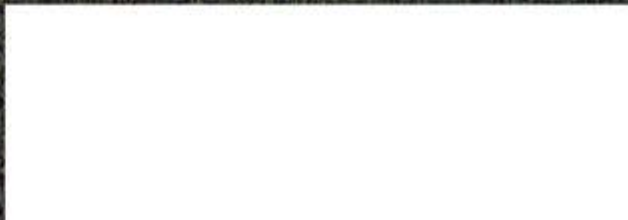


Roughing It Smoothly®



IN THIS ISSUE

- The Allegro 35-ft TSA
- A Fall Journey through Kentucky
- These Hills Are Alive
- The Incredible Detail of Making a Door



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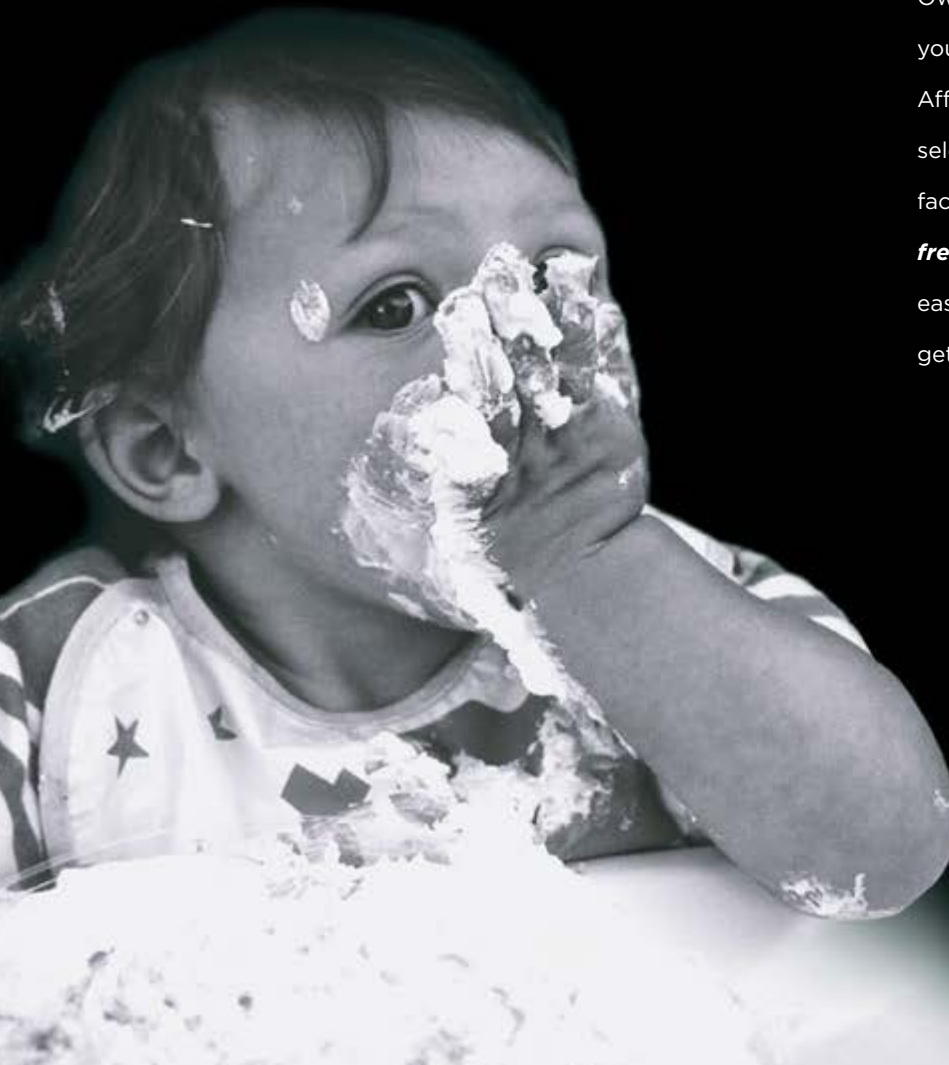
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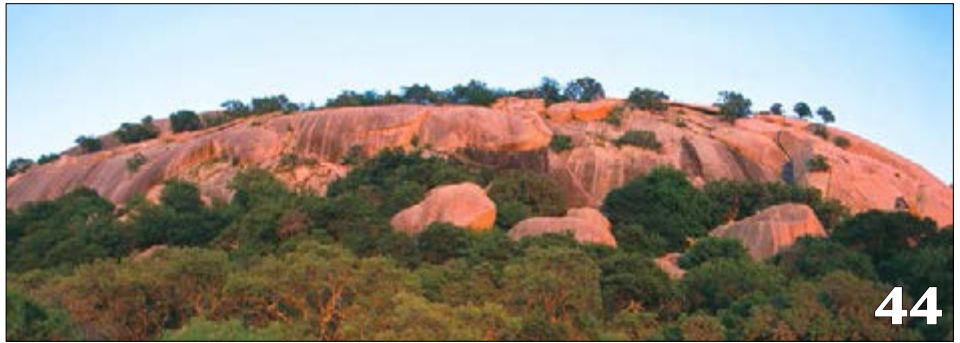
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Roughing it Smoothly®

October 2005 Volume 2, Number 4

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Features

Starting at the Top with an Entry Level Coach The Allegro 35 TSA	12	The Incredible Detail of Making a Door	38
A Fall Journey Through Kentucky	26	These Hills Are Alive with the Sound of (Texas) Music	44

Departments

President's Corner Giving Credit Where Credit's Due.	4
Tiffin Management Team First it was a challenge— Now it's a career.	7
News You Can Use Tiffin announces front-end diesel for the Allegro Bay.	9
Owner Profile Three Allegros in 18 Months.	18
Gourmet Quick & Easy Ready, Set, Grill	21
Allegro Club News Mackinaw Rally: Cool and Sunny	22
New for 2006 Great features and options on the Allegro, sheer luxury on the Zephyr	24
Quickshots from Tiffin	42
Serious Tech Talk	43
From the Road	51

Editor's Note

With this issue we complete two years of publishing *Roughing It Smoothly*. We hear from you most often when you miss an issue or receive one that is badly damaged by postal handling equipment. Beginning with this issue, we hope you will be in touch more often.

Danny Inman, a 31-year veteran at Tiffin Motorhomes, has agreed to be the editor of "Serious Tech Talk." You will find a postcard at page 43 to make it easy to send him your questions that may be useful to all of our readers. Your ideas, suggestions, innovations, and questions are welcomed. If you have a photograph to send, please put the postcard and photo in an envelope and send it to the same address.

Through your interest and postcards, we look forward to seeing this column grow larger with each issue.

If you have suggestions and ideas for the magazine, please write to me at P.O. Box 292912, Tampa, FL 33687-2912 or call me toll-free at 877-538-7467. Editorial contributions are welcomed but not returnable unless you include return postage. Items accepted for publication are subject to editing.

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Giving Credit Where Credit's Due

by Bob Tiffin

That's an old cliché, but it has not lost its meaning. On July 11 Tiffin Motorhomes opened its new Parts and Service Department in a 105,000 sq. ft. building that quadrupled the floorspace for the Parts Department and almost doubled the number of service bays. A totally new phone system was installed along with improved software to manage the parts inventory. And that's just the beginning.

Imagine what it would take to organize and label the thousands of parts in our old facility and put them in the right places in the new facility and to accomplish that in just one week—the week of July 4 that we usually close for vacations. The preparation for the move took months and its success depended on everyone doing their job and following the game plan.

First, I want to congratulate and thank Wade Humphres for his managerial and organizational ability to pull it off. His calm and deliberate approach to dealing with the daily operation of the Service and Parts Department is outstanding. But his skill in orchestrating “the move” is amazing.

Second, I want to congratulate and thank the three supervisors, Jesse Vess, D-Ray Hester, and Bearl DeFoor, who work directly under Wade. We love football here in Alabama, so I am going to compare them to a quarterback and his running backs. They all scored.

Third, we've got a team in Parts and Service that now totals over 100 members. It's a team that has a great attitude. They understand what service is all about—delivering top-notch repairs that make our customers know that we sincerely care about them and that TMH year after year will continue to set the standard for the

best factory service in the motorhome industry. They are in the trenches every day and they have my gratitude.

If you visit our new facility, it would be impossible for you to meet them all. But I want to mention every one of them.

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Wade Humphres | Kyle Blackburn | T H Boyd |
| Jesse Vess | Ricky Scott | Rodney Waddle |
| D-Ray Hester | David Hester | Paul Humphres |
| Bearl DeFoor | Donny Palmer | Mike Barksdale |
| Nathan Johnson | Anthony Pounds | Marlin Saint |
| Greg Ginn | Tim Thorn | Adam Hester |
| Phillip Rogers | Dewayne McCarley | Mark Richardson |
| Marion Holcomb | Pete Blanton | Dewayne Raper |
| Turner Richardson | Norris Lewey | Ricky Johnson |
| Robert Gober | Royce Miller | Jerry Thorn |
| Joel Garrison | Robby Smith | Loyd Ray Griffus |
| Jonathan Copeland | Billy Lawson | April Crum |
| George Embrey | Brent Bullard | Alan Mayhall |
| Joey Kuykendall | Steve Brown | James Cooper |
| Kevin Wilson | Johnny Hill | Chris Bishop |
| Dewayne Palmer | Jimmy Deaton | Jill Williams |
| Terry Aldridge | Kelly Bennett | Mallory Humphres |
| Kyle Palmer | Daniel McKinney | Rita Pounds |
| Gary Blackburn | Ronny Maxwell | Darlene Dotson |
| David Sparks | Brad McKinney | Liz Jones |
| Daniel Humphries | TJ Allison | Sandra Forsythe |
| Greg Dees | Dennis Scott | Jena Dillingham |
| Sammy Odom | Greg Scott | Kim Holland |
| Stephen Terry | Jake Scott | Jennifer Moore |
| Mark Calvert | Jonathan Humphres | Peggy Elliott |
| Scott Smith | Billy Strickland | Wayne Emerson |
| Scotty Hardin | Chad Holcombe | Stephanie Rogers |
| Charles Colburn | Billy Turbyfill | Gail Parrish |
| Josh Palmer | Donna Moore | Terry Barksdale |
| Carl Hall | Misty Holcombe | Billy Nichols |
| Luke Thomas | Francis Whitehead | Scotty Martin |
| Cory Hale | Patrick Nichols | Don Boyd |
| Kevin Lawson | Scottie Mitchell | Richard Blanton |
| Greg Peppers | Steven Cromeans | Jerry Humphries |
| Stan Patterson | Doyle Hopkins | BD Stacey |
| J C Blackburn | Danny Abbott | |

population in the U.S. is within a three- to four-hour drive of one of our dealers. Our dealers are doing a great job of presenting the Tiffin's line of Class A motorhomes to the American RV community.

TMH is actively engaged in sales and service tech education to better serve our customers before the sale, during the sale, and after the sale. We will continue to make our motto, “Wherever you go, we go,” a legend in the campgrounds of North America.

At our Dealers Meeting in Florence, Alabama, in July, we honored our Top 10 Dealers. Since two dealers nearly tied this year, we presented awards to eleven. And here they are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| La Mesa RV | DeMontrond's Texas RV |
| Lazy Days | Horizon Lussier |
| Bankston Motor Homes | Dandy RV Sales |
| Marlin Ingram's RV Center | King's Camper Sales |
| JC's RV | Colton RV |
| | Vogt Motor Homes |

These eleven dealers accounted for 44 percent of Tiffin's sales in the last calendar year. Congratulations and our appreciation to all of you! And to the all of our dealer—keep on keeping on. Each of you have the potential to join the Top 10 Circle. →

Our Dealers

We are blessed with a network of nearly 100 dealers throughout the United States and Canada. Approximately 90 percent of the



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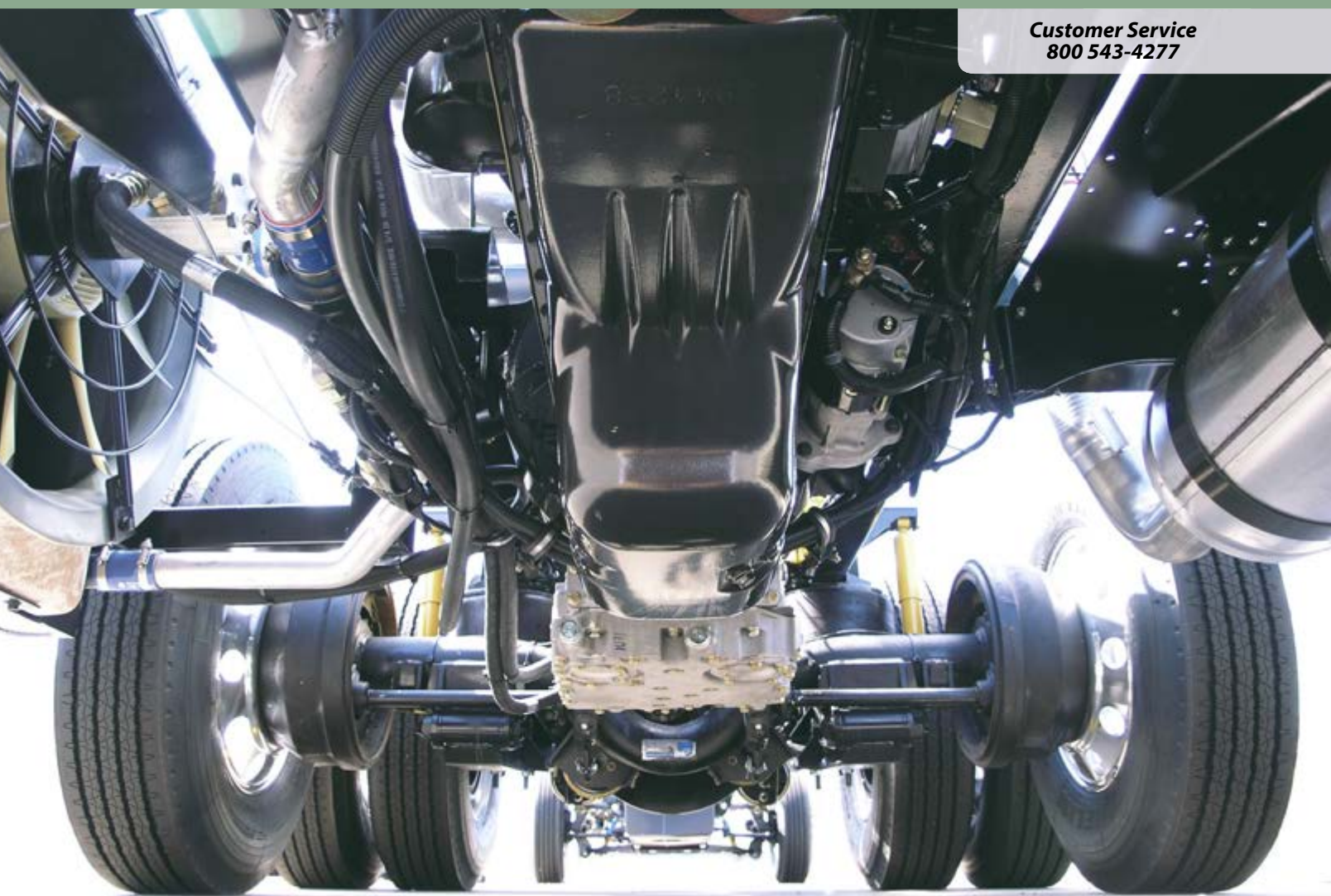
centers and 24/7 service mean we're available wherever you need us.

"When I was on my way to a rally in Tampa, the air dryer on my '98 coach needed a replacement, so I called Spartan. They shipped the part overnight so it would meet me at the rally in Tampa. Not only was it there when I arrived, but a Spartan technician installed it for me on-site. The support I received from Spartan was outstanding. You can be assured my next motorhome will be on a Spartan chassis."



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Our Red Bay Family

Every year the realization slips up on me of just how long we have been in business. In December it will be 33 years! And that means that we have more and more loyal and devoted employees who are reaching important plateaus in their careers: 25- and 30-year anniversaries of continuous employment with Tiffin Motorhomes.

Two have reached the 30-year plateau this year: Horace Stepp, our plant manager, and Barbara McDowell, our “do-it-all” office whiz who can tell us when, where,

Bob Tiffin congratulates (left) Horace Stepp and Barbara McDowell on their 30-year anniversary of employment at Tiffin Motorhomes. Passing their 25-year milestones are Donnie George, William Warren, and Walter Sparks.

how much, and what kind without the help of a computer. My congratulations and appreciation to both of you.

Horace’s understanding of people and how to communicate effectively with them, along with his in-depth knowledge of production, has made him the successful plant manager that he is today. It takes

Continued on page 49

An advertisement for Thetford hand sanitizer and soap. The background is a cartoon illustration of a motorhome driving on a road, with mountains and a moose in the background. In the foreground, a hand is shown holding a bottle of Thetford Sanitaylon Waterless Gel Hand Sanitizer, which is being placed into a white adhesive base. Another bottle of Thetford Soap Staylon is shown in a similar base. The text "No More SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL!" is written in large, bold letters on the left. The text "NEW! Adhesive Base... BOTTLES STAY PUT!" is written in a yellow oval on the right. Below the bottles, the text reads: "Antibacterial Soap and Waterless Gel Hand Sanitizer. Perfect for kitchen, bath and basement compartments! Refill bottles snap into an adhesive STAY PUT base!" At the bottom, the Thetford logo is displayed, along with the text: "For more information about Thetford's full line of RV products please visit www.thetford.com or call 1-800-521-3032".

First it was a challenge— Now it's a career.

When shopping for a motor-home, most of us will take a quick look at the graphics and paint and then rush inside to investigate the floorplan and decor. The more mechanically inclined will ask about the engine and chassis.

