

# Roughing It Smoothly<sup>®</sup>



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- The Allegro Breeze

## SPECIAL

- The 2010 Phaeton 42 QBH
- Part 3: Building the 43 QGP



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# Roughing it Smoothly®

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Volume 7, Number 1

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*On our cover:* Wakiwa Springs State Park

## Letters, We Get Letters. . . .

Thanks for your emails. We continue to enjoy *Roughing It Smoothly* from Monroe, GA. In early November, we made a twelve-day trip into Florida to explore the springs that supply the water demands of millions of Floridians. The springs have been a recreation resource for 150 years. After a severe decline during the 1970s, the Florida State Park system began to acquire these great natural resources and they are now making a comeback in outdoor recreation.

Don't stop writing! Your participation is the key to this magazine's great success. Here are some guidelines to help.

### Traveling With Your Pets

Surveys show that over half of you travel with your pets. So be sure to

read "Traveling With Your Pets," by Dr. John P. Pilarczyk, a veterinarian specializing in small animals who practiced for 38 years in Temple Terrace. Dr. and Mrs. Pilarczyk travel in a 2007 Phaeton. If you prefer to use the U.S. Mail, please address your questions to:

"Traveling With Your Pets"  
*Roughing It Smoothly*  
1403 Cedar Point Way  
Monroe, GA 30656

You can also send your questions via email to fredthompson1941@hotmail.com. Please enter "Traveling With Pets" in the subject line.

### From the Road

To tell us about your experiences on the road, you may use the postcard

bound in this issue, send a longer letter to the address at left, but using "From the Road" in the first line, or send an email with "From the Road" in the subject line.

### Serious Tech Talk

To address your technical questions to Danny Inman, you may use the postcard bound in this issue, send a longer letter to the address at left (put "Serious Tech Talk" in the first line), or send an email to RIStechtalk@gmail.com

### Changes of Address

Please do not call to make a change of address. We are often traveling when your calls come in and it is very difficult to handle the call on a cell phone. Please use a standard change

of address card from USPS or send the change by email. In the subject line, put "RIS Address Change."

### First Time Subscribers

Tiffin coach owners may receive a free subscription by **writing** to *Roughing It Smoothly*®, 1403 Cedar Point Way, Monroe, GA 30656 or **emailing** fredthompson1941@hotmail.com. Please include your phone number, the last six characters of your vehicle identification number (VIN), and the year and model of your coach. If you sell your coach, **email** stephanie.umfress@tiffinmotorhomes.com with your VIN, year and model, and the new owner's address. This will allow all service bulletins or recalls to reach the new owner.

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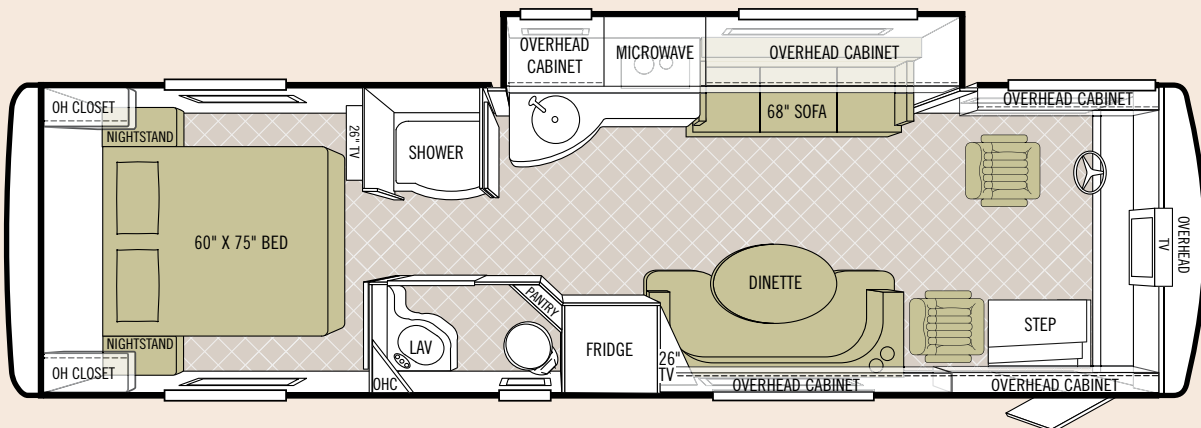


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## Features

- The 2010 Phaeton 42 QBH — The Phaeton’s Bath-and-a-Half Floorplan Assures Its Position As Industry’s No. 1 Class A Diesel Pusher. See page 8.
- The Assembly Line . . . Building the Allegro Bus 43 QGP, Part 3. See page 21.
- The Floridan Aquifer and the Magnificent Springs of Florida. See page 34.

Tiffin Motorhomes introduced a prototype of the Allegro Breeze at the National RV Trade Show in Louisville on December 1. The floorplan below has not been finalized and is subject to change. TMH expects to begin building the Breeze later this spring. See page 56.





## Watching a Boy Grow Up

by Bob Tiffin

As many of you who have been reading my column already know, Judy and I have three sons: Tim, Van, and Lex. Judy and I married about a year after I graduated from high school. I worked at Tiffin Supply Company, the business my Dad started in 1941.

Judy and I both grew up in families that had strong religious principles, very caring parents, and with brothers and sisters who completed the family unit. By example and teaching, we had a good foundation on which to build our lives. Nevertheless, we were young when we began our family. I have often said, "We grew up ourselves with our first two boys, and by the time Lex came along we had a whole different perspective on raising children."

In August 1988, Judy and I were blessed with our first grandchild. Van and Michelle presented us with Van Leigh Tiffin, Jr., and gave us the opportunity as grandparents to become a part of their extended family. As I am sure all of you grandparents know, having grandchildren definitely creates a different perspective on "raising" children.

Just like having your own first child, becoming grandparents for the first time is a special experience. We quickly realized how our new roles were different from when we became parents 26 years earlier. Van and Michelle moved to Red Bay the

year Leigh was born when Van accepted a position with Tiffin Motorhomes. It wasn't long until Leigh would come over to our house to spend Sunday afternoons after church services. And a few years later, Shelby, his sister, was coming with him.

We enjoyed spending pleasant hours each week doing things together. Grandparents get to bypass the parental responsibility of discipline. And it doesn't take long before they have to take the rap of spoiling their grandchildren.

Leigh was the most inquisitive child I have ever known. He wanted to know why everything was like it was. Even at four years old, I was working hard to answer his questions. Sometimes we would finally get down to the answer, "Well, Leigh, that's just the way it is."

Since I like to tinker with or collect just about anything that has wheels on it, I began to share with Leigh my interest in railroading and old cars. The Illinois Central Railroad closed their service here in Red Bay and I bought one of their small M19 Fairmont Speeder motor cars with a one-cylinder engine that was used to check the rail lines. It was built in 1929 and you had to crank it like you would a T-model Ford.

The IC sold the rail lines from Corinth, Mississippi, to

Haleyville, Alabama, to Norfolk & Southern so that N&S could create a shorter route from west central Tennessee to the Gulf coast. After a major storm and washout, N&S abandoned the Red Bay-Haleyville segment and kept the line from Red Bay to Corinth open to serve Sunshine Mills and Tiffin Motorhomes.

On nice weekends when the line was not in use, Judy, Leigh, and I would get the little car out and "ride the rails" up toward Corinth. The biggest thrill of the trip was crossing the Brushy Creek trestle, which is about 200 feet above the creek. It is the highest steel trestle of its kind in the United States.

Later I acquired a 1956 Pontiac station wagon that had been used by railroad executives on the Bay Line between Panama City and Dothan, Alabama. It had been outfitted with high rail equipment by Fairmont Motor Car Company in Wisconsin. We would put the car on the tracks at a crossing here in Red Bay and go to Corinth where we could exit at a crossing and drive home on regular roads. Leigh and I had a great time on several trips from Red Bay to Corinth.

Just before Leigh started to school in 1994, Van and Michelle built a home in Muscle Shoals which is about 45 miles from Red Bay. By this time Tim and his family were also in the Quad-City area, so Judy and I found a home in Florence that made it possible for us to be closer to all of our grandchildren. From first grade Leigh started making good grades right off the bat. He liked history and English, but he seemed to do really well in math.

When Leigh was 12, we got the old open rail car out for another trip. After we put it on the tracks next to the TMH plant, we went about 200 yards toward Sunshine Mills where we derailed on their yard switch. They were operating and we got a

pretty good blast coming from the mill. Leigh hollered, "Papa Bob, it sure is dusty here!"

We had a soccer-type ball at our house that Leigh would kick around whenever he came over for a visit. One afternoon I found two boxes of Van's old footballs he had used for practice when he place kicked for Red Bay and later for the University of Alabama. They were all flat, so I aired them up. Then we went over to the practice field at Bradshaw High School where Leigh got his first taste of place kicking on a football field. He was in the seventh grade and 12 years old. He liked it and showed some dedication to practicing.

Van had been holding place kicking schools at the high school level for several years. So teaching Leigh became a great father-son experience. When he got to the ninth grade, I bought 25 new footballs. Between the two of them, I long ago lost count of how many footballs I have bought. At 14 Leigh went out for football at Muscle Shoals and made the team.

Judy often cooked Sunday dinner and Van, Michelle, Leigh, and Shelby would come over after church services. At 15 Leigh got his learner's permit for driving. He loved driving my 1940 Packard Coupe (which we called "Buttercup") and my 1959 Ford on our Sunday afternoon visits. He became a very good driver—safe, careful, and no teenager desire to show off. He moved on to my 1934 Ford Cabriolet and learned right off to handle the clutch.

*Far left:* A four-generation picture, Nov. 1988 — Van Tiffin holding Leigh, Bob Tiffin, and Bob's father, Alex. *Center:* Leigh Tiffin, 4, in Papa Bob's rail car at the Brushy Creek trestle on the ICRR near Hackleburg. *Below:* Leigh and Judy Tiffin at the Brushy Creek trestle, May 1993.







Above: Papa Bob and Leigh, 11, get ready for a ride in a 1956 Pontiac converted for railroad use. Below left: Leigh Tiffin demonstrates perfect form with a field goal against North Texas. Below right: Van, Bob, and Leigh celebrate Alabama's win over Florida for the SEC Championship.

During his high school years, Leigh often visited the plant during the summer. I wondered if he would be interested someday in working at Tiffin Motorhomes, making him the fourth generation to be involved in TMH. Judy and I shared a large office as long as she worked here as the interior designer of the coaches. Her desk, complete with nameplate, remained in its place when she decided to retire in 2004. Leigh would often sit at her desk while he was here at the plant—and one day I

noticed he had taken a wide piece of masking tape, covered up “Judy” and written “Leigh.” I thought to myself, “Well, good . . . someday . . . maybe.”

After he got his regular driver’s license at 16, Leigh drove us all the way to Tuscaloosa and back during football season. His place kicking career in high school proved he was college material. When he graduated from high school, he did not consider any other college except Alabama. He walked on at Alabama his freshman year and made the team as the number two place kicker behind Jamie Christianson. Jamie got hurt before the first game and Leigh started. Jamie recovered at mid-season and came back, but Leigh won the starting position for his sophomore year.

Like his Dad, he learned to practice relentlessly and to concentrate and focus on every kick. He has broken most of Van’s records at the University of Alabama, and this year became Alabama’s all-time leading scorer with 378 points. He was honored in December as one of the three finalists for the Lou Groza Award. On December 15, Leigh was named a First Team All-American by both the Associated Press and CBS Sports.

Alabama was undefeated in regular season play during 2008 and 2009, during which Leigh kicked 44 field goals and 78 extra points. After beating Florida this year 32-13 in the Georgia Dome for the SEC Championship, Alabama . . . . . [to be completed on Jan. 8].

In December 2009 Leigh graduated from the University of Alabama with a BS degree in business administration. It has been an amazing 21 years watching this boy grow up. RIS







**“THE BEST THING ABOUT WEATHERING A STORM  
IS ENJOYING THE RAINBOW AT THE END OF IT.”**

*Ever since the day Tiffin Motorhomes opened its doors, we've believed that if you can build the best product and then stand behind it staunchly, everything will take care of itself. So it comes as no surprise to us that while the motor home industry continues to endure tough times, our company is doing quite well. Thanks to the hard work and diligence of everyone at Tiffin – from Tim, Van, and Lex to all our dedicated employees and national network of dealers – we see only blue skies ahead for our company. And as anyone who spends time on the road in an RV can tell you, blue skies are what it's all about.*



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# The 42 QBH



**T**he rear full bath plus a half bath located in the mid-section of large Class A coaches may be the hottest feature to come down the pike since the advent of slide-outs 15 years ago.

After testing the opinions of current Tiffin owners and reviewing other surveys, TMH moved ahead over the last two years to introduce bath-and-a-half floorplans in four of its six brands. It is noteworthy that during this time upper management at Tiffin was not intimidated by the worst recession in modern times. For its best-selling diesel pusher brand, Tiffin Motorhomes introduced the 42 QBH floorplan.

With many new standard features and several options to allow each buyer to customize the Phaeton 42 QBH, Jerry Williamson, Tiffin's national sales manager, predicts this coach will become

the industry's best-selling bath-and-a-half floorplan, carving out a whole new niche for itself. It may become a case of *déjà vu*.

In late November 2006 Tiffin Motorhomes took its newest Phaeton floorplan to the National Dealers Show in Louisville. With several 40-foot Phaeton floorplans riding a tidal wave of success, the company introduced the 42-foot QRH floorplan on a tandem rear axle chassis. The coach received high marks from U.S. dealers for innovative features and a remarkably reasonable price. It helped secure the Phaeton's position in the Class A market as the industry's best-selling diesel pusher, a distinction now closing in on four years.

So what *really* makes the 42 QBH go to the head of its class? Simplicity, light, interior design, many standard features, a quality



# Another Success Story

## Phaeton's Bath-and-a-Half Floorplan Assures Its Position As Industry's No. 1 Class A Diesel Pusher

build, and options that allow the buyer to personalize the coach.

*Simplicity:* The lines are clean, sharp, crisp. The cabinets, the molding, the hardware are not overstated.

*Light:* The windows in the living area of the coach bring the outside in. And if the sun gets a little too bright, you've got MCD solar shades at all points. At night, you have MCD opaque shades to preserve your privacy.

*Interior design:* Montecito — The metal art, the sconces, the fabrics make you think of southern Spain. Jasmine — Light and airy, springtime colors, fresh. Phantom — The blacks and leaf prints used in the molding, valances, and art, along with the deep browns in the wallpaper and bedspread, introduce a baroque touch to the decor.

*Standard features:* Full body paint, three choices of interior design colors and fabrics, two choices of hardwood for the cabinets, HWH hydraulic jacks, residential refrigerator, paint protective film, eye-level television and entertainment center, combined microwave and convection oven, overhead fan in the bedroom, 10kw generator with three low-profile air conditioners, double pane windows with thermal breaks, Ultraleather DE sofa bed (driver side), Ultraleather 8-way adjustable driver and passenger chairs (passenger chair with powered leg rest), solid wood cabinet faces, ceramic tile floors, concealed hinges in cabinets, tray ceiling lined with crown molding, barrel lights in place of fluorescent fixtures, side view cameras — many items you would not expect to be included in the standard base price.

TMH runs a continuous survey at its service center to ask owners what they want in a coach, and from year to year those requests materialize in Tiffin motorhomes. Last year slide-out shelves appeared in the cabinets over the galley. This year a large trash can on a slide-out rack along with two slide-out “over-and-under” vegetable bins appeared under the cooktop. Very convenient and all standard equipment. Five years ago Tiffin designed an island slide-out cabinet with a solid surface countertop. It added over 20 percent countertop space to the galley. It was immediately copied the following year by TMH's main competitor. It's a standard feature on four of Tiffin's six brands.

*A quality build:* Three years ago I visited a Tiffin dealer and accompanied a salesman as he showed a Phaeton to a potential buyer. The salesman was thirtyish, probably weighed 190, and obviously had been doing some weight lifting. To demonstrate the strength of the coach's construction, he sat on the couch, opened the doors to the cabinets above him, grabbed the exposed

ledge, and did several pull-ups. “I would never do this with any other brand,” he said. Needless to say, the buyer was impressed.

The cabinet shops are not included on plant tours because of the noise level, the amount of equipment being operated, and the constant movement of materials and finished units that are being sent to the production line. But if it were, you would be impressed with the state-of-the-art equipment, the quality of the wood, and the skill of the craftsmen.

Of course, woodworking is not the only area where the quality of TMH construction can be observed. Manufacturing quality begins in the chassis plant and goes all the way through to the paint plant and final finish. Quality begins with every employee who understands that each task in the manufacturing process, no matter how small, is very important.

The concern and planning for quality also begins at the top. In a recent conversation with Bob Tiffin, I asked, “When do you think the company will get back to full production?” His answer caught me by surprise. “I'm not as interested in reaching full production capacity as I am in trying to build trouble-free motorhomes.”

*Options:* Most of us like to have options and TMH gives you a bundle to make the 42 QBH what you want it to be. Full body paint is standard and you have six choices. There are five more exterior options including automatic and in-motion satellite dishes, satellite radio, and one or two slide-out trays in the pass-through storage compartment. There are four options for the driver to make in the cockpit. There are 13 options in the living-dining-galley area with regard to fine sofas, Euro-recliners, hide-a-beds, Ultraleather or cloth, booth dinettes or free standing dinettes, ovens, cooktops, and microwaves. In the bath and bedroom, you have five bedding choices and two options for washer-dryer combinations.

One of the most popular options today is the full ceramic tile floor which extends from the cockpit through the bedroom, and in the case of this particular coach, through the rear bath.

After you have carefully considered your options and made your choices, you can rest assured that the 42 QBH will reflect your style. It will be uniquely *your coach*.

Now let's take a look underneath, and then we will come back inside and review each living area.

### From the Outside — What's in the basement?

Most of the infrastructure of your motorhome is in the so-called “basement.” Because you are down on your knees peering into





the labyrinth, it is very important that what you are looking for is accessible, well organized, well lighted, and clearly labeled. It is all about planning and good engineering.

*Lighting:* TMH starts with good lighting. With a main switch at the entry door, and individual switches on the lights in each compartment, you won't have any trouble. In fact, you may want to leave all of the individual switches in the "on" position and use your main switch.

*Accessibility:* None of the infrastructure you need to reach is more than elbow deep.

*Organized:* TMH gets another A+. We will go from compartment to compartment in a moment and you will see what I mean.

*Labeling:* Fuses, solenoids, hydraulic controls, on-board compressed air link, plumbing, service bay – you name it, and it has a label.

Now let's take the tour, starting with the front cap. With a quick release, the 10,000 kw Onan generator slides out for an oil check or servicing. Its service schedule is simple and its reliability in the industry is unmatched.

Starting on the passenger side at the first compartment behind the front tire, TMH engineers have cross-mounted the propane tank to conserve space. The service valves are on the small oval end of the tank. In the same compartment and next to the propane tank, you will find the hydraulic valves and computer system for the HWH jacks – all very easy to access for service.

The second and third side-opening doors enclose the coach's huge pass-through storage compartment. The primary space measures 95 inches across, 98 inches wide, and 29 inches high, for a total of 156 cubic feet. The two chassis rails extend down 13 inches into the compartment. The optional slide-out tray in the forward compartment measures 88.5 inches across by 39 inches wide. It has a height clearance of 13.5 inches.

The fourth compartment behind the tag axle contains the two chassis batteries. The adjacent fifth compartment houses several electrical components including the battery minder, charging solenoid, slide-out breakers, and other electrical breakers and disconnects.

The rear cap provides a single-door access (flips up out of the way) to the 42 QBH's powerplant – the Cummins ISC 8.3 liter

diesel producing 360 hp and 1050 lb/ft of torque. Each service point is easy to check visually and manually. They include from left to right (see picture), the oil dip stick, transmission fluid fill tube, Filter Minder®, coolant fill, engine oil fill, 150 amp reset switch, and the chassis hydraulic oil system.

Moving up the driver's side from the rear, the first compartment's primary function is to give the owner easy access to the engine air cleaner. But it also offers three cubic feet of storage space, albeit rather shallow in depth: 36 inches wide by 21.5 inches high by 7 inches deep.

The second compartment, still behind the tandem axle, houses the 50-amp power service and the TMH Automatic Transfer Switch, a device (patent pending) created by Tiffin to protect the electrical systems in the coach when you are switching from shore power to generator/battery current or vice versa. The compartment should not be used for storage.

In front of the tandem axle, the utility bay is in the third compartment. It divides into the water panel and the sewer release system.

The water panel is thoroughly labeled and intuitively easy to use. It contains the city water connect and black tank flush valves, hot water bypass valve, city water tank fill valve, water pump and switch, water filter, water tank and water pump drain valve, and the outside shower. Towel and liquid soap dispensers are conveniently mounted here.

The sewer release system can be connected through a capped hole in the drain pan, allowing you to lock the compartment's door and still be hooked into the shore sewer connection. The dump connector will oscillate 45 degrees for a dump station connection through the main compartment door, avoiding the task of threading the dump hose through the floor pan.

The fourth compartment offers another 22 cubic feet of open storage space that flows directly into the double pass-through storage area. It is 66 inches deep, 25 wide, and 23 high.

The fifth and sixth doors are the opposite side of the pass-through storage compartment, across from the second and third doors on the passenger side. The large slide-out tray can be pulled out from either side of the coach.

The seventh compartment houses a slide-out tray hosting the



six coach batteries. It also provides access to the primary house battery fuse. You can see the Xantrex inverter connector here.

The eighth compartment, located at the front corner of the coach, is the Phaeton's "nerve center," better known as the Front Fuse Control Panel. It also houses the valve connector for compressed air service and the storage container for washer fluid.

Coaches of this size have complex systems. TMH engineers have designed and carefully labeled the service points in the infrastructure to make it possible for a Tiffin Service Center advisor to direct an owner through a problem-solving session.

### **Simplicity and Functionality — An Interior That Works**

A coach is really divided into two areas: living space and sleeping space. It is the location and design of the interior components which create a functionality that works for both areas.

#### ***The Living Space***

With the slide-outs deployed, you are looking at a living space that is 21' long by 12' 4" wide. With the driver's and passenger's chairs rotated into the living room, you have seating for eight. The floor space for the seating area is 6 by 7 feet, plenty of room for a coffee table (which you can store on your slide-out tray in the basement) and an area rug, two more ways to add your personality to your coach. It is Tiffin's way of giving you the opportunity to make the 42 QBH more residential.

Entertain! Invite friends over for coffee and dessert. Gracious living is what a generously appointed motorhome is all about. When you are not entertaining, put your favorite magazines, books, and framed pictures on the coffee table.

This living space is also designed for your personal entertainment. Some may consider it too much to have two televisions

in the living area. When you are having breakfast, the mid-ship, eye-level unit is perfectly positioned to catch the morning news, *Today*, or *GMA*. The optional over-the-dash television may be the better choice for a movie when you are stretched out on the sofa.

The surround sound system and the coach's HDMI television technology were designed two years ago exclusively for Tiffin coaches by Triple H Electronics in Red Bay. 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). The box receives high definition broadcast *input* from the optional in-motion satellite system which pulls programming from network satellites while you are traveling. Additional *input* comes from (1) an enclosed rotating digital TV antenna receiving local programming, (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. All of the described system is standard on the 2010 Phaeton 42 QBH.

When any of the four televisions in the coach are turned on, one click on the remote activates a selection screen which presents "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 iPod devices, allowing you to play your own music collection through the coach's surround sound.

With the optional satellite radio, you can subscribe to Sirius-XM and enjoy the music channels in surround sound throughout







the coach. Good music brings a calming, sublime quality to our lifestyle.

You can carry your entertainment outside, too. An optional 32-inch HD television is mounted in the outside wall of the forward passenger side slide-out. The standard patio awning will remove the daytime glare. If you are a sports fan, there's nothing like watching your favorite team while you are grilling steaks.

The living space also includes *the dining area*. In the 42 QBH coach under review, the free-standing dinette/computer workstation had been selected as an option. Extending from the computer workstation, the dining table measures a generous 42 inches, allowing for placement of two chairs on either side. At mealtime, the countertop of the computer workstation provides the space for your serving dishes. The storage compartment above the dining room window (5.2 cubic feet) is strategically located for your dinner service. Rubber-coated metal dish racks are perfect for use here.

The dining area and the *computer workstation* are integrally designed. The dining table serves as your desk. As you face the window, you will find on the left side a slide-out tray for your keyboard. In the cabinet below is a second slide-out tray for your printer. Your laptop or desktop computer should fit on the bottom (floor level) shelf and your monitor will position conveniently on the countertop. It is a really well-designed system.

