive
improvement during a model year,
specifications, standard and optional
equipment are subject to change with-
out notice or obligation.

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Ocala

Horse Capital of the World



Text by Wyre "Herb" Platt

Photography by Jude Hagin

AS RVERS TRAVEL the north-south corridors of I-75 and U.S. routes 441, 301, and 27 through Marion County, Florida, it is impossible to miss the gently rolling hills with emerald green pastures segmented by white and brown board fences. Many simply wish their lawns at home could look that good and keep moving to their destinations.

But this is Ocala. It's a destination. It's horse country! These major thoroughfares and 3,000 miles of byways will take you to the farms where the crème de la crème of stabled Florida Thoroughbreds are bred, raised, and trained. Not to mention the fifty or so other breeds, from Arabians and Belgian drafts to Paso Finos, Morgans, Tennessee Walkers, Missouri Foxtrotters, Welsh ponies, and the newly-registered breed, Gypsy Vanner.

In total, the Florida horse industry produces an

overall \$6.5 billion dollar economic impact for the state and generates more than 72,000 jobs. A large percentage of the financial impact and one-third of those jobs are realized in Ocala-Marion County. One becomes aware just from an RV windshield survey why this 1,579 square-mile county has aptly been labeled the "Horse Capital of the World." Some data sources report more than 40,000 horses. No one really knows for certain.

The historical evolution of the equine industry in Marion County has its 1917 pioneering benchmark in the horse breeding efforts of highway construction expert, Carl G. Rose. He knew the limestone underlying Ocala's topsoil was not only good for road construction; its nutritionally-rich calcium component also helped build strong horse bones. After a favorable comparison to the water and soils of



Town and Country Farms (entrance at top) is one of Marion County's most prestigious breeding, breaking, training, and racing Thoroughbred farms. Florida Thoroughbreds are exercised daily (above) on private training tracks.

Elaborate shingles (below and top right) market the farm and vie for the visitor's attention.



Kentucky horse country, he purchased hundreds of acres in central Ocala for racehorse breeding and encouraged others to make similar investments.

The 3,000-acre Rosemere Farm was operational in the 1930s on paddocks and pastureland where Central Florida Community College and Paddock Mall are now situated. Marion County's stature grew when two mid-Western oil wildcatters, Bonnie M. Heath and Jack Dudley, came to Ocala in the mid-50s and partnered with Hugh Fontaine. He convinced them to buy a sickly colt, appropriately named Needles because of his frequent vet visits for shots. To their amazement, the Florida-bred Needles captured both the Kentucky Derby and the Belmont Stakes in 1956.

Among several acclaimed champions in the 60s and 70s, Affirmed won the prestigious Triple Crown in 1978. In the 1980s, a formidable line of Florida-breds — Codex, Aloma's Ruler, Conquistador Cielo, and Gate Dancer — found the winner's circle in classic races. The racing world saw Unbridled win the Kentucky Derby in 1990 only to be followed by the dueling for winner's circle honors of fellow Florida-breds Silver Charm and Skip Away.

Over 85 percent of the horses competing in this year's Triple Crown quest had strong ties to Ocala-Marion County. The Derby winner Giacomo, is a son of Florida-bred Horse of the Year Holy Bull and he received his early training at Harris Training Center in Morriston. The second and third place finishers were Florida-breds, Closing Argument and Afleet Alex. The Preakness Stakes on May 21 belonged to Afleet Alex after a miraculous recovery from what could have been a disastrous fall. Florida-breds have now won 18 Classic races.

With the notoriety of three decades of winners, the Marion County thoroughbred farms have commanded the appellation of "Horse Capital of the World" and become the unquestionable anchor of the Florida equine industry.

Seeing and visiting these magnificent farms will take some planning. "At the present time, there is no company doing horse farm tours in Marion County. Some farms do allow visitors but contact must be made with the farm in advance," says Patrick Vinzant, information specialist at the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association (FTBOA). This Ocala-based association annually publishes a valuable compendium of resources entitled *The Florida Horse Farm and Service Directory*. The 2005 edition includes contact information and thematic maps for the 600 farms in the county. In conjunction with the Florida Department of Agriculture, the FTBOA helped create a color brochure entitled "A Scenic Tour of Florida Horse Country."

If possible, before you leave home, email info@ftboa.com and request both of the above publications. But if

you are already on the road when you read this story, and you would like to spend a day or two in Ocala, pull into the Grand Lake RV & Golf Resort (take exit 368 on I-75 and go 2.75 miles east on CR 318; 800-435-2291). Settle in, unhook your tow vehicle, and head for the FTBOA office at 801 SW 60th Avenue in downtown Ocala (352-629-2160) where you can obtain the above publications.

The *Directory* is very user friendly with a tabbed category breakdown of the farms. Annotated and labeled color maps provide numbered locations for each farm with letter coordinates for a quick geographic orientation. The country lanes are often narrow which will make touring in your motorhome impractical. On the farms that put out the welcome mat for horse lovers, you'll find owners and managers who offer up a double-helping of Southern hospitality. On those farm operations that have limited staff to manage visitors, you can still enjoy the view from the road.

One of the best-kept secrets is just a short drive from Ocala in Weirsdale: the Austin Carriage Museum. The museum's European and American galleries display 165 restored carriages. Magnificent horses may be seen on the grounds pulling the historic conveyances. The museum is complemented by walking gardens, an art museum, a library and museum shop. Along with the Austin Horse Park which offers events throughout the year (austinhorsepark.com), the Carriage Museum is a part of the Continental Acres Equine Resort which offers training for both horses and riders.

It is not only the equine industry, but rather the total package of the environmental, economic, and cultural landscape that makes this geographic region in north cen-



tral Florida so unique and attractive to RV travelers from all over North America.

The Ocala National Forest offers a rich ecology centered around beautiful streams, springs, and lakes where fishing, canoeing, and hiking are year-round activities. Of the twenty developed campgrounds, only Salt Springs offers full hook-up service. However, several campgrounds have dump stations and shower facilities. For more information about motorhome camping in the Ocala National Forest, visit the Lake George Ranger District office, 17147 East Highway 40 (exit 352 from I-75, then go east approx. 9 miles) in Silver Springs, or call 352-625-2520. Hours M-F, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Silver Springs and glass-bottom boats have attracted tourists for more than 125 years, and nature lovers for centuries. With exquisitely landscaped grounds, the famous glass-bottom boat rides over the springs with their diversity of fish, river cruises, and animals in their natural habitats, Silver Springs is still a "don't miss" attraction. Exit 352, then SR 40 east for 9 miles.

Ocala-Marion County's total annual days of sunshine and mild, inland subtropical climate make it one of the world's only regions where horses can be trained throughout the year. It is also the reason many RVers have chosen Marion County for their winter quarters. And we didn't even mention the numerous championship golf courses!

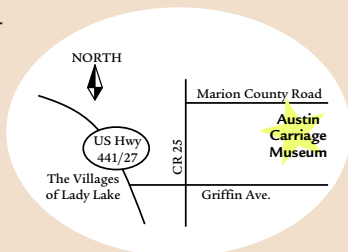
DIRECTIONS TO THE AUSTIN CARRIAGE MUSEUM:

To reach the museum and resort, take I-75 south of Ocala to exit 341. Go east (left) on CR 484 toward Belleview. At US 301 turn south (right) and go to CR 42. Turn east (left) toward Weirsdale. At US 441-27, go south (right) to The Villages. Watch for Austin Carriage Museum sign, and turn east (left) on Griffin Avenue to CR 25. Then go north (left) on CR 25 for 1.5 miles. Turn right

on Marion County Road and continue for 1.5 miles. At Austin Horse Park sign, turn right through gate and go ¼ mile to parking.

HOURS: Tu-Sa, 10-4; Su noon to 4; closed Mon.

ADMISSION: Adults \$10; ages 5-18, \$5; 4 and under, free.



CREDITS: Wyre "Herb" Platt is a senior land use planning consultant, free-lance writer, and veteran worldwide location scout and manager. He is a long-standing executive board member of the regional Film Commission of Real Florida in Ocala.

Jude Hagin is director of the Film Commission of Real Florida, Inc., located at 1025 SW First Avenue, Suite B, Ocala, FL 34474.



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1 From an independent study conducted by URI Information Services and Dr. James E. Fisher, St. Louis University.
2 This guarantee does not extend to radiators, A/C condensers, windshields, and routine maintenance parts, such as batteries, spark plugs and oil filters.
3 If your RV is totaled or stolen in its first five model years, we'll replace it with a comparable new RV even if you're not the original owner. After the first five model years, we'll pay your full original purchase price – not a depreciated amount – toward the purchase of the replacement RV.
4 Full-timers coverage not available in State of Texas
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Salad Days

by Maureen Callahan

As if growing heat and longer days weren't already a clue, the calendar and the weatherman like to claim an official start to summer. But they're usually way behind the rest of us, since as soon as the first hot spell kicks in out come the shorts, the iced tea, and recipes for lighter, simple-to-cook meals. After all, who wants to heat up the kitchen when the thermostat is creeping up towards the nineties or higher? While salads are usually a big part of summer menus to keep us cool, they're often a side dish. And that's too bad. Some of the best main dish meals for hot weather are simple salads filled with an assortment of meats and vegetables. The French make a main dish called Salad Nicoise that puts cooked fresh tuna, steamed green beans, boiled red potatoes, olives, and hard boiled eggs on a bed of greens. Stateside, Caesar Salad can be topped with grilled chicken or shrimp for a main course. So, we've taken flank steak and given it top billing on a big bowl of colorful greens and vegetables. Slices of fresh avocado offer a buttery-rich contrast to the tart tomatoes and crunchy onions and peppers in the salad. And a light vinaigrette made with fresh lime juice pulls it all together. With a side of cheese toast, the meal is complete.

Since the flank steak cooks quickly under the broiler, the kitchen won't have time to get too hot. Round out this light supper with our recipe for Blue Cheese & Chive Toast.

Steak & Avocado Salad

Serves 2

- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 1 (1 lb) flank steak
- 4 cups chopped Romaine lettuce
- ⅓ cup thinly sliced red onion
- ½ small orange bell pepper, trimmed and julienned
- ½ small yellow bell pepper, trimmed and julienned
- 1½ cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1½ tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 1 small avocado, peeled and thinly sliced lengthwise
- Sour cream, sliced green onions (optional)

Preheat broiler.

Combine salt, oregano, and pepper in a mortar and pestle and crush to blend. Alternately, crush spices together on a cut-



ting board using the back of a knife blade. Spread spice mixture evenly over top of flank steak. Place steak on a lightly oiled broiler pan and broil 4 to 6-inches from heat source for 5-6 minutes on each side for medium rare; let rest 10 minutes. Cut steak across the grain at a 45-degree angle into thin slices. Wrap and refrigerator half of steak for another use.

Place lettuce in a large bowl. Add red onion, bell pepper, and tomatoes. Toss gently to mix.

Combine lime juice and mustard in a small bowl. Whisk to blend. Gradually add olive oil, whisking until well blended. Add salt and pepper to taste; pour dressing over lettuce mixture. Toss gently to mix. Add avocado and toss to mix.

To serve, divide salad into two shallow bowls and top with 4-5 slices of meat. Serve with Blue Cheese Toast, if desired.

Blue Cheese & Chive Toasts

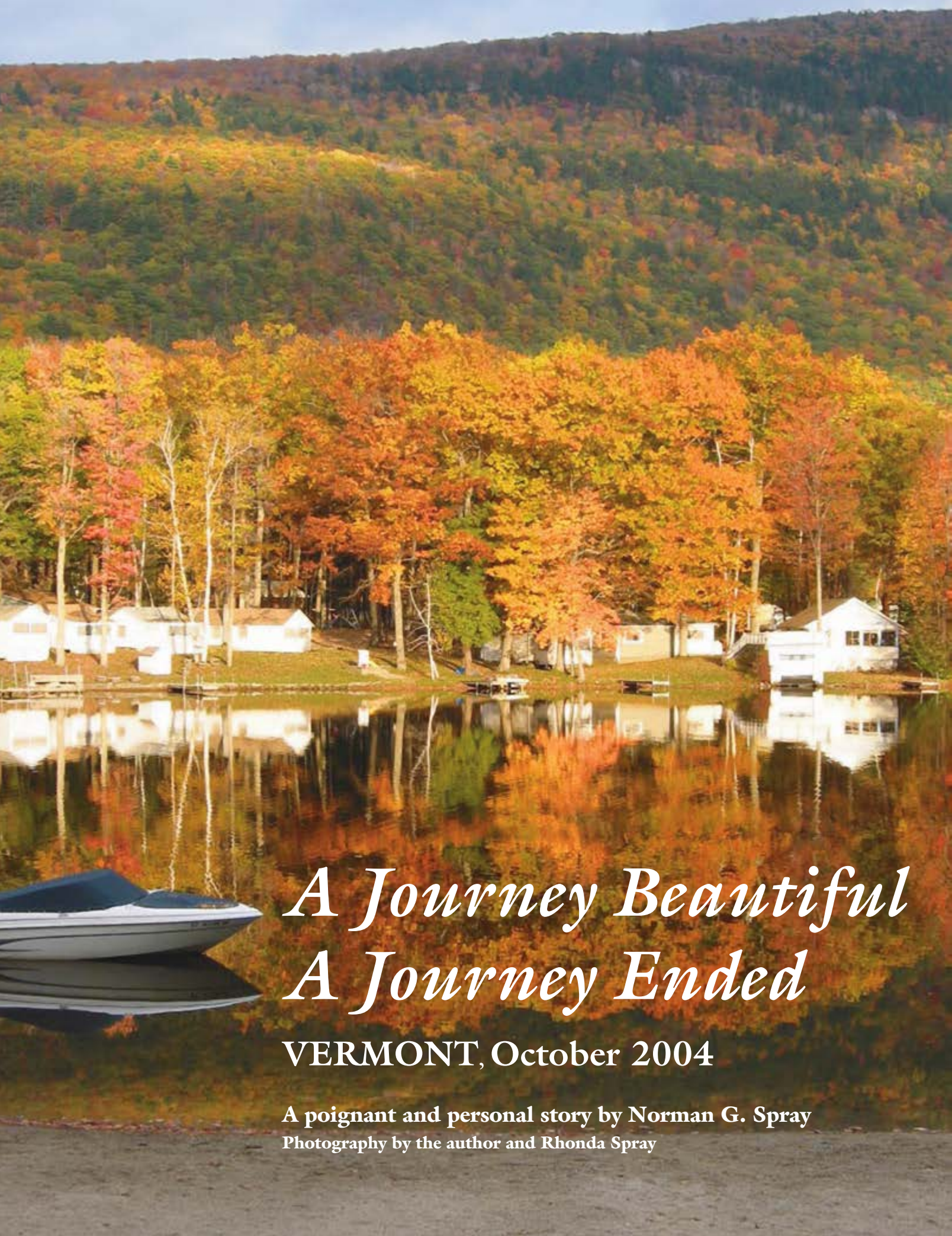
Preheat oven to 400°. Cut four ½-inch thick slices from a wide loaf of sourdough bread. Lay slices flat on a baking sheet and brush lightly with olive oil. Bake for 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from oven and sprinkle with a generous amount of shredded Italian cheese blend. Top with crumbled blue cheese and broil 4- to 6-inches from heat until cheese melts and begins to bubble, about one minute. Top with chopped fresh chives and serve.

Lighter Options: For less fat and calories, pat the spice rub on boneless skinless chicken breasts instead of steak. To lighten the toasts, switch to a reduced fat Italian cheese blend and bake toast without oil.

Leftover Steak Tips: Sauté sliced onions in a small amount of oil over medium heat and add steak strips. Place hot steak-onion mixture on hoagie style rolls and top with shredded Provolone or Fontina cheese for a warm steak sandwich. Or chop steak slices and sauté with sliced mushrooms. Serve mixture over baked potatoes with sour cream and chives.

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, Florida • Food Styling by CAROLYN BREUER, Tampa, Florida.



A Journey Beautiful
A Journey Ended

VERMONT, October 2004

A poignant and personal story by Norman G. Spray
Photography by the author and Rhonda Spray

this is not your ordinary travel story, though it was meant to be. Read on and you'll learn how to plan a fall trip through some of the most spectacular, breath-taking scenery this country can offer. You'll meet gentle, genial, wonderful people. But be forewarned: this road has unexpected twists and turns that can leave you breathless and perhaps misty-eyed.

The subject is Vermont: Vermont in October, a magical month when towering forests stop producing chlorophyll green and set hills, valleys, and mountains ablaze as 100-foot-tall sugar maples turn orange, gold and red; beeches and elms dress in yellow; and hickory and ashes flash red or purple. You can explore these hills and even enjoy the riotous colors from the interstate freeways but we will be taking roads less traveled.

