

# Roughing It Smoothly<sup>®</sup>



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- The 2014 Allegro Breeze 32BR
- The Canadian Rockies
- Riding the Rails

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# Roughing it Smoothly®

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## Printed Copy versus Reading Roughing It Smoothly online

With this issue, approximately 60 percent of our readership have chosen to read *Roughing It Smoothly* online. A significant number of Tiffin owners are traveling full time and find it more convenient to read *RIS* online. With the advent of the iPad and its competitors several years ago, this transition is not surprising. Of the three great weekly news magazines, only *Time* is still publishing a printed edition. We continue to hear about city newspapers dropping back to three editions per week. I subscribe to the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* and enjoy reading the hard copy with my morning coffee. But when we are traveling, I read the AJC's digital edition.

We are pleased to continue sending the printed edition of *Roughing It Smoothly* to those who have requested it.

If you have been dropped inadvertently from our mailing list, you may reinstate your subscription by sending a request on a

standard postcard. Provide the last six digits of your VIN plus the year, Tiffin brand, and floor plan of your motorhome. Tape the address label from an earlier *RIS* magazine to the card. Mail it to: Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc., P.O. Box 1738, Monroe, Georgia 30655-1738.

### Serious Tech Talk

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

### Change of Address

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sending your email to [risncoa@hotmail.com](mailto:risncoa@hotmail.com). First, enter your old address as it appears on your magazine label (we must remove your old address before we can add a new one). Second, please enter your new three-line address including the zip code. **We do not accept phone calls for changes of address.**

### New Subscribers

If you have just purchased a new Tiffin motorhome, be assured that your name/address will be added to our mailing list automatically. We receive a new sales report every quarter. If you purchased a pre-owned Tiffin motorhome, send the year, brand, length & floorplan, your name and address, and VIN to *Roughing It Smoothly*, PO Box 1738, Monroe, GA 30655-1738. Owners who request the magazine receive *Roughing It Smoothly* at no charge.

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## A Letter to Our New Sales Consultants

by Bob Tiffin



The economic meltdown that began in late 2008 and lasted for the better part of three years had a profound effect on the RV industry throughout our country. At least seven motorhome manufacturers had to declare bankruptcy and most of them went out of business permanently. Many RV dealerships, including some who sold our coaches, had to close their doors.

When a few of our dealerships closed and others had to let many employees go, a lot of talent in our industry had to seek employment in other businesses. Since many motorhome owners had to postpone trading in their older coaches for our new ones, and many who would have been first time buyers had to wait until the economy got better, the revenue generated by service departments in many dealerships was greater than that generated by sales. The attrition in service departments on a percentage basis was far less than the attrition in the sales force.

As the economy improved and potential buyers started looking again, dealerships needed sales consultants. Many were employed elsewhere and could not return to their old jobs in the RV industry. As fresh sales people are employed by our dealerships, we are seeing an increase of eager men and women coming to the Red Bay plant for training. They are entering the exciting world of RVing. I'd like to offer a few words of advice to the new sales folks.

Introducing a family to the wonderful experiences they will enjoy camping together will be satisfying and rewarding to you as well. Learning to interview your customer is a skill that takes time to develop. Sales trainers begin with a process they like to call "meet and greet." That phrase leaves me a little cold. You need to work into your introduction the feelings of graciousness and warmth. A welcoming spirit puts people at ease, especially when they begin to feel that you really want to help.

Ask them to tell you about their past experiences in RVing so you can be aware of the kind of RVs they have used. You will hear stories of how they began camping in tents and then moved up to a little camping trailer. Then as the kids got older, they may have gone to a trailer with bunk beds. Some will have pulled a fifth wheel with their pickups. Others will have owned a 40-foot motorhome and decided they want to downsize. Everyone has a story and when they know you are interested in hearing their story to better assist them in finding the RV that matches their needs today, then you can sincerely be their guide to finding the right product. Being a good listener will be your best asset as a sales consultant.

During that conversation, you will learn how they want to use a motorhome, how much they wish to spend, how much time they plan to use their coach each year, and what features and levels of luxury they want. Motorhomes are a lot like cars

in their trim levels. You can see what I mean when you walk through the Allegro Open Road, and then move up through the Allegro RED, the Phaeton, the Allegro Bus, and finally the Zephyr. The Allegro Breeze, of course, is our downsized Class A, but not downsized in quality appointments and its PowerGlide chassis.


Maybe it is old school, but it has always been my practice when meeting a couple here in my office or at a dealership to call them "Mr. and Mrs." Smith. It is a matter of showing respect. When we know each other better, or if they ask me to, I will start calling them Bill and Mary. As you serve each customer, keep notes about how you took care of their needs, solved a problem, or did something special for them. When you are gathering information for their loan application, make a record of birthdays and send a birthday postcard with a nice note on it. But the most important thing to do is remember their names. Everyone is flattered when you remember their name, or some particular thing about a service problem we solved for them.

The fact that you are self-motivated is one of the reasons you were offered a position with your dealership. When a new motorhome is delivered, be the first to get the literature and study it thoroughly. Compare it to competing products from other manufacturers and be ready to show why your product has the features to make it just what the customer is looking for. Don't try to sell on price; sell your product on features and quality and the price will take care of itself.

As you get started in this business, you are going to get some questions that you can't answer. Don't try to wing it and guess. Just say, "I don't know the answer to your question, but when we go back to the office I will find someone who does know the answer." If no one in your dealership can answer the customer's question, tell the customer it may take a few minutes, but you are going to call the president of Tiffin Motorhomes and get the right answer. When you call the switchboard (256-356-8661), ask the receptionist if I am in the building. If I am,

tell Candace you are in the middle of a sales presentation and need to talk with Bob Tiffin. If she says I am on a call, leave me a message with your name, dealership, and cell phone number and I'll call you back as soon as I finish that call. If I am not, ask Candace if I can be reached on my cell phone. If that's possible, then she will give you the number. We will get your customer's question answered, and if you prefer, I will be glad to talk with your customer. I want you to be a successful sales consultant. When we have finished the call, be sure to ask your customer, "Mr. Smith, how many company presidents do you know who will speak to you on the phone? And let me assure you, Mr. Smith, after you buy a Tiffin motorhome, Bob Tiffin will still take your calls." I am the president, but Job No. 1 for me is customer service and public relations. And always remember that Tiffin Motorhomes is a family company to the bone!

The last asset I want you to think about is your own enthusiasm. When you are fired up about the quality of your product and how well it is going to serve your customer, you are going to sell motorhomes partly because of your enthusiasm. You must learn to help your customers *imagine* how they are going to enjoy a Tiffin motorhome. If it is a couple just retiring and deciding to become full-timers, paint a picture of all of the incredible scenery they are going to see in this country.

If they have children, and especially grandchildren, taking those kids camping will be the highlight of their lives. For a lot of good stories about how RVers are enjoying their Tiffin motorhomes, go to our *Roughing It Smoothly* magazines online and read the section in each issue called "From the Road." One story about grandchildren that I especially remember is about Roy and Bertha Miller from Ontario, California (Vol. 5, No. 4, page 72). The story and pictures are about a grandfather teaching his three grandsons how to fish in the High Sierras. Those kids will never forget Papa Roy taking them camping in his 2002 Zephyr and teaching them how to catch trout. Just remember that you are selling a wonderful lifestyle. 

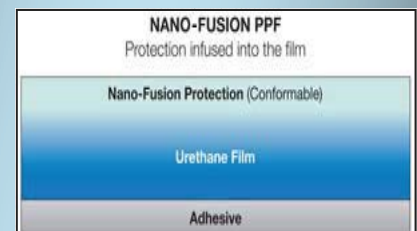
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# Allegro Breeze

## Luxury, Design, Flexibility, and Economy In a 32-foot Diesel Pusher

Text by Fred Thompson

Interior photography by Constellation Imageworks

In November 2011 at the annual National RVDA Show in Louisville, Tiffin Motorhomes redefined the Class A diesel with the introduction of the 28 BR Allegro Breeze. The rear engine coach built on Tiffin's PowerGlide chassis, especially designed for the Breeze, was named "Best of Show" by *RVBusiness*.

Still caught in a recessionary economy, other RV manufacturers struggled to come up with a competing product. But none succeeded in creating a motorhome that looked remotely like a Class A rear engine diesel.

There was nothing spare about the first Allegro Breeze. It had and still has the features that make for a great motorhome experience. A quiet cabin with the smooth delivery of diesel power put the Breeze in a class of its own. Being a shorty, it found a special niche for weekend trips and many owners are using it as a gad-about-town second family vehicle. Nothing like having a galley, bathroom, and shaded front porch when you take the kids to the weekend soccer tournament.

While Tiffin won the day at the 2011 show and got very favorable responses from the dealers, the company's design and marketing departments asked for a year of owner feedback. Owners indicated that while they wanted an easy-to-drive, downsized diesel, they wanted just a little bit more. Tiffin responded with the 32 BR that offered two more closets, bedroom drawer space that rivals a Phaeton, a pantry, a larger shower, a double stainless steel galley sink, a longer C-shaped dinette, and slightly more horsepower.

TMH waited for just the right time in 2012 to capture the "downsized Class A diesel pusher" market with their 32 BR

Breeze. The market responded strongly in Tiffin's favor, especially the fairer sex who raved about how easy the Breeze is to drive. Seeing that they had a clear winner, the design and marketing teams laid the plans for the long-term development of Tiffin's sixth brand. That plan is based on affordable luxury, practical design, flexible use, and real economy.

### Putting It All Together

#### LUXURY DESIGN FLEXIBILITY ECONOMY

Downsizing is not a new topic of discussion among motorhome owners. Driving a 40-foot or larger Class A requires a lot of skill. As the years add up and we reevaluate our skills, some will find driving a smaller coach is less challenging and a better fit. Nevertheless, it may be a difficult decision to give up the spaciousness and amenities of one of Tiffin's large Class A coaches.

Understanding that concern, Bob Tiffin insisted on a comfort level in the Breeze that he personally would enjoy. Let's do a walk-through of the 2014 Allegro Breeze 32 BR and I think you will see what I mean.

Like a classy sports car, TMH designed the chassis closer to the ground. Not only does it have a lower center of gravity that significantly improves handling, the 2014 Breeze now has *independent front suspension* — a feature that completely sets it apart from any wannabe competitors. Only Tiffin's top two Class A brands, the Zephyr and the Allegro Bus, have independent front suspension. The Breeze's chassis also reduces the number of





steps required to enter the coach. Just one slide-out step and two more in the step well.

All of the seating in the Breeze is custom-designed and built by Flexsteel, the leading manufacturer of motorhome furniture. Both the driver and passenger chairs with UltraLeather,<sup>TM</sup> 8-way adjustable power seats, and lever-adjusted backs are optional, but definitely worth the upgrade. Both chairs can be rotated to add seating to the living room.

As you will notice in the floorplan on page 11, the C-shaped dinette in standard UltraLeather can seat up to five. A height adjustable table fits into the opening of the “C” when you are ready to serve dinner. When the table is lowered to seat level, a cushion matching the opening of the “C” can be inserted to make a bed measuring 37 × 82 inches, just in case you have a basketball player joining you for a trip. The dinette has seat belts for two.

The optional UltraLeather sofa seats three and offers seat belts for two. It makes into a bed that measures 40 × 65 inches, perfect for two children. If the children leave their cookie crumbs all over the place, this coach has an optional central vacuum system. You can vacuum the entire coach in 5 minutes.

The lighting in the Breeze is both architecturally attractive and well designed. On the control panel to the left of the entry step well, you will find a conveniently placed switch for a ceiling entry light. No stumbling around to get in at night. Both driver and passenger have ceiling map lights focused directly over their respective chairs.

In the living area, there are 14 recessed LED ceiling lights

aligned in three rows. Six additional ceiling lights are strategically positioned over the galley, two more are recessed into the cabinet over the sink area, and yet two more are in the exhaust system above the cooktop. Your food prep and cooking area is brightly lit, to say the least.

Four LED lights are recessed into the cabinetry above the dinette seating, and two decorative sconces flank either side of the 20 × 54-inch window behind the seating. Similarly, on the driver side, three LED lights are recessed in the overhead cabinets. An identical 20 × 54-inch window is directly behind the sofa. Every seating area is a good place to relax and read.

The Breeze is cooled with two 13,500 BTU low profile air conditioners. An upgrade will increase the front unit to 15,000 BTUs with a heat pump. Two 30,000 BTU propane furnaces keep the Breeze toasty warm when you are in winter climates.

Realizing that many of those who buy the Breeze will have previously owned a Phaeton or an Allegro Bus, the design team knew the cabinetry and trim had to compare favorably. While cherry is not offered in the Breeze, alderwood is processed and finished like fine furniture in two stains: English Chestnut and Medium Alderwood. The fascias, valances, cabinet faces, and doors invite you to reach out and touch their smooth, matte-finished surfaces. For 2014 the raised panel designs in the valances are matched at a larger scale in the fascias surrounding the two slide-outs. The valance material covering the padded horizontal feature coordinates with the fabric used in the pillows on the sofa and all of the fabrics in the bedroom.

Downsizing requires planning. When we take trips in the



big Class A's to write stories for *Roughing It Smoothly*, we have so much storage space in the basement and in the living compartments that we load for the trip based on everything we "just might need." With more enroute and destination planning, we easily reduced by a third the clothing and gear we took on our 3,500-mile trip to Northern Michigan and the Blue Ridge Parkway last Fall in the 2013 Breeze 32 BR. For example, the compartments over the sofa and the C-shaped dinette offer more than 13 cubic feet of storage. That compares favorably with the 18 cubic feet of storage space at the same location in the 2014 Allegro RED 34 QFA. The automobile industry long ago began measuring trunk space in cubic feet, a storage measurement that is very easy to conceptualize. Since storage space in a motorhome is so important, I use it in my descriptions of Tiffin's coaches.

The galley is efficient and flexible. A Sharp microwave-convection oven is standard equipment. It is positioned directly over a two-burner cooktop that is LED-lighted and exhausted to the outside through filters. To the left of the oven, the overhead cabinet provides 3.4 cubic feet of storage. And just to your left, over the 37-inch Panasonic mid-section television, you have a second galley cabinet with 1.6 cubic feet of storage. Below the TV is a long sleeve-like cabinet that extends 35 inches back into the wall. Three large drawers 18.5 by 23 inches are under the cooktop. The top drawer is 3.25 inches deep and the lower two are 5 inches deep — plenty of space for storing all of your kitchen utensils.

The galley's solid surface countertop has recessed covers over the double stainless steel sink, which, of course, increases your food prep space. The redesigned 16-inch high solid surface backsplash has laser-cut designs with five diamond-shaped tile insets. Two 110v outlets in the backsplash will service your elec-

trical cooking appliances and tools. A 3-speed exhaust fan in the ceiling can be used to reduce galley heat and pull in fresh air.

Just behind you in the passenger slide-out, Tiffin opted for Dometic's 8-cubic foot gas-electric refrigerator. The freezer compartment has an optional icemaker. The door to the refrigerator has compartments for just about anything. The shelf dividers are designed to accommodate large containers such as gallon milk jugs or 2-liter bottles of soda. The cook will really like the double pantry compartments beside the fridge. The upper pantry at eye level is 23-inches deep, 9 inches wide, and 30 inches high. You can move the adjustable shelf to accommodate your grocery list. The lower pantry is a slide-out with three shelves.

The 2014 Allegro Breeze 32 BR matches its big brothers when it comes to entertainment. The standard mid-section television is a 37-inch Panasonic HDTV. Housed in a unique drop-down-from-the-ceiling location, the 24-inch bedroom television is standard. Watching television in bed in the Breeze's cozy bedroom is pretty neat.

To improve the standard surround sound option in the living area, the TMH audio team opted for six speakers in the ceiling. Four of the speakers are dedicated to the surround sound feature with the mid-section TV. The other two speakers give more depth to the sound system tied to the front TV. New for 2014, the Breeze offers an *outside 32-inch television* in the passenger side slide-out wall.

The entertainment center is powered by a Panasonic 1000-watt system with "Wi-Fi Built-in" to provide access to web content, including Bloomberg TV, Netflix, Twitter, Cinema Now, Pandora Internet Radio, Vudu, Fox Sports, Picasa Web Albums, and YouTube videos. Your Wi-Fi connection can be supplied by



Verizon's 4G network MiFi air card. By the end of 2013, Verizon expects to have approximately 98 percent coverage in the U.S.

With its Blu-ray™/DVD Home Theater System feature, the Panasonic unit can support 3D/full HD content and playback. A DirecTV receiver is now standard with the satellite option. A subscription is required.

With the Integrated Universal Dock for iPod and iPhone, plus an SD Card slot, you can launch your personal digital music collection as well as videos and photos stored on these devices. All of the above equipment is now located in one of the storage compartments above the bed.

While traveling in the Breeze, you will enjoy the *XM receiver in the dash radio*, now standard equipment for 2014. It has a separate antenna and its own stereo speakers in the upper left and right corners of the cockpit. After a six month free introduction, a nominal monthly subscription is required.

The mid-section bath divides the coach. The new for 2014 *shower stall* on the starboard side measures 24 × 39-inches. This year it features a seat, a decorative rainglass door and enclosure, a skylight, and an LED ceiling light. On the port side, the water closet has to be one of the best designed in the RV industry. You might think that in a downsized Class A design, the water closet might get slighted for space. Not here. A corner-mounted commode takes advantage of the floor space for its larger and taller patrons. The vanity has a solid surface countertop with a molded, integrated lavatory and a pump-style faucet. A window and 3-speed ceiling exhaust fan takes care of the air flow. A corner cabinet with mirror provides ample space for milady's toiletries, and a smaller 2-shelf cabinet will serve her consort. Vanity lighting over the mirror and two ceiling lights make it a brightly lit

compartment. A hand towel ring is mounted above the solid surface countertop and three towel bars are mounted in the door.

The vanity provides access to both plumbing and electrical service. Space for your trash can and access to the drain valve for the water line is immediately under the lavatory. The door to the left conceals the 110v and DC breaker panels, with each breaker clearly labeled.

A new feature veteran RVers will notice immediately is the *locking device for the pocket privacy doors* enclosing the bathroom. The earlier design required pushing a sliding bar mounted on the door into a floor slot. Now located at doorknob level, a two-finger recessed slot slides down to retract a spring-loaded rod inside the vertical member of the door's frame. When the rod is extended, it seats in a receiving hole in the carriage rail above. Both sliding doors have very sturdy frames and thick translucent glass. The system is another example of excellent TMH design.

The Breeze's bedroom is just right. A queen-size bed, four closets, 18 drawers, two compartments over the bed, and a cavity under the bed (7 cu.ft) large enough to return home with three months' worth of souvenirs and collectibles.

Let's talk about closet space. The largest clothes closet (it's behind the water closet and faces into the bedroom) is 37.5 inches wide, 22 inches deep, and 44 inches high. When Carolyn plans her hanging wardrobe for the climate to which we are going, that much space is a gracious plenty. Then she's got at least 10 drawers for all of her folding clothes and shoes. The other three closets (some would call them "shirt closets") are each 12 inches wide



and 44 inches high. Multiplied times three, now I have a closet 36 inches wide. Blankets, heavy coats, extra linens, etc. will go in the cavity under the bed. It's almost unbelievable how much closet and drawer space Tiffin designed into the bedroom area.

### **In the Driver's Seat**

Driving the Allegro Breeze is downright fun. During our three-week trip last October, we spent hours talking about its pros and cons. It's easy to back into a camping site, turn a 90-degree corner in city driving, do a U-turn on a 4-lane highway, and if necessary, use it as your transportation to dinner. It's as easy to drive as a Chevy Suburban.

I had not driven the 2014 Breeze prototype before working on this review, so I wanted to experience the results of the new independent front suspension (IFS) along with the modification to the steering system. The improvements made a significant difference. On a straight stretch of road at 60 mph, I took my hands off of the steering wheel and the coach continued to run straight as an arrow. There is almost zero wandering. From that beginning, I drove for the next 45 minutes through the hills and dales of Franklin County. The coach maintained an even speed effortlessly in the hill country. The IFS has improved tremendously the coach's handling. It is steady and firm. As you move into curves, the ride height adjusters keep the coach level.

The Navistar V8 power plant is doing its job well. You know you have 240 horses pulling when you leave the stop light – solid, even power application through the 6-speed Allison transmission. From a 10 mph roll, as if you were on an interstate ramp, we hit 60 mph in 26.1 seconds on a slight downhill grade. From a level start, we pulled 0 to 60 in 35.3 seconds. On a long hill ( 0.7 miles) with a 5 percent grade, our speed dropped approximately 15 percent. The Breeze was not designed to be a racehorse, but it is a solid performer in any kind of terrain and road conditions.

### **Feedback from Breeze Owners**

Feedback from Breeze owners over the last two years has often focused on handling. While air bags have been standard from the beginning, the Breeze needed more engineering to handle

rough roads and to deal with wandering (too much driver correction needed at the wheel). Since Tiffin builds the PowerGlide chassis, these corrections were made by TMH engineering. The 2014 Breeze now has *independent front suspension* and *modifications to the steering ratios*. What was a good driving coach last year is now an excellent driving coach.

One owner I spoke with said his Ford F-150 was too heavy to pull behind his Breeze. I can understand why – it's half as big as the Breeze! After pulling my 3,500-pound Saturn L-300 on a 330-mile trip behind the Breeze I tested last October, I decided a lighter, more efficient car made sense. I bought a Mercedes-Benz Smart Car that weighs 1,700 pounds and installed a Blue Ox tow system that was custom-designed for the Smart Car. *Result:* (1) I hardly knew it was back there. (2) It tied in perfectly with our concept and purpose of downsizing. (3) It, too, was fun to drive.

### **Deciding If the Breeze Is Your Niche**

We all have different reasons for owning a motorhome. After writing reviews on nearly every motorhome built by Tiffin, we boiled it down to which one worked for us. Our purpose is to see, learn, and enjoy the beauty and history of our country. We love to hike and be outdoors. But we want to get from point A to point B in an affordable degree of luxury and driving comfort. We have never gone on vacations where we stayed in one hotel after another as we traveled, or stayed in a destination hotel for a week. The motorhome provides *our* personal living quarters, *our* kitchen, *our* bathroom, and *our* bed. We can prepare healthy meals and know who slept here last night. The Breeze is short enough to fit in any state park campground. And it gets the best gas mileage of any coach in Tiffin's lineup. The big Class A's are great machines and I love traveling in them. But if you find yourself in agreement with the above statements, then the Breeze may be your niche. If you are thinking this way, read on.

### **Take the Breeze for a Test Drive – You'll Love the Cockpit**

It takes about three minutes to memorize where everything is



located in the Breeze cockpit. That, of course, will help keep your eyes on the road when you are underway.

Here's the configuration. On the *left console* under the window, you will see the HWH air leveling system. The Breeze does not have jacks and you will like this system. Next is the electronic gear shifter for the Allison 6-speed automatic transmission with lockup, then the 4-way directional control for the mirror.

The *upper left dash* houses the parking brake, windshield wiper and spray control, and an AC vent. The *upper right dash* houses a second AC vent for the driver.

The *lower left dash* presents five toggle switches for the engine brake, lights, panel lamps, auxiliary start, and pedals in and out.

Three adjustable features help create the most comfortable driving position for any driver, regardless of height. Usually found on far more expensive coaches, the pedal control switch moves the brake and gas pedals closer to you or farther out, adjusting for drivers of any height. With the 8-way adjustable driver's chair, you will find the right position for your legs and back. And, the steering column scopes in and out and tilts to the angle that fits best to your hands, wrists, and forearms.

The *lower right dash* has six toggle switches in easy-to-

remember positions: driver fan, solar shade, night shade, gen start, map light, and radio master switch.

The primary gauges, of course, have a lighted display, all of which are very easy to read – no squinting required. The large gauges are the MPH / KPH, RPM, air pressure (for the leveling system and air ride), and fuel. Thirteen color warning icons are out of sight and will come to life only if you need a specific one to identify a problem.

