

# Roughing It Smoothly®



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- Riding the Rails

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# Roughing It Smoothly®

October 2012 Volume 9, Number 4

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*If you have a subscription card on your back cover, this will be your last issue . . . unless*

**you return the card and it is postmarked on or before December 1. Please remove the whole card on the perforation, answer the questions, fold it once where marked, tape it where marked, and mail it with a 45-cent stamp. If you do not receive the Winter 2013 (10:1) issue by January 30, 2013, you can assume your name was removed. If you are using a Mail Forwarding Service and you do not see your name on the back cover, that means the mail forwarder has removed the cover wrap before sending you the magazine. There will be a reinstatement fee if you decide later that you want to receive *Roughing It Smoothly*.**

When we started the magazine nine years ago, we had a mailing list of only 29,000. Our list has grown to over 45,000, but it is

obvious that many of our addresses may no longer be correct. As I'm sure you know, it is not inexpensive to write, produce, print, and mail *Roughing It Smoothly*. We need to remove from our list those who no longer need or want the magazine. Therefore, we need to burden you one time and ask that you return the card on the back cover by December 1, 2012. *If you do not return the card, we will assume you do not want RIS and will drop you from the mailing list.*

### 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 on the postcard, or send an email to [RIStech-talk@gmail.com](mailto:RIStech-talk@gmail.com). If you need an immediate answer to a service problem, you should call 256-356-0261.

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Please do not call to make a change of address. We are often traveling when your calls come in and it is very difficult to handle the call on a cell phone. Please use a standard change of address card from USPS and send it to *Roughing It Smoothly*, PO Box 1738, Monroe, GA 30655-1738. You can also change your address by email. Send your old address as it appears on your label along with your new address. The email address is [RISNCOA@hotmail.com](mailto:RISNCOA@hotmail.com).

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vehicle identification number (VIN), and the year and model of your coach. If you sell your coach, **email** [stephanie.mccarley@tiffinmotorhomes.com](mailto:stephanie.mccarley@tiffinmotorhomes.com) with your VIN, year, model, and the new owner's name/address.

### Riding the Rails and the Oregon Trail

In April we introduced a new column about steam locomotives still operating in North America. The amazing steam locomotives were instrumental in expanding and building this country. In this issue Norm Spray tells us the story about the day the transcontinental railroad was completed at Promontory Summit, Utah on May 10, 1869.

Five days later, the Union Pacific Railroad began regular train service to the West. Almost immediately, the covered wagon migrations across the Great Platte River Road slowed to a trickle. The "last spike" that connected the rails coming from the west to those coming from the east was the

same spike that stopped the wagons on the Oregon Trail. By some estimates, nearly a half million emigrants sought a better life in the American West by making the arduous journey on the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails.

Trains were economical and fast. Emigrants lined up to buy one-way, cross-country tickets that cost \$50. They boarded rail cars in Omaha, Nebraska and arrived in Sacramento, California almost a week later.

By the 1880s, the Union Pacific was carrying nearly one million people west each year—over twice as many as those who had come across the continent in 30 years of covered wagon travel.

The Oregon Trail story in this issue relates a poignant chapter in our history. Although there are no records of those who began the trek, and those who died trying, historians who have studied the approximately 3,000 emigrant diaries estimate that one in 17

adults and one in five children died along the trail. Cholera was the main killer, accidents second, and Indian attacks a distant third.

You can follow the trail today, just as we did. Part I of our story will take you from Independence, Missouri, to Scotts Bluff, Nebraska. Part II, which I hope to complete in time for the January 2013 edition (10:1), will complete the story and take you to Oregon City, Oregon. Tracing the Oregon Trail today is a great teaching tool for your children and grandchildren. In talking with high school students today, I am stunned by their lack of knowledge of American history. We worry about our students ranking very low in math and science when compared to students in the developed nations, and we should. But we should also be concerned about their knowledge of our country's history. Learning our history will foster an appreciation of why we are a privileged people to live in the United States of America.

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## Facts Are Facts

by Bob Tiffin



From the very beginning of Tiffin Motor Homes, I have encountered many critiques of our product line. Some have been sobering while others have been encouraging, but none have stirred me to respond directly, until now. Recently, I came across a review of Tiffin, Entegra, and American Coach written by Mark Quasius entitled, “Looking in from the Outside, a Third Party View of Tiffin, Entegra, and American Coach.” The article was candid and detailed in its analysis of all three product lines. I am certain Mr. Quasius wrote the article to sincerely guide those contemplating the purchase of a new coach, but there were a few points raised in the piece concerning Tiffin that I feel compelled to address for the sake of all current and prospective Tiffin customers.

First, please allow me to address one phrase from the aforementioned article directly. Mr. Quasius wrote in reference to some internet writings, “They seem to feel that my influence is slipping and that Tim, Van, and Lex, my sons, are more concerned with the bottom line and don’t have the passion that I do.” With all due respect, nothing could be further from the truth. I am still an integral part of the day-to-day operations of Tiffin Motorhomes. If my influence is slipping, then I’m certainly unaware of it. This is the company I founded when I was 30 years old. Today, as I enter my 70th year, I have no plans of “hanging it up” anytime soon. The Lord has blessed me with excellent health, and if He wills, I will still be serving this company in my current capacity hopefully for years to come. My father, Alex Tiffin, worked in the building supply business until he was 84 and I have made it a personal goal to surpass that number handily. This means I hope to serve this company and our customers at least 14 more years; hopefully much longer. Additionally, Tiffin Motorhomes has never concentrated on the “bottom line.” As we folks from the rural South would say, “That is putting the cart before the horse.” I have always said that if we build a quality product and service what we sell, then we will be able to serve enough customers to fulfill our commitments and grow our business. Simply stated, quality and service have been our primary aim since our founding; earnings have never been our central focus. And as for passion, I can say that I am as excited to come to work today as I have ever been. The gratification of providing RVers with a first-class product and seeing the joy they find in the RV lifestyle

has been my pleasure and it has made for a tremendously gratifying career. There is nothing I would rather do more than build and service our motorhomes; I’m sure my sons would agree.

Next, let me address any criticisms of our product engineering by saying that we pursue a product differentiation strategy. We realize that we have to supply our customers with novel reasons to buy new coaches. We believe in innovation and we have always sought to push the envelope with regard to product development. We test our new products extensively and take drastic measures to guarantee quality and

customer satisfaction, but we realize that uncharted territory can be risky. With that in mind, we understand that we may occasionally stumble upon a slight technical hitch, but we will stand behind our product when a problem arises.

Lastly, I’d like to speak to any Tiffin quality control issues that have given our customers cause for concern. Mr. Quasius mentioned a few issues we have endured in the past (e.g. wet bay floors, sidewalls cracking, etc.). These trials are part and parcel of the plight of any motorhome manufacturer, but that doesn’t mean we find them acceptable. We have made design changes to our current products to ensure that these concerns are not only rectified, but never again may be experienced by our customers.

Changes we have made are as follows: water bay now has a floor frame that is steel with a polyethylene liner. Change made in production 2-24-2010. The flat floor slide now has an aluminum frame instead of plywood floor. Change made in production 5-10-2011. The roof rails for the one piece molded fiberglass roof cap were changed to a cross-weave fiberglass mat design on 6-5-2011. This made the roof on the rails almost twice as strong, and on 3-1-2012 we added a new vinyl ester resin for more durability. This new resin prevents the fiberglass from cracking. We have a limited warranty on each of these three items. The flat floor slide is warranted for six years from the original in-date service; the water bay floor is warranted for eight years from the original in-date service; and the roof rails are warranted for six years from the original in-date service. At this writing, we have repaired and warranted approximately 1,050 roof rails, 506 flat floor slides, and 1,208 water bay floors.

*Continued on page 72*



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**TIFFIN MOTORHOMES**

WHEREVER YOU GO, WE GO.



# The Perfect Condo

## *Wherever You Travel in the 2013 Phaeton 36 GH*

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

*If selecting a motorhome less than 40 feet long* causes concern about losing features you “can’t live without,” then your concerns will vanish after you spend 10 minutes in the new 2013 Phaeton 36 GH. How about a galley with residential appliances? An L-shaped chaise lounge with seating for four? An entertainment center featuring a 42-inch Panasonic HDTV-LED with a European recliner and an optional fireplace? A luxurious dressing area with solid surface countertop and molded lavatory, mirrored twin cabinets with theater lighting, and five large drawers? Plus porcelain tile throughout the coach? An optional endless hot water system? There are even more standard features and options, but I will get to those in a few minutes!

### **Relax in Comfort in the 36 GH Living Room**

With the L-shaped chaise lounge in optional Ultraleather setting the boundaries for the living room, you will immediately notice the planned spaces. We rotated the luxurious driver and passenger chairs into the living room, creating seating for seven, which includes the leather recliner. Both the passenger chair

and recliner have leg lifts. The section of the lounge touching the outside wall opens up to a very comfortable bed. The 42-inch Panasonic HD-TV is diagonally positioned in the forward corner of the passenger side slide-out above a handsome cabinet framing an electric fireplace. Instead of the fireplace, you can choose the standard cabinet for extra storage. The coffee table fits neatly into the floor area created by the “L”. The living room of our condo measures 10' × 12'9".

### **Phaeton’s Multi-Purpose Dining-Office Area**

Just a step away, the galley-dining area (9' × 12'9") is also well-defined, with the galley located on the driver side. The optional freestanding dinette-business center overlooks the awning-shaded patio through a 58" × 20" picture window. Just under the window, the business center is capped with a 72" × 18" faux marble countertop edged with solid surface molding, which doubles as a serving credenza when you are entertaining or a practical work space if you take your business on the road. If you are using a laptop, it will position on top of the credenza

adjacent to the refrigerator. A retractable keyboard tray is concealed with a drawer front just under the top of the cabinet. Under the tray, double doors open to a second retractable tray for your printer. If you use a desktop computer, it can be positioned in a cavity at floor level. On the opposite side of the business center, you will find two drawers for office supplies and a filing cabinet with rails for hanging folders. The center cabinet directly under the dining table houses the base woofer for the surround sound system. That's another story that we will get to shortly.

### **The Galley: Convenience and Efficiency**

Tiffin upgraded the standard residential refrigerator-freezer to a 21-cu.ft. top-of-the-line unit with a pull-out freezer in the lower third and a double-door fridge with water and ice through the door. Detailed touch controls with LED displays are located just above the water-ice dispenser.

The galley's solid surface countertop is a generous six-and-a-half feet wide. The solid surface backsplashes are 17 inches high with decorative laser-cut scenes from nature that capture the theme repeated in nearby framed artwork. The countertop depth varies from 30.5" to 42", with the latter depth accommodating a residential stainless steel double sink with a gooseneck water faucet, single-lever control, sprayer, and dish soap dispenser. The sink is recessed to receive two solid surface covers. You can use one or both as you choose between using the sink and having more counter space. In the middle of the galley, a fold-back solid surface vented cover conceals a three-burner gas cooktop. Just above the cooktop, Tiffin selected a full-size residential microwave-convection oven with bi-level racks. It is vented to the outside, plus an overhead Fan-Tastic vent with three-speed fan will quickly remove heat generated in the galley. The thermostatically controlled vent can also serve as an attic fan to bring in cool air or exhaust a hot coach.

The galley's cabinets demonstrate both innovation and top-quality workmanship. Under the cooktop, the trash can is conveniently mounted in a slide-out rack.







In the same double-door cabinet are two large slide-out boxes, perfect for storing vegetables or large kitchen utensils and tools, etc. On the south end of the galley, the Expand-an-Island gives you extra solid surface countertop workspace, plus a stack of three drawers 26 inches deep. On the north end is another stack of three drawers 7.5 inches wide by 14 inches deep. The two overhead cabinets on either side of the microwave-convection oven have large slide-out box shelves.

### **Quality Design and Construction**

The raised panel doors, drawer faces, slide-outs, and front framing are solid alder. Custom-designed moldings and joinery, created with CNC-controlled routers and saws as well as old-world craftsmanship, are made in Tiffin's state-of-the-art furniture shop.

Cabinets at Tiffin Motorhomes are not just boxes and drawers that are nailed and glued together. Each cabinet, facing, molding, door, drawer, and fascia is three-dimensionally designed before a prototype is constructed. Cabinet prototypes are combined into modules which are then checked for perfect fit and alignment in a full-sized coach mock-up built in Tiffin's R&D department.

At Tiffin Motorhomes, valance design has been elevated to an artform. Handsome fabrics backed by stiff foam fill the insets and invite your touch. Wrought iron ornamentation is framed by creative molding. Stamped metal covers on the sconce lights tie in nicely with the valance design.

Even the ceilings are carefully designed at TMH. A five by eleven foot tray ceiling is outlined by a richly molded four inch crown. Recessed LED lighting in the cockpit-living-dining areas is controlled by seven switches. A mood light is located above the dining table and two directional reading lamps are positioned over the chaise lounge.

When you stand in the middle of the living-dining area and do a 360, you will be surprised at the number of cabinets providing coveted storage space. In the galley-dining area, the overhead cabinets provide 12.6 cubic feet of storage, while





the lower galley cabinets offer 12.3 cubic feet. In the living area, the overhead cabinets give you 21 cubic feet to store all the necessities for comfortable RV living. The six overhead cabinets in the cockpit area offer eight cubic feet of storage for the many things that should be handy while you are traveling.

### **The 36 GH Bath and Bedroom Offer Luxurious Amenities**

At mid-section, the coach has a fully enclosed bath on the driver side with a footprint of 41" x 68". The 30" x 43" elliptical shower uses nickel-plated Price-Pfister fixtures with a single-lever temp control and a moveable shower head with a thumb switch. Two towel bars, a seat, a recessed shelf for toiletries, and a curved rainglass shower enclosure complete the installation. The sunroof directly above the shower is designed with an insulated sliding closure. A Fan-Tastic vent with 3-speed fan in the ceiling has wall-mounted controls just above the solid surface countertop. The lavatory is seamlessly molded into the countertop which is flanked with 13-inch backsplashes. When privacy permits, the screened window can bring in a breeze for a more refreshing shower. Just above the window is yet another double-door cabinet.

The ceramic toilet is positioned at a 45-degree angle to the wall to give the oc-

cupant plenty of knee room. The designers didn't miss a step on the cabinetry. Two cabinets with mirrored doors increase the visual perception of space and give you an extra angle for shaving or applying your make-up with the help of five recessed LEDs. The large magazine/book rack justifies the oft-used nickname of "library."

On the passenger side, the 45-inch wide dressing table with a solid surface countertop is 33 inches deep. The lavatory is molded flush with the surface of the countertop. A small chest with a 12" x 18" footprint is tucked into the right side of the 45" x 33" countertop. It offers two 11" x 13" drawers and a deep, two-shelf linen cabinet. The primary cabinet (2.4

cubic feet) with a 15" x 17" mirrored door has two shelves. Four recessed LED lights provide perfect illumination for the area. Under the countertop, you will be surprised by a drawer 23 inches long, 10.5" wide, and 5.25" deep, plus two smaller drawers with the same front faces. The cabinet under the lavatory has four cubic feet of unobstructed storage space.

The master bedroom in the 36GH completes the perfect condo concept. The queen-size bed with its optional Air Comfort mattress with dual controls will put you in the clouds soon after your head touches the pillow. But if you prefer to read in bed, two wall-mounted lamps are available. The new headboard design,





a curved and arched molding framing a lustrous fabric, complements the comforter. Dual bedside tables with faux marble countertops have a small front compartment and an open rack on the side for your reading material. Each table has 110v service. Opposing windows in the slide-out compartment offer pleasant nighttime ventilation, and the 2-speed control in the bedside table activates the ceiling fan.

The passenger side slide-out is designed for clothing storage and entertainment. The lower half of the slide has a 1.8 cubic foot clothes hamper and four large drawers. It is capped with a 68" x 12.5" faux marble countertop edged with solid surface molding. An 18" x 24" sliding panel window freshens the bedroom with those nice coastal sea breezes. In the upper forward portion of the slide, Tiffin upgraded the entertainment system to a 32-inch Panasonic mounted in a top-hinged frame that conceals the electronics cabinet. Two shelves at eye level hide the satellite receiver and the Panasonic 1000-watt entertainment system. See the following section for a full description.

Three storage compartments in the bedroom include 4.6 cubic feet under the bed, 11 cubic feet in the cabinetry over the headboard, and 2.4 cubic feet in the cabinetry over the window.

Across the rear of the coach, the op-

tional Splendide stacked washer and dryer fit neatly into the back corner, concealed by a sliding panel door that is new for 2013. The wardrobe has mirrored, double sliding doors, adding visual dimension to the room.

### **Technology Brings New Options to the Entertainment Center**

Before we visit the north half of the Phaeton 36 GH, I want to tell you about the entertainment center. The SMART VIERA® 42-inch Class E5, Full HD, LED TV brings a new dimension to television viewing. The brightness, saturation, contrast, and sharpness of colors are finely compensated in each scene. Highly vivid colors are produced with almost zero mutual interference. People's faces are detected by the software which automatically corrects skin tones to ensure soft, natural complexions. With VIERA's 178° viewing angle, you see clear, vibrant images from every seat in the room. The backlight features a wide transmission aperture that enhances contrast between light and dark and improves response to provide smoother images of human figures or objects in motion. The VIERA remote App allows you to use your smartphone or tablet as a remote control. With WiFi to link content from your smartphone or tablet, you can browse Facebook on your 42-inch Panasonic. That's just the latest. Here's the rest.

First announced in our Summer (9:3) issue, the entertainment center is powered by a Panasonic 1000-watt system with "Wi-Fi Built-in" to give you access to web content, including Bloomberg TV, Netflix, Twitter, Cinema Now, Pandora Internet Radio, Vudu, Fox Sports, Picasa Web Albums, and YouTube videos. Your wi-fi connection can be supplied by Verizon's 4G network MiFi air card. By the end of 2013, Verizon expects to have approximately 98 percent coverage in the U.S.

By installing an inexpensive wireless router, you can link the televisions in the living room, bedroom, and the optional 32-inch outdoor Panasonic to enjoy photos, music, movies, and more throughout the coach. Ports in the television introduce content from your camera's SD Memory Card or a USB memory stick. The options are almost limitless.

The domed in-motion satellite dish is optional equipment, and the optional receiver requires a subscription. The Phaeton can be prewired for the optional Winegard Trav'ler Satellite that is designed for stationary operation. With a DirecTV subscription, it offers you full HD reception.

The Panasonic 1000-watt system and the satellite receiver have been relocated from the box above the passenger chair to an electronics cabinet at eye level directly behind the 32-inch Panasonic TV in the bedroom, which is standard equipment. With the Integrated Universal Dock for iPod and iPhone, you can enjoy your personal digital music collection as well as videos and photos stored on these devices. All of the above is in addition to Tiffin's groundbreaking television and surround sound theater that was launched four years ago.

### **A Well-Designed Cockpit for the 2013 Phaeton 36 GH**

In the current model year TMH is building all of the seven Phaeton floorplans on Freightliner chassis. The 36 GH is the newest addition. Freightliner's instrumentation package is presented in eight easy-to-read dials. Front and center, the RPM and speedometer displays are three



inches in diameter, and very easy to read. Centered below the two displays, an **INFORMATION CENTER** offers the driver data on the transmission temperature, fuel economy (instant and average), engine hours, battery condition, two trip mileage meters, and a diagnostics system. Six smaller displays are arranged in an arc above the larger ones, presenting fuel gauge, engine temp, oil pressure, battery charge, and the air pressure for the front and rear air bag sets.

To the right of the steering column, eight toggle switches take care of the

STEP COVER	DRIVER FAN	SOLAR SHADE	NIGHT SHADE	GEN START	MAP LIGHT	DOCK LIGHT	RADIO
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The monitor for the rear and sideview cameras is positioned immediately to the right of the steering wheel for quick and safe viewing as you drive. When you are backing, the rear monitor shows a superimposed scale in feet and meters to make sure your visual interpretation is correct.

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

The three switches for the automotive heating and air are large and easy to read – making them readily accessible while you are driving. The defrost system is very effective because it supplies a sufficient air volume onto the large, expansive windshield. Tiffin continues to augment the defrost system with

eight-inch fans in the upper left and right corners of the windshield – an additional safety feature. Two 12v outlets are conveniently located just below the heating and air switches.

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

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

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

AUX START	ENG PREHEAT	MOVE PEDALS
--------------	----------------	----------------

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

The cockpit continues along the left sidewall in a wrap-around console design which is slightly slanted to make the switches and controls very accessible. The gear shifter is at the forward end of the console, right at your fingertips when you rest your elbow on the console.

The side mirrors can be easily adjusted from the same location. For 2013 Tiffin selected the Vel-Vac mirrors which have the sideview cameras mounted in the base of the mirror’s frame.



The outdoor television is one of Tiffin owners' favorite options.



TMH continues to receive kudos for its well-designed utility cabinet.

Three toggle switches . . .

AIR	ICC	EXH
HORN	FLASH	BRAKE

activate an optional air horn, the courtesy flasher, and the supplementary exhaust brake. A recessed drink holder is designed to hold cups with varying diameters. The HWH leveling system completes the "flight deck." The sidewall of the console has two large pockets for maps.

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

A smaller console with four toggle switches between the passenger chair and sidewall gives the passenger control of the step cover, a map light, the passenger fan, and the panel lights for the switches. The vertical face of the console facing the entry door positions nine toggle switches for convenient control of

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

Before driving the 36GL (or any coach), be sure to take time to memorize the locations of the controls to prevent distraction while you are driving.

### A Quick Look at the Infrastructure

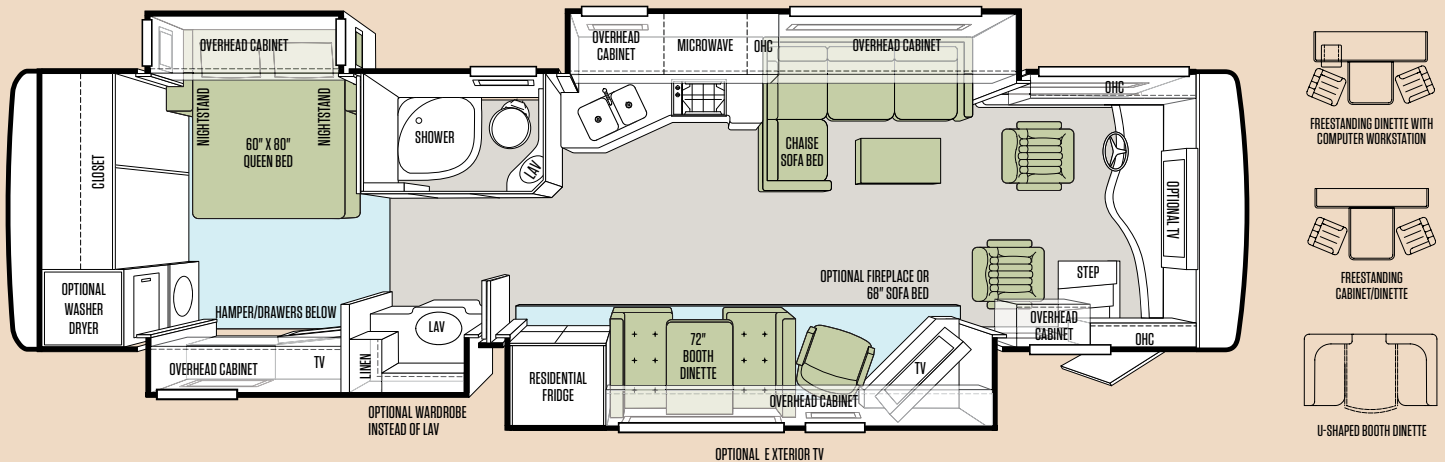
Starting at the front of the coach on the passenger side and moving front to rear, you will see five doors. Here's what's behind them: (1) HWH hydraulic system and the propane tank; (2) 45 cu.ft. of storage w/o slide-out tray; 25 cu.ft. of storage with the Stor-Mor slide-out tray; (3) 38 cu.ft. of storage (no slide-out tray option); (4) DEF tank plus small storage space; (5) Battery Minder Plus, relays, other electrical equipment

Two latches will release the door to the engine compartment. All service check points are neatly presented and easy to reach: (1) add engine oil port; (2) engine oil dipstick; (3) transmission oil dipstick; (4) coolant reservoir; Freightliner air filter minder.

Starting at the rear of the coach on the driver side and moving forward, you will find seven doors concealing the following: (1) Access to engine air cleaner; (2) SurgeGuard RV Power Protection Transfer Switch, 50-amp cable, engine batteries, chassis power disconnect; (3) Utility cabinet (see picture); (4) Dual access to large storage area, intervac house vacuum cleaner; (5) Dual access to large storage area; (6) Six house batteries on slide-out tray, house power disconnect; (7) DC power circuits and fuses; window wash reservoir; air supply.

*Continued on page 72*

## Phaeton 36 GH



# SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested, 2013 Phaeton 36 GH with Quad Slide, Base MSRP\* – \$261,100. MSRP as tested with options – \$272,615.

