

Roughing It Smoothly[®]



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- Sedona, Arizona





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Roughing It Smoothly®

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Roughing It Smoothly circulation jumps to 81,000 printed and online magazines.

Over 27,000 Tiffin owners are now receiving *Roughing It Smoothly* through the U.S. and Canadian postal service. Over 42,000 have chosen to read *RIS* online at the Tiffin website. Our dealers are distributing 12,000 copies in their showrooms. *Roughing It Smoothly* is in its 13th 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 address in case we need to edit or ask for more information.

Color prints are welcome and we will use them if we have the space. We do not return color prints or manuscript. You can also send your "From the Road" contribution by email to fredthompson1941@hotmail.com You may attach your images to your email. 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 address 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 RISStechtalk@gmail.com **If you need an immediate answer to a service problem, you should call 256-356-0261.**

New Subscribers

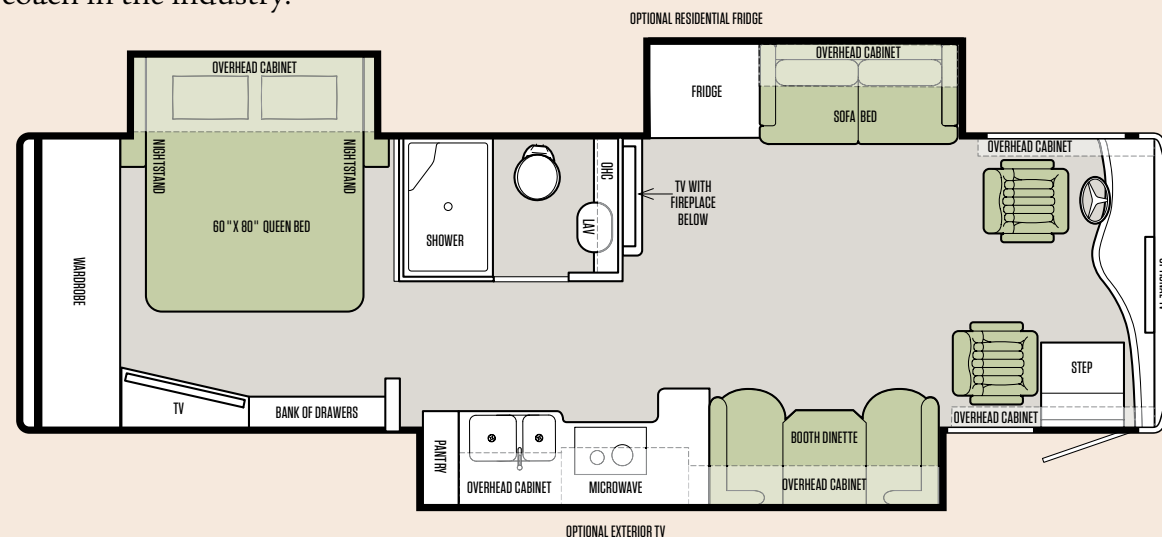
If you have just purchased a new Tiffin motorhome, your name will be added to our mailing list automatically. If you purchased a pre-owned Tiffin motorhome, send the year, brand, length & floorplan, your name and address, and VIN to *Roughing It Smoothly*, PO Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30655-1150.

Advertisers

To advertise in *RIS*, contact Dale Cathey at 817-247-5147. dalecathey1942@gmail.com

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The Allegro Breeze 31BR is now shipping to dealers. Built on the PowerGlide® Chassis mated with the Cummins ISV5.0 engine with 275 HP/560 lb. torque, the 31BR floor plan offers an east-west queen bed with a closet extending across the rear of the coach. Other upgrades include a larger shower in a self-contained bathroom, a slide-out pantry, and an optional residential refrigerator. The PowerGlide chassis brings independent suspension to the shortest diesel pusher coach in the industry.



The Tiffin Allegro Club

WHAT IT HAS MEANT TO OUR OWNERS, DEALERS, AND TIFFIN MOTORHOMES

by Bob Tiffin

In the last two months of 1972, we began building motorhomes. It wasn't very long before our buyers began to ask about an owners club. Unfortunately, we were so busy building coaches that we kept pushing the owner's interest in a club to the back burner.

In 1978 Elaine and Kello McAnally came to my office to tell me they wanted to start an RV travel club for Allegro owners. I supported the idea but I wanted it to be their club. As we sold motorhomes, Elaine would take the addresses from the warranty cards and contact the new owners. They incorporated the club and had their first rally March 23-25, 1979 at a campground in Marianna, Florida. Kello served as president and Elaine as secretary-treasurer. It was such a great success Elaine and Kello began planning right away for the next rally and set it for Marianna again. That one went well, too, and they felt like they had started a tradition. Both times we sent our factory technicians to the rally and set a precedent for making three repairs on each coach — not major repairs, but things that could be

done outside our service bays in Red Bay. The third year—doing one big event a year—the club decided to do a rally in Nashville. Of course, that's the entertainment capital of the South, and they drew a really big number of owners who drove their brown and whites to Music City.

We really supported the club in 1982 and 1983 with two factory rallies. Elaine and Kello did a great job in attracting over 400 coaches. We mowed Mr. J. M. Page's pastures and fields behind his house and put up a huge 3-pole circus tent for meals and entertainment. We also used the city's water park.

After that success, we established offices for Elaine and Kello here in our main facility. Elaine made copies of all the warranty cards from new sales and contacted the owners to offer membership in the club. We have always paid the first year's club dues for a new Tiffin owner and our owners always seemed to appreciate that we would make three repairs to their coaches when they attended a rally.

As local chapters of the club began to form, Elaine started a newspaper to report their activities. Each club elected officers, planned their own weekend rallies, and sometimes longer trips in the sum-



mer months. The camaraderie that began to develop at the local club level and even more so at the annual rallies, plus their loyalty to the Tiffin brand was just amazing. It wasn't long at all before we began to see repeat business.

Within a short time, Kello and Elaine were doing four major rallies each year. Then they did caravans limited to 25 coaches to places like Nova Scotia, Mexico, and Quebec. I was amazed when they put together a caravan to Alaska. They started at Vancouver, loaded the motorhomes on a ship, and cruised up to Haines, Alaska where they unloaded the coaches and started the caravan into Alaska. After three weeks in Alaska, they returned to Haines and sailed back to Vancouver.

The bonding that formed between the chapters and the company was mutually beneficial. The clubs built so much good will. Owners made a lot of friendships by joining their local chapters. We did not have the internet then to get feedback from our owners. The club members gave us the information we needed to know to improve our product and provide them the floorplans and features they wanted. The club has been a big asset to the company. Without a doubt, it helped Tiffin Motorhomes grow as fast as it did.

Kello and Elaine retired in 2004. They eventually moved to Oxford, Mississippi to be closer to their children. Kello passed away in August 2013.

I offered the job of leading the club to Jimmy and Gail Johnson. After 32 years in public education, Jimmy had retired after serving as principal at Bradshaw High School in Florence, Alabama, and was delivering coaches for TMH. Since Gail had a very viable daycare business in Florence and their daughter was still in high school, they had to make some adjustments to accept the job. Jimmy did most of the on-site work in Red Bay and Gail was involved on an "as needed" basis.

They laid plans to focus on member-

ship growth and chapter building, established better communications with the *Sideroads* publication, and continued with well-planned rallies. At the time Jimmy and Gail started, we had an active membership of 800.

The Allegro Club opened new offices in the building adjacent to our service center and the growth required additional staff. Verbon Jones was hired as office manager, and soon Cynthia Skinner came on board as office assistant and later membership coordinator.

Gail attended rallies with Jimmy and taught classes on convection cooking, along with publishing practical recipes for preparing meals in a motorhome. With Judy's encouragement, Gail began a tradition of hosting a tea party where the ladies were invited to bring a favorite teacup and share a special story. Dressing in tea party finery became a part of the tradition.

The Johnsons added other rally events including the Veterans Salute to honor our military veterans, an arts and crafts display, and yard sales & swaps.

Initially they focused on smaller, intimate rallies with ample opportunities for interaction among the attendees, ranging



in size from 60 to 130 rigs. Field trips on buses were arranged to take in the area's attractions and local entertainment brought in the regional culture. Games and ice cream socials, plus themed events such as costume parties, pumpkin carving contests, and pet parades kept everyone involved.

Motorhome education became an essential feature of our rallies with seminars provided by suppliers such as Aqua-Hot, Freightliner, Cummins, Onan and our dealers. Tiffin's technicians with a trailer full of parts were on hand to make minor repairs and offer technical advice at no charge.

During the Johnsons' tenure, they produced 44 rallies throughout the U.S. and took participants to many beautiful areas that included Key West, New England, Mackinac Island, Mt. Hood, California's wine country, San Antonio, Branson, and more.

With our encouragement, they planned a 250-rig "Super Rally" at the Sarasota Fairgrounds in 2012. To include owners of other brands, the event was designated a "Buddy Rally" for our members to invite their friends.

After deciding their goals for the Allegro Club had been accomplished, the Johnsons in 2013 hosted their final two rallies in Sacramento, California and Urbanna, Virginia. After their 10 years at the helm, the Allegro Club's active membership had grown to approximately 8,000 with 75 chapters.

In August 2013 Kelly and Sally Moore accepted my request to take the leadership of the Allegro Club. Kelly had worked at TMH from 1983 to 2000, finishing his career here as our national sales manager. He then took a position at CB&S Bank and during his tenure there was promoted to regional president.

As co-presidents Kelly and Sally bring a lot of energy to the Tiffin Allegro Club (TAC). It is not unusual for the international rallies to have 300 coaches. The

rallies have become so popular in recent years that they sell out within a week—and sometimes much sooner—after they are announced. To be fair to our owners who want to attend a rally, the Moores retained a professional registration management company.

Each rally has several seminars to help owners learn how to use and maintain their coaches and get the most enjoyment from them. They continue to enjoy participating in a lot of fun activities such as swap meets, craft and hobby shows, and games.

Judy and I try to attend at least two and sometimes three of the rallies each year. It is a great opportunity for us to meet many interesting owners, hear their RVing stories, and learn about their careers. We always leave each rally with new friendships, and I am sure all of the attendees do the same.

There is always live entertainment every night after a delicious catered meal. The TAC continues to do our traditional ice cream social, a ladies tea, and a veterans salute. Probably half of our attendees are veterans and we are honored to recognize their service.

Since most of our owners would have

Continued on page 88





The Allegro Bus 45 OPP

Luxurious
Comfort that
Will Lift Your
Psyche

A relaxing and comfortable environment or experience, whether designed or discovered, is something we all need to relieve our minds and bodies from the stress of everyday life, replacing that stress with the energy and verve that make life fun and interesting. The experience that will inject vigor into your lifestyle just may be an Allegro Bus built by Tiffin Motorhomes. Appreciating fine quality energizes the senses.

When we purchase and use a product well-designed for its intended use, we not only enjoy using it, but we find opportunities to recommend it to others. Tiffin Motorhomes probably buys fewer media ads than any other RV manufacturer in the U.S. Why? Because “word of mouth” is the best advertising and you can’t buy it. On Tiffin’s stationery, the line at the bottom reads, “Just ask someone who owns one.”

TELLING THE TIFFIN STORY in *Roughing It Smoothly* over the last 13 years has been a great publishing experience for me. It is simply a matter of observing and relating. For example, when I walk through the receiving area for the Tiffin woodworking shop, I am amazed at the large loads of solid cherry purchased out of New England for the Allegro Bus and Zephyr. This top grade hardwood has very few knots and flaws. Craftsmen carefully cut the boards to eliminate any small imperfections. After watching craftsmen engaged in planing, joining, mitering, assembling, staining, sanding, sealing, varnishing, and glazing, I can understand and appreciate how the beautiful moldings, fascias, raised panel doors, sliding doors, solid wall panels, cabinets, vanities, and valances are created. Being inside the 45OPP is an energizing experience, not unlike visiting an exhibition at the School for American Crafts in Rochester, New York.

The gradual and thoughtful improvements each year assure first time and repeat Tiffin owners that new ideas, features, and changes are foundational, not one-time, out-of-the-box additions to make a few more sales. Interior lighting has been an interesting progression of quality improvements. In 2004 when *Roughing It Smoothly* published its first edition, fluorescent tubes supplied most of the lighting in a Tiffin coach. Over the last decade, Van Tiffin selected better light fixtures each year that improved lighting as well as décor. The owner of this 45OPP will enjoy LED lighting perfectly placed for tasks; mood and indirect lighting for listening to music or watching television; subtle rope lighting in the step well, under counter edges, and ceiling; courtesy night lights at floor level; outside lights for the entry door, patio, and driver's side; docking lights; and decorative lights that are inviting and fun.

Over the last decade, the imagination and talent of designer Margaret Mia has taken the interior design of Tiffin coaches to a higher level each year. In 2017 four décors are offered in the

Allegro Bus, each with exciting choices of fabrics, upholstery, wood finishes and glazes, flooring, valance design, wallpaper, solid surface counter tops, and backsplashes.

The four interior décors include Caravan, Woodcrest, Sea Salt, and the optional Estate by Ralph Lauren (MSRP \$2,400). UltraLeather™ choices include Whey, Walnut, Grotto, and Oak-straw.

While all of the furniture is made of cherry, the owner has five choices of stains, varnishes, and glazes: Cherry, Natural Cherry, Glazed Canyon Cherry, Glazed Cherry, Glazed Honey Natural Cherry, and White Chocolate. The coach in this review was finished with Glazed Honey Natural Cherry. The glazed finishes are optional (MSRP \$3,080). The White Chocolate used in the rear bath of this coach is standard and is a very popular choice.

Now, let's take it room by room and feature by feature.

The Living Area

After you have parked the 45OPP and deployed the slide-outs, you will be amazed at the living area. From the rotated driver and passenger chairs to the bedroom door, the living room, galley, and dining area creates a flowing spaciousness that measures 23 feet long by 12 feet 9 inches wide.

THE LIVING ROOM

Whether they are full-timers or serious travelers who want to see as much of the country as possible during their vacations, RVers love to relate interesting stories about the many friends they have made during their RVing adventures. When you host a storytelling session to plan more trips, you can rotate the driver and passenger chairs 180 degrees to increase the seating to eight, including the luxurious sleep sofa that seats three. The passenger chair has a power leg lift.

If close friends or family are visiting or traveling with you, the PS air coil hide-a-bed sofa opens up to a very comfortable dou-





ble bed that has a built-in inflation/deflation pump to get it ready in minutes. The cabinets over the DS theater seats have 18 cu. ft. of storage space for guests' belongings plus plenty of room for sheets, blankets, and pillows. Taking care of overnight guests has never been easier.

THREE LIVING AREA OPTIONS

Package A: UltraLeather™ DE Sofa Bed with Power Lift 55" TV (PS) and Ultra-

Leather Air Coil Hide-A-Bed Sofa (DS)

Package C: UltraLeather Air Coil Hide-A-Bed Sofa with Power Lift 55" TV (PS) and Theatre Seating (DS)

Package D: UltraLeather Air Coil Hide-A-Bed Sofa with Power Lift 55" TV (PS) and two recliners with fireplace (DS)

ENTERTAINMENT

This Allegro Bus is designed for personal entertainment. Upholstered in Wal-

nut UltraLeather,™ three theater seats with leg lifts swell around the viewers who will enjoy programs on a 55-inch high-definition PS television that, at the touch of a button, rises from or disappears into a concealed encasement below a 24 × 54-inch picture window, all of which are standard on the 45OPP.

This is high-end entertainment. LG's Full HD Smart+ LED television is in the 55-inch class (54.6 diagonal). And, of course, it has surround sound with speakers that can rattle the pots and pans in the galley. We tested the volume of the surround sound with a DVD of a NASCAR race. WOW!!

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, 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. 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.

In addition to the LG technology, Tiffin includes as standard equipment the DirecTV receiver (subscription required) that is designed to operate with the optional In-Motion satellite receiver. Pre-wiring for the Winegard Trav'ler satellite receiver is standard.

THE GALLEY

I like the old cliché "top drawer" to describe something that is really good quality. Perhaps it is especially appropriate here to describe the galley in the 45OPP. Every drawer, cabinet, and pantry is "top drawer" in this galley.



The cabinet designers hit a home run with *two* huge slide-out pantries, one on either side of the Maytag 21.7 cu. ft. double-door fridge/freezer unit. Each pantry has two fixed and four adjustable shelves (28" long by 6.5" wide) with adjustable rods two inches above each shelf to keep items stationary. A locking push-button latch above each pantry prevents it from sliding out while the coach is in motion. The refrigerator has double stainless steel doors with an ice and water through-the-door dispenser. A roll-out freezer is in the lower third of the unit.

The galley itself is one of the largest TMH has built. The seven-foot wide galley offers a 24.6 sq. ft. work area that includes the slide-out island. THE TIFFIN STORE-IT-ALL™ ASSURANCE guarantees that a Tiffin will have more cabinet storage than any manufacturer's coach of the same length and in the same price point.

The two cabinets to the left and right of the microwave have nearly 12 cu. ft. of storage and feature adjustable-height

shelves plus two slide-out shelves that provide quick access to items in the rear. The Sharp Carousel microwave-convection oven is the full-size residential version that facilitates baking and roasting. Both the oven and the cooktop have outside exhaust vents. At their rallies, Allegro Club members receive special demonstration and training classes for making full use of convection technology.

The upgrade to the optional Wolf induction cooktop (MSRP \$2,100) brings a new dimension to preparing meals quickly and efficiently. Heat is produced instantly in the magnetic cooking vessel rather than on the cooktop itself. A fingertip touch selects the cooking temperature on the smooth cooktop. Changes in cooking temps are made in seconds. When you turn it off, heat is retained only in the vessel, not the cooktop. To see a demonstration, go to YouTube.com and search for "Wolf induction cooktop demonstration." A set of four ferro-magnetic pots and pans is supplied with the cooktop. If a magnet sticks to the bottom of





measuring 15.5" × 25"; two are 3" deep and one is 5" deep.

The optional Fisher & Paykel Dishdrawer™ (MSRP \$1,330) is located directly under the Wolf induction cooktop. It has become a favorite in the RV industry for its design and dependability. You can banish dish-washing chores forever by stashing all of your soiled dishes and utensils in the Dishdrawer through the day and running it at night. Your induction pots and pans store neatly in a large drawer under the dishwasher.

Using space efficiently has been a strong suit at TMH for many years. The double doors under the sinks reveal a multi-purpose slide-out cabinet. The front compartment holds the trash container. Two sink covers fit perfectly in a side compartment. The rear compartment has two deep drawers, with the top drawer sliding back into the housing to give access to the lower drawer. Design!

On the north end of the galley, a stack of three drawers is designed to store utensils, cutlery, and hot pads, plus all of the odds and ends every chef must have. With a galley this carefully designed, a chef can create dinner entrées to please discriminating guests with high expectations.

THE DINETTE

The Allegro Bus includes the dinette/computer workstation as standard equipment, one of Tiffin's most popular options. Many buyers choose the optional U-shaped dinette with deep-comfort UltraLeather™ upholstery (MSRP \$980) that begs you to stay for that second cup of coffee. The dinette's solid surface counter top is designed and manufactured in Tiffin's Red Bay plant. It compares very favorably with Corian™ and Gibraltar™. Tiffin's finishing of its solid surface counter tops, backsplashes, and tables is without compare.

your favorite pot or pan, you can use it on the cooktop.

The double sinks in the Allegro Bus brand, constructed with solid surface counter top (SSCT) material, may be unique to the motorcoach industry. Rectangular in shape (12" × 19.5" and 12" × 15.5") and 6.5" deep, with a curved chrome faucet, single-lever water control, and extendable pushbutton sprayer, these sinks can take care of any assignment—from washing dishes for a dozen guests to cleaning a harvest of fresh vegetables from the Farmers Market. Without a doubt, the large size provides versatility.

Let's take a look below the SSCT and check out the design efficiency of the storage. The slide-out island on the south end of the galley has a concealed handle under the forward edge of the slide-out. A tug on the handle will release the island to slide out, creating an L-shaped galley. It automatically locks into position. A second tug will release it when you are ready to push it back into its housing. The slide-out contains three large drawers

Heating and Cooling the 45OPP

The Extraordinaire™ AC system in Tiffin coaches is enhanced by state-of-the-art heating and cooling technology developed by Tiffin engineers. Modeled on the residential method 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 passenger side and return air through the vents connected to the driver side ducts. This keeps air moving in a circular pattern to maintain the desired interior temperature.

All of the Allegro Bus floor plans have three low-profile 15,000 BTU air conditioners with heat pumps. When the temperatures drop into the 40s on cool mornings, you can utilize the campground's power to warm your coach with the heat pumps.

In the spring and fall months when you have warm days, Tiffin's thermal wrap in the floor and ceiling will retain a significant amount of the day's solar warmth. With the standard fireplace, you can knock off the morning chill until the sun reaches

the top of your coach. When the temps really drop, Aqua-Hot's hydronic system pumps a hot liquid into five to seven heat exchangers that quietly disperse heated air into the living, bedroom, and bath areas.

The Aqua-Hot system maintains an even distribution of warm air without creating hot and cold spots in the coach. With potable water running through coils wrapped around the boiler, hot water is distributed endlessly and instantly to the galley, shower, faucets, and dishwasher. All water coming into the coach is filtered at the utility bay.

The optional heated floors (MSRP \$5,180) have two zones: bedroom & baths and galley & living area. After it became apparent the heated floors raised the room temperature in our Allegro Bus demo, we lowered the thermostat settings for the Aqua-Hot system by five degrees. Choose a selectable setting between 1 and 5 for the floor heat and you will enjoy a "new warm."



The R&R Area

After opposing slide-outs were introduced to the motorhome's bedroom about 15 years ago, the head of the bed by design had to go *into* the slide-out box. It certainly created more floor space in the bedroom, but long arms are required to reach into the slide-out and stretch a fitted sheet over the two forward corners.

Some ingenious mechanics eliminated that problem in the 2017 model year. Tiffin calls the invention the "Power Smart Bed." At the touch of a switch on the sidewall of the slide-out, the track-mounted PS bed slides out 24 inches into the room, making it easy to reach the two corners of the headboard. Making up the bed is now a "piece of cake." But there's more. As you retract the bed into the slide-out, and continue to depress the switch, the head of the bed will rise about 18 inches to lift your head and shoulders up for watching TV in bed.

Raising the head of the bed a few inches and adding a pillow will produce the perfect elevation for reading. An overhead light plus a wall sconce will customize your illumination. Both bedside tables are serviced by 110v outlets and two USB ports. At least one person in each family likes to check email and Facebook before turning out the lights.

And speaking of "turning out the lights" – from the Spyder panel located in the sidewall of the bedroom slide-out, you can turn off all of the lights inside the coach, control the ceiling fan, turn the outside door light on/off, lock your outside door, and start/stop the generator.

In this coach, Tiffin worked with Spyder Controls to create a "mini-pad" to operate nearly everything in the coach. Mounted on the wall at the entrance to the bedroom, the pad displays

several "folders" on its perimeters. Touch a folder, and the pad will open the screen inside the perimeter for that set of functions. For example, touch the icon shaped like the bus and the screen displays the four slide-outs for you to extend and retract. There's much more, but you will have to visit your dealer and get a demonstration.

This year TMH jumped the size of the bedroom television to 42" diagonal and added a sound bar as standard equipment, creating a second entertainment center for your evening enjoyment.

The double chests with solid surface counter tops in the opposing PS slide-out are the obvious beginning point for planning how you will store your clothes and personal items. The chest under the window has two large drawers (1.8 cu.ft. each). The taller chest houses the electronics for the primary entertainment system in the living room. Underneath you will notice a large clothes hamper and two large drawers. There are three more major storage centers in this bedroom.

Hidden behind two raised-panel doors, the cabinet over the window will surprise you with 2.7 cu.ft. of storage space. Under the bed and out of sight, two more drawers secret away 4.4 cu.ft. And in the DS slide-out, Tiffin puts its standard 10.5 cu.ft. of storage over the head of the bed. Perhaps the nicest thing about all of this storage is that it is all so inconspicuous.

A WALK-IN CLOSET

I am going to walk through the master bath and focus for a moment on the walk-in closet. Taking enough of your wardrobe to last through a winter or summer season will not be a



The stacked washer and dryer are positioned to the right of the sliding door entrance into the walk-in closet. To the left are six drawers and four cubbies with baskets. The clothes rod extends a full eight feet across the rear of the coach. Shoes are conveniently stored in eight recessed boxes. A safe is secreted in the wall at the back of the closet.

problem in one of Tiffin's 45-foot coaches. The walk-in closet is 8 feet wide by 4' 2" deep. You've got a hanging rod across the entire rear of the coach, above which is an 8-foot shelf. Immediately on your left is a floor-to-ceiling chest with six drawers and four large cubbies, each with a removable basket. It more than doubles the bedroom drawer space. A cabinet with eight boxes for your shoes fits flush into the rear wall. On your right as you walk into the closet, a louvered cabinet conceals the stacked Splendide washer and dryer (MSRP \$1,680). Out of sight in the northeast corner of the closet, the architect included a small cabinet for a built-in safe which is hidden by your clothes hanging on the overhead rack. The safe's code is programmable.

THE MASTER BATH

The bathroom in this 45OPP is distinguished by the choice of the White Chocolate décor. Some might describe it as French Provincial. Resembling half pipes carved into the solid surface counter tops, the double lavatories are served by pump-styled faucets with single lever controls. Full wall backsplashes blend into a rope-lighted overhang created by the four-inch extension of the personal cabinets for toiletries. Each is concealed by 20 × 27-inch beveled mirrors that completely belie the presence of the cabinet. Four LEDs recessed into the ceiling provide perfect lighting. Each vanity offers a large compartment for the storage of bath and hand towels, plus a shared stack of three drawers. You will notice towel rings for each lavatory plus an additional cabinet and drawer between the two mirrors. All very thoughtfully designed and skillfully made — a Tiffin trademark.



A handsomely crafted shower or a shower-tub combination and a macerator toilet occupy the other half of the master bath. Two of the shower walls are created with SSCT with handmade tile insets, the opposing two with Plexiglas. With the assurance of an unending supply of hot water from the coach's Aqua-Hot system, the "rainmaker" shower head, augmented with an adjustable water wand, creates a relaxing experience.

After many requests over the years for a real tub, Tiffin for 2017 engineered an optional tub into the 45OPP by extending the wall another nine inches. With 16 inches of steamy hot water, you can now get a good soak.

Our Tiffin demonstrator coach has a macerator toilet. Since the 1.6-gallon water closet is required by the EPA on new residential construction, I have wanted to put a macerator toilet in every bathroom in my house. They work! They have been road tested. In this bathroom configuration, you also get a window, a cabinet above it, and two double-bar towel racks.

For a little additional connection to the outside world, Tiffin has a big sunroof over the shower to encourage you to sing



to the morning sun. “Oh, what a beautiful mornin’, oh, what a beautiful day, I’ve got a beautiful feeling, everything’s going my way”— you know, the song from the great musical *Oklahoma!* I can just imagine Curly in the shower, singing his heart out.

One more important element: a fully-featured Fan-Tastic vent fan. It gets the humidity out, etc., and pulls in the cool air at night — just like the attic fan did in the home where I grew up. Some things should never change!

THE HALF BATH

Let’s face it. The half bath is not an extravagance. It is a necessary convenience. When you have guests, or when the two of you are trying to get ready at the same time for a dinner engagement, it is the perfect solution.

And Tiffin makes this half bath almost opulent. A solid surface counter top with the lavatory built into it as one piece, plus a designer backsplash. A single-lever faucet and soap dispenser, a ceramic toilet with sprayer, a toiletries cabinet with mirrored door, four storage cabinets, a window, an exhaust fan, LED

lighting, and a double-bar towel rack. And even though it is just a half bath, it has its own Fan-Tastic exhaust fan.

THE FLIGHT DECK

The brightly illuminated instruments in the Tiffin dash are recessed under a hood, making them easy to read even in midday. The standard warning lights are positioned horizontally under the speedometer.

The controls on the steering wheel are equally well-designed. The left side has four obvious buttons for the cruise control and one for the headlight dimmer. On the right side, Tiffin placed the ICC courtesy blinker switch at the top of an oval panel, with four buttons below it for the windshield wipers and spray. There are several variations for controlling the wipers’ frequency and speed.

To the right of the steering column, Tiffin used eight toggle switches to cover a wide assortment of functions. From left to right: Step Cover, Driver Fan, Solar Shade, Night Shade, Gen Start, Map Light, Door Light, and Radio. Just above the toggle switches is a Triple Vision color monitor for the two side



cameras mounted in the Velvac mirrors and the single camera mounted in the top of the rear cap. When you shift to reverse, the software displays a grid showing your distance from any fixed object.

The Kenwood radio, CD player, and navigation software are standard on the Allegro Bus. It is programmed for XM-Radio (subscription required, but free for the first three months). Stereo speakers are concealed in the upper left and right corners. An optional subwoofer (MSRP \$350) is hidden in the dash. Two USB ports will accommodate any items you wish to charge or use while you are traveling.

Denso redesigned their dash instrumentation for our automotive heating and air conditioning, making dials that can be used intuitively without taking your eyes off the road.



The three toggles to the left of the steering column take care of Engine Preheat, Auxiliary Start, and the Pedals In/Out adjustment. Just above the toggle switches, you will notice the round display for the optional Mobileye™ Collision Avoidance System (MSRP \$1,540).

To the left of the driver's chair, a console is positioned under the driver's forearm, allowing the fingertips to fall naturally on the gear shifting pad. Although it is an automatic transmission, a (+) and (-) key allow the driver to choose a gear. The MODE selector offers the "economy" option that will save fuel by re-

ducing automatic up and down shifting. The air-driven parking brake is located just in front of the shifting pad.