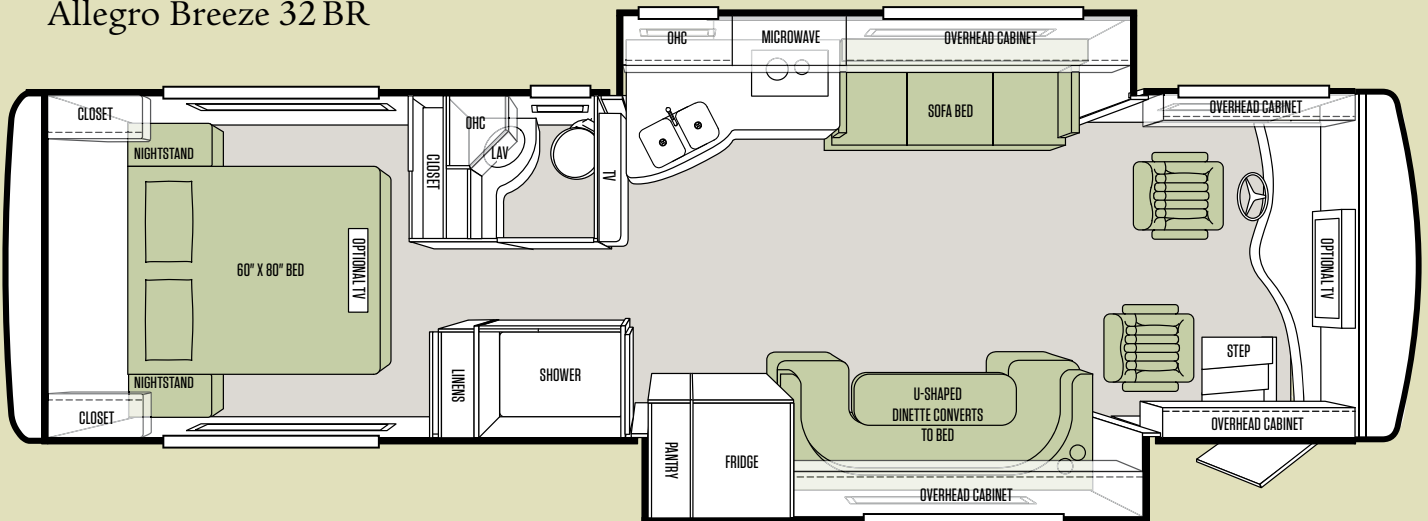
A 1.25 × 4-inch LED standard display (white background with black letters) offers a trip meter, average fuel economy, the odometer, and the current time. A wide variety of reports from the computer system will appear automatically if needed.

A test drive is not a spin around the block. Tell your sales consultant you need at least 30 minutes. Plan the route for as many different driving conditions as possible. If the Breeze fits your purpose for RVing, you had better be ready to sign on the line when you get back from the test drive – because you are going to fall in love with it.

Scan the QR code for a full review of the Breeze's basement and infrastructure plus the new exterior television option.



## Allegro Breeze 32 BR



# SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested, 2014 Allegro Breeze 32 BR, Two Slides, Base MSRP\* – \$195,750. MSRP as tested with options – \$202,219.

Note: (PS) = passenger side  
(DS) = driver side

## STANDARD FEATURES

### Structural

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

### Automotive

Allison 1000 MH 6-speed transmission  
Navistar Maxx Force 7 V8 engine  
620 lb-ft torque @ 1400 rpm  
Four air bags  
Independent front suspension  
Exhaust brake  
Fog lights  
Daytime running lights

### Exterior

Fiberglass front & rear caps  
Tinted one-piece windshield  
6kw Onan® diesel generator  
Two 13,500 BTU low profile roof ACs  
(high efficiency)  
Quiet AC roof-ducted system  
Single electric step  
¾-inch thick single pane windows  
Horizontal mounted wipers  
Heated power mirrors  
Gel-coat fiberglass walls  
Full body paint  
Paint protective film  
Aluminum wheels  
Exterior patio lights  
Power patio awning  
Power entry door awning  
Slide-out awnings  
HWH automatic air leveling system  
Seamless, one-piece fiberglass composite slide-out box construction  
Convenient storage doors with gas shocks  
Ridged long-life storage boxes  
Exterior storage compartment lights  
Single handle lockable storage door latches  
Heated water and holding tank compartments  
Two 6v auxiliary batteries  
Park telephone ready  
Digital/analog TV antenna  
Cable ready TV  
50-amp service  
Battery Minder Plus  
Black holding tank flush system  
Exterior rinse hose/shower  
Back-up camera with color dash monitor  
Side cameras activated by turn signals  
Inverter for televisions & entertainment center only  
110v exterior receptacle  
110v/12v converter  
Undercoating  
Roof ladder  
External tripod satellite hook-up  
  
Driver's Compartment  
Non-powered cloth passenger & driver seats (Flexsteel®)

Lighted instrument panel  
Back-up monitor  
Contemporary styled dash  
Single CD player & stereo AM/FM radio  
XM receiver and antenna  
Two 12v dash receptacles  
Dash gauges with diagnostic system  
Tilt/telescope steering wheel  
Adjustable gas & brake pedals  
Auxiliary start  
Cruise control  
Dual dash fans  
Power solar & privacy shades for windshield  
Roll-Ease® solar & privacy shades for driver & passenger side windows  
Fire extinguisher  
Snack tray with two cupholders

### Living Area/Dinette

Dinette sleeper lounge with Halo Leather with Blu-ray DVD player  
Storage drawer in sleeper lounge  
66" Cloth jack knife sofa–DS  
Mid-section LCD TV

### Kitchen

Single lever satin nickel sink faucet  
Double bowl stainless steel sink with solid surface countertop covers  
Solid surface countertops  
Solid surface backsplashes and splash guard  
Dual burner cooktop  
Convection-microwave oven with exterior venting  
Double door gas/electric refrigerator freezer  
3-shelf slide-out pantry  
Single door vertical pantry (2 shelves)

### Bath

Medicine cabinet  
Skylight in shower  
LED light in shower  
Satin nickel vanity faucet  
Toilet compartment with lavatory  
Solid surface countertop  
Fiberglass shower with rainglass enclosure and door  
3-speed exhaust fan  
Vanity lighting  
LED ceiling lights

### Bedroom

37-inch wide double door wardrobe with five drawers underneath  
Three 12-inch wide shirt closets (44" high)  
Four large drawers in bed pedestal  
Nine 23-inch long drawers (7" wide x 5" deep)  
Bedroom TV  
Bed comforter with four matching pillows  
Memory foam queen mattress  
Two windows with solar / privacy shades  
Carbon monoxide detector  
LPG leak detector  
Phone jack  
110v outlets in bedside tables

### General Interior

English chestnut interior hardwood finish  
Self-locking pocket door hardware  
High gloss raised panel hardwood cabinet doors  
Vinyl headliner  
Solid hardwood cabinet faces & drawer fronts  
Wall-to-wall vinyl tile flooring throughout coach  
Ball bearing drawer slides  
Scotchgard® treated carpet & fabrics  
Roll-Ease® solar & privacy shades in living area windows  
LED lighting throughout coach  
Two power roof vents  
Tank level monitor system  
Smoke detector  
6-gallon DSI gas/electric water heater  
Two 30,000 BTU ducted furnaces

## OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Power driver & passenger seats with Halo leather  
DE (jack knife) sofa, Halo leather  
15,000 AC with heat pump (front only)  
IPO 13,500 AC  
Automatic satellite  
Vacuum cleaner system  
Ice maker in refrigerator  
Exterior TV  
Front OH TV

## OTHER OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

Ivory cream solid cabinet fronts, doors, and drawer fronts  
Medium alderwood solid cabinet fronts, doors, and drawer fronts

## MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 202"  
Overall length – 33'2"  
Overall height with roof air – 11' 2"  
Interior height – 78"  
Overall width – 95"  
Interior width – 91"

## WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 23,500 lbs.  
Front GAWR – 8,500 lbs.  
Rear GAWR – 15,000 lbs.  
GCWR – 28,000 lbs.  
UVW – 20,018 lbs.  
CCC – 3,482 lbs.  
Trailer hitch capacity – 4,500 lbs.

## POWER TRAIN

Engine – V-8 Navistar Maxx Force 7  
Horsepower – 240 hp @ 2600 rpm  
Torque – 620 lb.ft. @ 1400 rpm  
Transmission – Allison 6-speed MH 1000  
Tire size – 265/70R 19.5, load range G  
Alternator – 170 amps

## CHASSIS

Frame – Full length ladder type design  
Frame design – Low floor, one-piece construction  
Anti-locking braking system – Standard  
4-wheel anti-lock brakes  
Suspension (front and rear) – Modified air rich  
Independent front suspension  
Shock absorbers – Sachs custom tuned  
Axles – **Front:** Heavy-duty Dana E-1007W. **Rear:** Dana S16-130 Rear  
Leveling – HWH Level Air system

## CONSTRUCTION

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

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – Four adults, two children  
Fuel tank – 65 gallons  
Fresh water – 70 gallons  
Black water – 30 gallons  
Grey water – 50 gallons  
LPG tank – 20 gallons (can be filled to 80% capacity)

## MSRP\*

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

## UVW

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

## DEALERS

To locate the Tiffin dealer nearest you, go to [www.tiffinmotorhomes.com](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 and optional equipment are subject to change without notice or obligation.



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## Nutrient-rich Food: Nature's Best Medicine

by Sylvia Tarnuzzer



Sometimes we are at or near retirement age as we begin the journey to considering and purchasing our first motorhome. This is also an age when we often begin to feel more aches and pains and may spend more time visiting the doctor's office. To fully enjoy the privileges and responsibilities of owning a motorhome, we need to be consistently finding ways to improve our health and make our food be our medicine of choice if at all possible.

As we age we begin searching for ways to feel better, have more energy, and move into the second half of life free from chronic illness. Unfortunately many of us weren't raised studying nutrition. We relied on our doctors to provide us information and education on how to live a healthy life. In today's world, doctors are sometimes more about finding a medication to prescribe for your medical condition rather than teaching patients to prevent illness.

Nutritionists, registered dietitians, and doctors who specialize in reversing disease through nutrition will tell you that food can be your medicine to heal many chronic diseases, including even advanced stages of cancer. If this is the case, why don't we hear more about it? According to an article in the *Examiner*, only about 30 to 40 percent of medical schools require doctors to take courses in nutrition. It's reported that 40 percent of medical students take only one course in nutrition and most of the time it's in their *first year*. This is shocking, especially when preparing for a career dedicated to the health and physical well being of their patients.

From a 1999 published report referenced by Dr. Colin Campbell, author of *The China Study*, the educational material provided to medical schools for their nutrition courses is produced by a conglomerate of meat, dairy, egg and drug companies. This isn't to say these companies may have a conflict of interest, just makes you wonder. According to the American Diabetes Association, if you're concerned with what to eat because you're diabetic, go see a registered dietician or nutritionist. If you're

concerned about the nutritional needs of your children, again, go see a registered dietician or nutritionist.

In the last article published in *RIS*, I mentioned how the fear of the unknown and the fear of change can be what causes people not to seek out ways to lose weight and get healthy. Unfortunately it becomes something of importance *after* we suffer from a chronic illness or have something tragic happen to us; this many times is too late. We need to focus now on making a choice to be healthy and avoid illness. Did you know your body is actually designed to heal itself? The more educated we are about how powerful our bodies are, the more we can make good choices to enhance the quality (and quantity) of our lives.

When we begin our journey into retirement and purchase a motorhome, or prepare one for the roads we will be traveling, we map things out. We plan, prioritize and even make sure the motorhome is in tiptop shape to cover the miles we will cross. We need to treat our bodies the same way. We consistently make certain the tires are in good shape on the RV and we get the annual maintenance done. Men in particular are more apt to take much better care of their vehicles and RVs than they do of themselves. Personal maintenance includes getting annual checkups and having the medications we are currently taking reviewed by our doctors and pharmacists. What we often don't think about is that we would never put cheap gas, diesel or oil in our expensive motorhomes; then why do we not take care of our own systems just as well and stop consuming things that may damage our internal organs?

There are several questions you should ask yourself when evaluating the healthiness of your current eating plan! Everyone wants to eat a healthier diet, but it can sometimes be difficult to know if your diet is healthy enough. There are a number of factors that go into creating a healthy diet, and it is important to evaluate the current state of your daily diet before embarking on a plan for healthier eating.

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**Editor's Note:** Is it possible to stay healthy while traveling in a motorhome or RV? The answer is absolutely YES with some good advice from a fellow Tiffin owner Sylvia Tarnuzzer, founder of RVHealthy, Inc. Sylvia is a Certified Health Coach who understands our traveling lifestyle and offers great advice on her website, [www.rvhealthy.com](http://www.rvhealthy.com), as well as in her weekly episodes on RVNN.TV.



Variety is one of the most important hallmarks of a healthy diet, since no one food contains all the nutrients needed by the human body. So ask yourself if you eat a wide variety of food. It is important to eat foods from all the major food groups, including grains and breads, fruits and vegetables, milk and dairy products, meats, beans and nuts. If you find yourself avoiding some food groups, such as vegetables for instance, it may be time to look for a healthier diet.

Eating a wide variety of grain-based products is important to a healthy diet. Grains and cereals contain a large number of important nutrients, including high levels of dietary fiber. It is important to choose whole grain products as often as possible, since products like wheat bread contain more nutrients than the more refined white bread. When eating cereal, it is a good idea to choose whole grain varieties, or those that are enriched with vitamins and minerals.

Are you eating enough fruits and vegetables? Most nutrition experts recommend eating between five and nine servings of fruits and vegetables every day, roughly equivalent to two cups of fruit and two cups of vegetables. Many people do not eat sufficient servings of fruits and vegetables daily. With spring upon us, there are hordes of juicy, tasty fruits that you can sink your teeth into. They are good for the nervous and respiratory systems and lead to healthier looking skin. They are approximately 80 percent water with high natural sugar giving energy to one and all when eaten fresh and ripe. While traveling in your motor-home, take time to stop at local farmer's markets. Following are some great fruit choices to gorge on this summer:

**Apricots:** This fruit is rich in potassium and magnesium, supplying stamina. Apricots contain vitamin C, iron and beta-carotene. They are fairly firm with a bright orange color when ripe. Unripe fruit can be stored for up to two days or so at room temperature before eating. Keeping them in the fridge will make them last a bit longer. Rinse and wash apricots before eating.

**Strawberries:** Buy sweet smelling strawberries that are red in color without any white or green spots. Strawberries are full of vitamin C, potassium, sodium and iron as well as being low in calories. Strawberries can be frozen up to twelve months whole or sliced, with or without sugar. Do not remove the stem of strawberries while storing them in the fridge. Before eating, rinse gently under cold running water.

**Raspberries:** This fruit is a good source of vitamin C, vitamin A and fiber. Raspberries are the most fragile of all the berries, so they have to be handled gently. Buy firm dry raspberries, avoiding soft ones. They are highly perishable and should be refrigerated if not eaten immediately. Gently rinse the raspberries under cold running water and dry them on paper towels before serving.

**Watermelons:** This fruit is extremely low in calories as they are mostly water. Watermelon is an excellent source of vitamin C and potassium and is high in pectin. To know whether the melon is sweet and ready to eat, thump it with the knuckles. If you hear a hollow sound, then the fruit is going to taste sweet. Watermelon has dark green skin and bright red flesh. Uncut fruit should be

## My Favorite No Sugar Raspberry Muffins

(without any refined sugar)

### Ingredients

1 1/2 cups oat flour  
1/2 cup spelt flour  
1 tsp baking powder  
1/2 cup shredded coconut  
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce  
1/3 cup pure organic maple syrup  
1/4 cup almond milk  
1 tsp vanilla  
1 egg  
2 tbsp coconut oil (melted)  
1 cup raspberries (or any other berry of your choice)

### Instructions


Preheat oven to 350. Mix all the dry ingredients in a medium bowl. Mix all the wet ingredients (except berries) in a small bowl. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and then fold in the berries. Spoon the batter into a greased or lined muffin pan. Bake for 15 minutes or until the top of the muffin is golden and inside is firm. Let cool for at least 15 minutes before removing from the pan. Enjoy! This is a great recipe to bring to the campsite to enjoy with your morning coffee.

stored in a cool place, while cut watermelon should always be tightly wrapped, refrigerated and used within a day or so.

**Cherries:** Dark cherries are extremely high in nutritional value and are packed with enzymes, vitamins, and minerals. Buy heavy firm cherries with bright color and a fresh stem. They last for only a couple of days so eat them quickly. You should chill them as it not only preserves them, but also makes them more flavorful. Simply rinse cherries in cool water and drain on paper towel before eating.

**Pineapples:** This fruit is a storehouse of minerals, potassium, sodium, phosphorus, magnesium, sulfur, calcium and iron. Pineapples have loads of vitamin C and are an excellent source of bromelain, an enzyme that helps digestion. The best tasting pineapple is the one with a strong, sweet aroma. The fruit skin should be a dark golden color; leaves should be fresh and green with no brown or yellow tips. They ripen at room temperature.

**Peaches:** This fruit is a rich source of beta-carotene and potassium and contains moderate amounts of vitamin C. Buy bright colored, firm peaches with a smooth skin and sweet aroma. They can ripen at room temperature so it is ideal to refrigerate the ripe ones and eat them within five days.

Summer is here and that means getting back into camping and traveling mode. Shop those local farmer's markets along the way to your destination for the cleanest, freshest, nutrient-rich fruit and vegetables available. You will be bringing the quality and freshness your family deserves to your table. By patronizing local farmers and farmer's markets, we are also creating jobs, so go shop and support your community and stimulate our economy while you make healthy food choices! 



### The Lincoln Highway

The best selling author of *Route 66* and a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer celebrate America's first transcontinental highway in all its neon glory. Taking you from east to west, Michael Wallis has written an ode to a bygone era, guiding us across the true spine of our country to explore vintage diners, Art Deco landmarks, traditional sites, and funky roadside attractions. Michael S. Williamson has provided hundreds of photos, vividly illustrating both the past and the present.

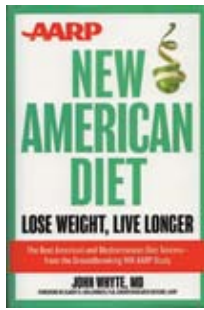
It began in 1913 with a glorious, new highway stretching across 3,389 miles and 13 states—connecting the bright lights of Broadway to the foggy shores of San Francisco. A meandering road, it enticed millions to hop into their Model Ts and explore the rapidly fading frontier.

The Lincoln Highway: it was the road to Gettysburg, Notre Dame, Chicago, the Great Plains, the Great Salt Lake, and the Gold Rush Trail. It was the black ribbon of asphalt that threw America open to curious travelers. Within a few years, it would become the perfect symbol of American roadside culture. Conceived by Carl G. Fischer, the founder of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the highway was promoted by Henry B. Joy, president of Packard Motor Car Company, who proposed that the coast-to-coast highway become a memorial to President Abraham Lincoln. The notion of the new highway proved so popular that more than 100,000 travelers made their way to the dedication, a nationwide celebration in 1916 in LaPorte, Indiana.

As grand as the inaugural seemed, and even though guidebooks proclaimed the virtues of this new thoroughfare, the era of "named roadways" was fast disappearing, and being replaced by numbered highways more easily traced on maps.

In the early 1980s a generation of travelers was attracted to new scenic byways identified and advertised by many states. Then a few historians retrieved the Lincoln Highway from dusty guidebooks and created a new interest by decorating the old route with official Lincoln Highway state signs. The Lincoln is now undergoing a national renaissance, once again aglow with neon and rich in historical lore.

Following the Lincoln Highway at their own pace, motorhome enthusiasts will have a front seat to relive the formative period of America's fascination with motorcar and RV travel.



### AARP New American Diet

In response to research by AARP and the National Institute of Health (NIH), Dr. John Whyte offers guidelines for implementing healthy changes in your diet and lifestyle.

So many issues regarding the connection between our daily diet, our lifestyle, and our health have been addressed in different ways by different people over the last several decades that many of us are confused about the facts. We want to live a healthy lifestyle, but how? What are the effects of drinking coffee? Diet soda? Red wine? Should red meat be included in our diet? Can limiting carbohydrates cause weight loss? Is a high-protein diet the best solution to weight loss? Which fats should be avoided and

which consumed for optimum health? Should we be concerned about high-fructose corn syrup in processed foods? How much can I weigh and still be healthy? What role does exercise play in my over-all health? The New American Diet addresses all of these food and health questions, and many more.

Dr. Whyte is a board-certified internist and serves as the vice president for health and medical education at the Discovery Channel. He was asked by AARP and NIH to document and interpret this largest-ever study of the American diet and lifestyle. The study spans a 25-year period and is based on the participation of more than half a million people. In addition, 16 pages of additional references are given at the end of the book. It is not just about weight loss, but also addresses becoming healthier by filling your body each day with nutrients that have been shown to reduce disease and prolong life.

*AARP New American Diet* offers information about the basics of nutrition, brain health, reducing the risk of disease, using vitamin and mineral supplements, and dealing with emotional eating. Numerous personal examples are shared throughout the book, along with guidance for evaluating your own physical well-being. Lists of foods to avoid and those to include in a healthy diet are given, along with a diet plan for seven days, 14 days, or a month, complete with recipes.

The book presents a proven way to develop healthy eating habits and live well every day.



### Tiffin Motorhomes Wins Tenth Quality Circle Award

On behalf of Tiffin Motorhomes, General Manager Tim Tiffin receives the 2012 Quality Circle Award at the National RV Trade Show in November. The Recreational Vehicles Dealer Association conducts the annual Dealer Satisfaction Index (DSI) each year to evaluate man-

ufacturers on eight core areas: sales support, sales territory, vehicle design, vehicle reliability/quality, parts support, dealership warranty support, and overall dealer communications. Tiffin Motorhomes was one of six manufacturers to receive the Quality Circle Award for 2012.

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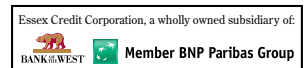
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# Using Nutraceuticals for Your Pets

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

What exactly are nutraceuticals? A nutraceutical is a compound found in food and herbs. Nutraceuticals are not considered to be nutrients like vitamins and minerals, but they may have a beneficial healing impact on certain physical problems. Most people are familiar with some of the more common nutraceuticals such as chondroitin glucosamine with MSM for joint health and treatment of arthritis, and antioxidants that are used to prevent cancer.

Nutraceuticals can also be used to treat dogs or cats; actually, they have been in use for decades in both humans and animals. Hopefully by using nutraceuticals you can prevent certain diseases and avoid the use of conventional medication. Nutraceuticals provide a unique chemical reaction that can help in the body's healing processes. These products are very safe but, to make sure no reactions occur, you should consult with your veterinarian if your pet is taking conventional medication.

I will try to de-mystify these products by explaining how they work. The most common nutraceutical is glucosamine chondroitin with MSM. It is absorbed by the body and aids in the production of thick and viscous joint fluid which protects joints by acting as a lubricant. The chondroitin included in this supplement plays an important role in the production of cartilage. So glucosamine chondroitin helps in the repair of joint cartilage. MSM, the third ingredient, has anti-inflammatory properties and releases hydrolyzing enzymes which improve the flexibility and elasticity of the joint.

Hyaluronic acid is another component in joint supplements that chemically is the same as joint fluid but is not absorbed

well by the body. Herbs are also used in treatment of joint disease. Boswellia is an herb that helps stop the breakdown of joint fluid. Yucca, curcumin and corydalis are also used for joints.

Another supplement used extensively in joint therapy is Omega 3 fatty acid that acts as an anti-inflammatory. Omega 3 fatty acid with fish oil also helps in skin conditions affecting your dog or cat.

There are nutraceuticals that contain glucosamine, lactobacillus, and digestive enzymes that promote intestinal well being. Yogurt is also a good product to promote intestinal health.

If your pet is suffering from liver disease such as hepatitis or cirrhosis, the supplement 5 adenosyl will help since it contains milk thistle and antioxidants which protect liver cells from toxins. It can also reduce damage done to liver cells by any prescription drug.

Denestra is another nutraceutical which helps to restore healing to liver cells by increasing glutathione production, a naturally occurring antioxidant that promotes liver cell regeneration. It also helps relieve joint pain and arthritis.

Pro Quiet is a product that helps maintain the nervous system. It contains tryptophan which acts as a mild sedative, just like we feel after that big turkey dinner at Thanksgiving. It can be used to calm one's pet during travel.

Enisyl F is an oral paste containing L-Lysine and is used in treatment of the feline herpes virus. This virus causes recurrent ulceration in the mouth and eyes. L-Lysine decreases the healing time of ulcers in cats.

Some people recommend the use of garlic for flea prevention. Unfortunately, use of garlic or onions in felines will cause destruction of red blood cells, resulting in severe anemia.

Over-dosing of vitamin D can lead to liver toxins so it is best to consult with your veterinarian regarding whether your pet needs these supplements and how much they need. If a little is good, a lot does not mean better results. More problems can result from over-dosing of vitamins than under-dosing. Water soluble vitamins like B12 or vitamin C will be excreted in the urine. Vitamin A and vitamin D will build up in the liver and cause problems.

As you can see, there is a definite place for the use of nutraceuticals in your pet care. These products do help but can also be limiting in certain diseases and you may have to resort to conventional medicine. Always consult with your veterinarian before starting any nutraceutical to ensure that no adverse reaction or nullification of medications occurs.