## STANDARD FEATURES ON THIS COACH

### Structural

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

### Automotive

Freightliner raised rail chassis frame  
Allison 3000 MH six-speed automatic transmission with lock-up (torque converter)  
Cummins ISC 380 hp, electronic/turbocharged diesel with 1,050 lbs.-ft. torque

Air ride (4 air bags)  
Aluminum wheels  
55° wheel cut  
Air brakes with automatic slack adjusters and ABS  
Exhaust brake  
Adjustable accelerator and brake pedals  
18-inch VIP steering wheel  
Cruise control  
Fog lights  
Daytime running lights  
Emergency start switch

### Exterior

Fiberglass front & rear caps  
Dual fuel fills  
Large tinted one-piece windshield  
8 Kw Onan® manual slide-out generator  
Hydraulic automatic leveling jacks  
Heated power mirrors with integrated cameras  
Fantastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan  
Single motor intermittent wiper  
Gel-coat fiberglass walls  
BASF full-body paint with protective film on front cap  
Deadbolt front entrance door  
Double electric step  
Dual pane windows  
Exterior patio light  
Automatic door awning  
Automatic patio awning  
Window awning package (2 windows)  
Slide-out covers  
Wheel liners  
Custom mud flap  
Lockable swing-out storage doors with gas shocks  
Remote locking system for entry door  
Lighted exterior storage  
Roof ladder  
Docking lights  
Back-up camera  
Side-view cameras activated by turn signals  
Heated water and holding tank compartments  
Six 6v auxiliary batteries  
2000 watt sine wave inverter with 100 amp converter & transfer switching  
Park ready telephone  
Black tank flush system  
Water filter  
Gravity water fill  
Undercoating  
110v exterior receptable  
110v/12v converter  
Digital TV antenna  
Pre-wired for in-motion or automatic satellite dish  
Cable ready TV  
Two 15,000 BTU low profile roof A/C systems with heat pumps  
A/C condensation drains

*Driver's Compartment*  
Flexsteel® Ultra Leather™ power driver and passenger seats with passenger footrest  
Contemporary wraparound dash  
Custom infrared repeater system on all TVs  
Dual dash fans  
Power solar/privacy windshield shades

Solar/privacy shades for driver & passenger side windows  
Color rear vision monitor system with side-view cameras activated by turn signals  
Two drawers in dash  
Courtesy drawer in step well  
Courtesy light in step well  
Adjustable seatbelt brackets  
Dual 12v dash receptacles  
Single CD player & AM/FM stereo  
Fire extinguisher  
Computer slide-out tray in dash with lock-out rails

### Living Area/Dinette

Booth dinette with laminate tabletop & solid surface edging  
12v, 110v, & phone jack receptacles at dinette  
Entertainment center (42" HDMI-LED color TV) with one leather lift recliner on passenger side  
Cloth L-shaped sofa/sleeper on driver side

### Kitchen

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

### Bath

Two medicine cabinets with vanity lights in full bath  
One medicine cabinet with lights over vanity/lavatory  
Skylight in shower with sliding solar cover  
Solid surface vanity tops and bowls  
Custom flat panel bath doors  
10-gallon DSI gas/electric water heater  
Sprayer on toilet  
Molded fiberglass shower  
Hand-held shower head with on-off switch  
Glass radius shower door  
Fantastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan in full bath  
Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan in half bath

### Bedroom

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

### General Interior

7-ft. ceilings

Soft touch vinyl ceilings with trey ceiling in living area  
Porcelain tile floor in kitchen, living area, bath & entry landing  
Carpeting with Scotchgard® in bedroom & driver's compartment  
High gloss raised-panel hardwood cabinet doors and drawers  
Solid hardwood cabinet faces with concealed hinges  
Medium alderwood cabinetry  
12v disconnect switch  
LED bulbs ceiling lights only  
Complete cable wiring interfacing with surround sound & satellite receiver  
Home theater sound system with concealed speakers  
Electric step well cover  
Solar & privacy RollEase® shades  
Home theater sound system with concealed speakers  
Tank level monitor system  
Smoke detector  
Fantastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan  
Two ducted furnaces

## OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Automatic satellite dish (receivers and service contract required)  
One exterior slide-out tray  
Tankless gas water heater  
Hadley air horns  
Fireplace  
Ultraleather® on L-shaped chaise lounge  
Dual control Air Comfort mattress – queen  
Exterior 32-inch HDMI-LED television in galley slide-out wall  
Freestanding dinette/computer workstation  
Stacked washer/dryer  
Bedroom tile  
Built-in vacuum cleaner  
Medium Alderwood cabinets

## OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

In-Motion satellite dish  
Pre-wired for Winegard Travel Satellite  
In-dash stereo/navigation system  
42-inch dash overhead television  
English Chestnut interior cabinets (NC)  
Spotlight  
Gas oven with convection/microwave  
Free standing dinette with built-in cabinets  
U-shaped dinette in leather  
U-shaped dinette in cloth  
Combo washer/dryer with OH storage  
Dishwasher  
Gas/electric refrigerator (w/4 batteries)  
Oven w/ Convection-microwave  
Molded fiberglass shower  
Satellite ready radio (requires subscription)  
**DRIVER SIDE**  
Ultraleather Hide-a-Bed sofa/sleeper  
Cloth Hide-a-Bed sofa/sleeper  
**PASSENGER SIDE**  
Two (2) leather recliners  
Ultraleather Hide-a-Bed sofa/sleeper  
Cloth Hide-a-Bed sofa/sleeper  
Memory foam mattress – queen  
Wardrobe (in place of lavatory on passenger side)

## MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 228"  
Overall length – 36' 9"  
Overall height w/roof air – 12'7"  
Interior height – 84"  
Overall width – 101"  
Interior width – 96"

## WEIGHTS AND CAPACITIES

GVWR – 35,320 lb.  
Front GAWR – 14,320 lb.  
Rear GAWR – 21,000 lb.  
GCWR – 45,320 lb.  
UVW – 29,160 lb.  
CCC – 6,160 lb.  
Trailer hitch capacity – 10,000 lb.

## POWER TRAIN

Engine – 380 hp Cummins ISC 8.3 liter, electronic, turbocharged diesel  
Torque – 1,050 lb.-ft. at 1,400 rpm  
Transmission – Allison 3000MH electronic six speed with two overdrives  
Tire Size – 275/80R22.5 Michelin  
Alternator – 170 amps

## CHASSIS

Frame – Freightliner chassis  
Frame Design – Raised rail  
Anti-locking Braking System – Full air brakes with Anti-locking Braking System (ABS)  
Air Suspension (front) – Neway AS 120 air suspension  
Air Suspension (rear) – Neway AD RV air suspension  
Shock Absorbers – Sachs tuned  
Leveling Jacks – HWH hydraulic automatic

## CONSTRUCTION

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

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – 4 adults  
Fuel tank – 100 gallons  
Freshwater – 90 gallons  
Black water – 50 gallons  
Grey water – 66 gallons  
LPG tank – (35.7 gallons; can be filled to 80% capacity) – 28 gallons

## MSRP

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

## UVW

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

## DEALERS

To locate a Tiffin dealer nearest you, go to [www.tiffinmotorhomes.com](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.

## Tiffin Authorizes New Northeast Service Center In Plainville, CT

Our Norcold refrigerator was not working, and for full-timers that is a major problem! I began a search for a good RV refrigeration technician, but was a bit apprehensive about finding one. I remembered Bob Tiffin speaking very favorably about a new service facility in Connecticut named Connecticut Motor Cars & Coaches. Just off of Route 10, it is only 75 minutes south of our home near Pittsfield, MA. It is two hours or less from Brattleboro, VT, Nashua, NH, Providence, RI, Boston, MA, and NYC.

My first phone conversation with owners Don and Maureen Mikolajcik (pronounced Mik-o-lay-check) was informative and very reassuring. Meeting them in person and touring their facility convinced me of their knowledge and workmanship.

At twelve years old, Don had a passion for automobiles. He became good friends with the auto shop instructor in a nearby high school and visited there nearly every day, learning and helping to repair autos. He loved the work. At 13 the instructor took Don under his wing and actually loaned him \$50 to purchase his first car. He worked on it in the tech department and restored the vehicle.

At 15, Don needed a place to work on his cars, and his dad loaned him \$900 to turn a horse barn on the family property into a garage. Don restored a 1957 Chevrolet, winning an award for his efforts. After high school, a family friend offered him a job at his auto body shop, and Don stayed there for eight years. The owner begged him to stay, but Don had a vision that would eventually take him and Maureen into a new venture.



In 1989 Don started his own business in his garage. After just one year, business was so good he decided to rent a shop, and with Maureen's help they began the life they had dreamed of. Maureen gave up her hospital employment as a secretary and medical transcriber and they were off and running.

Connecticut requires a legal license to operate a repair and auto body business. It was not an easy task, but Don's former employer went to bat for him and a license was issued. The repair business took off fast, and soon they added a towing service.

Don and Maureen enjoyed camping with their children and went through the familiar route of purchasing a camping tent, tent trailer, trailer, fifth wheel and finally motorhomes. When their motorhomes needed service, it was difficult to find a good RV repair facility that could fix specific problems under warranty. He even went to motorhome manufacturers several times and was disappointed. It was then that Don decided that Connecticut Motor Cars would service and repair motorhomes. He changed the company name to Connecticut Motor Cars & Coaches.

Over the years they owned several motorhomes. Hearing more and more about Tiffin products, they purchased a 2006 Allegro Bus. Unfortunately, on a trip to Florida for a week's vacation, the coach developed a frozen wheel bearing and needed a complete spindle assembly. Their planned stay for a week's vacation in Florida was in jeopardy.

Maureen convinced Don to call Bob Tiffin for advice. After reaching Bob on his cellphone at a football game, he was totally surprised when Bob immediately made arrangements by phone to send a technician with the parts from Red Bay to Clanton, Alabama, four hours away, where he and Maureen were stranded in a restaurant parking lot. Don helped the tech repair the coach and thanked Bob several times for saving their vacation. After several more contacts with Bob, Don agreed to become an authorized Tiffin repair facility. Over the past three years, Don has developed a tremendous knowledge of Tiffin products.

Don installed a new coil in my Phaeton refrigerator. I returned a year later for him to put in three new replacement windows. I can't say enough about the quality of his work, not to mention all the useful information he has given me.

At his primary location at 174 Whiting St., in Plainville, Connecticut, the crew does auto body work and towing. Mallory handles phone calls, scheduling, ordering parts, and preliminary vehicle inspections. Maureen, co-owner and office manager, takes responsibility for billing, payroll, record keeping, filing, and many other tasks. In the auto shop, Dan and Mike handle body and frame work and do the painting. Charlie is the official greeter.

At the RV service building just down the street, you will find Don and Maureen's son Tyler, 20, working days while studying business management at Tunxis Community College in the evening. Tyler and Carl are RV repair technicians who work under the

supervision of Rick, the shop manager. The older son, Brian, 23, works in sales at BASF (the paint manufacturer that Tiffin uses) and frequently gets calls from his dad ordering RV supplies. Don—owner, businessman, master Tiffin technician, scheduler, expert in collision repair and painting, customer relations, advisor, and researcher—works alongside his employees.

Connecticut Motor Cars & Coaches is a repair facility with no motorhomes sales. However, Don works closely with many RV dealers, helping them with difficult mechanical repairs, as well as body work.

For the past few years he has been searching for a new and larger facility in order to keep up with Tiffin repair work, not just for those who live in the northeastern states, but also for Tiffin owners who are passing through his area. Many have heard about Connecticut Motor Cars & Coaches excellent service reputation and are driving long distances to get there.

Recently, Don and Maureen purchased an 11-acre parcel in Plainville. They plan to build a state-of-the-art facility with 16 motorhome bays, RV lifts, two spray booths, waiting area, office facility, and second floor for future use. Don also envisions a covered porch with rocking chairs similar to the Cracker Barrel restaurants. Their zoning application was recently approved, and their vision will soon be a reality.

Connecticut Motor Cars & Coaches is certified warranty repair center for Atwood jacks and the PowerGlide chassis. They are equipped to replace Tiffin roof rails, slide-out and wet bay floors, and large electric refrigerator conversions. They replace smaller televisions using old technology with current state-of-the-art TVs. They also do air conditioner repairs and replacement, and exceptional painting and body work. See [www.ctmotorcar.com](http://www.ctmotorcar.com) for a complete list of items that they service, repair, or replace, or call 860-747-8102.

My 55 years of work history as a truck mechanic, construction supervisor, and

RV tech has given me the skills to know a good mechanic and auto body person when I see one. Trust and knowledge are the resources for success in any business, especially the recreational vehicle industry. As a Phaeton owner, I have the utmost confidence in Connecticut Motor Cars &

Coaches. Bob Tiffin now validates Connecticut Motor Cars & Coaches as a factory authorized facility. You will be very satisfied by the quality of their workmanship, work ethic, and friendly atmosphere.

Dave McClellan  
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Have you looked inside a Splendide lately?

Take a peek inside a Splendide combo or stackable washer and dryer and you may be surprised. Over the years, we've added a variety of cycle options to our laundry centers while increasing the size of their tubs to astonishing proportions. However, we've never lost sight of why a Splendide laundry center has always been the best choice in RV's — it does more with less, so you can travel light, conserve resources and spend less time doing laundry while you're out on the road. The Splendide tradition of quality RV laundry products and superior after sales care is a combination that can't be beat.

**Ask your Tiffin dealer about installing a Splendide in your coach today!**

1-800 356-0766 | [www.splendide.com](http://www.splendide.com)

## HWH Corporation Celebrates 45 Years October 20 with Open House

**MOSCOW, IA.** HWH Corporation was founded in 1967 and is celebrating its 45th anniversary this year. HWH manufactures a range of products, but is best known for its RV leveling systems and slide-out mechanisms.

The HWH manufacturing facility was originally located in Rock Island, Illinois. In 1979 Paul Hanser, president and founder of the company, moved the factory to its present location near Moscow, Iowa. After several major expansions, there is now close to six acres under roof at the Moscow location and two acres under roof at the Wilton, Iowa location. Today, HWH is one of the most sophisticated, state-of-the-art, CNC metal-working facilities in the country and employs approximately 170 people.

Because HWH manufactures their components in-house, they can provide replacement parts for every system ever sold. Whether it's a leveling system, slide-out mechanism, ride enhancement system, or any of their other RV products, HWH designs and manufactures almost every component in its Moscow and Wilton, Iowa facilities.

Extensive hours of design and engineering precede the manufacturing process. Prototypes are made and go through stringent testing in research and development, followed by re-engineering and more testing for the best possible design. During the manufacturing process, numerous quality control checks and further hours of bench testing are performed to ensure the best final product.

HWH has grown with the RV Industry. Their commitment to innovation, quality, and service has made them an industry leader. This desire to be the first and the best will ensure their position for years to come.

To celebrate this milestone, HWH is inviting everyone to come in and take a closer look at HWH. Doors will be open to the public from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 20, 2012. There will be self-guided plant tours, with employees answering questions and demonstrating our products. Refreshments (chili, hot dogs, chips, cake, lemonade and coffee) will be served.

HWH is located at 2096 Moscow Road, Moscow, Iowa. Take I-80 to exit #267, go south for 1,000 feet, the plant entrance is on the east side of road. For more information, call 800-321-3494 or visit [www.HWH.com](http://www.HWH.com).



## Winegard Introduces New Lower Priced Carryout® Anser™ Portable Satellite TV Antenna

Hybrid antenna automatically locates the right satellite.

**BURLINGTON, IA (August 28, 2012).** Winegard, the pioneer in television antenna design and development, today introduced the Anser™, the newest member of the Carryout® family of portable satellite TV antennas.

The Carryout Anser sports a one-of-a-kind design and is ideal for RVs, tailgating, picnicking, family outings, and other outdoor activities. Users simply set the elevation provided by the receiver and plug it in. After the antenna automatically finds the satellite, unplug the antenna power cable and start watching TV.

“We’re introducing the Anser to provide consumers with a simple satellite TV solution at a very affordable cost,” said Aaron Engberg, director of Mobile Products for Winegard. “In today’s hyper-mobile world, we like to be entertained and in touch with our favorite sports teams and shows constantly. The Anser is highly portable and requires no assembly.”

This hybrid automatic portable satellite antenna receives DISH® HD programming from a single satellite, 72°, without toggling between several DISH satellites as on some other automatic antennas. The Anser also pulls in DIRECTV® standard programming from satellite 101°. It’s also compatible with Bell TV™ in Canada.

The Carryout Anser comes with an easy grip carrying handle and a security eyelet that is molded into the base. A 25 ft. 12 volt power cable and a 25 ft. coax cable are included for easy outdoor positioning. An optional 12 volt to 110 volt converter is available, as well as a Carryout tripod mount, sold separately.

For a limited time, new DIRECTV customers can take advantage of a Winegard new customer mail-in rebate.

A pioneer in antenna, auto signal acquisition, and tracking technology, Winegard has designed more than 1,000 different antenna models with over 60 U.S. patents granted.

The Anser will be available at retailers and RV dealerships nationwide in September and has an MSRP of \$449.00. As with all Winegard products, the Anser can be found at [www.winegard.com](http://www.winegard.com) with other products made in the U.S.A.





# The RV bed that changes with you wherever the road may lead



## Everybody's different...so is our technology

The SLEEP NUMBER® bed's revolutionary DualAir™ technology lets you adjust each side to your ideal firmness, making it the perfect bed for couples. Nine out of 10 couples disagree on mattress firmness, but with the *Sleep Number* bed, there's no need to compromise.

## Sleep Number® RV Premier Bed

- European-style™ Pillowtop in a supersoft knit
- Comfort layer for responsive and resilient support
- Wireless SLEEP NUMBER® remote

## Fits your RV lifestyle

- Designed for your vehicle
- Decades of durability
- Energy-efficient operation
- Lighter on the road
- Several sizes for your RV



## Clinically proven better sleep

Do you suffer from back pain? A *Sleep Number* bed relieves pressure points, gently cradling every curve of your body. It's the only bed clinically proven to relieve back pain and improve sleep quality.†

## Research reveals...

- 93% experienced back-pain relief
- 89% reported improved sleep quality
- 77% found increased energy



## Breezing to Alaska

Hi! My name is Turner, and I am eight years old. This summer I took my third big RV trip with Gram, Deeps, Immy and Patches (the last two are Portuguese Water Dogs). It was different than our other trips because we traveled in the “lap of luxury”—a brand new Allegro Breeze! That’s what I thought anyway.

Just as soon as I got out of second grade and played my last baseball game, we left from Raleigh, NC. On the way out we stayed at a Walmart in Des Moines where I learned you don’t say the “s.”

Our first real stop was at the Badlands. They look like dribble castles that I make at the beach. I earned a Jr. Ranger badge from the National Park Service. It was my 17th badge as two years ago I began to earn these badges on our trips to America’s national parks in the West. Then we went to the Little Big Horn where we heard a ranger talk about the battle and had a tour of the battlefield with a Crow Indian. I earned another Jr. Ranger badge.

The Canadian Rockies were so scenic and we saw lots of animals: big horn sheep, mountain goats, black bear, and elk. We went to Banff and Lake Louise

(I had tapas at the Chateau) and then to Jasper, where a pregnant elk greeted us at our campsite. They come in to the campground to get away from predators when they have babies and the campground was full of them.

Dawson Creek is the beginning of the Alaska Highway. It’s 1,422 miles long. Along the way we saw black bear, stone sheep, female moose, and wood bison. We stopped at Liard Hot Springs. This was really, really nice. The water was hot, but there were lots of mosquitoes. On the road from Liard Springs bison were everywhere. It seems like they live on the road.

We stopped at Watson Lake to see the Sign Post Forest. There are over 70,000 signs. Next time we’ll add our own sign. If you go, be sure to take a sign. There are so many animals along the road to see. We saw 5 grizzlies, black bears and moose.

At Whitehorse I got to go to a kids’ camp for the afternoon where we had to climb a 35-foot wall to zipline down. If you were heavy enough you would hit the water. I didn’t. I got to go three or four times.

Fairbanks was next. We took a boat ride down the Chena River, saw a float

plane take off and land, watched a sled dog demonstration by Susan Butcher’s husband (she won the Iditarod 4 times), and toured a native village, where I learned a lot about how they lived.

In Denali you take a bus into the park. Deeps didn’t like how close we got to the edge at Polychrome, but we saw Mt. McKinley’s peak and a lot of animals. Many people think the mountain should go back to its original name—Denali (Great One). A grizzly mama and her two cubs were cute. The mama crossed a creek and the kids just fooled around on the other side, pushing and shoving, until they finally did cross. At night we went to a ranger talk about the pika. It is just a little rodent but we learned it’s important. I earned another Jr. Ranger badge.

We arrived at Homer late one night and pulled the Breeze up to the shoreline looking over Cook Inlet. We stayed there three days and met up with fellow Breeze owners, Jean and Ed Augustine, who lent me movies that I watched in the RV on one of the three TVs.

After Homer we stopped at Sutton at a funny RV place that had animals all over. I used Gram’s iPhone to call the turkeys. I was a little afraid of them. The color on their heads changed to a bright blue and their beards to red.

Haines is at the top of the inland passage, on a fjord. I met John Svenson, an artist who had “cool, dude stuff” like an embalmed cobra, shrunken heads and scorpions. He made a glass bead pull for me and I have it on my fleece.

We took the ferry to Juneau. We had to disconnect the “toad” to get on the ferry. We backed down the center of the ferry. We met John on the ferry, watched for whales, and saw some. In Juneau we took a floatplane ride over five glaciers and the icefield that feeds them. The blue in the glaciers was really bright and pretty. I was the copilot! We camped at the Mendenhall Glacier

and were able to walk right up close to it.

From Juneau we took a cool fast ferry to Sitka, where we stayed in the city RV park overlooking the marina, and watched the bald eagles. They have a neat totem pole park, and I earned another Jr. Ranger badge.

Then 17 hours on the ferry to Ketchikan—we didn’t get a cabin but slept in the lounge area. At Ketchikan we stayed at a fish camp RV park. People caught a lot of fish. Their catches included halibut, some bigger than me, and salmon. There were eagles circling all around. I learned why we say “eagle eyes.” If eagles could

read, they could read a newspaper from two football fields away. I earned my last Jr. Ranger badge at the Tongass Forest. We met Nathan Jackson, a carver who has been in *National Geographic*; he was working on a totem pole.

Back on the ferry to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, and on to Hope, where there were lots of chainsaw carvings in town. We stayed in an RV park right on the Frazer River.

Back in the US, we went to the Boeing factory where they build the 747 and the 787 airplanes. Boeings always start with a 7 but now they are running out of 7’s. I got

to sit in the pilot’s seat of a 737 cockpit.

We got up very early the next day so I could get on a plane to fly home. I flew alone as an unaccompanied minor. The trip seemed very long, but it took my grandparents another month to get home as they stopped to see family and friends and made a trip to Red Bay to get a new windshield.

It was an amazing trip. I saw beautiful scenery, many kinds of animals, and did lots of fun things. I traveled almost 8,000 miles in seven weeks.

Turner, Marsha & Tayler Bingham  
Wilmington, North Carolina

## JJ and Judie’s 2012 Summer Adventure

Be careful what you wish for. Seven days ago we were getting ready to leave our campsite at One Mile Campground in the Taylor Canyon just north of Gunnison Colorado, when the campground manager knocked on our door to ask if we could give him a hand with something.

We said “Sure we’d be glad to help,” not quite knowing what we were agreeing to. He told us that the campground host had to leave with a medical emergency and he needed someone to be host for the remainder of the summer season. After talking it over, we decided to do it since Judie’s brother Jim and her cousins Terry and Sharon had good experiences being campground hosts at other campgrounds. We’d been thinking of doing something like this in the future, but we never in a million years would have thought we’d be doing it so soon. We get a free beautiful campsite with full hookups and a small weekly salary. We have a golf cart to carry our supplies, rakes, and shovel. That was seven days ago and we have had a very interesting time learning how to be campground hosts.

There are 25 campsites here. One for the host, one for the manager, and two

are rented for the season. The other 21 campsites are divided between reservation only, and the other half are on a first-come, first-served basis. There are also two bathrooms that we have to clean.

The best thing about hosting is that you get to meet every camper when they arrive. We’ve met many interesting people so far. We have paperwork to keep track of each campsite and who is coming and going. We collect the camping fee for those who don’t have pre-paid reservations. Our other duties consist of checking the bathrooms a couple of times a day and cleaning campsites after guests leave. I clean out the firepits of ashes, and clean the campsite, while Judie does the paperwork and sweeps around the campsite with a rake. Not too stressful, and it generally takes only a few hours a day.

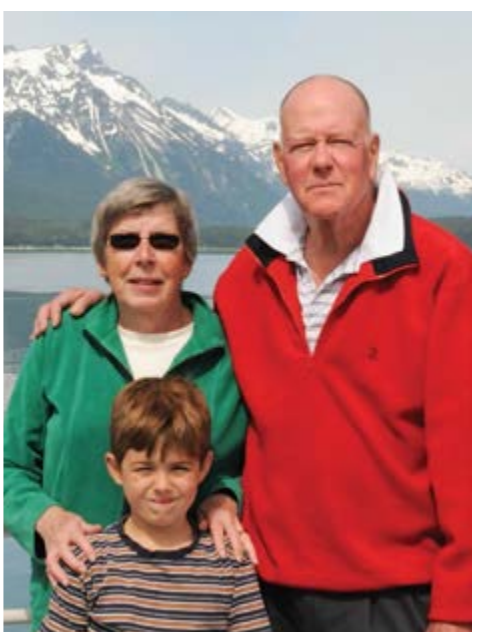
We are supposed to get two days off a week but so far have taken a couple of mornings off to go down to Gunnison to play pickle ball at the recreation center—there are anywhere from 15 to 20 people who play on a regular basis every Tuesday and Thursday mornings. That’s been fun.

I’ve had two epidural shots for my back pain and am scheduled for a third. The

funny thing is that when I’m walking or active my back doesn’t hurt. It’s when I’m sitting for any length of time where the pain goes from my back down my right leg. So maybe being a campground host that requires me to clean campsites every day keeping me active is a good thing ° maybe it’s just what the doctor ordered . . . maybe things happen for a reason, eh?