For us, it began in the summer of 2004 after my beloved Barb, best friend, wife, and lover for 53 years turned 72 on July 24. "You're going to be 74 on Oct. 10," she said. "What do you want for *your* birthday?"

My answer was almost automatic. "I'd like to tour Vermont," I said.

"We can enjoy the fall foliage, but let's make it different and focus on maple trees and maple syrup." Nothing, in my opinion, makes waffles and pancakes more delicious than hot, sweet maple syrup. I wanted to know more about where it comes from and how it's made. It became a different tour, all right. But first. . . .

Quickly I learned that few states offer more useful help for touring motorhomers than Vermont. (See "How to Plan a Vermont Tour," page 34.) After numerous phone calls and research on the internet, our plan was formed, soon to be altered by events.

The plan, and it would be a good one for you if you tour Vermont this fall, was to begin at the Carmen Brook Maple and Dairy Farm at Highgate Springs, only three miles south of the Canadian border in Vermont's northwestern corner. We would then work southward down state. Though peak foliage times vary from year to year, depending mostly on weather, foliage usually peaks first in the north during the last week of September or first week of October. You could start up north (western, central or eastern section) and follow peak southward until Columbus Day or maybe even as late as Oct. 15 or a day or two later.

Foliage should be glorious on both east and west slopes of the Green Mountains. Numerous passable roads criss-cross these mountains, opening marvelous vistas of color but also often challenging the motorhome driver with hairpin curves and steep grades. Perforce, we learned that those who tow vehicles might do well to leave the RV docked and tour the back roads in their dingies, especially given today's gasoline prices.

We loaded our 2001 Allegro (we call it "Harvey"—Texan for RV) in late September and hitched our 2000 Chevy Tracker (we call it "Scat") behind for the 2,200 mile trip from Bedford, Texas. Our itinerary took us through Arkansas, the bootheel of Missouri, part of Illinois, across Indiana, Ohio, a corner of Pennsylvania, and we planned to cross much of New York State before bridging over Lake Champlain into Vermont.

We didn't get that far north, as it turned out. Engine trouble forced us to limp into Lake Dunmore Kampersville at Salisbury, Vermont, one of the few first class RV resorts that operate year-round in Vermont, even during the state's harsh winters. When

Harvey had to be towed to a Ford dealer for engine repairs and was lost to us indefinitely (due to disputes with an insurance company and other issues), we suddenly found ourselves tourists away from home without our "home away from home." How much luggage can you pack into a small two-door Tracker when there's two of you and three miniature schnauzers? Our answer was to leave most of our clothing in Harvey with a plan to re-visit it from time to time.

Our first "break" came when Jean Wisnowski, the lovely lady who owns and operates the 208-slot Kampersville park, was able to put us up a couple of days in a large A-frame she rents. Virtually every site in the park, which adjoins scenic Lake Dunmore, is shaded by tall maples and oak trees. Foliage outside the door was beautiful. Touring from Kampersville in Scat was easy. First we drove south on U.S. Route 7, a main north-south road in western Vermont, down to Pittsford to visit the New England Maple Museum (see accompanying story, "Of Maple Trees and Maple Syrup.")

In Pittsford, we turned east on Furnace Road and, after 3.5 miles of winding road, arrived at the Baird Farm near Chittenden where Bonnie, Robert and daughters Averie and Jenna Baird make maple syrup and raise dairy heifers on 360 acres of magnificently wooded hills and dales and open pastureland. No one was around the 150-year-old farmhouse that is their home when we arrived, nor did anyone answer our calls or knocks. But, demonstrative of a trusting nature common among Vermonters, their syrup "display room" was wide open. Baird syrup, made in the sugar house only 50 yards from the residence, was on display for the taking in all sizes. There was a receptacle where syrup purchasers could leave cash payment and credit card forms to be filled out by folk who preferred to pay that way. It was strictly "honor" system: You take the syrup, you leave payment.

Norm and Barb, anticipating their fall excursion to Vermont.





The Bairds trust you. The farm, owned by four generations of Bairds, lies in the Green Mountain foothills. The road up was gorgeous, a term that describes most any country byway in Vermont at this time of year.

Oct. 10, my 74th birthday, arrived on a Sunday and Barby was determined it should be a special day, never mind worry about when and whether we'd get our motorhome out of the garage. For openers, we drove to nearby East Middlebury where we breakfasted at the Wayfarer Inn, the inn used for exterior shots for the old Bob Newhart TV show starring Newhart as a B&B innkeeper and featuring "Daryl, my brother Daryl, and my other brother Daryl."

That afternoon, we left early for dinner at the Fire and Ice Restaurant in Middlebury, took a wrong turn, and found ourselves at the University of Vermont's Morgan Horse farm, a national historic site known as "home of the Morgan" where rolling green pastures and woodlands make up a working breeding farm for over 60 Morgans. After that pleasant detour, Barby wished me "Happy Birthday" over a fine prime rib. She did, indeed, make it a special day for me.

The next day found us driving north on State Route 16 to Bristol, Vermont. How many ways can you say "the foliage was beautiful?" It was striking, as I'm sure it will be this year. Next, partly because the A-frame had been promised to others, we changed bases of operation. We moved north to Stowe, one of Vermont's

famed winter ski areas and home to the Trapp family of "Sound of Music" fame. We packed what we could into Scat, the Tracker, and drove first north up State Route 116 to its junction with State Route 17 at Bristol. There we turned east on 17, crossing the Green Mountains enroute to State Route 100 which runs north-south on the eastern slope of the Greens and would take us north to Stowe.

Route 17 can be negotiated by a motorhome but there are many climbs, curves, and steep downgrades. By now it was Oct. 13, a time when foliage might normally be fading but it seemed to be at peak. Entire hillsides radiated reds and oranges, absolutely lovely, especially on the western slopes.

Once we passed the summit and started down on the eastern slopes, the trees seemed to lose some luster. Where leaves were shining bright on the western slope, they seemed to have been on the trees longer at the expense of brightness on the eastern side. I'm guessing they endured cooler temperatures earlier and "turned" four or five days ahead of trees on the western slopes.

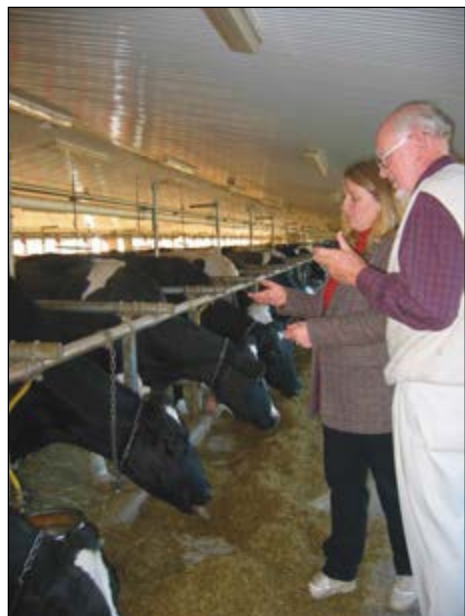
In Stowe, our first challenge was to find lodging that would accept three miniature schnauzers. That came in the person of Al Holzgruber, owner and operator of the Northern Lights Lodge. The back rooms look out on a beautiful wooded lot fronting the West Branch River. Here schnauzers Wilhemena (Willie), Heidi, and Sir could exercise while we enjoyed

the multi-colored foliage canopy and the soothing bubbling of a rushing mountain stream.

As I brought the dogs back from our first walk here, Barby waved at us from across the lot. I let the leashes fall free and the dogs ran to her full speed, anxious to "tell" her of their adventure along the river.

The following day we loaded ourselves and the dogs and headed "up the mountain," as they say in Stowe, on State Route 108 to Smugglers Notch State Park and Smugglers Notch Resort. We passed 4,393-ft. Mount Mansfield and continued northwesterly on this road to Jeffersonville, which is closed in winter due to snow and ice. There we took Route 15 southeasterly

Above, from left to right: Clay Road up to the Butternut Mountain Farm was "a trip to remember." · In Johnson, we stopped at the Butternut Mountain farm country store, got directions to their sugarbush and sugar house. · At Dakin Farm, Ferrisburgh, fun-loving Barbara Spray hides impish-like behind the scarecrow, enjoying a perfect October afternoon. · Karen Fortin explains their operation to Norm. She handles sugar making, while husband Daniel runs a 170-cow dairy that includes 100 "milkers." The cows actually sleep on water beds imported from Holland. · Doug and Barbara Bragg are seventh generation sugar makers operating the Bragg Farm Sugarhouse & Gift Shop near Montpelier. They tap 2,200 maple trees on 50 acres to produce 700 gallons of maple syrup from 28,000 gallons of sap. They collect sap the old-fashioned way – in buckets.



to Johnson where we stopped at the Butternut Mountain Farm Maple Store retail outlet. There we learned we could visit the farm's sugar bush and sugar house by taking Clay Hill Road two and three quarter miles up Butternut Mountain. "When you get to what looks like the end of the road and a sign says 'Dead End,'" a young lady told us, "just keep going and you'll find the sugar house."

That turned out to be a visit to remember. The road up afforded majestic views of a deep valley and mountains beyond. Once there, we saw how a "sugar bush" works. Metal taps are placed in hundreds of trees and hundreds of feet of plastic tubing run down slope from them in season to a huge storage tank where sap is collected for "boiling" in an evaporator in the sugar house. Just as we arrived, a shaft of sunlight broke through low clouds, creating a rainbow effect that painted a dream world of gold as it reflected off the glistening maple trees of the sugar bush.

That night became special for me and, I think, for Barb. For dinner, we drove up a bouncy dirt road to the Stowehof Inn, a resort hotel that sits on a mountain overlooking the valley into which is tucked most of Stowe. As we were seated at a window table in a magnificent dining room with a wondrous view of that valley, a tour bus load of people was just finishing dinner. They left before we could order, leaving only the two of us in this great and lovely room, stars twinkling above the valley and lights glimmering far below.

I have no memory of what we ate because food was not what made this a special time. What made it so special was our conversation. Like so many couples who feel they already know everything about the other and how they feel, we'd sometimes have dinner with little more conversation than observations like, "Mine's fine, how's yours?" This night we talked. *Really talked.* Barb shared with me memories of her childhood that I had never heard before, things she, her sister, and cousins did long before I knew her. Simple things, like how she liked to visit her grandmother's farm house. She told me how she loved the family's small home in Tahoka, Texas, and how she hated it when they moved into a bigger house in Brownfield. "I had this favorite tree," she said, "and it was MY tree, and I loved it. I climbed it every day, way up where no one could see me, and I could see the whole world. And it was MY world, and I was always happy there."

Her Mom made her come down anytime she caught Barb up in the tree, she said. But one day her Dad came out and saw her in the tree. She explained to him how this was HER tree and what it meant. Her Dad just said, "Well, be careful. If you fall, fall on the roof." After that, Barb felt she had free permission to own her tree as long as she lived there.

She just reminisced, recalling that and other stories that enthralled me. Then she asked for stories from my childhood, and I told some that regaled her. We'd been married nearly 53 years and it was a

fun time to discover there were still mysteries to be discovered about each other. I kissed her and she kissed me as we climbed in bed that night and she said: "Normy, I *really* did enjoy tonight." I told her how much I loved her and the evening but there was no way, then, that I could know how precious the memory of that evening would become.

That came in the next 36 hours. On the next morning, Oct. 15, Barb elected to sleep in rather than go with me to the Northern Lights dining room for breakfast. Finally, about 10:30 a.m., I chided her to get up. "Let's go touring," I said. "There are some syrup farms I want to visit."

Soon after we left Northern Lights, we drove by the lovely mountain-top Trapp Family Lodge, and down through thick maple woods to Nebraska Valley Road where we turned right to visit Audrey Coty at the Nebraska Knoll Sugar Farm.

Later that afternoon, I made a bonehead move and entered Interstate 89 going north toward Burlington when I meant to go south to get to the Bragg Sugarhouse and Gift Shop on Rte 14N east of Montpelier, Vermont's capital city. It was 16 miles to the first exit and I groused about the time we'd lose. Barb just gazed out at mountains aglow in red, gold, and yellow. "Normy," she said, "didn't we come to Vermont to see beautiful foliage?"

"We sure did," I conceded.

"Then what do you call this?" she asked. "Quit griping and enjoy the drive."

Continued at bottom of next page

OF MAPLE TREES AND MAPLE SYRUP

Text and photography by Norman G. Spray



“Sugaring,” the term Vermonters use for converting the sap from maple trees into syrup or sugar, is a time of mystery and excitement, hard work — even celebration — in the days of March when snow still blankets the earth but days warm up and the sap “starts running.” As surely as it happens, the earth is awakening, the long winter’s end is in sight, and spring is about to be sprung. Some call it Vermont’s favorite “religious” observance.

That could be over-stating the custom but there’s little doubt sugaring is deeply ingrained in the psyche of the natives. “It’s in the blood . . . something you just have to do every spring,” says Miles Russell, a sixth-generation farmer and sugar-maker who operates the Russell Family Farm at Starksboro in partnership with his wife, Lori, and daughters Taylor, 10, and Katelyn, 16.

“Not too many people try to make a living sugaring, but it certainly goes with the territory,” adds Audrey Coty who, with husband Lewis, has operated for 25 years the Nebraska Knoll Sugar Farm at Stowe, in the heart of the Green Mountains. Before that, Audrey says, “I was into backyard sugaring. Many peo-

ple do that and just make a little syrup for their own use. Even if you have just a few trees, you want to use that sap. You tap the trees, catch the sap in a bucket, and boil it in a pot. Seems everybody who lives here wants to get in the act.”

As surely as the calendar page turns to March, snow-shoed sugar-makers and their crews are in their “sugar bushes” in the hills. They’re carrying battery-powered drills, usually equipped with 5-inch-long 7/16” bits, along with buckets or carpenter aprons loaded with hundreds of tapered 3 1/2-inch long metal “taps.” They drive the taps into holes they drill in the bare but majestic hard rock maple trees that are the pride of Vermont and so much a part of her heritage.

“There’s a small window of time to tap,” says Karen Fortin of the 700-acre Carmen Brook Maple & Dairy Farm at Highgate Springs near Swanton. “When the time comes, you want to have crews ready to go.” At Carmen Brook, Karen’s husband Daniel, their four sons, and some of the sons’ friends, put some 4,000 taps in 3,500 trees.

The impact of sugaring is obvious to even the casual Vermont tourist. Dozens of independent producers — and some very

large ones — sell their wares from “sugar houses” or sugar stores scattered literally from one end of the state to another. Vermont sugar people believe theirs to be the finest maple syrup one can buy — and certainly tourists have fun meeting the sugar makers and shopping their stores. These small business farmers, who usually supplement their income with other endeavors, are happy to visit and tell you how they make their syrup.

Be sure to visit the New England Maple Museum at Pittsford, just north of Rutland on U.S. Route 7. Take their tour and you’ll learn more about maple trees and maple syrup than you ever thought possible. But you’ll have to come to Vermont in late winter or early spring to actually see sugaring.

The maple trees that provide riotous colors in the fall deliver their bounty in early spring. Sap usually starts running about the first Tuesday of March. What’s essential is a pattern of freezing temperatures by night and above-freezing thawing sunshine by day. By then, sugar makers have tapped their trees, and placed, checked or repaired plastic tubing lines that typically take sap down-slope to storage tanks or containers which “feed” evaporators in their sugar houses.

These evaporators, usually measuring five- to six-feet wide and 14- to 16-foot long, consist of a frame or “arch” that holds flat trays over a firebox lined with fire brick. Most operators run sap into the trays to a depth of only one- to two-inches to speed the evaporative or “boiling” process, which begins when the sap reaches a temperature of 219 degrees. It takes a full cord of good, dry wood to boil down 20 to 30 barrels of sap and produce 15 to 25 gallons of syrup. It takes 50 cords to make 1,000 gallons of syrup. But careful tending is a must. Too much fire and too little sap can result in a fire or a melt-down of the trays. Syrup usually is canned or bottled as it comes from the the evaporator.

Vermonters have some basis for contending their syrup is superior. The rock or hard maple tree is the best sugar and syrup producer among the 13 known maple species in the U.S. and it does extremely well in the granite soils prevalent in Vermont. The rock maple usually yields one-third to twice as much sap as white, red, or black maple trees. The hard maple accounts for three-fourths of the maple syrup and sugar made commercially. Led by Vermont, six states produce 95 percent



(Clockwise from far top left) Steam rises from the evaporator as syrup is made at the Russell Family Farm sugar house, Starksboro. Close-up photo shows how maple trees are tapped and sap flows into plastic tubing for the trip to holding tanks and thence to the “evaporator” where some 40 gallons of sap are boiled to produce a single gallon of syrup. Miles Russell says it takes 15 to 18 cords of wood to produce 250 gallons of syrup each season. Syrup is judged by color. Grade A amber (second from left) usually is the best choice for pancakes and waffles. Audrey Coty proudly displays maple syrup produced at Nebraska Knoll Sugar Farm near Stowe, operated by her and husband Lewis.

