

# Roughing It Smoothly®



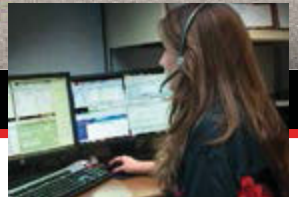
## IN THIS ISSUE

- The 2018 Allegro RED 37PA
- South Carolina's Islands & Beaches
- Newport's Mansions

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# Roughing It Smoothly®

April 2017 Volume 14, Number 2

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58

## Departments

President's Corner	4	On the Road with Dave & Terri	44
News You Can Use	16	Dealer Profile	46
Tiffin Management Team	32	Bob Ledford's Adventure Motorhomes	
Tony Riley, Human Resources Director and General Counsel		From the Plant	54
Owner Profile	36	From the Road	56
Darrell Valenti, Restaurateur		Serious Tech Talk	72
Tiffin Allegro Club News	40	Cover: Hilton Head Island. RV image by Constellation Imageworks.	
Traveling with Your Pets	42		



22

## Features

- **Tiffin Launches the 2018 Allegro RED 37PA**  
Loaded with standard features  
*See page 6*
- **An Island Adventure**  
In Newport, there's all those mansions. *See page 22*
- **South Carolina's Islands & Beaches**  
Hilton Head and Edisto Island, Huntington Beach & Brookgreen Gardens  
*See page 58*

SPRING 2017 VOLUME 14 NUMBER 2



2017 Wayfarer 24QW

4

## Roughing It Smoothly circulation jumps to 85,000 printed and online magazines.

Over 29,500 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 13,500 copies in their showrooms. *Roughing It Smoothly* is in its 14th 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.

### Advertisers

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### Change of Address

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address as it appears on your magazine label. 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 RIS techtalk@gmail.com **If you need an immediate answer to a service problem, you should call 256-356-0261.**

### New Subscribers

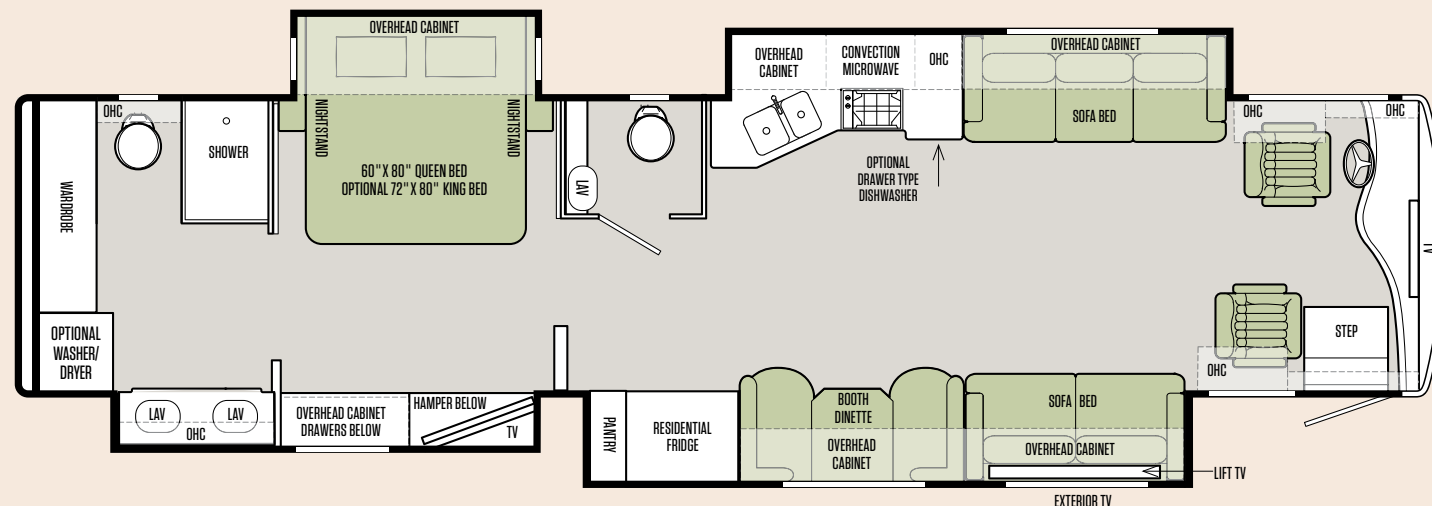
If you have just purchased a new Tiffin motorhome, your name will be added to our mailing list automatically. If you purchased a pre-owned Tiffin motorhome, send the year, brand, length & floorplan, your name and address, and VIN to *Roughing It Smoothly*, PO Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30655-1150.

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## The 2017 Phaeton 40IH-XSH is now shipping to dealers.

What is a Phaeton XSH? Extended Storage Phaeton The Phaeton 44OH and 40IH have extended height basement storage that allows you to store more cargo. With the taller basement compartment door, access to the basement is easy. The raised basement creates

a flat floor from front to rear. No more step up to enter the rear bath or closet. Built on a Powerglide chassis, with independent front suspension, Cummins diesel power, and an integrated two state compression brake, the XSH series takes to the road with confidence.



## We Are Building Class C's Again

by Bob and Tim Tiffin

It had been 25 years since Tiffin built a Class C motorhome. But the company's experience with marketing a new product and the application of its new high-tech construction techniques that are years ahead of the industry are promising its customers a great camping and travel experience. TMH's 17-year Class C history had some very interesting turns that began 42 years ago.

When the company was barely two years old in early 1975, a new opportunity surfaced.

"Jerry Nagle, our manufacturer's rep to the midwest called to tell me that a small manufacturer in Ohio had gone out of business. They had been building a well-designed 20-foot Class C. It had a fiberglass mold that fit perfectly over a Dodge chop van to make a seamless front cap," Bob explained.

"Jerry knew the fiberglass company that had the mold for the front cap. We bought the mold and less than three months later on May 20, 1975, Tiffin Motorhomes rolled its first Class C camper off the line. We ran that little camper for three years and built the last one on March 28, 1978."

The next generation of Tiffin Class C's utilized the Chevrolet Astro Van as its foundation. "The Astro was really a Class B. We had to buy the whole van and cut the body off right behind the driver. We extended the wheelbase to 158 inches. Then we added a 1/2-ton Chevy rear end and put 235 Goodyear tires on the rear. It was a V6 with 155-hp, a very nice Class C with a total weight of 7,500 pounds," Bob said nostalgically. "We made a thousand of those from Spring 1986 through Fall 1989."

In the fall of 1987 Tiffin Motorhomes built a new assembly plant across Second Street from the present administration building. The decision was made that the assembly lines in the new plant would only build motorhomes with exterior fiberglass construction. The original assembly plant (where the woodworking shops are now) continued to build units with aluminum siding.

"In the spring of 1988, we opened the new plant and began building our new full-size Class C all fiberglass Allegro Bay on a Ford chassis," Bob said. "In the old plant, we built a Class C



aluminum-sided Allegro, also on a Ford chassis, plus our Class A Allegros. Then in the fall of 1988 we used the Open Road brand to build our first fiberglass Class A coach in the new plant.

"We continued running both assembly plants and building Class C campers until 1992," Bob continued. "When our marketing research showed the interest in Class C's was declining, we dropped them altogether. We also closed the old assembly plant in 1992, dropped aluminum siding, and opened two assembly lines in the new plant."

For the next quarter of a century, Tiffin focused with

great success on Class A motorhomes and introduced five new brands, three of which have dominated the diesel pusher market. However, the TMH marketing team kept their fingers on the pulse of customer and dealer feedback.

"We have been looking at building a Class C coach for four or five years, but we did not have an appropriate facility," Tim noted. "It is not practical at all in our Red Bay assembly plant to build a Class C on the same production lines where we build six Class A coaches."

"We knew we were losing loyal Tiffin customers who wanted to downsize to a Class C coach, maybe start taking shorter trips, and we did not have anything to offer," Bob added. "Another part of the market we want to address is young professional couples, usually without children, who want to get away for long weekends or short trips."

Another big part of the equation was choosing the right engine and chassis manufacturer for a whole new Tiffin product. Aware of how well Europeans adapt to efficiently designed, small Class C motorhomes, Tim attended the major RV shows in Germany. "I especially wanted to get a good feel for the Mercedes-Benz engine and chassis," he said.

"There are several engine-chassis options including Ford and Dodge, but our team decided to go with the M-B engine-chassis based on quality, reliability, and service availability throughout the U.S. and Canada. The engine-chassis with the driver-passenger cabin are assembled in Germany and we buy them

through a Mercedes-Benz dealership in Alabama,” Tim noted.

“Once we made the decision to move forward with our Class C plans, it was like clockwork watching our people go into action,” Bob said. “Tim, our manufacturers’ reps, and our designers interviewed and listened to our dealers to help us define what our customers want in a 24-foot Class C motorhome. Then, our R&D department acquired three M-B engine-chassis units in the fall of 2015 and went to work.”

“While we were developing the ideas for our product and working on a prototype in R&D, two adjacent buildings became available in Winfield, Alabama,” Tim continued. “Ironically, a Canadian RV company attempted to manufacture coaches here in the U.S., but their plan failed and they put their facility up for sale. After our research showed it was a good location for us, we acquired the property. Winfield is only an hour from Red Bay and two hours from our fiberglass plant near Iuka, Mississippi. The location also gave us access to a new labor market.”

In the meantime, Bobby White, the newly-appointed general manager, started in June 2016 to oversee rehabbing and new construction in the Winfield location. “Bobby is a high-energy, problem-solving manager who does a great job at analyzing situations and coming up with plans that work,” Tim said. “In just eight months, Bobby and his team had the facility ready to go into production.”

The buildings required a major clean-up operation, production planning by the company’s industrial engineers, and the installation of new lighting, air circulation equipment, material handling equipment, air compressors, and waste management. The smaller building was dedicated to the paint plant that now has two in-line paint booths and a baking booth. “We are using the same technology, BASF paint, and suppliers that we use in our Belmont paint plant,” Tim said. “We capitalized on a decade of experience in our Belmont facility by bringing a few of our technicians to Winfield to launch our new painting facility. We were able to duplicate the same level of quality that we have in Belmont. As demand increases, we have the space to duplicate the equipment and output of the paint plant.”

Production began in February with the completion of one unit per day. On Monday, March 26, the line started producing two units per day. “Currently, we have shipped 35 units and have sold 15 units. Unit number 50 is going through the line at this writing,” Tim said. “We are getting very positive feedback. In the near future we will move production to three a day and continue from there. We have the plant space to add another

production line as demand increases. This plant will have the capacity to produce 1,000 units annually.”

Product technology in the 2018 Wayfarer 24QW is setting new standards for the Class C market. Each of the two slide-outs is a one-piece 100-percent composite. The five-sided, seamless, fiberglass slide-out box is lined with 1½-inch high-density polyethylene foam purchased in Italy. A penetrating resin goes through the foam and bonds it to the walls of the slide-out, creating the

hardened composite that is so structurally sound that metal framing is unnecessary. Next, the interior paneling is laminated to the foam. Metal backing is placed at strategic points behind the paneling to hold attachments to the slide-out’s walls.

“We are using our same proven Class A technology to manufacture our one-piece fiberglass roofs and our exterior doors for the baggage compartments,” Tim said. “The extruded fiberglass roof curves around the top corners where the roof joins the sidewalls, preventing the possibility of a leak at that juncture. The baggage compartment doors are laser-cut and shaped from 40-gauge aluminum sheets. Inside the coach, the decorative doors

for cabinets are constructed from a lightweight ¾-inch plywood out of Brazil, the same material we use in the Zephyr. We laminate alder to the plywood and create a curved door.”

The DS slide-out comes standard with dinette seating for four. A leatherette sofa/hide-a-bed is optional. A mid-section TV is standard, while the bedroom and exterior TVs are optional. The standard 13K mid-coach air conditioner can be upgraded to a 15K with heat pump.

The rear slide-out accommodates a queen bed (60 x 74 in.). While the black and grey tanks (27- and 33-gallons) are under the floor, the 32-gallon fresh water tank is under the bed. The GVWR is 11,030 lbs. and the CCC is approximately 800 lbs.

Features you do not see with a casual walk-through include the Mercedes-Benz “Lane Keeping Assist” that alerts the driver if the coach is drifting out of the chosen lane, “Collision Prevention Assist,” Sumo springs to smooth out the left-to-right sway, multiplex wiring harnesses, and the Kenwood radio-navigation software (optional).

“The Wayfarer looks like a Tiffin motorhome inside and out,” Tim emphasized. “Fully optioned, it has an MSRP of approximately \$140K. There are cheaper Class C’s on the market. When buyers compare the Wayfarer’s quality and price point to other brands, I believe we will be the clear choice. Tiffin Motorhomes will continue to set the benchmark for service.” **RIS**



# Tiffin Launches the 2018 Allegro RED 37PA Loaded with Standard Features

WITH THE CLASS A MARKET HEATING UP LATE LAST FALL, Tiffin Motorhomes decided to introduce the new 2018 Allegro RED in April of this year – a marked departure from its usual model year changeovers in the mid-summer months. For the introduction of the 2018 REDs, the marketing department chose one of Tiffin’s all-time favorite floorplans featuring the large full bath with slide-out located mid-coach. This popular floorplan was first introduced in the 2015 Allegro Bus, and then offered in the 2016 Phaeton 40AH. It was again made available in the 2015 Allegro RED 37PA. The floorplan was received extremely well in all three brands, using different chassis, engines, and trim levels to create three price points.

## A Coach Loaded with Features

With stunning paint schemes, new front and rear caps, and a new dash, TMH also surprised its competitors in this price point by using upscale furniture manufacturer, Villa, for the driver and passenger chairs and a handsome sofa that folds out to a queen-size bed with air coil springs. A matching recliner with leg lift from Lambright is included in the upgrade package. All of the furniture is upholstered in UltraLeather™ offered in Brown Sugar and Molasses shades (STD) and Toscana Bailey (MSRP \$363). Margaret Mia, Tiffin’s interior designer, created three new décors for the 2018 Allegro RED.

In the 2017 model year, TMH used porcelain tile in the front section of the coach with carpet in the bedroom. For 2018, buyers are offered a choice of two porcelain tiles throughout the coach

as standard: Prospective (a brown sugar color) and Pietre del Nord Alaska (a stone look). Last year the mud flap and air horns were optional at \$363 each. In 2018 they are both standard.

As we have noted in earlier reviews on the Allegro RED brand, the buyer will be pleasantly surprised with the large number of features that are standard, meaning they are included in the coach’s base price (\$269,352 MSRP). Here is quick review of many of the standard features:

- ◆ surround sound entertainment system for music, movies, and much more
- ◆ 2000-watt sine wave inverter
- ◆ four HDMI televisions: three 42" and one 31.5" (outside)
- ◆ satellite radio prep for XM reception (subscription required)
- ◆ 6-way powered driver and passenger seats upholstered in Ultraleather™ with a powered leg lift on the passenger seat
- ◆ a Villa 96-inch sofa (hide-a-bed) upholstered in Ultraleather featuring an Air Comfort mattress and air coil springs.
- ◆ porcelain tile throughout the coach
- ◆ 20 cu. ft. residential refrigerator with ice maker, including four house batteries
- ◆ gooseneck faucet-sprayer with single action hot/cold lever over a double stainless steel sink
- ◆ a dinette upholstered in Ultraleather
- ◆ solid surface countertops throughout the coach
- ◆ full-height backsplash upgrade in galley
- ◆ cooktop with convection /microwave oven
- ◆ every window has solar and privacy tension-pull shades

except the entry door and bath window which have only the privacy shade

- ◆ powered solar and privacy windshield shades
- ◆ two multi-directional windshield fans
- ◆ recessed LED ceiling lights throughout the coach
- ◆ directional lights over DS living room seating
- ◆ solid hardwood cabinet doors, facings, and slide-out fascias
- ◆ all heating vents have matching hardwood covers
- ◆ all AC vents in the ceiling are 360° directional
- ◆ air horns
- ◆ custom mud flap
- ◆ wall-mounted, touch-activated system controls for lighting, HVAC, ceiling exhaust, slide-outs, water pump, BR fan, wet tank monitors, engine preheat, and more
- ◆ four USB ports in the two bedroom side tables
- ◆ four USB ports in cockpit area for driver and passenger



IT IS UNLIKELY you will find another manufacturer who includes as many standard features in an entry-level diesel pusher motorhome. You will find many more standard features in the specifications at the end of this story.

THIS FEATURED COACH boasts the following options for a modest 3.6 percent of its MSRP.

- ◆ upgrade both 15K air conditioners to include a heat pump and the addition of a third 13.5K air conditioner
- ◆ dinette/computer workstation
- ◆ exterior slide-out tray
- ◆ in-dash navigation software
- ◆ central vacuum system
- ◆ stacked washer/dryer
- ◆ in-motion satellite
- ◆ fireplace
- ◆ bedroom ceiling fan
- ◆ CB antenna
- ◆ solar panel prep

The popular 37PA floorplan is a set of uniquely designed spaces skillfully integrated into a functional whole. The two areas to which visitors are immediately drawn are the living area with its large sofa and comfortable recliner and the largest galley Tiffin has offered in its Allegro RED series. All of the living room seating is upholstered in Ultraleather. Then, after visitors take a right turn from the galley/hall into the “residential bathroom,” their approval of the floor plan jumps to about 90 percent.

## FOUR CLOSE-UPS OF THE 37PA’S LIVING SPACES

### The Living Room

With the slides extended, the living room is 12' 9" wide, with a length of 15' 3" from the cabinet in the dash to the wall that encloses the fireplace. The porcelain tile floors throughout the coach add an elegance you expect to see only in private homes. Mocha cabinets, very similar to a rich walnut, are combined with the Sedona décor that features solid surface counter tops and backsplashes that have light brown sugar shades and patterns.

The 96-inch sofa has seating for four that swells around you. Combine the sofa with the recliner, then rotate the driver and passenger chairs 180 degrees to face into the living area, and you have seating for seven. The sofa opens to a queen-size bed with a sectional Air Comfort mattress and air coil springs. My personal review rating of this hide-a-bed is “very comfortable.” (Yes, I’ve actually slept on it.) Your children, grandchildren, and friends will know that you provided the best accommodations for their overnight stay as guests.



The everyday ambiance of the 37PA is enhanced by the surround sound stereo system that includes a 42-inch smart TV with accent backlighting. The optional fireplace just below the television can add real warmth on chilly mornings or cool evenings. A second 42-inch TV over the dash makes it possible for all diners to watch the news while having dinner.

We have always enjoyed the large windows Tiffin uses in its coaches. The DS slide-out has two 45-inch wide windows and the PS slide-out has one 45-inch unit over the dinette/computer workstation.

Since the huge glass exposure in the front cap primarily serves as a windshield, we may not think of it as a window. But it is!

The architects bring the outdoors inside with the maximum amount of “picture windows” possible in the structure of the walls and framing. When your purpose for traveling is to see this beautiful country, big windows make all the difference. I try to remember to thoroughly clean the windshield every morning, making it possible for Carolyn to get great pictures while we are driving. A campground in the Rockies designed one row

of campsites to be “pull-ins” to allow all of the campers to face a wide, fast-flowing stream strewn with huge boulders. While glints of sunlight hit the water the next morning, we sat in the driver and passenger chairs to have breakfast (it was too cool to eat outside).

### The Galley

The TIFFIN STORE-IT-ALL™ ASSURANCE really comes into play in the 37PA’s galley. The galley’s solid surface countertop is 7.5 feet across and offers over 20 square feet of workspace for the cook to prepare meals. The work space opens to a three burner propane cooktop and a double stainless steel sink served by a single-lever control gooseneck faucet. An extendable, button-controlled sprayer pulls from the end of the gooseneck. Three 110v outlets to service your favorite appliances are evenly spaced across the custom-designed backsplash which fully protects the back wall of the galley.

In the cabinetry above the cooktop (see picture), three cabinets on both sides of the microwave/convection oven provide 10.3 cubic feet of storage. The two double-door cabinets to the right of the oven are 22" wide × 21" deep × 15" high. You can customize each cabinet with adjustable shelves. To the left of the oven,





a third cabinet is 13¼ wide × 21 inches deep × 15 inches high. As seasoned RV-ers know all too well, storage design and capacity is one of the key elements in the overall design of an efficient motorhome.

The full-size residential convection/microwave oven (standard) will take care of just about any baking and cooking assignment. If you are not familiar with convection cooking, you will find YouTube tutorials on the internet or you can attend a Tiffin Allegro Club rally where a class is usually scheduled. All convection/microwave ovens in Tiffin motorhomes are vented through the outside wall.

Facing the galley and starting on the left under the countertop, you will see a stack of three drawers (11 × 23 × 5.5)<sup>1</sup>. That's actually 2.4 cu. ft. of space just in this stack of drawers.

Under the three-burner cooktop, there are two large drawers for your cookware (18½ × 17 × 3¼ & 5¼). The cabinet under the stainless steel double sink offers over five cubic feet of storage space and includes custom-built frames to hold the solid surface countertop covers for the sink. Just to the right of the sink, a second stack of three drawers is designed to

store your table service, cooking utensils, hot pads, and drying towels.

There's more! In the Allegro RED 37PA, Tiffin includes a 20-cu. ft. residential refrigerator as standard equipment. The stainless steel double-door refrigerator has premium shelves and compartments with variable temps and humidity controls. The freezer drawer pulls out at knee level. It features sliding shelves and an ice maker. Just to the right of the fridge, you will see two slide-out pantries, each with three shelves.

### The Dining Area

Over a decade ago, many owners visiting the TMH service center were packing their desktop computers and monitors. Some used a folding card table and others took over the dining table to set up their desktop computers. There was no specialized cabinet to house the computer equipment. Innovation won the day when TMH designers came up with the dinette/computer workstation. They integrated a dinette for four into a 72-inch wide credenza housing a computer



1. First number is width of the drawer in inches, second is length, and third is depth.

desk and workstation as well as the dining table.

First, a credenza extending 12 inches out from the wall conceals a steel frame that mounts a 27 × 40-inch table in the middle of its 72-inch width, 9 inches of which slides back into the credenza when only two are dining. That leaves about 22 inches on either side of the 27-inch wide table to create a workstation, two desk drawers, and a filing drawer that accommodates hanging folders. On the north side of the table (see picture), I position my large laptop on top of the credenza. A tray slides out from under the solid surface countertop for my standard size keyboard. Imme-

diately under the keyboard tray, a second slide-out tray can hold a small printer or it can be placed on top of the credenza.

For those few still using a desktop system instead of a laptop, the computer will fit into the center cabinet under the dining table and the monitor can be positioned on top of the credenza. Two 110v outlets and two USB ports are in a pop-up tower that rises from the credenza.

On the south side of the dining table, there are two desk drawers, plus a filing drawer with metal rails for hanging folders. If you take your business with you on the road or you are full-timing, the dinette computer workstation provides

a perfect business center. Twenty square feet of workspace can be created by covering the cooktop and sink with the solid surface countertop covers. The cabinets above the dinette offer nearly seven cubic feet of storage in a convenient location for your business records, samples, and other paraphernalia.

With the growing popularity of Chromebooks, tablets, and smart phones, you may decide to leave your laptop at home. If that's the case, evaluate ordering your 37PA with the U-shaped dinette covered in Ultraleather. It is quite comfortable and has a large storage drawer under each side.

### The Bath

When the rear DS slide-out is deployed, it nearly doubles the floor space for the 37PA's bath. The slide-out houses a handsome vanity with double sinks. Each of the oval bowls is seamlessly molded into the solid surface countertop. Accentuating features include a standard backsplash, nickel-plated, single-lever faucets, a towel ring, and double 110v outlets. The vanity and its twin mirrored cabinets (29 × 21 × 7¼ inches) are brightly

illuminated by three recessed LED lights.

Underneath each lavatory, you will find 1.7 cubic feet of storage space. In the middle, you will notice three drawers (8 × 15 × 3.5 & 5.5 inches). All of the drawers and cabinet doors, the cabinet facings, and the slide-out fascias are solid hardwood. Extra storage and a towel bar are located above the toilet.

The residential size shower (24 × 38-inch footprint) has a 3-panel sliding en-

closure. It boasts nickel-plated hardware and towel rack, a seat, recessed shelf and soap dish, plus a skylight with a sliding closure (insulated and lighted). The adjustable shower head with a cutoff button in the handle is mounted on a vertical pole. You will step out of the shower onto a porcelain tile floor.

The bath has a powered ceiling vent. Touch switches for the vent, water pump, and lights are in a wall console by the door.



## The Bedroom

Most Tiffin coaches come with the choice of a queen- or king-size bed. This particular Allegro RED has the queen-size which provides several extra inches on either side, useful space when it comes to making the bed in the morning. The floor area gained by deploying the opposing slide-outs creates a spacious room. Including the depth of the closet, the total floor space of the bedroom is approximately 12 feet north-south and 11 feet east-west. That leaves nearly four feet at the end of the bed for dressing space and moving about. And there is plenty of room between the bed and the closet doors to make your clothing selections. Except for the frames, the closet doors are full mirrors, creating a visual perception that makes the bedroom feel much larger.

In the sidewalls of the bed slide-out, two small windows provide fresh air movement. The egress window in the opposite slide-out creates a nice cross ventilation. To really move some air, close the bedroom and bath doors to the hall and set the exhaust fan in the bathroom to one of three speeds. You've now got an attic fan working for you. This coach also has an optional ceiling fan.

A Tiffin bedroom is the epitome of good storage design. The four-door cabinet over the bed has 10 cubic feet of storage, and under the bed you'll find another 10 cubic feet. In the side of each end table, Tiffin built an open box design for stashing your book, magazine, or newspaper before turning out the light. The front of each end table has two USB ports to power up your iPad, tablet, iPhone, or Kindle, plus a 15-inch door that opens to a small storage compartment. Both side walls in the bed slide-out have 110v service. A control module on the south slide-out wall has lighted touch switches for the ceiling and hall lights, the light master for the coach, the door light, and variable speeds for the ceiling fan.

The double sliding-door wardrobe in the bedroom's rear wall is 64 inches wide, 62 inches high, and 20.5 inches deep. The remainder of the rear wall houses the optional stacked washer and dryer by Splen-

dide, which is hidden by a sliding door that conveniently moves to the left and remains out of the way while you are using the washer and dryer.

A unique feature in the 37PA's floor-plan is the double set of sliding doors housed in the middle of the forward bedroom wall. One door moves east for privacy between the bath and bedroom and the other moves west to close off the bedroom from the galley-hall. This bedroom-bath configuration has become so

popular that it is now offered in four of Tiffin's coaches.

