

Boasting Nothing It. Smoothly[®]



IN THIS ISSUE

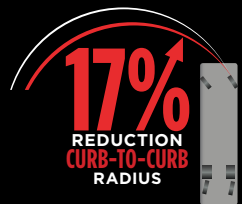
- The 2015 Phaeton 40QBH
- San Francisco
- Georgia's Golden Isles

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Roughing It Smoothly®

July 2015

Volume 12, Number 3

Roughing It Smoothly® magazine is published four times a year by Book Production Resources for Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc., 105 2nd Street NW, Red Bay, Alabama 35582. BPR offices are located at 1403 Cedar Point Way, Monroe, GA 30656. Printed in the United States of America. Periodical Postage Paid at Pewaukee, WI.

**Postmaster: Send all changes of address to Book Production Resources
1403 Cedar Point Way
Monroe, GA 30656.**

This issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*® has a printed distribution of approximately 24,000 copies, an online distribution of 43,000 copies, and a dealer distribution of 12,000 copies. It was printed by Quad Graphics, Inc., N63 W23075 State Hwy. 74, Sussex, WI 53089.

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22



36



42

SUMMER 2015 VOLUME 12 NUMBER 3

Departments

President's Corner	4	From the Road	41
Every Man Should Have a Hobby		On the Road with Dave & Terri	55
News You Can Use	16	Traveling With Your Pets	56
Connecticut Motor Cars & Coaches		Dealer Profile	58
Tiffin Allegro Club News	18	McPhail's of Harriston	
In the Plant with Jonathan	21	Serious Tech Talk	64
Owner Profile	36		
Deno's Wonder Wheel			

Cover: Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco
photographed by Ron and Patty Thomas

Features

- **The 2015 Phaeton 40QBH**
Still Number One — For 8 Years in a Row. *See page 5*
- **San Francisco**
A City You Experience. *See page 22*
- **Georgia's Golden Isles**
Cumberland Island. *See page 42*

Roughing It Smoothly circulation jumps to 78,000 printed and online magazines.

Over 24,000 Tiffin owners are now receiving *Roughing It Smoothly* through the U.S. and Canadian postal service. Over 42,000 are now reading *RIS* online. Our dealers are distributing 12,000 copies in their showrooms. *Roughing It Smoothly* is now in its 12th year and is the largest magazine published by an RV manufacturer in number of pages and total distribution.

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 ad-

dress 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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Please use a standard change of address card from USPS and send to *Roughing It Smoothly*, PO Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30655-1150. You may also change your address online by sending your email to risncoa@hotmail.com First, enter your old address as it appears on your magazine label (we must remove your old address before we can add a new one). Second, please enter your new three-line ad-

dress including the zip code. **We do not accept phone calls for changes of address.**

Serious Tech Talk

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

New Subscribers

If you have just purchased a new Tiffin motorhome, your name will be added to our mailing list automatically. If you purchased a pre-owned Tiffin motorhome, send the year, brand, length & floorplan, your name and address, and VIN to *Roughing It Smoothly*, PO Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30655-1150.

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Georgia's Golden Isles

Cumberland Island: First of a Three Part Series

Every Man Should Have a Hobby

by Bob Tiffin

My hobby is building motorhomes and trying to remember all of the details about the many floor plans that we build here in Red Bay. My sideline hobby is antique cars. Before a car can be called an “antique,” it must be at least 25 years old and recognized by the American Antique Automobile Association.

The cars that I enjoy the most are the pre-World War II automobiles and the cars built in the 1950s. The best automobiles built in the pre-war years, primarily the 1930s, were Packards. From 1932 until the war, Packard owned 55 percent of the total luxury car market in the U.S. They had more automobile-related patents between 1910 and 1941 than all of the other manufacturers put together.

One of the best patents was developed in 1936 and brought to market in 1937: Independent Front Suspension. That year Packard gained significant momentum in the market because of the driveability and

wonderful ride of its cars. Chrysler, Ford, General Motors, and Rolls Royce bought the patent rights, but they could not duplicate the quality of Packard’s IFS.

Many of you will recall the early standard suspension system used by Chevrolet, Ford, Dodge, Chrysler, and Plymouth. They were built on I-beam chassis with axles attached to the chassis like a truck. In 1954 after the 17-year patent expired, Ford, General Motors, and all of the Chrysler products started using the independent front suspension based on the design that Packard had patented.

Even today the IFS we use on the Allegro Bus is very similar to Packard’s 1937 design. We are using a German manufacturer’s version known as ZF independent front suspension. The “Z” in German sounds like “zed.” So it is called “Zed-F.”

The innovations automobile companies used years ago have worked their way into modern automobiles and even into the motorhomes that are being built to-

day. As a collector, one reason I like to restore, drive, and examine old automobiles is to get a sense of how the progression of innovation and changes have improved the performance of cars that are being built today.

I must say that during the decades of the 1950s, ’60s, and ’70s our domestic auto manufacturers struggled with their vehicles’ performance. It took the competition that both the Japanese and Germans brought to the U.S. to bring about what I call the auto revolution that we see today with respect to the quality and longevity of the cars now being built by U.S. manufacturers. When Mercedes, Nissan, Toyota and others introduced their technology to the U.S. market, our automakers had a tough time catching up with them.

However, now we can look back and say the competition was good for us. Over the last several years, I believe U.S. automakers have equaled or surpassed the foreign auto manufacturers in almost every category.

So, what has that to do with motorhomes? I have worked for years with the hope that we could produce motorhomes with the same quality as domestic autos, but I have finally concluded that RV manufacturers simply do not have the volume to develop the production technology to create the almost perfect product that we see in domestic auto manufacturing. To achieve that level of perfection would demand a unit price that would exclude most of the owners that we serve today.

We work extremely hard to build the best quality we can and we spend thousands of man-hours checking and re-checking all of our units before shipment. I must say that at the present time I believe we are building the best motorhomes we have ever built in our 43 years as a company. **RIS**



1940 Packard 160 Convertible Sedan Super 8, inline 8 cylinder engine with 160-hp. The car was owned by Danielle Steel and her third husband, John Traina. After their divorce, John acquired the car in the settlement. Through the maintenance and restoration specialist, Gerald Wuichet, Bob learned the car was for sale and purchased it on February 5, 2007. It is fully restored.

The 2015 Phaeton 40QBH



Phaeton: For 8 Years in a Row

THE BEST SELLING CLASS A DIESEL PUSHER IN NORTH AMERICA

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

We keep surprising ourselves, but Statistical Surveys provides the registration records every year. Tiffin's 2015 Phaeton for the eighth straight year is the number one Class A diesel pusher brand in North America. From 36 to 42 feet in length, you can take your pick from five floorplans. The 36GH is perfect for the couple who want to make their travels a twosome thing. The 40AH has a luxurious bath in the mid-section and a walk-in closet at the rear of the coach. The 40QKH is a family affair with an optional king bed for mom and dad, plus two full length bunks and a full hide-a-bed sofa for four children. The big 42LH with tandem rear axle offers the popular L-shaped sofa and provides enough cargo space to "take it all with you." The L-shaped sofa is available on all five of the Phaeton floorplans, standard on three and optional on two.

Last, and certainly not least in the Phaeton line-up, the 40QBH is running neck and neck with the 40AH as one of the two most popular coaches in the Phaeton

brand. In the 2015 model year, Tiffin for the first time offered a very desirable option for the Phaeton brand: a buyer can now order a Phaeton as an all-electric coach for \$8,120 MSRP. By selecting that option, the buyer automatically includes an induction cooktop and Aqua-Hot's hydronic heating for the coach and unlimited hot water for the galley and bath. Phaeton now offers heated tile floors, an option for \$5,075 MSRP that is becoming very popular. If you are dry camping, the 10kw genset makes it possible to cool the coach in very warm weather with simultaneous operation of the coach's three ACs, which are standard equipment on all of the Phaeton floor plans. Heat pumps are standard on the three AC units.

The Aqua-Hot, the induction cooktop, and heated tile floors are features that in previous years were only available on the Allegro Bus and the Zephyr. Now Phaeton buyers can choose all three options for about \$13,000 MSRP. Tiffin Motorhomes really works at staying one step ahead of the curve.



The Living Area in the 40QBH

With the slide-outs deployed, the living area in the 40QBH is a generous 12'3" wide by 21 feet long. The length of the living area divides evenly between the living room and the galley-dining room. The living room boasts single seats for three and a plush hide-a-bed sofa for three more, all designed and built by Flexsteel and upholstered in matching UltraLeather.

In its standard configuration, the 40QBH has opposing sofa beds in the forward sections of the DS and PS slide-outs. The standard UltraLeather DE (jack knife) sofa/sleeper on the driver side was replaced in the reviewed coach by the optional entertainment center that includes a 42-inch HDTV and an UltraLeather recliner with flip table (MSRP \$1,160). An optional electric fireplace (MSRP \$761.25) was selected for the lower half of the entertainment center cabinet. The standard floorplan fea-

tures a mid-section 38-inch HDTV mounted on the rear wall of the living area next to the refrigerator. Selecting the entertainment center with the 42-inch television eliminates the mid-section TV, replacing it with two handsome cabinets, the lower one capped with a solid surface countertop (SSCT), and each with three shelves.

After serving their purpose on the road, the driver and passenger chairs multi-task and rotate 180 degrees to become part of the living room. Of course, both of the Flexsteel monogrammed chairs have reclining backs, multi-position armrests, and a forward-rear tilt that puts you in just the right spot to make you comfortable. The passenger chair also has a leg lift. When traveling, the recliner tucks neatly into the wall between the entertainment center and the credenza for the optional dinette-computer workstation. But when you are in port, you





About 10 years ago Tiffin introduced the Dinette-Computer Workstation that found immediate acceptance by TMH buyers. Tiffin estimates at least 95 percent of motorhome buyers today have handheld, tablet, or laptop computers onboard that are used for business, communications, navigation, and entertainment. The workstation is centered in a handsome credenza that measures 18 × 72 inches and is capped with a SSCT. A 110v/USB 6-inch tower pops up from the credenza to serve the computer equipment. The 25 × 40-inch dining table/desk has a sliding cantilever mount that retracts to 24 × 25 inches when traveling. Immediately below the countertop, the north side of the credenza has a concealed tray for a full-size keyboard. Just below the keyboard, a double door opens to a larger slide-out tray for a printer. Under the dining table/desk, two doors hide 5.8 cubic feet of storage space. On the south side of the credenza, you will find two drawers (12w × 14d × 3h)* for office supplies and paraphernalia, plus a well-designed filing drawer with rails for hanging folders.

The storage compartments above the dinette, recliner, and television provide 14 cubic feet of storage, and there's another eight cubic of storage space in the mid- and bottom compartments of the credenza. Tiffin's Store-It-All™ guarantee is not just idle talk.

can slide the recliner's base out toward the middle of the room to provide the optimum viewing position for both televisions. Now you've got a "man cave" for watching two football games at the same time. By the way, the recliner rotates, reclines 60 degrees, and lifts your legs to a horizontal position.

The Dinette

The buyer has three choices for the dining furniture. The booth dinette has always been popular with families. In the evening, the table can be dropped down even with bench seats. The back cushions are placed over the table, creating a double bed for two children. If small children are not regular passengers, many couples select the U-shaped dinette with plush seating upholstered in luxurious UltraLeather. Both options have long, deep drawers under each seat.



The Galley

If you have shopped Class A motorhomes in the last five years, you already know that the galleys in Tiffin coaches usually win the competition hands down for functionality and appearance. The English Toffee Fabric Suite in the living area has a very light and airy attractiveness, made apparent by the light buff dash encasement and the porcelain floors as you enter the coach, and then with major contributions from the off-white ceiling and solid surface countertops of the galley and dinette. Including the expand-an-island, the galley's countertop work space measures 23 square feet. The galley's handmade, 18-inch high, decorative backsplash is first class. When the covers for the induction cooktop and the double sink are in place, plus the island pull-out, you have the perfect place to spread a generous buffet. Three 110v GFCI protected outlets are mounted in the backsplash to service your electric appliances.

When the galley is in operation, the chef will enjoy the double eye induction cooktop that comes with a four-piece ferrous magnetic cook set. Other pots, pans, and skillets will work if a magnet will stick to the bottom of the container in question. Induction heat will cook your food more quickly and evenly. It will take preparing a few meals to become accustomed to its characteristics, but most cooks refuse to go back to propane.

When you are traveling this summer and have the opportunity to visit a farmers market, you will really appreciate the two big stainless steel sinks for cleaning and washing your fresh veg-

*Drawer measurements in inches: w = width across the front; d = measured front to back; h = inside vertical depth of the drawer.



etables. The big extension sprayer on the gooseneck faucet will put the water right where you want it. A rack hidden at the end of the galley's cabinet conveniently stores the sink covers.

Three more appointments in the galley bring it to the A+ level: the residential size Sharp Carousel Sensor Microwave Convection oven, the Fisher & Paykel drawer-type dishwasher, and the 20 cubic foot residential size refrigerator-freezer with a water/ice dispenser through the door and individual settings to monitor the fridge and freezer. The microwave convection oven and the refrigerator are standard equipment and the dishwasher is optional at \$1,377.50 MSRP.

Although the microwave oven has a vent just above the cook-

top that exhausts cooking heat and odors directly to the outside, TMH exhausts the air faster with a full-featured Fan-Tastic vent in the ceiling. The fan is bi-directional and has a thermostat with a warm-to-cold color scale. You can experiment and use it like an attic fan in your stationary home to pleasantly cool the coach on warm summer nights. If the night air gets too cool, your selected color setting will turn the fan off. As noted, you must use the color scale to find your comfort level.

A galley is not an efficient galley without planned storage. Over the sinks, you will find 6.8 cubic feet of cabinet space. Measuring 27.75 × 18.5 × 5, a slide-out tray has full extension to let you see what is in the back of your cabinet. Above the tray is a



33.5 × 18.5 adjustable shelf. To the left of the oven you will find a second cabinet with a slide-out tray and adjustable shelf (3.3 cubic feet).

Under the SSCT you will find another world of storage in the cabinets. The expand-an-island has a three-drawer stack with each drawer measuring 10.25 × 25.75 × 2.5. Under the dishwasher, the pots and pans drawer can store the entire four-piece set. Under the double sink, the owner gets a bonus of nearly nine cubic feet of storage capacity. To the right of the sink, you will find another three-drawer stack with one already sub-divided for your table service.

Before we leave the living area, I must point out the deep PS cabinets over the hide-a-bed sofa (16.7 cubic feet of storage space) and the double slide-out pantries next to the refrigerator. Again, the Store-It-All™ guarantee! No other Class A manufacturer has matched Tiffin's carefully planned and attractively concealed storage compartments throughout the coach.

The Décor in the 40QBH

All of Tiffin's six brands offer the opportunity for buyers to personalize the interiors of their coaches with three to six wood finishes and three interior Fabric Suites. The 40QBH that we are reviewing in this issue has the English Toffee Fabric Suite and the English Chestnut wood finish. A light buff porcelain tile used throughout the coach is standard in all of the Phaeton floorplans for 2015.

In many competing brands, the valances and the fascia for the slide-outs are rather plain. In a Tiffin coach the fascia and valances usually set the tone for the décor. The 2015 Phaecons reflect a distinct art deco influence with decorative flares in wood reminiscent of New York City's Chrysler Building. The lighting fixture above the dinette and two sconces on either side of the PS window also reflect the Art Deco design.

Tiffin offers five to eight full-body paint schemes in each of its six brands. TMH's eight-step, full-body paint system features premium grade BASF paints sealed with four layers of super-

clear coat with ultraviolet protection. A scratch resistant coating by Diamond Shield is applied by hand to the coach's front cap, stairwell, and an area surrounding the entry locks.

Lighting

Several years ago Tiffin made the move to LED lighting. With obvious planning, lighting is both general and specific. Barrel lights are positioned in sufficient quantities to provide a general, even lighting throughout the living area. Then you will notice and put to good use the specific lights placed over the sofa, recliner, passenger and driver chairs, and dinette for reading and dining. Task lights are carefully placed over the galley for the chef's benefit. The 5 by 11-foot tray ceiling bordered by elegant hardwood molding is a touch of class. Within the tray, a 2.5" drop ceiling creates a recess for soft indirect lighting that is perfect for watching a movie.

In the bath and half-bath, several barrel lights provide general lighting, but touch the VANITY switch and you get bright lighting for shaving or applying makeup.

Exterior and entry lighting is important, too. As you touch the ENTRY UNLOCK on your key fob, you will get headlights and an entry light over the steps, plus two entry lamps in the stairwell and a LED ceiling light. The outside lights go off in 30 seconds and the interior ones have a switch on the lighted display to the left of the stairwell.

If you enjoy summer evenings on the patio, the LED lights for the porch, door, and awning will illuminate the area for a late cookout or card games on the picnic table.

Touch Switch Panels

Lighted touch panels with six to 12 switches in each panel are custom designed for TMH coaches by Spyder Controls Corporation. Each switch is backlit in blue but turns to white when activated. A "Panel Lights" switch can deactivate the back-lighting feature for the evening if desired.

A panel mounted near the middle of the coach uses a b/w screen to display the fluid levels in exact percentages for the fresh, grey, and black tanks. The touch switches in the same panel take care of extending and retracting the rear PS and DS bedroom slide-outs, the AquaHot heat sources (electric or diesel), and the lights for the bedroom.

Wall mounted in the half bath, the Spyder panel uses a b/w screen to display the temperature setting for the heated floors and the floor's current temperature. Touch switches activate the overhead and vanity lights, the exhaust vent's fan and lid, the water pump, and the panel lights. Other panels in the coach control similar lights and functions.

The Entertainment Center

The technology for the entertainment center is located in a louvered cabinet just below the bedroom television. The LG Smart+ TV using the system's Launcher Bar will allow you to select programming from Today, Netflix, Hulu Plus, Amazon,

Facebook, YouTube, Skype, M-Go and more. You can switch back and forth between apps, movies, and TV shows using the Launcher and its quick, nimble interface.

Input includes data discs, USB devices, MKV playback, external HDD playback, and Blu-Ray 3D discs. Stereo surround sound output in the living area emanates from four speakers in the ceiling and a sub-woofer concealed in the floor of the credenza. The LG system is certified by the Digital Living Network Alliance. The DLNA certification makes it easy to set up your home and coach networks to share and stream photos, music, and movies. For more information, see DLNA in Wikipedia. The LG entertainment system also permits recording current programming and playing it back at your convenience.

The television itself, an LG ULTRA HDTV 4K, displays 8.3 million pixels, making the resolution four times that of full HD. The television uses a revolutionary technology called OLED (organic light-emitting diodes). Unlike traditional, synthetic LEDs (light-emitting diodes), OLED uses an organic substance that glows when an electric current is introduced. This revolutionary material is part of a new design approach that drastically reduces the thickness and weight of the TV. The light passes through a combination of filters to reproduce spectacular

high-definition images. LG utilizes this technology to produce big-screen sizes up to 77 inches diagonal with the same clarity as a 42-inch.

Solar & Privacy Shades

In the 12 years that we have been publishing the magazine and writing reviews of Tiffin motorhomes, the solar and privacy shades have improved a couple of light-years in technology and materials. In fact, we didn't even call them solar and privacy shades 12 years ago. They were called day-night shades, curtains, and sun visors.

Today the individual solar and privacy shades covering the windshield can be adjusted at the touch of a toggle switch on the dash. They operate in tandem to allow you to use the opaque privacy shade as a sun visor near the top of the expansive windshield and the solar shade to move a little lower to reduce the glare. If you are driving directly into the evening sun, you can bring the opaque privacy shade as low as safety permits. At night the privacy shade lowers all the way to the dash.

The solar and privacy shades for the side windows in the Phaeton's cockpit can be raised or lowered by a quick tug on the bottom rail of the shade that releases a tension spring. A second tug will make the shade stop wherever you wish. When you are traveling, position the side shades about 10 inches above your head

so you can easily reach them for adjustment while you are underway. The shades in the living area, bedroom, and bath operate with the same ease to bring into the coach the amount of light you wish to have.

Heating And Air Conditioning

The Extraordinaire™ AC system in TMH coaches is enhanced by a state-of-the-art heating and cooling method developed by Tiffin engineers. Modeled on the residential technology of moving air, the system uses directional registers and return air vents placed on opposing sides of the ceiling; cooled air through the duct work on the PS side and return air through the vents connected to the DS ducts. This keeps air moving in a circular pattern to maintain the desired interior temperature.

All of the Phaeton floor plans except the 36GH utilize three roof-mounted 15,000 BTU air conditioners with heat pumps. When the temperatures drop to the mid-30s and 40s on cool mornings, you can utilize the campground's power to warm your coach. When the temps really drop, Aqua-Hot's hydronic heating uses tubing to run hot liquid into heat exchangers that disperse heated air into the living areas. Operating quietly and fume free, the system maintains an even distribution of warm air without creating hot and cold spots in the coach. With po-





table water running through them, coils wrap around the boiler to supply unlimited hot water to faucets and appliances in the coach.

The Half Bath

It is amazing what an architect can do with a small space. The footprint of the half bath is 36.25 × 40.25 inches, and yet it is perfectly appointed to make the occupant feel very comfortable. In colonial days in Williamsburg, Virginia, many of the outdoor toilets were attractive structures they called “necessaries.” It’s only been seven years since a half bath was first introduced on the 2009 Zephyr. Today, five of Tiffin’s six brands have one or more floor plans with a half bath. In the Allegro Bus, four of the five floor plans have a half bath. It certainly has become a “necessary.”

This necessary has a one-piece SSCT integrated with an oval molded lavatory boasting a Pfister single lever brushed chrome faucet and soap dispenser. Matching those in the galley and full bath, a 15.5" backsplash surrounds the



corner lavatory on both sides. The corner toiletries cabinet with mirrored door is brilliantly lit with six recessed vanity lights. The corner cabinet is flanked on both sides with shallow-depth, double-door cabinets designed for smaller bathroom items. Under the lavatory, you’ll find another cubic foot of storage space. On the south wall below the SSCT, a large recessed magazine/newspaper rack could turn the necessary into a library. Above the rack is a brushed chrome towel bar. A 3-speed exhaust fan is controlled by dual wall switches for the lid and the fan.

The Master Bedroom

King size beds are one of the most popular choices made by Class A motorhome buyers in today’s market. Tiffin has responded by making the king preference available in four of the five Phaeton floorplans. The optional Sleep Number king bed (MSRP \$1,450) was selected for the reviewed coach.

With the slide-outs extended, the bedroom measures 11'9" east-west and 8'3" north-south. End tables on each side of

the bed are 10 inches wide at the front and 36 inches deep. Both sides of the tables facing the bed have 18 × 14 inch book/magazine compartments. Each end table has a double USB port, 110v service, plus a front-facing enclosed compartment. The headboard carries the art deco theme with flared hardwood surrounding a padded UltraLeather centerpiece. Valances frame screened windows in the sidewalls of the bed’s slide-out. A 2-speed ceiling fan is controlled by a Spyder panel conveniently positioned in the slide-out’s sidewall. The panel also has switches for the bedroom, the front door light, a master switch for turning off all of the lights in the coach, and a panel light switch. Reading lamps are wall-mounted on both sides of the bed.

As you have already discovered in every room in the coach, storage compartments are plentiful. Tiffin begins with over 13 cubic feet of storage space in the slide-out above the head of the bed. For items used less frequently, you will find nearly 10 cubic feet of storage space under the bed. The mattress lifts and sus-



pendents easily supported by two air struts.

Designed primarily for clothing storage, the multi-functional PS bedroom slide-out houses two 37-inch wide chests, each with solid surface countertops. The 30-inch high chest under the window offers two large drawers that are 32 × 11 × 7. Over the window, a double-door cabinet that is nine inches deep conceals 2.25 cubic feet of storage space.

The 44-inch high second chest is the residence of the coach's entertainment system. A double louvered door conceals LG's electronics and the DirecTV receiver (subscription required), both of which are standard equipment on Tiffin coaches. Under the technology compartment, Tiffin included two more clothing drawers (14 × 11 × 7) and a clothes hamper (1.7 cubic feet).

The Master Bath

Here is where Tiffin's all-electric motorhome really shines: Aqua-Hot for unlimited hot water and heated floors for a pleasantly warm bathroom. There is nothing that can beat a long, hot shower with no fear of running out of hot water. And especially when you can now step out of the shower onto heated floors. Aren't we spoiled?! Aqua-Hot's hydronic heating system is quiet, providing an even temperature throughout the coach.

Rear baths in many brands are still squeezed into tight spaces. This one really stretches: eight feet east-west and seven feet north-south. When I first walked

into this bath, I knew it would be a lady-pleaser. The vanity's SSCT itself is huge. From the NE corner of the coach, it measures 49 inches on the DS and 34 inches E-W. As you can see from the floorplan, you walk into the rectangle, but the vanity top area is still very large.

Each of the three cabinets above the vanity have mirrored doors, plus a fourth mirror mounted on the wall housing the washer/dryer cabinet. You can see yourself coming and going, front, back, and sideways. Ladies will enjoy the LED vanity lights just above the mirrors. Benefiting from the depth of the corner, the storage space in the vanity cabinets is enormous, totaling over nine cubic feet.

The vanity cabinet immediately under the lavatory opens to seven cubic feet of corner storage space in just the right place for bathroom cleaning products and the several products needed for the washer and dryer. To the left of the lavatory cabinet, a stack of three drawers (6 × 17 × 5.5) are positioned for a wide assortment of bath items. On the right side of the cabinet door, a second hamper and drawer were purposely located next to the washer.

The closet extends 58 inches across the back of the coach, enclosed by two sliding doors with 24 × 54-inch mirrors. The interior is 21 inches deep and 63 inches top to bottom. The DS wall has a screened window between the closet and the shower, under which is the macerator toilet. A small double-door cabinet above the win-



dow is perfectly located for storing small bathroom items.

Tiffin's SSCT department has perfected making the lavatory bowl and the countertop one smooth piece. There are no countertop ledges over the lavatory that collect residues. Tiffin selected Pfister brushed chrome hardware for the single lever faucet, soap dispenser, two hand towel rings, and two towel bars. An Ikea 4-bar rack is mounted between the shower and window for washcloths or drying

items that should be washed by hand.

Equipped with a large handheld adjustable shower head, the elliptically shaped shower stall is 43 inches across and 30 inches between the ovals. The oval Plexiglas sliding shower door is cleverly designed to keep the water inside the shower stall. When we are parked in a wooded campground, I always get a kick out of looking through the shower's skylight at the upper story of the trees. A second full-featured Fan-Tastic vent in the bath-

room quickly exhausts the steam from the shower, preventing mirrors from fogging.

Tiffin uses the Splendide washer and dryer exclusively in its motorhomes. It is so convenient to run and dry a load when the equipment is right there next to your bedroom and bath. With all of the many other features of this Phaeton 40QBH, the well-designed bath and a half with washer and dryer really make this coach a full-timer's dream at a price point that is very attractive.



The Cockpit

The dash as well as the front and rear caps were completely redesigned for the Phaeton's 2015 model year by Jeff Margush, Tiffin's automotive designer. The individual curved hoods over the three main combination gauges are the most prominent feature. Using white type against a black background, the center gauge displays the MPH/KPH. The left gauge presents the RPM in the top half, with the fuel, DEF, and battery in the

lower half. The right gauge is quartered for front & rear PSI, oil pressure, and coolant temp. The Info Center collects and presents monitoring data for all of the coach's systems in large, easy-to-read type. When necessary, System Alerts in panels on both sides of the Info Center will appear in bright colors with a repeating tone that you can't ignore.

