

# Roughing It Smoothly



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## SPECIAL

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## Roughing It Smoothly®

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### Editor's Note

Beginning with our January 2008 issue of *RIS*, each contributor to "From the Road" will receive a *Roughing It Smoothly* T-shirt. Please be sure to indicate on your card or letter your size: Medium, Large, or Extra Large. We are looking forward to receiving a landslide of responses. Space is limited, so mail early!

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. Send address changes to the above address or email them to fredthompson1941@hotmail.com. Subject line of email should say "RIS address change."



# Family Management

## WHATEVER IT TAKES

by Bob Tiffin with Van Tiffin

As a youngster, Van wanted to tear everything apart to see how it worked and then try to put it back together. As often as not, he would take the parts and try to make something different. One time he took a bicycle and a tricycle apart and built a truck wagon to race down the hill in front of our house. He and two cousins built a fine racer but they got bunged up several times. I guess brakes were not part of their design. Van was always building things – bird houses were a favorite item and he came up with several designs.

He was rather young when he learned how to ride his bike. We lived on a hill and when he got going pretty fast, he would aim for the front yard and drag his feet across the grass to stop the bike.

Later Van and the cousins decided to build a tree house. Somehow it caught on fire and created a big mess. My brother-in-law wrote them a letter saying they were covered by the National Treehouse Fire Insurance Company and that they should submit a claim immediately. They did and he sent them a small payment.

By the time he was 12, Van was working at Tiffin Supply learning how to repair air conditioners, water pumps, refrigerators, washing machines, and stoves. This was a major part of his education in how things worked.

When he got to high school, Van weighed about 145 pounds and was trying to play linebacker on the varsity team. About that time, the University of Alabama put together several good seasons and went to the Sugar Bowl in '77, '78, and '79. They beat Penn State 14-7 and won the National Championship on Jan. 1, 1979. Woody Umphrey, Alabama's left-footed punter, kept Penn State in the corner time after time and helped win the game. John Underwood wrote a real nice article in *Sports Illustrated* about the game and mentioned Umphrey and his kicking coach, Dr. Edward Story. Dr. Story was an engineering professor at a university in Florida. I found his name in the phone book, called him, and explained Van's interest in punting and kicking. He graciously said, "Sure, bring Van on down here."

When Spring Break came in March, Mickey Kennedy took Van and Tim to Florida and Van got three days of instruction on place kicking and punting. I remember very well the day they left. Van was 15. When they got there, Mickey had a hard time finding a place to park the motorhome for three days. In the meantime, I bought 30 footballs for Van to use in practice when he returned.

After that first trip, Van went three times a year for further instruction from Dr. Story. Van thought nothing of practicing six days a week. He had a



DEAN DIXON PHOTOGRAPHY



good punting average in high school. His longest field goal was 45 yards.

When he finished high school in 1983, Alabama wanted him to walk on and Southern Miss offered him a full scholarship. He made official visits to Alabama and Southern Mississippi. Coach “Bear” Bryant was getting ready to retire. Judy, Van, and I went in to talk to Coach Bryant about Van’s future. In talking about Van, he said, “Sometimes they come wrapped in small packages.” After he learned that we built motorhomes in Red Bay, he said, “When I retire, I’m gonna get me one of those campers and go to Birmingham and eat fried chicken like everybody else.” Sadly, Coach Bryant died 10 days after we met with him.

Peter Kim, Alabama’s place kicker at that time, encouraged Van to walk on, and that’s what he ultimately decided to do. Van had a real work ethic that most kids that age don’t have—an ability to stay focused on a job or project at hand and never get distracted. He missed his first extra point kick in high school and then never missed again. In college, he never missed an extra point kick. What he learned about concentration and focus in football has served him well in business.

*Editor’s Note:* From this point, Van is writing the story.

During the last year of my college eligibility, Michelle and I got married. In the Spring of 1987, I went to the NFL spring training camp in Atlanta. I eventually played three strike games for Tampa Bay and the last game of the season at Miami. In the Spring of 1988, I went to Tampa and got cut in the training camp. Michelle and I decided we were ready to start our family, so we came back to Red Bay and I went to work at Tiffin Motorhomes. Since I had not finished all of the course work for my degree, I left TMH and returned to the University of Alabama. I graduated in 1990 with a degree in public relations.

In May of 1990 I began working full time at TMH. At first I took parts and service calls. It was good experience from the back end because you learned on any specific problem what parts were required to make the repair. I didn’t get involved in manufacturing for several years. In a family business, you float from one department to another and soon get a broad familiarity and understanding of how the company operates. After I had been working here for seven years, it all came into focus.

In 1997 Tim and I took a fact-finding trip to assess our competition. We visited several dealers who carried most of the other Class A brands and determined that our motorhomes did not compete well. We made our report to Bob during which I made the statement, “We will do whatever it takes to make our motorhomes sell.” He latched on and has energized that comment for the past 10 years. For me at the time, it was just a statement about what we needed to do to be successful. I had no idea how powerful “whatever it takes” could become with our plant and department managers, our supervisors, and all of our employees.

We had been using standard, off-the-shelf doors on our cabinets. That Spring we built a cabinet door plant and it became my responsibility to see that it was successful. If there was a

problem with color, finish, woodworking equipment, supply line, I had to take care of it. I began to see problems as opportunities to improve.

I started asking Bob if we could make minor changes, little stuff that made a noticeable difference. At first I had to get his confidence. I visited equipment shows and found some pretty expensive pieces that would increase our production and our quality. He approved the purchases.

Then I began to get involved in design, with more creative millwork and more complex processes. In the late ’90s we made a lot of changes on the fly from customer suggestions, or whenever we thought an improvement should be made. Then we became a little more sophisticated and began holding off the changes for implementation during the model year changeovers.

We sent surveys to customers and analyzed what the competition was doing. The evolution of design translated into more engineering and careful planning. In 1998 we had no process or mechanical engineers and one draftsman. When Tim became the general manager, he saw the need for industrial, mechanical, and electrical engineers. Somewhere during this transition, I became the director of design and product development.

At that time the process engineering for the front and rear caps was outsourced. Today, all of that technology is under our roof. A progression of changes began to take place. At first, to take care of new floorplans and cabinet designs, Tim hired more draftsmen. Some of our people went to night school on the AutoCad. Around 1999 we bought a CNC (computer numerically controlled) Panel Saw. In 2002 we added a CNC Router, a three-dimensional saw which is used to create the prototypes for the fiberglass molds to make fenders, shower stalls, and other curved components.

In 1999 Tim and I determined the positions we needed to fill and he began to hire degreed engineers. It was great to watch them all converge on a floorplan, each bringing specialized skills to the table to improve process design, and ultimately the final product.

Within a couple of years, we started breaking the process design down into smaller units: cabinets, sidewalls, roofs, floors, wiring, and later on, countertops and slide-out boxes. By focusing on the detail of smaller units, both our design and quality improved. When an engineer can concentrate on specific areas of the motorhome, he can get really good at it.

Today, in R&D we build a full-scale model of each new floorplan on an actual chassis that has gone through the welding shop. When we take a concept to a physical reality in the R&D shop, we find all kinds of problems. An engineer can analyze a three-dimensional drawing of his plan. But when he physically gets inside the mock-up, he really knows for sure how well the floorplan works. It generally takes four months to take the concepts for a new floorplan to a full-scale prototype.

If we did not make a full-scale model, we would have two problems: (1) we couldn’t prove that all of the components fit

*Continued on page 36*





# The Allegro Bus 43 QRP

## When Luxury and Convenience Are at the Top of Your List

Text by Fred Thompson

Photography by Peter Finger

Tiffin Motorhomes continues to raise the bar, delivering high-end residential features at prices that make the competition shake their heads in disbelief. Coach build quality, practical floorplans, and a reputation for the best service in the Class A industry are responsible for the unprecedented demand the company is enjoying.

One recent visitor to the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay expressed the sentiment of many RVers shopping in the high-end market. "I had rather own a luxury coach and enjoy using

it to see this great country than stay put in one place in my \$350,000 house," he said.

Tiffin designers and engineers focused on putting all the fine appointments of that \$350,000 house into the Allegro Bus 43 QRP. They build the house, you find the scenery. It may be in a campground overlooking the Pacific, a snow-bound site in the Rockies near the best slopes, a sunny beach in the Keys, a special place in the western desert. This coach may be your best bet to launch that second honeymoon. Its sheer luxury



will make the trip worth taking—its components spell comfort over and over.

Just a few of those features: ceramic tile with polished granite inlays; solid cherry cabinetry; three entertainment centers; an Amana residential refrigerator; a Fisher & Paykel dishwasher; a Whirlpool stacked washer and dryer; a contoured, soft Ultraleather™ dinette and sofa; a king-size Sleep Comfort bed. Do we need to go on? An Aqua-Hot system providing on-demand hot water and a hydronic heating system; an in-motion tracking satellite system; and there's even more.

### Getting Inside

As I stepped into the 43QRP, I discovered an unanticipated level of luxury and amenities at an MSRP of only \$348,334. The primary eye-catcher is the sofa/booth dinette combination in the driver's side slide-out. Designed by Flexsteel specifically for this coach, the sectional sofa envelopes you in soft Ultraleather™ with a foot rest serving the forward-most seat. The curved sofa with seating for three conceals two large floor-level drawers with

4.5 cu. ft. of storage. The passenger side features an 83-inch Ultraleather™ sleeper-sofa which will comfortably seat three. When you rotate the driver's and passenger's 8-way adjustable Ultraleather™ travel chairs, you'll have conversational seating for eight. With the two front slides out, the living/dining/galley area measures a walloping 20'10" by 12'4". Accented by the ceramic tile floor and handsome solid cherry millwork in the crown molding and valances, the living area is sectionally illuminated by 30 recessed barrel lights, two map lights, three wall sconces, and an attractive two-globe fixture over the dining table. Muted earth colors in the fabrics used for the valances and the backs of the dinette seating add an air of relaxation to the overall decor.

A glazed, cocoa-stained hutch with a solid surface countertop located at the center of the coach sits just beneath a standard wall-mounted 32-inch HDMI flat-panel television. An optional 32-inch HDMI television is positioned over the dash, allowing occupants a comfortable view from any seat in the room. If you are

tailgating at a football game, you could keep up with two games at the same time in the living room. Turn on the bedroom TV and the optional exterior 32-inch TV in the slide-out wall, and you and your guests can follow four games simultaneously.

In the living area, the cabinets above the two sofas present nearly 24 cu. ft. of storage, succinctly recessed so their depth is not obvious. Each valance is accented with three handsome cherry panels adorned with carved medallion insets. An MCD single piece blackout shade is mounted in tandem with a solar shade at each window. Valances conceal the double mount.

The galley in this coach is versatile. With 34 sq. ft. of solid surface countertop, you can serve buffet style with support from your residential appliances: a 22 cu. ft. side-by-side refrigerator/freezer with service through the door for ice and water; a Sharp microwave-convection oven with complete settings for cooking meats, vegetables, casseroles, breads, cakes, and prepared frozen foods; a dishwasher for easy





clean-up after the party; a double stainless steel sink with brushed nickel single-lever control for the combination faucet/sprayer; and a gas-on-glass two burner cooktop. With a three-burner cooktop as an option, this is a galley for the serious chef. Tiffin designers recessed the residential refrigerator/freezer into the driver's side slide-out to provide more space for moving about in the galley.

As you move through the center aisle bath, you will be impressed with the large lavatory on the driver's side with a 31 × 34-inch solid surface countertop and integrated lavatory bowl. The brushed nickel hardware that includes a liquid soap dispenser adds a touch of residential class. The designs in the full-height back-splashes have a Roman flair. The medicine cabinet is huge: 11.5 inches deep × 21 wide and 31 high. Theatre lighting accents the cherry-framed mirror. The vanity has two 27-inch deep drawers and a large cabinet.

Measuring 41 inches across and 32 inches deep with a skylight above, the shower with a curved fluted glass sliding door is nothing short of elegant. The single-lever control allows you to change the water temp easily as you bathe. With full hookups, you can enjoy a hot shower as long as your heart desires. The coach's standard Aqua-Hot system heats your water on demand by passing it through a copper coil positioned over a burner drawing fuel from your diesel tank. The Aqua-Hot technology also is used to heat the coach with hot water heat exchangers positioned throughout the coach. Three temperature zones can be maintained concurrently.

Enclosed by an extra heavy recessed panel door, the toilet compartment with a separate lavatory is located on the passenger side. The lavatory features a 24 × 30-inch solid surface countertop and a 13-inch backsplash with a brushed nickel single-lever faucet and accompanying liquid soap dispenser. The vanity offers three 17-inch deep drawers and a cabinet with over three cubic feet of storage. A handsome cherry magazine rack and theatre lighting could easily turn this essential







room into the proverbial library. Two large medicine cabinets with mirrored doors on the front and back walls of the compartment guarantee plenty of space for bath and medical items. Towel rings, bars, and hooks are strategically placed. The top-of-the-line SeaLand toilet with a residential handle flush lever and wall-mounted spray head completes the well-appointed bath which has a floor area of 4'8" x 6'6". The compartment's control panel includes light switches, 110v outlet, exhaust fan, and water pump, all easily reached from a seated position.

Facing the aisle and concealed by a solid cherry panel door, a stacked washer and dryer plus storage space offers a complete laundry facility. Tiffin selected the Whirlpool brand for its large capacity, variety of settings, and dependability. The Whirlpool Corporation recently developed RV "In Coach" Service, a major innovation in servicing appliances aboard motorhomes. When you place a call to their 800-number, a factory authorized service representative will come to your coach. The service also covers the Amana residential refrigerator. There currently are over 6,000 "In Coach" locations throughout the U.S. and Canada.



The master bedroom is equally well appointed. With both bedroom slides deployed, and including the closet depth, the bedroom floor measures 11'3" long by 11'5" wide. The mood of the decor and lighting is restful and serene. Thirteen recessed barrel lights offer soft overhead illumination, while four reading lamps positioned at the head of the bed provide just the right angle to attack the latest best seller. But be forewarned. Reclining on the optional Sleep Comfort king bed may put you in dream land before you finish the first page. The demand for this sleep system has been amazing. Whether you order a queen or a king size bed, each side can be adjusted for the softness-firmness level desired on a scale from 10 to 100.



The residential design philosophy is very evident in the bedroom when you observe the spaciousness of the built-in drawers and closets. There are six drawers 14½ x 10 x 7 (depth) inches, one at 22½ x



10 × 6¾, and two on the back wall under the closets are 22½ × 23 × 6¾. No more problems divvying up the “his & her’s” drawers. The clothes hamper is huge – 3¼ cubic feet! The lady’s full-length closet is 63½ inches wide × 67 high × 23½ deep. The gentleman’s shirt-length closet is 31 inches wide × 39½ high × 25¼ deep. The back walls of both closets are cedar lined.

The overhead cabinets in the two bedroom slide-outs offer 16.5 cubic feet of storage. A shoe cupboard with shelf is neatly tucked away under the closets.

Some of the extra length of this coach was dedicated to the “walk-around” space in the bedroom. Even with the king-size bed (72 × 80 inches), two can move about easily through the 4-foot wide floor area between the passenger slide-out and the end of the bed. Tiffin designers added two large end tables with deep drawers on either side of the bed, providing space for personal items and even a clock radio/ alarm. Overhead speakers bring in the morning news or your favorite CD from the 5-disk DVD player.

One side of the bed slide-out offers a window for good cross ventilation on pleasant evenings. The opposite slide has a 38 × 18½-inch window. This slide also houses a 26-inch HDMI flat panel television which functions independently from the other televisions in the coach. It can source programming from satellite, cable, DVD, and antenna, making the bedroom a nice escape if one member of the troupe wants to catch a movie while the guys watch the satellite sports channel.

### The Cockpit

Switching ends, let’s take a close look at the cockpit. Spartan presents a nice assembly of gauges with a large display of the MPH and RPM dials, surrounded by smaller displays of OIL PSI, ENGINE TEMP, FUEL, FRONT & REAR AIR PRESSURE, and VOLTS. Spartan’s SMART WHEEL makes driving the 43QRP much easier with thumb control switches for CRUISE CONTROL, HEADLIGHTS, and WINDSHIELD WIPERS & WASHER. The controls are backlit for easy identification during night driving.

On the driver’s right dash, a Sony color







monitor displays the back-up camera and two side cameras. The HVAC controls are easily read and safely used by the driver while underway. Two 12v outlets are conveniently positioned.

On the driver's left dash are several controls for exterior functional equipment including the spotlight with directional control, the "jacks down" warning light, the genset start, the generator hours record, headlights, and mirror controls.

On the driver's left in a sidewall console, Tiffin positions the Allison touch-shift transmission which includes an economy mode. The console also houses an array of switches for auxiliary generator start, horn, radio, +/- pedal depth adjustment, step cover switch, docking lights, L/R windshield fans, engine pre-heat, the opaque and sun screen visors, the tag dump, map light, and the engine brake. The rear section of the console presents the HWH hydraulic leveling system and the parking brake.

