

Roughing It Smoothly®



IN THIS ISSUE

- Yellowstone National Park
- Atlanta—As a Destination

SPECIAL

- The 2009 Zephyr 45 QBZ Gets a Rear Bath
- New for 2009: Tiffin Adds a Record Number of New Features

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49



SUMMER 2008 VOLUME 5 NUMBER 3

6



19



36

Roughing It Smoothly®

June 2008

Volume 5, Number 3

Roughing It Smoothly® magazine is published four times a year by Book Production Resources for Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc., 105 2nd Street NW, Red Bay, Alabama 35582. BPR offices are located at 9302 Alanbrooke Street, Temple Terrace, Florida 33637. Printed in the United States of America. Postage paid at Burlington, Vermont 05402. Postmaster: Send all changes of address to Book Production Resources, P.O. Box 292912, Tampa, Florida 33687-2912.

This issue of *Roughing It Smoothly®* has a postal distribution of approximately 39,500 copies and a dealer distribution of 12,000 copies. It was printed by Lane Press, 87 Meadowland, South Burlington, Vermont 05403.

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Contributing Photographers: Dean Dixon, Fred Thompson, Jeff Williams, Norman Spray, Harold Breuninger, RV Pro, Fotosearch, Cory Photography, Jimmy Johnson, Doc Hutcheson

Tiffin coach owners may receive a free subscription by calling toll-free to 877-538-7467; writing to *Roughing It Smoothly®*, P.O. Box 292912, Tampa, FL 33687-2912; or emailing fredthompson1941@hotmail.com. Please include your phone number, the last six characters of your VIN number, and the year and model of your coach. If you sell your coach, please call Stephanie Umfress at 256-356-8661 and give her the VIN number, year and model, and the new owner's address so that the new owner can enjoy the magazine.

Departments

President's Corner Things Are Really Pretty Good	4
News You Can Use Janice Frederick—Survivor	14
Tiffin Management Team Tiffin's Service Liaison: Norris Lewey	16
Allegro Club News Rallies in Arizona and Louisiana Rally Plans for 2009	30
On the Road with Harold Interviews from Arizona and New Mexico	40
On the Production Line Building Top-Quality Cabinets and Furniture	41
Dealer Profile His Name Is Jim Dandy	46
Owner Profile Getting High at 65	56
From the Road	61
Serious Tech Talk	62

On our cover: Big Springs Dam and Reservoir on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway near Dennis, Mississippi

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Features

The 2009 Zephyr 45 QBZ Opening a Whole New World	6
Yellowstone Granddaddy of Them All	19
Dan Blanke: Retired?	32
New for 2009 Atlanta As a Destination	36
	49

Editor's Note

Don't miss the four-page "New for 2009" feature starting on page 36. Tiffin has rolled out more new features this year than at any time in the last five. **NOTE:** The 2009 Allegro Open Road models will debut in late July due to the extensive changes and upgrades being made this year. We will feature them in the Fall issue of *RIS*.

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."

Things Are Really Pretty Good

by Bob Tiffin

The U.S. and world economies affect each of us in different ways, depending on our liquid assets, our liabilities, and how we are invested. Of course, that is equally true of all businesses.

Looking at Tiffin Motorhomes' 35-year history, the economy had a pronounced effect on sales during the years 1973-75 and 1979-81 and part of 1982. Of course, the primary factor in those years was the price of oil.

How was TMH affected? In January 1973, our first year of operation, we were building one motorhome a day. We began to hear rumors of the Arabian oil embargo in the early summer and did not think much about it. But by fall, we were seeing long gas lines every night on television. Inflation and high interest rates brought our business to a crawl. The Federal Reserve raised interest rates to curb inflation and that brought the economy down. In 1973 we built 232 units. The last two months of that year we only built six motorhomes. During the first four months of 1974 we built 12 units.

The Arab oil embargo was really caused when Syria and Egypt attacked Israel on October 5, 1973. After the U.S. and other western countries showed support for Israel, several Arab exporting nations imposed the embargo on the countries supporting Israel. Production was reduced by five million barrels per day (MBPD). Only one MBPD was made up by the increased production of other countries. The deficit of four MBPD was extended through March 1974. If there was any doubt that OPEC could control crude oil prices, it was removed during the embargo. The extreme sensitivity of fuel prices to supply short-



ages became apparent when the price of fuel increased 400 percent in six months.

Then the economy began to recover very gradually. During the next eight months of '74 we built 166 units. In 1975 Tiffin built 430 units, then 900 units in 1976, 1,200 in 1977, and 1,600 in 1978. We were moving along quite well when the Iranian Crisis struck in 1979. There was tremendous inflation and gas lines at the pumps were frustrating everyone again. The Iranian Revolution resulted in a loss of two MBPD between November 1978 and June 1980. Weakened by the revolution, Iran was invaded by Iraq in September 1980. By November the combined production of both countries was only one MBPD, reflecting a total loss of over six MBPD. The price of crude more than doubled to \$35 a barrel in 1981. Compared to 2008 dollars, that is approximately \$83 a barrel.

As fuel prices increased rapidly, Saudi Arabia's oil minister, Ahmed Yamani,

warned other members of OPEC that high prices would lead to a reduction in demand. He was right! Surging prices brought on better insulation in new homes, increased insulation in older homes, greater efficiency in industrial production, and automobiles that started to get more miles per gallon. These factors along with a global recession caused a reduction in demand which led to falling fuel prices.

Eventually, crude prices fell to \$10 per barrel by mid-1986. During this time, Tiffin Motorhomes built approximately 900 units in 1980, 700 in 1981, and 900 in 1982. In 1983 we started building eight units a day and have never slowed down since.

As we moved into the 1990s, the price of crude was spiked by the Gulf War and then by strong demand from the Pacific Rim countries. Later in the decade, declining Russian production and an economic crisis in 1998 in the Pacific Rim combined to reduce fuel prices.

Many of the factors affecting the price of oil today parallel the events of the seventies, eighties, and nineties. However, *demand* is the one overriding factor that was present in each situation. The problem was the *availability of fuel*.

I have always said that if fuel is available at some price, people will buy motorhomes. That has held true in this situation and we are building 11 motorhomes per day. In 2007, we built over 3,000 motorhomes.

During all three of the crises, we have never changed our service philosophy and that is what has sustained Tiffin Motorhomes. Of course, in 1973 we did not have a service history to fall back on because we simply had not built enough

units. But by the 1979–81 crisis, we had a good track record in service and parts and that is what helped us weather the storm during those years. And no doubt, service along with our well-thought-out functional designs and floorplans are the two key reasons why we are doing as well as we are today.

So what is the big question in June 2008? Where will the price of fuel go now? By looking at the past, we can attempt to predict the future. In both previous crises in recent history, energy prices stayed high for an extended period and then leveled off as the financial economic ship righted itself. Income and prices in other sectors of the economy increased to compensate for the increased price of fuel and ultimately brought everything back into balance. The key to the leveling process is when and where the price of fuel will settle for the long haul.

I believe that our technology is going to create a key factor that will affect the price of fuel. I am talking about electric automobiles. In the next 10 years, at least half of the cars on our roads will be propelled by some type of electric motors. That change will greatly reduce our current dependency on oil, not only in the U.S. but worldwide. Lowered demand will increase availability (supply) and cause the price of fuel to go down. However, the reduction in demand must be significant. OPEC has had some limited successes over the past 35 years by reducing production (supply) to keep prices up.

With respect to our national economy, if the dollar remains as low as it is now in comparison to other currencies, our balance of trade will improve. Even now, our products are a real bargain overseas. Eventually that will cause the value of the dollar to rise, which correspondingly will cause the price of commodities to fall, and that decline should include the price of oil. This is the second factor that should bring down the price of fuel.

Historically, the high price of fuel has been an irresistible incentive for U.S. companies to increase drilling and exploration. When OPEC members see this

Continued on page 60

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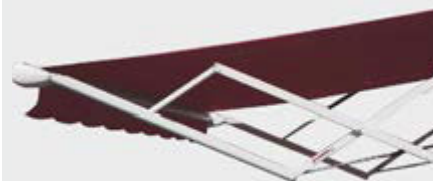
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The 2009 Zephyr 45 QBZ

Opening a Whole New World

Text by Fred Thompson

Photography by Jeff Williams

When the time comes for placing an elegant living style and luxury quarters on your priority list, consider the 2009 Zephyr 45 QBZ. Luxury condominiums and timeshares were the rage in the nineties. Even though you had several options in interesting locations, *you were still sharing*. In 2009, you can simply move your luxury condo — the 45 QBZ — to your next chosen destination when you are ready for a change of scenery, climate, or seasons. And you are always in *your* condo.

Never again will your luxury condo be booked the week you wanted it. Never again will you have to wonder “who was here last week.” Never again will you need an agent to find a new time sharing club. A tank of fuel to get you to your next destination—the mountains, the beach, the lake country — will probably cost less than a pair of airline tickets. Plus, you don’t have to pack, there are no security lines, and no delayed flights leaving you stuck in an airport looking for a room for the night.

A quick walk through this coach will convince you a condo on wheels is the right answer for discerning owners who want to: *enjoy living in a variety of locations*, yet always in their own homes; *meet new people* from America’s interesting cultures; *eat in a marvelous variety of restaurants* featuring a cross-section of national and international cuisines; *watch the sun set* across beaches, lakes, and mountains; and *see the incredible vistas* offered by every state and province in North America. It may be the right time for you to *open a whole new world*.

Amenities

Now for that walk-through: A **living area** featuring Italian ceramic tile and deep pile carpeting throughout the coach; crushed leather couches; two Ultraleather driver/passenger recliners with 6-way electric controls; panel controlled solar and privacy shades at every window in the coach; glazed cherry valances with brocade and velvet fabrics accented with rope lighting; a three-zone heating system powered by silent heat exchangers; a three-zone air conditioning system; a primary entertainment center featuring a 42-inch HDMI Panasonic television with surround sound and a five-disk CD-DVD player; a 32-inch HDMI Panasonic TV for those who may be facing in the opposite direction; programmable scene lighting for different entertainment and mood settings; and a queen-size hide-a-bed sleep sofa with air coil mattress. The speakers used in the surround sound system are hidden behind handsome cherry grills, disguising the locations in the living area from which the sound emanates.

Continuing our walk-through: A **galley** featuring a gas-on-glass cooktop; a Fisher-Paykel dishwasher; a residential-size Sharp convection-microwave oven, vented to the outside; a porcelain double sink with brushed nickel hardware; solid cherry glaze-finished cabinetry; a double-door 22-cubic foot residential Jenn-Air freezer-refrigerator with ice and water dispensers; slide-out shelves in the overhead galley pantries; solid-surface countertops with Roman-style tile backsplashes;

Ultraleather dinette seating with brocade back cushions.

TMH has raised cabinetry to an art form. Cherry is selected from the finest suppliers in West Virginia and the northeast. Tiffin offers its furniture in four finishes: natural cherry (lightest), cherry wood (a medium stain), cherry bark (a stain similar to mahogany), and glazed cherry. Raised panel doors are used throughout the coach and all of the exterior is made of solid cherry. The craftspeople take special care prior to staining and sealing. A satin-touch finish is achieved with meticulous sanding using a 320-grit pad. The final finish is created with a high-build, precatalytic lacquer.

The Zephyr’s Technology

Before we leave the living quarters, you should become acquainted with some of the Zephyr’s technology. The entertainment center in the Zephyr is unmatched by its competitors. Designed by Triple H Electronics in Red Bay exclusively for Tiffin coaches, the system uses component audio-video cables and HDMI to distribute input/output data from a central, easily serviced black box (mounted under the floor) that receives high definition broadcast *input* from the King Dome satellite system which pulls programming from network satellites. Additional *input* comes from (1) a digital/analog enclosed rotating TV antenna (another Triple H invention) receiving local programming broadcast in digital, (2) HD programming via cable service, and

(3) a 5-disc DVD-CD player with high quality picture and digital sound technology. The system transmits *output* to the coach’s HD-ready Panasonic televisions and sound equipment. The entertainment center is standard on the Zephyr.

When any of the four televisions in the coach are turned on, one click on the remote activates a selection screen which offers “TV, DBS, and DVD.” Your selection will source *input* for (1) standard television reception from the digital antenna or cable, (2) satellite reception (DIRECTV or DISH which you purchase separately), or (3) DVD-CD (movies or music) from the standard Panasonic 5-disc player. The Panasonic DVD unit converts standard disks to high-def. The system is also equipped with a cradle for I-pod devices, allowing you to play your own music collection through the coach’s surround sound.

You can carry your entertainment outside, too. Standard equipment on the Zephyr, a 32-inch HD television is mounted in the outside wall of the forward passenger-side slide-out. With the 20-foot Carefree of Colorado Paramount patio awning extended, you can enjoy your favorite team’s game while you keep watch over the steaks on the grill. Initially, the awning extends on the same plane with the roof, and then angles down to protect you from the late afternoon sun.

In a conveniently located cabinet over the driver’s side window, Tiffin engineers present monitoring and control panels for several systems in the coach’s infrastructure. Perhaps



the best creature comfort device in the coach is the Aqua-Hot feature. From either diesel or electric power, Aqua-Hot provides unlimited on-demand hot water for the galley, the bath, the Whirlpool washer, and the heating system. Using hot water heat exchangers, moist warm air flows throughout the coach into three zones for which the temperature has been preset on the thermostat. In extremely cold operation, Aqua-Hot will preheat the engine for quick starting.

The King Dome panel presents the set-up and monitoring controls for the In Motion Low Profile Satellite Dish. Both the dash overhead and the bedroom televisions can be used while enroute to provide entertainment to passengers.

The Xantrex System Control Panel presents preset programming as well as several options. The system monitors the coach's eight deep-cell, maintenance-free batteries which supply 110-volt service to the residential Jenn-Air refrigerator-freezer, as well as several 110-volt outlets throughout the coach. It also tracks the charging offered by the two 125-watt roof solar panels. When the battery charge drops below an acceptable level, the Xantrex system will automatically start the generator to recharge and preserve the coach's power supply.

The tank monitor has a rocker switch to simultaneously check the tanks for black and grey levels, fresh water, and propane gas. A forward cabinet houses the panel which monitors the charge provided by the two 125-watt solar panels.

Bath and a Half and More

Any fine home has a half bath conveniently available for guests. The Zephyr is no exception. At mid-ship and concealed by a

handsome raised-panel solid cherry door, the half bath has a wainscot treatment with chair rail on the exterior wall, complemented by solid cherry paneling on the other three interior walls. Its appointments are without peer. The solid surface countertop has a one-piece molded porcelain bowl served by brushed nickel hardware which includes a liquid soap dispenser with a below surface reservoir. The vanity offers three drawers and a cabinet. Two cabinets for toiletries and supplies are positioned fore and aft. Theater-styled lights for the mirror over the vanity plus recessed barrel lights in the ceiling create the comfortable ambience you would expect to find in a five-star hotel. The standard exhaust fan has a louvered cherry cover. A back-lighted control panel for the exhaust fan, water pump, and overhead lights is located on the front of the vanity.

Just across the hall you will discover the laundry center. The stackable Whirlpool washer and dryer are concealed by two raised panel solid cherry doors. A storage shelf between the units provides plenty of space for laundry supplies. Whirlpool provides service for the two units regardless of your location, just as if you were home.

The Master Bedroom and Bath — and A New Paradigm Regarding Living Space

The Zephyr's master bedroom, with its judicious use of lighting, cabinets, and fabrics, offers comfort, quality, and efficiency in its 8'5" × 11' 2" area that provides both an entertainment center and a king-size bed. After World War II, our 1,200 sq. ft. homes soon doubled and tripled in size as we expanded with relatively inexpensive materials and land. In the last two decades, we have



learned from our European and Asian friends how to use space more efficiently. Interior designers create a feeling of spaciousness by planning carefully for the number of people who will occupy and the activities that will take place in an area. Architects are downsizing homes as construction costs and land increase rapidly in price.

Our American consciousness of what is important in living spaces has begun to change as we rearrange **comfort, quality, design, innovation, efficiency, and service** at the top of our hierarchy and volume and floorspace at the bottom. How else can you explain so many RVers choosing to sell their homes and live full time in their coaches?

The Zephyr's MBR, bath, half-bath, laundry, and closet epitomize the paradigm.

Comfort: With the standard Sleep Number king-size bed with pillow-top, someone will have to convince you there is a good reason to get out of bed each morning. The two-speed ceiling fan with finger-tip control in your end table provides that cool, soothing air movement that brings on a pleasant drowsiness.

Quality: The comforter and pillows would make Martha Stewart proud. The center portion of the comforter was created with a beige woven-pattern fabric and has a 10-inch border of silky iridescent material dotted with tiny sparkling silver beads. Large shams with fabric matching the center of the comforter along with four silk throw pillows accent a molded cherry headboard with raised fabric panels. The presentation is stunning.

Design: As is true throughout the coach, the lighting areas in the MBR and bath have been thoughtfully arranged for dressing, entertainment center, reading, and slumber. The solid cherry wall

separating the MBR from the bath has handsome raised panels and a heavy sliding door with French molding around translucent glass, treatments usually found in seven-figure homes. To create an interesting contrast, Tiffin designers went from glazed cherry in the MBR to French Provencal in the master bath. The twin raised-bowl, clear-glass lavatories set into a rich brown, marble-design, solid-surface countertop are reflected by a full-wall mirror with perfect recessed barrel lighting. Tiffin selected Dometic's macerator, electric flush, ceramic toilet for the master bath. Its quiet flush design augments the privacy in the master bath. The tiles used in the residential-sized shower repeat the design used in the backsplashes elsewhere in the coach. The brushed nickel hardware features an adjustable shower head which can be raised or lowered to the bather's preference.

Innovation: A long-time feature above the shower in Tiffin coaches, the skylight can permit loss of heat in the winter months and absorption of heat in the summer months. This year Tiffin engineers added a sliding insulated panel to conserve heating and cooling. The exhaust vents in the galley and half bath now have attractive louvered covers. With programmable lighting, you can create several settings which automatically illuminate your activity. Tiffin continues its tradition of creating the greatest amount of storage possible in every floorplan.

Efficiency: Since I began writing and producing *Roughing It Smoothly* five years ago, I have watched design engineers from non-related industries marvel when they step inside a Tiffin coach for the first time. With slide-outs extended, you have approximately 435 square feet in a 45-foot coach. Before a new floorplan is introduced, Tiffin's R&D department builds a



complete prototype with every piece of furniture and infrastructure in place. Engineers and designers then “use” the prototype to assure its complete functionality.

Service: Before a new part, an appliance, a HVAC system, a fan, or a pump is introduced for the first time into a Tiffin coach, it is tested for its serviceability. While Tiffin is a legend in the industry for its excellent service, the company wants to assure the reliability and longevity of each part in order to reduce the amount of service your coach will require in the future.

Now for a Look Outside

In 2009 Tiffin Motorhomes offers nine full-body paint designs for the Zephyr and two interior decors. The full-body paint process is a story unto itself which we covered in the last issue of *RIS*.

A quick look at the roof reveals an eight inch shoulder that surrounds the roof and conceals the Carefree of Colorado awning. Three Carefree awning window treatments are also standard equipment. A round, stationary, non-retractable antenna replaces the Winegard crank-up antenna and receives both digital and analog signals. Three 15,000 BTU air conditioners with heat pumps will heat and cool the coach between temperatures of 100° down

to 40°. The King Dome In-Motion Satellite system and two 125-watt solar panels complete the roof mounted infrastructure.

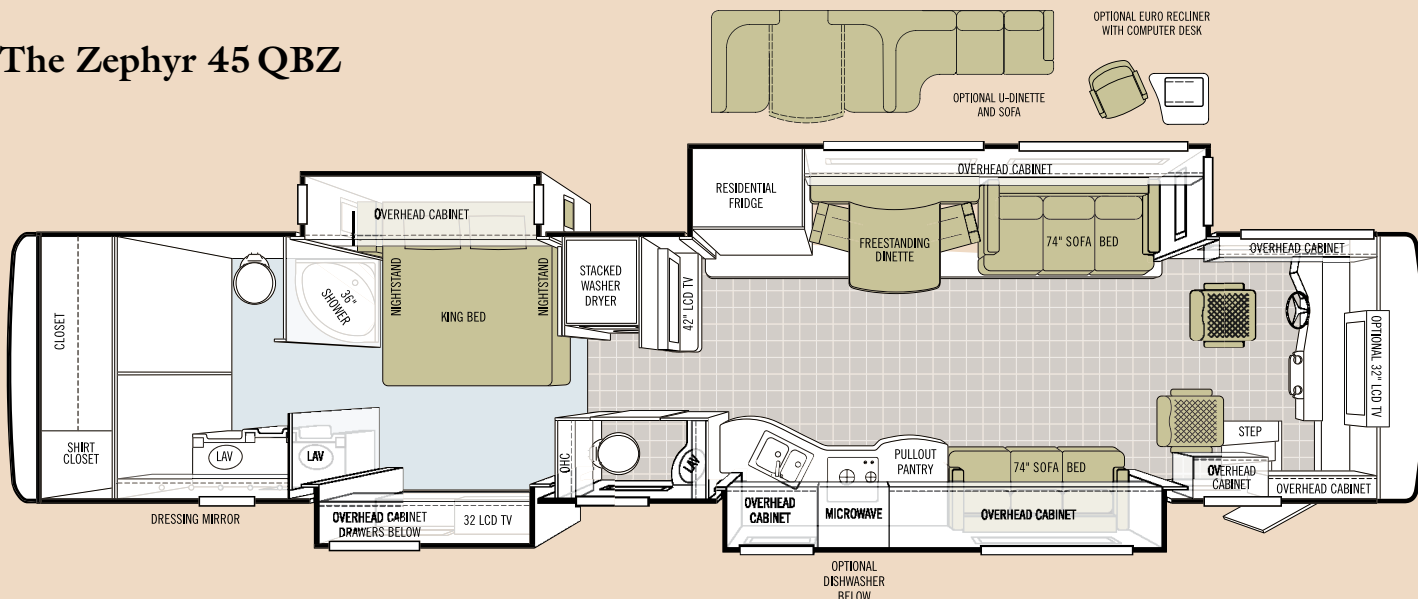
As you move around the coach clockwise from the front, you will see the automatic slide-out in the front cap for the 12.5 Kw Onan generator. The power plant provides full power to all of the operating systems in the coach.

The propane tank has been relocated to a new position immediately behind the front passenger-side wheel well. Diesel fueling locations are still positioned on both sides of the coach. As we move toward the rear, you will find an outdoor access to 12-volt, 110-volt, and phone jack service plus approximately two cubic feet of handy storage space. The next two storage bays open up a cavern with two slide-out trays (one standard, one optional). With a height of 19 inches, you can store 74 cubic feet of your treasures and have them fully accessible on the trays.

As we move toward the rear, the next storage bay houses the Aqua-Hot heating system and makes it very accessible for servicing. Two smaller compartments at the end of the coach provide access to electrical systems and offer seven cubic feet of storage.