Happy Travels,  
John & Kay

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

# Living Life to the Fullest

ANNE & WAYNE: CAREERS IN SURGICAL NURSING, COMPUTER SCIENCE, AND AVIATION

## An 11-Day Air-Land Odyssey from Georgetown, Texas to Oshkosh, Wisconsin: Excerpts from Their Diary

Wayne Smith grew up in Middlesboro, Kentucky, a town sitting almost on the point where Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee touch each other, where colonists finally found the breach in the Appalachians at Cumberland Gap to push their way into the country's heartland. When he graduated from high school in 1953, he enrolled at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee, just five miles away.

As an aviation cadet, Wayne left LMU after his freshman year and went straight into pilot training. After several years in the Air Force, he had flown nearly everything the military owned including five versions of jet trainers ending with the T-38, the F-100 fighter jet, and three of the great cargo planes of the 1950s and '60s, including the C-124 Globemaster II.

While stationed at Craig Air Force Base in Selma, Alabama, Wayne met Anne Cathey, who had just returned home from Auburn University in 1962 after earning a degree in business administration. Their relationship soon led to marriage later that year, and Wayne found himself at a crossroads: a career in commercial aviation looked promising but you were always away from home several days each week. Anne was hoping Wayne would return to college and find a career that would keep him closer to home. Since her alma mater was just 100 miles from Selma, Wayne decided Auburn was a good choice. He earned a degree in math, then a master's in computer science from Georgia Tech, and later got his doctorate in computer science from the University of Illinois.

At the time Anne graduated with her degree in business, positions for women in corporate America were scarce. There was definitely a glass ceiling and it was low. Several of her girl friends who were RNs were having no difficulty in finding jobs wherever they located. While Wayne taught at West Georgia College, Anne enrolled in Georgia State and earned an associates degree in nursing. While he taught a little later at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee, Anne picked up her bachelor's degree in nursing. As Wayne climbed a career ladder in teaching computer science, Anne continued with her studies, earning a master's degree in nursing from Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas, and a doctorate in nursing from the



University of Alabama's Medical School in Birmingham.

Wayne's career in teaching peaked at Mississippi State in Starkville. Anne became director of surgical nursing at Starkville's largest hospital. Along the academic trail, the couple started their family. They have two daughters. Leigh Anne in High Point, North Carolina, has one son, Lee, now 23. Erin lives in Dallas and has a daughter, Suzanne, who is 5½. Wayne and Anne just recently returned from a trip where Suzy went camping for the first time without her mama.

Wayne retired from MSU in 1997, and shortly after Anne retired from Oktibbeha County Hospital. They decided that seeing the country in the comfort of their own motorhome was a lifestyle they would enjoy. "We were also looking for a place to settle," Wayne said. "Our Dallas daughter, Erin, was living in Austin at the time and recommended that we check out Del Webb Sun City in nearby Georgetown. We did, liked it, and bought a house where we have lived for 12 years. Shortly after that Erin moved to Dallas. Now that Suzy is in the picture, she wishes we lived closer."

After a two-year experience with another brand that did not go well, Wayne asked a friend who had an Allegro Bus if he was pleased with his coach. "He was very happy with the coach and even more happy with the company," Wayne said. That review

convinced him, and they bought an Allegro Bay 34-ft. in 1999. Over the next 12 years the Smiths logged 80,000 in 48 states. “We don’t count a state on our list unless we have camped at least one night there,” Wayne said.

In 2011 they traded for a new Allegro 32BA. “There was really nothing wrong with our 1999 model,” he said. “We just wanted some of the upgrades that were available on the 2011.” So far the Smiths have put another 20,000 miles on their new rig.

This year they are planning to spend at least six weeks in the Four Corners region. “We plan to make our trip a very leisurely one,” Wayne said. “If we are not impressed favorably with a place, we’ll move on. If we really like an area, we may stay a week.”

One of their favorite destinations is Big Bend National Park in south Texas. “We try to get to Big Bend at least once a year,” Anne said. “We really enjoy dry camping in the area’s arid climate.”

Anne strongly recommended to our readers a Corps of Engineers park near her home town of Selma. “The Prairie Creek Campground is on the Alabama River between Selma and Montgomery,” she noted. “It is situated on the Bob Woodruff Lake formed by the dam. You will be camping under beautiful, moss-draped oaks.”

At 78, Wayne’s enthusiasm for flying may be on an upswing. “Seven years ago I bought into a partnership with three other

pilots who owned a J-3 Cub,” he explained. “Eventually the other three wanted to sell and now I own the plane outright.”

During the partnership, the owners restored the Cub, taking it down to the frame and rebuilding it from the ground up. “They asked me to be the first to fly it after the restoration, and I jumped at the opportunity,” Wayne smiled. “I flew circles around the airport for nearly an hour!” The fabric-covered plane is painted in the style of the military version L-4.

Wayne is also a civilian flight instructor and a glider instructor. He works with the glider club one day each month flying the club’s airplane to tow gliders aloft.

The Oshkosh AirVenture is an annual event in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to which thousands of pilots fly in to see and be seen in hundreds of different aircraft. Counting the trip last year with Anne following on the ground in their Allegro 32BA, Wayne has flown his 1946 L-4 twice to the event. “As you will notice as you read the diary, the trip was well planned in order to have an airport with hanger and a campground nearby,” he said. “The L-4 holds just 12 gallons of fuel and burns four gallons per hour. Unless I have a tail wind, it cruises at about 65 miles per hour.”

The diary was too long to publish in its entirety so Wayne edited it down to the days he thought his readers would find most interesting.

## A Cub goes to Oshkosh

**Preparation and Planning:** The year 2012 was the 75th anniversary of the Piper J-3 Cub. The Cub Club in conjunction with the Experimental Aircraft Association and the Vintage Aircraft Association had plans for a large gathering of Cubs at Airventure in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to celebrate the occasion. As the owner of a 1946 L-4 (a J-3 Cub in military paint), this sounded like something that would be a lot of fun. I really wanted to fly the Cub to Oshkosh, but it is a long way from Georgetown, Texas, to Oshkosh. Anne also wanted to attend, but she is not fond of sleeping in a tent at the Oshkosh airport. One way we could accomplish the trip would be to take both the Cub and our Allegro 32BA. That way we could both attend Oshkosh while having comfortable accommodations each night. But that would present a problem: I would have to fly the Cub alone and Anne would have to drive the Allegro by herself. Although Anne drives the motorhome even while towing our Jeep Liberty, she has never done it without me in the coach. She has never refueled the vehicle alone, nor set up the motorhome by herself. Could she do it?

The Cub only cruises at about 65 mph and needs to land after about two hours for fuel. Since we each would be traveling alone, we decided that about four driving hours would be a good day. Each travel day would begin by breaking camp and driving to the airport where the Cub had spent the night. I would help with getting Anne on the road, and we would top off the motorhome fuel before Anne dropped me off. She would then start on her way while I got airborne. After refueling for my second flight of each day, Anne and I should arrive at our overnight destination at about the same time. She could park and set up the RV while I serviced the Cub and made arrangements for overnight parking. Anne would then pick me up at the airport in the Jeep. We could then relax and play tourist for a day or two before starting it all again. Each evening we would plan for the next day’s journey with Anne using Street Atlas on our laptop. During travel, she would have a GPS to assist with routing. For flight preparation I used an iPad with Foreflight software to plan the next flight. In flight I relied on the iPad and Foreflight for navigation.

It all sounded like a good plan, but was it practical? The only way to find out was to try a short trip near home. We decided on a site about 350 miles away at Fort Clark Springs in Bracketville, Texas. The resort is located on an old Army post that has a grass runway from WWII. It also has a hangar and an excellent campground. Anne drove there directly and I flew with fuel stops at Kerrville and Uvalde. Other than Anne having a little trouble getting the tow car unhitched, everything worked as planned. We were pleased



with our “shake-down” cruise and were ready to begin planning for the “real deal” — going to Air-Venture 2012.

**Leg 1: June 29: Georgetown, TX to Lake Murray State Park, OK**

**Wayne:** I departed Georgetown at 7:15, and arrived at the plane for take-off at 8:44. I climbed to 3500 feet with smooth air and a 5 to 10 knot tailwind. I landed at Parker County airport for fuel. A local pilot volunteered to help me with the engine start (the Cub has no battery and must be started by hand). Then on to Lake Murray, which was the only stop on the trip that had an airport and a campground located in the same park. I taxied to the parking area and completed the tie down just as Anne arrived to pick me up.

**Anne:** On the road again! I had very little traffic until Ft. Worth. We stopped at a rest area just for a break for Tessa and me. Tessa is our 12-year-old West Highlands White Terrier. We had a light lunch and were back on the road in



a very short time. I arrived at Lake Murray State Park about 1:00 p.m., picked up Wayne at the airstrip and found a campsite. The park is old with lots of CCC buildings. The camp sites are small, but we found a back-in with lots of shade—very important due to the 100+ temperature.

**Leg 3: July 1: Tonkawa, OK to Lawrence, KS**

**Wayne:** Up early, for a quick start. Weather was wonderful, and the airplane almost seemed to fly itself—all I had to do was sit back and watch the world pass beneath my wings. The visibility was great, and the icing on the cake was the 20 knot tail wind which gave the little Cub a ground speed of over 85 knots (93 mph). After refueling at Eureka, I lost most of the tail wind

but it was an easy flight of about an hour to Lawrence. I landed, taxied to the Flight Office (FBO), and waited for Anne to come pick me up.

**Anne:** A quick bite to eat at the truck stop while refueling the RV and then to the airport. Wayne did his pre-flight, and we were “on the road again.” I-35 turned into a toll road when we entered Kansas. Tessa and I arrived at the Lawrence Jellystone Campground about noon. The airport is just across the highway from the RV park. It was so nice to have 50-amp electrical service. The RV cooled off for the first time since we left Georgetown.

**Leg 4: July 2: Lawrence, KS to Kansas City, MO**

**Wayne:** It would be a pretty easy day to get to Kansas City for a short family reunion for the Fourth of July. We got to the Lawrence airport about 10:15 and I was airborne about 10:30. The Noah’s Arc airport is very close to my sister’s house in Lake Quivira, Kansas. This is a private airport, but my brother-in-law arranged for me to land there and found a hangar that I used for the six days I was there (the Cub is covered with fabric, so hail storms and wind are bad news). When I landed, my sister was waiting for me. I taxied to a fuel truck and filled the Cub. Then I got a start from a local pilot and taxied to the hangar.

**Anne:** After dropping Wayne off at the Lawrence airport I started for Lake Quivira. Our GPS programmed us to go the back roads into Kansas City. I didn’t realize that Kansas was so hilly. The RV park we selected was difficult to find and I drove right by it, but found it on the second pass. On Tuesday, we joined lots of relatives at Wayne’s sister’s home for a six-day visit in Lake Quivira and enjoyed a wonderful Fourth of July celebration.

**Leg 6: July 10: Maryville, MO to Winterset, IA**

**Wayne:** While in Kansas City we discovered a leaking leveling jack on the RV. So our next leg was to be a short trip to pre-position for a trip to the HWH factory on Wednesday to get the jack repaired. We took our time getting to the airport, with the result that I got airborne about 10:00. The flight was pretty uneventful except that at 2500 feet I actually felt a little chilly. After I landed, one of the local pilots, Greg, had an empty hangar that he offered me for the night. This was the first leg where I had arrived before Anne did; she arrived about 30 minutes later.

**Anne:** Tessa and I had a stair step route from Maryville, Missouri to Winterset, Iowa: first, east, then north, followed by repetitions of this pattern several more times before arriving in Winterset. Since Wayne arrived first, I decided to pick him up at the airport before going to the campground. This was one of those times on the trip when I wondered WHY I let him talk me into participating in this adventure. The airport was on 8th Street and shortly after I turned onto 8th Street, the pavement ended and the road be-

came very narrow. By the time I reached the entry to the airport, I was in tears. I stopped the RV, called Wayne on the iPhone and asked, “Where are you?” He said he could see me from his location and told me to just wait where I was and he would walk to me. We found the Winterset City Park Campground and got set up for the night. Next day we did some “sightseeing.” We saw the Stone Bridge where Francesca and Robert (Meryl Streep and Clint Eastwood) enjoyed their “getaway” picnic in the movie, “The Bridges of Madison County.” Wayne went on a short tour to visit John Wayne’s birthplace. While waiting for Wayne, I realized that Fons and Porter was located on the square, so I went quilt shopping.



**Leg 7: July 11: Winterset, IA to Muscatine, IA**

**Wayne:** When we arrived at the airport about 8:15, Greg was there to open the hangar and help me pull the Cub out. He wanted a few pictures in front of the FBO and then refused any pay for the hangar space the night before—nice guy. Climbing to 2500 feet, it was a wonderful day for flying. The air was smooth as silk, and once again the Cub almost flew itself. We had planned to stop at Iowa City, but that didn’t work out.



About half way to Pella I discovered there was a Temporary Flight Restriction for a presidential speech that included Iowa City, so a change of plans was needed. After I landed at Pella, I sent a text message to Anne asking her to stop and give me a call. She had stopped for lunch just minutes after I sent the text and called me right back. We discussed the situation and agreed to go to Muscatine, which was reasonably close to Moscow. From Pella to Muscatine I went up to 3000 feet, and had fun watching a crop duster below. It almost looked like a choreographed dance from the air above him. He did perfectly straight lines and wonderfully compact, steep, banked turns at the end. When I landed at Muscatine, Anne was waiting. We hangered the Cub and headed to Moscow to visit HWH.

**Anne:** After dropping Wayne off at the airport entrance, I had an easy 16 miles to the interstate and breezed through Des Moines with no problems. I stopped at a rest area north of Pella and replied to the text message from Wayne about the change of plan. I reprogrammed the GPS to Muscatine Municipal Airport. After Wayne took care of the L-4, we drove to Moscow and got the Allegro set up in a free site next to the HWH repair facility. We got in for service the next morning at 10:00. While we had lunch, HWH repaired the leaking jack (that was out of warranty) at no charge; very nice people to deal with. Since we now had some time to spare, we decided to spend a few days in eastern Iowa. We had read about the Amana colonies in a recent article in *Roughing It Smoothly*. The largest colony, Amana, has a wonderful campground with room



for over 400 RVs. Our site had a lovely large popular tree that shaded our Allegro. On Thursday, we took a bus tour of the colonies, and visited Bill Metz, who has a tin shop in the basement of his house. We also stopped at the Church of True Inspiration in Homestead and learned about the church's early history.

In a brochure, I discovered that Kalona just south of the Amana Colonies was having a bluegrass festival that weekend. Since we both play and enjoy bluegrass music, we relocated to the Windmill Ridge Campground in Kalona. It was



wonderful. We played a little bluegrass with some other campers and watched a couple of shows. We did a walking tour of downtown Kalona where there are 42 very colorful quilt square patterns painted on the sidewalks. On Saturday the main street was roped off a planned Tractorcade—over 200 tractors, ranging in age from 1932 to 2012. Back at the campground, we went for the afternoon bluegrass show. On Sunday, we took a driving tour of Washington County where many barns are also painted with quilt squares. Since I am a quilter, I really enjoyed this area in Iowa.

**Leg 9: July 17: Rock Falls, IL to Poplar Grove, IL**

**Wayne:** When we got up on Tuesday, the weather forecast was questionable for Wednesday, so we decided to cut short our stay at Rock Falls and go to Poplar Grove a day early. The flight was short and uneventful and we arrived shortly after noon. Poplar Grove is an aviation airpark that is home to Lon and Barb — two dear friends. It is also the first place I ever flew a Cub. For the last several years, we have made Poplar Grove a stop when we are on the way to Oshkosh. In fact, we have been there so often that Lon installed a 50-amp electrical circuit at his house for us to use when we visit every year. When Lon arrived home from work, we pushed the Cub into Lon's hangar. As it turned out, that was a very wise move.

**Anne:** I drove Wayne to the airport. Tessa and I waited until Wayne was airborne and then we got on I-80, heading east. At Poplar Grove we got set up in our friend's driveway and waited for them to get home from work. After dinner, the weather turned bad with a really windy thun-

derstorm. Winds of 70 miles per hour were reported with golf ball sized hail. Thank goodness for Lon's large hangar!

**Leg 10: July 20: Poplar Grove to Hartford**

**Wayne:** This was a big day — Cubs from all over the country were to gather at Hartford, Wisconsin, on Friday and Saturday in preparation for the "mass arrival" at Oshkosh on Sunday. In addition to my L-4, two other Cubs from Poplar Grove were planning to make the trip up to the staging area at Hartford. Three of us gathered at Lon's hangar at 8:00 am. Several neighbors came by to "prop" the Cub engines and to watch the departure. We took off from the grass runway with 30 second spacing between planes for a short, easy, beautiful flight. We were greeted upon landing at Hartford and given our welcome packets from the Cubs2Oshkosh group. We had dinner tickets, ball caps, and carry-all's, all decorated with the Cub's 75th Anniversary logo. Most of Saturday was spent visiting. After dinner, we received a departure briefing. The plan was to line the planes on both sides of the runway and then dispatch one plane every 30 seconds. All 75 planes were to fly line in trail to Oshkosh.

**Anne:** I hit the road to Hartford shortly after the planes were airborne from Poplar Grove. The planes arrived at Hartford about 30 minutes before I got there. Everyone dry camped in an area set aside for us near the flight line. Friday night was a traditional fish fry with all the trimmings — great food. On Saturday the evening meal was a "pig roast." After dinner and a departure briefing, we were entertained by a band playing in the hangar. The music was very good, but based on the proposed departure time at 5:50 a.m., most





everyone was in bed by ten. We were all up before five Sunday morning. After seeing Wayne to his plane, I went out to the runway to observe the departures. Lon and Wayne ended up as number 62 and 63 of the 75 Cubs going to Oshkosh.

**Leg 11: July 22: Hartford, WI to Oshkosh, WI**

**Wayne:** The final leg to AirVenture was an event to remember. I got to the plane about 5:15. There was lots of ground staff on hand to assist with ground traffic and to take care of the all-important propping of the airplanes. The first Cub departed at 5:50, then one plane every 30 seconds. A flagman at the north end of the runway would signal when the earlier plane was clear of the runway, and the next plane would be signaled to roll. The flight itself was pretty uneventful. It was a beautiful morning, the air was completely still, and the visibility was unlimited. As usual the little Continental A-65 engine just ticked along as I enjoyed the beautiful early morning scenery. I maintained spacing on the plane ahead and at times I could see as many as four or five of the planes ahead of me. The flight took about 40 minutes. We were the only planes authorized to arrive at Oshkosh at this time of the morning and we had the 8,000-foot Runway 36 all to ourselves. Due to the short interval between planes, the tower was using two runways—36 Left (actually a taxiway) and 36 Right. Planes alternated runway assignments, with one on the left, and the following plane on the right. I got lucky and drew the left runway. I exited the runway onto the grass and followed the flagmen to parking. Arriving at the parking area, I was met by several volunteers and given a welcome bottle of cold water. Welcome to Oshkosh AirVenture 2012. We had made it. Now we had a whole week to enjoy the greatest General Aviation Exposition in the world.

**Anne:** After taking pictures of the 75 Cubs-2Oshkosh departure, Tessa and I took off in the Allegro. Our trip was short and uneventful. We had pre-registered for a week of camping at Camp Scholer, so the arrival was quick and easy. After receiving our registration packet, I found a site in the Generator/Pet Area and started setting up for a week of dry camping. Wayne and Lon rode the bus out to the camping area and we had a light lunch. We were ready to enjoy AirVenture. **RIS**



**TIFFIN MANAGEMENT TEAM** *Continued from page 44*

Since the company's two western territories encompass such large land areas, TMH has established three field servicing operations that go directly to an owner's home or meet him at the nearest dealership. George regards the field service units as a major asset for western owners.

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- TMH builds a high quality product.
- The company is committed to taking care of its owners.
- If the company makes a mistake, they will stand behind their product and make it right.
- "In the modern era of Class A motor-

home manufacturing, only one founder is left," George said. "Bob Tiffin is an icon in our industry, and you can learn a lot by observing how he has lived his life."

"After we get the boys through college, Kim and I are looking forward to owning a Tiffin motorhome and seeing this great country up close," he smiled. **RIS**

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# The Canadian



# Rockies



**I**N THE EARLY 1960s TWO OF MY UNCLES FROM Virginia bought Shasta trailers and with their wives took off on several three-month summer trips to see the U.S. and Canada. We usually visited with them every year and I was captivated by their stories and pictures of the Canadian Rockies: the towns of Lake Louise, Banff, and Jasper, and the beautiful provincial parks. I didn't know when it would happen, but it was on my bucket list to do an RV trip to the Canadian Rockies before my camping days were over.

That opportunity came last year in May when I traveled to Calgary to do a story on Bucars RV, a fine dealership operated by Kyle and Jeff Redmond and founded by their father, Bill Redmond. Before I left to fly home to Atlanta, Bill asked, "Fred, when are you going to do a travel story on the Canadian Rockies? We would love to see more Tiffin owners come here to enjoy the great summers in *our* Rockies." Before I could answer, he continued, "We'll find one of our motorhomes for you to use so you won't have to drive 2,000 miles to get here before you start your trip into the Rockies to do your story." I accepted his gracious offer almost before he could finish his sentence.

We planned our trip just in time to catch the last two days of the Calgary Stampede. When we arrived, the Redmonds had a brand new Allegro RED waiting for us with the dealership's tow car ready to hook up. Calgary native and veteran RV salesperson, Scott Graham, volunteered his day off to be our guide at the Stampede. Scott knew the venue and grounds so well we were certain he had written the guidebook to the events. Scott's wife, Cindy, who since childhood has spent many summer vacations in the Canadian Rockies, surprised us with a comprehensive, illustrated travel itinerary for our trip.

Last year was the 100th anniversary of the Calgary Stampede billed as "The biggest outdoor show on earth." Since it was the Centennial Edition, the promoters, the city, and the participants made it the best ever. In eight hours we saw five major events, exhibits, and programs.

The first program was "TAILS: Three Horses, One Legend." An equestrian told the tale—part mythical, part historical—of the first Calgary Stampede as seen through the eyes of three horses at the 2012 Stampede. In an indoor arena with exceptional theatrical lighting, a cast of at least a hundred represented the ranchers, farmers, First Nations, and business interests that built Alberta. The staging and costumes, the horses and cattle, the wagons and farm equipment were adroitly choreographed in an area smaller than a soccer field. It was spectacular.

We hurried next to an area occupied by the First Nations, most of whom were living in full scale tepees for the duration of the Stampede. We were amazed at the size of the interiors and how comfortably they were furnished. Some of the tribal members used their tepees as stores to sell their crafts and products. One dealer offered full scale tepees, with shipping and assembly

BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURS/PAUL ZIZKA

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Text by Fred Thompson

Photography by Fred Thompson & Paul Zizka

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on your property. In a nearby pavilion, at least 150 tribal members were in full costume moving along in an oval, but dancing in their individual routines.

Our next venue presented the art of western North America that included nearly every media imaginable: watercolors, oils, statuary, furniture, ornate trunks, taxidermy, metal smiths, jewelry – an endless array where we could have spent hours.

Unfortunately, we missed the rodeo events but the chuck wagon races may have been more spectacular. In a prescribed take-off routine with sharp turns, a career driver drove each wagon pulled by four race horses. A trailing rider on horseback

followed the wagon as part of the racing routine. Once the starting routines were completed without flaws, each heat of four wagons raced around a half-mile oval. Heat eliminations produced a final four who raced for six-figure prizes.

A huge outdoor stage accommodated an evening extravaganza that included acrobatic motorcyclists doing full aerial flips 50 feet above the ground, country music stars performing on aerial platforms suspended above the audience, acrobatic teams stacked four members high on bicycles, 100-member musical-dance groups, and more.

The Calgary Stampede is an unforgettable experience!

## TAILS: Three Horses, One Legend, a tale of the first Calgary Stampede



First Nations Village



First Nations Traditional Dances



Chuck Wagon Races



TransAlta Grandstand Show

**Saturday morning, July 14, 2012.** Canada's Rocky Mountains beckoned and we were excited about traveling in the Allegro RED. On Friday morning our online search for campsite reservations in the Banff and Jasper National Parks was disappointing. We discovered there were no sites available with full hook-ups, and very few unserved sites (meaning dry camping). Banff had nothing available on the 14th and Whistlers campground at Jasper could only offer dry camping. We reserved a dry site at Whistlers and put our wheels on Rt. 2 North to Edmonton.

