

Roughing It Smoothly

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10 Years of Publishing *Roughing It Smoothly*

With this issue (10:4), we complete our tenth year of publishing *Roughing It Smoothly*. We began with a 32-page plus cover issue that featured a 2004 Phaeton. As the years have passed quickly, the content has been enlarged to as many as 72 pages, and with this issue, 80 pages. It has been exciting to document the developments of Tiffin Motorhomes as they offered two new brands with the RED and the Breeze, the PowerGlide chassis, creative floorplans, new slide-out construction techniques, residential design and conveniences, state-of-the-art entertainment, elegant interior décor, and the largest full-body paint plant in the RV industry. Tiffin's innovation in roof systems, fiberglass, and solid surface countertop manufacturing has placed their brands ahead of the competition year after year.

Over the decade, *RIS* content has expanded with new features. One of the most inter-

esting may be the interviews of Tiffin owners. You are a very diverse group who have had amazing careers and done interesting things with your lives. We have also told you about the people at Tiffin Motorhomes who build your coaches, each of them bringing unique skills to create a product that you will enjoy for many years. We have verified the endurance of Tiffin motorhomes after talking with some who are driving 30-year-old coaches, and there are probably some of you who could best that record.

You have enjoyed the stories and travels of Norman Spray, who with his wife, Barby, took you on a dangerous trip down the California Baja to find his long lost cousin. While on a trip to Vermont to do a story on the Fall color, his beloved Barby died in her sleep from a cerebral hemorrhage. Like the trained journalist that he is, Norm finished the story which was published the following Spring

and added a sequel about making maple syrup. He has written great stories about the Four Corners, the Mississippi River Road in Minnesota, and with this issue, Oklahoma and its lake country. He can tell you about steam engines all over the U.S. based on his research to write "Riding the Rails."

In "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman has answered hundreds of your questions about your coaches from his 39+ years of experience with TMH. If he didn't know the answer, he spent hours calling everyone he knew until he found the answer. His column is the first thing that many of you read when you receive *RIS*.

Elaine Austin left her real estate profession and found a new calling interviewing owners for her vignettes. She delights in discovering facts about their travels. Dr. John Pilarczyk has educated those who travel with pets about the health problems

and symptoms they may notice in their beloved fellow-travelers.

Andy Cargile joined our staff in 2006 to bring his skills using the Adobe programs to address our color, typesetting, and layouts. His 20 years of experience, patience, and talent have made huge improvements in the quality of our magazine.

To make the 40 back issues of *Roughing It Smoothly* more useful, I plan to create an index to help you find resource material. If you don't have the back issues, you can find them on the Tiffin website. Lewis Communications is implementing a viewer that will be much faster and make the back issues easier to read.

Carolyn and I have enjoyed writing and producing the magazine. It has been an exciting adventure to visit and write about some of America's greatest wonders and scenic parks. We have visited national parks from

Maine to California, from Texas to Yellowstone, from Florida to Minnesota. We have climbed mountains, rafted rivers, and flown in helicopters to create stories we hope you enjoyed and used to plan your own trips. We hope to bring you many more issues.

– Fred and Carolyn Thompson

Serious Tech Talk

To address your technical questions to Danny Inman, use the postcard bound in this issue, send a longer letter to the address on the postcard, or send an email to RIStechtalk@gmail.com **If you need an immediate answer to a service problem, you should call 256-356-0261.**

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If you have just purchased a new Tiffin motorhome, be assured that your name/address will be added to our mailing list automatically. We receive a new sales report every quarter. If you purchased a pre-owned Tiffin motorhome, send the year, brand, length & floorplan, your name and address, and VIN to *Roughing It Smoothly*, PO Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30655-1150. Owners who request the magazine receive *Roughing It Smoothly* at no charge.

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Service Appointments vs. First Come, First Served

by Bob Tiffin

Many Tiffin owners have shown a strong preference for bringing their coaches to the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay whenever they need service and repair. Because the number of skilled technicians and service bays are obviously a finite number, owners often wait for days, even weeks, to have their coaches repaired and serviced.

In an effort to reduce wait times, we decided several years ago to accept appointments. Peggy Elliott handled the appointments and asked owners to arrive one day prior to the appointment date with their work list in hand. On the appointment date, work on an owner's repair list began and his coach remained in the system until the work was completed. After weekly appointments were scheduled for a quarter, appointment dates for the next quarter were opened. Four appointments were offered on Mondays and Thursdays, and three appointments were offered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays – which amounted to 17 appointments per week. Owners with appointments were placed in front of owners without appointments who were arriving on a “first come–first served” basis.

There are 10 bays available for routine repairs and service, plus four express bays that accept repairs requiring three hours or less. Twenty-nine specialized bays are designed to handle the following: cap rails (4 bays), slide-out floors (2), floor replacements under black/gray/fresh tanks (2), windshields (1), tile (1), body shop including four paint booths (10), cabinet and wood-working repairs (2), welding / mechanical (5), electrical problems (1), and upgrades for shades and refrigerators (1).

Coaches usually begin their repair and service plan in one of the 10 bays designed for routine repairs. Minor repairs requiring three hours or less can be run through one of the four express bays. Since it is not unusual for a coach to require two to three days in one of the routine service bays, the 17 incoming appointments for a given week have often monopolized those 10 service bays, leaving those owners who arrived without appointments with only a few opportunities to squeeze in during the week.

While the appointment system was intended to minimize an owner's time in Red Bay for a planned visit, a long-term evaluation by our service center management team revealed the appointment system was really creating a backup. Many owners



were making annual and semi-annual visits for routine work that could have been handled efficiently by their dealers or an approved service center near their current location. This situation, combined with those owners who *had* to come to Red Bay to take advantage of the specialized bays, created long wait times.

Therefore, the appointment system was cancelled in favor of a system based strictly on the order of arrival of owners who choose to come to the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay. This now makes it possible to efficiently schedule everyone into the service bays.

After arrival in the Allegro Campground, an owner's repair and service list is evaluated. Any item which can be handled in three hours or less is sent to one of the four express bays. There are several minor repairs including entertainment systems, water pumps, etc. that can be handled by the A-Team working from a service van at your campsite. Every coach is inspected in the campground to see if there are problems with cap rails, deteriorated floors under wet tanks, or deteriorated slide-out floors. If any of these situations are found, they will be scheduled in specialized bays as explained below.

Routine repairs requiring more than three hours are scheduled for one of the 10 available bays. After completing these repairs, the technician sends the coach to any specialized bay necessary for work required on the planned list. The specialized bays will receive coaches for continuing repairs in the order that they “graduate” from the routine service bays. This could mean that a coach with a later arrival number will go into a specific specialized bay ahead of a coach with an earlier number that is still in a routine service bay.

After all work is completed in routine and specialized repair bays, if problems with cap rails, tank floors, or slide floors were detected in the initial campground evaluation, the coach is then placed on a separate scheduling system for repairs in one or all of these specialized bays.

A very hard look at this process by all of our managers, including Wade Humphres, D-Ray Hester, Wayne Williams and all of the supervisors, indicates we will be able to process more coaches through the service area in a given time period when we

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Luxurious and Thoughtful Design

The Allegro Bus 37AP

While the Zephyr still wears the crown jewels in Tiffin's kingdom of six brands, the Allegro Bus for many years has proudly worn the mantle of being the company's most luxurious high production motorcoach. Offered exclusively on the company's PowerGlide chassis, demand remains very high for the approximately 400 units built annually.

In the past seven years, over 90 percent of the Allegro Buses have been 40, 42, 43, and 45 feet in length, placing them solidly in the so-called "big rig" class.¹

Early this year, to evaluate an apparently growing demand for shorter *luxury* coaches, TMH spent several weeks interviewing dealers and owners. Here is what they said: Shorter coaches are easier to drive; more campsites are available for shorter

motorhomes in state, federal, and COE campgrounds; better fuel economy; and somewhat lower price. The theory seems to be "give up a little, gain a lot."

The Allegro 37AP Emerges

The 37AP is subtle. Almost understated, and yet it clearly says as you enter, "You are going to enjoy this coach." Its features don't scream "look at me," but they are there, exactly where they should be. Perfect lighting for every situation. Foot rests for three seating positions. Four 42-inch LED Panasonic televisions to view from any position in the living area, bedroom, or outside. Every sofa, recliner, and chair cuddles you in Ultraleather™, all standard. This is comfort to the max and we haven't even begun

¹In describing the interior of the motorhome, the rear cap is North and the front cap is South. Across the motorhome may be referred to as E-W. Other acronyms used for brevity include DS for driver side and PS for passenger side.

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

to explore the thoughtfully designed galley, a bath that belongs in a million dollar condo, and a cloud nine bedroom.

The Luxury Features — Standard and Optional

First, however, to emphasize the features Tiffin packs into the Allegro Bus for 2014, let's take a "tour" through the 37 AP and talk about what is *standard* equipment, and that means *what is included* in the base price of \$345,800 MSRP. Most of the items were included in the 2013 model year, but may have been upgraded. And there are some new items for 2014.

In the Allegro Bus, Tiffin uses cherry for all of its fine cabinetry. It is standard. Cabinet and sliding doors, fascias, judge's paneling, valances, crown molding — all solid cherry! You can choose from several finishes. Glazes are extra. The cabinetry in this story has glazed honey.

The exterior window frames visually disappear into the full body paint system, causing the tinted glass to "float" in the frames. The manufacturing method does not expose the tracks in which the windows slide. With a light flick of the wrist, one glass panel slides over the other as you open the window — a feature usually found on million-dollar coaches.

Tiffin's state-of-the-art paint plant in Belmont, Mississippi, has set the benchmark in the Class A motorhome industry for outstanding full-body finishes. Beautiful finishes require multiple sanding passes. Base coats, up to four colors, and multiple clearcoats are applied in 70-foot down draft paint booths with filtered air systems to create outstanding automotive finishes. The front cap is protected by Diamond Shield that comes with its own warranty and is standard on the Allegro Bus.

What You Don't See That Is Standard Equipment

Following are standard systems you *don't see* when you walk through the coach. Several control panels are mounted in a cabinet on the DS wall and just above the driver's chair.

Power Control System w/Central Monitor Panel. Most resorts and campgrounds offer a maximum of 50 amps electrical service. With all of the electrical equipment in an Allegro Bus, you can easily exceed 50 amps of simultaneous demand. The PCS allows you to set up two 50-amp plans and then prioritize specific items to drop off when you exceed the amperage available.

SeeLevel II Tank Monitor (BATT, FRESH, GREY, BLACK, LPG). This display shows how full the propane tank and wet tanks are in percentages, plus a reading on the house batteries.

Magnum Energy Inverter. This system is very important to the operation of the residential refrigerator if you are dry camping. It monitors the reserves in the six house batteries and auto-starts the generator when it is too low to keep the fridge operating on converted 110v house current. It also serves two of the televisions and several 110v outlets. It is very programmable to the owner's lifestyle.

Aqua-Hot Control Panel (electric or diesel) with engine pre-heat. Aqua-Hot provides continuous hot water on demand in the galley and bathroom — electric if connected to shore power

and diesel if not. Aqua-Hot heats a special coolant that is circulated to several heat exchangers to evenly warm the coach. During very cold weather, running the "engine pre-heat" option circulates the engine's anti-freeze through the Aqua-Hot to warm up the engine for a quick start. And vice versa, if you are in transit, the system passes the engine's anti-freeze through the heat exchangers to warm the entire coach.

Winegard Roadtrip Mission / InMotion Satellite. Standard equipment on the 37 AP, this automatic in-motion and stationary roof-mounted satellite receiver makes it possible for passengers to watch live HD television while traveling. Of course, you have to purchase a subscription. The unit is factory set for DirecTV programming. It has a small footprint on the roof of only 20 inches in diameter and a low profile height of 12.9 inches.

More Standard Equipment

Before we get to the floorplan, there is still more standard equipment that TMH has packed into this 37-foot coach.

Thermal Wrap. This is another feature you cannot see. Added this year for the first time, Tiffin is using a thermal wrap material in the construction of the walls of all of its brands. Although a controlled test had not been completed at this writing, engineers estimate the thermal material will reduce the temperature in a coach by 10 degrees. Of course, this helps reduce the load on the air conditioners.

Central Vacuum System. Connecting at the vacuum outlet near the center of the coach, one vacuum hose will reach all points from the rear closet to the entrance door. All of the usual attachments come with the system. One special feature for quick cleanup is a "vacuum dustpan" conveniently mounted in the baseboard wall just opposite the cooktop. Keep a small broom handy, flip open the VacPan, and away goes the small debris.

Outdoor Entertainment. A 20-foot Paramount awning (PS) by Carefree of Colorado is encased in a raised housing that connects the front and rear caps on both sides of the coach. The design adds a new dimension of elegance to the 2014 Allegro Bus. Viewed from ground level, the housing completely hides all of the roof-mounted equipment. Adding to the enjoyment of the covered patio, a 42-inch Panasonic LED television in the sidewall brings full television programming outside.

Indoor Entertainment. With three 42-inch Panasonic LED televisions, there is no shortage of entertainment inside the 37 AP. The mid-section TV fits into a recessed area covered with handsome wallpaper. A second 42-inch unit is over the dash.

A third unit is mounted in the bedroom's DS slide-out. The entertainment center is located in the louvered cabinet under the television. Powered by a Panasonic 1000-watt system with "Wi-Fi Built-in," it provides a wide variety of 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.



With its Blu-ray™/DVD Home Theater System feature, the Panasonic unit can support 3D/full HD content and playback. In addition to the standard Winegard Roadtrip Mission / InMotion Satellite, TMH has also included as standard equipment the receiver which is pre-programmed for DirecTV, but does require a subscription. As an option (\$245 MSRP), this coach was prewired for the Winegard Trav'ler Satellite to bring in HD programming from satellites that are located just above the horizon.

With the Integrated Universal Dock for iPod and iPhone, you can launch your personal digital music collection as well as videos and photos stored on those devices.

In-Dash Systems. The in-dash radio and CD player are top-of-the-line units easily operated from a touch screen to set up your personal listening preferences. The radio is also prepped for XM reception that offers uninterrupted programming in

categories you select (subscription required after six months). This year in-dash navigation with software designed for RV travel is standard. Its functions are very easy to use.

Porcelain Tile Throughout the Coach is offered again this year as standard equipment. After you select your interior décor (Ambrosia, Ritz, Rocky Point, or Aspen by Ralph Lauren), you can choose between a herringbone design with a light gray patterned background or a staggered brickwork design with a soft beige background. The advantage, of course, is that you have the same floor throughout the coach, including the bedroom and bath. Many owners add handsome accent rugs that blend with their chosen décor.

In the galley you will notice three features that are standard equipment and included in the base price:

All Electric. In the 2014 Allegro Bus, "all electric" is standard. This means the galley features an induction cooktop. *Induction cooking* uses induction heating to directly heat a cooking vessel, as contrasted with heat transfer from electrical coils or burning gas in a traditional stove. Induction cooktops require cooking vessels made of ferromagnetic metal. A complete set of induction cookware is provided with the coach. Induction cooktops are faster and more energy-efficient than traditional electric cooking surfaces. Induction allows instant control of cooking energy similar to gas burners.

The **Microwave-Convection Oven** has been a standard fea-

ture for so long in the Allegro Bus brand that I sometimes (and I am sure our owners do, too) forget that it is included in Tiffin's base price. TMH uses a residential size unit for the galley which makes it easy to enjoy baking desserts, casseroles, cakes, and whatever may be on your menu.

The **Residential Refrigerator.** Also included in the base price for several years, Tiffin upgraded this year to a 20-cubic-foot Whirlpool double-door refrigerator with a slide-out freezer in the lower third of the unit. It dispenses water and ice through the door and provides a display for monitoring and adjusting temperature in both the freezer and the fridge.

Electronic Controls for Lighting, Shades, and Security. Five lighting control panels are placed in strategic locations throughout the coach. Each functional switch is backlit, labeled, and touch activated—blue when OFF and white when ON.

The largest panel at the coach's entrance controls ten functions: lights for entry, steps, porch, door, assist handle, and cargo bays; the night shade for the door; compartment locks for the storage bays; and a light master to control all of the lights in the coach as you enter and leave. The other panels manage lighting specific to the areas where they are mounted.

The solar and privacy shades in the cockpit and living area are motorized and controlled by touch switches, which are especially useful in the cockpit. The one-piece shades for the entire windshield are one of the best features ever invented for safe

driving. The shades for windows in the living-dining area are controlled from a touch panel mounted on the side of the galley cabinet nearest the front window. The shades can be controlled individually or collectively.

A small fob for your pocket or purse automatically activates the secondary sliding lock on the entry door and all of the locks on the exterior storage compartments. The primary deadbolt lock for the entry door is activated by keyless entry buttons mounted in the assist handle. The camera monitor in the dash, primarily designed for driving, can also be used to check the outside perimeters of the coach (sight and sound).

When talking about the features of a luxury Class A motorhome, one might assume that the booming Hadley horns and a roof-mounted spotlight would be optional equipment. Well, this year Tiffin made them standard. You get them without asking.

Rounding out what is standard on the 37 AP, you may be surprised to learn that a safe is installed in the rear wall of the coach. Since it will usually be hidden by your clothes hanging in the closet, a thief will probably not see it. But if he does, he will have a tough time getting it open since access requires both a key and a combination.

Optional Luxury and Functionality Features in This Coach

On this coach, the options only added five percent to the final MSRP, which emphasizes again just how much is included in the base price.

While the HWH hydraulic jacks are standard, marketing and engineering decided to offer the Valid Trueline Air Leveling (\$3,500 MSRP), an *automatic one-step air leveling system* designed specifically for RV applications. Valid uses a leading-edge technology to measure along three separate axes of the chassis (across front and rear axles, and then longitudinally) to check for both level and twist. It then accurately levels the vehicle. The flexible control process is automated to ensure operation is simplified for the end user. It also allows for manual leveling and low-speed maneuvering in manual mode.

Optional *design features* include glazes (\$2,800 MSRP) for the stains. In this coach, glazed honey was used. Three of the four interior décors are standard. The optional décor, Aspen by Ralph Lauren (\$1,680 MSRP), was selected for this coach.

When gear is stored in the motorhome's basement, reaching items in the middle can be a project. One of the most useful options is the MOR/stor sliding tray by MOR/ryde (\$700 MSRP). The *sliding steel tray* can be accessed from both sides of the coach.

The *Mobileye Collision Avoidance System* is offered for the first time this year (\$1,400 MSRP). Using sophisticated vision algorithms, Mobileye's collision avoidance technology is able to interpret a scene in real-time and provide drivers with an immediate evaluation based on its analysis. The system issues warnings for impending rear and head-on collisions, lane drifting, high beams to low, exceeding speed limits, safe following distance, and collision avoidance with pedestrians and bicycles.

Not having to haul your clothes to a laundromat, not knowing



what was in the washer and dryer before you used it, and sheer convenience has made the *stacked washer/dryer* (\$1,680 MSRP) the most popular option in the Allegro Bus brand. The Fisher & Paykel *automatic dishwasher* (\$1,330 MSRP) is running a close second.

If you had opted for a standard dinette in the 37AP, you would have received the immensely popular dinette/computer workstation. However, this prototype version received the luxurious *Ultraleather U-shaped dinette* (\$2,520 MSRP). The Ultraleather in this coach is a subtly patterned Oakstraw by Villa that matches the leather in the L-shaped sofa.

Positioned immediately under the mid-section television, the optional *electric fireplace* (\$700 MSRP) is handsomely bordered with solid surface countertop material. Even if it is electric, the warmth and beauty of a fire adds so much to a room. And it really does knock off the chill on a cool morning.

The final option for this 37AP is the *memory foam mattress* (\$560 MSRP). This modestly priced option has become a very popular choice.

Room by Room

As you enter the coach, you will be impressed with the very spacious interior. The Villa L-shaped sofa and the European leather recliner are the two show-stoppers that set the stage for



a very attractive *living room*. Created as the focal point for this coach, the sofa and recliner are standard equipment. Measuring 96 inches along the slide-out wall with the “L” extending 71 inches into the middle of the coach, the sofa is upholstered in Ultraleather’s Oatstraw. On a seating comfort level of 1 – 10, I would rate this sofa a high 10! The cushions are deep, but they are also firm. The seating position on the end of the sofa has a foot rest. The overhead cabinets in the slide-out offer nearly 13 cubic feet of storage.

The living room is comfortable and cozy when it’s just the two of you, but there’s plenty of room for entertaining when you have six or more. The passenger chair easily rotates 180 degrees to add additional seating. With a reclining back and a foot rest, it can be your second recliner. The European recliner slides easily and can be relocated anywhere in the room to improve the conversational area. If you store the folding coffee table, there is plenty of floor space to set up a card table and four chairs for bridge.



The lighting in the living area offers several options. With the recessed LED lights in the main ceiling plus five more in the ceiling of the slide-out, you can brighten the room for any type of activity. The ceiling lights in the slide-out and the four directional lights mounted in the base of the overhead cabinets provide perfect lighting for reading on the L-shaped sofa or the recliner.

Mounted on brackets that hold the unit a few inches out from the recessed wall, the television has soft backlighting that makes easy viewing when the room lights are low or off. The television can be viewed from the L-shaped sofa and the rotated passenger chair. The TV mounted over the dash offers viewing to the chef working in the galley or those seated facing forward in the dinette. When guests stay over, the sofa converts to a very comfortable queen size bed.

The forward section of the PS slide-out contains *the U-shaped dinette* that seats four. The overhead cabinets provide seven cubic feet of storage, conveniently located for dishes and table service. The large window overlooks your patio and the beautiful meadows beyond.

The remaining part of the PS slide-out houses *one of Tiffin's largest galleys*. The 16 square feet of solid surface countertop, plus an additional 2.5 square feet gained by extending the island slide-out, gives the chef plenty of preparation space to create a four-course dinner. The colors in the solid surface countertop



complement the handmade basketweave design of the backsplash. At the back of the galley's work surface, four drawers add convenient storage for cooking utensils, spices, and other small items pertinent to the culinary art. The solid surface countertop above the drawers is just right for stacking plates, cups, and saucers that are used at nearly every meal.

Previously mentioned in the discussion of standard features, the black rectangle above the dishwasher is your two burner induction cooktop, efficient to use and easy to clean. The Sharp Carousel microwave-convection oven is a residential size, top-of-the-line selection. Refer back to page 9 for full descriptions. Two deep sinks made of solid surface countertop material are plenty large enough to wash the dishes, pots and pans for the biggest tailgating party ever during the Fall football season. But if you have the optional Fisher & Paykel dishwasher, you can skip the clean-up and go to the post-game party.

Even when you stand back and look at the galley and its



associated cabinetry, you may not realize how much storage is offered behind the doors and draw pulls. Just for starters, the three overhead cabinets have more than 11 cubic feet of storage space, and two have slide-out shelves for easy access to items in the rear. The stationary shelves are adjustable, too. In the island slide-out, the three drawers are 25 inches long and 9.25 inches wide. Another 3-drawer bank (17" long x 5" wide) is con-

veniently positioned by the fridge. Under the dishwasher you will find a pots and pans drawer.

Under the double sink, an ingeniously designed slide-out drawer system maximizes the use of the entire cavity. When the drawer is fully extended, two over-under compartments in the rear half are exposed. The top compartment slides partially back into the cavity to permit access to the lower compartment. The front half

of the box houses the trash can and provides more deep space for storage of tall items. The overall system has 3.25 cubic feet of storage. The north side of the drawer has a slot to store the sink covers.

Just north of the 20-cubic-foot Whirlpool refrigerator, you will find two slide-out pantries (4" deep, 21" wide, 26" tall). Each pantry has three adjustable shelves.

At this point, look at the floorplan and notice how the galley is positioned in the slide-out. There is no space taken up by an aisle. The 45 inches of floorspace between the galley and bathroom wall is a functional area for working in the galley. At the north end of that space, a pocket door opens into the bedroom. A hinged door just opposite the galley sink opens into the bathroom. Both doors are solid and "residential thickness" for maximum privacy.

The *bedroom* is your comfort zone. And the 37 AP does not skimp on the amenities. First, the king-size bed with the optional memory foam sleep system is going to put you on Cloud 9, whether it's just an afternoon siesta or that perfect eight hours we are supposed to get every night. The Aspen décor featuring Ralph Lauren

Fabrics puts this bedchamber in a class by itself. You might find a similar luxurious comforter complemented by the Lauren fabrics for the pillows if you booked a night at the Waldorf-Astoria or the Ritz-Carlton. The tufted headboard framed by sculptured cherry is simply unmatched by Tiffin's competitors. Each side of the bed has its own window to catch night breezes, a 110v outlet, and a book and magazine rack. Each endtable has a small front cabinet. The north side has the control for the overhead fan, while the south side has a panel of switches for the three bedroom light systems, the genset, and a master switch for all of the light circuits in the coach.

The closet offers a 65-inch clothes rod and a depth of 20 inches. The shelf above the hanging space is 14 inches deep and 66 inches across. Under the wardrobe is a handy drawer for your shoes. The cabinet enclosing the stacked washer-dryer fills the remaining space of the width across the rear of the coach. The flush mounted door covering the washer-dryer slides west. Under the bed, you will find 10.5 cubic feet of storage space.

The DS slide-out in the bedroom has two drawer chests, each crowned with solid surface countertops. One chest has two very large drawers, each nearly two cubic feet in volume. The taller chest provides the pedestal for the 42-inch Panasonic television that is permanently mounted. The chest has two drawers for clothes, a hamper next to the washer, and a louvered cabinet providing fingertip access to the standard DirecTV receiver and the Panasonic 1000-watt entertainment system. A large window with two vertical sliding panes brings in the fresh air and also serves as an emergency exit. An overhead double cabinet has nearly 2.5 cubic feet of storage, the perfect spot for your collection of movies and CDs.

At the foot of the bed, and looking south, a handsomely designed cherry pocket door framing thick translucent glass opens into one of Tiffin's prettiest bathrooms. The double vanity with a beautiful basketweave, solid surface back-splash wins the prize for RV bathroom

design. Built into the rear DS slide-out, the cabinetry rests on a solid surface base that floats silently when you bring in the slide-out. Above the vanity, the his & her cabinets with full mirrored doors are each seven inches deep, 22 inches wide, and 20 inches high with three shelves. Under the vanity top, three 15-inch long drawers in the center are flanked on both sides with cabinets, each with more than four cubic feet of storage space. The glazed honey cabinetetry accentuates the setting.

The shower is constructed entirely from solid surface materials. The basketweave theme is repeated in the shower. When the outside temperatures are too warm or cold, you can pull the insulated slide to cover the skylight. The slide actually has an LED light in it to replace the illumination furnished by the skylight. The water control is adjustable for temperature as well as force.

Not to be missed in this review is the ceramic toilet with a bidet. The toilet is mounted in front of an enclosed box to conveniently stash your magazines and newspapers.

The Cockpit

For 2014 the Allegro Bus dashboard and side console were redesigned to accommodate some new features: the optional Mobileye Collision Avoidance System and Valid Trueline Air Leveling, and the now standard roof-mounted spotlight. Plus, the depth of the dash deck was

shortened for a new cab-forward design. The two-drawer vertical console in the center of the dash was changed to a single larger drawer with two compartments: the top compartment has a second cup holder for the driver that slides forward to expose a deeper lower compartment.

The Tiffin PowerGlide instrument cluster—three large circular dials—was changed to white illumination on a black field, making each instrument gauge very easy to read. An LED display on the center cluster reports numerical data for speed, mpg, two trip meters, odometer, and other pertinent information, all accessed by touching two buttons in tandem or succession.

The PowerGlide's 18-inch steering wheel is designed with two control panels shaped like inverted teardrops, each inset into the wheel's interior curves. The top touch control on either side operates the headlights. The left inset has the touch buttons for the cruise control, while the right inset has the controls for the windshield wiper system.

Mounted on the wall under the window, the left console begins near your elbow and houses the standard HWH hydraulic leveling system. Optionally, buyers may choose the Valid Trueline Air Leveling (described earlier on page 9). Moving forward you will see a battery of clearly labeled toggle switches (window, solar and night shades for the side window, suspension, air horn, and engine brake), a large cup holder, heated mirror controls, and



finally the Allison electronic gear shift panel right at your fingertips. The LED circular dial for Mobileye is positioned in the upper left corner along with an AC duct, headlights master switch, and the parking brake.