Tiffin engineers have made access to the engine compartment very easy with a full width, high lift door. All gauges and

The Zephyr 45 QBZ



dip sticks are very accessible. A trap door in the bath also provides a maintenance access to the 500-hp Cummins power plant.

Starting from the rear at the driver's side, TMH located a 58 × 30-inch side radiator vent which is more than adequate for this engine. The large utilities cabinet in the next bay provides clear access to city water, sewer, tank flush, and communications (cable, tripod, park phone). Other amenities include shower-soap-towel clean-up area, a power retract for the water hose, and a Touch Sensor to quickly check the grey, black, and fresh water levels.

The next bay houses the coach's 50-amp service and access to the vacuum cleaner. Driver-side access to the primary storage area comes next with trays that also extend on this side of the coach. The next three bays are utility cabinets housing the HWH hydraulic system, the eight house storage batteries, and the electrical cabinet just forward of the front wheel well.

Driving the Zephyr

The first word that comes to mind is "firm." With the six-point Spartan air bag system, the ride is firm, but still well-insulated from the bumps and unevenness of the road. The tag axle also aids in smoothing out the ride.

The next word that comes to mind is "quiet." TMH meant for you to be able to enjoy your Panasonic Sound System while traveling — and you can! You could talk at a whisper to your passenger and be heard clearly. Tiffin engineers made sure that noise-deadening insulation was used generously throughout the coach. This is where quality counts.

The next words that come to mind are "smooth" and "powerful." When you need to change lanes or move into faster traffic, you will feel an even, smooth surge of power that puts you where you want to be. The 45-foot Zephyr is approximately 5,000 lbs. heavier than 42-foot similarly priced motorhomes equipped with 400 horsepower engines, but it can easily pass them on a grade, thanks to an additional 100 horsepower. The handling is excellent; there is very little play in the steering wheel. On a long curve we were able to maintain a constant 60 mph without feeling any leaning in the coach's attitude. On delivery trips, veteran driver Hoyt George found that the coach attained 6 to 7 mpg, depending on the terrain and highway speeds. That test, of course, was pulled on a new engine that had not even reached its first oil change. When you are in the cockpit, you will find it hard to believe that you have 45 feet behind you. **RIS**



SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2009 Zephyr 45 QBZ, Quad Slide, Base MSRP* – \$450,800 MSRP as tested with options – \$460,740

STANDARD FEATURES

Structural

Steel cockpit overhead support structure
Seamless one-piece gel coat fiberglass molded roof cap
One-piece molded gel coat fiberglass front & rear caps with integrated air intake
Laminated gel coat fiberglass sidewalls
Steel-Aluminum laminated side walls, floor & roof
½-inch laminated floor decking
Insulated roof ducts laminated into roof construction
Steel basement construction
Insulated firewall
Insulated steel cage engine cover

Automotive

500 hp @ 1,900–2,000 rpm Cummins ISM 10.8L engine
Spartan K2 chassis
15,000 lb. tow hitch
Tag axle 10,000 lb.
Allison MH 4000 transmission
Two-stage engine brake
Six cast aluminum wheels
Independent front suspension
Hadley SLS automatic air leveling system
Full air brakes
VIP Smart Wheel

Exterior

One-piece fiberglass gel coat front & rear fenders with integrated storage
Fiberglass gel coat engine access door with swing-out hinges & shocks
One-piece aluminum face swing-out baggage doors with integrated power locks
Pass through basement with pull-out storage tray (both sides)
12,500 Onan generator
Phone, 120v, and 12v outlets inside storage compartment
3000-watt inverter with generator start
Eight house batteries
One-piece pull-out generator access door
Three low-profile roof air conditioners with heat pumps
Two 125W solar panels
Easy hook-up water compartment with built-in hose exits
Multi-port manifold system for hot & cold water lines
Fiberglass water service center panel and compartment
Hydronic heating system with continuous hot water
Water pump switches located at galley, lavatories, and water service compartment
In-motion low-profile satellite system (receiver not included)
One-piece panoramic windshield
Black tank and grey tank flush systems
Water filter system
Vented fresh water tank for potable water fill
Power water hose reel
Outside shower
Recessed docking and fog lights
Spot light and air horns mounted on roof
Basement and outside compartment lights
Porch light
Lighted exterior grab handle
Deadbolt entrance door lock
Keyless entry system
Air glide step cover
Rear roof ladder
Heavy duty rear hitch
Full length ZEPHYR mud flap
TV antenna
Electric power cord reel
32-inch exterior TV mounted in galley slide-out

Driver's Compartment
Ergonomic wrap-around dash with simulated burl wood instrumentation panels

Back light lettering for dash controls
Six-way power driver & passenger seats with co-pilot power footrest
Buddy seat, passenger side
Integrated pilot and co-pilot seatbelts
Storage drawers with built-in beverage tray
Smart Wheel™ with controls for ICC, cruise, and windshield wipers
Adjustable accelerator and brake pedals
Power steering
Electric powered full-width solar and opaque visors for windshield
Electric powered drop down solar and opaque shades on driver and passenger windows
Driver and passenger overhead fans
Pilot and co-pilot map lights
Dual 12v outlets in dash area
Rear view mirror with compass and outside thermometer
Rear and side view cameras with color vision monitor system
CB radio with antenna
Sliding dash writing table
In-dash communications: satellite radio (requires subscription), AM-FM radio w/CD, computer navigation w/GPS
Cellular phone antenna
32-inch HDMI television over cockpit area
Quick power disconnect
Fire extinguisher
Phone jack, 12v outlet

Living Area / Dinette

Built-in dinette hutch w/cabinets and free standing table
Fully tiled living room
Cloth Magic Sofa Bed on driver side
UltraLeather™ Magic Bed Sofa on passenger side
Decorative wall and dinette lighting package
Decorative ceiling panel
Full-length mirror in living area
42-inch Panasonic HDMI television wall-mounted over hutch, home theater system, DVD player

Kitchen

Solid surface counter tops
Electric residential refrigerator with eight house batteries
Recessed Princess two-burner cook top with solid surface covers
Fantastic exhaust fan with cabinet-mounted controls and louvered cherry cover
Integrated porcelain double sink with solid surface covers
Ceramic tile splash guards with decorative inlays
Convection microwave with stainless front, vented to outside
MCD shade and hardwood valance
Ceiling flush-mounted multi-lighting system
Four barrel lights in cabinet above sink
Three cabinets with ball bearing slide-out shelf-boxes
Built-in detergent dispenser

Bath

Two glass lavatories base-mounted on solid surface countertop
Built-in soap dispenser at each lavatory
Mini-blinds and hardwood valance
Electric macerator toilet with quiet flush
Sliding round shower enclosure with two ceramic tiled walls
Fantastic exhaust fan with wall-mounted controls
Window treatment: blinds, hardwood valance, translucent glass
Brushed nickel towel holders, robe hook, and lavatory accessory package
Sliding raised panel double doors into 8-ft. wide rear closet

Ceiling flush-mounted multi-lighting system
Stacked washer-dryer, 50-amp only operation (in hallway)
Handsome glazed cherry wall with raised panels and translucent sliding door separating bath from bedroom

Half Bath

Solid surface countertop with integrated porcelain lavatory
Vanity with three drawers and storage area
Brushed nickel hardware with soap dispenser
Fantastic exhaust fan with wall-mounted controls and louvered cherry cover
Two wall-mounted cabinets, one with large mirror above vanity
Theater lighting above vanity, barrel lighting in ceiling
Window treatment: blinds, hardwood valance, translucent glass

Bedroom

Duvet package with shams and pillows
32-inch OH high-definition TV with floating mount
Select Comfort king mattress with night stands
Large carpeted storage area beneath bed
Decorative ceiling panel with fan
LP gas detector
Ceiling flush-mounted multi-lighting system

General Interior

Wall-mounted thermostats, three zones
Cable TV hook-up and phone jacks
Carpeted cabinet shelves
Ball bearing drawer slides
In-motion high-def satellite system
Wallpaper covering on sidewalls
Padded soft-touch vinyl ceiling
MCD solar & night shades with wall-mounted remote controls
High-gloss Italian ceramic tile flooring
Built-in speakers with matching hardwood covers
Wall-mounted programmable controls for lights and accessories
Rope lights beneath galley and bedroom vanity areas
Rope lights in window valances
50-amp distribution
12v fuse panel
Battery disconnect switch
Smoke alarm
GFI outlets in galley and lavatories
Lighted interior grab handle

OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Glazed cherry finish for all interior cabinets
Dishwasher, drawer type
2nd exterior slide tray
Ultraleather™ Air Coil Hide-A-Bed Sofa Sleeper, passenger side
Sofa/Booth Dinette Combination

OPTIONAL AVAILABLE FEATURES

Glazed hutch, cocoa
Glazed hutch, black
Booth dinette
Memory Foam Mattress, king
Freestanding dinette with 18-inch wide hutch and built-in computer work station
Ultraleather™ Magic Bed Sofa, driver side
One Leather Euro-recliner with computer end table, driver side
Two Leather Euro-recliners
Cloth Magic Bed Sofa, passenger side
Cloth Air Coil Hide-A-Bed Sofa Sleeper, passenger side

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 316" (292" from front axle to drive axle)
Overall length – 44' 9"
Overall height with roof air – 12' 10"
Interior height – 84"
Overall width – 101"
Interior width – 96"

WEIGHTS AND CAPACITIES

GVWR – 44,600 lb.
GAWR (front) – 14,600 lb.
GAWR (rear) – 20,000 lb.
TAG axle – 10,000 lb.
GCWR – 59,600 lb.

POWER TRAIN

Cummins – 500 hp ISM 10.8L engine with side radiator
Transmission – Allison MH 4000
Tire – 315/80R22.5
Alternator (amps) – 270

CHASSIS

Spartan K2
Anti-lock braking system
Suspension (front) – IFS w/air ride
Suspension (rear & tag) – Air ride
Leveling jacks – HWH hydraulic

CONSTRUCTION

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

ACCOMMODATIONS

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

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

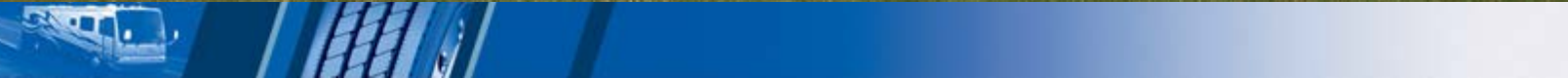
This is the approximate weight of the vehicle with a full fuel tank, engine oil, and coolants. The UVW does not include cargo, fresh water, LP gas, passengers, or dealer-installed accessories.

DEALERS

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

PLEASE NOTE

All options may not be available on all models. Because of progressive improvements made in a model year, specifications, and standard and optional equipment are subject to change without notice or obligation.



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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.



Janice Frederick—Survivor

In her own words, as told to Fred Thompson

I GREW UP IN VINA, just eight miles from Red Bay, and graduated from high school there in 1978. Like many young people here in Franklin County, I went to work at the Blue Bell plant. When the textile plants were moved to Mexico, many of us went to work at Belmont Homes. And then, fortunately for me, I got a job here at TMH in 2003. By the end of the summer, I will have been working at Tiffin Motorhomes for five years.

Mark Frederick and I married in 1995 and in 2000 our son, Tucker, was born when I was 40. I guess you could say we got started a little late. Mark is a great guy. He is director of production at Deer Valley Mobile Home plant in Guin, Alabama.

I enjoy my work at TMH. I work on the diesel line and install surround sound speakers, radios, phone jacks, and other electrical equipment.

It was time for my annual physical in February 2007 and we were really busy here at the plant. I was thinking of postponing my mammogram until later in

the summer, but my supervisor, Dennis Cayson, told me, “Janice, you need to put your health first. Go on and keep that appointment.”

My sister Pam died from cancer at 45. Her doctor discovered her breast cancer when she was 38. She recovered, but died

When you have a family history of cancer, you go to the doctor each time with a certain amount of apprehension.

seven years later when cancer reoccurred in her liver. Dennis knew that and didn’t want me to wait four more months.

When you have a family history of cancer, you go to the doctor each time with a certain amount of apprehension. My doctor had started me on Tamoxifen because the drug serves as a preventative in high risk families.

The apprehension was over. The mammogram came back positive. I was 47 at the time. My doctor in Florence discover-

ed the tumor and made an appointment for me with an oncologist in Birmingham. It is amazing how compassionate he was. Knowing that he sees patients every day who are just beginning to confront their battles with cancer, I would have expected him to distance himself from patients emotionally just to survive his own stress. Yet when he came into my room, he hugged my neck and assured me, “We are going to kick this thing!” That experience gave my courage an enormous boost.

We discussed my options for treatment and decided that given my family history a double mastectomy was the safest plan. The surgery was scheduled for March 30 and I elected to go ahead immediately with breast reconstruction. I came home in three days, very tender and sore but still able to move about and see friends who came to visit.

The encouragement and support from this community was wonderful. Lisa Davis, a 14-year survivor was one of my first visitors. Then Shala Keeton, who is

The encouragement and support from this community was wonderful.

younger than I am, stopped by to visit. She was diagnosed the previous fall. Nancy Logan, who was in third stage when her oncologist discovered her cancer, came to see me. What a lift each of them gave to me!

At Tiffin Motorhomes, people really do care about each other. We talk about it being the “Tiffin family,” maybe it is just the closeness of people in small towns. The outpouring of love from phone calls, visits, and get well cards just made me know that I was going to be a survivor.

I was scheduled for four treatments of chemotherapy, once every six weeks. And the doctor followed that with Tamoxifen which I still take. I lost my hair within three weeks of the first chemo treatment. The reconstructive surgery continued at inter-

vals and was completed in November.

I returned to work early in May, about six weeks after the surgery. Everyone at TMH has been so good to me and I know I have been on many people’s prayer list. I told Dennis when I came back that I might have to just stop and sit down for a few minutes every now and then. He told me not to worry, that everyone would understand. At first I wore a hat or a bandana, and then I just said, “Oh, whatever. Everyone knows I don’t have any hair.” So I got a few hugs and we just laughed about it.

Mark joked about being my beautician and my nurse. He shaved my head when my hair came back in October and was so

Mark joked about being my beautician and my nurse. He shaved my head when my hair came back in October and was so stubby.

stubby. Then, when my hair really started growing again, it was very curly and I kinda like it that way. I really feel good now 14 months after the surgery.

I continue to see my oncologist and surgeon every three months until I pass the three year mark. Then doctor visits will taper back to once every six months until five years have passed.

While I and my family and friends pray there will be no reoccurrence, I still find great consolation and draw courage from



my sister. In 1996 cancer came back in her liver and the doctors gave her just 10 months to a year to live. Pam inspired me with her attitude toward living and dying. She never cried or felt sorry for herself. She instilled the same positive, spiritual attitude in her daughter when Chasity’s birthday was approaching. Chasity later said to me, “Janice, if something does happen on my birthday, I’m not going to look at it that mother died on my birthday, but that she went to heaven on my birthday.”

Jump Start Your Energy

By Dr. Maoshing Ni

Low energy will keep you from enjoying your daily activities. The causes of low energy are numerous, but it usually points to the stress of living in this modern world. Coping with stressful situations requires a lot of energy, leaving the average person drained and even depressed. Discover six amazing ways you can restore your energy below.

1. Energize with a Blockbuster Breakfast

We have all heard that “you are what you eat,” but it’s also true that you are *when* you eat. The human body follows a circadian rhythm, and because of this, the same foods eaten at breakfast and lunch are assimilated differently than when they are eaten later. Start the day right with a breakfast that gives you the energy you need to function strong all day long.

Studies have shown that when you eat your daily protein and fat at breakfast, you tend to lose weight and have more energy; conversely, eating the same proteins and fat at dinner increases your tendency toward weight gain, increased blood pressure, and heart disease.

2. Sustainable Energy with Snacks

Most people eat too many foods that supply a rapid burst of energy in the form of simple carbohydrates and sugars — which burn out fast, leaving us depleted — rather than foods with a more sustainable energy content.

Eat a snack at mid-morning and another one at mid-afternoon. Good ones to choose are nuts, seeds, fruits, or protein-rich foods like hummus made from beans. These will help you sustain your energy and prevent low blood sugar from setting in. Make your own trail mix with almonds, pine nuts, walnuts, dried cranberry, raisins, or any similar combination.

3. Ginseng Restores Failing Energy

The most famous of energy tonics, Panax ginseng has been prized and used for 5,000 years in Asian medical traditions. Ginseng’s popular uses include increasing physical and mental endurance,

I love my family, just as my sister did her family. I want to continue to be here for them. My bout with cancer could have been much worse and I am thankful that everything turned out the way it did. I appreciate so much that TMH has good insurance for its employees. We had only the deductible to pay.

I want to encourage everyone to make time for yourself. Never delay a mammogram and always do a monthly self exam. You owe it to yourself and your family.

decreasing fatigue, and gently boosting energy. Unlike coffee, which stimulates the central nervous system, ginseng elevates energy gently. People taking ginseng often report overall improvement in well-being. Available as powder, capsule, and tea, you can find ginseng in your local health food store.

4. Flush Out Toxins

One cause of low energy is a buildup of toxins in the system. Water is very important in properly flushing the system and hydrating the cells to prevent buildup of toxic waste products. Drink at least eight glasses of water per day at room temperature. Better yet, drink teas made with herbs such as peppermint, chrysanthemum, and dandelion that gently cleanse your body.

5. Proper Posture Promotes Energizing

Your mother was looking out for your health when she told you to stop slouching. Slouching not only makes you look older than you are, it also leads to a huge drop in energy by decreasing your oxygen intake. When you compress the diaphragm and ribs, full respiration cannot take place and the blood flow is slowed to your brain and extremities. To get proper posture, pull your chin inward and pretend there is a string pulling straight up from the top of your head.

6. Raise Your Energy with Exercise

Getting enough exercise is crucial to maintaining a high energy level. Exercise helps us deal with daily stresses; without it, the body is rapidly depleted of vital energy. Take time throughout your day for aerobic activity. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park a few blocks away from your destination. Walk briskly, run, or ride your bike instead of driving. Sweep the floor with a broom instead of a vacuum. Do a set of squats and cross-over toe touches.

To really jumpstart your energy, try this: Jump rope for five minutes every hour throughout the day and drink a glass of water afterward. This will increase your circulation, get more oxygen in your body, and remove toxins from your body.

Dr. Maoshing Ni is an anti-aging expert, doctor of Chinese medicine, and author of the best selling book, *Secrets of Longevity*. © 2008 Yahoo! Health. Used by permission.



Tiffin's Service Liaison: *Norris Lewey*

Norris Lewey is a veteran in more ways than one. His longest term of service counts 37 years in the Alabama National Guard, from which he retired last year. His second longest term ranks him as one of Tiffin Motorhomes' earliest employees with 34 years of service by the time you read this story in June. But he hopes his service with Tiffin will go far beyond his military career. If you have visited the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay, Norris Lewey was probably the first Tiffin employee you met the morning after you arrived.

Lewey discovered a long time ago a great satisfaction in helping others. That plus his gregarious, friendly nature and a desire to do a good job has made him a success in both careers.

As the youngest child in a family with six children (4 boys, 2 girls), Lewey is a twin and the youngest by only 30 minutes. A native of Franklin County, he grew up in the rural community of Belgreen, where he finished high school in 1970. His first career began in April of that year when he joined an engineering company attached to the Alabama National Guard. Three years later he transferred to a signal battalion based in Russellville, Alabama. The unit drilled once a month and trained each summer at U.S. military bases throughout the western hemisphere, including South America; the Panama Canal; Yakima, Washington; and Fort Irvin, California. In 1988 the battalion spent three weeks in Pusan, South Korea, for training with the South Korean army.

Norris consults with Michael Austin on adjustments being made to his 2008 Allegro Bus. Austin and his wife Elaine recently sold their home in South Alabama to become full timers.



Military service enhanced the battalion's management skills and prepared them for their ultimate deployment: Iraq.

"During the summer of 1970 shortly after my graduation from high school," Norris related, "I was hanging out in the parking lot at L&L Propane with a bunch of my high school buddies. A pretty girl drove by in a green Ford Maverick Grabber and I told the boys, 'I'm going to run her down and talk to her.' To make a long story short, we got married 18 months later." Lewey attributes his success at winning Brenda's heart to being a good listener—and a good talker.

But let's backtrack and pick up Lewey's other career that was running parallel with his military one.

In June 1974 Norris Lewey began his career with Tiffin Motorhomes. In an earlier position with Tidwell Motorhomes in the nearby town of Haleyville, Lewey learned to use and maintain equipment that sprayed insulation into the walls of the RV. The skill got him a job at TMH.

Lewey eventually moved to the lead man position in the flooring department under Mickey Collum. "We did a lot more than flooring," he recalled. "Within five workstations, we built side-walls, floors, cabinets, set the sidewalls, and put the top on it."

In 1983 Lewey was moved to the service department where he found a synergy and stride that has lasted for 25 years. He knew immediately service was where he wanted to be — working with people to fix their rigs, make them happy, and get them on the road again. "Helping people has always given me a lot of satisfaction," he said. "You feel like you're really doing something worthwhile."

"Billy Emerson was the supervisor of the department and we only had three bays. That was enough because we just had six employees in service. The campground was along the railroad tracks, but we did have full hookups for 20 coaches," Lewey recalled. "When the company opened the new assembly plant in 1987, we expanded the service department and eventually opened 12 bays."

In 1992 Lewey launched a third career: politics. He ran for county commissioner. "I just wanted to get into politics to help the people of Franklin County," he said. He lost to his opponent by only 214 votes and promised to be back in the running in four years. In 1996 he won against the same opponent by a margin of 614 votes. It meant a lot to Lewey to say, "Bob Tiffin has supported me in everything I have ever tried to do, including running for office."

Franklin County voters had given their county commissioners rollercoaster rides for several decades, voting them out after

Continued on page 18

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C15 | 600-625 hp @ 2100 rpm, 1850-2050 lb-ft torque @ 1200 rpm

C13 | 525 hp @ 2100 rpm, 1750 lb-ft torque @ 1200 rpm

C9 | 400-425 hp @ 2200/2300 rpm, 1250-1350 lb-ft torque @ 1400 rpm

C7 | 300-360 hp @ 2400 rpm, 860-925 lb-ft torque @ 1440 rpm

single terms and trying the next selection of candidates. Norris Lewey changed that pattern when he was re-elected in 2000. When the time came for the next election in 2004, Lewey and his National Guard unit had deployed to Iraq.

"When I left for Iraq, Gov. Bob Riley appointed Brenda to fill my seat. I ran in absentia. Brenda campaigned for me and we won—again! I became the first three-term commissioner," he stated. "Now I am running for my fourth term. Serving as county commissioner has really been a great experience for me and I believe I have done a good job serving my constituency."

The commissioners govern the county's \$14,000,000 budget, funding the operation of the sheriff's department, the highway department, and the county landfill. Franklin County offers garbage pickup service throughout the entire county. The county also funds the health department, meals-on-wheels, and works with the Emergency Management Association (EMA) to help with storm shelters and alarm systems.

