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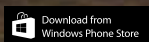
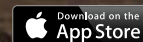
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Roughing It Smoothly®

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Reading *Roughing It Smoothly* online or receiving the magazine by USPS

After spending a year making the transition, two-thirds of the subscribers to *Roughing It Smoothly* are now reading the magazine online. That fact attests to the transient lifestyle of our owners. But why should we be surprised? That's why you bought your motorhomes! At any time in the future, you are welcome to change your mind and start receiving the printed version.

In each issue you will still find two cards for sending information to the editorial office in Monroe, Georgia. Using the "From the Road" card, we invite you to tell fellow Tiffin coach owners about your experiences and the special places you have discovered in your travels. If the card is not large enough, please type a whole page double-spaced, and mail it to Fred Thompson, Book Production Resources, P.O. Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30655-1150. Be sure to include your name and address, phone number, and email address in case we need to edit or ask for more information. Color prints are welcome and we will use them if we have the space. You can also send your "From the Road" contribution by email to fredthompson1941@hotmail.com And that will allow you to attach images. Images should be at least one megabyte in size. On the subject line of the email, please write FROM THE ROAD. We do not open emails without subject lines.

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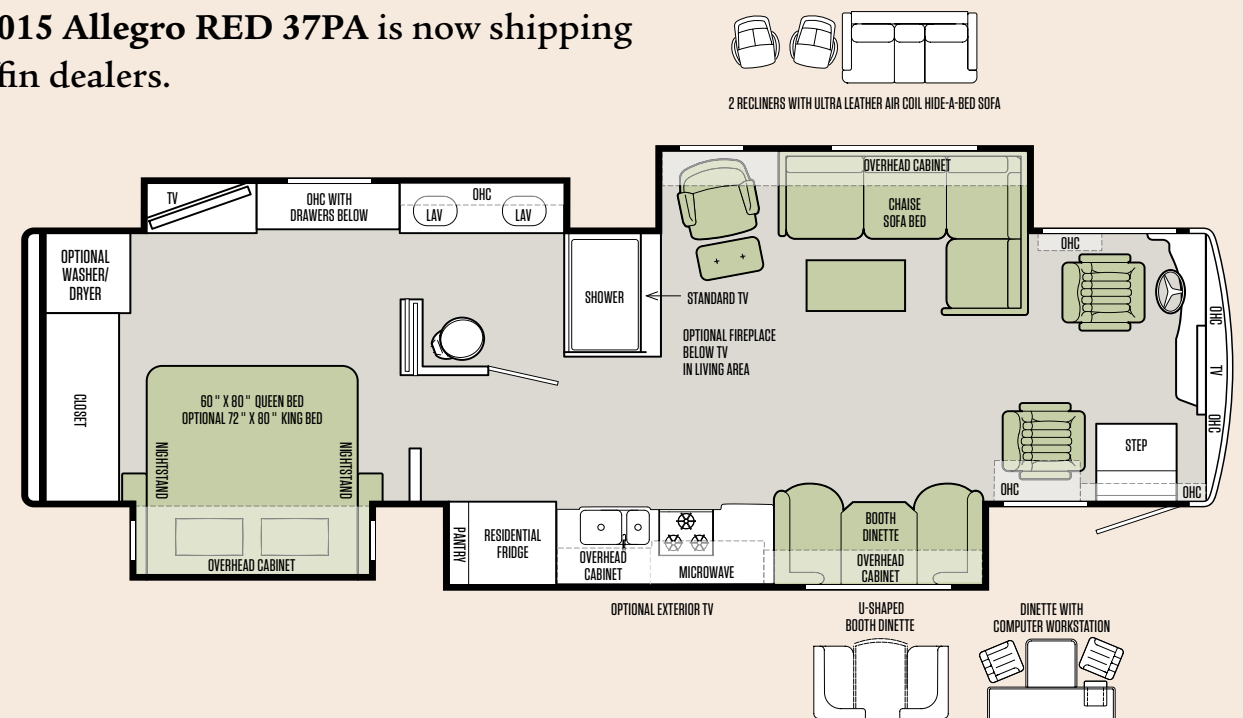
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To address your technical questions to Danny Inman, use the postcard bound in this issue, send a longer letter to the address on the postcard, or send an email to RIStechtalk@gmail.com **If you need an immediate answer to a service problem, you should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

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The 2015 Allegro RED 37PA is now shipping to Tiffin dealers.



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One-on-One with Bob Tiffin

Acknowledged “Dean” of North American Motorhome Builders

Sherman Goldenberg, publisher of *RV Business*, the industry’s leading magazine serving RV manufacturers and dealers, interviewed Bob Tiffin in June for his lead article on a motorhome manufacturer. We are reprinting the interview for our readers with permission.

—Fred Thompson, editor, *RIS*

BOB TIFFIN MAY WELL BE THE RESIDENT “DEAN” of North American motorhome manufacturing. But the affable founder, president, and CEO of privately held Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc., probably doesn’t want to dwell on that notion because he’s not all that comfortable in talking about himself.

On the contrary, Tiffin is noticeably more relaxed in chatting about motorhome design and trendy floorplans and the specialized demands of coach owners. After all, Tiffin, 72, a straight-talking businessman, has pretty much seen it all since 1972 when he parlayed a high school education and some of his father’s financial backing — along with a contingent of workers from two area RV firms — to start up his own two-coach-a-day operation in a former cotton warehouse in the small northwest Alabama community of Red Bay.

Tiffin today heads up a manufacturing company that has turned out over 75,000 coaches since its inception and currently ranks first in Class A sales of diesel pusher coaches, and second in sales of Class A gas coaches,* according to Statistical Surveys, Inc., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Located about 40 miles south of Muscle Shoals, Tiffin Motorhomes currently has 1,400 employees, a million square feet under roof, a network of 85 dealers operating some 100 locations, and a portfolio of mainstream gas and diesel motorhome brands that include the Allegro (MSRP including the usual options for \$164,000), Allegro Breeze (\$210,000), Allegro RED (\$251,000), Phaeton (\$358,000), Allegro Bus (\$410,000), and Zephyr (\$570,000). Tiffin is predominantly a diesel pusher Class A manufacturer, and now builds 30 percent of its coaches (Allegro Bus & Breeze) on its own rear-engine PowerGlide chassis. The Phaeton, the industry’s leading Class A diesel pusher, is built on a Freightliner chassis as is the Allegro RED.

Meanwhile, Tiffin Motorhomes, distant as it is from most of the industry’s frontline suppliers, has developed the capability

PHOTO BY SHAWN SPENCE

*See Statistical Surveys on page 39.



of producing in-house many component parts for both current and older units.

However, industry insiders indicate what really sets Bob Tiffin and his firm apart from the pack is that he has made a career out of dealing one-on-one with the needs of American and Canadian motorhome enthusiasts — consumers who can afford expensive motorhomes and who understandably expect things to work right every time.

Unfortunately, as Tiffin concedes, that's not always the case. Things don't always go right with these complicated pieces of machinery, and everyone knows it. So, the magic — the antidote, if you will, for motorhomers on the road or elsewhere — is discovering that the company's president is interested in taking their calls, learning about their problems and, most importantly, resolving them.

Bob Tiffin has been doing it for years. Loyal coach owners who stop by in droves to shake hands with him at retail shows around the country will quickly tell you that no corporate CEO — no one in management at any level at any company that they've ever run across — takes the time to field telephone calls and visit with consumers and listen considerately the way Bob Tiffin does.

We touched on this and other topics in a recent interview with Bob Tiffin at his Red Bay offices, where sons Tim Tiffin, general manager, Van Tiffin, R&D manager, and Lex Tiffin, quality manager, are part of the corporate management team at the family-held firm. Here are some of the edited highlights of that intriguing telephone chat with RV Business publisher Sherman Goldenburg.

RVB: Bob, paint us a picture of Tiffin Motorhomes and its general status today.

Tiffin: The overall picture for Tiffin Motorhomes right now is about as good as it's ever been. We have some of the strongest dealers in the industry and we have them strategically located throughout the country.

We don't have them stacked on top of each other. We have them separated out so they have a good territory and a good placement of product and we try our best to support them better than anybody as far as what it takes to do the job and make the sale.

I have three sons working here at the factory and they do a marvelous job. A family-owned company, I think, is much more suitable for this low-volume industry that we are in, especially the motorized segment, and I think we've pretty well proven that.

RVB: Tiffin Motorhomes, if we had to describe it, is an independent-minded, mid-size, privately held firm that produces mainstream, mid-priced products and has built a reputation for being very consumer friendly. Are you comfortable with that description?

Tiffin: Yes, that's a good description. We don't try to build too expensive and we don't try to build too cheap. We try to hit the middle of the road and we try to have workable floorplans for our customers. Just about 80 percent of (the deciding factor behind)

any sale is the floorplan, along with great service and dealers.

RVB: So, tell us, how many motorhomes do you build in a week?

Tiffin: We build 60 every week. We build 12 a day and we've been doing that for a couple of years now and that's a pretty good mark for us. We could probably build a couple more a day and build 70 in a week, but I feel really comfortable with our current build and it keeps a good balance out there in the inventory. Our goal is somewhere between 500 to 600 units at the dealer level. We never build anything for our inventory.

If a manufacturer has 200 Class A motorhomes setting on his yard that aren't sold, they may have all the money in the world but those unsold units are not a good sign. Motorhomes parked for months on a manufacturer's yard will begin to deteriorate. If a coach stays on the dealer's lot five to six months, chances are there will be much more service on that unit than one that rolls out to a dealer who sells it in 30 to 60 days from the time he receives it.

You can't survive in this industry unless you've got a good dealer network placing enough orders to keep an even flow of units going through the production facility. When some manufacturers have an ebb in their orders, they insert unsold units into the production line to keep an even flow. We, on the other hand, never, ever build a motorhome if we do not have an order for it. We passed that rule here in 1979 and we have not wavered from it one minute and we never will.

RVB: I understand that you build a lot of the components that go into your coaches because you are located so far from most vendors.

Tiffin: Yes, very few motorhome manufacturers make as many of the coach's components as we do. We build most of our solid surface countertops, all of our cabinets, cabinet doors, windows, and all of the compartment doors on the outside. We build all our fiberglass parts — every one of them, for everything from our one-piece fiberglass front and rear caps to the shower stalls and fenders.

We have a good steady stream and supply of parts for all models built in the last 15 years. But we also have every type of fiberglass mold that we've ever used. So we can produce replacements for anyone at any time. We can supply any of the cabinets we have ever built for a coach. We can make any of the outside compartment doors that owners frequently get banged up. We plan to supply the parts for our motorhomes for years and years to come. That's a big thing for an owner because he knows he's going to be able to get a part.

RVB: Judging by your earlier comments, you've been cast in the role of a problem solver on a fairly regular basis making sure that things don't get dropped with regard to customer service.

Tiffin: Well, we try not to drop the ball, period. We work desperately to keep that from happening. We try to stay with every customer we have and work out every issue he may have. The expectations of our customers are way up there because they are paying a lot of money for a motorhome.

The first motorhomes I built in 1973 retailed for \$7,500 and

a larger one for \$9,500. Yet, the expectations haven't changed. The owners didn't want to have trouble back then, and they sure don't want to have trouble now when they are paying \$100,000 to over \$300,000. Things just don't go well if the expectations of the customers are not met.

RVB: You know, it's unusual when a company president directly handles consumer relations, backing up his regular staff.

Tiffin: Well, I stay on the phone a lot, and, of course, I am just one person in this office. But our guys in customer service field hundreds of calls every week. You've got to have good communications with consumers. You can email. You can write letters, and you can send smoke signals all day long. But the best way to communicate is by phone or eyeball-to-eyeball. You just have to hang in there with them. That's what we do. If a company isn't willing to do that, they're going to hurt because in this day and age, you just have to talk to people. You have to be out there with them.

RVB: Does that also apply to meeting and greeting consumers at retail shows?

Tiffin: You have to show your owners you are not afraid to stand in front of them. They are going to have some problems and you are going to have to stand in front of your owners and look them in the eye. That's part of the business.

RVB: But you are also selling and building confidence and loyalty in your company at the same time, aren't you?

Tiffin: When you know your product and all of its good selling points, then you have to roll up your sleeves and pitch every minute. It's not easy to sell 12 expensive motorhomes a day. If you don't take every opportunity to sell, you just don't make it.

RVB: How, in your view, has the American dealer body changed?

Tiffin: As far as dealer complexity, it has drastically changed over the last 42 years.

The biggest thing is that dealers have gotten much larger and have more locations. When I first started, it was a rare thing for a dealer to have two locations. Now, it's pretty common.

I think Camping World is trying to force their hand because they're spreading out all over the country. The independent, family-owned dealerships feel the pressure to expand and try new markets and new things. I think that's going to continue even though the industry has never exceeded the Class A motorhome sales numbers of 1978. We've come close, but we've never topped them. I don't know how much expansion the dealer body can make.

But I know one thing: if the dealer body at large had great service, we would not be doing as much service as we do here in Red Bay. We are working on somewhere between 5,000 to 6,000 coaches a year at the Tiffin Service Center. We would not be do-

ing that if more of the dealers would take care of their service business at their dealerships. Many of them do. We have a lot of good service facilities at our dealers. We have a lot of independent service centers that we use as well.

RVB: With about 100 stores, there's no question that Camping World has been a real game changer and, in some people's opinions, a consolidating "WalMart" factor in many respects. Do you agree?

Tiffin: I don't know if it has had a "WalMart" effect or not. I don't know what game Camping World is going to play in the future. I do know that in the expensive motorhome sector that we serve, where people are very particular about what they buy, I as a consumer would look to a private company (dealer) to buy a coach from rather than a big, impersonal corporation. I want to know who the owner is and be able to talk to him.

"You've got to have good communications with consumers," said Bob Tiffin, president and CEO of Tiffin Motorhomes. "You can email. You can write letters, and you can send smoke signals all day long. But the best way to talk is on the telephone or eyeball-to-eyeball. You just have to hang in there with them. That's what we do."

Each to their own, of course, but it's one thing to buy a \$15,000 towable and another thing to buy a \$250,000 Class A coach. When you get up to that kind of money, it makes a lot of difference. I think there's a place for Camping World out there and I think there's a place for the multiple location dealers who want to compete with Camping World. And I think that dealers like La Mesa RV, Mike Thompson RV, Lazydays, and a whole host of other dealers that we have scattered across the country can compete toe-to-toe with Camping World.

We promote our dealers all the same. We sell service, accessibility to our sales and service departments, and our telephone techs. We try our very best to help our owners and I am sure Camping World does, too. But, if you are going to spend serious money on an RV, I think you will go to a private company. We don't do any business with Camping World at all. We made that decision several years ago and that's still our decision today.

RVB: What can you tell us about anticipated product trends in the recreational vehicle industry at large?

Tiffin: I don't know as far as numbers. I think towables are really, really going to boom in the next three or four years. I just don't see any slowing down in the towable market. I think toy haulers will maintain a steady growth of maybe two to three percent a year. The Class A market in general may have a little more growth than that. All in all, though, I generally think that the RV business is really going to see some good things in the future.

The terrible economic letdown that we had did not help the boomers at all because it took so much of their wealth. But I think this industry is on the upswing. At least our customers seem to be satisfied with current financing. I know the banks are still much more conservative than they were. They won't finance

Continued on page 87

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Text by Fred Thompson

Photography by Constellation Imageworks

The 2015 Allegro Open Road 32SA

TIFFIN LISTENS & CREATES A NEW 32-FT. ALLEGRO WITH OWNERS' MOST REQUESTED FEATURES

Summer 2012, at the beginning of the model year 2013, Tiffin Motorhomes offered five floorplans in their popular bread-and-butter Allegro Open Road brand. As always, they tuned their ears to the “feedback channel” and listened.

In mid-model year they were picking up some great ideas for a shorter coach and introduced the 31SA in the spring of 2013. The floorplan received good initial reviews, made the team, and appeared in the 2014 Allegro brochure. Now there were six floorplans in the lineup, each one a reflection of a different set of customers' needs and input.

One thing you can say about Tiffin's responsiveness to customers' input: it is swift! The 31SA (with a queen bed) was no exception. Tiffin owners who asked for a shorter coach at the Allegro brand's price point could have gone to a competitor already selling shorter length Class A coaches. But they had been pleased with Tiffin's quality over the years and preferred to stay with TMH. Tiffin continued to listen and the 32SA with a king bed was born. Here's what they heard.

“We would like a . . .”

♦ **Shorter coach.** It's easier to drive and park, and a shorter coach will let us take advantage of the smaller campsites in state and national park campgrounds.

♦ **L-shaped sofa** with a comfortable hide-a-bed in a mid-section living room.

♦ **At least a 38-inch television** with a surround sound entertainment system in the living room.

♦ **Residential refrigerator.** Wow! That was a big request because an electric fridge takes a bank of four house batteries and an inverter.

♦ **King-size bed.** Another *Wow!* A king-size bed in a 32-foot coach?

♦ **A larger lavatory-toilet compartment** that offers more elbow room.

♦ **8-way adjustable driver and passenger seats** with a leg lift on the passenger seat

So why do owners want a shorter Allegro Open Road coach?

DRIVEABILITY: If you are thinking of downsizing, compare 45 to 32 feet — that's down 29 percent. From 40 to 32 feet — that's 20 percent. The 32-foot coach has a shorter stopping distance. It also maneuvers better in traffic, especially on 90-degree, two lane corners. It is much easier to back into a campsite space when pull-through sites aren't available. And, of course, it has a significantly smaller turning radius.

MANY PARKS CAN'T ACCOMMODATE BIG RIGS: As Carolyn and I traveled to create stories for the magazine in 2012 and 2013, the 32-foot Allegro Breeze on several occasions made it possible for us to use campsites in state and national parks built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps, long before the advent of large motorhomes when most campers were still using tents or pulling trailers. Camping in our national forests pro-

vides access to some of the most beautiful back country in the U.S. The campsites usually have 50 feet or more of separation. Some of the national forest campsites are now offering electric and water hookups, but rarely sewer. Nearly all have dump stations and a community spigot to fill your water tank. But what if they don't? Dry camping really isn't that difficult once you get your routine established.

Most of our national parks have no hookups. But what you give up in conveniences, you are repaid double or triple in magnificent scenery, hiking trails, streams, flora, and wildlife. When was the last time you put on your hiking shoes, filled your backpack with cheese, fruit, bread, candy bars, and water, tucked in your camera and ID guides for trees and wildflowers, plotted your hike on a map, and went off for a day in the woods? When you return from your hike, you can fall into the 32SA's king size bed and drift off into lala land listening to the rushing stream 10 yards away.

My point is, of course, you don't have to give up luxury camping to enjoy the campgrounds in America with the greatest natural beauty. Just buy a shorter coach! There is a small but growing segment of Tiffin's owners who have discovered that “less is more.”

Now about the 32SA's luxury — it's got plenty of it!

Let's Take the Living Room First

Flexsteel's plush, L-shaped sofa extends 94 inches along the outside wall of the DS slide-out. The L-shape of the sofa is created by a sliding section that extends the “el” 64 inches into the living room. The sofa comfortably seats four adults, five if you're good friends. When it's bedtime, you will find a full-size double bed concealed by the two large top cushions. It inflates in about three minutes to provide a good night's sleep for your children or overnight guests. Having used the same bed several times in

the coach we drove this past summer, we will vouch for its ease of use and comfort.

Comfortable spaces don't have to be huge. The living room in the 32SA is a cozy 8 × 8 feet. Two of the walls are brightened by nearly 12 square feet of windows, making the area feel much larger. Each window has two drop-down shades: one for solar screening, plus an opaque one for total privacy. The living room's 38-inch flat panel television is at the perfect distance for optimum viewing. The surround sound system envelopes you in the movie or programming you are watching. The coffee table puts food or magazines at your fingertips. If you are watching the *Today* show on a cool morning, flip on the optional fireplace to knock off the chill.

Whatever you like to store in your living room, you will find eight cubic feet of storage space in the two compartments (4 doors) above the L-shaped sofa. In the base of the storage compartments and just above your head, you will notice two directional reading lights. Above the television, a louvered 2-door cabinet offers two 30-inch shelves.

Galleys & Dinettes — A Tiffin Design Speciality

In the last 10 years, Tiffin-designed galleys have not taken a back seat to any of its competitors. Quite the contrary, Tiffin has led the way, especially with innovative storage solutions. If you evaluated the galleys in Tiffin's top three brands — the Zephyr, the Allegro Bus, and the Phaeton, you would admire the skill and workmanship that created slide-out drawers in the overhead cabinets, slide-out pantries, the slide-out galley island, and an ingenious trapezoidal slide-out cabinet under the galley sink. The same skill and workmanship also created the galley in the 32SA.

In all six brands, the front faces and doors are made of hardwood. Although Tiffin buys prime select cherry and alderwood,



the woodworking department still uses a scanning device to mark and remove knots and other defects from the raw boards.

The amount of storage space in this galley is outstanding. Check out the overhead cabinets and the cabinets and drawers under the solid surface counter top (SSCT) covers for the cooktop. On the right side, a similar space is available for two sink covers. Though not designed specifically for that purpose, the covers fit there perfectly. Serendipity! Plus, you have plenty of

slide-out pantry has three shelves. Down under, left-to-right, the cook will love the stack of three drawers, each 6.5 inches wide × 23 inches deep. Under the sink on the left side, there is a slide-in slot for the solid surface counter top (SSCT) covers for the cooktop. On the right side, a similar space is available for two sink covers. Though not designed specifically for that purpose, the covers fit there perfectly. Serendipity! Plus, you have plenty of





space for storing all of the galley’s cleaning supplies and a “residential size” waste container. Underneath the cooktop, three drawers 18.5 inches wide × 19 inches deep will just about overwhelm your need for galley storage. Not through yet. Another stack of three drawers adjacent to the fridge — each 6 inches wide × 19 inches deep. If you choose the optional gas oven, you will give up the first two drawers under the cooktop.

The business end of this galley is a three-burner cooktop, with each burner well-spaced from the other to allow the concurrent use of large pans or vessels. When not in use, the cooktop is concealed with matching SSCT covers that afford more serving space in case you’re doing a buffet-style dinner. When its clean-up time, the double stainless steel sink, surrounded with plenty of counter top space, is ready for the job. The sink

has two SSCT covers. When not in use as a galley, you have a continuous work space for hobbies, business, or whatever, that is 75 inches wide with varying depths of 27 to 34 inches.

Residential refrigerators over the last eight years have been a big ticket item. First offered as an option, they soon became standard in the Zephyr, Allegro Bus, Phaeton, and the Allegro RED. Since the Allegro Open Road has a smaller chassis





and thus less space for the larger banks of house batteries required for the residential refrigerator, engineering had to search for a place to add two more house batteries which were tucked under the stairwell for the entrance door.

The Allegro 36LA was initially designed with a wider entrance door than the other Allegro floorplans. Those additional inches afforded the space for the extra two batteries. Since the 31SA and 32SA coaches were new floorplans, they, too, were designed with the wider en-

trances that made the residential fridge possible in their floorplans. So that's the story behind why those three floorplans have the 19-cubic foot Whirlpool refrigerator-freezer as an option.

Tiffin designers have done a really good job in lighting all of the six brands. LED lights recessed into the ceiling are standard. Even more important in the galley, the lights are perfectly positioned over the task areas.

Since the galley is a major functional area, Tiffin selected the sidewall encas-

ing the refrigerator for the placement of touch controls for the DS slide-out, lighting, water heater, water pump, roof vent fan/cover, and heating/cooling. A digital display shows levels for fresh water, gray & black tanks, and propane. All of the controls are at eye level.

For this coach, the optional convection/microwave oven with stainless steel facings was selected. It has task lights and venting to the outside of the coach.

Moving to the driver side of the coach, the standard dinette has seats 45 inches long and 18 inches wide. It really *can* seat four adults, elbows and all. The 45 × 25-inch table has the square footage for four place settings. Two drawers under the seats each provide two cubic feet of storage. We used one of the drawers to store all of our pots and pans. The table drops down to make a child's bed 45 × 69 inches. The cabinets over the dinette yield 6.5 cubic feet of storage space.

The Master Bedroom

The purposeful design of this coach was to create a 32-foot Allegro that included a king size bed. If you check the 2015 Allegro spec sheet, you will see headings for six floorplans. "King bed" is the last line on the spec sheet. The only floorplan offering a king bed in the Allegro brand is the 32SA — mission accomplished. North to south the bedroom floor measures eight feet. East to west with the bed slide-out extended, it measures 10 feet 3 inches.

The 72 × 78-inch bed has a handsome headboard flanked on both sides with end tables. Each end table has a compartment for stashing your paper reading material. The front of each end table has two USB ports, perhaps one for your iPhone (who uses an alarm clock today?) and another for your iPad, tablet, Kindle, or another digital device yet to be invented. Reading in bed ain't what it used to be.

But if reading and internet browsing in bed isn't your gig, then you surely will enjoy the flat panel HDMI 32-inch TV mounted on a flip-up door concealing the entertainment system. Powered by a Panasonic 1000-watt system with "Wi-Fi Built-in," the system provides a wide vari-

ety of web content, including Bloomberg TV, Netflix, Twitter, Cinema Now, Pandora Internet Radio, Vudu, Fox Sports, Picasa Web Albums, and You Tube videos. Both AT&T and Verizon offer air cards to provide a Wi-Fi connection.

With its Blu-ray™/DVD Home Theater System feature, the LG television supports HD programming and playback. In addition to the optional Wine-gard Roadtrip Mission/InMotion Satellite on this coach, TMH has also included as standard equipment the receiver which is pre-programmed for DirecTV, but does require a subscription. As an option, this coach was also pre-wired for the Winegard Trav'ler Satellite to bring in HD programming from satellites that are located just above the horizon. Surround sound is offered only in the entertainment center.

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 these devices.

The bedroom itself is a very thoughtfully designed compartment. Two mirrored doors conceal a unique closet (43 inches high × 51 inches wide × 8 inches deep) designed for hanging suits, coats, or long dresses. It utilizes the depth of the rear cap that otherwise would have been lost as dead space. The DS wardrobe is 50.5 × 50.5 × 20.5 inches. It, too, has mirrored doors, adding to your visual space. There certainly is a psychology to mirrored space — nothing deceptive about it. It just works to make small spaces more liveable.

The wardrobe sits on top of a solid surface counter top. Underneath are three large drawers 30 × 10 × 9 inches high. A big hamper will hold at least a week's worth of laundry. A solid surface counter top south of the wardrobe measures 34.5 × 21.5-inches where an easterly view through a 28 × 18 window brings in the morning light. It is also the emergency exit. The PS storage above the bed (nearly 14 cubic feet) has two compartments, each with two flip-up doors. It is a Tiffin trademark and an enduring design.

For items used less frequently, or perhaps for storing your out-of-season wardrobe, the felt-lined storage box under the



bed provides a whopping 22 cubic feet of storage space.

The Master Bath

Another enduring design is the split bath. To close off the bath from the bedroom and living area, two sliding doors move with the flick of your finger and lock into place with a spring-loaded plunger. A big advantage of the design is that it temporarily captures the hall as part of the bathroom's space.

The enclosed area for the toilet and lavatory is 5' 10" long by 3' 2" wide, perhaps the largest toilet-lavatory enclosure in all of Tiffin's floorplans. The bath has four storage areas.

The vanity with a solid surface counter top is L-shaped, 45 inches on the longer leg and 21 inches on the shorter. The lavatory has a single lever, brushed nickel faucet. The vanity cabinet has nearly 2 cubic feet of storage space. Built into the corner, the medicine cabinet with two shelves is 11 inches deep. The door has an 8 × 20-inch mirror. The cabinet above the toilet has two 23-inch shelves. A 22-inch wide enclosure under the longer leg of the "L"

has two hardwood slats that will retain four rolled bath towels. The bath has four towel racks and a hand towel ring.

A Fan-Tastic exhaust fan has separate touch switches for the lid and the fan. Touch switches on the same panel control the water pump and two LED ceiling lights. Two 110v outlets are conveniently positioned above the countertop. And standard, of course, the bath has the obligatory 12 × 22-inch window with an opaque shade.

Across the hall, rain glass encloses the 38 × 24-inch fiberglass shower which is sculpted with a seat, a grab bar, and a ledge for soap and other toiletry items. Two corner shelves are positioned at a higher level. Brushed nickel levers control the hot-cold temp and water pressure. A flexible hose connects to an adjustable shower head with a convenient on-off thumb switch.

Tiffin's signature skylight in the shower has an insulated sliding panel to take care of the heat and cold extremes. An LED light is embedded in the sliding panel to illuminate the shower when the panel is closed.



The Allegro's Cockpit

Built by Flexsteel, the optional 8-way power seats for both the passenger and driver will be the best \$399 (MSRP) you will likely ever invest. On a long drive, the ability to adjust your seat in all directions is a lifesaver for good circulation and just general comfort. In addition to the power adjustments, you can also use a lever to tilt the back of your seat to any point (as opposed to slotted adjustments). The passenger seat has the same set of adjustments plus a leg lift. Both seats can be rotated to face the living area.

Designed by Ford, the instrumentation is easy to read. No squinting to see numbers that are too small or digital displays that are not clear. The primary display directly in front of the steering column presents two large dials for RPM and MPH. To the right and left you will see temp gauges for the transmission, coolant, and engine, plus the fuel gauge. Between the speedometer and the RPM dial, a digital display presents warning lights, the odometer, and a trip meter. Just to the right of the steering column, notice the vertical bar divided into three push buttons (RESET, SETUP, INFO) for personalizing your driver input information. The steering wheel has buttons for cruise control.