(Continued from page 29) And she was right. The views from the interstate were as lovely as any we had seen. The return trip was just as beautiful because foliage viewed from one direction can look different from another.

That night, after visiting Doug and Barbara Bragg at the Bragg Farm and having an unmemorable dinner in Montpelier, we were tired and turned in a little earlier than usual. Barby fell asleep, as did I. The difference is, she never woke up. I found her in a coma the next morning. A catastrophic stroke that hemorrhaged the brain stem took her from me and our precious daughters, Rhonda and Starla.

Like the leaves of autumn, Darling Barby is gone now but, like those leaves, she left beauty in her wake. It was a journey beautiful, a journey ended in Vermont, a place she loved and one I hope to visit many more times.

Al Holzgruber (left) owns and operates the Northern Lights Lodge where Norm and Barbara were staying when she had a massive stroke. Al refused to let Norm pay for the rooms after the tragic event. “He just refused to take the money,” Norm said. “And that was just one of the many kindnesses delivered by him and other Vermonters at a time when my world stopped. Without him and people like him, I don’t know how my daughters and I could have survived.” Norm reflects on the beauty and fragility of life.



RHONDA SPRAY



RHONDA SPRAY

of the maple sugar and 80 percent of the maple syrup made in this country. The others are New York, New Hampshire, Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.

The rock maple is self-seeding, producing a crop of winged seed that fall where nature intends. "The trees regenerate themselves," says seventh-generation sugar maker Doug Brad of the Bragg Farm Sugarhouse & Gift Shop at East Montpelier. "We don't fertilize and we don't plant. But sometimes we have to thin the maple stand."

Thinning is necessary because rock maples, which can live as long as 300 years or more (Vermont claims to have one that's 450 years old), frequently develop a limb spread of 50 feet. Twenty of them can cover an acre. Since sap production seems to be in direct proportion to leaf area, stands are thinned to provide complete cover with as few trees as possible.

At the Bragg Farm, Doug and wife Barbara tap 2,200 trees, some of which are 120-foot tall. Each of the 2,200 taps runs about 10 or 12 gallons of sap per season on average which makes a little more than a quart of syrup, Doug says. In general, 40 gallons of sap (sometimes more) make one gallon of syrup.

It takes 40 years for a hard maple seedling to reach a diameter of 8 inches, which sugar makers consider the minimum for tapping. Some trees with a 30-inch diameter can support as many as four taps.

Most sugar makers now use plastic tubing to move sap from their "sugar bush"

(the term they use to describe the grove of maples that provides their sap) to their sugar houses. The Braggs, however, collect sap the old-fashioned way — with 16-quart galvanized covered buckets hung on the metal taps. Buckets are emptied into a 500-gallon tank as it is pulled through the maple trees by a four-wheel drive tractor and eventually transported to the sugar house. The operation requires 2,200 buckets.

"We know they are there because we have to wash every one at the end of the season," Doug smiles. From their 2,200 taps, the Braggs make some 700 gallons of syrup each season

Maple sap, which looks and tastes much like water, averages only three percent sugar but can go as low as one percent or as high as 12 percent. Syrup itself is 35 percent water, 62 percent sucrose, and contains about one per cent inverted sugar and one per cent malic acid.

While some corporate sugaring firms typically buy sap from smaller producers, most Vermont syrup is a product of family farmers, most of whom are happy to receive visitors and view sugaring as a source of extra income. Like farmers everywhere, small Vermont operators are being forced to diversify to survive.

Lori and Miles Russell have one comfortable fireplace-furnished room in their 200-year-old farm home reserved for use by guests in a bed-and-breakfast operation. They've also built a hilltop cabin with a marvelous view for renting to guests who want a taste of what life is like on a typical

Vermont family farm. In addition to producing some 250 gallons of syrup from their sugaring each season, they board dairy heifers and do some cattle trading.

At Nebraska Knoll, Audrey Coty runs a gift shop in the Coty's sugar house, as do the Braggs at East Montpelier. Audrey and Lewis, who also has a construction business, work in "always a foot of snow and sometimes two" to tap some 5,000 maples which grow on their hillside. From these, they make about 1,600 gallons of syrup.

At the Carmen Brook Maple & Dairy Farm, making 1,400 gallons of syrup is only a part of the family's business. They maintain a 170-cow dairy herd and milk nearly 100 cows which are pampered on individual 15-gallon bladder water beds. Daniel raises and "chops" corn silage for the cattle.

Native Indians, who are said to have first taught early settlers how to make maple syrup, called March "sugar month" or "maple moon." They threw hot rocks into sap collected in birch bark buckets or hollowed logs to make the syrup or sugar. Making the sweet stuff called for celebrations — a tradition many Vermonters continue. Making "snow ice cream" by pouring some of the season's always-best first batch of syrup over snow is a time for joyous reverie. It is, after all, a sweet time. Sugaring ends when maple tree buds swell and burst in cottony light green. Syrup made after the tree turns green is considered unworthy of the name and, among Vermont perfectionists, syrup is serious business. Inferior quality is not tolerated.

How to Plan a Vermont Tour

Vermont is a small state. You can see it all in two or three weeks. But if you visit in the fall, you may want to stay two or three months. Foliage is glorious from one end of the state to the other. You can hardly go wrong on any road you choose to travel. But there is help aplenty.

Tips:

• *Official Vermont Attractions Guide & Road Map.* Call the Vermont Dept. of Tourism & Marketing (VDTM). 800-Vermont, www.VermontVacation.com. A masterpiece, this map will give you everything you really need to know. It

lists numbers and email addresses for information sources, scenic byways, covered bridges, state parks, and more

• *Regional Maps.* Also ask the VDTM for regional maps. These provide even more information about specific sections of the state, including locations and phone numbers for state parks, hiking trails, bicycle trails, golf courses, and major attractions.

• *Vermont Chamber of Commerce.* 802-223-3443; www.vtchamber.com

The COC is a source for all kinds of information, including a "Vermont Vacation Guide" publication that contains information about all sections of the state.

• *State Information Centers* publish suggested tours for best foliage viewing at any given time. (vttravel@state.vt.us or www.state.vt.us/anr/fpr/forestry/foliage/tours.htm)

There are 12 centers located on major roadways, including Randolph, 802-276-3360 or 802-728-9570; Norcross-Waterford, 802-748-9368; Guilford, 802-254-4593; Williston Southbound Information Center, 802-878-1071; Georgia, 802-524-9662; and 802-524-0018; Northeast Kingdom, 802-742-6640; Lyndonville, 802-748-9368. Stop in at any of Vermont's 12 *Regional Marketing Centers* for current information on best tours.

Most are open until 11 p.m.

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Continued from page 6

TMH Leads the Competition with New Options and Standard Features

If you have visited the Allegro Campground in Red Bay recently, you were probably asked to evaluate your coach and suggest the features you would most like to see offered by Tiffin Motorhomes. The survey, input from dealers, and frequent reviews of the motorhomes produced by TMH's competition guide us in making annual changes and offering new features as the new models come out at mid-year. We know how important it is to listen to our customers who enjoy, use, and put our coaches to the test. This "New for 2006" section describes the changes for the Allegro Bay, the Allegro Bus, and the Phaeton. The October issue will address the changes for the Allegro and the Zephyr.

ALLEGRO BUS

NEW OPTIONS

- Two new interior design packages: Chateau and Espresso
- New full-body paint graphic package: Desert Sand
- New Cherry Bark interior cabinets
- Exterior 24-inch television
- Exterior 24-inch television with AM-FM-CD stereo system
- Sirius radio (satellite service requires subscription)
- Bedroom DVD player
- Living room aisle runway (wood or ceramic tile)
- 3-drawers in a drawer (extendable solid surface cabinet)
- Passenger-side extendable computer desk with connections
- Select Comfort Bed System (king or queen)

OPTIONS MADE STANDARD FOR 2006

- Extra Fan-Tastic fan



Tiffin designers created the slide-out cabinet with solid surface countertop to increase both a larger food preparation area as well as more drawer space. A handy writing-computer tray slides out of the dashboard to give the passenger an in-motion desk.

ALLEGRO BAY

NEW OPTIONS

- Two new interior design packages: Lake Shore and Granite
- New Cherry Bark interior cabinets
- Sirius Radio (satellite service requires subscription)
- Side sun shades in driver-passenger cockpit
- Select Comfort Bed System
- Chrome mirrors

OPTIONS MADE STANDARD FOR 2006

- Atwood automatic electric jacks

PHAETON

NEW OPTIONS

- Two new interior design packages: Tuxedo and Spa
- New Cherry Bark interior cabinets (requires ceramic tile option)
- In-Motion satellite dish (satellite service requires receiver & subscription)
- Exterior 24-inch television
- Chrome mirrors
- Sirius radio (satellite service requires subscription)
- Living room aisle runway (wood or ceramic tile)
- Select Comfort Bed System (king or queen)

OPTIONS MADE STANDARD FOR 2006

- Full-body paint: Titanium Pearl, Forest Rose, Sunlit Sand
- Atwood automatic electric jacks
- Manual entry door awning
- Extra Fan-Tastic fan

The Zephyr and Allegro brands will be featured in the Fall issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*. After July 25th, you may visit our website or call 256-356-8661 to request the latest brochures for the 2006 models.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRED THOMPSON

As with all the Tiffin brands, cosmopolitan styling in the Allegro Bay complemented by several choices of graphic packages has placed this gas-powered coach in high demand.

"We will become more flexible to respond to dealers' orders as received without resorting to picking the orders for our own efficiencies in the production process.

"And I believe we will achieve mass customization to give the customer more options and choices. We want to make each motorhome a more personal product to reflect each owner's preferences and tastes," Dancy explained.

The people who work at Tiffin Motorhomes through design, engineering, and quality construction try everyday to exceed your expectations. Derald Dancy is proud of that. He now considers Red Bay his home.

I WOULD LIKE to add a little postscript to what my long-time friend has said. On Friday, May 13, this year, we had a serious fire at our door plant in Vina. You can't build motorhomes without cabinet doors. After we figured out how much damage had been done, I called Bob Hardin that afternoon. He got a crew of four men together and replaced the entire electrical system in two days. We were back in business Monday morning. Like I said at first, Bob has pulled my bacon out of the fire more than once.

Bob, thank you for being there for us again. And whenever we've needed you in the past. I don't know what we could have done without you. — Bob Tiffin

Important Service Numbers to Keep in Your Wallet or Purse

Tiffin Motorhomes	256-356-8661	Freightliner Chassis	800-385-4357
Workhorse Chassis	877-946-7731	Ford Chassis / Engine	800-444-3311
Spartan Chassis	800-543-4277	Allison	800-352-5283
Caterpillar	800-447-4986	Onan	800-888-6626
Cummins	800-343-7357	Shurflo	800-762-8094
Norcold	800-543-1219	Dometic	219-463-4858

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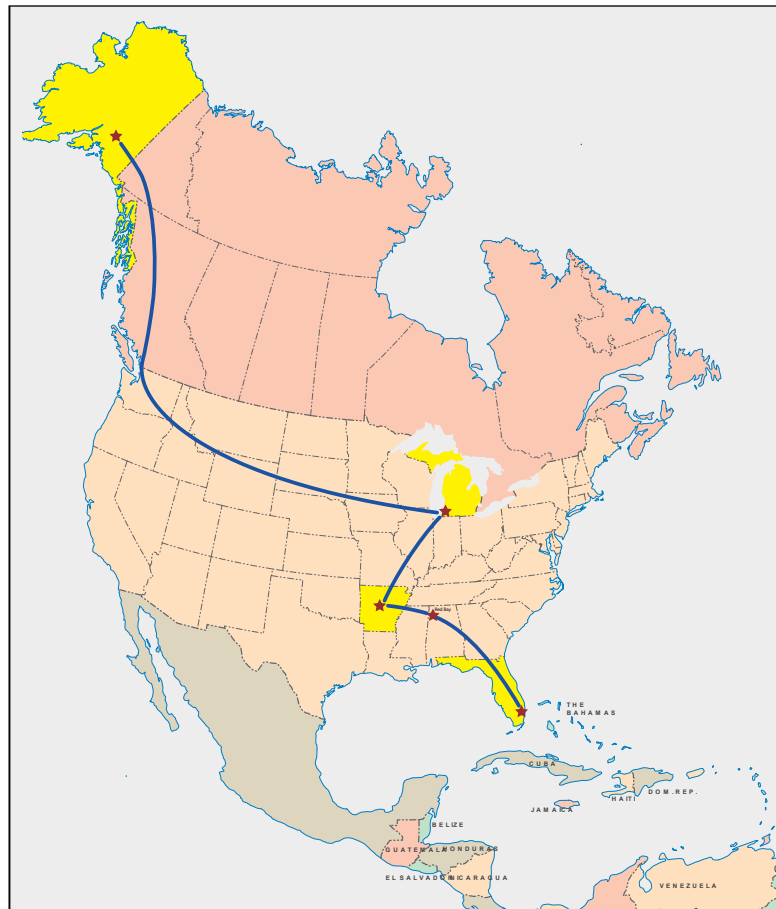
A First Person Story by Frank Cupp

Stevensville, Michigan

Jo and I bought our first Allegro motorhome in 1978. It was a 29-footer. We saw it at a show in Miami and purchased it two weeks later from a dealer in Ft. Lauderdale. We wanted a different bed arrangement and the dealer told us we could get it changed if we went to the factory in Red Bay, Alabama.

On our way to Michigan, where we had a produce and trucking company, we stopped at Red Bay. Bob Tiffin was certainly good to us. The company did a super job of modifying the motorhome to our satisfaction. From that day on, we stopped every year at the factory.

In 1981 Tiffin Motorhomes came out with a new diesel. On our way to our Arkansas office, we stopped in Red Bay to look it over. We told Bob if we could sell our 29-ft. motorhome, we would buy the 35-ft. diesel. Three weeks later we sold the 29-footer, called the dealer in Florida, and ordered the Tiffin Motorhome's new diesel. I talked with Bob and he had an Oshkosh CAT-pushed chassis, and that is what he built our new coach on. It had three furnaces and a 200-gallon plus tank for the diesel fuel. We told Bob we were going to Alaska when we retired.



From their home in Stevensville, Michigan, Frank and Jo Cupp covered much of North America from South Florida to Alaska. The Cupp Company imported produce from many of the Central American and Caribbean countries.

We made three trips to Glenallen, Alaska, to work with Send International, a church mission organization. One of the pictures shows our motorhome just after arriving in Glenallen, caked with dirt. We made the first trip before the Alaskan Highway was blacktopped. I protected the front with a homemade barrier against rocks and stones from passing rigs, cars, and trucks.

After our stint in Alaska, I used the motorhome for traveling and for an office while I conducted business from Florida to Arkansas. I never did like staying in motels and this was a perfect solution for me. The Cupp Company unloaded ships in Key West for six years – up to five ships a week. When the 7-Mile Bridge was closed, we moved our office to West Palm Beach and later to Ft. Pierce. We used C-46 airplanes, Super-G Connies, Stretch 8s, and a few Boeing 747s freighters. It was big business. These planes often used several airports, so our crews had to move around frequently trucks to meet the planes in different locations. The Cupp Company handled the transportation for farm produce companies in the Bahamas, Mexico, Honduras, Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Jamaica.

Every year we would stop at Red Bay and have our motorhome checked over and little things fixed. We had new mirrors installed when the extended mirrors came out. Jo and I became good friends with Bob and many of the people who worked at Tiffin Motorhomes. Bob and I often discussed farming, and it was not unusual to see him in the garden next to where we were parked, waiting our turn for service. We sold our motorhome about two years ago, and it looked almost as good as new.

When we bought the first motorhome, we joined the Allegro Club and our number was 618 – and to think that over

50,000 coaches have been built. That is amazing! But I know how the Tiffin family treats their customers, and therein lies the answer. We saw Bob this past Saturday, May 7, in Grand Rapids and he still remembered Jo and me.

Jo and I have been involved big time in the 5th Air Force Memorial Foundation from World War II. I am the First Vice President and Jo is the Membership Chairman. We place memorials in locations where we participated during WWII. Our last one was in Mackay, Australia, where 40 men were killed in the crash of one B-17 bomber. They were on R&R from New Guinea. It was the largest air disaster of WWII. While in Australia, we also helped dedicate in Brisbane a new museum honoring General MacArthur.

We still miss the motorhome. But our age was starting to show and we felt it was time to part with it. It had 123,000 miles on it and everything still worked. The only that was changed was the hot water heater. It sprung a leak and was replaced at the factory.