With safety as the key factor in the design, several controls are located in the steering wheel at thumbs reach. Cruise

control and the dimmer switch are positioned on the left side of the wheel. On the right side you will find the windshield wiper/wash controls and the ICC switch.

Moving to the left side of the steering column, you will see two banks each with three toggle switches. The first bank has the headlights/parking switch, the fog lights, and the bright/dim switch for the dash display. The second bank has the engine preheat, auxiliary start, and pedal height adjustment.

The controls in the left console under the DS window begin at the front with the parking brake, the Allison transmission gear selector at your fingertip position, and the controls for adjusting the outside mirrors. By using the air horn toggle, you move from an automotive strength to a truck strength horn when you press the center of the steering wheel. Next to the air horn toggle, you will see the exhaust brake, easily accessed when you need it for mountain driving or expedited speed reduction. The driver is favored with two cup holders, one in the left console and another in the center console drawer under the HVAC dials. When you are in your campsite, you can kneel across the seat and use the HWH leveling system, which provides automatic leveling although it can be used manually for adjustments.

In the dash to the right of the steering column, TMH has positioned eight toggle switches easily reached without



Flexsteel sets a high standard for excellence in the design, functionality, and comfort of the driver and passenger chairs.

having to take your eyes off the road. From left-to-right, you will see the STEP CVR, DRIVER FAN, SOLAR SHADE, NIGHT SHADE, GEN START, MAP LIGHT, DOCK LIGHT, and RADIO. Two 6-inch fans mounted in the upper corners of the windshield help with defrosting the large glass expanse and can also be turned to cool the driver and passenger. Sometimes moving air feels better than AC.

With speakers at ceiling level on the left and right, the AM-FM RADIO-CD with DOLBY STEREO will keep you entertained while traveling. The radio is XM-ready with a six month free trial subscription. The in-motion satellite (subscription required) can bring in TV programming for the mid-section television.

To the right of the radio, the camera monitor with a color display keeps the driver alert to traffic on both sides and the rear of the coach. You can split the monitor display for views of both

sides or rear and side at the same time. The automotive heating and cooling controls are located just below the monitor. Eight air vents are located at both dash and floor level. As the dash curves toward the stairwell, three outlets for USB and 12v electronic devices are available. On the PS of the dash deck, a slide-out box is handily positioned for storage of receipts, note pads, etc.

The passenger side of the cockpit is integral to the coach's operation. The top of the console at elbow level has toggles for the PASSENGER FAN, STEP COVER, and MAP LIGHT. Built as a part of the console, but facing the stairwell as you enter the coach, a 12-position Spyder panel allows occupants to control the ENTRY LIGHTS, OUTSIDE DOOR LIGHT, PORCH LIGHT, INSIDE MAIN CEILING LIGHTS, CARGO LIGHTS, ROAD LIGHT, and the DOOR AWNING. Two additional switches allow you to turn on/off the 12v battery system and the exit step.

Driving the 2015 Phaeton 40QBH

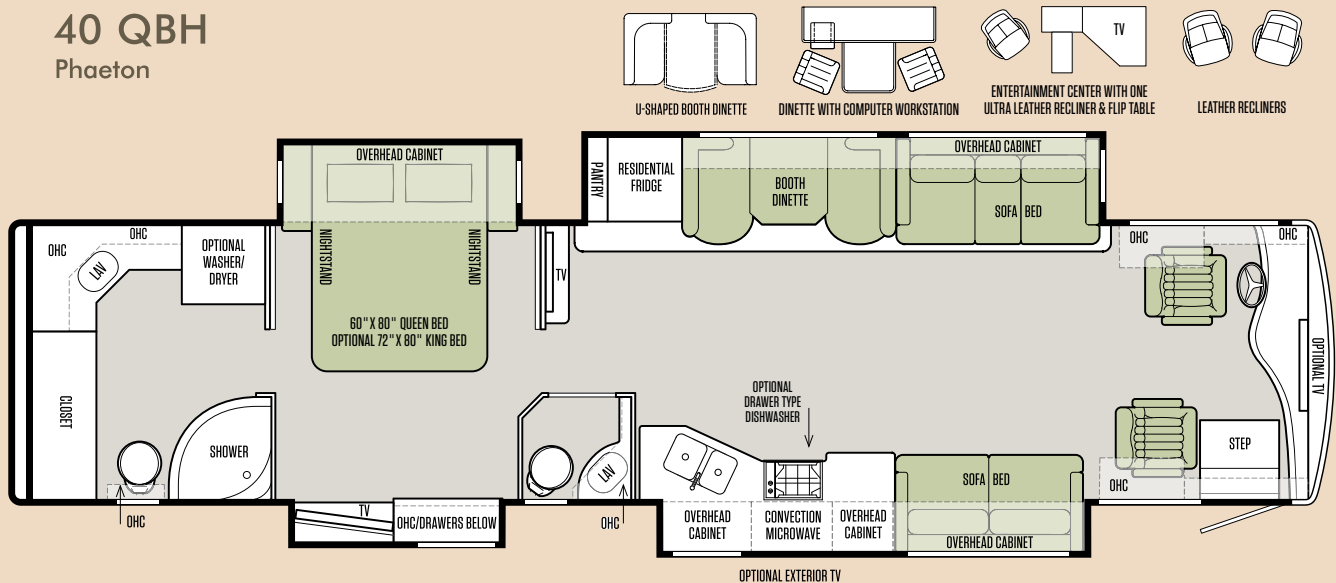
The 2015 Phaeton can attribute a large part of its success to its comfortable ride and pleasurable driving experience. Those assets depend on three companies: Freightliner, Tiffin, and Flexsteel.

As reported in last year's evaluation, the engineers at Tiffin Motorhomes and Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation work closely to assure that 40 percent of the coach's weight is on the front axle. Major components have been moved forward in the chassis to counter the enormous weight of the engine, transmission, and rear axle. With tuned shocks and tested inflation of the coach's four air bags, the passengers receive a firm and very comfortable riding experience. Flexsteel has stepped up to the plate and built 8-way adjustable driver and passenger seats that perfectly address every point of contact on the human body. After eight hours of driving, you will still look forward to a nice evening of dinner and entertainment.

Cummins turned up the torque a notch last year and continues with its excellent power plant in 2015. The 2013 Phaeton ex-

celled using a 380-hp, ISC 8.3L diesel with 1,050 lbs-ft of torque. The current engine has a 380-hp, ISL 8.9L diesel with 1,150 lbs-ft of torque. You can be sure that it made quite a difference. Still mated with Allison's 3000MH 6-speed automatic transmission, the take-off is several seconds better from a standing start on an interstate ramp. I was never disappointed with the coach's power and handling on interstate highways as we moved in and out of commercial traffic. It cruised smoothly at 70 and handled four percent grades with downshifting that was imperceptible.

It's easy to listen to music in the quietness of the cockpit. The Phaeton's suspension system and its insulation do a good job of absorbing noise created by the roughness of some types of pavement. While contemplating the possibilities, take an afternoon and visit your dealer for a test drive to see if my descriptions of this great coach still ring true when you are under the wheel. There's nothing better in RVing today than roughing it smoothly in a Tiffin. **RIS**



SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2014 Phaeton 40QBH, Quad Slide Base MSRP* – \$294,640. MSRP as tested with options – \$322,480

STANDARD FEATURES ON THIS COACH

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

Automotive
Freightliner raised rail chassis frame
Allison 3000 MH six-speed automatic transmission with lock-up (torque converter)
Cummins 380hp, ISL 8.9L, electronic/turbo-charged diesel with 1,150 lbs.-ft. torque
Air ride (4 air bags)
Aluminum wheels
55° wheel cut
Air brakes with automatic slack adjusters and ABS disc in front
Exhaust brakes
Adjustable accelerator and brake pedals
18-inch VIP steering wheel
Cruise control
Fog lights
Daytime running lights
Emergency start switch

General Exterior
Fiberglass front & rear caps
Dual fuel fills
Large tinted one-piece windshield
10Kw Onan® manual slide-out generator
Hydraulic automatic leveling jacks
Heated power mirrors with integrated cameras
Three power roof vents with 3-speed fans
Single motor intermittent wipers
Gel-coat fiberglass walls
BASF full-body paint with protective film on front cap
Foil wrap insulation barrier
Deadbolt front entrance door
Double electric step
Dual pane windows
Exterior patio LED light
Automatic door awning
Metal wrapped automatic patio awning
Window awning package (3 windows)
Slide-out covers
Aluminum wheels
Custom mud flap
Lockable swing-out storage doors with gas shocks
Motion sensor lighting for exterior storage
Remote locking system for entry door
Chrome handles on compartment doors
Flush mounted & painted frame dual pane windows
Roof ladder
Electric hose reel
Electric power cord reel
Docking lights
Back-up camera
Side-view cameras activated by turn signals
Heated water and holding tank compartments
Six 6v auxiliary batteries
2000 watt sine wave inverter with 100 amp converter & transfer switching
Black tank flush system
Water filter
Gravity water fill
Undercoating
110v exterior receptacle
110v / 12v converter
Digital TV antenna
Pre-wired for in-motion or automatic satellite dish
Cable TV ready hookup
Three 15,000 BTU low profile roof A/C systems with heat pumps
A/C condensation drains

Driver's Compartment
Power UltraLeather™ driver and passenger seats with passenger footrest
Contemporary wraparound dash
Courtesy drawer in step well
Courtesy lights in step well
Dual dash fans

One drawer in dash with compartment and sliding cup holder
One 12v dash receptacle
Single CD player & AM/FM stereo, XM satellite radio prep (requires subscription) including receiver and antenna
Three USB dash receptacles
Computer slide-out tray in PS dash with lock-out rails
Power solar & privacy windshield shades
Driver & passenger solar & privacy shades for side windows
Solid non-opening PS window
Custom infrared repeater system on all TVs
Solar / privacy shades for driver & passenger side windows
Color rear vision monitor system with side-view cameras activated by turn signals
Seatbelts integrated into driver & passenger chairs
Fire extinguisher

Living Area / Dinette
UltraLeather™ booth dinette/sleeper with laminate tabletop and solid surface edging
12v, 110v, & USB receptacles at dinette
Mid-section 38" HDMI-LED color TV, surround sound
UltraLeather DE Sofa/Sleeper-PS
UltraLeather DE Sofa/Sleeper-DS

Kitchen
Solid surface counter top with residential stainless steel sink
Solid surface sink covers
Sink cover storage rack at side of cabinet
Expand-an-Island
Permanently mounted folding solid surface cook-top cover
Single lever sink faucet with sprayer
Built-in soap dispenser
3-burner stainless steel cooktop
Stainless steel convection/microwave oven
Exterior vent for convention/microwave oven
Galley backsplash guards
Stainless steel residential refrigerator (6 batteries) with ice & water dispenser in door
Built-in soap dispenser
Built-in waste can (not available with dishwasher option)
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan

Full Bath
Three medicine cabinets with large mirrors over vanity in full bath
Solid surface vanity top with molded lavatory
Medicine cabinet over toilet
Macerator toilet with sprayer
Skylight in shower with LED light in sliding solar cover
10-gallon DSI gas/electric water heater
Curved molded fiberglass shower surround
Hand-held shower head with on-off switch
36" radius shower surround
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan in full bath
Closet with double sliding mirrored doors
Storage cabinet wired & plumbed for washer/dryer

Half Bath
Medicine cabinet in corner over lavatory with two side cabinets
Six vanity lights
Solid surface vanity top with molded lavatory
Toilet with sprayer
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan in full bath

Bedroom
Ceiling fan
Four OH storage cabinets in bed slide-out
Bed comforter with designer pillows
Sleeping pillows with shams
Queen-size bed with pillow top mattress
Under bed storage
Night stands with 110v outlets
UltraLeather upholstered headboard framed with curved wood molding

Two chests of drawers with solid surface countertops
Entertainment system concealed with louvered doors in chest
Pre-wired for DVD & satellite receiver
37-inch HDMI-LED television
DirecTV® receiver (subscription required)
DVD player with surround sound for living room
Carbon monoxide detector
LPG leak detector

General Interior
7-ft. ceilings
Soft touch vinyl ceilings with tray ceiling in living area
Porcelain tile floor throughout the coach
Scotchgard® treated carpet in slide-outs
High gloss raised-panel hardwood cabinet doors and drawers
Two ducted furnaces
Extraordinaire™ AC system
Solid wood cabinet fascias & doors with concealed hinges
Medium alderwood cabinetry
12v disconnect switch
LED bulbs
Complete cable wiring (interfacing with surround sound & satellite system)
Home theater surround sound system
Electric step well cover
Chainless solar & privacy shades
Tank level monitor system
Smoke detector
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan
Vacuum cleaner

OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

All electric coach
Aqua-Hot hydronic heating (water & air)
Heated tile floors
UltraLeather air coil hide-a-bed PS
Dinette-computer workstation
In-dash navigation
Dishwasher, drawer type
Entertainment center w/ one leather recliner and flip-up table DS
Fireplace
In-Motion satellite
Prewired Winegard Trav'ler Satellite
Exterior slide tray
Exterior LCD TV
Dash overhead TV
Stacked washer/dryer
English Chestnut Cabinetry
Select Number mattress, king
Hadley air horns

OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

Automatic satellite dish
2nd basement slide-out tray
Gas/electric refrigerator (w/4 batteries)
Leather booth dinette (sleeper) (NC)
Leather U-shaped dinette (non-sleeper)
Passenger side:
Leather L-shaped sofa (jack knife sleeper)
Leather DE (jack knife) sofa/bed (NC)
Driver side:
Leather DE (jack knife) sofa/bed (NC)
Leather magic bed
Two leather recliners
Medium Alderwood interior cabinets (NC)
Cordovan interior cabinets (NC)
Pillowtop queen bed
Pillowtop king bed
Memory foam mattress, queen
Memory foam mattress, king

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 266"
Overall length – 40' 5"
Overall height w/roof air – 12' 7"
Interior height – 84"

Overall width – 101"
Interior width – 96"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 35,320 lb.
Front GAWR – 14,320 lb.
Rear GAWR – 21,000 lb.
GCWR – 45,320 lb.
UVW – 30,271 lb.
CCC – 3,485 lb.
Trailer hitch capacity – 10,000 lb.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – Cummins 380hp, ISL 8.9 liter, electronic, turbocharged diesel
Torque – 1,150 lb.-ft. at 1,400 rpm
Transmission – Allison 3000MH electronic six speed with two overdrives
Tire Size – 275/80R22.5 Michelin
Alternator – 160 amps

CHASSIS

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

CONSTRUCTION

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

ACCOMMODATIONS

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

MSRP

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

UVW

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

DEALERS

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

PLEASE NOTE

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

Connecticut Motor Cars and Coaches: Dreams to Reality



This Tiffin-authorized northeast service center moved into a new facility on July 1, 2014. With Bob Tiffin's encouragement and guidance, the dreams of Donald and Maureen Mikolajcik are now a reality. The only authorized Tiffin Motorhome service center and official PowerGlide chassis center in the northeast, Connecticut Motorcars and Coaches is located in Plainville, Connecticut, less than a mile off I-84.

Don and Maureen had their eye on some property when I spoke to them a few years ago and came very close to purchasing it. However, after a hard rain (100-year storm), the entire property was underwater when a nearby river flooded. Needless to say, that deal fell through. Several years later, after Maureen's con-

tinued search for a location, she found their current 11-acre parcel which was already in a commercial zone, but not zoned for motorhome repair. After receiving the proper approvals from zoning, Don and Maureen focused on the next phase of planning their new facility.

Based on their previous experience, Don and Maureen brought many ideas about what was needed in their new state-of-the-art facility, and included some of Bob Tiffin's ideas for shop layouts. Bob also recommended their new software operating system (System 2000), stating other dealerships were using this system with much success.

Doing auto body work and towing since 1991, it has been a long journey to

the present. Their previous struggle with land purchase issues set them back a few years but they never gave up on their dream. For many years they worked out of a rented building with very limited space. They had only three bays which held three motorhomes in each bay. It was a time-consuming nightmare moving coaches in and out of the building, wasting three hours of labor each day.

Two years ago Don told me what he envisioned for his new location and building. Seeing what Don and Maureen have accomplished is exactly what he described. Well, all except the Cracker Barrel image with the rocking chairs on the front landing. It's my understanding that there may be a compromise pending. Some gliders or benches may be added!

As we pulled up into the parking lot we were awestricken. This place is huge, with 30-plus motorhomes parked inside and along two sides of the building. Connecticut Motor Cars and Coaches is capable of servicing 21 coaches at a time under cover. The total size of the building is 25,000 sq. ft. The front office area including the reception area and kitchen is 2,500 sq. ft. with the same size area on the second level for the customer lounge and storage.

As we entered the waiting room we were greeted by Don and Maureen who were expecting Terri and me that afternoon. Also checking us out was their

Golden Retriever, Cody, looking over the counter as he waited for a treat.

As we approached the counter, their secretary, Margaret, who has become a great asset for the business, also came out to greet us. Customers are visible from her office as they enter the building. Brian, the general manager, recently came onboard after running his own auto body business for 20 plus years. He can also see the counter and waiting room from his office adjacent to Margaret's. Don's office is conveniently located next to Brian's. Maureen's office is in the left front corner of the building near the kitchen and connects to the common area behind the counter.

As we entered the kitchen, Maureen told us that Don cooks a roast for everyone on occasion. Now that is a great place to work! And, by the way, they are searching for more good RV mechanics. Don and Maureen are the perfect couple to run a business. They insist on always telling it like it is—good or bad. As the saying goes, "Honesty is the best policy."

Their search for the perfect general manager was easy. Don has known Brian for over 20 years and he fit perfectly into the business. Tyler, Don and Maureen's younger son, took over the 24-hour towing business for Connecticut Motor Cars and Coaches and also works at the new facility. Brian, their older son, works for a paint supply business and often gets paint

orders from his dad. Another employee, Rick, the shop foreman, has worked for Don and Maureen for close to 20 years.

At max capacity, Don can run three across and service 21 coaches at a time under roof. Thirteen motorhomes can each back out or pull through any bay, which saves many hours of moving coaches around. One of the new bays has a portable lift, which I'm certain Don dreamed of for many years. There is also a state-of-the-art paint booth at the end of the building for motorhomes, with an adjacent area that can handle automobile body work with its own lifts and down-draft bake paint booth.

On the second level there is a conference room for employee meetings, but it is also available for customers who want to meet and greet other folks who are waiting for their work to be completed. It's a nice place to set up a computer, and customers can watch the progress of their coaches in the work area from there. Most of the second level space is reserved for storage and parts, appliances, and supplies. I noticed all the new electric refrigerators available to replace the gas/electric units in older coaches. That changeover has become very popular because it eliminates the use of propane gas, and the cubic feet of refrigerator space is almost doubled.

The outside parking area for coaches is completely fenced with electrically oper-

CT Motor Cars and Coaches List of services:

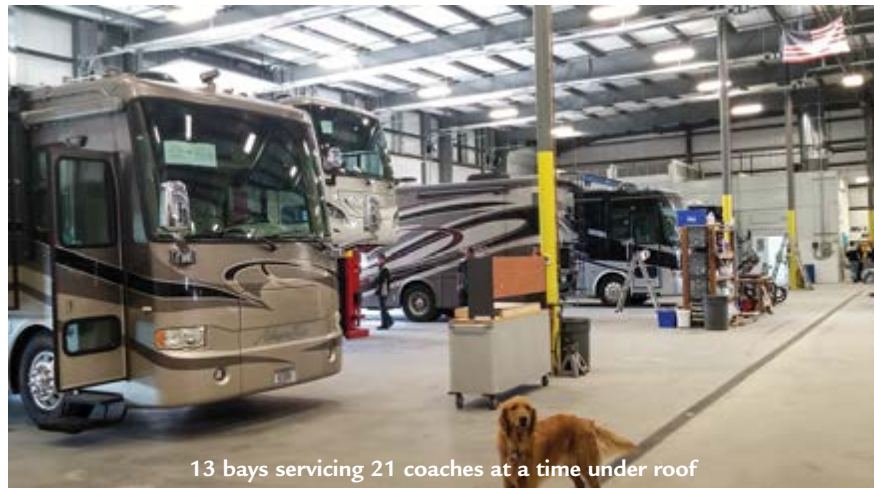
- Cooktops
- Propane heaters
- Cabinets
- Slide-outs
- Generator service
- Engine service
- Refrigerator service & repair
- Refrigerator conversions
- Leveling systems
- Shades
- Water heaters
- Window repair and replacement
- Windshield replacement
- Steps, antennas, lights, batteries
- Carpet, wood, and tile
- Entertainment centers
- Electrical
- Awnings
- Tow Bars
- Plumbing
- Slide toppers
- Chassis service
- Body damage
- Roof inspection & service
- Grey & black tank systems
- Aqua-Hot heating systems
- Custom work upon request

ated gates. There are 16 security cameras covering both inside and outside that operate continuously 24/7 and are monitored in Don's office. Conveniently located in the front parking lot you will see two motorhome hook-ups with electric, water, and dump stations for customers having service work done.

There are two campgrounds not too far from Plainville: (1) Seaport RV Resort in Old Mystic, Connecticut (now a Sun RV Resort). Contact manager Marissa Buckley at (888-560-5983). sunrvresorts.com/Community/SPO and (2) Bear Creek Campground in Bristol/Southington, Connecticut (15 acres, within

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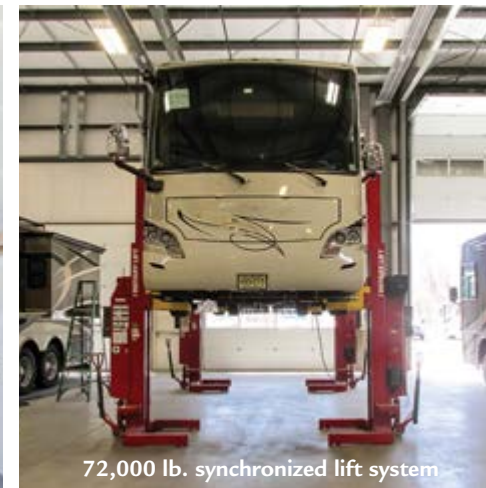
Text and photography by Dave McClellan



13 bays servicing 21 coaches at a time under roof



State-of-the-art semi-downdraft paint booth



72,000 lb. synchronized lift system



Maureen, Cody, and Don Mikolajcik

Tiffin Allegro Club Rally ORLANDO, March 23–27, 2015

by Sally Moore

The Tiffin Allegro Club hosted our first rally of 2015 at the Central Florida Fairgrounds in Orlando, Florida, on March 23–27. We were fortunate to enjoy beautiful weather with sunny skies and gentle breezes all week after a slightly damp start on Monday. The rally was staffed with folks from Red Bay as well as a host of WONDERFUL volunteers! We simply could not host a rally like this without the help of our hard working, energetic volunteers! These people come in a day or two before everyone



else and work hard to mark parking sites, check in coaches, greet everyone and get them registered and parked on arrival day. Throughout the week they ran golf cart shuttles, helped serve meals, sold apparel, assisted with seminars and made themselves invaluable to everyone. The best kept secret is: “They have more fun than anyone!” Our volunteers pay the same rally fee, then stay busier than everyone, meet more new friends than everyone else and WE LOVE THEM!

We had 250 coach owners parked on the fairgrounds along with several vendors’ coaches and a display of beautiful new Tiffin Motorhomes by LaMesa RV, Sanford, Florida for approximately 275 total motorhomes. This was a “Buddy Rally” and friends driving another brand of motorhomes were also welcomed to experience the Tiffin lifestyle.

After all coaches were parked, slides out and awnings extended, guests were greeted with a “Welcome Bag” packed with goodies from the Tiffin Allegro Club and others. One person said unpacking her bag was just like Christmas morning! On Monday night, guests were treated to a delicious meal catered by Maddy with Professional Catering, Inc. Again, volunteers stepped forward to see that guests were quickly served and greeted with a smile! After dinner, Tom & Pat Webber, our official “Bingo Ex-

perts,” explained the rules for Tiffin Allegro Bingo. Prizes were awarded after much fun and laughter.

A few hardy souls rose very early Tuesday morning for our daily Tiffin “Walk for a Healthier You” led by Joanne Brown. But everyone rolled out of their beds in time to enjoy a bountiful country style breakfast. Immediately after the meal, seminars on RV related topics began. Classes on Convection Microwave Cooking, Caring for the Exterior of Your RV, Towing, Motor-home Insurance, and many other topics were covered.

A parade saluting our veterans was held Tuesday afternoon. Golf carts gaily decorated in red, white, and blue bunting with marching music blaring followed Old Glory presented by vet-

eran John Frederiksen. Veterans from various military branches participated in the parade. A treat for all of us was veteran and Tiffin owner, A. H. Maher, dressed in his uniform. Mr. Maher, 82 years young, was headed up the east coast after our rally to attend a Rangers reunion! Thank you for your service, Mr. Maher and all veterans!!! Because of your sacrifice, we can enjoy the freedom and blessing of touring our beautiful country and gathering together with friends at events such as this.

Following the parade Hearthsides Grove RV Resort graciously hosted an ice cream social for everyone complete with sprinkles (because all our owners are winners) and whipped cream! This was a great opportunity to visit with one another and share travel experiences. Thank you, Hearthsides Grove!!

As always it was wonderful to have Bob and Judy Tiffin join us for the rally. Everyone always enjoys visiting with the Tiffins. They are legendary in the RV industry. Their southern charm and graciousness are unmatched.

On Tuesday night, people began gathering in the large conference hall dressed in tie-dyed shirts and bell bottoms! It was time for “A 60’s Experience!” After another delicious buffet meal, we were treated to music by the band, “Yesterdaze.” This musical group carried us on a 60’s journey playing hit songs by

a variety of artists. Everyone loved getting back in the groove! Drawings for door prizes were held and many folks were excited to have the winning ticket for “Tiffin Allegro Stuff”! Prizes were also awarded to the grooviest 60’s outfits. Great participation by some really ‘cool dudes’!

Wednesday brought another busy day with seminars and tours of the beautiful new Tiffin products. A big shout of “thanks” to LaMesa RV for their help and sponsorship of our rally. Several attendees made their dream come true with the purchase of a new coach while enjoying the rally! Purchasers of coaches were recognized each evening and presented with a gift basket from the Tiffin Allegro Club. This rally’s gift was a “Made

in Alabama” basket featuring delicious items all made within the great state of Alabama—just like your Tiffin Motorhome!

A new rally feature we have recently added is our Owners’ Forum discussion. Participation and attendance was overwhelming! Great ideas were shared, including “50 Ways to Solve Black Water Odor!” Future rallies will include forums divided into smaller groups with a common theme for discussion.

Our catering team fed the group mouth-watering grilled burgers and ‘dawgs’ with all of the trimmings for lunch. Once again, we left the tables with a smile and maybe just a dab of mustard remaining. Wednesday afternoon found many ladies and a few men participating in our traditional Afternoon Tea Party. Refreshments were served, but the highlight of the event is the sharing of stories and experiences.

Once again the group gathered for a delicious dinner Wednesday evening served by our fantastic volunteers. Door prizes were awarded with lots of Tiffin “stuff” again being handed out. Everyone then was treated to a great show, Spectacular Magic & Illusions featuring Al Belmont. The salute to America at the end was a crowd favorite.

