

Roughing It Smoothly®



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- **Southern New Mexico**

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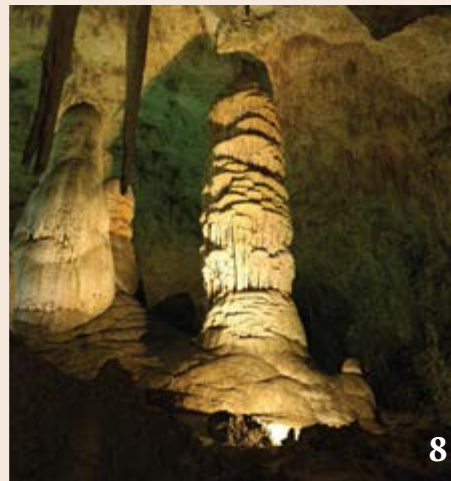
Roughing It Smoothly®

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Letters, We Get Letters . . . and Postcards and Emails

Thanks for your emails. We continue to enjoy publishing *Roughing It Smoothly* from Monroe, Georgia. In October, Carolyn and I spent two weeks in the splendor of fall color in the Hudson River Valley. The story will appear in the summer issue of *Roughing It Smoothly* to give you plenty of time to plan your own trip there later this year. You will read about the homes and careers of some of our greatest statesmen, artists, and entrepreneurs. We camped near Rhinebeck and dined at the oldest continuously operating inn in America. I flew in a D-29 open-cockpit biplane over the rolling hills of the Hudson Valley.

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. If you need an immediate answer to a service problem, you should call 256-356-0261

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.

Tiffin Motorhomes' new cockpit design with aeronautical influence has created quite a stir as RVers visit dealers throughout the country



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Our Older Brothers

by Bob Tiffin

There is a lot to be said for longevity – both for our motorhomes and ourselves. When Judy and I travel by car or motorhome, I am pleased to see so many Alleghros from the 1980s still in use, and most of them looking as bright and shiny as the day they were sold. We built them to last with the construction system that we used from 1972 to 1992. (See picture.)

During that 20-year period we built the walls and roof with one-inch aluminum tubing on 12-inch centers. We insulated the walls with polyurethane foam and formed the exterior with an approximately 20-gauge aluminum pre-painted skin.

To protect the motorhome from the weather, we developed an aluminum roof which we used from 1972 to 1982. It was seamed every 40 inches and it rarely leaked. In 1982 Reynolds Metals, located just 50 miles from Red Bay in Sheffield, Alabama, built a new rolling machine that produced aluminum in a 97-inch wide continuous length that was sold in 5,000-foot coils. It was the only rolling machine in the U.S. that could produce a sheet that wide. Fortunately for Tiffin Motorhomes, it was the perfect width for our coaches which at that time were 96-inches wide. The extra inch allowed us to form the edges to attach to the sidewalls. This allowed us to create the only one-piece roof system in the industry, and there was no way it could leak. In the early 1990s, every other manufacturer went to the rubber roof system which required a lot of upkeep, but we stayed with our unique aluminum system.

As we began to produce the wider Class A coaches, we had to find other solutions. In 2007, we pioneered the one-piece fiberglass roof which we manufacture in our Water Way plant just north of Iuka, Mississippi.

Sometimes we have to look back to see where we may be



headed in the future. Harvesting good ideas from our past floorplans, Tiffin Motorhomes has continued to build the split bath, which was first used in our 1985 28-foot Allegro (see below). Later called the “walk-through” bath, to which we added sliding doors fore and aft for privacy, it continues to be popular in several of our floorplans today.

In the future, I believe RV manufacturers will have to be very creative with both larger and smaller motorhomes to meet the changing needs of our customers. Whatever new ideas, changes, and improvements we introduce, we spend hundreds of hours in R&D to make sure they are structurally sound and never compromise the integrity of the unit. The Tiffin PowerGlide chassis, now available on the Allegro Bus, the Allegro Breeze, and the Phaeton’s 40-ft. floorplans, is one of our major innovations.

We are already getting great reviews on our new Phaeton 40QBH floorplan which features a rear bath and a half. Just introduced last month, the Phaeton 40QKH offers bunk beds in a driver’s side slide-out. Both are available on the PowerGlide chassis.

In our Allegro Open Road brand, we have just introduced the 30 GA. It features two slide-outs and brings back the split-bath that I mentioned earlier.

Coming soon (as they say in the theater business), you will see a new floorplan in our Allegro RED called the 38 QRA. At 38 feet, it will be our shortest floorplan with a rear bath and a half. As you probably know, the RED is our full-size Class A entry level diesel pusher.

Those of you who are members of FMCA saw the 28-foot Allegro Breeze on their December magazine cover. We can’t

Continued on page 43





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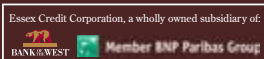
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Designing the 40 QBH Phaeton

Creating useful, efficient floorplans for motorhomes is a challenging game of inches, requiring Tiffin's engineers and floorplan architects to find creative ways to pack new features into 40 feet. They have played the game quite well, making the Phaeton the Number One selling brand in America for five years. To *keep it* in the #1 spot, the Phaeton got two new floorplans this year.

The 40 QBH Phaeton is a prime example of their gamesmanship. It was easier to design a rear bath and a half when given a 43- or 45-foot chassis base with a tandem rear axle. But, when strong preferences began to appear in Tiffin's customer surveys that buyers wanted a rear bath and a half in a 40-foot coach, they saw a significant challenge.

The challenge was not just locating a full bath in the back of the coach. TMH built small motorhomes in the late eighties and early nineties with rear baths. The challenge was to create a

functional— yes, even spacious — rear bath that did not occupy more than 17 percent of the motorhome's total length. Why the 17 percent limitation? Because the rest of the coach's living and sleeping areas must still be spacious and inviting, too.

They did it! Within an area that is 6'6" N-S and 7'11" E-W, the 40 QBH's rear bath has a double sliding door closet 58 inches wide, a lavatory with a solid surface countertop that stretches 49 inches in one direction and 34 inches in the other, a Splendide stacked washer and dryer, an electric Dometic toilet, and an elliptical, light brown, fiberglass shower that contrasts handsomely with the beige solid surface countertop. The elliptical shower enclosure is 42 inches across and 29 inches deep, with a recessed soap ledge and grab bar, two chrome towel racks, and a shelf for bath products. More specifics later.

Text and interior photography by Fred Thompson

Dividing up today's modern motorhome for an evaluation and review, you could say it has four areas of interest or "quarters." They include the cockpit, the daytime living area, the bathroom(s), and the bedroom. Let's start with the daytime quarter.

The Daytime Quarter

Living Area. With the slides out, the daytime quarters (living-dining-galley), where RVers spend most of their time when inside the coach, measures 20'8" N-S by 12'3", almost house-size dimensions. The quarters are light and airy with over 90 sq.ft. of windows which bring the outside in. After all, camping is an outdoor experience. I always try to find a camping site that allows me to take advantage of my eight-foot picture window (the windshield). All windows throughout the coach are equipped with Roll-Ease dual solar and opaque shades mounted in valances and operated with a circular beaded rope.

The optional Ultraleather™ residential sofa with seating for three on the passenger side produces a queen-size bed for your overnight guests, while the half bath offers nearby convenience. The mattress is an inflatable unit that fully deploys in about three minutes. Deflation and storage takes about five minutes. I have personally slept on this mattress and can affirm that it is very comfortable. With recessed barrel lights in the ceiling, sconce lights on either side of the 20 × 40 inch window, and directional accent lights embedded in the floor of the overhead cabinets, sofa occupants and overnighters have ample light for reading. Speaking of the overhead cabinets, TMH provided 13 cubic feet for blankets, bedsheets, pillows, etc. I will never forget a 200-lb. salesman at a Tiffin dealership who wanted to demonstrate the strength of Tiffin's cabinet construction. He sat on the couch, opened the cabinet door above, grabbed the ledge of the cabinet, and did a full body lift.

The optional leather lift recliners on the driver side bring a new comfort level to the 2011 Phaetons. With a flip of the wrist, a side lever kicks out a comfortable foot rest and the back reclines as you push on the armrests. With three barrel lights just

above, you can leave the recliners in the slide-out location while you enjoy a book, or easily push them to the mid-floor area for the ultimate location to watch a movie on the optional 37-inch Panasonic television located just above the dash. With a quick 180-degree rotation of the driver and passenger chairs, you add two comfortable places to sit, bringing the seating in the conversation area to seven. The Ultraleather driver and passenger chairs are a deluxe edition by Flexsteel with six-way power adjustments, adjustable armrests, and lever-operated reclining backs. The passenger chair boasts a power foot rest. All of this luxury is standard on the Phaeton, just one of the many reasons it continues to be the #1 diesel pusher sold in the U.S.

Entertainment. The living area is designed for entertainment. When you are having breakfast, the standard, mid-ship, eye-level unit is perfectly positioned to catch the morning news, *Today*, or *Good Morning America*. The optional 37-inch above-dash television may be your choice for an evening movie when you are stretched out on the recliners.

The surround sound system and the coach's HDMI television technology were designed 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 automatic satellite dish 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 40QBH.

From any of the four televisions in the coach, 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 and a subscription to XM, you can also enjoy their music channels in surround sound.

Dining Area. The optional free-standing dinette with a computer workstation is typical of the blended functionality that TMH designs into their spaces. First, TMH made the credenza 18 inches deep. Then, on the north side of the slide-out dining table, the cabinet designer created a slide-out tray for the keyboard and under it a second slide-out tray for your printer. Your laptop rests on top of the credenza. Power connections are inside the cabinet. The opposite side of the credenza offers a standard-width file cabinet with metal rails for hanging files, plus two drawers for office materials. The overhead cabinets have 6.2 cubic feet of storage space.

The Galley. Solid surface countertops and backsplashes have become works of art. With the capability of CNC lasers, scrollwork enhances the solid surface backsplashes and a large, curved end-piece which terminates the south end of the solid surface countertop. The backsplashes are over 18 inches high and have two 110v outlets for the appliances you like to take along.

New for this year is a hinged, two-piece solid surface cover for the three-burner cooktop. It folds into a vertical position at the back of the cabinet, and does not need to be stored by hand. The solid surface countertop has more than 18 square feet of workspace, plus another 2.4 square feet in the island slide-out. The double stainless steel sinks are huge: the primary sink is 18.5 × 15.375 × 9 inches deep and the rinse sink is 12.75 × 16.5 × 8 inches deep. The 1.1 cubic foot microwave-

convection oven has an exterior exhaust vent for the cooktop.

The island slide-out contributes a solid surface countertop that is 27.5 inches long and 12.6 inches wide. It creates an L-shaped galley and becomes indispensable when you are preparing a full-scale dinner. It also houses three drawers, each 26 inches deep and eight inches wide.

Just under the cooktop is one of my favorite TMH innovations: a well-designed slide-out that holds a full-size trash can. And right next to it are two vegetable bins (or whatever you choose to put there) which are nine inches wide and 18 inches deep.

In the cabinet under the sinks, a convenient rack stores the solid surface sink covers. You will also find about five cubic feet of storage space. And, finally, to the right of the sink, a three-drawer cabinet takes care of your silverware, cooking utensils and gadgets, and towels.

The overhead cabinet above the sinks boasts 6.5 cubic feet which is divided into a box slide-out shelf and a regular shelf measuring 20 × 33.5 inches. A similar overhead cabinet, but smaller, is located to the left of the oven.

At the north end of the daytime quarters, TMH located the mid-section television in a hutch-style cabinet. The enclosed cabinets above and below the TV serve as the pantry. Just behind the dinette is an appliance that could be called the “Tiffin Giveaway.” In place of the usual gas-electric refrigerator, TMH offers at no additional charge a 21 cubic foot GE Profile residential refrigerator. The double-door fridge above and the large pull-out freezer with icemaker below is a very practical design. When you are not on shore power, the six-battery storage system supplies the power for the all-electric refrigerator-freezer. When you are traveling, the system is constantly being charged. When you dry camp, the batteries supply power until they are depleted to a point which causes the inverter to automatically start the generator and recharge the system.

Decor & Cabinetry. Tiffin’s acclaimed interior decorator, Margaret Mia, has selected fabrics, wallpaper, ceramic tile floors, furniture stains, solid surface countertop and backsplash designs,



wrought iron accents, and valances which create interesting focal points and pleasing harmonies throughout the coach.

The buyer may select from three decors (White Diamonds, Caviar, and Tiffany) that offer delightful fabric choices, all of which will blend perfectly with three design constants: wallpaper, tile, and ceiling materials. The dark brown wallpaper used in the slide-outs has an aged Spanish influence that contrasts handsomely with the lighter wallpaper used on the primary walls. The light beige ceramic tile with a faux marble appearance offsets well with the soft white ceiling, giving an airy, open feeling to the room. A visual achievement through the choice of color.

The coach selected for this review has cabinetry finished in English Chestnut, which brings an elegance to the coach especially evident in the cabinet doors. The cabinet shops at Tiffin Motorhomes continue to raise the bar each year. Their machinist can create any routing mat that a designer can draw. The triple raised panel doors as well as the sculptured supporting slope to the panel are examples of their skills. The exterior facing of every cabinet is solid hardwood. The registers for the heat ducts are solid wood, stained to match the rest of the cabinet. The shop uses Sherwin-Williams stains and finishes.

The valances and slide-out fascias are additional examples of the woodworking finesse at Tiffin. Large and small wrought iron accents—similar to the work of artisans found in the residential fences of Savannah and New Orleans—are recessed in routed frames centered in each valance. The brocaded fabrics from your decor selection are contrasted with soft velours. The larger iron accents appear again in the slide-out fascias, centered between raised panels mounted in routed recesses with radius corners. Custom designed crown moldings cap the slide-out fascias.

Drawer pulls and door knobs in the 2011 Phaeton have a chrome finish with recessed decorative scrolls. The hinges are recessed into the back of each door and mounted unseen to the solid wood cabinet facing.

The Bedroom Quarter

Going back to that “game of inches” mentioned earlier, TMH has

managed to put the spacious rear bath plus a half bath into the 40 QBH floorplan and still offer a king size bed with walk-around space. Tiffin gives the buyer six choices for bedding! Beginning with the Pillowtop queen bed, which is standard, you can choose the Pillowtop king for a modest increase. Many buyers have selected the optional Select Comfort mattress, queen or king, which offers varying degrees of firmness for each side of the bed (What is *your* sleep number?). In the last two years, the optional Memory Foam mattress, queen or king, has been very popular.

The 40 QBH coach under review has the elegant “White Diamonds” interior. The comforter is created with a large inset of delicately brocaded fabric bordered with a smooth ivory-toned sateen. The faux leather headboard is flanked by twin pilasters inlaid with the decor’s complementary fabrics. The English Walnut valances on both sides of the bed slide-out have handsome fabric inlays. Perfectly positioned for cross-ventilation, the two screened windows have the dual Roll-Ease solar and privacy shades. End tables immediately under the windows have solid surface countertops and convenient shelves. Twelve-volt reading lamps and matched stereo speakers complete this inviting alcove. Four raised panel doors conceal over 12 cubic feet of overhead storage. The standard two-speed ceiling fan is controlled by a switch in one of the end tables.

The facing slide-out on the passenger side is multi-purpose. Tiffin’s use of solid wood for cabinet facings, drawer fronts, raised panel doors, and fascias demonstrates the company’s commitment to quality construction. The chest under the television offers a double-door enclosure with cable connections for a second satellite receiver and/or DVD-CD player to facilitate different programming, just in case Bill wants to watch football on the 37-inch screen in the living room and Mary wants to watch a movie in the bedroom. The chest also offers a large drawer and a clothes hamper. The chest under the window has four drawers measuring 18.5 × 10 × 7 inches. Both chests have solid surface countertops. The two double doors above the window conceal nearly three cubic feet of storage. The 28 × 18-inch window has a sliding panel with screen but also doubles as an emergency exit.





Rear full bath, passenger side



Stacked washer/dryer

Rear full bath, driver side



Mid-ship half bath

The Bath and a Half Quarter

Let's face it. Whether you are a family of five taking a two-week vacation or a couple who are full-timing, having two lavatories and two toilets sure can be handy on occasion. Now for that "game of inches." Look at the floorplan and check out the pictures again. From the N-S perspective, the rear bath only took 78 inches. And yet it has a lavatory with a solid surface countertop measuring 49 inches in one direction and 34 inches in the other, plus a 14.5 inch decorative backsplash. The solid surface lavatory material is laminated into one piece with the countertop. It sports a polished chrome single handle faucet and soap dispenser. Above the lavatory, three cabinets — each with mirrored doors — challenge you to fill them up. Four long, deep drawers provide plenty of storage space under the countertop, plus you have a small cavern directly under the lavatory.

Immediately on your right as you enter the rear bath, Splendide's stacked washer and dryer is perfectly located for convenient use. Each unit has almost as many settings as you would expect to find on a high end residential washer and dryer. The washer and dryer are smaller, of course, but if you use them as needed two or three times a week, it is easy to keep up with your laundry.

Moving to your left and across the back wall of the coach, the master closet is 58 inches wide and features double sliding doors with mirrors. The closet is 21 inches deep and 63 inches high. Wainscot and chair rail on the passenger side wall follow the bedroom decor. Adjacent to the closet and positioned under a window on the passenger side, TMH selected a Dometic elec-

tric macerator toilet which pulverizes waste with a bladed turbine. This eliminates clogs in the sewage line to the black tank located near the middle of the basement infrastructure.

The elliptical shape of the shower in the forward corner of the floorplan utilizes a double radius door with translucent glass. It is well appointed with two chrome towel racks, recessed soap dish, grab bar, a shelf for bath products, and a chrome adjustable shower head with flexible hose. Water volume and temperature is controlled by a single rotary lever. A skylight above the shower brightens the morning time in the rear bath, but a sliding insulator panel can be pulled across the skylight in colder temperatures to reduce heat loss. The rear bath is ventilated by both a screened window and a Fan-Tastic vent in the ceiling.

The half bath, located at mid-ship between the galley and the bedroom, has equally fine appointments, a corner medicine cabinet with mirror plus two side cabinets, a ceiling vent, and screened window. The vanity has a double door cabinet under the lavatory. The solid surface countertop with a 14.5-inch backsplash measures 19 inches along the outside wall and 36 inches across the inside wall. Theater lighting above the mirror, a curved hardwood magazine rack, and a towel rack complete this very accommodating half bath.

The Cockpit Quarter

Tiffin started from scratch on the Phaeton's 2011 cockpit. Many have noted the aeronautical influence in its design and functionality. On the reviewed unit with Tiffin's PowerGlide™

chassis, the instrumentation is concise, presented in three large dials. The center instrument is the speedometer with an **INFORMATION CENTER** screen at the bottom giving the driver data on the transmission temperature, fuel economy (instant and average), engine hours, battery condition, two trip mileage meters, and a diagnostics system. The left instrument cluster houses the oil pressure, coolant temperature, and front and rear air pressure. The right instrument cluster presents the primary RPM dial plus perimeter displays for the fuel and DEF tanks.

To the right of the steering column, nine toggle switches at your fingertips take care of the . . .

STEP COVER **DRIVER FAN** **PASS FAN** **SOLAR SHADE** **NIGHT SHADE** **GEN START** **MAP LIGHT** **DOCK LIGHT** **RADIO LIGHT**

The monitor for the rear and side view cameras is positioned immediately to the right of the steering wheel for quick and safe viewing as you drive. When you are backing, the rear monitor shows a superimposed scale in feet and meters to make sure your visual interpretation is accurate.

The optional navigation system offers satellite-sourced mapping plus vocal driving instructions. Depending on the level of service you select for the navigation system, you can get traffic reports, optional routing, and weather reports. The screen for the navigation system flips for access to the tuners for the standard radio or the XM satellite radio (optional, requires subscription), and the CD player. When you are underway, the quietness of the cockpit makes the surround sound system a really relaxing and pleasurable experience. If you are listening to the stereo or radio while using navigation software, the system will interrupt your programming to give you ongoing directions.

The three switches for the automotive heating and air are large and easy to read – making them easy to use while you are driving. The defrost system is very effective, supplying a sufficient air volume onto the large, expansive windshield. Tiffin continues to augment the defrost system with eight-inch fans in the upper left and right corners of the windshield – an additional safety feature. And speaking of safety, you will notice that the front half of the deck between the bottom of the windshield and the dash is a flat black, minutely dimpled surface. Safety experts have found that this treatment significantly reduces the glare from the sun during the day and oncoming headlights at night. Two 12v outlets are conveniently located just below the heating and air switches.

Since the cockpit and passenger chair are surrounded by nearly 50 square feet of windshield and side windows, TMH opted for the electrically controlled solar and opaque shades for the windshield, so that the driver or the passenger can easily make adjustments to deal with the sun’s direct rays and glare. The side windows and the door window can be adjusted with pull loops that are within arms reach of both the passenger and driver.

Two drawers are located immediately below the HVAC controls, one of which has a double cup holder. The lower drawer with a sliding tray should be especially useful for storing the coach’s

extra keys and records which sometimes require quick access.

To the left of the steering column within fingertip reach, the dash houses the headlight switch and the rheostat dial for cockpit lighting, the air-driven emergency brake, windshield wipers/washer, heat-AC vent, and three toggle switches for . . .

ENG PREHEAT **AUX START** **MOVE PEDALS**

The “engine preheat” warms the engine prior to starting on a cold day. The “auxiliary start” pulls extra power from the house batteries to assure a quick start of the generator. The “move pedals” switch adjusts the brake and accelerator pedals in and out to accommodate the driver’s height.

The cockpit continues along the left sidewall in a wraparound console design which is slightly slanted to make the switches and controls very accessible. A cupholder is at the forward end of the console. Three toggle switches . . .

AIR HORN **ICC FLASH** **EXH BRAKE**

activate an optional air horn, the courtesy flasher, and the supplementary exhaust brake. The gear selector and the HWH leveling system complete the “flight deck.” The sidewall of the console has two large pockets for maps.

Both the driver’s and passenger’s Ultraleather 6-way power seats are standard equipment in the forward travel compartment. Both chairs have lever-controlled reclining backs, adjustable armrests, and 180-degree rotation that moves them into the living room arena. The passenger’s chair also has a power-actuated footrest.

A smaller console between the passenger chair and sidewall gives the passenger a separate toggle switch for step cover and one for a map light. The vertical face of the console facing the entry door positions nine toggle switches for convenient control of . . .

FLOOR LIGHT **12v ON-OFF** **PORCH LIGHT**
ENTRY STEP **CEILING LIGHT** **DOOR LIGHT**
ASSIST HANDLE **CARGO LIGHT** **ROAD LIGHT**

The Basement

Starting on the passenger side and moving from front to rear, here is what you will find. The first bay houses the propane tank and the hydraulic pumps for the HWH jacks.