On the dashboard to the left of the steering column, you will see toggles for gen start, aux start, and the map light; a panel for the parking and head lights, and the brightness control for the instrumentation; and a dial for genset hours. The mirror controls with mirror heat are in the driver's door, along with the power window switch and door latch.

To the right of the steering column, toggles for the driver fan, radio, and the solar and night shades are at your fingertips. Just above the toggle switches, the standard color backup monitor presents views of the rear of the coach as well as the left and right sides. The side cameras are installed in the mirror frames. You can use the monitor at night for a security check around your coach.

A Kenwood unit to the right of the camera monitor combines the dash stereo, radio, CD player, and optional navigation software into one very efficient system. The control panel for the HWH computerized leveling system is located in the lower center of the dashboard. Just to the right you will see the Ford HVAC controls for automotive heating and cooling.

Staying on top of current technology, Tiffin installed two USB ports to keep all of your digital equipment charged to use while traveling.

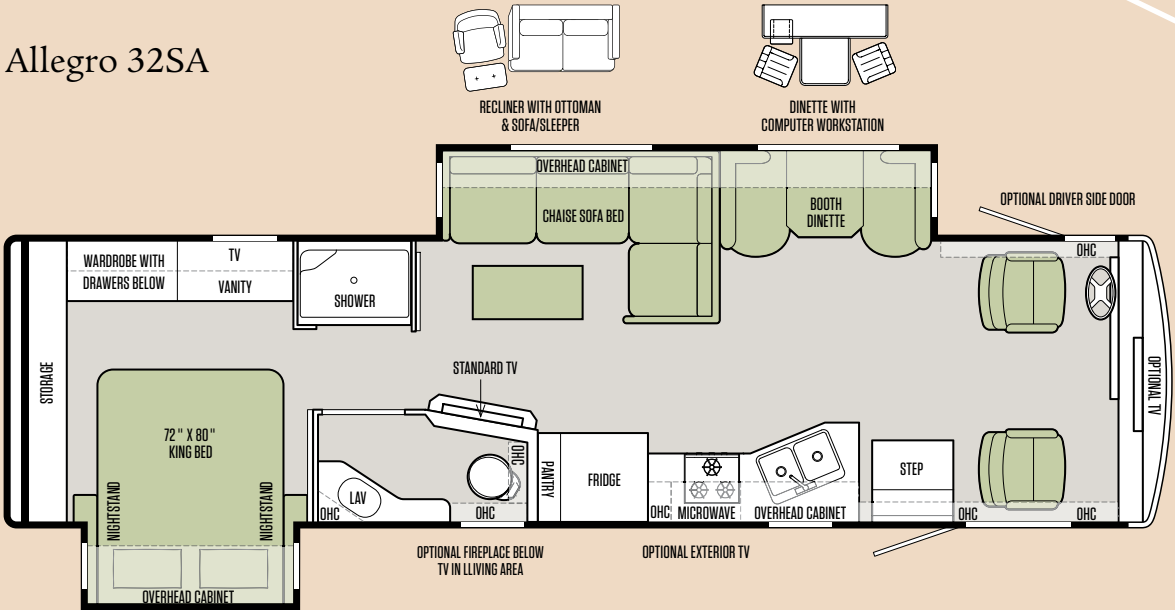
The dash slide-out table in front of the passenger seat was designed for your laptop. There's also plenty of space for a small printer on the deck in front of the dash. With 110v service just under the dash, you can use your computer and printer in transit or at rest. The passenger's armrest has toggle switches for the fan and overhead map light.

Driving the Allegro 32SA

New for 2015 in the Allegro, "Summo Springs" are a piece of engineering that has significantly improved the handling and ride of the Allegro coaches. Mounted above the leaf springs (see picture), the optional Summo Springs add stability that prevents

Continued on page 87

Allegro 32SA



SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2015 Allegro 32SA, with Two Slides, Base MSRP* – \$150,220. MSRP as tested with options – \$164,519.

STANDARD FEATURES

Structural

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

Automotive

Ford TorqShift® 5-speed transmission with overdrive and Tow/Haul mode
Ford 6.8 L, V-10, 362 HP @ 4,750 RPM
457 lb-ft torque @ 3250 rpm
Cruise control with steering wheel controls
Fog lights
Daytime running lights
Emergency start switch

Exterior

Fiberglass front & rear caps
Fiberglass roof cap
Gel-coat fiberglass walls
Tinted one-piece windshield
5.5 Onan® gas generator
Two 13,500 BTU high profile roof ACs (high efficiency)
Quiet AC roof-ducted system
Foil wrap insulated barrier
Double electric step
¼-inch thick single pane windows
Horizontal mounted wipers
Heated power mirrors
Exterior patio light
Slide-out awnings
Hydraulic automatic leveling jacks
BASF full-body paint with protective film on front cap
Two 6v auxiliary batteries
Exterior rinse hose/shower
Water filtration system
Low-point water drain lines
Lighted utilities compartment
Side-mounted access doors with gas shocks
Rigid long-life storage boxes
Single handle lockable storage door latches
Heated water & holding tank compartments
Digital TV antenna & cable-ready TV
Side view cameras activated by turn signals
Power patio awning with aluminum weather shield
LED patio & awning lights
Water heater bypass system
50-amp service
Black holding tank flush system
Gravity water fill
Color back-up monitor
110v exterior receptacle
110v – 12v converter
Undercoating
Roof ladder
External tripod satellite hook-up
Lighted basement storage

Driver's Compartment

Entry floor light
Step switch and 12v disconnect switch
Back-up camera with color monitor
Non-powered cloth passenger & driver seats
Lighted instrument panel

Single CD player & stereo AM/FM radio
Two cup holders & tray
Passenger slide-out desk
One 12v dash receptacles
Two USB dash receptacles
Tilt steering wheel with cruise control
Dual dash fans
Power solar & privacy windshield shades
Manual solar & privacy shades for driver & passenger side windows
Fire extinguisher

Living Area / Dinette

Contemporary booth dinette with large pull-out storage drawers
Mid-section TV in entertainment center w/ surround sound (digital system located in bedroom)
Halo leatherette L-shaped sofa
Decorative wall art

Kitchen

Single satin nickel sink faucet w/ extension rinser head
Under counter mount double bowl stainless steel sink
Solid surface sink countertops
Solid surface backsplashes
3-burner recessed cooktop with solid surface covers
Gas oven
Microwave with exterior venting
Gas/electric 2-door refrigerator/freezer w/pantry

Split Bath

Molded fiberglass one-piece shower on DS
Skylight in shower w/ insulated sliding cover & LED light
Satin nickel faucet w/ flex hose and adjustable shower head
Vanity cabinet with lavatory on PS
Satin nickel faucet on lavatory
Solid surface countertop & backsplash
Medicine cabinet
Fantastic fan with wall switch
Toilet w/ foot flush lever
Water pump switch

Bedroom

Wardrobe with automatic light
Bed comforter & throw pillows
Innerspring queen mattress (60" x 80")
Storage under bed, lift top w/gas struts
Tile flooring
Solar/privacy Roll-Ease shades
Carbon monoxide detector
LPG leak detector
Color television w/ concealed entertainment center at eye level
110v outlets and USB ports in bedside tables
Bedside tables with book/magazine racks
Individual reading lamps

General Interior

High gloss raised panel hardwood cabinet doors & drawer fronts
Solid wood cabinet faces
Medium Alderwood, English Chestnut, and Cordovan finishes
Soft touch vinyl ceiling

Ball bearing drawer slides
Wall-to-wall vinyl tile flooring through-out coach
LED bulbs in all interior lights
Scotchgard® treated fabrics
Roll-Ease® solar & privacy shades
Two power roof vents
Tank level monitor system
Smoke detector
10-gallon DSI gas / electric water heater
Two 35,000 BTU ducted furnaces
Carbon monoxide detector
LPG leak detector

OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Ride Assist – Summo Springs
7.0Kb Onan generator
15,000 AC w/heat pump
Countertop backsplash upgrade
Winegard in-motion automatic satellite
Driver door w/ power window
Exterior TV
Front overhead TV
In dash navigation system
Power DS & PS seats, Halo leatherette, PS power foot rest
Central vacuum system
Cooktop w/ convection microwave
Residential refrigerator w/ 4 batteries & ice maker
Fireplace
Bedroom ceiling fan

OTHER OPTIONAL & STANDARD FEATURES AVAILABLE

Power passenger & driver seats, cloth
Cooktop / oven / microwave (standard)
Cooktop / oven / microwave, convection
Dinette computer workstation
2-door gas-elec refrigerator w/pantry (standard)
Ice maker for 2-door refrigerator
4-door gas-elec refrigerator
Solid wood refrigerator panels (2-door)
Halo leatherette DE (jack knife) sofa bed w/recliner DS
Halo leatherette hide-a-bed w/recliner DS
CB antenna

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 228"
Overall length – 34'
Overall height with roof air – 12' 10"
Interior height – 83.5"
Overall width – 101"
Interior width – 96"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 24,000 lbs.
Front GAWR – 9,000 lbs.
Rear GAWR – 15,500 lbs.
GCWR – 30,000 lbs.
UVW – 20,300 lbs.
CCC – 3,700 lbs.
Trailer hitch capacity – 5,000 lbs.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – 362-hp Ford 6.8 L, Triton V-10
Torque – 457 lb.ft. @ 3250 rpm

Transmission – TorqShift® 5-speed automatic overdrive with tow/haul mode
Tire size – 235/80R 22.5 - GXRV
Alternator – 130 amps

CHASSIS

Frame – Single channel, ladder type
Frame design – 50 psi hi-strength steel with deep C-channel side rails
Steering – 50 degree wheel cut
Anti-locking braking system – Standard 4-wheel anti-lock brakes
Suspension (front and rear) – Tapered multi-leaf springs
Shock absorbers – Bilstien gas pressured
Axles – Heavy-duty Dana 17060S
Leveling jacks – HWH hydraulic automatic

CONSTRUCTION

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

ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – Six (four adults, two children)
Fuel tank – 75 gallons
Fresh water – 70 gallons
Black water – 50 gallons
Grey water – 66 gallons
LPG tank – 24 gallons (can be filled to 80% capacity)

MSRP

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

UVW

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

DEALERS

To locate 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.



He Found Opportunities, Took Risks, and Built a Successful Dealership

LOCATED IN PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA, RV Connections is a family-owned company with a fine reputation for excellent customer service. Since they became a Tiffin dealer three years ago, the company has been garnering top commendations from RVers who have purchased Class A motorhomes from the 15-year-old firm. Good sales and service will always create good public relations, but then we learned that RV Connections actually made a profit every quarter through the 42-month recession that began in late 2008. Plus, they did not lay off any of the company's employees. There had to be a good management story here.

On Monday June 30 we drove to Panama City to interview the company's owners and managers. Tuesday at 9 a.m. I was chatting with Neal Stewart in his office, awaiting the arrival of his father, Jack, who was on his way from the hospital where his wife, Kay, had surgery the previous day. Jack came in momentarily with the good news that his wife of 36 years was doing quite well. He was proud of her indomitable spirit that had helped her win previous health battles. As we began to talk, he put me at ease with his comfortable flow of conversation and a sincere smile. For some fortunate people, it is a natural asset and a building block for a successful career.

"My first real job in 1978 was working as a route man for a bread company," he began. "The bakery ran all night producing fresh loaves of bread and the route men had to be there at 4 a.m.



to load their trucks and start deliveries. It was quite a grind.

"Later I ran a beer route which was a move up the ladder as far as my earnings were concerned," he noted. Good route men have to develop sales skills to increase the number of stores they serve. But their annual earnings have a low ceiling.

With self-confidence gained over nearly a decade, Jack moved to the automotive industry where he became a top performer in sales. The Florida Panhandle is an RVers paradise served by several dealerships in every major city. Panama City is no exception and Jack began to hear that RV sales was not only a fun job with good hours, the commissions were better, too. After three years in the car business, he quit his job and took a position in sales with Northwest Campers. "The company sent me to Fleetwood

for my first sales training," Jack said. "I was excited and ready to set records."

Northwest Campers was a growing concern that later became Emerald Coast RV. Their success was fueled by dealerships in Panama City, Dothan, and Gulf Breeze. Jack's ambition and sales skills paid off with promotions to general sales manager and finally to vice president.

"Eleven years had gone by and Kay and I had Neal who was now 15," he continued. "Neal was fascinated by the RV industry and would work weekends washing RVs. I began thinking about starting a business in which he might join me in the future as a business partner.

"I came home from school one afternoon and Dad was there," Neal said, as he saw an opening in the interview. "It was mid-afternoon and I knew immediately something was going on since he rarely came home before six."

"I told Neal I had just quit my job and planned to start an RV sales and service company. I asked him if he was 'on board' with that idea and he jumped for it," Jack said.

It took seven months to find three acres on US 231. With surprising finesse, Jack secured a half million dollar line of credit from the bank for floorplanning and convinced Springdale and Cardinal to grant RV Connections dealerships for travel trailers. With no track record, the fledgling company was awarded a franchise by Condor for Class A motorhomes.

"All of the really good brands were already taken by the five big RV stores in town," he laughed. "So we started with what was still available. Then the stock market crashed in March 2000 when the so-called 'dot-com bubble' burst. What a way to start a business! But we made money the first quarter."

As so many of Tiffin's dealers have done, Jack Stewart joined a "20-Group." Dealerships with similar sales volume meet together semi-annually to discuss solutions to their common problems. Members in the group do not compete in the same geographical areas, so there is not a conflict in sharing information. Each member can benchmark his sales performance and financials with companies of similar size. "The 20-Group helped us tremendously and played a major role in our financial and general management success," Jack said. "We have visited nearly all of the stores in our group, and I can honestly say that I would match our sales and service teams against anyone."

Neal's enthusiasm for becoming a part of the new family business became a great encouragement to Jack. "He wanted to know everything about sales and how to make presentations," Jack smiled as he glanced at Neal. "He would pull me over after I got home from work and we would do role playing. He came to the store after school and on weekends to wash RVs, cut grass, and keep the landscaping looking nice. I could see that he saw the adventure and challenge of this business and that spurred me on."

A few years ago Jack and Neal attended a Paul Cummings seminar. Cummings has offices all over the world and has taught the principles and practice of good management to business owners for several decades. He champions a philosophy that made an indelible impression on the Stewarts and they took it home to the sales and service personnel at RV Connections.

The simple philosophy is: "It all matters."

- ◆ In the first five minutes, a customer decides if he wants to deal with the salesman who initially greeted him.
- ◆ It's how you look.
- ◆ Is the store neat, the inventory clean?
- ◆ Are the grounds clean, the landscaping trimmed, the grass cut?
- ◆ Is each sales person's desk organized and office comfortably arranged for a meeting?
- ◆ Are the offices, showroom, accessories store, and service center well lighted?
- ◆ Do you have qualified managers in all of your divisions?
- ◆ Are there training programs in place for sales, service, and management?
- ◆ Is growth of each employee's personal skills encouraged?

You have to focus on all areas, Cummings emphasized. That day when Neal and I returned from lunch, we walked across the parking lot toward the entrance. As we walked, Neal picked up a chewing gum wrapper and a greasy washer. "It all matters," he laughed.

Each unit on display is checked several times a week to be sure it is clean. The new motorhomes and towables are checked every day. "We want our new inventory to be decorated and plugged in with the lights and air conditioning on," Neal said. "We have six full-time detailers on the lot to monitor the cleanliness of the store and inventory."

In 2008 the company began to feel the crunch as the stock market tanked and the economy went into a pronounced atrophy. "We became a Monaco dealer in 2005 and they were one of the first Class A manufacturers to fail," Neal said. "We got hurt when we had to get rid of them below cost."

"When the recession started, there were five RV dealerships in the greater Panama City area," Jack noted. "A well-known national lender knew we were financially sound and debt free. They called and asked us to take 80 motorhomes and towables on consignment at wholesale prices. I felt confident there were still buyers with personal wealth out there to purchase those coaches. Through our website and other internet advertising venues, we began to sell the units all over the U.S. Then another large RV dealership closed. The bank paid us to repair units that had been cannibalized for parts. We made our facility look great, did a good job of managing service, and kept operating. Three years later RV Connections was the only survivor. "With

Text and photography by Fred Thompson



RV Connections Sales Team *left-to-right*: Butch Stewart, Leo Hill, Ronnie Riehm, Bob Beaty, Gary Taylor, Scott Norman, C.O. England. Not Pictured: Bill Cockrell, Matthew McQueen.

the exception of a line of bank credit for our inventory floorplan, RV Connections today is still a debt-free company.

“After Monaco went down,” Jack continued, “we decided to get out of the new motorhome business until we could become a Tiffin dealer. GE Capital put in a good word for us and the rest is history. Today we have a solid line-up of manufacturers: Tiffin is our Class A motorhome manufacturer; Keystone is our primary towable supplier; and we have a Forest River franchise for Class B and Class C motorized.”

“We have a great group of customers who are very loyal,” Neal pointed out. “Tiffin and Danny Inman have done a wonderful job of helping us grow our Class A business at a sensible pace.”

“After we established the franchise, Danny came to visit us,” Jack explained. “I was prepared to inventory five or six big coaches. To my relief, he said, ‘Let’s start out a little slower with two units.’ Tiffin never demands that you take x-number of units. They work with you at your pace.”

Having been the consummate salesman himself, Jack Stewart was very conscious of the necessity of building a good

sales organization and a capable service department.

“After I made the break with Emerald, set up a line of bank credit, and closed the deal on the land, second thoughts began to creep in,” Jack admitted. “The first few days I thought I had made the biggest mistake of my life. Then I began to think – who do I know that will make a difference in the success of this company?”

“I went to high school with C.O. England and knew he had 25 years of experience in the automotive service industry,” Jack said, with a relieved expression. “I talked him into coming with us as our sales manager – certainly a risk for him to leave a stable company and a good job to work for a new company. But C.O. has vision for which I have been thankful. He is good at forecasting and drawing up a great game plan.”

“We were servicing about 100 cars a day with the Chevrolet dealer where I had worked for 25 years,” C.O. began. “I focused on customer satisfaction by taking care of specific service problems. I joined Jack in 2005. Coming to RV Connections (RVC) was a learning experience for several months. You have to learn the features

and benefits that make our RVs better than products sold by the competition.”

“Everyone here in sales knows to go to C.O. to verify what we have in inventory,” Neal said. “He has a phenomenal memory that is critical when it’s time to order new stock – what sells good and what has been moving slow.”

“He brought organization to our service policies and procedures,” Jack added. “His communication skills and ability to work with everyone made him a natural for becoming our sales manager.”

“Our purpose in sales is to understand a customer’s approach to enjoying the outdoors, determine how many will use the RV, and find the right product/budget ratio to satisfy his needs,” C.O. explained. “We have very little turnover in our sales team. Most of the sales people who started here are still here. We look for a good work ethic, communications skills, and good character. We rarely hire a salesperson from another RV franchise store. We like to train our sales team our way.”

Neal and C.O. together do sales training every Friday using Joe Verde’s Virtual Sales Training methods, a system originally developed for automobile sales. “We are not a high pressure sales organization,” Neal notes. “Our approach to sales training emphasizes several points: (1) taking care of customers; (2) treating your customer the way you want to be treated; (3) the extra-mile philosophy; (4) making your customer feel like family; (5) allowing every circumstance to stand on its own merits.”

The company sends all of its sales team to Tiffin Motorhomes for product training. If a TMH representative or a representative from a component manufacturer comes to RVC to provide training, it is mandatory that all sales people attend.

“Danny Inman has done a wonderful job helping us grow our Class A business,” C.O. said. “Tom Webber has spent a lot of time training us on product and is always there to help by phone. The overall dealer support we receive from Tom and Danny on the sales end is top notch.”

The sales team and the parts and service team can make some impressive

claims regarding their collective experience. The sales team has 129 years of experience. The parts and service departments together have 194 years of experience, of which 167 years is claimed by service. Forty employees have a total of 405 years of experience, of which 199 years was spent at RV Connections.

In 2002 Jack found seven acres on Hwy 98 on the east side of Panama City. A small building on the property was remodeled for the sales and administration offices. The service department now has five bays that can accommodate two RVs per bay.

“We are currently pulling permits to begin several upgrades to our facility,” Jack said. “We will tear down this small sales and administration building to create a larger display area close to the highway for our Class A inventory. Then we will add a much larger building on one side of the service center to provide space for seven sales offices, a conference room, a customer lounge, plus offices for administration and F&I. The expansion will include the infrastructure for eight covered open-air service bays. These bays will also be used for customer training and provide a protected area for new owners to use when moving their contents and furnishings from their old RV into the new one. The new facility will enlarge our parts and accessories store. An additional four acres for future expansion will be added to the existing seven.”

The sales team can sell from both lots. A customer can determine from RVC’s website the sales lot on which a particular towable or motorized RV is located. Usually 40 percent of the inventory is located on the three-acre US 231 lot. And sometimes the smaller 231 lot outsells the larger, more heavily stocked Hwy 98 facility.

RV Connections offers the whole package. “We provide extended service plans, plus tire and wheel, and GAP protection through AGWS,” Neal said. “We sell RV insurance through RV America/Progressive at very competitive rates. We are very pleased with the great customer service they give to our owners. Our company offers financing through Bank of America, BBT, and Ally.” Kay Stewart and Nan



RV Connections service team *back row left to right:* Matt Walsh, Ken Zell, Jay Young, Carl Chapman, Travis Valdez, Jimmy Alligood, Matt Brown, Lee Exum, Roger Hobbs. *Front row left to right:* Connie Oliver, Linda Morrissey, Mechell Turner, Eric Scheuermann, Dana Blackburn, Terry Pippins, Andrew Cook, Bill Martin, Paul Lovett, Vance White. *Not pictured:* Lacey Smith, Keith Adams, Terry Dyson

White are both licensed insurance agents.

“Nan White, our finance manager, has been in the F&I field for over 15 years and offers a wealth of knowledge to help our customers,” Jack continued. “When it comes to RV finance, you want an experienced F&I professional to route you in the best direction possible. The banks frequently have rate specials that we pass on to our clients.”

“Customer training is a very important part of the sales process,” Neal emphasized. “We do an RV orientation, sometimes called a ‘walk-through.’ But that term probably minimizes what we do. Depending on the new owner’s previous experience with RVs, an orientation may require only an hour or two to explain the differences between his old unit and the new one, or it may take a half day or longer if he has never owned a coach. We just do whatever it takes to train the owner.”

“We have a dedicated customer training specialist,” Neal continued. “After the training takes place, he goes over a training checklist with the owner to see if there

are points that need to be reviewed. Then the owner signs off on the thoroughness of the experience. We provide a hook-up and space for the new owners to transfer the contents of their trade-in unit into their new one. Then we send them to a nearby five-star motorhome resort to have a great experience on their first night. If an RVC customer has not owned a motorhome before, the sales staff provides driver training.”

RV Connections goes one step further in training. The sales person provides the new owner with his personal cell phone number. If the new owners forget or become confused about a part of their training session, they can call during or after business hours for assistance.

“There have been cases where the sales person or trainer could not answer a question,” Neal said. “In that case we launch a conference call with one of our technicians to solve the problem. We want our owners to have complete self-confidence in the operation of their motorhome. That’s the only way they will completely enjoy it.”



Administrative and office management is handled by a four-person team, each of whom has many years of experience with the company.

Left to right: Donna Cummings, office manager; Nan White, business manager; Angel Trapp, document specialist; and Diana Fristoe, bookkeeper.

“We are very fortunate to have Matt Brown managing our parts and service department,” Jack said. “He came to us from Camping World and he has taken that department to the next level of competency and service quality. He has given structure to our operation and developed processes that create smooth follow-through. Matt is a pacesetter and the people in his department are motivated by his leadership.”

Matt began his career as an account manager with NAPA Auto Parts after college. In 2007 he accepted a position as a business development manager with Camping World (CW) in Dothan, Alabama. His success in that position boosted new business by 30 percent. However, the dealership badly needed service managers and urged him to accept the new position.

Matt found service management to his liking and built a very successful parts and service team through 2013 before joining the RV Connections family. With great disappointment in CW’s upper management, he observed, “Camping World is turning into a big box store. When I accepted this position with RV Connections, getting to deal directly with the owners was like a breath of fresh air.”

Matt manages a service department with eight technicians, one of whom is a

master certified tech with 30 years of experience. Three others are certified and the remaining four techs are training and studying for RVIA certification. The department has two service advisors, one warranty manager, and three parts technicians.

“Our service writers have a well-defined routine that we follow when working with an owner bringing an RV in for service,” Matt noted. “Here’s how we do it at RVC.”

(1) A full walk-around and walk-through to check the RV for any existing damage.

(2) We ask the owner to explain the problems that need to be repaired or corrected. We probe for full information.

(3) We check for other problems, recalls, or anything the service writer noticed in Step 1.

(4) The service writer creates a written “story,” enters it in the computer, and goes over it with the owner.

(5) If the initial contact was done by phone, the story is entered into the computer and a game plan is in progress before the customer’s arrival. Step 1 is done at that point.

(6) When the service write-up is completed, the writer asks, “How should we communicate with you? Texting, email, or cell phone?”

“We contact the customer every three days to update progress, parts orders, and receiving,” Matt said. “A communication line is paramount for a successful repair experience. We steer toward contacts by email because it builds a great paper trail.”

The service department also handles almost any type of repair including air conditioners; refrigerators; water heaters; furnaces; slide-outs; roof replacements; windows replacements; paint & body work; interior rehabbing including carpet, tile, and cabinetry; and fiberglass repair and sidewall delamination.

The service department does light chassis work including brakes, bearings, wheel packs, oil changes, and genset service. They do not offer tire service.

The department recently did a custom build for a disaster relief command center that included a new 10KW generator with wiring to operate 10 computer workstations, the fabrication of a new fuel tank and battery bank, and the installation of a converter. The department is certified to do warranty work for Tiffin, Keystone, Thor, and Forest River. RVC is a “Preferred Shop” for Progressive and Nationwide insurance companies.

“We have a really wide diversity of talent and abilities in our service department,” Matt assured. “Our turnaround

times are outstanding, and I am always amazed at the speed and efficiency of our technicians. We have very few returns on our work.” The service department is open 8-5, Monday through Saturday.

RV Connections is a member of the Route 66 RV Network. It is a consortium of franchised dealers nationwide who each pledge to treat a network member’s customer as if that customer were theirs. “We will evaluate a member’s problem within 24 hours of his arrival and work on it within three days,” Jack explained. “A member receives a 10 percent discount on parts and service. There are 150 participating dealers nationwide.”

The accessories store occupies 2,500 square feet and has vendor dealerships with Blue Ox, Lightning RV, A&E Awnings, and Carefree of Colorado Awnings. “Connie Oliver heads up our parts department,” Neal said. “She has brought our parts department light years in the last 18 months. She has nearly 20 years of parts experience. Having the right parts at the right time is an extremely important part of our business.”

A talk with C.O. England, the company’s sales manager, concluded my visit to RV Connections. My question to C.O. was, “Why should a person who enjoys the outdoors and wants to get into RVing come to RV Connections?”

“All of our employees — whether it’s sales, service, or finance and insurance — are very experienced,” C.O. began. “We love RVEDA’s advertising logo that says ‘Let’s Go RVing.’ And we know how to help you do that.

“This company is built on family values. And that’s really what RVing is all about. It’s a lifestyle and we are all committed to it.

“The operation of this company is based on Christian values. Our approach to sales training emphasizes every week that we treat our customers the way we would want to be treated if the roles were reversed. We emphasize the extra-mile philosophy.

“We have the best products in the RV industry. After the recession, we decided not to be a motorhome dealership unless we could be awarded the Tiffin franchise.

Tiffin has the best warranties and service ethics of any motorhome company in this business.

“Our employees always work together as a team. We back each other up and complement each other’s skill sets.”

“Just in general, we love what we do. It’s a fun business. We all like dealing with people,” C.O. continued. “We enjoy seeing a plan come together for a customer and making it work smoothly.

People come here because they want to, not because they have to. In a way, we are not really selling recreational vehicles — we are selling great experiences, and making our customers part of a great extended family. It’s amazing how RVers are always willing to help each other in a campground. It’s really fun making people happy with a new RV, seeing that happiness and enjoyment, and knowing that we had a part in it.” **RIS**



Have you looked inside a Splendide lately?

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

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

1-800 356-0766 | www.splendide.com

What's new for the 2015 Allegro and Allegro RED

Interior Color Options

Camomile (returning), Caramel (new), Linen (new)

Exterior Color Options

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

New Features (pictured below)

1. Full tile backsplash (optional)
2. Satin nickel faucets in bathroom
3. Satin nickel gooseneck faucet in galley
4. Hidden cabinet hinges (replaces flush mount hinges)
5. Optional rear rock guard (Allegro RED only)
6. Non-opening PS cockpit window (standard) (Allegro RED only)
7. Add USB ports (dash and BR)
8. LED (white) porch light

New Features (not pictured)

- Interior partitions to overhead cabinets
- Black night shades
- Windows in dinette end walls
- Fireplace option
- New type residential refrigerator in 36LA, 32SA, & 31SA
- Overhead bunk option available (except in 35QBA)
- 24" acrylic grab handle at entry door (replaces wood handle)



1



2



3



4a



4b

- New style cargo door latch/striker
- PTL entrance door (Allegro RED only)
- The optional satellite system is an in-motion satellite system
- Pre-wire for Winegard Trav'ler satellite (unpublished option)
- Spyder multiplex system controls (Allegro RED only)
- Keyless entry door with key fob (standard) (Allegro RED only)
- Pure sine inverter (standard) (Allegro RED only)

Allegro Open Road Floorplans

- The 30GA floorplan has been discontinued for 2015.
- Available floorplans are 31SA, 32SA, 32CA, 34TGA, 35QBA, and 36LA.