Knowing the end of the rally was fast approaching, Thursday morning found everyone once again enjoying a big country

style breakfast. Seminars concluded at noon on Thursday, then everyone turned out to experience the Tiffin Allegro Club Swap Meet. Tables were provided and anyone interested in swapping/bartering/trading their treasures for another’s treasures enjoyed the time together. A wide variety of items were available as you could imagine. There were bargains galore to be found.

A gala buffet dinner featuring roasted turkey, ham and carved roast beef was served Thursday night by our wonderful volunteers. More “stuff” was awarded to many lucky winners! After dinner everyone enjoyed vocalist Connor Lorre. Connor interacted with the crowd and entertained the group with his tributes to many artists through the decades such as Frank Sinatra,

Neil Diamond, and Elvis, just to name a few. Great show!

During the rally, attendees were fortunate to receive minor repairs and service on their motorhomes from a great group of technicians! Gary James, Terry Ray, Roger Holland and Rusty Holland from the Tiffin plant in Red Bay were joined by four technicians from LaMesa RV in Sanford. Together this team of expert service technicians worked long hours every day to insure each coach at the rally received their help with the owner’s top three issues. Sometimes the technicians’ abilities were limited by the availability of parts on hand, but if the job could be accomplished with the coach parked outside in a grassy field, then these guys could make it happen. They are truly the rock stars of our rally! A great big thank you to each one of these hard working men!!

Friday morning saw everyone hooking up tows and heading on to their next adventure. Again, a precious volunteer, Carolyn Mitchell, was there to wave everyone good-bye and wish them “Happy Trails!” So “until we meet again . . .,” keep enjoying your beautiful Tiffin rig, travel safe, and experience the open road with all that life offers! All of us at Tiffin Allegro Club and Tiffin Motorhomes enjoyed our time together and thank you for being a part of the Tiffin family.

Keeping in Touch with the Club

In an effort to reach all of our wonderful club members who are busily traveling all across our beautiful continent, we use email and digital formats first. To be sure you are receiving our messages, please keep us apprised of your email address and any updates you make to it. Sending items like your dues renewal, rally updates, etc. by email will get the message to you quicker than using the US postal service and will save you the cost of mail forwarding fees.

To be sure our message reaches you, add allegroclub@tiffin-motorhomes.com to your contacts list. That will ensure the email goes to your Inbox and not your junk mail folder. Rally updates are usually sent by Sally Moore at sally.moore@tiffin-motorhomes.com and it's good to have this address saved also.

We are continuing to make improvements at the Tiffin Allegro Club office! The entire office was painted during Christmas

break and we've added custom built display racks for our Tiffin logo apparel. Come in to have a look around! The outdoor patio was just outfitted with two industrial ceiling fans in preparation for our hot, humid summer days. Customers are enjoying the complimentary Wi Fi and comfortable Adirondack style chairs on the patio daily. Drop by and check it out! Meet your friends here and enjoy it together.

While enjoying meeting all of you at our rallies this summer, we are also hard at work scouting locations for 2016 rallies. Look for announcements this fall regarding our schedule. The best way to stay abreast of our news is to register your email address at TiffinSideroads.com. When we open a rally for sale, be sure to register promptly if you want to attend. In 2015 we are hosting four rallies. Two of the four sold out on opening day! Don't delay when you see a rally that fits in your busy travel plans! Happy trails until we meet again! Travel safe and enjoy your coach!



The view from one of the hiking trails at CERAland

Join Us in Indiana!

August 17-21, 2015

We have only a few sites remaining for our Columbus, Indiana rally to be held August 17-21, 2015. Call or email us immediately upon receiving this as the rally is only a few weeks away. Columbus is the home of the Cummins Midrange Engine plant and several years ago the employee retirement fund purchased a beautiful farm with its surrounding land and preserved it as the 345 acre CERAland Park. Plant tours at Cummins are offered for small groups of 30-40 people. Dates and times must be reserved and travel arrangements made on your own by calling CERAland prior to the rally.

Our Tiffin rally promises to be fun and exciting! The locally owned Pines Restaurant will be catering delicious meals for us; Tom Webber promises to bring his famous (or infamous) Tiffin Bingo Night to Indiana; and we'll have lots of fun activities throughout the rally. We have contracts with wonderful entertainers on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights. Bring your cowboy boots and jeans for our country & western hoe-down as well as your poodle skirt or pedal pushers for our 50's Rockaboogie night! We will have a "decorate your RV site" contest with prizes awarded. Best of all-our fabulous Tiffin service technicians will be on hand to perform minor service and repairs on all Tiffin coaches! These trained technicians are the rock stars of our event!! You have made a sizeable investment in purchasing a beautiful motor coach. Take this valuable opportunity to learn all you can about it.

Continued on page 72



Eric Raper

Utility on Super Clear Line

Eric Raper has worked at many jobs inside the Tiffin Motorhomes' paint shop at Belmont, Mississippi.

"I have worked in buffing, the paint booth, repair, clear coat, super clear, just about everywhere," he said.

The Red Bay native has worked at the plant for 11 years and has seen many changes during that time.

"When we started, we were doing eight units a day and we did everything on each coach," he said. "We basically did everything at our booth until it was clear coated. Now, it's a true line where we send them on to different stations to have certain things done to them. It's more of a step-by-step process now."

Raper said he has found his work at Belmont to be rewarding and he has enjoyed his time with TMH. "One of the neat things about working inside the Belmont paint facility is seeing how one step leads to another and how it all comes together," he said.

"I like seeing how the customers are wowed by it," he continued. "We take it for granted after working here every day, but they are amazed at what the finished product is like after seeing it roll through the line."

When he's away from the paint facility, Raper usually finds himself working at his home garage.

"I have been working on my little shop at the house so I can do some paint and mechanic work on cars. I am getting close to having it the way I want so I can spend more time working on cars and trucks."

Raper and his wife, Phoelicia, have six kids between them. They are: Kayla Miller, and husband, Derrick, Taylor Hester, Layne Raper, Dillon Whitehead, Levi Raper and Devin Whitehead.

"We have a pretty big family," he said with a laugh, "so there's always something going on with all of the children's activities."



Brandon Brazil

Material handler

As a member of a family that has had multiple members to work at Tiffin Motorhomes, Brandon Brazil is well-known throughout the plant. After graduating from Red Bay High School in 1997, Brazil attended the University of North Alabama in Florence. He later worked across the southeast as an installer with DIRECTV for several years.

He has been working as a material handler in the lamination department at the Red Bay plant for about five years, placing all orders and making sure the assembly line has all the materials they need.

A key part of his job is keeping count of metal fabrication materials stored outside, and ensuring the production process is never slowed by a lack of material. "I make sure the people in our department have what they need to get their jobs done and I process any paperwork that is needed to go with that," Brazil said.

Brazil and his wife, Amanda, have two children, a six year-old son, Mason, and daughter, Chyenne, who recently gave birth to the couple's first grandchild, Chyley.

When not at work, Brazil has several hobbies that keep him busy, including gun collecting and trading, working on his Jeep, and working the local barbecue circuit. He built his own wood-burning smoker and often cooks for community members and fellow TMH employees. "It's just a hobby that I got into and really enjoy," he said. "I stay up late at night a lot on the weekends cooking for the next day."

When asked what he thought about working at TMH, Brazil was quick to praise the Tiffin family's loyalty and dedication to its employees and community.

"They have done a lot for Red Bay and the people that have worked here over the years," he said. "They have all been good to me and I appreciate that. This is a good place to work."



Wesley Pardue

Tool Room, Quality Control

Anyone who works in production at the main Tiffin plant in Red Bay has some dealings with Wesley Pardue—even if they do not know it. Pardue, a Belmont, Mississippi native, operates the tool room inside the production facility. Almost all materials and tools used in the production process come through him.

Material handlers generate supply lists that go to Pardue. In his role, he makes sure employees have the materials necessary to do their jobs, and is also responsible for eliminating waste and ensuring that quality measures are being taken.

Pardue has worked at TMH for almost 20 years. After receiving a degree in Agriculture Economics and a minor in business from Mississippi State University, Pardue began working in the flooring department at TMH. After four years in that role, he was hired as one of the original five inspectors at the plant. As an inspector, he was responsible for making sure that there were no problems or unresolved issues with the motorhomes. He later moved to the Belmont paint facility and served as an inspector for a year before moving into the tool room there. Six years ago, he moved to the Red Bay tool room.

"I like my job," he said. "I want to be able to help the employees have the materials they need, but I also have to make sure there is no waste and that the tools we have in service are being taken care of."

Pardue credits all of the Tiffin family members for making TMH a good place to work. "They are a good family and have always treated me good," he said. "I can't complain about anything."

In his spare time, Pardue is an avid gun collector who is widely sought after for advice in the gun trading business.

Pardue and his wife, Allison, have two sons, Kyler, who recently graduated from Tishomingo County High School, and Brayden, who attends Vina School.



San Francisco — A City You Experience

Nearly 17 million tourists came to this city by the bay last year, preserving its undisputed reputation as one of the country's most visited destinations. There must be reasons. After all, the 837,442 people who live here are packed into only 47.3 square miles, home plots stuck like postage stamps over 43 hills—some so steep you'd risk your neck to drive them in a long motorhome, especially if towing.

Sure, we all know about the “little cable cars that climb half-way to the stars” and the majestic engineering wonder they call the Golden Gate Bridge. But there must be more. We came to see and left in agreement: fabulous attractions make a trip here memorable, flattened pocketbook, and traffic headaches not withstanding. So come. Bring money. But reserve early if you hope to hook up in or near the city.

To plan a trip here, first contact the Visitor Information Center (415-391-2000, www.sanfrancisco.travel). They'll send a

99-page *Visitors Planning Guide* with useful information on venues and services, including tour and cruise providers. When in town, visit the Visitor Center at 900 Market Street in Hallidie Plaza, lower level, for maps, brochures, and information.

Based on our own tour (not all-inclusive by any means), here's a doable bucket list:

(1) Sign up for any one of several narrated city bus tours that'll give you an informative overview of attractions, history, and culture in different neighborhoods. (2) Ride those cable cars. (3) Pass over and under the Golden Gate Bridge, by car and by boat. (4) You gotta go to Fisherman's Wharf. (5) Chinatown's a hoot. (6) Choose at least one of numerous boat and water taxi cruises offered. (7) Browse offerings, large and small (some bargains and some not), in Union Square department stores and designer boutiques. (8) Look down on the city and its bridges from Twin Peaks. (9) Whether you drive or take a tour, don't

We found only one full-service RV resort in the city itself. That's Candlestick RV Park, just 30 steps across the road from where the storied Candlestick stadium was being dismantled when we visited. Only 36 of 165 spaces here are pull-through. Most are back-ins. Rent starts at \$79 per night. It's a little (but only a little) less at parks available in nearby cities (see box on page 34).

Candlestick RV offers free shuttle service to venues you'll want to visit, even the AT&T stadium that replaced the old one across the street, and to places to

board public cable cars, street cars, busses, and trains. Or you can rent a car here. Leaving the motorhome docked is a good thing. At times, traffic is hectic whatever you drive – and there are those hills with grades as steep as 31.5 percent. But, oh, the delightful things you can do, see, and eat! Beautiful views abound, temperatures are agreeably mild (seldom above 70 degrees or cooler than 47 degrees), unique attractions tempt – and San Francisco chefs make it most unlikely that you'll ever get a bad meal.



Story text by Norman Spray
 Photography by Rhonda Spray

From Cable Cars to Wharves, You May Find More Worthwhile Attractions Packed in Less Space in This ‘City by the Bay’ Than Most Anywhere Else

miss Muir Woods National Monument and its giant redwood trees only 15 miles outside city limits. (10) Visit Golden Gate Park and attractions there, for certain the California Academy of Sciences and its aquarium, rainforest, planetarium and now a simulated earthquake. (11) Go onto or boat around “The Rock” on which stands what’s left of Alcatraz prison. (12) Pick cultural opportunities that suit your own interests like Broadway-quality theater, symphony and orchestra, museums, galleries, even night-time “light sculpture art.”

So, by the numbers:

(1) *City tour.* We began with a three-hour bus trip. Knowledgeable live commentary kept us informed as we passed over the Golden Gate Bridge, made mini-stops, and rode by key attractions in different cultural districts. Ours was a Gray Line city tour (\$58 per adult) but there are others similar, some less costly, some more so and some involving both vehicle and boat travel. This “quick study” overview helped us plan where we’d like to spend time. It gave us good picture-taking stops at viewing areas at the northern end of the Golden Gate Bridge and atop Twin Peaks.

(2) *Cable cars and the Cable Car Museum.* It’s as thrilling as riding a roller coaster. Plant your feet on a cable car’s “running board,” hang for dear life onto a supporting pole, and lean out



From top: California Street cable car moves up California Street after passing through San Francisco’s Chinatown. ♦ A cable car levels out after climbing a Powell Street hill. In foreground, note tracks on which the wheels run and the “trough” in the center where the cable is moving. When the “grip man” pulls a lever, a vice-like mechanism locks on the moving cable and the car moves with it. ♦ In addition to its cable cars, San Francisco operates street cars. Fare is only \$2.00 for a street car ticket and you can get transfers. A cable car ride costs \$6.00 each time you get on.



to get a better view up the steep, 21 per cent grade your car is climbing, bells clanging. Doing it, you're "holding on" to history going back 146 years when a tragic accident inspired a young Englishman named Andrew Hallidie to invent the first cable car system. At the Cable Car Power House and Museum, you can see much of the machinery at work that pulls the cable cars. Displays document cable car history. Entrance is free. (See page 30, "How the Cable Car Came to Be; How it Works.")

(3) *The Golden Gate and That Other Bridge*. Crossing the Golden Gate, one could get the erroneous idea that San Francisco, crowded for space, is happy to see you go since there is no toll when you go north leaving the city. But it costs you \$6.00 per axle when you enter the bridge approach to come into the city from the north. Worth that, and more. Going either direction, count on company. Some 120,000 cars cross every day.

We crossed five times, once in a tour bus, twice in our rented car, and twice on the water (under the bridge and back) in a triple-deck Red and White Fleet ship that kept us over the waves for an hour for \$30 each (see above). Each time was a new adventure, the first under a brilliant blue sky with the orange vermilion bridge structure glistening in bright sunshine; once at dusk with bridge and auto lights twinkling; and twice on water some 245 feet below the bridge deck watching San Francisco trademark fog shroud all but the top-most tips of the two main 746-foot tall towers which suspend the whole thing.

There's no fee for people who cross the 1.7-mile span on bicycles or on foot along pathways that are separated by railings from auto traffic lanes. On clear days, views from the bridge are spectacular, whether you focus on the city or boat traffic below. It will be time well spent to stop at the Bridge Plaza visitor center at the south end near the southeast parking lot if interested in the bridge's history and facts and figures about its construction. (See story on page 31, "Tale of Two Bridges.")

That *other bridge*, known hereabouts simply as *The Bay Bridge*, crosses the bay to link San Francisco and Oakland. Toll is \$6.00, only west bound toward San Francisco. It is 8.4 miles long with two main sections that meet at Yerba Buena Island about half-way across.

These east and west halves connect by literally passing through—not over—Yerba Buena Island, originally a mountain of shale rock. The tunnel cutting through is 76 feet wide, 58 feet high, and 1700 feet long. It is the world's largest diameter transportation bore tunnel.

(4) *Fisherman's Wharf*. Personal observation: Fisherman's Wharf is a split triple-personality place. First, being hands down the most visited section of San Francisco, it is a tourist "trap"—but one of the best kind where there's entertainment, delightful bay, city and Alcatraz Island views, shopping, and delicious foods you can find in kiosks, steaming crab pots on sidewalks, or in classy dining rooms, some historic, that rate high for



Clockwise at left: Passengers on the Red and White Fleet cruise get a water-level view passing under the Golden Gate Bridge. ♦ That's Fisherman's Grotto No. 9, a restaurant that has served excellent fresh sea foods since 1935 to all kinds of people, even presidents. ♦ At Fisherman's Wharf you can dine in any one of many fine restaurants—or enjoy freshly-caught crab like this one that's come straight from the ocean to a steam pot. *Clockwise above:* Color everywhere seems to be a theme in Chinatown. Here brightly-colored lanterns hang across Stockton Street. ♦ “Dragon’s Gate” across Grant Avenue is the official entrance to San Francisco’s Chinatown. ♦ Riding a tour bus to acquaint yourself with sights of San Francisco appeals to many, including these folks who’ve chosen a double decker bus with open air seating.

scrumptious menus and authentic ambiance. Second, the wharf is a working seaport where you can see fishermen sail out and in with the day's catch. Third, even amid all this human activity, there is natural bird and animal life, notably a huge sea lion and seal colony that suns daily on wharf decks at Pier 39, blissfully unperturbed by hoards of picture-snapping tourists. This pier with 130 shops and restaurants on two levels attracts tourists as well as sea lions. Also here is the Aquarium of the Bay where you can see over 20,000 marine animals as you stroll along 300 feet of clear-walled tunnels.

Walking the wharf from Pier 39 to Pier 45, you may pass kooky but amusing street entertainers. You'll likely develop an appetite just whiffing the aroma of steam rising from pots of

fresh Dungeness crabs. Among numerous attractions within short walking distance: at least a half dozen quality restaurants; the Boudin bakery that turns out famed San Francisco sourdough bread; Madame Tussauds wax museum; shopping and dining in the old red brick building where Ghirardelli once made its famed chocolate (you can still get a yummy sundae topped with chocolate made by the people whose big neon sign makes it plain that Ghirardelli used to headquarter here); a similar complex that was a cannery; and restored 19th and 20th century ships docked at the Hyde Street Pier in the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park.

(5) *Chinatown.* Personal first impression: to walk through the arched “Dragon’s Gate” on San Francisco’s oldest street, Grant Avenue, is to enter a world of riotous color—busy, busy color. Red “lanterns” hang across Chinatown’s streets. Flashing colors call attention to entrances to most every small retail business, many marked by signs discernable only to those who read Chinese.

In Chinatown, largest of its kind outside of Asia and oldest in North America, are 24 blocks of hustle and bustle, mostly on Grant Avenue and Stockton Street. Strolling along sidewalks here takes you by antique and souvenir stores, quaint and exotic shops of all kinds, markets displaying vegetables, chickens, ducks, fish, ginseng and herbs, pharmacies dispensing traditional Chinese “healing” remedies, theaters, tea houses, small museums and renowned restaurants.



Clockwise from lower left: The vastness of San Francisco becomes apparent from near the top of the 922-foot summit of one of the Twin Peaks. ♦ The 2.6-acre Union Square is surrounded by several leading department stores and exclusive boutiques. ♦ As visitors enter Muir Woods, it's hard to miss this trunk section cut to show how layers are added year after year and century after century as redwoods grow. ♦ Paved walkways make it easy to stroll through the giant redwoods in Muir Woods. When a log fell across this one, park rangers just cut out the log section that would have blocked the path. Problem solved. ♦ Foresters have come to realize that fire can be helpful as well as harmful in the woods. Redwoods have demonstrated a remarkable ability to survive damage like that shown here which could have happened hundreds of years ago.

Born in the 1850s following the gold rush of '49, nearly destroyed by the 1906 earthquake, then rebuilt, Chinatown holds onto many old ways. But gone are the once-numerous Chinese movie theaters, night clubs, and the brothels and saloons miners frequented during the great Gold Rush. All in all, Chinatown is a fun place to visit and shop. Now and then you'll find a real bargain, like the wind-breaking jacket you'll need if the fog rolls in or the breeze stiffens. You might even get a glimpse of your future if you buy and crack open a confection from the Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory at 56 Ross Alley.

(6) *Ride the waves.* Many of San Francisco's 39 piers, Fisherman's Wharf included, can be reached by driving, walking, or riding public busses or street cars along The Embarcadero, which is named for a neighborhood and also a street that runs along the waterfront. From the Ferry Building on this street, ferries serve Sausalito, Larkspur, Alameda, Oakland, South San Francisco and Vallejo. Water taxis can be hired for point-to-point service.

Built in 1898, the old Ferry Building also houses a gourmet marketplace known for fine food shops, a farmers market, wine bars, cafés, and restaurants. Nearby, on Pier 15, is The Exploratorium, a unique interactive science museum with hundreds of intriguing exhibits, indoors and out, including an observatory, art gallery, and a tactile dome.

For sightseeing cruises, Fisherman's Wharf is the place to sign up. The Blue and Gold Fleet (Pier 39) and Red and White

Fleet (Pier 43 ½) offer a variety of floating tours, among them the Golden Gate Bay Cruise we enjoyed that goes under the bridge and back, twice passing Alcatraz.

Tours that land on Alcatraz feature guided walks among cell blocks of the old prison. Others sail under both bridges; ferry you to Sausalito or Angel Island State Park, once the immigration station called "Ellis Island of the West." You can ride in a high-speed "rocket boat"; book sunset or evening dinner dance tours; even tour streets on wheels, then splash into the bay in an amphibian "duck"; or go by wind power in a sailing vessel.

(7) *Union Square.* For serious shopping, as well as luxurious hotels — and some not so very — this 2.6 acre square is *the place*. If you're into fashion, see the latest in Macy's, Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, Tiffany, Bloomingdale's, and others in Westfield San Francisco Centre. Upscale boutiques welcome you on Stockton Street (east side of the square).

Maybe less-fashionable but certainly "now" wares are for sale near here, too. There's Williams-Sonoma and Gump's, the city's oldest department store founded in 1861. Shreve & Co., an elegant jeweler founded in 1852, is even older. The third largest Levis™ store in the world is near Union Square.

For husbands content to let their ladies do all the browsing, Union Square has places to sit and relax.

(8) *Twin Peaks.* Our best overall 180-degree view look at the city, bridges, and bay unfolded when our tour bus stopped at the 922-foot-high north peak, named Eureka, which is north of



Noe, its sister peak. We arrived about mid-morning, sun shining brightly, skies blue, a day with views “forever.” Winds were light. But we’re told this mountain top is not always so friendly. Stiff breezes from the Pacific can make you dig out warm clothing.

Being on a tour, we did not explore hiking trails in this 64-acre park which may be the only place within the city still growing native coastal scrub and grasses. These slopes, unlike most acreage on this land-short peninsula, have been protected from earliest days, first from grazing by Spanish settlers, then from urban development. Up here, hikers pass coyote brush, lizard tail, pearly everlasting, and lupine as well as grasses that historically occupied San Francisco’s hills.

Birds like the white-crowned sparrow, brush rabbits, and coyotes are seen from time to time. This park is one of few known habitats for the Mission Blue Butterfly, an endangered species.

(9) *Muir Woods National Monument*, though only 12 miles north of Golden Gate bridge, is worlds apart from city hubbub so close by. Named to honor the famed naturalist and writer John Muir, this 560-acre park preserves the only never-logged, big redwood tree stand left near San Francisco Bay. Here we strolled into a calm oasis under 600-year-old, 250-foot-tall redwoods inviting us to slow down, relax, and ponder the astounding wonder of nature.

Nothing seems rushed or noisy here, not even the crowds passing quietly. Just inside the park, a mounted cross section of a redwood tree exposes rings added one by one over a thousand years which, we learned, is typical for mature redwoods though most in Muir Woods are mere 500 to 600-year-old youngsters. We saw one with a trunk 14 feet wide and some still thriving with trunks scarred by past fires.

We walked among these giants, trying—usually in vain—to photograph red-colored trunks that grow from the ground up, up, and up—far for the camera lens to record it all. Walking is easy going along the mostly-level, paved main trails beside Redwood Creek, which flows down from the nearby slopes of 2700-foot Mount Tamalpais. Four bridges along the creek make it possible to cross the creek and go back on the other bank, walking loops ranging from a half mile to two miles. In addition, six

miles of more rustic trails with names like Bootjack, Camp Alice Eastwood, Fern Creek, and Canopy View are open to hikers.

We got to Muir Woods following a twisting, climbing stretch of California Hwy. 1 that’s closed to motorhomes and other vehicles over 35 feet long. If that describes your rig, take your dinghy, rent a car, take a tour that includes Muir Woods, or board a shuttle that runs out of Sausalito. (See “Redwoods, Tallest Living Things on Earth,” page 34.)

(10) *Golden Gate Park*. Like New York City, San Francisco has parks, playgrounds, and squares (229 covering 4,380 acres in all) but only *one special park* that’s popular among residents and ranks as the city’s third biggest tourist attraction, behind only Fisherman’s Wharf and that glowing orange bridge. That’s Golden Gate Park, larger than New York’s Central Park, with 1,017 acres of natural green and dozens of world-class attractions.

Begun in 1870 on wind-whipped sand dunes then called the “Outside Lands,” the park became a temporary refugee home for 40,000 survivors of the great 1906 earthquake and fire that’s now and possibly forever a defining chapter in San Francisco history. Now, this is a place where people come to play, picnic, perhaps take fly-casting lessons, try their luck in one of several lakes, admire lovely plants and flowers, hike and bike the trails, see an American Bison herd that’s continued for generations here since 1870, and—possibly just as important—to learn.

One place to learn is the California Academy of Sciences which combines a natural history museum, aquarium, plane-



This colorful “sea urchin,” actually a sea horse, is one of many oddities displayed in the aquarium at the California Academy of Sciences. ♦ This is the “house” that shakes. Visitors who go inside learn about earthquakes, then one (simulated, of course) hits, the floor under their feet vibrates forcefully, and everyone starts reaching for handholds. ♦ Look closely and you’ll see the eyes of a flounder, apparently trying to determine what the colorful aquatic “thing” in the foreground is. ♦ An eerie reminder of its ghostly past, fog moves in over Alcatraz Island

tarium, and earth science displays. We found them all outstanding. We were even “all shook up,” in a section that not only explored earthquake science and lore but also demonstrated. That happened when we stepped inside a “house” that looked to be made of cardboard but the floor had us hunting for handholds as it vibrated violently under our feet when hit by a simulated “earthquake.”

Nearby is the de Young Fine Arts Museum that displays art from every continent. It is hard to miss with a copper façade and a 144-foot-tall observation tower. Also here is the Conserva-

tory of Flowers, a Victorian-like home dating to the park’s early days, that’s home to over 1700 exotic plants, including 700 of the world’s 1,000 known high orchid species. Another “must” for plant lovers is a 55-acre Botanical Garden with more than 8,000 plant species from around the world. Popular, too, is a five-acre Japanese Tea Garden noted for koi ponds, immaculate landscaping, cherry blossoms in season, Oriental architecture and, yes, tea.

(11) *Alcatraz Prison Remains*. No prisoner, not even Al Capone or Machine Gun Kelly, ever escaped “The Rock” during the almost 30 years it incarcerated federal prisoners, but you will have no problem going or coming. Numerous boat tours land you on this infamous rock in the middle of the bay about a mile and a half north of Fisherman’s Wharf. We saw Alcatraz eerily, appropriately shrouded ghost-like in incoming fog as our cruise boat passed within a stone’s throw.

We did not tour inside the former penitentiary but our fellow tourists who did were enthusiastic, telling us of the exhibits they saw, guided tours of cell blocks, and well-done video and audio presentations describing how prison life was for the 1,576 convicts incarcerated there over the years. Though never more than 250 prisoners were kept in Alcatraz at any one time, there were 450 cells, each measuring only about 10 x 4 feet.