Tomorrow we’re going down to Gunnison for the annual car show and craft fair at the beautiful fair grounds. We’ve gone to this the past few years and it’s always interesting. We love the town of Gunnison. It’s been our favorite town for many summers, although we would NEVER be here in the winter when it is 20 below zero. We don’t want to see another snowflake ever — well, maybe one or two.

We will be here until the campground closes for the summer/fall season, sometime in late September or early to mid-October depending on the weather. So far it’s been cool at night and warm during the days. Sometimes we get an afternoon shower, but the weather generally has been wonderful. The Taylor Canyon has always been our most favorite place for the summer. So here we are.





In the meantime, if any of you want to come out for some marvelous fall weather in a magical canyon, way up high in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, come join us. We promise not to work you too hard cleaning campsites. Who knows, maybe you too could become a campground host.

—Jonathan & Judy Skier

### Our Fabulous First Trip in Our Phaeton Motor Coach

We purchased our Tiffin Phaeton in April 2011. In August of that year, we embarked on our first lengthy trip that lasted a month and took us 6,000 miles. We headed out from Hammond and made our first stop in Colorado where we visited Pikes Peak. From there we went to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where we toured the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Park. We really enjoyed the beautiful landscapes and watching



Old Faithful erupt, as well as following many bison that held up traffic as they moved slowly on the main highway. After our visit there, we moved on to Lake Tahoe where we enjoyed the scenic view of the lakes and paddled down Truckee River. Nothing could compare to sitting on that beach and watching the beautiful sunset. While there we took a day trip to Virginia City that was fantastic as it took us back to the old western days.

After a week in Tahoe, we were on our way to California to Yosemite National Park. This was one of our favorite stops as the Redwood trees were magnificent and nothing could be as beautiful as all of the mountains, waterfalls, and clear streams meandering through the mountains. On our return trip, we stopped for a couple of days in Utah where we toured the Mormon Tabernacle and visited a mine. We arrived home in mid-September after a wonderful scenic trip that we had never before experienced, traveling in a beautiful motor coach that we truly love. We are looking forward to many more trips like this. We found that traveling by motor coach is the only way to go in order to have the comforts of home while touring the country.

Donnie & Debbie Efferson  
Hammond, Louisiana

### Lock Your Door While Taking a Shower!

Chuck and I bought our new Tiffin RV in April and began to prepare for a summer of traveling in our wonderful Phaeton. Since we were both retired, it seemed like the ideal time to discover America and what better way than this! We had been in the northern states for the really warm weather and decided to pick up our childhood friend, Roy, in Maryland. Then we headed for North Carolina to visit my best friend in Charlotte. We divided the trip in half and stayed at a Walmart in Henderson, North Carolina. It was a quiet night, and upon waking we leisurely prepared for our day. I was the last to get my shower so Roy and Chuck went to Walmart to get a cup of coffee and give me a little time to myself.

The coach was quiet, our little dog, Tinkerbell, was on the dash sunning herself as usual, and all was well with the world. As I was showering, I heard the front door open. “The guys sure took a short time for coffee,” I thought. Then I thought I heard a woman’s voice. She was talking to Tink. “She must have seen the dog and Chuck has let her in,” I thought. And then I heard another woman’s voice. I shut off the shower. I opened the bathroom sliding door a crack and peeked through. I could see the tops of the heads of two women, one sitting in the driver’s seat and the other in the passenger seat. They were petting the dog and conversing with each other. I kept thinking I would hear or catch a glimpse of Chuck, but that didn’t happen. I dried off as fast as I could and grabbed a robe, slid the door open and came up to the front. The ladies greeted me kindly. They looked at me a little strangely as I was standing there in my robe with my hair dripping. They smiled and continued to converse. They told me they thought Tink was the cutest little dog and very sweet, too. Tink thought our new company was great. I asked them how they were, thinking they might give me an explanation of what they were doing sitting in the front seats of our coach. They said they were fine and said it sure seemed like it was going to be a hot day. In my mind, I kept trying to figure out what was going on. Had Chuck let them in? Did they have car trouble and Chuck was helping them? What in the world were they doing sitting in my coach? They seemed so pleasant and not threatening in any way, and yet, who were they? I was totally puzzled at the situation.

There was a definite pause in our conversation, and then finally the lady in the driver’s seat asked, “Are you the one who’s going to do the osteoporosis screening?”

“No, I’m not the one,” I said, still at a loss for words. “Well, they told us there would be a big motorhome in the middle of the Walmart parking lot, and this is the only one we saw.” I repeated, “No, I’m not the one. We are tourists from Illinois going to visit friends in Charlotte.” “Oh, my!” They both responded at the same time. “I guess we must be unexpected company”, the “driver” said. The “passenger” agreed. I just nodded. They

got up, patted Tink, and left, wishing me a good day. I finished dressing, pondered the whole situation, and just laughed.

The guys came back and I shared the surreal story with them. They told me to step out and look in back of our coach. Sure enough, there was a big white RV parked in back of us with the words “Osteoporosis Screening” on the side. I just had to go back and tell them about my experience with their clients. As I walked in, the “driver” was walking out. She told me she was a bit embarrassed by it all. I assured her she had made my day, and I would like to write a story about the incident. She said that would be fine.

Then this delightful little lady said, “I just want to tell you something. I sure was glad it was a woman that walked out of that shower. If it had been a man, I would have said, ‘Oh my, I’m gonna make you a new door right now. Where do you want it?’”

Lynn & Chuck Wilson  
Springfield, Illinois

### Country Living in Savannah, Georgia

We traveled in our 2000 Allegro Bus with five other motor coaches on a caravan through the southern and east coast states this spring. We wanted to visit Savannah, Georgia, but were not sure where we could park six big rigs with trailers. We found the beautiful Red Gate Farms campground. It is family owned and has some history. It’s a beautiful country setting amid the big town, with friendly and helpful camp hosts. It is an oasis of country living between Highway 17 and Veterans Parkway, eight minutes from downtown. What a beautiful city—we loved the parks, river walk, and of course, we ate at Paula Deen’s!

Valerie & Francis Richardson  
Eudora, Kansas

### Tiffin Phaeton Owners Gather in Alaska

During our trip through Alaska in our Phaeton, we stopped off at Grand View Café and RV Park. Later in the evening, we noticed there was a row of Tiffin Phaetons. We just had to show you. All of us will have traveled about eight months from home



during our visit to Alaska. It seems that when we stop in a campground, almost certainly someone will come ask us how we like our Phaeton. And, as one Phaeton owner, we almost always ask other Phaeton owners about their experience as we seem to be drawn to each other. That’s how we all have met, sometimes for one night, sometimes longer.

On this particular evening there were four Phaeton owners: Todd & Cheryl Alley, Orlando, Florida, 2006 Phaeton; Richard & Peggy Hastings, Abilene, Texas, 2008 Phaeton; Jack & Bernice Morris, Ft. Worth, Texas, 2012 Phaeton; and ourselves, in our 2010 Phaeton. All of us are loving traveling all over the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, and our Phaetons have provided the means.

This particular RV park, [www.grandviewrv.com](http://www.grandviewrv.com), is one of the nicest we’ve seen here in Alaska. It has full hookups with 50 amps (which is rare in Alaska). It has large pull-thru sites, all facing the beautiful snow-capped mountains. There is a short walk to a glacier and Dall sheep across the street. Everything that we’ve ordered from the café has been homemade and freshly prepared by one of the owners, Colleen.

Jan & Harold Markham  
Waxahachie, Texas

### Thank You, Tiffin!

This is our first time to write, even though we have owned a Tiffin Allegro Bay since 2006. Ann and I both retired in 2011. We are not new to camping as our two girls grew up tent camping with us on the Pearl River north of Jackson, Mississippi. Since then we have owned a travel trailer, a fifth wheel, and then it was time to be “Roughing It Smoothly.”

We purchased our Allegro Bay in January 2006, in hopes that we could take the trip of our lifetime when we retired. We are very fortunate because we live only an hour and a half from Tiffin’s home office where we have it serviced. Tiffin was even good enough to arrange for employees to replace our analog TVs with new HD flat screen TVs after hours. All TVs look great.

Thank you, Bob Tiffin, for building a coach and helping to maintain it which allowed Ann and me to take a three month,



trouble-free 7,000 mile trip to 12 national parks. Our journey took us from Alabama through Arkansas, Oklahoma, the Texas panhandle, and into New Mexico where we started enjoying scenery that neither of us had experienced previously. If you really want to enjoy Mexican food at a local restaurant, it is a must to dine at Tomasita's on South Guadalupe Street in Santa Fe—our favorite restaurant of the entire trip. Our first parks to explore were the Petrified Forest followed by the Grand Canyon and then Zion and Bryce Canyons. We enjoyed a week's rest at Breckenridge, Colorado, and toured the Rocky Mountain National Park and Independence Pass before heading to the Black Hills of South Dakota. Mt. Rushmore was impressive, and the Badlands were amazing. Colter Bay Village RV Park inside the Grand Tetons National Park was our home for twelve days. What a great location to tour both the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Parks. From there it was a breathtaking drive over the Beartooth Highway (don't miss this—another "must see"), and north to Glacier National Park. Our journey home took us to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to visit friends working at the Experimental Aircraft Association. On our way through Kentucky we visited Mammoth Cave, which was a nice break from the heat.

This was a trip we will never forget in the wonderful lifestyle that we enjoy. Our coach is our "home away from home" where we can comfortably enjoy everything with our Chihuahua (Lola) and Mini Schnauzer (Della). During our trip we made new friends as we visited with other RVers. Following football season at Auburn University, we will begin our plans for our next adventure to New England.

Thanks again to all of you at Tiffin for making an excellent product that made our trip worry free.

Bob & Ann Reed  
Vinemont, Alabama

### The Allegro 35 QBA Sleeps Nine Comfortably!

For many years we owned a Winnebago Adventurer which we were not able to comfortably use when we had all our grandkids with us. We recently traded it in for a 2011 Allegro 35 QBA (bunk house) with a terrific layout to include our grandkids. Together with my wife, our daughter, her husband, and five grandkids from 4–13, we're now able to travel together. We recently had them with us for three wonderful weeks and made several trips around Florida in between rest stops at home to replenish our stocks. Our first trip for five days was to south Miami where we stayed at the Miami-Everglades Resort, an impeccably clean RV spot with wonderful amenities. Using that as a base camp, we traveled to the Keys, Miami Beach, Little Havana, the Coral Castle, and many other interesting sites that kept the kids excited. Another foray brought us to Lazydays (where we bought the coach). Using this as a base camp we visited all around the Tam-



pa area as far north as Tarpon Springs and Honeymoon Island Beach with its superb Learning Center that demonstrates the gorgeous flora, fauna, and history of the island. For our home-schooled grandkids, it was truly a scientific learning experience. This went hand-in-hand with the kid's visit to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium where they got to see "Winter" the dolphin with the artificial tail. Having seen the movie, they were thrilled to see "Winter" in the water!

Rally Park at Lazydays has a new Exit-10 restaurant right on the premises next to the pool making it accessible and reasonably priced to feed a crew of kids! It's our favorite place to stay with a super helpful and friendly staff! Our sleeping arrangements worked out perfectly with my daughter and son-in-law sharing the Aero bed couch, the two youngest in the dinette bed, the oldest boy on the floor of the salon using the cushions from the couch, and the two older girls in the bunk beds. When I bought the coach we wanted a king size bed so we adapted the bed platform to accept a king size mattress. Everyone was comfortable! You can see from the photo taken at Lazydays, the 35 QBA can hold a large family!

Dr. Peter Fallon  
Vero Beach, Florida

### Camping in the Thirties

In the 1930s, my Dad built a completely closed-in camper with two sofas, which converted to four beds when we stopped. There were no "travel trailer" parks in those days. We made our own parks—wide places on the side of the road—near a stream or a lake for fishing. My three-year-old brother, my Dad, myself and I made the trip. Mom preferred hotels!

Martin Mason Broadwell  
Decatur, Georgia



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to the dog show with Coco.

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# The Oregon Trail

## PART I: Independence, Missouri to Scotts Bluff, Nebraska



PAINTING, WILLIAM HENRY JACKSON-1932

**Oregon!** In 1840 the very word itself stimulated dreams of an agricultural paradise — protected valleys, consistent rainfall every year, plenty of free land — and a better life.

The Panic of 1837 plunged the young nation's economy into a financial crisis and a period of runaway inflation. Many banks failed, then came record-high unemployment. Every bank in New York City began to accept payments only in gold and silver coinage. The Panic was followed by a five-year depression. Of 850 banks in the U.S., 343 closed and 62 failed and later recovered.

Oregon's census records from the late nineteenth century show that Missouri was the clear leader in supplying the overlanders who left home for the Oregon Country, followed by Illinois and Iowa. Significant numbers also came from Indiana, Ohio, Arkansas, and Wisconsin. In 1840 the U.S. and its territories had a population of just over 17 million. Over nine million (53 percent) were living on farms. It is safe to say that a far greater percentage of the Oregon Trail travelers were farmers. By 1850 the U.S. farm population had grown to 11.7 million.

The farmers had a good year in 1837, but in 1839 agricultural prices dropped like a rock. In the 1830s there were no Ag Extension Agents to teach scientific farming methods. Crop rotation

to keep the soil enriched had been practiced for centuries in Europe. But from lack of knowledge, most farmers in the states during the early to mid-nineteenth century had worn out their soil. They thought the best solution to their problem was to move on.

### A Brief History of the Oregon Trail

During the preceding 50 years, several events had taken place that slowly formed a military and political puzzle. Limited explorations over land and sea by Spain and Russia created claims to the Oregon Country that eventually weakened because they were too far away to enforce them. U.S. and British claims were much stronger.

In September 1787 Robert Gray and John Kendrick left Boston in two ships backed by several Boston merchants who wanted to trade for pelts along the north Pacific coast and then sail directly to China to sell them. They reached Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island in September 1788 and remained in the area for at least eight months.

In 1792 George Vancouver explored Puget Sound for Great Britain and claimed a vast segment that included what are now the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, parts of Wyoming and western Montana, and British Columbia up to the 54° 40' parallel.

U.S. Minister to France Robert Livingston and Secretary of State James Monroe were in Paris in 1803 to negotiate a purchase of land on the east side of the Mississippi River for \$2 million to

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Text and photography by Fred Thompson  
Archival photography by Bill and Jan Moeller (B&JM)

facilitate port of entry rights to America's largest waterway. They were stunned by Napoleon's unexpected offer to sell 828,000 square miles of French claims between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains for \$15 million. With no way to get approval from President Jefferson or Congress, they accepted Napoleon's gratuitous offer on April 30. The documents reached Washington on July 14, 1803. Congress ratified the treaty with France in October, borrowed the funds from Dutch and English bankers, and took possession of the land on December 20. All or parts of 15 states were formed by the Louisiana Purchase, making it possible for emigrants to travel in U.S. territories or states the entire way to the Oregon Country.

Within months Jefferson commissioned Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to lead the Corps of Discovery to explore the Louisiana Purchase. They left St. Louis on May 14, 1804, following the Missouri River into North Dakota where they spent the winter at Fort Mandan. The Corps went beyond the western boundary of the Louisiana Purchase when they crossed the Continental Divide in August 1805 into the Oregon Country. They spent their second winter at Fort Clapsop near the mouth of the Columbia River. By staying at the fort for four months, they established the U.S. claim to the Oregon Country. They arrived back in St. Louis on Sept. 23, 1806. During the next 15 years, Russia and Spain gave up on weak claims to the Oregon Country through treaties with Great Britain and the United States.

David Thompson, working for the Montreal-based Northwest Company, explored much of the region in 1807–1808.

Three years later he was the first European to voyage the entire length of the Columbia River. At its juncture with the Snake River, he erected a sign claiming the country for Great Britain. Later in 1811 he completed his survey of the entire Columbia River and arrived at its mouth to find Fort Astoria.

In 1810 America's richest man, John Jacob Astor, founded the Pacific Fur Company. He sent 48 men overland to establish a trading post on the Pacific coast and dispatched a ship loaded with supplies and men around Cape Horn to meet them. The *Tonquin* arrived at the mouth of the Columbia River in March 1811 and began building a trading post. In June some of *Tonquin's* crew decided to explore the coast farther north. Sadly, they met a tragic fate when they were massacred by Indians and the ship was destroyed. The men at Fort Astoria completed the trading post and established friendly relations with the Indians in the area. The overland team arrived at the fort in early 1812.

Robert Stuart, one of the men who had come on the *Tonquin*, decided it was necessary to return to New York to inform Astor about the loss of the men and the ship, and to make Astor aware of the need for supplies. The overland team had not been suc-

cessful in finding a dependable route through the Rocky Mountains. Stuart and six companions were much more fortunate in finding passes and establishing a way that eventually would become the Oregon Trail.

Most historians credit Stuart with discovering South Pass. Actually two mountain passes with approximate elevations of 7,400 feet and 7,500 feet, it is a broad low region 35 miles across. South Pass is the lowest point on the Continental Divide between the Central Rocky Mountains and the Southern Rocky Mountains, and provides a natural crossing point of the Rockies.

For at least 25 years Stuart's route was known only to fur traders. Captain Benjamin Bonneville led a military contingent and the first wagons across South Pass in 1832. Ten years later, Lt. John Frémont wrote that South Pass "could be crossed with many toilsome ascents."



The Pioneers' Creed

Elijah White, a Methodist missionary and medical doctor, led the first wagon train to Oregon that included more than 100 people. White returned from Oregon in 1841 after spending four years at a mission in the Willamette Valley. Departing from Elm Grove, Missouri, on May 16, 1842, his group included 112 emigrants, 18 wagons, and a variety of livestock. White's party reached Fort Vancouver four months later on September 20. White, who had a U.S. government appointment as an Indian agent, placated tensions with several tribes and appointed judges to deal with disputes between Indians and U.S. citizens.

Another party of 80 set out from Independence, Missouri, early in 1841 led by Thomas Fitzpatrick who had first tra-

versed South Pass in 1824 with fur trader Jedediah Smith. Fitzpatrick led them across the northeastern corner of Kansas and then along the Platte River through Nebraska to Chimney Rock and Scotts Bluff. On an arcing trail through Wyoming, they passed Independence Rock and Devil's Gate along the Sweetwater River which led them to the wide, gentle grade across the Rockies — South Pass!

At Soda Springs the wagon train split into three groups: one headed to California; Fitzpatrick led a group to Fort Hall, a trading post on the Snake River in Idaho; and the Oregon-bound group hired a new guide to lead them along the Snake River across the Blue Mountains. Indians guided them down the Columbia River to Willamette Valley. This part of the route became known as the Oregon Trail Corridor.

Spain and Russia gave up their claims to the lands they had explored along the Pacific coast. The U.S. based its claim on Robert Gray's exploration of the Columbia River and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The British based their claim on the overland explorations and mapping of the Columbia River by David Thompson and the exploration by George Vancouver in 1792. But the decid-

ing factor was the number of settlers coming across the Oregon Trail from the states after 1842. Two Canadian efforts brought 100 settlers into the Oregon country, but it was too little, too late. In 1846 Britain signed the Oregon Treaty and ceded to the U.S. their claims south of the 49th parallel. Oregon's American-born population reached 4,000 by 1847 and tripled to more than 12,000 by 1850. In 1848 the U.S. portion of the Oregon Country was formally organized as the Oregon Territory. In 1853 an effort to split off the region north of the Columbia River resulted in the

creation of the Washington Territory. On February 12, 1859, the U.S. Senate passed a bill granting statehood to Oregon.

During the 1840s Indian and emigrant relations were generally cooperative. Indians sold the emigrants fresh meat, guided them to safer river crossings, and returned lost livestock. But then the Indians realized that the settlers were coming in droves and that their tribal lands were being settled without regard to their interests. Treaties were made and broken; tribes were forced onto reservations; and the landscape was changed forever.

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## Following the Oregon Trail Today

THE PLACE TO BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY is the National Frontier Trails Museum located at 318 W. Pacific Street in Independence, Missouri. The Trails Museum presents the story of the exploration, acquisition, and settlement of the American West. An excellent film provides an orientation for the interpretive exhibits of the Oregon, Santa Fe, and California trails. Quotations from trail diaries offer the emigrants' stories in their own words. Those traveling the three trails had different purposes. The 900-mile Santa Fe Trail was a foreign trade route. Travelers on the California Trail were seeking their fortunes in the gold fields. The "emigrants" on the Oregon Trail wanted to claim land and start a new life in the northwest. All of them had a role in writing the history of western America.

Before you leave the museum, be sure to purchase the *National Historic Trails Auto Tour Route Interpretive Guide*, published by the National Park Service. It is a five-booklet paperback series. Driving directions to reach each site on the Oregon Trail will be found in these guides. We did not visit every site, although with these guides you may choose to do so. For restaurant and camping information along each section of the Oregon Trail, I recommend a copy of *Traveling on the Oregon Trail* by Julie Fanselow. See the Bibliography at the end of this story.

The Trail Museum's Library (Merrill J. Mattes Research Library) is the largest public research library in the nation devoted to the overland trail experience. Of special importance is the library's core collection of over 2,300 overland trail diaries, letters, and first person accounts.

Independence was a "jumping off" point, a frontier town.

Every spring from 1842 to 1870 the emigrants spent two to three weeks camping in Independence while they bought supplies and outfitted their wagons for the 2,000-mile saga that, at best, would take four months. When the wagon trains left Independence, they left civilization behind except for an occasional entrepreneur in northeastern Kansas who offered supplies and livestock. Once they reached the Platte River in Nebraska, a building of any kind was a rare sight.



PHOTO BY B&JM

Most preferred light-weight farm wagons over the heavier Conestogas. A typical wagon bed was 11 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 2 feet deep and might cost from \$80 to \$100. A six-mule team cost \$600, while an eight-oxen team cost \$200. Savvy travelers took food staples and the necessary tools and hardware to repair wagon axles, shoe their teams, cook meals, and

build temporary shelters and rafts to get across rivers. A typical grocery list for a family of four: 600 pounds flour, 120 pounds hardtack, 400 pounds bacon, 60 pounds coffee, 4 pounds tea, 100 pounds sugar, 200 pounds beans, 120 pounds dried apples and peaches, 40 pounds salt, 8 pounds pepper, 8 pounds bicarbonate of soda, 25 pounds whiskey (for medicinal purposes!), 65 pounds candles and soap, 100 pounds clothing, 25 pounds cooking utensils, 20 pounds essential tools, and 60 pounds bedding. Many chose to sell their homes and possessions to buy the equipment and supplies to start a new life in Oregon.

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Special thanks to John Rimel, president of Mountain Press Publishing, for permission to use images from *The Oregon Trail: A Photographic Journey*, by Bill and Jan Moeller.



Thousands died on the trail from cholera and other diseases. The Oregon Trail has been described as “the world’s longest graveyard.” Although accurate records were not kept, the assessment of diaries by historians indicate that one in 17 adults died. One of every five children who started the trip did not finish. Children most often died from accidents, drowning, and disease. Adults died from gunshot accidents, rattlesnake bites, and cholera.

Wagon trains were organized on the Courthouse Square in Independence in an atmosphere of commotion, confusion, and excitement. Before you leave the area, be sure to get a map at the museum for a short hike to see the swales on the grounds of the Bingham-Waggoner Estate. They are grassed over wagon ruts created by the heavy freight wagons as the pioneers cut across open country. Using your NPS guidebook, *Western Missouri Through Northeastern Kansas*, you can visit other sites in the area showing runs and swales (see sites 4, 6, 9, 14). The guide book will provide directions to the sites we visited in Kansas, as well as many locations we omitted in the interest of time. The numbered paragraphs are correlated to the guidebook.

**21. Union Town/Herbert Reinhard Green Memorial Wildlife Park.** Going west on I-70, we made our first stop at Willard, Kansas. While the guidebook today calls it a “wildlife park,” it was a village from 1848 to 1859. Of course, that 1842 wagon train mentioned earlier missed this stop. The emigrants were probably seven days out of Independence when they stopped here to wait for a ferry across the Kansas River. Ferries would be non-existent farther on. The park preserves the trace and pioneer graves.

**24. Red Vermillion Crossing/Vieux Cemetery/Cholera Cemetery.** Louis Vieux, of mixed French and Potawatomic ancestry, built a bridge here over the Red Vermillion River and charged the emigrants a dollar per wagon to cross. During the peak season, he made up to \$300 a day. An epidemic of Asiatic cholera struck a wagon train camped here in 1849 and left 50 dead within a week. Three small headstones reside in a small fenced plot. One has a still readable inscription: T. S. Prather, May 27, 1849.

**27. Alcove Spring.** Most wagon trains arrived here in late

spring and sometimes had to camp for several days if the Big Blue River was flooding. The spring is mentioned often in emigrant diaries that describe the lush grass and beautiful wildflowers. But tragedy struck here, too. There are many graves of cholera victims on the hill above the spring. When Sarah Keyes’ family decided to go to Oregon in 1846, the 70-year-old grandmother, blind and deaf, refused to be left behind. She wanted to reunite with her son who had emigrated to Oregon two years earlier. She died at Alcove Spring and, according to a diary, was buried beneath a large oak. Her grave could not be specifically located later when a monument was placed to honor her valiant soul.



PHOTO BY B&JM

**30. Hollenberg Ranch Station.** Just a stone’s throw from the Nebraska line, Gerat and Sofia Hollenberg in 1857 built a general store, post office, and tavern near Cottonwood Creek to serve emigrants on the Oregon Trail. They provided meals, lodging, staples, clothing, and livestock. In 1860 the Hollenberg Ranch became a station for the Pony Express. Today it is the only surviving Pony Express station on its original site in the U.S. One diarist camped at the station described watching “the long trains of white-topped wagons for many miles.” Visitors may picnic on the lawn overlooking the Cottonwood Creek valley. The Hollenberg Ranch is open from 10 to 5 Wednesday through Saturday, and from 1 to 5 on Sunday.