A service console between the driver and passenger seats offers two drawers for maps and other items that require quick access, two cup holders, and a handy catch-all box. Across the dash, Tiffin has positioned five HVAC vents. The passenger will find multiple uses for a handy slide-out desk which is serviced by 12v, 110v, and phone jack outlets. Since the Xantrex inverter powers the 110v outlet while you are underway, we connected our laptop with navigation software and made the passenger a true co-pilot.

As standard equipment, the captain's and passenger's chairs are top-of-the-line seating. The passenger chair has a variable position foot rest that holds any position from 0 to 90 degrees. The passenger chair has a separate map light, a second wall-mounted cup holder, and a solid cherry magazine rack.

For 2008, Tiffin increased the width of the entry door to 30 inches. The entry has a separate awning (39 × 48 inches) supported by two scissor extenders. The patio awning (20 × 8½ feet) features an optional drop down motorized sun screen.

### **The Outside Walkaround**

An outside inspection of this coach immediately draws attention to its immaculate full body paint. The paint on the front cap is protected by Diamond Shield, a clear material that is in-

stalled by hand in Final Finish at the Tiffin's Belmont plant. Should the paint be chipped by rocks from the road, the Diamond Shield warranty covers repainting the front cap.

The front slide houses a 12 Kw Onan generator capable of powering all three of the 15,000 BTU roof AC/heat pumps. When dry camping is on the agenda, you've got the power to keep you comfortable.

Now standard on all of the Tiffin brands, the one-piece panoramic windshield (53 × 103 inches) opens up your world – whether parked at an overlook in the Southwest enjoying the late afternoon sun or driving down Highway 1 on the California coast, it brings the vistas of the outside world into your living room.

Chromed and heated, the coach's two-piece mirrors are fully adjustable from a dash-mounted control. The safety of the side view is enhanced by cameras mounted on the front corners of the coach. With no dead spots, the cameras give a full view of the coach's side when you need to change lanes. The rear camera will help you assess the amount of clearance between the coach or your tow car and the vehicle following you.

As usual, basement storage is huge. The optional slide-out trays allow easy access to your cargo. Depending on how you measure the vertical space between the I-beams, you can easily count 120 cubic feet of storage in the basement, available through the first three side-mounted doors.

The fourth bay houses the Aqua-Hot heating system and the central vacuum system, plus it yields another four cubic feet of storage space. The fifth and sixth bays contain the coach and house batteries.

The handsome rear cap sports double Tahoe tail lights on each side and an additional red strip light, centered left-to-right and top-to-bottom. Five yellow running lights across the top complete the safety features. A half-length ladder provides roof access after attaching a safety extension stored in the forward bay. Two large doors in the rear cap make it very easy to service the powerful Cummins ISL 8.9 liter 425 hp electronic diesel engine. All service points are clearly marked and easily reached. The side-mounted cooling package is an extra large vertically stacked modulated radiator.

Switching to the driver's side, I was surprised to find the 50-amp power cord reel-mounted in a small compartment at the back corner of the coach. Accessible directly through the outside wall of the coach, it is no longer necessary to go through one of the storage compartments to reach the power cord.

The utility service bay follows Tiffin's past standards of building a well-organized, clearly labeled, easy-to-use system. It includes a reel-mounted water hose, water pump and filter, black and grey dump system, and a double entry for cable and tripod connections. The water tank and pump drain are connected to a single valve. Liquid soap and towel dispensers along with a hot/cold shower head enable a quick clean-up and good sanitation. The compartment also has a standard phone connection for extended stays.

The adjacent bay provides service access to the coach's Aqua-



Hot system. The coach's full basement storage with one optional bi-directional slide-out tray can be reached through the next two side opening doors. Moving toward the front, the control panel and hydraulic pump for the HWH leveling system is located in the next compartment. Just forward of the front left tire, a small compartment contains a carefully labeled fuse panel and the connection for the compressed air pump. Of course, the availability of compressed air makes it very convenient for you to maintain accurate pressure in the tires.

With its stylish design, front cap conceals a 10,000 Kw Onan Quiet Diesel generator, which has a powered slide to move it out on twin rails for service. The power system has the capability to simultaneously run all three of the 43 QRP's 13,500 BTU air conditioner/heat pumps. The HVAC system has drain tubes strategically placed under Tiffin's one-piece fiberglass roof, allowing condensate to reach the ground without leaving streaks down the sides of the attractive paint job. Full body paint is a standard feature on all of the Allegro Bus models.

The roof system is also home to a King Dome automatic satellite receiver, a 125-watt solar panel, and Tiffin's exclusive Mini-State television antenna. The solar panel trickle charges the coach batteries. With a height of less than 12 inches, the Mini-State's disk-shaped housing encloses an operator controlled powered rotational antenna. In tests at Red Bay, it has picked up clear signals for as many as 19 stations compared to a standard crank-up antenna which brought in only two stations.

The optional Pro Sine Inverter is especially useful when shore power is unavailable and generator use is restricted. The 3000-watt inverter will use the house batteries to source power to all of the televisions, the convection-microwave oven, and the refrigerator.

## Driving the 43 QRP

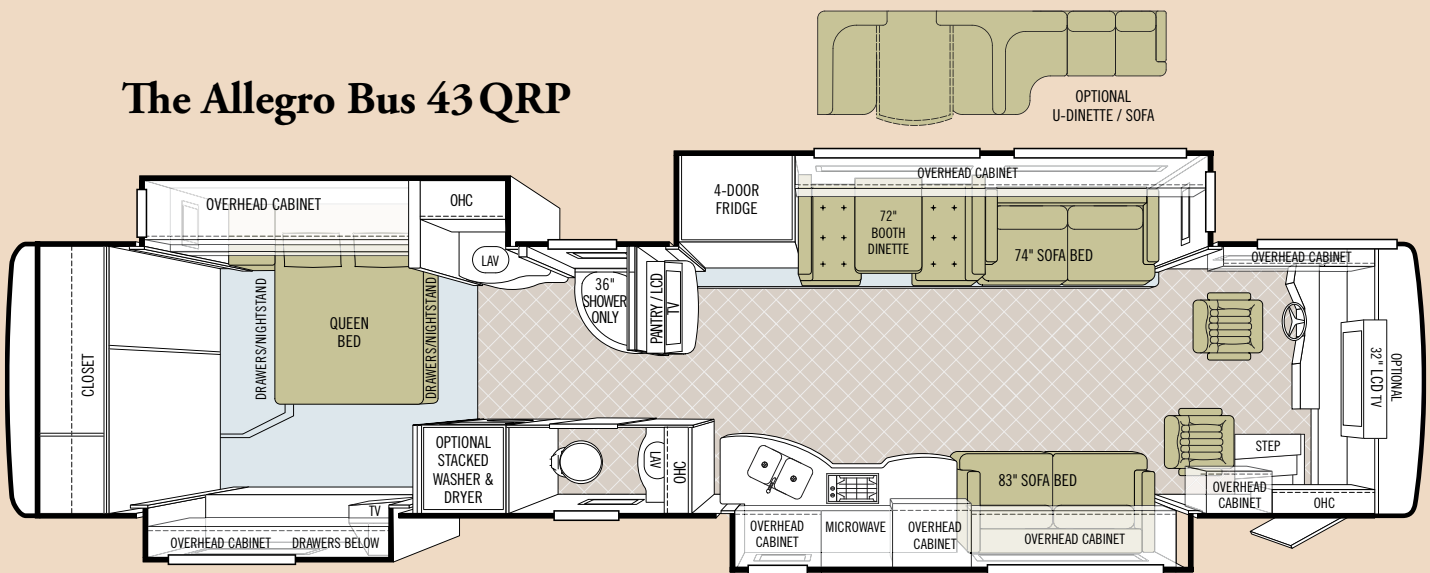
Powered by the Cummins ISL 8.9 liter 425 hp electronic diesel engine, the coach's smooth take-off from a traffic light was impressive. Certainly no race car, the QRP nevertheless reached 60 mph in just 16 seconds from a 20 mph rolling start on an interstate ramp. To pass slower moving traffic, it moved from 55 mph to 70 in just eight seconds. There is very little play in the steering, giving you an immediate response when making lane changes. The braking systems are firm and confident with full air brakes and auto slack adjusters front and rear. For long grades, Spartan added a two-stage engine compression brake.

Tiffin brought driving comfort to a peak with Flexsteel's 8-way power seats. The Ultraleather™ over deep padding makes driving a pleasure — I actually felt rested after driving 350 miles. The multi-directional power adjustments encourage the driver to shift positions often to promote good circulation.

Is the 43 QRP a gas hog? Not really when you consider the GVWR is 44,600 lbs. and the GCWR is 59,600 lbs. Checking mileage electronically, the coach logged in at 7.8 mpg at an average speed of 65 at 1,800 rpm. The check was made on I-65 South in Tennessee between mileposts 80 and 100. As noted in the beginning, when luxury and convenience are at the top of your list, the 43 QRP is your coach.

One full-timer remarked recently while visiting the Red Bay Service Center, "We are not going to give up our dream of traveling in this beautiful coach because gas prices have gone up a dollar a gallon in the last year. We pick out a nice campground in a central location and then see everything by car in a 50- to 100-mile radius." That's a good method of operation for enjoying this great coach. **RIS**

## The Allegro Bus 43 QRP





# SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2008 Allegro Bus 43QRP, Quad Slide Base MSRP\* – \$324,800 MSRP as tested with options – \$345,534

## STANDARD FEATURES

### Structural

Laminated floor, sidewall, and roof  
Steel / aluminum reinforced structure  
Full one-piece molded fiberglass roof cap

### Automotive

Allison GEN 4 – 3000 MH electronic 6-speed automatic transmission with two overdrives and lock-up (torque converter), new push button shift pad  
Cummins ISL 8.9 liter 425 hp electronic / turbocharged diesel  
1,200 lbs.-ft. torque @ 1,300 rpm  
Side-mounted radiator  
Two-stage compression engine brake  
Six Accuride aluminum wheels and two steel wheels  
Raised rail chassis frame  
Emergency start switch  
HWH fully automatic hydraulic leveling jacks  
Air ride (6 air bags)  
Air brakes with automatic slack adjusters and ABS  
55° wheel cut  
Adjustable fuel and brake pedals  
18-inch leather wrapped Smart Wheel with cruise, lights, and wiper controls  
Tilt steering column  
Reyco 240AR air suspension

### Exterior

Fiberglass front and rear caps  
Dual fuel fills  
Full body paint  
Large one-piece tinted windshield  
17.5" heated chrome power mirrors with remote adjustment  
Single motor intermittent wiper  
Undercoating  
Fog lights  
Daytime running lights  
Deadbolt entrance door  
30-inch wide entry door  
Keyless entry door system  
Double electric step  
Dual pane tinted windows  
Exterior patio light on driver's side  
Exterior patio light on passenger's side  
Electric door awning  
Electric patio awning  
Window awning package  
Slide-out awnings with metal-wrapped covers  
Pass-through basement storage  
Swing-out exterior storage doors  
Single handle auto-lockable storage door latches  
Heated water and holding tank compartments  
Docking lights  
Luggage compartment lights  
Onan® 10,000 Kw generator  
Auto generator start  
Three 13,500 BTU low profile roof air conditioners with heat pumps  
Six house batteries with residential refrigerator  
2000 watt inverter  
Custom full-width mud flap  
50-amp service  
Power cord reel, 50-amp  
Park telephone ready  
Cable ready TV  
Black holding tank flush system  
110v exterior receptacle  
Exterior rinse hose with soap dispenser & paper towel holder  
Molded fiberglass roof cap  
Spotlight with remote  
Hadley air horns  
Automatic satellite dish

TV antenna with booster  
CB radio antenna  
Power Fantastic® roof vent with 3-speed fan  
Roof ladder  
Color back-up camera  
Two side cameras activated with turn signal  
Water filter  
Quiet A/C roof-ducted system

### Driver's Compartment

Flexsteel® 8-way power driver's seat with Ultraleather™  
Flexsteel® 8-way power passenger's seat with Ultraleather™ and footrest  
Power window on driver's side  
Entry floor light  
12v disconnect switch  
Padded dash  
Lighted instrument panel  
Passenger seat console box with built-in magazine rack  
Full width power MCD opaque windshield shade  
Full width power solar windshield shade  
Fire extinguisher  
Dual dash fans  
Slide-out drawer and writing desk in dash  
12v / 110v / phone jack receptacle  
Driver / passenger side windows solar / privacy shades  
Beverage tray

### Living area / dinette

Booth dinette with solid surface table top  
12v and 110v receptacles, park ready phone jack at dinette  
Full tile in living room and galley  
32-inch flat screen HDMI color television wall-mounted in entertainment center  
Ultraleather™ 83-inch DE sofa sleeper (passenger's side)  
Cloth 74" DE sofa bed (driver's side)

### Kitchen

Polished solid surface countertops  
Solid surface sink covers with storage racks  
Expand-an-island  
2½" deep lighted toe kick  
4-door stainless steel refrigerator with ice maker  
Single lever sink faucet with built-in sprayer  
Residential double bowl stainless steel sink  
Stainless steel convection microwave oven  
2-burner gas-on-glass cooktop  
Galley soap dispenser  
Above floor galley slide-out  
Sink and stove cover racks (under the sink)  
Cherry cabinetry

### Bath

Two medicine cabinets with vanity lights  
Skylight in shower  
Solid surface vanity tops and bowls  
Custom raised panel bath door to water closet  
Curved shower enclosure and door  
3-speed Fantastic® fan  
Fiberglass molded shower

### Bedroom

Two cedar-lined wardrobes: 63½-inch full-length and 31-inch shirt length  
Eight OH storage cabinets  
Chests with nine drawers  
3.5 cu. ft. laundry hamper  
Bed comforter with throw pillows  
Queen-size bed  
Innerspring pillow top mattress  
Solid wood and fabric headboard  
Solid surface nightstand tops  
26" flat panel HDMI color television  
DVD-satellite receiver cabinet and wiring  
Carbon monoxide detector  
LPG leak detector

### General Interior

7-foot ceiling  
Soft touch vinyl ceiling  
Raised panel cabinet doors  
Soft cloth covered cabinet shelves  
Recessed ceiling lighting  
12v fluorescent lights  
Enclosed surround sound speakers  
Plumbed for washer / dryer with cabinet  
Fantastic® 3-speed fan  
Tank level monitor system  
Smoke detector  
Central vacuum system  
Air-driven step well cover  
Wall-to-wall carpeting in bedroom  
Solar shades and black-out MCD shades on all windows except galley, water closet, and bedroom  
Ceramic tile flooring in kitchen, bath, entrance landing, and living room  
Hydronic diesel/electric heating system and water heater  
Complete HDMI television system  
Complete cable wiring interfacing with surround sound and satellite receiver

## OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

In motion low profile satellite dish  
Residential refrigerator with inverter and solar panel  
One slide-out storage tray  
32" exterior television mounted in slide-out wall  
32" front overhead HDMI television  
3000 watt pro sine inverter  
Sirius satellite radio (subscription required)  
Rear view mirror with compass and outside temperature  
Handheld CB radio  
Dishwasher, drawer type  
Stacked washer and dryer  
Glazed hutch  
Extended drop down awning  
Diamond Shield paint protective film  
Dual MCD windshield shade  
Sofa-booth dinette combination  
Select Comfort mattress, king  
HDTV digital antenna

## OTHER OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

Second storage compartment slide-out tray  
Computer navigational system  
Free standing dinette with solid surface table top and built-in hutch  
DRIVER'S SIDE  
Ultraleather™ Flexsteel® DE sofa bed  
Ultraleather™ Air Coil® hide-a-bed  
Cloth Air Coil® hide-a-bed  
Two Ultraleather™ Euro recliners with center table  
Cloth magic bed  
Ultraleather™ magic bed  
Ultraleather™ Euro recliner with computer/end table  
3-burner cooktop with gas oven  
Select Comfort mattress, queen  
Combo washer/dryer  
Natural maple cabinetry  
Natural cherry cabinetry  
Cherry bark cabinetry

## MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 318"  
Overall length – 43' 6"  
Overall height with roof air – 12' 7"  
Interior height – 84"  
Overall width – 101"  
Interior width – 96"

## WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 44,600 lb.  
Front GAWR – 14,600 lb.  
Rear GAWR – 20,000 lb.  
GCWR – 59,600 lb.  
UVW – 33,580 lb.  
CCC – 9,320 lb.  
Trailer hitch capacity – 10,000 lb.