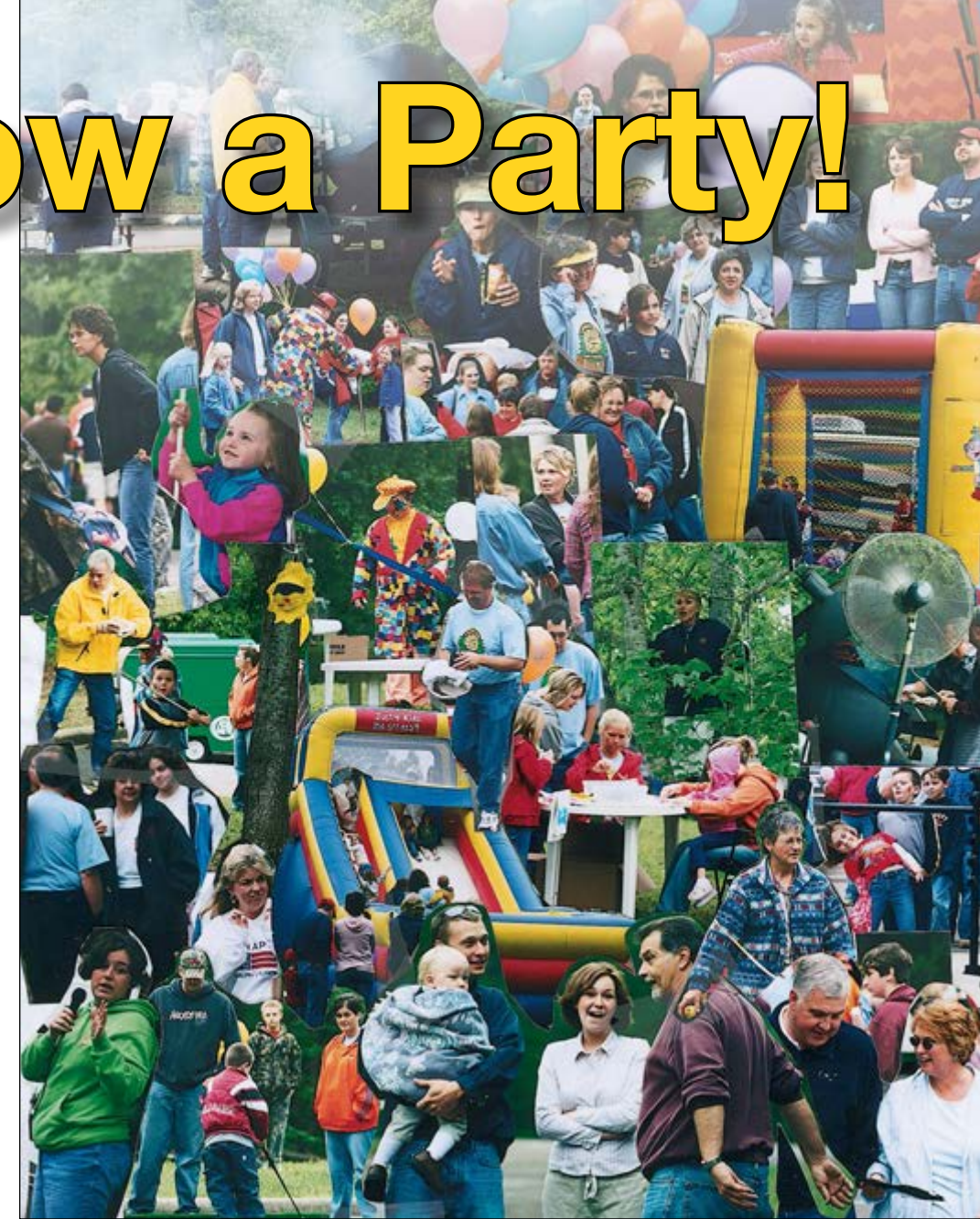
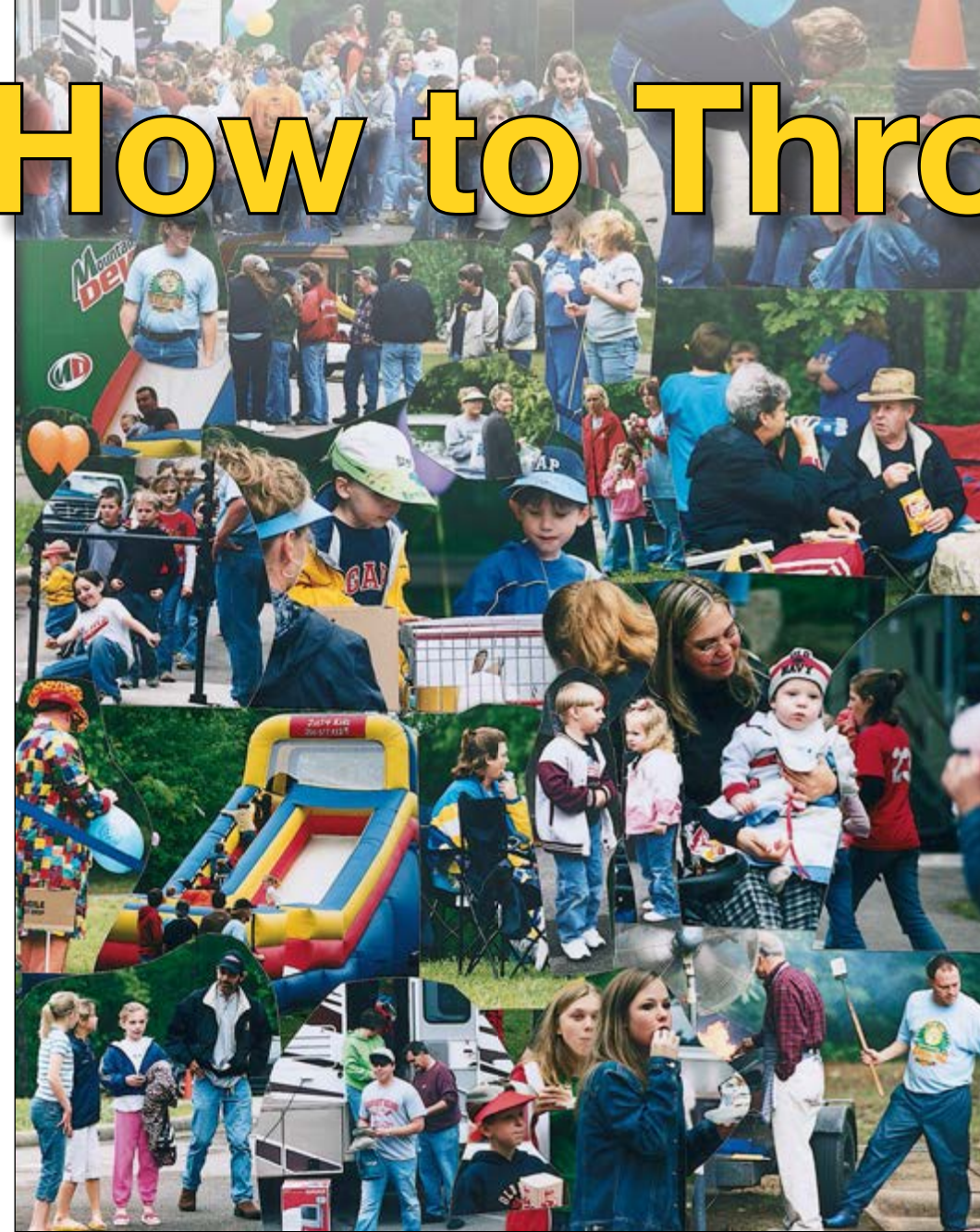
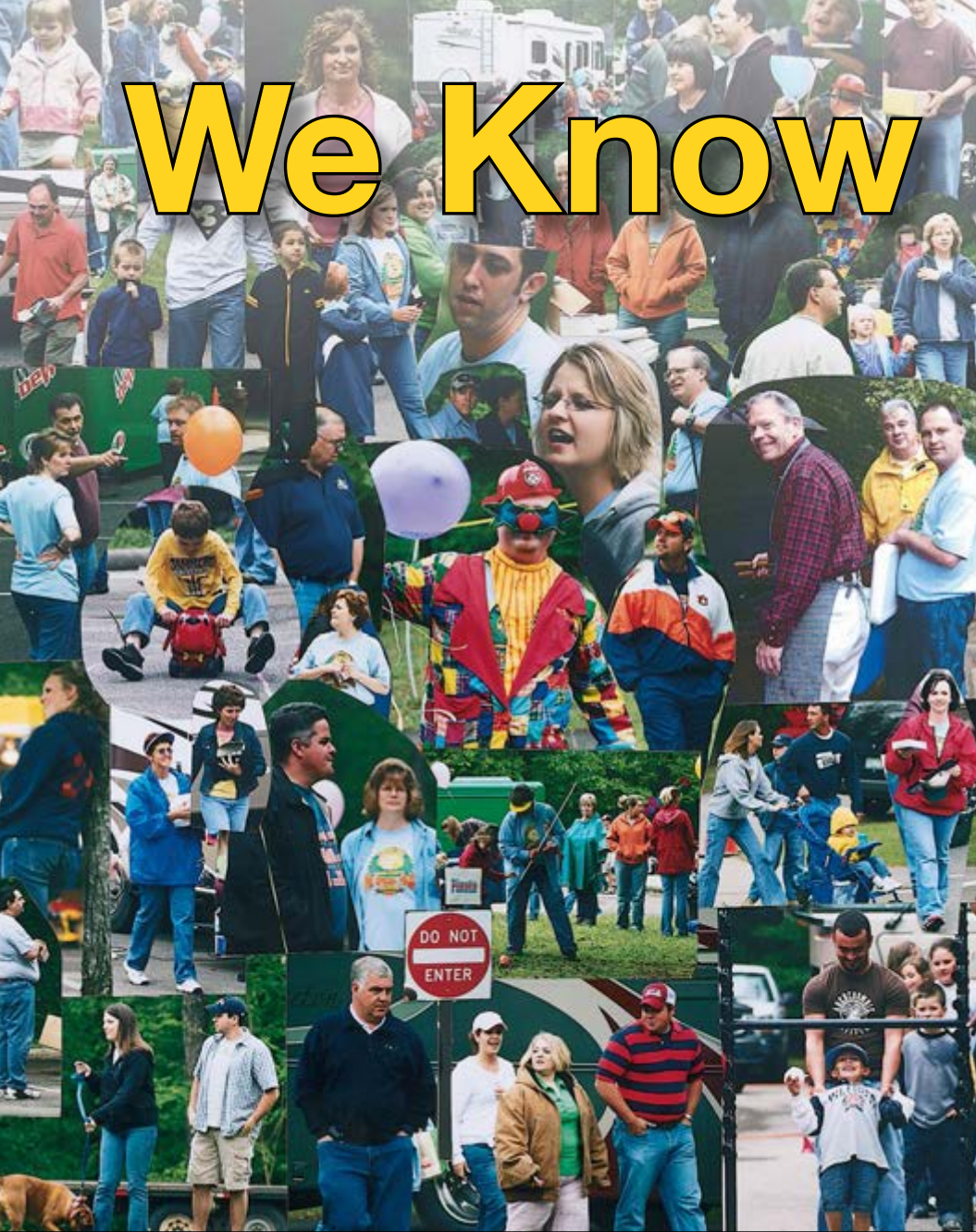
This is our story – but we sure miss our 1982 Allegro Diesel.

(From left to right below) Frank and Josephine Cupp in 1995. · Frank and Jo bought their first Tiffin motorhome in 1978 after dealing with the frustration of staying in hotels as Frank covered a large territory for his produce and trucking company. · In 1981 they purchased Tiffin's first diesel pusher, a 35-foot coach with a 200-gallon fuel tank. Their trip to Glenallen, Alaska, on the Alcan Highway before it was blacktopped made their coach look like a mud-wagon. · Frank kept his coach in pristine condition as seen here at a Flying Meet in Indiana. When he sold it two years ago, the couple who bought it could not believe it was 22 years old.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF FRANK CUPP



We Know How to Throw a Party!



Story by Amanda Hester

On April 30, 2005, we kicked off our 11th Annual Fishing Tournament-Picnic, held at the Piney Grove Campsite at Bay Springs Lake in Mississippi. The employees started fishing at 6:00 a.m., and on the other side of the campground we kicked off our picnic at 10:00 a.m. The fishing tournament-picnic began in 1994 when D. Ray Hester and Lambert Garrison went to Bob Tiffin with the idea. Bob thought it was a great idea and offered to sponsor the fishing tournament with prize money for the winners. D. Ray Hester said, "I never

imagined the tournament would grow as much as it has. I am glad that everyone shows interest. I am also proud that we have vendors who will donate prizes for our employees."

Richard Blanton for the last three years has chaired the fishing tournament committee, which consists of one employee from each department. The fishing committee makes all of the decisions and rules for the tournament, organizes and numbers the prizes, and does the weigh-in to determine the winners. They also do the un-

glamorous job of cleaning up when the tournament is over. There were only 32 fishermen at the first Tiffin fishing tournament. This year there were nearly six times that number with 172 participating.

The fishing tournament is divided into two categories: bass and crappie. This year we had 102 fishermen in the bass contest and 70 in the crappie contest. The winners in the bass category were Marlin Saint and Adam Hester with a total of over 19 lbs. The largest fish in the bass category weighed in

at over 6 lbs., caught by Marlin Saint and Adam Hester. The winners in the crappie category were Roger Robinson and Dwain Emerson with a total of over 13 lbs. The largest fish in the crappie category weighed in at over 2 lbs., caught by Casey Blanton and Rusty Holland. After the tournament was completed, prizes were given to each fisherman. Each year our vendors graciously donated TVs, DVDs, stereos, and a flat bottom boat. We also had smaller donations such as gift certificates, hats, and tee shirts.

Collages by Cynthia Skinner

While the fishing tournament is for the employees, the picnic is for the entire family. Chaired by Cynthia Skinner who works for the Allegro Club, the 10-member picnic committee met periodically to discuss the activities and the preparation that would be needed to make the event a success. This was Cynthia's first year to be involved. "The event was a success because everyone was so supportive and worked cooperatively to make it a wonderful day for the employees and their families," she said.

On the day of the picnic, the

weather was cloudy with drizzling rain, but that did not stop the families from coming out and participating. We had over 300 people attend the festivities. There were games for all age groups. Activities included a horseshoe toss, apple bobbing, limbo, piñata, and face painting. We also had a rabbit petting zoo, with the rabbits being given away throughout the day to the children. The most popular item was the giant jumpoline which, of course, the kids enjoyed more than anyone else. Employees volunteered their time to set up all of the activities. We had a popcorn

machine, cotton candy machine, and even a snow cone machine. Throughout the day we drew for door prizes, such as cash, gift cards, TVs, and many other nice gifts that were donated by our vendors. Mike Morrow, a vendor for Tiffin Motorhomes, provided the meal. He cooked hamburgers and hotdogs. Bob Tiffin came out early that morning and helped with the grilling, which he has done every year since we started.

We would first like to thank all our vendors for donating the door prizes so that we could show appreciation to our em-

ployees. Secondly, we would like to thank Richard Blanton and the fishing tournament committee, and Cynthia Skinner and the picnic committee for such a great success. We would have not been able to do this without our committees. Third, we would like to thank Jerry Williamson for providing each employee with a Tiffin Motorhomes tee shirt. Finally, we would like to thank Bob Tiffin for making it possible for us to do this each year. We appreciate all the many things he has done for TMH employees throughout the years.

Northern Idaho and the Selkirk Loop into British Columbia

Text and photography
by Fred Thompson

OVER 15 YEARS AGO a young friend of ours graduated from the University of Georgia in Athens at the top of his class with a degree in nuclear physics. He immediately entered the U.S. Navy and was sent to the Navy's Nuclear Power Training Unit in Idaho Falls, Idaho. At every opportunity, Paul and Amy traveled and camped throughout this oddly-shaped state (only two other states have stranger shapes: West Virginia and Maryland). Sometime later he returned with his family to Athens, Georgia, and regaled us with stories about the majesty and beauty of Idaho, located in an area that natives call the "Inland Northwest."

Paul was right! Our first view from the air was spectacular. We arrived in Spokane at 12:30 p.m. on Memorial Day, flying in from Tampa. We usually pick up a coach in Red Bay for these travel stories, but Idaho is 2,300 miles from Red Bay — about a four-day drive for me. Ron Little, president of RV's Northwest in Greenacres, Wash., just a stone's throw from the Idaho border, graciously furnished us with a 35-foot 2000 Allegro Bus. It was a pleasure to drive and had all of the amenities we needed.