Two doors under the dining table conceal six cubic feet of storage space. On the right side of the dining table, the workstation provides a file drawer with rails ready to receive hanging folders, plus two 14-inch deep drawers for office materials. If you need even more space for business materials, you can commandeer another six cubic feet of storage above the adjacent sofa.

The living space also provides *sleeping accommodations for guests*. The 68-inch Flexsteel Ultraleather™ Air Coil Hide-A-Bed sofa was selected on this coach as an option. When deployed, the hide-a-bed on the passenger's side quickly inflates to a 60 by 80-inch queen size bed which is very comfortable. On the driver's side, the



optional Ultraleather DE sofa/bed flips down to make a 48" × 68" bed, also a very comfortable accommodation (the cloth DE sofa/bed is standard). Both sofas have excellent reading lights, which of course make nice bedtime reading lights, too. Bedding for both sofa/beds can be easily stored in the cabinets above the Hide-A-Bed which offers over 13 cubic feet of storage.

While most of us RVers like to “eat out” pretty often, having *a nice galley* for preparing a good meal is very important. The Phaeton 42QBH provides one of the best in the business. Including the island slide-out, the countertop surface measures 25 square feet. The three-burner cooktop, the stainless steel residential-size sink and rinse basins, and the convection-microwave oven with exterior vent give you the tools you need. Many RVers like to use electric skillets and crockpots to prepare meals. This galley gives you three GFCI outlets just for that purpose. The icing on the cake is the standard double-door GE residential refrigerator with the lower slide-out freezer drawer with ice-maker. Because it is recessed into the driver’s side slide-out, the floorspace in the galley area is not compromised.

Tiffin’s designers always do a great job in providing plenty of storage in the galley. No exception here! In the countertop cabinets there are six drawers. Under the cooktop, you have two slide-out vegetable bins (or whatever you want to store there) and a large, very convenient slide-out waste container. Under the sink you will find several cubic feet of storage plus two racks for the removable covers over the cooktop and sink.

On either side of the microwave-convection oven, you will find double-shelf cabinets. The lower shelves are slide-outs to make it easy for you to reach what is deep inside. And they fully extend! Not through yet—under the mid-section television is a slide-out pantry and over the TV is another cabinet designed for your tall cereal boxes. Do you get the feeling Tiffin’s interior designers must dream about “slide-outs”? They have made it one of the best-applied ideas in motor-home design.

### *The Sleeping Space*

In this area we will be reviewing the bath and a half, the washer-dryer, and the bedroom. The half bath is located at mid-ship and may be regarded by some as the “guest bathroom.” However that plays out, it adds a second toilet to the floorplan, and for most of us that justifies its existence.

The half bath is well designed. Look under the sink and you will find a panel of valve cut-offs to control water flow to every point of use in the coach. When you are repairing a faucet or looking for a leak, you will appreciate this panel. Under the countertop is an extra drawer and a double-door storage compartment. Two medicine cabinets and a hatch storage bin over the window, a Fan-tastic Vent, two barrel lights plus theater lighting over the shaving mirror, and the essential rack for reading material. If you decide to buy this coach, send a thank you note to the half bath designer!

Although the master bedroom comes standard with a very comfortable queen size bed, you have several optional choices: a standard king, a queen or king Select Comfort mattress, and a queen or king Memory Foam mattress. The review coach was optioned with the king Select Comfort mattress. With dual controls, you can set the soft-to-firm settings to please anyone.

And now the full bath. Wow! The lady in this coach will be very pleased. If she

allows her husband into this sanctuary, he will probably feel privileged. First, a 59-inch wide vanity with two lavatories, a 33 by 47-inch mirror, perfect lighting, four towel rings, four fully extendable 17-inch deep drawers, two very large under-counter cabinets, and a medicine cabinet on the opposite wall only begin to describe this bath. Extending across the rear of the coach, a closet eight feet wide and 24 inches deep is accessed by two mirrored sliding doors which add visual spaciousness to the room. The oval-shaped shower is 42 inches wide and 30 inches deep, with an entry through two sliding, translucent glass doors. The skylight above the shower can be closed off in cold weather with a sliding insulated ceiling panel. The maserator toilet is operated electronically with a wall-mounted touch panel. A Fan-tastic Vent is center positioned in the ceiling along with ten barrel lights which brighten the room.

The talent of TMH’s interior decorator, Margaret Mia, may be most evident in the bedroom. Fabric choices for the bed comforter, pillows, headboard, and valances are beautifully coordinated and accented by the black chair rail and large mirror with black frame and capitals. Limited use of a dark patterned wallpaper below the chair rail contrasts handsomely with sun-dappled wallpaper used throughout the rest of the bedroom. Four silk-screened leaf prints framed in an interesting metal







and wood structure add to the ambiance of the sleeping quarters. Barrel lights are positioned on the ceiling's perimeter along with two reading lights above the headboard. A ceiling fan with a toggle switch next to the bed and two stereo speakers in the cabinet above the headboard add to the pleasant environment of the bedroom.

The opposing slide-out contains five large drawers for clothing storage, a clothes hamper, and a cabinet wired for an additional DVD player and satellite receiver. The cabinetry is finished with solid surface countertops. The top of the slide-out houses a 32-inch HDMI television and two storage cabinets positioned above a large window which is also the mandatory emergency escape route for the rear of the coach. Additional windows are located in both sides of the bed slide-out. With the slide-outs deployed, the master bedroom is approximately 8' 6" by 12'. The walking and dressing space between the end of the bed and the opposing slide-out is generous.

The stacked washer and dryer in this coach is an option, and one that buyers are increasingly exercising. The washer has most of the settings that you will find on a full-featured residential washer. Obviously, it is smaller, but it gives you the opportunity to keep up with your laundry chores in smaller amounts throughout the week as you see the need. The dryer has several settings and accommodates a variety of fabrics.

As noted in the beginning, the 2010 Phaeton floorplans focus on many desirable standard features. The brand offers handsome decors while still giving the buyer many choices for customizing the coach.

### **The Cockpit and Driving the 2010 Phaeton 42QBH**

As we pulled out of the TMH parking lot at 10 a.m. and into downtown Red Bay, the low hum of the 360-hp Cummins 8.3-liter engine was barely perceptible. Our conversation continued at a normal range. The 60-degree wheel cut made the 90-degree turn from Second Street onto SR-24 a piece of cake. Maneuvering through the two-lane streets was a com-



fortable experience. Immediately I noticed the tight steering ratio, very little play in the steering wheel.

On the level three-mile stretch east of town, I tested MPH against RPM — a pretty good indication of the coach’s potential fuel mileage:

At 50 MPH	1600 RPM
At 60 MPH	1650 RPM
At 70 MPH	1900 RPM

Obviously, those who are willing to drive 60 MPH are going to get surprisingly good fuel mileage on this coach. Keep in mind that we were not loaded for a trip and we were not pulling a tow vehicle.

A couple of tests show that the powerplant and the chassis-coach are a good pairing. On a half mile stretch with a three percent grade and using cruise control, we started at 60 MPH with an RPM of 1625. The coach topped the hill with no change in MPH or RPM. To see what kind of passing power the 42 QBH could demonstrate, we moved the coach at 55 MPH into a passing lane, again at an approximate three percent grade. With pedal to the metal, we topped the hill at 60 MPH. A few minutes later, we tried the same test on level highway. The coach accelerated from 55 to 75 in less than 40 seconds.

The cockpit’s control console on your left is designed for use without the driver having to take his or her eyes off the road. With your elbow at your side, your forearm-hand movements will make easy contact with all of the control switches. The electronic gear shift pad with the economy button is at the forward position of the console. Immediately behind the shift pad 15 lighted switches angled toward the driver are arranged three across in five rows. Once I familiarized myself with their locations, I found that I did not need to keep looking down to make a decision.

**The arrangement of 15 lighted switches:**

DOCK LIGHTS	ENGINE PRE-HEAT	AUX START
HORN	FUEL-BRAKE PEDAL ADJ	ICC FLASH
SOLAR VISOR	OPAQUE VISOR	ENG BRAKE
LH FAN	RH FAN	RADIO
MAP LIGHT	STEP COVER	TAG DUMP

**At the rear of the console:**

- PARKING BRAKE
- HWH LEVELING SYSTEM

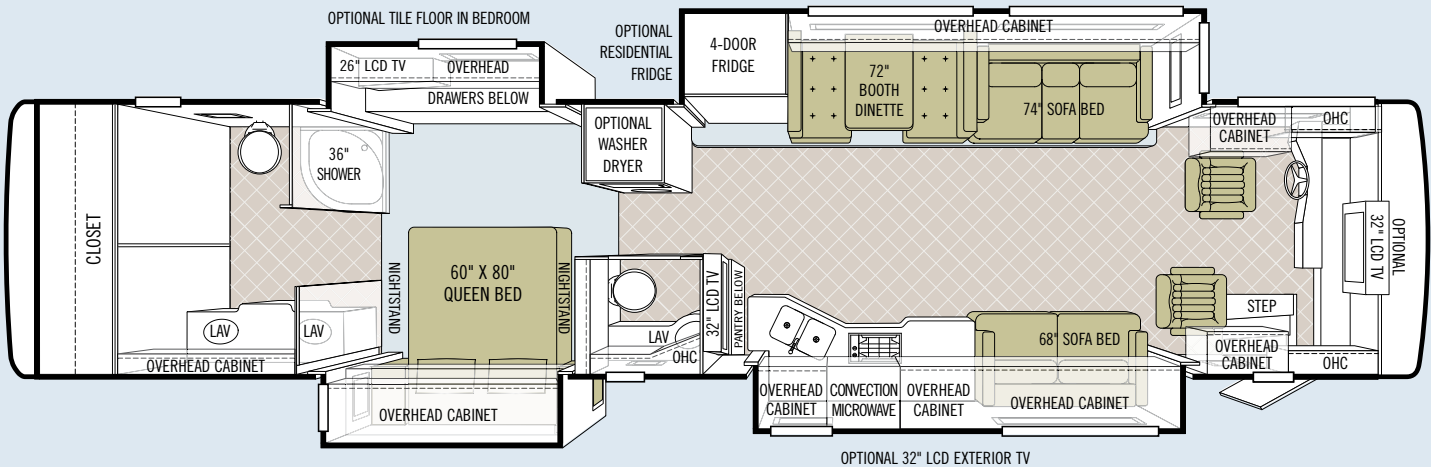
All of the operating functions are controlled with two levers on either side of the steering column. On the left lever, you will find cruise control, left-right turn signals, and high-low for the headlights. The windshield wiper controls, including variable speed, are located on the right lever.

Unless your right seat partner flew with Pappy Boyington, you will love the optional in-dash navigation system. With mapping and spoken instructions, you will take the most effective routes for your planned trip. Built into the same unit with the FM-AM stereo system, the navigation system operates on a flip-screen. You can enjoy radio programming and CDs while you are using navigation. The navigation voice will break in as needed to get you to your destination.

The standard color back-up camera has a foot-meter overlay which shows measured distances on the video screen. When you are making turns, the directional signal activates a full sweep view of the side to which you are turning.

Since first driving the Phaeton five years ago, I have found that it has been a continually improved experience. In design, engineering, and materials, TMH has found significant ways every year to improve the brand. Every time I talk with Phaeton owners, I hear the same message: the Phaeton is the best price-value-features coach in the Class A field. It is not surprising that it has claimed the No. 1 position as the best-selling coach in the diesel pusher category for nearly four years. **RIS**

## Phaeton 42 QBH





# SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2010 Phaeton 42 QBH, Quad Slide, Base MSRP\* – \$274,512 MSRP as tested with options – \$288,071

## STANDARD FEATURES

### Structural

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

### Automotive

Allison 3000 MH six-speed automatic transmission with lock-up (torque converter)  
Cummins ISC 8.3 liter 360 hp, electronic/turbocharged diesel with 1,050 lbs.-ft. torque  
Raised rail chassis frame  
Air ride (4 air bags)  
Aluminum wheels  
55° wheel cut  
Air brakes with automatic slack adjusters and ABS  
Exhaust brake  
Adjustable fuel and brake pedals  
VIP 18-inch steering wheel  
Cruise control  
Fog lights  
Daytime running lights  
Emergency start switch

### Exterior

Fiberglass front & rear caps  
Dual fuel fills  
Large tinted one-piece windshield  
10 Kw Onan manual slide-out generator  
HWH hydraulic automatic leveling jacks  
Chrome heated power mirrors with remote adjustment  
Power Fantastic® roof vent with 3-speed fan  
Single motor intermittent wiper  
Gel-coat fiberglass walls  
BASF full body paint with protective film  
Deadbolt front entrance door  
Double electric step  
Dual pane windows  
Exterior patio light  
Entry door awning  
Automatic patio awning  
Window awning package (2 windows)  
Slide-out covers  
Wheel liners  
Custom mud flap  
Lockable swing-out storage doors with gas shocks  
Remote locking system for entry door  
Lighted exterior storage  
Roof ladder  
Docking lights  
Heated water and holding tank compartments  
Four 6v auxiliary batteries  
2000 watt inverter with 100 amp converter & transfer switching  
Park ready telephone  
Black tank flush system  
Water filter  
Undercoating  
110v exterior receptable  
110v/12v converter  
Digital TV antenna  
Cable ready TV  
Park telephone ready  
Three 15,000 BTU low profile roof A/C systems with heat pumps  
A/C condensation drains

### Driver's Compartment

Flexsteel® Ultraleather™ power driver and passenger seats with passenger footrest  
Padded dash with passenger drawer & laptop desk  
Custom infrared repeater system on all TVs  
Dual dash fans

Full-width power windshield solar/privacy shades  
Driver/passenger side window solar/privacy shades  
Color rear vision monitor system with side-view cameras activated by turn signals  
Snack-beverage tray with drawers  
Step switch and 12v disconnect switch  
Dual 12v dash receptacles  
Single CD player & AM/FM stereo  
Fire extinguisher  
Computer slide-out tray in dash with lockable rails  
Fire extinguisher

### Living Area/Dinette

Booth dinette with laminate tabletop & solid surface edging  
12v, 110v, & phone jack receptacles at dinette  
32-inch flat screen LCD TV color television  
wall-mounted in entertainment center  
Custom infrared repeater  
68-inch Flexsteel® Ultraleather™ DE sofa bed (passenger side)  
74-inch Flexsteel® Cloth DE sofa bed (driver side)

### Kitchen

Solid surface counter top with residential stainless steel sink  
Solid surface sink and stove covers  
Sink & cooktop cover racks (underneath sink)  
Single lever sink faucet with sprayer  
Built-in soap dispenser  
Convention/microwave oven with exterior vent  
4-door refrigerator with ice maker  
3-burner cooktop  
Built-in soap dispenser  
Expand-an-Island  
One Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan

### Bath

Two medicine cabinets with vanity lights  
Skylight in shower with sliding solar cover  
Two solid surface vanity tops and bowls  
Custom raised panel bath door to water closet  
Sprayer on toilet  
Fiberglass molded shower  
Pfister™ shower head  
Glass shower surround  
Glass radius shower door  
Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan in water closet  
Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan in hall next to shower

### Bedroom

Wardrobe with automatic lights  
Pre-wired for DVD & satellite receiver  
Ceiling fan  
Four OH storage cabinets in bed slide-out  
Stackable washer/dryer-ready closet  
Bed comforter with throw pillows  
Sleeping pillows  
Queen-size bed  
Pillow top mattress  
Under bed storage  
Night stands with 110v outlets  
Wood headboard  
Chest of drawers with laundry hamper  
26-inch LCD television  
Carbon monoxide detector  
LPG leak detector

### General Interior

7-ft. ceilings  
Soft touch vinyl ceilings with trey ceiling in living area

Ceramic tile floor in kitchen, living area, bath & entry landing  
Carpeting in bedroom & driver's compartment with Scotchgard®  
Raised panel hardwood cabinet doors and drawers  
Fan-Tastic® power roof vents with 3-speed fans  
Solid wood cabinet faces with concealed hinges  
Medium alderwood cabinetry  
12v disconnect switch  
Bullet lights in ceiling  
Complete cable wiring interfacing with surround sound & satellite receivers  
Home theatre sound system with concealed speakers  
Air driven step well cover  
Solar & privacy RollEase® shades  
Home theater sound system with concealed speakers  
Tank level monitoring system  
Smoke detector  
10-gal. gas/electric water heater  
Two ducted furnaces (one 30,000 BTU & one 35,000 BTU)

## OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

In-motion satellite dish (receivers and service contract required)  
In-dash navigational system  
One exterior slide-out tray  
Hadley air horns  
Exterior 32-inch LCD television in galley slide-out wall  
Bedroom tile  
Satellite radio (subscription required)  
32-inch dash overhead television  
Dinette/computer workstation  
Stacked washer/dryer  
Built-in vacuum cleaner  
68-inch UltraLeather™ Air Coil Hide-A-Bed – (passenger side)  
74-inch UltraLeather™ DE sofa/bed  
Select Comfort mattress – king

## OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

Automatic satellite dish  
Second exterior slide-out storage tray  
Spotlight  
Gas oven with convection microwave  
Free standing dinette with built-in cabinets  
U-shaped dinette  
Combo washer/dryer  
DRIVER SIDE  
Two leather recliners  
74-inch Ultraleather™ DE sofa bed  
74-inch Cloth DE sofa bed  
74-inch Ultraleather™ Magic Bed  
74-inch Cloth Magic Bed  
PASSENGER SIDE  
68-inch Cloth DE sofa bed  
68-inch Cloth Air Coil Hide-A-Bed  
King bed mattress  
Select Comfort bed – queen  
Memory foam mattress – queen  
Memory foam mattress – king  
Cherry bark cabinetry (simulated)

## MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 296"  
Overall length – 42'5"  
Overall height w/roof air – 12'7"  
Interior height – 84"  
Overall width – 101"  
Interior width – 96"

## WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 42,600 lb.  
Front GAWR – 12,600 lb.  
Rear GAWR – 20,000 lb.  
Tag Axle GAWR – 10,000 lb.  
GCWR – 52,600 lb.  
UVW – 32,460 lb.  
CCC – 9,653 lb.  
Trailer hitch capacity – 10,000 lb.

## POWER TRAIN

Engine – 360 hp Cummins ISC 8.3 liter, electronic, turbocharged diesel  
Torque – 1,050 lb.-ft. at 1,400 rpm  
Transmission – Allison 3000MH electronic six speed with two overdrives  
Tire Size – 275/80R 22.5 XZA1 Michelin  
Alternator – Leece-Neveille 170 amps

## CHASSIS

Frame – Spartan Mountain Master Series Frame Design – Raised rail  
Anti-locking Braking System – WABCO 4M/4S ABS System  
Air Suspension (front) – Hendrickson HTB  
Air Suspension (rear) – Hendrickson HTB  
Shock Absorbers – Bilstein tuned  
Leveling Jacks – HWH hydraulic automatic

## CONSTRUCTION

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

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – 6 adults  
Fuel tank – 100 gallons  
Freshwater – 90 gallons  
Black water – 45 gallons  
Grey water – 70 gallons  
LPG tank – (35.7 gallons; can be filled to 80% capacity) – 28 gallons

## MSRP\*

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

## UVW

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

## DEALERS

To locate a Tiffin dealer nearest you, go to [www.tiffmotorhomes.com](http://www.tiffmotorhomes.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 optional equipment are subject to change without notice or obligation.



## *It's Better to Give Than to Receive*

“The best part of my career was being able to give back to other people,” he began. After a few more minutes I knew his career had never focused on climbing over anyone to get to the top. Or fighting for the upper hand in union negotiations. Or flying in corporate jets. Or pulling down the highest salary in his industry.

Michael Austin was born in London in 1939 to Edgar George Austin and Julianna McDonnell. “I was two years old when my dad died while serving in the Royal Air Force. My mother wanted me to become a priest,” he smiled. “She drilled into my head, ‘Michael, it is always better to give than to receive,’ along with her well-defined Irish Catholic value system that she instilled in both of her children.”

Toward the end of World War II, Mike’s mother married an American GI, and she and Mike immigrated to the U.S. in 1947 through Ellis Island. Mike grew up in nearby Long Island. During his childhood, he and his mother spent their summers in Ireland, traveling there on various Cunard White Star Line ocean liners. Keeping connected with her Irish roots was very important to Julianna.

“We lived in Port Jefferson on the north side of Long Island where I went to high school and developed my ‘good boy’ reputation,” he laughed. “But I often hung out on the south side of the island where I maintained my ‘bad boy’ reputation.” The “good boy” side apparently won as Mike became an Eagle Scout and served as president of the local Catholic Youth Organization.

“I got through high school with reasonably good grades, but I didn’t take the college prep courses,” he said. Mike joined the Air Force upon graduation in 1957, perhaps idealistically influenced by his father’s service in the R.A.F. His mother, who had been battling cancer, died soon after he turned 19. He filed a declaration of intent to become a U.S. citizen and achieved that milestone in 1959. By that time he was stationed at Otis

**Editor’s Note:** In a brief visit a year ago I learned that Mike Austin had retired recently from a very interesting career. After earning a B.S. in aeronautical engineering in 1965 from Boston University, his first job was with Bethlehem Steel. Nineteen years later Austin began a new phase of his career when he was recruited to turn around a steel mill that was losing millions annually. His success at Bayou Steel Corporation created a reputation that led him to do the same for two other mills. In a 35-year span, Austin sat in every seat and wore every hat beginning with foreman and rising to become the president and CEO of three companies. I called Mike and Elaine in early November to ask for an interview and see if their itinerary might place them somewhere in the Southeast by the end of the month. I was in luck and we met in Birmingham on November 29 and a few days later in Red Bay. Mike and Elaine own a 2008 Allegro Bus 40QSP.



Michael and Elaine Austin in Red Bay, December 2009.



Air Force Base on Cape Cod. Life began to move very fast for Mike Austin. Two chance meetings on the Cape would soon reset his compass and the course his life would take over the next 50 years.

“My buddies and I went into Hyannis for the weekend.” Mike began. “We were cruising in a convertible when we saw Elaine and her friends in poodle skirts on the sidewalk. We stopped and apparently some meaningful conversation ensued because Elaine and I started dating and married a year later in 1960.”

The second chance meeting took place at the Hyannis airport. Mike applied for a job as an aircraft mechanic with the ulterior motive of getting an opportunity to learn to fly. The airport manager offered him a job fueling airplanes. Good job performance led to a lineman’s position. As the airport needed more employees, he became assistant manager in charge of fuelers and linemen.

“A group of aeronautical engineering students came to the airport for a field trip,” he related. “In talking with them, they explained what they studied at Boston University and I decided immediately that was what I wanted to do.” Mike wasted no time seeking out the dean of the College of Engineering.

“What does it take to get into the aeronautical engineering program?” he asked

bluntly. “What did you take in high school,” the dean responded.

“Auto mechanics,” Mike answered.

“I am very sorry, young man, but you are not college material,” he said.

“But I don’t want to be an auto mechanic,” Mike protested.

“You have no ACT or SAT scores. You took no advanced math in high school. You could not possibly enter at the level we accept students into the program,” the dean explained.

Not giving up, Mike persuaded the dean to allow him to take the math courses he needed in an associate’s degree program — advanced algebra, trig and analytic geometry, calculus. Two semesters later Mike had aced the prescribed math courses and was admitted to the aeronautical engineering program.

Michael Austin graduated in 1965 with his coveted degree. Along the way he was elected president of his class and president of the student council. He was named College of Engineering Man of the Year and received the Scarlet Key Award and the President’s Award. He is quick to give due credit to Elaine who earned her PHT degree (Put Hubby Through) working as secretary to the administrator of admissions of the Graduate School of Nursing.

By now the Austins had two little boys, Michael, Jr., 4, and Stephen, 2. “I was

earning \$65 per week,” Elaine chimed in. “And \$25 of that was going to the babysitter! Actually, my salary was lower because I got half tuition for Mike.”

Their hard work began to pay off immediately. Several guys who had majored in marketing were going as a group to interview with Bethlehem Steel. “They invited me to join them and I got the job offer,” he said, “probably because I was four years older, had some experience and my military service behind me.” Austin stayed four years with Bethlehem, going through their trainee loop. “I had no industrial experience and they train you their way,” he said.

In 1970 the Austins completed their family when Keith was born. The lineup for the Austin basketball team was Michael, 9, Stephen, 7, Kevin, 4, Susan, 2, and Keith. Four years later they began their RVing odyssey which is now in its 36th year. “It all started with a travel trailer,” Elaine recalled. “Finding a way to take five children ranging in ages from four to 13 on a vacation was quite a challenge. Over the years we went through two Class C and two Class A motorhomes. We traveled with all five children to 39 of the lower 48 states plus Canada and Mexico.”

Long before now Austin realized the importance of developing a “career map.” Each move to a new corporate experience was based on finding new areas of responsibility that would complete his skill sets for rising to the helm of a corporation. Basing his goals on remaining in the steel industry, his successive positions included factory operations, manufacturing engineering, quality assurance, materials management, human resources, corporate planning, corporate finance, sales and marketing.