The dash to the left of the steering column is arranged with a small panel of toggles for engine preheat, auxiliary start, pedals IN/OUT, and parking brake. When the standard 8-way power seats are operated in tandem with the IN/OUT movement control for the brake and accelerator pedals, a person of any height can be accommodated in the driver's chair.


To the right of the steering column, the color Triple Vision monitor allows you to watch traffic at the rear and on both sides of the coach. In the evening when you are parked, you can use the monitor as a security camera. Just below the monitor you will see eight toggle switches to control the step cover, windshield fan, solar and night shades for the windshield (which also serve as sun visors), gen start-stop, map light, docking lights, and radio. To the right of the camera monitor, notice the touch screen for the radio and CD player, plus the standard in-dash navigation and satellite radio (subscription required). Under the touch screen, you will see the best designed automotive HVAC controls in the industry: there is one 12v receptacle and one USB port to serve cell phones, independent GPS equipment, or other appliances.

On the passenger side, the dash offers a slide-out writing table. A passenger console just under the passenger's side window has toggles for solar and night shades, step cover, map light, windshield fan, and exterior accent lights.

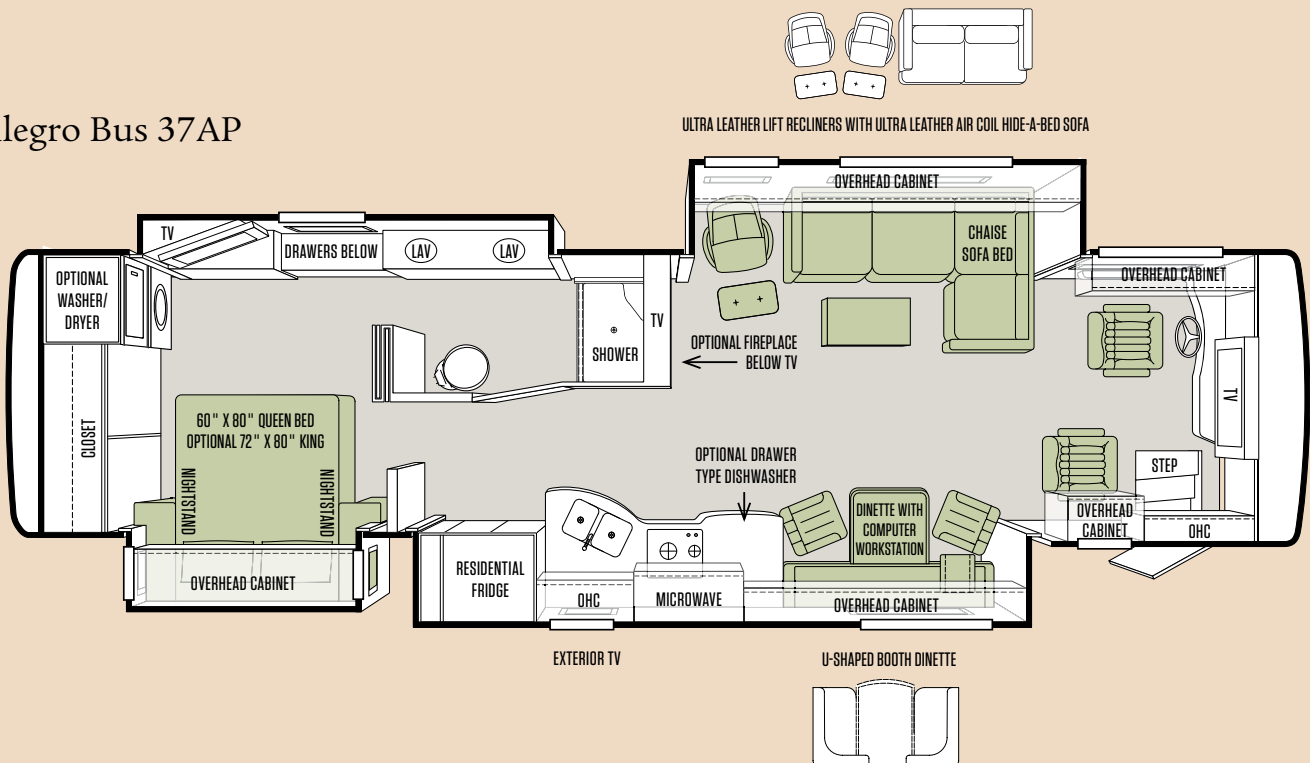
Driving the 37 AP

In the Spring 2013 issue, we reviewed the Allegro Bus 45LP which has the Cummins ISL 8.9-liter 450-hp electronic diesel engine and 1,250 lb.-ft. of torque @ 1,300 rpm. Comparatively, in the Allegro Bus 37 AP, we have lopped off eight feet of motorhome, the tag axle, and retained the same powerplant. Lighter by 4,860 pounds, the 37 AP is one powerful motorhome. It's not quite a racehorse, but you will love the surge of power when you take off from a traffic light, scoot down an interstate ramp, ignore five percent grades like they didn't exist, and pass the big boys on the interstate. Still built exclusively on the PowerGlide chassis, the 37 AP keeps all of the Bus's great chassis features: tuned shocks and four air bags, and ride-height adjusters to provide balance in long curves. And the wheel cut with the 315 front tires is approximately 60 degrees. With the firm comfort of the Villa 8-way adjustable driver's chair, your navigator will have to demand that you take a rest stop.

The Future

With the Allegro Bus 37 AP, Tiffin Motorhomes has opened a new door in coach design. Introducing affordable luxury, innovative design, and the efficient use of space is a move in the other direction from the 40+ coaches, and a huge step in leading the industry toward purposeful and thoughtful design. Classical architect Meis Van der Rohe in the 1930s coined the maxim "less is more." His work was lauded for balance, harmony, and simplicity. The 37 AP exemplifies Van der Rohe's maxim. 

Allegro Bus 37AP



SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested, 2014 Allegro Bus 37AP with Quad Slide, Base MSRP* – \$345,800 MSRP as tested with options – \$362,915

Note: (PS) = passenger side
(DS) = driver side

STANDARD FEATURES

Structural

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

Automotive

The Tiffin Powerglide™ chassis
Allison 3000 MH electronic 6-speed automatic transmission with two overdrives and lock-up (torque converter)
Cummins ISL 450-hp electronic/turbocharged diesel
1,250 lbs.-ft. torque @ 1,300 rpm
Side-mounted radiator
ABS brakes and two-stage compression engine brake
Air brakes with automatic slack adjusters and ABS
Aluminum wheels
Four air bags
Emergency start switch
Cruise control
Adjustable gas & brake pedals
Tilt steering column
VIP Smart Wheel
Independent front suspension
Fog lights

Exterior

Fiberglass front and rear caps
Dual fuel fills
BASF full body paint with front cap protective film
Large one-piece tinted windshield
Heated chrome power mirrors with remote adjustments
Single motor intermittent wipers
Undercoating
Daytime running lights
30-inch wide entry door with deadbolt
Lighted keyless entry door system & keyless component door locks
Double electric step
Hydraulic automated leveling jacks
Auto generator start
Dual pane tinted windows
Amber patio light on driver's side
Exterior patio light on passenger's side
Exterior 42" TV mounted in slide-out wall
Automatic door & patio awnings
Window awning package
Slide-out awnings with metal-wrapped covers
Pass-through basement storage
Auto-lockable, swing-out exterior storage doors with gas shocks
Heated water and holding tank compartments
Docking lights
Six house batteries
Onan 10,000 Kw generator with 2 low-profile ACs with heat pumps
2800-watt inverter
Custom mud flap
50-amp service
Power cord reel
Black holding tank flush system
SeeLevel II tank monitor located at dump station
110v exterior receptacle
Water filter
Gravity water fill
Exterior rinse hose with soap dispenser & paper towel holder
Concealed air horn
Low profile in-motion satellite dish
Digital TV antenna
Pure sine wave inverter
Color back-up camera
Two side cameras in mirror housing, activated with turn signal
Quiet AC roof-ducted system
Luggage compartment lights

Driver's Compartment

18" VIP Smart steering wheel
In-dash navigation with satellite radio (requires subscription)
In-motion satellite
NOTE: High-definition programming is not available on a domed satellite antenna unless you subscribe to DISH Network®
Drawer in step well
ITC courtesy light in stepwell
12v disconnect switch
Lighted instrument panel
Adjustable fuel/brake pedals
Adjustable seatbelt brackets
8-way power driver's seat with Ultraleather™
8-way power passenger's seat with Ultraleather™ and power footrest
Passenger seat console box with built-in magazine rack
Color in-dash monitor for rear and sideview cameras activated by turn signals
Contemporary wrap-around dash with glare reduction
Lighted switches
Power solar/privacy full-width windshield shades
Power solar/privacy shades for driver & passenger side windows
Single CD & DVD player & AM-FM stereo
Fire extinguisher
Dual dash fans
Computer drawer in dash with storage compartment and lock-out rails (PS)
12v, 110v, & phone jack receptacles
Beverage tray

Living area/dinette

Free standing dinette/computer workstation with solid surface table top
12v & 110v receptacles, park ready phone jack at dinette
Full ceramic tile floor in living area, half-bath, & rear bath
42" color television wall-mounted in mid-section entertainment center
42" dash overhead TV
L-shaped Ultraleather™ chaise lounge with air comfort queen sleeper (DS)

Kitchen

All electric coach
Induction cooktop
Residential refrigerator with inverter (6 batteries)
Polished solid surface countertops
Solid surface covers for sink and cooktop
Expand-an-island
LED lights above countertop
2½-inch deep lighted toe kick
Single lever sink faucet with built-in sprayer
Galley soap dispenser
Integrated solid surface sink
Residential stainless steel refrigerator with ice & water dispenser in door (6 batteries)
Stainless steel convection microwave oven with exterior venting
2-burner induction cooktop with convection/microwave oven
Power Fantastic® roof vent with 3-speed fan
Storage racks for covers in cabinet under sink
Cherry wood cabinets
Natural cherry wood cabinets

Bath

Skylight in shower with sliding insulation cover
Solid surface vanity top with two lavatories
Solid surface shower enclosure
Electric toilet with bidet, overhead cabinet
One Fantastic® roof vent with 3-speed fan

Bedroom

Innerspring pillow-top queen mattress (60" x 80")
Bed comforter with throw pillows
Solid cherry headboard with tufted upholstery
Bedroom tile
Safe located in closet

Cherry nightstands with solid surface tops
Solar/privacy shades
Entertainment center with surround sound pre-wired for DVD-CD player & satellite receiver
Cherry chest with four drawers and laundry hamper
42" flat panel color television
Ceiling fan
Carbon monoxide detector
LP leak detector

General Interior

7-foot ceilings with LED bullet lights
Soft touch vinyl ceiling
High gloss raised panel cabinet doors
Adjustable shelving in some cabinets
Enclosed surround sound speakers
SeeLevel II tank monitor
Hydronic heating system (required with all-electric coach)
Carbon monoxide, smoke, and LP leak detectors
Central vacuum system with VacPan
Multiplex lighting system
Air-driven step well cover
Energy management system
Power solar and privacy shades in living-dining area
Manual privacy shade at galley window
Manual solar and privacy shades in bedroom
Manual privacy shade only in bath and half bath
Porcelain tile flooring in kitchen, bath, entrance landing, and living room
Complete cable wiring interfacing with surround sound and satellite receiver
Enclosed surround sound speakers

OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Aspen interior, fabrics by Ralph Lauren
Glazed honey wood cabinets
One slide-out storage tray
Air leveling system
Pre-wire for Winegard Trav'ler satellite
U-shaped leather dinette (PS)
Dishwasher, drawer type
Stacked washer and dryer
Memory foam mattress, king
Fireplace
One Paramount awning with concealed roof ACs & antenna
Mobileye Collision Avoidance System

OTHER OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

PASSENGER'S SIDE
Dinette/computer workstation
Free standing dinette with built-in cabinets

DRIVER'S SIDE

Two leather recliners and hide-a-bed sofa
Ambrosia interior
Ritz interior
Rocky Point interior
Innerspring pillowtop king mattress (72" x 80")
Exterior roof ladder
3 low profile air conditioners
Solar panel
Basement freezer
Rearview mirror with compass
Heated tile floor
Staggered brickwork-pattern tile floor
Dual control bed system (Select Comfort), king
Dual control bed system (Select Comfort), queen
Memory foam mattress, queen
Glazed cherry wood interior cabinets
Glazed rear bath cabinets with white chocolate

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 250"
Overall length – 38' 2"
Overall height with roof air – 12' 7"
Interior height – 84"
Overall width – 101"
Interior width – 96"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 37,600 lbs.
GAWR – front, 15,600; back, 22,000 lbs.
GCWR – 47,600 lbs.
UVW – 32,600 lbs.
CCC – 3,740 lbs.
Trailer hitch capacity – 10,000 lbs.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – Cummins ISL 8.9-liter 450-hp electronic diesel
Torque – 1,250 lb.-ft. @ 1,400 rpm
Transmission – Allison electronic 3000 MH 6-speed automatic with 2 overdrives
Tire Size – 295/80R22.5 front steering; 295/80R22.5 rear axles.
Alternator – Leece-Neville 170 amps

CHASSIS

Frame – Powerglide™ chassis
Frame design – Raised rail
Anti-locking braking system – (front) Bendix ADB225 17" vented air disc (rear) Bendix/Spicer 16.5" x 7" drum
Suspension (front) – ZF RL80 IFS – custom tuned (air)
Suspension (rear) – Tuthill RD 2300 – custom tuned (air)
Shock absorbers – Sachs front/Bilstein rear – custom tuned
Leveling jacks – HWH hydraulic

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 with full body paint

ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – Four adults
Fuel tank – 150 gallons
Freshwater – 90 gallons
Black water – 50 gallons
Grey water – 70 gallons
LPG tank – NA

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, passengers, or dealer-installed accessories.

DEALERS

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

PLEASE NOTE

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



The Holidays Are Coming!

by Sylvia Tarnuzzer

What?? The holidays are coming? It can't be time for the holidays yet—or can it? The holidays happen upon us so quickly after summer is over and our children or grandchildren go back to school.

The first sign of the holidays is **Halloween**. This is the holiday that begins our sweet tooth challenges. Candy is displayed prominently in grocery stores, the superstores, and even pharmaceutical stores. Halloween candy is sometimes on the shelves even before the bathing suit season ends! Candy can be hard to resist, but one should be aware that even one small 100-calorie bite-size bar per day can cause a small creep up on the scales. Many will buy candy to bring to friends or to the evening rally or event and now you've just set up a potential high-calorie trap for your RVing friends! Another challenge is the “see-food” trap, so remember this when you decide to buy candy to hold on to for Halloween Day. If the bag is around, temptation may get the better of you and you might find the bag opened and empty wrappers on the counter before you know what happened.

So how can we avoid temptation with our first exposure to holiday calories? There are some effective options, beginning with purchasing candy you don't personally like. Something else you can do during the Halloween candy fest is to manage your hunger before going to stores you know will have a candy display. Eat a healthy meal prior to shopping. Remember, the healthier your food choices, the healthier your gut feels, making you more likely to make better food-buying decisions. Halloween candy can add up to a frightening amount of calories, fat, and sugar, but there are options that won't break your calorie bank. A fun-size 3 Musketeers bar has only 63 calories and a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup Miniature has 36 calories. Another option is a Kit Kat Miniature candy bar with only 42 calories.

If you should choose to purchase candy and buy something you like, hide the bag and don't keep it on the counter or anywhere you will see it on a regular basis. Remember, out of sight,

out of mind, *so keep it hidden*. If you do choose to eat the Halloween candy you purchased, just make sure you keep it under control. Determine when your usual sweet snack attack occurs, and allow yourself permission to have one piece per day. Plan to take an extra walk, do a certain amount of exercise, and eat a few less calories per day to allow for the extra candy calories consumed.

The next holiday on the calendar that can hinder weight loss and health goals is **Thanksgiving**, when we give thanks for our many blessings of harvest, family and friends, and abundance of all. Thanksgiving and food go together like breathing and air. How do we get through this holiday without eating too much? The following small changes can assist you with making better choices during this time of celebration:

Watch Your Portions: This holiday tends to bring more side dishes, extra meats, and almost always extra desserts. One great idea is to not consume excess calories by eating foods you eat all year long, such as potatoes, corn, bread, etc. Fill your plate with vegetables and lower calorie salads first, then add the foods that are unique to the Thanksgiving holiday. Skip the seconds when tempted to go back to the buffet table. If you limit yourself to one plate, you will still be plenty satisfied, have room for your favorite dessert, and not feel guilty about eating too much.

Lighten Up Your Meal: When preparing your dinner or the dish you will bring to a gathering, use lighter ingredients. You can use fat-free broth when making gravy, and use Greek yogurt versus sour cream in your mashed potatoes, casseroles or creamy dips. Use just a little or no oil whenever you can.

Take it Easy on the Alcohol: Just like desserts, alcoholic drinks are empty calories, and those calories can creep up on us if we aren't careful. Calories in a typical alcoholic beverage range anywhere from 100 to 500 (and some even more). When celebrating, have a sparkling water or even a wine spritzer and avoid a lot of extra calories.

Eat a Good Quality Breakfast: Don't try to save up calories for

Editor's Note: Is it possible to stay healthy while traveling in a motorhome or RV? The answer is absolutely YES with some good advice from a fellow Tiffin owner Sylvia Tarnuzzer, founder of RVHealthy, Inc. Sylvia is a Certified Health Coach who understands our traveling lifestyle and offers great advice on her website, www.rvhealthy.com, as well as in her weekly episodes on RVNN.TV.

the big meal of the day because starving yourself only sets you up to make poor choices. To get control over your appetite, begin your day with a breakfast high in protein and fiber. Foods such as eggs with fresh spinach or oatmeal with fresh fruit and low-fat milk are great choices for the morning meal.

Get Moving: As you approach the holidays, remember to increase your steps or extend your normal exercise routine. When you are extremely active, not only will you burn more calories, you will also make better food choices. Begin Thanksgiving day by burning off calories through exercise so you can go into the large meal with a calorie deficit.

WATER, WATER, WATER!!! *Drink more water throughout your day* and you will feel satisfied and energized.

Our next holidays are **Christmas** and **Hanukkah**, festive holidays where food is prevalent. We celebrate with family, friends, coworkers, church groups, and many others for most of the weekends during December. The cautionary calorie hogs during this time are the cookies, candy, and other sweets. Did you know a small glass of eggnog is around 350 calories? Not to mention the amount of sugar grams! You can enjoy a cup of hot apple cider or unsweetened cocoa for a lot less calories. Many of the tips mentioned for Thanksgiving can be repeated during this holiday. Just remember, the holidays are not a time to give yourself permission to indulge. The average holiday meal can easily add up to 3,000 calories, nearly double the amount a woman over 50 years of age should be eating in an entire day.

When you are invited to numerous holiday parties, be selective and remember you don't have to participate in all of them. Learn to say "no" and remember to prioritize to avoid overextending yourself as this can lead to stress, another potential trigger for overeating. While at a party, focus on socializing and do not fall victim to the food and drinks around you. When you can, use a small plate. This will assist you with eating smaller

portions. Another great suggestion is to stay balanced and avoid the cycle of overeating, then restricting yourself. The best plan for the holiday period is to eat lighter meals, keep up your exercise, and don't get lazy by making the statement "I will begin to lose weight or eat healthier after the new year."

Which leads us into the last holiday for the season, **New Year's**. This holiday can either hurt us in calories as we go to the New Year's Eve party and celebrate the upcoming year, or it may help us to resist the extra calories knowing the next day is the day we begin our resolutions. But here's a suggestion to consider as we contemplate the approaching holidays. As RVers we always plan our outings and trips, so why not also plan your health goals during this holiday season? With a plan in place you can set your goals and follow through with healthful choices. Nowhere does it say you have to establish those goals at the beginning of a new year, so why not begin today instead? As you anticipate the holiday season, consider losing five to ten percent of your current body weight. How would you feel getting in and out of your coach with that weight off? A little weight loss can really go a long way in terms of your health, resulting in lower blood pressure, better sleep, and less joint pain. If you are at risk for heart disease, diabetes, or any other chronic disease, the time to get your plan in place is now, not tomorrow. If you are currently overweight or obese, your health should be your top priority. The holiday season covers three months, so begin by setting your New Year's Day end goal, then break that down into weekly and daily goals. You might choose anything from eating healthy to drinking more water to getting more active; you decide and map out a plan to get you there. Know where to go to get the assistance you need and ask for help to follow through.

Have a safe, happy, and healthy holiday on the road to better health in the upcoming year! **RIS**



Roasted Sweet Potato Bites

Servings: 2 to 3

Ingredients:

2 fresh sweet potatoes
1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil
Sea salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Wash and peel sweet potatoes and chop into bite size pieces. Place sweet potatoes in a bowl and add the olive oil and salt and pepper. Toss to coat completely and spread out evenly on a baking sheet. Bake for about 25 minutes or until tender.

You can use this same preparation for roasted butternut squash and cut your calories down even further. Cooking time is about 35 minutes.

You can also use this same method for fresh green beans instead of the traditional green bean casserole. The cooking time will be about 12 minutes.

Smithsonian Exhibit Opens in Red Bay on September 14th

The Weatherford Center in Red Bay currently has a traveling exhibit, *The Way We Worked*, on display featuring photographs from the National Archives which trace the many changes in the workplace since the mid-1800s. The exhibit is a collaborative effort between the Smithsonian Institution and the Alabama Humanities Foundation. Smithsonian selected six towns in Alabama for their traveling exhibit that will be shown throughout the U.S. The other Alabama locations are Ashland, Andalusia,

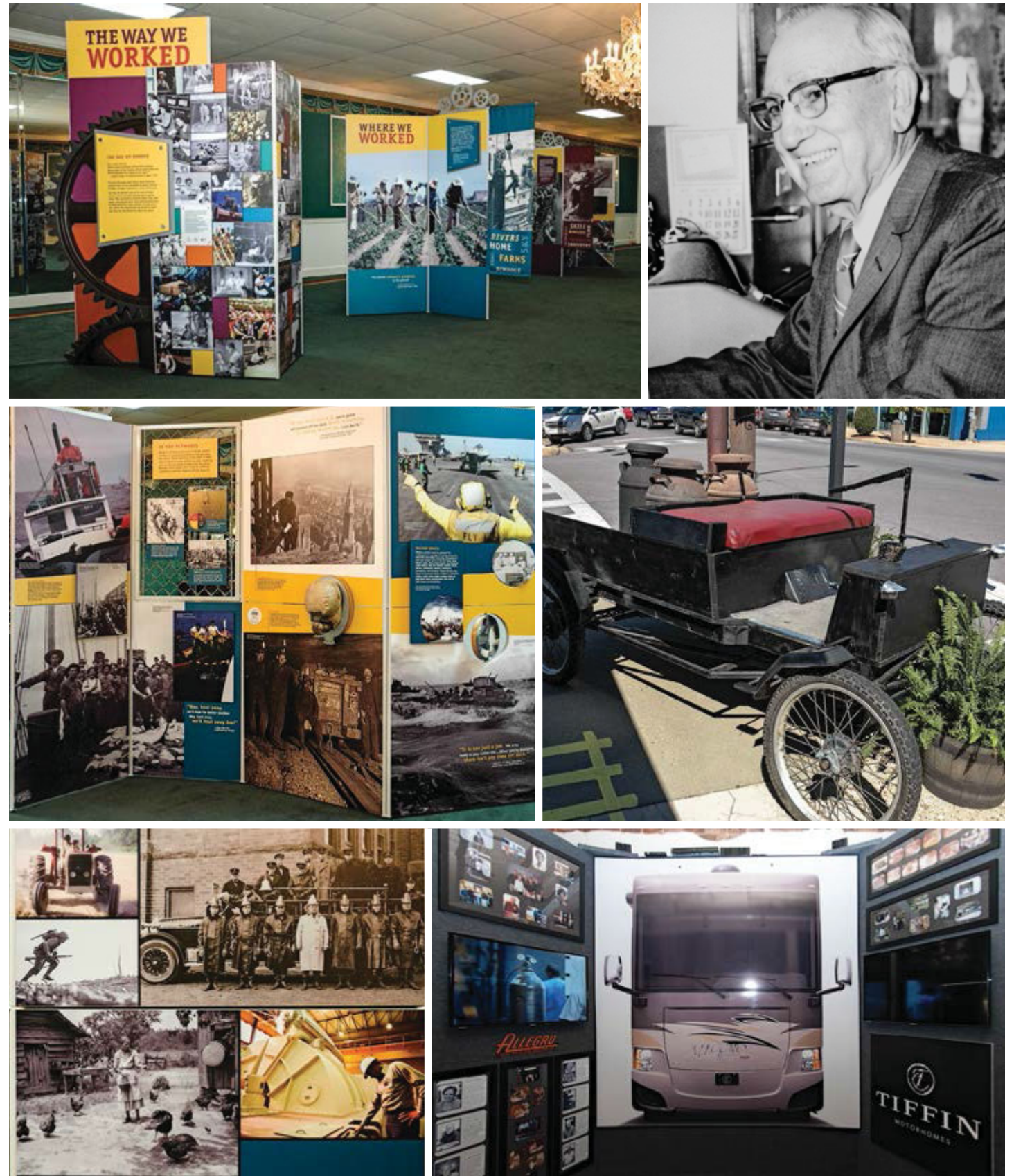


Northport, Fairhope, and Wetumpka. Large photomurals, videos, and audio recordings of personal experiences enhance the story of the evolution of the American workplace, work clothing, working conditions, and workplace conflicts over the past 150 years.

Follow the sidewalk color-coded railroad tracks to nearby venues where the story of *The Way We Worked* in Red Bay is told through “Music Works” featuring artifacts from the Alabama Music Hall of Fame; “Theatre Works” featuring storytelling and a movie documenting how Red Bay has worked over the years; “Quilt Works” with an exhibit that includes a quilt made by the First Lady of Alabama, Dianne Jones Bentley; “History Works” telling the story of Red Bay’s past; “Red Bay Works” featuring local businesses and industries, including Tiffin Motorhomes; “Church Works” with a recreated historical church and group performances; “Art Works” displaying murals made by Red Bay High School students that depict the first local industries and businesses; “Wellcare Works” at the Red Bay Wellcare Center; and “Farm Works” featuring farm skills demonstrations at Cypress Cove Farm just three miles from downtown Red Bay. Downtown window displays and street corner exhibits, a Red Bay Garden Club community project, also tell the story of *The Way We Worked*.

Admission is free to all displays and exhibits. The exhibit opened on September 14, and will run through October 25, 2013. Exhibit hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For additional information, call 256-356-4445. Reservations are required for group tours.

At right: Pictures on the left side are from the Smithsonian exhibit. Those on the right side are just a few of the Red Bay images which complement the traveling exhibit. *Top:* Dr. Z.L. Weatherford was one of Red Bay’s most distinguished citizens who served in World War I and was discharged after severe injuries. He later practiced medicine in Red Bay and served as a director and chairman of the board of the Bank of Red Bay. *Middle:* This motorized cart was used for deliveries in Red Bay before 1920. *Below:* A display by Tiffin Motorhomes, located in a nearby building on Fourth Avenue, presents a brief history of the company through videos and photos. Other manufacturers and merchants also have exhibits on display at the same location.



Cypress Cove Farm Formally Opens July 9th

Site #51 on the North Alabama Birding Trail



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEITH HUDSON, ADCNR

On July 9 of this year, the ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open site #51 of the Northwest Loop of the North Alabama Birding Trail on Cypress Cove Farm took place on the 250-acre property located just outside of Red Bay. State Represen-

tative Johnny Mack Morrow and his wife, Dr. Martha Morrow, live on the farm and maintain the trails and wildlife habitats developed in the fields and forests and three spring-fed streams that make up the birding site. A pond fed by a small

spring contains numerous large, old cypress trees, lending a tropical character near the entrance to the property.