"To say the least, I am in meetings every week working on problems and solutions. There are four commissioners and the probate judge serves as the chair-

man of the commission," he explained. "This year we completed the construction of a new \$9,000,000 jail which houses 125 inmates. We also have done a lot of new bridge construction and established animal control throughout the county. I love to help this county and its citizens and that's what has kept me in politics."

The commissioners now have under development a 180-acre industrial park to bring in new business and competitive wages. Road and infrastructure currently are under construction and you can bet Norris Lewey is checking on it frequently.

When his unit was activated for service in Iraq on December 10, 2003, they were first sent to Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, for additional training. "Our unit with equipment arrived in Kuwait on February 29, 2004. With 150 vehicles in our battalion, we convoyed to Mosul, Iraq, March 21–24 without getting attacked. I drove a five ton wrecker with a canvas top," he related.

"I served in the maintenance section of the 115th Signal Battalion out of Russellville, attached to the 142nd Brigade from Huntsville-Decatur," he continued. "I was the wrecker driver and mechanic. We either fixed it on the road or hooked it up and towed it. Everyone called me the 'hook man.'"

The assignment was not a "piece of cake." The brigade was mortared nearly every day. "We suffered 16 injuries, but we didn't lose anybody," Lewey said. "We were so thankful to bring everyone home." The battalion returned to Alabama after spending 11 months and two weeks in Iraq.

Lewey came back to his old job just in time to see the new 40-bay Tiffin Service Center open in July 2005. "I do first contact with our coach owners as soon after their arrival as possible. We itemize what needs to be done and schedule the specific service bays they need," he said. "I like to think I am a good listener, so I let the owners unload on me. Some are frustrated with continuing problems they could not get fixed elsewhere, but our purpose here is to take care of them, get their repairs made properly, and send them on their way smiling."

As I marveled at his energy to manage three jobs (service planner, national guard, and county commissioner), Norris began to tell me about his fourth career—farming! His John Deere cap should have given me a clue. "I run 40 head of brood cows and farm 150 acres in hay and corn. Right now I plan to build up to 60 head," he said casually (like, why do you look so astonished, Fred?). "I've been farming since I got out of high school. It just came naturally. My dad and older brothers were all into cattle; they had the experience to help me; so I got into it, too," he continued.

Horace, his twin, is in landscaping and foundation work. He runs 80 head of cattle. Carl raises 200 head of hogs and makes Lewey sausage which is a legend in Franklin County (you can even buy it at the campground office).

Norris and Brenda have a son and daughter, Candi, 34, and Brandon, 31. Candi works at Winchester-Lindsey, the company which makes the valances, shades, bedspreads, and pillows for the Tiffin coaches. Brandon works in the slide-out department. Candi's husband, Stephen, works in one of the TMH warehouses. Have you ever wondered why so many people here in Red Bay often refer to the "Tiffin family," and why they like to claim every coach owner as part of the "Tiffin family"? There is a friendliness in the South that is endemic to its culture.

But back to the Lewey family. Candi and Stephen have one son, Josiah, 3. Brandon and his wife, Chrissy, have three boys: Aaron, 8, Andrew, 4, and Aiden, 2. Brenda and Chrissy are full-time moms.

When is this man *not* working? Norris somehow finds the time for some relaxation. "I try to spend a lot of time with my grandsons. I am a John Deere man and my boys love the John Deere equipment models," he smiled. "Brenda and I love to go to the Smokies and we try to get there at least a week each year to get away from the stress."

Norris proudly supplied me with a picture of him with his four grandsons, telling me unabashedly that "there's the future of Tiffin Motorhomes and Red Bay!" **RIS**

Norris unabashedly tells his friends that his grandsons are the future of Red Bay and Tiffin Motorhomes. *Clockwise from bottom:* Aiden Lewey, 2; Josiah Cantrell, 3; Andrew, 5, and Aaron Lewey, 8.



YELLOWSTONE

Granddaddy of Them All

*It's the world's first national park and,
many argue, still the best*

Text and Photography by Norman Spray

It is early May, so early that our chosen southern entrance to Yellowstone National Park is not yet open. This forces us to push the Allegro (pulling a Chevy Tracker) up a grinding three-mile 10 percent grade climb out of Jackson, Wyoming, and into Idaho en route to the western entrance just outside West Yellowstone, Montana.

After over-nighting at an excellent new RV camp in little Aston, Idaho, we enter this, the first of the world's national parks, on May 8 acutely aware that Yellowstone's is a story told countless times by some of the world's leading journalists, some of the most thorough travel writers ever to pack a suitcase, and that some of the globe's most gifted writers have created magnificent prose in several languages describing the majestic wonders of this place.

What can we hope to add for *Roughing It Smoothly* readers?

Awaiting visitors along 300 miles of roads and 1100 miles of trails are hundreds of natural attractions including Old Faithful and 300 more geysers, more than 100 roaring

The lower falls of the Yellowstone River at 308 feet is twice as high as Niagara Falls.





waterfalls, huge wildlife populations, and opportunities for fabulous fishing, hiking, biking, camping and other activities.

This 3,472 square mile, 2,219,823-acre preserve is 136 years old, created by a Congressional Act of Dedication that President Ulysses S. Grant signed into law in 1872. So what new can we add? We leave Yellowstone several days later knowing that no report, no matter how artfully constructed, can adequately describe what nature has in store for you here. Full appreciation can only come when you experience it. Yellowstone must be *lived*, become a hands-on experience.

Since different people have different interests, your experiences likely will craft your personal definition of Yellowstone in line with your own interests. Here is the greatest wildlife sanctuary in the U. S., home to roaming bears, herds of bison, elk, moose, antelope, packs of wolves and dozens of other species. Here are nearly 60 percent of the world's geysers and hot springs. The park claims North America's largest lake above 7,000 feet in altitude. The lakes, rivers and streams open to anglers (with permit) yield the prized Yellowstone cutthroat trout and others. Day hikes and overnight trips by foot, horseback, or llama take you off the beaten paths into the back country wilderness which makes up most of the park.

Beginning a Tour

Quickest way to get a feel for the park and its wonders is to drive the 142-mile "Grand Loop" road, a figure 8 route circling the northern and southern halves joined by a middle cross-road. It'll be wise to stop at the visitor center where you enter and buy a copy of "Hamilton's Guide (to) Yellowstone National Park" available at stores operated by Hamilton Stores, Inc., a park concessionaire. More detailed than the park's newspaper, it lists every side road and attraction accessible from the "Grand Loop." A detailed map and color photographs will help you decide where you want to spend time and "must sees" along the route.

Facilities

Eleven visitor centers, five Forest Ranger stations, and 12 campgrounds serve visitors. **Important if visiting in a motorhome:** Advance reservations can be made for only the five campgrounds operated by Xanterra Parks & Resorts, a firm which also capably operates hotels and lodges, tours, and certain attractions in Yellowstone. The other seven National Park Service campgrounds are on a first come, first serve basis. From June through August, you'd better get to one early in the day if you hope to find an unoccupied space. Moreover, only a limited number of campsites are available at these campgrounds that can accommodate vehicles over 30 feet.

Only one, the Fishing Bridge RV Park near the village where the Yellowstone River exits Yellowstone Lake, offers full water, sewer, and electrical hookup and it's use is limited (because of danger of invasion by bears) to hard-sided vehicles. Just outside Yellowstone, large RV sites are available at Flagg Ranch near the south entrance, at Gardiner, Montana near the north entrance, and West Yellowstone near the west entrance. (See "Important Yellowstone Contacts" box on page 28 for reservation information).

Overnight camping outside designated campgrounds is not permitted. Fires are permitted only at sites with fire grates. Arriving early in the season, as we do, we easily find a space with

From Left: Although our original route to Yellowstone took us within view of the Grand Teton Mountain Range, snow-blocked roads in Wyoming required a detour to the western entrance. • On the West Entry Road into Yellowstone National Park, we observed this elk and two others in the Madison River. • Bison cross the road within arm's length of the passenger side of the Chevy Tracker we towed to Yellowstone. We opened a window for this shot. The bison are interesting but, more important, the photo graphically shows why speed is limited to 45 mph in the park and visitors are cautioned to keep a sharp eye out for animals. • Pelican plays or searches for food in the amazingly blue Firehole River which receives boiling hot waters from many of Yellowstone's glaciers and hot springs in the Upper, Midway, and Lower Geyser Basins. Old Faithful is in the latter basin.



ample room to park our Allegro and Tracker at the Madison Junction campground, only 14 miles east of the west entrance. We are told arriving vacationers will crowd this place by early July. Our site, shaded by tall pines, provides us a grate and picnic table (where Billie performs a fireside keyboard concert for neighbors) but it is a dry camp. (Water is available in spigot but not for hookup and, of course, electricity is provided only by the Allegro's generator until "quiet time" at 9 p.m.)

Making the Grand Loop

You can enter the park from any direction (from Cody, Wyoming to the east; Jackson, Wyoming to the south; Silver Gate, Montana to the northeast; Gardiner, Montana to the north or West Yellowstone to the west), and turn either right or left on the Grand Loop road for a delightful tour that, going either clockwise or counter clockwise, eventually brings you to Yellowstone's most spectacular and most-publicized natural wonders, including Old Faithful and other geysers and hot springs, the Yellowstone River and its falls, and Yellowstone Lake. If you come early in the season, check opening dates for the entrances. Both the south and east entrances were closed when we arrived early in May. Opening dates may depend on weather conditions and/or ongoing road construction in the park.

On this Grand Loop tour (speed limit is 45 mph max), you'll view spectacular scenic mountains, valleys, canyons and rivers; probably encounter many wild animal and bird species; and get a feel for where you'd like to pursue interests and activities like backcountry hiking and camping, bicycling, boating, day hiking, fishing, horseback riding and llama packing, park education, picnicking, and (in winter) cross country skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing. Stop at visitor centers along the way to learn where and how to arrange for such concessioner-led activities as stagecoach rides, boat tours, stock (horse or llama) trips into the back country, guided fishing trips, and bus tours.

From the West Entrance to The Geysers

The first leg of our own tour carries us 14 miles from the west entry to join the Grand Loop at Madison Junction. This entry road skirts the Madison River, one of the world's famous trout fishing streams, as it flows through 700-foot high walled cliffs, canyons and open meadows and sometimes around huge boulders dumped into the riverbed by the storied Hebgen Lake earthquake that re-arranged many park features in 1959. We are scarcely eight miles into the park when Billie yells: "Look, elk in the river!"

I brake the Allegro to a stop as quickly as is safe. We hurriedly grab cameras and run to the river bank, excited, and fearful we are about to miss a once-in-a blue moon opportunity to picture wildlife. Turns out the unperturbed elk are in no hurry at all. One cow climbs from the river and nonchalantly meanders across the road only feet from us. This proves to be only the first of many chances to picture wildlife. In fact, looking up, we spy an equally-undisturbed bald eagle surveying the scene from a nest on the top-most tip of a 75-foot tall dead tree.

After pulling onto site at the Madison campground, we unhook the Tracker, pile into the tow car and turn south where, moving counter-clockwise, we'll follow the Grand Loop Road to major southern half attractions: Lower Geyser Basin and the Upper Geyser Basin where Old Faithful does its thing; the lake area; and Fishing Bridge. We drive maybe four miles when we see a large herd of bison complacently grazing the flats of a wide pastoral meadow.

Lower and Midway Geyser Basins

First natural wonder we reach is the Lower Geyser Basin, some of which we see from the Loop, looking across the unbelievably blue Firehole River, which got its name from steam-emitting waters dumped into it by geysers and hot springs and is famous among fly fishermen for brown, rainbow, and brook trout. A better look at many of the features in this basin comes when we

WHY GEYSERS BLOW OFF STEAM

Maybe All and More Than You Ever Wanted to Know

Geysers, headlined by Old Faithful, remain perhaps the biggest draw among hundreds of natural attractions in Yellowstone National Park. Like people, they are different. Some erupt on a reasonably-predictable schedule. Others choose their own time to “blow.”

What makes them shoot steam-hot waters to the surface? Scientists have a good idea, though much about geysers remains to be understood. They say geysers are hot springs. Water that simply bubbles to the surface in ordinary springs doesn’t have that luxury in a geyser because only narrow spaces or constrictive natural piping exist between the spring water pooled in aquifers and the surface. Water can’t circulate freely to let heat escape at the surface. Deepest circulating water can exceed the surface boiling point (199° F).

However, surrounding pressure increases with depth. Pressure caused by weight of overlying rock and water keeps the heated water from vaporizing, much like putting a lid on a pressure cooker stops boiling and creates steam. Steam results underneath as the water rises. It expands as it bubbles upward until bubbles are too large and numerous to pass through the narrow plumbing. At some point, the trapped bubbles push the cooler water above them through the constricted passage-ways causing the geyser to overflow—first sign of an impending eruption.

Pressure is decreased with exit of this cooler water and violent boiling results. Huge amounts of steam force water up and out—and the eruption begins. The eruption ends when the water pool is emptied or when the gas bubbles become small enough to rise without pushing water out of the piping.

At Old Faithful, best-known of all the world’s geysers, the tube leading up to the surface has been measured to a depth of 70 feet. A weighted rope has not been able to pass deeper, apparently because the vent is lost in a maze of subterranean tubes and chambers. The belief is this system of tubes twists downward hundreds and maybe thousands of feet.

It is believed that nearly all the water in geysers

and hot springs comes from rain and snow on the surface. What causes the heating? Theory has it that hot gasses rising from molten rock (magma) at great depth is the source of the heat, which is transmitted through solid rock to water which has seeped to a depth of perhaps 10,000 feet. When Old Faithful erupts, water at the vent is approximately 204 degrees F.

Old Faithful is consistent. Its observed eruptions, more than 65,000 of them, averaged between 60 and 67 minutes apart for well over a century. Shortest time between eruptions was 33 minutes. Longest was 102 minutes. From 3,700 to 8,400 gallons of water are thrown out during an eruption, some of which falls back into the geyser’s vent. The rest flows into the nearby Firehole River.

Old Faithful is a cone geyser. That means it erupts throwing a narrow column skyward. Some other geysers in Yellowstone, notably Great Fountain Geyser, are fountain geysers which erupt broadly and in several directions.

Geysers change constantly, responding to natural changes in their plumbing systems. They also are affected by natural events such as earthquakes which are frequent in Yellowstone. The average interval between Old Faithful eruptions became longer after the 1959 Hebgen Lake earthquake, centered only 12 miles northwest of the park’s west entrance. It increased again after the 1983 Borah Peak earthquake, centered in Idaho. It happened again when another small quake was recorded in 1998. Other quakes are likely, and they likely will cause eruption length, height, and interval to change again.

Why over half the world’s geysers and hot springs are found in Yellowstone Park is anyone’s guess. Obviously, underground features are unique. One thing seems sure: Old Faithful will continue to draw faithful visitors, at least until the hot water runs out, which hasn’t happened since the geyser was described by the Washburn-Langford-Doane expedition of 1870 and it seems unlikely to happen in the future. So go see and marvel. It’s sure to astound!



stop at a large parking area marked “Fountain Paint Pots” and take a half-mile safely guided walk along boardwalks. We see six geysers and the colorful paint pots where pink, orange and pale blue “mud bubbles” boil, gurgle, growl and burst to fling stringy lumps over the pool.

Driving again south, we turn on the one-way three-mile Firehole Lake Drive side road beside the Firehole River. We pass Firehole Lake, one of the park’s largest hot pools, and other geysers including the Great Fountain, which sends diamond-like droplets bursting 100 to 200 feet up as water cascades down onto raised terraces. Great Fountain erupts only twice a day, however, and timing is not precisely predictable. We miss it on our trip.

The side road dumps us back onto the Loop and we continue south to a parking area for Midway Geyser Basin, reached by walking across a bridge spanning the river. One feature is Grand Prismatic Spring, largest of Yellowstone’s hot springs, which is 370 feet in diameter and flows from an azure blue pool 120 feet deep. Another is Excelsior Geyser which constantly discharges over five million gallons of scalding hot 199-degree water a day into the Firehole.

Old Faithful and Upper Geyser Basin

After all this, we can hardly wait to reach the turn-off to the star attraction, Old Faithful, the visitor center and the Upper Geyser Basin. There’s some 40 minutes before Old Faithful is scheduled to erupt next so we enjoy a free movie in the visitor center. It explains different thermal features. The Park Ranger Naturalist at the Information Desk fills us in on special programs, guided walks, trails, all-day hikes and evening programs, none of which we have time to consider.

Now it is only 15 minutes before Old Faithful is expected to blow. We join a crowd we estimate at 250 on the boardwalks provided for safest viewing. Five minutes to wait, by my watch. Four. Three. The crowd murmurs. Someone sees water surging over the rim of the crater. “It’s coming!” he shouts. Then there’s collective silence. Waiting. Now it happens! A column of hot white water (“Looks like steam!” says Billie, my lady.)

Quickly, in maybe only 15 to 20 seconds, this column rises to a height a ranger later estimates at 130 feet. After some 20 seconds of play, the water column lowers. In about three minutes, there’s only a few blasts of steam and then it is all over. Awe-struck visitors suddenly find their voices and the place is filled with excited chatter. We’ve all seen (and most have photographed) one of the world’s most publicized natural phenomena.

Old Faithful, we learn, sometimes sends water as high as 180 feet, but it is neither the largest, highest, nor most regular geyser in Yellowstone. It consistently erupts 18 to 21 times a day (not every hour on the hour).

Awesome as it is, we learn that there’s much more than Old Faithful in the Upper Geyser Basin. Within one square mile in this basin are at least 150 hydrothermal wonders, among them four more geysers where the naturalist staff predicts eruptions. One, Grand Geyser, sends widening fan-like plumes of water to



heights of 200 feet. Eruptions, one after another, may last 15 to 45 minutes. Many other smaller geysers erupt frequently. One could easily spend days here, waiting, watching, and marveling.

West Thumb and the Lake Area

From Old Faithful to West Thumb and Yellowstone Lake at the southern end of the Loop is only 17 miles but there are many worthwhile stops between. At one, only a mile and a half below Old Faithful, we stop at the Kepler Cascades parking area. We walk a few steps to a wooden platform where we are rewarded with a thrilling view of cascades and falls tumbling down 100 feet between sheer canyon walls. Tiny Isa Lake on Craig Pass (8,261 foot altitude) straddles the Continental Divide. Hard to believe, but it flows water in one direction to the Atlantic Ocean (via the Firehole, Madison, Missouri, Mississippi Rivers) and in the other to the Pacific (via Herron creek, De Lacy Creek, Shoshone Lake, Lewis Lake, Lewis River, Snake River, and Columbia River).

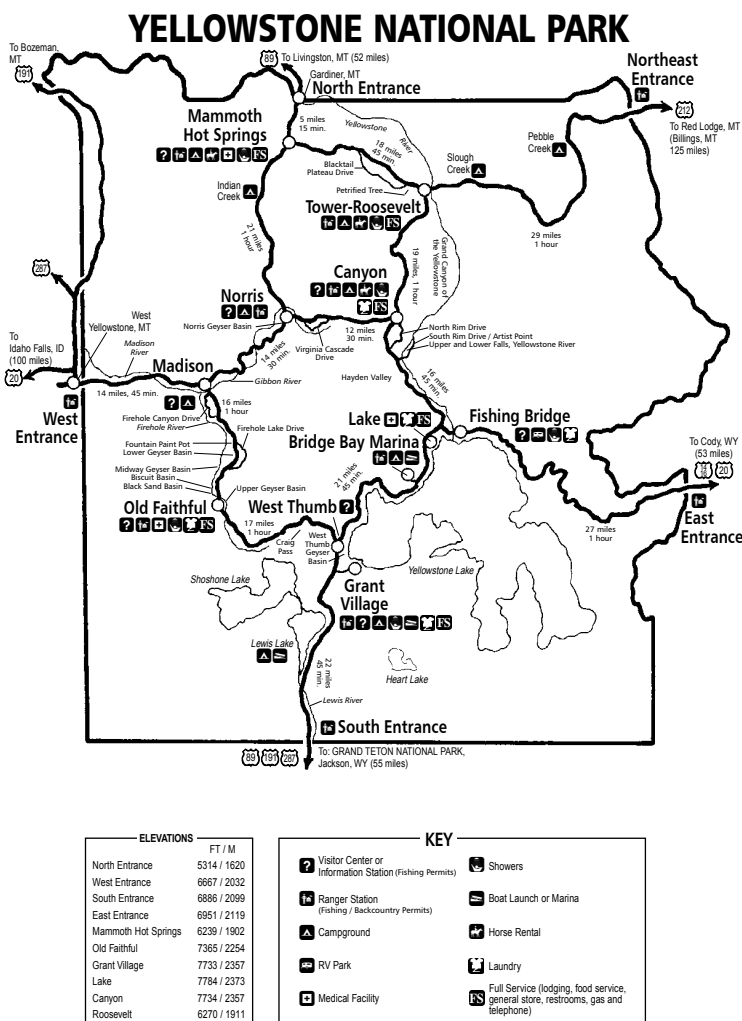
At West Thumb (named for its location on what once was called a “hand shaped lake”), the Grand Loop Road reaches Yellowstone Lake and follows its shoreline northward for 21 miles to Fishing Bridge. Moose often are seen in marshes in this area but none come into our view. At an elevation of 7,733 feet, this lake has a 132 square mile surface area, and 141 miles of shoreline. It is more than 390 feet deep, some 20 miles long, and 14 miles wide. Geysers, hot springs and canyons dot the lake’s bottom. The hottest spot known is at Mary Bay where the temperature has been recorded at 252° F. Lake Tahoe is larger but lower, giving Yellowstone clear title as North America’s largest high-altitude (over 7,000 feet) lake.

The lake is fed by the Yellowstone River, last major undammed river in the lower 48 states, flowing 671 miles from its source southeast of the park, through Yellowstone Park and into the Missouri River in Montana. It exits Yellowstone Lake near Fishing Bridge, continuing north over LeHardy Rapids, through peaceful Hayden Valley, and then thunders over the Upper and Lower falls into the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone.

Only Yellowstone cutthroat trout and small minnows are native to the lake though other cutthroat trout species, including the west-slope cutthroat and the Snake River (fine-spotted) cutthroat are found in other waters in the park. Other species in the lake, particularly lake trout, are thought to have been illegally introduced by anglers.

In the lake and elsewhere in the park, permits are required for all floating vessels, motorized, non-motorized, and even float tubes. Jet skis, personal watercraft, airboats and submersibles are prohibited. Outboards and rowboats can be rented from Xanterra at Bridge Bay Marina near Lake Village and Fishing Bridge. Xanterra also provides guided fishing boats. Other commercial

Continued on page 26



Above left: The Gibbon River glides over the eroded rim of an old volcanic caldera to drop 84 feet at Gibbon Falls. Though hardly as dramatic as the falls on the Yellowstone, it may be one of the park’s loveliest.

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businesses also offer guided services for canoeing, kayaking, and motorized boating.