PHOTO BY B&JM



PHOTO BY B&JM

As we travel through Nebraska, you will need your *Nebraska and Northeastern Colorado* guidebook.

**A-1. Rock Creek Station State Historical Park.** The park is the first site on the Oregon Trail inside the Nebraska line. Built in 1857 by S.C. and Newton Glenn, the Station was a regular stopping point for Oregon Trail emigrants, the Overland Stage, and the Pony Express. But the station became best known when “Wild Bill” Hickok killed the owner of the station, David McCandles, and two of his hired hands over a collection dispute with the station’s manager. The incident received instant notoriety and has long overshadowed the importance of the Rock Creek Station. The 350-acre park offers Pony Express exhibits, reconstructed buildings, pioneer graves, and trail ruts and swales.

The **Homestead National Monument**, about 20 miles off the Oregon Trail tour route to the northeast, commemorates the Homestead Act of 1862 signed by Abraham Lincoln. Exhibits tell the story of prairie pioneers. Restored buildings, antique farming equipment, and hiking trails make it a very worthwhile stop.

After the Homestead stop, we made a two-hour trip due west on US 136 to Franklin, and then turned north on NE-10 to the Fort Kearny State Recreation Area where we camped for three nights. Nebraska’s State Recreation Areas along I-80 offer beautiful parks with level RV sites (30-amp elec., no sewer, water usually nearby). We back-tracked 13 miles south to Minden the next morning to see Harold Warp’s interpretation of 120 years of American history.

**A-17. Harold Warp’s Pioneer Village.** Harold Warp’s parents immigrated to the U.S. in 1873 and homesteaded in a sod house on the Nebraska prairie. Harold, the youngest of twelve children, was born in 1903. He was orphaned at 11 and lived with his older siblings until he left for Chicago in 1924 with \$800 and a patent for “Flex-O-Glass,” a plastic window material he developed. Many other patents and products came from his ingenious mind.

In 1948 he learned that the country school he had attended as a child had been put up for sale. He bought the property which engendered an idea to create a “pioneer village” that showed man’s progress since 1830.



1900 Gypsy wagon

“For thousands of years,” Warp said in 1950, “man lived quite simply. Then like a sleeping giant, our world was awakened. In a mere hundred and twenty years of eternal time, man progressed from open hearths, grease lamps, and ox carts to television, supersonic speed, and atomic power. We have endeavored to show you the actual development of this astounding progress as it was unfolded by our forefathers and by ourselves.”

The main buildings show the development of transportation, lighting, guns, home products and appliances, and many other categories arranged in chronological order. I was fascinated by an 1830 Conestoga wagon, an 1857 Studebaker freighter wagon, the oldest combustion engine (an 1876 Otto), the world’s oldest production 1903 Ford, and a 1900 Gypsy wagon (the first RV?).



Warp's collection of cars requires three two-story buildings, each 265 feet long. Warp laid out a community of restored buildings on a beautiful tree-shaded circle, including a sod house, country school, horse barn, church, train depot, fire house, fort, general merchandise store, the Bloomington land office, livery stable, three buildings for farm machinery, blacksmith shop, Pony Express station, and a home appliance building. For us Pioneer Village was an all-day visit. It opens at 8 a.m. every day except Christmas.

Our camping location at the Fort Kearny State Recreation Area positioned us for day trips to sites A-2 through A-16 in the NPS Guide. Many are simply historical markers that will expand your knowledge of the emigrants' struggles, tragedies, and triumphs. In the interest of space, I will not describe them in this article. Based on your personal interests and time, you could easily spend another full day visiting these sites.

**A-18. Fort Kearny State Historical Park.** The fort was the first military post built on the Oregon Trail to protect the emigrants. Its interpretive center, artifacts, reconstructed buildings, and parade grounds will explain why the travelers were so glad to reach the fort.

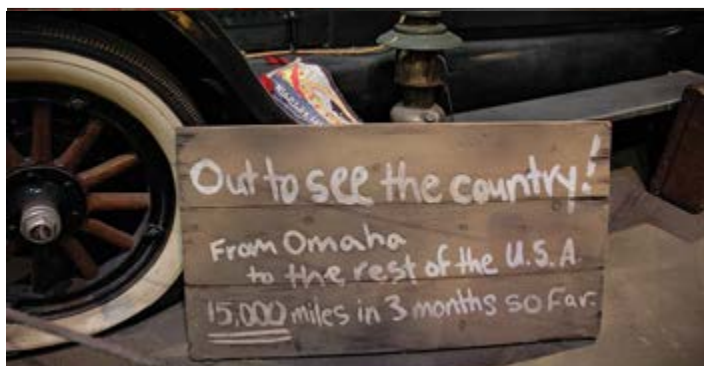
In his diary dated May 29, 1849, A. J. McCall commented about Fort Kearny: "At present it consists of a number of long, low buildings constructed principally of adobe, or sun dried bricks, with nearly flat roofs of brush." McCall arrived about one year after work on the fort had begun.



PHOTO BY B&JM

**D-1. The Great Platte River Road Archway Monument.** On I-80 take exit 272 for Kearney. Turn north and follow signs. Appropriately built over I-80, today's great east-west road that follows the Oregon Trail of 165 years ago, the Great Platte River Road Archway Monument presents the history of the Great Migration west, which by some accounts reached a total of 500,000 people by 1869 when the transcontinental railroad was completed (see Golden Spike story, p. 56). The 1,500-ton structure has four levels with exhibits using current technology to tell the emigrants' story. Visitors receive headsets that narrate the dioramas and exhibits on display. Reenactors make the experience more realistic. Historically you enter the monument in 1840s and

leave in the 21st century. You should allow at least two hours for your visit. Adults, \$12; seniors 62+, \$10. Hours 9-6.



The Great Platte River Road Archway Monument is an enormous structure containing four floors of exhibits spanning Interstate 80. The map shows the river road through Nebraska that the pioneers traveled. In 1913 when the first transcontinental road, Lincoln Highway, was completed, Americans began to use their spoke-wheeled cars to see the country, and most of them were camping. Today, from the top floor of the monument, one can watch motorhomes travel Interstate 80 over essentially the same route.

**D-2. Historical Wayside.** The wayside is accessible only from eastbound lanes about five miles west of Kearney (the city; the fort is spelled without the second “e”). You will find historical exhibits here about Fort Kearny and the forts of the Great Plains.

**D-9. O’Fallon’s Bluff Trail Ruts & Interpretive Area.** In the eastbound lanes, this exhibit and trails are located between mileposts 159 and 160. The Oregon Trail followed the south side of the Platte River. O’Fallon’s bluff pushes all the way to the river’s edge, leaving no room for wagons to pass. The wagons had to be taken up and over the bluff. The wagon wheels cut deep swales which are still visible today. Now covered with protective prairie grass, you can actually walk in them. Exhibit signs tell the story of the Great Platte River Road.

**D-10. California Hill.** Visitors can walk where the oxen and wagons gouged a deeply rutted “road.” Summer storms and winter weather have not erased the deep swales in the two mile



PHOTO BY B&JM

grade up California Hill near Brule, Nebraska. At this point the emigrants were 450 miles west of Independence after a month’s journey. Sometimes the iron rims on the wagon wheels expanded as they crossed the Platte and then shrunk quickly in the dry air, causing them to pop off.

**D-17. Ash Hollow and Windlass Hill.** Ash Hollow was described in emigrant diaries as a beautiful glade in which to



PHOTO BY B&JM

spend at least two days R&R. “This is a beautiful place with high bluffs on all sides; there are some ash trees from which it takes its name. The greatest profusion of wild roses is in full bloom and many other flowers. The sides of the bluffs were literally covered and the air heavy with the odor of them. I was enchanted and could scarcely tear myself away.” – Esther Belle Hanna, June 5, 1852.

Getting to this oasis was a terrifying experience. The men tied ropes to their wagons, locked the wheels, and allowed the



PHOTO BY B&JM

wagons to slide down the steep incline. One diarist said the hill was so steep that it seemed to hang “a little past the perpendicular.” Be sure to visit the sod house, a replica of a homesteader’s abode on the prairie.

As refreshing as Ash Hollow was to the emigrants, it was also a place of sadness. During the trail’s regular use over 30 years, many were buried here. The inscription on one gravestone tells the story of an 18-year-old bride who died from cholera.

**D-24. Courthouse and Jail Rocks.** After experiencing weeks of boredom traversing the featureless prairies, the travelers became fascinated with huge rock formations in the distance. Most had come from places that had trees and forests, making it easy to judge distances from familiar points of reference. But the great distances across the level prairies altered that sense. Two great formations took on the shapes of a courthouse and a jail. After first sighting, it would take two days to reach these monoliths.



PHOTO BY JUSTIN BENTTINEN

**D-26. Chimney Rock National Historic Site.** Rising 480 feet above the North Platte River, the most famous landmark on the Oregon Trail could be seen from 30 miles away by the emigrants, and in clear weather at least two days before they arrived near its conical base.

“When approaching it, it takes a variety of forms – sometimes that of an old ruin, then a very sharp cone; but, after all, more the shape of a chimney than anything else. –A. J. McCall, June 13, 1849.



The 1969 survey of 350 trail guides and diaries by Merrill J. Mattes found that 330 (94 percent) had a reference to Chimney

Rock. The nearest competitor was Scotts Bluff which was mentioned in 80 percent of the same records. Many diarists reported their surprise that distant objects seemed so close. One traveler wrote that what had “seemed ten was really fifty miles away.”

The Nebraska State Historical Society published the following elevations: The spire rises to an elevation of 325 feet above the base of the cone and 480 feet above the river valley. The spire alone is 120 feet in height.

The Ethel and Christopher J. Abbott Visitor Center houses museum exhibits; an excellent selection of books and pamphlets about Nebraska and the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails; a hands-on opportunity to “load your wagon,” and a video presentation that tells the story of the great western migration. Hours 9–5 daily. Closed on all state holidays except Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day. Adults: \$3. Located 1.5 miles south of Hwy 92 on Chimney Rock Road.

**D-33. Scotts Bluff National Monument.** Scotts Bluff is a geological remnant of the ancestral high plains, which were several hundred feet higher than the present Great Plains. Geologists believe the high plains were formed in the continent’s interior after the uplifting of the Rocky Mountains. Composed of sandstone, volcanic ash, and siltstone, the high plains eroded faster than new strata were deposited. Now referred to as cap rock, calcified limestone concretions in isolated patches near the surface of the high plains were more durable than the surround-

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# DENSO



The Scotts Bluff National Monument and Visitor Center is staffed with NPS rangers who give programs and lead hikes through the park.

ing sandstone. This stone roof protected the layers under it from eroding away, creating the 780-foot bluff that survived.

The first white men to see the bluff were probably John Jacob Astor's men returning to New York from Fort Astoria. Led by Robert Stuart, they passed the area on Christmas Day 1812. As noted earlier, fur traders used the route in the 1820s and 1830s, but the rugged topography surrounding the bluff caused the freight wagoners to favor the trail through Mitchell Pass, just south of the bluff.

The bluff was named for fur trapper Hiram Scott. In 1828 Scott and two other trappers were traveling by boat down the North Platte to meet near the bluff with three other trappers. Scott became ill sixty miles from the rendezvous and his two companions, believing his death was imminent, abandoned him. He recovered enough to make his way to the rendezvous, only to find the dead ashes of the trappers' campfires. He crawled to a spring at the base of the bluff and died. His remains were discovered several months later.

Hikers can do a roundtrip summit trail in about two hours, or you can drive to the top in a few minutes. Views from the overlook trails will help the amateur geologist realize the enormous amount of erosion that reduced the high plains to the present

level of what we now call the Great Plains. Wildlife enthusiasts will enjoy looking for rabbits, mule deer, rattlesnakes, swifts, cliff swallows, magpies, and meadowlarks.

The visitor center has exhibits, an information center staffed by park rangers, an audiovisual program, and a bookstore. Works by the renowned artist and photographer William Henry Jackson are on display. Visitor center hours: 8–7 summer, 8–5 off-season. Summit road: 8–6:30 summer, 8–4:30 off-season. Open daily except Jan. 1, Thanksgiving Day, and Dec. 25.

While in the Scotts Bluff area, we stayed at the Robidoux RV Park, 5855 Five Rocks Rd., Gering, NE 69341. (308) 436-2046. Full hook-ups incl. cable, \$29. 35 sites in park setting with grassy open spaces. Each site includes paved drive, patio and picnic table. The park is within sight of Scotts Bluff, and is adjacent to the Five Rocks Amphitheater. Call (308) 436-6886 to check on entertainment events while you are there.

**Part II: Scotts Bluff to Oregon City** will appear in *RIS*, Winter 2013, 10:1. While the two stories are not appropriately seasonal for the Fall and Winter issues, I hope you will use them to plan your travels for next year. An early May departure from Independence would emulate the journey of the pioneers. **RIS**

## A Mother's Diary on the Oregon Trail



Amelia Stewart Knight

*Editor's note:* The following excerpts from Amelia Knight's 1853 diary, published in *Best of Covered Wagon Women*, relates her family's experiences while crossing the country on the Oregon Trail and gives insight into their daily struggles: finding water and campsites; surviving the heat, cold, and storms; traveling over sections of the trail that were nearly impassable; handling conflicts with other pioneers; dealing with the Indians they encountered; and caring for their younger children through it all. She often described their appreciation and enjoyment of the beauty of the country they passed through as they made their way west. Amelia's family included her husband, Joel, and seven children: Plutarch, 17; Seneca, 15; Frances, 14; Jefferson, 11; Lucy, 8; Almira, 5; and Chatfield, 2. Amelia was three months pregnant when they began the journey in April of 1853 from their southeastern Iowa home on the Des Moines River. The eighth child, Wilson Carl, was born on September 18, just after they reached their destination in Oregon. One more child, Adam, was born in Oregon in 1855. Some excerpts have been edited for clarity, while spellings and capitalization have been left as shown in the original manuscript.

**April 9** Started from home about 11 o'clock, and traveled eight miles. Camp in an old house, night cold and frosty.

**April 11** Cloudy and signs of rain, about 10 o'clock it begins to rain, at noon it rains so hard we turn out and camp in a School house after traveling 11½ miles, rains all afternoon and all night. Very unpleasant, Jefferson and Lucy have the mumps, poor cattle bawl all night.

**April 14** Quite cold. Little one crying with cold feet, sixteen wagons getting ready to cross the creek, hurry and bustle and get breakfast over, feed the cattle, and tumble things into the wagons, hurrah boys all ready, we will be the first to cross the creek this morning. Gee up tip and tyler and away we go, sun just rising.

Evening: We have traveled 24 miles today and are about to camp in a large prairie without wood, cold and chilly east wind. The men have pitched the tent and are hunting something to make a fire to get supper. I have the sick headache and must leave the boys to get it themselves the best they can.

**April 16** Camped last night three miles east of Chariton point in the prairie. Made our beds down in the tent in the wet and mud, bed clothes nearly spoiled. Cold and cloudy this morning, and everybody out of humour. Seneca is half sick, Plutarch has broke his saddle girth, Husband is scolding and hurrying all hands (and the cook) and Almira says she wishes she was home, and I say ditto, Home sweet home.

Evening: We passed a small town this morning called Chariton point, the sun shone a little this afternoon. Came 24 miles today, and have pitched our tent in the prairie again, and have some hay to put under our beds. Corn one dollar per bushel, feed for our stock cost 16 dollar.

**April 23** It has been raining hard all day, everything is wet and muddy. One of the oxen is missing, the boys have been hunting him all day. Dreary times, wet and muddy, and crowded in the tent. Cold and wet and uncomfortable in the wagon. No place for the poor children. I have been busy cooking, roasting coffee, and etc. today, and have come into the wagon to write this and make our bed.

**April 29** Cool and pleasant, saw the first Indians today. Lucy and Almira afraid and run into the wagon to hide. Done some washing and sewing today.

**May 1** Still fine weather, wash and scrub all the children.

**May 2** Pleasant evening, have been cooking and packing things away for an early start in the morning, threw away several jars, some wooden buckets, and all our pickles. Too unhandy to carry, Indians came to our camp every day begging money and something to eat. Children are getting used to them.

**May 5** We crossed the Missouri River this morning on a large steamboat called the Hindoo, after a great deal of hurraing and trouble to get the cattle all aboard, one ox jumped overboard and swam across the river, and come out like a drowned rat. Cost us 15 dollars to cross.

**May 8** Still in camp waiting to cross the Elkhorn River. There are three hundred or more wagons in sight, and as far as the eye can reach, the bottom is covered, on each side of the river, with cattle and horses. There is no ferry here, and the men will have to make one out of the tightest wagon bed. Everything must now be hauled out of the way head over heels (and he that knows where to find anything will be a smart fellow) then the wagons must be all taken to pieces, and then by means of a strong rope stretched across the river, with the tight wagon bed attached to the middle of it, the rope must be long enough to pull from one side to the other, with men on each side of the river to pull it, and in this way we have to cross everything a little at a time, women and children last, and then swim the cattle and horses. There were three horses and some cattle drowned at this place yesterday while crossing.

**May 17** We had a dreadful storm of rain and hail last night, and very sharp lightning, it killed 2 oxen for one man. We had just encamped on a large flat prairie when the storm commenced in all its fury. In two minutes after the cattle were taken from the wagons, every brute was gone out of sight, cows, calves, horses all gone before the storm like so many wild beasts.

I never saw such a storm, the wind was so high, I thought it would tear the wagons to pieces, nothing but the stoutest covers could stand it. The rain beat into the wagons so that everything was wet, and in less than two hours, the water was a foot deep all over our camping ground, as we could have no tent pitched. All hands had to crowd into the wagons and sleep in wet beds, with their wet clothes on, without supper. The wind blew hard all night, and this morning presents a dreary prospect, surrounded by water, and our saddles have been soaking in it all night and are almost spoiled. Had little or nothing for breakfast.

**May 31** Traveled 25 miles today. When we started this morning, there were two large droves of cattle and about 50 wagons ahead of us, and we either had to stay poking behind them in the dust, or hurry up and drive past them, which was no fool of a job to be mixed up with several hundred head of cattle, and only one road to travel in. The drivers threatened to drive their cattle over you if you attempted to pass them, they even took out their pistols.

**June 3** Came 21 miles today and have camped about opposite to Scotts bluffs, water very bad, have to use out of Platte most of the time, it is very high and muddy.

**June 6** Still in camp, husband and myself being sick (caused we suppose by drinking the Platte River water, as it looks more like dirty suds than anything else).

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## Interviews from Alabama and Ohio



### Jim & Dee Curtin

Originally from New York State  
Interviewed in Cincinnati, Ohio

- Jim & Dee own a 2004 Allegro Bus 40 TSP with a Cummins 400 on a Freightliner Chassis.
- They have owned 11 RVs since 1974.
- In 2007 they purchased this Allegro Bus, their 1st Tiffin, and they've been full-timing since!
- Jim & Dee have been married 49 years and have 2 daughters, 1 grandson & 2 granddaughters. Donna lives in Norwich, New York and has 1 daughter. Lisa lives in Williston Park, New York and has 1 son and 1 daughter.
- Rascal, their Jack Russell, likes traveling.
- Jim served in the U.S. Army from 1959-1962.
- Jim & Dee were motivated to begin RVing for inexpensive family vacations.
- Occasionally Jim & Dee rendezvous with friends in the Gulf Shores of Alabama.
- Jim drives 100% of the time, traveled 60,000 miles in 43 states, & likes driving 200 mi/day.
- They both enjoy traveling the East Coast.
- The past 5 years they've been work campers in Arizona, Iowa, and New York.
- Their "bucket list" will take them to several National Parks and to the Northwest.
- Jim's favorite thing about RVing is freedom - Dee likes meeting people and seeing places.
- Jim owned a printing business for 17 years & retired in 2002. His hobby is traveling.
- Dee worked 20 years for the U.S. Post Office and she retired in 2003. Her hobbies are computers and reading.



### Mike & Doran Valk

Hometown: Columbia, South Carolina  
Interviewed in Pelham, Alabama

- Mike & Doran own a 2010 Allegro Bus 40 QXP with a Cummins 425 on a Powerglide Chassis.
- They have been married 49 years & their family includes 1 son, 2 daughters, 6 grandsons and 1 granddaughter. Michele is in Bloomington, IN; Andrea is in Snellville, GA; & Jay is in Mt. Pleasant, SC.
- Mike served in the Army Reserves for 6 years.
- Since 1977 Mike & Doran have owned 6 RVs (3 have been diesels) & this is their 1st Tiffin.
- How did they start RVing? Mike came home with a used RV in 1977 & after their 1st trip Doran decided that she liked RVing.
- Their 2 daughters also have RVs.
- They are ¾ timers & Mike drives 99% of the time. He's driven this coach 13,500 miles & prefers driving 250 to 300 miles per day.
- Mike enjoys adventure & touring - and his favorite area of the U.S. is the state of Utah.
- Doran likes meeting people & the lifestyle - & her favorite is beaches & water everywhere.
- They rendezvous with family and friends in the Keys, Atlanta, and Indiana.
- Their "bucket list" items: Glacier National Park, Grand Canyon, the Canadian Rockies & Alaska.
- Mike & Doran owned a marina; were sailboat & powerboat dealers/distributors from ME to TX; they now sell RVs for Camping World. His hobbies: saltwater fishing & RVing.
- Her hobbies: she likes to cook, knit, and read.



### Bill & Donna Bouchane

Hometown: Belle Center, Ohio  
Interviewed in Cincinnati, Ohio

- Bill & Donna own a 2010 Phaeton 40 QTH with a Cummins 360 on a Freightliner Chassis.
- They've been married 5 yrs. & have a blended family including children and grandchildren. Aaron lives in Wapakoneta, OH; Nichole lives in Parma, OH; Aaron lives in Portland, OR; & Andy lives in Columbus, OH.
- Rambo is Bill & Donna's "stuffed mascot dog" and travels with them on the dashboard!
- In 2008 they were motivated to start RVing part time because Bill wanted the freedom to explore, & Donna always camped as a child.
- This Phaeton is their 2nd RV & their 1st Tiffin.
- Bill does 100% of the driving. He prefers driving 250 miles a day and has driven this coach over 9,000 miles. They've traveled thru 20 states.
- The best part of RVing for them is: having the comfort of home while seeing the U.S. and the freedom to travel anywhere and everywhere!
- Bill & Donna manage to rendezvous with family and friends on a random basis.
- Arizona is their favorite state in the U.S.
- On their "bucket list": Oregon & Washington, the Black Hills, and Glacier National Park.
- Bill had a 32-yr. career with Anheuser Busch & retired in 2008 as a Brewing Maintenance Mgr.
- Donna had a 30-year Federal Government career and retired in 2008 as a Property Mgr.
- His hobbies include: motorcycles & visiting micro-breweries, and her hobby is reading!

**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. In March 2008, they bailed out, bought a new Allegro Bus, and "hit the road." In 2011 they traded for a new Phaeton 40 QBH.





## What's new for the 2013 Allegro Breeze



### Interior Decor

Bahamas, Dazzle, Stonehenge

### Exterior Paint

Gold Coral, Maroon Coral, Rustic Canyon, Rocky Mountain Brown, Silver Sand, Sunlit Sand

### New Features (pictured at left)

1. Increased engine horsepower (215 to 240) and torque (560 lb/ft to 620)
2. Seamless, one-piece fiberglass composite slide-out box construction; outside edges flush against sidewalls
3. Darker leather selection for sofa, driver & passenger seats
4. New window treatments for living area
5. Stylish headboard design with wooden slats and padded faux leather
6. Contemporary faucet for vanity sink

### New Features (not shown)

- Satellite-ready radio (subscription required), includes USB ports for iPad, iPhone
- New solid surface backsplash design in galley & new wallboard design
- Bedroom tile now standard
- New stylish window treatments in bedroom.