Beginning with 46 acres, Rep. Morrow piece by piece added acreage that had been owned by his family in previous generations, gradually converting the agricultural area into what now includes 10 nature trails that cover a total of eight miles. Large fields are managed as wetlands, attracting migrating waterfowl to stop on their flight south for the winter, visible from bird blinds converted from existing farm structures. In late summer, a large swath of sunflowers blooms across one field, providing food for migrating birds. Upon arrival at the site, a map guides visitors to explore the King Fisher Trail, the Purple Martin Trail, the North Wood Duck Trail and the South Wood Duck Trail; Mallard Trail #1 and #2; the Blue Bird Trail; the Chicken Hawk Trail; the Cardinal Trail, and the Bald Eagle Trail. As the trail names indicate, many kinds of birds call North Alabama home. Songbirds are commonly seen

Continued on page 80



State Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow and Dr. Martha Morrow have spent 10 years developing Cypress Cove Farm. • Visitors can follow trails and boardwalks to learn about wetlands so necessary for avian ecology. • Jeff Emerson has worked with Rep. Morrow reshaping the land to restore birding habitats. They have also restored a blacksmith shop, a grain mill, and a saw mill.



Chris Melvin

HE THRIVES ON DESIGNING NEW MOTORHOMES



While his friends were watching cartoons and “Little House on the Prairie,” Chris Melvin was watching “This Old House” and “The New Yankee Workshop.” As his parents were building careers in medicine, Chris was laying the foundation for a career in architecture, engineering, and product design. His career at Tiffin Motorhomes hit a peak late this summer when the 2014 Allegro Bus 37AP went into production. It was his baby (see pages 6–14).

“Dad bought me a jigsaw when I was eight,” Chris began. The family lived on a 150-acre farm with 120 head of cattle.

“We had just built a new house and had a lot of scrap lumber left over,” he said. “The first thing I built was a potting table for my Mother.”

Apparently convinced that Chris was careful enough with his jigsaw, Wayne Melvin bought his son a table saw when he was 10. When he was 12, Chris built a 24 × 32-ft. woodworking shop beside

the barn. His projects soon became more elaborate.

At 13 Chris bought a kit to build a cedar strip canoe. “I had to learn how to do fiberglass to finish that canoe,” he said. “I also had to learn how to do steaming to bend and form wood.” A year later he got welding equipment for his shop.

“You never know when a skill that you learn will be useful down the road,” Chris said. “Two years ago we used curved wooden bars in the magazine racks for

the Phaeton 40QBH. Later on in the Bus and the Red, we built curved cabinetry under the front dash in a vacuum press.” When his high school sponsored a fine arts competition, Chris entered a rolltop desk he made in his workshop in the barn and won a trophy.

Chris’s woodworking skills strongly influenced his plans for college. He was admitted to Mississippi State University in Starkville with plans to major in architecture. After two years he changed his major to civil engineering to add a larger perspective to his architectural interest.

“At the beginning of my junior year, I bought a house in Starkville that was built in 1890,” Chris smiled, anticipating my expression of incredulity. “In the neighborhood, it was known as the ‘ghost house’ and it had been unoccupied for many years. The windows were broken out; in two rooms the floors had rotted and caved in, leaving the dirt showing below.”

He rehabbed a bedroom, a small kitchen, and a bath, made it liveable and moved in. During Chris’ junior year he met and married Jessica, an architecture major from Jackson, Mississippi. They continued their studies at MSU with a brief interruption the following year when Clark was born.

Rehabbing the ghost house continued into his senior year and beyond while Jessica worked on her degree. She changed her major to Spanish and public relations.

“The house project turned out really well,” Chris said. “I bought the house and land for mid-fifties and when it was time to leave, I sold it for \$180,000. Of course, that was in the middle of the recession.” With modifications, removals and additions, he expanded the house to 1,800 square feet with three bedrooms and two baths.

After graduation the Melvins moved to Tusculumbia, Alabama, where Chris began managing and rehabbing his father’s rental properties. “We lived next door to Mom and Dad, which again gave me the opportunity to set up a woodworking

Text and photography by Fred Thompson



Chris and Van Tiffin confer daily in the company's R&D department on developing new floorplans, special features, and cabinetry. R&D annually creates the floorplans for six new coaches.

shop next to Dad's barn," Chris said.

About the same time, Van Tiffin moved from Florence to Tuscumbia where he built a home on a nearby property. Chris did some bushhogging for Van and they began a friendship that was to have some future consequences.

"Since my family had always had farm animals, I decided to add chickens to the menagerie," Chris related. "I designed a 10' x 12' chicken coop." Chris built the coop in sections in his shop and assembled it in one day on its site. It had a linoleum floor, making it easy to keep the coop clean.

"We took some pictures and Jessica put them on Facebook, explaining our new coop," Chris said. "After noticing the linoleum floor, one person wrote, 'Don't you know it's not sanitary to keep chickens in your kitchen?' We got a pretty good laugh out of that response."

Noticing how quickly Chris assembled the coop, Van came over to ask about the project. He invited Chris to come to Red Bay for an interview with Brad Witt, who at that time was the chief engineer for the assembly plant. Brad asked Chris to come back the next day for an interview with Tim Tiffin, who offered him a position with the Tiffin engineering team.

"I started the day after Labor Day, 2009," Chris noted. "I was the first engineer that TMH hired after the downturn."

His first assignment was to use a program called Microvellum to develop a library of cabinets which could be grouped and selected for use in any future motorhome plans. The library was first used in Tiffin's R & D department as they developed the plans for the 28BR and 32BR versions of the Allegro Breeze.

"I learned so much from that assignment and the applications we were beginning to make," Chris said. "We moved the library over to Auto-Cad and Alpha Cam for wider use, and because it also generates CNC code for cutting out the parts for each cabinet."

During his first year at TMH, Chris worked closely with Rodney Johnson, the company's primary floor plan designer. "Rodney trained me on floor plan and cabinet design," Chris said. "In 2010 we did the 40QBH Phaeton together."

Rodney eventually left Tiffin to take over his father's company. Chris moved into the job and began a full application of the varied skills he learned in architecture and engineering school.

"The neat thing about this R & D department is that we can see a need for a new floor plan in one of our brands, and move very quickly toward getting that product on the market in four months or less," Chris explained. "We visit dealers to research what's out there. We are not trying to validate what we are doing, but

to see where our products do not compare favorably with the competition. For example, on one trip we decided the Allegro Open Road needed a rear bath to stay competitive. Back at the plant, we review what Tiffin owners are telling us they want to see in a motorhome that is not being offered.

"Process engineering is fascinating," Chris continued. "I learned in architecture school that no matter how many times you find a way to do something, there is always a better way."

When a motorhome is in the design phase, many heads come together to put the project on track and get it going. Chris Melvin begins with the floor plans and cabinets. Margaret Mia creates the interior design. Jeff Shook designs the floor and basement structures for correct support, both the PowerGlide and Freightliner as well as the wiring harness locations. Jeff works closely with Tammy Roberson in plumbing and Kevin Raper in electrical. The electrical engineers have to get the wiring right, matching switches, outlets, and lighting.

Steven Coon does the sidewalls and roofs and oversees the general engineering. Brad Warner develops the modifications required for the chassis. The company's industrial designer, Jeff Margush, creates the dashes and the front and rear caps. Dash design is finalized in Margush's lab in Elkhart, and cap design is finalized in the Water Way plant near Iuka, Mississippi.

"A complete chassis with engine is moved into the R & D department to begin the mock-up," Chris said. "Other than not having the fiberglass sides and caps, we create a complete motorhome with all of the cabinetry it will have when it rolls down the assembly line. Each engineer brings in his part of the new coach. We even do the laminate floor, which is designed and brought in by Josh Inman. It takes R & D three to five months from the start to the assembly line roll-off.



Jessica and Chris are enjoying country life on their 80-acre farm where Blake, 2, and Clark, 6, have plenty of room to play and help take care of their dog, goats, and chickens.

that 45 inches is the chef’s working space in front of the galley. The living space matches the living room size of the 45LP.”

Just like the assembly plant, the engineers begin their day at 6 a.m. and usually start heading for home by 3:30 or 4. Chris and Jessica left Tusculumbia three years ago after buying a home near Golden, Mississippi, just across the state line from Red Bay. In July 2011, they added a little blonde daughter, Blake, to their family. In addition to their home, Chris and Jessica bought 80 acres just across the road from their house, where they have 25 head of Black Angus, a herd of goats, and chickens. Chris started work four months ago on a new home well-sited among several stately oaks. He and Jessica hope to see it completed in two years. **RIS**

“The most stressful day of my life is when we run the first prototype on the assembly line,” Chris laughed. “My first one was the 2010 Phaeton 40QKH. I don’t think I slept at all the night before.”

In late August, Chris received accolades and attaboys from his colleagues when the first 2014 Allegro Bus 37AP was completed. “My favorite feature is the bathroom with entry doors from the bedroom and the hall. It gives you more privacy. With the vanity being part of the rear DS slide-out, it gives you the space of a rear bath,” Chris explained. “The shower is all solid surface material. Although it is an inexpensive feature, the backlighting of the mid-section television creates a more pleasant viewing environment. The floor plan facilitates the second largest galley in Tiffin’s coaches, which is positioned inside the slide-out. At first, some called it a side-aisle floor plan. Actually,

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New Hampshire Dealership Expands Service and Sales to Eight Locations

In the late Spring of 1964, Arthur Hirsch began making plans to take his Boy Scout troupe to the BSA's World Jamboree in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Anticipating the excitement of the annual event, he really wanted his wife, Frances, to accompany him. She had always been supportive of his work as a scoutmaster since their three boys were getting so much out of their scouting experiences. But sleeping in a tent exceeded her highest level of support. The answer was "No."

Art was a very talented machinist. He invited Frances and the boys to go with

The business philosophy at Campers Inn focuses on creating a great customer experience.

him after work one day to visit an RV sales lot that had tent campers for sale. In his blue machinist uniform, Art went

in a small mobile office where he found two men playing cards. Neither seemed interested in showing him an RV, but one suggested, "Look around. If you see something you like, come back in and let me know." He left without looking at the tent campers and told my mother as he got in the car, "I know we could do a much better job than what just happened. Why don't we go into the camper business?"

Jeff Hirsch has related the story many times. He felt badly for his father. "Dad was insulted because he felt the salesmen weren't interested in wasting their

At left: The Campers Inn management team at the company's flagship store in Merrimack: Ben Hirsch, David Hirsch, Ted Gulezian, and Jeff Hirsch.

time with a man in work clothes." The insult would soon lead to action, but at that particular time Art Hirsch was more interested in finding a camping trailer to encourage Frances to attend the scout jamboree with him. A short time later, he found a 1950s Serro Scotty and they all got to attend the jamboree.

When they returned from the jamboree, the snubbing at the RV lot led to more conversation about good sales experiences and customer service. Eventually, Art decided to visit the town hall in Acton, Massachusetts, and ask about starting a business. Friends called to encourage him, but Art was getting cold feet. The townspeople wanted it, and voted to grant the license.

Art and Frances had saved \$5,000 for their three sons' college education. Bob, David, and Jeff had been saving for college, too. In a leap of faith, the family in 1966 agreed to go forward and bought four Scamper tent trailers. "Bob and I had saved up enough and were continuing to save," David said, continuing the story. "Bob was a junior and I was in the ninth grade. Dad did not graduate from high school, but later earned a GED certificate. He was determined that all three of his boys would go to college."

The machine shop where Art worked was located across a wide field from their home. If anyone stopped to look, Frances called Art and he ran across a well-worn path to greet a potential buyer. They called the company Nashoba Valley Trailers and sold 14 units by the end of the summer.

The family's seasonal business continued to grow each year and in 1970 they splurged on a service building that set

them back \$7,500. They had been working outside for four summers to install hitches. In 1972 Bob graduated from college and decided to go full time with the business. Two years later David finished and followed in his brother's footsteps.

To improve their service and sales, Art decided to add an accessories store to Nashoba Valley Trailers. In a zoning glitch under which they obtained their first permit, they learned they could not expand the business. The solution was to scrap the old business entity and create a new one. Nashoba Valley Trailers became Campers Inn.

"By 1975 our parents realized they had a pretty viable business," Jeff said. "In 1976 Dad opened a new store in Nashua across the street from where he had been snubbed by the card playing salesmen."

For the next 10 years Campers Inn increased sales and enlarged its service operation. Jeff returned to the business full time in 1977 and realized how much he enjoyed working in the recreational vehicle industry.

As his dad began to consider retirement, Jeff moved into a leadership role. Campers Inn initiated a growth plan that began with a new store in Kingston, New Hampshire, in 1987. He followed with a fourth store in Raynham, Massachusetts, in 1992. The original store in Acton was closed in 1994. In 2004 a new facility was built in Merrimack, New Hampshire, that replaced the Nashua store. In 2006 Jeff opened a store in Leesburg, Florida, his first entry into the Deep South. That success was followed in 2008 with a store just south of Macon, Georgia, in Byron, located on the heavily traveled I-75. Two years later the company moved west to open a store in Elkhart, Indiana. That venture was followed with two stores in North Carolina, one in Mocksville in 2011 and another in Kings Mountain in 2013. The Elkhart store was closed this year and a new store is planned for Union, Connecticut, in 2014, making a total of eight stores.

"Like everyone else, our business was affected by the recession," Jeff said. "There were sacrifices. Personnel and inventories had to be adjusted and expenses had to be trimmed. However, over the years we had planned financially for a downturn. Economies are cyclical. We invested heavily in our employees. Having a well-educated staff with industry-specific know-how helped us to continue delivering a great customer experience. And it is those customers who helped keep our doors open during the recession."

Several years ago Jeff had Spader Business Management develop a 20 Group style of management reports for his dealerships. "Those reports provide monthly comparisons that I need for a better understanding of what is going on in each individual store," he said.

"Actually, the downturn created opportunities," Jeff continued. "We identified geographic locations and targeted growth cities. Land and facility prices fell during those four or five years. Now with seven stores and an eighth opening next year, we are ready to serve an economy that is definitely on the rebound. Banks and credit unions are relaxing their restrictions and RV enthusiasts are buying. We believe this industry has a bright future and we are willing to commit the resources."

The growth of Campers Inn has taken place over 47 years. Art Hirsch's determination to treat each customer with the utmost respect has been the guiding philosophy since it began.

"Our company has always been very service oriented," Jeff continued. "We want to exceed our customers' expectations. It is our goal to be the trusted and reliable resource. Obviously, we have to serve a sales need, but service is paramount at Campers Inn."

"We began selling Class A motorhomes about 1975," Jeff recalled. "Our first Class A may have been a 20-foot Explorer that was built by Anthony Industries. I think the price on it was \$7,995."

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

“The 2014 model year marks our third year with Tiffin Motorhomes and they supply all of our Class A diesels. Tiffin’s pricing integrity helps our customers maintain their resale value,” Jeff said. “We like their strategies and regard Tiffin Motorhomes as a valued partnership. At Campers Inn, we have always tried to align ourselves with companies that have values similar to ours.”

The Merrimack store is the prototype location for Campers Inn with a facility that was designed specifically as an RV dealership. Central accounting for the company’s seven stores is located here as well as their largest service operation offering 16 bays and a full lift system. Service operations in Merrimack include the repair of roofs, sidewall, and caps; light chassis work; and refrigerators, air conditioners, and all appliances. The technicians are qualified to address all electrical and plumbing problems and repairs.

Developing leadership has been a part of Hirsch’s growth plan from the beginning. Ted Gulezian began his career with Campers Inn 28 years ago. “My parents owned an RV dealership in Plaistow, New

Hampshire,” Ted explained. “I have been in the recreational vehicle business since I was a teenager. A year after joining Campers Inn in 1985, I became a service technician. Several years later I accepted the service manager’s job in the Kingston store.”

Ted’s career path then led from service into sales. His continued success led to becoming sales manager in one of the Campers Inn locations. He now serves as regional director over three locations. Over the years several service managers have followed a similar career path.

Three years ago a family member “came home.” After several years away from the business, David Hirsch became sales manager for the Merrimack store. “I admire my brother’s leadership talent and energy. In case you are not aware,” David smiled, “Jeff is the owner of Campers Inn. He has done a great job in developing this company. I was very happy to come back as general sales manager.”

David did not have to be introduced to the culture of Campers Inn. He grew up in it. “It’s simple. We start out with the golden rule. As our father said many times, ‘It doesn’t matter if your customer

has \$1,000 or \$10,000 to spend, you treat him with the utmost respect.’

“The sales process is not complicated,” David continued. “You can’t sell anybody anything. You have to help them buy the right unit based on how they plan to use it and how much they want to spend. We call it the need-want assessment.

“Every product line at Campers Inn stores has a sales specialist. A salesperson is expected to have general knowledge of all product lines, but a sales specialist must be the authority on a particular line and be ready to handle any questions. A salesperson earns the right to sell the more sophisticated RVs by demonstrating product knowledge and sales know-how,” David explained.

“When we took on Tiffin, I sent four sales people to Red Bay for product training,” David said. “When customers visit our store, I want them to really test our salesperson’s knowledge. That’s part of the process we must go through to be sure the customer is getting the right unit.”

In every store, Campers Inn sales managers schedule weekly sales meetings focusing on relevant problems or issues.



“Sales know-how and product knowledge is the key to helping your customer buy the right product,” David emphasized. “In training a salesperson, I want the need-want assessment to be so natural that the process takes place in pleasant conversation. We must help the customer make a good buying decision based on his plans for RVing and his financial ability.

“When the salesperson is with me and we are assisting a customer, I am training the salesperson on the fly as I tailor a proposal for the buyer,” David said. “When I see a salesperson having difficulty with the process, I go over and mix it up with the buying couple. Sometimes I have to be a counselor to the couple, too.”

Campers Inn has franchises to sell Tiffin motorhomes in Merrimack, Mocksville, North Carolina, and Byron, Georgia. “We want to keep at least six Tiffin coaches in stock on a continual basis here at Merrimack,” David said.

“We could sell more Tiffins if we could get them. But, because Tiffin does not saturate this market, we see demand that is constant,” he pointed out.

As with every successful RV dealership today, Campers Inn’s advertises on the internet. But they have a general policy about those who want to shop the coach they have spec’d out, trying to get dealerships to bid against each other in order to obtain the lowest price. “We encour-

age price shoppers to buy from their local dealers because service should always be part of the sale,” David said.

“We do direct mail, TV and radio, and email blasts. Each of those may prompt a potential buyer or one of our owners to go to our internet site. And, of course, it is our internet site where they will find out what is really going on at our stores,” David noted.

Within the past year, another Hirsch joined the firm as director of fixed operations. David’s son, Ben recently completed 12 years of service with the U.S. Army, four of which were spent at West Point where he graduated in 2005. After eight years of active duty flying Blackhawk helicopters and training pilots, he decided to join Campers Inn because “this company has a sustainable future.”

To better prepare himself as a third generation manager, Ben is currently working on an Executive MBA degree at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Recognized as one of the top three business schools in the U.S., Wharton’s selection of MBA candidates is very competitive. He expects to graduate in 2015.

“We have strength in sales and great feedback from our customers. In service, we are going from ‘strong’ to ‘excellent,’” Ben began. “We look to our Core Values to be the foundation of our future growth. Those values are Integrity, Teamwork, Excellence, and Financial Stability.

With regard to integrity, Campers Inn goes back to its founder, Art Hirsch, who demanded that every customer be treated with the utmost respect.

Ben is putting into play a new mentoring program to develop teamwork and personal growth in each employee’s ability to serve. “Everyone has a mentor so that everyone is growing,” he explained. “Part of the pay for technicians will be based on how well the person they are mentoring develops.”

With regard to excellence in service, Ben is planning to bring in RVIA industry professionals to take all of Campers Inn’s technicians from basic to advanced levels in every area of their respective specialization. “We will evaluate each technician’s present skills and set goals for advancement,” Ben said. “It takes more talent and technical skill to maintain today’s coaches, and we

Left: The Campers Inn Sales Team

Back row: David Hirsch, sales manager, Josh Kasuba, Brittany Richards, Joe Patrissi, Marc Hamel, Joe Melanson, Ron Leger, Lanson Simmons, Bernie Culliton
Front row: Sergei Bushonow, Dale Dubois, George Woodman.

Right: The Campers Inn Service Department

Back row: William MacLean, Keith Marshall, Rob Nash, Nathan Corson, Chris Lajoie, Dennis Gilbert, Jim Donnelly
Middle Row: Jared McCauley, Todd Paquette, Lena Ketchie, Branden Pynn
Front Row: Richard Cooley, Warren Curtis, Robert Ferry, Michael Annis





are upgrading to give our Tiffin owners a world-class customer experience.”

Campers Inn management identified 67 areas in which to train technicians. “We are developing a format for technicians to advance his or her learning experience and earnings,” Ben said. “In the format, there are 18 pay levels. Each level is based on an individual attaining new skills, achieving certifications, mentoring employees, and upholding company values. We believe we are developing a plan for personal growth and earnings that will produce a great customer experience. To the best of our knowledge, we are doing something that no other RV dealerships are doing. With regard to mentoring, we will continually test the mentee’s efficiency gains and reward the mentor with hourly bonuses.”

In each of the Campers Inn stores, one person supervises and develops the service department. Each service organization is centrally monitored and the best service practices are implemented and made transparent throughout the whole company.

“We are focusing on creating a level playing field,” Jeff injected. “Ben directly assists to assure our service standards are high.

“We have hired a data-oriented customer satisfaction company to create reports with actionable information to improve our customer service. The information is specific to each store, each department, and individual employees. The data helps

us as managers to coach our employees to grow and profit as they attain higher levels in the pay system,” he said. “It has to be paramount that we give our employees the best opportunities for success in taking care of our customers. Personal growth is inextricably tied to excellent service and a great customer experience.”

“Our goal is to be a trusted resource for the RVer,” Jeff continued. “We are creating the tools to access what the customer thinks, feels, and understands about our company. We must never be detached from the customer’s perception of us.”

Jeff is currently chairman of the Recreational Vehicle Dealers Association for a two-year term. “RVDA takes a tremendous amount of time and effort. It’s like having another department in your business,” he laughed. “I am passionate about the survival and success of the independent RV dealer in order to give the consumer the best lifestyle experience. RVDA represents the interests of all RV dealers. Through its diverse programs, they educate, inform, and lobby on legislative issues.

“RVDA has a non-profit learning center to educate and professionalize dealers,” Jeff continued. “As dealerships, we would be narrow-minded to focus on just our own communities. We must take a holistic view to solve problems and create an optimum experience for the customer. I felt it was important to give my time to advance a vital organization, and to give

back to an industry that has blessed me.”

At 56, and after 30 years of operating and managing Campers Inn, Jeff Hirsch has developed an inner peace and understanding of his role in the company. “Finally, I am becoming very comfortable in the development of Campers Inn. I am not a born leader; I am an employee. Somehow, I earned the stewardship, but I realize it is only temporary because of our limited time on this earth. As an employee, I work for the other employees. I want to find ways to make them more successful. At the end of the day, I am a small part of this company.

“My parents were first generation Americans,” Jeff explained. “They knew their parents came here to give their children a better life. And Dad and Mother wanted that for everyone. When they went into business, it was never about the money. Dad enjoyed treating customers like they were family and giving them a good experience. Your vision has to be greater than your financial profit. One of the best things we do is become a part of the fabric of the community and take on social responsibilities where we live.

“Over the last two years, I have begun cross-country bicycling,” Jeff said. “I did it for two reasons: first, I lost my best friend and an aunt to cancer. I wanted to give back by participating in the Pan-Mass Challenge (PMC), riding 188 miles in two days. The second reason was to get

At left: The Campers Inn philosophy of a great customer experience extends into the parts and accessories store. Each store carries a wide array of camping supplies and equipment selected for both motorhomes and towables.

myself in good condition. For two years I trained, biking five days a week, 30–60 miles each day. The PMC has raised \$375 million since 1980 for cancer research and treatment at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. On August 3rd and 4th this year, 5,500 cyclists participated in the 34th PMC. We raised \$34 million this year. Each rider was responsible for getting sponsors for his ride. My commitment was \$5,000. Some riders committed for as high as \$10,000. It was difficult, but I completed the two day ride, cycling 111 miles the first day and 88 the second day.”

With regard to the future of Campers Inn, Jeff Hirsch is often asked, “Where is this company headed in what appears to be a fragile economy?”

“Many of our customers are snowbirds who travel the north–south conduit

through North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida,” Jeff began. “Our dealerships give them the same service quality as they travel. Plus, I can go to our RVDA members in the U.S., and through our family of dealerships we can take care of our customers wherever they choose to travel. But we are planning to do even more by expanding with new locations or acquisitions in order to be a better resource to our owners who travel far and wide.


“I can forget that the root word for recreation vehicle is ‘recreate.’ As a company and as individuals working at Campers Inn, we want to give owners a chance to *recreate*. If it’s a couple passing through middle-age, the kids are gone, we can help them recreate their lives together. Two people have to learn how to be together again, how to be a couple. If it’s a family, it is all about bringing parents and children together as they explore nature, escaping the pressure and challenges of city life. We have to have long-term vision to find ways to humanize our lives and make

our relationships relevant again.

“If you are an employee in an RV company or working on an assembly line in an RV manufacturing plant, would it not mean more if you realized that you were creating opportunities for a couple or a family seeking to be together again?”

“When we repair an RV, I want to enhance the experience for our technicians as they take pride in what they are doing for a couple or for parents and their children who are looking forward to a great experience.

“There are so many ways an RV allows people to pursue their hobbies, sports, and passion to just travel,” Jeff expounded. “Deby and I take a motorhome to our son Aaron’s motocross events and our daughters Mackenzie’s and Baleigh’s equestrian events.”

“We are in a unique business. My father gave me the vision for a better life in serving others. I want to enhance his philosophy by giving our employees and our customers a better life.” 

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DENSO

What's new for the 2014 Allegro and Allegro RED

Interior Color Options

Sunset, Camomile, Autumn

Exterior Color Options

Gold Coral, Maroon Coral, Silver Sand, Sunlit Sand, Rocky Mountain Brown, Ocean Side

The New Features Apply to Both the Allegro & Allegro Red (pictured)

1. Exterior 32" television in PS slide-out wall (optional on both brands)
2. Valance
3. Roller shades (not chain driven)
4. Cabinet for entertainment center under bedroom TV
5. Frontline shower stall
6. Free standing dinette to dinette/computer workstation (optional on both brands)

7. Vacuum-formed solid surface counter tops
8. Stainless steel microwave oven
9. Footrest for passenger seat
10. XM satellite radio (standard)
11. Porcelain tile (Allegro RED only)
12. Pocket door hardware

New Features for Allegro & Allegro Red (not pictured)

- Redesign cabinet over passenger seat
- LED shower light
- Sconce lights with LED bulbs
- Surround sound speakers in ceiling





What's new for the 2014 Phaeton

Interior Color Options

Alabaster, Mystere, Sandpiper

Exterior Color Options

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

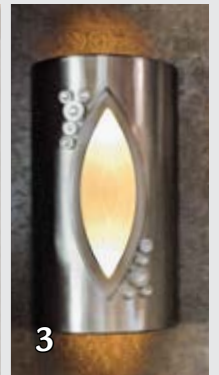
New Features (pictured below)

1. Integrated seat belts in driver & passenger seats
2. Valance design
3. Sconce lights with LED bulbs
4. Painted window frames
5. Energy management system with load shedding feature
6. Power cord reel
7. Bus-style utility board

New Features (not shown)

- Dinette / computer workstation (std. equipment)
- Optional Aqua-Hot on tag axles

- All electric available on 42LH
- Optional heated floors
- Stepwell design
- XM satellite radio
- Redesigned ceiling ring
- All solid surface countertops
- New design for roller shades (not chain driven)
- Surround sound speakers in ceiling
- New wallboard design
- Induction cooktop on 42LH with all electric
- Pocket door hardware
- Relocate entertainment center in cabinet under bedroom TV
- Full tile on all Phaeton floorplans
- Power hose reel
- Exterior television in PS slide-out wall



What's new for the 2014 Allegro Bus

Interior Color Options

Ambrosia, Ritz, Rocky Point, Aspen

Exterior Color Options

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

New Features (pictured below)

1. Front and back caps
2. Flush Mounted Windshield
3. Backsplashes & galley shelf/drawers
4. Mirrors
5. Integrated seat belts in passenger's and driver's chairs
6. Shower with clear glass doors

New Features (not shown)

- All electric (standard)
- Dash
- Driver's window
- Valance
- Integrated solid surface sink bowls
- Relocated entertainment center under bedroom TV
- Frontline faux stone panels in shower
- Faux stone panels over sink and lavatory
- Integrated solid surface sink bowls
- Pocket door hardware



What's new for the 2014 Allegro Breeze

Interior Color Options

Bahamas, River Rock, Sahara

Exterior Color Options

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

New Features (pictured below)

1. Independent front suspension
2. Backsplash design
3. Exterior television in PS slide-out wall
4. Valance design
5. Shower stall

New Features (not shown)

- New wallboard design
- Pocket door latch hardware
- LED light in shower stall
- Sconce light with LED bulbs
- XM satellite radio (standard)
- Surround sound speakers



Educators Visit Florida's 162 State Parks

RAY & PAT CIEMNIECKI COMPLETED A 4-YEAR PLAN TO SEE ALL OF FLORIDA'S PARKS

As Ray and Pat Ciemniecki sit on their back porch, light shimmers off the waters of the Braden River. This view, they admit, is hard to beat. But, after visiting all of Florida's 162 state parks, there's been some tough competition. "We've been from Pensacola all the way to Fort Zachary Taylor (Historic State Park) in Key West and everything in between," Pat said.