Since RV's Northwest was closed on Memorial Day, we picked up a car at the airport and headed for Coeur d'Alene (pronounced cor duh 0 lane). A stop at the Idaho welcome center revealed that they, too, were observing the holiday. However, a group at the welcome center selling cookies for a "cause" gave us a recommendation and directions to a "great place for dinner" — The Cedars Floating Restaurant, 1.2 million pounds of styrofoam and cedar positioned at a marina on the northern tip of Lake Coeur d'Alene. Take I-90 to US 95 South. After you cross the Spokane River, take the first left, a road that weaves through a parking lot for boat trailers.

Passing just a few yards from our window seat, we saw antique Chris-Craft woodies, pontoon houseboats, state-of-the-art fiberglass powerboats, single- and twin-masted sailboats, and a 100-ft. yacht. I'm still not sure which was the best: the scenery and boat show or the food. But I think it was probably the food. When you fly for six hours on Delta and get nothing but cokes and peanuts, you would probably vote for the food, too.

But starving or not, it was a fabulous meal. After deliberating over a mouth-watering menu, we decided on two versions of fresh wild salmon: cedar plank roasted with honey-anchovy dipping sauce and sesame crusted with apricot-Gran Marnier dipping sauce, served with wild rice and pan roasted vegetables. An excellent salad bar pacified our hunger until the main course arrived. Idaho is known for huckleberries, a wild mountain berry not to be confused with blueberries. We could not refuse a piece of New York cheesecake with huckleberry sauce. We had to split it. But, wow! Was it good!

Since we are talking about Coeur d'Alene, another top restaurant for Greek cuisine is The White House. Take the Spokane Avenue exit off of I-90 in Post Falls and go north for two blocks. The White House is on the SE corner at the traffic light. I had roasted marinated lamb over fried eggplant with a yogurt-garlic sauce. My traveling companion had fresh sea bass accompanied with skewers of grilled prawns and chicken. Both dinners were served with rice and pan roasted vegetables. We had dinner here our last night out before flying home.

There are several ways to see Coeur d'Alene and all are winners: by car, of course; sightseeing cruises on the lake; flights from the lake marina on a sea plane; and kayaks (certainly the most athletic way to do it). If by car, stop at the welcome cen-

ter and pick up brochures for sights and points of interest that catch your eye — and there is plenty for every interest. Coeur d'Alene has seven art galleries within five blocks of each other on Sherman and Lakeside Avenues. Monroe Street is the antique district. Post Falls just to the west on I-90 is the historic district that depicts life in the mid- to late-1800s. It is a fascinating area for recreation, history, cuisine, and scenic beauty.

After studying the literature in our hotel room acquired at the state line welcome center, we quickly realized that we could not traverse Idaho in the nine days we had planned to be there, much less spend time experiencing the land and meeting its people. So I decided to cut it in half with Lewiston and U.S. 12 to Missoula becoming the dividing line. I made a mental apology to the folks in the southern tier and planned to head north Tuesday after we picked up the motorhome.

For those who are athletically inclined, be sure to pick up a brochure entitled "Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes." The trail is a 73-mile stretch of paved asphalt that follows old rail beds of the mining and timber industries. The trail has 20 trailheads and 17 scenic waysides for picnics. Motorized vehicles of any kind are prohibited. Bicycles and in-line skates only. Several locations will provide pickups if you wish to ride one way. Camping is not permitted on the trail, but the trail comes within two miles of Heyburn State Park where you can camp and launch a day trip on your bikes. To get a copy of the brochure, call the State Trail Manager, Idaho Dept. of Parks and Recreation, at 208-682-3814, or email old@idpr.state.id.us

We picked up the motorhome from RV's Northwest on Tuesday afternoon. With the generous help of Brian Leak, sales manager, and Chris Mitchell, service technician, we launched our

Idaho odyssey. After a two-hour stop for provisions at a Walmart Supercenter, we headed north on U.S. 95 to Farragut State Park, less than an hour's drive from Coeur d'Alene.

The 4,000 acres that is now the state park began its existence on April 10, 1942, when 22,000 men began the construction of the Farragut Naval Training Station. After five months of intense work, the Station was formally commissioned for operation on September 15. Camp Bennion was the first of six camps accommodating 5,000 recruits. By March 25, 1943, five more camps were completed with a total of 776 buildings constructed. The Station trained 293,381 recruits by early March 1944. Today, the Brig Museum captures the history of FNTS. The Farragut College and Technical Institute operated on the property for two years, after which the large acreage became the Farragut Wildlife Management Area from 1950 to 1965. Army Reserve Units removed the building and foundations and reseeded the camp sites to grass. The only structures left were the brig and two water towers.

This beautiful property where thousands of men were trained to fight the Axis Powers is now Farragut State Park. The park is bordered on the southeast by Lake Pend Oreille (pond duray). The glacier-carved lake has a depth of 1,152 feet and is still used by the U.S. Navy for sonic depth testing. The crystal clear azure waters offer world record fishing, national class sailing, and wide open water skiing. Hiking trails will take you through forests of lodgepole, ponderosa, and white pine, Douglas fir, western red cedar, and tamarack. Naturalists will enjoy observing whitetail deer, badger, black bear, coyote, bobcat, and occasional elk, as well as the ubiquitous Columbian ground squirrel.

The park offers horseback, bicycle, and mountain bike trails, two 18-hole disc golf courses, swimming at Beaver Bay Beach,



We've always been a close family. But then Becky & her family up and moved to Orlando. Jack got a transfer, so he and Molly and the twins headed out to Phoenix. Amis in Montana working a few months in a national park. And Kevin's off working on his umpteenth degree in Boston. But as far flung as everyone seems to be, you could say they're all still close to home. Now that home is an Allegro — (a good bit of the year) we're still able to enjoy having the whole family right around the corner. One state at a time, of course!



TIFFIN MOTORHOMES
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Shopping in Sand Point is a welcome contrast to the outlet malls that so many of us frequent regularly. A very rustic structure built with lodgepole pine, Coldwater Creek's flagship store (above) rests on a bridge relinquished by the city. Other stores throughout the village demonstrate similar ingenuity.

fishing, boat launch and docks, volley ball courts, and a model aircraft flying field with runways. Farragut is truly a destination park. You can spend some serious R&R time here. Purchase the Idaho State Parks Annual Pass for \$25 and you will save a \$4.00 day-use fee, which reduces your campground fee to approximately \$16 per night with water and electric hook-ups. Convenient dump stations are available in each of the three campgrounds. The park does not have a restaurant but Sandpoint just 25 miles to the north offers many options.

And Sandpoint was our next stop. You're going to love this town. First, call Island View Resort at 208-264-5509 and make sure they have a spot. Then take Hwy. 200 East out of Sandpoint for 18 miles. Turn right on Sam Owen Peninsula Road for 1.8 miles. \$27/night for Good Samers includes water, sewer, electric, and cable. There are two golf courses nearby.

Sandpoint has a great summer calendar of events. Go to www.visitsandpoint.com and check out the daily schedule. You'll find short courses on various topics, free Sunday Concerts on the Lawn, Sunday Brunch on the Farm, and much more. Then you'll need at least two days to check out the shops, not the least of which is Coldwater Creek. Restaurants range from the quaint to the practical. We thought

Panhandler Pies had great lunches and, of course, pies. Ivano's Ristorante puts out very good Italian fare at very reasonable prices. Good dinner spot.

One speciality store you must visit is the Litehouse Bleu Cheese Factory at 125 South Second Avenue. Through viewing windows you can watch cheese-master Ralph Stuart making small hand-crafted batches of the finest bleu cheese for the company's famous Bleu Cheese Salad Dressing. Litehouse has become the one of the largest producers of bleu cheese in the nation with production of over 325 tons annually. Faced with the loss of their supplier of bleu cheese, Litehouse had to take drastic measures just to stay in business. The company leased the old Pend Oreille Cheese Factory and relocated Ralph Stuart to head up its own bleu cheese manufacturing facility. The retail store occupying the front portion of the Litehouse Bleu Cheese Factory is a showplace for Litehouse branded products. We especially enjoyed Idaho Bleu TM Cheese Crumbles which we sprinkled on our BLT sandwiches — it adds a whole new dimension to a BLT.

If your travel plans put you in Sandpoint the first half of August, be sure to schedule several evenings at the Festival at Sandpoint. Visit www.festivalatsandpoint.com for individual performances and prices. The offerings include the Spokane Symphony Orchestra, Super Blue-



ALLEGRO®



ALLEGRO BAY®



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ZEPHYR®



TIFFIN MOTORHOMES

WHEREVER YOU GO, WE GO.

grass, Celtic Songstress Natalie MacMaster, Ronnie Milsap, and Super Salsa Saturday including Rolando Morales and Poncho Sanchez.

While we were shopping at Coldwater Creek, we met a Sandpoint transplant who had fallen in love with the laid-back lifestyle of Sandpoint and Lake Pend Oreille. She convinced us that we had to add the Selkirk Loop into Canada to our Idaho travel story. We were so glad she insisted, and you will be, too.

As you leave Sandpoint on U.S. 95 North, stop at the Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce on the right just after you cross the bridge and pick up a brochure about the Selkirk Loop. To enter Canada, you will need your driver's license, your motorhome and automobile registrations, and possibly your birth certificate and/or passport. At Copeland, Idaho, take Idaho Rt. 1 into Canada.

When you cross the border, you will be on BC Rt. 21 going into Creston. Follow Rt. 3A out of Creston along the east side of Kootenay Lake. Our transplant friend likened the 90-mile drive to a "spiritual experience." She was right! More than once I thought, "Could any place on earth be more beautiful?" As we made our drive in mid-afternoon, mists and clouds played with the sunlight on the water, making it sparkle. Some of the peaks still sported a snow cap. The turnouts provided many opportunities to capture the moment.

When we reached Kootenay Bay, the MV Osprey 2000, a 90-car free ferry, was approaching in the distance. A very modern vessel, it quickly unloaded hikers, cars, trucks, motorhomes, and motorcycles. We were loaded efficiently and began our 30-minute cruise to Balfour. With mountains rising on all sides of the bay, the photo opps were endless. Looking back on the experience, I would have been willing to pay \$50 in a New York minute for the passage.

Just 15 kms (9.3 miles) west of Balfour on Hwy 3A, we found the Kokanee Creek Provincial Park, bordering the west arm of the lake. To our amazement, each campsite was completely private, made so with undergrowth, shrubbery, trees and 10 meters of separation. The primary attraction of the park is the spawning channels for Kokanee salmon, an August event. Interpretive

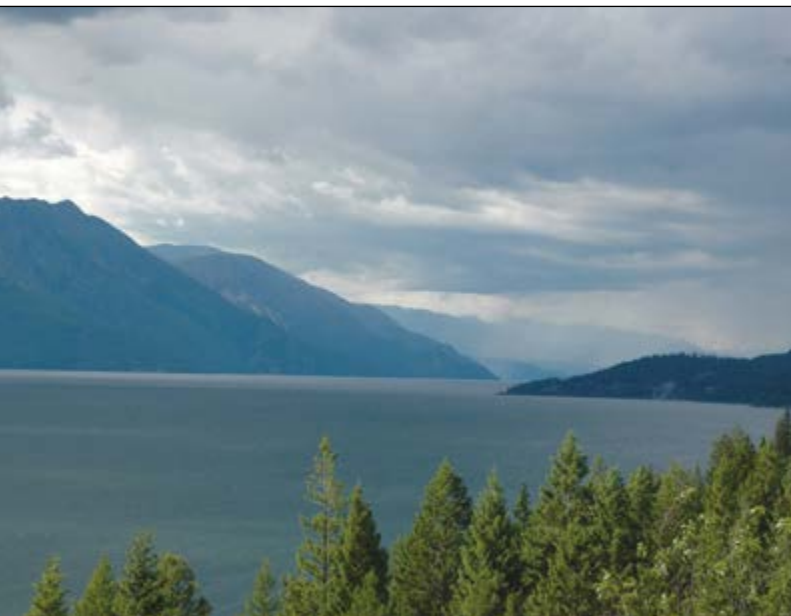
signage describes the unusual life cycle of this landlocked species. The park offers hiking, fishing, boat launch, playground, and beach. \$22/night Can; \$17 U.S. No hook-ups. Dump station. Water spigots throughout park if you need to tank up. Reservations accepted at www.discovercamping.ca/searchForDate. To review all parks in British Columbia, visit <http://wlap-www.gov.bc.ca/bcparks>

Just west of the campground, you will find several access points to the Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park. A day hike into the park will reward you with an incredibly beautiful experience. There are 85 km of well-marked trails plus a day-use picnic area. Ask the campground host for directions and the hike's level of difficulty.

The region is known for its hot springs. Just a few miles north of Balfour on BC Hwy 31 you will find the Ainsworth Hot Springs Resort. A day-use pass to the pool, cave, and hot springs is \$11 Ca. The pool is maintained at 99 and the springs are naturally at 104. The parking lot is currently being expanded and should be able to accommodate motorhomes in early July.

Going west out of the Kokanee campground, we found the Blaylock Mansion on the north side of Hwy 3A just before we reached Nelson. Trained as a metallurgist, Selwyn Blaylock came to the area in 1899. His business acumen and leadership skills carried him to the top position with Consolidated Mining & Smelting. In 1934 he decided to upgrade his original summer home with a new structure that would become one of the finest examples of Tudor architecture in North America. Blaylock retained the architectural firm that had designed the Banff Springs Hotel as well as other famous CP Hotels across Canada. The mansion was finished just before WWII began. Blaylock retired there in 1945 but died six months later. Now operated as a B&B and spa by Dan and Louise McGauley, Blaylock is open by appointment for tours of four or more (\$10 each). The gardens behind the mansion are exquisite and worth the price of the tour. Call 888-788-3613 to book a tour. Parking for motorhomes is available just off of Hwy 3A in front of the mansion. Use your cell phone to announce your arrival.

When you arrive in Nelson, park your coach in the Wal-Mart



lot at 1000 Lakeside Drive and put on your most comfortable walking shoes. It's mostly a walking town, but you may enjoy a lift on Street Car 23. Make your first stop the Visitor Information Centre at 225 Hall Street. Tons of brochures and knowledgeable aides will help you plan your day according to your interests. The Nelson Walking Tour received the Award of Honour from the Heritage Society of British Columbia.

Nelson bills itself as the #1 "small arts community" in Canada. While the town does not have a long history (it's centennial was 1997), Baker Street claims to be the heart of the historic district. Just ten decades ago, it was the site of horse races, saloons with rowdy silver miners, brothels, and playhouses. Today Baker Street offers an eclectic assortment of eateries, boutiques, and sporting goods stores — no chain stores here! Many of the stores and restaurants showcase the work of local artists. We found a "very Canadian" restaurant called Rickaby's at 542 Vernon St., housed in one of the Heritage Buildings, that offered excellent pastas and bread. Our choice of stores carrying the work of local artists was The White Buffalo on Baker.

If you have plenty of time, pick up a copy of "Visitor's Choice: Nelson" at the Visitor Centre and review the story about The Silvery Slocan Side Trip, pages 23-24. We didn't have time to do the three-hour loop, but there are a host of interesting stops.

Wanting to move quickly back to our Idaho trip, we scooted down Rt. 6 into Washington and looped back via Highways 31 and 20 into Idaho at Priest River. Sections of both routes are undergoing reconstruction. If time permits, turn north on Idaho Hwy 57 and plan to spend a couple of days at Priest River State Park. Several locals declared it was a "can't miss" destination. I could not describe it any better than the Idaho State Parks Guide: "Priest Lake is for people who want to get away. Spend your days stretched out on a white-sand beach taking an occasional plunge in the crystalline water to cool off. Stroll through the ancient cedar groves, paddle a canoe on the lake, hike to a spectacular viewpoint, or land a fish for dinner." This just may be the best R&R location in Idaho! Make reservations for this park as early as possible. Two campgrounds, Indian Creek and

White Pine, are suitable for motorhomes. Indian Creek offers full hook-ups at sites 167-181 for \$21.77. Call 208-443-2200 or 208-443-6710.

For the next two stops we decided to go for history. At Cataldo on I-90, the Coeur d'Alenes' Old Mission is the oldest remaining building in Idaho. The tribe of 2,500 to 4,000 was considered by French trappers to be very shrewd bargainers. But they were also a very spiritually-minded people. When they heard that a neighboring tribe had medicine men (whom the Indians called "Blackrobes") with great powers, they sent word that the Blackrobes (Catholic Jesuit priests) were welcome at their villages. In the early 1840s, Jesuit missionaries came to north Idaho.