The second, third, and fourth side-opening doors expose the largest unobstructed storage area on any of TMH’s motorhomes. It is 118 inches wide, 95 inches across, and 19 inches to the bottom edge of the chassis rails, making 123 cubic feet of storage. If you measure the height of the compartment to the above floor (into which the chassis rails intrude), the storage volume jumps to approximately 180 cubic feet. Optional slide-out trays add convenience, but they will reduce the storage volume.



The fifth compartment houses the DEF tank (diesel engine fluid) which holds 15 gallons (see *Roughing It Smoothly*, 7:2, pages 19-21, for an explanation of the use of DEF and the EPA's regulation of emissions).

The sixth compartment holds a large assortment of relays, electrical equipment, rear and front chassis power breakers, etc. It may be a little intimidating when you first take a peak, but the installations are neat, clean, and well-labeled.

The rear cap has a single-door access that flips up out of the way. The Cummins ISC 8.3 liter powerplant produces 380 hp and 1050 lb/ft of torque. Each service point is easy to check visually and manually. They include the oil dip stick, transmission fluid fill tube, Filter Minder®, coolant fill and engine oil fill.

Going from rear to front on the driver side, the first compartment gives you four cubic feet of storage, a very handy space for cleaning supplies. The second houses the Auto Transfer Switch, the 50-amp cable, and about two cubic feet of storage.

Located in front of the rear tire, the utility bay is in the third compartment. After inspecting utility bays on many other brands, I think most RVers would agree with me that the TMH design is among the best in the industry, and certainly the easiest and most efficient for quick hook-ups and servicing (see picture). The big change this year is the larger diameter drain for the grey tank. It is the same as the drain for the black tank.

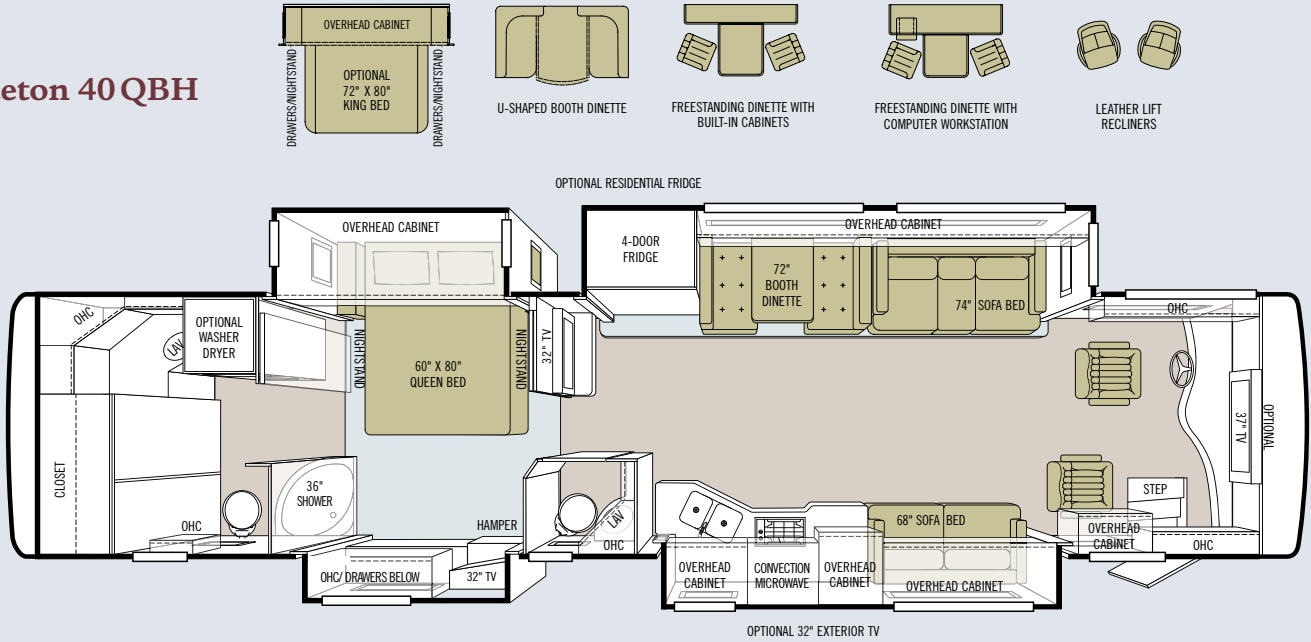
Bays four, five, and six on the driver side provide dual access to the large storage area. The storage trays slide out on either side. The storage area has cargo lights at all four corners.

The seventh compartment contains the heavy duty slide-out tray for the six house batteries. Although the batteries are service free, the slide-out tray provides replacement access.

The eighth compartment under the driver's window contains the HWH electronics panel, compressed air service, windshield washer fluid, and fuse panels. The TMH printed label system for all components should make future troubleshooting much easier.



Phaeton 40 QBH



Fueling ports are located on both sides near the front tires. This year they are positioned higher on the sidewalls to prevent the foamy air lock spills and to facilitate faster fueling.

Driving the Phaeton 40 QBH with PowerGlide™

When you *design* your chassis to accommodate the motorhome you build on top of it, you can expect a better totally integrated result. Tiffin engineers have spent untold hours balancing the loads in every area of the motorhome to achieve better handling, braking, cornering, and a comfortable ride.

The take-off from a standing stop is powerful. The Cummins ISC 8.3 liter 380hp engine is perfectly mated with the Allison 3000 MH 6-speed automatic transmission. The acceleration makes a strong surge as the transmission moves evenly through each gear. In driving the 40 QBH loaded with approximately 60 percent of its cargo carrying capacity and towing a 3,500 pound car, the coach easily achieved enough ramp speed to merge

safely into interstate traffic. On four to five percent grades extending at least a half mile, it rarely lost more than 10 percent of its speed. In interstate driving, the coach can transition easily into the passing lanes and pull away from traffic clogs.

When driving on two-lane highways, I found the coach's steering responsive with very little play in the steering wheel. In city traffic, the coach's 55-degree wheel cut is a big asset.

The PowerGlide's suspension system, air bags, and four independent ride height control valves create a smooth ride and keep the coach level in curves. All of these features translate into a coach that is very easy to handle on the road and never intimidating. The suspension system also figures into good handling characteristics when unexpected braking is necessary. When you combine these features with the top quality Flexsteel driver and passenger seating with Ultraleather and 6-way power that is standard equipment on the Phaeton, I'll bet you can drive eight hours with three rest stops and not be tired. It's just that good! **RIS**



SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2011 Phaeton 40 QBH, Quad Slide, Base MSRP* – \$244,440. MSRP as tested with options – \$256,620.

STANDARD FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Structural

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

Automotive

The Tiffin PowerGlide™ chassis
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 accelerator 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
8 Kw Onan manual slide-out generator
Hydraulic automatic leveling jacks
Heated chrome 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
Automatic 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
Back-up camera
Side-view cameras activated by turn signals
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
Two 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
Contemporary wraparound dash with glare reduction
Slide-out laptop tray and recessed stair rail in passenger side of dash

Custom infrared repeater system on all TVs
Dual dash fans
Power solar / privacy windshield shades
Solar / privacy shades for driver / passenger side windows
Color rear vision monitor system with side-view cameras activated by turn signals
Beverage tray with drawers
Adjustable seatbelt brackets
Dual 12v dash receptacles
Single CD player & AM/FM stereo
Fire extinguisher
Computer slide-out tray in dash with lock-out 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 color television wall-mounted in entertainment center
Custom infrared repeaters on all TVs
68-inch Flexsteel® Ultraleather™ DE sofa bed on passenger side
74-inch Flexsteel® Cloth DE sofa bed on driver side

Kitchen

Solid surface counter top with residential stainless steel sink
Solid surface sink covers
Sink cover racks (underneath sink)
Permanently mounted folding solid surface cooktop cover
Single lever sink faucet with sprayer
Built-in soap dispenser
3-burner cooktop with convection / microwave
Exterior vent for convection / microwave oven
Built-in waste can
Galley splash guards
4-door refrigerator with ice maker
Built-in soap dispenser
Expand-an-Island
One Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan

Bath

Three cabinets with vanity lights in full bath
One cabinet with vanity lights in half bath
Skylight in shower with sliding solar cover
Solid surface vanity tops and bowls
Custom raised panel bath doors to half bath & full bath
Sprayer on toilet
Fiberglass molded shower
Price-Pfister™ shower head
Glass shower surround
Glass radius shower door
Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan in full bath
Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan in half bath

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 with pillow top mattress
Under bed storage
Night stands with 110v outlets
Wood headboard
Chest of drawers with laundry hamper
32-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
Solid hardwood 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 theater 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

Automatic satellite dish (receivers and service contract required)
In-dash navigational system
Two exterior slide-out trays
Residential refrigerator (NC)
Hadley air horns
Exterior 32-inch LCD television in galley slide-out wall
37-inch dash overhead television
Dinette / computer workstation
Two Ultraleather™ lift recliners
Stacked washer/dryer
Built-in vacuum cleaner
68-inch Ultraleather™ Air Coil Hide-A-Bed – (passenger side)
Memory foam mattress – king
English Chestnut interior cabinets (NC)

OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

In-Motion satellite dish
Pre-wired for Winegard Travel Satellite
One exterior slide-out storage tray
10,000 kw generator with 3 low-profile ACs
Tankless gas water heater
Spotlight
Gas oven with convection / microwave
Free standing dinette with built-in cabinets
U-shaped dinette
Combo washer/dryer with OH storage
Satellite radio (requires subscription)
DRIVER SIDE
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 pillowtop mattress
Select Comfort bed – queen
Select Comfort bed – king
Memory foam mattress – queen
Cherry bark cabinetry (simulated)
Medium alderwood cabinetry

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 266"
Overall length – 40'5"
Overall height w/roof air – 12'7"

Interior height – 84"
Overall width – 101"
Interior width – 96"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 36,600 lb.
Front GAWR – 14,600 lb.
Rear GAWR – 22,000 lb.
GCWR – 46,600 lb.
UVW – 28,700 lb.
CCC – 7,900 lb.
Trailer hitch capacity – 10,000 lb.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – 380 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 – 275/80R22.5 Michelin
Alternator – 170 amps

CHASSIS

Frame – The Tiffin PowerGlide™ chassis
Frame Design – Raised rail
Anti-locking Braking System – WABCO 4M/4S ABS System
Air Suspension (front) – Tuthill
Air Suspension (rear) – Tuthill
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 – 4 adults
Fuel tank – 100 gallons
Freshwater – 90 gallons
Black water – 50 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.tiffinmotorhomes.com and click on "dealer locator." If internet access is not available, call 256-356-8661 and ask the operator for the Tiffin dealer location nearest to you.

PLEASE NOTE

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



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- CULINARY KITCHEN



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SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO

Warm Winter Wonderland

Looking for an interesting, warm but not sweltering place to dock your motorhome for a few weeks this winter? Here's a weather bulletin:

- **Desert-like Cities.** *Carlsbad* in southeastern New Mexico: 350 days of sunshine, average high in January, about 60 degrees and low of 27. *Las Cruces*, in central southern New Mexico: same 350 days of sunshine each year, average high in February, 65 degrees with average low just under 30 degrees. *Deming* in the state's southwestern region: sunshine 350 days a year, only 9 inches of rain in an average year, highs in the high 50s and average low of 30.5 degrees in the coldest month of December.

If you hail from deep snow climes, you'll agree this is mild winter weather. But, is there anything interesting to do in this arid country? Visit, as daughter Rhonda and I did, and be surprised. Southern New Mexico, though perhaps not so well promoted as some of the state's colder northern cities like Taos, Santa Fe and Albuquerque, offers some of the most enchanting winter RVing adventures in this "land of enchantment." For instance:

- **Fantastic sightseeing drives**, either in your motorhome or a dinghy, can take you in a few hours across cactus-studded desert, up scenic mountain roads to an altitude of 10,000 feet, alongside rivers and lakes, and put you in sight of such natural wonders as the White Sands National Monument where snow-white gypsum sand dunes, some 60 feet high, cover 275 miles of the undrained Tularosa Basin and the "Valley of Fire" where black lava flows up to 160 feet thick spread across 45 miles of desert.
- **Outdoor opportunities** abound. You can golf on intriguing courses; dry camp on a beach or hook up in ex-

cellent full-service RV parks; test your choice of literally hundreds of miles of back country hiking, biking, four-wheeler trails and roads; hunt big game or fish; ski cross-country or on acclaimed slopes; ride horseback; bird-watch in different habitats; and pick up rocks in places confirmed "rockhounds" rate highly.

- **Four National Parks.** Southern New Mexico's most noted and visited park is *Carlsbad Caverns National Park* where you can either walk or be whisked by elevator 750 feet below the surface into the famed Big Room which is 4,000 feet long with a ceiling that is 350 feet at its highest point. Others include *White Sands*, the *Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument* in the western part of the state where you can walk into homes Mogollon people built into high bluffs and then left over 700 years ago; and the *Petroglyph National Monument* where over 21,000 Indian drawings decorate rock cliffs.

- **Old West history** comes alive in these parts. Many historians call *Lincoln*, 30 miles north of Ruidoso, the most authentic old west town remaining in the U.S. Now a picturesque National Historic Landmark, its history is spiced by such famous characters as Billy the Kid, Kit Carson, Pat Garrett, and John Chisum. It is where 29 men were murdered before the bloody Lincoln County War ended in 1878. *Silver City*, founded after prospectors discovered silver in the 1860s, was devastated in 1895 when heavy rain cascaded a wall of water from nearby hills, washed out Main Street, and cut a ditch as deep as 50 feet where the street had been. Today you can cross that wash on a foot

Text by Norman Spray

Photography by Rhonda Spray



bridge and walk down its banks in the downtown Big Ditch Park. Just across the Rio Grande River south of Las Cruces is *Mesilla*, also called Old Mesilla, founded in 1850 by 60 families who moved across the Rio Grande to land then owned by Mexico. That happened after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican war with the U.S. and Mexico ceded land to the U.S. They moved because they wanted to stay in Mexico but, ironically, Mexico sold another 30,000 square miles to the U.S. four years later for \$10 million as part of the Gadsden Purchase. Though this placed the Mesilla people under U.S. rule again, they continued to live their lives as if still in Mexico, preserving a rich culture that still prevails. Now Mesilla's plaza is a major tourist attraction with shops, boutiques and restaurants occupying ancient adobe buildings. *Columbus*, a small town on the Mexican border 32 miles south of Deming, was attacked at 4 a.m. March 9, 1916, by an estimated 1,000 banditos led by Mexican revolutionary bandit Gen. Francisco (Pancho) Villa. Eighteen residents and U. S. soldiers and more than 100 of Villa's men died. Historical exhibits are displayed at the Pancho Villa State Park visitor center at Columbus and the Old Custom House. The park has a full-service RV campground.

• **Culture and Entertainment.** Museums, galleries, fine dining and fast food restaurants, live entertainment night spots, local theater groups, casinos, and all sorts of shopping assure satisfying cultural pursuits in Southern New Mexico. There are 40 galleries in Las Cruces and nearby Mesilla Valley. The Ruidoso area boasts 18 art galleries and a dozen museums plus six that are part of the "Old" Lincoln State Monument.

Rhonda and I began our tour at Carlsbad in the southeastern corner and worked east-to-west across the southern half of the state. We looked at attractions, including colder ones, easily reached by motorhome from the relatively warm cities. But fuel cost could make it more economical to do much of your touring in a tow vehicle. Following: we review worthy attractions by area.

FROM CARLSBAD in Southeastern New Mexico

There are the caverns . . . and much more close by

Carlsbad, with a population of 27,000, takes pride in cultural and civic activities (reasonably priced concerts, plays, musicals, dance, and visual arts) offered in a city defined by its relaxed, friendly, small-town feel. There's a lovely paved six-mile river walk along the banks of the Pecos River, boating and water sports, a sports complex, parks, golf links, and tennis courts. There are at least eight good campgrounds and RV parks in and near the city, including the Pecos River RV Park on the banks of the Pecos where we hooked up.



These Carlsbad Caverns stalagmites probably began growth thousands of years ago with a single drop of water.

CARLSBAD AREA ATTRACTIONS

A Walnut Canyon Drive guide pamphlet available at the Visitor Center explains geologic features and much of what you'll see at 18 different viewpoints along a 9½-mile twisting, narrow one-way loop scenic drive through mountain desert country that supports up to 800 plant, 400 animal, and 300 bird species. Though easy for passenger cars, the Park does not recommend this gravel road for motorhomes or RV trailers. There's a short nature trail and over 50 miles of primitive backcountry trails with trail heads located along each park road. Overnight hikers must register and carry plenty of water since they're not likely to find any. Take care.

Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park (575-887-5516) located atop the Ocotillo Hills just six miles northwest of downtown Carlsbad lets you walk 1.3 miles through different authentic Chihuahuan Desert habitats occupied by Mexican wolves, javelina, pronghorn antelope, mule deer, bison, and mountain lion.

Guadalupe Mountains National Park (915-828-3251, www.nps.gov/gumo), located 35 miles southwest of Carlsbad Caverns, offers 10 backcountry campgrounds, two year-round campgrounds; 85 miles of trails, two spring-fed oases; and an 8.4 mile round-trip trail from Pine Springs trailhead to the 8,740-foot summit of Guadalupe Peak, highest in Texas.

Lincoln National Forest and Bureau of Land Management Recreation Areas (575-885-4181, www.blm.gov/nm) This 1,103,441 acre forest adjoins both Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks and extends northward beyond Lincoln. It is open to hiking, caving, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, hunting and sightseeing. Maps for the Carlsbad area can be obtained at the BLM's Guadalupe Ranger District Office, Room 159, Federal Bldg., 114 S. Halagueno in Carlsbad. Popular destinations include **Sitting Bull Falls**; **Black River Recreation area**, an oasis in the Chihuahuan Desert area; the 30-mile paved **Guadalupe Back Country Byway**; the **Hackberry Lake Off-highway Vehicle Area**; **La Cueva Trails**; and the 6,000 acre **Pecos River Recreation Area** which provides public access, including boat ramp, to the Pecos River and Red Bluff Reservoir.

Christmas on the Pecos (575-885-4181, www.christmasonthepecos.com) is a wildly popular Christmas tradition. Spectacular holiday lighting in backyards along the developed river banks turns the world into a cloud of brilliant color. Trips are available from Nov. 26 through Dec. 31. Fares: \$12.50 Sundays through Thursdays, \$17.50 Fridays and Saturdays.

Brantley Lake State Park (575-457-2384), 12 miles north of Carlsbad off U.S. 285, offers a campground with shelters, tables and grills. There's a Visitor Center, fishing dock, and boat ramps.

Any discussion of attractions has to start with Carlsbad Caverns National Park (575-785-2232, www.nps.gov/cav), perhaps the state's most famous destination. The entrance is 18 miles southwest of the city on U.S. 62/180, and it comes as a surprise. Out your window is flat desert land dotted with sage, yucca, and cholla cactus. Then instantly, after turning west on the park's entrance road at White City, you're in a different world, climbing the foothills of the Guadalupe mountains. At the unremarkable-looking visitor center, you pay \$3.00 to rent a recorded audio "tour guide" and choose to walk a mile and a quarter down into the cavern to the Big Room entrance or streak down a 750-foot shaft cut through solid rock which is visible through the elevator's glass windows.

You step from the elevator into a surreal 56-degree world of speleothems, including colorful huge and small stalactites hanging from ceilings and stalagmites which grew up from the floor, all having begun tens of thousands of years ago with drops of water carrying minute amounts of calcium carbonate material. Along the 1.25 mile walk through the Big Room, you'll pass 40 marked viewpoints where you can stop, punch the corresponding number on your audio "tour guide" and activate a professional voice that tells you exactly what you are seeing. The beauty and vastness you find yourself trying to comprehend is breathtaking. You probably can't help assessing the dangers early explorers faced in these dark passages, particularly a cowboy named Jim White who gets most credit for discovery and development of this natural wonder. I was particularly awed by a rickety homemade wire and rope ladder that White and others used to descend into the depths of the "bottomless pit" as well as a rope they climbed some 80 feet to find an upper level "spirit room" that is not part of the tour.

At the visitor center, free brochures and books are available to explain how this and 115 other caves within the park's 47,000 acres were formed. If you want to see more, you can arrange to follow park rangers on guided tours into more demanding routes in the cavern. These include King's Palace (\$8.00), Left Hand Tunnel (\$7.00), Lower Cave (\$20), Hall the of White Giant (\$20) and others. For some, head lamps will be provided but you'll need gloves, kneepads, and at least four new alkaline batteries. Steep climbs and long distance crawls through tight squeezes are encountered on some of the routes. If you go in winter, unfortunately, you'll not be able to see flights of the hundreds of thousands of Mexican Free Tail Bats that live part-time in the cavern. They will have gone south, usually leaving in late October not to return until next April or May.

FROM LAS CRUCES in south central New Mexico

It'll take more than one winter to see and do all there is in this section

• **Las Cruces**, home to some 95,000, is the second largest city in New Mexico, larger than the capital city of Santa Fe. Situated along the banks of the Rio Grande River at the foot of the Organ Mountains in the edge of the Chihuahuan Desert, Las Cruces gets an average of only 8.5 inches of rain a year and no more than two inches of snow in winter. New Mexico State University's campus contributes to the city's cultural ambiance. The area has four golf courses and many good RV parks, including the outstanding Hacienda where we stayed.

• **Mesilla**. It's easy to imagine you're in Old Mexico (before the current drug wars) as you stroll across and around Mesilla's vividly colorful plaza. Many of the adobe buildings pre-date the time the village was organized. One of



This adobe building, more than 200 years old, is the last standing Butterfield Stage Line depot. It now houses La Posta de Mesilla, regarded as one of the best Mexican restaurants in the United States.

the buildings, now more than 200 years old, was a favorite depot stop for the famed Butterfield Stage Line when Mesilla was the largest town between San Antonio and San Diego. Today it houses La Posta, recognized by tourists (Rhonda and I among them) and many restaurant rating guides as a colorful five-star establishment serving the finest Mexican cuisine. “These walls,” the restaurant claims on its menu, “have sheltered such personalities as Billy the Kid, Kit Carson, General Douglas MacArthur, and Pancho Villa.”

Indeed it was in a Mesilla courtroom that a judge sentenced Billy the Kid to be hung “until you are dead, dead, dead!” for the murder of one Andrew “Buckshot” Roberts. “And you can go to hell, hell, hell!” the Kid is said to have shouted. The Kid then was taken to Lincoln to await execution. Instead, he killed two deputies and escaped only to be killed by Sheriff Pat Garrett

Losing track of where you are while playing in the white sand can be dangerous. Sand “white-outs” can be disorienting, erasing your tracks and obscuring landmarks.