The Ciemnieckis, retired Manatee County educators, concluded their tour of parks March 15 at Paynes Creek Historic State Park in Bowling Green, but traveled back to the place their travels began — Lake Manatee State Park — to formally conclude their adventure. The accomplishment earned them induction into the Florida Park Service's Passport Gold Club.

"What a lot of people in Florida don't realize is every Florida resident is within an hour's drive of a state park," Ray said. "It's easy to get started. These are like jewels scattered around the state. Every jewel is different. When you go there, you have to look for the shine."

Camping Culture

Camping has always been a regular activity for the Ciemniecki household. As educators, it not only created a great affection for the outdoors in their children, but it also was a cost-effective way to visit sites throughout the country.

"We started when our son was about two," Ray said. "We've gone to state parks off and on, just as a place to go. Being in education, we had blocks of time off. The most economical way to travel was camping."

While visiting a festival at Lake Manatee State Park, the Ciemnieckis purchased a passport to their future. The green, spiral-bound "Passport" book has a page for each of Florida's then-162 state parks, and each park has an accompanying unique stamp to go in it.

After visiting a few parks, the Ciemnieckis decided to see every one. Although they took their time making it to all of Florida's state parks, the couple had to be purposeful when planning their trips to maximize the number they could visit with each excursion. "We'd use one of the parks as a base and visit the others," Ray said. "When we got toward the end of our adventure, we realized we had one here and one there that we missed. We had to make some decisions on how to get to them."

Story by Pam Eubanks
East County Observer, Florida

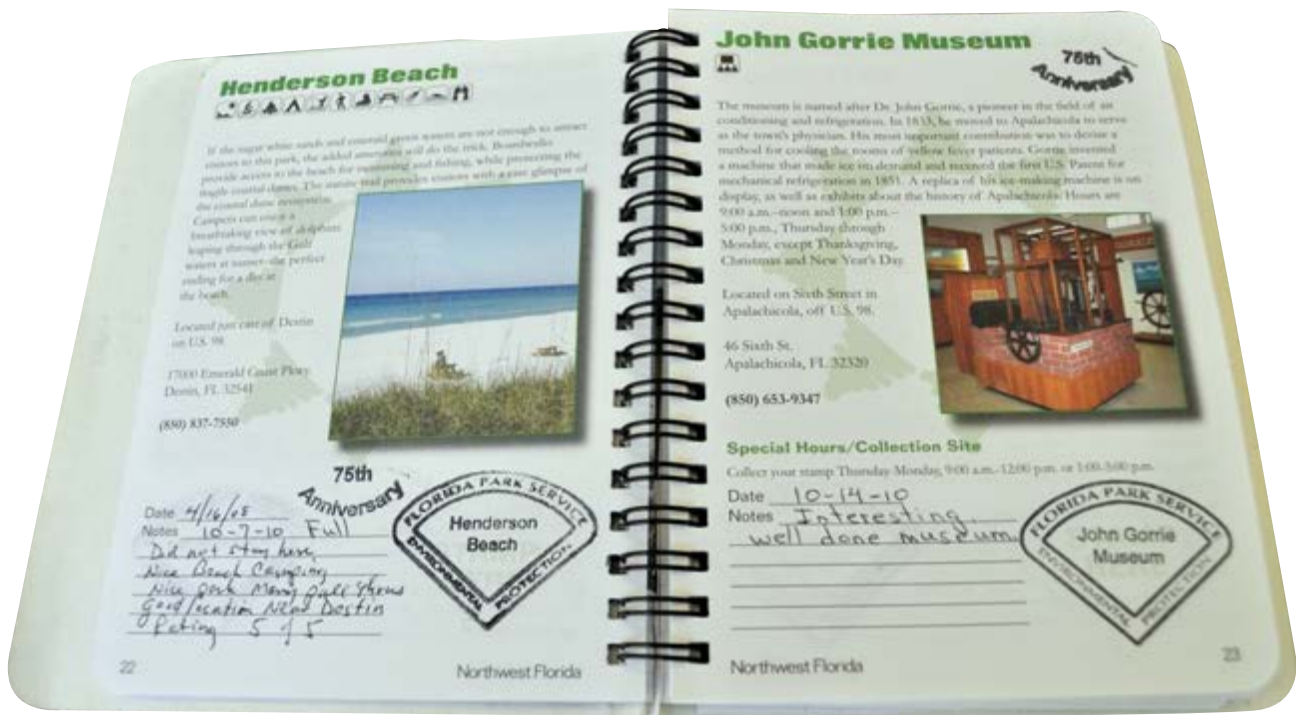


Ray and Pat display the Passport Gold Club license plate and their validated passport showing that they visited all 162 state parks in Florida. They have been enjoying their Allegro Open Road since last summer.

As they approached their goal, they had to determine on each outing whether they should take the RV or simply go in their car and pack a tent. "You don't want to drive the motorhome through the streets of Miami," Pat said.

Searching for Sunshine

Without a doubt, the Ciemnieckis know there are sites yet-to-be discovered at the parks they visited. But what they did see left them spellbound, because Florida's state parks offer a diverse sampling of natural habitats and state history. "For example," Ray said, "I never knew there were underground caverns you could go and visit."



Some parks, such as Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park, are so isolated that there is not a grocery store within 30 miles.

Devil’s Millhopper Geological State Park, in Gainesville, features a limestone sinkhole. And Dudley Farm Historic Park in Newberry showcases the evolution of Florida farming from the 1850s to the mid-1940s, the couple noted. There you will find an authentic working farm that features 18 buildings, livestock, seasonal cane grindings, and corn shuckings, among other events.

“St. George Island has a lighthouse,” Ray said. “The town raised money to move the lighthouse from its original location brick by brick.”

More unique attractions, the Ciemnieckis pointed out, were found at locations such as Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, where they enjoyed cooking their own pancakes at the park’s

Lake Manatee park manager, Manny Perez, signs off on the completed passport book. Visiting all of the state parks earned them a “Passport Gold Club” car tag and a letter from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection commending their accomplishment.



The Florida State Park system created a “passport” that describes all of the state’s 162 parks, museums, and historical sites. As someone visits a park or site, they may ask a ranger to validate their visit with the site’s stamp in the lower right corner of each page.

restaurant, and at Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park, where they saw a figure they dubbed “Moss Man.”

From their treasured collections, Pat pulled out a framed photograph picturing a deer with its reflection in the water. “You’d go to a park, and you’d never know what you were going to see,” she said, holding up the image. “It is rare to see things like this anymore.”

Some of the sights were more beautiful than she could have imagined – sights like the deer, or the pristine beach line of St. George Island State Park. “It almost made me want to leave Bradenton,” she said.

Ray most loved the diversity he observed in Florida’s parks. “Everybody knows about Florida’s beaches, but there’s a lot of historic sites and all different kinds of nature,” Ray reminded us.

While at each park, Pat took plenty of pictures. By the time she and her husband returned home, she usually had her scrapbook pages for their trip completed. “It occupied her time while I was driving,” Ray smiled. Pat regarded the time on the road as a reprieve from the day-to-day activities of life and a great chance to indulge in her hobby. “You have things at home you feel like you have to do,” she said.

Onward Adventures

When the Ciemnieckis finished their tour of Florida’s parks, their passport complete, they headed back to Lake Manatee State Park to have their completed passport verified. The accomplishment earned them a “Passport Gold Club” car tag, as well as a letter from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to commend their accomplishment.



Pat Ciemniecki's scrapbook of their trips to Florida's state parks in 2011 won a blue rosette ribbon at the 2012 Manatee County Fair.

Although the couple may re-visit some of parks they visited, the Ciemnieckis already are dreaming up travel plans for the future. Ray hopes to visit all the state parks in Georgia, and Pat hopes to make it to the Kentucky Derby in future years. In June of last year, the couple flew to California for a NASCAR series race. **RIS**

Florida Favorites

Favorite Park: Topsail Hill Preserve State Park (Ray); Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park (Pat)

Most Unique Park: Florida Caverns State Park (Ray); John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park (Pat)

Most Interesting Area to Visit: St. George Island State Park (aka Dr. Julian G. Gruce St. George Island State Park) and its nearby town of Apalachicola

Most Remote Park: Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park

Best Food Nearby Park: Collier-Seminole State Park (stone crab in Everglades City)

Tips for Visiting Florida's State Parks

Pat and Ray Ciemniecki say the secret to getting as much out of each park visit as possible is to start by talking to park rangers at each site. "The key is to go into the park office and ask what they have," Ray Ciemniecki says. "Plan to spend some time there. Get out and walk the trails."

Outside Florida

In addition to Florida's parks, the Ciemnieckis also have visited a hot air balloon festival in New Mexico, Yellowstone National Park, Mount Rushmore, the Great Salt Lake, and the Mississippi Delta.

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Donald Holland Celebrates 40th Anniversary with Tiffin



On May 1 of this year, Donald Holland became the first Tiffin employee to celebrate 40 years of continuous employment with the company.

To mark the occasion, TMH honored Holland on August 7 with a luncheon at the Fourth Street Grill attended by Bob, Tim, and Van Tiffin and several members of the management team including Tim Massey, plant manager, Tony Riley, human resources director and general counsel, and Mark Richardson, marketing director.

Bob, Tim, and Van Tiffin presented Holland with a bonus check and a plaque designed to commemorate his 40 years of service. Prior to the luncheon and awards ceremony, Holland appeared in a Tiffin advertisement in a county magazine, *Franklin Living*, in recognition of his service to TMH.

Holland, who has been an avid collector of Coca-Cola memorabilia for many years, was completely surprised and delighted

by the presentation of a crystal Coke bottle by Perry DeBardeleben, who is the classic food and vending sales manager with the Birmingham Coca-Cola Bottling Company. The bottle is inscribed to commemorate Holland's 40 years with Tiffin.

Holland began his career at Tiffin in the wiring department. "It was simple then," he recalled. "Just not a lot to it. There was a fuse box, a breaker box, and a converter. There were three of us in wiring. During the first gas crisis, we were building only one unit a day and I wired that one unit."

As the economy recovered and the assembly line ramped back up, Holland moved up to become "utility man," a job that requires one to have all of the skills needed on the assembly line in order to fill in for an employee who is out sick. A few years later he was asked to fill supervisory positions in wiring, plumbing, appliances, hanging metal sides, and window installation.

In 2001, health issues slowed his fast-paced career with TMH and he was forced to take time off to recover. Realizing the

knowledge base that Holland has in so many areas, the company wanted him to return to work when he was ready. After five weeks, he came back as a line helper, and then as a utility man. Today, he works in the small parts department cutting sets of parts that will be used to assemble valances, plumbing covers, blinds covers, mirror frames, interior doors, and the end tables that attach to the bottom of slide-out fascia frames.

"There's a zillion small parts to cut out in this department," Holland explained, "but I really enjoy this job and the people in the department."

He lives 30 miles away in Iuka, Mississippi. "I arrive at the plant at 4:15 a.m. to clean the saws, check the blades, and make a wood list for my department," he said. That schedule means getting up at 3 a.m. and leaving home at 3:30.

Donald Holland may deserve a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for the person who has the most diverse collections of just about everything. "I collect bottles, signs, advertising pieces, toys, footballs, basketballs, pool sticks in their original cases, clocks, rods & reels, Hot Wheels, and baseball cards," Holland laughed. "I like to buy stuff that I can rehab and sell for a little profit." He buys and sells at flea markets nearly every weekend.

Perhaps his most cherished collectible is a 1965 Ford Mus-

tang. "I started home one evening after work and saw the Mustang at Moore's Chevrolet in Belmont. Couldn't resist! I've had it for about 30 years," he grinned.

Mississippi Rt. 25 follows the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, and has a host of front-yard vendors. During a two-day weekend in October every year, hundreds of vendors set up their tables for one of the largest rolling flea markets in the South. "I have been participating in the flea market on Rt. 25 for six years," he said.

Donald and his wife, Betty, have two children: Jackie and Donna. Jackie and his wife, Barbara, have three children: Mackenzie, Addison, and Mattie Grace. Donna has one daughter, Nickie, who presented Betty and Donald with their first great-grandchild, Kallie.

Asked about the most significant changes in motorhomes during his tenure at Tiffin, Donald answered quickly: "When we dropped metal sidings and went to fiberglass and when we started building slide-outs."

"I have always liked my jobs here at Tiffin Motorhomes," Donald concluded. "This company has really been good to me. Everybody has their ups and downs, but I sure can't complain. I have really enjoyed watching the Tiffin boys grow up and take a big part in the family business." **RIS**

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The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

53 Years of Camping in All 50 States

We would like to continue receiving *Roughing It Smoothly*. We have enjoyed it for years and would truly miss it. We have found stories about some of our distant relatives including the article in Vol. 7 No. 3, about the Houmas House that

mentioned Wade Hampton, a distant relative of my wife.

Since we were married 53 years ago, we started out camping with a small pop-up tent. Gradually over the years we graduated to the vehicle shown here, our 1997 Allegro which we still own. We have



Touring the National Parks with Our Granddaughter

In May 2005, my wife and I left on a 23-day trip with our granddaughter in our 1996 Allegro Bay. We drove through the following states: Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, then back through Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama. We visited all of the National Parks on our route, including Hot Springs NP; Rocky Mountain NP; Grand Tetons NP; Yellowstone NP; Grand Canyon NP; Arches NP; and also Four Corners; Antelope Island; and the Snake River Canyon in Twin Falls, Idaho. Our motorhome made the trip well, and our granddaughter, age nine, still remembers every stop we made.

Floyd Guthrie
Carbon Hill, Alabama

Memories of Our Allegro Adventures

My husband and I retired (early) in 1989. We bought an RV and began our travels of the USA. We had a ball working in the

winter months and traveling the rest of the year. We saw and did things we never dreamed we would do. We visited all our great states except Alaska. In 2009 he had a stroke and our RVing days came to an end. Moving to Arizona, we sold our RV. It was so sad to see that Allegro leaving without us. This past June he passed away short of our 57th wedding anniversary. I have a dream of getting a smaller Class B so I can still do a little more traveling. When Allegro comes out with one I can handle that is what I'll do. My heart is sad but thankful for so many memories. It was a pleasure meeting Mr. Tiffin when we were in Red Bay.

Doris Epperson
Maricopa, Arizona

Thank You for Prompt and Exceptional Service

Just a note to express our gratitude for the service provided to solve a problem we had while traveling through the state of Idaho this summer.

We had just left Bend, Oregon, headed

covered all 50 states in the U.S., plus five countries in Europe.

We would recommend a Tiffin motorhome to anyone that wants to get the most out of their travels.

James & Pearl Billings
Willis, Texas



toward Boise, Idaho, when we heard air escaping from somewhere in the front of our Phaeton. We continued on and spent the night in Vale, Oregon. I called Tiffin service the next morning and was directed to Rush Truck Center in Boise to make repairs. We spoke with Josh, the Service Supervisor at Rush, he got us right in and discovered that the front leveling air valve was leaking and needed replacing.

He attempted to find one locally but was unsuccessful. This was late in the day, and I suggested he call Tiffin Parts to see if one could be flown out to Boise from Tiffin. Your folks came through and by noon the next day we were back on the road headed north to our destination.

We want to thank Tiffin Motorhomes and Rush Truck Center of Boise, Idaho for the excellent service provided to us.

Ric & Nancy Cutting
Milwaukie, Oregon

Maiden Voyage in Our Allegro RED

We are starting a four month, 10,000 mile road trip in a brand new Allegro RED

34QFA. We are going to visit approximately 15 states. We are looking forward to an interesting trip from Florida to Washington state and all points in between.

Ed & Linda Morris
Oviedo, Florida

Excellent Experience at Royal Coachman RV Park

We stayed a season at Royal Coachman RV Park in Nokomis, Florida. An excellent experience, lots of great facilities which are maintained on a daily basis, located close to a great beach at Nokomis Park and Clearwater, with soft sand. A great bike trail runs from Sarasota to Venice.

Larry Braisted
Pisgah Forest, North Carolina

Breaking in Our 34TGA Open Road

We've been fortunate to have spent our last six winters in Arizona. Hoping for 20+ more years. We're from Washington state, which is great, but we feel it's the best of both worlds to be able to be half in Arizona and half in Washington. Last winter (with NO PLANS to get a different motorhome) we were "just looking" at an RV place and bought our first Tiffin, a 34TGA Open Road! It's a 2012 and we are just breaking it in!

Hank & Kathy Poortinga
Bellingham, Washington

Friendly, Helpful Service at David's Bay City RV Center

In 2011 my wife and I purchased our first motorhome, a new 2011 Allegro Breeze 32 BR, and were very excited about traveling. In the past, we had owned big boats and cruised up and down the coast and the Bahamas until we could not handle a big boat anymore, so we decided on a "land yacht."

The dealer we purchased our Breeze from is over 100 miles from our home. A friend of ours recommended David's

Bay City RV Center in Grand Bay, Alabama, only 22 miles from our home, and I'm glad he did. David's service center is a small but well organized and customer-oriented facility with a great staff. Every time I have a question or problem, David takes the time to help and introduces me to one of his techs to solve my problem. He provided me with his cell phone number and told me to call any time I needed help. I have called him on Sundays, late at night, Saturdays, and all during the week. He is always friendly and helpful. His facility works on small campers to large motorhomes. If anyone is traveling on I-10 between Mobile and Grand Bay and needs service, I highly recommend David's Bay City RV Center.

P.S. He is doing some minor warranty

work on my new 2013 Phaeton as I write this letter. Very pleased customer,

Terry Moss
Moss Point, Mississippi

We Love the Canadian Rockies Story

The article on the Canadian Rockies was wonderful. We took that trip years ago and it was such a delight. There were five coaches caravanning together and every bend in the road brought us another amazing sight! We all were just enthralled. Thanks to Fred Thompson for writing such an interesting piece. It was so well written that we all took the trip with him once again.

Barbara Hart
Cerritos, California

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



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709P-4 Display

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Tiffin and Happy Daze RV Sponsor Gold Country Rally

by Gail Johnson

The 49er Village RV Resort was the setting May 20–23 as 150 Tiffin motorhomes assembled for the Tiffin spring west coast rally. The tiny village of Plymouth is the home of this lovely, tree-filled resort located about 50 miles from Sacramento. The 49er Village Resort is nestled in the heart of California wine country, with over 40 wineries in the vicinity of our rally.

The customary format was followed at this rally with the first day given to registration and getting acquainted. Happy Daze RV hosted a “Meet and Greet” social at their extensive RV display area, and later in the evening attendees gathered in the huge tent for a delicious dinner sponsored by Happy Daze. Allegro Club president Jimmy Johnson welcomed guests, made introductions, and presented a brief overview of the scheduled events. Tiffin owners were excited to be able to visit with the founder and CEO of Tiffin Motorhomes, Bob Tiffin, and his wife Judy, at this rally.

On Tuesday, after a bountiful breakfast, the day was filled

with seminars and more opportunities to socialize! Our list of presenters included: HWH, Paul Maddox; Convection/Microwave Cooking, Gail Johnson; Triple H Electronics, David Humphries; Coach Cleaning, Mary Findley; Thetford, Jerry Alexander; Freightliner, Joe Snyder; Cummins, Garry Enyart; Navistar, Jim Ham; Tiffin Motorhomes, George Victorine; Onan Generators, Harold Kimbrough.

Also on Tuesday, the ladies enjoyed a delightful afternoon tea hosted by Gail Johnson. Having been prompted before the rally to bring a favorite teacup and attire appropriate for a tea party, many wore hats and dresses and came prepared to share special stories. However, whether dressed up or not, everyone was encouraged to come and join in the time together, sharing stories and remembrances and getting to know each other a little better.

After a sumptuous dinner Tuesday evening, attendees enjoyed a rousing session of Bingo, called by president Jimmy Johnson.

Wednesday brought another full day of activities interspersed among three lavish meals provided in the big tent! A mid-day

scavenger hunt was held, and the Happy Daze RV display was a beehive of activity all day long. At mid-morning, we attended a moving tribute to our veterans, organized by Cynthia Skinner, Allegro Club membership coordinator and assisted by David Humphries. After lunch, those so inclined had an opportunity to play ladder ball. Other activities were available on site, and the afternoon was spent in friendly competition and socialization among Tiffin owners and friends. After the farewell dinner Wednesday evening, attendees were invited to take lawn chairs to the amphitheater, where the California Cowboys Band played near a blazing bonfire.

Thursday found many folks lingering in the campground, saying their goodbyes, and making plans to see each other again! The entire week was a golden one in northern California, with perfect weather and a lovely setting for our rally.

We hope you will make your plans to attend a Tiffin Motorhome Rally in the future. In the meantime, travel safely, and have fun . . . “Roughing It Smoothly!”



U.S. veterans were honored at the rally.

Oh, the Sweet Sound of Retirement!

We want to wish a “Happy Retirement” to Jimmy and Gail Johnson. Jimmy began his role as president of the Allegro Club in 2004. In early 2004, the club had about 2,000 member units, and to date we are holding steady at approximately 7,500 member units. In 2004 the Allegro Club had 40 chapters, and now there are 70+ chapters.

Jimmy and Gail brought fresh ideas for the rallies, such as more OEM vendor participation and seminars, Allegro Club retail items, fun activities, games, and F.Y.I. seminars. Gail has hosted many rally “tea parties” and presented “Convection Cooking” classes. Together they have hosted more than 40 rallies.



During their tenure with the Allegro Club and Tiffin Motorhomes, Jimmy and Gail have made many lasting friendships. As they venture into new avenues in their lives, we say not “Goodbye” but “We’ll see you down the road.” Keep on Roughing It Smoothly!!

The Johnsons Give the Reins to the Moores

Born and reared in the Red Bay area, Kelly & Sally Moore have long suffered from the disease known as “wanderlust.” The side effects of this disease have been eased throughout their 40 years of marriage by frequent vacations and get-away trips while they continued to fulfill their duties in full-time careers. After retirement in May 2013 from careers in sales and banking, they delivered coaches for Tiffin Motorhomes to retail dealerships across the nation for several months trying to feed this insatiable hunger to explore the USA. Kelly and Sally have enjoyed camping since the seventies when they spent many weekends tent camping. “Gradually we moved up the ladder through pop-ups and travel trailers until we

purchased our first Allegro motorhome in the summer of 1984. We became life-time fans of these beautiful *Roughing It Smoothly* coaches,” said Kelly.

In August 2013, Tiffin Motorhomes lured them out of their brief

Continued on page 80



Allegro Club Adds Value to Your RVing Experience

Are you staying informed on the latest news from the Tiffin Allegro Club? If not, please visit the website www.tiffinsideroads.com and enter your email address in the FOLLOW box. You will receive one email asking for you to confirm your subscription. Then you will receive an email occasionally from us just informing you of upcoming rallies, new and improved benefits to your club membership, and interesting articles on other club members/chapters. This is the best way to stay up-to-date on all the news!

We invite you to “like” Tiffin Motorhomes on Facebook or “follow us” on Twitter! This is another great way to stay connected with Tiffin Motorhomes and the Tiffin Allegro Club throughout the year. Visit www.tiffinmotorhomes.com and click on the proper icon at the top of the home page.

2014 Tiffin Motorhomes Sarasota Buddy Rally

February 27–March 1, 2014 (Check out March 2)

Sarasota County Agricultural Fairgrounds
Sarasota, Florida

Make your plans now to be a part of the kickoff rally of 2014 in Sarasota, Florida. It will be held at the Sarasota County Agricultural Fairgrounds. The rally will consist of three nights

camping with 30 amp electrical hookup. You are encouraged to come in with empty holding tanks and a full tank of fresh water. A dump station and fresh water are available but you want to avoid the line and having to unhook your coach. Three delicious evening meals and continental breakfast on two days will be provided. We have a number of seminars available covering a variety of topics. There are great entertainers lined up for your enjoyment and we will have a variety of other activities planned as well. Lazy Days RV and North Trail RV will have a large display of the latest Tiffin Motorhomes for your viewing pleasure. Service technicians from the dealers and Tiffin Motorhomes will be available to perform minor repairs. There will also be other representatives from Tiffin Motorhomes present throughout the rally.

Don’t hesitate! Get your applications in today as you will not want to miss it!

You can bring your buddy even if he is driving some other brand. Maybe he will soon be driving a Tiffin.

Applications are available at www.tiffinmotorhomes.com. Click on the rally link under the OWNERS tab, or, at www.tiffinsideroads.com, click on the rally button.

SEE YOU THERE!

Canine Cough Complex

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

As we travel with our beloved pets to various places throughout the United States and Canada, we may think they are protected from upper-respiratory disease. Such diseases are usually seen in boarding kennels, pet shelters and animal control shelters.

Actually, when traveling in our RV we are exposing our pets to viruses more than if we were sitting at home. For example, all of us must walk our dogs, usually in a designated, confined area. Chances are you will run into another dog.

Now that more campgrounds have doggie parks, you also are exposing your pet to other dogs during their playtime. So, you see by traveling or full-timing in an RV, there are many opportunities for your pet to be exposed to upper-respiratory disease. The best method of protection is vaccination.

The Canine Cough Complex is made up of a variety of viruses. We will discuss each of them and their treatment and prevention.

The first is Bordetella, better known as kennel cough. The organism causing this virus is Bordetella Bronchiceptics, which spreads through coughing. Untreated cases can lead to a dog's whooping-type cough and secondary pneumonia. Treatment consists of antibiotics and cough depressants. Prevention is possible through vaccination every six months. Long-term protection does not occur since it is a bacterial-type pathogen. Nasal vaccine is recommended for better protection.

The Canine Parainfluenza Virus is another agent that produces coughing and sneezing. Treatment is symptomatic and

vaccination is recommended. The vaccine is incorporated with the Bordetella vaccine.

Canine Adeno Type 2 Virus is the next agent that produces sneezing, coughing, and congestion. Treatment is the same as for the parainfluenza virus as we try to prevent pneumonia. Prevention occurs by vaccination whether with nasal vaccine incorporated with Bordetella or with injection.

Canine Coronavirus is another one of the viruses in this complex. It was discovered in 2003 and is usually associated with milder forms of respiratory disease. Early infection with Coronavirus may lead to susceptibility to more severe pathogens. There is no specific treatment or vaccine for this virus.

Some of the more severe pathogens are Canine Distemper and Canine Influenza. Canine Distemper causes severe snotty nose, coughing, congestion, and diarrhea, and can lead to neurological symptoms. It is seen mostly in unvaccinated dogs and puppies. Most of you keep your pet's shots up-to-date, so the chances of coming across distemper in RV parks is not as great as in a shelter. It is best to stay away from stray dogs. . . . period.

Canine Influenza Virus, better known as "Dog Flu," is an emerging threat to dogs. Almost all dogs are susceptible because they do not have any natural immunity built up due to lack of exposure. Most dogs develop mild symptoms but some can become severely ill. Prevention in the form of vaccination with FDA licensed flu vaccine is highly recommended. This virus was first discovered in 2004 when an outbreak in Florida greyhound racetracks killed many dogs.

