

# Roughing It Smoothly®



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- Building a Prototype

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# Roughing It Smoothly®

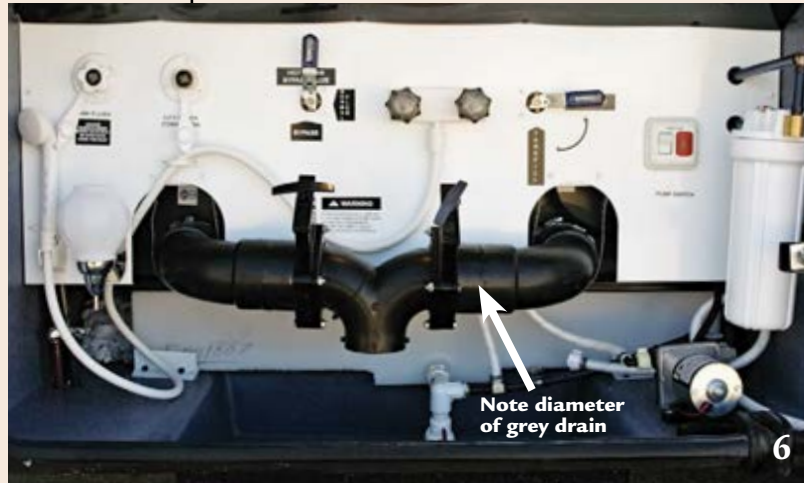
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Lazydays isn't "big" anymore.			

*On our cover: Callaway Gardens*

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

In the Southeastern states, but not including Florida, springtime begins in late February. If you are following the "azalea trail," Bellingrath Gardens will present the first explosion of color around March 15th. Making an arc toward the Blue Ridge Parkway, your next stop should be Callaway Gardens where the blooming season this year began on April 1st. Further north at our last stop, hybrid azaleas bloom in late April and native azaleas the first week of May. Since you will not be able to organize your trip in time to capture the benefit of spring at each garden, I hope you will save this issue for planning your trip in the spring of 2012. However, all of the gardens have blooming schedules on their websites and you will find that something is in

bloom from now through the fall months.

### Traveling With Your Pets

In this issue, Dr. Pilarczyk discusses traveling with cats and keeping their vaccinations current. If you have questions for Dr. Pilarczyk, please address them to:

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

You can also send your questions via email to [parkwayvet@yahoo.com](mailto:parkwayvet@yahoo.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 to [fredthompson1941@hotmail.com](mailto:fredthompson1941@hotmail.com) 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](mailto:RISTechtalk@gmail.com). If you need an immediate answer to a service problem, you should call 256-356-0261.

### Changes of Address

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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](mailto: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](mailto:stephanie.umfress@tiffinmotorhomes.com) with your VIN, year and model, and the new owner's address.

*Tiffin engineers and employees enjoy the challenge of building a prototype on the assembly line. The inaugural Allegro RED 38 QRA was built with only four minor adjustments which were made as they were discovered.*



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## How Do You Select Employees Who Can Build a Company?

by Bob Tiffin

When I first started Tiffin Motorhomes in September 1972, I knew I had to have employees with experience who had built motorhomes before. Two relatively small companies in Mississippi that had been building motorhomes had recently gone out of business. I let it be known that we were looking for qualified people to start this company and quite a few from the two Mississippi companies came in for interviews. Others who heard about our start-up came, too. One underlying value they all had was a rural background. Of course, I thought, Red Bay is in the country. I should have expected that. In 1972 you could have walked ten minutes from downtown in any direction and been in somebody's pasture.

Red Bay is almost on the corner of four counties, two in Alabama (Franklin and Marion) and two in Mississippi (Itawamba and Tishmingo). We are located approximately 30 miles from four county seats. As a boy growing up in Red Bay, we had to drive at least 40 minutes to reach a larger town.

These early employees all worked on farms and had daily chores to do every day. They had learned to be responsible for what they did. If your son failed to milk the cow before he left for school, somebody's got a problem — not to even mention the cow!

They also went to very small schools. When I started the company in 1972, there were approximately eight small schools in each county — some with only five or six classrooms. You had to go to a county seat or at least a town the size of Red Bay (pop. 2,484 in 1970) to find a high school. In fact, the school I attended here in Red Bay never had more than 950 students from the first through the twelfth grades and by far the majority of them came from the surrounding countryside.

The classes were small and the teachers knew everything about each student and his or her family — parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. In an environment like that, a student had a much better chance of learning. Every student had to be a lot more responsible for their actions — that's important — accountability.

Young people grew up showing respect for their teachers, their parents, and the older generations. Neighbors helped each other. People lived simply, had gardens, and were thrifty so they could be generous. I can't tell you how many times neighbors have brought me fresh corn, tomatoes, beans, and okra out of



their gardens. And guess what? People still do all of that around here today. Parents still teach their children to answer “Yes, sir.” and “Yes, ma'am.”

So Tiffin Motorhomes was able to find good people to work here from the very beginning. We were so accustomed to our way of life and the way people treated each other that we didn't realize what a blessing a rural environment is. We knew that pulling together was for the common good. We believed that doing our best to make a solid motorhome for people to enjoy would bring customers to Red Bay — regardless of how far out in the country we are. Some of the employees that started

here in 1972 are still here today.

I noticed early on when we got a new employee from the farm that he would know about welding, wiring, and using tools. And they knew in general terms about plumbing and engine mechanics because they had to deal with all of this to help keep their farms operating.

When we got ready to lay out a new floorplan, we didn't have computers to do the drawings. We had one man, Horace Stepp, who was a houseplan draftsman. He would do the basic floorplan and a few cabinet drawings. It was not unusual for us to develop a new floorplan and have it in production in two days. Things really moved fast back then; but except for the slide-outs, the basic floorplans were similar to those we use now. Today, Horace is the plant manager for tile, final finish, and repair in our Belmont facility.

According to the recent census, Red Bay has doubled its

*Continued on page 48*

### CORRECTION

In my last column (*RIS* 8:1), I incorrectly stated that “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.” Mr. Joe Hatley of Dora, Alabama, called my attention to the error and I thank him. We used the rubber roof until 2002 when we switched over to the aluminum roof. We now use a one-piece fiberglass roof on all of our motorhomes. It is manufactured in our plant near Iuka, Mississippi.

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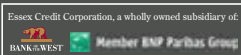
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## The Allegro RED™ 38 QRA

### Tiffin Offers Bath-and-a-Half Floorplan For Its Entry-Level Diesel Pusher

**When you are “on a roll,”** you are obviously doing something right. It is amazing how one innovative idea leads to another, then that idea jumps to another brand, which uncovers a demand for yet another concept. Just for a moment, follow this line of RV history which will lead us to a bath-and-a-half floorplan in an entry-level diesel pusher.

#### A Quick Marketing History

In Spring 2007, Tiffin offered a 36-foot floorplan for the Phaeton, which had recently become the Number One diesel pusher in America. Owners loved the 40-foot floorplans with four slide-outs, but some pointed out they were just a little too long to get into some of our state and national parks. The four slide 36QSH Phaeton was an immediate success and within a year its floorplan *trickled up* to the Allegro Bus, which lavished its feature-rich standards and options on the 36 QSP.

While analyzing the success of the similar 36-foot floorplans in the company’s two most successful brands, the marketing department uncovered a pent-up demand for an *entry-level* diesel pusher and introduced the 36 QSA as its first floor plan. For nearly 25 years the Allegro brand was Tiffin’s entry-level coach with front-engine gas powerplants. To emphasize that this coach was Tiffin’s entry-level offering in the diesel pusher arena, TMH with a few upgrade exceptions used the Allegro’s interior

trim standards and christened its new brand the Allegro RED (rear engine diesel).

A descriptive phenomenon in art, music, and architecture — “less is more” — may be fueling the growth of the Allegro RED brand. German architect, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, adopted the phrase to describe his aesthetic tactic of arranging the numerous necessary components of a building to create an impression of simplicity. The Allegro Red 36 QSA presented the buyer with clean, unfettered design. But it held on to several standard amenities available in the Phaeton: solid surface countertops in the galley and lavatories, standard mid-section and bedroom TVs, dual facing sofa beds in the living room, and a full-size 60 × 80 queen bed. The 36 QSA also offered buyers several options: stacked washer and dryer, combo washer/dryer, 2000 watt inverter, free standing cabinet dinette or dinette with computer workstation, 15,000 BTU AC with heat pump, and surround sound with DVD player.

Less than three months later, Tiffin added a second floorplan to its Allegro RED brand— bunk beds in the rear passenger side slide-out. The 38QBA was the company’s first foray into a *family* motorhome in over a decade. “Bunks” spoke to couples with children in elementary, middle, and high school. The kids could really have their own *place*, not just the couch or the dinette when it was time for bed.

Then, in Summer 2010, the call for downsizing reached the ears of Tiffin’s architects and out came the Allegro RED 34 QFA —

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Text and photography by Fred Thompson



six feet shorter than the big 40s and still with four slide-outs. The amenities and the options remained the same and the 34QFA got a Cummins ISB 6.7 liter electronic turbocharged diesel.

The rear bath-and-a-half floorplans first appeared on the 42- and 43-foot tandem-axle Phaetons and Allegro Buses in the summer months of 2009 during the changeover to the 2010 model year. Even though the recession persisted, the rear-bath-and-a-half floorplans were in demand by Tiffin buyers.

Inevitably, the trickle-down pattern put the rear-bath-and-a-half into a 40-foot Phaeton floorplan offered earlier this year (see *RIS*, 8:1). And, you guessed it, Tiffin's sales and marketing team was certain the rear-bath-and-a-half would find broad acceptance in their entry-level diesel pusher brand, the Allegro RED.

The Allegro RED 38 QRA with rear bath and mid-section half bath was first introduced to the public at the FMCA Family Reunion and Motorhome Showcase last month in Perry, Georgia.

### **Standing on Its Own Merits**

The Allegro RED has jumped into fourth place in Statistical Surveys' quarterly sales records for individual brands. As noted in earlier stories on the three other floorplans, the RED answered a demand for an *entry-level* coach with a rear-engine diesel. While buyers want several "big coach" options, they are willing to accept a lower trim level in return for a lower entry-level price. The non-negotiable features include pass-through storage using a high-rail chassis, the 340-hp Cummins rear-engine diesel powerplant with

the matched 6-speed Allison 2500 MH automatic transmission with lockup, and air bag suspension coupled with tuned shocks.

The 38QRA has the qualified potential to be a full-timer's dream coach or the economical answer to the couple who are several years short of retirement, but have a lot of vacation time and long weekends available.

### ***The Galley***

If you are already looking forward to the Fall and great football weekends, the big, C-shaped dinette makes the 38QRA a great RV for tailgating. Plus, its optional residential refrigerator and freezer means you can bring the whole smorgasbord and have your feast ready to spread when you arrive. The motorhome's standard three-burner cooktop and gas oven and its optional convection/microwave oven will help get the hot entrées and casseroles ready in record time.

Or if it's just the two of you, you've got a great galley that will match the kitchen you left behind. This galley can match or beat the storage space of just about any coach on the market.

The galley's solid surface countertop offers a double bowl stainless steel sink with handsome bronze-toned, single lever faucet and a three-burner cooktop with optional gas oven (oh, those hot biscuits in the morning!). The galley is 7.5 feet wide. Overhead you will note the optional convection-microwave oven (microwave only is standard) flanked by English Chestnut cabinets that offer 10.2 cubic feet of storage. All of the TMH



cabinets are built with solid wood facings and raised panel doors. The cabinet under the sink has over 9 cubic feet of storage. Both ends of the galley cabinetry have two stacks of three drawers.

On the driver side slide-out, the new owner of this coach will be very pleased with the optional Whirlpool Gold residential refrigerator with a 6.5 cubic foot pull-out drawer freezer with icemaker. The 12.9 cubic foot top-side fridge has all of the options you can imagine including an adaptive defrost system, accu-chill temperature management system, a humidity controlled crisper, and adjustable door bins for 1-gallon size containers.

If you are looking for more pantry space, you will find 6 cubic feet next to the fridge in the hutch-style cabinets above and below the mid-section television.

### **Entertainment**

Since we are talking about the coach's *standard* 37-inch Panasonic LCD mid-section television, let's take a look at the RED's entertainment options. The coach has an optional surround sound entertainment center for an MSRP of \$560 and an optional 32-inch Panasonic LCD television over the dash. On the roof you will find an optional automatic satellite by Winegard for an MSRP of \$1,120. It gets better. The same 32-inch Panasonic in the bedroom is *standard* equipment. The surround sound system includes a Panasonic DVD-CD player.

Custom designed by Triple H Electronics in Red Bay, the system uses component audio-video cables to distribute input/output data from a central, easily serviced black box (mounted under the floor) that receives broadcast *input* from the rooftop receiver which pulls programming from network satellites. Additional *input* comes from a digital, enclosed rotating TV antenna (another Triple H invention) receiving local programming broadcast digitally, HD programming via cable service, and a 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.



When either of the three televisions in the coach are turned on, you activate a selection screen which offers TV, satellite, and DVD. Clicking on your choice will activate the *input* source for (1) television reception from the hi-def antenna, (2) satellite reception (DIRECTV or DISH, which you purchase separately), or (3) DVD-CD (movies or music) from the Panasonic disc player which is included in the optional surround sound system price.

### **The Living and Dining Area**

The 68-inch passenger side sofa bed with Halo leather by Flexsteel is optional (cloth is standard). With seating for three, the sofa converts to a queen-size bed. The air coil bed inflates in three minutes with the use of an electric pump included in the package. Wall sconces on either side plus bullet lights in the recessed cabinets above provide just the right illumination when you are ready to curl up with a book. From the overhead cabinets, you can pull out your comfy throw and pillows or the bed linens and blankets for your overnight guests.

Opposite the sofa bed is the coach's C-shaped dinette which can actually seat seven. Its 45 × 23.5-inch dining table is mounted on a pedestal which lowers to allow the table to fill the gap in the C.

After you drop in the stored cushion/mattress, you have a bed that is 32 × 82 inches. Of course, Tiffin never forgets about storage space. Four cabinets above the dinette offer six cubic feet of convenient space to store dinnerware and other items you use frequently. Underneath the seating of the C-shaped dinette, two large drawers, each with nearly three cubic feet of storage, slide out into the main floor area for easy access. Both the driver and passenger chairs rotate 180 degrees to make them a part of the living room seating. With the slides out, you gain 66 inches of floor space which invites the use of area rugs and even a coffee table which can be easily stored in the pass-through bay underneath.

### **The Cockpit**

Tiffin and Freightliner have done a great job designing the RED's instrumentation. In bright colors, the electrical display bar just above the instruments makes it easy to check system lights and warnings. A computer display provides a safety checklist before you begin your trip.

Below the computer and warning lights, Freightliner positioned two large gauges for MPH and RPM and surrounded them with six smaller gauges for fuel, PSI ① & ②, amps, oil pressure, and engine temper-



ature. The steering column position can be adjusted to accommodate your view of the dash or to add to your driving comfort.

The left dash panel presents the heat switch and the controls for the horizontal and vertical movement of the outside mirrors. The wiper/washer switch is within easy reach and the light panel controls the headlights, interior instruments, and the master switch for the cargo lights.

The right dash panel displays Tiffin's exclusive Triplevision monitor for the three exterior cameras. While most side camera displays are activated by the turn signal, you can touch a button to monitor traffic on either side and the rear before you signal your move to change lanes. The monitor can also be used to view the exterior of the coach at night to check security concerns. The cameras can be adjusted for day-night vision, contrast, and sound.

The right dash panel also presents the generator start switch, two 12-volt outlets, and the XM radio (subscription required). The automotive heating and air is controlled with three large, easy-to-read dials controlling fan speed, temperature, and vent selection. Seven well-positioned heating and air vents near the floor and in the dash put the air circulation and volume just where you want it.

The center console features two cup holders with insets to stabilize the container. The console also has two full-extension drawers to store your maps.

Both the driver and passenger seats on the tested coach were equipped with 6-way power seats and Halo leather, a \$1,162 MSRP option well worth the cost. As noted earlier, they both can be rotated to face into the living area.

Attached to the sidewall under the window, the driver's console places the electronic gear shift pad right at your fingertips to access the six-speed Allison 2500 MH transmission. The adjacent air

brake can be applied when the transmission is in neutral.

Just behind the gear shift pad you will find ten toggle switches clearly labeled and lighted. The next two switches are the genset auxiliary start and the ICC flash. This switch flashes your running lights to thank other drivers for helping you pass or change lanes. The next row has two switches for activating the privacy (opaque) shade, which doubles as your sun visor, and the solar shade. Each shade covers the entire windshield. The third switch is the exhaust brake. The final row has four switches for the left



and right fans (tucked into the upper left and right corners of the windshield), the radio master switch, and the map light. The HWH auto-leveling jack control pad is located at the rear of the console.

The cockpit is equipped with privacy and solar shades for the driver's and passenger's side windows, as well as the door. You will never have to suffer again from that blinding sun sneaking through the cracks between the sun visors.

### **Other Options You'll Really Like**

The base price of the 38 QRA is \$203,700. In addition to the options already mentioned, the reviewed coach had the following options which most buyers will want to consider.

You can upgrade the 13,500 BTU air conditioners to 15,000 BTU units with heat pumps for \$1,120. The upgrade requires the larger 8.0 Onan generator for \$840. The heat pumps kept the coach cozy warm in Red Bay when the temperature dropped to 36 degrees while I was writing this story. When you are in a campground with 50-amp service, they will conserve your LP usage.

While the awning is standard, the automatic entry door awning is not. Its MSRP is \$910, but you'll be glad you added it when it's pouring rain outside. It gives you the shelter to open your umbrella as you get out the door.

The 2000-watt inverter is a \$1,750 option that allows you to run your microwave, television, coffeemaker, and even your hair dryer when you are dry camping — without having to turn on your generator. Since many national park campgrounds do not have electrical hookups, but do have rules against using generators during quiet hours, the inverter can be very handy.

The vacuum cleaner system with an MSRP of \$350 is the best bang for your buck on the coach. With one hose connected in the middle of the motorhome, you can vacuum every inch of the place in 20 minutes with various attachments. The vacuum unit is in the basement where you can easily change the bag without spilling debris inside the coach.



When I was in college, I hated sitting in a laundromat reading magazines while my clothes washed and dried in somebody else's washer and dryer—probably for the same reason I don't like to sleep in hotel beds today. This isn't the place to save a buck. Splurge and get that stacked washer and dryer. MSRP \$1,680. Of course, you have to have full hookups.

Selecting the residential refrigerator may depend on where you like to camp. If you are big on dry camping on BLM land, then you may want to stick with propane. But if you are staying in campgrounds most of the time, you couldn't find a better way to spend \$980. We don't buy motorhomes to "rough it." Tiffin brought you the residential refrigerator so you could enjoy "roughing it *smoothly*." If you are traveling to a destination and have to park overnight at Walmart or Cracker Barrel, no problem. Your inverter will start the generator if your four house batteries get too low. This fridge will make you think you never left home.

### **Checking Out the Back Forty**

Now we are talking about the 40 percent of your coach devoted to your bath-and-a-half and very comfortable bedroom. Starting at mid-ship, the half bath and stacked washer/dryer are just across the hall from each other. The amenities in

the half bath are complete: full length towel bar, towel ring, a vanity with plenty of storage underneath (for stashing your black tank chemicals right where you will be using them), solid surface counter top with backsplash and bowl with bronzed-toned hardware, a handsome English Chestnut corner cabinet (deep shelves) with mirror and lighting just above it. The screened window and a 3-speed Fantastic vent makes this half bath top notch.

The Splendide washer has the full features of a top quality residential washer, just a smaller version so it will fit in your motorhome. And the energy efficient dryer—same ticket, first class.

Margaret Mia, Tiffin's interior designer, adds so much warmth and personality to a room with her choices of materials. The fabric for the comforter on the full queen bed (60 × 80 inches) uses tones and colors which complement the handsome charcoal wallpaper above the English Chestnut wainscot. The same fabric framed with brown faux leather is used in the headboard which has reading lights positioned on either side. Both of the side-walls in the slide-out have screened windows to give you the benefit of pleasant evening temperatures. Could anything be nicer than having this coach parked next to a mountain stream and being lulled to sleep by the rippling water? The valance



houses both privacy and solar shades.

The side tables for the queen bed have plenty of room for your personal items, with two 110v outlets, and two deep drawers on both sides providing more unanticipated storage. Four cabinet doors conceal a large compartment above the headboard which has over 12 cubic feet of storage space. If you are willing to give up your side tables, you can choose a full king size bed (72 × 80 inches).

The charcoal wallpaper carries over into the opposite slide-out. When it is deployed, you gain a large floor area for dressing and pass-through to the rear bath. The well-designed slide has two chests-of-drawers, each finished on top with a faux marble laminate. Positioned under the standard flat panel LCD television, the taller chest houses a double-door storage area which is wired for an optional second satellite receiver and DVD, a deep drawer, and a clothes hamper. The lower chest under a large screened window houses four deep drawers. Two smaller cabinets are positioned above the window which has both solar and privacy shades. When you are ready, where could you find a more comfortable place to enjoy a good movie?

Why is the rear bath so popular? It serves *only* the master bedroom. It extends all the way across the rear of the

coach. The bedroom itself separates the rear bath from the rest of the coach, affording much greater privacy. In short, it is just more residential. The solid surface countertop, backsplash, and bowl with a single-lever, bronze-toned faucet add that touch of class. The vanity has three deep drawers and the usual large storage space under the lavatory. Controls for lighting, the water pump, the Fan-tastic vent, and the electric toilet are located on the side panel of the cabinet. The charcoal wallpaper and the English Chestnut cabinetry make a handsome combination. The mirrored corner cabinet offers deep shelves and the cabinet to the left conceals the 110v breakers and 12v fuses. The screened window just above the toilet has both solar and privacy shades.

The closet with mirrored double sliding doors extends six feet across the rear wall of the coach providing ample hanging space for two. In the forward corner on the passenger side, the shower with a 36-inch radius has a large bench shelf for all of your toiletries, body washes, shampoos,

and conditioners. The bronze-toned hardware features a dual-lever water control with a flexible hose and shower wand. Other features include a towel bar, hand grip, and soap dish.

### Taking a Look Underneath

Starting at the door and walking down the passenger side, the first door conceals the laterally mounted LP tank and the HWH hydraulic system. The second and third doors open into a storage cavern measuring 94.5 inches across, 106 inches down the side, and 29 inches floor to ceiling, adding up to an amazing 168 cubic feet if you discount the chassis rails that drop down into the space.

The area gives up 10 cubic feet of space to the water heater's compartment. You will also find the Dirt Devil vacuum and full access to HDMI electronics, splitter, and surround sound system which is mounted out of the way on the side of the chassis rail. There are 110v and 12v outlets and a cable connection to the Winegard satellite to connect an outside TV.