Fishing Bridge, near the northern outlet of the lake, is a prime spawning ground for Yellowstone cutthroat trout. For that reason, fishing is no longer allowed but rangers tell us it is not unusual in summer to see visitors line up shoulder to shoulder to watch cutthroat trout, named for the orange or red stripes across their throats.

From Fishing Bridge to Canyon Junction

At LeHardy Rapids, a cascade three miles north of Fishing Bridge, cutthroat trout can be seen resting in shallow pools in the spring gathering energy to leap the rapids on their way to spawn under Fishing Bridge.

The Loop follows the Yellowstone River north for 16 miles toward Canyon Junction, crossing wide and open Hayden Valley, a natural wildlife sanctuary where coyotes range, bison graze, grizzly and black bears roam, and there's a wide variety of bird life along the river, its tributaries, and ponds and marshes.

By now, though, darkness looms and we return to camp.

Madison Camp to Canyon Junction

It is a new day. We leave camp and turn east on the cross-road between the north and south halves of the Grand Loop, en route to Canyon Junction, the village nearest the Grand Canyon. We've followed the Gibbon River only seven or eight miles when Billie exclaims: "What a beautiful waterfall."

Indeed, the river glides veil-like over worn rock, dropping 84 feet. After parking to admire and take pictures, we continue to Norris Junction where there's a museum, information station, and the nearby Norris Geyser Basin.

From Norris to Canyon Junction is another 12 miles eastward. Here we stop at the visitor center to get directions to the popular canyon viewpoints. First we take a two-way dead-end road to Inspiration Point where we park and walk to viewing platforms. From here we get some idea of the immensity of the canyon, which is 24 miles long and from 800 to 1,200 feet deep. The Yellowstone River rushes through, dropping 417 feet in two roaring water falls.

The biggest, the Lower Falls, plunges 308 feet. As it crashes down on the rock bottom, a steamy, misty spray rises to the moss-covered walls of the canyon. Spectacular! Though twice as high as Niagara, the volume of water varies from 63,500 gal/sec at peak to as little as 5,000 gal/sec in the fall.

Canyon Junction to Tower Junction

Because it is so early in the season, the Loop road north from Canyon Junction to Tower Junction is not yet open and we can't make this drive. We miss the climb over Dunraven Pass which, at 8,859 feet in elevation, is highest on the Grand Loop. A foot trail 3.6 miles long climbs to the 10,243 foot summit of Mt. Washburn, where views in every direction are said to be breathtaking on a clear day.

Attractions in the Tower-Roosevelt Area at the northeastern bend of the Loop include a petrified redwood tree; the largest concentration of petrified trees in the world at Specimen Ridge along the northeast entrance road; and Tower Falls, where Tower Creek plummets down 132 feet through eroded volcanic pinnacles that rise on both sides.

Back to Madison Campground

From Canyon Junction, we return on the same cross-road from Canyon Junction toward our campground. It is like a new trip as we see things missed on the drive over. We stop to photograph elk grazing in an area razed by the infamous 1988 fires that ravaged 793,880 acres or 36 per cent of Yellowstone Park. New saplings are rapidly replacing burned stumps and hulks. Natural regeneration is working.

Evening is approaching and we elect to drive a few miles further west on the West Entrance road, knowing this is one of the best times of day to look for wildlife.

Sure enough, we come on a herd of bison grazing along the

Continued on page 28

From Left: Visitors view Grand Canyon of Yellowstone from Inspiration point. The canyon is 24 miles long and from 800 to 1,200 feet deep. The Yellowstone River roars through, dropping 417 feet in two waterfalls. • Travertine formations grow more rapidly at Mammoth Hot Springs due to the softer limestone found in this area.

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Madison River. We watch fascinated as two bulls get into a head-butting contest. Cows and calves seem not to notice their dramatics. After all, boys will be boys.

Mammoth Area

On our visit, we miss also a drive to the Mammoth District on the northwest corner of the loop, and that probably is a mistake. There Mammoth Hot Springs, the main attraction, differ greatly from thermal areas we've visited. Travertine formations

grow more rapidly due to softer limestone. As hot waters rise at a rate of 500 gallons per minute, they bring large quantities of limestone—an estimated two tons a day—to the surface, where it dissolves and is deposited as a white chalky mineral to build and decorate terraces that form in stair-step fashion.

We leave Yellowstone certain that, however long you stay, it likely won't be long enough. There's enough to see, do, and learn here to keep you pleasantly occupied for months. Like us, you'll probably look forward to coming back another day. **RIS**

THINGS TO DO IN YELLOWSTONE

Enjoying Yellowstone is hardly limited to sightseeing. Popular activities include:

- **Backcountry Camping and Hiking.** The Park has a backcountry campsite system. A Backcountry Use Permit is required for overnight stays and each designated campsite has a limit for the number of people and stock allowed. Maximum stay per campsite varies from one to three nights per trip. Neither hunting nor firearms are permitted. Permits may be obtained only in person no more than 48 hours in advance of your trip. However, campsites can be reserved in advance if submitted by mail or in person (not by phone or fax). A confirmation notice, not the permit, is issued which must be converted in person. The reservation fee is \$20. Forms for making reservations can be obtained online at Backcountry Trip Planner (<http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/backcountryhiking.htm>), by calling 307-344-2160 or by writing to: Backcountry Office, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.
- **Bicycling.** Bicycling is limited to public roads, parking areas and designated routes. You can bring your own or rent from Xanterra Parks and Resorts at the Old Faithful location. Camping for bikers is limited to developed campgrounds. Some routes are restricted to bicycle and foot travel only. Check at the Information Center where you enter. For general park information, call 307-344-7381.
- **Horseback riding and llama packing.** Private stock may

be brought into the park after July 1. Horses are not allowed in frontcountry campgrounds but may be kept in certain backcountry campsites. Xanterra offers horse rides of one and two hours at Mammoth, Tower-Roosevelt, and Canyon locations. They also offer horseback or wagon rides to a cookout steak dinner. Advance reservations are required. Call 307-344-7311. Get information on planning a trip with stock by seeing the Backcountry Trip Planner on line (<http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/horseride.htm>) or call 307-344-2160.

- **Fishing and boating.** You'll need information on season dates, fishing regulations, permits and fees for fishing and boating. Native cutthroat trout are the most prized by anglers. Information is available by calling 307-344-7381 or online at <http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/fishing.htm>. For boating information, <http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/boating.htm>.

- **Skiing, snowshoeing, and winter use.** All unplowed roads and trails are available for skiing and snowshoeing. Limited numbers of motorized over-snow vehicles are allowed under terms of a new managed winter program that permits only the cleanest and quietest vehicles commercially available. Commercial guides may be required. Cross-county skiing services, including equipment rental and guides, are available. Call park information at 307-344-2132 or go online to www.nps.gov/yell/planyourownvisit/winteruse/htm.

IMPORTANT YELLOWSTONE CONTACTS

For general information, road or entrance gate opening/closing information, call:

307-344-7381 (TDD: 307-344-2386)
307-344-7311 (Xanterra services)

or visit: www.nps.gov/yell
www.yellowstoneassociation.org
www.travelyellowstone.com

Xanterra for dining, reserved campsites, activities, call: 307-344-7311

For road updates call: 307-344-2177

Campsite Reservations:

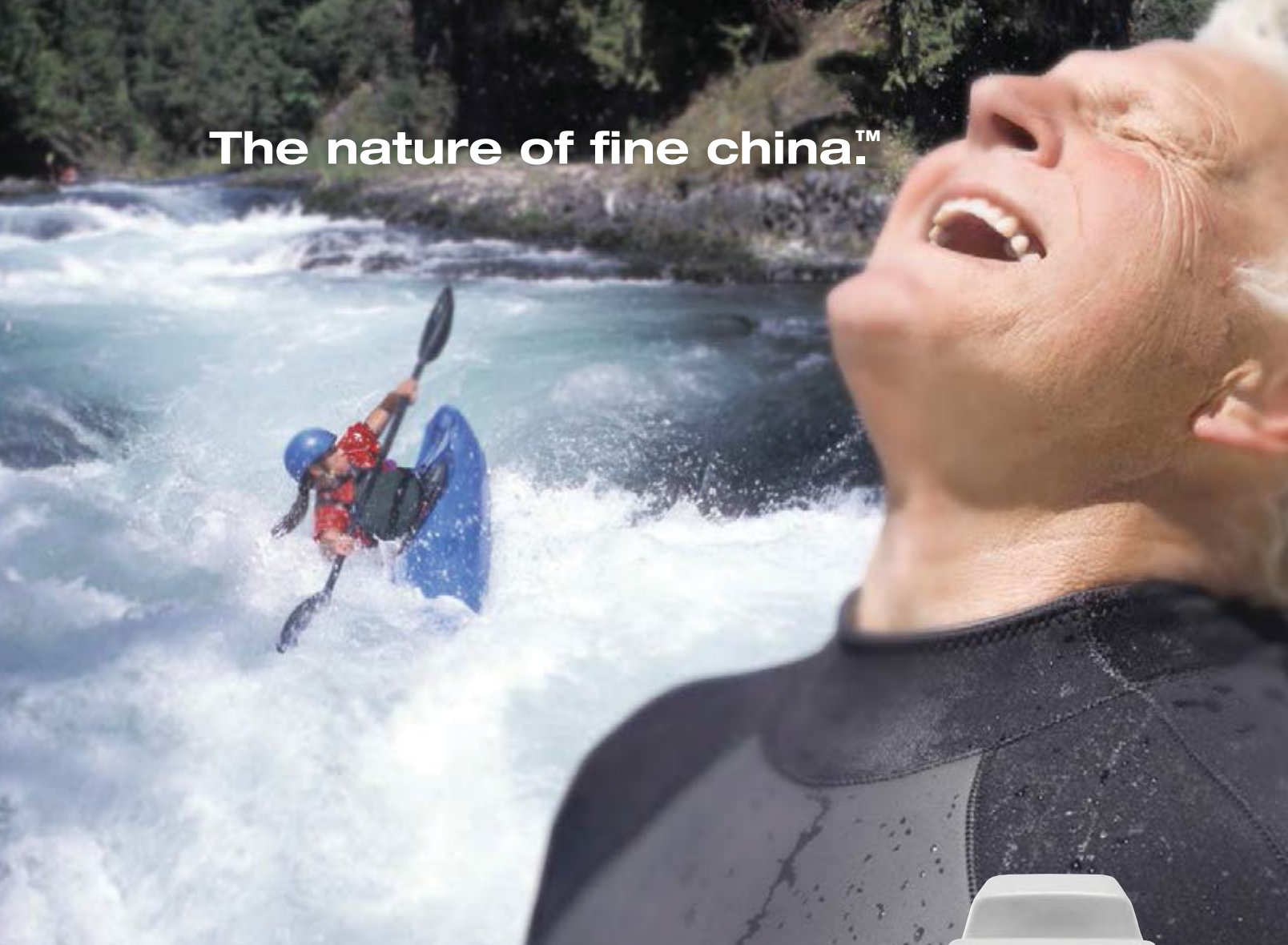
Same-day reservations at Xanterra-managed campgrounds, call: 307-344-7901

For future reservations, call: 307-344-7311 or 1-866-439-7375

or write: Yellowstone National Lodges, PO Box 165
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.

If you can not get reservations within the park on desired dates, ask helpers at above numbers (307-344-7311, 307-344-7901 or 1-866-439-7375) for RV park listings nearest the entrance on your route into Yellowstone or, if you know where you want to camp, call the Chamber of Commerce in that area if you don't find a listing you like in standard RV campground directories.

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Old Tucson Studios

Tiffin Motorhomes/La Mesa RV Southwestern Shootout

by Jimmy Johnson

Sunshine, warm temperatures and a constant brisk mountain breeze provided the mid-March backdrop for the Southwestern Shootout Rally at Old Tucson Studios in the desert near Tucson, Arizona. One hundred fifty Tiffin-built motorhomes convened for three days of enlightening seminars, delicious food, fun games and entertaining activities.


Tiffin Regional Sales Representative Dan Blanke and his wife Lynn teamed up to plan and host this delightful event. Members of Chapter 156 Route 66 Allegros provided the manpower for registration and activities coordination. Outdoor activities included a rodeo, horseshoes, washers and a pet parade. Craft and exercise classes were available for those who wanted to participate. An Afternoon Tea provided opportunities for attendees to exhibit and discuss their RV friendly hobbies and crafts. Tours to the Titan Missile Facility and the Pima Air & Space Museum were available for those who opted to go. The Old Tucson Studios offered a variety of entertainment activities during our stay. Sounds of gunfights, magicians, story-tellers and snake-oil salesmen filled Main Street.

LaMesa RV displayed a variety of factory fresh Tiffin motorhomes at the Old Tucson Studio for the participants to examine, inspect, and acquire. LaMesa RV also provided major financial support for the rally.

Educational information and hands-on help was provided by OEM suppliers. Onan Generators, Freightliner, ShurFlo, Triple H Electronics, Spartan, PowerGlide Chassis, and Thetford-Norcold had representatives present. Jan Sadlack provided instruction on the effective operation of the Sharp Convection-Microwave Oven.

Monday evening after dinner we gathered around the campfire listening to stories of the old west, learning rope tricks, and making and eating s'mores. "The Old Tucson Western Review" provided Tuesday evening's entertainment. Wednesday night after dinner we were treated to "Miss Kitty's Can-Can Girls" and Mariachi & Folklorico music and dancing.

One of the highlights of every Tiffin/Allegro Club rally is the service provided by technicians from Tiffin and the sponsoring dealership. The six techs worked long hours in order to get to all the coaches in the rally. And, as always, they answered a myriad of questions as they worked.

We hope you will join the fun at a Tiffin/Allegro Club rally sometime soon. Until then, travel safely and keep on "roughing it smoothly." 



Spring Rally In Robert, Louisiana

by Gail Johnson

Mid April—is there a more lovely time of the year to be in the Deep South? Allegro Club rally attendees enjoyed warm days, cool nights, balmy breezes and the sweet scents of spring flowering flora as we gathered at Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Resort near tiny Robert, Louisiana for our spring rally.

Robert is located near the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain--about an hour's drive from the sights and sounds of the legendary city of New Orleans. One day during the rally we boarded buses for the drive into the city, where we got a taste of the atmosphere of "The Big Easy"! Our bus driver gave us an informal guided tour on the way into the city, pointing out landmarks such as the famous Dome, Harrah's Casino, the downtown business district, etc. We were also able to see telltale reminders of hurricane Katrina's mark on the city. However, I think we were all impressed with how well the downtown area has recovered and seems to be thriving! The highpoint of our tour was a luncheon cruise aboard the "Natchez," an old-fashioned riverboat. As strains of "When the Saints Go Marching In" floated on the breeze from our vessel's

Enjoying themselves in front of the St. Louis Cathedral in Jackson Square, New Orleans are (from left): Bob & Joanne Brown, Pete Pepinski, and Gail & Jimmy Johnson.

calliope, we enjoyed being on the open decks seeing the sights of the harbor slip by as we rolled along on the mighty Mississippi.

After the cruise, many boarded buses to return to the campground for games and an ice cream social. However, some who had made prior arrangements stayed in the city and enjoyed a stroll through the French Quarter, listened to street performers as they sipped café au lait at the Café Du Monde, or window shopped the famous antique shops along Royal Street, perhaps enjoying a bowl of gumbo or a po-boy at a local eatery.

But, the trip into the city was only one part of the five-day rally! Monday was, of course, devoted to registration and getting settled in. The campground facilities were great, with ample campsites, adequate hook-ups, many entertaining amenities, and a spacious and comfortable meeting hall for our meals, seminars, and entertainment. The food, catered by the campground, was delicious and plentiful!

As is the usual custom, the second day of the rally was given to vendor seminars. Much useful information was made available throughout the day. Two activities that were of particular interest to the ladies at the rally were the Microwave-Convection Cooking Seminar and the Ladies' Tea. The tea has become a popular feature at the last several rallies. We send out a request in the rally package asking each attendee who wishes to attend the tea to bring a favorite teacup and be prepared to tell about it. We have heard so many stories—some touching, some funny—as we open up to each other and share a little of ourselves.

Two of our evening meals included entertainment: country-bluegrass duo Tex & Mary, attending the rally in their Tiffin RV, performed some

ALLEGRO CLUB 2008 RALLY SCHEDULE

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

ALLEGRO CLUB FALL FOLIAGE FEST
Cold Springs Camp Resort, Weare, NH
October 6-9, 2008 (Checkout Oct. 10)

ALLEGRO CLUB 2009 RALLY SCHEDULE

ALLEGRO CLUB KEY LIME RALLY
Boyd's Key West Campground, Key West, FL
April 6-9, 2009 (Checkout April 10)

ALLEGRO CLUB BRANSON RETURN RALLY
America's Best Campground, Branson, MO
May 12-16, 2009 (Checkout May 17)

Additional rallies in the planning stages: a Southwest Rally, a Northwest Rally in June, a Northeast Rally in September, and a Fall Rally in October/November.

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old favorites for our enjoyment, while the other entertainment venue featured Jimmy and Gail Johnson's daughter, Jessica, on the piano and her singing partner, Caleb Banks. These two graduating high school seniors delighted the crowd with selections from Broadway, ballads, and other favorites.

Another enjoyable feature of the rally was a costume party at the final evening meal. There was excellent participation in this activity, with costumed characters running the gamut from Caesar and Cleopatra to the Phantom of the Opera! What fun!

Along with all of this, the rally featured the customary games and contests—"Back your Wagon," horseshoes, the "Hat" game, penny bingo, and a mini-golf tournament. The evaluations we received on the rally rated it as a big success.

Let me urge you to check the upcoming rally schedule for 2009. It is filling fast with some wonderful destinations in store! Be safe on the road. Until we see you again, keep on "roughing it smoothly!" 

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Dan Blanke: Retired?

by Fred Thompson

ENERGETIC, ENTHUSIASTIC, INNOVATIVE, ACTIVE. DAN BLANKE. WHEN you meet the man, the conversation begins to flow easily. There is an almost instant connectivity. Sincerity and honesty are in the eyes. Communication is always interactive.

The skills of his trade are sharp, honed for over 40 years. Salesmanship. For some, it is an awkwardly learned skill. For others, it is a natural extension of their personality. For Dan Blanke, it is a mixture of many factors and a constant awareness of each.

“Good salesmanship delivers the product to the consumer. Salesmanship is product knowledge, product presentation, service, communication, self-awareness, plus an understanding of the customer’s need and current environment . . . and a touch of psychology,” he explained.

Born in Nowata, Oklahoma, in 1943, Blanke grew up in a family deeply rooted in the oil business. Grandparents, parents, and three older brothers provided a heritage that could easily have drawn him into that industry. “We moved to Russell in west Kansas where I graduated from high school. I worked for the local dry cleaners/laundry and delivered Bob Dole’s laundry to his home. At night, I worked at a gas station,” Blanke said, as he reminisced about his teenage years.

After high school, he moved to Lyons, Kansas, and took notice of the big trucks delivering Pepsi to grocery stores and a variety of other outlets. He decided to apply for the job of “truck driver.”

“We don’t have truck drivers. We have route salesmen,” the sales manager at the Pepsi plant told him. “They taught me about salemanship,” Blanke said. “It was my first experience at doing battle with the competition.”

“We filled up Pepsi coolers at gas stations, and waxed and cleaned them every week. We competed every day for shelf space with Coke in the supermarkets. I worked on straight commission and got 10 cents for every case I sold. We got two cents per case for sorting the different brands before we brought the empty bottles back to the bottling plant,” he recalled.

Blanke’s competitive spirit made him a top route salesman. After four years in the business, a State Farm insurance agent noticed Blanke’s skills and offered him a job. “I was 21 when he hired me. State Farm sent me to their McPherson, Kansas,



From left: Van Tiffin, Tim Tiffin, Dan Blanke, Bob Tiffin, and Lex Tiffin enjoyed several days together at the plant during Dan’s last official national sales meeting in May.

agency for training and after two years I was selected to run that office,” he said. By the time he was 26, Blanke had made State Farm’s McPherson office a very successful agency.

“My dad was always an outdoors person. He first had a truck camper, a Mountaineer that was built on a truck chassis. After he bought a Winnebago Brave, Dad came to my office one day and wanted to buy insurance for a motorhome,” Dan related. “I said, ‘What’s a motorhome?’ Well, sure enough, State Farm had rates for motorhomes, and that was my first introduction to the Class A market.”

“But I was bored to death in the insurance business,” he confessed. During his tenure at McPherson, Dan became a member of the Kansas Jaycees and a good friend of the Jaycees state president Bob Hudson. When they first met, Hudson was sales manager for a farm supply company. Some time later, Hudson accepted a position as national sales manager with Eldorado Industries, a manufacturer of truck campers in Minneapolis, Kansas.

“Bob offered me a job selling truck campers to the four-state territory of Colorado, Kansas, Texas, and Oklahoma,” Dan said, still drawing from the excitement of that day in 1972. Hudson spent four hours with Blanke to explain the meaning of dealer floorplans (the financial relationship a dealer has with the bank

to purchase the units until they are sold) and Eldorado’s sales commission plan.

Blanke left for Denver to visit Omera Ford, an automobile dealership that had just ordered eight campers. The dealer was putting the truck campers on his Ford pickups and selling them as a unit. “He was making \$100 profit on a truck, but \$500 profit when he sold the truck and the camper as a package,” he said. “He had already sold the eight campers we shipped him two weeks earlier and wanted to know how soon I could get him eight more.” The dealer had the right combination and Dan took the concept to dealers throughout his four state territory. Six months later Dan became the sales manager for the Kansas plant.

With plants in California and Kansas, Eldorado seemed to be doing quite well. Due to a very serious illness of the company’s west coast sales manager, Dan was offered the job. Although the new position opened many doors for him in the western states, the company had to close the plant in 1978 during the oil shortage and energy crisis. Blanke quickly found a position with Midas who was building Class C’s and later Class A’s.

As he remembered his career during the 1970s, Dan smiled. “A funny thing happened at the Louisville Dealers Show in December 1972. I heard about these people from Alabama who had shown up at the show and had two motorhomes out in the parking lot. I didn’t go out to see the motorhomes, but who could have guessed that company would be part of my future.”

Dan brought a new dimension to our sales program. His advice has been invaluable to me over the years.

— Bob Tiffin

After the second oil crisis slowed the RV market in 1978-80, Blanke made a two-year detour in his career when he became the general manager of the original Rainbow Wallet Company, the inventor of the nylon-velcro wallet. As one might expect, sales soared and the company made a respectable profit — but his heart was not in it. RVs were his first love.

In 1981 Bob Stewart, president of Eldorado Industries, asked Blanke to return to Eldorado as factory rep to the western states. Dan and his family had become entrenched Californians and the job was a good fit. In 1983 the company offered him the position of vice president and asked him to move back to Minneapolis, Kansas, where the plant was located. Dan agreed to two years and stayed four. In 1987 they returned to California to spearhead a new western sales office for Eldorado. Out of the blue, Revcon offered Blanke what appeared to be a crowning position in his career — the presidency. Revcon’s sleek coaches on tandem axle chassis were leading the industry in both exterior and interior design. However, the company’s financial stability was tenuous and they had to declare bankruptcy six months later.