LAS CRUCES AREA ATTRACTIONS

White Sands National Monument. (575-479-6124, www.nps.gov/whsa) It’s hard to miss the white sands, one of the world’s most unusual phenomena, when you travel 54 miles northeast of Las Cruces on Hwy. 70. Stop at the visitor center museum and take in a diorama that explains how these unique sands came to exist, unique because they are naturally-produced gypsum instead of quartz that makes up most of the world’s dunes. Thus “educated,” you’ll better appreciate what you see on an eight-mile scenic drive into the heart of the dunes. In the first mile or so, we saw only parabolic dunes supporting some plant life, notably skunkbush, sumac, rosemary, mint, and rabbit brush. Frankly, not too impressive. In the next mile, all this changed and the world in our vision turned to blue sky, towering snow-white dunes with no plants growing, and mountains in the background.

You can hike, walk, and play barefooted in the sand. Be aware that winds whipping the sands sometimes kick up the equivalent of a winter “white out” that erases all landmarks. Don’t expect to get back in your car without some of the sand sifting in, even if you’re not supposed to leave with any.

Special tours. Dusk being one of the best times to see the dunes, the park is open until 9 p.m. every evening. Ranger-guided strolls leave a staging area an hour before sunset. Scheduled auto caravans led by rangers on certain days each month go to Lake Lucero, which plays a key role in the production of sand.

Missile range activities. Much of the 150-mile long Tularosa Basin (which has no river to drain it) is occupied by the 4,000 square mile White Sands Missile Range which surrounds the park. Experimental weapons and space technology firings sometimes force the park and Hwy. 70 to shut down, usually not more than twice a week and then not more than one or two hours at a time.

Sixty-five miles northwest of White Sands, there’s really not a lot left to see but it’s nevertheless a place where the world was forever changed at 5:29 on the morning of July 16, 1945. This is the Trinity Test Site. Here the world’s first plutonium bomb was exploded, creating a thundering shock wave that broke windows 120 miles away. This test was followed less than a month later with drops of similar bombs, first on Hiroshima then Nagasaki, that led to Japan’s surrender on Aug. 14. Today this National Historic Landmark is open to visitors only twice a year, on the first Saturday of April and the first Saturday of October. For information and/or reservations: 404-678-1134.

How impressive is it to wander the white sands dunes? “This is the nearest I’ve ever gotten to feeling how I think Neal Armstrong must have felt when he made that ‘one giant step for mankind’ on the moon. This is other worldly,” Rhonda remarked in awe.

CLOUDCROFT AND RUIDOSO AREA ATTRACTIONS

Hunting in Southern New Mexico. Licensed hunting guides and outfitters in both Cloudcroft and Ruidoso equip hunters and can be hired to lead hunts into the Lincoln National Forest for elk, mule deer, antelope, turkey, bear, cougar, Barbary sheep, mountain lion, dove, and quail. The Chambers of Commerce will put you in touch. (Cloudcroft: 575-682-2733, www.cloudcroft.net; Ruidoso: 575-257-7395, www.ruidosonow.com. Also: Mescalero Apache Reservation Big Game Hunts, 575-464-9770). Maps for hiking, ATV trails, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and horseback travel around Cloudcroft are available at the BLM's Sacramento District Ranger Office in town (575-682-2551). In Ruidoso, contact the Smokey Bear Ranger Station (575-257-4095).

The Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum & Pioneer Village (open weekends during winter months) brings the area's past to life with exhibits and period-dressed actors. High altitude and low humidity make sky gazing delightful. A dark sky ordinance in surrounding communities limits distorting glow from town lighting. **Sunspot National Scenic Byway** (NM-6563) is a 16-mile route from Cloudcroft to the visitor center at the **National Solar Observatory at Sacramento Peak**. Another, the **Apache Point Observatory** is nearby. A half dozen RV parks operate near Cloudcroft, but most of them close at the end of October.

The Inn of Mountain Gods Resort & Casino, noted for its championship golf course and fine restaurants, regularly brings national headline entertainers to its 2,000-seat theater. The **Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts** stages Broadway shows, dance troupes, and music from around the world in separate summer and winter seasons.

Ski Apache, just outside Ruidoso on Sierra Blanca peak (12,003 feet), has 55 runs, a ski summit of 11,500 feet, 11 chair lifts, and a lift capacity of 16,500 skiers per hour. Average annual snowfall is over 15 feet, providing excellent powder skiing and snowboarding. **Ruidoso Winter Park**, a tubing and sledding area, provides giant tubes and bib rentals. **Ruidoso Downs Race Track**, which operates May through Labor Day, is best known as home of the All American Futurity, the world's richest Quarter Horse race.

An affiliate of the Smithsonian, the **Hubbard Museum of the American West**, just off Hwy. 70 near the racetrack, houses the Museum of the Horse and a marvelous collection of carriages, wagons, saddles, art, and Indian artifacts. This "must-see" museum is famed for its outdoor exhibit, "Free Spirits at Noisy Water," which displays eight larger-than-life bronze horses in a life-like hillside setting. These finely-detailed horses by acclaimed local artist Dave McGary, accurately represents a different breed, from Quarter Horse to Thoroughbred.



Ruidoso's Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts brings renowned dance, musical, and theatrical troupes to perform in separate winter and summer seasons. • At the Hubbard Museum of the American West, a Smithsonian affiliate, one can experience the flavor of the Old West. • Six of the eight bronze horses in Dave McGary's "Free Spirits at Noisy Water" are seen in this display in a hillside setting outside the Hubbard Museum of the American West.

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This life-size “blow up” of an old photograph of Billy the Kid stands in the Old Courthouse museum that is part of the Lincoln State Monument. Whatever he was, he did not win any accolades for most handsome dude in Old West folklore.

in 1881. The building where that trial was held still stands. The iron cell that the Kid occupied is displayed across the street in the Gadsden Museum.

Now for some real winter, we left Las Cruces and drove 85 miles to Cloudcroft, and later another 30 miles to Ruidoso, both high altitude mountain resorts surrounded by the 1.2 million acre Lincoln National Forest. There’s usually plenty of snow for skiing, snowmobiling, snow tubing, and ice skating. Local sporting goods dealers and outfitters rent or sell any equipment needed.

• **Cloudcroft**, sitting at 9,000' altitude in the Sacramento Mountains, brings to mind a quaint Old West movie set with shops, hotels, saloons, boarding houses and restaurants crowded wall-to-wall along Burro Avenue. In January the average high temperature is 41 degrees and the average low is a chilling 19.

Now home to fewer than 900 year-round residents, the village began as a railroad and lumber mill outpost, first becoming a tourist destination in 1899 when owners of the railroad offered round trips from El Paso, some 90 miles away, for \$3.00. Tourists who came could stay in a tent for 50 cents a night or get a room in the newly-constructed pavilion for \$1. Heck of a deal!

The railroad is long gone but *The Lodge Resort*, successor to that pavilion, remains a Cloudcroft institution famed for an excellent restaurant, high altitude golf course, and other amenities, not the least of which, legend has it, is a red-haired lady ghost sometimes “seen” in the halls. In February, there’ll be food and entertainment at a “Mardi Gras in the Clouds” family celebration.

• **Ruidoso** is much larger, home to some 9,500 year-round residents. At an elevation of approximately 7,000 feet, it gets real winter weather with an average low of 19 degrees and high of 45 in the coldest month of January. The average annual snowfall is 47 inches. Nevertheless many RV parks operate year-round. Probably most sophisticated of southern New Mexico cities, Ruidoso has a downtown entertainment district with several clubs and restaurants that have live shows, among them Mountain Annie’s popular family dinner theater.

• **Lincoln Country Tour: Murders, Lava, and Smokey Bear**

The longest tour we made out of Las Cruces took us north 78 miles on U.S. 70 to Tularosa, thence another 45 miles on U.S. 54 to Carrizozo and the *Valley of Fires State Park*. From there we took U.S. 380 southeast down to Capitan, Lincoln, and Hondo. There we intersected U.S. 70 that took us back to Ruidoso where we spent the night, since we’d already driven close to 200 miles and spent several hours enjoying attractions.

First, we regretfully bypassed *Three Rivers Petroglyph Site*, which we could have reached by turning onto County Road B30 seventeen miles north of Tularosa then continuing five miles east. The site contains over 21,000 rock carvings that archeologists think the Jornada Mogolon people made as long as 1,000 years ago. Two RV pull-throughs with power and water are available.

Four miles northwest of Carrizozo on U.S. 380, we pulled into the BLM *Valley of Fires Recreation Area*. From a hill within the area’s campground, we saw miles of lava, which looked like black rock, covering a vast section of the Tularosa Basin as far as we could see. The lava covers over 125 square miles and is more than 160 feet deep at the center. We looked in vain for the mountain that could have erupted and made all this mess, only to learn it didn’t happen that way. Perhaps as recently as 2,000 years ago, scientists believe untold millions of tons of lava spewed not from mountains but from volcanic vents in the basin floor. The Malpais Nature Trail (3/4-mile) gives hikers a closer look at the smooth and jagged flows. Water and 30/50 amp hookups are available, as is a dump station.

At Capitan, we stopped to pay respects at the grave of the original (and real) Smokey Bear. At *Smokey Bear Historical Park and Museum*, we learned details of the story, viewed artifacts and early posters and enjoyed an audio visual presentation. Smokey was a very small badly burned cub found clinging to a log after the devastating 1980 Capitan Gap fire that burned 17,000 acres. Miraculously, 19 firefighters caught in a rock slide escaped harm. Smokey got well and was flown to Washington, D.C., where he received appropriate honors. He became the famous symbol for safety in the forest that all kids know, took up com-



Anyone interested in agriculture should visit the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces. You'll find great displays of farm equipment, livestock, gardens, and orchards.

portable residence in the National Zoo, and got so much mail he was given his own zip code. When Smokey died in 1976, his body was returned to the Capitan Mountains of his origin.

The highlight of the day was our tour of *Lincoln State Monument* in Lincoln. Sixteen buildings, six of them museums, have

been carefully preserved or restored so that the entire town could (and has) be used for western movie sets. It was in this town that opposing factions fought the infamous "Lincoln County War" that left 29 men dead, culminating in a final five-day showdown in 1878. President Hayes called Lincoln's lone main street (now U.S. 380) "the most dangerous street in America."

One of the participants in this "war" was an 18-year-old skilled in use of the Winchester carbine and Colt's 45. He was William H. Bonney, a.k.a. Billy the Kid. It was in the same courthouse building still standing in Lincoln that the Kid was jailed waiting to be hanged after being convicted of murder in Las Cruces. Instead, he killed two guards and escaped. He died less than three months later when shot down by Sheriff Pat Garrett.

The Courthouse Museum houses exhibits relating to that episode and the Lincoln County War. Today you can even see a hole in a wall long thought to have been made by a bullet fired by The Kid that first passed through Deputy J. W. Bell's head.

Other museums in Lincoln, all interesting, include the Skipworth-Dr. Woods Mansion, Tunstall Store, Torreon, Montano Store, and Anderson Freeman Museum. The Tunstall Store and Dr. Woods House are closed during winter months).

• **Attractions Closer to Las Cruces**

Mesilla Valley agriculture is interesting, made profitable in the desert by drawing irrigation water from the Rio Grande. How


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it is and how it used to be is admirably documented at the *New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum* in Las Cruces. In addition to displays of antique farm and ranch equipment, there are greenhouses, orchards and gardens. In pens and barns you'll see six different breeds of beef cattle, dairy cows, horses, mules, donkeys, goats and sheep. "The Dust Bowl: Dark Times in New Mexico," an exhibit scheduled to run through Aug. 11, 2011, tells this Depression-era story in text, photography, oral histories and a controversial 1936 film, "The Plow that Broke the Plains."

More current and certainly significant, given the popularity of New Mexico chile peppers in the southwest, is an exhibit called "Red or Green," that focuses on New Mexico chile varieties, their history and evolution, and how they have reached such a "hot" place in the state's culture, economy, and diet. The exhibit will be in place through Sept. 18, 2011.

We visited Hatch, New Mexico, a village some 27 miles north of Los Cruces via Interstate 25, so famed for its chiles that many New Mexicans and Texans insist on buying, roasting, seasoning, and otherwise preparing *only* "Hatch Chiles." "If they ain't from Hatch, they ain't the best," swears an old uncle of mine. The chiles are now gone from the fields at Hatch and other producing areas, harvest having ended in late October. But brightly colored red and green ristras hang along many store fronts and even doors of residences. The ristras, made by stringing dozens of chile pods so that they hang stem side up, are used both for decorating and eating. One string of average size costs about \$16.

At *Gilly's Hatch Valley Chile Company*,

Ristras made of New Mexico Chile peppers come in various sizes and colors. Chile ristras hang awaiting sale at Gilly's Hatch Valley Chile Company, Hatch, New Mexico. The pepper harvest ends in October, but ristras are sold year-round. • Chile peppers turn a roof red where they are placed to dry. • Driving south from Las Cruces on State Highway 28, you will find the road almost covered by the extending limbs of giant pecan trees. Stahmanns Estate Grown Pecans' country store, at left, stands in the middle of a 128,000-tree orchard.

CAMPING NEAR LAS CRUCES

Fishing, canoeing and kayaking, boating, hiking, and camping in scenic areas all are within easy reach of Las Cruces. **Elephant Butte Lake**, 40 miles long, lies behind a dam across the Rio Grande that's 306 feet high and 1,674 feet long. You can dry camp on beaches or hook up to water and electricity in **Elephant Butte State Park**.

A few miles south of Elephant Butte, **Caballo Lake** is impounded at the foot of the Caballo Mountains. Popular for water sports it is known as a nesting place for Bald and Golden Eagles. **Caballo Lake State Park** has water and electric hookups for RVs.

Leasburg Dam State Park, only 15 miles north of Las Cruces, is good for camping, kayaking, and hiking. The campground has water and electric hook-ups.

the first chile roaster and store we came to in Hatch, we talked with Gilbert Pino, formerly a railroad engineer who came to Hatch to care for an ailing mother. He never got back to driving trains. Instead, he said, "God gave me a chili business. I love it. The chile is good for you, it's addictive --- and it's legal!" You can order mild, medium, or hot --- and Pino says he and other Hatch chile dealers will ship them anywhere.

In San Miguel just south of Las Cruces, **Stahmanns Estate Grown Pecans** orchards and store is another agricultural enterprise you can visit. Said to be the world's largest privately-owned pecan producer, Stahmanns tends 128,000 trees. You can see perfectly symmetric row after row as you drive along State Hwy. 28. The country store (Stahmanns has a second store in Mesilla) sells nuts any way you want them, including in delicious confections and Christmas packs.

• **Eagle Ranch** north of Alamogordo (off U.S. 70) specializes in another nut and a grape crop as well. The ranch has over 12,000 pistachio nut trees and makes wine from grapes it harvests off 18,000 vines. There's a gift store facing the highway and another in the Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces.

FROM DEMING, LORDSBURG OR SILVER CITY in Southwestern New Mexico

Any of these towns put you near amazing sight-seeing, hiking, unusual attractions

• **Deming**, 52 miles west of Las Cruces on I-10 and 33 miles north of the Mexican border, is largest city in the northwestern corner with a population of 14,116.

• **Lordsburg**, just 23 miles east of the Arizona border, has a population of 3,379 and average temperatures nearly identical

to Deming's: January average low, 30 degrees, high 59.

• **Silver City**, at nearly 6,000 feet elevation, is coldest. Temperatures here can drop into the teens or even sub-teens during December and January nights but usually bounce back into the 40s or higher the next day. You can find good RV parks, galleries, interesting museums and passable restaurants in any of these towns -- and major attractions are near.

• **Rockhound State Park**, 12 miles southeast of Deming, issues permits to campers and other visitors who want to

Elephant Butte Lake, 60 miles north of Las Cruces is popular for fishing and dry camping on the beach. You can get hook-ups for water and electricity at Elephant Butte State Park. • It is unbelievable that boulders this size could have been thrown or blown from a volcano 180 miles north to form the City of Rocks, which are spaced apart almost like streets.



keep the rocks and semi-precious gem stones they find. Many have walked away with quartz crystals or translucent chalcedony of white, bluish-grey, or red hues. Between Deming and Silver City on U.S. 180, turn east onto NM 61 and drive four miles to . . .

• **The City of Rocks State Park.** Look down into the valley to your left and you'll think maybe what you see covering a square mile of the Chihuahuan desert is a mirage. You've reached the City of Rocks State Park. From this hill half a mile away, huge rocks truly are stacked to look like a small city. Theory is that these huge boulders, spaced apart as if to make room for streets between and below them, were thrown or blown here nearly 35 million years ago by a volcano 180 miles to the north. But why did they land on this place and nowhere else? It's a mystery. Because it's obvious that erosion is eating on these rocks and has been for millions of years, some wonder if there might once have been other "cities" that simply eroded away earlier than this one.

• **The Gila Cliff Dwellings National**

Monument in the Gila wilderness 45 miles north of Silver City is reached via the *Trail of the Mountain Spirits National Scenic Byway* (NM-15). This narrow, winding, dipping and climbing byway passes through the first wilderness area set aside by Congress. Convenient pull-out vistas give you chances to stop and admire the magnificent scenery. Once you reach the cliff dwellings visitor center, go in for background, information about the area and its peoples, and the monument's 553-acre RV park.

A mile-long hike, sometimes steep and rocky, takes you to the dwellings end at an elevation of 5,875 feet. There are 46 rooms in the dwellings inside five interlinked alcoves of a cliff created by pre-historic volcanic activity. As you step through these rooms, you may be haunted by the mystery of the place.

The dwellings were built in about 1276 and occupied by perhaps 10 to 15 Mogollon families, gentle people relatively small and short in stature who traditionally built pit houses or surface pueblos. They hunted game and grew

corn, beans, and squash in the Gila River valley. Then, by 1300 — only 24 years after occupying their cliff homes — they were gone! Why after such a short time? Why break tradition and build in the cliffs in the first place? All good questions. No certifiable answers. The unknown makes this visit all the more enjoyable.


• **More in the Southwest Corner**

Sixty-five miles north of Silver City on U.S. 180 brings you to Glenwood. Another five miles east on Whitewater Canyon road (NM-174) and you are at *The Catwalk*, second most popular destination in the Gila National Forest. This mile-long path, much of it scaffolding-like steel, hugs rocky sides of Whitewater Canyon that's only 20 feet wide and 250 feet deep in places. An exciting section is a 250-foot steel causeway over the river. The Catwalk dates back to 1889, built by miners laying a three-mile long, 3-inch pipeline to deliver water to a mill and temporary mining town that could not be set up closer to water because of the canyon walls.

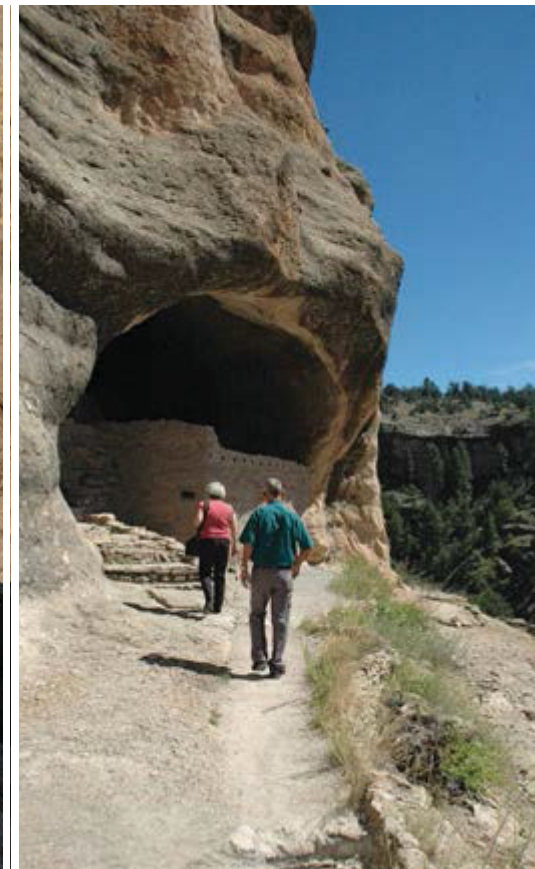
Hikers, bikers, off-road vehicle enthusiasts, and birders have no trouble pursuing their interests in southwestern New Mexico. The 555,065-acre Gila National Forest maintains an extensive trail system. The Continental Divide Trail passes just west of Silver City, continuing northeastward as far as one wants to go. If mountain hiking is not your thing, go south and west out of Lordsburg to find complete solitude in the ecologically unique Sonoran Desert, one of this coun-

try's most desolate, least populated areas. "Ghost towns," often ruins of only one or two buildings left by prospectors who abandoned played-out mines, are not unusual in southern New Mexico. There's this and more in the *Shakespeare Ghost Town* a few miles south of Lordsburg. Initially only a stage stop, the town mushroomed to 3,000 after prospectors struck silver in 1870. Now the "town" is owned by the Hill family, who welcome visitors. A "walk of the past" takes you by

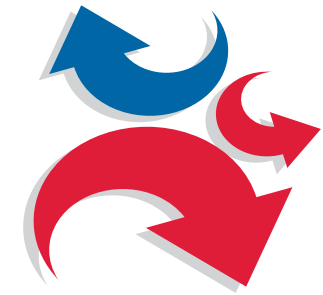
more than 25 points of interest and eight buildings for you to investigate.

So is there really anything to do in Southern New Mexico? Between our first stop at Carlsbad and the time we left New Mexico, Rhonda and I logged over 800 miles. The things we saw, the adventures we had, the education we got, the cuisine we enjoyed, the people we met, and the fun of it all leaves us with a positive reply: you can drive 800 miles and still leave much to do on the next trip! 

From left: Norman Spray talks with a young ranger at Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. • The Gila Cliff Dwellers left behind macaw feathers from Central America. They built T-shaped doorways which were also used by other cultural groups in the Southwest. • There are 46 rooms in the dwellings inside five interlinked alcoves of a cliff created by pre-historic volcanic activity. This close-up view was taken from inside one of the Gila cliff dwellings. The structure on the right presumably was a storehouse for corn and other grain crops. • Billy Jack Spray and wife, Sylvia, enter a Gila cliff dwelling. The trek along this trail begins at the valley floor and requires a climb that rises more than 200 feet.



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What's Purring In Your RV?

by Dr. John P. Pilarczyk

That purring sound may not be your 350 Caterpillar or 400 Cummins but your cat.

Today cats outnumber dogs as family pets. You say, "That's hard to believe!" but that is because they are kept inside and not walked outside and visible like dogs.

As I travel these United States and Canada, I am seeing more and more cats traveling in RVs. I am also seeing more people walking their cats on a leash with a harness. Once cats get used to traveling in a motorhome, they are easy to care for. The biggest problem is where to put the litter box. Today the new self-cleaning litter boxes make this chore a little more pleasant.

Cats are really suited for the RV life. They enjoy hanging out in the front window. They don't bark continuously when you leave them and when it is pouring rain outside you do not have to walk them.

Thinking of going off for a two-day stint in your dingy? Your cat can stay in the RV. You do not have to rush back to walk them. They are great companions for the RV lifestyle. Think how many times you have cut short your day trip because you had to get back to walk the dog.