## POWER TRAIN

Engine – Cummins ISL 8.9 liter 425 hp electronic diesel  
Torque – 1,200 lb.-ft. @ 1,300 rpm  
Transmission – Allison GEN 4 3000 MH 6-speed with 2 overdrives  
Tire Size – 295/80R 22.5 XZA2  
Alternator – Leece-Neville 160 amps

## CHASSIS

Frame – Spartan Mountain Master GT  
Frame design – Raised rail  
Anti-locking braking system – WABCO 4M/4S ABS System  
Suspension (front) – Reyco 240AR Air  
Suspension (rear) – Reyco 240AR Air  
Shock absorbers – Bilstein Front/Rear tuned  
Leveling jacks – HWH Hydraulic

## CONSTRUCTION

Body – Laminated floor, sidewalls, roof  
Roof – One-piece fiberglass  
Support – Steel / aluminum reinforced structure  
Front / rear body panels – One-piece fiberglass caps  
Exterior side panels – Gel-coat fiberglass with full body paint

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – Four adults  
Fuel tank – 150 gallons  
Freshwater – 90 gallons  
Black water – 46 gallons  
Grey water – 70 gallons  
LPG tank – (35 gallons; can be filled to 80% capacity) – 28 gallons

## MSRP\*

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

## UVW

This is the approximate weight of the vehicle with a full fuel tank, engine oil, and coolants. The UVW does not include cargo, fresh water, LP gas, passengers, or dealer-installed accessories.

## DEALERS

To locate the Tiffin dealer nearest you, go to [www.tiffinmotorhomes.com](http://www.tiffinmotorhomes.com) and click on "dealer locator." If internet access is not available, call 813-356-8661 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, and standard and optional equipment are subject to change without notice or obligation.





## You've Been Packing!

You probably packed a little extra for whatever adventures you might encounter on your trip. If you're not sure of the axle end weight of your vehicle, your RV is most likely overloaded. The new Michelin® 305/70R22.5 XRV, with its expanded load capacity\*, is ready to take on more weight than ever.

\*The Michelin 305/70R22.5 XRV has a per-axle maximum load capacity of 15,660 lbs in singles and 27,760 lbs in duals at 120 psi cold pressure. You should always weigh each axle and check Michelin's Load and Inflation Tables to determine proper fitment and air pressure for your vehicle.





# DISNEY IN WINTER



**Cool evenings. Warm days.** An almost unlimited agenda of interesting things to do. Great restaurants. Interesting people from all over the world. Walt Disney World in winter is certainly a “best buy” for RVers escaping the cold of our northern states. Having lived in Tampa for the last 10 years, the standing joke after two or three January evenings in the low thirties is “Well, winter’s over now.” And that’s just about right, too!

Living only an hour away from the vacation mecca, our family has visited WDW many times during the last decade. In fact, we have spent Christmas Day at Disney twice, and each time our three grown children and their spouses loved it. Summer is hot and the lines are long. Spring Break is crowded with students of all ages.

Several friends had mentioned the Disney resort and campground called Fort Wilderness. Before deciding to do this story, we made an exploratory visit to Fort Wilderness. If you have been to any of the Disney theme parks and noted how well the parks are groomed and maintained, you can count on the same quality of attention at Fort Wilderness. The campsites are nicely spaced, RV pads are paved, and connections are well-designed with 50-amp/water/sewer hookups.

Fort Wilderness marked its 36th birthday on November 19. The 700-acre resort opened just two months after the Magic Kingdom made its debut. Today the campground boasts 784 campsites and 409 wilderness cabins.

We began planning our January trip immediately. The Value

Rate (\$47) is available from Jan. 1 through Feb. 14. We plugged in the dates for a two-week vacation and came up with \$658 plus tax. Serious Disneyphiles recommended a 10-day Park Hopper pass good for the 14 days we planned to be at Fort Wilderness. A Park Hopper pass allows you to visit any or all of the four theme parks during each day of your stay. Each of our tickets was \$281. Put the numbers together and you have a terrific two-week vacation for less than \$1,300. If you can claim Florida residency, Disney offers an annual pass (including park hopping) for \$350 each plus tax.

If gardening and flowers are your passion and hobby, you may want to schedule your visit between March 18 and June 1 when Disney presents the Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival. While those dates do not affect the park entrance rates, the campground rates increase to \$69 or \$79. Check [wdwcamp.com](http://wdwcamp.com) for specific rate information.

Before we begin exploring the parks, let’s take a closer look at Fort Wilderness Resort and Campground. It really *is* a resort — a great place for R&R even if you decide to skip the theme parks. If you have bicycles, bring them. They are the best way to travel within the resort property, and are also available for rent (1). The Trading Post near the beach carries a broad selection of Disney souvenirs, snacks, soft drinks, and limited RV supplies. There are two swimming pools, both heated. The Bay Lake Beach is a good place to work on your tan. But be sure to check local TV stations to learn what the “burn time” is for the day. They’re



Text by Fred Thompson

Photography by Fred Thompson and Disney Public Relations





serious—you'll need sunscreen in the winter in Florida. The marina at the beach offers watercraft rentals; but if you have a canoe, bring it. A fee is charged for lake fishing and WDW has a catch-and-release policy.

If you have children or grandchildren along, they will really enjoy Fort Wilderness. The Tri-Circle-D Ranch and Farm offers horseback, pony, wagon, and carriage rides (fee based). A video rental store offers the latest releases when you're ready to kick back and enjoy a movie. Each evening you can enjoy fun for the whole family at Chip'n Dale's Campfire Singalongs. To stay fit, plan on hitting the jogging trail or playing a few sets of tennis on WDW's championship quality courts.

Dining in the campground is available at Trail's End Restaurant—it's all buffet at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The Hoop-Dee-Do Musical Revue presented in Pioneer Hall each evening is a slapstick comedy show and dinner. For more casual dining, we like Mickey's Backyard BBQ.

WDW is renowned for its transportation efficiency. Buses serve three pickup points in the Fort Wilderness Resort and transport guests at no charge to all of the theme parks and Downtown Disney. Motor launches (2) operate throughout the day and into the evening from the Fort Wilderness marina to the Magic Kingdom. Of course, WDW's famed monorail system moves guests quickly from park to park.

## Epcot

When we visit Disney World, our first stop is usually Epcot — the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow. Opened in 1982, Disney said the park would “take its cue from the new ideas and new technologies that are now emerging from the creative centers of American industry.”

As you enter the park, **Spaceship Earth** captures your imagination. Certainly Epcot's icon, the geosphere weighs 16 million pounds, measures 165 feet in diameter, and was created with 11,324 aluminum and plastic-alloy triangles.

Epcot has two distinct themed areas: **Future World** and **World Showcase**. Future World will fascinate you with attractions that feature transportation, space exploration, energy, communication, health, and our environment. **The Land** exhibit

focuses on the environment while **Living with the Land** takes you on a boat tour to explore greenhouse and fish production.

For children and adults alike, the **Seas with Nemo and Friends** takes you into a 5.7 million gallon aquarium, home to thousands of fish, including sharks, sea turtles, and dolphins. Clever electronic displays of Nemo flitting about the aquarium will entertain the children while we all learn about marine life and culture.

Long-established attractions include **Mission Space**, **Spaceship Earth**, **Test Track**, and **Innoventions**. The current rage is **Soarin'**™. Strapped into your seat, you will feel a rush as you are lifted in front of a giant screen which projects the view as you would see it from a hang glider. Your close proximity to the screen brings a sensational reality to fast-moving landscapes of mountains, fields, and beaches that pass under your dangling feet.

The **World Showcase** has for 25 years educated Epcot's visitors about the culture of 11 countries, each of which has constructed representative historical architecture to provide unique learning environments. Art, music, archaeology, textiles, crafts, athletics, theater, and food are used to tell each country's story.

Located around a beautiful lagoon, **Mexico** is the beginning point for a clockwise visit to the showcase. Visitors enter through a Mayan pyramid (3) leading to a gallery displaying artifacts from several periods in Mexico's history. A formal portico, a mayor's mansion, and a colonial plaza are the setting for a typical marketplace with a festival atmosphere. The San Angel Inn Restaurant offers authentic Mexican cuisine.

**Norway** chose a stavkirke, or Stave Church, as the primary architectural feature of its exhibit. Modeled after Gol Church of Hallingdal, which was dated at 1212 A.D., a stave church is a medieval wooden structure built with post and beam construction. The wall frames are filled with vertical planks. The load-bearing posts (*stafr* in Old Norse) have lent their name to the building technique. The Stave Church houses an exhibit of Norse artifacts. A castle, styled after a 14th century fortress in Oslo's harbor, forms the exterior for the Akershus Royal Banquet Hall. A typical Norwegian village street (4) leads to the castle.

The entrance to the **China** showcase is based on the exquisite main gate at the summer palace in Beijing. An outstanding





acrobatic team **(8)** performs daily just inside the gate, drawing large audiences who sit on the stone sidewalks. The Temple of Heaven, through which guests pass into the Circle Vision 360 Theater, symbolizes the Chinese universe. Brief musical performances featuring artists playing unique Chinese instruments are offered throughout the day. One of the most interesting exhibits in the entire Epcot Showcase, the *Tomb Warriors* **(5)** from the Qin Dynasty (221–210 B.C.) were intended to be protectors of the emperor beyond the grave. Because nearly all the faces of the warriors are unique, archeologists believe the figures were modeled after actual people. The public marketplace offers crafts from several regions of that vast country and the Nine Dragons Restaurant serves authentic Chinese cuisine at lunch and dinner.

Perhaps the most sought-after dining reservations are those for Germany's Biergarten Restaurant. The Biergarten's architecture and ambience is derived from the 16th century town of Rothenberg. The rousing music played by the Oktoberfest Musikaten band featuring an alpine horn **(6)** inspires dancers young and old to take to the floor. The village facade of the art and book shop was modeled after the Kaufhaus, a 400-year-old merchants hall in Freiburg in the Black Forest. Medieval castles on the Rhine and Mosel rivers influenced the design of the high walls that serve as a backdrop for the showcase.

The designers of Italy's Showcase sampled architecture throughout their country. The entrance features architectural elements of Venice including the Doge's Palace and a scaled-down version of the Campanile from St. Mark's Square, from which the promenade's paving was taken. Venetian bridges, gondolas, barber poles, and sculptures complement the composites of architecture taken from buildings in Florence, Verona, Rome, and northern Italy. Versions of Bernini's Neptune Fountain in Florence and the Fountain of Trevi in Rome complete the Roman environment, making visitors feel they have really experienced Italy. If you enjoy good Italian pasta and rich sauces, make a reservation at L'Originale Alfredo di Roma Ristorante for lunch or dinner.

Located in the center of the promenade surrounding the World Showcase lagoon, *The American Adventure* **(7)** is an







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11

historical presentation featuring key people, locations, and events that tell our story. The showcase uses some of the Disney Imagineer's most advanced designs and effects in scenes from Plymouth, Valley Forge, and the Civil War. The Benjamin Franklin figure represents new technology that allows the inventor-diplomat to "walk" up stairs and execute body, hand, and mouth movements as he describes the American experience of establishing a new democracy. Four presidents tell the story across nearly two centuries: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. There's so much more, but be sure to look for Mark Twain blowing smoke from his pipe and Will Rogers twirling his lasso. Check the daily schedule for performances in the American Gardens Theatre directly across the promenade from The American Adventure.

The Japanese cultural talent for using rocks, exquisite plants, and water in landscaping and then blending those elements so seamlessly into their architecture is unmistakably displayed at Epcot (9). Notable architecture in Japan influenced replicas of an eighth century pagoda (10), the torii gate similar to the one in Hiroshima Bay, and the Goshō Imperial Palace in Kyoto, which forms the setting for the Teppanyaki Dining Rooms. Japan offers four dining experiences in addition to the Mitsukoshi Department Store.

Morocco architecturally presents its economy, cuisine, domestic life, and religion. The Koutoubia Minaret, a detailed replica of a famous prayer tower in Marrakesh, stands guard over the entrance to its showcase. As in most Moroccan cities, the showcase is divided into the new city (Ville Nouvelle) and the old city (Medina). Medina is a thriving marketplace. Shoppers may enter through the Bab Boujouloud Gate, a replica of a gateway in the city of Fez. Just inside the gate is a replica of a traditional Moroccan home. The Restaurant Marrakesh features the Moroccan approach to beef, lamb, and chicken, with entertainment provided by native belly dancers (11).

The French outdid themselves. With an ambiance reflecting the cultural ebullience of the period between 1870 and 1910, known as La Belle Epoque, the France showcase features a book shop, a perfume and designer accessories shop styled after the chateau look of an older Paris, and a busy garden marketplace. A pastry shop, a sidewalk café, and a formal Bistro de Paris will delight your palate. Finish your visit with a 20-minute film in a surround theater celebrating the magnificent French countryside.

Now, let's cross the English Channel for a visit to merry old England. The United Kingdom Showcase successfully blends city, town, and rural architecture to tie together its history and culture from 1500 to 1800. You will find an informal street with an Anne Hathaway thatched-roof cottage (12), a four-story timber and plaster building often seen in towns like Oxford, a formal square with a Hyde Park bandstand, a 1400s brick house, and a plaster and stone great hall. If it's time for lunch or dinner, the Rose and Crown Pub and Dining Room (13) serves up traditional British fare with fish and chips, bangers and mash, prime rib, and rich desserts such as sherry trifle.



Still in the UK, we cross the Atlantic for a visit to **Canada** to experience the diverse culture and unspoiled wilderness of our neighbors to the north. The Canada Pavilion showcases the Rockies, furriers, trappers, and a rich heritage of diverse cultures including native Indian villages (14), a French chateau, and the Scottish influence in the Maritime provinces. A new 14-minute video presented in CircleVision 360 includes breathtaking scenery from all of the provinces with the spine-tingling orchestration of “O Canada.” Short takes from cities such as Ottawa, Quebec City, Moose Jaw, and Medicine Hat show the wide cultural diversity in this sparsely populated country. Don’t miss the Victoria Gardens, inspired by the famed Butchart Gardens near Victoria, British Columbia. Elaborate floral displays are changed throughout the year and a stand of maple trees honors the country’s national symbol. Le Cellier (15) restaurant will satisfy both seafood and beef lovers. La Boutique Des Provinces offers crafts made throughout the country. Maple syrup is probably the most frequent purchase made at the Trading Post. “Off Kilter” performs New Age Celtic Music at brief concerts throughout the day.

If you have never been to Epcot before, you are in for a pyrotechnic surprise at the end of the day. Thousands gather around the lagoon as barges move into place to release one of the most impressive fireworks displays on the planet. Over 2,800 shells explode to the orchestration of inspiring music.

To really see Epcot, I would suggest one day at Future World and two to three days in the World Showcase. It is an incredible experience and probably the Disney park of greatest interest to adults.

## Magic Kingdom

Walt Disney described **Main Street U.S.A.** as the heart of the Magic Kingdom: “Main Street, U.S.A., is America at the turn of the century – the crossroads of an era. The gas lamps and the electric lamps, the horse-drawn car and the auto car. Main Street is everyone’s home town . . . the heartline of America.”

The authenticity of the architecture is convincing, especially when the smell of fresh baked cookies wafts out of the Main Street Bakery. Shops, neat places for light meals, and ice cream parlors line the streets. Main street vehicles on which you can hitch a ride include street cars, antique cars, jitneys, and a fire engine.

**Adventureland** takes you back to your childhood story-times: The Swiss Family Robinson, Aladdin, Tiki, Jungle Cruise, and (more currently) the Pirates of the Caribbean.

**Frontierland** has several “main” attractions, but Walt Disney would probably point to his beloved trains as his favorite. An avid railroad enthusiast, Disney built a miniature steam railroad in his backyard. After Walt’s death in 1966, WDW sent representatives to purchase five locomotives from the United Railways of Yucatan in 1968. With vintage ranges from 1916 to 1928, four of the locomotives (16) were brought to the Tampa Shipyards and restored under the guidance of restoration expert Bob Harpur. Today the Walt Disney World Railroad is one







16



17



18

of the busiest steam-powered railroads in the country, transporting over 1.5 million passengers annually.

**Splash Mountain** is a log flume ride themed with Disney's 1946 film, *Song of the South*. The Splash Mountain Animatronic cast sings portions of the motion picture's sound track with a splashy finale and steep drop into the Briar Patch.

The **Big Thunder Mountain Railroad** sounds pretty scary but is a fairly tame roller coaster ride designed as a runaway train careening through an abandoned mine about to cave in. The kids will love it!

You can escape to **Tom Sawyer Island** by motorized raft and plop down in a rocking chair while the children explore an island full of passageways and caves, a rope bridge, an old mine, and Fort Langhorn. It's a nice getaway from the faster pace of the Kingdom.

**Liberty Square** has three attractions. **The Hall of Presidents** will take you on a trip through U.S. history as it relates to our presidents (17). The lobby doubles as an art gallery with a portrait of each president. A movie projected on a 180-degree curved screen offers a cursory treatment of U.S. history including the development of the Constitution. After the film, the screen disappears and exposes a stage full of Audio-Animatronic versions of each U.S. president. Moving and gesturing as he "speaks," each president contributes a tidbit to the program. George W. Bush and Abraham Lincoln give speeches. It's a good place to relax and recharge your history batteries.