Other not-so-known chapters in the Alcatraz story are covered, including its time as the first lighthouse on the West Coast and as a Civil War fortress. After the prison shut down in 1963 and before it was opened to tourists in 1973, Alcatraz was occupied by “American Indians of all Tribes,” briefly in 1964 and again for 18 months in 1969. Their peaceful protest against federal policy that might have terminated many Indian tribes gave Alcatraz another place in history: birthplace of the American

Indian Red Power movement. Ironically, the place that denied freedom for many then became a place that forced changes that left tribes free to exist as they desired.

(12) *Cultural Venues.* San Franciscans take pride in their city's cosmopolitan cultural heritage—and with admirable justification. Internationally recognized opera, symphony and ballet companies regularly perform at Davies Symphony Hall, the War Memorial Opera House, the Civic Center, and elsewhere.

No fewer than 66 museums display art, artifacts, and historical items from many countries and their cultures. A few, in addition to those previously mentioned, are (1) The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (closed for expansion in 2015), one of the world's most innovative collections of modern and contemporary art; (2) the Asian Art Museum with nearly 15,000 works spanning 6,000 years, one of the largest anywhere devoted exclusively to Asian Art; (3) the beautiful Legion of Honor Museum in Lincoln Park which displays 4,000 years of ancient and other European art in its setting overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge; (4) the San Francisco Railway Museum; (5) Children's Creativity Museum; (6) California Historical Society; (7) the 1886 Haas-Lilienthal Victorian Mansion; (8) the San Francisco War Memorial; and (9) the Performing Arts Center.

There's a showcase museum for many of the "nationality communities," among them: the Contemporary Jewish Museum; the Museum of the African Diaspora; Mexican Museum; Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts; Museo Italo Americano; Museum of Russian Culture; Chinese Historical Society of America Museum and Learning Center; Chinese Culture Center; and Pacific Heritage Museum.

But you won't have to go to a museum to admire art in San Francisco. There are over a dozen art installations along the Embarcadero. On the south side of the Bay Bridge, "Sea Change," a kinetic sculpture by Mark DiSuvero stands 70 feet high; Between Piers 35 and 39, "Skygate," a 26-foot-high stainless steel structure by Roger Barr, memorializes the late Eric Hoffer, the San Francisco longshoreman who earned fame as a poet and philosopher.

San Francisco, moreover, has become a leader in a kind of art everyone can see. That's "light art," arranging LED lighting to flash "sculpture" images onto publicly visible structures. One of these, "The Bay Lights," flashing on the Bay Bridge, was the world's largest until it was turned off last March to permit bridge maintenance work. But these performing patterns, made by 25,000 LEDs positioned on the bridge's vertical cables, will be illuminated in all their glory in time for visitors who come next February when the Bay area hosts the Super Bowl. The display, created by Artist Leo Villareal, will become a permanent fixture in San Francisco's night sky. Eight other permanent light creations appearing on buildings around town continue to fascinate residents and visitors alike

Variety seems limitless in some 150 theaters, large and small, offering immensely varied performing arts entertainment. Avant-garde works of playwrights like Sam Sheppard and Tom

Stoppard often are premiered here. Theaters like the American Conservatory Theater stage acclaimed touring productions. Others, for instance, the landmark Castro Theater in the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender) District, may more often depend on local talent for more specialized productions. The Castro, incidentally, may be one of few in the country where a live organist still sits at a mighty Wurlitzer organ to accompany performances..

Bottom line: San Francisco is a fascinating city of indescribable beauty—yet one you don't just see—you experience. It's compact. You can drive through its 19 distinctive cultural neighborhoods in a day, traffic permitting, in this town without a freeway. Do this, and you're sure to mentally develop an agenda to go back to experience what you've discovered, whether it is more sightseeing, museum visits, or shopping, learning about different cultures, dining—and, just maybe, over-eating. ➔➔

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How the Cable Car Came to Be and How It Works

THE STREETS WERE SLIPPERY ON A DRIZZLY DAY IN SAN FRANCISCO in 1869. A team of horses strained to pull a fully-loaded “street car” up the 21 percent grade of one of San Francisco’s famous hills. Suddenly a horse slipped and lost its footing, taking others to the ground. The “street car” rolled back down the steep slope, dragging horses to death.

A young Englishman named Andrew Hallidie saw it all. Horrified, he decided then and there to devise a system to move street cars by locking them onto a moving cable, then often called “wire rope,” using a steam engine to pull the cable. He had experience, having built a wire rope-making machine that produced cable he used to pull ore wagons out of mines after the Great Gold Rush discoveries of 1849.

First, Hallidie patented an “endless ropeway,” then got a street railroad franchise.

In 1872, he began laying cable under Clay Street. He designed a “car” or “engine” with a vice-like cable-gripping mechanism that could lock on the cable so that it could move on rails as the cable below moved. The idea seemed so far-fetched that many dubbed the project “Hallidie’s Folly.”

A year later, at about 4 a.m. on August 2, 1873, Hallidie himself clamped the first car’s gripper down on the moving cable. His “folly” made history as the car lumbered smoothly at four miles per hour over and down the Clay Street incline on Nob Hill’s prestigious east side. That’s the story—and cable car devotees numbering in the millions stand by it.

That “folly” became so practical that eight companies operated as many as 22 cable lines in San Francisco for years and other large cities adopted the technology. But by the mid-1940s, only San Francisco still had cable cars. Today, this cable car system is a National Historic Landmark. It and the St. Charles

streetcar line in New Orleans are the only two such recognized “moving landmarks” in the country.

Cable cars operate on three routes today, the Powell-Hyde, Powell-Mason, and California Street lines. The system works essentially the same as it did when Hallidie began, except that the looping “endless cable” is pulled under the streets by electric engines, not steam power, and moves faster at a constant 9.5 miles per hour. Cars move when the “grip man” forcefully yanks back on the lever that causes the grip mechanism to clamp tight on the moving cable beneath.

The cable is moved beneath the streets at a uniform depth by a system of pulleys, bars and sheaves. You can see much of this machinery working at the Cable Car Barn, Powerhouse and Museum “Home Base,” a stop on both the Powell-Hyde and Powell-Mason Lines. California Street cars stop at Mason, two blocks away. There is no admission fee.

From the museum viewing gallery, you look down on rotating winding wheels 10 feet in diameter. Cable entering the building from the streets is looped over these in a figure 8 pattern through a series of gears and a tension wheel. The winding wheels move the cable at a constant speed. The tension wheel keeps the cable taut so there’s little jerking of the line. On a lower basement-like level, in a sheave room viewing area, you can see the cable leaving underneath the street.

The world’s first cable car, No. 8 of the Clay Street Hill Railroad, is displayed in the museum as are two antique cable cars, grips, track, trucks, cable, and brake mechanisms with corresponding explanations. Here, too, are scale models of some of the 57 different types of cable cars that have operated in the city. Cable cars that serve the routes today, 41 of them at this time, are stored in an upper “barn” level not open to visitors.



Workmen physically rotate the cable cars at the Fishermen’s Wharf turntable terminal of the Powell-Mason line. This prepares the car for the trip back down to Market Street. On the California Street line, the cars are “double,” meaning they have been built with a control “cabin” at each open end, making it possible for the driver or “grip man” to

move in either forward or backwards directions without turning the car around on a turntable like this. ♦ This machinery keeps the cable moving that pulls the cable cars up San Francisco’s hills. The rotating winding wheels keep the cable moving at a constant speed of 9.5 miles per hour, which allows riders to hop on and off wherever they wish.

The moving cables pull up to 26 cars at a time on weekdays. Some cars carry more than 60 people. On each car, there's a "grip person" who operates the gripper, tends the brakes, and rings the bell and a conductor who collects fares and also helps with brakes. Fare is \$6.00 for each boarding, whether for a one-block uphill ride or an end-of-the-line lift.

Not surprisingly, the cars are immensely popular. Nearly eight million people ride them each year. So it is not always easy to get a seat or even a place to "hang." The people who operate the cars day in and day out offer tips. For the Powell lines, they advise, come as early in the morning as you can. Since there's often a long line at the turntable at Market and Powell Streets, try boarding at a subsequent stop, say at O'Farrell Street, just

two blocks up. If you want to board at Fisherman's Wharf, know that boarding is possible at two different turntables and that the line for the Powell-Hyde line near Ghirardelli Square is usually longer than that for the Powell-Mason line at Bay and Taylor Streets. If it's just a ride you want, not a lift to a specific location, find your way to a stop for the California Street line. There's hardly ever a wait. You won't go around curves but you'll go over Nob Hill and pass through the Financial District and colorful Chinatown.

Those little cable cars, *they really are something*, as much a San Francisco emblem as the Golden Gate Bridge. So board one. No one will believe you, anyway, if you say you came to San Francisco and did not ride a cable car.

A Tale of Two Bridges

THE 1.7-MILE-LONG GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE CROSSING THE GOLDEN Gate Strait is recognized as a majestic San Francisco icon while the 8.4-mile Bay Bridge between San Francisco and Oakland is thought of as the area's "workhorse bridge." Both, remarkable for their engineering and construction, were built in the same years when the country had yet to recover from the Great Depression, unlikely as that may seem.

Construction on the International Orange-colored Golden

Gate bridge began January 5, 1933 and the bridge opened to traffic May 27, 1937. Also in 1933, builders started the Bay Bridge on July 8. They finished it November 12, 1936, six months ahead of the Golden Gate.

Cost: over \$35 million for the Golden Gate, \$77 million for the Bay Bridge, including cost of cutting a tunnel through the mountain of shale rock called Yerba Buena Island at the bridge's half-way point. How much in today's dollars? Well, half of the Bay Bridge—just the eastern half between Yerba Buena and Oakland—had to be rebuilt after it was damaged by the Loma



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Prieta earthquake in October, 1989. That reconstruction cost over \$6.5 billion.

Upwards of 120,000 cars cross Golden Gate each day. Traffic on the Bay Bridge is more than twice as heavy—some 270,000 vehicles daily. Tolls vary depending on various payment plans but the standard for one-time crossings is \$6.00 at both bridges, collected only when inbound toward San Francisco.

Golden Gate. Magnificent by any standard, the Golden Gate is called a Wonder of the Modern World by the American Society of Civil Engineers. Its supporting towers soar 746 feet above the water. The bridge's roadway deck is 220 feet above the water at high tide, leaving plenty of room for shipping below.

The roadway is suspended by two cables, made with 27,572 strands of wire, slung through the gigantic towers and cemented into place at each end. In all, 80,000 miles of wire make up the cables. Some 1,200,000 rivets hold steel members in place.

The roadway, 90-foot-wide, has five traffic lanes plus pedestrian and bicycle pathways. Early in 2015, Golden Gate installed a \$30.3 million movable median barrier system to speed placement of a divider to create more lanes in one direction (and fewer in the other) to accommodate rush-hour peaks. Lanes are changed several times a day using specialized transfer machines called zipper trucks.

The Golden Gate withstood the shocks undamaged when the Loma Prieta Earthquake, measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale, rocked San Francisco on October 17, 1989. Many commuters, unable to use the Bay Bridge, which was damaged, rerouted over the Golden Gate. An all-time high of 162,414 vehicles crossed Golden Gate on one day during that time.

Maintaining the bridge structure is a full-time job for 13 ironworkers, three pusher ironworkers, 28 painters, five painter laborers, and a chief bridge painter. Often working high above the deck, these crewmen battle wind, sea air, and fog to repair and paint corroding steel. The original lead-based paint was removed years ago. The current coat is a water-borne inorganic zinc primer with acrylic topcoat. Painters and ironworkers often work together, ironworkers removing plates and bars to give painters access to places they could not otherwise reach. Ironworkers replace rusting steel and rivets with high-strength steel bolts.

Use of safety netting to prevent falling in high-up structure construction was pioneered by builders of the Golden Gate. Though the norm at the time was loss of one man per each million dollars spent on projects, only one worker was killed in over three years on this job, due in part to a net suspended from end to end under the bridge. That net saved the lives of 19 men who became members of the "Halfway-to-Hell Club." Then disaster struck on February 17, only three months before completion. A section of a scaffold occupied by 12 men fell and broke through the net. Only two survived their 200-foot fall into icy waters.

The bridge, for all its acclaim, has one dubious record: only one other bridge in the world has recorded more suicide jumpers. With the deck about 245 feet over water, the jumper is moving at about 75 miles per hour at the end of his four-second fall.

This usually does it. If one is bound and determined to end it all in the Golden Gate Strait, though, jumping may be the only way. Asking a relative to throw cremated ashes over the bridge after natural death won't work. That's against the law.

Bay Bridge. For its first 53 years, both halves of the Bay Bridge had two decks connecting through the Yerba Buena Island tunnel. The western San Francisco to Yerba Buena section was a suspension bridge. The section linking Oakland to the island was cantilevered.

The upper level had five traffic lanes for westbound vehicles. Five lanes on the lower deck served east bounders.

That changed after the devastating 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake knocked a section of the upper deck onto the lower road of the eastern section between Yerba Buena and Oakland, indirectly causing one death. A design change and massive \$6.5 billion rebuilding project to make the bridge safer and more earthquake resistant was completed in 2013.

Now this section has 10 traffic lanes on one level, five in each direction, on a single deck that's 258.33 feet wide. Guinness ranks it as the world's widest bridge. It is a single-tower, self-anchored skyway structure.

The connecting older West Bay section remains double suspension. It moves five lanes of traffic on each of two levels as before. Like the Golden Gate, the roadways are held up by cables strung from two massive towers.

The roadways are so high there's 220 feet between the lower level deck and bay waters on the San Francisco side, 191 feet on the East Bay side. The tallest tower stands 527 feet above water level. The deepest pier, 242 feet below water level, is 396 feet high.

Though perhaps not so much favored by the world press as its Golden Gate neighbor, the Bay Bridge nevertheless is a sight to see, fun to drive, and surely, as it claims, the region's "work-horse bridge."

At Yerba Buena, one can exit I-80 to explore what there is of Yerba Buena and also Treasure Island, an artificial island built on the shoals of Yerba Buena Island for the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition, a world fair event. Together, they have a land area of only 576.7 acres, less than one square mile, but share history other than the bridge. Treasure Island became an active U.S. Navy base after the exposition that shipped men and equipment to the Pacific Theater during World War II. It remained an active installation until 1996.

Now visitors on Treasure Island have an excellent bridge-to-bridge view of San Francisco's northern waterfront, see public art on the island, or just enjoy the open space of "The Great Lawn" on which stands the much-photographed "Bliss Dance" sculpture. The island also is a place for wine lovers. At least seven wineries are in business here and most welcome tourists for tours and visits to tasting rooms. On the last weekend every month, vendors, artists, antique traders, and dealers of vintage, indie, retro, new and up-cycled goods, even underground food startups display their "stuff" on the Great Lawn. They call it the "Treasure Island Flea."

An Elite Restaurant or Steam Pot on the Wharf, Dining is Good in San Francisco

WHETHER YOU CRAVE FRESH SEAFOOD EXPERTLY PREPARED, FRENCH cuisine, the best from Italy, Oriental specialties or local concoctions dating back to the 1849 Gold Rush, you'd be hard-pressed to find better dining of any type anywhere than in San Francisco. The tab can run from every day lunchtime pricing to, oh, maybe as high as the Golden Gate Bridge.

With over 5,350 places to eat, more per capita than any other major U.S. city, and over 15 cultural districts that favor different foods, the variety is infinite. Whatever you order, chances are you'll be pleased. After sampling 46 types of cuisines in 474 eateries in the area, Michelin awarded its internationally recognized stars to 40.

The San Francisco Travel Association, which keeps track of these things, reports that 40 per cent of visitors list restaurants as a main reason for coming, adding that restaurants are, in fact, the second most mentioned reason for visiting here. Scenery is first.

We did not do a Michelin-type sampling, nor did we check the elite and elegant, but we did find service and food par excellence at traditional well-known places we visited, some of them historic. Two were among the many quality restaurants at Fisherman's Wharf, Fisherman's Grotto No. 9 and Alioto's, both founded by immigrant fishermen from Sicily.

Both claim to have started the trend that's made the Wharf a dining mecca and home for many other fine restaurants. Maybe they did. Fisherman's Grotto opened in 1935 as, it says, the first sit-down eatery on the Wharf. Founder Mike Geraldini did it to sell his daily fresh catch. Grotto is run today by the fourth generation of the same family.

Alioto's, just next door at wharf stall No. 8, was started by Nunzio Alioto as a fresh fish stall in 1925. In 1932, he added a seafood bar. After he died in 1933, his wife Rose took over. By 1938 she installed a kitchen and opened the restaurant.

Both Fisherman's Grotto and Alioto's buy much of their seafood fresh from the fishing boats you can see coming and going from the windows of their charming second floor dining rooms. What mattered to us was the food, and it was delicious! Sea bass, swordfish, bacon-wrapped trout, and shell fish were among our choices but there were so many more. Fishermen Grotto chefs, for instance, use many varieties of fish in 150 menu selections.

On a bluff overlooking that Pacific, away from the Wharf, we ate at a place truly historic: the Cliff House, opened first in 1863 by real estate developer Charles Butler. Expanded in 1868, it catered to the well-healed who could afford the toll roads, horses, and menu prices. Later German-born Adolph Sutro bought the Cliff House and 1,000 surrounding acres with plans to make it a high-end resort. He achieved his goal with his own scenic railroad to haul in customers, a glass-enclosed bathing pool that had five tanks holding 1,685,000 gallons of water at various temperatures and room for 1,600 bathers, three restaurants and more. A fire, two world wars, and a catastrophic depression ended all that but, since 1972, Cliff House has operated as a restaurant and was re-modeled in 2004 to live up to a history of fine dining in a place with an unexcelled ocean view. After lunching there, we agree it is a reputation well deserved — and preserved.

Just off Union Square on Powell Street downtown, we twice enjoyed super breakfast fare at Sears Fine Dining, a restaurant first opened in 1938 by Hilbur and Ben Sears, a retired circus clown who became noted for Swedish pancakes made from a recipe that came from his wife's family. The restaurant has changed hands since but has retained the Sears Fine Food name and, oh, the breakfasts they serve! Other meals may be equally good but breakfasts we highly recommend.

Some foods you may not find at home but can enjoy in San Francisco: abalone, Dungeness crab, sand dabs, bay shrimp, and crusty sourdough bread. Or there's a local concoction called *Joe's*

Special. It's made of spinach, onions, mushrooms, beef, and eggs. Story is that when a late night chef at *New Joe's* told a band leader those were the only ingredients left in his kitchen, the band man said: "Mix 'em together."

The Cliff House Restaurant actually does sit atop a high bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean beach below. The first Cliff House was built 152 years ago. Several different buildings have occupied the site over the years. It has in most of those years been noted as a place serving fine food. It does today.



Hangtown Fry, said to have originated for miners during Gold Rush days, mixes scrambled eggs, oysters, and bacon. Alioto's claims *Cioppino*, a shell fish stew served locally, was originated by Rose Alioto. San Francisco also claims to have invented *Chicken Tetrizzini*, now available in most any Italian restaurant.

With more than 5,500 restaurants here, there's not time, space, or enough elasticity in the belt to allow you to experience more than a small fraction of Frisco's eateries. *Fior D'Italia* here is the oldest Italian restaurant in the U.S. *Tadich Grill* is San Francisco's oldest restaurant. San Francisco, says the Travel Association, is in the forefront of such trends as Asian fusion cuisine, exotic greens, heirloom tomatoes, and pedigree produce, thanks in part to nine farmers markets that give chefs access to fresh ingredients.

About those places good enough to earn Michelin stars and listings: We didn't try them but there are many, including names locally well-known like *Benu*, *Saison*, *Acquerello*, *Atelier Crenn*, *Baume*, *Coi*, *Manresa*, *Qince*, *Ame*, *Aziza*, *Boulevard*, *Campton Place*, *Gary Danko*, *Keiko à Nob Hill*, *Kuisakae*, *LaFolie*, *Luce*, *Marujya*, *Michael Mina*, *Sons & Daughters*, *SPQR*, *Spruce*, and *State Bird Provisions*.

That hardly even begins the list. And, notice, we haven't even mentioned the many chains brave enough to enter this competitive and demanding market though we did, in fact, have a good lunch at a Cheesecake Factory outlet in Macy's building.

Hunting a place to dine in San Francisco, you won't run out of choices, good ones. Look first at a menu to check prices, then, if you're still hungry, enjoy!

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Olema: Olema Campground. 80 spaces, 26 full hookup. 30/50 amp. Rate: \$43 to \$63. (415) 663-8106; olemacampground.com

Novato: Novato RV Park. 69 spaces, 8 pull-throughs. 30/50 amp. Rate: \$65. (800) 733-6787; novatorvpark.com

San Jose: Coyote Valley RV Resort. 126 full hookups. 30/50 amp. Rate: Starts at \$65, weekends \$70. (866) 376-5500 or (408) 463-8400; coyotevalleyresort.com.

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Redwoods, Tallest Living Things on Earth

The coast redwood tree grove in Muir Woods National Monument does not have the largest, oldest or tallest trees standing today but it is unique for many reasons, first being that it has never been logged, not ever. What you see is what nature has done. Young Redwoods and some as old as 600 years grow beside standing dead trees, rotting logs and undergrowth.

Not many redwood groves claim that distinction. Most that blanketed many northern California coastal valleys before the 1800s fell to logger's saws and axes to feed mills turning out lumber that kept the country building.

Though redwoods covered much of the Northern Hemisphere 150 million years ago, just two species exist today in limited ranges in California. The tallest of these, *Sequoia sempervirens*, grows in Muir Woods and also in a thin 500-mile stretch from southern Oregon to Big Sur, south of San Francisco. The giant *Sequoia dendron giganteum*, a tree older and larger in volume but not height, exists only in small groves on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada, including Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia National Parks.

The tallest living thing in the world is a coast redwood further north in northern California that's 379.1 feet high! In the 560-acre Muir Woods preserve, the tallest coast redwood is over 250 feet. Muir Woods' tallest are in Bohemian and Cathedral groves that visitors can walk through.

Don't be surprised if fog rolls in over the tree tops and through foliage on any summer day you visit Muir Woods. For redwoods, that's a good thing. They are by nature better equipped than most trees to capture moisture from the air and



fog—and redwoods must have moisture, lots of it, all the time to grow to the enormous sizes they do. In the dry season, fog brings in a new water supply that collects on needles and leaves and sifts down as “fog drip.” This process is said to deliver the equivalent of at least 10 inches of rain in summer.

This is critical since most of the 40 inches of rain Muir Woods gets each year falls between mid-November and mid-April. Redwood Creek, which flows down through the park from nearby Mount Tamalpais, is not a dependable water source in summer. Cascading, raging floods of the rainy season dry to a trickle.

Fog helps lower summertime temperatures, important since redwoods can't tolerate heat, cold, or too much wind. In fact, they can do well only in coastal California's fog belt.

Average life span of a big redwood is thought to be about 1,000 years though some live twice that long. In Muir Woods, there's mostly young trees, 600 years old or less. Trees here could die young because conditions are less than optimum—a little too dry, too windy, or soil too thin. However, scientists think it also possible that this is a new grove, recovering after some disaster wiped it out in the ancient past.

Visitors can enjoy Muir Woods today because local businessman William Kent and his wife, Elizabeth, bought this land in 1905 with preservation in mind, and donated it to the government to protect the redwoods from loggers. In 1908 President Theodore Roosevelt made it a national monument. Kent insisted that the monument be named to honor John Muir, famous conservationist and author who died in 1914. Though Muir had visited the grove in what was then called Sequoia Canyon—not in company with Kent—the two did tour together in 1908. After the grove became a monument named in his honor, Muir wrote in a letter to Kent: “This is the best tree-lover's monument that could possibly be found in all the forests of the world. You have done

This is what “sky high” can look like in a redwood forest.

me a great honor and I am proud of it.”

Some things you need to know if you visit Muir Woods National Monument (415) 388-2595; .nps.gov/muwo:

- Vehicles longer than 35 feet are not allowed on the stretch of California Hwy 1 that takes you from I-101 to the park and on north up the coast.
- You likely won't have cell phone service.
- Parking nearby is limited, but you can usually find space if you are willing to

walk a good distance from the remote lot.

- Picnicking/camping are not allowed.
- Only service animals may be on the trails. Horses and bicycles are restricted to fire roads.

Coast redwoods are protected also in other redwood national and state parks in California and Oregon. But Muir Woods, so close to a major city, represents the world of redwoods in a way that welcomes over a million visitors each year. **RIS**

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Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park

Three Generations of Vourderises on Coney Island

FOR AS FAR BACK AS STEVE VOURDERIS can remember, his father was involved in the amusement park business on Coney Island. During the two decades after he was born, a grand story evolved that has made Steve and his older brother, Dennis, as well as their children, very proud of their heritage.

Born in Aigion, Greece in 1920, Constantinos Dionysios (Deno) Vourderis was the eighth of 22 children. In the middle of the Great Depression, Deno emigrated to the United States and joined the Merchant Marines.

During World War II, Deno, with great appreciation for his adopted country, joined the U.S. Army, working as a cook. He received several awards during his military service and was honorably discharged on June 8, 1946. With his Army food service experience, he obtained a peddlers license to work the food trade from pushcarts in Manhattan.

"As fate would have it," Steve began, "my mother was also pushing a food cart in Manhattan. On weekends, they went on dates to Coney Island and realized how much they enjoyed the area."

Lula and Deno married in 1953; Deno continued his pushcart business in Manhattan; and they opened a restaurant in Tarrytown, about 25 miles north of Manhattan on the eastern bank of the Hudson. Their fascination with Coney Island, the Boardwalk, and the Wonder Wheel continued and they often took their young family there for fun and recreation.

In an amusement park operated by the Garms family, the Wonder Wheel was the centerpiece. The Wonder Wheel is unique in the history of the modern ferris wheel* because 16 of its 24 fully enclosed passenger cars are not permanently installed

on the perimeter of the wheel. Those 16 swinging cars slide on a serpentine track toward the hub of the Wonder Wheel and, as the wheel rotates, return to the perimeter of the wheel. Standing 150 feet tall and weighing 200 tons, its height is equivalent to the height of a 15-story building.

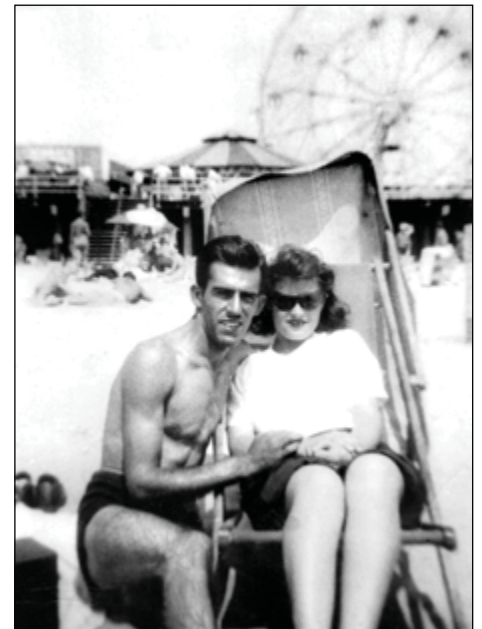
Coincidentally, the Wonder Wheel and Deno Vourderis were the same age. Invented by Charles Hermann, the spectacular wheel was built by the Eccentric Ferris Wheel Company between 1918 and 1920, using Bethlehem Steel. The Wonder Wheel opened on Memorial Day 1920. The only time the wheel stopped while not under the control of the operator was on July 13, 1977, during the New York City blackout. Because an electric motor connected to the perimeter turns the Wonder Wheel, the operators were able to manually crank it a full revolution and allow the passengers to get off.