Next on the console is the multi-directional control for the motorized PS and DS mirrors. The adjacent switch will also heat the mirrors in cold weather. Never forget the importance of a cupholder. This one has a slot for the finger loop on your mug. A second cupholder is out of sight, but still in easy reach just inside the drawer under the Denso HVAC controls.

This console has five toggle switches: Driver Solar Shade, Driver Night Shade, Air Horn, Engine Brake (HI & LOW), and Tag Dump. Next to the Air Horn toggle is the power control for the driver's window.

In the 2017 Allegro Bus, the passenger's responsibilities were increased with nine controls placed in the PS console, including



Exterior Accent Lights, Door Night Shade (automatic), Passenger Night Shade, Step Cover, Passenger Solar Shade, Slide Box Lights, Map Light, Porch Awning Light, and Passenger Fan.

Tiffin provides two leveling systems. The hydraulic leveling system is built by HWH, the leader in manufacturing this product for the motorhome industry. TMH added an air-leveling system built by Valid Manufacturing. It employs air bags specifically designed to level and stabilize the coach on parking pads that might be damaged by the leveling jacks, such as brick pavers or macadam that gets very hot during the summer. A large map

box and a slot for the driver's cell phone complete the console's functional design.

The cockpit's description would not be complete without mentioning the cabinets and controls at eye level. The cabinet over the passenger chair houses the front and center thermostats for roof AC/heat pumps, plus the awning control over the entry door, the antenna-cable selector, and over a cubic foot of storage. We use this space for our map collection and five Wood-all's campground directories.

Over the door is the handiest place for umbrellas and flashlights—two of each. The cabinets on either side of the overhead dash TV are 15 × 16 × 2.5 inches — shallow, yes, but every owner finds a special item to store here. The DS cabinet conceals the monitor/control for the 30-amp solar panel on the roof (MSRP \$1,232).

The most important cabinet in the cockpit is over the driver's chair, naturally. Lots of controls: Power Control System; Central Monitor Panel; Spyder panel for lights in the main ceiling, door, porch, road (DS), and entry; Winegard Satellite; Carefree Awning, and Magnum Energy Inverter. But no slide-out toggles! What?

They fooled me this time! I looked everywhere for those two toggle switches and had to call Danny Inman to ask where they were mounted. They are mounted in the side top edge of the passenger and driver chairs, on the sides facing the outside walls. Why there? Many of us during the operation of the motorhome push the chairs back against the sidewalls of the slide-outs. Then we would deploy them with the two toggle switches in the cabinet over the driver's chair and overlook the UltraLeather getting scratched or torn when we put the slides out. Now the easiest way to activate the toggle switches is to park your knees in the seat of the chairs while you reach around the edge of the chair and hold down the switch, affording easy surveillance of the slide-outs as they move in or out.

UNDER THE WHEEL

We pulled out of the Red Bay campground at 7 a.m. towing a friend's Ford F-150 just to let the 45OPP know that it had a job to do. Plus 90 gallons of water and 150 gallons of fuel. I distributed evenly across the basement ten 50-lb boxes of books from my warehouse to make it a fair test drive.

Bumping down 4th Street, I could not hear even a squeak. Unusual for a brand new coach with only 110 miles on the odometer. Take a right at the bank and head out to the left curve that leads to the bypass. By the way, the 4-lane from Russellville to Red Bay is completely finished. Didn't think it would ever happen!

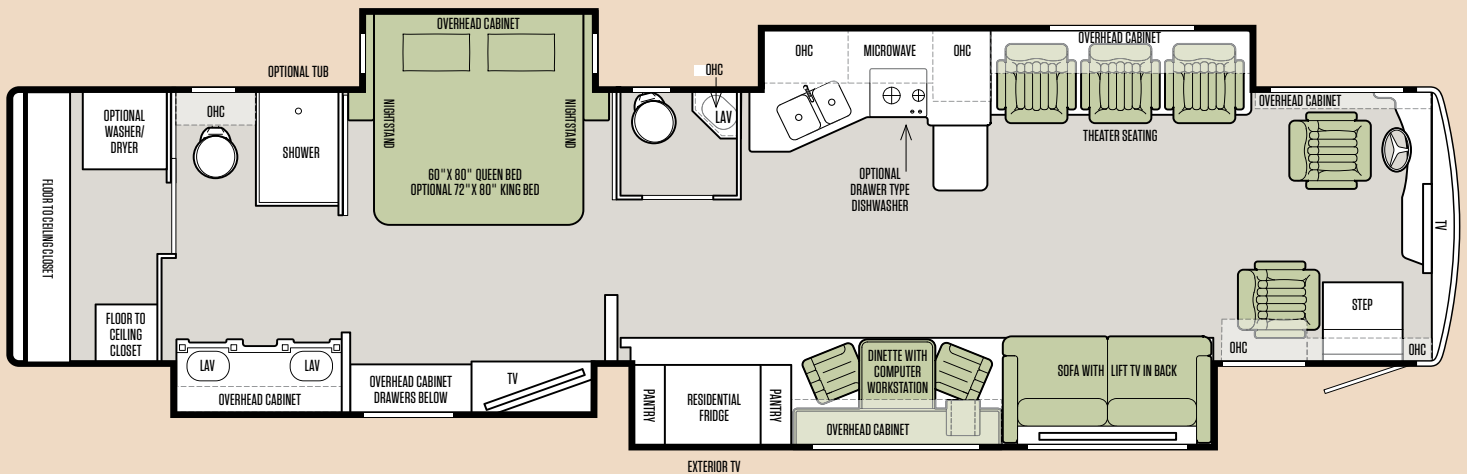
Heading out east on AL-24 across the flats, pushing the speed up to 65, passing Swamp John's and taking that long hill. If you've been to Red Bay, you know the route. We are topping the hill at 58. Keep in mind that we are driving a 450-hp Cummins ISL 8.9L 450-hp with 1,250 lb/ft of torque.

We have some long hills and serious curves ahead. The independent front suspension, tuned shocks, and six air bags will smooth out the rough pavement and absorb the bumps wherever you find them. But today we are on a new road. Can't simulate that for you.

Tiffin is running 315/80R22.5 Michelins on the 45OPP. The road manners are great: absolutely no wandering, I am holding the wheel with thumb and forefinger. We are into a long curve and the ride-height adjusters are giving the 45OPP the balance to counteract the natural centrifugal force you should feel with 50,000 pounds under you.

If you've been thinking about full-timing, this is the right coach. Three living room configurations, dozens of options to personalize it to your tastes, luxurious comfort to lift your psyche. **RIS**

The Allegro Bus 45OPP



SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2017 Allegro Bus 45OPP, Quad Slide

Base MSRP* – \$426,300 MSRP as tested with options – \$458,997

STANDARD FEATURES

Structural

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

Automotive

PowerGlide chassis
Allison 3000 MH six-speed automatic transmission with lock-up (torque converter)
Cummins 450-hp, ISL 8.9L, electronic/turbocharged diesel with 1,250 lb.-ft. torque
Air ride (6 air bags)
Aluminum wheels
Independent front suspension
ABS brakes & two-stage compression engine brake
Adjustable fuel and brake pedals
VIP Smart Wheel
Side-mounted radiator
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® generator, manual slide-out
Auto generator start
50-amp service
50-amp power cord reel
Three low-profile roof 15,000 BTU ACs with heat pumps
A/C condensation drains
Heated chrome mirrors with integrated cameras, remote mirror adjustments
Back-up camera in rear cap
Three power roof vents with 3-speed fans
Single motor intermittent wipers
Exterior TV with sound bar
Gel-coat fiberglass walls
Full-body paint with protective film on front cap
Double electric step
Dual pane tinted windows
Exterior patio and door LED lights
Powered door awning
Single Paramount™ powered patio awning
Window awning package (3 windows)
Slide-out covers
Custom mud flap
Swing-out basement storage doors with gas shocks, remote locks
Pass-through basement storage
Basement cargo lights
Motion sensor lighting for basement storage
Remote locking system for entry door
Deadbolt front entrance door
Chrome handles on compartment doors
Flush mounted dual pane windows
Docking lights
Heated water and holding tank compartments
SeeLevel tank monitor
SeeLevel monitor pad in utility bay
Exterior rinse hose with soap dispenser & paper towel holder
Six house batteries
Pure sine wave inverter with 100-amp converter & transfer switching
Black holding tank flush system
Water filter
Gravity water fill
Undercoating
110v exterior receptacle
110v / 12v converter
Digital TV antenna
Concealed air horns
Pre-wired for Winegard Trav'ler satellite
Low profile in-motion satellite dish
Cable TV ready hookup

Driver's Compartment
Power UltraLeather™ driver and passenger seats with passenger footrest
Contemporary wraparound dash
Drawer in step well
Power step well cover
Driver side power window
Courtesy lights in step well
Lighted switches
Dual dash fans
One drawer in dash with compartment and sliding cup holder
Cup holders on driver & passenger side
12v disconnect switch

Single CD player & AM/FM stereo
XM satellite-ready radio includes receiver and antenna (requires subscription)
In-dash navigation system
Front overhead TV
Two USB dash receptacles
Passenger console with 9 toggle switches & USB receptacles
Driver console houses gear shift, mirror controls, engine brake, leveling system, shades
Computer slide-out tray in PS dash
Power solar & privacy windshield shades
Solar & privacy shades for DS & PS side windows
Solid non-opening PS window
Custom infrared repeater system on all TVs
Color rear vision monitor system with side-view cameras activated by turn signals
Seatbelts integrated into driver & passenger chairs
Fire extinguisher

Living Area / Dinette

Package A (standard):
UltraLeather™ DE Sofa Bed with Lift TV (PS)
UltraLeather Air Coil Hide-A-Bed sofa (DS)
Mid-section 55" LG Smart+ color TV, surround sound
Dinette with computer workstation

Galley

Polished solid surface countertops with sink covers
Expand-an-Island
Induction cooktop
Permanently mounted folding solid surface cooktop cover
Solid surface double bowl sink
Single lever sink faucet with sprayer
Built-in soap dispenser
Stainless steel convection/microwave oven with exterior vent
LED task lights above countertop
2.5" deep lighted toe kick
Galley backsplash
Stainless steel residential refrigerator with ice & water dispenser in door
Built-in soap dispenser
Slide-out cabinet under double sink with compartments for sink covers & trash can
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan

Full Bath

Two medicine cabinets with large mirrors over vanity
Solid surface vanity top with sculpted double lavatory
Four LED recessed lights over vanity
Full backsplash with rope lighting
2.5" toe kick with recessed lighting
One cabinet over toilet
Macerator toilet
Solid surface shower walls with tiled insets
Rainmaker shower head
Shower wand with flex hose mounted on adjustable vertical slide
Wall-mounted seat in shower
Skylight over shower with LED light in sliding solar cover
Aqua-Hot continuous hot water
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan in full bath

Half Bath

One 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

Bedroom

Ceiling fan
Four OH storage cabinets in bed slide-out
Bed comforter with designer pillows
Sleeping pillows with shams
Queen-size bed with memory foam mattress
Under bed storage
Night stands with 110v and USB outlets & solid surface countertops
UltraLeather upholstered headboard framed with curved wood molding
Two chests of drawers with solid surface countertops
Side windows in bed slide-out with solar & privacy shades
Exit window with solar & privacy shades in PS slide-out
Carbon monoxide and LPG leak detectors
Entertainment system concealed with lowered doors in chest

Pre-wired for second satellite receiver
42" LG Smart+ television
DirecTV® receiver (subscription required)
DVD player with surround sound for living room

Walk-in Closet

Storage cabinet wired & plumbed for washer/dryer
Floor-to-ceiling chest with six drawers, four open compartments
96" clothes hanging rod across rear of coach
Wall safe

General Interior

7-ft. ceilings
Soft touch vinyl ceilings with tray ceiling in living area
Porcelain tile floor throughout the coach (excluding slide-outs)
High gloss raised-panel hardwood cabinet doors and drawers
Aqua-Hot hydronic heating system
Extraordinaire™ AC system
Solid cherry cabinet fascias & doors with concealed hinges
LED lighting throughout coach
Complete cable wiring (interfacing with surround sound & satellite receiver)
Home theater with concealed surround sound speakers
Powered solar & privacy shades in living area
Tank level monitor system
Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors
Vacuum system with VacPan

OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Crimson full body paint (NC)
Woodcrest décor (NC)
Package C (NC):
UltraLeather Air Coil Hide-A-Bed Sofa with Lift TV (PS)
Theatre Seating (DS)
Exterior lights under slide-out boxes
Exterior ground effect lights
Extended cycle batteries
Exterior roof ladder
Glazed Honey Natural Cherry Wood Cabinets
Solar panel
Second Paramount awning
Basement refrigerator-freezer
One powered basement slide-out tray
Subwoofer in dash
Mobileye Collision Avoidance System
Stacked Washer/Dryer
Heated tile floor
Wolf cooktop upgrade
Dishwasher
UltraLeather U-shaped dinette
Power Smart Bed with Memory Foam – King

OTHER OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE FOR THIS COACH

One or two storage compartment slide-out trays
Second powered storage compartment slide-out tray
Autumn Wood Plank Tile Floor
Vertical slide opening window – PS
Glazed Canyon Cherry solid cabinet doors & door fronts
Glazed Cherry solid cabinet doors & door fronts
Luster Sheen cabinet finish (only with glazed cabinets)
Estate décor by Ralph Lauren
Package D: UltraLeather Air Coil Hide-A-Bed Sofa with Lift TV (PS) and two recliners with fireplace (DS)
Memory Foam mattress – Queen (60 x 80")
Memory Foam mattress – King (72 x 80")
Dual Control Air Comfort mattress – Queen (60 x 80")
Dual Control Air Comfort mattress – King (72 x 80")
Power Smart bed with Memory Foam – Queen (60 x 80")

OTHER CHOICES FOR PAINT, DÉCOR, AND CABINET FINISHES AT NO ADDITIONAL CHARGE

Any of the six other paint colors
Either of the other two décors: Caravan or Sea Salt
Any of these three cabinet finishes: Cherry Wood, Natural Cherry, and White Chocolate (bath only)

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 326"
Overall length – 45"
Overall height w/roof air – 12' 7"
Interior height – 83"
Overall width – 101"
Interior width – 96"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 51,000 lb.
Front GAWR – 17,000 lb.
Rear GAWR – 23,000 lb.
Tag GAWR – 13,300 lb.
GCWR – 66,000 lb.
UVW – 38,000 lb. as tested
CCC – 11,551 lb.
Trailer hitch capacity – 15,000 lb.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – Cummins 450-hp, ISL 8.9 liter, electronic, turbocharged diesel
Torque – 1,250 lb.-ft. at 1,400 rpm
Transmission – Allison 3000MH electronic six speed with two overdrives
Tire Size – 315/80R22.5 Michelin
Alternator – 210 amps

CHASSIS

Frame – PowerGlide chassis
Frame Design – Raised rail
Anti-locking Braking System – Full air brakes with Anti-locking Braking System (ABS)
Air Suspension (front) – ZF independent front suspension
Air Suspension (rear) – Dana axle with Reyco suspension
Air Suspension (tag) – Reyco axle and air suspension
Shock Absorbers (front) – Sachs tuned
Shock Absorbers (rear) – Bilstein tuned
Leveling: Valid Air Leveling System in combination with HWH hydraulic automatic jacks

CONSTRUCTION

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

ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – 4 adults
Fuel tank – 150 gallons
Freshwater – 90 gallons
Black water – 50 gallons
Grey water – 70 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.

LEASE 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.

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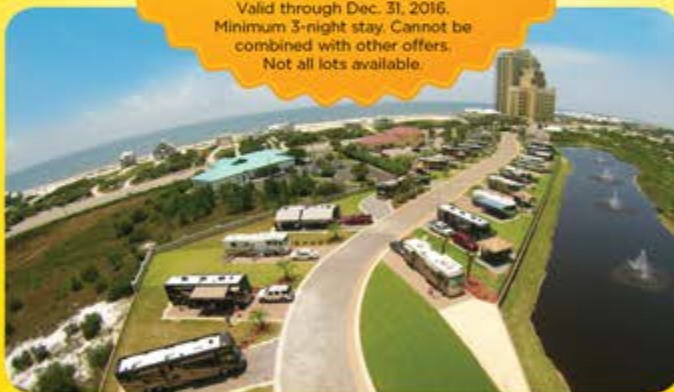
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Tiffin Motorhomes Celebrates Five 40-Year Anniversaries



ANNIVERSARIES ARE AN IMPORTANT EVENT AT TIFFIN MOTORHOMES, especially 40-year anniversaries. Each anniversary represents achievements in dedication, skill, and mutual trust between the company and the employee. Since Tiffin Motorhomes celebrated its 44th anniversary in September, it is not surprising that five employees celebrated their fortieth year at TMH during this quarter. They were honored at a luncheon attended by their relatives and members of the Tiffin family.

Hollis Hicks began his career in the cabinet shop at Tiffin Motorhomes in March 1976, soon after he graduated from high

From left to right: Phyllis Williams, George Embrey, Pete Blanton, Bob Tiffin, Walter Sparks, Hollis Hicks, and Tim Tiffin.

school. “We built cabinet frames out of pine and then attached paneling to the sides and fronts of the frames,” he said. “Today we build our cabinets out of hardwood. A lot more labor goes into the construction of a cabinet in the galley. Paneling required no finishing work.

“Now our cabinets have to be sanded, stained, top coated, sanded again, varnished, and sometimes glazed,” he continued. “There are so many wood pieces in the cabinets, fascias, and valances that they had to start a ‘small parts department.’ When I started, there was no such thing as a slide-out. We had five floor plans and built three campers a day. We had two 23-ft. units, two 26-ft. units, and one 29-ft. model. We have been growing ever since.”

Hollis and his wife Janet have two children: Brian and Holly. Brian and his wife Shannon have three children. Holly and Janet are employed at Lindsey-Winchester, the company that makes the comforters, décor pillows, and valances for Tiffin’s interiors. Holly is also studying at Itawamba Community College for a teaching degree.

While Hollis’ career has focused on woodworking, it is also his hobby. “I really like the work I do,” he said, “so much that I have



my own woodworking shop at home.” Like so many of his friends at Tiffin, Hollis’ outdoor hobby is riding his motorcycle through the beautiful countryside throughout northwest Alabama.

Pete Blanton is a Tennessean by birth, but his parents moved from Savannah, Tennessee, to Mississippi to begin farming land near Tremont. The family planted cotton, corn, and soybeans and raised hogs and cattle. “My brother and I are still farming and my mother, 79, lives on the farm in the house where we grew up,” Pete said. “I am a fourth generation farmer—my great-grandfather, both of my grandpas, my dad, and now me and my



brother. We both enjoy working the land. For me it is almost a hobby.

“I raise soybeans on the original 70-acre family farm with my brother and I lease another 60 acres,” Pete continued. “My brother *really* farms for a living and plants 600 acres in soybeans. We are into harvesting now. The harvesting equipment cuts the plants three to four inches above the ground and extracts the seed. We sell the seed in Decatur where it is loaded onto barges on the Tennessee River.”

Pete began his career at Tiffin in March 1976. He started in plumbing and electrical on the assembly line. That position led to more experience in flooring, carpet installation, and setting sidewalls to the floor.

“I had been serving as a utility man in the flooring department for several years when Kenneth Shotts, the supervisor of the service department, asked me to join the service team as a technician,” Pete explained. “For the last five years, I have been the supervisor of Repair Central which includes overseeing 10 service bays and 21 employees.”

Pete and his wife Cindy have been married 39 years. For several years, Cindy served as a librarian and secretary in the school system. They have two children: Casey and Jana. Casey, who works in the Tiffin maintenance division, is married to Emily and they have a daughter, Chloe, 7. Jana and her husband, T. J.

Allison, have three children: Clay, 14; Paden, 12; and Nylah, 8.

George Embrey began his career at Tiffin Motorhomes in March 1976, working in the flooring department. “After working in flooring for three years, Bill Emerson, the plant manager, asked me to be the utility man at several different positions on the assembly line,” George related. “I also hung aluminum siding and installed roofs in the late 1980s, quite a while before we went to fiberglass. I have worked at almost every job in motorhome production except painting, mechanical, and welding.”

George was born in Itawamba County, Mississippi, and



farmed with his father until he began working at TMH. He and his wife Bobbie have been married for 44 years. They have one daughter, Tracy, and one granddaughter, Stephanie. Tracy makes her home in Dorsey, Mississippi, where she is employed as a bank teller.

“Bobbie and I enjoy living on 50 acres in Itawamba County, land that was inherited out of the old family place. We heat our home with an Ashley wood stove, which means we have no heating bill,” George said. “I cut firewood off our property every spring and fall. Heating with wood gives you a really nice toasty warmth in the winter.”

George now works as a “parts runner” to keep the store stocked with inventory needed by motorhome owners who stay at the Tiffin Service Center while their coaches are being serviced and repaired.

Walter Sparks is an Alabama native, born in the village of Sweet Water (pop. 250) about 100 miles north of Mobile. His parents decided to move to Red Bay in 1973 to be closer to his mother’s family. Walter attended high school in Red Bay and began employment at Tiffin Motorhomes on September 7, 1976.

“My first job was with a furniture company in Golden,” he began. “That job did not last very long. I applied at Tiffin and started framing cabinets in the woodworking shop. Except for a



brief layoff in 1979, I have worked continuously for Tiffin since I began in 1976.”

After three years in the cabinet shop, Walter spent 12 years in the sidewall department. His next job was in undercoating where he worked for five years. “That job required a full protective suit and a breathing hood,” Walter said. “I moved to the electrical department in 1991. Over the last 10 years, I have wired both the AC and DC breaker boxes. However, there is probably 10 times the amount of wiring in a coach today than there was when I started in 1991. After the DC box got a lot more complicated, the electrical engineer decided to add a second electrician to this production line. Now I handle only the AC boxes. It is a very detailed job that requires accuracy. Connecting a circuit to the wrong breaker could create a big problem.”

A few years ago Walter’s wife, Patricia, worked at the Tiffin door plant in Vina. She is now employed at the Silver Dollar salvage store in Golden. The couple have five children, Rodney, Tracy, Amanda, Melissa, and Kimberly, who range in age from 26 to 39. The Sparkses also have five grandchildren who are 10 to 18 years of age. They use their 32-ft. travel trailer frequently for family camping trips to the beautiful campgrounds situated on the three TVA lakes in Franklin County.

“We enjoy fishing from our fish ’n ski boat,” Walter said. “I like to fish all three lakes. There are a lot of bass and catfish and the grandkids like to catch brim.”

Walter is actively involved in a religious ministry. He began preaching in 1995 for the Church of God. “I have been pastoring the New Life Fellowship in Halltown for several years,” Walter said. “I preach nearly every Sunday and minister to all of the congregation’s needs and that includes preaching funerals and doing weddings. I receive great joy out of ministering.”

Phyllis Williams. The company was barely three years old in December 1975 when Bob Tiffin called the business teacher at Red Bay High School and asked if she could recommend a former student for a position in the TMH business office. Ms. Bar-



bara Cashion strongly recommended Phyllis Shewbart. She had just graduated seven months earlier in the Class of 1975.

Bob first called Phyllis’ father, Forbus Shewbart, to locate his daughter who had married recently, and then called Phyllis to ask if she might be interested. After a brief interview, the job was offered, Phyllis accepted, and she is now in her fortieth year with Tiffin Motorhomes.

When Phyllis was a junior in high school, she and several other students were working on a float in the TMH warehouse for the 1973 homecoming parade. A local boy, Gary Williams, stopped by to visit and eventually asked her for a date for homecoming night. The couple married shortly after her graduation on May 23, 1975. In business for himself, Gary was a distributor of agricultural products. A few years later he took a position in the warehouse with Tiffin Motorhomes.

“There were 35 employees when I came to work here,” Phyllis said. “I was hired to fill in for Sylvia Massey when she left to spend more time with her family. Barbara Strickland did the payroll and insurance and I did the drivers’ reports, the accounts payable and receivable, and invoiced the motorhomes to the dealers. The invoices were processed on an electric typewriter. The accounts payable and receivable were written by hand and we used pegboard bookkeeping to keep track of the payables. Back when invoices were paid by hand-posting and hand-written checks, we went through the invoices daily to check for discounts we could take and always paid the invoices on a daily basis, paying whatever was due on that date,” Phyllis explained.

“It is unreal what it takes to run the plant in 2016,” Phyllis reflected. “I cannot imagine what it would take to launch a plant like this today. The Tiffins have done an amazing job of building the company up to what it is now – the equipment, materials, and machinery. In the beginning we simply bought colored aluminum for our sidewalls. Today the sidewalls are complicated laminations and the finished motorhomes get full body paint. We have come a LONG way!”


Phyllis’ job has changed exponentially, too. “Today’s ac-

counts payable department consists of our controller-CPA Brian Thompson and two accountants, plus three of us who do data entry for vendors’ invoices. We are like a family and our work is a team effort. I continue to process the checks and send the payments, but thankfully I no longer have to balance those bank statements and keep those general ledgers by hand like we did in the early days,” she laughed.

Gary and Phyllis have two girls who both decided on careers in elementary education and each earned a bachelor’s degree. Jill, 28, is teaching first grade at Red Bay Elementary School and is married to Bryan Hester. Lauren, 25, teaches pre-K at West Elementary School in Russellville. Lauren is married to Blake Taylor.

Gary and Phyllis stay busy with their own activities. In addition to working at TMH, Gary manages the family’s farm eight miles east of Red Bay where he has a small herd of cattle. Phyllis, who learned to play the piano and organ as a child, enjoys her digital piano which has a headset. “I can entertain myself and no one else can hear me if I miss a note,” she laughs.

Phyllis is an avid reader, concentrating on history and biography most of the time. The family is very active in the Burn-out Missionary Baptist Church, just a mile or two from their home, where Phyllis serves as secretary and Gary as treasurer.

When the leaves turn red and gold and the temperatures cool a bit, the South knows it is time for football. “Most of my dad’s family attended Auburn,” she explained. “So I have been an Auburn Tiger fan almost since birth.” The family loves tailgating on the Plains. 

Plant Tours

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The Great Smoky Mountains National Park

by Fred Thompson

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION
WILDFLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The fourth national park featured in our series this year, the Great Smoky Mountains claims the number one slot for the most annual visits among our top 10 national parks. In 2015 it welcomed more than 10 million visitors. Holding second place with the most visitors, the Grand Canyon welcomed slightly more than half that number. The other eight parks of our most visited parks in-

clude Rocky Mountain, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Zion, Olympic, Grand Tetons, Acadia, and Glacier. All but Olympic and Glacier have been featured in *Roughing It Smoothly*.

The Smokies are old mountains. In fact, they are the oldest mountains on the North American continent, born long before the age of the dinosaurs. There are no great granite spires breaking the 14,000-

foot mark like you will see in the Rockies. The Smokies' highest peaks humbly measure less than half that height. After being worn down through untold eons of time, they were left with soil that produced the most diverse number of species of flora and fauna compared to any other region in the temperate zone throughout the world. The Smokies are sometimes called a temperate rain forest.

How *were* the Appalachian chain and the Great Smokies formed? A thousand years is a mere blink in the geologist's timeline. Early Precambrian rocks, the dominant rock type found near Oconaluftee and the upper Tuckasegee River near Cherokee and Bryson City, consist of metamorphic gneiss, granite, and schist. Geologists believe that Precambrian gneiss and schist formed over a billion years ago from the

The Four Seasons in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park



Clingmans Dome Tower dressed in winter white.



Spring perfection on Charlies Bunyon.



Spring fed streams are still very cold even in summer.



Fall brings a burst of color on Rich Mountain Road.

accumulation of marine sediments and igneous rock in a primordial ocean.

By the end of the Paleozoic period, the ancient ocean had deposited a thick layer of marine sediments, leaving behind sedimentary rocks such as limestone. Approximately 450 million years ago, the North American and African plates collided. Geologists believe this destroyed the ancient ocean and initiated the 200-million-year Alleghenian mountain-building epoch that produced the Appalachians. The later Mesozoic period saw the rapid erosion of the sedimentary rocks from the new mountains, creating soil that would provide the foundation for a future rainforest.

Because of the orographic¹ effect, the Appalachians played an important role in forming the temperate rainforest in this area. In the last Ice Age, the ice did not cover the southern Appala-

1. Orographic effect occurs when an air mass approaches a mountain range and is rapidly forced upward, causing any moisture to cool and create precipitation in the form of rain or snow. Thus, rapidly rising air forced up by mountains creates rain or snow.

chians. The area became a refuge for animals and plants pushed south by the glaciers. After the ice receded, some species spread back north while the developing temperate rainforest became a biological harbor that continued to increase its diversity.

Flora

So when did these mountains begin a transition to their present appearance? About 20,000 years ago, glaciers pushed south across North America but never reached the Smokies. They did create a lower mean temperature that increased the annual rainfall. Tundra vegetation took over the higher elevations and spruce and fir forests grew abundantly in the valleys and slopes below 5,000 feet.

Approximately 5,000 years later, the mean annual temperature rose when the glaciers retreated. The tundra disappeared. Spruce-fir forests moved to the higher elevations. Moving from the coastal plains, hardwoods replaced the spruce-fir forests in the lower elevations. The temperatures continued a warming

trend until about 4,000 BCE when the mean temps began to cool again.

The ecology of the Smokies today can be divided into three zones based on elevations: (1) The *cove hardwood forest* in the valleys and coves formed by streams plus the lower mountain slopes, usually below 3,500 feet. (2) The *northern hardwood forest* on the higher mountain slopes between 3,500 and 5,500 feet. (3) The *spruce-fir forest* at the higher elevations above 5,500 feet. The elevations vary and are more marginal than exact.

An interesting phenomenon is the *grass balds* that appear on some of the summits in the Smokies. Surrounded by forests, their origin and persistent survival remains a mystery. Dominated by a turf of mountain oat grass, the balds harbor numerous herbs and occasional shrubs. Their unique beauty and the unparalleled vistas they offer of the surrounding mountains make the balds the destination of many GSM hikers.