“Each time I went into a company,” Austin explained, “I told the people, ‘If you commit to me, then I will commit to your personal growth and advancement in this company. If I as a young kid can come to the U.S. and reach the corporate level I am in today, you can do what I



Elaine and Mike Austin relax in their living room in the Euro-recliners they chose in place of a sofa bed.



have done or more.”

“I don’t think intelligence is the only key to the development of business skills,” he continued. “My passion for helping other people is what propelled me to the positions I attained.”

Mike Austin was recruited in 1984 to turn around an Austrian-owned company in LaPlace, Louisiana. Bayou Steel Corporation was a specialized steel mill losing several million dollars a year. “We implemented aggressive objectives and got everyone on board. Three years later we recorded a profit of \$24 million,” Austin said.

In 1987 Austin was recruited to do a strategic turnaround from a difficult greenfield start-up operation that had gone awry. Tuscaloosa Steel Corporation is a non-union mini-mill. The turnaround required rebuilding the company from the ground up, establishing a new management team, and implementing a new strategic direction for both production and marketing. During their tenure in Tuscaloosa, the Austins lost Michael, Jr., in a tragic automobile accident.

When it became critical for Tuscaloosa to win a contract with Nakajima Pipe in Japan, Austin set up a contest for the hourly employees. The winner was to go to Japan with Austin, write the specifications for making and producing the product, and then return and show Tuscaloosa Steel employees why it was important to win the contract. The contest had two questions: “Why I want to go to Japan” and “Why I am qualified to go to Japan and write the report.”

“The winner was Aubrey Brunner,” Austin related, “a tall fellow with a ponytail and earrings. He had written the best letter. When I asked him to come to my office, his first remark was, ‘Hey dude, what’s happening?’”

“Tell me about yourself,” Austin said. Aubrey grew up in Tuscaloosa, served a tour in the Navy as an electrician, drove a cab, and washed dishes. He saw an ad from the mill for an electrician and applied. Aubrey went with Austin to Japan, wrote a very credible report, and convinced his fellow employees to produce a quality product that won the Nakajima contract.

After they returned from the trip, Austin asked Aubrey, “No limits, what would you like to do with yourself?” Aubrey responded with no hesitation. “I would like to go to school and become an electrical engineer.”

“That’s great,” Austin answered. “I want you to take *can’t* and *never* out of your vocabulary and go enroll for an algebra course at Shelton State Community College.”

After a semester went by, Aubrey came by to tell Austin he had made an “A” in algebra. “Terrific,” Austin responded. “Now

you need to sign up for trig.”

“I already have,” Aubrey responded. After an “A” in trig, he mastered calculus and a short time later got a promotion to supervisor. Aubrey was married and had two kids. Somewhat despondent, he told Austin, “I can’t keep up with my supervisory job, the family, and school, too.”

Austin was not going to let him off the hook. “Aubrey, I will pay your salary, your tuition, and buy your books if you will finish your degree in electrical

## DUAL ROLLER SHADE SYSTEMS



MCD is the originator; the innovator of the dual roller shade system. The original Day/Night Shade manufacturer and supplier to Tiffin since their 2008 model year.



- Upgrade your lifestyle. Now you can update your coach to 2010 model features with MCD shade technology - new pull-chain hybrid, cordless, or powered systems.
- When ordering your new coach, insist on the original, GENUINE MCD Day/Night Shades.

 Proudly made in the USA! 

Mention ad code TM91 when ordering to receive your special Tiffin Owner’s Bonus!



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engineering.” Aubrey graduated with an engineering degree from the University of Alabama and now has an executive position with IPSCO in Mobile.

Austin may have used his most unorthodox method to turn a company around after he accepted the job of president and CEO at Haynes International in Kokomo, Indiana. After calling in all of the company’s executives at all management levels who were paid salary plus bonus, he asked each person to contribute his or her bonus which would then be distributed to the hourly paid employees. With a few protests and a lot of encouragement, he got 100 percent participation and each hourly paid employee received a bonus of \$1500 to \$2000. The union officials objected: “You can’t do that!” Austin responded: “It’s not about the money. It’s about trust and appreciation.”

Sometime later Austin received a complaint from GE that a very expensive alloy Haynes was supplying for jet engines was causing a major problem. “Before we can use your alloy, we have to spend half what we pay you to correct the quality problem,” GE’s engineers told him.

Austin asked the engineers to come to Kokomo and “tell our employees exactly

what is the problem.” They did. The alloy steel sheets were minutely pitted when they were delivered to GE. “Our production employees traced the problem and corrected it,” Austin said. From the end of the rolling mill line, the alloy steel sheets were transported unprotected across the road to the shipping department. That’s where the pitting was happening. The employees decided to move the packing and shipping equipment to the end of the mill line and that solved the problem. Four months later Haynes got a check from GE for \$125,000 because quality assurance at the mill had saved them that much.

Under Austin’s leadership, sales rose from \$160 million to \$256 million. When the company was to be sold through a leveraged buyout to Carpenter Technology, the visiting buyers (CT’s president and two VPs) wanted to talk with the union’s president, who told them simply, “With Mike, we don’t need the union.”

In 1999 Austin was drafted to become president and CEO of Mobile Metals International, a consulting start-up operation that included business modeling and financial planning, equity development, equipment design, organizational development and governmental agency

compliance. Although the project was not completed due to difficult times in the steel industry, it brought Austin in contact with Dr. Jeanne Maes, professor of management at the University of South Alabama’s College of Business in Mobile.

Dr. Maes asked Austin to lecture to MBA classes regarding leadership and motivation. The lectures were so well received that Austin was invited by Dean Carl Moore to take the newly created position of Executive-in-Residence at the College of Business. His popularity led to requests for his lectures on leadership from the College of Engineering where he was also appointed Executive-in-Residence. He also taught a series of Professional Management and Career Planning Seminars for the School of Nursing and College of Continuing Education. At a faculty meeting late in the semester, Dean Moore, speaking somewhat tongue-in-cheek, looked directly at Austin and said, “Your student evaluations (consistently 5 on a 5-point scale) are making us all look bad.”

For four years he was in his element developing and teaching professional management seminars for seniors and MBA students. Each 14-week series emphasized the skills needed to become an effective CEO. “We did role playing, setting up real life business situations and solving problems,” Austin explained. “They had been exposed to academic principles, but my seminars forced them to apply their knowledge.” To his surprise, several students who had taken his seminars for credit came back and asked to audit them for reinforcement.

During all of Mike’s career, Elaine describes herself as a stay-at-home mom. With their four children and spouses and nine grandchildren in Chicago, Kokomo, Birmingham, and Mobile, she continues to be the family nurturer and communications chief. However, when she and Mike relocated to Mobile, Elaine discovered a whole new career in real estate. Adams

*Continued on page 43*



Cameron, 7, and Connor, 4, children of the Austin’s son, Kevin, and his wife, Jenny, prepare for their parent’s trip to Cape Cod to camp with Nana and Grandpa in the summer of 2008.



# *The Assembly Line . . .*

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This is Part 3 of the production line story that began in the Summer 2009 issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*. In that issue we watched the assembly of a 2010 Powerglide tandem-axle chassis which began with two raised rails on a steel assembly table and was driven away five days later to the welding shop. There it received the steel outrigger trusses, steel sub-floor, wiring harnesses, the basement floor frames, the step well, and several other assemblies.

**I**n the Fall 2009 issue, we watched another 2010 Powerglide tandem-axle chassis enter Station 1 of the main assembly plant at 6 a.m. on a Tuesday. This chassis was slated to become an Allegro Bus 43 QGP. Before the shift ended at 2:30 p.m., the bath-and-a-half coach was in assembly station 7. At station 1 the extensions from the two main electrical harnesses were pulled to their designated locations. The basement floor, the wet utility cabinet with holding tanks and fresh water tank, and the Aqua-Hot heating system were installed along with electrical control and monitoring panels. At station 2 the OSB subfloor was delivered by overhead crane and was soon followed by a one-piece tile floor that extended from the cockpit to the rear bath. The floor system for the rear bath was dropped into place followed by its own one-piece tile floor.

The orchestrated assembly continued as modules arrived “just in time” from the cabinet shop for the rear bath, bedroom, laundry, half bath, sliding doors, and living area. Amazingly, every module was dimensionally perfect as it was in-

stalled and attached to the other modules on the floor. As the unit progressed through the assembly stations, electricians continued to deftly select and connect the multitude of wires from the looms of the harness to the equipment behind the firewall as well as to the controls and displays in the cockpit.

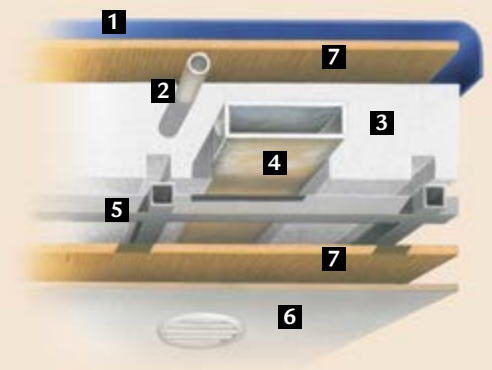
Then at station 5 the end wall and the side walls were hoisted into place and attached to the steel floor frames. The cabinets in the cockpit area appeared and were attached to the walls. As work inside continued, an overhead crane lowered the roof system into place and technicians moved quickly to attach its outer aluminum frame to the walls. The floorplan was obvious now and it was easy to see how this coach was going to finish up.

In Part 3 of the assembly line story, we will begin with the one-piece fiberglass roof and watch a completed coach emerge from the assembly line, ready to drive for preliminary testing and for delivery to the Belmont paint plant just a few miles away.

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Text and photography by Fred Thompson





Above: The diagram illustrates the roof “sandwich” which is built in a sub-assembly production line adjacent to the primary assembly line. The installation of this major component was shown in Part 2 (vol. 6, no. 4), pictures #63 and #64. At that point, the top of the sandwich was the luan layer. The first three illustrations in Part 3 show the installation of the fiberglass top shell which is installed on the primary assembly line.

#### Station 7

• 1 After the roof sandwich was aligned and attached with four-inch screws to the sidewalls, Donald Robbins uses an air-driven system to apply adhesive to the top of the luan layer. The adhesive pattern assures a solid bonding with the fiberglass roof. • 2 Using the overhead crane, Tim Sauls maintains exacting control of the fiberglass roof shell as he lowers it into place. • 3 Before the adhesive permanently bonds, Tim and a co-worker check the corners for accurate positioning. Note the different components coming together at the driver’s side rear corner. Under Tim’s left hand is the end of the roof sandwich with the luan extending about two inches over the 5½ inches of formed insulation immediately underneath. Tim checks for a one-inch overlap with the outside fiberglass layer of the sidewall. The rear wall sandwich has an aluminum exterior (see Part 2, photo 52). The expanding foam insulation assures an airtight seal with the roof system.



• 4 From the inside of the coach, holes are punched through the fiberglass to locate the points where roof-mounted components will be installed. With the holes as a guide, a technician using a router follows the inside perimeters already in the roof system to cut exact openings for vents, air conditioners, and skylights.

#### Station 8

• 5 Air conditioning technician Bobby Warren lifts the wiring from the roof harness through one of three openings for the air conditioners on the 43QGP. • 6 With wiring in place, Warren continues the installation of one of the air conditioners. • 7 Danny Davis sands the inside frame of the skylight over the shower to assure an accurate fit. Just to Davis’s left, note the pressure gauge attached to the dark blue drain line for the air conditioner. Before the drain line is attached to the air conditioner, it will be pressure checked for possible leaks. • 8 Davis installs a 125 watt solar





1. One-piece, molded fiberglass roof cap provides insulation, strength, and prevents water intrusion.
2. A/C Condensation Drainage System redirects water underneath the motor home.
3. 5½" formed insulation
4. Quiet Air Cooling System with foil-wrapped cooling and return air ducts
5. Durable, tubular aluminum roof skeleton
6. Easy-to-clean soft touch vinyl ceiling panel
7. Luan sheets form top and bottom of roof sandwich.



panel which is used to trickle charge the house batteries. • 9 Roger Hester works on a 110-volt connection which will supply power to the kick plate plug positioned just below the computer slide-out tray in the passenger-side dashboard.

• 10 James Sparks installs the awning box to support the coach's patio awning which will be mounted in the Final Finish department.

• 11 Danny Davis completes the cable connection for the Mini-State HD television antenna which is manufactured by Triple-H Electronics in Red Bay. The antenna, which rotates inside its housing, does an excellent job of picking up local HD stations within a 100-mile radius.

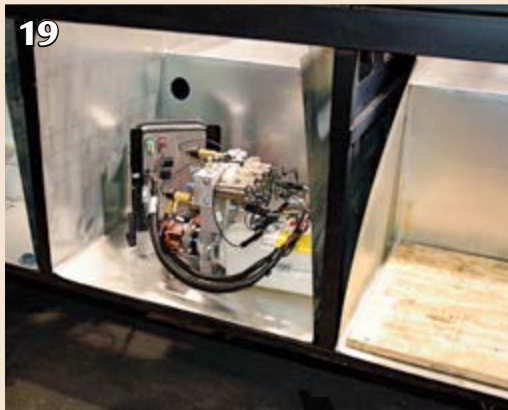
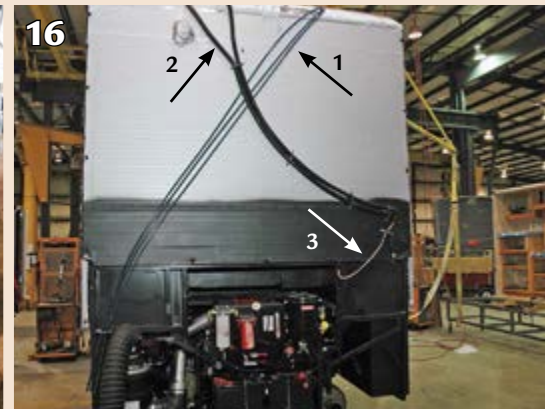
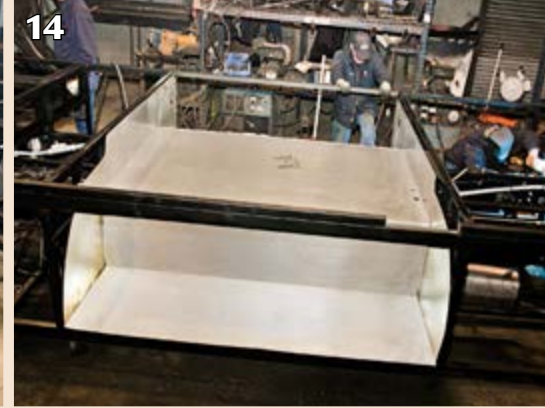
• 12 Moving to the front of the coach's roof, Davis attaches a Trac-King In-Motion satellite receiver built by King Controls. With a subscription service providing nationwide coverage, the receiver pulls in live news, standard programming, weather, and sporting events while you are on the move, as well as commercial-free CD quality music channels.

• 13 With the roof installations completed, James Sparks finishes the caulking while Danny Davis, Bobby Warren, and Kevin Underwood make final checks before the Bus rolls to the next station. In approximately one hour, the four technicians installed three ACs with heat pumps, three Fan-Tastic vents, a skylight, a solar panel, an awning box, a satellite receiver, and an HDTV antenna, including caulking each component and completing the clean-up.

• 14 While the roof installations were underway, several technicians were working inside the coach. Here, Walter Sparks installs the 110-volt breaker box in the full-width closet at the very rear of the motorhome, adjacent to the rear bath. • 15 The main living area is a beehive of activity as Christy North makes a quality control inspection on the wood framing that will soon house a mirror, while Jim Jackson completes the wiring for an overhead vent. Roger Hester wires the 110-volt receptacle for the coach's 37-inch midship television and Marty Pardue uses an air-driven pin nailer to install crown molding.

#### Station 9

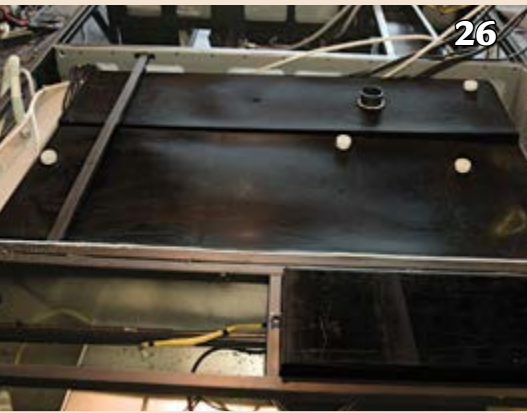
• 16 This view of the rear wall shows three key features: (1) Three drain lines from the air conditioners are routed across the rear wall to an outlet under the coach. (2) The 110-volt and 12-volt roof harnesses are directed to the breaker box in the back closet [see picture 14]. (3) The copper ground wire from the breaker box is tied







to a ground point on the chassis. • 17 The galley slide-out with sofa sits on a trolley awaiting installation. Note that the doors and drawers for the cabinets have not been installed at this stage. • 18 The slide-out is transferred to two small forklifts as Chad Gann rolls the trolley out of the way. • 19 The forklifts are moved very incrementally until the slide-out is in the exact position to be pushed onto its own fixed rollers in the floor of the coach. • 20 At left, HWH hydraulic mechanisms will move the slide-outs in and out very smoothly. Before the slide-outs were installed, the triple-door residential refrigerator was loaded onto the floor of the living-galley area. After the wiring is completed [see picture 26], it will be moved into a cabinet in the driver's side slide-out [see picture 22]. • 21 Larry Hill bolts the HWH slide-out mechanism to the aluminum end wall. • 22 Chad Gann removes a corner brace that was used during the assembly of the driver's side slide-out. Note the finished cabinet which will house the residential refrigerator. • 23 Gann installs a metal F-shaped bracket that will prevent the ceiling of the slide-out from bowing. Decorative fascia will be attached to the bracket. • 24 The two smaller and much lighter slide-outs in the bedroom are lifted into position with overhead slings. The bed slide is shown here. • 25 The vanity box has been inserted on the passenger's side. It will be operated with a hydraulic mechanism. The solid surface countertops are carefully protected until the coach is finished. • 26 Larry Hill prepares the wiring and water hook-ups for the residential refrigerator as well as the wiring for the free-standing dinette and computer workstation.



#### Station 10

• 27 The front cap for the 43QGP comes to the assembly line with its windshield, mirrors, and lights attached. It waits here on a forklift to be lifted into place. • 28-29 Roger Grissom carefully uses the forklift to hold the front cap in place, and then positions himself between the firewall and the inside of the cap to tie in the wiring for the headlights, mirrors, wipers, and other key items. • 30 While Grissom is doing the wiring for the mid-section of the front cap,





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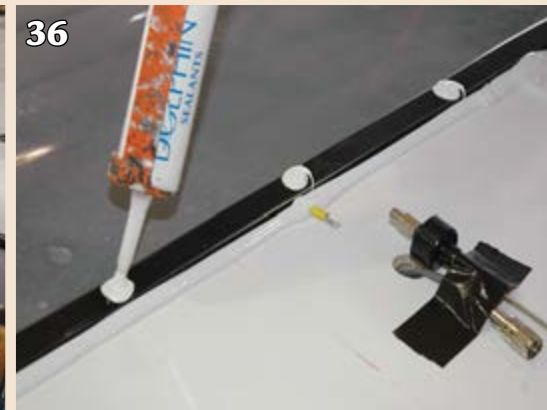


up on top Chris Barksdale (*left*) and Ronnie Palmer take measurements for lines to correctly position the satellite signal receivers for TV and XM radio, and the AM-FM and CB antennas. The lines also prevent technicians from hitting the wires with screws. • 31–32 A 1½-inch strip [see arrow] of special adhesive is applied that will start spreading under pressure when screws are driven through a trim rail to attach the cap to the roof system. • 33 After the front cap has been attached to the sidewalls and roof systems, Grissom installs the “duckbill” that houses the defrost hoses and duct work for the automotive heating. • 34–35 Barksdale trims out the edge of the front cap with an aluminum rail that bends to fit the fiberglass as he hammers it. A rubber trim is then attached to the aluminum rail to provide a finished surface that can be painted. • 36 A self-leveling sealant is applied to the screw heads and joint where the front cap and fiberglass roof are joined. • 37 The rear cap is delivered to Station 10 on a specially designed trolley. After it is positioned at the rear of the coach, a suction hoist lifts it while the trolley is removed. • 38–39 The rear cap is positioned with a three-inch lap over the rear of the fiberglass roof. The expanding pressure strip is put in place. While the hoist continues to hold the cap, the bottom corners are attached to a precise point to get a correct fit of the cap to the sidewalls. Then the cap is attached with screws to the rear of the fiberglass roof. • 40 A final rubber trim is attached and the self-leveling sealant is used on the screw heads and seam to assure a leakproof joint. • 41 Roger Grissom, assisted by Lynn Sparks, pulls back a rubber flange to install the door with 15 screws. The same number of screws are used to attach the door’s hinge to the jam or sidewall.

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#### Station 11

After a crew cleans the coach in Station 11A, the coach is moved into Station 11B.

• 42 Shannon Green and Shane Funderburk install basement doors. Accurate alignment is a major concern. Note the plumb line along the rail above the doors. The carpenter’s “tried and true” method works fine here.

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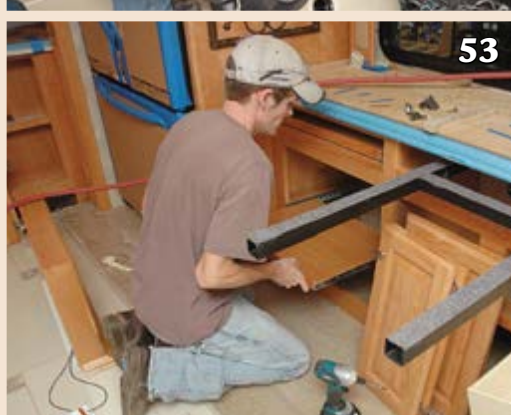
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### Station 12

• 43 Linda Ewing takes measurements to accurately position the entrance step cap which joins the tile floor to the finished walls in the step well. • 44 Barbara Lindsey attaches a backer board to the edge of the galley slide-out. The finished slide-out fascia will be attached with screws to the backer board. The finished fascia is very sturdy. • 45 Hilda Hale installs a finished "header" over the track for the pocket door that separates the living area from the walk-through section where the half-bath and stacked washer and dryer are located. • 46-47 Barbara Lindsey and Ramona Dyar team up to install the slide-out fascia on the driver's side. The large screws used to attach the heavier part of the fascia to the F-bracket will be covered with a small piece of trim which Ramona attaches with a headless pin gun. • 48 Moving to the bedroom, she uses an air-driven nailer to attach the headboard pads with small nails that are hidden by the edging rope. The solid wood headboard is crafted in the TMH cabinet shop. • 49 Barbara Lindley installs the mirror in the rear bath of the 43QGP. She uses two-sided tape to hold the mirror in place while the liquid glue bonds to the wood backing and the back side of the mirror.

### Station 13

• 50 Kim Hoffman preps the keyless entry wiring before the dashboard is installed. • 51 Chris Wiggington ties up the wire harnesses behind the firewall to make space for the installation of the dash pod. • 52 Wiggington reaches through the center console in the dash to route the heater hoses for the floor vents on both sides. • 53 Dennis Laughtery positions the printer slide-out shelf for installation in the computer workstation/ freestanding dinette. Note the slide-out shelf above for the keyboard. Doors and drawers await installation at Station 14.

### Station 14

• 54 Lambert Garrison installs a "stop bracket" to limit the extension of the dinette table. At this point, the doors and drawers have just been installed. • 55 Shannon Robinson uses a positioning jig to establish perfect alignment as he installs cabinet doors with hidden hinges. • 56 In the rear bath, Lambert Garrison drives screws through the top of a valance into the cabinet above. Valances for the 43QGP arrive at the assembly line with the MCD solar and opaque shad-





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es in position, recessed behind the fabric panel.

**Station 15**

• 57 As the 43QGP continues to move down the assembly line to Station 15, the interior of the coach is almost complete. Here, Kevin Upton uses a torque wrench to install the base of the shoulder restraint for the seat belt system. When the wall was built, a metal plate was welded into position to receive the bolt to hold the restraint. The same technique is used with the four bolts which mount the driver's and passenger's chairs to the floor. • 58 From left, Jason Mayes, Joe Slayton, and Randy Patterson come in from other departments to check the inspection reports made by the quality assurance department, while Shannon Robinson adds a restraining device to the refrigerator door. Stacy Ozbirn makes the electrical connections in the dinette lighting fixture. • 59 David Holland, assembly line supervisor, checks quality assurance inspection sheets with Will South.