"One day at the beach, my father told Mom he was going to buy that Wonder Wheel for her as a wedding present, a ring so big that everyone would know how much he loved her," Steve continued. "Little did he know at that time he would one day be able to fulfill his promise."

Deno started a small restaurant on the Boardwalk next to the Cyclone, and then moved it across the street behind the Cyclone. "At the beginning of one summer in the mid-seventies, Dad asked the owner of the Kiddie Amusement Park, John Curran, if he could bring in an 8 x 16-ft. trailer to sell hot dogs and soft drinks," Steve said. "Mr. Curran approved and the next summer Dad asked if he could

put up a small building, making his food business a little more permanent.

"Mr. Curran needed help with repairing the rides, someone who could both manage the park and keep the rides operational," Steve explained. "They made an agreement: Dad would manage and operate the park and Mr. Curran would eventually sell him the rides at a favorable price. It was a win-win deal for both men."



Deno and Lula Vourderis at Coney Island, 1953.

"Stacy and I were in high school together and I knew she was the one for me," Steve smiled. "When we graduated, Stacy went off to college. After a year, I talked her out of it, afraid that some good-looking college boy would steal her heart. We got married later that year."

By 1981 Steve and Dennis had joined their father in managing and running the kiddie park, which at that time had 18 rides, several amusement games, and two snack bars.

In the spring of 1983, Deno was re-

*The original ferris wheel was designed and constructed by George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr. as a landmark for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The term "ferris wheel" is used generically for all similar structures.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE VOURDERIS

Text by Fred Thompson

pairing a ride when he noticed an unsavory character harassing a woman. He ordered the man to leave the park and then continued working on the ride. The man slipped back into the park, grabbed a long screwdriver from Deno's tool box, and stabbed him in the chest, puncturing one of his lungs.

While Deno was hospitalized, Fred Garms decided to sell the Wonder Wheel. "We had a family conference about the opportunity. Some said 'yes' and some said 'no,'" Steve said. "Dad turned to Stacy and said, 'Stacy, what do you think

I should do?' Feeling the pressure, Stacy spoke in a low, whispery voice, 'I think you should buy it.'"

Even though the price was \$250,000, Deno decided right then and there that he wanted to buy the Wonder Wheel. The Wonder Wheel was owned first by Herman Garms and then by his son, Fred. There were several interested parties, but the Garms family was only willing to trust this world-famous ride to one man—Deno's Vourderis. The deal was completed on June 7, 1983. Deno was the front man when they bought the park,

while Lula worked quietly in the background. "I went on the Wonder Wheel one time, and that was enough," she said. She worked behind the Anchor Bar snack counter, often giving hamburgers and hotdogs to homeless men who depended on her kindness.

"It was operable when we bought it, but it was not up to the standards we wanted," Steve noted. "Our family went to work restoring the great wheel, putting it in pristine, like-new condition, making it the centerpiece of Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park.



In 1981, Dennis and Steve joined their father in managing and operating the kiddie park. Today, as joint owners, Dennis oversees business administration while Steve manages equipment operations and repairs.

"I was working in Deno's Snack Bar at the time the Wonder Wheel was purchased," Steve said. "My role in the business began to change rather quickly. I am mechanically inclined and enjoy working in the machine shop which turned out to be a good thing. The company that built the Wonder Wheel does not exist anymore. You can't pick up the phone and order parts. Dennis has the business skills to run the company: payroll, purchasing, bookkeeping, job fairs, interviewing for staffing for both the kiddie park and the adult rides.

"During the main season, Memorial Day to Labor Day, we have 80 employees. During the shoulder seasons, we employ 60," Steve explained. "We are open weekends from Palm Sunday to Memorial Day and from Labor Day to Halloween. During the summer we are open from noon to midnight. We sometimes extend the hours based on the size of the crowds."

Maintenance and safety procedures are daily routines that are followed strictly. The company hires a private firm to X-ray the steel in each ride for structural integrity. A magnetic test is



used to check for cracks in the welds. The Wonder Wheel has a perfect 95-year safety record and there has never been a serious accident in the park since it has been under the Vourderises' ownership.

During the six months the park is closed, Steve and his maintenance team remove all of the wheels and bearings from every ride. On the roller coaster ride, every wheel and shaft that attaches the cars to the track are removed and sand blasted to remove the paint to allow accurate magnetic particle testing. The same test is run on the shafts that attach the gondolas to the Wonder Wheel.

Painting is a major operation during the off-season. "To keep all of our rides looking fresh and new, painting every year is a must," Steve said. "Sand is a major problem. Last year we had just painted a ride and set it up when a sand storm cut the paint right off."

The carousel painting is done by an artist who uses air brushing. Every Vourderis family member has an image and name air brushed on one of the equine mounts. "It is so much fun to watch the parents who are giving their little ones their first ride on the carousel. They watch and enjoy the child's reaction, hoping for smiles. Sometimes they are a little frightened," Steve said.

"Every ride except the Wonder Wheel has a maintenance manual that tells us what has to be done to keep it structurally safe," Steve said. "We work harder in the off season than we do during the spring, summer, and fall when we are open for business."

The Wonder Wheel does not have an axle as it appears to have. The spokes on each side of the wheel are attached to a circumferential piece of steel that has an attached track surfaced with cold-rolled steel. The track sits in a cradle and rides on case-hardened steel wheels which are lubricated every day. The cold-rolled steel tracks are changed every 8-9 years, depending on wear. To change out the cold-rolled steel requires using hydraulic jacks to lift the Wonder Wheel just enough above the steel wheels in the cradle to allow Steve to remove the old tracks and weld new ones in their place.

"The rides being built today require more maintenance and



have a lifespan that averages about 10 years,” Steve said. “The steel frames have fiberglass coatings that look pretty, but they hold moisture that causes the steel to deteriorate because it can’t breathe. The Wonder Wheel, now in its 95th year, was built to last with painting and periodic maintenance. We grease it every day and it keeps going.”

Disaster struck Coney Island on October 29, 2012. After raking the East Coast with devastating wind and waves, Hurricane Sandy hit Coney Island with blunt force, tearing apart the rides and buildings that could not be dismantled and moved into storage. Over the next six months, the amusement park owners up and down the Boardwalk spent over \$5.5 million to repair, replace, and restore the rides and amusements. Steve and Dennis spent over \$1 million to restore Deno’s Wonder Wheel Amusement Park.

Underneath the park’s main level that opens onto the Boardwalk is a 400 × 400-foot basement with workshops, paint booths, and storage space for the kiddie rides that are painted and refreshed every year. It was flooded with 11 feet of water. A second level was under five feet of water. The machine shops were flooded with three feet of water.

Continued work over the last two-and-half years has restored the park to almost like-new condition. The damage to the machine shops is still very evident.

Steve and Stacy live on a quiet street in Astoria, near LaGuardia Airport. They have three sons, Deno, 33, John, 31, and Teddy, 29, all of whom are married and have homes nearby. The day we visited the Vourderises, Deno and his wife, Daniella, were attending a christening and we did not get to meet them. Deno has Steve’s mechanical aptitude and is the only other person who can maintain the Wonder Wheel. Either Steve or Deno are on-site when the park is open.

John chose another career path and earned a law degree. He is employed by the U.S. Department of Justice. John is married to Clara, who is employed by an architectural firm.

Teddy and Anastasia have two girls and a boy. Teddy works year-round in general operations and maintenance.



Teddy works full time with his father in ride operations and maintenance. Deno, Steve’s oldest son, also works in maintenance but was away attending a christening and we missed meeting him.

“We began using motorhomes back in 1977 for a very practical reason,” Steve explained. “My father owned a Pace Arrow and first used it for catering the San Janero Feast Day on Mulberry Street in lower Manhattan. It turned out to be an annual event and over the years we owned a half dozen RVs. During that time we used an Allegro that the RV dealer gave my father as a loaner when ours was in the shop.”

From Steve and Stacy’s home in the northern part of Queens, it is a 25-mile, 90-minute commute south to Coney Island in Brooklyn. Having had experience with motorhomes in a business capacity, Steve began thinking of a coach for both business and pleasure.

“Having the coach at the park would be like having an apartment for staying overnight instead of having to make that late night commute home,” Steve said. “Then we could get away a few times in the winter to enjoy some warm weather when it is so cold here in January through March. It sounded like a plan.

“We attended the Hershey Show in September 2013 and met



Stacy and Steve have known each other since high school and married a year after graduation. Stacy works at the park with Steve as well as running their household and assisting Steve in the care of his mother Lula, who lives with them. ♦ Steve looks forward to the close of the park season when he and Stacy can take trips in their 2015 Allegro Bus 37AP. “Getting on the road and driving this coach is so relaxing to me,” Steve said.

our business and the story about the Wonder Wheel. By the end of the day, we bought the 37AP.”

Steve arranged for hookups at the park for the Allegro Bus and it began its role as an apartment during the closing part of the 2014 season. “It is my onsite second home whenever I need it. Stacy prepares meals for me to bring to the coach and I spend the night whenever the time is too short to make the drive home,” he said.

Last year Lula Vourderis, the matriarch of the family, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Alliance for Coney Island at its annual gala. “My mother was a big driving force behind my father,” Dennis said. “If it were not for her, I don’t know that we would have been as successful.” Steve agreed.

Miss Lula, now 83, lives with Stacy and Steve in their Astoria home. Although her memory is beginning to slip a bit, she still encourages her children and grandchildren who visit her every day.

“It is a privilege to work here,” Steve reflected at the end of our interview. “How many people can say something like that about where they work. I am very happy at the end of the day and each season to see children and their families having fun in a safe environment.”

Coney Island’s famed Boardwalk and amusement parks have suffered hard times in both the 20th and 21st centuries—storms, race riots, and businesses that failed. But the neighborhood endured and so did the Vourderis family. **RIS**

Bob and Judy Tiffin,” Steve began. “We were impressed with the quality of the Tiffin coaches. We were very surprised that we could meet and talk with the president of the company. Since our park depends on excellent service to the public, I saw that same service ethic in Mr. Tiffin and his company. Since my work focuses on maintenance, finding out how well Tiffin coaches are built was really important to me.”

Steve decided to wait one more year and think about his strategy. He and Stacy have a vacation home in the mountains of eastern Pennsylvania. “When we go there, it is really for sleeping and relaxing—just the quiet and peacefulness. But a home on wheels really sounded good, too. I love to drive, just get in the coach and go to new horizons,” he exulted.

Last September the plan became reality when Steve visited the Hershey Show and met Bob and Judy again. “Judy graciously showed us through the new 2015 Allegro Bus 37AP that she and Bob were occupying during the show,” Steve said. “We renewed our friendship, visited, and talked about how we were going to use the coach for business and pleasure. Bob was fascinated by

The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

Ancira's Salesperson of the Year

Having purchased three motorhomes from Ancira RV in Boerne, Texas over the last several years, we enjoyed your dealer profile on Ancira RV in the Spring edition of *Roughing It Smoothly*. You noted "our salesman," Steve Lyons is a 30-year Ancira employee, but failed to mention Steve was honored in 2015 as Ancira's Salesperson of the Year for the 29th consecutive year. He is one of the reasons we keep going back to Ancira.

Steve Spear
San Antonio, Texas

Dear Steve,

Thanks you for pointing out my oversight. When I interviewed Steve, he did not mention his honors—certainly an indication that he is a very modest man.

Fred Thompson, Editor

an old mining town near Death Valley where they shoot many western films. We were headed to Death Valley and discovered that Randsburg was just a few miles off of our planned route. The day we stopped they were filming a movie. Unfortunately, the general store is closed on Mondays. If you appreciate quaint places, you will enjoy the town of Randsburg.

We made our planned visits to the three national parks: Joshua Tree, Channel Islands, and Death Valley. That makes 45 out of 59 true national parks. On the way home we stopped in Tombstone, Bisbee, and Douglas, Arizona, including the Coronado National Monument. Don't miss the 108-year-old four story hotel in Douglas. We enjoyed a fabulous lunch at the hotel and enjoyed viewing one of the

few Tiffany windows with a desert scene. Don't miss the Amerind Museum near I-10 at Dragoon recommended by AAA.

Our motorhome made this another enjoyable trip for us. Thanks Tiffin!

Shirleen & Hank Smith
San Antonio, Texas

A Daily Journal for All to Read

We went full-time on August 2, 2014 and since have traveled most of the western national parks. We write a daily journal and keep our itinerary on our website: cbjtouramerica.shutterfly.com. You are welcome to follow us.

So far the best park we have visited is Chula Vista RV & Marina Resort.

Candy and Bill Jameson
Vancouver, Washington

Paradise Point RV Resort

We have a Doberman who travels with us everywhere. Unfortunately, many parks do not permit visitors to have Dobermans. Friends recommended Paradise Pointe RV Resort in East Naples, Florida, as a great park that also accepted Dobermans. We visited the park for several days and would like to recommend it to others. We would like to highly recommend Paradise Pointe. The staff were friendly to us "newbies." We met some wonderful people and plan to go back there next year.

Gary & Joyce Weiss
Canonsburg, Pennsylvania

We Visited Three National Parks Last Fall, Plus Much More

We thoroughly enjoy our 2009 Phaeton 40QTH. Last fall we went to southern California to see three national parks we had missed on earlier trips. We also visited our great RV friends, Mike and Jan Hillenbrand in Indio. They told us about Randsburg, a small California town (pop. 200) where they once lived and owned a general store, a motel, and a B&B. It is

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Georgia's Golden Isles

Cumberland Island



Text by Fred Thompson

Nearly 250 years ago, Sir Robert Montgomery, a Scottish nobleman, published a 75-page booklet entitled *The Most Delightful Golden Isles, being a proposal for the establishment of a colony in the country to the south of Carolina*.

The treatise was republished in 1969 by Ken Boyd, the proprietor of Cherokee Publishing Company. Sir Robert and his co-author, Colonel John Barnwell, proposed the establishment of a new colony on the barrier islands of Ossabaw, St. Catherines, Sapelo, and St. Simons. To promote the business venture, they called the islands “an earthly paradise” and referred to them several times as the “Golden Islands.”

While the description of the islands – the Golden Isles – survived, the Montgomery–Barnwell venture found few willing to take the obvious risks. Fifteen years later in 1732 George II selected the territory between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers and chartered it for twenty-one years as the colony of Georgia, placing it under the control of a board of trustees of twenty-one prominent Englishmen represented by General James Oglethorpe.

When the 37-year-old Oglethorpe arrived in January 1733 with 114 colonists, he developed a lasting friendship with 90-year-old Chief Tomochichi. Ap-

parently believing there was plenty of land for all, the chief arranged for a peaceful transition of the territory to Great Britain, beginning with the site that eventually became Savannah.

In 1734 Oglethorpe persuaded Tomochichi, Senauki his wife, and their adopted son Toonahowie, and a selected number of the Creek tribe to accompany him to London to meet King George II and his Court. The native Americans were the talk of London as they calmly imposed their plain and simple manner and attire on the “artificiality of Court life.” They were received by the king seated on his throne, dined with members of the royal family, and graciously welcomed by the Archbishop of Canterbury William Wake.

After spending four months in England, Tomochichi, Senauki, and Toonahowie embarked from Gravesend, England, in October for their return trip to Georgia. Toonahowie, a prince in his own right, had developed a strong friendship with the king’s 13-year-old son, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland. As a going away gift, William presented Toonahowie with a gold watch. Toonahowie valued his friendship with the young duke so much he requested the island of San Pedro be renamed Cumberland in honor of William Augustus.

Cumberland Island in Retrospect

No one has better described the contrasts of Georgia's golden islands than Burnette Vanstory in the first paragraph of her book, *Georgia's Land of the Golden Isles*.

The Golden Isles of Georgia, fabulous, beautiful, romantic! From prehistoric time until the present, the saga of these coastal islands is peopled by Indian brave and Spanish don, by priest and pirate, Puritan and Scottish Highlander, by planter, plunderer, soldier, statesman, by slave and millionaire, recluse and vacationer, by seaman, fisherman, and flyer. Their forests have echoed to war whoop and mission bell, to the ax of colonists, the skirl of bagpipes, and the boom of cannon, to the chantey of slave and the rattle of musket, to the roar of the airliner, the clatter of the blimp, and the swift passing of the jet. The islands have known the urgency of war, the gracious life of plantation days, the chaos of destruction, the loneliness of ruin and desolation, the gaiety of year-round vacationers. Their waters have seen Indian canoe and Spanish galleon, black-sailed pirate ship and English gunboat, slave ship and dugout, tramp freighter and shrimper's craft, mahogany yacht and fisherman's bateau; have heard the shrill chatter of the racing boat and the secret whine of the submarine.¹

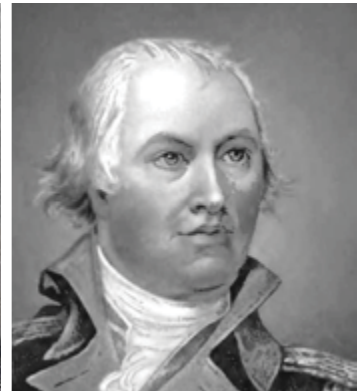
Vanstory, Mary R. Bullard^{2,3} and other authors⁴ provide the brief history of Cumberland offered here. Moving north from their strongholds in Florida, the Spanish came ashore in 1566, named the island San Pedro, and constructed a garrison / mission on the southern end of the island, naming it San Pedro de Mocama. In the next 85 years they established three missions and converted several hundred natives to Catholicism. In 1683 French pirates attacked Cumberland, looted and burned, and caused many of the natives and the Spanish missionaries to flee.

With the Spanish gone, most of the natives died of European diseases for which they had no natural immunity. Laying in dormancy for nearly 50 years, Cumberland was rediscovered by Oglethorpe who built a hunting lodge he called Dungeness. Forts on the northern and southern points were constructed, but after the Spanish were defeated in the Battle of Bloody Marsh in 1742 the need for the forts declined.

At the close of the War for Independence, the grateful people of the Georgia colony presented Mulberry Grove Plantation near Savannah to Gen. Nathanael Greene, who emerged from the war with a reputation as George Washington's most gifted and dependable officer. The general acquired 11,000 acres on Cumberland Island in exchange for a bad debt. He traveled to St.



General James Oglethorpe



General Nathanael Greene

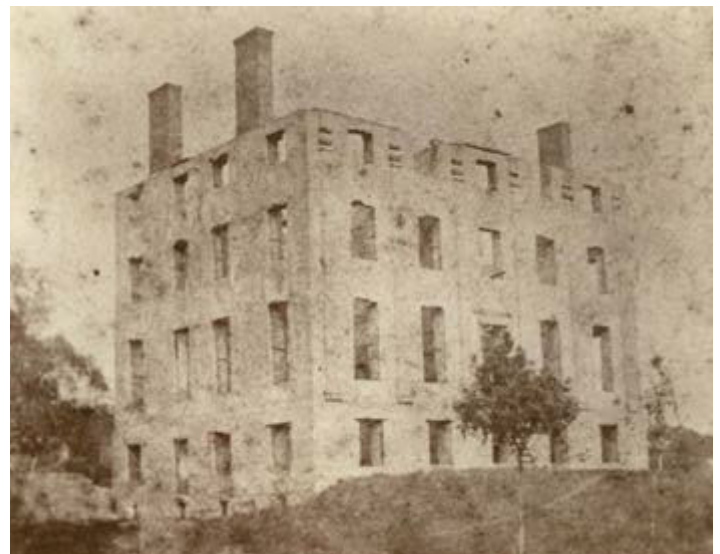
Augustine in 1785 where he may have met Thomas and Robert Stafford, who had plantation experience on the vast holdings of Admiral Sir Edward Hawke in East Florida. Greene hired both men to try cultivating Sea Island cotton on his Cumberland acquisition and to begin harvesting live oaks for ship building. Oak from the island was used to build the USS Constitution ("Old Ironsides").

In a tragic turn of events, Nathanael Greene died suddenly from heat stroke in June 1786. Phineas Miller, initially employed as a tutor, proved his adeptness by 1788 at operating Mulberry Grove as a profitable venture.

In June 1796, Catherine Greene, the general's widow, married Miller, nine years her junior, in Philadelphia's First Presbyterian Church with President and Mrs. George Washington in attendance. Despite previous success, Mulberry Grove fell upon hard times and the Millers sold the estate in 1798 and moved the family to Cumberland Island.

Catharine and Phineas spent several years building an elaborate four-storied mansion, naming it Dungeness, after Oglethorpe's early lodge that had long since deteriorated. When it finally stood complete, it was reported to be "the most elegant residence on the coast." With four symmetrical chimneys to

The Millers' Dungeness from a photograph soon after it burned in 1866.



1. Burnette Vanstory, *Georgia's Land of the Golden Isles* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), 1ff.

2. Mary R. Bullard, *Cumberland Island: A History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 1ff.

3. Mary R. Bullard, *Robert Stafford of Cumberland Island: Growth of a Planter* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 1ff.

4. Maggie Carter-de Vries, *Amelia's Secrets: An Historical Novel* (Bloomington: Author House, 2008), 1ff.

serve its sixteen fireplaces, the perfectly proportioned house was surrounded by 12 acres of gardens and terraces. Both of the Greene daughters were married at Dungeness in elegant weddings. Catherine Greene Miller had long been known as “one of the most charming hostesses in the nation, . . . and the great mansion on Cumberland briefly became the center of a social life equaled by few plantations in the country.”

Miller became involved in local politics and worked successfully with Thomas and Robert Stafford. Thomas Stafford died in 1800 leaving his wife Lucy and Robert Thomas, a precocious 10-year-old. Impressed with young Robert Stafford who often played with the Greene children, Miller arranged for him to be schooled in Connecticut.

A land dispute based on alleged errors in earlier surveys caused the validity of Catharine Greene Miller’s claim to the general’s estate to be challenged in court. After a federal marshal ordered the sale of all the Greens’ Georgia properties in the summer of 1800, Dr. Lemuel Kollock of Savannah bought tract 1 on which Dungeness was being constructed and presented it to Catharine Miller, his friend and client. Catharine’s children acquired other tracts that eventually restored most of General Greene’s original acquisition.

Phineas Miller died in 1803 from blood poisoning initially caused by a puncture wound from a large thorn bush that became infected. Ray Sands, Catharine’s brother-in-law, took over the administrative management of the estate with the assistance of Louisa Greene. At her death in September 1814, Catharine was poor in cash, but rich in slave capital with the ownership of 210 slaves. By 1815 the Greene family was operating three successful Cumberland plantations: Rayfield, Littlefield, and Dungeness, each with its own cotton house, three stories high and capable of storing the harvest until it could bring the best price.

It usually took 1500 pounds of unginned cotton to make one 300-lb. bale. One bale required the labor of 53 people: a dryer, 30 sorters, 12 ginner (operating a Whitney hand-cranked gin), seven moters (graders), two packers, and one overseer.

In February 1818 Dungeness received an unexpected visitor. The ailing Gen. Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee arrived in a schooner whose captain put him ashore in a rowboat. Phineas Miller

Nightingale, the 15-year-old son of Martha Washington Greene and John C. Nightingale, watched from the dock. Learning that Phineas was the grandson of General Greene, he grabbed the boy and said, “Tell Mrs. Shaw [Louisa Greene Shaw] I am come purposely to die in the house and in the arms of the daughter of my old friend and compatriot.” He died March 25, 1818 and was buried in the family cemetery. His son, Robert E. Lee, visited the cemetery in 1832 and marked his grave with a headstone.

Under Louisa Greene Shaw’s leadership, the sibling ownership of the Greene plantations became increasingly fractured. Robert Stafford, educated by Louisa’s stepfather, returned to Cumberland from Connecticut in about 1808 and began farming with his uncle and namesake. In April 1813 he purchased tract 5, a 600-acre cottonfield from Cornelia Green Littlefield.

By 1825, with the exception of Louisa Greene Shaw and her nephew, Phineas Miller Nightingale, most of the Greene children and grandchildren had lost interest in cultivating cotton and further developing the Greene plantations. Louisa’s interest in citriculture produced a grove of 2,000 orange trees. Her process of creating orange crystals produced a product marketable to the military for the prevention of scurvy.

Louisa died in April 1831, leaving her land and slaves to Phineas. Within a month after her death he mortgaged everything and bought tracts 2, 4, 6, 7, and 11 and put all of the property except for tract 2 up for sale or lease to raise capital to develop a citriculture empire. His plan was dashed when the region was hit by a hard freeze in the winter of 1834–35, with temperatures plunging several degrees below zero.

He tried to make a recovery in 1837, but his new trees were killed off by a purple scale. His company had to take bankruptcy in 1839. Intervention by both Phineas’ and Mary Nightingale’s parents avoided complete bankruptcy that allowed them to hold on to Dungeness, but they abandoned it as a full-time residence, returning only for holidays and occasional galas over the next 25 years.

Robert Stafford bought Rayfield Plantation in 1834 from Nathanael Ray Greene and continued to buy land, usually at auction. As parcels came up for sale, Stafford became the largest landholder on Cumberland. By 1861 he owned 8,125 acres, most of which was planted in Sea Island cotton, representing a third of Great Cumberland Island. Had the Civil War not intervened, he would have acquired another 3,300 acres in 1861. During the quarter century from 1840 to 1865, Dungeness was neglected. Used by the Union Army occasionally during the Civil War, it burned to the ground in 1866.

Since cotton farming was a labor-intensive business, maintaining a healthy work force was a necessity. Getting a doctor to visit slave patients on Cumberland was nearly impossible. To take care of the sick, Stafford acquired Elizabeth, a 17-year-old mulatto, from one of his island neighbors, the Bernardeys, a French-speaking family, whom he had assisted in managing their land and field hands. Stafford fathered a daughter with Elizabeth a year later. Mary Elizabeth was born in 1839, and five

Sea Island Cotton

In about 1786, planting of Sea Island cotton, *G. barbadense*, began in the former British North American colonies, on the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia, when cotton planters were brought over from Barbados. Among the earliest planters of Sea Island cotton in America was an Englishman, Francis Levett, who later fled his Georgia plantation at the outbreak of the American Revolution. Sea Island cotton commanded the highest price of all the cottons, due to its long staple (1.5 to 2.5 inches, 35 to 60 mm) and its silky texture.





Robert Stafford (1790–1877) was the most successful planter on Cumberland Island and made shrewd investments in Connecticut that protected his wealth after the Civil War. ♦ Robert Stafford’s house, known as The Planter’s House, was built in 1823 and burned in 1901. ♦ Primus Mitchell was a former slave of Robert Stafford, c. 1917.

more children were born two to three years apart. As they became old enough to leave their mother, each child was boarded with a family in Connecticut and attended a private school. By the late 1840s, Elizabeth made a permanent move to Connecticut

to live with the children. Stafford joined his family when it was not planting and harvest times. In 1853 Stafford built a fine home for his family in Groton, Connecticut, and returned each spring to Cumberland to supervise his plantations with resident managers.

By 1850 Stafford had become a very wealthy man, but the next 15 years would test his mettle to survive. In 1857 he sold a large proportion of his slaves in exchange for railroad stock. His connections with officers in the Union Army allowed him to sell

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cotton from his warehouses at very favorable prices, which allowed him to invest in valuable business properties in Connecticut. By returning to his Cumberland properties at the beginning of the war, he negotiated favorable settlements for the loss of his assets. His banking skills made him seek the best securities for loans. The records show that he never borrowed money, but accumulated wealth by using his capital reserves to expand his businesses.

