

# Roughing It Smoothly<sup>®</sup>



## IN THIS ISSUE

- The 2020 Allegro Bus 450PP
- Corpus Christi's Cornucopia
- Michigan's Great Western Shoreline



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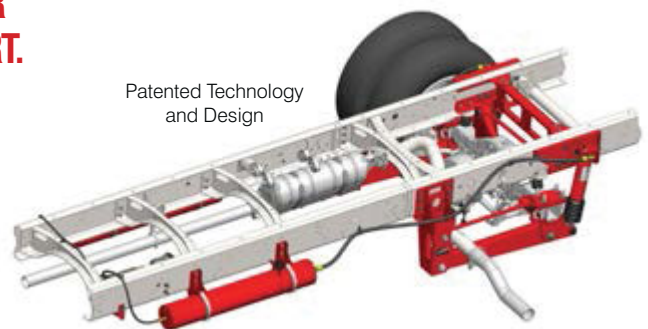
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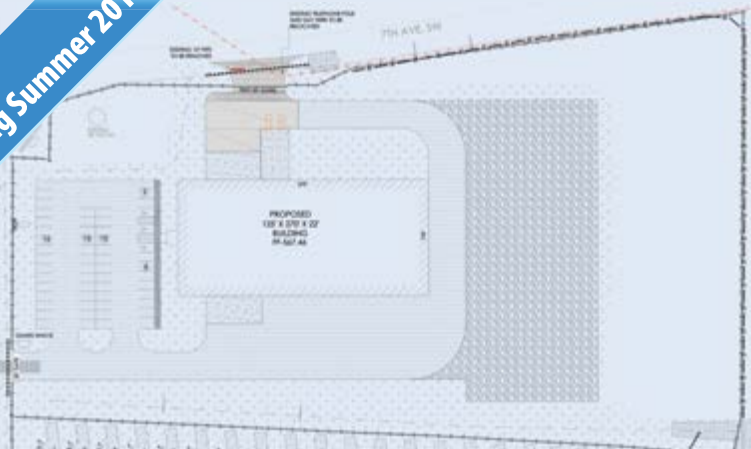
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# Roughing It Smoothly®

July 2019

Volume 16, Number 3

*Roughing It Smoothly*® magazine is published four times a year by Book Production Resources for Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc., 105 2nd Street NW, Red Bay, Alabama 35582. BPR offices are located at 1403 Cedar Point Way, Monroe, Georgia 30656. Periodical postage paid at Monroe, GA and additional mailing offices.

**Postmaster: Send all changes of address to Book Production Resources  
PO Box 1150  
Monroe, GA 30655-1150**

This issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*® has a printed distribution of approximately 34,000 copies, an online distribution of 42,000 copies, and dealer/event distribution of 17,000 copies. It was printed by American Printing Co., 428 Industrial Lane, Birmingham, AL 35211. Copyright © 2019 by Book Production Resources. All rights reserved. *Roughing It Smoothly*® is a registered trademark of Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc. No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the publisher.  
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Stoltzfus RV's and Marine			

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## Owners and RV enthusiasts are enjoying the *Roughing It Smoothly* digital magazine: [rismag.org](http://rismag.org)

In January 2019, Tiffin's owner-acclaimed quarterly magazine began its 16th year of publication. In November 2017, we launched and tested the digital magazine our readers can enjoy online the same day we upload the typesetting files to the printer.

You can read all back issues (16 years) of *Roughing It Smoothly* online at [rismag.org](http://rismag.org)

On this contents page, click on the page number for the story you want to read and it will jump directly to that double-page spread. To go back to the contents page, put "4" in the page selection box at top center of screen. You can enlarge/reduce the type with the +/- symbols at top center of the screen.

The most useful feature is the "Search" function. In the upper right corner, clicking on SEARCH will open a column of options on the left side of your screen. Put in a word (such as "Utah" or "trains") or multiple words to find a story. Then click on "Search" at the bottom of

the column. You can search for a particular motorhome floor plan, such as Phaeton 40QTH or 33AA for a featured review or a Q&A in Tech Talk. Search for a travel story to use in planning your next trip to a state or national park, and much more.

The web address (URL) for each advertiser is "hot," meaning that you can click on it and go directly to the website.

This software was originally developed for daily newspapers and we have not succeeded in getting the software to print the pages of the story in the magazine format in which it originally appeared. However, you can double-left-click anywhere on the story to open a reformatted story in manuscript form (it fills an 8.5 x 11 page). This will allow you to print the pictures and the text in an easy-to-read digest. The programmers are working to create a software update to print the pages exactly as they appear in the printed edition of the magazine.

Online readers will receive the magazine three weeks ahead of the approximate date *RIS* appears in mailboxes. Tiffin owners who use mail forwarding services will view the magazine about six weeks before it would normally be delivered.

The digital magazine is presented online in facing pages; it is formatted for laptops, iPads, iPhones, Android OS, and most tablets that are WiFi capable. Some of the digital newspaper features (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.) are applications that we are still developing for *RIS*.

We designed the expanded digital magazine to better serve both our readers and advertisers. We hope you will enjoy the digital *Roughing It Smoothly*. Please send your suggestions to [fred1902@gmail.com](mailto:fred1902@gmail.com).

### Magazine Continues to Grow

Over 34,000 Tiffin owners are now receiving *Roughing It Smoothly* through the U.S. and Canadian postal service. Over 42,000 have chosen

to read *RIS* online at [rismag.org](http://rismag.org). Our dealers are distributing 17,000 copies in their showrooms. *RIS* has completed its 15th 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 three 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](mailto: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

To advertise in *RIS*, contact Dale Cathey at 817-247-5147. [dalecathey1942@gmail.com](mailto:dalecathey1942@gmail.com). An advertisement in *Roughing It Smoothly* does not constitute an endorsement of the product by Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc.

### 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, see instructions below to add your name and your motorhome's data to the mailing list.

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To facilitate your request to change address, renew, or cancel your subscription, provide the ac-

count number and last name as it appears on the label of the last magazine you received.

### Change of Address

If you are not online, please use the enclosed change of address card in this magazine which is pre-addressed to the publishing office in Monroe, Georgia. Tape the label from the front cover to the change of address card and carefully print your new address below it.

### Serious Tech Talk

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

**Have you checked our four 2020 Open Road Allegro floorplans? They comprise our most popular brand, outselling even the iconic Phaeton.**

# Daddy

## Recollections of a Life Well-Lived

by Bob Tiffin



Robert Alexander Tiffin, Sr.  
1911–2004

### Alex Tiffin was my father.

But in the South, grown men still call their fathers “Daddy.” Daddy was a remarkable man. Born on Turner Bolton’s farm near Red Bay, Alabama, when we had an agriculturally based economy, he developed a business philosophy at an early age and implemented ideas that preceded the successful techniques of today’s retailing titans.

In 1911 Red Bay was a very small town — no paved streets, three or four churches, a school, and a few stores. Farmers came to town on Saturday in their horse- or mule-drawn wagons to get supplies.

His parents, William V. (Bud) Tiffin and Samantha Modenia (Modie) Patterson, lived in Red Bay until Alex was five when they bought a 360-acre farm north of Belmont, Mississippi. With seven children to raise, my grandparents, Bud and Modie Tiffin, lived on the farm until all of the children were grown. Daddy finished high school at Belmont in 1929 and worked for the next four years while he sorted out what he wanted to do with his life.

Over the last 15 years, many people have asked about my father, his successful business, and his influence on my life. A few months after he died, I wrote this column as a tribute to him. I’m running it again for those who were not aware that the column is available in our digital magazine.

In 1933 in the midst of the Depression, he moved to Jackson, Tennessee, to enroll in a six-month business course at Middle Tennessee Business College. Daddy came home in 1934 full of ideas to try. He first went to work in the grocery business for Uncle John McKinney.

Daddy lived across the street from Nancy and L.N. Sparks. He took notice of their pretty 19-year-old granddaughter, Katie, and they began dating in 1935. About a year later they were married on April 28, 1936. No big wedding ceremony. He just borrowed Uncle Johnny’s car and went to Russellville, the county seat, to get the probate judge to marry them. When they got there, the judge was at a school function and they had to sit outside his office and wait for him to return.

Daddy learned how to get along with Uncle Johnny and continued to work for him until 1941 when he went into business for himself. He rented a 25-foot wide building and began to sell a full line of groceries along with seed, feed, and fertilizer.

Daddy had a good personality and just genuinely enjoyed meeting people. He made people feel comfortable and welcome whenever they came to his store. When I began to work in his store many years later as a teenager, he would tell me, “You learn your customers’ names and call them by their names when they come in the door.” We always referred to a customer as “Mister” and “Mrs.” and rarely took the liberty of calling someone by their first name unless we really knew them personally. “That shows respect,” he always said.

About a year after he started the business, I was born at home on March 5, 1942. Like so many rural towns in the South, there was no hospital in Red Bay. Doctors practiced medicine out of small clinics.

Customers put their confidence in Daddy. He taught me from the beginning to make your dealings honest with everyone and pay your bills. He went through his accounts payable file every week and paid his suppliers. He always took discounts on accounts payable and I still do that today. We pay our dealers every week for the warranty work they do.

Daddy had the philosophy of putting some money back on a regular basis, keeping it in reserve for a rainy day. That philosophy has gotten Tiffin Motorhomes through some critical slow periods over the years.

By 1947 Alex Tiffin General Merchandise had outgrown its rented quarters and Daddy built a new store. He expanded his business to include hardware and building supplies, and bought property along the railroad tracks to unload fertilizer, mortar mix, cement, roofing, and other commodities. The railroad siding gave him the flexibility to buy carload lots. His suppliers would sell the larger quantities

at lower prices, making it possible for him to sell to his customers at more competitive prices. In a few short years he had become a very successful entrepreneur.

In 1950 Mother and Daddy began planning a new home. They bought five acres about a mile from town and started construction in March 1952 and completed it in August. Whenever he would get in items they had ordered for the new house, such as sheetrock, lumber, and plumbing supplies, his customers would want to buy the same good quality supplies for their houses. It didn't take him long to realize there was a market demand for quality building supplies. He bought two more buildings and began to stock bath fixtures, appliances, windows, doors, sheetrock, finished lumber, fencing, and water pumps. Tiffin Supply is the oldest Whirlpool dealer in the state of Alabama.

By 1955 the company had changed its name. That was the year I began working at the store. Tiffin Supply Company had everything for a man to build his house and run his farm. Daddy sold everything except ready-mix concrete. Red Bay was strategically located in the middle of a four-county area: Tishomingo and Itawamba, Mississippi, and Marion and Franklin, Alabama.

"Always stock what people want," he would tell me. We kept expanding our product base. Local people would say, "If you can't find it at Alex's store, you can't find it nowhere else."

Bob Tiffin with his father during the winter of 1943-44 in Red Bay.



In the 1950s the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) began to offer a 100 percent loan program to build a house if you owned the land. Because so many families owned farms, they could give their children a piece of land to get started. Most children learned to build on the farm. So it was easy for them to use the FHA loan program, buy their supplies at Tiffin, and build their homes. A group of contractors sprang up to build houses for those who lived in the small towns in the quad-county area. The success of the program spread and we were soon getting business from Colbert and Lauderdale counties north of us because we stocked such a broad base of products for building and supply. Daddy's business philosophy was working: "Buy in large quantities and sell everything at a fair price."

Being able to service what we sold became a key part of Daddy's business philosophy. I'll never forget when chain saws first came out. A salesman came around

Alex and Katie Tiffin on their honeymoon at Rock City in 1936.



and these chain saws caught my Daddy's eye because he knew how long it took to cut down a tree with a crosscut saw. After the salesman demonstrated the saw on some trees out back, Daddy bought six. He sold three on a time payment plan and the other three for cash. Soon, every one of those chain saws came back to us all in pieces in tow sacks. We couldn't fix them, so Daddy took back every chain saw and made good on them. Needless to say, we didn't sell any more chain saws. But he taught me a principle that we use today: you always stand behind what you sell and you provide repair service.

Working with a local contractor, Daddy built several houses to sell. He financed them himself. Marlin Saint, who used to head up our warranty recovery program at Tiffin Motorhomes, bought one of those houses many years ago and told me a funny story about the transaction. When Daddy came to collect the first payment, Marlin paid him in cash. As Daddy walked back to his truck, Marlin said, "Mr. Alex, don't I get a receipt?" Daddy reached across the front seat, tore off one side of a brown paper bag, scribbled out a receipt, and handed it to him. He noticed that Marlin looked a little surprised, and said, "That's just as good

Alex Tiffin took great satisfaction in the success of Tiffin Motorhomes. Shown here with him in 1985 are Lex, Tim, and Bob.





as one of those receipts that's printed on a pad!" Marlin accepted it and still enjoys telling the story.

In the late forties and early fifties, Daddy partnered with Purina to try a new marketing idea for chicken feed. In the spring he offered "free baby chick" days. The farmer would get a dozen baby chicks if he bought 25 pounds of chick starter. Anticipating the rush, Daddy ordered 10,000 baby chicks from the Cullman hatchery that were shipped by rail to Red Bay. I'll never forget the depot agent, Mr. McDowell, calling the store. With the loud chirping of 10,000 baby chicks in the background, he hollered into the phone, "Tell Alex his baby chicks are here!!"

Daddy took his business out on the rural country roads in 1948 with a locally designed and built peddling truck. He bought a Ford school bus chassis and had Curt Griffus, the local blacksmith, and Robert Sparks (his father-in-law), build a floor frame using 4 × 6 oak runners. Mr. Griffus made tie bolts to attach it to the chassis and used oak 4 × 4 floor joists on 24-inch centers. They used ¾-inch tongue-and-groove oak flooring to complete the base and tied off the edges with 1½ × ¾-inch steel. They built the walls with 2 × 4s on 16-inch centers. The roof joists were beveled and topped with

In 1948 Alex Tiffin put his store on the rural roads of Alabama and Mississippi to better serve his customers. The Peddling Truck was an immediate success.

¾-inch tongue-and-groove. The sides and roof were skinned with 18-gauge galvanized sheets. The back bumper was extended to strap on chicken coops. It was a sturdy craft. I watched my granddaddy build it and picked up ideas that I would use later in motorhome construction. When I asked him what he was going to do for a windshield, he just said, "I'll make one." It was a flat windshield that pushed out from the bottom edge for ventilation.

The Purina Feed Company thought so much of Daddy's idea that they offered to paint it with their standard red and white checkerboard advertising if we would bring it to Birmingham.

Daddy drove the peddling truck to Birmingham and I rode along in a cane bottom, ladder-back chair. Every time he started off, I'd flip over in that chair. Daddy and I rode the Illinois Central Seminole back to Red Bay from Birmingham. Purina kept it two weeks and we went down on the train to pick it up.

During the summers of 1953 and '54, I rode the peddling truck just about every day and helped out. We had regular routes for every weekday. We would sell groceries, kerosene, and fertilizer, and we bought eggs, chickens, and butter from our customers. Many times we traded

by bartering. The peddling truck drivers I remember were Marvin Umphres, Jim Harden, Junior Ledbetter, and Mr. Thrasher. Daddy's peddling truck was a big convenience to people out in the country. Life seems to have been a lot simpler then.

When my children became old enough to learn about business, they started out at Tiffin Supply under Daddy's watchful eye. Daddy gave Van an assignment and explained what the pay would be. As he concluded his instructions, Daddy warned Van, "Now don't tell people how much I'm paying you." Van quickly replied, "Don't worry, Grandpa, I'd be ashamed for anyone to know." Standing nearby, his older brother Tim was shocked. Nevertheless, he was always a good mentor to anyone who wanted to learn from him.

During the late sixties, there were three RV companies in nearby Mississippi: Commodore, Sunliner, and Safari. It was my job to collect from them. Commodore moved back north and the other two went out of business in late 1971. Having had the opportunity to visit their plants, I was intrigued with the idea of starting a motorhome plant in Red Bay.

Daddy and I discussed the plan in September 1972 and he agreed to underwrite it as necessary. "Necessary" came much sooner than we expected when the country was socked with the oil embargo in September 1973. We laid off everyone but our management team.

Daddy stood by us and kept us going. "If we go down, we'll all go down together," he said staunchly. We recovered in early 1975 but had a similar experience again in 1979. He paid for the chassis and engine, the largest component we had to buy. He visited the plant every afternoon to see what we were using and whether his large quantity purchasing could help us.

When we started the company, I wanted to use Onan gensets. Since I only wanted to buy a few at a time, we had to buy through Atchinson Equipment Company in Birmingham. Mr. Atchinson was not favorable. "I'm not selling anything to

*Continued on page 84*



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## Recalls for 2018–2019

**Kidde NHTSA # 17E-062, Tiffin NHTSA # 17V-841, Kidde Fire Extinguisher Recall** Customers with Tiffin units from all models 2003 to early models of 2018 should immediately contact Kidde to see if your fire extinguisher is involved. If so, you can request a free replacement fire extinguisher and instructions on returning the recalled unit as it may not work properly in a fire emergency. Contact Kidde toll free at 855-262-3540. Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST; Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST; or online: [www.kidde.com](http://www.kidde.com) and click on “product Safety Recall” for more information.

**NHTSA Recall # 18V- 328, Tiffin Recall # TIF-109 2013- 2018 Allegro Open Road Reinforcement of Frame Rail at Tow Hitch** Tiffin Motorhomes has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists on the following models of motorhomes: **2013-2018 Allegro Open Roads.** Tiffin Motorhomes has become aware that the steel of the frame rail where the hitch is attached to the motorhome needs to be reinforced to strengthen the hitch attachment to the frame rail. If the steel is not reinforced the hitch may come loose from the motorhome and that may result in the loss of the tow vehicle, which could result in a crash causing injury or damage to property. Tiffin Motorhomes will provide a steel insert that will double the amount of steel at the points where the hitch is attached to the frame rail of the motorhome. Tiffin Motorhomes previously issued a recall in March of 2017 concerning an issue with the failure of the hitch attachment on certain Allegro Open Road motorhomes due to the sizing of the bolt holes in the frame rail. *All motorhomes included in the original recall that did not have a steel gusset box installed will need to complete this new recall repair.* If this new recall repair is not completed, the hitch may fail even after completing the previous recall repair. **Notice:** As of October 1, 2018, Tiffin Motorhomes will not pay the customer for doing the work to install the steel insert on the Hitch Recall NHTSA 18V-328. Tiffin allows the steel insert to be sent to the customer as a courtesy so customers can find a dealer or service center near their current

location. Having the part already allows the recall to be completed more quickly. It was never our intention for the customer to make the repair. That being said, from this point on, if customer decides not to heed our warning, customer is assuming the liability for the repair were it to fail in the future. Tiffin will not be responsible for any future warranty repairs to that hitch or for any damage that may arise from the recall not being completed properly.

**NHTSA Recall # 18V-341, Tiffin Recall # TIF-110 PTL Entry Door Lock Adjustment, 2018 models** Tiffin Motorhomes has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists on the following models of motorhomes: **2018 Allegro Open Roads, 2018 Allegro RED's, 2018 Allegro Breezes, 2018 Allegro Buses, 2018 Phaetons and 2018 Zephyrs built between January 2, 2018 and May 15, 2018.** These specific motorhomes have an entry door equipped with a PTL door lock. Tiffin Motorhomes has found that under certain circumstances these doors could open in transit. These specific doors could open because they are equipped with a door lock that was overtightened at the time it was manufactured. The over tightening of the door lock can make it more difficult for the door to close securely. If the door is not securely closed, the door could open in transit. If the entry door were to open in transit it would be possible for injury to occur to any passengers riding inside the motorhome and it could increase the possibility of a crash.

**NHTSA Recall # 19V-228, Tiffin Recall # TIF-111 Energy Management Module overheating 2018 & 2019 Phaeton, Allegro Bus & Zephyr** Tiffin Motorhomes has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists on the following models of motorhomes: **2018 & 2019 Phaeton, Allegro Bus and Zephyr.** Tiffin Motorhomes has become aware that the alternating current lines that go to the Energy Management Module located in the rear load center may not be securely installed in the terminal levers. If these lines are not prop-

erly installed in the load center there is the possibility that the alternating current lines could overheat. If these lines were to overheat, that could result in a thermal event. The Energy Management Module needs to be inspected to determine if the alternating current lines are installed correctly.

ADVERTISEMENT



### A New Cottage for Rent in Red Bay

Located within the city limits of Red Bay, Alabama, is a lovely little cottage, perfect for two nights or for an extended stay. Creekside Cottage is owned and operated by Beth and Richard Hammock, lifelong residents of Red Bay, and is only a five minute drive to Red Bay's downtown area, as well as the Tiffin Motorhome factory.

The cottage was constructed in 2018 and boasts an open floor plan, a spacious den with vaulted ceiling, two bedrooms (both queen beds), two full baths, a completely appointed kitchen ready for you to begin cooking, a laundry room, a covered carport, and a patio with a grill for barbecuing. DirecTV and free WIFI are included, as well as some necessary breakfast items. A convenient keyless entry lets you right inside the front door of this very nice house.

Booking a stay at Creekside Cottage is easy. Simply decide when you will be coming into Red Bay, search Creekside Cottage on Airbnb, view their calendar for available dates, and book directly on that website. You can message Beth with any questions or concerns and she will happily respond, usually within the hour.

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# The 2020 Allegro Bus 450PP

## FROM TRADITIONAL TO CONTEMPORARY: A WHOLE NEW COACH WITH THE SAME FLOOR PLAN

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

Soon after the 2017 Allegro Bus 450PP was introduced in the late summer of 2016 and then made its big splash in the Fall 2016 issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*, orders began streaming in from dealers and buyers began placing special orders for the 450PP, customizing each order with the many options that fit their lifestyles. Tiffin realized they had found a popularity motherlode and turned on the afterburners to meet the demand.

During the 2018 and 2019 model years, TMH used fresh ideas to continue its improvements of the 450PP, especially in technology. As plans for the 2020 model year began to evolve in 2018 (R&D works at least 18 months ahead), buyer interest began to peak toward very contemporary interiors emphasizing neutrals, whites, and greys. In almost total contrast, many RVers were going for bold, splashy exteriors. The 2020 Allegro Bus 450PP in this review is an order from Transwest in Belton, Missouri, where you may see it—if it does not fly off their sales lot before you can get there.

This coach's exterior certainly follows the bold, splashy trend: Fire Opal full body paint. It's a grabber that makes a statement. I loved it. But then I stepped inside to a calming décor called Linen. When buyers select the Linen or Sterling décor, they will likely want to go with the contemporary ceiling and a contemporary slide-out fascia and soffits shown in this story. However, they can still choose the traditional ceiling. Buyers can also choose one of the three traditional wood stains and glazes and

match it with the contemporary ceilings, fascias, and soffits.

In this coach, Tiffin's traditional wood tones are gone in favor of a rich cream you could pour into your coffee. After walking back and forth the length of the 45-foot coach two or three times, I was a convert. Even the stainless steel, double doors of the residential-size refrigerator were discreetly covered with matching panels of that rich cream color.

Those who love traditional architecture and rich wood stains with glazes should not despair. Tiffin's traditional slide-out fascias and ceilings are standard options along with their three most popular stains: Glazed Cherry Wood, Glazed Canyon Cherry, and Glazed Honey Natural Cherry.

When we staged the coach for the photoshoot, each item made a significant contribution because it did not get lost in the background. Then I remembered a paragraph from the 450PP story three years ago.

*A relaxing and comfortable environment or experience, whether designed or discovered, is something we all need to relieve our minds and bodies from the stress of everyday life, replacing that stress with the energy and verve that make life fun and interesting. . . . Appreciating fine quality energizes the senses.*

The gradual and thoughtful improvements each year assure first time and repeat Tiffin owners that new ideas, features, and changes are foundational, not one-time, out-of-the-box additions.

## The Living Area

### THE LIVING ROOM

RVers love to visit. If it's warm weather, bring your lawn chair and sit under the awning during the day or gather around the campfire at night. If weather and temps are not accommodating, the 45OPP has a living room that will seat seven or eight after you rotate the driver and passenger chairs 180 degrees – even 11 or 12 if you use the dining table chairs.

If close friends or family are visiting or traveling with you, the PS air coil hide-a-bed sofa opens up to a very comfortable double bed that has a built-in inflation/deflation pump to get it ready in minutes. The cabinets over the DS theater seats have 13 cu. ft. of storage space for guests' belongings plus plenty of room for sheets, blankets, and pillows. Taking care of overnight guests has never been easier.

There are several options for configuring the furniture in the living room. The power lift 55" TV is standard. All of the sofas

and recliners are covered with UltraLeather. On the driver's side, buyers have three choices: (1) an 83" Air Coil Hide-a-Bed Sofa (STD) that seats three and sleeps two; (2) reclining theatre seating (MSRP \$1,400) for two with powered leg lifts and headrests; (3) two recliners with electric fireplace (STD). On the passenger's side, buyers have three more options: (1) an UltraLeather DE Sofa Bed with Lift TV (STD) that seats three and sleeps one; (2) an UltraLeather 72" Air Coil Hide-a-Bed Sofa with Lift TV (MSRP \$700) that seats three and sleeps two; (3) one recliner with Lift TV & Fireplace (MSRP \$700).

One of the best features of a Tiffin coach is the amount of natural light captured by the large windows in the living area. Four of the windows are over five feet wide. Including the "picture window" windshield, there is nearly 80 square feet of windows. We have enjoyed sites in campgrounds where our windshield and windows opened to beaches, rushing streams, snowcapped mountains, and deserts bursting with spring flowers. Why do we all love to travel in our motorhomes?

### LIGHTING IS CRITICAL TO GOOD DESIGN

In 2004 when I published the first edition of *Roughing It Smoothly*, fluorescent tubes supplied most of the lighting in Tiffin coaches. Reading a book at night was a bit difficult. Over the past 15 years, Van Tiffin selected better light fixtures that improved the amount of light throughout the coach. He continued to experiment and test new LED lights as they came on the market. One can comfortably read at night with no hint of eyestrain.

The owner of this 45OPP will enjoy LED lighting perfectly placed for any task: mood and indirect lighting for listening to music or watching television; rope lights as accents, but also

practically positioned under the slide-outs to help you safely navigate your way to the basement in the evening; lights in the ceiling of the bath and half bath, but also over the vanity mirrors for shaving and applying make-up; courtesy lights at floor level; LEDs right over your pillow for reading in bed; lights in the ceilings of the living room slide-outs; lights that come on automatically when you open the closet slide or the doors under the kitchen sinks; outside lights in the awning, over the entrance, in the patio, and over the utility bay; docking lights; and decorative lights under the coach that are inviting and fun.



## LIGHTING & SHADES IN THE LIVING AREA

We also love to travel because Tiffin's technology makes it comfortable and fun. The monitor for the Spyder system, located on the wall by the door into the half bath, has controls for the entire environment for the 45OPP. For now I will address lighting and shades in the living area.

Soffits at ceiling height extend 16 inches into the room from the coach's sidewalls, measuring 15' 3" on the driver side and 17' 8" on the passenger side. In addition to being an attractive two-color design feature, each soffit houses six round LED lights and four speakers for the surround sound system. The forward edges of the soffits conceal accent lighting which is controlled by a separate touch switch on the control pad. They really brighten the room. The touch switches for the 12 round LEDs have rheostats that can vary the amount of lumens emitted—great for creating mood lighting or a softer light for watching television.

Two slightly inverted 11-inch wide trays, one 19' 6" and the other 16' in length, serve three purposes. In recessed edges of their molding, accent lighting is concealed and controlled by a separate touch switch on the Spyder pad. Designated as "ceiling lights" on the Spyder pad, one rheostat touch switch controls 14 LEDs which are square in shape. The PS tray also carries the registers for air delivery generated by the roof ACs. The DS tray carries vents for return air delivery.

The ceiling of the PS slide-out houses six LEDs, also controlled by a rheostat touch switch that can vary the lumens as desired. The PS slide-out has two directional reading lights mounted in the base of the cabinets above the theatre recliners.

The galley is illuminated by three of the LEDs in the previously described soffit. In addition, five LEDs are mounted in the base of the cabinets above the Broadway countertop.

The ceiling in the cockpit is functionally lighted with five LEDs: three entry lights and two map reading lights. Tiffin does not miss the details.