Move back to the fourth door for access to the diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) tank and a shallow storage area.\* The fifth door encloses a shallow compartment for chassis relays, slide-out breakers, the 12v disconnect, charging solenoid, 20-amp storage box lights, 30-amp fridge breaker, and the 15-amp 12v disconnect. The compartment

\*For a full explanation on the Cummins Aftertreatment System to reduce harmful emissions, see *RIS*, vol. 7, no. 2, pages 19–21. DEF is the active component used in Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) engines to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by 90% to meet EPA standards.





needs plenty of air circulation and is not a storage area.

The big door in the rear cap encloses the radiator and, of course, the 340-hp Cummins diesel behind it. Service points include the Freightliner Filter Minder, engine oil fill, coolant fill, PVC 1/2-gal. tank, and transmission and engine oil dip sticks.

Moving up the driver side, the first door hides a shallow compartment whose primary purpose is to give you access to the engine air cleaner. It would be a good place to store a couple of lawn chairs.

The second door houses two compartments: first, two chassis batteries and the disconnect switch, and second, the 50-amp cable, Surge Guard RV Power Protection Transfer Switch, and a Battery Minder Plus. You will also find connections for TV cable, outside satellite tripod, and the city phone service entrance.

The third door encloses the utility bay (see picture, p. 11). This year buyers are very pleased to see a 3.5-inch grey water drain, the same size as the black drain.

The fourth and fifth doors are the driver side access to the primary storage area.

The sixth door conceals the sliding shelf for the 4 deep cycle heavy duty house batteries with the Xantrex inverter connection for the residential refrigerator.

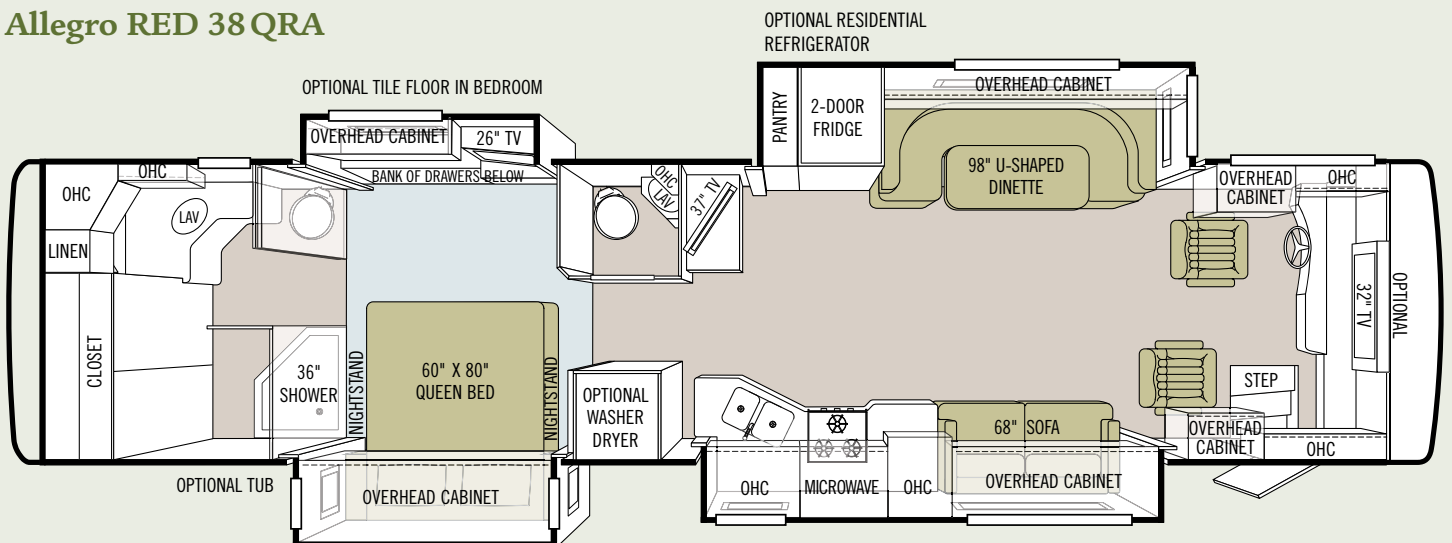
The seventh door compartment (just under the driver's chair) houses the 20-amp fuse panel, an outlet for compressed air, and the washer fluid reservoir.

The front cap has a flip door for easy access to the Onan generator (RV QD 8000), the optional Hadley horns, and dash wiring.

There is so much under the floor that

*Continued on page 25*

## Allegro RED 38 QRA



# SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2011 Allegro RED 38 QRA, Quad Slide, Base MSRP\* – \$203,700. MSRP as tested with options – \$218,302.

## STANDARD FEATURES ON THIS COACH

### Structural

Laminated floor, sidewall, and roof  
Steel / aluminum reinforced structure  
One-piece moisture resistant molded fiberglass roof cap

### Automotive

Allison 2500 MH six-speed automatic transmission with lock-up (torque converter)  
Cummins ISB turbocharged, aftercooled 6.7 liter electronic diesel  
Peak horsepower: 340 @ 2,600 rpm  
Peak torque: 660 @ 1,600 rpm  
Raised rail chassis frame  
Air suspension (4 air bags)  
55° wheel cut  
Air brakes with automatic slack adjusters and ABS  
Exhaust brake  
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  
6.0 Kw Onan Quiet Diesel generator  
Hydraulic automatic leveling jacks  
Heated power mirrors with remote adjustment  
Horizontal mounted, single motor intermittent wipers  
Gel-coat fiberglass walls  
BASF full body paint with front cap protective film  
Deadbolt front entrance door  
Double electric step  
Exterior patio light  
Power patio awning with aluminum weather shield  
Slideout awnings  
Chrome wheel liners  
Exterior swing-out storage doors with gas shocks  
Single handle lockable storage door latches  
Ridged long-life storage boxes  
Exterior storage compartment lights  
Roof ladder  
¼" thick single pane windows  
Electric step  
Heated water and holding tank compartments  
Four 6v auxiliary batteries  
50-amp service  
Park ready telephone  
External tripod satellite hookup  
Black holding tank flush system  
Exterior rinse hose / shower  
Water filter  
110v exterior receptable  
110v / 12v converter  
Undercoating  
Digital high-def TV antenna  
Cable ready TV  
Two 13,500 BTU low profile roof A/C systems  
Quiet A/C roof ducted system  
A/C condensation drains  
Roof ladder  
Triplevision back-up camera  
Side view cameras activated by turn signals

### Driver's Compartment

Non-powered cloth driver and passenger seats by Flexsteel®  
Entry floor light  
Step switch and 12v disconnect switch  
Lighted instrument panel  
Single CD player & AM/FM stereo  
ICC courtesy lights  
Dual 12v dash receptacles  
Padded dash  
Dual dash fans  
Adjustable seatbelt brackets  
Tilt and telescopic steering wheel  
Full width power solar / privacy windshield shades  
Manual solar and privacy side shades, driver & passenger  
Fire extinguisher  
Snack-beverage tray with drawers

### Living Area / Dinette

C-shape dinette with large pull-out storage drawers, cloth – DS  
37-inch flat screen LCD color television wall-mounted in mid-section  
Custom infrared repeater  
68-inch air coil hide-a-bed sofa, cloth – PS

### Kitchen

Solid surface countertop  
Solid surface backsplashes  
Double bowl, stainless kitchen sink  
Single lever bronze-toned faucet  
Solid surface sink covers  
Under counter storage receptacles for sink covers  
Microwave oven with exterior venting  
10 cu.ft. 2-door refrigerator  
3-burner cooktop with gas oven  
One Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan

### Bath

Full bath in rear of coach  
Half bath in mid-section  
Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan in each bath  
Medicine cabinet with mirror in each bath  
Skylight in shower  
Fiberglass molded shower  
Solid surface vanity top and bowl  
Bronze-toned vanity faucet  
Wardrobe with automatic light

### Bedroom

Four OH storage cabinets in bed slide-out  
Stackable washer/dryer-ready closet  
Bed comforter with throw pillows  
Sleeping pillows  
Wall-to-wall carpeting  
Queen-size bed  
Solar / privacy shades  
Innerspring mattress  
Under bed storage  
Night stands with 110v outlets  
Two built-in dressers with 5 drawers, 2-door cabinet  
Laundry hamper  
26-inch color HDMI-LCD color television  
Carbon monoxide detector  
LPG leak detector

### General Interior

7-ft. ceilings  
Soft touch vinyl ceilings

Medium Alderwood raised panel cabinet doors and drawer fronts  
English Chestnut stain raised panel cabinet doors and drawer fronts  
Ball bearing drawer slides  
Wall-to-wall vinyl tile flooring in kitchen, living area, bath & entry landing  
Scotchgard® treated carpet and fabrics  
Solar / privacy shades  
Complete HD-ready system (HD satellite receivers required)  
Power roof vents  
12v disconnect switch  
Tank level monitoring system  
Carbon monoxide detector  
LPG leak detector  
Smoke detector  
10-gal. DSI gas/electric water heater  
Folding step well cover  
Two ducted furnaces (one 30,000 BTU & one 35,000 BTU)

## OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

2000 watt inverter  
Residential refrigerator-freezer with ice maker including 4 deep cycle batteries  
68-inch air coil hide-a-bed sofa, Halo leather – PS  
C-shape dinette, Halo leather – DS  
Power driver and passenger seats, Halo leather  
Automatic entry door awning  
Surround sound system with DVD player  
Convection-microwave oven  
32-inch LCD front OH television  
Stacked washer and dryer  
CB antenna  
Bedroom tile  
Two 15,000 A/C with heat pump  
8.0 Onan generator (required w/ above)  
Automatic satellite (subscription required)  
Vacuum cleaner system  
Hadley air horns

## OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

Cherry bark cabinetry (simulated)  
4-door refrigerator with ice maker  
Refrigerator wood panel inserts  
Ice maker with standard 10 cu.ft. refrigerator  
DVD w/o the Surround Sound option  
Convection/microwave with 3-burner cooktop  
Power driver and passenger seats, cloth  
68-inch DE sofa, cloth – PS  
68-inch DE sofa, Halo leather – PS  
Washer-dryer combo with OH storage  
Tub IPO shower  
King bed

## MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 252"  
Overall length – 38'5"  
Overall height w/roof air – 12'7"  
Interior height – 84"  
Overall width – 101"  
Interior width – 96"

## WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 29,500 lb.  
Front GAWR – 12,000 lb.  
Rear GAWR – 17,500 lb.  
GCWR – 33,000 lb.  
UVW – 25,200 lb.

CCC – 4,300 lb.  
Trailer hitch capacity – 5,000 lb.

## POWER TRAIN

Engine – 340 hp Cummins ISB turbo-charged, aftercooled 6.7 liter electronic diesel  
Torque – 660 lb.-ft. at 1,600 rpm  
Transmission – Allison 2500MH electronic six speed with lock-up  
Tire Size – Michelin XZE 275/80R 22.5 LRG  
Alternator – Delco Remy 160 amps

## CHASSIS

Frame – Freightliner XCR Series  
Frame Design – Raised rail  
Anti-locking Braking System – WABCO 4M/4S ABS System  
Suspension (front) – Hendrickson Air  
Suspension (rear) – Hendrickson Air  
Shock Absorbers – Sachs tuned  
Automatic Leveling Jacks

## 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 – 5 adults  
(bedroom, 2; sofa sleeper, 2; DS sofa, 1-2)  
Fuel tank – 100 gallons  
Freshwater – 90 gallons  
Black water – 45 gallons  
Grey water – 70 gallons  
LPG tank – (30 gallons; can be filled to 80% capacity) – 24 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](http://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.



## *Creating Edible Works of Art*

Jeremy Hardin is a newcomer to Tiffin Motorhomes. “I’ve been with Tiffin for about three months. I work in the warehouse where I am training to be a utility person.”

In his spare time, Jeremy has flourished in his newfound hobby of cake decorating. A talented artist, he has incorporated his love for drawing into his hobby of decorating cakes for people. “I have always been interested, but started decorating cakes only about a year ago. My grandmother Shirley taught me cake decorating,” he said. “There are many techniques involved in making cakes and it seems like I learn something new with each cake I create.”

“Most of the time people seem to have a good idea of what they want but sometimes I have to do sketches beforehand. A lot of the cartoon character cakes actually have pans that make it easier to create. All I have to do is color the impression with icing. The most unique cake I have done so far is a cake depicting Gene Simmons from KISS,” he said.

“Usually I have between three and five cakes a week on order. Typically I can do a cake in about two days. This allows one day for baking and cooling the cake and the next for decorating. I like to have at least a week’s notice on an order if possible. I really enjoy doing the more unusual cakes the most. The response from the public has been very good. I started out baking cakes for my family members’ birthdays and now I make cakes for everything from children’s birthday parties to weddings.”

Although Jeremy enjoys creating cakes for all occasions, he doesn’t plan to venture into the bakery business full time. Along with Jeremy, his wife LeAnn is also an employee of TMH. They have two daughters, Zoie and Ashelin.



## *Scrapbooking Enthusiast*

Heather Kamarainen is an SAP Functional Analyst for Tiffin Motorhomes. She began working at TMH on July 12, 2004 and has quickly become known for her creative and unique scrapbooking skills. “I began scrapbooking in 2002 after my sister came home from Walmart with some scrapbooking materials and said, ‘This might be fun to do,’ and I’ve been creating scrapbooks ever since,” she shared.

For the first few years of her hobby, Heather was involved with various home party companies selling supplies and conducting scrapbooking parties and workshops. “When that became more of a job than a hobby, I stopped consulting and began focusing on my own scrapbooks. I enjoy attending retreats and crops at local scrapbook stores but I usually scrapbook at home. Besides creating scrapbooks, I also enjoy using my supplies to make greeting cards.”

The most unusual scrapbook Heather has created so far is one for Bob Tiffin to highlight his grandson Leigh’s football career at the University of Alabama. “It was a very involved project that took quite a while to complete. I rarely scrapbook for others, and since most of my albums focus on my family, trips I’ve taken with my husband, and our daily life at home with our pets, Leigh’s album was definitely the most unique scrapbook I’ve done.”

Heather and her husband Brandon just celebrated their 14th wedding anniversary and share their home with two rambunctious Boxers and two cats. “We are very active in our religion and we also love to travel whenever we can. I usually have a book nearby, as I love to read. Photography is also an interest as well as genealogy and I work on my family tree from time to time. I would love to complete a scrapbook of that one day.”



## *R.V. Cleaning Entrepreneur*

Ricky Johnson can often be found at his desk in the parts department. After his day at Tiffin ends, Ricky is usually working at his thriving business, R.V. Cleaning Service. “I started work at Tiffin in June 1990, so this year will mark 21 years that I have been with the company. Over the years I have worked in various positions at the factory from the electrical department to the parts department and now to the parts office where I process parts orders that come in by email,” Ricky shared.

Ricky got started in the RV cleaning business nearly two decades ago. “In 1994 I was approached by Bill Page, then the owner of Nu-Way Carpet Cleaning about a motorhome cleaning position that was coming open. I said I would give it a try and in 1996 when he decided to retire I took over the motorhome cleaning side of his business and renamed it R.V. Cleaning Service. Over the years I have done advertising, gotten my name out to the motorhome community and gradually have built a large client base of great customers,” he said.

“I have met a lot of interesting RVers while cleaning their motorhomes,” Ricky shared. “Many have military backgrounds, work in other countries, or work at home selling products over the Internet. I have had many enjoyable conversations with customers while cleaning their coaches. I must say all of them have a high regard for Bob Tiffin. I always tell each one of them that I can’t say enough good things about Bob Tiffin myself.”

Working at TMH is a family affair for Ricky Johnson. His wife Effie and his father Nathan also work at Tiffin Motorhomes. Ricky and Effie enjoy taking trips to the mountains and the beach when they have time for a break.

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**Editor’s Note:** After earning a B.S. degree in professional writing from the University of North Alabama, Stephanie Umfress began working in the sales department at TMH in May 2005. She writes and edits the owner manuals for all six brands, answers emails coming in over the website, and assists in sales administration. Born in the Philippines, she has lived most of her life in Red Bay.



ENGLISH ROSE GARDEN AT BILTMORE ESTATE

# *Gardens of the Southeast*

Our entire country is blessed with beautiful gardens open to the public that will give you a calming serenity and renew your spirit. The importance of gardens in our lives began when the earth was created: “The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden.” Solomon planted and cultivated lavish gardens. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were considered to be one of the original Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Throughout the ages, the palaces of kings were always enhanced with magnificent gardens.

Garden tours are offered in several European countries that have a rich history of both public and

private gardens. Some American cities spend millions on their botanical gardens. Three families in the Southeast have provided us with treasured legacies — beautiful gardens each within a day’s drive of the other: Bellingrath near Mobile, Callaway 65 miles southwest of Atlanta, and Biltmore in Asheville.

We began our tour at the garden with the southernmost location, and then moved northeast each time to see Callaway Gardens and Biltmore Gardens.

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Story by Fred Thompson

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The magnificent 65-acre garden estate on the Fowl River just a short distance from Mobile Bay was designed by George B. Rogers in the late 1920s for Walter D. and Bessie Bellingrath.

Mrs. Bellingrath loved to work in her gardens and loved to share them. She searched for every variety of azaleas and camellias to add to Rogers' initial landscapes. The couple first opened their gardens to the public in 1932 while a national garden club was holding its annual meeting in Mobile. In his generous nature, Walter Bellingrath announced that anyone who would like to see their spring garden could do so at no charge. That weekend over 4,000 visitors jammed the two-lane road to accept his invitation. In 1934 the couple decided to keep the gardens open year-round.

Today's visitor enjoys a greatly expanded garden estate with a



self-guided walking tour through one of the top public rose gardens in the nation, the Great Lawn, the Asian-American Garden, the Butterfly Garden, the formal terrace gardens, and the Bayou Boardwalk that explains the ecology of the marshes.

Born in Atlanta just four years after Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Maj. Gen. U.S. Grant, Walter Duncan Bellingrath was the sixth of eight children born to Leonard B. and Catherine Jean McMillan Bellingrath. Leonard was born in Germany in 1832 and emigrated 16 years later with his father, a brother, and a sister to Cumberland County, North Carolina. He worked with his father in the business of distilling turpentine. After the birth of their first child, Leonard and Catherine moved to Atlanta, where he and his brother, Albert, were successful in a metalworking business. Two more children were born before the Civil War began. Leonard joined the Georgia State Guard and served in Fulton County.

Just before Sherman stormed Atlanta, Leonard and his family fled in a boxcar to Cuthbert, Georgia, where a fourth son was born in 1866. The family returned to Atlanta where Leonard and Albert opened a plumbing business, and where Walter was born in 1869. In the 1870s Leonard moved his family to Castleberry, Alabama, where he may have reestablished his turpentine business. He died in 1892 and his widow moved to Anniston, Alabama, to be near her older children. Walter returned to Castleberry to work as a railroad agent for the L&N Railroad.

In 1903 Walter and his older brother William learned about an opportunity to buy a franchise to sell bottled Coca-Cola in southern Alabama. Several banks initially turned them down,



From left: The Great Lawn remains green throughout the year with the use of different grasses. It is bordered by seasonal plant beds which are changed through the year based on blooming schedules. • The placid waters of Mirror Lake reflect the colors of the surrounding azaleas which begin blooming in mid-March. • This unexpected grotto along one of the garden's many paths reminds the visitor of Tennyson's poem, *Flower in a Crannied Wall*. • Terraced gardens precede the visitor's approach to the Bellingrath home from the river.

but they finally secured the necessary financing. The brothers eventually split the territory, with William taking the Montgomery region and Walter taking the Mobile region. Before they were finished, four of their siblings owned franchises in Andalusia and Selma, Alabama, and Little Rock and Pine Bluff, Arkansas. By 1910 Coca-Cola had created a Bellingrath dynasty.

In 1906 Walter married Bessie Mae Morse whom he had hired three years earlier as his stenographer. Their business flourished and a new plant facility was built in 1911. The couple moved into a new home on Mobile's prestigious Ann Street. It had a deep lot that Mrs. Bellingrath immediately began to use for her garden. Her gardens became the first stop on the city's annual spring garden tour.

By 1917 Walter's hard work had paid off with a very prosperous business, but the rigorous climb to success seemed to be detrimental to his health. His physician recommended that he balance his heavy business schedule with regular recreation. Bellingrath's interest in a fishing camp on the Fowl River quickly escalated into a purchase. The camp had two shacks which Mrs. Bellingrath's father helped him rehab into barely liveable cab-



ins — no electricity or running water. But it was a great place for hunting and fishing with friends. For Mrs. Bellingrath it was a new garden project. She brought cuttings from her garden on Ann street. Together they developed Belle Camp as a country retreat for themselves and their extended family.

During a tour in 1927 of country estates and gardens in England and the continent, the Bellingraths returned home with new inspiration to develop Belle Camp into an estate that would feature regional plants. They hired George Rogers to help them landscape the entire 65 acres into a floral showcase. The gardens

*Continued on page 48*

## Fact Sheet for Bellingrath Gardens

### DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

On I-10 approx. 12 miles SW of Mobile. Take Exit 13 (Theodore Dawes Rd), drive east to US 90. Turn right and then left on Bellingrath Road. Travel south for 6 miles, turn left on Bellingrath Gardens Rd.

LUNCH AT THE GARDENS: 11 a.m. daily in the Magnolia Café.

### ADMISSIONS:

Value Package – Gardens, Home & Cruise, \$28.50; Gardens & Home, \$20; Gardens & Cruise, \$20; Gardens Only, \$12

HOURS: Gardens: 8 – 5, daily; closed only on Christmas Day

Home: 9 – 3:30; Cruise: call 251-247-8420 for departure times

PARKING: Free. Look for signage marking motorhome parking.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Visit website [www.bellingrath.org](http://www.bellingrath.org)

Easter Sunrise Service, 6 a.m. April 24. No charge for admission to gardens. Bring your lawn chairs.

CAMPING: Meaher State Park  
5200 Battleship Pkwy East  
Spanish Fort, AL 36577  
251-626-5529  
\$30 + tax; 15% disc 62+

For luxury camping, try  
Bella Terra RV Resort  
101 Via Bella Terra  
Foley, AL 36535  
866-475-7746  
[www.bellaterrarvresort.com](http://www.bellaterrarvresort.com)  
Approx. \$45-55/night



Less than a year after Walter D. Bellingrath was born in Atlanta in August 1869, Fuller Earle Callaway was born just 65 miles southwest of LaGrange in July 1870. While Walter Bellingrath had the privilege of enjoying the gardens on the Fowl River created by his wife's horticultural enthusiasm and skill and his own generous financial support, Fuller Callaway never saw the expansive natural gardens at Pine Mountain created by the vision of his older son, Cason Jewell Callaway.