As you can tell from the descriptions of these viruses, the symptoms are the same with differences in severity. It is very difficult to isolate or identify which virus your pet may have. It is best to vaccinate for prevention. Avoid any dog parks or gatherings where dogs may be coughing, sneezing, or acting lethargic.

If you have to place your pet in a kennel, it is best to get them vaccinated at least ten days before they enter the kennel. If nasal vaccine is available, have it administered 48 hours before entering for best protection. Our pets cannot live in a bubble, but we can take extra precautions to protect them..

This article has been specifically addressing respiratory disease in dogs. Cats also are susceptible to a variety of upper-respiratory diseases. However, most people who travel in RVs with their cats do not expose them to other felines as happens regularly with our canine friends. Therefore, the chance of a cat picking up a respiratory disease in an RV park is much less likely. But if you pick up and handle an infected stray dog or cat, then you could pass a virus on to your pet.

Safe Travels, John & Kay

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

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

Interviews from New Hampshire and Michigan



Fernand Plante & Pierrette Charest

Son: Pascal, Anny & Amelia / 2 yrs.
Quebec, Canada / interviewed in New Hampshire

- Fernand & Pierrette purchased a 2009 Allegro Open Road 32QBA with a GMAC 250 on a Workhorse Chassis.
- They have been married for 39 years.
- Son: Pascal, Anny & Amelia live in St-Cesaire, Quebec; Son: Vincent, Emilie & Gabriel live in Ste-Marthe Sur Le Lac, Quebec.
- Son: Pascal, Anny & Amelia came from QUE to visit them in New Hampshire for 4 days.
- They've owned 3 RVs since 2006 & driven in 38 of the lower 48 states, all except the Northwest.
- Fernand does 100% of the driving; they travel approx. 2 mo. annually; prefer to drive 300 mi. daily; & have driven this Tiffin 18,000+ miles.
- They enjoy meeting people, discovering new places & learning from everyone as they travel.
- Fernand's favorite areas of the U.S. are: the entire Florida coastline; Monument Valley, Nevada; & the Western United States.
- Pierrette's favorite areas are : Hoover Dam, Grand Canyon, & the entire state of Arizona.
- Bucket list: Western Canada & Northwest U.S.
- Fernand retired in 2010 as a regional sales mgr; & now drives a charter coach for 56 passengers.
- His hobby is snowmobiles ... he and his 2 sons traveled 6,000 miles in 1 yr; drove 1,500 miles in 1 wk; & 1 day drove 450 miles ... in 23 hrs!
- Pierrette retired from a career as a decorator & over the past 15 years has been a homemaker.
- Her hobbies: golf, walking & exercising.



Wayne & Linda Sharp

Hometown: Berlin, Ohio / Amish country
Interviewed in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire

- Wayne & Linda own a 2008 Phaeton 36QSH with a Cummins 360 on a Freightliner Chassis.
- Wayne served in the U.S.Navy from 1965-1968.
- Wayne & Linda have been married for 43 years.
- They have 2 children, 5 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild ... Julie lives in Dallhart, TX and has 3 children & 1 grandchild; Ken lives in Goose Creek, South Carolina and has 1 child.
- Diesel is their travel companion & is 2 yrs. old.
- Wayne & Linda have owned 6 RVs since 1978; driven this, their 1st Class-A, 12,000+ miles; and travel 5 to 6 months annually.
- Wayne drives 100% of the time; prefers to drive 350 mi. per day, & he's driven in most of the states east of the Mississippi River.
- Their favorite area of the United States is: Acadia National Park & Bar Harbor, Maine.
- Bucket list: Nova Scotia, Canada, National Parks in the Northwest, and No. & So. Dakota. He wants to go to Alaska, but Linda does not!
- Wayne's favorite thing about motorhoming is the travel convenience & ability to be outside.
- Linda enjoys taking their 'own home' to see relatives & friends, and does not like hotels!
- Wayne's 33 year career: retired in 2010 as a Division Controller / specialty: cost & budgets.
- His outdoor hobbies: golf, fishing & hunting.
- Linda's 30 year LPN career: retired in 2007; the OR / for a doctor / & her favorite - psych.
- Hobbies: computers & flying model airplanes.



Rick & Tami Gingras

Hometown: Iron Mountain, Michigan
Interviewed in St. Ignace, Michigan

- Rick & Tami own a 2012 Allegro Open Road 36QDB with a V10 Triton on a Ford Chassis.
- They have been married 29 years.
- They have 3 daughters: LeAnn lives in Iron Mountain, MI; Kathryn is a student at Lake State Univ. in Sault Ste. Marie; & Rikki is a student at St. Norbert Univ. in Green Bay, WI.
- Schnauzers Fritz (8) & Lulu (1) travel w/them.
- Rick & Tami have owned 6 RVs. This is their 1st Tiffin & in the 3 months they've owned it they have traveled 3,000 miles in 3 states.
- Motivation to begin RVing in 1999 was to see the U.S. & discover where they'd like to retire.
- Rick & Tami share driving 50/50 and always discuss who is going to drive. They prefer to drive 300-350 mi/day & travel 3-4 mo/year.
- Rick says when they leave the driveway the vacation begins; Tami loves adventure and change; & they both enjoy meeting people.
- They like the mountain scenery in the West.
- Their bucket list includes: traveling the East Coast from Boston to the Carolinas to Florida.
- Rick has had a 30 yr. marketing and finance career and plans to retire in 10 years.
- His hobbies include snowmobiling, RVing & being outdoors.
- Tami has been a 2nd thru 9th grade teacher for 28 years and will also retire in 10 years.
- Her hobbies are reading, camping, cooking, decorating and all things creative!

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 40QBH.



OKLAHOMA!

Where the Wind Still Blows Free But Water Covers Much of the Land

As Rogers and Hammerstein penned in that famous song, wind does come “sweeping down the plains” in Oklahoma. At least half of it. But that song talked about a bygone era.

Things have changed. Great man-made dams and natural waterways make the other half, predominantly the eastern portion, a paradise for fishing and virtually every water sport.

The state boasts 700,000 acres of surface water lined by hundreds of miles of shoreline, much of it bounded

by hardwood and pine forests that cover 23 per cent of the state. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineer’s Tulsa District manages 28 Oklahoma lakes, locks and dams built since it came into being in 1939. Those and at least 13 more lakes and 78,500 miles of rivers and streams make Oklahoma a water playground that likely contributes as

much to the state’s economy as its storied farms and ranches.

Fishing, boating, sail boating, golf, paddling, hunting, wildlife watching, birding, equestrian activity, camping, hiking, mountain biking, off-roading, rock climbing, ATV tripping, scuba diving

and even white water rafting are among sports residents and visitors enjoy on and around these waters.

Across the state, 35 well-equipped and maintained state parks cater to travelers, 22 of them around lakes in the eastern part of the state. Most have RV sites.

In addition, motorhome tourists can dock in many public Corps of Engineers camps and full-service private RV resorts around these waters.

Intrigued by all this, we loaded the Allegro and headed for Oklahoma. Any hope of sampling much of this water wonderland in a single 10-day trip was short-lived. That idea sank, in fact, like a diving greenhead mallard after one good look at a map. Too many lakes too big to “do” in a few days. So we limited our tour to just four – and left wishing we had more time to stay at each.

Grand Lake O’ the Cherokees

Our tour began at Grand Lake O’ the Cherokees in Oklahoma’s northeastern corner. We docked the motorhome at Cedar Oaks RV Resort in Grove, on the eastern side of the lake. There we unhooked our trusty little Tracker tow car to explore some of the 1300 miles of shoreline that surround 46,500 surface acres of water best known among fishermen for largemouth bass, sand bass, channel catfish, crappie and bluegill. In less than three hours, we enjoyed magnificent lake views and passed some of the eight state parks, five golf courses and dozens of marinas and boat ramps on and near the lake. Seeing this 76-mile long impoundment is to understand why so many return year after year and others just decide to stay forever.

Grand Lake lies behind the mile-long, 51-arch Pensacola Dam, one of the world’s largest of its type. Approaching it from Disney, a town at Pensacola’s eastern end, we drove across the top of the dam, riding at one point 150 feet above the downstream valley, a memorable eye feast. At the dam’s western end, we arrived at the Grand River Dam Authority’s Ecosystems & Education Center in Langley. We signed on for one of the free tours that run from 9 to 4 every day between Memorial Day and Labor Day, including holidays (918-782-4726 or tours@grda.com). Tours last about an hour and, for those who elect to go inside the dam, require negotiating over 40 stair steps.

An orientation movie and our friendly tour guide, Jackie Jaggers, made it plain why Pensacola is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The project was envisioned in the late 1800s by Henry C. Holderman as a way to supply electric power to the Cherokee Nation in Indian Territory. Federal funding finally was approved by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on September 18, 1937. News that thousands of jobs would open in a nation still recovering from a great depression caused a migration reminiscent of the great Oklahoma Land Rush of 1889. Oklahoma’s first hydro-

Sunset over Tenkiller Lake

Text by Norman Spray
Photography by Rhonda Spray



Duffers Tee off at Shangri-La, one of five golf courses available to Grand Lake visitors. • On the floor of the Starbird Museum are two dozen Starbird originals plus over 40 one-of-a-kind vehicles on loan for exhibit. It was like visiting a car factory that never was. Some of these, like a 1978 XJS Jaguar “J Bird” were familiar to us (as they looked before customizing). Others, who knew? • Lendonwood Gardens turns colorful with over 500 varieties of daylilies and other flowers, like the big bloom hydrangeas shown here.

electric project then steamed ahead at an amazing pace. Some 3,000 workers, many “common laborers” who earned an average of about \$16 a week, completed the dam in just three years on Oct. 4, 1940. They excavated 1.6 million cubic yards of earth and rock, laid in nearly 24 million pounds of reinforcing steel, and poured 510,000 cubic yards of concrete using 625,000 barrels of cement. Thirteen men lost their lives but many were saved by nets strung beneath the massive 60-foot span arches. These same nets had been used earlier building San Francisco’s Golden Gate Bridge.

Take the dam tour and you’ll see a power house 279 feet long, 72 feet wide, and 80 feet high. In it six generators grind out electricity for much of Northeastern Oklahoma. Income from sale of power funds most Grand River Dam Authority activity, making it self-supporting though it is a state agency. Our tour convinced us: if you visit Grand Lake, put Pensacola Dam at the head of your must-see list. If you are lucky, as were we, you may get a ride in a golf cart with our guide Jackie, sometimes called the “backup queen” honoring her locally famed but dubious golf cart backing skill.

At Sailboat Bridge, where U.S. 59 crosses a half-mile arm of the lake north of Grove, we boarded the Grande Belle, a paddle-wheel riverboat look-alike, for a two and a half hour dinner cruise. We rated the barbecue buffet average but the blue waters and shoreline vistas provided natural ambience no restaurant could duplicate. Formerly known as the Cherokee Queen, this old riverboat replica slipped past large, lovely, obviously expensive, lakeside homes on both Monkey Island and Grove shorelines. From some built atop cliffs, it seemed residents could reach their docks only by climbing challenging stair cases, some as steep as ladders. The Grande Belle gave us a pleasant cruise, skimming over smooth water and blessed by a cool evening breeze that made open decks comfortable. Afternoon and evening cruises are offered Tuesdays through Sundays. Reserve at 918-786-4272.

Monkey Island, a 3500-acre, seven-miles long peninsula in the center of the widest part of Grand Lake, is noted for shopping and as a “laid back party place” with 18 restaurants or clubs, some with seasonal live entertainment and dance floors. We didn’t have time for partying but we did find the best, even “guaranteed” (by the owner), fried catfish on the lake at the water-side Quarter Deck. We did not cash in on the “guarantee.” The fish was *that* good.

Driving down SR125 toward the tip of Monkey Island, we were awed by the immaculate, pristine links of the Shangri La Golf

Har-Ber Village got its start on the shores of Grand Lake when trucking magnate Harvey Jones built this little church for his wife, Bernice. When intrigued boaters started coming ashore for a closer look, Bernice said it'd be nice to also have a parsonage. Harvey found one. More people came and an idea developed. Over subsequent years, the late Joneses moved in over 100 buildings, many of them authentic log cabins, and furnished them with antiques used 100 years ago. Walking through their legacy is like reading a history of how things were in pioneer days in this part of the country. • Two fishermen try their luck in the deep waters lapping against Pensacola Dam at Lake O' the Cherokees. Visible behind their boat are intake works which feed water that drives six hydroelectric generators. The dam spans the lake between the towns of Disney and Langley, Oklahoma.

course. Here 27 holes, including an 18-hole championship course, are laid out on an inviting carpet of green. Also on the island are three full service marinas that rent boats and personal watercraft, and arrange parasailing junkets and guided fishing trips.

Just west of Monkey Island (couldn't find out how the peninsula got that name), we stopped at Daryl Starbird's National Rod & Custom Car Hall of Fame on SR 95A, attracted to the entrance of the 80-acre site by a "Wild Stang," a rebuilt Ford Mustang mounted on huge tractor-sized tires. Donna Starbird, the famous custom car builder's wife, welcomed us to the museum.

Wandering through was like visiting a car factory that never was. On the floors were some two dozen originals that Starbird himself face-lifted, rebuilt, or built from scratch plus another 40 or so cars on loan by other aficionados. Some of these cars we knew. Some we'd never heard of, ranging from a "Crystal Ball Merc" Mercury to a "Big T" toy model Starbird built full-size for the Monogram Model Company.

The Starbird museum opens 11-5 Wednesdays through Sundays or by appointment at other hours. The fee is minimal and, when she's there, there's no extra charge for the information you'll get from the personable Ms. Starbird (918-257-4234, www.darrylstarbird.com).

In south Grove, we turned west off U.S. 59 onto Har-Ber Road for two fascinating attractions: Lendonwood Gardens, six acres of over 1200 plant species displayed under tall, shading oak trees; and unique Har-Ber Village, a beautifully-landscaped re-constructed turn-of-the-century village featuring over 100 old buildings, many of them log cabins, literally packed with authentic antiques used 100 years ago.

At Lendonwood, we wandered through six different floral areas, beginning with the Oriental, English Terrace, American Backyard, and Azalea gardens. Species in these areas bloom and splash color in different seasons. Contributing are some 500 varieties of daylilies, 75 different Japanese maples, 125 hosta varieties, dogwoods, the largest rhododendron collection in the southwest, mums, snapdragons and others. There's a cascading stream with waterfalls and Japanese Pavilion overlooking a scenic koi pond. At a tranquil opening, a bronze sculpture "Angel of Hope" stands surrounded by memorial bricks, inviting visitors to remember lost loved ones.

Tours are self-guided. There's no admission charge but Len-



donwood suggests a \$5 donation per person. Gardens are open year-round during daylight hours (918-786-2938 or www.lendonwood.com).

Some two miles further west, we were welcomed at the entrance to Har-Ber Village by statues of Harvey and Bernice Jones, the deceased couple who spent a fortune and untold thousands of hours building this amazing place "in a sincere effort to preserve for future generations the way of life as experienced by our forefathers who carved out of the wilderness this wonderful country we know and enjoy today."

Situated on a slope overlooking Grand Lake are streets lined by some 116 cabins, village shops, a one-room school house and even a courthouse, and a replica of the 13-step Hanging Gallows used by "Hanging Judge" Parker at Fort Smith, Arkansas. This "labor of love" began after Harvey Jones, a trucking entrepreneur, bought lakeside acreage for a summer home in 1944. In 1968, Harvey built Bernice a church overlooking the lake, using bricks hand-made before the Civil War that came from three huge fireplaces in a home in War Eagle, Arkansas. A pulpit was moved in from





the Zion Methodist Church, six miles southeast of Springdale, Arkansas, home of the Jones' trucking company. A marble statue of Christ, sent from Italy, stands in front of this small church.

When fascinated vacationing boaters on the lake started coming ashore for closer examination of the church, Bernice thought it would be nice to add a cabin "for the parson." Harvey found one built in the 1840s and recreated it log by log. An idea grew. A one-room school with original desks was found near Goshen, Arkansas and moved on site. Other buildings were added over the years and furnished with authentic antiques, many purchased at auctions over five states. Clothing, furniture, housewares, farm implements, toys, vehicles, and tools of many trades are displayed. Har-Ber (first three letters of each of the Jones' names) boasts the largest collection of log cabins in the Midwest, including one from Arkansas' Boston Mountains that was rebuilt without level or square.

Har-Ber Village is open to tourists March 15 through November 15 (918-786-6446 or har-bervillage.com).

Lake Tenkiller

There was much undone and much yet to explore when we pulled onto SR 82 for a 40-mile drive south through Tahlequah and on to Tenkiller Ferry Lake, "Oklahoma's Clear Water Wonderland," in the Cookson Hills. Much smaller than Grand Lake, Tenkiller is deepest of all the state's lakes, 165 feet deep in some places. When we arrived late in the afternoon, deep blue water sparkled under a golden sunset, creating a favorable impression that lingers still.

Tenkiller waters are clear from eight to 28 feet, we learned, making it popular for scuba diving. Divers skirting sloping hills and rock cliffs sometimes find sunken vehicles, planes, boats and, in places, homestead artifacts left behind and covered when the lake filled. With Oklahoma fishing licenses, divers can also try spearfishing.

Fed by the Illinois River and the Barron Fork, Tenkiller has 12,900 surface acres of water and over 130 miles of shoreline facing Cookson Hills that rise to 200 feet above water level in places. Around the lake are 10 marinas, four with floating restaurants and three with RV hookups; two state parks; 14 Corps campgrounds, six of which accommodate RVs; and over 20 boat launching ramps.

We visited with Don and Linda Bickel who were camping in their motorhome. They live in Sallisaw and frequently visit Oklahoma lakes, using their boat for fishing and cruising. Don, a former high school band director retired since the year 2000, lists Tenkiller as a favorite but says he and Linda also like Lake Eufaula, Oklahoma's largest, and Lake Texoma, second largest. "We have grandsons, one six and one ten. The clear waters here



Clockwise from left: View from dam overlook at Tenkiller Ferry Lake. One of the lake's three hiking trails starts here. • Oklahoma has 78,500 miles of rivers and streams. Hard to imagine any more lovely than this bend of the lower Illinois River below the Lake Tenkiller Dam at Marval Resort, Gore, Oklahoma. Here it's enjoyed by wanders and anglers alike. • This dam at Lake Eufaula holds 105,000 surface acres of water behind it. That's SR 71 crossing the top of the dam. • Cherokee Heritage Center Guide Donnay Leach explains how Cherokees continue the bowl-making art of their ancestors.

are good for their tubing and swimming.

"Wherever we go, we look for an RV resort that has boat slips so we don't have to pull the boat in every night." The Bickels often fish for crappie, which they consider among the best for the table but, at Tenkiller, "we've filled an icebox with good perch."

Tenkiller's hydroelectric dam and power house at the Southwestern tip of the lake, an impressive structure, was completed in 1953. At an overlook here, we had an admirable view of the lake, the dam, and the Illinois River flowing south downstream. One of Tenkiller's three hiking trails that vary from a mile and a fourth to over two miles long starts at this overlook. All three of the trails are easy hikes. Be sure to do at least one of them.

A side trip to the Cherokee Heritage Center in Park Hill, a Tahlequah suburb that lies a few miles north of the lake, proved interesting and educational. We were captivated—and in ways appalled—viewing Cherokee National Museum displays, historical decrees, art, cultural objects and relics documenting what happened to the Cherokee people before and during that infamous 1830s Trail of Tears march.

Guide Donnay Leach, herself a full-blooded Cherokee, ushered us through a replica of a mid-18th century "Cherokee Township" made to look like it would have to the first European explorers and settlers. She showed us through family winter and summer homes and a large "council house," all with thatch-like roofs made of river cane. Her accuracy with a blowgun enthralled us as did a "stickball"



demonstration. She told us how her people made baskets and pots which we saw and admired (www.cherokeeheritage.org).

From Tenkiller, we moved a few miles south to Gore, Oklahoma, and a pull-through, full-hookup space at Marval Resort, a lovely shaded complex on the banks of the lower Illinois River below the Tenkiller dam. Families camped (or

rooming) here enjoyed swimming, tubing and fishing the flowing, cool waters of the river.

With 100,000 rainbow trout released each year along a 12-mile stretch of the river below the dam, trout fishing is good any month of the year. One of three sites where these trout are stocked, Marval is popular among fly and bait fishermen.



Nature trails, a swimming pool, and a nine-hole mini golf course are among Marval's amenities.

Lake Eufaula

Our first look at Lake Eufaula as we approached from the north on U.S. 69 left us wondering if we'd just driven upon the world's biggest muddy stock tank instead of Oklahoma's largest lake. Unlike the blue waters we'd admired at Tenkiller, our eyes now locked on miles of brownish water the North and South Canadian and the Deep Fork Rivers flow into this giant reservoir.

That impression, we soon learned, was partly an erroneous result of the lighting at that time of day and, more significantly, did not describe other clearer stretches of the lake. In the town of Eufaula, we pulled into the Yogi Bear Jellystone Park, unhooked the Tracker and headed for the shoreline roads.

There was more than we could do in a day, or maybe even a month. With more than 600 miles of shoreline, we found natural beauty at every bay and cove, ranging from friendly sandy beaches to wooded meadows, lofty hills and rocky cliffs with expansive lake views. It was easy to imagine how delightful sightseeing would be when spring wildflowers bloom or when falling temperatures color hardwood foliage in October and November.

Finding suitable motorhome hook-ups should be easy in any season. Lake Eufaula State Park, Arrowhead State Park, four Corps parks, and numerous private RV parks in surrounding communities offer hundreds of spaces.

Eufaula's 105,000 surface acres of water spread out in four directions behind a 3,200 feet rolled earth dam structure that rises 114 feet above the stream bed at maximum height. We followed Oklahoma Hwy 71 across the crest of the dam, then took a side road to the downstream riverbank. Picnickers and fish-

ermen seemed unmindful of our presence studying and photographing the spillway and outlet works and its 40-by-32-foot electrically-operated tainter gates, 11 of them.

Relatively shallow, Eufaula's mean depth is 23 feet though it is 87 feet deep at one spot. Construction on the project, designed and built under supervision of the Tulsa District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, began in 1956. The last of three generators started producing power in September, 1964. President Lyndon B. Johnson dedicated Eufaula September 25th of that year. Now the lake not only controls floods and produces electricity as it was built to do but has become a water playground with myriad attractions.

Fishing, best in the spring and fall, yields striped bass, largemouth bass, white bass, crappie, catfish, walleye, and sunfishes. Several golf courses, including one in Lake Eufaula State Park, are within easy reach for duffers. At Deep Fork Nature Center, visitors learn about native plant species and wildlife. Numerous hiking and nature trails are available. One we visited, the Younger Bend Trail, begins at the Memorial Overlook at the dam. Named after an old town that got its name from outlaw Cole Younger, the trail winds along bluff tops, dips, then climbs again, and eventually temporarily follows part of an old wagon trail rumored to have been used by Belle Starr, "Queen of the Bandits." Also popular: Bluebird Trail, Crowder Point Nature Trail, and Terrapin Trail. Mountain bike trails and places for ATV travel are open for those who bring or rent vehicles.

Civil War buffs visiting Lake Eufaula might want to go to Checotah, just a few miles northeast of the lake, to visit Honey Springs Battlefield Memorial Park on the site where 9,000 troops fought that war's largest battle in Indian Territory on July 17, 1863. There's an interpretive center and trails to places

Lake Texoma's nearly 600 miles of shoreline ranges from prairie to woods to cliffs. This is but one of many lovely scenes that enthrall visitors on both the Oklahoma and Texas (south) sides of this big lake.

where the Union army rested after marching 25 miles; where the Union lined up to bombard the Confederates; where the Confederates waited at the main battle line; where the battle for the bridge was fought; where the final fight happened; and the site of the Confederate headquarters. This battle will be re-enacted 150 years later on Saturday, November 9th and again on Sunday, November 10th this year. The show begins at 1 p.m. each day.

It's one thing that does not have a lake view that you might want to schedule if you're planning a pre-Thanksgiving getaway to Eufaula (918-473-5572).

Lake Texoma

From Eufaula, we turned south again on U.S. 69, this time to Lake Texoma, Oklahoma's second largest with 89,000 surface acres that lap over the state line into north Texas. The visit here was surprising and, to us, evidence that sometimes we know less about attractions under our noses than in distant places we visit. We'd never before seen this great lake, only 75 miles north of home base in Bedford, Texas. Just had no idea how much we'd been missing.

We didn't come close to driving all the 580 miles of shoreline surrounding Texoma, but the expansive views and ameni-

ties we observed in both states made it obvious why nearly seven million visitors come here every year. Texoma ranks among the most visited of all Corps of Engineers projects or, for that matter, any Federal recreation facility. Though second to Lake Eufaula in water surface, Texoma is Oklahoma's largest in capacity (2,525,568 acre feet) and twelfth largest in the U.S. This immensity first came into focus for us soon after we headed west out of Durant on U.S. 70. Miles and miles of 100-foot deep blue water glistened on both north and south sides as we passed over the mile-long Roosevelt Memorial Bridge spanning a wide arm a bit north of the lake's mid-point.

At the west end of the bridge, we turned into Texoma State Park, surely one of Oklahoma's best with 308 spaces, most of which have great views of open waters of the lake or Catfish Bay. Of these spaces, 88 offer water, sewer, and electricity (30/50). Fifteen are pull-throughs (580-564-2566, TravelOK.com/TexomaSP).

There's a swimming beach, a golf course, and a full marina that also rents paddleboats, pontoon boats, and canoes. Catfish Bay Marina within the park also is home of the Texoma Striper Guide Service, making it a convenient place for fishermen to connect with guides who know where the fish are.

And fishing for striped bass is a big deal. A certain balance of naturally-occurring mineral salts make Texoma one of only seven lakes in the U.S. where stripers reproduce naturally and find shad and other food to reach maturity weighing up to 20

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Lake Texoma State Park, looking across Catfish Bay

Where to Camp

Grand Lake

Six state parks around Grand Lake have RV hookups

Bernice. 33 water/electric (W/E) sites, dump.

918-786-9447. TravelOK.com/Bernice.

Cherokee near Langley. 13 W/E/S sites and 30 W/E sites, 918-435-8066.

TravelOK.com/CherokeeArea.

Honey Creek, south of Grove. 49 W/E sites.

918-786-9447.

TravelOK.com/HoneyCreek.

Snowdale, near Salina. 17 W/E sites. 918-435-8066.

TravelOK.com/Snowdale.

Spanview near town. 26 W/E sites. 918-435-8066.

Twin Bridges, near Fairland. 63 W/E sites, dump.

918-542-6969. TravelOK.com/TwinBridges.

Privately owned campsites include

Near Grove

Cedar Oaks RV Resort. W/E/S, (50/30) 125 spaces.

918-786-4303 or 800-880-8884.

www.cedaroaksvr.com.

Lakewood Village, 30 W/E sites, dump. 918-786-4836.

www.lakewoodvillageok.com

Lee's Grand Lake Resort. 6 W/E sites, dump.

918-786-4289. www.leesresort.com.

Near Jay

Pine Island RV Resort. 171 spaces, dump. 918-786-9071.

www.pineislandrvresort.com.

Near Ketchum

Pine Lodge. 28 W/E, dump. 919-782-1400 or

800-640-3173. www.pinelodgeresort.com.

Water's Edge RV & Cabin Resort. 918-782-1444.

www.watersedgerv.com.

Near Afton

Grand Country Lakeside RV Park. 82 full hookups, (30/50), 42 W/E sites, dump. 918-257-5164.

www.grandlakeareainfo.com.

Tenkiller and the Lower Illinois River

Near Park Hill

Cherokee Landing State Park. North end of lake's west bank.

92 W/E sites including pull-throughs, dump.

918-457-5716. TravelOK.com/Cherokee/Landing.

Burnt Cabin Marina. 24 W/E sites, dump. 918-457-5421.

www.burntcabin.com.