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**Station 16**

• 60 Craig Howard attaches the genset cover to the generator's slide-out frame with an adjustable steel bracket [see arrow], and adjusts the bracket to make the genset cover fit perfectly into the front cap. • 61 Using the switch in the control cabinet under the cockpit, Howard runs the genset slide in and out several times as he checks the adjustment and fit. • 62 After tweaking the mounting bracket a few times, Howard achieves a perfect fit of the genset cover when it is retracted into the front cap.

**And finally . . .**

• 63 Before the coach leaves the assembly line, a cleaning team comes aboard. Here, Janice Blackburn wipes down the cooktop where dust and small debris had settled during assembly. The team does a full-coach vacuuming of the interior and basement, mopping of tile floors, window washing, and a wipe down of the walls and cabinets. • 64 With the assembly line process completed, the coach awaits a driver to take it to the Belmont Paint Plant. **RIS**



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**Thanks** to Barry Page, David Holland, Charles Spencer, Rusty Holland, and Duane Emerson for assistance with captions.

**Correction:** In Vol. 6, No. 3, pages 22-23, in photos 8, 9, 11, and 12, Mark Emerson was incorrectly identified as Mark Chapman.





PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER REINES

# Reines RV Center

## A "Top 50" Dealer For Second Consecutive Year

IN NOVEMBER REINES RV CENTER BECAME A "TOP 50" DEALER FOR THE second time, led by company president Lindsey Reines. When asked about the company's success, the 54-year-old businessman was very reflective as he reached back 40 years to talk about his first experience as a salesman for his father's company. "When I was 14, I made my first sale—a Swinger travel trailer—and I was hooked," he said. "We were in an RV show at the D.C. Armory."

Each sale became a milestone for "Dusty" \* Reines's son and he remembers each one like it was a few weeks ago. "The first Class C that I sold was a new Utopia for \$8,995. And my first Class A was a Champion Concord that I sold for \$15,000."

"My brother Richard and I were fascinated with the RV business. He designed floorplans as a teenager and named them after family members," Lindsey recalled.

The Reines (pronounced rye'ness) family grew up and attended public schools in the District of Columbia. Their grandparents moved to Washington from Massachusetts in 1925 where Grandmother Reines opened a store to sell confections, tobacco, newspapers and the like. Dusty dropped out of college during the thirties to help support his family.

He volunteered for military service during World War II and fought in the Pacific Theater. When he returned from the war, a relative gave him \$50 to start a business. Dusty rented space next to a gas station in 1946, bought two cars, fixed them up, and sold them for a profit. He continued with that plan, each time buying one additional car, until he had a lot full of inventory to sell. Reines Motor Company was on its way to a bright future.

By the early 1960s, Dusty had a salesman who talked him into buying a few Norris travel trailers manufactured in New Tazewell, Tennessee. "I was about eight years old," Lindsey said. "It was fun for me to come to work on Saturday and marvel at the travel trailers."

\* Since it was not his given name, "Dusty" Reines always signed his name with quote marks.

The trailers began to sell really well. "We bought three and sold three. Then we bought six and sold six. We were amazed at the demand," he said. Dad changed the name of his business from Reines Motor Company to Reines Motor and Trailer Company.

"As time went on," Lindsey continued, "Dad got out of the car business altogether and went solely into recreational vehicles. He changed the business name again to Reines RV Center." When his family and business associates asked him why he stopped selling cars, he confessed that he hated the car business!

Dusty felt that RV sales was a much nicer experience than selling used cars. "It was a family-oriented business, and he liked that," Lindsey explained. "He realized that we were selling a dream and a lifestyle. That realization became part of our business philosophy. For us it is wonderful after the sale to hear that a customer has had a fantastic camping or vacation experience. People sometimes have apprehensions about getting started in the RV experience. They are uncertain if it is the right step for their family. We teach, explain, counsel, and coach."

In 1979 Reines RV Center took over a Winnebago franchise from a car dealer who had not been very successful with it. "Our business was in Arlington, Virginia, at that time," Lindsey said. "We had two service bays, two techs, and two salesmen. We also had a small parts store. We waited on parts customers and then went out on the lot and sold RVs."

Dusty delegated more responsibility to Richard and Lindsey as they became president and vice president of the company. In 1981 Dusty led the company to buy a larger property in Fairfax, Virginia, that had formerly been a Mercedes Benz dealership. "The location boosted our sales almost immediately and we went from six to 19 employees," Lindsey said.

In reviewing their long-term business plan, the brothers found research indicating that RV dealerships with Interstate locations showed significant annual growth in both sales and service revenues. Richard found a prime location on I-66 west of Washington in Manassas, Virginia. He helped design a state-of-the-art dealership. The company opened the new facility in June 1998.

"Dad was against it," Lindsey recalled. "He said, 'You'll work twice as hard and be in debt.' But Richard and I felt the location was the key to our continued growth." After the new facility was finished, Dusty Reines came over on a Saturday and saw the traffic on the lot. Recalling how it all started with \$50 and two used cars, he was amazed and pleased. He died in March 2003.

In September 1998, Richard was not feeling well. A visit to his doctor followed by extensive tests revealed he had advanced colon cancer. Tragically, he passed away the following March. The new facility was his dream and he was able to see it become a reality.

"I had always followed his lead because he had the business skills, drive, and personality to be president," Lindsey recounted. "I suddenly found myself running this successful company without my partner. Sales were showing good annual growth," Lindsey continued. "In life you have two choices. You can shed your responsibilities or you can do what you need to do. My role had been recast without my permission, but a lot of people depended on Reines RV Center for their livelihood. I loved selling motorhomes. I loved interacting with customers. And I loved teaching the RVing lifestyle. I knew I could do it!"

"We had belonged to a Spader 20 Group (peer companies who meet regularly to share business experience and consult with each other, guided by Spader Business Management), but I dropped out after Richard died, thinking I would not have enough time to continue," he continued. "They were concerned for me and asked me to come back. Having a group of other dealers who want to help you has meant the world to me."

The Spader 20 Group met at Reines RV Center this past summer for the second time to make recommendations and critique the dealership. "They gave me great suggestions on our parts and service operation. We want enthusiastic people who are happy to be here — and who make that feeling contagious," Lindsey said. "People are our most important asset. We have a nice building, but it's our people who make the difference."

Lindsey noted that an effective business executive is always in a learning curve. "I have been doing this for 35 years and I prob-

ably know about half of what I need to know," he said. "I have toured several Class A manufacturing plants which has made me realize just how complex a motorhome really is."

But at the Tiffin plant, it wasn't technology that impressed him the most. "I was most impressed by Tiffin's customer service and business philosophy," Lindsey said, as if he were about to unveil a major discovery. "Tiffin coach owners actually look forward to going to Red Bay to the service center. There is nothing like it anywhere in the industry. All of the TMH employees — administrative, sales, production, and service—are interested in the quality of their product, excellent service, and the customer's satisfaction," he continued. "It's a culture that works down from the top to everyone in the organization."

"The service end of Reines RV Center is an extremely important part of our company," Lindsey said. "It's like the structure of a wheel: all the spokes have to be in place for the wheel to turn. Our people demonstrate the highest integrity and care about every detail. I had to change the service manager and the service writers to get the right combination of people. The synergy between our people and our customers has to be right. You can't be afraid to make changes."

Lindsey has a very strong commitment to excellence in customer service. "We learned the importance of customer service from our Dad. You have to be humble. There is always something you can learn about your product, your technique, your customer, somewhere you can improve."

The company has 16 service bays, with two reserved for body work. Two of the service department's eight technicians are RVDA certified techs. All have been trained in speciality areas. Parts and accessories occupy 8,000 SF and the showroom with 14,000 SF can display 12 motorhomes and trailers.

Reines's management skills demonstrate strength in marketing and sales. "When I became president, I made changes in our key management personnel. Doug Magee, who has been with

Text by Fred Thompson





Above: Lindsey Reines has enjoyed selling RVs since he was a teenager. Below left: Reines and Doug Magee, general manager, were very pleased when RVDA selected the company as "Dealer of the Year." Below right: Doug discusses a new delivery with Lindsey.

Reines RV Center since 1983, became our sales manager. We currently have seven salespeople. We think 2010 will be a banner year which should push our sales staff up to 10," he said.

Doug started with Reines RV Center as a towable salesman. "I really enjoyed working with Richard, Lindsey, and Dusty, all of whom were very good at selling RVs. Dusty tried to retire in 1978, but he loved

the parts and accessories business and meeting customers. I don't think he ever really retired," Doug said. "I fully supported the move to Manassas when I took the sales manager's position in 1998. Later I added another hat when Lindsey asked me to be general manager. Lindsey does a great job working the shows we do, and I usually stay here and run the business and sales when he is away."

Doug realizes great satisfaction and personal reward by planning and recommending the right equipment for families' RV camping and for couples' RV retirement plans. "So many people save for years to do this and I enjoy helping them find the right unit," he said.

"Lindsey and I are excited to be a dealer for Tiffin Motorhomes because of our shared interest in a top-quality product and a service orientation. We have similar ideas on how to take care of the customer," Doug continued. "We like the fact that Tiffin has a quality build from the chassis up. They do good follow-up with the coach owners whenever a problem develops. In the seven months that we have been a dealer, we have seen TMH go above and beyond several times. It really makes our job a lot more pleasant and fun when we have Tiffin backing the product. Bob Tiffin tries to insure that TMH builds coaches in such a way that supporting and maintaining them is not a complicated process."

Doug continued to point out reasons why Reines RV Center became a Tiffin dealer. "TMH is a true manufacturer. For example, their craftsmen take high qual-

ity, raw wood and build fine furniture and cabinets. Their fiberglass plant makes a molded one-piece fiberglass roof. TMH constantly reevaluates the product *as it is built*. They don't build 25 units that continue to incorporate the same design flaw. Their methods produce far less flaws and failures. Production and engineering staffs meet every day. This makes a tremendous difference if you are making corrective changes sooner rather than later. Tiffin keeps proven technology that is dependable, rather than making changes just for the sake of change or something new."

"We were really impressed with Tiffin's Service Center," Doug said. "Tiffin put its money into a very important area. All products as complicated as a motorhome will have some problems. But Tiffin recognizes this and aims high to constantly exceed customer expectations."

The Reines RV Center's philosophy for customer training on a new coach is "as long as it takes." If a new owner has had previous experience with a motorhome, the delivery specialist evaluates his transitional knowledge and begins at that point. The specialist does a complete walk-through and insists on the owner performing procedures and tasks until he is satisfied.

The dealership provides a free roadside assistance plan by Coach-Net for one year which also includes 24/7 phone support by service technicians.

The recession placed a severe strain on the RV industry and Reines RV Center was no exception. After the recession

*Continued on page 43*





# Motorhomes, Horses, and Motorcycles – In That Order!

**Danny Inman has been answering owners’** questions about their Tiffin motorhomes for the last four years in his regular column “Inman’s Answers” that appears quarterly in this magazine. During his 36 years of experience at Tiffin Motorhomes, he has developed an almost encyclopedic knowledge of how hundreds of floorplans were designed and built. His diplomatic patience and cordiality in answering questions and solving problems has created a very appreciative audience.

Although born in Red Bay, Danny grew up a few miles south on a small farm near Vina where he graduated from high school in 1972. Vina is an even smaller town than Red Bay, but its school system produced good football, basketball, and baseball teams that competed throughout northwest Alabama. Danny lettered several times in all three sports.

The Inman family goes back several generations in northwest Alabama. “My Dad, Neuce Inman, was born in 1913. When he was only 14, he ran away with the circus,” he laughed. “Then two years later he hoboed his way back home on the train. He had a lot of good stories to tell.”

“After serving in the military during World War II, he met Mom in Birmingham in 1945. Dad was driving a delivery truck at the time,” he said. “Mom was from Holly Pond out east of Cullman. They lived in Birmingham for a short time after they married and then moved back to Red Bay.”

Neuce Inman worked for Tiffin Supply Company making deliveries. Back then it was simply called Tiffin’s Store. “Dad knew Bob and David Tiffin when they were young boys just beginning to work in Mr. Alex’s store,” Danny continued. “Later on Dad worked for and retired from Franklin Electric Coop.”

When Danny graduated from high school, he found a job in Hamilton, Alabama, with Buccaneer Homes, a mobile home plant. “Mickey Collum, now a 36-year veteran at Tiffin, and I worked together at the Buccaneer plant, which was about 20 miles south of Vina,” he continued.

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Text by Fred Thompson







Danny and Rita take a few moments to inspect a new 2010 Phaeton.

In March 1974, Mickey suggested they should take a look at Tiffin Motorhomes. “He said, ‘Do you want to go to Tiffin and work?’ I said, ‘Yeah, why not? It’s closer to home.’”

“Bill Emerson was the plant manager then,” Danny recalled. “He hired us in. There were only 50 people working here at that time.”

“I did the electrical under the dash, some of the dash work, installed the driver and passenger seats, the front and rear lights on the caps, and some of the interior lights,” Danny said. “I had done electrical work at Buccaneer. As a kid, you grow up around here working on cars and building houses, so it wasn’t hard to learn how to build motorhomes. They were so simple then compared to what we build today.”

In 1974 Tiffin Motorhomes was housed in two small buildings: an assembly plant and a welding shop. The offices were in a small corner of the assembly plant. “On one corner of the property, we were next to an area where they had rodeos,” Danny remembered. “Across a city street there was a church and a fair grounds. The livestock sale barn was on the land where the mechanics shop is now located. The trains came flying by on the other side of us. We were pretty boxed in.”

After the company had built several hundred units, owners began to come back to the plant for repairs. “We parked motorhomes coming in for service along the property near the railroad tracks where we had electric hookups. It was interesting the way we began to spread out,” he said. “Bob had a nice garden near the motorhomes and he would go over there after work to weed and till the garden. Coach owners would see him and not know who he was, and then go in the next day to ‘meet the president’ and find out he was the gardener.”

The rural values and the practical ways local people got things done carried over into how Tiffin Motorhomes operated its business. “Customers felt comfortable with a president who wore khakis and a sport shirt,” Danny said, “and although we didn’t realize it at the time, Bob was building a culture of service and trust that would quickly become the company’s hallmark.”

In 1977 Danny became the utility man on the second half of the production line. A “utility man” is a person who can do all

of the jobs in a designated segment of production. He fills in when someone is sick or when extra help is needed to resolve a problem. “We were building three units a day and by early 1979 we were doing six a day,” Danny observed. “We built them quite differently from what we do today. After the welding shop built the steel platform for the base and floor, we then put on the aluminum wall frames which had the inside paneling and insulation already in place. At the next station we installed the cabinets and the roof, attaching the cabinets to both the side-walls and the roof. Lastly, we hung the exterior aluminum siding on the studded walls.”

In 1983 Danny accepted an office job to handle incoming calls for parts, service, and sales. “I was offered the opportunity to help with the Louisville show that year. It was a big show back then, just like it is today,” he said. “And for me it was my first chance to really meet our dealers.” New career possibilities were beginning to open. He was soon working shows in Los Angeles, South Bend, Miami, Dallas-Fort Worth, and New York.

By 1987 the company had quite a few dealers on the West Coast. “James Bostick was our general sales manager,” Danny recalled. “Kelly Moore and I handled in-house sales. We had two outside sales reps: Dick Cross on the West Coast and Bob Garner in the Mid-West. Back then we did not have specific accounts.”

In 1987 Tiffin Motorhomes built a new administration building and followed in 1988 with a new assembly building which housed the first production line to build coaches with an all fiberglass exterior. “In about a year and a half, our whole company had made a great leap forward,” Danny said.

Concurrent with the development of his business career, Danny Inman was also taking care of his future away from work. “I met Rita while we were both still in high school, but we didn’t start dating until after I graduated,” he said. The couple married in 1976. They have a son, Joshua, who is now 22. He attends Shoals Community College and is studying drafting, architecture, and bridge and structural engineering. “It is amazing how academically advanced Joshua is compared to me when I was his age,” the proud father said.

The company’s sales organization continued to develop during the nineties as it experienced significant growth. “In 2000 we divided up sales territories and assigned each salesman specific accounts,” Danny explained. “As southeastern regional sales manager, my accounts are in the states of Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and parts of Mississippi.”

Tiffin’s regional sales managers now deal directly with the dealerships in their territories. They take orders for new units, handle problems, do sales training, help dealers with service questions, and coordinate Tiffin’s support of the dealerships’ retail shows. “My job today is very diverse. I may be answering a sales question one minute and a technical question the next. But my first responsibility is to my dealers,” he said. “I do enjoy working with the public, but sometimes it can be a little frustrating when you can’t solve their problems immediately.”

The 36-year veteran offered some interesting insights into the



changes in the motorhome business over the last three decades. “Thirty years ago we were building ‘campers’ that could sleep a family. Parents and children took vacations in the summer and long weekends in the spring and fall,” he noted. “Now motorhomes are not ‘campers.’ They are luxury homes on wheels. Owners expect all the luxuries and amenities in their motorhomes that they have in their permanent homes. In fact, we have begun to describe our motorhomes as being ‘more residential.’”

“Another trend we have noticed over the last eight years since 9–11 is the lowering of the average age of our owners. People are becoming more family oriented with their travel plans,” he believes. “There seem to be more couples like the Meitlers (Vol. 6, No. 2) who are home schooling their children and traveling for a year at a time. We have two floorplans now that have bunk beds for children.”

But other trends are surfacing, too. “When I talk with owners here at the plant, at dealerships, and at RV shows, the conversation often turns to ‘downsizing.’ Although it is still a prototype that is undergoing testing and further development, we are addressing that need with the Allegro Breeze,” he said.

As a 36-year veteran, Inman sees an industry undergoing vast changes. “The overall recreational vehicle industry is going to shrink, but I think Tiffin Motorhomes will very likely expand,” he predicted. “More companies will be trying to do business like TMH does business.”

“But it is hard for them to quit watching the bottom line every time they have to deal with a customer’s problem,” he continued. “Bob has set a proven standard that taking care of your customers and doing the right thing with respect to each owner is just the best way to do business. It is the reason we are still in business when a lot of companies are gone.”

“Fuel efficiency is a must for the future,” he continued. “There will always be big motorhomes for those who are full-timers and want the luxuries a big rig can provide. But there is a large segment of our market who want smaller, more fuel-efficient motorhomes. We will design units that make the best use of interior spaces, but at the same time do not make you feel cramped.”

“The Breeze is our first design to address the new demands of the post-recession market. I am sure you will see more innovative Tiffin products in the months and years ahead,” Inman projected. “Our chassis plant will play a major part in our future as it allows us to make modifications and changes in shorter time frames. The size of this company allows us to be very flexible.”

It is obvious Danny Inman enjoys his job. Is there another Danny Inman who manages to separate himself from the motorhome business? “Yes, there is,” he says with a smile. “I grew up riding horses and I still enjoy doing that today. We have three horses. Josh and I like to ride together, and several friends and I do some pretty long trail rides in the Bankhead National Forest.”

*Continued on page 45*



A Tiffin Motorhome made with quality components means fewer repairs and more time for your favorite pastime.

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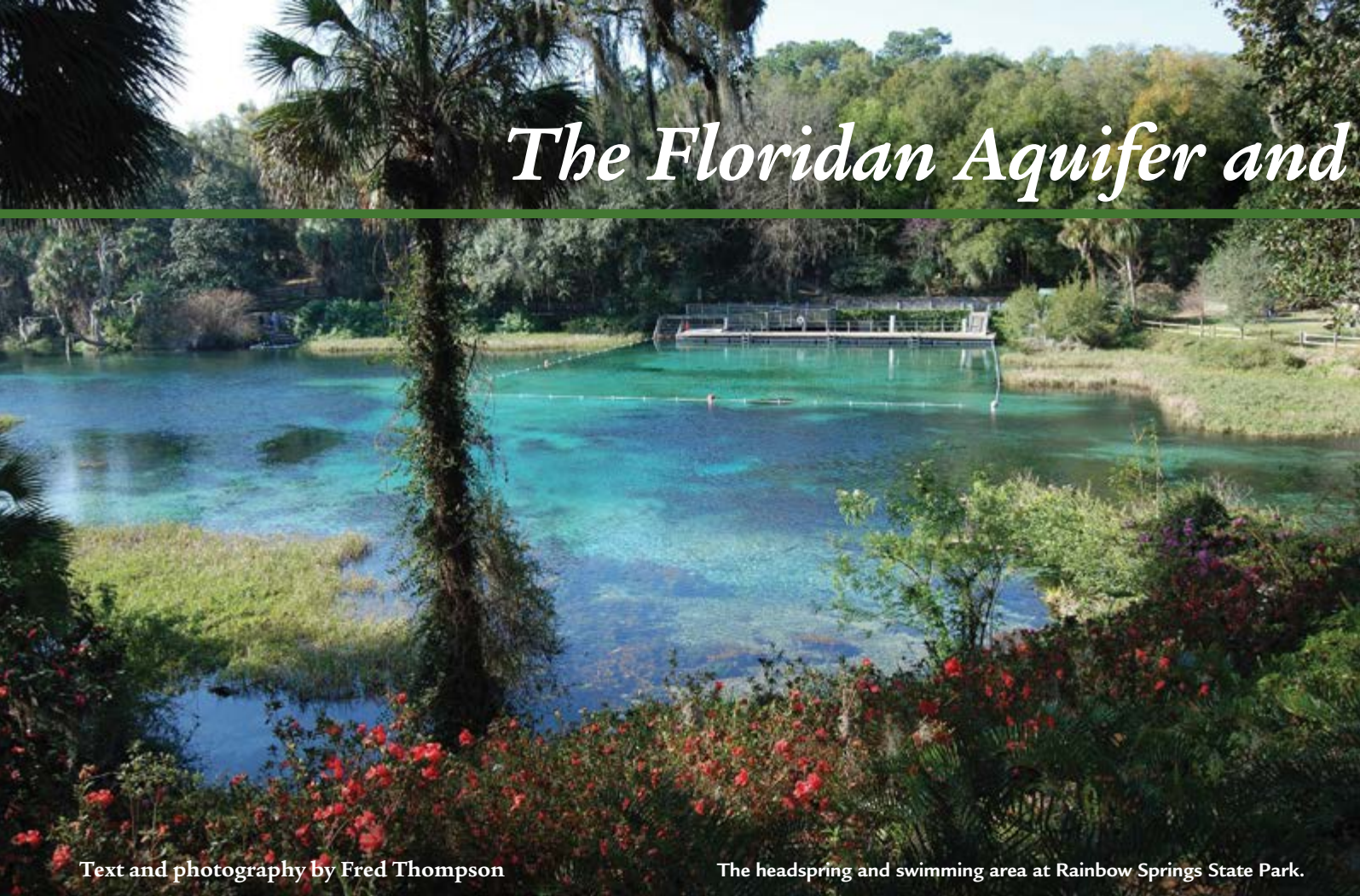
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# The Floridan Aquifer and the Magnificent Springs of Florida



Text and photography by Fred Thompson

The headspring and swimming area at Rainbow Springs State Park.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPH E. SMITH, RAINBOW SPRINGS STATE PARK

Unless you happen to be a hydrologist or a resident of Florida, the word *aquifer* is probably not in your everyday vocabulary. Several million Floridians, however, depend on the Floridan aquifer — so just what is it?

An aquifer is a vast underground system of porous rock that holds water, yet allows the water to move through it. Sometimes the holes in the porous rock are so small you couldn't push your finger through one, and sometimes the water flows through caverns large enough for scuba divers to explore. Aquifers can be composed of sand, shells, unconsolidated gravel, fractured rock, and limestone.

The Floridan aquifer is one of the most productive aquifers in the world. It underlies an area of approximately 100,000 square miles in southern South Carolina, southeastern Georgia, southern Alabama, and all of Florida. Aquifers are important reservoirs that have become very strategic in supplying freshwater to some of Florida's major cities as well as smaller towns and rural areas. The Floridan is pumped intensively for industrial use and agricultural irrigation. For all purposes it supplies as much as 3.5 billion gallons of freshwater per day.

Freshwater generally fills the upper layers of an aquifer and saltwater is usually present at lower depths. In some places, the

## A quick history on the ownership of the springs of Florida

Until the mid-1900s most of the large springs in Florida were the centerpieces of privately owned resorts and attractions, touting the curative values of the waters flowing from their clear depths. Some resorts opened in the 1880s. Before the turn of the century, it was very likely a full day's journey was necessary to reach a particular spring from the nearest city. As Florida's population grew, and improved rail transportation brought in more winter visitors, the facilities and the recreational offerings at the various springs

were expanded, even to the point of competing with one another. They continued to be profitable through the fifties and sixties. But the advent of Disney and other mega-parks in the seventies spelled doom for most of the attractions whose primary draw was based on Florida's magnificent springs.