Leaving from Calgary *with* campsite reservations, one would most likely launch a trip through the Canadian Rockies from Banff and use Rt. 93, the highly traveled scenic drive through the two national parks, to eventually get to Jasper. Since we were beginning our tour of the Rockies in Jasper, we wanted the fastest route to Jasper which meant taking "two sides of the triangle instead of the hypotenuse." Rt. 2 is similar to our Interstate and Trans-Canada Hwy 16 is one of Canada's two east-west arteries. We melted away 168 miles in three hours including a brief stop for lunch, and

then turned west on TCH 16 for a 220-mile run to Jasper,

As we traveled north we wondered why we were seeing huge fields of bright yellow flowers. During a fuel stop in Edmonton, we asked a local about the fields of flowers and with a big smile, he said, "That's where you get the canola oil you use in cooking."

We skirted Edmonton and turned west on TCH 16. It wasn't long before the population density of Edmonton disappeared and we felt thrust into a pristine land of timber and open country, except for occasional intersections and two small towns that clung to the highway. One intersection called Niton Junction had sprouted an A&W Root Beer stand—out in the middle of nowhere. The mental flasher "root beer float" went off in both our heads as I wheeled the Allegro RED into a big gravel lot next to the stand. A perky waitress welcomed us like we were the grandparents she hadn't seen since Christmas and made the best floats we'd had since we were teenagers. Then she came over to chat with us while we consumed our treats. Unexpected little highlights can make a trip so much fun.

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## Jasper National Park

An hour and a half later we reached the entrance to the park. An annual pass to 27 national parks and 77 national historic sites is \$67.50 per adult and \$57.90 per senior. If you plan to spend more than six days in Canadian parks during the year, the annual pass is your best bet.

A short time later, when the sun was about 15 degrees above the horizon, we flipped on the Tom-Tom to find Whistlers Campground. It is a huge park with 784 campsites: 120 full hookups (\$38.20), 126 elec only (\$32.30), 538 dry (\$27.40). Mosquitoes are at their worst near sundown and park officials warned they were intense. When I stopped to unhitch in front of our campsite, the hitch was in a bind and I could not break it loose. The mosquitoes were about to carry me off when my next door neighbor from Louisiana heard the commotion and rushed out to help. We broke the hitch loose and rushed inside without taking time to meet each other. After I got the RED set up for camping, I drove to town and bought two cans of *Off!* — one for my "Good Samaritan" neighbor and one for us. When I knocked on his door, he opened it a few inches and I pushed the can toward him with my business card. "Maybe we can talk tomorrow. Thanks again," I said. He tried to refuse the gift and then hollered when he saw my name on the card. "My name is Thompson, too. Bobby Thompson! We might even be cousins."

The next morning the mosquitoes had retreated and we took 93 into downtown Jasper. As it parallels the railroad tracks, you will come to a totem pole along Connaught Drive. Grab a parking place and you will be directly across the street from the **Information Centre**. There is also a free parking lot one block over on the west side of Patricia Street. Travel advisors will help you plan your visit to Jasper, providing literature, maps, and organizational tips.

We selected the **Jasper Tramway, Parkway 93A for a picnic, Maligne Canyon, Maligne Lake, Mt. Edith Cavell and Angel Glacier, Athabasca Falls,** and the **Columbia Icefield**. Of course, you can spend another day just visiting the shops in Jasper and making difficult decisions on which restaurants to try. I recommend the AAA Tour Book to pick restaurants. But one shop not in the Tour Book is The Bear's Paw Bakery and The Other Paw Bakery. They offer great homemade soups and sandwiches at reasonable prices.

Be sure to pick up a copy of the 2013 Interpretive Program Calendar at Whistlers Campground office. The Outdoor Theatre has evening programs every night at 9, and there is a Junior Naturalist program every day 5–6 p.m. Special programs include Edible and Medicinal Plants, Astronomy, and Geocaching.

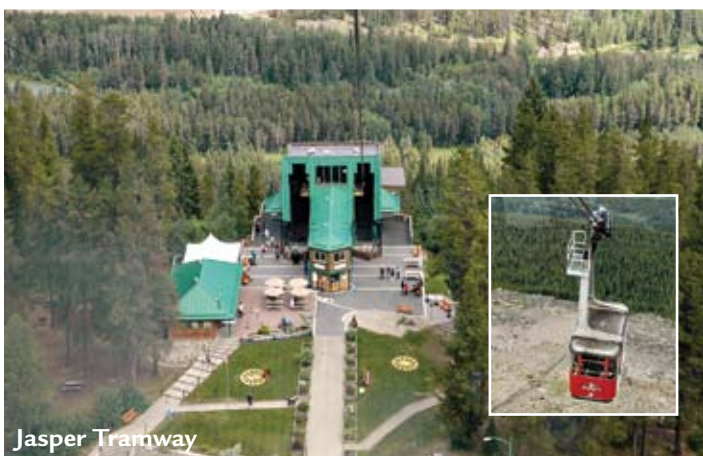
### Jasper Tramway

Less than a mile from the campground entrance, the Jasper Tramway (\$32.50) in seven minutes can take you 3,193 feet above your starting point of 4,279 feet. When you get off the tram, you are at 7,472 feet. With good hiking shoes and poles, you can walk at your own risk to the top of Whistlers summit to reach an elevation of 8,084 feet. From the domed top of the summit, you will enjoy expansive vistas, especially to the southwest where there is no hint of civilization. Since you are nearly four thousand feet above the valley to the north, the rivers, lakes, Jasper itself, and the snow-capped mountains make perfect postcard shots. It has been said that you can't make a bad picture in the Canadian Rockies—just point and click.

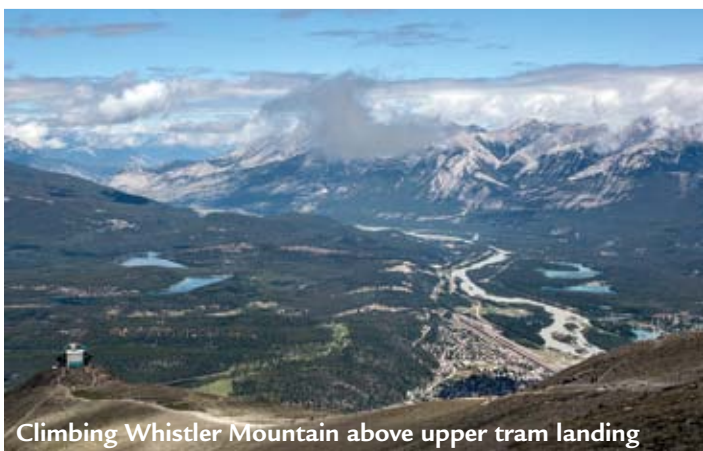
Brightly colored flowers cling closely to the rocks. We observed white-tailed ptarmigan, ground squirrels, and pikas. We were told that bighorn sheep and marmots are sighted occasionally, perhaps when there are fewer visitors around.



Jasper National Park Information Centre



Jasper Tramway



Climbing Whistler Mountain above upper tram landing



Looking south from Whistler Mountain summit

### **Mt. Edith Cavell and Angel Glacier**

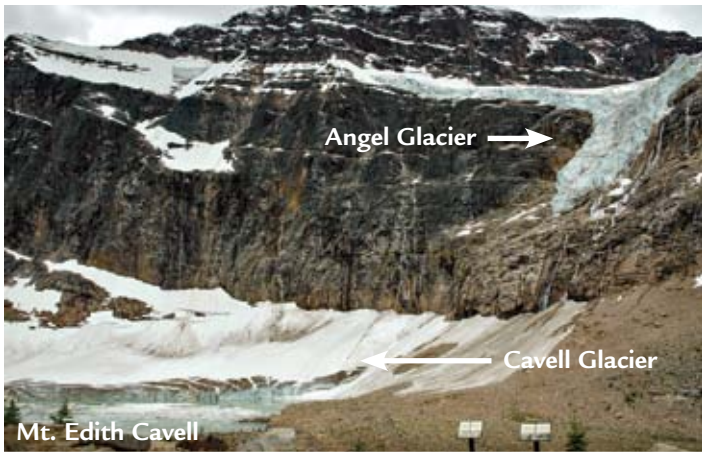
We used our roundtrip ticket to get back to the valley and headed south on 93A, the old highway to Banff, where we found a scenic picnic spot at Otto's Cache. Our destination was Mt. Edith Cavell, named for a heroic British patriot and nurse. When Belgium fell to the German army in World War I, Cavell was in charge of a nursing school in Brussels. She refused to leave her post and with some of her staff saved the lives of both Allied and German soldiers: "I can't stop while there are lives to be saved." She was also instrumental in helping both British and French soldiers get back to Allied lines. The Germans suspected her activities, arrested and executed her by firing squad in October 1915. Her heroism and death became a cause célèbre, publicizing the barbarism of the German military and spurring thousands to volunteer for service.

After reaching the parking area, the trail leading to Cavell Pond and the Cavell Glacier is a one mile loop called the Path of the Glacier. About a century ago, the Angel Glacier and Cavell Glacier merged and formed the moraines through which the trail passes. As the glacial ice receded, Angel and Cavell separated and the melt from both have formed Cavell Pond. Hiking to the southeast from Cavell Pond, we enjoyed a 4.8 mile trail through Cavell Meadows. Small wildlife and summer flowers are abundant. You may need a light jacket for these two hikes.

### **Maligne Canyon**

Maligne Canyon (pronounced mah-LEEN) should be at least a half day event. To get there, follow TCH-16 east just over a mile (1.7 km) to Maligne Lake Road and turn right. Proceed to the signs for Fifth Bridge. Cindy, our trip advisor, notes that the Maligne Canyon section of Trail 7 provides the best views of Jasper's famous limestone gorge. Cross the suspension bridge over the Maligne River and keep right at all intersections as you work your way up the canyon, gaining over 320 feet in elevation. The views are better when you are facing up-canyon.

Maligne Canyon is connected to Medicine Lake over nine miles to the southeast by one of the largest underground rivers in the world. It takes approximately 70 hours for the water to



Mt. Edith Cavell



Maligne Canyon



Maligne Lake

come through the underground network of caves. At 180 feet, the canyon is deepest at Second Bridge. Because it is so narrow, it is difficult to visually grasp the scale of its depth. Proceed to First Bridge where the canyon is 125 feet deep and the river is forced through a 3-foot slot.

Most geologists believe the canyon is an unroofed cave. This is a good possibility because the canyon is cave-like in shape and water feeds into the canyon from caves. Glaciers 600 to 900 feet thick once covered the area which was laced with caves. On the bottomside of the glaciers, meltwater seeped in and weakened the tops of the caves. The movement of the thinner glaciers, approximately 160 feet thick, may have scraped off the top of a cave and formed Maligne Canyon.

The canyon walls are limestone, a type of rock that is slightly soluble in water, and is common in caves throughout the world. Bits of the canyon walls are pried off each year as water freezes in cracks and expands. The rock also expands and contracts slightly as the temperature changes, causing small fractures. Sand and gravel carried by the water grind away at the limestone walls of the canyon. No one knows how much deeper the canyon gets each year, but geologists guess only a fraction of a millimeter. Multiply that by thousands of years and the result is spectacular.

### Maligne Lake

For more than a hundred years Maligne Lake has claimed the prize for the most iconic scenery in Jasper National Park, and some would say in all of the Canadian Rockies. Its geologic shape and history is the epitome of glacier-carved lakes—long, narrow, and deep. At nearly 14 miles long, it is the largest body of water in Jasper National Park and the largest natural lake in the Canadian Rockies. Its width varies from 330 feet to 1.2 miles, and its maximum depth is 318 feet. After glaciation started the process of building the lake, a series of massive landslides into the Maligne Valley formed a natural dam making the lake longer and deeper.

Remnant glaciers thousands of years old accent the beauty of the peaks framing Maligne Lake. Blocked from view by Monkhead Mountain, the Brazeau Icefield produces enough meltwater to feed both Maligne Lake and the Brazeau River.

Jasper National Park has relatively hot summers and long, cold winters. Ice on Maligne Lake is not completely melted until late May or early June. In the town of Jasper, the hottest days of summer will peak at 86°F. The lake's cold water and higher elevation usually lower the peak temps in the Maligne Valley by several degrees. At its latitude of nearly 53 degrees, Maligne Lake enjoys 17 hours of daylight on the first day of summer. The average daytime temperature is 73°F. Visitors and locals alike take advantage of the long days, spending hours hiking, kayaking, canoeing, camping, and fishing.

At the Curly Phillips Boathouse, opened in 1928, you can rent canoes, rowboats, or kayaks. Overnight rentals make camping and fishing possible at Fisherman's Bay and Coronet Creek, backcountry shoreline campsites. If you feel less outdoorsy but

BANIFF LAKE LOUISE TOURS BY PAUL ZIZKA



Athabasca Falls



Athabasca Glacier



Ice Explorer going to the glacier

For the sake of perspective, this is an Ice Explorer out on the glacier.

still want to enjoy Maligne's incredible scenery, make a reservation for the Boat Cruise, which is the only way to see Spirit Island. You can book the 90-minute cruise in Jasper at the Maligne Tours Reservation Office (616 Patricia St.), online at [malignelake.com](http://malignelake.com), or at the lakeside office. Adults, \$61.95; children 5-14, \$30.

When we spent two weeks in southern England a few years ago, we got hooked on afternoon tea with scones, jams, and clotted cream. At the historic 1927 Maligne Lake Chalet, we were pleased to find the Canadian version of that wonderful (but calorific) tradition. Eighty years ago visitors reached Maligne Lake by horseback and were welcomed at the log cabin chalet with afternoon tea. We enjoyed the same ritual immediately after our lake cruise. When we saw the extensive buffet, we were glad we had skipped lunch. We also skipped dinner that evening. The cabin's rustic ambience and famous views capture the quintessential charm of an era that valued luxury in the midst of wilderness. Scones and tea are just the beginning. Scan the QR code for the complete menu. Afternoon Tea is offered July 1st through Labor Day, 2-4:30 p.m. Adults, \$32. You may do a package deal with cruise and tea for \$81. For the package, schedule the cruise at 1 p.m. or 2 p.m. to give you plenty of time to enjoy the repast afterwards.



### Athabasca Falls

At just 75 feet, Athabasca Falls is a shorty by Canadian Rockies standards. Flowing from the glaciers of the Columbia Icefields, the Athabasca River carries more water than any other river in the mountain national parks. Many waterfalls in the high Rockies are spectacular as they plummet hundreds of feet. The falls and cascade of the Athabasca were created by its ancient glacier that moved across a hardened quartzite ledge, shearing off chunks to create a cliff. A stream flowing underneath the glacier started forming the canyon. As the glacier receded, the river eroded softer rocks downstream. The lower and softer rock channel in which the river now flows was its "path of least resistance." It abandoned the harder channels that you can now explore. As the broad river is forced into the narrow channel approaching the falls, the sheer volume produces a thunderous explosion of mist and spray that sustains a forest of pine, fir, and white spruce. Accented with mosses, lichens, and wildflowers, the area is quite scenic, drawing a constant flow of visitors from May through October. Because the banks and sides of the channels are always wet, they are slick and dangerous. Do not cross over the railings and fences.

The Athabasca River links the meltwater of the Columbia Icefield to the salt water of the Arctic Ocean. The water flowing over the falls journeys through Lake Athabasca, Great Slave Lake, and the Mackenzie River before spilling off the northern edge of the continent 3,844 miles away. It is one of only five major rivers that flow from two continents into the Arctic.



## The Columbia Icefield

Located 64 miles south of the town of Jasper on Hwy. 93, the Columbia Icefield is the largest sub-polar body of ice in North America. Covering 130 square miles, its greatest depth is estimated at 1,200 feet. Its average elevation is 10,000 feet, but Mt. Columbia is its highest point at 12,284 feet. The icefield feeds into six outlet glaciers. The Stutfield, Athabasca, and Dome glaciers can be seen from the Icefields Parkway. The meltwater from the icefield flows to three oceans: the Pacific, the Arctic, and the Atlantic via Hudson Bay.

At the Columbia Icefield Discovery Centre, interpretive exhibits offer models of the ice field and an ice cave. The Columbia Icefield Glacier Experience departs from the Centre every 15 to 30 minutes daily (weather permitting) from mid-April to mid-October. Visitors get to walk (golf shoes with spikes would help) on a field of moving glacier ice formed by compacted snow that may have fallen as long ago as 400 years. Moving? Don't worry, you can't detect it.

The ticket price of the Glacier Experience is \$49.95. You can buy a combined ticket for the Banff Lake Cruise (\$44.95) and the Banff Gondola (\$34.95) for 99.95, saving \$29.90.

Visitors are transported to the glacier in a Terra Bus. When you get to the glacier you will transfer to the Ice Explorer. These vehicles carry 56 passengers at about 5 mph. Weighing over 27 tons, an Ice Explorer has only 253 horsepower and a very low ratio transmission. The loading and departure building is located



Rocky Mountain scenery along the Icefield Parkway

on a moraine above the glacier, requiring a 45-degree slope to descend to the icefield. We joked that this was the slowest roller coaster we had ever ridden.

In mid-summer, the air temperature just above the ice is about 55 degrees when the sun is shining. Add wind chill and a cloudy day and you will need a sweater and a waterproof windbreaker. The weather anywhere in the mountain national parks requires flexibility which means layers that you can add and remove as needed.

Your bus driver will be your guide on the 3-mile tour that takes about 80 minutes. You will be filled to the brim with facts and data by the time the bus gets to the toe of the glacier. Take a collapsible camping cup or paper cup with you to have the experience of drinking the meltwater. It is probably the purest water occurring naturally on our planet.

Two-hour walking tours on the glacier's Forefield Trail are offered five times each day beginning at 9 a.m., with the last tour at 7:30 p.m. The naturalist who leads the tour provides much more information than you'll receive on the Ice Explorer. Offered from May 24 through August 31, the rates are adults, \$38, and children, \$19. If you like to walk, you may want to do this trip instead of the Ice Explorer.

The Icefields Restaurant is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Lunch is buffet service and prices are pretty reasonable.

Just a little history: In August 1898 Norman Collie and Hermann Woolley while exploring the mountains of the Great Divide in the Canadian Rockies climbed to the summit of Mt. Athabasca and became the first recorded people to look out across the great plateau of ice now known as the Columbia Icefield. Collie wrote in his journal, "The view that lay before us in the evening light was one which does not often fall to the lot of modern mountaineers. A new world was spread at our feet; to the westward stretched a vast icefield probably never seen by human eye and surrounded by entirely unknown, unnamed, and unclimbed peaks."

Over the next 40 years, a few mountaineers and the hardest tourists trickled in to see the icefields. In the 1920s entrepreneur Jim Brewster operated his "Great Glacier Trail" horseback outfitting excursion. Tours out onto the glaciers were guided events in small numbers. In 1936 work began on a road linking Jasper and Lake Louise that was completed in 1939. Realizing the importance of the Columbia Icefield, the Brewsters built the Icefield Chalet, but during World War II the road and the chalet saw few visitors. In 1968 Brewster Tours began spending serious funds to design and build a safe and comfortable excursion vehicle. The first SnoCoach went into service in July 1981, and continuing development later produced the Ice Explorer which has 6-wheel drive. Brewster Tours now has 22 of these machines, nine of which are wheelchair accessible.

Completing our tour of the Columbia Icefields, we found ourselves at the border of Banff National Park. It has a totally different history of development and cast of characters, although similar geography.

# Banff National Park

To a great extent, the history of Banff National Park and the town sites of Banff and Lake Louise begins with the Canadian Pacific Railway. The CPR was incorporated as a syndicate on February 16, 1881, to build the railway from Canada's eastern provinces to British Columbia. Ontario and Quebec became provinces in 1867 and British Columbia followed in 1871, but there was no viable overland connection between Canada's two economic centers.

Managerial talent was drawn from the United Kingdom and the United States, but the crews failed miserably during the 1881 construction season with only 131 miles of track completed. The railroad's chief engineer and general superintendent were fired. Syndicate director James Jerome Hill believed William Cornelius Van Horne was the man who could get the job done.

Van Horne said he would build 500 miles of main line railway in his first year. Van Horne's formal education ended at 14 when his father died. He learned telegraphy and went to work to support his mother and the younger children. Demonstrating finesse and unusual ability, he rose through the management ranks of the Michigan Central Railway and the Chicago and Alton Railway where he was serving as general superintendent by 1878. At Hill's behest, Van Horne was appointed general manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway at age 39. Floods delayed the beginning of the 1882 construction season, but by the time heavy snow accumulated in late October Van Horne's crews had built 418 miles of main line and 110 miles of branch line tracks. The directors had selected the right man. The eastern and western portions of the Canadian Pacific Railway met at Craigellachie, B.C., and the last spike was driven on Nov. 7, 1885.

To reduce the enormous debt load incurred to build the railway across Canada, the company had to look at other means to generate revenue. From his earlier background, Van Horne knew telegraph lines were revenue generators and erected them as they built the railway. He also anticipated express business shipments the CPR could provide and acquired Dominion Express Company to address a demand that quickly materialized.

Van Horne's foresight for financing the railway was in some measure responsible for the creation of the town of Banff. Natural resources such as coal and timber generated freight revenue, but Van Horne saw another opportunity in the mountains. "If we can't export the scenery, we'll import the tourists," he was quoted.

To build support for his proposals, Van Horne in 1886 suggested setting up a national park system in the Canadian Rockies. Of course, "importing the tourists" required hotels. With amazing speed for that era, the CPR built the Banff Springs Hotel between April 1887 and May 1888, opening it to the public on June 1, 1888. Designed by American architect Bruce Price, it was constructed in the Scottish Baronial style at a cost of \$250,000. The hotel had more than 100 bedrooms centered on a five-story, octagonal rotunda. Expansion and renovation in 1902 added more than 200 rooms. Subsequent expansions in 1906 and 1914 resulted in a total of 300 guest rooms.

In 1926 more renovations were designed by J.W. Orrock, who maintained the style begun by Walter Painter but enlarged Painter's Tower considerably, adding massive additions. While work was proceeding on the new wings, fire destroyed all that remained of the original building designed by Price. The two new wings opened in 1928. Forty years later the hotel was winterized for year-round use.

Through posterization prints of original artwork, the CPR sold Canada to the rest of the world and helped to shape the country's national identity. Banff and Lake Louise were often used on the posters which are still available today.

Continuing to travel from north to south, counter to the direction most take, we left the amazing Columbia Icefields and continued on the parkway to Mistaya Canyon and Peyto Lake.

## Mistaya Canyon

Formed by the Mistaya River, the canyon is another fine example of the slot canyons found in the mountain national parks. Its distinctive curvy walls are similar to Maligne Canyon. Access to the 550-yard trail into the canyon is located at a large parking area on the west side of the Parkway, approximately 10 miles south of the 93-11 intersection. The trail is an easy walk in summer but too steep for wheelchairs. The canyon is deep and there are no railings. The trail is icy in early spring. Since the canyon is not heavily visited, it has not been developed like some of the other canyons in the parks. A bridge spans the chasm overlooking the 40-foot waterfalls. The gorge downstream is not accessible.

## Peyto Lake

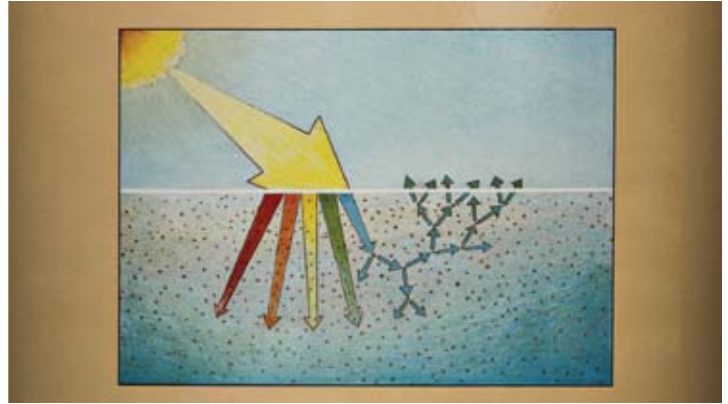
Driving another 12 miles south will bring you to Peyto Lake (PEA-toe) at Bow Pass. Easily accessible from the Icefields Parkway, it has the bright, turquoise color characteristic of glacier-fed lakes. Why so blue? Water leaving the glacier is muddy with rocks, gravel, and silt. As the stream slows down, gravity pulls most of the rubble into the delta, but the silt flows into the lake where most of it sinks to the bottom. Fine particles of rock ground by the glacier to the texture of baking flour (<0.01mm) remain



## Why the Lake Is Blue

**W**hy is the lake blue? The junction of the stream, the lake and the delta is the clue.

Water leaving the glacier is muddy with rocks, gravel and silt. As the stream slows down most of that rubble is left behind to become delta. Silt flows into the icy water where most of it sinks to the bottom. Fine particles of rock ground to the texture of baking flour remain suspended in the water. This "rock flour" scatters the blue-green rays of light, giving the lake its special colour.



suspended in the water. This "rock flour" scatters the blue-green rays of light, giving the lake its special color, while the other rays in the spectrum dissipate to the bottom [see illustration].