The **Liberty Square Riverboat** departs several times a day to cruise the "rivers" of WDW. The steam-powered sternwheeler, the *Liberty Belle*, cruises the half-mile trip in about 20 minutes. There are few seats, with most guests standing for the duration of the cruise.

The **Haunted Mansion** is a Magic Kingdom original, having been there since opening day, October 1, 1971. To reach the mansion, brave visitors must follow a path past the graveyard and the home's wrought iron gates. As a cast member welcomes you, your invisible host takes over the tour. Soon you are in your "Doom Buggy" experiencing a macabre, sometimes humorous trip through the haunted mansion. Thanks to some Disney magic, a ghost enters your buggy and sits right down beside you – or in your lap!

Dining at the **Liberty Tree Tavern** begins at 4 p.m. Salad, three meats, potato, and vegetables, \$27.99. Desserts additional. The food quality is very good.

**Fantasyland** is a mini-paradise for children eight and under. Rides indoor and out feature Peter Pan, Cinderella, Dumbo, Winnie the Pooh, the Little Mermaid, Mickey Mouse, and the Mad Tea Party. **Cinderella's Golden Carousel (18)** is a classic piece of entertainment art built by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company in 1917. Purchased by WDW in 1967 from the Olympic Park in Maplewood, New Jersey, the 90-horse carousel was brought to Orlando and restored to its original beauty.

Breakfast at Cinderella's **Royal Table** in the Royal Castle is served from 8 - 11:15 a.m. for \$32.99 per person, children \$22.99.



Focusing on a delightful experience for children eight and under, **Mickey's Toontown® Fair** brings Mickey and Minnie's home up to scale. Here children can visit with Disney characters and the Disney princesses, enjoy Donald's water play area, and ride The Barnstormer at Goofy's Wiseacre Farm.

**Tomorrowland's** attractions appeal more to older children, probably nine to 16. One of the original WDW attractions at Magic Kingdom when it opened in 1971, the **Indy Speedway** offers real gas-powered cars that can be driven by anyone tall enough to reach the pedal. It's a good parent-child experience. **Space Mountain** is a fantasy roller coaster that dips and swerves through the galaxy, past shooting stars and glowing planets! The other events and rides at Tomorrowland are equally imaginative and fun. You could easily spend a whole afternoon.

## Animal Kingdom

Unique experiences abound throughout Animal Kingdom, always fun and educational at the same time. There are eight sections in Animal Kingdom, each having several interesting attractions.

You will pass through the **Oasis Exhibits** as you enter and leave the park. In natural habitats, you will see the giant anteater, the exotic boar, and the Hyacinth macaw.

At **Discovery Island** you can reverse your role with the earth's tiny creatures. As you walk through the giant-scaled root system of the Tree of Life, you become the tiny creature and the bugs outsize you. Don't worry—they're not alive. But **It's Tough to Be a Bug!** makes its point. If it's lunch time, try **Flame Tree Barbecue** — very good ribs!

At **Camp Minnie-Mickey**, check your timetable and arrive early for a good seat at the **Festival of the Lion King (19)**. This is a theatrical event of considerable magnitude. Costumes, dance routines, gymnastics, and music combine for a dynamic 30-minute show.

When you get to **Africa**, you will find the landscape, cultural performers (20), and an array of animals in natural settings that capture the essence of the dark continent. Take the **Kilimanjaro Safari** to see animals native only to Africa unrestricted in their environment (21).

In **Rafiki's Planet Watch**, visit the **Conservation Station** for an in-depth look at the care programs that Disney designs for its creatures through veterinary attention, good nutrition, and research programs.



19



20



21



22





In **Asia** at **Flights of Wonder (22)**, we were amazed at the intelligence of birds as their trainers asked them to do several unusual routines. The birds are free to fly about the open theater and are trained to return to an assigned perch.

## Disney's Hollywood Studios

By the time you read this issue, Disney-MGM Studios will have been renamed Disney's Hollywood Studios to better reflect not only the Golden Age of Tinseltown but all that today's Hollywood has to offer in movies, music, theater, and television. If you are a real movie buff, it will take at least two days to do justice to this park.

Disney's Hollywood Studios is divided into several venues: Hollywood Boulevard, Streets of America (23), Echo Lake, Mickey Avenue, Animation Courtyard, and Sunset Boulevard. There are so many things to see and do, our decision was to select one activity from each area to get a good flavor of the movie industry. **The Great Movie Ride** is right at the end of Hollywood Boulevard. A 24-minute trip in tram cars will take you through some of the most famous scenes filmed over the last 70 years. Throughout the ride, Disney's signature Animatronic figures including James Cagney, Humphrey Bogart, John Wayne, and Julie Andrews will bring lifelike commentary to each film clip.

In the Echo Lake venue, the **Indiana Jones™ Epic Stunt Spectacular** features re-enactments of a climactic scene from the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Fight scenes, explosions, and a crushing boulder falling on the Indiana Jones look-alike bring edge-of-your-seat realism to the 30-minute show. Try to get there a half-hour early for the best seats and comedy routines from the "hired help."

There was no question about which act to see in the Streets of America venue; it had to be **Lights, Motors, Action!™ Extreme Stunt Show**. The action-packed, high-performance show features the good guys and the bad guys chasing each other through a Mediterranean village as the film crew with its mobile high-tech equipment attempts to record all of the action (24), some of which gets projected on the big screen above the village. Jumps, near accidents, and chases that crash through second-floor balconies make the 40-minute show very entertaining. The good guys ride in red cars and the bad ones in black. The cars appear to be standard Opel Corsas, but in fact are rebuilt with roll cages, 150 hp motorcycle engines, and eight gears

## New for 2008 at Disney World

**Playhouse Disney—Live on Stage!** will debut in February 2008 at Disney's Hollywood Studios. Children will be singing, clapping, and dancing with the Disney characters.

**Walt Disney World Marathon** will be staged in January (see [wdwnews.com](http://wdwnews.com) for times). This full 26.2-mile marathon will pass through all four of the Disney theme parks.

**Block Party Bash** – At Disney's Hollywood Studios in the spring, visitors can play, party, and dance in the most interactive parade in Disney

history. See [wdwnews.com](http://wdwnews.com) for times.

**Atlanta Braves Spring Training Camp** returns to Disney's Wide World of Sports for Spring Training in February.

**Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival** opens on March 18.

Epcot's Future World and World Showcase will show off more than 30 million colorful blossoms. Interactive garden activities for kids and workshops for adults with national gardening experts will be offered during the two-and-a-half month event.



(four forward and four backward). One is cleverly modified with the driver facing the rear so that when he is backing up or being chased backward at high speeds, he is actually traveling “forward.” Jet skis in a narrow canal and motorcycles used in casting also create a lot of excitement.

The Mickey Avenue venue took us down memory lane for the **Backlot Tour**. It is amazing how a relatively small area can be made to project depth and size, such as battles at sea with huge waves and explosions, or a flash flood at an oil rig in Catastrophe Canyon. The oil tanker looked as if it would tumble right down on our tram (25). When you see your next action-packed movie, you may be able to spot the telltale signs of a movie set if you look carefully.

Animation Courtyard has three entertainment choices, but we went with **Playhouse Disney— Live on Stage!** because live performances generally seem to be more fun. Definitely aimed at preschool and early elementary age children, the freshness and vigor of the actors will entertain parents and grandparents as well. The mini-musical features characters from Jim Henson’s “Bear in the Big Blue House,” “The Book of Pooh,” “Stanley,” and “JoJo and Goliath.”

When we got to Sunset Boulevard, it was a tough choice. We decided to go with the 30-minute version of **Beauty and the Beast— Live on Stage**. Upon learning that her father, Maurice, had been imprisoned in the Beast’s enchanted castle, Belle offered herself in his stead. She eventually falls in love with the Beast and the ending has a fairytale quality.

Be sure to make your evening dining reservations early in the day. In Epcot, we recommend the all-you-care-to-eat buffet at Germany’s *Biergarten Restaurant* as well as France’s *Bistro de Paris*. You will also find interesting choices at Downtown Disney including the *Wolfgang Puck Café*, *Bongos Cuban Café*, and *Planet Hollywood*. Entertainment options at Downtown Disney include La Nouba (Cirque du Soleil), an AMC 24-movie theater, and Comedy Warehouse. **RIS**

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# Jim Kimbrell Capitalizes on His Strong Suit

by Fred Thompson

The son of a central Alabama dirt farmer and one of 18 siblings from two sets of children, Jim Kimbrell joined the Army immediately after he graduated from high school in 1960. After serving in Korea and returning to train recruits at Ft. Benning, he completed his tour and headed back to Birmingham.

With opportunities looking grim, Kimbrell warmed to a suggestion from a retired Navy friend regarding a sales position with a Lincoln-Mercury dealership in southern California. After several years in the business, he found his calling. “My strength is knowing sales. I know the ‘people end’ of the business,” he



said, reflecting on his success over the last 40 years.

Kimbrell became an operating partner in the business and led the formation of La Mesa RV in 1972. The company soon had to make the decision to focus on automobiles or recreational vehicles and the latter won. Later that year the gas crisis hit the U.S. and the company’s principal partner, Pascal Dilday, wanted to sell. Kimbrell boldly bought him out, acquiring 70 percent of the stock. In the late seventies, he bought the remaining stock from Pascal’s son and gained full control of the company.

Taking a page out of the company’s history of owning several automobile dealerships, Kimbrell realized that growth and profits lay in duplication. After opening three stores in California, he connected the dots on how the seasonal travel of RVers could affect sales, which eventually led to the opening of four dealerships in Arizona. Today, two of those dealerships, Yuma and Quartzsite, are open only during the peak months of the winter season.

Early in his career, Kimbrell identified several factors for the success of a dealership: (1) An excellent operational service department. (2) Good employees who treat customers right. (3) Absolute integrity. “If you let a customer leave your store believing something that isn’t true, then you’ve lied to him,” he said.

“We don’t sell perfect coaches – new or used,” he smiled. “We must condition our customer to make sure his expectations are in line with reality. Overselling is a big mistake. If we can make a customer happy by matching up his needs and expectations with the right coach, he will tell others. If we have a customer who has a problem and we can fix it for him, we have a loyal customer,” Kimbrell continued.

With three stores in California, four in Arizona, two in the eastern U.S., and another to open soon, Kimbrell finds himself spending a lot of time traveling. In the early nineties, he brought James Walters into the company as a stockholder to serve as corporate comptroller. Their skills complement each other. “He runs the business end of La Mesa and I develop and expand our sales function,” Kimbrell said.

Over the years, La Mesa RV developed a criteria for selecting manufacturers they wanted to represent. *Quality* is the number

*Continued on page 28*





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*Continued from page 26*

one item on the list. “Without top quality, you are going to have problems from the beginning,” Kimbrell said. Second is *Self-reliability*. “Several things make a manufacturer’s product sell. A broad line of brands and floorplans that give customers many choices, plus creative interiors,” he explained. Third is *Innovativeness*. “You’ve got to offer features that the consumer wants, along with some unique ideas.” Fourth is *Values*. “You’ve got to select a manufacturer who shares your values about service and warranties,” he continued.

“Tiffin Motorhomes is a good fit for us,” Kimbrell said. “Tiffin does not build a lot of floorplans, but they keep them feature rich and in the middle of the market. We select two or three Class A manufacturers for good reasons. First, if you can do a large amount of your business with each manufacturer, you become important to that company. We can tell them what kind of floorplans and interiors that we think will sell and they listen to us. You develop an open line of communication to solve problems together. No one listens better than Bob Tiffin. He has made TMH a very customer-oriented company where top managers get personally involved in taking care of business.”

“Second, it is important that a manufacturer does not over-build the market. It prevents the product from aging on the dealer’s lot. Tiffin is more of a custom-built motorhome. Once the customer sees a Tiffin, it is not widely shopped for further comparison. The company seems to keep improving their product every year with carefully added upgrades in decor and one or two floorplans per brand. They keep their product fresh,” he said.

“Third, I learned early in this business that you must give the customer good service to keep him. Having only two or three Class A manufacturers per dealership means that we have a lower parts inventory. To keep our service techs on top of their jobs, we like to send them back to the manufacturer as often as possible. We do the same with our sales people. Sales is a service and our people must be thoroughly informed about every brand, its floorplans, and its features,” he continued.

La Mesa RV may be unique in its approach to building its used motorhome inventory and selling coaches in its several markets. “We buy about 150 coaches per month, and that’s probably on average about \$15 million,” Kimbrell said. With a used acquisition staff of 20 directed by a senior buyer who is paid a percentage of the profit on each coach, the company advertises in markets throughout the country and employs over 200 part-time drivers to retrieve the coaches and deliver them to the market where the buyer sees a demand.

“Most of the time we buy from individuals,” Kimbrell explained. “Several years ago we developed a software that locates ads in newspapers and the internet. Individuals often find it difficult to sell their coaches, collect the money with no risks, and pay off their mortgage. We are straight up front with our customers. We explain that we are paying wholesale rates. We pay cash for their equity, pay off their mortgage, and furnish a driver to pick up their coach. We can buy throughout the year

and move coaches to markets where they will sell.”

Kimbrell noted that it is hard to find used Tiffins. Owners tend to keep them a little longer than they do other brands. La Mesa usually acquires a used Tiffin brand on a trade-in or when an owner must sell due to health problems. He pointed out that the company avoids buying units from smokers or pet owners.

Another strategy that makes La Mesa successful in selling used motorhomes is its ability to move sales staff to stores which are seasonally active or hot because of a strong advertising promotion. “We may move sales people from California to Arizona during the winter and usually several of our certified techs as well. Our Quartzsite and Yuma stores are open only for the winter season. If we are driving the winter market in Florida, we will buy in the north, move the units through Atlanta for service, and sell in Tampa. We may do several promotionals at major shopping malls in addition to selling at our Tampa store,” Kimbrell said.


“Being able to buy used units throughout the year and sell in active, seasonal markets by moving our coaches and sales people around as needed is a core strength of La Mesa RV,” he said. “Our stores report out every night through a centralized inventory control system. All of our store managers have access to our real-time inventory.”

La Mesa centralizes its advertising through its San Diego home office. “We talk to our managers and review all of the ads that will be used throughout the country. The strategy is set every Monday morning,” he said.

Describing himself as an “operations guy,” Kimbrell admitted that his management style “requires a lot of traveling in order to be on the same page with all of our managers. We go in to check customer problems, visit with the finance and insurance person, and get copies of all complaints. Jim Walters or I personally look at each complaint and turn it over to our public relations specialist. If a customer expresses a desire to talk to ownership, Jim or I will call him. I find if you just listen to people and show empathy, you can come to an understanding. Then I turn the matter over to my PR person who already knows the situation and can find the best solution.”

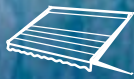
Constant travel every week led Kimbrell to acquire a business jet in 2003 that seats six. He has on order a Challenger 300 by Bombardier that seats 10. Being a pilot himself, he realizes the importance of a jet as a business tool.

Witnessing his enthusiasm for the motorhome business, one could easily believe that it is also Kimbrell’s hobby. But he does reserve time to enjoy his family—a son, one married daughter, and two grandchildren. Realizing the need to recharge his batteries, Kimbrell plays an occasional round of golf, vacations in a favorite spot in Hawaii, and enjoys his home in Rancho Santa Fe near San Diego.

Reflection sometimes leads to offering a philosophy of one’s life in the business world. Kimbrell explains his approach: “You have to do something with your life. So it’s best if you like what you do. You’ll be better at it and you’ll enjoy your life more.” 



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## Phaeton 40QTH Adds 32-Inch TV To Mid-Ship Console Plus Options Galore

Realizing the runaway popularity of the centrally located television, Tiffin Motorhomes modified the Phaeton 40QSH by moving the four-door refrigerator into the extended driver side slide-out and installing a hutch-pantry with room for a 32-inch flat panel HDMI television at eye level when seated. The new 40QTH floorplan significantly increases the roominess in the galley-living area.

“We know that our customers want us to emulate the residential look in our coaches,” Van Tiffin said recently. As director of product development, Tiffin assimilates the research regarding customer preferences and suggestions into live, working floorplans. Two new Phaeton floorplans introduced earlier in 2007, the 42QRH and the 36QSH, were both designed with a high definition television located in the hutch-pantry. That left only the 40 footers without a mid-ship entertainment center until now.

“This floorplan will drive this motorhome to the top of the Phaeton line,” Jerry Williamson, Tiffin Motorhome general sales manager, said confidently. If the buyer still wants the overdash high-mounted television, a 32-inch duplicate of the mid-ship model can be ordered as an option. Tiffin has discovered that many owners like to have it in both locations to accommodate easy viewing from any part of the living-dining area.