The bedroom portion of the DS slide (the other half of the slide-out is the double lavatory) offers four large drawers (41 × 11 × 7 and 14 × 11 × 7 inches), a clothes hamper, two overhead cabinets above the egress window, and a louvered double door compartment for the coach's entertainment system. Each chest has a solid surface countertop. A 42-inch smart HDMI television is standard on the 37PA.



**Lighting**

The lighting in Tiffin coaches just gets better every year. I feel sure Tiffin has an engineer who specializes in lighting. The design for lighting is both general and specific. The carefully placed recessed lights in the ceiling provide a general evenness of light throughout the rooms. There are four recessed LED lights in the ceiling of the DS slide-out. Add to that four swivel reading lights attached to the cabinets (see arrow) above the sofa and recliner, plus a designer sconce light on the wall and you have lighting for specific activities. There are three recessed lights in the ceiling of the PS slide-out above the dinette/computer workstation. Whether you are working or dining, you have good lighting. The natural light provided by the large windows in the slide-outs add measureably to the brightness of the room.

Recessed lights are carefully placed throughout the coach to provide lighting for all activities. Three are located over the galley, one directly over the cooktop, and 13 in the main ceiling of the living room and galley areas. There are two ceiling lights in the entry area that come on automatically when you open the front door. When you are traveling, the driver and passenger have toggle switches for personal map lights. We will come back to the cockpit later for a full report on its features.

The bath, bedroom, and closet areas are well lighted, too, with three recessed lights above the double sink plus one center ceiling light in the bath. The shower has a huge skylight. If reading in bed is your pleasure, a directional wall sconce will focus the light right where you want it.

Tiffin also puts lighting outside. LEDs are used at the entry door and on the PS mid-section for illuminating your porch in the evening. Nothing could be more frustrating than trying to hold a flashlight while searching for something in the basement. Cargo lights are in all of the storage compartments. The utility bay has a bright motion-sensitive light for taking care of hookups when you arrive after dark.



**Solar & Privacy Shades**

In the last 14 years, the solar and privacy shades have improved a couple of light years in technology and materials. In fact, we didn't even call them solar and privacy shades 14 years ago. They were called day-night shades, curtains, and sun visors.

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

The solar and privacy shades for the side windows in the Allegro RED's cockpit can be raised or lowered by a quick tug on the bottom rail of the shade that releases a tension spring. A second

tug will make the shade stop wherever you wish. The shades in the living area, bedroom, and bath operate with the same ease to bring the amount of light you wish to have into the coach.



## Heating and Air Conditioning

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

All of the 2018 Allegro RED floor plans utilize two roof-mounted 15,000 BTU air conditioners. This coach has optional heat pumps on the 15K AC units plus an additional mid-coach 13.5K air conditioner. When the temperatures drop to the mid-30s and 40s on cool mornings, you can utilize the campground's power to warm your coach. When the temps really drop, the coach's two propane furnaces will keep the 37PA toasty warm.



## DRIVING THE 2018 ALLEGRO RED 37PA

THE FUNCTIONALITY of the Allegro RED's cockpit is right at the top of the chart. Beginning with a Villa chair with 6-way power adjustments that will assure the pilot's comfort, the RED has a dash cluster with instruments large enough to provide clear recognition of the coach's performance data.

Three large round instruments provide the data. The center gauge is dedicated to the speedometer. The top half of the left circular cluster displays the RPM. The lower half displays the fuel, amps, and coolant gauges. The right circular cluster is quartered for front and rear PSI, oil pressure, and engine temperature. Below the circular clusters, a long rectangular display provides checklists, odometer, and two trip meters, plus symbols for system alerts. The steering column position can be adjusted to accommodate your view of the dash or to add to your driving comfort.

The ergonomically designed dash to the right of the steering column features Tiffin's Triple Vision color monitor for the three exterior cameras. While most side camera displays are activated by the turn signal, you can touch a button to monitor traffic on either side and the rear before you signal your move to change lanes. The monitor can also be used to view the exterior of the coach at night to check safety concerns. The cameras can be adjusted for day-night vision, contrast, and sound.

Two in-dash AC vents are located to the NE and NW of the steering column.

Kenwood combines Garmin's navigation software (optional) system with its AM-FM stereo and satellite-ready radio (subscription required). Located in the dash immediately under the Kenwood system, seven toggle switches control the step cover, the driver fan in the upper left corner of the windshield, the solar shade, the night shade, gen start/stop, map light, and radio. To the right of the toggle switches, you will notice Denso's new heating and air controls with the best functionality and design in the industry.

The parking brake, headlight switches, and windshield wiper/spray controls are in a small dash area to the left of the steering column. In the wall console, the Allison electronic shifting panel is located at the driver's fingertips. The heater switch and directional controls for the mirrors are adjacent to the shift panel. A 4-way directional toggle controls the display for checklists, trip meters, and odometer. Next you will see four toggles for the auxiliary start switch, air horn selector, ICC flash, and exhaust brake. The most important item on the console may be the driver's mug holder. When you are





ready to level the coach at your campsite, the HWH hydraulic leveling system is located at the rear of the console.

The passenger seat also has 6-way power adjustments and a console with toggles for the step cover, map light, and overhead

fan, plus two USB ports and a cup holder. Both the passenger and driver consoles have compartments near the floor for maps, magazines, newspapers, etc. A 110v service outlet is located at the top of the stairwell.

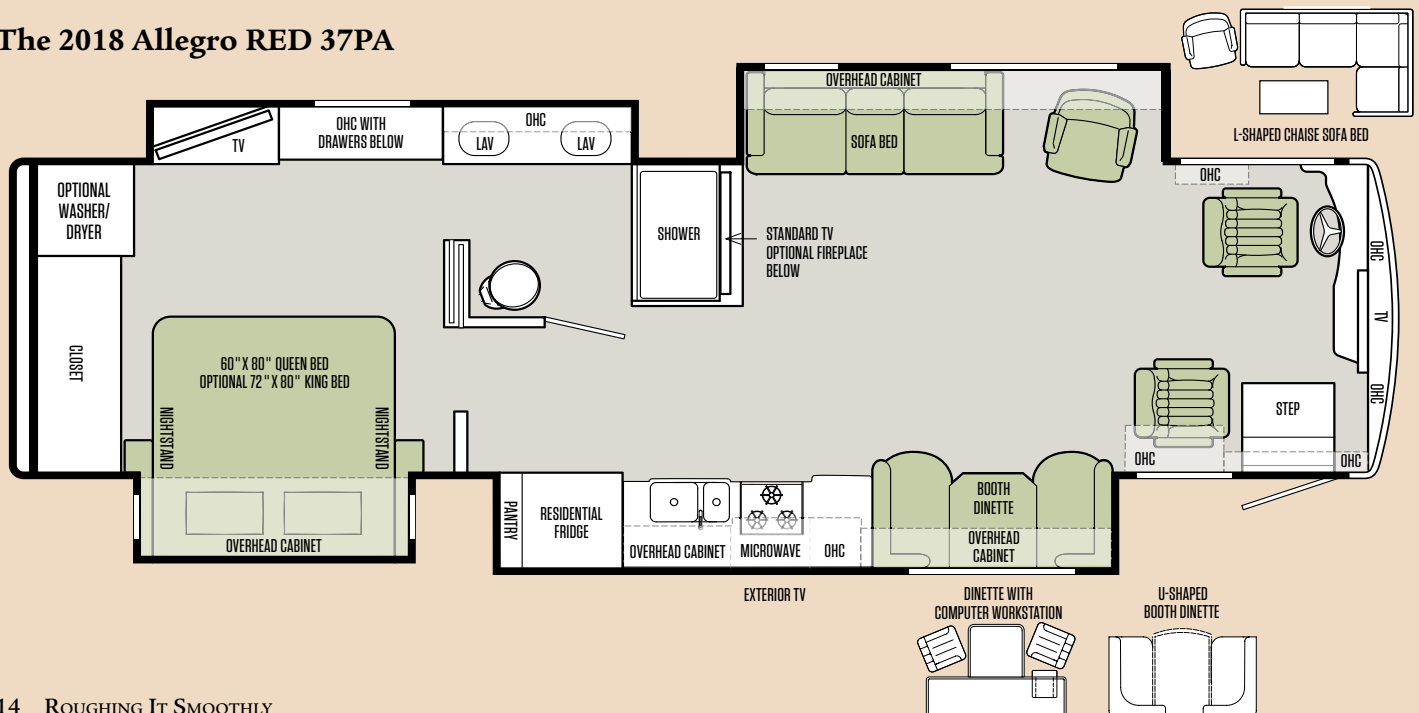
Tiffin builds the Allegro RED on a Freightliner rear engine diesel chassis that features a raised rail frame, air ride suspension, full air brakes, and an exhaust brake. No matter which of Tiffin's diesel-powered coaches you choose, each coach's weight is carefully matched to a power plant and transmission that delivers the right torque and horsepower.

The RED's power plant is a Cummins ISB 6.7-liter electronic diesel, turbocharged, aftercooled engine. With a satisfying surge of power, the 37PA moves out smoothly from a dead stop to 65 miles per hour in approximately 32 seconds. Although the shifting is very smooth, you can feel the Allison transmission moving through its six gears effortlessly. The engine hits peak torque of 800 lb-ft at 1,800 RPM, and winds out at approximately 1,700 RPM when you are cruising at 65 MPH. The fuel tank can be filled from either side of the coach, and the DEF is now located on the driver's side. If you are planning to trade a gas coach for a Tiffin diesel pusher, you will be pleased to discover a compressed air supply line on all of TMH's diesels. Never again will you have to look for an air pump at a fuel station.

The coach's four air bags and tuned shocks delivered a comfortably smooth ride. Over the years TMH has continued to improve the interior quietness of its coaches. With concealed speakers in the opposing upper corners of the cockpit, one can enjoy selections from Sirius radio and music from your favorite CDs or MP3 player. Good music and the fully adjustable Villa driver and passenger seats can make the miles evaporate.

The thoughtfully designed, interactive floor plan, a great ride, and a tight, quality-built interior will put the 2018 Allegro RED 37PA on many RVers' MUST SEE AND TEST DRIVE list. **RIS**

## The 2018 Allegro RED 37PA



# SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2018 Allegro RED 37PA, Quad Slide

Base MSRP\* – \$269,352 MSRP as tested with options – \$279,140

## STANDARD FEATURES

### Structural

Laminated floor, sidewall, and roof  
Steel / aluminum reinforced structure  
One-piece moisture resistant molded fiberglass roof cap

### Automotive

Allison 3000 MH six-speed automatic transmission with lock-up (torque converter)  
Cummins ISB turbocharged, aftercooled 6.7 liter electronic diesel  
Peak horsepower: 360 @ 2,600 rpm  
Peak torque: 800 lb-ft @ 1,800 rpm  
Raised rail chassis frame  
Air ride suspension (4 air bags)  
55° wheel cut  
Full air brakes with automatic slack adjusters and ABS  
Exhaust brake  
18-inch steering wheel  
Cruise control  
Fog lights  
Daytime running lights  
Emergency start switch

### Exterior

BASF full body paint  
Fiberglass front & rear caps  
Dual fuel fills  
Large tinted one-piece windshield  
8.0 Kw Onan Quiet Diesel generator  
Hydraulic automatic leveling jacks  
Heated power mirrors with remote adjustment  
Horizontal mounted, single motor intermittent wipers  
Gel-coat fiberglass walls  
Deadbolt front entrance door  
Double electric step  
Air horns  
Exterior patio light – LED  
Power patio awning with aluminum weather shield  
Exterior TV in PS wall  
Electric entry door awning  
Awnings over slide-outs  
Aluminum wheels  
Exterior side-opening, swing-out storage doors with gas shocks  
Exterior storage compartment lights  
Single handle lockable storage door latches  
Ridged long-life storage boxes  
Exterior storage compartment lights  
Roof ladder  
¾-inch thick single pane windows  
Heated water and holding tank compartments  
Four 6v auxiliary batteries  
2000 watt inverter  
50-amp service  
External tripod satellite hookup  
Black holding tank flush system  
Exterior rinse hose/shower  
Water filter  
Gravity water fill  
110v exterior receptacle  
110v/12v converter  
Undercoating  
Digital/analog high-def TV antenna  
Cable TV ready  
Two 15,000 BTU low profile roof A/C systems  
Extraordinaire™ AC system  
A/C condensation drains  
Roof ladder  
Customized mud flaps with diffuser  
Color back-up camera & monitor  
Side view cameras activated by turn signals  
Chrome mirror heads with integrated turn signal cameras

Front cap protective film

### Driver's Compartment

6-way power driver & passenger seats upholstered in Ultraleather  
6-way power passenger seat w/footrest upholstered in Ultraleather  
Shoulder and seatbelt combined into driver & passenger chairs  
Entry floor light  
Step switch and 12v disconnect switch  
Lighted instrument panel  
Single CD player & AM/FM stereo  
Satellite ready radio (subscription required)  
42-inch flat screen HDMI color television over dash  
ICC courtesy lights  
12v dash receptacle  
12v disconnect switch  
USB dash receptacles  
Padded dash  
Dual dash fans  
Tilt steering wheel  
Full-width powered solar & privacy windshield shades  
Manual driver and passenger solar & privacy shades on side windows  
Fire extinguisher  
Wood console in dash with cabinet drawer

### Living Area / Dinette

96-inch sofa-bed with Ultraleather  
Recliner with leg lift, Ultraleather  
TV in entertainment center  
Custom infrared repeater

### Kitchen

Solid surface countertops  
Countertop-backsplash upgrade  
Cooktop with convection/microwave oven with exterior vent  
Double bowl stainless steel kitchen sink  
Solid surface sink covers  
Single lever satin nickel faucet and sprayer  
Under counter storage receptacles for sink covers  
Residential refrigerator with roll-out drawer freezer  
3-burner recessed cooktop with gas oven  
Solid surface covers for cooktop  
Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan  
Two sets of stacked drawers under countertop

### Bath

Double door medicine cabinet with mirrors  
Skylight in shower with sliding cover & LED light  
Molded fiberglass one-piece shower  
Fan-Tastic® power roof vent fan  
Solid surface vanity top and bowl  
Satin nickel vanity faucet

### Bedroom

Wardrobe with two automatic lights  
Four OH storage cabinets in bed slide-out  
Closet ready for stackable washer/dryer  
Bed comforter with throw pillows  
Queen-size bed  
Solar/privacy tension pull shades  
Innerspring mattress  
Under bed storage  
Night stands with 110v outlets and USB ports  
Built-in dresser with 4 drawers  
Solid surface countertops  
Laundry hamper  
42-inch HDMI color television  
Carbon monoxide detector  
LPG leak detector

### General Interior

7-ft. ceilings  
Soft touch vinyl ceilings  
Solid hardwood cabinet fascias  
High gloss raised panel hardwood cabinet doors and drawer fronts  
Ball bearing drawer slides  
Porcelain tile flooring throughout the coach  
LED lighting  
Home theater surround sound system (includes DVD player)  
Treated carpet and fabrics  
Solar/privacy tension pull shades (chainless)  
Power roof vents  
12v disconnect switch  
2000 watt sine wave inverter  
Tank level monitoring system  
Smoke detector  
Carbon monoxide detector  
LPG leak detector  
10-gal. DSI gas/electric water heater  
Power step well cover  
Two ducted furnaces

## OPTIONAL CHOICES & FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Crimson Full Body Paint STD  
Mocha Classic cabinetry STD  
Sedona interior STD  
Prospective porcelain tile STD  
Brown Sugar Ultraleather™ (all furniture) STD  
96-inch sofa-bed & recliner STD  
Residential refrigerator w/4 batteries STD  
Cooktop/Convection Microwave STD  
Solid non-opening window, passenger side STD  
Two 15,000 AC w/heat pumps & 13.5K AC CB antenna  
Bedroom ceiling fan  
Dinette computer workstation  
In-dash navigation system  
Fireplace  
One exterior slide-out tray (manual)  
Solar panel prep  
In-motion satellite  
Stacked washer/dryer  
Vacuum cleaner built-in

## OTHER OPTIONAL CHOICES & FEATURES AVAILABLE

English Classic Chestnut cabinetry STD  
Amber Glazed Classic cabinetry  
Pietre del Nord Alaska porcelain tile STD  
Toscana Bailey Ultraleather  
Molasses Ultraleather STD  
L-shaped sofa and lounge recliner  
3-burner cooktop w/oven and convection/microwave oven  
Pre-wire for Traveler satellite  
Booth dinette  
Vertical side-opening window, passenger side  
King bed

## MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 252"  
Overall length – 38' 2"  
Overall height w/roof air – 12'10"  
Interior height – 84"  
Overall width – 101"  
Interior width – 96"

## WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 32,000 lb.  
Front GAWR – 12,000 lb.  
Rear GAWR – 20,000 lb.  
GVWR – 32,000 lb.

GCWR – 42,000 lb.  
UWV – 27,332 lb.  
CCC – 3,100 lb.  
Trailer hitch capacity – 5,000 lb.

## POWER TRAIN

Engine – 360 hp Cummins ISB turbocharged, aftercooled 6.7 liter electronic diesel  
Torque – 660 lb.-ft. at 1,600 rpm  
Transmission – Allison 3000 MH electronic six speed with lock-up  
Tire Size – Michelin XZE 275/80R22.5 LRG  
Alternator – Delco Remy 160 amps

## CHASSIS

Frame – Freightliner XCR Series  
Frame Design – Raised rail  
Anti-locking Braking System – WABCO 4M/4S ABS System  
Suspension (front) – Neway Air  
Suspension (rear) – Freightliner V-Ride  
Shock Absorbers – Sachs tuned  
Automatic Leveling 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 (bedroom, 2; sofa sleeper, 2)  
Fuel tank – 100 gallons  
Freshwater – 100 gallons  
Black water – 50 gallons  
Grey water – 70 gallons  
LPG tank – (30 gallons; can be filled to 80% capacity) – 24 gallons  
Basement storage: 119 cubic feet (approx.)

## 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.

## UWV

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

## DEALERS

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

## PLEASE NOTE

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

## Improving the Ride and Handling of the Ford F-53 Chassis

The Tiffin Allegro Open Road is built on a Ford chassis and powered by a Ford 6.8 liter V-10 320-hp engine that burns standard 87-octane gas. Depending on the length of the motorhome, the Allegro has three GVWRs: 22,000 lb., 24,000 lb., and 26,000 lb. Tiffin offers seven floorplans on these three Ford chassis. After the steel floor and supporting outriggers are welded to the twin-rail chassis, the motorhome box with its two to four slide-outs is securely attached to the steel floor.

As standard equipment, Ford delivers its chassis with leaf springs and either Bilstein or its own branded shocks. At least five U.S. motorhome manufacturers use the Ford F-53 chassis and 320-hp engine to build their Class A gas-powered coaches. They all face the same owner complaints regarding ride and handling.

As an option to address both issues, Tiffin offers four Sumo springs designed specifically by SuperSprings, Inc., for the Ford chassis. The proprietary micro-cellular urethane air spring features progressive spring rates designed to improve driver control and ride comfort.

A 56-year-old company owned by Robert and John Henderson in Grants Pass, Oregon, has addressed on a more comprehensive scale the ride and handling of the F-53 chassis. Over the last 25 years, Henderson's Line-Up, Brake and RV, Inc. has developed a following of owners whose coaches are built on the F-53 chassis and who are pleased with the modifications the Hendersons have made to their coaches.

Henderson's Line-up has invested many years of research to improve the ride and handling of Class A coaches on the Ford chassis. While Sumo springs are a major component in the system, there is more that can be done in combination with the Sumos.

Robert and John Henderson, the second generation to own and operate the business, began serving recreational vehicles in the late 1980s to correct steering, suspension, and braking prob-

lems. "We quickly learned how the many variables in wheelbase, overall length, overhang past the rear wheels, and weight distribution affect the ride and handling of motorhomes," Robert said. "We knew we had to find 'common denominators.' Because there were no products at that time to solve the problems some of our customers were experiencing, we established our SuperSteer manufacturing division and designed several components."

The Hendersons subsequently designed and developed a systematic approach to quantitatively evaluate 16 factors that affect the ride and handling of a motorhome. They trademarked the evaluation forms and the process as Road Performance Assessment®. You can view the two-page RPA form and the actual two-page RPA evaluation of a 2016 coach on a F-53, 24,000 lb. chassis at [rismag.com](http://rismag.com). The RPA includes weighing all four corners and measuring the overhang versus the wheelbase—an important part of the analysis of a coach.

After making the modifications to many different brands built on the F-53, they decided to build a demonstration unit to show at RV dealerships across the U.S. that included all the components they use to improve the ride and handling of the coach. When it came time to finally select a gas coach with the F-53 chassis, the 2016 Tiffin Allegro Open Road was at the top of their list.

When an owner visits the Grants Pass store, John Henderson drives their coach over 15 miles of roads in the area selected to demonstrate the ride and handling issues in the F-53 chassis. I rode with Robert and John in their new Allegro Open Road to evaluate its characteristics for ride and handling before any additional components were installed.

During the test drive, the coach's response to each test characteristic is recorded on a scale of 1 (NEEDS ATTENTION) to 10 (EXCELLENT). The numeric evaluation of each response is admittedly objective, but is based on years of experience and comparison. The characteristics include:

PLAY	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After	BOUNCE	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After
RETURNABILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After	VIBRATION	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After
STEERING WHEEL	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After	RIDE HEIGHT	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After
PULL (L) & (R)	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After	BRAKES	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After
HARSH RIDE	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After	TAILWAG	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After
WANDER	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After	Q-LANE CHANGE	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After
SWAY	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After	ACCEL/POWER	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After
PORPOISING	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After	NOISE/AERODYN	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="checkbox"/> After

Two boxes beside each characteristic on the RPA are labeled Before and After. You can see the RPA forms at [rismag.com](http://rismag.com).

Following the initial numeric evaluations made on the 32SA's test ride, a plan was designed to add components manufactured by SuperSteer, SuperSprings, Roadmaster, Safe-T-Plus, and Koni that would significantly improve the ride and handling of the coach. A test ride following the installation of the recommended components revealed significant improvements.

PLAY in the steering was almost non-existent in the initial test drive and was rated an 8. Therefore, no component was added to address PLAY in the steering. The Before and After score for PLAY was 8 / 8.

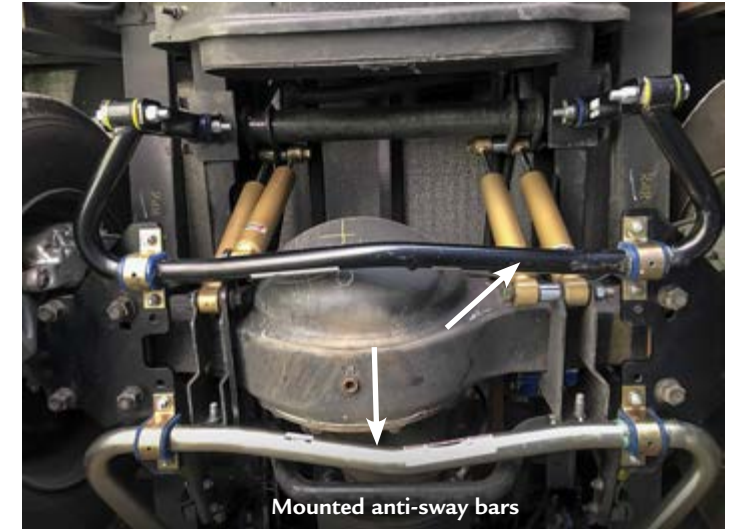


Safe-T-Plus

By comparison, RETURNABILITY was rated 1 on the initial test drive. The term refers to the ability of the wheels and steering mechanism following a 90-degree turn to come back to true center without assistance from the driver. This is also tested and evaluated at all speeds up to and including freeway limits. When the coach does not want to find its own center, that represents poor RETURNABILITY. After the Safe-T-Plus steering control with 230 lbs. of centering force was added, the RETURNABILITY was rated an 8. The Before and After score was 1 / 8.

On a 4-lane highway, the QUICK LANE CHANGE to avoid a simulated collision with the car ahead revealed the most surprising deficiency. The sharp swerve caused the coach to lean over what felt like 30 degrees. This factor was scored as 1. The problem was addressed in conjunction with the SWAY.

Body roll (general instability or side-to-side tipping comparable to a boat) is described as SWAY and was very pronounced in this coach. With a light wind and otherwise good driving conditions, SWAY was rated as 1. Most of the energy going from side-to-side was stopped with a Roadmaster front 1¾-inch anti-sway bar, a rear facing 1½-inch Roadmaster anti-sway bar



Mounted anti-sway bars

mounted behind the rear differential, a forward facing 1¾-inch anti-sway bar mounted in front of the rear differential (in addition to Ford's factory-installed anti-sway bar), a SuperSteer rear trac bar, and four Sumo springs. The subsequent rating for both SWAY and QUICK LANE CHANGE was 9.

The following Quad Shock Kit by SuperSteer also factored into the improved SWAY rating.



Quad shocks mounted

The reduced horizontal energy seemed to be refocused vertically on a second road test when we noticed much more up and



Henderson's Line-Up building



down BOUNCE. We rated this problem at 3. To dissipate that energy, John installed dual Koni shocks on both sides of the differential, reducing BOUNCE and improving the score to 7. The Sumo springs reduce the SWAY by 30 to 35 percent. Obviously, the BOUNCE and HARSH RIDE are inextricably related.



A factory-installed rear Sumo spring

On a 2-lane backroad with considerable broken asphalt, we felt every bump. The coach's response to a HARSH RIDE was rated as a 1. With Ford's standard equipment, the leaf springs were flat level. The Sumos helped in this situation by taking most of the tension off of the leaf springs, allowing them to absorb energy. The Sumo springs' contribution in correcting a harsh ride is the stretch from 8 to 12 inches (50 percent).

The Sumos absorb and dissipate energy in compression, slowing down the stroke of the fall of the coach when the tires hit a pothole. The Sumos' elasticity or stretch dampens the rebound. The installation of Koni shocks helped on the rebound side, while allowing soft compression. The overall ride quality rating improved from 1 to 6.

The problem of TAILWAG increases in direct proportion to the increased distance between the rear axle and the end of the coach. In a noticeable crosswind, the 32SA had a significant measurement of 3. The Roadmaster anti-sway bar and the



A SuperSteer dual sway bar kit

SuperSteer anti-sway bar kit combined with the SuperSteer rear track bar, brought this rating up to an 8.

Although PORPOISING was not considered to be a serious problem, the nose of the coach did tip downward during hard braking which Robert rated as a 4. The installation of the six Koni shocks corrected this minor problem and brought the rating up to a 7.