There are two types of shades in the living area: solar and night. In the living area, all of the shades can be operated by the central Spyder control pad located on the wall at mid-ship. For simple functionality and convenience, there are seven smaller Spyder pads that control lights and shades closer to their locations. However, the two pads on either side of the bed control nearly everything except the shades.

At the central Spyder control pad, the primary screen for raising and lowering shades has two sub-sections in the center of the screen called Day Masters and Night Masters. With two touches—one for cockpit and one for main living area, you can raise or lower all of the solar shades or all of the night shades. On either side of the center sub-section, you can individually control each solar shade or each night shade.

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## ENTERTAINMENT & NAVIGATION

Since the navigation software is inextricably built into a primary part of the entertainment system, we will look at them together.

The video and sound options in the 2020 Allegro Bus are extensive. The standard Kenwood AM-FM radio with single CD

and USB input has six speakers. The Garmin navigation program is standard with this system.

The optional JBL sound system (MSRP \$1,540) with 12 speakers and a sub-woofer is custom-tuned to provide an exceptional stereophonic sound experience for the cockpit of the





Allegro Bus. You can use the standard Kenwood AM-FM radio with the JBL speakers.

The Advanced Monitor System is an extensive upgrade (MSRP \$2,800) that includes an XITE radio with Rand-McNally navigation software designed especially for Class A motorhomes, two large monitors (6.37" x 8.25"), and a small interactive monitor the size of a large iPhone that allows the passenger to take full control of navigation and radio tuning. The JBL system must be purchased with the Advanced Monitor System.

The menu for the left monitor offers eight choices plus Setup. They include Radio, Media Center, Sirius XM, Bluetooth, HDMI, Camera, iPod, and Navigation. The right monitor serves the three exterior cameras. The color XITE monitor provides a larger view of lane traffic on both sides of the coach by touching the LEFT, CENTER, or RIGHT icons across the top of the monitor. If the navigation software is running on the left monitor, the left or right turn signal will momentarily cancel the video to allow the driver to have a full view of side traffic in that direction.



The graphics for the Radio are large, making it relatively safe for the driver to choose six pre-selected favorites or touch SEEK to allow the Radio to search for the strongest signal. The Media Center can store a preselected playlist for playing while underway.

Owners can subscribe to SiriusXM immediately with a six-month free trial. You can Bluetooth your cellphones to the XITE system and create a calling list to achieve hands-free operation. Selecting the Camera option will make the XITE's second monitor serve the three exterior cameras.

The Rand-McNally navigation software is designed to select accommodative travel routes for large motorhomes. The software will locate fueling stations, restaurants, attractions, state and national parks, and more. It will reroute you around construction, weather conditions, and accidents. The iPod option will connect to your music on an iPod or an MP3 player. The Setup option allows the owner to set the parameters for audio, video, and system operations.

Upholstered in Grey Owl UltraLeather,<sup>™</sup> the two theatre seats in this coach are the most comfortable I have ever had the privilege of enjoying. The first control activates the recliner to move from upright to a nearly prone position. Once prone, the occupant can activate the headrest motor to lift to a comfortable position for watching the programming on the 55" LG Smart+ LED television, housed in a compartment flush against the PS wall. However, you may find it a challenge to stay awake. The back of the seat has a cushion that presses nicely into the small of your back and you can make minute adjustments to improve your comfort level.

As you probably know, the Smart+ television allows you to select programming from Netflix, Hulu Plus, Amazon Prime, Facebook, YouTube, Skype, and more. The surround sound has six speakers and a sub-woofer that can rattle the pots and pans in the galley.

Input includes data discs, MP3 Player, USB devices, MKV playback, external HDD playback, and Blu-Ray 3D discs. The LG system is certified by the Digital Living Network Alliance. The DLNA certification ensures an easy set up of your home and coach networks to share and stream photos, music, and

movies. For more information, see DLNA in Wikipedia. The entertainment system also facilitates recording current programming and playing it back at your convenience. We record most news and selected programs and watch them later in order to fast forward past the advertising.

You have two additional entertainment venues! If you order the optional Lift TV with fireplace in the bedroom (MSRP \$840, see picture, page 15), the system includes the lift device itself, the sound bar, and the electric fireplace. The 42" Smart+ TV is standard equipment. The experience is almost as good as surround sound. To make this your perfect bedroom, this coach also has the optional Power Smart Mattress, King (MSRP \$1,680). Tiffin included Spyder control pads on both sides of the bed.

Touch the TV Lift button to raise the television from its handsome Broadway compartment and/or the Bed Lift to choose selectable elevations to make your bedtime viewing very pleasant.

Your third entertainment venue is on the patio. Using a hand control, the operator can lift the optional exterior television door (MSRP \$1,750) from its locked position. It can only be raised with the hand control, eliminating the need for an extra key. The exterior 42" Smart+ TV with a sound bar is standard equipment.

In addition to the LG technology, Tiffin includes as standard equipment the DirecTV Wally receiver (subscription required) that is designed to operate with the In-Motion Low Profile Satellite Dish (standard).

## THE GALLEY

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

Two huge, but very sturdy slide-out pantries are flanked on

both sides of the fridge/freezer unit. Each pantry has two fixed and four adjustable shelves (28" long by 6.75" wide) with side rods to keep items stationary. Even with the pantry fully loaded with canned goods, cereal boxes, etc., it slides out easily with a two-finger tug. An electronic locking pushbutton latch above each pantry prevents it from sliding out when the coach is in motion.

The Maytag 21.7 cu. ft. refrigerator/freezer is state-of-the-art with different sections for humidifying vegetables, meats, cheese, butter, and milk. Ice and water are dispensed through the door. You can also view the temp settings for both the freezer and the fridge. The lower third of the unit houses the slide-out freezer. Two sliding boxes at the top make it easy to find less frequently used items in the lower section of the freezer.

The galley itself is one of the largest TMH has built. With a width of eight feet, it offers 25 sq. ft. of work area that includes the work surface on the Expand-an-Island. The Tiffin STORE-IT-ALL™ assurance guarantees that a Tiffin will have more cabinet storage than any competing manufacturer's coach of the same length and in the same price point.

All of the cabinets in the galley are designed for convenient access. A new feature this year is self-closing cabinet doors. A gentle push and the hinge takes over to close the door. Each cabinet to the left of the microwave has a 15" x 14" slide-out drawer with five inches of clearance. Above





the drawer is a shelf with two cubic feet of storage. To the right of the microwave, a slide-out shelf/box opens on the north side to offer 1.5 cu. ft. of storage divided by an adjustable shelf. The residential-size Sharp Carousel microwave-convection oven is located immediately above the induction cooktop. Sharp has been a long-time standard in Tiffin coaches. Both the oven and the cooktop have outside exhaust vents.

The upgrade from the standard **true™** induction cooktop to the optional **Wolf™** induction technology (MSRP \$2,100) brings a new dimension to preparing meals quickly and efficiently in your Tiffin motorhome. Heat is produced instantly in the magnetic cooking vessel rather than on the cooktop itself. A fingertip touch selects the cooking temperature on the smooth cooktop. Changes in the cooking temperature inside the pan or vessel are made in seconds. When you turn it off, heat is retained only in the vessel, not in the cooktop. To see a demonstration, go to YouTube.com and search for “Wolf induction cooktop demonstration.” A set of four ferro-magnetic pots and pans is supplied with the cooktop. If a magnet sticks to the bottom of your favorite pot or pan, you can use it on the cooktop.

Following feedback from owners who stay in the Allegro Service Center campground, Tiffin returned to the double stainless steel sinks for the 2020 Allegro Bus from the single bowl farmhouse sink. And they are huge. The larger sink measures 15.5 x 18.5 inches at the top edge and 8.5 inches deep. The slightly smaller sink is 13 x 16 and 8 inches deep. With a high curved chrome faucet, a single-lever water control, and an extendable pushbutton sprayer, these sinks can take on any assignment.

Let’s take a look below the Broadway countertops and evalu-

ate the design and efficiency of the storage. The picture on page 16 may tell you more than I can describe. The Expand-an-Island on the south end of the galley has a concealed handle under the forward edge of the slide-out. A tug on the handle will release the island to slide out, creating an L-shaped galley. It automatically locks into position. A second tug on the handle will release it when you are ready to push it back into its housing. The slide-out contains three large drawers measuring 10.25 x 25.5 inches. Two are 3" deep and one is 5" deep.

The optional Fisher & Paykel Dishdrawer™ (MSRP \$1,330) is located directly under the induction cooktop. You can banish dishwashing chores forever by stashing all of your soiled dishes and utensils in the Dishdrawer through the day and running it at night. Your induction pots and pans store easily in the large drawer under the dishwasher.

Using space efficiently has been a strong suit at TMH for many years. The double doors under the sinks conceal a multi-purpose slide-out cabinet (see picture, page 16). The front compartment (22.5" x 10," 11.75" deep) holds the trash container with extra space for recyclables. A slot on the end of the compartment houses the sink covers. The rear half of the larger box houses two compartments, the top one (20" x 11," 6" deep) on a slide rail moves to the back to expose the one below (22.5" x 9.5," 5" deep). It is a piece of ingenious design. A flip-out door just below the edge of the Broadway countertop has small compartments for dishwashing tools and scrubbers.

On the north end of the galley, a stack of four drawers is designed to store utensils, cutlery, hot pads, dish towels, and all of the odds and ends every chef must have.

## THE DINETTE

The Allegro Bus includes the dinette/computer workstation as standard equipment, for many years one of the company’s most popular options. Half of the dinette’s table (20.5" x 40") stores under the credenza (18.5" x 76") when you travel. When serving meals buffet-style, push the table into storage position and the credenza becomes your buffet. However, many owners opt for the U-shaped dinette with its deep, comforting UltraLeather™ upholstery and drawers under the seats (MSRP \$980).

When you go into business mode, the computer workstation becomes a very efficient mini-office. On the south end side of the credenza, a fold-down door hides a slide-out tray for a thin laptop or a keyboard. A small printer can fit nicely on a second slide-out tray below the laptop. You can store six reams of paper in the compartment at floor level. The double-door cabinet under the dining table has over two cubic feet of storage.

On the north end of the credenza, the cabinet houses two large drawers (19" x 11" x 3") for office supplies and a filing draw designed for hanging files. A pressure-sensitive pop-up 110v-USB port is conveniently located in the corner.



## The R&R Area

### THE MASTER BEDROOM

After opposing slide-outs in the bedroom were introduced in the 2004 Allegro Bus, the head of the bed by design had to go *into* the slide-out box. The design created more space in the bedroom's floorplan, but long arms were then required to reach into the slide-out box to stretch a fitted sheet over the two forward corners.

In 2017 Tiffin remedied that problem with the invention of the optional Power Smart Mattress (MSRP \$1,680). At the touch of a button on the small Spyder controls pad on either side of the bed, the occupant can extend the track-mounted DS bed 22 inches into the room from the headboard, placing the forward corners of the mattress at fingertip length. During non-use, the mattress can be retracted to a reclining position that leaves a four-foot wide walkway through the room and exposes two large drawers (1.8 cu. ft. each) under the bed. The reclining position is perfect for watching programs in bed on the 42" Smart+ television.

Those who love to read in bed will enjoy not only the reclining position of the bed but also three choices of lighting. Two LED reading lights are mounted above the headboard in the base of Tiffin's standard four-door cabinet. The two touch switches for the lights are located respectively in each bed partner's Spyder

control pad. One can snooze while the other reads. The second lighting system consists of accent lights in the concave molding surrounding the headboard. It is perfect for adding a little more reading light. However, the system also includes the accent lights concealed in the soffit, and tray moldings. You can really turn on the lumens by touching the ceiling switch that activates 14 LEDs. This switch has a rheostat to adjust from a "barely on" position to a "grab your sunglasses" position.

The contemporary PS slide-out features a centered encasement (46"w x 15.25"d x 31"h) manufactured with Broadway, Tiffin's solid surface countertop material. The encasement contains a colorful 39-inch electric fireplace and a 42-inch Lift TV with soundbar. The television is standard. It lifts quietly out of the encasement to cover the 24" x 37" window. The lift, Broadway encasement, and the fireplace are optional (MSRP \$840). The warmth generated by the fireplace will eliminate any need for the Aqua-Hot or heat pumps. It is programmable for shutting off at night or coming on in the morning when you are camping in cold climates.

Both sides of the television/fireplace are flanked with twin floor-to-ceiling cabinets 15.5 inches wide by 6 feet tall. Matching doors enclose 8 cubic feet of storage in each cabinet that has three or four adjustable shelves. The south cabinet has two fixed shelves to accommodate the LG entertainment system and the Dish Wally receiver (subscription required). The lower part of each cabinet has two drawers (14" x 13" x 5.5").

The four-panel headboard conceals a new feature requested by current owners. The two center panels snap out to provide access to an egress safety hatch. The outside door is 36" x 42.5". The inside width is 28 inches. After the handle releases the door, it swings down on its hinge. The person leaving the coach slides off the bed face down until his feet touch the first of three steps on the door leading to the ground (MSRP \$1,680).





**THE MASTER BATH**

The Broadway faux granite on the countertop and in the shower, the black bamboo backsplash, the grey stone shower insets, the Tuscany Sea Salt tile floor, and the large expanses of glass create the aura of a spa in the master bath. Augmented by the rear PS slide-out, the footprint of the bathroom is 9' 4" x 5' 6".

The contemporary theme is continued with the same ceiling treatments found in the living area and bedroom. The Broadway countertop features two large (13" x 20") lavatories with a deep gold tone accented with a black aqua-inspired pattern. The lavatories are serviced by pump-styled faucets and soap dispensers. The entire wall and backsplash matches the black bamboo solid surface material used in the galley. Twin medicine cabinets with 19" x 25" beveled glass mirrors are brightly lit with four LEDs. Each lavatory has its own 110v outlet in the sidewall along with a chrome loop for a hand towel. Under the countertop, each lavatory has 3.3 cubic feet of storage, plus two large drawers that separate the storage compartments. The remaining ceiling is illuminated with six LEDs controlled by a separate touch switch by the door.

The floor of the shower measures 28.5" x 44.5", two sides formed by the Broadway faux granite and two by a base-to-ceiling expanse of safety glass. A chrome latch opens the glass door into the shower. A chrome towel bar is conveniently located on the outside of the door. A fold-down teak seat and a lady's step

ledge add to the shower's functionality. A single lever mounted on a corner panel controls both the water temp and volume. A soap dish and ledge for amenities complete the corner ensemble. A vertically mounted pole in the shower facilitates the sliding movement of the multi-stream shower head. Both of the Broadway walls are accented with grey stone insets.

The architects added a full-length mirror in the bath which is attached to the sliding door entrance to the walk-in closet.

A ceramic elongated maserator toilet is positioned just north of the shower, located below a window. A cabinet above the win-



Walk-in closet



dow is very handy. A chrome double rod towel bar is attached to the common wall of the bath and the walk-in closet.

### THE WALK-IN CLOSET

The time has come when a home is difficult to sell if the master bedroom does not have a walk-in closet. That may soon be true with high-end motorhomes. The 45OPP meets the criteria. Its walk-in closet measures eight feet across and four feet deep. The 96" clothes rod on the back wall takes full advantage of the coach's width. Plus, it has a 96" shelf above the clothes rod. Using the cavity of space between the back wall and the rear fiberglass cap, TMH added eight shoe cubbies.

On the left as you enter the closet (page 19), you will find a floor-to-ceiling cabinet, the top half of which is enclosed by double doors. The top of the cabinet has 7.5 cubic feet of storage divided by three shelves. The lower part has four drawers, each measuring 20w x 14d x 5.5h. The two sections are divided by a breaker box for the 110v system. A small cabinet under the clothes rod in the NW contains two more drawers and the breaker box for the 12v system. The stacked washer/dryer is enclosed in matching cabinetry on the east side of the closet. Just behind it is a small cabinet for the safe in the NE corner.

## Operating the 45OPP

### THE COCKPIT AND ITS DIGITAL DASH

Since I discussed the Advance Monitors and the JBL speakers as part of the entertainment system, let's go now to the all-new digital dash that is centered around two 4.5-inch dials, one for MPH and the other for RPM. The MPH can be reset to KPH. Two trip meters operate in the center of the MPH dial. All of the digital dash's functions are selected with a rotary dial in the left console (see white arrow at right). A selector on top of the rotary dial slides in four directions to move through the information options. A press downward on the selector will set choices that have been made. In addition to speed and trip meters, the left dial area contains the odometer, the gear selected, compass direction, fuel gauge, oil pressure, and engine temp.

In addition to the RPM, the right dial displays the DEF fuel level, house batteries, time, front and rear airbag pressure, and outside temp. The center area of the dial displays the folder for Settings, Pre-Drive check, and more. The center column of space between the dials shows Tag Dumped and Miles to Empty. Above the dials are 12 warning signals, all easily displayed.

Perhaps the most useful feature of the new digital dash is the



driver's ability to use the rotary dial to move the entire digital dash up or down on its display screen, allowing the driver to see the display through the top half of the steering wheel, regardless of his/her height.

**RADIO.** The radio can be operated with the four finger touch switches on the steering wheel. On the right side under the edge of the windshield wiper controls, two switches control the volume and the station tuner. On the opposite side under the cruise controls, one switch is on/off and the other is the band selector.

**TOGGLES.** From left-to-right under the large monitor, nine toggles control the STEP COVER, DRIVER FAN, DASH ACCENT LIGHT, SOLAR SHADE, NIGHT SHADE, GEN START, MAP LIGHT, DOCK LIGHT, and RADIO/CAMERA.

**HVAC.** Denso's three easy to see and operate dials control AC/Heat, fan speed, and vent selection.

**LEFT DASH.** Top left: display for the Mobileye. Mid-section: parking brake, head & park lights, dash lights intensity. Bottom left: 12v port, mirror heat, mirror position. Toggles: ENGINE PREHEAT, AUX START, PEDALS IN/OUT.

**LEFT CONSOLE.** From top: gear selector, USB port, driver's



## Driving the 45OPP

The 45OPP featured in the October 2016 issue is identical to the 2020 45OPP with reference to the PowerGlide chassis, engine, IFS, air suspension (front, rear & tag), tuned shocks, and tires. Following is that review.

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

No matter how tall or short you may be, the cockpit is fully adjustable. Of course, the seat itself slides forward and backward, and lifts up and down. The steering column telescopes in and pulls out as well. The toggle switch to the left of the steering column allows the driver to move the pedals in and out.

Bumping down 4th Street, I could not hear even a squeak. Unusual for a brand new coach with only 110 miles on the odometer. We turned right at the bank and headed to the bypass.

window. Toggles: AIR HORN, ENGINE BRAKE, DRIVER SOLAR SHADE, DRIVER NIGHT SHADE. The rotor dial next to the toggle switches (see arrow below left) controls all of the functions on the digital dash.

LEVELING. Tiffin introduced for 2020 a more automated system for leveling the coach. A video display shows each option and step. The LEVELING option offers two choices: AIR or JACKS. The system uses HWH jacks and Valid's air system. It worked well the first time I used it without any prior instruction. Very intuitive.

RIGHT PASSENGER CONSOLE: Spyder control pad for all front items, lights in living area, power system, temp settings throughout coach, locks for entry and bays. Auxiliary monitor. Charging pad for iPhone. Two USB ports.

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

We have some long hills and serious curves ahead. The independent front suspension, tuned shocks, and six air bags will smooth out the rough pavement and absorb the bumps.

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

By the time you're reading this story, the new 2020 Allegro Bus brochures will be ready to mail. If you've been thinking about full-timing, this is the right coach. Three living room configurations, dozens of options to personalize it to your tastes, and luxurious comfort to lift your psyche.

## Heating and Cooling the 45OPP

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

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

In the spring and fall months when you have warm days, Tiffin's generous insulation in the outside walls will retain a significant amount of the day's solar warmth. With the optional electric fireplace in the bedroom, you can knock off the morning chill until the sun reaches the top of your coach.

Aqua-Hot is a hydronic heating system that uses the coach's diesel fuel to heat a coolant which it pumps to six heat exchangers located throughout the motorhome. The exchangers produce a quiet distribution of warm air without creating hot and cold spots. With incoming fresh water running through coils wrapped around the Aqua-Hot's boiler, hot water is distributed endlessly to the galley, shower, dishwasher, and faucets throughout the coach. All water coming into the coach is filtered at the utility bay. The optional heated floors (MSRP \$4,900) have two zones: bedroom & baths and galley & living area. After it became apparent the heated floors raised the room temperature in our Allegro Bus, we lowered the thermostat settings for the Aqua-Hot by five degrees. Choose a selectable setting between 1 and 5 for the floor heat and you will enjoy a "new warm."



## Controlling Your Environment


Since I last wrote a story on the Spyder controls in the 2018 Allegro Bus 45MP in the Spring 2018 issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*, many changes and improvements have been made. Tiffin Motorhomes frequently sends a new coach to Spyder Controls in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada to allow Spyder's engineers to have a "live" motorhome to use in designing the best possible control systems. If you compare the images on the insert with those on page 16 of 15:2, you will see the differences. One obvious item is that we now have a 10-inch control pad.

Across the bottom of the pad, you will notice eight folders: Home, Lights, Power, Climate, Slides, Shades, Mechanical, and Settings. A touch to each folder will jump you quickly to the area you wish to address.

The v folder provides four rectangles containing an overview to four areas: Lighting, Climate, Power, and a non-folder view of your tanks (incl. diesel), water pump, and Aqua-Hot. Touching either of the first three will take you to that folder for making selections.

The HOME folder allows you to quickly turn ON/OFF lights in the ceiling, bedroom, and mid-bath, plus activate the water pump and Aqua-Hot, all time-savers when you are in a hurry and do not wish to go through the second level screens.

By touching the rectangle labeled LIGHTING PAGE, or the Light Bulb on the folder at the bottom of the pad, you will open the LIGHTS folder with six sub-folders. If you are not a computer person, don't let the word "folder" throw you. They are just squares and rectangles on the screen that corral functions in a given area. In the LIGHTS folder, you have sub-folders for Exterior, Main, Bedroom, Mid and Hall baths, and Light Master. When you turn the Light Master OFF, it will

remember all of the lights you had ON when you touched the Master. When you touch it again, the same set of lights will come back on. A light with this symbol  can be dimmed to about 10 percent of its total lumens at the lowest point and increased to 100 percent full value. Hold your fingertip on the triangle and the dimming screen will appear.

The POWER folder (a battery w/ lightning symbol) gives you the option for prioritizing your electrical devices in the motorhome. If every device were ON at the same time, the system would go into overload mode and follow factory preset choices for shedding devices. On the right, the screen shows input from the generator or shore power and details voltage, amps, and hertz for each leg. The EMS (Electrical Management System) shows what is currently operating and what is OFF. As a new owner, during dealer orientation you should ask for detailed training for every option on this page including the inverter (pass thru disabled), float charging, EMS (enabled disabled), and AGS (auto generator start).

The CLIMATE folder is intuitive. In the 45OPP, you have three AC/heat pumps on the roof. The screen shows REAR, MID, and FRONT. The red and blue arrows facilitate selecting the coach temperature you prefer. Heat sensors in the ceiling monitor when the desired temp is achieved. The AC should be run on the AUTO setting in most cases.

When the outside temperature is above 38 degrees, you can warm your coach with the heat pump. If it is really cold, touch the diesel switch under the Aqua-Hot rectangle and touch FURN for furnace. Floor heat is a third option for heating the coach. Select numbers between 1 and 5 for floor heat, with 5 being the warmest. These are not temperature set-

tings, just incrementations of heat, one of which you will find comfortable. Floor heat often reduces the amount of heat needed from the Aqua-Hot furnace.

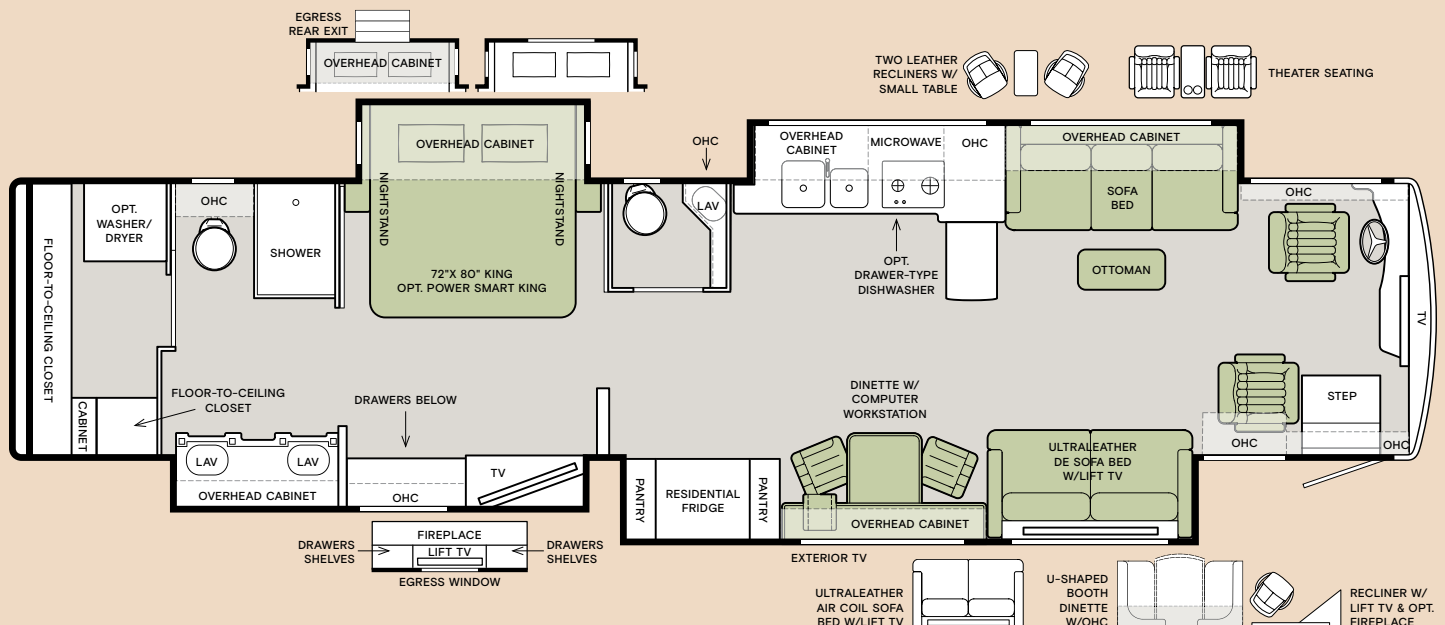
The SLIDES folder addresses only the two rear slide-outs in the bedroom. Prior to using the slide-out controls pad, you must first set the parking brake and turn the ignition key to the accessory position. Do not stop in the middle of extending or retracting the rear slide-outs. Stopping can cause misalignment. The front slide-outs are operated from switches located in the top back of each driver and passenger chair. Be sure the chair backs will clear the slide-out sidewalls before extending or retracting.

The SHADES folder will take some experimentation to get used to it. In the center, notice DAY MASTERS and NIGHT MASTERS. With two TOUCHES, you can control all of the shades in the daytime living area of the coach. The MAIN shades and the COCKPIT shades are on separate controls. The DAY control activates the solar shades and the NIGHT control activates the opaque, privacy shades.

On opposite ends of the display, you will see individual controls for designated windows, both for daytime and nighttime shades.

The MECHANICAL folder controls ceiling exhaust fans in the galley, mid-bath, and rear bath, locks for the entry door and bay doors, bed and TV lifts, and the bedroom ceiling fan.