## What's new for the 2013 Allegro and Allegro RED

### Interior Decor

Autumn, City Lights, Raven

### Exterior Paint

Gold Coral, Maroon Coral, Oceanside, Silver Sand, Sunlit Sand, Rocky Mountain Brown

### New Common Features for Both

*Allegro & Allegro Red (pictured Below)*

1. Exterior graphics
  - a. Allegro
  - b. Allegro RED
2. Headlight & taillight design
3. Windshield design and mounting
4. Sideview cameras built into exterior mirror frame
5. Darker Halo leather for furniture
6. Larger TV in mid-section
7. Sliding dome cover for skylight in shower



**New Features for Allegro (pictured below)**

8. New front & rear caps

**New Features for Allegro RED (pictured below)**

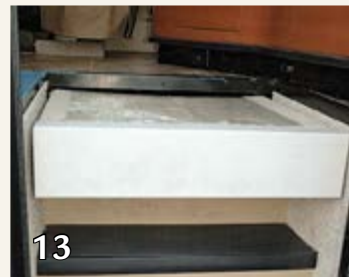
- 9. Area under dash: curved hardwood cabinetry with storage compartment, drawers
- 10. Home theater system in eye-level cabinet behind bedroom TV
- 11. Optional exterior TV in slide-out wall
- 12. Redesigned night stand
- 13. Automatic electric cover for step well
- 14. New front & rear caps

**New Features for Allegro not shown**

- Enhanced grill, powder coated
- Integrated Tripp Lite inverter allows use of TV and entertainment system w/o genset or shore power
- Storage compartment boxes with Gator Hyde
- Larger front overhead TV with new bracket design
- Double din radio to provide GPS option

**New Features for Allegro RED not shown**

- 2000-watt inverter
- Inverter switch inside coach
- Larger front overhead TV with new bracket design
- Two 110v plugs in rear bath of Allegro RED 38 QRA
- Freestanding dinette with computer workstation, Euro recliner





## What's new for the 2013 Phaeton

### Interior Decor

Glitter, Mystere, Capri

### Exterior Paint

Gold Coral, Maroon Coral, Silver Sand, Sunlit Sand, Rocky Mountain Brown, Rustic Canyon

### New Features (pictured below)

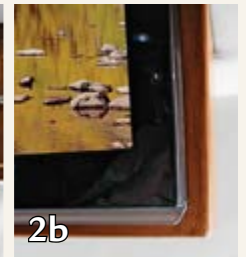
1. Exterior graphics
2. 42" front overhead TV with contemporary hardwood enclosure
3. Stylish window treatments
4. Redesigned trey ceiling with radius corners
5. New backsplash design
6. Redesigned night stand
7. Integrated drawer dishwasher (option on some floorplans)
8. Home theater in bedroom with hidden cabinet for satellite receiver & 1000-watt Panasonic entertainment system

### New Features (not shown)

- Magnetic light w/cord on firewall
- Redesigned roof to allow room for

Winegard Trav'ler (prep) and domed satellite receivers

- Upgraded 2000-watt Sine wave inverter for cleaner power
- Enhanced appearance with beige dash
- Darker leather
- New wallboard design
- 110v service in wall by freestanding dinette with computer workstation
- Residential stainless steel Whirlpool microwave-convection oven
- Ice & water through door in residential refrigerator
- Crown molding in rear bath
- Upgraded bedroom window treatment
- Additional 110v service in rear bath





## What's new for the 2013 Allegro Bus

### Interior Decor

Milan (beige)  
 Ambrosia (neutral)  
 Driftwood (tan)  
 Classic Manor (fabrics by Ralph Lauren)

### Exterior Paint

Gold Coral, Maroon Coral, Silver Sand,  
 Sunlit Sand, Rocky Mountain Brown,  
 Rustic Canyon

### New Features (pictured below)

1. Exterior graphics
2. Radio controls on steering wheel
3. Integrated seatbelts with Villa driver/passenger seats
4. Double sink integrated with solid surface countertop
5. Wider passenger console, 7 toggle switches
6. Redesigned night stands
7. BR headboard design
8. Galley backsplash and splash guard

### New Features (not shown)

- Magnetic light w/cord on firewall
- Enhanced appearance with beige dash
- Decorative floor tile
- Interior wallboard
- Extra 110v service near dinette
- Ice & water dispenser through door
- Hardwood trim around ceiling vents
- Larger panel switches for lighting
- Home theater system in BR with more accommodative cabinet design





## What's new for the 2013 Zephyr

### Interior Decor

Le Reve Fabric Suite  
 Romantic Travels Fabric Suite  
 (fabrics by Ralph Lauren)

### Exterior Paint

Gold Coral, Maroon Coral  
 Silver Sand, Sunlit Sand  
 Rocky Mountain Brown (RMB),  
 Rustic Canyon (graphic same as RMB,  
 replacing off-white with burgandy)

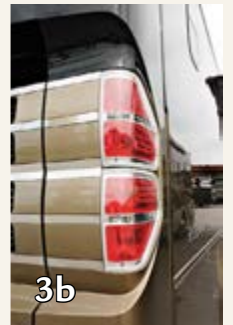
### New Features (pictured below)

1. Exterior graphics
2. Front & rear caps
3. Headlight and taillight designs
4. Moved driver's station forward 10.5" to improve handling, give coach more automotive drivability
5. Villa driver/passenger seats with integrated seatbelt and adjustable head support
6. Flush-mounted cabinet doors
7. L-shaped sofa with coffee table in LZ floorplan
8. Fireplace & entertainment center
9. Shower glass enclosure, tile designs, hand-held on/off switch

10. Galley solid surface countertop with additional wraparound
11. Lavatory with two pyramid sinks
12. Chest-of-drawers in walk-in closet

### New Features (not shown)

- Sideview cameras in Velvac mirrors
- Potable water fill in exterior wall
- Painted window frames on flush-mounted windows
- Cummins 500-hp ISX engine
- Sound bar in exterior television
- Hardware on doors and drawers
- Ceiling ring design
- Increased efficiency using LED lights
- Soft-close drawer slides



# Flea Products – Too Many Choices

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

With the advent of all the new topical flea treatments over the last few years, it is hard to decide which one is best for your dog or cat. One thing to consider is whether these products can be used on dogs only or cats only. Most veterinarians will recommend a certain product for your animal based on your pet's history and particular needs.

There is a large array of products to choose from. Let's look at the different products, how they work and what they prevent, starting with the topicals for dogs only.

**K-9 Advantax II** is a monthly preventive against ticks, fleas, mosquitoes, biting flies and lice. It repels and kills all life stages of fleas including eggs, pupa, larvae and adults. It kills 98-100% of fleas in 12 hours. This product works by combining imidacloprid and permethrin which attack the flea or tick nerve cells. Pyriproxyfen is a growth regulator that prevents eggs from hatching. This product should not be used on cats.

**Advantage II** is a monthly flea preventive for dogs and cats. It kills adult fleas, larvae and eggs. It does not work on ticks. Imidacloprid and pyriproxyfen are the active ingredients.

**Advantage Multi For Dogs & Cats** is a once-a-month treatment for fleas which also prevents heartworms and controls hookworms, roundworms, and whipworms. The active ingredient imidacloprid kills fleas, and moxidectin prevents heartworms and other parasites.

**Frontline Plus** is a monthly preventive that kills fleas in 12 hours and ticks within 48 hours. It can be used on dogs and cats. Fipronil is a slow-acting poison that disrupts the nerve system of fleas and ticks and methoprene prevents eggs from hatching. The active ingredients are stored in the sebaceous glands of the animal's hair follicle and leach out to kill the fleas and ticks.

**Frontline Top Spot** is similar to Frontline Plus but does not contain methoprene so it has no effect on unhatched eggs. The theory is: as eggs hatch, the fipronil will kill the young adult flea.

**Revolution** is a topical insecticide that penetrates the skin and enters the pet's bloodstream. The flea or tick must bite the pet to receive the insecticide. Revolution kills fleas

and ticks and prevents heartworms, ear mites, and sarcoptic mange. The active ingredient is Selamectin. It also controls hookworms and roundworms.

The following flea and tick medications are to be administered orally.

**Program** is a flea preventive that inhibits the flea eggs from hatching. It becomes incorporated in the flea egg and breaks the flea life cycle. It does not kill adult fleas. The active ingredient is lufenuron.


**Capstar** is a pill that is given to dogs or cats and kills adult fleas within 30 minutes. You can actually watch the fleas drop dead. There is no residual effect to prevent other fleas from infecting the pet. The active ingredient is nitenpyram.

**Sentinel** is a monthly oral medication that prevents heartworms, hookworms, roundworms, and whipworms, and also prevents the development of the flea egg. Sentinel is for dogs only. You can give Capstar along with Sentinel to get rid of adult fleas. The active ingredients are milbemycin and lufenuron.

**Trifexis** is a chewable tablet that kills fleas and flea eggs. It prevents heartworms, hookworms, roundworms and whipworms. This is used for dogs only. It kills fleas in 30 minutes. The active ingredients are spinosad and milbemycin.

**Comfortis** is a chewable tablet for dogs only. It kills fleas and prevents flea infestations. It acts by exciting the flea's nervous system leading to paralysis and rapid death. The active ingredient is spinosad.

I have included a description of the active ingredients because there are many new generic flea products that can be purchased over the counter. By comparing the active ingredients, you may be able to substitute a generic product for the one you are using.

Most of the products that prevent heartworms and intestinal parasites will require a veterinarian's prescription. As you can see, there are a large number of products available, and a lot of them serve the same purpose. Ask your veterinarian which one is best for your pet and your pocketbook. 

Dr. Pilarczyk practiced veterinary medicine for 38 years in Tampa, Florida. You may address your questions to Dr. Pilarczyk at parkwayvet@yahoo.com.

## Dixie RV SuperStores Now Has Its Own Heartbeat

“WE DON’T HAVE ANY ROOM IN OUR COMPANY for heroes,” Greg began. “Our business is a team effort. To use a cliché, ‘The sum of the whole is greater than any of the parts.’ We recognize that Dixie RV Superstores is not about Stephen and me. It is about our customers, the conscientious people who work here, and the manufacturers who supply Dixie RV with top quality products.”

Greg Lala, president/CEO, Stephen Guidry, vice president and general manager, and I spent the next two hours in the company’s conference room talking about a recreational vehicle business in Hammond, Louisiana, whose motorhome sales department counts the entire United States as their marketplace. “In unit counts, we rank #6 in the U.S. in motorhome sales,” Stephen noted. “We are the largest RV dealer in Louisiana. In motorized sales, it takes the next eight dealerships in the state to equal our sales.”

Dixie RV began in 1983 as an adjunct to Dan Durham’s automobile dealership. “Dan didn’t have a pickup truck franchise and RVs seemed to fill that gap,” Greg said. Dan brought Greg, 30, into the RV dealership as general manager in 1992. “I had been working in another Louisiana RV dealership before linking up with Dan. He was a master educator in the car business,” Greg continued. “He gave me the tools and education to run a large business.”

In 1996 Dan made Greg a partner. To provide Dixie RV with a separate identity and room to grow, they decided to move

the RV dealership to a new location in Hammond. Greg began to apply the same principles that Dan used in bringing him to Hammond: recruit young, energetic, talented self-starters.

Stephen Guidry came to Dixie RV in January 2000. Just out of high school in 1996, he began his career in the recreational vehicle business working as a porter for a company in New Orleans. Stephen’s ambition and ability moved him quickly through service and sales and into management. “I learned about Stephen through one of our managers here at Dixie. After getting to know him, I offered him the job as general manager of a facility we acquired in Baton Rouge.”

Dan Durham died in 2002 and Greg had to forge ahead without his mentor. “We wanted to be big enough to offer the level of service our customers rightfully expected,” Greg explained. As a member of a “Twenty Group” (management executives from RV companies throughout the nation), Greg and Stephen began visiting large RV dealerships in California, New York, Texas, Florida, Washington, and Indiana. “We wanted to invest in our business to provide the large inventory and quality service level that would cause others to want to do business with us,” he said.

The search and subsequent planning led to the purchase of 68.5 acres on I-12. The new facility opened in December 2004 with 80,000 sq. ft. offering an indoor showroom, administrative offices, and 24 service bays. In January 2006 the company added 12 more bays. The following year Greg purchased the remaining shares from the Durham family and became sole owner of Dixie RV Superstore.



In 2010 the management team opened a new store in DeFuniak Springs, Florida. “Even though we were in the middle of a severe recession, the Florida store has shown a profit every month since we opened,” Greg said. “Management is in the final planning stages for adding 14 service bays at the Hammond location. In fiscal 2012 we expect to come very close to \$100 million in sales. Our service and parts (fixed operations) will bill \$7 million. We now have 50 employees in service and parts and 105 total employees.”

“Profit is not a four-letter word as long as you give back to your customers,” Greg continued. “*Cheap* and *good* never go together. It costs to provide good service and we want to still be here when the customer needs us. It is our intention to give everyone world class service. We do give priority scheduling in service to those who purchased their units here at Dixie RV. That’s only fair. But everyone who comes here for service will receive our careful attention and excellent service.”

Since most RV dealerships throughout the U.S. are still recovering from the “Great Recession,” it has been a standard question over the last four years in the

Dealer Profile interviews to ask, “How did your company deal with the financial pressures of the recession?”

Both Greg and Stephen smiled. “We actually thrived through the recession. Shortly before it began, I completed my acquisition of the company from my partner’s estate,” Greg began. “We listened to our employees’ concerns about the recession, as well as the steps being taken by the principals in our Twenty Group. Then we told everyone, ‘We know there is a recession, but we choose not to participate.’”

“We reasoned that if 30 percent of the market died off, there would still be 70 percent to fight for,” Stephen said. “If we continued to sell the same number of units, we would not suffer. We went to our core business—the most popular floorplans that we were confident would continue to sell. We didn’t speculate on what *might* sell. We advertised and demonstrated our strengths both in sales and service. Really, what we did was manage the market. It paid off.”

“We all worked harder and did things out of the box. God blessed us generously. We felt the need to give back. We never missed giving bonuses—our way of saying

‘thank you,’” Greg continued.

Moving the interview back to current concerns, Greg emphasized how important it is to the company for managers and sales people to *walk the walk* and *talk the talk*. “We pride ourselves on seeing that our managers and sales people check out RVs and use them so they can discuss RVing with their clients based on their actual experience,” Stephen noted.

“If you don’t really live the RV lifestyle, then you are not fully in touch with your customers or the business,” Greg said. “Stephen and I both have demos and are active campers. We know what our customers want and like because we use these units ourselves. Last month Stephen, Jeremy, and I took an eleven-day trip in a Zephyr to the NASCAR races. It was a great experience to use all of the features and software on Tiffin’s finest motorcoach. We visited with quite a few of our customers on the trip. We are big on tailgating at the LSU games and enjoy sponsoring the Dixie RV Touch-down Village. It gives us the opportunity to be *with* our customers during a time when there is no *intention to sell* to them.”

Jeremy Bradley, 29, is Dixie RV’s general sales manager and another example of Greg’s ability to recruit energetic, talented self-starters. He began his sales career in towables in 2004 at the old location in downtown Hammond. He moved up to motorized a year later and then became sales manager for towables in 2006. In ’09 he became sales manager for motorized, and last year became general sales manager.

“I have been camping since I was a child,” Jeremy said. “My parents bought an RV before I started to school and I’ve been camping ever since. I try to hire people who are dedicated and willing to learn. Our towable sales manager is 23. His father owns an RV company in Iowa. He was in school at LSU and dropped by looking for a part-time position. He sold three units the first Saturday he was here.

“Training is very important to a salesperson’s success. We have a sales meet-

ing every morning at 8 a.m.” Jeremy explained. “Knowing the product thoroughly is critical—the products we sell as well as the units sold by our competition. We lean heavily on manufacturer’s reps for product training and knowledge. Our sales people must be able to compare competing products accurately for our customers. We never bash a competitor’s product—just compare features. Just a short time ago, we were thought of as a ‘hometown dealer.’ Through our website we now have a very effective national presence.

“Every quarter we do an in-house RV Show with TV commentary, radio spots, local newspaper and magazine ads, and website promotion,” Jeremy said. “It is a Thursday through Saturday affair with catered Cajun food. We post sale prices on every unit in stock, showing the MSRP and the offered price.

“In our sales meetings we address closing skills. We want everyone to use the same consistent approach. We never want a customer to feel like they are being pressured,” Jeremy continued. “We do a good job of qualifying the customer and identifying his purpose, needs, and camping style, all of which is necessary to show him the choices we have that fit his profile. The company sends out a letter to each customer to evaluate his experience with his salesperson. The salesperson sees the report, absorbs the customer’s remarks, and grows from it. Our sales people average 50 hours a week. We are closed on Sunday to give everyone an opportunity to recharge.”

At the Hammond location, Dixie RV has 12 sales staff in motorized and 15 in towables. “The primary thing that makes our sales team so successful is selection,” Greg points out. “We rarely take a manufacturing order from a customer. Approximately 98 percent of the time, we are able to sell directly out of inventory. We try to keep 25 to 40 Tiffin motorhomes on the sales lot. We sold 100 Tiffins last

Text and photography  
by Fred Thompson





*From left:* Stephen Guidry VICE PRESIDENT, Jeremy Bradley GENERAL SALES MANAGER, Jamie Gatlin PARTS MANAGER, Glenn Laurent SERVICE MANAGER, Carol Kronlage CONTROLLER, Doug Bedore TOWABLE SALES MANAGER, Chad Picone F&I MANAGER, Regina Wadsworth F&I MANAGER, Scott Crawford MAINTENANCE MANAGER, Bobbie Blouin F&I MANAGER, Jeff Pegler FIXED OPERATIONS MANAGER, Rhonda Hoolahan HR MANAGER.

year. Comparing single location dealerships, we were Tiffin's #3 dealer last year (July 2011–June 2012).

Jeremy points to key strengths in Dixie RV's marketing strategies. "First, we watch the market closely. If some of our coaches remain in inventory too long, we identify the floorplans and features that are not selling. Correctly assessing demand and keeping the right units in stock has allowed us to grow at a more rapid pace. Second, our youthful management gives us a fresh, analytical perspective. We are a little brash in questioning how and why we do anything. Third, we are able to *show* a customer who buys from Dixie RV that we have the best service in the state: 36 service bays, a full body shop, and the only Camping World store in the state."

"Energy, recognition, and high-spirited meetings" are a planned part of running a successful company whose bread and butter depends on excellent service and growing sales. "Every Tuesday at 7 a.m. we have a manager's meeting to keep everyone and everything on the same page," Stephen said. "Then, on Fridays we have our 'Get-Up Meetings.' Two managers hold the meeting. It consists of a safety message, something inspiration-

al, and a discussion of what is planned for the coming week.

"On First Fridays, we do a company-wide breakfast to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries within the company. Last time we celebrated a salesperson with 30 years, several techs with 10+ years, one tech with 25, and our finance manager who has been with the company since 1994," Stephen elaborated.

The company has a "Twenty-Foot Rule." If an employee is within 20 feet of a visitor or customer, he or she gives a sincere greeting and offers to help with any directions or needs. "It really becomes second nature when you practice it all the time," Greg said. "Our employees want to make our customers feel appreciated. They live it!"

"The RV motorhome owner demands more today because of his near trouble-free experience in taking delivery of a new car," Greg observed. "We know we have to offer a world class experience in our industry to meet expectations. Technology is the track on which we will move forward. Fifteen years ago every motorhome owner had a big toolbox to fix his problems. Today he opens up his laptop to retrieve the information he needs to solve his problem. The iPad and iPhone are already capable of accessing and directing the systems in the coach including navigation, security, lighting, window treatments, HVAC, entertainment tech, and troubleshooting every component. The first manufacturer to maximize the use of the iPad will have significant leverage."

The success of the company's sales strategies, physical plant resources, and training are evident. Since opening their new lo-

cation in 2004, sales at Dixie RV in Hammond have grown from 40 units/month to 125 units/month (motorized and towables).

To match the company's phenomenal sales growth, Dixie RV's management has planned and developed new and effective strategies in their service department. "When we were smaller, we had one service department team that addressed everything. Today we have six teams," Stephen explained. "Sales is linked to service from the moment a motorhome or towable is received from the manufacturer."

On the day any recreational vehicle arrives from the factory, it is assigned to a service team—five to six members headed by an assistant service manager (ASM). Glenn Laurent, service manager, oversees the assignments, keeping the workloads in balance. Each team will have one or more master techs, an intermediate tech, and a trainee. A dedicated warranty administrator completes the team. "We have used this system for four years and it is a major reason for our success in service," Stephen said. "We use the same system for processing trade-ins and getting them ready for resale."

"After a unit is assigned to a team, the pre-delivery inspection (PDI) identifies everything that needs to be done to get the unit ready for our sales inventory. Every feature and system in the motorhome is checked," Stephen continued. "The team member who did the PDI will also make the delivery and provide training to the new owner. As long as the owner and unit remain associated with Dixie RV, the original team will take care of the service, providing the owner with the opportunity to really get to know his team members. Of course, the team becomes completely familiar with the coach, its service records, and the owner's approach to using and maintaining the unit."

"Our service department has several strengths that our owners appreciate," Glenn said. "Because our technicians work on a large number and variety of motorhomes, they have developed a broad knowledge base and a tremendous amount of experience in all areas."

"We do our best to involve the owners in the service process. We want them to remain on-site if possible to see and approve the repair work while it is in process. Our assistant service managers do a really good job of building personal relationships with our owners," he said.

Jeff Pegler, 33, fixed operations director, oversees the parts, service, body shop, and warranty operations in both of the company's locations. Five managers in each location report to Jeff. His

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Dixie RV currently has 36 service bays with a planned expansion that will add another 14. They have three lift systems to handle any size coach.

first job out of high school was with the Bridgestone-Firestone tire plant, where he continued working as he completed a degree in business management at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. He met his wife, Marquette, in college and after graduation they moved to Hammond, her hometown. His profile fit the MO at Dixie RV and he began his career in the RV business in 2005 as a service writer. He moved up the management ladder to become a production manager supervising the shop technicians. In 2007 Jeff opened the company's body shop. "At first we did light body work, but now the shop has four techs who do fiberglass and sheet metal repair, light chassis work, and painting. We can also do maintenance service on Caterpillar and Cummins power plants and full service on Onan generators," he said. Jeff built relationships with Geico, State Farm, Progressive, and Allstate, and received their referral business. Under his management, Dixie RV became the preferred collision center for repairs insured by Progressive and Geico.

In 2009 Jeff's promotion to director of fixed operations presented him with new challenges. "In service we are delivering 120 units per month and that will continue to grow," he said. "The most challenging part of my job is developing better ways of communicating with our customers and suppliers in a more timely manner. We have a good working relationship with Tiffin in regard to ordering and receiving parts. The response time on issues with Tiffin coaches is the best in the industry."

"Whenever it is necessary, we change our structure and methods in the service department to meet customer needs," Jeff continued. "Processes and procedures have to be flexible. Our sales volume has increased 30 percent year-to-date. Fixed operations extended the hours of the team members who do PDIs and deliveries, hired additional personnel, and purchased additional equipment. We now have three lifts that can pick up any size motorhome for servicing, and we sell a full line of tires for every





As part of the service team responsible for this new Zephyr, Bill Hayes, RVIA master certified technician, demonstrates the use of the computer controlled privacy shades to Robert and Margie Miller. Orientations on Class A coaches generally take a full day. • Dixie RV's body and collision center has four technicians who do fiberglass and sheet metal repair, light chassis work, and painting. Dixie also offers maintenance service for Caterpillar and Cummins powerplants and full service for Onan generators.

through detailing to put the unit in tip-top condition. She keeps the buyer, the salesperson, and the service team informed throughout the delivery process. The final step in the delivery process is orientation and training.

Regina Wadsworth, finance and insurance manager for Dixie RV SuperStores, guides the buyers through what could be a complicated process. "We interview the buyer at the point where he has decided on a particular RV. We look at his trade-in and suggest financing options. Even a cash buyer may decide to finance in this market to keep his resources available for investments or emergencies," she explained. "I always suggest replacement value insurance based on appreciated value up to five years. Then we look at paid out value for 10 years. On 15 and 20-year loans, I suggest gap insurance.

"In financing we look at the options that fit the owner's situation, such as pay out early with no penalties, longest terms in the event he needs that option, and lowest interest rate," Regina said. "Based on the buyer's financial profile, I know which banks will offer him the best rates."

Dixie RV offers several mechanical components in the buyer's contract. "Appearance protection products will help maintain the value of an RV," Regina said. "Paint sealant on the outside prevents fading caused by the sun, acid rain, oxidation, and black water streaks. We offer inside sealant to protect carpet and upholstery from stains caused by anything consumable or oily. Once it dries you cannot feel it. If Dixie RV cannot correct a fade or stain, they will file the claim for you." Dixie RV's F&I department has three full-time finance and insurance managers.



unit in our inventory. It is an exciting time to be working at Dixie RV Superstores!"

Jeff oversees training in the service department. The company has 23 service technicians: four in the body and paint shop and 19 in the service area. By RVIA standards, six are master certified techs, five are certified techs, and three are registered technicians. In the company's training room, a new employee has login privileges to the RVIA on-line training programs for one year. Forty hours of study are required to become a registered technician. With additional OJT and testing, a technician can move up to certified

technician and certified specialist. One can become a master technician after logging five years of service experience and scoring 90 percent on the certification test.

Brandi Lala, Greg's daughter, serves as delivery coordinator. "The delivery process for a travel trailer or fifth wheel is 1½ days; for a Class C motorhome, 2 days; and for a Class A motorhome, 2½ to 3 days," she said, as we began discussing her role in the company.

After the decision to buy is made, Brandi schedules the buyer and the unit's paperwork through F&I; through service, making sure that any upgrades, changes, and service issues are completed; and

“Customer orientation and training (OT) takes as long as necessary,” Brandi said. The person who did the original PDI conducts orientation and training at six delivery sites with electric hookups. The technician begins with outside OT and then moves to the inside of the coach. The tech explains and demonstrates every operating device and system, and then asks the owners to do the same. Then the owners spend the night in the coach and try everything. The next morning the tech repeats any training procedure requested and answers questions. If a new owner needs driver training for a motorhome, a fifth wheel, or a trailer, several of our sales people are experienced in providing that service. We do a ladies driving school on a regular basis.”

Brandi, 24, did not jump into a plum job because she is the owner’s daughter. Beginning in high school as a receptionist and filing clerk, she planned her career by earning a degree in marketing at Southeastern Louisiana University. While

in college she spent three to four months in service, warranty claims, and finance to increase her knowledge base. Under Stephen Guidry’s supervision, Brandi worked in the inventory department ordering units and issuing purchase orders to manufacturers.


Working with department managers during the past year, she outlined the steps to make delivery a smoother process. Before the delivery coordinator position was created, each salesperson took care of his own deliveries, a responsibility that took considerable time and removed him from the sales arena. Brandi keeps the salesperson fully informed during the delivery process.

“I love dealing with and taking care of our new owners. Helping them gives me a great deal of satisfaction,” she said. “Knowing that they leave happy with their new RV is very important.”