The Cataldo Mission measures 90 feet high and 40 feet wide. Huge vertical and horizontal timbers were hewn and planed with a broad axe and fastened together with wooden pegs. Holes to secure horizontal poles were drilled in the upright timbers. Straw was woven into this framework and then daubed with mud to create walls 10 to 12 inches thick. This structure was then covered with boards inside and out. A foundation of native stone measures four feet wide. The building was meant to last. Antonio Ravalli, a native of Italy who became a Jesuit in 1827, designed the building and directed the work of the mission. The Parish House reflects a Neo-Gothic design that was popular at that time, even on the frontier. The priests taught the Indians life skills as well as their theology.

In the early 20th century, financial difficulties pushed the Mission into decline. An initial restoration of the buildings

From left to right: The views of Kootenay Lake from BC Rt. 3A were spectacular. The afternoon sun prying through the clouds created sparkling light patterns on the water. After reaching Kootenay Bay the MV Osprey ferried us to Balfour, providing scenery that we feebly tried to capture with our cameras. Following a restful evening at Kokanee Creek Provincial Park, we enjoyed a pleasant interlude in the gardens of Blaylock Mansion. After returning to Idaho through the eastern edge of Washington, our first stop was the Cataldo Mission, built in the 1840s by the Jesuits to serve the Coeur d'Alene Indians. It is the oldest building in Idaho.





Architecture at the turn of the century in Wallace ranged from Western Victorian to Greek Neo-Classical. The great fire in 1890 and a rebuilding surge in 1910 resulted in buildings today that are on the National Register of Historic Places.

was completed in 1930. In 1973–76, the state undertook the complete restoration of the church as a national bicentennial project. The Visitor Center presents a very thorough history of the Coeur d'Alene tribe. In 1975 the property became an Idaho State Park. In addition to the buildings, the park offers guided tours, trails, historic cemeteries, and picnic facilities. \$4.00 day-use fee. Motorhome parking in marked areas.

From Cataldo about 20 miles west on I-90, the town of Wallace seems to jealously compete for the ground on which the Interstate is built. Wallace is a mining town which has had a great impact on the economy of Idaho and the United States. Beginning in 1884, the next century saw over \$5 billion worth of metals mined and recovered in this small valley. The district produced over one billion ounces of silver, eight million tons of lead, one-half million ounces of gold, and over three million tons of copper.

In 1884 Colonel W.R. Wallace purchased 80 acres with Sioux scrip and built a cabin and called the area Placer Center. A year later when his wife, Lucy, arrived to become postmaster, the Post Office refused a two-word name. She deferred and named the town Wallace. While silver mining boomed for several decades, it eventually declined. Today local mines produce lead and zinc, but not enough to support the area's economy.

Late on a Saturday afternoon while my wife shopped in a Wallace jewelry store, I questioned the shopkeeper about the town's history. Suddenly, she pointed toward the sidewalk and said decidedly, "That's who you need to talk to!"

"And who is he?" I asked. "He's the town historian, Judge Richard Magnuson."

I ran out the door, trying not to shout but calling his name. The judge stopped to see what I was about. Explaining my interest in Wallace for my magazine story, he graciously began to give me a brief version of the town's economic history.

"Wallace is not a silver town today. Mining survival now is really lead and zinc," he began. "Mines are an extractive industry. When the mines are depleted, you move on."

"Tourism is really a poor substitute for active mining," he continued. "We don't have a large enough mining industry today to sustain an on-going labor force of well-trained miners. You just can't take a man off the street and make a miner out of him. It takes a lot of training and education," he explained. "The mining industry was built on waves of economic wealth based on the price of metals. Today silver still stays in the equation because you can't mine lead and zinc without getting some silver."

It was a rip-roaring mining town at the turn of the century. Saloons, bordelloes, fights, murders over mining claims. Names of shops today reflect the past and draw those interested in the history of Wallace. Names such as The Best Little Hair House, Wells Fargo, Wallace District Mining Museum, Idaho Silver Shop, Sixth Street Melodrama, Oasis Bordello Museum, Northern Pacific Depot and Railroad Museum, and N.W. Mine Supply.

The Sierra Silver Mine Tour still offers a true underground mining experience. The 75-minute tour narrated by an experienced miner explains the methods and techniques for hard-rock silver mining in one of North Idaho's silver mines. Tours begin at 9 a.m. at 420 Fifth Street, and every 30 minutes thereafter, May through September. Adults, \$9.50; Seniors, \$8.50.

The Recreational Trails of the Idaho Panhandle are a huge asset to North Central Idaho. Most of the trails have been developed

from railroad beds no longer in use. Frequent trailheads and pick-up points along the 72 miles of paved trails make it easy to tailor a trip for your schedule and energy level. The Route of the Hiawatha is all downhill, beginning at Lookout Pass, passing through several tunnels, and crossing several bridges. 208-744-1301 or www.ridethehiawatha.com Ask at the Wallace Information Center if you prefer to use ATVs on the area's motorized trails.

If you would like to stay overnight in Wallace, Down-by-the-Depot RV Park has 46 spaces with full hookups for \$23 including tax. 108 Nine Mile Road. 208-753-7121.

Our game plan called for a three hour drive from Wallace to Lewiston. The destination was Hells Gate State Park, the jumping off point for jet boat tours on the Snake River into Hells Canyon. We opted to take State Hwy 3 from I-90 which happens to be the Lake Coeur d'Alene Scenic Byway. Hwy 3 becomes the White Pine Scenic Byway. It runs into Hwy 6 which will take you to US 95 South into Moscow and Lewiston. An unexpected scenic pleasure was the Palouse country—eastern Washington and western Idaho. The rolling fertile farms in the late spring offer a kaleidoscope of greens, yellows, and golds created by the maturing winter grain crops.

When you approach Lewiston from the north at night, you will find yourself on a high mesa overlooking the city far below—an incredibly beautiful vista. The descent into the valley was a long series of straight-away six percent grades ending in 180s. We crept into Hells Gate State Park around 10 p.m., trying not to disturb our new neighbors. We awoke to a chilly 55 with the Snake River gliding by just 40 yards from our campsite in a tree-lined park. 208-799-5015. Water, elec / \$19.19 w/tax. The Lewis and Clark Discovery Center at the park office offers a film and a wide selection of books, DVDs, and CDs about the Corps of Discovery. If the L&C Trail is the focus of your trip, the Discovery Center is a great place to plan your journey.

Idahoans are quick to point out that Hells Canyon is deeper by 2,000 feet than the Grand Canyon, making it the deepest gorge in North America. The river offers world-class whitewater that our jet boat captain craftily dodges to avoid the concealed boulders. The mountain peaks are rugged, spectacular, treacherous. Only the most intrepid would dare to scale and cross them.

The weather can change without a moments notice. Overbearing heat can become a driving rainstorm sweeping through the canyon. Partly for that reason, we chose River Quest Excursions. Their 42-foot, 55-passenger heavy aluminum boats are completely enclosed with clear plastic windows that can be rolled up when the storms dissipate. To take the edge off of a cool day, Captain Butch Odegaard turned on the heaters. The boat was especially designed for use on the Snake River. It boasts three 460 Ford engines harnessed to Hamilton jet pumps built in New Zealand. As we first leave the marina and go south up the river, small ranches line the narrow flood plains. In the early 1700s the Nez Perce raced their Appaloosa horses on these rolling terraces.

Captain Odegaard slows and maneuvers closely to an outcropping of rocks on the east side of the river. Valerie Earl, who owns the property, has requested no PA systems and quiet respect. Her father was an early river captain, her mother Nez Perce. The area is sacred to the Nez Perce. A card table-sized, flat-faced rock displays a petroglyph with human-like figures. Although Smithsonian and National Geographic have analyzed



From top: The basalt formations reveal the geologic history of a large portion of Hells Canyon. The deeper we went into the canyon the more spectacular the walls became, at one point narrowing the river to a mere 60-foot wide. Captain Butch Odegaard guided the jet boat flawlessly around the rapids while relating fascinating stories.

the ancient artwork, there is no sure interpretation.

Just a short distance further south is the Elmer Earl Ranch (est. 1894), the site of the massacre and burial ground of the Nez Perce. While the men were out hunting, an opposing tribe murdered the elderly, women, and children in the camp.

Captain Odegaard is licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard. His knowledge of Hells Canyon is interesting, thorough, and never dry or dull. He listens and learns from the geologists he has transported into Hells Canyon. "I know just enough to be dangerous," he laughs. As the jet boat slaloms upriver at 33 mph, the landscape changes rapidly.

Perhaps 300 million years ago the canyon was the suture zone, the western coast of what we now call North America. After a fault line opened up, the lava in the form of volcanic basalt pushed up and created layer upon layer. The Snake spent the last 150 million years carving out the canyon.

Wildlife abounds. Elk, deer, mountain goats, and bighorn sheep, some of which you will see on a trip into the canyon. But it is unlikely that you will see cougars, bobcats, and bear who also inhabit the canyon.

Captain Odegaard's stories continue to roll over the PA system while his assistant, Chuck Fred, hopped from seat to seat giving historical glimpses at a personal level. They leave you spellbound with wonderful stories about China Garden Creek where the Chinese maintained gardens and sold fresh vegetables to the miners; about the Imnaha sternwheeler that broke up in Wild Goose Rapids; about the Nez Perce crossing where Chief Joseph used an eddy to cross the Snake and escape the U.S. Army; the China Bar where cowboys from Oregon murdered



When your days end with sunsets like this, a prayer of thanks is the only appropriate response.

a settlement of Chinese gold miners but still could not find their gold.

We stopped for lunch at Cache Creek Ranch, a National Forest station monitored by volunteers. Picnic tables on a grassy knoll gave us a beautiful view of the north-flowing Snake as we consumed our lunches.

The raw mountains, their constantly changing shapes, the columnar basalt formations, the magnificent rock faces and buttes, the sheer height of the peaks around us. To be there is humbling! I asked the captain if he ever got bored making the trip several times a week. "Never! It's different every day. In fact, I told Debbie (his wife) not long ago that if I ever got bored, I would quit. I don't think that will ever happen."

As we approached the confluence of the Salmon River, we saw a hiker waving to get our attention. Capt. Odegaard had dropped Ron Larue off the previous day to begin a three and a half month trek

up the Salmon River to Montana—no trails, virgin wilderness. Unable to cross the swift river, Larue asked to be deposited on the north side of the intersection where he hoped to find more accessible terrain. Upon reaching his destination, Larue plans to kayak back to Lewiston, reaching there on Oct. 10.

On the way back to our port city, River Quest treated us to a stop at Garden Creek Ranch, a property that Odegaard leases from the Nature Conservancy. The Conservancy is doing research on eradicating the Yellow Starthistle which is destroying plant life consumed by wildlife. To provide funding to the project, the Odegaards lease the property and operate a bed and breakfast. The guests were invited to pick and consume Bing cherries from the orchards. The captain designed a unique hydro-generator, capturing the water power from a creek to provide full electric service to the camp.

Grand Fir



Douglas Fir



Western Red Cedar



The half day trip took us 59 miles upriver; the full day adventure would have taken us 91 miles. \$84/person including lunch (10–4:30). Full day, \$104/person including breakfast and lunch. 800-589-1129. www.riverquestexcursions.com This is a “don’t miss” trip.

A few miles east of Lewiston, the Nez Perce Indian Reservation covers approximately 1,300 square miles. Administered by the National Park Service, the Nez Perce National Historical Park and Visitor Center at Spaulding on US 95 tells the tragic story of this proud people being forced to leave their homeland by land-hungry settlers moving west. After several battles and an 1,100-mile chase, the U.S. Army crushed the Nez Perce at Bear Paw in northern Montana.

The last two days of our Idaho trip were focused on traveling the Northwest Passage Scenic Byway (US 12) which follows the Clearwater and Lochsa Rivers to Lolo Pass. The Lolo Indian Trail follows the ridges on the northern side of this wild scenic river corridor and was used by the Lewis and Clark Expedition exactly 200 years ago. See the Info Sidebar to request booklets for this area.

The river corridor is a fisherman’s dream, especially a fly fisherman. There are several Forest Service campgrounds along the way that honor the Golden Age, Golden Eagle, and Golden Access Passports, affording overnight stays at one-half price. Unless specifically stated, they do not offer

hookups or dump stations in these parks.

The Wild Goose Campground near the confluence of the Selway and Lochsa Rivers is right on the river, but offers only six campsites. This campground is not suited for big rigs. However, you can park a 32-ft coach on sites 6 and 7, which are pull-through sites. But you first should drop your tow vehicle at the upper park area next to US 12. Site 3 is suitable for a back-in up to 35 ft.

At MP 97 the Three Rivers Resort can take motorhomes up to 32 ft. The resort offers half and full day float trips, \$50/\$100. Open through mid-October. Elec and water hookups for \$24.30 w/tax. General store has good collection of area books.

The Apgar Campground can accommodate motorhomes on site 5 (up to 38 ft) and site 7 (up to 34 ft). Watch the slide-outs; trees are very close to parking pads.

The Wilderness Gateway Campground between MP 122–123 can handle motorhomes of any length and offers several pull-through sites on Loops A, B, and C. Loop D is reserved for campers with horses. Dump station on Loop A. Spigots available to fill tanks. No river access in campground.

Take a trip back 75 years and visit the Lochsa Historical Ranger Station. At one time 200 men worked here to develop and maintain the forests in this district.

The Wendover Campground between MP 158–159 has 25 spaces with enough shrubbery and trees to provide privacy between each space. Several are deep

enough to accommodate big rigs. The campground is on the river and offers several trailheads for hiking. The Whitehouse Campground is next door with 11 sites close to the river. The pads are not as deep, so drop your tow car at the parking lot on the right before you select a site.

Powell Campground is privately operated. Sites 12–34 offer elec hookup at \$15/night. Big rigs are welcome. Services include fueling station with gas and diesel, a lodge and restaurant. Located between MP 161–162.

The Devoto Memorial Cedar Grove at MP 165 is a “must stop.” The groves are located on both sides of US 12. It is estimated that the trees are between 500 and 3,000 years old. Just think about touching a living tree that is 3,000 years old. Awesome!

At Lolo Pass you will be at 5,225 feet. The Visitor Center rates a 10. Recently completed, the center has an excellent exhibit about forest ecology and geology. Three interpreters are on staff every day leading hikes and giving programs from 8 – 5:30 (PDT). On July 30–31, re-enactors dressed in authentic costumes will tell the story of the Corps of Discovery and the Travelers Rest Brigade. Exhibits will address the cultural history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition as well as the history of the Nez Perce and the Salish tribes.

Our Idaho journey is over and we are entering Montana. We hope you get to follow our trails through this great state. Keep on *Roughing It Smoothly*.

Information Resources to Help You Plan Your Tour of Idaho

First, go to www.visitid.org and request the following brochures as needed, or call the Idaho Travel Council at 800-847-4843 if you do not use the internet. Below is a list of individual websites and phone numbers in the event that the Idaho Travel Council does not have each item available.

Idaho Official State Travel Guide. A thorough guide to each of Idaho’s seven geographical sections. 800-847-4843.

RV Idaho. Idaho RV Parks, Campgrounds & Dump Stations. Request 2005 edition at www.rvidaho.org or write to Idaho RV Campgrounds Assoc., P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83707. 208-345-6009.

Idaho State Parks and Recreation Guide. Map of Idaho state parks, facilities offered, and phone numbers for each park. www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov or write to Idaho Dept. of Parks and Recreation, P.O. Box

83720, Boise, ID 83720-0065. 208-334-4199.

Idaho State Map. Shows Scenic Byways, state parks, etc. Idaho Transportation Dept., P.O. Box 7129, Boise, ID 83707. 208-334-8000.

Taking the Scenic Route: A Guide to Idaho’s Scenic Byways. Idaho Travel Council. 800-847-4843

Lewis & Clark on the Lolo Trail and Highway 12: A Long and Winding Road. Excellent guides for traveling US 12 from Lewiston to Missoula, MT. Call the main office for Clearwater National Forest at 208-476-4541 and ask for LeAnn. Or write to Clearwater National Forest, 12730 US Hwy 12, Orofino, ID 83544.

Nez Perce. A guide to the Nez Perce Indian Reservation. www.nps.gov Nez Perce National Historical Park, Spalding Visitor Center just east of Lewiston on US 95. Open all year. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closes at 4:30 p.m. Sept. through May.

If you are interested in outdoor activities:

The Recreational Trails of the Idaho Panhandle.