The son of a Baptist minister, Abner Reeves Callaway, and his wife, Sarah Jane Howard, young Fuller was still a small boy when his mother died and his father moved the family to a farm near LaGrange. At eight years old, Fuller's entrepreneurial talent was awakened when he earned a nickel as a water boy at a barn raising. Wanting a pair of shoes, he naively thought a nickel would do it and walked eight miles into town to make the purchase. When he was disappointed, he bought three spools of thread instead and returned home. He walked from farm to farm looking for ladies who needed thread and sold each spool for a nickel. Then he purchased nine spools of thread and watched his profits grow. In four years the young peddler had saved \$60. He farmed for a year and doubled his money.

With only one year of formal education, Fuller knew he would have to improve his intellectual skills. He read and studied two hours each evening and continued that practice until the day he died. At 14 he moved to LaGrange and worked in a clothing

store. By the time he was 18 he had saved \$500 and made plans to open his own store — Callaway's Famous Five and Ten Cent Store. In 1891 Fuller married Ida Cason from Jewell, Georgia.

Then, at just 23, he rented more space and opened Callaway's Mammoth Department Store. He expanded the business again to include wholesale and mail order sales. By the time he was 25, he was doing business in 36 states. He bought household goods in carload lots, ran ads with "coupons," and had housewives standing in line to empty his shelves.

In the late 1890s out-of-state promoters came south to launch a cotton mill. Local merchants were asked to put up funds and Callaway responded with \$10,000. It wasn't long before the mill failed. The local stockholders asked Fuller to take over and gave him their proxies. He went to New England, bought new machinery on credit, reorganized the operation and in two years brought the mill back to a profitable operation. He and the stockholders sold the mill and recovered their funds. Callaway went back to running his store full time.

The business connections he had made in New York knew of his success and came calling. They wanted him as a partner to build and operate a new mill. After long deliberation, he accepted, put up \$10,000 again, sold stock to other merchants and citizens in LaGrange, and with funds from New York, opened Unity Cotton Mills. It was May 1900. Fuller was 29 years old. By this time the couple's first son, Cason Jewell Callaway was five

years old. Fuller Earle Callaway, Jr., was born January 1, 1907.

The business thrived and eventually became Callaway Mills, employing thousands from the area. Why was Fuller Callaway so successful? One writer made a list: his love of work and his constant awareness of the needs of the people he worked with, his ability to see an opportunity as soon as it appeared on the horizon, the wish to make room for others in his ambitions, and an invincible will to see every undertaking through to a successful conclusion. In addition, he had the ability to choose men and delegate authority. "Pick a good horse and let him run," he would say.

In 1913 Callaway commissioned Neel Reid and Hal Hentz to design a 30-room mansion for his family on the site of the historic Ferrell Gardens. Reid blended Georgian architectural detail with a strong Italian influence, and called the resulting design Georgian Italianate. It was completed in June 1916 at a cost of \$125,000. Situated on 3,000 acres, the home is surrounded by formal gardens. The couple named the home and grounds Hills & Dales.

His interest in the social and physical condition of those who worked in the mills led him to build more comfortable houses for them, and to erect schools, hospitals, and playgrounds for their benefit. The mills hired nurses, established medical clinics, brought in dentists, and set up dental chairs in the schools.

After his father's death in February 1928, Cason, 33, felt an enormous pressure in taking the reins. In the preceding eight years, he had married Virginia Hand and they now had three children. His brother, Fuller, Jr., 21, was near graduation from Georgia Tech.

The mills grew from five to fourteen plants and sent their products to markets all over the world. Fuller joined the company after graduation and immediately began to take a strong role in operations and management. In 1930 he married Alice Hand, who was the sister of Cason's wife. The couple had two children: Fuller Earle, III, and Ida Cason.

In 1935 Cason decided to leave the company and turn to agricultural pursuits. In 1938 Fuller succeeded him as president. Following in his father's tradition, Fuller capably led Callaway Mills to even greater heights of success. After 30 years at the helm, Fuller sold the business to Milliken and Company of Spartanburg, South Carolina, in 1968. Fuller and Alice extended the borders of the Fuller E. Callaway Foundation's philanthropy with generous grants and gifts to universities, hospitals, medical research, scholarship funds, churches, and libraries.

After the death of his mother, Ida Callaway, in 1936, Alice and Fuller moved into the mansion to preserve the house and its historic gardens. After his death in 1992 and her passing in 1998, the estate was given to the Foundation and is now open to the public.

At his retreat at Blue Springs, near today's Callaway Gardens, Cason laid the plans for a program that he called "100 Georgia



*Above left:* Featuring 40 acres of hybrid and native azaleas, the Callaway Brothers Azalea Bowl honors Ely and Abner Callaway. The blooming period began April 1st and will continue through the latter part of the month. • The Ida Cason Callaway Memorial Chapel honors the mother of Cason J. Callaway, Sr. and Fuller E. Callaway, Jr. • The 13,000 acre park has over 13 miles of bicycle paths. • The Birds of Prey exhibit features owls, falcons, hawks, and vultures.



Better Farms.” His plan was supported by 700 Georgia businessmen who gave \$1,000 each. Working through county extension agents, the program trained the farmers in effective farming and business practices. In three years nearly all of the farms became profitable.

A few miles to the west, the couple used their 2,500-acre Blue Springs Farm to launch research focused on the restoration of land. Poor farming practices, no crop rotation, soil erosion, silted streams, drought and floods had left most of the land surrounding their farm worthless. To control erosion and the quality of water in the region, the Callaways bought parcel after parcel of land in the Harris County watershed until they had amassed 40,000 acres (62 square miles). They experimented with many different vegetables and crops and a large variety of farm animals.

After a serious heart attack in 1948, Cason had to reduce his attention to the farming industry. He and Virginia began to explore what they could do with the acreage they owned just south of the village of Pine Mountain. They became interested in conservation and the recreational benefits the land could offer. Their youngest son, Howard Hollis “Bo” Callaway, 84, tells the story.

“The original thoughts were not about Callaway Gardens at all,” Bo began. “They were about building a lake. Dad never saw a stream he didn’t want to dam up. There were no places in this area for people to swim or fish.

“A dam site was here where two hills came together and he just knew the Lord put that site here for him to dam it up. The lake got prettier and prettier. And finally, he said, ‘This is just too pretty. I’ve got to open it up to the public.’ And that’s how the gardens got started.”

After extensive planning, construction, and planting, Callaway Gardens opened to the public on May 21, 1952. Initially, it offered recreation at Mountain Creek Lake, a 9-hole golf course, and a scenic drive. Cason was in the hospital with a detached retina and could not attend the opening. Struggling with poor health, he was working on the final plans for the Ida Cason Call-

away Memorial Chapel and Mr. Cason’s Vegetable Garden when he died on April 12, 1961.

Bo’s son, Edward C. Callaway, is now the chairman and CEO of Callaway Gardens. “Cason, Virginia, and Dad\* are the ones who have really carried forward the vision for Callaway Gardens since its inception,” he said.

“For a while we were a three-person team,” Bo said. “Dad had all the ideas. Mother did all the flowers. When they asked Dad what my job was, he said, ‘Bo’s job is to make more money than his mother can spend on flowers.’”

Virginia Hand Callaway (1900–1995) was the co-founder of the Gardens. With an understanding of the delicate relationship between man and the natural world, she inspired thousands to discover their role in taking care of the world around them. The Virginia Hand Callaway Discovery Center is a 35,000 sq.ft. facility on the edge of Mountain Creek Lake devoted to enhancing the harmony between man and earth. Staff members provide guests with an overview of all there is to see and do in the gardens’ 13,000 acres. “Time & the Gardens,” an orientation film, plays continuously, offering a portrayal of the development of the gardens. An education wing, an auditorium for visiting lecturers, a museum and exhibit wing, and a café serve the needs of visitors. Artwork and exhibits change frequently.

As you leave the Discovery Center, a 5-minute walk will take you to the John A. Sibley Horticultural Center, one of the most advanced garden greenhouse complexes in the world. The main conservatory features nine major floral displays each year. An environmentally controlled arboretum features a Mediterranean garden and a lush tropical rain forest. Lawns bordered with plant and flower beds invite the visitor to relax on the stone walls and benches.

Continue your walk to the Callaway Brothers Azalea Bowl on the west side of the Lower Falls Creek Lake, featuring 40 acres

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\*Howard H. “Bo” Callaway is the third child of Cason J. Callaway, Sr. and Virginia Hand Callaway. Virginia died in 1995. “Bo” Callaway was 84 on April 2 of this year.



*From left:* Funded by a gift from the founder of Days Inn, the Cecil B. Day Butterfly Center is home to more than 1,000 butterflies representing 50 species. Serving both as both an educational and research facility, the center welcomes thousands of visitors each year. • One of the largest of all butterfly species, the Blue Morpho from Central and South America has a wing span of 5 to 8 inches. • Fuller E. Callaway, Sr. commissioned Neel Reid, a young classically trained architect from Atlanta to design a 30-room mansion on the site of the historic Ferrell Gardens. Completed in June 1916, the house cost Mr. Callaway \$125,000.

of thousands of hybrid and native azaleas. The blooming period will continue through late April. But the garden also includes other flora creating a beautiful area year-round.

On the north end of the lake you will see the Ida Cason Callaway Memorial Chapel, a place for quiet reflection. Check your Daily Events Calendar and Map for organ concerts, usually offered on Saturdays and Sundays. Depicting the four seasons, four large stained glass windows occupy the west wall of the chapel and illuminate the sanctuary with a sublime light.

A 3-minute walk north of the Discovery Center will take you to the Birds of Prey exhibit in the Discovery Amphitheater. The program features raptors displaying their natural abilities. Falcons, owls, and hawks fly above the audience and land on a perch where their handler explains their elusive secrets.

If you are ready for a good 10-minute walk, follow the signs to the Cecil B. Day Butterfly Center, a glass-enclosed, tropical conservatory – the home to approximately 1,000 butterflies of up to 50 species. A telephoto lens on your camera will help you get the up-close shots to take home and frame. If you are very patient, you may even get close enough with a regular lens.

Your next stop should be Mr. Cason’s Vegetable Garden, a model 7.5-acre garden producing more than 700 varieties of vegetables, fruits, and herbs. If you are a gardener, Mr. Cason’s ideas will help you improve your own garden.

When you visit the Discovery Center, be sure to pick up a copy of the Calendar and Map for the current month, where you will also find special events listed for each day. Recreation opportunities can keep you busy for days, including bicycle and

## Fact Sheet for Callaway Gardens

### DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From Interstate 185 (which connects I-85 to Columbus in west central Georgia), take exit 34 and travel east on Ga. Hwy. 18. After 8 miles, turn right into Callaway Gardens.

**LUNCH OR DINNER AT THE GARDENS:** Pick up a current copy of the Calendar & Map and note the list of restaurants, grills, and cafés. We enjoyed the Country Kitchen at the south end of the park at the juncture of US 27 and Hwy. 190. The Discovery Café has quick lunch menus. The Gardens Restaurant offers an elegant evening and great entrees, but it’s expensive.

### ADMISSIONS:

Adults, \$18 + tax; children over 5, \$9 + tax. Annual pass, \$40.

HOURS: 9 – 6, daily; 9 – 5 (mid-Aug to mid-Mar)

**PARKING:** Free. Look for signage marking motorhome parking.

**HILLS & DALES:** 20 miles north of Pine Mountain. Stop at Discovery Center for directions. Hours: Mar–Jun, 10–6, Tue–Sat & Sun 1–6; Jul–Feb, 10–5. Adm: \$15 adults & seniors; \$8 garden only.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** Visit website [www.callawaygardens.com](http://www.callawaygardens.com)

Easter Sunrise Service, 6 a.m. April 24. Lakeside adjacent to the Gardens Restaurant. Symphony on the Sand, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, April 29. Deep South Brass Band Festival, May 14. See website for later events.

**CAMPING:** Pine Mountain RV Resort, 4 miles north of the Gardens on US 27. Gravel sites with 30/50, water, sewer, WI-FI, \$34.95; add concrete pad & cable, \$44.95. 10% disc for AAA, Good Sam, FMCA, Military. Clean, family showers. Great pool. [www.pinemountain.rvcoutdoors.com](http://www.pinemountain.rvcoutdoors.com) 706-663-4329.

FDR State Park, approx. 15 miles from the Gardens. Take Hwy 354 to Hwy 190 and follow signs. Gravel sites, 30 amp, water. No sewer. \$28. Disc 20% for 62+. Beautiful park, two lakes, miles of hiking trails. Long pull-thrus: 105, 107, 109.


[www.gastateparks.org](http://www.gastateparks.org) 800-864-7275

**OTHER:** Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Little White House. Warm Springs. FDR died here on April 12, 1945. He visited here 16 times during his 12 yrs 4 mo as president. A recently built museum is excellent. Daily, 9 – 4:45.

Adults, \$8. [www.gastateparks.org/LittleWhiteHouse](http://www.gastateparks.org/LittleWhiteHouse)

See website for special events through the year.

boat rentals, tennis and two 18-hole golf courses, and fishing. There are 10 miles of paved bicycle trails and 16 miles of walking trails laced between 13 lakes and fields that invite hundreds of bird species and wildflowers. If all of the walking or biking makes you hungry, you will find at least 11 restaurants, cafés, grills, or seasonal food pavilions to satisfy your appetite.

A small sign in the Garden that you could easily miss reads, “Take nothing from these gardens except nourishment for the soul, consolation for the heart, and inspiration for the mind.” Harold Northrop, a former president of Callaway Gardens, summed it up: “The unique thing about this garden is that there is a sense of peace, a sense of tranquility, a sense of comfort when you come here.” 



While most visitors who come to Asheville, North Carolina, to visit Biltmore are drawn by a desire and fascination to see America's largest private home, few may realize that the gardens at Biltmore were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the father of landscape architecture in America. Although some consider his most notable commission to have been New York City's Central Park, which he created collaboratively with his partner, Calvert Vaux, Olmsted's last commission was George W. Vanderbilt's expansive estate.

The youngest son of William H. Vanderbilt and the grandson of the legendary Cornelius Vanderbilt, George often had visited the Asheville area as a young man. While his older siblings built their imposing homes in Newport, New York City, and Hyde Park, George was smitten with the beauty and charm of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In the mid-1880s he purchased 125,000 acres with a plan to establish the first forestry education program in the U.S. He employed Gifford Pinchot, a German forester and naturalist, to direct the Biltmore Forest School, and later hired Carl Schenck to assist him. Following the model of self-supporting French agricultural estates, Vanderbilt intended to set up poultry, cattle, and hog farms, and a dairy.

Richard Morris Hunt was retained as the architect of the

home. Vanderbilt could not have chosen a more prestigious designer. A *New York Times* critic described him as "American architecture's first, and in many ways its greatest, statesman." To complement Hunt's French châteaux design of the house, Olmsted created the immediate gardens in the *Garden à la française* style, and the gardens beyond in the English Landscape garden style. After siting the house, he designed a three-mile winding road through the natural woodlands that turn a guest's "arrival at the mansion into a breathtaking event." Olmsted's intent was to create suspense and interest as the visitor enters at the Lodge Gate and follows a road of switchbacks and curves with views of ancient trees, streams, and a lagoon.

Olmsted's formal gardens included the acclaimed four-acre Walled Garden, a 16th century Italian Garden with three reflecting pools, and a dramatic Rampe Douce and Esplanade lined with an avenue of trees at the entrance to Biltmore House. Moving toward a less formal approach, he designed a Shrub Garden or ramble, pools, and a lagoon. A master of naturalistic landscaping, Olmsted found in the rolling hills an unending array of indigenous flora which he used to shape the grounds — rhododendron, mountain laurel, and azaleas. To these resources, he

playfully added rare and exotic plants to create unique horticultural settings.

With plans that others would execute far into the future, Olmsted established a large-scale nursery to grow the thousands of plants and flora that would be used to sustain his landscaping.

On June 1, 1898, George W. Vanderbilt married Edith Stuyvesant Dresser in a lavish ceremony at the American Cathedral in Paris. Their only child, Cornelia Stuyvesant, was born in 1900. Cornelia married British aristocrat, John F. A. Cecil, in 1924. The couple had two sons, William, born in 1925, and George, born in 1928. In 1930 as the Great Depression gripped the nation, Cornelia and John Cecil opened the house and its gardens to the public to attract tourists and stimulate the Asheville economy.

In 1960 William A. V. Cecil left a banking career to join George in managing the estate. Working under the terms of a trust for their eventual inheritance of the estate, William planned the restoration of the house and grounds to its original splendor and the self-sufficiency his grandfather had envisioned. George managed the 8,000 acres surrounding the house and built a profitable dairy enterprise. The herds which visitors saw in the fields added a pastoral appearance to the estate.

In 1979 William assumed sole ownership of The Biltmore Company. That same year George formed Biltmore Farms, Inc. In 1985 the estate's original dairy barn was transformed into a retail facility for the Biltmore Winery. Ten years later William A. V. Cecil, Jr. became the CEO of The Biltmore Company, as the fourth generation began to carry the vision into the twenty-first century.

Realizing the valuable heritage of Olmsted's work, landscape designs preserved from the 1890s are used today to make plans for floral beds. The plantings around the Winery, while not historic, were inspired by Olmsted. The horticultural team used Olmsted's original plans for the Shrub Garden as their guide for the landscaping that surrounds the Inn on Biltmore Estate.



To complement the French châteaux design of Biltmore, Olmsted created the gardens near the house in the *Garden à la française* style, and used the English Landscape style for the outlying gardens. Clockwise from left: The roof lines of Biltmore House can be seen above the lush rose gardens. • Children are enchanted by the sea of 50,000 tulips that bloom each spring in the Walled Garden. • Brick walkways with grass edging set off beds of old-fashioned roses. The estate's conservatory, which produces year-round blooms, rises in the background.



Typical of the Blue Ridge Mountains, morning fog hangs over the pattern beds as a couple strolls in the four-acre Walled Garden which overflows with annuals each summer.

The routines followed today by the landscape staff to maintain the estate's 5,000 acres of forests, grounds, gardens, and greenhouses reflect Olmsted's plans from over a century ago. The recurring tasks are monumental: pruning 80 varieties of roses in the Rose Garden, planting 50,000 tulip bulbs in the Walled Garden, raising and planting 20,000 bedding plants, and growing more than 1,000 poinsettias to decorate Biltmore House at Christmas.

To really enjoy the gardens at Biltmore, you must put your Smart Phone to work. Go to the following link: [http://www.biltmore.com/visit/house\\_gardens/gardens/default.asp](http://www.biltmore.com/visit/house_gardens/gardens/default.asp)

Note the underline between "house" and "gardens." If you are using an iPad, you have an excellent tool for touring the gardens! The list on the left side of the URL shows all of the gardens on the estate including the conservatory, the approach road, the garden guide, the annual bloom calendar, and which plants are blooming now. Click on any of them to see a full description of the requested garden. For example, if you click "Azalea Garden," you will get the following description:


The largest of the Biltmore gardens, the Azalea Garden is renowned for its extensive collection of native and hybrid azaleas. This 15-acre garden was largely the work of Chauncey Beadle, a Cornell-educated horticulturist who was hired temporarily in 1890 but stayed on till his death in 1950. Beadle and his fellow "Azalea Hunters" traveled the country gathering a massive collection of native specimens. In 1940 he donated his extensive collection of plants to Biltmore. Now, more than 1,000 azaleas grow alongside magnolias, dogwoods and conifers.

At the bottom of the display, you will see "Learn the story behind the Azalea Garden." Click on that and more information will appear.

Click on "Annual Bloom Calendar" and you will see what is blooming each month at Biltmore, April through October. That screen also will give you a month-by-month "**Must-See**" List From Our Gardeners. The technology at Biltmore is great. Use it to enjoy your tour of the gardens.

This story has featured three famous gardens. But each has an impressive home to take you back 75, 95, and 116 years respectively. Under the guidance of the Cecil family, the Biltmore Estate continues to expand its features. In addition to the house and gardens, take time to see:

- **Antler Hill Village** (the Legacy, Edith Vanderbilt's Car, the Village Green and Bandstand, the Outdoor Adventure Center, Antler Hill Farm, Cedric's Tavern, Creamery, The Smokehouse, and The Mercantile).

- **Biltmore Winery** (the Biltmore Collection, the Century Collection, the Biltmore Reserve Collection, and the Biltmore Estate Sparkling Collection). 

### Fact Sheet for Biltmore House and Gardens

#### DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From I-40 in Asheville, take exit 50 (US 25) and follow signs to the estate entrance at 1 Lodge Street. From the Blue Ridge Parkway, exit on US 25 and follow signs into Asheville and the 1 Lodge Street entrance.

**DINING AT BILTMORE:** The options are far too numerous to list here. Go to [www.biltmore.com](http://www.biltmore.com) and make a selection. Something for every appetite and price range.

**ADMISSIONS:** Purchase your tickets 7 days in advance online for \$39 and save \$15 off the gate price. Admission includes the house, gardens, Antler Hill Village, and the Winery. If you plan to stay more than one day, buy the annual pass for \$79.

**HOURS:** Gardens: 9 – dusk, daily

Home: 9 – 4:30 daily

**PARKING:** Free. Look for signage marking motorhome parking.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** Festival of Flowers, beginning May 7. See website for more information.

**CAMPING:** Campfire Lodgings, 116 Old Marshall Hwy., Asheville, NC 28804 828-658-8012  
Elevation: 2,478 GPS: N35° 39.605 W82° 35.528  
Sites: deluxe, \$45; premium, \$60. Incl. 50 amp, water, sewer, cable, and WI-FI.

**OTHER:** The Blue Ridge Parkway offers a relaxed journey in either direction: northeast to Waynesboro, Virginia, and southwest to Cherokee, North Carolina. Mt. Pisgah is a one-hour drive toward Cherokee where you will find a very good restaurant with a magnificent view and a campground (no hookups) for units up to 34 feet. The BRP probably is not suitable for our big rigs.

## THE ALLEGRO RED 38QRA

*Continued from page 12*

takes care of the motorhome's functionality above the floor. When you acquire a new coach, plan to spend a lot of time reading the manuals to learn everything you can absorb about your investment. Call your dealer or Tiffin's service technicians with any questions. Your effort will maximize your understanding and enjoyment of your coach.

### Driving the Allegro RED 38QRA

The length and weight of the 38QRA is almost identical to the 38QBA which was introduced in July 2009. Because I did not have an opportunity to take the 38QRA out for a test drive, I cannot give you an evaluation. However, since the QRA has the same chassis, infrastructure, engine, suspension, and wheelbase as the QBA, its ride and handling are the same. Following is the test drive report for the 38QBA which ran in *RIS*, 6:3.