Greg added his postscript to the sale: “We want the new owners to have two things: a perfect RV that they are proud

of, and bragging rights when they show it to their friends.”

When the new owners leave, they have cell phone numbers for their salesperson, finance manager, ASM, service tech, and Brandi Lala. They also have a one-year subscription to Coach-Net, a 24/7 service offering highly trained techs to answer questions.

Greg was reflective as he looked at the future of the company that he, Dan Durham, Stephen Guidry, and 110 managers and employees have built over the last 20 years. “Dixie RV has its own heartbeat now. A business should not follow the lifecycle of its owner. I was a hands-on owner, deeply involved on a daily basis, but I could not see clearly the functionality of the business. Now I can. For me it has been a transition. My role now is visionary and advisor. Stephen and the talented managers we have in place are responsible for the heartbeat of Dixie RV SuperStores, and I am confident the company is in good hands.” 



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## Charlie Henry Harvey Jr. — “Please call me C.H.!”

WHEN A MAN TELLS ME his life’s story over a period of several hours, I begin to make mental notes of the nouns, adjectives, and adverbs I will use to describe him. For C.H. Harvey many descriptors came to mind: ingenious, prankster, industrious, generous, fun-loving, political.

C.H. is a Texan through and through; born in Breckenridge, Texas and reared for a while in Woodson, where C.H.’s dad and uncles were building contractors. “The great Texas drought in the 1950s changed our lifestyle completely,” C.H. said. The family moved to Ingleside near Corpus Christi, Texas where his dad worked in pipeline construction.

C. H. had three sisters: one eight years older, one eight years younger, and one 10 years younger. “When my parents learned about needy children, they took them into our family,” he continued. “Dad had a 10-acre garden to feed everyone. I spent a lot of time on the end of a hoe.”

All of the children had jobs. “I sold fresh fruits and vegetables from a stand on the side of the road from an early age. Throughout the year, I also sold all-occasion greeting cards,” he said. At

eight years old, he was bussing tables at Mrs. Breeding’s Working Man’s Hotel, chopping lettuce and tomatoes for salads and washing dishes. The pay was 25 cents an hour and one meal a day.

By the time he was 12, C. H. was operating a full-service gas station. “I ran the cash register, bought supplies, made deposits, pumped gas, changed oil, fixed flats and washed windshields,” he related as I smiled incredulously.

At home C.H. learned how to play several instruments. He and several buddies formed a band and practiced at every opportunity. They played a few gigs for free to get their name out, and then began charging. At age 14, C.H. got a loan, without a co-signer, to buy better instruments and they began booking gigs regularly. “I would make as much in one night as Dad made all week,” he said. He qualified for his CDL license and started hauling lumber from the Corpus Christi docks to locations in South Texas.

C.H. was the first in his family to go to college. He was awarded a \$500 Rotary Club scholarship to study electrical technology at a nearby technical college. In 1969 he was drafted into the Army but was transferred to the Air Force where he was trained in digital encryption. This 18-month training program led to an assign-

ment in the Strategic Air Command at Dyess Air Force Base near Abilene, Texas, where he also had the responsibility for Secure Voice Equipment for the Tactical Air Command fighter squadron attached to Dyess. The fighter jets were there to protect the nuclear weapons systems at the base and in the area.

After nearly five years in the Air Force, C.H. declined an offer from the National Security Agency and accepted a position with Xerox. While working at Xerox in Houston, he attended college at night and earned a degree in criminal justice and began his “Dream” career in law enforcement. He graduated first in his class and was promoted to detective a year later where he worked the fugitive detail. Disillusioned and disappointed with the internal corruption at the higher levels of law enforcement in both the sheriff’s department and the police department,

C.H. resigned in 1980. “Law enforcement was my first love and it broke my heart.”

He then made connections with friends in the oil field, and signed on as a trainee to sell drilling rig equipment for National Supply Company, a division of Armco Steel.

Using spreadsheets and financial analysis to improve the manufacturing process, he increased the profit margin from 12 to 31 percent and became supervisor of “rig up” installations. This is the process where individual components are assembled and manufactured into a working rig ready to drill. “The rigs were sold for anywhere from \$6.5 to \$10 million each, and created hundreds of jobs. I thought I had found the best job in Texas,” C.H. laughed.

But then in 1982, the bottom fell out. Companies in the oil industry started selling inventory to overseas drilling companies at 50 cents on the dollar and

Heather Kirby, vice president and general manager brings a procedural operations policy to the attention of Jason Draehn, shop foreman, Darlene Loesch, operations manager, and C.H. • Raymundo Zamora loads a forming cylinder with the powdered form of Teflon PTFE®. • Under thousands of pounds

of pressure, the powder adheres into the desired shape. It remains fragile until it is processed in a sintering oven. • A CNC lathe will mill thin layers into component parts for the oil industry. • Other cylinders create parts in their final form (bottom right).



Text and photography by Fred Thompson



Working with his dad in their shop, David Harvey looks forward to his next INEX—Bandolero Racing event. He and C.H. participate in several races a year in Texas, earning points for major races out of state.

thousands of jobs were lost. C.H. found himself in an entirely new role: managing the logistics of shipping rigs to Indonesia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and other parts of the world. “Oil field equipment suppliers and manufacturers had to get creative fast to liquidate inventories,” he said.

After this experience, C.H. saw the need for a new service. “I founded my own logistics service company to move equipment overseas. During this time I became more involved in the international side of the business and served as chairman of the Indonesian-American Business Association, and vice president of the Interamerican Chamber of Commerce. Our mission was to connect nationalized oil companies with oilfield manufacturers and suppliers in the U.S. Over the next several years, we organized and produced industry conferences to bring international companies and U.S. suppliers together. It was an interesting decade.”

During a business trip to Caracas, Venezuela, C.H. was fortuitously seated at breakfast next to four men deeply involved in conversation. “I overheard their conversation and realized Hugo Chavez, then a candidate for president of Venezuela, two of his advisors, and a representative of Fidel Castro were planning Chavez’s election,” he related. “I sold my interest in my business there and was gone from the country within two weeks,” he said.

By 1999 this irrepressible entrepreneur was looking for new horizons. “I began doing research into the companies that were successful in building homes in the Houston area. I had first visited Brenham, Texas, in 1975 when I was discharged from the Air Force and was favorably impressed,” C.H. began. He bought land there in the 1990s and that, of course, was a big factor in his decision to move there in 1999.

“My son, David, was born in September 2000, and that put down deeper roots,” he continued. “My plans were to build

homes like my Dad did, so I went to work for MHI, a high-end home builder, to gain experience.

“In late 1999, I learned about TFE Company, Inc., through a person from my church. The company’s founder was a talented engineer and inventor who had developed proprietary processes to make consumable parts for the oil and gas industry using polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), or more commonly known as Teflon®. In the years following his unexpected death in 1993, no family members stepped forward to run the business. In self-defense, the employees began a search for a consultant. I offered my services, the family and the employees accepted, and in December 1999 we began a new chapter to put the company back on its feet.”

Through a mutually beneficial agreement, C.H. bought the company in August 2003. He followed that acquisition in June 2004 with the purchase of B&R Industries, in Navasota, Texas, another company that manufactured consumable parts for the oil and gas industry.

C.H. had a lot to learn about the unique parts product line used by the petroleum industry and by other businesses as well. But he was no stranger to diving in, spending long hours to learn about a manufacturing process, identifying and developing management talent, attracting good employees, and marketing the product.

“TFE products are involved with all types of sealing applications,” he said. “Industrial applications are almost endless. TFE Company Inc. is a specified component manufacturer to OEM valve and pump companies, specializing in fluoropolymers and engineered and high performance plastics. No longer limited to plastics, TFE Company also supplies metal components demanding quality and service. The company is recognized as a premier supplier in the marketplace for sub-sea applications

where close tolerance, high-alloy metal components are required.

When he took over TFE, C.H. conducted extensive research about the product, its customer base, and the competition. He also knew that he had to attract and retain good employees. "Employees ARE the Company," he said.

C.H. had been successful in finding talented employees and managers in earlier business ventures, and was confident he could duplicate that success at TFE. C.H.'s management team closely evaluates applicants. Those who demonstrate aptitude and willingness to continue their education are offered the opportunity to attend college at company expense. C.H. and Justin Woodward, vice president and general manager of B&R Industries, serve on the curriculum advisory board to Lone Star College in Houston. Even though the company pays for their education, employees are not obligated to stay. A new management team was formed by training and promoting talent from within the company. Today, Heather Kirby serves as vice president and general manager; Darlene Loesch, operations manager; Carrie Baker, accounting manager; Tennille Smith, shipping and receiving manager, and Jason Draehn, shop foreman.

"Although I am the president and CEO, I get out of the way and let the employees and managers do a great job," C.H. said. "I moved my office downtown to allow Heather the opportunity to manage the company without me being nearby to answer employee's questions which might undermine her authority.

"TFE Company is the only manufacturing company in the area that is primarily managed by women, a fact not lost on our local population," he laughs. "We are a team, and I am a facilitator. I want TFE to be the type of company my parents aspired for me to work for.

"I read *Roughing it Smoothly* every time it arrives and I often share Mr. Tiffin's ideas and philosophy about doing business with my employees. After all, we are all in the 'Customer Service Business.'"

C.H. has custody of his son David during the school year and most of the summer. His hands-off management style at TFE has made it possible for father and son to spend a lot of time together and develop two hobbies. In one corner of the plant, seven small racing cars are lined up in two rows in a U-shaped workshop lined with parts and consumables. Overhead a large banner proclaims David Harvey Racing, LLC.

INEX—Bandolero Racing is a category based on the use of a Briggs & Stratton racing engine which has been bored and stroked with a special cam and other performance parts. A new engine cost about \$1,700 and Dyno-Tuning another \$750.00. These cars can run up to 100 mph. Built on tubular chassis, the car and driver must weigh at least 760 lbs. Two age categories, Bandits (8-12) and Outlaws (13+), keep the kids in comparable skill levels. "Just like NASCAR, the kids compete for points based on their driving skills and times, not just trophies at the end of each race," C.H. explained. "They have to use the same

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The 1996 Allegro Bus (known as Mac) towed “Lightning McQueen” on David and C.H.’s two-summer trip over Route 66 from the Santa Monica Pier to Chicago. The father-son team uses the 2003 Bus to haul David’s Bandolero cars to races.

fireproof suits, helmets, fire suppression systems, five-point seat belts, and head and neck restraints as the drivers in NASCAR. In the east, kids can race four times a week because there are so many tracks. Here in Texas we have only three tracks and they are hundreds of miles apart.”

In 2006 C.H. bought a 1996 Allegro Bus, (named “Mac” after the character in the movie *Cars*) to travel Route 66. “David and I both loved the Disney movie *Cars*. We have met several of the people that were the inspirations for the characters in the movie. Stars, such as Paul Newman and Richard Petty, did the voice-overs for the animated characters,” C.H. began with enthusiasm. “This movie is really for adults. If you have a chance to watch it, go to the bonus section of the DVD and watch the segment called ‘Inspiration for the Movie.’ It tells the real life story of a father who is the movie director and creator of *Toy Story*. At one point his wife acknowledges his fame and success, but points out that he is also missing his children growing up. He immediately put his career on hold, went out and purchased a motorhome, loaded up the family and took off. This experience and trip became the inspiration for the movie *Cars*. It is really worth parents watching,” Harvey encourages again. “Life is not a destination, it is the journey - that is the message.”

C.H. really got into the story and in November 2006 bought a 1995 Mustang GT Cobra with a 5.0 engine. “It was as close to the shape of the car in the movie as I could find. We painted and stickered it up to look like ‘Lightning McQueen’ in the movie,” he exulted. “In the movie, the events happened on the fabled Route 66. So I had a trailer built to haul ‘Lightning’ and off we went to travel Route 66 from the Santa Monica pier to Chicago.

“For seven weeks in 2007 we traveled Route 66, stopping hundreds of times to let people photograph their kids with the car,” he continued. “More than once the police pulled me over to ask if we would stop for a while so their wives could get their

kids and let other residents in the community take pictures.”

In a Texas town, an older lady who was in charge of the local Route 66 Visitors Center asked C.H. to take her for a ride, and he agreed. They headed out of town on a straight stretch, doing about 65 mph. She said to C.H., “Honey, get on it! I want to see what it’ll do.” C.H. protested, saying that every cop in the county would be after them. “Don’t worry,” she said. “My husband is the sheriff and my son is the police chief.” So C.H. put the pedal to the metal! Another lady in California, and a rabid *Cars* fan, got to spend her 77th birthday on 7/7/07 with ‘Lightning.’

C.H. and David got as far as Joplin, Missouri, and due to the raining and flooding that was taking place that year, decided it would be best to finish the trip the next year. True to the plan, David and C.H. went back to Joplin in 2008 and finished the Route 66 trek all the way to Chicago in eight weeks. “On the way back we took a side trip to Red Bay, had some work done on ‘Mac’ and spent a few days seeing the area. Everyone in Red Bay and at Tiffin are great folks!” C.H. said.

His satisfaction with Tiffin and the 1996 unit led to a search for one of Tiffin’s newer Allegro Bus designs from the next decade. In 2011 he found a 40-ft. 2003 Bus that became known as ‘Maxxumus,’ their new racing and touring coach. “David names everything we own. Of course we still have ‘Mac,’” he added.

C.H. is a car collector and continues to add to his stable as he finds interesting vehicles. His office in downtown Brenham contains an eclectic collection of Texas memorabilia: a desk made of lumber from an old wagon, paintings, saddles, guns, sculpture, chests, Texas flags, and a 60-foot riata platted from one continuous strip of rawhide. In the plate glass window of his storefront office, C.H. placed a 46-inch television that carries political messages. No one could possibly doubt his conservative leanings. Autographed pictures of Republican luminaries are displayed on a credenza near the window.

His interest in seeing the town of Brenham thrive is reflected in appreciative comments from individuals we met as we toured the town. C.H. Harvey enjoys his life as a “facilitator,” a father, and an amateur politician. RIS



# Mike Ponders

## From Visual Basic to SAP in Four Years

**In January 1994** the U.S. economic forecast was good. The business pages of the major newspapers were reporting that the country “seems to be moving from a technical recovery to a real one marked by consumer and business confidence.” And it did. The gross domestic product grew at an annual rate of 4.1 percent, inflation stayed low, and unemployment dipped to 5.4 percent by the end of the year. The productivity and competitiveness of American industry vastly improved. The newspaper proclaimed that we were in a world “where computer technology is king.”

Mike Ponders may have seen that forecast. He and Maria had been married for seven years in 1994 and had two children: Ryan, 6, and Kelli, 2. He took a full-time job on the assembly line at Tiffin Motorhomes that year and enrolled at Itawamba Community College to study computer information systems technology. He definitely selected the right field of study.

After working the assembly line shift from 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Mike took one or two courses per semester and finished his Associate in Applied Science degree from ICC in 2003. During that time he spent two years at Tiffin in electrical engineering. While on the assembly line, he wired motorhomes and later designed floor harnesses.

With his AAS shingle, Mike hoped to find a position as a Visual Basic programmer in Tiffin’s newly organized information technology department. “In 2003 production schedules were done by hand on spreadsheets. There were no shop floor reports,” Mike recalled. “Writing computer programs for automating reports was still in the infancy stage at TMH.”

At a 6 a.m. managers’ meeting, Van Tiffin arrived with an armful of data printouts and announced that the program for running the Vina door plant had failed, and wondered if anyone in the meeting could fix it. Mike volunteered and found that the program was written in Visual Basic. He discovered what the problem was and had the program up and running again the next day.

Mike was offered a job in the new information technology department. “I wrote programs to automate time and materials planning and spent the next two years designing production schedule reports for each work station in the plant,” Mike related. “I was the programmer and Chad Logan was the network administrator. We *were* the IT department!”

In 2005 general manager Tim Tiffin decided the company needed to move beyond the Legacy software being used and select a comprehensive system for the long term to embrace every facet of business management and manufacturing.

“A committee of 12 members representing management and production areas throughout the company was formed to evaluate software systems,” Mike explained. “Tim wanted everyone’s input to be sure the software we selected would address the needs of all departments.”

Members of the team visited software companies in Atlanta and Dallas, and then asked six companies to make presentations at the plant in Red Bay. The committee supplied data to the competing suppliers and suggested how reports and programs should be presented on monitors and printers. “We were concerned with the appearance and functionality of the reports, and how well they worked in real time for specific applications throughout the company,” Mike said.

“Several more presentations narrowed

Mike Ponders, center, and the IT team meet frequently in their conference room. From left are Jeevan Sager, Luke Pounds, Mark Richardson, Mike, Chris Huffman, Heather Kamarainen, Brad Freeland, and Jason Jacks.





It was a proud occasion last year when Ryan graduated from the United States Naval academy. From left: Mike, Kelli, Ryan, Kaitlyn, and Maria. • Ryan and Mike have enjoyed back country hiking in our national parks. Ryan snapped this picture of his dad in Yosemite National Park.

the field to two companies,” Mike continued. “SAP, a German company, demonstrated the program’s ability to extract data from each departmental software module and integrate it across the entire business platform. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is a very powerful tool that will energize TMH’s future development. The committee was unanimous in its decision to go with SAP. We had ‘buy in’ from everyone on the committee.”

The IT department began hiring key people immediately. “Today we have nine employees in the IT department,” Mike said. “Chris Huffman and Jason Jacks are our network administrators. They are responsible for network maintenance. Luke Pounds serves as our network technician and help desk support.

“We have a great SAP team. Brad Freeland and Heather Kamarainen were recruited from the engineering department. They picked up the SAP software’s functionality very quickly which made them ideal for training in that department,” Mike continued. “Brad does SAP production planning and Auto-Cad administration. Heather is our SAP materials management specialist, which involves material procurement and the controlled distribution of materials to the right loca-

tions in the plant. Mark Richardson handles SAP applications for customer service, sales, and distribution, which includes testing and implementation of software upgrades. He is instrumentally involved in developing our online parts store.

“Jeevan Sagar is our SAP specialist who writes programs to modify SAP’s standard software to address unique applications here at TMH,” Mike explained. “In the hands of a programmer like Jeevan, SAP is a very flexible software.

“Kelli Pounders does our clerical work, tracking the development of our projects and testing them,” Mike said.

Installing, learning, and teaching the use of SAP software modules was a 12-month project. “We were here all hours of the day and night, days and weekends,” Mike grimaced. “It was a ‘once in a lifetime experience’ that I hope to experience only once. Some of our team said it was a life-changing experience.”

As SAP installers and trainers put the system together, the IT team learned the meaning of redundancy. “We have backups of the back-ups,” Mike said. “If we have a system go down, the plant cannot effectively do its job. We try to have a plan in place to minimize downtime for any event.”

The team took the first SAP module live in the chassis department in April 2007, and followed with human resources and payroll in July. All of the other departments went live in November. “We had zero downtime in manufacturing,” Mike noted. “Some companies using SAP have had to shut down completely to



switch over. We installed HP servers and a SAN (storage area network—an array of hard drives providing two terrabytes).”

Nearly five years have slipped by since the SAP installation was completed. “Today my job consists of three primary responsibilities, almost all of which are connected to SAP: system administration, help desk support, and projects and developments,” Mike said. “The first two items are tied to maintaining the software and hardware, which absorb about 80 percent of my time. We have 30 servers, 250 computers, 250 phones with voice-over internet protocol (VoIP), numerous printers, and many network routers and switches. The SAP software does everything: payroll, production scheduling and process reports, inventory—it’s almost endless. But that’s good! It makes everyone’s job easier and our future growth possible.

“Hardware technology is constantly changing,” Mike continued. “The hardware that we use throughout the plant has an average lifespan of three to five years. Of course, that puts us in a constant cycle of replacements.”

A significant part of the help desk support involves training employees on hardware replacements which usually have new technology. But software questions and training still are the leading time-burners on the help desk, which is open from 6 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. “We log in every call and prioritize each issue based on how it may affect production or critical management problems,” Mike said. “We

have to think of users as our customers. You have to have a heart for it to make everything work. We learn to work with each individual based on their skill levels. I feel like our toughest challenge is explaining to non-IT employees how we are solving a problem that affects them and their job. They want to legitimately understand our problems and we appreciate that.”

Smaller projects in magnitude on Mike’s docket will have good payoffs. A software monitoring system is being developed that will alert IT staff members when a system is in trouble—hardware and software. IT staff members will share on-call duty 24/7 to respond and prevent downtime.

The SAP team is working on additional data input for materials handling. Input entered at every workstation will provide more comprehensive information on the manufacturing process.


Eighteen years have slipped by since Mike Pounders started on the assembly line at Tiffin Motorhomes and enrolled

for night classes at ICC. He started in the IT department in 2003 writing comparatively simple programs in Visual Basic. Four years later he was Director of Information Technology for a company that has 1,300 employees. His desire to improve his management skills to lead an IT department that is destined to grow inspired him to enroll in the University of Mississippi to earn a bachelor’s degree in management information systems.

Ryan and Kelli are grown now. Their family grew in 1997 when Kaitlyn was born. Ryan graduated from high school with top grades and a high ACT score. His academic advisor suggested that he apply at one of the military academies. He was one of 50,000 applicants to the U.S. Naval Academy in 2007 and was one of the 1,200 who received an acceptance letter. Ryan graduated in 2011 and is now serving on the USS *New York*, an amphibious transport built in part from steel salvaged from the World Trade Center disaster. Having majored in political sci-

ence at Annapolis, he is a surface warfare officer who recently earned the Officer of the Deck rating, which qualifies him as a direct representative of the captain, having responsibility of the ship.

Mike and Ryan have discovered how much they enjoy backpacking together. “When Ryan came home from college, we began doing some pretty serious hiking. We have been able to work in some 10-day hiking trips in the backcountry in Rocky Mountain National Park, Yosemite National Park, and Glacier National Park,” Mike related. “Now that Ryan is a grown man on his own, we have bonded in new ways as father and son. It’s been a great experience and a terrific way for me to relax and refocus. No cell phones!

“This fall we plan to spend some weekends tailgating with Kelli at Ole Miss games and going to Kaitlyn’s football games on Friday nights,” Mike said. Just talking about backpacking, tailgating, and high school football games puts a relaxed look in his smile. 

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## “The Way It Was” WHEN THEY DROVE THE GOLDEN SPIKE

It was 143 years ago last May that an illustrious crowd gathered at Promontory Summit in northern Utah to celebrate an epic achievement: driving the last spikes to complete the first transcontinental rail line connecting the world’s two great oceans. Befitting the impact coast-to-coast rail traffic would have on the nation’s development, it was one heck of a celebration, albeit not without some comical hitches.

Go to Promontory today and you can see how it all happened. That celebration is reenacted every Saturday and holiday between May 1 and Columbus Day at the Golden Spike National Historic Site. Authentic replica locomotives of Union Pacific Railroad’s *Number 119* and Central Pacific Railroad’s *Jupiter* do it all over again. These old steam locomotives meet head to head, just as they did on that breezy but mild 68 degree day, May 10, 1869.

Period-dressed volunteer actors nail rails to the last tie in two performances, one at 11 a.m. and the second following a

“steam demonstration” at 1 p.m. when the locomotives move on the tracks. These steam engines operate every day between May 1 and Columbus Day, in fact, not just on the Saturdays and holidays that actors reenact the 1869 celebration. Locomotive runs begin every day at 10 a.m. when *Jupiter*, blowing a head of steam, moves to a point in front of a viewing stand. *Number 119* joins her 30 minutes later. At 1 p.m. Engineers Ron Wilson, Steve Sawyer, and Fireman Mike Oestreich and volunteers move the old 4-4-0 locomotives down the tracks and back.

This historic site, managed by the National Park Service, encompasses 2,736 acres and attracts nearly 50,000 visitors yearly. Entrance, reached by a road off Utah 83, is some 32 miles west of Brigham City. Entrance fee is \$7.00 per vehicle in summer, \$5.00 in winter. There’s one road in and out. Parking is adequate for motorhomes at the Visitor Center but no camping or overnight stays are permitted.

Much has changed since that day 143 years ago, of course. The reincarnated *Jupiter* and *Number 119* locomotives still operate at Promontory Summit but on tracks only a mile and a half long. The line was routed to Promontory in the first place to

detour around the Great Salt Lake. It served for 35 years. Then everything changed when a trestle was built across the lake to Lucin, cutting off 43 miles of grades and curves. Promontory, never more than a “tent town,” faded away. With World War II raging in great demand, rails on the “Promontory Detour” line were taken up in 1942. What’s left at Promontory is the Golden Spike National Historic Site, first authorized in 1957 then moved to federal ownership in 1965. The short rail line there lies on the same roadbed as the original. Reenactment performances appear near the exact spot where the last spikes were driven.

What has not changed is the historical significance nor, for that matter, the historic effort—both heroic and bungling—that led up to that May 10, 1869 ceremony. For openers, the spikes were driven two days later than planned, according to the National Park Service’s Golden Spike web site. Both the Central Pacific, headquartered in Sacramento, and the Omaha-based Union Pacific had troubles that kept them from getting to Promontory on time. Both companies had special trains that arrived behind second-choice locomotives. Here’s why:

Central Pacific had two trains rolling east toward Promontory, the first a passenger train carrying sightseers to the planned event. Behind it, a “special” carried Central President Leland Stanford and dignitaries behind *Antelope*, the engine Stanford personally selected to steam into history books at Promontory. Things went terribly awry when the first train passed through a large moun-

tain cut still being cleared. Workmen doing the clearing either failed to see or recognize the significance of a small green flag flying on the first locomotive to signal that another train followed. As soon as the first train passed, the workmen rolled a large log across the track. Wham! The collision did not derail *Antelope* but left her so damaged that Stanford’s telegrapher wired instructions to the next station to hold the passenger train.