The SETTINGS folder allows the owner to personalize the control center for time, temperature, screen brightness, screen settings (power saver, screen default selector, and color), and switch settings (keyless entry, doorbell, and fobs). The diagnostics settings should be used only by the technician at the dealership where you purchased your coach. **RS**



# SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2020 Allegro Bus 45OPP, Quad Slide Base MSRP\* – \$462,700 MSRP as tested with options – \$512,155

## STANDARD FEATURES

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

### Automotive

PowerGlide chassis  
Allison 3000 MH six-speed automatic transmission with lock-up (torque converter)  
Cummins 450-hp, ISL 8.9L, electronic/turbocharged diesel with 1,250 lbs.-ft. torque

Air ride (6 air bags)  
Aluminum wheels  
Independent front suspension  
ABS brakes & two-stage compression engine brake  
Adjustable fuel and brake pedals  
VIP Smart Wheel  
Side-mounted radiator  
Cruise control  
Fog lights  
Daytime running lights  
Emergency start switch

### General Exterior

Fiberglass front & rear caps  
Dual fuel fills  
Large tinted one-piece windshield  
10Kw Onan® generator, manual slide-out  
Auto generator start  
50-amp service  
50-amp power cord reel  
Three low-profile roof 15,000 BTU ACs with heat pumps  
A/C condensation drains to rear of coach  
Heated chrome mirrors with integrated cameras, remote mirror adjustments  
Back-up camera in rear cap  
Three power roof vents with 3-speed fans  
Single motor intermittent wipers  
Exterior TV with sound bar  
Gel-coat fiberglass walls  
Full-body paint with protective film on front cap  
Double electric step  
Dual pane tinted windows  
Exterior patio and door LED lights  
Exterior LED light on driver side  
Powered door awning  
Single Girard™ powered patio awning  
Girard™ window awning package (3 windows)  
Slide-out covers  
Custom mud flap  
Swing-out basement storage doors with gas shocks, remote locks  
Pass-through basement storage  
Basement cargo lights  
Motion sensor lighting for basement storage  
Remote locking system for entry and basement doors  
Deadbolt front entrance door  
Chrome handles on compartment doors  
Flush mounted dual pane windows  
Docking lights  
Heated water and holding tank compartments  
SeeLevel™ monitor pad in utility bay  
Exterior rinse hose with soap dispenser & paper towel holder  
Six house batteries  
Pure sine wave inverter with 120-amp converter & transfer switching  
Black holding tank flush system  
Water filter  
Gravity water fill  
Undercoating  
110v exterior receptacle  
110v/12v converter  
Digital TV antenna  
Concealed air horns  
Low profile in-motion satellite dish  
Cable TV ready hookup

### Driver's Compartment

Power Ultraleather™ driver and passenger seats with passenger footrest  
Contemporary wraparound dash  
Drawer in step well  
Power step well cover  
Driver side power window  
Courtesy lights in step well  
Lighted switches  
Dual dash fans  
Two-drawer center console  
Cup holders on driver & passenger side  
12v disconnect switch  
Kenwood AM/FM stereo with 7-inch monitor  
XM satellite-ready radio includes receiver and antenna (requires subscription)  
In-dash navigation system  
Front overhead TV  
Two USB dash receptacles  
Passenger console with 9 toggle switches & USB receptacles

Driver console houses gear shift, mirror controls, engine brake, leveling system, shades  
Power solar & privacy windshield shades  
Solar & privacy shades for DS & PS side windows  
Solid non-opening PS window  
Custom infrared repeater system on all TVs  
Color rear vision monitor system with side-view cameras activated by turn signals  
Seatbelts integrated into driver & passenger chairs  
Fire extinguisher

### Living Area/Dinette

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

### Galley

Polished Broadway countertops with sink covers  
Double stainless steel sink  
Built-in soap dispenser  
Expand-an-Island  
Induction cooktop  
Pop-up 110v & USB ports, stores level w/countertop  
Permanently mounted folding Broadway cook-top cover  
Single lever sink faucet with sprayer  
Built-in soap dispenser  
Stainless steel convection/microwave oven with exterior vent  
LED task lights above countertop  
Galley backsplash  
Stainless steel residential refrigerator with ice & water dispenser in door  
Slide-out cabinet under double sink with compartments for sink covers & trash can  
2.5" deep lighted toe kick  
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan

### Full Bath

Two medicine cabinets with large mirrors over vanity  
Broadway vanity top with lavatories made with decorative glass in composition  
2.5" toe kick with recessed lighting  
Four LED recessed lights over vanity  
Full backsplash with rope lighting  
One cabinet over toilet  
Macerator toilet  
Solid surface shower walls with grey stone insets  
Shower wand with flex hose mounted on adjustable vertical slide  
Built-in folding teak seat in shower  
Skylight over shower with LED light in sliding solar cover  
Aqua-Hot continuous hot water  
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan in full bath

### Half Bath

One medicine cabinet over lavatory with two side cabinets  
Five vanity lights  
Broadway vanity top with ceramic lavatory  
Two cabinets in vanity  
Broadway cane weave backsplash  
Toilet with sprayer  
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan

### Bedroom

Ceiling fan  
Four OH storage cabinets in bed slide-out  
Bed comforter with designer pillows  
Sleeping pillows with shams  
King-size bed with memory foam mattress  
Under bed storage  
Night stands with 110v and USB outlets & solid surface countertops  
Spyder controls for entire coach in fwd edge of both bed slide-out walls  
Ultraleather upholstered headboard framed with curved wood molding  
Two floor-to-ceiling cabinets with double-door enclosed shelves and two drawers  
Side windows in bed slide-out with solar & privacy shades  
Exit window with solar & privacy shades in PS slide-out  
Carbon monoxide and LPG leak detectors  
Entertainment system concealed in double-door cabinet  
Pre-wired for second satellite receiver  
42" LG Smart+ television  
Dish® receiver (subscription required)  
DVD player with surround sound for living room

### Walk-in Closet

Storage cabinet wired & plumbed for washer/dryer  
Floor-to-ceiling chest with four drawers, plus open compartment with three shelves

96" clothes hanging rod across rear of coach  
Corner safe

### General Interior

7-ft. ceilings  
Soft touch vinyl ceilings with lighted soffit ceiling in living area and bedroom  
Porcelain tile floor throughout the coach (excluding slide-outs)  
High gloss raised-panel hardwood cabinet doors and drawers  
Aqua-Hot hydronic heating system  
Extraordinaire™ AC system  
10-inch Spyder touch monitor for complete environmental control  
Solid cherry cabinets, fascias, & doors with concealed hinges  
LED lighting throughout coach  
Complete cable wiring (interfacing with surround sound & satellite receiver)  
Home theater with concealed surround sound speakers  
Powered solar & privacy shades in living area  
SeeLevel™ tank monitor in Spyder control panel  
Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors  
Vacuum cleaner with VacPan

## OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Fire Opal full body paint (std)  
Powerglide chassis 450 HP  
Tempest interior décor (std)  
Linen cabinets w/ Luster Sheen  
UltraLeather air coil sofa with lift TV – PS  
Theatre seating – DS  
Advanced monitor system  
JBL sound system  
Second Girard Awning  
Basement freezer  
Bedroom Lift TV w/fireplace  
Bed OH cabinets (w/o window)  
Egress rear exit – DS  
\*requires Bed OH cabinet  
Contemporary ceiling (std)  
Contemporary slide-out fascia (std)  
Mobileye Collision Avoidance System  
Dinette computer workstation – PS  
Dinette OH cabinetry (NC)  
Dishwasher  
Two powered slide-out storage trays  
External under slide-out lights  
Exterior ground effect lights  
Generation 10 external paint scheme (std)  
Grey Owl UltraLeather (std)  
Heated tile floor  
Exterior roof ladder  
Extended cycle batteries  
In-motion low profile satellite dish (NC)  
Solid non-opening window – PS  
Wood refrigerator panels  
Power window awnings  
Power exterior TV door  
Power Smart Mattress with Memory Foam – King  
Solar panel prep (std)  
Stacked washer/dryer  
Tuscany Sea Salt floor tile (std)  
Winegard Connect  
Wolf induction cooktop upgrade

## OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

Powerglide chassis, 60S HP  
One or two storage compartment slide-out trays (not powered)  
One powered slide-out storage tray  
One Girard awning (patio side)  
Vertical slide opening window – PS  
Sterling cabinets with Luster Sheen  
Standard cabinet finish  
UltraLeather U-shaped dinette-PS  
Sub-woofer in dash  
Three or six solar panels  
True induction cooktop  
No bed overhead cabinet  
Single galley OH pantry cabinets (std)  
Dinette OH cabinets (std)  
Bedroom TV w/traditional cabinets (no lift TV, no fireplace)  
Standard sound system  
Traditional slide-out fascia (NC)  
Traditional ceiling (NC)  
Two recliners w/fireplace – DS  
One recliner w/Lift TV & fireplace – PS  
UltraLeather DE sofa with Lift TV – PS  
Memory Foam mattress – Queen (60" x 80")  
Memory Foam mattress – King (72" x 80")  
Power Smart Mattress with Memory Foam – Queen (60" x 80")

Other Choices for Paint, Décor, Floors, and Cabinet Finishes at no additional charge

Any of the six exterior paint colors  
Either of the other three décors: Latte, Posh II, Sand Castle II  
Any of these three cabinet finishes: Glazed Cherry Wood, Glazed Canyon Cherry, and Glazed Honey Natural Cherry  
Glossy Porcelain wood floor

## MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 323"  
Overall length – 45'  
Overall height w/roof air – 13' 3"  
Interior height – 83"  
Overall width – 101"  
Interior width – 96"

## WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 51,000 lb.  
Front GAWR – 17,000 lb.  
Rear GAWR – 23,000 lb.  
Tag GAWR – 13,300 lb.  
GCWR – 66,000 lb.  
UVW – 40,890 lb. as tested  
CCC – 7,995 lb.  
Trailer hitch capacity – 15,000 lb.

## POWER TRAIN

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

## CHASSIS

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

## CONSTRUCTION

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

## ACCOMMODATIONS

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

## MSRP

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

## UVW

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

## DEALERS

To locate a Tiffin dealer nearest you, go to [www.tiffinmotorhomes.com](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.

The eight primary folders on the Spyder control pad

HOME



LIGHTS



POWER



CLIMATE





SLIDES



SHADES



MECHANICAL



SETTINGS



# Steven Howell

## ASSURING TOP QUALITY PAINT FINISHES ON THE TIFFIN WAYFARER

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

After you admire the paint finishes on your new Wayfarer, you may want to send a thank you note to Steven Howell and his team who assure the peerless painting quality on Tiffin's Class C coaches. Wayfarers are flying off dealers' lots within days after they are delivered from Tiffin's Winfield, Alabama plant. Curb appeal is certainly one reason for their success.

Like so many employees who work at Tiffin's plants, Steven grew up in the small town of Hamilton, Alabama, and learned a work ethic that is inherent with farm life. "My father had 15 horses on 40 acres," he began. "My brother and I were responsible for baling the hay and putting it up in the barn every year. We also cleaned the barn and the stalls and groomed the horses."

When Steven graduated from high school in 2002, he decided it was time to investigate new careers. "I took a job with Speedrack. The company builds warehouse storage systems and I was hired as a painter. Of course, I did not realize at that time the skills I learned at Speedrack would lead to a career with Tiffin Motorhomes," he said.

When the company moved its Hamilton plant to Quincy, Michigan in 2004, Steven was not interested in moving away from family and friends and his familiarity with the place where he grew up. Fortunately, Tiffin Motorhomes was in the process of opening its state-of-the-art paint plant in Belmont, Mississippi. After an interview in the company's Red Bay headquarters, Steven became a member of the new team of painters who got

in on the ground floor of very high-tech systems. "I was in awe at the size of the Belmont plant and the number of down-draft paint bays," Steven recalled.

The Belmont plant began operations by producing seven full-body paint jobs each day with 12 paint booths in service. In 2006 Steven was promoted to utility person with supervisory responsibility in the pre-mask area which had 20 to 25 employees. A utility person has the skills to do any job in the area to temporarily replace someone who is absent.

Steven's other experiences in Belmont included serving as utility person over the clear booths which required eight painters. Later he supervised three paint booths where the stripe colors are applied.

"When the planning was underway to open the Wayfarer plant in Winfield in June 2016, I was offered the opportunity to manage the painting operation," Steven explained. "Our goal was to design and set up operations for two paint booths. We opened the production line in February 2017 building one unit a day. Today we have four paint booths and one bake oven, producing four units each day."

Steven provided a tour of the painting operation. "The first station is Prep where we apply two cleaners to the fiberglass and metal to be sure the surfaces are ready to accept the paint. All non-painted areas are masked to prevent overspray," he said.

"The second station is the first paint booth. Two painters begin at the same corner and apply the base coat, working in opposite directions around the coach. When they meet at the diagonally opposite

corner, they return to the starting point. The process is repeated until four coats have been applied. At that point, the paint booth becomes a baking oven. The four coats of paint receive a 15-minute bake cycle at 150 degrees," Steven continued.

In the third station, a pre-mask is applied to define the areas where decorative stripes will be painted.

"The coach then enters the fourth station, a paint booth where we apply the next two colors of the painting scheme," he said. "This time we let the paint air dry."

At the fifth station, all the pre-mask and overspray masking is removed. Under bright lights, an inspector searches for any painting defects and makes the repair.

"The sixth station is very important," Steven pointed out. "Here we apply three coats of clear, waiting five minutes between each application. The coach then rolls into the bake oven at 155 degrees for 75 minutes."

The paint plant is really the end of the production and manufacturing process, Steven noted. It is time to remove all of the protective overspray masking and begin several steps to complete the coach. It is Belmont's version of "final finish."

The awning and all exterior components are installed. A very fine grit is used to sand the paint, followed by some serious buffing out to produce the fine sheen for which Tiffin coaches are noted.

"Any defects that have made it through the line are corrected," Steven empha-

sized. "At this last station, we run our bubble-check. After silicone is applied to all the seams, we install a positive air pressure machine at one of the Mercedes cab windows. Then we soap the outside of the coach and turn on the air pressure machine. Any seam that is not sealed perfectly will produce air bubbles. After we complete the sealing process, the Wayfarer rolls off the assembly line."

The coaches are hooked up to utilities in a "campground" and checked to be sure all systems are completely functional before shipping to dealers.

"Our sales are really good," Steven continued. "Right now we can build 20 units a week. With the planned modifications, we could build 10 to 12 units per day. Of course, we will have to install more paint booths, cranes, and production lines. We expect to reach that capacity inside our present physical plant. A lot of research went into selecting Winfield.

Several businesses had closed, including the coal mines. We knew we had a good supply of labor."

The job move from Belmont to Winfield kept Steven's driving time almost the same, a welcome change because of his commitment to being an effective father and husband. Steven married Ashley Burlison in 2010. "Ashley was a city girl who had always wanted a horse while she was growing up in Hamilton," Steven said. "Our daughter, Kensley, was born in 2011. The following year we found 15 acres in the country with a house and a barn. That, of course, made it possible for us to have horses.

"As Kensley became old enough for 'little girl' sports, nothing really seemed to interest her," Steven noted. "Ashley had a horse by now and was enjoying riding. Then we heard about a dressage program in Nettleton, Mississippi, about 45 miles from our home. We enrolled Kensley and everything clicked. Maybe she got that gene from her mom. Now we go to Nettleton every Sunday afternoon following our church service. Ashley and I are in the same Sunday School class at the First Baptist Church in Hamilton.

"Dressage has made it possible for Kensley to learn more about the horse, good balance, and riding skills. The kids also learn they have responsibilities—cleaning the stall and grooming the



Far left: Steven checks with Karla Chism before she begins the pre-mask work on the rear cap of a 2020 Wayfarer 25QW. Karla worked at the Belmont paint plant for 10 years before transferring to the Wayfarer operation. ♦ Left-to-right: Tanner Holland, Jeremiah Hudson, and Kevin Dozier joke with Steven as they leave the paint booth for lunch. Tanner is a third-generation employee at Tiffin Motorhomes. His father, Rusty, was the assistant plant manager in the Red Bay assembly plant before he accepted the job of getting the Wayfarer production line up and running. Tanner's grandfather, Roger Holland, is a career employee at TMH and now works with the team that sets up Tiffin displays at major RV shows.



*Clockwise from top left:* A recent family picture of the Howells: Ashley, Ella Kate, Steven, and Kensley. ♦ Kensley and Ashley enjoyed a late fall ride on a warm sunny day. ♦ In her dressage riding costume, Kensley confidently takes the reins riding Moon at a weekend practice session.

horse,” Steven added. “Then something unusual happened. During her lessons, Kensley took a special interest in Moon, an eight-year-old quarterhorse. Her teacher pointed out she was the only student who had ever bonded with Moon. When we arrived at the stable, Kensley would call out his name and Moon would look out from his stall to find her. Not long after that, we bought Moon and took him home. We now have four horses on our 15 acres and a very happy mom and daughter who love to ride together.”

Ashley began her career as a dental hygienist working for Dr. Brent Boyett, M.D., D.D.S. His dual medical degrees led him to establish Pathway Health Care in Hamilton to test new drugs and procedures in the medical field. Ashley became the company’s national director for research and development.

Eighteen months ago Kensley was presented with a little sister, Ella Kate. With

the difference in their ages and Kensley’s willingness to accept new responsibility, Steven and Ashley are looking forward to watching their firstborn develop some motherly instincts and help out with her little sister.

The Howells have the good fortune to live near Smith Lake where Ashley’s parents have a summer house. “We try to find time in the summer for several short stays at the lake for swimming and boating. We also love to get away for a week at the beach every summer,” Steven said. “Living in Hamilton, a small southern town of 5,800, is just ideal. We have a good school system, too.”

“I hope to finish my career at Tiffin Motorhomes,” Steven continued. “The Tiffins demonstrate a lot of care and concern for their employees and their families, so much more than you would find with a big corporation. Since it is a family-owned business, there is a real family atmosphere at TMH. I have had the opportunity to know Tim Tiffin on a more personal level as we opened and brought the Wayfarer plant on line. It has been a great experience working for the Tiffins for the last 15 years.” **RIS**

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# Corpus Christi's Cornucopia

## BEACHES, BIRDS, BOATS, SHIPS, AND SEAFOOD

Text and photography by Suzanne Clemenz

*“Miles of sea beneath a sky of blue?”* No, we’re not singing the praises of Old Cape Cod, but of sparkling, surprising Corpus Christi, Texas. This balmy city gives its visitors an abundance of seaside merriment. You’ll find beaches, parks, marinas, inviting piers, every type of water conveyance, playgrounds, restaurants, museums, and galleries. It’s all beside a two-mile-long paved seaside promenade where people frolic on scooters, bicycles, pedaled surreys, and Adam’s express. Add to that the nearby attractions north across the Harbor Bridge, and the wilder, nearby Mustang and North Padre Islands across the Hwy. 358 causeway to the south. Every day promises new discoveries. Seafood? Corpus Christi’s local oysters, shrimp, and fish compare favorably with those found in great seaport restaurants anywhere.

On the next few pages you’ll discover many ways to enjoy your time in Corpus Christi, from visiting the aircraft carrier USS Lexington, to birding, hiking, surfing, windsurfing, kite-flying, fishing, and gaping in wonder in a large aquarium. Corpus Christi’s half million people enjoy a deep water bay that makes ‘Corpus’ the fourth largest port in the nation. Its oil refineries and cargo docks are tucked out of sight on the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. Forbes magazine ranks the city’s major industries as tourism, energy, and defense, in that order. Sperling’s year-round Comfort Index for the city is 79 out of 100, with the U.S. city average being 54. There are 55 days of precipitation and 223 sunny days. If the morning sky is overcast, the clouds generally lift by mid-day, and people play in or by the surf most days of the year. You’ll find many seaside RV parks or campsites throughout the area.

### Corpus Christi’s Seminal Years

Corpus Christi Bay was known only to the Karankawa Indians and other tribes until 1519, when Spanish explorer and cartographer Alonzo Alvaro de Pineda sailed into it on the Catholic feast day of Corpus Christi (body of Christ.) Pineda was first to map the Gulf of Mexico’s coast from western Florida to today’s Texas. He was killed in a local battle on the Mexican coast, but his maps survived and are preserved in Spain. Three hundred years later,

In 1919 the community of North Beach was slammed with 110 mph winds and a storm surge. Today only jet skis churn the waters as beachgoers enjoy the sun and sand and bicyclists and skaters cruise the beach walkway. ♦ The seawall features include lovely gazebos, three piers, marinas, and access by foot to many restaurants. After two →



American adventurer Colonel Henry Lawrence Kinney expanded his business interests northward from Brownsville, Texas, to a site on Corpus Christi Bay. He started a trading post around 1840 near existing Indian trading grounds. Kinney was also a rancher, raising the finest horses. Sometimes this led to confrontations with invading Comanches, who were eager for horses. He participated in a military campaign during the Mexican-American War, returning afterwards to his trading and ranching businesses. Kinney was elected to the Ninth Texas Congress.

Settlement began near the trading posts. In 1845 U.S. General Zachary Taylor and his troops arrived at the trading grounds. They advanced south to reinforce the Mexican War's outcome—establishment of the Rio Grande River as the U.S. southern border. Settlers chose the name Corpus Christi in 1847 and it was incorporated in 1852. Its population of 175 in 1860 became citizens of the Confederacy in 1861. U.S. troops occupied the town by 1863. No doubt a number of the troops from both sides noted the beauty, good climate, and natural resources in the area, and chose to settle there later. The Homestead Act also exempted settlers from debts to foreign countries or creditors, creating a new start for many. By 1890 the population of Corpus Christi was over 4,000.

During those 19th century decades when Europeans, and then Americans, were arriving in the Corpus Christi Bay area, small bands of Karankawa Indians of ancient Caribbean ancestry occupied the coast from Galveston Bay southwestward to Corpus Christi Bay, including the long barrier islands. They harvested seafood and plants, moving seasonally along the coast and inland about 100 miles. To their west and south were the related Coahuiltecan, with whom they shared a language, body build, and other attributes different from other American tribes. The men were often six feet tall, muscular and athletic, had neatly braided hair, and wore no clothes except animal skins

devastating hurricanes, Corpus Christi built the seawall to protect its population and future success as a port and business center. ♦ Famed sculptor Gutzon Borglum proposed a bay-facing seawall amphitheater for the city waterfront. Today fireworks and the Christmas-time Illuminated Boat Parade are among events enjoyed here.



for warmth when needed. The women were shorter, had waist-length hair, and wore animal pelt skirts. Children under 10 wore nothing, and no one wore footwear. Both men and women were tattooed and had body piercings for ornamental items, but wore no jewelry. The men hunted, fished, and built canoes for transportation of their families from site to site. Their red cedar bows were almost as tall as the men and were used with great precision. Globes of oil that washed onto the beaches were used as an adhesive to help hold arrows onto shafts. The bows and arrows were used in archery contests as well as for hunting. Men also engaged in wrestling competitions. Women did most of the gleaning of native plants and cooking. Women also built the circular huts of willow saplings which were bent and interwoven at the top, then covered with animal skins. Since they moved to follow food sources, possessions were few. Spaniards who lived among them as captives or survivors of shipwrecks were treated at first as slaves, but the Karankawas became in awe of their European medicinal and spiritual capabilities, some of which they attempted to assimilate into their own culture. Written observations by Cabeza de Vaca, a Spanish captive-turned-friend noted the great affection that Karankowan parents lavished on their children, unlike coastal tribes farther east.

Their speech was guttural and unusual. They repressed their breath to speak, then exhaled heavily at the end of each sentence. They averted their eyes from each other while speaking. The Karankawas were particular about correct pronunciation and scoffed at foreigners' mispronunciations. They slept, drank, and ate opportunistically, rather than communally. Their trade networks extended across the coastal areas of the Gulf of Mexico. The Karankawas differed from their Coahuiltecan cultural cousins by living in many small family bands rather than having a more communal social structure. They communicated with far-flung tribal members or neighboring tribes using precise smoke signals. There was also a sign language used among the regional tribes with whom they interacted. Like tribal peoples everywhere, they efficiently utilized their sometimes sparse natural resources for their own needs. In occasional clashes with other tribes, the Karankawas' height, huge bows and arrows, and ability to run tirelessly for hours protected their relatively small population.

The Karankawas were curious about the humans who arrived on their shores in strange, ornamented, immense wooden 'canoes,' and who wore even stranger clothing. If Spanish explorers waded ashore from a shipwreck, the Karankawas were hospitable until trade goods salvaged from the wreck ran out. They then were enslaved. Some Spanish shipwrecked explorers, such as Cabeza de Vaca in 1528, lived with the Karankawas and more easterly coastal tribes for several years, getting tattooed and adopting their lifestyle until escaping. Much of what we know about the Karankawas today is from journals kept by these men. De Vaca published his diary upon returning to Spain in 1537. An English translation, *The Journey & Ordeal of Cabeza de Vaca*, is available online. It is a brief, staggering survival saga of his eight

years wandering by foot from Tampa Bay almost to Corpus Christi Bay, then to New Mexico and Mexico. You probably didn't read about this in your early history classes!

By 1688 relations with explorers had deteriorated into lethal confrontations. Karankawas attacked the French-built Fort St. Louis northeast of Matagorda Bay (100 miles northeast of Corpus Christi,) killing all but five children. By 1691, the children had been released or purchased back. In 1721, the Spanish rebuilt a presidio and mission at Fort St. Louis, but the Karankawas resisted their religious zealotry. Explorer Jean Lafitte engaged in war with the Karankawas in 1818, killing many tribesmen.

Texas was part of Spain prior to 1821. It was then annexed by Mexico prior to becoming the Republic of Texas in 1836. Texas became part of the United States in 1845, then seceded in 1861 to join the Confederacy briefly.

In 1821, Stephen F. Austin of Arkansas negotiated with Mexico to allow American immigrants into Texas, and then led 300 to settle in Texas. Without Austin's approval, the immigrants petitioned for independence from Mexico. Austin was arrested, then expelled. Following the creation of the Republic of Texas, Austin returned. He served as the secretary of state for just a few months before dying of pneumonia.

In 1840, Mexico gave the few remaining, now desperate, Karankawas permission to move south of the Mexican border. By 1858, they were expelled back into Texas. With insufficient resources on the land allotted to them, plus warfare and European diseases, Karankawa numbers rapidly dwindled. A Mexican rogue activist, Juan Cortina, probably with supporters, is often blamed for simply slaughtering the remaining Karankawas. In 1891, a guide to Karankawa culture and language was published by ethnologist Albert Gatschet. Alice Williams Oliver, an elderly woman who knew the last Karankawa band, provided what she remembered of their vocabulary to Gatschet. Sadly, no memorial in Corpus Christi honors the

Karankawa tribe. Corpus Christi's South Texas Alliance of Indigenous People designed and started a fundraiser for a bronze memorial in honor of all native peoples who inhabited the coastal areas for thousands of years. Funding is insufficient even for this token remembrance.

### The City's Twentieth Century Adolescence

During and after the Civil War, receiving military and civilian supplies was hindered by Corpus Christi Bay's shallow waters. The Corpus Christi Ship Channel was first dredged in the late nineteenth century. The Channel starts at the north end of Mustang Island and parallels the south curve of Nueces Bay, which is a good-sized bay off Corpus Christi Bay. Cattle ranchers began to thrive on exports loaded onto the port's visiting steamers. Tourists and settlers were among the imports. In 1900 Corpus Christi was a city of 4,200 with two railroads, many paved streets, and municipal water. As cattle and cotton produced significant economic growth, development and tourism increased. This section of the Texas Coastal Bend was turned into vacationer's dreams of sandy beaches, pleasure boat marinas, tourist lodging, and enticing restaurants.

On September 14, 1919, a hurricane that brought 149 mph winds to Florida churned across the Gulf Coast, slamming an unprepared Corpus Christi with 110 mph winds and a 16-foot storm surge. Hundreds of people perished, ten major ships sank, buildings were demolished, and battered bodies washed ashore covered with crude oil leaked from storm-damaged tankers. The downtown area was inundated with 11 feet of water. Awaiting rescue on their roofs, many North Beach residents were swept away. Timbers used to keep people afloat became deadly projectiles. Fourteen inches of rain fell in 12 hours. Volunteers rushed in to help the following morning. Body descriptions were accurately recorded before being quickly buried in temporary mass graves, averting disease outbreaks. A month later they were all reburied in a local cemetery.



The USS Lexington aircraft carrier, now a National Historic Landmark, has become a defining landmark of the city. The ship is daunting in size, capabilities, and it's glorious history during and after World War II.