Not Melvin Dotson. He first checks out the door. The jamb, the door frame, the hinges, the merging of the primary door and the screen door, the hardware, the windows. “The entry door,” he said, “is one of the more complex assemblies in the motorhome.”

Melvin Dotson should know. He is the supervisor, manager, and designer of the Tiffin Door Plant that resides in one of the company's oldest buildings.

Like most of the supervisors at Tiffin Motorhomes, Melvin did not set his career sites on becoming the supervisor-manager of a major department in a motorhome plant. A native of Loretto, Tennessee, about an hour-and-a-half's drive north-east of Red Bay, Melvin graduated from high school in 1968 and headed to Knoxville to major in agricultural mechanization at the University of Tennessee.

After two years at UT, those plans got a little fuzzy when he met Darlene at her uncle's store at a small town south of Loretto. Darlene was from Vina, just a few miles from Red Bay. They were married a year later and Melvin accepted a position with Sunshine

Homes, a mobile home plant in the area.

Bob Tiffin has an amazing human radar for finding the right people for the Tiffin operations—and he makes job offers in somewhat unusual places. In the fall of 1975 at a high school football game, Bob sat down next to Melvin, talked a while, and offered him a job. The fall and winter in the South define the bird hunting season and that happens to be Melvin's favorite sport. He responded to Bob's job offer with a request: “Yes, I would like to accept the job,” he said, “but could you let me start in March after bird season is over?” Trying to be flexible, Bob agreed.

Melvin started in the parts department,

creating a shipping operation to service the growing orders for parts from dealers as well as a few thousand owners who were now on the road with Tiffin motorhomes.

For its first twelve years, Tiffin Motorhomes purchased doors from outside suppliers who made a generic product for other manufacturers. In 1984 Bob decided it was time to develop self-sufficiency when the company had reached an economy of scale to warrant starting a door manufacturing operation. A contributing factor was the high reject rate from the outside supplier. The young president had already instituted a policy of tapping capable employees and giving them a challenge, a policy he continues to follow today. Melvin got the call.



Melvin Dotson and Chris Cass, lead man, like to make spot checks on their doors after installation in a motorhome.

TEXT BY FRED THOMPSON • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIMMY JOHNSON

Perhaps overwhelmed with the offer to launch a startup operation, Melvin accepted with the caveat that he would quickly step aside if Bob found that his efforts did not meet the plant's needs.

It was a daunting task— six to eight weeks to launch and generate the required components. Putting in long days, Melvin produced engineering drawings, templates, specification lists, material lists, equipment requirements, and a manufacturing flow chart for production. They found a tool and die specialist to machine and stamp the components with a level of precision that he did not anticipate. He was creating specs in thousandths of an inch.

TMH did not have a personnel department in 1984, so Melvin began to interview and hire employees. The old cotton warehouse became the new home for the door plant.

Melvin developed a motto for his employees: "If you would not buy the part you just made for your own motorhome, then reject it!" Each craftsman is responsible for quality. A visitor will see measurements being checked constantly on each com-

ponent being assembled. Work done previously is rechecked as each assembly moves closer to completion.

"With that philosophy established from the get-go with each person who comes on board, we have very few problems with what we build and contribute to the assembly line," Dotson said. "Our people take great pride in the precision of each component we build."

Within a month after the launch, the door plant was building doors that were going into the assembly line.

"When we started our door plant, Tiffin Motorhomes was one of only two or three motorhome manufacturing plants in the nation that were building their own doors," he said with evident satisfaction.

Creating both entrance and storage bay doors requires a considerable amount of metal fabrication. That means tool and die development for stamping and forming parts and extensive aluminum welding during assembly. The tradition at TMH is "jump in feet first and figure it out!" Dotson's drafting experience came in handy when he had to create specifications and exacting drawings for the tool and die components to create the pieces he needed.

Over the two decades that Dotson has managed the door plant, he has been able to bring together good design and practical ingenuity.

Bob Tiffin likes to challenge his managers. "Challenges expand our ways of doing things," he explained. "Challenges are responsible for creating new and better products. Melvin has risen to the occasion many times over the years to create the product design and mechanisms we have needed to accommodate our new models."

Dotson recalled a particular challenge when the president told him that he needed a driver's door with a roll-up window. The driver's door was popular with owners, but also inconvenient because the window was fixed.

"We bought a window roll-up mechanism, but then we had to modify it extensively for our application. We submitted it to the manufacturer and they produced it. We also redesigned an existing sliding window to fit into our door, designed mounting panels for locks and regulators, and had them produced. Before long we had our manual roll-up window in production," Dotson said. "We learned later that our coach owners wanted an electric window. So back to the drawing board we went."

Another challenge involved creating a curved door to fit the curved exterior body of a mini-motorhome that TMH offered 15 years ago. A tool and die company tackled the problem and finally gave up. Not convinced that it was impossible or impractical, Dotson built the dies in house to bend the door frame, the jamb, the door, and the screen door. He then put the four units together as a working assembly. The old adage that "necessity is the mother of invention" was certainly applicable to his success with the project.

The next major challenge was to build radius cornered doors. The technology had to be developed to stretch door jambs and moldings into a 90-degree radius without tearing the metal or

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Continued on page 49

Tiffin Announces Front-End Diesel for the Allegro Bay

In mid-September at the Pennsylvania RV and Camping Show in Hershey, Tiffin Motorhomes debuted the 2006 Allegro Bay with a front-engine, tapping into a market niche seeking the fuel economy, high resale value, and long-term depend-

ability of diesel power in a moderately priced motorhome.

Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation is producing the chassis, which features a 300-hp Cummins 5.9-L electronic diesel engine mated with an Allison 2100MH 5-speed transmission with overdrive for the three Allegro Bay models. Production will begin in the fourth quarter of 2005 or the first quarter of 2006 as the chassis become available from Freightliner, according to Tiffin Gener-

al Manager Tim Tiffin. He expects 2006 model year production of the front-engine diesel to be 100-150, increasing for the 2007 models. Tiffin said the company's entry will be one of the first front-engine diesels on the current market, confirmed by RV industry leaders.

"This Cummins is so quiet," Tim Tiffin said. "We are very confident that as our customers become interested in moving from our high-end gas models into diesel, they will find this Allegro Bay very



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attractive. We showed this model to our dealers in July, and the response was very positive."

The price point for front-engine diesel Allegro Bay is projected at a slight increase over the comparable gas-fueled Allegro Bay.

Freightliner is very optimistic about the front-engine diesel Allegro Bay. Product Manager Gary Poole provided test drives for Tiffin dealers at their annual meeting in late July. "Noise and horsepower have been the concerns in past front-engine diesel attempts," Poole said. "Now we have a quiet diesel with giddy-up and go. The Tiffin dealers got in the Allegro Bay looking for reasons why not to like it. When they got out, we had resounding acceptance."

Dean Schaper, Freightliner sales and marketing director, added, "There's no question diesel is the optimal power plant for the RV market. Our front-engine diesel is showing gas motorhome customers they can have all the power, fuel economy, and durability of a diesel engine at a price point that's a very attractive alternative to gas."

Freightliner has nicknamed the new chassis/engine combo FRED for front engine diesel.

FRED offers the following features:

- an industry leading 55-degree wheel cut
- a lowered engine position that eliminates the "doghouse"
- Hendrickson SOFTEK parabolic suspension
- 80-gallon fuel tank
- 300-hp Cummins ISB diesel engine
- 600 lb.-ft. of torque
- Allison 5-speed 2100 MH transmission
- GVWR: 26,000 lbs. GCWR: 30,000 lbs.
- Front Axle Weight Rating: 10,000 lbs. Rear Axle Weight Rating: 17,500 lbs.
- 255/70R 22.5" tires

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40,000	\$ 599.00	300,000	\$ 1734.00
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
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Starting AT THE Top

WITH AN ENTRY
LEVEL COACH

THE ALLEGRO 35 TSA



When your motorhome game plan calls for economy, plenty of space and storage, and a feature-rich coach — yes, all at the same time, then Tiffin's Allegro 35 TSA triple slide may be the answer to your search.

In addition to numerous coach options, Tiffin gives the buyer an engine-chassis choice: the Ford 6.8L V10 with TorqShift® 5-speed automatic overdrive with Tow-Haul Mode, or GM's Workhorse 22,000 chassis with the 8.1L V8 engine mated with Allison's 1000MH Series 5-speed with overdrive.

The 35 TSA's floorplan includes a forward streetside slide-out that measures a whopping 143 × 33 inches (inside dimensions) and contains an optional hide-a-bed sofa and a very comfortable bench-style dinette. Opposite the sofa and curbside is the entry door which is just forward of the very functionally designed galley. The work of Tiffin's design team is evident in the eye-pleasing choices of fabrics, carpet, vinyl coverings, and hardware.

Walking to the rear of the coach, you will be impressed with the size of the walk-through bath, and especially the separate enclosure for the toilet. A single sliding door defines the bath compartment as you enter and double sliding doors separate the bath from the bedroom. When closed, the craftsmanship and weight of the double doors give you the feeling of a solid wall. Some homes have smaller baths!

The floorplan gets even better when you walk into the double-slide bedroom. With a queen-size bed, the sleeping-living area measures 11'3" wide by 10'3" long. Tiffin engineers somehow have made the room feel spacious even with the addition

of a desk, folding game table, and lounge chair at the very rear of the coach.

At 35'7" in length, TMH has created a gas-burner that offers slightly more interior space than the company's entry-level diesel Phaeton 35 DH. Although Tiffin considers this unit an entry-level gas coach, the industry regards it as a mid-line unit.

Walkaround Impressions

The Allegro 35 TSA's exterior from front to rear demonstrates careful attention to the slightest detail. Accented with a matte-finished black aluminum grille, the computer-designed front cap is both handsome and functional. A full-width service door (12 × 70 inches) offers easy access to the engine for all fluids and electrical service. Inside, amazingly, the "doghouse" engine cover between the driver and passenger seats rises only 4.5 inches above the floor.

TEXT BY FRED THOMPSON · PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEWIS COMMUNICATIONS



The contemporary design of the headlights lends an aircraft-inspired look to this Allegro's appearance to oncoming traffic. The feature is unique to coaches in this price level. But the 35 TSA's driver gets to enjoy the best view through the coach's one-piece tinted picture window windshield which is enhanced even more by the horizontally mounted windshield wipers nested at the bottom edge of the expansive glass.

Matching the black matte finish of the grille, the outboard heated mirrors are dash-controlled. The top 60 percent of the mirror gives you the long view down the side of the coach while the lower 40 percent is a convex mirror that covers the 12 feet back from the front of the coach that sometimes forms a "dead spot" where passing cars can't be seen.

Buyers can choose between two partial body paint designs: Chili Spice and Mocha Frost. Applied graphics integrate with lower body paint to create attractive designs that are pleasantly understated and certainly not flashy or gaudy. The approach is "classic Tiffin."

On the streetside of the coach, Tiffin designers elected to carry the storage compartments directly under the slide-out for easy accessibility. Four storage doors supported by gas shocks elevate to 135 degrees to the continuous storage area that is 10'7" long by 19" deep. To make the space even more usable, a side access door (exposed after the slide-out is deployed) permits storage of skis, fishing rods, and other non-collapsible items.

The next bay at mid-coach position houses the sewer equipment and is followed by the generator compartment. The last basement door presents the water panel and the 50-amp electrical service. Tiffin is one of the few manufacturers who provides a black tank flush system as standard equipment on an entry-level gas coach. The panel contains a hot water bypass valve, color-coded drain pipes with valves, and the exterior wash-up and shower system. The lighted compartment also houses cable and phone connections and the Shurflo pump. The thoughtfully designed panel has every component labeled.

The efficiently designed cockpit (below left) presents instrumentation that is easy to read in daylight or evening hours. With the living room slide deployed (below), activities in all areas have plenty of space. The galley (below right) has storage space to accommodate long trips or weekend jaunts. Both the captain's and passenger's chair (top right) rotate into the living room to facilitate larger gatherings.



A trip down the curbside of the coach reveals four bays offering approximately 45 cubic feet of storage. This side of the coach provides service access to the propane tank, both heaters, and the refrigerator. In addition to storage space, the front bay offers convenient access to the fuse panel, the electrical converter, and the control panel for the leveling jacks. Coach batteries are concealed under the first step in the entrance box.

Each slide-out has an awning cover to prevent water and leaves from being inducted into the coach when closing. Tiffin includes as standard equipment a 15-foot Dometic A&E manually operated awning.

The rear fiberglass cap with its clean lines connects smoothly with the gel-coated fiberglass sidewalls. In addition to the standard rear lights for braking and turning, Tiffin adds well-placed running lights. The standard rear camera is mounted top center and can be adjusted for depth of field. An aluminum ladder mounted on the curbside is standard equipment. Also standard equipment on the rear cap is Tiffin's now-famous "Roughing It Smoothly" logo. Tiffin management enjoys telling a story that happened a couple of years ago. When the company did not include the logos in the rear cap design a couple of years ago, new owners quickly realized when they saw other Tiffin coaches in campgrounds that they were missing the noted emblem. Phone



calls came in from across the country, “Where’s *my* RIS logo?” TMH quickly shipped new logos to all who requested them, and immediately started including the logo again on the rear cap.

Unseen, but nevertheless impressive, Tiffin’s fiberglass roof is standard equipment. The neatness of the rooftop installations is unmatched in the industry. Annual maintenance caulking is simplified by Tiffin’s good design and thorough workmanship.

Campsite set-up in this coach is a hassle-free operation. The standard equipment automatic electric jacks will level the coach in just a few minutes on a reasonably level pad; the 12-foot slide-out deploys in 25 seconds; the awning set-up takes two minutes; and hook-ups require five minutes tops.

Interior Living Space

The Allegro’s living room tells you immediately upon entry that “I’m home.” Whether you are a long weekend camper, a two-week tripper, or even a full-timer, this coach will always be your retreat. With cabinetry now offered in three woods (oak [std], natural maple, and cherry bark) and interior designs in three options (Cappuccino, Desert Sand, and Stone), you have choices that personalize this coach to fit your own tastes. The manufacturing quality of the coach’s interiors invites magnifying-glass scrutiny.

The coach in our pictures features the classic oak cabinetry with the Desert Sand interior. Having examined coaches with all three of the woods available, you may find it difficult to pick a favorite. Tiffin buyers personally select the unfinished woods to be used in their coaches. The company’s state-of-the-art wood-working and finishing systems produce a top-quality product that you would be pleased to have in your home.

Probably the first thing a buyer will notice is the abundance of storage found in the living-dinette-galley area. The cook will be pleased to find a galley area that is over nine feet wide, of which six feet is countertop space. A double bowl sink with single-lever swivel faucet sits above a bank of four drawers and a double-door storage space for large items. The drop-in three burner cooktop with oven is positioned under a lighted hood with exhaust fan and a Sharp microwave oven. The microwave is flanked with four feet of multi-level cabinets 12-inches deep. To the right of the drop-in oven is a conveniently placed multi-level pull-out pantry. The 8-cu.-ft. refrigerator-freezer is positioned next to a 10-inch wide, 4-level, 22-inch deep cabinet under which sits three more drawers 17-inches deep. A similar cabinet arrangement is imbedded on the opposite wall. Amazing! And we haven’t mentioned the 14 overhead cabinets that line the living area, cockpit, and slide-out. Two huge drawers in each dinette bench add another three cubic feet of storage. Full-timers enjoy!

Lighting throughout this coach is both decorative and highly functional. If you have a favorite spot, it may be due to the perfectly placed lights for reading or working. The swivel chair, the sofa, the dinette and the galley countertops all have custom lighting. Both the driver and passenger have directional map lights. Three common ceiling lights offer bi-level illumination.

With the slide-out deployed, lounging space is ample and does

not conflict with the galley work area or walk-through passage. The 24-inch flat-panel television can be comfortably viewed from the sofa, the swivel chair and the forward facing dinette bench. The 68-inch sofa with its extra pillows is the perfect place for an afternoon nap or an evening reading session.

If you need an office while you are on the road, the 27- by 37-inch dinette table serves that need quite well with both electrical and phone jack connections just under the table’s edge. Stash a couple of TV trays in the back closet and you can leave your office set-up in place for days. The six cabinets in the slide-out and the two huge drawers in the dinette benches will provide ample storage for your traveling office.

When it comes to glass, TMH has specialized. Located in rural northwest Alabama, Bob Tiffin decided not to depend on outside suppliers for their windows. By fabricating those components in-house, the company maintains excellent quality control as well as being able to service anything they have built. The Allegro line comes standard with ¼-inch glass, and the windows, slide tracks, hardware, and screens are virtually trouble-free.

The heating and cooling systems in the Allegro coach are all ducted — no hot spots, no cold spots. The test coach included the optional second AC mounted in the bedroom. Even with both units operating on high, conversation is not strained. The test coach featured the optional primary 15,000 BTU AC with

heat pump. This option, of course, reduces your propane usage when you have full hook-ups. The 35 TSA has two Suburban propane furnaces that keeps the living quarters toasty warm even in zero temps. Because the foam insulation in the walls is cut-to-fit perfectly on computerized routers, there is little chance that outside air (hot or cold) will find its way through these walls. Tiffin’s plant tour will erase any doubts you may have about the tightness of their coaches.

The bath in the Allegro 35 TSA is a compartment with all the features to please the lady of the house, such as the skylight above the shower which is enclosed with the translucent rain glass. The solid sliding doors provide privacy even when other family members are in the front compartment or bedroom. The lavatory-vanity provides adequate storage with three drawers and cabinet underneath plus a double-door mirrored cabinet above. The compartment has three ceiling mounted bi-level light fixtures, two AC cooling ducts, and two heating ducts. The cabinet storage opposite the galley and adjacent to the shower can be appropriated for toiletry, towel, and linen storage instead of galley items. Towel racks are plentiful with a three-some rack built into the door, one in the toilet compartment, and one over the lavatory.