Balancing economy with adequate power for the 38QBA, Tiffin engineers selected the 340 hp Cummins ISB turbocharged, aftercooled 6.7 liter electronic diesel, mated with an Allison 2500 MH six-speed automatic, with lock-up. It develops 660 lb-ft peak torque at 1,600 rpm, and 340 hp at 2,600 rpm.

The coach's take-off is smooth with an assured feeling of power. There was no nose diving, even with hard braking you would experience in unplanned stops. Keep in mind we are riding in a coach showing 35 miles on the odometer that rolled out of "final finish" one week ago. Some knowledgeable owners will argue it takes approximately 20,000 miles to really break in a diesel engine.

With a full tank of fuel, two-thirds tank of water, a tow car weighing 3,500 pounds, and two adults on board, the RED handled four and five percent grades east of Red Bay with only a five percent loss of speed. From a standing stop, the coach reached 60 mph in 42 seconds. From a 20 mph rolling start (as on an interstate ramp), the coach reached 60 mph in 38 seconds. In the rolling hill

country of Franklin County, Alabama, I put the coach on cruise control and the transmission in "economy" mode. Entering uphill grades at 65 mph (1800 rpm), the RED would consistently top the hills at 55 (2300 to 2400 rpm), and generally dropped to 4th gear in the process.

As with the Freightliner chassis on the Phaeton, the coach's 55-degree wheel cut and 38'9" length make it very easy to handle in tight situations or in city driving.

The four Hendrickson air bags combined with the tuned shocks gave us a comfortable ride. The cockpit's interior quietness is just as good as the Phaeton's. You will be able to enjoy your surround sound while traveling just as much as when you are parked.

With the rear bath-and-a-half, this entry-level diesel is certain to attract full timers and the younger set who have long summer vacations *RIS*



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# The Rest of the Inside Scoop

by Mary Findley

With the long winter months hopefully behind, it's time for many of our Southern comrades to head North and Northern folks to nudge their coaches out of hibernation. Whichever direction the front end of your coach heads, make sure the first stop entails a thorough cleaning. My past five articles have laid a solid foundation for both inside and outside cleaning along with adequate warnings surrounding microfiber and toxic chemicals. Let's clean up the last of the nooks and crannies so the next article can focus on teaching you my Precision Cleaning and Organizational tips.

## Ceilings

Care must be used when cleaning fabric ceilings that were popular a few years back. Degreasing agents found in most cleaners and liquid dish soap will loosen the adhesive holding the fabric to the ceiling. These ceilings can pose two different problems. One is brown water spots caused by a water leak, while grey or black spots often develop around vents and fans.

**Water Spots:** Head to the grocery store for some white garbage bags, a fresh box of baking soda and a fresh bottle of hydrogen peroxide, which is a safe alternative to bleach, a known carcinogen. Place the plastic bags on the floor or any furniture directly below the spot to be treated. Mix a very thin paste, thinner than white sauce, of baking soda and peroxide. Remember the old Brillcream commercial? A little dab will do ya? Well a little dab will do ya and anything more makes for mega pounds of headaches. Lightly blot the mixture on the spot. Do not rub it into the fabric.

Give the concoction 30 minutes to work on the stain then spray with more peroxide. Let the mixture set overnight. Peroxide and baking soda will bubble and fizz, which helps aerate out the stain. Spray the spot again the next morning if any stain remains. When dry, gently wipe off any excess baking soda. No need to rinse.

**Grey or black smudges:** Spray a bit of foaming shaving cream (gel does not work) in the palm of one hand. Gently pat onto the spot and wait 30 minutes. Dampen a soft cloth in one part food

grade distilled white vinegar to four parts water. Blot to remove the shaving cream.

Ultra leather or vinyl ceilings must be cleaned and conditioned regularly to prevent drying and cracking. Mary Moppins carries an excellent product called Leather Care that cleans and conditions in one step. When cleaning the first time, pour Leather Care onto a barely damp soft cotton cloth to deep condition the ceiling. Dilute Leather Care: 1 part Leather Care to 5 parts water, to clean regularly.

Leather Care also does an excellent job cleaning and conditioning leather, ultra-leather and vinyl furniture, and the dash. This is the only cleaner Mary tested that removes dirt from the small grooves in leather and vinyl. Dilute it with water to clean regularly.

## TV Screens

1) Do not use microfiber on these screens or any surface other than windows or glass; 2) Never use standard glass cleaners and never spray a cleaner directly on the screen; 3) Clean them as infrequently as possible and keep your hands off the surface or you will damage the pixels within the screen; 4) Avoid using too much moisture as it can work under the screen and appear on the screen.

First unplug the set then lightly spritz a soft 100% cotton cloth like Mary's Baby Diaper Cloth with water and very gently



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](http://www.goclean.com) or call 800-345-3934.

wipe the screen working horizontally with the grain of the screen. Add just a bit of food grade distilled white vinegar to the water for heavier buildup. Lightly spritz a cloth with water to dust when necessary. Remember - hands off the screen!

## Wood surfaces

Use only 100% clean, cotton cloths for dusting and cleaning wood cabinets and furniture. Old white cotton T-shirts will do the job as do Mary's Baby Diaper Cloths. For first time cleanings, pour Mary's Wood Care on a dry soft cloth. Apply a light touch of elbow grease to work the cleaner into the wood. Wood Care cleans and conditions in one step. It restores color to dry wood and even helps remove light scratches and water marks.

Wood only needs deep conditioning once a year unless your coach is stored in a dry hot state like Arizona or Southern California. If so, then conditioning twice a year is necessary to prevent the wood from drying and cracking. Dilute Wood Care five parts water to one part Wood Care for weekly cleanings.

Clean around the door pulls once a week with the diluted Wood Care to remove oil residue from fingertips that can damage the finish. A word to the wise: if you have been using a product like Endust or Pledge continue using that product. Some wood products are not compatible. Mixing them could damage the finish. Most wood products are compatible but always test a small spot first.

## Laundry Day blues

Laundry days quickly turn blue when white clothes turn a dingy grey. Isn't bleach supposed to whiten clothes? Yes, bleach is supposed to brighten whites but it only happens on non-reality shows called TV commercials. In reality, bleach turns whites a grungy color of grey.


In place of bleach, pour a full cup of hydrogen peroxide into the bleach dispenser adding the regular amount of laundry detergent. When the tub has filled, turn off the machine and soak the clothes for 30 minutes before finishing the laundry cycle. Peroxide perks up colored clothes as well.

Small capacity washers in motorhomes leave little room for error. For instance, when light weight clothes are washed with heavy items such as towels or jeans, the heavier items can push lighter weight clothing into the holes of the tub. When that happens, unsightly round marks are permanently left on the clothes. Whenever possible, wash heavy items separately.

Never over-stuff a washing machine. Laundry cleans in two ways: One is by the movement of water and detergent amongst the clothes. The other is the agitation of clothing when it rubs against itself or another piece of laundry. Either way the cleaning action halts when the machine is over-filled.

A final word of caution: heat sets a stain. Never put clothing in a washing machine unless the stain has first been removed.

## Headlight fog and scratch solution

Several people have asked if I had anything that would clear up the fog on their headlights or remove scratches. After using my own products on several motorhome headlights, nothing worked until I tried RenewZt. We were all thrilled to find RenewZt removed both the fog and the scratches. 

## CORRECTION

In the story on the 2011 Phaeton 40 QBH in *RIS* 8:1, we mistakenly said the house batteries are service free. They do require periodic checks and water replacement.

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## The Dabney's RV Lifestyle Began With A Blast

**A hurricane blast to be exact!** In fact, it was the third costliest hurricane ever to make landfall in the U.S. On September 13, 2008, Hurricane Ike roared into the Galveston-Houston area, forcing the largest evacuation of Texans in the state's history. In spite of the warning and preparations, 48 died in the Lone Star republic and another 34 perished in the ten states that Ike ripped across in the next 36 hours. Damage exceeded \$30 billion and 202 were listed as missing.

After spending nearly four weeks following their coach down the Tiffin Motorhomes' assembly line and through the paint plant, Joe and Jan Dabney proudly took possession of their



2009 Allegro Bus 43QRP at Sherman RV in Tupelo, Mississippi, on September 4, 2008.

On daily news broadcasts, the couple had followed the progress of Ike across the Atlantic and into the outer edges of the Caribbean. Apprehensively, they prepared for the 700-mile trip home to Nassau Bay, a village of 4,500 bordering the southeastern side of Houston, which bills itself as "an incomparable waterfront community at the leading edge of technology." Ironically, Nassau Bay is only 22 miles from Galveston, a port city on an island where 6,000 men, women, and children died in the Great Storm 108 years earlier.

"When we got home, we packed up our office and all of the files we had to have for our business," Jan said. They headed for Kerrville, 60 miles northwest of San Antonio and 200 miles from the Gulf. "We got the last site in the campground," Joe added.

A few days later they learned the storm surge had come halfway across their yard and stopped. "Our neighborhood looked like a war zone," Jan continued. "A neighbor family whose home was flooded stayed at our home for a while. Then we leased our home for nine months to another family across the street who needed a place to live while their home was being rebuilt."

Almost unwittingly, the Dabneys had become full-timers. "During the time our house was leased, we decided we preferred full-timing," Joe said. The house is still leased.

"Joe was worried about what our clients would think," Jan said. And therein lies the interesting story of why they bought the Allegro Bus in the first place.

Joe graduated in 1971 from the University of Texas in Austin with a degree in zoology, thinking that he might follow in his father's footsteps and go into medicine. Less than 100 miles away at the "cowboy college" in College Station, Jan took a degree in accounting in 1978.

The couple met in 1976 at the Bavarian Gardens, a biergarten in Houston where Joe and a fraternity brother, John, had stopped for a beer and a little recreation pitching washers. The establishment was owned by Jan's father and a business partner. (When Joe is telling the story, he likes to tease, "Jan picked me up in her daddy's bar.") Jan and her friend, Rickie, were also enjoying some leisure time at the biergarten. Jan had known John from school in Houston while growing up. The foursome soon began dating. John married Rickie in 1977, and Joe married Jan in August 1978

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

in the gazebo at Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston.

Joe's career moved toward finance when his business connections led him to a position with Paine Webber, a retail stock broker. In the meantime, Jan's career flourished with a public accounting firm and later as a sole practitioner.

Joe moved from Paine Webber to a succession of positions in the trust departments of three banks in the Houston area. In the early nineties, he served as senior vice president and trust officer at First Interstate Bank of Texas, and later as the manager of the Texas Trust Investment.

Asset management in trusts and employee benefit plans requires rigorous training and certifications, including certified financial planner (CFP), chartered financial analyst (CFA), and a certificate in investment performance measurement (CIPM).

In 1994 Joe formed Dabney Investment Consulting Associates, Inc., (DICA) to provide trusts and asset management firms with the guidance to meet the standards, policy and procedures required for their profession. DICA is an SEC registered investment advisor. The Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS) is a key to the business success of his clients.

"The purpose of the standards is to provide the consumer

with a basis to compare asset management firms," he explained. "The GIPS achievement is similar to the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval in financial institutional investing."

DICA's primary service is pre-GIPS consulting and the provision of GIPS verification to money management firms. DICA also provides institutional investment consulting services in investment policy, asset allocation, manager search, and performance measurement/attribution to a small number of institutional clients. With periodic reviews, DICA evaluates and verifies a company's continuing GIPS claim of compliance.

Jan found a role for her professional skills in the services offered by DICA. With over 30 clients in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Colorado, Iowa, South Carolina, and New York, their time spent in clients' offices was far greater than the time spent in their Nassau Bay office. "Our home was a hotel and our kitchen was a restaurant," Jan said. There had to be a better way.

"Pat Fitch, one of our neighborhood friends, suggested we talk with Paul and Claudia Medlock who live full time in their 2007 Allegro Bus," Joe said. Paul is a retired dentist. "Paul took me under his wing and spent three hours giving me lots of good practical advice and Claudia did the same with Jan," Joe

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continued. In January 2008 Joe and Jan went to Red Bay for a plant tour. The idea was taking root. As they weighed the pros and cons, that reoccurring question kept popping up: “What will our clients think about their professional financial consultant operating his business out of a motorhome?”

In April 2008 the Dabneys rented a 40-ft. 2003 Allegro Bus in Houston and took it to the Galveston Bay State Park to see how they liked the idea. “That was our first experience ever staying in a coach and we enjoyed it!” Jan said.

With the Tiffin literature in hand, they decided on the options they wanted on their 2009 Allegro Bus 43QRP. Joe wrote the bid request and Jan sent it to 69 Tiffin dealers.

“We stayed in Russellville from late July to mid-August 2008 to watch our coach being built,” Jan said. Joe took over 4,000 digital photographs during the build and continues to refer to them to locate a part or troubleshoot an issue.

“We spent our thirtieth wedding anniversary watching our coach being painted at Tiffin’s Belmont facility, and then went to the Marriott in Muscle Shoals that evening to celebrate with a nice dinner at the revolving restaurant overlooking Wilson Dam and the Tennessee River,” Jan reminisced.

The “what will our clients think” issue went away quickly when Joe learned that they were fascinated with the solution he and Jan had found to serve them. “Our entire office will be right next to yours as we serve you,” he told them, and they loved it,” Jan explained. Joe even gives those interested a link to a map which plots their location wherever they are in the U.S.

“In November 2009, after we had been full timing a little over a year, we went to the Escapees RV Club’s weekend Boot Camp in Livingston, Texas,” Jan related. The seminars covered basic RV operation, maintenance, towing, fire safety, driving safety, weight and distribution management, and tire safety. “Although we had over a year’s experience before Boot Camp, we didn’t realize how much we didn’t know!” she said.

Jan later took an eight-hour driving course from Warner Detrick with the RV Driving School, LLC, in Ocala, Florida. “He gave clear instructions, was very calm, and an excellent instructor,” Jan said. “Warner taught both Joe and me better hand signals to use when parking. We practiced with me driving and Joe giving the signals, and then vice versa. We never have any problems now pulling into a site.”

The Dabneys took advantage of Tiffin’s one year of free membership in the Allegro Club for new coach owners and joined the Lone Star Allegro Club which is based in Houston. “We have attended several of their weekend rallies when we have been in the Houston area,” Jan noted. “We really enjoyed the Allegro Club rallies in Foxboro, Massachusetts, in September 2009 and the Fort Myers, Florida, rally in March 2010. We also attended a Tiffin RV Network rally in Gulf Shores, Alabama, in April 2010. All the rallies have been fun and we have met so many nice RVers.”

Jan contends that Joe has never met a stranger and she confesses to being shy. Usually, when they arrive at a campground

in the afternoon, Jan sets the coach in order and begins preparing dinner while Joe sets up the outside items and then gets out and starts visiting. They have also met new friends at the campground in the Tiffin Service Area. “In Summer 2010 we visited one of those couples, Steve & Sharon Aust in Michigan, and another, Dave & Sandy Hasselberg in Minnesota,” Jan said. “We met a couple from Idaho, Loren & Kathy Webster, who taught us how to play Pegs & Jokers, and then gave us a P&J gameboard they had made! Another couple from San Antonio, Manny & Connie Esparza, taught us how to play Mexican Train and a card game called ‘Pass the Love.’ Pat Fitch taught us how to play ‘Farkle,’ a dice game.”

While some Tiffin RVers describe Red Bay as a small rural town and just hang out in the campground while they wait for their coaches to be serviced, Jan and Joe could serve as the campground’s concierge. “Our times in Red Bay have been a lot of fun and we enjoy spending time in the town and the surrounding area,” Jan said. “We have toured the Red Bay Museum, Coon Dog Cemetery, Helen Keller’s childhood home in Tusculumbia, and the Rosenbaum House in Florence, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. We have tried the local cuisine including the bologna biscuit at the Parade Grill and the biscuit with chocolate gravy at Swamp John’s—and, of course, Swamp John’s famous catfish dinner on Thursdays.”

Although Joe has over 30 clients to visit each year, he and Jan find plenty of time to see the country. Full timing has been the right solution for combining work and play. In addition to dealing with his dislike for staying in hotels and eating in restaurants every day, Jan finds full timing the answer for her desire to see the U.S. “The state and national parks, the museums, music festivals, concerts, meeting so many interesting people—I didn’t know farmers grew wheat in the state of Washington or sunflowers in North Dakota. We are both lifelong learners,” she said. “So far, I think my favorite campground is Prospect RV Park in Prospect, Oregon near Crater Lake.”

“I just like *going*,” Joe explains. “I was sick of hotels and restaurants and you don’t see anything but clouds at 35,000 feet. I like the mountains, snow, and big trees. I think lakes are Jan’s favorite topography. And from a business point of view, my clients are absolutely fascinated by how we conduct our business from the Bus.”

The Dabneys have logged over 35,000 miles in their Allegro Bus in two-and-a-half years. Highlights in their travel diary include Acadia National Park in Maine, viewing a shuttle launch in Florida, and touring the Spam Museum in Austin, Minnesota, and the recreational vehicle museum in Elkhart. “Beginning in Texas last year, we circumnavigated the U.S.,” Joe pointed out. Their travel plans for 2011 include a trip to Alaska. They both carry Class B non-commercial licenses which the state of Texas requires for the 43QRP’s weight class. They tow a GMC Yukon which Joe says “you can only tell it’s back there when you check the monitor.”

Joe drew on the skills of Chris Berry in Red Bay to execute his plans for an office in the driver side slide-out. He also installed a MotoSat dish to receive email in nearly any location in North America. Jan is an inveterate photographer and Joe stores thousands of her images annually by uploading through MotoSat to off-site storage for safekeeping. Jan uses the built-in office which Tiffin offers as a part of the dinette-credenza system.

"We started this adventure with two AT&T cell phones and the standard KingDome for TV reception," Joe said. "Then we went to an air card with router. Now we have the MotoSat with HughesNet. Our mobile office is as well-connected as our land-based office was in Nassau Bay."

Joe is an avid astronomy buff who hauls his Meade 5-inch telescope (carefully packed, of course) in the slide-out tray in the basement. They have toured several major observatories in the U.S. including Palomar in California, Lowell and Kitt Peak in Arizona, and McDonald in Texas. If there is a major celestial event on the calendar, you can bet that Joe will be in a location that offers good viewing conditions.

To broaden their travel opportunities and experiences, the Dabneys purchased DeLorme topographic map books for all 50 states in order to find the interesting backroads and sites not shown on standard highway maps. To personalize travel in each state, they bought a set of miniature state flags for the U.S. and the 13 provinces and territories in Canada. "We have a

flag-holder on the dash that holds three flags: the U.S. flag, our Texas flag, and the flag for the state or province we currently are visiting," Jan explained. "When we arrive at a state line, I put the flag for the state we are entering in the holder and take a picture and also try to get a picture of the state's welcome sign. When we look back at our electronic picture albums, the flag pictures make good introductions to each section."

Both Jan and Joe enjoy cooking in their Allegro Bus. "I love my kitchen," Jan said. "It is the smallest I've ever had, but the layout was well thought out. I've been able to cook a big Thanksgiving dinner for six. And we served appetizers and drinks to 150 people who visited in a three-hour open house. We've had dinner parties for as many as 14. It works!"

Every December Joe makes fudge to send to their clients, business associates, and family. Jan is in charge of cutting, packing the fudge in tins and then shipping boxes, and preparing the Fedex labels. "In December 2008, 2009, and 2010, we made 66, 72, and 78 pans of fudge in 8 x 8-inch pans," Jan said. "I must admit that the coach is quite messy in late November and early December when we have pans, tins, boxes, and bubblewrap everywhere. Joe says the gas burner in our coach works much better than the electric range we had in our home. Many people are surprised we can do this, but the layout of the kitchen and the coach works quite well for this big project."

*Continued on page 50*

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# **Notice of New Refrigerator Recall**

**Attention: All customers with Norcold Refrigerators**

**There is a recall involving Norcold Refrigerators  
that are in Tiffin units  
built from December 1996 to December 2010.**

**If you have a unit produced during that time  
period that has a Norcold refrigerator, please  
immediately call **800-767-9101**  
and speak to a Norcold representative  
for the most up-to-date information.**

**They will advise what you need to do.**

**This is a very serious recall  
that could involve a refrigerator catching fire.**

**Do not delay.**

**Norcold Recall #10E-049**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT 1.800.767.9101 OR [WWW.NORCOLD.COM/RECALL](http://WWW.NORCOLD.COM/RECALL)

OFFICIAL REFRIGERATOR RECALL

**If your refrigerator is on Recall,  
DO NOT operate it until it can be professionally retrofitted  
with its proper remedy.**

**The installation of this safety device  
will be at NO CHARGE to you.**

**Action Steps** – If you have one of the recalled refrigerators and you...

***Currently reside in the RV,  
you should immediately:***

1. Set the refrigerator to “OFF.”
2. Unplug the refrigerator through the Service Vent on the outside of the vehicle.
3. Contact your Dealer, a Norcold Authorized Service Center or call 1-800-767-9101 as soon as possible to get assistance.

***Do not currently reside in the RV,  
you should immediately:***

1. Set the refrigerator to “OFF.”
2. Unplug the refrigerator through the Service Vent on the outside of the vehicle.
3. Disconnect from shore power.
4. Contact your Dealer, a Norcold Authorized Service Center or call 1-800-767-9101 as soon as possible to get assistance.

**Failure to follow these instructions can result  
in fire causing injury or death.**

**To check your refrigerator’s status regarding this Recall,  
or for more information about  
other Norcold recalls involving older models,  
go to [www.norcold.com/recall](http://www.norcold.com/recall)**



JF

**Lazydays**

If you love RVing — this is home

*If you haven't been to Lazydays in a few years, you are in for a surprise. Lazydays isn't "big" anymore.*

If you've been an RVer very long, you probably heard at some point in the last five years that Lazydays was the biggest single site recreational vehicle dealer in the world. Someone may have told you Lazydays had more than 200 service bays. Someone else may have claimed they had the largest Class A and fifth wheel inventory in the world, and you would have the greatest selection possibilities if you made the trip to Florida. And someone may have said their total sales would soon reach a billion dollars annually.

Well, they still have the same 126 acres, 200+ service bays, and a huge inventory. But there has been a reawakening. "Customers don't really *care* about how big we are," John Horton, president and CEO, said last month as I revisited Lazydays for the first time in two years. "It's the little things that count. In every direction, everywhere visitors look on our campus, we want them to be surprised and delighted."

Story by Fred Thompson

Horton came to Lazydays in 2001 as a consultant. A mutual friend had introduced him to Don Wallace, one of Lazydays' founders. His résumé shows he has been president of two companies and has broad experience in finance and manufacturing management. He also packs sheepskins from the University of Michigan (BS in business) and the University of Texas (MBA). Within a year, Wallace hired him as the company's chief operating officer.