Native to the Appalachian mountains, cove hardwood forests in the Smokies usually have over 130 species of trees in

their canopies. A good example is the Albright Grove that can be reached from a trailhead at the intersection of Baxter Road and US 321 near Cosby. Follow the Maddron Bald Trail 2.9 miles to the Albright Grove Loop Trail. This old growth forest has some of the oldest and tallest trees in the Appalachian range plus an amazing understory.

Some of the prevalent species in cove hardwood forests include sugar maple, tulip poplar, basswood, yellow buckeye, Fraser magnolia, hickory, Carolina hemlock, and eastern hemlock. The main species in the understory include dogwood, Catawba rhododendron, redbud, mountain laurel, and hydrangea.

The *northern hardwood forest* reaches its southernmost limit here in the Smokies. The mean annual temperatures above 4,000 feet are cool enough to support several species more commonly found in the northern United States. About 29,000 acres of the northern hardwood forest are old growth. These canopies are dominated by yellow birch and American beech. Usually present in lesser numbers are white basswood, yellow buckeye,

A Spring Wildflower Blooming Schedule

MARCH

APRIL



Birdsfoot Violet



Jack-in-the-Pulpit



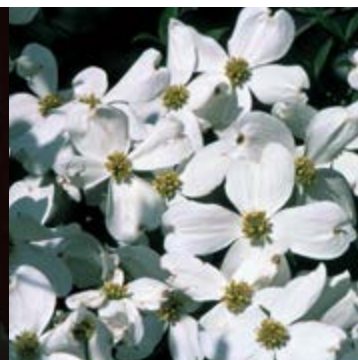
White Trillium



Dutchman's Britches



Yellow Violet



Dogwood



Fire Pink



Showy Orchid



Crested Dwarf Iris

APRIL

Wildlife in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park



The native black bear has become a symbol of the Great Smokies.

mountain maple, and striped maple. The diverse understory includes bloodroot, coneflower, goldenrod, ragwort, and several varieties of grasses and ferns.

The *spruce-fir forest* is a relic of the Ice Age when the mean annual temperatures in the Smokies were too cold to support hardwoods. When the glaciers receded and the temperatures rose over a 6,000-year interim, the hardwoods returned. But at elevations above 6,000 feet on the harsh mountaintops, the spruce and Fraser fir have the ability to survive. Sadly, most of the firs have been decimated by the balsam woolly adelgid, an infestation that began in the 1960s. The red spruce now dominates that elevation. The understory includes the hearty Catawba rhododendron, pin cherry, hobblebush, and thornless blackberry. The diversity is reflected in the vast number of moss species and several ferns.

Another category is the “Successional Forest,” created in a small way by the settlers and primarily by the companies who mercilessly clear-cut the mountains that became the GSMNP.

A Spring Wildflower Blooming Schedule

MAY



Dragon's Mouth



Sweet Shrub



Apple Blossom



Yellow Lady's Slipper



Mountain Laurel



Pink Rhododendron



Catawba Rhododendron



Flame Azalea



Tulip Poplar



The bald eagle is found at all elevations of the Smokies.

Early settlers cleared the land for their homes, crops, and pastures. Beginning in the 1890s, lumber companies removed huge tracts of original forests and processed them in the mill towns they built. With the coming of the park and the removal of the farms and lumber companies, the forest began its renewal in the 400,000 acres that had been so severely disturbed. Today the Great Smoky Mountains may seem heavily forested, but the discerning eye will see that as much as 65 percent of the forest is young and only in its early stages of coming back to its previous state.

Fauna

On the bright side, the “successional forest” is able to nurture a significant segment of the park's plant and animal life. For a timetable on wildflowers, see pages 24-27 for their blooming schedule. The GSMNP has documented 66 species of mammals, over 240 species of birds, 43 species of amphibians, 60 species of fish, and 40 species of reptiles.



The Smokies have two venomous snakes: the copperhead and the timber rattlesnake.

The park has the densest black bear population east of the Mississippi River. The National Park Service (NPS) has successfully reestablished river otters and elk into the park.

Because of the three forest types, the Smokies have an amazingly diverse bird population. Birds that thrive throughout southern hardwood forests are found in the cove hardwood forest. Species found in cooler climates, and even in Canada, populate the northern hardwood forest.

Bald eagles and golden eagles have been sited at all elevations in the park. Once native to the GSM, the Peregrine Falcon had nearly disappeared from the region. A reintroduction program began in 1984 to improve the likelihood of success for nesting, breeding, and surviving once again on the ridges and bluffs in the park. The program has been a resounding success.

Two venomous snakes are found in the Smokies: the timber rattlesnake and the copperhead. The timber rattler is found at all elevations, but the copperhead is generally found at lower elevations.



The brook trout is native to the Smokies. The red-cheeked salamander is found only in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park.

Aquatic species are abundant in the GSMNP. The brook trout is the only trout species native to the park. The rainbow and brown trout were introduced about 75 years ago. The park is home to one of the world's most diverse salamander populations including the redcheek salamander that is found only in the Smokies.

Then the Europeans Arrived . . . and the Cherokees Resisted

Some evidence indicates that Native Americans, who in modern times became the Cherokees, have been living and hunting in the Smokies for 14,000 years. During the Mississippian period (900-1600 CE), an increasing knowledge of agriculture changed them from hunter-gatherers to hunter-planters. They moved into fertile river valleys on the outer fringe of the mountains.

Settlers began arriving in East Tennessee and Western North Carolina in the mid-1700s. When greater numbers arrived after the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, conflicts developed with the Cherokee. When the Cherokees aligned with the



The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians began with 800 resisting removal to Oklahoma. Today they have a major business presence in the town of Cherokee.



The Tipton family settled in Cades Cove soon after the War of 1812 and remained for two generations.

British at the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776, they were invaded by colonial forces who burned two of their villages at Kittuwa and Overhill. After the war ended in 1783, more settlers continued to arrive. By 1800 the Cherokee Nation still possessed about 53,000 square miles of land in Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, with the legality of their ownership having been acknowledged in earlier treaties. In 1805 the Cherokees ceded the region we now call the Great Smokies to the U.S. government. Although most of the Cherokees were forced to move to Oklahoma in 1838, approximately 800 hid out in the mountains and later managed to retain some of their land in the Qualla Boundary. Today they are known as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

After frontier outposts were built in the 1780s near Cosby and Pigeon Forge, permanent settlers began to arrive. William and John Whaley settled the Greenbrier section. In 1802 William Ogle and his wife Martha Jane Huskey Ogle settled White Oak Flats.

One of the earliest settlers of Cades Cove was Col. William “Fighting Billy” Tipton, who was recognized for his leadership in several Revolutionary War battles. As an entrepreneur, he built milling and forging operations that contributed to the development of the cove. He was awarded several land grants for Cades Cove property and later sold farms to many of the families from Carter County who became well-known in the Cove. You will see names like Oliver, Shields, Burchfield, Cable, Sparks, and Gregory. The Procter family first settled in Cades Cove and later became the first settlers in the Hazel Creek area. The Cataloochee area in the eastern end of the park was first settled by the Caldwelles whose home still stands, overlooking fields where elk have been reintroduced to the Smokies.

After the Cherokees were forced out, many of the settlers followed the streams deeper into the mountains where they found small coves to homestead. Each family usually built a cabin, one

barn, a springhouse, a smokehouse, a chicken coop, and a corn crib. Today you can still find cabins and sometimes a springhouse and a barn at homesites such as those seen along the Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail which can be accessed from the main drag through Gatlinburg. Turn south and follow the signs. More on auto touring later.

Some of the families built gristmills, sawmills, sorghum presses, and general stores in addition to their subsistence farming. Their faith in God and attending worship services on Sunday was a central focus in family and community life. Primitive and Missionary Baptists, Methodists, and occasionally Presbyterians were the main denominations that created the religious fabric of the settlements.

Not surprisingly, the Civil War did not have a major effect on the settlements in the Great Smoky Mountains. The communities on the Tennessee side of the Smokies supported the Union and those on the North Carolina side tended to support the Confederates. In Sevier County, Tennessee, 96 percent voted against secession. In the North Carolina Smokies, 46 percent favored secession. No major battles were fought on either side of the mountain range.

The Walker family who owned a 122-acre farm in Little Greenbrier Cove had 11 children—seven girls and four boys, all of whom lived to maturity. John Walker married Margaret Jane King in 1866 soon after he returned from the Civil War where he fought for the Union. Their house was made of tulip poplar logs, chinked with mud and rock. Other buildings included a barn, corn crib, smokehouse, pig pen, apple barn, and blacksmith shop. Walker crafted chairs, tables, looms, and farming tools. He designed and built a cotton gin. Sheep were raised for the wool that the family spun and wove for winter clothing. They raised hogs and chickens for their meat and cows and goats for their milk. The Walkers also raised a wide variety of fresh vegetables during the summer and dried fruit to last



The cantilevered barn is unique to the Southern Appalachians, characterized by a large overhanging second story. This architectural style was used frequently in Blount and Sevier counties.

through the winter. Walker planted a large orchard with 20 varieties of apples, plus peaches, cherries, and plums. A springhouse kept their dairy products and eggs cool.

In 1881 Walker and one of his sons built a small log schoolhouse that doubled on the weekends as the Primitive Baptist Church until 1925. John Walker died in 1921 at the age of 80. By that time all four of his sons had married and moved away, but only one of his daughters married. The remaining six girls inherited the farm and continued an agricultural lifestyle that lasted for their entire lives. Nancy died in 1931 leaving five sisters who found farm life much to their liking.

In 1926 Congress approved the authorization to establish the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. North Carolina and Tennessee started raising funds to buy the half million acres designated for the future park. To assure the acquisition of the minimum 150,000 acres Congress required in its authorization for the park, the Rockefeller Foundation gave five million dollars. Some families left willingly, seeing it as an opportunity to leave the difficult life of subsistence farming. Others fought the inevitable and haggled to get as much as possible for their beloved property and way of life.

In 1934 the states of Tennessee and North Carolina signed over to the federal government the deeds for approximately 300,000 acres to create the park. The Civilian Conservation Corps worked diligently for the next six years to build the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The five Walker sisters continued to hold out, blatantly refusing to leave their homestead. Finally, shortly before President Franklin D. Roosevelt arrived to speak at the dedication of the park, the sisters sold their farm for \$4,750 with the proviso for a lifetime lease to allow them to live out their lives on their land. The Walker story was featured in the *Saturday Evening Post* in April 1946. Polly died in 1945 followed by Hettie in 1947 and Martha in 1951. Margaret died in 1962 at 92 years of age. Louisa



President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on September 2, 1940, from the granite podium overlooking the Newfound Gap parking lot.

lived in the cabin two more years, passing away on July 13, 1964, at 82. Her passing represented the end of an era in the history of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. See “Hiking in the Smokies” later in this story.

Logging in the Smokies

After the Civil War, the demand for lumber throughout the eastern states skyrocketed. Selective logging was done throughout the 1800s, but the difficulty of getting the large logs to mills limited large operations. That changed in the 1880s with the use of splash dams to float the logs down the rivers to lumber mills. The dams were dangerous and extremely damaging to the lands bordering the streams.

When narrow-gauge railroads, small cranes, draglines, and band saw technology came into use in the 1890s, wholesale clear-cutting began. The mountains that eventually became the GSMNP were heavily logged beginning in the 1890s and continuing through the mid-1930s. By the time logging operations concluded, the Little River Lumber Company and the Ritter Lumber Company plus many small operations had logged two-thirds of the virgin forests of the Smokies.

Today old growth forests² occupy only 20 percent of the Smokies. Depending on whose research you accept, old growth forests account for 187,000 acres in the park. From logging records and field research, one team of biologists maintained there are 112,000 acres of old growth forests in the Smokies: cove hardwood forests, 72,000 acres; northern hardwood forests, 29,000 acres; spruce-fir forests, 11,000 acres.

The Albright Grove is an example of an old growth forest about three miles west of the US 321/TN 32 intersection near Cosby. *Day Hikes* describes the trail (see page 35).

2. Most forest biologists use the term “old growth” because it refers to a mix of young and old trees, light gaps in the canopy, trees in various stages of decline, a wide diversity of species, and little or no disturbance from previous logging or agriculture.

Auto Touring

The park has more than 800 square miles that are threaded with 270 miles of roads, presenting easy access for visitors to a diversity of ecosystems and unmatched scenery. Beginning with the climate and flora of the rolling foothills surrounding the national park (Gatlinburg, 1,289 ft.; Cherokee, 1,991 ft.), at least 10 peaks top 6,000 feet, creating ecosystems that compare with the climates of southern Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Within 63 feet of each other in height, Buckley, LeConte, Guyot, and Clingmans Dome top out between 6,580 and 6,643 feet. You can actually drive to the parking lot just below Clingmans Dome and hike for 20 minutes to the observation tower that affords 360 degree spectacular views, especially in the Fall.

Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail

To reach the entrance to this unique touring road, turn south at traffic light #8 on the main parkway through Gatlinburg. The one-lane paved road winds 5.5 miles through a community of cabins, barns, and mills, with paths through the trees to the structures. You might wonder, “Where are the people who live here?”

The road follows the Roaring Fork stream that affords many opportunities to shoot pictures that you no doubt will want to enlarge and frame when you return home. Keep in mind that large motorhomes, buses, and trailers are not permitted on the trail.

As you enter the loop, you will see a post that dispenses a guide to the trail for a buck each. Be sure to stop and get a copy.

The *Noah “Bud” Ogle Place* is a 400-acre farm. A ¾-mile trail takes you by the cabin, barn, and tub mill just as the Ogle family left them in the 1930s. They were one of the first families to settle in White Oak Flats (now Gatlinburg) not long after the Civil War. Most of the farm’s pastures and cleared land have been reclaimed by a successional forest.

Noah Ogle’s 400-acre farm was much larger than the neighboring farms in Roaring Fork.

If you brought your hiking shoes and are feeling vigorous, pack a lunch and several bottles of water for a 5.5-mile round-trip hike to *Rainbow Falls*, an 80-foot waterfall and cataract generated by LeConte Creek. If you made reservations for an overnight stay, you can hike four miles on past the falls to *Mt. LeConte Lodge*. A lottery was created to deal with the strong demand for the cabins. Contact the lodge at lecontelodge.com for future reservations. Without prior notice, hikers can arrive at the lodge between noon and 4 p.m. and purchase a sack lunch for \$10, beverages \$3. They may use the dining room between 12 and 4. The lodge’s porch is often described as grandstand seats for the “Smokies spectacle.”

Less than a mile farther on the trail, *Ephraim and Minerva Bales* and their nine children lived on 70 acres. They used 30 acres for subsistence farming and 40 for cutting trees for heating their home and construction of farm buildings.

In addition to being a farmer, *Alfred Reagan* was a pretty good carpenter and blacksmith. He usually made the coffin when there was a death in the community. The farmers in the area knew they could count on Reagan to repair their wagons and farming equipment. When Roaring Fork needed a store, Reagan built one. It saved the Roaring Fork folks an arduous trip into White Oak Flats for supplies. He also built a tub mill with a flume that brought water from farther up the creek and usually kept it running even during dry spells.

The scenery on Roaring Fork creates sought-after serenity. Spring brings countless shades of green and Fall delivers a riot of color created by over a hundred species of trees. Supplied by springs and runoff, the stream is always cool, boulders are covered with moss, and fallen trees create temporary dams and deeper areas that harbor fish. It’s a wonderland of beauty that a Disney park could never replicate.

Two crystal clear streams kept the Roaring Fork community well supplied with water for their farms and livestock.



Cades Cove Loop Road

An 11-mile loop that returns to its starting point, this scenic and historic byway is the most visited area in the GSMNP. While it can be driven slowly in two hours, even with frequent stops, you will often find a stream of cars extending the loop time to three or sometimes four hours. That's not all bad. Park, stay longer in special places, and take your time.

First settled by Euro-Americans in the early 1800s, the Cove became a community of more than 650 residents by 1850. Farms, churches, stores, a post office, mills, blacksmiths—except for staples like coffee, tea, and salt, Cades Cove was almost a closed economic system of self-sufficiency and bartering. Today it is one of the largest collections of 19th century farm buildings in the U.S.

John and Lurena Oliver in 1818 were the first permanent European settlers in the Cove. Oliver was a veteran of the War of 1812. They nearly starved their first winter, depending on friendly Cherokees who supplied them with dried pumpkin. A friend brought them two milk cows the next Spring and the Oliversons managed to get a good garden in the ground.

A German agriculturalist, Peter Cable, built a dyke and sluice system that drained the swamps in the western part of Cades Cove, making it productive. Daniel Foute built a forge and made metal plows and other farming tools. Robert Shields built the first tub mill on Forge Creek, and his son, Frederick Shields built the first grist mill in the cove. Other early settlers included Russell Gregory and James Spence.

Empty churches but well-tended cemeteries dot the Cove. Homecomings still take place every summer at the Primitive Baptist, the Missionary Baptist, and the Methodist churches. Twenty surnames on the cemetery headstones would likely account for most of the family lines in the Cove when the resi-

John and Lurena Oliver nearly starved their first year in Cades Cove. Friendly Cherokees brought them meager sustenance.

dents lost their land to the national park. Cemeteries are a rich source of history that we must continue to preserve.

The residents of Cades Cove were largely pro-Union which often resulted in Confederate raids into the Cove. Some even say part of the Underground Railroad went through Cades Cove. Russell Gregory organized a militia of older men who ambushed a band of Confederates who had been harassing Cove residents. The militia routed the Rebels and ran them back into North Carolina. But a small band returned two weeks later and killed Gregory. Gregory's Bald was named in his honor. Cades Cove suffered from the after-effects of the Civil War until the turn of the century when the population again grew to 700.

Prohibition and moonshining ushered in another era of conflict. Josiah Gregory, a prominent moonshiner, and William and John W. Oliver, leading members of the Primitive Baptist Church, bitterly opposed each other. Still raids, shoot-outs, and retaliatory barn burnings eventually resulted in Gregory serving six months in prison before he was pardoned by the governor.

As the 1930s drew to a close, most of the residents left, selling out to the government for whatever they could get. A few older residents fought eminent domain and were allowed to live out their lives on their farms. The government destroyed the more modern buildings and left only the primitive cabins and barns that were considered most representative of pioneer life in the previous century.

While appreciating the pastoral beauty of Cades Cove and the simple lifestyle of its residents a century past, I feel a certain sadness for what they lost. A few of the elderly residents were granted leases and allowed to remain on their farms for the rest of their lives. Hopefully, the restoration of the Great Smoky Mountains and their future preservation justifies the establishment of the park.

The Cable Mill is a fully maintained grist mill that operates eight months out of the year and sells whole wheat flour and corn meal.



Today in Cades Cove you can visit:

The John Oliver Place. This farm and its structures remained in the family for more than a hundred years.

The Primitive Baptist Church. Established in 1827, the church met in a log building until 1887 when the present structure was built. The church closed during the Civil War “on account of the Rebellion and we as Union people and the Rebels was too strong here in Cades Cove.” Some of the early settlers rest in the cemetery.

The Methodist Church. A blacksmith and carpenter built the original church building in the 1820s. It was said that J. D. Campbell built the log structure in 115 days for \$115. It was replaced with the present building in 1902. The War divided the Methodists and resulted in another church being built on the other side of the Cove.

The Missionary Baptist Church. After a split with the Baptist Church over the scriptural way to do missionary work, this church was built in 1839. It also closed during the Civil War and resumed meeting in 1865, but without those members who were Confederate sympathizers. The present building was constructed in 1915. A Sunday School continued to meet until 1944.

The Elijah Oliver Place. Born in the Cove in 1824, Elijah Oliver married and left the valley before the Civil War. He returned after the war and bought the property you can visit today. It was a full farm operation that included barns, corn cribs, smokehouse, springhouse, and stables.

Cable Mill Historic Area. The Cable Mill is a functional, water-powered gristmill with an overshot waterwheel. It is open from 9 to 5, seven days a week from mid-March through November. Ranger-led tours from the visitor center include stops at the mill, a cantilever barn, a furnished log home, a smokehouse, and a blacksmith shop.

The Henry Whitehead Place. Architecturally, this house can be called a “transition house.” It is a link between a log cabin and a regular frame house built from milled lumber. The logs are square-sawed and four inches thick and 12 to 16 inches high, with joints at the corners like a conventional log cabin.

The Dan Lawson Place. Built in 1856, this house is significant because it was built with hewn logs (i.e., not left rounded as they were cut down) before sawmills were brought to the area.

The Carter Shields Place. George Washington “Carter” Shields bought this homestead in 1910, many years after he was crippled in 1862 at the Battle of Shiloh. One of the oldest cabins remaining in the Cove, it was built in the mid-1830s. He sold this beautiful place in 1921 and left Cades Cove.

From top: The Civil War divided many churches in the South. Some of the Methodists had sided with the Union while others stood with the Rebellion. The Methodists built a second church on the other side of the cove. The Baptists divided over the scriptural way to do missionary work, separating into the Primitive Baptists and the Missionary Baptists. ♦ Elijah Oliver left the valley before the War. He returned to the valley of his nativity after the War and bought a sizeable farm. ♦ Carter Shields lived in this pleasant setting laced with dogwood trees for only 11 years. In the Spring, it is one of the most photographed buildings in Cades Cove.



The Methodist Church



The Elijah Oliver Place



The Carter Shields Place

Newfound Gap & Clingmans Dome

Mixing Auto Touring with Hiking

Newfound Gap is the lowest place in the ridgeline of the mountains that separate Cherokee and Gatlinburg. We began our drive to the gap from Gatlinburg following US 441, a 3,000-foot ascent in 16 miles that took us through the three ecosystems we described earlier: cove hardwood forest, northern hardwood forest, and spruce-fir forest. In terms of the three systems, it is similar to driving from Georgia to Maine. In the parking lot at Newfound Gap, you can straddle the Tennessee-North Carolina state line.

Sugarlands Visitor Center just outside Gatlinburg was our first stop. It is the largest visitor center in the park and well-staffed with rangers and volunteers who can help you plan your visit and answer your many questions. There is an excellent nature exhibit that explains the three ecosystems in the park and describes the flora and fauna that inhabit them.

Smokies Road Guide by Jerry DeLaughter describes each overlook, trail, picnic area, and stream on the way to the top. There are 11 stops in the 14-mile jaunt, each one worth a visit. Every overlook will give you a photo opp and each exhibit is a learning experience. Plan on a full day if you hike all of the trails plus an extra hour for a picnic.

The Chimney Tops Trail at Mile Post 8.6 is a four-mile roundtrip with an ascent of 1,335 feet. Take a quart of water, a



Northeastern view from Newfound Gap



Tower at Clingmans Dome

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candy bar, and hiking poles, plus wear good hiking shoes. This trail is ranked as STRENUOUS by Carson Brewer in his excellent guide, *Day Hikes of the Smokies*. It is one of the most popular trails in the park because of its length and spectacular views at the top.

Mile Post 7.9 and Mile Post 14.4 will give you the opportunity to study the *cove hardwood forest* and the *northern hardwood forest*.

If you make a brief stop at Mile Post 10.1 you can wade in the Little Pigeon River. The stream is fed by deep springs high up in the mountains.

At Newfound Gap the *spruce-fir forest* is evident. At 5,046-ft. elevation, the temperature will be at least 10 degrees cooler than Gatlinburg or Cherokee. The Appalachian Trail crosses the gap and offers an EASY 3.4-mile roundtrip to Road Prong Trail junction and back.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated the Great Smoky Mountains National Park from the granite podium overlooking the parking lot on September 2, 1940 “for the permanent enjoyment of the people.”

A pleasant seven-mile drive across the ridgeline of the Smokies leads the visitor from Newfound Gap to Clingmans Dome, the highest point in the national park at 6,643 feet and the third highest mountain east of the Mississippi. The views from pull-outs and overlooks along the way are outstanding. A clear day in late October is a gift from God. When you reach the parking lot for the Dome, be ready for a strenuous half-mile climb on paved walkways. A sloping ramp leads to the top of the observation tower where you may struggle to find words to describe the 360-degree views in both Tennessee and North Carolina.

Cataloochee Valley

Some have called this valley in the southeastern corner of the Smokies “the lost cove of Cataloochee.” In 1900 with 1,200 people, the valley was the largest community in the Great Smoky Mountains. The valley was an east-west route for several tribes, later for settlers, and then for commerce. Counting stores, schools, churches, and farms, the valley was dotted with 200 buildings.

Today the picturesque valley receives far fewer visitors than the mid-section and western end of the park. During October, the reintroduced elk herd usually grazes in the fields across from the Caldwell House. Hiram Caldwell, one of the first settlers in Cataloochee, lived with his family for many years in a log cabin. In 1903 he began a three-year project to build an “up-to-date” home with modern framing like we use today and exterior weatherboarding. But the occupants did not abandon the early methods of farming.

Elsewhere in the valley you can visit the Will Messer Barn, the Beech Grove School, the Palmer House, the Woody Farm, and the Palmer Chapel Methodist Church.

There are two ways to reach Cataloochee. If you are already in Cherokee, follow US 19 East to Dellwood (20 miles) and turn

north on US 276 for approximately six miles. Just before you get to I-40, turn left on Cove Creek Road which has a mix of pavement and gravel for five miles. Starting in Gatlinburg, take US 321 East 20 miles. Turn right on TN 339 for a six-mile scenic byway jaunt to I-40 at exit 443. Travel east on I-40 to exit 20 in North Carolina. At the end of the ramp, turn right for two-tenths mile, then turn right on Cove Creek Road.

If you do take the route from Cherokee, be sure to stop in Maggie Valley for a visit to *Wheels Through Time*. Dale Walksler has assembled an impressive collection of motorcycles going back over a hundred years. The museum is open Thursday–Monday, 9 to 5, from April 1 through November 28. Adults, \$15; seniors, \$12. Walksler has been featured on the History Channel and he has a regular TV show.

Hiram Caldwell and his family lived in a humble log cabin for many years after they arrived in the Cataloochee Valley. In 1903 he brought in the best materials to build a fine home with wainscot paneling. The Caldwell family vacated their home in the late 1930s when the park took their land. ♦ Handsome bull elk bugle their calls in October and compete to attract their harem. The National Park Service warns tourists to keep their distance, especially during the rut in the Fall months.



Hiking In the Smokies

Walker Sisters Cabin & Farm

From the Sugarlands Visitor Center, take the Little River Road toward Cades Cove. In approximately five miles, turn right at a large picnic area at Little Greenbrier Cove. Cross the bridge and turn left. After a long curve to the right, turn right on a gravel road and follow it to the Little Greenbrier school house that was built in 1881 by John Walker and his son. After you visit the schoolhouse, walk back up to the road and around the gate. Vehicles are not permitted beyond this point. In 1.2 miles, turn right for another 0.2 miles to the Walker cabin.

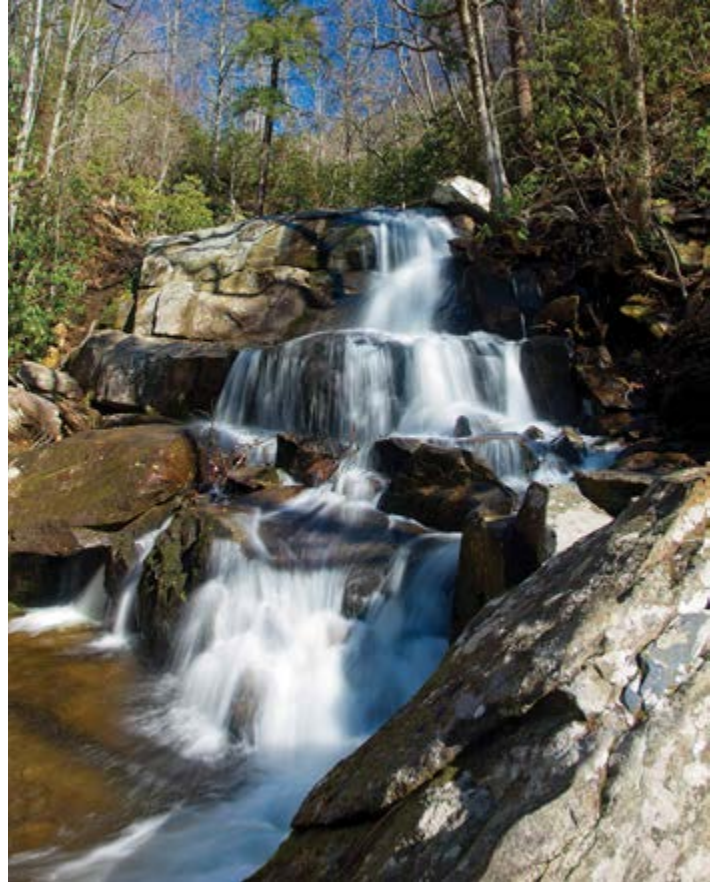


Andrews Bald from Clingmans Dome: 1.7 miles

From the parking lot at Clingmans Dome, take the Forney Ridge Trail that follows the side of the mountain in a slight descent. Most of the hike is through *spruce-fir forest* that we discussed early in this story. This walk is an up close look at the damage the balsam wooly adelgid has done to the Fraser fir forest. Difficulty: EASY

Laurel Falls Trail: 4 miles roundtrip

One of the most popular hikes in the Smokies, this hike begins at a trailhead between the Sugarlands Visitor Center and Elk-



mont Campground at Fighting Creek Gap. The path crosses a bridge in front of the falls. The rocks just below the bridge are quite dangerous and best left to experienced climbers. Continue on the path past the falls for a mile and enjoy a walk through an old growth forest. Difficulty: MODERATE

Albright Grove Loop Trail: 6.5 miles roundtrip

To see an uncut grove of virgin trees, travel 15 miles east of

Continued on page 88

From top: John Walker and his son built Little Greenbrier School in 1881. On Sundays, it doubled as the Primitive Baptist Church. ♦ Walker built this three room cabin in 1866 for his wife and eventually 11 children. ♦ The surviving three Walker sisters are shown here about 1950. From left, Louisa, Martha, and Margaret.