Following are the list of components that improved 14 of the 16 assessments made on the 2016 Allegro 32SA:

- Tire pressure was set to 80 psi in all six tires.
- Front and rear Sumo Springs designed for the F-53 chassis
- Front and rear Koni shock absorbers (six in all)
- Rear SuperSteer Quad Shock kit\*
- Front 1 3/4-inch Roadmaster anti-sway bar
- Rear 1 1/2-inch Roadmaster anti-sway bar
- A forward facing 1 3/4-inch anti-sway bar
- SuperSteer rear trac bar
- Safe-T-Plus attached from the tie-rods to the front axle

\*A front SuperSteer Quad Shock is available for the 22K chassis, and is coming soon for the 24K and 26K chassis.

To assure the owner's satisfaction with the driving and handling of his/her coach, Robert and John Henderson go over each of the assessments subsequent to the corrective component installations and the follow-up road tests.

Chassis and tire alignment is the basic first step to improve ride and handling. "Ford gives you the specification and we try to get it on the high end of that spec and assure more positive caster on the alignment," John said. At this point we reviewed the results.

On the 2016 Allegro 32SA, we determined that the PLAY in steering was negligible and rated the **Before** and **After 8/8**. RETURNABILITY was improved from 1 to 8. The Ford factory installation of the STEERING WHEEL position was acceptable. We also found that the PULL (L) or (R) was acceptable.

The HARSH RIDE, originally rated as 1, was corrected by Sumo springs and Koni shocks for an improved rating of 6.



Installed view of SuperSteer trac bar

WANDER was very noticeable and rated at 3. It was corrected with the installation of Safe-T-Plus and the SuperSteer rear track bar, achieving a revised rating of 8. John noted that the steering on this coach might be tighter than normal.

SWAY, or body roll, can be very objectionable even to the point that some passengers feel seasick. Connected to the leaning or tipping caused by the QUICK LANE CHANGE, both problems are corrected by Roadmaster/SuperSteer's specially made anti-sway bars and the SuperSteer trac bar.



SuperSteer rear trac bar

The SWAY improvement was 1/9 and the QUICK LANE CHANGE evaluation moved from 1 to 8.

PORPOISING was corrected with Koni shocks and moved the evaluation up to a 7. BOUNCE was reduced by the Koni shocks and the Sumo springs, improving from 3 to 7. VIBRATION was not a significant problem, but we think there was a slight improvement 8/9. RIDE HEIGHT and BRAKES functioned perfectly and needed no adjustments.

The rear axle becomes the pivot point when a coach has a TAILWAG problem. The components that were added produced a noticeable improvement of 3/8. The components that were added to the coach were designed to provide a better ride and improve handling, but they did not address the last two items on the RPA: ACCELERATION/POWER and NOISE/AERODYNAMICS.

"By controlling the lateral and vertical motion, we are trying to optimize the handling and still provide a good ride," Robert said. "Most owners are willing to sacrifice a little of the marshmallow effect to have better control."

Depending on the number of components required to reach the owner's desired level of improved ride and handling, the cost of modifying an Allegro Open Road will vary from \$850 to \$8,000. Robert and John Henderson's ultimate goal is to improve the ride and handling of each coach to the satisfaction of its owner. For more information, contact Robert or John at Henderson's Line-up (888-898-3281).

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For more info, go to [rismag.com](http://rismag.com), *Roughing It Smoothly* 14:2

## World's first illuminated tow bar

Introducing Roadmaster's Nighthawk™, a non-binding, aluminum alloy tow bar incorporating a jaw-dropping design with embedded LED lights. It includes internally-routed safety cables and power cord, an attractive black matte finish, and solid stainless steel inner arms. Nighthawk is Roadmaster's first tow bar designed for EZ5, MX and MS tow bar mounting brackets, which incorporate the strength of the crossbar into the mounting bracket — so no crossbar is required.

The Nighthawk has the sleek look of the Sterling™ All-Terrain™ tow bar, with which it shares many performance and convenience features, including a military-grade aluminum alloy shell. ➔

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Nighthawk is motorhome mounted and has an 8,000-pound capacity. It only weighs 35 pounds, yet tows up to four tons.

The Nighthawk's most prominent features are as follows:

- ◆ A dazzling row of LEDs along each tow bar arm that illuminate with the motorhome's lights. The 300-lumen LEDs add safety and convenience to nighttime towing — what was the darkest portion of the towing system is now easily visible to other drivers, and also visible when it comes time to disconnect.
- ◆ Non-binding Freedom Latch™ — disconnects first time, every time. A patented cam design inside the Freedom Latch transforms linear motion into rotary motion at a 400-to-one ratio — five pounds of force against the latch equals 2,000 pounds

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of force against the lock. So you'll never have to straighten and align your towed vehicle and motorhome to release the tow bar — the Freedom Latch releases the tow bar at any angle or bind — first time, every time.

- ◆ Black matte powder coat finish, textured for easy grip. This finish exceeds all 500-hour salt spray, high-impact and extreme weather standards. In this process, charged particles of pigment are sprayed onto the surface of the tow bar, then baked at more than 400 degrees. The paint fuses to the metal. The result is a uniform, thick and extremely durable finish — three times stronger than solvent-based paint.

- ◆ Solid stainless steel inner arms for smooth, trouble-free operation and easy maintenance. Stainless steel looks better, lasts longer and prevents corrosion that binds — Roadmaster tow bars are the most rust-free in the industry.

- ◆ One-person quick connect and disconnect — telescoping, independently-adjustable inner arms are easy to maneuver into position. Simply pin them in place and then drive your motorhome away. The arms automatically extend, center and lock in place. Part number 676; MSRP: \$1,250. Call 800-669-9690 or visit [roadmasterinc.com](http://roadmasterinc.com) for more information.

**Alabama Head Football Coach Nick Saban Leads Grand Opening Celebration of Tiffin's New Class C Plant**

by Rick Kessler, RVBusiness

University of Alabama head football coach Nick Saban was the honored guest recently in Winfield, Alabama, for a ribbon-cutting, grand opening celebration of Tiffin Motorhome's new production facilities for its 2017 Wayfarer 24QW, the company's long-awaited re-entry into the Class C marketplace. Plant tours and photo ops followed the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

As the manufacturer of Class A motorhomes since 1972, the company has close ties to the Crimson Tide football program. Founder Bob Tiffin's son, Van, and grandson, Leigh, were place-

kickers for Alabama. Additionally, the manufacturer, which is headquartered in Red Bay, Ala., purchases the Sprinter chassis for the Wayfarer line from Saban's Mercedes-Benz dealership in Birmingham, Ala., one of several he owns.

Bobby White, Tiffin's general manager of the Winfield Wayfarer production facility told RVBusiness that Saban asked to go on a tour because he was really interested in the manufacturing process. "He told me, 'I'm just a garage guy at heart from

*Continued on page 80*



Company executives and honored guests attending the grand opening of Tiffin's new Class C plant on March 29 included (from left) Tony Riley, Tiffin HR director; Lynne and Tim Tiffin; Coach Saban; Bob Tiffin; Randy Price, Winfield mayor; and general manager Bobby White.



While touring the plant, Coach Saban asked pertinent questions about the Wayfarer assembly plant as general manager Bobby White and CEO Bob Tiffin provided answers. Others in the tour group included Tim Tiffin and Tony Riley.



Coach Nick Saban congratulates Bob Tiffin as Tim Tiffin looks on. Coach Saban's Mercedes-Benz dealership supplies the M-B engine and chassis on which the Wayfarer Class C motorhomes are built.



General manager Bobby White and Tim Tiffin explain some of the production processes in the assembly of the Wayfarer. This image shows the floor of the coach as plumbing and wiring harnesses are installed.

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# An Island Adventure

IN NEWPORT, THERE'S ALL THOSE MANSIONS—AND MUCH MORE

**L**IT'S NOT EVERY DAY YOU DRIVE YOUR MOTORHOME over ocean waters to camp on an island, but that's one way you can get to the eastern part of the state of Rhode Island that *actually is an island* surrounded by Atlantic waters on all sides. Doing it could turn into one of your best trips.

Why visit this island, a popular destination for tourists for over three hundred and fifty years? To find out, take RI 138 east, cross high above the waters of Narragansett Bay on the 2.1 mile-long Pell Bridge, and you'll land in historic Newport. It's a city where some of America's earliest history happened; one that grew wealthy as England's leading port before there was a United States; fell onto hard times when the revolution freed the country from British rule; was then made famous and rich again in the 1800s by the wealthiest of America's hifalutin, party-loving society.

Today you can enjoy the same pleasant sea breezes and beaches that attracted all those who came before. But what makes Newport unique is that much of its past—glorious, and not so much—remains for you to see, feel, and visit. Tour-

ing the famous “summer cottages,” some of which have huge ballrooms and fifty or more rooms, is first on most everybody's bucket list. In 2016, a million people visited the mansions, ten of which have been “saved,” restored, and opened to visitors by The Preservation Society of Newport County.

In Newport, you can eat high on the hog in a farmhouse-style building raised 365 years ago in 1652 and then converted to become the White Horse Tavern in 1673. Said to be America's first and oldest, the White Horse Tavern survived the British invasion of Newport in 1775 and has for nearly 350 years been a popular eating and drinking establishment. Like many other local restaurants, the White Horse offers fresh fish, clams, and lobster straight from Narragansett Bay. There's a restaurant or pub in this city to please every palate, some easy on the pocket-book and some, more formal, specialize in fine dining and price accordingly. For our own special “evening out,” we chose the Castle Hill Inn and admired both the food and service.

Sure, there's much more you can do than eat or try to comprehend the legends society's *crème de la crème* left in all those mansions. You *simply must* trod the city's famed 3.5 mile Cliff Walk, a National Recreation Trail. And you might visit the Museum

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Text by Norman Spray / Photography by Rhonda Spray



Facing page: Marble House, the \$11 million “cottage” built by William K. Vanderbilt for his wife, Alva. Those gleaming white walls were built with a half million cubic feet of white marble. Most expensive of all the Newport mansions, its elegance outdid even *The Breakers* built by his brother, Cornelius II.

Left: Visitors tour the fifty-foot-high great hall of *The Breakers*, the seventy-room “cottage” occupied—at least during the summer seasons—by the Cornelius II Vanderbilt family. The great hall was often used as a ballroom.



Newport’s famed Cliff Walk has paved very easy sections, as shown in this stretch beneath the Marble House mansion, and other bluff-side passages that are difficult and dangerous.

of Yachting and learn about the years that Newport hosted the America’s Cup races or maybe even get on the courts at the International Lawn Tennis Hall of Fame. Ladies are sure to enjoy the boutiques lining cobblestone streets. You can charter a boat and go fishing or look for seals (if you visit in winter); take your family sailing or take sailing lessons; visit the outstanding Newport Museum of Art; or drive by a working lighthouse. A driver-narrated Historic Trolley Tour will give you a good overview of where things are in Newport. You’ll pass the church where Jack Kennedy and Jackie Bouvier got hitched in 1953.

Best way to learn about where and how to do all these things and more is to stop in at the Visitor Center at 23 America’s Cup Avenue. (800-326-6030 or 401-845-9110, DiscoverNewport.org).

You might do all that, yes, but it’s likely you’ll be drawn first to Bellevue Avenue and those mansions the very rich, *really, really rich* built in the 1800s. They called them “cottages” and though they cost millions, most owners occupied them for only a few weeks in summer. But history had taken many turns before the rich arrived.

The people who founded Newport 378 years ago in 1639



The largest of Newport's summer "cottages", *The Breakers* was built by Cornelius Vanderbilt II, Chairman and President of the New York Central Railroad system. The 70-room mansion was inspired by 16th century Italian palaces, with many furnishings and fixtures imported from Europe. Today the house, purchased by the Preservation Society in 1972, is designated a National Historic Landmark.



Built in 1851 for merchant Daniel Parrish, *Beechwood* became the show place for dinner parties given by Mrs. Caroline Astor after she and her husband William Backhouse Astor acquired the property in 1881. The Astors renovated the mansion to be suitable for hosting summer social events during the Gilded Age. *Beechwood* is privately owned and not open to the public.

certainly were not wealthy. They were, instead, a small band of Boston colonists who came to the southern end of Aquidneck Island seeking religious and political autonomy. It turned out they settled beside a perfect natural harbor. It didn't take long for others to come to Newport and develop a booming shipping trade between the colonies, the Caribbean, and beyond. Boats brought in sugar and molasses from the Caribbean that was distilled to make rum (Newport had 22 distilleries at one time) that was shipped to West Africa and traded for slaves.

All this, not to mention the pirate ships that plied out of Newport, made Newport one of Britain's leading North American settlements by the 1750s. Merchants got rich dealing in whale oil, slaves, and rum. Uncommonly cosmopolitan for its day, Newport was by 1774 the country's fifth biggest resort, bigger even than New York, hosting visitors from Cuba, elsewhere in the Caribbean, and the American south who came, particularly in summer months, to revel in the city's healthful, cooling sea breeze climate.

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The Preservation Society of Newport County raised enough money to buy, “save” and refurbish *The Elms* in 1962. It was built by Edward Berwind who became wealthy mining and marketing coal. ♦ When he

built *The Elms*, Berwind made sure there was plenty of coal for the huge boilers used to heat the mansion. Coal was delivered to a nearby street and transported in small rail cars through this tunnel to the boiler room.

That ended abruptly the next year when England’s King George III sent troops to reclaim the colonies, among them ten thousand who occupied Newport, prompting half the town’s population to flee. When the Redcoats left for New York in 1779, townspeople who returned found the British had consumed all their produce and livestock, burned their trees and many houses for firewood, and left a wrecked economy in a town that had prospered. No ships in the harbor. No merchants. Things got a little better when French troops arrived (with cash) in 1780 and stayed nearly a year working on plans to help Gen. George Washington defeat the British.

The revolution that freed the colonies nevertheless ended Newport’s great profitable days as a seaport, touching off a 30-year economic depression. The island’s spectacular scenery and reputation as a cool, enjoyable place “just to be” helped start a recovery in the early 1880s. On a hill overlooking the harbor, Southern planters and wealthy people from New York, Boston, and Providence began building “cottages,” some as monstrous in size as European castles.

One of the earliest still standing that you can tour today is *Kingscote*, a Gothic home designed more for comfort than show in 1839 for Southern Planter George Noble Jones of Savannah. Many of the most “showy” and huge didn’t rise on Bellevue Avenue until the former country lane was paved in 1851. Then came one after another. To ordinary folk, it looked like building “cottages” had become a sport of the rich as one seemingly tried to out-do the other. It was the owners of those who began the glittering, partying, high society way of life that became known as Newport’s Gilded Age. The owners were so prestigious and their parties so outrageous that national newspapers and magazines headlined stories covering “the Newport” way.

By the 1860s, it was no longer fashionable among the richest

to stay, like common tourists, in hotels when they came to Newport. To “belong” among the “right” (rich and mighty) people, you *simply must* either build or rent a “cottage,” *don’t you know*, to maintain a position in the top echelons of an elite society. As for the Joneses who started it, they enjoyed summers in *Kingscote* through the 1850s. Then, being slave owners, they found things a bit uncomfortable after Newport turned abolitionist, though it had earlier been the country’s biggest slave trading port.

Another Southern Planter, Daniel Parrish, built the Florentine palazzo named *Beechwood* in 1851. First of the mansion-like “cottages,” it was bought in 1881 by Caroline Astor, wife of William Backhouse Astor, grandson of John Jacob Astor. She added a ballroom big enough to accommodate 400 guests and, as it turned out, *The Mrs. Astor* changed a lot of other things in Newport. *Beechwood* is not one of the mansions you can tour today.

In the 1880s until the early 1900s, if you had more money than kings, Newport was *the place* to participate or flaunt your position in the “Gilded Age” society. One huge party followed the other on weekends during the summer season. In 1885 when Newport’s population was under 2,000, the cottages were staffed by 2,229 servants, chefs, and gardeners, most of whom were emigrants from Europe. Today Newport’s somewhat fluctuating population is near 26,000. Servants? Well, not so many.

Caroline, *The Mrs. Astor*, set the Gilded Age tone with her balls at *Beechwood*, requiring Newport rich to follow strict rules of etiquette and dress. Invitations to parties, for instance, *must* be delivered by hand by a servant. It was simply bad, bad, unacceptably bad, manners to do this by telephone or post. To be anyone in Newport society, you just had to be one of the 400 invited to Mrs. Astor’s ball. You did not dare invite Mrs. Astor to a ball or party of your own unless she had invited you to one of her parties or perhaps left you her card or a note blessing your acceptance

among the elite. The season was short but some women brought as many as 280 changes of clothing to be sure they were dressed properly, changing several times a day, for every occasion whether it be swimming, tennis, horseback riding, walking the Cliff Walk, or “turning out” for a formal weekend party.

Matriarchs of the cottages spent untold hours (and money) planning and preparing for their own parties, anxious to outshine each other. Husbands usually were back in New York or Boston attending to business on week days but returned to Newport on weekends for partying, golfing, or relaxing in a private club.

After Mrs. Astor died in 1908, things began changing for the cottage owners. They drank less and exercised more. But bigger changes, ones that would shake up a way of life for the rich, were just around the corner. On March 1, 1914, horror! Americans were hit with an income tax for the first time. If you made more than \$3,000 a year, you had to pay a tax of one percent on lower amounts but up to seven percent on incomes up to \$500,000. Most citizens earned less than \$3,000 yearly and paid no taxes at all—but the wealthy trembled.

Then, there was that war in Europe that turned into World War I. Many Newport hostesses turned their parties into fund raisers for the war effort but these nevertheless became venues where people could dress up and have fun. But many servants, fearing war, returned to their native countries and never came back. Staffing a “cottage” became a challenge. Then there was the country’s Great Depression, followed by World War II.

Already on its last legs, the “Gilded Age” no longer glittered. In war time 1944, Newport’s real estate market was severely depressed, especially for the “large cottages,” many of which had passed on to heirs who had little interest in reviving the party days of yore. Even if they had money to do it, it was hard to get help to maintain these majestic structures, and the lovely gardens surrounding most of them. Who could afford to hire a staff of 30 to keep up a place they never used? *Rosecliff*, a fifty-room mansion some think the most beautiful of those you can tour today, sold at auction for only \$21,000! *Marble House*, built at a cost of eleven million, sold for a little over \$100,000. Robert Goelet, who hired 35 servants just to keep his property up, gave his *Ochre Court* mansion to the Catholic Diocese of Providence and it became Salve Regina University, today a lovely institution in Newport that includes some other former “cottages” as well.

Some owners even had trouble giving their property away. The writing was on the wall: most of these great buildings, some already falling apart, were in the path of wrecking balls. A way of life, a part of the nation’s heritage, was doomed. That’s how it looked until a few concerned citizens formed The Preservation Society of Newport County in 1945 and dedicated it to somehow acquiring, saving, restoring, and displaying the mansions as historical museums.

In 1948, they got significant help. Countess Laszlo Szèchényi leased *The Breakers* to the society for one dollar a year. The Society opened it to the public, charging \$1.50 admission. In the first four months, 26,000 entered, apparently interested to see

how the richest had once lived. That success suggested the mansions could survive as museums. By 1970, over 100,000 had toured *The Breakers*, inspiring the Preservation Society to open other mansions.

Today you can tour 10 of these magnificent edifices but you’ll pay more than \$1.50. (See “How to Tour The Mansions” box on page 31.) As you tour, you’ll learn some of the history of each place, the people who occupied it and, sometimes, their foibles and antics. (See “Mansions You Can Visit” on the next page.)

You may not have the time—or stamina—to tour all these properties during a single visit but, be assured, you’ll utter many ohs and ahs as you see how the rich lived and try to fathom how it could be to live with no worries about money. Some folk, a very small few privileged Americans, once did it—and, in their day, Newport was the place to be and be known among social climbers in a very, very elite and tight society. RIS



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# ≡≡≡ Mansions You Can Visit ≡≡≡

**SOME NEWPORT MANSIONS REMAIN PRIVATELY** owned and, though impressive, are not open to tour. The ten mansions The Preservation Society of Newport County has open for public tours this year are listed here, along with a short history of each and several images:

*Hunter House*, built in 1748, the only one available for tours that dates back to the 1700s, is an excellent example of Georgian Colonial architecture. It was built by Jonathan Nichols, Jr., a prosperous slave-trading merchant and colonial deputy. After he died, Col. Joseph Wanton, Jr. bought the house and made changes that left it as a two and a half story structure with four rooms per level, two on either side of a hallway.

Wanton himself beat it out of Newport during the American Revolution because he was a loyalist who had just as soon have England maintain control as he'd done well when that was the case. The house became headquarters for the commander of the French fleet when the French came to Newport in 1780 to help Gen. Washington whip the British. After being owned by several others, William Hunter, a lawyer, bought it in 1805 for \$5,000. He died in 1849 and his widow sold the house which became owned by another chain of buyers. In run-down condition, its destruction was imminent when a private group bought it and transferred ownership to the Preservation Society in 1945. It was restored to the 1757–1779 years of Col. Wanton's ownership and opened to the public. It exhibits fine furniture built locally as well as pewter and paintings by Cosmo Alexander, Gilbert Stuart and Samuel King.

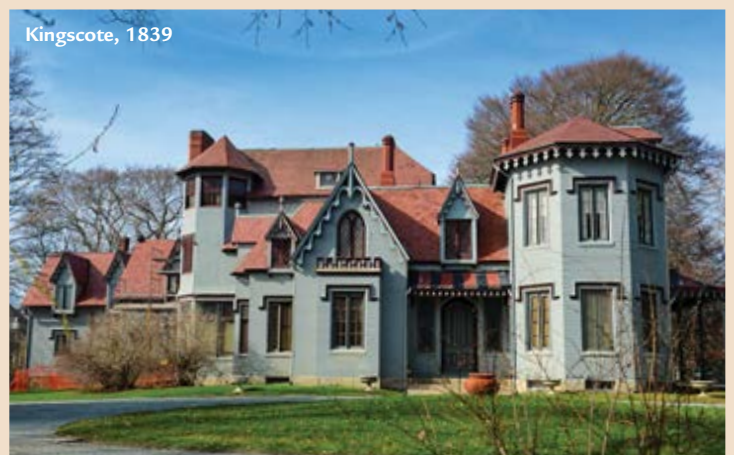
*Kingscote*, the 1839 George Noble Jones house, was built along what was then a country road known as Bellevue. A classic Gothic Revival style, it began Newport's "cottage boom." Being slave owners uncomfortable in abolitionist Newport, the Jones family left at the outbreak of the Civil War and never returned. China trade merchant William Henry King bought the house

in 1864. His nephew David later took control of *Kingscote* and enlarged it to include a large dining room on the ground floor that could be converted to a ballroom and added two bedrooms and a hallway on the second floor. The last King family member left the house to the Preservation Society in 1972.

*Chateau-sur-Mer*, built in 1852 of rough cut Fall River granite, is called a landmark of High Victorian architecture, furniture, wallpapers, ceramics, and stenciling. Built as an Italianate-style villa for China trade merchant William Shepard Wetmore, it is three stories tall with a four-story tower over the entrance. It became the site of one of Newport's biggest "parties" ever when 3,000 guests were invited to a country picnic in 1857—and most showed up—perhaps beginning Newport's Gilded Age grand partying mind set. It was the most palatial in Newport until the Vanderbilt houses changed the skyline in the 1890s. When Wetmore died in 1862, the house was occupied by his son, George, later governor of Rhode Island and a United States senator. George and his wife Edith contracted Architect Richard Morris Hunt, famed designer of many of the mansions, to remodel and redecorate it in the Second Empire French style. Now *Chateau-sur-Mer* exemplifies more major design trends of that century. The Preservation Society bought the house in 1969.

*Chepstow*, a three-story dwelling with a low French-style Mansard roof, built in 1860-61, was named by Mrs. Emily Morris Gallatin, its second owner, after a castle in Wales. After her death, ownership later passed to Mrs. Peter McBean, whose love of Newport and its history resulted in her becoming a trustee of the Preservation Society to which she bequeathed *Chepstow*. Inside are original furnishings and a collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century paintings.

*The Isaac Bell House* was built between 1881 and 1882 as a summer residence for Isaac Bell, Jr., a wealthy cotton broker and investor who was a brother-in-law of James Gordon Bennett, Jr.,



Chateau-sur-Mer, 1852



The Isaac Bell House, 1882



The Breakers, 1895



Rosecliff, 1902



publisher of the *New York Herald*. It is said to be one of the country's best surviving examples of domestic Shingle Style architecture. English Queen Anne style is blended with New England colonial and Japanese influences such as an open floor plan and bamboo-style porch columns. The Preservation Society bought it in 1994 and restoration is near complete.

*The Breakers* (page 24), the huge four-story, 70-room limestone palace occupied, at least in summer, by Cornelius Vanderbilt II and his family is by far the largest of Newport's mansions. Measuring 250 by 150 feet and covering nearly an acre of Vanderbilt's 13 acre estate, it was modeled after the Renaissance palaces of Turin and Genoa. Designed by Architect Richard Morris Hunt in 1893, it replaced an earlier version that burned to the ground after Vanderbilt bought it from Pierre Lorillard in 1885. The huge new structure was completed in less than two years by hundreds of workers who put the walls up stone by stone.

Whole rooms were designed and constructed in the shops of European craftsmen, one being Allard and Sons of Paris, and then shipped to Newport for reassembly. The great hall rises fifty feet high, making entrance to the home astounding, providing a breath-taking view of how some of America's wealthiest lived. Furniture, carpeting, draperies and wall art decorating the rooms could themselves fill an entire museum which, when one thinks of it, is exactly what *The Breakers* is.

Having the first *The Breakers* burn down, Vanderbilt personally helped develop innovative ideas to make the building as fireproof as possible. No wood was used in its construction. The building's core was stone and brick. Steel beams provided structural support. The kitchen was isolated in a ground-floor wing. It took many servants working in the big kitchen (at left) to turn out banquets for dozens, even hundreds of people. The ovens, pots, and pans in *The Breakers'* kitchen give visitors an idea of what was involved.

The boilers, parts of the heating plant, and electrical equipment were buried deep beneath the caretaker's cottage and part of the front lawn, several hundred feet from the main house. Much of the technology was decades ahead of its time. It is so impressive that a "*Beneath the Breakers*" underground tour along a 360-foot long tunnel is being offered for the first time this year.