After the North won the war, Stafford's plantations were in ruins. Most of

the slaves were gone. Disastrous weather ensued for the next two years, and the appearance of the boll weevil destroyed any remaining hopes of coastal planters to rebuild their Sea Island cotton plantations.

Near the end of the Civil War, Elizabeth returned to Cumberland Island and took up residence at Stafford House. When Stafford died in 1877, he left a Connecticut estate worth \$345,000 to his surviving daughters, for whom he had already established viable trusts funded by land acquisitions. He established a trust fund

for Elizabeth who was 30 years his junior.

After inheriting Dungeness from his aunt, Phineas Miller Nightingale's business plans and subsequent failures left him in debt to several creditors, including Robert Stafford who offered to buy the burned remains of Dungeness. Stafford in 1869 took tract 2 (600 acres) in settlement. Edmund Molyneux as a first mortgagor eventually held the notes on Dungeness. His widow, Eliza Molyneux, in July 1870 purchased Dungeness for \$25,000. 

The Carnegie Years

Gen. William George Mackay Davis, a Confederate brigadier general and distant cousin of President Jefferson Davis, was successfully practicing law after the war when he became aware of Cumberland Island, Dungeness, and the potential of the property for the location of a resort hotel. He negotiated with the heirs of Eliza Molyneux and purchased the property in November 1879.

After taking possession of Dungeness, a personal tragedy struck when Gen. Davis' son accidentally shot and killed his five-year-old little boy in March 1880. In August Frederick Ober wrote an extensive story about Dungeness and Cumberland Island for Lippincott's Monthly Magazine and then fortuitously met Thomas and Lucy Carnegie later that month in a Fernandina Beach hotel. After visiting the Cumberland property, Carnegie contacted Davis and offered him \$25,000 for Dungeness and its associated land. Davis rejected the offer and countered at \$40,000. The negotiations languished.

In December 1880 the general's son, Bernard M. Davis, died unexpectedly, compounding the family's tragedy. Both the father and his 5-year-old son were buried in the Greene-Miller cemetery.

After 1929, Dungeness mansion was used infrequently by the Carnegie family. This picture was made early 1950s. The mansion was destroyed by fire in 1959, most likely by an arsonist. ♦ Lucy Coleman Carnegie (1847–1916) photographed with her children on the steps of Dungeness.



The general decided to lower his asking price and offered to sell the property to Carnegie for \$35,000 in May 1881. He simply asked to reserve his right to visit the cemetery and have its future maintenance assured. Finalized in November 1881, the sale included 4,000 acres and the extensive olive and orange groves, gardens, cottages, and the supporting maintenance buildings that surrounded Dungeness.

In April 1882 the adjoining 8,240 acres owned by Stafford's heirs were sold to Thomas Carnegie and his cousin, Leander Morris.

The overgrown skeletal walls of Dungeness and its foundations were demolished and hauled away to make jetties to protect the landing docks for the yachts of future guests. The Carnegies retained Andrew Peebles to design a 59-room Queen Anne style mansion on the site of Catharine Greene's Dungeness, replete with verandas, porches, many turrets, and a


100-foot high tower. The grounds offered pools, a squash court, a golf course, and many smaller buildings to house the mansion's 200 servants. The foundation cornerstone for the new Dungeness was laid on February 26, 1884, and the 6,720 sq. ft. mansion was completed in January 1886 at a cost of \$285,000.

In September 1886 Thomas Carnegie became ill with what he thought was just a cold. His illness persisted into October when he left his office thinking he was suffering from another cold. He died three days later of pneumonia.

Flush with the Carnegie wealth, Lucy remained at Dungeness and built estates for her children: Greyfield for Margaret Carnegie, Plum Orchard for George Lauder Carnegie, and the Stafford Mansion for herself. Nothing remains of Robert Stafford's Planter's House, although a ruin known as "the Chimneys," a series of 24 replicated hearth-and-chimney structures, identify the location of the slave cabins.

Like her predecessor Catharine Greene Miller, Lucy Carnegie was the nation's hostess, filling the new Dungeness mansion with visitors who shared her delight in Cumberland's magnificent semitropical ecology.

The Carnegies last use of Dungeness was for the 1929 wedding of a Carnegie daughter. With the onset of the Great Depression, the family left the island, leaving the vacant mansion under the oversight of one caretaker. It burned in a 1959 fire believed to have been arson.

Five years prior to the loss of the elegant mansion, several members of the Carnegie family in 1954 asked the National Park Service to evaluate the property for its suitability as a national seashore. After extended deliberations over the next 18 years with several agencies and advisors, Congress passed a bill establishing Cumberland Island as a national seashore. The bill was signed by President Nixon on October 23, 1972. 



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Cumberland Island Today

by Wendy Joyce



PHOTOS BY WENDY JOYCE

AFTER A PLEASANT MARCH EVENING in our coach at A Big Wheel RV Park in St. Marys, Georgia, we awakened to a very foggy southeast Georgia morning. We held reservations for the “Lands and Legacies” van tour of Cumberland Island, a five- to six-hour guided excursion that begins on the southern end of the island at Sea Camp and takes you to The Settlement and Cumberland Wharf ruins on the northern end. Several stops along the way include Robert Stafford’s plantation and cemetery and the Plum Orchard mansion built by the Carnegies. We arrived at the St. Marys wharf at 8:15, giving us time for parking and getting in by the 8:30 deadline. Reservation holders must formally check in at least 30 minutes ahead of the 9 a.m. ferry departure or chance losing their seats to “walk-ins.”

Aboard the ferry, *Cumberland Princess*, we were joined by others heading to this captivating wilderness island located just to the north of Amelia Island, Florida. Although the morning fog persisted, we were assured the Cumberland ferry crew was quite familiar with operating in these conditions.

There aren’t many places in the world where one can see wild horses grazing along the beach of a secluded barrier island frozen in time, or visit sites where the crumbling ruins of a mansion hint of the grandeur of nineteenth-century days past and a restored 22,000 square-foot home reflects a high society lifestyle that most of us can only imagine. While civilization has left indelible marks on Cumberland, over 90 percent of the island is an untouched, undeveloped, protected U.S. national seashore. If you’re interested in both a beautiful, natural setting and 500 years of fascinating history, treat yourself to a visit to Cumberland Island, Georgia, the largest of the barrier islands protecting the state’s 150-mile coastline. The island measures about 17.5 miles long by 3 miles across at its widest point, features one of the largest maritime forests in the U.S., and contains the largest wilderness area in a national seashore on the eastern seaboard.

Waiting for the ferry to depart from St. Marys, sand gnats (also called “no-see-ums”) were making their presence felt. Here in the south, gnats and marshes go together like salt and pepper. We wondered whether it would be a brutal, buggy day over on the island. Most of us on the ferry were day-trippers. Some, though, were heavily laden with camping backpacks, coolers, and gear, heading to Cumberland’s Sea Camp campground and ferry dock that offers restrooms, cold showers, and picnic tables.

The island is accessible only by a park concessioner’s ferry from St. Marys, Georgia to Sea Camp or by a private launch that transports guests from Fernandina Beach, Florida to Greyfield Inn, the only lodging offered on the island (another story we will get to later). If you do not opt for the Lands and Legacies Tour, you have two options: hiking or renting a bicycle at Sea Camp.

Picture in your mind for a moment a place with no stores, no street lights, no paved roads, no public transportation, and restricted daily access to the public. Day-trippers must pack all food and beverages for the day. Anything (including trash) brought onto the island goes back to the mainland with you on the return ferry.

Cumberland is almost uninhabited, with the exception of a few island dwellers whose private homes and property were retained permanently (not sold) or given life estates when the National Park Service acquired most of the island in 1972. The other island residents are marsh rabbits, alligators, snakes, nesting sea turtles, deer (and ticks), bobcats, raccoons, armadillos, feral hogs, wild horses, turkeys, and so much more wildlife. It’s an amazing place for birding, too.

Cumberland Island is a feast for the eyes and the soul. You may not want to rush back to the twenty-first century after glimpsing a simpler time and a natural paradise. It’s easy to dream about what it would be like to live on this island sheltered from the congestion of automobile traffic, shopping malls, high



PHOTO BY BOB BRIDWELL

rise condominiums, cable television, and the intrusive internet.

Visitors can enjoy solitary walks on miles of tranquil, deserted beaches. The dune system on the island is vast and inspires awe — primary dunes and rear dunes — and visitors walk along paths to the beach through an interdune meadow. Cumberland Island National Seashore features miles of empty beaches marked by the tracks of the resident wildlife. Hiking through the trails on Cumberland, you notice the quiet stillness of the forest, interrupted only by rustling leaves in the breeze or an animal scampering into the underbrush.

The morning fog soon cleared to bright sunshine on the western side of the island. Those who visit Cumberland Island, particularly in winter months, know the sea fog can suddenly roll in and engulf the island, sometimes hanging there all day long.

Dungeness Ruins

For those who decide to take a self-guided tour at your own pace, the NPS ferry's first stop is at the Dungeness dock. Soon after arrival, a park ranger will offer a presentation at the ruins site. After the ranger's lecture, you can explore the area, visit the Carnegie Ice House Museum, or walk to the ruins, entering the property under the remnants of the walled gates. It is a grand entrance, framing the mansion's skeleton as it comes into view along the trail. If you missed the ranger's talk, you can listen to an audio tour on your cell phone.

Destroyed by fire in 1959, Dungeness is the most visited place on the island. It was built in the mid-1880s on the site of Catharine Greene Miller's mansion, also named Dungeness, that was destroyed by fire in 1866. A visit to the grounds promises a unique look back, as your mind's eye pictures the grand parties and the famous high society families who frequented this home for more than 40 years, including the Vanderbilts, Morgans, Duponts, and most of the titans of American industry. When approaching the island from the water, you'll see the chimney stacks of Dungeness extending above the tree canopy.

Thomas Carnegie's death in October 1886 was a serious blow to his brother Andrew Carnegie's financial interests since Thomas had run most of Andrew's enterprises. Andrew urged Lucy, Thomas' wife, to sell out to him, but she refused and retained Thomas' ownership in the Carnegie businesses. Her decision led to major increases in her personal wealth throughout the remainder of her life.

One can often see the wild horses grazing around the mansion grounds. When Dungeness burned to the ground, it left only brick chimneys and a stone skeleton. Like a monument of



The Ruins of the Carnegies' Dungeness

tragedy, a huge, dry fountain stands overlooking vast marshlands—a reminder of the home’s grand past. The mansion’s recreational building that housed a billiard room, a gym, squash courts, guest rooms, and indoor swimming pool was a pile of rotting wood for many years (not touched by fire, but rather time and neglect). Today, most of the wood is gone except a few pieces of dilapidated walls, along with the brick foundation and chimney beyond a fence posted with a “Danger Keep Out” sign.

It’s the same tale for other structures on this island — fallen into the ground from years gone by unattended—carriage houses, greenhouses, cottages, and buildings. Fingers point to the National Park Service’s absence of care and funding. Before it became a national seashore, around 90 percent of Cumberland was owned by the Carnegies. The Dungeness area was a small village requiring a staff of 200 who lived on the island to keep the homes and gardens operational.

Today only the ruins are left. The loss of the Carnegies’ home was a tragic repetition of history. Owned by the descendants of Revolutionary War hero Gen. Nathanael Greene, the original Dungeness by the late 1840s had been a working plantation for 50 years. The mansion burned in 1866. After continuous financial mismanagement, the remains of the mansion and its accompanying land were purchased by Eliza Molyneux in 1870. Molyneux’s heirs sold the ruins and its accompanying plantations in November 1879 to an officer of the Confederate States of America, General William George Mackay Davis.

Just two years later the Carnegies purchased the property from General Davis for the sum of \$35,000. The Carnegie family built a new Dungeness mansion, starting construction in 1884 and completing it two years later at an estimated cost of \$200,000 (one record says \$285,000 including furnishings).

To keep this incredible island from the

hands of developers, much of the island’s privately-owned land was sold to the U.S. government in 1972, forming the Cumberland Island National Seashore. The park’s formation saved this mostly wild southern island for future generations.

While much of the island is thick maritime forest, don’t miss exploring around Sea Camp’s area of tangled, wind-swept oaks that are particularly beautiful near the camp sites bordering the beachfront. This is a good beach access point where one can walk to the island’s eastern shore and beaches on a wooden walkover through the expansive interdunes. Amazing natural scenery abounds along the shoreline with abundant shorebirds and shells. Sometimes the feral horses are also seen along the beach and in the nearby dunes at Sea Camp. It’s likely you’ve never seen such a natural shoreline, unmarred by any commercial development—no hotels along the beach or hordes of tourists. Consider that Cumberland is larger in square miles than Manhattan.

Lands And Legacies Tour

After our visit to Dungeness, the beach, and Sea Camp, we boarded the van for the Lands and Legacies Tour,

ready for the long trip along the island’s main north–south corridor, Grand Avenue, with landmark stops along the way. On our way to Plum Orchard, the man-

sion built by Lucy Carnegie in 1898 as a wedding gift for her son, George Lauder Carnegie, we stopped briefly at the cemetery where we viewed Robert Stafford’s headstone (1790–1877). He played a huge role in the agricultural and economic development of the Sea Island long staple cotton, grown extensively on Cumberland prior to the Civil War.

Wild horses grazed in the marsh grass along the riverbank at Plum Orchard, like a scene from an idyllic painting. Not far from the ferry dock stands a picturesque, octagonal-shaped shed on the riverbank flanked by huge oak trees. Walking along, visitors are greeted by Plum Orchard’s expansive grounds, dotted with ancient, stately oak trees draped in “tree hair” (that’s what the Indians called it). The Spanish moss adds to the distinctly southern landscape, along with the native palmettos, cabbage, and sago palms. Brilliant white, the sun-bleached mansion gleamed against the deep blue sky on this warm afternoon.



PHOTO BY BOB BRIDWELL



PHOTO BY BOB BRIDWELL

Plum Orchard

The Plum Orchard tour takes visitors through various rooms of the home (and even into the basement level). Today our host was a ranger with almost three decades of experience working on this enchanting sea island just off Georgia's mainland.

Folks on the tour heard lots of historic details about this beautiful Carnegie home and life on the island. The home's highlights include the front entrance hall and its focal point—an arched alcove (the inglenook) with a large fireplace flanked by benches. What a spot to sit by the fire! The walls are covered with burlap wallpaper featuring a griffin pattern. The room also features an authentic Tiffany lamp hanging above the table in the front hall. According to the ranger, this Tiffany is valued at around \$180,000.

But that seems like pocket change compared to the two Tiffany lamps that hang in the adjacent game room, custom made to resemble the shell of a tortoise. The Tiffany duo are potentially worth around \$5 million each.

The original elegance of the mansion with 30 main rooms and 12 bathrooms has been restored, featuring parquet floors, intricate trim woodwork and cabinetry, and all of the modern conveniences of that era including an elevator. One record indicates that Plum Orchard was built for a



PHOTOS BY WENDY JOYCE

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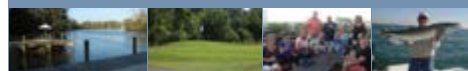


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mere \$50,000. Compared to known building costs and architectural fees for Dungeness, a realistic price tag for Plum Orchard would be well over \$100,000.

The large hallway bell was rung once to beckon the servants, twice when someone approached on the driveway, and sounded violently as an alarm in an emergency. The bell is engraved “CARNEGIE—Plum Orchard—October 6, 1898—Ring in Joyous Remembrance.”

Most will discover that a day spent on Cumberland Island will also be one worthy of joyous remembrance.

Cumberland's Wild Horses

Cumberland has a population of feral horses that roam the island. They subsist on the island's natural bounty—its marsh grasses and sea oats. Recent DNA research indicates the feral horses seen on

Cumberland today most likely originated from domestic stock released on the island in the early 1900s.

During an earlier excursion to Cumberland, six wild horses approached our group along Grand Avenue. We slowly walked past them on the trail. Seemingly tame, the horses did not live up to their “wild” name, and just sauntered over to the side of the path and stepped partially into the forest. They observed us with curiosity as we passed, but just stood there, using their long tails to swat the mosquitoes that seemed to be hanging around them. After we went by, the horses returned to the middle of the trail and continued on their way in the opposite direction. However, the Park Service warns visitors not to approach the feral horses or try to feed them, as they can sometimes be dangerous.

The Settlement

Before 1800, Cumberland Island was sparsely populated. Plantations experimenting with the long-staple Sea Island cotton were just beginning to realize the possibilities that the climate and the soil offered. By 1850 the census records showed more than 500 slaves, with a black-white ratio of 7-to-1.

Before the end of the Civil War, Gen. William T. Sherman issued Special Field Order #15 that provided 40 acres to each former slave family. By June 1865, over 40,000 Freedmen had been settled in the Sea Islands area, working over 400,000 acres of land. However, on Cumberland

Island, most of the land on which the cotton plantations had flourished ultimately remained in the hands of its titled owners. A small Freedmen's settlement developed on Cumberland that focused on subsistence farming. Their religious, social, and political life eventually gravitated to the north end of the island. In the 1890s an area known as The Settlement clustered around the First African Baptist Church that met in a very small one-room building. Rebuilt in the 1930s, The Settlement and the tiny church was the last stop on our Lands and Legacies Tour.



First African Baptist Church in The Settlement

PHOTO BY BOB BRIDWELL

The Greyfield Inn

The Greyfield Day Package is a nice opportunity to see this historic Carnegie estate (without having to book lodging for the usual two-night minimum stay). This special day trip is offered Monday through Thursday (excludes holidays) via the Greyfield Inn's private launch, the Lucy R. Ferguson. It leaves from Fernandina Beach's downtown docks at 9:30 a.m. Arrive at the dock at 9:00 for the 45-minute cruise to Greyfield. The return trip leaves at 3:30 p.m. from the Greyfield dock heading back to Fernandina.

Visitors are greeted at the Greyfield dock by a staff member, followed by a brief tour of the home's general areas. The day trip package includes a bicycle, picnic lunch, non-alcoholic beverages during the day, plus the use of beach and fishing equipment. The day trip package is \$119.95 per person, including tax and gratuity.

There's ample time to also take a self-guided tour of the ruins of Dungeness, a 2-mile bike ride south of Greyfield. For the more ambitious, a 6-mile bike ride north of Greyfield will afford a visit to the Plum Orchard estate and an opportunity to explore the grounds. Visitors can also try to catch the National Park Service's 1 p.m. tour inside the Plum Orchard mansion, usually given daily by park volunteers.

With time constraints, Greyfield's day trip visitors will likely have to choose between these two additional historic landmarks. Or just make it a leisurely day spent at the Greyfield estate with the option to venture over to the island's empty shoreline for a swim or beachcombing. The inn is located on the western side of the island along the marshfront, a site where the island is only a half mile across. The Atlantic beach is a lovely 15-minute walk from the Inn along a shaded trail. It is much less arduous than the trek to the beach from the Dungeness area.

For complete information, call the Greyfield office toll free (9-5 p.m.) at 888-241-6408. In Fernandina, call local number 904-261-6408. The “Lucy R. Ferguson” will take up to six people on these special day-trip excursions. Reservations are required at least 24 hours ahead.



The Greyfield Inn

PHOTO BY WENDY JOYCE

Cumberland's Isolation Often Attracts Celebrities.

Even though 90 percent of the island is a national park, only 300 visitors per day may enter the park by reservation, which is further controlled by the ferry service departing from St. Marys each morning at 9:00 sharp. Many celebrities visit Cumberland to enjoy the remote solitude, including the late John F. Kennedy, Jr. and his wife, Carolyn Bessette. With their daily lives sometimes overwhelmed by the paparazzi, they chose the natural setting and seclusion of Cumberland Island for their secretive wedding in the tiny sanctuary of the First African Baptist Church on the north end of the island. The Greyfield Inn blocked several days from their reservations and together they pulled off quite a coup d'état on the national press, who learned of the wedding several days after the fact. Cumberland was one of John's favorite escapes, having visited the island since he was a teenager.

Picnicking, beachcombing on miles of deserted beaches, and hiking along paths

and sandy, unpaved roads cut through the maritime forest of Cumberland Island are just a few of the pleasant interludes awaiting visitors. And the peaceful solitude of nature — and not much else. Even the forest, with its variety of oaks, looks windswept and timeless. The natural palmetto is thick, as is the Spanish moss-laden canopy of the centuries-old oaks.

It's difficult to describe the natural delight of this untouched barrier island that likely looks the same as it did a century ago, even two centuries ago. It's a priceless jewel that thankfully has been preserved for the people.

But it may not have remained this way if real estate developer Charles Fraser had not abandoned his plans to develop Cumberland Island. His success with the Sea Pines Plantation in Hilton Head, South Carolina gave him the confidence in 1969 to buy 3,100 acres on Cumberland Island for \$1,550,000 from three great-grandsons of Thomas Carnegie. The land represented one-fifth of the Carnegie holdings on the island. Fraser had planned to build houses, apartments, marinas, a golf course, an air strip, shopping, a hospital, and more. Thankfully, he was unsuccessful in his effort to develop the island, allowing Cumberland to remain in its wild and natural state.

Island residents and several environmental organizations banded together with the Department of the Interior to support the acquisition of Cumberland by the National Park Service. For most residents, it became a personal sacrifice when they were required to sell their property on Cumberland in order to preserve it—an indication of how dear to their hearts Cumberland was to those who knew it best. Furthermore, donations by the Carnegies and funds from supporting foundations helped to win Congressional approval to turn Cumberland into a protected national seashore. Rights of land use and occupancy were granted to landowners for the remainder of their lives, but those rights have begun to expire and some properties have recently been turned over to the National Park Service.

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Getting to Cumberland Island

You can't drive to Cumberland Island (there's no bridge), so you must take a ferry. To reach Cumberland Island from I-95, take Exit 3. At the end of the ramp (traffic light), turn east on Hwy 40 East (also named Osborne Street). When you enter the historic district, turn right at the stop sign onto St. Marys Street. The NPS Visitor Center in the blue building and the ferry dock are both located on the left. GPS users should enter 113 St. Marys Street, St. Marys GA 31558. Both day and overnight parking is located behind the NPS Administrative Building (the Bachlot House) across St. Marys Street from the waterfront park. No overnight camping is allowed in the parking areas.

General Information Before You Go

Public access is limited to a maximum of 300 people per day. Ferry reservations can be reserved up to six months in advance. Be warned: if you miss the last ferry back to St. Marys from Cumberland at the end of a day trip, you will be required to charter a private boat to return to the mainland.

A note of advice for parents: Other than the 5-to-6-hour-long Lands and Legacies Tour, there is no motorized transportation once you set foot on the island. So plan on lots of walking about on Cumberland. There are bikes available for rent at Cumberland's Sea Camp (first come, first serve). Check with the ferry deck hands to rent bicycles. Those with young children need to realize that an excursion to Cumberland may not be ideal for your little ones. You'll likely end up carrying children who tire, and pushing strollers around in the sand may prove to be a real chore. You may wish to make arrangements for childcare and treat yourself to some quiet time with your camera.

Be sure to wear sneakers or comfortable walking shoes, pack a lunch, snacks, drinks, sun screen and bug spray. There are no garbage cans for disposal of your trash. Thus, anything you carry onto the island you must carry out. The heat and humidity of the summer may be a less "user-friendly" time for some to visit the island (especially those who aren't used to being outside for extended times walking around). Early spring, late fall, and winter are ideal times for exploring and hiking when you have cooler temps and fewer insects.

Reservations & Tickets

Buy ferry and tour tickets before you arrive by dialing 877-860-6787 or 912-882-4335. Download the fax form to buy ferry tickets at nps.gov/cuis/siteindex.htm. Click on "fax" to download the form that you can return via fax to the number shown. You can also make ferry reservations online at cumberlandislandferry.com Note: No cars, motorcycles, bikes, kayaks, or pets are allowed on the ferry.

Fees & Passes

• **National park entrance fee:** \$4.00 (waived if you hold the Golden Age Passport or the Senior Pass)

• **Cumberland Queen & Cumberland Princess Ferries:** Adults \$25 RT plus tax; Seniors \$23 RT plus tax (65+); Child \$15 RT plus tax (12 & under). Reservations can be made up to six months in advance. Ticket holders for the ferry must check in at the Cumberland Island National Seashore Visitor Center 30 minutes before the 9 a.m. departure time or reservation will be canceled.

• **Lands and Legacies Tour:** Adults \$15; Seniors \$12 (62+); Child \$12 (15 & under). The tour is approximately 26 miles round trip by van and features stops at Plum Orchard and The Settlement, the location of the tiny First African Baptist Church made famous when the late John F. Kennedy Jr. and the late Carolyn Bessette were married there in 1995. The driver will make other stops at his discretion.

Note: A new NPS concession contract for a vendor to take over the Lands and Legacies Tour from the National Park Service was out for bid at this writing. Informed sources expect the fee for the tour to increase sharply later this year to allow the new concessioner to cover the costs of the tour and turn a modest profit.

Visitor Centers & Museum

• **Cumberland Island National Seashore Visitor Center** is open daily 8-4; closed Dec. 25. Located at the wharf in St. Marys.

• **Mainland Museum** at 129 Osborne St., St. Marys. Hours: 1-4 daily; 10-4 Sat.

• **Sea Camp Visitor Center** at the Sea Camp dock on Cumberland Island. Hours: 10-4:30 daily.

• **The Carnegie Ice House Museum** at Dungeness. Hours: 10-4:30 daily.

Ferry Schedules

March 1 to November 30: Departs St. Marys at 9 and 11:45 a.m. Departs Cumberland at 10:15 a.m. and 4:45 p.m. daily.

March 1 to August 31: An additional departure from Cumberland at 2:45 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

December 1 to February 28: Ferry operates Thursday through Monday. Departs St. Marys at 9 and 11:45 a.m. Departs Cumberland at 10:15 a.m. and 4:45 p.m.

Other Tours

• **"Footsteps" Tour:** Ranger-guided tours of the Dungeness Historic District are offered daily based on staff availability. Tour begins at Dungeness Dock at 10 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. The one-hour tour covers about a mile in distance and concludes at the restroom-picnic

area. A self-guided cell phone tour is available 24/7 by dialing 912-268-3170 and pressing "4." Listen to a more extensive account of the island's history by starting with "1" and continuing through to "9."

• **"Plum Orchard" Tour:** Plum Orchard was built in 1898 as a wedding gift by Lucy Carnegie for George, her sixth child. It is included on the "Lands and Legacies" Tour and offered otherwise when a ranger or volunteer caretakers are in residence. The 22,000 sq. ft. mansion may also be reached by an 8-mile bike ride from Sea Camp. Ask the Sea Camp ranger if tours are available on a given day.

• **"Dockside" Program:** A 30-minute program is presented daily at 4 p.m. at the Sea Camp Ranger Station. The programs highlight a variety of cultural and natural history topics and are often seasonal.

Our Recommendation

Plan to spend two days on Cumberland Island. Do the Greyfield Inn Tour one day and the Lands and Legacies Tour the next day.

MORE CONTACT INFORMATION

Cumberland Island National Seashore

101 Wheeler Street
St. Marys, GA 31558
912-882-4336 office; 912-882-2651 fax
nps.gov/cuis/siteindex.htm

Cumberland Queen

P.O. Box 1203
St. Marys, GA 31558
912-882-4335 office; 877-860-6787 toll free
912-673-7747 fax

Campgrounds

A Big Wheel RV Park

6031 Charlie Smith Sr Hwy
St. Marys, GA 31558
912-576-5386
50/30 amp, water, sewer, WiFi, \$35. Nice separation between sites karen@abigwheelrvpark.com. If you decide to do the Lands and Legacies Tour, this would be the best park to use for proximity to ferry.