Once you have loaded up your motorhome, I suggest that you put your feline friend in a carrier. This way you know exactly where they are. I have heard many times about cats hiding behind the couch or under the bed and as the slides come in, trouble brews. If your cat gets scared initially while traveling, he or she might want to hide and they can get into some pretty tight places.

While driving, most cats will feel safer in the carrier and will eventually associate it as their bedroom. It is also safer for you as a driver that a frightened cat does not jump on you or get near the gas or brake pedals, causing a serious accident.

Consider creating a special space in the motor home for your cat. On one of my travels to Everglade City in Florida, I saw a unique cat house. This was a Prevost that had a trap-door in the floor inside the coach that allowed the cats to go down into one of the cargo bins. The bin was screened in and the cats had a scratching pole and play room. This gave them exposure to outdoors and protection from any wandering animals.

There have been many concerns about leaving your dog or cat in the motorhome on a hot day should the park lose power. Leaving a couple of ceiling vents open slightly with your air conditioner on should help as hot air rises. Also the Cummins

Onan generator has an automatic start available, called Energy Command Auto Start, EC-30W. It will only start the generator if shore power is lost. The company says it was designed to be installed by the average RV owner. This energy command system is wireless. The system will start the generator if it gets too hot in the RV. This sounds like a must-have item for those traveling in warm areas with pets.

Everyone likes to compare the age of their dog to human age. I found a chart comparing Cat Age to Human Age.

6 mos.	15 years	8 years	52 years
1 year	24 years	9 years	56 years
2 years	28 years	10 years	60 years
3 years	32 years	11 years	64 years
4 years	36 years	12 years	68 years
5 years	40 years	13 years	72 years
6 years	44 years	14 years	76 years
7 years	48 years	15 years	80 years

In the next issue I will write more about diseases that cats are prone to have, vaccinations, and things to consider while you are on the road with your cat. Remember cats are not like small dogs; just ask any cat lover.

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

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.

How Do You Get to a Crimson Tide Football Game in the Fall?

by Fred Thompson

For Gerald and Callie Waldrop there is only one way to go — in their 2006 Phaeton 40QSH. The Helena, Alabama, couple has attended almost every Alabama bowl game since he enrolled at the University in the Fall of 1964. In fact they have missed very few Alabama regular season games in 46 years!

“We have been tailgating in a motorhome since 1975,” Gerald said. “We bought an Allegro Bay diesel pusher in 2001. And in the fall of 2007, we got the 2006 Phaeton. Bob Tiffin is the grandfather of UA place kicker Leigh Tiffin, the Tide’s all-time leading scorer. And the father of Van Tiffin, who never missed an extra point and won the game against Auburn in 1985 with a 52-yard field goal in the last few seconds. Leigh’s four field goals against Tennessee in 2009 won the game for us and kept us in the running for the national championship. Both are All-Americans.”

After the brief account of Van’s and Leigh’s accomplishments in their football careers, Gerald continued. “You know, in my opinion it would be heresy for an Alabama fan who wants to travel to the games in a motorhome and enjoy the tailgating and camaraderie to buy anything but a Tiffin motorhome. The Tiffin family is just a big part of the Alabama tradition. They are always there supporting the team and taking care of their customers,” he said.

Since both of the Waldrops retired from their teaching careers in 1996, they have had the time to turn the away games into extended trips. “We loved spending time in Berea when we went to the Alabama-Kentucky game during the 2009 season,” Callie said.

They really made a vacation out of their trip to the BSC National Championship Game last year in the Rose Bowl. “We left on New Year’s Day and arrived in Pasadena on the fifth. They played on January 7th,” Callie said. “It was a great game,” Gerald chimed in. “We beat Texas 37–21.” Gerald located a county park just 12 miles from the stadium in San Dimas.

After the game and the festivities were over, the Waldrops camped at Sequoia National Park where Callie got in some hiking. Gerald was still taking it easy, having recovered from heart surgery less than ten months earlier. Moving south quickly to escape winter storms, they landed for a few days in Las Vegas to

catch a few of the shows. Then on to the Grand Canyon and the sights of southern Arizona and New Mexico.

“We wanted to visit Junction, Texas, where Coach Bryant got his Texas A&M team ready to play in 1954,” Gerald said. “We finally got back to Alabama on February 5,” Callie finished. “What a trip! And it was all built around our love for our alma mater and Crimson Tide football.”

Gerald and Callie Waldrop have both enjoyed very successful careers. Where did it all begin? “I grew up in Alabama City, Alabama,” Gerald began. “It was a cotton mill town just west of Gadsden. We lived in the mill village and my mother worked in the cotton mill. Children from the mill village were teasingly called ‘lint-heads’ at school.”

The teasing didn’t bother Gerald Waldrop. He enrolled at Jacksonville State University not far from home in 1960 and began working on a degree in history. In 1963 he met Callie Edgar.

“I graduated from high school and one week later I enrolled at Jax State,” Callie said. “By the end of my first week, I met Gerald. Back then boarding students had to live on campus and take their meals in the school cafeteria. Every meal was covered on the meal ticket except the one for Sunday night. A lot of us went to the Wesley Foundation at the Methodist Church where they served Sunday night supper. And that’s where we met,” she smiled.

Callie’s parents were college graduates and teachers who lived on a small farm on the southeast side of Gadsden at Glencoe. “My parents were teachers, but we lived in the country and farmed,” she said. “I learned how to plant crops. I hunted and fished and went barefoot all summer long. When I turned 15 and was old enough to get my learner’s permit, Daddy told me that I would have to learn how to milk our cow before he would teach me how to drive.”

Callie was nothing short of enthusiastic about going to college. “I worked my way through college at different jobs and my parents gave me five dollars a week. Tuition back then was only seventy-five dollars per semester,” she noted.

In 1964 Gerald graduated with a degree in history and headed to the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa with plans to go

Callie and Gerald Waldrop managed to find a few weeks during the holidays to spend at home with Gone and Wind, prior to leaving for the Alabama–Michigan State game in Orlando. They continued their trip after the game to the Everglades, Key West and an excursion up the east coast before returning home to Helena.



to law school. With two years of college behind her, Callie transferred to Alabama and continued her studies in biology.

“We immediately were caught up in the fun of college life on a big university campus and went to every home football game and most of the away games,” Gerald said. “We were hooked and have been passionate Crimson Tide fans ever since.” The couple married on January 23, 1965. Gerald switched his major to study for a master’s degree in history and Callie forged ahead in biology, finishing her coursework for a master’s degree before her twenty-second birthday. Dr. Joab Thomas, originally from Russellville, Alabama, and later president of both the University of Alabama and Penn State University, served on Callie’s committee for her master’s program and thesis. During their tenure at UA, their daughter Leigh was born.

In 1967 Gerald and Callie began their teaching careers at Jefferson State Community College in Birmingham. Callie taught and did research in several programs which included ecology at Colorado State, radiation biology at the University of Tennessee, and other programs which took her to the University of Mississippi, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and the Dauphin Island Sea Lab.

Gerald taught history and political science at Jeff State. His intense interest in government led him to run successfully for the Alabama House of Representatives in 1970, representing Etowah County. In 1974 he ran for the State Senate and won again. Since he was spending so much time in Montgomery serving in the senate, he bought his first motorhome and parked it in a Montgomery campground to reduce his living expenses

while the senate was in session. It also gave him and Callie the opportunity to start tailgating in style. “It is amazing how many friends we have made through the years by going to the Alabama games and socializing through cookouts both before and after the games,” Gerald said.

Soon after he was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives, Gerald and Callie accepted teaching positions at Gadsden State Community College in 1971. Although they had maintained their residency in Etowah County, it was great to be teaching in the county where they had both grown up. Since graduation from Alabama, they had made one more addition to their family: Natasha.

Gerald can tell some amusing stories about Alabama football. One of the best happened when Alabama played Southern Cal in 1970. It was the first time a fully integrated team had come to play Alabama in the Deep South. Sam Cunningham, a black sophomore fullback, was not anticipated by Coach Bryant to be a threat. By the end of the game, USC had beaten Alabama 42–21. Sam “Bam” Cunningham on 12 carries had gained 135 yards and scored two touchdowns. Cunningham later said that he had surprised himself, but he both surprised and frustrated Bear Bryant. On his longest run down the Alabama sideline for a touchdown, Cunningham raced right past Bryant. As he did, the Bear slammed his cigarette to the ground. An alert 28-year-old Gerald Waldrop sitting just a few rows back in the stands saw exactly where the cigarette butt hit the ground and kept his eyes fixed on that point. He immediately raced to the fence, got the attention of one of the water boys, and asked him very

quietly to hand him the cigarette butt on the ground. The boy complied, not knowing the significance of what he was doing. Gerald put his treasure in a bank deposit box where it has remained for over 40 years.

The Waldrops devoted the next 25 years of their careers to teaching at Gadsden State. They both retired in 1996 when the state offered early career buyouts. Always interested in international travel, they joined Friendship Force International which has 357 clubs located in the U.S. and abroad. The exchange program allows couples and families to visit their counterparts in countries around the world. Members host international guests in their homes and also visit abroad for extended stays. The association motto is "A world of friends is a world of peace."

Gerald has served as an exchange director for their local Birmingham chapter and Callie is currently serving as outbound director for a trip to southern Brazil in June. "We have never had a bad experience with any exchange," Callie said. "Often we do not know the language of our visitors, but we always get along with improvised sign language. We have hosted in our home members from Japan, Canada, Northern Ireland, and Russia. And we have stayed with families in Northern Ireland, Cuba, China, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Bosnia."

"If you want to see a cultural shock," said Gerald, "take two Japanese and two Russian guests to an Alabama football game. When those four guests left the state for home, they had become

Alabama fans. They still email me wanting updates on the Tide."

"Natasha majored in Asian Studies with an emphasis on Japanese culture," Gerald said. "She taught English in Japan. Natasha was really helpful when we hosted the couple from Japan."

The Waldrops made plans in 1998 to do an around-the-world trip in 1999-2000 with Marine Expeditions, a travel experience that visits all seven continents. In late 1999 during a routine physical exam, Callie was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her doctor advised her to begin treatment immediately, so with great disappointment they cancelled their trip. But on the upswing, her treatments were successful and she has passed two five-year markers cancer free.

Less than 10 years after Callie's battle with cancer, Gerald had his own battle to fight: atrial fibrillation. A routine catheter ablation was attempted, but one of the long, narrow tubes used in the procedure punctured the heart chamber (a rare event). While a patient representative went to tell Callie, doctors rushed Gerald into emergency open heart surgery to repair the puncture. "Over the next few days," Callie related, "I almost lost my husband three times." But ten months later, the two dyed-in-the-wool Tide fans were on their way to Pasadena.

The Waldrops pets, Gone, their 14-year-old Cocker Spaniel, and Wind, their black, longhair cat, make an interesting sidebar to their medical stories. (You got it: "Gone with the Wind").

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Floyd "Red" Davis: Tour Master

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

If you haven't met Red Davis, you probably haven't been to Red Bay. If you *have* been to Red Bay and you didn't meet Red Davis, you missed a lot of fun. Next to Bob Tiffin, Red is probably the best known personality at Tiffin Motorhomes.

For the last 10 years, Red has conducted two plant tours nearly every day the plant has operated. Excluding the time for holidays and scheduled closures for vacations, the plant runs approximately 49 weeks per year. If 15 RVers tour the plant each day, we figure Red has met about 37,000 Tiffin owners and visitors.

"I get birthday cards every year from people who have been on my tour," he said with obvious pleasure. "People here at the plant gave me a birthday party on my 80th and put up a story about it on the wall. For the last four years, I have received birthday cards from Germany, California, Florida, Texas, Arizona, and Nevada, and several other states I can't recall. I even get Christmas cards."

At the Allegro Welcome Station, Red greets every tour member and asks where they are from. After watching the introductory movie about motorhome production, Red answers questions while he hands out the FM radio headsets and eye protection glasses. Despite plant noise, everyone can hear him

clearly as he explains what is being done at each station on the production line. If Red can't answer a question (and that's not the case very often), he involves an assembly line technician — to the amazement of those on the tour.

People who take the tour often arrive in Red Bay driving some other brand. After seeing how Tiffin coaches are built and getting a good taste of the culture, many return to the RV parking lot ready to trade for a Tiffin. Because of the very friendly atmosphere that visitors discover on Red's tour, many buyers come back to Red Bay to watch their coach being built. "Sometimes I have wondered if I should be on commission," Red laughs.

Just across the Alabama-Mississippi line in Itawamba County, Red Davis was born December 5, 1926 in a house on Cotton Gin Road "early on one frosty mornin," to pull a line from *Dixie's* lyrics. Not many years ago the farming country around Red Bay would turn white in the fall as the cotton bolls reached maturity.

"My parents were farming during the Depression," Red remembered, "raisin' cotton and corn. We had dairy cows, too. I was one of seven children—two boys and five girls. By the time I

was six Daddy had taught me how to milk a cow and hoe cotton. Most people today find that hard to believe."

Schools in the country usually were just one big room and one teacher taught first through eighth grade. When Red finished eighth grade, his father bought a dairy farm close to Red Bay. "We got up early enough to milk 16 cows before I left to walk a mile to school," he said.

In 1944, just a year short of finishing high school, Red joined the Army and went through basic training at Fort Rucker in southeast Alabama and then was sent to Texas for additional training. His group headed for the Pacific Theater as the tide was turning against Japan.

"We were sent to Japan as part of the Occupation Forces and stayed there for nearly two years," Red explained. "When I was discharged, I came back to Red Bay and finished high school. They set up classes in the American Legion building for returning veterans to take classes and finish school."

Red found a job driving a cab. In 1948, Red Bay had regular passenger service with several trains stopping daily. Arriving passengers needed transportation to businesses and homes in the area. One passenger arrived to visit his sister and husband who owned a farm a short distance from Red's father's farm. Red had forgotten about the pretty young girl on the neighboring farm who had grown up while he had been away for four years. Bringing her uncle to see his sister turned into an opportunity to meet Jo Wilson. Red wasted no time and asked for a date. Jo and Red were married six months later on December 22, 1948.

Good paying jobs were not plentiful in Red Bay at that time and the couple followed the migration north to find work. After seven years Red and Jo found themselves homesick for Red Bay. Red left a good job with the Teletype Corporation and the couple arrived back home just before their first daughter, Sheree, was born. Red found a position delivering retail sales for Keeton Lumber Company. "We were home and it really felt like home," Jo said. "This is where we belonged," Red added. A short time later, Sandi was born and completed their family.

Finding an entrepreneurial desire that stayed with him for many years, Red bought a service station. "Besides fuel and oil changes, we had mechanics who worked on cars, too," he said. The business went well and five years later Red sold the station and opened City Auto Parts.

During the time they lived in Chicago, Jo worked as a cost accountant for Latrobe Drill Works. After Sandi was in school, she accepted a position with the Bank of Red Bay. When the First National Bank of Russellville established a branch in Red Bay, Jo took a management position and remained in banking for 34 years until she retired in 1999.

Red's auto parts business continued to prosper and he sold the company in 1973 and invested in a Western Auto franchise. "A lot of people even today will remind me and say, 'I bought my first Western Flyer bicycle from you, or I bought my first lawnmower from you,'" he said. "It was a family business, too. Our daughter did my accounting and kept books for me." Having

Continued on page 63



In a small ceremony in early December at the Tiffin administrative office building, Bob Tiffin recognized Red Davis for 10 years of service in leading tours at the TMH assembly plant in Red Bay. Jo and Red have lived in the Red Bay—Belmont area for most of their lives. Red enjoyed a 38-year career as a businessman in Red Bay before he retired in 1995. A few years later, Tim Tiffin talked Red into becoming the company's official tour guide, a job in which Red took great delight. He proved himself not only as a tour guide, but as a teacher and an entertainer.

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I Got into the RV Business by Accident!

— Frank DeGelas

Mike Thompson's RV Super Stores became a Tiffin dealer just 20 months ago. With four stores in a five county area claiming a population of 22 million in Greater Los Angeles, MTRV quickly became Tiffin's second largest dealer and its largest West Coast dealer within a year.

Sole owners of the company since 1980, Frank and Donna DeGelas successfully guided the company through a recession that wiped out many manufacturers and dealers in California. "When the recession hit, we had the financial strength to survive," Frank said. "We were debt free except for inventory floor plan. We got our inventory down as quickly as possible — and that allowed us to be the first company buying fresh inventory as Southern California began to emerge from the recession," he continued. "We've got the best brands and huge territories." Tiffin Motorhomes granted MTRV a territory which includes five counties: Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, San Bernadino, and Riverside.

Service. Frank and Donna follow the business philosophy that *service drives sales*. "Mike Thompson RV had its own apprentice program and segmented training into levels of achievement," Frank explained. "Mentors were paid for training the new techs who were hired. Many were trained under this system and it benefited both the company and the employees. As we see growth

again, we will reactivate these programs. We continue to stay in touch with the best techs and will bring them back as demand warrants. We have the service bays and all of the infrastructure to ramp up as the economy continues to grow." MTRV also participates in manufacturers' training programs and regularly sends both sales associates and service technicians to Red Bay. The company also uses RVIA certified technician training programs.

Each of MTRV's four stores at Santa Fe Springs, Fountain Valley, Colton RV Expo, and Cathedral City has a service manager who reports to Geary Powell, director of service.

MTRV works on all brands of recreational vehicles, motorized and towables. "We will do warranty work on any brand if we have received manufacturer's authorization," Geary said. "RV manufacturers often send us business. We can do major repairs for side walls, roofs, and full body paint. Our company is a GMAC-preferred insurance location. GMAC feels no need to send inspectors when we do the work."

In its four stores, MTRV has 188 service stalls for taking care of its customers. For body shop and painting, the company has an additional 37 stalls. The body shop work is done at the Santa

Fe Springs store and painting, including full body paint, is done at Colton. Currently, MTRV employs 42 service technicians in service, the body shop, and the paint shop.

Geary Powell, director of service, and Mark Rosenbaum, director of sales, both agree with Frank that RV owners are loyal to dealers who provide the best service.

After a service advisor interviews a customer with a service issue and writes a service directive, a service manager and a parts manager work hand-in-hand to collaboratively make the right decision for the repair. "Our training and investment in our managers has made a tremendous difference in our proficiency to please a customer with a service problem," Jeff Wombacher, director of parts, pointed out.

If a recreational vehicle in for service has been at MTRV for six days without the requested service being successfully completed, the service advisor provides the customer with an explanation. "We are pro-active with our software technology for service processing," Geary said. "It may be a warranty or parts issue with a manufacturer, in which case the report automatically goes to the manufacturer. But we resolve the problem quickly. Our Six-Day Report helps manufacturers stay on top of their game, but it also keeps our parts and service managers on the same page, too. Our maxim is *What gets measured gets managed.*"

Follow-Up. The company makes effective use of customer satisfaction index surveys (CSI). "Service and sales must work in concert for our customers to have completely positive and satisfying experiences at Mike Thompson RV," Mark Rosenbaum, director of sales, notes. MTRV uses an independent third party company to conduct its CSI surveys.

"We track the individual performance of each salesperson, finance manager, orientation tech, service advisor, and cashier," Mark said. "Then we share each person's survey report privately to help him or her build skills and grow as a professional. We post the collective scores for each store. Service advisors see their individual scores and work on their deficiencies. The CSI survey helps us to understand exactly how the customer feels about his or her experience in one of our stores."

The bottom line question on the CSI survey is, "Would you recommend MTRV to a friend or buy from us again in the future?" The survey reports arrive 15 days after the month is over and are reviewed from top management down. "We spend a lot

Facing page: The Santa Fe Springs store on Interstate 5 is the original location of the company and serves today as the hub of the Mike Thompson's RV Super Stores group. *Above right:* The company's 14-acre site in Colton was opened in 1989 and named RV Expo. *Below right:* Originally opened in Traveland in 1981, the company acquired a 4-acre site in Fountain Valley on the I-405 freeway in 1994. Ten years later, the location was expanded to 12+ acres. • In 2009 MTRV opened a store in the Palm Desert area to serve the annual "snowbird" population (not shown).

with our survey company. We are human and we are going to make mistakes," Frank said. "But each person here wants to learn from his or her mistakes. It's our way to continually improve in the way we do business."

"Our biggest success? Service, parts, and sales work really well together," DeGelas said. "It is ingrained in our culture as a company. If there is a disagreement or somebody drops the ball, we don't have a referee. We sit down together and solve problems."

"We spent a year bringing together departments within each store and across stores to solve problems," Jeff Wombacher, parts director, explained. "We met every quarter. We had to come up with our own operation manuals for each department since we are such a large company."

Sales. Mark Rosenbaum, director of sales, outlined the steps MTRV has taken to build an outstanding sales organization. "We know our sales organization cannot be static. It must be dynamic,"



Text and photography by Fred Thompson



he said. Mark begins with a hiring process in sales that ensures bringing in top quality people by using a multiple interview system. Each interviewer uses a different approach, giving the applicant opportunities to show his or her best facets.

When a prospective client visits a MTRV store, he will stay with the salesperson he meets first. The salesperson at MTRV is trained to orchestrate the event. “He determines the client’s interests and needs and matches them to his financial capability,” Mark explained. “There is no point in showing a \$350,000 motorhome to a prospect who can only afford a \$100,000 camper. As the sales event progresses, either on the first contact or later ones, the MTRV salesperson introduces his client to key people in parts, service, finance and insurance, customer service, customer orientation, and delivery. Our salesperson shows the prospect the complete ability of MTRV to serve his every need as he begins or furthers his RV lifestyle,” Mark continued.

“The products we carry in our inventory are Number One in the industry in their category and price point,” Mark said. “We constantly review what is available in today’s market.”

Mark emphasized that MTRV insists on a “synergy of decision making” across all of its departments. “To be effective with new client prospects and our new owners, sales must have the support of every department,” he noted.

It is critical, Marks says, to “fix the real problem, not the symptomatic problem.” The company subscribes to the Edwards Deming philosophy of defining and solving problems.

“We align ourselves with manufacturers who mirror our business philosophy and methods of doing business,” Mark said. “That policy alone solves problems quickly.”

“Becoming a dealer for Tiffin Motorhomes was almost a no-brainer,” Frank said, as Mark nodded in agreement. “Our cus-

Because of Southern California’s warm winters, 115 of the company’s 188 service stalls are outside with approximately two-thirds of the motor home being under roof.

tomers-first attitude is instilled in everyone here. We knew the same attitude was the foundation of Tiffin Motorhomes.”

Mark noted a lot of factors that have contributed to sales growth—and thus the growth of the company. “Our locations on the major L.A. freeways are unmatched by our competitors. Frank frequently reminds us that the daily traffic counts at Santa Fe Springs, Fountain View, and Colton are in the hundreds of thousands,” he said. “Our huge, electronic reader boards can quickly be changed to promote what we have in inventory, sales, interest rates, you name it. We grab the drivers’ attention.”