Allegro Red Floorplans

- The 34QFA floorplan has been discontinued for 2015.
- Available floorplans are 33AA, 36QSA, 37PA, 38QBA, and 38QRA.



5



6



7a



7b



8

What's new for the 2015 Phaeton

Interior Color Options

English Toffee (new), Sandpiper (returning), Tribeca (new)

Exterior Color Options

Sunlit Sand, Maroon Coral, Rustic Canyon, Emerald Spruce, NASA

New Features (pictured below)

1. Dash styling and components
2. Non-opening PS cockpit window (standard)
3. Blackout shades
4. Window valances
5. USB/110v pop-up power strip in counter-top of dinette computer workstation
6. All electric unit with Aqua-Hot (optional). Available on all Phaetons.
7. USB ports in dash and passenger console
8. Front and rear caps
9. Windshield
10. Headlights and tail lights
11. DS & PS mirrors



New Features (not shown)

- Driver's seat moved 10-inches forward
- A-Pillar covers
- A-Pillar windows and gaskets
- Galley window offered as an option
- Full length mirror on rear bath pocket door
- 30" acrylic grab handle
- Partitions in overhead cabinets
- Spyder multiplex system

- The optional satellite system is an in-motion satellite system
- 3 ACs except 36GH (standard)
- 10KW generator (standard)
- Driver's window
- Ladder
- Fenders
- Patio awning with light
- Door awning with light
- LED porch light

Floorplans

- The 40QTH floorplan has been discontinued for 2015.
- Available floorplans are 36GH, 40AH, 40QKH, 40QBH, and 42LH.



What's new for the 2015 Allegro Bus

Interior Color Options

Ritz (returning), Aspen (returning), Bamboo (new), Watercolor (new)

Exterior Color Options

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

New Features (pictured below)

1. Full tile backsplash (standard)
2. Valances and slide-out fascias
3. Folding shower seat in solid surface shower
4. Louvered vent doors over 14 × 14 vents
5. Change bank of drawers on top of galley countertop from 2 to 3 drawers
6. New PTL entrance door

New Features (not shown)

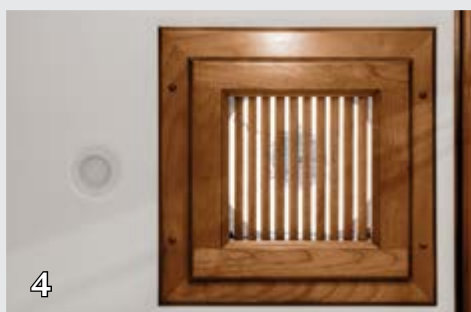
- Solid pocket doors (frosted glass inserts discontinued)
- Interior partitions to overhead cabinets
- Black night shades – Multiplex shades
- 30" acrylic grab handle
- Redesigned outer ceiling ring to house LED strip light
- Redesign closet for 45LP to mimic the closet in the 40AH
- Soft-close drawer rails
- Three AC units (standard)
- 10KW generator (standard)
- Two AC thermostats in PS front overhead, one in bedroom
- Dash radio sub-woofer
- Satellite system is an in-motion satellite system
- Monitor panel (multiplex system) moved

from front overhead on DS to hall (near the bedroom)

- Leveling system: Combo system with HWH (standard); Valid Leveling System (optional)
- Brake lights now come on in tandem with the engine brake
- LED patio awning light
- LED porch light
- LED door light
- LED road light
- Non-opening PS cockpit window (standard)
- Ground effect lighting around entire coach

Floorplans

- The 40QBP and the 43QGP floor plans have been discontinued for 2015.
- Available floor plans are 37AP, 40SP, and 45LP.



What's new for the 2015 Allegro Breeze

Interior Color Options

River Rock (returning), Sahara (returning), Zest (new)

Exterior Color Options

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

New Features (pictured below)

1. Full tile backsplash (optional)
2. USB ports in dash and passenger console
3. LED (white) porch light
4. LED (white) door light
5. 24" acrylic entry door grab handle to replace wood grab handle
6. Residential refrigerator (optional on 32BR only)

New Features (not shown)

- Interior partitions to overhead cabinets
- Black night shades
- The optional satellite system is an in-motion satellite system
- Pre-wire for Winegard Trav'ler satellite (optional)
- Brake lights come on with the exhaust brake
- Non-opening PS cockpit window (standard)

Floorplans

- Available floorplans are 28BR and 32BR.



Norris Reminisces on 40 Years at Tiffin Motorhomes

Norris Lewey's job duties have changed quite a bit in the past 40 years, but one thing hasn't — he still loves being around people.

Like many employees joining the ranks at Tiffin Motorhomes in the early 1970s, just two years after its founding, Lewey didn't really know what the future would hold and he certainly didn't expect to look back on a 40-year career with the company. But, on June 24th of this year, that is exactly what he was doing.

"I never dreamed I would be here this long," said Lewey, as he reflected back on the longevity he has had with TMH. "When I first came to work here I was insulating sidewalls and undercoating the motorhomes. But, after about six weeks, they made me a utility person and I jumped around helping wherever they needed me when someone was out."

He moved to the service department in 1999, and has now been working with the Allegro campground for several years. Lewey is one of the first points of contact that customers have when they arrive to have work completed on their motorhomes.

"I work with the customers on their list of what they need to have done and order items so they will be in stock when their coach gets to the bay. I get all of the complaints first," he said with a laugh.

"No, most customers are very nice and are real happy when they get here. We just try to make sure they leave feeling the same way."

He describes his current role as including a great deal of "PR" work. "I just try to make sure the customers have what they need and help make sure we



Bob Tiffin congratulates Norris at a luncheon celebrating Norris' 40th anniversary with Tiffin Motorhomes.



The Tiffin family, Tim, Van, Bob, and Lex, honored Norris with several gifts and an appreciative honorarium. Tim's son, Brock, joined the group for the luncheon.

By Jonathan Willis

take care of them while they are here."

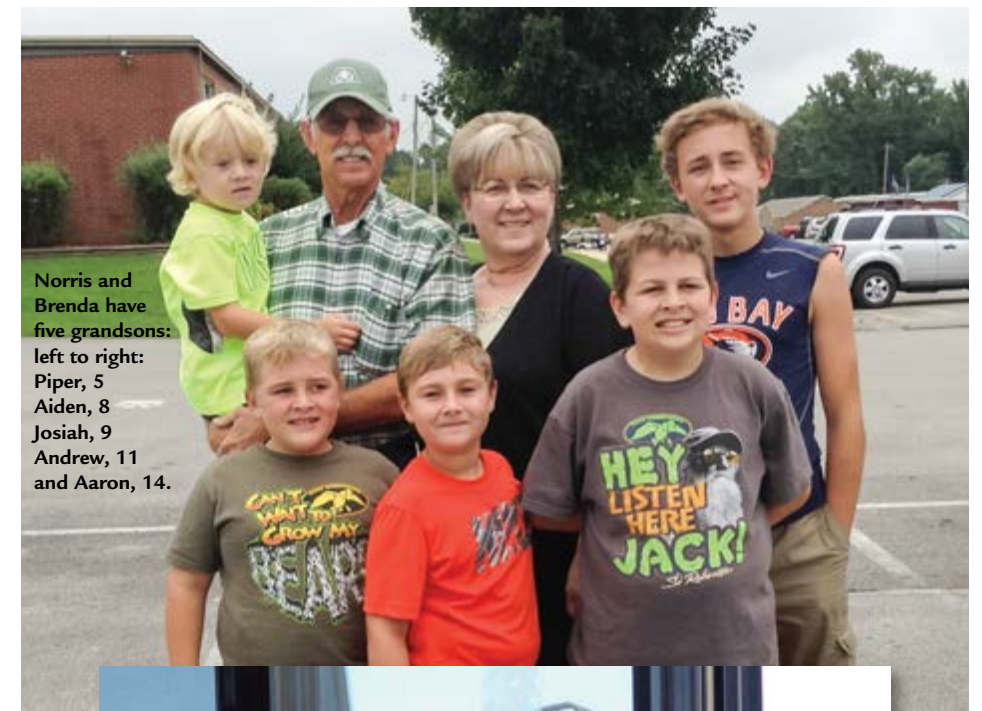
At any given time, there are as many as 150 coaches at the service center and a great number of those customers spend extended periods at the Allegro campground.

"I really enjoy meeting the customers because 99 percent of them are as nice as they can be," Lewey said. "They are here from all over the United States and Canada so it's interesting to meet them and learn about their careers, and hear about all the places they've been in their motorhome."

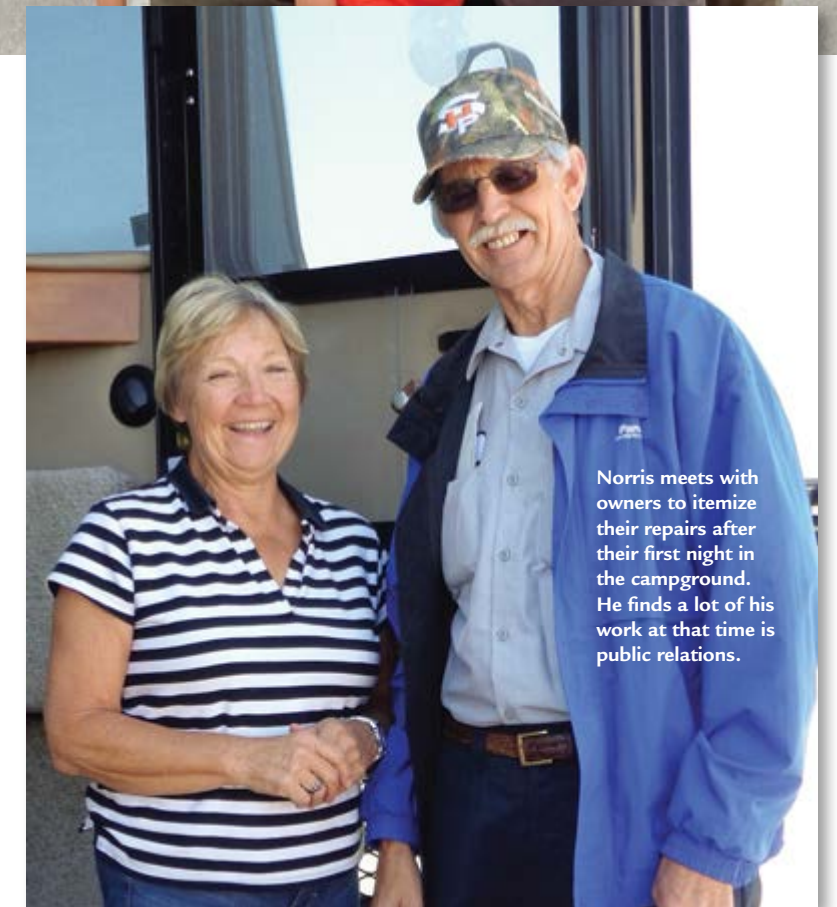
When he's not working, Lewey operates an 80-head cattle farm and row crops corn. "And I try to spend time with my five grandsons any chance I get," he said. Norris and Brenda have two children, Candi Cantrell and Brandon Lewey. Candi and her husband, Stephen, have two sons, Josiah, 9, and Piper, 5. Brandon and his wife, Chrissy, have three sons, Aaron, 14, Andrew, 11, and Aiden, 8.

Lewey's affable personality and his ability to roam the campground and "mingle" with customers could be the same traits that helped him be elected to the Franklin County Commission for three terms. During one of those terms on the commission, Brenda served in his seat for more than a year while he was deployed to Iraq with the Alabama National Guard. Lewey retired from the National Guard in 2007 after serving for 37 years.

"You know, when I started working here things were a lot different," he said. "The motorhomes and what people want in them have changed, but I have always enjoyed working with people and that's one of the things I still like the most."



Norris and Brenda have five grandsons: left to right: Piper, 5, Aiden, 8, Josiah, 9, Andrew, 11, and Aaron, 14.



Norris meets with owners to itemize their repairs after their first night in the campground. He finds a lot of his work at that time is public relations.

Jack Elliott Celebrates 40th Anniversary with Tiffin Motorhomes

By Jonathan Willis

Jack Elliott made a decision almost 40 years ago that changed his life forever – and it’s one that he’s never regretted.

Jack and his wife, Brenda, had been living in Cicero, Illinois, just two blocks removed from the Chicago city limits, for 10 years when he came home from his job at Industrial Pipe and Supply one afternoon and told Brenda that she had two weeks to have everything packed up and ready to move.

“We had two small sons and the oldest had just started school. I had seen enough to know that I was ready to move back to the South,” he said. For the Elliotts, a move to Red Bay was a natural fit. Jack was a farmer’s son from Cherokee and Brenda grew up in nearby Golden, Mississippi.

“I was very fortunate because Bob Tiffin was looking for someone to handle purchasing,” he said of his hiring, just 22 months after Tiffin Motorhomes opened for business. Elliott marked his 40th anniversary with the company on

July 1, observing four decades of enormous changes.

“That was quite an experience for me because I had never worked in an office setting before,” Elliott said. “Bob and I were the only two people we had handling purchasing back then.” After working in purchasing for several years, it took a major national crisis to get him out of that role.

“There was a major fuel shortage from late 1979 into early 1981. We continued to build units for which we had dealer orders,” Elliott said. “However, banks began to tighten dealer floorplans and we soon had a surplus on our hands. By the spring of 1981, we had about 100 motorhomes built and ready to go. I can remember Bob Tiffin telling me, Jack Bostick, and Kelly Hester that we had to move those units.”

For the next year, the three were on the road working to establish new dealers and find buyers for the existing coaches. “When things started picking back up, I moved

to the warehouse and worked in the parts department,” he said.

In the mid-1990s, Elliott began overseeing the dispatch department which schedules drivers and ships motorhomes to the Tiffin dealers. It was there that Elliott developed relationships with dealers that led to a natural transition to the sales department in 2000. That’s where he has continued to remain.

In his current role, Elliott calls on dealers located from south Georgia to North Dakota and also sets up major shows, such as the annual RVDA-RVIA event in Louisville, Kentucky.

“I really love my job,” he said. “I always have. When I came to work here I never dreamed Tiffin Motorhomes would grow to become as successful as it has. I have been fortunate enough to see all the changes over the years and it has been fun to watch.”

But don’t let a little thing like a 40-year anniversary

give the impression that he may be looking at retirement.

“I don’t ever think about retirement,” he said. “There is only so much you can do around the house. My career here has seen the ups and downs of the industry and it’s been a fun ride. It has been very good to me and my family and I can’t imagine doing anything else.”

In the rare time when he’s not at the plant, Jack and Brenda love to travel on their Honda Gold Wing trike. He’s also quick to point out how proud he is of his three grandchildren.

His son Randy has one daughter, Allyson, who is a student at Itawamba Community College pursuing a degree in forensic science. His youngest son, Tracy, has a daughter, Laken, who is a student and cheerleader at the University of Alabama planning a career as a nurse anesthetist, and a son, Tra, who works as a student manager with the women’s basketball program at Shelton State Community College. Tra is pursuing a career in physical therapy.



Jack was working at Tiffin Motorhomes when the company built this 1976 Allegro.

Bob Tiffin took great pleasure in honoring Jack for his 40 years of service at TMH. Jack also received several gifts and an honorarium at the luncheon held in his honor.



Tim, Van, Bob, and Lex joined Jack for a commemorative picture to honor his 40th anniversary with the company.

Brenda and Jack were joined by their son Randy, and two grandchildren, Tra and Laken, both in college at Shelton State Community College and the University of Alabama.



Ken & Connie Gleason

FRESH IDEAS OPEN NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN RETIREMENT

IF YOU HAVE BEEN READING *Roughing It Smoothly* for a few years, you know there is a feature story in each issue about a Tiffin motorhome owner. We have met some really interesting people whose accomplishments are fascinating, admirable, and sometimes almost overwhelming. Ken and Connie Gleason fit into all three categories, with an emphasis on the last one. Neither had siblings to compete against, but both had parents who encouraged their educational achievements.

Their family backgrounds have interesting similarities. Con-



nie's parents were Eldon Stepler and Nellie Reynolds. In 1940 near the end of the Depression, after graduating from high school, Eldon was unable to find a job in the tiny village of Amboy, Indiana, where he grew up. Like many young men in that difficult time, he joined the Army and signed up to be a baker. The Army stationed him in Los Angeles, but during his first leave he hitchhiked back home to marry Nellie, who had grown up in Greentown just a few miles from Amboy. Eldon spent most of the war stationed in the Panama Canal Zone. He finally got home in 1946 and Connie was born a year later.

Eldon was of the Mennonite faith and Nellie was a Quaker. After the war Eldon worked for the A&P grocery chain and Nellie worked as a riveter in a factory.

Ken's father, also Ken (but with different middle names), grew up on a farm near Dubuque, Iowa. He took the civil service exam when he finished high school and got a job running an elevator in the National Archives building in Washington, DC. Ken's mother, Florence Ludwig, grew up in Indiana. Her uncle was in charge of mail distribution to the military during WWI and WWII. He and his family lived in Washington. After high school, Florence was offered the job of nanny to her uncle's children. While working as a nanny, she completed an RN degree program at George Washington University and later served in the Army Nurse Corps.

The elevator job was just a beginning position for Ken's dad. He worked with the Corps of Engineers and later with the finance division of Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indiana. Ken Gleason and Florence Ludwig met at the Calvary Baptist Church in Washington. They married in 1946 and Ken was born a year later.

"We did everything in Washington that you could do back then," Ken recalled. "My parents took me to the Easter Egg Roll on the White House Lawn in 1953 when President Eisenhower hosted the event. Little did I know then that my wife and I would come back in 2009 to help decorate the official White House Christmas Tree."

Ken and his parents loved to ride the streetcars in Washington during the early fifties. "You could go just about anywhere in Washington on a streetcar," he said. "And riding the streetcars for a kid was just plain fun."

In 1955 the Gleason family moved back to Indiana. "We moved to Kokomo and found a house just across the street from my maternal grandparents," Ken said. He graduated from high school in 1965 and went to Purdue University, majoring in social studies education.

Connie and Ken were in band together during high school.

She also went to Purdue and majored in Spanish because she wanted to work in the travel and airline industry in Los Angeles. They married in 1967 after completing their sophomore year.

They finished their college degrees in 1970 and for the next 20 years Ken taught seventh and eighth grade social studies in Indianapolis and coached the swimming team. Connie's goal of working in Los Angeles transpired into a good position with a travel agency in Indianapolis. Before the days of the internet and airline websites where travelers could make their own reservations and buy their tickets, the travel agent played an important role in arranging both business and pleasure travel. Travel agents were courted by the airlines and given trips to exotic destinations all over the world so they could sell the same trips to their customers. Ken was often able to accompany her during his summer breaks from teaching. You almost can't name a place they haven't been.

Connie later took a position with U.S. Airways and in 1990 the airline moved her to Orlando. Ken was not finished with his teaching career in Indianapolis, but he was able to pull up roots and find a new position in Florida where he taught another 15 years.

Connie's career took a negative turn in 1994 when she developed a respiratory illness, the alleged cause of which was traced to adhesives in the carpet where she was working. One door closed, but another opened. Connie began a new career at the University of Central Florida teaching courses in hospitality management.

Ken used his summer vacations from teaching in middle school to return to Purdue's Indianapolis campus and earn a master's degree in Adult Education, and later to earn his Educational Specialist degree, which is the last step before a Doctorate in Education. This qualified him to teach several advanced placement courses that allow high school students to simultaneously get college credit. Ken is a national board certified teacher.

With email and Facebook, Ken stays in contact with many of his former students whom he and Connie often visit throughout the U.S. as they travel. In 2006 Ken was honored with an appointment to the Dean's Advisory Council for the College of Education at Purdue. The council meets twice a year for a roundtable discussion, troubleshooting, and fund raising ideas.

Summers also opened up new opportunities for Ken at Disney. His years as a swimming coach led to a lifeguard job for seven years at one of Disney's hotel pools. For 18 years, he also enjoyed piloting the pontoon boat out of the Yacht Club Beach

Left: Ken and Connie are enjoying their 2013 Phaeton 40QBH that they purchased "slightly pre-owned" from Danny Davis at Davis Motorhome Mart in Memphis. ♦ *Above right:* To keep track of their travel schedules, business, and daily correspondence, Ken removed a sofa and installed a custom-built desk in their Phaeton. ♦ Since "feeling fit on the road" is the subject of one of Connie's books, she follows her own advice and prepares most of their meals at home.



Hotel Marina for Disney's renowned nightly fireworks displays.

In 1997 the Gleasons decided to rent a Class C motorhome from Cruise America for a month to visit the Civil War battlefields in Virginia and Ken's favorite Civil War site — Gettysburg. Teaching American history as an AP course intensified Ken's enjoyment as a member of the 75th Ohio Re-enactor Group, "one of the few Yankee groups south of the Mason-Dixon Line," Ken likes to point out. Re-enactments usually take place once a month in winter in Central Florida. Schedules can be checked on floridareenactorsonline.com

Renting the motorhome for a month was a prelude to a new lifestyle. The respiratory illness mentioned earlier created severe reactions to the smells of cleaning products in hotels, motels, and B&Bs. "I had worked for the airlines and in the travel industry my whole adult life. Ken and I were so accustomed to traveling. Now I was grounded," Connie said. "Ken suggested an RV to control my environment, but I didn't like the idea at all. I had never been a camper growing up. I was used to staying in 4-star resorts at discounted prices."

During the one-month trip through Virginia in the rented



motorhome Connie fell in love with RV-ing. “When I was in the motorhome, I had my own environmental bubble. And when we were outside in fresh air I was okay.”

Over the next six years Ken and Connie kept coming back to the idea that they could control the air in a motorhome. They could easily exclude any agents that caused breathing problems for Connie. In 2004 they made the decision, sold their 3,000 square foot home and moved into a 38-foot motorhome. “The concept worked

and we have never looked back and love our home on the road,” Connie said.

Quilting is a hobby, a passion, and a business for both Connie and Ken. “Connie has quilted our whole married life of over 40 years,” Ken said. “She was taught by her grandmother.” Ken originally got into quilting by helping Connie cut the pieces she needed for a quilt. “Once rotary cutters came into existence, I could create the pieces in a relatively short time.”

The couple inherited quilts from both sides of their families. Always the historian, Ken began to study the history of quilts in the U.S. During the four-year period from 2011 to 2015 in which the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War is being observed, Connie and Ken have presented a brief historical pageant that tells “The Story of the Quilt During the Civil War.” In period costumes, they explain the impact of quilting and the importance of quilts to the soldiers. “Quilts were made by mothers, wives, and daughters during the war and sent to their sons, husbands, and brothers to keep them warm at night,” Ken said. “The quilts were usually 4 × 5 feet in size and were designed for the soldier to hold it around himself like a cloak.” Their most recent presentation was given August 1st at an AQS Quilt Show in Charlotte, NC.

In 2010 Ken made a quilt based upon Clara Barton’s Civil War signature quilt.

That quilt was given to Clara in the 1870s in honor of her tireless efforts throughout the Civil War as an independent relief worker, delivering donated supplies to the battlefields and nursing soldiers during some of the worst battles of the war. The quilt was signed by veterans of the Civil War and is on display today at the Clara Barton Museum in North Oxford, Massachusetts. Ken’s quilt was signed by members of the 75th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. “After I became a Civil War re-enactor, I realized that I needed something authentic to keep me warm at night while camping. After I made one for myself, I started making the 4 × 5 foot quilts and selling them to other re-enactors.”

Going even further with his historical interest in quilts, Ken studied in a program created by the American Quilt Society to train quilt appraisers. He has been a professional appraiser since 2008 and has appraised quilts at shows in Florida, Indiana, and North Carolina.

One of Ken’s first quilts was based upon Clara Barton’s Civil War signature quilt. Ken’s quilt was signed by members of the 75th Ohio Volunteer Infantry re-enactor group. ♦ Keeping warm at night was a problem for Civil War soldiers. Relatives at home sent 4 × 5-foot quilts to help the men stay warm. ♦ During the 150-year observance of the Civil War, Connie and Ken dress in period costumes to tell “The Story of the Quilt During the Civil War.”



Having worked in the travel industry for 30 years, Connie is a professional at working with clients on the phone. She had heard that the White House selected volunteers each year to decorate it for Christmas. In 1997 she called her congressman to ask how to volunteer and receive an invitation. He gave Connie the White House main number. When she called, the operator connected Connie to the chief usher. He almost knocked the wind out of her sails when he told her that many volunteers had been on the list for several years.

“I kept calling back and got to know him pretty well,” Connie laughed. “I called for 12 years and finally got an assignment in the flower shop. We had no experience as a florist, but the mother of one of Ken’s students was a florist. I got her the job and Ken and I went as her assistants.” With that impressive service on their résumé, the Gleasons were asked in 2012 to help decorate the governor’s home in Tallahassee for Christmas.


The Gleasons apparently decided they just didn’t have enough to keep them busy, so last year they submitted an 8-page résumé to Fantasy RV Tours to become tour leaders – they call the jobs wagon masters or tail gunners. In their earlier professional careers, Ken had escorted educational tours for students and Connie had escorted tours for seniors. “We first talked with them at an RV rally and they asked for our résumé. We were hired soon after and have worked as understudies on two tours so far: a 7-day tour with the Rose Bowl Parade as the theme and a 9-day tour themed around Mardi Gras,” Connie explained. “We are now qualified to serve as wagon masters on an upcoming tour. You get to be the host and live in your own coach, which is the only way I could do it. Ken and I become the mama and the papa. It can be like herding cats. And if somebody has a problem, you get it fixed. That’s what they are paying for.”

Having been a travel professional for so many years, Connie felt the need to share

her knowledge as she applied it to full-timing in their motorhome. They now travel in a 2013 Phaeton 40QBH. In 2009 she produced a 150-page manuscript entitled *Living Your Dream: A How-To Manual for Full Time RVing*. It was published by LifeStory Publishing, Orlando (\$12.95). Her second book, *Living Your Dream: Feeling Fit on the Road* is a “soft approach” to exercise and fitness. It was also published by LifeStory (\$12.95).

For the state of Indiana’s Bicentennial celebration in 2016, Ken and Connie are preparing a manuscript entitled *The Rural Churches of Indiana* which focuses on both the history and architecture of churches that are over 100 years old.

For Purdue University’s 150th Anniversary in 2019, the Gleasons are working on an illustrated history of *The First Ladies of Purdue: Spouses of Purdue’s Presidents*.

The Story of the Quilt During the Civil War is a 28-page booklet that is self-published by Ken and Connie. You can order their books on Amazon.com. 



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The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

Thanks for *Roughing It Smoothly* and the Key West Article

I want to thank Tiffin Motorhomes for the wonderful magazine, *Roughing It Smoothly*. I especially enjoyed the story about Key West in the Winter 2014 issue. We have spent the last 10 winters in Homestead, Florida, and have gone to Key West a couple of times. We thought it was pretty, but it was a long drive for us and not that impressive. The Key West article gave us a whole new perspective. We have never camped there, so never really explored the historical part of it.

Patrick Henderson / Medford, Oregon

10 Years of Trouble-Free Traveling

I just want to tell you that I no longer own my 2001 Allegro. It was time for me to sell it and a fellow in Colorado bought it. I sure do miss it as it was a wonderful machine. I enjoy your magazine very much. Thank you for 10 years of trouble-free traveling.

Gerald Myers / Gratiot, Wisconsin

Campground Hosts in Yellowstone in Our New Breeze

When we learned in February that we would be campground hosts in Yellowstone National Park this summer, we went shopping for a larger motorhome. The Allegro Breeze 32BR caught our eye and in March we got it! We arrived at Grant Village Campground on June 17th, woke up to about three inches of snow on the 18th, and the campground opened on the 21st. We enjoy our hosting duties, we love Yellowstone, and our Breeze is a super home for us until September 21st.

Then we will wander our way back to Texas . . . sometime.

Debbie & Warren Rugenstein / Frisco, Texas

Our First Trip in Our 2006 Allegro Bus

We returned on June 20 from our very first trip in our gently pre-owned 2006 Allegro Bus. We took the "new" rig up to Palo Duro Canyon in Texas. What a great trip – beautiful sunrises and sunsets everyday. We enjoyed just sitting outside the coach taking in the sights of the canyon and enjoying all the features the Allegro Bus has to offer. What a motorhome!! Thanks for making a unit that appears to have the quality to withstand time and still be so awesome.

Karen & Dwayne McAbee / Fort Worth, Texas

Retired Allegro Bus Owner Was Submarine Mariner

We enjoy your articles in the *RIS* magazine as we travel full time in our 2006 Allegro Bus 42QDP. I am a submarine veteran who later spent 35 years as an OTR trucker. That experience gave us many places to go back and visit. My most enjoyable travel is visiting my fellow submarine shipmates and visiting and volun-

teering on museum subs. For now our travels are ending due to health issues (cancer). By the way, the cockpit description on the 2014 Phaeton (11:3) has a mistake: the yellow pull-out button is the parking brake, not an emergency brake (-:-).

Tony Gray / Oskaloosa, Iowa

RVers Working with SOWER Ministry

We are proud owners of an Allegro Bus and for the last two years have enjoyed serving others at various projects with SOWER Ministry. The ministry is composed of RV couples who volunteer throughout the U.S. and Canada to assist children's homes, schools, camps, and non-profit agencies. We enjoy great fellowship and unlimited appreciation from their staffs. We feel blessed to share our gifts with others, make new friends, and provide valuable services. Fellow Tiffin owners who may be interested may visit our website for more information: sowerministry.org Our personal SOWER number is 3234.