Rosecliff stairwell



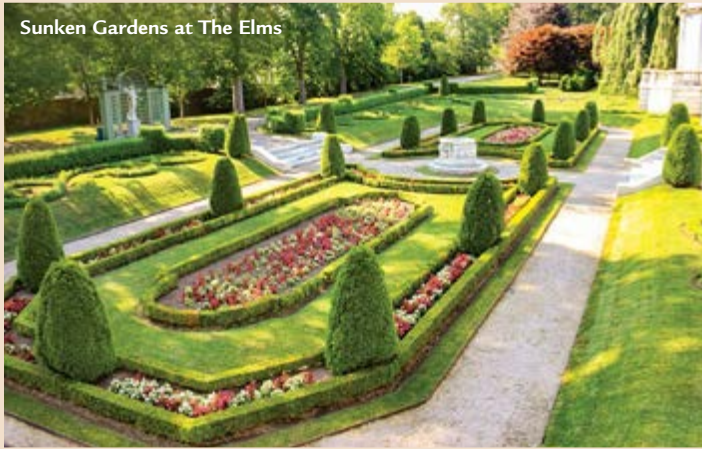
Rosecliff ballroom



PHOTO COURTESY FREDERICK & FREDERICK ARCHITECTS



The Elms butler's pantry



Sunken Gardens at The Elms

PHOTO BY PHILLIS TRENOR HIGGERSON



Marble House, 1892



White Horse Tavern

PHOTO © JAWANGKUN | DRAGTIMES.COM

The Vanderbilts had seven children including youngest daughter Gladys who married Count Laszlo Szèchényi of Hungary. She inherited *The Breakers* after her mother died in 1934. An ardent supporter of The Preservation Society of Newport County, she leased this magnificent structure to the society for a dollar a year. Visitors came by the thousands when *The Breakers* was opened to the public in 1948. The house became a continuing source of revenue for the Society and helped raise money used to save other mansions from destruction. Certainly it remains a bigger-than-life almost unfathomable glimpse of the era of the Gilded Age. In 1972, the Preservation Society bought the house from Ms. Szèchényi's heirs.

*Rosecliff*, completed in 1902, was the home of Theresa Fair Oelrich ("Tessie") and her husband, Hermann. Modeled after Grand Trianon, Louis XIV's garden retreat at Versailles, the house was intended primarily for grand-scale entertaining and that's how Tessie used it. Her many lavish dinners and parties are legendary. The forty by eighty foot ballroom, largest in Newport, is the focal point in a mansion that conveys an impression of light and air, delicate grace, and, more than others, epitomizes lighter, more romantic elements of the Gilded Age.

There seems somehow a sense of fantasy and escapism about this place with its glistening white walls (brick finished with glazed terra-cotta tile that resemble marble), paired Ionic columns, arched French doors, and multi-tiered entablature. A "fairy tale dinner," a party where Harry Houdini appeared, and a Bal Blanc (White Ball) where all the women wore white and the men were decked out in black, are among the party productions that made Tessie one of Newport's greatest hostesses. Scenes in the movies, "The Great Gatsby" and "True Lies" were filmed in *Rosecliff*.

Mrs. Oelrich's father, James Graham Fair, was one of four partners who discovered the Comstock Lode, single largest deposit of silver ever uncovered.

Tessie's husband died at sea in 1906. When the widowed Mrs. Oelrich died in 1926, she left *Rosecliff* to her son, Hermann, Jr. He later sold it to a developer who sold the contents and house at auction on July 15, 1941. Anita Nielson bought the house, its fifty rooms and two-story ballroom, with a winning bid of \$21,000!

She bought it for her daughter, Gertrude, then a popular actress and singer known as the "Nightclub Thrush." Gertrude spent little time in the house and had no idea what she'd need to do to maintain a mansion. It's assumed she thought she could just lock the doors and leave if she needed to go. There was no caretaker. In February the next winter, the house was flooded. Either a faucet had been left running or pipes froze and burst for lack of heat. Gertrude was left with a house that was ruined and, on top of that, an \$800 water bill she failed to pay on time. She sold the whole mess to Mr. and Mrs. Ray Allen Van Clief. He had the flood damage repaired but then was himself killed in an auto accident before he could occupy the place. His widow sold it in 1947 to Mr. and Mrs. J. Edgar Monroe of New Orleans. They kept the house open in summer for more than

twenty years, then in 1970 donated *Rosecliff* and a trust fund to the Preservation Society.

*The Elms* (page 26) was completed in 1901 for Edward Julius Berwind, who made a fortune in the coal industry, and his wife, Herminie, of New York and Philadelphia. Modeled after the French chateau d'Asnieres built outside Paris about 1750 and called a model of classical symmetry, the house has three floors, the third hidden behind a facing parapet that makes it hardly visible from the ground.

In the day, the landscaped grounds outside *The Elms* were as impressive as the dwelling. A 10-acre park contains nearly forty species of trees plus shrubs and bushes, many manicured into trim cones and cylinders. Several gardeners were employed to keep the grounds and a flowering sunken garden (recently restored) shipshape.

After Mrs. Berwind died in 1922, Berwind's unmarried sister, Julia, became hostess at his Newport and New York homes. After Berwind died in 1936, Miss Julia continued to summer at *The Elms* until her death in 1961. The house and a huge collection of period furniture, paintings, and tapestries were sold at auction. Certain destruction loomed for *The Elms* until The Preservation Society of Newport County raised enough money in 1962 to buy and save it, then refurnish it with period furniture, some original.

*Marble House*, designed by Architect Richard Morris Hunt and completed in 1892 for Mr. and Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, is easily the most costly of all Newport's summer cottages and palazzos. The walls are made of a half million cubic feet of white marble that, with marble throughout the house, is said to account for seven million of the house's eleven million dollar cost. Inspired by the Petit Trianon at Versailles, the design has been called a classical masterpiece. An elaborate bronzed entrance grill weighs over 10 tons. The gilt oak and green silk-adorned ballroom, though not the largest, was the most ornate in Newport. Yellow Siena marble covers the floor and walls of the en-

trance hall leading to pink Numidian marble lining the dining room. *Marble House* may be, as Mrs. Vanderbilt hoped, the finest summer house money could buy on Bellevue Avenue.

Vanderbilt, grandson of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, who established the family's fortune, was the brother of Cornelius II who built *The Breakers*. Upon its completion, William gave *Marble House* as a 39th birthday present to his wife, Alva, a remarkable and acclaimed hostess in both New York and Newport. However, the couple divorced in 1895.

Alva married Oliver H.P. Belmont a year later and moved across the street to Belcourt. After Belmont died in 1908, Alva re-opened *Marble House* and hosted rallies for women's right to vote. She sold the house to Frederick H. Prince, president of Armour and Company, in 1932 shortly before she died in 1933 at age eighty. In 1963, the Preservation Society bought the house from the Frederick H. Prince Trust. Harold S. Vanderbilt, youngest of three children born to Alva and William Vanderbilt, contributed funds that made that purchase possible.

*Green Animals*, a small country estate in Portsmouth near the north end of Aquidneck Island, is the only Preservation Society "mansion" not in Newport that's on the list open to the public. Thomas Brayton, treasurer of textile mills in Fall River, Massachusetts, bought the seven-acre site with a white clapboard summer residence, farm outbuildings, a pasture, and a vegetable garden in 1872.

Today the grounds contain more than eighty sculptured trees, shrubs, flower beds, fruit orchards, and a vegetable garden. The name comes from a collection of animal figures, some quite large, fashioned from California privet. There is a camel, a giraffe, a bear, and many other animal figures. It's a remarkable collection, originally created by two generations of Portuguese-American gardeners who successfully adapted their European horticultural traditions to work with the local climate and practices.

Brayton's daughter, Alice, lived on the estate until her death in 1972 at age eighty. RIS

### How to Tour the Mansions

The Preservation Society of Newport County makes it easy for you to tour the mansions they have open to the public. You don't need to make reservations. You can buy tickets at the entrance gate to any one of the mansions or online at [NewportMansions.org](http://NewportMansions.org).

Best deal is one we signed up for in 2016 that is available again this year: buy a "Newport Mansions Experience" ticket for \$35 and you are good to join tours in any of the mansions except Hunter House.

A free parking lot is available at all the mansions excepting *Hunter House*, where you usually can park on the street.

You're allowed to shoot pictures in and outdoors for non-commercial uses when it does not disturb other visitors. That means flash is frowned on. No tripods, selfie sticks or drones of any kind.

Young kids are welcome on tours but strollers are not allowed. Also, there's no way you can store suitcases or other personal items. What you carry in, you must carry with you throughout your tour.

### RV Parks in Newport Area

We found no RV parks in the city of Newport. However, Aquidneck is a small island so all other towns are within minutes driving time.

#### In Middletown which adjoins Newport

*Sachuest Beaches & Campground* (401-846-6273, [middletownri.com](http://middletownri.com)) is on Sachuest Beach, often referred to as Second Beach (just outside Newport, technically in Middletown). Second Beach also leads to the Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, popular for birding.

*Meadowlark RV Park* (401-847-9455). 80 sites, \$60/night.

*Paradise Park RV Campground* (401-847-1500) Open May-Sept. \$60-\$80/night.

#### In Portsmouth, 20 minutes north of Newport

*Melville Ponds Campground* (401-682-2424). 128 sites.

#### In Jamestown, take the Pell Bridge to Jamestown Island

*Fort Getty Recreation Area* (401-423-7211) 125 sites. Water/elec.

# Tony Riley

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES & GENERAL COUNSEL



**I**N FEBRUARY, TONY RILEY CELEBRATED his tenth anniversary at Tiffin Motorhomes. He is certain that he made the right decision to give up his law practice in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, and join the company as director of human resources and also to serve as general counsel.

Tim Tiffin, the corporate general manager for Tiffin Motorhomes, saw the practicality and need for an attorney who could successfully navigate the company through the growing sea of state and federal laws and regulations that apply to a company the size of TMH. Tim also saw the importance of having staff counsel to coordinate legal matters that required the use of outside attorneys.

“I was in the right place at the right time,” Tony said. “Tim had been thinking of hiring an in-house attorney for quite

some time. And I had been thinking of leaving private practice for a couple of years.”

Tony had known the Tiffins for over 20 years. “I went to high school with Van’s wife, Michelle,” Tony continued. “I enrolled at the University of Alabama in 1982; Van came in ’83 and Michelle transferred to UA in ’84. During that time, Van was the placekicker for the Tide and Michelle attended several games with my college friends and me. When I came back to the Shoals area to practice law seven years later, our shared interest in the university and Crimson Tide football kept us in touch.”

As early as the seventh grade, Tony knew he wanted to go to law school. “I always participated in high school speech competitions and entered contests that required essays on American government and related subjects,” he noted. “I ran for

elected offices in all of the high school clubs that I joined. In 1980 I worked as a volunteer in a county campaign office to support Ronald Reagan’s first run for the presidency.”

During his senior year in high school, Tony was selected to participate in the United States Senate Youth Program that is administered by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation. The program includes 104 students, two from the 50 states plus two from the District of Columbia and two who were dependents of active duty service members.

“The Hearst family is well-connected,” Tony said. “They gained admission for us into congressional hearings and meetings I never could have anticipated. We observed President Ronald Reagan conducting a meeting in the White House. In a subsequent meeting at the State Department, I was introduced to Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

“We were divided into groups of 10, with each group escorted by an officer who was a West Point graduate. The 10 officers reported to Commander Edward Davis, a Navy pilot who was a POW incarcerated for 7½ years in the Hanoi Hilton during the Vietnam War,” Tony recalled. “He asked me if I knew Jerry Denton. At that time Jeremiah Denton, who was himself a POW for 7½ years, was one of the U.S. senators from Alabama. I told him I would be with Senator Denton the next day. He told me to tell Senator Denton that ‘Ed Davis says hello.’ Commander Davis asked me if I had seen the movie *When Hell Was in Session*. I responded that I had seen the movie and read the book. He reminded me of a scene where a fellow prisoner had left a handmade cross

for Denton in the latrine at the prison. ‘I was the prisoner who made that cross,’ he said. The next day I was with Senator Denton and told him that Ed Davis sent his regards. He turned and quickly asked, ‘Where did you see Ed Davis?’ I explained that I had been with him the day prior. He was visibly moved.”

In the fall of 1982 Tony enrolled at the University of Alabama to study history and political science. By attending three summer school sessions, he graduated in three years. He was admitted to the University’s School of Law in the fall of 1985 and graduated in 1988 with a J.D. degree. He returned home to Muscle Shoals where he opened a law practice in the spring of 1989, something he had hoped to do from the beginning.

With both civic and political interests, Tony has taken several public service positions during his career. He served as a member and later chairman of the civil service board in the city of Muscle Shoals from 1997 to 2000. He also served as a member of the Drug Court Planning Team for the 31st judicial circuit and the Colbert County Indigent Criminal Defense Team.

Active in politics since 1980, Tony has managed campaigns at the municipal, county, and state levels. He is currently serving his second term on the Alabama State Republican Executive Committee and is also a member of the Colbert County Republican Executive Committee.

“I decided to begin a solo practice,” Tony said. “Starting your own firm is the dream of many young attorneys. In a small town, opportunities for general practice abound: real estate closings, commercial land acquisition, civil and criminal defense, probate, and estate dissolution. I soon found myself enjoying the camaraderie of other attorneys. Three of us met for lunch once a week: I was the conservative Republican, Cliff Wright was a liberal Democrat, and Major Marshall Gardner (U.S. Army ret.) was a libertarian. We had some very interesting lunches!

“The downside of a solo practice is cash flow and demand,” Tony elaborated. “You can work on a major project for weeks, even months with no income. But you still have to pay your personal bills. A solo firm has no financial cush-



Amanda Hester has been working in the human resources department for 14 years. She is the company’s benefits and payroll specialist.

ion while a large firm has a diversity of accounts to provide cash flow for all of its members.

“The other side of the coin is demand. A solo attorney may enjoy the flexibility of his practice, but he is often faced with demands coming from all sides — demands from judges, other lawyers, and clients. The stress level can be high and sometimes very unpleasant.” Tony said. “One of the nicest things about working here is the space that upper management allows for me to plan and accomplish our goals.”

Many of Tony’s fellow students at law school accepted positions with corporations to practice “corporate law.” When Tim offered him the position at Tiffin Motorhomes, it did not take him long to accept.

“Tim was in the process of changing the HR department and wanted an in-house attorney to do the legal work connected to human resources as well as corporate and manufacturing issues,” Tony explained. “The list of issues is large and

continues to grow: employment law and contracts, safety and environmental issues, family medical leave, the American with Disabilities Act, the Affordable Care Act, OSHA enforcement, diesel engine regulation, new manufacturing regulations generated every year (especially during the Obama administration), product liability and warranty issues, dealer agreements, and property acquisitions.”

Under Tony’s management and direction, the HR department is now staffed by professionals who are addressing these issues. “Of course, this department administers all of the hiring process for the company. We also manage our payroll and benefits and offer a diverse cafeteria plan for health insurance and benefits,” Tony noted. “Our benefits include medical, dental, vision, accident, cancer, and life insurance (paid for in full by TMH), and short- and long-term disability. Our



Elizabeth, Emma, Sarah, and Tony took a few moments for a father-daughters picture just before they opened their presents. ♦ Tony and Gina both have very busy careers. Gina has an interior decoration practice in Brentwood, Tennessee.

employee population is large enough that we can self-insure in some areas and successfully negotiate favorable premiums in other areas.

“We manage all of the hiring and occupational health (Workman’s Comp), and safety and environmental (SAE) management. The three SAE managers for Red Bay, Belmont, and Winfield report to me. My staff files 47 separate permits and compliance reports for seven different sites. SAE managers make regular visits to each site.”

Forty years ago nearly all of Tiffin’s employees lived within a 15-mile radius of Red Bay. Today with nearly 1,350 employed at Belmont and Red Bay, over 40 percent drive 25 miles or more to work. Tony drives 40 miles to Red Bay from Muscle Shoals.

“The most interesting thing for me at TMH is learning the manufacturing process and how a business like this operates,” Tony said. “I count it a privilege to work here and learn from Bob Tiffin. He is a great business man, but he is a better man.”

Tony has three daughters of whom he is justifiably proud. Elizabeth, 25, is in college at Cleveland State Community College in Cleveland, Tennessee. Sarah Katherine, 24, and her husband, Josh, are both computer engineers with the Department of Defense. They graduated from the University of Alabama in

2016. Emma, 17, is a senior at Muscle Shoals High School and plans to attend Alabama this fall. His two stepsons, Jordan and Casey Pense, are on active duty with the U.S. Air Force.

Tony enjoys three hobbies. “My dad, two uncles, and my grandfather all worked for the Ford aluminum casting plant in Muscle Shoals,” he said smiling. “In my family, you might have been called a ‘defector’ if you bought another brand. I have always been fascinated by the Ford Mustang. I own three of them and enjoy keeping them in pristine condition. I also have a 1969 Ford Fairlane 500 Fastback.”

His second passion really began in high school. “I love history, biography, and politics. Those subjects really confirmed my interest in studying law,” he said. William Manchester, David McCullough, Brennan Manning, and Phillip Yancey are his favorite authors. The latter two are well known for their discourses on practical Christian living. Tony serves on the board of directors for New Beginning Church.

An Alabama alumnus would not be considered very loyal if he did not support the Crimson Tide every fall. “I have attended 260 Alabama football games and have been a season ticket holder since graduation,” he confirmed. He also served several terms as the president of the Red Elephant Club for North Alabama. “My daughters and I often tailgated with Tim and Lynne.

“I had the good fortune to become friends with Alexander Ingram, perhaps the Crimson Tide’s greatest fan,” Tony said as

*Continued on page 80*

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# Darrell Valenti

## A VERY SUCCESSFUL RESTAURATEUR

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

**C**alifornia's Napa Valley in the fifties and sixties was not the wine country that we know today. "We grew grapes and raised horses," Darrell Valenti recalls, "as did many of our neighbors. I was breaking horses in my early teens for just a few bucks a horse. It was very rural then. Much more emphasis on grapes, farming, and agriculture."

The Valenti family decided to move in the early seventies to south San Francisco. With a work ethic learned from his father, Darrell in 1969 found an after school/weekend job as a cook in a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant. This wasn't just any KFC. It had connections to two of the most successful entrepreneurs in the nation's growing fast-food industry.

Pete and Arline Harman with two employees opened their first restaurant, called The Do Drop Inn, in Salt Lake City in 1941. In post-war America, the economy flourished and Pete was looking for ways to expand his business. Almost by chance, Colonel Harlan Sanders visited the Harman restaurant and "the rest was history." Harman struck a deal with Sanders to buy the first Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise and opened for business in August 1952. It was an immediate success and sales tripled.

Harman wanted to open more franchises and began working with Sanders to develop a viable system for franchising. The Colonel, now 62, and Pete bonded almost immediately, allowing Pete to take the initiative to develop training manuals and product guides. The Harmans moved to California where they rapidly began building franchise stores. By the end of his career, Pete was operating 238 KFC stores in four states.

One of those stores was in San Francisco. Darrell's attention to detail, good camaraderie with other employees, and a natural friendliness with customers caught Pete's attention. A year after he began work, Darrell at 16 was promoted to assistant manager. He went on to set records for the company, becoming a restaurant manager and then a district manager with Harman Management by the time he was 25. "Pete Harman became my

Darrell and Adriana acquired their new 2017 Allegro Bus 45OP in October. They currently have it located at a resort park in western Florida as they plan an epic adventure to Yosemite, the Grand Canyon, and southern Utah. ♦ *Facing page:* During the two-hour interview at their home on Smith Lake in Crane Hill, Alabama, Darrell with an outgoing friendliness and animation related the highlights of an interesting and very successful career.

mentor," Darrell said. "He saw himself in me and I saw in him what I wanted to become.

"Harman wanted his managers to acquire equity," Darrell continued. "He was a Mormon from Utah. Of his key people in management, I was the only one who was not a Mormon. But that was never a problem. Pete treated all of us like family. He and the Colonel were very close friends.

"I was thrilled that Colonel Sanders knew me by name," Darrell reminisced. "I asked him one time when he was about 80,



'Colonel, why don't you retire?' His reply was so down-to-earth. 'Darrell, if you don't keep moving, you will rust out before you wear out.' And then he added, 'You have to have a reason to get up in the morning.' It was a privilege for me to work with such motivated people. Colonel Sanders worked until one month before he died in June 1980. He was 90 years old."

In 1979 Darrell cut the strings with Pete's encouragement, founded Valenti Management, and franchised his first KFC in Sonora, California, about 50 miles north of Yosemite National Park. At 25 he became the youngest franchisee in KFC's history. By this time, Darrell was married and had two children, Troy and Nicole.

"Over the next 10 years, I was on a fast track," Darrell said. "Using Pete's company as a model, I developed a corporate organizational structure that allowed my company to open 10 new stores a year. For product diversity in the same areas, we took on Taco Bell. By 1989 we were managing 100 restaurants."

During that time, Valenti Management developed all of South Florida for Taco Bell, becoming their largest franchisee in the world with 45 stores. Simultaneously, the company developed 55 KFC stores in Washington, Illinois, and Indiana. During the 1990s, he sold all of the KFCs and the Taco Bells to Pepsico.

During the process of liquidating the franchises, Darrell became friends with Dave Thomas in 1996. They lived only a few blocks apart in a South Florida suburb. "I was 40 and Dave was 61," Darrell said. "As I look back on it now, I was receiving the benefit of knowing a man who had twice the years of experience and over 6,000 Wendy's stores."

Before long, the company, now renamed Valenti Mid-Atlantic Management LLC, was franchising Wendy's at a pace nearly as fast as they had done KFCs and Taco Bells. Over the next 20 years, Valenti opened 125 Wendy's in six states. Eleven years ago, Valenti became a franchisee for Chili's Grill and Bar and now has 15 of their stores.

"Dave and I visited back and forth in our homes often," Darrell smiled. "Sometimes when he had something he wanted to dis-

cuss, he would rap on my door and holler, 'Darrell, are you here?'"

"One day he came over and, to my astonishment, said, 'Darrell, if you don't mind, I want to look in your bedroom.' Well, OK, Dave." We went to the bedroom and Dave went in and began walking around, with his left arm folded across his chest to prop up his elbow with his right hand around his chin. He looked at one side of the room and said, 'Hmmm.' Then to another place in the room and another, 'Hmmm.' Finally, he said, 'Well, Darrell, you have them, too.' 'What Dave?' I said. "All those pillows on your bed!"

"Well, I lost that bet!" he said disgustedly. "My wife and I every night pull all those 10 pillows off the bed and stack them off to the side. Then we make up the bed the next morning and put all those pillows back on the bed. I told her, I bet Darrell and his wife don't do this every night, so I came over here for some ammunition!" By then, we were both laughing."

"Fred, I will have to tell you a follow-up to that story," Darrell volunteered. "When we bought the 2017 Allegro Bus 45OP last August, and Adriana saw all of the decorative pillows on the bed, she said, 'Darrell, what are we going to do with all of those pillows every night? There's no place to put them. Maybe they will give us a credit if we return them now.' Remembering the episode with Dave, I started laughing and said, 'Honey, I think we are stuck with them!'"

Two members of Darrell's immediate family now play key roles in Valenti Mid-Atlantic Management. A graduate of the University of Alabama with a degree in business management, Troy, 45, serves as vice president of real estate and acquisitions. He is responsible for site selection, real estate management from inception to final use, strategic planning, financial analysis, and lease management. He joined the company in 1997 and now serves on the board of directors. Troy and his wife, Maracel, have a daughter, 12, and a son, 9.

Troy works closely with his brother-in-law, Jason Hill, the company's in-house building contractor who oversees remodeling and the construction of each new restaurant. Jason is mar-







rried to Nicole, who has a doctorate in psychology and a professional practice. The couple has three daughters, 7, 10, and 13.

Audrey, 21, is studying law and expects to complete a degree at the University of Alabama next Spring. Gavin, 23, does sport fishing out of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Adrianna's son, Josh, will complete a degree in business next year at Florida Atlantic University and looks forward to a career in business or possibly joining the company.

Darrell continues to serve as CEO, president, and chairman of the board of Valenti Mid-Atlantic Management. "Five of us have to sign off on every new site, where it will be built, and the projected costs for bringing it online. I visit every new projected site prior to acquisition and breaking ground. Depending on the cost of the dirt, it takes \$2 to \$3 million to open a Wendy's store, and consider-

ably more to open a Chili's restaurant.

"To keep our stores fresh and attractive, we do major remodeling continuously, usually 12 stores a year," he explained. "And, we are opening four to five new Wendy's stores every year. If a neighborhood where we have a store begins to deteriorate, we will buy out the property or lease and work to get our store moved into the most viable trade area or new shopping district.

"Restaurant remodeling is like painting the Golden Gate Bridge," he said. "My grandfather was a painter on that bridge. He said that by the time the painting team began on one end and worked their way across painting until they reached the other end, it was time to go back and start over again. Obviously, it took several years for them to get one coat of paint on the bridge.

"As I look back on 48 years in this busi-

ness, I almost can't believe what Valenti Mid-Atlantic Management has accomplished: 140 stores and 7,000 employees," Darrell said pensively. "We have stores in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Missouri. I want my key executives to have ownership in the business. As they have stepped up to become partners, they have performed to my expectations and beyond. Every 18 months or so, we take our store, regional, and district managers on a nice vacation. Alternately, we do a one-week cruise or pick a destination city that has a lot of fun things to do and spend a week there."

In order to manage so many stores, Darrell got his pilot's license when he was 25. "The company bought a Beech King Air to maximize the use of my time and the district and corporate managers' time as well. I did a lot of the piloting initially, but the board decided that we needed a full-time professional pilot," Darrell said. "That point became more important when we moved up to a Citation 10-passenger jet. Legally, it can be flown without a co-pilot, but I obtained my rating to give us a greater safety margin. One thing is for sure. By not having to fly commercially, the plane reduced stress on all of us so much. Plus we could get so much more accomplished, sometimes visiting two or more districts a day."

Approaching the 50th anniversary of such a dynamic and interesting career, Darrell reflected on the experiences that were the most meaningful to him. "I have been blessed to work with people who have such good values and ethics," he began. "It has been rewarding to me to see them do well in their careers. And thirdly, it means so much to me to have the appreciation of the good people whose careers I helped launch."

One does not operate a business with 7,000 employees without having to deal with some serious issues. When asked

about the most significant challenges over his five-decade career, Darrell responded quickly as if he had been anticipating my question. “Taking care of customers must be your first priority. A customer must be pleased with his food, satisfied it was worth what he paid, and treated fairly and with respect. Secondly, as a company we must maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and quality in the food that we sell. We must also provide a clean facility. And, thirdly, we have to hire top quality people to greet and serve our customers. To find and hire the best employees for food service positions and management jobs, I had to learn how to understand people and what motivated them,” he explained.

On the company’s website, a mantra appears at the bottom of the opening page:

“Quality in our people as well as our product is our most important asset.”