Initial contacts are also made through the company’s extensive website which is very dynamic and interactive. “We take pictures of every new coach and connect it to the actual sales listing on our internet site,” he said. Web browsers can request additional information from the website.

“Radio has also been successful because radio stations know their demographics really well,” he noted. “They know the drive times when we will get our greatest number of listeners with the interests and income brackets we want.”

General sales manager Mike Ancich pointed out that sales training is just as important as training service technicians. “We rotate our salespeople in four groups, 10 to 15 at a time, back to the manufacturers to learn how motorhomes and towables are built, their features and selling points, and how they must be serviced and maintained,” he said. “We do special training sessions to qualify our salespeople for selling diesel products.”

“Daily training is scheduled at 9 and 10 a.m. every day. Each

store opens at 10," he observed. "We train in sales as a process and in product knowledge."

The sales department plans the training for related services that makes the buying experience successful. "We oversee the training for preparing the coach for the buyer, for the delivery process itself, and for training the buyer to use his new coach," Ancich noted.

Rosenbaum explains that an in-store sales event is followed by behind-the-scenes sales work. "We have a computer software program we created called Make-A-Deal," he began, "which is basically a custom contact database." The salesperson who made the contact completes a customer ticket which contains the customer's name, address, contact information, preferences, likes and dislikes — information which also may have been collected at shows and other response literature which was returned. "Based on responses from our mailings, we believe 85 percent of the people in our marketing area who are interested in RVing have visited one of our four dealerships," he said.

After an in-store client visit, a salesperson will send out a thank you note which is recorded in the database under the prospect's name. A mailing piece will follow in a short time.

The company segments its direct mail into targeted interests groups to put relevant information in each recipient's hand. "We don't send toy-hauler brochures to a 60-year-old client who is interested in an Allegro Bus," he joked.

Subsequently, the Make-A-Deal software will prompt the salesperson to make calls at programmed intervals. Whenever sales lot traffic is slow, the sales staff will pull out their call list and make good use of their time.

Radio spots, the reader boards, and the internet are used to advertise MTRV's seven annual on-site RV shows. Large amounts of potential client information is added to the database after each show.

"We are now on Facebook," Mark pointed out. "We think there is a significant number of people who prefer our marketing go through this media. I expect to see more contacts made this way in the future."

MTRV now employs 40 in motorhome sales, 31 in towable sales, and six in internet sales. In round numbers, MTRV floors \$28 million in new motorhomes, \$14 million in towables, and \$14 million in pre-owned RVs (80% motorized, 20% towables).

The sales department played a major role in MTRV's survival of the recession, DeGelas points out. The company gained market share in all categories in a down economy. As credit financing fizzled for Class A coaches, management took on more Class B motorhomes (Road Trek) and folding camping trailers (Coleman). The internet sales department grew to six salespeople and three IT specialists. MTRV paired with local Sam's Clubs and offered on-going displays there as well as at the Orange County Market Place, the largest outdoor market in Southern California.

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“We became very active in manufacturers’ clubs and supported their rallies with our technicians,” Rosenbaum added. When sales plummeted, MTRV had to lay off nearly fifty percent of its employees. “We left our egos at the door and did whatever it took to make things click. We moved key people to stores to fill service and sales gaps as they occurred. During the past two and a half years, everyone’s willingness to do whatever it took is a testament to the kind of people who work here.”

Parts. “We have 21 people in our parts department who totally embrace our software technology,” Jeff Wombacher, director of parts, began. “We keep over \$1 million in our perpetual inventory, depending on usage. With our interactive software between the four stores, we can look at each others’ inventory. This gives our service advisors the options to transfer parts locally between our stores, or to know immediately if we will have to order a part from the manufacturer. We have six trucks to move parts and accessories between our four locations.”

The system suggests orders based on the reorder points put in by the company’s three parts managers. As each item is sold, it comes out of inventory. The software reports the number of sales made for any item by any selected period. “We sometimes override the reorder points to handle the convenience and politics of having certain parts and accessories in the store,” Jeff said.

“With every coach we sell, we include a catalog for the parts and accessories that will be of help to that owner in the future,” Jeff explained. “Our computer system has our part number and the manufacturer’s part number cross referenced on every item.” MTRV also gives each parts manager a company credit card to expedite repairs when parts can be procured locally.

Frank DeGelas has carefully organized his operational management staff under four directors. Each director oversees managers in each of the company’s four locations. From left, Don Nelson, controller; Geary Powell, director of service; Mark Rosenbaum, director of sales; and Jeff Wombacher, director of parts. Frank and Donna DeGelas have created a staff which currently numbers approximately 300.

Financial Services. Don Nelson, the company’s controller, oversees a staff of seven who provide critical information to top management: Frank DeGelas, and the company’s departmental directors: Mark Rosenbaum; Jeff Wombacher Geary Powell; and Sheila Page, business manager; Linda Williamson, human resources; and David Revere, inventory manager.

As the controller, Nelson oversees the company’s banking relationships. “Customer financing and floor plan financing have begun to ease over the last year,” he said. “Banks are starting to compete with one another again. GMAC decided to get back into the RV business. We also work with Bank of the West, US Bank, Ally Bank, and Bank of America. A dealership of our size has the advantage in dealing with banks to get the best interest rates and to get loans approved.”

Nelson rewrote the general ledger software to provide more categories of financial information. “We now have more data to make analyses within departments and across departments,” he explained. “Our managers can be more ‘store oriented’ rather than looking solely at their specific departments. Our general sales managers in each store now look at the whole store as a profit center.”

Using reports from the financial software, the company can track and compare performance of different products. “For example,” Nelson explained, “the profit from 20 sales of tent

campers may be better than the profit from eight sales of Class A diesel motorhomes.”

How It All Began. As with every successful company, a personal story behind that success usually inspires both the employees who work there as well as the customers who buy the company’s products or services.

As a teenager, Frank DeGelas had goals that focused on fast cars and “burning rubber.”

“My parents came from Belgium in 1946,” Frank began. “An uncle lived in the Los Angeles area, which is why my Dad came here. He and Mom lived with Uncle Pecimil briefly before Dad bought a 750 sq. ft. house. Mom and Dad had three boys and I was in the middle.”

Before he left Belgium, Frank’s father suffered a back injury that caused him intense pain, but his strong work ethic kept him going. An operation which his doctors gave a 50-50 chance to either paralyze him or correct the problem turned out for the best. Mr. DeGelas got a job as a backhoe operator and proved to be one of the best in the business. He was able to buy his own backhoe, a hauling trailer, and a truck.

“I got a lot of training early in my life in the mechanics and maintenance of that backhoe and truck,” Frank laughed. “Before I got of high school, I actually rebuilt the engine on Dad’s truck.”

That experience and other mechanical work Frank did for

friends led him to a “guy down the street who had a Shelby 350. I did his engine work and that gave me the appetite for a fast car that would burn rubber.”

“My parents were round-the-clock workers,” Frank said, “but they were poor.” When Frank’s older brother was old enough to drive, his parents bought him an old Plymouth Savoy with a flathead six engine that was not “fast” or “hot.” Frank got a job at Alpine Trailer Sales washing trailers and cutting grass for minimum wage to get a nice car when he turned sixteen. His buddy, Phil, came by and gave him a ride to work.

“I gave my Mom my paycheck and she would give me a little to spend, usually enough for Donna and me to buy two chili dogs,” he remembered. “Phil and I would often go to lunch at the Orange Julius and get a chili cheese dog and the orange drink. I realized that it was taking two hours of my wages to buy lunch, and I said to Phil, ‘We’ve got to make more money or eat cheaper.’”

By the time Frank was 16 he had saved up \$1,500 to pay down half of the \$3,000 price of the 1966 Mustang that he had his eye on.

“Donna was 14 when we met,” Frank smiled as Donna’s eyes moistened just a bit.

“He taught me how to drive,” she said. “Of course, I was impressed with his Mustang.”

The couple continued dating for six years and married in July 1974 when Donna was 20 and Frank was 23.

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Married for 36 years, Frank and Donna DeGelas take pleasure in creating a company in which they think of their employees as family. Frank first met Donna when she was 14 in the ninth grade and he was a senior. “He taught me how to drive when I got my learner’s permit,” Donna laughed. The couple dated for six years and married in 1974.

“My job at Alpine Trailer Sales started expanding,” Frank continued. “I learned to put on hitches and wire the car for towing. I installed more than a thousand hitches. I got to my job every day after school at 3 p.m. and worked until nine. We were doing so good that I persuaded my industrial arts teacher to come to work with me and do the welding I needed on some of the hitches. Then I started prepping coaches and doing walk-throughs with buyers. I sold a lot of Apache tent trailers, too.”

The owner of the company was a Seventh Day Adventist, which meant that he did not work on Saturday. His religious faith required him to close his store at sundown on Friday. Stores were generally closed on Sunday which gave Frank plenty of time to date Donna and go to the drag races.

The company continued to grow. The owner bought a furniture store building next door and opened a service center, an

accessories store, and a parts store. By 1970, Frank, at 19 years old, became the service and parts manager. As his career in recreational vehicles was advancing, Frank’s father died and he decided to take six months off and help his mother make a lot of adjustments. “Mom had never worked outside the home. I sold Dad’s business and his equipment for her,” he related.

When Frank decided to return to work, he took a position with Motorhome Centers as their accessories store manager. The company owned automotive stores and a Winnebago store. The business was thriving.

Don Rhoads was president and general manager of the company. Just as Donna and Frank married in July 1974, the energy crunch was biting into the motorhome business. “I was charged with converting the accessories to cash ASAP,” Frank said. “The sales people disappeared. Then Don called me to his office and said, ‘Congratulations, you have just been promoted to sales manager.’”

“I was not a dress-up kind of guy and there was no way I was going to start wearing white shoes, a white belt, and a white tie to satisfy his idea of what a sales manager had to look like,” Frank laughed. “Of course, the truth was nobody wanted the job.”

Frank took the job and compromised with Rhoads on the dress code. Over the next four years Frank admitted he learned a lot about selling trailers and Winnebagoes.

“One day Don paged me on the intercom: ‘Frank DeGelas, come to the general manager’s office immediately.’ When I walked in, he began, ‘Frank, I have taught you all I can teach you about this business. It’s time for you to move on.’”

Frank protested. “Don, I’m married. I just bought a house and a ski boat, and a 1973 Winnebago. He ignored me. ‘You need to start looking at buying a part of a store. When you are young, the apertures are big.’”

“‘What happens if I don’t do this,’ I asked.”

“‘I’ll fire you,’ he said coldly.”

“I’m the best thing that has ever happened to you. You don’t have the guts to fire me, I said cockily.”

“‘You’ve got a year to get your own business,’ he said.”

Frank went home and told Donna, who was equally astonished. Six months later Rhoads called Frank in and reinforced his “threat.”

“In model year 1977 we were Winnebago’s largest dealer in the U.S.,” Frank continued with his unusual account. “And I was the sales manager. The dealership won a cruise. Don couldn’t go, so Donna and I got the trip.”

Frank was on a mission. He finally realized that Rhoads was dead serious. As it happened Mike Thompson who owned Mike Thompson RV was on the same cruise.

“Mike was an accountant who operated a very successful tax preparation company for small business owners,” Frank said. “When he would leave L.A. for the weekends, he saw all of these RVs leaving for the campgrounds in the mountains and decided that selling them must be a good business. His business background and expertise did not make him a good manager for the

RV business. The stress was not a good mix for Mike, and he suffered a heart attack. When I met him, he had 'car guys' running the business for him."

By the time the cruise was over, Mike agreed to sell one-fourth of the business to Frank and Donna. "We took mortgages on both houses we owned and bought a fourth of the business with an option to buy a second fourth," Frank related.

In January 1978 the business took off. MTRV was selling 13 brands of motorhomes on a two-acre site. It was during the Jimmy Carter administration and interest rates were soaring. Mike suffered two more heart attacks. When the energy crisis ended, Frank and Donna bought the other three-fourths of the business. It was 1980.

"When I bought the first fourth in 1978, we had 12 employees. I was a straight-laced dresser per Don Rhoads. All the sales guys were hip and quit, which gave me a chance to make a fresh start with the kind of sales staff I wanted," Frank said.

At 28, he had bought into a dealership. Don Rhoads pushed him out on schedule. Frank's parents had taught him how to be frugal. He and Donna took the business through the energy crisis.

Two years later Frank and Donna opened a second store in Orange County. An enterprise called Traveland USA rented space to dealers and MTRV proved to be their most successful tenant from 1981 to 1994.

The original Santa Fe Springs site was just two acres. After four expansions, it is now 9.5 acres. In 1994 Frank bought four acres in Fountain Valley on the I-405 freeway. In 2004 he expanded that site to 12+ acres.

When he closed his location in Traveland USA, he moved that business to Colton in an area known as RV Expo Mall where the company has 14 acres. In 2009 after acquiring the franchise from Tiffin, Frank and Donna opened a new store in Cathedral City, an area south of L.A. called Palm Desert. It is a winter operation serving the snowbirds.

As they began their venture at Santa Fe Springs, and then later at the other sites, Donna took over the job of preparing the motorhomes and trailers for shows. "With one assistant, she often decorated 160 RVs in one-and-a-half days," Frank said. "She has been my adviser, right arm, and always there to give me the feedback I needed so that I could concentrate my attention in the right places. We've always been a team."

Frank and Donna have been married 36 years. They have no children but they enjoy a close involvement with three families who share their seven children with them on frequent outings to their mountain retreat. The couple live in Huntington Beach. "We have had four homes in Huntington Beach since 1974, but we have never moved more than four miles from where we had our first home—the house where Donna grew up which I bought from her Dad," Frank said. "I also own the house where I grew up."


With deep roots in Southern California, Frank and Donna look forward to the future growth and development of Mike Thompson's RV Super Stores as the economy restores itself to full bloom. "We have a big family at MTRV and we want the

company to provide a good living for everyone." Their managers feel the same way.

"When a business is family owned and operated, and not a corporately held company, the owners can create a family atmosphere which conveys a caring attitude about each employee," Mark said. "Frank DeGelas is a hands-on owner. He has a passion for the business. He enjoys being a coach and an encourager."

"Frank does a great job of keeping us optimistic," said Corey Halterman, sales manager, towables.

"Frank attends our awards ceremonies every month. He is always encouraging to every one of us," said David Revere, inventory manager.

When I arrived to do the interview with Frank, he had been delayed in traffic. His executive assistant, Calista Baldwin greeted me. After some small talk in getting acquainted, I asked her to describe her boss. She thought for a minute and said, "He fills the room." 

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Interviews from Alabama and Texas



Roger & Ardelle Coult

Hometown: Rapid City, South Dakota
Interviewed in Mobile/Theodore, Alabama

- Roger and Ardelle own a 2007 Allegro Bus 42 QRP.
- They have been married 34 years and have 6 children: a daughter in Portland, OR; daughter in Park City, Utah; 3 sons in Orange County, CA; and a son in Mexico.
- Roger and Ardelle have 17 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.
- Their 2 dogs, April and Pansy, travel with them.
- Began RVing in 1976 for horse shows, skiing and boating. They have been full timing since 2003.
- They've owned 10 RVs and throughout the years have traveled in all of the lower 48 states.
- Travel days average 150 miles per day to their destination and prefer to stay 1 week.
- Favorite destination is Glacier National Park.
- Roger likes the "Freedom to go wherever and having everything with them."
- Ardelle says: "There's nothing she doesn't like about RVing and they follow the weather."
- They both enjoy eating crawfish in Louisiana!
- Roger retired from a CA electric company and hobbies include RVing, fishing, ham radio, video games, cards and his computer.
- Ardelle's hobbies are RVing, fishing, sewing, quilting, video games and cards.
- They would like to share an RVing tip: "Use Tiffin Forum for problem solutions."



Rick & Sherry Brown

Hometown: Claremore, Oklahoma
Interviewed in San Benito, Texas

- Rick and Sherry own a 2008 Phaeton 36 QSH.
- Rick graduated from college in May 1968 and in September the Army drafted him. Rick then served 4 years and is a Vietnam Veteran.
- Rick and Sherry met after his military service and have been married 39 years.
- Their 3 sons and 1 daughter live in Oklahoma: Randy lives in Lawton; Dustin in Langley; Dennis in Claremore; and Amy in Stilwell.
- Rick and Sherry have 8 grandchildren, 5 granddaughters and 3 grandsons.
- They have been RVing for 10 years — a lifelong dream.
- They have had 3 other RVs; this Phaeton is their first motor home.
- Rick does all of the driving and they travel approximately 6 months annually.
- Their favorite things about motor homing: togetherness, freedom and convenience.
- At the time of this interview their cousin was camping in a buddy-site beside Rick & Sherry at Fun-N-Sun RV Resort.
- Rick was a teacher and athletic coach for 29 years and retired in 2000. His hobbies are RVing, fishing and antique shopping.
- Sherry retired in 2009 from a career as a bookkeeper and tax preparer. Her hobbies are antique shopping and RVing.



Walter & Peggy Brunson

Hometown: Murrells Inlet, South Carolina
Interviewed in Mobile / Theodore, Alabama

- Walter and Peggy own a 42ft. 2007 Allegro Bus.
- They have been married 40 years; are parents of 3 children: 2 daughters and 1 son; and their 3 grandchildren live in Murrells Inlet, South Carolina.
- Travel with their 2 dogs; Pumpkin and Sissy.
- Walter and Peggy began motorhoming in 2008 as both wanted to see the USA.
- They've had 3 RV's, travel approx. 6 months annually and have traveled 12,000+ miles in the past 2 years.
- Walter drives over 95% of the time and prefers to drive 400-500 miles a day.
- They enjoy the convenience of having everything with them while driving and the ability to stop anywhere at anytime.
- Walter semi-retired from engineering management in 2001 and currently consults while traveling. His hobbies are fishing and motorcycles.
- Peggy's a domestic engineer/homemaker and her hobbies include stained glass, painting and sewing.
- Two RVing tips to share w/our readers: "Prior to closing slides, secure hutch door knobs to prevent doors opening in case items shift during travel." and "Don't always trust the GPS for the shortest distance for motorhomes!"

Editor's Note: Elaine and Mike Austin retired in 2007 at the urging of their children who wanted them to realize their dream: buy a luxury motorhome, go full time, and spend several years just enjoying themselves and seeing the country. After a career turning around failing steel companies, Mike connected with the University of South Alabama as a guest lecturer in their Business Institute. Elaine discovered a whole new career in real estate, selling 105 houses in her best year. They bailed out, bought a new Allegro Bus in March 2008, and "hit the road."


PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Continued from page 4

build 'em fast enough. By the time you read this, we will have built the first 32-foot Allegro Breeze which has two front slide-outs. It also has a large closet facing into the bedroom on the driver side and a full 60 × 80 queen-size bed. Right now, we are the only manufacturer offering a

downsized rear-engine diesel—bringing you the best of both worlds: a smaller coach with the amenities you requested, plus the quiet operation of a rear engine and better fuel economy.

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with the usual care and maintenance that a conscientious owner provides. No matter what year or model Allegro you own, you should be proud of it because we are all from the same family. “Wherever you go, we will be there.” Until next time, drive safely and keep on “roughing it smoothly.” 

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The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

She's Happy – He's Lucky

by Dave McClellan

Wanting to be a full-timer has finally come true for Terri and me after many years of wishing, dreaming, and wondering if this would ever happen. I guess the first thing that came to mind in the last 10-15 years was if we would be healthy enough, or even alive, to realize our dream. I'm now 68 and Terri is 63. Well, the health isn't quite what it used to be but we finally have that dream coming true.

Terri comes from a military family. Her father was in the Army Corps of Engineers as a career person. That makes her an "Army brat" and I kid her about it from time to time. The reason I mention that was because she traveled all over the world, living and being educated in Central America, Japan, and Germany. Back in the States she attended college at Fordham and Johns Hopkins Universities. In a strange sort of way, I thought she was a worldwide camper because she had lived in so many places, but had not seen the U.S. attractions.

I have been camping since I was 21, starting in a tent like most campers, then graduating to two different tent trailers, a 23' trailer, a Pace Arrow motorhome that looked like a giant box on wheels, an '85 Winnebago Elandan, and then a '97 Winnebago Adventurer. Our camping was only local to Western Massachusetts within just a few miles at that time. It was never too far except for one trip to Disney. Even when the two boys were in diapers, we always enjoyed roughing it. The air always smelled cleaner, the food tasted better, and meeting new friends was always a pleasure for us.

Our one and only long trip to Disney in Florida several decades ago was a nightmare. Going through Charleston, South Carolina,

our motorhome kept overheating because the outside temp was over 100 degrees. I imagine you could have cooked eggs on the pavement. On the way back home the transmission quit and we had to stop at a gas station where they said they could fix it for us. We were grateful for that but on the way back through Connecticut the transmission starting acting up again. I tell this story because it never discouraged me to quit traveling or camping.

While struggling through the years to pay bills, sometimes working two jobs, I never stopped dreaming of owning one of those fancy, large diesel pushers. It took many hard years of work, but I finally had the resources and the dream finally came true when we purchased a 2008 Allegro Phaeton. Seeing this rig at the camping show at the Eastern States Expo Grounds in W. Springfield, Massachusetts, stopped me in my tracks. I took a 3 minute look at it and quickly left to find Terri to tell her I had found the rig we should purchase. As she entered the Phaeton, it only took one second and I saw that "let's do it" face. So the journey began.

We took delivery in September 2007 and were ecstatic that we would now be "Roughing It Smoothly." Buying the coach at Campers Barn in Kingston, NY, was a pleasure. I couldn't imagine a deal going more smoothly and the personnel there have become good friends to this day. Tiffin Motorhomes owner Bob Tiffin also gave us some valuable information about accessories, engine, and chassis, and was a major influence in our decision to purchase our dream coach. Bob was the most generous and helpful person that I have ever dealt with in my 50 years of experience with any owner or retail merchant.

Taking the motorhome to places in New England while getting used to driving it was not hard at all. It is a smooth-riding coach with plenty of power. The Cummins 360-hp engine is smooth with plenty of torque. All the extras we added were well worth the money and very useful.

Now it's time we considered going full-time. Not wanting the worry about a home left behind in the winter, we decided to sell our house. We put it on the market, sold it in two weeks, and had only one month to reduce our inventory of furniture, and all that stuff that accumulates over time. I also had to empty out our five-car garage with 50 years of, as Terri would say, "just plain junk." I was a pack rat and anything I thought I would use in the future, I would keep with me forever. I had a regular hardware store, a wood shop, an auto repair facility, and plumbing and electrical supplies. But every now and then I would use something that I had kept from years past and I would tell Terri, "you see this junk, I told you I would use it someday." Actually getting rid of stuff was easier than I expected. We invited all our children and other relatives over and told them they could have whatever they wanted. They took most of the furniture and we

gave our friends the rest. Some of the stuff we sold at a tag sale, and on Craigslist. Anything left was given to the Salvation Army. The day of the closing came quickly and we were still taking that junk away but we made it. Finally we were off on our journey.