"I fell in love with the business," he said. When Wallace retired in 2005, he tapped Horton to become the president and CEO. "I stayed because the business is so much fun. I had never been in a business that helped people fulfill their dreams. When you help them achieve that goal, you feel such a sense of reward," Horton continued. "Of course, this *is* a business. We have to make a profit. But Lazydays is really based on a *culture of serving*."

Photography by Jeff Fay and Fred Thompson

"Everyone's focus is on providing the customer with a wonderful experience," he said intently. "Even those who do not interact with the customer have the same attitude: accounting, landscaping, and maintenance, for example. We have created a culture. Another company can physically duplicate everything we have here if they have the capital. But they can't duplicate our culture."

Horton was quick to mention company leaders and give credit. "Harold Oehler is our general counsel and Gordon Myhre is our chief marketing officer. They could have great careers anywhere but they chose Lazydays. They have a passion for our company and a passion to serve others. They are so enthusiastic that they excite those around them. You've got to talk to them and others as well," he urged. "Gordon had his own ad agency and did consulting work for Lazydays. He understood our strengths and what we were trying to achieve. He places an emphasis on learning and how to tell that story to our public."

"Randy Lay, our chief financial officer, has taken on the additional responsibility of planning and overseeing training in customer service for all of our employees — even though his chief responsibility is finance," Horton said.

Every Friday from 7 to 8 a.m. is a time reserved for supervisory and management training. Leadership is emphasized and everyone works in groups to learn, apply, and test knowledge and skills.

Dominic Calabro is general sales manager. He oversees five sales managers who head up teams of 28 to 30 salespeople. "When there is an opening, applicants are interviewed by all five sales managers," Horton explained. "Applicants must have sales experience in selling high dollar items, but attitude, desire, and recommendation are carefully evaluated. To receive a job offer, at least two sales managers must approve the applicant."

Sales trainees are assigned to mentors who have a proven record in sales and ongoing customer satisfaction. Mentors are held in high esteem at Lazydays. Since all salespeople are paid by commission only, mentors are giving their "earnings time" to train a person who in a sense will become a competitor. The sales teams use Stephen Covey's book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, in the training program. "In Covey's Habit 4: Think Win-Win, our mentors apply the principle of 'Abundance Mentality: believing there is plenty for everyone,'" Horton noted.

Sales training is a daily event. Lazydays opens at 9 a.m., but the sales staff arrives at eight for an hour of training on product knowledge, promotion, how to correctly show and demonstrate each RV, and how to successfully develop the client-salesperson encounter and relationship. The initial encounter

Bob Tiffin, president & CEO of Tiffin Motorhomes, and John Horton, president & CEO of Lazydays, share an unbounded enthusiasm for bringing the best of the RV lifestyle to their customers.

and subsequent relationship is expected to develop in stages.

The salesperson must make the client feel *welcome* in every way. The salesperson must be a *good listener* and give feedback to assure the client his needs and interests are fully *understood*. The client must realize how *important* he is to the salesperson and to Lazydays and *feel secure* in knowing his best interests are being served. The client must feel *comfortable* with all of the staff he is meeting at Lazydays and their *commitment* to serving him.

"We want our customers to be so pleased with their decision to purchase an RV from Lazydays, and happy with the relationships they have established with our staff, that they *can't wait to tell their friends* about our company. That's what our culture of serving is all about," Horton explained.

"The customer service relationship begins with the salesperson and extends to every person in our organization. Everyone must *do the right thing* to take care of the customer as if he were a member of your own family," Horton emphasized.

A team sales manager will call the prospect and personally thank him for his visit to Lazydays. Inquiries by phone or email are assigned to salespeople who follow-up the same day or within 24 hours. With a follow-up email, clients are asked to evaluate their experiences at Lazydays. The data is used to create a customer service index that measures each client's satisfaction with their encounter.

Lazydays economic stability was jeopardized by the bankruptcies of several RV manufacturers as well as the credit crunch that lasted for over two years. In 2008 Horton downsized the company and brought the management team together. "We did not do anything that diminished the customer experience," he



JF



In Tampa's subtropical climate, the Lazydays RV Campground is always teeming with fun and excitement. The heated pool and adjacent tennis courts are especially appreciated by visitors from the snow-bound states who enjoy Florida's weather. Those who come to trade or shop for upgrades find the campground a relaxing place. Exit 10, a new restaurant near the pool, is designed to look like an oversized motorhome. Visitors negotiate the 126-acre campus on bicycles, golf carts, and the old-fashioned way — hiking. The Allegro, the Allegro RED, and the Allegro Breeze are located in a Tiffin Pod (not pictured) a short walk from the campground.

explained. "We realized how important it was to make our recovery process transparent. Two hundred employees were laid off. There were pay cuts. We reduced our inventory. But we tried not to touch any customer amenities. We continued to provide complimentary meals (breakfast and lunch) Monday through Saturday to all customers staying in the Lazydays RV Campground. And we frequently assured our customers we would still be here for them after the sale."

In 2009 business began to push back up. Last year Lazydays sold 4,600 units. This year they expect to sell 5,000 units. Inventories are back up significantly — \$45 million in new motorized, \$25 million in used motorized; \$5 million in new towables and an equal amount in used.

"We feel we have everything our customers need or want," Horton said. "In addition to our education program and service amenities, our 300-site campground has full hookups, including cable and WI-FI, plus a heated pool and two tennis courts."

Horton sees the competition for RVing as "any other lifestyle on which our customers can spend their discretionary funds." As far as competing against other RV dealers, he believes "there is room for all of us. We service owners from all over the country no matter where they bought their motorhomes, and Tiffin dealers everywhere reciprocate and service owners who purchased their coaches at Lazydays."

Horton emphasizes that the sale and delivery of a recreational vehicle is not the end of the buyer's experience at Lazydays. "It is really the beginning. To assure that our owners get the full measure of enjoyment from their RV, we selected one person to be the head of customer education," Horton said. "David Castaneda accepted the position in 2007. With his staff, Dave developed curriculum for training owners in a classroom equipped with current technology. While manufacturers have become training partners, Lazydays tries to use their own highly trained staff as much as possible to run the classes."

If you are a beginner, Dave offers courses that will start you at "Square One," such as:

The **RV Orientation** (learning about the many systems in a motorhome); and **Class A Motorhomes 101** (a thorough understanding of how to operate your motorhome), and **RV Site Hookups**. When you are ready to learn the operation and maintenance of each system, you will be taking courses like **Air Conditioning Care and Maintenance**, **Furnace Care and Maintenance**, **Battery Care and Maintenance**, **Generator Operation**, **Water Heaters**, **LP Gas Systems**, **RV Care and Maintenance**, and **Refrigerators**.

Several courses address safety issues including **Tire Safety**, **RV Fire Safety**, **RV Safety Features**, and **Personal Safety**. There are too many courses to name them all. But if you feel you may have missed something, you can sign up for **Ask CEO John LIVE**, **Q&A by a Lazydays Technician**, or **Q&A Just for the Ladies**.

Courses that will enhance your RVing lifestyle include **Microwave/Convection Cooking**, **RV Internet 101** (Wireless, cell phone internet, air cards, sending photo images, satellite, internet connectivity, internet security, protecting sensitive information,

and thwarting hackers, spam, sniffers, and phishing attacks.), **RV Renovations and Remodeling**, and **RV Insurance 101**.

Steve Roddy, who is an RVIA/RVDA master certified technician with over 38 years of RV experience, teaches many of the classes and is also available for Q&A on [www.betterRVing.com](http://www.betterRVing.com).

Barney Alexander directs the Lazydays RV Driver Confidence Course on Tuesday through Friday. Participants first spend 90 minutes in the classroom in the morning and then take Driving Sessions A & B in the afternoon. Towing classes are offered for customers taking delivery of a motorhome. To date, Alexander has trained more than 43,000 drivers.

Leaving the customer education auditorium, our interview turned to Lazydays' expansive service center where Horton introduced Bob Grady, director of parts and service. Grady oversees a staff of 260 employees, of whom 44 are master certified technicians and 28 are certified technicians. Thirty technicians work in the 35 bays dedicated to body work, cabinet repair and remodeling, and glass (windows and windshields). Lazydays is also certified to do chassis work for Spartan, Workhorse, and Freightliner.

"My real job is helping customers enjoy their RVs and have a great experience," Grady began. He first came to Lazydays as a consultant, following a career position in manufacturing as a vice president for Zenith Data Systems. Grady emphasizes process training in the service area as well as customer service training for service writers. "Our service writers deal with every RV and its owner with a six-step problem-solving approach. Owners are usually frustrated with their problem when they arrive, so it is very important for a service writer to listen carefully, acknowledge, and empathize with the owner," Grady said. "When the problems are understood and the causes identified, the service writer will explain the complexity of the job, the estimated charges, and the anticipated time the repair will require."

The sectionally arranged waiting area has comfortable seating for reading, TV viewing, and WI-FI to catch up on your email and business. A separate section is provided for owners with pets. A customer service oval is situated in the center of the waiting lounge to give owners updates on the progress of repairs and service.

Lazydays routinely stocks \$1.5 million in its parts inventory, and turns that inventory approximately seven times a year. "There is a lot of commonality in the parts used by all of the motorhome manufacturers," Grady said. "Tiffin Motorhomes makes our job much easier by maintaining an inventory of its specialized parts on site. Since we have new coaches arriving from the Tiffin plant several times a week, they can send parts overnight in the coaches at no charge for freight," he said. "We have an excellent relationship with the factory. If we spot a problem being created in the production process, we notify TMH of our concern and they quickly find a solution."

"When a repair is completed, the technician will go over the work with the owner to be sure the owner both understands the solution and is pleased with the work," Horton said. "Working on RVs is challenging and we will make mistakes. But we are



Russ O'Connor (above left), president of the Crown Club, operates a dealership within a dealership. "We have created a special experience for everyone in the Lazydays family who chooses a qualified luxury diesel." Bob Wilson (above right), the Crown Club's top Phaeton salesman, maintains an office on the Club's Lobby Level. The Crown Club staff make the sales and service process go smoothly. Nearby is the display area that features Tiffin's luxury diesels (above). Lazydays usually maintains an inventory of 15 to 20 Phaetons, Allegro Buses, and Zephyrs. The Club Level of the Crown Club facility (shown at top) offers breakfast and lunch plus luxurious lounges for members.





JF



honest and fair, and we will do the right thing to ensure the customer is satisfied.”

Just a few steps north of the service center, you will find the Crown Club. Russ O'Connor, president of the Crown Club, operates a dealership within a dealership. With the gracious demeanor you would expect from an owner of a southern plantation, O'Connor welcomes each member to the club.

“We have created a special experience for everyone in the Lazydays family who chooses a qualified luxury diesel,” he began. “We want you to enjoy the best-in-class benefits designed to meet the unique needs of the luxury diesel coach lifestyle. We believe that no RV manufacturer, dealership, or club offers these premium benefits, making Lazydays the best luxury diesel coach experience you can have.” The Crown Club’s approach to luxury service and benefits seems to be meeting with success. They delivered 65 luxury coaches in January.

“Our clients have come to a place in their life where they have certain expectations. The coaches they purchase are

much more complicated,” he continued. The Crown Club responds with dedicated advisors specially trained to meet their delivery and service needs. When they arrive at Lazydays, a porter meets them at a gate where they are expected by prior appointment and escorts them to one of 42 sites in a grove of great live oaks. Their coach and tow car are washed and a service advisor is assigned.

The Crown Club Service Center offers 43 service bays staffed by its own service manager, Ken Schielka, and 28 master certified and certified technicians. Crown Club members have exclusive access to all the amenities of the deluxe 17,000 sq.ft. clubhouse, including a lounge, bar, and dining room on the Club Level. On the Lobby Level, members enjoy the use of a comfortable library, television lounges, and a swimming pool. The dining room serves two complimentary meals Monday through Saturday: breakfast featuring omelets prepared to order, bacon and sausage, and gourmet pastries, juices, and fruits; a lunch buffet with several entrees; plus cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at four.

In the offices at the Lobby Level, the Crown Club offers a complete staff including the service manager, the delivery manager and two delivery advisors, the service writer, three service advisors, a service scheduler, two finance and insurance specialists, a customer service representative, a club benefits manager, and a warranty work manager. Nadine Barber,

sales support manager, has a staff of 18 who work behind the scenes to make the sale process go smoothly. Ernie Herring provides technical support for club members. While many members have Coach-Net road service which may take several hours, Herring works directly by cell phone with members which often facilitates getting them going right away.

In the Luxury RV Showcase, you will find 15 to 20 Tiffin coaches which qualify for the Crown Club. They include the Zephyr, the Allegro Bus, and the Phaeton. If you are interested in one of Tiffin’s top three brands, be sure to meet Bob Wilson in the Crown Club offices. Bob came to Lazydays in December 2003 after selling his computer sales company in New England. He worked six months at Lazydays and then six months with another RV dealer in Maine. “There was just no comparison. Lazydays is a fantastic company with excellent business principles. I admired the way they treated their customers and their employees,” he said. “If you sign on here, you sign on for training. Training every day is just part of the culture.” Wilson set a goal to be one of Lazydays’ top 10 salespeople. Last year he was the #1 salesperson in the nation for Tiffin Motorhomes, as well as the #1 salesperson in new motorized sales.

“You sell what you believe in. I believe wholeheartedly in TMH as a company. They have earned it,” Wilson said. “They make my job so easy. I can look a

customer straight in the eye and tell them that Tiffin offers the best service in the motorhome industry.

“Now that I have been here for eight years, I am getting a lot of repeat customers. Tiffin’s customer loyalty blew me away. The Tiffin family always goes the extra mile to fulfill its warranties and do the right thing. They look at the long term when they take care of customers,” Wilson noted.

“The culture of serving is very evident at Lazydays,” Horton continued. “Joe Wiley’s primary responsibility is information technology, but he also has taken on property management. Our landscape department is very efficient. Keeping 126 acres manicured is a major piece of work, but they also do a beautiful job with the flower beds you see throughout the campus.

“Four ancillary properties also create a campus that RVers love,” he noted with some satisfaction. “We have a Cracker Barrel, a Flying J, and a Camping World. Last year Country Inn & Suites opened on our campus. Many first time buyers stay there while they are making a decision about an RV to fulfill their dreams.”

The word “dreams” brought up another subject. Working at Lazydays gives every employee the opportunity to work on a “Dream Team.”

Lazydays Dream Teams are formed to help fellow employees who may need helping hands to deal with an overwhelming problem. Dream Teams also form when

someone hears of a community project that needs assistance. Recently, a team put a new roof on a safe house for children. “If one of our employees is in need, a Dream Team can step in to help. Another team painted a whole facility for Joshua House. Each team is organized with a manager who might be a technician in our service center. Team members working for him might be his boss, one of our salespeople, or someone in our F&I office,” Horton said. “Dream Teams have fringe benefits. Members develop leadership skills, bond together as a family, and develop a personal satisfaction in serving others.” The dream team concept leads to another area in the company’s “culture of serving.”

Harold Oehler, general counsel to Lazydays, spends a large portion of his time spreading the word about the Lazydays Employee Foundation. “Don Wallace created his own foundation to benefit the arts, education, cancer research, and the Joshua House for children,” Oehler began. “Lazydays employees wanted to follow his lead and do something on their own. In record time we got an IRS-approved foundation [501(c)3] established.”

The foundation’s biggest achievement is the Lazydays House at A Kid’s Place. In 2004 Hillsborough County ranked third in Florida with 13,468 cases of child abuse and neglect. These vulnerable children were the inspiration behind the \$400,000 funding of the Lazydays House at A Kid’s Place. The facility is the first of its kind to

provide temporary emergency shelter for these victimized children while they wait for placement in a foster home. It is one of several homes that make up the child-friendly complex at A Kid’s Place. Located just a few miles from Lazydays in Brandon, A Kid’s Place is a flagship model program for the nation.

Even during the recession, the employees’ support for the Foundation never went below 50 percent participation. Their motto was “We pay the kids first.”

LD employees go out once a month and organize an activity such as a talent show to bring smiles to their faces and let them know we are there for them. They root and cheer for each other. There is a separate room in the house—it’s the child’s turf, so to speak—where adoptive parents visit. When a child is adopted or goes to a foster home, he or she leaves with a wardrobe and a teddy bear.”

For more information about other programs, go to [www.lazydaysemployee-foundation.org](http://www.lazydaysemployee-foundation.org) You will find inspiring stories about the foundation’s contributions to *The Scholarship Program*, “Take

*From left:* Chef Archie Williams deftly prepares several custom omelets simultaneously in the Crown Club’s dining room open Monday through Saturday. • A tempting buffet awaits Crown Club members at lunch time. • Barney Alexander begins his driving school with “body marker” tips to help new drivers determine where to begin making a 90-degree turn. • Two lounge areas are provided for owners: those with and without pets.



JF



JF

Last year, Lazydays pulled out all the stops when Tiffin Motorhomes held a preview rally and dinner at the campground.

Stock in Children” which awards 10 scholarships each year to middle and high school students; *The R.I.C.H. House Shelter*, a safe house where at-risk children can spend their after-school time studying and playing; *It’s All About Kids*, for which a dream team created a place of wonder in the University Square Mall for children in need of a safe place to play; and *The Spring*, a local shelter for victims of domestic violence.

When Harold Oehler learned that Hillsborough County had the highest number of homeless youth of any county in Florida, he went to Covenant House in Orlando to learn more about the problem and how Lazydays might be able to help. Covenant House serves homeless and at-risk youth under 21 including teen parents and their babies.

“Without any adult influence, they are often victimized by predators and become involved in narcotics and prostitution. Their options are very limited,” Oehler noted. “Even though they are homeless and hurting, some try to act as if everything is okay.”

When Oehler started meeting with local officials to get information, he met Jeff Rainey, CEO of Hillsborough Kids, Inc. HKI oversees the care of approximately 2,800 children and teens in the county who have suffered abuse or neglect. Ideas flowed and a plan began to take shape. The Lazydays Employee Foundation agreed to provide \$70,000 annually for a social worker for five years. HKI became the fiduciary, Camelot Community Care provided the physical facility, and the University of South Florida will provide an intern. The Lazydays Youth Development Center was born.

The Center is not a shelter. It is an outreach facility whose first mission is to connect the homeless, unaccompanied youth with his or her immediate family or any relative. The Center’s diversionary program will immediately get youth off the streets. Working with educational and social organizations, the Center connects the child with case management and navigation to get services and needed resources.

When the employees at Lazydays heard about the number of

homeless youth, participation in the foundation jumped from 54 to 67 percent. “Paying the kids first” with their weekly payroll deductions had become even more relevant.

In 2007 Zachary Bonner from nearby Valrico, Florida, paid a visit to Lazydays to present his idea for raising public awareness of the 1.3 million homeless children in America. He planned to walk from “My House to the White House” and asked Lazydays to provide an RV for his mom to drive throughout the trip so they would have a place along the route to stay each night. Just nine years old, Zach’s credibility was never doubted, and he and his mom received a motorhome for the trip. After all, he had received the Presidential Service Award in 2006 from President Bush for the work he had done with his Little Red Wagon Foundation. In 2004 using his wagon, he collected enough bottled water to fill 27 pickup trucks for the victims of Hurricane Charley.

Zachary’s three-leg trip went first to Tallahassee to meet Governor Jeb Bush (280 miles Nov. 3–26, 2007); then from Tallahassee to Atlanta in the fall of 2008 (250 miles); and finally a 668-mile leg to Washington to meet President Bush (May 11–July 10, 2009). On the final stretch, over 500 people, including 300 homeless children, walked with Zach down the National Mall to the capitol. Zach was met by Georgia Senator Saxby Chambliss to discuss the plight of homeless children.

In early 2010, Zach announced his “March Across America” from Tampa to Los Angeles. Again starting at Lazydays, Zach left on March 23 and completed his 2,478 mile walk on September 14, 2010. If you would like to help the 1.3 million homeless children in America, go to the foundation’s website and make a contribution. If you are visiting Lazydays and have good DIY skills, ask about joining a Dream Team for a day.

If you have not yet visited Lazydays, your perception of the company may have been formed by Gordon Myhre (pronounced MY-er). John Horton was impressed with Myhre’s grasp and interpretation of Lazydays image as it existed in 2009. Gordon owned a successful advertising company and frequently did consulting work at Lazydays. But Horton could see Gordon’s passion for making the customers’ dreams become reality and con-

vinced him to join Lazydays to head up the company's marketing department. Gordon is now the CMO, chief marketing officer.

Tall, large frame, a head full of curly, salt and pepper hair, Gordon Myhre seems to be in perpetual motion. "We are rebranding this company," he said with authority. "Bigness is important — how many service bays, how many RVs we have to show you, how many units we sell every year. We're the biggest single site RV dealer in the nation. I was seeing yawns every time I made that pitch and knew that RVers were really looking for something more."

That "something more" is the *customer experience*. Steve Adams, whose office is adjacent to Myhre's, was recently made the director of customer experience. "He is empowered in his job to change, fix, and repair anything that improves the customer experience. Everything the customer sees, feels, and smells is important," Myhre said.

"We are not a giant and somehow better than our competitors because of our size," he continued. "The customer is subjective, not an object. We want to see Lazydays through the eyes of our customers. The customer *is* in control. Many are afraid of social media because they have no control, but in reality they never had control."

Myhre saw a need for a restaurant with light fare in the campground near the pool. "We are building an experience, a sense of wonder. We are not trying to build a restaurant," he laughed. "EXIT 10" has the look and feel of a giant motorhome, inside and out. I was expecting a teenager to slide into the driver's chair and crank up a big diesel. "Steve and I will continue to look subjectively at everything and focus on the customer experience. Customer service is just a part of the total.


"Ownership is not an objective occurrence that takes place at

a point in time," he said. This guy is good, I thought, wondering if he had taught marketing at USF. "Ownership is a subjective experience. And we make it subjective because we form a partnership and continue adding services when and after we hand you the keys: the delivery process, customer education, the 24/7 phone service to help you at 10 p.m. when the slides won't go out, webinars, our online magazine, and bringing you back to Seffner for reunions and annual checkups."

Lazydays is in the process of building a new website. It will have better search and browse functionality, always allowing you to come back to the point where you last browsed. "Our new website will be a better customer experience when we first meet you online," Myhre said.

"We love the pure simplicity of Tiffin Motorhomes and the fact that you can shake hands with an icon. There are no façades," Myhre compared. "Lazydays also has a story that is iconic, a business that started with two travel trailers and \$500 and became the Disneyland of RV marketing. We are combining the value of two great brands. What a combination!"

In 2009 the marketing department launched a new magazine, [www.betterRVing.com](http://www.betterRVing.com). You can receive it by mail or online. "With a staff of six and several writers that we bring into the mix, we are offering valuable content," Myhre noted. "We address technology and do product reviews. Our readers get articles designed to improve their RVing experience — again, we are focusing on *customer experience*. Our "Two for the Road" stories address about 85 percent of our market — a couple living their dream.