The 40QTH offers so many standard features and options that the buyer really has the opportunity to customize his coach. There are three cabinet woods: Natural Maple, Cherry Bark, and Medium Alderwood. Three interior decors: Kona, Laguna, and Patina. Booth dinette or free standing. On the passenger side,

choose between 74-inch driver side DE Sofa Bed covered in a handsome cloth or Ultraleather™. On the driver side, you have four choices: a DE Sofa Bed, an Air-Coil Hide-a-Bed, or a Magic Bed (each in cloth or Ultraleather™) or a Leather Euro Recliner with Computer End Table.

As in all of the diesel pushers, you can choose between the standard booth dinette or the free standing dinette with a hutch. A gas oven or a large pots-and-pans storage drawer. Will it be a king or a queen bed? A standard mattress or the popular Sleep Comfort (dual control) Bed System?

For your laundry system, two options are available: the washer-dryer combo or the stacked washer and dryer units – or skip both and opt for a huge storage cabinet. And don’t forget the optional central vacuum cleaner.

Now, let’s go outside for even more choices. Full body paint is standard on the Phaeton, but you will have to choose between NASA, Silver Sand, and Sunlit Sand. Outdoor entertainment? How about the optional 32-inch HDMI television concealed in the passenger side slide-out wall?

Yes, there are more optional choices to make: a dash-controlled roof-mounted spotlight, a computer navigational system, automatic door awning, two window awning packages, aluminum wheels, Hadley air horns (Those 18-wheelers can’t intimidate you anymore!), in-motion or automatic satellite dish (HD ready), an HDTV digital antenna, side cameras activated with turn signal, chrome mirrors, and standard electric or optional hydraulic jacks.

When you have made all of your choices, you will have created a very personal coach. Congratulations!

## Tiffin Adopts 40-ft. Diesel Floorplan Features Into Allegro Bay 38TGB with FRED

“The floorplan in this coach is very much like our diesel pushers. We have developed the same design concepts for our front-end diesel chassis and our Workhorse gas chassis,” Jerry Williamson explained with a great deal of enthusiasm, “and both will have over 2,000 pounds of cargo carrying capacity.”

The main feature unique to this front engine chassis is the double facing sofas. Because of the necessity to position the entrance door in the sidewall of a front engine chassis, most coach designs offer a single chair or recliner and the galley on the passenger side. By moving the four-door refrigerator to the driver side slide-out, Tiffin designers incorporated into the passenger side slide a 74-inch sofa and a full-service galley with a stainless steel double-bowl sink, three-burner stove, microwave-convection oven, a slide-out island, and generous cabinet top work space. The coach also has the popular full tile floor for the living-galley area. The fridge has an auto-lock device which is activated when you start the engine.

“We know how big a seller the mid-section television has been for us in the last two years. So we added that feature to this coach,” Williamson said. Tiffin selected the 32-inch Panasonic flat panel TV with HDMI and surround sound. In addition to high definition television reception, a five-disk player system

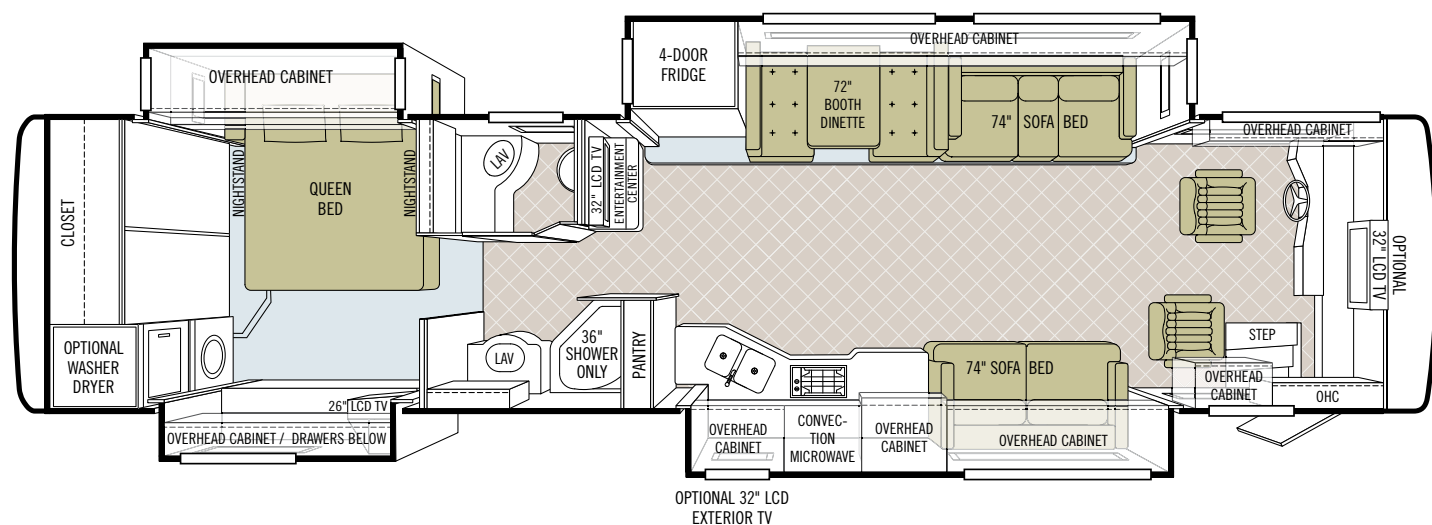
brings concert-quality CD and DVD performance into the coach’s comfortable living quarters.

In addition to the four-door refrigerator in the driver side slide-out, the floorplan offers an optional eye-catching U-shaped dinette which connects with a handsome J-sofa, both covered in Ultraleather™. There is double-drawer storage under the sofa and single drawer storage under each side of the dinette. Of course, a standard booth dinette and an optional free-standing dinette is also available.

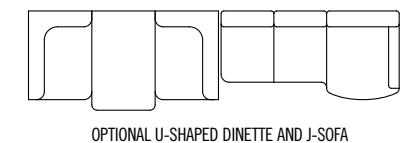
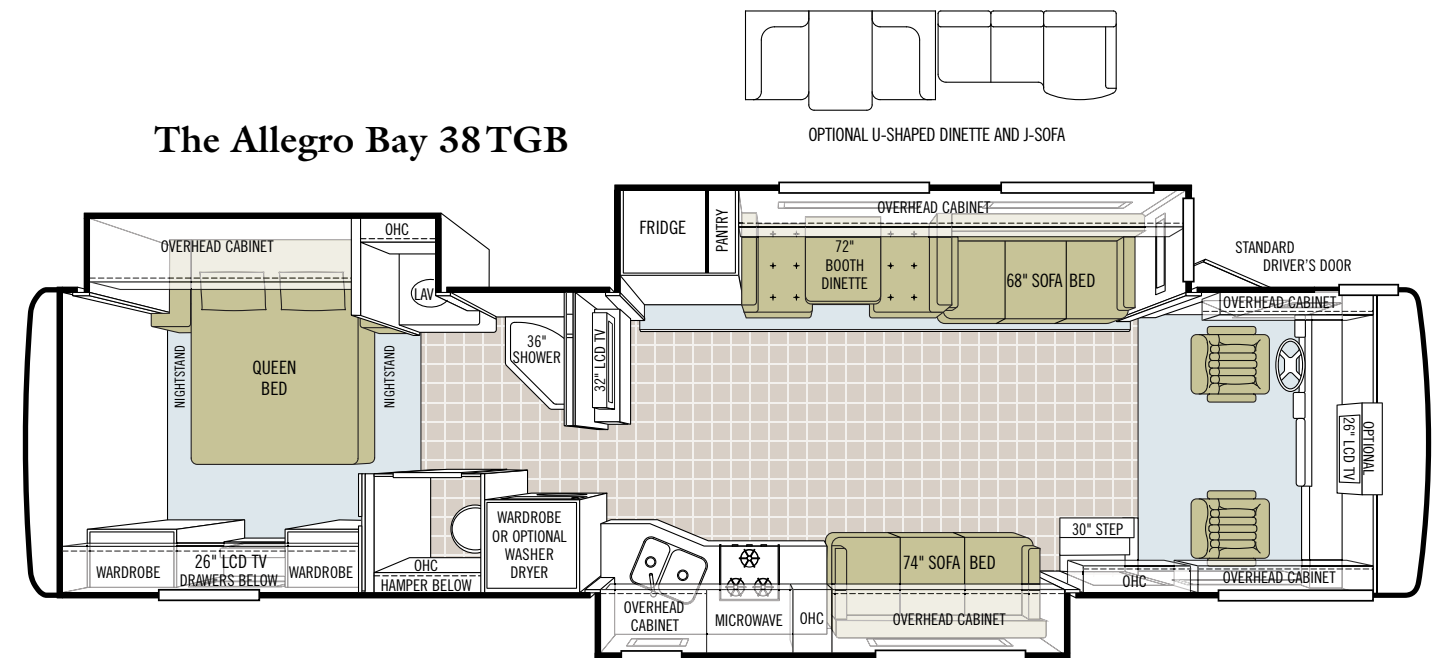
As you walk into the mid-aisle bath, you may be surprised to find a stacked washer and dryer, a feature rarely available on a front-end engine coach. The enclosed water closet faces a 36-inch shower which backs up to the wall housing for the mid-ship TV. The floor space for the bath is opened up dramatically by the placement of the lavatory in the rear driver side slide-out with the queen bed. Except for approximately four feet separating them, the two slide-outs on the driver side of the 38TGB offer a virtual full-side slide-out.

The queen bed is flanked by two end tables with plenty of space for all of the personal items needed nearby. The passenger side wall has two opposing wardrobes with a 32-inch flat panel HDMI television in between. A large window under the TV will provide cross ventilation between a side window in the slide-out. Best of all, underneath the two wardrobes and a center table, there are nine drawers! That’ll work!

The Phaeton 40QTH



The Allegro Bay 38TGB





## Plant Safety at Tiffin Motorhomes Extends to Visitor Tours

Top management, plant managers, supervisors, and employees take plant safety at Tiffin Motorhomes very seriously. It is that concern that led Joe O'Neill, TMH's Safety and Health Coordinator, to develop a safety policy for plant tours.

"Mr. Tiffin has always wanted our visitors and coach owners to see the quality that goes into the construction and assembly of our motorhomes. Through the years, the company allowed owners to visit almost any part of the production area. Employees have always been very careful to watch out for the safety and welfare of our visitors," O'Neill said.

In the last five years, the number of employees has doubled. "Because of our growth, it was simply a practical step to write into our safety policy several protocols for tours. We want everyone to feel comfortable and safe as they enjoy the educational tours that Red Davis offers to our visitors," O'Neill continued.

To create a safe environment, O'Neill designed a "red carpet" approach for guests taking the tour. "It's not really red carpet," he admitted. "But we did paint a four foot wide pathway with yellow borders to help our production employees be aware of exactly where our guests are when visiting the plant. Fork lift operators, those who are moving materials, and everyone involved with tools constantly look out for our visitors who may be on the 'red carpet.' Given the pace that we maintain in production, we wanted to get the tour aisle defined in order to keep it clear of materials, drop cords, air lines and anything that might cause a fall," he said.

TMH management still wants visitors to feel free to direct questions to production employees. "We always want our tours to be a learning process," TMH general manager Tim Tiffin said recently when he endorsed O'Neill's policy to extend plant safety policies to cover the company's visitors.

Tiffin emphasized that the company has taken a very proactive approach to plant safety. O'Neill and company nurse Susan Mills wrote a safety and health policy, personally endorsed by Tim and Bob Tiffin, which is posted in all departments and reviewed annually. "Our employees know we are committed to the policy," O'Neill said. "With safety, you tend to get tunnel vision. Because we welcome professional consultants, we invited the Safe State Onsite Consultation Program to visit TMH and make recommendations," he explained. The program is part of the College of Continuing Studies at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

"Safe State checked and approved the visitation system that we designed," O'Neill said. "If you don't encourage visitors to tour your plant, you may not have a business for very long. We really care about their safety and wanted the outside consultation program."

With over 14 years experience in the safety field, O'Neill emphasized the importance of jointly involving management and employees in the policy process. "We have safety committees in both the Red Bay and Belmont plants," he said. The two committees involve 38 employees from all departments, an environmental coordinator, the company nurse, and, of course, O'Neill. Top management members include plant manager Tim Massey, director of engineering Brad Witt, and human resources director Tony Riley.

The company's proactive approach has produced results. With the dedication and hard work of the company nurse, Susan Mills, and the safety teams in each department, days of work restrictions due to accidents have been reduced by over 1,000 percent in the last year. Accident rates have been cut by 30 percent. "Sometimes it is necessary to change a manufacturing process. Sometimes you have to ask an employee to change the way he or she does something. Whenever we make such a change, we stress employee safety," O'Neill said. "Once in a while somebody will get a little annoyed. But I always tell them, 'I'd rather have you go home a little mad at me, than you not go home at all due to an accident.'"



## King Controls Announces New VuQube® Portable Satellite Antenna

King Controls, a leading manufacturer of mobile satellite antenna systems for the RV Industry has introduced the VuQube® Portable Satellite TV Antenna. The Industry's first portable satellite antenna under a dome, the VuQube® incorporates user friendly features not found with other portable antennas.

Place the VuQube® antenna on the ground, picnic table, or anywhere you have a clear line of sight to the southern sky. A single 50-ft. coaxial cable connects the antenna to the tripod input on your RV. The wireless remote control tilts and turns the internal dish towards the satellite while monitoring the signal meter on the TV inside the RV. A built-in automatic level feature keeps the dish pointed at a consistent elevation while rotating, even on unlevel ground.

The system comes complete with antenna unit, wireless remote control, 50-ft. RG-6 coaxial cable, and operating instructions that include elevation maps for various satellites. The antenna receives +12 volt power from the satellite receiver through the coaxial cable, so there is no need for a separate power supply. The lightweight compact dome measures 16" W x 17.5" H and weighs 10.5 pounds.

"There is great demand for an easy to use, portable satellite TV antenna," said Shawn Winn, King Controls national sales



manager. "It's a great solution for both cost-conscious RV owners looking for an easy to use, affordable antenna, and for motorhome owners wanting a second dish for times when their roof-mounted dish is obstructed by trees at a particular campsite. The 5-minute set

up is much simpler than traditional portable dishes making the VuQube® more versatile to be used not only while camping but tailgating, at the cabin or even at home in the back yard to watch the big game outside."

King Controls' VuQube® model VQ1000 antennas have a suggested retail price of \$899 and are available in the U.S. and Canada through King Controls' dealer network. For more information, call (800) 982-9920 or visit [www.kingcontrols.com](http://www.kingcontrols.com).

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# Frank Kimmel: *Winner*

by Fred Thompson

Frank Kimmel does not regard winning on the ARCA (Automobile Racing Club of America) circuit as the most important goal in his life. The nine-time ARCA champion will tell you in half a minute that he focuses on success in three roles: son, husband, and father. But he loves the sport that he learned from his father, Bill, Sr., and he is pleased that his own son, Frankie, 17, is succeeding already in racing street stocks at the Salem Speedway where he broke the track record recently and was named “Rookie of the Year.”

“For me, racing is the competition. I’m a nuts and bolts guy, but there is a thrill in it, too, that you get in your blood,” he said after we had been talking for almost an hour.

For Frank Kimmel, racing is really a family story. His father, Bill, Sr., began racing in 1948 at the Sportsdrome Speedway in Jeffersonville, Indiana. “He was racing long before I was born,” Frank explained, “and was very successful in all forms of racing, with wins in several ARCA races. He quit racing in the early ’80s and went to work for United Technologies. Racing became too expensive and he couldn’t make a living at it.”

Bill, Sr., now 79, still lives in the same homeplace where he and Mabel raised their seven children, Frank being the youngest. Bill, Jr., followed in his Dad’s footsteps and won four late model championships at the Louisville Speedway. Frank began racing at 16, a hobby initially. When he graduated from Clarks-





ville High School, he planned to be a school teacher and studied for two years in nearby New Albany at Indiana University Southeast. At 19 in his sophomore year, he opened Kimmel Auto Parts and worked a full day shift before leaving each evening to attend night classes. By the end of that year, his knowledge of cars and the parts business won the race over the books. His mother, Mabel, who passed away in November at 82, was a strong supporter of her husband and all of her children in their careers.

Although Frank didn't earn a college degree at IUS, he did win the heart of a girl named Donna, whom he regards as the most important "win" in his career. In a personality profile on Frank's website ([www.frankkimmel.com](http://www.frankkimmel.com)), he listed as the three most important qualities to succeed in life: honesty, loyalty, and determination. His honesty led him to explain to Donna his desire to have a successful career in car racing and that she would have to be content with that if they were to marry. She agreed. Donna continued her studies in special education and now teaches handicapped children.