But wait . . . there's more planning that has to be done. What about doctors and medications? How will we pay our bills and what about the money situation? We both went to the doctor and had checkups. He gave each of us a six-month supply of prescriptions. We have an account with CVS and they are all over the country so that won't be a problem. Our Social Security and annuity income are automatically deposited and we have an on-line bill pay and checking account if needed. Cash is drawn from an ATM. We don't use a mail forwarding service. Our mail is sent to a PO box near a daughter's house. Once a week, she picks up the mail and reviews it with Terri over the phone. She scans and emails the documents we need. The rest is either stored or thrown out.


Now we better take care of the motorhome and make sure it is ready to go. Engine, transmission, and chassis maintenance, and tires must be checked. Supplies of food, clothes, bedding, toiletries, and cleaning products have to be enough for at least the first leg of our journey. At that time we can evaluate what else we need. You can probably imagine my side of the closet is only 20% of Terri's side, and she found hiding places that I never knew existed for her staggering amount of shoes. Oh, we almost forgot about the dingy tires, hitch lights and don't forget to put the car gear shift in neutral. Terri and I do a double check on that part.

We mapped out the directions to our first destination and made sure our GPS units were working... all five of them. Two laptops with Microsoft GPS units, built in dashboard computer, a hand-held Garmin, and Terri's new iPhone. Four out of the five would talk back to us. Now, as navigator, Terri wouldn't have any excuse for getting me lost. After exhaustive work and preparation, we are ready for our first destination to Easton, Pennsylvania, to see Terri's sister.

From Southwick, Massachusetts, where a friend let us park after the sale of the house, at 7:00 a.m. we're off to Rte. 91 south to Rte. 84 west to 209 S through the Delaware Water Gap adjacent to the Pocono Mountains. Oh no! What's this sign that reads no commercial trucks are allowed on this two lane Rte. 209? Hey, that sign wasn't there 10 years ago! We panicked. Does that mean big RVs? If we go and have to get off or turn around, where will we do that while towing a car? Luckily for us, shortly before 209 there was a sign for a Pennsylvania welcome center and we pulled in. According to an attendant inside, 209 was closed to truckers because they were misusing the road and not courteous to other drivers. Anyway, we continued. However,

up comes another sign that says detour. Now what?! How do I know that this detour is safe and does not have a low overpass? We don't, but there was no place to pull off, so on we went. It was a narrow, steep, and winding road, but we made it okay. This is just one of the many nerve-wracking experiences that RV owners have to put up with from time to time.

At noon, we arrived at one of the Pocono campgrounds for our first overnight stay. I won't mention which campground, because our journey could have ended right there after only one day on the road.

....to be continued. 

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OWNER PROFILE

Continued from page 31

“When Callie was diagnosed with cancer, Gone instinctively knew something was wrong and would not leave her side,” Gerald said. “When Callie returned from treatments, Gone was there to take over.”


“In 2009, I was home by myself when my blood pressure and heart rate began to drop,” Gerald continued. “I checked it again and noted another drop. I lay on

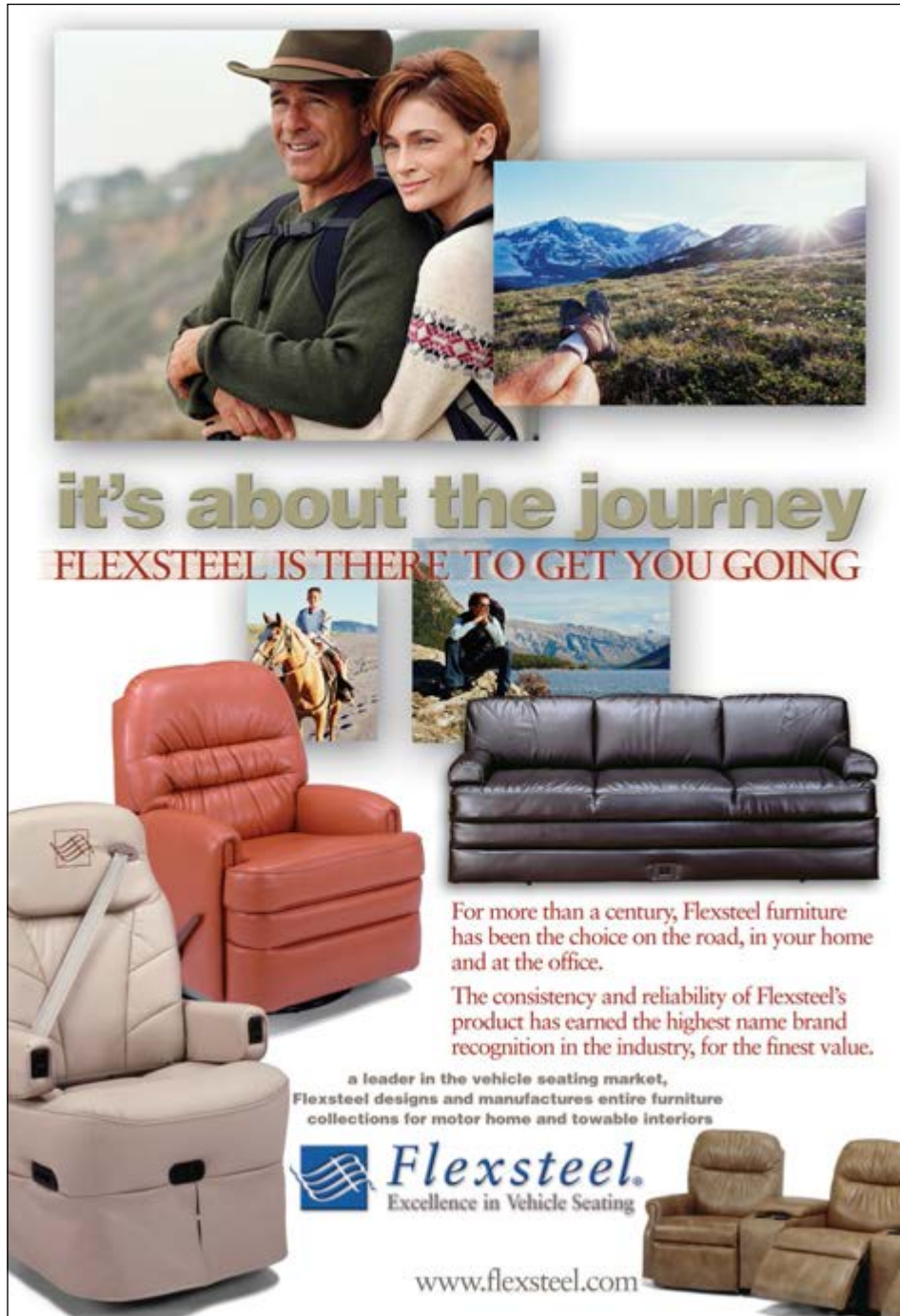
the floor and elevated my feet. Wind knew something was wrong and began to purr and walk around me. As my blood pressure continued to drop, I passed out. Wind got on top of me and kept bumping my face with her nose until I regained a blurred consciousness – but enough to dial 911 on my cell phone. I think she saved my life. I can tell you from experience that God works in mysterious ways through His creatures.”

Gone and Wind earned their bars and

now travel with Gerald and Callie wherever they go in the motorhome.

Gerald and Callie Waldrop have demonstrated their leadership skills and civic involvement many times over the years. In addition to serving eight years in the Alabama Legislature, Gerald served as president of the Alabama Education Association in 1984–85 and was elected Governor of Kiwanis, Alabama District, for 2006–07. Callie served as president of the Alabama Education Association in 1992–93. She is currently serving as president of the board of directors of the Edgar Senior Care Foundation.

With two daughters, five grandchildren, civic involvement, and a full Fall calendar with 14 weekends of Tide tailgating and football, the Waldrops have never thought of themselves as being retired. “We are busier now than we have ever been,” Callie laughed. 



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“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

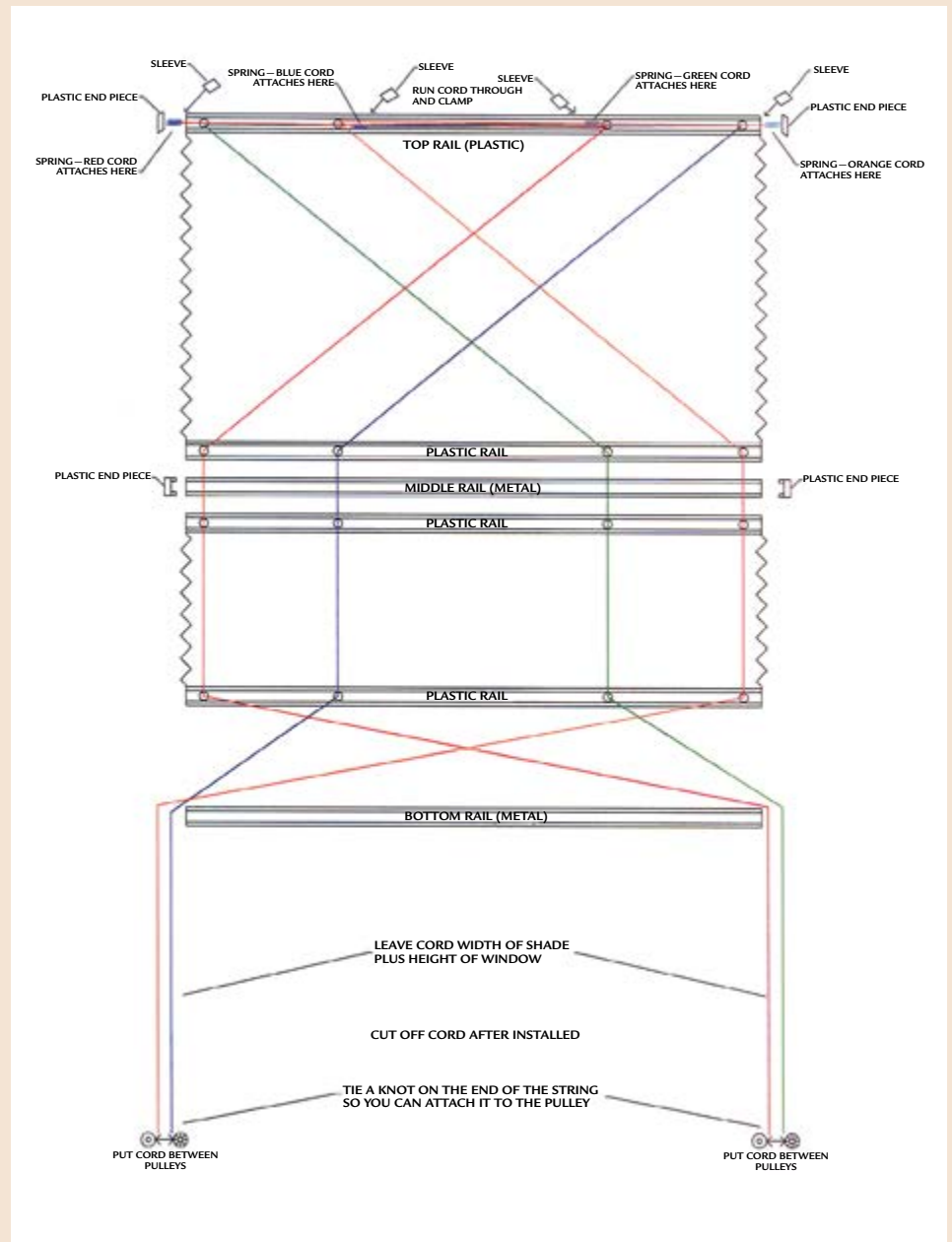
Restranging Day-Night Shades

Designed at Tiffin Motorhomes, day-night shades have been a very successful product for many years. During the daylight hours, the day shade allows light to come into the living area, but it also provides occupants privacy if there are people outside the coach. At night, the top segment of the day-night shade can be pulled down to give total privacy. The product's only weakness is the strings on which the shade glides up and down. After long use, the strings may break and the shade ceases to function. At the Red Bay Service Center, TMH will remove the dual shade from the valance and restring it for a nominal charge. Tiffin's Roll-Ease shades, an upgrade product, is now available and can be retrofitted. A price list is available at the end of this article.

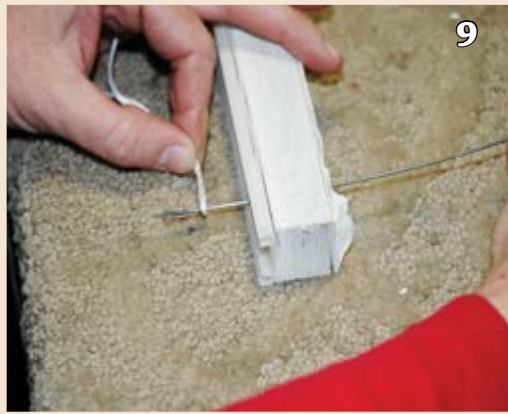
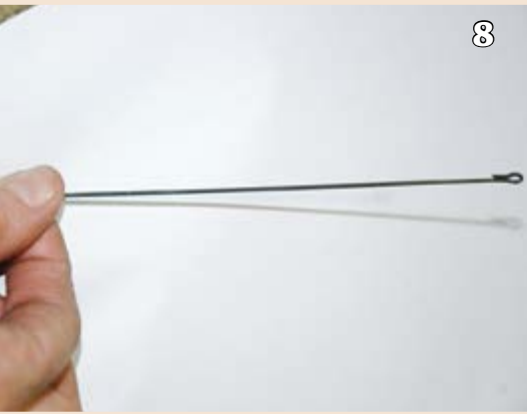
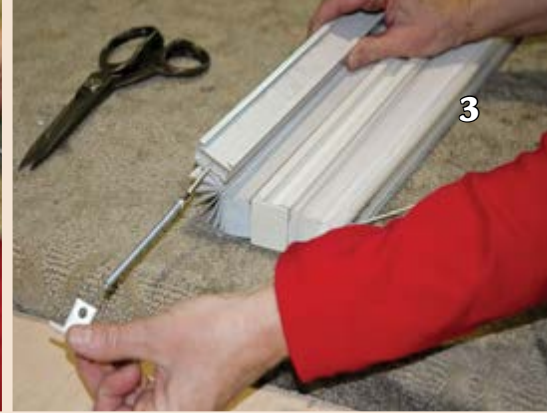
Following is an illustrated "How to Restring Your Day-Night Shades" narrative for do-it-yourselfers. For wide shades, such as the 63-inch unit in this story, you will need a work surface nearly 12 feet long.

TOOLS

- Two tape measures to place on either end of the shade.
- An electrician's wire crimper
- Wire sleeves (purchase from the TMH Camp Store)
- String (purchase from the TMH Camp Store)
- Two pair of scissors
- A 5/32-inch round file (used for sharpening chain saws)
- A one-foot long threading wire with small loop formed on end



Text and photography by Fred Thompson



On the top rail of the shade, you will see a measurement made with a felt-tip marker (1). On the one used for this story, the measurement was 63 x 35. The 63 represents the width of the shade. The 35 represents the vertical drop of the shade from its top open position to its bottom closed position.

Each string hanging down from the broken shade is terminated with a plastic knob (2). Cut the strings and remove the knobs. Then remove the bottom rail by sliding it off the pleated shade. Remove the end caps from the top rail (3) and slide the rail off the shade (4). This will expose four springs: one at each end and two positioned left and right of the center of the bar. *Note:* A two string shade has two end springs at opposite ends of the top bar.

Using scissors, cut the springs free of the old string (5). But first, notice how the wire sleeves were used to crimp the end of the string to prevent it from coming unraveled in the future. All of the old strings can be pulled out.

Notice there is a middle bar (6) that separates the day and night shade fabrics. Slide the bottom fabric out of the middle bar. Now you are ready to restring the shade.

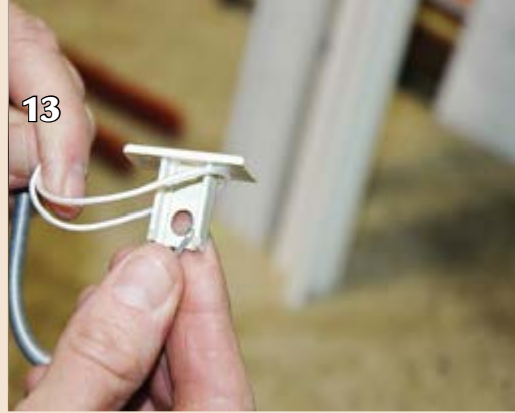
Use the round file to smooth the brass eyelets (7). Sometimes little burrs can form on the eyelets and fray the string, eventually causing it to break.

In the 63-inch wide shade there are four eyelets in each bar. Start at the right

12



13



14



lower end of the day shade and number that eyelet #1. Eyelet #2 will be the first one to the left. Eyelet #3 will be the next one to the left. And eyelet #4 will be on the opposite end. The middle bar also has four eyelets, numbered in the same sequence. Using the threading wire (8), thread the string up through eyelet #1 from the bottom of the day shade (9). Pull the string to the opposite end of the assembly and thread it into eyelet #4 from the bottom of the middle bar and through the night shade fabric (10).

Pull the string to the opposite end of the top of the assembly and thread it through a wire sleeve (11). With a loop knot (12), attach the string to the spring that is linked to an end cap (13). Pass the loose end of the string below the knot through the sleeve and crimp the sleeve (14, 15, 16).

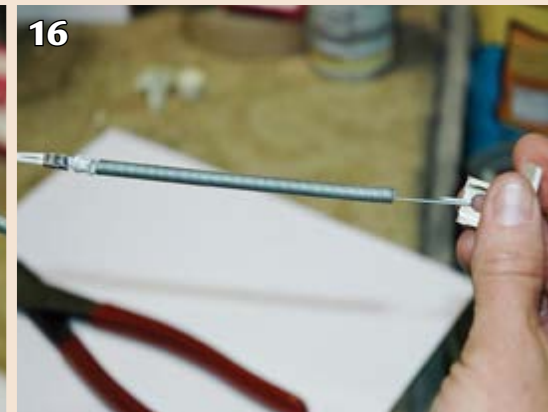
At eyelet #1 at the bottom of the day shade, pull 35 inches of string from the roll beyond the end of the bar and cut the string, leaving it extended off to the right.

Go to eyelet #2 on the lower day shade and thread the string through from the bottom (17). Then thread the string through eyelet #3 of the middle bar and into the upper night shade (18). After threading the string through a wire sleeve, attach it with a loop knot to the second spring on the right (19, 20). Secure the loose end with the crimping tool. From the spool of string, pull 35 inches out beyond the right edge of the lower bar, cut and leave it for now.

15



16



17



18



19



20



21

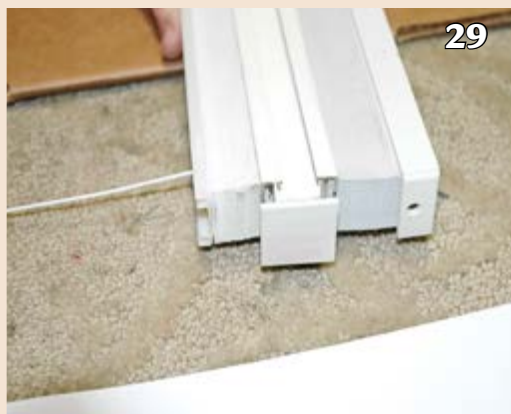


22





From eyelet #3 thread the string from the bottom (21), move diagonally to the right and continue threading it through eyelet #2 in the middle bar and through the night shade material (22). After you thread it through the top, attach it to the spring on the top bar which is left of center. Use the same type of knot and secure the end of the string with the crimped sleeve. Pull an additional 35 inches of string out beyond the left end of the shade, cut and leave it for now.



Then thread the string through eyelet #4 in the day shade. After passing through the day shade, go to the diagonally opposite end and thread the string through eyelet #1 in the night shade. After pulling the string through the night shade and on to the top bar, attach it to the end spring on the top left side of the bar. Pull 35 inches of string out beyond the left edge of the bottom bar and cut.



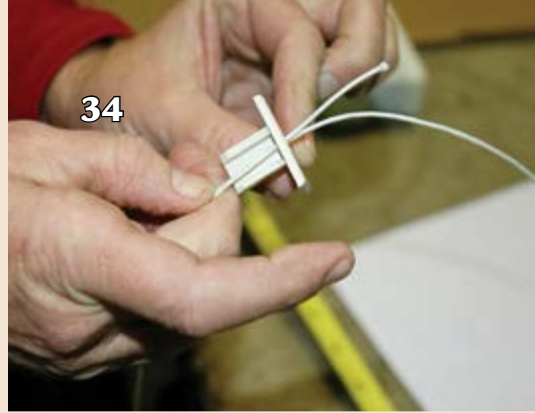
Now put the top rail back on the assembly. While holding the strings and springs inside the rail's tracks, slide the rail gently across to its closed position (23).

Pull the strings that you left extended on the opposite ends of the shade until you can feel the tension provided by the springs (24).



Slide the bottom day fabric all the way to the right so that its left end is adjacent to the middle bar above it (25). While holding the dangling strings, thread the day fabric and its top plastic

34



35



36



strip with the eyelets into the middle bar (26). Turn the strings loose and let them glide into the channel (27). Put the end plugs back into the middle bar and tap them snugly into place (28, 29).

Stand the shade up on its top end (30). The 35 inches of each string from the first and third holes should be extended to the left end (31). Strings from the second and fourth holes should be extended to the right end. Slide the bottom bar across through the grooves that attach it (32).

Lay the shade down on its side (33). Thread the two strings on each end through the end caps (34) and tap them into place (35). Pull the two strings taut to make sure there is no internal slack. On either end, with the tape measures touching the ends of the frames, measure 35 inches and tie a knot. The 35 inches is the height of the window which was marked with felt-tip pen on the top of the frame (see image #1).

On either end, take the 2-piece tension knob and place the knotted string inside the knob and snap it back together (36). You can test your success by holding the top and bottom bars alternately and allowing the shade to separate as if it had been pulled down in the valance frame (37, 38). After the day-night shade assembly has been remounted inside the valance, the tension knobs should be screwed back in place where they were originally. The tension should be similar to that on a guitar string.

37



38



Options for Upgrading Shades in Your Motorhome (living & bedroom areas)

Tiffin Motorhomes began using RollEase shades in the living and bedroom areas in the 2009 Phaeton. This is a dual shade system containing an off-white, opaque shade for the night portion and black solar shade which is used during daytime. These are the only colors available.

The RollEase shades are operated by a beaded chain attached to a mechanism on the end of each of shade rolls. The two beaded chains hang down just inside the legs of the valance. They are mounted so that the chain for the solar shade is on one end and the chain for the opaque night shade is on the other end.