A moderate one-third mile walk to the lower Peyto Lake viewing platform offers a spectacular view of the most photographed glacial lake in the Canadian Rockies which is nearly 1,000 feet below. The lake is 1.8 miles long and 0.6 miles wide. Behind you to the south are two more trails: the Timberline Trail takes you to the Peyto Lake Upper viewing platform and the other leads to the Bow Summit Lookout Site. Nearly two miles long, this trail is a little more difficult, but rewarding since you will reach the highest point on the Icefields Parkway and the best viewing point of Peyto Lake.

Last year when we made this trip, we decided to bypass the national park campground at Lake Louise which has only electric service in favor of the Tunnel Mountain Campground Trail-

er Court in Banff. The Tunnel Mountain facility has 850 sites with full hookups, all pull-throughs. When I checked with the office this year in late May, the ranger said there is still some utility work going on, but it was not a problem when we were there in 2012. Tunnel Mountain Village I has no hookups and Village II has electric only. Make your reservations as early as possible: [www.parksCanada.gc.ca](http://www.parksCanada.gc.ca)

The next morning we did our homework—as you should. Take the Tunnel Mountain Road from the campground into town. It dead ends into Wolf Street. Turn right and go three blocks to the Information Centre on the corner of Wolf and Banff. A half block left will take you to a large parking lot on your left. We spent an hour gathering brochures and talking with the travel consultants, who were very helpful. Then it was back to the Allegro RED for a planning session.

We decided to visit Lake Louise first. Since it was nearly lunch

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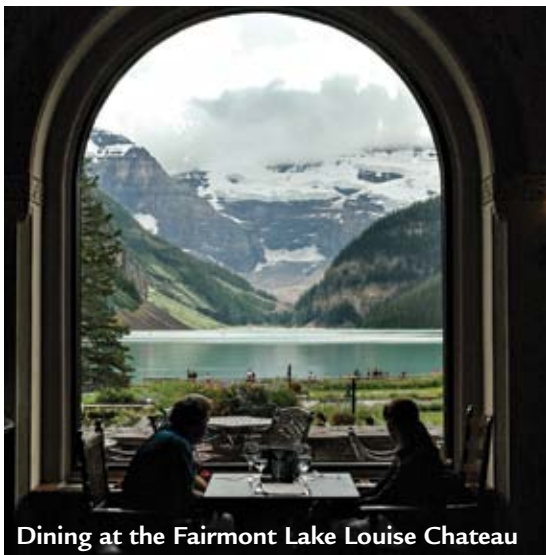
# DENSO





Lake Louise

BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM/PAUL ZIZKA



Dining at the Fairmont Lake Louise Chateau



The Teahouse at Lake Agnes

time, we followed Cindy's directions and headed for the Lake Louise Railway Station that has been authentically restored. It was a very cool day—yes, in July—and the roaring fire in the stone fireplace was welcoming. Cindy also recommended the French onion soup, and it was delicious. After gourmet sandwiches, we enjoyed cheese and fruit for dessert.

We were drawn like a magnet to the iconic Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise. The Canadian Pacific Railway led by William Cornelius Van Horne knew the magnificent mountains would bring in a clientele capable of paying the bills. As several additions were added over a 100-year period, the architects skillfully managed to offer mountain and/or lake views from most bedroom

windows. The floor just below the main lobby opens to the lawn leading to the lake. It is also the abode of handsome, upscale stores. Based on our hiking experience at Whistlers Mountain and summit, we splurged and bought two sets of hiking poles.

The glacier-fed waters of Lake Louise are turquoise for the same reason as Peyto Lake—the magical qualities of “rock flour” produced by the grinding action of the glacier. With even paddle strokes, young men deftly moved their red-hulled canoes and rowboats across the serenely calm lake. My mind's eye saw them in linen suits with pastel ties and straw, flat-top, brimmed boater hats. Their dates in frilly white dresses had ribbons in their hair, parasols in one hand, and a bottle of root beer in the



The Johnston Canyon Trail



Johnston Creek



Upper Falls, Johnston Canyon

other. But my glazed eyes blinked, and alas, they were really in shorts, jeans, sweatshirts, baseball caps, and Nikes. The “Great Gatsby” romantic era of genteel formality is gone forever.

“Classic Hikes in Lake Louise,” a brochure we found in the Information Centre, provided descriptions and hiking stats for seven trails. Four were rated as “easy” and three as “moderate.” We selected the Lake Agnes Teahouse hike. Distance: 7 km round trip. Elevation Gain: 390 meters. Time Required: 3–4 hrs. Difficulty: Easy. (km to miles:  $\times 0.62$ ; meters to feet:  $\times 3.28$ )

Do the math. That’s an elevation gain of nearly 600 feet for each mile. We enjoyed the hike, but we were glad we had the hiking poles!

The teahouse at Lake Agnes offered a pot of English tea, pie, and pastries. The young people who operate the teahouse and wait tables pack everything up for each day, and then pack the trash out in the evening. But, just as Sir William said, “It’s the scenery that sells.” And we agree. After refreshments, we followed the trail around Lake Agnes and ascended another 200 feet via switchbacks to the Big Beehive, and were rewarded with views of the Bow Valley and Lake Louise. If we had stayed in the park for a full week, I would have planned to hike the other six trails. Three of the trails are 11.8 to 13.8 km. Hiking poles, comfortable boots, and a backpack with plenty of water and high-calorie provisions are a must. Enjoy!

At the Information Centre we found three  $4 \times 9$  inch cards with 5-day plans for enjoying the Lake Louise area: The Secrets to Indulging in Lake Louise, Explore & Discover Lake Louise, and An Authentic Lake Louise Experience. Each of the cards has a great plan for spending five days in the Banff–Lake Louise area.

The 24-mile drive to Takkakaw Falls, the second highest waterfall in Canada, is beautiful in itself. The waterfall strikes ledges in its 1,260-foot descent, producing spectacular sprays. From the intersection of Lake Louise Drive and TCH 1, drive 16.3 miles west to the intersection of Yoho Valley Road, where you will travel north for 8 miles. From the parking lot, the paved trail (wheelchair accessible) to the base of the falls is only 0.8 mile.

For those of you who are fascinated (as I am) by trains and railroad construction through the Rocky Mountains, you will find roadside signage explaining the engineering triumph of the spiral tunnels near the Yoho Valley Road’s intersection with TCH 1. To get over Kicking Horse Pass, the Canadian Pacific first built dangerously steep grades. After many accidents, J. E. Schwitzer in 1909 designed spiral tunnels similar to those used in Switzerland to gradually raise the trains

high enough to cross the pass. For example, one 3,251-foot spiral loop through the mountain raised the train 56 feet. Today from a vantage point along the road, you can watch the 25 to 30 trains a day go in and out of the tunnels.

Another 17 miles of scenic driving will take you to Emerald Lake, the largest in Yoho National Park. Its color is most brilliant in July from the glacial meltwater that dissolves limestone rock flour into its waters. For hikers, an easy 3.2-mile trail around the lake will be very refreshing. The restaurant at Emerald Lake Lodge garners the highest ratings in the best culinary guidebooks. Figure \$25 to \$30 per person for lunch and \$60+ for dinner.

At the fork of the road going right to Lake Louise, turn left instead and drive 7.5 miles to Moraine Lake and the Valley of the Ten Peaks. The lake's elevation is 6,183 feet. The view of the lake from the top of the rock pile (the moraine) is one of the most photographed locations in Canada. The ten peaks at the end of the lake appeared on Canada's twenty dollar bill several years ago. The trailhead at the canoe docks of Moraine Lake Lodge branches out into five trails. All are rated as "easy." Canoes rentals are very reasonable and will provide you with two hours of pure serenity.

Leaving Lake Louise, we took the Bow Valley Parkway back to Banff. The parkway earlier was the main road between Lake Louise and Banff. With the TCH as the main thoroughfare today, the parkway has become a relaxed scenic drive. Our primary target on the parkway was Johnston Canyon and the hike to Upper Falls and the Ink Pots. To negotiate the canyon and provide hikers with great but safe views, catwalks with hand rails are anchored into the canyons vertical walls. From the parking lot you will see a gift shop. Bear right past the shop to the trailhead about 200 yards to the right. A 15-minute walk will take you to the lower falls. It is only 33 feet high, but it has a low tunnel at one side that you can duck walk through to get a close-up view with spray in your face. The children in a group near us got a big kick out of this little side trip. The upper falls is another 1.7 miles with an elevation gain of nearly 400 feet.

From the Upper Falls the Ink Pots are 2.2 miles and worth the trip, and not a difficult hike. The trail moves away from the canyon and into the forest for about 1.8 miles and then opens into Johnston Valley framed with scenic views of the mountains. With no sight of or audible noise from the parkway, you really get a nice back country feel of the mountains. The Ink Pots are six greenish-blue pools of spring water.



Tunnel Mountain Campground, Banff

It was 9 p.m. and still broad daylight when we reached the parking lot. When we got back to our campsite, the sunset was lighting Tunnel Mountain for another picture we probably will frame. We were now ready to use the rest of the 3-Attraction Ticket we purchased at the Columbia Icefield Discovery Center: the Banff Lake Cruise and the Banff Gondola.

The one-hour cruise on Lake Minnewanka explores the history, native folklore, and geology of the 18-mile lake that is 450 feet deep. From June to mid-September, cruises depart on the hour from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Two cruisers have seating for 43 passengers and the Alberta Explorer takes 65 passengers. The entire one-hour cruise is narrated for you to get the maximum enjoyment from what you are viewing. If you have field glasses, be sure to bring them. Your camera, of course, is obligatory no matter where you go in national parks. If you don't already have one, this is the trip where you may want to invest in a telephoto lens for your camera. On the cruise, you are very likely to see bald eagles, ospreys, and loons. There is also the possibility of seeing elk, deer, moose, and mountain goats. We spotted eagles, ospreys, and mountain goats using field glasses.

If you are a fisherman, inquire about fishing charters with all equipment included. There is a 3-hour group charter at \$149



Lake Minnewanka Cruiser

BREWSTER CANADA TOURS

per person, a half-day private fishing trip for two at \$395, and a full-day charter for two at \$500.

With a little planning, you can easily spend a full day at Lake Minnewanka. Pack a picnic lunch to enjoy after a morning cruise. You will find many sheltered picnic tables. If backpacking your lunch and throwing a blanket down at a scenic spot for an alfresco lunch is your style, the possibilities are limitless. We have always found that the impromptu approaches usually turn out to be the most rewarding.

Yesterday we enjoyed the lake. Today we will do the mountain top using the remaining portion of our three-part ticket for the Banff Gondola. The summer hours are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Take Mountain Avenue south out of Banff to the parking lot for the Lower Terminal. The 8-minute ride to reach the summit of Sulphur Mountain is breathtaking. The four-passenger gondolas depart the Lower Terminal at an elevation of 5,194 feet and lift you nearly one-half mile up to the Summit Upper Terminal at 7,486 feet.

The Banff Skywalk is a one kilometer (0.62 miles) self-guided interpretive boardwalk that leads to the Cosmic Ray Station (a national historic site) and the Sanson's Peak Meteorological Station. The plaques along the boardwalk offer stories of Banff, the valley, and early explorers. You can have breakfast and lunch at the

Summit Café and lunch and dinner at the Panorama Restaurant.

When you finish your visit to Sulphur Mountain, you will notice the Banff Upper Hot Springs just across from the parking lot. Open from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. (May 18 to Oct. 7), the year-round temperature is 102°F. The Springs' elevation at 5,200 feet make it the highest of the hot springs located in the Canadian Rockies. The soothing experience will cost you only \$7.30 (seniors, \$6.30). If you didn't bring your bathing suit, you can rent a suit and towel for \$1.90/each.

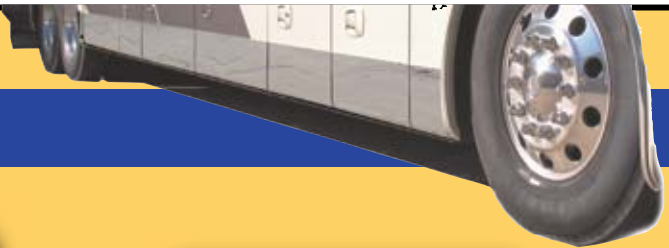
Our next two days were spent right in the town of Banff. Of course, the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel is the singular piece of history and architecture that you must see. As noted earlier in the story, the Canadian Pacific Railway connected British Columbia to eastern Canada at tremendous expense. Sir William Cornelius Van Horne realized he was sitting on a goldmine of scenery that would help pay off the CPR's debt. Although expensive to build, the hotels in Banff, Lake Louise, and Jasper generated the revenue he anticipated.

The hotel is inviting guests to help celebrate 125 years of legendary hospitality with a special offer available for the entire year. When you spend two nights at the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, you will receive a daily resort credit of \$125. That in-

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The Banff Gondola to Sulphur Mountain



The Banff Skywalk

cludes enjoying dining with mountain views, golf on the world famous Stanley Thompson golf course, or pampering in the hotel's world-class Willow Stream Spa.

After you take the tour of the hotel, you may want to return in January for a few days to experience the exquisite beauty of the Canadian Rockies in winter. If you happen to be a Rotarian, the Banff Rotary Club meets in the hotel on Tuesday at 11:45 a.m.

If you like chocolate, you must stroll down Banff Avenue to the Sundance Mall where you will find a shop called Fudge, Fudge, Fudge! There is an endless variety of fudge, caramels, and chocolates made fresh daily. Stoney Squaw Mountain, which seems to loom up at the end of Banff Avenue, makes you realize constantly where you are, even when you are just shopping.

If you are one of those "shop till you drop" people, you will probably drop before you can finish visiting the many interesting shops on Banff Avenue and its side streets.

The Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, located at 111 Bear Street, has an exhibit that opened on June 8 that ties in perfectly with our story.

*Picturing the Canadian Pacific Railway* showcases important Canadian historic treasures and new contemporary art. Focusing on the Canadian Pacific Railway's mainline from Calgary to Craigellachie, the museum draws upon its own impressive collection and combines those with fine works from public and private lenders.

While you are in the museum, ask about the next scheduled tour of the home of Peter and Catharine Whyte. Art was their common denominator, but their upbringings were worlds apart: he from Banff and she from Boston. You will enjoy learning their story and how their art and cultural interests helped preserve invaluable regional legacies.

Other exhibits include:

- *Gateway to the Rockies*, the stories of resilient and intelligent men and women who explored and developed the physical, scenic, and cultural resources of the Canadian Rockies.
- *Stoney: First Nation Portraits* by Byron Harmon. Early 20th century portraits of individuals from the Stoney First Nations.



The Whyte Museum



Peter and Catharine Whyte






The Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel



The Grand Hall at Banff Springs Hotel

The images capture both nobility and sorrow; they are uncompromising in their honesty.

The Banff Park Museum, just around the corner from the Whyte Museum, is a typical example of the Rocky Mountain Architectural Style. All ages will appreciate the taxidermy of animals that you may not see in the park. The early records and tools used by park superintendents and the guides who conducted the early tourists on backpacking trips are very interesting.

And finally, we found a guide booklet available free at the Information Centre called “Walking through Banff History.” The routes include Downtown Discovery, Cemetery Circuit, Culture Cruise, Whyte Wander, and Further Forays. If the history and culture of an area interest you, this booklet will keep you busy for a couple of days. For those who love the outdoors as we do, you should check out the options for back-country horseback riding and hiking, as well as river rafting on the Athabasca and Kicking Horse rivers. 

### Resources for Your Trip

Graeme Pole. *Walks & Easy Hikes in the Canadian Rockies*. Hazelton, B.C.: Mountain Vision Publishing, 2012. \$21.95.

*Where*. Canadian Rockies edition. Summer 2012. Free.

*Visitor's Choice*. Banff and Lake Louise. Banff, Alberta: I. G. Publications. Free.

*Visitor's Choice*. Jasper. Banff, Alberta: I. G. Publications. Free.

### Special Thanks

The good folks at Bucars RV in Calgary treated us like family. We especially want to thank Bill, Jeff, and Kyle Redmond for so generously providing us with a new Allegro RED to use for this travel story, as well as the company's tow car. A special thanks to Scott and Cindy Graham. Scott used his day off to be our guide to the 100th Anniversary Calgary Stampede. We just had one day to do the Stampede and Scott packed it full. Cindy has camped in the Canadian Rockies all of her life and provided an itinerary that made sure we didn't miss any of the highlights.



The Banff Park Museum



Stoney Squaw Mountain overlooks Banff Avenue



# ALLEGRO CLUB

## CHESAPEAKE SPRING RALLY

### Urbanna, Virginia

**April 29 – May 2, 2013**

The tiny village of Urbanna, Virginia, located in the Middle Peninsula of coastal Virginia on the vast Chesapeake Bay, was the idyllic location for the Tiffin Motor Homes Allegro Club spring rally. Lovely BethPage RV Resort was our rally site, and its natural beauty, outstanding facilities, and friendly, efficient staff made our experience there one we will remember with great fondness!

As is our custom, the first day of the rally (Monday) was given to registration and getting settled in. Around 200 Tiffin motorcoaches convened, as Mother Nature gave us some “spring showers”. But, in spite of the rain, we were able to enjoy a “Meet and Greet” reception in the afternoon and a fantastic kick-off dinner in the spacious, rustic dining lodge overlooking the bay in the evening. Following dinner we were treated to an amazing show, “The Wizard’s Festival of Fun,” featuring nationally acclaimed magician Al Belmont! “HOW DID HE DO THAT???”

Day two of the rally was designated as “seminar day.” From early morning to dinnertime, each time slot was filled with classes, activities, and seminars designed to provide information, entertainment, and networking opportunities for rally attendees. Presenters included: Jerry Williamson - What’s New at Tiffin Motorhomes; Gail Johnson - Cooking with your Sharp Convection Microwave; David Humphries & Marty Vanderford - Triple H Electronics (systems in the Tiffin coaches); Harold Kimbrough - Onan Generators; Erik Guldager - Winegard; Mike Williams - Atwood; Mark Wolschlager & Bran-

don Lambright - Dometic; Dave Cartiglia - Blue Ox; Brian Caudell - Freightliner; Jim Ham - Navistar (Breeze engine); and Chris Roberts - Michelin Tires.

Of special interest to many of the ladies in attendance, Gail hosted a tea on Tuesday afternoon. Participants were encouraged to dress in appropriate “Afternoon Tea” attire and bring their favorite tea cup or mug...so much the better if there was a story to share about the cup, or a special memory about past tea parties with loved ones! However, party attire was not mandatory; many were welcomed wearing their blue jeans and athletic



shoes! We had a grand time laughing, visiting, sharing memories, and getting to know each other a little better!

As the cloudy weather gave way to beautiful blue skies, Wednesday and Thursday were filled with optional activities. Folks could be as involved as they wished to be, but some time was built in to visit nearby towns and historic sites, which are plentiful in this area of Virginia. Historic Colonial Williamsburg, Gloucester, Yorktown, Jamestowne, Irvington, Saluda, Delta-ville, Kilmarnock....the list goes on and on of delightful villages, historic sites, and shops galore, just waiting to be explored!

Back in the campground, some of the games available for our competitive folks included Corn Hole Toss, Ladder Ball, Bingo, and Miniature Golf. Lots of fun was had by all who participated, and even those of us who cheered from the sidelines enjoyed the activities! Our favorite Line Dance Instructor, Tammy Wyatt from Ontario, Canada, was on hand to teach a line dancing class and later she encouraged testing our skills after dinner one night.

The caterers at the resort provided well-planned, delicious meals each evening, and either breakfast or lunch was provided each day, as well.

One unique feature of this campground was its own harbor, making it convenient to offer short cruises on the Resort launch, "the Bethpager." Many attendees took the cruise, which ventured into the Rappahannock River, into Urbanna Harbor, and up into picturesque Urbanna Creek. While we were a bit early in the season to take full advantage of Bethpage's extensive water park and beach area, we were able to get a glimpse of what is most certainly a really "cool" spot in the summertime!

Another first-time event that was featured at this rally was a Veterans' Parade. Rally attendees were notified in advance of this planned activity, and veterans were encouraged to come prepared to take part. From all the positive comments, we be-

lieve that this was a very successful effort to honor our veterans!

Many folks worked together to make this a successful rally; besides the vendors and presenters who were named above, many others deserve a mention.

Bethpage Resort personnel were most helpful in making our event successful. Reines RV from Manassas, Virginia was our sponsoring dealership at the rally. They provided nine new Tiffin motorcoaches for display, and several rally attendees left the rally in brand new motorhomes!

Work-campers Bob and Joanne Brown, Bruce Stevenson and Tammy Wyatt, and David and LaVon Steinborn were a great help in the preparation for and running of the rally. Two local Allegro Club Chapters, the Chesapeake Allegros and the Virginia Lovers Allegros, were available to help with registration, transportation, and other details.

Tiffin technicians Robert Gober and Nick Brewer worked tirelessly from Sunday before the rally to rally's end on Thursday evening, making minor repairs and helping wherever they were needed. Nick Palm, Regional Sales Manager for the Northeast, and Jerry Williamson, National Sales Manager, were both on hand to assist our members and Reines RV.

And we were especially fortunate to have Tiffin founder and CEO Bob Tiffin and his wife Judy in attendance for several days during the rally to meet and greet owners and friends.

Office staff for the Allegro Club includes Cynthia Skinner, Membership Coordinator, and Verbon Jones, Office Manager. Allegro Club President is Jimmy Johnson, now in his ninth year heading up the organization.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation go out to all of those mentioned above, and to you, Tiffin owners and Allegro Club Members! Your support is the reason we do what we do! Safe travels...we hope to see you on the road soon..."Roughing it Smoothly!"

— Gail Johnson



# George Victorine

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IS THE CORE OF OUR BUSINESS



**T**iffin Motorhomes employs six regional sales managers to establish, build, and manage the liaisons between the company and its dealers throughout the U.S. and Canada. After a dealership is established, the regional sales manager begins a perpetual process of evaluating how TMH can better serve and support the dealer.

George Victorine's career path to becoming a manufacturer's rep for Tiffin began when he was a teenager. George was born in San Francisco in 1962 to George and Zeta Victorine, and is the fourth first born son named George in a proud family lineage. When he was quite young, his family moved to San Jose, where he grew up.

"My dad was a firefighter and his work ethic was pretty intense. He always had work for me to do," George said. "Dad did construction and roofing on his days off from the firehouse." George learned many skills and values as a young man that still

influence his lifestyle today. During his youth George's family enjoyed the outdoors and spent their vacations camping in California's beautiful state parks.

"In those days we really roughed it. No fancy motorhomes for us. We enjoyed being close to nature fishing, hiking, and skin diving on the northern California coast," he said. George played tackle and nose guard on his high school football team and in his senior year the team won its division championship. "Winning was all about teamwork," he noted, "and looking back I can see many valuable lessons learned in sports that I applied later in business."

After high school, George enrolled at West Valley Junior College in Saratoga to complete the general courses for his core curriculum. Perhaps fate was at work when George was invited to a party given by the girlfriend of a buddy. After meeting Kimberli Johnson at the party, he mentioned a ski trip he was planning at

Bear Valley near Stockton. "Kim met us the next day for skiing," George laughed. "She's a great skier and she really showed me up."

While going to school during the day George with some amount of success sold water treatment systems and auto service policies at night. "It was my first opportunity to get sales experience, except for selling peanuts for YMCA camp," he joked.

George got to know Kimberli's brother, Jeff, while they were enrolled at Bryman College in the computer programming school. They launched a successful firewood business to help cover their college expenses. George earned a technical degree, learning several programming languages that helped him land a job with a software company in Silicon Valley. It was his first professional position and a key building block in his developing career.

Kimberli enrolled at California State University-Chico to work on a degree in finance. On George's visits to Chico during Kimberli's first semester, he decided to begin study for a bachelor's degree in marketing. They both really liked the ambiance of Chico, a quaint college town nestled in the foot hills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It would have a long-term influence

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

on their future. While George waited to be admitted to Chico State, he and Ron Whited, an old high school friend, started a joint venture in rehabbing homes in foreclosure for local real estate offices.

“Our business really took off,” George explained, “and I bought a boat, a motorcycle, and a mobile home. It was a good run, but at the beginning of the next semester Ron and I headed for Chico to complete our education.” George earned a B.S. degree in business and a minor in computer science, and Kim finished her degree in finance in 1985. They married the following year. “We knew we wanted to stay in Chico,” George said. “The town has so many hidden treasures that make it a very interesting place to live.”