Russ Enslin & Millie Matthews / Lake Ariel, Pennsylvania

We Made the Right Decision

This past winter we took a "bucket list" trip to some of the southern states. We visited Dallas, San Antonio, New Orleans, and several places in Florida. Beautiful but cold. We also made a stop at the Tiffin Service Center and stayed two weeks while several items were taken care of on our 2013 Phaeton. It was a wonderful experience to see how Tiffin operates. The courtesy shown to us and to all the other owners proves to us we made the right purchase.

William & Vicki Gladsjo / Pahrump, Nevada

Caravanning with SMART RV Club

We have caravanned with the SMART RV Club* in our 2008 Phaeton 36QSH to places like Alaska, Western Canada, the Pasadena Rose Parade, and the western U.S. National Parks. We thought the best national parks were Big Bend NP in Texas, Salem Maritime NHS in Salem, Massachusetts, and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge in Homer, Alaska.

John Wheeler / Zephyrhills, Florida

*SMART stands for Special Military Active & Retired Travel. See smarrtrving.net for more information.

Disney with Three 16-Year-Old Boys

Our first big trip was to Orlando, Florida – 700 miles each way. Previously, we had pulled a 37-ft. toy hauler. Now, with our new Class A Tiffin coach, everyone was comfortable. The voyage included my wife, our son, and two of his friends, all 16. We stayed at Disney's Fort Wilderness Campground. It was great! We went

scuba diving in the aquarium in Epcot. It was the best RV trip we have ever taken. Perfect!

Thomas DeLatte / Clinton, Louisiana

At 89 and 85, a Lifetime of RVing

In a lifetime of RV travel, we have been to 49 states. In addition we have traveled through all of the Canadian provinces. By air and sea, we have visited six of the world's seven continents. Betty and I have been married for 64 years. I am 89 and Betty is 85. We have camped or RV'd for most of those years. In the last 25 years, we have owned 12 motorhomes. We are currently driving a 2008 Allegro Bay 34XB.

Albert Boysen / Tampa, Florida

Realizing a Dream

I have just seen my first issue of *Roughing It Smoothly* and love the magazine. I found the new subscribers information and would like to be added to your list of subscribers.

In October 2013, we purchased our first RV. Long ago I had

a dream to retire from the Navy, purchase an RV and see the USA. The first part, retiring from the Navy, happened in 1999. In 2013 I finally made it to the second part of that dream when I found a pre-owned Class A motorhome for sale, a 2005 Allegro Bay 37DB.

I should mention I discovered your magazine through a great salesman, Scott Norman with RV Connections in Panama City, Florida. (*Editor's Note:* The RV Connections dealership is featured in this issue of *RIS*, p. 16.) While our 37DB was being serviced, Scott took us through the new Allegros and Phaetons. Like I said, he was great! No pressure, answered every question I could come up with, and spent as much time as we desired. He made me a believer again in customer service – I thought it was dead. We aren't ready to move up yet, since we have owned our Allegro Bay for less than a year. But when we are ready, you can rest assured it will be a Tiffin.

I look forward to receiving my own personal copy of *Roughing It Smoothly* in the near future.

Thomas E. Metcalf / Virginia Beach, Virginia

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TMH Launches New Interactive Website

Tiffin Motorhomes has launched a new, more interactive website that will allow customers to share their RV experiences with one another as well as provide up-to-date information on the company's full product line.

The site, made2moveu.com, went live in mid-September and will feature updates related to the full TMH product line, as well as provide video footage and tours of various coaches. The site currently contains a video tour of the newly released 2015 Phaeton.

"Our customers have been very loyal to TMH throughout the years and it has always been the company's goal and mission to provide the best customer service possible. We feel that adding

this site gives us one more opportunity to provide customers with information they may be looking for," Mark Richardson, director of marketing, said.

The new site contains information on the Tiffin Service Center's campground and detailed information on tourist, shopping, and historical attractions throughout the region, and worship opportunities for those needing to plan an extended stay.

"Our service center staff is committed to getting customers through as quickly as possible and making sure that they are well aware of when that might be," Richardson continued.

"By providing information on area attractions, we hope customers will see their stay as a vacation of its own. There are many wonderful and unique people and places in our area and we want to encourage our customers to take advantage of this special feature on made2moveu.com."

The website features several options that will allow customers to share their own experiences with one another, including a feature titled "Wish You Were Here."

That column will be open for customers to submit photos and their own story about special places they have visited.

"Everyone sees a place a little bit differently than how someone else sees it," said national sales manager Jerry Williamson.

"The 'Wish You Were Here' feature will let customers share their favorite things about places they have been. One person may have seen something or enjoyed dinner somewhere that another person may have missed. We believe this will be a popular feature and we encourage customers to routinely send us their photos and stories."

Another feature that is sure to be popular is a series of contests that will feature monthly themes. Tiffin owners will be able to share photos of their coach decorated for Christmas, summer, the Fourth of July and other special events.

The first contest is currently underway.

"We want to see how our customers are enjoying their coaches at their favorite college football tailgate sites," Richardson said.

"College football has grown to become one of the most popular sports in the country and tailgating is a big part of that. Each Saturday in the fall, Tiffin-built coaches are found on college campuses across the country and we love to see how they are being enjoyed. But, more than that, we want to see which college's fan base can outdo the others."

Each week, photos containing tailgate sites can be emailed to us and shared on made2moveu.com. Monthly winners will be chosen and fantastic prizes awarded, including a Yeti cooler and several other items given to the overall winner at the end of the college football season.

"We want to encourage everyone to visit us online at made2moveu.com and continue to follow us on Facebook and Twitter," Richardson said.

Tiffin Service Center Streamlines Communication

Following some changes earlier this summer, customers at the Tiffin Service Center should feel a bit more comfortable with the communications process. Tiffin Service Center manager Wade Humphres said a daily email is now being sent to all customers registered at the service center to inform them when their time for service is scheduled. Coach owners provide their email address as part of the registration process.

"I think it will help customers and our staff because everyone will have a better understanding of what they can expect on their service day," Humphres said.

"The email will inform owners one day in advance of their scheduled service day. Hopefully, it will allow the customers to feel a little better knowing that they can come and go and not worry about missing a knock on the door to inform them of their service the next morning at seven," Humphres continued. "Although we do work on motorhomes even if the owners are not there that day, many of them want to be here so they stay with their coach and wait for a knock. We want to ease their minds a little so they can enjoy themselves while they are in the area."

The move is just one more way that Humphres hopes customers feel satisfied with the time they spend in Red Bay. "We want to be as accommodating and as realistic as possible with all of our customers and I believe this really will help."

The Tiffin Service Center serves about 100 customers each week through its 49 bays, with service ranging from front and rear cap repairs, slide-out and floor repairs, and tile or windshield work.

Humphres said crews in service vans make daily rounds throughout the campground to make minor repairs at campsites, expediting the owners' time in Red Bay and sometimes eliminating the need to go through a repair bay.

Continued on page 88

Blue Ox Announces New Motorhome Chassis Product

"With the addition of *sway bars*, we now have a complete line of *chassis performance products* that will drastically improve the ride comfort of most motorhomes," said Ellen Kietzmann, president and CEO of Blue Ox.

Sway bars are designed to eliminate the excessive side to side movement which is often referred to as body roll. This can be particularly noticeable when going around corners or curves and entering and exiting driveways. Blue Ox sway bars are heat-treated with a tensile strength of up to 180,000 PSI, have forged ends on all models, are made in the USA, and have a lifetime warranty. Besides that, they are a Blue Ox product, so you know the service after the sell will be outstanding.

"More important than just the introduction of sway bars is the opportunity to talk about the entire chassis performance. We look at this product line as taking a stock chassis and turning it

Continued on page 88

Statistical Surveys Reports Class A Diesel Pusher Sales for First 6 Months, 2014

Top 5 Class A diesel brands.
(based on number of units sold by brand)

1. Phaeton
2. Palazzo by Thor
3. Allegro RED
4. Allegro Bus
5. Tuscany by Thor

Top 5 Gas brands

1. Ace by Thor
2. Allegro
3. Vista by Winnebago
4. Georgetown by Forest River
5. Boulder by Fleetwood

Top 5 Class A Diesel Pusher Manufacturers

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Tiffin | 860 coaches |
| 2. Newmar | 393 |
| 3. Thor | 376 |
| 4. Fleetwood | 371 |
| 5. Winnebago | 370 |



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How We Made Our Own Private RV Resort

WE HAVE A HOME IN FLORIDA which is great from November till April; then it's time to move into our RV and find a mountain.

My husband Charlie was raised in North Carolina and likes to spend time there, so we started looking at RV resorts in North Carolina. We tried out several fancy RV resorts to see if we would like owning a lot there. We took the tours, got the prices and monthly fees, and studied all the rules and regulations. The really nice ones approved of our RV and assured us they wouldn't let RVs older than five years in. Knowing how fast five years goes by, you have to wonder what you will do with your tiny \$100,000 site if you're still happy with your RV after five years. After watching a herd of deer strolling down the street eating the landscape to the ground, I asked a maintenance man if they couldn't do something about the deer and he said they don't worry about it because the maintenance fees cover replacing what the deer eat.

It didn't take us long to discover that we really wanted to be where nobody could see us, some place with a lot of shade, and definitely where we could make our own rules.

Finally we bought eight acres of woods at Lake Lure, North Carolina. We were able to develop the property for less than a tiny lot in the resort. I know, "But you don't have a pool and exercise room." We have both in Florida and have never missed them while we're in our RV. Besides, there is always the lake.

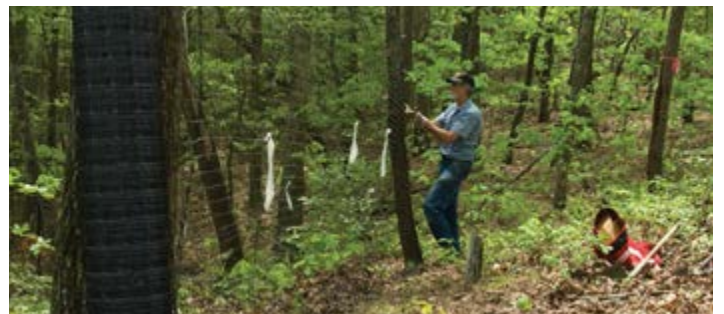
Since we would have no other occupants to pay the maintenance fees, the first thing we did was buy enough seven-foot deer fence to enclose two of the eight acres. Charlie and I wres-



The Lake Lure, Chimney Rock, and Bat Cave areas deserve stories of their own.

tled the rolls of fence from tree to tree, up and down the hills and ravines for a week while a bulldozer was making a big hole in the woods for the RV.

The deer fence is almost invisible so we hung flags on it for a



TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLAUDIA ABBOTT



If you look close, the deer fence is in front of the dead tree with Charlie's funny birdhouse on top. The pileated woodpeckers took all that bark off this Spring. I hope they intend to finish the job.

couple of years to show them where it is. Now we can watch the deer walking thru the woods lusting over my plants.

The electric company couldn't understand why we were going to be moving back and forth in an RV (they think of it as a little camper). They said we had to take the wheels off and "pin it." It cost \$3,500 more not to take the wheels off our RV, but I am fond of electricity. They came in with a bulldozer and tore up the wonderful carpet of creeping juniper and pushed over the little hemlocks that were all along our 300-ft. driveway. But we had 50-amp entrance plus one for visiting RVs.

We had a well drilled and it is such good water that we take 100 gallons to Florida when we go.

Unfortunately, we completely forgot to check for signals for Internet, TV. The first year, we had to change from Dish to DirecTV because the mountains hid the Dish satellite. Charlie carried a booster antenna around till he found the perfect spot that let us get a phone signal. Now we know — never buy property unless you check the phone signal.

The site that we chose for the RV is at the top of a ravine



This is how the site looks now.



I started my first flower bed before we got the RV moved in — look at it now.

and completely surrounded by four wooded hills. When we were clearing the site, the contractor kept saying that we should clear cut the area, but we didn't want to give up the trees. We have since had to cut down trees to get enough sunshine. It's five to ten degrees cooler at our place than it is down the mountain.

There is a micro climate that goes through Lake Lure that plants love. Every time we dig a hole, we find nice flat rocks. We're still digging up rocks and making walks and walls with all the free supplies.

A lot of plants later, this is how it looks.



When I planted the plants in this picture, I found so many rocks that I started a walk down into the ravine.



The woods are full of mountain laurel and we have a 15-ft. natural flame azalea that we can see from our deck.



We put up a bird house just off the deck. One night we were sitting on the deck and Charlie thought he saw something in the bird house. He shined a light on it and we saw a couple of flying squirrels who had moved in. They were so tame that the more noise we made, the more they stuck their heads out. They never left the house during the day; their little heads were there when we woke up and still there in the evening. They hung around for two summers; we missed them when they were gone.

By the third summer, we started missing things. If I left my gloves on the swing, one would be missing. Charlie was watching TV and glanced out the window in time to see his work pants that he had hung over a chair on the deck being dragged under the deck. He set a trap and caught a foot long packrat. The critters have taught us to put things away.



It was inevitable that Charlie would want a shed. Since we are on the edge of a ravine and the Phaeton has 270 degrees of a circular view, there was no place that I wanted an ugly shed. I found a fantasy photo of a little garden house and told him to build it like that. He did! The shed is perfect, all cedar, and so tight that a bug can't get into it.




There are critters in these woods that I never heard of. I had a hosta in the ravine for several years, which was five feet across. Overnight something made a little hole beside the plant, ate the whole root ball and all the plant, leaving only one half eaten leaf sticking up like a piece of celery! After a few of those, I got huge pots and closed the smorgasbord.

The more beautiful the place got, the more people ask us why we didn't build a house here. The taxes without a house are

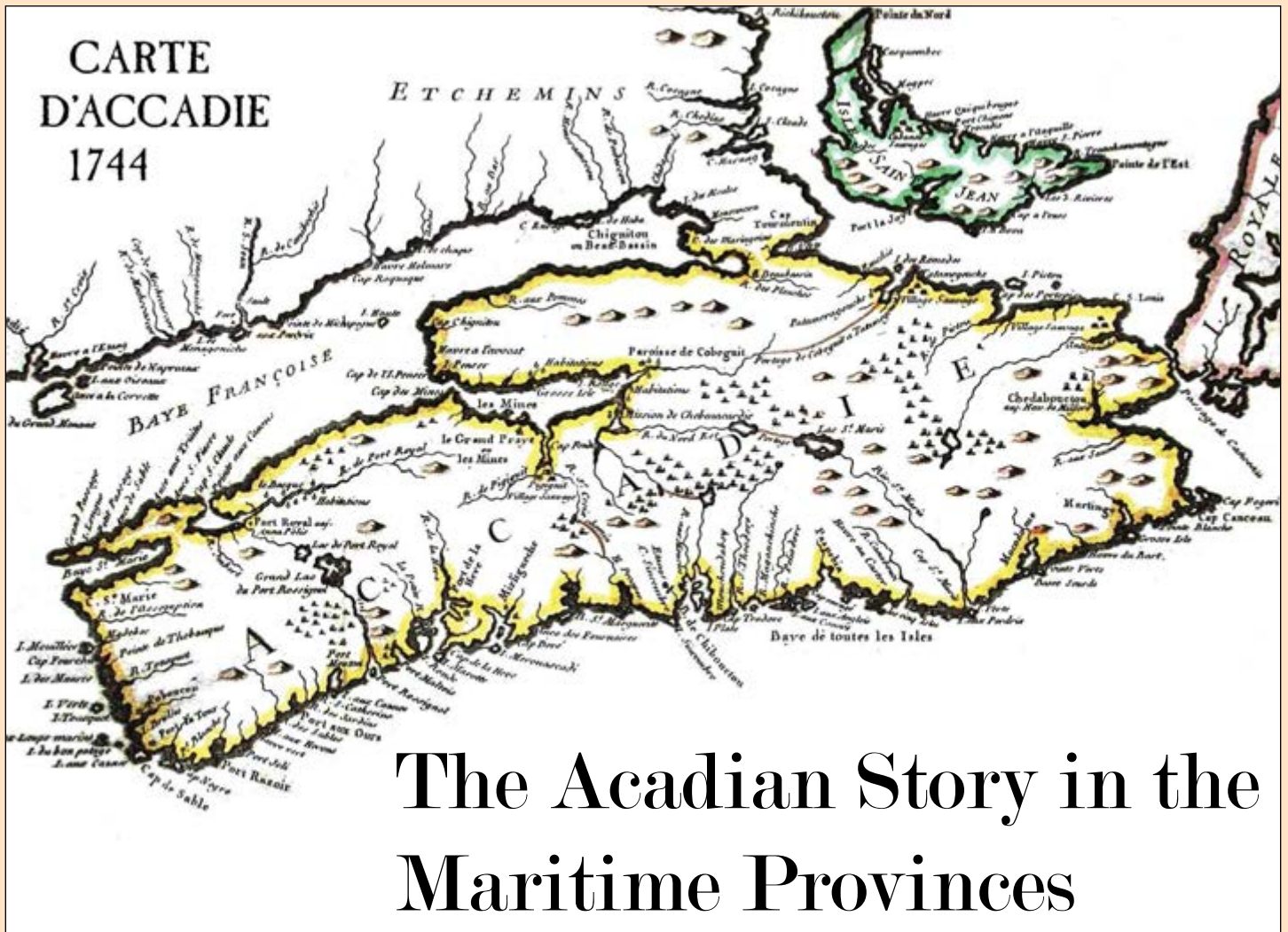
hardly noticeable. When we leave, we take with us everything that would be worth stealing. These views are from my window. We would have a hard time designing a house that would let us see all around us like this RV.

The most annoying part of living in the woods is that the mice have come to think of our RV as a "Mouse Maternity Ward"! We have had them under the bed, even in the cabinet where the sound system is. About 2:00 a.m. they would start gnawing on the insulation and romping back and forth in the walls. Then Charlie starts flashing lights all over and talking bad about living in the woods.

This has been the first spring that we have reason to believe that we have beat the mice. Charlie had been putting pure peppermint oil on cotton balls in the wet bay and under the coach. It helped but this year he added a Yard Guard ultrasonic thing near the rear wheels. It makes various sounds like a hawk. We haven't had a mouse this year! We think that the word is out that the maternity ward is closed.

Never a dull moment — last week Charlie took a load of ash from the fire pit down to the woods. The next day we found 6" × 9" bear tracks in the ash. He put up the game camera so we can see what's out there. That's scary, but not as bad as mice! 





The Acadian Story in the Maritime Provinces

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO OFFER A COMPREHENSIVE treatment of the Acadian experience and diaspora in an eight-page magazine story. But hopefully this story will increase your awareness of an amazing people whose faith, courage, agricultural talent, and persistence assured their survival in spite of decades of brutal treatment. The story is preserved today in two museums in Miscouche, Prince Edward Island, and Grand Pré, Nova Scotia, plus a delightful park-pageant-museum in Bouctouche, New Brunswick.

The Acadians are the descendants of French colonists who first came to the Maritime Provinces in 1604, three years before English colonists established Jamestown and 16 years before Plymouth Rock. Most of them came from the western part of central France. The colonists lived primarily along the shores of the Bay of Fundy. After several false starts in a politically unstable environment, they managed to achieve a reasonable level of prosperity by employing a farming method developed in France.

But first let's backtrack 75 years to get a better perspective.

Commissioned by King Francis I of France, the Italian explorer, Giovanni Verrazano, made a voyage of discovery in 1524, sailing the coast of North America from Newfoundland to what is now North and South Carolina. Impressed with the beauty of what is now present-day Virginia, he named the region "Arcadia." Over the next century, mapmakers several times took the liberty of shifting that place name to the north and altering its spelling as they went. Finally, a mapmaker selected "D'Accadie" for the 350-mile long "sausage link" that sheltered New Brunswick from the Atlantic. After another century went by, the British re-named it Nova Scotia.

In 1604 French entrepreneurs — some have called them opportunists — began to arrive in Acadia. Pierre Du Gua, sieur de Monts, established a colony with sixty brave souls whom he enticed to join him and thereby claimed the first charter granted by Henry IV of France for "the country of Accadie." His navigator,

Samuel de Champlain, who would go on to greater fame, guided their ship into the Bay of Fundy in May 1604. Champlain selected Dohet Island at the mouth of the St. Croix River to establish their initial settlement. The 21-mile long river forms part of the border between present-day Maine and New Brunswick. Scurvy and a very severe winter took the lives of half of the colonists. In the spring of 1605 Champlain crossed the Bay of Fundy and selected a site on the Dauphin River, near present-day Digby, Nova Scotia, where de Monts mapped out the city of Port Royal. Blessed with the friendliness of the Mi'kmaq, an indigenous people who had lived there for thousands of years, the colonists bartered weapons and tools for food and managed to survive the next two winters.

The colony began to prosper, but was shocked when Henry IV abruptly revoked de Monts' fur-trading monopoly, causing the settlement to be temporarily abandoned. De Monts sent Champlain into the St. Lawrence Valley where he founded a trading post in 1608 in an area that eventually became Québec. De Monts returned to France and never visited North America again, although he continued to pursue his commercial interests in New France, as French holdings in North America were known, for another decade.

One of de Monts' partners in the 1604 venture, Jean de Biencourt, sieur de Poutrincourt, and his son, Charles de Biencourt de Saint-Just, stepped into the void of leadership with the goal of turning Port Royal into an agricultural colony. He failed to renew Henry IV's support, clashed with the Jesuits who were focused on similar goals, and was plundered in 1613 by a lawless band reportedly from Jamestown. De Poutrincourt returned to France two years later where he died battling a peasant uprising near his home. His son remained in Acadia until his death in 1624, again leaving the village at Port Royal without leadership.

The French attempts to establish a foothold in Acadia did not go unnoticed by the British crown. In 1621 James I granted a charter for Nova Scotia to William Alexander. Eight years later Alexander's son arrived at the abandoned village of Port Royal with seventy fellow Scotsmen. With the gracious help of the Mi'kmaq, they, too, managed to survive their first winter. A pitched battle with the French reduced their number to forty-two, who returned to England in 1632. A treaty that same year returned Acadia to France.

Now under Louis XIII, the French regrouped in 1636 to go back to Port Royal under the leadership of Charles de Menou d'Aulnay de Charnizay. The length of his name betrayed his nobility. D'Aulnay had come to Acadia in 1632 and was quite familiar with the strategic value of Port Royal. The Compagnie des Cents-Associés, a company selected by the king to oversee

trade and settlement throughout France's North American claims, approved d'Aulnay. They also appointed Charles de Saint-Étienne de la Tour to establish another fort at the mouth of the Saint John River, across the Bay of Fundy from Port Royal. Both men reported to Isaac de Razilly, a naval officer who was charged by the king to assure his country's interests were advanced in the New World.

Although inadvertently cast as rivals, d'Aulnay and de la Tour got along quite well. After Razilly died unexpectedly, d'Aulnay attempted to assume complete authority over all of Acadia, setting off a series of battles, blockades, and raids that lasted for 10 years. In May 1650, d'Aulnay died from exhaustion trying to reach shore after his canoe capsized. Three years later de la Tour married d'Aulnay's widow, a union that put a stop to the feud. The couple put a plan in place to bring under one collectivity the small forts and villages along Fundy's shores.

D'Aulnay was not preoccupied with the feud during the decade prior to his death. He had become aware that the Bay of Fundy's great tides were dumping tons of nutrient-rich silt into the marshlands and meadows. In France dikes had been used for several centuries to reclaim land from the swamps. D'Aulnay was determined to bring the technology to the area around Port Royal.

As a member of the French nobility, his family employed peasants who labored on their estates, bringing the d'Aulnay clan wealth and prestige. On several visits back to France, he persuaded 20 families they could have a better life in Acadia. It is not known if those he recruited had experience in marshland farming, but a number of them came from the interior of Poitou, a region in France where freshwater marshes had been cultivated for many years.

D'Aulnay's parish priest recorded in his journal that he watched him return from the marshes in his canoe after a difficult day "planting stakes, tracing lines, and marking off with cords another plot of land to be drained."

To create the dikes, the Acadians during low tide drove five



PARKS CANADA - LEWIS PARKER

THE DIKES

The building of dikes was a very organized procedure that was coordinated between the ebb and flow of the twice daily tides on the Bay of Fundy. During the ebb, a team of five to eight Acadians in one day could construct a dike measuring approximately 16 feet long, six feet high, and 12 feet wide at the base.

or six rows of large logs into the ground at the points where the tide entered the marsh. Between the vertical logs, horizontal logs were placed, one on top of the other. The spaces between them were filled with well-pounded clay, so that the water could no longer get through. Within this waterproof base, the dike builders placed sluices, with one end pointing toward the bay and the other toward the land to be reclaimed. The early sluices were made from hollowed out logs closed on top with a board. A clapper valve was installed on the end of the sluice nearest the bay. It opened only toward the bay, allowing rain and marsh water to push it open. The tidal salt water from the bay would push it shut.

In searching for the best building materials for the dike, the Acadians discovered that the floor of the marshes was made of the wiry root systems of the hardy marsh grasses, creating a trap for decayed plant matter, clay, and sediment. Using sharp spades, they cut rectangular blocks, measuring 4 × 10 inches at the top and 12 inches deep. These impenetrable blocks formed the exterior sides and top of the dike, covering a core made from marsh mud and several types of debris. They called their dikes *aboiteaux*.

It took a team of five to ten Acadians one day to build a 16-foot section of dike measuring approximately six feet high and 12 feet across at the base. Their work had to be coordinated with the two periods each day when the tide was out, necessitating a 24-hour stint over which the work had to be done.

A dike located along a river where the tides are comparatively gentle does not require the height of a dike located beside a bay or basin where the powerful tides can reach a flow speed of nearly 10 miles per hour. In the latter case, dikes were 16 feet high and 22 feet across at the base.

Once constructed, the salt had to be removed from the soil. Then rain and runoff water had to be drained into the bay in order to dry out the soil. The sluices with clapper valves facilitated the drainage during low tide and prevented the ocean water from reentering the reclaimed land.

Drying out the soil and getting rid of the salt usually took two to three years, after which the soil could be cultivated and food crops planted. While the marsh was drying out, the native marsh grasses were used as hay to feed their livestock.

Some observers noted the relative finesse with which the Acadians built their dikes and criticized them for laziness for not moving into the uplands and clearing land that would not be threatened by the high tides. But modern day science has shown that the reclaimed lowlands were far more fertile than the glacier-scraped uplands. However, the downside for the Acadians was the limited amount of lowland acreage that could be reclaimed. As their population grew in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Acadians migrated up the Bay of Fundy all the way to Beaubassin at the Chignecto Isthmus where the first group drained hundred of acres in the next 25 years. Seeing their success, many more families followed.

Their most auspicious development was 70 miles northeast of Port Royal. In the 1680s several families migrated to the

southern shoreline of the Minas Basin where small rivers emptied into the Bay of Fundy. The rivers mitigated the rushing strength of the tides, reduced the required height of the *aboiteaux*, and increased significantly the number of square miles of marshland that could be drained. By the early 1700s, the Basin was the largest population center of Acadia.

Their village was located on a “great meadow,” a literal translation of Grand Pré, which was the most populous settlement in the Minas Basin. To protect the village against the Gaspereau River and the tidal basin, the Acadians built over 17 miles of dikes serviced with 30 sluices. A bird’s-eye view of the region would have shown that the Acadians built *aboiteaux* at nearly every small stream emptying into the bay up and down the coastline from Grand Pré.

A major reason for the Acadians success in establishing settlements in Nova Scotia was the sincere friendships they cultivated with the Mi’kmaq. As previously noted, the Mi’kmaq welcomed the de Monts expedition and prevented them from starving during their first winter. A French missionary described their hospitality in the early 17th century:

“Hospitality is in such great esteem among the Mi’kmaq that they make almost no distinction between home-born and the stranger. They give lodging equally to the French and to the Indians who come from a distance, and to both they distribute generously whatever they have obtained in hunting and in the fishery, giving themselves little concern if the strangers remain among them for weeks, months and even years.”¹

After de Monts lost his trade monopoly in 1607, abandoned Port Royal, and returned to France, several of the settlers stayed and many married Mi’kmaq women. The children of mixed marriages were accepted by both communities as one of their own without reservation.

From these early interrelationships, the Mi’kmaq imparted into the Acadian culture a strong sense of independence, a love of personal liberty, and an abiding desire for peace that focused on both political and military neutrality. The admiration of the Mi’kmaq’s democratic practices lured many French settlers to assimilate into their community. From the families who came in 1604 with de Monts and survived, and those who came in 1636 with d’Aulnay, the Acadian population by the end of the century had grown to 1,700.

Most Acadians are descended from about 50 French families who settled in the Port Royal area between 1636 and the early 1650s, forming the roots of the Acadian people. Perhaps influenced by the inclusive nature of the Mi’kmaq, the French accepted into their communities a wide range of nationalities including Spanish, Portuguese, Basque, Irish, English, and Scottish. Within a few generations, their descendants began to consider themselves a distinct people.

In retrospect, the Acadians insistence on remaining neutral made it possible for them to survive for 100 years as the French

¹ Father Chrestien Le Clercq, a 17th century French missionary.