Retrofitting prior model years. To retrofit any coach built prior to 2009, “extensions” have to be fabricated for

each valance to make it deep enough to hold the dual shade system and provide room for the two shades to roll up and down properly. The extension is done by taking the valance down, removing the existing day-night shades, cutting a strip of wood to add to the back of the valance’s legs, covering those strips with fabric that matches the valance, and then attaching this to the valance and trimming out the seam with matching welt cord. After the RollEase shades are mounted to the inside of the valance, it is ready to be re-hung. **NOTE:** The crystal balls placed on the chains are stops to prevent accidentally rolling the shade too far and rolling off the tubing. *Please do not remove these.* *Continued on page 62*



Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, 38-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 have a 2010 Phaeton 40QTH purchased Jan. 2010. My motorhome is all over the road on a slightly windy day and is subject to movement with every passing truck. I have monitored tire pressure and they are currently at 110 psi cold. The ride is very rough in the coach and I believe this pressure is too high for the load. I have not weighed the coach to determine the exact

weight and I am going on manufacturer's specs. I have talked to other motorhome owners who agree with me that this sway/lane movement is not normal for a rig of this size. Please help.

Hamilton Prestridge
Kiln, Mississippi

Dear Hamilton,
This is not a common complaint by Phaeton owners. The air pressure in your tires can make a minor but not a drastic difference. Other factors include the ride height adjuster and anti-sway bar. High winds will affect any unit. I recommend that you take your coach to the chassis manufacturer's service center and ask an experienced driver to evaluate the way your coach handles on a windy day.

I enjoy your Tech Talk column very much. I have a 1996 Allegro 28. Please send me instructions on restringing the pleated blinds. Thanks.

Kenneth Kelley
Stigler, Oklahoma

Dear Kenneth,
On pages 47-51 of this issue, you will find an illustrated guide to restringing pleated blinds. I am running the guide in place of the usual "On the Production Line" feature. Our thanks to Tunya Scott for her patient and detailed explanation of how to do this job.

Fred Thompson, editor

We bought a Tiffin Allegro 35QBA this summer, and we absolutely love it! It's our first motor home, so we're "RV newbies." I have a question about the rear tires. The inner tires have really short valve stems that make it pretty difficult to measure the tire pressure, and the outers have valve stems that face inward. I've heard that using the braided type of valve stem extenders can leak air, so I'm wary of installing those. I asked the dealer about it, and they said that they've discontinued

installing any type of valve stem extenders for their customers, so I'm left to figure this out on my own. What should I do?

Jim Bates
Berryville, Virginia

Dear Jim,
Your motorhome is probably on a newer version of the Ford chassis and this issue has been called to our attention before. The holes in the rims are a smaller diameter than the previous rims. The only easy fix is to install some type of extender which, as you say, could be subject to leakage. We recommend you install an electronic tire pressure kit which attaches to each valve stem and transmits each tire's pressure to a monitor on your dash.

Can the dinette booth be replaced with a table and chairs? We older folks find the booth very hard to get in and out of. What is involved in getting rid of the head knocker (TV cabinet) in the bedroom?

Thank you for the great tech tips *Roughing It Smoothly* (Volume 7, Number 4), as it has helped us take some of the rough edges off.

Charles & Lois Fietz
Cypress, Texas

Dear Charles & Lois,
The dinette booth can be replaced with the freestanding dinette. Our service center as well as several of our dealers' service centers have made this change. In the bedroom, you can remove the older television and replace it with the newer flat LCD design. With some cabinet work, you can remove the original bezel and recess the TV into the wall.

Wiper Arm Problem and the Solution

Ever since new, I have had problems with the wiper arms on our coach. They are just too flimsy for the application. Initially, in the snow, they twisted around horizontally and the head would not lock the wiper in place. Several times I had to

stop on the side of the road and retighten the head. While at Tiffin for other work, I checked with the technicians there and they said that there was nothing they could do but replace the arm. The manufacturer of the wiper motor has a special shaft that other arms would not fit. I recently replaced the blades with the newer type continuous flex type. They worked fine for a while but coming here in a rain storm yesterday, they started twisting horizontally again with disastrous results. Each time the wiper made a pass on the driver's side, the wiper would twist on the return and the wiper itself would distort drastically and would not wipe the windshield. I could replace the blades back to regular blades but I will soon be heading west again through snow conditions and the original problem will reoccur. My question to either of you tech people is:

Is there another wiper arm to replace the existing arm? Or, is there an adapter that will adapt the shaft to another arm? I am currently in Hilton Head, South Carolina, and will be leaving here in four days. I have checked over the years at different automotive places and RV shops to no avail.

I have another problem that I have not been able to fix. None of the edge lighting works on the front access door panel. My electrical diagrams do not show this circuit.

David McCloskey
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Follow-up from David McCloskey

I stopped by your office yesterday afternoon but you weren't there. I wanted to tell you that I had found a solution to my wiper problems and also the panel lighting.

For the wiper arm, I was able to strengthen the arm torsionally with a

piece of 1/2 inch aluminum angle stock that I found at Home Depot, putting it along the side and bottom of the length of the arm with marine epoxy glue. So far so good. I think it is a solution to the problem. Searches for replacement arms were futile. There is no one who sells replacement wiper arms for motorhomes.

The other problem with the front panel was solved when I found out that all of the "T" edge lights were burned out. I had thought that it was a wiring problem, never thinking that all of the lights were burned out.

Dave McCloskey
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

We have a 2010 Allegro RED 36QSA that we really enjoy. This summer we traveled from Florida to Montana to Connecticut

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and back. In 8,000 miles I never saw the transmission go into 6th gear or the light come on indicating I should shift up. We were towing a 2008 Ford Edge and generally maintaining a speed of 65 mph, which seemed to be a “sweet spot” for the engine. So my question is this: when does the 6th gear come into use, or do I have a problem that needs to be addressed. Thanks for your help.

Dave Schilke
Hobe Sound, Florida

Dear Dave,
Try operating it between 65 and 70, put it in economy mode and cruise control and then back off and see if it will go

into 6th gear. If it does not, you probably should have it evaluated at a Freightliner service center that can check the synchronization of the engine and transmission. The 6th gear was designed as an overdrive gear. We have not experienced this problem with our 2011 Allegro REDs.

I have a 32-ft. 2004 Allegro Open Road. I found an LCD television that fits perfectly to replace the original tube television above the dash. I need to remove the bezel so I can replace the TV. I spoke with a service tech at Tiffin who said there were four screws to remove, two on

each side. When I lifted the flipper on the side, I found four screws on each side — two black screws and two white screws. I removed the four screws on one side, but the bezel still will not move. Please help. I have this great LCD in my garage, still in the box.

Dave Rollins
Sunnyvale, California

Dear Dave,
I am assuming that what you are calling the “flipper” are the doors to the adjacent storage cabinets on either side of the television. After you remove the four screws from both sides of the television (accessed through the storage cabinet),

the bezel should come off. You cannot remove the bezel by taking the screws out on only one side.

I own a 2004 32BA. I have noticed that there is crazing on both of the upper corners of the rear end cap. The crazing doesn't appear to be deep but I'm concerned about whether it will get worse and if it will affect the structural integrity of the end cap. Is there a fix for the crazing? Thanks.

Russ Stearns
Windsor, Wisconsin

Dear Russ,
This is a common problem on fiberglass

at the stress points which are curves and corners. The older the unit the more prevalent it could become. The structural integrity is not affected. The crazing shows up more when the area is only gelcoat. Any good body shop that does fiberglass work on cars and boats can make the repair.

We enjoyed the latest issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*, especially your Q&A column. We are very interested in buying an Allegro Breeze, but have several questions: (1) We would like to have only the front TV over the dash along with a DVD player and satellite receiver. Can we order

it without the middle and rear TVs? (2) Does central heating and air come standard? (3) Will the price be increased in the near future because of the regulations for emission controls on diesel engines? If so, how much? Are there increased maintenance costs for the diesel engine in the Breeze? (4) Does the Breeze come standard with an automatic electric awning?

We now have our second Allegro Bay. We wonder why the electrical control switches are near the floor by the entry door. It is difficult to tell if they are off or on without kneeling on the outer steps, finding a flashlight, and twisting into a ball to see if they have been accidentally kicked on or

Customer Responses About Losing Power

“Reduced Power” Warning Light and Stalling Out (Workhorse chassis)

After a number of RVs in our life, we bought our first Tiffin in 2004, a 32BA which we now have 42,000 happy miles on. We love Tiffin people, Tiffin quality, and this 32BA. The 32BA's wheelbase to overall length ratio makes it the most stable RV in high wind I have ever driven. By our count, we are directly responsible for four new Tiffin RV sales to our friends.

We do, however, have a bone to pick with you on our 32BA that I thought was unique to our coach until I read Dwight Caler's letter to you recently. Our unit has had at least eight episodes like Mr. Caler's. On the way home just after buying it, I received the “Reduced Power” light followed by about 10 seconds of a badly running engine. Then it stalled before I could make it to the side of the road. For an hour I tried to restart the engine every 10 minutes without success. Then, just as the tow truck showed up, the engine restarted as if nothing had happened. I drove it straight back to the dealer. They ran every conceivable test and found nothing, and then thinly suggested I was

trying to find an excuse to back out of the deal! I was so mad I drove it home.

The next time it happened was at approximately 5,000 miles on the odometer. We were in rush hour traffic in D.C. and nearly created a pile-up trying to coast to the side of the road. After some time, the engine restarted and we took it to another dealer who found no codes, nothing in the history, nothing at all. After the third time and the same results from another dealer, I gave up on dealers. The problem continues to happen every few thousand miles and the engine runs only a few seconds on the “Reduced Power” warning before completely stalling. By now I am conditioned to immediately dive for any hole in the traffic to get to the shoulder.

With all due respect, it is NOT, as you stated, a simple case of switching the ignition off to reset the ECM in order to achieve normal operation. With one exception, I have done this many times with no immediate reset success. And even if this was a fix, you do not want your owners to experience this complete, or even reduced, power failure going on in the motorhomes you manufacture.

Something more is going on here and

it is dangerous when it happens. Have your drivers experienced this problem during deliveries? If so, what history of codes appeared on the units that experienced this problem? Since this almost certainly is an engine-chassis problem, what conversations have you had with Workhorse to correct this problem? Surely this must be a matter of great concern to Tiffin Motorhomes. I encourage you to get to the bottom of this before it causes a serious accident.

Jeff Johnk
Lakeville, Minnesota

Dear Jeff,
There could be a number of reasons which could cause the problem you have described, which would not show up on the computer history. (1) The excess fuel that is not used by the injection system is returned to the fuel tank by a line that is on top of the pump. This can cause the pump to malfunction and cut out temporarily. When the pump cools, the system will start pumping fuel again. This problem rarely occurs and may not be the reason for your engine cutting out. (2) In extremely wet weather, moisture going into the air intake system can trigger the MAP

sensor that regulates the air going into the air intake and cause the engine to run rough or shut down. (3) In the following letter, Ned Fenton describes how he was able to solve a similar problem.

Letter to Dwight Caler from Ned Fenton: “Reduced Power” Light and Stalling

Dear Dwight,
I had a very similar problem with my 2004 37DB Allegro Bay (Workhorse) when it had approximately 27,000 miles on it. My coach would lose all power after a 100% acceleration as I moved into traffic following a stop.

First, the dealer replaced the “Tachometer/Accelerator Module,” then the “Accelerator Module,” and finally the “Final Accelerator Component Throttle Position Sensor & Body” (which is the gas pedal assembly). After much frustration, this eliminated the problem. Good luck with yours.

Ned Fenton III
Salamanca, New York

A Similar Problem with a Freightliner-Cummins Product

First of all, my wife and I absolutely love our 2009 Phaeton QTH, have a little

over 15,000 miles on the odometer, and have had very few problems to speak of, and what we have had, we were able to resolve fairly easy with either our dealer or by calling Tiffin and speaking with a person in Service. However, I do have a unique story to pass on and hope it may help someone else that owns a Tiffin product with a Freightliner chassis.

While on a recent trip to Michigan, we were pulling out of an over-night stay and as I accelerated, the Cummins would not respond to throttle response to go faster than idle speed. I was fortunate it was early morning, very little traffic, and I had plenty of road space to quickly make a turn back to the campground.

I called Coach-Net, Cummins, Freightliner, and Tiffin for phone advice and a possible resolution to my problem. Everyone had a variety of suggestions, but after 2+ hours on the phone, it became clear I needed to have the Phaeton towed to a major service center and have the engine hooked up to a computer for a complete diagnostic.

I contacted Cummins Bridgeway in Saginaw, Michigan, and they arranged for a tow service to take us back to their facility, about 60 miles away. Once there, the

service tech hooked up the computer to the engine and proceeded to conduct a diagnostic report. The result was a faulty electronic throttle pedal. They stated that they had serviced only one other vehicle (an 18-wheeler) with a similar problem in over two years! A rare problem.

Bridgeway contacted Freightliner as it was not a Cummins problem but a chassis matter. Freightliner was very helpful and shipped overnight, and at no cost to us, a new electronic throttle pedal. Once the unit had arrived, it took less than 15 minutes to take out the faulty pedal and install the new one, the job was complete, and we were soon on our way.

I wasn't aware, and I am sure many other Tiffin motorhome owners with Freightliner chassis aren't either, that the throttle pedal in their coach is an electronic “fly-by-wire” unit and not one of cables, pulleys, or push rods to the engine. I keep learning more and more about my Phaeton every time we travel. I decided to purchase from Freightliner a “spare” electronic throttle pedal in case this ever happens again.

John R. Guenther
Borden, Indiana

off. Is there any particular reason why they are in such an awkward place? Why not put them at eye level on the side of a cabinet or higher up on the wall by the door?

Jerry Begué
Slidell, Louisiana

Dear Jerry,

(1) Due to the standard production system used for each floorplan, the mid-section television was designed as the primary TV for use with surround sound. Therefore, the coach cannot be ordered without the mid-section television. The front television is the only optional TV in the coach. (2) Central heating and air is standard: 13,500 BTU furnace is standard; one central air conditioner is standard and a heat pump and second air conditioner is optional. (3) We do not anticipate a price increase due to emission control issues on this engine in the near future. (4) The maintenance cost of the MaxxForce diesel engine is comparable to any similarly sized diesel engine in other vehicles. A gas engine is not available on the Breeze.

The bank of switches is placed adjacent to the step well to make it easier to reach into the motorhome to make adjustments when you are outside.

We own a 2008 Phaeton 40QDP and are very satisfied with the coach. Do the air bags require any maintenance, such as silicone spray? How long do the air bags normally last and is there a hard and fast rule about the time frame to replace them? I notice that we feel every bump in the road like we did in our Allegro Bay. Our front curtain has fallen twice and our side curtains once. Pieces of our hubcaps and the hydraulic pump up front have come off. Can these bags have too much air and can it be checked?

Tommy Matthews
Franklin, Louisiana

Dear Tommy,

Gary Harris in our chassis department tells me that Firestone does not rec-

ommend or require any maintenance for the air bags. When the motorhome is being serviced, do a visual inspection for possible punctures that might have been caused by road hazards. During very harsh winter weather, prolonged exposure to de-icing chemicals may hasten drying out the rubber, causing it to crack. Even in a truck environment, air bags last 15 or more years.

With regard to the stiffness of your ride, check your tire pressure against the weight of your motorhome and the charts that are furnished by the tire manufacturer. You may be running a little too much air in your tires to get the smoothest ride.

We bought a 2010 Allegro 32BA in March and have thoroughly enjoyed it so far and get lots of compliments on it. However, we are puzzled at two features.

The on-off switch for the radio is located over 24 inches to the right of the steering wheel, making it awkward for the driver to reach and adjust. On most automobiles today, the radio controls are mounted on the steering wheel. Why not mount them on the Allegro's steering wheel?

The overdrive switch is located on the dash to the left of the steering wheel, requiring the driver to lean forward every time he/she wants to activate it. Could this also be placed on the steering wheel?

We would appreciate your comments on these issues.

Dave & Anne Cavazzi
Blind Bay, British Columbia

Dear Dave & Anne,

None of the chassis manufacturers used to build the Allegro Open Road offer steering wheel controls for the radio, overdrive shift, or cruise control. It is a matter of cost on an entry level coach. Installing these items aftermarket will be prohibitively expensive.

We have a 2009 Allegro 34TGA that we

really enjoy. The one problem we have is that there is no way to get any fresh air into the bedroom (a window that opens).

Is there a replacement exit window that opens and could be installed in place of the window that came with our coach? Is it possible to install smaller windows in the sidewalls of the bedroom slide-out? Thanks for your help.

Mike & Gail Davis
Maple Valley, Washington

Dear Mike & Gail,

Adding windows to the side walls of the slide-out is not structurally feasible or cost effective. There is an emergency exit window now available this year which incorporates a sliding panel that will fit your motorhome. Your dealer can order and install it.

We have a 2007 Allegro Bus with the "pull-out" island. Is there a way to put a "stop" on the island to keep it from rolling back into the main cabinet? Being so "moveable" is annoying when the slightest touch makes the island move toward being "stowed."

Jean Griffith
Canton, Texas

Dear Jean,

A friction latch can be installed to prevent the island from floating back and forth. This can be installed by our service department here in Red Bay. At this time, we do not have written instructions available to help an owner make the installation.

On my 2009 Phaeton 40QTH, the headlight lenses have some kind of coating that is starting to come off. What is this coating and why is it coming off? What can I do about it?

Bob King
Martinsville, New Jersey

Dear Bob,

Without checking it visually, I cannot say what may be on your headlight lenses. I

am not aware of any coatings that have ever been applied to the headlights. When you can get to your dealer, have the service tech inspect the headlight coating. Of course, your dealer can call our service department for further consultation.

Fuel injection problems? Is algae the cause?

I read with interest in the last issue of *RIS* the problem that Jack Windsor of Scottsboro, Alabama, has with his 2003 Allegro Bus. I experienced the same problem with my 2004 Allegro Bus with a 400 hp Cummins. The engine was skipping badly and I had to replace the fuel injection system at a cost of \$5,300. My engine had 58,000 miles on it and has always been properly maintained. Why is it that the fuel injection systems are failing on Cummins engines with so few miles? I believe Cummins has a faulty injection pump and needs to have a recall.

William Thompson
Ripley, Mississippi

Dear William,

See answer following the next question.

Another algae problem solved

I had the same exact problem with my 2002 Allegro Bus that Jack Windsor experienced on his 2003 Bus. It was caused by algae in the fuel tank which plugged the inlet screen in the lift pump (fuel pump). The fuel filter/H2O separator was installed by Freightliner *after* the pump! I added the fuel filter/H2O separator ahead of the pump. I then removed the pump and cleaned out the algae. End of problem.

Dick Osteerhoff
Ridgway, Colorado

Dear Dick,

Thank you for sharing your information.

A collective answer from several heads in the service center

Dear Dick and William,
Diesel fuel left dormant in the fuel tank

and fuel line can cause algae to build up. Left untreated, it could cause fuel injection problems. If the motorhome is stored for several months through the winter, for example, you should use a diesel fuel additive such as "Killem." If you suspect you have an algae build-up in your tank, it is recommended that you use the additive over the next four tanks of fuel.

If you have a gasoline engine and you plan to store the coach for several months, you should treat the fuel system with an additive such as "Stabil." After you add "Stabil" to your fuel tank, run your generator for a few minutes to get the additive into the generator's carburetor.

We have a Cummins dealer in Morgan City, Louisiana, but they refuse to work on RVs. We have to drive to Kenner. I have taken my coach there three times and it still runs very badly. Every time we travel the check engine and stop engine lights come on and I lose power. I purchased the Extended Gold Warranty "bumper-to-bumper" policy, but the manager at the Cummins shop in Kenner refuses to honor the policy. What can we do?

Alton & June Albert
Morgan City, Louisiana

Dear Alton & June,

Cummins does not offer an extended warranty on their engines. Such warranties are offered by third party insurers. Cummins generally does not accept the warranty document as payment for their services. It is customary for the owner to pay for the service and then take the receipt to the warranty company for reimbursement. Some warranty companies require you to get approval for the estimated repair costs before they will authorize reimbursement.

I too had a problem with my jacks making a noise as we traveled along. After going through a similar number of trials

and errors as Mr. Fisherof (see *RIS* 7:4), a technician found that the jacks had been recalled for O-ring problems.

Jerry Hammell
Absecon, New Jersey

Dear Jerry,

Thank you for letting us know about the recall. Without the year and model of your coach, we were not able to check the parameters of the recall by HWH. It was fortunate that your technician checked for recalls before making the repair.

Please help me understand the rationale for the offset driver side mirror on the 2011 Phaeton. I notice that is not the case on any other of the Tiffin motorhomes. Can I order a 2011 Phaeton with the driver's mirror in the same position as the passenger side mirror? The offset mirror takes away from the beauty of the Phaeton. I want to buy one if you will change it back to the way it was on the 2010. I now have a 2007 37-ft Allegro Bay FRED.

James Wright
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear James,

The redesign of the 2011 Phaeton's cap and the flattening of the windshield created a blindspot in the forward position of the mirror. We had to move it to the side for safety reasons. The new position gives a much better sideview of the traffic.

I have a 2006 Allegro Bay (FRED 34XB). It came equipped with Goodyear G670RV (255/70R22.5) tires. Last year after a trip to Alaska, I noticed abnormal tire wear on the front steering tires. My Oasis Freightliner dealer checked alignment, balance, and run out, plus he rotated the tires, but to no avail. After another 5,000 miles (35,000 miles total) the tires continue to wear badly.

My Oasis dealer said he has seen a lot of problems with the Goodyear G670 RV tires, and recommended I replace the Goodyear tires on the front with BFGood-

rich ST230 255/70R22.5, which I did. After 9,000 miles, there is no sign of abnormal wear. However, being a truck tire, the Goodrich tires seem to ride rougher. My questions: (1) Does Michelin make an RV tire in the right size for my coach? (2) What tire would you recommend?

Pete Mowry
Waddell, Arizona

Dear Pete,
The chassis manufacturer usually determines the brand of tire that is installed on the chassis. We have always had better luck in the long run with Michelin tires. Michelin does make a replacement which is the 255/70R22.5 LRH XZE.

We have 1998 Allegro Bus. We have the following problems: (1) The fuel gauge does not work and the "Low Fuel" indicator stays on constantly. (2) The brake lights stay on even when the ignition is in the off position. When the ignition is turned on, the brake lights go off. (3) The headlight switch gets very warm and the headlights begin to flash off and on. Hope you can give us the input we need to make these repairs.

Andy & Stevette Rehberg
Jacksonville, Florida

Dear Andy & Stevette,
All of these problems could be related. There is a short in the electrical system, most likely in the wiring harness for the headlights. Or it could be the headlight switch itself. Try installing a new headlight switch. If this does not solve the problem, you should take it to an RV service center and have a certified electrical technician determine the cause of the problem.

I really enjoy Serious Tech Talk. I own a 2008 Allegro 32BA. Is there any way to keep the storage doors on the living room side from binding? During travel they shift and it takes significant effort to

open them. The bolt heads almost interlock. They slide freely when open.