Petit Bay (Public Corps). 93 sites, 5 pull-throughs, 24 W, 7S,

74 E (30/50), dump. 918-487-5252.

Near Cookson on the eastern shore

Four public Corps campgrounds

Chicken Creek Campground. 101 Back-ins, 30/50 amp, only 64 have water hookups.

Elk Creek Landing. 41 back-ins, 18 electric (30 amp).

Cookson Bend. 121 back-ins, 7 W, 47 E (30/50 amp), dump.

Snake Creek Campground. 112 sites, 7 pull-throughs, 5 full hookups, 104 E (30/50), dump. 918-487-5252.

Near Black Gum and Tenkiller Dam, south end of lake

Tenkiller State Park. 43 W/E/S sites. 918-459-5641.

TravelOK.com/Tenkiller.

Near Gore, south end of Lake Tenkiller

Strayhorn Landing (Public Corps). 40 sites, 1 pull-through, 2 S, 40E (30 amp), dump. 918-487-5252.

Marval Resort. 112 sites, 43 pull-throughs, 46 full hookups, 66 W/E (30/50), dump. 800-340-4280.

info@marvalresort.com.

Lake Eufaula

In and near town of Eufaula (locations near U.S. 69)

Lake Eufaula State Park, formerly *Fountainhead*. 34 W/E/S

sites, 65 W/E, dump. 18-hole Fountainhead Creek Golf

Course. 918-689-5311. TravelOK.com/EufaulaSP

Arrowhead State Park. 20 W/E/S sites; 71 W/E, dump. 18-hole golf course. 918-339-2204.

TravelOK.com/Arrowhead.

Yogi Bear Jellystone Park. 22 full hookup sites, 11 pull-throughs, (30/50), dump. 918-689-9644.

Lakeview Landing & RV Park. Full hookups, pull-throughs. 918-452-2736.

Eufaula RV Park. 16 full W/E/S hookups. 405-501-3740 or 405-682-2447.

Gentry Creek (Corps park on far north shore north of I-40). 33 sites, no slide-outs, 3 pull-throughs, 15 W/E, (30 amp). 918-799-5843.

Town of Crowder

City of Crowder RV Park. 30 full hookup sites, (30/50).

First come-first served. Information at Crowder C of C. 918-334-3700.

Crowder Point East (Corps park). 26 W/E back-in sites, dump. 918-484-5135.

Corps Parks on east side of lake

Belle Starr South. 120 sites, 24 pull-throughs, 120 E (30 amp), dump. 918-799-5843.

Belle Starr North. 13 sites, no slide-outs, back-ins, 13 E (30 amp), dump. 918-689-2132.

Highway 9 Landing. 73 sites, no slide-outs, 15 E.

918-799-5843.

Porum Landing. 53 sites, 2 pull-throughs, 45 E (30 amp). 918-799-5843.

Checotah

Terra Starr RV Park. 300 sites, 16 pull-throughs, 150 full W/E/S, others W/E, dump. 918-689-7094,

www.TerrastarrRVPark.com.

Checotah KOA RV Lake Resort. 69 full hookup sites, 55 pull-throughs (30/50). 918-473-6511.

koa@gotsky.com.

Lake Texoma

Best way to learn about and/or reserve Texoma RV facilities:

Lake Texoma Association. 580-564-2334 or

www.laketexoma.com/camping.

The Association lists pertinent data about 22 Corps campgrounds, state parks, and private parks, marinas and resorts with RV hookups around the Oklahoma towns of Kingston, Mead, Cartwright, and Madill, and the Texas towns of Pittsboro, Gordonville, Denison, and Sadler.

pounds. Preferred target of many anglers, striped bass nevertheless share these waters with 70 other species, among them small and largemouth bass, white bass, hybrid striper, white and black crappie, and record-size channel and blue catfish. Several years back, one lucky angler landed a 125 pound blue, then the rod and reel record. Most marinas and many other businesses sell Lake Texoma fishing licenses that are good on both Oklahoma and Texas waters.

Texoma's expansive open waters and quiet coves lend themselves to a variety of water sports. We saw power boats, sail boats, house boats, personal watercraft, people skiing, and wind surfing. Party boats cruise out of several marinas.

There are shore attractions as well. A variety of golf courses await. There's a 40-mile equestrian trail for horse people. The popular Cross Timbers trail, one of many, takes hikers 14 miles over rocky ledges with picturesque lake views and through blackjack oak woods.


Two wildlife refuges, together covering 30,000 acres, host migratory birds and native wildlife. During migration, thousands of Canada, Snow, Greater White Fronted and Ross's geese flock into the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge at the lake's south-eastern tip in Texas and the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge at the lake's northern end in Oklahoma. Shorebirds and mallard, northern shoveler, northern pintail, and green-winged teal duck species show up at different times.

At Hagerman, visitors taking a four-mile drive through wetlands, croplands, and alongside water sometimes spot whitetail deer, wild turkey, bobcats, armadillos, rabbits, river otters, and turtles.

Hunting is allowed on 90,000 acres. State licensing and regulations apply. In season, hunters go for whitetail deer, wild turkey, feral hogs, small game, dove, migratory game birds and certain waterfowl.

Texoma filled after the Denison Dam, then the country's largest rolled, earth-filled project, was built between the years 1939 and 1944 to capture waters from the Red River, flowing from the west, and the Washita, coming from the north. About five miles northwest of Denison, Texas, the dam stands partly in Bryan County, Oklahoma and partly in Grayson County, Texas. Two generators produce hydroelectric power. Several cities draw water from Texoma for domestic use.

Like Oklahoma, Texas has a premier park on Lake Texoma. Eisenhower State Park, named after the nation's 34th president who was born in Denison, is on the southern edge of the lake near Denison. It has 95 RV sites, 50 of them pull-through, full hookups (903-465-1956).

In addition to the state parks, 15 public Corps camps occupy strategic sites around the lake, 11 of which have electric and water hookup and dumps. More than two dozen privately-owned marinas and resorts have RV pads. In total, there are more than 1,000 camp sites, some primitive and some with full RV hookups. 

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The Hitching Post in Ocala, Florida

By Dave McClellan

After purchasing a 16-ft. tandem axle trailer in Ocala, Florida, I needed information regarding the best method to tow my car on the trailer. I knew I needed to measure the tongue weight with my car on the trailer. A fellow motorhome owner suggested The Hitching Post in Ocala as being a reliable company to address any kind of towing situation. Jay Skone, the owner, had one of his employees use a special scale to measure the tongue weight. They told me the trailer tongue was too heavy with the car positioned with the engine toward the front and that it would be best to back the car on the trailer. I reversed the car and got a perfect tongue weight that would not cause any harm to the trailer or strain my motorhome receiver and undercarriage. I pulled the trailer and car 1,200 miles back to Massachusetts without any problems. I was very pleased and confident with the information and help I received.

Started in 1970, the company fabricated and welded custom hitches from steel components. Over the years, The Hitching Post became the largest installer of Draw-Tite and Reese hitches in Central Florida.

Current owner Jay Skone was born in Minnesota and raised in Atlanta. After college he was hired to manage a campus research project for IBM. Eventually he became the manager of the IT department of an Ocala manufacturer. After the company was sold and downsized, Jay realized he was burned out from working 80-hour weeks.

Brian Skone, Jay's father, had moved to a horse farm in Ocala in 1986 and purchased his first motorhome. As a customer of The Hitching Post for hitches, baseplates, tow bars, and braking systems, he got to know the owner, Bill Chalker. Bill mentioned to Brian that at age 74 he was ready to sell the business.

Brian, knowing his son Jay's frustration with his current job and Bill's interest in selling the business, set up a meeting. Jay quit his high paying job and went to work for Bill at The Hitching Post for \$8.00 per hour. After six months, Bill agreed to sell The Hitching Post to Jay in 2006. At that time the majority of the business was auto trailer hitches and trailer repairs for private individuals, building contractors, and dealerships. At the time of the purchase, approximately 10 percent of the business was from RVers.

On a recent visit to the Hitching Post, Jay gave me a demonstration of his state-of-the-art computer program. You look up the vehicle and within a second it tells you (1) which hitch mounts on a specific car or truck, (2) the correct wiring kit, (3) if it's in stock, and (4) the cost, plus a lot of other pertinent information. As a demonstration, Jay pulled up the correct data for my 1986 Mustang GT convertible, and he had the hitch

on the shelf! The Hitching Post currently stocks nearly every hitch from year 2000 to the present and some even earlier. If he doesn't have it, it can be available the next day, or in some cases the same day. Stocked hitches are all neatly stacked or hung on shelves in a special area of the shop.

Owning a Phaeton motorhome, I know how important it is to be able to park overnight at a service facility. The Hitching Post has two 50-amp hookups available for guests who are waiting for service or parts, and there is ample room for large motorhomes to park and navigate around the building.

At the present time, the company is one of the largest dealers in Florida for sales and installation of Blue Ox, Demco, Remco, SMI and RVI brake systems, and Brake Buddy products.

The Hitching Post is also an authorized repair center for Aqua-Hot and has technicians who have trained at Aqua-Hot headquarters. Another plus for motorhome owners is the repair service they provide for RV washers and dryers.

The Hitching Post has added a sales department for LED lights. They have a new E-Commerce web site that has become one of the leading online retailers of replacement LED bulbs for existing RVs. www.rvledbulbs.com/Default.asp. On their website, The Hitching Post has set up an exclusive 10% discount code for Tiffin motorhome owners. Use code "Tiffin" at check out.

The Hitching Post is conveniently located just off Interstate 75 at 2616 NW 8th Place, Ocala FL 34475. Give them a call at (352) 629-0756 or toll free at (800) 241-2122.

Your comments are welcomed: Hapy1Luky2@hotmail.com

Lifeline Batteries Sets the Bar for Quality

By Andrew Finkelstein

Lifeline is the original equipment battery of choice for more than 150 marine and RV manufacturers. They are known around the globe as a sealed, maintenance free, AGM deep cycle, superior battery. Lifeline batteries are built by the Concorde Battery Corporation, certified under the aerospace standard ISO 9001 + AS9100, using the same manufacturing standards as aircraft batteries built for and installed by airframe manufacturers.

Lifeline batteries are manufactured to the United States Military Standard, also known as MilSpec, an accurate process to meet or exceed certain specifications and detailed military requirements. The batteries built by Concorde, a defense supplier, are on the military's Qualified Product List. These batteries are adopted by military forces worldwide.

Lifeline batteries are also certified as UL Registered components. A certification with the UL (Underwriter's Laboratories) mark of approval means that Lifeline batteries have been evaluated for product safety, durability, and performance. Consumers

can be confident that Lifeline Batteries have been independently evaluated as a safe and proven product for RV installations.


Lifeline is a U.S. family-owned and operated company with more than 35 years of experience in the industry. The manufacturing and engineering staff is comprised of experts selected to write military specifications and participate in setting national and international battery standards.

All Lifeline batteries are constructed to the highest standards, giving operators a proven, reliable deep cycle battery. Superior lead acid performance can be attributed to AGM maintenance-free technology, unique design features such as proprietary PolyGuard® separators with an additional layer of protection against shorting which is unique to Lifeline, thicker plate construction than the industry standard, and robust intercell connections to deliver a durable and safe product with extended life. Because they're sealed, all Lifeline batteries ship Hazmat Exempt via land, air or sea.

In an RV, there are size and weight considerations that need to be addressed when building a battery bank. It is best to size the battery bank as closely as possible to the intended application. Someone who spends most of their time hooked to shore power in campgrounds will require less battery power capacity than others who spend more time dry camping. To correctly select the size of the battery bank, an owner needs to know that the deeper the batteries are discharged, the shorter the battery life. Another key contributor to battery life is the methods used to recharge the batteries. With proper voltage regulation there is virtually no limit to the number of amps an owner can use to charge. Lifeline recommends a delivery of no less than twenty percent of the capacity (in amperage) of the battery bank to recharge for optimal performance. The low internal resistance of Lifeline AGM batteries can equate to a significant reduction in recharge time.

With today's loads on an RV system, preserving the life of the battery is important. After all, the battery is *the heart of your system*®. Owners should give some thought to the storage battery bank if the RV is not hooked up to an external power source that allows the charger to keep the batteries topped off. A parasitic load is a long-term, low drain that can deeply discharge the batteries, discharging more than what occurs with a normal load. Repeated deep discharges will shorten battery life substantially. Parasitic loads are present in almost all modern RVs and examples include relays, clocks, radios, and any on-board computers. If an owner is going to store his RV without access to a power source, he should disconnect the battery bank by removing the negative cables after checking to see that the batteries are fully charged. This can also be achieved by installing a battery disconnect switch.

Lifeline doesn't stop at simply providing batteries. An Owner's Manual is included with every battery and the company encourages Lifeline battery users or prospects to call or email

them directly for any technical assistance. The tech assistance number is 800-527-3224. Email questions to andrew@lifeline-batteries.com Lifeline is committed to providing outstanding customer support by a professional staff with decades of experience in RV battery systems. With Lifeline's support team, owners can focus their attention on more important things—like enjoying the experience of RVing. 

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Riding the Piney Woods Steam Excursion

Steam locomotives still run on East Texas railroad

The train behind a 112-year-old steam locomotive glides smoothly down rails shaded by pine, oak and hickory trees up to 100 feet tall. Looks green and inviting but the outside temperature is 102 degrees. It is August in Texas. Nevertheless, air conditioning in our coach has us cool as cucumbers as an attendant delivers iced sodas and coffee to our white-clothed table.

We're enjoying the Texas State Railroad's 25-mile steam train run between Palestine and Rusk in east Texas, riding in comfort that early-day passengers could hardly have imagined when tracks were first laid here 132 years ago. Called the Piney Woods Steam Excursion, the railroad boards passengers on two trains every weekend from March through December. One leaves Palestine and another departs Rusk at the same 11 a.m. time.

Though hardly an exact replay of how travel was "way back then," the smoke-blowing, steam-hissing locomotives that pull these trains are authentic relics of railroading's illustrious past.

"This is the smoothest operation of its kind I've ever been on," says Rhonda, my daughter and the photographer documenting this trip. I'm thinking she may be right. We and 125 or so other riders have been greeted with smiles and classic south-

ern hospitality during check-in and ticketing. Awaiting departure, we've all had opportunity to study historical railroad displays in an interpretive center, then step inside the locomotive's cab to see the engineer's controls. Then the train left the station precisely on schedule.

Now Engine 316 sends up a cloud of smoke and blows out occasional wisps of steam as we rumble through thick woods beside creek bottoms at 20 to 25 miles per hour. The engineer, who today happens to be Texas State Railroad General Manager Earl Knoob, blasts the traditional whoo-whoop whistle and clangs the bell at crossings.

We're fortunate to be in one of two climate-controlled "Lone Star" passenger coaches that, with three other cars, make up the train this day. One is open-air with bench seating that may get

some smoke. Two others have windows that open and shut.

About halfway into the one and one-half hour trip to Rusk, Engineer Knoob slows the train, then we stop. Poking heads out an open window, we see why. The sister train that left the Rusk depot at the same time we left Palestine is coming at us, smoke billowing. Engine 300, its boiler painted bright red, chugs onto the 660-foot Mewshaw siding and stops its cars alongside us.

Brakemen debark to supervise transfer of the few passengers who have opted for a "halfway ride." Instead of continuing eastward to Rusk, they'll move to the train Engine 300 is pulling to return to Palestine where they boarded.

This done, our train moves on, soon passing through Maydelle, the only village on our route. A community of some 250 folk, Maydelle dates back to 1910, established then primarily to serve the railroad and its passengers. Today it is headquarters for the railroad's track maintenance department. Clearly visible as we pass is a vintage pneumatically-operated turntable used to turn heavy locomotives around. Knoob believes it to be the only one of its kind operating today.

At the Rusk depot, we have an hour and a half for lunch, a chance to peruse items in a gift shop, and sit in on a presentation in the depot's theater to learn more about early railroad operations. There's time to stroll about a park with a 15-acre lake and 71 camp sites including 32 full hookup RV spaces.

Just looking out the coach windows riding either east or west makes it easy to see that this is loblolly pine country. However, there's a profuse understory of dogwood, berries, trumpet creeper and other vines. Dogwood bursts into color in early spring, a visual treat for Texas State Railroad (TSRR) riders in March. Turning hardwood foliage splashes the forest with gold, red, orange and mixed hues in fall and early winter, months when TSRR trains load to capacity and reservations are required.

Some of the "special event" trains TSRR offers every year still have availability in 2013. "Pumpkin Patch Express" trips are scheduled for October 5-27 weekends. There'll be two departures from Rusk each of these days, one at 11 a.m. and one at 2:30 p.m. Parents and kids get off at a Trick or Treat Street

Left: Steam Engine 316 blows off cloud of smoke as the 112-year-old locomotive pulls passenger cars across the 1,042 foot long bridge over the Neches River on its route between Rusk and Palestine, Texas. *Above right:* This excursion offers a climate-controlled coach with table seating and a personal car attendant serving refreshments. • One Texas State Railroad train leaves the depot at Palestine at the same time a sister train departs the depot at Rusk. They meet at a siding halfway along the way. Here the train from Rusk (left), pulled by Engine 300, detours to a siding as it meets the train from Palestine. • Just out of the barn, Engine 316 passes the water tower at Palestine on its way to hookup to the cars it will pull. This engine's tender holds 5,350 gallons of water and 2,500 gallons of oil.



Text by Norman Spray
Photography by Rhonda Spray

PHOTO COURTESY OF TEXAS STATE RAILROAD



The Palestine Train Station serves as the departure point for the Piney Woods steam excursion train. • Trains from Rusk and Palestine stand side by side at a siding halfway between the towns. Here brakemen prepare to supervise safe transfer of passengers who have opted to go halfway on one train, then return to the same depot on the other. • Engine 300 from Rusk is getting word from brakeman that all is clear to leave siding after trains have met and transferred passengers who elected to ride halfway between depots. Engine 300 is known as a “Pershing” train built for service in World War I and named after General “Blackjack” Pershing.

where children, encouraged to wear their Halloween costumes, collect goodies and take part in games and fun things like picking a pumpkin to take home.

Two dinner events remain this year. The “Moonlight Special Dinner Train” departs Palestine at 6:30 p.m. Friday, October 18, a full-moon evening. The other is on New Year’s Eve, Tuesday, December 31.

Also remaining is “The Polar Express Train Ride,” by far the most popular of all the special events, reports Marketing Manager Janet Gregg. This “mystical time” is painstakingly choreographed to bring to life the original story in which a boy is recruited to board a train filled with pajama-clad kids bound for the North Pole.

On the TSRR train, the North Pole turns out to be a stop at a wye siding,

magically turned into a winter wonderland. Here kids visit Santa and elves in surroundings decorated to make the storybook fantasy seem real, even to the point Santa gives each child a bell that may (or may not) ring forever, depending on the recipient’s imagination. “Entire families board these trains dressed in pajamas,” Gregg says. “In fact,” she adds, “many businesses in town call our riders the ‘Pajama People.’” Polar Express trains leave Palestine, at 3:45, 5:15, 6:45 and 8:10 p.m.

Polar Express trips typically are sold out well in advance. In fact, Gregg says, last year, 44,000 passengers rode the Polar Express, more than half the count for the entire year.

Fare prices vary for special events. For

the normal runs between the two depots, round trip in climate controlled coaches with table seating and personal car attendant costs \$75 for adults (\$65 for seniors 65 and over) and \$40 for children two to 12. For other cars, it’s \$32 for adults (\$28 for seniors) and \$20 for children. For \$225 one-way or \$325 round-trip, you can ride in the locomotive cab with the engineer. For information and/or ticketing: 877-726-7245 or www.texasstaterr.com.

Riding the rails here turns back pages of Texas history. The TSRR line was built in 1881 by inmates of the state penitentiary at Rusk to move hardwood, logged in track-side woods, to furnaces at a smelter where the prison made iron products. The columns and dome structure in the capitol building in Austin came from this smelter.

State operation of the railroad ended after the smelter was shut down and the penitentiary converted to a mental hospital in 1913. Private companies operated the



line under lease agreements until 1969. In 1972, ownership was conveyed to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The Palestine-Rusk State Historical Park was developed then, again with help from prison inmates.

Management of the TSRR was privatized in 2007 and is today operated by Iowa Pacific Holdings, a family of freight and passenger railroads. The TSRR currently runs the only functioning steam engines in Texas. It owns five in all. The engines in service on this day are themselves rolling history. The oldest, Engine 316, is a 4-6-0 class weighing 79 tons. It was built in 1901 at the A.L. Cooke Locomotive Works in Patterson, New Jersey. With boiler pressure of 200 psi and tractive effort of 28,000 pounds, it hauled freight for Texas & Pacific Railway and a subsidiary until 1951. Then it was retired and doomed to an ignoble death at the hand of a scrapper's torch. But a remarkable thing happened. A lady who must have had money and a love for steam

trains (and insisted on remaining anonymous) bought the engine. She later gave it to the city of Abilene, Texas, where it was moved with T&P's help.

The old ten-wheeler (four front guide wheels and six 63 inch drive wheels) was displayed in a city park there until Abilene citizens donated it to the newly-formed TSRR in 1974. Put back on the rails after extensive re-building, 316 is the only T&P steamer still operating. Oil now fires the boiler though it originally was a coal-burner. The tender holds 5,350 gallons of water and 2,500 gallons of oil.

Also last of a kind, 83-ton Engine 300 was one of 1800 steamers built for the U.S. Army for service in Europe during World War I, according to Knoob. This one came out of the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1917. Assigned for duty at army bases in this country, it escaped the fate of those sent to France to help rebuild that nation's rail system after the first World War. Many of them ran until they couldn't. Many more were blown up or

otherwise destroyed during World War II, Knoob says.

After World War II, Engine 300 saw service with lumber companies in Louisiana and Texas until Arthur Temple of Temple Lumber Company gave it to TSRR in 1973. Refurbished and put into service in 1996, this 2-8-0 (two guide wheels and eight drivers that measure 56 inches in diameter) is the only one of those original 1800 "Pershing" engines now operating anywhere in the world, Knoob believes. With 190 psi steam pressure, Engine 300 delivers tractive effort of 35,600 pounds. Also an oil-burner, its tender carries 6,500 gallons of water and 2,400 gallons of oil.

Two other steamers, Engine 400 and Engine 500, are in the shop for repair. Engine 610, the only surviving example of super-power locomotives and most famous of those at TSRR, now is on static display. Built by the Lima Locomotive Works in 1927, this 224-ton monster won the heart of many Texans pulling the

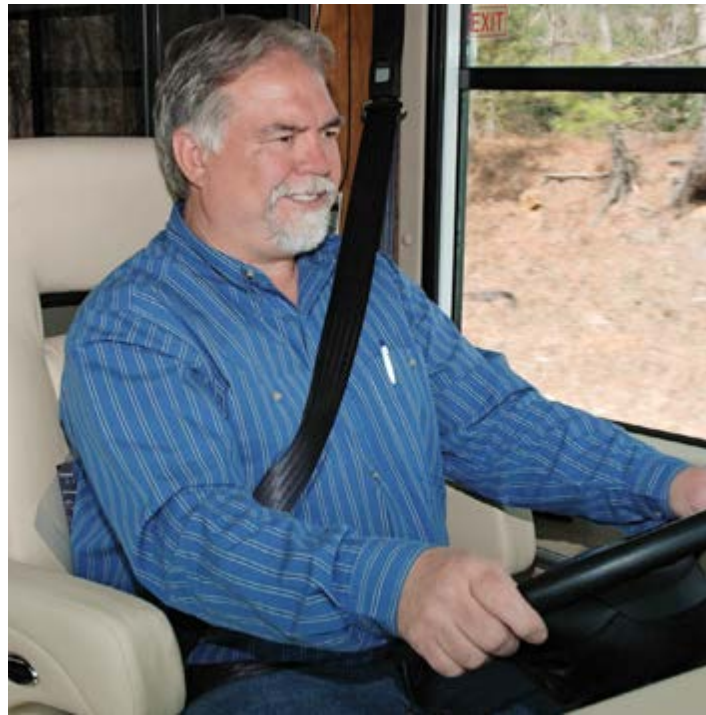
Continued on page 80

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Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, 39-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 1150
 Monroe, GA 30656-1150

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.

For answers to urgent questions and problems, call the Parts and Service number at 256-356-0261.

Editor's Note about RISTechtalk@gmail.com

When Google overhauled GMAIL earlier this year, I misfiled about 15 questions received by email. We ran some of those questions in the summer issue. If your question was deleted and you still do not have a satisfactory answer from other Tiffin sources, please resend your question to the GMAIL account and Danny will respond. Always include your full name as it appears on your magazine label, your city and state, and phone numbers whenever you send a question by email.

Dear Danny . . .

Water Pressure Reduced in Shower

When I first go in the shower, there is plenty of water pressure. After I turn off the water to soap up, and then turn it back on, the pressure is greatly reduced. What is causing this and how can I fix it. I have a 2007 Allegro Bus. Thanks.

Doug Kasten
 Titusville, Florida

Dear Doug,

If you are turning the water ON/OFF at the shower head, the problem may be a defective shower head that is not opening back completely under full pressure.

Vinyl Wallpaper is Wrinkling

We have a 2008 Phaeton. The vinyl wallpaper around the windows has wrinkled. Is there any way to correct this problem? We have read about this problem in earlier issues. Could Tiffin Motorhomes consider this defective workmanship and cover it under warranty work?

Joe & Judy Shearon
 Bells, Tennessee

Dear Joe & Judy,

Please see Vol. 9, No. 3, page 65, first column. This is something that can be repaired, but we cannot cover it under warranty since five years have passed.

Camera Failures in an Allegro Open Road

I have a 2007 Allegro Open Road 34 TGA. I am now on my third rear backup camera. Why such a high failure rate?

At a seminar I attended, the speaker advocated grounding the Triple Vision monitor. I removed the monitor and can find no external metal on the monitor to use for grounding.

My side cameras have both failed. I am not getting into replacing any more cameras until the cause of the failures can be diagnosed and correctly identified. Can you help? Thanks.

David Adams
 West Ossipee, New Hampshire

Dear David,

Through the years we have used several different manufacturers for the cameras on our motorhomes. We have never been able to pinpoint the failures to any particular problem, or say that one brand fails more than another. I will have to be candid. It may take a complete system change-out to solve your ongoing problem.

Adding an Exhaust Brake to a 1996 Allegro Bus

I have a 1996 Allegro Bus. It has a 6-cyl. B-9 Cummins power plant and an Allison 6-speed transmission. Here in the Northwest it is not unusual to encounter seven percent grades that are

several miles long. I am considering putting an exhaust brake on this engine. I would appreciate your input as well as the experience of others who may have added an exhaust brake to this engine. Is it possible to change the heads and have an engine brake? If you know the approximate cost of making this change to the engine, please advise. Thank you for your help.

Virgil A. Hatley
 Colfax, Washington

Dear Virgil,

Adding an exhaust brake or an engine brake to a unit that was not factory equipped with one will be a very costly and complicated job. It will require specialized parts. The electrical programs in the older engines are likely not compatible. If you do decide to make this modification, any parts would have to be supplied by the manufacturer of the engine and the chassis.

Driving the Allegro Breeze in the Mountains

We have a 2012 Allegro Breeze 32 BR. This summer we traveled to Saguenay, Quebec, that has a lot of big hills for 25 miles. We do not have a Jake brake and that caused major overheating of our brakes. Is there a solution to this problem? We plan to go to the Canadian Rockies soon and we are very anxious about this problem.

Solange Gravel
 Chambly, Quebec

Dear Solange,

Unfortunately, the International engine for the Breeze before the 2013 model year was not capable of accepting the exhaust brake application. The only solution we can recommend that might help is using the transmission to gear down the speed on grades that might cause overheating of the brakes.

Unsatisfactory Response from Norcold

I own a 2005 Allegro Bay with a Norcold refrigerator that is subject to several well-documented recalls. I have had the "fix" installed three times, twice after the refrigerator had shut down. The other times it shut down the service technician used a magnet to turn the "shut off" to the OFF position and allow the refrigerator to start up. Each time it ran from one to four months before shutting down.

I have had to cancel two campground reservations for vacations and I am at the point where I cannot count on it to run without shutting down. I also am afraid to take my grandchildren camping if it is unsafe. Norcold refuses to do anything other than rely on their "fix" which has failed twice. Do you have any recommendations?