Biking, hiking, and ATVs. Idaho Travel Council, 800-847-4843. www.visitid.org

REGIONAL TRAVEL INFORMATION:

North Idaho Tourism Alliance, 888-333-3737 or www.visitnorthidaho.com

North Central Idaho Travel Association, 800-473-3543 or www.northcentralidaho.info

Southwest Idaho Travel Association, 800-635-5240 or www.swita.org

South Central Idaho Tourism, 800-255-8946 or www.visitsouthidaho.com

Southeastern Idaho: Pioneer Country Travel Council, 888-201-1063 or www.seidaho.org

Eastern Idaho: Yellowstone Teton Territory, 800-634-3246 or www.yellowstoneteton.org

Central Idaho: Sun Valley/Ketchum Chamber & Visitors Bureau, 866-305-0224 or www.visitsunvalley.com



Fly Fishing in Northern Idaho

by David Anthony

*F*ly fishing is truly magical, a sport for those that want to be at one with nature. To be able to catch a fish by understanding the entomology of the region, the natural food of the fish, and then to present a handmade version of this natural food so well as to fool the fish gives the fisherman a feeling of excitement that cannot be duplicated. I am fortunate enough to live in one of the finest fly fishing regions of the world and I would like to introduce you to my neighborhood.

Waters of my area

I live in North Central Idaho, between the Coeur d' Alene and the St. Joe rivers. There are also numerous lakes that these rivers flow into which support some of the fish that can be taken using flies. I will show you some of the easy access points of the rivers, some not so easy, and some of the remote lakes where you can enjoy fishing in a wilderness surrounding. Let's start with a remote lake.

Lower Glidden Lake is one of the most pristine alpine lakes that I have ever fished. The mountaintops around the lake are over 8,000 feet, very rocky, with shale and talus slides coming from the summits. The lake is fed by snow and natural streams, causing it to be very cold. Bring neoprene waders to all of our waters. The fish are not likely to be in easily accessible spots. With the water being so cold, you will want to stay comfortable so you can stay in. There is an old mine at the eastern end of the lake with a passable dirt road leading to that side. Follow the dirt road about ¼ mile past the turnout for the pit toilets and look toward the lake for viable fishing points. There are pullouts for parking, and some people stay in the area for several days. This is national forest and camping is allowed by the lake. Bring a good insect repellent. The mosquitos in the area are voracious during the summer months. Also bring warm clothing. The chance of snow in the Northern Rockies is year round. The lake has an excellent base of cutthroat and rainbow trout in the 12- to 16-inch size. They feed exclusively on natural feed at this altitude, and are not planted. They know what a hook looks like, so you will have to be good to interest them unless there is a spectac-

ular hatch going on. Watch the local insects to see what is happening.

The Coeur d'Alene River flows from deep in the mountains west of Glidden Lake and can be fished anywhere there is enough water for fish to swim. My favorite areas are in the North Fork Coeur d'Alene River between Linfor and Enaville. These are the easiest areas to get to by taking exit 43 at Kingston from I-90. Go north on road NFD9 past Enaville and start looking for likely places to work the river. This river goes for another 30 miles into the mountains, so work your way upstream. When you get to Linfor, look for the road to split. Take the left fork onto NFD209. This is the North Fork of the Coeur d' Alene River. There are numerous camping sites along the river, some primitive and some developed. Look for the signs to direct you and choose your site well. I like to fish within walking distance of my camp, so I prefer the primitive campgrounds higher up the river. The river is cold until the middle of summer. At this time of year, the cutthroat and rainbow are heading to the high ground to spawn. Check your regulations for the section of river you are on. Some sections are catch and release only, some are keep under 8 inches and over 16 inches. This will insure good spawn and renewed fishing resources. You can follow the road for some 30 miles or more, depending on how deep in the wilderness you want to go.

The South Fork of the Coeur d' Alene River runs past Mullan on I-90. This high mountain country can still produce good fish. For a very good side trip, visit the fish hatchery at Mullan to learn about the life cycle of the fish you are seeking. Fishing below the hatchery can be very good during the return cycle of the rainbows and cutthroats to this area to spawn. Be sure to check the regulations for the size and number limits. There is camping and river access at Mullan, Dorsey, and Larson, which are all between Wallace and the Montana border. Catch and release is the best policy for these rivers, since they meander through some heavy mining areas where heavy metals have been released into the waters.

The St. Joe River can be accessed two ways. If you are coming east on I-90, take exit 5 at

Taft, Montana, for Avery, Idaho. If you are coming west from St. Maries, Idaho, go east on St. Joe's Road. In this direction, the first acceptable trout fishing will be a few miles up Marble Creek, about 33 miles east of St. Maries. The fishing here is not spectacular, but can be good. Cutthroats are not that selective, but they can be finicky. The fish are larger, healthier, and more responsive in the colder waters of the more inaccessible areas of the upper river.

Take NFD 456 to the north out of Avery and follow the river as far in as you dare to go. Remember, this is remote country. Be prepared! The nearest help is in Avery, the nearest hospital is St. Maries, and cell phones don't work here! With that in mind, go deep! I find the upper end of the river, farthest away from the pavement to be the best fishing ever. There are two access roads that follow the river and its tributaries. One runs high and follows the old railroad bed. Nice views and lots of old train tunnels to go through. The other follows the river down low. This road can be accessed after Avery by going through tunnel #34 and following the road down to the river level rather than crossing the rail bridge. The right fork of the road goes back toward Avery on the west side of the river and downstream, while the left fork goes to the north towards Moon Summit on the western side of the river. Fishing from here on is what dreams are made of. Fish the holes or riffles from the roadless side. You'll cover more virgin areas this way. Chest waders and a life vest are my recommendation if you want to get aggressive.

The river can be slippery, so use some traction devices on your feet. You might also consider a wading staff for the faster water areas with the big trout. Scout the water and then consider a float tube or small inflatable raft. These can take you through most areas of the upper river if you are careful of the fast water.

There is a 6-foot waterfall up there so scout the area well before jumping in! From the headwaters down, 15 miles is pretty rough and narrow but very good fishing. The next 15 miles down wades better but it is a full day of fishing. There are numerous camping areas along the river. This is national forest and the camps are undeveloped,

so prepare accordingly. There are several names to remember in this area: Bluff Creek, Turner Flats, and Skookum Canyon. All of these produce excellent fishing, along with an area just south of Avery. I have found great trout fishing within site of the frontage road in all of these areas.

Bait in the area

Your flies must imitate the local entomology. Study your surroundings to determine what type of bait to present. "Catch the Hatch." By observing the insects currently hatching, you will know exactly what the fish are eating. Empty shucks and dead spinners on the water's edge are a sure sign of the day's activity. Insects in groups living on the banks near vegetation are a sure sign of the feed the fish are looking for. As the fishing drops off in one area, move and examine the area around your next spot. You will be surprised to see what the change will bring. Insect hatches vary along the river. What is working at one spot may be completely different in another. Just be vigilant in your observations and you will do well.

My favorite flies are the stonefly, salmon fly, and mosquito. These seem to be a universal group and do well all along the river's upper sections. Closer to the lake around St. Maries the mosquito will do well with other species such as salmon and rainbow, but that is because they are eating what is eating you! Don't get hooked on a favorite fly or spot. You will definitely miss out on some exciting fishing and a beautiful view just around the corner. Stay mobile and alert for the food the fish are taking and you will not be disappointed.

Fish

Cutthroat Trout winter in the lakes and then move upstream as much as 60 miles when the spring runoff begins. When the river water temperature drops below 40° F in the fall, the fish migrate downriver and occasionally congregate in the deeper pools along the way. Summer population along a mile of the St. Joe can be 1,500 to 2,000 per mile. This is far below the productive rivers like the Madison in Montana where the populations can exceed 3,000 per mile. However, the views are better

on the St. Joe and the fishing pressure is less so it all works out. The cutthroat trout live on insect larvae. Fishermen who use dry flies to imitate adult May flies, Caddis flies or Stone flies will do well. Below the North Fork the bag limit during the open season is 2 and must be less than 8 inches or larger than 16 inches to help maintain a sustainable number of spawning fish. To many people cutthroat trout and the St. Joe River are synonymous.

Who to Talk to

In Avery go to Scheffy's General Store and Motel and talk to Ben Scheffelmair, the owner. Ben knows more about the surrounding area than just about anyone. Check out his selection of flies inside the store and talk to him about what is hitting right now. The other expert in the area lives right across the street. Wade Bilbury is a long-time resident of Avery and has the perfect house to just sit and watch the water. I learned about the cutthroat trout's life cycle from Wade. Both gentlemen are fine fishermen who have very useful information. Take some time and have a chat.

Conclusion

Coeur d'Alene. When fishing near I-90 in the Coeur d' Alene region, it is a good idea to observe a catch and release protocol. Heavy metals in the waters are quite high due to the many old mines in the area.
St. Joe. The North Fork of the St. Joe River is as close to heaven as a fisherman on this earth can get. The cutthroat trout that live in the wild sections of this river call all fly fisherman with the special song of the wilderness that can only be answered in one way: the sing of the reel as the fish starts taking line and the familiar cry of "Fish On"!

David Anthony is a resident of Northern Idaho and a videographer by profession. He can be found at david55@imbris.net.

By email you may order a DVD of his videography and the text herein about fly fishing.

Please note: The roads we use to reach the fishing spots are all accessible by motorhomes except the roads into Glidden Lake.

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~ J.Ray, posted on the internet
11/18/04

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RV's Northwest: Bill & Ron

by Fred Thompson

"When I sold my first motorhome, it was like selling ten Toyotas at one crack — and it was more fun!" Bill Fishfader recalled with a smile.

Starting as a Toyota salesman in 1962, Fishfader bought his first car dealership in 1975 and sold six different brands. "I started picking up used motorhomes to put on my car lot, usually Vogue and Foretravel."

Bill got really serious about the motorhome business and built a new facility in Coeur d'Alene in 1983. He became a dealer for Foretravel and Allegro, thus beginning a long relationship with Tiffin Motorhomes.

Bill found out how serious Bob Tiffin was about building motorhomes a few weeks later. "We had four Allegro coaches show up at once on a Thursday afternoon. Three of them pulled into our lot, but the driver parked the fourth one on the shoulder of the road in front of our business," Bill related.

"My coach has a fuel tank that's leaking and I don't want to corrode your new blacktop with the fuel running out on it," the driver explained. The driver called the plant and explained the problem.

"I figured the company would air freight a new fuel tank out of Huntsville on Friday or Monday and we would get it by Wednesday. There's no quick way to get from Huntsville to Spokane regardless of how you travel," he laughed.

"We opened the lot on Sunday afternoons during the summer. At 1 p.m. a pickup with Alabama plates pulled up with a fuel tank in the back. The two drivers looked a little tired; they had driven 2,350 miles straight through from Red Bay to get us that tank as quickly as possible. I knew then what kind of manufacturer's service I could count on from Bob Tiffin," he said. "They took back the faulty tank to troubleshoot the problem."

Not long after Bill opened the new motorhome dealership Foretravel bought back all of their franchises. Bill sold the whole facility to Foretravel and along with it the Allegro dealership. But the RV bug had bitten him and he soon found a Winnebago dealership in Spokane that was for sale. He added Pace Arrow, Boulder, and

Fleetwood. After resolving a few problems, the company added towables with a full line of Dutchman travel trailers.

In 1985 Fishfader changed the name of the company to RV's Northwest. Spokane bills itself as the gateway to the Inland Northwest and the new name reflected the greater opportunities to market RVs to the rapidly growing movement to enjoy the outdoors.

The company's growth soon demanded more sales talent. In 1992 Ron Little's good friend and next door neighbor who worked for Bill told him about a sales position open at RV's Northwest. Ron had been with a car dealership and immediately felt a synergy for the RV business.

As businesses began to populate the intersections on I-90 east of Spokane, Fishfader became the first RV dealership in 1995 to build out on the freeway. It was a good decision. Beginning with just \$4 million in sales that year, RV's Northwest's sales have multiplied to over six times that figure. Last month the company celebrated

Ron Little, president, and Brian Leak, sales manager, look forward to making customer visits to RV's Northwest a fun experience.



ed its tenth year in its modern facility and its 20th anniversary in business.

In January 2001 Ron bought 49 percent of the business from Bill, and then completed the buyout in 2003. "Bill's speciality is finding and buying good quality used motorhomes," Ron said. "Although he now winters in Arizona, he keeps active in the business by buying stock for us."

In the meantime, Ron expanded the business by picking up a second location that sells towables and fifth wheels. Recently a 4,200 sq. ft. building became available next door which is now the Parts Department for the company.

With 40 employees, RV's Northwest is positioned to offer both top quality service and knowledgeable sales consulting to its customers. The company has 14 in sales and sales support, 10 service techs, six in parts, and 10 in administration and lot personnel. Seven service bays are now in operation. Ron has developed close relationships with chassis and engine service companies in the immediate area and helps customers make appointments to keep all of their engine and chassis service current.

"Everyone who comes in is 'family,'" Ron said as he explained his sales philosophy. "We operate with zero pressure, very relaxed. We are in the recreation business, so we make a customer's visit here a fun experience," he continued.

"Last year the Allegro 32BA floorplan was our hot item. In 2004 it was the 31-ft. Allegro," Ron said. Tiffin is RV's Northwest's sole supplier of new Class A coaches.

Training at management, sales, and service tech levels is a top priority for Little. "We are working with RVDA to get satellite training started. Our managers regularly attend classes at Spader Management Training, a program that was specifically designed for the RV/Marine industry.

As the owner of RV's Northwest, Ron became a member of 20 Group. The organization of 20 dealers in non-competitive areas meets three times a year to share management ideas and do comprehensive critiques on each other's operations. Little is very enthusiastic about the fresh ideas that he has implemented.

Ron is married with three children: two sons, and a daughter who is the youngest and the most interested in one day taking over her daddy's business.

One Year, 10,000 Miles, 28 States and Counting

By Harold & Lynne Breuninger

In our first year of full-timing we visited 28 states and covered just under 10,000 miles in our trouble-free Allegro Bus, plus another 15,000 miles in our dingy. We tow a 4-door Saturn, an excellent vehicle for this purpose. Every Saturn dealership we visited treated us like they knew us and as if we had bought the car from them. Routine maintenance service appointments are made at our convenience without any hassle.

As we previously reported, our pace is leisurely and unhurried. We usually remain in one place for a week or so to allow ample time to visit local attractions. Also, weekly campground rates usually offer a discount over the daily rate.

We have not joined any "Campground Membership Systems," finding them confusing, complicated, and somewhat restrictive for our purposes. For discount camping we use Passport America (\$44 per year) which offers a 50 percent discount at selected campgrounds and we have a KOA Gold Value Card that gives us a 15 percent discount at all KOA campgrounds. The Good Sam Club, FMCA, and AAA are also recognized at many campgrounds and offer a 10 percent discount. Our average campground costs for the year were \$23 per day. We do not "boondock" or dry camp nor do we stay in many state parks as our 40-foot rig usually exceeds their length limit. Also, spending a month or so in California added considerably to the daily average!

The price of fuel has not as yet curtailed our travels. We only have a limited number of years left before age (I'm 72) or medical conditions prevent us from traveling and enjoying this beautiful country and the RV lifestyle. So, like all traveling RVers, we "bite the bullet."

If you are age 62 or older, we strongly recommend buying a Golden Age Passport (a one time \$10 fee) which is a lifetime admission permit to a host of national parks, monuments, and government campgrounds (National Park Service, Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management or Reclamation, USDA Forest Service). It has saved us hundreds of dollars.

When we are not sightseeing, our day-to-day activities are much the same as they were before we became full-timers. Laundry needs to be done, food bought, meals prepared, hair cut, dogs walked and groomed, etc. Many national or regional supermarket chains, pharmacies, and pet supply stores offer "Customer Rewards Cards." These cards have provided considerable savings.

Keeping in touch with family and friends is usually done by email or cell phone and we use our "any-time minutes" and "in-network calling" extensively. We access the internet using our cell phone which

we find very convenient. It allows us internet usage in the coach, on the road, at rest areas, food and fuel stops.

Our laptop is loaded with a GPS system that is invaluable in plotting routes and determining distances between stops. As we prefer to travel less than 200 miles in a day, it helps us plan accordingly. Also, should we require roadside service or emergency medical assistance, GPS will tell us exactly where we are so that our directions for help will be accurate and time saving.

Wherever we stop in our Allegro Bus, we receive favorable and enthusiastic comments from our fellow campers. Whenever we speak to other Tiffin Motorhome owners, we never hear any dissatisfied comments. They, like us, would again buy a Tiffin RV.

Reading Phoebe Wienke's excellent article entitled "So You're Going to Red Bay" in the Spring 2005 issue of *Roughing It Smoothly* brought back fond memories and smiles of our routine maintenance visits to the company's Red Bay facility. It reminded us to mention that, should you wish to see more than Red Bay while awaiting service, there are several campgrounds within easy reach. Tishomingo State Park in Mississippi (662-438-6914; see 2005 *Trailer Life*, page 885), is just 15 miles north of the Tiffin Campground and offers water and electric (30 amp only) hookups at a senior rate of only \$11 per day (\$14 otherwise). Several sites can accommodate a 40-foot rig.