Rockwood Motorhomes was waiting and drew Blanke into their fold. Under his sales guidance, the company rose from #12 in the California Class A market to #3. Success drew attention and the family-owned company was sold five years later to Cobra Industries. Blanke decided to stay on board.

“The culture of the company changed quickly and I soon realized I was in the wrong place,” Dan said. “As fate would have it, Bob Tiffin called me while I was enroute to see a dealer and asked if I might be interested in representing Tiffin Motorhomes in the western states.” Blanke lost no time in getting to Red Bay. “I showed up in a suit and tie, and Bob said, ‘You’re a little overdressed for Red Bay.’ I never wore a tie in Red Bay again,” he laughed.

“Bob Tiffin understands sales and most company presidents don’t,” Dan said bluntly. “I understand production and a lot of salesmen don’t.” Almost the same age, the two men felt a synergy developing that was to last 16 years. “He asked me to write a proposal on how I wanted to be paid,” Dan recalled. “He said, ‘If I like it, you’ll hear from me soon. If I don’t, you won’t hear



Dan & Lynn Blanke and Judy & Bob Tiffin found many occasions over the past 16 years to enjoy one another's company at sales events throughout the nation.

from me again," Dan said. "I agonized over that proposal for a week and finally wrote it. I guess he liked it. I'm still here."

After visiting quite a few of Tiffin's dealers, Blanke returned to Red Bay convinced the company should launch a sales school. Bob agreed.

"I taught sales people the concepts behind Tiffin Motorhomes, and then strongly emphasized corporate and product knowledge," Dan said. "I wanted them to know thoroughly what Tiffin Motorhomes does that other companies fail to do. We are manufacturers, not assemblers."

Dan took a low profile in the industry because he devoted so much of his time to training qualified sales people. "I trained hundreds of retail sales people and probably 15 factory representatives, many of whom are now at the executive level in RV companies," he said. "Seeing their successes is a great joy to me. I have tried to teach people to really care about what they are doing and who they are serving. Those who really show they care are the most successful."

Seizing the moment, Dan said, "Our industry needs to develop recognition for the top quality skills that it takes to be a successful sales person in dealerships as well as in sales management. It is a skill that is critical to the success of our industry."

Teaming up with Lynn, his wife, Dan brought in a new marketing approach. Lynn became involved in the business in 1997 by helping to organize rallies. "We limited the first rally to 60 coaches and sold it out at \$99 per coach. Lynn developed her own list of activities," Dan explained. "One of our first and most successful rallies was held at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, California. Most of our owners had never seen a polo match. The whole affair was elegant and we continued to do one rally a year at numerous locations in Oregon, California, and Arizona. At Judy Tiffin's urging, Lynn introduced a Tai Chi exercise class that was first attended only by the ladies. Then the men started participating, too. Lynn has been a tremendous help in developing the camaraderie and culture that has become part of owning a Tiffin motorhome."

In 2000 Dan and Lynn helped launch the Tiffin Annual Dealers Meeting which has become a highly anticipated event each July. "We brought in key industry speakers such as Mike Molino from RVDA, David Humphries from RVIA, and Bob Upton, vice president of La Mesa. We had been doing meetings every two years. But it is very important at the beginning of the model year for dealers to have separate appointments with their manufacturer's

representatives," Blanke said.

Tiffin dealers will meet this year in Branson, Missouri. Dan and Lynn did their organizational swan song and it promises to be the best Tiffin Annual Dealers Meeting ever. Dr. Keven Elko will give his highly acclaimed motivational program called "Nerves of Steel." Following dinner on one of the evenings, Bob Anderson will entertain with his tribute to "The Golden Age of Music." Now in his fifth season at Branson, Anderson is a world class singer, comedian, and impressionist.

"Lynn and I have had a great time doing the rallies and dealers meetings," Dan continued. "Before retirement, Lynn worked for Southern California Edison in their nuclear training facility. Today our daughter Holly works at Edison as the southeast division manager of field accounting. With a staff of 150, she accounts for all labor and materials used in construction and maintenance of the Edison infrastructure," Dan said proudly.

The couple has three children and six grandchildren. Holly, her husband Tim, and four children live in Mission Viejo. Aaron lives in Goddard, Kansas, and is a district manager for Wal-Mart's optical division. Aaron and his wife Courtney have two children. Heath lives in Wichita and works in the drag racing business. He specializes in torque converters and does special tuning after installations.

With 40 years of hindsight, Blanke sees a bright future for the motorhome industry. "I believe this current downturn will be short lived. Motorhoming is such an appealing lifestyle for the boomers. The next 30 years will be more fun than the last 30 years of our history. Products will be so much more sophisticated that only a few manufacturers will be able to make them," he said.

"Over the next 10 years, the boomers will introduce their children and grandchildren to the RV lifestyle which is really a magnet in itself. I wonder if we should start downsizing but maintain the amenities. Therein are some great challenges in design. Bigger is not necessarily better," he continued.

"Although Tiffin has many good dealers

Continued on page 60

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*whichever occurs first
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Allegro Bay

New Interior Features

- Pleated day-night shades replaced with separate Roll-ease solar and privacy shades controlled with circular pull cords **1**
- Radius shower stalls and doors **2**
- Light package
- Wall board
- Bedroom ceiling fan **3**
- Rear wardrobe lights activated by sliding doors
- Sleeper added to optional U-shaped dinette
- Powered MCD solar and privacy sun shades for windshield and cockpit/passenger side windows
- Upgraded monitor panel
- Decorative wood heat duct registers
- Sliding cover in skylight above shower reduces heat loss/gain
- Rear wall mirror redesigned
- In-dash GPS/stereo option

New Exterior Features

- Exterior graphic design with nine color schemes **4**
- Some storage compartment doors will be side-swinging
- Optional 26-inch television mounted in slide-out sidewall **5**
- Microwave-convection oven vented through outside wall
- Encased rotating antenna w/inside control (receives both analog and digital signals; replaces Winegard crank-up antenna) **6**
- Lowered entry door with two extended steps (not three as in earlier years) **7**

Interiors

Pewter
Crystal Cove
Java

Floorplans

34 XB
35 TSB
37 QDB
38 TGB

Paint Schemes

Gold Coral Silver Sand
Maroon Coral Sunlit Sand
Nasa
Mocha option available in above paint schemes except Nasa

NEW FOR 2009



Phaeton

New Interior Features

- Window treatments featuring hardwood centers and wrought iron designs **1**
- Pleated day-night shades replaced with separate Roll-ease solar and privacy shades controlled with circular pull cords **1**
- Radius shower stalls and doors
- Pfister shower mixing head
- Bedroom entertainment center redesigned to accept a DVD and satellite receiver
- Bedroom ceiling fan
- Upgraded interior monitor panel
- Rear wardrobe lights activated by sliding doors
- Decorative wood heat duct registers
- Slide-out full-extension drawers mounted on first shelf of each OH cabinet on either side of microwave/convection oven **2**
- Transmission shifter pad moved forward **3**
- Backsplash design **4**
- Sliding cover in skylight above shower reduces heat loss/gain
- Key ring fob locks/unlocks entry door (does not control compartment door locks; there is not a touch pad on the assist handle)
- Residential refrigerator option (includes 6 house batteries & 3000-watt inverter—Not available on 40QDH and 40QSH)
- Powered MCD solar and privacy night shades for windshield and cockpit/passenger side windows
- Wall board design
- In-dash GPS/stereo option
- Optional Ultraleather™ Air Coil Hide-A-Bed Sofa now available on passenger side (no cloth) **5**
- Optional Memory Foam mattress (Queen only for 36QSH; King only on 40s and longer)

New Exterior Features

- Exterior graphic design with nine color schemes **6**
- Main panel of sewer compartment powder coated for cleaner appearance
- The driver-side door forward of the front wheel well is now a side opening door with standard latch and lock
- Three ACs and 10,000-watt generator optional on 40-ft coaches
- Chrome mirrors now standard
- Microwave-convection oven vented through outside wall
- Window awning package now standard
- Cable TV and auxiliary satellite antenna connections relocated to the electrical compartment
- Encased rotating antenna w/ inside control (receives both analog and digital signals; replaces Winegard crank-up antenna)
- Turn signal activated camera now standard

Interiors

Atlantic
Chateau
Montecito

Floorplans

36 QSH
40 QDH
40 QSH
40 QTH
42 QRH

Paint Schemes

Gold Coral Silver Sand
Maroon Coral Sunlit Sand
Nasa
Mocha option available in above paint schemes except Nasa

NEW FOR 2009





NEW FOR 2009

New Interior Standard Features for 2009

- Powered MCD solar and opaque night shades for windshield and cockpit/passenger side windows
- Recessed ceiling with curved molding border
- Slide-out full-extension drawers mounted on first shelf of each OH cabinet on either side of microwave/convection oven
- Upgraded Moen lavatory faucets **1**
- Drawer pulls
- Upgraded interior monitor panel
- Transmission shifter pad moved forward
- Bedroom ceiling fan
- Rear wardrobe lights activated by sliding doors
- Bedroom entertainment center redesigned to accept a DVD and satellite receiver
- Decorative wood heat duct registers
- Floor tile design
- Backsplash design **2**
- Sliding cover in skylight above shower reduces heat loss/gain

New Interior Optional Features for 2009

- Cherry glazed cabinets
- Optional White chocolate glazed water closet **3**
- In-dash GPS/stereo (not the 15" monitor)
- Electric residential refrigerator (not available on 40QDP or 40QSP)
- 3000-watt pure sine wave inverter (included with residential refrigerator option)
- U-shaped dinette/sofa sectional **4**
- Powered MCD solar and privacy night shades for living room area
- Memory Foam mattress (Queen only for 36QSP; King only on 40s and longer)
- Air Coil Hide-A-Bed Sofa available only on passenger side except in 36QSP

New Exterior Features for 2009

- Exterior graphic design with nine color schemes
- The driver-side door forward of the front wheel well is now a side opening door with standard latch and lock **5**
- Exterior monitor pad located in sewer compartment
- Upgraded sewer compartment connections panel
- Black ladder is standard
- Microwave-convection oven vented through outside wall
- Side swinging battery compartment door
- Three ACs and 10,000-watt generator optional on 40-ft coaches
- Cable TV and auxiliary satellite antenna connections relocated to the electrical compartment
- Encased rotating antenna w/inside control (receives both analog and digital signals; replaces Winegard crank-up antenna)

Interiors

Summer Wind
Nile
French Vanilla

Floorplans

36 QSP
40 QDP
40 QRP
40 QSP
42 QRP
43 QRP

Paint Schemes

Gold Coral Silver Sand
Maroon Coral Sunlit Sand
Nasa
Mocha option available in above paint schemes except Nasa





NEW FOR 2009

New Interior Standard Features

- 45QEZ features entertainment center with 42-inch mid-ship, eye-level television
- Slide-out full-extension drawers mounted on first shelf of each OH cabinet on either side of microwave/convection oven
- Contemporary vessel style sinks in water closet and rear bath
- Galley faucet **1**
- Upgraded interior monitor panel
- Transmission shifter pad moved forward **2**
- Bedroom ceiling fan **3**
- Rear wardrobe lights activated by sliding doors
- Bedroom entertainment center redesigned to accept a DVD and satellite receiver
- Decorative wood heat duct registers
- Hinged louvered wood covers for two ceiling exhaust fans **4**
- Backsplash design **5**
- Sliding cover in skylight above shower reduces heat loss/gain

New Interior Optional Features

- White chocolate glazed water closet
- In-dash GPS/stereo (not the 15" monitor) **6**
- Memory Foam mattress
- Air Coil Hide-A-Bed Sofa available only on passenger side

New Exterior Features

- Exterior graphic design with nine color schemes
- Flush mount slider window
- Encased rotating antenna w/inside control (receives both analog and digital signals; replaces Winegard crank-up antenna) **7**
- The driver-side door forward of the front wheel well is now a side opening door with latch and lock
- Exterior monitor pad located in sewer compartment
- Side swinging battery compartment door
- Upgraded sewer compartment connections panel
- Relocate telephone, cable TV, and auxiliary satellite antenna connection to the electrical compartment
- Microwave-convection oven vented through outside wall

Interiors

Belair
Graphite

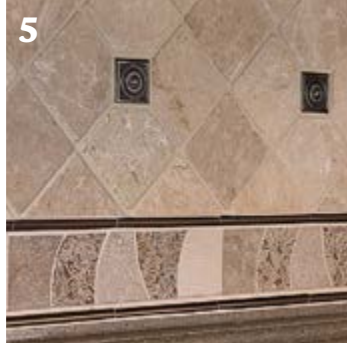
Floorplans

45 QBZ
45 QEZ

Paint Schemes

Gold Coral Silver Sand
Maroon Coral Sunlit Sand
Nasa

Mocha option available in above paint schemes except Nasa



Interviews from Arizona and New Mexico



Marieann and Bob Brooke

Home: Newberry, Michigan
Interviewed at Cochise Terrace RV Resort
Benson, Arizona

- The Brookes own a beautiful 2003 Allegro Bus.
- They started RVing in 2001 with a 5th wheel but quickly decided a Class A was the way to go.
- Of course, Tiffin was the RV of choice.
- They travel with their 17 year old Maine Coon Cat named Willy.
- Willy loves to travel and gets excited when they get ready to move on.
- They motorhome from October to May visiting family and RV friends along the way.
- At the conclusion of this trip they plan on selling their home and going full-time.
- They usually stay in one place for about two weeks in order to enjoy the sights.
- They tow a 2007 Saturn Vue with a supplemental braking system.
- Bob does all the driving with trips averaging 300 to 350 miles per day.
- Bob and Marieann are both retired from General Motors.
- They have 3 children living in Michigan; one son and two daughters.
- They presently have nine grandchildren.
- They have been to Red Bay four times and love the experience.
- Bob's hobby is golfing; Marieann enjoys quilting and cooking (she *loves* the kitchen in her bus).
- Bob said this was his first Tiffin product but it definitely would not be his last.
- During one visit to Red Bay, they knocked on Bob Tiffin's door. He waved them in and they conversed about many things for the next hour and a half.



JD and Kathy Anderson

Home: Wherever their coach is parked
Interviewed at Kiva RV Park
Tucumcari, New Mexico

- The Andersons drive a 2002 Allegro Bus.
- They travel with Missy and Max, both Yorkies, and Little Bit, a Pomeranian Rat Terrier mix they call a "Pomrat."
- They list an address in Rapid City, South Dakota for mail and licensing purposes.
- It is their second rig following a 1999 5th wheel that gave them nothing but trouble.
- They started full timing right off the bat 7 years ago with the 5th wheel and sold their home in Florence, Kansas.
- Kathy couldn't wait to "get on the road" and both have no regrets whatsoever.
- JD does all the driving usually 250 to 300 miles a day.
- They are both retired Allstate Insurance Agents.
- They have 2 daughters and 2 sons.
- They have been to Red Bay several times; have met with Bob Tiffin and cannot sing his praises loud enough.
- They encourage all who inquire to select Tiffin for their next rig.
- Their most disconcerting experience occurred on their 4th day of driving when they were detoured off the highway and routed through New York City.
- JD builds model Airplanes, Roadrunner and Twirling Mobiles made out of aluminum cans.
- Many times their departures are delayed as more and more folks want JD to build one for them.
- One of their great pleasures is meeting new people wherever they travel.



Ken & Bonnie Martin

Home: Surprise, Arizona
Interviewed at Desert's Edge RV Village
Phoenix, Arizona

- The Martins enjoy their 2005 Allegro Bus.
- When not on the road they park at their own pad in Happy Trails RV and Golf Resort located in Surprise, AZ.
- Ken is a retired computer analyst, software developer and implantation consultant.
- Ken is also a retired private pilot.
- Bonnie is a bookkeeper by trade but is a retired owner/operator of two ice cream/yogurt/deli stores.
- They began motorhoming in 1994 when Ken convinced his company that his business travel in a motor home would cut their costs.
- Before their Allegro Bus, they had a Fleetwood 35' Southwind, a 35' Safari Sahara and a 40' Serengeti motor home.
- They travel with Midnight, an 8 year old Lab mix and Vixen, a 5 year old Corgi-Sheltie mix.
- Ken does all the driving with Bonnie keeping her eye out for towns that have quilting stores.
- They stay off the interstates and only travel local roads and highways.
- They have driven as closely as possible the Pony Express Route; the Lewis and Clark Route and the Oregon Trail.
- They make it a point to visit volcanoes and have been to every volcano in the Northwest.
- They have been to Red Bay twice.
- They are impressed with Bob Tiffin and how he runs his company.
- Ken's hobbies are fishing and being outdoors.
- Bonnie says her "life" is quilting and has been for many years.

Editor's Note: Harold Breuninger has been a contributor to *Roughing It Smoothly* from the beginning. Originally from South Carolina, he and Lynne were full-timers for several years. They now make their home in Tucson. His interviews give you a good flavor of Tiffin owners who travel the country extensively.

Building Top-Quality Cabinets and Furniture

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

The year 2000 was probably the pivotal point in fine cabinet making at Tiffin Motorhomes. “We began using more fine quality hardwood as opposed to the vinyl-wrapped wood,” Van Tiffin explained as we discussed the company’s response to customer demand for interiors that looked more residential. “Buyers indicated stronger preferences for uniform color of hardwoods in doors and exterior facing of cabinets,” he said.

To satisfy those preferences, Tiffin began to purchase the highest grades of hardwoods which yielded fewer knots and evenness of color. “Top quality cherry and maple come from New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia,” he noted. “Alder comes from Oregon and northern California. We buy most of our hardwoods from warehouses that control quality and offer us better uniformity.”

Even with the company’s very selective purchasing, Tiffin acknowledged that some of the cherry and maple the company receives doesn’t meet the standards necessary for customer satisfaction. “We don’t want black streaks running through it, which is especially critical in choosing the best pieces from each load we buy,” he said. “That is very important with our natural cherry finish. You can’t hide any imperfections with stains. We request certain mills to get the best cherry. Our natural maple gives us the same problem, but maple only accounts for five percent of our cabinet production.”

“The National Hardwood Association has well-defined grading standards. NHA also provides proprietary grading that goes beyond their standard specifications,” Tiffin continued. “The higher standard will yield fewer knots and wider boards. NHA does not grade based on color. The company opts for the highest standard which means 90 percent uniform on face side and 70 percent uniform on the back side.”

In 1998 the company manufactured cabinets with very standard equipment that included 10-inch table saws and standard routing equipment. “Today we make the molding knives to

design and create our own moldings. The technology allows us to control our inventory much better,” Tiffin said. “Eight years ago we had one CNC router (computer numerically controlled). Today we run four CNCs. We can cut anything our engineers and designers can draw in autocad. We transfer the G-code to the router and cut curved beverage holders, plastic dash parts, ceiling panels with holes for barrel lights, scrolled pocket doors on the Zephyr, and curved mullions,” he said with obvious satisfaction.

Tiffin Motorhomes no longer subcontracts millwork. Everything from rough milling to finish work is done within the company’s facilities. “Fine cabinetry and woodworking are such an aesthetic part of a coach’s interior that we have to fully control the process. If we see something amiss, we know where to go and what to do to get it fixed,” he said.

Van Tiffin has immersed himself in fine woodworking. “It is something I really enjoy doing. I can do millwork and it helps me understand the process and what we need to do, but I couldn’t run a CNC router. Our employees have been key to improving our processes and ultimately achieving good design,” he said. “Rodney Johnson has really stepped up to the plate and become a key player in our research and development department,” he said.

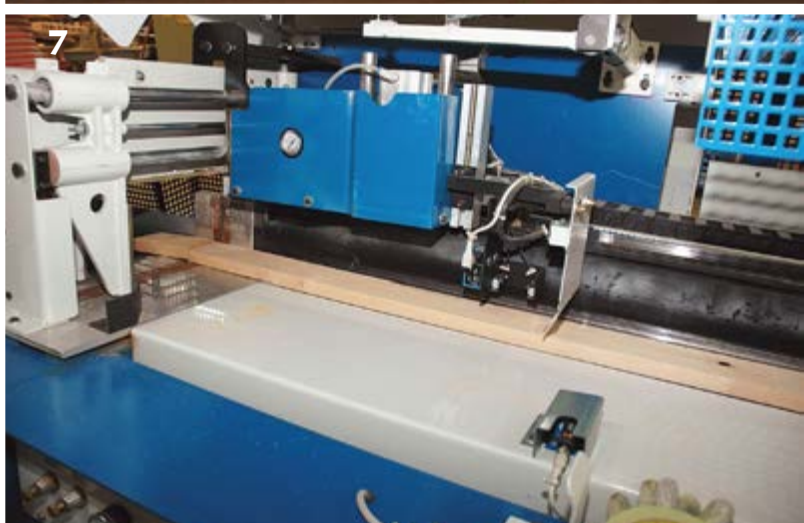
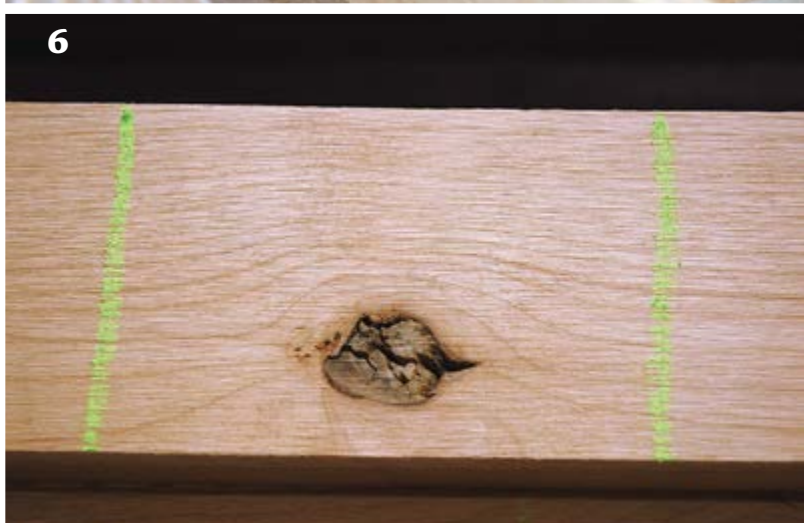
In recalling the major steps the company had to take ten years ago to make the improvements that are bringing

buyers to TMH today, Van related a conversation that he and his brother, Tim, had with Bob. They emphasized the company had never spent more than fifty to a hundred thousand for a piece of millwork equipment, and that it was going to take a lot more to do the job. Bob became enthusiastic in his support for his sons’ assessment. “If you boys need that kind of equipment to build these motorhomes, you just haul off and get it!” And get it they did.

Following is a captioned picture story of just how TMH is creating fine interiors in their coaches. ➤➔



Van Tiffin, director of product development, works with the craftsmen in the cabinet and furniture departments to create new designs each year for the company’s five brands.