Fort Clinch State Park

2601 Atlantic Avenue
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034
904-277-7274
50/30 amp, water, dump station, \$29. If you decide to do the Greyfield Inn Tour, this is the best park for proximity to ferry.

Wendy Joyce worked for a newspaper in the Northeast, held a position in PR/investor relations at a Fortune 100 company, and served as a managing editor at an investment research firm. She now enjoys living in the South near the beach at the Florida-Georgia border and doing freelance writing and photography focused on coastal ecology.

Interviews from Florida



Ron and Lily Bogner

Hometown: Frankford, Illinois
Interviewed: Silver Springs, Florida

- Ron and Lily travel in a 2008 Phaeton 40QSH with a 360 HP Cummins on a Freightliner chassis which is their very first motorhome. It was purchased in Joliet, IL.
- Ron's previous employment was for the Federal Reserve building development office and Lily was an office manager for a doctor.
- Ron was originally from Buffalo and Lily from Manila. They have two daughters and grandchildren, Noah 4 and Jeremy 6.
- Their favorite traveling companion is their cat Toby.
- They love to spend winters in Florida where they purchased a lot at the Wilderness RV Park Resort in Silver Springs, FL, which he created into a beautiful oasis.
- Going to the balloon festival in New Mexico and traveling in Colorado were favorite past trips.
- Ron loves plants and trees and works constantly on their lot keeping it looking great.
- Previous camping was in tents and a Volkswagen minibus.
- They love the freedom to go where and when they want after retirement.
- Favorite state from past camping trips is Colorado, and they enjoyed an RV rally in New Hampshire.
- Future traveling plans include visiting the Maritime Provinces and cross country to see state and federal parks.



Dave and Barbara Hahn

Hometown: Waterford, Connecticut
Interviewed: Silver Springs State Park, Florida

- Their first RV was a Four Winds that was 20 years old with 40,000 miles. They now travel in a 2014 Allegro 35QBA purchased new at the Alpine Haus in NY.
- Children: Jennifer, Richie, and Christopher. They also have 5 grandchildren.
- Dave is a retired engineer and former charter boat captain. One of his passions is classic cars. He currently owns a very rare 1938 Chevy Sedan Delivery and his dingy is a 1964 Volvo.
- One of their passions is following drag racing. Dave & Barbara have a goal to see all the NHRA (National Hot Rod Association) drag racing events around the US. Their favorite is the Thunder Valley drag race in Bristol, TN. They are now on the road more than at home.
- They also use their motorhome to travel around the country and meet up with their son Richie who has a goal of running a marathon in every state. He did the Lake Placid Ironman and one in Georgia which was his sixteenth event.
- Camping clubs include Good Sam, Thousand Trails, and Allegro Club, and their favorite campgrounds are the national parks.
- Bucket list: To go back out west to see Glacier National Park and travel along the Pacific Coast Highway.
- You can follow Dave & Barbara's adventures in NHRA drag racing on their blog at: Barb-adventures.net



Hughes and Mary Simmons

Hometown: Evansville, Indiana
Interviewed: Sarasota, Florida

- Motorhome: New 2015 Phaeton 40QBH with a Freightliner chassis and 380-hp Cummins which they purchased Oct. 31 from Tom Raper RV in Richland, IN. They purchased their first motorhome in 1994.
- Married 24 years; Hughes has 5 children from a previous marriage with 9 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.
- They developed the area where they live, including 4 houses for family.
- They enjoy traveling for 4½ months a year with their rescue dog Tootsie Belle.
- They bought their first motorhome in 1994 so their dog could go with them. They're now on their 4th motorhome and 3rd dog.
- Hughes retired from Brown & Williamson in 1991; Mary retired from banking in 1994.
- Their motor home stops at all casinos, and if Mary is lucky, an occasional outlet mall.
- Hughes collects poker chips from all of the casinos they visit.
- They love Florida in the winter and Michigan in the summer. A favorite spot was the Maine coastline, and they have traveled in all of the 48 contiguous states except North Dakota.
- Future travel plans: To revisit San Antonio and the casinos in Louisiana.
- They stated: "RVing is a wonderful way to travel and see the sights while meeting great fellow travelers."



Editor's Note: Dave has been camping for 52 years in tents to motorhomes. Dave and Terri purchased a new 2008 Phaeton 40QSH. In 2010, they sold their home and purchased a 2.8 acre lot in the Berkshire Mountains (Peru, MA) for summer use. They named their mini-campground "Beech-Wood Acres." In 2012 they purchased an RV lot at Wilderness RV Park Estate in Silver Springs for use in the winter months. Dave and Terri are now full-timers who are living their dream.

Is Fido Fat? Is Your Tabby Flabby?

Dr. John Pilarczyk, editor

IF YOUR PET is like most American pets (and most American humans, for that matter), he or she is probably carrying around some extra poundage. About 53 percent of dogs and 58 percent of cats are overweight or obese, according to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (yes, sadly, there is such an organization). Part of the problem is that many owners don't see their pets as fat—perhaps because many of them are overweight themselves.

It's not just a matter of aesthetics. As in people, being overweight poses many health risks for pets. Extra weight puts extra stress on joints and increases the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and cancer. It affects respiratory, kidney, liver, digestive, and immune function and reduces quality of life and life span. Overweight pets have less stamina and greater difficulty tolerating hot weather. And they are more susceptible to skin diseases because bacteria and fungi can nestle in extra skin folds. A fat cat or dog is also at higher risk for complications from anesthesia if that is needed (such as during a teeth cleaning).

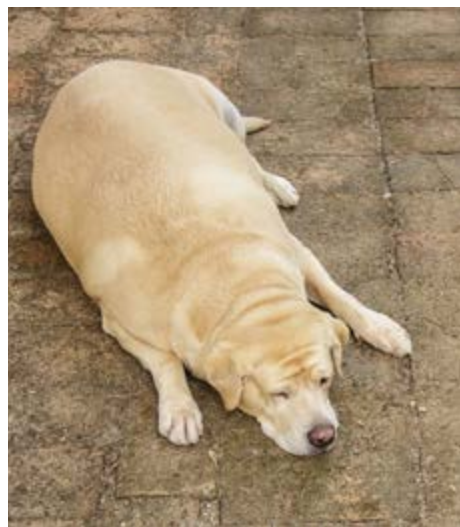
How Did Our Pets Get So Fat?

Pets gain weight the same way their owners do: by eating too much and exercising too little. Many pets will overeat if given the chance — perhaps a residual behavior that was an evolutionary advantage for their wild ancestors, who had to hunt and then feast to stave off periods of famine. Some pets may also be “emotional eaters,” just as some people eat in

response to stress, anxiety, depression, frustration, or boredom. Many owners assume their pets will self-regulate their food intake if food is left out for them, but as a 2012 study in *Behavioral Ecology* found some dogs eat more than twice the calories needed when given excess food.

How Can You Tell If Your Dog Or Cat Is Overweight?

You should be able to feel his or her ribs (and even the spaces between the ribs) through a thin layer of fat. And as viewed from above, your pet should have an hourglass figure. When looking from the side, the tummy should be tucked up at the flank area, not level with the rest of the body or sagging — though this can be hard to see if your pet is very furry. (For a visual, go to tinyurl.com/pet-body-chart) Your vet can also confirm whether or not your pet is overweight or obese.



How To Keep Your Pet Svelte

Ask your vet how many calories your pet should consume (you can't always go by the feeding guidelines on pet food, since those are based on animals fed under laboratory conditions). Then figure out how many cups or cans of food to give based on the calorie information listed on the package (if not provided, check online or call the manufacturer). Measure portions precisely — don't guesstimate. If you switch foods, be aware that calories can vary a lot between brands and types of food.

It is okay to use treats as a reward for good behavior, but make sure you count them toward your pet's daily calories. Calories from nibbling here and there — including from table scraps — add up quickly. Just an extra 20 calories a day can lead to a weight gain of about two pounds a year, which is a lot for a small pet in particular.

Make your cat “hunt” for food. Puzzle feeders are food-dispensing devices that come in different designs, from simple to complex. As your cat manipulates it — by rolling a tube or ball, for example — the food is released. Not only does this physically and mentally stimulate your cat, it also slows eating (which is also good if your cat is prone to vomiting from eating too fast). You can find puzzle feeders at pet stores and online, or you can make your own (for one idea, go to tinyurl.com/puzzle-feeder).

Make sure your pet gets enough exercise (ideally 20 to 30 minutes a day) which

may help keep you active too. Play fetch, run, or swim with your dog; take brisk walks together. Let him or her romp in a dog run. If your dog has been sedentary, start off gradually and watch out for heat exhaustion. Getting older cats to play is more of a challenge, but many still like to chase feathers, toys on strings, “cat dancers,” and laser lights (avoid pointing in their eyes); some even fetch. Catnip toys may also get them moving.

If your pet seems hungry all the time, there could be a medical reason (such as a thyroid problem or early diabetes). If that has been ruled out by your vet, the behavior could be a sign of some kind of psychological distress. Restricting food intake without providing an alternative coping mechanism may worsen the problem. Instead, try to identify and remedy the cause of the stress. Enriching your pet's environment with opportunities to engage in species-specific behavior (such as with puzzle feeders, cat climbing trees, and bird videos) and more social interaction (with humans and other animals) may help; so might more exercise. Your vet may also have some insights and solutions.

For dogs with extra-indulgent “parents,” there are “doggie fat camps,” where they can swim, work out on treadmills, eat healthy snacks, and get a personalized weight loss program. Some “doggie boot camps” let owners and dogs work out together.

Hungry for more resources? You can find more tips on how to help your pet stay fit at hillspet.com/weight-management and projectpetslimdown.com.

Guesstimating Calories

How many calories your pet needs depends on several factors, including his or her age and activity level, as well as individual metabolism, which varies widely. Neutered/spayed animals require fewer calories than “intact” ones; pregnant and nursing pets need more. There is no one-size-fits-all calculation, and different sources list different formulas — which is

why it's always best to check with your vet, especially if your pet needs to lose weight.

For a ballpark idea, however, you can multiply your pet's weight in pounds by 14 and add 70. This is roughly the number of calories your pet needs to meet ba-

sic metabolic functions. For your pet's total daily calorie needs, you then multiply this result by some factor, such as 1.0 (for weight loss), 1.2 (to maintain weight of an inactive or obesity-prone pet), 1.6 (for an average neutered adult pet), or 2.0 (for a very active pet).

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



McPhail's OF HARRISTON

TAKE A LITTLE RIDE IN THE COUNTRY FOR BIG SAVINGS

During the 50 years they have invested in marketing recreational vehicles, Don and Paul McPhail have built a sterling reputation on demonstrating the utmost respect for their customers, delivering premium service at a fair price, and stocking a wide variety of towables and motorized RVs carefully selected for quality and competitive price points.

The McPhail family history in a business that moves people goes all the way back to 1927 when C. G. McPhail secured a Chrysler dealership in the village of Clifford, Ontario. He also sold Allis Chalmers tractors to the hundreds of farmers in southwestern Ontario. After World War II, the McPhails switched to General Motors, moved the business to Harriston, and sold Pontiacs and Buicks.

In 1958 Don McPhail bought his father's business and seven years later decided to diversify his product mix. "In 1965 we began selling RVs in the summer and snowmobiles in the winter," Don said. He is now 83 and still president of the company. "By 1969 it became obvious that selling RVs was more profitable and we stopped selling cars."

In just a few years, McPhail's needed more land to display their growing inventory of towables and found 10 acres a few miles southeast of Harriston, which they bought in 1976. With a progression of several business expansions over the next 35 years, the company now has five bays for 40- to 45-foot coaches and 10 bays to serve Class C motorhomes and towables. Two lifts are available for oil changes and chassis service.

The expansions also included new offices for sales and administration and a very large accessories department for RV owners. The parts department for scheduled RV service and re-

pairs carries an extensive inventory in a 56 × 96-foot adjacent warehouse for the most frequently needed items.

To cope with the long Canadian winters, the McPhails installed a 100 × 200-foot indoor showroom with a translucent roof supported by a tubular aluminum structure. A regional company built several of these buildings for farmers to store large equipment during the winter. The application for motorhomes and RVs in general was obvious. All of the Tiffin coaches are stored in this showroom during the months when winterizing is necessary.

As we have seen in most family-owned RV dealerships, when the children get into their early teens they begin washing RVs and doing general property upkeep. "I worked here at the dealership whenever school was not in session—pumping gas, changing oil, and washing RVs," Paul said. "In 1975 I began studies at Humber College in Toronto for a bachelor's degree from the School of Hospitality, Recreation, and Tourism. I began full-time employment with the company in 1979. At that time we had five working here including Mom, Dad, me, and two non-family employees."

Don and Paul did the selling in the eighties and the inventory was all towables. "In the mid-eighties we started carrying Class C motorized and soon after that Class A," Paul noted. But it would be another 10 years before McPhail's became a dealer for Tiffin. Today Don is semi-retired, spending winters in Florida or south Texas. Paul serves as vice president and general manager. Phil Sanderson is vice president and service manager.

"We are open year-round, but our selling season really begins in March," Paul explained. "We do a Spring Open House the last weekend in April. This year we had 700 registrants. Our sales move along pretty evenly through the summer with 15 to

16 sales per week in towables and motorized. Then we see the 'light at the end of the tunnel' effect when the cash crops come in—soybeans, corn, and grains. Our selling season runs to mid-November. We do an October RV show in Toronto, another one in January, and then a third show in early March. The winter months give us time to catch up on service and prepare for the



shows. Actually, shows seem to be the best place to spend our advertising dollars. Ninety-nine percent of the people there are interested in RVing and sooner or later will be buyers.

"Our market addresses the age spectrum from young families buying towables to retirees buying motorhomes," Paul noted. "We try to cover as many price points in the product lines as possible to have units that will appeal to most of the market."

The population of Harriston is approximately 2,000, certainly not a large enough town to support an RV sales center. However, McPhail's success is driven by its geographic proximity to a population of three million within 1.5 hours drive of Harriston. The residents in the towns of Owen Sound, Guelph, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Waterloo, and Toronto, and people living near Lake Huron, comprise 90 percent of McPhail's clientele.

Paul pointed out the major problem for Canadian RV dealers is the fluctuation of the exchange rate between U.S. and Canadian currency. "If I buy a Tiffin coach when our dollar is 20 percent weaker than the U.S. dollar, then my price will be 20 percent higher than a Tiffin dealer in the U.S.," he said. "If the exchange rate goes back to par, then I am really in trouble."

In recent model years, McPhail's has sold 25 or 26 Tiffin coaches. The Phaeton, Breeze, and Allegro Open Road usually run six or seven each, with the Allegro Bus and the Allegro RED selling about four each. The company's annual sales average between \$12 and \$13 million per year. Sales revenue usually splits evenly between towables and motorized.

In 1990 Darlene Savage joined McPhail's as the company's bookkeeper. Now with 25 years of experience in financial management, she oversees payroll, accounts receivable, and accounts payable, along with the weekly, monthly, and annual financial reports using IDS software. Darlene also records and tracks the history of how long each RV has been in the company's inventory, a factor that is critical to profitability. She is assisted by Janice Harrison in the bookkeeping department, and also by Ashley Ross whose primary job is reception and communications.

The Service Team

Phil Sanderson as VP and general service manager oversees a service manager, a parts manager, and two service writers. The service department employs 10 technicians. Three class A techs are qualified to work on the PowerGlide chassis and have been successful in addressing 75–90 percent of the service issues. Canada classifies technicians with different terms but qualifies them similarly. McPhail's employs four full-fledged RV techs, and two apprentice techs who are currently rated at RV-1 and RV-2.

Spending the summer months in Ontario, President Don McPhail still enjoys selling RVs at the company he began 50 years ago. Don's son, Paul, joined the company full time in 1979 after finishing college, and serves as vice president and general manager.

Text and photography by Fred Thompson



The Service Team at McPhail's
Standing l-r: Jocelyn Fisk, Sean Weed, Jeff Champ, Matt Klingenberg, Kyle Moore, Philip Jamieson, Brad Crozier, Vern Davies. *Kneeling l-r:* Katie Voll, Linda Wilken, Dan Fick, Wayne McCutcheon, Paul Fletcher, Phil Sanderson

The company is a qualified warranty service center for Onan, Aqua-Hot, HWH, and Dometic ACs and refrigeration. For Tiffin coaches, the service department handles all issues related to electrical, plumbing, roof, slide-out repairs, minor body damage, windows, and electronics. McPhail's offers oil change service, but does not provide alignments or tire service. Recently, Paul, Phil, and the technicians totaled their combined experience in RV service and surprised themselves with 300+ years.

Phil Sanderson discussed McPhail's protocol for handling a service event. "A service writer determines the owner's wants and needs, transfers the information to a work order (paper trail) that outlines what, when, and how the service will be processed and handled. The service writer schedules the work, and when it can be addressed and completed with respect to ordering parts," Phil explained.

"I select the best technician for each job based on the tech's range of expertise to address the repairs. The service writer handles the paperwork and records as the repair and work pro-

gresses," Phil continued. "If questions of what, how, and why come up, then I get involved to participate in the repair process. When the repair and work has been completed, the service writer checks to assure that the paperwork has been done. When the owner comes to take delivery of

the coach, the technician spends time with the owner to explain the details of what was done. "We only contact the owner if unknowns pop up, parts do not come in on time, or if the job did not turn out to be as the owner described it when the service writer developed the work order," Phil said. "We process out about 20 work orders per week. Most of our work originates within a 150-mile radius of Harriston.

"Electronics are our most complicated repair order," Phil averred. "Electronics change constantly in motorhomes. But Tiffin works hard to take care of dealers and owners alike, more than any other manufacturer, even when something is slightly out of warranty. If the problem began before the warranty expired, Tiffin always tries to work with us to take care of our customer."

Originally developed to shelter agricultural equipment from the rough Canadian winters, Paul McPhail realized this architectural system measuring 100 x 200 feet would be perfect for showing recreational vehicles during the winter months when displaying them outside would be impossible.



McPhail's is the second company where Phil Sanderson has served as the service manager. He has been with McPhail's for 22 years. He also has experience on the manufacturing side and in wholesale distribution.

"Everyone in this service department wants to continue upgrading skills and training," Phil said. "We send our techs to Tiffin every two years to stay on top of new technology and changes."

Brian Ellis serves McPhail's as parts manager. Carolyn Groenhuis and Wendy Walsh work with Brian in assuring an efficient operation. "Our parts inventory is computerized," Brian said. "Carolyn processes work orders for parts, and each of us can pull the required parts for each job. Wendy is in charge of receiving and labeling all of the parts. Phil tries to pre-order parts when owners make appointments two to three weeks ahead. This really helps expedite the completion of a repair job."

McPhail's maintains a parts inventory valued at \$500,000. Currently, Tiffin parts represent 15-20 percent of the total inventory. "TMH does a good job as long as we have a picture of the item," Brian said. "And that's very easy to do in just a few minutes with an iPhone. If it takes 5-7 days to get a part delivered, it is a real hindrance to completing the repair project on time. We need 2-3 days, and of course, we can get it next day if needed. When we identify a part with an iPhone picture, TMH is very prompt to get back to us with the part number so we can

order online. I haven't called in a parts order in years."

In McPhail's parts and accessories store, Brian, Carolyn, and Wendy go far beyond helping owners find what they are looking for. "We emphasize maintenance and using the correct cleaners and chemicals to clean the coach," Brian continued. "Snow and salt are the enemy here. We are teaching our owners to use the right brushes and chemicals to take care of their coaches. Using the right lubricants is very important, too. We try to help them learn."

"Training a new owner to know how to use all of the features, technology, and equipment in his or her coach is a learning curve that does not happen in a few days," Phil pointed out. "The technician who does the pre-delivery inspection (PDI) to receive and accept the coach from Tiffin will do the training for the new owners. The tech will go through the coach with the owner and train them at their pace. He will show them every switch, how to operate every feature, and try to answer every question. Some will take notes and video the training sessions. Because it is difficult to absorb all of the training offered on the first day, we ask them to camp here or nearby for a couple of nights and try to use everything in the coach. The tech who trained them will answer their questions M-F, 8-5. We do everything we can to make their transition into a new or used coach as complete and thorough as possible. We deliver and train owners on 250 to 300 RVs per year."

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The Sales Team

McPhail's employs three full-time salespersons and two part-time, including Paul McPhail, Don McPhail, Jeanna Brodie, Lisa Rowley, and Ryan South.

Jeanna began her career as a lab technician after spending two years in the university at Guelph. She and her husband, Al, decided to move to Mt. Forest to be able to acquire more property for raising horses.

"We showed American Saddlebreds in Syracuse and in the Toronto National Exhibition. The last year we showed was 1980," Jeanna explained. "We decided it was time to start a family and gave up horses. Now we have Reena, 32, an RN in obstetrics, who is married to Scott, a millwright. They have three children. Our daughter Brittany, 29, is a country music singer. Scott, her boyfriend, is a class A mechanic and races stock cars. We call him Lightning McQueen. Our youngest, Wade, 27, runs transport in the winter and heavy equipment in the summer. He has a little girl named Lilly, 5."

Al worked at Labatt Breweries for 25 years as a transport driver. He retired for a week and realized he really missed the action. He now runs specialized oversized loads all through Canada and the U.S.

Jeanna has been with McPhail's 20 years this fall. Over the last three years she has worked from April through October and traveled during the winter months with Al on his long hauls through the U.S. and Canada. But how did she transition from horses and mom to selling RVs?

"We had a horse trailer with living quarters in the front of it and I kind of liked the arrangement," Jeanna began. "After raising three children, I decided I was ready for a career change and landed a position with an RV dealership in Mt. Forest selling 5th wheels and towables. But I really wanted to sell motorhomes and knew about McPhail's. At that time Paul was the primary salesman and Phil Sanderson was selling, too. I got a job here, but it was four years before they added a second salesman. I like to sell RVs because it is not something people have to have. It is recreation and fun, an outdoor luxury.

"The stories I tell about my customers are fun, too. A couple came in with a little car and wanted to buy a small travel trailer," Jeanna continued. "They were so fascinated with the stressless



The Sales Team at McPhail's from left: Ryan South, Lisa Rowley, Jeanna Brodie, and Paul McPhail. Not pictured, Don McPhail. ♦ Below: McPhail's of Harriston offers an extensive selection of camping equipment and accessories for RVers.

lifestyle that they stayed here most of the day and finally bought an Allegro Bus. He was petrified to drive it. We helped him get over his fear of driving it by practicing in a big parking lot. He is now on his fourth Tiffin motorhome.

"Another man came in looking for a motorhome. I showed him the Allegro Bus 45LP," Jeanna said smiling as she recalled this story. "He wasn't so sure about a 45-foot coach. I got the copy of *Roughing It Smoothly* that had the story on the front cover about the 45LP. I told him to go home and read about it, and gave him three more copies of *Roughing It Smoothly*. The next morning he came back and bought the 45UP."

So why is Tiffin Motorhomes a good company for you to sell for? I asked. "That's easy. They stand behind their product. And their coaches sell themselves. I send my customers away for the night with a handful of Tiffin magazines. The next day they



come back ready to buy. The other big reason is that their culture and their standards are so far above other manufacturers.”

Lisa Rowley has been with McPhail’s for nine years. After earning a marketing degree, she sold promotional products. After marriage and two children, Hunter, 16, and Conner, 13, she decided she would like to return to a full-time job.

“My father and mother were partners in an RV dealership and we camped frequently when I was a child,” Lisa said. “After Andy and I married, our friends learned that I grew up in an RV family and would come to me with their RV brochures and ask for advice about which unit to buy. Then I saw a newspaper ad for a sales position here at McPhail’s. Paul hired me and I started in 2006. RVing has its own lingo and you have to stay on top of the technology and new developments.

“During January and February, sales are usually via the internet,” Lisa continued. “The RV show in January in Toronto usually gets things going. When we are working here at the office, we get our leads from the internet, phone calls, and walk-ins. Paul receives the leads and serves as the sales manager, distributing the leads to the three sales persons on a rotational basis.

“McPhail’s is well-known here in southwestern Ontario,” Lisa said. “Our customers are 60 to 80 percent repeat business. And one thing is for sure about McPhail’s: service sells RVs. But another factor is so important and that’s product knowl-

edge. Nick Palm, Tiffin’s manufacturer’s rep to this area, sends updates to us regularly along with excellent product brochures. Nick also makes regular visits here to do sales training. Then every other year we go to Red Bay for training. Every year we go to Indiana for Expo. We will see RVs up close that we may not have stocked in Harriston. When we are selling through internet inquiries, we can take an order and sell that coach even though we have not seen it.

“The RV shows are huge for us,” Lisa noted. “People in the larger cities in southwestern Ontario may never visit our location in Harriston, but we are finding that we can sell a coach even though it is not on our lot.

“Selling Tiffin motorhomes is a pleasure when the company has a president like Bob Tiffin,” Lisa said with emphasis. “You can go directly to Bob Tiffin for support, and no other RV president does that. I am proud to sell his product because I know he stands behind what he builds. They manufacturer most of the components in their coaches and therefore can control and maintain quality.

“The dynamics of the Tiffin family is very similar to the dynamics of the McPhail family,” Lisa reflected. “Paul thinks of us as extended family and I am proud to say I work here. Paul is on the hospital board and takes us to the hospital black tie galas;

Continued on page 72

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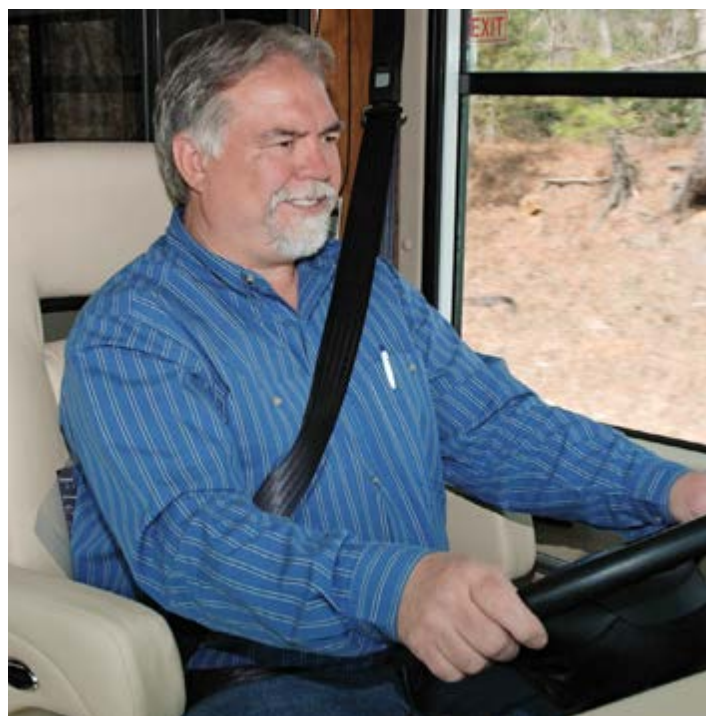


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Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, a 41-year veteran with Tiffin Motorhomes, invites your questions.

Please use the enclosed 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:

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 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.

Dear Danny . . .

RPM & MPH Gauges Difficult to See

We just purchased a 2015 Allegro RED 37PA and we love it. Great floorplan and options. Our one big complaint, however, is the dash instrumentation. When you pull the steering column down to adjust for height, it completely blocks your ability to

see the two top gauges — RPM and MPH. It's very frustrating since you have to bend your head down to see either one. What is the solution? Perhaps a different steering wheel should be installed or could the gauges be redesigned or relocated?