THE HARVEST

This painting by Claude Picard shows a glimpse of life in Acadia before the deportations began in 1755. The setting is a salt marsh located beside a tidal stream opposite the settlement. It is a summer day, possibly in the early 1740s. Families are busy harvesting hay and placing it on straddles to dry. It is a co-operative effort involving members from several households. Since Acadians tended to settle in family villages, it is likely most of the people are related by blood or by marriage. The house, outbuilding, kitchen garden, orchards, and livestock are in the background, on the upland overlooking the marshes. The windmill probably ground the settlement's grain to produce flour for bread. The marsh on the settlement side of the stream is drained and protected by a dike, which runs along the stream.

and English continued to struggle for power in conflicts fought in both Europe and North America. In 1654 the British gained control. Sixteen years later Charles II gave Acadia (Nova Scotia) back to France in exchange for several Caribbean islands. In 1690 a British loyalist from Maine led an attack that essentially destroyed Port Royal. It was a hit-and-run job with no follow through for continued control. A French governor was back in the village in less than a month.

In the last two decades of the seventeenth century, the Acadians moved from subsistence farming to creating a surplus they could trade. Because of the ongoing conflicts in Europe and North America between the French and the English, the Acadians realized their trading with the Massachusetts colonists would require a delicate balancing act.

Contrary to the diaries and reports of European visitors that the Acadians had few material possessions, recent archaeological excavations show that some lived in relative comfort. They had a variety of imported ceramics and miscellaneous manufactured goods in their homes. They used tableware, hardware, smoking pipes, cloth, buttons, buckles, and shoes obtained in trade with merchants from Louisbourg and New England. Sources for these goods have been traced to France, England,

² Christopher Hodson, *The Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History*. Oxford, 2012.

Germany, Spain, and Portugal. "Acadians ate well, aged gracefully, and managed to integrate most French, Irish, English, and even Basque migrants into their little societies with admirable equanimity."²

From 1690 to 1710, an inert British government did very little to stabilize the politics or establish military control of Nova Scotia. A small army of New Englanders sailed from Boston in 1704 seeking revenge against "the Acadians" for an earlier attack on Deerfield, Massachusetts, made by Canadians and Amerindians, native tribes who inhabited North America prior to the Europeans. The Acadians had not taken part in that raid, but being French-speakers, Roman Catholic, and an easy target was sufficient justification for the New Englanders. Led by Col. Benjamin Church, the attackers struck the Grand Pré area in the Minas Basin. They burned houses and farm buildings, destroyed orchards, slaughtered livestock, damaged the dikes to let in seawater to ruin the crops, and took prisoners, especially women and children, to exchange for New England prisoners held at Québec. After the attackers left, the Acadians repaired the damage and the region prospered again.

With little success, British forces in 1704 formed a naval blockade around Port Royal to halt imports and exports and then attacked the village twice in 1707. The Tory government in London sent an expedition led by Samuel Vetch. Easily overpowered, Port Royal succumbed to the British on October 13, 1710. The village was renamed Annapolis Royal and a British garrison was installed.

After the English took possession of Nova Scotia in 1713 following the Treaty of Utrecht, the colonial officials were bitterly jealous of the friendly relationships the French enjoyed with the Mi'kmaq. Oblivious to their own condescending attitude and treatment of the Mi'kmaq people, they seemed unable to understand why they could not expect the same friendly, cooperative relationships that were enjoyed by the French. They referred to them as "savages" and even passed an ordinance that forbade a white man (read: Acadian) from entertaining an "Indian" in his home. Upon discovery, punishment was swift.

The majority of the Acadians decided to remain on their land. But they were French and Catholic and their new sovereign was English and Protestant. The British demanded that they swear an oath of allegiance to George I. The Acadians stalled and then refused, saying, "When our ancestors were previously under English rule, they were never required to swear such an oath."

Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Caulfield wanted them to stay in the country. "If the Acadians leave, we will never be able to support (provide food for) the English families here, and protect them from harassment by the Indians, who are the worst enemies imaginable."

Governor Richard Philipps informed London in 1720 that the Acadians "will never swear the oath of allegiance, no more than they will leave the country." The British Board of Trade replied, ". . . we are apprehensive they will never become good subjects to His Majesty . . . for which reason we are of the opinion they ought



PARIS CANADA- CLAUDE PICARD

TAKING THE OATH

In the struggle between Britain and France for the control of North America, the Acadians occupied strategic territory. At the behest of Governor Richard Philipps, they took a qualified oath of allegiance which they felt established their neutrality in any future conflict.

to be removed as soon as the forces which we have proposed to be sent for your protection shall arrive in Nova Scotia. . . .”

Over the next ten years as the Acadian population doubled, Philipps wanted to solve the problem by satisfying both the crown and their subjects. With some amount of ingenuity, he managed to get the Acadians to take the oath with a clear exemption from the duty of taking up arms against the French and Indians or, in case of war, against the kingdom of England. The clause appeared in the document the Acadians signed, written in the margin next to the French translation. Witnessed by Father Charles de Goudalie and Alexandre Bourg Belle-Humeur, a notary, there is no doubt the promise not to bear arms was made.

Philipps gave a verbal promise that the Acadians would be neutral in future conflicts between Great Britain and France or any problems with the Mi'kmaq, but he did not include this qualification in the copy of the signed oath sent to England. For subsequent British administrators of Nova Scotia, the “qualified” oath of 1729–30 was not sufficient proof of the Acadians’ loyalty, whom they called “French neutrals.” Nonetheless, the Acadians steadfastly maintained they were loyal and neutral.

The close relationships formed over many decades between the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians had the strong potential to cause the British to doubt the Acadians’ loyalty oath to the British crown. The Mi'kmaq pointed out that they were not at the bargaining table when the treaty was signed and it had no relevance to them. The British, French (non-Acadians), and the Mi'kmaq were frequently in conflict in the region. Remote Acadian settlements may have missed hostilities, but the Acadians in Grand Pré and the Minas Basin were subjected to serious conflicts going on all around them and outright wars in 1744 and 1747.

One French initiative during the declared war in 1744 put soldiers from Fort Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island in the

vicinity of Grand Pré and other Acadian communities. Some Acadians provided food and moral support, but few picked up arms to join the attack on Annapolis Royal. The lack of Acadian enthusiasm disappointed the French, but the British were concerned that they had offered any assistance at all. They mentioned this incident when the decision was made to deport them.

The following year the French launched another offensive against Annapolis Royal which was countered by a successful attack by New England troops against Louisbourg. The losers of that battle were deported to France.

In 1746 France sent a naval armada to retake Louisbourg, Isle Royale (Cape Breton Island), and Nova Scotia, but the fleet was incapacitated by disease and storms.

In a 1747 engagement, 300 French soldiers and Amerindian warriors from the Chignecto area made a dead-of-winter trek through deep snow to attack 500 New England troops stationed at Grand Pré. They took great pains to make a clandestine passage near an Acadian settlement for fear some of the Acadians might warn the New Englanders of the impending attack. In a blinding snowstorm, they were successful in surprising the troops at Grand Pré and achieved an overwhelming victory. Nevertheless, the British doubted the Acadians’ claim that they were unaware of the French soldiers being nearby.

The British surprised their colonial troops when they returned Louisbourg to France in 1748 by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, a move that involved negotiated concessions elsewhere in their complicated chess game with the French.

The British decided to move the seat of government from Annapolis Royal to Halifax in 1749 as a counter balance to Louisbourg and in the process installed a new administration that did not recognize the Acadians’ claim to neutrality. They tried again with no success to get the Acadians to swear an unqualified oath of allegiance.

In 1750 the Chignecto Isthmus, a 20-mile neck of land connecting present-day New Brunswick to Nova Scotia, began a five-year run in the spotlight. Major Charles Lawrence oversaw troops who built Fort Lawrence on the east bank of the Misaguash River. The next year the French began construction on Fort Beauséjour a few miles to the west. Although Louis du Chambon de Vergor was the military commander at the fort, the real director of the operation was the fort’s priest, Abbé Le Loutre. A group of Acadians had moved to the area in the late 1700s from the Minas Basin area. To subjugate the Acadians to France and to the Catholic Church, he threatened physical and spiritual damage to them if they were ever to leave for land under British control. Faced with religious and military excommunication, the Acadians abandoned their desire to remain neutral.

British and French conflicts continued elsewhere in North America during this period, distracting the purpose of the disputants in the Chignecto region. But the tension was building and the Acadians were looking for alternatives. To avoid trouble, many emigrated to Isle Saint-Jean (Prince Edward Island) or Isle Royale. Governor Edward Cornwallis tried again to extract the

unqualified oath from the Acadians without success, but he relented when they threatened to leave Nova Scotia en masse. His successor, Peregrine Hopson, did not push the matter.

The colony on Isle Saint-Jean was established in 1720 with 200 settlers recruited in France. By 1735 it had grown to 432 settlers, of which 162 were of Acadian origin. Due to the British moving their center of government to Halifax in 1749, many Acadians living in Beaubassin, Pisiguit, Grand Pré, and Annapolis Royal became concerned about their safety and left Nova Scotia for Isle Saint-Jean. Within four years, the population of Isle Saint-Jean jumped from 735 to 2,223. It is estimated another 1,500 Acadians took refuge there in 1755, the year the deportation began on the mainland.

By 1755 Fort Beauséjour had been finished and the distracted British refocused on their primary objective to defeat the fortifications at Louisbourg and Beauséjour. In May 1755 Colonel Shirley assembled an army in Massachusetts and began a two-week march with 2,000 men to the Chignecto Isthmus. In early June, Vergor received news of the impending attack and issued a call to arms to the surrounding Acadian population. Fort Beauséjour had only 1,000 soldiers to defend it. Concerned about their oath of allegiance to the crown, the Acadians asked the governor to “threaten them into service” to give them protection from execution for treason later on by the British.

On June 4, 1755 at the Missaguash River, a total of 400 French settlers, the Acadians, and the Mi’kmaq joined the fort’s soldiers to confront the British colonials now numbering 2,400. Concurrently, the British blocked the port of Louisbourg, preventing the French from sending reinforcements. It was all over on June 16 after a white flag of surrender was raised.

The battle of Fort Beauséjour sealed the Acadians’ fate both militarily and politically. The British discovered a significant number of Acadians had participated in the defense of the fort, however feckless the effort had been. Governor Lawrence claimed enough evidence that some Acadians had breached their oath of neutrality, and decided with the Nova Scotia Council to solve the “festering Acadian problem” once and for all. On July 31, he ordered the forcible removal of the Acadian population from the colony.

The British lost no time in making plans for the deportation. On September 5, Acadian men and boys 10 and older were commanded to assemble at 3 p.m. in the parish church of Saint-Charles-des-Mines, Grand Pré. In the painting by Claude Picard (see above), Lt. Col. John Winslow, who is overseeing the deportation from Grand Pré and surrounding villages, stands at a table with the deportation order in hand. The Acadians surrounding Winslow are from the settlements located along the shores and rivers of the Minas Basin: Grand Pré, Canard, Habitant, Landry, Melanson, Granger, Terriot, and others. Troops of Shirley’s Regiment and the 45th Regiment of Foot stand at the ready.

The order informed the Acadians that acting Governor Charles Lawrence and the Nova Scotia Council have ordered the



PARKS CANADA—CLAUDE PICARD

READING THE DEPORTATION ORDER

As the British-French struggle intensified, British authorities decided to deport the “French neutrals” from Nova Scotia. On September 5, 1755, Lt. Col. John Winslow read the deportation order to the men and boys of the Grand Pré area who had been assembled at the Church of Saint-Charles-des-Mines.

removal of all Acadians from the colony. The shock of the announcement is reflected in the range of emotions depicted—disbelief, despair, anger, and protest. The Acadians learned at that point they were all prisoners and would be held under guard.

Between 1755 and 1763, more than 10,000 Acadians were removed from their homes in present day Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Some evaded deportation, of whom a small number carried on a guerrilla resistance against British forces. They were unwilling to turn over their well-manicured farms to the British without compensation.

Thousands were forced to gathering points, taking with them only the possessions they could carry. Several hundred souls were loaded into each of the waiting ships. With destinations that were often determined on the day of sailing, most of the ships carried inadequate food and water to sustain their human cargoes.

Some sailed for France, some for the Caribbean, the American colonies, and a few even sailed for South America. During trips that lasted for weeks, they endured hunger, illness, desperate living conditions, and anguish at the death of loved ones, usually the elderly and children.

In the late spring of 1758, the British captured the fortress at Louisbourg, forcing France to surrender Cape Breton Island and Prince Edward Island. On PEI the Acadian population had grown to nearly 5,000. An estimated 3,000 were deported to France in the autumn. About 700 of those deportees perished when the *Duke William* and the *Violet* sank in the English Channel. The remaining Acadians on PEI escaped deportation by hiding in remote areas.

To discourage the Acadians from ever returning, houses, barns, mills, and other buildings were burned. The painting



PARKS CANADA - CLAUDE PICARD

BURN AND LAY WASTE

Settlements were burned to discourage the Acadians from returning. Houses, barns, mills and other buildings were reduced to ashes, leaving little trace of a century or more of the Acadians' well-maintained farms.

depicts a generic village located somewhere along the rivers or basins of the Bay of Fundy. The troops marched from village to village, putting everything to the torch.

At first, most of the Acadians were scattered among the American colonies. However, being French and Roman Catholic, they often were not welcome in cultures that were largely Protestant. Many continued to look for a friendly homeland, a search that would span 50 years and reach as far as Europe and the south Atlantic.

Most deported Acadians never returned to their maritime homeland. Nevertheless, the strategy of assimilation largely failed, if indeed that was the purpose of the British government. Many historians would argue that the British simply wanted to get the Acadians out of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick because the Acadians were so adamant about not taking an unqualified oath of allegiance to the British crown.

At the end of the war in 1763, approximately 2,600 Acadians had managed to remain in Nova Scotia (Nova Scotia at this time included present-day New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island). In 1764 the British government announced the Acadians could return to Nova Scotia, provided they would swear an oath of allegiance and agree to settle in small groups. Even as their exiled relations were trying to return to their homeland, many of those who had stayed were no longer willing to endure British rule.

Those who returned in most cases were unable to reclaim the fertile farms they had built up from the diked marshes. But with the passage of time, they did return to farming as their economic mainstay. During the years they were deported, many out of necessity were forced to learn other skills and trades. They had become expert fishermen, boat builders, navigators, and lumberjacks.

In the mid-1800s, a remarkable awakening took place in the



PARKS CANADA - CLAUDE PICARD

THE DEPORTATION

Rounded up as if they were cattle, allowed to take with them very little of their household, and guarded to prevent their escape, the Acadians often waited in despair for days as they were transported in longboats to the ships in the harbor.

Acadian farming communities. Farmers became more informed about using modern agricultural and economic practices. They founded their own organizations to improve the development of their businesses. Two notable examples on Prince Edward Island were the establishment of the Farmers Bank of Rustico and the grain bank, or granaries as they were called. It was during this period that the first Acadian entrepreneurs and merchants began to emerge.

Important changes took place in the Acadian community on Prince Edward Island after 1860. A group of relatively well-educated men began to emerge as leaders. They took on the mission to raise their fellow Acadians to the same social, economic, and political level enjoyed by English-speaking islanders. As a result, a number of institutions were established to further the development of the Acadian community.

By the late 1800s, a spirit of nationalism had begun to develop, focusing on Acadian history, the French language, the Catholic faith, and agriculture. These issues were discussed in depth at national conventions attended by Acadians from all three Maritime provinces. PEI Acadians played an active role at these gatherings, the first of which was held in Memramcook, New Brunswick in 1881. On this occasion the Feast of the Assumption, celebrated on August 15th annually, was chosen as the Acadian national holiday.


The Acadian flag was chosen in Miscouche, PEI, in 1884 during the Second National Acadian Convention, a tri-color designed by Father Marcel-François Richard from Saint-Louis, New Brunswick.

The importance of farming diminished considerably in Acadian communities during the 20th century, while fishing industries expanded. Today the Acadians have diversified their businesses considerably. Service industries, small businesses, and public

utilities now employ more and more Acadians. Co-operatives also play a significant economic role in many Acadian villages.

There are over 300,000 Acadians in the Maritime Provinces and over three million worldwide. The deportment of Acadians to Louisiana in the 1700s resulted in an Acadian, or Cajun, population of approximately one million. The story of the Acadians

is truly one of survival against overwhelming circumstances.

You can learn about the history of the Acadian people at the museums in Miscouche, Prince Edward Island, and at Grand Pré, Nova Scotia. It should be noted that Grand Pré has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is the iconic place of remembrance of the Acadian diaspora. 

Le Pays de la Sagouine in the Village of Bouctouche, New Brunswick



Irène Maillet-Belley was our guide for the day. Her character name was Dorine. She completely immersed herself in the role of an Acadian woman living in the 1920s. The business below is a general store and the kitchen is typical for the period. Small groups on the deck surrounding the buildings provide spontaneous music and skits that usually involve the visitors.

Antonine Maillet, a novelist and playwright born in Bouctouche, published *Le Pays de la Sagouine* in 1971 and awakened the world to view through new eyes the rich culture of the Acadian people. Translated “The Land of the Washerwoman,” and pronounced *pay-ee day la sag-win*, the story is voiced through Maillet’s most celebrated character, *La Sagouine*, an intuitive washerwoman with no education who speaks the truth about those who struggle at the bottom of the ladder to make sense of their lives as they work for and serve those who are comparatively wealthy. She is the daring voice of the voiceless.

For more than a quarter of a century, Viola Léger has been the only actress to play the part of La Sagouine. Garbed in a humble dress, a tattered sweater, and a scarf knotted under her chin, Léger delivers her monologues from a rocking chair on the stage of a roofed but open air theater. She takes hapless situations and pokes fun, exposes the excesses of the wealthy, and asks the obvious, but avoided, questions of “why do we put up with this life?”

The recreated Acadian village is located on a small island in a lake in the village of Bouctouche, New Brunswick, about an hours drive north of Moncton. Throughout the day and into the evening, the village offers a fresh look at the vibrant history of Acadian culture that has evolved over nearly 400 years. Actors in authentic garb will involve visitors on the patios as they jump into impromptu skits. You will discover the history of Acadia through theater, music, comedy, dance, and cuisine. Every year new characters appear on the island, extracted from Maillet’s literature and integrated into

the Le Pays experience. Their accents in French match the Acadian dialect.

We enjoyed the benefit of a personal tour guide whose character name is Dorine. She began with a bit of history. “When we came back after the expulsion, we got the rocky and sandy land. But potatoes grew okay and that’s why most of our recipes today have potatoes in them.

“Everyone ate potato pancakes with molasses. Even wedding cakes were usually molasses cakes. In a large way, our culture came from our kitchens. With food and music, we celebrated our culture. That’s why the celebrations are called ‘kitchen parties’ or *ceilidhs*,” Dorine explained.

“New Brunswick became officially a bilingual province in 1981,” Dorine said. “In the 1980s we began to ask ourselves, ‘How can we stop assimilation?’ We answered that question with the First International Congress of Acadians with a two-week event August 1–15, 1994. The Congress has continued to meet every five years.

“In 1960 Louis Robichaud became the first Acadian premier for the province of New Brunswick. He served for ten years. During that time he gave us French high schools with French books. We had a university that spoke only English. In 1963 the Université de Moncton opened where all classes and instruction are in French,” Dorine said.

Dorine introduced us to an Acadian buffet lunch that you should not miss when you visit Le Pays de la Sagouine. We dined on *râpée* pie and *poutine râpée*, plus several variations of potato dishes.





Nick Palm Brings Aerospace Experience to Tiffin Motorhomes

“My father was career Army and we lived all over,” Nick began. “We lived in Germany for three years, and then in Texas, Arizona, North Carolina, and Washington. Dad was a 1st sergeant when he retired in 1963. He was attached to a surveillance unit that began flying drones in the late fifties and early sixties. My fascination with his work may have influenced my decision to join the Air Force a year after I finished high school.”

Nick grew up with four siblings, two brothers and two sisters. He was the second oldest of the five children. When his dad retired from the Army, the family moved to Long Island, New York. Nick was in the sixth grade.

Unbeknownst to Nick at the time, Pam Mason’s dad, who was career Navy and Coast Guard, retired when she was in the seventh grade and her family also moved to Long Island, New York. The two met when they were midway through their senior year in high school. Their relationship blossomed and they began dating.

Nick went away to college for a year and then joined the Air Force in October 1970. “My draft number was 314, but the Air Force had openings in their air traffic control school and that got my attention,” he said. The Air Force trained Nick as a life

support specialist that involved maintaining all of the pilot’s equipment used during flights.

After Nick had completed eight weeks of Air Force basic training and four months of technical training, he and Pam were married on February 2, 1971. Nick was assigned to Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, California. “I was attached to the first MAC squadron of CSAs,” Nick explained. “The C5A transports were the largest aircraft in the world at the time and flew cargo and troops all over the world.”

“Our daughter, Nicole, was born at Travis AFB, so it became an important place in our lives,” he continued. “The last year of my enlistment was spent overseas at Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, assigned to the World Famous 555 TFS called the Triple Nickel. I signed up for four years and got out in October 1974. The Air Force was the best thing I ever did. I matured and Pam did, too, in those four years.”

The young family moved back to New York. Just one month later Nick got a job offer from Fairchild–Republic in Farmingdale, New York to work on the A-10 aircraft for the Air Force, designed specifically for close air support of ground forces. “They put me in flight operations,” Nick said, “and to my surprise it was the same job that I had in the Air Force. I checked out all the

When he is not working at dealer sites, Nick’s functional office in the basement of his home allows him to maintain contact with the dealers that he supports. ♦ For Nick Palm, cooking is an art that is key to a healthy lifestyle. During the growing season, he and Pam maintain an herb garden on the deck.

equipment and got it ready for the test pilots.”

Survival training for the pilots was added to Nick’s job description. After three years at Fairchild–Republic, he was promoted to Integrated Logistics Support. “We were a field service organization to troubleshoot problems and perform modifications on A-10 aircraft in the field,” he explained.

As Nick’s job responsibilities grew, so did the size of his family. Nicole got a little brother, Michael, in July 1976. Three years later Pam decided she wanted to be a nurse and Nick encouraged her to go for it. Having taken the non-college prep route during high school, Pam had to first complete algebra and chemistry prerequisites before entering the Farmingdale State College nursing program. Nick concurrently finished a bachelor’s degree in business management.

Fairchild–Republic made college a bit more difficult when they moved Nick’s job to Hagerstown, Maryland. Pam transferred to Hagerstown Junior College where she completed her RN degree. She later completed her B.S. degrees in sociology and nursing at the University of Maryland. Nick managed his job with Fairchild, and finished two prelim courses for an MBA which transferred back to the New York Institute of Technology to complete his B.S. degree. He went on to complete the MBA program at Frostburg State University. Nick and Pam still wonder sometimes how they did it.

“Meanwhile, at Fairchild–Republic, we built 713 A-10s and then won the contract to build the T-46 trainer,” Nick said. “As we ramped up for production, Fairchild–Republic retained key people for the program. I transferred to a composite bonding facility where I served for a year as the manufacturing supervisor for a fiberglass bonding shop.”

Nick was picked for another interesting assignment. The design of the T-46 included ejection seats. “We built a sled to carry the ejection seats to be tested on a 15-mile track on which the sled had to achieve a speed of 450 knots (518 mph),” Nick explained. “The sled carrying the seat module had to reach the prescribed speed and eject the seats with the test dummies successfully. Success, of course, meant a human pilot could survive the ejection.”

The T-46 program was moved back to Long Island. “We loved the Hagerstown area, Pam had an established nursing position, and the children were in a good school,” Nick said. “This time I moved to New York and the family stayed in Hagerstown. However, the T-46 program lost Congressional support and was shut down the following year.”



Nick went back to Hagerstown, somewhat disillusioned with Congress and military contracts, and began putting out applications for a new position. “This time I applied to several companies that were unrelated to aerospace and aircraft production,” he joked.

Surprisingly, he received an interesting offer from Fleetwood in 1987 for a position as sales coordinator in the company’s eastern manufacturing division for travel trailers. Fleetwood’s

Text and photography by Fred Thompson



Wilderness trailer was being manufactured in Williamsport, Maryland; the Terry trailer in Winchester, Virginia; and the Prowler in Hancock, Maryland. “Geographically, it was a good fit for the family and I accepted the offer,” he said.

In 1991 the company transferred Nick into its motorhome division, first to Decatur, Indiana, and in 1993, to the Paxinos, Pennsylvania, plant. “I was very pleased with the new job opportunities in Fleetwood,” Nick said. “I admired John Crean’s leadership and saw a solid future for myself at Fleetwood.”

Two years later in 1995 Fleetwood promoted Nick to national sales manager for motorhomes and transferred him to their main office in Riverside, California. He continued to exceed his projected sales numbers and in 1997 was made regional director of sales for half of the U.S.

“After thirteen years with Fleetwood, I realized it was time for a change and resigned my position,” Nick said. “In September 2001, I met with Bob and Tim Tiffin, and Jerry Williamson, the company’s national sales manager and also a former Fleetwood employee. I really wanted to get back into sales. You get RVing in your blood and I knew I was missing the camaraderie the RV industry provided.”

Tiffin Motorhomes immediately saw the value of Nick Palm’s experience and management depth and carved out a territory for him that included 10 dealers. “Tiffin gives dealers a large geographical territory,” Nick said. “In the first month after I took the job, I lost a dealer in Virginia. It was six years before I was able to find the right dealer to put in that territory. A short term gain can become a long term loss if you make the wrong decision about a dealer. My territory now includes Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Quebec, and Ontario.”

Nick considers thorough sales training to be one of his primary responsibilities. “My attempts to do training at the dealership were usually chaotic. The daily flow of customers coming and going interrupts the training,” Nick noted. “From my experience,

Clockwise from left: While Pam is at work at the hospital, Nick’s Springer Spaniels, Harley and Deuce, do a good job of keeping him company. ♦ Riding his Harley-Davidson has been a lifelong hobby that has included touring several countries in Europe. ♦ A few years ago, Pam and Nick found this rustic cabin in the country, a mile or two from a paved road. ♦ Nick visits Red Bay frequently for meetings and training sessions with the sales teams from the dealerships he supports.

It is always better to train at the plant in Red Bay. Since several have to remain at the dealership to take care of daily customers, you can’t train them all at one time. But when I train half of them at a time at the plant, I have their undivided attention. It is primary and critical for a sales person to know his product inside and out. And he has to know the features of all the competing products in order to sell effectively against them.

“There are other factors a good sales person must be aware of,” Nick continued. “Sometimes your competition is not another RV at a competing dealership. It’s the sales person down the street who *understands* his job better than you understand your job. I try to teach salespeople how to build credible relationships. I train great sales people to be equal opportunity sales people.

“Here’s what that means,” he said as his eyes and mouth creased into a slight smile. “We sell to a diverse society. You must demonstrate an obvious respect for your customers. If you are working with a couple and you notice that one does most of the talking, you still must sell to *both* of them. Another key point: a good sales person talks with his eyes. You must learn to make eye contact with both parties.”

Accurate orders would seem to be a given when a \$300,000 motorhome is being spec’d out. “Dealers place retail orders through me. Sometimes we call them stocking or inventory orders,” Nick explained. “In those cases, I specify the optional features to go into those units because we know best what is selling well in all of the dealerships. We track the features that routinely sell the best throughout the country and can help the



dealers avoid running up the cost of a unit with features that may not sell well on the average. That's what inventory management is all about. If a *customer* places an order and specs out the features, whatever he wants is okay, of course."

Nick emphasizes that the RV industry is all about relationships. "I develop relationships internally with Tiffin Motorhomes and externally with my dealers," he noted. "All good relationships are based on integrity and trust."

In addition to overseeing the dealerships in his territory, Nick manages the Tiffin exhibit at the Hershey Show in Pennsylvania which this year took place September 10-14. It is usually billed as the largest RV show in the nation. "We sold 52 motorhomes last year at the Hershey Show," Nick said. "I designed a large trailer to support our exhibit at the show. It carries all of the tables, furniture, tents, carpets, and literature racks that we use every year. When we get back from the show, the trailer becomes a storage unit until we need it again next year. The show is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Recreation Vehicle and Camping Association. I serve on the association's board of directors."

In addition to visiting the dealerships in his territory, Nick visits competing dealerships. "We are out here in our respective territories all alone and I have to know our competition," he said. "In early December at the annual National RVDA Show in Louisville, I schedule business meetings with all of my dealers and we plan our sales tactics for the coming year," he said.

Nick Palm is not *all* business. When I called to make an appointment for this interview, he warned me: "You can't drive your motorhome to my house. You will have to park it and then drive your tow car to where we live." History buffs would thrive on Nick and Pam's location out in the country, down a gravel road, several miles from the small village of Keedysville, Maryland. But they are only a few miles from Harper's Ferry, Antietam Battlefield, and Sharpsburg. We decided on meeting in the big parking lot at Harper's Ferry where Nick arrived on his Harley. After a guided tour of Harper's Ferry (get this: a M-B Smart

Car following a Harley), it was nearly noon and I offered to take Nick to lunch. He smiled knowingly and instructed me to keep following him.

Our arrival at his country home was followed by an outside tour of the property, and then an invitation to come inside to the kitchen where Nick donned an apron. "I love to cook," he confessed, and it was easy to observe that his domain was designed as a chef's kitchen. Every type of pan and skillet hung from a bar above the sink, ready for the chef to grab when needed. Long cabinet tops and an island stood ready for food preparation.

Water was soon boiling in a 10-quart vessel on the gas cooktop as Nick was selecting the right amount of pasta. "I hope you are okay with a little garlic," he said. We endorsed the garlic as he continued preparations. "I spent over an hour this morning chopping all of the ingredients for the pesto."

Continued on page 88





STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Text by Norman Spray

“Get Up Here” Any Season to Enjoy Some of the Best of the Rockies

popular destinations in the Rocky Mountains. The soft, “champagne powder” that falls onto the slopes of overshadowing Mt. Werner draws so many skiers, some of the world’s best among them, they at times double the town’s population. Last winter 15 athletes who trained at Steamboat Springs Ski Resort represented five countries at the Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia.