According to industry websites, Valenti Mid-Atlantic Management over the years has earned every national honor for sales, service, quality, cleanliness, and profitability. At the same time, Darrell Valenti developed the reputation for being able to turn around under-performing restaurants.

By its very nature, the fast-food industry is a high stress business. How does the captain of such a business find a way to remove the stress and relax?


“When I was 21, I bought a Winnie and a ski boat,” Darrell laughed. “We used it every chance we got. We have just about always had a motorhome or some type of camping vehicle. Getting out in the back country with four-wheelers has always been a lot of fun for the family. We have owned several yachts. But a 100-foot yacht requires a crew of three. A motorhome is so easy to use—you don’t need a crew. Just drive it and park it when you’re ready to stop for the night.”

“We are really looking forward to taking our new Allegro Bus on the road,” Darrell said. “On our first epic trip, we plan to travel to Yosemite and after a week or so we are going to double back to the Grand Canyon and southern Utah. Then our itinerary will be open until we decide

to come back. Of course, whenever I am needed for meetings and sign-offs on new stores, we will leave the motorhome and fly in to our corporate headquarters.”

Darrell and Adrianna have two homes, one in Lighthouse Point, Florida, near Boca Raton, and another on Smith Lake in Crane Hill, Alabama. “We are in the process of selling the home in Florida because that area is so congested,” Darrell said. “We love the ambiance of weather and the relaxed beach living that we have

in Florida. When we sell the house near Boca, we plan to build on a beachfront property on the western end of the Florida Panhandle.”

When Darrell built the home on Smith Lake in 2007, he bought 600 acres of adjacent farmland that he turned into a Black Angus ranch. “It is really relaxing to come here. We are already spending about six months of the year here at Crane Hill. The ranch takes me back to the farm where I grew up.” 



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## News from the Tiffin Allegro Club by Sally Moore

In an effort to reach all of our club members who are busily traveling all across our beautiful continent, we use email and digital formats first. To be sure you are receiving our messages, please keep us apprised of your email address and any updates you make to it. Sending items like your dues renewal, rally updates, etc. by email will get the message to you quicker than using the US Postal Service and will save you the cost of mail forwarding fees. Dues renewal payments can also be made at TiffinMotorhomes.com for your convenience and financial safety. 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.

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

Come have a look around the Tiffin Allegro Club office! We have a selection of new Tiffin T-shirts as well as other new items. Our outdoor patio is always a popular spot while guests are in Red Bay. Customers enjoy the complimentary Wi-Fi and comfortable Adirondack style chairs on the patio daily. We have a book swap that owners enjoy as well as DVDs

and magazines to borrow. Thanks to our generous members, the Tiffin Allegro Club is the largest donor of eyeglasses and sunglasses to the Red Bay Lions Club Recycle for Sight program. We collect BoxTops for Education for our local elementary school. Drop by and check us out! Meet your friends here and enjoy it together.

While enjoying meeting all of you at our rallies this year, we are also hard at work scouting locations for 2018 rallies. Look for announcements later this year regarding our schedule. The best way to stay abreast of our news is to register your email address at [TiffinSideroads.com](http://TiffinSideroads.com). When we open a rally for sale, be sure to register promptly if you want to attend. Our rallies are selling out within minutes. Don't delay when you see a rally that fits in your busy travel plans!

Happy trails until we meet again! Travel safe and enjoy your coach!

## Registering for the Tiffin Allegro Club Fall Rally

Join us in the beautiful northwestern USA at the Oregon State Fairgrounds on October 2-5 for our fall Tiffin Allegro Club rally! Visit the historic Highway 30 and the Columbia River Gorge as you arrive or depart from the rally. Beautiful Multnomah Falls is a sight to behold! We will host 300 coaches at this facility. A display of 2018 Tiffin Motorhomes will be available to tempt you!

The fairgrounds has 30-amp electrical service and water. Our rally begins on Monday, October 2 and coaches will depart on Friday, October 6.

Your rally fee will include multiple catered meals, ice cream socials, live entertainment, four nights of camping, seminars, shopping with RV suppliers and local vendors, and other fun activities. Your rally fee also includes our terrific Tiffin Technicians performing up to three minor repairs on your coaches. You

have made a sizeable investment in purchasing a beautiful motor coach. Take this valuable opportunity at our rallies to learn all you can by attending our seminars and talking with representatives from Tiffin suppliers such as Freightliner, Onan, Triple H Electronics and others.

The cost for one coach and two adults is only \$459. We will begin accepting reservations on Tuesday, May 2, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. CDT. Our rallies sell out quickly—the first two 2017 rallies sold out within minutes! Don't delay if you are interested in attending! The only way to register for this rally will be online at [Tiffinmotorhomes.com](http://Tiffinmotorhomes.com). Make yourself familiar with the Tiffin website ahead of time so you know where to go when registration opens. (The Registration Form will not be available until exactly 10:00 AM Central Time and it will be removed when the rally is full.) Click on the Owner's tab, select Tiffin Allegro Club, and click on Rallies. Open the Registration Form by clicking on the space as instructed.

Information required for this form:  
Tiffin Allegro Club membership #  
Name, address, cell #  
Tiffin Allegro Club Chapter #  
(if applicable)

Model, year & length of Tiffin coach  
First time rally attendee?

Request for handicap parking area?

Guests wishing to park together will need to enter the fairgrounds together as coaches will be parked one after another. No need to tell us who you wish to park with—just come in together.

Complete the required information by filling in the blanks and click SUBMIT. Pay for the rally on the next page by entering your credit card information into this secure PayPal site. It is not necessary to have a PayPal account for payment. You can pay as a "guest" the same as those who have an account. If the rally sells out before you register, don't despair! Add your name to our waiting list and we will contact you if a space becomes available. Once the waiting list is filled to capacity,



the link will be removed from the website.

An outside vendor accumulates all registration forms and provides them to the Club in the order in which they are received. This eliminates the problems with overloading our email server, jamming the fax machine, etc. No registrations will be accepted by mail, in person or by telephone. Anyone not having access to the internet can ask a friend or family member to register for them. This rally will sell out quickly so don't delay in getting your registration completed online. Call our office at 256-356-8522 ahead of time if you have any questions. *We do not recommend trying to register for the rally on a smart phone or mini-tablet!* Too much information in too small a space!

We hope your 2017 travel plans include spending time with us at a Tiffin Allegro Club rally! Make your plans now!

## Repairs Made at Tiffin Allegro Club Rallies

Bob Tiffin has arranged to have TMH service technicians and our local RV dealers' service techs present at this rally to do minor repairs on your coach. In order to get everyone taken care of, we need your cooperation. Because of the obvious time constraints of less than three full days at the rally, only minor repairs and adjustments can be made. Please understand, we must take care of all of your issues in only one visit to your coach. Work will be limited to the parts on hand.

A maximum of three items or 30 minutes will be allowed for the repairs per the aforementioned criteria at Tiffin Allegro rallies. At FMCA rallies, only three items that can be repaired in 15 minutes will be allowed per the aforementioned criteria.

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



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- ❖ Digital design completely eliminates installation calibrations and any future recalibrations.
- ❖ Senders are custom fitted to your tank by cutting the sender with a pair of scissors!
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# Monitoring Your Pet

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

**Y**ou and your friends may have been wearing those plastic wristbands that monitor your steps, calories, and sleep. Similar small monitors are now available for your dog.

These wearable devices track your dog's activity through the day or night. Was he sleeping or pacing most of the night? Some include a GPS so your pet's whereabouts can be located.

Such monitoring devices have proven to be very useful in veterinary medicine because they have made it possible to track many specific pet behaviors like scratching, running, and shaking. A dermatologist who is treating a patient for a skin problem can now determine the number of times a dog scratches and for how long they scratch so when a treatment is initiated they can see if it is helping rather than the owner giving a cursory: "I think he is better."

Another great use for an individual pet monitor is the tracking of seizures in epileptic dogs. The purpose of tracking seizures is to see if the medication the dog is receiving is working. Many times animals will have seizures when their owners are not around. Therefore, the owner is unaware of how many seizures the pet is actually experiencing.

Many people use the Fitbit, Garmin, or a program on an iPhone to keep track of their steps and their calories for weight management. It is also a great idea to use a monitoring device to help control obesity in our pets. Obesity is a huge issue for pets because it leads to diseases such as diabetes, heart problems, and difficulties with joints. Using a monitor is a great way for an owner to record and regulate their pet's calorie intake and exercise. Having results documented can lead to better control of calories consumed.

Since such devices can track pacing, one can tell if destructive

behavior is involved and monitor whether medication and behavioral therapy is working. One such monitor is called FitBark for the Fitbit users. Many working people spend a lot of money on doggie daycare and pet walkers. Now the owner can monitor whether their pet is walking enough with the pet walker, and whether the pet is actually running around while at the pet care center. Another device, PetPace, is used in veterinary hospitals to monitor hospitalized patients.

Vetrax is a new device that is lightweight and attaches to the dog's existing collar. With this device, there is a monthly fee for monitoring. This device transmits data directly to the cloud via the pet owners Wi-Fi network. Feedback is provided to the veterinary hospital and pet owners through a mobile app.

The PetPace monitor can track vital signs such as temperature, pulse, and respiration along with heart rate, calories, and the position of the animal. These devices take the guesswork out of treatment results and document the progress being made.

All this information is being sent to veterinary universities so that we can expand on different treatments for certain diseases such as epilepsy and heart disease.

FitBark did a study on large dogs over a year old that wore the device for at least 20 hours a day. They wanted to evaluate the impact of dogs on human sleep to answer the question, Are dogs disruptive in the bedroom? They developed a list of dogs you should avoid having in the bedroom if you want to enhance your sleep. The website is <http://bit.ly/2ibW7JW>.

All of these monitoring devices can be a big help by providing evidence of a pet's specific behavior on a 24/7 basis. Since animals cannot tell us what is going on, this new technology is their new voice.

Happy Travels, John & Kay



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## Interviews from Florida and Massachusetts



### Frank & Joan Cornier & 3 of their 4 children

Hometown: Orlando, Florida

Interviewed: Silver Springs, Florida

- In June of 2016 Joan and Frank Cornier purchased a 2007 Phaeton 40QSH at Lazydays in Seffner, Florida. It has the 350 Caterpillar power plant.
- They have been married two years and together have four children. Still working full time, the Corniers are living their dream early with their young children, and loving every minute of it.
- When they can get away from work, their normal routine is to camp once or twice a month, mostly in Florida.
- “We like RVing to relax, enjoy each other, enjoy the outdoors, make memories, and slow down from the busy work week,” Frank said.
- Both are employed in full-time positions. Joan is a registered dietitian and Frank is a firefighter.
- With less than a year of RVing in their Phaeton, they have been to Franklin, North Carolina, Fort Wilderness at Disney, Wekira Falls, Jetty Park, River Ranch, and Dunedin, Florida.
- They have an unusual traveling companion – Swirl, the hamster.
- Their hobbies, besides camping, include exercising, traveling, reading, and fishing.
- Future traveling plans include: Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Maine, Badlands, Rhode Island, and South Carolina.



### Tom & Joan Van Dette

Hometown: Fredonia, New York

Interviewed: Silver Springs, Florida

- Tom and Joan purchased a 2010 Phaeton 40QTH at Lazydays in Florida in November 2015. The Phaeton is built on a Freightliner chassis with a 380-hp Cummins Diesel
- Both Tom and Joan are retired; Joan since Nov. 2012 as a vice president of human resources and Tom since 2010 as an owner-operator of a small technology business. Two weeks after Joan’s retirement, they hit the road.
- They have been married 30 years and have five children: Christina, Jill, Angel, Eric, and Tony. Their seven grandchildren include Ashley, Colby, Aubrey, Emma, Brian, Danielle, and Chris.
- Their first motorhome was a 34-ft Georgetown that they christened “Georgie.” They soon realized a Tiffin of similar size and price had far more amenities. They traded for the 40QTH and headed to the Florida Keys for their first trip.
- Tom’s hobbies include woodcarving and playing his guitar. They both are avid readers. They enjoy birding, lighthouses, and journaling. Tom has completed three journals, documenting the wonderful memories of the people and places they’ve seen.
- Since their bucket list to see America began, they have visited 38 states. They plan to visit all 50 states and many of the national parks.



### Peter & Brenda Reilly and son Matt

Hometown: Sandwich, Massachusetts

Interviewed: Scusset Beach State Park, Massachusetts

- We met this busy couple at Scusset State Park in Sandwich, Massachusetts. At the present time, they are occasional campers pondering future years as half- or full-timers.
- The Reillys own a 2011 Tiffin Allegro Open Road 35QBA with a Ford chassis and V10 engine. It was purchased new from Reines RV in Manassas, Virginia.
- They have been married 24 years and have 3 children: Morgan, Madison, and Matthew.
- Peter is presently working for Oracle and the Air National Guard. Brenda is the owner of Cruise Planners, a full-service travel agency.
- Hobbies include biking, boating, and hanging out with their friends on the beach.
- Their bucket list includes Alaska, British Columbia, Mackinaw, Sturgis, and Malibu.
- They travel with 13-year-old Gizmo, a Keeshond breed.
- Now in their 16th year of camping, the Reillys spent the first 10 years in a Shasta travel trailer and have special memories of Assateague Island; Burlington, Vermont; and the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- Current favorites include Virginia, Gettysburg, and Amish Country in Pennsylvania, the Maine coast, plus Newport and Galilee, Rhode Island.
- Their future plans are to see the country, meet new people, and get together with old friends on the road.



**Editor’s Note:** Dave has been camping for 52 years in tents to motorhomes. In 2008 Dave and Terri purchased a new Phaeton 40QSH. They sold their home two years later and purchased a 2.8-acre lot in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts, naming their summer mini-campground “Beech-Wood Acres.” They spend the winter months at Wilderness RV Park Estates in Silver Springs, Florida. Dave and Terri enjoy full-timing as a lifestyle and are living their dream.

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Text and photography by Fred Thompson

**V**ERY FEW, IF ANY, RV DEALERSHIPS were started by two friends who over lunch decided to pool their resources, wrote a business plan, and launched a company that took off like a rocket. Most RV dealerships have very humble beginnings. A frugal entrepreneur, who puts in 16-hour days and often has some unique skills, is usually at the heart of a successful dealership. That is the behind-the-scenes story at Adventure Motorhomes, perhaps still better known to many customers as Bob Ledford's RV, located in Greer, South Carolina.

David Ledford, Bob's son, has told the story many times before, but the little nostalgic creases in his eyes and smile reveal how much he enjoys telling it again. Bob is now 85 and still comes in on Saturdays to greet customers and hand out treats to children.

"When dad was in high school, he would buy and fix up old bicycles and rent them out," David began. "He grew up on a farm in western North Carolina and they did a lot of logging in addition to farming. He could repair just about anything. When he finished high school, he got a job driving a Coca-Cola truck route and saved every penny he could. When he and mother got married, he had \$75 and that was enough to spend a week in Daytona Beach on their honeymoon."

Bob Ledford was always looking for

ways to earn and save. Perhaps instinctively, he knew that being in business for himself was his goal.

"When dad was running his Coke route in 1957 in Asheville, he found two used cars for sale and bought them," David continued. "After sprucing them up, he parked them on the side of the road with FOR SALE signs and sold them quickly. Then he bought three and sold them; then four, five, and six. Someone at the city's business license office saw what dad was doing and told him he would have to get a business license to continue his little on-the-side business."

Given a legal ultimatum, Bob considered his options and went to talk with his boss at the Coca-Cola bottling plant. He decided to leave Coca-Cola and go into the used car business, but with a promise

from his boss that if his business did not succeed he would still have a job there.

Within a few years, Bob Ledford became the largest used car dealer in North Carolina. A major reason for his success was his decision to advertise on WLOS TV13 in Asheville. "Dad was always very outgoing and gregarious in talking with customers," David said. "To save on his TV advertising expense, he decided to do his own TV ads. The station manager at WLOS was so impressed with his talent, stage presence, and enthusiasm that he asked dad in the early sixties to be the master of ceremonies for the station's ongoing local talent search and show. Dad attracted a tremendous amount of talent for the show and bartered with the station for his own dealership advertising. It was a win-win deal for everybody. He

became quite a celebrity throughout the Asheville area, and his dealership became more profitable every year."

With success in the wings of nearly anything he did, Bob Ledford decided to open a mobile home sales lot northwest of Asheville on a small farm owned by his father. "The mobile home business was moving along fairly well in the early seventies when a Winnebago rep stopped and asked if dad would put a few Winnebago Class A motorhomes on his lot to see how they would sell at that location," David related. "He liked the idea and the motorhomes sold. Dad also took on the Class A Banner brand. It had a Dodge engine and chassis and was priced at \$12,000. They sold well, too, and dad was convinced. Mobile homes out, RVs in. He decided to add towables right away

and got dealerships with Lark, Shasta, and Serro Scotty. By the late seventies, he was selling five Class A brands including Tiffin, Banner, Travco, Champion, and Holiday Rambler. The farm had a two-car garage that became our service center. We continued the sales and service at the farm until 1998-99.

"My experience in the business was from the ground up," David continued. "I washed RVs and worked in service and parts. But I was most intrigued by the accounting department. I was always good in math and that pushed me into the management end of the business. I created charts and graphs for the company's overhead and expenses and studied our operational effectiveness from an accounting perspective. Dad was great in the 'gift-of-gab' selling. He could take you through any of our RVs and tell you how it functioned and how much you were going to enjoy it. He was a talented salesman and our skills seemed to complement each other."

David Ledford has other passions besides the RV business that divides his time. "When we get out of high school, most of us are determined to do something on our own," he said reflectively.

"I had a passion for hang gliding. I was pretty good at it, got a national sponsor, and went into competition. The idea with hang gliding is to navigate a prescribed course or go a specific distance. Powerless flight has been my passion for over 40 years. Today I fly hang gliders, paragliders, and sail planes. I have a sail plane that has a 57-1 glide ratio which means if I am a mile up, I can glide 50 miles in dead air."

Bob Ledford decided in 1983 that David was capable of launching a new operation. They were selling a lot of RVs in the Greenville, South Carolina area and both father and son agreed that the potential for opening a dealership there was good.

"Dad was blunt: 'You're elected. Go do it,'" David said.

"I had just sold a Holiday Rambler Imperial to a Greenville banker. He offered to loan me the funds to launch the dealership," David related. "How much do you need?" he asked. "One million," I responded. "It was a deal in a matter of a few days. I secured several dealerships, put towables on 18 acres, and opened for business. I had a \$50,000 line of credit for day-to-day operations. The business went well and in 1993 I went back to Asheville and bought Dad out. We had maxed out



the sales potential on the original business location northwest of Asheville and sold it.”

With great plans for a new Bob Ledford operation in Asheville, David opened “Adventure Motorhomes” on a 50-acre property: 25 acres for the new sales and service operation and 25 acres for an upscale campground. The company’s success was evident when an Asheville family made David an offer in 2001 he could not refuse and he sold out.

Now concentrating on the Greenville location (actually in Greer), David began expanding and improving the company’s facilities, both in sales and service. “We are moving toward a facility and staffing that will make this store a 1,500 units per year operation, towables and motorized.”

As a separate business, David operates a grading and construction business in the Greenville area, building commercial property for rent and doing grading and land preparation for other contractors. He has used his construction company to expand the Adventure Motorhomes property, reshaping the steep side of an adjacent ravine into multi-tiered parking for RV inventory as well as employees’ vehicles.

“We are really excited about the improvements we will be making this year to our facility,” David said. “We will be adding 12 new service bays, each with 10 feet greater depth than our current bays so we can handle the 45-foot motorhomes completely inside. This will give us a total of 22 service bays. We currently have the largest indoor showroom in the Carolinas. Along with our other physical plant improvements, we will be doing an external facelift with stucco or brick. On the upper tier parking level, we are adding eight sites with hookups for full-timers who need to stay in their coaches while they are here for repairs. We will be adding two lift systems in the new bays and opening a body shop late this year. In addition to maintaining high sales and service standards, it is so important to have a solid business financially in order to be here in the future to serve those who place their confidence in us.”

Certainly a part of the success of Adventure Motorhomes is David’s ability to employ talented managers. **Carl Horton**, sales manager, has been with the company for eight years. “I grew up on a farm near Camden,” Carl began. “We had 100 acres in watermelons and 1,000 acres in row crops. Farm kids begin working when they are in elementary school. Even at that age they can help and begin to learn a work ethic that will last a lifetime. By the time I could drive the truck hauling watermelons to market, I negotiated selling truckloads to the buyers at the farmers market.

“When I finished high school, I studied commercial art at Central Piedmont in Charlotte and later at Coastal Carolina College,” Carl continued. “Out of college, I worked for an interior decorator. Then, for the next 10 years, I sold European cars during the day and sold my artwork at night. My father-in-law suggested my experience with high-end automobiles (Volvo, Mercedes, and Porche) would qualify me for a job opening at Brown RV. ‘Carl, you’ve been a success selling expensive cars. You’ll do even better selling expensive motorhomes.’ I applied



**Sales Staff**  
*Left-to-right* Back row: David Ledford, Ken Brady, Josh Martin. Middle row: Marcel Savard, Tom Matlock. Front row: Lewis Garland, Kelly Patterson, Jeff Smith. Not shown: John Sherrill and Kathy Flowers.

**Parts, Service, and Technicians Staff**  
 Back section, sequentially *left-to-right*: Brandon Mereby, Jeff McArn, Troy Nielsen, Marlynn Slusser, Lauren Matlock, Kreg Dion, Erick Robinson, Tammy Marchbanks, Joe Girardeau, Lori Whiten, Tom Brady, Ben Crumley, and Jeff Davis. Middle row: Mariya Bentsiy, Jeff Collin,

David Robinson, Trey Smith, Autumn Ledford. Front row: Carla Hall, Travis Center, Joni Canterbury, Bill Wilt, Brian Sautter, Michael Harris, Shawn Barrow, and Charlie Wilson

at Brown RV in Chesterfield County and they hired me immediately. The sales etiquette is totally different between selling a Mercedes and a Ford. You establish relationships based on consulting and service that should last for decades. The same is true when you are selling an Allegro Bus or a Phaeton. You are matching desires and specific needs to the product.”

Carl manages a team of 10 to 12 sales associates plus two specialists in finance and insurance (F&I). He regards skill in the interview process as critical to good salesmanship. “You have to learn to ask the right questions and listen carefully to the client’s answers. Some answers require an additional question,” he said. “You must know what the couple wants before you show them what you have that will meet their specific plans for RVing.”

Sales training often occurs on the fly. Carl occasionally works with a sales person and allows the experience to become part of their training process without interfering with the relationship that is developing with the client. Representatives from manufacturers visit regularly for product training, especially on new floorplans or features that are being introduced.

“Almost all of our advertising is done on the internet and on our website,” Carl noted. “Of course, that means most of our sales leads come from the internet. Every morning incoming leads go to sales associates on a rotation basis. Phone calls during the day are dispersed to the sales staff for an immediate

follow-up. Our process is to get off of the internet and on to the phone. You can respond with emails, but an interactive conversation is the best way to help an inquiring caller. Communication is a personal thing. Your desire to help and tone of voice tells the inquirer you are sincere.

“Charlie Wilson helps us with our website,” Carl continued. “As soon as a new unit arrives from a manufacturer, a stock number is assigned and it goes on our website and is fed to several other posting sites, such as rvtrader.com. Pictures are added as soon as possible.”

Carl elaborated on two strengths of his sales team. “In addition to their sincerity to help, our sales associates are knowledgeable and have years of experience,” he said.

“David Ledford is a believer in treating the customer right,” he emphasized. “He does not try to make killer deals. We will take less to make a good deal if that’s what it takes. Our focus is building a good, solid customer relationship for life—not one deal. A good relationship means our client will tell others how much we care and how well we service your coach and you personally after the sale.

“Written communication is important, too,” Carl said. “Some companies have form letters thanking customers for their business. We write personal thank you letters and postcards.”

Since most of the sales team have offices along the outside

wall of the showroom, I had the opportunity to interview each of them for a few minutes. Most of their responses reflected how they feel about the company’s culture.

*Marcel Savard* — It’s a family-owned company. We are completely relational and open with each other.

*Josh Martin* — It all goes back to our owner. David is just like Bob Tiffin. He is always involved and ready to talk to a client or an owner on a moment’s notice.

*Jeff Smith* — Our company’s owner is honest and trustworthy.

*Ken Brady* — I came here in 1988. It was like coming home. David and I are like family. Many manufacturers build a gas quality motorhome and put it on a diesel chassis. Tiffin builds a diesel quality motorhome and puts it on a gas chassis.

*Tom Matlock* — As a customer, you can visit a dealership and be impressed — until you look behind the curtains. At Adventure Motorhomes, you won’t be disappointed.

*John Sherrill* — I like the way David does business. He cares about his employees and his owners. I like the Tiffin product and the honest, candid answers I always get from Bob Tiffin and Danny Inman.

*Kelly Patterson* — I drive 70 miles each way from Walhalla to work here. The atmosphere here is wonderful. I love the people. David has been a patient teacher.

*Kathy Flowers* — I worked 10 years at Tom Johnson RV until it



*From left:* Adventure Motorhomes' management team Joni Canterbury, David Ledford, Charlie Wilson, Carl Horton, Autumn Ledford, Troy Nielson, and Jerry Cantey.

was sold. I drive an hour and a half each way to work here. I get to see the sunrise and the sunset.

**Jerry Cantey** is the service manager for Adventure Motorhomes. His mechanical knowledge came from building cars from the ground up. From 1999 to 2004, Jerry built replica Shelby Cobras. Originals were built intermittently in the UK and the United States beginning in 1962. The first ones sold for \$7,000. "A true original today in pristine condition will bring a half million dollars," he said. "Replicas go for about \$50,000."

Jerry started his RV career in sales in 2004 at Todd's RV in Henderson, North Carolina, where he remained until the 2008 recession began. After two years in the security business, he took a sales position with Tom Johnson RV in Marion, North Carolina, working there until the company sold to Camping World in 2015. "Most of us left and began looking for positions elsewhere," Jerry said. "I was

glad to find a position in service management here at Adventure Motorhomes. I drive an hour and a half each way from Marion. I work here because of David and who he is. He has one of the biggest hearts in this business."

The service center has been under Jerry's supervision for nearly two years. The personnel include two service writers, 14 technicians, and two wash/prep guys. "Brian Sautter, our foreman, is a master certified technician and we have three certified techs. Brian focuses one day a week on in-service training and David pays for RVIA training courses that lead to certification. Achieving the certified technician rating earns an automatic pay raise," Jerry noted. "Most of our techs have been through Tiffin's service training in Red Bay. We are trying to hire additional experienced techs to fill the positions that will be created when we add 12 new service bays."