Traveling southeast approximately 60 miles to Double Springs, Alabama, brings you to the Corinth Recreation Area (205-489-3165; see 2005 *Trailer Life*, page 150), adjacent to Lake Lewis Smith and in the Bankhead National Forest. This campground is operated by the USDA Forest Service. It has 52 family campsites, each with water, sewer, and 30/50 amp electric service. The sites are spacious with paved interior roads and parking spurs. Most sites can accommodate RVs over 40 feet. The Senior or Golden Age discount rate is \$13 per day.

Traveling due south 116 miles from Red Bay, along the Mississippi border, brings you to the Pickensville Campground (877-444-6777 in Carrollton, Alabama; see 2005 *Trailer Life*, page 148), operated by the Corps of Engineers. It has paved interior roads and 30 sites with full hookups (30/50 amps) on huge sites (ours was a 100+ foot pull through). Our Golden Age fee was \$9 per day. The only drawbacks at this campground are no cell phone coverage and 30 miles to the nearest marginal grocery store. If you go to this rustic but beautiful park, be well stocked before you arrive.

As usual, you are invited to email us at hfb123@earthlink.net with any questions or comments. Until next time. . . "Be Well, Drive Safe, and God Bless."

The author enjoys the rapt attention of his best critics.





Allegro Club Fall Getaway — COLORADO SPRINGS

Garden of the Gods



Allegro Club Fun in the Sun 2006 — GREATER TAMPA BAY

Sunshine Skyway Bridge



Allegro Club Spring Fling 2006 — MYRTLE BEACH

Lakewood Camping Resort

2005 RALLY SCHEDULE

ALLEGRO CLUB SUMMER LAKE ESCAPE

Mackinaw Mill Creek Camping
Mackinaw, Michigan
August 22-26, 2005 (break camp 27th)

ALLEGRO CLUB FALL GETAWAY

Garden of the Gods Campground
Colorado Springs, Colorado
Oct. 11-15, 2005 (break camp 16th)

2006 RALLY SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

ALLEGRO CLUB FUN IN THE SUN

Rally Park at Lazy Days
Seffner, Florida (Tampa Bay)
February 27-March 3, 2006
(break camp 4th)

2006 RALLY SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

ALLEGRO CLUB MYRTLE BEACH SPRING FLING

Lakewood Camping Resort
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
April 17-21, 2006 (break camp 22nd)

ALLEGRO CLUB FMCA PRE-RALLY

Site TBA
Charlotte, NC
August 10-13, 2006

ALLEGRO CLUB NEW ENGLAND GETAWAY

Champlain Valley Exposition
Essex Junction, VT
October 9-13, 2006 (break camp 14th)

ALLEGRO CLUB FALL FIESTA

Blazing Star RV Resort
San Antonio, TX
Nov. 6-10, 2006 (break camp 11th)

CALL, FAX, EMAIL, OR WRITE FOR MORE INFORMATION
256-356-8522 Office
256-356-9746 Fax

jimmy.johnson@tiffinmotorhomes.com
Allegro Club
P.O. Box 1429
Red Bay, AL 35582-1429

Why be an Allegro Club member?

- Food, Fun, Frolic, Friends, Fellowship
- *SIDE ROADS* Newsletter
- Rallies & Pre-rallies featuring food, entertainment and activities from the surrounding area; Tiffin factory technicians; supplier/partner seminars; valuable Welcome Kits and Door Prizes; dealer display of new model Tiffin-built products.
- Discount Insurance Coverage, Roadside Assistance, Trip Cancellation, Liability, Collision, Comprehensive, Sky-Med
- Club & Tiffin brands logo merchandise
- Maintenance & Repair Benefits
- Discount rates on Enterprise car rentals
- Local chapters in many areas

Northwest Rally in July

Details are now being finalized for a summer rally in the Northwest, July 25-28, 2005, Welches, Oregon. Call Tom Kirk, Northwest Tiffin sales office, for last-minute rally information: or email at captpt@comcast.net

Tom Kirk 541-485-6266 Business
2174 Wester St. 541-953-3151 Cell
Eugene, OR 97408 541-485-0660 Fax

Don't Miss the Allegro Club Fall Mountain Fest

Oct. 11-15, 2005, Garden of the Gods Campground in Colorado Springs, Colo. Limited to 120 coaches.

Dinner and entertainment at the Flying W Ranch, Thursday; tour of the Garden of the Gods and the Air Force Academy with lunch at the Officer's Club on Saturday. The schedule permits ample free time for you to pursue your own interests. We look forward to seeing you in Colorado Springs!

The Branson Spring Fling — April 25-30, 2005

The Allegro Club's Spring rally in Branson was a huge hit! Whether visiting this quaint Ozark Mountain town for the first or the fiftieth time, one will never be without something interesting to do or see. The rolling Ozark hills were still laced with dogwood blooms and spring flowers were abundant as we pulled into the Compton Ridge Campground to begin our nearly week-long stay. We experienced the full range of springtime weather, but enjoyed several days of beautiful blue skies and mild temperatures. Some nights were quite chilly, but that made for good campfires.

Jimmy, Verbon, and Cynthia certainly arranged a varied and delightful slate of entertainment for Allegro Club members to enjoy. Our first theater visit was to "Fifties at the Hop", a nostalgic journey down memory lane that had us tapping our toes and humming along to classic favorites such as "Wake Up Little Susie," "My Girl," "Rock Around the Clock," and so on. Wonderful young talent brought all of these oldies back for us to enjoy and reminisce about the days of ducktails and poodle skirts.

Our next musical treat was an old standby, the Oak Ridge Boys. This great country/gospel quartet has been wowing audiences for many years, and they did not disappoint! They performed some of their classic hits, such as "Elvira", as well as some new material that has just recently been released on CD. Their opening act was also a treat; Larry Stewart, the lead singer for Restless Heart, treated us to many of their big hits from the 70's and 80's, such as "The Bluest Eyes in Texas," and "I'll Still be Loving You." What a great evening of musical entertainment!

Thursday was devoted to vendor seminars and door prize giveaways, but Thursday night held in store a double treat. Buses transported us to the beautiful grounds of the Branson Belle Riverboat, where we boarded that ma-

gestic vessel and cruised the lake at sundown while enjoying a delicious prime rib dinner and an elaborate and entertaining stage show. The musical revue included many Broadway and movie hits from such shows as Phantom of the Opera, Mame, Chicago, and so on. The show also included a wonderfully entertaining comedian/ventriloquist and his "talking" dogs. Some of our own members got in on that act!

Friday was our final day of activities, with our entertainment being capped off by Pearce-Arrow, a fantastic variety show which featured a talented young quartet who sang many favorites. Their show also featured a great comedian; we literally laughed till we cried at his antics.

So, as you can see, we were treated to a great variety of musical entertainment, and we only scratched the surface! Branson is a place to visit over and over to receive the full benefit of all the musical treasure that is to be found in that lovely mountain town.

And, not only did we have our "plates full" of entertainment values, but we literally had our plates full each evening at the Compton Ridge dining hall! With our numbers being well over 200, their catering staff did a fantastic job of feeding us quickly, efficiently, and deliciously!!

As always, we must give a word of thanks to the Tiffin technicians who gave their time so freely to do minor repairs for all who needed them. This service alone makes the rallies a good value. Thanks, too, goes out to Mid America Motor Homes and Byerly RV, both who brought new Tiffin products to view and purchase. Several members went home in new coaches from this rally!

These few paragraphs really cannot adequately describe what a wonderful experience it is to attend an Allegro Club rally. Make your plans now to join us soon, as we keep on "Roughing it Smoothly!" — Gail Johnson

Tiffin Motorhomes Celebrates Completion of Natchez Trace

When the last section of the Natchez Trace parkway was officially opened on May 21, 2005, seven Tiffin-built coaches were there to help celebrate.

Joining Allegro Club President Jimmy Johnson for the historic 90-mile caravan ride along the Trace section lined with waving, cheering onlookers, were Tom and Miriam Chaffee of Decatur, Ala., Al and Rose Pitts of Crystal Springs, Miss., Doug and Kay Alexander of Cullman, Ala., Dave and Adella Hicks of Hernando, Miss., Walter Yow of Petal, Miss., and John and Inez Poague of Memphis, Tenn.

The 444-mile Natchez Trace Parkway stretches from

Nashville, Tenn., to Natchez, Miss. It honors the trail used by Choctaw, Chickasaw and other American Indian tribes between central Tennessee and the Mississippi River. According to the National Park Service, the Trace experienced its heaviest use from 1785 to 1820 as boatmen floated the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to markets in Natchez and New Orleans, sold their boats, and returned north on foot to Nashville via the Trace.

Tiffin was invited to be a part of the ceremonial events because of what Stennis Young, one of the National Park Service event planners, called the "tremendous RV traffic" on the parkway.



F R O M T H E R O A D

The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

The Trace

I just had to send you a note of “thanks” for your article on the Natchez Trace and for your correspondence when I requested additional information. We just returned from that wonderful adventure and used your article to guide our way. The history, people, and accommodations made this one of our most memorable trips.

We took your suggestion and went to Red Bay to tour the plant. I don't know what you can say

about the gentleman who gave the tour that you probably haven't already heard, but Mr. Davis is definitely the right man for the job — outstanding! I could not believe the experience of being out there on the production line and everything happening right around you. Everyone doing their job, and if asked a question, took the time to reply and did it with a smile. I believe that each person we came in contact with had to be special. Whatever Mr. Tiffin is do-

ing, other industries need to take a lesson from him

I had some questions about my unit (an old 92 class C) that were not resolved over the phone and e-mail, but the staff at the plant got me in touch with a gentlemen, if I remember correctly, Jesse Tess. Mr. Tess went out of his way to get the answer to my question and stayed around after the workforce left because our tour went past the closing time.

Thanks again for your article which made our adventure so memorable.

— Leon Tieteyen
Stratford, Wisconsin

That 38-ft. 2005 Allegro Bay Just Kept Following Us Around

In March our newly formed Tenn-Tom Travelers FMCA Chapter headed south to the Strawberry Festival in Plant City, Florida. We camped at the Rally RV Park at Lazydays, a great facility. In addition to the Strawberry Festival, we took in a Braves spring training game. I still dream about that wonderful strawberry shortcake sold at the fair for \$3.50. Some of our campers had withdrawal pains for a week.

At Lazydays over a thousand new campers from 17 manufacturers were on display and we sure checked them out. Tiffin Motorhomes was well-represented with their newest and best coaches.

When we left home, I had no idea of trading motorhomes. I did not even carry my title certifi-

cate. My lovely wife Martha and I have owned two new Allegro Bays (1999 and 2002), and being satisfied with our 36-ft coach with only 15,000 miles, why trade?

I made the mistake of touring the newly designed 38-ft Allegro Bay. It was so popular that you had to stand in line to go inside. Needless to say, it got my attention, especially the three slides, full-body paint, and every amenity I had ever dreamed of on a gas-powered rig. It even had separate living quarters with two chairs in the back bedroom with French doors. Whoever designed the interior had to be a genius.


Well, we left that jewel in Florida and headed to St. Augustine, then to Savannah, and finally to Perry, Georgia, the site of the National FMCA Rally.

Guess what! That 38-ft Allegro Bay was in Perry on display. Martha and I decided that since it had followed us that far, we might as well take it home—and we did! Since then we have taken it to rallies and campouts in Tupelo, Jackson, and Mobile. You would not believe the number of people who have visited our Allegro Bay. Martha says that's a good excuse to keep it clean and tidy.

Our thanks to Tiffin Motorhomes for a job well done. I have not had one single problem from day one. This is the first time I could say that. Bob and company really take care of their customers.

— Jimmy Hollingsworth
Tupelo, Mississippi

Our customers say it best, so we don't have to...



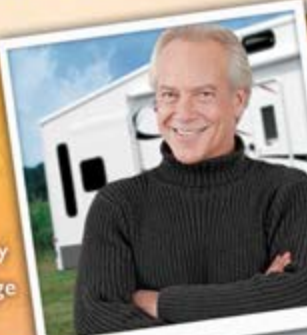
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Joe of Clearwater, FL



*Dear Fantastic Vent,
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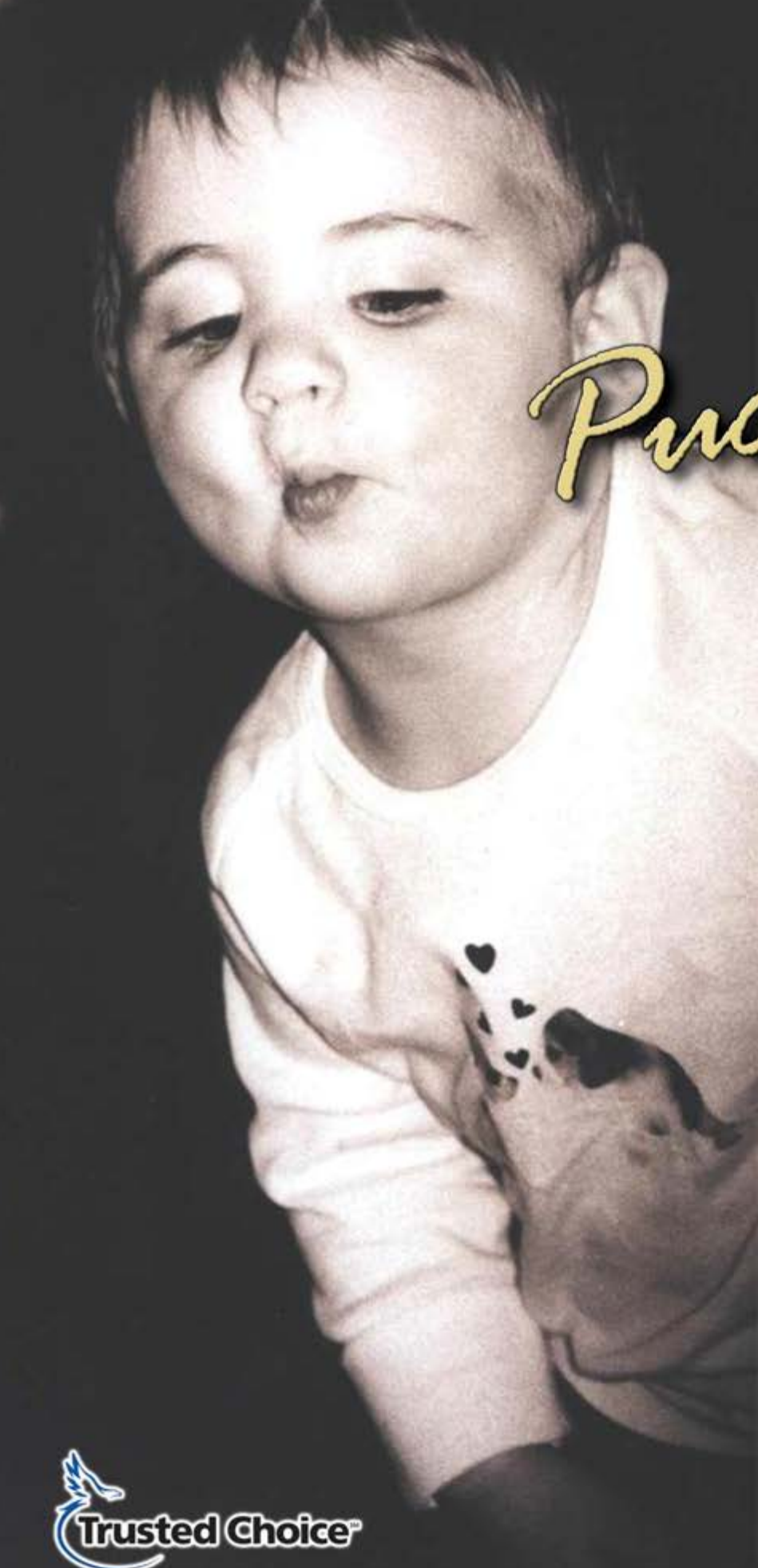
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LET US HEAR FROM YOU

“From the Road” is a fun part of the magazine to read and we hope more of you will pick up your pens and write to us. Send your stories to Fred Thompson, P.O. Box 292912, Tampa, FL 33687-2912 or fred@bookproduction.com. Be sure to put “Roughing It Smoothly” in the subject line of your email. Or call 877-538-7467. Tell us about the interesting places you've been, an unusual experience, a great destination, or just a good place to camp and hang out. Please share.

—Fred Thompson, editor



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There's nothing like strapping yourself into something called the Cyclone to test the limits of your digestive system. But when you're RVing, the last thing you want is a road trip like a carnival ride. That's why Workhorse made Transmission Grade Braking standard on the W-Series gas chassis. TGB enables



the driver to control vehicle speed during a steep decline simply by tapping the brakes and letting the transmission slow the vehicle down.

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