Kim took a position as a stockbroker with A.G. Edwards, where she became a very successful broker. “Kimberli’s clients really appreciate the way she helps them with their finances,” George said. “She also does a great job separating her high stress career and her family life. I really admire that about her. She can run circles around the guys at her firm and keep us straight at home, too.”

In 1987 George was interviewed by the general sales manager (GSM) at Fleetwood’s west coast division. They had a plant in Chico at the time. When no offer was forthcoming, he went into banking with CIT consumer loans. “It was a good 9-to-5 job, but it was boring,” he averred. George and the GSM stayed in touch which paid off in 1988 when he was offered an entry-level position. Fleetwood’s ladder began with sales coordinator, and moved upward with positions in sales training, sales management, and brand manager. George accepted the offer and moved into a new profession that was not boring!



In 1992 George and Kimberli moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he became a territory manager. By working through the A.G. Edwards brokerage, Kimberli continued to serve her California clients while developing a new customer base in Indiana. In 2002 George was offered the position of district sales manager for all brands in the company’s northwest territory. George and Kimberli were pleased with the offer, and excited that they could move back to Chico. “We will always treasure our time in the midwest. We started our family there and have many great memories,” George said.

Before Fleetwood declared bankruptcy in 2009, George was interviewed by Tim Tiffin who offered him a position as TMH’s representative in the northwestern states and two Canadian provinces. “I left a 20-year career at Fleetwood and it was the best thing I ever did,” George said. “Fleetwood was a great company that molded many good people in this industry. I wish them success in their efforts to rebuild the company.”

“After seven Class A manufacturers closed or took bankruptcy, many dealers were stuck with inventory without warranties,” George explained. “We started losing some of them who were heavily invested in unsupported inventory. Tiffin began to rebuild its network with the best dealers in each territory. We were positioned to rebuild our base with dealers who were still financially viable.

“When former Tiffin dealers had to close, we repurchased much of their inventory, refurbished the units, and placed them with our new dealers,” George said. “My territory saw significant change.

“From 2005 forward, Tiffin’s product got better and better,” George said. “Tiffin’s strategy is to design and produce in its own facilities every possible component. Of course, we still buy water pumps, LP tanks, refrigerators, air conditioners, and furnaces from specialized industry suppliers. But Tiffin makes its own fiberglass, windows, front and rear caps, solid surface countertops, cabinets and raised panel doors, entry doors, baggage compartment doors, and more. In-house design and fabrication not only controls quality and schedules, it also controls price. If our competitors were able to match in their motorhomes the features and quality found in a Tiffin coach, their prices would go sky high.”

George continued to explain his confidence in Tiffin’s business strategy. “With thanks to Bob Tiffin, the company’s service is a legend in the motorhome industry. We don’t have a fancy marketing system, but we build the best motorhome we can. Motorhomes are very complex products and if there are issues, we resolve them. ‘Word of mouth’ has been our best marketing tool. TMH doesn’t have to spend a lot of money advertising.”

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George leads a group of new sales consultants from west coast dealerships through a two-day orientation in the Red Bay and Belmont facilities.

“TMH has a very simplified approach to corporate management. Most publicly held companies are far too structured and over-organized,” he said. “There are usually too many levels of management for each brand. It is all about control instead of developing talented managers who are individually responsible for developing lasting relationships with the dealer base.”

Today George manages his territory by working from his office in Chico and traveling throughout his territory. However, if it's duck season, George and his sons, Steffen, 17, and Evan, 13, may be out duck hunting on an early stormy morning. “Living in Chico is great because we can go hunting in the morning and always make it home in time for work and school,” he related. “Kim loves my job because it allows me to spend more time with our boys. I work irregular hours and I take calls *anytime*. My dealers and their staffs know where to find me any time of the day. I tell them, ‘If you're selling something, then I am, too.’”

Steffen, Evan, and George enjoy marksmanship and hunt turkey, duck, and dove in season. The threesome enjoys fishing for salmon, trout, and bass in the Sacramento River and boating on Oroville and Shasta Lakes where they do wake boarding and water skiing. Lake Tahoe is the family's favorite place for snow skiing.

Manufacturers' reps spend a lot of their time working at dealerships. “When I am traveling, I work doubly hard,” George said. “Training sales people, addressing service issues, and working trade shows are routine activities throughout the year. Dealers want to mold their sales and service staff to fit their business models. That's where I can really work with their staff and help implement their model. As a rep, I can come in with classes on features, benefits, and product knowledge. In the classroom, each salesperson goes live with a presentation on a given product, followed with peer critiques.”

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George had a very successful day duck hunting on a private game preserve in Woodland, California. He used a Winchester SX3 semi-automatic 12-gauge shotgun to bring down Mallards and Spragues. • George and Kimberli enjoyed a visit to New York at Christmas with their sons Steffen and Evan. After dinner at the Russian Tea Room, they viewed New York from the top of Rockefeller Center.

A salesperson's major learning experience comes with a visit to Red Bay and a thorough tour of all of the manufacturing areas—not just the assembly line tour offered daily to owners and the general public. Conducted by a manufacturer's rep, these specialized tours are a critical training ground for each dealer's sales staff. Wearing headsets to hear the rep, tour members receive detailed instruction on how Tiffin motorhomes are built. They visit the chassis and welding shops; the frame and wheel alignment shop; the cabinets and room compartments shop; the solid surface countertops shop; the entry and baggage doors operation; the assembly line building which includes shops for harnesses, slide-outs, and wall-roof components; and finally the company's state-of-the-art exterior paint facility in Belmont. The learning experience takes two days.

George explains that his primary responsibility is “managing his territory.” He currently has 11 dealers in his territory—the northwestern states plus British Columbia and Alberta. During the recession that began in 2008 for the RV industry, George had to remove six dealers from the Tiffin network. “It is difficult to cancel a dealership. A dealer may have been with us for many years. But if the dealership is not selling product and not providing the quality of service required by Tiffin, then we have to move on,” George said. “It's like getting a divorce.”

When Tiffin is selecting a new dealer, the manufacturer's rep has the initial job of evaluating the overall facility and the service operation. “We have to determine how Tiffin will fit into the dealer's existing product mix. We investigate the company's overall reputation. I also assess the service operation: how many certified techs the dealer has; can they do body work and painting; in how many different areas of service do they have competency. We have got to make the right call,” George explained. “From my point of view, making the dealer decision is the most interesting part of the manufacturer's rep's job. Then the work really begins. Building relationships is the core of this business. Providing support and watching them grow as a Tiffin dealer is the most satisfying part of my job.”

*Continued on page 23*



## Interviews from Michigan, Wisconsin, and South Carolina



### Lanny & Lois Swanson

Hometown: Livonia, Michigan  
Interviewed in Lansing, Michigan

- Lanny & Lois own a 2006 Phaeton 40QDH with a Caterpillar 350 on a Freightliner Chassis.
- They've been married 46 yrs. & have 2 children: Lori has 2 children and lives in Holt, Michigan; and Chris has 3 children and lives in Farmville, Virginia.
- Lanny & Lois have owned 6 RVs since 1982; began full timing in 2001; and have driven in 47 of the lower 48 states—except Delaware.
- In 2010 they purchased this Phaeton and have traveled 13,000 miles through 19 states.
- He drives 90% of the time—and they both enjoy visiting National Parks & State Capitals.
- Lanny & Lois have work-camped 2 summers at Yellowstone; then one summer each at parks near Pensacola and Naples, Florida; and one summer at Disney World's Epcot Center.
- Lanny's favorite area is the Pacific Northwest; and Lois prefers Southern Utah.
- His bucket list: Death Valley in southern California; Rehoboth State Park in Delaware, & a return trip to the Pacific Northwest.
- She looks forward to visiting Washington, Oregon, and Maine – for lobster!
- Lanny & Lois both taught school in Michigan; he taught 5th grade for 33 years & retired in 1999; she taught elementary vocal and instrumental music for 20 years & retired in 2001.
- His hobbies: photography and reading.
- Her hobbies: computer and quilting.



### Harvey & Sonja Olson

Hometown: Amherst, Wisconsin  
Interviewed in Arbor Vitae, Wisconsin

- Harvey & Sonja own a 2001 Allegro 33 ft., 2 slides, with a Triton V10 on a Ford Chassis.
- They have been married 52 years.
- They have 2 children and 4 grandchildren: Mark has 4 children and lives in Amherst, Wisconsin ... he also has an RV; and Terry is single and lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Between 1958 and 1962 Harvey was in the Army Reserves in Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri.
- Harvey & Sonja sold their Florida time share in the early 1980s & bought their 1st of 4 RVs.
- This Allegro is their 1st Tiffin coach; they've driven 70,000+ miles in 15 states; and they travel 5 to 5½ months annually.
- Harvey does 100% of the driving and prefers driving 450-500 miles per day; however, if necessary, he can drive 550-600 miles per day.
- While motorhoming, Harvey's "enjoying life", Sonja likes "her own bed" & their favorite thing about motorhoming is meeting people!
- Their favorite areas are: Northern Wisconsin in the summer; Needles, California in the winter & the Southwest.
- On their bucket list: Alaska & New England.
- Harvey's career has included: master plumber, realtor, & since 1959 owned a hardware store.
- Sonja's career continues to be taking care of the book work for their hardware store.
- Harvey's hobby is golf—plus they're both avid Green Bay Packer fans & attend the games.



### John & Doris Roberts

Hometown: Green Cove Springs, Florida  
Interviewed in Spartanburg, South Carolina

- John & Doris own a 2007 Phaeton 40QDH with a Caterpillar 350 on a Freightliner Chassis.
- We met for this interview at Camp Freightliner!
- They're married 44 years and have 2 Daughters: Misty Dawn in Poolesville, Maryland; and Michelle Deanne in Middleburg, Florida.
- John retired in 1983 after 22 years in the Navy.
- John & Doris have owned 2 RVs since 2006 and traveled in all but 2 of the United States.
- Since purchasing this Phaeton 1½ years ago they've traveled in 20 states, driven 12,500 miles & prefer driving less than 200 mi./day.
- John & Doris consider themselves 'sun-birds' & travel 7 months each year – April thru Oct.
- They purchased a motorhome to see the U.S. & as many animals as possible, to go hiking, and for a chance to relax—with no stress.
- Favorite places: Glacier & Denali National Parks, Niagara Falls and Newfoundland.
- John enjoys the Southwest & likes canyons.
- Doris loves Montana and the mountains.
- Their bucket list includes returning to both Newfoundland and the state of Montana.
- John taught at St. Johns River Community College in Florida for 20 years & retired in 2008. His hobbies are: computers, leather crafts, woodworking and reading.
- Doris retired in 2008 after 40 years as a registered nurse. Her hobbies: gardening, knitting, crocheting, & crafts of all types.

**Editor's Note:** Elaine and Mike Austin retired in 2007 at the urging of their children who wanted them to realize their dream: buy a luxury motorhome, go full time, and spend several years just enjoying themselves and seeing the country. After a career turning around failing steel companies, Mike connected with the University of South Alabama as a guest lecturer in their Business Institute. Elaine discovered a whole new career in real estate. In March 2008, they bailed out, bought a new Allegro Bus, and "hit the road." In 2011 they traded for a new Phaeton 40QBH.



PLEASE TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION

## **Notice of Refrigerator Recall**

**Attention: All customers with Norcold Refrigerators**

**There is a recall involving Norcold Refrigerators  
that are in Tiffin units  
built from December 1996 to December 2010.**

**If you have a unit produced during that time  
period that has a Norcold refrigerator, please  
immediately call **800-767-9101**  
and speak to a Norcold representative  
for the most up-to-date information.**

**They will advise what you need to do.**

**This is a very serious recall  
that could involve a refrigerator catching fire.**

**Do not delay.**

**Norcold Recall #10E-049**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT 1.800.767.9101 OR [WWW.NORCOLD.COM/RECALL](http://WWW.NORCOLD.COM/RECALL)





OFFICIAL REFRIGERATOR RECALL

**If your refrigerator is on recall,  
DO NOT operate it until it can be professionally retrofitted  
with its proper remedy.**

**The installation of this safety device  
will be at NO CHARGE to you.**

**Action Steps** – If you have one of the recalled refrigerators and you...

***Currently reside in the RV,  
you should immediately:***

1. Set the refrigerator to “OFF.”
2. Unplug the refrigerator through the Service Vent on the outside of the vehicle.
3. Contact your Dealer, a Norcold Authorized Service Center or call 1-800-767-9101 as soon as possible to get assistance.

***Do not currently reside in the RV,  
you should immediately:***

1. Set the refrigerator to “OFF.”
2. Unplug the refrigerator through the Service Vent on the outside of the vehicle.
3. Disconnect from shore power.
4. Contact your Dealer, a Norcold Authorized Service Center or call 1-800-767-9101 as soon as possible to get assistance.

**Failure to follow these instructions can result  
in fire causing injury or death.**

**To check your refrigerator’s status regarding this recall,  
or for more information about  
other Norcold recalls involving older models,  
go to [www.norcold.com/recall](http://www.norcold.com/recall)**

# General RV Expands Operations in Five States

WITH TEN STORES, COMPANY IS THE LARGEST FAMILY-OWNED RV DEALER IN U.S.

*Abe Baidas was a child of the Great Depression.* The hard lessons he learned as a teenager and young man became the financial foundation for a successful recreational vehicle sales and service company that today employs 600. Operating from 10 locations in five states, General RV last year posted sales of over \$300 million. The Baidas family justly lays claim to being the largest family-owned RV sales and service company in the U.S.

Abe's parents were Polish immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania. After World War II, he moved to Detroit and found a job with one of the Big Three auto makers. It only took a month for him to realize there had to be something better than the daily monotony of the assembly line.

With his savings, he opened a gas station on the west side of Detroit. A representative from an RV manufacturing company asked Baidas to allow him to leave a travel trailer on a corner of his lot to see if he could sell it and make a profit. He promised to come back in two weeks and pick up the trailer if it did not sell. The trailer sold quickly and Abe bought two more when the rep returned. That scenario repeated itself several times and Abe decided he preferred the RV business over pumping gas and changing oil.

Baidas thoughtfully began to develop a business philosophy. Consignments produced small profit margins, but paying cash for the inventory when he acquired it produced a much better margin.

He put back into the business all that he could to build operating capital for inventory. His frugality soon began to pay off.

In 1962 Baidas and a partner started General RV Center at a location on 8 Mile Road in Southfield. The inventory was expanded to include truck caps and a wider variety of travel trailers. The Baidas family was expanding, too. Abe and Grace had four children: Claudia and three sons: Dick, Randy, and Robert.

Dick joined General RV at a professional level in 1970 right out of college and became a driving force in the company's development. The rest of the second generation followed with Randy and Rob joining the company a few years later, with col-

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General RV Center's main operation is located in Wixom on I-96 at 12 Mile Road. The company has all of its management and computer system operations at this location. A completely new 30-acre facility is being planned at a nearby property.



lege degrees in finance and business. Abe turned the business over to his sons in the late '80s.

Detroit is a very multi-cultural city. In the early '70s, it became apparent to the Baidases that Detroit residents remained in their own municipalities for most of their shopping, even major purchases.

General RV opened a second store in Mt. Clemens as a first marketing effort to address Detroit's sprawling population of five million. Following positive results in Mt. Clemens, Dick and Rob chose the southside for their next store in what is now Brownstown Township. Their fourth store was opened in the north central area of Waterford Township. It later was moved and became the White Lake Store.

In 1985 with Abe Baidas proudly watching his sons develop what he had launched nearly 25 years earlier, General RV opened its fifth store in Grand Rapids, Michigan's second largest city. Over 150 miles away, it was their first store beyond the perimeters of Detroit, which prompted Randy to move there to assure its success. With the combined sales of the five stores, General RV became the #1 RV dealer in Michigan.

Led by Dick in business operations and Rob in land acquisitions, General RV realized the location in Southfield was a handicap to the company's future development because of its lack of exposure to major thoroughfares. In a bold move in 1993, the company bought land on I-96 at 12 Mile Road in Wixom. "It was several miles from high density neighborhoods," Rob said. "The only thing out here at the time was the Ford plant and McDonalds. But, we were on an interstate and the exposure to high traffic counts is what mattered."

Within two years General RV Center doubled its sales in the Wixom store and launched plans to move four of its five stores to interstate locations. By this



time, Loren Baidas, Dick and Ruth's son, in his third year at Alma College on a basketball scholarship, was spending his summers at Wixom working in each department to learn the business.

"It was amazing to watch Dad and Rob execute their plans," Loren said. "They took all five locations and enlarged them to Super Stores, offering expanded services and much larger parts and accessory stores. With that success, Dad continued to manage daily operations while Rob, my uncle who is seven years younger, focused on land acquisitions and developing the company's centralized computer system. My Mom did the accounting for the company at home and actually printed the payroll checks every two weeks until 1990.

"When I was in middle school and high school, my spending money came from working afternoons and weekends at the first store on 8 Mile Road in Southside," Loren recalled. "I cleaned bathrooms, washed RV inventory, and stocked parts shelves. The floorplan at Southside was not designed for a retail business. To get to the ladies' room, employees and cus-

tomers had to walk through Dad's office! Reflecting General RV's long suit with success in family management, third generation Loren Baidas (seated right) serves as corporate president. Chris Davis (seated), Rob's son-in-law, is the company's F&I manager. Standing, Rob Baidas, the remaining second generation member, oversees land and property acquisitions. His son, Grant, is director of Internet Sales. Not shown, Wade Stufft, vice president of operations, is Loren's brother-in-law.

tomers had to walk through Dad's office!

"Following my grandfather's business philosophy, the three brothers continued to put all the funds possible back into the business," Loren continued. "That really became important when they made the decision to relocate. The capital was available to buy land along interstates and move the stores to take advantage of higher traffic and visibility.

"The equally important key to our success in expanding to the new locations was our employees. They made the transitions go smoothly while they continued to provide top quality service to our customers," Loren said. "We just have good people who take ownership of their departments

Text by Fred Thompson



and individual jobs. From the point where a customer is greeted by our receptionists, our employees work together to make sure every customer has a great experience.

“We have two employees with over 40 years of service: one here in Wixom and one at Brownstown,” Loren noted. “They have known me since my childhood. We have many people who are in the 25-to-35 and 15-to-25 year brackets.”

When Loren finished his degree in business in 1997, he decided to accept an offer from a Detroit bank in their commercial lending department. “It was a good opportunity for me to understand the functionality of a bank and to observe the business operations of various companies to whom we were making loans,” he said.

By Christmas 1998, Dick Baidas talked his son into joining the company. Loren was the beginning of third generation management, but that did not mean an office next to Dick’s. “I started as a sales person in the Wixom store and won the sales contest in my first year,” Loren said. In late 1999 Loren assumed the position of store manager which included parts, service, and sales — a staffing of 50 employees. Each of the other stores had managers reporting to Dick. In 2004 Loren became national sales manager.

“Our biggest year was 2004. At the Wixom store, we sold 1,300 units total—motorized and towable, new and used,” he recounted. “This year we expect to sell 1,000 units.

“In Michigan overall, dealers in 2004 sold 2,028 motorized units compared to 728 motorized units in 2012. In towables, those numbers were 15,057 in 2004; 6,459 in 2009, and 9,587 units in 2012. It’s the ‘new normal’ and we have to learn how to do business on a different scale and still make a profit,” Loren said. “Currently, General RV stores are capturing 75 percent of the Michigan market for new motorized RVs.”

“In spite of the recession, General RV made a profit every year from 2005 forward,” he continued. “We finance our own inventory. During the recession we never cancelled a purchase order. That really solidified our relationships with manufacturers. When they had to move inventory recovered from failed dealerships, we got the benefits. When banks were selling new units at 50 cents on the dollar, we bought those units and made a fair profit on them.

“If we sold a new motorhome built by a company that failed during the recession, we provided the warranty service to the

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General RV Center, Wixom, Michigan Sales Staff: *Kneeling, left to right* – Caitlyn Dreyyour, Chris Cole, Ryan Swiney, Phyllis Forster, Steve Vasiloff; *1st Row* – Amanda Smith, Dan Maddox, Dan Broat, Bob Bianchini, Byron Cancelmo, Tom Goodin; *2nd Row* – Ed Buchwald, Chad Bondie, Primo Crocenzi, Jeremy Miller, Brian Sorge.

General RV Center, Wixom, Michigan Parts Department Staff: *At left*, Don MacKinnon. *Left to right*, Joel McCarthy, Al Pinneo, Jerry Dolowy, Eric Sibila, Richard Medaugh.

General RV Center, Wixom, Michigan Service Staff: *Kneeling, left to right* – Paul Drier, Larry Devine. *Standing* – John Gazdag, Matt Helm, Dave Carlisle, Richard Medaugh, Rob Beale, Bill Barry, Tammy Charron, Kelly Hildebrand.



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owner. We did millions in warranty work for which we were never reimbursed by the manufacturer,” Loren said. “We want potential customers to know our history on this matter. If a person buys a motorhome from General RV, they can be assured they are dealing with a financially sound company who can take care of them when the chips are down. Many people try to get bids over the internet on the unit they want to buy. When they take the lowest bid with no intention of returning to that dealer for service, where will they go when they must have service? It is far better to pay a little more and buy from a financially strong dealer who has your back.”

In a tragic twist of fate, Dick Baidas, 58, was diagnosed in 2006 with pancreatic cancer. He died three months later. The family was in shock, but nevertheless ready to regroup and move forward with Ruth’s blessing. Dick was well respected in the industry and was posthumously inducted into the RV Hall of Fame two years later.

The family wanted Loren, then 31, to assume the presidency. “Admittedly, I really felt the weight on my shoulders. Dad and I were best friends and he had been a good mentor since the day I was born,” Loren said. “I knew that Rob would continue to do a great job planning the company’s expansion and land acquisitions, and that Wade Stufft, my brother-in-law, would back me up as vice president of operations. We had good management people in every position and our employees treated the business like it was their own. My answer, of course, was ‘yes.’ Rob, Wade, and I sat down to ask ourselves where we were headed next.

“About 18 months before Dad died, we had opened Birch Run between Flint and Saginaw as our sixth store. At this point, we decided our present market was too dependent on the regional economy created by the auto industry. We wanted to find regional economies that were not as vulnerable,” Loren explained. “Actually, we anticipated the downturn in RV sales about two years before it struck the U.S. at large and took steps then to prepare for it. By 2008 we were carrying half of the inventory we had two years earlier, and had only four units from the two largest manufacturers that failed.”

The family team moved carefully at first to find a Midwestern market that was similar to theirs in demographics, climate, and product mix. A dealership located on a freeway in the Canton, Ohio, area near Cleveland came up for sale. “We rehabbed the overall facility and got it up to speed with our other stores,” Loren said. “We made a few mistakes and learned a lot in the process. In a year the store was profitable and the weak economy brought some really good people our way. We began to see property values fall a little, too, as we continued our search for other locations.”

Now in full swing, the recession that was playing havoc with both RV dealerships and manufacturers was also creating two situations that improved General RV’s opportunities: people with skills in RV dealership management, sales, parts and service who were looking for employment with a stable company, *and* properties and businesses that were distressed. “We were confident that the RV market was going to come back because the lifestyle is so

popular — maybe not to the same scale we enjoyed in 2004, but we believed we could adjust our business plan proportionally to function profitably with reduced sales,” Loren said.

At this point chronologically, Tiffin Motorhomes entered the picture. “We had been looking at General RV for two years,” Jerry Williamson, Tiffin’s general sales manager, said. “Their reputation for excellent service and their managed growth were impressive. We were confident their business philosophy as a family-owned business was a good match for us.”

The opportunity for the two companies to have a serious dealer–manufacturer discussion came with a touch of serendipity in 2009. “An FMCA rally and RV show in Bowling Green, Ohio, was coming up in July, and Tiffin really did not have a sponsoring dealer for the show,” Mike Andes, Tiffin’s rep for that region, recalled. “Jerry and I asked for a meeting with Loren Baidas and their sales executives.”

“Our meeting went really well,” Jerry noted. “They liked Tiffin because we are predominantly a Class A diesel manufacturer. Our strong position for service and backing up our warranties was a major factor since we were having this discussion in the middle of the recession when other manufacturers were failing.”

The relationship began in Bowling Green at the FMCA rally. General RV took a leap of faith and became the sponsoring dealer for the show with the delivery of 10 coaches. “We actually did sales and product training right there at the show in Bowling Green,” Jerry said. “Later, as we traced each company’s history, we were amazed at how similar we are in corporate development and conservative business philosophy. Even in the family’s management, each company has a founder whose three sons became principals in the business.”

At first the Wixom and Grand Rapids stores were General RV’s only Tiffin dealers. Now eight of the company’s 10 stores are selling the Tiffin brands. Within two years General RV had a solid position as one of Tiffin’s Top 10 Dealers. This year Tiffin coaches took first place among General RV’s five Class A manufacturers. Tiffin does not manufacture Class B or Class C motorhomes.