As the private owners closed their properties one by one, the state of Florida recognized the historical and ecological value of these resources and began to appropriate funds to surround the springs with the pro-

tection available to state parks. Now, under the professional oversight of ecologists, hydrologists, wildlife and plant biologists, and park planners and managers, the springs are being protected appropriately and the public is returning to rediscover the treasure they own. With swimming areas in the springs themselves, waterways for canoeing, hiking and biking trails, and ranger-guided snorkeling tours and hikes, Florida's springs are experiencing a long overdue revival.

water in the aquifer may be confined by a thick layer of clay followed by a heavy layer of sand extending to the surface of the earth. When this happens, the water comes under pressure. If a well is drilled in such an area, the water will rise to the top without a pump. This is called an artesian or free-flowing well.

In the Floridan aquifer, there are many places where the top layer of porous, carbonate rock is less than 100 feet thick or absent altogether. This has resulted in the development of large conduits or caverns that channel the freshwater to the surface

and create the orifices of major springs which are called "boils."

Florida has 17 first magnitude springs out of a total of 78 in the entire United States. A first magnitude spring has a flow of at least 100 cubic feet per second. That's 748 gallons per second or 65 million gallons per day. Just 15 miles south of Tallahassee, Wakulla Springs is a giant among the springs of Florida with an average flow of 250 million gallons of freshwater per day. A record peak flow recorded in April 1973 was measured at 14,324 gallons per second or 1.2 billion gallons per day.

## Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-10 in Tallahassee take Capital Circle at exit 196 or 203. If exit 196, the highway number is SR 263 South; if exit 203, the number is US 319/SR 261 South. From the southernmost point of the Capital Circle going around Tallahassee, take US 319 toward Apalachicola. In less than two miles, take SR 61 which forks to the left and follow it to Wakulla Springs.

Wakulla Springs is probably the deepest freshwater spring in the world. Archaeologists believe that humans have occupied the lands around the springs for 15,000 years. Historians debate over the meaning of the word *wakulla* but usually offer two possibilities: "river of the crying bird" or "strange and mysterious river."

Edward J. Ball, a very successful financier who managed the estate and holdings of his brother-in-law Alfred I. du Pont, chose Tallahassee as his home. He purchased 4,000 acres around the springs in 1934 and completed construction of the Wakulla Springs Lodge in 1937. He imported stone, marble, and tile, and hired craftsmen and artisans who built an elegant retreat featuring ironwork and high ceilings and beams painted with murals. It is an excellent example of Mediterranean Revival architecture. The restaurant is a step back in time, with a menu from the late thirties (but not the prices). Ball focused the development of the park on the preservation of wildlife and the surrounding habitat. In the mid-sixties he donated land to Florida State University for a marine laboratory which was completed in 1968 and named in his honor. He then sold the remaining land surrounding the springs to the state of Florida, which used the property to create the Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park.

Today the springs are open 365 days a year for swimming and boat tours. The water temperature remains constant at 70 degrees and we saw several visitors swimming at mid-afternoon. A two-story concrete structure provides a perch for peering down into the 100-foot depths of Wakulla as well as a jumping and diving platform for the braver of heart. In the winter months the structure is a good observation point for viewing the manatees who seek out the warm waters of the many springs of Florida.



Swimming area at Wakulla Springs State Park.



Florida cooters and an alligator sun themselves on the same log.



Manatee cow and calf cruise the Wakulla River.



The most interesting activity at Wakulla Springs is the pontoon boat tours, operated by very knowledgeable guides who will make sure you get the opportunity to take your special pictures of the unusual variety of wildlife. The parks and surrounding swamp lands are the wintering grounds for an amazing variety of birds. On our first boat tour I had the unusual opportunity to photograph an American Bald Eagle swooping low to seize a fish and then soaring to the top of a tree to feast on his catch. The boat operator shut off the engine while we stood in awe watching this magnificent creature over 100 feet above who simply ignored us. We enjoyed a host of manatees cavorting around the boat on the second tour and several alligators who seemed to be watching us as much as we were watching them.

After you get your sea legs back under you, you may want to take a hike on one of the park's five trails. They are self-interpretive and have boardwalks to get you over the wet, swampy areas.

After you go through the main gate and drive a short distance, you will see the lodge over to the left. Go straight ahead until you see a packed sand parking lot large enough for motorhomes. Wakulla does not have a campground. We stayed at Big Oak RV Park in Tallahassee which was \$34 per night.

**Costs:** Park entrance fee, \$6 (standard fee in Florida state parks for occupants in one car); boat tour; \$8; lunch for two in the lodge restaurant, \$20.

## Suwannee River State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-10 take exit 262, turn north on SR 255 and continue for 2 miles into Lee, Florida. Travel east on US 98 for approximately 8 miles. Turn north into the park.

Leaving Wakulla Springs we decided to stay off the interstate to see a little more of "the Real Florida." We followed US 98 east to Perry, then US 27 for 19 miles to SR 53, where we turned north for 12 miles and took a fork to the right on SR 255 for 10 more miles to Lee, Florida. Take US 90 east for about 8 miles until you see the park entrance. Unlike many of Florida's state parks, Suwannee has full hookups. If you are 40 ft. and under, you won't have any trouble getting into most of the sites. We slipped a 42-ft. Allegro Bus into site #10.

This park is a popular destination because it is located on the beautiful Suwannee River which originates in the Okefenokee Swamp in the southeast corner of Georgia. You can navigate the river all the way to the Gulf if you are so inclined. Boat trailer parking is provided and canoes can be rented in the park. A high bluff overlooks the point where the Withlacoochee River joins the Suwannee. Five trails within the park's 1800 acres will take you to earthworks built by Confederate forces to guard against incursions by Union Navy gunboats, to one of the oldest cemeteries in the state, and to a paddlewheel shaft from a nineteenth century steamboat. The Florida National Scenic Trail passes through the park. It begins at Gulf Island National Seashore near Pensacola and terminates in the Big Cypress National Preserve, just north of the Everglades National Park.

Suwannee is a very nice place to camp in its own right, but

we selected it because of its proximity to three of Florida's first magnitude springs: Ichetucknee Springs State Park, Fanning Springs State Park, and Manatee Springs State Park.

**Costs:** Camping fee, \$24.20 per night

## Ichetucknee Springs State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** To reach the North Park Entrance, take I-75 to exit 423. Follow SR 47 south to CR 238 and follow the park signs. To reach the South Park Entrance, leave I-75 at exit 399. Follow US 441 to High Springs. Then take US 27 for four miles past Ft. White to the South Park Entrance.

Less than an hour's drive from our home base at Suwannee, Ichetucknee Springs is a day use park that features the third largest of the first magnitude springs with an average daily flow of 216 million gallons per day.

If you plan to spend the day with a picnic lunch, take the North Park Entrance and enjoy one of three beautiful nature trails (maps provided at the gate). A half-mile walk will take you to the Blue Hole Spring. The one- and two-mile trails wind through diverse ecosystems.

When the air temperature is in the seventies, you will be amazed at how warm the spring feels at its constant temperature of 71 degrees. If you like to swim, bring your bathing suit and don't let the fact that it is "winter" discourage you. There are plenty of places to spread your picnic lunch. So pack in some calories and get ready to paddle your canoe on the Ichetucknee River. Private vendors just outside the park offer canoe rentals or you can bring your own. On the outbound part of your canoe trip, paddle upstream and then enjoy a more leisurely float back to your vehicle. In the winter months you may have the river to yourself on weekdays. The park does not have a campground.

**Costs:** Park entrance fee, \$6; canoe rentals vary with time, beginning at \$10 per hour.

## Fanning Springs State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-75 take exit 387 and travel west on SR 26 for 33 miles to the town of Fanning Springs. Follow signs in the town to the state park.

As a first magnitude spring, Fanning Springs barely makes the cut-off at 70 million gallons per day. The swimming area over the springs has a floating dock that separates it from the Suwannee River. It is a great pool for swimming laps and getting in your daily exercise. Manatees sometimes visit the springs during the winter months.

If you are with a group, the playgrounds, volleyball court, and frisbee and soccer fields are ideal for entertaining the younger set while the picnic is being spread.

Perhaps the most interesting possibility is planning a canoe trip on the Suwannee River from Fanning Springs to Manatee Springs. Two couples were launching an early afternoon trip just as we were leaving. Contact Suwannee River Tours at (352) 490-9797.

**Costs:** Park entrance fee, \$6; canoe rentals vary with time and pick-up fees.



## Manatee Springs State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** From US 98 in Chiefland, take SR 320 west six miles to the park, which is located on the Suwannee, just a few miles down river from Fanning Springs.

A first magnitude spring, Manatee Springs discharges an average 109 million gallons per day. The spring and its surrounding ecosystem and wetlands support an abundance of wildlife, including many species of fish, alligators, mammals, and birds. From November through April, manatees seek the spring's 72 degree waters for warmth when the temperatures of the Suwannee River and Gulf of Mexico drop to the high fifties and low sixties. Manatees can suffer from hypothermia just as humans do. Popular for swimming, snorkeling, and scuba diving, the spring is an outstanding year-round experience. The spring run forms a clear stream that flows through towering cypress, tupelo, and other wetland trees to the Suwannee River. A boardwalk constructed eight to 10 feet above the wetlands takes you approximately a half mile from the springs to the Suwannee River where it terminates in an observation deck, providing excellent photo opps of the river which is at least 250 yards wide at that point. A dock receives boaters who come in for a visit. A very nice playground and picnic area with grills and pavilions offer the perfect setting for a sunny winter Florida afternoon.

We spent one night in Manatee's campground, but I would have to say that it needs some work. The sites have water and electricity, but the utilities are not well-positioned for coaches. The access roads through the campground are narrow and overhead limbs have not been trimmed back to prevent scratching your motorhome. Both the roads and the camping pads are unprepped sand.

**Costs:** Park entrance fee, \$6 (campground occupants do not pay the entrance fee); campground, \$24.20

## Rainbow Springs State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-75 near Ocala, take exit 352 and travel west on SR 40 for 18 miles to the intersection of US 41. Turn left. The park entrance is immediately on the left.

Various estimates place the daily flow of Rainbow Springs at approximately 460 million gallons per day, second only to Silver Springs. That's 320,000 gallons/minute or 5,300 gallons/second. The Rainbow River created by the springs flows only 5.7 miles before it joins the Withlacoochee River and flows on to the Gulf of Mexico.

Archaeologists have found evidence of the Paleo-Indians here and around most of the first magnitude springs in Florida as far back as 10,000 years. The Timucuan people were living near this spring when the Spanish first arrived in the 1500s. American pioneers settled the headsprings in 1839. By the 1920s when it was called Blue Springs, the area became a popular spot for tourists. After WWII, the attraction grew. Glassbottom boat tours, a waterfall, attractive brick walking trails, and landscaping that featured camellias and azaleas were added. Then a zoo, a rodeo,



The headspring at Manatee Springs State Park.



The Suwannee River at Manatee Springs State Park.



Manatee Springs boardwalk through diverse ecosystems.



View of Rainbow River above headspring in Rainbow Springs State Park.

COURTESY OF JOSEPH E. SMITH



gift shops, and a monorail. Marketing experts changed the name to Rainbow Springs. But in the mid-seventies when the larger theme parks lured tourists away, Rainbow Springs was closed. In 1972 the U.S. Department of the Interior designated Rainbow River as a “National Natural Landmark.” In the mid-nineties, Rainbow Springs reopened as a state park.

Last year the state built a first-class campground about six miles from the headsprings with full hookups and excellent ADA facilities. The park and the campground are not adjacent to one another, but the campground has its own access to the river. Trails wind through the sandhills and oak hammock communities, capitalizing on the natural assets of the area.

The gardens and waterfalls survived the park’s closing when it was a privately owned attraction. They have been renovated and restored to preserve and improve upon the quality of the original landscaping. The park is fast becoming a destination to swim, snorkel, tube, fish, canoe, picnic, and stroll the gardens. In late January there will be a profusion of camellias and throughout March the entire headsprings area will burst into pinks, purples, and whites with its famous azalea blooms.

The springs and the campground have a variety of ranger-guided activities, including nature walks, snorkeling expeditions, and canoe trips. The original park area now offers a food concession, gift shop, and visitor center. Picnic pavilions may be reserved for family reunions.

The Rainbow River created by the headsprings supports abundant wildlife, including otters, alligators, many species of turtles and fish, and many varieties of water birds. Osprey and hawk can be seen circling above the park, while smaller birds thrive in the lush vegetation. Many animal species, including the endangered gopher tortoise, inhabit the uplands surrounding the springs and river.

**Costs:** Park entrance fee, \$6; campground fee incl. tax, \$32.55; campground canoe rentals, \$6/hr; park canoe rentals, \$10.65/hr.

### Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-75 20 miles south of Ocala, take exit 329 and travel 25 miles west on SR 44 to Lecanto. Take CR 490 about 7 miles to Homosassa Springs. Turn left on US 19 and proceed to the Welcome Center on your right at 4150 South Suncoast Blvd. Buy tickets at the Welcome Center and travel at no charge on the tram or the pontoon boat to the springs and wildlife park.

With a flow of 120 million gallons per day, Homosassa Springs is the fifth largest of Florida’s 17 first magnitude springs. Because of the rehabilitation center for injured and orphaned West Indian manatees, the springs are the centerpiece of the park. After a 20-minute entertaining and educational talk about the manatee as an aquatic mammal, its habitats, and the rehab facility, visitors are invited to see the park’s manatees up close from the Fish Bowl, an underwater observatory that places you only a foot or two from the gentle giants as they come gliding by the glass windows consuming the fresh lettuce attendants have dumped at the surface. When the mammals



COURTESY OF JOSEPH E. SMITH

Cool mornings produce fog over Rainbow Springs’ 72-degree waters.



Manatee cow glides past underwater viewing area at Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park.



Flamingoes make defensive moves against vultures who were intruding into the park habitat.



Pontoon boats transport visitors from the Homosassa Welcome Center to the park on a canal through dense Florida vegetation.



are rehabilitated, they are released back into the wild.

With the exception of the resident hippopotamus and the transient flamingoes, the wildlife center showcases animals that are native to Florida. Visitors view the animals in large natural habitats from 1.1 miles of elevated boardwalks. The menagerie includes a cougar, bears, bobcats, otters, deer, alligators, and a wide variety of birds, birds of prey, and songbirds. Three red wolves and a Florida panther, both endangered species, have recently occupied their new habitats.

Three manatee programs, two Wildlife Encounters, and an alligator program are presented each day. The Reptile House offers close-up viewing of native snakes and other reptiles. The Children's Education Center offers a variety of hands-on activities for young people.

**Costs:** Adults, \$13; children (6-12), \$5; under 6, free.

### Silver Springs & The Silver River State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-75 take exit 352 and travel east on SR 40 for approximately 9 miles. At the traffic light for 58th Avenue, make a sharp acute angle turn to your right on SR 35. The Silver River State Park will be approximately 1 mile on your left.

First, let's look at getting into the campground. You have 50 amps and water, no sewer. The bathhouses are very nice and well attended. We managed to stay four days without having to visit the dump station by taking showers at the bathhouse. If you are making a reservation by phone or ReserveAmerica, ask for sites between 50 and 55 (53 is ADA) which will put you close to the bathhouse. The sites are pull-through and rather spacious.

While you are there, be sure to visit the Silver River Museum and take time to do the bike trail (rentals available) and the hiking trails. At the ranger station, you can pick up brochures for many other activities in the area.

Silver Springs has the distinction of being the largest of Florida's 17 first magnitude springs, with an average daily flow of 522 million gallons per day. Historically, the springs and the surrounding country have given up archaeological evidence that indicate the Paleo-Indians inhabited the area at least 12,000 years ago. As with other springs, the Spanish first visited here 500 years ago. In the 1820s, Indian Agent Gad Humphries arrived at nearby Fort King and gave Silver Springs its name. It soon became a tourist attraction for the adventurous who arrived in boats they poled up the river. In the late 1870s, Phillip Morrell managed to fix a thick piece of glass in the bottom of a rowboat and a new enterprise began.

In this writer's opinion, the best way to see Silver Springs is from the Silver River. We rented a canoe at the state park for \$5 per hour and paddled 2½ miles up the river to the springs. The five mile round trip was one of the most beautiful canoe trips we have ever taken – anywhere! The wildlife and the flora are just incredible. When you get to the Silver Springs boil, you can paddle around over it and look into the clear depths for as long as you like. Doing this in the winter months is best because you won't



As a new resident at the Wildlife Park, a Florida panther seems to enjoy his extensive natural habitat.



Cormorants in concert were not disturbed as we approached them in our canoe on the Silver River.



Blue herons find the Silver River habitat much to their liking.



While canoeing the Silver River, we frequently saw large turtles sunning themselves on logs.



have to contend with as many glass-bottomed boats. However, you should be fairly adept at maneuvering your canoe. If you haven't visited Silver Springs Theme Park in a few years, you may want to plan a day there. They have some interesting exhibits, occasional concerts, and nice rides that won't make your eyes bulge.

**Costs:** Park entrance fee, \$6; campground fee, \$24 + taxes; canoe, \$5/hr; museum, \$2; bikes, \$10/day.

## Wekiwa Springs State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-4 north of Orlando, take exit 92 and travel west on SR 436 (Semoran Blvd.) for six miles and turn right on Wekiwa Springs Road. After Wekiwa Springs Road makes a sharp right, the park entrance will be on your left.

Not quite a first magnitude spring, Wekiwa ejects 43 million gallons of crystal clear water into Wekiwa Springs Run which joins with Rock Springs Run to form the upper Wekiva River. Note the difference in the two spellings. In the Creek language, Wekiwa means "spring of water" and Wekiva means "flowing water."

Located on 7800 acres, Wekiwa Springs has 19 distinct plant communities which sustain an abundance of wildlife. The largest population of the endangered star anise flourishes here. Well-marked trails through tall pines and live oaks will allow you to observe some of Florida's more unusual plant life, including red buckeye, witch hazel, passion flower, and beautyberry. Be sure to ask at the ranger station for a guide to identify plants and birds. Thirteen miles of trails in the park are designed for hiking, biking, and horseback riding.

Wekiwa Springs and the Wekiva River Basin are home to a great variety of beautiful birds. If you decide to canoe some or all of the 15 miles of the Wekiva River, you will likely see great blue herons, ibis, egrets, moorhens, ospreys, and kingfishers on the banks of the river. There are six concessioners who rent canoes and planned trips that take from one to eight hours. Ask at the ranger station for the brochure "Canoe Trips in the Wekiva River Basin."

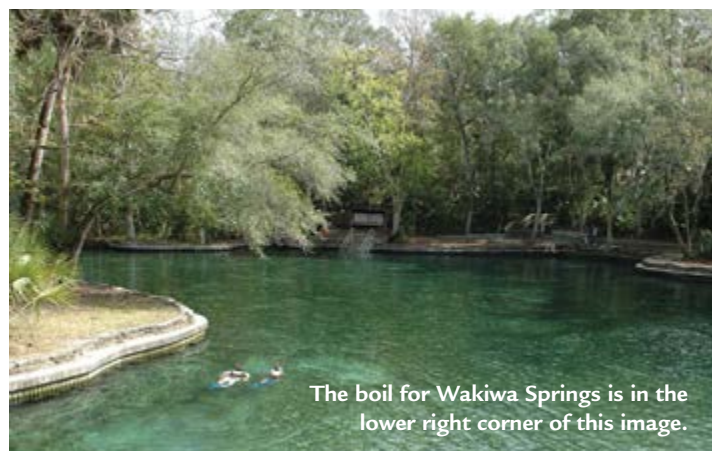
If you are inclined to take a swim in Wekiwa's 72-degree crystal clear waters, the perimeter walls and sidewalks around the area have two entry points with steps and handrails. I expected the temperature to feel really cold, but was surprised at how refreshing it was. The outside perimeter of the springs are shallow enough for you to touch bottom, but remember that it is very deep in the center where the boil is located. The sidewalks around the springs will give parents good vantage points to watch their children. There are no lifeguards.

The campground has sites for coaches of any length with nice separation. Hookups are 50 amp and water, no sewer.

**Costs:** Park entrance fee, \$6; campground fee, \$24 + taxes; canoe and kayak rates vary with the concessioners.

## DeLeon Springs State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-4, take exit 118 and drive five miles west on SR 44 to DeLand. From downtown DeLand, take US 17 north for approximately seven miles to the park entrance.





Sixteenth-century Europeans heard stories that had survived for two millennia about legendary springs that could restore the youth of those who drank from them. The writings of Herodotus and Alexander the Great tell of extensive searches made for such healing waters.

Juan Ponce de Leon's knowledge of such stories may have been excited when the Native Americans told him about Florida's magnificent springs. Local folklore claims that the Spanish explorer discovered the Fountain of Youth at this site, that the Spanish built a sugar mill here in 1570, and that the British farmed here. There is no evidence to support any of these legends.

But archaeological evidence does show that Native Americans lived here for thousands of years before the Europeans came. Two dugout canoes found in the spring have been dated to 3000 and 4000 B.C.

Early commerce began in 1779 when a British company traded with the Seminoles. Other highlights include John Audubon painting several of his famous bird illustrations in this area. A plantation and sugar mill constructed in the 1820s burned fifteen years later during the Second Seminole War. It was rebuilt and destroyed again by Union troops in 1864.

In the 1880s the townspeople changed the name from Spring Garden to DeLeon Springs in hopes of attracting tourists. A small resort, later a hotel and pavilions, and then the wintering home for the Clyde Beatty Circus gave the area hope of economic development. After a whirl in the fifties and sixties with jungle cruises and a water circus, the town's dreams fizzled. In 1982 the state bought the property and began operating it as a state park.

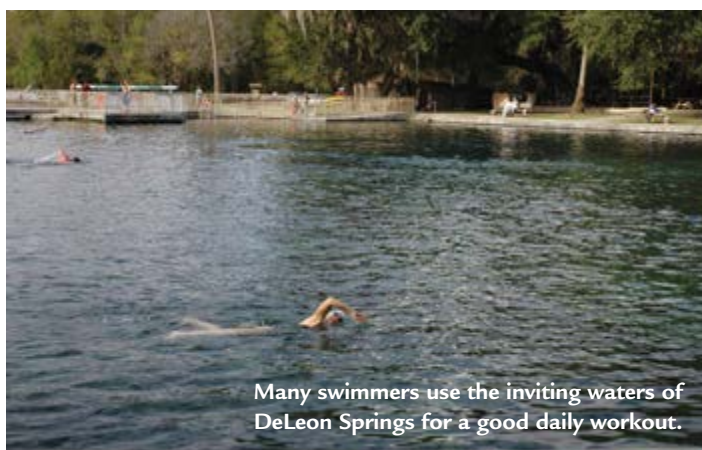
Today the spring has been encircled with concrete walls that give it the appearance of a very large pool. Its constant year-round 72-degree temperature brings visitors throughout the year to swim in its warm, clear waters. The springs flow over a retaining wall to form the Spring Garden Run which eventually runs into the St. Johns River.

With the immense natural pool, plus canoes, kayaks, and paddleboats available from the park's concessioner, DeLeon Springs State Park could be thought of as a "water park." Visitors (with proper state license) may fish for bass and bream from the shore or from the fishing pier. Hiking the 5.2-mile Wild Persimmon Trail will get your appetite in good shape for a visit to *The Old Spanish Sugar Mill & Griddle House*. This is an event you do not want to miss. Each table in the dining area of the mill is equipped with a propane grill, the top of which fits evenly with the table. When you order pancakes, you will receive two pitchers of batter: whole grain and white. Then you may order the "additives" for your pancakes: blueberries, pecans, bananas, etc. Sausage, bacon, and eggs are available and you do all of the cooking. It's a fun experience that you can prolong until your appetite is sated.

**Costs:** Park entrance fee, \$6; restaurant, ~\$10 per person.



Karin Krause entertains the Gerhards from Berlin at The Old Spanish Sugarmill & Griddle House.



Many swimmers use the inviting waters of DeLeon Springs for a good daily workout.



The Old Spanish Sugar Mill & Griddle House has provided breakfast to thousands of DeLeon Springs visitors.



Boardwalks lead visitors to several picnic pavilions under ancient live oaks at DeLeon Springs State Park.



## Blue Spring State Park

**DIRECTIONS:** If you are coming from DeLeon Springs, stay on US 17-92 south until you get to Orange City. Follow brown signs to the park west of the city. If you are on I-4, take exit 114 and drive west into Orange City.

Blue Spring is a first magnitude spring that produces 104 million gallons daily. The largest spring feeding into the St. Johns River, Blue Spring is a designated Manatee Refuge (mid-November through March) to a growing population of more than 200 West Indian Manatees. When the river's temperature drops below 70 degrees, they begin seeking the constant 72-degree waters of the spring. At that time all water activities in the spring and the spring run are terminated, including swimming, snorkeling, scuba, canoes and kayaks. Manatee viewing is excellent from the wildlife overlooks along the boardwalk to the spring and from the summer swimming dock.