It all begins with a strapped bundle of highly graded hardwood **(1)**. The most frequently used woods are Alderwood (back) and Cherry (front). Maple (not shown here) is offered in all of Tiffin's brands except the Zephyr. Medium Alderwood and Cherry Bark finishes are offered in the Allegro, the Allegro Bay, and the Phaeton. Cherry is offered in four different finishes in the Zephyr.

Production operator Billy Patrick moves pre-set laser beams **(2)** over unfinished 7/8-inch thick cherry to find the most efficient cuts for the widths needed to build the cabinets and raised panel doors. After the right selection is made, the blades are automatically set on the Mereen-Johnson Rip Saw to make the selected cuts. The four-inch wide boards ejecting from the rip saw **(3)** will be planed to 3/4-inches.

A planer smooths both sides of the board while reducing the thickness from 7/8-inch to 3/4-inch **(4)**. Production speeds of all the equipment in the cabinet shop are amazing.

A band saw slices a 3/4-inch thick board into two 3/8-inch pieces which will be used for decorative moldings **(5)**.

An OMGA Saw electronically recognizes the operator's special chalk **(6)** marks to automatically cut and remove knots and other imperfections from the wood **(7)** that will be used to make raised panel doors after the boards are glued together and cut to specific lengths for the many door sizes in every coach. After the blocks of wood have been planed, a molding saw will be used to create the raised panels.

Gluing frames in the cabinet shop prepare large pieces of hardwood which will be used for exterior frames of cabinets as well as walls **(8)**. Once glued, the larger piece is stronger than if it had been cut from a single piece of wood which would be vulnerable to splitting.

Glue is applied to the edges of boards **(9)** and assembled in clamp frames **(10)** under pressure to create the larger pieces from which raised panel doors are made. The panels are left in a motorized circular rack **(11)** for two hours until the glue is dry and cured.

Decorative molding, which must be free of knots or any imperfections, is created by this molding machine **(12)**. All of the many shapes and pieces required to create the interior of a Tiffin motorhome come from the large bundle of unfinished hardwood in Illustration No. 1. Faron Credille makes the molding blades at his tooling shop to produce any molding created by TMH's furniture and cabinet designers. Their work is most evident in the crown moldings **(13)** used in the slide-out fascia.

Sets of planed hardwood boards are precut to exact lengths for a cabinetmaker to assemble **(14)**. By isolating the cutting of the individual pieces and the assembly of the cabinet into separate tasks, the total labor time to produce a given piece of furniture is significantly reduced.

Using a perfectly squared framing table with air-driven pressure clamps, Jeff Childers selects and assembles precut pieces to make the front facing sections of galley and lavatory cabinets **(15)**, computer desks, and mirror walls **(16)**.

Kevin Murray attaches the feet to the bottom section of an entertainment center for an Allegro Bus **(17)**. He completes the





hutch-styled center with finely detailed molding (18).

Terry Hurst adds crown molding to the upper cabinet of the entertainment center (19).

Terry Hurst completes the base cabinet for an Allegro Bus galley (20). Marshall Green sands the structure (21) before it goes into a two-process finishing operation for staining-sealing followed by top coating.

Barbara Hayes in her "Tiffin space suit" makes the first stain application to a bedroom entertainment center (22). After a second pass, the center will receive a sealer. After drying, the finishing department will apply a top coat.

Following a front face assembly, cabinets are moved to an assembly line process where Trent Richardson constructs the middle and rear walls (23); wiring and heating ducts are added by Anthony Blackburn and Josh Daniel (24); and finally drawers, hardware (25), and solid surface countertops with the handsome brushed nickel faucets, levers, and spray are installed by Jeff Burks and George Gresham (26).

Mickey Collum assembles a vanity and cabinet unit which is mounted to its adjacent wall (27). The assembly will move as one piece into a Phaeton on the production assembly line.

The flat floor of a "soon-to-be" 42-ft. Phaeton with only carpet and ceramic tile has just received three assemblies (28): *from left*, a closet and drawer assembly which extends across the width of the motorhome; a shelf system for a stackable washer and dryer, which also forms the back wall of the half bath; and a lavatory, vanity, cabinet and wall assembly which creates the front wall of the half bath. A different angle (29) shows the back wall of the half bath with the toilet now installed. A temporary metal frame keeps the future door opening perfectly square.

The galley slide-out for a 40QRP Allegro Bus awaits installation on the production assembly line (30). Note the cabinets for the galley, the housing for the refrigerator, and the overhead cabinets, all of which were built and assembled in the cabinet shop. **RIS**



His Name Is Jim Dandy

by Fred Thompson

Perpetual motion. He only stops moving and talking when he's asleep. And we couldn't verify that. Jim "Dandy" Cooley is the closest thing to a human dynamo we have ever met. But understand, it's a soft pedal energy — friendly, thoughtful, and ready to serve.

Dandy and his wife Tammie operate one of the most customer-friendly RV superstores in the nation. Located in Oxford, Alabama, on the I-20 corridor between Birmingham and Atlanta, the Dandy RV Superstore 82,000 sq. ft. facility encompasses a 40-bay service facility, a 17,000 sq. ft. showroom, and a 14,000 sq. ft. Camping World on a sprawling 29-acre campus that borders the interstate. Dandy acquired an additional 25 acres which will become a state-of-the-art KOA campground with 150 sites during the coming year. To capture the attention of the 60,000 vehicles that pass by daily, Cooley installed a Vegas-style \$300,000

messaging sign to bring customers into the business.

The Dandy RV Superstore didn't just pop out of the ground like Spring dandelions. Jim Cooley's story is a 30-year philosophical climb to success. "I stand on the shoulders of so many good people whose examples and personal instruction made this company what it is today. And our great employees who come to work every day ready to serve are responsible for the day-to-day success of our operation. Each one of them is empowered to do what's right for the customer," Cooley said with intense sincerity. But where does this story begin?

Jim's parents moved to Birmingham from Kentucky when he was a youngster. His dad did contract work and his mom managed a trailer-RV park. The middle child of seven children, Dandy slept on the couch in his parents' mobile home. "I was a



Dandy RV Superstore recently consolidated two separate facilities into its new, much larger location in Oxford, Alabama. The \$8.1 million facility has 82,000 square feet of space and includes a Camping World outlet.

very average student in school, but I was a leader,” he said as we scampered down the steps behind him from his second floor office to the showroom floor on a tour of the facility. “I was captain of the football, baseball, and basketball teams in high school. My high school football coach used to tell me that what you think about the most is what you become. He was right! In some cases, it just takes time — like me, 30 years — to reach your goals.”

Actually, it was his football coach who can claim responsibility for Jim’s nickname. “When I was a kid playing metro football, I made a good hit and the coach hollered, ‘That was a dandy lick, Jimmy.’” The name stuck and he became known as “Jim Dandy.”

Jim Dandy graduated from high school in 1976 and began selling RVs from his front yard. “I did not have any franchises with manufacturers to sell new units, so I bought units out of the classified ads or wholesale from dealers and fixed them up. When we didn’t have enough, I drove around Birmingham neighborhoods and towns throughout the Southeast looking for RVs in people’s yards that I could buy,” he explained.

“Tammie kept the books and I managed the inventory and sold from our little front yard lot. God gave me determination — I used that, and hard work,” he said reflectively. “Tammie made me take a good look at myself. If I didn’t talk the right way to a customer, she would suggest a better approach. She is a good business person, balanced our check book when we didn’t know if we would make it through the next week. After four years, we were selling 80 RVs a year and decided it was time to look for a larger property,” he continued. Dandy found a one-room office on a lot with good street traffic.

“The owner asked me how much I could pay per month,” Dandy said. “I told him \$650, and he responded with ‘How does \$500 a month sound?’ He knew how much the property was worth and I didn’t. He could have taken advantage of me. But he didn’t and I learned a good life lesson from him: Never take advantage of a customer. I don’t want anyone to even *think* I am taking advantage of them. I would rather lose the sale.”

Dandy RV continued to grow in spite of the fact that the little office and lot had no bathroom or water supply. “I had to pump water out of the creek behind us to wash the trailers,” he laughed. “We were operating on the basics, but by the end of the fourth year we were selling 182 units annually.”

That milestone was the foundation for another move in 1984 to 7834 First Avenue North in Eastlake, a Birmingham suburb. “The new location provided 10,000 sq. ft. and we could only imagine what we would do with that much space,” he said. But the expansion allowed Jim Dandy to hire his first employee and begin developing a culture that would set the tone of his business for years to come.

“I don’t read fiction but I try to read at least one book a month that will give me fresh ideas to improve the business and better serve our customers,” he said. “Businesses are ideas taken to reality.”

Capitalizing on a name that people could remember, he named the company Dandy RV. “Most people don’t remember

my real last name, but they remember Jim Dandy,” he smiled, “and that’s okay.”

Over the next 21 years, the culture continued to grow. Dandy learned quickly that service was paramount in the RV business. “It doesn’t matter what brand, we service it and treat all our customers the same, whether or not they bought their RV from us. It is important never to talk down to an RV owner because you think you know more about his unit than he does. The question should be ‘How would you like us to do your service and repair?’” he explained. “The secret to having satisfied customers is to empower employees to make decisions. Our people do not have to come and ask me if they can take a particular course of action to best serve the customer. They know I will stand behind them,” he said.

Believing that he could duplicate his success in Eastlake, Cooley opened another dealership in Clanton, Alabama, 50 miles south of Birmingham on I-65. He continued to encourage and cultivate a helpful, service-minded attitude in each person that joined the company. As Dandy RV continued to grow, it became obvious that the size of the physical facilities in Eastlake and Clanton as well as their separation were destined to limit his dream.

“By 2003 we were selling 1,100 to 1,200 units annually. In 2004 I started looking for a marquee piece of property. My minimum site requirement was 25 acres but my preference was 50. It had to be on a major interstate interchange,” he said. “My theory was that a lot of key businesses nearby would draw customers to Dandy RV. I wanted a Cracker Barrel, Home Depot or Lowe’s, Target, upscale automobile dealerships, and leading hotel brands. I also wanted space for a Camping World store to complement our RV sales.” The search for the right property continued to widen and eventually led Dandy to Oxford, 50 miles east of Birmingham. Located at exit 188 on I-20, the property met all the specifications on his checklist.

Not one to move slowly to bring a key idea to reality, Jim and Tammie opened the \$8.1 million Dandy RV Superstore in March 2007. Having visited many RV dealerships over the years, Jim observed that very few had enough customer parking for cars, much less their rigs. He dedicated nearly four acres to parking. “We have 75 spaces for motorhomes and travel trailers and 115 spaces for cars,” he said.

Dandy RV is one of several dealerships to have an independent Camping World store. “They can sell parts and new equipment at prices lower than I can buy them wholesale,” Jim said. “We actually thrive off of each others customers. It has happened pretty often that someone will come to Camping World to buy a \$3 part, then visit our side of the facility to look at RVs, and wind up buying a \$150,000 motorhome,” he said. “We have 65 employees and Camping World has 40. They also have six service bays in our facility.”

Dandy places a strong emphasis on training. “Counting the six from Camping World, we have 20 certified technicians at this location,” he observed. “We do a lot of online training

using RVIA's programs, but we prefer manufacturers' courses to upgrade our skills. We budget \$6,000 a month for travel to do training. We also require our sales associates to visit the manufacturers' plants within their first year of employment, and then return at least every two years."

After the new KOA campground opens, Dandy RV plans to sponsor one or two rallies a month to offer customer training seminars. Dandy expects their convenient location between Birmingham and Atlanta to keep rallies sold out.

A clean sales lot and a nearly spotless RV inventory have become a hallmark. Dandy cannot resist picking up a piece of paper or a stray soft drink can, a habit that he learned at home and teaches today by example. "We all take ownership when it comes to keeping the place clean," he said.

The business philosophy that permeates Dandy RV is constant attention to detail and getting it right for the customer. As we walked through each department, Dandy introduced each employee and offered an interesting anecdote about that person's dedicated service to the company or a particular skill that made a difference.

After a first-rate tour, Jim Dandy invited us to wander about the beautiful facility while he took time to take care of business. We stopped first to talk with Jon Vardaman, Dandy's general sales manager, and Scott Shropshire, assistant sales manager. They manage a staff of 12 sales people, each of whom has an office adjacent to the showroom. Jon explained that the company is gradually increasing its Class A inventory. "Right now we have a floorplan for \$5 million in motorized and \$10 million total. As far as individual units go, that split is about 20 percent motorized and 80 percent towables," he explained. "We plan to move that ratio to 50-50 in the near future. Tiffin is our dominant product in motorized."


In a spacious reception area, service writers Deborah Vest

and Dan Cornelius greeted us warmly. Deborah began her career at Dandy RV several years ago at minimum wage in facilities maintenance. Her friendly manner and a desire to do a good job moved her quickly through several positions to her present job as service writer, a case in point of Dandy's policy to promote from within the company. Dan told us a similar story. "I began in PDI, went to parts and was promoted to parts manager. After that I went to sales, was promoted to detail & lot manager, and now to my present position as service writer."

Bill Wharton brings 30 years of experience to RV body work and painting. When a manufacturer could not supply a new front cap for a wrecked coach, Bill refabricated the damaged areas. After painting it, it looked brand new. Dandy RV is one of a few dealerships in the U.S. offering a 60-foot air-filtered paint booth. Progressive Insurance contracted with Dandy to handle its customers' repairs and painting.

Dandy RV has achieved its current level of success through Jim "Dandy" Cooley's development of a business culture built on customer friendly employees who are empowered to "do the right thing for each customer." Ty Hicks, who sells extended warranties for Interstate Star, visits Dandy RV every Thursday. "It is the highlight of my week to work with the customers and employees at Dandy RV," he said. "Every employee sincerely welcomes every person who comes in. There is a definite synergy here that customers feel."

Dandy returned from his errands to continue telling us about the company. "We came to Oxford for the long term. I could have retired at 50, but we were at a crossroads for our company. Sometimes circumstances push you down a road you should have been following anyway," he explained.

"I never dwelt on obstacles when I was growing up. I just focused on what I wanted to become. If you get the right mentors and work hard, you will succeed. Being associated with Bob Tiffin and other great dealers like Tom Stinnett has inspired me to a higher level," Dandy continued in a low voice. "My wife, my children, and my employees are the best things that ever happened to me." The Cooleys have three children: Jessica, 26, Andrew, 23, and Ashley Rose, 17. 

From left: Danny Inman (TMH mfg. rep.), Jim "Dandy" Cooley, April Thompson, Joe Bowman, Billy Jones, Eddie Claridy, Tommy Truss, Shelly Steinberg, Scotty Shropshire, Harold Ogle, Jon Vardaman, Kathie Wilson, Rita Hollis, and Tom Shuta.





Atlanta—As a Destination

by Fred Thompson

While living in nearby Athens, Georgia, from 1968 to 1998, we watched Atlanta transform itself from a southern regional city to an international metropolis worthy of attracting the 1996 Summer Olympic Games.

The city's rapid ascent to prominence may have been forecast by its success in establishing five major entertainment venues in just four years. In 1966 the city gained two national league sports franchises: the Atlanta Braves (baseball) and the Atlanta Falcons (football). The following year Six Flags Over Georgia opened along the Chattahoochee River on the west side of the city. The Atlanta Hawks brought major league basketball to Atlanta in 1968. Finally, after nearly 50 years since work began in 1923, the famed carving of Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and Stonewall Jackson was dedicated in May 1970.

Even by U.S. standards, Atlanta is a young city. Less than 180 years ago, the land that is now Atlanta belonged to the Cherokee and Creek Indians. The Creek Nation ceded its lands to the state of Georgia in 1825 and the Cherokees were forced to move to Oklahoma in 1835, which precipitated the infamous march on the Trail of Tears.

As land became available through lottery disbursements, the early settlers came south from the North Georgia mountains and west from Virginia and the Carolinas. The Georgia Piedmont might have developed as a yeoman society of small farmers and craftsmen except for a law that was passed in 1836 by the Georgia General Assembly. The law-making body voted to build a state railroad to provide a trade route from the coast

to the Midwest. Few, if any, of its members could have realized what an economy-changing project they had initiated.

Colonel Stephen Harriman Long, a talented army engineer, surveyed several possible routes and selected one that took the rail line through what is now Five Points in downtown Atlanta. The colonel drove a stake into the ground which became "Milepost Zero." The route had no natural barriers and Atlanta began to grow like a western boomtown.

After a north-south rail line intersected the east-west route, the little village that was springing up was called Terminus. Businesses began rising up in all directions and the city was renamed Marthasville in honor of Gov. Lumpkin's daughter. Prominent citizens decided the name of Marthasville was not appropriate for such a progressive town. The chief engineer of the Georgia Railroad, J. Edgar Thomson, suggested that the town be renamed "Atlantica-Pacifica." The name was quickly shortened to just "Atlanta" and the town was incorporated as "Atlanta" in December 1847.

Atlanta grew to 2,500 in population and in 1848 elected its first mayor. In 1854 another railroad connected Atlanta to LaGrange and by 1860 the population was 7,741. Its growth as a rail center was soon to lead to its demise. During the Civil War, Atlanta emerged as a key railroad supply hub. In 1864 the city of 10,000 had the full attention of the Union generals. After a four-month siege by Gen. William T. Sherman's troops, Confederate Gen. John B. Hood on Sept. 1 ordered all public buildings and depots destroyed as the southern army evacuated the city. On

Sept. 7, Gen. Sherman ordered the evacuation of all civilians. Perhaps in preparation for his infamous March to the Sea, the general on Sept. 11 ordered his troops to burn Atlanta to the ground. He spared only the city's churches and hospitals. The conflagration increased when retreating Confederate troops blew up 81 boxcars of explosives.

Atlanta's homeless returned to a smoldering rubble and began rebuilding the city. Five years after the holocaust, Atlantans had rebuilt the city and more than doubled its pre-war population. Rapid growth continued well into the 1890s. Industrialization during the remaining part of the nineteenth century was amazing. The International Cotton Exposition of 1881 promoted Atlanta as a textile center and induced textile corporations from New England to build mills in Georgia. Historians consider the Cotton States and International Exposition of 1895 the most important factor in Atlanta's emergence as the major city in the Southeast. By 1903 Atlanta became the headquarters for many national and regional corporations.

In the early twentieth century, investors, architects, landscape architects, builders, and banks began to change Atlanta's overall appearance. Joel Hurt built Atlanta's first skyscraper as well as Inman Park, the city's first planned residential suburb. Hurt invited Frederick Law Olmstead, the father of American landscape architecture, in for consultation as the city built parks and green areas.

Atlanta followed the Chicago School of Architecture in the development of its skyscrapers, which caused the railroad and insurance companies to regard office buildings as investments. The Great Depression developed an architectural style of its own: Art Deco-Modern.

After World War II, Atlanta surged forward again to become the largest distribution center in the Southeast, as the trucking industry and the Eisenhower Interstate System with "just-in-time" deliveries began to replace the railroads. Eastern, South-

ern, and Delta Airlines flourished and made Atlanta their hub city with the use of post-war planes like the DC-3 and the Martin 404, with the jet age only a few years away. It only took two decades for Atlanta's airport to burst at the seams, while architects designed what would soon become the nation's busiest air transportation center.

As Atlanta built its physical, educational, medical, and social infrastructures, corporations and businesses poured in to create one of the largest financial, manufacturing, service, and distribution centers in the nation.

Greater Atlanta surged forward again to provide a metropolitan population of nearly six million with opportunities for recreation, relaxation, educational stimulation, and physical renewal. Not only does the Atlanta area serve its own citizens with these opportunities, it invites the world to visit and enjoy its museums, aquarium, corporate expositions, parks, sports and music venues, zoo, and history centers.

From an almost endless selection, here is what we chose to visit during our five days in the city. First, we parked our Allegro Bay at Stone Mountain Park and spent two days enjoying its sights and events. We purchased a CityPass for \$69 at the aquarium in mid-town Atlanta. It is valid for nine days and discounts your entrance to six attractions (you choose six of eight offered). The attractions are the Georgia Aquarium, the World of Coca-Cola, Inside CNN, Zoo Atlanta, Fernbank Museum of Natural History OR the Atlanta Botanical Garden, and the High Museum of Art OR the Atlanta History Center.

On our third day, we headed to downtown Atlanta to see the fabulous Georgia Aquarium, the New World of Coca-Cola, and the CNN Center. On our fourth day, we added the Carter Museum and Library and then used our pass for Fernbank. On our last day, we visited Zoo Atlanta and the High Museum. If you are a Civil War buff, take in the Cyclorama located within 100 yards of the Zoo's entrance.

Stone Mountain Park

The park is billed as Georgia's #1 Attraction. The largest exposed piece of granite on earth, this ancient landmark rises 825 feet above the surrounding countryside. The "natural district" in the park offers four trails, with the five-mile Cherokee Trail tracing the circumference of the mountain.

To reach the park, take the Stone Mountain Parkway (U.S. 78) seven miles east from I-285, the loop around Atlanta. As you take the exit from the parkway, you will approach a gate entrance and pay an \$8 one-time park entrance fee. You will get a windshield card that will get you in/out as you come and go during your stay. After you pass the gate, make an immediate left and go 1.5 miles to the campground. The campground has two main camping areas for motorhomes: the old section and the new section. The Loop (sites 140-168) has full hook-ups, decks, and gas grills at \$48/night (\$58 on holidays). The older section (sites 278-348) offers mostly back-in sites at \$38/night

(\$48 on holidays) with a few that will handle 40s and 42s. Some of the lake sites in the older section go at the higher rate. To make reservations (which you will definitely need during the summer months), go to www.stonemountainpark.com/lodging-camping. The Loop has a very nice pool and a pavilion with WiFi and electrical outlets for your laptop.

This year is the 25th anniversary of the Laserlight Show which begins each evening at 9:30. From the park's museum on a knoll, a sloping lawn 80 yards wide extends 500 yards to the base of Stone Mountain. Rising over 300 feet above the lawn, the Confederate carving (1) measuring 90 feet high by 190 feet wide features Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and Stonewall Jackson riding east on their horses. The world's largest high relief carving becomes the screen for the 35-minute laser light show which features patriotic, cultural, and musical themes you will recognize (2). Visitors bring their blankets and lawn chairs and sometimes consume elaborate picnic suppers prior to the show. The event is free.



1



2



3



4

Other attractions at the park include the Duck Boats (\$8) which are restored World War II amphibians which were used for the military landings at D-Day in 1944 and later in the Pacific Theater. You leave the parking lot at the village on four wheels, take a short excursion on the loop road, and then race down a hill to splash into the lake with gusto. A quick gear switchover turns the amphib into a boat. Our driver, Capt. Harold (3), kept us entertained with his monologue and comedy. Several of the passengers got to drive the amphib while it was in boating mode.

The rest of the park's attractions are included in a two-day \$25 pass. The Swiss cable car (4) swishes you from the park level to the top of the mountain in about four minutes, a rise of 825 feet to an elevation of 1,683 feet, where it is usually very windy. Other venues you will want to visit include:

The Stone Mountain Museum. Learn the story behind the carving.