Tom Cambron
 Hendersonville, Tennessee

Dear Tom,

We know the problem with Norcold refrigerators has been a

frustrating situation. There is not a lot TMH can do since this is a Norcold product and subject to their recall. The only other solution is to replace it with another brand of gas-electric refrigerator. Depending on how you use your motorhome, you may want to consider changing it to a residential style unit. However, installing the residential unit will require more modifications in cabinetry and wiring.

Inches Matter!

I purchased new a 2003 Allegro Bus 38TGP. In re-reading several back copies of *Roughing It Smoothly*, I came across an inquiry in 10:1 about moving a sofa in a 2007 Phaeton that had seven inches of space between the back of the sofa and the slide-out

wall. Your response was to move the sofa and gain seven inches of space. I had to re-read the article to my wife to confirm that I was not going crazy. The sofa was apparently a whole seven inches from the wall for no apparent reason.

I had earlier noticed a six-inch gap between the sofa and the wall in my coach, but had assumed there was some “logical” reason — perhaps electrical / hydraulic / frame issues — requiring the anchoring of the sofa in that exact location. I did not want to be re-installing those large anchor screws in the wrong places. I moved the sofa next to the wall after realizing I had been banging my knee for almost 10 years against the sofa to avoid hitting the recliner as I walked through when the slide-out was in. Those extra inches made a huge difference.

Rick Escobedo
El Monte, California

Dear Rick,
Thanks for your observations.

Getting HVAC Service from the Engine

We have had other brands of motorhomes in the past and cannot understand why in the Tiffin products that the heat and air conditioning from the Denso HVAC is not used throughout the coach when we are driving. Other RV manufacturers have this feature. We have had a 2007 Phaeton and now own a 2012 Allegro Bus.

Does the power plant in the 2012 Allegro Bus charge both the house and chassis batteries when traveling? We had a problem starting the coach’s generator even after we used the AUX START toggle switch. We waited 20 minutes and tried again with no success. We had to call a local service company to charge the batteries in order to start the generator. Was there another alternative to starting the generator? Thanks for your help.

Mel & Judy Hankos
Blomkest, Minnesota

Dear Mel & Judy,
Using a Denso or other brand of automo-

tive dash air conditioning system to cool down an entire coach is not practical because the engine compressor cannot supply the amount of power needed to do the job. On the heating side, with the Aqua-Hot system on the Allegro Bus today, you can take the engine heat and warm the entire coach while enroute.

The engine alternator charges both the house and chassis batteries when traveling. If your engine battery is dead, the AUX START can be used to supply power from your house batteries to start your engine. It is wise to have the generator running at the same time to put more charge in the house batteries. Sometimes you may have to hold the AUX START toggle switch down for as long as 10 minutes to transfer enough charge into the batteries to start your engine. If the house batteries are dead, simply start the engine and let it run for about 10 minutes. This will automatically charge the house batteries.

Greasing Zerk Fitting on Fan Housing for CAT Engine

I have a 2003 Phaeton 36-ft. with a 330 CAT engine. I have been reading that there is a Zerk fitting on the fan housing that requires periodic greasing. I can’t find it and no one so far can tell me if I have one. I understand that not greasing it can cause a major repair problem. My VIN number is 4UZA AHAK13CL87690. The CAT engine is identified as HEP 18431. Thanks for your help.

Ken Day
Whistler, British Columbia

Dear Ken,
A Zerk fitting is a grease fitting used as an aid to grease bearings in the fan hub. According to a Caterpillar document, the fan drive on the older 3126 series engine with engine serial #HEP15357 and below have grease Zerk fittings on the fan hub. The 3126 with numbers above #HEP15357 and all C7 series engines have permanently lubricated bearings and will not have a Zerk fitting. According to your

VIN number, your unit should have permanently lubricated bearings.

Replacing an Analog TV with a Digital TV in Older Allegro

We have a 1998 Allegro 28-ft. with a center-mounted analog TV. We would like to replace it with a digital set. What are the issues or concerns I should be aware of as I prepare to undertake this project?

James Mathis
Sykesville, Maryland

Dear James,
After you find a television that you are comfortable with, the rest of the job is basically cosmetic. You will need a bracket to mount the TV. You will have to modify the size of the opening since the new digital units are more rectangular in shape. You will need molding to enclose the area where the old unit was removed. You should be able to use the present wiring.

Flat Towing for the First Time

I would like to start flat towing a car using a Blue Ox system. Do you have an available list of brands showing years and specs that can be towed? And especially brands that can be used without adding switches and pumps, etc.? We love *Roughing It Smoothly* and especially your column. Thanks.

Rick Raymann
Rochester Hills, Minnesota

Dear Rick,
Motorhome magazine publishes each year a “Guide to Dinghy Towing.” This year it was a supplement to their April 2013 issue. You can buy a copy for \$3.95 by calling 800-765-1912. Then go to <http://www.blueox.com/baseplates.aspx?template=r> to access the baseplates for towing that Blue Ox currently offers.

Power Supply Problem Through Coach Towing Plug

I am not getting power to the trailer plug at the rear of my 2008 Allegro Bus. I have taken the plug and socket apart and thor-

oughly cleaned the contacts on both. The light system on my Jeep Cherokee is working when it is disconnected from the motorhome and connected to a 12-volt battery.

The strange thing is I get RV power for the running lights on the Jeep and on the correct pin. I get close to zero volts on all other pins. I get stay voltages of less than 0.5 volts on most of the pins, but it fluctuates on my digital volt meter. Any suggestions on what item needs to be repaired? Are there fuses in the Allegro Bus that I should check?

Larry Braisted
Pisgah Forest, North Carolina

Dear Larry,
If your unit is built on a Freightliner chassis, the power supply for the tow plug will be in the PS rear compartment in a small black box with Arens on the cover.

Remove the four screws and check the fuses. If you have a PowerGlide chassis, in the same compartment area there will be fuses that will be labeled “Trailer Supply.”

Steps Work Intermittently

We own a 2011 Allegro Bus 40 QXP. The steps work intermittently — sometimes will go out when we give them a swift kick. A service tech said it was possibly a “bad spot on the motor,” but I have not had a chance to have the technician at Davis Motorhome Mart in Memphis check it out yet. What should we be looking at or checking to correct this problem? This has been our best Allegro Bus yet, but we hate the steps not working.

Steve & Cynthia Ecton
Heber Springs, Arkansas

Dear Steve & Cynthia,
After checking all the fuses, the next

thing to check with a step problem is the magnetic bar that causes the step to open or close. Remove the magnetic bar on the inside of the step well. Check to see if any wire is loose and if the switch is making and breaking contact correctly. If this seems to be working okay, go underneath the step and check all grounds and wire connections. If this is good, it will either be the motor itself or the control box that controls the functions of the step.

Problems with Water System on 2003 Allegro

We have a 2003 Allegro Open Road 30 DA. It is a super motorhome, but we do have a problem with the water system. First, my fresh water drain only has a trickle of water when I open the valve. I connected a blower to the drain pipe with no success. Can you furnish me with a schematic of

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the water lines? Second, when the coach is hooked to shore water, it takes about 48 hours to fill the fresh water tank. I have changed the water pump and the valves are in the right place. Thanks for your help.

William Sherwood
Salinas, California

Dear William,
On your model, the water tank only had a 1/2-inch line to drain the tank which could take up to two hours to drain. The time it takes to fill the tank tells me there is some kind of obstruction in the line. It should only take about 45 minutes to fill your water tank. You will have to trace each section of the line to find the blockage. It is not a trivial task to get to these lines and correct the problem. You may want to take this to an RV technician who has experience in solving such problems.

Locating Cause of a Drip in Holding Tank

We have a 2007 Allegro Open Road. On a brief trip recently we noticed a drip in the storage compartment directly beneath the toilet. By the end of the trip, we realized the leak was definitely somewhere under the toilet coming from one of the pipes. Can you direct me where to look to confirm my suspicions before we spend money on a dealer's diagnostics?

Beth & Michael Gill
San Bernardino, California

Dear Beth & Michael,
You will probably have to start by removing the toilet to see if the pipe underneath is tightly sealed. There is also a vent line that could be loose. On some units, it is difficult to gain access to the top of the black tank. You may want to take it to a dealer to get the help of an experienced technician.

A 3-part Question from the Andersons

(1) Defective Shifter Caused Transmission Not to Go into Sixth Gear. See Vol. 8, No. 1, pages 53-54, for questions from

Dave Schilke about the transmission not shifting into 6th gear. Your answer was to operate between 65 and 70, put it into Economy Mode and cruise control, then back off the gas pedal and see if it will go into 6th gear.

We had the same problem with our 2011 Allegro RED 36QSA. We went to a Freightliner Camp and learned from the trainer that we had a bad shifter from the factory. He sent us to Gaffney to have a new shifter installed under warranty. After replacing the shifter, I can set the Economy Mode and cruise at 63 mph. I have had no problems since Freightliner replaced the shifter. I suggest that Mr. Schilke check with Freightliner on this problem, and I recommend the Freightliner Camp to anyone who owns a Freightliner chassis. They will learn a lot.

(2) Confetti in the Ducts. Vol. 10, No. 2, page 65. Willis Dean Parsons complained about silver confetti in the AC vents. We have the same problem with our 36QSA. The ducts in our coach have been blown out and vacuumed by the dealership, by Tiffin in the Red Bay Service Center, and by me. After two years, the problem still persists. Where is this stuff coming from? Do you have any other suggestions to fix this problem? We have owned two other Tiffin coaches and never had this problem.

(3) Carbon Monoxide & Propane Gas Alarm Go Off in Hot Weather. We have a problem with the carbon monoxide and propane gas alarm (dated 10-20-2010) going off in hot weather when the coach is parked in our driveway with no AC running. When the coach is in operation or parked in a campsite with the AC running, there is no problem. Could it be a bad monitor?

Leslie & Margaret Anderson
Garland, Texas

Dear Leslie & Margaret,
(1) Thanks for relating your solution

from Freightliner on the shifting problem. (2) Unfortunately, I don't know where all of the confetti is coming from, but eventually it will all get out. (3) It is very likely the monitor is defective. But take extra precaution to be certain there is not an LP leak in your coach.

Squealing Brakes on Freightliner Chassis

I have a 2003 Allegro Bus. Whenever I apply the brakes at a slow stop, they squeal – I mean really squeal! My Freightliner service center tells me there is nothing they can do about the problem. The brakes themselves are in good shape and have been checked recently. Do you have any suggestions for correcting this annoying problem?

Jeffery O'Keefe
Cornish Flat, New Hampshire

Dear Jeffery,
The only solution that might help is changing the brake shoes themselves, even though they are not worn out. When they banned asbestos from brake shoes, they had to replace it with a more abrasive material. The newer shoes are not as bad to create the friction that causes the squealing.

Dash AC Ducts Dripping Condensate

We have a 2013 Allegro Open Road 32BA purchased in March of this year. The dash AC ducts are dripping cold concentrate on our legs and feet on both the driver and passenger sides whenever the humidity is high (typical of our Florida climate). It is my opinion the thin, plastic flexible ducts are inadequate for the amount of cold air being moved by the AC system. Has this problem been addressed before, and is there a fix for it? Thanks for your help.

Glenn Lentz
Ft. Pierce, Florida

Dear Glenn,
This has been a problem that occurs in tropical climates where the humidity is high. If too much duct was used at the

time of assembly, it will probably help if you shorten the duct as much as possible.

Replacing Bulbs in 12-Volt Switches on 2010 Phaeton

We have owned a 2010 Phaeton 42QBH since it was new. At this point several of the tiny bulbs are burning out that illuminated the switches on the console at the entrance door. As you know, these lights stay on continuously. First, I would like to know the bulb's specification and how to change them. Second, if we can get into the panel where the switches are located, how can we install a master switch to turn these lights off when not needed? Can you provide a wiring diagram to help an electrician make the change?

Vincent Janowich
Leesburg, Florida

Dear Vincent,
Several people have asked this question and I will address yours. Some of the problem with the bulbs burning out so quickly is due to the inverter and the alternator supplying up to 13.5 to 14 volts which reduces the life of these small bulbs. There are a couple of things you can do to extend the life of the bulbs. When you remove the panel, find the lead wire that powers these bulbs. Find the 12-volt 12-gauge feed wire to the switch light and cut it behind the splice. Add a pn/5012413 resistor where you made the cut. Make sure you select the line with the splices that run to the switch lights. Go to rismag.com to see illustrations. If the bulbs are already burned out, you will have to replace the switch as well since the bulb is an integral part of the switch. Hopefully, this will answer the similar questions sent in by Dale Sitek and Richard Dabney.

Chain Locking Your Batteries in Place

In answer to Maurice McChesney's problem of securing batteries in his 2003 Allegro Bay: I placed a piece of chain inside a piece of bicycle tube and bolted it to the

frame on one side, ran it across the top of the batteries and padlocked it on the other frame. Hope this idea helps.

Charles C. Knibbs, Jr.
Belen, New Mexico

Dear Charles,
Thanks for your suggestion. Your remedy is an inexpensive way to prevent theft.

Replacing the Exterior Patio Light/ Can We Use the C-Shaped Dinette as a Bed?

The exterior patio light on my 2011 Allegro RED 34QFA has stopped working. It looks like a sealed unit. How do I access the bulb for replacement and what is the correct spec for the bulb?

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It's a matter of comfort

The dinette table is mounted on a 3-inch diameter telescoping pedestal that appears to drop down and form a bed with the C-shaped seating. The salesman at Crestview RV (Buda, Texas) said it was *not* meant for sleeping, so we don't do that. However, the table is unstable on this pedestal, rocking back and forth when we use it or when someone leans on it. Before I try to "fix" it, does Tiffin have a manufactured "remedy kit"? Thanks.

Richard Dabney
College Station, Texas

Dear Richard,
It is not a sealed unit. By placing a thin blade under the cover, you can pop it off and replace it with a standard 1156 12-volt bulb. The dinette was designed to be used as a bed when needed. You may want to add an air mattress for greater comfort. Due to the table's size and its mounting on the slide-out's floor, it is not possible to stabilize it as if it were mounted on a solid floor. Check the screws in the base of the pedestal and make sure they are tight. Hopefully, you should find the table very functional.

Shades Do Not Match Angles of Driver's Window

I have a 2011 Allegro Bus. The powered night and solar shades on the driver's side do not match the angle of the driver's side window. The shades have a square bottom and the bottom of the window is angled. Surely I am not the first owner to notice this design issue. Any suggestions? Can you trim the shades to match the angle? It allows light in and limits privacy.

Michael P. Morton
Wilmington, Delaware

Dear Michael,
With the window being wider at the bottom than at the top, and also with the windshield slanting back, to store properly the roller shade has to be straight. However, check to see if the shade can be moved forward an inch or two to help cover the angle of exposed window. The

rear of the shade is covering two or more inches of wall.

Wiper Problem Solved on 2010 Allegro 38 QBA

I wrote earlier about my windshield wiper problem and talked with several people in the Tiffin Service Center. The wipers sometimes cut off after the first sweep across the windshield and sometimes they would stay on for five minutes. Following suggestions from you and the techs, I wrapped wiring all under the hood, ran extra ground wires, checked the amp draw at the motor, and replaced the wiper module above the steering column.

Then, voila! I found the problem. It was in the fuse box on the left side behind the emergency brake. This fuse box has no IDs on the fuses as to what goes to what — just numbers. I noticed the fuse was hot and it turned out to be a 15-amp fuse for the wipers that cost all of 25 cents. I thought this might help someone else.

Sloan Trigg
Richton, Mississippi

Dear Sloan,
Thanks for the solution.

Random Wipers

Regarding Sloan Trigg's "Random Windshield Wipers":

In 2009 we bought a new 2008 Allegro 32 LA that the dealer had on his lot for a year. Our wipers would stop working randomly. They always resumed working after turning them off for a while. I guessed there was a thermal breaker somewhere in the circuit and the wipers, being inactive for a year caused some corrosion to build on the linkage. I thought maybe the increased drag was causing the motor to overheat tripping the breaker. After a cool down, the breaker was resetting and the wipers would work. I sprayed all the linkage with WD40 and the problem disappeared. By the way, we love the 32 LA layout with its larger bath area and very handy galley. When in camp with the

slide out, we rotate the settee 90° to face forward and use two small hassocks to make a very comfortable arrangement to watch TV. It also makes a totally separate area for the cook to work. Best regards.

Francis J Grasso
Depew, New York

Bendix's Smart Tire System Does Not Work in 2011 Allegro Breeze

We purchased a pre-owned 2011 Allegro Breeze last year. My brother who owns an RV service center installed the Smart Tire System by Bendix. Upon completion of the installation, the system worked perfectly with the ignition in the ON position. When the engine is running or we are driving the coach, only some of the sensors will work. Eventually we got a "sensor default" message and the system quit working. It was never the same sensor that was not reading.

He tried moving power from the ignition to house battery power, but with the same resulting failures. Then we ordered an entire new system from Bendix and installed it with the same results. Next he wired the system to a dedicated 12-volt power supply running off of the 110-volt circuit. He has installed dozens of the Smart Tire Systems in different RVs, including two of our previous RVs and a 2010 Allegro Bus. He has tried moving the sensors, replacing them, and moving the antenna. We contacted Bendix support and followed their suggestions with no improvement.

At this point we are wondering if the engine could be creating interference with the Smart Tire System's wireless transmission, and if so, is there a fix for this problem? Looking forward to your reply.

John Park
Seattle, Washington

Dear John,
After checking with our electrical engineering department, we don't know a solution to solve your problem. Howev-

er, we don't believe there is interference coming from the engine because it would have caused interference in our multiplex wiring systems.

Need a Primer on Generator Operation

For review and for those of us who rarely use the motorhome's generator, please go over the operating process for "us," such as how often should we run the generator if we have been in camp for long periods of time? If we do have to dry camp for a few days, how long each day should the generator be operated to recharge batteries, etc. What appliances run on 110-volt that make it necessary to run the generator? What appliances run off the inverter? How long can you run the generator without getting the diesel quantity in the tanks too low to start the engine? Thanks for the input. We will take notes this time.

Dean Riley
Banks, Alabama

Dear Dean,
When you are in a campground and connected to shore power, or the motorhome is not in use, the generator should be run at least once a month for 15-20 minutes under a load such as the air conditioner. Motorhomes can have two, four, or six house batteries. You should keep your voltage above 11.5. The runtime on the generator will vary to get it back to the recommended 12.5 volts you should maintain. With six batteries, the generator time may take up to 4-5 hours and proportionately less for fewer batteries. The appliances requiring 110-volt service include dishwasher, vacuum cleaner, washer-dryer, air conditioner and heat pump. The residential refrigerator, microwave, entertainment center, and several interior outlets can be operated from inverted battery power. On the Allegro Open Road, the inverter only supplies power to the entertainment center and, if equipped, the residential refrigerator.

Recommendation for Poli-Glow to Restore Fiberglass Finish

We have been a Tiffin owner for 15+ years and currently own a 34-ft. 1995 Allegro Bay with 110,000 miles that we keep in pristine condition. Three years ago in a boating magazine I found a product with

high ratings to restore and polish the gel-coat finish on fiberglass. It is called Poli-Glow and made by Goldshield Elite, 1501 Northpoint Parkway, #100, West Palm Beach, FL, 33407.

It is an unbelievable product. When applied properly, the finish looks better

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than new with a shine depth that looks a quarter-inch deep. The cost for doing my coach was \$110 and it took about 12 hours to apply. There are two applications: Poli-Prep and Poli-Glow. See their website at www.poliglow.net

Richard Laiben
Crystal City, Missouri

Dear Richard,
Thank you for relating your experience and recommendation. *Note:* Since we have not tested this product at TMH, our readers should not take the publication of this recommendation as an endorsement by Tiffin Motorhomes.

Entry Step Failure in 2006 Phaeton

This past winter marked the third time we have replaced the “brain” and motor for the slide-out entry step on our 2006 Phaeton. When we left for Texas this Spring, the steps stopped working. About an hour later into our trip, we stopped and the steps were working again. They quit working again three days later when we arrived back home from Texas. After three replacements, what do you suggest at this point?

Charles Cummins
Pacific, Missouri

Dear Charles,
This time it does not sound like it would be the motor or the control box. It seems likely that you are losing a power connection at some point or a ground. Check the connections and the ground underneath the step and also the leads going to the magnetic switch that signals the steps to retract and extend when the door is opened and closed.

A Battery Tender for the Chassis Batteries?

We have a 2007 Allegro Bay 34BX. It is stored inside when not in use. After a couple of months of no use, the chassis batteries are discharged to the point that we cannot crank the engine. Is it possible to wire a battery tender to those batteries?

Would it require two battery tenders? I would like to wire them directly or use some type of plug arrangement to avoid having to crawl under the coach each time. This unit does not have an inverter. We really like the coach and the good experience we have had with Tiffin Motorhomes.

David Guedry
Prairieville, Louisiana

Dear David,
Adding a battery tender is a good idea and will probably solve your problem. On a gasoline unit with the batteries located in the front, this will be a pretty simple application. If your unit is a front-engine diesel, the batteries are mounted on the chassis rails behind the slide-out box. You will need to create a wiring harness and plug arrangement to keep from having to crawl under the unit each time you need to hook it up. Be very careful when you run the line and avoid any locations that could be pinched or rubbed, causing a future short and possible fire.

Inside Gauges for the Generator

After we purchased a 2013 Allegro Bus, I was shocked to learn there is no way to monitor the generator status inside the coach while the generator is running. Even my 1994 Country Coach Affinity had gauges showing the temperature and oil pressure on the genset. It is difficult to even know if the genset starts without gauges. Any suggestions?

Larry McSpadden
Kaufman, Texas

Dear Larry,
Generators with current technology have monitoring systems to automatically protect against low oil pressure and overheating, making gauges unnecessary. If a problem occurs, the unit will shut down automatically and provide a code to the genset’s STOP/START switch light on the dash (blinking light with special sequences; see manual). If there

is a fuel issue (clogged filter or running out of fuel), it will give an indication.

Leaking Brake Fluid on 2001 Allegro

We have a 2001 Allegro with 27,000 miles and have a problem with the brake fluid. It seems after I run about 800 to 1,000 miles after filling the master cylinder, it is empty of fluid and I don’t have brakes. I have inspected for a leaking caliper or a leak at the master cylinder. My Ford RV mechanic thought it could be pad wear or the callipers needing more fluid. I don’t think that is the case since the pads are nearly new. The Hydroboost shows no leakage and the power steering reservoir is at the proper level. Do you have any ideas or suggestions?

George Mitchell
Athens, Alabama

Dear George,
The brakes are a chassis issue that we send to the chassis manufacturer’s service center. You have a serious repair concern that should be addressed by a technician who is certified to work on brakes.

Using Non-Low Sulfur Fuel in Mexico

I have a 2011 Allegro Breeze. I am planning a trip to Baja, California. Low sulfur diesel fuel is not always available in Mexico. Can I use regular “Mexican diesel”? If not, are there any additives or modifications that can be made to permit the use of non-low sulfur diesel. When I began driving my Breeze, I had a problem with the diesel particulate filter clogging up. It had to be removed and sent to a company to clean it. The technician at the RV service company said there was an additive to avoid a future filter clogging problem. Can you identify that additive for me? Thanks.

Bill Burnett
Santa Rosa, California

Dear Bill,
I am not aware of any additive you can put in the unit and run non-sulfur fuel through it without stopping up the par-

ticulate filters. If the International engine manufacturer has an additive product for non-low sulfur fuel, we are not aware of it.

Cracking Lines in Graphics on 2002 Allegro

I am writing to you today about my 2002 Allegro. Its main color is gelcoat white with gray graphics. On the entire length of the driver side, cracking and scratches have appeared on the graphics. What is causing this and what do you recommend we do about it? We have tried several different cleaners and waxes but nothing has taken care of the problem. Our RV looks new from the inside, but that’s not the case on the outside. Please help me bring the beauty back.

Britta Galimi
Ludlow, Vermont

Dear Britta,
About the only thing we can recommend is the replacement of the graphics. Replacement graphics are available. If you are going to keep the unit, consider having the stripes painted which will last longer. See also Vol. 7, No. 2, page 56: “Decal Deterioration.”

Concern for Sharp Corners on Small Cabinet

I have a 2012 Allegro Bus 40QSP. The slide-outs behind driver’s and passenger’s seats have small DVD-type cabinets with solid surface counter top material the same as the galley counters. Unfortunately, they were constructed with sharp corners that are a hazard to the owner, especially the D/S slide-out when they are in the closed position. Is there a way to round these sharp corners and then repolish them?

George S. Bowers
Moneta, Virginia

Dear George,
You can do a limited amount of rounding by sanding and repolishing. But if you go too deep, you could possibly create an unsightly hole.

Odor When Dumping Tanks

We purchased a new 2012 Allegro RED 36QSA just under a year ago. We have enjoyed traveling in it for five of the last 10 months. Recently we have had a terrible odor problem after dumping and flushing the black water tank. The first time we experienced the problem the odor hung around for 3 or 4 days, dissipating a bit each day. At that time we were parked at an RV site. We do keep the black and grey water gate valves closed when we are not dumping the tanks. The next two times we dumped the tank we again had the odor. As we drove down the highway with the ceiling vents and the bathroom and bedroom window open, the odor left us within a few hours. The odor seems to be strongest in the hall near the bathroom, perhaps emanating from the bathroom and bedroom sink cabinets. We only notice the odor when we have just dumped the tanks and we have not had this problem until recently. Generally we go no more than a week without dumping our tanks. We used Walex Porta-Pak treatment for the black water tank, as directed. After the first experience, on the recommendation of an RV repair shop, we switched to Unique RV Digest-It Holding Tank Treatment only after thoroughly rinsing the tank. We welcome your suggestions.

Cyndi Pride
Parker, Colorado

Dear Cyndi,
Underneath the sinks in your motorhome, there are short-type vents on the drain lines that allow air to come in to help the sink drain properly. These valves should open when water travels through the pipe and then seal back up when there is no water in the pipe. The vents are not closing up properly until you start moving. Then the vibration causes them to close. You can check my theory by taking a plastic bag and capping over the vent and taping it tightly. If this solves the problem, then change the cap on the short vent.

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Exterior Heat Causes Electric Door Lock Failure

I have a 2005 Allegro Bus. When it gets hot outside, the electric lock on the front door quits working. The automated electric locks for the side compartment doors continue to work fine. When it cools off, the door lock begins to work again. Any thoughts on how to fix this problem?

David Steinborn
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear David,
We are not aware of any heat issue causing the electric lock to fail. It may not be the electronic mechanism that is failing. My guess is the door itself is expanding in the heat. That would require adjustment at the door striker.

Replacing TV in 2008 Phaeton

I have a 2008 Phaeton 36QSH. I would like to remove the television and put in a new low-power LED model. I have not been able to figure out how to release the bracket on the back of the TV. Please advise. Thanks.

Marty Ficken
Dana Point, California

Dear Marty,
Depending on the location of the television, the bracket should be a two-piece system: one mounted to the TV and one mounted to the wall. You should find two screws on the side of the bracket that can be removed and allow the bracket to separate. If the TV is above the dash, the screws should be on the bottom instead of the side.

Only Cold Air Coming from Furnace in 1990 Allegro

I own a 1990 Allegro 24-ft. motorhome and have a problem with the furnace. When I start the furnace using the thermostat, the blower comes on but only cold air comes out. Occasionally, you can smell the furnace working, but it only lasts for a minute or so. I took the motorhome to a local RV repair shop and they told me it

was a ground issue but they were not able to repair it successfully. Any ideas?

Stephen J. Baker
Tooele, Utah

Dear Stephen,
There are two grounds: one from the control board to the furnace, and one from the furnace to the battery supply. Both should be easy to check. I recommend you take it to a Suburban certified repair center. General RV is a Tiffin dealer in the Salt Lake City area.

Short-Term Storage for Residential Refrigerator

I have a 2011 Allegro Red that is equipped with a residential refrigerator. Would it be best if I leave the unit plugged into shore power while it is in short-term storage? Is there any chance of battery damage by leaving the unit plugged in? Thanks.