By the late '80s, Frank was enjoying success in racing street stocks. "We moved up to late model class, specially built race cars that are the fastest for the oval track," he explained. By 1986 his team won the Charlestown Motor Speedway Track Championship, and then repeated in 1987. Moving up a notch, Kimmel won the Kentucky Motor Speedway Track Championship in 1989.

In 1990 in the late model class, Kimmel won the Louisville Speedway Championship and later that year ran well in his first ARCA race.

Racing takes capital and no one knows that better than aspiring race car drivers. Appreciating the sponsor-driver relationship, Kimmel stresses that "we are there for the sponsors and help in any way we can to promote their products. Being able to represent the sponsor in the way they want to be represented is what matters – and, of course, winning helps," he laughed.

Kimmel was attracting attention. In 1991 he ran five ARCA races and finished four times in the top 10. His ranking really climbed in '92 when he ran the entire ARCA season, winning "Rookie of the Year" honors and finishing fifth in the points. Two years later Kimmel got his first ARCA win in Toledo and was second in total points, a feat he repeated in 1997.

Kimmel's style and records drew the attention of Larry Clement, owner of Tri-State Motorsports, who persuaded Frank to join the Tri-State team. Then the National Pork Board became a major sponsor. Kimmel responded with his first ARCA Championship in 1998, a second place finish in 1999, and then eight successive championships from 2000 to 2007.

Frank has won 71 races in the last 15 years, and is now in all-time second place in the history of the ARCA program, with 79

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*At left:* Frank Kimmel, who lives in his Allegro Bus during the racing circuit, enjoys the sponsorship of Tom Stinnett RV, of Clarksville, Indiana, a Tiffin dealer. Frank's relationship with Stinnett goes back 25 years when he first sold auto parts to Tom.

being the record for most wins. His career includes 209 top five finishes and 259 top ten finishes during his ARCA career spanning back to the 1990 season.

On December 8, 2007, Frank and his crew chief/brother, Bill, and car owner Larry Clement celebrated a record ninth championship at the ARCA RE/MAX Series Championship Awards Banquet. Kimmel, who remains ARCA's all-time active race winner, all-time active lap leader, and all-time money winner, is the only driver in series history to acquire nine championships. En route to his ninth title, Kimmel posted three wins, 11 top five, and 17 top ten finishes. He also was honored for winning the 2007 Bill France Triple Crown, which is designed to measure a driver's performance on a diverse array of tracks including a mile dirt track, a short track, and a speedway. Bill Kimmel was awarded the Cometic Engine Mechanic of the Year Award.

*Continued on page 50*

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*Continued from page 6*

together correctly, and (2) we couldn't assure the production line that all of the infrastructure and the coach's components *functioned* successfully together.

During the first fabrication of the cabinets for a new floorplan, the engineers stay with the shop craftsmen as they build each component. As we run it down the production line, all of the engineers are watching and making notes. Then we compile all of the notes and correct everything we found wrong. A lot of what we do in R&D is design dependability into the product.

Every motorhome we build has a minimum of two slide-outs. All of the diesel pushers have four. Therefore, concurrent with the development of a new floorplan, the slide-out department is designing the boxes. We can now go from concept drawings of all new slide-out boxes to a finished prototype in two months.

There are really just two types of problems in building a motorhome: *design* problems and *fabrication* problems. If you have a faulty design, it makes the fabrication impossible. A fabrication problem is usually a skill problem or an install problem at the line. It can be simply a lack of training. But one thing is for sure: if the design is not right, no amount of skill can fix it.

In the 10 years since we made the "whatever it takes" commitment, we have seen several major changes in our approach to managing design and building our coaches. Let me emphasize that everything we do is designed to please the customer.

First, let's talk about floorplans. The floorplan is the #1 reason a customer buys a motorhome. Therefore, we spend a lot of time trying to understand exactly what the customer wants. From our perspective, we don't want 15 to 20 floorplans per brand. We know from experience that 20 percent of the floorplans account for 80 percent of the sales. It's either a good floorplan or a bad one. If you have 15 floorplans, several of the plans will account for only one or two sales per quarter. Our industry is like most—you have turnover. When a rarely used floorplan comes down the production line, our production workers' lack of experience with that unit may cause mistakes to be made. So sticking with the 20-80 rule, we average about six well-designed floorplans per brand.

Second, slide-outs sell motorhomes. In 1998 we built several motorhomes with only one slide-out. Then it was two, then three, and now four. Slides have become a huge component. It doesn't cost that much to add a slide-out to a floorplan and it adds so much to the liveability of the coach.

Third, our customers want us to emulate the residential look. Today, homeowners spend a tremendous amount on their kitchens. So that's what we do. We have upgraded our cabinets with higher grades of wood and new finishes. Solid surface countertops are standard on every brand except the Allegro. You can order residential refrigerators and dishwashers on the Bus and Zephyr. We have stacked washers and dryers available on all of the diesel pushers. Buyers want more hardwood and tile, so now you will see carpet only in the bedroom and a few of the cockpits.

Customers often ask about the "challenges" in building a top quality coach. Perhaps the biggest challenge we face as a plant is making the annual design changes in each brand and its several floorplans. On the surface a change may seem pretty simple. But then you realize there are over 1,000 people involved. Everyone in the plant has to be trained to make the model year changes. If you are building a house, you have time to fix the mistakes. At each build station in the production line, we have a roll time of only 60 and 75 minutes. So you have to get it right.


I want to emphasize the precautions we take to be certain a change is made correctly. Our motto is work it, work it, work it. We will introduce 20 to 30 new features every model year in each floorplan. The R&D department will fabricate the change on the floor and check the test build time as well as the install time. Then we will make certain that the change functions properly after the installation.

Probably the single most challenging component in the motorhome is the slide-out. Twelve years ago our slide-out department was building one a day. In 2007, we built 50 slide-outs per day. Proportionally, the slide-out department has grown as much or more than the plant in general. It is an entire production plant in and of itself. The slide-outs are totally mechanical and designed to be cycled in and out thousands of times during the life of the coach. They are built to exacting tolerances and have all kinds of components including plumbing, electrical, HDMI, and LP. However, our technology and production efficiency has kept the cost per slide-out low.

Probably the question I am asked most often is, "What's new for 2009?" New ideas began coming in this past summer before we got the 2008 models fully launched. I put all of the new ideas in my computer with a folder for each brand. By January, I distribute the list to the engineers and they start to work on it. We don't have a specific cut-off time so a good idea that comes in late can still be incorporated.

In 2009, high definition TV will continue to be in demand. After February 2009 there will be no more analog signals. All coaches we are building today are HD ready. We will use more multiplexing technology which will significantly reduce wiring failures. More diagnostic technology will be built into the motorhome, including the jacks.

It has been a great decade for Tiffin Motorhomes and we want the next one to be even better. Like the airline flight attendants say, "We know you have other choices."

Fred Thompson, our magazine editor, asked me to tell you a little about myself. I am 42 and married to Michelle for 22 years. We have a son, Leigh, 19, who is following in my footsteps as the place kicker for the Alabama Crimson Tide and majoring in business. Our daughter, Shelby, 16, enjoys sewing and knitting and is being home schooled by Michelle. We use an Allegro Bus to travel to all of the Alabama football games in the fall and usually drive it on a vacation in July. Michelle and I ride motorcycles for relaxation and recreation. We restored a home in the historic section of Florence and enjoy living there very much. 



## Finding the middle of nowhere



1 First, disarm the optional GPS system. With map thoroughly out of sight, press gas pedal.



2 Find unpaved road. Such roads generally lead to remote locations. Follow unpaved road to end.



3 Open window. Listen for bustling city noise. If noise is still present, repeat step 2. If no noise is audible, you may exit Tiffin.

### ▲ WARNING

Do not follow road signs. These lead to populated areas and could have unintended effects.

THE HOW TO GUIDE

2008 ALLEGRO BAY® OWNER'S MANUAL 89







## Fall Gulf Getaway Rally Tours Pensacola Naval Air Station Museum in October

by Gail Johnson

**Mild temperatures,** beautiful sunny weather, the sparkling emerald Gulf of Mexico, sugar-white beaches, an abundance of local seafood, unlimited shopping opportunities, and relaxing Southern hospitality were some of the attractions that brought around 120 Tiffin coaches to the Gulf Breeze RV Resort in Gulf Shores, Alabama the first week in October. The Allegro Club hosted its early fall rally at this beautiful spot, and, from the surveys and comments received, the rally was a resounding success!

This five-day rally was packed with activities on site in the campground, beginning with the Tuesday seminars and classes by Tiffin vendors. Activities throughout the week included bingo and other games, a horseshoe tournament, a back-your-wagon contest, and theme nights with judging for best costume on *Pirate Night*.

An activity that has been added recently to our rallies is a Ladies' Tea, to which everyone is encouraged to bring a favorite teacup or mug and share a story about it. This particular tea was attended by around fifty, and nearly everyone had a brief story—some funny, some very touching—about her cup. An added treat was a first-person account from Toni Lipka of her childhood in

*At right:* The “Back Your Wagon” contest got a lot of laughs. Has your wife ever tried to help you park your motorhome?

a British colony overseas where she and her sisters received proper training in the correct etiquette for the handling of a teacup at British teatime. In closing her delightful story, she stated that her mother wanted them to be prepared in case that all-important invitation came to have tea with the Queen; “The invitation never came”, she sighed, “but we *were* prepared!”

Another activity that has been added to the last several rallies has been a Craft and Hobby Display with an opportunity provided to share information about each particular display. We




had good participation in this also, and an added bonus was a craft class directed by Marsha Schultz in which the attendees embellished tee shirts for themselves.

As has been the case in all of our Allegro Rallies, food is a large part of our time together, with dinner catered every night and some lunches and breakfasts also provided. The caterer for this rally was Katy's Catering of Foley, Alabama, and the meals were outstanding! One night, dinner was followed by live music provided by the J.R. Owen Band. They played a variety of music, and several enjoyed hitting the floor to keep time with the music!

One afternoon was devoted to a tour—we boarded buses to make the thirty-minute drive to Pensacola, motoring down the coastal highway and enjoying the views of the beautiful Gulf of Mexico. In Pensacola, we spent the afternoon touring the Pensacola Naval Air Station, home to the legendary Blue Angels. We enjoyed an IMAX movie, and the vast array of aviation-related displays kept us wandering the museum grounds, indoors and out, all afternoon. The many actual aircraft, and stunning artwork depicting air and sea battles our military has been involved in, were stirring reminders of the military tradition that has made our country great. I think our veterans especially enjoyed this trip!

To conclude our Pensacola tour, we stopped off at Lambert's Café, home of the “thrown rolls”, and feasted on delicious “down-home” Southern cooking!

If you have never attended an Allegro Club Rally, please consider doing so. As good as the food is, and as many “fun” things as we always have planned to do, the most enjoyable thing about the rallies is YOU! Forming friendships with other Tiffin owners from all around the country is, to me, the greatest benefit to be derived from our rallies. After all, we really are one big family!

On behalf of the entire Allegro staff, may we wish you safe travel, a happy holiday season, and we hope to see you soon, “Roughing it Smoothly”! 

## ALLEGRO CLUB 2008 TENTATIVE RALLY SCHEDULE

**TIFFIN/LA MESA RV SOUTHWEST SHOOTOUT**  
Old Tucson Studios, Tucson, AZ  
March 10-12, 2008 (Checkout March 13)

**ALLEGRO CLUB LOUISIANA LAGNIAPPE**  
Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park, Robert, Louisiana  
April 14-17, 2008 (Checkout Apr. 18)

**ALLEGRO CLUB NIAGARA FALLS FLING**  
Four Mile Creek Campsite, Youngstown, NY  
June 16-18, 2008 (Checkout June 19)

**TIFFIN/JC'S RV'S RALLY IN THE VALLEY**  
French Camp RV Park Resort, Manteca, CA  
June 24-26, 2008 (Checkout June 27)

**ALLEGRO CLUB BRANSON OR BUST**  
America's Best Campground, Branson, MO  
September 22-26, 2008 (Checkout Sept. 27)

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ALL EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE OR CANCELLATION



*At left:* Theme nights are always popular at Allegro Club rallies. *Pirate Night* inspired some very creative costumes from which the judges selected the winners.



## Fall Florida Festival

by Gail Johnson

**Bright blue autumn skies**, daytime temperatures in the seventies and dropping to the fifties at night, balmy breezes—what more could one ask to set the stage for a week of fun and fellowship at a Tiffin Allegro Club rally?

Seffner, Florida—just a stone’s throw to the west are Tampa and the beautiful Gulf of Mexico beaches and to the east, Mickey Mouse and friends in Orlando—the perfect location for our fall Allegro rally. Our host campground was Rally Park, a beautiful facility adjacent to the Lazy Days RV dealership and service center in central Florida.

As is our normal custom with five-day rallies, Monday was spent with registration and a welcome dinner in the evening. Lupton’s Catering did an outstanding job, and we enjoyed theme nights with several of the evening meals.

Our Tuesday was devoted to classes and seminars, which provided information on various aspects of Tiffin RV ownership. In addition, Lori Neely guided craft class participants in making “potato jewelry.” Some rally attendees opted for sightseeing, with so many interesting and fun things to see and do in the immediate vicinity. Following a tasty meal on Tuesday evening, we enjoyed a country-western band from Orlando, the Hindu Cowboys, who did a great job playing classic country. Many couples enjoyed getting up on the dance floor, while others clapped along from their seats.

Wednesday found us on buses bound for Tampa Harbor, where we boarded the Yacht *StarShip II* for a delightful luncheon cruise in Tampa Bay. What a perfect day of beautiful weather, delicious food, the glorious sun and water, and warm fellowship! Upon returning to the campground in the evening, a light meal was served and bingo and other games were available for those who desired to enjoy the evening among friends.


After a morning tea for the ladies, the highlight of Thursday’s activities was another tour; this time to a remote location outside of Tampa called the Boggy Bottom Ranch. Not knowing exactly what to expect, we were enchanted to find ourselves in a beautiful rustic camp in a natural setting. We enjoyed trails through lush forests featuring trickling waterfalls, abundant birds and other wildlife. This was the perfect setting for a scavenger hunt, and several couples enjoyed competing. Also available for horseshoe fans was a horseshoe-throwing tournament. Our hungry crowd enjoyed a delicious picnic-style buffet of barbeque chicken and ribs, with all the fixin’s, served in the open-air pavilion.

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Under bright blue Autumn skies, we boarded the yacht *Starship II* for a delightful luncheon cruise in Tampa Bay.

Friday’s activities included more games, with a “Back Your Wagon” contest the highlight of the competition. Friday night’s steak dinner closed out the rally, with chapters being recognized who had four or more members in attendance. Winners of contests were announced, and goodbyes were said, with plans being announced for future rallies where friendships and associations can be renewed.

On a personal note, Allegro Club President Jimmy Johnson received word on Thursday that his elderly mother, Elizabeth Johnson, had taken a turn for the worse back home in Florence, Alabama. Jimmy and Gail caught a flight out of Tampa on Thursday night and arrived home in Florence shortly before midnight. On Friday morning, with her children at her side, Mrs. Johnson passed peacefully from this life. Jimmy and Gail want to express heartfelt appreciation for all the kind words and acts that have helped them in this difficult time. To Cynthia Skinner, Tom and Pat Webber, Bob and Joanne Brown, James Bush, Robert Gober, David Sparks, and all others who helped to close out the rally and get the Johnson vehicles back home, a very special “Thank You!”

Until next time, be safe, and we hope to see you out there “Roughing it Smoothly!” 





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# Jesse Vess

## A 33-Year Veteran

by Fred Thompson

Jesse Vess loves working with TMH customers and they remember his friendly, low-key, get-the-job-done manner long after they have left Red Bay. He can claim more than 33 years of experience in the motorhome parts and manufacturing business.

Born and raised in Iuka, Mississippi, less than an hour's drive from Red Bay, Vess accepted a position at a Safari RV plant immediately after graduating from high school in 1971. Safari moved him to a new plant which opened in Burns Flat, Oklahoma, in 1972. The company did not survive and he returned to Mississippi in January 1973 to work at Tiffin Motorhomes, just a month after Bob started building Allegros. After a short stint with Air Cap, Vess came back to TMH to stay. "I'll stay here 'till Bob runs me off," he said with a smile.

All of the service center managers have an amazing depth of experience. Vess began his career at Tiffin as an electrician and later moved into plumbing. "There weren't that many of us in the early years and we all learned to do whatever was needed," he explained. "I have wired dashes, put on belt rails (exterior trim), and worked in final finish. Wade Humphres and I both worked in final finish back in the seventies."

Jesse moved into service several years later and then into the parts department in 1981. When you think of the thousands of parts that it takes to build a motorhome, you can only imagine the magnitude of organizing the inventory and cataloging each part so that it can be quickly picked for the service department or pulled for a shipping order to a dealer. In 1992 Bob

Tiffin created a parts department and asked Jack Elliott and Vess to write and process parts orders. He added three additional employees for shipping. "We had four desks in one office," he recalled.