The Antebellum Plantation. Eighteen structures and outside features including the plantation house, two period homes, a barnyard, slave cabins, and formal gardens will provide a very authentic view of life in the Revolutionary and Antebellum periods of Georgia's history.

The Paddlewheel Riverboat. For a pleasant 20-minute ride, climb aboard the "Henry W. Grady" and rest your feet while you sip a cool drink.

Fishing and Boating. The park's lake is open for fishing. Check at the office for licenses and fees. Non-powered boats and canoes are welcome.

Golf. Golfers are challenged with two 18-hole championship courses. The Stonemont Course was designed by the legendary Robert Trent Jones, Sr. It is the only RTJ course in Georgia that is open to the public. The course is a classic, traditional, shot maker's course that places emphasis on accuracy. The Lakemont Course offers a little less demanding, target-oriented layout with breathtaking views of Stone Mountain. Summer sample rates: \$49 Mon-Thu; \$36 Mon-Thu twilight. Seniors, \$40 & \$30.

The Commons. Located in the clubhouse, attractive interior and patio seating offers views of the lake while you enjoy creative (even elegant) entrees, salads, and sandwiches.

The Georgia Aquarium

Billi and Bernie Marcus, one of the founding families of Home Depot, have provided a legacy gift to the residents of Georgia, as well as its visitors. The world's largest aquarium (5) provides an amazing diversity of the creatures of the seas and rivers of the world. Viewing positions from the plexiglass tube running through the aquarium are breathtaking. You will find yourself just inches away from the whale shark (6) or the friendly white belugas (7) who seem to be smiling as they perform their watery acrobatics. In smaller aquariums, exquisite creatures like the Pacific Sea Nettle (8) will mesmerize you. The food court has several very nice selections at moderate prices. *See overleaf.*

Allow at least a half day for your visit.

Opens daily at 8 a.m.; closing times vary.

Full day parking at the aquarium is \$10.



The World of Coca-Cola (9)

The world's oldest and largest manufacturer of liquid refreshment is presented in several contexts including its origins, innovative advertising, collections of Coca-Cola dispensing machines (10), containers, international markets, diversity of products, and bottling equipment. Coke around the world has been America's ambassador for over a century. No product in the world has enjoyed a greater market penetration than Atlanta's Coca-Cola. The last part of your visit is a tasting tour of Coke worldwide products. Drink up! Located two minutes across the lawn from the aquarium.

Allow two hours for your visit.

Daily: 8–6, during summer; other months, 9–5.

Inside CNN

A 10-minute walk from Coke, Inside CNN (11) will introduce you to the world of breaking news casts in a one-hour tour. From a glass-enclosed catwalk overlooking the news room, you can watch 30 to 100 employees who work in groups. News gatherers who work the electronic satellite sources from throughout the world assign stories to writers and copyeditors. Show producers pull the prepared material and insert it into the breaking mix of news.

CNN began on June 1, 1980, an innovative approach to continuous news broadcasting started by the irascible Ted Turner. The first broadcasts initially had 1.7 million viewers. Today 90 million U.S. viewers watch CNN's daily offering, and 220 million tune in worldwide. There are 39 CNN news bureaus throughout the world. Turner sold CNN to Time-Warner in 1996, making himself a billionaire.

Headline News began in 1982 on a different channel to present continuous 30-minute segments of summarized news that are updated throughout the day. Raw information is sent down from the main news room and rewritten in a more brief format.

CNN International distinguished itself in the world of broadcast journalism during the 1991 Gulf War when it offered continuous live coverage of the bombings. This division focuses on news for the world market, competing against the BBC.

No photography is allowed during the tour.

Daily: 9–5. Allow one hour.

The Carter Museum and Library

While the Carter Museum (12) is not a state-of-the-art museum compared to the Clinton Library in Little Rock, it does present a balanced view of the issues and problems faced by President Carter, his cabinet, and staff.

A primary exhibit addresses the influence that each president had on those who followed him. The presidents who served after Washington until 1828 followed Washington's pattern of governing. Jackson vigorously exercised his veto power, thus causing subsequent presidents to do likewise. Lincoln defended the right of a U.S. president to declare war. FDR led Congress as it had never been led before with the exercise of executive power far beyond any previous president. The public came to identify

the president as the government itself. Roosevelt defined the U.S.'s responsibility to carry democratic principles to people throughout the world.

The Museum deals fairly with presenting the pros and cons of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the SALT Agreement as well as the controversy that surrounded the new Panama Canal Treaty. The Camp David Accords tells the story in live video of Carter's dilemmas in keeping Begin and Sadat at the peace table. The trauma and pain that the hostage crisis in Iran brought to his presidency is clearly shown in photographs and video accounts. In 1979 the Carter administration was successful in strengthening ties with China and severing the U.S.'s close relationship with Taiwan that stemmed from the end of World War II.

The Library is open only to registered scholars involved in research. The Carter Center hosts training seminars for college students who aspire to serve in government as well as international meetings and programs. The beautiful grounds and

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gardens are open to the public until 9 p.m. during the summer.
Adults, \$8; seniors (60+), \$6; parking free.
Hours: Mon-Sat, 9-4:45; Sun, noon-4:45.
Allow at least two hours.

Fernbank Museum of Natural History

As you enter the Fernbank's three-story atrium, the skeletal forms of two great dinosaurs (13) dominate the area. Side venues explore the development of life on Earth through present-day landscapes. Special features include the animals of Georgia and the development of the Appalachian mountains in northeast Georgia. Soil development is explained with regard to igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rock.

A current photographic exhibit by Jeanne Moutoussamy Ashe addresses the effects of tourism and real estate development on the Gullah people on Daufaskie Island, the last of Georgia's Sea Islands to be touched by modern society (14).

The IMAX theater offers films that change frequently.

The museum has a very nice café offering light lunch fare.

Hours: Mon-Sat, 10-5; Sun, noon-5.

Parking free.



Zoo Atlanta

Atlanta's Zoo has distinguished itself with its Giant Pandas and the Gorilla Habitat. We decided to visit it because it was on the CityPass. While the pandas and gorillas are fascinating, the Atlanta Zoo still has a long way to go to compete with zoos in cities of similar size. If you are traveling with children or grandchildren, by all means put the Atlanta Zoo on your itinerary.

Hours: 9:30-5:30 daily except Thanksgiving and Christmas.



The High Museum of Art

Following a multi-year agreement with the Louvre, the High Museum (15) will bring a continuous flow of world class exhibitions to Atlanta. Currently, *The Louvre and the Ancient World*, which will run through September 7, 2008, features masterpieces from the founding cultures of Western civilization and includes more than 70 works from the Louvre's unparalleled Egyptian, Near Eastern and Greco-Roman antiquities collections. The most impressive sculpture in the exhibition is "The Tiber," (16) ca. 75-125 A.D., which was discovered in 1512 during excavations for a house.

While the High's exhibitions are world class, certainly part of its phenomenal story is its architecture. Opening in 1983 to worldwide acclaim, architect Richard Meier's design featuring 133,000 square feet of light-filled galleries was named in 1991 by the American Institute of Architects as one of the "ten best works of American architecture of the 1980s." Following unprecedented growth during the 1990s, the High Museum retained the services of Italian architect Renzo Piano to create three new buildings which more than doubled its floorspace to 312,000 square feet. The architect's design facilitates natural light while carefully placed baffles prevent the light from causing deterioration of



Atlanta Restaurants You Will Enjoy

Six Feet Under, 415 Memorial Dr., SE, Atlanta (404) 523-6664

Six Feet Under, an urban, authentic fish house across the street from Oakland Cemetery, serves Southern-style fish and chips with appetizers ranging from baked oyster dishes to corn meal-breaded fried green tomatoes to chewy alligator bites. Popular entrees include any of the fried fish baskets (oysters, shrimp, catfish, etc.) grilled fish tacos or the traditional fish and chips. And, their burgers are quite tasty, too!

Belly General Store, 772 N. Highland Ave., Atlanta (404) 872-1003

Want a warm, just-out-of-the-oven olive oil bagel, a delicious chicken salad sandwich or a tasty, homemade cupcake? Try Belly General Store in Virginia Highlands to fill your belly with these and a number of other scrumptious tastes. Located in the historic building once home to Fleeman's Pharmacy at the corner of St. Charles and N. Highland Aves.,

Belly is a trendy but casual neighborhood joint that offers anything from scrambled egg, cheddar, house mole and avocado-stuffed tortillas, to the aforementioned homemade olive oil bagels with a fresh schmear, or a bowl of country ham and grits for breakfast. For lunch you can choose a salmon salad sandwich with roasted red peppers, Spanish capers, olive oil and tarragon, a Belly-made mozzarella, basil and tomato panini, or just about anything in between.

Table 1280, Woodruff Arts Center, 1280 Peachtree St., Atlanta (404) 897-1280. After you whet your cultural appetite at the High Museum or a Production at the Alliance Theatre, head next door to the Woodruff Arts Center's Table 1280, an American Brasserie and tapas lounge. Diners can snack on House Smoked Salmon and a Spanish tortilla in the lounge, or they can sit in the elegant restaurant and savor a simply grilled 12 oz. beef tenderloin. Don't forget to try the warm

chocolate brioche or the sugar donuts with dipping sauces for dessert!


Mary Mac's Tea Room, 224 Ponce de Leon, Atlanta (404) 876-1800

Enjoy a meat and three (or four or five) at historic Mary Mac's Tea Room in Midtown Atlanta. Mary Mac's has been a staple of Southern cuisine in Atlanta and around the country for more than 60 years. With favorites such as homemade fried chicken, fried green tomatoes and black-eyed peas, or lesser-known delicacies like pot likker (ask your server what it is), liver and onions and hoppin' john (again, let your server explain), you're sure to enjoy every single bite. Mary Mac's isn't just about the food, either. The wait staff is just as entertaining. You'll meet servers who have worked there for 50 years and can tell you stories about Dr. and Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr., Jimmy Carter and the Clintons stopping in for a tasty bite.

—Restaurant reviews by Kelly Thompson

exhibits. Galleries in the center of the museum use roof-mounted light scoops to bring in non-harmful northern light.

With its current ability to display more of its growing collection, increase exhibitions, and offer new visitor amenities, the museum is addressing the needs of larger and more diverse audiences.

Special tours are offered daily which focus on such topics as "The History of Painting," and use the museum's collections to illustrate the progression of artists' technique, style, and subjects. 

There's more to do if you have the time . . .

Whip out your laptop and visit www.atlanta.net for "50 Fun Things To Do In Atlanta." The new Turner Field is the home of the Atlanta Braves. Tickets are readily available and it's a great way to spend the afternoon with your family.

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Getting High at 65

Always Looking for a New Challenge,
Doc Decided to Test His Mettle on the Chilkoot Trail

A few days after Dwight Hutcheson graduated from high school on May 20, 1960, he joined the U.S. Army and in short order made two life-changing decisions that would impact his career path for the next 40 years. First, he managed to get into the jump school at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Then he volunteered for Special Forces. The latter assignment took him to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he volunteered again to become a Special Forces medic. In short, Hutcheson pushed himself to the limit and thrived on challenges.

The first stop in his medical career was at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, for medic training. After completing that training and an 18-month assignment in Panama, Hutcheson was ready for the action he would soon see in the Vietnam War. He was assigned as an infantry company medic to the 173rd Airborne Brigade. "We were in combat constantly. Obviously, that's where I was needed. I liked what I was doing and extended my tour three times," Doc said.

By this time, he had acquired the nickname that has stuck: Doc. "I knew I didn't want to be called 'Hutch,'" he reminisced, "and I'll have to admit that I kinda liked the nickname 'Doc.'"

After a four-year stint operating a dragline in Florida, Doc's career came full circle in 1977 when he joined the Dade County Fire Department. Many of his colleagues were EMTs, but Doc's Special Forces training as a medic moved him to seek a higher service level. EMTs deliver basic life support. Paramedics are taught advanced life support skills, including IVs, drug therapy, intubation, defibrillation, etc. After three years with the fire department, and after completing the paramedic course at Miami-Dade Community College and passing the state exam, Hutcheson was assigned to the fire and rescue division at the Miami International Airport.

After meeting several

colleagues in the fire department who were in the Florida National Guard, Hutcheson decided that would be a good move for him. After three years in the National Guard, he transferred to the Army Reserves to a helicopter med-evac company as their NCOIC (non-commissioned officer in charge). Five years later he transferred to the Army Reserve school where he taught the Army medic's course.

During his career with the fire department and knowing that Miami-Dade Community College taught EMTs and paramedics, Hutcheson decided to apply for a position as an instructor. Enter Carole Adams. As a registered nurse and a paramedic, Carole served on the part-time faculty teaching the emergency medical courses. She then moved into coordinating MDCC's program and scheduling teachers for the courses. Doc's resume got him a position on the teaching faculty. Soon after, they began seeing each other socially, which led to their marriage in 1987.

They soon began planning for their retirement. Carole had been an RVer most of her adult life and owned a Class C. She didn't get much resistance from Doc when she introduced him to yet another lifestyle. Of course, with his experience on draglines, helicopters, and fire trucks, big RV rigs didn't intimidate him for a minute.

Over the next several years, they owned three RVs and logged well over 100,000 miles. Carole remembered that "the first Class A we had, a gas model, every trip we made, we went to a garage."

New challenges, new experiences, new satisfactions. A career that was finding new facets. Since he had joined the Miami-Dade Fire Department, thirteen years had slipped by quickly and the country was now facing a crisis again in the Middle East: 1990 – Desert Storm. The Army Reserve moved Doc back

Continued on page 58



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into his old company where he was again the NCOIC. Doc's unit was called up and they went to the Middle East for six months.

Doc retired from the Army Reserves with 26 years service in 1995. In 1999 the Hutchesons purchased their first diesel pusher. They logged over 100,000 miles in five years, including two trips to Alaska. Doc retired from the fire department in 2001 with 24 years service. After hearing about Tiffin Motorhomes from RVers all over America, they did their homework and bought a 2005 Phaeton 35 DH. "We made our third trip to Alaska in it and at this time have over 50,000 miles on it," Doc said.

"I had read about the Chilkoot Trail in relation to the 1989 Klondike Gold Rush in the Yukon on our two earlier trips," Hutcheson related, "and really wanted to see if I could do the hike myself."

In 1898, would-be miners came to the Yukon via the port of Skagway, Alaska Territory. The trail begins at tidewater and passes through the Pacific Northwest coastal forest in Alaska. It climbs above the treeline into the alpine tundra and reaches an elevation of 3,535 feet at the Chilkoot pass. The 33-mile trail ends at Bennett Lake in British Columbia, which eventually feeds into the Yukon River. On every imaginable craft that would float, the miners used the Yukon River to reach Dawson in the Yukon Territory and go another 500 miles up river to the gold fields.

The miners were required by the Canadian government to carry in 2000 pounds of supplies in order to survive. They did it by backpacking 50 or more pounds at a time over the Chilkoot Trail, stockpiling it, and then returning for more until the requirement was met.

Doc arranged to hike the trail with his friend, Doug Calkin of Anchorage, who had hiked the Chilkoot before. They were joined by fellow retired firefighter Gary Rankin and Jacqueline Decesare, who raises sled dogs near Anchorage. In preparation for the trip, Hutcheson walked every day at their home in Punta Gorda, Florida. A 40-pound backpack helped to make the simulation more realistic.

The four hikers left Skagway on June 25, 2007. Excerpts of Doc's diary follow.

June 25 – Left Dyea (pronounced *die-ee*) walking back in time. My pack is the same model I carried in Vietnam for three years. My boots were issued by the Florida National Guard in 1978. I wore them during Desert Storm. My pants were issued by the Dade County Fire Department in 1995. I am carrying my old jungle fatigue shirt that I brought home from Vietnam almost 40 years ago. It also went to Desert Storm. My friend, Mike Ortiz, a volunteer firefighter in Spring Ridge, Florida, made my walking stick especially for me. After a mile . . . we began an uphill climb that lasted forever . . . very dense forest. Had to watch rocks and roots to prevent turning ankles. Covered a difficult 4.8 miles . . . but my legs said it must have been at least 10. Pita bread sandwiches with peanut butter and honey for lunch. Continued upward trek until we reached Canyon City Camp at 2:30 p.m. Covered 7.5 miles. Set up tents. Dinner was freeze-dried beef teriyaki and rice. Met Canadian couple hiking trail with her 76-year-old father. The trip was his 75th birthday present. We filtered water for tomorrow and turned in at 7:30 p.m., stiff and sore.

June 26 – Up at 4 a.m. Gary had to turn back with painful blisters. Breakfast of oatmeal with raisins and hot chocolate. Today's trek will be more of the same onward, upward, over very rugged terrain. Spectacular scenery, snow-capped mountains and waterfalls. Absolutely no vehicles. If you turn an ankle, it's a \$2,000 rescue helicopter ride out. Arrive Sheep Camp at 9:45 a.m. By now we covered 12.7 miles of the 33-mile trail. Very rugged, very tiring. You cannot imagine how difficult the trail is. You have to do it to believe it.

The camps where we stop are the sites of the original camps set up during the gold rush. You need to start your climb up the "Golden Stairs" early in the morning. All campsites have areas to set up tents, outhouses, and large tents or cabins for warming or cooking. Everyone must cook in or around these facilities. No cooking is allowed at individual campsites. Ranger arrived at 7 p.m. to give report on trail condition. Still 60 percent covered with snow including the area of the "Golden Stairs." Tonight's dinner: freeze-dried





lasagna. When you're hungry, it all tastes good. Lots of mosquitoes. **June 27** – Up at 4 a.m. It was Doug's oatmeal or no meal. Left camp at 5:45 a.m. At 10:15 a.m., we reached the location at the bottom of the "Golden Stairs" known as "The Scales," where the miners confirmed the weight they were packing over the pass.

The first third of the "Golden Stairs" was covered with snow as is seen in the classic picture. The next third was huge boulders, irregular in shape and difficult to walk on. I moved on hands and toes from boulder to boulder. We reached the summit of Chilkoot Pass at 11:15 a.m. Bear activity reported. We will have to join up with other groups of at least four or more.

Filtered water and took an hour lunch break, then started down the Canadian side. Traveled from snow pack to rock pile, crossed many shallow streams. Arrived at Happy Camp at 3:15 p.m. It took us 10 hours to go 8 miles. This camp had new platforms. This would be a very comfortable camp. Lasagna for dinner again.

We will join up tomorrow with the three Canadians and a young couple from Switzerland. Sure hope my boots dry out by morning.

July 28 – Up at 4 a.m. Drizzling rain. Catnapped until 5:30 and got up – no more rain. Joined up with the three Canadians. The 76-year-old cross-country skis and wins several cross-country contests every year. Arrive at Lake Lindeman at 11:30 a.m. Information tent set up with photos and information from the Gold Rush Days. After lunch, we all left for Bare Loon Lake, our next campsite, and arrived at 4 p.m., just as it started to sprinkle. We have completed 29 miles! Only 4 more to go. We got the tents up, filtered water, and made dinner: sweet and sour pork with rice. Mosquitoes at Bare Loon Lake were horrendous. I crawled into my sleeping bag at 8 p.m.

July 29 – Awoke at 4:30 a.m. and catnapped until 6. Today will be the LAST day! We have only four miles to Lake Bennett and a hot lunch. Arrive at Lake Bennett at 11:15 a.m. Many artifacts and lots of beautiful scenery along the way.

After lunch we caught the train back to Skagway. Arrived at 4:30 p.m. I took a long, hot shower, scraped five days of growth off my face and went out for a *real* hot meal.

"The temperatures for our third trip to Alaska were great," Doc said. "We had 60s in the daytime and 40s to 50s at night. The scenery is just incredible, almost from the time you cross the Canadian border. The animals are apparently acclimated to the traffic along the Alaska Highway, which gives you some amazing wildlife shots."

"I did this hike shortly after my 65th birthday—why not name the story 'Getting High at 65,'" Doc smiled.

With their EMT and paramedic training, the Hutchesons often volunteer as emergency medical staff at FMCA and other rallies. In addition to their medical bag, they also carry an AED (automatic external defibrillator) on board. "Saving a life is something that we will always try to be ready for, no matter where we travel," Carole said.

The Hutchesons enjoy traveling with Pete, a Belgian Sheepdog, who has been in every state except Hawaii. He is 13 years old and has been to Alaska three times. Cassie, a Belgian Malinois, several years younger, loves to travel, too. They are a foursome. (Pete made his last trip and was laid to rest in March.) RIS

Opposite page, top to bottom:

(1) One of the many artifacts along the trail, this wood cookstove was abandoned near the Canyon City townsite. (2) Doc crosses one of the two suspension bridges on the trail. (3) We begin our ascent of the "Golden Stairs." The trail is marked with red poles. (4) Doug Calkin, our Alaskan friend and guide, stands on the granite boulders that form the middle third of the trail going over the Pass.

This page, top to bottom:

(5) Doc arrives at the top of the Pass, elevation 3,525 feet, where Alaska meets British Columbia. A Canadian warden (equivalent to a U.S. park ranger) checks passports before allowing hikers to proceed. (6) Due to several bear sightings, a warden directed us to team up with a Swiss couple and a Canadian couple traveling with her 76-year-old father for the last two days of the five day hike. (7) Platforms for tents are available on the Canadian portion of the trail. This one is at Bare Loon Lake, the last campsite before Lake Bennett where the 33-mile trail terminates. (8) The view across Bare Loon Lake from our campsite was spectacular.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Continued from page 5

happening, they will reduce the price of crude both to compete with and to discourage the U.S. companies in continuing with drilling and exploration. By lowering their price, the return on investment would not be as attractive. This may be the third factor that will reduce the price of our highway fuels.

Incidentally, another striking contrast between now and the crises of 1973 and 1980 is the interest rate. In 1980 the rate soared to 22+ percent. In addition to the lack of availability of fuel, interest rates contributed to depressed sales. As you know, interest rates now are very reasonable for qualified buyers. That's

good for business, period.

In an April article in the *Wall Street Journal*, Greg Meyer wrote, "The speed of the ascent [price per barrel] has caught many market participants off guard and forced banks and brokerages repeatedly to revise upward their oil-price outlook. Yet some analysts continue to warn that oil prices are teetering close to a steep fall — at least back to \$80 a barrel."

"I personally think this is the mother of all bubbles," said Michael Lynch, president of Strategic Energy & Economic Research, a consulting company in Amherst, Massachusetts. Lynch expects prices to pull back to \$80 a barrel by late June, and in the long run step down to \$50 as the pent-up supply in Iraq, Nigeria, Venezuela

and other under-producing exporters starts to flow.

The International Energy Agency, the Paris-based energy watchdog of the world's richest nations, sees supply from outside OPEC growing by 815,000 barrels a day, the strongest growth since 2004, indicating the world is amply supplied.

No matter what happens to the price of crude, there will always be a certain number of people who love the motor-homing lifestyle and who will want to continue to enjoy this great country in which we live by roughing it smoothly. For all of you, Tiffin Motorhomes by the grace of the good Lord will be here for you, to provide you with the quality motor-homes and service you deserve. **RIS**

DAN BLANKE: RETIRED?