When *Antelope* labored into that station, the Stanford “special” cars were hooked behind the first train. *Antelope* got left behind for repair. And that’s how *Jupiter*, built by Schenectady Locomotive Works of New York in 1868, got into history books and has come to live again at Golden Spike.

To the east, Vice President Thomas Durant of Union Pacific ran into double trouble at Piedmont, Wyoming. First his train was “hijacked” and chained to the siding by 400 disgruntled workers who hadn’t been paid for three months. Two days later, the pay arrived, likely at the behest of an embarrassed Durant. His train was released—only to run into more trouble. Seems that while the train was held hostage, the Weber River flooded and knocked out supports at Devil’s Gate Bridge. Seeing that, Durant’s engineer refused to cross. He argued that the heavy locomotive, the very one scheduled to “star” at Promontory, likely would cause the bridge to collapse and dump the entire train into raging waters.

He had a saving idea, though. He assured Durant that the

Text by Norman Spray

Photography courtesy of National Park Service



bridge would support the lighter passenger cars. So he fired up the locomotive and gave each passenger car a push from behind that sent the car, loaded with dignitaries (who must have been more than somewhat perturbed) coasting across the bridge. This brilliant strategy worked, did not endanger the locomotive or, by the way, the engineer. It did, however, leave Durant without the locomotive chosen to represent the east in the “wedding of the rails.” A hasty telegraph ahead to Ogden called for one of the steam engines in the yard there. That’s how it came to pass that *Union Number 119* rescued the train, earned its place in history, and later was reincarnated for duty at the Golden Spike National Historic Site.

Finally, after all that, the moment arrived on May 10! Workers brought from Stanford’s coach a special polished California laurelwood tie to which the connecting rails would be temporarily anchored, for sake of the show. Four holes were previously drilled so that special spikes could be “tapped” in. Then the laurelwood tie and ceremonial spikes would be taken up and the two railroad’s top executives would drive actual spikes into a regulation tie, joining east and west for real.

There were speeches. Oh, were there! Dr. H.W. Harkness, a Sacramento newspaper editor and publisher delivered one. Then he presented to Stanford two golden spikes made for the occasion. Durant was handed a silver spike from Nevada by Railroad Commissioner F. A. Tritle, also a candidate for governor. P. K. Safford, Arizona Territory’s newly appointed governor, presented Durant a second spike, one clad in silver and crowned in gold.

Stanford made a “rousing” speech. Durant was scheduled to follow but he declined, blaming a severe headache (which some suspected resulted from too much partying in Ogden the previous night.) General Grenville Dodge, Union’s chief engineer, substituted. Then Stanford and Durant used a silver-plated mawl to tap the ceremonial spikes into place. That done, the fancy laurelwood tie and precious metal spikes were taken up.

A regular pine tie was positioned. Iron spikes were set to be driven, one by Stanford and one by Durant. That didn’t go as planned, either. One account says Stanford took a hefty swing at his spike with a heavy hammer -- and missed, hitting the tie instead. The same writer reported that Durant, presumably still victim of hangover headache, lifted the hammer, made a wishy-washy effort, but couldn’t even hit the tie! No document exists to verify or debunk that description.

Regular rail workers then banged three spikes down. A fourth, the last, and the hammer used to drive it, were wired to the transcontinental telegraph line to let the country “hear” the driving. Once the rails from the east and west were nailed to the tie, Union Pacific telegrapher W. N. Shilling sent the message at 12:47 p.m.: “D-O-N-E.”

Next Central Pacific’s *Jupiter*, rolling from the west, and Union Pacific’s *119*, coming from the east, met “cowcatcher” to “cowcatcher,” separated by only a few feet.

Legend has it that engineers George Booth and Sam Bradford each broke a bottle on the other’s locomotive as champagne flowed among dignitaries.

It did happen that Central Pacific’s chief engineer Samuel S. Montague and his counterpart, Union Pacific’s Grenville M. Dodge, stood between the locomotives and shook hands to congratulate their companies, themselves and the nation on completion of this massive project, Tammy Benson, chief of operations at Golden Spike, says.

Sixty volunteers who serve as actors make the reenactment programs realistic, Benson reports. Most live in nearby towns and cities but some enthusiastic railroad fans come from afar and stay for weeks.

Golden Spike National Historic Site is open year-round (excepting Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day) but outside locomotive operations are limited to only three days in winter, Dec. 28–30.

Visitors can sign up at the Visitor Center for guided tours through the Engine House when the locomotives are not operational in winter. Tours usually start at 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1 p.m., 2:30 p.m., and 3:30 p.m.

Benson cautions visitors to believe signs and not GPS units once they leave Utah 89 when headed for Promontory. Some GPS systems have given erroneous information, she says.

You can phone the Visitor Center for information at 435-471-2209, x29; fax: 435-471-2341. Mail address is P.O. Box 897, Brigham City, UT 84302. Web site: <http://www.nps.gov/gosp>.

Nearest RV parks are in Brigham City. These include Brigham City KOA, 435-723-5503 or 800-562-0903, [brighamcitykoa@brigham.net](mailto:brighamcitykoa@brigham.net) and Golden Spike RV Park, 435-723-8858. Both offer pull throughs with full hookups, Wi-Fi, and TV.

### About the Steam Locomotives (Reincarnated) That Weren't Supposed to be Famous

Historic stories rise with the steam that billows from the stacks of *Jupiter* and *Number 119* as they chug down the tracks at the Golden Spike National Historic Site. Though not first picked to be at the 1869 ceremony marking the completion of the Nation's first transcontinental rail line, circumstances got them there anyway.

These engines are not the originals, since both were sold to scrappers for \$1,000 each around the turn of the 20th century. But their stories didn't die then.

**Jupiter.** This passenger locomotive was one of four built by Schenectady Locomotive Works of New York. They were dismantled, shipped around Cape Horn to San Francisco, then barged upriver to Central Pacific Railroad's Sacramento headquarters.

She was put back together measuring 72 feet long with tender, weighing 60 tons and equipped with two drive wheels on each side that were 62 inches in diameter. *Jupiter* used wood to fire an 800-gallon boiler which could generate up to 160 pounds per square inch of steam pressure. With 800 horsepower, her tractive effort rated at 30,000 pounds. Her cylinder was 16 inches across with a 24-inch stroke. Axle load: 41,800 pounds.

*Jupiter* pulled passenger trains for Central Pacific until 1885 when Central was merged into the Southern Pacific system. Over several years, she was converted to coal, got new numbers, new paint, a new boiler, a new bonnet, and a pilot that had horizontal slats instead of vertical slats on the original.

In 1893 *Jupiter* was sold to the Gila Valley, Globe and Northern Railroad for service in Arizona. She served that line until scrappers got her in the early 1900s.

**Number 119.** One of five freight locomotives built for Union Pacific in November 1868 by Rogers Locomotive and Machine Works of Paterson, N.J., *119* was among several at the Ogden station when called on to "rescue" the train that got stranded on its way to Promontory.

Like counterpart *Jupiter*, *Number 119* weighed 60 tons, also had an 800-gallon boiler and 2,000-gallon tender, could generate up to 160 pounds of steam pressure, develop 800 horse-

power and 48,000 pounds tractive effort. She was longer, however: 80 and a half feet with tender. She, too, was a 4-4-0 engine with 57-inch drive wheels. Coal heated her boiler. After her Promontory adventure, *119* pulled freight trains for Union until sold for scrap iron.

**Reincarnation.** The *Jupiter* and *No. 119* engines at Golden Spike are exact replicas of those that made the run to Promontory in 1869, painstakingly constructed by O'Connor Engineering Laboratories, Costa Mesa, California. Starting in 1975, engineers and technicians there used an 1870 locomotive design engineer's handbook and micrometer scaling of enlarged 1869 photographs since no blueprints were available.

It took \$1.5 million, four years, and over 700 drawings. The

*Continued on page 72*

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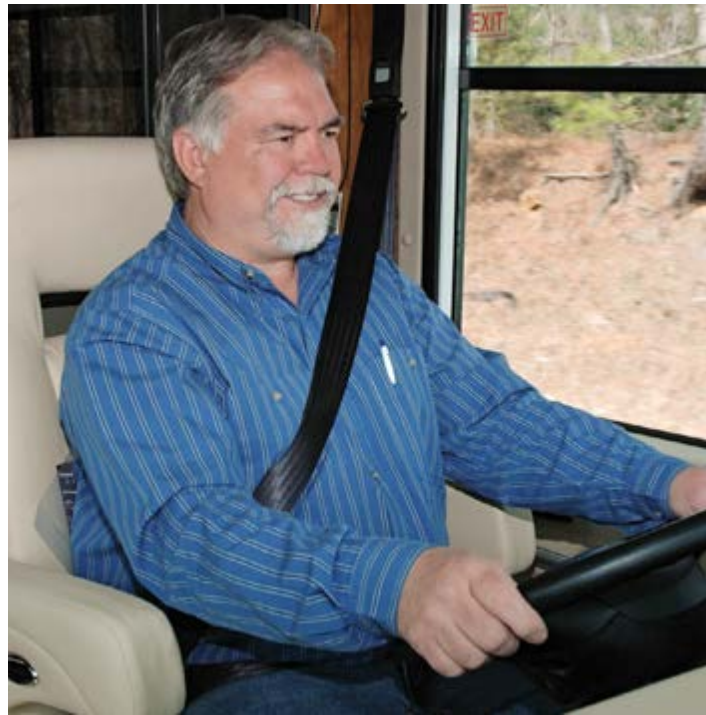
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### Inman's Answers

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.

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Dear Danny . . .

#### Rough Ride on a Freightliner Chassis & Sleepless Nights on a Sleep Number Bed

We are not "riding smoothly" in our 2008 Phaeton 40 QSH on a Freightliner chassis. Any rough road conditions—like a bridge joint out of alignment—produces a severe jolt through the entire coach. We don't have anything to compare it to so we don't know if this is "normal." The coach has 24,000 miles on it and

we have not taken it to a Freightliner shop. Are you aware of any recalls or "fixes" that Freightliner has offered?

On our Sleep Number bed, the control module turns OFF during each trip and we lose our settings. While we were in the Colorado mountains in June, the controls would not come back ON and our bed became so hard we could not sleep (change of pressure over a mile high?). The control came ON after a short trip and we were able to adjust to our preferred settings for the next few days that we were in the higher altitude. During our trip back to Texas and lower altitude, the bed deflated to EMPTY, the controls would not work, and we got no sleep! I tried to jiggle the wires and tubes under the bed (extreme lack of access), but nothing worked. Please advise. Thanks.

Jim & Zona Peterson  
N. Richmond Hills, Texas

Dear Jim & Zona,

Regarding the rough ride, you should weigh the front and rear of your coach with the contents you normally carry. Then refer to the Michelin tire book that came with your coach and adjust the cold tire pressure to match the weight of your coach. Most units will take less pressure than the max recommended in the book, which will give you a softer ride. If you take it to a Freightliner shop, they can adjust the airbag ride height. If it is not set correctly, it will cause a harder ride.

When we first installed Sleep Number beds, they were not hooked up to power from the inverter. In that case, you would have to be hooked up to shore power or running your generator for the settings and adjustments to work.

#### Does Tiffin Put Surge Protectors in Their Coaches?

(1) Why are power surge protectors not included as standard equipment in Tiffin motorhomes, or offered as an option?

Fran McCormack  
The Villages, Florida

(2) I hear frequently about how important it is to have a good surge protector in your motorhome. I am assuming that older motorhomes may not have surge protectors as original equipment. Do current Tiffin motorhomes have surge protectors installed at the factory? If so, how far back did you start putting them in your coaches? I have a 2011 Phaeton 40 QBH.

Max Hilyard  
Angola, Indiana

Dear Fran & Max,

There are many voltage protection systems offered by aftermarket suppliers at a variety of prices. Tiffin opted not to accept liability for problems caused by faulty shore power, lightning, brown-outs and surges cause by power companies, etc. However, in 2012 we started using an automatic transfer switch called

Surge Guard Plus that offers protection from open neutral and reverse polarity. It also has multi-mode surge suppression.

#### Unexplained Vibration in a 2004 Allegro

We have a 2004 Allegro 32 BA that we love, but we do have a major concern. We can be driving over a smooth road at 50 or 60 mph when suddenly the front of the rig starts to vibrate, shaking the RV and everything in the cabinets up over our heads. The tires have been balanced recently. Can you suggest any cause?

Don Powell  
Arizona City, Arizona

Dear Don,

There is a possibility that your tires need to be rotated—two from the back to the front. Also, a good front-end alignment will check the toe-in and caster for the unit.

#### A Gap Between the Windshield and the Dash

We purchased a pre-owned 2007 Allegro Bay QDB this Spring in Arizona. On the way home to Michigan, my wife noticed a draft. I could hear a high-pitched whistle which was like a window or door not shut tightly. We discovered a large space between the forward edge of the dash where it meets (or should meet) the windshield. One spot on the passenger side is wide enough for my wife to push her finger into the engine compartment below. Is there something missing that should close this area?

Bob Horwood  
Owosso, Michigan

Dear Bob,

There should be a foam insulation sprayed under the dash where it meets the front cap. Expanding foam insulation can be purchased at a local hardware store and sprayed from under the hood where the dash form meets the front cap. Before you start, wedge old towels into the crevice from above the dash to prevent the expanding foam from coming up into the cockpit. Then remove them after the foam insulation is applied.

#### It Sounds Like a Swarm of Bees

We have a 2010 Allegro Red 38 QBA with about 14,000 miles on it. It has developed a strange noise over the last year when we start driving the coach after it has been out of service for a while. After reaching 35 to 40 mph, a noise like a swarm of bees comes from the area around the step well. If the well cover is put down, the sound is somewhat eliminated or muffled. After we get up to full speed on the highway, we don't hear the buzzing until after we stop and start again. I have tried putting tape over drain holes and checking for loose items inside and out. Help!

Ben White  
Zebulon, North Carolina

Dear Ben,

There is a metal plate between the step well and the front tire. If this plate is touching the steps or other metal, the wind noise could make it sound like a loud buzzing noise. If it is touching, bend it away from the point where it is touching and that should solve your problem.

#### Loose Screws Holding Skirts on '96 Allegro

I have a 1996 26-ft. Allegro. I cannot tighten the screws holding the skirts on the side of the motorhome. What can be done to fix this problem? Does the factory paint older motorhomes?

John Volz  
Sacramento, California

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Dear John,  
First, try going to a larger screw. If that does not work, the wheel well covers will have to be removed and new backing plates installed. TMH does not paint older units, but there are two body shops in Red Bay that paint motorhomes and do a very good job.

**Sound Only or Video Only**

We have a 2008 Allegro Bus. When we use the DVD player to watch a movie, the inside TV produces the sound, but no picture. The outside TV shows the picture but has no sound. What needs to be done to correct the problem?

Larry Floyd  
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Dear Larry,  
In the driver's side storage area, mounted high next to the chassis rail, you will find your splitter boxes for your component and HDMI cables. This would be the first place to check for loose connections. There is also a reset button on the box. This is where your DVD player and satellite system splits out to all of your televisions.

**2012 Breeze Entry Door Awning Has Rattle**

We have a new 2012 Allegro Breeze. The entry door awning does not close completely when retracted. The cover remains extended almost an inch, creating an annoying rattle when we are traveling. Is there an adjustment we can make to correct the problem, or should we take it to a service center? This is our fourth Tiffin motorhome and we are extremely pleased with our unit. As a couple downsizing, the Breeze is a perfect fit for us. Keep up the good work.

Joe Lowman  
Abingdon, Virginia

Dear Joe,  
I recommend that you take your Breeze to a service center. There is no readily accessible adjustment that a non-professional technician could make. You would also

have to be on a ladder to reach it which could be dangerous.

**Need Color Specs for 1987 Allegro**

I have a 1987 Allegro 31-ft. The brown stripe in front is fading. Can you supply a paint brand and a color specification so that we can have it repainted? We have replaced the refrigerator, water faucet, stove, ceramic toilet, and mattresses for the bed over the cab and twin beds in back. It is a very good motorhome with a 454 engine. The tank monitor is the only thing that does not work.

Francis Pew  
Dexter, Oregon

Dear Francis,  
Our body shop uses either Martin Seymour or Dupont brands, a two-part paint which is a base coat with a clearcoat paint over it. For the best results on a match, have your body shop or paint store use their electronic matching gun on the brown metal on the side of your coach.

**Paint Splotching on 2002 Allegro Bay**

I own a 2002 Allegro Bay 34-ft. with a paint problem. The white paint of the two-tone green and white paint scheme cannot be cleaned satisfactorily. Then, after waxing, it has the appearance of splotching. I have tried all kinds of cleaners and waxes to no avail. I bought the unit in 2009 after it spent most of its life in Arizona. Any suggestions will be appreciated.

Richard Greenwood  
Grants Pass, Oregon

Dear Richard,  
If a power buffer will not bring the cleaned and shined look back, you will probably have to repaint your coach to get the results you want.

**Residential Refrigerator Drains onto the Floor**

We have a 2011 Allegro RED. The residential refrigerator periodically drains on the floor. Ice stays in the bottom of the freezer. The unit was checked out ear-

lier and no problems were discovered. We were told then that this unit did not have a drain pan. It is aggravating to have to continue mopping water frequently.

By the way, you guys have been top drawer on warranty issues. What a relief it has been.

James & Barbara Brown  
Vero Beach, Florida

Dear James & Barbara,  
Your refrigerator has a drain pan which serves as an evaporator. There should be a line from your refrigerator that drains into this pan. I think the line into the pan is clogged and the water is draining from a point above the line onto your floor. Removing the refrigerator and getting to the drain line is a piece of work and should be done by a technician familiar with your unit.

**Using the IR Sensor on Your Television**

We have a new Phaeton 40QBH. Our problem is connected to the IR sensor in the entertainment center. The sensor is made by Impact Acoustics (MODEL NO. 40430). Whenever we use the TV remote in the bedroom, it changes the channels on the living room televisions. My wife and I have different tastes when it comes to TV programming. I finally got it to stop by putting tape over the sensor in the bedroom. How can this problem be corrected?

Greg Pomatto  
Valencia, California

Dear Greg,  
Over the infrared eye on the front television, try placing a small piece of tinting material that is used to tint window glass. This will reduce the distance that the signal will carry from the remote control. The material should be available at an automotive window tinting company. No need to purchase a large piece.

**Planning to Use 2001 Allegro After Years of Storage**

We are planning to use our 2001 Allegro again after having it stored for several

years. What should we expect our RV service center here in California to recommend in order to make the motorhome road-ready? New tires are already on the list. Thanks.

Barbara Ziegenhals  
Pleasanton, California

Dear Barbara,  
Your tires are the most important item to replace. Be sure to put stabilizer and cleaner into your fuel tank to remove moisture, such as Sea-Foam. Have the engine and the generator serviced and the oil changed. Have your refrigerator, hot water heater, furnaces and roof air cleaned and serviced by RV technicians. Be sure to check your braking systems. Clean and flush the radiator, and replace the coolant. Check the batteries and the water level in the cells. Check the 110v service and make sure that the power change-over box is working properly. Clean and flush the fresh water tank.

**Getting a 2009 Allegro RED Ready After A Year of Storage**

A recent illness prevented us from using our motorhome for over a year. We are getting it ready to go again, but cannot solve a problem with the two air conditioners that started soon after we bought the unit. Both ACs continually throw the breakers. Today we finally got them both running, but after a short time they both quit. Ingram's RV in Montgomery checked them but could not recreate the problem. Do you have any suggestions?

Dean Riley  
Banks, Alabama

Dear Dean,  
Without a personal check on your unit, I would have to guess that it could be weak breakers or one of the AC units pulling more amps than normal.

**My Phaeton Bounces**

I have a 2010 Phaeton 40QBH that occasionally will bounce when starting out on a trip. My brother-in-law owns a 2010

Allegro Bus. When his coach does that, he presses the Air Up switch which airs up his air bags. I can't find that switch on my Phaeton. What should I do except wait for a good while so the air bags can air up fully and eliminate the bounce?

Dale Matney  
Bloomington, Indiana

Dear Dale,  
The Air Up switch is a special feature on the PowerGlide chassis. Freightliner and Spartan does not offer this switch on their products. Use your cruise control to set your engine at high idle around 1100 rpm and this will help inflate the bags more quickly. Once the pressure reaches 110-lbs. your air bags should be inflated enough for you to travel smoothly.

**Lag Bolts Working Up Through Floor**

We own a 2007 Allegro Open Road 30-ft.

with the front engine diesel. We love the coach . . . best we have owned. However, lag bolts in the floor are spontaneously "backing out" beneath the carpet and the tile. What causes this? Is there any remedy? I did lift up the tile near the step well and screwed the bolt back down. We have logged 47,000 miles with annual trips from our home in Maine to the west coast. Thanks for any help you can offer.

John K. Lowe, Jr. (USN Ret)  
Albion, Maine

Dear John,  
Fortunately this is a problem that is rare, so I don't have a remedy we have tried that will prevent this. Try a larger lag bolt that has been dipped in a strong bonding glue.

**Figuring Out the Ukelele and Pinging Noise**

In reference to Leo Dwyer's "ukelele"

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noise, I have a similar noise in my 2008 Allegro 32BA. Since it was new, we have heard a “tink” every now and then in the ceiling — not consistent and not located in one particular spot. After paying attention to the weather conditions when I heard the noise, I believe the answer is temperature change. The noise is the aluminum roof structure expanding and contracting. We love our coach and your Tech Talk column. Thanks.

Rick & Diane Rocla  
Wakefield, Rhode Island

Dear Rick & Diane,  
You may have the right answer. Read Gary Allen’s idea about how the AC noises are projected through the ductwork.

**2005 Phaeton Overheating in Mountains**

We have a 2005 Phaeton. As we travel through the mountains, our engine overheats and we have to drive 40 mph to keep the temperature down. Is this common or do we have a problem?

Casey Paw  
Orlando Park, Illinois

Dear Casey,  
The first thing to do is spray the radiator with a good engine degreaser and then wash it out with water under pressure. When you are driving in the mountains, shift to a lower gear to keep the engine running at a higher RPM. This will cause the cooling system to work more efficiently.

**Eureka! You Got It Right on the Pinging Noise**

The July 2012 Tech Talk (9:3) items from Wayne Hampel (p.66) and Leo Dwyer (p.71) and the previous one from Ron & Ann Sims (9:2, p.61) are, I am quite sure, all talking about the same noise — one I also hear all the time when parked in our 2007 Phaeton 40QDH. I have often wondered what it could be and I thought your suggestion to the Sims fit what I was hearing perfectly — that it was an AC system device in one or both units that was

“throwing its voice” through the ductwork in the ceiling. Your suggestion was a “Eureka” moment for me, as it would explain how it seems to come from many points overhead but always sounds exactly the same. You seem to have retreated from your theory in the July STT, but I am sure you are correct. It remains only for you to cross-examine your AC specialists to see what is making the “ping” overhead.

Gary Allen  
Williamsburg, Virginia

Dear Gary,  
Thanks for your feedback confirming my first idea. We will ask our air conditioning manufacturer to do some research on the problem.

**Temp Gauge Failure in 1999 Allegro Bus**

In my 1999 Allegro Bus, the needle in the temperature gauge will always go to the end, come back, and then pulse back and forth until it finally stops. I have checked the wiring and changed the temperature sender. Does this indicate the problem is the gauge itself? If so, where can I purchase a temperature gauge?

Ronald West  
Statesville, North Carolina

Dear Ronald,  
I don’t think the problem is in the temperature gauge itself. It sounds like a weak ground. Try taking the ground side of the gauge direct to a ground to see if this will solve your problem.

**Unexplained Electrical Outages**

I have 7,000 miles on my 2011 Allegro RED 38QRA. I am having difficulty with three separate electrical issues. Power outages have kicked off the GFI in the rear bath, which also controls the Sleep Number mattress. After 24 to 36 hours, the outlet finally begins operating again. Also, after a power outage, the residential refrigerator will not work on the batteries alone. At one time, it seemed to recycle itself and function on the batteries. This

last time it has not. Thirdly, the front AC’s breaker occasionally kicks off for no apparent reason. Our dealer has not been able to solve the problems.

Bill Whiston  
Lincoln, Nebraska

Dear Bill,  
It has to be something to do with the inverter. Once the power goes off, the inverter is not transferring the power back to the plug. If this is the case, your televisions and microwave oven should be out, too. Have an electrical technician check the inverter. It is not uncommon in extremely hot weather for the breakers to kick off, especially if the air conditioners cycle on and off quickly. It could also be a weak breaker that needs to be replaced.

**Wipers Won’t Go to Storage Position**

I have a 2010 Allegro on a Workhorse chassis. Almost since new there has been a problem with the wipers. When turned off, they lie flat at the bottom of the windshield for about two seconds and then pop up about six inches to a 35-degree angle. A technician at a Workhorse service center had no idea what causes the problem. Do you know what might cause the problem? Does the mechanism have any adjustments to correct it?

Dave Cavazzi  
Blind Bay, BC, Canada

Dear Dave,  
You probably need to reset the “park” position on the wipers. You do this by removing the swing arm from the motor shaft. Then turn the motor on and let it “park” when stopped. Then reinstall the swing arm on the motor shaft and torque it to approximately 35 lbs. This should cause your wipers to stop in this location every time.

**Using Ethanol in Older Engines**

We have a 1987 Allegro Bay. Will ethanol hurt the engine? Here in Oklahoma we are very careful to use gas with no ethanol added. However, when we travel elsewhere, gas with ethanol is all we can find.