The park's 2,643 acres is a paragon of diversity with 15 nat-

ural plant communities, a lagoon, a north-flowing river, and a first magnitude spring. Its habitats protect 15 threatened or endangered plants and animals, including one of only two known locations for the Okeechobee gourd.

Like the other large springs of Florida, it is rich in history. First inhabited by Native Americans, it was visited in 1766 by the American botanist John Bartram who called it "an admirable fountain." In 1856 former gold rush prospector Louis Thursby bought the spring and its surrounding area and planted orange groves. In 1872 he built his three-story house on top of a large Indian midden. His "Blue Springs Landing" for shipping and receiving goods was visited frequently by steamboats on the St. Johns River. The steamboats also brought tourists to visit the springs and view the manatees.

St. Johns River Cruises depart daily at 3:30 p.m. January through April, and 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. in the warmer months ([www.sjrivercruises.com](http://www.sjrivercruises.com) or 386-917-0724). The company also offers an "Up Close & Personal" guided kayak/canoe experience for a three-hour



Elevated boardwalks take visitors through almost impenetrable wetlands to the headspring at Blue Spring State Park



Former goldrush prospector Louis Thursby built his three-story home which served as both residence and business headquarters.

## Manatees

The Florida manatee, a subspecies of the West Indian manatee, is a large grayish-brown aquatic mammal. An oblong, oval body tapers into a flat, paddle-like tail that propels it through the water with powerful movements. The front of the body has two flippers with three or four "fingernails" on each flipper. The head and face are deeply wrinkled and the snout has stiff whiskers. The manatee breathes air like all mammals and must surface every three to four minutes, positioning its nose just above the water. If resting it can stay submerged for as long as 20 minutes. The manatee averages 9 to 10 feet in length, weighing 800 to 1200 pounds, but specimens have been known to reach 13 feet in length and weigh over 3000 pounds.

Their life span in the wild is approximately 40 years. Female manatees mature sexually between three to six years and first give birth to offspring at four to seven years. Females usually produce one calf every three years. A calf will nurse from 18 months to two years.

The manatee can live in fresh, brackish, or salt water habitats, which includes Florida's rivers, springs, harbors, bays, and inlets. Manatees are herbivores and eat over 60 different plant species such as mangrove leaves, turtle grass, and types of algae. An adult manatee will commonly eat up to 10 percent of its body weight per day. The adults have no incisor or canine teeth, just a set of cheek teeth. Unique among mammals, these teeth are continuously replaced throughout

life, with new teeth growing at the rear as older teeth forward in the mouth fall out. A fossil skeleton found in a northwest Florida quarry indicates that the manatee inhabited the shallow bays and rivers of Florida 15 million years ago.

Their survival has been threatened by collisions with water craft, red tide, and the reduction of flow in Florida's first magnitude warm springs which supply the 72-degree water they need in the winter months to prevent hypothermia. The current population of Florida manatee is believed to be approximately 3,300, keeping them on the endangered species status. They are protected by state and federal laws which exact severe penalties for harming these amazing mammals in any way.



**OWNER PROFILE** *Continued from page 20*  
Homes builds and sells homes in their own subdivisions, each designed for different incomes. Within each subdivision, the homes had floorplans chosen for a specific number of family members to accommodate their lifestyle. Elaine saw herself as a counselor to families trying to make the right decision. "It was a new responsibility and I really loved it. I loved going to work every morning," she said. Adams Homes liked her approach and sent new hires to Elaine for training and indoctrination. She was the top salesperson for three successive years, selling 105 houses in her best year.

The opportunities to teach became the fulfillment of the career plan Mike had mapped out 35 years earlier. But another dream began to resurface. "Having owned four motorhomes over the years, we knew what we wanted to do when the time came," Elaine said. The College of Business asked Mike to become the director of the newly formed Leadership Institute and he wanted very much to accept the offer. "We had just built a new home and had only been in it for six months," Elaine continued. "It made sense to stay."

After searching dealers' websites and noticing that Lazy Days had 1100 coaches on site, the Austins headed to Tampa in their Class C motorhome. "I spent several days researching the price-value-quality relationship of every 40-foot floorplan we liked. I was sure it was going to be a Phaeton," Mike said. "When we walked through the brand islands at Lazy Days, Tiffin's quality just jumped out."

They received an email from their son Kevin urging them to go for it. "When are you going to do what you really want to do? If you stay at the university, they will continue to want more and more from you. I know you love to teach, but the Leadership Institute is a black hole."

"Secretly, our kids called Lazy Days and had them locate our salesperson. They sent him a bottle of wine and \$1,000 in gift certificates from Camping World to give to us when we made the decision," Elaine related. "Mike had settled on a Phaeton, but I saw an Allegro Bus and asked him to drive it. He agreed just to please me. It was missing a sofa and the salesman assured me he could put two Euro-recliners in its place. I liked the navigation system, the hardware, and the cabinets. To my surprise Mike agreed and we bought the 40QSP. It was March 9, 2008."

They made plans to sell the house on the way back to Mobile and asked the children to come and make their picks on the furniture and household items they would no longer need.

"When we got back to Mobile, all I wanted to do was get in that motorhome and drive," Mike said. "But I must admit that leaving the Leadership Institute was one of the hardest things I have ever done."

Their lives began to change almost overnight. "We still plan ahead but our schedules are more relaxed," Elaine said. New routines began to develop. They drive 250 to 350 miles per day with Mike doing about 90 percent of the driving.


Elaine drives about 10 percent of the time to maintain the driving skills she learned at the Lazy Days RV Driving School.

"Elaine is a great navigator and knows how to get the most out of our in-dash navigation system," Mike said. Together they stay on top of current books. "Elaine reads aloud while I drive and we often discuss the topics she is reading. It makes the driving time pass quickly."

In December 2008 they decided to buy a two bedroom villa in Kokomo, Indiana, as their home base. "It is near Kevin's home and he keeps an eye on things for us and forwards the mail we need," Elaine said.

The Austins plan to travel four months during the summer in the northern states, which includes one month on Cape Cod, and four months in the southern states during the winter. They plan to spend two months each during the spring and fall seasons at their villa.

During their 21 months in their Allegro Bus, they have logged approximately 17,000 miles, visiting points on the east and west coasts, the southwest and the northeast, from Niagara to Cape Canaveral. They have visited all four of the military academies, including the Air Force Academy which their son Michael attended.

In July 2010 the Austins plan to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary on Cape Cod with all of their family attending. When they are stationary and not out sightseeing, they enjoy several hobbies—some in common and some individually. They mapped their career plan and it seems to be working well. 


**DEALER PROFILE** *Continued from page 30*  
began, the company was left with 15 motorhomes and eight towables from one of the leading manufacturers who took Chapter 11. "We marked them all down to the invoice price and sold the inventory in three months," Lindsey said.

In dealing with a recession that has put many dealers out of business, Lindsey and Doug came up with an equitable way to avoid pink slips. "In summer 2008, we had a meeting with the entire staff to discuss the

situation," Lindsey said. "It was either let 15 people go or implement a 32-hour work week, continue to stay open six days a week, and rotate our shifts. We became a stronger team and only one person left. Doug and I took pay cuts. We then reduced our inventory by 50 percent. So far it has worked."

The company had a good August and then began to really feel the recession in September. "Traffic at the dealership slowed. People were postponing their decisions to trade up, or break into the RV

lifestyle for the first time," Doug noted.

By summer 2009 motorhome sales were picking up again and Reines negotiated with Tiffin to fill a void in their Class A inventory. "I have seen our business operate in both strong and weak economies, and I believe that people will always want to buy recreational vehicles," Lindsey said. "While other dealers are still nervous about stocking new inventory, we are doing just that. This lifestyle is very important to a lot of people." 



## Interviews from Florida, Arizona, and South Dakota



### Gary & Theresa Tholen

Former Hometown: Tracy, Minnesota  
Interviewed in Chokoloskee Island, Florida

- Gary and Theresa own a 2005 Phaeton.
- They have motorhomed since they were in their thirties. On a shopping trip to purchase a prom dress for one of their daughters, they also came home with their Phaeton.
- They became full-timers in 2006.
- They travel with Annie, their 12-year-old Vizsla.
- They winter at a site they own at Outdoor Resorts, Chokoloskee Island, FL. This year they will spend 3 months in Kirksville, MO watching their daughter play volleyball at college. They also spend time in the summer at Breckenridge, CO where they own a second site at Tiger Run RV Resort.
- Gary retired as the owner of a Subway and two supper club restaurants. He spends time managing wind turbines on land they own in Minnesota. Theresa substitute teaches high school.
- They have been married 32 years and have two daughters, Krysta, a student at Truman State University, and Jenna who is married to Tom and lives in St. Cloud, MN.
- Both Gary and Theresa love to fish in their boat at Chokoloskee Island. Gary caught a 7-foot shark this year. They are also avid hikers. Gary hunts deer and elk in Wyoming and pheasant in Minnesota.
- They have been to Red Bay and think the whole experience is "wonderful."



### George & Judy Danielson

Hometown: Atlanta, Illinois  
Interviewed in Apache Junction, Arizona

- The Danielsons own a 2008 Allegro Bus.
- They have been motorhoming since 1987.
- They winter in Apache Junction, AZ.
- George and Judy travel with Espresso, a Lynx Point Himalayan cat, who was supposed to have been a Seal Point Himalayan, now known as "so-so kitty."
- George is retired from 22 years at State Farm Insurance and Judy retired from a secretarial position at a Ford dealership.
- They have been married 25 years.
- Their blended family includes five sons and one daughter.
- They have six grandsons and six granddaughters.
- George does all of the driving. They travel between 5 and 6 months each year.
- One of their favorite places is Gulf Shores, AL because of the beautiful beaches and wonderful sunshine.
- Their common interests include NASCAR racing and golf.
- Judy makes beautiful Swedish weaving patterned afghans. In spite of their passion for motorhome travel, they still enjoy being "homebodies."
- They have not been to Red Bay but are planning on going sometime this year.



### Gregory & Patty Allen

Former Hometown: Bloomington, Illinois  
Interviewed in Sturgis, South Dakota

- Gregory and Patty own a 2007 Allegro Bus.
- They went full-time on a boat for one year before they bought their first motorhome, a used Navigator. They traded it for their 2007 Bus and could not be happier.
- They became full-timers February 2005.
- They travel with their 6-year-old Shitzu, Ben.
- They winter at a site they own at Cypress Woods RV Resort in Ft. Meyers, FL and are thinking of trying Tucson next winter.
- Gregory is a retired chiropractor whose business was in Clinton, IL. He still keeps his license current. Patty retired from GTE Verizon's sales department.
- An avid reader, Gregory has found more time for reading since they retired.
- They have been married 24 years and have one son, Dustin, who lives in Gainesville, FL.
- Gregory does most of the driving, even though Patty is certified to drive. Gregory laughs as he explains that arrangement: "I'm not a good passenger."
- Both Gregory and Patty enjoy bicycling and are avid motorcycle enthusiasts, traveling every year to Sturgis, SD. Last year they put 17,000 miles on their Yamaha Venture exploring our beautiful country.
- They have been to Red Bay and think the service is "absolutely fantastic."

**Editor's Note:** Earl and Rita Warren retired five years ago from the Denver area and were full-timers for two years in their 2007 Phaeton. I first met Rita when she submitted an article for "From the Road." The Warrens traveled to 35 states in that brief time. "One of the best parts of exploring our beautiful country is meeting the people who make it great." In 2009 they found just the right place in the Southwest for their permanent home. Rita had done enough interviews for her "On the Road" column to take us through the Summer issue. In our Fall issue you will meet Elaine Austin.



## TIFFIN MANAGEMENT TEAM

*Continued from page 33*

In October nine riders went to southern Illinois for a five-day trail ride that covered 130 miles. “We went through open country in the Shawnee National Forest and connecting state parks. The trail ride was planned so that we had bunkhouses to use each night,” Danny said. “It was a great experience. I took two horses for the ride and alternated them since we were doing 25 to 30 miles each day.”

Rita claims Danny still searches the TV guide for old runs of Bonanza to watch on the weekends. “He should have been born about 70 years earlier. He could have been Adam Cartwright’s brother,” she laughed.

Like many in the Tiffin Motorhomes family at Red Bay, Danny owns a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, in his case a Heritage Softail model. “I’ve only had this hobby for four or five years. I didn’t take the training wheels off until last year,” he joked. “Rita and I have done several trips together, including the Smoky Mountains and Gatlinburg, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Natchez Trace.”

One thing is for sure — between motorhomes, horses, and motorcycles, Danny Inman doesn’t lack for something interesting to do. And you can bet that you won’t have a hard time starting a conversation with him on either topic. **RIS**

## TRAVELING WITH YOUR PETS

*Continued from page 48*

pet. The honey or syrup can be rubbed on your pet’s gums to deliver glucose quickly, especially if they are having a seizure. It is important to keep doing this until you get your pet to the emergency hospital. Signs of hypoglycemia are shaking, acting weak or very sedate, and possibly seizures. Hypoglycemia and low blood sugar can be avoided with careful monitoring.

Your pet can live a comfortable life and you can still travel without too much inconvenience while your pet is taking insulin and eating a controlled diet. Now would be a good time to have been enrolled in that pet insurance! As you travel with a diabetic dog or cat, take note of where the nearest emergency hospital or veterinarian is located along with having appropriate phone numbers. **RIS**

## Need Your Motorhome Cleaned?

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**Inside:**

Wash windows; wipe down walls, ceilings, and countertops; sanitize bathroom; clean floors; dust and wipe furniture and cabinets with oil cloth; steam clean carpets.

**Outside:**

Thorough wash job including roof, tires, and rims; showroom-quality wax job.

Next time you are in Red Bay, Alabama, contact Ricky Johnson for a quote at:

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**rvcleaningservice@gmail.com**





## The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

### 5 OLD LADIES AND A DOG ON A BUS TO COLORADO

It started as a great adventure among life-long friends, but who could have known that we would have to deal with a hailstorm, a flood, a car chase, and a healing!

We left Bedford, Texas, in my motorhome early on a Tuesday morning. We cram packed the fridge the night before, but quickly realized we had far more than would fit. We decided to leave the frozen enchiladas in the shower to thaw during our first day's drive to Palo Duro Canyon. However, we had plenty of room for five women and their stuff. I must have really scared everybody with my explanation that each traveler could have one big drawer, one basket, and some closet room. I have always allotted one basket per person to keep their "stuff" —cell phone, camera, glasses, purse, book, whatever—it keeps from having to answer the question "Where is my. . . ."

I had pleaded for a close-in parking spot at the Palo Duro State Park in North Texas, and they explained their first come—first served policy. So we headed out early, hoping to be there in time to be close to the Texas Theater show that evening.

We started trying to eat our way to Colorado after about three hours on the road, and before we knew it we were in Palo Duro Canyon—one minute driving down a country road and the next dropping down into the canyon on a two-lane winding road. I soon decided that the road was MINE and anybody else on that little winding road would just have to wait until I got to the bottom of the canyon.

We found our campsite, set up for the night, and roughed it with our enchilada dinner, although the sight of five women trying to light the oven was a scary picture. It looked a little cloudy so we grabbed our umbrellas and got ready to go to the outdoor stage. One extra potty stop slowed us down a bit, but we were so glad later because just as we opened the front door the wind almost carried us away. Huge thunderstorms rolled in, and the trail to the theater that was dry a few minutes ago now stood two feet under water. I've always read of a "flood in the arroyos," but never experienced it until that night. They canceled the theater,

leaving us to huddle around the weather radio trying to find out what was happening since huge hailstones were pounding the Phaeton. We had no cell phone coverage in the coach and really felt cut off from civilization.

The next morning the park rangers told us they had checked on us during the night. We had five feet of water and they were satisfied they could get to us if things had gotten worse. Further down the canyon they had ten feet of water and the rangers couldn't get to those campsites. We went to the park office the next morning and pleaded for a refund of our tickets, arguing that we were all senior citizens who might not make it back again for a rain check. It worked!

With money in hand, we proceeded to the Royal Gorge in Canon City, Colorado. Needless to say I opted to park the bus instead of driving over the Gorge.

Colorado Springs was our stop for the night, and once again we ate a huge dinner—spaghetti and meatballs. By this time, we were getting pretty good at lighting that oven. One of our campers had brought omelettes in a bag for breakfast. Each person squished her bag of two eggs and added their own additions. We boiled them all in a huge pot of water for 13 minutes! Best omelette I've ever had.

We packed up to drive through the Garden of the Gods. Let me just say the Garden of the Gods roads were constructed before we had

SUVs — much less RVs! Once again, the road was MINE. The rolling teepee has been from New England to Florida to California, but these little roads were the smallest I had seen. I was glad to see the exit sign. Little did I know that I would be looking for another exit soon.

Interstate 25 between Colorado Springs and Denver is a major freeway, eight lanes in some sections, with a 75-mph speed limit. I was comfortable traveling in the right lane, probably going 65 or so. Suddenly I could see lights coming up fast on my right. My right? I was in the right lane. Just about as soon as I realized what was happening a car passed me on the right shoulder as though I were standing still. Right on his bumper was a Colorado Highway Patrol car. Five seconds later, three more patrol cars passed me on the left. This was about the time I began to look for that exit, but all the exits were blocked with patrol cars. We were in the middle of a "Car Chase." If you haven't seen five women glued to those big windows in the Phaeton, you haven't seen a car chase. Like it or not, we were there for the duration.

Traffic soon began to slow in a construction area, and off to our right we saw a wreck between the CHP car and the chased car. It looked like everybody was okay, but the "chase" was flat down on the ground with an officer aiming a gun at his head. There were also two women we could see sitting as we passed. We fiddled frantically with the radio dials trying to find

out what had happened. We couldn't wait to get to Breckenridge up in the mountains and get our TV on.

I'm sure the Tiger Run RV Resort couldn't figure why we were in such a hurry to hook that cable up. Sewer line and water could wait. Get the cable on! Sure enough, there we were on the TV. We hadn't realized, but the TV news crew was filming directly opposite us while they were holding the gun to the guy's head, and in the distance behind him you could see an RV passing. I'm surprised we couldn't see five women's heads pressed against the windows. Come to find out, he had kidnapped the two women in Colorado Springs, and the CHP officers were determined he wouldn't get out of their sights. I kid you not! This is real life.

After our day of adventure we had one more good meal of brisket and fresh chocolate pie—yes, I did say *fresh* chocolate pie. I'm glad we finally got proficient at lighting the oven. I'm also glad I invited such good cooks along for the ride. They just didn't know what a ride it would be! Not only did we see an exciting car chase, but we were in for a healing.

Tired after our adventures, we set up the beds and settled in for the night. The Phaeton has room to sleep six, but you can be sure it's very close quarters. Everyone got their jammies on, read their books for a while, and slowly drifted off to sleep—that is, except for one with a problem. Conversations that day had been on macular degeneration, contact problems, etc., and she couldn't see to read her book.

She was the only one still up and didn't want to scare the rest of us. Her first thought was a stroke, so she took two aspirin. Then she decided to try to go to sleep and just pray about it. She figured that if she still couldn't see in the morning, then we'd look for a hospital.

Remember about the baskets for "your stuff"? The next morning when she awoke she reached for her glasses first thing, only to find out that the glasses were not hers. She had been trying to read with someone else's glasses! But thankful we were. We didn't have to stop our trip to find a hospital.

We spent the next three days shopping, taking pictures, sitting in lounge chairs in the grass outside, having happy hour, and fending off questions from curious neighbors like the lady behind us who finally got up the nerve to come over and ask, "Who brought you ladies up here?" When she found out it was "one of the ladies," she swore us to secrecy. "Don't tell my husband you drive that thing."

Finally, it was time to drive home, so we packed up, did all the checklists, and headed back down the mountain pass. After the narrow roads in Palo Duro Canyon and the Garden of the Gods, mountain driving was no big deal. But as we departed on I-70 through the Eisenhower Tunnel back to Denver, I felt something was not quite right. The Phaeton seemed to be "dragging its behind"—you know how it should feel after driving 20,000 miles, and it just didn't feel right. I was looking for one of those run-away truck roads to pull off

and check it out when a car passed us waving frantically for us to pull over. There's just not a lot of places to pull a rolling teepee over on a mountain pass, but I soon did and found our one lone bicycle dragging behind us. I thought I had secured it to the bicycle rack, but apparently not. That was what the "dragging its behind" was all about.

We had 800 miles to go, back to Texas, and we had experienced true camping in Palo Duro, luxury at Tiger Run, and I wanted the ladies to experience a night at Wal-Mart. They asked where we were staying in Amarillo, and I told them we'd find a place. We did—the Amarillo Wal-Mart. They couldn't believe it! I wanted them to experience a shower on the Wal-Mart parking lot. They went outside, found the security guard, and asked him to take our picture with the Wal-Mart sign in the background. He was happy to oblige, but he had a question for us. "Where is you ladies husbands?"

Judy Hobart • 2007 Phaeton

**Editor's Note:** When Judy Hobart submitted her story of she and four of her friends taking off for Colorado in a Phaeton from their home in Texas, I thought "Wow!" I requested a short postscript to describe these adventurous souls who will no doubt give other ladies the courage to strike out on their own. Before the trip began, only Judy had driven the Phaeton.

"Three of us went to high school together and prior. The other two we've known since high school. I am widowed, one is single, and two are married. The Phaeton is mine and I did most all of the driving to Colorado, although two of them did relieve me some on "straight" highways. I am an active freelance court reporter, but the rest are mostly retired. We spent seven days on the road, and I've driven that road many, many times through the years, but never in anything this big. I've always driven a sports-type car, never even an SUV. But I found out you can teach an old dog new tricks. I took two of them to the high school parking lot before we left and gave them driving lessons, just in case!"

*Left:* Nancy Womack, Doris Gray, Judy Hobart, Linda Stegall, and Nancy Barber. My dog Calie is a 20,000-mile veteran.





## “What is this? My cat has diabetes?”

November was Diabetes Awareness Month for Pets. We are all aware of diabetes in people, but what about our furry friends? Yes, they too can become diabetic. More than 1.6 million dogs have been diagnosed with diabetes as has one in every 200 cats. One of the leading causes of diabetes in an animal is obesity, usually the result of an inappropriate diet.

As we travel with our pets in an RV, they must be exercised. Cats, especially, are very hard to exercise so their diets must be carefully watched. Diabetes is caused by the inability of the pancreas to produce enough insulin to break down the carbohydrates eaten by dogs and cats.

Some symptoms of diabetes to look for in your pets are: excessive drinking, almost to obsession; excess urinating; ravenous appetite with unusual weight loss; thin skin; and an unkempt-looking coat. Cats may develop a neuropathy causing them to crouch or be weak in the rear legs. As the disease progresses, cataracts and complication with kidney disease and heart disease appear, very similar to the progression of diabetes in humans.

Your pet can be tested for diabetes by your local veterinarian. A 24-hour fasting blood sugar test is done along with a urine test.

Once a diagnosis has been made, treatment with insulin and diet can begin. At first, your pet will need a blood glucose curve and follow-up blood sugar tests. After the initial analysis to determine how much insulin to give your pet, you will need to check your pet's blood sugar periodically. This is not difficult and you can still travel with your pet. You must, however, monitor your pet's blood sugar in the same way humans with diabetes must consistently monitor their blood sugar. Using a lancet on the ear tip and a glucose meter, you can determine your pet's glucose level. Using a urine dipstick, you can monitor the urine sugar which should be negative or trace in a well-treated dog or cat.

Diet plays an important part in regulating your pet's blood sugar. A high protein to low carbohydrate diet is best. A low carbohydrate diet reduces the amount of insulin needed in the pet's body.

The majority of our dogs and cats are overweight. Cats have been known to go into diabetic remission. That is, they do not need insulin once their carbohydrate intake is controlled. Diets high in fiber help by lowering gastric emptying time thus reducing the amount of insulin needed. There are many commercial diets made by Hills or Iams that are high in fiber and protein and low in carbohydrates. Consult with your veterinarian as to which diet your pet should be on.

There are various treatments for diabetes in dogs and cats as far as the type of insulin used. Some animals will respond with the use of pills such as Glipizide that stimulate the pancreas. Injections of insulin can also be given. I think it is much easier to give an injection than to give a pill to a cat or dog. Most animals require injections 1-2 times daily to become controlled. The pills do not have a high rate of success in animals. Your veterinarian can show you how to give an injection.