Do you have any suggestions for getting bugs off the front painted surface? We love our Tiffin and the good service.

Jason Cole
Springdale, Arkansas

Dear Jason,
There should be spacers between the doors, preventing them from sliding. It sounds like the spacers on the living room side are missing. Check to see if the rubber spacers are between the doors.

If you have the Diamond Shield protective film on your coach, see p. 62 in this issue for information on removing bugs from the front of your RV.

We are very happy with our 2009 Allegro Bay 35TSB, which has the Workhorse chassis. When our speed gets up to 50 to 55 mph, we hear a very annoying high pitched whistle in the front of the coach. When we took the RV back to Red Bay for some other repairs, we told the technician about the whistle noise. He put a new grill cover on the front, but that did not solve the problem. Is there a solution?

Bill & Dorothy Wockenfuss
Leesburg, Florida

Dear Bill & Dorothy,
Tape a piece of 18x18-inch cardboard over one side of the grill and see if that stops the whistle. If it does not stop, then move it over to the next section and try again. Once you see where the noise is originating, examine the area behind the grill to see if you can determine what is causing the whistle. We discussed this problem in Vol. 6, no. 4, Fall 2009 issue and owners shared several solutions. Air flow passing over the grill has caused this noise in several Allegro Bays.

I have a 1995 Allegro Bay and love it with one exception. It has a cloth ceiling and no matter what I do, I can't get it clean.

I am assuming the ceiling material has seams because I have seven black streaks across the ceiling that will not budge. Any suggestions? I would appreciate any help.

Larry Cooper
Leesburg, Florida

Dear Larry,
Rather than overlaying the existing ceiling with new fabric, which is very labor intensive, we have seen several units fitted with wooden ceiling beams. These beams are 2.5 to 3 inches wide, stained to match the cabinetry, and screwed into the existing ceiling over the dark spots.

We have a 1995 Allegro Bus. Our shower stall has freed itself from the wall and we would like to know the best way to reattach it to prevent any water leakage that would create future problems. The shower door is out of alignment. I think the door will realign after we get the shower walls back where they should be. Please let us know if and how this can be done.

James & Barb Corder
Independence, Missouri

Dear James & Barb,
The shower stalls were attached by a silicone-type glue such as "Liquid Nails." You should remove the shower door and trim before you reattach the stall to the bathroom wall. You can use a similar silicone-type glue for the job.

We live in a cold climate (Nebraska) and we can only leave for a couple of weeks at a time. Our 2010 Allegro is stored in an enclosed building. We need to know if we can just keep it plugged in with the heater on and go without winterizing.

James & Sherry Stougard
Crete, Nebraska

Dear James & Sherry,
Make sure the furnaces are on and that you have a full tank of LP gas. Keep the cabinet doors open so that air can circulate better. You should dump the holding tanks.

Customer Comments

This is just for your information, should anyone have a similar problem. We no longer have our Allegro, but this might apply to some of your readers who have the same refrigerator.

We now own another brand with a 4-door refrigerator. It was working fine when we received the recall for it, but we made an appointment with Camping World in Tennessee to have it repaired on our way out west last year. For the rest of that trip (3 months), we had nothing but trouble with it! Every time it got cold, and for some reason always on the same night of the week, the fuse blew, and the unit quit working. We stopped at other Camping World's, spent a week in San Antonio where they took the whole unit out and checked it over, had a mobile tech in California look at it, but nobody could find the problem. Even had several conversations with Norcold, and no one could help. One tech finally drilled a hole where the fuse went, so my husband could replace them more easily. However, he found that if he tried to replace the fuse right

away, it would blow again. He had to wait several hours, then it would accept the new fuse, and work for a few more days.

When we got home, we took the coach into an RV dealer for some repair work, and happened to mention the problem we were having with the refrigerator. The tech who was working on our coach overheard us, and said he thought he knew what it was. There's a wiring harness on the back outside of the refrigerator that prevents the ice-maker feed pipe from freezing in cold weather, and someone (apparently the original recall repair person) had put it back on backwards. He re-wired it properly, and we have had no problems since.

I hope this might help someone who has a similar problem.

Heather Dina
Leicester, North Carolina

Regarding the hanging clothes rod: I found a solution using strip felt purchased in a roll at Home Depot. Stuck

on the top of the rod, secured with silicone tape about 6-8 inches apart, it eliminates the slip and jump, allows pushing the hangers to get something out or putting something in on the rod. We only had hanger malfunction once on a very bumpy washboard road.

Paula Arnold
Broomfield, Colorado

I just received *RIS 7:4* and noticed the question from Joseph Kuhn. I have a 2010 Allegro RED 36QSA with the same problem. To correct this, I bought a car windshield heat reflector and cut the size to fit the window on the slide-out where the heat from the direct sun is coming in. This works pretty well, but the real solution would be changing the window glass to one that is very highly insulated to repel the sun's rays. I feel sure that moving the thermostat to another location would also help.

James M. Bihl, Sr.
Imperial, Missouri

Tiffin Plant Tours

Daily Monday-Friday at 9:30 a.m. Meet Red Davis in the Allegro Welcome Center 15 minutes before departure. Tour headsets and protective glasses provided. You'll be right on the production lines seeing it all up close and personal.

Tired of the Old Tank Monitor Issues? Here is the Solution!!



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709P-4 Display

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The 'Get Around To Its' of Cleaning

by Mary Findley

Have you ever walked into a craft store and purchased items for a craft project or two, thinking you'll 'get around to it' in the next few months? Several years later, dust covers the stash of untouched material leaving behind a vague memory of the intended purpose. Gratefully, my daughter-in-law has a crafty wit about her and inherits my long-forgotten projects.

People know I understand how easily cleaning chores are put aside like craft endeavors and often ask how to tackle them. One such question came during a seminar when a woman sheepishly begged for a solution to the persistent odor on the floor around her bathroom toilet. Men, please accept my apologies, but she needed to understand that her husband's missed efforts were the source of the odor and the only long-term solution rested with him. I suggested she instruct her husband to "sit on it," the toilet that is, to prevent future calamities. The men in the audience chuckled and nodded in agreement.

Grab your plunger and let's attack these cleaning nuisances.

Toilets can present several problems. Here are a few cures for odors around the toilet. If the mishap is fresh and a cleaner has not been previously used, head to the pet store for a bottle of Nature's Miracle. The enzymes in the product "eat" the bacteria that cause the odor. Enzyme cleaners, however, are wasted on spots where a chemical has previously been used. Chemicals kill the enzymes,

which must stay active to be effective.

If a cleaner has previously been used, try rinsing the spot with a 50/50 solution of food grade distilled white vinegar and water. Vinegar carries its weight when it comes to neutralizing odors.

Clean a toilet by spraying it with Mary's diluted CleanEz or your organic all purpose cleaner. Sprinkle just a bit of baking soda onto a toilet bowl brush and scrub. Baking soda is not recommended for use in holding tanks but you can sneak in a half teaspoon without the holding tank police fining you for roughing the gaskets.

Remove hard water, iron, or rust in toilets with Mary's EraseIt for Bathrooms. It works like a pumice stone only it will not scratch. After cleaning the toilet, turn off the water supply to the toilet, then flush to drain the water. Let the bowl dry a few minutes and grab your bottle of Mary's Advantage made for protecting your coach. Spray the toilet and wipe with an old cloth to evenly coat the toilet. The polymers in Advantage make a surface slick so nothing sticks. Do I really need to tell you the benefits of a slick toilet when nothing sticks? Just don't overspray onto the seat!

The saying "All good things must come to an end" really hits home the minute you walk into your home after an extended road trip. Toilet bowl water evaporates leaving behind a series of ugly rings. Use Mary's EraseIt for Bathrooms to get rid of those rings. Before you leave

on an extended trip add one half to one full cup of water to the toilet bowl and a cup of distilled white vinegar. Finish by covering the bowl with Saran Wrap. The additional water prevents the water from completely evaporating. Vinegar is a mild acid and neutralizes the alkali in the water, which retards ring formations. Saran Wrap keeps the water from evaporating so quickly. Finally, put a sticky note on the toilet lid to remind you to remove the Saran Wrap before use!

Showers rank high on the list of least favorite cleaning chores so folks always ask for supersonic ways to clean them. My answer never varies - prevention. Most bar soaps contain talc or animal fat that cling to the walls and doors of showers slowing your cleaning progress. It's also the main culprit behind clogged drains.

Run your thumbnail along the bottom of your shower. Any grey matter that comes off is soap residue. Prevent the buildup by switching soap. Try glycerin soap or bar soap from a health food store. Sappo Hill is my favorite. It's a good soap plus the individual bars are not wrapped, which saves on packaging and toxic ink used for printing.

An acidic cleaner is needed to remove hard water spots and soap residue from shower walls. Look for a concentrated organic cleaner that is not made from orange oil as those often contain delimitene, or petroleum distillates, which have been linked to cancer.

Alternatively, remove water spots on glass shower doors by boiling undiluted distilled white vinegar. Wear rubber gloves and wipe it on the doors. Keep the doors damp for 30 to 45 minutes then scrub using a non-scratch pad and a bit of baking soda.

Once the shower is clean, spray a cloth with Advantage and wipe on the shower walls. Do not spray Advantage directly on the walls or doors of the shower. It drifts to the floor and makes the floor slick resulting in falls and bruised tail bones. The polymers in Advantage make the shower walls and doors slick so water sheets down to slow down water spot buildup. You do squeegee your showers, right?

To clean showers weekly, dilute Mary's CleanEz or your organic concentrated cleaner. Spray the walls from bottom to top. Wait five minutes and use both hands to clean and dry. Head to my website www.goclean.com and click on the Speed Cleaning video at the lower right side to learn my tricks to double-handed cleaning.

Brass or gold plated fixtures must be wiped after every use or they discolor. The tarnish on gold or brass plating is difficult to remove. Try Brazzo found at the grocery stores.

For clog free drains, pour Happy Camper down them once a month before retiring at night. The enzymes in Happy Camper "eat" the residue in drains and keep them free of clogs. It is available online as well as from many dealers.

The Grey and Black of It

Holding tank companies used to recommend pouring one cup liquid Dawn dish-washing detergent into three-quarter full grey and black tanks, then drive 100 miles before dumping the tanks.

After giving this recommendation at a seminar, one of the attendees later told me they followed my directions. The highway patrol pulled them over as they journeyed down the highway. The abundance of suds in the tank found an

escape route out the vents on the top of their coach and the highway patrol feared a fire. One-third cup cleans the tanks just fine without the effervescent effects.


Some owners add a bag of ice to the tanks in the morning to clean the sensors as they drive. Then treat your tanks with Happy Camper to prevent odors.

K P Duty

Convection ovens: Your coach comes equipped with a stainless steel convection oven, which tends to develop a brown residue along the sides. A product called Awesome found at the Dollar Stores is the only product I know that busts the grungies off those ovens. Awesome is toxic so open the windows, turn on the fans, and wear gloves. Wipe on a cool oven and let it set several minutes. Scrub then rinse with undiluted distilled white vinegar, then plain water. Vinegar removes the chemical residue so the fumes won't cook into your food. Heat your oven to 350 for 5 minutes to bake off any lingering residue.

Refrigerators and stoves: Removing the fingerprints and grease spots from stainless steel can get you sweating like a good aerobic workout. Just like wood, stainless steel has a grain. Dirt builds in those grains, dulling the finish. Always clean in the direction of the grain to remove soils in the grooves. Straight distilled white vinegar does a good job. The secret to keeping stainless steel looking new is weekly cleaning.

Avoid using microfiber on stainless steel unless you favor that "just scratched" look. Never use commercial grade stainless steel cleaners on residential appliances. Cleaners made for the heavier commercial stainless steel will damage residential appliances.

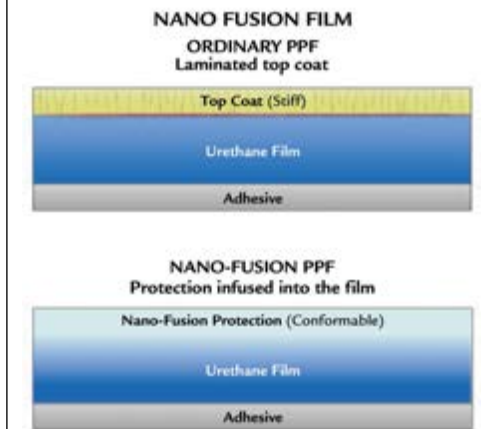
Although I have not finished covering the interior cleaning, the next article will veer off course and take you down the toxic highway of chemicals and their hazards to your health and explore the causes of what I call "Toxic Home Syndrome." There is a dark side to the color green. 

Diamond Shield Introduces New Nano Fusion Paint Protection Film for 2011

Diamond Shield, a leader in the paint protection industry, prides itself in its commitment to the motorhome owner, and helping them protect their investment. Diamond Shield, after five years of development, recently announced that they are using a new Nano-Fusion paint protection film. Nano-Fusion film is a patent-pending film technology that makes existing topcoats obsolete.

Most existing topcoats will separate at the boundary, causing crazing and stress cracking, which helps to produce mold and/or mildew resulting in a negative appearance.

Nano-Fusion technology infuses the urethane film with clear penetrating protection. The Nano film is ultra clear, more conforming, flexible and stain resistant.



Diamond Shield's Nano Fusion is a urethane film that is designed to protect the painted areas of a motorhome that are most vulnerable to damage caused by stone chips, bug acids, road debris and weathering. Our company designs and manufactures computer-generated kits specifically for each of the motorhome models.

A Limited Lifetime Warranty is provided to the original owner on the purchase date. At Tiffin, our installers are always



Mary Findley is a veteran cleaning expert, author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Green Cleaning* and owner of Mary Moppins. Mary's cleaning tips appear in magazines such as *This Old House*, *Real Simple*, *Woman's World*, and *Woman's Day*. Her dedication to all things green has led her to presenting sustainable living seminars to help organizations, businesses, and individuals rid their lives of toxic chemicals and engage sustainable living practices. Reach Mary through her website www.goclean.com or call 800-345-3934.

available to take care of any concerns or warranty issues if required. Diamond Shield will make arrangements to do your work at a dealer, paint shop or other location to meet your needs. No other film on the market can match this labor and film replacement warranty.

A product care sheet is included with

each unit with a copy of the maintenance procedure attached. The maintenance procedure is easy to follow, and will keep your Diamond Shield protective film and paint looking like new. Failure to do proper maintenance will degrade your motorhome's appearance and may affect your D-S protective film warranty.

Diamond Shield Product Care

After the Diamond Shield film has been applied, refrain from washing for 48 hours. Washing after that time presents no problems. Do not use harsh or abrasive cleaners or detergents.


We do not recommend ANY of the dry wash types of cleaners as they are intended for non-porous surfaces, paint protection films are a porous material.

Car wash type soap is recommended. Bugs should be washed off ASAP. One bug cleaner we recommend is Bug Magic (www.bugmagic.com), but any similar product should work just as well.

Use EXTREME care if using a pressure washer, too high of a pressure or misuse of pressure washer may cut or tear the film. Pressure washer damage IS NOT covered under Diamond Shield's warranty. The application of ANY products over

Diamond Shield i.e vinyl bras, banners, etc. will void the Diamond Shield warranty.

Diamond Shield recommends the use of 303 Aerospace Protectant™ (www.303products.com). especially before any trips or Protect All (www.protect-all.com). Both of these products replenish and provide UV screening protection, repel dust, soiling and staining, and should be applied every time after you clean the front of the coach/vehicle. If a product cannot be found locally, it can be purchased through Diamond Shield. Waxing of your coach/vehicle is recommended at least 3-4 times/year.


Prior to putting coach/vehicle in storage Diamond Shield should be cleaned and waxed. We recommend Mothers or Maguire's Liquid cleaner wax. DO NOT USE wax designed for specific colors. 


Tiffin Motorhomes receives 12th Quality Circle Award

Tiffin Motorhomes received its 12th Quality Circle Award for dealer satisfaction. The company was honored with one of only four Quality Circle Awards presented by the Recreational Vehicle Dealers Association to Class A motorhome manufacturers in 2010 for top-rank design, reliability, quality, value and competitive price at the National RV Trade Show in Louisville Nov. 29.

A total of 423 RV dealers provided 2,125 ratings in the Dealer Satisfaction Index survey conducted earlier this year. Tiffin's ratings substantially exceeded the motorized industry average in seven surveyed categories: vehicle design, vehicle reliability/quality, competitive price/value, dealership warranty support, parts support, overall dealer communications and sales territory.

The Quality Circle Award is presented by the RVDA to manufacturers which received at least 15 dealer responses and scored 80 percent or above in overall dealer satisfaction.

"The Dealer Satisfaction Index is one major indicator of our primary goal of customer satisfaction," said Tim Tiffin, general manager. "We are gratified that our ratings reflect across-the-board the standards we set in terms of customer service, innovative engineering, quality, value and outstanding dealer support. Our continuing industry leadership in the DSI is both gratifying and challenging. Now we dedicate our efforts to maintaining and enhancing our customer and dealer confidence." 

If your coach is an older model and you would like to remove the film protection that is currently on your coach or if you would like to add paint protection for the first time, we can help. Diamond Shield has certified installers that are located across the United States. 

ON THE PRODUCTION LINE

Continued from page 51

The prices listed below include parts and labor. Sales taxes are additional at 8.5%.

PRICES WHEN HAVING ROLL-EASE SHADES INSTALLED AT THE TIFFIN SERVICE CENTER IN RED BAY:

5 windows	\$ 950 + sales tax
6 windows	1,140 + sales tax
7 windows	1,310 + sales tax
8 windows	1,480 + sales tax
9 windows	1,655 + sales tax
10 windows	1,830 + sales tax

SPECIAL NOTES: All package pricing includes the installation of the off-white, opaque shade ONLY on the following windows: The two end windows in the driver side living room slide-out, located at each end of that slide-out. Overhead cabinetry prevents both shades from being installed. You will be given the black, solar shade. Many customers have creative ideas as to how to use it, even though it will not fit inside the valance on the tube in the same manner as the other windows. If you decide that you want the black, solar shade installed in these two slide-out windows instead of the off-white, opaque shade, you must notify us before the installation. Any changes after installation will result in additional labor charges.

Bathroom and kitchen RollEase shades are not available at this time.

There will be additional labor charges for Zephyrs with the rope lighting inside the valances. The rope lighting has to be removed and retrofitted. We anticipate 15 minutes additional labor per window.

TIFFIN MANAGEMENT TEAM *Continued from page 33*

been a successful businessman for 38 years, Red retired in 1995.

During his many years serving the public in his businesses, Red also served his church and his city government. For the last 46 years, he has been a deacon and an usher in the First Baptist Church. For almost that many years, he has been a member of the Gideons, an organization that places Bibles in every motel and hotel in the country. In civic service during the 1960s, Red served the city of Red Bay as a councilman and vice mayor.

Following the good examples and training from their parents, the Davis's daughters and their spouses developed successful careers, and their four grandchildren are no exceptions. They also have three great-grandchildren, ages 18 months to eight years old.

Sheree Humphries, their oldest daughter, is an early developmental learning specialist in the Huntsville, Alabama, school system and her husband, Ricky, is an engineer with NASA. Their daughter, Heather, has a degree in business from Faulkner University. She and her husband have a little boy named Brodie. Their son, Zack, will graduate in May with an engineering degree from the University of Alabama-Huntsville.

Sandi is the housing manager at a facility for the elderly and disabled in Belmont, Mississippi. Her husband, David Johnston, is retired from the Norfolk & Southern Railroad. They have two children: Jodi and Jake. Their daughter, Jodi, is a registered nurse, and works with Home Health. Jodi and her husband have two little ones: Tucker and Brylee. Their son, Jake, is in high school at Belmont.

Not one to sit on the front porch and watch the world go by, Red volunteered to deliver Tiffin coaches to dealers. "I had a lot of experience driving Tiffin motorhomes," Red joked. "Jo and I bought one in 1973, the first full year they were in business. Then we bought a '76, an '84, and then a 21-ft. class C on the AstroVan chassis. Then we bought a used '90 Allegro, and soon after that a '94 Allegro Bay. Then we 'down-sized' — you know, that's a popular word today — and owned two Class C's. The last one we owned was a 23-ft. Class C which we sold two years ago."

The Davises loved RVing and joined the Allegro Club. "We went to many club rallies all over the country," Jo said. "We have been to all of the lower 48 states." The couple's longest trip (in time away from home) took them to Quartzsite, the Grand Canyon, the Painted Desert, and Carlsbad Caverns. "We saw Yellowstone when the park was on fire and the old lodge burned," Red recalled. On some of their summer trips, a grandson or granddaughter joined them.


Red's career delivering motorhomes was brief. With his many years of experience at Western Auto, Red was offered a position with Campers' Choice, Tiffin's RV products store.

In 2000 Tim Tiffin asked Red to add yet another facet to his long career in Red Bay. Although plant tours had been conducted by different employees on an "as needed basis," the company did not have regular scheduled tours. With some amount of apprehension about his skills as a public speaker, Red agreed to

lead tours of the Tiffin assembly plant. After an introductory tour one day, Red was leading tours the next day!

"I'll never forget," Jo said. "He was nervous as he could be about his first tour."

"My first tour was to lead 26 insurance adjusters, all dressed up wearing ties, who came to learn how motorhomes were built," Red said. "I was afraid I wouldn't know the answers to their questions." But the tour went well, and Red followed with nearly 5,000 more.

Red and Jo have recently moved to a new home near Sandi and David. As often as possible, he plans to continue greeting tour visitors at the Allegro Welcome Center. But there is more important work to do. As great-grandparents, they look forward to spending precious time with the three members of the fourth generation—Brodie, Tucker, and Brylee. 



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FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:

[http://www.tiffinmotorhomes.com/
tiffinOwners/tiffinRallies.php](http://www.tiffinmotorhomes.com/tiffinOwners/tiffinRallies.php)

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ALL EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE OR CANCELLATION



IMAGINE YOUR GRANDCHILDREN
HEARING THE WORDS 'GOLDEN ARCHES'
and not automatically thinking hamburgers.

There are wonders in this nation that every child should see with his or her own eyes. And they are not made of plastic or packaged with a kid's meal.

It's time to give your family the gift of America.

Our Allegro Bus® is the most comfortable, spacious way to experience those wide-open spaces. Four slides and floor plans up to 43 feet give everyone room to roam. And with our exclusive Powerglide chassis, you'll have the



confidence to travel from coast to coast. Custom-built and designed at the Tiffin plant in Red Bay, Alabama, this chassis is American ingenuity at its finest, delivering superior performance and reliability.



▲ It's your country. Come see it, in the roomy Allegro Bus.

The exterior is clad by the very same body paint which graces the world's top luxury supercars. Grand touring, indeed. And because it's a Tiffin, you can be confident in our warranty, our company, and our commitment to customer service. America is waiting. And so are the memories of a lifetime. Climb on board.

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