Downsizing from a 45-foot Prevost Marathon to a 2016 Allegro Bus 37AP

Mike Wells, CEO of Wells Enterprises, — you know them better as Blue Bunny — realized he could have all of the amenities in a 37AP that he had in his Marathon. The reduced length made it possible to visit more interesting places as well as campgrounds that weren't prepared to accommodate a 45-foot coach.

Text and photography by Fred Thompson



Wells Enterprises, Inc. corporate headquarters in Le Mars, Iowa

particularly the 2016 Allegro Bus on the PowerGlide chassis.

“I began to appreciate the quality that was evident,” Mike noted. “After spending considerable time examining three Allegro Buses and driving one several miles, I decided we would not be ‘stepping down’ at all from our Marathon coach with two slide-outs if we bought the Allegro Bus 37AP with four slide-outs. The 37AP was actually more spacious than the Marathon.”

Mike went home with order sheet in hand to select all of the features that he and Cheryl wanted on their Allegro Bus 37AP. He flew to the Belmont, Mississippi, airport in December to visit the Tiffin plant and meet with Bob Tiffin.

Dave Bowe, branch manager at Transwest, revealed the company’s plans to open a 43,000 sq. ft. facility in July 2016 dedicated to RV sales, parts, and service. With 18 bays and complete chassis service, Wells was impressed with the level of support that Transwest, a Denver-based corporation, was putting into the development of its Kansas City RV dealership.

“We are really happy with Transwest and we have had a wonderful experience with Tiffin,” Mike said. “We had three special requests in addition to the usual selections of options, exterior paint, and interior décors. The van I tow has an electric transmission pump that requires a special wiring connection from the coach. We also tow a Chevy Tahoe with a Roadmaster braking system that requires specialty wiring. And, when we occupy our infield site at the NASCAR-KC races, we sit out in front of the coach with a 42-inch TV mounted in a frame that I built. Of course, we watch the race live, but we can also see the com-

mentary and replays as they are broadcast. So TMH installed a HDMI cable jack in the front of the coach. Tiffin’s electrical engineers took care of all of our wiring requests and ran the lines through the existing protective looms in the infrastructure under the floor.”

In March, the next day after Cheryl and Mike’s 37AP came off the assembly line, Mike flew into KC in the company’s jet, picked up Brian Johnson, and arrived 90 minutes later at the Tiffin paint plant. Mike had arranged for an inspection at this point in the manufacturing process. After making notes for a few minor adjustments, Mike and Brian returned to KC to anticipate the delivery of the 37AP in three weeks.

Mike and Cheryl’s impressions about their new coach and the Tiffin company are exuberant. “I love that motorhome and so does Cheryl,” Mike said. “Tiffin’s ingenuity is amazing. From an industrial and manufacturing point of view, I am impressed with their vertical integration.”

When Mike arrived in Le Mars with his new 37AP, he stored it in a heated garage adjacent to his wash-n-dry bay that without a doubt will make this coach the most pampered Allegro Bus in North America. “When we want to leave on a trip during the winter months, I don’t have to de-winterize the coach,” Mike explained. “When we return with salt and winter road dirt all over the outside, I can wash the coach with unlimited warm water in the heated bay and then rinse it from the tank that has 1,800 gallons of soft water. As I back the coach out, the high-speed warm air blower at the exit will dry the coach and leave

Inc., in Le Mars, Iowa, the largest privately held, family-owned ice cream and frozen treat manufacturer in the United States. The company operates under the well-known Blue Bunny label.

“I wanted to find a coach less than 40 feet long that still offered the amenities and comfortable ride for personal trips, but also provided the seat belts for three or four kids and the space to haul all of our gear for a fun experience,” Mike explained.

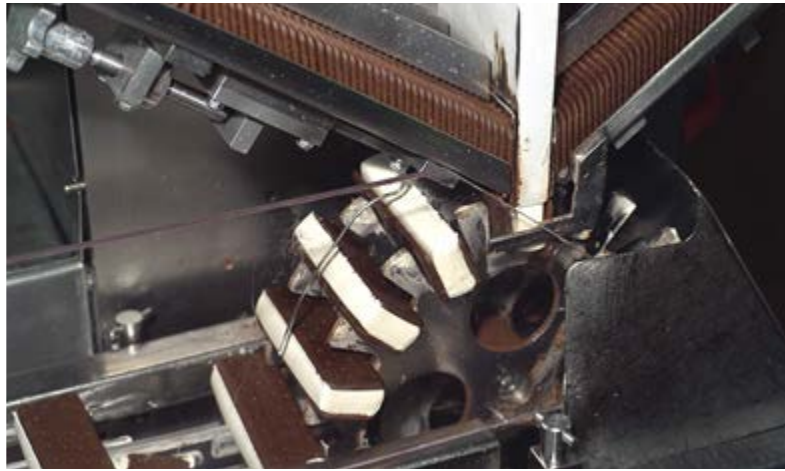
Several hours of research on the internet led to two or three possibilities, one of which was Tiffin’s Allegro Bus 37AP. He learned that Transwest-Kansas City had become a Tiffin dealer in September 2015. A trip to Kansas City in October to watch a NASCAR race was already on the agenda so Mike decided to pay Transwest a visit.

He was welcomed at Transwest by Dave Bowe, branch manager, and Brian Johnson, RV sales. After explaining their plan to downsize, Johnson showed Mike several Tiffin coaches,

“**W**E HAD JUST ABOUT EVERY LUXURY FEATURE YOU could want in our Prevost,” Mike began. “But we were realizing that its sheer size was preventing us from stopping at many places and parks we wanted to visit. We began camping with our four children years ago in tents, then a pop-up, and later in a travel trailer and a 1975 Tioga on a Ford chassis. It was all about being outdoors. Then we became empty nesters and found that we enjoyed meeting interesting people in the RV resorts. Now we are coming full circle with seven grandchildren we enjoy taking on camping trips. Cheryl and I like to hike and do things with the kids.

“But quite honestly, we liked the luxury and doubted we could find a shorter coach without compromising too much,” he continued.

Mike Wells is a professional problem solver. For the last nine years he has served as president and CEO of Wells Enterprises,



Bomb Pops™, ice cream sandwiches, and chocolate covered cones with peanuts are all-time favorites

it spotless. Then I park it in its regular garage with the Chevy Tahoe, which is the tow I use when Cheryl and I are RVing by ourselves.”

The complex where Mike stores the 37AP also has a recreation building that includes a heated pool with an adjacent commercial kitchen and dining room for serving up to 60 guests. A third building houses two RV garages rented to friends and Mike’s shop for working on his restored Roadtrek, a 12-passenger Sprinter van that’s handy for family events, a 1938 Dodge delivery vehicle painted with the Blue Bunny logo used in parades, plus an interesting assortment of other collectible vehicles. A second floor apartment serves as his NASCAR memorabilia room with an 80-inch TV screen to watch the big races when he and Cheryl can’t be there in person.

When Mike learned that his favorite NASCAR driver, Jimmie Johnson, was involved in several charities, including the Make-

A-Wish Foundation in which Wells Enterprises is also involved, he contacted Johnson to explore the possibility of a relationship with Blue Bunny ice cream benefiting the Jimmie Johnson Foundation. Johnson expressed an interest and the two men made plans to use ice cream as an avenue to benefit children and education. The Helmet of Hope program is just that and allows fans and consumers across the country to nominate not-for-profit (501c3) organizations that support K-12 public education for five available grant packages.

On May 18, 2016, Jimmie Johnson, six-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Champion, and Mike Wells, president and CEO of Wells Enterprises, announced the five recipients of the 2016 \$25,000 Blue Bunny Helmet of Hope grants on FOX Sports One’s *Race Hub*. “As we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Jimmie Johnson Foundation, Chani and I are thrilled to have partners like Blue Bunny that make it possible for us to provide funding for the great work the five recipients are doing to support K-12 public education.”

The final five recipients were selected by nearly 225,000 bal-





lots cast by the public. They are ArtWell (Philadelphia); Carlos Gilbert Elementary Parents! Teachers! Kids! (Santa Fe, NM); Change for Kids (NYC); Inside the Outdoors Foundation (Costa Mesa, CA); and Mercy Child Advocacy Center (Sioux City, IA).

Each of the recipients received a Blue Bunny ice cream party and special recognition on Johnson's race helmet during the NASCAR Sprint Cut Series race on August 7 at Watkins Glen. As of this summer, the Blue Bunny Helmet of Hope program has contributed more than \$800,000 to 81 different charities.

Michael Cole Wells began working in the family business in 1977 driving milk delivery routes while he took 15 hours each semester at Morningside College in his hometown of Sioux City. He and Cheryl married right out of high school, making a job, a new marriage, and college a triple career challenge. By his sophomore year, they had Michael Jay.

Mike graduated in four years with a BS in business administration and joined the Blue Bunny sales force. Early in his management career, he held several positions including director of

retail sales and transportation; vice-president of retail sales and transportation; and executive vice-president of sales, marketing, and transportation.

The story of Wells Enterprises begins over a hundred years ago. The Wells family left Chicago at the turn of the 20th century to homestead 160 acres of federal land in South Dakota. To claim title to the land, the family had to make significant improvements in five years. They were instrumental in founding the community of Wellsburg.

After an extended drought in 1911 threatened the success of their farm, Fred Hooker Wells, Jr., one of the sons who had left Chicago with his parents in 1905, decided to return to Chicago with his wife Miriam and their two sons, Harold Raymond and Roy Frederick. Their funds ran out in Le Mars, Iowa, and they decided to stay. Fred began raising hogs to ship by train to the packing yards in Chicago, but his farming enterprise was cut short by a cholera epidemic.

With a determination to succeed, he started a business delivering milk. In October 1913, he signed a contract with Ray Bowers to buy a horse, a milk wagon, plus an assortment of milk cans and bottles. Bowers agreed to sell Wells the milk he produced and not compete in the same area for five years. Miriam bottled the milk and Fred delivered it. By 1918 they constructed a small building as the business continued to grow. In the 1920s they began making ice cream that was pasteurized before being frozen.

In 1927 the family established a plant in Sioux City, 30 miles from the Le Mars location. Fred asked his brother, Harry Cole Wells, to move from Doland, South Dakota, to manage the new operation. Two years later the Wellses sold the Sioux City plant to Fairmount Creamery with a five-year non-compete clause and the rights to the use of the Wells brand ad infinitum.

In 1934 Wells Dairy reentered the Sioux City market but they had to come up with a new name for their product. During the



The Blue Bunny Ice Cream Parlor attracts ice cream lovers from around the world. The parlor is also the company's welcome center that was formerly a hardware store. Mike Wells added the grand staircase that leads to a large reception area for weddings, birthday parties, and other events.

Part of the second floor presents a history of the company with many interesting pictures of the delivery vehicles and bottling equipment that were used 75 to 100 years ago. A family picture shows Fred Hooker Wells, Sr. (1862-1939) and the four generations who descended from him. Fred Jr. (1885-1954) started the company in 1913.

During the celebration of its 100th anniversary in 2013, the company committed to fulfill 100 wishes for children selected by the Make-A-Wish Foundation.



Cheryl Wells opened the Habitué Coffeeshouse and Creperie in 2010 as a quiet place for lunch and reading. Cheryl's collection of thoughtful books provide reflective reading for spiritual growth. An upstairs offers comfortable chairs to sink into while you read and enjoy your coffee.

Depression, the company sponsored a contest for a new logo and a name for its popular ice cream. Inspired by his little boy's love for a blue bunny in a department store window display, George Vanden Brink, a newspaper artist, won the \$25 prize for the name and the Blue Bunny logo he created.

In spite of the Depression, the public still spent some of their grocery budget on ice cream. In 1936 Wells Dairy bought its first continuous ice cream freezer that produced 150 gallons per hour. The Wellses' sons began taking active roles in the company. The family's management philosophy dictated they would always pay cash and never incur debt, a policy that provided a foundation for the company's long-term success.

During World War II, the family continued to run the dairy with the assistance of Fred and Miriam's sons, Harold, Mike, and Roy, who were exempt from military duty due to employment in an essential food industry. Fay, the youngest of the four boys, served with the U.S. Army Air Force.

Fred Hooker Wells, Jr., who had started the company with a loan from a farmer, died in 1954. His sons and their cousin, Fred D. Wells, son of Harry Cole Wells, continued to run the family business as a partnership.

With the rapidly growing economy after the war, Wells Dairy first expanded with the North Plant, built in the mid-fifties for the manufacture of ice cream products, and followed that expansion with the construction of the Le Mars Milk Plant in 1963. The family retained ownership in 1977 when the business was incorporated as Wells Dairy, Inc. Fay Wells became president and CEO.

Wells Dairy saw tremendous growth in the next decade. Corporate offices were built in 1980, followed by a facility for servicing its growing fleet of trucks. Soon after, an Omaha milk processing plant was acquired.

In 1985 the company doubled its North Plant capacity with new production lines, a mix department, and a high-rise freezer. A new quality control department was created to oversee the company's operations in both Le Mars and Omaha.

In 1990 Wells Dairy had over 1,000 employees and was selling its products in 27 states. In 1991 the company acquired the assets of a defunct competitor as well as the rights to sell its branded products. The Bomb Pop™, a frozen confection on a stick, was its best known treat.

The company continued its expansion in 1991 with the purchase of 112 acres south of Le Mars for the construction of its South Plant that was designed to manufacture a new low-fat, low-sodium dessert, created jointly by Wells Dairy and ConAgra. The plant also expanded ice cream production by 20 million gallons annually. With 245 new employees on board, the South Plant made its first ice cream bars on July 2, 1992. Later in the decade, the plant was expanded to include 21 production lines. An automated storage and retrieval system was designed to store up to 2.8 million cubic feet of ice cream products. A 1999 expansion in the South Plant increased its size to 550,000 sq. ft. With the later expansion of the 12-story freezing tower, the South Plant now claims over 1,049,000 square feet.

In 2000, Wells Enterprises drew on the dairy farmers in Iowa whose approximately 65,000 dairy cattle supplied the Wells' plants that produced fluid milk, ice cream, and novelty desserts. The company forecast at that time called for that volume to double over the next decade. But in the next few years, the operation was to experience a major change in both suppliers and market focus.

Fay Wells retired in 2001 as president and CEO, leaving the leadership to the third generation, made up of three brothers and four cousins, all of whom had executive positions in the company. The board of directors selected Gary Wells, Fay's oldest son, to take the helm while most of the other family members retained key positions. Over the next six years which saw Fay's death in 2005, the company struggled with the demands of phenomenal growth.

Realizing that fresh managerial talent was needed, the Wells family stepped away for a hard look. With the backing of the company's bankers and the board of directors, Mike Wells was selected to serve as president and CEO. He immediately reorganized the company and began to recruit top managers to run

the key divisions. Having previously served as executive vice president of sales, marketing, and transportation, Mike had his fingers on the pulse of three critical divisions of the company. After new leadership was placed in operations, finance, legal affairs, and human resources, Wells Enterprises regained its balance in a competitive industry and began a trajectory that would double its gross revenue in less than 10 years.

In 2008 Mike decided to sell the fluid milk and yogurt business and focus the company's productive capacity entirely on ice cream and related products. Since the milk and yogurt division required the lion's share of the daily milk purchased, the company reduced its acquisition of milk to approximately 100,000 gallons per day from 16,000 cows. "We buy 100 percent of the milk production from four local farms and pay a premium for high quality and high butterfat," Mike said.

Today the capacities of the world's largest ice cream plant at a single location will stretch your imagination. From 2005 to 2016, the company grew from 1,000 to 2,500 employees whose production expanded from 75 million gallons of ice cream to 150 million gallons, plus millions of novelty products in the category of "frozen dairy desserts." In the last 12 months, Wells Enterprises produced 750 million pounds of ice cream. The production line for 3-gallon containers of ice cream for restaurants and soda fountains can produce 18 to 22 containers per minute. The 48-oz. ice cream line fills 65 containers per minute. The ice cream sandwich line makes *two million* sandwiches per day. The

line making novelty ice cream cones topped with chocolate and nuts creates 18,000 cones per hour. All of the products go into a hardening tunnel for 45 minutes at 35 degrees below zero.

The infrastructure for supporting production operations is equally impressive. The plant has 300 stainless steel tanks, each with a 3,000 gallon capacity, plus six 12,000 gallon tanks. The tanks are used for both storage and mixing. Wells operates 38 production lines, some as multi-product lines and others as dedicated lines. The plant produces 900 different products when you count the different sizes for each product.

The South Plant operates seven days a week with 1,400 employees on two 10-hour shifts on each production line, followed by a four-hour shift to break down, wash, clean, and sanitize. All of the polished brick floors are sloped slightly into floor drains that remove all of the fluids from the clean-up shift. Each employee working on a production line must wear white smocks, ear and eye protection, shoes that do not leave the plant, nets for all body hair including mustaches, and hard hats in designated areas.

The North Plant with 300 employees packages the bulk ice cream, novelties, bars, cones, and items on a stick. While ice cream, treats, and novelties are the marketable products, they cannot be sold without innovative packaging. Each year Wells Dairy outsources \$700 million in printing, boxing, and firm and flexible packaging materials. The company maintains a graphic arts department to create packages that not only cover the product but help sell it, too, with inviting designs.



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The trip began on Sunday, July 17.

Mike and Cheryl are acutely aware of the company's social and civic responsibility to the town of Le Mars. "We employ the breadwinner in one of every five homes in our local area," Mike acknowledged. As a beginning point, they restored an old funeral parlor on one of the town's main streets. Mike and Cheryl founded *The Living Center* with Cheryl acting as the executive director.

"We want to invest in the next generation," Mike explained. "Our small staff offers counseling and needs assessment and serves as a conduit to resources in the community. The Center's Ambassador Program follows each individual as (s)he learns how to work and develop life skills. We want to see our kids grow up to lead productive lives. Our resources are available to all denominations." The Center offers daily devotionals with music for worship.

In 2010 Cheryl also opened *Habitué Coffeehouse and Creperie* at 108 Central Avenue NW in Le Mars. On the first floor the visitor will find a delightful variety of sandwiches, pastries, and crepes plus delicious Sumatran coffee, with seating for those who are in for a quick lunch.

The shop's GUARANTEE states "that passionate people who love what they do will make coffee the way you want it, while providing a welcoming environment to enjoy it in . . . or your money back."

If you have a half hour or more to relax with your coffee, visit



the second floor where you will find comfortable chairs and a wide assortment of inspiring books. A visit to *Habitué's* website will explain the shop's MISSION "To provide the ultimate coffeehouse experience," and VISION "To use coffee as a conduit for ministry."

Across the street the *Blue Bunny Ice Cream Parlor* will take you back 75 years to an ice cream counter with stools and tables with wire back chairs that you may have seen in the locally owned drugstore where you grew up. The forty or so different flavors will delay your decision while you deliberate, wishing you lived in Le Mars so you could come back every day until you had tried them all. I settled on a big hot fudge sundae with nuts and whipped cream topped off with a waffle cookie. It was a real déjà vu experience as I remembered so well *Bradford's Drugstore* in the fifties where I grew up in Russellville, Alabama, where you could order a double scoop hot fudge sundae with nuts and whipped cream or a banana split.

The Parlor occupies an old two-story hardware store with plenty of seating and memorabilia on the second floor, accessed by a grand staircase which Mike had built after removing a narrow staircase. The upstairs facility is available for parties and receptions.

Now back to the beginning and Mike and Cheryl's first trips in the *Allegro Bus*. Except for a couple of "try-it-out" weekends, the 37AP waited patiently in its garage. Then in mid-July five grandchildren were ready for a week's trip across South Dakota.

"We left on Sunday, July 17th, and spent our first night in Chamberlin, South Dakota," Mike related. "On Monday we hiked in the Badlands and visited Wall Drug. That afternoon we drove to Hill City where we camped for five nights at the Rafter J Bar Ranch. The older children got to stay in their own nearby cabin. Throughout the week, we visited Mount Rushmore,



Bear Country, Reptile Gardens, rode the 1880 Train, panned for gold, and took a three-mile hike in Custer State Park where we also did the wildlife loop.”


With a little help from Tiffin Motorhomes, Mike and Cheryl

became rock stars with their grandchildren. A very talented couple have found important life paths to follow in serving their family, their customers and employees, and their community. Cheryl’s concept for creating Habitué has touched many lives as well as their dual effort in serving young people at *The Living Center*. Mike’s business leadership has been recognized several times since he became CEO. He is currently chair of the International Ice Cream Association, secretary of the International Dairy Foods Association, and vice chair of the Iowa Business Council. Mike received the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year® 2010 Manufacturing Award for the Central Midwest Region. In 2013 the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce awarded Mike the W. Edwards Deming Entrepreneurial and Business Excellence Award.

Many people ask him, “What is your favorite flavor of all the choices that Blue Bunny offers?” His answer always is, “A scoop of Premium Vanilla Bean ice cream – every day!”

I asked Mike, “How do you stay so trim when you eat ice cream every day?”

“I run four miles every morning,” he smiled. “I am planning to do a triathlon this fall that includes a 300-yard swim, a 15-mile bike ride, and a 5K run.”

His enthusiasm for everything he does is reflected in the company’s purpose statement: “To bring joy to everyday life because of the love of ice cream.” 

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2017 Tiffin Allegro Club Rally Schedule

Mark your calendars now and make plans to join us at one or more of the following 2017 Tiffin Allegro Club rallies! Our rallies provide you the opportunity for camaraderie with other Tiffin owners, minor repairs/service by Tiffin Service Techs & factory representatives, meals, entertainment, seminars, and other fun activities. The newest and latest Tiffin coaches will be on display!

SPRING RALLY Okeechobee KOA Campground, Okeechobee, Florida

Arrive April 3 & depart April 7, 2017
Registration opens at 10:00 a.m. Central Daylight time, November 1, 2016.

SUMMER RALLY New York State Fairgrounds, Syracuse, New York

Arrive June 19 & depart June 23, 2017
Registration opens at 10:00 a.m. Central Standard time, January 17, 2017.

FALL RALLY Oregon State Fairgrounds, Salem, Oregon

Arrive Oct. 2 & depart Oct. 6, 2017
Registration opens at 10:00 a.m. Central Daylight time, May 2, 2017.

Rally Schedule is Subject to Change

For latest updates on rally and other Tiffin Allegro Club information, visit TiffinSideroads.com and enter your email address in the SUBSCRIBE box. You will promptly receive an email asking that you confirm your subscription. After you click FOLLOW, you will begin hearing from us once or twice per month. **See page 88 for instructions to renew or pay Allegro Club dues online.**

SPRING RALLY Okeechobee KOA Campground, Okeechobee, Florida April 3-6, 2017

We will begin accepting reservations on Monday, Nov. 1, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. CDT.

Join us in sunny Florida April 3-6 for our first Tiffin Allegro Club rally in 2017! We will gather at the Okeechobee KOA campground on the banks of beautiful Lake Okeechobee on Monday, April 3 and depart on Friday, April 7. We are prepared to host 300 coaches at the campground. North Trail RV will be on hand with a display of beautiful new Tiffin Motorhomes!

The campground has **30 AMP electrical service, water, cable, wi-fi and sewer hookups**. The KOA has a 9-hole golf course with a driving range and putting green on the property, tennis courts, pickleball courts, mini-golf course, and a state-of-the-art fitness center. Restrooms, laundry and showers are available. There

are two pools with a sundeck and hot tub, bocce ball, horseshoes, and shuffleboard. Bike and golf cart rentals are available from the campground.

Your rally fee will include multiple catered meals, ice cream socials, live entertainment, four nights camping, seminars, shopping with RV suppliers and local vendors, and other fun activities. Your rally fee also includes our terrific Tiffin and North Trail RV Service Technicians performing three minor repairs on all coaches. These trained technicians are a wealth of information for you to tap into!! You have made a sizeable investment in purchasing a beautiful motor coach. Take this valuable opportunity to learn all you can about it.

The rally fee for one coach and two adults is \$459. Our rallies often sell out, so don't delay if you are interested in attending! Make your plans now to join us on the banks of beautiful Lake Okeechobee!

SUMMER RALLY New York State Fairgrounds, Syracuse, New York June 19-22, 2017

We will begin accepting registrations on Tuesday, Jan. 17, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. CST.

For the first time in several years, Tiffin coaches will be returning to the north-eastern USA for a Tiffin Allegro Club rally! We anticipate a great turnout and you don't want to be left out! The rally will be held at the New York State Fairgrounds in Syracuse, New York. This beautiful area is the site of the oldest state fairgrounds in the USA. The fairgrounds demolished the old horse racing track last year and built a wonderful, new full service RV Park in its place. All 300 sites have **50 amp electrical, sewer, and water**. Colton RV from North Tonawanda, New York will have a display of beautiful new Tiffin coaches on hand.

Rally coaches will arrive on Monday, June 19 and depart on Friday, June 23. If you wish to remain after the rally, you will make reservations directly with the fairgrounds. No early arrivals for the rally. Your rally fee will include multiple catered meals, ice cream socials, live entertainment, four nights camping, seminars, shopping with RV suppliers and local vendors, and other fun activities. Your rally fee also includes our terrific Tiffin and Colton RV Service Technicians performing up to three minor repairs on all coaches. These trained technicians are a wealth of information for you!! Take this valuable opportunity to learn all you can about your Tiffin coach.

The rally fee for one coach and two adults is only \$459. Our rallies often sell out, so don't delay if you are interested in attending! Make your plans now to join us in beautiful New York!

Tiffin Rally Registration Process

The Tiffin Allegro Club is blessed to have a difficult problem! Tiffin rallies have become so popular, we can't accommodate everyone who wants to attend! Almost all of our rallies are a sellout - many on opening day. We are constantly looking for facilities that will accommodate a larger number of coaches with dining/meeting facilities to comfortably house everyone. Other factors also play a part in the rally selection area, but be assured we are constantly scouting for good locations. In order to better serve Tiffin owners with our wonderful Tiffin service techs and personal attention at seminars and functions, *at this time*, we have no plans to expand our rally size beyond 300 coaches.

To make rally registrations fair and available to everyone, we will be using an outside registration processor for our 2017 rallies. This outside vendor will accumulate all registrations and provide us

information in the order that registrations are received. This should eliminate problems with overloading our email server, jamming the fax machine, etc. **No rally registrations will be accepted by mail, in person, or by telephone.** The **only way to register for a rally** will be online at tiffinmotorhomes.com. Click on the Owner's Club tab, then click Tiffin Allegro Club, finally click on Rallies and go to the specific rally you wish to attend. Complete the required information and pay for the rally online. A PayPal page will open immediately after you submit the registration form. It is not necessary to have a PayPal account to make payment. You can also pay as a "guest" with your credit card the same as someone with a PayPal account.

If the rally you wish to attend sells out before you get your registration form in, please add your name to the waiting

list. You will not be charged for the rally until a space becomes available. It's not unusual for cancellations to occur when people's travel plans change, so you need to be on the wait list. As spaces open up, we will call the names on the wait list to fill vacancies. You then have the option to accept or cancel the rally.

Again, early registrations will not be accepted and you must have a current membership in the Tiffin Allegro Club to participate. Anyone not having access to the internet should ask a friend or family member to register for them as we will not be able to register anyone by telephone.

As always, we are here to answer any questions you have concerning upcoming rallies. Give us a call at 256-356-8522 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Central time. Travel safe and enjoy your beautiful Tiffin coach!

Tiffin Apparel & Accessories

You are driving a beautiful, quality built motorhome that is the envy of many. Be proud & show some swag as the younger folks say! You can find just what you need from the Tiffin Allegro Club. The Club continues to expand its selection of mens and ladies apparel and other items featur-

ing the Tiffin Motorhomes logo. View our 2016-2017 catalog at tiffinmotorhomes.com/pdfs/Allegro_Club_Wearables_Catalog.pdf or call the Tiffin Allegro Club office at 256-356-8522 to receive a catalog by mail. A full line of shirts, jackets, t-shirts, caps, tote bags, stainless steel

mugs, and much more is available inside the Tiffin Allegro Club office located adjacent to the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay. Be sure to stop by and browse anytime your travels bring you to Red Bay. Items can also be ordered by phone and shipped to your address.



Mark Phillips

TIFFIN'S NEWEST MANUFACTURER'S REPRESENTATIVE

By birthright, Mark Phillips is a true Arkansas Razorback. He was born just across the Big Muddy from Memphis, Tennessee, in West Memphis, Arkansas. He also claims the University of Arkansas as one of his alma maters. Mark has served as Tiffin's southeastern regional representative since July 2015.

With strong agricultural ties that he cherishes, each of Mark's grandparents, the Phillipses, Prentices, and the Thompsons, grew cotton on Arkansas' fertile Mississippi River bottomlands. Family stories are rich with accounts of their labor-intensive way of life and its culture. "My Grandpa Phillips had died from blood poisoning while my dad was a young boy," Mark recalled. "He was going for regular treatments in Memphis, but did not survive. My grandma moved back to Baldwin, Mississippi from Arkansas where she married Grandpa Prentice. They then moved back to Arkansas where

Dad grew up and met my mother.

"My Prentice grandpa had a son and a daughter — "My dad's step-brother, Johnny, was like a second father to me. Uncle Johnny grew up sharecropping, hunting and fishing with Dad. He spent a lot of time with me and always had good advice."

Mark studied at the University of Arkansas and then transferred to Tennessee Technological University in Memphis to complete the requirements for his electronics engineering degree in 1985.

He then accepted a position with Dynamic Electric, an electrical contractor located in Memphis, where he manufactured specialized circuit boards and served as a troubleshooter. With a little serendipity perhaps, his job eventually put him in the same plant with his dad.

After meeting Cindy Nix through mutual friends, Mark and Cindy married in Memphis in 1988. An accounting major who graduated from the University of Al-

abama, she began her career working for a bank in Germantown, Tennessee.