Once controlled, you will see the symptoms of excessive drinking and urinating decrease along with the ravenous appetite. While under treatment, it is possible for a diabetic cat or dog to develop hypoglycemia or low blood sugar from too much insulin, stress, or too much exercise without eating. It is best to keep some honey, syrup or orange juice on hand to give to your

*Continued on page 45*

Dr. Pilarczyk practiced veterinary medicine for 38 years in Tampa, Florida. He and his wife, Kay, travel most of the year in their 2007 Phaeton and are wintering in Tucson.

## DIAMOND SHIELD

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## Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, 36-year veteran with Tiffin Motorhomes, invites your questions.

Please use the attached postcard and send Danny your questions about your motorhome and its operation, especially those questions that may be useful to all of our readers. If you need more space, address your letter to:

Danny Inman  
 Roughing It Smoothly  
 PO Box 1738  
 Monroe, GA 30656-1738

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 own a 2004 35-ft. Phaeton. How do you get the screens off for cleaning? I have windows with dual pane glass.

Allen Cox  
 Riverside, California

Dear Allen,

For windows that slide left to right to open, grab the vertical sides of the screen and push up. When the bottom horizontal part of the frame clears the channel in which it slides, you can pop the screen

out. On the windows that slide up to open, push the screens to the left until the right vertical frame clears the channel. Then pop the screen out by pulling it to the right.

We appreciate your column very much. We have a 2004 Allegro Bay and have had trouble from the beginning with the leveling jacks. Last month we were told the "mother board" was not functioning and would cost about \$800 to replace. The tech said the board should have lasted more than five years. We are confused. Is this really the problem?

Don and Diane Masiello  
 Temple City, California

Dear Don and Diane,

The mother board *should* last for five years or longer, but most technicians will tell you that anything electrical can fail the day after you put it into service. Of course, that's why both companies have warranties on their boards for a limited time. The board for either Power Gear or Atwood is very expensive. The dealer should determine the mother board is defective before replacing it.

Our 2008 Allegro Bus has been great. But we miss these items that were on our previous "entry level" Monaco coach. In the plumbing bay, it had tank level indicators, hose valve for exterior hose use, and a gravity fill for fresh water additives. In the kitchen, there is no skylight like the Monaco had. On the cooktop, there is no "simmer" setting. The lowest setting still boils water. We hope these suggestions will be helpful.

Ron Emrich  
 Capitola, California

Dear Ron,

Thank you for your suggestions. In the 2010 models, electronic tank level indicators have been added to the features in our utility bay. We have the outside shower with hot and cold water supply in the utility bay, but the hose is smaller than the standard garden hose diameter. We discontinued the exterior gravity fill into the water system to prevent malicious contamination of your water. At the moment,

the galley skylight is not in our design planning; however, we do like the idea. We will contact the manufacturer of the gas cooktop to see if the fuel control can be reduced to create a "simmer" setting.

I have a 2008 36-ft. Phaeton. I received a recall from Cummins to have a calibration 0844 done. After the calibration, there was a drop in the fuel mileage. I now average 6 to 7 mpg. I went back to Cummins but could not get any help to remedy the lost mpg. Could you advise if this is normal fuel mileage after the calibration? In checking with other Phaeton owners, they indicated they were getting 8 to 10 mpg.

Frankie Majek  
 Corpus Christi, Texas

Dear Frankie,

I was not able to get any information from Cummins on the specified calibration or why that modification would affect your gas mileage. They did not recognize the 0844 calibration number you mentioned in your postcard. Engines have become so complicated and computerized that they have to be serviced by the manufacturer. An average 6 to 7 mpg under normal driving conditions sounds like a low number for your coach. Most of our owners say they get 8 or better.

I have a 2000 39-ft. Allegro Bus. On a recent trip this summer, the mode display on my 4-door Norcold refrigerator started cycling from Auto to AC to LP without stopping until it was turned off and restarted. Everything remained normal for four or five hours when it started recycling again. The inside temp remained constant and the freezer and icemaker worked fine. I called Red Bay and talked to a tech who said he had not heard of this problem. Two years ago I had the same problem, but it went away. Now it keeps recurring. Is this symptomatic of something major going wrong that needs to be fixed?

Bob Buchanan  
 Indio, California

Dear Bob,

Nothing major to fix your problem. Your refrigerator needs a new optical board



which Tiffin or any RVIA certified technician can replace for you.

We purchased a new 2009 Allegro 32BA with the Ford chassis and the V10 engine. When driving, the motorhome does a side-to-side shifting or tail wagging. Are there any stabilizing bars which can be installed to stop or control this movement? Can you tell us what may be causing this problem?

Lamar & Mary Whitaker  
Crestview, Florida

Dear Lamar & Mary,  
Most Camping World stores offer an anti-sway bar for the Ford chassis. Blue Ox also has an anti-sway bar which is sold through dealers who can install them.

I have a 2006 Allegro Bay 37DB and it is probably the nicest motorhome we have ever owned. But it has one persistent problem. The dual pane windows continue to trap moisture between the glass panes. TMH had Camping World in Gibbstown, New Jersey, replace all of the front double pane windows and they are fine. Now the non-moveable panes in the side windows of the front slide-out are blocked with moisture. Can these two windows also be replaced? Warranty? On the back cap there is a panel that looks like it could be removed. What is it for?

Kenneth Willson  
Barrington, New Jersey

Dear Kenneth,  
The windows can be replaced. The warranty on our radius-cornered dual pane windows is in effect for three years from the original date of purchase. The fiberglass panel on the back cap provides access between the rails of the motorhome to the position where the holding tanks are located.

After my 2004 Allegro Bus has been plugged into shore power for a while, the green light on the monitor panel shows the house batteries have a full charge. After unplugging and driving for 20 minutes, the charge level drops to half (yellow) or all the way to red. If left unplugged for a few weeks and both master switches are turned off, the inverter

usually has to be rebooted. Am I doing something wrong? All six of the batteries have been replaced.

Mike Horner  
Nottingham, Maryland

Dear Mike,  
When plugged into shore power, your monitor panel should read a "full charge." Once you unplug, it should drop down one light. When you start the engine, it should go back up to full charge and hold. If this is not happening, you either have a faulty battery or crossed electrical wiring. The problem could also be caused by improper connecting of the four house batteries. You should have someone familiar with this electrical system trace all of the faulty wiring possibilities.

We own a 1999 34-ft. Allegro Bay on a Ford chassis. Everything is fine except the ride of the vehicle. Is it possible to add air bags or better shocks to improve on the rough ride? If not air bags or shocks, can you suggest another solution?

James Kennedy  
Terrell, Texas

Dear James,  
An air ride system for a Ford chassis is not available as far as I know. A set of Bilstein or Sachs brand shocks will improve your ride, but it may not make it perfect for you. There are other aftermarket stabilizer and ride enhancement systems, but I am not familiar enough with them to make a recommendation.

First, I need help on how to remove the day-night shades on my 2000 Zephyr. I cannot figure out how to get the valance off. I spoke with you some time ago about sending in three shades to have them restrung. · Second, can you direct me to a service provider for the satellite dish that came on this motorhome? Everyone I have consulted so far wants to put another satellite dish on my coach.

Willis Eadens  
Somerset, Kentucky

Dear Willis,  
You will need an extra long square-head bit with a power screwdriver to remove the three screws that attach the top of the

valance to the cabinet above it. There are two L-brackets for the sides of the valance that are much easier to remove. Once the valance is down, you can remove the shades and send them to TMH for restringing.

You may be in a situation where the troubleshooting and labor cost to repair your satellite dish will cost more than what you want to put into a 9-year-old system. You should put an upper limit on what you are willing to spend and let a dealer try to repair the unit. You are welcome to bring it to the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay where technicians can diagnose your problem. We will make the repair or replace the unit. You decide.

We own a 2004 Allegro Bay on a W22 chassis. In October 2008 we were informed by the Workhorse Service Center in our area that the brakes (drums, rotors, etc.) were fried and needed replacement at a cost of \$3,000. The repair was made. In May 2009 we received safety recall 50901-C which covered our RV and referred to the type of brake problem we had experienced. We have not received a schedule for the repair, nor an explanation or solution to the problem. We would appreciate your input about this problem and whether or not the service center in Red Bay will be making the correction.

C. A. Johnson  
Auburn, Alabama

Dear C.A.,  
This recall came directly from Workhorse. They have not provided information to TMH about the problem because we are not an authorized Workhorse service center. Therefore, we cannot make the repair here in Red Bay. The nearest Workhorse authorized service center is Precision Sales & Service, 451 64<sup>th</sup> Place South, Birmingham, Alabama 35212. 877-403-7827.

This past summer my wife and I drove our 2002 40GH Phaeton to Alaska and to Yellowknife NWT on the return trip. Before leaving our home in Van Cleave, Mississippi, I replaced the air cleaner on the 330-hp CAT engine with a removable clean-replace kit using a hi-flow filter. During the trip I drove several miles on dusty

gravel roads. After returning home the air filter indicator showed a "dirty filter" (12,000 miles). I removed the air filter to clean it and could not believe the amount of dirt, dust, and even mud in the filter. During the trip on dusty roads, I could plainly see heavy dust clouds swirling up at the top rear of the coach around the air intake, which explains the heavy dirt accumulation in the filter. Why is the air intake point on the coach designed this way? Why didn't TMH relocate the air intake away from the rear of the coach? Is there a fix or modification to correct this problem? Removing and cleaning the air filter is a very difficult task.

Tony Weiss  
Van Cleave, Mississippi

Dear Tony,  
Three engineering staffs are involved in determining the location and size of the air intake: the chassis, engine, and coach manufacturers. Factors include proximity to heat (exhaust), distance from the filter on the engine to the air intake point, and a place on the coach's exterior that allows the least amount of water intrusion. The air intake location on the Phaeton was carefully considered.

We realize that the location of your filter makes it difficult to replace. On later models we improved access to the filter by the easy removal of a panel inside the rear cargo door on the driver's side.

I am the original owner of a 2000 Allegro Bus and I have enjoyed (with a few exceptions) all of the 89,000 miles I have put on it. I have been able to repair several minor problems myself, but this one I can't figure out. The heater coil on the engine-fed heater has sprung a leak. This manifested itself in the form of a bad antifreeze smell in the coach coupled with overheating and the "Low Coolant" light coming on. This happened in Canada, 1500 miles from home. After determining the leak was in the fins of the heater coil, I removed both the input and return coolant lines and spliced them together so we could get home. This was in the summer and we did not need the heater or defrost. Now we do! Since the leak is in the fins of the heater coil, it will need to be removed in order

to be resoldered. The problem is that I cannot see any way to remove the heating coil without removing the fiberglass cap. I hope you have a suggestion for making this repair without removing the cap.

Robert J. Reid  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Robert,  
You gain access to the heater coil from inside the coach. Remove the screws on either end of the dash and lift it up to about a 45 degree angle. The heater coil is behind the vertical panel on your right as you come up the step well. After you remove this panel, you will see the heater coil housing. Take the lines loose to the heater coil. Remove the screws from the top of the case and the side facing the interior of the motorhome. Remove the clips from the top of the case, the side toward the middle of the motorhome, and the bottom of the case. Remove the two Phillips screws that hold the heater core in place. Open the case like a clam shell and slide the heater core out of the middle. We recommend that you replace the heater core with a new one instead of trying to solder it.

We have a 2009 43-ft. Allegro Bus. Three questions: · How do we solve the dishwasher problem? When on shore power, the drawer locks and stays in place. When we unhook, the drawer opens and slides out while we are driving down the highway. So far we have tried to solve the problem with velcro strips — not a very satisfactory solution. · How do we get the winterizing solution out of the icemaker? · Can the screen on the passenger window be removed? The passenger can't see or take pictures while we are moving because of the screen.

W.L. and Sam Cooley  
DeRidder, Louisiana

Dear W.L. and Sam,  
Before you unhook from shore power, hold down the dishwasher lock button for at least three seconds until the red light becomes steady red. You should be able to hear a confirmation beep and possibly also be able to hear the mechanism lock. Once you unhook from shore power, the door should stay locked. However, if you start the generator or plug the unit back

into shore power, the drawer will automatically unlock. To relock it, you must first hold the locking button down to deactivate the lock, then go through the same procedure to lock it again. When you have shore power, it will stay locked during the washing stage. When you lock it prior to unhooking from shore power, it should stay locked until you reintroduce power to it. · Through the refrigerator service panel on the outside of the coach, unscrew the icemaker line and allow it to drain as much antifreeze as it will. Then flush all of the water lines in the coach to remove antifreeze throughout the system. Reattach the icemaker line and be sure you have not cross-threaded the connection. Check for leaks when you open the valve. If you have a residential refrigerator with water dispenser, flush that outlet until the water is clear. Then allow the icemaker to run two or more boxes of ice to clean all residues from the freezing unit. · The screen on the passenger window can be removed by opening the window and sliding the screen to the left to allow it to come out of the window track.

I have an HWH leveling system on my 2001 Allegro. Getting the jacks to retract has become a problem. What should I use to lubricate them? I am using CRC heavy duty silicone after spraying and cleaning them with WD-40. Sometimes they work and sometimes they don't! Thanks for your advice and help.

Willie Gilmer  
Opp, Alabama

Dear Willie,  
Keeping the cylinders clean and lubricated from the outside is certainly a good policy. However, it sounds like the valves are sticking or not opening properly to allow the fluid to transfer and make the jacks lower and raise. Be sure to check the fluid level and top it off periodically with the jacks in the up position.

We have a 2007 Phaeton. All 110-volt receptacles apparently feed through the inverter. When cooking with the electric skillet, toaster, and coffee pot at the same time, the breaker trips. Why aren't some of the



receptacles wired directly to shore power?

Gene Welch  
Batesville, Mississippi

Dear Gene,

It is difficult for our electrical engineers to determine exactly how any particular owner will use the power supply in a coach. In your case you are using high amp demand appliances on one circuit line. Most owners want the galley circuits wired through the inverter to be able to use electricity when they are dry camping. However, you can have a plug added to your galley area that is run directly through the 110-volt harness, allowing you to use your appliances simultaneously while on shore power.

We purchased a pre-owned 2004 Allegro Bus 40QDP with 10,380 miles. On the first trip we were getting 6.3 mpg. After using a fuel additive, I got 6.4 mpg. Is this what we should expect for this coach? It does not seem to matter how it is loaded or what speeds I drive. Can you offer any tips to improve our mileage?

Jim Adkins  
Twin Falls, Idaho

Dear Jim,

There are too many factors that can affect your mileage for me to offer you a solution that will increase your mileage significantly. Every engine will respond differently. Identifying and controlling variables is the way to begin your experimentation. One of the most significant variables is maintaining a fairly consistent speed. I just spoke yesterday to one Allegro Bus owner who consistently gets 8.5 to 9 mpg, but he rarely drives over 62 mph.

You may spend a considerable amount of money experimenting with additives only to find an insignificant increase in mpg. Obvious things such as clean oil and air filters, reducing your speed (and thus the rpm), not running with your water tank and holding tanks full will improve your mileage more than additives. I am assuming, of course, that you have followed other engine maintenance schedules.

I ordered a thermostat from Tiffin on Sept. 24, 2007, for my 1998 Allegro Bus. I

was informed that the original thermostat was no longer available. TMH shipped a conversion kit for a 4 to 5 button thermostat at a cost of \$225.59. I took my coach to Floyd's RV in Norman, Oklahoma, for the installation. They said the conversion kit was not needed and installed the thermostat. They demonstrated that both heaters worked. I accepted the installation, but due to a health problem I had to put the motorhome in storage. I recently took it out of storage and found that neither air conditioner would respond to the settings on the thermostat. What is the solution to the problem? Is the thermostat installation too complicated for the average RV technician?

Roy Varner  
Shawnee, Oklahoma

Dear Roy,

The conversion kit will have to be installed to make the furnaces and air conditioners work properly. The installation is not too complicated for an RVIA certified technician. Your tech should have checked all of the components (ACs and furnaces) before releasing the motorhome to you. Kjelshus RV Service Center in Oklahoma City has successfully handled thermostat problems for our motorhomes in the past. The phone number is 405-789-4279.

I have a "tank problem!" I inherited a 1996 Allegro from my parents. The coach is on a P-model light duty Chevy chassis. My father let it sit in a garage for over six years with the gas tank half full. Needless to say, the tank has rusted from the inside out. I have checked Chevrolet dealers and parts companies here in Salt Lake City who all tell me the tank for this model has been discontinued. I have tried several aftermarket companies with no success. The dimensions of the tank are 27 x 53 x 13 inches. It is a 60-gallon tank. The motorhome only has 17,000 miles on the odometer and is like new inside and out. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Obviously, we can't use it until we get a new tank. I have already removed the rusted out tank.

Mark Miller  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mark,

We have several fuel tanks in inventory for

older model Allegros. Unfortunately, we no longer have the one needed for your coach. There are several companies that fabricate tanks. One that we found on the internet is Northwest Metal Products in Forest Grove, Oregon. Call 866-319-7499 and see if they can make the tank size you need.

I have a 1994 34-ft. Allegro Bay. The driver's door has wind noise at speeds over 40 mph. Can the door be adjusted to minimize the noise, or is there another fix for this problem?

Dan Kent  
Gahanna, Ohio

Dear Dan,

Depending on the wind noise and where it comes from on the door, it can be adjusted to reduce or eliminate the noise. The repair process would be similar to using a block of wood as a fulcrum and gently bending the door frame to make it fit tighter. If the wind leak is at the top left corner, you can add a security latch to tighten the door to the frame.

We own a 38-ft. Allegro Bus with 18,000 miles on the odometer. It was purchased new in 2004. With this low mileage, I had to replace the radiator at a cost of \$2,700. Three weeks later, I lost all of the new antifreeze when a hose clamp rusted out and broke. Because we were on the road and could not get to a motorhome service center, I had to use Prestone 50/50 which I purchased at a local Wal-Mart. This coach has a CAT 330 engine. Is the Prestone antifreeze satisfactory for long-term use?

Norman Pelletier  
Rowley, Massachusetts

Dear Norman,

With regard to the Prestone 50/50 antifreeze, add one pint of DCA (diesel coolant additive) to your coolant reservoir and run your engine for a few miles to mix it. Then use test strips to check the low temp. Add more if necessary. You can get the DCA at any truck service center and most auto parts stores.

I have a 2009 Phaeton 40QTH and would like to know how to remove the eleven air

conditioning filters for cleaning that are positioned above each ceiling grille. This will need to be done several times a year because of the amount of use this coach is getting. Please do not tell me to remove and replace the 44 screws each time!

Bob Ring  
Martinsville, New Jersey

Dear Bob,

No problem, Bob. Just get a power-pack drill and you can have all the screws out in about five minutes. Just kidding! At the center of each grille is a plastic snap-in head. A tug with your forefinger and thumb will pop the grille out. Wash the filters in the sink with a little soapy water, rinse, and pat dry with paper towels, and you are good to go for another month. By the way, your dealer should have covered this point in your training session and walk-through.

We are new to Tiffin but not to the RV lifestyle. Our last coach was a Monaco Diplomat and we bought a Phaeton because we like the floorplan, the features, the quality of the coach, and the reputation of the company. However, there are a couple of things we would like. First, a switch next to the bed to turn the radio off and on. Second, we thought this coach would have an energy management system and it doesn't. The EMS on the Monaco was so nice as many parks only have 30-amp service. Can EMS be added? Can you wire a switch for the radio?

Fred & Mary Diel  
Prather, California

Dear Fred & Mary,

There are aftermarket EMS modules that can be added to your coach. The cost is not trivial. For your bedroom radio control switch, the wiring job is somewhat complicated. It might be more satisfac-

tory to install a small Bose or Panasonic system just for the bedroom.

There have been several news reports lately about putting nitrogen in vehicle tires to get better fuel mileage and better wear on the tires. We have a 2008 Allegro Bay. What are your thoughts about replacing the air in motorhome tires with nitrogen?

Larry Kline  
Reading, Pennsylvania

Dear Larry,

The positive factors for using nitrogen are constant air pressure, elimination of moisture in the tire, and very little build-up of heat. The only negative is the initial cost, usually about \$15 per tire.

I have a 2005 Phaeton. Concerning tile flooring: Several tiles have cracked and were replaced at the Red Bay service center (new tiles do not match original tiles). The grout is eroding and areas of weakness are reappearing. This coach has carpet in the living room. Is it in my best interest to replace the old tile and the carpet throughout the coach (entry through bedroom) with new tile, using the current adhesive technology? Using your newest products, will the eroding grout and tile cracking continue? Or should we just have the eroding tile replaced again?

James Fowler  
New Castle, Pennsylvania

Dear James,

It is difficult to match the older tile with tile that has just been manufactured. The clay that is used to make the tile changes from batch to batch. TMH packs six tiles in a box with every new unit that is sold to allow you to replace broken tiles from the same batch. If you retile your coach from

cockpit to bedroom, it will certainly look nice. However, we do not recommend new tile throughout the entire coach because you will add significant weight which will affect your total cargo carrying capacity or possibly exceed your GVWR.

At the bathroom sink whenever we turn on the cold water, there is a very bad sulfur-dirt smell. It does not seem to matter where we are or whose water we are hooked to. It is only with the cold faucet. Water coming into the toilet and shower does not smell. We have flushed the system several times.

Bob Schlumpberger  
Grants Pass, Oregon

Dear Bob,

We are stumped. There may be a sediment or residue that has formed and hardened in the P-trap. Try replacing the P-trap and see if that helps.

I read the article by Marlin Saint in 6:2 regarding additives. I don't travel in cold weather so item #2 in his article doesn't apply to me. However, I spoke with the service manager at a Cummins dealer and he said not to use additives in my 2008 Allegro Bay FRED. When we come in from a trip, I fill up with diesel to hopefully prevent any condensation in the tank. So, what's the right answer? If it is "use an additive," then which is the best one to use?

Wayne Lanier  
Arlington, Texas

Dear Wayne,

Your remedy for preventing condensation is a good one. We are still doing research about additives for diesel fuel. As you discovered, professionals take both sides of the issue.

## 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 "Roughing It Smoothly" in the subject line of your email. If your communication requires an entire letter, mail it to us at: PO Box 1738, Monroe, GA 30656-1738. Tell us about the interesting places you've been, an unusual experience, a great destination, or just a good place to camp and hang out. Please share. "From the Road" contributors will receive a free tee shirt while supplies last.

—Fred Thompson, editor



Reader Response

**A handle to lift the bed**

I installed a handle on the end of the bed so that my wife could raise it easily. I suggest Tiffin include a bed handle as one of the standard items on their motorhomes. It makes it easier for older and smaller people to raise the bed. Also, the hex stud in the entry door frame is very sharp on the hex head. I have ripped my left arm on it twice as I entered the coach. I installed another handle on the inside of the screen door to help me avoid catching my arm on the stud. Over the years, I have owned five Allegro Buses. I am 82.

Ralph E. Starkey  
The Villages, Florida

Dear Ralph,

Thanks for your suggestion on the bed lift. We will look into creating a design feature to prevent the hex nut from being a hazard to catching your clothing or tearing your skin if you should accidentally run into it.

**Coach pulling to the right**

I read with interest the problem Harvey Turner was having with his coach pulling to the right. Our 2006 Allegro purchased new had a similar problem of pulling to the right after driving it a few miles. The front end was realigned which improved slightly on the pull to the right. Then I noticed the right front wheel was getting much warmer than the left wheel after a few miles of driving the coach, so I bled the brake system. When I started again I noticed one cap was missing from the brake reservoir. I also noticed some water and air came with the fluid from the right front brake. This procedure solved the problem. I don't know if the missing cap caused the problem in the humid air. Keep up the good work, Danny.

Lloyd Westphal  
Slidell, Louisiana

In the Fall 2009 issue (6:4), Harvey Turner described a problem with his 2009 Phaeton 36QSH constantly pulling to the right. I had the same problem. When I took the coach in for an alignment, they

told me my one-directional tires had been switched. They switched them back and that corrected the problem.

Jack Snider  
Tucker, Georgia

**Schematics needed for plumbing**

Please consider furnishing a three-dimensional schematic of the water system in each coach, showing the water lines, valves, drain lines, holding tanks, pumps, etc. in relationship to their placement in the coach. This would save a lot of time for technicians making repairs as well as the do-it-yourself folks. After the original schematic is made for each floorplan, you could use your color copying machine to make a print for each coach manufactured. You also could store PDFs that could be emailed. We also need an article on the long-term effects of using RV anti-freeze to winterize a coach. Tell us all the "do's and don'ts." I really enjoy *Roughing It Smoothly* — all of the articles and your column. Keep up the good work.

Jack B. Gilbert, Sr.  
Mattoon, Illinois

**How to stop hangers from jumping off the closet rod in the Allegro Bay**

(1) We have a 2005 Allegro Bay 37DB and on our first trip we had the same problem. We simply turned the hangers around and put them on back to front. No more clothes on the floor. We use plastic hangers.