Ah, now the bedroom. Comfy, cozy, yet spacious. My haven. It was very easy to fall in love with this coach. A full-length wardrobe (49” wide, 52” high, 18” deep), a shirt wardrobe (26” wide, 32” high,

18” deep), three clothing drawers (18” × 14” × 7” deep), and a 20-inch flat panel TV are all nicely housed in the streetside slide-out.

A 20 × 77-inch (interior measurement) slide-out for the queen-size bed leaves you with a 40-inch corridor of walking space at the foot of the bed. But what really makes this bedroom so pleasant is the lounge chair in the back corner, the flip-up game or work table with two cupholders, and an 18- by 35-inch desk with filing cabinet and two drawers, plus electrical and phone outlets for your computer. Manage your household from here! It is noteworthy that with all of this tucked into the last four feet of space at the end of the coach, you don’t feel crowded.

And you still have windows! One over the desk keeps you in touch with the outside world while you work, and the second full-length window behind your lounge chair lets you view that stream just off to the side of your coach. Sorry, Tiffin does not furnish the stream.

Moving back to the front of the coach, you will find a well-designed cockpit with instrumentation for RPM, fuel, engine temp, MPH, and an LED display for instant MPG. A computer in the lower right corner provides two trip meters, permitting an interim trip to be recorded within a longer journey.

The dashboard to the right of the steering column contains the monitor for the back-up camera, the automotive heating-cooling controls, the automatic leveling system, plus an AC duct and a 12v outlet. Twin cupholders made of the cabinet stock sit atop the engine cover and aligned with the bottom of the dash. The passenger seat has an accommodating vanity box and mirror built into the dash as well as an additional cupholder in the sidewall, a map light above, and all electrical and phone connections in the firewall. Both passenger and driver have fans mounted in the top corners of the windshield which can be directed toward eliminating windshield moisture or cooling the occupants.

To the left of the steering column, the driver has a control panel at his fingertips, including directional control of the heated mirrors, a 12v outlet, generator hours meter, genset and emergency start controls, grade brake, overdrive switch, map light, and left/right fan controls.

The driver’s side door is a popular option that was included on the test coach. Tiffin includes an electric window in the door.

Driving this coach was a pleasure. The GM 8.1L V-8 340 hp engine provided excellent power responses when called upon for passing or climbing hills. A pleasant surprise was the low 2100 RPM when cruise control was set at 60 MPH. On a five mile level straightaway, the electronic instant mileage computer recorded 8.2 MPG — very good for an engine that had only 50 miles on the odometer.

Tiffin Motorhomes has created a “best buy” option for those of us who want plenty of space, a great entry level price, and a feature-rich coach. When you factor in Tiffin’s national reputation for providing the best factory service in the U.S., you can’t go wrong with the Allegro 35 TSA. Check out their website today at www.tiffinmotorhomes.com.

Please see specifications on page 16



Even with the addition of a desk, a folding game table, and a lounge chair, the bedroom offers an unexpected spaciousness.

SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2006 Allegro 35 TSA, Triple Slide

Base MSRP* – \$110,439 MSRP as tested with options – \$117,530

STANDARD FEATURES

Structural

Laminated Floor, Sidewall and Roof
Steel/Aluminum Reinforced Structure

Automotive

Cruise control
Emergency start switch
Leveling jacks
Tire size – 245 / 7OR 19.5
Fuel tank – 75 gallons
Alternator amps – 130

Exterior

Fiberglass front & rear caps
Tinted one-piece windshield
4.0 Kw Onan generator (will operate only one roof AC unit)
1- 13,500 BTU high profile roof AC (high efficiency)
Double electric step
¼-inch thick single pane windows
Horizontal mounted wipers
Heated power mirrors
Gel-coat fiberglass walls
Exterior graphics & paint
Exterior patio light
Manual patio awning
Slideout awnings
Wheel liners
Exterior storage doors with gas shocks
Ridged long-life storage boxes
Single handle lockable storage door latches
Heated water and holding tank compartments
Two 6v auxiliary batteries
Park telephone ready
TV antenna
Cable ready TV
Black holding tank flush system
Exterior rinse hose/shower
Back-up camera and dash-mounted monitor
110v exterior receptacle
110v/12v converter
Undercoating
Domed fiberglass roof
Roof ladder

Driver's Compartment

Entry floor light
Step switch and 12v disconnect switch
Snack / beverage tray
Non-powered cloth passenger & driver seats (Flexsteel®)
Padded dash
Lighted instrument panel
Single CD player AM-FM stereo
12v dash receptacle
Tilt steering wheel
Dual dash fans
Windshield privacy curtain
24" color flatscreen television (front)

Living Area / Dinette

Large pull-out storage drawers in booth dinette
Booth dinette
Cloth swivel chair
Cloth sofa bed

Kitchen

Single-lever chrome sink facet
Double bowl kitchen sink
3-burner cooktop with oven
Microwave
8-cubic foot refrigerator

Bath

Mirrored medicine cabinet
Skylight in shower
Separately enclosed toilet
Fiberglass molded shower
Wall-mounted light switch
Atwood gas-electric 6-gal water heater (electric not available on units with a 4 Kw generator)

Bedroom

Double wardrobe (full- and shirt-length)
Interspring mattress
Bed comforter
Built-in desk with phone jack, elec. outlet, & drawers
Built-in folding game table
Rear wall mirror (22 x 55 inches)
LPG leak detector
Carbon monoxide detector

General Interior

Raised panel cabinet doors
Vinyl headliner
Oak cabinet solid doors & drawer fronts
Vinyl tile flooring in kitchen & bath
Carpeting in bedroom and driver's compartment
Scotchgard® treated carpet and fabrics
Day / Night pleated shades in living room
Power roof vents
Tank level monitor system
Smoke detector
35,000 BTU ducted furnace

OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Cherry Bark interior
5.5 Onan generator
Driver's door
Semi-automatic satellite
Second 13.5 BTU roof AC
Upgrade 15,000 roof AC w/heat pump
CB antenna
DVD player
Vacuum cleaner
Cloth hide-a-bed sofa
Solid wood raised refrigerator panels
Add'l Fantastic fan in toilet compartment
Bedroom 20-inch television
Bedroom day-night shades (2)

OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

7.0 Kw Onan generator
Tru-Center Steering System
Powered cloth driver's seat
VCR
Convection-Microwave oven
8 cubic foot refrigerator with ice maker

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 242"
Overall Length (approx.) – 35'7"

Overall Height w/roof air – 12'3"
Interior Height – 80"
Overall Width – 101"
Interior Width – 96"
Minimum garage height – 13'

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 22,000 lb.
GAWR (front) – 7,500 lb.
GAWR (rear) – 13,500 lb.
GCWR – 26,000 lb.
UVW – 17,780
Trailer hitch capacity – 5,000 lbs.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – 8.1 L V8
Torque – 457 lb.-ft. @ 3250 rpm
Transmission – 1000 MH Series
5-speed automatic Allison transmission with overdrive

CHASSIS

Frame – Workhorse 22,000
Brakes – Disk brakes front & rear
Suspension (front & rear) – Leaf springs with Bilstein shocks
Front-rear caps – Fiberglass
Exterior side panels – Gel-coat fiberglass walls with painted graphics

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Sleeps – Four adults
Fresh water – 53 gallons
Black water – 35 gallons
Grey water – 70 gallons
LPG tank – 24 gallons (max. fill: 80% of capacity)

MSRP

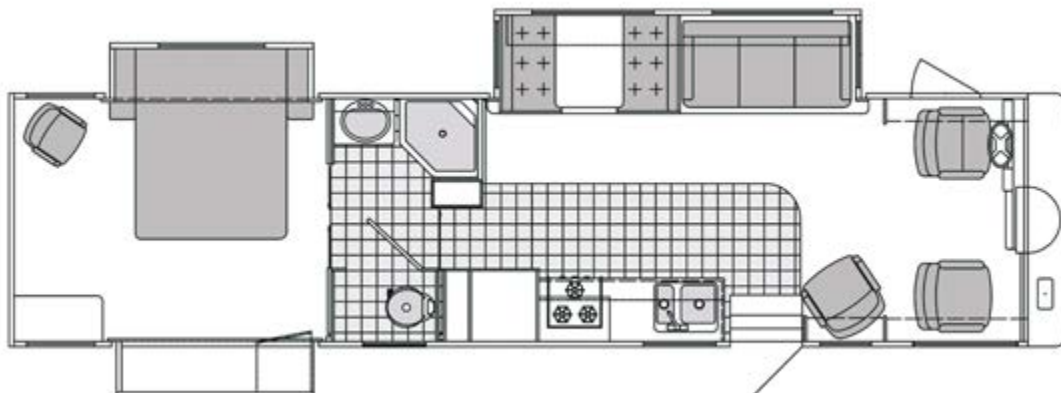
MSRP is the manufacturer's suggested retail price and does not include dealer prep or options. Manufacturer reserves the right to change or discontinue models offered, standard features, optional equipment, and prices without prior notice. Dealer prices may vary.

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 on all models. Because of progressive improvements made in a model year, specifications, standard, and optional equipment are subject to change without notice or obligation.





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Three Allegros in 18 Months

A.C. JUST MAY BE TIFFIN'S BEST CUSTOMER

by Robert Wilson

A.C. Maher is evidently one of those people who can't get enough of a good thing. That's one explanation for why he has purchased three new Allegro motorhomes in 18 months.

"Old-age indecision," Maher calls it with a grin. "And a wife who gets what she wants."

Maher, an energetic 72-year-old, is a double retiree, first from the U.S. Army and later from the retail industry. He met his wife, Helga, while stationed in Germany during his Army years.

Maher has a hair-trigger smile and a wit to match. Helga is his soulmate and highway *hausfrau*. He allows that he is A.C. and Helga is DC. Both have somewhat electric personalities.

The Mahers' non-motor home is in Etowah, an East Tennessee town of less than 4,000. When they leave Etowah they ride in style in a 2005 Allegro Bay, a 37-footer with two slides. On a recent weekend they were camping with several fellow members of the Cen Tenn Allegro Club based in Middle Tennessee. The president of the club is Walter Trapnell of Mt. Juliet, who coordinated the camp along with his wife, Judy.

The Mahers have run the gamut of campers during their lives, from pop-ups to travel trailers (five in three years) to a fierce and abiding loyalty to Tiffin Motorhomes. Their newest is the one Maher says he will be sticking with "for a long while," though his history testifies to the contrary.

He and Helga bought a 32-foot Allegro after seeing it at an RV show in Huntsville, Ala., in January 2004. Then came a 2005 34-foot Allegro Bay.

But size and slide considerations — in addition to his desire for a full-body paint job — prompted Maher to bring home his latest acquisition. He keeps his Allegro Bay housed in a garage — which he had to have expanded — and washes it after every outing. He also waxes it in sections. "It's our home," he says, "two long weekends a month and one long trip a year."

Maher retired from the military in 1971 and went into the retail industry as a store manager for Eckerd Drugs. "I spent 23 years in the U.S. Army and 23 years in retail," he says.

Maher served in the 11th Airborne Division, later in the 82nd Airborne Division, and then completed his tour as an instructor at the Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Ga., where he taught hand-to-hand combat, bayonet, land navigation, and demolition.



Helga and A.C. do two long weekends a month and one long trip a year. They logged 1,300 miles in the first three months after they bought their 37-foot Bay.

If you want to see what A.C. looked like in his younger years, he is in the first few minutes of the 1958 James Garner movie "Darby's Rangers," which was filmed at Fort Benning.

After leaving the service, Maher managed drug stores in Florida for 15 years and another in Chattanooga for about eight years before retiring again in 1995.

He also operated two farms in Tennessee, one near Maryville and another in Knox County near Seymour. He called them “cow cap” operations, where he maintained a small herd of cattle and sold off the calves he bred.

The Mahers first started camping in 1969 and have tried it in all its iterations, tents, pop-ups, trailers, and now motorhomes.

They developed their strong attraction to Tiffin after visiting the Red Bay construction facility. “We were so impressed,” he said at a recent Cen Tenn camp at the Best Holiday Trav-L-Park near Chattanooga, “with the way they are built, the way they are put together. After the tour, we knew what we were going to buy.”

He and others in the Cen Tenn group speak glowingly of the company’s support of its customers long after the sale.

A.C. and Helga put 1,300 miles on their new 37 Bay in less than three months after buying it in May 2005.

Helga will share the driving duties with her husband, but only in one direction. She still declines to back it up.

Being the social gadfly that he is, Maher usually “hits the streets” after getting his Allegro Bay set up at the campground. “I meet a lot of fine people,” he says. “I could spend hours just talking to them. We meet a lot of good friends.”

That’s why, Helga says in her still-evident German accent, she spends so much time looking for A.C. He has a habit, she says, of hoofing it all over the campground meeting people and leaving her wondering where he is.

The attraction of camping, Maher says, is getting away from the problems at home. “At home you never stop working and taking care of little problems. It’s an escape to freedom.”

Of course, when he is at home in Etowah, A.C. plays golf two or three times a week. That — along with camping — is the closest thing he has to a hobby. Helga works part-time maintaining Hallmark card displays in 16 stores.

The Mahers more or less got out of camping in 1986, Maher said, but dove back in five years ago. He says the advantages of motorhomes include being able to go to the refrigerator or bathroom without having to stop.

At the Cen Tenn event, the Mahers had their dark-haired Filipino granddaughter, Chimbie Pesoro, along. The 14-year-old is staying with them while one of their two sons, David, a government contractor, is in England.

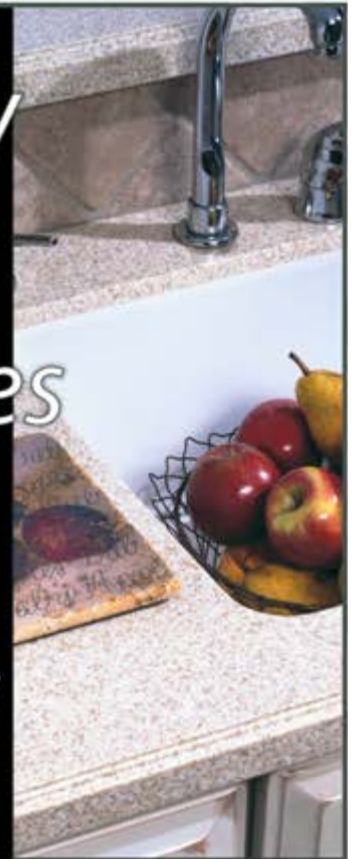
The Mahers have three other children, Mark, also an Army retiree who is now in the computer industry, and daughters, Monica and Lydia. Plus, there are six granddaughters, one grandson, and one great-grandson.

In an apparent display of Helga’s German heritage, the Mahers keep seven or eight empty souvenir beer steins on the dashboard and visible from the outside.

They also symbolize the unabated pleasure the Mahers get from camping in their Allegro Bay.

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Ready, Set, Grill

by Maureen Callahan

When it comes to tailgating, firing up the grill has always been a huge part of the tradition. And recipes can run the gamut from beer-can chicken to brats to thick, juicy steaks. But this time, why not try pork chops? Don't worry that today's pork is on the lean side. It can still take well to the grill if you employ a little trick used by upscale restaurants and chefs: Brining. When leaner cuts of meat like pork and turkey are soaked in salt-sugar brining liquids, it helps keep them moist and flavorful. That's because as they sit in the liquid, meats absorb some of the moisture along with the flavor. The best part of the whole process is that it's super simple and allows the cook to prepare everything in advance. In fact, the meat can sit for up to 12 hours in the brining liquid. Consider making the Fennel-Orange Coleslaw and Tomato Salad below as a side and this is one dinner that can be ready whenever you are.

With today's leaner cuts of pork, brining is the way to go. Not only does it help keep meat moist, but it also improves texture and flavor of the final product.

Grilled Honey-Brined Pork Chops

Serves 4

- 4 cups water
- ½ cup dark honey
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 6 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1 tablespoon kosher or coarse salt
- 4 (8-ounce) center cut pork loin chops
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Olive oil
- Bottled barbecue sauce (optional)

Combine water and next 5 ingredients in a saucepan; bring to a boil. Turn off heat and stir brine until sugar, salt and honey have dissolved; cool. Place brine in a large non-reactive baking dish or glass container; add pork chops. Cover and refrigerate for 8–12

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.



hours. Remove pork from brine and pat dry; do not rinse. *Note:* If you need to prepare chops more than 12 hours in advance, do not leave in brine. Drain as instructed and refrigerate for up to two days. Pork brined for more than 12 hours starts to take on the flavor and texture of ham.

Prepare grill. Brush drained pork with oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and grill pork 4–5 minutes per side for medium. (Cooking time will vary depending on the thickness of the chops.) Brush barbecue sauce over chop, if using, and serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 335. Protein 31g; carbohydrates 9 g; fat 18.5 g; saturated fat 6.8 g; monounsaturated fat 8.0 g; polyunsaturated fat 1.7g; sodium 563 mg; cholesterol 100 mg; fiber 0 g.

Fennel-Orange Coleslaw

Drain 1 small can of mandarin oranges and pat dry. Combine oranges, 1 (16-ounce) package of shredded coleslaw mix, 1 cup thinly sliced fennel, 1 cup shredded carrots, and ¾ cup coleslaw dressing. Toss gently to mix. Cover and chill until ready to serve. (*Note:* If you can't find fresh fennel, substitute 1½ teaspoons of fennel seed.)