The city had already been planning seawalls so it could qualify for federal funding to deepen its shipping channel. By 1926 a straight, deeper channel was finished, paralleling Nueces Bay's south side channel. Four cargo docks were built to handle beef, cotton, and other exports. Just two years later two more docks were added. In 1930 the channel was deepened to 30 feet. Then oil fields were discovered in Nueces and neighboring counties. Oil nudged aside cotton and beef as the lead-

The Corpus Christi Ship Canal has refineries, manufacturers, and warehouses. The Harbor Bridge is being replaced by a bridge tall enough to handle large cruise ships, which would be a new industry here.

ing cargo item. A 45-foot deep channel was dredged by 1975, and even that was expanded by 1989, creating the deepest port on the Gulf of Mexico. Corpus Christi diversified the utilization of the port in the 1980s and 90s by attracting steel and refrigerated cargoes, automobiles, containers, grain, and military needs. Wind turbines manufactured on port property are newer economy-boosters.

A taller bridge is under construction over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel

to woo the cruise ship industry to the area. Promoters note that besides Corpus Christi's own charms, it is only a day trip away from San Antonio, Austin, the Rio Grande Valley, and northern Mexico—added value for cruise travelers. The serious politicking about this acknowledges Corpus Christi's tourism appeal.

Many coastal cities in the world such as Ecuador's Guayaquil, Mexico's Mazatlan and Puerto Vallarta, South Africa's Capetown, and Copenhagen, Denmark, have esplanades. These pedestrian areas follow the edge of a lake, river, or bay, and offer some protection from the water's naughtier habits. From the early 1900s, Corpus Christi's municipal government realized the allure that the bay's shore has for recreation and tourism, and committed itself to that use. A hurricane in 1916 and the devastating hurricane of 1919 did so much damage to the waterfront and downtown that building a protective seawall became urgent. In 1928 Gutzon Borglum, eventually the designer of Mount Rushmore's presidential bas reliefs, designed a seawall. His plans included an amphitheater section facing out to sea. The Great Depression dried up funding from state and federal sources. Corpus Christi citizens endured ten more years of fearing another hurricane before passing bonds that allowed seawall construction to begin in 1939. A levee was built 100 yards out from the old water line and special pilings were driven into the bay's base to brace the levee and add protection to the city center. Borglum's idea for amphitheater-like steps was included, facing the pier-heads that shelter the marinas. The two-mile long seawall is 14 feet above sea level and has not been breached since its completion in 1941, despite five named hurricanes and one tropical storm. The Corpus Christi seawall was awarded a Texas Historic Civil Engineering Landmark designation in 1988.

Corpus Christi Bay's complete ring of highways lends itself to circular exploration. You can start with the museums, historic district and stadium at the north end of the seawall, follow the seawall southeast along the Bay, then take the



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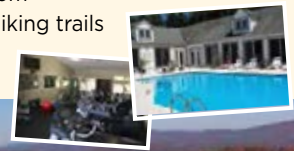


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John F. Kennedy Causeway to North Padre Island. Detour south to North Padre Island National Seashore for hours or days, then return north from Padre to rejoin the circular route on Mustang Island, up the Bay's east side. Turn back west across the Bay's north side and a detour to the Aransas Pass area and its famous birding refuge. Then continue south, spending a day or more at North Beach, the USS Lexington, and the Texas State Aquarium, which are across the Harbor Bridge from our starting point at the museums. Drive the entire Bay circuit in a day if you just want an overview before allocating your time ([stxmaps.com/go/scenic-drive-around-corpus-christi-bay.html](http://stxmaps.com/go/scenic-drive-around-corpus-christi-bay.html)).

### Beginning the Circuit: Museums, Arenas, the Historic Park

Within three blocks at the northern end of downtown's Chaparral Street you'll find the Museum of Science & Industry, the Art Museum of South Texas, Harbor Playhouse, the American Bank Center performance venues, the Texas State Museum of Asian Cultures, and the charming Historic Park. A home run away from these is Whataburger Field, home of the Class AA Corpus Christi Hooks, an affiliate of the Houston Astros. The city also has a water park, tennis arena, motor speedway, and 16 teams from Texas A&M University's Corpus Christi campus.

The geometric architecture of the Art Museum of South Texas hints that its collection leans toward contemporary art, though there are many other genres plus visiting exhibits. The museum's café is excellent with indoor/outdoor seating and big views of the Harbor Bridge and the USS Lexington. Next door is the Corpus Christi Museum of Science & History. Be sure to tour this in a clockwise route or the history displays are not chronological. The science part is modest but has some good info, especially for children.

The American Bank Center has an auditorium for the Corpus Christi Symphony and other performers, plus a convention hall. Its arena hosts the Corpus Christi Icerays, rodeos, and other live performances. On the same campus is the Playhouse for the Harbor Community Theater's busy roster of performances. Check out their performance schedule online, [harborplayhouse.com](http://harborplayhouse.com).

Don't miss the Texas State Museum of Asian Cultures two blocks north of the Historic Park on North Chaparral, between Brewster and Hirsch Streets. It is on the west side across a parking lot. That worn building displays a treasure trove of artifacts from many Asian cultures. The artistry on display is mind-expanding. Look for an exquisite small, clam-shaped ivo-

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A life-sized bronze bison contrasts with the lines of the Art Museum of South Texas. The contemporary lines and realistic sculpture outside mirror the wonderful genres of art inside the museum. ♦ A visitor absorbs a wall full of large, dramatic pieces in the contemporary art room at the Art Museum of South Texas. Other rooms and small courtyards feature visiting exhibits, and a variety of art genres and periods. ♦ Hester Café at the Art Museum of South Texas has unique menu items and big views of the USS Lexington. ♦ Corpus Christi Museum of Science & History has life-size models of prehistoric birds which inspired these boys to take flight.





This carved ivory clam shell, about five inches wide, has an entire scene inside. It is one of several thousand intriguing pieces in the Texas Museum of Asian Cultures.

ry sculpture with a detailed scene carved between the shells. The museum merits a larger, newer, easier-to-find home.

The Historic Park covers two park-like city blocks, between North Chaparral and North Mesquite Streets, where eleven post-1850s homes were moved. Signs tell each home's history. Some homes are local organizations' headquarters. Stop first at the official city Visitor Center in a historic home on North Chaparral. Visitor information includes a printout for the Historic Park's walking tour. The winding course brings to life an

early 1900s neighborhood, with expansive covered porches and a little rose garden. The Littles-Martin house is home to the Institute of Hispanic Culture, which, though small, has well-presented displays featuring art and crafts from many Latin-American countries.

### By the Beautiful Bay

Stroll south along the seawall's paved promenade mindfully, as you are sharing it with electric scooters, 4-wheel pedaled surreys, runners, bicycles, and skateboarders. There's plenty of room and it is contagiously fun. You'll want to walk, jog, or sit in one of the charming arched and turreted gazebos on the seawall and enjoy people-watching. Smiles are normal attire. The walk starts at the museum/sports arena complex at the north end of downtown and continues southeast. The Republic of Texas Bar & Grill in the Omni Corpus Christi Hotel is adjacent to the promenade at the north end, should their fine dining with 20th floor harbor views entice you. Or dine at their first floor marina-view Glass Pavillion Restaurant.

Heading south along the seawall promenade you'll pass three piers. The L- or T-shaped pier heads all enclose picturesque marinas and views of Corpus Christi. At an arcaded enclosure, where People Street becomes its pier extension, is a memorial park and bronze life-sized sculpture of singer Selena Quintania. "The Mexican Madonna" was fatally shot downtown just when her career was skyrocketing. There is also a Selena Museum

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on Leopard Street. On People's Street pier you can visit with shrimp and oyster boat crews, then proceed to the pier-head park where people fish, picnic, and relax on the lawns. At the excellent Landry's Seafood House, the blackened redfish etouffee is among many delicious discoveries. Or dine at the more casual Harrison's Landing.

The next pier south, Lawrence Street Pier, has a watercraft rental business immediately on your right. You can rent (or watch) paddleboats, jet skis, canoes and kayaks, take power boat rides, or enjoy a dolphin cruise. Four-wheel bicycle-surreys are rented for esplanade fun. Joe's Crab Shack is by the pier's park at the north end of the T. Note Best Western Hotel across Shoreline Boulevard to help you find Williams Street and the don't-miss Water Street Oyster Bar. The restaurant has famously tender, very finely breaded oysters and other luscious food. Their sweet/tangy key lime pie is unmitigated decadence, big enough to share.

Cooper's Alley Pier has the Islander Sailing Club, one of Texas A&M University's athletic teams. The club teaches sailing basics to students, has local summer Wednesday evening races at 6 p.m., and travels to other Texas regattas. The adjacent Corpus Christi Yacht Club has sailboat races throughout the year. Look for their sails beyond the long jetty. And shop at Jane's L-Head Seafood House for just-caught seafood to cook in your Tiffin kitchen, as well as fresh bait for the fisherfolks among you.

Just south, the Art Center of Corpus Christi sells local artists' best work, and you'll relish the unique menu at the Center's Citrus Bistro. The lawn around the Art Center is a shady park. Sherill Park, south of the Cooper's Alley Pier entrance, is a memorial to Corpus Christi's first WWII casualty. Warren Joseph Sherrill was aboard the USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, when the Japanese attacked it. The city reeled, being suddenly at war, and losing a son of the town in the first salvo.

Wander farther down the seawall's sidewalk and you'll hear the excitement from kids and adults playing on McGee Beach or in the adjacent playground at Water's Edge Park. Wave action is often much calmer here than other local beaches—great for young children. The jetty you see from the pier starts at the north end of McGee Beach and is a favorite fishing spot. Need beach gear? Captain Jack's (aka Corpus Christi) Jet Ski & Beach Rentals can rent you anything from beach chairs and umbrellas to tubes, surfboards, Boogie boards, and Waverunners. They even offer Banana Boat rides on a yellow inflatable towed behind a speedboat. Falling off is part of the fun!

At about this point the seawall esplanade ends, although a sidewalk, briefly separated from the bay by private property,

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Pedal a surrey-bike, pop a wheelie, try an electric scooter, run, walk, or just sit and people-watch on Corpus Christi's downtown seawall promenade. ♦ You can walk, drive, or sail to dine at Landry's Seafood Restaurant, left, or Harrison's Landing, right, on the People Street T-head Pier downtown. ♦ Three jet skiers race between the downtown pier heads and the jetty wall built to tame storm surges. ♦ The man standing in the blue boat is giving sailing lessons to novice sailors in the calm waters inside the jetty.

Families enjoy playing in the surf at Malaquite Beach, one of several beaches at North Padre Island National Seashore.

continues south to the bayside's Cole Park. There you'll find a long paved trail for walkers, runners and cyclists, playgrounds, and picnic sites with grills. Fishing and swimming aren't permitted. Photograph skateboarders practicing their moves at the 10,000 square foot skate park. The park has a popular amphitheater which hosts the free Summer Bay Jammin' Concert & Cinema Series. There are several more bayside parks as you continue southwest on Ocean Drive toward Texas A&M University's local campus and a Naval Air Station.

### **South Corpus: The Botanical Garden, Birding Areas, and Texas A & M University**

Visit the South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center about 10 minutes south of Hwy. 358. The gardens are multi-hued, the orchid house is splendid, and the huge wetlands with trails and viewing decks is a birder's delight. North of 358 off Ennis Joslin Road is the Suter Wildlife Refuge on Oso Bay, with boardwalks and a mile of bird trails. From there you're practically at Texas A&M University.

Texas A & M University's main campus in College Station has 16 satellite campuses throughout Texas. The Corpus Christi campus is on its own island, with a beach plus wetlands for environmental studies. Degrees are offered in 80 subjects.



### **Sand Between the Tootsies on Padre Island**

Southeast of downtown, fishing beaches are tucked under the John F. Kennedy Causeway which spans Laguna Madre between the mainland and North Padre Island. Across the Causeway bear right (south) on Park Road 22 and you're on beachy, marshy North Padre Island. Visit Whitecap Beach for wave action. Stop or stay at Padre Balli Park for good RV camping, picnicking, surfing, kite flying, and the loooong Bob Hall fishing pier. Mikel May's jivey Beachside Bar & Grill is on the pier. Heading south again, Bird Island Basin Road takes you to Worldwinds Windsurfing and some small waterside RV campsites. Here the

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Seeing the rare yellow-crowned night herons in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge is a special treat. ♦ In 1941 fewer than two dozen whooping cranes were alive. With conservation for decades, there are now over 500. The graceful birds are 52" tall. Adults have red skin on their foreheads and masks. Aransas National Wildlife Refuge birding boats take you right to the wintering whoopers.

Laguna Madre on the inland side of the island is saltier than the ocean. It's great for windsurfing, kayaking, canoeing, and fishing. On the Gulf side, Malaquite Campground in Padre Island National Seashore has first come, first served RV dry campsites with covered picnic tables, grills, no hookups, but flush toilets, showers, a dump station, and a potable water filling station. The Padre Island National Seashore Visitor Center has a wonderful beach, showers, free beach wheelchairs, and natural history information, including about the endangered Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, which nests on the island. No food, gas, or fishing licenses are sold in this expansive wildlands park. Park Road 22 ends shortly after the Visitor Center.

### Birders Heaven

Continuing the Corpus Christi Bay circle drive after visiting North Padre Island, turn north to the Hwy. 361/Mustang Island intersection. Wander north up the Bay's east side toward Port Aransas. Keep your binoculars close by and watch for shorebirds and marsh birds. Mustang Island State Park boasts 400 bird species plus fishing, hiking, bicycling, hookups, and dump station, and a 20-mile paddling trail on the park's inland side. Farther up the island is Gulf Waters Beach Front RV Resort, which rents privately-owned RV sites. At Port Aransas the Leonabell Tumbull Birding Center gardens and boardwalk are open and recovering from Hurricane Harvey. The 50-acre Roberts Point Park in Port Aransas has fishing, boating, picnicking, and free summer concerts. There are several deep-sea fishing charters in town, and five RV parks in or near Port Aransas.

### Closing the Loop—With Major Distractions

After Hwy. 361 curves northeast across Redfish Bay, birders will find their Holy Grail if they turn right (north) on Hwy. 35 and head toward Rockport and Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.



Texas Route 35 hugs the shore between Rockport and Aransas Pass, as do white pelicans, double-crested cormorants, and many other birds. Drive slowly, binoculars in hand. ♦ An osprey caught a fish as Aransas tour boat birders watched the action.

Look for roadside birds on piers, grassy fields, and even communal heron nests atop stands of trees. Booking a legendary birding boat tour from Rockport into Aransas National Wildlife Refuge is a must. The boats are modest. The birds are spectacular. Records show 405 bird species recorded in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, which is about 40 minutes north of Corpus Christi (1 Wildlife Circle, Austwell, Texas, 77950). From late November to late March, many of the 500+ highly endangered, elegant whooping cranes are present. The tour pilots can find them. You'll see many other birds as well—sandhill cranes, tri-colored and yellow-crested night herons, loons, ducks, shorebirds, gulls, terns, oystercatchers, brown and white pelicans, and many more. The pilot stops when good birds are spotted. Songbirds arrive just as the whoopers head north to breeding grounds, so birding is good here year-round. Google *Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail*.

For the last leg of the Bay loop, take Hwy. 361 or 35 from Rockport and turn south to Hwy. 181 and three great stops. North Beach is first, and next to it are the USS Lexington aircraft carrier and the Texas State Aquarium. North Beach is 1.5 miles long, has a concrete beach walk for bicycles, skates, and strollers, plus there's fishing, bath houses, restrooms, a ferris wheel, hotels, and restaurants.



An F-18 Hornet Blue Angels demonstration jet sets on the 910-ft. long Flight Deck forward of the Navigation Bridge and communications towers. ♦ This view of the *USS Lexington* aircraft carrier shows the navigation bridge towering over the entrance gangplank. The carrier became a National Historic Landmark in 1992.

The *USS Lexington* National Historic Landmark opens daily at 9 a.m. Walking up to board the gargantuan “Lady Lex,” it seems impossible that she floats. But float she did, from her launch on September 26, 1942, to her final self-powered trip to Corpus Christi on January 29, 1992. She was nicknamed *The Blue Ghost* because of her original navy blue paint. Later she was repainted gray. The *Lexington* arrived at her present berth on June 17, 1992. Her statistics are staggering. She is 910 feet long, over 166 feet tall, has a top speed of 32 knots, and can hold 1.5 million gallons of fuel for herself plus 400,000 gallons of aviation fuel. In war, her own guns shot down 17 aircraft; her air groups shot down 387 and destroyed 635 grounded enemy aircraft. The *Lex* sank or damaged 588,000 tons of enemy naval vessels and 497,000 tons of enemy merchant ships. She participated in 18 Pacific battles during World War II. *The Blue Ghost* survived being torpedoed by a Japanese bomber. Eleven months later two Japanese kamakazi fighters attacked. One was shot down, but one struck high on the starboard rear side, killing or injuring 180 crewmen. Both times she was quickly repaired and returned to war. During the Korean War she was designated an attack carrier but was kept in reserve. After a 1953 overhaul she joined the Pacific Fleet for a busy schedule of training operations, and in 1962 she sailed around Cape Horn to the New York Naval Shipyard for an overhaul. She was reclassified as a CVS-16 anti-submarine Support Carrier, and was hastened out of the overhaul in support of the Cuban Missile Brigade. Over 1500 pilots a year were trained on her decks. She was decommissioned on November 8, 1991, having logged over 209,000 miles at sea. Lieutenant Kathleen Owens’ landing on the *Lexington*’s deck was the carrier’s 493,248th and final landing. The booklet *USS Lexington, “The Blue Ghost”* has a wealth of information and color photos. The DVD *USS Lexington “Always Ready”* is exciting and quite moving. Both are available in the gift shop.

Five self-guided tours are included in the admission price. The ladder-like steps on most tours weave up and down some of the carrier’s 16 decks. There’s a 3D movie, a flight simulator, virtual battle stations, and a *Lockdown on the Lex* escape room adventure “sure to mess with the mind.” View the ship’s guns plus many military planes on the Flight and Hangar decks. Those two decks are wheelchair accessible using the *Lex Lift*. There are four 3-hour guided tours requiring reservations and a \$50 fee—Flight Operations, Catapult Launch Procedure, Primary Flight Controls, and Aircraft Recovery Procedure.

Here is a peek at viewable features: *Flight deck*: Aircraft, arresting gear, navigation bridge. *Foc’sle*: Pearl Harbor exhibit, officers’ quarters. *Gallery deck*: Captain’s cabin, combat information center. *Lower decks*: Chapel, galley, dental clinic, scale models. *Hangar deck*: Engines, flight simulator, café, WWII aircraft. You can spend from four hours to several days viewing Lady Lex. Former crew members can pre-register on the *Lex*’s website for a special welcome. The awe-inspiring *USS Lexington* alone makes Corpus Christi an unforgettable destination.




Sharks, manta rays, dolphins, and other fish and aquatic creatures can be viewed up close in beautiful undersea habitats at the aquarium.

The Texas State Aquarium's ticket booths open at 10 a.m. Below them at left is a large, shallow splash park where water spurts up, down, and over, or unexpectedly dumps a waterfall on giggling youngsters. Inside the aquarium on level 3 is a jungle overlook. Level 2 has jungle creatures including flamingo, ibises, and macaw parrots plus the main aquarium. Sharks, mantas, lionfish, yellowtail snappers, a school of silvery fish, sea turtles, and many other tropical creatures make large, lazy circles in the blue-green water. Shy creatures dart out from the shadows.

There are 16 appealing exhibits in the Texas State Aquarium. A few examples: Dolphin Bay, Stingray Lagoon, Tentacles, Swamp Tales, Living Shores, and Otter Creek. The dolphin show is at ground level G. The trainers channel the dolphins through natural leaps and tail-splashing, providing a spectacular show.

Nearby is an amphitheater where interesting animals such as the African serval cat, owls, a red-legged Seriema (bird,) falcons, owls, and a prehensile-tailed porcupine are featured. Daily programs at the Aquarium include Diver in the Water, Dolphin Bay, Feed the Rays, Turtle Tales, and the Wild Flight Show. Everything mentioned is included. In addition adult-accompanied kids over 8 years old can buy tickets to accompany trainers on the Discover Dolphins tour, the Feed the Fish tour, or the Sloth Meet & Greet tour. The Pepsi Shoreline Grill at Level G has a surprising variety of foods for the whole family. You can see the aquarium in three hours or spend the day.

Consider visiting Corpus Christi in spring for 11 days during the annual Buccaneer Days, which has a carnival, an illuminated night parade, and fireworks. One sparkling and vividly colorful Buc Days event is the Coronation Pageant, when women of the court wear gowns with long trains masterfully encrusted with crystals, embroidery and rhinestones. Check online for other great festivals ([101corpuschristi.com](http://101corpuschristi.com)).

Corpus Christi has, in a compact area, an intoxicating mixture of indoor and outdoor events and entertainment. This overview of its considerable allures may pique your interest and inspire a visit. Try it for a week or two. Lady Lex, the beaches, the birds, and seafood heaven await you. 

## Where Do Tiffin Owners Park Their Motorhomes?

Corpus Christi's mild winters make this coastal city a year-round destination, especially for RVers who are known as Winter Texans. Corpus Christi has more than 100 miles of beaches with many RV parks taking advantage of the sandy shoreline. Most have great views and resort-style amenities.

The Tropic Island Resort RV Park has two swimming pools and is just minutes away from Tropic Island's main docks. Laguna Shore Village offers free cable TV and beautiful views of the Laguna Madre. The activities director at Colonia del Rey hosts regular events and games in between your time in the surf and catching rays on the beach.

On the Beach RV Park in Port Aransas is located right on the edge of the beach. The sound of crashing waves at night may help you fall asleep. A trolley stop is located near the entrance to this park, providing transportation to town and many points on Mustang Island.

The following parks got favorable reviews from several Tiffin owners and from TripAdvisor. Their listing here does not represent an endorsement by Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc., or the staff of *Roughing It Smoothly* magazine.

**Tropic Island RV Resort**, 315 Cut-Off Rd., Port Aransas, TX 78373. (361) 749-6128.

Centrally located, Tropic Island Resort is less than a mile from the beach and close to a number of restaurants and shopping areas. It has one shallow and one regular swimming pool, as well as two hot tubs. The daily rate at this pet-friendly RV park is about \$60 and includes electricity.

**On the Beach RV Park**, 907 Beach Access Rd. 1A, Port Aransas TX 78373. (361) 749-4909. This park is right on the ocean. On the

Beach is pet-friendly and has high-speed wireless Internet and cable TV. A trolley stops right in front of the park. The daily rate, which includes electricity, is approximately \$53 to \$75.

**Colonia del Rey RV Park**, 1717 Waldron Rd., Corpus Christi TX 78418. (361) 937-2435. Colonia Del Rey RV Park is Good Sam's highest rated park in Corpus Christi. Woodall's ratings are: 10 for the facility, 10 for restrooms, and 9 for appeal. Guests at this park have access to a swimming pool and a fun slate of activities, including a Texas Hold 'Em tournament almost every week. The park is located eight miles from the beaches on North Padre Island. Rates are approximately \$38 a day.

**Surfside RV and Resort**, 1820 S. Eleventh St., Port Aransas TX 78373. (361) 749-2208.

A short walk to the beach, the Surfside RV and Resort was recently remodeled and has level concrete pads and a swimming pool. The park earned TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence. With some restrictions, pets are welcome. Full hook-ups, Wi-Fi, and cable are included in the daily rate, approximately \$55.

**Beacon RV Park and Marina**, 301 Fulton Beach Rd., Rockport TX 78382. (361) 729-3906. Located on Aransas Bay about an hour's drive from Corpus Christi, the park offers an activity center, a 550-foot fishing pier, and a small marina. The park has some paved pads. Rates are approximately \$40 a night for full hook-ups, cable, and Wi-Fi.

**Laguna Shore Village**, 3828 Laguna Shore Rd., Corpus Christi TX 78418. (361) 937-6035. Laguna Shore Village is located across the road from the Laguna Madre off the Gulf of Mexico. Grassy RV sites, full hook-ups, and free cable. WiFi available. The park is pet friendly and has handicap-accessible facilities. Daily rates approximately \$40.



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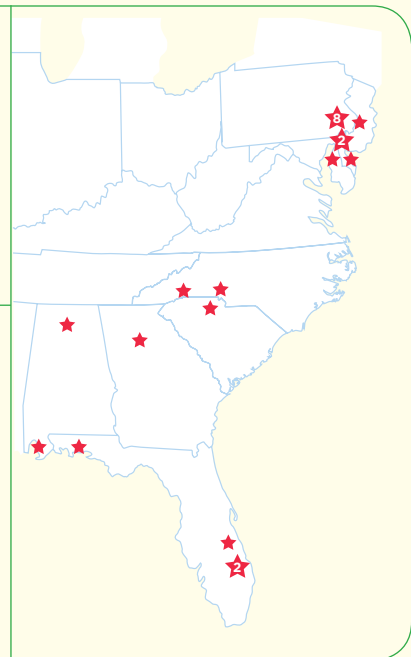


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## Inaugural Wayfarer Rally Sevierville, Tennessee

By Sally Moore

We were very excited to host the first Wayfarer rally at beautiful River Plantation RV Resort in the Great Smoky Mountain region! Response from our Wayfarer owners was overwhelming and we had 150 Wayfarer coaches present. The rally was held May 13-16, 2019 with almost perfect weather. Cool crisp mornings and sunny afternoons created ideal camping conditions. Owners came from as far away as California, Maine, Washington, and Florida to participate in this inaugural rally that focused on components and concerns that are unique to Wayfarer coaches.

Lazydays RV in Knoxville, Tennessee brought several new Wayfarers to show our owners. Staff from the Wayfarer plant in Winfield drove a new prototype model LW to the rally and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to have an early preview of this new and exciting floorplan. Lazydays RV helped several owners move into a

new 2020 Wayfarer during the rally!

Our volunteers came early to help the Tiffin staff get everything ready. We love our volunteers! They pay to come to the rally and then work hard all week to be sure everyone has a good time just as they do! Our volunteers are fantastic!

Coaches began arriving days in advance of the rally, but as soon as the rally officially started on May 13th, guests made their way to the Wayfarer Store for the first opportunity to stock up on Wayfarer swag! This was the first time that Wayfarer merchandise had been available for sale and rally folks took great advantage of this shopping mecca! Monday was also the day for guests to receive the rally agenda and their welcome bag of gifts. Everyone was excited to gather in the conference center on Monday evening for a delicious meal and an opportunity to make new friends and renew old acquaintances. Bob Tiffin, founder of Tiffin Motorhomes, was present and welcomed everyone to the rally.

We appreciate the support of the Tiffin family and the management from Tiffin

Motorhomes for our rallies! Door prizes were awarded and everyone enjoyed a few games of Wayfarer Bingo. Prizes were awarded with much fun and laughter. Veterans were recognized by their branch of service and celebrated during the evening. We are always honored to salute our veterans and first responders and say thank you for their service to our nation!

Immediately after a hearty breakfast on Tuesday morning, seminars were held on Wayfarer related topics. Mercedes Benz of Birmingham presented an informative session regarding the Sprinter chassis. Winfield staff covered Electrical 101 and news about upgrades in the 2020 models. Onan generators, Truma, Triple H electronics, Kenwood, and many others presented seminars Tuesday and Wednesday. A crowd favorite was presented by Wayfarer owner, Janna Burnworth, "Living large in a small area & loving it!" Guests appreciated the opportunity to learn more about all components of their Wayfarer coaches!

We were delighted to have Tyler Davis, marketing director of Tiffin Motorhomes,

at the rally. On Tuesday evening, Tyler gave an informative presentation on the history of Tiffin Motorhomes and why one should feel confident in the decision to join the Tiffin family. Everyone enjoyed another delicious meal served by Chef's Catering of Pigeon Forge. Tim Tiffin, general manager of all Tiffin Motorhomes operations, addressed the group with updates on the Wayfarer and his vision for the future of Tiffin and Wayfarer. More door prizes were awarded to lucky winners before Tennessee's own Kenny Evans took the stage for a wonderful evening of classic oldies and country hits. Kenny can often be found performing at one of the Pigeon Forge theaters.

Wednesday was devoted to more Wayfarer seminars. Everyone gathered at noon in the conference center for another delicious meal of burgers and dawgs with all the trimmings! Mayfield Dairy is a local Tennessee favorite and their delicious Nutty Buddy cones were enjoyed by everyone in the new coach display. This was a great opportunity to visit with one another and share travel experiences on a

beautiful Tennessee mountain afternoon.