Jerry divided the department into pre-delivery inspection (PDI) and the service center itself. PDI actually takes place twice while a unit is in inventory. When a unit is received from the manufacturer, the PDI techs go over it thoroughly to discover any deficiencies or problems. Then, after the unit is sold, the PDI team goes

over the unit again to ascertain it is in A+ condition. At that point, a team member delivers the unit (motorized or towable) to the new owner which includes training in all aspects of operation and periodic maintenance. The company processes 25-30 units per week through PDI.

"We offer full service and repairs to the manufactured unit," Jerry said. "That does not include chassis and engine service. We refer service for Cummins, CAT, Freightliner, Spartan, and PowerGlide to nearby companies. We do heating, AC, plumbing, electrical, refrigeration, wood-working, body and collision work.

"Our biggest challenge now is the volume of incoming service work," Jerry continued. "However, we are taking care of that problem this year with 12 new bays and more technicians. Tiffin owners give us high marks for our service. Three of our techs specialize in Tiffin coaches and visit the service center in Red Bay once a year to stay abreast of the technology."

Good public relations play a major role in the success of the service center. On repairs and service that are expected to take several days, the service writers, Scott Marchbanks and Chris Brady, schedule drop-off dates and estimate the time re-

quired. In late March, the service center was scheduled six weeks out. If warranty work is involved, Marlynn Slusser, the warranty and service administrator, gets involved early to secure clearances from manufacturers to perform the work under warranty.

After the repair work progresses, the service writers stay in touch with owners to update any changes found in the original service write-up, the time required to complete the work, and any change in the anticipated charges. “We aim to provide comprehensive and precise repairs and service in a timely manner to the best of our collective ability,” Jerry emphasized.

**Travis Center** is the company’s parts manager. He oversees the retail parts store that carries a \$400,000 inventory plus the parts inventory for the service and repair center. “There are so many aftermarket products that RVers want, as well as items they must have to go camping,” Travis said. “We build our own starter kits that include the sewer hose, water hose, RV toilet paper, holding tank chemicals, water regulator, wheel chocks, and shore adaptors (50/30 and 30/110).

“For our motorhome owners, we carry Splendide washers and dryers and satellite dishes by Winegard,” he continued. “We do a lot of aftermarket installations for those items. We are also converting a lot of gas-electric refrigerators to residential units with inverters. For those who like to camp in the national parks, state parks, and Corps of Engineers campgrounds that usually do not have sewer connections, we sell 50 to 100 Tote-A-Longs a year. The 42-gallon unit is our largest size.”

When asked what he likes best about his job, Travis responded, “The great customers we serve and just getting to talk to people who enjoy camping. David loans a used motorhome to the employees for a week at a time, so we can talk-the-talk and walk-the-walk with our customers.”

Asked about the most difficult part of his job, Travis said, “Trying to give everyone the best level of service when we get super-busy.”

Travis pointed out that “Adventure Motorhomes will match prices against Camping World every day of the week. Plus, we sell with world-class service and that doesn’t cost you a penny!”

**Charlie Wilson’s** hobby of hang gliding brought him in contact with David Ledford at a California location a few years ago. Subsequently, he worked with David to liquidate several condominiums David had built along the Pacific coast as an

investment. After discovering Charlie’s additional business skills in IT and sales support, David persuaded him to move to South Carolina and join Adventure Motorhomes.

“I do updates to our website on an almost daily basis as we bring in new units from our manufacturers,” Charlie began. “I upload RV descriptions, pricing, images and video sales promos and remove the units that we have sold. I also assist Carl and David in ordering new motorhomes



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Travis Center, parts manager, oversees the retail parts store that carries a \$400,000 inventory. He also manages the parts inventory for the service and repair center.

from Tiffin and other manufacturers. It is a pleasure working with Effie Johnson in Tiffin's sales department in Red Bay."

Charlie's IT skills are key to managing the company's phone systems, the computer software for purchasing, and the set-up and operation of computers throughout the business. "We are now using fiber optics throughout our location which has really enhanced the functionality of our servers and overall system. I also work with the sales department to develop our internal sales literature and pricing. Working with David, Joni, and the entire staff at Adventure Motorhomes has been a great experience, not to mention our common hobby of hang gliding."

Adventure Motorhomes now has the fourth generation of the Ledford family involved in the company. Of course, David is second generation; his daughter, Autumn (F&I), and son, Bradley (service),

are third generation; and Autumn's son, Eli (sales), is the fourth generation.

**Autumn Ledford** has worked at Adventure Motorhomes since she was 14. "I cleaned campers when I was in high school. After Eli and Ivy came along, I took a break from the business to raise my kids and get them in school. Then I returned to build a career here. I am very blessed to be a part of this company."

Autumn is spending an extended time in each department to absorb the big picture. She is currently working in the finance and insurance department. "I help select the right finance company for each client, taking into consideration the amount of the loan, credit ability, and interest rates," she explained. "We use Bank of America, USBank, Community First Bank, and credit unions in general. Most of our buyers do not arrive with their financing in place, so we spend quite a bit of time helping them find the best solution. We also offer extended warranties, gap insurance, and tire and wheel insurance. We have a really good local insurance agency that works with us interactively during the sales process. Most of the time our insurers are Progressive, Foremost, or Allied."

"I love to sell and talk to our clients," Autumn said. "We really focus on building relationships with our owners. Because we have camped with Eli and Ivy since they were very young, I can really talk about family camping with our customers. We have camped in tents, trailers, Class C's, Class A's – you name it. Ivy and I love to leave on a Friday and not even have a destination. We just go! All four of us care about people. We enjoy camping so much ourselves that we want everybody to have a positive experience. We often see people in campgrounds that I first met here at Adventure Motorhomes."

**Joni Canterbury** is Adventure Motorhomes' most recent addition to a top management position. "I joined the company on September 13, 2013," Joni began. "My official title is Human Resources/Systems Coordinator. I grew up

in Colorado and began my career with a BS degree in microbiology and followed that with an MS in environmental health and safety. David and I met while spending time with family and friends in Florida. Before I joined the Adventure Motorhomes team, I professionally developed operational and environmental policies and plans for companies to help them meet government regulations. At Adventure Motorhomes, I have developed employee policies and procedures such as injury/illness reporting, cell phone, hiring and disciplinary practices, etc. We believe these are important to our company as many companies the size of Adventure Motorhomes lack an organized human resources/safety & health program with documented company policies and procedures. I subscribe to online resources that continually keep me up to date on the laws and regulations that affect our business."

One of the paramount responsibilities of the HR department is to make good hires. "David and I do preliminary interviews of every applicant," Joni explained. "If we both get favorable results, we send the applicant to the departmental supervisor for a final interview. Once hired, the new employee receives 1.5 hours of new employee orientation and a 90-day trial period before becoming a full-time permanent employee. We look for employees with a positive attitude, good work ethic and those that enjoy working with people (meet our customers with a smile on their face). Our business is all about customer service and customer satisfaction!"

In addition to Joni's responsibilities in human resources, she is in charge of commercial and employee insurance and creates the content and basic design for RV Show signs, banners and literature. She works closely with Charlie Wilson in advertising and promotion, and with Troy Nielson, the company's accountant, on financials and budgets.

"Charlie, Troy, and I manage our Sys2K dealer management software, a system vital to our recordkeeping," Joni continued. "The program tracks everything that is done throughout the business. It tracks



Above: Joni Canterbury works closely with company accountant Troy Nielson to monitor and meet the departmental budgets. ♦ David Ledford takes a very hands-on approach to the management of Adventure Motorhomes. With definitive skills in cost accounting, he develops the budgets for each department. For the new members of the sales team, he enjoys teaching the math of working a good deal for their customers.

inventory acquisitions, sales, trade-ins, and parts, warranty and service events. When an RV comes in from the manufacturer, it is entered into Sys2K and is automatically downloaded to our website. Lori Whiten, our IT/Web Technician and

photographer, loads images of each new RV to the website daily.”

David develops corporate as well as departmental budgets and Troy and Joni monitor the financial feedback to keep the company operating within the budgets.

**Troy Nielson** has been with Adventure Motorhomes for four years. He has bachelor’s degrees in business management and accounting.

“I really like the challenge,” Troy said. “I get to have a hand in everything. With a large company, I probably would handle only one facet of the financials such as ac-



counts payable. Here I do it all including preparing all the financial reports. When I do a financial statement, I understand it completely because I have already had a hand in working with each department.

“In four years I have watched our sales double,” he noted. “We have 46 employees. It is fun being part of a family business and getting to know everyone here. Joni and I do not meet our customers that much. We are behind the scenes and provide the structure for the company.”

Just before I left Adventure Motorhomes to return to my office in Georgia, a Fedex driver delivered an envelope from Statistical Surveys, the company that records annually every vehicle sale of any kind throughout the country. David Ledford proudly displayed three certificates that placed Adventure Motorhomes as Number One for 2016 in three categories of RV sales in South Carolina: #1 Dealer for Class A Motorhomes; #1 Dealer for Class B Motorhomes; and #1 Dealer for Travel Trailers. David pointed to the Class A certificate and said, “Five years in a row for us and that’s because of Tiffin Motorhomes.”

A letter to David Ledford from a Tiffin motorhome owner who purchased a Phaeton from him tells an equally successful story about service. “This is a letter of gratitude and thanks to you and your staff for repairs and adjustments to my Phaeton. . . . Your mechanic, Brian Sautter, did an outstanding job. . . . He explained to me what the problems were and what had to be done to repair them, made me feel like a very special customer.” The owner went on to commend the other members of the staff who made sure he was well taken care of.

Adventure Motorhomes is a very welcoming place that puts service in its place – first place! Owners returning for service, visitors who are checking the company out for the first time, those passing through who need service or RV supplies from the well-stocked store, serious buyers who are looking for the right RV for their families. You will know when you walk in the front door that you are in the right place! **RIS**

## A Tiffin Regular Who Doesn't Get a Paycheck

During daylight hours at the Tiffin Motorhomes' Red Bay assembly plant, Betty Tiffin and Gary Williams are almost inseparable. No, this is not a questionable relationship going on in broad daylight. You see, Betty is a four-legged member of the Tiffin family.

Betty is about eight years old, a handsome mixed breed that has a strong lab influence. "She showed up about two years ago," Gary said. "Some of us tried to pet her. She was skinny and very shy. We fed her, but we had to put the food in a bowl and stay clear while she ate. After a few weeks, she reluctantly accepted our petting. And then one morning, she took food from my hand."

Gary has been with Tiffin for 34 years, spending his first nine years in the welding shop. For the last 25 years, he has worked in supplying the assembly line with "just-in-time" parts, especially the front and rear caps that require special handling.

"Betty has also warmed up to Steve Sims who pays her a lot of attention. Jimmy Patterson brings her lunch every day," Gary continued. "We wormed her, fed her well, and now she has put on some weight and her coat looks pretty. At break time, she comes to the warehouse for a snack. When we go home around 3 p.m., Betty ambles up the road. We checked on her afternoon destination and discovered she was going to David Grimes' house about two blocks from here. David felt sorry for her, too, and built her a dog house, but he was not aware of her daytime visits to the plant. Betty always got home before David did."

Betty "comes to work" every morning around 6:30 a.m. after her landlord leaves the house for his job. Until Gary investigated, David didn't know "his pet" was leading a double life. Who said, "No one can serve two masters?" Apparently, Betty has that one figured out.

She checks the area on the weekends, we are told, and when she sees that no one is here, she leaves.

"Now, after two years, if I am standing close by, anyone can come over and pet Betty," Gary said. "She seems to understand that she is in a special community of humans when she is here."

Gary, Steve, and Jimmy are amazed at how smart Betty is. "She will cross the street after looking both ways," Gary observed. "One day we were standing in front of the Welcome Center by the two-lane entrance into the plant area. As we walked over to the Welcome Center, Betty stopped in the road as a truck approached. I hollered at her, 'Betty, get out of the street,' and she immediately moved and got right behind me."

"If I go in the administration office building, she somehow knows that is off-limits," Gary said. "She will get by the door and wait for me to come out. But if I go down the wide corridor



PHOTO BY PHILLIS WILLIAMS

between the woodworking shop and the solid surface countertop department, she will follow along right behind me. Doesn't bother anybody, never barks at anything. She knows about garage doors, too."

When Gary makes regular trips to move material to the assembly line, Betty has a favorite place to lie in the sun. But if he is gone too long, she will go looking for him. "She can sense when the weather is getting bad," Gary said, "and she will go get in a box the men have set up for her."

When the assembly plant closes at 2:30, Betty will see the employees going home and will not let Gary out of her sight. "She gets these sad eyes when she thinks it's time for me to leave," Gary smiled. "She kinda makes me feel bad about leaving her."

Betty seems to have holidays figured out, too. When the plant is closed for several days at a time during Thanksgiving and Christmas, she stays home with David. "If I am out on a trip away from the plant, Betty will follow my tow truck with someone else driving it until she realizes the driver isn't me."

When the human resources department was asked to make her a name tag, they did have to make a special exception: Betty wasn't "human." But an exception was made and Betty now wears her Tiffin ID tag. "She has become quite a celebrity," Gary said. "The police know her. People in town tell me they see her at such-and-such a place over the weekend," Gary related. "Yep. Betty takes the weekends off just like the rest of us." **RIS**

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**10 Weeks and 7,500 Miles in 2016 — Alaska Here We Come!**

After nearly 30 years of career positions in corporate America, my wife and I decided to take a break. In February 2016, we bought our first motorhome — a 2016 Allegro Open Road 34PA. After six months of research, we knew the Tiffin was the best choice. We have had no regrets.

We took a few week-long trips to get our feet wet before embarking on a 7,500 mile, 10-week trip from Florida to Canada and back during the summer of 2016. Having relatives in Canada, we had made the trip several times in a car and could not wait to do the trip in our new Tiffin — what a difference! We loved taking our time, meeting great people, and seeing incredible sights along the way. Being an avid fisherman, we were able to bring back a freezer full of halibut (thanks to our residential size fridge). We found that living full time in our coach for almost three months was so enjoyable and very comfortable. Unless you have ever experienced it, you don't really realize how little you need on the road to be content and happy. Our journey took us up through the center of the country across Arkansas, the Dakotas, and into Saskatchewan Canada, then over to British Columbia and back home through Seattle and many beautiful states. For the upcoming summer of 2017, we are planning an even longer trip — this time across Alaska. We can't wait!

Thanks to Tiffin for making a great product. I traveled to Red Bay to see our Tiffin being built back in January. I met Mr. Tiffin and he told me to let him know if we ever needed anything. That is personal service from the man himself. One seldom finds this level of customer interaction in the business world today. You don't have to look far to find the secret to Tiffin's success.

Henry & Caroline Jordan, Lynn Haven, Florida



**Kudos to a Great Dealership**

We just wanted to let people know about a great Tiffin dealership — Tennessee RV in Knoxville. We recently purchased a 2017 Allegro RED 33AA which is our first Tiffin. I have owned two other brands and was never happy with either of them. Knoxville RV made me feel like I was "family." They never pressured me to buy, just let me shop at my own pace. I have never been so at ease buying from someone.

Terry Temple, Wendell, North Carolina

**The West Coast in '16, the East Coast in '17**

We purchased our 2016 Allegro 31SA in May 2016 with all of the factory options. I added Sumo springs, Roadmaster HD anti-sway bars, rear axle side-to-side control bar, Koni shocks, solar panels, a Banks intake system, and a five-star tuner. Then we traveled from Mesa, Arizona to the Pacific Coast in north-west Washington. We traveled the coast for nearly three months

until we reached southern California. Along the way, we parked at major RV resorts and then used our Jeep to travel and explore the coastal routes. After a few days at each resort, we moved to the next resort farther south. It was 11½ weeks of travel and fun. We had never seen so much ocean. We saw whales all along the coast, and met a lot of interesting travelers along the way. In 2017 we plan to travel the east coast from Florida to Canada.

Dennis Marbury, Mesa, Arizona

**Now Retired with Many Good Memories**

I would like for you to remove our name from your mailing list. We are now in our mid-eighties and not able to travel anymore. We sold our 1992 Allegro Bay Pusher after enjoying many years of travel in it. Jim and I have many good memories of the places we visited in our motorhome. Your magazine is wonderful and we have enjoyed it very much.

Joyce Kothe, Central Point, Oregon

**Dear Mr. Tiffin,**

I have just finished reading Vol. 13, No. 4 of your latest magazine and enjoyed it as much as the rest that I have read over the years. However, I thought that I should let you and your publishing staff know that we have sold our Tiffin because we are no longer able to travel.

We had wonderful trips in the two Tiffin units we owned. They were much superior to the other three motorhomes that we owned in earlier years. Please send our copy to a future owner for them to enjoy.

Alan & Diane Hemstock, Calgary, Alberta

**Central Ohio Has Many Attractions**

A visit to Amish country in central Ohio is a great experience! We camped for a few days at Evergreen RV Park in Mt. Eaton. Super nice folks! The park has an indoor pool, recreation hall, and a great store.

The Country Traveler Festival near Loudonville offered wonderful food, arts, and crafts. The Amish furniture shops had furnishings you can't resist taking home. They also have stores marketing bulk foods and meats. The cheese factory tour is not

to be missed. We really enjoyed the Warther Carving Museum in Dover. It's unbelievable. We are going back soon in our 2016 Tiffin Open Road 36LA.

Denny Napora, W. Seneca, New York

**Missouri Couple Begins Full-Timing in Their Allegro**

After acquiring our Allegro Open Road in October 2016, we started a full-time life on the road. After a couple of short trips in Missouri, we headed south to Mexico Beach on Florida's Forgotten Coast. It's a sleepy little town with a nice park just across the street from the ocean. Our three-month stay was over at the end of March. We met great neighbors, enjoyed the Oyster Festival in Apalachicola, and the Gumbo Festival in Mexico Beach. Our next stops were in Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina.

Bob & Marsha Becher, Farmington, Missouri

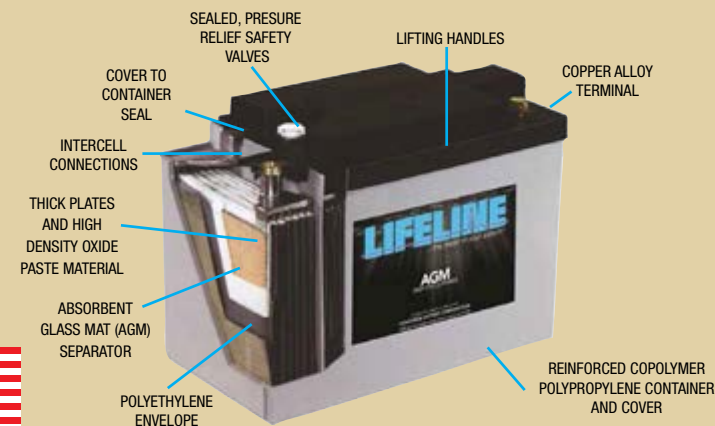
**For Years Frank and I . . .**

Traveled to lots of Blue Grass shows and campgrounds. We loved our motorhome but I sold it after he went "home" five years ago. So I don't travel anymore. Please remove our name from your mailing list. I love your magazine. God bless.

Sarah Turney, Sylacauga, Alabama



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# South Carolina's Islands & Beaches from South to North

## HILTON HEAD, EDISTO, HUNTINGTON BEACH, & BROOKGREEN GARDENS

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

**B**EGINNING WITH THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL evidence of the early indigenous peoples, our series on Georgia's Golden Isles revealed historical narratives about three of the barrier islands: Cumberland, Jekyll, and St. Simons. As the southeastern coast of North America was colonized during the sixteenth through the early eighteenth centuries, the Spanish and the English built missions, towns, and forts, and fought battles to establish and challenge territories. After the Spanish withdrew into Florida, it wasn't long until the colonies formed a new nation.

The southern colonies capitalized on their warmer weather to build an agricultural economy on rice, sugar cane, long-staple cotton, and tobacco. Slavery made their success possible. They fought a civil war over slavery and were recovering slowly when their mild winters along the coast were discovered by the barons from the industrial north.

Sixty years later following World War II, the participants in a rapidly expanding American economy now had the resources to enjoy—albeit to a limited extent—the extended seasonal weather of the Georgia and South Carolina coasts.

**Hilton Head Today**  
Harbour Town, the Marina and the Lighthouse/Museum



PHOTO BY JEFFREY KEEFER

## Hilton Head: How It Became a Resort Mecca

Identified from 20,000 feet as the “island shaped like a shoe,” Hilton Head Island encompasses an area of 69 square miles about 20 miles northeast of Savannah. Prehistorically, early inhabitants may have visited or lived on the island as long as 10,000 years ago, attracted by several species of game and the abundant aquatic food resources found in the marshlands and coastal waters. Archaeologists continue to study the shell ring in the Sea Pines Forest Preserve. Pottery shards are still being discovered along the creeks and beaches. The early European explorers called them the Yemassee Indians.

The Spanish first arrived on the island on 1521 on an exploratory voyage led by Capt. Lucas Vasquez Deayllón. In the summer of 1526, Deayllón sailed from Hispaniola in several ships with 500 settlers and founded a settlement called San Miguel de Guadalupe. Some historians claim the settlement was located in the Spanish Wells area of Hilton Head, fronting on Calibogue Sound, while others assert it probably was at the mouth of the Pee Dee River in South Carolina. Deayllón died from a fever



Deayllón

later that summer and the settlers returned to Hispaniola. In either location, there is no evidence of the settlement's existence.

Over a century later in 1662 a group of Boston merchants hired Capt. William Hilton to explore the coast of the Carolinas for future trading opportunities. Aboard his ship *Adventure*, Hilton had sailed the route several times from Barbados to Boston to sell Caribbean products to the merchants. He sailed from Charlestown, Massachusetts to accomplish his mission, but only ventured as far south as Cape Fear, North Carolina, about 30 miles south of Wilmington. The region was known as the Province of Carolina after Charles I of England had chartered the area in 1629 and granted it to his attorney general, Sir Robert Heath. After 31 years of inaction by Heath, the charter was ruled invalid. In March 1663, Charles II granted the

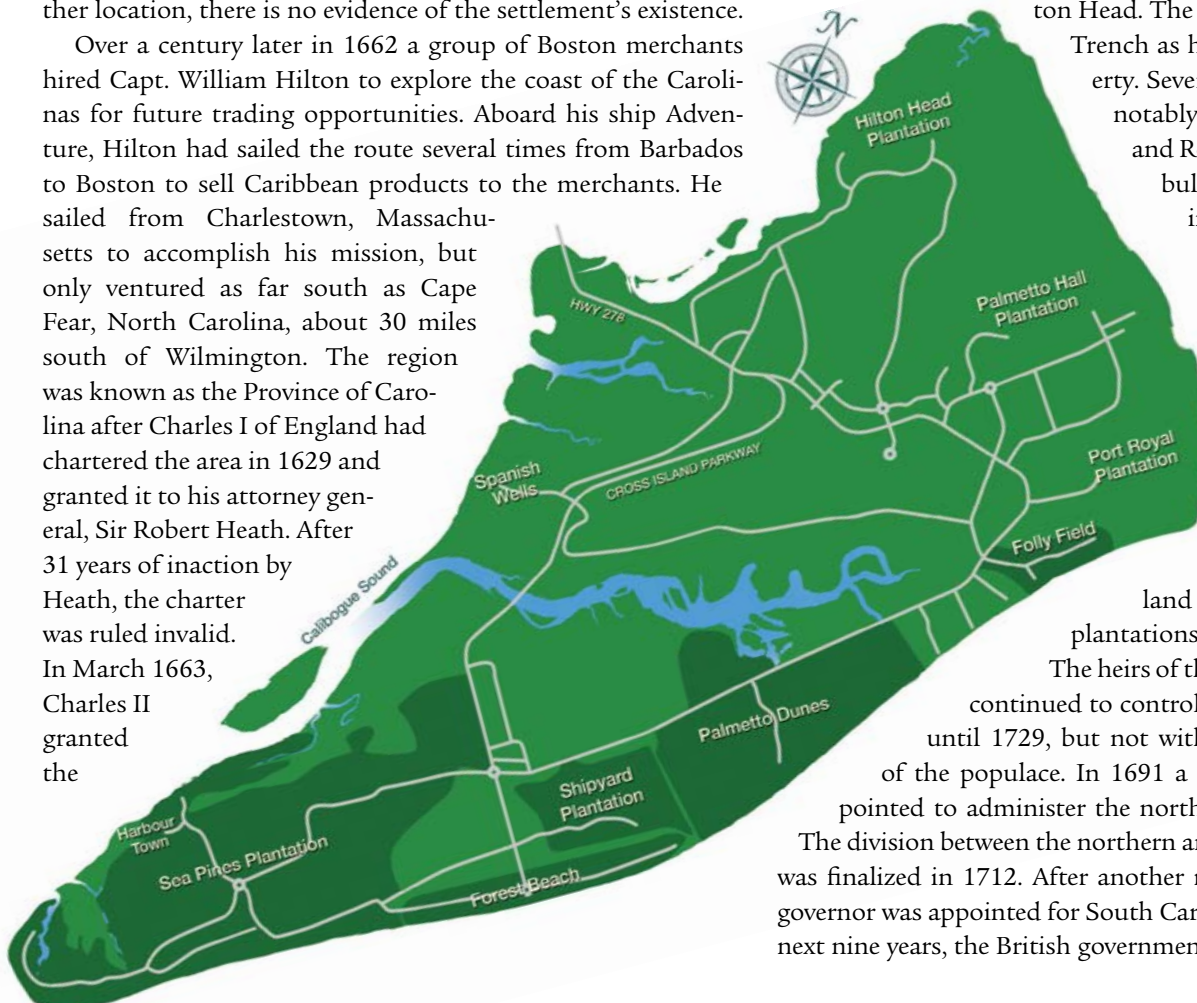
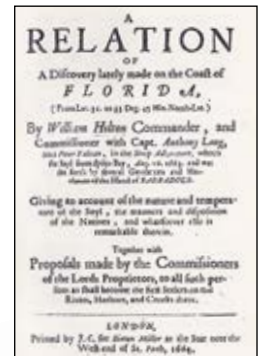
territory to eight Lords Proprietors in return for their political support in restoring him to the throne in 1660. He also wanted the new province to become an English buffer to stifle the Spanish from expanding northward out of Florida.