Tomato Salad

Thinly slice fresh ripe red, yellow, and orange tomatoes and layer with thinly sliced fresh mozzarella and whole basil leaves. Drizzle extra virgin olive oil over the top and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

On the lighter side

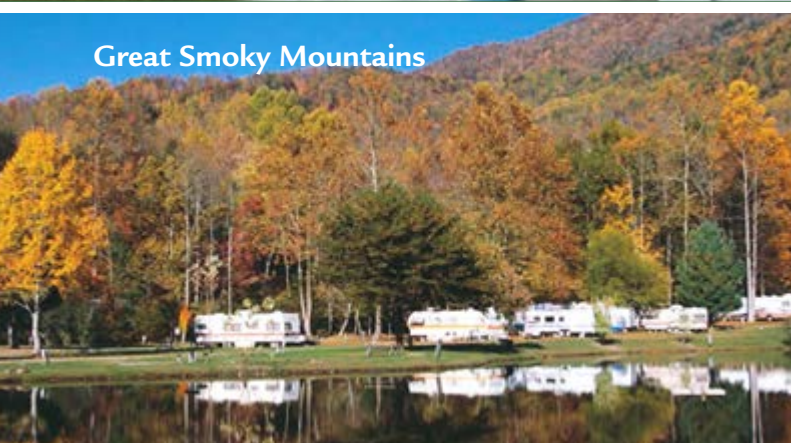
Brine two 1-pound pork tenderloins instead of the loin chops; tenderloin is as lean as a skinless boneless chicken breast. To lighten the salad, use homemade low fat coleslaw dressing made by whisking together ¾ cup light mayonnaise, 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar, and 1 teaspoon sugar.



Rally Park at Lazy Days



Lakewood Camping Resort at Myrtle Beach



Great Smoky Mountains



Lake Champlain

2006 RALLY SCHEDULE

ALLEGRO CLUB FUN IN THE SUN

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

ALLEGRO SPRING FLING

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

ALLEGRO CLUB FMCA PRE-RALLY

Happy Holiday RV Park, Cherokee, NC
August 10-13, 2006 (break camp 13th)

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)

BEGIN PLANNING NOW FOR 2006!

CALL, FAX, EMAIL, OR WRITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ALLEGRO CLUB

PO BOX 1429

RED BAY, AL 35582-1429

Join us for the Allegro Club Spring Fling Rally!

April 17-21, 2006. Lakewood Camping Resort in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Dinner and a show await us at the Dixie Stampede. Golf and a wide variety of other entertainment opportunities are near by. Limited to 120 coaches. Spaces are already being reserved. Don't be left out.

Make plans now for the Allegro Club FMCA Pre-Rally!

August 10-13, 2006. Happy Holiday RV Park in Cherokee, North Carolina. Enjoy the beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains before the FMCA Rally in Charlotte. Limited to 120 coaches.

Allegro Club 2006 Fall Rallies!

Look forward to viewing the peak autumn color of New England. Enjoy the beauty Vermont's fall foliage and the feel of the crisp cool weather. Join us October 9-13, 2006, in Essex Junction, Vermont. Limited to 120 coaches.

November 6-10, 2006, will find the Allegro Club Rally attendees playing in the warmth of the sun in San Antonio, Texas.

Make plans NOW to be a part of the fun!

Mackinaw Rally: Cool and Sunny!

How does sunny, breezy, and 73 degrees sound for the middle of August? Both the scenery and the weather were perfect for our Summer Lake Escape at Mackinaw Mill Creek Campground on the shores of beautiful Lake Huron at the Straits of Mackinaw. The evening view from our campground of the Mighty Mac, the twin-towered bridge linking the lower and upper parts of the state of Michigan, was spectacular.

A day-long excursion across the lake to Mackinac Island highlighted our August escape. Reached only by a 20-minute ferry ride from Mackinaw City, this lovely place is a time machine. When we disembarked, it felt as though we had stepped back in time. Except for modern dress and cell phones, the year could have been 1885.

We immediately boarded waiting horse-drawn carriages for a guided tour of the island. Mackinac Island has approximately 500 permanent residents, and at least that many horses! Many residents rely on bicycles and saddle horses. Except for emergency vehicles, no motor-driven conveyances are allowed on the island.

The guided tour in our comfortable carriages took us to Fort Mackinac, Arch Rock, the Butterfly House, and various trails and roads around the island. Our mid-day meal was a treat, indeed, as we dined at the famed Grand Hotel, which was featured in several movies including "Somewhere in Time," starring Jane Seymour and the late Christopher Reeves. A magnificent piece of architecture in its own right, the hotel boasts the longest covered front porch in the world. It is lined with rocking chairs and offers breathtaking views of the lake and the bridge. Usually restricted to registered guests, the stunningly landscaped grounds and gardens, the porches, the lobby, the dining room, the art room, some guest rooms, and even the cupolas on top of the building were all accessible to our group. After lunch, strolling the streets and grounds, visiting the many interesting shops in town, or just lingering over a cup of coffee in a street café made Mackinac a memorable experience. Everyone agreed that the day spent on the island was well worth the trip!

Our time in the campground was quite enjoyable. Our caterer outdid himself feeding us morning and night. Audie's Restaurant of Mackinaw City created culinary triumphs every day. Each evening a large bonfire near the shore provided just the right amount of warmth to deal with the crisp, chilly air wafting inland from the lake. Many brought their lawn chairs and lingered late into the evening visiting and star-gazing on the banks of Lake Huron.

Besides seminar day on Tuesday and our island adventure on Wednesday, our other days were free time. Several visited local sites of interest. Mackinaw City has many interesting shops and restaurants,



The Grand Hotel

and the specialty item which we saw everywhere was FUDGE! Yum!

Several RVers visited the Shipwreck Museum in Whitefish Point, about 70 miles north of Mackinaw City on the northern side of the Upper Peninsula. The museum is a sobering reminder of the many tragedies that have occurred in the stormy waters of the Great Lakes. The story of the tragic sinking of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, an iron-ore freighter that went down in November 1975 only 15 miles off of Whitefish Point, is told with displays and mementos from the wreck. All 29 aboard perished.

Coming back south along the shoreline of Whitefish Bay, we visited the Tahquamenon Falls State Park. Four miles apart, the upper and lower falls can both be reached by car.

In the southeast corner of Whitefish Bay, the two cities of Sault St. Marie (Ontario and Michigan) overlook the Soo Lock system, a water "staircase" that lifts/lowers ships between the 22-foot water level difference between Lakes Superior and Huron. From this point, some of our group boarded an excursion train which took them into the wilderness of Canada for a day of sightseeing.

Each rally we attend just seems to get better than the last, and this one was no exception. If you made this trip, we appreciate you for being there and making it a wonderful memory for us. We hope to see you again as we continue "Roughing It Smoothly!"

Our thoughts and prayers go to all of you who may have suffered in any way as a result of the catastrophic hurricane which struck our Gulf states recently. You are on our hearts and minds as we wish for you the help you need to recover!

— Gail and Jimmy Johnson

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

Tiffin Motorhomes Offers Great Features & Options on the Allegro and Sheer Luxury on the 2006 45-ft. Zephyr



ENHANCEMENTS

- Burlled wood steering wheel
- Driver-passenger seats
 - Passenger buddy seat
 - 2-tone diamond pleated Ultraleather
- Marble tile with inlaid pewter accents
- Built-in solid surface sofa end tables
- Ceiling lighting packages

OPTIONS MADE STANDARD FOR 2006

- Outside Entertainment Package
 - 27-inch flat panel HDTV with AM/FM/CD
- Sirius radio (requires subscription)
- 32-inch bedroom LCD/HDTV with DVD
- Select Comfort king size bed
- Swing-out exterior storage doors
- Low-profile King Dome satellite dish

NEW STANDARD FEATURES

- Slide-out computer tray integrated into passenger side dash
- Tester cabinets above dining table
- One piece windshield with horizontally mounted wipers

EXTERIOR COLORS

- Desert Sand (new)
- NASA
- Sunlit Sand

INTERIORS

- Cosmopolitan
- Tuscany
- Cherry Bark



UPGRADES

- Ceiling lighting enhancement
- Upgraded tile
- Nickel-plated cabinet hardware
- Designer-enhanced rear cap
- Windshield
 - One piece for increased visibility
 - Horizontally mounted wipers
- Automotive Chevy Silverado headlights
- Automotive Ford Econoline taillights

OPTIONS MADE STANDARD

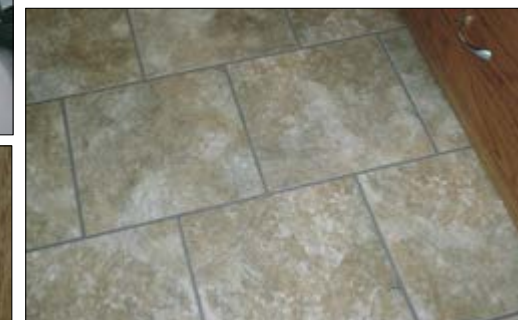
- Atwood automatic electric jacks

NEW OPTIONS

- Cabinets: Cherry Bark
- Interior: Desert Sand
- Semiautomatic King Dome satellite dish
- Living room DVD player
- Tru-Center Steering

FLOORPLANS

- Dropped for 2006: 31 DA
- Added for 2006: 35 TSA



A Fall Journey Through Kentucky

by Fred Thompson

Our Travelogue

- Cumberland Gap
- Glacier Girl
- Wilderness Road State Park
- Big South Fork Scenic Railway
- Renfro Valley
- Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea
- Fort Boonesborough
- Natural Bridge
- Kentucky Horse Park
- Daniel Boone's Grave
- My Old Kentucky Home
- Bardstown & Bourbon
- Shaker Village at Pleasant Hill
- Abraham Lincoln's Birthplace
- Mammoth Cave
- National Corvette Museum
- Jefferson Davis' Birthplace
- Museum of the American Quilter's Society

Where should one begin a motorhome trip across the beautiful Commonwealth of Kentucky? Cumberland Gap! The chain of mountain ranges stretching from Pennsylvania to Georgia had long-thwarted the westward migration of the population living in the 13 colonies. First used by buffalo to move to and from feeding grounds, the gap was known and used by Indian warriors. It finally became the crucial breach across the mountains that allowed 200 to 300 thousand pioneers between 1780 and 1810 to squeeze through on the Wilderness Road and open the western frontier. It seemed like the perfect place to begin our journey.

In 1750 Dr. Thomas Walker, a physician, was retained by the Loyal Company to explore an 800,000-acre land grant beyond the Blue Ridge. On April 13, the doctor and his company became the first white explorers to locate the gap and penetrate the mountain barrier. But after two months of fruitlessly searching for the fabled bluegrass region, they returned home with no maps or recommendations for a migration. Confined to the eastern seaboard for 150 years by the geographical wall, the colonists remained frustrated. The French and Indian War stymied further explora-

tion and kept the western frontier closed for another 13 years.

In 1755 young Daniel Boone volunteered to serve as a wagon driver with the American militia to fight with British General Edward Braddock who came to America to seize Fort Duquesne from the French. Boone met John Finley, an older driver, who related wonderful stories about Kentucky, a hunter's paradise. After the conflict, Boone returned to the Yadkin River valley where he married Rebecca Bryan. He sustained his family with farming and hunting. But he could not stop thinking about Finley's stories.

In the winter of 1768-69, a peddler stopped at Boone's cabin. It was John Finley. The old friends talked again of Kentucky's rich grasslands and game. Finley had learned about Dr. Walker's discovery, which at that time was called the Warriors' Path. Known throughout the region as an expert woodsman (today we would call him a "survivalist"), Boone assembled a travel party that left in early 1769 to find the gap and explore the territory beyond. On June 6, 1769, Boone stood atop Pilot's Knob and saw the promised land.

Kentucky proved to be a "terrestrial paradise." Deer,

elk, turkey, and a vast array of other game were plentiful. The bluegrass meadows offered rich soil for farming. Boone returned two years later and in 1773 led a westward migration of his family and neighbors. Tragedy struck when Indians attacked and killed James, the Boones' oldest son. The group turned back.

After the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals in 1775, a North Carolina judge obtained a large tract of land from the Cherokees. To make a migration possible, Boone led 30 woodsmen to blaze a trail through the Cumberland Gap and into Kentucky. The trail became known as the Wilderness Road.

Boone selected a site on the Kentucky River south of Lexington and built Fort Boonesborough later in 1775. After building his own cabin, he returned to the Yadkin valley and brought Rebecca and their daughter Jemima over the Wilderness Road to Boonesborough. Their second son, Israel, was killed in 1782 during an Indian attack at Blue Lick.

By the end of the Revolutionary War, over 12,000 pioneers had trekked through Cumberland Gap to settle Kentucky. By 1792 when Kentucky became a state, the population exceeded 100,000.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TOMI BARNES

The Cumberland Gap offered a breach of more than 1,000 feet, allowing the pioneers passage through the otherwise impassable Appalachians.

Today, the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park is administered by the National Park Service near Middlesboro, Kentucky. For the most dramatic entrance to the park, travel north out of Tennessee on US 25E through the Cumberland Gap Tunnel. Just prior to entering the tunnel, you will find the NPS Wilderness Road Campground two miles off to the right on US 58. The 160-site facility has 49 sites with 50-amp hook-ups (\$12/dry; \$17/elec.; half-price with Golden Age/Access Passports). You will enter the tunnel in Tennessee and exit in Kentucky where you will see the Visitor Center and Park Headquarters.

You should spend at least an hour in the Visitor Center to see the movie and visit the exhibits. Allocate another hour for the bookstore and the Southern Highland Craft Guild shop. There

The Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands will be held at the Asheville Civic Center, Asheville, North Carolina, October 20–23. Camp at Mt. Pisgah on the Blue Ridge Parkway and commute to Asheville. Come a week earlier for the best of the fall color.

is a special section in the bookstore for children. The crafts and products created by guild members are exquisite almost beyond description.

Inquire at the main desk for tours of the area. Of special interest within the national park is the Hensley Settlement, where a group of hardy settlers forsook civilization in 1903 to make their home on an isolated Appalachian mountaintop. Tours begin at 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., through Nov. 13. Call early to make reservations (606-248-2817, ext 1075). See www.wilderness-road.com for detailed information. Other tours include the Cumberland Gap Area Tour, the Benham/Lynch–Kentucky tour, the Wilderness Road–Virginia tour, and the KY-VA-TN Trails (a guided hike). A self-guided driving tour on Pinnacle Road will take you to Pinnacle Overlook (2,440 ft.) for a sweeping view of the gap. From the Thomas Walker parking lot, a trailhead leads to the Saddle of the Gap (0.6 miles) and on to the Tri-State Peak (1,990 ft.) where Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee touch (0.6 miles). A nice shelter for a picnic covers the USGS brass marker. The hike from the gap to the Tri-State Peak may be a bit taxing if you are not a regular walker.

On October 7–9, the park offers Wild Mountain Mania, a Weekend of Celebration of Nature at Cumberland Gap. The three-day event will uncover some of the most fascinating aspects of the natural world.

Before leaving Middlesboro, those interested in historic military aircraft should stop at the local airport to learn about the Lost Squadron. Only six months after Pearl Harbor, the Army Air Force began ferrying planes to the European Theater via Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, and England. In mid-July 1942, six P-38s and two B-17s struggled with bad weather, inadequate weather forecasting, and a lack of experience in trans-Atlantic flying. Running out of fuel, in desperation the pilots put the eight planes down on Greenland's glacier with only minor injuries. Although all 25 men were rescued 10 days later, the eight planes were never recovered. Fifty years of precipitation buried the squadron under 268 feet of ice. Financed by Roy Shoffner of Middlesboro, an engineering team located one of the P-38s and with superheated water melted a hole in the ice large enough to remove the plane in pieces. The perfectly restored P-38, now called Glacier Girl, is on display from 8–5 every day. No admission / donations accepted / cameras welcome.

Leaving our point of entry in Kentucky, we moved our base camp to the Levi Jackson Wilderness Road State Park. Col. Dave Jackson and his sister Ella gave their 307-acre farm for a state park to honor their father, Levi Jackson, who was the first judge of Laurel County. The Jacksons also wanted to perpetuate the memory of the early pioneers who traveled the Wilderness Road and Boone's Trace which passed through the park's boundaries.

The Mountain Life Museum is a reproduction of a pioneer settlement in the 19th century Laurel County (open through Oct. 31; \$3.50). McHargue's Mill is a turbine mill, unlike the overshot waterwheel mill usually seen in pioneer villages. The mill is surrounded by the largest collection of millstones in the U.S.



JOHN DIBBS



FRED THOMPSON



NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

With several pull-throughs, the campground at Levi Jackson has 146 sites with electric and water hook-ups at \$18/night. From November to March, only 33 sites are open. The park served our needs for two days as a good radius location to visit several other points of interest.

After setting up camp, we were off to Stearns to hitch a ride on the Big South Fork Scenic Railway. Formerly a working railroad to haul coal and lumber, the Big South Fork is now overseen by the National Park Service. The train with open-air cars only hauls people nowadays. In October, the train leaves at 11 a.m., Tuesday–Friday on a three-hour round trip through fall-painted forests and over rushing mountain streams. On Saturdays and Sundays, the Big South Fork offers two departures at 11 and 2:30. Be sure to arrive at least 30 minutes before departure to enjoy some good old fashioned bluegrass and country music by the train crew. If you take the 11 a.m. train, you may want to bring a lunch for the stopover at Blue Heron. A self-guided tour presents oral history through audio recordings housed in “ghost structures” which are representations positioned where the actual buildings stood over 50 years ago. A picnic shelter, concession stand, and gift shop are on the site.

On your return to camp, plan to stop for dinner at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park. An early dinner will give you time to walk to the falls in time to see a “moonbow.” Similar to a rainbow, a moonbow is formed at night under a full moon. In October the five-day window is October 15–19, with Monday, the 17th, being the most likely. Moonbow or not, the falls are spectacular and can be viewed from several vantage points with short hikes down river.

If you are a bluegrass and country music fan, you may wish to bypass the Levi Jackson park and continue another 30 miles north on I-75 to the Renfro Valley Entertainment Center at Exit 62. The Renfro Valley RV Park offers first-class camping facilities including 30/50 amp service, water, sewer, and cable for \$21–23 weekdays and \$23–25 weekends. Pull-through sites accommodate rigs up to 46-ft. in length. LP gas service, laundry, and hot showers available.