"We are here to create joy," he smiled with the satisfaction of a man in love with his job. "The end result — our higher purpose at Lazydays is to put a smile on your face." 

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## An Interview with Jerry Williamson, Tiffin's National Sales Manager

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

The ability to sell something seems to be learned easily by some—it almost comes naturally. As a teenager, Jerry Williamson applied his natural abilities—self-confidence and a friendly personality—and began to carefully study his product, the skills of older salesmen, and his potential buyers. A native of Lubbock, Texas, Williamson has been selling RVs for 33 years and loves his job. He is now the national sales manager for Tiffin Motorhomes.

“As a child I always found ways to earn a little money. When I was eight years old, I sold flower and vegetable seeds door-to-door that I had ordered from a magazine,” he remembered. “That was really my first job. As I got older, I worked at L&H Drug Store delivering circulars, painting fences, and mowing yards.”

Jerry was one of four siblings, three boys and one girl, who were evenly spaced two years apart. “My sister is the oldest and I am the third child,” he said. “One of my friends in junior high school was Eric Sims,” he continued. “His father and mother owned Billy Sims Trailer Town (see *RIS*, 7:3).”

“When we were 14, Eric invited me after school to go hang out at the business,” he related. Billy Sims put them to work picking up trash. Jerry was fascinated with the tent campers and trailers and soon became interested in the business itself. “I saw other things I thought I could do and Billy gave me many opportunities to learn,” he said. Within a year Jerry was working in service, installing air conditioners and repairing plumbing and appliances.

“By the time I was 16, I started doing walk-throughs with the new owners who had purchased trailers and tent campers,” Jerry said. “I was a very shy, skinny kid with long hair. I had to learn how to communicate.”

At 17, Sims offered Jerry the opportunity to sell Rockwood tent campers. “I thought sales was an easy job. The first weekend went okay and after I talked to six or seven customers, I probably got a little cocky,” he laughed.

The next weekend Jerry got his comeuppance. “A couple with children came in and brought along a brother-in-law who was the ‘expert,’” Jerry began. “He began testing my knowledge and

he trashed me, made me look foolish when I couldn’t answer his questions. Oh, was I embarrassed!”

Jerry vowed he would never let that happen again and went to Billy and the lead salesman. “You’ve got to tell the customer more than just how the RV is built,” Billy coached. “You have to find out what kind of camping the customer wants to do, how much he is willing to spend, and then match that with what we have to offer. Then you sell features and benefits.”

Feeling very much a neophyte salesman, Jerry called Rockwood for help. The person he spoke with was impressed with Jerry’s desire to learn. He lengthened the phone call into a teaching session, and then sent Jerry a bundle of literature on everything Rockwood made.

“I began to interpret customers’ verbal responses and their body language,” Jerry said. “I learned how to interview the customer without sounding too inquisitive, and then distill his answers into his needs. Then I could show him the right product. I tried to make the process a good experience for my customer. I realized how much I enjoyed talking with people—from the kids to the grandparents. I learned how a quick smile and friendliness make the difference.”

As his career in service and sales was developing, Jerry’s father became seriously ill, the victim of a brain tumor. His mother remained by her husband’s side for nearly two years, both at home and in the hospital. Jerry had just finished his junior year in high school when his father died.

“Like a teenager, I felt life wasn’t fair,” he recalled. “How will we survive without Dad? I had a good job and used Dad’s death as an excuse to quit school and support the family.”

Billy Sims was not going to let that happen. He learned of Jerry’s decision from a high school teacher who enlisted his help. Jerry remembers that day’s events quite well. It was a pivotal point in his life. “Billy called me to his office and let me know he had no place for me in his business if I didn’t stay in school. He painted a picture for me of where my career would be at 40 years old if I quit school.”

Jerry finished high school and went on to a junior college in

Lubbock where he considered a career in real estate and completed his core curriculum. While in college, he continued working with Billy Sims Trailer Town and soon became Sims’ top salesman.

“Mom went back to college at Texas Tech and earned a degree in business. We were in college at the same time. She really enjoyed school and loved to learn,” Jerry related. “She went into mortgage banking and had a very successful career. She is a great listener when she is one-on-one with an employee or a customer. Long hours didn’t bother her at all. In the past decade she retired four times. Each time area banks offered her positions to help them improve their mortgage banking departments.”

By the time Vada Williamson finished college, she had met and married Chris White. “As a step-father, he came into my life at a time when I needed a father’s guidance,” Jerry said. “He would put an idea out there to help me and somehow he would make it my idea. Mom inspired us with her success in business. I think all of us got our motivation and drive from her.” Jerry’s sister, Christy, is a registered nurse. His older brother, Dennis, heads up a communications business, and his younger brother, Barry, has a management position with Texas Instruments.

Before he was 20, Jerry was working full time as a salesman.

“I knew the RV industry was going to be my career,” Jerry said. “I talked with the manufacturers’ sales representatives on their regular visits to Trailer Town to learn about their jobs. It was easy to see they had good salaries and nice perks.”

The career-minded Williamson began to enjoy an active social life in the college town of Lubbock. But work came first and he made himself a promise not to marry until he was 30. “I wanted to have a well-established career and be ready for a solid relationship,” he said. He almost made it.

“I met Kellie at a dance. A mutual friend introduced us,” Jerry recalled. “Although I didn’t know how to dance, I was so struck when I met her that I asked her for a dance. When the dance was over, I walked over to my brother Barry and said, ‘I’m going to marry that girl.’ Barry was shocked.”

Kellie was from Hereford, Texas, and had graduated from Texas Tech with a degree in secondary education. She was teaching seventh grade and coaching girls basketball, volleyball, and track when they met. Kellie had a very conservative upbringing by two sets of grandparents. She and Jerry were married four months after they met. “I changed my lifestyle completely,” Jerry confessed. “I knew her lifestyle, values, and ethics were the best thing for me.”



Encouraged by Billy Sims, his mentor, to follow his dream, Jerry left Trailer Town at 29 in 1988 to pursue a career as a manufacturer's representative. "I got a call from Fleetwood out of the blue and drove 475 miles to Longview, Texas, for the interview," he said. Fleetwood offered him a trainee position in their towables division.

"I had a great general manager. Vince Monza required all of his people to attend the Dale Carnegie courses," Jerry said. "I took the full set of courses. Fleetwood had a good sales organization and provided the training I needed for career advancement."

In 1990 Monza was promoted to sales manager over Fleetwood's entire towable division which operated out of Riverside, California. In late 1991 Jerry was interviewed for a promotion to assistant manager for sales for the Wilderness Travel Trailer, a brand that was built in Rialto, California. Kellie was expecting and had a teaching contract to fulfill. Jerry was interviewed in Rialto and returned to Longview without knowing the outcome. Vince called Kellie while Jerry was in the air to tell her that he had the job. "Kellie got to tell me that I had the job when she met me at the airport," he laughed. "I left right away for Rialto, but it was four months later before she could make the move. The move from Lubbock to Longview was easy, but the move to California was a leap."

Jacob was born June 4, 1992. The couple found a family to take care of Jacob so Kellie could continue her teaching career. "They were a wonderful family with five children and they treated Jacob like 'little brother,'" Kellie said (she had just joined our interview). Jerry built a solid foundation in the Wilderness Travel Trailer division, but he kept his eye on the motorized division.

In 1994 Jerry put his bid in for a job in motorized, hoping for a move back to Texas. "I knew my sales manager in towables would have to approve the move in order for me to be released from that division," he said. Johnny Hernandez, a sales manager for a Fleetwood towable division in Oregon, offered him a position. Jerry declined. Fortuitously for the Williamsons, Hernandez was promoted to director of sales for all of Fleetwood's motorized divisions.

Later that year Hernandez remembered Jerry's desire to move back to Texas and called to tell him that Fleetwood was going to experiment with a new plan to let their manufacturer's reps work out of their homes. The first location was going to be Dallas. "We were thrilled with the possibility of moving back to Texas. But when I learned there were six applicants, I thought my chances of getting the job were slim," Jerry said.

On the flight from California to Indiana for the interview, Jerry read Coach Jimmy Johnson's book that had just come out: *Turning the Thing Around: Pulling America's Team Out of the Dumps—and Myself Out of the Doghouse*. "By the time I got off the plane, I was pumped full of ideas I wanted to try," Jerry said, finding himself excited again just thinking about the book. "I used a lot of his ideas in my answers to the interviewer's questions," he continued. "They kept probing deeper. A week later I got the job."

They were going home to Texas to a job that had been the

focus of his career plan for several years: a manufacturer's rep to dealers for a major motorized brand. "When we crossed the Oklahoma-Texas line, we stopped to do a picture of our family sitting on the 'Welcome to Texas' sign," Kellie said. In his excitement, Jerry told Kellie that they would never leave Texas again. The new job brought a significant increase in salary and made it possible for Kellie to be a stay-at-home mom, for which they were both very thankful.

While waiting on their movers from California, the Williamsons stayed briefly in a hotel. Anxious to meet the dealers in his territory, Jerry left on a two week trip, leaving Kellie to rent a house and supervise the move-in. "When I returned to Dallas, I had no idea where we lived and Kellie had to guide me in by phone," Jerry said.

As he visited each dealer in his territory, Jerry asked, "Who was the best rep you ever had?" and "What were the characteristics and reasons that made that person your best rep?"

"I compiled and revised that list every month as I asked the questions again and again," he said. "I still have that list today. It made a big difference in my success as a manufacturer's rep. On every subsequent visit to my dealers, I asked them, 'Am I fulfilling my goal to be your best rep ever?'"

Jerry also had a big advantage in retail because he had worked as an RV salesman and had sold directly to the customer for several years. "Training salespeople is a big part of the manufacturer's rep's job," he pointed out. "Meeting my quotas depended on how effective the dealers' salespeople were on the line."

"Over the next year I noticed at dealers where my Pace Arrow brand competed against Tiffin Motorhomes, the Allegro was outselling my brand by nearly two to one," Jerry said. "Finally, I met Danny Inman in 1996 at an RV show in Dallas and asked if I could look at his Allegros. He was open and approachable. To my surprise, he answered all of my questions fully and without hesitation."

Jerry was astonished. They were competitors, yet Danny treated him like a friend. Jerry went back to his dealers and asked why the Allegro was outselling the Pace Arrow. "They are just a great company to work with and Bob Tiffin bends over backwards to take care of the owners and keep us happy," they told him.

In 1996 Jerry attended a Fleetwood sales meeting in Indiana and spoke with Mike Andes about his recent decision to go with Tiffin. A year later Jerry called Mike again to see how his transition to TMH had gone. "Mike was happy and put me in touch with Tiffin's national sales manager, Kelly Moore," Jerry said. Moore did not have a position available and Jerry began to check with him once a month, hoping for a change.

Almost a year later, Moore called to tell Jerry that TMH might be making a change in Texas and invited him to come to Red Bay for an interview. Moore interviewed Jerry at his home in Red Bay and then took him to the plant to meet Bob Tiffin.

"I thought the interview with Bob went badly and I even called Kellie to tell her I didn't think I had a chance of getting the job," Jerry recalled. To his surprise, he was offered the job

the following week. After two years as Tiffin's manufacturer's rep in Texas, Jerry was tapped to become the company's national sales manager in 2000.

"TMH wanted me to come immediately, so I towed my Wilderness travel trailer to the Allegro Campground and camped for eight weeks while Kellie put our home on the market and oversaw the move to northwest Alabama," Jerry said.

As soon as he arrived at the plant, Jerry began to see the company's products evolving. "That year was a turning point because the Tiffins had made a strong research, design, and planning commitment to build the best Class A motorhomes in the U.S. in all of the price-point categories in which they were competing," Jerry explained. "They spent whatever it took to get the best equipment to build the motorhomes.

"As I got to know Bob, Tim, Van, and Lex better, I realized that they are not money-driven. They are customer-driven," he continued. "They don't have to worry about paying stockholder dividends. You could say the dividends go to our customers as they spend more each year for the quality of the materials and features that are added to each brand.

"The three sons took over in 2000 and flat made it happen. They have Bob and Judy's values and that is one reason why this company is doing so well. They made it possible for Bob to work frequently with the dealers at sales events, to have more time to visit with owners here at the plant, and to focus on expansion of

the company's physical plant," Jerry said. "Bob has the 'been there, done that' experience when they seek advice. That's why it is truly a pleasure to work with a 'two generation,' family-owned company."

As the new national sales manager, Jerry saw from a geographical and a performance perspective a number of changes that needed to be made in the dealer base. He realized that was Job One.

"We have seven sales reps now and have redrawn the boundaries several times. We have put people in the places where their specialized talents will bring the greatest benefits," he elaborated. "The company has grown tremendously during the last 11 years.

"We did not have a human resources department five years ago. That department has made huge strides in personnel and benefits management. The functionality of cost accounting, general accounting, parts and service management, purchasing, just-in-time scheduling, and information technology were vastly improved with the installation of SAP software," Jerry said. "It has been exciting to be a part of this company's rise to the top of the Class A motorhome marketplace."

Under Williamson's leadership, TMH now operates frequent training seminars in the city's A&E Center. Two-day seminars focus on product training. The sales reps bring in their dealers' salespeople, one dealer at a time for detailed product knowledge and features-benefits training.

"We want our salespeople to understand why our construction

*Continued on page 50*

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## The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

### She's Happy – He's Lucky PART 2

by Dave McClellan

After four hours on the road we entered a campground just off Rte 209 and stopped at the office. A fellow came out with a golf cart (you know the routine) and I followed him up on an elevated road. He turned left down an embankment and stopped in their so-called pull-through site. I watched in amazement as he motioned me to turn left, come to him, and go down the embankment to the site below. There was no way I could do that without tipping the motorhome over on its side. Stalling for time, I got out and shouted down to him that I was going to take the dingy off first, hoping that he would leave me alone so I could take the lower road and back up into the site. He did finally leave, so I backed up off the upper road onto the lower road. With the great turning radius of the Phaeton, it was an easy task backing into the site. Was this guy for real? Unlike during some of my earlier years, I have resolved that staying calm in situations like these is sometimes the best way to deal with people, and I expected he didn't have a clue what could happen, or who knows, maybe he had a friend that owned a tow truck company in need of work.

We got settled in and after an hour went to see Terri's sister in Easton, Pennsylvania (30 miles away) for dinner and lots of conversation, catching up on family happenings. We drove back to the campground later that evening for a restful night and the next day's journey to Winchester, Virginia. Terri phoned ahead to the Candy Hill Campground to make a reservation for the next night.

Going through Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, was a nightmare because my worst fears quickly became a reality when I made a wrong turn and ended up smack dab in the middle of the very narrow city streets, not knowing how to get out of there safely. Making almost impossible

turns through the streets was like nothing else I had ever experienced. They were just too narrow and on several right turns I almost took down corner obstructions like signs, traffic lights and telephone poles with the dingy. If I was ever to panic, this was the time. The five GPS units really let us down. Or was it our own fault for not going over our route before we left. After running in circles and going over the same streets twice, we finally found a place to pull off and go over the maps. We lucked out and the correct turn was just up ahead. I have to admit that after that experience I was ready for the funny farm. Is it time to quit and go home yet? “What home?” Terri said. In the future we will take the time to go over our next day's trip.

Reaching our destination in Winchester, Virginia, at the Candy Hill campground was a much needed relief and we were satisfied with the pull-through site that was assigned to us. We were actually still talking to each other. It's times like this that will tell you the truth about togetherness. Being in these types of situations and in such close quarters can get people on edge very quickly. Terri and I often wondered what full-timing would do to our relationship but we had been camping for 17 years and knew that this is what we both wanted. Having each other as best friends is certainly a major factor to survive this lifestyle. Having a Phaeton motorhome with opposing slide-outs also keeps us far enough apart with room to roam. We just love this rig.

The next morning it sounded as if there was a hurricane outside. The motorhome was swaying and rocking like I have never felt before. Okay, so stop laughing! Our nerves began to get on edge while watching TV as we heard about the tornado warnings, high winds, and cold weather with possible snow. With all that wind

blowing, the most unbelievable experience for me was that Terri slept through it all. Drop a pin, any other time, and she would wake up immediately and tell me I was making too much noise. It must be a wonderful trait to be able to relax so deeply. Go figure! The wind reminded me of that old song, “Shake Rattle and Roll” by Bill Haley and the Comets.

We ended up staying at this campground for three days because of the unsettling weather. It would have been a nerve-racking drive on the interstate so we took the extra time to visit the Shenandoah Valley Museum. After the wind died down we were ready to leave the campground and head out for the North Carolina border.

When packing up to leave, it is my job to take care of the outside duties and Terri does the inside packing. So we were all set to go and I pulled out of the site, but wait...what's that electric cord that I can see in my mirror? It's following me and it seems to be attached to the pedestal that just fell forward. Yes, you're right, it was mine! “Where is my check list?” I asked Terri. With a cute smile she stated, “Why, it's in the desk drawer.” I thought it best to end the conversation right there. I've seen this embarrassing event done by others, but as I've told Terri in the past, “That could never happen to me!” We stopped at the office and explained what happened and the attendant wrote down my address and phone number. Hopefully, because I stood the pedestal back up and packed dirt around it, I won't receive any additional charges. We have our fingers and toes crossed.

We are on a limited budget and didn't plan for expenses like damage to other property although I suspect our insurance would pay after a large deductible. Our plans to finance our full-timing includes funds we put into annuities over the past years and our social security income. We felt that SS alone would limit our retirement activities. We also make and sell foam corner protectors for slide-outs, do laminating, and design and print

identification cards with pictures for RV'ers to exchange with others.

Not wanting to travel anywhere near Philly, Baltimore, and DC, we headed towards Rte 81 south to Rte 64 east and then on to Rte. 95 stopping at the Car-

olina Crossroads RV Resort in North Carolina at exit #171. It's a Passport America member park, recommended by a fellow camper, and the rate was \$21 a day. It was a fairly new place, all flat sites, and

*Continued on page 55*

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER *Continued from page 4*

population in the last 40 years and "farm population" (as defined by the U.S. Census) in the four county area has decreased. But most of us still "live in the country." As we move into the future, most of our employees will still come from a rural background. Our heritage is generational and today there are many children and even a few grandchildren of our early employees working at Tiffin Motorhomes. In a changing world, the value system in our rural Alabama culture is prevailing. I am pleased and proud to tell you about our employees in this column and how they have been able to make TMH into a strong company with a great product. **RIS**

## BELLINGRATH GARDENS *Continued from page 17*

were permanently opened to the public in 1934 as Rogers directed his attention to the design of the Bellingrath's new home in the English Renaissance style. The home was built in 1935. An avid collector of antiques, Mrs. Bellingrath became a regular customer of shops from Mobile to New Orleans. She found other pieces in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, as well as in Europe during their 1927 tour. While the gardens were open throughout the year, the residence remained their private retreat through the 1940s.

Sadly, after the residence was completed, Mrs. Bellingrath was blessed with only seven years to enjoy their riverside home with its beautiful surroundings. On a vacation to Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1943, she died after a sudden heart attack at age 64. After her death Walter dedicated himself to maintaining the gardens she had worked so hard to create. In 1949 he funded the Bellingrath-Morse Foundation "to maintain the gardens and oversee the operation of the museum home as a fitting and permanent memorial to my wife."

Walter died in 1955 at age 86. The following year the Bellingrath home was opened to the public and became a part of the tour. In the 1960s a new entrance building and café replaced an older facility and the Asian-American Garden was installed. In 1976 the six-car garage under the guest house was remodeled to house the Delchamps Gallery of Boehm Porcelain.

In 1995 the *Southern Belle* river cruiser was launched to offer passengers waterfront tours of the gardens and the Fowl River's ecology. "Magic Christmas in Lights" began in 1995. With over three million lights and 928 set pieces in 13 scenes, it has become a popular annual event. Also opened in 1996, the Bayou Boardwalk features interpretive panels to inform visitors about the ecology, history, flora and fauna of the Fowl River watershed.

While Hurricanes Frederic and Ivan have reeked havoc over the last 32 years, the gardens have been repaired each time and continue to renew themselves. Walter mandated that the home be kept just as it was when the family lived there. All of the furnishings and collections are original, but they were not displayed then as they are now. **RIS**



## Have Vaccine, Will Travel

by Dr. John P. Pilarczyk

In our last issue, we talked about traveling with your cat. In this issue, we will discuss their vaccinations and some health issues that cats are prone to have.

Keeping your cat's vaccinations up to date is very important while on the road, especially when crossing either border. The Rabies vaccine in particular must be current. In Canada your pet must have had the vaccine within the previous year. As you travel, the time may come when you have to board your feline friend in a kennel, which also requires an up-to-date vaccine.

The core vaccines all cats should have are: Distemper, Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calici Virus and Rabies. The non-core vaccines are: Leukemia, Feline Aids, Bordetella and Chlamydomphila. Non-core vaccines should be given based on individual circumstances. For instance, all outdoor cats should be vaccinated against Aids since their chances of getting bitten and exposed to this virus are greater than a cat that stays indoors only.

If you are a person who likes to take in strays, then I recommend the non-core vaccines for your pets. If your cat attends cat shows, they should have the non-core vaccines. For traveling in your RV, I recommend giving your cat all of the core vaccines and the Leukemia vaccine, just in case your cat escapes.

Vaccine protocol has changed in recent years due to new research on duration of immunity. The Rabies vaccine can be for one year or three years. If you are traveling in Canada frequently, get the one year vaccine. The Distemper, Calici, and Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis vaccines are now considered good for three years with a one year booster. Your cat should receive the Leukemia vaccine as a kitten, with a booster at one year; after which boosters should be determined on an individual basis.

Vaccines should be of the non-adjuvanted kind to reduce the risk of infection site Sarcoma. An adjuvant inoculation causes chronic inflammation at the site which then causes immune cells to respond and create immunity. These Sarcoma cells can appear much later as a hard lump under the skin in the area where the vaccine was given. Although this condition is rare in cats, affecting one in 10,000; if it is your cat, statistics don't matter. There is some DNA predilection to this problem.

Cats are susceptible to heartworm disease and to being infested with fleas and ticks. As you are traveling through different

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.

states, it is best to keep them on a preventative treatment year round. I prefer Revolution, which is a topical treatment that prevents fleas, ticks, heartworms, hookworms, roundworms, sarcoptic mites and ear mites. This once a month treatment takes care of a lot of problems.

In older cats, you need to be on the lookout for diabetes, kidney disease and hyperthyroidism, all of which require blood testing. A blood profile is recommended once a year for your cat. You will then be able to determine if any abnormalities are developing in your cat's organs.

Enjoy your feline friends. Happy Travels! If you have any questions or other topics you want discussed, please send an email to me at parkwayvet@yahoo.com.