Continued from page 34

now, service at that level must be substantially improved. Owners should *demand* better service. You would not hesitate to demand first rate service if you bought a Porsche and discovered something did not work. Many of our dealers are spending substantially on service tech education, improved service facilities, and the number of service functions they can provide," Blanke observed. "But we need to have all of our dealers on board. If we don't change the way we service at the dealer level, our public—the boomers—will find other ways to spend their recreational money."

In further assessing the RV industry, Blanke is concerned that the campground owners are not keeping pace with the quality of motorhomes. "At the basic level, they need to test and improve the quality of their hookups: evenly sourced 50-amp power supply, good clean water, and sanitary sewer connections," he said. "We need more attractive, well-landscaped facilities with a broad array of activities. There are many campgrounds that need to become destinations and not just overnight spots." He is optimistic that the campground owners who step up to the plate will establish successful and thriving operations.

Blanke sees more and more coach owners becoming full-timers in the near future.

"Our coaches with so many residential and convenience amenities are reasonably priced to draw RVers into that lifestyle," he noted.

Retirement? Yes, he and Lynn are serious about it. Starting in mid-May, they resolved to stay at home for 30 days in Shell Knob, Missouri, where they built a new home last year. Located in the southwestern corner of the state near Table Rock Lake, golfing and fishing are high on their lists for relaxation. "I am really enjoying the time I can spend fishing with Mason, 19, who is our oldest grandchild," he said.

Although they still plan to attend their last Tiffin Annual Dealers Meeting in July, Dan and Lynn have scheduled a two-week cruise to Alaska in September followed by two weeks in the Napa Valley. In February they plan a visit to Padre Island in south Texas.

Dan has been a Shriner for 30 years and will continue to expand his service because of the organization's total focus on children. "Every penny we raise goes to 23 Shriners Crippled Children's Hospitals," he said. "All services to children in our hospitals are completely free and funded by our members. There is absolutely no cost to the families. Over the last 24 years, our Shell Knob Shriners have raised a half million dollars from our annual bass fishing tournament."

Dan Blanke has influenced a lot of

lives during his career. In closing our interview, I asked who had the greatest influence on his career. In his words:

Bob Tiffin. "If you try to emulate his high standards when you deal with your customers, employees, and family, you will be a success." *Tom Bordgioni*, past owner of Mountain Family RV. "He set the highest standards for how you conduct a business. He also became one of my best friends." *H. V. "Boog" Blanke*, my father. "Early in my life he taught me there are no degrees of honesty. If you are completely honest with everyone, you'll never have to look back." *Jim Kimbrell*, president and CEO of LaMesa. "He has more insight and vision into the retail RV industry than anyone I have ever met. Jim's key thought about marketing is 'The market will tell you whether your product is right.'"

"Some parting thoughts for our readers and Tiffin employees:

"The greatest satisfactions are the friendships I have made through the years. Don't ever undervalue maintaining strong friendships."

"You have got to have fortitude to stay in this business."

"The Tiffin family (and I mean the whole company) has really been good to me and my family. Bob treats everyone with the same care and concern that he treats his own family." **RIS**



FROM THE ROAD

The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners



A Dozen Eggs

We love wildlife and were very amused when a hen decided to adopt our little California Car as its nest while we were waiting for service at the Allegro Campground. She disappeared after visiting with us for several days and laying a dozen eggs. We put a tarp over the car and she got under it and kept right on laying. Then she brought her buddy, the rooster, back with her. I took her to the catwalk on the other side of the service center. Wade Humphres found her inside the service center and brought her back to me. There seemed to be no way to stop our friend's attachment to our little car, so I put a box filled with shredded paper in the car. She left us with two eggs in one day and we never saw her again. Saga ended!

Fred & Betty Drake, Frankford, Delaware

Postscript on the Drakes:

For over 40 years, the Drakes have operated a salvage yard, mechanics shop, and body shop for cars, trucks, and late models. They retired in 2000, turned the business over to their son, Fred, Jr., and bought a 1998 Allegro Bus. In March 2007, Fred and Betty bought a 2007 Zephyr and spent three months out west touring South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas.

Fred loves new adventures. He and Betty bought a Piper Archer II and Fred earned an IFR license. The plane was a "toy" and they enjoyed a lot of fun trips in it. "We kept the plane in Wilmington. We would fly over to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to a restaurant that had very good soup. Then we would fly into BWI to have pie and coffee. Our son went to Embry-Riddle in Florida, so we would fly down to see him pretty often, too," he said.

They are thoroughly enjoying traveling in the Zephyr. Fred already has his eye on the 2009 Zephyr with the rear bath. After service was completed in Red Bay, they were planning a trip to Oregon in the Zephyr, and then flying on to Alaska for two weeks.

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!

Her New Phaeton Is Great

Thank you for your article on the 42-ft. Phaeton QRH in the January 2007 issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*.

As soon as I opened the magazine and saw the pictures, I knew this was the coach we had been looking for. Reading your article confirmed it. We called the dealer and bought the coach the next day.

Your article was very informative. Mike was a little leary of the 350-hp Cummins engine. He thought it would be under-powered, but again you were right on when you said, "It does the job."

We are very satisfied with the coach. It is everything you said it was. Tiffin's warranty service in Red Bay is exceptional and the people are very friendly.

Karen Schwilke, East Wenatchee, Washington

Her Allegro Had No Damage

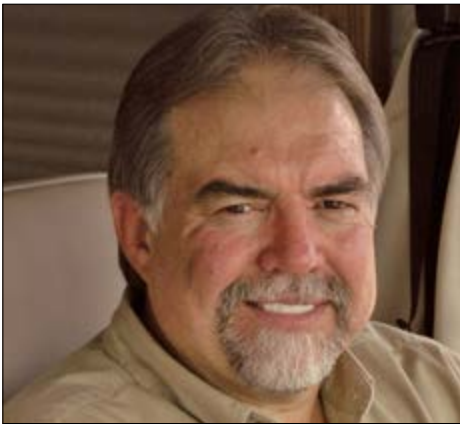
I am writing for my friend, Lenora Abston, who is a full-timer in her 1997 31-ft. Allegro. I am also a full-timer in my 1971 Travco. We sometimes caravan together. I read one of her copies of *Roughing It Smoothly* and decided to tell you about our recent "experience." One evening in the panhandle of Florida, we began looking for an RV park for the night. We missed the turn-off for the park and went to the next intersection to make a U-turn to go back. As Lenora made her U-turn, the wet soggy bank caught her wheels and pulled her farther into the ditch. I thought she would turn over. She was able to climb out the driver's door. The police arrived with a wrecker and it was debated how to get her rig out without turning it over. One of the two wrecker men got into her coach and guided the wheels while the wrecker pulled it out.

What amazed both of us was that everything in and about the motorhome was intact and never had to have anything done to make it roadworthy again. I thought you would like to know about this experience and how proud and satisfied Lenora is with your company and its products!

Lee Snow (91 years young), Omaha, Texas

P.S. I'm about ready to call it quits after full-timing for 42 years.





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 . . .

I have a 2004 31-ft Allegro on a Workhorse chassis. When I first used the windshield wipers, they worked fine, including the intermittent speed settings. The windshield washer did not work. Later the intermittent wiper speed settings became inoperative. Fuses and wiring connections seem to be okay. By this time, it was the end of the camping season, so I stored the motorhome with plans to get it checked out in the spring.

Before traveling again the next spring, I tried the wipers and intermittent settings and every-

thing worked fine. In the fall, I had another occasion to use the wipers and they worked fine until I attempted to use the windshield washer. It still did not work and subsequently the intermittent wiper settings stopped working.

Another member of our Allegro Club chapter experienced the same problem on his 2005 Allegro that was corrected under warranty. My warranty has expired, but I am wondering if someone in the Tiffin service center is familiar with this type of failure pattern. If so, I am fairly mechanically inclined and would appreciate getting some coaching to make the repair myself. Thank you in advance for any assistance you may be able to provide.

Tom Watrous
Linden, Michigan

Dear Tom,
It could be a number of things from loose connections to a bad relay. One of the most common problems is a loose or corroded ground at the wiper motor. Check to make sure the ground is clean and seated good against the screw and eyelet.

In June 2006 we purchased a 1999 Allegro Bus with 12,000 miles on it. On our way to Alaska, we had a tire blowout in Minnesota. While changing the tire, the mechanic showed us we had an axle leak. We drove to a garage where they repaired the axle seal. They told us if it had not been repaired recently, then it had been pinched at the factory. Fortunately, we caught it before more damage occurred. The previous owner assured us it had not been worked on during the warranty period. The bill was \$722 plus a new tire. Does this happen often?

Karl Swords
Montrose, Michigan

Dear Karl,
This is not a common occurrence, but seals do occasionally go bad even on new units. The warranty from the chassis manufacturer would have covered your problem for three years or 60,000 miles, whichever came first.

I have a 1995 Allegro Bay with one slide. My dealer said the 50-amp cord was 110v, not 220v. A friend of mine who is an electrician said it is 220v, and that most, if not all 50-amp boxes are 220v. Who is right?

Ron Dickelman
Shawano, Wisconsin

Dear Ron,
They are both right. The 50-amp service has two 110v power leads. The two 110v pins are separated

by a neutral pin which prevents the power from becoming 220v. The ground is the round pin in the 50-amp connector head. When you connect your power cord to a 50-amp service, be sure that the receptacle has two hot leads, a neutral, and a ground. As a precaution, always turn the breaker box to the OFF position when you connect and disconnect.

I have a 2003 38GH Phaeton. My issue deals with the city water hook up assembly. When I connect my water hose to the assembly and turn the water on at a campground, I hear a “moaning sound” at the water hook up assembly after I turn on a faucet inside the motorhome. I cleaned the small screen filter at the city water hook up assembly, but that did not solve the problem. Any suggestions to eliminate this nuisance sound?

Dale W. Sitek
Hartland, Wisconsin

Dear Dale,
The input connection at the water panel has a check valve that prevents backflow when you are not hooked up to city water and are using your water pump. When you are hooked up to city water, the spring in the check valve which prevents backflow is making the noise. When the spring corrodes or is not in its original position, it creates noise when water passes through it. It is about a five minute job to remove and replace it.

I recently purchased a 2008 Allegro Bus with the Powerglide Chassis. I notice that it only has a 55° wheel cut while other manufacturers are going with a 60° cut. I would like to know why TMH went with only 55° on their new chassis. Is there a technical reason or was it cost?

John Heim
Venice, Florida

Dear John,
The 60° wheel cut is offered only on the Freightliner chassis with independent suspension. Unfortunately, we were not able to purchase that suspension from the manufacturer.

We purchased a 2004 Allegro 35DA new and my problem is aesthetic. There is a wallpaper border in the bathroom and along the walls behind the galley and sofa, and it enhances the décor of the motorhome. However, not many months after we purchased the Allegro, we noticed the border was coming loose and beginning to curl. It now looks shabby. I have tried to reattach it, but it continues to curl and separate from the wall. We

are very proud of our motorhome and want it to continue to look like new. Can you please advise us as to the best way to remedy this situation?

Alice B. Talley
Folsom, Louisiana

Dear Alice,
Most wallpaper-paint shops sell “Seam Glue” which is intended to hold down abutting edges of wallpaper where they have turned up. The tube has a pointed dispenser head similar to the shape of a sharpened wood pencil that allows you to put a tiny bead of glue just where you want it. You can also use this product to hold down the edges of your borders. You can get surgical tape at your drugstore that is designed for use on fragile skin. Use this tape to hold down the border while it is drying.

Your “Tech Talk” column is the best part of a superbly produced magazine! Thanks. I own a very-seldom-used 1983 Allegro with under 50,000 miles which drives great. Here’s my problem: I have two 12v batteries in tandem (plus two engine batteries). I keep the house batteries charged both by exercising the generator a little, but mainly by occasionally connecting the motorhome to a 115v line. How many days a month do I need to “plug in” to maintain the two house batteries charge for optimum longevity, yet minimize the “frying” of the batteries’ cells and loss of water?

Paul Fausnight
Miami Beach, Florida

Dear Paul,
Once a month plug it in for 24 hours. That should maintain the charge in the battery and not over-charge it. It is also recommended that you start your generator once a month and let it run for 30 minutes under a load, such as your air conditioner. You should also start your engine once a month and run it for 15 to 20 minutes. This will also charge your house and engine batteries.

In the Spring 2008 issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*, you mentioned an orientation DVD. Is there one available for the 2007 42 QRP Allegro Bus?

Our fuel gauge rarely goes to the “Full” position, even though the tank seems to be full. I have tried running the diesel pump very, very slow. Fuel backs up and runs out of the fill tube. When I check the gauge, it still does not show full.

Dick Bathurst
Palm Desert, California

Dear Dick,
The DVD orientation program began with the 2008 models. The 2008 version would not be

entirely correct for a 2007 or older coach. The fuel gauge problem is most likely in the fuel level sending unit in the fuel tank. Repairing it is rather complicated and requires draining the tank completely, dropping the tank, and then removing the sending unit for testing. If you can live with the inconvenience, we recommend that you not attempt a repair.

We are currently owners of a 2005 Allegro Bus. Our first Tiffin was a 1985 Allegro. One thing we would like to see changed is a slide-out under the batteries. My husband has back problems which makes checking the batteries very difficult for him. We have had to install one in each of our Tiffin motorhomes. Other companies have already done this. Your turn now!

Gerrell Tompkins
San Diego, California

Dear Gerrell,
We are pleased to report that the batteries will be on a slide tray on the 2009 Phaeton and Bus brands.

We have a 1999 Allegro Bay. The TVs are Panasonic. In February 2009, the TVs are to be converted. We do not have satellite. We use the antenna and cable whenever it is available. Will we have to do something to the TVs? If so, what?

Marion Spoulos
Lake Havasu, Arizona

Dear Marion,
To pick up the signal from your antenna, you will have to purchase a converter box just as you would if it were in your home. Your cable service will not be affected. TMH will have converter boxes available by mid-summer.

We currently have a 2006 34 XB Allegro Bay with the Workhorse chassis. We are very satisfied with its performance. Does Tiffin have any plans to introduce a rear engine motorhome using the Workhorse chassis?

Tom Fonner
Saint Augustine, Florida

Dear Tom,
At this time we have decided not to use the Workhorse UFO chassis. We have not ruled it out completely, but have no plans to build on it in the near future.

I love our Allegro 28 DA. However, I travel with a man who *hates* the V-10 engine with a passion. It

is so bad I insist he only complain on even days. And he no longer wants to drive anywhere there might be an incline.

So please consider a FRED for a motorhome shorter than 32 feet. Pickup trucks have them. Why can’t you put a diesel engine on a 28-footer? I want to get on the road and start “roughing it smoothly” again.

Barbara Kendall
Concord, California

Dear Barbara,
At this time Freightliner has not offered a chassis short enough for us to build anything under a 32-foot Allegro motorhome. We think this situation may change in the future.

My wife and I have a 2006 Bay 38 TDB which we really enjoy. Your 2008 brochures no longer list this floorplan. Do you plan to bring it back for 2009 or 2010? The only thing we do not like is the small shower. Two inches on either side are wasted. At the existing size, every inch counts.

I also have a problem with your newer models that have the fresh water connection in the same compartment with the sewer connections. I would rather see these hookups in separate compartments even if we have to sacrifice storage space.

Jere Key
Fayetteville, Georgia

Dear Jere,
At this time we have no plans to bring back the 38 TDB. Customer demand determines whether or not we continue a floorplan. As we design new floorplans, we are moving the sewer connections to a separate compartment.

We have a 2005 Allegro Bus. We were told that if the temperature falls below 30° while we are using the heat pumps, then the Aqua-Hot system will automatically take over if we have the diesel turned on. Is that true?

Joan Sopko
Nanticoke, Pennsylvania

Dear Joan,
The switchover range for activating the Aqua-Hot will probably be in the 35 to 38 degree range.

We have a 1991 31-ft. Allegro motorhome and have not used it very much. Each Spring we resolve, “This is the year!”

Mechanically, it is in great shape and last year we replaced the tires. Now it is time to clean the outside. The exterior has not been waxed in several

years and the paint, and especially the trim, seems to have an oxidized finish. What can we do to brighten it again?

John Taber
Anchorage, Alaska

Dear John,
Your 1991 unit has aluminum exterior walls with fiberglass front and rear caps. A good automotive wax should brighten the aluminum walls. The fiberglass caps will require an initial treatment with an automotive rubbing compound followed by a good quality marine wax. The oxidized trim may have to be replaced to bring it back to the "like new" appearance you want.

We recently purchased a 2007 Allegro Bus with a 10 kw generator. We live in the country and once in a while lose power to the house. Is there a way to tap into the generator to power the transfer switch in the house without affecting the electricity in the motorhome?

Richard Cook
Waterport, New York

Dear Richard,
While it is possible to install the electrical equipment for your RV generator to power most of the HVAC and appliances in your home, it does require changeover boxes to prevent electrical power from backfeeding into the utility supply lines and injuring a lineman who does not know your house is supplied with electrical service. The

equipment configuration should be designed by an electrical engineer and installed by a licensed electrician.

We have a 2006 35-ft. Phaeton that has a loud high pitch whistle coming from the right front corner of the coach. It starts above 50 mph. I taped around the generator opening, covered the mirror with a plastic bag, taped around the headlight and running lights, and removed the windshield wiper — but failed to find the cause. I also taped and checked the window. Please help. I must wear ear plugs to drive.

Joseph Volk
Pahrump, Nevada

Dear Joseph,
I know this is not what you want to hear, but the only way to locate the cause of the "whistle" is continued experimentation. Many times the sound you hear does not appear to emanate from the location of the actual cause. You are doing all of the right things to track it down, but it is just a continued process of elimination.

We have just purchased our motorhome number 15, a Phaeton 36 QSH, which is by far the best motorhome we have ever owned. We have had motorhomes priced two or three times more than this one but this Phaeton really tops everything. We have never been so excited over an RV

until now. However, nothing is perfect in this world. So, my question is this: Can we have wireless remotes installed for the entry door as well as the basement storage doors? It seems like this is the only item missing in this coach to make it "perfect." By the way, Danny, your column is the best and most informative of any of the RV magazines. And Fred, please continue your excellent articles. We wish we had purchased a Tiffin long before now.

Vic W. Kwan
Winter Haven, Florida

Dear Vic,
The power door entry and locks for the basement storage doors are standard features on the 36 QSP Allegro Bus. To add a similar system to the Phaeton aftermarket would be very expensive.

I have a 2003 Allegro Bus and wonder if there is a way to change the wiring for the horns. I would like to be able to use only the air horns when they are turned on. The way it is presently wired the electric horn sounds at the same time I use the air horns. Thanks.

Jim Brown
Valparaiso, Indiana

Dear Jim,
The air horns are operated by an electric solenoid. You can wire it to another switch which will be totally separate from the horn activator on the steering wheel.

Reader Response

Thank you very much for the quick response on the phone to solve my electric step and rear slide-out electrical problem. The fuses and the 12-volt breakers were exactly where you told me and I found the problem right away — a broken terminal lug! Tiffin has always quickly resolved the few problems I have had in my eight years of dealing with you folks. You have a life customer! Thanks again.

Dennis Carlson
Willis, Texas

I own a 1992 Allegro Bay Pusher and have the same problem described by Paul Sahaydak in Michigan, which is wet storage compartments. I think his roof is leaking.

After 10 years, my rubber roof deteriorated with increasing speed. Your advice to me was "caulk it" and that worked for a little while. After 11 years the roof was replaced with 1/4-inch fiberglass in the old factory. If the air conditioner gaskets and the skylight had been replaced at the same time, it would have been a perfect repair

job. I sealed them later and the coach is tight.

The roman shades can be cleaned by spraying them with diluted vinegar, exposing them to the sun for 5 to 10 minutes, and then rinsing with clean water and blowing them dry.

When my coach was new, the Tiffin Service Center corrected several problems over three visits to the plant. You had three crews back then and they all did very good work.

Benjamin J. Caravello
Elberta, Alabama

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

"Serious Tech Talk" is a very important section of *Roughing It Smoothly* in which information sharing flows in both directions. Please continue to send your questions to Danny Inman on the enclosed postcard. A separate postcard is enclosed for "From the Road," a fun part of the magazine for readers to share their motorhoming experiences. If you choose to email us at: fredthompson1941@hotmail.com, be sure to put "RIS From the Road" in the subject line of your email. If your communication requires an entire letter, mail it to us at: PO Box 292912, Tampa, FL 33687-2912. Share with us the interesting places you've been, an unusual experience, a great destination, or just a good place to camp and hang out. "From the Road" contributors will receive a free *Roughing It Smoothly* T-shirt. What's your size?

—Fred Thompson, editor

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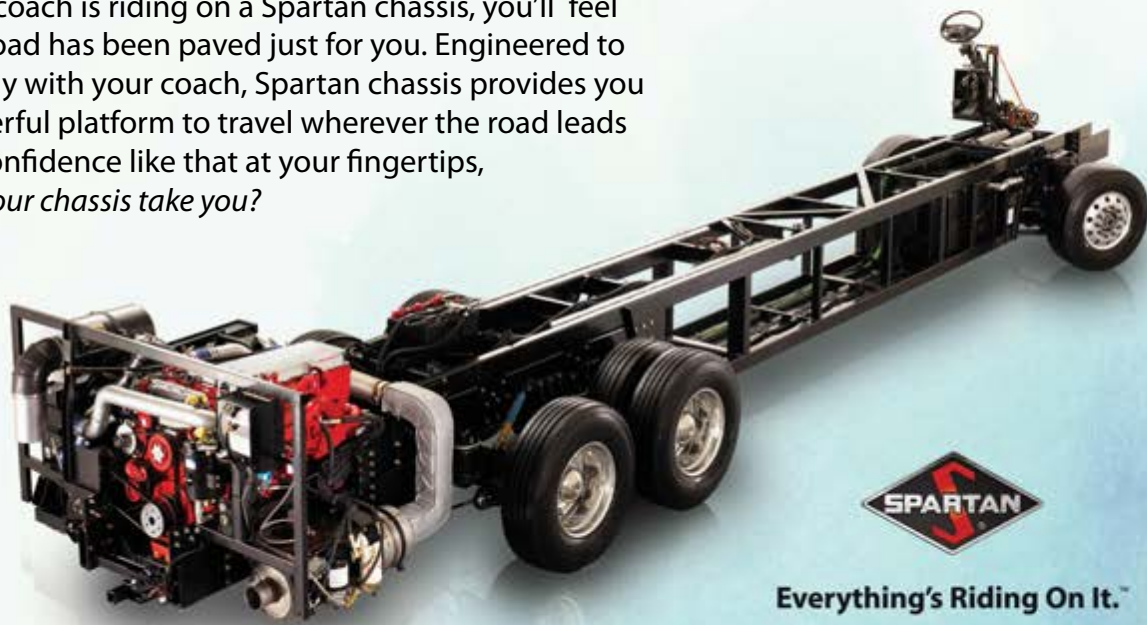


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