The nationally known Renfro Valley Barndance “Live” Show is now in its 66th year and airs every Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. The Jamboree is scheduled at 9 p.m. (each show \$17, both \$29)

Live shows are scheduled every weeknight in October at 7 with tickets between \$9 and \$13. Tickets for standard weekend shows are \$9 to \$17. Special events with “big-name” talent are slated for every weekend in October with ticket prices from \$23 to \$38. You can hear [dates in parentheses], The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra (2), Eddie Miles (7), The Oak Ridge Boys (8), Gene Watson (14),

(Top) The P-38 played a crucial role in protecting the 8th Army Air Force’s bombing raids into Nazi-occupied countries. “Glacier Girl” is on display at Middlesboro Airport every day 8–5. (Center) The millstone collection at McHargue’s Mill in the Levi Jackson Wilderness Road State Park is the largest found anywhere in the U.S. (Bottom) Keeping railroading alive in the mountains, the Big South Scenic Fork Railway operates April through December.



As we made our way north towards the Arctic Circle, the vegetation began to give way. And everything that remained — the plants, the animals, the people — seemed somewhat hardier. Less cuddly, perhaps,

but uniquely suited for survival in this harsh climate. Every morning we awakened to new wonders. A bald eagle kept watch over our campsite, soaring majestically over the thermals. Each day as we headed northward, the daylight grew longer and our anticipation mounted, and we almost had to remind ourselves to sleep.



TIFFIN MOTORHOMES

WHEREVER YOU GO, WE GO.



and Charley Pride (15). Gospel music fans will enjoy (tickets approx. \$15) The Primitive (20), The Kingsmen Quartet (21), The Chuckwagon Gang (22), and The Dove Brothers (23). The Fiddlers' Festival on 28-30 completes October's special events (weekend pass \$21).

The Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum nearby on US 25 honors the great stars of country music, bluegrass and jazz including Loretta Lynn, Bill Monroe, Red Foley, Boots Randolph, Ricky Skaggs and many others. Closed Mondays.

If you are ready for an early morning start, break camp and head north on I-75 to Exit 77 where you will find the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea. Kentucky's Official 2005 Map designated the Center as one of 27 "Must See" places in the state. A handsome piece of architecture, the Center showcases the work of Kentucky's finest artisans, including finely crafted furniture, jewelry, musical instruments, baskets, fabrics, glassware and pottery, books by Kentucky authors, and specialty foods grown in the state. You likely can finish out your Christmas list here. Prices are reasonable and the quality is excellent. Leave your coach in the Center's parking area and unhook for a tour of Berea.

Berea College continues to be a strong influence in the area's notoriety for its fine arts and crafts. The college's history goes back to 1853 when Cassius Clay, a wealthy landowner, heard John G. Fee preach fervently against slavery. Clay offered Fee a

10-acre homestead to settle in the area. Fee accepted and built a church that courted opponents of slavery. Two years later he opened a one-room schoolhouse. Fee named the village Berea after the Macedonian town where congregants accepted the gospel with open minds (Acts 17:10-11).

After the Civil War, the school taught life skills and practical curriculum that prepared students to earn a living. Berea College granted its first bachelor's degree in 1873. The college focused on the science of agriculture, skills to create useful products such as furniture and fabrics, and educating elementary and secondary teachers. Overwhelmed with applications, the school was forced to limit its applicants to those living in the southern Appalachian mountains.

Today Berea College's 1,500 students work 10-15 hours per week in 140 departments. One is the Boone Hotel and Tavern with 58 elegant guest rooms and an award-winning restaurant. Executive Chef A.J. Caudill serves lunch and dinner to the public with entrées such as Blackened Pork Tenderloin with Orange Marmalade Chutney, Frenched Lamb Racks with Cranberry Mint Risotto, and Bourbon Cured Sea Scallops.

One special place you will want to visit is Churchill Weavers, a prestigious handweaving studio known for its luxuriously soft fabrics of outstanding design and color. The studio is located at 100 Churchill Drive just off of Lorraine



The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is one of the state's "Must See" places. It showcases the work of Kentucky's finest artists and craftspeople.



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TIFFIN MOTORHOMES

WHEREVER YOU GO, WE GO.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED THOMPSON

Court. Call (859) 986-3127 for further directions. Gallery open Mon–Fri, 9–6; tours Mon–Thu 9–4, Fri 9–12.

In Old Town you will find shops producing finely crafted furniture. We visited with Doug Haley and his teenage son Daniel at 119 N. Broadway. Dining chairs and tables, sideboards, rocking chairs — clean lines, excellent design, finishes that challenge you to find a flaw. After earning a teaching degree at nearby Eastern Kentucky University and paying his dues at a sawmill and a furniture plant in Stanton, Doug came to Berea in 1986 with a wood lathe and a bandsaw to make ornamental bowls. After his brother Wally came on board to handle finishes, the team migrated into fine furniture. Today Doug’s award-winning designs with Wally’s finely crafted finishes are exhibited at the Artisan Center and their shop on Broadway.

Doug buys cherry in Pennsylvania and Indiana, walnut in Ohio, and birdseye and curly maple in Pennsylvania. Ambrosia maple is the only local hardwood used.

When Wally buys the chemicals for wood finishes, he first throws away the instructions. The owner of the chemical plant makes a monthly visit and shakes his head. “Our finishes look good, but only Wally can make them look this good!”

Doug will work with a customer’s ideas to create the desired design, the right wood selection, and the best finish. A quote from a mentor governs every piece the brothers produce: “Craftsmanship goes far beyond the manipulation of one’s hands — it’s a state of mind that is satisfied with nothing less than excellence.”

Daniel has a special talent, too. He turns tiny hardwood sleeves on his lathe to create beautiful ballpoint pens. His dad added Daniel’s name to the corporate moniker.

If your historical fires are still burning, you can visit Daniel Boone’s settlement at Fort Boonesborough. From I-75 take Exit 95 to SR 627 and follow signs to Boonesborough Road. You will find a working fort with cabins, blockhouses, and authentic furnishings. Resident artisans demonstrate early pioneer crafts and skills, creating a true sense of what pioneer life was like in 1775. Trails along the Kentucky River make good leg-stretchers. The campground has 167 sites with water and electric at \$20/night. We did not inspect this campground since we planned to stay at the Kentucky Horse Park a few miles north of Lexington.

Although we did not add it into our itinerary, a fall side trip to Natural Bridge State Resort Park, about 90 minutes east of Fort Boonesborough, will be worth the effort. Take SR 627 to the Bert Combs Mountain Parkway and travel east. Located in the Red River Gorge Geological Area, the bridge spans 78 feet and is 65 feet high. Experienced hikers will enjoy the trails

(Top) The dulcimer has been favorite instrument of mountain musicians for generations. This Ledford dulcimer is held in high regard. (Center) Doug Haley has established himself as one of Berea’s finest furniture craftsmen. His son, Daniel, is learning the intricacies of lathe work. The 64-inch Lazy-Susan table shown here is priced at \$4,200. (Bottom) In the movie, *Seabiscuit*, the star of the movie had many doubles. This particular double, “Rich in Dallas,” is ridden by Sabrina Manness.

through the stone cliffs and stone arches, while tenderfoots can experience the scenic views from the park's sky lift.

Never an owner, always an admirer, I have always enjoyed riding horses. Even if you only have a passing interest, the Kentucky Horse Park in the heart of Kentucky's famous Bluegrass region is *the* place to get close to horses! The 1200-acre park is dedicated to man's relationship with the horse. Follow I-75 north of Lexington to Exit 120.

To get your coach on a nice site, go past the park's main entrance to the campground which will be on your left. Facilities include a well-stocked camp store; basketball, tennis, and volleyball courts; playground; swimming pool; and bathhouse and laundry. The 260 sites on A, B, C, and D loops have electric and water hookups at \$25/night (62+ \$20), electric only \$18, dry \$15. Campground residents receive free parking at the Horse Park and \$2 off each ticket.

The park offers daily equine presentations, horse-drawn tours and carriage rides, horseback riding and pony rides, two museums, a movie presentation, and a variety of shows and special events throughout the year. Through October 31, adults \$14, children (7-12) \$7. November 1 - March 14, adults \$9, children \$6.

We started our visit with the Parade of Breeds, a twice daily show presenting unique breeds and costumed riders. The show included the Kentucky Natural Gaited Horse, the Icelandic Horse, the American Saddlebred, the Spanish Norman, and the Thoroughbred, which in this case was *Seabiscuit* (or really, the horse that played *Seabiscuit*).

In the Hall of Champions, we saw racing legends John Henry and Cigar, with lifetime earnings of \$6.6 and \$10 million respectively.

The Draft Horse Barn houses the park's "gentle giants," featuring all of the major draft horse breeds that nearly a century ago were the work horses of American farms, fire houses, and transport wagons.

Dedicated to all breeds, the International Museum of the Horse is the world's largest equestrian museum. With excellent exhibits and models, the museum covers more than 50 million years of equine history beginning with the earliest known ancestor of the horse to the modern breeds found at the park today.

The American Saddlebred Museum features Kentucky's first native breed. Adjacent but not inside the Kentucky Horse Park boundaries, this park charges a separate entrance fee. Through October 31, adults, \$14, children, \$7. Daily, 9-5. November 1 - March 14, adults \$9, children \$6. Wed-Sun, 9-5.

Don't leave without paying your respects to Man 'O War, the Thoroughbred giant whose stride was measured at 28 feet. Man 'O War won every race in his career except one, and that loss was attributed to a false start. In 1918 Sam Riddle bought the colt for \$5,000. In 1921 Riddle refused \$1 million from William Waggoner, Texas oilman, who then offered Riddle a blank check. "The colt is not for sale," he said. After Riddle retired the legend to stud, he sired 386 foals including 1937 Triple Crown winner War Admiral.

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STEPHEN FOSTER MUSICAL

For additional information on the Wilderness Road legend, visit Daniel Boone's grave by taking I-64 west for 17 miles to exit 58. Follow US 60 into the capital city and turn left on CR 1784 which runs along the Frankfort Cemetery. Boone's monument is 1/4-mile on the right.

In addition to being the capital city, Frankfort is the home of Buffalo Trace Distillery, the oldest continuously operating distillery (1787) in Kentucky. A full scale operation including bottling, Buffalo Trace offers tours from 9-3, M-F, starting on the hour, and Sat, 10-2. From the Boone grave, get back on US 60W until it becomes 127/421. Go past the Civic Center/Downtown staying on Wilkinson Blvd (US 127). Buffalo Trace is about 5.5 miles on your right.

Leaving Frankfort behind, we took US 127 South to the Bluegrass Parkway and headed west to Bardstown. About an hour and a half later, we pulled into My Old Kentucky Home State Park. Take exit 25 into Bardstown and turn left on SR 49. The park will be on your right in about a mile. We used this as our base camp for two days while we toured the area. Elec (30-amp). and water, \$16.20/night. It is a very pleasant park with a free shuttle to the Stephen Foster Musical.

Perhaps no other home in the country has become a symbol of its state as the Rowan mansion has in Bardstown. A judge and U.S. senator, John Rowan, Sr., began construction of the classic two-story brick house in 1812. Completed in 1818, Rowan named his home Federal Hill. Although he lived there only five years, his descendants continued to occupy the house until 1922. Stephen Foster, a cousin of the family, is said to have visited Federal Hill in 1852 where he found the inspiration to write and publish "My Old Kentucky Home." It became Kentucky's state song in 1923. Foster is the only lyricist credited with two state songs. In 1935 Florida adopted "Old Folks at Home" as its state song.

The Stephen Foster Musical finished its 47th season in August. The fictionalized story has the ne'er-do-well Foster sticking with his song writing and finally winning the hand of Jane McDowell, whose parents opposed the union. The outdoor mu-

sical is delightful. House tour, \$5; the musical, \$15. The musical closed on August 20. Maybe you can catch it next year.

Bardstown and bourbon go back over 230 years when Jacob Beam and others were drawn to Nelson County because of its plentiful limestone-rich springs and streams. Heaven Hill Distillery recently opened an excellent museum and exhibit that tells the story of bourbon in Kentucky. You will learn that the word "whiskey" from the Gaelic word *uisgebaugh* means "water of life" and is pronounced *weez' ga-bach*. Eventually it was shortened to *weez' ga*, which sounds a lot more like whiskey. The tour of the warehouses where bourbon is aged is interesting, but a tour of the distillery itself is not offered. A few miles past Heaven Hill on SR 49 South, Maker's Mark offers a complete tour of its distillery, bottling operation, and warehouses. Both tours are free and samples are offered. Heaven Hill: Tu-Sa, 10-5; Su 12-4; closed Mon. Maker's Mark: 10:30-3:30, Mo-Sa; Su 1:30, 2:30 & 3:30. Both are closed on holidays, and on Sundays during January and February. As you might have guessed by now, Bardstown is known as the "Bourbon Capital of the World."

The next day we left the coach at the MOKH State Park and drove an hour east to visit the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill. The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing fled persecution in England in the 1770s and eventually established 19 villages for communal living from Maine to Kentucky. Believing that Christ had returned and established a heaven on earth, the Shakers accepted celibacy. A rigorous work ethic, ingenious crafts, practical architecture, and farming technology brought a self-sufficient lifestyle and earned the respect of their neighbors.

Reaching a peak of 500 members in the 1820s, the Shakers continued to thrive until the Civil War and industrialization eventually brought their demise. The community dissolved in 1910 and the land and buildings were auctioned. In 1961 a nonprofit organization was formed to restore the historic structures and redevelop the rural settings. Today costumed re-enactors demonstrate the Shakers crafts and tell their story. The former living quarters have been modernized to offer 81



(Clockwise from left) Federal Hill built by Sen. John Rowan, Sr., inspired Stephen Foster to write “My Old Kentucky Home.” · The Stephen Foster musical, running from June through August completed its 47th year this summer. · Communal living at Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill was both sufficient and austere. · Vivian Yeast, of Harrodsburg, has been demonstrating the loom operation at Pleasant Hill for 17 years. · The birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, a humble 16 × 20 cabin, has been enclosed in a very imposing marble memorial. · Kentucky’s Mammoth Cave National Park offers tours for every spelunker’s interest. Shown here is Frozen Niagara.

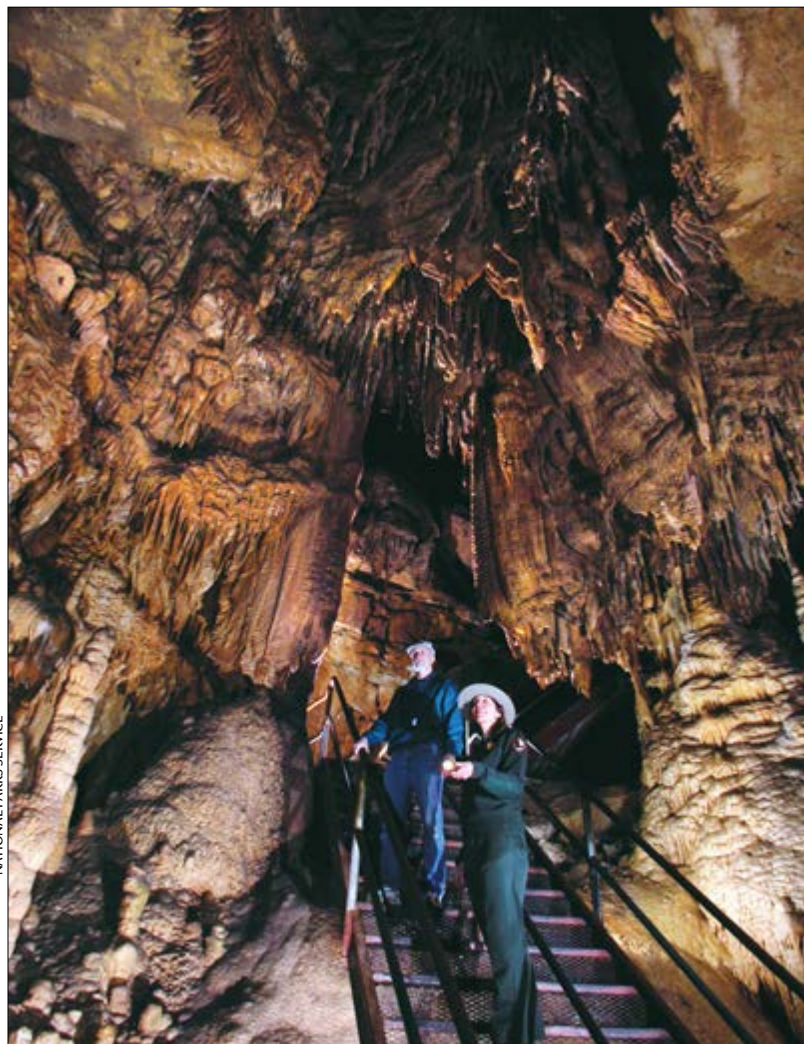


air-conditioned rooms with private baths to those who wish to revisit a quiet and simple respite—if just for a day or two. A fine restaurant offers breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Early risers will enjoy a southern breakfast of fruit, juices, biscuits, muffins, eggs, bacon, sausage, fried apples, grits, and gravy plus plenty of steaming coffee as you are bathed in the morning light streaming through the high windows. What a way to start the day!

Located on the Kentucky River, the village operates a paddlewheeler for 90-minute trips into a cliff-bounded wilderness that can take you back 200 years. With tours and visits to the crafts centers and bookstore/gift shop, you will probably want to spend the day. Apr 1–Oct 31, 10–5. Nov 1–Mar 31, 10–4:30. Entrance fee, \$12.50. Meals: breakfast, \$9; lunch, \$12; dinner, \$18 (approx.). For more information on events, workshops, education programs, and daily events, call (800) 734-5611.