William Parolari
Knoxville, Tennessee

Dear William,
For short-term storage, leaving it plugged in is the best way to store the unit. The inverter will control the amount of charge going into the batteries and prevent any damage to the batteries.

Fish Eye Docking Light Not a Sealed Unit on 2011 Phaeton

I like your "Serious Tech Talk." In the RIS, Vol. 10, No. 3, in your response to Frank Baldauf about the fish eye docking light, you said it was a sealed unit. I have a 2011 Phaeton 40 QTH and have just cleaned up and sealed my fish eye light, adding a seal of 5/16" screen rubber and used dielectric sealant around the bulb and bulb seal.

In my unit, the bulb is a 893 that can be replaced without having to replace the whole unit. The bulb comes out easily even without removing the whole fish eye. Maybe in the newer models the fish eye has to be completely replaced, but on mine it doesn't.

William Kyle
Schuylerville, New York

Dear William,
You are correct. I was mistaken. On 2010 and newer, the bulb can be changed. Sorry for the misinformation.

Dropped Signal for Satellite Radio; Pin 7 on Tow Socket Hook-up

We have a 2011 Allegro Bus 36QSP. I have SIRIUS radio and find that my signal drops out when traveling west in the far northern states (ND, MT, MI). By experimenting I found that whenever possible I could shift over to the east bound lanes and the signal would return. This implied to me the antenna's receive pattern was such that the combination of roof slope and road camber took the antenna out of receive limits. I know there are three small satellite receivers on the roof. The one near the dish is for the dish system. I am assuming the two up front are assigned to the GPS and the satellite radio. And since the radio dropped out west bound, I assume the passenger side antenna is for the radio.

Having said all that, have you ever heard about this occurrence? My first thought was to try and lift the radio antenna and put a wedge under it to get it level with the road. Another thought occurred that maybe there is a better antenna with greater pattern and sensitivity. Your thoughts would be greatly appreciated.

The tow socket on the rear of the motorhome is a 7 pin and the book says pin 7 is EXTRA AUX TERMINAL. Is this pin connected to anywhere in the motorhome or is it not attached? I am trying to add a Brake Buddy active line that would have an LED on the dash indicating the towed vehicle brakes have been applied.

Greatly appreciate your time and would like to say we are very happy with our Allegro Bus and would like to thank all at Tiffin for a quality product.

Howard & Bunny Scott
Dear Howard & Bunny,
We have not had this brought to our attention before, but what you are describ-

ing makes sense if there is such a fine line between reception and non-reception. If that is the case, changing to a different style antenna or raising it up on a small platform may solve your problem. Maybe our readers can contribute to the solution.

On your towing plug, the wiring for pin #7 is not being used. It is run from the rear to the left-hand side of the steering column under the dash. It is designed to support an auxiliary braking light.

Identifying Cables in 2013 Allegro 36LA

I have a question regarding the AV cables located in the storage area adjacent to the door of our 2013 Allegro 36LA. There are HDMI and component cables as well as a coax connection.

Do these cables support the connection of another TV for outside use, or are they related to a satellite dish installation?

Jim & Bev Goodwyn
Severn, Maryland

Dear Jim & Bev,
These cables will support the use of an outside television. Through these cables, you will be able to use your local antenna, satellite antenna, or a DVD player.

Eliminating Rattle in Dinette Drawer Slides

I have a 2012 Allegro Red 38QRA with a little over 6,000 miles. There is a real bad rattle coming from the C-shaped dinette large lower front drawer (behind the driver's seat). It even rattles on smooth roads. Yesterday my wife sat on the seat cushion over the drawer and the rattle disappeared so we are assuming it is caused by the drawer. We looked in back of the drawer and under the cushion and nothing is out of place. I think the rattle is originating in the drawer slides as it is very loud and somewhat metallic sounding. Do you have any ideas on how we could correct this problem?

Gary McManus
Baker City, Oregon

Dear Gary,
I believe the rattle is coming from the area underneath the dinette where there are rollers to assist with the slide-out room moving in and out. If this is the case, the roller will need to be adjusted either up or down to eliminate the rattle.

Images Appear Reversed in Turn Signal Monitor

When I use the turn signal on my 2013 Breeze 32BR, the picture in the video monitor appears to be reversed. The image that appears in the monitor is confusing. For a left turn, the side of the coach appears on the left side of the monitor and the lane of traffic appears to the right. When I turn the right signal on, the coach appears on the right side of the monitor and the traffic appears on the left side.

This seems to be backwards. I know for me it's confusing.

Steve Seebold
San Clemente, California

Dear Steve,
Your back-up camera is set on "mirror imaging," which is why it appears to be on the wrong side. You can go into the set-up on the camera to change it back to normal imaging. With the camera on, push the "M" to get your menu; then push the "C" to go through the selections. Scroll through until you find "mirror/normal." Select cameras 1, 2, and 3 and press "normal" or "mirror."

Solving a Slide-Out Deployment Problem

I enjoy your column and read every word each quarter. I have a 2005 Allegro Open Road. After having difficulty with slide-outs that did not open consistently, my experimentation turned up a solution that may be of interest to others.

When I turned off the engine, the slide-outs would not extend for as much as 20 minutes; then they would work. I isolated the problem to a solenoid that keeps the slide-outs from functioning

when the motor is running and ordered a new one from Tiffin.

The replacement soon experienced a similar problem. I discovered that the solenoid was very hot when the engine was running with 14.5 volts. I built a small harness with two 1 ohm 10W resistors in series and covered the wire with shrink wrap tubing and put it in series with the coil of the relay. The relay now has 12.5 volts when the engine is running and is not hot to touch. Everything has worked perfectly for several months.

Dan Hardesty
Lincoln, California

Dear Dan,
Thanks for the solution. I will pass this on to our electrical engineer.

Replacing the Heater Defroster Core on a 1998 Allegro Bus

I have a 1998 Allegro Bus on which the heater defroster core is leaking. I have called all the dealers in the northeast who service Allegros, Cummins, and Freightliner. None of them can help. Please tell me where I can get the defroster replaced, even if I have to go to the factory.

Joe Russell
Melrose, Massachusetts

Dear Joe,
Changing the heater core on your Bus is a pretty difficult job, but not impossible for someone with automotive experience. Coming to the factory is an alternative, but we have techs who can give phone instructions to help your mechanic make the repair. Call 256-356-0261 to arrange for assistance.

Grey Tank Odor

I have a 2012 Allegro RED 38QBA. When I use the exhaust fan in the bathroom, I get grey tank odors being drawn into the bathroom. I have closed the sink drain and put water into the sink for a water seal. Even that did not help. When the exhaust fan is off, the odor is almost nil. Thoughts or recommendations, please? Keep up the

great information in *Roughing It Smoothly*.

Larry Leslie
Cypress, California

Dear Larry,
This also is going to be the short vent. Replacing it should solve your problem. See my answer to Cyndi Pride.

2013 Allegro 32 CA Wandering

My wife and I bought our 2013 Allegro 32 CA in March. This is our fourth motorhome, and our first Class A. We love all the storage and the interior layout. However, we are not too pleased about how it handles on the road. I find the RV constantly wandering, and it is uncomfortable to drive even on a smooth surface. I can't relax and drive one-handed at all. I feel that I'm over-steering, and I was a commercial truck driver for 30 years before I retired. My wife is very hesitant to drive it at all. We didn't have any issues with our previous RVs.

Is there any type of kit for improving/stabilizing the steering on our Tiffin? Apparently some other owners are also experiencing the problems we're having. What can we do?

Joe Skidmore
Alamosa, Colorado

Dear Joe,
There are several aftermarket systems to enhance the handling and control of the Ford chassis. Some of our customers have installed and recommended the Safety-Plus and the Blue Ox steering control systems. The heavier duty aftermarket shocks, such as the Koni brand, should produce a more stable ride.

Using Hardware Cloth to Protect Grill

We recently purchased from Lazy Days here in Florida a 2013 Tiffin Allegro 30 GA Open Road. The first thing that we noticed was the total lack of any protection for the radiators from Love Bugs and other road insects. Those front grill grids are wide and the bugs can have their way with our radiators, so we fashioned from

¼-inch galvanized hardware cloth a protector for the radiator. This is fastened with bolts and fender washers as well as plastic zip ties. It looks like it belongs there right behind the grill.

Is the factory grill installation strong enough not to be blown inward when traveling down I-95 at 60 mph? And will this ¼-inch wire protector cause the Ford motor to run too hot?

We thoroughly enjoy your "Serious Tech Talk." It is the best and most informative part of RIS. Thanks !

Marilyn & Bill French
Ormond-by-the-Sea, Florida

Dear Marilyn & Bill,
Although I have not experimented with using the wire hardware cloth to keep the radiator clean, I don't think your design will cause a problem with the grill. However, keep a close watch on the engine temperature in the summer months to be sure the air flow is not affected enough to cause the engine to overheat.

Keeping a 35 QBA in One Place Long Term

We have a 2011 Allegro 35 QBA and absolutely love it. Due to our family's schedule conflicts (my wife and I both work and all the kids have sports, dance, etc) we haven't been able to get out on any trips other than weekend getaways with our coach. My wife and I decided (to the delight of our kids) that we would basically "park" the coach along side of the Colorado River for summer boating and winter off-roading fun. This is a great outlet for us since it's close to home (about three hours) and we can go for a short day trip when the schedules don't allow a longer trip.

What are some things I can do to ensure that the coach remains mechanically sound as it sets? We start the coach each trip (usually twice a month) and we run the generator. I put fuel stabilizer in the fuel tank and we will have the fluids changed annually. We considered trading

it in for a trailer but we just love the floor plan of the QBA. Can't beat it! Any tips would be appreciated! Thanks.

Dave Hardenburger
La Mesa, California

Dear Dave,
What you are doing is what I suggest for a unit that is stationary. I would also suggest investing in tire covers to retard the dry rotting process on your tires.

Correct Fluid to Use in HWH Hydraulic System

I have a 2011 Phaeton QTH. I have two questions.

(1) According to the HWH manual, the fluid to use in their hydraulic system is HWH 22866. The dealer where I purchased my Phaeton insisted on Dextron ATF. But HWH says to use this only in an emergency. Can you clear up this issue?

(2) How can I find out what tonnage jacks are installed? I worked for over thirty years on fighter aircraft, and I like to know as much as possible about my equipment. The DEF tank on my rig is black, so I have to rely on the lights on the dash. Is there some way of reading the level in the tank, which would really be helpful when filling it? Thanks for all your help. I really like your column and read every article.

Dennis Smrdel
Missoula, Montana

Dear Dennis,

(1) The only thing I can offer is that you follow the HWH manual.

(2) On your leveling jacks, you have 8,000 each on the front and 12,000 on the rear.

Plant Tours

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



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Revisiting the Blue Ridge Parkway

In the summer of 2004 we did our first travel story for *Roughing It Smoothly*. There was no doubt in Carolyn's mind about where we would go for my first story. It would be the Blue Ridge Parkway. That 469-mile strand of blacktop is in my blood.

My Hatch grandparents and many of my Williamson ancestors and cousins are from Virginia. All of my mother's brothers lived in Virginia or West Virginia. A trip each summer to those wonderful mountains and the Shenandoah Valley was inevitable. My dad really didn't like to drive and always deferred that chore to my mother.

Because of severe rationing of tires and gas during World War II, my dad decided to sell our car. In Russellville, Alabama, you could walk to just about anywhere you needed to go. But when the war was over, we managed to get on the waiting list to buy a 1946 4-door battleship gray Dodge.

The next summer was my first experience on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Parkway was still in various stages of development, built in unconnected segments. You could drive the crest road for maybe 45 miles, then you would have to descend back into a valley and drive on two-lane roads to get to the next segment. Mother and Dad seemed to enjoy the mountains, and we stopped often for picnics, overlooks, and walking on the trails.

On one of those long lingering afternoons on the Parkway, the mists from the valleys rose almost unnoticed and contributed to the beautiful sunset. Then suddenly it closed in and we were in the fog. No mileposts. No maps for these disconnected strips of roadway. The headlights reflected right back at us when they hit the dense fog. No place to spend the night except in the car. The turnouts for the parking areas were difficult to find.

But the lane dividers were bright yellow and proved to be our salvation. Mother opened the door about a foot and looked down to watch the yellow line as she drove about 10 mph. Dad concentrated on looking into the fog in case we overtook or came up on another car in the road. I was in the back seat, hanging over the back of the front seat. After what seemed like forever, Mother saw a white shield marking a U.S. route that crossed

the BRP. It didn't matter where it led — just so it would get us off the Parkway. I don't think we were ever in any real danger since we crept along hugging that yellow line. But for a six-year-old boy, it was an exciting experience.

For the next 13 years we made trips to the Virginias every summer. And we always found our way back to the BRP. The old Dodge was replaced with a green 1952 green Pontiac with a sun visor extension over the windshield. Then came a 1956 big bulky 4-door Buick Roadmaster (we were moving up in the world!). All of those cars got their turns on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

I graduated from high school in 1959, Dad passed away in 1960, and there were no more summer trips on that beloved Parkway. But that changed in 1968. Carolyn and I moved to Athens, Georgia, where I took my first job in publishing, and we were only three hours away from the southern terminus of the Parkway at Cherokee, North Carolina.

Over the next 45 years, we missed very few summers when we did not find at least a couple of days when we could relax into that slow 40 mph pace and enjoy the serene beauty of those mountains from the overlooks where we could see for miles.

With the ready availability of chestnut, mountaineers created four fences commonly seen in the Blue Ridge Mountains: The buck rail, the snake rail, the twin post and rail, and the picket. Groundhog Mountain, MP 188.8. The picket fence was used to enclose the yard around the house. The other designs were enclosures for livestock.



Text and photography by Fred Thompson

If you are starting from the southern terminus in your car, you won't have a problem with the low tunnels at Big Witch, Bunches Bald, and Lickstone Ridge. But if you are in your motorhome, you will have to skip the beginning of the Parkway at Cherokee and get on the BRP from U.S. 23-74, coming in from the north through Waynesville or from the south through Sylva. The rest of the tunnels along the Parkway will accommodate your motorhome with minimum heights of over 13 feet.

Our first stop is always Richland Balsam at Milepost 431, the highest point on the Parkway at 6,047 feet. Many of the trees are denuded from disease but the view across the mountain ridges is priceless. It will be cool in October and you will need a light coat or sweater.

In 22 miles you will reach Mt. Pisgah at MP 408.6. Here you will find good hiking trails, a very good restaurant with a view overlooking the mountains to the south, and a fine campground. This will be your first chance to pick up a copy of the *NPS Guide to the Blue Ridge Parkway*. One side has an excellent map of the entire Parkway and the reverse shows the highlights of the Parkway along with a chart of the main places you will want to stop and spend time. Keep in mind that the campgrounds along the Parkway do not have hookups. But they all have restrooms with flush toilets, dump stations, and a place to take on water.

As we suggested in the 2004 story, plan to spend a couple of days at each of the campgrounds, and use your tow vehicle to travel in each direction to visit the overlooks, highlights along the way, and trails that beckon your footsteps. If you are a hiker, be sure to pick up a copy of *Walking the Blue Ridge*, by Leonard M. Adkins, or *Hiking the Blue Ridge Parkway*, by Randy Johnson. You will find these books in the gift shop at Mt. Pisgah. You will also find good titles about the history of the Parkway (most of it during the 1930s was built by the CCC), birding, and wildflowers. Except for the dead of winter when many sections of the Parkway are closed, you can enjoy this 469-mile road of relaxation anytime during spring, summer, or fall.

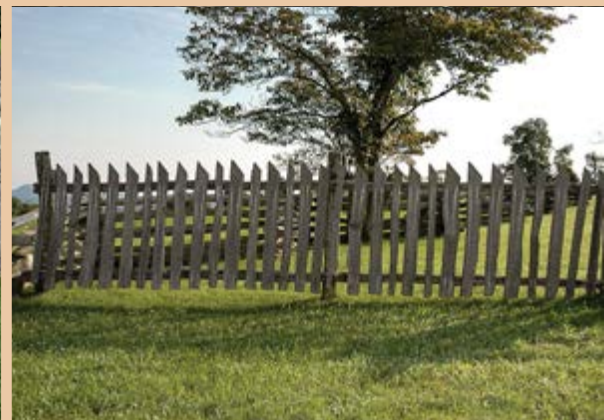
Your next campground (if you are traveling south to north, as we were) will be at Linville Falls. This is a very nice facility that is well maintained. On the way to Linville Falls, plan to spend at least two hours at the Folk Art Center (MP 382) in Asheville.

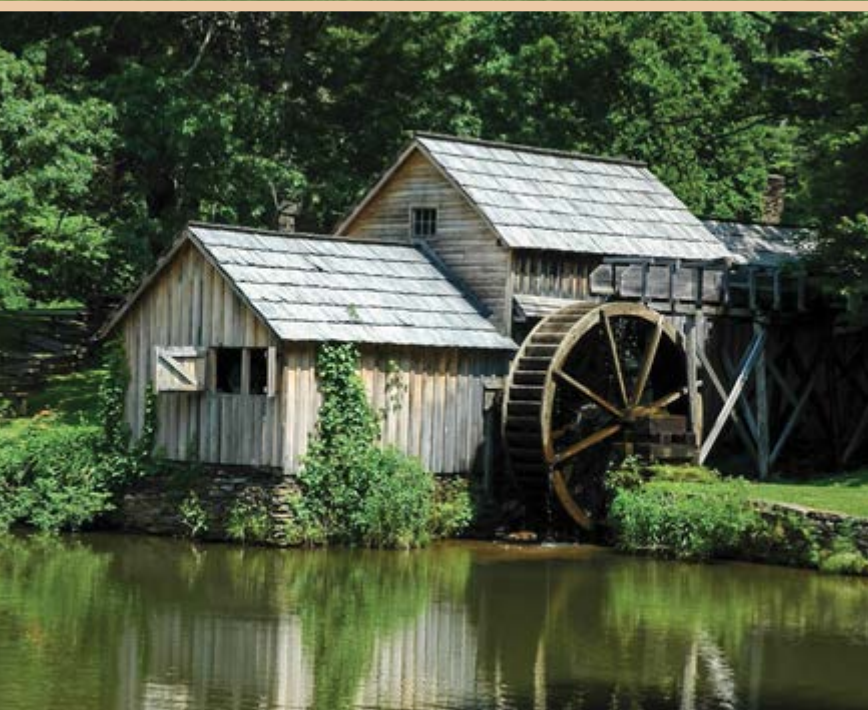


Linville Falls at MP 316.4



An overlook in southern Virginia





The Center has demonstrations on most weekends featuring the arts and crafts of mountain residents. You will find collectibles in the shop that you will want for your home. The second floor (wheelchair accessible) will have a major exhibition in progress. The Center also has an excellent bookstore. While you are in the Center, check on road conditions to the north. A rock slide earlier this year closed a few miles of the Parkway, but I understand from a recent report that a short detour has been developed.

Going on north, if you are traveling the second week of June, the Rhododendron will be in full bloom at Craggy Gardens. After you reach your camping destination at Linville Falls, you can backtrack to Mount Mitchell, Crabtree Meadows, and the Museum of North Carolina Minerals. At Linville Falls, you will want to visit the welcome center on the trail to the falls.

Going north again, you should stop at the welcome center (MP 304) at the Linn Cove Viaduct. It is a masterful feat in road building engineering (see front cover) that prevented damage to the ecology of the mountain. In 1992 the Parkway around Grandfather Mountain, owned by Hugh Morton, was the last section to be completed. He held up the completion of the Parkway in the courts in order to prevent the BRP engineers from making severe cuts into the side of his beloved mountain to accommodate the roadbed. You can view the viaduct up close from hiking trails underneath and along the side of the structure. Traffic to the top of Grandfather Mountain is restricted to automobiles. There is an admission fee.

Just a few miles north of Linville Falls, you may find that you prefer the campground at Price Lake. We have camped there a number of times and always enjoyed the area. They have canoe and boat rentals.

We always plan a stop at the Moses H. Cone Memorial Park Visitor Center. Cone was a wealthy textile industrialist who loved taking carriage rides through his expansive estate. Today you can hike the trails or ride horses. Crafts are available for purchase.

Doughton Park will be your next camping site when you are ready to move your coach north. You will definitely want to spend 30 minutes at the Brinegar Cabin at MP 238.5 to see an accurate picture of mountain life 130 years ago. You may have difficulty finding a site in Doughton Park for Tiffin's longer coaches. Consult your campground guide for campgrounds off the Parkway.

Moving 70 miles north again will bring you to Rocky Knob, one of my favorite campgrounds on the Parkway. Some of the sites will be a little tight. But on the farthest end from the registration office, there are a couple of sites that can accommodate a 40-ft. coach. There are also several pull-throughs parallel to the road through the campground. Just remember, be careful and patient and

you can squeeze in. These campgrounds were built when most people were camping in trailers.


After you get your coach situated at Rocky Knob, you must visit Mabry Mill. The mill is still used to grind corn and wheat, and on weekends you will usually find the blacksmith doing demonstrations and making useful items. The big draw at Mabry may be the restaurant. Good meals throughout the day, but their breakfast is not to be missed.

Your next stop will be Roanoke Mountain. We have not camped here, but we did a drive through inspection and it appeared to be very accommodating. It is near Virginia's Explore Park which has its own entrance into the BRP. This park has several special sections where life in each century beginning in the 1500s is recreated. It begins with Native Americans and ends in the early 1900s. Reenactors tell the stories of each period and remain in their character roles as they speak to you. When we last visited, the Park offered a very good restaurant with the staff wearing colonial costumes.

The Peaks of Otter will be your next campground stop. The campground is in bad need of repair and maintenance, since funding has been reduced due to the sequester. The highlight here is Sharp Top, a mountain that on a clear day will offer 100-mile views, and a hiking trail around the lake. If you are not in good walking condition, a bus will take you to the top for eight bucks.

Proceeding north, you will cross the James River at the Visitor Center (MP 63.8), the lowest point on the Parkway at 649 feet. There are very interesting historical markers and hiking trails along the river. The restaurant and campground at Otter Creek (MP 58-63.6) has been closed (lack of funding due to the current sequestration).

Our last stop for camping was just 4.5 miles off the Parkway at MP 16. Take VA 814 to Sherando Lake, a Forest Service recreation area worthy of several days of R&R that includes hiking, fishing, and boating.

If you are 62+ you should have a Golden Age Passport or a Senior Pass. It will cut your camping fee in half at BRP sites and National Forest campsites (\$16 to \$8). The priceless assets of the Blue Ridge Parkway are the relaxed pace, beautiful scenery, and excellent hiking trails. The Appalachian Trail parallels the BRP for 100 miles in Virginia. Plus there are many round trip trails from overlook parking lots that take you through meadows, deep forest hollows, across streams, and to mountain peaks, all a brief escape into the silence of nature. In the Spring, you will find life bursting forth from the restraints of winter. In the Summer, the robust forests show off their strength and greenery. In the Fall, nature puts on its greatest show. Come with us once more and visit the Blue Ridge Parkway. 



MOUNTAIN LAUREL



RHODODENDRON

Facing page, top to bottom: Known as the “Denim King,” Moses Cone and his wife, Bertha, created an estate with carriage trails and apple orchards. MP 294.1 • Martin and Caroline Brinegar raised three children in this cabin. MP 238.5. • Ed and Lizzie Mabry brought industrialization to the mountains in 1910 with a design that powered a sawmill, a grist mill, plus a bandsaw and joiner for making wagon wheels. MP 176.1. *This page:* An interpreter at Roanoke's Explore Park explains the hardships of an 18th century primitive cabin that settlers constructed with native materials. MP 115. • Mountain Laurel and Rhododendron are often confused. • The Mercedes-Benz Smart Car, the Tiffin Allegro Breeze, and the Blue Ox towing system were the perfect combination for touring the Blue Ridge Parkway.




NEWS FROM RED BAY *Continued from page 20*

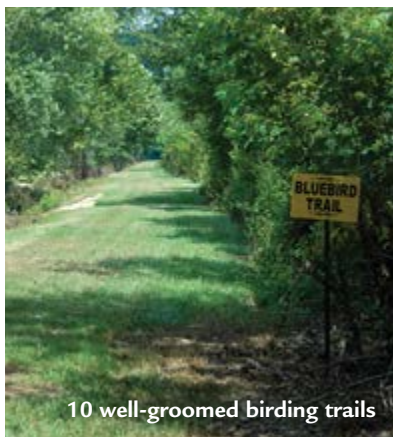
during their Spring migration from South and Central America to nesting areas further north. Interpretative panels along the trails inform the visitor about the birds one might encounter.

Cypress Cove Farm provides educational tours for school children, who, in addition to learning about wildlife habitats and ecology, can also learn about the agricultural history of North Alabama. A blacksmith shop and a working gristmill are on display, along with an historical saw mill. Plans for future expansion include adding a general store, a whisky still, and a butterfly garden.

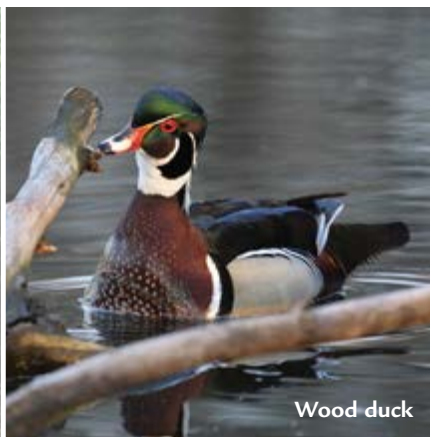
Rep. Morrow and his wife have generously opened their farm for public enjoyment with no admission fee. Because the Morrrows live on the site, visitors are expected to practice courtesy

and avoid private areas when they are on the property.

Cypress Cove Farm is located at 1895 Highway 28. From the junction of State Highways 19 and 24 in Red Bay, take Highway 24 East for 1.6 miles, turn left on Mud Creek Road. Go one mile and the parking lot for the farm will be on your left at the intersection of Mud Creek Road and County Road 28. GPS coordinates for Cypress Cove Farm are N 34.4588, W 88.1031. Arrangements for group tours can be made through the Red Bay Parks and Recreation Department, 256-356-4473. For further information on this site, visit Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association at www.northalabama.org. Information about other birding trails in north Alabama can be found at www.northalabamabirdingtrail.com. 



10 well-groomed birding trails



Wood duck



Kingfisher



Prothonotary warbler

PHOTO COURTESY OF USFWS


PRESIDENT'S CORNER *Continued from page 4*

have this flexibility. It will certainly provide a more fair system for everyone in general.

We want our owners to know we care very much about taking care of their service and repair requirements. You will always be welcome at the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay and I will continue to have an "open door" policy to listen to your concerns.

The Tiffin Service Center also offers to owners the option to

leave your coach in Red Bay for repairs. Each coach is assigned a "tech" who checks the repairs being made and communicates with the owner. We can transmit pictures to the owner as the work is completed to be sure we are meeting expectations.

Our success as a company will always be based on your satisfaction with our products and the service you receive to provide the maximum value for your investment. 


RIDING THE RAILS *Continued from page 61*

1976 Bicentennial Freedom Train across Texas. Since 1986, it has been maintained and protected by TSRR.

From the RV Park and Campgrounds at Rusk, it is an easy walk to the adjacent depot. With 32 full hookup sites (30 and 50 amp electric and sewer), pull-through sites are usually available. At the Palestine terminal, there's room for motorhome parking but no hookups. Several privately-owned parks are available at

both ends of the line:

Near Rusk: Country Estates RV Park and MHP, (903-683-9684, countriestatesrv@aol.com); Rusk KOA Campground, (800-562-4143, ruskkoa@mykoa.com)

Near Palestine: 'R' Place RV Park, (903-723-8887, Melinda@rplacervpark.com). Bar-S RV Camp, (903-724-8834, barsrv-camp@yahoo.com); Hwy 155 RV Park, (903-729-7778). 

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retirement with the temptation of working with the Allegro Club. Now, they are excited to combine their love of people with their love of travel as they work with Tiffin owners to help them enjoy their coaches. "We love traveling in our coach and look forward

to meeting many other Tiffin owners across the nation. Please come by our Tiffin Allegro Club office located next door to the Allegro Service Center to say hello! We believe you will find our rally schedule for 2014 to be exciting and interesting," said Sally.



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