"My dad started in 1962 with Container Corporation of America (CCA)," the year I was born," Mark said. "The electrical contractor I was working for had contracts with CCA that gave me some experience with the type of circuit boards and industrial wiring being used in this industry. I was offered a job with Boise

At left: Andy Baer, national sales manager; Tim Tiffin, general manager; and Bob Tiffin, president and CEO took time to officially welcome Mark into Tiffin Motorhomes. ♦ Dealer training is a regular responsibility for a manufacturer's rep. Here, Mark is taking three sales reps from RV World of Georgia through the main assembly plant. ♦ For the last 20 years, horses have played a big role in the family's recreational activities. Mark, Cindy, and the girls have all shown horses in competition. Here, Mark is riding Elvis, a former Tennessee Walking Horse champion in the state of Mississippi.

Cascade as the electronic maintenance engineer. Located in West Memphis, they had just transitioned into state-of-the-art manufacturing.

"Since my dad was the union president and an employee in an hourly-paid job, he got upset with me for taking a job that he assumed was similar to his," Mark continued. "He wanted more for me than his career path. I promised him that I would reassess my job position every five years and if I had not advanced I would do something else. I worked for Boise for 11 years, moving in that company from electronic maintenance to plant supervisor to corporate engineer. While I was there, I wrote the Corporate Lockout/Tagout Safety Manual for the industry."

Mark also introduced time-and-motion studies that improved production efficiency on all shifts. The plant operated 24 hours/ day, seven days a week. His success at Boise led to an offer and a new position as plant engineer with Inland Paperboard and Packaging in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

"We moved to Hattiesburg in 1994," Mark explained, "and that required some major changes. Cindy was now working for Security Check, a property protection

company. She began as an accountant, but had become the CFO and part owner. She was able to continue her work in Hattiesburg through the internet, phone conferences, and a lot of Fedex shipments. By this time, we had two little girls: Jessica, 5, and Alexandria, 1."

After being in Hattiesburg for three years, Cindy's company and position needed her to be back in Memphis for the day to day operation. "So I became an independent contractor specializing in predictive maintenance," Mark explained. "Using a listening device (Shock Pulse Monitor), I could tell when the ball bearings in a machine were nearing failure because they make a distinctive frequency/noise. Smurfit-Stone decided to use my service. After I tested the main corrugated line equipment, I predicted it would go down on the next shift based on the main corrugated roll bearing test. After checking their maintenance records for greasing and lubrication, the operators scoffed at my assessment. The machine went down on the next shift and shut the plant down. My dad was called in during the middle of the night to supervise the tear down and repair. They became believers and business was good."

Smurfit-Stone offered Mark the position of plant engineer. The promise Mark had made to his dad earlier about advancing in position, he had kept. Mark was now over his dad's department.

"When I accepted their offer, we moved back to Memphis in May 1997, which, of course, made Cindy's job much easier, although working at home while the girls were very young turned out to be a good thing," Mark said. "Cindy had become half owner of the company at this point.

"My dad was pleased with my career," Mark continued. "He helped me take a consultative approach with the union stewards and employees. But I had a new norm: this was an 80-hour-a-week job."

After four years at the Smurfit-Stone plant, Mark reached a point in his career where he realized it was time to make another major change.

"I was going down the same path as my father—spending too much time at the plant. He taught me respect, work ethics, responsibility, and led me to Christ at the age of eight. Mom and Dad were both godly parents and raised us in church," Mark said. "I became very reflective and decided I did not want to become a seven-day-a-week employee. I wanted to



have time to spend with Cindy and the girls who were growing up too fast. So I told Cindy, 'When we are financially able, I will quit and look for another type of work.'

Within a few years, Smurfit-Stone decided to close that plant and Mark watched his father supervise the shut-down and ease into retirement. It would be his dad's last job.

"Our girls had always wanted to have horses. We moved to Olive Branch when the girls were 8 and 4, giving me the opportunity to fulfill that dream," Mark said with a smile. "Our neighbors had horses and a large enough lot to accommodate ours. We joined the Saddle Club and eventually acquired 10 acres and a small barn two miles from our house."

Mark and Cindy met Tim and Carla Mask at the Saddle Club. Tim had started a new position at Cummins Mid-South

and introduced Mark to Cummins.

"Their engines were just going electronic in 2002," Mark said. "My first position with Cummins was in original equipment manufacturer (OEM) sales, marketing engines to irrigation dealers. I began in December 2002 and sold \$705,000 in my first year. In my last year with Cummins in OEM sales, I topped \$18 million."

In 2004 Cummins Mid-South brought in a private consultant to talk with TMH about what it would take to start building their own chassis. That meeting eventually resulted in Bob Tiffin hiring Gary Jones & Son to design the first PowerGlide chassis for the Allegro Bus. Mark became the liaison between Cummins and Tiffin Motorhomes.

"In the meantime, Cummins in 2007 started the development of a V8 diesel engine for half-ton Dodge trucks," Mark

related. "Unfortunately, Dodge filed for bankruptcy in 2008 and Cummins, after seeking suggestions from their OEM group, went looking for commercial applications for their engine.

"I approached Tim Tiffin and asked, 'If I can get an engine, will you supply the Powerglide chassis for testing?' Then I asked Cummins, 'If I can get a chassis for testing, will you supply the engine?' I got a 'yes' from both companies," Mark said, indicating he was a little surprised at his success.

Tiffin sent the chassis to Cummins headquarters for the engine installation. Cummins returned a drivable chassis to Red Bay for TMH to build the motorhome box on it. The Tiffin engineering department worked on it between 2010 and 2015. The result was the unpainted "gray ghost" that professional drivers drove continuously for over 250,000 miles except for oil changes and maintenance. "It was a testament to the Tiffin PowerGlide chassis," Mark said.

"After seeing the V8 engines come off the Cummins assembly floor in 2015, Tim talked with me about the success of the testing," Mark said. "I knew then I had done all I could do to facilitate the transition of the new engine into the Allegro Breeze brand.

"In May 2015, I was offered the position of southeastern regional representative to serve Tiffin's dealers. I accepted and began on July 1," Mark related. "The people at Tiffin are the reason I changed jobs: Tim and Bob Tiffin, Andy Baer, Brad Whitt, Gary Harris, Brad Warner, Bobby Luther and all of the engineers in the chassis department and sales team. When I went to trade shows, I learned from them what customer service really means. Cummins says they are service oriented and they mean it, but Tiffin lives it every day.

"The best thing about Tiffin is there is no red tape. They make a decision to do something and then they carry through with it," Mark continued. "All of the poli-



This past summer, the Phillipses found time for a family picture. From left, Mark, Alexandria, Cindy, and Jessica outside their home in Olive Branch, Mississippi.

cies and procedures that you find everywhere in corporate America usually slow the process of doing business. At Tiffin, if it is the right thing to do, then do it and the paperwork will catch up with it later. Cummins is a great company to work with and I love the people there. But my job here at TMH is an opportunity to help people in a different way than I was able to do at Cummins—and that really appeals to me.”

The Phillips girls are grown now. Jessica, 26, has two degrees from Mississippi State in fashion design and business. She is studying for an MBA degree at Christian Brothers University in Memphis while working as a manager at Anthropologie, a women’s apparel and home décor store. Alexandria, 22, a senior at Mississippi State, plans to study for a master’s degree in accounting as soon as she completes her B.S. in May of 2017.

“The girls are Cindy’s and my greatest accomplishment, but I do have a grand puppy I am working on,” Mark laughed.

“Zeus is an Australian Shepherd that Alex has at college.

“Cindy continues in her position as CFO for the security company,” Mark said. “The business was renamed Security One when they purchased it. She now has ownership with one partner. They are operating in several states and claim Regions Bank as their ‘High Profile Client.’ They employ 700 to 800 and provide personal and property protection.”

Mark’s hobby now is his pets. “In 2001 through 2011, our family showed our seven horses, from Welsh ponies to Tennessee Walkers,” Mark said. “Sometimes we competed against each other. I still have “Elvis,” a Tennessee Walker who in 2007 was Amateur Park Performance Mississippi State Champion. I have one Appaloosa named Skipper T’s Red Chief, and two miniature horses, Pixie and Lucy. We also have three dogs: Buckley, an Australian Shepherd; Hershey, a miniature Pincher; and Sassy, a Pomeranian.”

Life is good in Olive Branch! 

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Tunnel Clearances on the Blue Ridge Parkway

In reading the excellent article on “Iconic Asheville” in *RIS* 13:3, there was a reference to entering the Blue Ridge Parkway at Asheville. Some clarification and warning is needed for RV traffic on the parkway. It is indeed a relaxing, beautiful drive. However, when you approach a tunnel that lists a clearance of 11' 3" and your 1996 Allegro Bus is 11' 9", it causes a panic. I encountered this when I entered the parkway at Cherokee, North Carolina, and approached the first tunnel at mile marker 461.2. Not wishing to make a convertible out of my motorhome, I disconnected my tow vehicle at a nearby observation turnout and returned to Cherokee. There are two additional tunnels in that area that list clearances of 10' 6" and 11' 1".

It was not until I returned home and researched the Blue Ridge Parkway website that I learned all of the tunnels on the parkway will clear a large commercial bus or a large motorhome if you drive the center line through the tunnel. The website lists the minimum clearance at 18' 1" along the center line of all the tunnels. None of this clearance information was in any of the several brochures I obtained prior to entering the parkway, nor was there any notice at the parkway entrance.

I do think it may be rather exciting to drive the center line through a curved tunnel and meet a vehicle in the tunnel!

Pete Garrett, Huntsville, Alabama

Editor’s Note

The Blue Ridge Parkway—all 469 miles of it—is my favorite place on this earth to enjoy rest and relaxation. In the 13 years we have written and produced *Roughing It Smoothly*, I have written two stories about traveling the parkway (1:3 and 10:4). We have spent time on the parkway nearly every year since 1968 when we moved to North Georgia.

When I wrote the BRP story in 2004, I recommended entering the parkway via US 23–441 at Balsam Gap, the most convenient route coming north on US 441 out of Georgia. My plan for seeing the entire length of the parkway was to spend two nights in each of the BRP’s nine campgrounds. The MO was to park the motorhome in the first campground (Mt. Pisgah) and then use the tow car to see the sights in both directions. Then we would move to the next campground and follow the same procedure. While we were at Mt. Pisgah, we drove to Cherokee in the car and gave little thought that we were going through three tunnels too low on their outer perimeters for our Allegro 32BR. In 2004 the BRP map of the parkway published by the National Park Service did not show the tunnel heights at Lickstone Ridge, Bunches Bald, or Big Witch.

About ten years later, the NPS began printing these three tunnel heights on its official Blue Ridge Parkway map. But you must study the map carefully to see that detail. The printed

number represents the height of the tunnel on either side, directly above the white line—not the center yellow line.

In my second story on the BRP (10:4, 76–79) published in 2013, I was aware of these three tunnels and warned my readers not to drive their Class A motorhomes through them. I would not recommend driving on the center line or over the center line to get a Class A coach through Big Witch, Bunches Bald, and Lickstone Ridge.

Our 2017 Allegro Breeze Is Running Like a Swiss Watch

My wife and I have been RVing since the mid-1980s. Although I am somewhat embarrassed to say how many RVs we have owned, suffice to say that we have done as many RVers do and sampled a few until we were happy with our rolling home. For us, “happy” is a complex combination of tasteful style, superior construction quality, strong driving characteristics, and, most importantly, solid after-sales customer support.

Some good friends of ours suggested we consider the new Tiffin Breeze. We finally took the plunge when we bought a 2015 Breeze and, boy, were we happy with our choice! It only lacked one thing I prefer in a pusher which was a Cummins diesel. When we found out that the 2017 Breeze would have the new Cummins ISV5.0 engine, we put our order in and anxiously waited for delivery.

As we drove off from the dealer to take our new Breeze home, Penny and I started planning our summer adventure. Each year we escape the Florida heat by camping our way up to the Northwest and this year was going to be a joy. After making all the reservations for the planned three month travel extravaganza, we got a call from the Tiffin Service Department telling us that we were one of the few new Breeze owners who may have a problem with our turbocharger due to ingested welding dross. It seems that the intake pipe from the air filter to the turbo was welded in several places that were very difficult to inspect and were not cleaned properly, leaving beads of welding slag that could break free and enter the turbo. Tiffin support personnel helped us find the closest Cummins Service Center and we made an appointment to inspect the turbo to see if our Breeze was one of the unlucky few. Unfortunately, our turbo was damaged and



required replacement along with some other key parts.

Cummins was now the responsible party for repairing the problem caused by the other parts supplier. The initial repair time estimate was well before our planned summer trip. The problem was identified and the repair process clear. All Cummins needed were the parts to do the job. Tiffin promptly supplied the parts for which they were responsible and the only outstanding issue was turbo availability. Since this was a new motor and the parts stream was still not fully established, the turbo became the holdup. As time passed and our departure date came due, there still was no turbo available. Repeated calls to Cummins led nowhere and, eventually, we had to cancel our trip and all our refundable and non-refundable reservations. I asked Bob Tiffin for help even though it was not his responsibility. Mr. Tiffin assigned Gary Harris to work with us and, I have to say, I admire his patience and skill in working with a, by now, rather irate customer. He and Mr. Tiffin worked their magic and, ultimately, the turbo was delivered to Cummins of Ocala for installation. I want to commend the Ocala Cummins service manager and their mechanic on keeping our brand new Breeze in pristine condition even though a lot of the work was inside through the bedroom motor access. The only casualty to all this work was the pillow top mattress cover which was smudged with grease. Before we arrived, the service manager went to the local Camping World and bought us a brand new cover. That is true customer care!

The Breeze is running like a Swiss watch and we are happy campers!

In the beginning paragraph, I made a list of attributes that make RV owners happy. These are exactly why one should pick Tiffin as their coach provider. We chose the Breeze because it best fit our needs but any coach in the Tiffin line provides the best possible combination of these attributes. Bob Tiffin and his outstanding staff stood solidly behind us when we needed their help and support. That, my friends, is worth more than you can know when you chose to own an RV.

Penny & Marshall Lounsberry, Weirsdale, Florida

Our 1923 Model TT “Jitney” Bus Has Been a 12-Year Restoration Project.

When we bought the Ford it was in a farm truck configuration with a small handmade cab and flatbed body. Ford “TT’s” were one-ton truck chassis. Since 1923 Ford trucks were sold as chassis only, thus allowing me to pick a body configuration that let me show off some woodworking skills. In the 1920s, Ford’s model T was known as “The Universal Car.”

I chose a “Jitney” body. (Jitney was slang for a “nickel.”) The Jitneys were used to transport people cheaper than the trolleys (10 cents), and they could modify the route, unlike the trolleys.

The configuration is basically a depot hack on steroids. It can seat 10 in the back and three on the front seat.

I found photos of a sales brochure from the Hercules Body Company and dropped the height and length by one foot. Instead of ash, I used red oak because it has more character and stained better for an antique look.

I rebuilt the engine, put new bands in the transmission, and tightened or rebuilt all the moving parts on the chassis prior to building the body. The 3-speed Warford Aux Transmission was in excellent shape.

Fabricating the body was a challenge due to the “irons” (bracketry) that hold the wood together. After much research, I made all the bracketry to match photos and diagrams. After the wood was cut and installed, we started adding period-correct travel pieces.

The Ford Jitney inventory includes a fully equipped travel kitchen, tire chains, snow shoes, water barrel, lean-to canopy, electric spot lights, tire tools, replica rifle, and many antique camping accessories.

My wife and I are Yellowstone Trail Organization members and have done many awareness events in elementary and middle school history events. The Yellowstone Trail was a transcontinental road that was used from 1908 to 1930. The Federal work programs during the depression turned the trail into US 12.

We trailer the vehicle if the event is more than five miles away. Top speed is about 17 mph so the slow speed and curiosity effect are not conducive to helping traffic flow.

We expect to have many more years displaying and refining the TT and when the time comes for the Jitney and us to part, it will have its final showplace in the Model T museum in Indiana.

Traveling in the 1923 camper certainly wasn’t “Roughing it Smoothly” like our Tiffin Allegro. We enjoy them both like our children, even though they are completely different.

Sharon and Bruce Elliott, Hudson, Wisconsin



The RV Corral

IN EUGENE, OREGON, HAS A CHARISMA CUSTOMERS PICK UP ON IMMEDIATELY.

THIS STORY IS ABOUT A 28-YEAR-OLD RV DEALERSHIP and a woman who made a decision in two hours to run a company that was on the brink of being sold to a mega-RV operation who likely would have closed it down to get rid of the competition. And why? Because she cared about its two owners and its 45 employees who were like a family and she knew the incredible talent and skill they could offer to their RV customers.

Her story begins in a small town 26 miles west of Dubuque, Iowa. Tina Ray, 50, grew up in Dyersville, Iowa, where *Field of Dreams* was filmed. Dyersville may have been infused with the ethos of that story. In any case, Tina's father, who worked for "corporate America," wanted a simpler life. He was the vice-president of a company he felt was not treating its employees fairly. David Burroughs



and his wife Patricia pulled up stakes and moved to Oregon in 1978 when Tina was 13, the middle child of five siblings.

David's father was a successful plasterer in Oregon who agreed to teach his son the trade. As a skilled business manager, David put several plastering crews to work and the company grew. Tina went into banking immediately after finishing high school. Eventually, she became a loan officer working with RV and auto dealers. "My job was vetting the credit worthiness of buyers as well as researching loan to value on units and working within the lending regulations and guidelines," Tina said. "I had contact only with the F&I person at the RV dealer and not directly with the customer as I had in the past. I had to really trust who I was working with and they in turn had to trust me.

"After four years in that job, I left the bank in 1993 and accepted an F&I position with an auto dealership, working on straight commission. That was a bit risky because I was a single

mom with three kids—6, 5, and 2 years old," Tina continued. "It was a good job and I stayed in the auto industry for seven years, when an F&I position with an RV dealership became available that looked more promising. In 2002 Jerry McCall, Rick Neet and Steve Christofferson (who left the company in 2010) offered me a position at their company, The RV Corral, which had been in business for 13 years. It was the beginning of a long relationship based on trust and mutual respect."

The RV Corral was a small, but growing company. McCall and Neet had opened a second location to expand their inventory to Class A diesels and upscale fifth wheels and then the 2008 recession hit the industry. "We cut back to the original location and ran a tight ship," Tina said. "We all took pay cuts and made it a team effort. At that time we were dealers for three Class A manufacturers: Winnebago,

Newmar, and Tiffin. We scaled back on our flooring line to reduce expenses and had to make some tough decisions and decided to drop Newmar. Like other dealers, the recovery from the recession was slow but by 2011 we started to breathe again and by 2014 were back up to speed. 2015 was a great year for us and we anticipate the next few years to keep growing."

Tina saw an opportunity in 2011 and left The RV Corral to become a partner in an RV sales organization that was specializing in used coaches they were acquiring from customers wanting to sell and some bank liquidations.

Jerry McCall and Rick Neet bought out their third partner and Jerry brought his son, Joe, into the company to learn and run the business. Tragically, while attending a golf tournament in June 2014, Joe died in his sleep from an undetected congeni-

Text and photography by Fred Thompson



Kenny Gebhardt and Tina Ray are looking forward to building an RV dealership with a strong customer service orientation. Kenny, Tina's son, joined the company in March of this year. ♦ The RV Corral sales team brings 75 years of experience to serve the company's clients. Clockwise in the step well are Luke Whalen, Kenny Gebhardt, and Johnny Robbins. Standing left to right: Don Jump, Glen Newton, Joe "Bass" Hubacek, John Hartley, Tina Ray, and Jim Boechler.

tal heart defect. Completely disheartened, Jerry wanted to sell the company and Rick was willing to sell, too.

A large RV company became aware of the owner's interest in selling and made an offer. McCall and Neet met with their attorneys, considered the offer carefully, and decided to sign the documents for the sale. The next day while they were waiting for the RV operation to sign the papers they decided to go ahead and announce to the employees that the company was being sold. Most of the employees were very apprehensive they would lose their jobs when they learned the name of the buyer.

Fortunately, Tina had heard of the sale weeks earlier and had contacted Jerry and Rick about running the company. "I talked to Jerry and Rick and said, 'Let me run the company for you. Don't sell it. They will close it down and most of the employees will lose their jobs. Everyone has felt tremendous loss with Joe's death,'" she said.

"I just couldn't think about driving by here a year from now and the company would be gone—27 years of their life's work would have been lost too," Tina continued.

Unaware of what was happening at the The RV Corral store, the attorneys for the mega-RV operation called McCall and Neet and said their client was not going to sign because they wanted to renegotiate the price.

"Both men were relieved, canceled the contract, and quickly accepted my offer to return and run the company," Tina continued. "Within two hours, we had an agreement. It was a roller coaster ride for the employees that day and they were so relieved that the deal had fallen through."

Tina rejoined the company in October 2014, content to be the general manager. She realized she had a bit of a learning curve to begin running a company with 45 employees. "I had been evaluating trade-ins and working sales deals in my other business but needed to learn more



Standing: John Crapser, service manager; Matt Burroughs, facilities manager; Kenny Gebhardt, general manager. *Seated:* Elaine O'Connell, F&I manager; Jean Anderson, office manager; Glen Newton, consignment manager; Tina Ray, owner; Greg Chambers, parts manager.

about operating the computer software for accounting and service,” Tina noted. “But each department was great in helping me get up to speed.”

After a year, Jerry and Rick saw her management style and the profit the company had made. “They wanted me to buy The RV Corral. I did not have the capital to pay in full but with a significant down payment they worked out a five-year plan for me to purchase the company,” Tina explained. “I asked for the contract to begin on January 1, 2016 and they both agreed. I did it at a good time. We had a great year in 2015 and this year looks even better. RVIA is projecting growth and the large RV manufacturers are making significant increases in their production capacity.”

The former owners are continuing as Tina’s mentors and stopping by to study the company’s monthly and quarterly reports, offering suggestions and ideas to help.

With a fresh set of eyes on the business and suggestions from the employees, Tina began to make changes. “I brought in my younger brother, Matt Burroughs, to head up our detail department for receiving new RVs and rehabbing trade-ins,” Tina explained. “Matt also serves as our facilities manager. His experience included four years in the Marines and operations manager for a sheet metal fabricator. He also owned a welding company. He works well coordinating with the service manager on getting RVs show ready. That also includes the clean-ups and detail work on motorized and towables before those units go on display.”

Tina and Matt want the rehab work on trade-ins to put each unit in top condition. “Our reputation rides on every pre-owned product we sell,” Matt said. “I designed a large dry erase chart to

list the work to be done on each incoming trade-in. Each employee will select repairs they know they are qualified to handle. We empower each team member who completes an item to ask another member to check it out. Then (s)he picks another repair or upgrade and continues working on any of the listed items for all of the trade-ins.

“We also advocate a ‘discovery process’ by encouraging each employee to look for components that need to be replaced or upgraded,” Matt continued. “At the end of the day we review what we have accomplished. We already had the right people for this department. We just needed the organization.”

As facilities manager, Matt is identifying and bringing work areas up to a standard level of organization, cleanliness, and neatness. “Since we were a 28-year-old company, we knew we needed to ‘clean out the attics’ in our four buildings,” Matt said seriously. “We kept the good stuff, catalogued it, and stored it. Then we recycled everything else.

“Everyone takes pride in the area where they work,” Matt said. “Improving our facilities is creating a new pride and loyalty to the dealership. We are also improving our offices to make better use of our space. If we can’t do the work ourselves, we are hiring contractors to make repairs. We want to make our sales and service areas very customer friendly. We also want our repair bays and work spaces to be employee friendly.”

In March of this year, Tina offered a position in the company to her youngest son Kenny Gebhardt. Kenny, 25, completed a BA degree in economics with minors in chemistry and biology at Willamette University in 2013, where he played cornerback on the football team for four years. “I accepted a position at gradu-

ation with Northwestern Mutual selling insurance and financial products,” Kenny began. “Then, using my chemistry and biology training, I moved to an agricultural chemicals company that had contracts with large corporate farming enterprises to identify crop diseases and pests and apply the correct chemicals to assure maximum production. I rode the fields on a 4-wheeler to ID the problems and plan the timely applications of chemicals. Spring was the busiest season when I was covering 20,000 acres a week. In the Fall we did soil samples to be sure the ground was ready for planting the next year.”

Kenny is now in a broad training program at The RV Corral addressing sales, finance and insurance, marketing, and at some future date, service. “When I came on board, we had a website based on WordPress, but it was not designed for web crawling,” Kenny said. “I oversaw a redesign that was launched three months ago. I brought in a friend of mine to do the photography of our inventory. He does a build sheet for each RV and presents our new inventory on the website.”

“Leon Carlson is training me on how to work and approve a sales contract,” Kenny continued. “With regard to a Tiffin unit, we rely on past customers’ preferences and input to select options for the new coaches being ordered. Leon is also working with me on forecasting our orders off previous years sales. The ordering is done by a team made up of Leon, Tina, and myself. We have our floorplan with Bank of America and they treat us very well.”

Over the next five years, Tina anticipates Kenny becoming the general sales manager. “Floor planning, relationships with brand reps, and service are all major parts of the business I will be learning,” he said. “I will continue to manage the website and optimize our marketing. It is amazing how much time the website requires.”

“To those who have not yet visited The RV Corral, in person or on our website, this company really is a family,” Kenny said. “Customers tell us, ‘We love every single facet of doing business with The RV Corral.’”

Tina asked Leon Carlson to become general sales manager. With over 40 years of experience in sales, she knew Leon had a wealth of knowledge, sales techniques, and general skills he could impart to the sales staff.

“I avoided management for many years because I like working with customers and helping them find the right coach for their camping style. For me, it is really fun meeting people PERIOD,” Leon began. “I do U-tube videos and sell to people all over. They watch a video about a particular unit and begin to feel like they really know me. One lady to whom I sold an Allegro Bus 37AP told me how much she enjoyed watching the video, and then she added, ‘You really do need to lose a little weight,’” Leon laughed.

Leon is very aware of just how important regular sales training is to the overall success of the company. “We approach sales training as a team,” he said. “No one wants to be a member of

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a team that is in an unfriendly competition. We want a team where everyone helps each other to improve. That makes the company grow and gives everyone a stronger base from which they can do their job.

“When we train on specific RVs, each sales person gives a demo to the rest of the team,” Leon continued. “He will study the unit carefully before the walk-through and demo. Then the rest of the team members will ask questions as if they were customers. This approach helps everyone to learn. If we are doing Tiffin coaches on a given day, we will do an Allegro Bus on one demo and then switch to an Allegro Open Road. The two coaches are very different and require a completely different presentation.

“George Victorine, our Tiffin northwestern regional representative, keeps us well stocked with literature for each brand,” Leon said. “He likes to work with groups, too, and puts together good storylines on each Tiffin brand.”

Tina created a new sales technique to address selling RVs that have been in the inventory for an extended time. “The sales team works on commission only, but they also get the ‘atta-boys’ and

slaps on the back,” she said. “So I started this spiff program to put a few bucks in the pockets of our support teams as well as the sales team. Each old age unit is assigned a team consisting of a member of the clean team, a PDI tech person, and the salesman who sells the unit. Once a week we spin the wheel (i.e., like the Wheel of Fortune TV show) for the units that have sold. All three spin the wheel and the team members split the total amount to get a nice monetary prize. It’s a fun gathering for everyone.”

Tina and Leon urge the sales and service team members to look for problems the owner may not have noticed. “Recently I saw a problem with a customer’s upholstery when I was inside his coach and asked if we could help. I reported the problem to our Tiffin rep, George Victorine, and four weeks later we had the problem corrected,” Leon related.

The RV Corral has a strong player in the buyer’s corner. With 25 years of experience, Elaine O’Connell heads up the F&I department to find the best options for financing, insurance, and warranties. “We use four major lenders,” Elaine explained. “US Bank, Bank of the West, Bank of America, and Ally have provided our new owners with good options. We also use 10 credit unions and a community credit union that has broad membership options. Buyers who are financing \$200,000 or more can get 3.99% interest rates right now. Our customers really feel comfortable with the unassuming family relationships here at The RV Corral.”

Seated left to right: Jessa Klemp, Brian Crapser, Jay Hamilton, Joy Best, Kim Hoover, Blaine Edgamin. *Middle:* Matt Ott, Matt Burroughs, Brian Phelps, Nathan Greer, Brandon West, James Talbot, Keith Morago, Mike Yarush. *Top:* Roger Ames, David Bennett, John Crapser, Greg Chambers, Scott Mitchell, Mike Vosberg, Frank Perez, Warren Clark, Kevin Smith, Ryan Williams, Danny Norman.



Elaine goes over the options for each buyer and assists them in selecting the term of the loan and the available interest rates. "Fifty percent of our new owners buy extended warranties," Elaine said. "We use U.S. Warranty Corporation for our extended warranties and I can offer it to our buyers with complete confidence they will be satisfied and treated fairly. To keep the rates lower, the USWC uses a deductible and pre-authorization."

Jean Anderson, The RV Corral's office manager, is the "behind the scenes" talent who keeps the company running on a day-to-day basis. She has the record for the longest tenure at the dealership. "I actually started working for Jerry, Rick, and Steve in 1984 when they owned a sandwich shop," Jean said. "I wrapped the sandwiches in the assembly line."

"Jerry, Rick, and Steve launched The RV Corral in 1988," Jean said, relating some of the company's history. "I started bookkeeping part-time for the new company and in 1992 became the full-time office manager. Steve sold his interest in the business to Jerry and Rick in 2010. Jerry told me often that I am 'the glue that keeps this business stuck together.' I love working with numbers and will stay here as long as Tina wants me to be the office manager. This business has always been a close-knit family and I love working here."

Now in his thirty-first year of working in automotive and RV service, John Crapser is the The RV Corral's service manager. He has been with The RV Corral since 2004 and accepted his

current position in 2012. He oversees parts, service, repairs, and warranty. Including the body shop, the service department employs 11 technicians.