But, we learned during an off-season visit, one need not ski nor sink into mineral pools to relax and renew a battered spirit in the rarefied, pollution-free air of this blue-sky, bright-star mountain wonderland. Any season you accept the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association’s invitation to “get up here,” you’ll be impressed by the diversity and scope of outdoor attractions and indoor events awaiting within the lovely landscape Mother Nature painted in this valley 6,700 feet above sea level.

Altitude, though lower than the Aspen and Vail resorts, makes Steamboat Springs a favorite summer destination for lowlanders looking for a place cooler than where they come from. The average temperature in the summer months is 73 degrees. Average high in July, the hottest month, is a temperate 82 degrees and the average low is 42 degrees. Winter is another matter. (This is a ski resort, after all.)

In past years, the average high in January registered just under 30 degrees and the average low just a degree or two above zero. The dress code is simple any time of the year: layers. Expect the layers of clothing townspeople wear to be informal, western-style. The friendly folk hereabout take pride in their ranching/cowboy/cowgirl heritage, dress to enjoy their fabulous country surroundings, and are not likely at all impressed by fancy attire.

Snowfall in the town averages over 38 inches in the month of January and over 170 inches in the course of the winter. Ski slopes on Mt. Werner, 10,568 feet high at the summit, catch 350 inches of that trademarked Champagne Powder. Even in winter, snow is seldom trouble for motorhomes en route to Steamboat. Snow plows operate at all hours clearing U.S. 40 as it winds over high-altitude Rabbit Ears Pass before descending into town from the south.

Skiing and associated snow sports can begin in late September or October if there’s early snowfall but the season officially opens on Thanksgiving weekend. Even for

A LOVELY BUT SWIFT RIVER FLOWS THROUGH downtown. Over 150 springs gurggle hot water up 12,000 to 15,000 feet from the bowels of the earth. There’s water aplenty. But never has a steamboat chugged into this Colorado town they call Steamboat Springs.

Steamboat *in the mountains*? It’s said French trappers named the place 150 years ago when one of the now-

famous hot springs, then boiling up as a mini-geyser, sounded to them like a steamboat on the nearby Yampa River. Today visitors still come to soak weary bones in these mineral-laden “medicine waters” early American tribes believed had magical, sacred healing powers.

It is snow, however, not these hot springs, that makes this unique city of less than 17,000 one of the most

Hot air balloons often take to the sky on early mornings in Steamboat Springs. Two companies offer tourists aerial views of the phenomenal scenery in the area. This photo, however, shows balloons over the Yampa River participating in the city’s Hot Air Balloon Rodeo festival last July.



PHOTO BY DAVID THIEMANN



PHOTO BY RHONDA SPRAY



PHOTO BY RHONDA SPRAY

non-skiers, Steamboat has something for everyone every season. Glorious Aspen foliage turns woods to flaming hues of orange and yellow in the fall.

Fly fishing on the rivers, lakes and creeks is superb year-round. In summer and into early fall, there's rafting, kayaking, tubing, paddleboarding and swimming on the rivers and nearby lakes. Literally dozens of trails excite hikers. Three golf courses are open as long as weather permits. With hundreds of miles of biking trails -- some easy for beginners and others difficult enough to test professionals -- Steamboat Springs is an accredited Gold Level Bicycle

Friendly Community. The town is a mecca for mountain bikers, in fact. In August of this year, it hosted the International Mountain Bicycling Association's biennial World Summit.

Man-made thrills include a breath-robbing 2,400 foot Alpine Slide down Howelsen Hill, the part of Emerald Mountain where Norwegian Ski Jumper Carl Howelsen opened a ski area in 1914 and built a ski jump where he started teaching locals how to "fly." An old wooden jump remains today, adjacent to a newer plastic-covered one that lets jumpers train year-round. The jump and Nordic

ski trails are part of Howelsen Hill Sports Complex, a city park also offering night skiing, snow tubing, an Olympic-grade ice rink, a skateboard park, horseback trails, and picnic areas. Emerald Mountain stands across the Yampa adjacent to Old Town. At the Ski Resort just east of town, an eight-passenger Gondola will lift you up Mt. Werner where you can dine in style while enjoying majestic views of the Yampa Valley and surrounding territory.

Then there are planned events. Strings Music Festival concerts featuring nationally-known performers (rock to country to classic symphony, even opera) entertain at dif-

ferent times of the year. In the dead of winter, the ski resort brings in up to 40 bands, many nationally-acclaimed, for its wildly anticipated week-long MusicFest. Fall activities get a little ahead of the calendar with an "Oktoberwest" Festival in September featuring music, food, beer, chef competitions, and games for kids and adults.

Downtown, an art museum displays Russian paintings. There are art, hot springs, and historic walking tours. Exhibits at the Tread of Pioneers Museum cover history from the time Ute Indians occupied the area to times of the early settlers and the ski era. A Winter Carnival that's been a tradition for a hundred years, a rodeo, biking runs, and a balloon festival are among the many other events. Shops and galleries, 93 of them, offer everything from original art to sporting equipment and western wear. Menus at 46 restaurants range from hamburgers to world-class fine dining cuisine.

The easiest way to get clued in to goings-on when you "get up here" is to drop into the Chamber Resort Association Visitor Information Center at 125 Anglers Drive just off U.S. 40. (970-879-0880, steamboatchamber.com).

The Yampa River flows swiftly through downtown Steamboat Springs. Here "tubers" float through a Class II rapids adjacent to the Old Town business district. • A bald eagle soars high over the banks of Steamboat Lake at Steamboat Lake State Park • Golfers enjoy lush greens at the "4 Star" Haymaker Golf Course which lies on 233 acres in the Yampa River Valley just south of Steamboat Springs. • Summer flowers abound in the elevations surrounding Steamboat Springs.



PHOTOS BY RHONDA SPRAY



PHOTO BY SHANNON LUMENS

Steamboat Springs is all about all kinds of winter fun, whether you find it on sunny ski slopes or under lights at night, on cross country trails, ski jumps, snowshoes, ski bikes, snowboards, sleigh rides, in snowmobiles, behind dog sleds, or perhaps just throwing snowballs or making snowmen. It's all in Steamboat, even a free Grandkids Ski Program and a complimentary "Over the Hill Gang" guided

ski program for those of a certain age, like 50 and over.

Getting up the mountain so you can ski back down usually happens with little waiting. The resort keeps things humming with 18 lifts that can move 41,465 skiers uphill every hour. Lifts at Howelsen Hill serve the jump, slide, slopes, and cross-country trails on Emerald Mountain.

Visit the Steamboat Springs Ski Resort mountain,

In the fall, turning aspen foliage paints a lovely world of golds and yellows, here enjoyed by a biker on a Steamboat Ski Resort trail high on Mt. Werner above Steamboat Springs.

definitely, but there are dozens of other "must see" natural attractions, beginning with the Yampa, last free-flowing wild river in the Colorado River system. Cascading down from headwaters some 4,000 feet above town in the Flat Tops Wilderness, the river zips by when the snow melt is big, but seldom floods. "Our respect for the Yampa approaches holy exaltation," says Nikki Inglis, public relations manager for the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association, Inc.

"Trout caught from the Yampa in town sometimes measure 20 to 30 inches long. We can dine at a river-side restaurant, then step out on the patio and toss a fly into the river, *really*. We learn to paddleboard on this river. Rafters and kayakers bounce through Class II rapids in the heart of town. We swim in summer. Yampa's rushing waters may not sound like a steamboat but the music they make can drift cares of the day downstream. All you have to do is sit still on a rock, listen, and relax."

Fish Creek Falls, just four miles east of downtown, is a spectacular landmark you won't want to miss. Here runoff from the Mount Zierkel Wilderness Area plummets 283 feet over a bluff, creating a mist cloud as it crashes into the creek bed below. An easy quarter-mile paved walk gets you to an excellent viewing platform close enough to hear the thundering waterfall. The parking area, adequate for a motorhome, also is a starting point for miles of day hike trails. Always known as a great stream for trout, Fish Creek is one of several that flow through town and into the Yampa.

Reservoirs in two state parks near Steamboat Springs add another dimension for water sports, including ice fishing in winter. We drove 27 miles north to Steamboat Lake State Park, following County Road 129 alongside the Elk River. Looking down from an elevated roadway, every curve opened idyllic views of herds of cattle grazing pastoral pastures beside the river, mountains towering in the background. The 8,100-foot-high park, nestled at the base of Hahn's Peak, surrounds a blue-water 1,011-acre lake noted for premier fishing, camping, and boating.

The park lies like a picture of lush valleys and alpine wildflowers beneath Hahn's and other peaks. There's a full-service marina, a swim beach, and 188 mostly-sunny camp sites. RV sites offer 15, 30, and 50-amp electricity. During winter months, 14 electrical sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis for self-contained RV units.

Hiking and biking trails meander through meadows and along the lake shoreline. After October, ice fishing, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing replace summer activities. Rent a snowmobile or bring your own for




SIX PHOTOS ABOVE BY LARRY PIERCE/STEAMBOAT SKI RESORT

surrounding Yampa Valley lands make eye-catching panoramas for motorists looking down from U.S. 40, high above. Like Steamboat Lake, Stagecoach’s reservoir is popular for water sports, summer and winter. Visitors often base camp at Stagecoach to explore the nearby Flat Tops and Sarvis Creek Wilderness areas. Snowshoe and cross-country ski trails are open in winter.

The park’s name comes from its history as a stop on a stagecoach line that ran between Toponas and Steamboat Springs until its demise in 1907. Considered a year-round destination, Stagecoach State Park maintains four electrical sites for winter camping. For information: 970-736-2436, coloradoparks.org.

Whatever you want to do in Steamboat Springs, there are friendly folk to help you get it done, safely and right. At the Visitor Center, you’ll find listings for skilled fishing guides, ski and snow sport instructors, teachers for kayaking, rafting and tubing the rapids, horseback riding experts, balloon and helicopter pilots, whatever. You can buy or rent equipment you need and didn’t bring, like skis, ski suits, snowmobiles, boats, kayaks, horses, bicycles, four-wheelers and more.

With all that, guess you’d have to call Steamboat Springs a tourist town. But my travel companions and I agreed it is the least “touristy” place we’ve been where tourism is the leading industry. Clean and wholesome, it is. Littered with junky “tourist traps,” it is not. Residents simply go competently about their business, anxious to help if asked but not pushy. These folk just seem authentic and “real,” sure of their identity, happy to have visitors, and pleased to share an outdoor world they love, even revere. All this made us feel like we belonged, a part of it all, like maybe we’d come to a mountain “home” away from home when we “got up here.” 

Motorhome Camping In and Near Steamboat Springs

Listed campgrounds in and near Steamboat Springs offer electric and water hookups. National Forest campgrounds generally do not offer hookups. Open/closed dates are subject to change. Check in advance.

Steamboat Springs: Steamboat Campground is open year-round. 907-879-0273 or 888-451-2243. steamboatcampground.com. **Eagle Soaring RV Park** is open year-round. 970-870-0164. eaglesoaringrvpark@gmail.com

Rabbit Ears Pass: Dumont Lake National Forest Campground, 22 miles southeast of Steamboat Springs on U.S.40. 970-870-2299. recreation.gov

Oak Creek: Stagecoach State Park, 17 miles south of Steamboat Springs. 970-736-2436. coloradoparks.org

Clark: Steamboat Lake State Park, 23 miles north of Steamboat Springs 970-879-7019. coloradostateparks/steamboat-lake-statepark.org

Hayden: Yampa River State Park, about 20 miles northwest of Steamboat Springs 970-276-2061. yampariver@state.co.us

access to 146 miles of prime snowmobile trails.

For camping reservations (highly advised) call 970-879-7019. For current conditions and information: 970-879-7019. Web: coloradostateparks/steamboat-lake-state-park.org.

Hahns Peak Historical Village, just across the road from the park, began as a gold mining camp around

1865. Self-guided walking tours visit some buildings erected during those boom times. A museum displays early-day artifacts, among them the “Bear Cage Jail” said to have once been temporary “home” to two members of Butch Cassidy’s infamous Hole-in-the-Wall gang.

Stagecoach State Park, 17 miles south of town, maintains a marina on an 820-acre reservoir. The lake and

Snow fun comes in all forms in Steamboat Springs. Trail difficulties are graded from beginner to professional. Steamboat Springs has trademarked its soft “Champagne Powder” that attracts skiers from around the world.

IN THE PLANT WITH JONATHAN



Donald Robbins

Inspector, QC Department

Donald Robbins' 14-year career at Tiffin Motorhomes can almost be divided into two separate, distinct tenures.

The Hamilton native and now Red Bay resident spent the first 10 years of his TMH career working as an electrician. He has spent the past four years as an inspector. "It is totally different from what I used to do," he said. "I have really enjoyed it though."

As an inspector, he is one of the final people to check each unit before they are released to dealers. "We inspect the entire motorhome and look at every detail," he said. "A problem might range from a small scratch on a cabinet door to a major thing like a gas or water leak or a problem with a slide-out."

The job can be daunting, but Robbins insists that he enjoys getting to look at different units and finding things that need to be corrected before the motorhome leaves the plant. "There are always going to be little things that slip by, but we work hard to make sure that we catch everything that we can so any problems can be corrected as soon as possible," he said.

Robbins describes himself as an avid outdoorsman who loves to hunt and fish, especially on the Tennessee River. "We have great lakes here but I just really enjoy fishing the river, so that's where I go most of the time."

He is also an archery enthusiast who is already making preparations for the upcoming bow-hunting season. "I have always loved the outdoors and hunting and fishing and shooting guns and bows, so that's the main hobby that I have."

Robbins and his wife, Kimberly, have three children; 20 year-old Kyle, and two 17 year-olds, Brock and Kaitlyn.

"This has been a good place for me to work for my family and I really enjoy what I do."



Kelia Phillips

Sander, Cabinet Shop

Many things at Tiffin Motorhomes change from day to day, but one constant that people can always expect to see is a big smile on Kelia Phillips' face each morning.

October will mark Phillips' ninth year at TMH and she says that she enjoys each day knowing that she has a good place to go to work. "This is a good place to work," she said. "It is a nice, friendly laid back atmosphere with good people and that makes it easy to look forward to coming to work each day."

Phillips has worked in the spray booth inside the cabinet shop during her entire tenure with the company. She currently sands the cabinets inside the booth, prepping them for the next station.

Away from work, she is a family-oriented person and enjoys spending time with her four children; Jordan, Felicia, Justin, and Fiara Phillips; and two grandchildren, Jamere Rose and Maleah Phillips. "It doesn't really matter if we are shopping or doing whatever, all the things I enjoy involve my family," Kelia said.

One big change recently taking place has involved her daughter Fiara's move to Auburn University. "That's been a big transition for me and her but I know she will do well and we will make it."

Another focus of the Russellville native's life is her church. Phillips is a member of First Baptist Church College Avenue in Russellville. "My faith is very important to me and that gives me the strength and guidance I need in everything I do," she said.

Her personality has blended well with her fellow employees and supervisors over the years and she is quick to credit those who gave her an opportunity to work at TMH.

"Horace Stepp hired me nine years ago when there weren't many women in the plant and I am thankful that he gave me an opportunity. I have really enjoyed working here and I am grateful for it."



Rodney Pharr

Utility, Front End Department

Rodney Pharr has spent the last 13 years working in the front-end department at Tiffin Motorhomes, with the past two-and-a-half as the utility person in that department.

"I have seen a lot of changes in the way motorhomes are put together over the past 13 years," he said. "This is a good place to work and make a good living. There are a lot of good people here." Pharr, a Tremont, Mississippi, resident and his wife, Ponda, have two children, 22 year-old Leah, and 19 year-old Taylor.

When he's away from the plant, Pharr enjoys some of the traditional outdoor activities that you might expect, such as hunting and fishing. And there is another nature-related hobby that is a little more unique. Pharr is an active beekeeper, with six hives at his home.

"I started doing it about a year ago just because I was curious about it and how it worked," he said. "I just really wanted to see what it's like. I found out that a lot of hard work goes into it, but I really enjoy it."

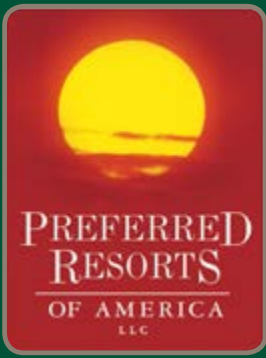
Beekeeping is a hobby that began with curiosity but quickly grew. "It is interesting watching them and seeing how they live. There are certain bees that do certain things and there seems to be a reason for everything they do."

Despite the interesting nature of the bees, it does bring its dangers. Pharr said the bees frequently sting him, but it is nothing that deters his interest.

Another important aspect of his personal life is the time spent at Pearly Gates Church in Tremont. "I really enjoy being involved with our church, that is something that's important to me."

The couple's daughter recently graduated from college and their son is a sophomore at Itawamba Community College. "That's enough to keep a lot going on for us," he said with a laugh and smile.

Editor's Note: Jonathan Willis joined Tiffin Motorhomes earlier this year. He is the former editor-publisher of The Franklin County Times. Jonathan and his wife, Mandi, are natives of Russellville, Alabama, and have two boys, Ty and Cade. He is a regular contributor to *Roughing It Smoothly*.



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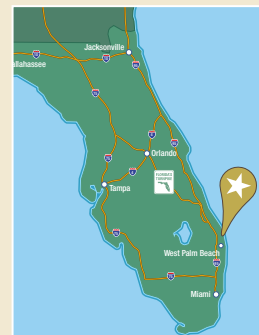
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Interviews from Massachusetts and Alabama



Jay & Mary LeBow

Hometown: Annapolis, Maryland

Interviewed: Cape Cod / Sandwich, Massachusetts

- Jay & Mary own a 2012 Allegro Breeze 32 ft. with a Navistar 215 on a PowerGlide Chassis.
- They have been married 22 years and have a blended family: 5 children & 10 grandchildren (2 grandsons and 8 granddaughters). Jeff lives in New York City, NY; Jon lives in Crofton, MD – he also camps; Carrie lives in Baltimore, MD; Joe lives in Davidson, MD; & Lawrence lives in Baltimore, MD.
- Their travel companion is 3 year old Max.
- Jay served in the Air National Guard 1963-69.
- This is Jay & Mary's 1st RV – they're enjoying a leisurely pace, meeting people & the scenery.
- Jay drives 100% of the time; prefers driving 300 miles daily; has driven 4,500+ miles in 12 states & plans to travel 4 months annually.
- After boating they needed a project & began motorhoming; Mary had many great camping memories; Jay was reticent – & now enjoys it!
- Bucket list: travel west to the National Parks.
- Jay's career: lawyer thru 1966. He attended medical school – psychologist thru 2009; & owned a boat dealership in MD thru 2012.
- Hobbies: bridge, reading, boating, & a pilot.
- Mary's primary career was raising their family. Late 1970 – went to graduate school. Her next 3 phases included: psychiatric social worker; 15 yrs./child psychiatry; 20 yrs./psychiatric geriatrics ... & retired in 2011.
- Hobbies: grandchildren, gardening & reading.



Geoff & Nancy Justiss

Hometown: Houston, Texas

Interviewed: at Tiffin MH in Red Bay, Alabama

- Geoff & Nancy own a 2009 Allegro Red 36 ft. with a Cummins 340 on a Freightliner Chassis.
- They met at TX A&M in Commerce, TX and have been married 43 years.
- Nancy drives 100% of the time; prefers 200-300 miles a day; has driven 30,000+ miles in 30 states; and they began full-timing in 1997.
- Have owned 4 RVs since the 70's; researched Tiffin MH & technical service for this last RV!
- Their bucket list: the Eastern U.S.; the Eastern Provinces of Canada; & look forward to their next destination 'just around the corner'.
- Travel goals: hiking highest 'climbable' peaks in each state; touring 1 to 2 museums daily & have toured 4,000+ from art, history, science, to eclectic (i.e. vacuum cleaners). They have also toured 200+ 'watch it made factories'; plus historical sites in each state, presidential libraries, presidential birthplaces & homes; and governor's mansions in every state.
- Enjoy: meeting people; learning new things; experiencing local culture, foods, reading local books; & traveling to new places!
- Geoff's career: Budget Comptroller for a catalog showroom for 20 yrs. He retired in 1990.
- His hobbies: pickle-ball, yoga & the gym.
- Nancy's career: 20 yrs. in secondary education and retired in 1997.
- Hobbies include reading, walking, pickle-ball, yoga & the gym.



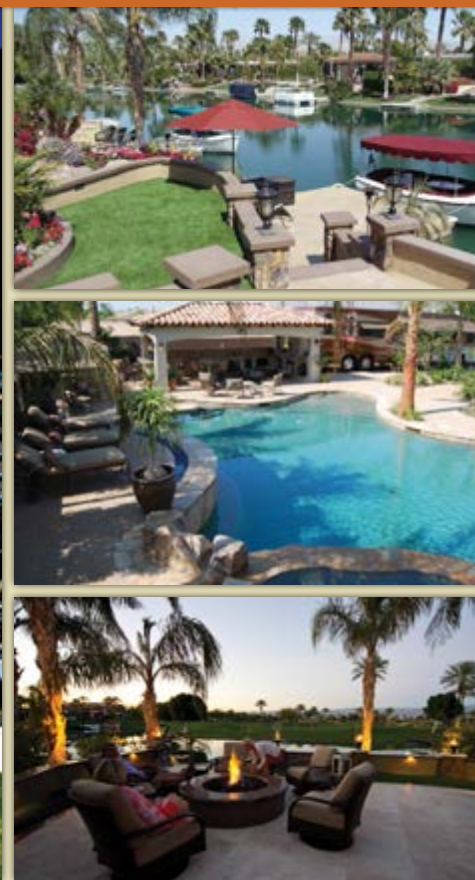
Curt & Sherry Hinman

Hometown: Cherry Valley, California

Interviewed: Mobile, Alabama

- Curt & Sherry own a 2008 Phaeton 40 QSH with a Cummins 360 on a Freightliner Chassis.
- They have been married 20 years and have 3 children and 4 grandchildren. Kent has 2 children & lives in San Diego, CA; Marcie has 2 children & lives in Menifee, CA; and Erik lives in Cosmopolis, Washington.
- Their travel companion is 5 yr. old Bogey.
- Curt & Sherry have owned 5 RVs & this is their 1st Tiffin. They've driven in 49 states!
- They share driving 50/50; prefer driving 300-350 miles daily; driven this coach 45,000 mi. in 14 states; & travel 8-9 months annually.
- They enjoy learning the history of our country; seeing state capitols; & visiting battlefields.
- Also enjoy: the wide open spaces in the western states; twice-a-year traveling with a Calif. RV club; & rendezvousing with friends.
- This year they have tickets to see Cher in Las Vegas. They'll travel east to see the Statue of Liberty while on a 3 month trip with Sherry's sister & brother-in-law.
- Bucket list: travel west to the National Parks.
- Curt's career: lawyer & judge in California for 26 years & retired in 1999.
- His hobbies: golf, computers, & cooking on a Treager smoker grill.
- Sherry's career: courtroom clerk for 16 years & retired in 1999.
- Her hobbies include: making jewelry & golf.

Editor's Note: Elaine and Mike Austin purchased an Allegro Bus in 2007 to realize a longtime dream and go full time. After a career turning around failing steel companies, Mike became a guest lecturer at the University of South Alabama's Business Institute, while Elaine discovered a whole new career in real estate. In 2011 they traded for a new Phaeton 40QBH. This summer they made the decision to retire in Point Clear, Alabama, and sold their Phaeton in just two weeks. We will introduce you in the next issue to Connie Gleason, a "professional" full timer.



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When Old Is New

World's Newest Factory-Built "Old Steam Locomotive" Pulls Iowa Train

SO FAR AS KNOWN, it is the last steam locomotive commercially-produced in the world. China's Datong Locomotive Works built it in 1988. It passed through Beijing on rail cars at the same time trouble brewed in Tiananmen Square. It crossed the Pacific aboard a freighter, landing in Long Beach, California in 1989. Two rail flat cars then hauled it to an anxiously-waiting small town in America's heartland.

"It" is Engine 8419, a 210-ton, 76.67-foot-long coal burner proudly owned and operated by the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad and Museum, Boone, Iowa. It came to Boone "brand new" 29 years after the last mainline steam-powered engine was retired in the U.S. as diesel power took over.

Now, you can ride the rails in cars behind this locomotive—historic *not because it is old* but because it is "*newest*" of all factory-made steam engines. You can, that is, if you visit Boone any Saturday between Memorial Day weekend and the last day of October.

Boone & Scenic Valley (B&SV) fires up the steamer (a six-hour process) to pull excursion trains on two 15-mile round trips only on Saturdays, departing at 1:30 and 4:00 p.m. On other days, B&SV's excursion trains are powered by diesel electric locomotives, three built by General Motors and two each by Alco and General Electric. Departure is at 1:30 p.m.

Whether pulled by Engine 8419 or one of the diesels, it's a

ride that takes you over a single-track 156-foot-high, 780-foot-long bridge at Bass Point Creek; over the Des Moines River on a 30-foot-high bridge also 780 feet long; and then alongside the river and through the Des Moines Valley to tiny Fraser, once headquarters for this railroad and once a coal-mining town. The train passes corn and bean fields, meadows and pastures where wildflowers bloom in the spring and hardwood "forests" where foliage turns the track-side world to brilliant oranges, reds, and golds in October. Riders often spot deer and wild turkey along the right-of-way. Tour guides explain the sights and history you pass.

This "basic" excursion trip lasts about an hour and 45 minutes. Adult ticket prices vary from \$20 for basic coach to \$25 for air-conditioned double deck First Class.

In addition, B&SV Railroad operates a dinner train on Friday and Saturday evenings and a "dessert" train leaving at noon on Saturdays. These continue 3.5 miles further than Fraser, negotiating sharp curves and steep grades. These 22-mile round trips last two hours and 15 minutes. Another option is a bring-your-own-food "Picnic Train" leaving at noon on Sundays. It is on the rails for two hours. Special event "Santa Express" trains operate

Text by Norman Spray
Photography by Fenner Stevenson

Left: Engine 8419, the world's last factory-produced steam locomotive, crosses the 156-foot high bridge over Bass Point Creek giving passengers a bird's eye view of colorful foliage on a Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad and Museum excursion trip to Fraser. This steam engine, built in China in 1988, has made this run on Saturdays since arriving "brand new" in Boone, Iowa in 1989. ♦ The height of the single-track high bridge over Bass Point Creek is dramatically illustrated in this photo of Engine 8419 pulling cars on one of two excursion trips it makes on Saturdays between Memorial Day and November 1. Boone & Scenic Valley operates excursion trips every day but diesel power is used on other days of the week.

on weekends between Thanksgiving and Christmas, sometimes passing through falling flakes and skirting snow fields. For reservations on any trip (recommended though not required): 800-626-0319, scenic-valleyrr.com

Saturdays at B&SV can be special for another reason. The Iowa Historical Railroad Society, owner of the non-profit B&SV, also operates an electrically-driven combination baggage, mail, and passenger interurban car of a type that ran between cities and towns in populated areas from the 1890s into the 1950s. Still drawing power from an overhead copper wire, beautifully-restored "Car 50" round trips between the railroad's depot on 10th Street and downtown Boone.

"We may be the only place in the country where, at a given time on a Saturday, you can see a steam locomotive blowing smoke, a diesel electric on the tracks, and an interurban car speeding down tracks under a copper wire," says Fenner Stevenson, general manager of the railroad for 18 years.

Electrical power actually is an important chapter in the railroad's somewhat checkered past. The line was founded in Fraser in 1893 to haul coal out of newly-discovered mines. Coal shipping never met projected potential, partly because the coal mined around Fraser proved too soft and "dirty" to command a meaningful market share. ("Actually, I never heard





The Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad depot at Boone, Iowa may be the only place you can see this. Side-by-side are Steam Engine 8419 on the left, a diesel-powered locomotive in the middle, and an electrically-powered interurban coach at right. The steam engine and electric trolley operate only on Saturdays. Seven diesel engines pull excursion trains on other days.

of ‘clean’ coal,” Stevenson jokes.)

However, it was an era when other freight business grew and railroads were expanding. This one grew, too, though the name changed several times. In 1907, then known as the Fort Dodge, Des Moines and Southern, the line was converted to electrical power after a generation plant was built at Fraser. Interurban cars operated on an hourly basis between several cities at one peak time during this era. Then passenger demand dwindled with the growing popularity of automobiles. A devastating flood all but knocked out the power plant, presaging the end of the interurbans in 1955. Electric lines were torn down and diesel engines were put on the tracks to handle a still-viable freight business.

Chicago and North Western Railway purchased the line in 1968, shut down parts of it, then in 1983 announced plans to end all service. Many local folk did not want to see the line scrapped, particularly the landmark Bass Point Creek High Bridge. So, says Stevenson: “When the judge at a hearing on the proposal to kill the line asked whether anyone wanted to

buy the railroad, the story goes, a local man with maybe five dollars in his pockets said, yes, he wanted to buy it.”

The Chicago and North Western agreed to give the Boone community a little time. The local delegation returned home, formed the Boone Railroad Historical Society (now the Iowa Railroad Historical Society) and, with 2,254 charter members, raised \$50,000 that bought the line. “All they got was the bridge and the tracks,” Stevenson says. “No equipment.”

Undaunted, they raised more money to buy some equipment and got some donated. Against all odds, they boarded passengers for the first paying trip in November that same year. It was a short ride, just about two miles out onto the High Bridge. Tickets were sold from a makeshift “office” in a tent.