Do you have a suggestion on how to protect the engine from ethanol?

Beverly & Dave Miller  
Ponca City, Oklahoma

Dear Beverly & Dave,  
Ethanol will probably not hurt your engine. However, it is a good preventative to use a fuel treatment called Sea-Foam every third tank of gas. It will keep your injectors and carburetor clean and help eliminate moisture in your tank. This item can be purchased at nearly any auto parts store.

**Turbo Failure on CAT 350**

I have a 2007 Phaeton with a Caterpillar 350-hp engine. I have had two turbos replaced. I would like to know if CAT has a problem that is causing this. I have called their service number and they seem to

have no interest in dealing with it. The waste gate freezes up. Is there anything I can do to keep it from freezing up? Replacing a turbo is not cheap!

Steve Moody  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Dear Steve,  
We used Caterpillar engines steadily from 2002 to 2007 and rarely saw a problem with their turbos. This could be a problem that we are not aware of if it was observed only by the CAT service centers.

**Keeping Your Inverter on All of the Time**

I have a 2008 Allegro Bus 40QSP. If you keep your inverter on all of the time, how do you know if the shore power happens to kick off? The microwave and televi-

sions continue to work. Are the dryer and air conditioners the only indicators that there is no shore power?

Bill Morrison  
New Gloucester, Maine

Dear Bill,  
With the inverter in the ON position, the only indication that the 110v power source is not active will be the appliances not tied into the inverter, i.e., the ACs, the dryer, the vacuum cleaner, etc.

**Brake Light Switches Burning Out**

I have had three brake light switches burn out on my 2008 Allegro Bay on a Workhorse chassis, twice under warranty. Each time it was replaced the service tech said it was a short in the switch. But if that is the case, why have I had two new ones

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burn out? The problem seems to affect the brake lights in my tow vehicle. When you operate the turn signals while braking, both left and right turn signals pulse.

Richard Underwood  
Des Moines, Washington

Dear Richard,  
Unless it is blowing fuses or you can find a loose connection to the brake switch, the burning out of switches would almost have to be caused by a defect in the switches themselves. A phased pulsation is normal in the light. But if you see a strong pulsation, it indicates a defective converter box or a weak ground.

**Awning Vibration in Allegro RED**

I have a 2011 Allegro RED. When the coach is in motion, there is an annoying vibration in the patio awning. Can an owner make the repair, or should I take it to a Tiffin dealer? Thanks for your help.

Pete Fischer  
Clyde, Texas

Dear Pete,  
Since I cannot help you identify the likely cause of the vibration, I suggest you take it to a service center. Try to determine exactly where the noise is coming from. If the noise is intermittent, it is going to be difficult for a dealer's technician to find it.

**It's Died Five Times in Four Years**

I own a 2008 Phaeton and I love it! Bought it in late 2007. Since then, on rare occasions when I turn on the ignition key, it's dead. Won't say a word. This has happened five times in the last four years. I have checked everything electrical with no results. Then, after it sets for awhile, it fires up like a champ. Should I consult an exorcist or do you have some ideas?

Johnny Grimes  
Conyers, Georgia

Dear Johnny,  
I think a voodoo doctor might be better in this case. You will have to make the following checks when the ignition has failed. On the front of the coach above

the generator, there are two electrical lugs that bring power from the engine to the front of the chassis. First, make sure you have a good ground to that point, and then check how much voltage you have on the hot side. If no voltage is found there, go to the rear of the motorhome along the passenger side rail next to the engine where you will see several relays and solenoids. With the ignition switch on, check the voltage (12.5v) across the poles of the solenoids. You will have to check three solenoids because you won't be able to differentiate between them. If these are okay, be sure to check the grounds at the chassis battery and the ground that goes from the engine to the motorhome's rail.

**Pre-Installed CB Antenna?**

I read your response in "Aftermarket Installation of CB Radio" in the July 2012 issue (9:3, p.61). I have a 2007 Allegro Bus 40QSP. I have checked under the dash and cannot find a CB antenna connection, nor do I see what I would consider a CB antenna on the roof — just two short "spike" antennas that I think are for the radio. Am I correct about the "spike" antennas, and do I have a pre-installed CB antenna?

Richard Spurr  
Huddleston, Texas

Dear Richard,  
There should be only one radio antenna on the roof. The second antenna should be for a CB radio.

**Slide Operates Intermittently on 2003 Phaeton**

I have a 2003 Phaeton with slides that work intermittently. I have replaced the coach batteries, checked terminals for tightness, checked contact points on slide-out solenoids, checked fuses, and checked the wiring on the seat slide. All are okay. During the last episode, I wiggled the key in the ignition and it worked! And the slide-outs have continued to work over three trips this summer. Is there a replacement ignition switch for my coach? Could there be

a short somewhere? All of the contacts on the ignition were tight!

Gary Coffman  
Corona, California

Dear Gary,  
There is a solenoid toward the rear of the motorhome that provides power for the slide-outs from the batteries. It should be marked "slide-out solenoid." If the solenoid is sticking and working intermittently, it will cause the problem you describe. When the problem occurs, jump power across the poles of the solenoid. If your slide-outs work, you know the solenoid should be changed.

**Follow-up on Cause for Fume Alarm Problem**

In the July 2012 issue (9:3, p. 63), Wes & Evelyn Rogers said their fume alarm was going off without cause. I had that problem in my 1996 Allegro Bus and found that the bogus alarm was caused by dead cells in the house batteries. I replaced the house batteries and the problem went away.

Jim Bulla  
Marietta, Georgia

Dear Jim,  
Thanks for your follow-up on this problem.

**Entry Door Lock Malfunctions**

The "Posi-Loc" on the entry door of my 2001 Allegro Bus broke (malfunctioned) last winter. It held the door in the "open" position. To close the door, I had to dismantle the system. Can we replace the system with a newer version that does not require pulling the door handle when we want to close the door? Can you recommend a service center? We have no way to prop the door open.

Bob Harper  
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

Dear Bob,  
The locking arm that we use today can be interchanged with the original older style arm. This will eliminate your having to pull the door handle to release the "stop"

mechanism in the arm. If you dismantled the old system, you should be able to install the new one. Order from TMH's parts department

**Installing a Flat Screen Overhead Television**

We own a 2006 Allegro Open Road 35TSA. I have removed the overhead television and would like to install a flat screen TV. The opening measures 29" x 22". What kind of TV will fit into that opening with the controls accessible and the speakers facing outward? What is the best way to mount the TV? Any assistance you can offer will be appreciated.

Bruce Grave  
Brainerd, Minnesota

Dear Bruce,  
The 2013 Panasonics we are using measure 30" x 18". If you cannot come up with an extra inch for the opening, you will have to drop down to a 26-inch television. You should be able to purchase a residential-style mounting bracket and mount it to the cabinet.

**Fogged Windows**

I own a 2006 Phaeton 35 DB. In the past year three of my windows have fogged up with moisture. Is there an easy fix for this problem? Can you recommend a place in California to have the problem corrected?

Charles Gisler  
Modesto, California

Dear Charles,  
There is not an easy fix for this problem. There are companies that remove the window from the motorhome, take out the glass, and repair the seal. Sometimes it is less expensive to replace the window. Happy Daze in Livermore, California, is the Tiffin dealer for your area.

**Guidelines for Replacing Tires**

We recently had a tire blowout on I-40W near Knoxville, Tennessee. It was the left front tire right under my seat. It was a terrible explosion and a horrifying experi-

ence. We bought our 2005 Allegro Bus in September 2004 and we had not replaced the front tires. We have less than 50,000 miles on the coach. We now have new tires on the front. We have since heard differing opinions and guidelines about when tires should be replaced. Which is

most important? Age of the tire or number of miles? Can you put a number on each guideline?

Sheila Miller  
Theodore, Alabama

Dear Sheila,  
We have been using Michelin tires for sev-

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eral years. Michelin recommends replacing a tire that has been in service for 10 years from the date the tire was manufactured. The manufacture date is stamped on the sidewall. Many other conditions influence replacing your tires earlier, such as storage conditions, conditions of use such as load and speed, maintaining proper inflation pressure, and mileage. Storing motorhomes for long periods of time without moving them is worse on the tires than driving them regularly. After five years of service from date of tire's manufacture, you should have your tires checked by a reputable dealer at least once a year. Before every trip you should check your tires for inflation and visual condition.

**Relocating a Thermostat & Repairing Wiper Control**

On my 2003 Phaeton, the wall thermostat that controls the front AC is mounted on the outside wall. As a result, when the sun heats up the coach wall, the thermostat reacts accordingly and the AC runs nearly full time. Has Tiffin developed a "fix" for this situation? It looks like it would be a major job to relocate it.

The primary control for the windshield wipers has failed. The fuse is okay and the washer button still squirts and activates the wiper for a few swipes. The only way I can get the wipers to work is to keep pushing the washer button.

Gene Uecker  
McKinney, Texas

Dear Gene,  
It will be time consuming to relocate the thermostat. The TMH Service Center has remedied the problem by building a wooden frame to set the thermostat away from the wall 1-2 inches. Then high density foam insulation is inserted in the box. Be sure to insulate the holes where the wires come through the box. You should see a significant difference. Stain and varnish the box to match your other cabinetry.

On your wiper failure, check the ground wires under the hood from the

motor to the frame of the motorhome. This should solve your problem.

**Parking Brake Failure on Allegro Bay FRED**

I have a 2006 Allegro Bay FRED 34XB. I recently experienced a parking brake failure on my FRED. My Oasis dealer told me that the brake is spring set with a hydraulic release, and that it was not working. A Freightliner service person informed us that the module is no longer available. We were told that the system now has to be changed over to a manual brake and a parking pawl installed in the transmission. The estimated cost is \$6,000 with Freightliner offering no subsidy. I am wondering if any other FRED owners have had this problem. They may not be aware their parking brake could fail on an incline.

Pete Mowry  
Waddell, Arizona

Dear Pete,  
The answer you received does not sound correct. Call Freightliner Customer Service 800-385-4357 with your VIN and put the same question to them.

**Unexplained Cabin Noise in an Allegro FRED**

We are pleased with our 2006 Allegro FRED, having crossed the country coast to coast, two trips from Stuart, Florida, to Red Bay, and from Stuart to Yellowstone. While driving along at highway speed, the cabin is nice and quiet. Then, suddenly, noise from the engine makes it almost impossible to talk. It sounds as if the engine has downshifted and is just screaming. Checking the tachometer, I can see the engine's RPM has not changed. I cannot instigate the problem for a service tech or find any consistent cause. Any ideas? The sudden noise is really annoying.

R. D. Conner  
Stuart, Florida

Dear R.D.,  
In hot weather this is a common problem. It will be your clutch fan on the en-

gine engaging to reduce the temperature of the engine. This usually happens after you let off the accelerator when pulling inclines. We know the noise is annoying but it is part of the design and there is nothing we can do to prevent it.

**Defective TV Cable**

I have a 2010 Allegro 35QBA on a Workhorse W22 chassis. When we are on cable in a campground, the main television is not as clear as the other TVs in the coach. I can run a long cable through the window from the pedestal source to the main TV and get a clear image. The TMH service center in Red Bay did not have replacement cable when I was there for warranty service. How can I get the problem corrected now?

Sloan Trigg  
Richton, Mississippi

Dear Sloan,  
Normally the cable is not bad unless a staple or screw has pierced it. In that case, you would get no reception. Perhaps one of the fittings connecting the cable to the television or the outside cable hookup is faulty. Anyone familiar with coax and cable hookup should be able to locate the bad fitting.

**AC Breakers Keep Tripping on Allegro Bus**

The AC breakers on my 2010 Allegro Bus 36 QSP continually trip when I am operating on generator power. I set the thermostats at different temps. My thermostats fluctuate from on to off. I have had my dealer check this out when I go in for service. My wife is handicapped and refuses to travel as long as we have to deal with this problem.

William G. Naber  
Melbourne, Florida

Dear William,  
We have found on some units that the opening where the wiring comes into the bottom of your breaker box is allowing heat from the engine compartment to come into the box. These are thermal breakers. When the normal heat generated

by the transmission of power is augmented by the engine heat entering the box, the thermal breakers are being tripped. Remove the cover from the top of the box and use foam insulation to insulate the wires where they pass through the floor. Then add fiberglass insulation to the bottom of the box. You can also drill holes in the side of the box to relieve the heat buildup.

**Parking Brake Problem on 2003 Allegro**

I have a 2003 Allegro 31-ft. with a Chevy engine on a Workhorse chassis. The parking brake on the drive shaft has failed to the extent that when you park, it will not release. When you can get it to release, it will not set. I cannot locate a wiring diagram and have not been able to find a shop in my area to repair it. The parking brake is now disabled. I can use the rig, but cannot park it safely. Help!

Ed Fortune  
Stockton, California

Dear Ed,  
This is a job that must go to a service center that is familiar with the GM and the Workhorse brake system. Workhorse indicates that Lodi RV Center, 19681 N. Hwy 99, Acampo, CA 95220, is the nearest service center. Their phone number is 209-369-1431.

**Closet Doors Come Off Tracks**

We have a 2003 Allegro and I must say I love this coach . . . except for the closet doors. The doors never work properly and always come off the tracks. I swear I am close to taking them down and throwing them away! Any suggestions for a permanent repair?

Wendy Polesky  
La Mesa, California

Dear Wendy,  
Without seeing the problem, it is difficult to evaluate it. However, it sounds like a part is missing. The doors are suspended on rollers that move on an overhead track. Attached to the top of the closet at the ceiling, there should be a felt-covered,

grooved board that keeps the rollers from jumping off the track. If this is missing, that's the cause of your problem.

**Does Tiffin Sell Furniture Upgrades?**

Where can I purchase furniture shown in the new motorhomes featured in *Roughing It Smoothly*? I would like to replace a Euro chair with the full recliner as shown in the Zephyr (9:3, p.14). I recently visited the Tiffin facility in Red Bay and did not see any sales area where we could examine and purchase furniture items.

Gail Floyd  
Smyrna, Tennessee

Dear Gail,  
We do not have a furniture showroom at the factory. Any of the furniture in our motorhomes can be purchased through our parts department in Red Bay. Indicate the brand, year, floorplan, and leather color when you place your order.

**Redecorating With Wood Floors and New Backsplash**

We have a 2004 Allegro Bus 40 TSP. What is the best way to remove the mirror backsplash over the kitchen counter without damaging the wall? Is the mirror attached to the wall with silicone? My wife wants to replace it with decorative glass tile. Also, after many cleanings, our living room carpet is showing its age. Considering our slide-out configurations, can I replace the carpet with a laminate wood floor? Your recommendations on both projects will be appreciated.

Eric & Phyllis LoFaso  
Buffalo, New York

Dear Eric & Phyllis,  
The mirrors are attached to the walls with Liquid Nails glue that was especially made to attach mirrors to walls. It will be hard to remove the mirrors, but you can try to gently pry with a long metal paint scraper. Be very careful because you are likely to splinter the glass.

You can replace the carpet with the wood laminate but you will have to



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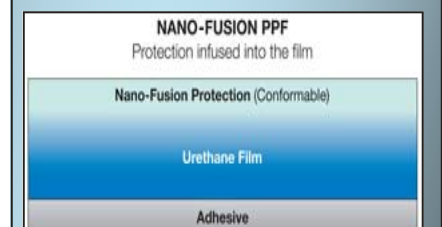


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change and adjust the slide-out rollers, using a rubber roller instead of the steel roller that is now in the coach. The laminate floor is more subject to scratching and scarring. A vinyl-type floor (wood design) will be more forgiving.

**Windshield Wiper Control Is “Out of Control”**

I have a 2004 Allegro Bay 34-ft. on a Workhorse chassis. It was purchased new and is stored inside. On a recent trip through Oregon, it started to rain and I turned the wipers on intermittent mode. After 20 minutes or so, the wipers came to a complete stop for a moment and then switched to the constant slow speed. The wipers responded to different speed settings, but would not cease when I moved the switch to OFF. Since it was still raining, I just let the wipers go, figuring I would pull the fuse when the weather cleared. However, sometime later the wipers just stopped. While I had been trying all of the settings earlier, I had left the switch in the OFF position. I waited for a while and tried the wipers again, and they worked correctly in all settings including OFF. This is the second time this scenario has happened. Any suggestions?

Milton Rose  
Phelan, California

Dear Milton,  
Your problem will be the windshield control module, which was supplied with the chassis by Workhorse and mounted under the hood in front. This relay controls the speed and the intermittent setting of

the wipers. They are apparently not waterproof. If moisture builds up in the module, it will react just as yours did. You can probably prevent the problem by locating the box and shielding it from moisture, or you can move the module inside under the dash—a much more difficult job.

**Passenger Side Slide-Out Moves Imperceptibly**

I have a 2008 Allegro Bus 36QSP. I have noticed that when the slides are out and we are hooked to shore power, the slide on the passenger side in the bedroom will move in imperceptibly. In a week or two it will move two to three inches. The dealer could not trace the problem. Do you have an answer?

Dan Childs  
Southside, Alabama

Dear Dan,  
The passenger side slide in the bedroom is controlled by hydraulics. Once the room is deployed, it holds the fluid to keep the slide-out room steady. This valve is likely leaking, bleeding the fluid back internally through the line. This relieves the pressure on the slide-out and permits it to ease in or out. The cure is worse than the problem. In order to get to the valve, you will have to remove the face plates on the slide-out. This could cause the paint to crack and rupture. The simple solution is to push the OUT button once a week to restore the pressure—at least until it gets noticeably worse.

**Problems with Cruise Control & Emergency Start on a 1996 Allegro**

I have a 1996 Allegro Bay 32-ft. on a Ford

chassis. I am the original owner and I do my own maintenance. The coach has 75,000 miles, runs great, and is like new inside and out. I am still impressed with its above average construction and quality materials. It’s a great motorhome and, as the saying goes, “Quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten.” I need help with two problems I haven’t been able to solve.

The cruise control works fine when I first start out and the motorhome is cold. It continues working until I cancel or stop somewhere and shut down. After that, it won’t even turn on. It will work again after it has been parked overnight or longer.

The emergency start button activates the solenoid when the ignition is off, but won’t when it is on. I have checked the solenoid, the fuses, and verified the wiring according to the schematic. I have had the problem for quite a while. It must be somewhere in the wiring. Any help will be greatly appreciated.

Ron Stiteler  
Clarksville, Florida

Dear Ron,  
On the cruise control, it sounds like the vacuum line controlling the servo is weak. Once the heat builds up in the engine compartment, the vacuum lines weaken and collapse and will not activate again until the unit cools off. Replacing the vacuum lines will probably solve your problem.

The solenoid that the emergency start button activates should be automatically activated when you turn the ignition switch on. If not, you may have a blown ignition fuse in the Ford fuse panel. This solenoid allows the alternator when charging the engine batteries to also charge the house batteries.

**Generator & House Batteries in an Allegro Bus**

We purchased our 2007 Allegro Bus new with a residential refrigerator. The unit came with four 12v batteries. We think it is the best motorhome we have ever

owned! But, when we dry camped overnight, the refrigerator would draw down the batteries to the point that we could not start the generator without running the main engine for ten minutes.

I called Tiffin service and was told the unit should have had four 6v deep cycle batteries in it. Whose fault was that??? I changed out the batteries and it did help some, but overnight with the refrigerator and heat running, it still drained the house batteries enough that we could not start the generator. Yes, I know we could have set up the inverter/auto start to crank the generator in the middle of the night. But parked next to other units, that is not appreciated.

I talked to Eric at the Cummins service center in New Hudson, Michigan, and he was aware of the problem. We decided to add a battery with an isolator just for

the generator (located under the stairs). Voilé! Now we can start the generator even after the house batteries are drained.

Mike Kuehnl  
Pinckney, Michigan

Dear Mike,  
I do not know how the battery mix-up could have happened. We have used 6v deep cycle for many years in this application. I don’t have a good answer for your short battery life with just the furnace and the refrigerator running. The only thing I can think of is to check the inverter charging system to be sure you are getting a full 100% charge back in your batteries.

**Tuning in the Surround Sound for TV in a 2012 Phaeton**

I have a 2012 Phaeton 40QBH that we acquired in September 2011. When I play a DVD, I have surround sound in the living

area of the coach. When I play the TV, I do not have surround sound. Both televisions in the living room and bedroom are 32" Panasonics. I checked the wiring on the living room television and it has a shielded cable with a square connector in the Digital Audio Out terminal. The bedroom TV does not have a cable in the Digital Audio Out terminal.

What do I need to do to get the TV to play with surround sound? I am assuming that it is wired for surround sound through the TV. Any help will be appreciated.

Jim Wyatt  
Kenney, Texas

Dear Jim,  
The only television that is wired for surround sound is the one next to the refrigerator. You should be able to move the surround sound to the TV by selecting AUXILLIARY on the DVD player.

**LET US HEAR FROM YOU**

“Serious Tech Talk” is a very important section of *Roughing It Smoothly* in which information sharing flows in both directions. Please continue to send your questions to Danny Inman on the enclosed postcard. A separate postcard is enclosed for “From the Road,” a fun part of the magazine for readers to share their motorhoming experiences. If you choose to email us at: fredthompson1941@hotmail.com, be sure to put “Roughing It Smoothly” in the subject line of your email. If your communication requires an entire letter, mail it to us at: PO Box 1738, Monroe, GA 30656-1738. Tell us about the interesting places you’ve been, an unusual experience, a great destination, or just a good place to camp and hang out. Please share. “From the Road” contributors will receive a free tee shirt while supplies last. —Fred Thompson, editor

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SERIOUS TECH TALK *Continued from page 71*

### Reprogramming the Allison Transmission on the Breeze

I have been very confused about the whereabouts of the exhaust brake on my 2011 Allegro Breeze. Please see the enclosed sales brochure for the 28 BR.

Then I learned there was no exhaust brake and “downhill braking” was accomplished by reprogramming the Allison transmission. After visiting three Allison service centers including the ones in Las Vegas and the Los Angeles area, I finally found a place in Kent, Washington, where they would do it. I want to add that they did the job very well. I want to thank

Pacific Power Products, 7215 South 228 th Street, Kent 98032.  
(800) 882-3860.

Gerry Hoffer  
Lantzville, British Columbia

Dear Gerry,  
We are sorry for the confusion about the 2011 Breeze having an exhaust brake. Thanks for letting us know about your good experience at Pacific Power Products. If we are in contact with other owners with the same problem, we will know that we can feel confident in sending clients to Pacific.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER *Continued from page 4*

Tiffin Motorhomes was founded 40 years ago on the same Christian morals and values that we still champion today. It was an endeavor I entered into humbly with modest goals of providing for my family. We never set out to become the largest Class-A motorhome manufacturer in America. We began with a clear objective: to build a quality product to serve others, and to always deal honestly with everyone. I believe very strongly in treating our employees and customers as I would want to be treated. This has always been the theme of our business, and as long as I am at the helm this will be our standard. I simply refuse to accept anything less. We weren't founded on gimmickry

or fancy marketing shenanigans. We still believe in the same timeless business principles that sustain us today. We know there is a three-pronged approach that delivers an outstanding motorhome experience: superior quality control, exceptional product design, and unparalleled customer service. These are our signature traits and they are the values on which we have chosen to stake our reputation. We promise to always strive to live up to that reputation. While quality is our primary goal, we realize that we may occasionally fall short of customer expectations, and this is why we will never shy away from servicing our products and ensuring that our customers are taken care of to the best of our ability now and in the future. **RIS**

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PHAETON 36 GH *Continued from page 12*

### Driving the 2013 Phaeton 36 GH

For six years the Phaeton has enjoyed the distinction of being the best-selling diesel pusher in the U.S. market. The Phaeton's superb handling is one of the reasons for its success. Correctly balancing the weight in the infrastructure is critical. Tiffin engineers have moved major components forward in the chassis to counter the weight of the engine, insuring that 40 percent of the Phaeton's weight rests on the front axle. With tuned shocks and tested inflation of the air bags, the occupants enjoy a firm but very comfortable ride.

There is no hesitation in the Phaeton's take-off from a standstill stop. With the Cummins 8.3-liter 380-hp engine mated with Allison's 3000MH 6-speed automatic transmission, the acceleration is a strong surge as the transmission moves evenly through each gear. With two occupants, a full tank of fuel, and approximately 1,500 pounds in cargo, plus my tow car (3,500 lbs.), I was very pleased with the coach's effortless acceleration

to move into the passing lane on I-65 and slide past 18-wheelers on four percent grades. Cruising at 70 between Cullman and Birmingham, the coach lost almost no speed at all on grades that I estimated at four percent.

On two-lane roads with narrow shoulders that require a driver's total attention, I felt very confident with the responsive steering and handling. The coach has almost zero rocking and the suspension system does a very good job of absorbing uneven road surfaces. The tuned shocks also did very well in handling one hard braking incident.

With the 6-way power driver's seat built by Flexsteel and terrific ride provided by TMH and Freightliner engineering, it was a slam dunk to drive this coach for eight hours and not feel tired when we stopped for the evening. Part of that, of course, is due to one's driving style. You should stop every two to three hours and take a short walk. Enjoy the trip as much as you enjoy your destination. And keep on *roughing it smoothly* in a Tiffin motorhome. **RIS**

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RIDING THE RAILS *Continued from page 59*

locomotives then were built with every dimension within one fourth inch of the originals. They could well be the last steam powered locomotives built in this country. *Jupiter* surely must be the last that depends on wood to heat the boiler. Four trucks

hauled the gleaming engines 800 miles to Golden Spike in 1979. “Christened” with water from the Atlantic and Pacific, these new/old steamers have ever since entertained and educated visitors as they replay a defining moment in U.S. history. **RIS**



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