"Currently we have one RVIA certified technician on staff," John said, "but we use mentor training, specific videos for targeted repairs, and manufacturers' training courses for all of the products in our RVs and motorhomes. We have found Tiffin's training classes in Red Bay to be very effective. Tom Forsyth, one of Tiffin's west coast technical service advisors, stops here frequently to oversee repairs and approve warranty work. He also provides training on components manufactured by TMH."

The RV Corral offers oil changes, brake jobs, and generator service, and nearly every service and repair required by a Tiffin motorhome except engine and chassis repairs. Windshields are replaced by Coach Glass in nearby Coburg, the company that supplies Tiffin's production line windshields. The RV Corral repairs porcelain, carpet, and linoleum floors as well as solid surface countertops and cabinetry.

The body shop can replace front and rear caps and roofs, repair sidewall delaminations, and make realignments and repairs to slide-out boxes. All exterior work is water-tested in a rain booth. Full body painting is subcontracted to a nearby company that has a full downdraft paint booth. Their work is guaranteed by The RV Corral.

The RV Corral currently has eight inside service bays and 14

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outside service slots that can be used almost year-round. The company employs nine service technicians and two body shop techs. John pointed out that most of the service writers and technicians have worked together for many years, developing a very good synergy within the group. "Since Oregon has for years been a major RV manufacturing state, and consequently had a large service industry to go with it, most of our employees careers have moved through the same companies," he said.

The tech who does the PDI to accept the newly delivered motorhome into The RV Corral inventory will also do the training and delivery of the coach to its new owner. The company has six delivery locations with 50-amp service and water hookups. If they wish, new owners can stay overnight while they become accustomed to the operation of the motorhome's features. Full-timers who are upgrading often park their trade-in next to their new coach while they make the big move.

"All new owners receive the cell phone numbers of their sales person, the tech who provided their training, and a service advisor," John noted.

John, service advisors James Talbert and Paul Carlson, and the technicians are excited about the new software that will be installed this fall. The IDS G2 system will allow the use of iPads to all the service advisors and technicians. As the advisors write the service order, each repair will be tied to an image stored on the iPad. Parts availability will be checked by Greg Chambers, the parts manager, and then supplied out of inventory or ordered. As a technician works on the order, he will record with the iPad camera any new findings that may affect repair cost or the completion date. The tech will also use the iPad to record the time required to make the repair.

Paul Carlson and James Talbert can claim nearly 20 years of combined experience as service advisors and 45 years of overall collective experience in the RV industry.

Paul was a shop foreman when he left Guaranty RV in Junction City to join the sales staff at The RV Corral in 2005. "My father was in sales here at The RV Corral when I came on board," Paul explained. "During the recession, the company had an opening for a service advisor and I changed jobs. Before becoming shop foreman at Guaranty, I was a master certified technician. With my background and understanding of the service business, it was an easy transition to become a service advisor. Because The RV Corral is so customer oriented, we have a huge repeat business. We are relatively small, but that allows us to be much more personal in our service. I am on a first-name basis with so many of our customers. It's not just a grind here. The RV Corral is a very friendly place to work. I have the control to make the service experience work smoothly for my customers. The owner creates the right atmosphere for good customer relations."

James echoes Paul's description of the business climate at The RV Corral. "When a customer calls to arrange service, we ask for *their* time schedule to decide how we can best fit them into our work flow," he began. "What may seem like a drastic problem to the RV owner may not be drastic to us. That's when we have to prioritize the urgency of a repair with the time slots that we have in our schedules. After we finish writing up the needed repairs for an owner, we integrate his repairs into our schedules and build a worklist that we email to him, creating the first paper trail that will help track the RV through our shop. We then check to see if we have all the parts we will need, and if not we go to Greg Chambers and have him place orders with our manufacturers.

"We sincerely want our RV owners to know that it is our goal to repair their coaches as soon as we possibly can," James said. "Some repairs require warranty approvals, blueprints for wiring or plumbing, and occasionally just extra time to figure out how we will attack the problem. We need our customers' patience to understand the time it takes to make repairs."

Greg Chambers, the parts manager for The RV Corral, has worked in parts since he was a junior in high school. "I actually got started by going to work with my dad who was in automo-

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rive parts and learned the business through him,” Greg said. “After spending 13 years in an automotive parts department, the owner of an RV dealership offered me a position in 1985. I was looking for a new challenge and took the job. And it was a challenge! The difference is the number of components in a motorhome far exceeds the number in an automobile: water heaters, appliances, pumps, plumbing, lighting, cabinetry, miles of wiring . . . we could go on and on.

“The biggest challenge is stocking the most frequently used parts,” Greg pointed out. “It really expedites a job if our techs have the parts they need for a repair right here in our inventory. Having to order parts always delays the repair. However, we do have a major RV parts distributor in Portland who gives us overnight service. The RV Corral’s inventory investment is approximately \$125,000.


“Finding parts for RVs that are 10+ years old is always a challenge,” he said, “but I find satisfaction in locating a part for a customer’s older coach. It is kind of fun tracking down an item. My personal knowledge base helps a lot since I have been doing this kind of work for 31 years. And I value my fellow employees’ opinions about what we need to keep in stock. Our customers keep coming back because they know we will help them.”

The current software and the new IDS system soon to be installed track the number of sales of each part and the date on which that item was sold. “The system actually recommends

what we should stock, but we combine that with personal experience,” Greg continued. “The Tiffin software for ordering parts is very dependable. It begins with the brand, model, and year and then filters down to the parts we need. TMH has provided a lot of tools to make the parts ordering process work smoothly. Our customers also use iPhone pictures to ID the parts they need.”

When an RV is sold, Greg and the sales staff encourage owners to allow The RV Corral to install MAXX-AIR covers for their exhaust vents and to add wire mesh covers to protect the air intakes for the furnaces, the water heater, the cooktop, and the fridge. The wire mesh prevents insects from building nests in the burn tubes. “We put it on all of the new coaches as standard procedure. The departments here work together to create a complete service experience for our customers,” Greg said.

“Tina is carrying on the good traditions that Jerry and Rick established here at The RV Corral. She is very attentive to everyone’s needs: the customers and employees alike.” Leon said. “All of our managers intuitively treat everyone in our organization with respect. It is exciting to come to work and the days just fly by. A customer may buy elsewhere, but it is not unusual for them to come back here soon to get their service.”

“We are not emphasizing just one aspect of this business,” Kenny explained. “We work hard to be on top of all aspects of our business. We really are a ‘home grown’ company and we want this business to feel like you are ‘coming home’ when you visit us.” 



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Sedona

THIS PLACE IS ADDICTIVE

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUZANNE CLEMENZ

Sedona's uniquely dramatic setting below sculpted sandstone canyon walls makes it a destination recognized around the world. Nestled at the mouth of Oak Creek Canyon and the southern rim of the Colorado Plateau, most days in Sedona are a sunny riot of primary colors—the green of the forest, the sapphire blue sky, and the iron-rich reds of the sandstone itself.

Visit in Sedona's spring (February through May) to enjoy froths of pink and white fruit tree blossoms and gaudy flowering cacti along the trails. Summer (June through mid-September) is the season for cooler trails in nearby canyons, or exhilarating trips through Slide Rock, Oak Creek's natural water chute. Retirees favorite season is fall (mid-September through November,) when you can buy apples grown in Oak Creek Canyon, or photograph fall color along all the riparian areas of Oak Creek (especially West Fork,) and the Verde Valley's Beaver Creek, Clear Creek, and Verde River. Most winter days (December and January) are mild enough to hike and bike sunnier trails throughout all of the Sedona-Verde Valley. With luck you'll catch the radiant magic of snow outlining every contour of the sunny red rocks. And don't miss the memorable night skies on any cloudless night of the year when the moon is not too bright. You can almost touch the Milky Way, which looks like an elongated cloud in a star-spangled black velvet sky.



Cathedral Rock is reflected in Oak Creek at the Crescent Moon Ranch Day Use Area.

RECREATION ABOUND

Want to play outside? Hiking, street or mountain biking, birding, photography, plein-air painting, archaeology, geology, picnicking, botany, golf, tennis, pickleball, even some easy fishing will entice

sturdy shoes for hiking, you need a hiking stick, cell phone, a small flashlight, and great respect for the altitude and summer heat. A Camelbak™-style daypack holds a water reservoir with a convenient over-the-shoulder sipping tube. Drink water

at trailheads. Put a jacket, socks, and a warm cap in your daypack—it can get surprisingly cold after sunset. Now you're safely prepared for the challenges and excitement of the Sedona-Verde Valley trails.

Bicycling. Bike lanes encircle Sedona



Sedona hikers enjoy the Mount Wilson Trail. Mount Wilson (elev. 7,122 feet) is the highest of the red and white sandstone peaks surrounding Sedona. The grassy plateau offers great views of the town and surrounding area.

Many bike riders come here specifically for the excellent trails and paths through the sandstone mountains. Top mountain biking competitors train here throughout all of the seasons.

you into the Sedona-Verde Valley's playgrounds.. There are popular public and private campgrounds throughout the area—reserve early! Five state parks and three National Monument units invite exploration, most little more than a half hour's drive apart. Three more National Monuments are almost inside Flagstaff, which is an hour away.

An overview of your outdoor menu:

Hiking. Hardly any place in Sedona is more than five minutes from trailheads into a scenic paradise. The big U.S. Ranger Station on Hwy. 179 south of Sedona's Village of Oak Creek has a complete trails map, individual trail maps, natural history displays and movies, bird walks, hiking and natural history books, some outdoor wear, and rangers to answer questions.

Besides sunscreen, a brimmed hat, and

before you hike. Drink it frequently *while* you're hiking. If you feel headachy, dizzy, and nauseous, you're already dehydrated. Test yourself on shorter, cooler, more level trails before tackling longer, steeper ones. Rock cairns serve as guideposts on trails.

Critters around here include coyotes, javelinas, foxes, seldom-encountered black bears and mountain lions. Even the shy rattlesnakes create few emergencies around here if you back away, give any creature time to retreat, and don't threaten it in any way.

Most emergencies come from overrating your abilities in this climate and altitude, or getting stranded or lost and failing to stay put and use a signal. *Check the time until sunset before you leave*, count the hours until that time, hike outbound half of that time and then *turn back!* Reg-



and the Village of Oak Creek, and there are bike rental shops, bike tours, and mountain bike trails for every skill level. The annual Sedona Mountain Bike Festival is four early spring days of racing, touring, a beer garden, and live entertainment.

Running. The annual Sedona Marathon attracts runners from everywhere, and will be held next on Feb. 3, 2017. It has full and half-marathons plus 10K and 5K races. You may walk the course except during the full marathon.

Swimming. Take your camera, swimwear, and a picnic to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Crescent Moon Ranch Day Use Area off the Upper Red Rock Loop Road. There the iconic Cathedral Rock formation reflects in the waters of Oak Creek. Lighting for photos of Cathedral Rock is best after 3 p.m. The big swimming hole is up the wooded trail along the creek to where it opens to an in-your-face view of Cathedral Rock. Swim shoes are advisable anywhere in Oak Creek. The Cottonwood Recreation Center is an

amazing facility with indoor swimming, nice in cooler months. The Sedona Community Pool is open May through November and has lovely views.

Or visit Slide Rock State Park in Oak Creek Canyon, where a narrow underwa-

Society (NAAS) welcomes visitors to their many free local fieldtrips above and below the Mogollon Rim, and to their meetings. Stop in at Jay's Bird Barn in Sedona and Flagstaff for info, and visit northernarizonaaudubon.org.

Hwy. 179 have executive golf courses. All four courses are open to the public.

Tennis and pickleball. One of the newly renovated tennis courts at the Village of Oak Creek Country Club now has pickleball lines. The City of Sedona's Posse



ter conjunction of rounded rock ledges zips you like a rocket through a natural water chute. Keep your elbows and knees tight to your body. It's 30 seconds of watery mayhem, but unforgettable. Wear denim cutoffs as the sandstone wears holes in swimwear after a few times down. Wet creekside rock is *very* slippery. At Slide Rock, at Grasshopper Point in Oak Creek Canyon, and at the swimming hole on Wet Beaver Creek about 2 miles east of I-17 at Exit 298, you can jump off red rock ledges into swimming holes.

Birding. Except from mid-June to mid-September, birding is excellent in Sedona-Verde Valley. During summer some birds migrate and some birds move upslope to places like Mingus Mountain and Oak Creek Canyon. The rest of the year is great. Hot spots include Page Springs Fish Hatchery, the Sedona Wetlands Preserve, and Dead Horse Ranch State Park. Also bird along Oak Creek and its West Fork, Wet Beaver, Clear Creek, and the Verde River. Northern Arizona Audubon

Sedona Golf Resort in the village of Oak Creek ranks as one of the most scenic in the South-

The last full weekend of April is the Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival, a four-day event with numerous field trips, workshops, speakers, kids' events, birding-equipment vendors, and a shaded Feeder Watch place to sit near seed and sugar-water dispensers. People come from all over the nation and favorite field trips sell out quickly. Google the event name for more information and request the Festival booklet.

Festival headquarters is at Dead Horse Ranch State Park in Cottonwood--a great birding spot in itself. There are ongoing in-park field trips but most take you by van farther afield.

Golf. Sedona has two scenic 18-hole golf courses in the Village of Oak Creek: Sedona Golf Resort and Village of Oak Creek Country Club. Canyon Mesa Country Club on Jack's Canyon Road in the Village, and Poco Diablo Resort on

west, boasting the unmatched scenery of both Bell Rock and Courthouse Rock.

Ground Park in West Sedona also has both tennis and pickleball courts, while the City's Sunset Park has two tennis courts in West Sedona. Poco Diablo Resort on Hwy. 179 has tennis courts open to the public, and the Cottonwood Recreation Center has pickleball courts.

Excursion train. Clarkdale is the terminal for the Verde Canyon Railroad, which makes a 40-mile leisure round trip through the Verde River Canyon, a roadless red rock canyon very different in character from Oak Creek Canyon. Bald eagles nest in the canyon and are often seen. Special excursions include starlight evening trips or a ride in the engine car. A disabled eagle is onboard for the Fourth of July. Every ticket includes seating both inside and out.

Fishing. The pretty lagoons at Cottonwood's Dead Horse Ranch State Park are stocked with fish adapted to each season's water temps.

STATE PARKS

• **Slide Rock State Park**, Hwy 89A in Oak Creek Canyon. Besides the famous natural chute described earlier, the park has a snack shop, toilets, picnic tables, historic orchard buildings and equipment, and short trails. An apple orchard provides extra photo ops during spring blossom time. The very tasty apples and cider that is pressed from them are sold at a roadside stand on autumn weekends at Indian Gardens Cafe & Market a couple of miles south of the park.

• **Red Rock State Park**, Lower Red Rock Loop Road, off Hwy. 89A beyond West Sedona. This environmental education park straddles three-quarters of a mile of Oak Creek. The visitor center is opposite a building with a small theater and classroom used for kids and the general public. A pair of rare Black Hawks usually nests near the creek. There are nine interconnected trails totaling five miles, a book/gift shop, regular birding field trips, inspiring lectures, and a variety of interesting fish, amphibians, mammals, reptiles, and even river otters. A bridge across Oak Creek lets bikers loop around the Sedona area.

• **Dead Horse Ranch State Park**, Cottonwood. Turn on 10th Street and cross the river to the entrance. This large, popular state park has RV camping (to 40') with hookups, no generator use, and a dump station. You will also find rental cabins, day use areas, picnic ramadas, hot showers for registered campers, and three lagoons for fishing, two of which allow non-motorized boats. There are hiking, biking, mountain bike trails, and equestrian trails, with lots of fun for kids. Verde River Days is in late September.

• **Jerome State Historic Park**: While there are outdoor machinery and historic displays at this park, the surprisingly contemporary Douglass Mansion Museum, which describes Jerome's long copper boomtown history, is the beating heart of the park. Every room is either a fully furnished historic family living and entertaining quarter, or has displays of minerals, copper mine signage, historic photos, entertaining movies, and a wonderful diorama of Jerome with metal rods representing the maze of deep mine shafts under the town. Allowing an hour or more to visit this park before you visit the nearby town itself will add to the pleasure of your visit.

• **Fort Verde State Historic Park**: Like the Jerome State Park, Fort Verde State Park in Camp Verde contains a wealth of discoveries. Visit the Military Headquarters Building, the Commanding Officer's house, the Doctor & Surgeon's house, and the Bachelor Officers' House. The Headquarters building has both furnishings and displays that tell the good, the bad, and the ugly about historic military/Indian relationships and events. The houses are fully and authentically furnished in 1880's pieces, including children's toys, a dining room set for dinner, and the doctor's tools and examination table. Interior doorways have glass cubicles that you step inside to look around as if you'd been invited in for a visit. Historic re-enactments take place during October's Fort Verde Days. This may include cavalry drills, vintage baseball, Buffalo Soldier and Indian Wars presentations.



Slide Rock State Park



Dead Horse Ranch State Park

Chambers of Commerce in Sedona, Cottonwood, and Camp Verde, plus the big U.S. Forest Service Visitor Center just south of Sedona's Village of Oak Creek, are good starting points for outdoor and indoor information and can give you vital precautions about exerting yourself outdoors around here. Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore!

ENTERTAINMENT ABOUNDS, TOO

• **Dining** in Sedona is a real pleasure. Whatever your gastronomical preferences and whims, you can probably find something to suit. Dine at five-star resorts in or near Sedona, or at woodsy creekside lodges in Oak Creek Canyon (reservations required). The number and variety of restaurants, cafes, and faster food in Sedona reflects the number of visitors, which is far out of proportion to the population of roughly 23,000. Competition for business means that there are dining experiences ranging from very sophisticated to great spur-of-the-moment favorites to vegan, ethnic, western, and a few architecturally-correct national chains. *Sedona Monthly Magazine* has a short write-up online and \$\$\$ price level rating for every eatery, grouped by which part of town you prefer. Cottonwood, especially its Old Town section, and Jerome also have delightful restaurants.

• **Wine & brew**. In relatively recent years viticulturalists (wine grape growers) began comparing local climates and soils to that of successful wine-growing regions in the U.S. and abroad. They bought land, planted vineyards along Page Springs Road off Hwy 89A, and also along Hwy 260 between I-17 and Cottonwood. Now a wine industry complete with tasting rooms and tour maps is flourishing in Verde Valley towns. The local community college teaches viticulture. Sedona, Cottonwood, Clarkdale and Camp Verde all have wine festivals—Camp Verde's in conjunction with its long-running pecan festival. Local wines are winning national prizes.

• **Beer-lovers** are not left out. You can enjoy Oak Creek Brewery's eight popular beers at its brewery off Coffee Pot Road in West Sedona, or at Oak Creek Brewery & Pub upstairs in Tlaquepaque. The beers are sold and served throughout Arizona. Flagstaff also has a couple of good micro-breweries with pubs.

Most Sedona visitors mix their explorations here between natural and man-made activities, and there's no lack of the latter. Besides delightful shopping, fine arts and performing arts have been part of the Sedona scene for many decades.

• **Art galleries**. The 'gallery district' in Sedona is primarily between The Sedona Arts Center in 'Uptown,' Tlaquepaque, and Hillside Shops. There are also galleries and crafts shopping in West Sedona, the Village of Oak Creek, Cottonwood's Old Town, and Jerome. First Friday in the Galleries is a great introduction to the art scene. The event is free, as is the Sedona Trolley ride which makes a continuous loop from Hillside to Tlaquepaque to Uptown between 5 - 8 p.m. Download a map from the Sedona Gallery Association if you'd prefer to walk the area.

• **Museums**. The delightful Sedona Historical Society Museum is housed in a pioneer family's stone home. The Clemenceau Mu-

seum in Cottonwood brings Verde Valley history to life. The Douglas Mining Museum at Jerome State Historic Park is a treasure, and Clarkdale has an interesting copper museum. Don't miss the displays at Verde Valley Archeological Society's Visitor Center in Camp Verde (on the Main Street corner where you also turn into the Fort Verde State Park.)

• *Movies & music.* Movie options include a 6-plex Harkins Theater in West Sedona, and the indie Mary Fisher Theater across 89A from Harkins. Mary Fisher Theater screens two different titles daily, and in the course of a week it will rotate three or four movies. It also has live filming of several New York Metropolitan Opera productions plus ballets and live entertainers.

The Sedona International Film Festival, in its 23rd year, uses the Harkins Theater and the Mary Fisher Theater as well as several other venues to screen over 160 movies during its annual festival, which will be Feb. 18-26, 2017. The town is jammed with fans and stars, so book your RV space, tickets, even restaurant reservations, well in advance.

Chamber Music Sedona offers live performances of international-caliber groups, plus a Winterfest and Springfest. The Verde Valley Sinfonietta will have concerts in November 2016, and in February and April 2017. Mingus High School in Cottonwood has an exceptionally fine theater arts department that puts on two or three major productions per year. Many restaurants, cocktail lounges, and bars feature live music of every genre throughout the Sedona-Verde Valley.

For a complete western evening in a barn-like venue, with a chuckwagon-style supper, smooth harmony a la Sons of the Pioneers, and some great laughs, the Blazin' M Ranch in Cottonwood is a one-of-a-kind experience.

The courtyards at Tlaquepaque Shops & Galleries are always full of flowers. ♦ Cottonwoods Old Town has restaurants, wine tasting, antiques, and covered walkways. ♦ Sedona's Uptown has shops, restaurants, galleries, and Jeep tour companies.



THE LONG VIEW OF VERDE VALLEY TOURISM

• *Paleo Indians*

Humankind's presence in the Sedona-Verde Valley area starts about 11,500 BCE. Those First People's ancestors left evidence of their lives south of the Canadian ice sheet roughly 14,500 years ago. They were so successful at hunting giant game animals in each succeeding southward expansion that they only pushed this far after 3,500 years of purposeful game tracking.

Clovis point arrows were first found locally in 1995, and others since then. Fossilized footprints and teeth show that mammoths, giant bears, camels, giant sloths, bison, and saber-toothed tigers were what these Paleo Indians hunted. Their very simple petroglyphs date to 11,500 to 9000 BCE. These people were successful in making the Verde Valley part of their annual food-seeking travels until, just like their own ancestors, and perhaps because of a warming, dryer climate trend, they moved on. Think of how shocked and frightened they would have been if some space-time warp had revealed you rolling into the area in a huge shiny rectangular box with moving black round things at each corner!

• *Archaic Indians*

Some of the Paleo Indians may have stayed here, slowly adapting to smaller

prey, local plant resources, and a warming climate. Evidence shows that a culture we call the Archaic Indians lived here from 9000 to 3000 BCE. Their own inventiveness coupled with exchanges with other regional tribes demonstrate improvements in diet, housing, clothing, art, tools, jewelry and rock art. They started using plant fibers for baskets, ropes, cordage, and clothing. They ground native bean pods, nuts, or seeds; and recently-developed baskets extended the expiration dates of such foodstuffs. These were cutting edge advances over the Paleo Indians.

Through contact with tribes as far away as Mexico and southern and Baja California, they eventually learned to plant corn and a bit of squash and beans. They dug pit houses with thatched roofs to store the baskets below ground level. Remnants of one pit house site can be seen alongside the short road into Montezuma Well National Monument. In the late Archaic era, Mexican influence is shown in the introduction of clay pottery for storage and serving. All this led to a more stationary home base, with some pit houses large enough for ceremonies and sleeping. Real individuals. Living here. Light-years before the RV lifestyle.

• *The Sinaguas*

The Sinaguas migrated from Eastern Arizona to the Flagstaff and Verde Valley areas around 650 CE. They built the stone pueblos and cliff housing now preserved in both areas as National Monuments or USFS Heritage Sites. During their tenure an active trading corridor linked the Flagstaff and Verde Valley Sinaguas with the Hohokam and other tribes from southern Arizona, plus Mexican people. The Sinagua left around 1450 CE, and may have settled with the Hopi tribe northeast of Flagstaff.

Sinagua rock art was prolific. The most concentrated site you can visit is the *VBar V Heritage Site* two miles east of I-17's Sedona exit 298. It is open Thursday-Mon-

day, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. The docents reveal how some petroglyphs and pictographs were very precise astronomical and agricultural calendars.

The USFS *Honanki and Palatki Heritage Sites* in sandstone cliff walls between Sedona and Cottonwood preserve smaller Sinagua hamlets and cliff art. Docents lead small groups to the dwellings and interpret the rock art, some of which was inscribed centuries later over previous art. Call 928-282-3854 for reservations. A high clearance vehicle is needed for Palatki and Honanki, and a cell phone for directions if you get lost. Palatki is the more extensive and has a small visitor center. →

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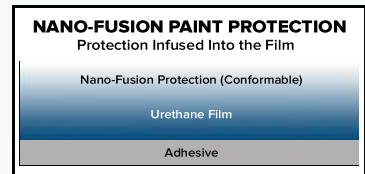
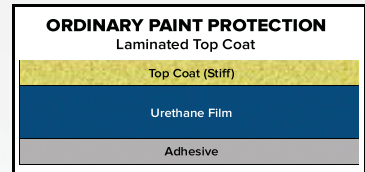
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Three Sinaguan Ruins

MONTEZUMA CASTLE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Take I-17 Exit 289 east past the casino. Turn left and continue about 2 miles.

This beautiful site includes separate dwelling clusters built into a white limestone cliff adjacent to Beaver Creek. The sight of the best-preserved structure 100 feet high in the cliff is not only breathtaking, but also precisely engineered, as a visitor center display demonstrates. The second ruin is less complete but closer at hand. Allow time to enjoy the visitor center displays, which are dimly lit to preserve artifacts. Notice the amazing fragments of cloth weaving patterns that exhibit both refined design and technical artistry.

MONTEZUMA WELL, Rimrock Unit of Montezuma Castle National Monument. I-17 exit 293 east. Turn left when the road forks.

The circular collapsed limestone cavern is 368 feet wide and 55' feet deep. The short climb to the rim's overlooks can be hot. Look below the Well's rim to spot Sinagua stone housing built 900 years ago. A trail at right leads down to more ruins at water level. The rim trail itself takes you down to a shaded Hohokam irrigation canal where water flows from the Well to ancient farm fields. Note the park's pit house alongside the entrance road and the lovely green and bird-rich picnic area at the entrance.

TUZIGOOT NATIONAL MONUMENT

Clarkdale

Take Cottonwood's Main Street through Old Town to Clarkdale. Turn right, before Clarkdale.

This large hilltop pueblo was excavated from enshrouding earth by the Civil Works Administration in 1933-34. The main complex was once 500 feet long and could house roughly 230 people in 86 ground floor rooms and 15 second story rooms. Walk up the slope, enter the pueblo and go to the rooftop overlook of the Verde River and Black Hills, as the ancient inhabitants once did. The Visitor Center is well worth your time, too.



Montezuma Castle National Monument



Montezuma Well



Tuzigoot National Monument

SIDE TRIP: FLAGSTAFF'S NATIONAL MONUMENTS

WALNUT CANYON NATIONAL MONUMENT, five miles east of town. Take Walnut Canyon Exit 204 from I-40.

Stairs down to the cliff dwellings start at 7,000 feet elevation and descend 185 feet. *Bring a hiking stick and water.* The cliff walls have rows of overhanging ledges. Thirteenth century Sinaguas created stone walls around the canyon between certain ledges and the one above. They farmed above the rim. The limestone canyon is dramatic. The Rim Trail is short, level, and looks across to the ruins.

SUNSET CRATER VOLCANO NATIONAL MONUMENT, six miles northeast of town on Hwy 89.

This 1000 foot high black cinder cone erupted between 1040 and 1100, while the Northern Sinagua lived nearby. Nine other cinder cones erupted simultaneously within six miles. Lava flowed north and east from Sunset. Get the fascinating story inside the Visitor Center. You will pass through lava flows when heading north to Wupatki.

WUPATKI NATIONAL MONUMENT, 18 miles north of Sunset on the park loop road.

Wupatki has two large, handsome sandstone pueblos and two circular ball courts built by the Northern Sinagua peoples. Two large ollas in the Visitor Center show Sinagua pottery. Enjoy ranger walks November through May, or they will loan you a pamphlet explaining each stop. There were 100 rooms originally.

NATIVE PEOPLES OF TODAY

The Athabaskan-speaking Apaches and the unrelated Yuman-speaking Yavapais had lived cooperatively in Sedona-Verde Valley for over 300 years when white settlers arrived in the mid-1800s. President Lincoln commissioned Fort Verde in present-day Camp Verde to calm frictions arising between residents and newcomers. Ultimately and shamefully, 1500 Yavapai-Apaches were forcibly marched 180 miles east in 1875's harsh winter. Many perished enroute. Only 200 returned 25 years later to reservation lands one quarter as big as promised. That they now own and operate the family-friendly Cliff Castle Casino & Hotel on Middle Verde Road is a testament to their indomitable spirit. Politically they work together while each tribe preserves its cultural heritage. They are good neighbors to surrounding communities.

SEDONA: THE BOOMERANG EFFECT

First-time visitors to Sedona frequently acquire Red Rock Fever. The only known cure is returning for frequent visits. So if you don't do it all the first time, we'll leave the gate unlatched. A lifetime here is barely sufficient.

RV PARKS

Two Sedona area RV parks are especially appealing. Both are green, shady, and beside Oak Creek. **Rancho Sedona RV Park**




Walnut Canyon National Monument



Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument



Wupatki National Monument

(888-644-4261) is about one-third of a mile up Schnebly Hill Road near Tlaquepaque. It accommodates 45-foot coaches in a spacious park that looks like a well-kept neighborhood. **Lo Lo Mai Springs RV Park** (928-634-4700) is on Page Springs Road off Hwy 89A 15 minutes southwest from town. It takes coaches up to 40 feet. It is in a quiet, wooded setting right on Oak Creek. Make reservations well in advance for either park. 