Another great evening and meal on Wednesday. It was a special treat to hear from another member of the Tiffin family as third generation Trent Tiffin spoke to the group. He has been involved with the Wayfarer development from day one and is very connected with Wayfarer owners. Many know Trent from his Facebook live posts and visits to the Winfield plant. More door prizes were awarded including 50% discounts on future Tiffin rallies! After dinner, the band Dashboard Blue from Asheville, North Carolina, presented a great evening of music.

A special round of heartfelt thanks goes out to the hard-working service technicians from Tiffin and Lazydays RV. They are our unsung heroes and did a remarkable job of visiting each Wayfarer during the rally to perform minor repairs/adjustments to the coach. Hats off to them!!

Thursday morning many Wayfarer friends opted for a narrated bus tour to Cherokee, North Carolina. Both buses were treated to wonderful commentary about the history of the Great Smoky

Mountains. We drove through the mountains and visited many overlooks before stopping in Cherokee for lunch. On the return trip to Sevierville, we visited the Oconaluftee Visitors Center to tour a mountain farm museum of log structures situated along a beautiful mountain stream. Again, the weather was almost perfect and it made for a great day! Before arriving back at the campground, we drove through downtown Gatlinburg and saw the new skybridge high above the city, now the longest suspension pedestrian walkway in the United States.

Many Wayfarer owners remained at River Plantation RV Resort for a few days while others stowed their lines and headed on to their next destination. Whatever your plans, travel safely. We hope to see you at a Tiffin rally somewhere in the near future! Please check the just-released rally schedule for 2020 on page 44. Follow the directions for registering when your rally becomes available for sale. These rallies will sell out so make note of the on-sale date and time so you don't get left out. Happy trails and great adventures!





## Tiffin Allegro Club Rally Rock Springs, Wyoming

By Sally Moore

The Tiffin Allegro Club hosted its third rally for 2019 in beautiful Rock Springs, Wyoming, June 17-21. After experiencing snow flurries earlier in the month, the weather was gorgeous when rally guests arrived! We enjoyed cool, crisp mornings, brilliant blue Wyoming skies, and sunshine for the majority of each day. Located south of Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Tetons, and east of Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, Rock Springs was an excellent central location for touring the area. We were very excited to host 320 coaches from 38 states and two Canadian provinces.

Guests began arriving up to two weeks prior to the opening day of the rally. With so much to see in the area, many folks took advantage of the Sweetwater Events Complex's hospitality and facilities while visiting the beautiful Flaming Gorge or driving the Wild Horse Loop. Spring was in the air and it was wonderful to see the Wild Horse Corral filled with mares and their frisky colts kicking up their heels in the sunshine.

When rally week arrived, Sunday and

Monday saw the remaining coaches arriving steadily throughout the day. Thanks to a topnotch parking crew of volunteers, the coaches were guided in and parked quickly and efficiently. Guests made their way to the exhibit hall where they were greeted by more volunteers staffing the registration tables and received their welcome bag of Tiffin gifts. Guests visited the vendor area and shopped for items ranging from satellite systems to cleaning cloths. We were very happy to have several vendors participate in this rally, even though Rock Springs is an area that is more isolated than other rally locations we have visited. Two very popular booths were the folks representing the Tiffin Parts Store and our Tiffin Allegro Club store. Bretz RV Center brought a great line-up of Tiffin coaches and everyone was eager to see the newest 2020 models.

The rally officially kicked off Monday evening with a welcome by Kelly and Sally Moore. After a delicious meal from Santa Fe Catering, we were honored to salute Tiffin owners who have served our country both in the military and as first responders. Anthems from each branch of the service were played as those veterans stood and the flag from their branch of service was presented on stage. Lee Greenwood's "Proud to be an American" then

had everyone on their feet waving American flags. Veterans, we are honored to pay tribute to you! Thank you, volunteers, for your assistance (see picture below)! After the veterans salute and several door prize presentations, everyone enjoyed our version of Bingo, aka Tiffin Bingo!

Our trusty crew of golf cart & trolley drivers were out early on Tuesday morning bringing everyone to the exhibit hall for a delicious buffet breakfast. Seminars began immediately following breakfast in three conference rooms. Among other topics, rally attendees learned more about the operation of their television & navigation systems from Triple H Electronics, the Tiffin electrical system by Daniel Allen, Michelin tires and many others. After all of these talks and discussions, it was time for ice cream. Thank you, Sweetwater Events Complex, for sponsoring our ice cream social. Everyone was treated to locally made, farm-fresh ice cream from Shumway Farms Dairy. This sixth-generation dairy farm is located in beautiful Star Valley, Wyoming, and is dedicated to supplying high-quality, farm-fresh products. The Shumway family has been in dairy farming in Star Valley since 1889. Threat of rain showers moved the ice cream social inside a nearby arena tent, but everyone appreciated staying dry!

A new feature of our Tiffin rallies is the chapter Meet & Greet session. Chapters present at the rally are given time to display information and share about their chapter with other members. Often chapters will enlist new members during this session and new friendships are formed!

Andy Baer, Tiffin Motorhomes assistant general manager, had hoped to join us at the rally and give a presentation on "What's Happening at Tiffin Motorhomes!" Mother Nature and the Denver airport conspired to block his travel plans, but Kelly Moore gave the presentation on Andy's behalf. Tiffin Motorhomes is growing and expanding while continuing to be an industry leader focused on customer satisfaction.

After Tuesday night's dinner and more Tiffin door prizes, Jukebox 4 treated everyone to a fantastic performance! This energetic foursome is fighting to keep the hits from yesterday alive today. They boast incredible harmonies, infectious stage personas, and playful choreography in a one of a kind show that delighted the group as they visited the decades of the late 20th century.

Wednesday brought another series of seminars with popular presenters such as Marcus McCluney from Freightliner Custom Chassis and Harold Kimbrough

along with Ross Fischer from Onan. With a break for hamburgers and hot dogs at lunch, the seminars concluded mid-afternoon. Always a fun activity is the RV and campsite decoration contest among the owners. Competition was fierce! We had some fantastic entries this year in the theme of "Happy Trails." Winners were announced at dinner and each couple received Tiffin gift certificates. They were Joseph & Karen Eckroth, Leavenworth, Washington; Marc & Julie Spencer, Colleyville, Texas with Joe & Karen Kohler, Harold, Texas; and Monte West & Barb Knowles, Sanora, California.

Bretz RV had a busy week helping several couples move into their new dream coach. Each night these lucky folks were

awarded Tiffin gift certificates for two embroidered Tiffin jackets! We certainly hope all of these folks enjoy their beautiful new coach and have many miles of safe travels.

After another delicious meal Wednesday evening, Brady Goss treated the group to a great show. Brady has performed at several Tiffin rallies and everyone enjoys his piano performances, vocals, and guitar. Brady performed hits by Ray Charles, Dr. John, and many others, but his grand finale was a crowd favorite, "Great Balls of Fire" by Jerry Lee Lewis. Brady performs throughout the country - catch his show if he is in your area!

Thursday had everyone up and out early again to take in more seminars. We were



A "Happy Trails" contest winner.

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very fortunate at the Sweetwater Events Complex to have three large seminar areas where everyone could comfortably enjoy learning more about their coaches. Gary Harris, Powerglide chassis manager, drew a large crowd as well as Shawn Phillips from Cummins, Chris McCondichie from Allison Transmissions, and many others. The information gleaned from seminars alone is worth the price of a Tiffin rally! Delicious meals, good entertainment, and fun and fellowship with other Tiffin owners are great side benefits.

We are thankful to our owners who participated in the Tiffin swap meet Thursday afternoon. Bargains were found and another great opportunity to visit with everyone. Bargain hunting also meant we needed more ice cream! Thank you again, Sweetwater Events Complex!

A very special "thank you" goes out to the Tiffin and Bretz service teams who worked tirelessly to visit each Tiffin coach performing minor repairs and adjustments. Our Tiffin techs sacrifice time away from their families to travel with us to rallies across the nation, sometimes working under hard conditions without the proper equipment, to represent the Tiffin brand and help owners any way possible. A big hat's off to these guys!

Thursday night was our farewell evening. After door prizes and dinner, everyone enjoyed stepping back in time to the music of IMAGINE: Remembering the Fab Four! Beatles songs and costumes by the band brought back many memories and folks were encouraged to sing along to some favorite hits!

Friday saw coaches hitting the freeways again as people moved on to their next travel destination. Many coaches remained at Sweetwater over the weekend to continue exploring the area. With 50 amp electric, water, and a sewer connection, there was no rush to move to another campground. Sweetwater was an excellent host for our Tiffin rally and really rolled out the red carpet. Thousands of flowering plants and shrubs were planted days before our arrival and everyone appreciated their beauty!

Please check the just-released rally schedule for 2020. Tiffin rallies are very popular so make your plans early if your travel schedule pairs up with ours. Registration is made online for each rally. Follow the directions for registering on the date your selected rally becomes available for sale. We look forward to hosting you at a Tiffin rally next year!

Until next time, "Happy Trails"!



## 2020 Tiffin Allegro Club Rally Schedule

Mark your calendars now and make plans to join us at one of the following 2020 Tiffin Allegro Club rallies! Our rallies provide you the opportunity for comradery with other Tiffin owners, minor repairs/service by Tiffin Service Techs and factory representatives, meals, entertainment, seminars, and other fun activities. The newest and latest Tiffin coaches will be on display! Each year our rallies sell out within minutes, so don't delay in registering. Give us a call at 256-356-8522 if you have any questions about the rallies. Registration forms will be available online at [tiffinmotorhomes.com](http://tiffinmotorhomes.com) at 11:00 AM Central Time on the day the rally opens for sale. Complete the form and pay online. No registrations are accepted by email, fax, telephone, or in person—register online at [tiffinmotorhomes.com](http://tiffinmotorhomes.com) only.

### **Sarasota County Fairgrounds & Roberts Arena, Sarasota, Florida**

Arrive: Monday, February 24, 2020

Depart: Friday, February 28, 2020

On sale: Oct. 8, 2019 at 11:00 AM CDT

*For Tiffin Class A and Wayfarer coaches*

### **Amana RV Park and Event Center Amana, Iowa**

Arrive: Monday June 8, 2020

Depart: Friday June 12, 2020

On sale: Feb. 11, 2020 at 11:00 AM CST

*For Tiffin Class A and Wayfarer coaches*

### **Palm Creek Golf & RV Resort Casa Grande, Arizona**

Arrive Monday October 26, 2020

Depart Friday October 30, 2020

On sale: June 23, 2020 at 11:00 AM CDT

*For Tiffin Class A coaches only*

### **Palm Creek Golf & RV Resort Casa Grande, Arizona**

Arrive: Monday November 2, 2020

Depart: Thursday November 5, 2020

On sale: June 25, 2020 at 11:00 AM CDT

*For Tiffin Wayfarer coaches only*

# LIFELINE

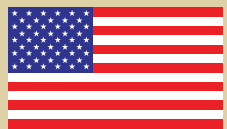
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# Stoltzfus RV's & Marine



How a Successful Business Came to Be Owned by Its Employees

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

**E**ARL STOLTZFUS OPENED FOR BUSINESS ON Route 202 in West Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1967, and celebrated the company's 50th anniversary two years ago. But the company has an interesting history that precedes that date by many years.

"My great-grandfather came from Germany and settled in Lancaster County in the 1870s," Earl began. "I was born and raised on a 113-acre dairy farm. My ancestors were Amish and my parents were Old Order Amish, which means we farmed with horses.

"My father, Elam Stoltzfus, and several others became dissatisfied with the bishop and decided to leave the Old Order," he continued. "My folks went with the Mennonite sect who sanctioned the use of tractors and up-to-date equipment. We also installed electricity and telephones. During that transition, I was 12 to 15 years old and it was a really exciting time for me. My mother did not agree with my father, so for a while we dropped her off at the Amish worship services on Sunday morning while we attended the Mennonite services.

"Dad had an International gas engine in the barn that had not been used in a while," Earl said with a slight twinkle in his eye. "When he went to a cattle auction in Lancaster, I tried unsuccessfully to crank it. Of course, at 15, there was a lot I didn't know about safety. I took one of the spark plugs out and dipped it in gas, but I forgot to reconnect the wire to the plug. When I tried to start the engine, the loose cord sparked and started

a fire. I got the cattle out, but the barn burned to the ground. That happened on November 7, 1956. The neighbors came for a barn raising and six weeks later we had a new barn. We continued to completely modernize the farm."

Elam bought a Nimrod tent camper in 1961 and introduced his family to camping. "After using it for several camping trips, he was surprised at how easy it was to sell," Earl said. "Dad (This is before I was in the business) went to the Cleveland RV Camping Show which was the RVIA show before it moved to Louis-

Earl Stoltzfus and his stepchildren: Ginny Knox, administration; Earl, CEO; and Bob Cox, president.



The Administration Team: Sara vanNeerden, F&I manager; Wes Markey, business manager; Joanne Anderson, marketing manager; Bob Cox, president; Dan Taney, vice president and controller; John Alexander, general sales manager.

ville, and bought four Terry Travel trailers with a plan to sell them from our front yard that bordered the road. That went well, too, and inspired Dad to buy a sales lot in the borough of Honey Brook. In 1973 he sold the farm to a family who was Old Order Amish and it is being farmed today with horses and no electricity."

By this time, Earl was eligible for the draft during the Vietnam era. "As a conscientious objector, I served military time in the Kansas University Medical Center as a messenger delivering pharmaceuticals to various locations."

After satisfying his military obligation, Earl learned welding via on-the-job training. "I worked in construction and helped build power plants. I later worked with a steel company as a rigger," he said. "A man in the construction business with me also worked as a crop duster. Still searching for what I wanted to do, I became a pilot, earning both standard and commercial licenses. I took a position as a dispatcher for an airline company, hoping that would lead to a pilot's job. Then I realized how commercial pilots had to live and came back home to work for a kitchen equipment company."

After Elam bought property on the main highway to sell trailers, Earl told him he wanted to do that, too. Elam quickly replied, "Go find another location."

Earl got to know the owner of a diner on Rt. 202 (Wilmington Pike) who had a one-acre lot next door. He negotiated to rent the lot for \$250/month and opened for business in 1967 with his brother as a partner. Earl and his brother owned and operated the two locations as partners until 2001 when Earl bought out his brother and formed an ESOP company.

The business continued to operate on the one-acre gravel lot for 10 years, using a mobile home for an office. "We had to put down pavement to do Pennsylvania state safety inspections. That was a big deal," he laughed. "Our product lines were travel trailers and truck campers from Terry and Sunline. One of the motorhome lines we carried was an all-fiberglass Glas-tron. It was way ahead of its time. Then we stocked Lifetime motorhomes who touted a 'lifetime warranty' on a Dodge chassis. They went out of business."

While the business was taking shape, Earl, now in his early thirties, began dating Ginny Cox who later worked and managed the rental and detail departments. They married in 1973. Ginny's son, Bob, started washing trailers while Earl and Ginny were dating. When Bob graduated from high school in 1975, he joined the business full time.

"Earl and I took night classes together in business at local colleges," Bob said. "Years later when I became General Manager, I took accounting classes which gave me basic accounting principles. We both continually broadened our knowledge on how to run a successful business. As far back as I can remember we both have attended the RVDA convention and advanced our knowledge through the classes they offer. In the eighties, we joined a Spader 20 Group and continued to hone our skills to run a growing business."

As members of the Priority RV Network, Stoltzfus connected to a network of dealers throughout the U.S. who take care of their collective owners whenever they need service on the road. The organization offers a 20 Group for owners and business managers with regular virtual meetings. "We log in to an online meeting run by Chuck Marzahn who followed in Bill Gorman's footsteps," Bob explained. "Marzahn & King also offers a 20 Group for the parts and service departments of dealer-members. The members decide who can join their 20 Group. Our members are located in Pennsylvania, Minnesota, New York, California, New Mexico, Missouri, North Carolina, Indiana, Iowa, and Kentucky. We have two face-to-face meetings annually. In February we meet to compare numbers for two to three days. In a dealer-requested face to face meeting, we do a comprehensive critique that includes departmental evaluations. The evaluators talk to department managers and employees. At the end of the evaluation, the evaluators share ideas and make departmental suggestions in a general meeting. A final meeting with the owner completes the critique.



The Sales Team (clockwise from left): Bud Richards, Andrew DeBlase , Steve German, Mike Pace, Bob Cox, Fred Caramanis, Ken Miller, Frank Bailor, Kristen Turnbach, Karen Madonna, George Cartolaro.

“There is no doubt the Priority RV 20 Group has helped us to improve sales techniques to assure the customer buys the right RV for his/her needs, better service and follow-up, and financial practices that lead to continued success,” Bob said. “If an RVer sees that a dealer is a Priority RV member, they will know they are doing business with a good company that will treat them fairly and provide quality service.”

Prior to 1978 Stoltzfus had 15 employees. “We all did everything,” Bob said. “It was cross training to the max. We had one part-time and one full-time salesman. That year Earl bought 14 acres at 1335 Wilmington Pike in West Chester, about a mile from the one-acre sales lot where we began. My sister, Ginny, handled accounts receivable/payable, did title work, was our receptionist and closed work orders. Ginny stepped up and did whatever needed to be done and still does today. I’d be lost without her!

“We built an office, three service bays, and set up departments,” he continued. “I became the parts manager and later the service manager. In 1987 we built a parts and accessories store, added more service bays, and a showroom.”

On Thanksgiving eve 1990, the entire facility burned to the ground. “The company was totally destroyed,” Bob related. “Bill Gorman was here designing our new store while it was still smoldering. We lost customer coaches as well as our own coaches. Our insurance agent did a great job. Our techs lost all of their tools and the insurance enabled us to buy all new tools for every technician.”

In 1987, Bob became the parts and service director, and in 1999 began his service as the company’s general manager. As

Earl began looking for an exit strategy, he attended a convention that focused on Employee Stock Ownership Plans. In 2001 he created an ESOP Trust and negotiated a bank loan to allow the trust to buy 50 percent of the business. In 2007 a second loan was secured to purchase the remaining stock.

After an employee completes six years of employment, he or she becomes fully vested and receives stock that is augmented during each continuing year of employment. The company’s value is assessed each year by an outside disinterested party. The stock increases or decreases each year based on the company’s assessment compared to the previous year. To some extent, the ESOP serves as a pension plan. When an employee reaches retirement, he sells his stock back to the trust at the currently assessed price.

“We ask for suggestions and input from our techs in shop meetings as well as all employees in general weekly meetings,” Bob said. “Everyone receives an annual statement showing the value of the shares owned.”

Earl Stoltzfus continues to serve as the chairman of the board. Based on his commitment to the company and contributions to its success, Bob Cox was elected president of the company in 2014.

Dan Taney joined the company in 2004 as controller over the accounting department. His business experience as the controller with several small companies enables him to create the analysis and reports Earl needs to provide guidance as the company’s CEO. Dan was promoted to vice president in 2014.

“Earl insists on the company setting the bar very high for top quality customer service. Every customer who buys a new or used unit from Stoltzfus RVs and/or receives service will get a phone call from CSI—Customer Service Intelligence—requesting an evaluation of the service received and the owner’s satis-



The Service and Parts Team, *kneeling from left: Dave Rossi, Brian Brumbaugh, Cristian Tedesco, Ali Griffin, Tori Haney, Ian Brown; standing: Joe Davis, Clark Hoffman, Rich Longacre, Brandon Schwab, Kay Wanzel, Brandon Hurst, George Ashbridge, Paul Wilburn, Kirk Beideman.*

faction level,” Dan noted.

“Each manager receives a spreadsheet in weekly meetings that shows current sales and current gross profit,” Dan elaborated. “The data compares current numbers to what was budgeted and how we performed in the previous annual period. As we get ready for the end of our 2019 fiscal year (Nov. 1–Oct.31), our sales are down slightly (even though our unit count is up) because the average sales price per unit is lower. In our previous fiscal year, 2018, we sold 2.5 towable units to every motorized unit. Last year was a 30 percent increase over 2017.

“Tiffin Motorhomes provided our largest brand increase in sales revenue dollars,” Dan continued. “We sold 67 new units: 22 Open Roads, 10 REDs, 10 Phaetons, 12 Allegro Buses, 3 Breezes, and 10 Wayfarers. Tiffin was up 91% over 2017 in sales dollars. In unit count, they were up 72%.

John Alexander, general sales manager, has been with Stoltzfus for five years. “I grew up locally and have been in sales for most of my career,” John said. “I was in custom electronics for ‘smart homes,’ and general manager for the largest company in that field that manufactured in-wall architectural speakers. I have been working with multiplex wiring for years and that, of course, fits in well with understanding and marketing the entertainment features on the Tiffin brands.”

Stoltzfus RVs and Marine currently has 10 sales people and a business development center coordinator. “As general sales manager, I work to make the sales staff more successful. We depend on knowledge-based training on all of our units,” John explained. “With regard to Tiffin Motorhomes, we send

our sales staff to the Red Bay plant for training which is usually conducted by our manufacturer’s rep Nick Palm. Nick also spends considerable time in our store every quarter going over all of the features of every Tiffin brand. We use Legacy Training to teach and improve effective sales techniques that best serve our customers. With Nick’s support, Stoltzfus RVs & Marine represents Tiffin at the annual Harrisburg RV Show.”

“It is extremely important to minimize turnover by creating the best environment for both the client and the sales person. It is so important for RVers to feel comfortable in our store and know that we are here to help them select the right RV for their style of camping. We want our owners to always find the same sales person here who sold them their RVs when they return for assistance or any kind of service,” John said.

“We hire the right people who understand the culture because they are RVers themselves. And I make sure there is enough business to go around,” he noted.

“Stoltzfus employs a marketing company to develop, maintain, and improve our website,” John said. “It is very functional, so much so that traffic in the store is down and sales are up. People shop our website carefully and usually know what they want before they arrive. Of course, they check to see if we have what they are looking for in stock. Karen Madonna, our business development center coordinator, processes inquiries from email, social media, and our chat box, and distributes leads to our sales staff.”

Joanne Anderson, marketing manager, follows industry trends and works closely with the website managers to reflect buyers’ interests on the Stoltzfus website. “Social media is very important today in marketing RVs,” Joanne said. “We use Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to feature our new owners who are taking delivery of their motorhome or towable. It is an ex-



The PDI and Delivery Team, *kneeling from left:* Bill Weidemoyer, Jeremy Mercado, Laura Pulte, Kevin Popiel, Cynthia Avila, T.J. Drainer; *standing:* Linwood Alston, Art Paviglianiti, Dean Alderfer, Bob Lotz, Wayne Elliott, Derick Albitz, Tom Kysor

citing time that is almost contagious for those who watch on social media. Marketing has become a really fun experience. My team also is in charge of providing the interior and exterior images for each RV in our inventory. We also employ Level 5, a company that designs very effective email blasts for Stoltzfus. We sometimes buy “key words” that position our website first when browsers are running searches to find a particular RV.”

Joanne described her position as a “large coordination job of tying many diverse avenues of information together to create useful leads for our sales staff.” Before coming to Stoltzfus, she was a preschool teacher who helped design her school’s website. She pointed out that websites require constant review and checking to make them effective.

Declan Kane, the webmaster, plays a major role in the marketing process as the company’s photographer and videographer. “In addition to the exterior and interior images for each RV, I do walk-through videos with the salesmen that become YouTube stories accessible through our website or independently by the brand and floorplan name.”

John Alexander mentioned two sales people on his staff with 25 and 39 years of experience. Frank Bailor lived “just over the fence” from Stoltzfus RVs when he was growing up. Fascinated by camping in a trailer or tent camper, Frank kept showing up and asking to help. “In 1978 when I was 16, they let me wash

and detail towables,” he smiled. “When I graduated from high school in 1980, I came to work here doing orientations for new owners. I have never worked anywhere else.”

Sometime in 1980, Frank started in sales and next year is looking forward to his 40th anniversary selling RVs at Stoltzfus. He has done “tons of rallies” for the company from Florida to Maine. In addition to selling Tiffin’s high-end coaches, he was a top salesman for Beaver and Monaco, nailing the #1 Salesperson of the Year Award for Monaco in 2008.

“I have been successful in selling because I put myself in the customer’s shoes,” Frank said. “I listen carefully and try to fill every need. I answer my own phone and take phone calls after hours and on the weekend. Being accessible is very important when one of my customers has a problem or a question. I get referrals constantly and I love new customers. My whole life has been in this building. I know this industry. I have seen it go down and come back up. I study my products constantly. Providing accurate information is essential to success.” In the last 12 months, Frank has sold 220 units.

Ken Miller has logged 25 years at Stoltzfus. “I sold my first Allegro Pusher the first month I worked here in 1994. When I was just out of high school, my parents got a loan to start Millers Service Center. I worked there for 17 years before coming to work at Stoltzfus. The integrity of Earl and Bob is unimpeachable. When they tell a customer something, we back it up 100 percent.”

There are eight sales people that I did not interview and I wish there had been time to talk with each one. As you can see,



The parts and accessories store manager, Joe Davis, stocks approximately \$500,000 in the accessories inventory and the 200 most common repair parts owners replace themselves. He and his team attend two shows a year to stay abreast of the items in demand by RVers.

I went with 64 years of experience to give our readers a good feel for the quality of the sales experience they will appreciate at Stoltzfus RVs and Marine.

Service Manager Ali Griffin came to Stoltzfus four years ago after operating her horse farm where she trained show horses, hunters, and jumpers. “I had 16 stalls and 20 boarders. Basically, I just went through burn-out and knew it was time for a change. Now I only do boarding,” she explained.

When Bob Cox interviewed Ali, he saw an ability to organize, manage, and supervise diverse operations that are required to meet commitments to daily schedules. Currently, she supervises the service department, three service writers, and the detail and PDI departments that do RV preparation for delivery and customer orientation. She described the competence and comprehensive abilities and services that RVers will experience when they bring their coaches in for service, repairs, and body work. The company has 10 technicians in the repair shop and body shop, including Master Certified Technician Martin Ekberg, another 40-year employee who has worked only for the dealership, the foreman over both shops.

“Two of our nine employees are Certified Technicians,” Ali said. “The other seven are trained in specialties or they are working on their RVDA Certified Technician status. We did two job fairs this year through a local technical college. Throughout our industry, there is a shortage of Certified and Master Certified technicians, but we are working to correct that, at least here in our own region. Our basic critique for hiring a person to be-

come an RV technician is pretty simple. Can they handle tools to make repairs to their homes or their cars and do they fit our culture? We use a mentor to train new hires for a year and then we use the RVIA online courses that lead to a Certified Technician status. We pay for the courses. When completed, certification qualifies the tech for advancement to a higher pay grade. I can say with certainty that we do the best service, repair, rehab, and body work of any dealer in this area.”

The company currently employs five techs in the service-repair department which has 12 bays in the main building. The detail and PDI department employs five techs who manage RVs in 11 bays including two wash bays. Eleven outside bays covered by roof extensions have water, electric, and air hook-ups.

“In our service department, we work on anything that Tiffin builds on the chassis. We have a specialist in electronics who does repairs and replacements,” Martin said. “When it comes to slide rooms, we do complete repairs including new floors, carpet, and sub-floors. We have sub-contractors who do repairs to porcelain floors and replace windshields and windows, but we stand behind their work. I like to make it fun to work here and we do have exceptional people. I believe our ESOP has a very positive effect on the morale of this company.

“We do not do extensive engine work,” Martin continued, “but we are very good with tune-ups on both gas and diesel engines. For serious work on gas engines, we have a Ford dealer who does engine and chassis work on a timely schedule. Of course, Freightliner and Cummins are nearby and we can schedule our customers’ engine and chassis work for them.”

Martin also serves as the foreman for the body shop. “We do body work for damaged coaches inside and out, including electrical fires and water damage. Stoltzfus works with Progressive,





The service and repair department has twelve bays in the main building. The detail and PDI department has nine bays and two wash bays. Eleven outside bays covered by roof extensions have water, electric, and air hookups.

Geico, State Farm, Good Sam, and several extended service policies,” Martin said. “In the off-season (Dec/Jan/Feb), we schedule rehab work for older coaches.”