If you skipped a major meal at Pleasant Hill, you may be ready for a great dining experience at the Beaumont Inn, housed in a lovely old 1845 home that was once a girls school. Operated by the fourth and fifth generation of the Goddard family, the Inn is known for its Kentucky cured ham. I would call most of the entrees “southern gourmet” (\$14–24). After you cross the RR tracks on US 68 in Harrodsburg, turn left on Beaumont Avenue for about ¾-mile. Turn right on Beaumont Inn Drive. Call 800-352-3992 for reservations.

Leaving Bardstown, you have about a 30-minute drive to Abraham Lincoln’s birthplace. Thomas and Nancy Lincoln bought



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the 348-acre Sinking Spring farm near Hodgenville in 1808. On February 12, 1809, Nancy gave birth to their second child, naming him Abraham after his grandfather. Two years later the Lincolns moved 10 miles northeast to a farm on Knob Creek, where the young Lincoln later recalled his earliest childhood memory of helping his father plant pumpkin seeds.

Lincoln's birthplace was purchased in 1894 by a businessman who dismantled the cabin and reassembled it for exhibitions in several cities. In 1906 the Lincoln Farm Association was formed to preserve the birthplace of our 16th president. In 1909 President Theodore Roosevelt laid the cornerstone for a marble and granite memorial to enclose and preserve what may be the original cabin. The site is operated by the National Park Service. No charge.

After a short jog over to I-65, we were headed south to Mammoth Cave. It was named "mammoth" for good reason. With 350 miles of passageways currently surveyed, Mammoth is at least three times longer than any other known cave system in the world. Geologists estimate there may still be 600 miles of undiscovered passageways.

Leave I-65 at exit 48 (Park City) which is called the South Entrance Road. It will

take you directly to the Visitor Center and the campground.

Operated by the National Park System, Mammoth is crowded in the summer months but much more relaxed in the fall. The campground at headquarters has suitable sites for Class A coaches. Arriving on a weekday will improve your options for selecting a pull-through. Like most NPS campgrounds, there are no hook-ups. Sites 77 and 85 can accommodate larger rigs. \$16/night, \$8 for Golden Age.

If you have the time, plan for two days at Mammoth. The NPS now offers 12 different cave tours. If it's your first time here, take the "introductory tour" called Mammoth Cave Discovery Tour. Try the Historic Tour next to get an understanding of how the cave has been used by native Americans, early explorers and settlers, and present-day people. Then, just for the fun of it, do the Lantern Tour. That's right. No flashlights, no flash cameras, no electric lighting systems. A genuine cave experience.

Regardless of which tour you select, be sure to check at the Visitor Center well ahead for departure times, restrictions, and number of people allowed on the tour.

After Mammoth, it's Corvette time! The National Corvette Museum is located at exit 28 in Bowling Green. The museum

(Left) As a monument to "America's Sports Car," the National Corvette Museum at Bowling Green displays 75 to 80 Corvettes. Many aficionados believe that in the car's 52-year history, Chevy never matched its introductory 1953 classic. (Above) The world's tallest concrete obelisk at Fairview honors Confederate President Jefferson Davis. His service to the Confederacy overshadowed his earlier career as Mexican war hero, U.S. senator, and secretary of war.

is housed in a 68,000 sq. ft. piece of modern architecture that uses curved walls, a 12-story interior spire, geometric designs, and full-scale diorama displays to deliver the 52-year history of America's sports car. As a young teen, I will never forget the band director at our high school in Russellville, Alabama, showing off his 1953 Corvette Roadster. I was in awe. On display at the museum is Corvette #232 of the first 300 hand-built Corvettes.

Harvey Earl, GM's chief of automotive design since the 1920s, felt that America needed its own sports car. He planted that idea in the mind of Ed Cole, GM's president and chief of engineering for Chevrolet. The notion that the stodgy Chevrolet could reinvent itself with a two-seater, plastic-bodied sports car sparked Cole's imagination. After that, the creation of the Corvette was a done deal.

Today you can see 75 to 80 Corvettes from 1953 to present. The exhibits change throughout the year. While some of the Corvettes are perfectly preserved production models with only a few miles on their odometers, many are on loan from owners across the U.S., and a few are one-of-a-kind concept models.

Begin your tour in the museum's Chevrolet Theater with a film that presents the sport car's history. Then you can walk down Nostalgia Alley, Route 66, and a Chevrolet Dealer's Showroom. Boy, did that bring back a few memories. Admission: adults, \$8 (AAA and 55+, \$6).

When you've finished absorbing the Corvette's history, you can drive across the road to the Corvette assembly plant and watch the current models being built. M-F, tours at 9 and 1. \$5. Arrive 30 minutes before the tour starts. No children under 7. No sandals, cell phones, backpacks, purses, or cameras.

With an irony not emphasized in our history books, the president of the Union and the president of the Confederacy were born less than 100 miles apart, with Jefferson Davis just eight months older than Abraham Lincoln. Born in the village of Fairview about 50 miles west of Bowling Green, Jefferson Davis distinguished himself as a graduate of West Point, a Mexican War hero, a Mississippi congressman and senator, and Secretary of War during the Franklin Pierce administration. Although he is remembered as the president of the Confederate States of America, he was actually a very reluctant secessionist.

To honor him, a Confederate general from Kentucky proposed in 1907 a monument to honor Davis at his birthplace in Fairview. Today you can visit the world's tallest concrete obelisk. With walls seven feet wide at the bottom and two feet wide at the top, the 351-ft. structure has an elevator that will take you to the top for a great vista in three directions. The memorial was completed in 1924. Open 9-5 May 1 through October 31. Small charge for museum and elevator.

Our last destination on this tour through the Bluegrass State will be for

the ladies making this trip (unless we have a male quilter among us). Opened in 1991, the Museum of the American Quilter's Society (MAQS) was established by Bill and Meredith Schroeder of Paducah. It is the world's leading museum devoted to quilts and the only museum dedicated to today's quilts and quiltmakers. The MAQS annually hosts six changing exhibitions. Two side galleries feature contemporary and antique quilts selected to follow certain themes.

The skill, craftsmanship, and artistry seen in this museum left me in awe. A quilt made by Beverly Mannisto Williams, of Cadillac, Michigan, especially demanded my attention. Titled "Victorian Fantasy of Feathers and Lace," this quilt has 11 yards of handmade 2½-inch wide bobbin lace edging that took Ms. Williams three months to make. And that was just the edging! The hand-quilted Victorian patterns are incredible in their design and execution.

Ms. Williams exquisite work won the 1987 NQA Masterpiece Quilt Award.

Distraught as she watched the Challenger disaster as she worked on that fateful day in January 1986, she missed quilting one flower in the center design. She could have repaired the oversight, but instead decided to leave the error as a remembrance to the lost astronauts.

If you are a quilter, the variety found in the exhibits will extend your imagination for your future projects. I must take my 90-year-old mother-in-law to see the exhibits. She is close to meeting her goal of making a quilt for each of her 25 grandchildren.

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Kentucky's Last Great Places. Thomas G. Barnes. 2002. University Press of Kentucky, \$32.50.

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The Incredible Detail of Making a Door

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

Building a door—could it be that difficult? I've walked through dozens of houses under construction. Front and back doors are heavier, solid perhaps, using steel door jambs for more security. Interior doors come prebuilt, packed in boxes, ready for the carpenter to set in 15 minutes.

Motorhomes? Different ballgame! Now we're talking metal jambs, metal door frames and interior bracing, quarter-inch glass windows with metal frames, screen doors that must fit and align perfectly with the jamb and primary door. Detailed construction, measurements in thousands of an inch — not eighths or sixteenths. Dies that cost 12 to 15 thousand dollars, presses that exert 30 to 90 tons of pressure to stamp and shape parts. Complicated? You bet!

The Tiffin Door Plant is one of several "off line" manufacturing operations that supply various components to the assembly line in the main plant. Located about 200 yards west of the main assembly building, the door plant builds the entry doors for the three diesel brands as well as the doors for the basement storage compartments of all five brands.

Managed by supervisor Melvin Dotson and lead man Chris Cass, the door plant employs 25 metal fabricators who operate high-tech equipment to manufacture an extremely dependable product using a wide variety of materials.

One of the most interesting components in the construction of the storage



bay doors is the frame-hinge shown in picture #1. This molding is created in 100-inch lengths by heating aluminum billets to 950 degrees and forcing them through an extrusion die to produce the shape shown in #2.

The curl shown in #2 fits a reverse curl on the top edge of the finished door, similar to curling the fingers of each hand and locking them together. Once continuous lengths of this molding are installed on both sides of the coach along the top edge of the storage compartments from the front wheel well to the back wheel well, workers on the assembly line at Station 12 slide the doors into place beginning at the rear and pushing them forward. It is a matter of zero tolerance.

A simpler extrusion in the shape of a squared-up letter C in picture #3 is used to fabricate a welded frame for the door of each storage compartment on the Phaeton, Allegro Bus, and Zephyr.

In contrast to the fiberglass sidewalls immediately above, the doors for the storage compartments are made of .0800 steel blanks (#4). At the steel mill, these sheets are rolled from 8-ton ingots. To insulate the doors, TMH buys 1 1/4-inch styrofoam in 4 x 8-ft. sheets and slices it with a hot blade to fit the framed interior of the door.

When you examine the bottom edge of your storage doors, you will notice that the outside steel is curved under the storage box's frame. It takes a Cincinnati stamping press exerting 30 to 90 tons of

pressure to form that curve. It is amazing to learn what is required to create a feature that goes almost unnoticed (#5).

The big Cincinnati press is used to make several other parts required in the fabrication of both the entry and the storage doors. A complex set of four dies in a very heavy mounting (#6) is required to stamp out the bolt slot for the latch on the new 2006 side-mounted doors (#7). Requiring a different stamp for the driver and passenger sides, the dies for fabricating this small part cost over \$15,000.

Following detailed manufacturing orders, the metal sawing department cuts sets of C-shaped framing members for the many different-sized doors that will go on each motorhome. The sets are routed to welders who assemble the rectangular frames (#8).

A latch assembly and double adhesive

tape are applied to the frame at the next workstation. Concurrently, a stud welder (#9) applies bolts to the back side of the outside metal door panel which will be used to attach the other components. The frame and the door now come together at a final assembly point.

In sequential operations, the lock mechanism is attached to the latch (#10), the back of the metal door is sprayed with glue to hold the insulating styrofoam in place (#11), the styrofoam is cut to make space for the wiring to be attached for the auto-lock system (#12), and the back metal sheet is attached and riveted into place (#13). Each floor plan in the three diesel models requires up to 12 doors to the basement-level equipment and storage areas, and that usually means at least five different door sizes and shapes. Each of the different shapes and sizes requires

a separate set of engineering drawings and component planning.

Building the entry doors for the Tiffin diesels is an even more complex operation. The primary door construction begins on a welding jig shown in picture #14. It is constructed with 18-gauge 1.5-inch square tubing. To better explain the operation, we placed a completed, painted frame in the welding jig to show the stamping locations and welding joints. When the frame components are welded, it is powder-coat painted, which means that the sprayed paint goes through a high temperature baking process that melts the paint powder and bonds it to the metal.

The frame pieces are mitered and cut on a specially built saw mounted on way tubes for variable lengths and cuts. Absolute precision is necessary to insure that





the door will fit perfectly inside the jamb.

To complete the primary door, four components are joined together: the outside fiberglass skin, the frame, and the interior luan covered with naughahyde. Not shown is the styrofoam insulation (#15).

All four door components are assembled and finished out with the black aluminum exterior (#16). A white steel base plate supporting the two lock systems is shown in the middle of the photo.

The exterior weather gasket is at-

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tached to the door frame with a special tool (#17).

At the next workstation, Derek Lucas installs one of the door's two windows (#18) which are made in the Tuscumbia Window Plant.

Anthony Lovett TIG-welds the screen door, the jamb, and the screen guard, a welding technology that guarantees the permanence of the joints (#19). This assembly is shipped to the Belmont plant

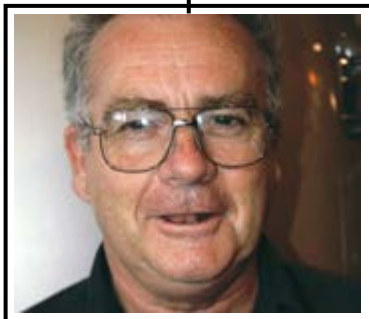
Continued on page 43

Whether you're prepping for your next road trip or traveling through unfamiliar territory, trust your coach to a Cat RV Center for parts and service. They're as reliable as the Cat engine with ACERT® Technology that powers your home away from home.

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Folks You're Likely to Meet When You Visit Tiffin's New Service Facility

J. C. Blackburn
Tiffin Service Tech, 29 years
 J.C. does chassis service and electrical work on all units. **Advice:** When you leave your diesel coach parked for a week or more, be sure to turn off your chassis battery disconnect switch. This will prevent your controllers from draining your chassis batteries.



Turner Richardson
Tiffin Service Tech, 16 years
 I take on any project for repair as if the coach were my own. **Advice:** Realize that the vehicle is your home and treat maintenance as if you were at home.



Royce Miller
Tiffin Service Tech, 19 years
 Royce services all appliances. **Advice:** Be sure to thoroughly check your refrigerator every year, including making sure that the burner is clean and that all wiring connections are tight. If you store your motorhome, be sure the inverter is off. Otherwise, it will run your batteries down very quickly.



Kevin Wilson
Tiffin Service Tech, 15 years
 Kevin services entrance door problems as a speciality. With the new service bays, Kevin now services the entire coach. **Advice:** Be sure to maintain and lubricate your slide-out mechanisms and properly lube your seals. Be sure to keep your roof properly sealed. If you have a water leak, it starts at the top and creates problems from there down.



George Embrey
Utility Lead Man, 29 years
 George specializes in plumbing and general maintenance. **Advice:** Follow all maintenance procedures in your manual for proper care of your holding tanks. To be sure your holding sensors are clean and give you correct readings, put two bottles of Pine Power in the tank with $\frac{2}{3}$ tank of water. Then drive around with plenty of turns to agitate the solution. Drain tank and check sensor reading.



John Copeland
Tiffin Service Tech, 4 years
 John does general service on most coaches. **Advice:** Make sure you keep your roof sealed properly and check it every six months. We treat problems every day caused by neglect of roof caulking and maintenance.



Joel Davis
Warranty Department, 3 years
 Joel brings defective parts from all service bays to the warranty department and assures that the customer receives proper credit from the manufacturer. He works with Marlin Saint and Jonathan Humphres.



Chad Holcombe
Parts, 2 years
 Chad prepares requests from technicians and supplies them with the parts needed for repairs. He also maintains parts inventory records.



Nancy and Joe Solomon
 Nancy and Joe are new hosts at the campground. They full-timed for four years in their 40-foot Allegro Bus. Every time they stopped at Red Bay, Nancy reminded Bob Tiffin that she wanted the campground host job if an opening became available. Bob called in April. They sold their home in Okeechobee, Florida, on the Kissimmee River and bought a place near Red Bay. They enjoy serving up good humor and good service.



Wendell Puckett
Security, 5 years
 Wendell gets to watch television all day—actually the monitors for six security cameras that constantly pan plant operations. Located in the new Allegro Welcome Center, he is the first to welcome visitors and give directions for their destinations within the plant complex.



Inman's Answers

Beginning with our Winter 2006 magazine, Danny Inman, a 31-year veteran with Tiffin Motorhomes, will become the editor of "Serious Tech Talk." The new column will be called "Inman's Answers."

Using the postcard at this opening, please send Danny your questions about your motorhome and its operation, especially those questions that may be useful to all of our readers. Danny would also like to hear your ideas, suggestions, and innovations that would make our motorhomes more useful and functional. If you have a photograph to send, please put the postcard and photo in an envelope and send it to the same address. Photos and submissions for his column will not be returned.

We look forward to seeing this column grow larger with each issue. For [answers to urgent questions and problems](#), call the new Parts and Service number at 256-356-0261.

The Incredible Detail of Making a Door (continued from page 41)

to receive a black powder-coat paint that is very durable for this application.

Michael Ray inserts the screen and the screen guard to the frame (#20).

Bob Puckett (left) and Hugh Bates complete the final assembly. The door jamb on the left will be bolted into the motorhome's wall frame. The middle unit is the screen door and the unit on the right is the inside of the primary door (#21).

Twelve completed door assemblies await transfer to the assembly line (#22).

Complexity, yes. But ingenuity, good engineering, and thorough production planning create top-quality door assem-

The RVer's Essential Toolbox

Everyone has his favorite tools that he takes on every trip. To make sure that we all carry the *essential* tools, I asked Wade Humphres and his colleagues to make their list. Here's the essential basics:

When motorhome owners call the Tiffin Service Department for assistance, these are the items that they will most often need.

12v test light	Wire strippers
110v tester	Tire pressure gauge
9v flashlight	Electrical tape
Flat-head screwdriver	12-volt fuses: 5, 10, 15,
Phillips-head screwdriver	20, 25, and 30-amps
Adjustable wrench	12-volt circuit breakers:
Pliers	20-amps and 50-amps

Rubber Roof Maintenance

In Spring 2005 *RIS*, you said a rubber roof should have a treatment every six months to prevent deterioration. The guidelines in the manual for my 2001 Phaeton state the roof should be washed regularly with soap and water. Just what should I do to prolong the life of this rubber roof?

— Wayne Reyburn

I recommend: B.E.S.T. Rubber Roof Cleaner-Protector or Thetford Premium Rubber Roof Cleaner-Conditioner. First, soap and water wash the roof, then use one of these protector-conditioners. It's like a "wax job for your roof." These products help the roof to stay cleaner for a longer period of time. Do not use a petroleum-based product on the roof as it will void your warranty.