Interviews from Florida, South Carolina, and Connecticut



Ernest (Bob) and Sharon Simpson
 Homestate: Michigan
 Interviewed: Silver Springs, Florida

- Bob and Sharon purchased a new 2013 Allegro Open Road QBA at Dixie RV in Louisiana in November 2013.
- Prior to the Allegro they had a Class B, Class C, and a Class A.
- Bob and Sharon have been married 51 years. They have 3 children: Chris, Charles and Charlene; and 5 grandchildren: Brittany, Kaitlyn, Tyler, Marisa, and Avery.
- Bob retired from GM Canada in 1995. Sharon was a nurse until 2007.
- They say the RV lifestyle is their enjoyment; they like meeting new folks and camping in different states. To date they have camped in California, Nevada, Utah, Michigan, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Florida, and Ontario, Canada.
- Bob and Sharon have been camp hosts in Florida and Michigan. They like hosting at Florida Caverns State Park in Marianna, Florida, on the Florida panhandle.
- Their bucket list includes a trip to visit Idaho, north of Boise.
- Bob and Sharon travel with their dog Rocky, a 7-year-old Teddy Bear Pomeranian.
- Bob's hobbies include biking, boating, fishing, kayaking, and watching NASCAR. Sharon likes knitting, sewing, cooking, gardening, and crocheting.



Jerry and Diane Ammerman
 Homestate: Michigan
 Interviewed: Gaffney, South Carolina

- Jerry and Diane purchased a 2010 Phaeton 40QTH in Aug 2014 at Elkhardt, IN.
- Prior to the Phaeton they owned a Class C Travelcraft, a 28-ft. Bounder, and a 38-ft. Newmar Dutch Star.
- Jerry and Diane have been RVing for 35 years and have visited all of the US except the Northeast. They have been full-timers for 13 years.
- They have been married for 42 years, have one son and two granddaughters, Ava & Ali. Jerry retired from GM in 1999 after 30 years. Diane is a retired homemaker.
- Club affiliations include FMCA and Good Sam, Coast to Coast, and Adventure Outdoor Resorts.
- Jerry and Diane became entertainers 10 years ago. They perform at campgrounds and rallies in the Homestead FL area. Jerry sings and Diane plays the keyboard. Their music is primarily 50s/60s, Doo-wop, and some Sinatra. They are booked a year in advance for 12-14 shows each winter.
- They say that there is no better way to see the country than having your own home on wheels. Their favorite places are Florida and South Carolina, especially Myrtle Beach.
- Future travel plans include Maine and the Northeast.



Matt and Alma Carroll
 Hometown: Killingworth, Connecticut
 Interviewed: Mystic, Connecticut

- Matt and Alma purchased their used 2007 40-ft. Allegro Bus in Anoka, Minnesota from a private owner in 2011.
- They took a major leap from a "Tent to a Tiffin." Their first trip driving the motorhome was from Anoka, Minnesota to Killingworth, Connecticut, even though they had never owned a motorhome. Matt had experience driving a large fire-fighting vehicle, but the motorhome was a new experience.
- Matt and Alma have been married 31 years. They enjoy spending time with their many nieces and nephews.
- They try to spend as much time as possible on "The Bus" but are limited to vacations and weekends, since both still work.
- Matt is a Senior Consultant at Eversource Energy, and Alma is the Director of Town Services for the town of Madison, Connecticut.
- Their RV vacations include trips to Florida, North Carolina, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Isle, and Acadia National Park.
- They also love camping in Maine and Rhode Island near beaches and the ocean.
- Their bucket list trip is to Alaska in 2018.
- Matt and Alma like traveling, gardening, and bicycling.
- RV clubs: Tiffin RV Network and Good Sam.



Editor's Note: Dave has been camping for 52 years in tents to motorhomes. Dave and Terri purchased a 2008 40' Phaeton QSH, and in 2010 sold their home and bought 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 Estates in Silver Springs for use in the winter months. Dave and Terri are currently full-timers and living their dream lifestyle.

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Update on Canine Influenza

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

Flu season is upon us and humans are starting to get their vaccinations. The flu is also present in the canine world. Two strains, called H3N2 and H3N8, produce the same symptoms. These virus strains are named based on the amino acids in their cell wall.

The H3N8 strain represents a rare adaptive evolution because it began as an equine virus that later transferred to dogs and became a new canine specific virus. The first U.S. outbreak of H3N8 occurred in 2004 at Greyhound tracks in Florida. Since then, it has been reported in 40 states and is endemic in Colorado, Florida, New York, and Pennsylvania.

The H3N2 strain emerged in Korea, China, and Thailand, and was probably transferred by the avian flu virus. The first U.S. outbreak of the H3N2 virus occurred in Chicago in 2015 and then spread over the Midwest. Outbreaks are commonly seen when susceptible dogs are grouped together in kennels, dog care facilities, and grooming and boarding facilities. In March 2016, the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine announced that the H3N2 strain had crossed over and was infecting cats. It was reported that cats in a shelter in Indiana had contracted the virus from dogs and the virus had then spread from cat to cat. As you can see, this virus has a way of jumping species.

This disease can be transmitted through coughing, sneezing, and barking. The virus can be found on contaminated surfaces such as food and water bowls, collars, and leashes. It has been shown that the virus remains viable on surfaces up to 48 hours, on clothing for 24 hours, and for 12 hours on the hands. This is why the virus spreads among dogs and cats so easily.

The incubation period is 2-4 days from the time of exposure. Dogs are most contagious during this time, before symptoms

appear. Virus shedding decreases during the first four days of illness but may continue for 7-10 days. The H3N2 strain has been shown to shed for up to 26 days so infected dogs with the H3N2 strain should be quarantined for 21 days.

Since this is an emerging disease all dogs are susceptible. Most dogs will have mild symptoms, with about 20% of dogs showing no symptoms but still being able to spread the virus.

Symptoms of the flu include coughing, sneezing, lethargy and a fever of 104-105 degrees. The nasal discharge may be purulent. Severe cases can develop into pneumonia. Cats express signs of an upper respiratory virus including nasal discharge, congestion and coughing.

Diagnosis is based on symptoms and serological testing through collecting blood at the onset of the disease, and again at seven to ten days after the onset of symptoms. Nasal and pharyngeal swabs taken during the first four days of illness may identify the virus.

Treatment of the disease is mostly supportive, with antibiotics given for secondary infection; non-steroidal medication to reduce fever; and plenty of fluids. Patients need to be isolated for at least 21 days.

Prevention and control is best done by using common disinfectants for a thorough cleaning of all cages and bowls. Employees need to wash their hands after coming in contact with the virus, and should wear protective disposable clothing when exposed to infected dogs.

There are currently two H3N8 vaccines available. Both are labeled as an aid in the control of the disease. It is unknown whether there is cross protection against the H3N2 strain. Zoetis and Merck have the first commercially available vaccine against the H3N2 strain.

Unfortunately this disease is not seasonal but is around throughout the year. The vaccine may not protect completely but will reduce the duration and symptoms of the virus. Vaccination is recommended if you use boarding and grooming facilities.

Since most of you are traveling in your rig with your pet, you might want to consult with your veterinarian about your lifestyle and your dog's likelihood for increased exposure. If your dog gets a Bordetella vaccine, then it is a good idea to get the influenza vaccine. As of this date, there is no vaccine for cats.

Happy Travels,
John & Kay

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

A separate postcard is enclosed for "From the Road," a fun part of the magazine for readers to share their motorhoming experiences. If you choose to email us at: fredthompson1941@hotmail.com, be sure to put "Roughing It Smoothly" in the subject line of your email. If your communication requires an entire letter, mail it to us at: PO Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30656-1150. Please don't just list the places you have been. Make a story of it and tell us about the people you have met, interesting experiences, and unusual places. We welcome your pictures. Please attach high resolution images if you email. "From the Road" contributors will receive a free tee shirt while supplies last. —Fred Thompson, editor



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The Old Times Rock

by Mary Findley

People often ask where my green-ness sprouted. During my years of professionally cleaning homes, the cleaners I purchased at grocery stores gave my clients headaches and sinus infections. A search for healthier ways to clean took me back to life on my grandparent's farm. Although Grandmother used some pretty toxic stuff like bleach, ammonia, and lye, she also tossed together concoctions that took down the dirt. Let's take a look at some of these old fashioned ideas and add some new ones along the way.

Distilled white vinegar remains my 'go to cleaner' for many jobs. Beware of vinegar that states: 'Food Grade' or 'Safe for Pickles' as it is made from petroleum. Leave it on the grocery store shelf. Reach for 'made from grain or corn' distilled white vinegar. Never use vinegar on stone or composite counters and floors as the acid in vinegar etches these surfaces.

Pour a cup of vinegar into toilets before leaving home on a road trip. Vinegar neutralizes the alkali in the water to help prevent water rings.

Mix a paste of salt and vinegar to remove stains in coffee cups.

Substitute vinegar for dryer sheets or fabric softener in the laundry. Pour ½ cup in the rinse cycle of top loading machines and ¼ cup in front loaders.

Boil straight vinegar and wipe on water spotted glass shower doors. Repeat every 5 minutes for 30 minutes. Scrub with a non-scratch scrub pad soaked with the hot vinegar. The white spots should dis-

appear although the etching may remain.

Canadian research has shown that vinegar kills more germs than bleach – take the bleach to the toxic waste dump.

Vinegar also kills mold and mildew on most surfaces even in driveway cracks. Beware as it kills grass too.

Borax – Ever wonder why your white clothes turn grungy after bleaching them in the laundry? Try borax instead, then “ooh and aah” over your bright, white clothes.

Kill mold and mildew by first cleaning the area with straight boiling hot vinegar. Wait 24 hours and repeat with a borax paste. Never mix the two together as they undo the effectiveness of each other.

Borax kills roaches, ants and fleas. Pour it where these pests enter the coach or the perimeter of the home. It also kills plants and grass so beware of where you sprinkle it.

Kill bed bugs by sprinkling borax on the mattress. Wait 7 to 8 hours then vacuum.

Make a paste with borax and lemon juice to remove sink stains.

A tablespoon of borax added to laundry detergent helps remove odors, stains and brightens clothing. Yea! No more smelly wash cloths!

Cream of Tartar has been a staple of households for many years. It comes in handy for more than cooking:

Brass and copper shine when cleaned with a cream of tartar paste.

Mix a paste of cream of tartar and hydrogen peroxide to remove rust stains even in clothing. It will not scratch deli-

cate surfaces. Always test an inconspicuous area first.

Ants refuse to come out of their hole with cream of tartar poured around the opening. Cover cracks and crevices where ants enter the coach or home to repel them.

Tired of ring around the collar? Dampen the collar, then pour on the cream of tartar and gently rub. Let it set a good 30 minutes before laundering.

Salt in my grandmother's day was used to preserve meat, clean, polish, and prevent fruit from turning brown.

Remove perspiration stains by adding four tablespoons of salt to a quart of hot water. Pour over the stains and keep moist until the stain fades.

Heat the iron then sprinkle salt on a piece of white paper. Iron the paper to clean the bottom of the iron.

Salt also kills mold and weeds between the cracks of the driveway or sidewalk. Use a funnel to spread it in the crack then lightly wet it down.

When boiling eggs, add a quarter teaspoon of salt to prevent the shells from cracking. Salt also brings the water to a higher temperature to help cook the egg whites.

Boil salt and water in burned pans to remove the charred remains.

With a few handy tips under your belt, let's tackle other inside cleaning chores. Kitchen countertops can be tricky to clean due to the vast array of materials used to construct them.

Green cleaners are healthier for you and our Earth, and often tout their ability to safely clean any surface. A year later the finish has dulled, or worse, the surface contains small pits. Let's demystify the confusion over what cleaner to use on a specific kitchen counter surface.

Most all-purpose cleaners, green cleaners included, contain some form of an acid such as the acetic acid found in vinegar, citric acid or soy. While they are safe for Formica countertops, avoid the use of these cleaners on marble, granite, tile, Corian, and other composite countertops where non-acidic based window cleaners work best. Look for window cleaners like Mary's Benya that are alcohol based. Some window cleaners contain a wax that builds up and dulls the finish. Read the MSDS sheet before using window cleaners on countertops by typing

“MSDS (material safety data sheet) for 'xyz' cleaner” into a web browser. Here is a guide that talks about the various sections of an MSDS sheet: ccinfoweb.ccohs.ca/help/msds/msdsINTGUIDE.html

Folks often ask for my trade secrets to speed cleaning. My one word answer: Prevention. Prevent dirt from building up and cleaning becomes a breeze. Prevention starts at the door by kicking off the shoes before entering your coach or home. Why? Oil and grease from the pavement sticks to the bottom of your shoes. Grit and sand stick to the oil then you walk across the carpet, which just turned into a costly welcome mat. As you walk on the carpet your feet grind the sand into the fibers, wearing them down and shortening the carpet's life. If you need to wear shoes inside, store a pair just inside the door and change shoes.

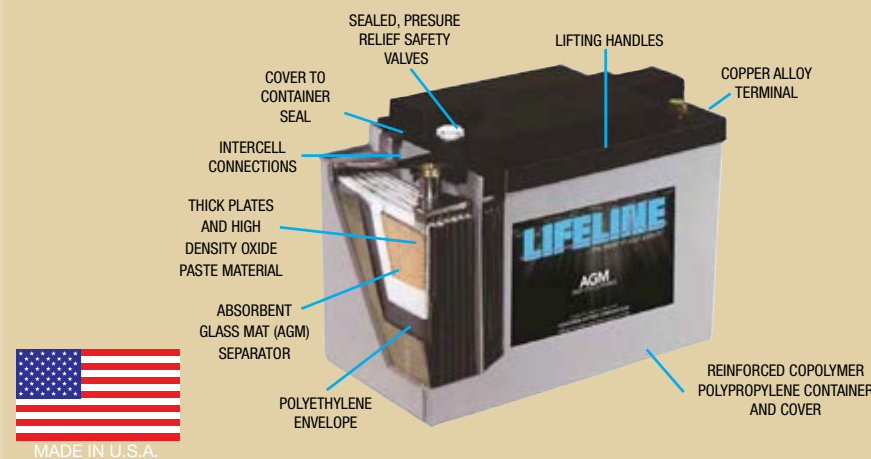
Naturally, folks clean their carpets when they become soiled. Only a month later the dirt returns with a vengeance. Carpets soil quickly after shampooing due to soap residue left in the carpet. The sticky substance grabs and holds dirt within the fibers so firmly that even commercial vacuums can't extract it.

Let's put a halt to this mayhem by tossing distilled white vinegar into the scene of the grime. Rent a carpet shampooer and mix one-half cup of vinegar per gallon of hot water. Vinegar re-activates the shampoo already in your carpet and pulls out both the dirt and the shampoo. Finish with plain water. Your now-soft carpet stays clean far longer if you dock your shoes at the door.

It took 22 pages in my book “The Complete Idiot's Guide to Green Cleaning” to cover all my stain removal tricks. Here is a

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Mary Findley is a veteran cleaning expert, cleaning consultant to the RV industry, author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Green Cleaning*, and original owner of Mary Moppins. Mary's cleaning tips appear in magazines such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *This Old House*, *Woman's World* and other national publications. For more information visit: goclean.com or call 541-607-9498.

short version. Remember: Give your product time to work. My CleanEz removes most carpet stains except red dye or red wine. Spray the stain with CleanEz or your organic cleaner and wait five to six minutes. Blot and rinse with a solution of one part vinegar to four parts water. Vinegar extracts the cleaner, which if left in the carpet, attracts dirt so the stain “reappears.”

Remove red wine, blood and red dye stains from dog/cat food, or punch by mixing a 50/50 solution of a fresh bottle of hydrogen peroxide to water. Test a small area first allowing it to set no longer than five to six minutes. Rinse immediately with one part vinegar to three parts water. Vinegar neutralizes the effects of peroxide to prevent it from discoloring the carpet.

*Note: Dogs and cats are color blind and can't see colors in their food. Switch to a neutral colored pet food for no more red stains after they “lose their lunch.”

Hard floor surfaces: First a few preventive tips. Keep microfiber mops off the floors. Made from 80% polyester or plastic, they scratch the finish off floors, cabinets, furniture, vehicles, etc. Cut the handles off sponge and string mops as they make great tomato stakes. Those mops soil after the first use then leave smears, smudges and dull floors in their wake.

Disposable towelette type mops are expensive, damage the finish and leave a multitude of toxic waste in the landfills. Steam cleaner mops seem to do a good job. Keep them away from the baseboards and be cautious with wood or laminated floors as the continuous heat can warp the wood. If you switch to a steam cleaner opt for the best. I have heard too many nightmare stories about the cheap one.

Instead use 100% cotton towels. I developed my mop from cleaning homes professionally for 12 years. The Velcro type hook fasteners on the mop head grab hold of the fibers in ordi-

nary terry cloth towels. It works on all hard floor surfaces, nabs the cobwebs at home, dries the exterior of your coach, cleans awnings, and so much more.

The ins and outs of hardwood floor care: TV commercials remind us to disinfect our floors. Do you disinfect your feet? Of course not. Then why disinfect your floors? Disinfectants and most anti-bacterial products contain triclosan, a documented carcinogen.

Stone and Composite Floors: Only two things belong on tile, marble, granite, slate and composite floors; your feet and hot water. Any disinfectant, vinegar or cleaner will pit and ruin these floors. Marble and granite floors must be dried to prevent water spots. Work one section at a time with a cotton towel dampened with hot water and Mary's Mop. Remove the damp towel and use a dry towel to dry the floor.

If you drop food or the dog or cat has an accident, then the floor must be disinfected. Pet stores carry a product called Nature's Miracle. The enzymes in Nature's Miracle “eat” the bacteria killing it and the odor without damaging the floor. Care must be used on wood or laminated floors as excess moisture will warp the boards.

Mary Moppins' Stain Eraser removes stains from the grout in stone floors and is safe for colored grout. It erases stains much like a pencil eraser. Always seal grout to retard stains. A syringe used to give babies medicine makes an easy applicator or ask a feed store for a syringe used to give cattle and horses shots. Remove the needle of course.

Laminated and Wood Floors: Mix one third cup grain based distilled white vinegar per gallon of water. Dampen a 100% cotton terry towel like those carried by Mary Moppins and wring out all the moisture. Some wood floor manufacturers specify

the use of a certain cleaner on their floors. The use of any other cleaner could void the warranty.

Mop *linoleum* floors with one part vinegar to four parts water and a drop of CleanEz. Dust bamboo, cork and other exotic floors with a cotton or Lambswool floor duster. Spot clean them with warm water only. Place floor protectors on legs of furniture and place white to off white throw rugs on the floor in front of doors or windows as the sunlight lightens these floors.

Short, Sweet and Unconventional Tips

By now you have learned that my cleaning tips are anything but conventional. Those of you who wash your coach with baby shampoo have seen the results of my unconventional ways. With that in mind, let's explore some easy solutions for a few troublesome areas.

Pleated Day-Night Shades: Never use moisture on these blinds. Mary Moppins carries a Dry Sponge or find them in pet stores to remove pet hair from fabric furniture. Use the sponge dry and wipe over the pleated day-night shades. It does a great job on window screens too. Sand it outside with light grit sand paper to clean it.


Remove small spots on the blind by dampening a Q-Tip with a bit of hair shampoo and gently dab on the spot. Wait five min-

utes and blot with a barely dampened cloth. If the stain remains leave it alone as further treatment can damage the blind.

Clean mesh-type day blinds with either the Dry Sponge or a barely damp soft cloth like Mary's Baby Diaper. The night shades are a vinyl-type fabric and need the TLC of Mary's diluted Leather Care. Leather Care cleans and conditions them to prevent drying and cracking, which is also great for Naugahyde, Ultra-Leather, leather, and vinyl furniture.

Windshield curtain. Wipe the instrument panels daily to prevent dirt from gathering along the bottom of these curtains. Use Mary's Leather/Vinyl Care for vinyl surface instrument panels and a window cleaner like Benya for hard surface panels.

Grab a can of foaming shaving cream (gel does not work) to remove small stains on the windshield curtains. Test a small spot first, wait ten minutes and rinse with a 50/50 solution of vinegar to water. Then wait 24 hours. If the stain has lifted without causing water damage test a larger spot—go slow to avoid water stains.

Mix a 50/50 solution of hydrogen peroxide to water to remove mold or mildew. Blot on, wait no longer than seven to eight minutes and blot with the vinegar and water solution. Remember: test a small area first. 

Dave McClellan's Theory Regarding Nitrogen in RV Tires

I appreciate William Hill's comments on my “Riding On Air” write-up in *RIS* 13:3, page 74. I purposely eliminated text about filling tires with nitrogen in my article because I am not convinced it will save anyone the cost to put it into a truck or RV tire, although I am certain it works best in race cars and airplanes for very unique reasons. My theory is this: I don't need to worry about my tires other than the correct pressure and visual inspection before and during trips with my coach. Plain old ordinary air already has approximately 78% nitrogen. If I used 100% nitrogen and needed to pump up a tire because of lost pressure while I'm on the road, I may have to go “out of my way” to have the nitrogen added or the tire(s) completely purged and then add the nitrogen. That would negate the fuel savings and add extra cost just to perk up the tire with more nitrogen. (Those Nitrogen machines cost upwards and beyond \$8,000 and someone has to pay for them. Guess who!) Some large trucking companies say that million mile travel projections show a significant savings. Well, that's not the same for an RV owner. We won't come anywhere near that mileage in our lifetime. In addition, the initial cost to purge six or eight truck tires and refill with nitrogen would deplete my life savings. Now, some advocates say 99% nitrogen (1% is other elements) is the way to go for motorhome tires. There is normal microscopic air/nitrogen leakage through the sidewall of all tires. You may have

to add one or two pounds of air every two months but that's easy enough using your air supply line on most, if not all, Tiffin diesel coaches. However, if the tires are around 100% nitrogen, the down side of adding the coach air at 78% nitrogen, is slowly reducing the total percentage of nitrogen. Below are two web sites that explain more about using nitrogen. If you see a green cap on a tire fill stem, it's an indication that the tires were previously filled to 100% nitrogen. My personal opinion... adding more nitrogen is another way to pick our pockets. Time, the sun, under inflation and road hazards are a tires worst enemies. Don't forget to put on the UV protectant. Take good care of your tires and they will take care of you.

tirerack.com/tires/tiretech/techpage.jsp?techid=191
getnitrogen.org/sub.php?view=getTheFacts&subpage=warranty

Correction to *RIS* 13:3 Article

I believe there is some incorrect information in the review of the 2017 Allegro Open Road 36UA. It is stated in the entertainment section that the TV uses OLED technology. The OLED TVs that LG sells include a 55" version that is HD but not 4K. All of their OLED TVs that are 4K begin at 55" and sell for well over \$2000. So I believe the TV in this unit is not an OLED, but rather an LCD/LED TV.

Glen Savage, Henderson, Nevada
Editor's Note: The error was mine. Thanks for the correction.

BASF Recommendations for Polish, Wax, and Cleaning Products for Tiffin Motorhomes

Tiffin Motorhomes uses BASF paint on all of its six brands of coaches. BASF submitted to Tiffin a list of cleaners, waxes, and polishes for the preservation of the coatings that we use. Following are the products of four manufacturers that were recommended and three retail stores that we understand stock these items.

	Meguiar's	Mother's	3-M	McKee's RV Products
Polishes	Meguiar's Ultimate Polish #G19216	MTECH Synthetic Wax #25712	3-M Perfect-It Polish #06068	McKee's RV Final Step Detail Polish
Waxes	Meguiar's Ultimate Wax #G17516	MTECH Spray Wax #22224	3-M Quick Car Wax #39034	McKee's RV Carnauba Sealant Wax
Cleaners	Meguiar's Quick Detailer #A3316	MTECH Instant Detailer #28224	Clean & Shine #06084	McKee's RV Wash on the Go

National stores that may carry the items listed above: Advance Auto Parts, AutoZone, O'Reilly Auto Parts

Dale Cathey Joins RIS Team

A Michigan transplant who has lived in the South for more years than he will admit, Dale Cathey is still certain that hockey is our national pastime. We manage to overlook that mistaken opinion because of his persistent wit and the ability to turn a stranger into a friend in 60 seconds.

Cathey has spent most of his career in sales where those two characteristics along with his organizational and management skills pushed him to the top of every position he held.

Earlier this year Fred Thompson, editor and publisher of *Roughing It Smoothly*, asked him to join the staff as National Advertising Director. Needless to say, as the owner of four Phaetons over the past 11 years, Dale Cathey is a major fan of Tiffin Motorhomes. Beginning in 2003, his sales career led him to a whole new approach to selling that was made possible by a Phaeton motorhome.

After his 10-year career at MCI, cell phones turned the communications industry upside down in the late 1990s. Cathey discovered a new opportunity in marketing and manufacturing walk-in bath tubs that allowed seniors to maintain their independence.

With the entire state of Texas as his territory, Cathey's advertising in AARP's magazine and newspaper generated enough sales for him to conclude the product had a very viable market. However, it did not take long for him to find

flaws in both the product and the price. "The tubs were so expensive that retired people who needed them simply could not afford one," he said.

When the manufacturer refused to implement his suggested modifications to create a better product at a lower price, Cathey put together a team that included a design engineer, a fiberglass manufacturer, and electrical and plumbing specialists who built a much better tub.

He envisioned a rolling showroom in a trailer. But pulling it around the country with his pickup just did not project the image he wanted. Then a college buddy introduced him to Tiffin Motorhomes. "When I saw the Phaeton, I knew it would be the perfect vehicle to display the walk-in tub. We placed our order and bought the coach in October 2005," Cathey said. "The Phaeton's living area surrounding our 'showroom' was a big asset. We removed the PS sofa and put the tub in its place. With the slide out, I had plenty of room for potential dealers to visit at the same time in an office-like environment."

In the meantime, Cathey improved the design of his product by featuring hydrotherapy with 21 water jets. Then he increased the number of jets to 39 with a new air handling system and added a heater option that maintained the bather-selected water temperature. Sales soon reached 60 tubs a month.

As he established dealers, he followed

the policy of being certain his walk-in tubs could be serviced wherever they were sold. His success at building a sales-service network attracted the attention of the owner of the fiberglass plant that made his tubs. When he offered to buy Cathey's organization, serious negotiations ensued.

"I agreed to be available as a consultant to the new owner, plus I kept the Texas sales territory as an exclusive distributorship," he explained. "It looked like a win-win deal for both of us."

Dale and Connie Cathey began building a new home in Ft. Worth and made plans for future travel in their second Phaeton. They enjoyed many extended trips throughout the country and into Canada with one especially memorable three-month summer excursion into the Maritime Provinces.

Their plans for seeing the country began to unravel when Connie's fibromyalgia worsened. Her condition was ultimately diagnosed as advanced Parkinson's disease and she passed away in October 2014. Not interested in traveling solo, Cathey sold his Phaeton.

He continued to read each new issue of *Roughing It Smoothly* which nurtured his desire to stay connected to RVing. Never short on generating ideas to be involved, Cathey called Fred Thompson last fall and floated the idea of an advertising sales director for the magazine.

A visit to the 2015 RVIA Dealer Show in Louisville convinced both men that the idea would work. Cathey managed the advertising sales for the spring and summer issues this year and was invited to take the mantle and run with it.

"We welcome Dale Cathey to our staff and look forward to his bringing new and fresh advertising that will benefit our readers," Thompson said. "His 40+ years in sales will help us to continue the growth of *Roughing It Smoothly*."





Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, a 42-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:

Danny Inman
 Roughing It Smoothly
 PO Box 1150
 Monroe, GA 30656-1150

Danny would also like to hear your ideas, suggestions, and innovations that would make our motorhomes more useful and functional. If you have a photograph to send, please put the postcard and photo in an envelope and send it to the same address. Please send a SASE if you would like for us to return your photographs, disk files, or manuscript.

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

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

Dear Danny . . .

Two Questions from a New Diesel Owner

I just bought a 2015 Allegro RED in February. It is my first experience with a diesel and so far it has been painless. I have two questions: (1) The question you answered in 13:3 about algae in the fuel tank left me wondering. How can I avoid ever having

this problem? Further discussion of preventive measures would be much appreciated. (2) Does the LG television above the fireplace have an AUDIO OUT connection I can use for a wireless headset? So far I cannot find one.

James Mason, Dunwoody, Georgia

Dear James,

Algae has always been a problem for diesel vehicle owners. If you have algae in your tank, there are additive treatments available that will help to a certain extent. This problem has to be carefully monitored because if the algae gets fed into the engine with the fuel, then the injectors and fuel pump will have to be changed on the engine. In severe cases, the fuel tank will have to be changed and all the fuel lines cleaned out. The best preventive action an owner can take is to always buy fuel at the major truck stops. Their fuel turns over so fast that algae normally does not have time to develop.

Most of the LG TVs have audio-out connections. They will be on the back of the TV if available.

Dash AC Stopped When House Batteries Lost Power

We have a 2005 Allegro Open Road. Why did the dash AC quit working when the house batteries lost power?

Dave DePriest, Norman, Oklahoma

Dear Dave,

The AC uses 12-volt power to communicate to the thermostat and tell it what to do. That would also be true of your hot water heater, gas-electric refrigerator, and the furnace. They all operate with 12-volt power.

Parking Lights Malfunction in Allegro RED 33AA

We have a 2016 Allegro RED and love it! We were told by a Freightliner tech that the parking lights are designed to work with a "courtesy switch" in the coach, which we do not have. Another tech said the parking lights should work regardless of the use of a "courtesy switch." Which tech is correct?

Roy Martin, Fincastle, Virginia

Dear Roy,

The parking lights will only work with the headlights switch. Push it once and the parking lights come on; push it twice and the headlights come on. Any of the courtesy lights will have a switch separate from the parking/headlights switch.