Sales at Tiffin Motorhomes continued to grow and the parts and service department strained to match that growth. In 1998, Jesse became parts manager. His job and responsibilities grew exponentially to keep up with sales. Today Vess oversees a staff of 59 employees—30 in the parts office and 29 in the parts warehouse.

To pull and ship hundreds of parts every day, Vess created a work flow which required many new job positions. Long term experience counts here. The department has eight telephone techs (189 years of cumulative experience), three warranty techs (63 years), seven parts order specialists (80 years), three pullers who work in the parts warehouse, five crate builders, two who pull parts for service techs, three who order parts and place them in inventory, three who specialize in furniture,

doors, and windows. "Most of our phone techs come from service or production," Vess explained.

"I deal with customers who have 'major' problems," he laughed. "Of course, we want to take care of every problem, large or small. But we practice triage and I try to handle the big ones myself," he said. Vess likes to handle the parts problems for motorhomes which have been in wrecks since he has a depth of knowledge about major repairs. "It's not just what you see on the outside of a damaged motorhome, but what may be underneath that can't be seen," he said. "On the older models, I very likely will have to have some of the parts fabricated—like a storage compartment door, an entry door, a window, and even a front or rear cap."

Vess also enjoys handling upgrades. Coach owners may decide they want a free standing dinette after using the booth dinette for a few months. He also noted frequent requests for removing sofas and replacing them with recliners

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Jesse discusses the completed work order with Danny and Erma Bird, former residents of Albertville, Alabama, who have become full-timers. The Phaeton is the Bird's second Tiffin.





and computer desks. “Our cabinet shop has pre-designed plans and we can build quite a few items right here in the Service Center,” he pointed out. “Many of our owners are surprised that we can fabricate upgrades right here. However, we only build parts when we have the prints furnished by production.”

“The new Service Center has made a huge difference in our ability to serve our coach owners,” Vess said. “But we have learned to expect the unexpected. You never know what kind of new request you may get,” he laughed. “Our customers have some pretty interesting ideas for upgrading their coaches.”

The Service Center is also a proving ground for identifying design and construction problems. “We have a QC person who comes in every day after lunch to learn about repetitive problems,” he said. “On Tuesdays, Wade Humphres, our service manager, meets with Tim Tiffin and several engineers to address problems that the service department has discovered. The interchange of information goes on constantly. If we discover a recurring problem, the engineers will come to the Service Center to check it out and find solutions,” Vess said. “It’s one of the things that makes working here so challenging and interesting.”

Vess’s enthusiasm about his job continues to show as we talk. “I really enjoy my job because of all the great people I work with: Wade, Danny Inman, J.C. Blackburn, Danny Abbott, Norris Lewey, Billy Nichols, Don Boyd—we have all been together here about 30 years and we are just like family. We also have several people with 20+ years and quite a few with 10+ years.”

“Meeting our customers is another reason this job is so interesting. We had a couple who came in annually for service who were in their eighties, and they each had a motorcycle!” he said. “One couple I met last year has owned 13 Tiffin motorhomes.”

“We have a large number of customers who come in regularly twice a year and that allows me a chance to get to know them and to understand what they need. Nurturing good service relationships is really important. I think our customers can see how much we as individuals truly care about them. Bob Tiffin takes care of his customers and he expects us to do so, too. No one has ever treated me any better than Bob Tiffin, and it makes me want to treat our customers the same way. Caring concern is just a way of life around here,” Vess said as he continued to explain the culture of a small town.

“Without the great crew we have here

in the Service Center, we would have a real headache when you see all the motorhomes in this campground,” Jesse assured me.

Although the Service Center opens at 7 a.m., Jesse is at his desk by 6:30. “I can process more paperwork in that 30 minutes than I can at any other time throughout the day,” he said. “It’s like the quiet before the storm.” At 7 the intense activity starts, and it’s usually 4:30 or 5 p.m. before Jesse points his truck toward Itawamba County, Mississippi, to make the short 12-mile trip to his 15-acre farm. Married to Velma for 31 years, he knows supper will be waiting for him.

After spending five days each week in his high tech world, Jesse Vess descends into a rural world of horses, mules, and covered wagons. With three horses, three mules, and a customized wagon, Jesse and Velma are members of the Tishomingo County Wagon Train. “We organize a wagon train and travel backroads. We camp out in tents, buses, and motorhomes. Several years ago we did a Labor Day Ride with over 100 wagons participating. We usually have about 30 to 35 wagons,” he said. “Some of the folks haul their mules or horses in the rear of their school buses and use the front for camping.”

*Continued on page 50*

### Tips from Jesse Vess When You Call Parts and Service

1. When ordering parts or calling for service, it will help the service tech if you can provide the vehicle identification number (VIN #).
2. Be sure to write down your service tech’s name in case you need to get back to him later.
3. Fax number for Parts Dept.: 256-356-0257  
Fax number for Service Dept.: 256-356-8930
4. Parts & Service Phone number: 256-356-0261





# Building the Roof and Walls

Engineering Technology and Assembly Line Production Create the Durable Exterior of the Tiffin Motorhome

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

Caption Story by Phillip Cavness

When I see a new Tiffin motorhome, I notice the paint job and the interesting designs. I check out the contours of the front and back caps, the LED lights, the slide-outs. Then, I go inside to fully experience the floorplan, the decor, the comfort level, the lighting, the conveniences. Immediately, I am looking forward to the test drive. As I listen to the guttural tones of the 400 hp diesel engine, I anticipate the smooth surge of power as the Allegro Bus glides out of the parking lot onto the highway. Its handling on the highway is effortless: 25 tons — it's almost too easy.

Returning to the parking lot, I take a careful tour of the coach with my notebook. All at the same time, it is a visual, tac-

tile, physical experience. Ceramic tile, the smooth finish of fine quality furniture, the suede in the valances, the softness of Ultraleather™, the sharper images in hi-def television, the quality of solid surface countertops, the 8-way power captain's chair, and the list goes on.

But what is so easy to overlook in a Tiffin coach is the infrastructure. It starts with the solid steel welded sub-floor with the outrigger members to fully support the coach all the way to both outer walls. A story on the welding shop two years ago revealed that Tiffin Motorhomes uses on the average 400 pounds more steel in a coach's sub-floor system than any competitor.



**1** Allegro Bay driver's sidewall. At the lower left is the recess or path for a backer plate which will have a wall cabinet attached with screws. **2** Paths for 12-volt and 110-volt wiring. **3** Jimmy Patterson inserts the window assembly studs into a vanity slide-out box. **4** MIG welder Joe Sloan joins studs after insertion into the styrofoam frame. MIG stands for metal and inert gasses. **5** A 42-foot wall with 1 × 1½-inch studs in place is ready for welding. Lewis Cass glues 4 × 4-inch backer plates to exact locations where cabinets will be attached. Wiring in the routed paths awaits lights or electrical outlets. **6** Jason West transfers a

welded wall to the laminating table. **7** Technicians at the laminating table lower the welded aluminum frame into position over the fiberglass exterior wall which has been sprayed with glue. The glue is a moisture-cure urethane that requires water to activate it. **8** The fiberglass exterior and the welded aluminum frame with styrofoam insulation are in full contact. **9** A machine running on opposing tracks sprays the top side of the wall sandwich with glue. **10** Kelly Ertle (left) and Josh Pierce apply Expo Champagne luan paneling to an Allegro Bay wall. **11** Bud Strickland stretches a protective tarp over the top of the "wall sandwich"

prior to moving it into the stack press. The wall receives 5 to 10 pounds of pressure per square inch for 22 minutes in the four-tier press. **12** A tarp-covered wall is shown in the stack press just prior to lowering to begin the pressure curing process. The system was the first 48-foot stack press ever built by BSI in Yakima, Washington. **13** Bud Strickland and Kelly Ertle (left) work opposite Hank Woodard to position pre-cut luan panels over the white naugahide soft-touch ceiling material. Each panel is pre-drilled for barrel lights and A/C ducts. The white naugahide is placed over a clean tarp to prevent any glue or debris marks.

**14** Using the same construction techniques for the roof structure, tubular steel framing is pressed into routed styrofoam channels for welding. A/C ducts and electrical conduits are installed in routed channels and large back plates are glued on top to hold screws for all of the equipment mounted on the roof. Allen Howard routs the hole for a roof-mounted HVAC system. **15** Phyllis Garrison installs wiring harnesses in the electrical pathways of the roof system cut with the CNC router. **16** After spraying the luan with glue, John Dowdy (left) and Hank Woodard lower the styrofoam-insulated steel frame with A/C ducts and wiring



Just as impressive is the engineering and construction methods that TMH uses to build the walls and roof of its coaches.

Starting with the roof, the major components include the one-piece fiberglass roof cap, an A/C condensation drainage system, high-performance thermal insulation, the Quiet Air Cooling System, the tubular steel roof welded skeleton, and the soft touch vinyl ceiling panel.

The wall system includes the gel-coat fiberglass outside wall panel, high-performance thermal insulation, tubular aluminum welded skeleton, and the decorative inside wall panel.

TMH fabricates all of the wall system components from top quality materials in a fascinating production process. To create

an accurate description of just how it is done, Phillip Cavness, the departmental supervisor, wrote captions for the sequential pictures that follow.

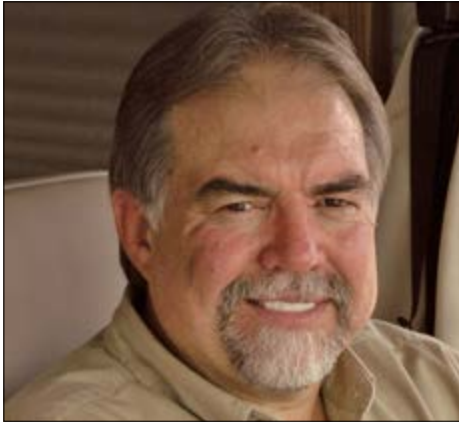
Let's begin by looking at the building process for the walls. A single piece of Styrofoam EPS 1.5 inches thick, the size of which is equal to the height and length of the wall, is placed on the router bed. The operator selects the computer program for either the driver's or passenger's side. The router begins its path across the styrofoam sheet which could be as large as 8 × 45 feet, creating recesses for the tubular aluminum studs, the wiring paths, the electrical receptacles, and the plates to which cabinets and other major items will attach. **RIS**



harnesses onto the luan-naugahide ceiling system. **17** Hank Woodard carefully lines up the styrofoam-steel frame with the luan-ceiling material. **18** With the styrofoam-steel roof in place over the luan-ceiling material, a coat of glue over the roof is released for attaching another layer of luan. **19** Josh Pierce (left) and John Dowdy add a layer of luan, attaching each sheet with screws to backer plates that are glued to the styrofoam. **20** Joby Dill removes a full wall from the stacker press after pressure curing for 22 minutes. **21** Following guide marks placed by the lamination team, Joey Riddle prepares to rout and remove sections of the wall for two slide-outs, plus window, refrigerator, and water heater openings. **22** Chris Brazil routs and removes a slide-out panel from a primary full wall panel. Holes marking the corners of the slide-out wall are put in on the previous work table from the paneling side. The removed panel is sent immediately to the slide-out department for the assembly of the slide-out box for this motorhome.

The slide-out box must be built in one day and brought back to the assembly line when needed. **23** Chris Brazil and Joey Riddle rout out the windows from the full wall. The routed pieces will be used for the seat bottoms in the dinette booth, an example of how TMH avoids waste to control costs. **24** Joe Cooper (left) and Ashley Wallace install AC registers into the ceiling of a Phaeton motorhome. **25** A completed roof system showing the top layer of luan awaits installation on a motorhome. The one-piece fiberglass roof will attach directly to the luan. **26** The wall assembly is mounted to the floor frame. The extended screws wait to be power-driven into the aluminum P-tubing on the side wall. Screws are inserted every six inches. Notice the two large openings where the slide-out will be mounted later on the assembly line. **27** Braces are inserted into the slide-out openings to keep the walls perfectly square during assembly line production until the slide-out boxes can be inserted later in the production line.





## Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, 32-year veteran with Tiffin Motorhomes, invites your questions.

Please use the postcard and send Danny your questions about your motorhome and its operation, especially those questions that may be useful to all of our readers. Address your letter to:

Danny Inman  
Roughing It Smoothly  
PO Box 292912  
Tampa, FL 33637-2912

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. Please send a SASE if you would like for us to return your photographs, disk files, and manuscript.

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

### Dear Danny . . .

After camping in travel trailers for 30 years, we recently purchased our first new motorhome, an Allegro Bay. On delivery day, we decided to video tape our walk-through.

A month later we went on vacation and forgot to take the video tape. After we could not get a couple of things to work, we called home and asked our son to watch the video and walk us through what we had forgotten. The directions in the owner's manuals were generally too brief and did not tell us what we needed to know.

Since people spend so much money for these beautiful coaches, we think they should come

equipped with a DVD that instructs the owners on how to set up and operate everything needed for a happy camping experience. All of the common pieces of equipment could be addressed in one section of the DVD, and then features special to each brand could be placed in five different sections of the video. The video should remain in the coach so that the owner can quickly refer to it when needed. Most people hate to plow through manuals, but they will watch a video. Hope to hear from you soon on this suggestion.

Sandy Ames  
Mendon, Michigan

Dear Sandy,

We are in the process of completing instructional DVDs for our 2008 motorhomes. They will be released in January. At this time there are no plans to create DVDs for motorhomes built prior to 2008.

We have a 1999 28-ft Allegro. Our little dog has scratched the tinting on both inside front side windows. It is getting difficult to see my rear view mirrors. Is there any way to remove the tinting from the windows?

Gale Shoemaker  
Carp Lake, Michigan

Dear Gale,

You can remove the tint material by taking a single-edged razor and scraping it off. Remove the adhesive residue with a glue remover. You can have the tinting replaced by a reputable automotive shop.

I have a 1982 Allegro which I bought six years ago. I love it; my son and I use it a lot for fishing and camping trips. I need a replacement self-leveling jack and clutch assembly. I bought it this way and cannot find the parts to fix it. The company that made the jacks for this coach is no longer in business.

Edward & Jamie Glatz  
Fulda, Minnesota

Dear Edward,

This was an aftermarket add-on which a former owner put on your Allegro. Jacks were not offered by Tiffin in 1982. The only solution we can suggest is to have a repair shop install a new set of aftermarket jacks which will be very costly.

My 38-ft Phaeton has a full slide-out that houses the galley (sink, stove, oven) and a sofa. The sink/faucet supply lines are routed through a portion of the slide that is prone to freezing. I put heat tape there and enclosed it with hardback insulation which works okay. I am concerned about the

heat tape being "on" for the 60 days while I am here skiing. Can you suggest any alternatives?

Edward McFall  
Payson, Arizona

Dear Edward,

We don't have any experience using heat tape for an extended period in the situation you described and share your concern for safety. *RIS* ran a story on Frank and Dee Hoelzle who live in their 38-ft. Allegro Bay at Breckenridge, Colorado, throughout the ski season. Temps 20 below are not unusual there at night. I suggest you contact Frank to learn what he is doing. Call Fred Thompson, editor, for a phone number or email address for Frank.

I own a 2003 Allegro 30DA which I purchased new. In order to use both air conditioners at the same time, I would like to upgrade from a 30-amp to a 50-amp service. Can I purchase the parts from the Tiffin Parts and Service Center? I know the generator will not handle both air conditioners, but 50-amp service at RV parks will.

Can you advise me on upgrade parts that would permit rotating the couch 90 degrees to watch TV more comfortably? How can I install a lock-down device to make it stationary again for travel?

William H. Sherwood  
Trail, Oregon

Dear William,

Making the conversion should be done by a certified electrician trained in the wiring of motorhomes. While the parts are readily available, you would need comprehensive knowledge of all of the electrical systems to make the changeover safely.

We do not stock nor do we know where to find the parts that would permit your rotating the couch 90 degrees to watch television. It would be a major task to make a lock-down device to rotate the couch safely and then put it back in place.

The new Phaeton we recently purchased is just about perfect! My only complaint is the 100-gallon fuel tank. It is too small. I hardly get down the road and I'm faced with the dreaded "Where to stop?" far too soon. I wish it had two 150-gallon fuel tanks.

Can I add a pony tank? Or switch out the 100 tank for a 150-gallon tank? The chassis of the Phaeton and the Allegro Bus are almost the same and the Allegro Bus has a 150-gallon tank.

Whitney Broussard  
Colleyville, Texas

Dear Whitney,

The main reason we selected the 100-gallon fuel tank is a concern for total weight. You would



severely reduce your cargo carry capacity by increasing your fuel tank size by 50 gallons. The front axle carrying capacity on the Allegro Bus is over 2,000 pounds more than the Phaeton. Swapping a 150-gallon for a 100-gallon tank would be impossible given the configuration of other infrastructure. Adding an auxiliary tank is not recommended.