—Ricky Johnson
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These Hills Are Alive with the *Sound of (Texas) Music*

From Austin to Luckenbach There's No Better Time Than Fall to Enjoy Live Original Music in the Lovely Hill Country of Texas

by Norman G. Spray

Rodgers and Hammerstein had different hills in mind when they wrote “The Sound of Music,” but these days there’s no better place than the majestic Hill Country of Texas to sit back, relax, and listen to some of the best leading edge music anywhere, and it’s not all country. You can do this in literally hundreds of venues in a weather-friendly area that attracts many snowbirding “winter Texans” every year.

The Hill Country, spanning roughly 150 miles from Austin on the east to Junction on the western edge and 200 miles northerly from Uvalde, may be best known for its glorious Bluebonnet, Indian Paint, and other wildflowers that turn its hills and valleys to vistas of color in March, April, and May. Color is not the biggest attraction in the fall since much of the Hill Country is blessed with evergreen cedar and live oaks that keep their chlorophyll year-round. But no fewer than 18 world-class state parks, crystal clear streams and rivers, mountainous majesties, hiking, biking, bird and wild animal watching, hunting and fishing keep people so busy that many may miss some of the best color of all: local professional, semi-professional, and amateur song writer/musicians. These talented troubadours have and continue to create a whole new genre that some claim superior to the “Nashville sound” and, indeed, challenges Nash-

ville as a hot bed for new and exciting songs and sound. In fact, in what may or may not be an over-assessment, Cedar Park singer-songwriter Walt Wilkins is quoted as saying: “Every 25 years, Texas has to save Nashville’s butt.”

Beginning in Austin, which has some justification for its claim as “live music capital of the world,” these hills are like magnets attracting performers who are serious about the music they create. Here artists find attentive and appreciative audiences. You’ll find some of them performing most every night – and certainly every weekend night – at virtually every town in the Hill Country.

You’ll have a choice of full-service RV camps that cater to your taste, whether you prefer mountain views, shaded in-town pads, a place next to a river, a quiet isolated mountain-side location, adults-only neighbors, or pet-friendly or pet-restricted parks. Most are listed in the standard park directories.

The performers who work at venues throughout these hills place a premium on creative freedom. Most of these artists record and produce CDs locally, like Jerry Jeff Walker, a New Yorker who left the star-making merry-go-round and came to Austin to create and record music “as close to the bone and true to the moment” as he can manage. A state-wide Texas Music Chart that ranks popularity of singles based on plays by area radio stations

is followed closely by recording industry executives everywhere.

Different Music for Different Folk

"We'd rather play to an audience of 40 listeners than 400 noise-makers," says one Hill Country music pro, Michael Blakely, who also has authored 14 historical western novels. As have many of his successful contemporaries, Mike became disenchanted with the major label country music business after pitching some of his songs in Nashville. Now he focuses on recording and performing songs he has written for his own fans. "Here a lot of different music comes together: country to blues to rock to bluegrass to swing to tejano, even semi-classical and classical," he says. "Our music is defined by the people who listen to it and it is as varied as the tastes of the people. You can get away with playing any kind of song here. Musicians love it and there is a kind of brotherhood among us. Nowhere else in the world will you find so much talent or such a proliferation of live music in one geographic area."

"Texas music is all about songwriters," adds Jeff Posey, an aspiring songwriting artist who shared the stage with Blakely and John Murray Greenberg at the River City Grill one Wednesday night in Marble Falls. "Texas writers write what they want and feel," he adds. "In Nashville, you have to write at an eighth-grade level. Texas performers are more true to their music. The focus is on the music, not on the money."

Even so, many of these performers have risen from the Texas Music Chart to national notoriety. Performer Pat Green, whose "Baby Doll" came in at number 15 on the top 30 Texas Music chart last August, is one example. Many others enjoy recognizable success in their world, among them Willie Nelson, John Michael Riley, Walker, Tommy Alverson, Robert Earl Keen, Lyle Lovett, Mark Bell, Delbert McClinton, Rusty Wier, Larry Joe Taylor, the Robertson Brothers, Kelly Willis, John Arthur Martinez, and dozens of others.



Where to Go for Music

Restaurants, bars, public auditoriums, dance halls, and even some RV camps in most every Hill Country town are venues for Texas music. Wherever you stay, the local Chamber of Commerce, tourist bureau, or convention and visitor center usually has a schedule of music events, both those staged in public halls and individual businesses. The Fall Texas Events Calendar lists events across the state. Pick it up at any of the state's 12 Travel Information Centers. Austin is the only one in the Hill Country area but there is a Center where most major highways enter the state or call 800-452-9292 or write Texas Events Calendar, P.O. Box 149249, Austin, TX 78714-9249 for a free copy. Another state publication, Sites and Sounds, Texas Music, a Road Trip, lists musical events. It is available from the same source. See "How to Find Texas Music Venues," page 48. If you have access to the internet, you will find the best and most current lists of music events across the state at www.governor.state.tx.us/music.

If you stop or pass through Johnson City (President LBJ's home town), be sure to visit with owners Kay and Al Pratt at the Silver K Cafe, 209 E. Main St. (830-868-2911). This couple moved to the Hill Country from Seattle to be close to the Texas music they love soon after Al retired. Though there's live Texas Music at the Silver K only every other weekend, Al and Kay know many of the best artists and keep track of where they are performing anywhere in the Hill Country. Besides checking out the artists and their venues, a stop at the Silver K guarantees you an excellent meal where the ambiance is "rustic elegance" and the cooking is superb. Lady Bird and daughter Lucy dined there recently.

Don't Miss Luckenbach

Al and Kay will tell you, as will most everyone else, that any sampling of what Texas music is all about must begin in Luckenbach, the "town" made famous by the 1977 Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson hit, "Luckenbach, Texas, (Back to the Basics of Love)." Most everyone who is anyone in Texas Music has played Luckenbach and is likely to drop in any time to join whoever happens to be playing at the time. Guests listen for free at this unique place. See "Luckenbach, Texas: Where Everybody's Somebody," page 47.

There are so many Hill Country music offerings in the fall that it's impossible to assemble an all-inclusive list. "Music Events this Fall," page 49, gives you some idea. To name only a few of many, you can always count on good live music at: Gruene Hall, 1281 Gruene Rd. (830-606-1281) in Gruene (pronounced Green), near New Braunfels
Saengerhalle, 255 Saengerhalle Rd. (830-625-4255) in New Braunfels
Arkey Blue's Silver Dollar Saloon, 308 Main St. (830-796-8826) in Bandera
Flores Country Store, 14664 Bandera Rd. (210-695-8827) in Helotes



This is a town? This post office, which doubles as a general store and gift shop, is the center of everything in Luckenbach. Musicians usually perform outside under huge live oak and pecan trees.

Hill Country Opry & Grill, 3044 Junction Hwy. (830-367-6093) in Ingram

Inn of the Hills Pub, 1001 Junction Hwy (Hwy 27W) (800-292-5690) in Kerrville

Austin

Continental Club, 1315 S. Congress (512-441-2444)

The Broken Spoke, 3201 S. Lamar (512-442-6189)

Stubb's, 801 Red River (512-480-8341)

Threadgill's, 6416 N. Lamar (512-451-5440) and 301 Riverside Dr. (512-472-9304)

Fredericksburg

Hill Top Cafe, 10 miles northwest on Hwy 87 (830-997-8922)

Auslander Restaurant & Biergarten, 323 E. Main St. (830-997-7714)

Hondo's On Main, 312 W. Main St. (830-997-1633)

Stonewall Saloon and Dancehall, 14373 U.S. Hwy 290 E. (830-664-2277)

Las Aves RV Resort on the Medina River near Medina (830-589-7766) hosts a local-talent music show called "Medina Jam" in its roomy activity hall/auditorium on the second Friday of each month. Anyone who wants is given an opportunity to play his instrument and sing two numbers during the course of the show, says Manager Ramon Madrigal. Many of his RV guests bring their own instruments and join locals in the music-making. Music can vary from "what I call original down home root music to popular songs of the day and it's all unbelievably good," Madrigal adds. "The talent we attract is tremendous."

Other Things to Do

With high daytime temperatures averaging 80 degrees in October, 68 in November, and 63 in December in most of the Hill Country, weather favors golfing, hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and most outdoor activities in scenic mountain settings.

With an unimpressive exterior, the Hill Top Cafe sits alone in the country near Fredericksburg. Nevertheless, it is a gourmet restaurant and books some of the best Texas performers.

Exotic and native game often can be seen from Hill Country roadways. Area game ranchers have built up herds of some exotic species that are now endangered and even extinct in their country of origin. More than 100,000 exotic game animals from over 45 different species reside on ranches in the area. For exotics, look behind the highest fences. Birding is rewarding since many species visit or permanently reside in the Hill Country. Two residents, the Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler, are on the endangered species list.

You can get a Texas State Park Guide at any of the Travel and Information Centers or by logging on to www.tpwd.state.tx.us/parkguide that gives you information about all of the 120 parks in the state. Along the Sabinal River, the 2,200-acre Lost Maples State Natural Area is one of 18 state parks in the Hill Country. It boasts a stand of bigtooth or canyon maples, a western variety said to be relics of the last ice age that provide vivid red and gold fall colors. The park, which offers hiking trails, backpack camping, and 30 RV camp sites, attracts thousands on weekends from the last week of October through November. Park Manager Roy Heideman urges visitors to come on less-busy week days.

A Drive to Remember

You should make Lost Maples a destination on a beautiful drive that begins at the Guadalupe River RV Resort in Kerrville. I suggest leaving your coach at the resort and taking Hwy 16 south to Medina, a scenic road marked by many curves and grades that would make driving difficult in a large motorhome. At Medina, turn west on SR 337 and enjoy a treat of many mountain views en route to Vanderpol. At the intersection of SR 337 and 187, turn south on SR 187 and drive some 10 miles to lunch at the Lost Maples Cafe in the town of Utopia.

After experiencing Utopia, we backtracked north on SR 187 to the Lost Maples park and pickup 337 west. We were treated to more majestic scenery before arriving in Leakey and turning north



A family enjoys the view of the Frio River over 1000 feet below, at lookout point on State Route 83 north of Leakey.



Fans listen to live music while enjoying a view of the Guadalupe River and dining on the patio at Chili's Restaurant in Kerrville.

on US 83. Some 13 miles north of Leakey, a roadside turnout gave us an incredible straight down view from a bluff to the Frio River 1,000 feet below. Spectacular! You don't want to miss this.

At the intersection of US 83 and SR 39, we turned back east toward Kerrville on 39. This is a fantastic drive, crossing the crystal-clear, cypress-lined Guadalupe River some 15 times and providing a chance to see exotic game on several ranches. Caution: Many of these are low-water crossings. Don't drive this road during and after heavy rainfall.

Underground caves and caverns may be explored at two of the 18 parks: Longhorn Cavern off Hwy 281, north of Marble Falls; and Kickapoo Cavern State Park 22 miles north of Bracketville where there's great bird diversity and a chance to see thousands of Mexican free-tailed bats emerging at dusk. Since public access to the cavern is limited to guided tours, call the park for reservations (830-563-2342).

Far from taking visitors underground, Enchanted Rock State Park off Ranch Road 965 north of Fredericksburg displays a

unique pink granite dome rising 425 feet above ground level. One of the nation's largest batholiths (exposed underground rock formations), this one was named by Tonkawa Indians who believed ghost fires flickered at the top. Though this rock appears smooth and featureless from the ground, hikers find unexpected arrays of plant and animal life in its crevices. The park is so popular among rock-climbers and hikers that it sometimes overflows on weekends. Call before you go (325-247-3903). All Hill Country parks are exceptional, including the Lyndon B. Johnson State Historic Park and the LBJ National Historic Park west of Johnson City.

The hills of the Texas Hill Country, indeed alive with the sound of music, can make for a fun and educational motorhome trip whether or not you ever heard of the increasingly-popular genre called Texas Music. That line about how "ain't nobody feelin' no pain" that Willie and Waylon sang about Luckenbach is surely wishful thinking, but it does speak to a more relaxed honest way of life Hill Country natives and visitors cherish.

LUCKENBACH, TEXAS: Where Everybody's Somebody

Truth is, there's not much to look at when you drive into Luckenbach, Texas, the "town" Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson made famous with their 1977 hit song titled simply, "Luckenbach, Texas (Back to the Basics of Love)."

The "town," all 10 acres of it, sits beside Grape Creek. It is closest to Fredericksburg but some 10 miles from "anywhere

else" in the Hill Country. The "business section" consists of a weathered barn lumber building that's a combination general store, U.S. post office, and gift shop. Only steps away, stands another long barn-like building often called Texas' most famous "open-air" dancehall (meaning open windows provide the air conditioning). And there's a small office building occupying

what was once the "egg house" after the town was built as a trading post for German settlers and Comanche Indians in 1849.

These buildings are shaded by giant 500-year-old live oak and pecan trees. It's what happens under the trees that makes Luckenbach unique. On the sweaty-hot afternoon we visited, Kerrville Musician Kimbo Keeting and four others were "picking,

grinning, and practicing" outside. Their music was good and the listening was easy—and free.

"There'll be more tonight," promised David Mann, an ex-IBMer now a part of Luckenbach's "huge" administrative staff of five. He explained how the "picker's circle" works. "Usually, a seasoned professional who can provide backup for anybody doing any kind of music is in charge.



These musicians shared the “picker’s circle” on a recent Thursday night in Luckenbach. The youngster with the hat in the foreground is 13-year old Jimmy DePoy.

It is his responsibility to see that anyone who shows up and wants to perform gets a chance.”

That happens any night there is not a performance scheduled by a Texas music luminary. Even performances by the more famous artists are free to anyone who takes a seat on benches under those trees. And established “names” in Texas music often drop in unannounced, take a seat in the circle, and lend their own musical ability to the music being played.

“Our mission,” Mann says, “is to provide a quiet, restful atmosphere for music—both for those who write, play, and sing it and those who come to listen. There’s never a cover charge. We do not commercialize the music but instead finance the operation with sales from the gift shop and the cold beer many of our visitors order.”

In cold or rainy weather, the picking and singing goes on inside the bar. But there’s music every night and most afternoons.

“Sooner or later, everybody plays Luckenbach and keeps coming back,” says established singer/songwriter Michael Blakely. “It’s

unique—a very special place — where you know people are going to listen and pay attention.”

Danny Terry, a native Mississippian who helped build electrical distribution lines in 16 countries before he retired and moved to Luckenbach because of the music, calls the “town” a little college of music. “Here all the professional musicians and aspir-



Hondo Crouch, a Texas folk hero, bought Luckenbach for \$30,000. An entertainer, rancher, and philosopher, he attracted music talent to Luckenbach with no intention of making money for himself. The inspiration for the hit song, “Let’s Go To Luckenbach, Texas,” Crouch died in 1976.

ing musicians lift each other up,” he says. “That’s the beauty of the people who come here. Players educate each other by playing together, shooting the breeze, trading ideas on how to be more effective in presentations—things like that.

“They all show up under the trees at Luckenbach. Every musician has something he can share with others and, here at least, they are all free with their ideas, their time, talent, and advice. There’s no other venue I know where anyone can walk in and play with pros or accomplished musicians. I’ve never seen another place like it,” Terry continued.

That night, as promised, Fredericksburg Musician Cowboy Doug Davis hosted the “picker’s circle.” An 13-year-old named Jimmy DePoy was one of those sitting in. Jimmy’s dad, Jay, said he moved the family from North Carolina to Fredericksburg because of “the weather, the people, and especially the music” to give his talented son better exposure and a better chance of “making it” as an artist. Young Jimmy is surely a star of the future, if our unprofessional ears mean anything. The kid is that good whether he happens to be doing country, rock and roll, or even semi-classic.

In the course of the evening, several other aspiring amateurs played and sang with the pros in the circle. They all brought their own instruments. “We never know who’s going to show or what they plan to play,” Mann asserts. “Once several years ago, someone unloaded their own piano. Another time, a classical music group climbed into the circle.”

It all goes back, Mann says, to a sage, cowboy-booted, western-hatted “imagineer,” the late Hondo Crouch who, with partners, bought the town in 1970. In 1973, country-rocker Jerry Jeff Walker came to Luckenbach, looking for a laid-back, Texas locale in which to write songs

and record an album, “Viva Terlingua,” which later went “gold.”

The story goes that Walker and Willie Nelson, among leaders in the “outlaw” country music of the day, talked so much about the music-friendly, easy, anything-goes atmosphere at Luckenbach that their stories inspired songwriters Chips Moman and Bobby Emmons. Though they had not been to Luckenbach at that time, the writers caught the spirit and penned “Luckenbach, Texas,” which talks about escaping the race to keep up with the Joneses, getting back to the basics of love, and living the simple life in Luckenbach where “ain’t nobody feelin’ no pain.” Waylon and Willie’s recording became a classic.

That song was picked as one of the top 20 songs about home towns on Country Music Television (CMT) and remained in the running for No. 1 prior to the scheduled broadcast Aug. 29 (2005). “CMT had a great time filming things and people here,” Mann says. “They said Luckenbach was the only entry about a town that really isn’t a town—just a few buildings under the trees.

“We hope, though, they caught the spirit of what Luckenbach is all about. Musicians here give you a chance to play and encourage you, makes no difference who you are – or aren’t. Hondo Crouch coined a slogan we live by,” Mann adds. “Everybody’s somebody in Luckenbach.

FINDING TEXAS MUSIC VENUES

The Texas Hill Country Visitor Center at Johnson City is the best single source for information about artists, venues, dates, and times. A list of phone numbers and web addresses for every Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Bureau in the Hill Country is available at www.hillcountryinfo.com or contact them at 830-868-5700.

MUSIC EVENTS THIS FALL

A monthly tabloid available at any Chamber of Commerce or Tourist Center, *The Stars of Texas*, lists performers, places, dates, and times for hundreds of events. Here is a sampling:

Llano Country Opry, Lan-Tex Theater, Llano (325-247-5354). Events on Oct. 8, Nov. 12, Dec. 10.