Stopping Sidewall Streaks Caused by Roof Oxidation

I have a Phaeton 42QBH. How can I stop roof oxidation that is creating white streaks down the side of my coach? I have had the roof cleaned and waxed but I still have the streaks.

Joe Richardson, Long Beach Township, New Jersey

Dear Joe,

First of all, streaks are not caused by oxidation. Most of the

time, streaks are dark and are caused by oil film that is in the air as you drive down the road. The next time after you wash your motorhome and drive it for a couple of hours, take a white rag and rub across the sidewalls. You will notice that it will be black with oil film from the road. When that film collects on the roof and it rains, you will see the dark streaks on the sidewalls.

Low-High Switch for Dashboard Illumination

I have a 2016 Allegro RED 37PA. Everything works fine except for one issue with the illumination switch for the dashboard lights. When the switch is set on "low," there are no dash lights. When the switch is set on "high," all of the dash lights flash like a strobe. Our local Freightliner dealer does not work on motorhomes—only trucks. The Tiffin dealer is over 100 miles away. Any suggestions on how to correct this problem?

Bill Hosack
Findlay, Ohio

Dear Bill,
This is a Freightliner problem related to the ECM communication with the lights. You will need to take the coach to Freightliner to be reprogrammed to have the problem corrected.

P-Trap Solves Problem on Whirlpool Fridge

I enjoy reading your service information in RIS. We have a 2013 Phaeton 40QTH. Our Whirlpool refrigerator developed water and ice in the bottom of the freezer. We removed the duck bill valve on the condensate line but still had the problem. After some investigation, we found a P-trap drain tube kit that Whirlpool makes to solve this problem. For the 33" and 36" bottom freezer refrigerators, their part number is W10619951. It is necessary to remove the bottom grill on the back side of the refrigerator to install the kit. This is accessible through the outside panel

on the coach. So far, it seems to have corrected the problem.

Jim & Kathe Riha
Los Angeles, California

Dear Jim & Kathe,
Thank you so much for sharing the information about a P-trap drain tube kit for Whirlpool refrigerators. We will print it here to help other owners.

How to Add Freon to Dash AC

We are trying to locate the ports to add freon to our dash AC system. After storing our 2003 Allegro Bay for several months, we discovered that the AC would no longer put out cold air. Our coach has a Workhorse chassis. Thanks.

Phyllis & Charles Mitchell
Louisville, Kentucky

Dear Phyllis & Charles,
The high and low pressure ports to add Freon should both be located out front under the hood near the AC dryer.

Brake Lights Come On When Coach Is in "Park"

I have a 2014 Phaeton. Sometimes the brake lights illuminate when the air brake is on and the gear is in neutral (parked). When this happens, I have to lift the brake pedal to turn off the brake lights. How do I correct this problem?

Larry Stockert
Audubon, Minnesota

Dear Larry,
The brake light switch may need to be adjusted. But first check the cable that controls the brake and accelerator pedal positions. The cable could be binding against something under the dash, keeping pressure on the brake pedal. Readjusting the cable's position should relieve any pressure on the switch.

A Simple Manufacturing Suggestion

In my 2012 Phaeton 40QBH, the flange around the hole for the sewer hose in the utility bay is attached to the fiberglass pan with sharp screws that can puncture

the sewer hose. I ground off the sharp points with a sanding disk. I suggest using a short machine screw with a hex nut.

David M. Jackson
Loudon, Tennessee

Dear David,
Your suggestion about grinding off the sharp points with a sanding disk is a great idea. I will pass this on to production as soon as possible. Thanks a lot.

Changing Out Dinette to Dinette/Computer Workstation

We have a 2007 Phaeton 36QSH. It has a dining booth. Can it be converted to a dinette/computer workstation? Can this work be done in Red Bay? What is the cost?

David & Mary Guedry
Prairieville, Louisiana

Dear David & Mary,
Yes, you can make the conversion. We can build the furniture for the conversion, but the owner will need to contract with a separate shop for the installation. We have a number of local shops in the Red Bay area. When you check into the campground at Red Bay, they will provide a list of suppliers. If you would like to have this information before you come, call the service department at 256-356-0261 and ask for the outside suppliers packet.

Dry Camping with a Residential Refrigerator

How do I dry camp in my Allegro RED with a residential refrigerator? I do not want to run my generator all of the time. I have four batteries. How long will they last? Would it be practical to install solar panels that generate enough power to run the refrigerator?

Jon Ayers
Morrison, Colorado

Dear Jon,
If you are not using other electrical appliances, you should be able to get 12-18 hours of refrigerator operation from a full charge on your batteries. Avoid opening and closing the fridge doors as much

as possible. Other items in the coach can also pull power, e.g. your satellite dish and receiver. The HDMI control cables for the satellite system and Blu-ray player will draw 12-volt power. There is a switch that will cut the 12-volt power off when the coach is not in use.

Solar panels will help when you are camping, but only in the right conditions. It would be very expensive to add enough panels to support the power draw of the refrigerator.

Why a Low Battery Warning When Battery Is Charged

In January we purchased a new Allegro RED 33AA. It lives next to our house, usually plugged into our 30-amp RV box. I start it up every couple of weeks or so if we are not traveling. When I turn the ignition key and wait for the pre-ignition light to go out, I see a "Low Battery" indicator on the screen. When the engine is started, the voltage gauge fluctuates between 12 and 14 volts for about 30 seconds. Then it settles on 13.5, which I know is good. Why?

Scott Carlisle
Benicia, California

Dear Scott,
Your motorhome is operating as designed. When you start it up every couple of weeks, and see the low battery indicator on the screen, this is normal. In the engine, the injector heaters are coming on so that it will crank easily, which pulls a sizeable amp load from the battery, plus it takes a good load for the starter to turn the engine. These two items together will trigger the low battery indicator that shows on the screen. After the engine runs for a few minutes, it will replenish the power that the start-up process took out of the battery. It is performing exactly as it was designed.

Drawer Above Fireplace Slides Out When Traveling

In March I purchased a 2016 Phaeton

36GH. The drawer above the fireplace keeps coming out with every turn I make while traveling. What is the "fix" for this annoying problem?

Anthony Balsavage
Pemberton, New Jersey

Dear Anthony,
The quickest way to correct the problem

is to place a piece of Velcro on the wall behind the end of the drawer. Then place another piece of Velcro on the end of the drawer. The two pieces will touch and hold the drawer in place.

House Batteries Failed in 2016 Allegro
I own a 2016 Allegro 32SA and have ex-

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"Very helpful resource! We are heading west for the next 5 months and I've depended on your book/online info for the last year and don't plan on stopping it! Take care, -Lynn" (April 2016)

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perienced problems with the 12-volt system. The house batteries finally had to be replaced. I am wondering how long the batteries should last when we are running gas heat and a gas-electric refrigerator. When the coach is not occupied, keep the thermostat set at 55° when the daytime temps average 45° and night temps are around 30°.

Henry Gagne
Westbrook, Maine

Dear Henry,
A battery is an electrical storage device. Any power taken out of the battery eventually will have to be replaced. I would estimate you could operate your vehicle for three to four days if everything is turned off except the furnace. However, if you do not top your batteries off every three or four weeks with a generator charge, they will eventually fail.

Brakes Go Weak on a 2005 Allegro

We have a 2005 Allegro 28DA. I am having trouble stopping it at highway speed (60 mph). Can the power braking system be set for more assistance? I took it to our local Ford dealer and they were no help. Spokane is our nearest Ford truck service dealer, but that is a 200-mile trip.

Lee Burts
East Wenatchee, Washington

Dear Lee,
First of all, make sure you have adequate brake fluid in the master cylinder. The master cylinder is located on the DS firewall when you raise the hood on your Allegro. If low brake fluid is not the problem, you must take it to a Ford Truck Service Center to have them check the brakes. You should have excellent braking power when everything is operating as designed.

A Solution to “Frequent Brake Use Sets Off Warning” in Vol. 12, No. 4

Gerald Oliva wrote in the 12:4 RIS that frequent use of the brake set off a warning. I had the same problem on my 2010

Phaeton 36QSH. I called Freightliner and they were very helpful. First, they said, “Don’t worry, it is not serious. It is just the high center brake light.” Second, they told me the issue is a Freightliner fuse/relay located in the forward DS fuse compartment. Under the black cover on the forward wall are a number of blade fuses and some metal, thumb drive-shaped fuses. One of the metal ones is for the “rear high center brake light.” There are several—some 10-, 15-, and 20-amp fuses. I actually had my coach repaired at Bay Diesel in Red Bay for \$15. You can get the fuse/relay from Freightliner and replace it yourself.

The issue is that the relay goes bad and sends a false reading which initiates the warning. The warning is much worse than the actual issue especially since it only occurs when you are in heavy traffic. Hope this helps.

Dan Allen
Lacey, Washington

Dear Dan,
Thanks you so much for the information. I know our owners will be pleased to read and implement your solution.

8-Port Splitters Overheating on Entertainment System

My letter is in response to Jim Wolpert’s problem with the 8-port HDMI splitters in his coach’s entertainment system (see RIS, 13:3, page 78). We were in the Red Bay Service Center this summer for warranty work. The service tech gave our 37AP a general check and noticed the two 8-port splitters were very hot to the touch. He replaced both of them with new ones and commented, “They were about ready to quit.”

He then asked, “How long do you let them run?” I responded, “I have never turned them off with the fan switch.” He said, “When not in use, turn them off with the power switch.”

I suggested moving them to the adjacent compartment, but he said, “The

same thing will happen. That model runs very hot.”

I guess short of installing a larger fan and listening to it roar, there is nothing that can be done until a new model comes out.

Mr. Wolpert asked about rebuilding the two expensive splitters he kept after Mike Thompson RV made the repair. That depends. Usually the power supply in the unit fails first and it could be replaced by a good electronics technician. If the two defective units were mine, I would replace the power supply and then cut a hole in the case to mount a small fan that would suck out the hot air. Wire the new fan to the power switch so that it comes on whenever the splitter is in use. I think that will solve the problem.

John Lanza
Tucson, Arizona

Dear John,
The HDMI splitters are CAT-6 splitters that build up heat. They do not need to be turned on all the time. The only time they need to be on is when you are watching satellite TV. If you have cable TV available at a campground, you can turn them off. If you are using the air antenna, they can also be turned off. The only time they have to be on is when you are using the satellite TV system. I hope this helps.

How is “Engine Pre-Heat” Powered?

I have a 2006 Allegro Bus with a 400-hp Cummins engine. On the left-hand side of the driver’s seat is a toggle switch labeled “Engine Heat.” I understand it is useful in cold climate situations, but my question is more operational. Is the heating element powered by AC or DC power? What is the typical power consumption? Should it be used only under shore power or generator running conditions? Thank you for your advice.

Jack Morgan
Dade City, Florida

Dear Jack,
Your unit uses AC power for the engine

pre-heat. Running the generator on shore power will make this work when the switch is in the ON position. There is a receptacle under the bed that can be unplugged if you don’t want the switch to work on the console. The power consumption is approximately 9 AC amps per hour.

A Problem with Diamond Shield

My wife and I are the happy owners of a 2010 Allegro 35QBA. We bought it new and take great pride in keeping it clean, polished, and in good working order. It is parked under a metal carport.

I am writing to ask about the Diamond Shield protective covering. The glue adhesive is deteriorating and changing color. It now has a speckled appearance all across the front cap and it really looks bad. Other covered areas around the rim of the front tires and the door handle have the same problem. I have used 303 Aerospace Protectant recommended by Diamond Shield to suppress the discoloration, but that does not help.

I recently saw a YouTube video by Bob Tiffin from a few years ago that was made at a Tiffin Rally at Lazydays. He stated in the video that Tiffin Motorhomes would remove the Diamond Shield and repaint any coach that had this problem. He also said that replacing the Diamond Shield would be the customer’s responsibility. If I can get it removed and repainted, I will not replace it. I would rather apply touch-up paint and buffing as needed.

Is what Mr. Tiffin stated in the video still the company’s policy? If it is, must the unit be returned to Red Bay for the removal and painting or can that be done locally? If returning the unit to Red Bay is necessary, can the work be scheduled with an appointment or do we have to wait in line to have the work done? It is a long drive from my home to Red Bay, but I would make the drive if necessary.

Thomas C. Dunn
Wendell, North Carolina

Dear Thomas,
What you saw at Lazydays on the video of Mr. Tiffin is not necessarily a company policy. But we have helped several customers who are first owners when mildew appears under the Diamond Shield. You are exactly right about what happens

when some of the paint comes off when we remove the Diamond Shield and it has to be repainted. When the repainting has been done and the front has been refinished, it is not necessary to put the Diamond Shield back on if you don’t chose to do so. The warranty to repair the out-

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side finish of the motorhome is for three years. Some of our dealers have been very successful in removing the Diamond Shield coating, and repainting the front cap. Ask the dealers in your area if they have handled this problem. If not, we will be glad to take care of your coach in Red Bay, although you will have to wait in line to have the work done since your coach is out of warranty.

Regarding Heads Up Displays (HUD)

Do you know of a HUD on the market that would work on my 2015 Allegro 31SA? There are lighting conditions that make it almost impossible to see my instruments. I think a HUD would be the answer to this problem.

Charles Cooper
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Charles,
I think the HUD display would be great, but I am not aware of any of these instruments being available that would work with our 2015 Allegros. You might check with your Ford dealer.

Passenger Side Camera Creates Lines on Dash Monitor

We own a 2013 Allegro 36LA. The PS camera creates lines that interfere with the image on the dash monitor. It seems to work perfectly when starting out on a trip, but then the image degenerates. How can we correct this problem? We love this motorhome. The quality Tiffin puts into every detail is amazing.

Jeanette Barker
Port Alberni, British Columbia

Dear Jeanette,
Most likely this is caused by a loose connection at the monitor or the camera. Please check and adjust those connections and that should correct the problem.

Rear Leveling Jacks Retract Very Slowly

The two rear hydraulic leveling jacks on our 2016 Allegro 36LA retract very slowly. Actually, the DS rear jack does not fully

retract without a push. The front jacks work well. I have cleaned the shafts with WD-40. Is it possible a 2016 coach could need new retraction springs? Thanks.

Dennis Napora
Buffalo, New York

Dear Dennis,
I believe you hit the nail on the head. I recommend you change the retraction springs to one size heavier like the ones we use on the Allegro RED or Phaeton. Call HWH in Moscow, Iowa and ask for the size springs we use on the RED or Phaeton.

Black Tank Gauge Inaccurate

We have a 2014 Allegro Bus 40QBP. The toilet in the rear bath ceases to function when the black tank is only half full. As soon as I drain the black tank, it starts working again. Is this normal?

Clyde Phifer
Boise, Idaho

Dear Clyde,
You need to be very diligent to use the tank flush every time you dump the black tank because there is a float assembly in the black tank that controls the pump in the rear toilet. Most likely you have some debris on the float assembly in the black tank which is creating a false reading that is causing the rear toilet to shut down when the black tank is only half full.

Seat Belts Needed in 2013 Allegro RED

We have a 2013 Allegro RED 38QRA and love the coach. We are planning a trip and would like to take our grandson. When we discovered our sofa has no seat belts, I called the Tiffin Service Center to ask why. My brother-in-law has a 2014 Phaeton and it does have seat belts in the sofa. Is this a simple oversight made during construction? Would it be practical for me to install them myself? If a dealer should make the installation, will Tiffin cover the cost?

Ronald Gatchell
Canton, Ohio

Dear Ronald,
We will be happy to help you with your seat belts. Please call the Tiffin Service Department and request two pair of seat belts. We will furnish them at no charge along with the instructions to install them.

Bedroom TV Has Unclear Picture

We have a Phaeton 40QBH. Two problems: First, the television in our bedroom has always had a picture that is not as clear as either the living room or outside televisions. I am guessing there is a problem with the splitter or a poor connection. I can see the wires and components in the cabinet under the TV when I remove the fan panel. But it is such a rat's nest of jumbled wires, I hesitate to get into it without some guidance as to what I am looking for. I am reasonably handy. Can you give me some direction as to what I should look for and how to fix it, or do I need to go to a Tiffin dealer and ask a professional technician to make the repair?

Second, some sort of coating has formed on our left headlight lens. It is semi-clear and has a honeycomb appearance. We were able to get most but not all of the coating removed with just soap and water. When the coating comes off, the towel we are using to clean it has small sparkly crystals on it. Do you have any recommendations?

Allen M. Zatkin
Camarillo, California

Dear Allen,
There are numerous problems that could cause poor reception in your bedroom TV. Your explanation is right on target. I recommend you call the Tiffin Service Department and talk to Nick Brewer and go over the points you made with him. I believe Nick will be able to help you solve this problem.

In regard to the coating on your headlight lens, the Mary Moppins Company, goclean.com, has developed a buffing compound to remove scratches and oxi-

dation called Renewzit. Working on a cool surface out of direct sunlight, it will remove the glaze without damaging the headlights. It is ideal to use a buffer, and some elbow grease, to remove the coating. Mary Moppins recommends applying a couple of coats of another of her products, Advantage, to the lens after removing the glaze to help prevent its return.

Installing the Safe-T-Plus on a 2016 Allegro

While awaiting delivery of our 2016 Allegro 36LA, we met a couple at the dealership who were having their 2015 Allegro 36LA serviced. After an extended conversation, the owner recommended that we have a Safe-T-Plus installed on our coach. He said the device made a great improvement in the handling and created a more pleasant driving experience. During our closing, we asked the general manager of the dealership if we should have a Safe-T-Plus installed on our coach. He said that since our coach was equipped with Sumo Springs we would not need the Safe-T-Plus.

I have since researched both items and they seem to do two different things. What is your opinion of the Safe-T-Plus? How or why would the Sumo Springs eliminate the need for the Safe-T-Plus? We love our coach, but my wife says it takes a great effort for her to drive it. She says she is constantly steering it. It seems like the Safe-T-Plus would certainly help that. Thanks for your response.

Gary & Shirley Johnson
Statesville, North Carolina

Dear Gary & Shirley,
If you have the Sumo Springs on your coach, its main function is to improve handling and stabilization. The Safe-T-Plus is a safety device that will enhance the handling characteristics of your 2016 Allegro, but its main purpose is to improve safety in the case of a front blow-out. We have been using this device for many years and have had good reports

from owners who have had it installed. Conditions will be much safer when a blow-out occurs if you have Safe-T-Plus.

Air Suction from Big Trucks and Slack in the Steering Mechanism

I have a 2015 Allegro 32CA. I love a thousand things about my Tiffin, but one of

my few complaints is how it handles in a crosswind on the freeway. I have had a steering stabilizer installed that has helped some. I have ordered a rear track bar, but do not have it installed yet. I am trying to counter the effect of 18-wheelers passing me in a crosswind. As I drive between 60 and 65, they frequently pass

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me. First, the force of their air pushes me to the right as they begin to pass. Then as they pass, the air sucks me to the left.

My second question is about slack in the steering. It seems that when I normally drive in any conditions, I am constantly moving my hands up and down the steering wheel six to eight inches to keep the coach in the lane. Is there a chance there is too much slack in the steering mechanism? Is there a way this slack can be reduced? Thank you for your time and expertise in answering so many questions from Tiffin owners.

William Isenhardt
Newark, Ohio

Dear William,
Crosswinds have always been an issue with mostly gas-powered motorhomes at 60 to 65 miles an hour highway speed, and especially when big 18-wheelers are passing. The only thing we have found that addresses this situation is the Sumo Springs on the rear. They will improve stabilization in your coach.

Oil Leak in HWH Hydraulic System

I first noticed a slow leak of HWH hydraulic fluid at about 3,000 miles on our new 2016 Phaeton 36GH. A drop of fluid was hanging on the bottom of the 90-degree fitting attached to one of the four velocity valves exiting the pump-manifold assembly. Other drops on the floor were evident. A technician at the Tiffin Service Center tightened the connection and off we went.

I checked the fluid reservoir later and found it was below the measuring point. I added 3.5 quarts of Dexron automatic transmission fluid. At 4,500 miles I checked again for leakage and found the original valve and a second valve leaking. We were at the FMCA rally and I reported the situation to a Tiffin tech at the rally. They promptly came out to check and tighten the fittings. These leaks were associated with the front two jacks.

At 6,000 miles I noticed another drip-

ping leak. Unlike the previous leaks, this was located in the rear PS cargo compartment, at the end of what appears to be a PVC-type tube with a hydraulic fitting and hose coming out of the end. It seemed to be part of the slide-out apparatus. I ran the slides out and discovered a leak when extending both the PS and DS slide. It is a slow drip and seems to leak only when the slide is being operated.

The maintenance section of the Operator's Manual states: Check the oil level every two years or "More often if there is an oil leak. . . ." Question: Is this amount of leakage a normal condition which can best be managed by maintaining a full reservoir? Or, should I arrange for a system evaluation?

Gary Kimberling
Brownsville, Texas

Dear Gary,
I think a system evaluation of the HWH hydraulic equipment would be in order based on the description you offered. It seems that some of the fittings may be overtightened. The torque is usually very low for the hydraulic fittings in the HWH system. If you are planning travel to northwest Alabama or central Iowa, the Tiffin Service Center or the HWH plant will be happy to check out your system.

Wallpaper Loose or Buckling Around Windows or Corners

We own a 2011 Allegro Bus 36QSP and earlier owned a 2005 Allegro Bus. On both coaches we experienced the problem of wallpaper coming loose and buckling around the windows and corners. It then gets so brittle that when I try to fix the wallpaper it breaks apart. Is there any way to correct this problem? I have looked at other brands, some that are 10 years old, and they do not have this problem and still look good. We have paid a lot of money for our two coaches and I don't think this should be happening.

Linda Davis
Rio Rancho, New Mexico

Dear Linda,
The only success we have had with the uneven wallpaper is to remove the trim ring around the window and put urethane adhesive between the wall and wallpaper. Use a squeegee to smooth it out and let it set overnight, then reinstall the trim ring.

Please Make It Simple for Owner of 2016 Allegro RED 33AA

I store my coach over the Winter in an unheated garage with a 50-amp outlet available. Should I hook up to the 50-amp service? Will the hookup trickle charge both the house and chassis batteries without over charging?

Could you please provide a simple explanation of how the inverter works? What do I push and what do I not push? I understand I need to have the inverter ON to serve the residential refrigerator when we are traveling, but there are so many things that can and cannot happen with respect to the inverter. Please make it simple. Thanks.

Merrill & Nanette Ritter
Indianapolis, Indiana

Dear Merrill & Nanette,
Using the 50-amp power source, the simplest thing to do is to turn everything off except your inverter and leave it in the low charge mode. If you do not want your refrigerator operating during the storage period, turn the refrigerator's AC breaker OFF in the switch box. All the inverter will do is keep the batteries trickle charged. Every 30 to 60 days check the liquid level in coach batteries. The chassis batteries are maintenance free.

A Manufacturing Suggestion to Improve Long-Term Quality

We have a 2011 Phaeton 40QBH. The coach has three Fan-Tastic vents. All three of the ceiling inserts have trim that has failed at the corners. I believe that over time the plastic gets brittle. Coupled with over-zealous torquing of the screws on the lip of the insert, the insert cracks open

where the screws hold the insert to the ceiling. I purchased three new inserts from the TMH parts department and will be careful not to overtighten the screws. We will see if that works. Thanks for listening.

Steve Aasheim
Gainesville, Florida

Dear Steve,
Your comment about improving long-term quality regarding the fasteners on your Fan-Tastic vents is well-taken. Thanks for your suggestions.

Two AC Units Not Keeping 2013 Allegro Cool Enough

We have a 2013 Allegro RED 38QBA that we bought new in 2014. I would like to know what we should realistically expect in regards to air conditioning performance on a hot day. We have two Coleman 15,000 BTU units.

Whenever we are parked in a site exposed to the sun or traveling on an open road on a hot sunny day (90+ degrees), we cannot get the inside temp below 86 degrees. We have tried pulling all the shades and limiting interior sunlight as much as possible. We have tried closing off the vents in the bedroom so that all the air from both units is pushed to the front living area. We have had both units checked, the duct work checked, and have not been able to find any problems. Does it sound to you like we have an undiagnosed problem or is this what we should expect from our air conditioning system? Thank you for addressing our question.

Rick Johnson
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Dear Rick,
Yes, when the temperature is 90+ degrees in your 38QBA there are some things that will help lower your inside temp below 86 degrees. Pulling the shades will certainly help. But I think regulating the AC thermostats will be of greatest benefit. For best results we recommend that you set the front thermostat at 72 degrees and set the rear thermostat at 60 degrees. The reason

for this is to keep the rear AC compressor running all of the time because the rear AC set at 72 will cycle off when the temp is met. Then you are trying to cool the whole motorhome with just the front AC. If you can keep both running all of the time, you will get much better results.

Another thing to try is to close two of the discharge vents on the very rear (on the PS side). This will throw most of the rear air to the front.

Best Way to Store 2016 Allegro with Residential Refrigerator

We have a 2016 Allegro 32SA with a residential refrigerator. At this time, the coach is connected to a 110v 20 amp outlet with the fridge ON and the TVs and satellite OFF. On three occasions, the circuit breaker for the 110v outlet has kicked off and the inverter has taken over

to keep the refrigerator running. That caused the house batteries to drain. How can we store the motorhome and leave the refrigerator running?

John & Debra Folsom
Boulder City, Nevada

Dear John & Debra,
The best way to store the motorhome and leave the refrigerator running is to take the outside cover off of the sidewall, unplug the refrigerator from the receptacle, and plug the unit into an outlet from your house. Then turn off both disconnect switches. The motorhome will hibernate but the refrigerator will remain on. That's the simplest and best way to do it.

Water Pump Lights Remain ON Continuously

The water pump lights remain ON all of

Continued on page 88

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER *Continued from page 5*

to travel quite a few miles to a regional RV show or one of our dealerships to see the new lineup of Tiffin coaches, we try to bring 10 to 15 coaches to each major rally. It also gives owners an opportunity to learn about the Michelin Tire Plan, and financial savings through Coach-Net, Overland Insurance, Passport America, Sky Med, and Enterprise Rental Cars.


To keep our owners better informed, Sally and Kelly publish an electronic newsletter, *Sideroads*, with monthly updates of news from Tiffin Motorhomes, the Tiffin Allegro Club, and the Red Bay area in general. They also publish rally reports in our quarterly magazine *Roughing It Smoothly*.

One of the nicest things about the TAC is the assistance it provides owners in any area of the U.S. and Canada to establish local chapters. In addition to helping each other learn more about their equipment, local chapters often become service clubs and do charity benefits for their communities.

When chapter members are in Red Bay for service, the TAC offers an inviting lounge with free wi-fi and a comfortable pa-

tio for relaxation. The club office and store are located adjacent to the Tiffin Service Center and Campground. The store stocks high quality RV clothing, all weather mats for your coach, and stainless steel and pottery mugs at reasonable prices. The TAC will help local chapters develop their personalized logo jackets and shirts.

For years, our dealers have realized the benefits of sponsoring a local chapter. Allegro Club chapters help dealers build solid relationships based on mutual trust and friendship. Chapter members often recommend their dealers to friends and RVers they meet in their travels, and dealers in turn give the chapters early notice on upcoming sales events.

I have seen local chapters of the Tiffin Allegro Club build brand loyalty for Tiffin Motorhomes. Our owners' *enthusiasm* for the quality of our product, the extensive service we provide, and the integrity, friendliness, knowledge, and ability of our service technicians has brought us more new customers than any of the advertising we have ever placed in publications. 

TIFFIN ALLEGRO CLUB NEWS *Continued from page 44*

Allegro Club Membership Dues/Renewals May Be Paid Online

For your convenience and financial safety, we have added the option for members to renew their Tiffin Allegro Club membership dues online. New members can join or current members can renew and pay the annual dues either as a Paypal member or


as a Paypal guest. This secure website eliminates mailing credit card numbers or personal checks through the US Mail. If you prefer to call us or mail your information, that is still acceptable. Give us a call at 256-356-8522 if you have any questions.

THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS *Continued from page 35*

Gatlinburg on US 321. Turn right on Baxter Road and keep to the right. Follow the signage for the Maddron Bald Trail to the Albright Grove Loop Trail. This trail is rarely crowded on weekdays. Difficulty: MODERATE

Editors Note: There are more than 150 maintained, marked trails in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We had the privilege of hiking only a few, but enjoyed every mile. We hope

to return soon. At the bookstore in the Sugarlands Visitor Center, you can purchase several publications for avid hikers.

Day Hikes. A \$1 brochure published by the NPS. ♦ *Waterfalls.* A \$1 brochure published by the NPS. ♦ *Exploring the Smokies.* Rose Houk. Great Smoky Mountains Association. \$10.95. ♦ *Day Hikes of the Smokies.* Carson Brewer & Friends. Great Smoky Mountains Association. \$9.95. ♦ *History Hikes.* Michal Strutin. Great Smoky Mountains Association. \$12.95. 

SERIOUS TECH TALK *Continued from page 87*

the time. It is draining the house and chassis batteries unless there is another undetected problem with the converter. We have a 2006 Allegro Bus that we love. We have traveled over most of the U.S. and Canada. Thanks for your help Danny!

Brian Loescher, Oceanside, California

Dear Brian,

If your water light stays on all the time even though the switch is OFF, then you have either a short or a wire that is going to ground. To check this, disconnect the power at the water pump. If the light stays ON, then check the hot line going to the pump. That is most likely where the problem is.

Sliding Doors for Bunk Beds in 2015 Allegro 35QBA

I would like to have sliding doors made for my bunk beds—one for the top bunk that I use for storage and one for the bottom bunk where my dogs sleep. Is this possible? Who would I contact regarding this request?

Sue Stamp, Surprise, Arizona

Dear Sue,

We have never installed sliding doors in our bunk models. However, it could certainly be done in a custom cabinet shop. Please call John at RV Specialties in Apache Junction, Arizona. If he cannot do the work, he can suggest a company to do the modification. His number is 480-380-3801.



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