“It’s a wonder they saved the road back then,” Stevenson adds, “but what has happened since is amazing. In 2013, our record year, we carried 55,000 passengers. We have eight locomotives and a dozen beautifully-restored coaches.” On a peak day a locomotive might pull 10 cars car-

rying up to 600 people. About 300 passengers is more normal.

It was also in November, the day after Thanksgiving 1959, that Engine 8419 arrived new, never used, six years after that first run. It is a 2-8-2 (two front guide wheels, eight drive wheels, two back guide wheels) Mikado, an American design.

When Engine 8419 was off-loaded in Boone, Chinese lettering on the front wreath (now in storage) translated to: “We are friends of the world. Even though our two countries are far apart we feel like close neighbors.”

Somebody in the Chinese factory must have been a poet at heart. Lettering on the engineer’s side of the tender reads: “The (locomotive) is a dragon that swims through the blue ocean between two friendly nations.” On the fireman’s side, perhaps more apropos: “The locomotive bounds through the sky (as if flying) as it climbs the hill and passes through the valley with a loud whistle.”

Output at the rim of the steam engine’s 54-inch drive wheels equals 2,770 horsepower, adequate to chug down tracks at maximum speed of 52.8 mph. On B&SV runs, however, maximum speed is 14 mph, half that on the High Bridge. Fully loaded, the tender holds 17.6 tons of coal. Water capacity is 9,245 gallons. The boiler generates working steam pressure up to 200 psi. On a normal 15-mile round trip excursion run, the engine consumes less than a ton of coal and about 1,500 gallons of water.

B&SV riders are admitted free to the James H. Andrew Railroad Museum and History Center adjacent to the depot. A 9,000 sq. ft. facility bearing the name of a chief benefactor, it displays over 4,000 railroad artifacts and houses a library of more than 900 volumes. There’s adequate parking with lots of room for RV units, even long ones.

Though riding the B&SV becomes a priority for many visitors, they find other Boone County attractions also worthwhile. Heading any list of other things you might want to do or see in the immediate area likely would be the Kate Shelley High Bridge, site of one of railroading’s

greatest stories, and the nearby Kate Shelley Railroad Museum at Moingona (see separate story, next page).

In the town of Boone, you can tour the Victorian home birthplace of Mamie Doud Eisenhower, wife of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th U.S. president. (515-432-1896, director@boonecountyhistory.org). Also in town is the Boone County Historical Center, a local history museum occupying a lovely old Masonic Temple built in 1907. (515-432-1907, director@boonecountyhistory.org).

There's a campground with 30 and 50 amp electrical service at the Boone County Fairground, open from April 1 to November 1. (515-432-5899). Stock car racing happens Saturday evenings at the Boone County Speedway, just outside Boone, where more than 600 cars enter the International Motor Contest Association super nationals in September. (515-432-1795, raceboone.com).

Summer and winter outdoor recreation from kayaking to skiing to paint

ball gaming gets good reviews at *Seven Oaks Recreation*, Boone. (515-432-9457, sevenoaksrec.com).

For a scenic, deep canyon drive within the Des Moines River Valley, visit Ledges State Park four miles south of Boone. Miles of hiking and biking trails are available within this 1200-acre preserve. Forty of the 95 camp sites at Ledges have electrical hookups. (515-432-1852, ledges@dnr.iowa.gov.) Just south of Ledges is the *Iowa Arboretum* with 40 acres of managed garden grounds and 340 acres of forest. (515-795-3216, iowaarboretum.org)

Honey Creek Golf Club, nestled in the trees and hills of Ledges State Park, is one of two popular 18-hole courses not far from the B&SV railroad's depot. (515-432-6162, info@golfhoneycreek.com). The other, near Odgen, west of Boone, is part of the *Don Williams Recreation Area*, a complex that also offers fishing, hiking and biking trails, and boating. Camping at 150 sites with electric hookups is on a first come, first served basis. (515-353-

4237, bccb@wccta.net).

Ames, home of Iowa State University, some 17 miles east of Boone, offers many attractions. On the ISU campus, you can visit, among others, the *Brunnner Art Museum*, (515-294-3342); the *Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics* (515-294-3181); and the *Farm House Museum* (515-294-342). Also in Ames is an Old Town Historic District with homes dating from the 1880s through the mid-1990s. **RIS**

A sidebar story continues on the next page.

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What If It Were You . . .

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IT IS 11 P.M. JULY 6, 1881. LIGHTNING SPLITS THE SKY, THUNDER booms. Gale-strong winds whip sheets of rain across the pasture between the shanty that’s your home and flooding Honey Creek. You hear a steam locomotive chugging across the high bridge spanning the mighty Des Moines River. You know how the railroad operates. This will be a pusher engine sent to check track conditions between the depot at Moingona and Boone. Needs to be done before the “midnight express” carries some 200 passengers first over the high bridge, then across a lesser trestle over Honey Creek.

You hear the bell on Old Engine No.12 ringing as it nears the Honey Creek crossing. Next, the rumbling, cracking sound of timbers crashing. A “fierce hissing of steam.” No.12 has plunged into the creek! Your mind flashes back to the sad day your dad, a section foreman, died in a railroad accident five years earlier. No time for memories now.

You’re a girl, only a teenager. Your mother is ill. Your siblings are younger. No one lives anywhere close. If anyone can help, it has to be you. You throw a straw hat on your head, light your dad’s railroad lantern and run through mud into the storm wearing only a skirt and jacket.

Lightning bolts make enough light for you to see two men clinging to tree branches in swirling flood waters at Honey Creek. No way you can help them now. You yell that you’ll go for help. But where? How? Worse, you know the “Midnight Express” passenger train will be here in an hour, steaming to certain disaster.

Nearest help will be at the Moingona depot, but how can you sound an alarm there? You don’t have a telephone or motor vehicle and you’ve had to let animals out of the stable so they can escape the flood. There’s only one way: cross the Des Moines River bridge. You pick your way over the wreckage of what’s left of the Honey Creek bridge then hurry up the tracks to the river bridge.

You’ve gone only a short distance, climbed out over the river, when your lantern flickers out. You stand, shaking, inching forward in darkness. A thunderous, powerful wind gust hits hard. Reeling, you grab onto a tie to keep from falling into roiling waters so far below. You have only lightning flashes to guide you through the dark. Wind rips at you, nearly blasting you off the bridge. The only way you can feel your way forward, keep your balance, and not misstep into a dark void in the places where there is no decking is to stay on hands and knees, crawl!

You have no idea how much time has passed. How long before the passenger train comes over this bridge? Can you get across in time to stop it? You listen for train noise but booming thunder is all you hear. What could you do, anyway, should you hear a train coming your way? It would simply knock you off the bridge, then plunge into Honey Creek loaded with passengers.

No matter. You’re irrevocably committed now. Alone, nearly 200 feet up, afraid of heights. No turning back. Your only hope is to reach Moingona in time to get that midnight train stopped. A super-human effort, adrenaline surely exploding through your system, keeps you moving. Finally, still crawling, you reach for one more handhold to keep you on the bridge – and find terra firma instead. You’re across! With a final last-breath burst of energy, you force yourself to run as fast as you can another half mile to the Moingona depot. There you collapse, faint away, totally spent.

The station manager knows you, realizes why you have come, and quickly telegraphs instructions to stop the inbound passenger train. It stops at Ogden, a few safe miles to the west, minutes before it would have reached Honey Creek.

For you, the reader, this has been an imaginary adventure. But the story is fact. It really happened, making a dirt-poor young lady named Kate Shelley a heroine, forever a leg-

Old and new Kate Shelley bridges stand side-by-side near Boone, Iowa. The photo shows the new bridge under construction in 2007 and the old bridge standing at right. Union Pacific Railroad invested over \$50 million to build the new bridge which was officially opened on the first of October 2009. The company named it the Kate Shelley High Bridge, same as the one it replaced. On the new bridge, east and west bound trains can cross at the same time maintaining speeds up to 70 mph.



PHOTO COURTESY UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD

end in the annals of railroad history. Here’s the rest of the story:

Once she regained consciousness at the Moingona station, Kate insisted on riding with a rescue party over the high bridge in another engine. When they reached Honey Creek, she guided rescuers to the men she had left clinging to trees. Rescuers threw a rope to one of Engine 12’s four-man crew, Ed Wood. He tied the rope to the tree, then pulled himself out hand over hand. A second crew member, Adam Agar, could not be rescued until waters receded. Two others did not survive. Patrick Donahue’s body was found later in a corn field a quarter mile downstream. The fourth, George Olmstead, was never found.

Kate’s amazing feat attracted worldwide attention, a notoriety she was ill-prepared to handle. Her ordeal on the bridge and the swarm of reporters seeking interviews was too much. Four days after her adventure, she was confined to bed for three months. Some financial help did result for the impoverished family, however, along with accolades for Kate. Passengers on the train she saved collected a few hundred dollars for her. The Chicago and North Western Railroad added \$100, a half barrel of flour, half a load of coal and a lifetime pass. Later, in Chicago in 1890, a rug was auctioned to pay off a mortgage on the Shelley home, cash gifts of \$417 were collected, and the Iowa Legislature voted her a grant of \$5,000.

When Chicago and North Western built a new bridge over the Des Moines River in 1900, it honored her by naming it the Kate Shelley High Bridge. It was the only bridge in the U.S. named after a woman until 1976 when the Betsy Ross Bridge was opened in Philadelphia.

Kate taught school for several years in Boone County, then accepted Chicago and North Western’s offer to become stationmaster at Moingona.


She never married. Kate died January 21, 1912 at age 47 or 49, depending on which conflicting birth date is accurate. It is certain that she was born in Ireland, either in 1863 or 1865, and emigrated to the U.S. with her parents as a toddler.

Today there is no railroad track beside the quarter section farmstead where the Shelley family settled. That track has been moved several miles north. The old bridge that Kate crawled over has been replaced, first by the one named for her in 1900 and now by a new one, 190 feet high, built by the Union Pacific Railroad at a cost of over \$50 million. Dedicated in 2009, it retains the Kate Shelley High Bridge name.

Much of Kate’s story is documented in exhibits at the John H. Andrew Museum at Boone & Scenic Valley’s 10th Street Depot in Boone. There they’ll tell you where and how to get the best views of the Kate Shelley High Bridge and what remains of the older route she crawled over.

If Kate’s story and deeds interest you, make it a point to visit the small Kate Shelley Railroad Museum maintained by the

Boone County Historical Society. Devoted to Kate’s story, this little museum stands on the precise site where the Moingona depot was located when Kate fought her way to it in 1881. In a recreated 19th century passenger station, it houses artifacts, photos, and personal papers pertaining to Kate Shelley. It displays also some railroad equipment, a working telegraph system, and is the starting point for a trail leading to the site where Kate made that historic crawl. To visit this museum, make an appointment at: boonecountyhistory.org/BCHSKateShelley-RailroadMuseum.htm, 515-432-1907.

Kate Shelley is gone. But her name lives on a bridge and forever in the railroad industry’s storied past. 

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Tiffin Allegro Club Rally, Castle Rock, Washington

by Sally Moore

The Tiffin Allegro Club and the Toutle River RV Resort welcomed over 200 Tiffin-built motorhomes to the Mount St. Helen's area for the Tiffin Allegro Club Rally in June. Many coach owners took advantage of the opportunity to arrive early and almost half of all rally attendees were parked and relaxing by the weekend prior to the rally's kick-off on Monday! Poulsbo RV, a Tiffin dealer from the Seattle/Tacoma area was present with a huge display of beautiful new Tiffin coaches.

The weather was cool and crisp with a few light rain showers at the beginning of the week, but not enough to dampen everyone's spirits. A great big shout-out of thanks goes to the fantastic team of Tiffin volunteers who drove golf cart shuttles, helped with registration, greeted guests at the meals, etc.! We could not host a rally without the help of these generous folks! As always, RV owners are the kindest, most "willing to lend a hand" people traveling on the highways today.

We had 16 states and two Canadian provinces represented at the rally. After being escorted to their RV sites, guests were registered and presented with a gift bag of items from Tiffin Allegro Club and Poulsbo RV. Everyone was eager to visit Poulsbo RV's display to see the newest and latest coaches. Kelly Moore, Tiffin Allegro Club President, welcomed everyone at dinner Monday night. Meals were catered by the Summerland Catering Company and each was delicious with a great variety. Everyone was very excited for the opportunity to meet Mr. and Mrs. Bob Tiffin at the rally. After dinner, Tom Webber entertained the group with Bingo! Winners had to shout "Allegro" to win! Door prize drawings and announcements closed out the night.

Tuesday morning found everyone lining up for a bountiful breakfast. That cool, crisp Washington air really sharpened everyone's appetite! Seminars began immediately after breakfast. Owners really appreciated the informative seminars presented by Triple H Electronics, Freightliner, Cummins, Onan and others. Janet Sadlack from MicrowaveConnect presented her popular convection/microwave cooking to a packed audience! Mary Moppins' cleaning tips are always good to hear. Lawn games were available for anyone who wanted to participate. One of Tuesday's fun activities was the RV site decorating contest. Many folks took time to decorate their site with the country western theme - judging was difficult! Folks put a lot of thought and hard work into this. We had great participation and it was enjoyed by everyone. The winners were: Michael and Roxanne Parish, First Place; Wayne and Diane Heath, Second Place; David and Shirley Kellog & Don and Nancy Printz who tied for Third Place. Thanks for all your creative efforts! They were presented with gift certificates from the Tiffin Allegro Club store. Dinner



on Tuesday was a delicious barbeque and fried chicken buffet.

Closing out the night was Joseph Baldwin, talented singer/songwriter/musician. One of our attendees' favorite songs was Johnny Cash's "I Hear That Train A-Coming," in recognition of the frequent trains running on the tracks near the campground! Joseph did an outstanding job singing old country favorites as well as his original material. We were honored to recognize Mr. and Mrs. Larry Hebert on their 52nd anniversary. When Joseph asked Mr. Hebert what song he would like for their dance, Mr. Hebert replied "A slow one!"

On Wednesday the weather cleared and temperatures were more pleasant! More seminars were held with a new favorite being added. Owners were invited to participate in a round table discussion of tips for coach organization, customization, and interesting things they have learned while traveling about the country in their motorhomes. This forum was facilitated by Kelly Moore and we received many positive comments. When time permits we will try to include this type of round table in future rallies. The aroma of grilling burgers and wieners filled the air as lunch was being prepared for everyone, compliments of Poulsbo RV. No need to ring a dinner bell! The smoke and delicious aroma drew everyone into the pavilion right on time.

A Tiffin tradition is the afternoon tea party! This fun time was enjoyed by everyone. Tea trivia games were played, stories about favorite tea cups were shared, and unique hats were admired. After sharing a beautiful day together, the entire group gathered for another delicious dinner of Tex-Mex dishes followed by more door prizes and entertainment by Bobby Greer.

A full country breakfast buffet kicked off our Thursday schedule. More seminars were held in the pavilion. When one of the presenters had to cancel at the last minute, we used the time for a swap meet among the owners. Several folks participated and were pleased with their sales and/or their purchases! With more advance notice for everyone, this could be a great opportunity to meet people and let unwanted items change hands!

We were very pleased to have several Tiffin Allegro Club chap-


Allegro Club members began arriving on June 16 from all over the U.S. Roger and Julie Ray, from Coral Springs, Florida were recognized for traveling the farthest distance to the rally. ♦ The Veterans Salute Parade honoring our retired service men and women has become an event for our midyear rallies. ♦ The Puget Sound Allegro Chapter #54, Tacoma, Washington area, gathered for a chapter picture just before participating in our Country and Western Night. ♦ Tiffin Motorhomes sent four service technicians to the Castlerock Rally to take care of any service or repair issues that could be handled on site. From left, they are: Gary James, Phillip Hollingsworth, Jim Smith, and Tom Forsythe. Poulsbo RV sent Norm Griffith to assist Tiffin's four techs. ♦ Mr. and Mrs. Larry Hebert from Onalaska, Washington chose to attend the rally where they celebrated their 52nd wedding anniversary. When the emcee asked them to request a special song, Larry said, "A slow one."

ters represented at the rally. Chapters took this opportunity to have their monthly meeting and many gathered every afternoon before dinner to visit and catch up on the "news." New chapter members were recruited and several added during the rally.

A real highlight of the rally was the veteran's salute parade. Participation was great! We had a good time decorating automobiles and golf carts with red, white, and blue bunting and streamers. There were banners saluting our veterans and paying tribute to those who have passed on. Spectators stood along the way with American flags waving to the veterans. The parade ended at the Poulsbo RV display and everyone was treated to ice cream by Mary Moppins!

Our farewell dinner on Thursday night featured northwestern salmon and glazed pork loin. All of the meals were bountiful and featured a variety of delicious foods. Immediately following dinner, door prizes were awarded and then Onan caps and Kenwood T-shirts were pitched into the crowd and caught by some lucky individuals. We were very pleased to recognize and pay tribute to our dedicated service technicians who had worked tirelessly all week. These men received a well-deserved standing ovation from the crowd.

A fantastic number of rally attendees took advantage of Poulsbo RV's show discounts and became owners of brand new coaches! These folks were recognized each night and presented with a gift basket from the Tiffin Allegro Club. After dinner, musical sensation Brady Goss entertained the group with his rendition of Jerry Lee Lewis' "Great Balls of Fire!" This young man lit up the keyboards and put on a great show for the crowd!

Friday saw many of our guests heading for home or on to their next adventure. A few folks wanted to continue enjoying the beautiful Toutle River RV Resort through the weekend. The Tiffin Allegro Club staff wants to again thank everyone for attending the rally. Until next time, keep on Roughing It Smoothly! Travel safe! 



2015 Allegro Club Rallies

Mark your calendars now and make plans to join us at one or more of the following 2015 Tiffin Allegro Club rallies! Our rallies provide you the opportunity for comradery with other Tiffin owners, repairs/service by Tiffin Service Techs & factory representatives, meals, entertainment, seminars, and other fun activities. The newest and lat-

est Tiffin coaches will be on display! Each year our rallies usually sell out so don't delay in getting your registration form to us. Give us a call at 256-356-8522 if you have any questions about the following rallies. **Registration forms will be available online at www.Tiffinsideroads.com just prior to opening dates of each rally's registration.**

Central Florida Fairgrounds, Orlando, Florida

Arrive March 23 & Depart March 27, 2015

Registration Opens at 12:01 AM CDT, October 1, 2014

Seven Feathers RV Resort, Canyonville, Oregon

Arrive June 8 & Depart June 12, 2015

Registration Opens at 12:01 AM CDT, December 1, 2014

Ceraland Park, Columbus, Indiana

Arrive August 17 & Depart August 21, 2015

Registration Opens at 12:01 AM CST, February 1, 2015

River Plantation RV Resort, Sevierville, Tennessee

Arrive September 21 & Depart September 25, 2015

Registration Opens at 12:01 AM CST, March 1, 2015

Rally Schedule is Subject to Change

For latest updates on rally and other Tiffin Allegro Club information, visit www.TiffinSideroads.com and enter your email address in the SUBSCRIBE box. You will promptly receive an email asking that you confirm your subscription. After you confirm, you will begin hearing from us once or twice per month.



Ceraland Park



River Plantation RV Resort



Seven Feathers RV Resort



Seven Feathers RV Resort

Keeping Kitty Safe During the Holidays

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

November and December bring many parties and yuletide cheer. Many who travel or live full-time in an RV will be going home for the holidays. If you travel with your cat, your pet will no doubt go home with you.

During this holiday time presents are wrapped and people are baking goodies. A Christmas tree is purchased and set up or an artificial tree is brought out. Many of you may receive flower arrangements or poinsettias.

Your feline friends are very curious and will inspect everything that is left out and will join you in the thick of things during your preparation. Some holiday items have the potential to harm your cat.

Ribbon, tinsel and string are used to mail packages and decorate the RV or house. Cats like to play with such items and often accidentally ingest what we call linear foreign bodies. If left untreated, these items can cause a blockage in the intestines, possibly cutting through the intestine and causing peritonitis. For the safety of pets and children, ribbon, string, and similar items should be put away as soon as you finish using them.

Another common problem for cats are the holiday flower arrangements that decorate the RV or house. Many of us use poinsettias for holiday decorating. The dangerous part of this plant is the sap that comes from broken stems which will cause skin irritation, and if ingested, will irritate the mouth causing profuse drooling, vomiting, and reluctance to eat. Poinsettia sap usually does not cause organ damage if ingested.

The more toxic plant in your holiday décor is the lily. If these are ingested, they can cause kidney failure. Many Christmas trees such as fir, spruce, or pine can be toxic to pets, so do not allow your cat to drink from the tree stand.

Mistletoe leaves and berries are toxic to cats, causing vomiting and heart problems. Holly leaves also cause vomiting and depression, but because of their prickly leaves are not often ingested. Christmas cactus will cause vomiting and gastrointestinal upset, so keep this plant out of reach of your feline friends. Chocolate has theobromine and caffeine which increases the heart rate and causes tremors and diarrhea. If taken in large quantities, it can cause death.

After that holiday meal, make sure your guests do not sneak a bone to your furry pet. Bones can cause blockage and may puncture the stomach or intestine, which might require surgical intervention. Bones should never be given to cats or dogs;

you are only asking for trouble. You must keep a watchful eye on your pet. Your guests might think giving them a little treat would not harm them, but it really could.

Guests during the holidays, a large Christmas tree with lights, and all the new decorations might be stressful to your feline friend. Having strangers over and the additional noise from conversations may create tension and confusion for your cat. Felines will feel safer if they are isolated in a room with a litter box and food and water.

Trying to maintain as much normalcy as possible during the holidays and carefully watching your décor will go a long way toward keeping kitty safe. Remember those Christmas tree bulbs and lights on the lower level of the Christmas tree are very tempting for our feline friends.

As the saying goes, "Curiosity killed the cat," and we do not want any of that.

Happy Travels,
John & Kay

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



Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, a 40-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.

In the Q&A text, we abbreviate "passenger side" as PS, and "driver side" as DS.

through a window that must be held up out of the way to allow your loved ones to escape as well as yourself. Please redesign the window with a latch at the top and the hinges at the bottom. When the emergency latch is opened, the window falls flat against the outside wall below the window.

A. J. Gutierrez
 Kenner, Louisiana

Dear A. J.,
 Egress windows are built for all of the Tiffin brands. If the window glass is large enough, it is equipped with red handle components and labels. The passengers can simply slide these windows open and then exit. The minimum opening size is 17" high x 24" wide.

If the glass in the window frame is smaller than 17" x 24", then the frame is hinged to get the minimum egress area. All of the windows are designed to be as flush as possible (outside frame versus inside frame). For this reason, none of the windows open 180 degrees. The maximum opening angle is 100 degrees. If these windows were hinged on the bottom, the hinged portion would stand out from the side of the coach and become a hindrance to egress. The windows could be redesigned to allow the hinged portion of the window to lay flat against the side wall when open. However, this would mean the hinged frame would stick out beyond the side wall several inches when the window was closed.

The hinged egress windows have red cam handles to keep them closed, but they are easy to open in case of an emergency. If the hinge were on the bottom of the window, the cam handles would be on the top of the window. The handles would then be concealed by the window treatment (valance, shades, curtains, etc.) and out of sight of the persons needing to egress. The window treatments would make it difficult to operate the cam handles. People of short stature may find it hard to reach the cam handles at the top of the window. With her knees in the seat of the sofa, a small woman would have a difficult stretch trying to reach both cam handles at the top of the window at the same time. In the same position on the sofa, the same woman can easily see and reach the cam handles on the bottom of the window.

Magnetic Shower Door Strips Not Strong Enough

I have a 2011 Allegro RED 34QFA. The magnetic strips on the shower door are not strong enough to hold the door closed. The slightest bump while showering opens the door and soaks the floor. Is there a better way to hold the door closed when the shower is being used? Thanks for your help.

Ross McIntire
 Yucaipa, California

Dear Ross,
 The door and the door jamb must align and fit flat against each

other for the magnets to hold the door closed. The problem may be corrected by adjusting the door to fit. We are not aware of an aftermarket latch that you could interchange with the original latch.

Electrical Problems in 2002 Allegro

After driving just over 400 miles from San Marcos to Bridgeport, California, I lost my 12-volt service in the coach. I traced it to the AC/DC connector and the two batteries for the coach. PROBLEM: My steps now work in the 12-volt switch's OFF position. I replaced the switch with a 3-pole ON/OFF switch from Radio Shack. With the 12-volt disconnect in OFF position and with the step switch in the OFF position, I can open the door and the step comes out. Shut the door and step goes in. Do both of them need to be replaced?

Charles C. Wood
 Lake San Marcos, California

Dear Charles,
 If the 12-volt disconnect switch seems to be working properly to turn the power on and off in the motorhome, that switch should be okay. The step switch also should turn the power off to the entry step in the off position. If it does not, then the switch is wired incorrectly or it is a faulty switch.

Screen Position & Awning Location on the Allegro 32CA

In my 2012 Allegro 32CA, the construction of the slide window over the dinette requires you to open the screen first in order to open the window. Is it installed correctly? The awning support is located in the middle of the passenger window. Is there a reason it was not shifted farther back? If the awning were moved back, the rear support would still be forward of the bedroom slide-out. I would appreciate hearing from you regarding these two concerns.

Gary Averhoff
 Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Gary,
 The screen and glass are correctly installed. If you reversed it with the screen on the outside, it would cause the screen to trap rain water when you are traveling and subsequently cause leaking.

The awning was moved forward to give the entrance door more coverage in bad weather.

Congratulations on 40th Anniversary with TMH

Danny, congratulations on your 40 years with Tiffin Motorhomes. You have done a fine job in answering owners' questions in Tech Talk. We have just sold our faithful 32-ft. Allegro. We were so sad to see it go. We traveled many miles in it and lived in it three months a year in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. We enjoyed South Texas and the Gulf of Mexico where there was

lots to do. We had many wonderful, safe, and trouble-free years with our Allegro. We sure miss it.

Joe & Virginia Spears
 Mineral Wells, Texas

Dear Joe & Virginia,
 Thank you for the nice compliment. Best wishes for a continued happy retirement.

A Little More Space in the Bedroom, Please

First, I would like to start by saying we love our 2014 Allegro 36LA. This is our third motorhome and we are glad we chose a Tiffin. My question to you is, which brand/model has more space in the bedroom area? This is a negative to us, especially as we get older. It is very tight on the sides of the bed and we wish the slide went out further. Would it be possible to build a PS slide-out for the wardrobe and TV? We are only in our fifties, but we plan on having a motorhome for many years to come.

Steven & Kelly
 Clermont, Florida

Dear Steven & Kelly,
 Your feedback is very useful to our designers. They deal every day with providing more space while keeping the price point competitive and attractive to our customers. In our floorplans that offer a king and queen size bed option, you will get more space around the bed when you select the queen size bed. And, most of the floorplans offering a king bed also have opposing slide-outs in the bedroom.

Erratic Air Pressure in 2000 Zephyr

I have a 2000 Zephyr in which the bottom air supply is giving me erratic readings. It will vary from 0 to 130 psi, occasionally flipping back and forth. After about an hour, it will stabilize and read exactly the same as the upper gauge. I believe I have good pressure; the brakes work fine and the air bags seem to be full. I don't feel in any danger, but I would like your professional input.

Willis Eadens
 Somerset, Kentucky

Dear Willis,
 The problem is probably the gauge itself. Before you go to the expense of buying a new gauge, you can check the erratic gauge by reversing the air lines to the gauges. If the same gauge continues to be erratic, you know you have a faulty gauge. If the other gauge becomes erratic, you have a problem in the line. I am guessing you most likely have a faulty gauge.

Running the AC Periodically During Storage

How often should we turn on the air conditioners during the four to six months we have our Allegro Bus in storage? We run

the generator and the AC every month for about one hour. Is that sufficient? We love our Bus!

Patrick & Joyce Heslin
Titusville, Florida

Dear Patrick & Joyce,
Your running time and frequency is sufficient. Good plan.

Repairing the Wiper Hoses

I have a 2013 Allegro RED. When cleaning the windshield this week, I noticed both wiper hoses were severed. I cut off a very small piece of the hose and took it to the local auto parts store. He sold me two 4-inch pieces of hose that fit snugly over the severed wiper hoses. I installed them as close to the fitting as possible. All for \$1.37 and they work great.

Curtis Atteberry
Arcola, Illinois

Dear Curtis,
Our thanks for coming up with a very good idea for the repair. And the cost was less than a cup of coffee! We have learned over the years that owners often come up with good solutions to maintenance problems.

Warranty Work Without an Appointment?

We bought our 2014 Phaeton 40QBH last January from La Mesa RV in Sanford, Florida. Obviously, returning to the dealer for warranty work is less than convenient. We rationalized the purchase from La Mesa in Sanford by the fact that Red Bay is about a day's drive from our home. We had planned to visit Red Bay in September as part of a trip to Atlanta for a wedding. We have several minor problems that need to be corrected while the coach is under warranty. I was shocked to learn that Tiffin no longer makes appointments and that all work is done on a first come, first served basis. I am sure our problems will only take a day or two to correct. Please advise Tiffin's management that your first come, first served policy should not apply to warranty work

and needs to be reviewed. We will have to rearrange our plans to accommodate your policy.

Today I used the battery switch for the first time to turn off the house batteries. I was very surprised to find that most of the electrical outlets remained energized, as did the microwave and residential fridge. Do I have a defective switch or is there more to turning off the batteries than using the switch?