Steve Vasiloff, who has been an RV sales person for 13 years, with five years in motorized, smiled broadly when I asked him about selling Tiffin motorhomes. “If people have heard the Tiffin story, then it is easy to sell them a coach,” he said. “If they have never heard of Tiffin, then I simply point out the benefits and features and do a few comparisons. Tiffin is a good solid motorhome that has the sizzle, too — and that’s what sells.”

Although it did not fit their profile, General RV in 2009 opened its eighth store in Jacksonville, Florida. The property had been an automobile dealership. “Our customers were spending the winter in Florida, trading, and coming home with other brands,” Loren smiled. “We needed a presence in Florida to hold on to our good customers.”

The company’s ninth store didn’t fit the profile either, but the opportunity to work with a family friend made Salt Lake City, Utah, an overwhelming choice. Robert Jensen in 2001 sold his two stores to a conglomerate and stayed on to run the

business. It did not go well. Teaming up, Jenson and the Baidas family leased a used car lot for a year that was adjacent to an RV dealer who had the Tiffin franchise. They bought the dealership, retained the Tiffin franchise, and in two years became the #1 motorized dealer in Salt Lake City and all of Utah.

The company's tenth store is in Chicago. It was a project from the ground up. "We purchased the land, put up the buildings, and launched the business," Loren said. "Chicago is a major market for the RV industry with population densities similar to Detroit's. It may take a few years to develop our presence there, but we have made a good start."

"We will continue to look at underserved markets where we can make a significant impact," Loren assured. "However, we will make certain that any expansion is a quality-based store—and that is precious to us."

You can be certain that wherever expansion is planned, Rob Baidas will be at the helm of the physical development. He and older brother Dick were quite a team with their complementary skills: Dick heading up operations and Rob working with land acquisition, architectural planning, and overseeing construction. Now it is Loren and Rob and the company is still expanding. Currently, General RV has outgrown its Wixom facility and is looking forward to a completely new facility on property formerly occupied by a Ford assembly plant. The new Wixom store will have approximately 20,000 sq. ft. for office space, plus an

indoor showroom and 40 service bays. Other projects underway include an expanded service center at the Chicago store; 10,000 sq. ft. of space, 10 more service bays, and more acreage at the Birch Run store; plus an acquisition of 10 acres for a service center at the Canton, Ohio store.

To make General RV's presence felt in all of its 10 locations, the company engages several forms of media to reach its public. "All of our stores do local ads in radio, TV, and direct mail," Loren said. "Our content for television is produced in house by George Deveau. RVDA also provides good footage. We use direct mail, radio, and television to bring customers to our open houses. Some stores have found it profitable to tie our promotions into local events. We do off-site RV shows annually developed by associations. Interestingly, we have found that ice cream socials at campgrounds will bring prospects to our stores. This year we expect to move 8,000 new and used units. That is a 120 percent increase from 2009 to 2012. We are adapting to the 'new normal.'"

Dennis Anderson, General RV's marketing manager, has been with the company for 14 years. While advertising and marketing are inextricably tied together, Dennis is charged with developing ideas for carrying the company's message to existing and new markets. "My job is sitting in the middle of a continuum of change," he laughed. Getting a bit philosophical, he continued,

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General RV offers the largest parts and accessories store in the greater Detroit area. They offer a large number of aftermarket products including refrigerators, TVs, RV furniture, carpeting, washers and dryers, and bathroom fixtures.

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“Change is seldom easy, but it’s almost never bad.”

Traditional mail is still the main contact for known customers, but the company is gravitating toward electronic media that will in the future be their primary source of contact. “Three years ago the internet was not as relevant as it is today,” he said. “Now we are sending out electronic mail with attachments. If I send out 5,000 emails, I can see how many opened the email and how many printed the coupon I offered. Analytics software can track almost anything I send and give me reports. We are working in an amazing communications environment.”

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In today’s marketplace, the sales managers at General RV’s 10 stores see a lack of consistency of demand as their major challenge. “Before 2008, you could bank on a certain amount of business and traffic,” Loren said. “Then, for no foreseeable reason, sales began to fluctuate. What’s selling and what’s not. We talk about it everyday. We have to place our RV orders three months out which puts stress on manufacturing. It is not unmanageable but it requires constant analysis.”

The company’s motorized sales manager, Bob Green, and towable sales manager, Geoff Radke, communicate daily with each store to identify patterns as to what *is* selling. “We try to identify small dips and knee jerk reactions and not allow them to overly influence what we order,” Geoff said. “We do regular analysis on floorplans and brands to establish possible trends.”

“With regard to Tiffin’s product, the gas-powered coaches are the area of greatest growth in our market, although we are selling a significant number of diesels, the Phaeton being the leader,” Bob noted. “Tiffin’s floor plans and features for 2014 are the best line-up they have had. The Breeze was hot when it first came out. There is not much comparable in the competition.”

Chris Miller, corporate sales manager, supervises the sales

operations, new and used, in all 10 stores. “Constant and sometimes repetitive sales training is the key to a successful sales operation,” Chris began. “We teach a system that begins with a simple introduction and greeting. Without being intrusive at all, the sales consultant conducts a search process that identifies the customer’s purpose for buying an RV, how he plans to use it, and his budget. Then the consultant will select several RVs to show. The product presentation emphasizes the features and benefits. If the RV is a motorhome, the final step is a test drive. I oversee and insure the correct use of the interview pattern.”

Near the end of each week, Chris sends out a theme plan for sales managers to do training during the next week. By Sunday p.m. each manager returns a script to execute the theme plan. “I review each plan to make sure they are putting a lot of thought into it,” Chris continued. “We share each other’s plans to enhance how we are doing it. One day is dedicated to product training to become masters at it. Three days are directed to the theme, 15 minutes each day. One day is used for store-specific training, such as ‘How to handle grumpy customers’ or ‘The different types of personalities we encounter.’ We work on topics every day. The adage that ‘Sales people are born, not trained’ is a myth.

“Learning to identify what motivates a sales consultant may be the most important talent a sales manager can acquire,” Chris said. “Some are motivated by the recognition of being #1 on the team. Others want to do a great job of taking care of their families. Some are motivated primarily by monetary reward.”

Until three years ago Loren interviewed every person who applied for a sales position. He considers the decision to hire a sales consultant to be critical because that person is the face of General RV to the public. Loren now delegates this responsibility to Bob Green, Geoff Radke, and Chris Miller. The skills the interviewers look for are self-motivation; good interpersonal skills with all ages; honesty (It’s OK to say, “I don’t know the answer to your questions, but I’ll find out.”); competitive (wants to be #1). Consultants are paid by commission only.

Loren still interviews applicants being considered for management positions. “The skills I look for are (1) organizational



skills; (2) the ability to make key decisions – a good manager will be making decisions all day long; (3) the ability to develop policy and procedures to apply to management situations; and (4) observing those they surround themselves with.

Wade Stufft is vice president for operations, overseeing parts, service, and facilities. Wade, who is married to Loren's sister, Larnise, began his career at General RV on the sales floor. He was successful with a very deliberate sales approach. He also accepted the responsibility of running operations at the Wixom store within his first year. The management model for having both sales and operation managers in each store evolved from that experience.

Managerially, each of the 10 stores has two managers: one for operations and one for sales. The operations manager oversees service, parts, and facilities, each of which is headed by a manager. The operations manager in each store reports to Wade. The sales manager oversees new sales, pre-owned sales, F&I, and inventory, and reports to corporate sales manager Chris Miller. The sales manager and the operations manager run the store as partners and report to each other. "This organizational structure has worked well for us," Loren said. "The two managers have cross responsibilities and feed off each other to do a thorough job."

"In operations, our priority is to take care of details," Wade began. "We want both our employees and customers to have a consistent experience, which means we must be consistent on policy and procedure. It is important for each store to have its own personality, but still create a consistent General RV experience.

"In facilities, we now have 10 Super Store locations and one coming that will have a 40,000 sq. ft. building on 30 plus acres. We know we need to grow and we want to improve the overall appearance of our facilities," he said. "To do that we have a corporate team that evaluates each store as a customer would look at it. Consistency in our signage for general recognition by the public is important, but it is not necessary for our buildings to all look alike. We want to be 'one voice' in each store.

"In service, we have set up policy and procedure manuals for how our service departments are to be operated," Wade continued. "We make sure the attitude is 'My customer will get 100% great service.' My role is to communicate with the service manager and provide him with all the support needed to achieve that department's goals."

"Chris Dietrich, vice president for service operations, has written a service and policy manual for every repair job we do," Wade said. "But the hardest part is making that job 'the best possible service' in the customer's eyes."

"We care very much and want each customer to be happy with the service he or she receives," Chris said. "The quality service rendered by each employee must be instinctual."

"Wayne Micallef, parts director, sets policy regarding all of the parts, products, and accessories that will be sold in our retail super stores," Wade said.

"Our success depends on taking advantage of the efficiencies of scale. Expanding from five stores to 10 in just seven years was a game changer for us," Wade began. "When making buying or

spending decisions, we must not lose sight that this is a people business. It is all about relationships from manufacturer to dealer to owner to service. Our business is to fix problems and build good relationships in the process. We look at each issue as an opportunity to determine how best to deal with it, solve the problem, and set policy to make it a good solution for all the stores.

"An example of our approach to a problem was addressing the complaint of 'Not servicing a unit quickly enough,'" Wade explained. "Sometimes we were taking two to three days for a repair that was not complicated."

"Our team designed a 'same day service' program that involved three departments," Wade began. "We identified the parts most often needed in repairs that could be completed in one day. The parts department is now inventorying those items and restocking them regularly. The service department worried about having enough techs to do same-day service, but techs



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were teamed up to get the job done in the prescribed time.”

The parts and service managers in each store play critical roles in assuring that each customer has a great experience. In the Wixom store, Donnie Mackinnon with 21 years of experience at General RV serves as parts manager. He manages the retail parts counter, the special order parts department, shipping and receiving, client-generated orders for aftermarket accessories, and inventory management of parts used in repairs. The parts center has three in sales, one in shipping-receiving, and one in special orders.

“Keeping everything in stock that’s in demand is my biggest challenge,” he reported. “We order most of our parts from Salem Distributors, a local company.. All of the managers work well together. There is a cooperative spirit throughout the whole company. We have so many repeat customers who come in to chat and hang out. The coffee’s still free.”

Dave Carlisle is the service manager at the Wixom store. “When a coach comes in for service, we ‘walk the coach and mark the problems,”” Dave said. “When the service writer completes the work order, it goes to Matt Helm, our foreman for the service area, who dispatches the job to the techs. We have 20 coach bays: 14 inside and six for pre-delivery inspection (PDI) outside. The service shop has eight techs including two master certified techs. We also have seven state certified techs, five PDI techs, and five who are ready for testing. At present we do not

offer chassis service (except for changing engine oil), brake, engine, or transmission service. We are certified to do body work including roofs, side, and caps.

“General RV attaches an evaluation postcard to every work order. It follows the job until the owner receives it with his invoice,” Dave pointed out. “The postcards are returned to a third party company that does the evaluations and provides the data to management. Evaluations can also be done online.”

“I started here 14 years ago as a porter and then became a certified and master certified technician,” Dave continued. “I am an example of a person starting at an entry level job and advancing to a management position. In addition to overseeing the department, I maintain a service log that records how long each coach has been in the shop. I do evaluations for warranty work. Whenever I am needed, I still get involved in repairs. That’s really the fun part of this job.”

Chris Davis joined the company last year to take charge of F&I. “The financial crisis in selling motorhomes and the more expensive towables was tied to our inability to secure financing. Many buyers who had excellent credit scores were not prepared for the size of down payments demanded by the banks who want to see an equity deal,” Chris said. “Restrictions have loosened a little but nothing close to pre-recession levels when banks were doing zero or five percent down on a \$40,000 fifth wheel. For loans on new motorhomes today, banks are requir-

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ing 10 percent down if not more. National and regional banks in our stores are coming up with better programs, and credit unions have come back into the picture. Customers are payment driven. We try to find the right rates and terms. Rates vary between 4.99 and 5.99 percent.”

Grant Baidas, whose father is Rob, heads up Internet Sales, a fairly new division at General RV Center. Approximately 25 percent of motorhome sales at the Wixom store are initiated or consummated through General RV’s website and the internet. Ten percent of all towable sales are initiated through the company’s internet sales force. Out of the top 10 sales persons in the company, at least two are in the internet sales department. Nine sales people work in the Wixom office and six in other stores.

Grant, 26, earned a degree in business from Northwood University. “I am a people person,” he said. “I did floor sales while I was in college and then for a year after I graduated.” He has been in his present position for 16 months. “In internet sales, the closing rate is three to five percent. On the floor, it is 25 percent. The difference is, of course, that you have so many more opportunities in internet sales. In training, we work on objectives and objections. Our sales people learn to ask the right questions that lead to the sale, as well as improving on their conversion rates.”

General RV has a photographer and videographer at each store to provide quality images for the website. Grant and his staff meet once a month to review and revise the website. A

search optimization policy is worked and revised on a daily basis. They develop sales campaigns based on designs, factors, and words that people key on when they search for RV products.

General RV’s growth has been built on an organizational plan that is committed to service. Any expansion is designed around a quality experience for the customer. Financially conservative with reserves that permit growth without incurring risky debt, this company will be in the vanguard of RV marketing for decades to come. Abe Baidas and his son Dick certainly must be proud of what their progeny are doing with the business they started and developed. **RIS**

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Text by Norman Spray

Photography by Jody Dole



*Back in the day*—that is the day before good roads, dependable cars and airplanes connected our cities—steam-powered trains and riverboats were *the* way to travel. That day is gone. But there's a place about as far east as you can go in this country where you can experience the nostalgic thrill of both train and boat travel as it was in that bygone era.

You begin at the Essex Steam Train & Riverboat station in the small town of Essex, Connecticut, just seven miles upstream from where the picturesque Connecticut River empties into Long Island Sound. There you board a steam-powered train that chugs up a river valley the Nature Conservancy calls “one of the last great places on earth.” After five scenic miles, your train pulls alongside a dock at Deep River Landing.

You leave the train and walk a gangplank onto the decks of the 65-foot *Becky Thatcher*, a Mississippi-style riverboat. She sails you and as many as 219 more passengers on a serene hour and fifteen minute cruise through deep water along coves, inlets, and marshes. The scenic shoreline, rising wooded hills, birds and sometimes other wildlife are magnificent. Visible from the boat's three decks are the Gillette Castle, the Goodspeed Opera House, and the East Haddam Swing Bridge, all historic icons.

The cruise ends upon return to Deep River Landing. The steam train then rails you back to Essex. It's a two-and-a-half hour, one-of-a-kind excursion that costs only \$26 for adults (\$17 for children). You can take a one-hour train ride and skip

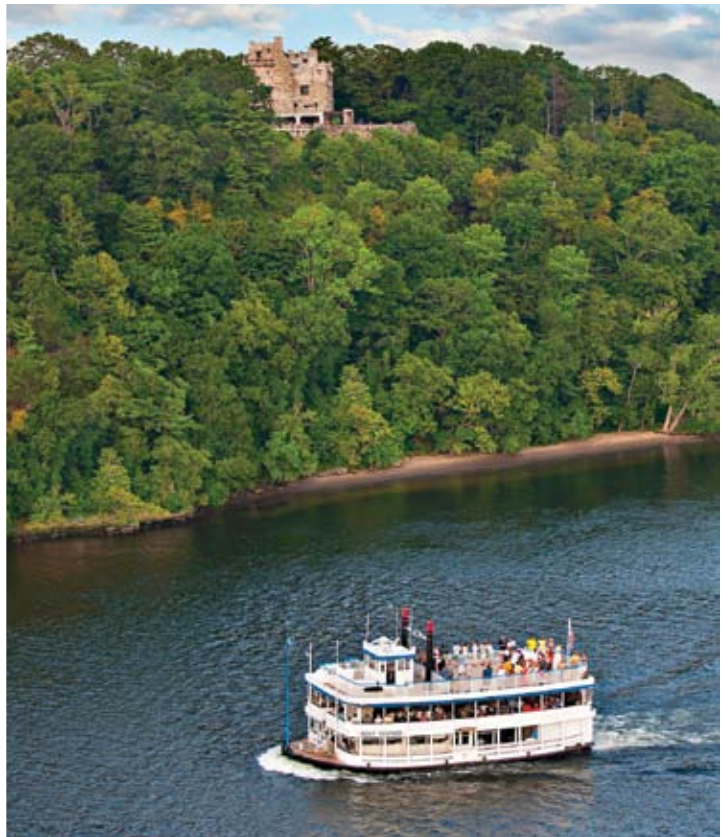
the boat cruise for \$17 for adults, \$9 for children. This trip is available every day through the summer season, June 22 through September 2, boarding at 11:00 am, 12:30 and 2:00 pm.

In the fall season, September 6 - 29, trips are scheduled only on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. During a special foliage season, October 3 - 27 when track-side trees turn glorious hues of gold, orange, and red, trains run Thursdays through Mondays. Seating in a first class car (more comfortable chair-like seats and cash beverage service) on any of the above outings costs \$10 more. Riding in an open car (available seasonally) is \$5 more.

In winter, there's an evening “North Pole Express” every day between November 15 and December 29. “Santa Special” train rides on weekend days November 29 through December 2 leave Essex at 11:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. The Essex Clipper Dinner Train, pulled by an early diesel-electric engine, offers elegant four-course meals in plush Pullman diners during a two and a half hour run. Cost: \$75.

You'll marvel at the scenery as the locomotive, smoke billowing, pulls vintage cars over bridges and trestles spanning blue-water creeks and rivers. A narrator explains points of interest as the train passes by the towns of Essex, Deep River, Chester and Haddam. You roll by pristine meadows, a quaint farm, a millpond with waterfall and the undeveloped Selden Neck State Park, accessible only by boat. Near the tidal wetlands of Pratt Cove and Chester Creek, you may spot Cormorants, ducks, swans, Green-

# H E R A I L S



*Clockwise from top left:* Essex Steam Train & Riverboat offers special foliage season excursions during the month of October when vegetation along tracks turns glorious red, gold, and yellow. Here, Steam Engine No. 97, a 2-8-0 Consolidation type manufactured by American Locomotive's Cooke Works in Paterson, New Jersey, steams through this colorful wonderland. • When the train reaches the steamboat landing at Deep River, passengers board a Mississippi-style riverboat, *The Becky Thatcher*, for an unforgettable cruise up the scenic Connecticut River Valley. High on the hill above is the Gillette Castle, a 24-room mansion built by Actor William Gillette between 1914 and 1919. Gillette Castle State Park conducts tours through the building and

provides hiking trails and picnic facilities on the 184-acre estate formerly owned by Gillette. • Fans willing to ante \$500 tuition and go to school for a half day can learn how to operate a steam engine, then actually put their hands on the throttle to operate one for an hour. Here a happy, newly-trained “engineer” is set to guide the Valley’s newest engine, number 3025, up the line. He’ll “drive” it, but in the presence of and under the supervision of a professional crew. • An Essex Steam Train & Riverboat adventure begins with a scenic train ride over hills and dales, bridges, trestles, bogs and wetlands alongside the Connecticut River. Here, an early morning steam-powered train crosses the bridge over the blue waters at Deep River Creek.





Passengers who've just ridden up from Essex on a steam-powered train are boarding the *Becky Thatcher* for a cruise on the Connecticut River. This combination Essex Steam Train & Riverboat excursion is a two and a half hour taste of how many people traveled in the 1800s and early 1900s.

land geese. Blue Heron, egrets and red-winged blackbirds.

On the first weekend of each month from May to October, passengers who buy tickets for the first train to Deep River are offered also a free round trip south to Old Saybrook if they report to the station by 9:45 a.m.

Some 145,000 passengers rode these trains in 2012 and 155,000 are expected this year. This popularity makes it advisable to reserve places in advance at [www.essexsteamtrain.com](http://www.essexsteamtrain.com), 860-767-0103 or 800-377-3987. At peak times, a single steam locomotive may pull up to nine cars loaded with up to 400 passengers.

The railroad's locomotives and cars are authentic survivors from the great steam train industry that grew from a beginning in the 1830s to put 180,000 steam locomotives on the rails at the industry's peak. Diesel engines took over after World War II, ending the steam era on most lines. Now there are fewer than 100 operating steam locomotives in the United States, most of them making short excursion runs like the two at Essex.

Engine 40, a 2-8-2 or Mikado-type locomotive, manufactured in 1920 by American Locomotive Company (ALCO) at its Brooks Works in Dunkirk, New York, has been hauling trains at the Valley since the early 1980s.

Engine 1325, also a 2-8-2 (two front guide wheels, eight driver wheels and two guide wheels in back) was built in 1989 as an SY-type locomotive at the Tangshan Locomotive & Rolling Stock Works in China. Essex rebuilt it in 2011 to replicate a New Haven Railroad steam engine of the 1930s and '40s.

The four driver wheels on either side of both these locomotives are 54 inches in diameter. Their tenders hold 8,000 gallons

of water and carry up to eight tons of coal to fire the boilers which generate steam pressure rated at 185 pounds per square inch.

Like to operate one of these steamers yourself? On specified dates in April and November each year, Essex Steam Train will teach you how, then let you put your hands on the throttle. You actually "drive" one of these steam locomotives for an hour. When you register (required in advance because demand is heavy), you'll get home study materials on steam theory and operation, railroad and steam safety.

Then you report for training at a reserved time. After some three hours of classroom instruction, you'll operate a steamer for about an hour under direct supervision of the professional engine crew. Next training dates are November 1 - 3 and 8 - 10 beginning at 8:00 am and 12:00 noon. Dates for 2014 will be announced later. Cost is \$500. Registration is limited to people over 18, in good health and physically able.

Today's Valley Railroad Company, owner and operator of Essex Steam Train & Riverboat, has its roots in steam's glory days. The first train to operate on this line was on July 29, 1871, when it was known as the Connecticut Valley Railroad. After mergers and deals, good times and bad, the Valley became a part of the once-mighty New Haven Railroad that eventually merged into the ill-fated Penn Central Railroad.

Local volunteers, fearing Penn Central might tear up the rails, negotiated a temporary lease. Penn Central later gave ownership to the state which granted a lease authorizing the current Valley Railroad Company to use 22.47 miles of track. On July 29, 1971, exactly 100 years to the day after its first train rolled down rails, the new company's first train steamed from Essex to Deep River. Its trains are still steaming, over 40 years later.

Getting to Essex by motorhome is easy. Driving either north or south on I-95, take exit 69 onto Route 9 headed north. Then take exit 3 off Route 9 at Essex. Turn left at the end of the ramp. Drive about 200 yards. The station is on the left.

If coming from the north on Route 9, take exit 3 and turn right at the ramp's end. Parking is free and adequate for motorhomes. No hookups are available.

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## Things to Do and See in the Connecticut River Valley

Most anywhere you travel in Connecticut, you'll cross cities, towns, rivers, landmarks and hallowed ground significant in the history of this country. After all, the state was one of the earliest in the union, coming in fifth in 1788. For over 150 years before that, it was an English colony organized in 1636 and first known as the River Colony.

The Connecticut River Valley, where you'll go if you ride the

Essex Steamtrain & Riverboat, is itself historic but also up-to-date with varied entertainment venues, a passion for the arts and cultural activity, scenic wonders and opportunity for outdoor activities, particularly water sports and fresh and salt water fishing. There's more to see and do than you could get to in a month of Sundays. Trying to list them all would be futile but following are some you may find worthwhile:

Essex, (population about 6,500), listed among the 100 best small towns in America, and neighboring Centerbrook and Ivoryton are charming New England villages containing fine examples of early colonial and federal architecture, all near the Essex train station. Antique shops, specialty boutiques, restaurants and marinas abound. Notable attractions: the Connecticut River Museum, the 1776 Griswold Inn, and the Ivoryton Playhouse.

Old Lyme, a community of 8,000, occupies 27 square miles of shoreline, wetlands and forested hills on the east bank of the Connecticut River where it meets Long Island Sound. Old Lyme and neighboring Town of Lyme, and East Lyme all exude quintessential charm. They are known for a long-standing commitment to the arts and federal and colonial style homes and buildings that line their streets and winding country roads.

Old Lyme is famous for its public beach but perhaps more so as home of the *Florence Griswold Museum*, called the Home of American Impressionism. The museum occupies a house built on a 12-acre site by Sailing Ship Captain Robert Griswold in 1817. By 1890, Miss Alice Griswold was the only surviving family member left to maintain the family homestead. She operated it as a boarding house when Artist Henry Ward Ranger visited in 1899. He saw in Old Lyme a place to establish a new American school of landscape painting.