I purchased a new 35-ft 1998 Allegro Bus with one slide. I am concerned that the slide-out might get stuck in the extended or retracted position. Can you tell me how to get to that motor if I need to fix or disconnect it?

Bill Guertin  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Dear Bill,  
The slide-out motor is located underneath the slide-out box in the storage compartment. The manual will show you how to disengage the motor and move the slide-out in or out with a socket wrench.

I read with interest the question from Pete Mowry regarding an electrical problem with his 2006 Allegro Bay. I have the same problem with my 2007 Allegro 30DA. It has been to Red Bay, a dealership twice, and the glitch is not resolved. Currently, the backup camera, slides, jacks, and power window work intermittently. I have not replaced the solenoid you mentioned. Where is it located? Is this a production or a design problem?

W. R. (Bud) Jenkins  
Cottonwood, Arizona

Dear Bud,  
The unit that failed is an ignition solenoid that becomes hot when you turn on the ignition switch. It is located behind a black plastic shield in the passenger's side storage box near the converter. It is a White-Rogers 12-volt, 3-post solenoid, Tiffin part number 7860. This is not a production or a design problem. Solenoids burn out with extended use.

While traveling the highways and by-ways of the western coastal states in our 2003 Allegro Bus, we often run into somewhat deplorable road conditions. Our 27-inch television over the dash often vibrates to the point that I am surprised it still works when we arrive at our destination. Do you have any way to reduce the vibration and solve this problem before the TV lands in our laps? Thank you for all of the good information in your column.

Bob Yates  
Napa, California

Dear Bob,  
There are support brackets that go up to the roof and to the front cap. You will have to remove the television to check the brackets. If they are properly anchored, you should eliminate the vibration problem. The TV is heavy, so it may be advisable to have the work done at a service center.

I have a 1989 Allegro M31. As others have noted, I too only get 5 mpg, regardless of whether my speed is 50 or 65. The problem I have is when the lights are on and I turn on the dash lights: the temperature gauge and the fuel gauge go to full hot and less than half a tank respectively. I took it to a dealer who was unable to fix it. Any ideas as to what is causing the two gauges to misregister?

Billy J. Coley, Sr.  
Loxley, Alabama

Dear Billy,  
It will be in the grounding system. If you can go to the back of the gauges and install a better ground wire which would be connected directly from the instrument to a piece of the sheet metal or one of the structural members, I think you will solve your problem.

I have a 2004 Phaeton. When we get home in April after spending the winter in Texas, I put our motorhome in our shed for three months or so. Is it best to plug into a 110-volt outlet to keep the batteries charged? Or should I switch off the two coach batteries and the six chassis batteries with the two red switches? Should I turn off the 12-volt switch at the entry door? What is the purpose of the battery shut-offs? Would all memory in the Phaeton's computer be lost if I shut off the chassis batteries? Thanks for your help.

Donald Kleven  
Marshall, Wisconsin

Dear Donald,  
It is best to turn off the red disconnect switches for long-term storage. This will assure there will be no drain on the batteries. This will disconnect the house and chassis batteries, but your computer should retain its memory. If you decide to leave the 110-volt line connected, be sure to check the battery fluids every three to four weeks to prevent it from evaporating the water and ruining them.

I own a 2007 Allegro Bus with the Atwood leveling system. How should the Bus be stored? Should I engage the leveling system to take the weight off of the tires and the air suspension bags?

Charles R. Parrish  
Kingwood, Texas

Dear Charles,  
I feel this is the best way to store your Bus. It relieves the pressure on the sidewalls.

Jim and Kathy Beedle wrote to you in the Fall 2007 issue regarding a problem with the hot water pressure in their 2005 Allegro Bay and you indicated that it was probably a broken or dirty check valve. We have a 2005 Phaeton. In our coach, the hot water pressure is fine, but the cold water pressure is very weak. Is there also a check valve for the cold water?

Jim and Janet Thomas  
Sublimity, Oregon

Dear Jim and Janet,  
There is a check valve in the cold water line. That particular check valve is located where you hook in your water hose and another one is located in the water pump. If it is this valve, then both your hot and cold water will have low pressure. If it is not the valve, then you probably have debris in the line which requires a trial and error routine to track it down. That is probably a job for your dealer or the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay.

Does the engine-driven alternator in my 2003 Allegro Bay charge my two 6-volt batteries as well as the 12-volt batteries used for cranking? When I am plugged into shore power, which batteries are getting charged?

Frank Woythal  
Andover, New York

Dear Frank,  
Yes, the alternator charges both the 6- and 12-volt batteries. When you are plugged into shore power, only the house batteries are being recharged.

## CORRECT ADDRESSES

If you are receiving more than one copy of *Roughing It Smoothly*, please call us toll-free at 877-538-7467 or email fredthompson1941@hotmail.com.

**Three ways to change your address:** (1) Use the USPS standard change of address postcard. (2) Email us and put "RIS address change" in the subject line. (3) Call our toll-free number and select option 4. Speak slowly and clearly stating your old address first and then your new one.

## Reader Response

Dear Danny,  
You published a letter from Alice Lowrimore of Arlington, Texas, about the ceiling marks in her 1995 Allegro Bus. We own a 1995 Allegro Bay and had the same problem. It can easily be taken care of by using a 50-50 mix of bleach and water in a spray bottle. Although it is a temporary fix, it requires no scrubbing and looks good after the application. First, make a test for color fastness in a spot like the closet.

We love our Allegro Bay. Just can't seem to find enough time to spend in it. It is just so homey.

Neal West  
Michigan City, Indiana

Dear Neal,  
Thank you very much for your practical solution.

I have enjoyed all of your columns in *Roughing It Smoothly*. Since we had to sell our Allegro due to illness, we would like to cancel receiving the magazine. It is a super magazine, but I am sure it is expensive to print and mail it.

John Troxel  
Rockledge, Florida

Dear John,  
Sorry to hear about your illness. We will be glad to continue sending you the magazine. Just let us know. Thanks for your patronage.

I was dismayed by your cavalier answer to the question regarding malfunctioning parking brakes (RIS, 4:4). "Purchase chock blocks," you say. This is an unsatisfactory solution to a serious safety issue. . . .

The Auto-Park brake on the Chevy chassis . . . has caused us untold grief and expense in the seven years we have owned our Allegro Bus. Three different Chevrolet dealers were unable to properly adjust the brake when the coach was under chassis warranty. The fix would last about three days of travel before the brake would once again fail to hold. We rarely leave the coach without chocking the wheels.

A Cummins service center rebuilt the brake at a cost of \$1,500, an expense we should not have had to incur since the brake never worked properly from the beginning and while under warranty.

Once Cummins rebuilt the brake, it held very well. Then the Auto-Park rendered the coach completely immobile when an electrical problem prevented it from releasing. The coach had to be towed 50 miles to Cummins for yet another repair. A brake design that disables the coach com-

pletely in the absence of electrical current is as asinine as they come.

Now that the Cummins rebuild has been in use for a few hundred miles, the coach is starting to creep again when parked on an incline. Now it is back to the chocks.

Michael LeButt  
Cheboygan, Michigan

Dear Michael,  
Chevy, Ford, and Workhorse used this braking system for several years on a number of chassis that were selected by many of the leading motorhome manufacturers. Unfortunately, we were one of those manufacturers. Mr. Tiffin has struggled many times with problems on the chassis we have used over the years. As a direct result of those problems, Tiffin Motorhomes started building its own Powerglide chassis earlier this year. It is offered right now only on the Bus.

I don't think a single issue of *Roughing It Smoothly* comes in that I don't pick up at least one and usually more helpful ideas.

The "News You Can Use" on the HWH jacks system (RIS, 4:4) was most timely, at least in my case.

We own a 1999 34-ft Allegro Bay which we bought used five years ago. About a week ago I did my usual monthly check of all systems including lowering and raising my 610 HWH System. The next morning I had an early appointment to address the Ford cruise control recall issue. On starting up and turning on my lights, I noticed the jacks warning light was "On" (not the buzzer). I made a visual inspection and found all of the jacks retracted. No further problem occurred and I intended to explore the "On" light problem in the next day or two. On a rare occasion while driving, we have gotten the warning buzzer. The first time it was quite frightening. But when it happened again, it was always on a very rough road and I attributed it to that. Simply hitting the "On" and "Store" buttons took care of the problem. But when the light came on this time while parked, it was more of a concern.

Then in the mail that day was the latest copy of *Roughing It Smoothly* which told me exactly the source of the problem. Since we bought the motorhome used from an individual, we did not have a true "shake down" tour of all systems.

I have to admit I had no idea the system had to remain in the "On" position while retracting, until the warning lights and then the store light went off (which it did today in six minutes ex-

actly as your article said). Well, egg on my face, and as they say, "If it doesn't work right, read the instruction manual" — which is clearly stated and emphasizes your point!

Many thanks for such a pertinent "put my mind at rest" article.

C. C. Laborde, Jr.  
Lake Charles, Louisiana

The parking brake problem that Bob Steward brought to your attention in the Fall 2007 issue is the same problem I have had. This parking brake is simply a drum brake on the drive shaft. Here is what I did to correct the problem.

Drum brakes are adjustable. (1) Lift the rear wheels off the ground. (2) Put the transmission in Neutral. (3) Rotate the drive shaft until the access port is at 12 o'clock. (4) Remove the port cover. (5) Adjust the drum brake until a very slight drag occurs. (6) Put the transmission in Park. The brake should now be able to repel any attempt at turning the drive shaft.

In my opinion, to state that a set of wheel chocks are needed is an admission that this is a case of poor engineering. But that is not to say that a severe incline would not require chocks.

I have fought with this miserable situation since 1998. I even replaced the system with a mechanical park brake and needed chocks at that time. I then reinstalled the original parking brake system, made the adjustments listed above, and so far all is working fine.

My next motorhome had better have a lock-up transmission or it is NO SALE!

Joe Tanguay  
Melbourne, Florida

Dear Joe,  
Thanks for sharing your step-by-step method with our readers. We hope this will help Mr. LeButt and Mr. Steward solve the same problem on their coaches.

For your information only. The metal end of the engine oil cooler line rubbed on the frame and leaked oil. I spotted this before any serious damage occurred. However, it was expensive to repair, about \$500. I thought you might tie off more of these lines. My Allegro has 50,000+ miles on it and this is the first real breakdown. We enjoy our RV by taking shorter trips and staying longer because of the fuel prices.

Joe Rice  
Wills Point, Texas




## TIFFIN MANAGEMENT TEAM

*Continued from page 43*

April through November, the club does a monthly trail ride of 12 to 20 miles. "My daughter, Cindy, and I ride together frequently. She has been riding since she was five," Vess said.

"I love to go to church and serve God because He makes all of this possible. My wife and I attend Antioch Baptist Church in north Itawamba County. I love to give the kids a ride on the wagon during Vacation Bible School every year," he said with a big smile.

But what is the driving force behind Jesse Vess and his devotion to his job? "When a customer or a dealer takes the time to call and thank me for the good work that we do, that's my biggest reward and satisfaction."

And what really counts? "When we get the Quality Circle Award every year, Bob comes over and personally thanks every individual at the Service Center." 



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## OWNER PROFILE

*Continued from page 35*

This year marks a huge turning point for Frank and his brother, Bill, who has served as crew chief since 1999. In late fall 2007, they announced the formation of Kimmel Racing. "We had been driving for Larry for 10 years. He opened doors for us and gave us many opportunities, but we think now is the time to begin a new chapter," Frank said.

Kimmel Racing currently has two Dodges, a major change from the Fords Frank has driven for the last nine years. "We decided to build our own cars," Frank said. "Dodge makes a great race car with a lot of horsepower. The engines have an output of 820 horsepower at 8800 rpm," he explained. The new company acquired a 5,000 sq. ft. shop in Clarksville to develop their equipment.


"It cost \$80,000 to build our first car from scratch, and that's without the engine," Frank said. "New engines are about \$65,000 each. However, we lease our engines on a yearly program which runs us about \$15,000 to \$25,000 per race." The new company expects the 2008 season will cost approximately \$1.5 million, or about \$65,000 per race.

Acknowledging a serious concern for safety, Kimmel said the team had developed better structure and framing. "We have great fire safety teams at the tracks, plus the required use of fire retardant uniforms," he pointed out. In addition, Kimmel always wears the HANS device (head and neck restraint). His only serious accident was a complete wipe-out in the 1999 qualifying laps at Daytona. He woke up the next day in the hospital, but fortunately had no broken bones or long-term damage.

Kimmel is quick to give credit to the company's racing team. "Without a totally competent team, a driver doesn't have a chance to win. Pit stops are critical. If your team is four or five seconds faster than your competitors, that alone can win the race," he said.

At 45, Frank Kimmel is at the peak of his career. Kimmel Racing is launching a new phase in the family's 60-year racing history. Frank and Bill both have sons who want to keep the tradition alive. "I don't see myself racing in ARCA past 50," he said recently. "I can step out and be very happy and content as a mechanic."

More time for family still remains a priority for this racer. Donna and Frank's daughter Holly, 19, is a sophomore at Belmont Abbey in Charlotte, North Carolina. She plays on the college's volleyball team. Frankie, 17, is a junior at Providence High School in Clarksville. He plays on the school's tennis team and is a member of the Quick Recall Team. He agrees that racing is in his future. Both children are members of the Honor Society.

A sports editor in a recent column said, "Frank Kimmel has no entourage. When the soft-spoken driver goes to Daytona, he simply goes about his business, as unassuming as the average Joe. He's never too busy to answer questions. I've never seen him even slightly bent out of shape about anything. . . . Kimmel has no real desire to be famous. I don't think he is motivated by the cheers of the masses. All he really wants to do is race a little and be with his family a lot." 



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# F R O M T H E R O A D

## The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

### Planning to Buy Soon

I am retired from a management position with General Motors. My last involvement was as manager of technical assessment for the R&D of the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Engine Project. We are on our second RV, a Holiday Rambler pusher. However, before acquiring it a year ago, I became very impressed with the Phaeton we saw at Colton RV. I talked to Bob Tiffin about my questions on the unit we were looking at only to have someone else buy it ahead of us. My wife's and my dream is to own a Tiffin as long as we're able to drive one safely. We plan to visit the plant soon. I would appreciate being added to your mailing list for *Roughing It Smoothly*.

Al Stocker, Ellicottville, New York

### Taking Our Grandchildren Fishing

We took our three grandsons (ages 4, 5, and 9) to the High Sierras to catch some trout. Since the water was really low at Rock Creek at Tom's Place, we drove farther north to Walker. The fishing there was great. The boys had a ball learning to fish. The oldest, Kody, fished right by Papa and caught just as many as he did. We own a 2002 Zephyr but do not receive *Roughing It Smoothly*. Please add us to your mailing list.

Bertha & Roy Miller, Ontario, California

### Small Town, Big Heart

This past summer we spent nine days at the Tiffin Allegro Campground. What a wonderful experience we had! After the first four days, we left behind our 2004 Phaeton with Chris Wright to give our motorhome an "extreme makeover." What a delightful, hard working young man who

proved to be an excellent craftsman. Six weeks later we returned and met Chris Berry, another wonderful craftsman who redesigned our television cabinets, and what a terrific job he did in only two days. From Red Davis who runs the tours at the plant, to the friendly and helpful hosts at the campground, who answered our questions and gave us directions to the right stores in Red Bay, where we always met friendly people, it is a pleasure to return to "small town America" and receive that good old "southern hospitality."

Terry & Carole Zahn, La Verne, California

### The Canyons of Utah

We have just returned from beautiful Bryce Canyon and Zion Canyon in Utah. Wow! If you haven't been there, this is a great place to visit. The ever-changing colors as the sun sets, rises, the shadows. The hikes we experienced, the people we met, just an overall great vacation. While living in the Eastern Sierras, I have become an avid photographer—there are so many beautiful places in the Sierras to take pictures. But the Utah canyons are such a different type of beauty. You can look at the "hoodoos" forever, almost like gazing at cloud shapes. We are so blessed to live within a nation of such beauty.

We arrived to find the weather had blown in a cold snap — 39° when we arrived and I cannot imagine what the wind chill factor was. The temp dropped to 16° over night. Our new 2008 Allegro was nice and toasty, and we cannot express the comfort we felt in our motorhome.

Tammy Turner, Fernley, Nevada



## IMPORTANT Dometic Recall Information

Dometic Corporation is continually committed to maintaining a high level of satisfaction and excellence now and in the future. That is why Dometic is voluntarily recalling certain refrigerators that may have a potential safety defect. The recall affects Dometic two-door refrigerators manufactured between April 1997 and May 2003.

The well-being of Dometic customers is of highest concern. A serious problem resulting in a fire may occur in an exceptionally small fraction of Dometic two-door refrigerators, but to address that potential risk, **please contact us immediately for more information.**

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