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## OWNER PROFILE *Continued from page 31*

The Dabneys exuberance for full timing is convincing. Are there any complications to their new lifestyle? “Yes,” Jan quickly answers. “Both of our mothers are in their eighties. We plan regular trips to see them and spend Thanksgiving and Christmas with family. That’s important.”

At a personal level, Jan misses the pool at their home in Nassau Bay and Joe misses the meetings with friends and business peers. “I always enjoyed attending the CFA meetings and lunches. We don’t miss our larger wardrobes,” Joe said. “I’ve got a suit and a sports coat with slacks for meetings with clients. The rest is golf shirts and jeans.”

“I have a couple of nice pant suits, but otherwise it’s blouses and pants that go through the washer,” Jan added. At a practical level, they schedule regular trips during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays back to Houston and Livingston for doctors’ appointments.

Jan said the three things she likes best about her Allegro Bus are the dishwasher, the washer and dryer, and the kitchen. Joe enjoys the efficiency of his office plus their ability to serve their clients so effectively by taking the office to them. “And I just like to go!” he emphasized again.

Is full timing still the right decision? “You bet it is!” they chorused. **RIS**

## TIFFIN MANAGEMENT TEAM *Continued from page 45*

methods make a Tiffin product better than the competition’s,” Jerry said. “We promote the fact that the company is family owned and explain the benefits that offers to our owners. We want our salespeople throughout the country to feel like they are a part of the Tiffin family. We laugh about being ‘Tiffimized,’ but you can bet we are serious about it. When they leave Red Bay, they understand why Tiffin as a company cannot be copied.”

As an observer, Jerry noticed when he joined TMH that the company sponsored an annual fishing tournament. The department managers cooked for the fishermen there at the lake. The sales staff added a Funfest for the wives and children who in past years simply waited for weigh-in and cook-out. “There were games for the families and I got to meet them and see their smiles,” Jerry said. Each year the event became larger and finally evolved into an Annual Company Picnic which takes place under a huge tent. There are 20 inflatables for the kids to bounce and slide on, face painting, professional entertainment, clowns, motorcycle rides, a fireworks show, and, of course, a catered cook-out and meal.

We finally came to three big questions:

- **What was or is the most difficult and challenging part of your job?**

“In the beginning, I did not know my boundaries. Tiffin Motorhomes is not big on corporate structure and that made me unsure of myself and how much I could do. But on the other hand, it gave me a broader canvas to paint. At Tiffin, boundaries of what you can do, and how far your game plan can go, are sometimes determined by your talent and ability and probably by what your plan will cost. This approach allows you to let your ideas grow and expand. Then you schedule a conference with upper management to evaluate and put the parameters in place. The paradigm here is: *‘Be imaginative, try new ideas, think broadly — but let’s not make the same mistakes we have already made.’* The system works.”

- **What has been your greatest sense of accomplishment?**

“For the first six months in 2010, Tiffin Motorhomes was No. 1 in Class A motorhome manufacturing. In January 2011 we were No. 1 again with a 22.5% share of the market. Winnebago had a 20.8% share. By specific brands in the top five positions, the Phaeton is No. 1, the Allegro Bus is No. 2, and the Allegro Red is No. 4. When I came in 2000, Tiffin Motorhomes had a 2.9% share of the Class A market. In January 2011, as noted earlier, we had a 22.5% share.”

- **Tell us about your family.**

“Kellie is a realtor now. Jacob has grown up since we moved to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, 11 years ago. He got involved in motocross racing about five years ago. He is going to races during his senior year in high school and earning points which will qualify him for the fourth time in the Amateur National Championship, which is held each year at Loretta Lynn’s Ranch in Hurricane Mills, Tennessee. He plans to study at a community college this fall to get his core curriculum and decide on a major later. He also enjoys training younger students in motocross. Jacob has a big heart for kids. There are a lot of jobs in the motocross industry, so hobby and sport may develop into a life’s work for him. Now that Jacob can manage on his own, Kellie enjoys traveling with me as I visit with our dealers. She also enjoys assisting with the set-up for some of the many shows and rallies we do each year.” **RIS**

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# Building the Prototype on the Assembly Line

When customer surveys and market research indicate that a new floorplan in a Tiffin brand would be well received, a host of planners in several departments begin a coordinated effort to create the new product. The first version is usually called “the prototype.” The basic floorplan and the chassis with its primary infrastructure have to be developed in concert.

The company’s R&D department takes the selected chassis and begins construction of the box with its exterior and interior walls. A floorplan may look good on paper, but how does it “feel” when you move around inside? The plans for the cabinetry in the galley, hutches, bath, overhead cabinets in the slide-outs, plus the modules for the washer-dryer, refrigerator, half and full baths, shower, and rear closets which also form dividing walls, are all drawn in near-infinite detail for the Tiffin woodworking shop to build. Planning engineers frequently check the shop’s compliance to the plans to assure all the pieces of the giant puzzle will fit perfectly together when they reach the assembly line. The plans for the wiring harness and the plumbing, both critical components to the new coach’s functionality, are designed with detailed specifications and carefully checked.

Although the above-mentioned components are major checkpoints to guarantee the smooth assembly of the prototype, hundreds of additional components must meet the design specs and be checked before the reckoning day when the chassis begins its journey through the welding shop and then the assembly line.

It is a fulfilling experience for the engineers to oversee the assembly of a prototype and to watch the execution of their design come to life. Following are a few images recording the birth of the Allegro RED 38 QRA, our featured coach for this issue. Only four minor problems were discovered and corrected as the new motorhome was assembled—a tribute to the great engineering at Tiffin Motorhomes.



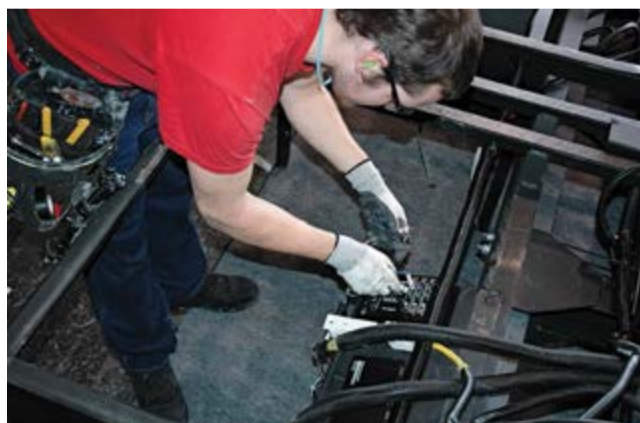
*While the Freightliner chassis is in the welding shop, it receives a sturdy steel sub-floor.*



*For better balance, the LP tank is turned laterally across the chassis. Note the controls on the rounded end of the tank.*



*At Station 2 on the assembly line, the white freshwater tank goes in first followed by the grey tank on the left and the black tank on the right.*



*The surround sound control system is mounted on a small platform and attached to one of the chassis rails. It can be serviced through the large pass-through storage area.*

Read from top to bottom



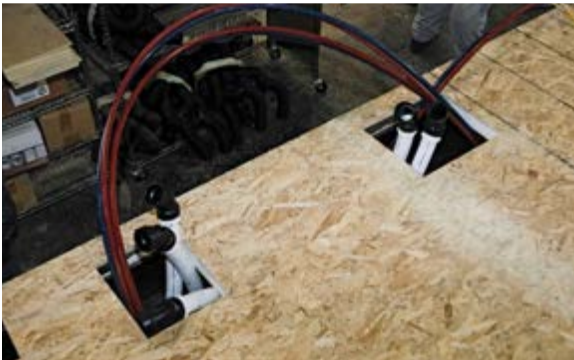
*An overhead crane suspends the OSB floor while employees position it for attachment to the chassis subfloor.*

*Although very complex, the wiring for the dash is completed in less than 90 minutes.*



*With air-driven tools, employees attach the OSB to the steel subfloor with self-tapping screws.*

*Three separate modules for the rear bath were built in the woodworking shop and transported to the assembly line.*



*Openings in the sub-floor expose drain pipes into the grey and black tanks as well as water lines for the shower and washer.*

*The cabinet for the washer/dryer has been installed and the vanity for the half bath is next.*



*Built off-line, a platform for the rear bath shows the recess for the shower on the left and a pedestal for the closet in the rear.*

*A crane suspends the passenger-side wall until it is attached with 4-inch self-tapping screws to the steel subfloor.*



*A base across which the front slide-out will move is attached at Station 3.*

*Also at Station 5, the driver-side wall is attached.*





*Operating as a team, one person aligns the wall with a leverage bar while another drives the 4-inch screws into the frame.*



*At Station 8, air conditioners, satellite receiver, TV antenna, and power vents are installed.*



*The forward passenger slide-out moves on a vertically mounted power system.*

*At Station 9, the slide-out for the bed is suspended from a sling while workmen move it into the wall opening. The heavier front slides are installed with power lifts.*



*Built in another part of the plant, the roof assembly is lowered into place with an overhead crane.*

*Shown here is the rear cap suspended and ready for installation.*



*The fiberglass wall is attached to the side of the roof frame. Then screws are driven vertically through the roof assembly into the top of the wall assembly.*

*As the motorhome enters its third day on the assembly line, cabinet doors, fascias, and closet doors are installed*



*Manufactured in Tiffin's Water Way plant, the one-piece fiberglass roof is glued to the top of the roof assembly.*

*A 4-door gas-electric refrigerator was used in the prototype. Later, in the feature story, you will notice an all-electric residential unit.*



FROM THE ROAD *Continued from page 47*  
 a nice overnight stop-over park. (Don't ever discount valuable information from other campers.) While setting up, we met a wonderful couple with a 2008 Phaeton. We exchanged names and addresses so that we could keep in touch until we met again in Red Bay. Our appointments were scheduled within a day of each other in March 2011 and we agreed we would search each other out.

Everything worked out well this day. Our Phaeton with the 360 HP Cummins engine ran like a top and we didn't get lost. I only barked at my navigator a few times when she was tardy telling me which way to go. More than once her reply had nothing to do with the directions here on earth! That's what I love about her; she doesn't haggle and always gets right to the point!

So far we have only wanted to jump ship three times but we will keep trying to get things right to extend our journey to the Willow Tree RV Resort near Myrtle Beach for a two week stay. Finally, we're getting a break to relax and ponder our previous and new adventures. When I became retirement age and finally fell into the full-timing mode, I quickly lost the daily routine of doing any kind of work, stopped mowing the lawn and shoveling the snow. I began to be more conscious of my longevity. At times I feel guilty that I'm not near my children and friends and not by their side to answer their calls for help. It's a strange phenomenon and sometimes a strong gut-wrenching feeling, especially when you have more time to reminisce about your life. I am hopeful that this will diminish with the encouragement that we are receiving from family and friends.

We arrived safely and without any trouble at the Willow Tree Resort in Long, SC, but "Holy Cow," as the announcer for the New York Yankees, Phil Rizzuto, used to say. We turned into the driveway, drove about a quarter mile, and there it was. "Terri," I exclaimed with surprise, "This can't be the campground we booked!" **RIS**

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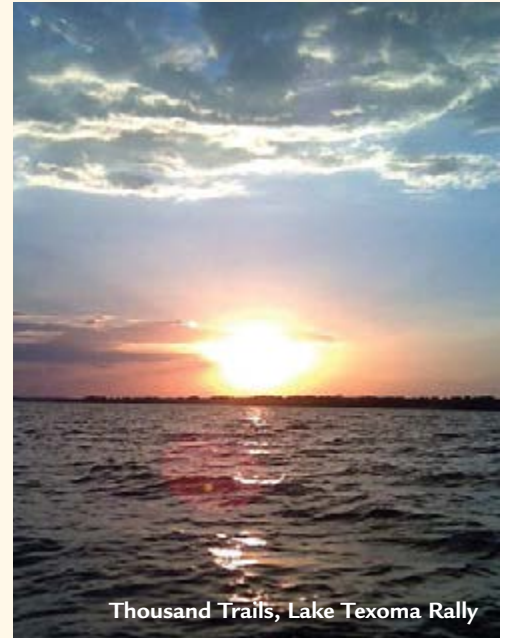
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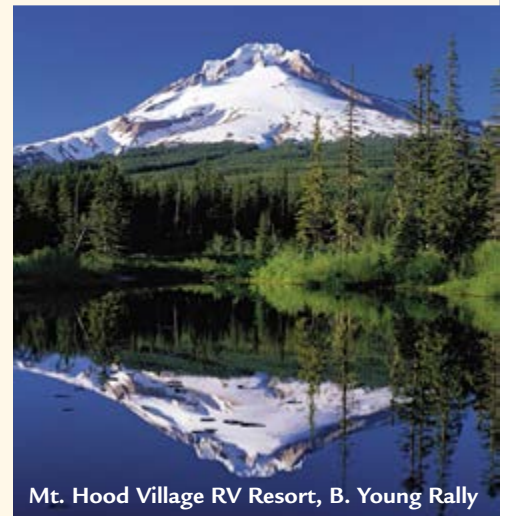
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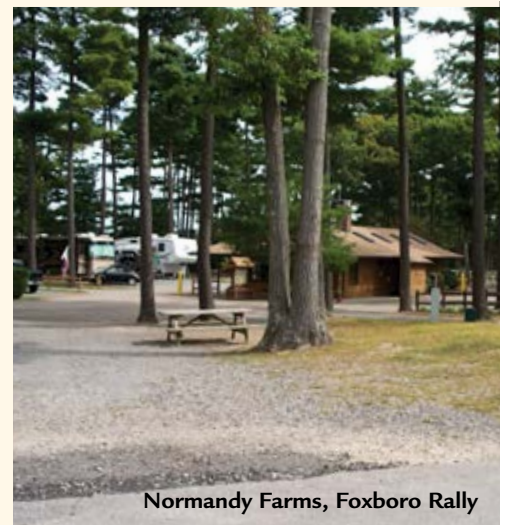
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## Interviews from Red Bay and Mobile, Alabama



### Alice Quigley

Hometown: Martinez, California

Interviewed at Tiffin in Red Bay, Alabama

- Alice owns & drives a 2006 Allegro Bus 40 QSP with a Freightliner chassis and Cummins 400.
- Began RVing in 1979 - had 5th wheels and a horse trailer with living quarters for horseback riding & the outdoors.
- Married 40 years - has 2 daughters: A daughter in CA & 2 granddaughters. A daughter in ID & 1 granddaughter.
- A "special gift" from her husband ... he taught Alice the mechanical care of the 'bus' & how to drive the 'bus' prior to his passing away 2 years ago.
- Her "travel experiences are confidence builders" She's "treated the same as any man!" She "enjoys conversations with new people & their friendliness."
- Mt. Rushmore and the Grand Canyon are Alice's favorites and Yuma, AZ is where family members rendezvous.
- Future: to the Kennedy Space Center.
- She prefers driving 250-300mi. daily and tows a Chevy Malibu.
- Has driven in 20+ states & she appreciates having no schedule, no structure and enjoys the freedom to stay as long as she wants!
- Alice retired in 2001 after 41 years of teaching grades 1-3 in three schools.
- Her hobbies include needlepoint and making 'memory bears' for Hospice.



### Paul & Shirley Boykin

Hometown: Green Cove Springs, Florida

Interviewed in Mobile, Alabama

- Paul & Shirley own a 2009 Phaeton 40 QTH with a Freightliner chassis and Cummins 360.
- They recently ordered a new 2010 Tiffin Motorhome with their own specifications.
- They have been married 43 years.
- Their daughter lives in Mobile and it's a repeat destination.
- Their son lives in Raleigh, NC and they rendezvous with him in his coach.
- They have 8 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.
- Having started out tenting & boating, the Boykins began RVing in 1978.
- They have owned 8+ RVs and became full timers in 2005.
- Paul does 100% of the driving.
- They've enjoyed an old-time train ride to Keystone, SD and a trip to the Jolly Green Giant in Blue Earth, MN.
- Paul's career progressed from DJ, to TV news reporter, to TV broadcast engineering and he continues his consulting - i.e. Regis & Kelly Show.
- While working in CA they invented the 'in-car' cameras that are used in police and racing cars.
- Paul's hobbies are golf & ham radio.
- Shirley's hobbies include reading, golf and water aerobics.



### Ron & Debi Thompson

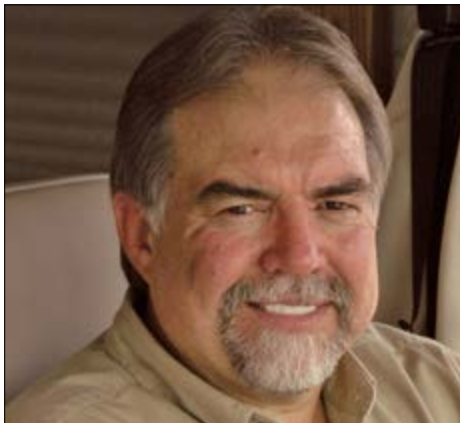
Hometown: Avon, Indiana

Interviewed at Tiffin in Red Bay, Alabama

- Ron & Debi own a 2010 Phaeton 40 QTH with a Freightliner chassis and Cummins 360.
- They have been married 25 years.
- They have 3 sons, 1 daughter, 13 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.
- Ron & Debi began RVing in 1986, have had 6 RVs & travel 7-8 mos. annually.
- Ron drives 100% of the time and he prefers to drive 250 miles per day.
- Favorites: Hoover Dam and Virgin Canyon.
- Future destinations: northern part of the United States & New Brunswick.
- Rendezvous w/family in Rhode Island, Michigan, Florida, Utah, and Louisiana.
- Ron was a fire fighter for 32 years and retired in 2000.
- His hobbies are woodworking, golf, and all sports.
- Debi was a systems engineer 7 years with American Trans Air thru 2004.
- Her hobbies include stained glass, jewelry, pottery, crafts, oil painting, basket weaving & wood carving.
- Ron's been Santa Claus for 4 yrs. The day after Thanksgiving he is flown by helicopter to the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis - daily average is 1,500 children thru Christmas Eve - 97% sit on his lap & Debi takes the pictures! Note: 3 mo. growth on annual beard!

**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."





### 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, or 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 find your Tech Talk column in *Roughing It Smoothly* is very helpful. Thank you for taking the time to answer our questions.

I have a 2006 Phaeton. The water pump switches have a light on the switch. I assume the electrical design is set up to illuminate the lights on all the switches when one switch is turned ON, so that you will be able to tell at any switch location if the pump is ON.

I bought my coach last year and only one of the lights illuminates. Could you offer me a test sequence, and where to test, to locate and correct the problem? I find it difficult to believe that the lights at all four switches are burned out. Thanks for your help.

Errol Wilkins  
 Snohomish, Washington

Dear Errol,

The quickest way to test is to take the switch whose light works and place it in one of the other switch positions that is not working. Follow this procedure for the other locations. If the good switch does not work in the tested location, go to the control panel which is located behind the plastic panel at the holding tank dump area. Check to see if there are any wires loose at the control panel. If not, you should replace the control panel. But I think you will find that the bulbs in the switches are burned out.

After three sets of batteries, we found there was not a wire for the turn-off switch on the panel by the entry steps. We should have had it checked after buying it new in 2003 at La Mesa RV in Davis, California. They had to run a new wire from the panel to the batteries. What gives? It did not just disappear! It was not there when we took delivery. Also, how come the sky light over the shower has always leaked when it rains even though there is plenty of caulking on all four sides of the opening on the roof.

Russell Kelly  
 Modesto, California

Dear Russell,

The 12-volt disconnect switch malfunction could have been an oversight at TMH and at the PDI done by La Mesa. However, it should have been discovered within the first few months of your using the coach. If you turn off the 12-volt disconnect and the lights in the coach are still on, then you know that the switch is not working.

Caulking can be deceiving as far as how it looks. Sometimes it does not adhere to the fiberglass after the first year or two. You should check it every year for adherence. If the caulking on the skylight is good, you need to check for other locations on the roof where a leak could allow water to enter the roof system and run out at the skylight.

We have a 2008 Zephyr that we just love. We get issues of *Roughing It Smoothly* and really enjoy seeing all of Tiffin's new floorplans and innovations. We read every issue! What a wonderful magazine. Serious Tech Talk is one of my favorite areas.

One thing we have read about and now have seen on the 2011 Tiffin models is the larger grey water dump valve and line. Is it possible to retrofit the improvement on our Zephyr?

Keep up the good work and great quality motorhomes.

Harold Diederich  
 Big Lake, Minnesota

Dear Harold,

To do a retrofit on your Zephyr, the black tank would have to be replaced and the plumbing system would have to be reworked. Tiffin Service Center cannot address this retrofit because of the time it would take and the number of owners who would likely want to make the same change. Our current policy on this applies to all brands.

In the Spring 2007 issue of *RIS* (volume 4, number 2), you stated: "We have corrected these problems on newer motorhomes by adding battery disconnect switches for both the engine and house batteries when storing your motorhome for long periods of time. Also we have added a charging device that will trickle charge the engine batteries when you are plugged in to shore power. This item can be added to any motorhome."

My 2008 32LA does not have a charging device to trickle charge the engine battery. Should one have been installed by Tiffin? If not, what should I install now and how should it be wired? I have looked at the Trik-L-Start.

Doug Smith  
Surrey, British Columbia

Dear Doug,  
Tiffin only installs the trickle charge system on rear engine diesels. There are several different brands available, but we use Battery Keeper. You can order it from Tiffin Parts (256-356-0261). The price is \$55.24 plus shipping. Part #25148. Using shore power, you should run a 110v line off one of your existing plugs to your trickle charger. Take extra precaution in running the line to prevent it from rubbing against anything that could break the insulation and create a short.

My wife is disappointed with the surround system because we are not able to shut off the sound in the bedroom without going to the front of the coach, finding the fader on the JVC radio, and making the necessary adjustments. Can this be remedied?

Mitch Meacham  
Corona del Mar, California

Dear Mitch,  
The speakers in the bedroom are not part of the surround sound system which is only in the living room area. The bedroom speakers are part of the automotive radio. The only way to remedy your problem is to wire an on-off switch at the bedside table to the speakers above the headboard.

I have a 2010 Allegro RED 34TGA on a Freightliner chassis. It is difficult to heat and cool the front of the motorhome which is very poorly insulated. Both AC units should be moved forward for better cooling. I upgraded the front AC to a 15,000 BTU unit, but I still have trouble

cooling the front of the motorhome. Do you have any suggestions?

I love the floorplan. It is the best floorplan I have ever seen for a 34-ft. motorhome and I have been RVing for over 50 years.

Lloyd W. Vanduyo  
Artesia, California

Dear Lloyd,  
The Tiffin parts department offers an adjustable vent that can be closed. If you place three of these in the rear output vents, it will force more of the air from the AC/heat pumps to the front of the coach.

I have a 40-ft. 2008 Phaeton. I like the coach but I am disappointed with the windows. Some have water between the dual panes and the bathroom window has turned white. Is there anything that can be done short of replacing them? I would not have expected this to happen on a coach this new. Any suggestions will be appreciated.