When an RV owner arrives for an appointment for service or repairs, he will meet with one of three service writers: Tori Haney, Brandon Hurst, or Rich Longacre.

“When I meet with an owner for service and repairs, I get the basic information before we visit the coach for a description of the work to be completed,” Tori began. “I handle accounts with the surnames A through K, and Brandon handles L through Z. RV owners will always get the same service writer which helps us build continuing relationships in service. Rich handles our rentals, boats, and unexpected owners without appointments.

“As I mark the areas for repair with green tape, I enter the owner’s instructions into our Motility software that creates a service write-up and work list that immediately becomes available to the parts department, service techs, and the front desk. I add pictures as needed for the work to be performed. I give a projected completion date when the work order is completed and signed by the owner,” Tori explained.

As the service writer and assistant service manager, Tori follows up in three days to let the owner know the status of repairs and the receipt of parts that were ordered. Warranty coverage is verified. The techs use their iPads to log into the account in real time as they complete the prescribed repairs. After the three-day report, Tori reviews her work orders daily and provides updated status reports to owners whenever their completion dates are affected by delayed parts arrivals or unanticipated problems. When all of the service and repairs are completed, the service writer delivers the unit to the owner and goes over each item on the work order to assure complete satisfaction.

Parts manager Joe Davis brings 18 years of experience to his

job. He also manages the accessories store where he is assisted by Dave Rossi and Kirk Beiderman. Parts ordering and receiving is handled by Kay Wanzel and Faith McCaney.

“We go to two shows a year to stay abreast of the items in demand by RVers,” Joe said. “We keep about a half million invested in our accessories inventory and the most common 200 repair parts that owners replace themselves in their RVs. New accessories come on the market constantly. Through our distributor, we can get our common parts and popular accessories within 24 hours after ordering. I also supply parts to our repair and service departments. My biggest challenge is getting the correct part for a repair job the first time it is ordered.”

At 8:45 a.m. every day, key managers meet in John Alexander’s office for the delivery meeting. As general sales manager, John leads the meeting and goes over each unit that will be delivered that day to a new owner. Those attending the meeting include Bob Cox, president, Art Paviglianiti, the delivery manager; Derrick Albitz, the detail manager; Mike Pace, the sales manager; Wes Markey, the business manager; and the PDI shop assistant service manager Laura Pulte.

John goes over the list of units to be delivered that day and asks for feedback from each manager that could affect a successful delivery. As the delivery manager, Art will orchestrate all of the players in the process. Each delivery is timed throughout the day.

“I facilitate the whole delivery process,” Art began. “I make sure the buyer brings all of the proper documents to the delivery. I coordinate with Jeremy Mercado, orientator extraordinaire, as to when each orientation will begin.\* The sales person will greet the new owner with red carpet and balloons and take them to the new RV where the orientation will begin. If there are several deliveries scheduled that morning, assistant orientation people are scheduled.”

\* At other dealerships, “orientation” is sometimes called “customer training” or “walk throughs.”

“I worked as a service technician before a neck injury stopped my career,” Jeremy said. “This job allowed me to continue to use my knowledge profitably. The Class A diesels have a lot of similarities to simple RVs. I start at the driver’s seat and work my way around the coach both inside and out and eventually come back to where we started at the driver’s seat. For example, when we get to the utility bay, if the new owner has previously owned an RV, he knows the process but not the functionality of this particular unit.

“Technology is the major area where I spend time with the new owner. Take the inverter; I explain it to them but I know it will not sink in immediately. Then I set the inverter up for failure and let them work their way out of it,” he continued, as I nodded approval of his approach. “I teach them about problems and solutions, which if not handled correctly may cause damage. There is so much help online. I show them how to use YouTube and how to search to find solutions to most problems. During regular business hours, they can call me from 8-5, and later up to 7 p.m. on my cell phone.”

“When Jeremy finishes the orientation session, he takes the new owner to the parts and accessories department and makes sure they have the necessities to begin the camping experience,” Art said. “If a hitch is involved, I take them to the hitch department in the service center and they do a training session on hooking up the tow car.”

Unseen in the process, but nevertheless very important, Derrick Albitz’s team figures into the delivery the day before it happens. As the detail manager, Derrick and his team of five full-time and four part-time employees put the RV in perfect condition. The outside team washes the coach thoroughly, touches up, and buffs out the paint. The inside team leaves the RV in better-than-new condition.

Laura Pulte became the internal assistant service manager when PDI was moved to a separate building. “I coordinate between PDI, the parts department, and sales when we are delivering a new or a pre-owned coach,” Laura explained. “I make sure we do all that the customer requested when he agreed to buy the RV. If warranties are still available, I investigate and take advantage of those options.”

Laura’s job sometimes accelerates during the winter months when Stoltzfus rehabs pre-owned coaches. “My job was created a year ago when the new PDI building was opened,” she said. “We have 9 service bays and two wash bays.”

“After the orientation and a visit to the accessories store is completed, I introduce the new owner to either Wes or Sara, our finance and insurance managers, usually called F&I,” Art said.

“My favorite part of our business is the excitement new owners are experiencing during the delivery,” Sara said. “Since our economy is doing so well, we are seeing interest rates hovering around 5% for owners with good credit. I advise those planning to finance to prepare with a down payment of a least 15% with a 20-year loan. Banks look carefully at income to debt ratio and some consider RVs to be a high risk loan.

“After a credit analysis, I assist the buyer in finding the best interest rate and terms,” she continued. “We work with Bank of America which has a good loan structure. I also use M&T, US Bank, and Bank of the West. If the buyer is a member of a credit union, he may have an excellent credit rating that will garner a good interest rate.”

For general protection of the buyer’s investment, Stoltzfus offers plans for major mechanical protection, appearance protection, tire protection, and roadside assistance. “If the buyer sees a possibility that he may not keep his RV for very long, we advise gap insurance,” Sara said. “Everyone must have general insurance when they leave. We use Brown & Brown, a broker who gets comparative quotes and same-day service.”

“We follow a pattern for delivery and try to stay with it,” Art said. “A smooth, well-planned delivery makes the process fun. We want to make this the best experience the customer can have as they begin their RV lifestyle or continue it with a new or upgraded unit. When new owners leave who are grateful for our delivery process, I take that as my reward.

“Bob makes sure each person working at Stoltzfus RVs and Marine realizes he or she is an integral part of the company. We all want to make sure our owners feel they are now a part of an RV family that will help them enjoy a rewarding lifestyle,” Art concluded. RIS



## Christine Vanderpool and Al Bowman

MARRY AT THE LONE STAR ALLEGRO CLUB'S SPRING RALLY

Text by Carolyn Thompson

Wedding bells rang in the Texas Hill Country in a wonderful big red barn at Buckhorn Lake RV Resort in Kerrville, Texas, on April 27 of this year as Christine Vanderpool and Al Bowman were united in marriage. Joining them in celebration were fellow members of the Lone Star Allegro Club as well as their children and other relatives and friends. Mark and Sue Didelot, Lone Star club members who had introduced Al and Chris and nurtured their relationship as they attended rallies and became better acquainted, served as Best Man and Matron of Honor. Lovely vocal and instrumental music was performed during the ceremony by several of Al's children. With lots of congeniality, audience participation, and good humor, the true Texas wedding was a fun event for everyone present. The ceremony was followed by a barbeque dinner, music, and dancing into the night.

Christine was living in the Houston area and enjoying solo motorhoming travels in her Allegro Red 33AA as a full-timer when Al began attending rallies of the Lone Star Allegro Club in his Allegro Bus 37AP. They were first introduced at the November 2017 Christmas Rally at the Lake Conroe KOA. Eating dinner at a restaurant with other members, Al noticed a very attractive and statuesque lady arriving. As he was leaving the restaurant, Chris (the very attractive lady) approached the check-out counter at the same time, and said, "Hi, I'm Chris." Stunned, Al stammered a reply. They met again at breakfast the next day and couldn't stop talking to one another. They soon learned they shared many Christian



values that had influenced their lives, and were in agreement that one should "let their light shine." Al told Chris about his perspective gained from 40 years of teaching Sunday school classes and his 50-year career in medicine. Chris shared her experiences of teaching and leading young people on mission trips, and taking privileged teenagers on working tours of third world countries.

When the rally was over and Al was waving good-bye to Chris, he asked, "Would you like to run away together?" Two days later, Christine texted him, "Where did you want to run away to?" That rally began several months of "motorhome dating." They report that they never argue because they have so much in common. Al and Chris continued to attend rallies

with the Lone Star Allegro Club. Mark and Sue and Steve Metz, club president, as well as others in the club encouraged their continuing friendship, making sure their two motorhomes were parked in adjacent sites at subsequent rallies.

Christine Vanderpool and Al Bowman's lives merged in Texas, after prior fulfilling lives with their families and careers. Christine, a native of Los Angeles, graduated with an AA degree in Early Childhood Education from Roston Montessori Institute and then studied journalism at the University of Southern California. She later completed her undergraduate and graduate work in computer literacy and technology education along with commercial real estate at the University of Hawaii.

Christine has a heritage of motorhoming through her aunt and uncle who were full-timers, and her parents who owned two motorhomes and traveled nine months each year. When she lived in Newport Beach, California, she owned and used a motorhome while showing hunting dogs, German Shorthair Point-

In 1990, Christine used her training in computer education to begin working with the University of Hawaii's College of Education. Apple was giving computers to schools and placing them in each classroom and computer lab. Teachers were resistant to this new technology. Through the University of Hawaii's ini-

Chris has three children, Keith, Lucas, and Janelle, and two step-daughters, Kim and Kelly, with a total of six grandchildren. In 2009, Christine and Lew divorced amicably and she retired from the University of Hawaii. Having friends in Houston, Texas, she relocated to begin to explore the "mainland." After acquiring her 33AA and becoming a full-timer, she joined the Lone Star Allegro Club in 2014, which she says has been a true family to her. She often traveled with a network of women RVing solo, and loved the RV lifestyle.

Al Bowman was born in San Antonio and went to high school in Harlingen, Texas. He received a BS in chemistry from Baylor. He then earned an MS in biochemistry simultaneously while earning his M.D. degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. With the war raging in Vietnam, doctors were in great demand by the military. Al joined the Army National Guard as a corpsman, later becoming a 2nd lieutenant in the Medical Corps. After graduation he then joined a MASH unit and advanced to commander, then brigade surgeon, and finally colonel.

While moonlighting during his internship, a Pasadena doctor offered Al an opportunity to go into private practice. He began his general practice of medicine in 1966. Although he served as Chief of Staff at two different hospitals, Al remains very humble about his stellar career in medicine.

In 1968, Al married Joyce. They honeymooned in an Airstream while he attended National Guard duty for two weeks. Their family grew to include four daughters: Melody, Mindy, Sharie, and Shelly. Al and Joyce bought a larger coach and continued RVing as they raised their family. Over the years, the Bowman family owned and enjoyed six motorhomes. Al's daughters are now married. The four couples have presented him with a total



The Lone Star Allegro Club

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GABE RENE HERRERA

ers, in field trials. The competitions also required her to use her horses, a Morgan mare and an Appaloosa stallion, as participants in the trials.

While working as editor of *Skin Diver Magazine*, Chris met her husband, Lewis Trusty, an underwater photographer/videographer. Together, they produced an award winning documentary film on the kelp beds of California, "The Silent Forest." They also did educational and children's documentaries for *National Geographic*. In 1980, Chris and Lew sailed to Hawaii on their 50-foot Petersen tall cutter rig to produce stories for *National Geographic*, *Skin Diver* and other publications there and in Polynesia. They also used their business education to develop, own and operate commercial real estate holdings.

Chris helped build integrated curricula for teachers to use computers as an educational aid. Students needed little help using these new machines. With grants, Chris brought robotics and programming to students ages 4 to 14. Her students participated in the Global Grocery Project. Students from around the world shopped for the same items and compared prices and cost of living with their international "internet" friends. She taught them to prepare spreadsheets and databases to share and compare their data. Chris later became executive director of the Hawaii Academy of Science, and served as the director for their Pacific Symposium for Science and Sustainability and Director of the Hawaii State Science and Engineering Fair until 2009.



of 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Al has always included exercise as part of his regular routine to maintain good health. Since they only had one car while he was in college, he rode a bicycle several miles to classes. After his graduation, he regularly ran five miles a day before work. He increased his personal cycling regimen throughout the 1990s.

Biking led to a long-term friendship with Rufus and Kitty Barnes who owned the Bike Barn and sponsored a bicycle club. In the morning, Al would jog for five miles, or work out on the Nordic Track during bad weather. In the afternoon, the bicycle club met at 5 p.m. each Tuesday and Thursday to ride from Clear Lake to Galveston, a distance of 22 miles round trip. On Wednesdays, he biked 40 to 60 miles with Kitty and Rufus. Al joined the club on Saturdays who met at the Bike Barn and biked 60 to 100 miles. Al has done numerous seven to ten day bicycle tours in Montana, Washington, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia.

In 2012, Joyce was diagnosed with advanced aggressive Parkinson's disease. Al and Joyce continued to travel as Joyce's health allowed. In 2014, Al went to the annual RV show in Houston on an occasion when Bob Tiffin was visiting. Bob helped Al spec out a 37AP Allegro Bus. Al got to know Bob, and says, "Of


all the RV's I have owned, I have never experienced service like that offered by Tiffin." In October of that year, Al sold his medical practice and took delivery of their new Allegro Bus. Able to care for Joyce full-time, they were free to travel and explore.

After Joyce passed away in January 2017, Al began RVing by himself, which he says was no fun. He talked to Steve Metz about joining the Lone Star Allegro Club, feeling that a club membership would be enjoyable.

Al began attending Lone Star rallies, and was encouraged by both Steve Metz and Mark Didelot to attend the previously mentioned Christmas rally in November 2017 where he and Christine met and began "motorhome dating." In February 2018, Chris was on the way to Tucson when she experienced problems with her tow car and stopped in Las Cruces. At the same time, Al was on the way to the Big Bend National Park, and also experienced a mechanical problem. Due to the delay, he abandoned his trip to Big Bend and joined Christine in Las Cruces. The transmission repair for Christine's car took over three weeks, allowing them time to continue to get better acquainted. While in Las Cruces, Al saw Christine admire an intricately decorated pair of turquoise cowboy boots, then put them

back on the shelf. Al later went back to the store and bought the boots, which Chris wore on their wedding day.

Kneeling on one knee with a custom designed engagement ring, Al proposed to Christine on August 23, 2018. Chris and Al spent their honeymoon at Fort Wilderness Resort and Campground, a favorite destination. They love the atmosphere of Disneyworld, and especially enjoy using the monorail to participate in the progressive dinner. The safari at the Animal Kingdom is another favorite, as is taking the rope walk on overhead cables above the open area where the animals roam about. After Fort Wilderness, Chris and Al plan to extend their honeymoon with a trip to Israel in September and then spend a few weeks in Europe.

Cowboy hats and boots, western-style shirts, bolo ties, swing skirts, barbeque, and Texas-size smiles brought together in a big red barn made the Vanderpool-Bowman wedding a special event that will be remembered and cherished by Chris and Al and their families, along with their Lone Star Allegro Club family. Congratulations to Christine and Al Bowman on their marriage, and best wishes to them for many years of "Roughing It Smoothly" in their Tiffin RV! For more wedding pictures, see [rismag.org](http://rismag.org), July 2019, page 57a and 57b. 



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GABE RENE HERRERA



PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRED THOMPSON



*The afterglow, three hours after the wedding.*

*Sunday afternoon, the next day.  
Is this matter still under discussion?*

*Of course not!  
At our ages, we knew from the beginning we were in love.*

Give us your best shot!

## The winners of the 2019 Summer RIS Photo Contest



**First Place**  
**William Lax**  
*Desert wildflowers with photographer*  
**Peridot, Arizona**  
Everything works beautifully in this photo—topic, lighting, colors, saturation, sharpness. When the desert has wildflowers, there's often nothing unique to use for foreground interest, so having the photographer to one side, close to the camera, facing toward the scene, directs your eye toward this rare, spectacular vista.  
Nikon D800E, 24–124mm lens; f/8 @ 1/250 sec



**Second Place**  
**Vernon Britton**  
*Storm Arriving*  
**Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado**  
This is a dramatic moment, perfectly caught. The light is even across the scene, so the photographer used color contrast to create visual depth. The green foreground leads to the muted gold midground and then to the overlapping, dynamically monochromatic mountains. There's a touch of blue sky plus the hint of a rainbow at right. The photograph's elements harmoniously step you into the fury of the storm.  
Canon 5DMkII, Canon 70–200mm lens @ 70mm; f/8, ISO 200



**Third Place**  
**Phillip Welty**  
*Oregon Sunset*  
**Emigrant Lake, Oregon**  
This image is pure magic. Most likely the image was mentally composed and the photographer waited until that perfect moment of light occurred. Those little octagons of light created by the lens elements are generally accepted by publishers these days, if they're not too overwhelming, so the spot of green midground wasn't disqualifying in this luscious scene.  
Nikon D850; 1/50 sec @ f/6.3, 24mm focal length, ISO 200



**Honorable Mention**  
**Sally Wiegand**  
*Tree Reflections*  
**Okefenokee NWR, Georgia**  
Mirror images are tricky. A complete mirror is static, no matter how pretty the scene. Sally Wiegand avoided the pitfalls: The horizontal line between the trees and the reflection is thankfully not dead center. The tree's tops and blue sky occur only in the reflection. The low band of light showing through the far trees creates movement. An element of surprise, like an alligator sunning on the far bank, would be great, but nature held back on that.

See page 84 for commentary and the next Give Us Your Best Shot! contest.

## Traveling with Your Pet By Air

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

**T**raveling by RV allows you to take your pets with you as you travel across the country. A time may come when you need to get to a certain city at a certain time and will have to get there by airplane. There are various documents required and regulations that must be met when travelling with a pet.

First and foremost, you must find out specific regulations from the country you are entering. Contact a travel agent that handles animal travel, such as Air Animal, or contact the embassy of the country in question to request information about travelling with a pet to that destination. Regulations change continuously, so information you have from a previous time may not be accurate now. So check before you go and allow yourself plenty of time to meet the requirements.

A health certificate must be obtained from a veterinarian. A health certificate requires that vaccinations need to be up to date. Health certificates are only good for a certain length of time and are different for every country, so please check regarding the requirements of your destination. Here in Florida health certificates are usually good for 30 days.

Next you will want to contact the airline that you are using for travel. Find out if they will take animals and what size and breed they allow. Some breeds such as pit bulls and pit crosses may not be allowed. Brachycephalic dogs( pugs, bulldogs, French bulldogs) may not be allowed because of problems with their breathing. Most airlines won't fly these breeds if the tem-

perature outside is above 90 degrees, as this may be a problem if they need to make a connecting flight. I would recommend only taking non-stop flights if possible to alleviate dealing with lost pets or missed connections.

Pets can travel on commercial airlines in 3 ways: cabin, checked baggage, and manifest cargo. Virtually all airlines accept pets except Southwest, Jet Blue, and smaller connector airlines. They do not have facilities to handle pets.

Most airlines have a special compartment in the belly of the plane with regulated temperature and pressure just like the passenger cabin. If there is a layover, the pet will be kept in its kennel in a climat- controlled warehouse until the connecting flight is met or the owner picks up the pet. Usually the airlines have a special team designated to meet an animal shipment, with the responsibility of keeping the animals safe and comfortable.

Most airlines have regulations about the size of the animal's crate, so this eliminates some larger size dogs. In days past, people would tranquilize pets before travel, but this is no longer recommended. The animal that has not been tranquilized has better control of its body temperature and is better able to handle stress. I recommend introducing your pet to the crate well in advance of any travel so it becomes a place where they feel safe. If your pet is very apprehensive, check with your veterinarian for some calming agents that are not sedatives.

Your pet needs to be comfortable in its crate. If it is stressed, it can result in broken teeth from chewing on the bars of the crate or torn toe nails and bloody feet from trying to escape .

In your due diligence prior to your trip, make sure the country you are going to visit does not have a quarantine period such as England and Hawaii have. England's quarantine period is six months, so a short visit with your pet would not be practical.

Pets traveling on airlines should be micro-chipped and have an identification collar for quick retrieval. There have been cases where the pet escapes, presenting the need for an immediate way to identify your pet. This doesn't happen often .

Canada recognizes a three-year rabies vaccine, but the health certificate requires date given, manufacturer, and expiration dates of the vaccine. Cats require a rabies vaccine also.

With so many regulations for travelling with pets, and different rules for each country, travel by plane can be a nightmare unless you prepare ahead of time. Maybe it's time to find a nice boarding facility which we will discuss next time.

Happy travels, John & Kay

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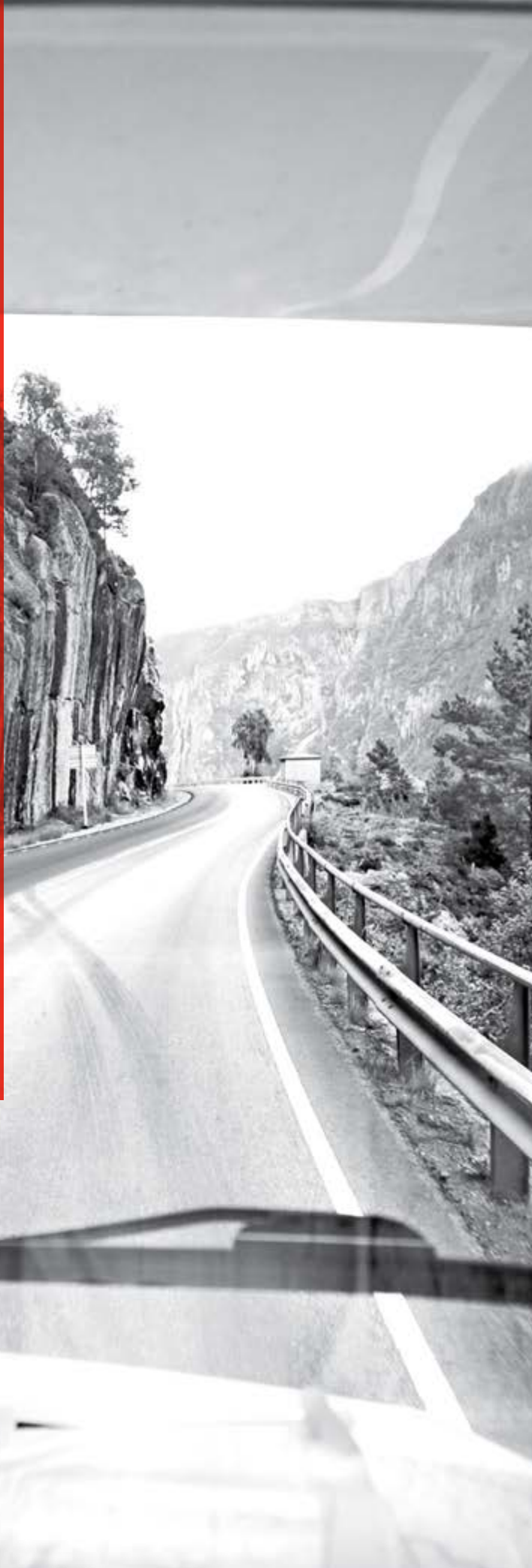
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**ALWAYS ON**



# Michigan's Great Western Shoreline

WARREN DUNES STATE PARK TO GRAND TRAVERSE LIGHTHOUSE



Text and photography by Fred and Carolyn Thompson

## The state of Michigan can make some

unusual claims about its shorelines and borders. Michigan shares 1,650 miles of land boundaries with Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, and Ontario. But even more impressive, the state has 3,288 miles of shoreline formed by lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, and St. Clair, a shoreline longer than the entire eastern seaboard of the U.S.

Formed, of course, by Lake Michigan, the state's western shoreline from Grand Beach to Mackinaw City runs for approximately 335 miles, not including the irregularities for inlets. Sand dunes are the most fascinating landforms along the shoreline. In geologic history, the dunes are infants that began to appear three to four thousand years ago when changing lake levels exposed sand that was pushed inland and shaped by the prevailing westerly winds.

One would think the westerly winds would continue to blow the sand endlessly across the shoreline. But there are beaches where the dunes exceed a hundred feet above lake level. *Something* must slow the wind's momentum, allowing the sand to accumulate. That "something" is Marram Grass. When windblown sand buries this hardy plant, it grows taller to keep its blade-like leaves in the sun. At the same time it builds a root system, called *rhizomes*, which spread and send new plant shoots to the surface. The plants' extensive system of rhizomes and root hairs hold sand in place, while the plant and its offshoots of grass

growing in every direction form the obstacles to the wind and its sand load. The repetition of this process contributes to the vertical growth of a sand dune. The energy of the winds and the retentive ability of natural grasses has resulted in the world's largest assemblage of freshwater coastal dunes.

When you observe the north-south orientation of the state's western shoreline in the Great Lakes basin and the importance of the westerly winds in sculpting dunes, it becomes obvious why Michigan has so many beautiful dunes, most of which are protected in the state's parks. We will visit some of those parks on our journey, following the coastline north from Michigan's juncture with Indiana, first along I-94 and then on I-196. But first we had to find a place to park our 2019 Phaeton 40IH.

That place turned out to be Sunny Brook RV Resort in South Haven at 68300 CR 388, just a short hop from I-196. Our MO for selecting an RV park is to find one in a central location that offers a 50-mile radius covering places we want to visit. Sunny Brook met our criteria.

Before we go further, a visit to [shorelinevisitorsguide.com](http://shorelinevisitorsguide.com), covering West Michigan's Lakeshore Region, is strongly advised. Here is some basic information about fees. If you are a Michigander, you can purchase an annual park passport for \$11 when you buy your annual license plate. It costs \$16 per vehicle if purchased at a state park. Non-residents pay \$33 per vehicle for an annual pass. If you are towing a car, add another \$33. This al-



lows you to enter any Michigan state park throughout the year. If you are traveling by car, the non-resident daily pass is \$9. In the campground, “Modern Full Service” at \$45/night means 50-amp, no sewer or water at site. Fill up with water when you enter and visit the dump station as needed. Reservations online at [midnrreservations.com](http://midnrreservations.com) or call 800-447-2757, M-F, 8-8 and S/S, 9-5. For the website for each park, go to [michigandnr.com/park-](http://michigandnr.com/park-)

**sandtrails.** From the list provided, select the park’s website. For more information, click on View Online Visitor’s Guide.

### Warren Dunes State Park

We backtracked to Sawyer at exit 12 on I-94 to enjoy an early morning walk at Warren Dunes State Park. Its three miles of shoreline gave us the distance we walk most mornings when we are home in Georgia, except the scenery here far ex-

ceeds walking the streets of our subdivision. Away from the shoreline, there are six miles of trails through the 1,900+ acres of an ecology unlike the Atlantic coast. The park’s signature dune rises 260 feet above Lake Michigan. We didn’t see any hang gliders that morning, but the park ranger said a forecast for a windy day would bring several enthusiasts to the park. The breezes were gentle and the temperature at 10:30 a.m. was only 75.

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## ST. JOSEPH

The town of St. Joseph was a small maritime shipping center whose population reached 11,700 in 1960, and then slipped sharply over the next 40 years to approximately 8,700. What it lost in numbers, it made up for in quality of life and civic pride.

### Silver Beach County Park and Two Lighthouses

If you are ready for another day at the beach, St. Joseph is located right on the lake and generally in the Benton Harbor area. Silver Beach County Park has a beautiful beach that very likely will be crowded on the weekends. Try to plan a weekday visit to catch a few rays and test the water—usually in the low 80s by early August. Taking on a little flare of Coney Island, the park has a pizza and a hot dog joint. Parking for the day is seven bucks.

The two lighthouses are not nearly as tall as the ones we climbed two years ago on the Outer Banks. But they are beautiful in their own right. You can climb the first one for a \$5 fee. On a clear day, the view is worth the effort and the five bucks. If the wind is up, you will probably catch the mist or the splashes of the waves when you walk out the sea wall to the lighthouse.