Fredericksburg Peach Opry, 1668 Hwy. 87 S. in Fredericksburg (210-831-3272). Oct. 1, Nov. 5, and Dec. 3 Texas Piano Man Keith Magel hosts shows featuring entertainers from Texas and beyond.

Luckenbach, 412 Luckenbach Town Loop, Fredericksburg (830-997-3224 or 888-311-8990). Oct. 1. Ladies State Chili Bust. Dec. 10. Cowboy Christmas Ball.

Hill Country House Concert, Kerrville (830-895-0975). Dec.1, Steve Young.

Symphony of the Hills, Kathleen C. Cailloux Theater, 910 Main Street, Kerrville (830-792-7469). Classical concerts, Oct. 6 and Dec. 1.

Gruene Hall, 1281 Gruene Road, New Braunfels (830-629-5077). Oct. 7-9.

Tommy Alverson's Music Family Gathering, Tres Rios River Ranch and Campground, 2322 CR 312, Glen Rose (254-897-4253).

Community Resource and Recreation Center of Canyon Lake, 125 Mabel Jones Drive, Canyon Lake (800-746-7238). Oct. 15-16.

Texas Fall Harvest Bluegrass Festival, Tres Rios River Ranch and Campground, 2322 CR 312, Glen Rose (254-897-4253). Oct. 28-30.

Austin Celtic Festival, Fiesta Gardens, 2101 Bergman Drive (512-498-4908). Nov. 5-6.

Jazz at Saint James, Saint James Episcopal Church, 3701 East Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Austin (512-926-6339). Nov. 11-13.

Johnny Nicholas Texas All-Star Big Band Bash, Lady Bird Johnson Park Pavilion, Pioneer Pavilion Hall, Hwy 16 South, Fredericksburg (830-997-7182). Nov. 12.

Michael Martin Murphey Cowboy Christmas, Grand Ballroom, Inn of the Hills, 1001 Junction Hwy, Kerrville (830-792-9830). Dec. 13.

A Ride With Bob From Austin to Tulsa. The first-ever musical drama about the life and music of Bob Wills. Starring Ray Benson and Asleep at the Wheel.

Oct. 22-22, Cailloux Theater, Kerrville (830-896-9393). www.caillouxtheater.com

Oct. 28-29, Austin (512-477-6060). www.texasboxoffice.com

P R E S I D E N T ' S C O R N E R

Continued from page 6

tremendous professional skill, dedication, and commitment to oversee 16 supervisors and 630 production employees, and Horace makes that commitment every day.

Barbara started with TMH in March 1975 typing invoices and doing general office work. She probably had cause to wonder back then if this company would ever amount to anything. But she kept the faith and stuck with us. She often kids me that I can't retire before she does. Putting together an office organization is like children's building blocks. You've got key blocks on the foundation row of blocks that support the organization. Well, Barbara is one of our key blocks in the office foundation. Over the years, her knowledge of payroll and insurance, deposits, driver and expense reports, and filing has been the oil that kept the machine running.

Walter Sparks, William Warren, and Donnie George have passed their 25-year anniversaries with TMH. They are in the first wave of production employees to achieve this plateau.

Walter, who we call "Sam," began his career with TMH on Sept. 7, 1976, in the

cabinet shop. Today he is one of our best electricians. He works at Station 8 on the diesel line and ties off all the connections to the breaker box. The functioning of all of the electrical systems in the motorhome depends on the tie-ins to the breaker box being made perfectly.

Donnie joined TMH in October 1979. Today he works in the welding department and operates the metal shearer. Because of all the many lengths of the steel members that it takes to construct a motorhome's frame, accuracy in cutting every piece is important and critical.

William began working with TMH in August 1977. We call him "Rocky." He started out building front caps (long before the days of fiberglass) and T-grills, and setting cabinets on the production line. Today Rocky drives a fork-life truck and enjoys working in materials support.

My thanks and appreciation to each of you for your continued loyalty and excellent work.

Credit where credit is due. We've got a great family here at Tiffin Motorhomes, and I want the RV community to know why we are successful.

TIFFIN MANAGEMENT TEAM

Continued from page 8

causing it to lose its strength. In early motorhome design, doors had square corners. Years of use would cause a door to lose its square and separate. Working with different suppliers, Dotson purchased a machine that bends the molding. He then designed the dies for the door frame and a correspondingly larger door jamb.

Today the Tiffin Door Plant employs 25 metal fabricators who make the storage doors for all five of the Tiffin product lines as well as the entry doors for the Phaeton, the Allegro Bus, and the Zephyr.

Dotson is quick to place the success of the door plant squarely on the shoulders of his employees. "These men are responsible for the success of this operation. Their attention to quality and detail give our doors an extremely low defect rate on the assembly line," he said.

"We haven't done everything right," he laments, "but with Bob's patience we have made this door plant work. I am very thankful that he has the confidence to allow us to do our jobs, fix our problems, and make the needed course corrections."

"When I started here," he smiled, "I didn't think I would be here a year. But next March will make 30 years."

But what happened to bird hunting? "Well, the quail population around here just played out. But I do enjoy bass fishing. Our department has won a few trophies and prizes and had our share of fun in the company's annual fishing tournament," he allowed.

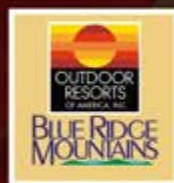
And, Darlene? "She works in Tiffin's parts and service department. It is amazing how many couples both work at TMH," Dotson said. The Dotsons have two very accomplished children. Lana, 26, is a radiologist who works in Cullman, Alabama. Devin, 21, is studying agricultural communications at Auburn University. Out of 3,000 student employees at Auburn, he was honored recently as the university's Number One Student Employee. He has also spent two summers in Washington working for the USDA.

Success runs in the family!

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The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners



Clinton MS Visitor Center on the Natchez Trace

I read *RIS* from cover to cover because we have traveled thousands of miles in our Allegro Bus. Like everyone, we could not be happier with our motorhome and the service we receive at Red Bay. For the last five years we have been full-timers serving as workampers across the U.S.

For the next two years, we will be in our hometown working in the new \$2,000,000 Clinton Visitor Center at Milepost 89 on the

Natchez Trace. Since *Roughing It Smoothly* and *Side Roads* have had several articles about the Natchez Trace and its recent completion, we wanted to issue an invitation to motorhomers to stop and visit our new center. It is a great place to take a break, see our museum, and visit the gift shop. And we will have a wonderful free cup of coffee waiting for you.

Jacque McLemore
Clinton, Mississippi

Northern Idaho

Your super article on Northern Idaho grabbed my attention. It brought back vivid memories of the months I spent soaking up the beauty and serenity of Lake Pend Oreille, trips to the USO in Coeur d'Alene and catching the train to Spokane for weekend R&R.

After completing Hospital Corps School at Farragut, I served in the Navy Hospital where hundreds of Navy and Marine wounded were brought for extend corrective surgery and rehabilitation. Some of my greatest joys of service were working with an ophthalmologist in the eye clinic, and seeing men cry with joy when they could see again when the eye bandages came off.

On the wall in my office is a

panoramic 12 x 48 inch photo of Farragut Naval Training Station. I purchased the picture as a birthday gift for my father in 1944. It clearly shows all the six camps, the drill halls, the marching fields, indoor swimming pools, the hospital, and the massive sewage treatment plant.

Ain't History Great?

Robert D. Roler
Kokomo, Indiana

When luxury is a necessity

May 29, 2005. I am in the process of trading my 2005 Excursion 39L for a 2005 Zephyr at LazyDays. Some RVers like luxury just because it's nice. But for those of us who are disabled and cannot travel by any other means, luxury

becomes a necessity. I have owned two coaches since I took medical retirement from the military. Until today, I had not been able to find a driver's seat or couch that was comfortable. Today I stepped into a Zephyr and sat on one of the sofas—the first time I have sat comfortably in a motorhome. Thank you for making such a quality coach.

Major Richard Earl
USMC, Retired

Response Time

I did a lot of looking and research before I bought a 1999 39-ft. Allegro Bus. Many told me that Tiffin had the best reputation in the industry for support after the sale. Even today, I think that my Allegro Bus is better than most of the new coaches I see at shows. Recently, I had cause to check the service. I tripped a circuit breaker and emailed Tiffin to find out where it was located. They called me back 15 minutes later and seemed glad to help. I am IMPRESSED! Thanks a million.

Gil Hebert

Recommendations from Our Readers

Calhoun Falls State Recreation Area in South Carolina

Our trip to Calhoun Falls was really great and we would like to recommend it to others in the Tiffin motorhome family. The Calhoun Falls State Recreation Area is located on Lake Russell. Coves on this 26,650-acre lake offer excellent fishing with an

abundance of bass, bluegill, crappie, and catfish. Three campgrounds are located along the shores of the lake. Two of the campgrounds provide water and electrical hookups. Some of these sites accommodate RVs up to 40 feet. Other amenities include nice hiking trails, picnic areas, tennis courts, and swimming.

Raymond Raines
Easley, SC

Algonquin Park

We have a 2003 Allegro Bus and spend six months in Canada and six months in the U.S. My wife, Gerry, is a Canadian. A great place that we would like to recommend to our Tiffin family is Algonquin Park in Northern Ontario. Of course, this is a summer destination. Hope you will try it next summer.

Ron Steward
Ocklawaha, Florida

Danna's BBQ in Branson

We have a great BBQ restaurant in Branson, Missouri. Next time you're in Branson, try Danna's at two locations: Hwy 165 or Hwy 13 South off of Hwy 76.

Darlene Bloomquist
Lampe, Missouri

Bluewater RV Resort near Key West

We thoroughly enjoyed the Bluewater RV Resort 14 miles north of Key West. It is the most beautiful park we've ever seen. You can find them on the internet at www.bluewaterkey.com. Their rates include 50-amp, water, sewer, and cable.

Rob & Sandy Stidd
Mooresville, NC

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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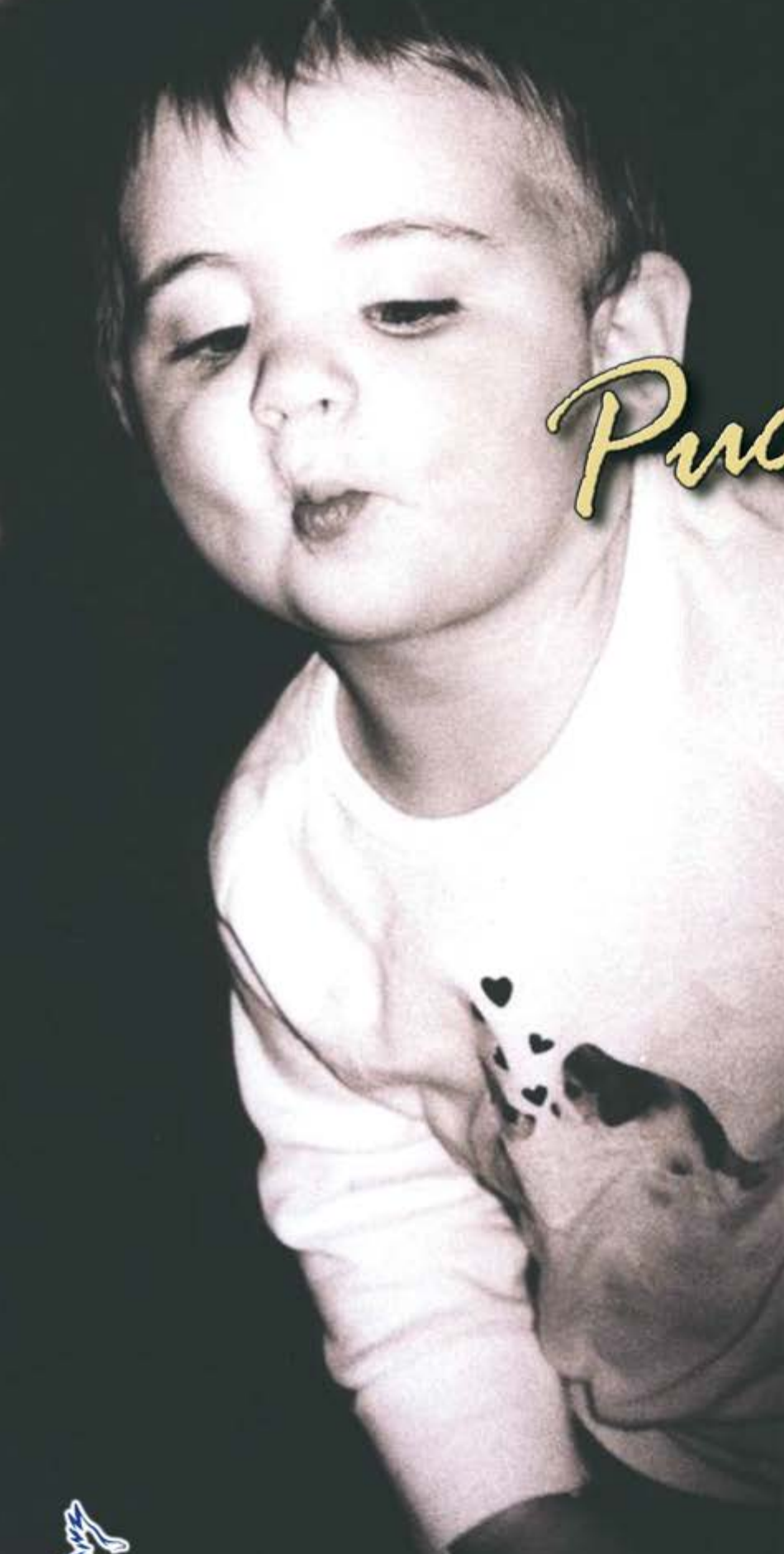
1 From an independent study conducted by URI Information Services and Dr. James E. Fisher, St. Louis University.

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

5 Premium not offered in State of Texas.



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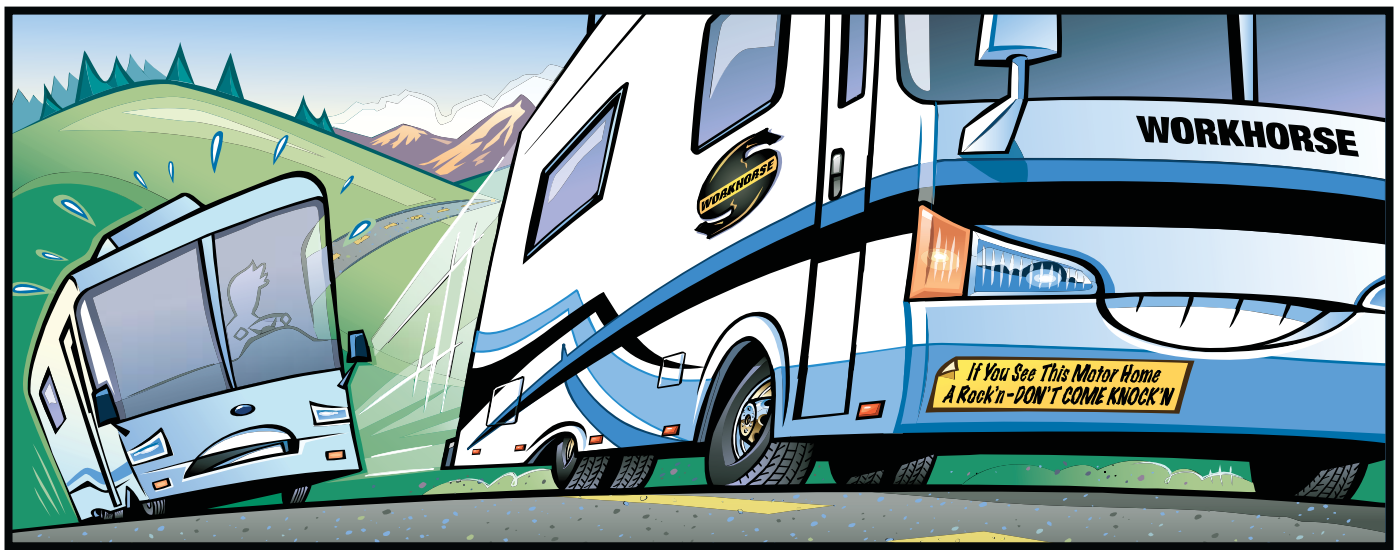
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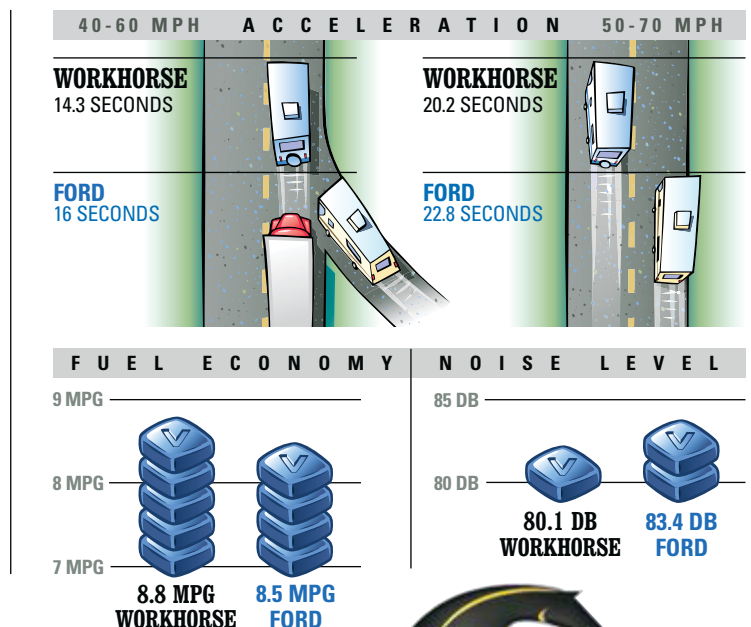
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* Based on independent tests performed at Bosch Proving Grounds, South Bend, Ind., May 2005. All specifications based on the latest product information available at the time of content approval.

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