Dick Lyda  
Camdenton, Missouri

Dear Dick,  
The windows are warrantied for three years from the original date of purchase.

This frustrated cook needs help. The Princess Gourmet gas cooktop in our 2008 Allegro Bus cooks too hot. A 5-quart pot on the smallest burner will maintain a rolling boil even when the burner is turned to its lowest position. It is impossible to “simmer” a food item. Is there an adjustment I can make to reduce the gas flow, or otherwise reduce the heat on the burners?

Eugenia Bozeman  
Green Cove Springs, Florida

Dear Eugenia,  
After you turn it on simmer, remove the knob and you will see a brass set screw that adjusts the flame. Be very careful not to let the flame get too low where it could easily blow out with the slightest whiff of air. There is a thermocouple to

prevent the gas from leaking into the coach if the flame goes out. If you don't feel comfortable making this adjustment, you can take the coach to a service center that sells and services propane gas appliances. We have noticed that many RVers use an electric crockpot for slow cooking of soups or roasts with vegetables. Electric skillet also are popular and usually have lower temperature settings.

I own a great 2002 Allegro 31-ft. coach. My cruise control has stopped working. It cut off a few times while in operation, and then it completely stopped. I checked the fuses inside the coach and in the front compartment. Where else can I check? Could it be something else besides a faulty fuse?

Chris Sterious  
Chester Springs, Pennsylvania

Dear Chris,  
Check the brake light switch to be sure it is working. Then check the cruise control servo motor located in the engine compartment to make sure all the lines are properly connected. If this does not solve your problem, take the coach to a Ford or Workhorse service center.

**My Husband's Great Idea for Restranging Shades**

We have had a frustrating and expensive time with our shades breaking. When one shade broke a third time, he decided to fix it himself. After reading “Restranging Day-Night Shades” in the Winter 2011 issue, he was impressed with your well-illustrated article. But he came up with a better idea that I thought you would be interested in hearing.

He used 80-lb. fishing line instead of the cord supplied by TMH. It is easy to work with and the shade pulls smoothly and quietly. He just hopes never to have to fix one for a double or triple window.

Sandra Thompson  
Prattville, Alabama

Dear Sandra,  
Thanks for your suggestion. I am sure our readers will want to try the 80-lb. fishing line.

The “Older Brother” article says the Alleghros from the 1980s did not have much of a problem with roof leaks. We have had leaks since we bought our 1984 Allegro in the summer of 1989. We have put sealer on it almost every other year. The original AC leaked badly and was replaced recently. The roof had sunk and it cost extra to seal the new AC—which still leaks. The cost to install an entirely new roof is just too expensive. It also leaks around the clearance lights and the edge-of-the-roof lights don't work at all. We don't drive at night, so that is not a big problem. When we camp, we resort to using a blue tarp to keep out the rain. The inside is now

moldy and the paneling is in bad shape. The ceiling has been repainted but now needs replacing. We have been trying to do the work, but it is getting too hard for us. We want to take more trips and not get wet. Why does our motorhome leak and others do not?

Ralph & Nancy Gwinn  
Cocoa, Florida

Dear Ralph & Nancy,  
Your best option is a new roof system. However, before you invest approximately \$6,000 in a new roof, you should have a certified RV repair facility evaluate your motorhome for other problems which also could be expensive to repair. If the rest of your unit is fairly solid, then a new roof system may be a good investment.

I have a 2008 Allegro Bus 40QRP. The toilet is a Dometic Concerto. Sometimes

it will flush, sometimes not. I have opened the trap by the side with a screw driver. My repair man changed all of the wires. We still have the same problem. What do you suggest?

GillesVaillancourt  
La Salle, Quebec

Dear Gilles,  
This toilet is electrically flushed. It could be a loose wire, a faulty electric switch, or the flush motor. You should take your coach to a professional repair facility and have it checked by a certified technician. Your dealer is your best option.

I have a 2006 Phaeton which I love. I am an older guy who wakes up early each morning. I get up and usually watch shows I record on my DVR from the previous night. So as not to wake my wife, I use headphones plugged into my TV. The

**Customer Responses About Losing Power**

**Another “Reduced Power Incident”**

I would like to add to the on-going discussion of “reduced power incidents.” We were traveling north of Baker, California, on I-15 last August, climbing a significant grade in our 2010 Allegro 32BA on a Workhorse chassis. The ambient air temperature was 110–112 degrees. All fluid levels were correct and the instrumentation showed no abnormalities. The coach had 4,000 miles on it at the time.

All of a sudden the bells and whistles went off, the check engine light came on, we lost power, and the message center showed “reduced power mode.” I moved the coach to the shoulder and shut the engine down due to a very rough idle.

Our Las Vegas dealer suggested I call Workhorse. Fifteen minutes had passed since the incident began and I decided to try starting the engine first. It ran fine, the message center cleared, and off we went with the check engine light still on. We overnighted in Vegas

and the next morning the check engine light went out on the initial start.

After getting back home, I took the coach to our Workhorse service agency. The problem was diagnosed as a faulty mass air sensor. It was replaced under warranty and we have had no occurrence since. Of course, Summer 2011 is not here yet—and we are hoping the sensor was a permanent fix. It is a scary situation when it happens.

Jerry Gardetta  
St. George, Utah

Dear Jerry,  
Thank you very much for relating your experience and the solution that took care of the problem.

**Check Engine Light Followed by Severe Power Loss**

I was just reading the topics in Serious Tech Talk in the latest edition of *Roughing It Smoothly* (volume 8, number 1). I think I can offer some help for Alton and June Albert. We had several similar episodes with our 2006 Allegro Bay 38TDB with

the Cummins FRED chassis. After a fuel injection wiring harness replacement at one Cummins dealership, the same problem (Check Engine Light followed by a severe power loss) occurred again on our next trip. The second Cummins dealership, Rocky Mountain Cummins in Henderson, Colorado, found the true cause: the power supply plug to the ECM module was not fully inserted, and would occasionally lose a full connection, which dropped three cylinders. Once that was fixed, we have never seen the problem again. If you could forward this info on to the Alberts, they might find that they have a similar situation. If so, it is an easy fix.

Terry Staley  
Westminster, Colorado

Terry,  
Thank you so much for sharing your experience and the solution. One of the reasons that RVing is such a wonderful experience in this country is that everyone is so helpful and ready to share.

original televisions had an earphone jack in front of the TV. I replaced all three TVs with newer flat screen models. On the flat screen TVs the earphone jack is either on the side or the rear of the TV. In order to use the earphone plug, I will have to drill a hole in the side of the TV cabinet. Is there a better way to do this?

Carl Carver  
Meridian, Mississippi

Dear Carl,  
A transmitter can be plugged into the rear of your television that broadcasts to a wireless headphone. It allows the television speakers to be muted and broadcasts the sound only to the headphones. This equipment can be purchased from electronic supply stores and from Triple H Electronics here in Red Bay. Their phone number is (256) 356-9671.

We have a 1998 34-ft. Allegro Bay. The carpeting is badly worn and we would like to remove and replace it. Could you tell us how to remove the carpet from underneath the slide-out?

Walter & Florence Rice  
Lupton, Michigan

Dear Walter & Florence,  
Removing the carpet is not a problem. Replacing the carpet back under the slide-out is difficult.

Once you take the carpet loose from other areas, you can pull it loose from under the slide-out. To install new carpet, you have to take the slide-out almost out of the coach. You have to loosen and raise the slide-out box to do this. You will need professional help to lift the box while you install new carpet.

We are planning on a caravan this summer that requires a CB. I have a 2010 Allegro 35QBA. I would appreciate your input on grounded versus non-grounded antennas and some installation directions.

I am leaning toward an antenna

mounted on the ladder and frame and hard grounded to the chassis. I really don't want to drill holes in the coach exterior. Is the post between the windshield and coach sidewall connected by some material that could be used as a ground plane? Thanks for your help.

Herschel Anservitz  
Winchester, Kentucky

Dear Herschel,  
Using the ladder as a ground plane is okay, but you will have to run your coax from the rear to the front. When we mount a CB antenna, we place it on the roof where the roof line and the front cap meet. There are metal plates in this area that will provide a secure mount plus a ground plane. The coax can be run in the overhead cavity above the dash, then behind the plastic cover over the corner post to the dash.

On my Allegro Bus, the brake lights come on whenever I switch the ignition key to the accessory position to use the HWH jacks. Furthermore, my speedometer often ceases to work. When that happens, I stop the coach and turn off the engine. When I restart the engine and begin driving, the speedometer works fine. Thanks for your suggestions to remedy these two problems.

R.A. Williams  
Waldport, Oregon

Dear R.A.,  
There are so many possibilities that could cause this problem, such as backfeed from a loose ground to crossed wiring. This problem will have to be troubleshot by a technician who is familiar with electrical circuits, and can by trial and error locate what is causing the problem.

We had a squeak in the bath-bedroom wall of our 2010 Phaeton 36QSH which was not apparent when the jacks were raised. But when we used the jacks to raise the rear of the coach during the lev-

eling process, the squeak reappeared.

Happy Daze RV in Sacramento solved the problem by accessing the underside of the flooring above the rear axle and tapping shims between the floor and the beam. The squeaking disappeared except when the rear of the coach was raised to its maximum height during the leveling process. Tiffin indicated by phone before the repair that I had to take out the flooring, re-secure it with screws, and replace the flooring—which would have been very messy inside the coach. My question is this: will this shimming of the floor cause any long-term damage or is this an acceptable repair from Tiffin's point of view. We love this coach. Thanks for your input.

Don Reighley  
Sacramento, California

Dear Don,  
The shims will not cause any long-term damage. If it takes care of the problem, the shims are a much better solution than having to remove the tile and replace the floor.

My wife and I are the proud owners of a 2010 Phaeton 40QTH. We love the rig and are very impressed with the quality of all the systems. I have thoroughly enjoyed your column, "Serious Tech Talk." By reading all of the back issues, I have learned a lot about the technical aspects of Tiffin motorhomes.

As I read the various manuals, I realized there are many replacement parts including fuses that should be carried in the motorhome for repairs while on the road. These should be both parts I can replace and parts that would require a technician, but might involve a delay or increased expense if they had to be ordered and shipped to our location while we were traveling.

Do you have any recommendations as to which parts should be carried for this rig? There are so many circuit breakers, fuses, and solenoids that it would be difficult to carry them all, so your recom-

mended list would be very helpful. Also your recommendations about items such as drive belts, hoses, filters, and other parts for the engine, generator, hydraulic system, water heater, plumbing system, etc. would be most valuable.

Your column is a great service to Tiffin owners. Keep up the good work.

Anthony Zollo, M.D.  
Lufkin, Texas

Dear Dr. Zollo,  
I would carry an extra fuel filter, an assortment of fuses and light bulbs, an extra set of belts (see the chassis manual for part numbers), wiper blades, four quarts of engine/generator oil, a water pump, and a water pressure regulator for your hook-up point. Hopefully, you will not need any of these items. We would be guessing to suggest any additional items.

We always enjoy your "Serious Tech Talk" column. We have a concern with our 2008 Allegro Bay 37DB on a Workhorse chassis. We like the coach more and more every time we use it. However, this past year we have been getting a loud thump which seems to originate immediately in front of the passenger's seat. It sounds like someone is under the floor striking it with a 5-lb. hammer. Sometimes it sounds like the right front tire is throwing a large rock up into the wheel well. We never know when it will happen—sometimes in town at 20 mph or on the highway at 55 mph. Sometimes it happens once a day, sometimes three or four times a day. I have been under the coach and can find no marks or evidence as to where something is hitting. I thought it might be a broken leaf in the springs or a broken shock (e.g., the piston is catching and slipping past occasionally). But the shocks appear to work properly and the coach rides level. A dealer inspected the underside on a hoist and could not find anything out of the ordinary. Of course,

when we took the coach for a test drive, nothing happened. Nothing mechanical appears to be affected by this thumping: no change in rpm, speed, transmission output, or steering. We are at a loss as to what it might be. Do you have any ideas or suggestions? Thanks for your help.

Murray Garrett  
Clifford, Ontario, Canada

Dear Murray,  
You have checked all of the obvious causes. Check the diagonal braces from the rails to the metal frame of the motorhome floor. Strike each one with a hard rubber mallet. If a weld is broken, it will make a distinctively different sound from the ones that are solid.

Since getting our new Breeze on February 18, I have found Tiffin employees to be

extremely responsive in helping me resolve some issues. I have one question and a suggestion.

In two basement storage compartments at the rear of the coach on both sides, there are heat warnings. How hot might they get and do you have any suggestions on what we might store in them?

Twice I called the service department and waited for 20 minutes but no one answered. Have you considered installing a system that would tell customers how long the wait will be or what number one is in the queue?

Paul Brunelle  
Bluffton, South Carolina

Dear Paul,  
In the rear compartment on the passenger side, our engineers located a number of electrical components, including relays and fuses which need easy access for

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occasional service. These components need plenty of air circulation to keep them cool. It is a small compartment anyway, so we advise owners not to store anything there. The rear compartment on the driver side is adjacent to the engine. It's okay to store items in this compartment as long as they are not combustible.

As to the phone system you suggested: inquiries from owners may be directed to service technicians who are specialists. Each tech will work with an owner for as long as it takes. There may be a way to check on a call after five minutes and ask the person holding if he or she wishes to continue holding or opt for a call back. We will investigate that possibility. Thanks for the suggestion.

I noticed in the last issue of *Roughing It Smoothly* that an owner had an issue with a thin layer separating from the outside of the headlight surface. I am also having this problem. I have a 2009 Phaeton 42QRH. The material peeling away is very thin and it curls up off the surface creating a very distracting appearance.

Neil L. Pedersen  
Livingston, Texas

Dear Neil,  
This is a problem we have seen two or three times at the Service Center. We do not think it is caused by clearcoat overspray. The fix is to take 2000-grit sand paper and wet sand the surface of the headlight. Then come back and buff it with a #1 Buffing Compound by 3M and then follow it with a #2 Compound. This should bring the lights back to "like new" condition or better.

Is it possible to replace the existing switch which dumps the air on the tag axle when you are turning? Our switch must be held down with one hand while turning, obviously leaving one hand to turn the steering wheel. Also, on our 2008 Phaeton

the switch is located behind my left shoulder, making it difficult to hold it down. I would like to change it to an "off-on" switch instead. Can this be done?

John Cillessen  
Arvada, California

Dear John,  
Putting a permanent dump switch on the system is not recommended. If it were accidentally turned on or left on while traveling, there could be damage to the air system related to the tag axle and possibly cause a blowout because of too much weight on the tires on the drive axle. Once you hit the switch, it dumps the tag and should stay dumped until the motorhome reaches 8 mph, and then it automatically airs back up. Sorry for the inconvenience, but we want you to take the safest approach.

I own a 2010 Phaeton 42QBH. The engine has required service twice, which necessitated removing the ceramic tile cover in the rear bath. Both times the Cummins service center has chipped the edges of the ceramic tile on the cover. They apparently pushed something into the narrow space between the cover and the floor to pry it out. Should it be that difficult to get the cover off? Why is there nothing embedded in the cover's surface (a latch of some kind, as in other brands) to aid in pulling the cover up? Isn't there a way to make removal easier?

Jay Plannier  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Dear Jay,  
Use a 3-foot 2x2 and have an assistant push the trap door up from underneath. Then someone in the bathroom can grab the edges and lift it out as the door is pushed up. We know this is an inconvenience, but embedded latches in the porcelain floor detract from its appearance.

I have a 2003 Allegro Bay. It is stored off-

site and brought to our property when we intend to travel. I hook up to a 15-amp household circuit to power the fridge and charge the batteries before leaving.

When I set the fridge to "auto," it went back to "gas." The microwave was operational along with all non-GFI outlets. The GFI outlet in the bathroom tested OK, but no power. I checked the household breakers and re-attached the coach to the household 15-amp circuit. Same condition.

I disconnected the house circuit and started the generator. All circuits became operational. Then I re-plugged to the household circuit. Again no power in the GFI outlets, but the non-GFIs and the microwave were operational.

I took the coach to the service center. They plugged the coach into a 15-amp circuit and found no problems. They opened all outlets, checked the wiring, and found no problems. They switched to the generator—again, no problems.

I took the coach back to our residence, plugged into the same household circuit as before and had no problems. Every outlet in the coach worked fine. Any ideas what may have caused the earlier condition?

Jerry Spotts  
Summerfield, Florida

Dear Jerry,  
The electrical changeover box has relays that will not activate with low voltage. One side of the feed coming from the 15-amp cord into the 50-amp service may not have had enough power to activate that relay. Also, if you had to use an extension cord, the amperage could have dropped from the power source to the motorhome and caused the problem you described.

I have a 2010 Allegro Open Road. On the dash there is a warning light as well as a buzzer that should be activated if the jacks are down when I start the engine. Neither functions. Our dealer, Stoltzfus RV in West Chester, Pennsylvania, checked the circuits and said neither item

was connected to the 12-volt wiring or to the 5-amp fuse. I have not heard back from Stoltzfus about this issue, although they did call after other warranty work was done to ask if everything had been handled to my satisfaction. Can Tiffin's service department in Red Bay direct Stoltzfus to make this repair?

Carl Peterman  
Greenwood, Delaware

Dear Carl,  
Your dealer can call our helpline service and someone will direct the technician at Stoltzfus to make the repair. The system must also be wired to the emergency brake. The brakes have to be activated in order for you to put the jacks down.

I have a 2010 Allegro RED. When it rains, the water from the roof drains over the

top of the door. That's okay except when you enter or leave the RV. Any ideas on how to fix this problem?

Ralph Hayes  
Edgewood, New Mexico

Dear Ralph,  
We realize this is an issue, but we have not designed an attractive solution yet that we can retrofit to correct the problem. However, we are working on it.

I have a 2007 Phaeton purchased new. After an overheating problem that went on for two years and was finally corrected under warranty, I have a question concerning engine operating temperature. It is my understanding that the boiling point for coolant is 264 degrees. I have an MB 900 engine. What is the high safe operating temperature for this diesel? Normal oper-

ating temp is 180-183 except when climbing hills, whether towing or not.

Andy Pancarik  
Escondido, California

Dear Andy,  
Freightliner sets their "check engine" light between 219 and 225 degrees. Their "stop engine" light comes on at 234 degrees. Running the engine at 200 degrees is not excessive for this engine.

I have had two ignition switches burn out on my 2003 Allegro with 33,000 miles on the odometer. Both incidents happened on an extended trip after driving in excess of 2,000 miles and stopping at rest stops on an Interstate. When I tried to start the engine after each of these stops, nothing happened.

In the first case in California on April

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6, 2006, I called Workhorse Emergency Road Service, but the 36-month warranty had just expired. At their Bakersfield service facility, Workhorse settled my claim with a one-time goodwill reimbursement of \$428.05, which was the cost of the switch and the labor to install it.

The second incident occurred on October 1, 2010, when we stopped at an Interstate rest area near Frankfort, Kentucky. When I tried to start the engine, nothing happened. When the Good Sam mechanic/technician arrived, I told him about the earlier experience in California.

He crawled under the steering column and informed me the switch was “fried.” He stated there had to be some kind of a design or manufacturing problem to cause the switch to be “fried” twice. When I contacted Workhorse, they refused to discuss either incident and pointed out brusquely that the chassis was out of warranty.

Danny, have you any experience with this problem? What do you suggest I do before making another “extended” trip? When I get the coach serviced at the local Workhorse service center this Spring, I

am going to request a full checkout of the electrical system.

Thank you for your help.

Bruce Wharram  
Sylvania, Ohio

Dear Bruce,

I am familiar with two more units on the Workhorse chassis that have had this problem, and both of them were related to the tilt wheel rubbing into a wire in the steering column that was not properly shielded. Be sure to check the wiring at the knuckle where the column bends to be certain that the wiring is shielded.

## Customer Response

We have a 2005 Allegro bus and have had the same whistling noise problem for five years. Finally, we found a tech who taped over the holes in the bottom of the outside mirrors. No more whistle!

Jack Riley  
Highland Village, Texas

Dear Jack,  
Thanks for your input. We always appreciate owners' input to resolve problems.

Regarding Andy Rehberg's inquiry in *RIS*, volume 8, number 1, on page 58, parts (2) and (3). Freightliner has a service bulletin on this problem: NHTSA Campaign ID number: 99v110000. The headlight switch is replaced with a new electronic system and the wiring damage is repaired. I had the same problem with headlights and switches in my 1998 Allegro Bus.

Jerry Berger  
Kansas City, Missouri

Dear Jerry,  
Freightliner issued the following Service Bulletin No. 54-11. “To increase circuit efficiency and to improve parts availability, FCCC changed headlight switch vendors on November 6, 1998, for all M-line and X-line products. FCCC chassis built before that date can be converted to the current production switch (product # CHS 71092 03)

I have a 2006 Phaeton 40QSH. Here are four suggestions to improve its functionality. (1) Place a sticker on dash showing the coach's clearance height. (2) Add recessed LED lights under the slide-outs to assist in opening the storage doors at night. (3) Relocate the magazine rack in the bath. Little and big boys pee on it. (4) Add heated seats for the driver and copilot. (5) Use LED lights wherever you can to reduce battery drain. Just a few things I hope will make the coach better.

R.M. Lecren  
Hoover, Alabama

Dear R.M.,  
Thank you for your suggestions. It's input from our owners that help us plan for changes in later models.

In response to James Bihl's question about clothes hangers jumping off the clothes rod: I use wire loom (1-inch or larger) on my clothes rod. It has ridges that hold the hangers to the rod. It is usually available at automotive and truck supply stores.

Dick & Gerry Heavner  
Cumberland, Maryland

Dear Dick & Gerry,  
Thanks for the suggestion. Of the many responses we have gotten about this problem, I don't think anyone has offered that idea.

## Customer Compliment

We have a 40-ft. Allegro Bus with a 425 hp Cummins power plant. It is the only motorhome I have owned without any problems. Everything works! I have owned four diesels and two gas burners. I stopped at Red Bay to have the gauges switched on the black and grey tanks. The tanks worked fine, just the gauges were switched. So everything is good now. I enjoy the *Roughing It Smoothly* magazine. Good luck!

Al Veto  
Lake Havasu City, Arizona

Dear Al,  
Thanks for the kudos.

Just a note of thanks to Tiffin's super service. I called on Thursday, March 10, and talked to Rita to request a copy of the brochure for the 1994 Allegro Bus. Our coach is a 34-ft. diesel pusher with 190-hp engine. Rita was very nice and helpful to me in spite of the fact that I was confused about the address for her to send the brochure. I received the brochure two days later. What good service! Tiffin is a great company. Many thanks to Rita.

Laurence Moore  
Blacksburg, Virginia

Dear Laurence,  
Thanks for the compliment. We will give your postcard to Rita.



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