### The Carousel

Having been a fan of carousels since I was a little boy, I wanted to see and ride the great carousel at Silver Beach in St. Joseph, located at 333 Broad Street. In the summer of 1910, Louis Wallace and Logan Drake brought a three-row, Coney island-style car-

ousel to their Silver Beach Amusement Park. It was built by Fred Dolle of North Bergen, New Jersey. Another carousel builder, M.D. Borelli, formed a partnership with Dolle and operated the carousel for Wallace and Drake. They continued to improve it, with a notable update replacing the 16 inner-row standers with eight pairs of jumping horses.

The park’s founder and surviving owner, Logan Drake, died in 1947. His daughter, Rebecca, inherited the carousel and continued its summer operation until 1971. The beloved carousel which provided memories to thousands of area children was sold. After extensive restoration, it now resides in Kennewick, Washington.

In 1997 the Silver Beach Carousel Society was formed. They raised the necessary funds and hired distinguished carvers from The Carousel Works in Mansfield, Ohio, to build a new million-dollar carousel. On January 2, 2010, the new Silver Beach Carousel spun into action, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the first carousel. On July 28, 2017, 11-year-old Ayana Harris became the 1,000,000th rider!

Be sure to visit this carousel and reclaim a few minutes of your childhood. If you have children or grandchildren, start a new memory for them.

### Whirlpool Compass Fountain

Located at 330 Broad Street, the splash pad operates 10-9 daily spraying water 35 feet into the air to the delight of the kids there who loved it. We got a kick watching the fun for a few minutes.



The lighthouses at Silver Beach County Park





### Krasl Art Center

With a grant from a local bank, the Krasl Art Center reimagined its campus as a dynamic, inclusive outdoor space to engage with the arts and nature, and with each other. With the specially commissioned sculpture *Rising Crossing Tide* by Richard Hunt as the outdoor centerpiece (see above), the campus now inspires area residents and visitors alike to initiate meaningful change by giving people a place that “makes life more worthwhile.”

The sculpture garden offers a park-like environment. It is the perfect venue for artistic programs, performances, and community celebrations, all of which will be framed by Richard Hunt’s sculpture. The outdoor space reduces barriers to entering and engaging with KAC and invites visitors to come as they are and experience Krasl on their own terms. The Center hours are M–Th, 11–8; F–Su, 11–5. [krasl.org](http://krasl.org) 269-983-0271.



## SOUTH HAVEN

About half the size of St. Joseph, South Haven became a resort town in the early 1900s. Recreational boating increased in the post-war economy and the harbor and beaches became a major tourist draw. Several resort businesses in the area began to flounder, but the survivors that remained grew stronger. In 1969, the city launched “The Centennial Celebration and Blueberry Festival” and dedicated a 64-slip marina.

The National Blueberry Festival became an annual event, scheduled each year for the second weekend in August. Unfortunately, we arrived on August 14, just missing it. The festival atmosphere had lingered and several stores were still running their specials. The Blueberry Store’s tasting bar offered several varieties of blueberry preserves. We liked Blueberry Lime Preserves and purchased two jars. Wow, put a spoon of this on a hot biscuit and you’ll keep coming back for more! This year the National Blueberry Festival is slated for August 8–11 and we are wishing we could be there. Pick your own at True Blue Farms, 09589 CR 215, Grand Junction, MI 49056.

Another must-visit place in South Haven is Sherman’s Dairy Bar at 1601 Phoenix Street, which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Dairy farmer Ralph Sherman began delivering milk with a horse-drawn wagon in 1916 from house to house. From a menu of over 40 flavors, dairy connoisseurs can order anything from a single dip to a Pig’s Dinner, Sherman’s deluxe version of



a banana split. Customers can pop in for a quick ice cream cone or sit in the dining room to savor a special treat.

The Riverfront Concert Series is presented every Thursday evening at 7 p.m. through August. There is limited seating but plenty of grassy lawn for a blanket and a picnic dinner. The Blueberry Festival preempts the August 8 concert. The last three concerts are Classic Big Band *Casco Community Band*, Kalamazoo-based Reggae *Zion Lion*, and SW Michigan acoustic hip hop *Last Gasp Collective*.

## DOUGLAS

Moving a few miles north on I-196, we took exit 36 to the villages of Douglas and Saugatuck. The village's earliest records go back to 1851 when it began as a lumber mill town known as Dudleyville. The name was changed to Douglas in 1861. The sawmills provided a significant amount of the lumber that was used to rebuild Chicago after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. After the trees were harvested, the area became known for its peach orchards.

Over the last 30 years, tourism has become an important part of the area's economy. Marketing themselves as "Art on Center," seven art galleries exhibit a wide variety of media and genres. The fine art, pottery, and jewelry on display represent a mix of both regional and national artists. The galleries are open until 9 during the summer. They include Water Street Gallery, Mister Miller's Art Emporium, Button Gallery, Mixed Media Gallery, and The Palette Art Gallery & Studio.

The Leben Art Gallery is one of the few galleries in the country devoted exclusively to digital art. John Leben uses the computer as the tool for creating the paintings flowing from his fertile imagination. His formal training is in traditional painting and printmaking. Today, the computer is his medium. John creates images wielding powerful painting programs with skill and panache. The finished paintings—digital images in his computer—become the "printing plates" for making limited edition archival-quality prints. He is a pioneer in the use of digital media for artistic expression.

Respite and Kismet Bakery sell coffee and bakery items. Wild Dog Grill, Everyday People's Café, and Borrowed Time serve dinner.

Kim Neuens Design & Interior, LLC, had an unassuming window and an open door. Her shingle is backed up with an architecture degree from the University of Michigan and a master's from Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, Michigan. "I was working 80 hours a week doing project management for nine different subdivisions under development," Kim began as we asked about the beautiful restored pieces of furniture in her shop. "Paul, my husband, elected to be a stay-at-home dad. So we left the big city and moved to Douglas, his hometown, and I opened my shop. We could both work here when our son started to school. I found out soon after the move that I was expecting."

As a veteran, Paul chose to see doctors at the VA hospital to

treat continual pain in his lower abdomen. After eight months and no relief, he sought a diagnosis from a local doctor. "The diagnosis was colorectal cancer and a prognosis of 30 days to live," Kim continued. "He survived for 23 months."

Projects seem to walk in the door and find Kim. "In the winter when the customer traffic is slower, I do custom work with big items." Her children, Abigail and Paul, are now ten and five and attend the local schools. They can walk to school and come to the shop at the end of the school day. "It's still a good life. We love this town," she said.

If you can't visit Douglas, you will enjoy a visit to Kim's website: [kimneuensdesign.com](http://kimneuensdesign.com) Kim Neuens Design & Interiors, LLC, 25 Center Street, Douglas, MI 49406





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## SAUGATUCK

Like neighboring Douglas, Saugatuck grew up as a lumber town with its access to shipping on Lake Michigan. By the late 19th century and into the early 20th, its mild, sunny summer climate attracted droves of visitors from Detroit, Chicago, Indianapolis, and Grand Rapids. Today, the winter population drops to less than 1,000 and swells to more than 3,000 by early June as summer employees and visitors come to find work and amusements.

The cultural and recreational opportunities draw the visitors and the event venues and businesses are well organized to earn their revenue in the brief four-month season. Of course, several businesses remain open year-round.

The town's location on Lake Michigan, the Saugatuck Center for the Arts, and the variety of good shops and restaurants put the village in the Top 50 summer places in the country. For 2019, the Center scheduled eight concerts (six summer, two fall) and three Broadway-quality plays for the summer crowds. Two will still be in the schedule when you receive this issue of *RIS* in case you are in the mid-west: *Unnecessary Farce* (a comedy obviously) and *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*.

One store that we especially liked: Good Goods on the corner at 106 Mason Street. Representing over 150 artists and craftspeople, Good Goods searches for the best hand-made products in America. Open daily, 10-10, year-round. [goodgoods.com](http://goodgoods.com)

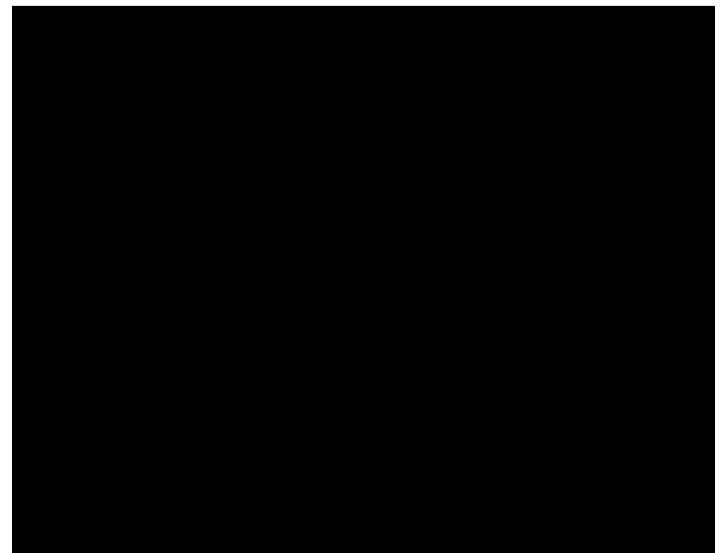


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## HOLLAND

The city of Holland is synonymous with tulips. For 90 years, millions of horticultural enthusiasts have visited Holland in May for the annual Tulip Time Festival. Drawing over a half million people, the 9-day event features over 5 million tulips blooming throughout the city and hundreds of klompen dancers. The event has received recognition as the nation's Best Flower Festival, America's Best Small Town Festival (pop. 33,000), and the 2017-2018 Tulip Festival of the Year. The city celebrates its heritage with traditional Dutch garb, the town's unique dance, and wooden shoes.

The town's main street is lined with handsome store fronts like the 8th Street Grille, beautiful flower displays, and side-





Windmill Island Gardens



walk musicians. Two gentlemen dressed in near-concert attire performed a delightful rendition of “Just the Way You Look Tonight” on guitar and small harp to an appreciative audience. Check out the digital edition of this issue to enjoy the music.

Holland is not located on Lake Michigan. The town was built on the shores of Lake Macatawa. The Big Red Lighthouse stands by the channel that connects this lake to Lake Michigan.

Holland was settled in 1847 by Dutch Calvinist separatists under the direction of Dr. Albertus van Raalte. Severe economic depression in the Netherlands forced them to emigrate, but they were also motivated by their desire for complete religious freedom. They purchased the land from the Ottawa natives who moved north to establish a new village and preserve their culture.

In April 1965, the 125-foot De Zwaan windmill was formally dedicated on Windmill Island, a 36-acre site reclaimed from a swamp on the eastern end of Lake Macatawa. It was the realization of a desire of many Hollanders to find an authentic Dutch windmill to complement their heritage. In 1961 Holland residents Willard Wichers and Carter Brown began a project to locate a windmill in the Netherlands that could be purchased and transported to Michigan.

Many of these structures had been seriously damaged or destroyed in World Wars I & II. Before WWI there were 9,000 windmills in the Netherlands. After WWII ended, there were only 900 left, many of which were inoperable. This led to a ban by the Dutch government on the sale of windmills outside the Netherlands. Wichers was able to secure an exemption by agreeing to purchase a heavily damaged mill known as De Zwaan (“graceful bird”). The government decided to sell it to Wichers for \$2,800, but made the sale conditional on Dutch millwright Jan D. Medendorp supervising its relocation and restoration. The De Zwaan was the last windmill to leave the Netherlands. De Zwaan was first erected in Krommenie, Netherlands in 1761. In 1884 it was moved to Vinkel, Noord Brabant.

In October 1964, De Zwaan arrived on the *Prins Willem van Oranje* at a cost of \$450,000. It was unloaded in Muskegon harbor and delivered to Windmill Island in Holland. Under Medendorp’s direction, the reconstruction and restoration required six months. He directed a three-story brick base to be built with the bricks slanted downward to the outside to keep the interior dry. Two double doors on opposite sides were designed to allow farmers to drive through on the ground floor. A wind-driven gear lifts two 50-lb. bags of grain at a time. The farmer placed notes in a wooden shoe attached to a cord that was pulled up to the floor where the miller was working.

A windmill must have a miller. With a history degree to her credit, Alisa Crawford volunteered to understudy a master certified miller in the Netherlands and hired a local Dutch professor to teach her the language. She studied for two years with frequent trips back and forth from Michigan to the Netherlands. She earned her certification in 2007 and last year applied for her examination to become a master certified miller.

Windmill Island Gardens is open to visitor tours from late

April through early October at 1 Lincoln Avenue, Holland, Michigan 49423. Adm: Adults \$10; Youth (3–15) \$5. 9:30–6, daily.

About those wooden shoes. Yes, you can buy a pair at Veldheer's Wooden Shoe Factory, 12755 Quincy Street in Holland—off the shelf or custom made.

## GRAND HAVEN

The drives back to the resort in South Haven were beginning to get a bit long, so we moved our campsite to White River RV Park and Campground on the White River. The next morning we drove south to visit Grand Haven. The Grand Haven State Park has been recognized by one authority for having one of the top five freshwater beaches in the United States. It has a fairly



Grand Haven State Park beach and campground



Grand Haven's boardwalk



Grand Haven's iconic red lighthouse

large campground bordering the beach, but it was packed with towables much too close together (see top left).

With a population of just over 10,000 and civic pride that is off the charts, Grand Haven's harbor on the Grand River offers boating, fishing, sailing, and a fleet of charter boats if you arrive without your own. Biking and roller skating are very popular on the 100+ miles of paved trails, plus the boardwalk that runs from the inner harbor to the end of the south pier where visitors can make the two lighthouses their destination.

The Lakeshore Trail, a 20-mile paved bicycle path, allows cyclists to pedal from Grand Haven State Park to Holland State Park on one continuous trail that does not allow motorized vehicles. The trail passes through three beach parks and natural areas. Tunnel Park and Holland State Park are access points for cyclists traveling from south to north. Kirk Park is a midpoint that offers a great beach, nature trails, parking, restrooms, and a picnic/playground area.

After a late afternoon trek on Grand Haven's boardwalk which took us all the way to Grand Haven's iconic red lighthouse (see below left), we discovered the Snug Harbor restaurant on a knoll overlooking a parade of boats. We lucked out, getting a corner table with window views in both directions. Our waiter informed us that the Grand Haven Musical Fountain would start in 45 minutes. We finished an excellent dinner and walked another block to find a place on the grassy slope rising gently on the south side of the river.

The fountain's website, [ghfountain.com](http://ghfountain.com), has a playlist for each night from Memorial Day to Labor Day. It operates on weekends in May and September. The fountain was designed by William Morris Booth II, a local engineer, who also holds the patent on his invention. It was built in 1962 for \$250,000 by volunteers under Booth's direction. The technology to operate the synchronized music and water displays was computer driven and programmed using 6-level paper tape. In 1980, the fountain was switched from punch tape to an Allen-Bradly PLC, allowing for better control over the valves and lighting. The new software to program shows ran on a Radio Shack TRS 80 Model 4. The programming and code processing took over 200 hours to produce a single 20-minute performance.



The Grand Haven Musical Fountain



In 2006, a PC-based program and playback system named the Animated Choreographer became available. The software was released to the public to encourage the development of more innovative and complicated light and water shows. The software and the playback system (water pipes, valves, pumps) were updated to take advantage of new lighting and water effects.

It is quite a show. The specs are impressive: 240 feet in length on the north side of the river; water basin capacity—40,000 gallons; 8,000 feet of pipe ranging from ¼-inch to 16 inches in diameter; 1,300 nozzles; maximum height of spray—125 feet.

The Tri-Cities Historical Museum in downtown Grand Haven occupies a handsome two-story building that appears to have been a department store in its first life. The exhibits cover a broad array of life from the mid- to late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, plus a brief look at the cultural life and primitive homes of the native people encountered when Europeans began arriving in the early 1800s.

By the late 1800s, the upper middleclass and upper class citizens appeared to be enjoying a very well-to-do lifestyle based on the reconstruction of a dining room and finely set table (see above). The lady of the house enjoyed the services of a cook and housekeeper. An example of middle class life shows a far less well-appointed kitchen where the lady of the house toiled daily.

The museum presents the effects of industrial and agricultural change on those who lived in the town. In the mid-1830s, white pine covered Michigan from Grand Haven to Saginaw and north to the Straits of Mackinac and the Upper Peninsula.

Forestry experts predicted it would take over 500 years to harvest all the white pine in Michigan. In fact, it took only 50 years. By 1890 most of the white pine was gone. Logging camps dotted the landscape throughout the upper half of the state.

As the white pine forests disappeared, farms took their place. Agricultural change happened quickly, accompanied by industrial progress that provided the tools. Michigan was in the middle of the Industrial Revolution as iron ore and coal were transported on the Great Lakes to the fast-developing manufacturing cities: Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Cleveland.

The museum records the changes that World War I had on Grand Haven and the state at large. Every city in America should aspire to have a museum the equal of the Tri-Cities Historical Museum.

After we completed our visit, we found our way to the city's Bicentennial Memorial Park. A full city block was covered with century-old trees, verdant lawns, and well-tended flower beds. Sidewalks criss-crossed the park and intersected where memorials were erected honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice in wars over the last two centuries. Comfortable metal benches invite visitors to rest and meditate.

## MUSKEGON

As the largest city on Michigan's west coast, Muskegon has a population of approximately 38,000. It is one of two departure points for car ferries serving motorists with destinations in Wisconsin: Muskegon-Milwaukee and Ludington-Manitowac. With far more industry than the resort towns on Michigan's west coast, Muskegon does not attract summer tourists in significant numbers.

With a long-time interest in visiting decommissioned ships from WWII and the Cold War era, I wanted to visit the *USS Silversides* (SS/AGSS-236), now permanently moored in Muskegon, and recognized as a National Historic Landmark.

During WWII, the U.S. Navy's submarine service suffered the highest casualty percentage of all the American armed forces. Of 16,000 in service, 3,506 died in the line of duty, a factor of 22 percent. Of the 288 subs in the fleet, 263 made war patrols. Fifty-two submarines were lost. Of that number, eight went



USS Silversides



Some sailors bunks next to the rear torpedo tubes.



The adjacent museum tells the story of the Pacific submarine fleet in WWII.

missing while on patrol and were presumed to have been sunk by Japanese mines. Thirty-three subs were known to have been sunk in hostile encounters with the Japanese.

The *USS Silversides* was one of the most successful submarines operating in the Pacific Theater of World War II. It claimed 23 confirmed sinkings, totaling more than 90,000 long tons of shipping. Her keel was laid on November 4, 1940. She was launched 10 months later and commissioned on December 15, 1941. She arrived at Pearl Harbor on April 4, 1942 and departed on her first patrol on April 30. On May 10 at 0800, the *Silversides* engaged and heavily damaged a Japanese gunboat with her 76 mm deck gun. During the action, an enemy machine-gun bullet killed deck gunner TM3 Mike Harbin, who was the only man

lost in action aboard the *Silversides* during WWII. Harbin was buried at sea later that evening.

After her fourteenth patrol that ended on July 30, 1945, at Apro Harbor, Guam, the *Silversides* headed for New York City. After transiting the Panama Canal on September 15, she arrived in NYC on September 21. She became a training ship for Naval Reservists in Chicago. After several relocations, the *Silversides* in 1987 was moved to Muskegon to serve as the centerpiece of the new Great Lakes Naval Memorial & Museum.

The USS Silversides Submarine Museum is an historical treasure chest of the role played by the submarines serving in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters during WWII. The visitor can follow a timeline of the war as well as sections of the museum dedicated to each year of the war, beginning with 1942. With wars going on indefinitely today, it is difficult to comprehend that the U.S. and its allies defeated the Axis Powers in 44 months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The museum pays tribute to the 375 officers and 3,131 enlisted men on 52 submarines who were lost. The museum also honors the service and leadership of Vice Admiral Charles A. Lockwood, who provided the leadership to the submarine force that sank more than 50 percent of Japan's warships and merchant ships during World War II.

## LUDINGTON

Like three of the cities we visited earlier, Ludington began as a lumber town soon after the Civil War. By 1892, 162 million board feet of lumber and 52 million shingles had been produced by Ludington's sawmills. This made the town a major Great Lakes shipping port.

Ludington is a walking town with a beautiful park, medians beautifully planted and maintained by local residents, shops, and restaurants. From downtown to the beach is less than a mile. Another short walk on the breakwater jetty will take you to the Ludington Lighthouse.





## The Carferries and the Maritime Museum

In 1875, the Flint and Pere Marquette Railroad began shipping rail cars across Lake Michigan on the sidewheel steamer *SS John Sherman*. In 1897, The F&PM Railroad constructed the first steel carferry, the *Pere Marquette*. The success led to the construction of a fleet of ferries to carry rail cargo to Manitowac. The fleet was expanded to carry cars and passengers across the lake. By the mid-1950s, Ludington was the largest carferry port in the world. As industry declined, the fleet was retired. Only one car ferry, the *SS Badger*, makes daily trips across the lake from Ludington to Manitowac. Tourists and locals, too, often gather in the late afternoon to watch the *Badger* come in and dock.

The 1934 U.S. Coast Guard Station was acquired by the City of Ludington in 2010 under the Federal Historic Monuments program after the federal government declared it as “historic surplus property.” This public benefit program is administered by the National Park Service. The Station was repurposed as The Port of Ludington Maritime Museum and is operated by the Mason County Historical Society.

With the backing of the National Park Service, the museum preserves the rich maritime history of the area and the companies who operated the cross-lake ferries for cargo and rail cars.

To show the reality of piloting one of the great ferries for transporting rail cars, the Maritime Museum constructed a simulator of the pilothouse of the *Pere Marquette 22* (at right). It was replicated based on the original 1924 construction drawing and photographic evidence. The Mason County Historical Society holds several original objects from the *Pere Marquette* including the helm, nameboard, life rings, ship’s bell, gyrocompass repeater, the captain’s desk, and the mast head light.

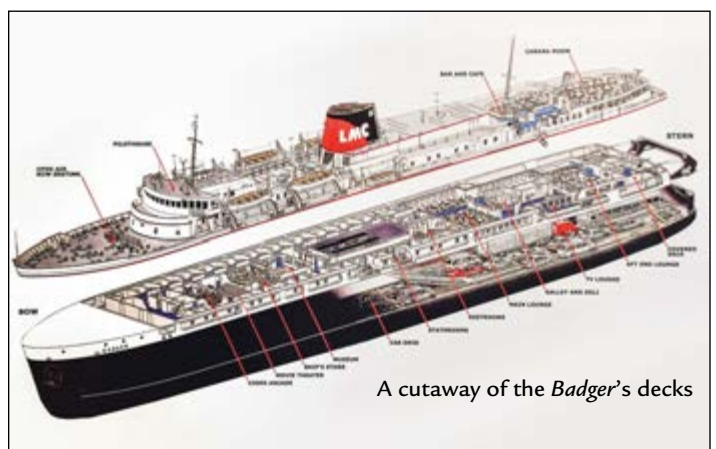
The demand for cross-lake rail freight and passenger service increased following World War II. The Chesapeake & Ohio Railway built two new rail carferries that were the largest on the Great Lakes. The ferries were named *Spartan* and *Badger* after the mascots for Michigan State and the University of Wisconsin. The *Badger* on March 21, 1953, carried 32 rail cars filled with Wisconsin-manufactured paper eastbound to Ludington, the *Badger’s* home port.

Rail service over land became more efficient and better scheduling quickly moved through-trains around Chicago. The cross-lake service could not compete and failed financially. Thirty years after the *Spartan* and *Badger* went into service, rail, auto, and passenger service were discontinued.

In 1991 Charles Conrad founded Lake Michigan Carferry Service and rehabbed the *Badger* into a passenger and automobile ferry with new lounges and food service. The *Badger* made its first trip from Ludington to Manitowoc on May 16, 1992 with 500 passengers. In its first season, the company transported 100,000 passengers and 30,000 cars across Lake Michigan.

## White Pine Village

The village is a collection of restored buildings and homes moved here from the area that give an authentic view of life from the



mid-1800s into the early 1900s. The buildings (see below) include a home, courthouse, post office, school, fire station, blacksmith shop, church, hardware store, general store, weaver's shop, a steam engine and tender, and a museum shed of farm implements.

The village is open from May 4 through October 19 of this year. Village hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10–5; town hall ice cream shop, 11–3. Admission: adults, \$10; seniors, \$9; children (6–17), \$7.

Just before you reach Ludington, take exit 166 from US 31 and set your navigation for Bortell's Fisheries, 5528 S. Lakeshore Drive, Ludington 49431. Step inside and place your order for the freshest fish you will ever eat. As available from the day's catch, you can order up lake perch, whitefish, smelt, salmon, walleye, catfish, and trout. Flown in fresh: shrimp, scallops, clams, and ocean perch. Orders are cooked as they are placed and served with slaw and fries. Grab a cold drink from the cooler and head for the picnic tables under the trees. Bortell's is a family-owned and operated fishery now in its sixth generation. Prices \$9 to \$15. Tu–Sa, 11–8. Sun. 11 until “sold out.” Closed Monday.

You will find a nice picnic area at Summit Township Park just south of Bortell's on the right. The park has a small, uncrowded beach, restrooms and changing area, and a children's playground. No turnaround for motorhomes (except for the Wayfarer).

We “docked” the motorhome at Poncho's Pond RV Park, 5335 W. Wallace Lane in Ludington. Located on 37 grassy acres, it is an



older park with full hook-ups (\$60/night) that is well maintained.

Leaving Ludington, we took US 31 to Manistee and then Mich. 22 to Empire. On the way we found an overlook that required several flights of stairs to reach the summit for a spectacular view of Lake Michigan. It was worth the effort. The parking lot was large enough to handle the Phaeton and our CR-V.

After arriving in Empire, we found a convenience store with a diesel pump island on M-22 that was wide enough for the Phaeton to squeeze in. Six miles east on M-72 delivered us to Indigo Bluffs RV Park, which must be one of the nicest parks in Northwest Michigan. It was our base station for the next three nights.

At mid-afternoon we returned to M-22 and followed it north into Sleeping Bear Dunes Philip A. Hart Visitor Center, a welcoming place where NPS personnel were happy to help us plan our time at the Dunes. As often happens in this part of Michigan, this northwest corner catches the incoming weather system. Since it was overcast and misty, we elected to spend a couple of hours in the Visitor Center and learn about the area.

The NPS-quality educational displays cover the geologic account of how the dunes were formed over thousands of years, the eventual appearance of native people and centuries later settlers from the east. Wooding and logging operations lasted for several decades and then agriculture. The displays explain how active dunes become habitats for small animals who must struggle with the constant movement of the sand. Plants, too, must struggle to build footholds where the waves constantly tear them away. A short distance away from the shore, shrub zones develop where an old dune shelters plants from the prevailing winds. The narrow strip created allows decaying plants to enrich the soil, permitting a different ecology to take over. Farther from the beach, small forests begin to develop, and farther yet even larger trees represented by the great white pine forests of more than a century ago that were harvested to build several great cities in the north. You will be impressed with the Ranger-led programs offered to children and adults at the Visitor Center, and find the available information helpful as you plan your visit to the park. An area guide and map about restaurants, shops, museums, wineries, hiking and biking trails, and driving tours is available through [sleepingbeardunes.com](http://sleepingbeardunes.com).

### Old Mission Peninsula

Hoping for better weather later, the next day we postponed our visit to Sleeping Bear and headed for Traverse City on route M-72. Our destination was the lighthouse at Old Mission Point on the narrow peninsula that divides Grand Traverse Bay. Still under cloudy skies, we found CR-37 north to the tiny villages of Mapleton and Old Mission. Beautiful homes lined the first few miles and then we saw long-established truck farms with occasional roadside stands to sell several varieties of apples, tomatoes, blueberries, peaches, and plums. Processing sheds were shipping most of the harvest to grocery distribution centers in Michigan. But tourists and locals also benefitted from the bounty.

The modest lighthouse at Old Mission Point at first appears

to be a private home with a short boxy steeple topped by an octagonal glass enclosure surrounded by a catwalk with railing. The home and lighthouse has an engaging museum that tells the story of Sarah Lane, who at 18 married Capt. John Lane in 1858. He received an appointment as the second Lighthouse Keeper in August 1881. Sarah was appointed Assistant Lighthouse Keeper. The couple had three children, but only Minnie, born in 1861, survived. She married William Rushmore who later owned and operated Rushmore Inn in Old Mission.