David McClure
 Burke, Virginia

Dear David,

I don't think there is a suitable aftermarket steering wheel that would solve your problem. It would be fiscally impossible at this point to redesign the dash and move the gauges. Try telescoping the steering column up and down while adjusting the height to get a better line of vision. Hopefully, this will help.

Replacing Flooring in a 2002 Phaeton

We own a 2002 Phaeton 38OH with two slide-outs. It has carpet up front. The slides stick on the vinyl tiles in the kitchen and bath areas. Can I replace the tile and carpet with either laminate flooring or vinyl planks? Will the slide-outs be affected?

Ken Cerling
 Mount Horeb, Wisconsin

Dear Ken,

Our experiments using laminate flooring in the past have not been successful due to the thickness of the laminate and the slide-out rollers leaving an imprint on it. Vinyl tile would be better because it is closer to the thickness of what you now have in your coach.

Keeping House Batteries Over Six Months of Storage

I have a 2001 Allegro Bus. I kept my coach in storage for six months last year and discovered the two chassis batteries were dead even though I kept the coach plugged in the entire time. I did not realize the chassis batteries do not receive a charge from either the generator or shore power. Since the house batteries are charging when the RV is plugged in, can I use jumper cables from the chassis batteries to the starting batteries while in storage?

Jim Sanderson
 Vacaville, California

Dear Jim,

Jumping the house batteries to the chassis batteries during that six months is not recommended. This will shorten the life of the chassis batteries that are not designed to receive a continuous charge. We do recommend that you add a battery keeper or a low-amp trickle charge, like we install on our units being built today.

Playing Russian Roulette With the Toilet

I am new to RVing. We purchased a 2012 Phaeton with a bath-and-a-half floorplan. The toilet in the half bath is directly over the black tank. When the black tank is approximately 2/3 full, a flush instead of going down into the tank will explode back into

the toilet room causing a disgusting mess. Please advise what I should do so I can stop playing Russian roulette with the toilet.

Robert Warren
 Greensburg, Pennsylvania

Dear Robert,

The black tank should have a vent pipe that goes from the tank to the top of the roof. If the vent pipe gets stopped up by a bird nest or other obstruction, you will experience this kind of problem. Usually it won't wait until the black tank is 2/3 full. The best way to check is to dump the tank and then go up on the roof and run water down the vent pipe to see if it free flows from the roof and out the black tank's drain. If everything checks out, the next step is to check where the vent pipe connects to the top of the holding tank to see if there is a problem. If not, you should take it to a reliable service center.

Aftermarket Dishwasher & Exhaust Brake for 2012 Breeze

We have a 2012 Allegro Breeze 32BR and love it. The only upgrades we would like is an exhaust brake (we live in the mountainous West) and a drawer dishwasher. Can either of these upgrades be installed on our coach in Red Bay or elsewhere?

I understand the exhaust brake became standard on the 2013 Breeze. Would an aftermarket installer in a western state be capable of doing the exhaust brake upgrade? As for the drawer dishwasher, could it be added where the couch is located on the driver side and reduce the couch to a love seat or a chair?

Michael Lucia & Rachel Brooks
 Reno, Nevada

Dear Michael & Rachael,

Sorry to say, but there is not an aftermarket exhaust brake available for the 2012 Breeze's engine. It is not cost feasible for TM to re-engineer the Breeze cabinetry, furniture, and plumbing to house a dishwasher. You might find a carpenter to build a nice cabinet for the dishwasher, but running the plumbing through the basement infrastructure would be difficult.

Installing a Rock-Mud Guard on 2013 Allegro RED

In the 12:1 issue of *RIS*, you recommended using a 2015 Freightliner upgrade to reroute the exhaust to avoid scorching an aftermarket installation of a rock-mud guard on a 2014 Allegro RED. I own a 2013 Allegro RED 34QFA and installed the rock-mud guard "in front" of the exhaust. I simply drilled two holes in the trailer hitch framework and installed two 1/2-inch eye bolts with self-locking nuts. I then used two clevises to attach the rock-mud guard. It works great and does not interfere with the exhaust or the cooling system. I have towed a two-door Jeep Wrangler without incident for over 20,000 miles.

Vern Chastain
 Cathedral City, California

Dear Vern,

I am glad your installation was successful and did not scorch the rock-mud guard. We have seen two or three other installations where the rock-mud guard was scorched by the hot exhaust. It sounds like it has a lot to do with where you locate the rock guard.

Propane vs. Electric Water Heaters

As of January this year, we have a 2015 Allegro 36LA. When the water is being heated electrically, should we expect it to get as hot when we are heating it with propane? We must run the water for a far longer period to get hot water in the bathroom. Why

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is this the case when the water heater is just a couple of feet away?

Gary & Jan O'Connell
Henderson, Nevada

Dear Gary & Jan,
The LP creates a lot more BTUs, gets the water hotter, and will keep it hotter longer. It will also heat the water more quickly.

Maintaining Battery Charge Without Hookups

I have a tip that I have never seen in the magazine regarding house batteries. When parked in storage, shutting off the inverter will keep the batteries up for a month without plugging in to shore power. Otherwise, they have to be plugged in every week. I have a 2009 Phaeton.

Michael Goelz
Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin

Dear Michael,
Thanks for the reminder to our readers. It is easy to forget the inverter when you are closing up the coach for a month.

Ice Maker on the 2012 Breeze

The ice maker in our 2012 Allegro Breeze 32BR usually works well for 3-4 days. Then it freezes up and makes no more ice until we do a freezer defrosting. Is there a remedy for this problem short of a new freezer/refrigerator?

Jim Garriss
Poquoson, Virginia

Dear Jim,
Without taking it into a service center there are two things you can check. First, make sure the condensation drain on the back of the refrigerator is not stopped up. Second, check the seal around the freezer door for any kind of imperfection that could cause an air leak. You should see ice build-up at the point of an air leak. If neither of these situations are found, you should visit a service center and have a professional tech address the problem.

Battery Questions on the Allegro Bus

We have a 2013 Allegro Bus 40QBP that

we love. This is our second Tiffin motorhome. In error, I left the ignition switch on for 36 hours, completely draining both of the 12-volt starter batteries. I then tried to use the auxiliary switch to engage the six 6-volt house batteries to start the engine, but to no avail. I then disconnected one of the 12-volt starter batteries and completely charged the remaining one. I then reconnected the charged battery to the second drained battery and let them set for six hours to equalize the two 12-volt batteries. The engine then started.

My questions are: Why didn't the house batteries start the engine when I engaged the auxiliary switch? Will the inverter charge the two 12-volt starter batteries when plugged into shore power? Are the automatic steps wired to the two 12-volt batteries, as they would not extend when the starter batteries were drained?

Barton M. Pedersen
Yucca Valley, California

Dear Barton,
When plugged into shore power, the inverter does not charge the chassis (engine) batteries. However, there is a battery minder on your coach that should put a small charge into the chassis batteries, but not enough to restore a dead battery to start the engine. When using the auxiliary switch to start completely dead chassis batteries, you will need to hold the aux switch down for a long time (probably 10-15 min.) to allow the batteries to equalize. In moderate to warm weather, that should start the engine. In colder weather, it would take a lot longer, so it would be better to use a jumper system.

Modifying Storage Area on 2015 Allegro Bus 45OP

I am a loyal Tiffin owner. We started with a 2014 Allegro 36LA, upgraded to a 2014 Phaeton 42LH, and I am expecting to take delivery on a 2015 Allegro Bus 45OP.

We enjoy the electric fireplaces in all three of the Tiffin floorplans. In the Pha-

eton, the fireplace sits just behind the passenger seat in an angled cabinet. On the 45OP it is located in the same area and will also be in the angled cabinet since we ordered the adjacent chair instead of the love seat. The fireplaces are not that deep, so it seems there is useable storage space behind it, or for the 45OP alongside it. Given Tiffin's wonderful "Store-It-All" design accomplishments, I am wondering why this space is untapped. I have a woodshop at home and I am thinking of reworking the stock cabinet on the 45OP, but I would like to hear your advice before I jump into something I shouldn't.

My other question is about the published and actual wheelbase lengths. The brochure shows the 42LH at 272" and the 45OP at 326". That is a whopping difference of 54" or 4.5 feet. I was concerned that I would not be able to navigate the much longer wheelbase as easily, particularly at my home where I store my coaches. I was assured by Lazydays that the improved wheel cut on the PowerGlide chassis would enable me to handle it just fine, so I went ahead and ordered the 45OP. The difference does not seem to be accurate. I hope you can explain how the wheelbase is measured.

Phil Turner
Oldsmar, Florida

Dear Phil,
Someone who has professional cabinet building skills could possibly put the fireplace on a hinge to access the space behind it. For 2016 we are looking at ways to utilize the space behind the fireplace on some models.

On motorhomes without tag axles, the wheelbase is measured from the center of the front hub to the center of the rear hub. On units with tag axles, normally we measure this wheelbase from the center of the front hub to the center point between the two rear wheels. On the brochure for the 2015 Phaeton 42LH, the wheelbase was measured to the hub of the drive axle and not the center point between the two

wheels. If it had been measured to a center point between the wheels like the Bus was, we would have recorded a wheel base of 296".

Aftermarket Stabilizing of the Ford Chassis

We own a 2014 Allegro 34TGA that we purchased new. I read the articles and questions about the Sumo Springs in the last two issues of *Roughing It Smoothly*. I also wanted our motorhome to handle better and the steering to be more responsive. Therefore, I took it to Henderson's Line-up, Brake, and RV in Grants Pass, Oregon.

After they completed a comprehensive road performance assessment, I asked them to install the Sumo Springs (front and rear), a Safe-T-Plus steering stabilizer, a rear sway bar, a rear track bar, and four Koni shocks. The results are fantastic! One handed driving down the interstate is great and much of the body roll has been eliminated. My wife even enjoys driving the motorhome now. I highly recommend Henderson's to everyone. They also do other repairs including oil changes, brakes, and alignments.

Regarding our motorhome, I do have a few questions. Is there an in-line fuse for the water pump? If so, where is it located? Where should we lubricate the three slide-out mechanisms? If the electric awning fails to retract, how can it be retracted manually?

Ron & Colleen White
Mission Viejo, California

Dear Ron & Colleen,
We have heard many good reports about the modifications that Henderson's has made to the Ford chassis to significantly improve the handling and steering of other coaches.

There is not an inline fuse to the water heater. It is fused in the standard breaker box in the rear of the coach. On the bedroom slide-out, clean the guide bars on the sides of the slide-outs and

lightly lubricate with a dry silicone lubricant. On the two front slide-outs under the slide boxes, clean the gear parts and lubricate with the dry silicone lubricant. Boeing makes a T-9 lubricant which is very good. It can be used on the jacks and the entrance steps. If the electric awning fails, you will have to remove the motor

and roll it in manually. Then reinstall the motor to hold the assembly together until you can replace the motor. See your owner's manual.

Making the Dash Air Keep the Cockpit Cool in Summer

In the Spring issue (12:2) of *Roughing It*

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Smoothly, we read Mr. Raymond's technique for "making the dash air work in the summer heat." We put up an insulated drape behind our seats with a spring-loaded rod from WalMart. The curtain hangs down and stops the heat from the rear of the coach. The rod goes between the two forward walls of the slide-outs.

Charles & JoAnn Tange
Temple, Texas

Dear Charles,
Thanks for your suggestion. I am sure there are other owners who would like to try your system.

A Sliding Screen for the Exit Door

Please consider making a top screen in the exit door that will slide up and down so that when you are traveling both the passenger and the driver will have a clear side view. Be the first in the market to do this. I have not seen this on another brand. I actually took our screen out and made a square screen that I could put in place with velcro when we are not traveling.

Carl Smith
San Antonio, Texas

Dear Carl,
We have not installed the screen you described. However, MCD shades makes an aftermarket roller screen that can be installed on your door.

Rejuvenating the Batteries After Storage

We have a 2009 Allegro 34TGA that we purchased new in June 2009. We have an electrical problem. Over the past winter I had to put my motorhome in storage without having shore power available. The last thing I do is turn the house batteries off with the switch just inside the door. When I return to the motorhome, I turn on the switch and not everything that I think should be powered actually comes on. You can hear relays clicking, but I have no power to the 12v house lights, the water pump, or the thermostats (and who knows what else). I start the engine and then the generator. By repeatedly cycling

the house battery switch, I can usually get the lights and everything to come on. I have replaced the batteries and still have the same problem. I have disconnected the batteries after turning off the switch and verified that the battery voltage at the disconnect is 12.6 and then checked again after a week prior to reconnecting and the voltage is 12.2 to 12.4.

The wiring diagrams that I received with the motorhome are not all that clear and difficult to read. So if you could point us in the right direction as to what relay or whatever else you think might be causing the problem, it would be greatly appreciated. I have taken the coach to two dealers and they either cannot duplicate the problem or they want to keep throwing new batteries at it. Thank you for anything you can recommend. We love our motorhome and this is the first big problem we have had.

Mike Davis
Goodyear, Arizona

Dear Mike,
I think your problem will be the disconnect solenoid going bad. It should be located on the DS front compartment adjacent to the wheel housing.

Reprogramming Automated Shades

I have a 2015 Allegro Bus 40SP. All of the night shades are on one switch and must be operated together. I would like to have the DS shade on a separate switch. I have talked to two Tiffin service techs about this. One said it could be changed at the factory and the other said it could not be changed. The Spyder Control panel has an empty switch that is not being used. Is there any way this can be done without going to the factory? Or do I have to install a manual blind?

Judy Brant
Indiana Lake, Pennsylvania

Dear Judy,
Unfortunately the switch panel would have to be changed and reprogrammed to operate single night shades. This is a

change most service centers could not handle, so it would have to be done at the factory level. Not having made this modification before, we do not have a shop rate established for the alteration.

Intermittent Operation of Porch Light

We own a 2014 Allegro Open Road. The porch light has worked only on an intermittent basis, sometimes 5 to 10 minutes, sometimes 5 to 8 hours. Our dealer was unsuccessful in his attempt to resolve the problem. One of your techs attempted to repair it at a Tiffin rally and determined that the multiple switch was faulty, but he did not have a replacement switch with him. He recommended that our Oregon dealer replace the switch. The dealer replaced it, but it did not correct the problem. Other Tiffin owners have suggested the problem is a program fault in the computer.

Philip Coke
Corvallis, Oregon

Dear Philip,
Most of the time when this happens, it will be the switch itself or a loose connection to the switch. On your unit, the wiring to the light should be activated by the switch at the entrance. First, remove the switch panel from the housing, and then looking at the back of the panel, check to see where the wire plugs into the switch panel and make sure all connections are good.

More Space Around the Bed

We special ordered our 2015 Phaeton with a queen bed thinking it would be placed in the same area as a king bed, thus leaving more space to make the bed and foot space on my side of the bed. Wrong! This was disappointing to me. There is no extra space for my side of the bed.

Sue Brusenham
Coleman, Texas

Dear Sue,
We are sorry you are disappointed with the way that turned out. What should have been ordered was a queen bed plat-

form with king bed (narrower) night stands. This would have given you extra room on both sides of the mattress.

Passenger Window Fogged in Phoenix

I have a 2004 37-ft. Allegro Bay. The front half of the passenger window is fogged up on the inside. Is there a dealer in the Phoenix area who can replace the window? Also the lug nut covers on my tires are disappearing. Can Tiffin Parts & Service supply this item? I tried Camping World but they did not have a lug cover that fit.

Bob Moritz
Scottsdale, Arizona

Dear Bob,
The dealer in the Phoenix area is La Mesa RV. They can order and install a replacement window for your coach. The lug nut covers should be available through Tiffin Parts and Service. Remove one and send

it with your order so they will be able to match it.

Stiff Sliding Windows

In the latest edition of *Roughing It Smoothly*, a reader indicated he was having difficulty with the movement of the sliding window. I had the fogged windows replaced on my 2007 Allegro Bus. The technician suggested I use Plexus regularly and it has taken care of the stiffness. After the window is closed, it is sometimes difficult to get it open again. Once you get it to open, it slides very nicely.

Douglas Kasten
Titusville, Florida

Dear Douglas,
Windows that are difficult to open is not altogether a bad thing. It indicates the windows are sealing off the coach from the elements. However, the use of Plexus

will make the windows slide more easily. You can order Plexus from the Tiffin Parts and Service Dept. 256-356-0261.

An Unusual Exhaust Pipe on My Phaeton

I have a 2010 Phaeton. My exhaust pipe is fluted-shaped compared to the round chrome pipes I see on most Tiffin coaches. What is the reason for this design on my Cummins engine?

Dale Sitek
Hartland, Wisconsin

Dear Dale,
On the 2010 Phaeton, the exhaust pipe came with the chassis from Freightliner. The fluted shape is a diffuser to spread the heat from the regeneration afterburner which cleans the exhaust. Later they turned the exhaust to the side of the coach and began using a round exhaust pipe.

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Awning Retraction Problem Connected to Wind Sensor

We own a 2009 Allegro Bus 36QP and are very happy with it. We have the same wind sensor / retraction issue that Ollie Reamy brought to your attention in the last issue (12:2, page 74). We host a state park campground in New Mexico and have non-retraction as well as unintended retraction problems. Hopefully, A&E has a solution.

On another issue, I was told I should change the engine coalescing filter on our Cummins engine. The filter sits on top of the engine and I am wondering how to gain access to it. Do I have to remove the 11 screws holding the cover in place? This unit has the PowerGlide chassis with a 425-hp engine. I have done all the routine maintenance on the six class A's we have owned, and if I can get to this filter I can change it.

One suggestion: How about making Low-E coated windows as an upgrade. I have them in my house and they reduce heating and cooling costs a lot.

Jim Maggi
Pine City, Minnesota

Dear Jim,
You will have to remove the engine cover in the bathroom to change this filter. Fortunately, this filter only needs to be changed every 60,000 miles. With regard to Low-E glass, yours is the first inquiry about its use in motorhomes. The first prerequisite is whether or not it can be manufactured as auto safety glass. The next concern will be the cost to acquire Low-E glass in limited quantities for this application. We will do some more research on this to see if it is feasible.

Relocating 12-volt Receptacle on 2015 Phaeton

We have a 2015 Phaeton 40QBH and a RVi brake system. The RVi utilizes a wireless receiver plugged into the 12-volt receptacle in the dash. The 2015 QBH has a 12-volt receptacle facing away from the

driver. Therefore, I must rely on my passenger to observe the status of the brake system while we are driving. If I am alone, I cannot monitor the system. Would it be possible to relocate a 12-volt receptacle on the dash where the driver can monitor the brakes and the tire pressure?

Joan Connell & Annalee Leonard
Gulf Breeze, Florida

Dear Joan & Annalee,
Adding a 12-volt receptacle is not a major problem. Any good service center can jump a new receptacle from your existing one, or run a separate wire to place a new one anywhere on the dash where there is room for it.

Locking Fuel Doors

I am enjoying my new 2014 Allegro RED and really like the floorplan—lots of room inside. In order to guard against fuel theft, I would like to have had locking covers to the fuel tank, especially when the motorhome is in storage.

Richard Ziembra
Apache Junction, Arizona

Dear Richard,
We have had several requests for a locking fuel cap but until recently we were unsuccessful at finding one that would properly seal off the spout and not let fuel spillage run out when the tank was close to full. Now we can suggest four aftermarket manufacturers. Following are the manufacturers and part numbers for diesel coaches: Stant, 10501; NAPA, 703-16-85; and Federated Auto Parts, MGC-791. For the Ford F53 chassis (Allegro), Gates 31842.

Antenna Cutting Out on Allegro RED 33AA

I noticed in a recent issue an owner while listening to his XM radio programming was having a problem with it cutting in and out. He attributed the problem to the antenna. I have a 2013 Allegro RED 33AA and mine is doing the same thing when the coach is moving; sitting still the

reception is fine. We have traveled east and south from home and it does not seem to matter where we are. The coach is in the repair shop now for the radio and other items. The tech here called a TMH service tech who indicated they are not aware of any problems as long as the XM radio has an external antenna (mine does). Please help. We enjoy our music when traveling.

John Ostricker
Bellingham, Washington

Dear John,
We have had a few reports of this problem occurring in one or two northwestern states in the U.S. In one case, the driver noted that changing lanes on the interstate solved the problem. I believe it may be the antenna being mounted so low on the roof that the satellite dome or AC is blocking the signal at certain angles.

Steps on My 2011 Zephyr Are Too Steep

Could Tiffin make their entry steps easier to use? They are just too steep for my dog and me. They are just fine for my six-foot husband. Perhaps they could add a step and make them closer together. We also have a wiring problem. Why do our dinette lights come back on after we turn them off (sometimes)?

Ruth Meittunen
Hibbing, Minnesota

Dear Ruth,
What you bring up for consideration is a good point that we need to study. I will bring your concern to the attention of our engineering staff. With regard to your dinette lights coming back on after you turn them off, we have found that the switch is at fault in 90 percent of this type of problem. The first place to check is the wiring connections on the back of the switch. Make sure the connections are solid and tight. In some cases in the 2011 year model that has multiplex wiring, we have noticed backfeeding from other components that may cause this problem.

Faulty Thermostat on 2013 Allegro 31SA

I own a 2013 Allegro Open Road 31SA. The bedroom thermostat has a slide switch for heating and cooling. The cool setting activates the AC just fine, but the heat setting will not activate the furnace. The thermostat in the front of the coach works perfectly.

Thomas Scott
East Concord, New York

Dear Thomas,
The thermostat is not faulty. Your unit comes with two roof ACs and only a single 42,000 BTU furnace. The front thermostat controls the furnace operation. Some of the Allegros come with two furnaces and each will have lower BTU output.

Chattering on a Transfer Switch Box

I am having problems with my transfer switch box. I have "chattering" on the 50

amp service. I have tried the power posts at two other campgrounds in two different states. My 30-amp circuit works fine. Is there a different PC-board for the 30- and 50-amp circuits? If so, can I change the PC-board myself? I will check for loose connections again at the transfer switch box and retorqued all of the screws.

Klaus Dahl
Andover, Massachusetts

Dear Klaus,
Changing the PC-board is not difficult. There are not separate boards for the 30- and 50-amp circuits. If it works okay when you are using the generator, having the problem on the 50-amp circuit and not the 30-amp circuit may indicate bad contact points on the shore power side of the box. Depending on the age of the motorhome, it is possible there could still be some warranty available through Tiffin or TRC who builds the change-over box.

Repairing Atwood Jacks with Electrical Problem

I read your tech talk section in the Spring 2015 issue. Ron Peterson wrote that his Atwood jacks had quit working and the reply seemed to imply changing the whole system was the solution.

I have a 2008 35TSB, and my jacks also failed. By removing the wires from the controller I was able to jump power to each jack and extend and retract them as a temporary fix just to get back on the road.

Later troubleshooting I found that a voltage drop across a knife splice under the hood prevented power to the controller which would prevent the system from turning on. I replaced the splices and the system has worked fine since. I believe the Atwood jack system is very robust and I prefer it to hydraulic systems which also have problems.

Continued on next page

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NEWS YOU CAN USE *Cont'd from page 17*

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Connecticut Motor Cars & Coaches is also a Tiffin authorized collision repair center. They will manage the insurance claim process for your motorhome or vehicle. They can also handle all Tiffin work and extended warranties with a quick turnaround on collision and emergency repairs. They have over 30 years experience in collision repairs, using only certified technicians.

SERIOUS TECH TALK *Cont'd from page 71*

I would suggest to Ron Peterson that he troubleshoot the wiring before he considers replacing the system. I would be happy to speak with him and review what I did. You can have him contact me thru this e-mail: mphsrebel@comcast.net

I have 45,000 very enjoyable miles on my Allegro Bay.

Jeff Dworkin

Toms River, New Jersey

Dear Jeff,

Thanks for letting us know how you resolved the problem. It is always a good idea to thoroughly check out a system before making a decision to replace it.

TIFFIN ALLEGRO CLUB NEWS *Cont'd from page 20*

All sites at CERAland will have 50-amp, water, picnic table, & fire ring; there is a convenient dump station centrally located for your convenience. Three shower houses and laundry facilities are on the premises. Pre- and post-stays can be reserved by contacting CERAland directly.

The park offers a host of activities including an 18-hole miniature golf course, golf driving range, nature trail, disc golf course, and horseshoe pits. Also available are shuffleboard courts, an aquatic center, a remote control airplane strip, fishing, and tennis courts for all guests.

Shopping (a favorite activity for all RVers) includes outlet malls, traditional malls, and a huge antique mall along with a vibrant downtown with specialty shops. Several museums can be found here. The Columbus area also hosts several Farmers Markets & Wineries. Two unique stores that you will want to visit are Not Just Popcorn serving over 260 premium flavors and shipping product worldwide as well as Zaharakos Ice Cream Parlor and Museum "serving sodas, sundaes, & smiles for over a century."

The cost for one coach and two adults is only \$429. Don't delay if you are interested! Our rallies often sell out! A registration form can be found at tiffinmotorhomes.com and also at TiffinSideroads.com. Complete the form and return to the Tiffin Allegro Club as soon as possible. Please give us a call at 256-356-8522 if you have any questions.

We had a wonderful tour with more information than we have room to include in this story. I am fascinated by Don and Maureen's accomplishments, and, as a retired mechanic, I can say with certainty that after seeing their new building and observing their work ethic, I now have 100 percent satisfaction with this new, state-of-the-art motorhome repair facility.

Address: Connecticut Motor Cars and Coaches, 90 Town Line Road, Plainville, CT 06062

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DEALER PROFILE *Cont'd from page 63*


he is an elder in the United Church; he sponsors soccer teams and children's organizations; he just gives back to the community continuously. He is very modest and won't tell you these things, but I want people to know what kind of person and company I work for."

Ryan South has been in sales with McPhail's for six years. Ryan and his wife, Shannon, have two children: Chayse, 11, and Austin, 8. Shannon is a human resources manager at Golden Valley Farms. Ryan had been friends with Jeanna Brodie for some time when she told him about a sales opening at McPhail's. Ryan grew up with three brothers on a dairy farm not far from Harriston. After college in Petersborough, he worked in marketing with a sporting goods business. After several other jobs in sales, Ryan was offered a position with McPhail's.

"Getting repeat business made commission sales begin to work for me," Ryan explained. "We all cross-sell here and that really helps. The Tiffin product is exceptional in the RV industry. The Bob Tiffin story sells motorhomes. Seeing Tiffin motorhomes being built on the production line in Red Bay convinced me what a great product it is. The fit and finish, the quality, the workmanship—they do it all themselves. I like to do a feature-benefit comparison when I make a presentation to a customer.

"When I am working with a client here at McPhail's, I try to take them through our service department," Ryan said. "Seeing is believing! I want them to meet Phil Sanderson, the director of service here.

"Another important factor here at McPhail's is the quality of our customer training," Ryan pointed out. "They camp here at McPhail's to be sure they are completely comfortable with the operation of their coach before they leave. A customer from Newfoundland is taking delivery of an RV later this month. He discovered our company through word of mouth.

"I am sure Jeanna and Lisa have probably said this, too, but I will emphasize it," Ryan said. "Every person who comes in wants to be here. We are selling a lifestyle, a luxury, not a necessity. McPhail's is a really great place to work and customers comment about how happy people are who work here. 

Plant Tours

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



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