The following year Capt. Hilton sailed from Barbados to explore the territory granted by King Charles II to the eight lords. He sailed into a two-mile-wide sound in September 1663 and identified a headland on the northern tip of what appeared to be an island. He named it “Hilton’s Head” and anchored in the sound for several days, noting in his diary the trees, crops, “sweet water,” and “clear sweet air.” He described at length the Indians’ agricultural methods, the soil, the flora and fauna. Hilton’s glowing descriptions of the climate and abundant wildlife energized those interested in settling the Carolinas. His reports were repeated in the pamphlets distributed in England to encourage colonization. The island soon became known as Hilton Head Island and decades later the sound was named Port Royal Sound.

In August 1698 the Lords Proprietors granted to John Bayley of Ballingclough, County Tipperary, Ireland, a barony that included most of the island.

Neither Bayley nor his son, John Bayley, ever set foot on Hilton Head. The son appointed Alexander Trench as his agent to sell the property. Several plantations were sold, notably to Capt. John Gascoigne and Roger Moore. However, the bulk of the barony remained in the Bayley family until after the Revolutionary War. A survey in 1783 showed 47 tracts totaling nearly 15,000 acres. Records showing the disposition of the barony were lost in two fires, but British records indicate most of the arable land was absorbed into large plantations.

The heirs of the eight Lords Proprietors continued to control the Province of Carolina until 1729, but not without the extreme dissent of the populace. In 1691 a deputy governor was appointed to administer the northern half of the province. The division between the northern and southern governments was finalized in 1712. After another rebellion in 1719, a royal governor was appointed for South Carolina in 1720. During the next nine years, the British government located and bought out



the heirs, after which both North and South Carolina became royal colonies.

As the fledgling confederation moved toward war with England, Beaufort County's shipbuilding industry became one of the largest in the thirteen colonies, made possible by the deep-water creeks around Hilton Head and the great live oak forests. In 1779 privateers sailing with the British navy burned many houses on Skull Creek near the shipbuilding operation.

After Hilton Head plantations began experimenting with Sea Island cotton in the 1780s, the Myrtle Bank Plantation owned by William Elliott II garnered the distinction in 1790 of growing the first successful crop of the long-staple white fibers. For the next 70 years, at least 20 plantations on Hilton Head thrived because of the cotton gin invented by Eli Whitney in 1793 and the huge demand of New England and British textile mills for the coveted long-staple cotton.

On November 7, 1861, the prosperity of cotton plantation owners virtually changed in a day when 13,000 Union troops attacked Fort Walker and defeated Confederate forces in the Battle of Port Royal. In the next nine months, the island's population increased to over 40,000, including Union troops, civilians, missionaries, POWs, and blacks fleeing slavery on the mainland.

General Ormsby Mitchel established the town of Mitchelville to accommodate the country's first self-governing town of freedmen. The residents elected their own officials, passed their own laws, and established schools with compulsory attendance. By 1868 the military occupation of the island ended and the population of the island dropped to a few thousand.

Some of the plantation owners in the 1870s reclaimed their land by paying back taxes charged to their property. Much of the land was sold by the government to speculators and some freedmen were able to purchase small farms. By 1890 there were approximately 3,000 African-Americans living on Hilton Head Island who clung to their West African heritage. In August 1893 the fourth deadliest hurricane in U.S. history struck Beaufort County. The Category 3 storm killed over 2,000 and left 20,000 homeless. The 16-foot storm surge decimated Hilton Head Island. By 1930 the second and third generations of the freedman population had dwindled to 300.

On Hilton Head Island, the 300 heirs were held together by their Gullah heritage—a West African-based culture encompassing traditions, customs, beliefs, art forms, family life, and language that had transcended and survived three centuries of enslavement. The name "Gullah" came to be the accepted name of West Africans who after the Civil War settled in South Carolina's coastal islands, while "Geechee" usually refers to the West Africans who lived on Georgia's Golden Isles and Amelia Island in northern Florida. Designated by Congress in 2006, the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor extends from Wilmington, North Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida. See "Where to Go and What to Do" later in this story.

An unlikely connection to a brilliant scientist led to the development of Hilton Head as it is today. After serving in World



Alfred L. Loomis and his partner Landon K. Thorne acquired Bonbright and Company in New York after World War I and forged it into a prominent investment banking house. They liquidated just prior to the Wall Street crash of 1929 and walked away with millions. They made another investment in Hilton Head Island in 1931, and made a huge profit again when they sold it to General Joseph B. Fraser in 1950. Loomis was also a trained scientist who made investments in research. *Above*, Loomis is seated at far right in a March 1940 meeting at the University of California at Berkeley concerning the planned 184-inch cyclotron (seen on the blackboard), from left to right: Ernest O. Lawrence, Arthur H. Compton, Vannevar Bush, James B. Conant, Karl T. Compton and Alfred L. Loomis.

War I, Alfred Lee Loomis and Landon K. Thorne, two attorneys with Ivy League law degrees, decided to forego returning to law practice and acquired Bonbright and Company in New York. From the verge of bankruptcy, they led the company to become a preeminent investment banking house. In 1928 they anticipated the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and converted all investments into cash. With undergraduate degrees in mathematics and physics, Loomis turned his wealth and interests to developing projects in spectrometry, chronometry, experimental physics, and radar. His coterie of fellow scientists often included Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, and Enrico Fermi.

In 1931 Loomis and Thorne bought 63 percent of Hilton Head Island's total land mass to be used as a private game reserve and personal retreat, a practice that was seen earlier on Cumberland and Jekyll. After holding the land for nearly 20 years, they were approached by Fred C. Hack who was scouting timber for lumber companies. Not a major financial player himself, Hack put a partnership together composed of Gen. Joseph B. Fraser, Olin T. McIntosh, and C. C. Stebbins. Hack wanted to lease the 8,000 acres that had excellent stands of pine and urged Fraser to come immediately to approve the deal. However, Loomis and Thorne wanted to sell. With a 51 percent controlling interest, Fraser formed the Hilton Head Company, paying \$60 an acre. Soon after they gained ownership, the general was called up for duty in the Korean War, leaving Hack to get the timber operation underway. Learning that Loomis and Thorne were ready to sell their remaining 12,000 acres, Hack and McIn-



Charles E. Fraser in 1956 acquired his father's controlling interest in the Hilton Head Company and began developing it into a plantation of meandering drives and homes that melded into the coastal environment. Fraser was a marketing genius who nevertheless imposed stringent rules to preserve the natural environment of Hilton Head while it was being developed for attractive plantation-style homes. ♦ The appreciative owners of Sea Pines Plantation dedicated the statuary below to the memory of Charles E. Fraser.



tosh negotiated buying the balance of the estate for \$600,000. During the early 1950s, three lumber mills logged 19,000 acres of the island's pine trees. In 1956, Gen. Fraser's son, Charles E. Fraser, acquired his father's controlling interest in the Hilton Head Company with conservation-centered plans to develop Sea Pines Plantation. Fraser's vision was based on protecting the natural beauty of the land and wrapping human environments within the natural landscape rather than imposing man and his structures upon the environment. His guidelines included no building taller than the tallest tree, paint with natural earth tone colors, and make the oceanfront available to as many as possible, disturbing as few as possible.

The development of upscale homes with a distinctive island architecture and landscaping found immediate success. Many other gated communities attempted to duplicate Fraser's successful concepts, but he raised the bar by creating Harbour Town, a delightful shopping destination that surrounded the marina. Populated with interesting restaurants and anchored by its iconic lighthouse, the unique village continues to draw a steady flow of island visitors. Fraser's commitment to the environment was questioned when he altered the whole configuration of the marina to save an ancient live oak. Subsequently known as the Liberty Oak, it became the venue for nationally known singer and songwriter Gregg Russell who has performed there for over 25 years. After his death in 2002, Fraser was buried near the tree.

Another entrepreneur whose name is rarely heard today played a significant role in developing Hilton Head Island. By 1950 following the war, beach-goers in Georgia and South Carolina brought their provisions with them for a few days on the 12 miles of Hilton Head's uncrowded beaches. The completion of the James F. Byrnes bridge in 1956 significantly increased the seasonal flow of visitors to the island.

Norris and Lois Richardson drove 275 miles each summer to enjoy a week at Hilton Head's beaches with their three children. They owned five grocery stores in Thomasville, Georgia, an experience that opened their eyes to the need for retail stores on the island. In 1956 Richardson had all the materials to build his Hilton Head store shipped in by barge. Forest Beach Market was the first grocery on the island and Charles Fraser was his first customer.

Forest Beach Market expanded into Coligny Plaza that offered a wide variety of stores, including a post office, bakery, pharmacy, and real estate office. By the mid-1970s Coligny Plaza had become Hilton Head's Downtown, offering shopping, dining, and entertainment — and, of course, all of the supplies needed for a great beach vacation!

This writer and his family first enjoyed Hilton Head's beaches in 1976 when we rented a cottage near Folly Field Beach, located on the heel of the shoe. It was so uncrowded we imagined we were on the other end of Robinson Crusoe's deserted island. Do such places still exist in this country? We will continue to look for them in hopes that a few have survived.



### **Where to Park Your Coach**

By far the best choice on the island, Hilton Head Island Motorcoach Resort has all the amenities in a well-landscaped park. Each of the 401 sites is privately owned with fee simple title just as home sites are normally owned in a community. Owners may choose to rent their sites when they are not in residence. All sites are fully paved with patios. Most of the rentable sites are handsomely landscaped and have patio furniture. The resort

features secure gated access, full hookups, free cable TV, Wi-Fi (accessible from every site), dog park, resort lake, luxury bath facilities with private shower rooms adjacent to the large temperature-controlled pool, in-ground heated spa, fully-equipped exercise room, six tennis courts, children's playground, and basketball & shuffleboard courts. For current fees and available sites, visit [hhimotorcoachresort.com](http://hhimotorcoachresort.com)

## ***Where to Go and What to Do***

### **Golfing**

With more than a dozen public and private clubs, some of which were designed by Robert Trent Jones, Sr. and Jack Nicklaus, Hilton Head Island was named by the readers of Golf Digest as one of the world's top golf resorts. The 122-year-old Pinehurst Club has seen the legendary play of Hogan, Snead, Nicklaus, and Palmer. Palmetto Dunes near the middle of the island has three world-class courses. The renowned Robert Trent Jones Oceanfront Course at Palmetto Dunes offers an open, inviting layout with spectacular views of the Atlantic. Tee times are reserved weeks in advance for the Golden Bear at Indigo Run, designed by Nicklaus, of course. Google "golf on Hilton Head Island" and you can spend the rest of your day trying to make a choice where to play your first 18 holes.

### **Tennis**

Hilton Head Island is consistently ranked as one of the top ten tennis venues by national magazines. The Sea Pines Racquet Club at 3 Lighthouse Lane has 21 clay courts with 10 of them lighted. For reservations and information, call 866-561-8802 or visit the website at [seapinestennisresort.com](http://seapinestennisresort.com)

The Palmetto Dunes Tennis & Pickleball Center (public) has 26 clay courts and boasts the "Island's Largest Tennis Pro Shop." Located at 6 Trent Jones Lane. 877-434-2546

### **Biking**

Go to [hiltonheadisland.org/see-and-do/biking/biking-on-hilton-head-island/](http://hiltonheadisland.org/see-and-do/biking/biking-on-hilton-head-island/) for exhaustive information about biking on the island. HHI has 117 miles of shared-use pathways and 108





miles of paved shared-use paths. Be sure to read the section on “Hilton Head’s Hidden Bike Routes” that lists historical parks, birding and wildlife viewing areas, and a fishing and crabbing pier with vistas across Calibogue Sound. With HHI’s firm beach sand, bicycling on the beach will double your fun—you can go for 12 miles on the “foot of the shoe.”

For excellent service and rates for bike rentals, go to [bicyclebilly.com](http://bicyclebilly.com) or call 843-785-7851. Reserve and purchase on line to get two bikes for a week for approximately \$60 (including a 50% discount for the second bike). Price includes delivery and pickup



### Kayaking

Hilton Head Island’s waterways and inlets plus the rivers surrounding Bluffton present a natural beauty of the marshlands and aquatic life along Calibogue Sound that you will miss by just walking on the beaches. With patience and quiet exploring, you will likely see dolphins, several species of herons, river otters, and possibly a manatee. First-timers will enjoy a two-hour dolphin nature tour for \$28 at Kayak Hilton Head at 11 Simons Road. Call 843-684-1910. On your own, two-hour rentals are \$20 for a single and \$35 double.

### Theater, Symphony & Choral Performances

The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina oversees the production of five Broadway shows each season in an intimate setting with seating in the orchestra, loge, or balcony. All seats are priced the same (\$47) because there isn’t a bad seat in the house. The remaining plays in the 2016–17 season are *Sister Act* running from April 26 to May 21 and *Mamma Mia!* from June 14 to August 6. Tickets can be ordered online at [artshhi.com](http://artshhi.com). We enjoyed Pump Boys and Dinettes that played to a full house during our HHI visit. The Arts Center is located at 14 Shelter Cove Lane. Box office: 843-842-2787. Online contact: [artshhi.com/contact](http://artshhi.com/contact).

The Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra has four remaining

performances in their 2016–17 season. April 23 and 24 at 4 and 8 p.m. respectively: Brahms A German Requiem. May 7 and 8: Beethoven Seventh Symphony. Concert venue: First Presbyterian Church, 540 William Hilton Parkway. Reservations: 843-842-2055.

The Hilton Head Choral Society presents programs throughout the year. On Memorial Day weekend, America Sings! will be a special event at the First Presbyterian Church to honor our veterans. Sunday, May 28 at 7 p.m. You may purchase tickets early (\$10–25) at [hiltonheadchoralsociety.tix.com](http://hiltonheadchoralsociety.tix.com) or call 843-341-3818.





### Beaches

HHI is known for its beautiful white sand beaches—all 12 miles of them! The beaches are clean, rarely littered with detritus left by the tides. The sand is tightly packed, perfect for bike riding, long walks, or just playing with the kids in the surf.

The island has seven public beaches with parking nearby. Our first experience with HHI was at Folly Field Beach on the northeast end of the Atlantic beach. As mentioned earlier, in 1976 we rented a small cottage overlooking the beach. The living quarters were on the second level with a screened porch the length of the structure. A parking shelter and a big storage room for all of the beach stuff were enclosed at ground level. Those little, almost quaint, cottages are gone forever, absorbed by the high rise condominiums and hotels. Forgive the reminiscing, but at least the beach at Folly Field still has a public entrance. And once you are on the beach you can walk the entire Atlantic Ocean frontage, if you wish, passing the luxury homes that survived, the condos, and the big hotels.

To see a list of the access points with descriptions of the facilities, go to [hiltonheadislandsc.gov/ourisland/Parks/park-sandfacdetails.cfm?FacilityID=34](http://hiltonheadislandsc.gov/ourisland/Parks/park-sandfacdetails.cfm?FacilityID=34).

Coligny Beach Park, located at the end of Pope Avenue off of Coligny Circle, has the best designed facilities on the island for beach-goers, offering outdoor showers, changing rooms, restrooms, wi-fi, and seasonal life guards and beach rentals (Season: April 1 – Sept. 30. Hours: 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily). Official swimming areas have been designated for the Alder, Coligny, Driesen, Folly Field, and Islanders beaches. The boundaries of these areas will be clearly marked on the beach and in the water.

### Fish Haul Creek Park

Located in the heel of the shoe, Fish Haul Creek Park is a “must visit” area to experience the natural communities and wildlife habitats found on the island. In this 16.5 acre property you will find a maritime forest, a freshwater wetland, a salt marsh, and a beautiful beach. Interpretive exhibits along the

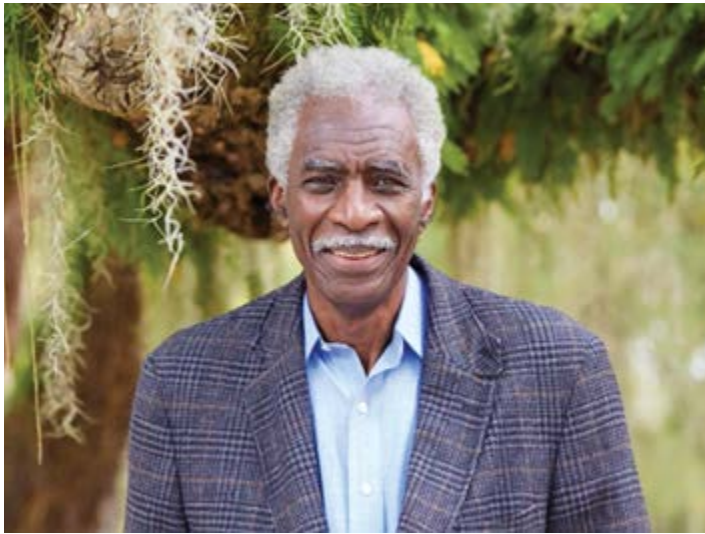


trails explain each area. The park is a significant cultural site because Native Americans occupied this area from 2000 B.C. to 1800 A.D.— four millenniums!

The park includes the area dedicated to the Historic Mitchellville Freedom Park. Be sure to pause and reflect at the Toni Morrison “Bench by the Road” memorial that connects HHI to the 19 other selected memorial bench sites around the world. These benches are a reflection of ignored, unknown, and forgotten African-American ancestors and their influence on lives and events that helped shape the world. The message on the memorial plaque is a moving tribute to the former slaves who stepped forward and owned the challenge to build a life and community free from the chains of slavery.

### The Gullah Heritage Bus Tour

Gullah Heritage, an organization on Hilton Head, offers tours of the island to share with visitors a broad understanding of Gullah culture. Tour guides, all of Gullah heritage, were born and raised on Hilton Head Island before the bridge connected the island to the mainland. The Gullah people are known for preserving more of their African linguistic and cultural heritage than any other African-American community in the U.S.



Dr. Emory Campbell, author, historian, and tour lecturer, traveled to Sierra Leone to broaden his perspective on the Gullah heritage and the African influence that is still so evident today.

Their language is an English-based Creole containing many African loanwords, plus significant African influence on grammar and sentence structure. You can arrange a two-hour tour on a modern, air-conditioned bus by calling 843-681-7066.

### **Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn**

Visit the Museum (no charge) and select at least two or three of the offerings from the educational smorgasbord offered Monday through Friday. The variety and number of programs, events, tours, nature & historic walks, cruises, and exhibits offered each week are mind boggling. We enjoyed and recommend the “Kayaking Jarvis Creek” and the “Dolphin Research Excursion” cruise. Outside the museum, you can roam 68 acres of gardens and displays, hike through the salt marshes, and visit the butterfly habitat. Go to [coastaldiscovery.org](http://coastaldiscovery.org) for daily schedules, programs, and driving directions to 70 Honey Horn Drive. 843-689-6767. Note the new entrance from Business 278 East.



### **Harbour Town, the Marina, and the Lighthouse / Museum**

Early morning and late afternoon at sunset are the best times to enjoy the scenic beauty of Harbour Town, the marina, and the lighthouse. Initially, the lighthouse is the attention-getter. As you climb the 114 steps to the top of the lighthouse, the interior walls to which the stairs are attached present a narrative history of the island. At the top, a circular walkway rewards the climber with a 360° view of the island and Calibogue Sound. The town’s shops and boutiques, restaurants, and sidewalks in all directions will keep you busy for several hours. Two stores in the marina area rent boats, kayaks, paddleboards, and jet-skis.

### **The Sea Pines Resort Forest Preserve**

You can easily spend four hours hiking, marveling, and photographing the Sea Pines Resort Forest Preserve near Harbour Town. It is considered by many to be Hilton Head’s finest natural asset. Charles and Joseph Fraser of the Sea Pines founding family in 1970 filed legal covenants that dedicated 606 acres in the preserve as a Wildlife Habitat and Outdoor Recreational Facility. Within the preserve, the 4,000-year-old Shell Ring, made by the Indian Moundbuilders, is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Information stops along the boardwalks and pathways through the preserve describe the endless varieties of flora and fauna in pine woods, live oak forests, sea grasses, and fresh water marshes. Check with the HHI Chamber of Commerce (843-341-8378) for the projected dates of the spectacular wildflower meadow in full bloom by Lake Thomas. On the boardwalks you are likely to pass alligators sunning themselves along the shores of the lakes. The National Audubon Society recognizes the preserve as an “Important Bird Area” with over 200 species sighted and recorded.

### **Dining on HHI**

There are over 250 restaurants on Hilton Head Island. On the South Carolina coast, the obvious cuisine is fresh seafood.



Add Gullah rice (an absolute must on HHI), fried okra, and peach cobbler. Visit [hiltonheadisland.org/dining/restaurants](http://hiltonheadisland.org/dining/restaurants) to get started on your culinary adventure. Using Google you will find a “Top 10 List of HHI Restaurants” where you could drop a Franklin every night for a dinner for two. We took a different approach. Here are a couple of alternative ideas.

**No. 1** Stop at Barnacle Bill’s Fresh Seafood Market, 614 William Hilton Parkway, and pick up a pound of unpeeled boiled shrimp per person, a jar of cocktail sauce, a box of saltine crackers, a gallon of iced tea, a sack of ice, and head for a picnic table at the beach, preferably at sunset.

**No. 2** With a little more preparation, you can do your own Low Country Boil. Bring a 16-qt. pot and a propane burner with your vacation stuff for the South Carolina coast. Visit a local grocery and buy crab boil seasoning, new potatoes, smoked sausage

(e.g. kielbasa), corn on the cob, celery, whole crabs, and fresh unpeeled shrimp. Set up your event on a picnic table at the beach. Print out detailed cooking instructions at [rismag.com](http://rismag.com) and have the time of your life eating like the locals.

**No. 3** Now we will get just a little more sophisticated. Located at 397 Squire Pope Road, Skull Creek Boathouse is a good choice for lunch, early dining (4:00–5:30), or dinner. Outdoor dining is on a sprawling terrace under iconic live oaks. You can get a table near the creek and with a bit of luck enjoy the best show on the island: a HHI sunset. The seafood menu is expansive, but landlubbers are not forgotten. If outdoor dining is your preference, come early or make a reservation—and wear mosquito repellent. They do have an indoor air conditioned dining room.

That’s it for HHI. Now let’s move up the coast for a one-day visit to Edisto Island.

## *Edisto Island: Quiet and Undeveloped*

We left Hilton Head Island Motorcoach Resort around 11 a.m. on July 15, taking the only exit—US 278 back to I-95. We took a short hop up I-95 to US 17, an eastern route across the low country to Charleston. Twenty-five miles west of Charleston, we turned south on CR 174 to reach Edisto Island, where residents have pointedly resisted commercial development.

Like Hilton Head and the sea islands of Georgia, there is ample evidence of prehistoric, indigenous people making extended

visits to the island to harvest its aquatic food supply as well as making it a productive hunting ground. A large shell midden located in Edisto Beach State Park is still being studied by the state. Before 1700 the first land tracts were granted by the colonial government for plantations to grow indigo and rice, harvest timber and furs, and run free-ranging cattle to produce hides for the European market and salt beef for Caribbean markets. Soon after the revolution, Edisto Island planters began growing and exporting the famous long-staple Sea Island cotton. Labor was provided by enslaved Africans whose native tongues were mixed with European and Caribbean dialects to create the Creole Gullah culture and dialect.

The twentieth century saw the repurposing of land for resorts and tourist destinations, but not to the extent that we saw on Hilton Head, St. Simons, and Jekyll. We chose to camp at Edisto Beach State Park to learn more about the island itself. The centerpiece of the park is the Edisto Interpretive Center, an 11,000 square foot “green” building that houses educational exhibits to explain the complex ecology of the ACE Basin Project that extends from Edisto Beach inland to Orangeburg and Bamberg, covering a million acres in the drainage area of the Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto rivers. The project is a partnership effort by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited and many private landowners.

The building itself is part of the message. Its “green” features include geothermal energy use, natural lighting and passive solar design, eco-friendly paint and carpet, and wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. Pervious concrete was used in the building to demonstrate its benefits in reducing stormwater runoff. If you are thinking about building a new home, you will leave with a notebook full of ideas.

The park offers a 3.5-mile nature trail using boardwalks through a marsh and a maritime forest full of live oaks and palmettos. The trail has stopovers at the Interpretive Center and the



The Edisto Interpretive Center



Lillie Howard



Edisto Presbyterian Church

Spanish Mount shell midden. Bicycles are permitted on the trail.

Loggerhead sea turtles nest at Edisto Beach State Park from May to August. Hatchlings emerge in August and September. From May until late September, no lights are allowed on the beach to avoid frightening the mother turtles and disorienting the hatchling who will go toward the light instead of the

sea. If you are interested in learning more, check with park staff who conduct early morning excursions to hunt for the tell-tale tracks of nesting sea turtles.

For an immersion into the culture of the island, pick up a copy of Edisto Island: National Scenic Byway at the Interpretive Center. From the McKinley Washington, Jr. Bridge at the



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Intracoastal Waterway to the Edisto Beach State Park, there are 30 stops with explanations and things to do. We especially enjoyed Stop 11 where we met Lillie Howard, 65, who has been making sweetgrass baskets for over 50 years. Lillie's mother died when she was 10. Four older sisters taught her how to make the baskets. Her creative talent produces baskets for many different uses. She still lives in Mt. Pleasant, S.C. 75 miles away, but drives to this location twice a week to sell her baskets and demonstrate how they are made.

We also visited the Presbyterian Church at Stop 10. The congregation first met there in 1685. The present building was constructed in 1830 with a balcony for seating slaves. Heavily damaged during local skirmishes, the church was restored after the Civil War.

Quite by accident, we met a tour in progress at the church and were offered the privilege of an inside visit. The tour guide, Dorothy Thomas, is a native of the island and capably relates the history interspersed with interesting anecdotes. You can schedule a two-hour tour Monday-Friday by calling 843-869-1984.

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Leaving the National Scenic Byway and driving to Botany Bay, you will travel through several miles of unpaved road through a continuous tunnel of live oak and pine.



Botany Bay Plantation Heritage Preserve and Wildlife Management Area requires a full day. The 4,687-acre area was created from two large plantations: Bleak Hall and Sea Cloud. Bleak Hall was acquired by Daniel Townsend II in the 1780s. The Townsends farmed the land for 130 years. During the 20th century, owners harvested timber, farmed the open fields, and managed habitats for wildlife. The 6.5-mile driving tour has 15 stops with a detailed guide to explain

habitats, land use, picnic areas, a place to launch a kayak or canoe for an excursion on the creeks through the marshes, and much more.

The most visited place on the plantation is the beach on the Atlantic Ocean (parking area at Stop 3 on the map). A short walk through the palmettos will take you to the beach. Visitors to Botany Bay Beach are guests, a point that is emphasized by a sign you will see as you arrive. There are many rules to preserve this



Earlier visitors arranged beautiful shells on endless pieces of driftwood.



Botany Bay Beach and shell displays

unusual gift of nature for future generations. No pets are allowed on the beach.