Edward Goodwin
Mandeville, Louisiana

Dear Edward,
We realize our service queue is not a perfect system. We have struggled to create a system that is fair to everyone. When an owner arrives, we evaluate his or her service needs, separating simple repairs from the more difficult ones. Our AA Express Service – two teams working from their trucks – offer factory service right at your campsite, making repairs and correcting problems that do not require putting your coach in a service bay. If a repair needs to be done in a service bay, and will require three hours or less, we will put you in one of the Express Bays. Our other bays are specialized and designed to handle problems that may take one or more days. So you may be pleasantly surprised that your time in the Tiffin Service Center will be about what you would have expected under our previous system.

Turning the 12-volt switch off does kill the 12-volt power going into the motorhome. However, the appliances and electrical outlets are on the 110-volt circuit. To disconnect them, you must be unplugged from an outside power source and the inverter must be in the OFF position.

Yorkie Gets Under Bed When Slide Extended

We have a problem with our small Yorkie who goes under the bed through an opening when the slide is extended. He can also squeeze under the bed when the slide-out is closed. Is there a way to close

it off and still use the slide-out?

Millard & Pat Walck
Niagara Falls, New York

Dear Millard & Pat,
I cannot suggest a rigid closure that will not impede the functionality of the bed slide-out. I heard that one pet owner used a piece of the flexible shade material we use on our windows and installed snaps to hold it in place.

Position of Transmission Control on 2014 Phaeton 36GH

In my 2014 Phaeton 36GH, the down slope of the control deck to the left of the driver's chair prevents the driver from having a clear view of the transmission control. You must lean forward to see the read-out. Have you considered a change to the location of that mount? For those of us who already own one, is a machined metal shim to change the plane of the mount a possibility?

Mike Daly
Yorba Linda, California

Dear Mike,
The new wraparound dash on the 2015 Phaeton has a different slope that corrects that issue. There is not an aftermarket shim available at this time, but your idea is a good one.

Misaligned Catches on Closet Door

We were lucky enough to buy a 2014 Allegro 36LA. We love it. It's a great RV and the best designed RV of the four we have owned. We have a small problem I hope you can solve. The aft closet door (right side looking at the closet) has become misaligned. I have examined the upper hinge and have no idea how to make any adjustments so that the latch on the door and the facing will align. Any suggestions?

Lane Ramsdell
Harker Heights, Texas

Dear Lane,
Without seeing your coach, it sounds like the hinge has become warped or bent. It will need to be reformed or replaced.

Where Is the Front AC Sensor?

We have a 2012 Allegro RED 36QSA. I cannot locate the remote sensor for the front air conditioner. The sensor for the rear unit is in the bedroom ceiling and it works fine. The front AC thermostat is on the cabinet in the front slide-out. It is recording a higher temperature than what is actual and causes the front AC to run excessively. Other than this, we love this coach.

Thomas Hoffmeier
Gap, Pennsylvania

Dear Thomas,
The remote sensor should be in the living room ceiling close to a return air vent and a few feet behind the driver's seat. You could have a faulty sensor or a disconnect behind the thermostat.

Can't Find the Leak in 2010 Allegro RED

We have a 2010 Allegro RED 36QSA. There is an intermittent water leak under the PS galley slide-out. The water puddles on the floor in front of the galley cabinet but it is not leaking inside the cabinet itself. The leak seems to be connected to our use of the sprayer, but we cannot detect any leaks around the sprayer head or the hose itself. The local dealer and RV shop checked for water leaks from the refrigerator and sink faucets with no success. Any suggestions?

Carolyn & Mabry Dellinger
Conroe, Texas

Dear Carolyn & Mabry,
You have checked the obvious places. Check the drain lines to see if they could be leaking. It could be a very tiny leak that takes a little time to build up a puddle large enough to cause the water to run out in front of the cabinet.

The 2013 Allegro Breeze 28BR: Tires & DS Window Shades

I purchased my 2013 Allegro Breeze in February 2013. The Michelin tire book supplied in the bag of materials does not list the tires on the Breeze. I had a blowout

a few months ago and called for roadside assistance. After giving them the Michelin brand and tire specs, they told me the tire was not available from Michelin anymore and I would have to accept a tire made by Hankook, a South Korean company. Later I checked with two Michelin tire dealers

who both said the Michelin tire size that came on the Breeze was not meant for motorhome use. Can you explain this? I do know the Breeze rides a lot harder than other motorhomes I have owned.

Another concern is not having a powered shade on the window immediately

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on the driver's left side. When driving, you will sometimes need to pull the shade to cut out the glare from the sun. This cannot be done safely while you are driving. At the FMCA Rally in Perry this year, I tried without success to find a vendor who offered a powered shade for that location. As a safety factor, can you retrofit a powered shade for that location?

George Moyer

Myerstown, Pennsylvania

Dear George,
You were misinformed by the tire dealer. The Michelin tires on your Breeze are the same tires that we are using on the 2015 Breezes we are currently manufacturing. They are certified by Michelin for being the correct tire for this application.

Tiffin is now manufacturing a tension shade that you simply pull down and it holds the position at which you release it. With a slight tug, it rises back to its housing. Check with the Tiffin Parts and Service Center for lengths that are currently available. If the correct length is available, you will need a professional installation.

What Kind of Tile Is in the Allegro Open Road?

We have a 2011 Allegro Open Road 30GA and we absolutely love it. We are Canadian snowbirds who spend the winter months in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, and come back to Edmonton, Alberta, in the summer months. We really like the look of the vinyl tile flooring in the Allegro. Our residence in the summer months is a park model that we have to winterize just like an RV when we head south to Arizona. The park model has a thin sheet of vinyl that does not expand and retract well when we turn the heat back on during the months we are in Edmonton. We want to install in our park model the same vinyl flooring used in the Allegro. Could you check with your purchasing department and furnish us the specs and the name of a supplier? Does it install with a glue furnished by the vinyl's manufacturer? Does

it require a special sub-floor? Thanks for your help.

Janey & Bernie Semrau
Edmonton, Alberta

Dear Janey & Bernie,
The manufacturer is Tarkett in Florence, Alabama (formerly NaFco). Pattern: Aged Marble. Color: Yuma Clay QASM-436. Size: 16"x16". Phone: 888-639-8275. If Tarkett does not have it in stock, call Tiffin Parts & Service at 256-356-0261. Use our SAP #5013984. We may have some inventory.

Adding Aftermarket Lights Underneath the Coach

As excited new owners of our very first Tiffin product, a 2006 Allegro Bus, we are interested in finding out if it is possible to mount the LED lights underneath the coach for use at night while parked in the campground. If so, would you please provide instructions and guidelines on "how" to accomplish this task?

Karen & Dwayne McAbee
Fort Worth, Texas

Dear Karen & Dwayne,
With the introduction of LED lighting, this has become a popular add-on. We do not offer aftermarket product installations in our service center, but you should be able to find an RV service center that carries this product who will install it for you.

Adjusting the Slide-Out's Fit into Coach's Wall

We have a pre-owned 2007 Phaeton 40QDH that we bought last year. After a few short trips, we are very pleased with it. We have one problem and a few questions about proper operation.

The PS bedroom slide-out does not fit snugly to the coach's wall. There is a half inch of space at the top of the slide-out when it is fully retracted. The Newmar we owned earlier had only one slide-out, but I had no difficulty adjusting it to close correctly. However, all of the mechanisms

were visible on the Newmar. Can you tell me how to adjust this slide-out, or is this something that must be done in a repair facility?

The owner's manual indicates there are two drains on the fresh water holding tank. It takes a long time to drain 100 gallons through that one little drain when sterilizing the tank, so I use the pump a lot. Where is the second drain?

The owner's manual and the component manufacturers' info sheets indicate that the ignition key must be OFF and the parking brake set to operate both the auto leveling system and the slides. On our coach, we discovered that the ignition key has to be in the ON position with the brakes set both for both to operate. Is something wrong or unsafe with our coach?

Clyde Villar
Gonzales, Louisiana

Dear Clyde,
The bed slide-out on the 2007 Phaeton is adjustable from the inside. We recommend you take it to a Tiffin dealer for the adjustment.

There is only one drain for the fresh water tank. There is an error in the owner's manual stating there are two drains.

To use the auto-leveling system and deploy the slide-outs in the 2007 Phaeton, you should set the parking brake and move the ignition to the ON position.

Finding a Leak in Allegro Bay 34QDB Slide-Outs

We have a 2008 Allegro Bay 34QDB with the front engine diesel. We own a campground in New York and store our unit all summer. After the campground closes for the season we go south and live in it all winter. Last summer we stored it with the slide-outs closed and were surprised to find mushrooms growing behind the driver's seat in the crack between the carpet and the tile floor when we went to pack up and leave in October. We went all winter and did not find any water problems, but

we did not have much rain either.

This year I decided to leave the slides out. A few weeks later when I checked on the coach, I found the crack wet again. The floor is actually starting to rot along the edges. I can't seem to find anywhere that water is coming in. I have checked around the driver's door and all the seals seem to be intact. There is no moisture trail from the door to the crack. I thought the problem might have been from leaving the slides closed. But leaving them out this year has ruled out that possibility. Do you have any ideas?

Wayne Hampel
Saugerties, New York

Dear Wayne,
The water leak is most likely coming from somewhere along the roof line and running down the sidewall itself. Also check around the slide-out trim area to see if water is getting into the floor area at the front corner of the slide.

Sewer Gas Backing Up into My Motorhome

I have a simple solution to the sewer gas problem Michael Clagget brought to your attention in the July issue. I see many RVers who run their sewer hoses in a straight line to the in-ground connection using some sort of support system. If you leave the grey water valve open, sewer gas can back up into the RV. The solution is to create a U-shaped trap at the top of the hose before it runs into the sewer connection at ground level. BTW, I love your column!

Warren Holmes
Long Beach, Indiana

Dear Warren,
Thanks for your simple solution to a problem that bedevils a lot of RV owners.

Connecting and Disconnecting with 50-Amp Service

Your column is most interesting and I read it from start to finish in each issue of *RIS*. I have owned several pre-owned

coaches as well as several new ones, and can relate to many of the issues my fellow RV owners encounter.

This is not really an issue, but I am questioning why the surge protector would "kick on and off" while plugged into 50-amp shore power but when it was re-connected to 30-amp service no issues occurred. In one instance, 50-amp shore power would "kick off and on." So we camped using 30 amps. However, prior to leaving I plugged into the 50-amp service again and did not have any issues.

I did remove the surge protector cover and checked for a loose connection, and found none.

Jim Wright
Goldendale, Washington

Dear Jim,
It was probably a loose connection, not in the motorhome, but in the power service

that you were plugged into. It could have also been weak power on one leg of the 50-amp service. I would not be concerned unless it happened more often.

Suggestions for Improving Little Things on an Allegro 30GA

First: Units that have water in the slide such as the kitchen sink have a flex hose connected to the drain which moves back and forth as the slide traverses in and out. On my 30GA, the hose came loose from the drain receptacle. I put it back together with PVC adhesive and it failed again. Then I ran a long set screw through the receptacle and the hose for a positive lock. So far so good. I suggest TMH use this attachment method on your assembly line.

Second: Under the bedroom TV, there is a counter area that could accommodate a number of electrical items, but there

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is not an electrical outlet at the counter level. I suggest TMH consider adding an outlet in that area.

Third: There is no cross ventilation in the living room due to the emergency exit window that does not open. I suggest TMH install an emergency exit window that opens like the one in the bedroom. Does Tiffin have such a window that we could purchase?

Fourth: There is a TV outlet in the outside bay that we do use. However, only the antenna and cable feeds are available. How much trouble could it be to add another line and connector from the satellite circuit?

Thanks for listening. Little things mean a lot.

Todd Zeile
Indio, California

Dear Todd,
Thank you for the good suggestions. We will refer them to engineering.

At the time your coach was built, our supplier did not have a window of that size with a slide opening. Measure your window and send the specs to Tiffin Parts and Service, 904 Gates Rd., Red Bay, AL 35582; or call (256) 356-0261. I am reasonably sure one with a slide opening is available now. With regard to a line for the satellite feed, it definitely can be run to the basement location. But it will take some time and labor to create a concealed route to get it there.

Ford Ignition System Creating Problems on Allegro 28DA

I have a 2008 Allegro 28DA on a Ford chassis with an intermittent problem concerning some of the ignition activated accessories. At times when the ignition is turned on, there is no power to the backup camera, the control panels for the electric jacks, the slide-outs, and the electric mirrors. Turning the switch on and off a few times will usually get them working. All other accessories have power. I have replaced the ignition switch to no avail.

There is a 9-pin connector in the ignition switch wiring at the base of the steering column. Three are constant hot, five are ignition activated, and one is the starter feed. I have tested these when the items were working and when they were not, but in both tests all of the wires were working. It seems that the problem is not in the steering column. Is there a relay or some device which feeds these items, and if so, where is it located? The fuses for the camera and mirrors are in the panel on the top of the dash. The slide-out fuse is by the door, and the jacks have a breaker in the storage compartment. Can you help?

Michael Marcusky
Miami, Florida

Dear Michael,
Your problem is probably not with the Ford ignition, but with a solenoid that is activated when you turn the ignition on. The solenoid will be located in an electrical box in the basement bay in front of the entry door. The solenoid is activating part of the time, causing the items you mentioned to operate intermittently. That's why turning the ignition on and off causes the solenoid to finally activate. Replacing it should take care of the problem.

A Better Roof Vent for the Black & Grey Tanks

My wife and I own a 2012 Allegro Bus 40QXP. Since purchasing it in August 2011, we became full-timers. From the beginning, we frequently experienced black tank odors in the bath area when the tank was above 50 percent full. After examining the roof vents for the two tanks, I found they are essentially directional, designed to work when driving or if the wind is blowing from the front of the coach when parked. Winds from the side or rear of the coach can actually cause a build up of pressure inside the tanks, and thus create the odors.

To deal with this problem, I installed 360 Siphon Vents. Since installation two months ago, we no longer experience

odors in the bath area. The vents work regardless of the wind direction. I have no affiliation with the 360 Products Company. I simply found it to be a very effective product and wanted to pass my experience along to TMH and Tiffin owners.

Rex Gooch
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Rex,
Thanks for bringing this product to the attention of our owners.

Electric Element Not Working in 2003 Water Heater

Our 2003 Allegro's hot water heater appears to have an ON / OFF switch to electrically heat the water. However, when we turn it to ON, we get no hot water at all. We can only get hot water by using the propane. The ON / OFF switch is in a very difficult place to reach. Is there any easier way to determine if the electric element is still working? We bought the unit six months ago.

Sandra Vanover
Hamilton, Indiana

Dear Sandra,
Check to be sure you have 110v power going to the electric heating element in the water heater. If you do, change the heating element and the water heater should start producing hot water.

Norcold Refrigerator Creating Excessive Condensation

First, I want to tell you how much I enjoy your very informative section in the *Roughing It Smoothly* magazine. I recently purchased a 2007 Phaeton 36QSH. Anna and I have been enjoying it very much. This is the third Tiffin I have owned over the years. We have enjoyed the quality that was built into every one of them. However, there have been some minor annoyances.

The Norcold Model 1210 in this coach constantly produces large quantities of condensation on the ceiling of the refrigerator. It gets so bad that it drips on the floor. Norcold has been no help at

all. They just referred me to a service center that could not fix it. Have you or the technicians at the Tiffin Service Center encountered this problem before?

Lee R. Darbonne
Opelouses, Louisiana

Dear Lee,
Some of the Norcold refrigerators come equipped with a condensation switch on the inside upper back wall of the unit. If you have it, try experimenting with it on and off to see if it helps. Most of the time when there is excessive condensation, the door seal is not making good contact. To check it, take a dollar bill and close the door on it. See if there is stiff resistance all the way around the seal in the door. If not, the seal should be replaced.

Solenoid for Slide-Outs Operating Intermittently

I bought a 2005 Allegro Bay new and have loved using it and still do. This past March after camping in Texas for several months, the slide-outs quit working. The Tiffin Service Center told me to jump the solenoid which I did and got the slide-out closed. TMH Parts Dept. shipped a solenoid to the RV service center near where I live. When I returned the next day the original solenoid was working just fine, so I got the replacement and headed for home. Of course, it quit working on the way home, so I headed for Red Bay and had the Tiffin Service Center install it. The solenoid worked fine the rest of the month and during our April camping trip. When I started out last week, it failed to work until I jumped it. The rest of the trip the slide-outs worked fine and are still okay as I write this from home. Any suggestions about the intermittent functioning of the solenoid? It has become less than dependable.

Tom Cambron
Hendersonville, Tennessee

Dear Tom,
I don't know why the replacement solenoid failed again. For now, check the

wiring connections to the solenoid. If the connections are okay and it happens again, you may have a weak solenoid.

Dashboard Recommendations

I read the article with some interest about Jeff Margush, Tiffin's industrial designer. I own a 2012 Phaeton 42LH and overall am very satisfied with its design and performance. However, I think the driver's cockpit and dashboard could be significantly improved in the following ways:

(1) Make all of the displays face the driver's eyes. Many of them point upward or in such a way that the driver has to take his eyes off the road longer than necessary to read them. For example, the gear selection is impossible to read when the sun hits it.

(2) Move all of the displays up about a foot including the speedometer and tachometer so you don't have to stretch over the steering wheel to see them.

(3) Get the cruise control off of the turn signal lever.

(4) Make the dials larger and mark them clearly.

(5) A wraparound dash design would really help in the operation of these large coaches.

Thanks for listening.
Charles Esola
Valparaiso, Indiana

Dear Charles,
I think Jeff has been listening to our customers' suggestions. Most of your suggestions have been implemented in the redesign of the 2015 Phaeton dash. I hope everyone will be visiting their Tiffin dealer soon to evaluate all of the many changes throughout the new 2015 Phaeton, especially the new front and rear caps.

Upgrading the Design of a 2011 Allegro Bus

We had Tiffin build a new 2011 Allegro Bus 43QGP in early 2011. Much to our chagrin, shortly after taking delivery in May 2011, the 2012 Allegro Bus had a to-

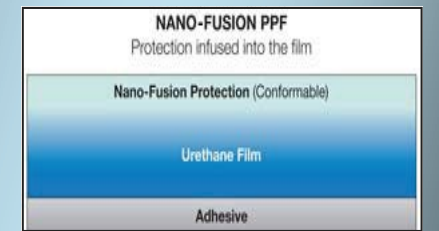


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tal redesign and look with a taller profile and integrated paramount awnings.

Is it possible for our 2011 model to be retrofitted with the new upper rail and awning design to give us the “built-in look” instead of the “add-on look.” If this can be done, can someone in the Tiffin Service Center provide an estimate for the work?

Thanks for your assistance. BTW, we really like our 43QGP and enjoy it throughout the summer as we spend our time up north. We live in Florida in the winter.

Bill & Julia Snyder
Lake Mary, Florida

Dear Bill & Julia,

We are sorry to disappoint you, but there is no practical way to make this upgrade.

Owner Wants to Modify Speaker System on JVC Radio

I purchased a 2014 Allegro 31SA last October. I have two questions about possible modifications to original items installed by Tiffin.

(1) Compared to the surround sound powered by the Panasonic system, the quality of the speakers in the cockpit area hooked up to the in-dash JVC sound extremely “tinny.” Despite making all possible adjustments on the JVC unit for bass and sound equalizer settings, I could not improve the quality of the sound.

The two speakers on each side at the ceiling level are covered by brown grill material. Does the front face pull off somehow? I am wondering if replacing the original equipment speakers with something that delivers better bass will solve the problem. Have other owners recommended retrofitting solutions? Is there a connection for a sub-woofer to

the in-dash system? Where would you recommend locating a sub-woofer with minimal disruption and wiring?

(2) The OEM black, grey, and fresh water monitor provides only a rough estimate to the true levels in the tanks. Is it possible to install the Garnet Liquid Measurement Solution (Model #714) and how does it configure with the existing panel used by Tiffin? Will there be wiring modifications that only a dealer or the Tiffin Service Center can do?

Dave McClure
Burke, Virginia

Dear Dave,

You can go through the adjacent cabinets to remove the side panels to the speaker boxes. There should also be a connection for the sub-woofers in the dash behind the JVC system. I would recommend installing the sub-woofer underneath the dash.

With regard to the 714 tank monitor, check with Garnet for an aftermarket dealer in your region who can install the system. The Tiffin Service Center does not retrofit this system.

More Information on Programming TVs and Satellite Receivers

See 11:1, page 62. “Multiple TVs in Coach Do Not Receive Same Channels.” With digital over the air televisions, each TV or converter must be reprogrammed, even if you only move 10 feet away. If the line of sight changes and the TV is receiving differently or only part of the signal, all TVs must be reprogrammed.

See 11:1, page 58. “Adding Features to 2013 Allegro.” Satellite receivers, 2 in 1, have small antennas on the receivers that get pushed down when cleaning or placing on top of the receiver. This causes

the receiver not to see the remote. BTW, thanks for solving my gas tank filling problem.

George V. Schrank
Roswell, New Mexico

Dear George,

Thanks for your input and explanations. It is obvious we are selling our motorhomes to some very tech savvy RVers.

Using iPod Files on the Allegro’s Kenwood Radio

We recently purchased a 2014 Allegro 36LA and we love it. I have read the instructions for the Kenwood Radio/CD player on how to connect my iPod model A1320. The instructions in the booklet and CD are not detailed enough. There are two USB plugs on the dashboard next to the Kenwood. Please provide more explicit instructions that will help me set up the connection with the iPod and listen to my recorded music.

Andy & Sylvian Flores
Richmond, Texas

Dear Andy & Sylvian,

At the beginning of the 2014 model year when we began using the Kenwood Radio/CD player, we overlooked the available wire for connecting the iPod A1320. There is a 2-foot lead with a USB plug on the end that comes out of the back of the radio. Slide the radio out to get to the wire. Then push it down through the back of the dash and allow it to lay in the tray in front of the cup holders. The tray will be a good place for the iPod while it is connected to the radio. If you prefer a more professional connection, order a dash mount plug from Triple-H Electronics (256-356-9005). The two USB ports in the dash are only for charging.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

A separate postcard is enclosed for “From the Road,” a fun part of the magazine for readers to share their motorhoming experiences. If you choose to email us at: fredthompson1941@hotmail.com, be sure to put “Roughing It Smoothly” in the subject line of your email. If your communication requires an entire letter, mail it to us at: PO Box 1738, Monroe, GA 30656-1738. Tell us about the interesting places you’ve been, an unusual experience, a great destination, or just a good place to camp and hang out. We welcome your pictures. Please attach high resolution images if you email. “From the Road” contributors will receive a free tee shirt while supplies last.

—Fred Thompson, editor

PRESIDENT'S CORNER *Cont'd from page 4*
 people so upside down anymore, and I hope we never get back to that because it hurt our economy for a long time.

For our part, though, we are going to stay with our Class A motorhomes and concentrate on what makes our customers happy. I think we do a better job concentrating on one basic product.

RVB: In your thinking, will the next generation buy into the so-called RV lifestyle in adequate numbers to continue to drive the industry's economic engine at its present level?

Tiffin: That's a big question. We sell a good number of motorhomes to people in their forties and fifties. We see more of that age group than we have in the past. When I first started, we were selling to WWII veterans, then Korean War and Vietnam War era guys. We still sell to a lot of folks who have had successful careers in the military. Great owners. We just have a great time with them and they do a won-

derful job for us, promoting our product.

But, along with having fewer military people percentage wise, this next generation is going to be a little different. I think they will camp, especially when the camping has been ingrained in them when they were little. I am basically optimistic about the long-term growth of this industry because people in this country want to travel, and, you know, there's so much of this country, you could spend a lifetime trying to see it and you would never see all of it.

RVB: On a personal level: you're obviously doing fine, so we are assuming we can expect to see you at the Hershey, Louisville, and Tampa shows for years to come?

Tiffin: Yes, I am 72, but I feel like I'm 55. I don't have any plans not to be at any of those shows for the next several years. So you might as well get used to seeing me around. **RIS**

THE ALLEGRO 32SA *Cont'd from page 14*
 the east-west rocking motion. "In strong crosswinds or mountain driving, the

summo springs will definitely stabilize the handling and the rocking motion," Jerry Williamson, general sales manager, noted. "If you are traveling on an older highway that has roller coaster hills, the springs will stop the effect that we call porpoising."

When Danny Inman, our Serious Tech Talk columnist, tested the Allegro 36LA two years ago when it was first introduced, he was very pleased with the coach's power and its ability to handle the steep hills in the northwest corner of Franklin County. The 32SA is three feet shorter and 2,000 pounds lighter.

Under cruise control (standard) on interstate when the 32SA relaxes in fifth gear, the cockpit is almost as quiet as one of Tiffin's rear diesels. In all candor, if you are in hilly country, you will have the transmission noise of the lower gears. However, to Tiffin's credit, they have done a very good job of using sound-deadening insulation around the engine. If you need a comparison, take a U-Haul

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with V-10 Triton engine for a spin.

The torque and acceleration of the V-10 is exceptional. Since I have recently driven the Allegro RED, Phaeton, and Allegro Bus, I would wager the V-10's take-off on an interstate ramp will match one of the diesels. It also has the extra power to move smoothly into passing lanes and get around slower moving traffic.

If the Allegro Open Road has caught your eye with all of its new standard and optional features, consider adding the optional Summo Springs when you place your order. After you take it for a test drive, I feel sure you will be pleased with the handling and performance of this coach. **RIS**

TIFFIN MANAGEMENT TEAM

Continued from page 55

Carolyn and I were impressed with the whole quart of pesto waiting to be added to the pasta. With a few deft moves over several fresh ingredients, Nick assembled a salad and invited us to get started while he finished preparing the pasta. Now we were very pleased that he refused our offer to take him to lunch!

After the delicious meal, we settled into big leather chairs in the rustic living room: high ceiling, a floor-to-roof window, a huge fireplace and chimney. I was thinking about how nice a quick nap would be, but it was time to talk about a very interesting 40-year career. Unfortunately, we missed the opportunity to meet Pam since she was working that day at the hospital.

Having just turned 62 in September, Nick Palm today is not the same guy I met 10 years ago, a rotund man who was much heavier. "I decided it was time to address obvious health issues. It is a matter of willpower. Today I eat half of what I used to eat. I walk three miles a day in 49 minutes carrying 2-lb. weights in each hand. Pam usually walks with me. We do at least 21 miles a week."

Nick and Pam both enjoy excursions on the Harley, but their annual ride supporting September 11 has a very serious purpose. "The 9-11 Motorcycle Ride is police escorted," Nick explained. "We begin in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. That, of

course, is where Flight 93 went down, killing 44 passengers and crew. The first day we ride 170 miles to the Pentagon where Flight 77 crashed into the western side of the building, killing 189 passengers, crew, and Pentagon employees. At 7 a.m. the following day, we ride from the Pentagon to the location of the World Trade Center in New York City. When we go through Washington, all the roads are closed.

"On the 10th Anniversary of 9-11, approximately 2,700 made the ride," Nick continued. "The participation fee is \$150 per bike. Our organization donates all of the funds to college scholarships for the children of policemen and firemen who lost their lives that day or died later from their injuries."

The Palms have traveled in Europe by motorcycle on several trips that took them through Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. "You just become so much a part of the country when you travel by motorcycle," Nick said. "On one trip we arrived in Frankfurt at 6:30 a.m. The planning for the trip was so well-coordinated that we were on our Harleys by 9:30 traveling on the Autobahn."

The Palms have two beautiful Springer Spaniels, Harley and Deuce, who are well-behaved and often curl up around Nick's desk in the basement of the couple's home.

Nick has a bucket list he is working on. "I want to visit and stay in all of the historic lodges in our national parks. I expect it to take several years to do all of them. We are not into that list very far because I enjoy working for Tiffin Motorhomes and have no plans to retire in the near future."

Nick is quite the collector, focusing on the lithographs of David Wright and George Losch, and primitive antiques that harmonize with their rustic home.

Both Nick's daughter Nicole (elementary school principal) and son Michael (an airline captain) are married and have children whom the grandparents are trying not to spoil. Nicole and Brad have Morgan, 7; and Michael and Angela have Elliot, 5, and Benjamin, 4. Nick and Pam took Morgan on a camping trip this summer, which may have set a precedent for future sum-

mer camping trips with the grands.

"It has been a great thirteen years working with Tiffin Motorhomes, I look forward to the future with this great company!" Nick said. **RIS**

NEWS YOU CAN USE *Cont'd from page 45*

Tiffin Service Center

The service center moved to its "first come, first serve" basis 18 months ago so that owners arriving without appointments would not continue to be pushed further back in the queue as owners with appointments arrived each day. "Those without appointments were sometimes waiting four to six weeks. We just needed to make sure that they were better taken care of," Humphres said.

Work completed at the Tiffin Service Center ranges from minor repairs to major damage caused by accidents. "We do everything right here," Humphres said. The Tiffin Allegro Campground offers full hook-ups, wi-fi, a laundry facility, and a parts store. A small number of overflow sites offer water and 50-amp service only with a dump station nearby. The campground office is open 12 hours a day. Two staff members provide assistance for those customers staying onsite so their time in Red Bay can be as enjoyable as possible.

NEWS YOU CAN USE *Cont'd from page 45*

Blue Ox Product Announcement

into a high performance chassis," said Kietzmann. "Used all together, this line of products will decrease driver fatigue. Even people that haven't been comfortable driving a motorhome may feel much more comfortable once they have our Chassis Performance Package installed."

For more information about the Chassis Performance Package and its elements (Sway Bars, TruCenter & TigerTrak), call the company's Customer Care Team (1-800-288-9289), or visit our website at blueox.com.

Blue Ox has announced a series of webinars to explain the Chassis Performance Package and their new Sway Bar line. For webinar dates, contact Sheila Vander Veen at sheilavanderveen@blueox.com.



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