Her husband's poor health led to Sarah becoming the de facto lighthouse keeper who kept the light burning from sunset to sunrise, trimming the wicks every four hours to ensure a bright light. She tracked the oil received and consumed with quarterly reports to the superintendent. She was also expected to entertain visitors to the lighthouse. When John died in 1906, Sarah was 66. She was appointed Lighthouse Keeper and continued her service until December 9, 1908.

Sarah's life is the story of a strong woman who accepted the challenges presented and performed with skill, finesse, and aplomb. She spent her remaining years with her grandson in Rahway, New Jersey. Sarah died in 1920 and was buried in Monroe, Michigan.

### Grand Traverse Lighthouse

Returning to Traverse City, we replotted on CR-22 our next destination, the Grand Traverse Lighthouse built in 1858, located at the northern tip of the peninsula that forms the western side of Grand Traverse Bay. Two lighthouses in one day! After a leisurely drive, we arrived in just over an hour and a half.

Like the structure at Old Mission Point, this lighthouse was also built above the two-story living quarters of the family responsible for its operation. Compared to the living quarters at Old Mission Point, this home was almost luxurious. Plaques in the home tell the stories of several lighthouse keepers and their families. The grounds are well-kept and a short walk to the lake



Old Mission Point Lighthouse



Sara Lane

reveals a rather inhospitable beach and a horizon that looks like "forever."

We departed for Leland on the west side of the peninsula. Leland is a commercial fishing village that has provided a livelihood for its residents for over a century. During the early years of the fishing industry in Leland, fishermen reached the fishing grounds in small sailboats. Later, beginning around 1900, the fishermen used primitive little oak boats with gas-powered engines well into the thirties. Fishing shanties, ice and smoke houses, and related buildings were constructed during those peak years. Now gray and weather-beaten, some still serve their original purpose. With more modern equipment becoming available after WWII, Leland continues to generate revenue with commercial fishing. But like many coastal towns, interesting shops and restaurants catering to tourists have sprung up. The dining room at The Cove overlooks the Leland River falls. We also enjoyed shopping at Two Fish..

Our last stop for the day was in Glen Arbor at the Cherry Republic. This is a "must see" place where cherries have become an institution. Evening had turned very cool and the chili served in the Republic's dining room demanded seconds. Then a visit to the shops detained us for an hour—a beautiful high-ceiling

The quality of the interiors in the lighthouse were impressive, including the cabinetry, flooring, and moulding. The home was an attractive perk for the families who worked there.





Over 100 years old, these weather-beaten shanties in Leland were constructed by the grandparents of the fishermen who continue to use them today. ♦ In the upper left corner of this picture, the Cove Restaurant offers diners a view of the falls on the Leland River.

wood structure with displays that would make a NYC marketing specialist jealous. See [cherryrepublic.com](http://cherryrepublic.com)

### **Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore**

The rainy, overcast weather continued the next day, but we decided to visit the Sleeping Bear Dunes anyway since our time in the beautiful state of Michigan was almost over. Designated as a National Lakeshore in 1970, Sleeping Bear Dunes runs for 35 miles along the northwestern coastline of Michigan. Spectacular and dazzling, the area was voted “Most Beautiful Place in America” in 2011 by the *Good Morning America* TV show. The glacially-formed dunes, lakes, and beaches of the region are enhanced by the surrounding lush sugar maple and American beech forests. The dunes received their name from an Ojibwe legend which relates that a mother bear watched and waited patiently for her two cubs who had drowned in crossing the lake. As she waited, the winds buried the sleeping mother bear under the sands of the dunes, where she still waits today.

In favorable weather, the park offers visitors numerous ways to see all nature has to offer here. Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail is the only trail available for bicyclists in the park. This 10-foot wide paved trail with 2-foot shoulders is currently about 22 miles in length with several access points and will be 27 miles long when completed. The trail is also for use by hikers, walkers, cross-country skiers, and people of all physical abilities. Sleep-

Some of the dunes in the National Lakeshore rise steeply from the water's edge providing majestic views of the coastline. Signs warn visitors against descending the dunes to the lake, not realizing the difficulty of climbing back to the top or the possibility of tumbling to the bottom.

ing Bear Heritage Trail runs from the northern end of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore to Manning Road, just south of Empire. Trail users need a park pass, available from the Visitor Center. More information on the trail can be found at [friendsofsleepingbear.org](http://friendsofsleepingbear.org).

There are numerous trails within Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore park that are short day hikes. Each trail offers a unique experience, whether it be a high vista overlooking the lakes or dunes, or through the forest, fields, or over the dunes. The Empire Bluff Trail and the Cottonwood Trail are each 1.5 miles in length and considered moderate in difficulty. The Sleeping Bear Point Trail is 2.8 miles long, and is rated moderate to strenuous. The Dunes Trail, 3.5 miles in length, is a strenuous hike. Platte Plains Trail varies in length and in difficulty depending on the weather and trail conditions. The Alligator Hill Trail runs a total of nine miles divided into several loops over hilly terrain, providing great views of Lake Michigan from the top of the hill and Glen Lake through the trees. Additional trails are listed on the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore website at [nps.gov](http://nps.gov).

The Alligator Hill Trail takes one through what was supposed to become “America’s premier summer community.” In the early 1900s, as lumbering declined in Michigan, tourism began to boom. Glen Lake was called by some travel writers “the Switzerland of America.” A local businessman, D.H. Day, began

planning and developing an exclusive resort on Alligator Hill overlooking Glen Lake. He cleared land for an airstrip and built an 18-hole golf course. He hoped to accommodate over 100 estates, and planned to add tennis courts, bridle paths, and a ski jump. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1928 before he could complete the project. When the stock market crashed in 1929, other partners who had invested in the development pulled out. By the 1940s, Michigan residents and state officials were contemplating a new use for the beautiful lakeshore and beach—a park that could be enjoyed by everyone.

Though the weather didn't permit bicycling or hiking during our visit to Sleeping Bear, we did enjoy the driving tour developed by another local lumberman, Pierce Stocking, who loved the woods, and often walked the bluffs above Lake Michigan to enjoy the inspiring views of the lake and the dunes. He felt an intense desire to share this beauty with others, and conceived the idea of building a road to the top of the dunes. Stocking had worked at the Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Cadillac, Michigan, during the Great Depression, and used the construction skills he had learned there to plan and build the Sleeping Bear Dunes Park road which opened for public use in 1967. Pierce Stocking operated the park road until his death in 1976. In 1977, the road became a part of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Not long after, the 7.4-mile road was renamed the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive.

The Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive has 12 stops, and we en-



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Stop No. 1 on the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive

joyed spending time at each one. Each offers interesting and informative experiences. Stop #1 is a nostalgic covered bridge, and #4 gives you access to Cottonwood Trail. The cottonwood tree is well-adapted to the ecology of the dunes. Stops #3 and #5 educate the visitor regarding the fragile ecology of dunes and why they must be protected. Stop #7 brings one into the forest above the lake and dunes, and #9 and #10 offer dramatic area views of the Lake Michigan shoreline and Sleeping Bear Dunes.

From this point, it is 54 miles across Lake Michigan to the



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Stop No. 11 overlooks North Bar Lake.

state of Wisconsin. A sign posted at this stop warns visitors that descending the dune to the shore of the lake is not recommended and can be dangerous due to the very strenuous climb back up the dune. If one has to be rescued because they cannot get back up to the trail, they are required to pay the cost of their rescue. Though the majority of the trees in the forest surrounding the dunes are maple and beech, Stop #12 is in a pine plantation, planted before the land became part of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive is open for car traffic from May through November from 9:00 a.m. to 30 minutes after sunset.

Our day at Sleeping Bear Dunes was made complete with a visit to the Glen Haven Village Historic District, a former logging town now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The opening of the Erie Canal greatly increased steamship traffic on the Great Lakes, carrying both passengers and freight

The National Park Service has made some of the dunes near the lakeshore wheelchair accessible.




from Buffalo to Chicago. The increased traffic created a need for wooding stations to fuel the ships that came through. A sawmill to provide wood and an inn for lodging workers and tourists were constructed in Glen Haven. The village struggled with many residents leaving to fight in the Civil War, and a fire that burned most of the buildings. Eventually rebuilt, the properties were acquired by the Northern Transit Company (NTC), and by 1878, the company had 24 vessels traveling the route from New York to Chicago and Milwaukee. The Glen Haven wooding station held an integral role in supporting this commerce.

David Henry Day, a New York native, was recruited to become the agent for the station in 1878. By 1881, wood had been replaced by coal as the primary fuel for steamships, so they no longer needed to stop at Glen Haven. NTC began selling some of their steamships, and the entrepreneurial Henry Day bought two of them to establish a new passenger line to Chicago. He expanded the general store which housed a telegraph and post office, and built an ice-skating and curling rink in the village. Glen Haven became a popular tourist town. The sawmill was used to process hardwood for shipping to Chicago and other cities. Day also started agricultural enterprises that included livestock as well as cherry and apple orchards.

By 1923, the forests surrounding Glen Haven had become depleted, and the sawmill was no longer in operation. Henry Day started the Glen Haven Canning Company, purchasing fruit from area orchard owners which was canned and shipped to large cities. Because of his efforts to keep Glen Haven thriving after the demise of the lumber industry, D. H. Day was sometimes referred to as “the king of Glen Haven.” Restored buildings include a general store and blacksmith shop. The cannery is a museum for historic boats. Check [nps.gov](http://nps.gov) for days and times the buildings are open to the public.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is one of Michigan’s most popular vacation destinations for camping. Campgrounds in the park include the D.H. Day Campground, located at the

beach on Lake Michigan. Campsites are rustic and wooded. At the Platte River Campground, some sites have electric hookups, some sites are hike-in, and some are more rustic. Manitou Island has three campgrounds. There are many campgrounds in the Sleeping Bear Dunes area. We enjoyed our stay at Indigo Bluffs, just 3.5 miles from Sleeping Bear Dunes, [indigobluffs.com](http://indigobluffs.com), (231)326-5050.

Pleasant towns, abundant seafood and area produce, intriguing shops, colorful festivals, local history and culture, the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, and the glistening clear blue water of Lake Michigan all combine to make a visit to the dramatic Western Michigan shoreline an exhilarating experience. We hope you will agree when you explore this fascinating destination. 

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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.

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

Dear Danny . . .

**Erratic Engagement of Slides**

We have a 2010 QSA we bought new. Love the coach, but have developed a slide issue that so far no solution has been found to correct the problem. The passenger side slides do not always engage when the switch is pushed. Sometimes you have to push

several times. Both the front and rear slides act the same. We have installed new house batteries, and on Tiffin advice, have replaced both solenoids on the pump. Any thoughts? Thanks.

Al Conrad, Lacey, Washington

Dear Al,

In addition to the two solenoids on the hydraulic pump, there is also a slide-out disconnect solenoid which is located on the passenger side in the compartment behind the rear wheel. This solenoid disconnects power to the slide room while traveling. The next time the slide-out fails to work, you can check it with a 12-volt meter to see if power is reaching both poles of the solenoid before you replace it. To get your slide room retracted without replacing the solenoid, put a jumper between the two poles.

**Dash AC/Heater Performs Erratically**

I have a 2005 Phaeton. My problem is the dash AC/Heater. Most of the time it doesn't run, but if I hit a bump on the road, it comes on until I hit another bump. If I turn the motor off, it won't come back on. I have called Freightliner, they can't or won't help. I have tried to check connections but can't find the problem. Do you have any idea where to look for a loose connection?

Martin R. Carrera, Semmes, Alabama

Dear Martin,

The power that supplies the automotive air conditioning comes from the house batteries, not the chassis batteries. The power supply originates at the fuse panel located in the outside compartment under the driver's chair (where you release the generator slide-out). This fuse box is activated when the ignition switch is turned on and supplies power to items like your AC, steps, the back-up camera, and other items added by Tiffin. Double check all the connections at the fuse block, especially at the AC fuse. That AC supply will come from the fuse block to the control switch under the dash, and then to the AC blower motor.

**Slide Won't Operate After Winter Storage**

We have a 2014 Allegro Red 33AA which we purchased in 2015, with only 8,000 miles. Every year since its purchase, we have had a problem with the rear passenger side slide. After taking it out of storage from the winter, the slide will not operate. We bought a new control unit. It worked all summer and fall. We stored it for the winter, but come spring, it did not operate. Buying a new control unit is a costly fix. Please help.

Anthony & Barbara Kupko  
 Allegany, New York

Dear Anthony & Barbara,

Before replacing the control unit, check the power coming to the control board, both hot and ground sides, to be sure there

is full 12-volt power coming to the board. If there is a low voltage problem getting to the board, check and be sure the ground wire is properly connected and you have a solid 12+ volts going through the board. Also, get your troubleshooting manual for the slideouts. The board has a light that provides a flashing diagnostic. Your slide-out manual will have instructions to interpret the flash codes to determine whether the board itself or the wiring coming to the board is faulty. You can also find YouTube videos on Swintek.com *Note:* Be sure when you store your unit for the winter season, first disconnect the batteries and then disconnect the inverter. If you do not, the inverter will pull the power out of your batteries.

**Problem with the Black Tank Flush**

I am the proud owner of a 2014 Phaeton 36GH. I have a problem with the black tank flush. The vacuum breaker leaks from the top. It has been replaced two times but still leaks when water is put into the system. It is located under the sink and is in the upright position.

Tim Peltz, Fairfield, California

Dear Tim,

Having a vacuum breaker leak is not that uncommon. Having three of them leak in that time frame is very unusual. When replacing your next vacuum breaker, be sure to check the lines on both ends of the breaker to be certain there are no cracked or split lines that could cause a leak. Also check and make sure the water flow is installed in the proper direction of the flow. Hopefully this will help you find a solution to your problem.

**Rust Becomes a Safety Hazard**

I have a 2007 Allegro 34TGA on a Ford F53 Chassis. I am from the North, New Hampshire to be exact, where salted roads and rust are common. The worst rust situation attacked me on March 4<sup>th</sup> of this year. I totally lost all braking. I was lucky, it happened on an on-ramp of an interstate highway. A corroded brake line burst. I left the coach in Georgia and returned three weeks later, after a total replacement of brake lines. Of course, this was a surprise. I have replaced steps, propane tank, and latches. So, RV'ers, inspect the bottom!

David Adams  
 West Ossipee, New Hampshire

Dear David,

Thanks for bringing this to our attention. This is a good time to elaborate more about this situation. Rust has always been a problem to any automotive vehicle. Even though we undercoat every motorhome, it is impossible to totally prevent rust. The chemicals used on our roads to combat ice seem to be more corrosive than ever before. It is very important after operating

your motorhome in these conditions to clean the bottom of the coach, especially around the wheel wells, under the lip of the storage doors, and inside the diesel compartments.

**No Electrical Plug-In on Passenger Side**

We purchased a new 2019 40IP with the dinette computer work station option. There is no electrical plug-in on that side of the coach. I have to run an extension cord from the kitchen side for power. Is this the standard build for this model or are we missing a plug-in? Thank you.

Bill Petersen, Surprise, Arizona

Dear Bill,

There is an electrical outlet for the dinette computer worksta-

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# S E R I O U S T E C H T A L K

tion, but it is in a very unlikely place. When you are facing the wall, you will find a 110-volt outlet in the wall behind the left leg of the valance.

### Refrigerator Door Won't Stay Shut

We have a 2014 Open Road. We love our coach, but have a problem with the refrigerator. It is a double-door Dometic. We had the cooling unit replaced at two years. The extended warranty covered all but the deductible. When the engine starts, the refrigerator doors lock. However, while driving, the doors will open. My wife has to go back and pick up spilled items, then close and re-lock the doors. We now put something against the doors while driving. Any other reports of this issue? Any suggestions?

Timothy Burkhart  
Redwood City, California

Dear Timothy,

I don't know why the door is coming open while traveling. Check for any loose connections at the back of the refrigerator. If this does not solve the problem, you will probably have to change the lock assembly itself. This is not something we see on a regular basis.

### Ceiling Lights Come on by Themselves

I have a 2015 Allegro Red 32A. My problem is that the ceiling lights turn on by themselves. Sometimes while the coach is on, they flash off and on, they just never stay on. I have disconnected all the switches and it still does it. I don't know how the lights can work if all the switches are disconnected. Any ideas?

Ed Reyes,  
Canyon Lake, California

Dear Ed,

Occasionally, we see this when the house batteries get to a low state, which causes the memory in the computer to become confused and require a reset. To do the reset, go to the house battery compartment, pull the 5-amp inline fuse, and turn off the disconnect. Then go to the

engine battery compartment, and pull the 5-amp fuse, and turn that disconnect off also. Give it about a minute, reinstall the fuses, and see if this solution stops the problem.

### Automatic Mattress/Bed Retractor

We love our second Tiffin, an Allegro Bus. We want to offer an idea that we think would be a huge benefit - an automatic mattress/bed retractor to help us make up the bed easier!!

Kim & Bob Marsh,  
Green Cove Springs, Florida

Dear Kim & Bob,

We have that option now. The "Smart Bed" allows the mattress to slide back and forth, making it easier to make up the bed, and also tilt up for making it convenient to read in bed.

### Grey Water Tank Won't Drain

We purchased a 2019 Allegro Open Road 32SA from LaMesa RV in San Diego. We took delivery of it on March 30, 2019. We wanted it built to our needs; oven, 4-door gas/electric refrigerator, four six-volt batteries, and 340 watts of solar panels. We love dry camping. On our first "check out" trip, I discovered that the grey water tank took 34 minutes to drain! LaMesa RV determined that flooring tile chips were found blocking the valve. They fixed the problem and it now drains properly. Please advise the staff accordingly. We love the coach! Thanks for your help during the construction of it.

Jerry Carrigan  
Fallbrook, California

Dear Jerry,

I am definitely passing this on to production. Thanks for your input.

### Winterizing the Water Heater

We have a 2010 Phaeton 42QBH. I'm writing this because of your response to an Allegro owner in Volume 15:2 who had experienced the water heater filling with anti-freeze when winterizing. We experi-

enced the same problem. After checking the bypass valve and finding it okay, we replaced the check valve under the half bath and this cured our problem. Hope this will help others who have this experience.

Bob Woetzel,  
Parkers Prairie, Minnesota

Dear Bob,

This will help. Thanks for sharing your experience and the solution.

### Furniture in Coach is Peeling

We purchased a new 2015 Allegro Red in April of 2016. We had a problem with the leather seats, and Tiffin replaced them. Now the whole coach is peeling. We have used the unit three times to vacation in Florida for a total of six months in three years. We paid \$248,000, so it should last at least ten years!!

Robert Booth  
South Wales, New York

Dear Robert,

Yes, we have had some issues with the material separating. Please contact our parts and service department at 256-356-0261. They will assist you with this problem.

### Check Out the Dishwasher Before Purchasing

When checking out a new or used coach, be sure to run the dishwasher, washer/dryer, front AC/heater, and slides. We did not use the dishwasher for just the two of us. Besides, our dishwasher takes between one hour and thirty minutes to two hours to complete the wash cycle. Well, after two years, we decided to try it. We could not operate the dishwasher. After calling the service company, we had to pay \$425 to correct the drain hose and install a new dishwasher rotor. We will not order a dishwasher on any future Phaetons.

Richard Frechette  
West Palm Beach, Florida

Dear Richard,

I am sorry to hear that you had a problem with your dishwasher. You are right about the decision not to order a dishwasher if

you do not plan to use it often. The storage would be much more valuable to you.

### Use of Emergency Windows

I have a 2011 Allegro 34QFA. I would like to open my emergency windows to see how they work. If I open them, will the

glass hatch crash to the ground? Or does it stay on the frame?

Tom Sadecki  
Deotone, Illinois

Dear Tom,

If your emergency window has the two red handles, you can open and swing it out.

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If you open it beyond 90 degrees (straight out) and keep lifting it up, it will separate from the hinge and drop to the ground which is a safety feature to get it out of the way in an emergency.

**Running Lights Will Not Turn Off**

I own a 2005 Phaeton and it runs fine. I have no major problems with it. However, I cannot turn off the running lights after they are turned on. I use the switch in the basement to turn off the lights. Then the lights will stay off when the switch is turned back on. I have replaced the main dash switch, but it did not fix the problem. Please advise how I should troubleshoot this situation.

Forrest Parsons  
Lago Vista, Texas

Dear Forrest,

There is a good possibility there is a bad relay in the Freightliner system that is sticking and causing your lights to stay on. In the Freightliner fuse box, you will have several small relays, such as relays for the horn, headlights, and daytime running lights. It is labeled DRL. These relays are interchangeable, so you can take one of the other relays and test it with the DHL relay.

**New Breeze Owner Has Several Questions**

Thank you for providing the tech info in your "Serious Tech Talk" articles. I have several questions about my 2017 Allegro Breeze 31BR with just over 4,000 miles.

Does the generator also charge the chassis batteries? If it's supposed to, it does not on this coach.

When I'm storing the coach for an extended length of time (over a month), should I dump all of the air out of the leveling system?

I understand the Mode selection is to assist in checking transmission oil, etc. but I am not sure what purpose it serves while driving. I see that I can push button shift through the various gears (or

just proceed with the Drive selection). I thought that it was similar to my truck and the Tow/Haul mode, but that doesn't seem to be the case.

While I was driving down a 4% grade, I had to hard brake to avoid another vehicle. When braking, the coach pulled hard to the right and almost caused me to go off the shoulder. Do you have any ideas as to a fix for this issue? I live in Colorado so hills are a normal part of everyday life. This only occurred during the hard braking.

This is the first "pusher" that I've owned. I am thrilled about the ride of this coach. It's much quieter than the V-10 gasser and it rides like you're on a cloud. I was worried about the small Cummins engine since I live in the mountains, but so far it has performed nicely. I haven't pulled anything yet over the passes so that will be interesting. It's been averaging a hair over 10 mpg.

I missed the deadline for the Rock Springs Tiffin Rally in June, but I will try not to miss any more.

Dan Needham  
Grand Junction, Colorado

Dear Dan,

I will answer your questions in order.

1.) Yes, the generator and shore power will charge the chassis batteries through a merge board. When the battery power gets below 12.1-volts, the merge board kicks in and activates the inverter to charge the batteries until they reach 12.4 to 12.5-volts. At that time, it cuts off. If you think your batteries are not being charged, you will need to have a technician check the merge board located in the most forward compartment on the driver's side.

2.) It is a good idea to dump the air when you put the unit in winter storage or for any other long period that you decide to put it in storage.

3.) Your Mode selection has nothing to do with your checking the transmission oil. The Mode switch changes the shift

**LET US HEAR FROM YOU**

A separate postcard is enclosed for "From the Road," a fun part of the magazine for readers to share their motorhoming experiences. If you choose to email us at: fredthompson1941@hotmail.com, be sure to put "Roughing It Smoothly" in the subject line of your email. If your communication requires an entire letter, mail it to us at: PO Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30656-1150. Tell us about the interesting places you've been, an unusual experience, a great destination, or

just a good place to camp and hang out. We welcome your pictures. Please attach high resolution images if you email. "From the Road" contributors will receive a free tee shirt while supplies last.

There is also a postcard in the magazine for questions you may have for Danny Inman. Keep in mind that his answers are published quarterly. For answers to urgent questions and problems, call the Parts and Service number at 256-356-0261. —Fred Thompson, editor

pattern of the transmission in fifth and sixth gears. With the Mode button in the ON position, it will stay in a higher gear longer on elevations before it shifts down to fifth gear. This should be used in flatter terrain, such as Florida.

4.) The brakes on the front of the Breeze are drum brakes. Sometimes when it has been parked for a while, you could have a rust build-up on the pads which may have caused the pulling to the right. After you brake a few times, the problem should go away. If this problem continues, it should be checked out by a mechanic.

**Instrument Panel Lights Too Dim**

I have a 2016 Allegro Open Road 31SA. The lights in the instrument panel are so dim that I cannot see the gauges during the day! Is there a fix?

Chuck Weide  
Florence, Oregon

Dear Chuck,

We do not have any control over the instrument package supplied by Ford Motor Company in the manufacture of the Allegro Open Road. The instrument package comes to TMH with the chassis and V10 engine and we install it during the production process on the assembly line. In searching for insight about your problem, we checked out four units during daylight hours on our dispatch lot and none of them exhibited the dim light displays. The 2020 models have the same instruments as your 2016 coach. I suggest you have a Ford dealer that services Ford delivery trucks with the V10 engine check out your system.



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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER *Continued from page 8*

anybody in North Alabama. I've been burned by all the companies in North Alabama," he complained.

I called Tom Bowen at Onan about our predicament. "Mr. Atchinson won't sell to us—not even for cash!"

He called back a short time later. "Are you affiliated with Tiffin Supply?" he asked. I explained. "OK, no problem. We'll bill Tiffin Supply." We continued to use his credit on gensets until 1985.

Daddy retired in 1995 at the age of 84 and enjoyed several years of good health. His last three years were difficult.

Daddy believed in all three of his children: David, Beulah, and

me. He taught us well the principles of dealing fairly with everyone—your employees, your customers, and your suppliers, making everyone feel welcome and comfortable, managing carefully your payables and receivables, understanding market demands, and purchasing in quantities that give you a selling advantage.

Daddy was not a Christian when Mother married him in 1936. But she was patient with him and always a good example. He resisted for many years but finally obeyed the Gospel after Judy and I married. He had always followed Christian principles in his business. After he was baptized into Christ, he followed those principles in his service to God throughout the rest of his life. **RIS**

## Give us your best shot! *Continued from page 59*

### Photo Contest Comments

"Natural Landscapes" was the theme chosen for this issue's photo contest. You submitted some real beauties! Our winners got everything just right. No editing of any sort was needed. Congratulations! To really compete, only send photos of the assigned topic. Submissions with dominant man-made elements in them were not judged

this competition. Themes will be travel related, and our tips can enhance your images and help you to understand the judging criteria. Maximize your photo opportunities as you're travelling by watching the weather forecast for interesting destinations several days ahead. Choose time slots with low wind and 20–33% cloudiness.

## Our Fall Photo Contest

"Cross-lit Farm Scenes" is the next contest's challenge. Cross-lighting means that the light comes from one side, creating shadows on the opposite side. This is a key to vivid, three-dimensional images. Conversely, if the sun is behind you, its light fills in most nooks and crannies of the scene. Objects don't separate. That's flat lighting. Your farm scenes can be close-up or wider angle, and the topic should be as interesting as the lighting. To practice seeing cross-lighting, stand outside on a sunny day and slowly pivot in place. Notice how the scene looks 3-dimensional when the sun bathes just one side of anything from a flower to a mountain. If you find a beautiful but flat composition on an overcast day, return to it on a sunny day and notice the dramatic difference. With practice you can learn to 'pre-visualize,' that is, to observe a new scene when the lighting is wrong and estimate what time of day to come back and take a dramatic cross-lit photo. Yes, early morning and late afternoon light are quite dramatic, but daylight hours can be just fine. Backlighting and edge lighting are future topics.

Distractions disqualify an otherwise good photo. *Crop the edges of your photo. Be ruthless!* Get rid of excess earth, grass, water, sky, or objects that pull the eye to the photo's periphery without framing the focal point. Also, judges expect level horizons and straight vertical elements, though tall objects that converge can be okay. Free, easy-to-use photo editing apps can help you with these tasks and keep you in the running. Use the clone tool to get rid of dust specs that create small, darkish dots in the light areas. Use the app's saturation tool to subtly make the colors more like your eyes see them. No camera delivers the range of light and colors that the eye sees. You're the artist, the camera is your canvas, and an editing app is your brush.

Email your "Cross-lit Farm Scenes" before September 7th to fred1902@gmail.com. Include your address, cell number, email address, camera model, lens length, and the photo's title and location. First place prize, \$100; second, \$50; third, \$25. Please remember, we will accept only one entry from each photographer.

## Two Sedona pictures illustrating flat lighting and cross lighting

Courthouse Rock has only a tiny bit of side (cross) lighting, and the forest has none. The shrubs look pancake-flat and do not separate from each other or Courthouse Rock. The photo is pleasant, but it certainly lacks drama.



Good cross-lighting on Courthouse Rock. The colors overall are rich. Shrubs and trees look lobed, separated, and 3-D. Sunlight on the juniper snag's branches at far right emphasizes the textures and twists. Storm clouds add impact and movement.



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