Botany Bay Beach is 2.8 miles of exquisite shoreline littered in places with greying driftwood. The shore also enjoys an abundance and variety of seashells protected by the state's department of natural resources. That means you cannot pick one up and take it home. Visitors often find the most interesting and beautiful shells and arrange them on pieces of driftwood, creating a natural seaside museum. The beach is a habitat for a variety of shorebirds, including the endangered Least Tern. It also has the highest density of loggerhead sea turtles nesting on the eastern seaboard. We were amazed at the formations of shorebirds that continued to fly low, as if we were attending an air show.

**Camping:** Edisto Beach State Park has two campgrounds. The Beach Campground has 30-amp service; the Live Oak Campground has 50-amp service. Both have water, neither have sewer. \$48/night.

A salt marsh creates transitional areas between land and water along intertidal estuaries. Cordgrass provides the most important component of the salt marsh food web, providing a habitat for fiddler crabs, periwinkle snails, oysters, clams, and marsh hens. Seventy-five percent of all recreationally and commercially important fish and shellfish spend all or part of their lives in a salt marsh ecosystem.



Live Oak Allée

These magnificent old live oak trees were planted as early as the 18th century to mark the land-side approach to the Brookgreen Plantation owner's house that then stood directly ahead. Two hundred years later, the allée's grandeur was still such that the founders of Brookgreen Gardens made it the central feature of the butterfly-shaped garden that remains today as the Archer & Anna Hyatt Huntington Sculpture Garden.

## Brookgreen Gardens

Brookgreen Gardens is undoubtedly America's best buy in quality experiences in science, gardens, and art. The gardens are a jewel with a very nice state park campground almost across the street.

At its founding in 1931, Archer Huntington wrote: "Brookgreen Gardens is a quiet joining of hands between science and art. The original plan involved a tract of land from the Waccamaw River to the sea in Georgetown County, South Carolina, for the preservation of the flora and fauna of the Southeast. At first the garden was intended to contain the sculpture of Anna Hyatt Huntington. This gradually found extension in an outline collection representative of the history of American sculpture from the nineteenth century, which finds its natural setting out of doors. It is not an experiment sta-

tion, nor a research plant. Its object is the presentation of the natural life of a given district as a museum, and as it is a garden, and gardens have from early times been rightly embellished by the art of the sculptor, that principle has found expression in American creative art."

Archer Milton Huntington (1870-1955) was the son of industrial magnate Collis Potter Huntington (1821-1900), who with Mark Hopkins, Leland Stan-

### Len Ganeway

Derek Werner (1938- )  
Bronze, 1980

When commissioned to create a sculpture that symbolized the readers of a county newspaper in rural Michigan, Derek Wernher decided that a farmer sitting on a park bench reading the paper would be a perfect choice. The title of the sculpture is the pen name of the newspaper's editor. Wernher cast the sculpture in a small foundry set up in his studio. Only one other casting exists.





The Butterfly House at Brookgreen Gardens

ford and Charles Crocker helped build the first transcontinental railroad. Collis Huntington was also the founder of Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company in Virginia. He was a forceful man who exemplified the nation's leadership in this period of rapid growth and expansion. To read the rest of the story, go to [brookgreen.org](http://brookgreen.org) and click on "About Us."

The price for tickets for seven continuous days of admission is adults \$16 (13+), seniors \$14 (65+), and children \$8 (4-12). Labor Day through late October is a per-

fect time to take a week's vacation, stay a week at Huntington Beach State Park, and enjoy the daily events at Brookgreen Gardens (see [brookgreen.org](http://brookgreen.org)).

If you do decide to stay for a week, you may want to consider purchasing an annual single membership for \$65 that will provide invitations to members-only events and programs. A household membership will admit two to members-only events. The Events Calendar on the website's toolbar is a smorgasbord of interesting things to do throughout the year, but especially from April through October.

Your week-long visit will be extra-special if you can bring your children and/or grandchildren. Following are some examples:

"Ribbit the Exhibit" is a remarkable traveling collection of larger-than-life, copper frogs taking part in a variety of activities, including playing instruments, catching butterflies, and meditating on a lily pad. Sculpted by artist J.A. Cobb, these captivating whimsical sculptures are on display from April 1 to July 9, 2017 and are included in garden admission.

The Butterfly House is a seasonal exhibit featuring a lush garden with tropical plants that give you the opportunity to observe hundreds of butterflies up close. Dozens of species are introduced throughout the summer and fall. The "Whispering Wings" exhibit contains a pupae emergence room where you can observe the transformation from chrysalis to adult butterflies. Tickets for a 30-minute timed visit are \$3 (adults) and \$2 (children) in addition to garden admission. Members no additional charge.

The Sculpture Exhibit is featuring "Recent Acquisitions, 2014-2017," May 27-July 23.

This exhibit will feature works by Stanley Bleifeld (1924-2011), Marion Roller (1916-2012), and Domenico Facci (1916-1994), all of whom are represented by multiple sculptures in the Brookgreen Gardens collection. It will also include medallic art by important sculptors in this specialized field which has been an acquisition focus in recent years. The exhibit is free with garden admission.

The Art Festival is a two-day event on June 3-4, 9:30-4:00. The annual festival provides an opportunity to talk with local and regional artists and authors. Brookgreen invites selected artists and authors to sell their works, meet with visitors, and give demonstrations. The festival is free with garden admission.

Brookgreen's Gullah Program is presented on Wednesdays throughout the summer at 1 p.m. in the Wall Lowcountry Center Auditorium. Ron Daise, vice-president for Creative Education and a Gullah descendant, will present an entertaining and informative program about

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*Diana*  
Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907)  
Bronze, 1893

One of the best-known works by this artist, Diana has sparked controversy since her creation in 1893. Once atop Madison Square Garden, the bronze now resides elegantly in Brookgreen's planted gardens. The sculptor was one of America's foremost artists, excelling in portraiture, relief sculpture, and medallic art.

the culture, food, language, and history of the Gullah Geechee people. The program is free with garden admission. The content of the program changes each month during the summer.


"Cool Summer Evenings" are offered on Wednesday-Friday, June 14-August 11. After a day at the beach, come back to the gardens in the cool of the evening and enjoy concerts, kids programs, and dinner in the Pavilion Restaurant. Entertainment and programs are included in garden admission. Creek Cruises are \$8 in addition to admission.

Camp Brookgreen provides one-week activities with an emphasis on connections to the natural world, animals, and

art. Summer fun and educational enrichment at Brookgreen Gardens includes hands-on activities, zoo and garden exploration, live animal encounters, crafts, games, stories, projects and more for rising K-12th graders. The camps are age specific: two camps K-1, two camps 2-3, two camps 4-5, one camp 6-12. Call 843-235-6049 for more information.

**Camping:** We stayed at nearby Huntington Beach State Park. The campsites have water and electric (30- and 50-amp) and a dump station. Rates are \$40/night. Hurricane Matthew in October 2016 did considerable damage to the park. At this writing, only one of the loops was open. It will be difficult to get a reservation during the summer season.

#### Myrtle Beach

If you have been to the Grand Strand before, you know why we did not include Myrtle Beach in this story about South Carolina's islands, beaches, and parks. Myrtle Beach is a destination story and you will see that in our summer edition of *Roughing It Smoothly*, 14:3. 

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**Inman's Answers**

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, a 43-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.

Red Bay. Then it happened again and we were locked inside a second time. I have removed the deadbolt and not replaced it. Is there a fix for this problem?

Paul Ewashko, Georgetown, Kentucky

Dear George,

There are several different adjustments you can make on the door and the locking mechanism. If the deadbolt is opening and closing properly when the door is open, then it must be binding against the receiving striker plate in the door frame. You can use a file to make the receiver hole larger and hopefully eliminate the binding. Also be sure that the primary lock is going into the second latching position on the lock before you lock the deadbolt. If it is not in the second latching position, the door could put pressure on the deadbolt, making it very difficult to retract.

**Sink Drainage Problem in 2015 Allegro Bus 37AP**

The sink in our galley will not drain properly. It seems to be air locked or blocked in some way. We have the problem regardless of the water level in the sink. It eventually drains, but very slowly. Replacing the Hepvo valve did not help. I suspect the flexible drain hose may be clogged or crimped. How does someone get to the drainage plumbing to analyze and fix the problem?

Terry Cobb, The Villages, Florida

Dear Terry,

It could be a twisted or kinked line or it could be a venting problem. With the slide-out fully extended, you can gain access to the drain line. A pan two inches in depth is attached to the bottom of the slide-out. Two screws on the outside should be removed. Then go to the inside directly underneath the sink and remove two more screws. This will allow the pan to drop down and expose the plumbing lines. The drain line is a continuous run from the sink into the grey tank. If everything looks okay, then it could be a venting problem that will require dealer service.

**Inset Lights in 2013 Allegro RED 38QBA**

Directly above the PS loveseat and the DS sofa/bed, there are two lights inset into the above cabinets. Each light has its own switch. When I turn these lights on, there is — more often than not — a time delay before the lights actually illuminate. The delays range between a couple of seconds to 20 seconds. Any idea why this happens? Thanks, Danny. I always enjoy your articles.

Mike McCabe, Marietta, Georgia

Dear Mike,

The power to the light is constant. Therefore, the problem is with the switch itself. I suggest you lubricate the switch with T-9 lubricant, being careful not to drip any on your sofa materials below.

**Taking Care of Your Splitters**

We have a 2014 Allegro Bus and we also have had problems with

our splitter boxes overheating and requiring replacement. While we were at the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay, they routed the splitter plugs through the hole inside the entertainment cabinet and plugged them into a surge protector. This allows the splitters to be turned off when not in use without removing the front panel in front of the splitter boxes, obviously a more convenient solution. I also purchased a small personal-sized fan that I use in the entertainment cabinet to reduce the heat. The Tiffin technicians also recommended turning the splitters off overnight to prevent overheating.

Suanne Moon, Portland, Oregon

Dear Suanne,

Thanks for making a good point about the splitter. This is something we have had a problem with in the past.

**Missing Coax Cable on 2014 Phaeton and Allegro RED**

I read the article concerning the missing coax cable on a 2014 Phaeton. I have the same problem on my 2014 Allegro RED. I took it back to the dealer and his technician could not find it either. During last summer's rally at Pigeon Forge, one of the Tiffin technicians could not find it. I am registered for the rally in West Virginia this summer. Could my coax cable be installed

at the rally since it was left out during assembly at the factory?

Wayne Rader, Blountville, Tennessee

Dear Wayne,

With the time restraint to work on individual coaches at rallies, the technicians probably will not be able to make an installation at the rally. However, they can look for it and see if it is up behind the dash out of sight. If there is a CB antenna on the roof, then there will be a coax cable in there somewhere behind the dash.

**Heating the Water Compartment in a Tiffin Motorhome**

We have a 2014 Phaeton 40QBH. Is it necessary to have the rear gas furnace on to heat the water compartment?

Roger Hannay, Westerlo, New York

Dear Roger,

In most of our motorhomes, the wet tanks are heated by the rear furnace.

**Updating the Navigation Software**

We bought a 2014 Phaeton from Lazydays in February 2014. We quickly discovered the navigation/GPS software was out of date. We have not found anyone at Lazydays or Red Bay to help

Dear Danny . . .

**Deadbolt Lock Freezes on Allegro RED**

I own a 2014 Allegro RED 33AA. Shortly after I bought it, we were locked inside the coach. The deadbolt lock would not open. I had to crawl out of a window and was finally able to get it open from the outside. Since that event, I had it replaced at

us update it. All of the maps appear to have been lost.

Irvin King  
Charles Town, West Virginia

Dear Irvin,  
First, go to Wal-Mart or Best Buy and purchase a 2GB microSDcard. On your laptop, go to kenwood.com and click on "Navigation & Multimedia." Insert the microSDcard into your laptop and call Kenwood's support line at 800-536-9663. They will walk you through a download of the current software /maps to your microSDcard. They will also explain how to load the acquired software to your Kenwood. The download slot is in the lower left corner of the radio. The charge for the download is \$99.

**Good Service in California**

We purchased a 2016 Allegro 34PA. We

have had our share of issues but they seem to get corrected by one person who is always there for us. Jim Smith represents Tiffin here in California and he is very helpful whenever we need him.

Anthony & Cecelia Galindo  
Chino Hill, California

Dear Anthony & Cecilia,  
Jim is a big asset to the Tiffin service system. Thanks for bringing his good work to our attention. Sometimes it is too easy to take good people for granted.

**Setting the Interval on Intermittent Windshield Wipers**

The owner's manual for my 2017 Phaeton 40QBH tells me how to set the intermittent windshield wipers to sweep anywhere from 0 to 30 seconds using my Freightliner Smartwheel controls. However, all I can manage to get is a sweep

every 10 seconds. Can you identify the problem and tell me how to correct it?

Tom Schmitt  
Mobile, Alabama

Dear Tom,  
If the wiper cannot be programmed to make an interval longer than 10 seconds, then the problem will be in the wiper relay which is supplied with the chassis from Freightliner. You should take the coach to your nearest Freightliner service center to correct your problem.

**Modifying the Pantry on a 2012 Allegro RED 34QFA**

We bought our first motorhome, a 2012 Allegro RED 34QFA, in March 2015. We love it. We would like to modify the pantry to the right of the fridge. It is very deep and dark, so we added LED lights at each shelf level. We use plastic trays on

each shelf that can be pulled out. I asked our local RV shops if they could modify the cabinet with a sliding pull-out shelf system, but they all declined. Can it be done at your service center in Red Bay? Can you recommend a slide-out system to install in the cabinet? Thanks for any information you can offer.

Darrell & Melanie Young  
Shalimar, Florida

Dear Darrell & Melanie,  
The modification you wish to make on your pantry is not something we would do in our service center where we focus primarily on repairs. However, there are independent companies in the Red Bay area that can make the slide-out pantry to your specifications. For a list of these suppliers, check tiffinrvnetwork.com.

**Correct Operation of the Tank Flush**

I own a 2016 Allegro RED 33AA. After draining the black tank, I hook a hose with plenty of pressure to the tank flush inlet and turn it on. With the black tank valve open, the amount of water draining into the sewer line is negligible. After that unsatisfactory result, I allowed the water going into the tank flush inlet to run for 15-20 minutes with the black tank valve closed. Upon opening the valve, I expected a good surge but there was very little. Have the water nozzles spraying inside the tank somehow been compromised? There is also a ton of back pressure when I remove the hose from the tank flush inlet. Where am I going wrong?

I have another water system problem. After I fill my water tank at home and leave the incoming water pressure on, I cannot get water in the galley or bathroom when I open a faucet. I have to turn on the water pump to get water.

Greg Jones  
San Diego, California

Dear Greg,  
You are not doing anything wrong. There is something wrong with the system. Either the nozzle heads are clogged or the

line feeding the heads has a kink or a restriction. The line that feeds the sprayer begins in the utility bay where you connect a hose to the tank flush inlet. It travels up inside the motorhome, usually under a sink or in a plumbing wall, to an anti-siphoning valve. From that point it travels back to the black tank and con-

nects to the nozzle heads.  
With regard to your second question, the lever in the upper right corner of your utility bay will position at either 3 or 6 o'clock. The 3 o'clock position is for CITY WATER and the 6 o'clock position if for TANK FILL. After you filled your fresh water tank, I think you left the le-

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ver at the 6 o'clock position. Move it to 3 o'clock and you should get water pressure to all points in the coach.

**Objectionable Odor in Water System**

I have a 2009 Allegro Bus that has a case of bad odor in the water. It occurs in both the galley and the shower, hot and cold water. How do you add bleach to the water tank when the coach does not have a gravity fill point in the exterior wall?

Secondly, are the Accuride wheels on my coach sealed?

Frank Decker  
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Dear Frank,

The bad odor in your water that is not going away is likely caused by a bacteria that has infected your fresh water tank. Different bacteria require different treatments for eradication. We are going to post at rismag.com a recent laboratory analysis that an owner purchased and the recommended treatment from the laboratory. This is just an example and not necessarily the solution that would solve your problem. I suggest you call your local municipal water department and get the name of the testing laboratory they recommend.

With regard to the sealed Accuride wheels, we sold them both ways and we do not keep records on whether a coach did or did not have sealed Accuride wheels.

**Difficulty with Allegro Bus Remote Door Opener**

In the Winter 2017 (14:1) issue, you addressed a problem Frank & Gail DePiano were having with the remote door opener on their 2015 Phaeton. We are experiencing the same problem with our 2015 Allegro Bus with both the entry door and the cargo door locks. We have been in for dealer service four times for this problem.

The problem is sporadic and may be heat related. At the FMCA Rally in Chandler, Arizona in March, both systems worked after we arrived and got settled

in. Our coach was facing west and it got very warm during the day, but cool at night. It worked sporadically throughout the week. I tried to mentally keep track of when it was not working and it does seem that heat has something to do with the functionality.

When we arrived back home in Surprise, Arizona, both locking systems worked consistently. In troubleshooting, we have changed the battery on the remote twice. The dealer's technician cleaned the contacts on the door and made sure they were in alignment.

In response to the DePianos, you mentioned it might be the control box or the antenna wire on the box not receiving a good signal. How does one determine if the control box is the culprit? How can we test for signal strength? How does one increase a weak signal? Thank you very much for addressing our concerns. I truly enjoy your "Serious Tech Talk" section in *Roughing It Smoothly*. It is the first section I read when the magazine arrives. Always interesting, good tips!

Bill & Karen Petersen  
Surprise, Arizona

Dear Bill & Karen,

Normally, if the control box is bad, the system will not work at all. However, the receiving antenna connect to the control box could be defective. The antenna is a 24-gauge wire about 30 to 36 inches in length. From the PS, go through the second basement door and look between the two chassis rails. The control box should be mounted to a metal support between the rails. The antenna wire should be stretched over the top of the rail toward the PS wall of the coach. This will give you the best signal strength. If this does not solve the problem, you can call Tiffin Parts and Service and get a new antenna wire.

**Windshield's Night Shade Moves in Increments**

I own a 2010 Allegro Bus. After the coach is garaged for a month, the windshield's

night shade goes down in quarter- to half-inch increments. After a few days of use, the shade moves in longer increments. After many days of use the shade goes up and down in 6- to 8-inch increments. Is there a motor out of sight that I can locate and replace?

Bill Novatny  
Lake Wales, Florida

Dear Bill,

Before you replace the motor, check and be sure the wiring coming out of the end of the tube is tight and making good connections. If the wiring is okay, then the motor needs to be replaced. The motor for the shade itself is inside the tube that houses the shade. To replace the motor, you will have to completely remove the shade from its housing. After you remove it, the shade must be completely unrolled to get to the motor. At the end of the shaft, you will see a set screw. Remove it and the motor will slide out.

**Removing Pet Scratches on Dash of 2012 Phaeton**

We travel with our pets. One managed to scratch marks into the black plastic area on top of the dash. Is there anything that can repair or cover these scratches?

Dan Thompson  
Allen, Texas

Dear Dan,

These scratches can probably be touched up to look better, but not completely removed. The best solution for pets that like to stretch out on your expansive dash is a handsome dash cover. Nichols Custom RV in Red Bay specializes in upholstery and carpeting and can make the cover you need.

**Windows in 2014 Phaeton Difficult to Operate**

We love our 2014 Phaeton, especially the bath and a half. My only complaint is the windows. They are so difficult to open and close and they do not seal tightly. The prying that it takes to remove the

screens for cleaning often results in chipping the paint on the frames or damaging the screens. The frameless windows most other companies use are so much easier to operate and, in my opinion, look so much more classy on the exterior. Is there a reason why Tiffin stays with these windows?

Dawn Myers  
South Williamsport, Pennsylvania

Dear Dawn,

The main reason we stay with our windows is that we manufacture them. We can stand behind them when they need service or replacement. Secondly, the amount of airflow and ventilation with our windows is more adjustable than the frameless window design. Thirdly, if you have a problem with the glass fogging, we can change a single piece of glass instead of the replacing the entire window assembly.

**No Waste Bags for My Vacuum System**

The onboard vacuum system for my 2007 Allegro Bus was made by Hydaway Products. Local stores do not carry vacuum collection bags for this system. I could not get a response from Hydaway when I tried to place an order through their website and later by phone. Does TMH have a source for the collection bags, paper or cloth?

A temperature control is mounted inside the PS Hydro-Hot compartment door. Is it the control for maintaining a minimum temperature in the basement during cold weather?

H. Russell Hastings  
Westfield, Pennsylvania

Dear Russell,

We normally keep the vacuum system bags for your Hydaway in our parts inventory. Call Tiffin Parts and Service at 256-356-0261 with the model number on the unit and the part number on an old bag. The answer to your second question is "yes."

**Fresh Water Overflow Drain in a 2017 Allegro 31SA**

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March 17, 2017. I filled the freshwater tank (sanitized) and expected to see overflow out of a drain under the unit. Instead, the overflow ran out (up and out) the gravity fill tube and door. Is this how the system is designed to work?

Greg Malinak  
Patrick AFB, Florida

Dear Greg,  
There is a drain on the passenger side underneath the fresh water tank (in front of the rear wheels). The drain could have been blocked when the coach was sprayed with

undercoat. Clean this drain and you should be able to get the drainage line to work.

**Electric Jacks Will Not Retract**

We have a 2007 Allegro Bay 35TSB with the Atwood leveling system. The jacks would not retract on a trip we took last October. We have replaced the control panel, checked the fuses and the ground, all the harnesses, and the connectors. We are at a loss what to do now.

David & Jas Hothi  
Surrey, British Columbia

Dear David & Jas,  
From what you have said, everything indicates that you still have a bad control panel. It is unusual, but not impossible, that you were shipped a faulty control panel.

**Allegro's 20-Amp Outlet for Microwave Trips During Genset Operation**

I have a 2010 Allegro Open Road that has an Onan 5500 generator. When we are dry camping and attempt to use the microwave, the 20-amp breaker trips after the microwave has been running for 30 seconds. This outlet does not trip when we are connected to shore power. The air conditioners do not trip the breakers when we are using the Onan for power. Even when I turn off all of the other power consumers, the microwave breaker still trips. Any help will be greatly appreciated.

Albert Bracamonte  
Chula Vista, California

Dear Albert,  
The first thing to check is loose connections at the change-over box, especially the ground side, but also at the generator connection. Second, change out the breaker. It could be just a weak breaker. If that does not correct the problem, you should take it to a service center to check the amp draw by the microwave.

**Driver's Door Expands on 2014 Allegro Open Road**

We have a 2014 Allegro Open Road. In hot weather the upper half of the driver's door seems to expand and flex out along the top edge and curve. It remained this way until Fall. Once it got a bit cooler, the door returned to its normal place in the door frame. Is this expansion-contraction normal? If not, can it be repaired?

Tom Oellerich  
Athens, Ohio

Dear Tom,  
Some metals will expand slightly in hot weather, especially if they are in direct sunlight. You can adjust it like you would an automobile door. First, put the win-

down. Then, working with another person, place a small block of 2 x 4 in the lower part of the door jamb just below the handle and press hard against the door to hold the wood block in place. The second person should go inside and stand in front of the door. With the left hand, grip the top curved corner, and with the right grip the top of the door about 18 inches over from the curved corner. With the other person pushing hard against the bottom, the person inside should pull the door firmly but gently to the inside. You may need to do the maneuver three or four times to get the desired result. The door should spring back into the correct position to fit the jamb.

**Solving an Electrical Problem in a 2006 Allegro Bus**

I have a 2006 Allegro Bus 42QPD with

which I have had a reoccurring electrical problem. The power would drop out for less than 5 seconds and come right back on. After troubleshooting, I found that it was the inverter that was causing this occurrence. As you know, electrical problems that are intermittent are a real pain to find. After much head scratching and trying all different ways to chase this, I discovered that if I wiggled the electric power reel, I could make it happen. I found that these are not a serviceable item. I took it upon myself to take it apart. As you can see by the picture, I found the cause. I hope that this will help others that are having a similar problem.

James Rosacker  
Coburg, Oregon

Dear James,  
Thank you very much for relating your problem-solving experience with the in-

termittent electrical service in your coach. We are running your letter in hopes that it will help other owners.

**RV Connections Provides Great Service**

When we needed warranty service work while vacationing in Mexico Beach, Florida, we went to RV Connections in Panama City. They treated us like we had just bought a brand new Allegro from them. Because of what we needed, they were there for us all the way. Gary Jones, service writer, followed up and kept us informed until our repair was completed. Thanks to Gary and the service techs, Marsha and I are happy campers.

Bob & Marsha Becker  
Farmington, Missouri

Dear Bob & Marsha,  
Thanks for the kind remarks. RV Connections has been and is a great dealer for us.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE *Continued from page 21* West Virginia.' He asked some really detailed questions that revealed pretty deep insight into our manufacturing processes. I was surprised," White said.

"He was everything you would hope someone like him would be — and that's coming from a Mississippi State guy," he continued. "He was really down to earth, as humble as could be and easy to talk to —

not at all what you would expect given his public persona as a no-nonsense coach. He was professional to the letter, but he even cracked a couple of good jokes."

Tiffin introduced the Wayfarer to the public in January at the 2017 Florida RV SuperShow in Tampa. "Typically equipped," the Wayfarer 24QW has an MSRP of \$138,000. It debuted with a single floorplan that has two slide-outs,

although other configurations are currently being developed by R&D.

White noted the Winfield operation—which includes 105 employees, a 250,000 square-foot production plant and a 30,000 square-foot paint shop—is producing two units per day, and so far feedback on the Wayfarer has been decidedly positive.

"It's the right product at the right time," he said. **RIS**

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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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#### TIFFIN MANAGEMENT TEAM

*Continued from page 34*

his tone became very respectful. "His first Alabama game was in 1921 when he was a young boy. In 1929 he saw the first game played in Denny Stadium. His last game was in 2009. He rarely missed a home game and we figured he saw about 600 Alabama games. In his last few years, several of us took turns making sure he had a ride to the stadium and got safely to his seat. With a sharp memory that belied his advanced age, he could name many of the players on each team, recalling great plays in the games that Alabama won. He was a spellbinding storyteller. After he died in 2011 at the age of 95, I now feel a sadness to some degree when I go to an Alabama game."

Mr. Ingram flew 35 missions with the Eighth Army Air Force flying out of southern England in World War II. Well over 26,000 airmen died in combat in three and a half years of operations. Another 28,000 were shot out of the sky and became POWs. An estimated 18,000 were wounded and lost to operations. Only the submarine service had a higher fatality rate.

Tony is married to Gina Riley, an interior designer whose company is located in Brentwood, Tennessee. They make their home in Tuscumbia. **RIS**

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