Carol & Jim Estes  
St. Peters, Missouri

(2) I have an Allegro Bay 37QDB and had the same problem. I fixed the problem by constructing a center support for the hanging rod made with a 1-inch threaded conduit pipe. I placed a 3/4-inch plywood base on the floor with a 1-inch hole in it to hold the pipe in place. I attached a short piece of angle iron V to the hanging rod and then threaded a large bolt on top of the pipe to adjust the pressure to the bottom of the V. No more clothes on the floor. It is

the springiness in the hanging rod that is causing the hangers to jump off.

Ronald Gross  
Dayton, Oregon

(3) We have an Allegro Bay and experienced the same problem. We bought a sump pump hose and split it length-ways to fit over the closet rod. Not only does this keep the clothes on the rod, it also keeps them from bunching together. The hangers stay where you put them.

Rod & Joan Ramsey  
Berryton, Kansas

(4) Simply alternate the direction of every other hanger. If the clothes are fairly snug to each other they won't come off the bar. This solution works for metal or plastic hangers.

Jim & Kay Grenz  
Mount Vernon, Washington

(5) I took pipe insulation, cut it to length, and placed it over the hanger rod. You can buy the insulation at Lowe's or Home Depot for two or three dollars. Works great.

Carol Brown  
North Falmouth, Massachusetts

(6) I solved the problem with a second rod that swings down onto the top of the hangers and locks down for traveling and up when we are parked.

Ned Fenton  
Salamanca, New York

**The "popping" slide-out**

We recently had the same problem that Jim Brunette described: the slide would start out and "pop" a couple of times before it was all the way out. The solution turned out to be with the matt topper mechanism. The rotating arm was hitting when the slide was going out. When the mechanism was taken apart, it was discovered that the hole in which the shaft rotates was elongated downward allowing the arm to hit.

My conclusion is that when driving the constant bouncing up and down elongated the hole, probably because the metal

is too soft. The solution is to replace the part, but I'm going to investigate fabricating the part myself out of a harder metal.

Tell the owner to look at the slide-out from a ladder when it is going out and he'll see the rubber foot hit as it turns.

Warren Holmes  
Long Beach, Indiana

**Windshield wiper motor running erratically**

While reading one of the articles under "Serious Tech Talk," September 2009, sent to you by Alan Shields, Las Vegas, Nevada, regarding problems with his 2006 Allegro windshield wipers, I want to provide feedback since I've had exactly the same problem with my 2005 Allegro Bay.

In the article, Mr. Shields specifically states that the problem occurs when water is sprayed in front of the engine firewall or forward of the radiator (where the wiper motor is located). I experienced problems with my unit where the motor would run erratically and/or would stop in the middle of the windshield and could not be controlled and/or turned off. This condition occurred any time I drove in rain or when I allowed water to enter the front end area during vehicle washing. Take it from one who knows, having the wipers stop on your RV while driving in traffic, in heavy rain, is indeed a very traumatic event!

I contacted the motor manufacturer and found that water was likely causing the problem by entering the wiper brush contacts portion of the motor housing due to what I suspect is their failure to properly waterproof that area during production. I removed the wiper motor, dismantled the electrical brush housing, and much to my surprise, water had clearly entered the brush area and was shorting out the contacts. I thoroughly dried out the area and sealed the housing seams with "Clear RTV Silicone Adhesive Sealant," which I bought at a Wal-Mart Supercenter. Most auto parts stores stock it, too. I reinstalled the motor and that solved the problem. I am dismayed that the motor manufacturer has not issued a recall.

The motor manufacturer suggested I relocate a "modular control" unit that you referred to in the article. I have to wonder if one exists in my unit or the one Mr. Shields owns. I hope this helps.

Bill Hoenstine  
Orlando, Florida

**Linkage problem on toilet flush**

About a year ago, I had a similar problem to that experienced by Mike and Terry Losado. I thought I had solved the problem by cleaning the gasket and letting the flush lever return with a hard snap just as you suggested. A much more serious problem developed, however. The linkage broke so that the ball-shaped closure device no longer opened or closed with the operation of the foot pedal. When I spoke to the Thetford rep at the Albuquerque RV Rally he told me that I had broken

the linkage by repeatedly letting the lever snap back. The proper repair for the leaking bowl is to place shims between the bowl and the stand at the four bolts where the bowl attaches to the stand.

Fortunately, Thetford covered the repairs to my toilet under warranty, even though I inadvertently caused the damage.

Bill Berry  
Rapid City, South Dakota

**A 3-inch PVC grey water drain**

It would be nice if Tiffin would use a 3-inch PVC on the grey water tank as they do on the black water tank. My last RV had that. It takes forever for the water to drain from a 1½-inch PVC. That is one of the few negatives I have regarding our 2006 Phaeton.

Gary Nelsen  
Rockford, Illinois

Automatically maintain air temperature and battery levels in your existing RV

Cummins Onan  
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**Cummins Onan EC-30W Wireless Generator Auto-Start**

- > Wireless operation means the average coach owner can install the unit in under 30 minutes
- > Can monitor shore power to only start when power is lost



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## Announcing the *Allegro Breeze*

"I kept noticing in the surveys we get from the Allegro Service Center, Allegro Club rallies, and our shows that people were asking for smaller motorhomes, but with most of the amenities that are in the large coaches," Bob Tiffin noted. "And that's quite an order!"

The surveys showed many owners definitely wanted to downsize. As a result, TMH asked chassis designer Gary Jones two years ago to begin work on a smaller unit that would have a rear engine diesel, an Allison transmission, and most of the comforts that you can find today in a Phaeton. The result was the *Allegro Breeze*. Although it was introduced to the dealers as a prototype last month in Louisville, it is still under development and will not go into production until mid to late spring.

"But since the cat has been out of the bag for a couple of months, we thought it best to give you some accurate information," Bob said.

The chassis will be built by Tiffin in the same plant where the Powerglide is manufactured. The rear engine diesel is a 215-hp Navistar Maxforce 7 with 560 lb.ft. at 1400 rpm. The chassis frame is 40-inches wide, low-floored, full-length ladder type. It is a one-piece formed rail made with 50,000 psi high-strength low-alloy steel. The 28-foot first edition of the *Breeze* will have one slide-out on the driver's side that houses the galley and a sofa. On the passenger side is a C-shaped sofa/dinette with a table top that drops down to fill the open part of the "C." A cushion fits the void to make a very comfortable bed.

Stay in touch via the Tiffin Motorhomes website for future announcements regarding availability at dealerships.



The Allegro Breeze was well received by dealers.



Living area of the Allegro Breeze

## Tiffin Motorhomes Receives RVDA Award for 10th Consecutive Year

The Recreational Vehicle Dealers Association honored three Class A manufacturers with its Quality Circle Award just prior to the opening of the National RV Trade Show in Louisville, KY, on November 30. The Dealer Satisfaction Index (DSI) measures dealer attitudes in key policies, products, and procedural areas which dealers say are the most important elements in their business partnerships with manufacturers. The three manufacturers receiving awards were Tiffin Motorhomes, Jayco, and Winnebago.

When rating manufacturers, RVDA asks dealers to express their level of satisfaction on eight core issues: sales support, sales territory, vehicle design, vehicle reliability/quality, competitive price/value, parts support, dealership warranty support, and overall dealer communications.

RVDA surveyed 322 dealers this year and provided 1,644 brand ratings, an average of almost five per dealer.



Tim, Van, and Bob Tiffin received the company's 10th Quality Circle Award at the 2009 National RV Trade Show in Louisville in November.

## Walk Through DVDs: *Training from Your Laptop*

The RV bug bit me hard in March 2002. Since my life has been spent around the advertising and marketing world, it would be great if I could figure out what sight or message, or combinations of both created this desire. My wife will tell you I did little else but research and shop for RVs during that period.

The wait from the time the desire hit me to actually taking delivery of our first Allegro Bus (a 2003 model in August 2002) was agonizing. The dealer walk through was at best OK, but an owner's retention at that time is slight. So slight in fact, that after they threw me the keys and wished me luck, I started the three-hour drive home on a rainy night . . . only then realizing that I didn't know how to turn on the wipers! It got worse after that.

Fast forwarding from then to now shows a family that enjoys the RV life every chance we get. I use the motorhome in our agency business making calls on clients and the whole family uses it for weekend and summer trips. We knew from our experience that it was hard to learn all the things about a motorhome during a walk through. We traded for a 2006 Allegro Bus and didn't have a much better walk through than with our first one. When I took a friend on a day trip to the Tiffin factory to look at the 2008 models, we went in to visit with Bob Tiffin, as

I usually do. After a brief visit I said, "Bob, I want to make you a *Walk Through DVD*." His response was, "Griff, when can you get started? I have wanted to do this for 10 years but could not find anyone who knew how to operate a camera and also knew the proper way to flush out a holding tank."

We have just completed our third year with the 2010 models. Owners should find their copy with the chassis manual. The *Walk Through DVDs* are available for all 2008-2009-2010 models. If you have one of these models and cannot find your DVD, call Tiffin Motorhomes at 256-356-8661 and request it.

We are about to wrap up another DVD designed to help you take care of your motorhome. It is a preventative maintenance DVD that explains the best way to wash the outside, to winterize the coach, and hopefully, everything in between. It will cover 2005 models forward. These will be sent out in the same manner as the *Walk Through DVD*.

It is indeed a labor of love producing these DVD's and we hope to keep doing it for a long time. Just like Tiffin Motorhomes, we hope they are a help to Tiffin owners.

Larry C. "Griff" Griffith  
Dickson Advertising Inc.

## Attention All Tiffin Motorhome Owners

Norcold has extended a previous recall to include 528 units involving Tiffin Model years 2001, 2002, and 2003. The following is an excerpt of the letter from Norcold. Please be advised that if you have a coach from the listed model years or earlier (from the previous recall), call Norcold at 800-767-9101 to determine if you need to take action.

Norcold, Inc. manufactures absorption refrigerators which are sold for application in Recreational Vehicles ("RVs"). On July 22, 2002 Norcold announced and undertook a motor vehicle equipment safety recall to address a potential fatigue failure in cooling units made by Norcold serving as components in Norcold refrigerator model numbers 1200LR and 1200RIM built from December 1, 2001. At this time, Norcold has determined that the recall announced on March 25, 2008 and assigned recall number 08E-030 should be extended to embrace cooling units made by Norcold serving as components in Norcold models 1200LR, 1200LRIM and 1201LRIM manufactured from March 1, 2001 to December 31, 2002. Each cooling unit under this extension has a serial number between 1273701 and 1536607, non-consecutively.

The nature of the defect is a fatigue failure in the section of the cooling unit which contains the refrigerant. This fatigue could allow the liquid solution to slowly leak from the cooling unit. If a leak occurs and the refrigerator continues to be operated after solution circulation has ceased, the heat source could generate very high temperatures. At such high temperatures the steel material of the cooling unit could soften and rupture. If refrigerant gas is still in place when the rupture occurs, hydrogen gas may be expelled and could be ignited by the high temperature, possibly causing a fire.

The cooling unit serial number is located on the solution chamber, which can be viewed through the refrigerator vent door on the outside of your vehicle. **The serial number on the cooling unit differs from the se-**

**rial number of your refrigerator.** If your refrigerator is one of the models listed above, with a cooling unit serial number in the defined range, it has one of the suspect cooling units and requires **retrofitting with a thermal switch kit. Extended operation of a leaking cooling unit could cause a fire, resulting in personal injury (including death) and/or property damage. Call 800-767-9101 to report your refrigerator and get assistance to execute repair through a Norcold authorized service center or other approved dealer. Parts and labor for the repair will be at no charge. If you have one of the recalled cooling units:**

1. **YOU should set the controls to "OFF," and unplug the refrigerator through the service vent on the outside of the vehicle.**
2. **YOU should immediately have a service center check to determine if there is a cooling unit leak.**
3. **If a cooling unit leak is detected by the authorized service center, you will be instructed to not operate the refrigerator in any mode until the cooling unit can be replaced.**
4. **If the cooling unit is not leaking, you will be instructed to not operate the refrigerator in any mode until it can be retrofitted with a Thermal Switch Kit.**

You should contact **Norcold's Recall Center at 800-767-9101 or visit Norcold's website at <http://www.norcold.com>** as soon as possible to arrange a service date and to help you locate the service center nearest you. If you use the web address, click on the Customer Support link followed by the Service Centers link. You can also check online to see if your cooling unit is under recall by clicking on the Customer Support link at the top of the page, followed by the Recall Info link. From there you can click on the 'Check Status' button to see if a cooling unit serial number is under recall.






On a balmy September 23, we enjoyed a delightful luncheon cruise of Boston harbor on the *Spirit of Boston*.

harbor to board the “Spirit of Boston” for a delightful luncheon cruise of the Boston harbor.

Thursday, our last full day, had a full slate of games and activities. Bingo, ladder ball, and bean bag baseball filled the day with fun and competition for those who chose to participate. A scrapbooking workshop was also held on Thursday. A casual lunch of hamburgers and hotdogs was provided, and, for those who desired some free time to explore the area, Thursday afternoon was available. Many attendees ventured down to Cape Cod, the storied coastal playground of many locals. Within close driving proximity are so many historic sites: Plymouth Colony, Concord, Lexington, Harvard, Newport, R.I., etc. One could remain in the area for a month or more and never take it all in!

Thursday evening’s Farewell Dinner turned into quite a rollicking party. The evening’s theme was “Boston –Then to Now”, and quite a few cleverly costumed participants were paraded before the crowd for recognition. We saw Ben Franklin, (or was it George Washington?), Betsy Ross, several Boston Tea Party participants, Boston Baked Beans, Tea Bags, and more. After a delicious meal, we were treated to performer–D.J. Jim Hollis, who sang and played a delightful selection of oldies and familiar tunes. Tammy and her posse of line dancers encouraged participation with them; soon a great part of the crowd was up and moving! Winners of games were recognized, chapters with 4 or more member coaches in attendance were awarded checks, and thanks and well-wishes were passed around. A special word of thanks was offered to the Tiffin factory technicians, Robert Gober and David Sparks, for their tireless work during the rally making minor repairs and answering questions.

On Friday, most rally-goers were pulling up stakes and heading back on the road. As parting comments were made, the overwhelming consensus regarding this rally was that it was one of the best to date! Conditions and circumstances came together to make the Allegro Freedom Trail Rally one to remember. We at the Allegro Club are busy planning future rallies—we hope to see you again soon. Until then, keep on roughing it smoothly! 

### Allegro Freedom Trail Rally Foxboro, MA—September 2009

by Gail Johnson

**NORMANDY FARMS CAMPGROUND**—What a perfect place for an early Autumn rally in New England! The “next-to-nature” woodland setting of this campground would never have you believe that you were actually only about three miles from Gillette Stadium, home of the New England Patriots pro football team. Foxboro, Massachusetts, the little village near the host campground, is located about forty miles south of Boston. This picturesque area offers many interesting places for exploring, dining, relaxing, and shopping. The weather was perfect—bright blue skies and mild temperatures during the days and cool nights.

The rally schedule followed our customary format; activities, games, meals, entertainment, seminars, and outings were crammed into the four days we were there, making the time go by so quickly!

Monday was devoted to checking in and getting settled into the campground; a delicious Welcome Dinner was held in the lodge at the end of the busy day.

Tuesday was, as is our routine, Seminar Day. Many vendors were on hand to provide useful information regarding Tiffin coaches. Harold Kimbrough of Onan Generators, David Humphries and Marty Vanderford from Triple H Electronics, Tom Webber from

Tiffin Dealer Support, and Gail Johnson with Sharp Convection Microwave Cooking were just some of the presenters available with information to share. A new seminar at this rally was done by Pat Webber, who presented a useful and informative talk on “Living Green.” In the late afternoon, the ladies who wished to participate enjoyed a Tea Party, at which they were encouraged to “show and tell” their favorite stories about their favorite teacup or mug. This “get-together” is such a pleasant way for rally attendees to get to know each other a little better, as they share sometimes funny and sometimes nostalgic bits of their favorite memories. After another hearty catered dinner in the lodge, we were treated to a line-dance session with Tammy Wyatt, line dance instructor extraordinaire!

On Wednesday, the weather held as we embarked on an off-site tour of Boston and the surrounding area. Rally-goers boarded tour buses in the campground and set out for a driving tour; we had step-on guides who joined us in the city and showed us the high points of Boston’s interesting history. From fabled Fenway Park to the Naval Shipyard, we toured uptown to downtown and enjoyed a wonderful glimpse of this thriving, yet historic city. At lunchtime, we were dropped off at the



The morning “balloon rise” in Albuquerque was fabulous.

### Fall Southwest Rally, Albuquerque, NM—October 2009

by Gail Johnson

Overlooking the Rio Grande River valley is the lovely, conveniently located American RV Park, which was the site of the Allegro Club Fall Southwest rally. The rally began immediately following the famous Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta held annually in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Many attendees were able to come into town early and participate in some of the festivities of the previous weekend. The high desert weather was perfect, with cool, breezy nights and mild temperatures and bright blue skies during the day. Fall color was beginning to manifest itself with bright splashes of yellow and red along the river and in mountain vistas around the area.

After Monday’s registration, a “Get Acquainted” reception was held before dinner. Later, a brief overview of the week was given, and a delicious dinner was served in the tent.

Tuesday was set aside for seminars—vendors and factory representatives gave informative talks on a range of topics. Harold Kimbrough from Onan Generators, Tom Webber on new products from Tiffin, Pat Webber on “Living Green,” David Humphries from Triple H Electronics, and Gail Johnson on Sharp Convection Microwave Cooking, were some of the classes arranged for the rally. Also hard at work were the Tiffin field technicians, who

were on hand to offer service for minor repairs and answer questions for rally participants.

After a busy day on Tuesday, we were treated to another fine dinner and live entertainment by a lively local Mariachi Band.


Wednesday was designated as our touring day. After a continental breakfast on site, we boarded buses for a day-long outing. Our stops included the Balloon Museum, a very nicely done attraction which chronicled the history of balloon travel with interesting artifacts and displays in a large, two-level building. Lunch was included on this tour—a delightful Mexican Restaurant called El Pinto. This local eatery served our large group effortlessly on beautiful, flower-filled patios—we enjoyed a generous luncheon buffet of classic Mexican dishes outdoors surrounded by splashing fountains and crackling fires in cozy outdoor fireplaces. Our third stop on this fun-filled day was to the Sandia Peak Tramway. This enclosed tram car traveled to the summit of the Sandia Mountain range, elevation just over 10,000 feet, for a breathtaking view of surrounding mountains, rock formations, and the city below. This area is a popular ski resort and we were quickly impressed by the fact that we were in an Alpine area, with temperatures hovering around 30 degrees and a

brisk 25-mph wind blowing as we stepped off the tram at the top!

Once again, upon returning to the campground, our dinner was provided at the resort dining area.

Optional activities on Thursday and Friday included games—bean bag baseball, horseshoes, ladder ball, bingo—a tea party, and a craft and hobby display. On these days, time was available for individual exploration of the surrounding area. Many interesting and exciting attractions were available, including balloon rides, numerous shopping areas, historic Old Town, Native American Exhibits, and so on.

Thursday evening was theme night—“Roswell Aliens”—and we had quite a few creatively costumed aliens in attendance! After yet another delicious meal, we were treated to a local Western Cowboy Band.

Friday evening’s farewell dinner was a fitting opportunity to give out prizes for game-winners, recognize chapters with four or more coaches in attendance, announce future events in store for Allegro Club members, thank everyone who made this rally a success, and bid safe travel to all as we were to break camp on Saturday. We don’t like to say “Goodbye,” but rather, “Hope to see you later. Keep on roughing it smoothly!” 





Cades Cove from Rich Mountain Overlook

© BENDALL CHILES

## Smoky Mountain Getaway — November 2009 by Gail Johnson

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, an area of over 500,000 acres of rugged wilderness straddling the Tennessee–North Carolina border, is one of our country’s most beautiful natural treasures! What a lovely setting for our Allegro Fall getaway! River Plantation RV Resort, a full-service resort located right on the Little Pigeon River in the gateway town of Sevierville, Tennessee, was our base of operations for this early November event. With Autumn arriving late in the southern Appalachians this year, we were treated to almost peak color in the lowlands during rally week. Also, the weather seemed to be cooperating with bright blue skies and mild temperatures—perfect fall conditions for being outdoors!

As registration opened on Monday, attendees were greeted by Allegro personnel and our dealership partner in this rally—Tennessee RV, who provided a display of new models for our perusal. A “Get Acquainted” reception was held before dinner at the outdoor pavilion in the campground; light refreshments were served.

Later, we enjoyed a delicious dinner in the convention hall, sponsored by Tennessee RV.

Tuesday, as is customary, was seminar day at the rally. Various vendors and factory representatives were on hand to provide important information regarding different aspects of Tiffin products. Tom Webber, (Tiffin dealer support), Harold Kimbrough, (Onan Generators and Power Glide Chassis), Gail Johnson, (Sharp Convection Microwave Cooking), Jim Kaskey, (SHURflo), David Humphries and Marty Vanderford, (Triple H Electronics), Mike Williams, (Atwood), and Mike Pratt, (Industrial Finishes), all provided informative classes. As an added bonus, Pete Pepinsky, (editor of Sideroads Magazine) gave an interesting hands-on fly-fishing demonstration on the banks of the Little Pigeon River. As always, our Tiffin factory technicians, David Sparks and Robert Gober, were hard at work throughout the rally providing minor repairs for those needing them.

Tuesday night after a fine meal in the con-

ference center, entertainment was provided by “Elvis and Friends”.

Wednesday and Thursday at lunchtime, Tennessee RV fired up their grills and provided a tasty lunch of hamburgers, hotdogs, and barbeque for rally-goers. Thursday’s lunch was a themed event, “Tribute to Country Music,” in which folks were encouraged to dress as their favorite country music entertainer. We had sightings of Tammy Wynette, Patsy Cline, Hank Williams, Willie Nelson, and . . . Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus!! Entertainment was provided by the band from the show “Country Tonite!” and they were great! They even persuaded our own Hank Williams (aka Jimmy Johnson, Allegro Club president) to man a mike for a rousing version of “Hey Good Lookin’!” It was a foot-stompin’ good time!

Wednesday afternoon was designated for our off-site tour. We boarded buses in the campground for a quick trip down to Dixie Stampede, the famous Dolly Parton dinner attraction which features country music, horses, cowboys and cowgirls, and, for this Christmas show, donkeys, camels, sheep, pigs, goats, etc. What an extravaganza!

Free time was built into the schedule on Thursday for opportunities to sight-see and enjoy the beauty of the surrounding area. The shopping Mecca of Sevierville/Pigeon Forge, the quaint village of Gatlinburg, the Smoky Mountains National Park, Cades Cove, Little River, craft and antique shops in Wear’s Valley, etc. were only a short drive away.

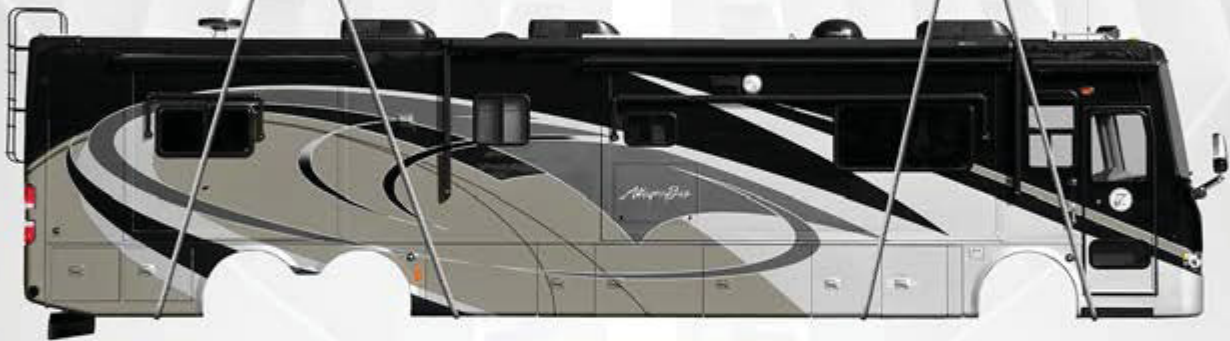
Optional activities are always provided Wednesday through Friday for fun and fellowship for those who choose to participate. This rally had a scavenger hunt, a tea party, games, including bingo, bean bag baseball, horseshoes, a book exchange, and line dance class by our Canadian Allegro Tammy Wyatt.

Friday evening’s farewell dinner was a time to recognize game winners, give out checks to chapters with more than four in attendance, recap the week and look forward to upcoming events. Thanks were extended to all who helped to make the rally a success, with special thanks going to caterer Michael Cobb, and to our participating dealership, Tennessee RV.

Travel safely, happy New Year, and we hope to see you down the road—roughing it smoothly! **RIS**



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