Some of the nation's most accomplished artists followed Ranger, forming the Lyme Art Colony. By 1915, Miss Griswold's

house centered America's best known impressionist art colony. Herself born in 1850, Miss Griswold died in 1937. In 2002 she was inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, one of nearly 100 recognized for pioneering and leading their fields.

Old Saybrook, population about 10,000, lies on the east bank across the river from Old Lyme. Like its neighbor, Old Saybrook boasts lovely shores, beaches, walking and bicycling paths, vistas, marinas, picturesque and historic 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century homes, and an "eclectic" collection of shops and restaurants. It is one of the state's oldest towns, incorporated in 1854, but its history goes back to 1635 when it began as Saybrook Plantation, an independent colony. Only a year later, the Pequot war eliminated a tribe of Indians from the area.

Eight years after that unpleasantry, Saybrook Plantation became part of the River Colony, later known as the Colony of Connecticut which became the union's fifth state in 1788. Yale University was founded in Old Saybrook in 1700, first called the Collegiate School.

East Haddam and Haddam at the northern end of Essex steam train's run occupy land purchased from Indians in 1662 for 30 coats worth about \$100. Once heavily industrialized, the Haddam cities now are bedroom communities that combine industry, culture, and tourism, and enjoy proximity to Lake Hayward, Bashan Lake, and Moodus Reservoir resort areas.

*Gillette Castle in East Haddam*, a 24-room mansion said to be

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## Camping Near Essex

RV camping near Essex is not a problem; however, there are only a few campgrounds in the immediate area. Short distances separate nearby cities where you'll find multiple listings in standard directories. In driving time, the steam train station is only about 45 minutes from Harvard, New Haven or New London; an hour or minutes more from Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Springfield; less than two hours from Greenwich, Stamford, Danbury, Providence and Worcester; and about two and a half from Boston or New York City. Listed below are some campgrounds closer to Essex; check for current pricing.

- **East Lyme**

**Aces High RV Park**, 877-785-8478, reservations@aceshighrvpark.com. 100 pull-throughs, full hookup spaces; 50 amp; \$54/night regular: \$59 for "water sites" near the park's pond.

- **Niantic**

**Camp Niantic Family Campground**, 860-739-9308, campniantic@aol.com. 135 spaces, 25 pull-throughs; 30 amp, electric and water; \$35 to \$43/night; dump and mobile sewer service.

**Rocky Neck State Park**, 860-739-5471, dept.stateparks@po.state.ct.us. Dry camping. No hookups. Dump station. 60 back-in sites, RV length limited to 32'-34'. Pets not allowed. \$33 first night for out-of state guests, \$30 thereafter. \$23 first night, \$20 after for Connecticut residents.

- **East Haddam**

**Wolf's Den Family Campground**, 860-873-9681, wolfsden-camp@msn.com. 209 sites, 25 pull-throughs; \$45/night; 30/50 amp; two dump stations, mobile sewer service.

**Devil's Hopyard State Park**, 860-873-8566, dept.stateparks@po.state.ct.us. 21 back-in sites; no hookups; no pets; \$11 to \$20.

- **Bozrah**

**Odetah Camping Resort**, 800-448-1193 or 860-889-4144, <http://www.odetah.com>. 377 total sites; 50 pull-throughs; 25 full hookup. \$50 to \$69/night; other sites, water, electric (30/50 amp) greywater sewer (cap and water hose), \$43/night; dump and mobile sewer service.

**Acorn Acres**, 860-859-1020, <http://www.acornacrescampsites.com>. 225 total sites; mostly back-ins; 60 full hookups; most water/electric (30/50 amp); \$45 to \$55/night; dump and mobile sewer service.

- **Clinton**

**Riverdale Farm Campsite**, 860-669-5388, [www.riverdale-campsite.com](http://www.riverdale-campsite.com). 250 total sites; 80 pull-throughs; 85 full hookup; others water, electric (30/50 amp) and greywater sewer; \$40 to \$45/night.

- **Salem**

**Witch Meadow Lake Family Campground**, 860-859-1542, [www.witchmeadowcampground.com](http://www.witchmeadowcampground.com). 280 total sites; 3 pull-throughs; few full hookups, most back-ins with water, electric (30/50 amp), greywater sewer; \$42 to \$50/night.

**Salem Farms Campground**, 800-479-9238, [sfcg2003@aol.com](mailto:sfcg2003@aol.com). 189 spaces, 3 pull throughs; side by side hookups; water, greywater sewer, electric (30/50 amp); \$40 to \$45/night.

a copy of the Normandy fortress of Robert LeDiable, father of William the Conqueror, indeed looks like a medieval castle. Designed by the fabulously successful actor William Gillette and built between the years of 1914 and 1919, it sits high atop a hill, 200 feet above sea level. Granite walls four to five feet thick and oddly-shaped windows are among individualistic touches by Gillette, best known for his portrayal of Sherlock Holmes.

Gillette heirs sold his 184-acre estate to the state in 1943. Now Gillette Castle State Park gates open daily at 8:00 a.m. from Memorial Day weekend through Columbus Day. Hiking trails and picnic facilities are available. Guided tours through the castle itself start at 10:00 a.m.


*The Goodspeed Opera House* was built in 1876 to load/unload passengers and freight from the river at a basement level and serve visitors with a store, offices and a theater on an upper level. It is today Goodspeed Musical's headquarters and a venue for three musicals Goodspeed presents each season between April and December. Dedicated to preservation and advancement of musical theatre and development of new works, Goodspeed Musical has premiered 19 shows that made it to Broadway, among them hits like *Annie*, *Shenandoah* and *Man of La Mancha*. Built for Shipbuilder/ Banker/Merchant William H. Goodspeed, a lover of theatre, the Opera House is open for tours on Saturdays from June through October.

If musicals are not your thing, *East Haddam Stage Company* presents non-musical theater events that emphasize character, story and language, including poetry and staged readings.

*The East Haddam Swing Bridge*, built in 1913, quickly replaced a steam ferry as the way to cross the Connecticut River. A local landmark, the 899-foot span opens to recreational traffic on the hour and half hour and "swings" on demand to clear the river for barge traffic.

*Nathan Hale School House*, a one-room structure where the Revolutionary War hero served as schoolmaster in 1773 and 1774, sits today on a hill overlooking East Haddam Village. Owned by Sons of the American Revolution, the schoolhouse displays Nathan Hale possessions and items of local history. More historical exhibits, some artifacts dating back to 1300 B.C., can be seen at the *East Haddam Historical Society Museum*.

*Chester*, about halfway between the steam train station at Essex and Haddam, calls itself "a unique town that celebrates art, history, music, theatre, craft cuisine, community and conversation." Elegant shops, boutiques, art galleries, restaurants, and the Norma Terris Theatre occupy 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings along Chester's short, winding, and crooked Main Street. Popular attractions include hiking trails, marinas, a river ferry, swimming lakes, and the nearby thousands of acres of state forest.

Wherever you are in the Connecticut River Valley, you're in a cradle of history. Here you can study early day New England architecture; enjoy world class entertainment, including nearby casinos; eye natural wonders; hike, bike, sail, swim or fish; and, maybe best of all, soak in down East Yankee hospitality. All this and ride a steam train and riverboat, too! 



# Enjoying the Blue Ridge Parkway

The Blue Ridge Parkway begins at I-64 in Virginia and runs for 469 miles to Cherokee, North Carolina, following the crest of the Blue Ridge most of the way, but frequently dropping down from the mountains into valleys and towns. One of the most interesting points on the parkway is the Folk Art Center near Asheville, N.C.

We stopped there last Fall to see the new exhibits and found Peter Werner, a college professor who lives in Black Rock, N.C.,

providing demonstrations of how brooms were made by mountain craftsmen many decades ago.

This brief vignette is a little taste of the story I wanted to run in this edition of *RIS*, but there just was not enough space. In the Fall edition (10:4), we will revisit the BRP. It hasn't changed much since we did our first motorhome travel story for *Roughing It Smoothly* nine years ago.





## Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, 39-year veteran with Tiffin Motorhomes, invites your questions.

Please use the attached postcard and send Danny your questions about your motorhome and its operation, especially those questions that may be useful to all of our readers. If you need more space, address your letter to:

Danny Inman  
 Roughing It Smoothly  
 PO Box 1738  
 Monroe, GA 30656-1738

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

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

### Editor's Note about RISTechtalk@gmail.com

When Google overhauled GMAIL earlier this year, I misfiled about 15 questions received by email. We are running some of those questions in this issue. If your question was deleted and you still do not have a satisfactory answer from other Tiffin sources, please resend your question to the GMAIL account and Danny will respond. Always include your full name as it appears on your magazine label, your city and state, and phone numbers whenever you send a question by email.

Dear Danny . . .

### Panasonic Home Theater System Performance Is Great!

There is a lot of confusion among techs and sales people about what the Tiffin Panasonic home theater system will do. Thanks to Johnny Walker RV in Las Vegas, Nevada, television programming and DVD movies in my 2013 Phaeton QBH all play through the home theater system using the digital or satellite antenna. It's great sound. The dash JVC radio also has its own speaker system throughout the coach.

William M. Gladsjo  
 Pahrump, Nevada

Dear William,

Thanks for the feedback on your surround sound system. I was very glad to hear that one of our dealers has done such a good job of training owners how to get the max benefit from a great sound system.

### Television Channels Change Simultaneously

I have a 2012 Phaeton 40QBH. When I set up my DirecTV (box in front and one in bedroom), I ran the Sat-In coax to the one in front and Sat-In to the one in back. But, when I change the channel on one, they both change. Why do I not have a separate Sat-In coax for the one in the back? I don't know if I am hooking them up wrong or if there is a problem with the wiring.

Dan Harvey  
 Clinton, Tennessee

Dear Harvey,

The problem you are having with one remote activating both TVs is not in the coax, but in the receivers themselves. Each of your remotes will work either receiver through the infrared system we provide. A radio frequency (RF) remote control is the easiest way to solve the problem. Select one of the receivers and disconnect TMH's infrared system from that receiver. Then program the RF remote control to that receiver. Now, each receiver will have its own remote. The RF remote can be purchased from most electronic stores.

### HDTV Wiring Options Needed

My wife and I purchased a 2013 Phaeton 40QBH at the Hershey RV show. We were told at the show that the dish would not support DirecTV HD. The problem is the pre-wiring for the TV is set up for HD using an HDMI plug. We have to use our HD DVR. The only problem is the Ant 1 and 2 cords are short and required me to add extensions, a \$10.00 fix. Putting an RG6 to Ant or RCA jacks in the space provided for the receiver would allow owners a broad choice of receivers to choose from.

David Pessoni  
 East Hampton, Connecticut

Dear David,

The satellite HDMI cable provided in your Phaeton should hook up to your DirecTV system. Each television has a connection labeled “satellite.” This will broadcast all standard definition programming. The pre-wire for the Trav’ler satellite that we offer as an option will allow you to install a Winegard Trav’ler satellite receiver on your unit that will provide full HD programming.

### Questions Regarding TV Use

I have a 2013 Allegro 32CA, and would like to watch DirecTV outside. I have a coax output and 110 volt outlet in the passenger side forward of the entry door. But it does not work with the other TVs, on the inside, on DTV or ANT. Is it for park cable only? I also have a coax connection on the inside of the passenger side overhead monitor panel compartment. What is it for? Also, is there a CB ANT cable pre-wired? I don’t want to drill more holes to install a new antenna and wire.

Carl Ford  
Sun City, Arizona

Dear Carl,

The connections underneath on your Allegro will allow you to view cable channels or the standard antenna—not the satellite or DVD. To be capable of using the satellite or DVD, it will be necessary to run more wiring. The coax connection in the inside overhead cabinet allows you to view programming from either the outside cable or the standard TV. The green light indicates antenna use. With the green light OFF, it will switch to cable feed. The coax is an extra unused connection. If the CB antenna is not installed on the roof, there will be no prewired antenna.

This allows you to use park cable or the regular TV antenna. The coax connection is an extra and is not used.

Triple H in Red Bay offers a wireless TripleVision HDMI extender that will allow you to accomplish your goal without running all the wiring. The transmitter plugs into the DirecTV box by HDMI. Call 256-356-9005 for more information and pricing.

### How Can the Life of Windshield Wipers Be Extended?

We purchased a new 2012 Allegro Open Road in March 2012. In less than one year, both wiper blades began to come apart. We live in the Florida panhandle and use the RV mainly in the southeast. It is stored outside and receives partial sun. Is this normal? What can be done to extend the life of the boomerang style blades? Also, both plastic washer hoses broke and I replaced them with rubber ones. I had approximately 14,000 miles on the RV the first year and didn’t use the wipers very much.

Richard Moriyama  
Niceville, Florida

Dear Richard,

You can buy wiper blade protection covers at most RV accessory centers. The cover is split down the middle and slides over the wiper blades. They are not expensive when you compare the cost to replace your wiper blades. A product called Rain-X applied to the windshield will take the stress off the blades when the wipers are in use and prolong their life. The manufacturer of the wiper chose the plastic over the rubber, but I think the rubber is much better.

### Pinging Noise in Ceiling—No. 1

Help! We, too, have the “pinging” noise in the ceiling of our 2009 Phaeton. It happens often and I have tried to determine if it is temperature related. I think it might be, as it seems to

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happen more when temperature changes occur, like overnight to mid-morning or evening to night.

Carl H. Smith III  
San Antonio, Texas

Dear Carl,

In the past we have published several theories about the cause for the pinging noise. We believe now that a reasonable answer is the natural temperature changes in the aluminum and fiberglass. However, there could be other reasons. We have not attempted any well-designed studies to find a solution to stop the noise. That said, we do not have a simple fix to correct the noise.

#### **Pinging Noise in Ceiling—No. 2**

On page 58 of *Roughing It Smoothly*, volume 10, number 1, there was discussion of a pinging noise in the ceiling. We have a 2009 42QBH Phaeton. The pinging noise in the ceiling is the sensor for the heat and air conditioning thermostat. There is one in the ceiling in the front of the coach and one in the bedroom ceiling.

John Ferraris  
Coopersburg, Pennsylvania

Dear John,

Thanks for your input in helping identify the source of the noise.

#### **Phaeton QSH Thermostat Location**

Our 2012 Phaeton 36QSH is our third new coach and our first Tiffin. We are generally pleased, but there are a few kinks we need to get worked out. I have a design issue with the location of the bedroom thermostat. After two months of short cycles of the bedroom heat pump this winter, I determined that the ceiling outlet nearest the thermostat is blowing directly on it. I have not been able to change this by turning the vent.

Paul Goldberg  
Livingston, Texas

Dear Paul,

The wall thermostat itself does not pick up the room temperature. Your problem

could still be in the thermostat, but not from air blowing directly on it. The room temperature is transferred to the thermostat from a sensor located on the ceiling next to a return air vent. You should have a remote sensor for each thermostat in the motorhome. The short cycling you are experiencing is most likely caused by a thermal sensor located inside the air conditioning unit. If this is the source of the problem, you should take your unit to a Coleman service center. The short cycling could also be caused by a faulty AC part or a freon deficiency.

#### **Flat Tires After Extended Parking**

We had a chronic flat tire problem whenever our coach was parked for a couple of months, either just before we drove off or shortly thereafter, on the road. At \$400 per tire, this was not only frustrating but expensive! I asked the tire people what could be causing it, but no one knew. Then, finally, someone suggested that it could be rust on the wheel rim. We bought a new rim for one rear tire, and just had the other one treated. So far so good. Hope this helps someone with the same problem.

Heather Dina  
Leicester, North Carolina

Dear Heather,

Sorry you had the problem. Without more information, it would be hard for me to speculate what caused your problem. The new rim sounds like it may be the right solution.

#### **Engine Overheating on 2005 Phaeton**

I know that some 2005 Phaeton owners have asked you about engine overheating. I have the same problem. My Phaeton is getting hot, or at least it is showing hot on the gauge, when I go 60 mph or faster, or when I go up a hill. I have checked the radiator water level and it was okay. The alarm went off but I didn't see steam or over-boiling. Sometimes the needle shows under the normal level, and then

jumps all over. I was wondering if it could be the sensor.

Martin R. Carrera  
Semmes, Alabama

Dear Martin,

This is an issue that you need to take to a Freightliner service center to determine if the sensor is actually defective or possibly if the radiator is partially clogged. The radiator is cooling up to a stress point which indicates it may be clogged.

#### **Solving an Overheating Problem during Mountain Driving**

I saw the questions from Casey Paw and your answer in Vol. 9, No. 4, regarding the engine overheating of a 2005 Phaeton while driving in the mountains.

I agree with your answer, but since I experienced the same exact problem, I have a more detailed answer for Casey.

I have a 2003 Phaeton with a 330 Cummins engine. The coach never overheated in the lower altitudes, but mountain driving was a nightmare. The solution was finally discovered by a great tech in a Denver area service center.

Using a mechanic's creeper for me to observe the problem, the tech pointed to the lower third of the forward side of the radiator. This part of the radiator cannot be seen from the outside, and even underneath I could only get a look at a small section of that part of the radiator. That entire section of the radiator was completely compacted with dirt. He then showed me the existing "blow-by" hose-tube installed on the engine at the factory, and advised me that the "blow-by" hose-tube was far too short, causing any discharge from the hose-tube to fall directly on the radiator. The discharged fluids landed on the radiator and caused dirt and grime to collect there. The impacted dirt completely rendered that portion of the radiator useless.

He advised, as you did, that a degreaser and water pressure would help keep the radiator clear in the future, but added

that no amount of degreaser would fix the existing problem. The radiator was removed and sent to a repair shop. The tech lengthened the “blow-by” hose-tube by about five inches so that blown out fluids would miss the radiator.

That was four years ago and we have enjoyed many miles of mountain driving since without a sign of engine overheating. I suspect I am not the only one who has been disabled by a shortened “blow-by” hose-tube. I wanted to give you this info so it might help Casey or anyone else who has experienced this problem. We read your tech section in every issue of *Roughing It Smoothly*. Thanks for your good work.

Jim & Margaret Bagwell  
Slidell, Louisiana

Dear Jim & Margaret,  
Thank you so much for relating your experience. The tech in Denver and your

detailed letter have done a good turn for our readers.

### Flashing Battery Light

We have an Open Road 34TGA with a Ford V-10 engine that we bought new in 2009. When we are on longer trips, at times the red battery light on the dash starts flashing, then stops for a while or until we take the next long trip. Ford says it doesn't happen at the dealership. Do you have an answer?

John McCoy  
Glendale, Arizona

Dear John,  
We have seen this problem, but unless the light stays on it is not anything to worry about. Normally, it shows up when you start the engine and the house batteries are at low voltage.

The charging solenoid ties the house

batteries and the engine battery together to allow the alternator to charge the house batteries while you are traveling. The light comes on for a short period of time as the feed off the engine battery goes to the house batteries. Since your coach is a 2009, you may want to have your house batteries checked to see if they need to be replaced.

### What is Causing My Monitor Screen to Go Blank?

I have a 2007 Open Road with a Triple Vision Monitor. It works fine when the turn signals are not being used, but when I go right or left with the turn signals, my screen goes blank. I have checked the wires on the back of the monitor and they seem to be plugged in correctly. Any ideas?

Don Hackerson  
Windsor, Illinois



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Dear Don,  
It could be a faulty camera(s). However, this sounds like a ground wire issue that we have seen before. Check the ground wires for continuity and if that does not resolve the problem, I would advise you to see your dealer.

### House Batteries Aren't Charging

I own a 1997 Allegro with a 460 Ford engine. When the motor is running, the house batteries are charging. If I turn the engine off and start the generator, the house batteries quit charging. If I plug it in to 110v house current, still no charge. I have replaced both house batteries and replaced the two 30-amp fuses in the inverter. What could be the problem?

Larry D. McKnight  
Mineral Wells, West Virginia

Dear Larry,  
When the engine is running, the house batteries are being charged by the alternator. The 1997 Allegro should have a converter and not an inverter. The converter charges your house batteries when you are running the generator or are plugged into shore power. You either have a faulty converter or the connection from the converter to the house batteries is bad.

### Chassis Battery Tender?

We have a 2013 Allegro Bus. Would you please explain the operation of the device in the chassis battery compartment that appears to be a miniature battery tender?

Marylee & Howard Shaffer  
Roanoke, Virginia

Dear Marylee & Howard,  
The battery tender is a very low amp battery charger that charges the engine battery when you are plugged into shore power. If you are in a campground for a long period of time, it will prevent your engine batteries from draining down.

### Love My Motorhome, But the Windshield Wipers Turn Off Randomly

I have written before and also talked to

several people at Tiffin about the windshield wiper problem on my 2010 Allegro QBA. Sometimes the wipers cut off with the first wipe, and sometimes it will happen after they have been on for five minutes. I have wrapped and taped all under-hood connections. I also ran an extra ground wire to the wiper motor. I have checked the amp draw at the motor (maximum five amps on wet windshield), and I replaced the wiper module above the steering column. I can run a hot wire to the motor and the wipers work. Please HELP! I love this motorhome!

Sloan Trigg  
Richton, Mississippi

Dear Sloan,  
With all the things that you have tried unsuccessfully, to discover the source of the problem you will probably need to catch it when it does not work. Start from the fuse box, to the modular board, to the switch, and to the motor itself to determine if you are losing it through the voltage side or the ground side. I probably am oversimplifying because this is a fairly complicated system. You may need to involve an electrical tech to solve your problem.

### Do I Need a New Carburetor?

I have a 1992 Allegro Bay 28 ft. conventional that I bought new. It has been a wonderful toy the last 20 years. The 4kw generator (gas) starts well, but after storage stops upon release of the rocker starter switch. It runs well until you release the switch. My generator man says I need a new carburetor. I think he is wrong since twice this last year after storage and then driving it a few miles, the generator runs fine even after releasing the starter switch. Is there a limiter switch that gets charged up by driving it that causes it to continue running when releasing the starter switch? I cannot see that there is a carburetor problem. At my age, 82, I don't need a new motorhome.

David Naumann  
Enterprise, Alabama

Dear David,  
I don't think it is the carburetor. It is probably going to be the dash switch or in the wiring harness going from the switch to the generator. Disconnect the wiring that connects the generator to the gen-start switch in the dash. Then start the generator using the switch on the generator. If it continues to run, you will know it is either a bad dash switch or the wiring harness from the genset to the switch. One other possibility: the generator has a low oil level shut-off switch located on the side of the oil pan. Be sure to check your oil level and the switch itself. If these two suggestions do not solve your problem, you should take it to an Onan service center.

### Top Front Light Not Working

I own a 2011 Allegro 30GA. One of the running lights above the windshield does not light up. My RV dealer has not been able to find the problem. The fuses are okay. So far it has cost me \$200 in shop time. Can you help me with this problem?

André Wilson  
Chateauguay, Quebec

Dear André,  
Power for the upper marker light is supplied from the front driver side marker light. The power comes from this point through the A-pillar to the top cap. You can access the back of the lights from removable panels in the back of the overhead cabinet above the dash. It could be one of four things: a defective bulb, a defective housing, or a loose connection on the hot side or ground side.

### Doorstep Stairs Retract at the Roll of the Dice

I have a 2010 Phaeton and have a problem with the stairs. Sometimes they will go in for travel, but other times they won't. It seems when the coach sets for three or four days, the stairs won't retract. At one point, we had to take them apart because they wouldn't go in. When we stop, they always go out, but it's a roll of the dice

whether they go back in. I have taken it to two different dealers who can't find anything wrong. Can you please HELP!

Len Robertson  
The Villages, Florida

Dear Len,

The first item to check is the magnets on the door and door jam to see if they are aligned. If this is OK, look underneath the step and find the ground wire that is screwed to the step. Take it loose and make sure it is clean and has no corrosion. Also check the power connection to the step's motor and the control box. Be very careful that you are not in the way if the step becomes activated. It could catch your fingers in the mechanism and do a lot of damage.

### Need New Driver's Doorstep for 1996 Bus

I am the proud owner of a 1996 Allegro Bus purchased through Bankston Motorhomes in Huntsville, Alabama. My problem is that the driver's doorstep rusted off at the base. A friend strengthened and re-welded it, but that only lasted one year. Do you have anything that will replace that step?

Frank Fenney  
Ravenswood, West Virginia

Dear Frank,

We do not carry any retrofit steps in the parts inventory. Broken steps on coaches this old have to be repaired on a case-by-case basis by a creditable service center capable of doing this type of work.

### Ideas and Suggestions to Consider

We own a 2011 43 QGP Allegro Bus. We have some ideas/suggestions for you to consider as improvements/innovations to the Tiffin Allegro Bus (and other models).

(1) The wiper on the passenger side of the windshield needs to be longer to cover more of the space. Too much space is left to the right of the blade and causes rain to be left on the windshield that then obstructs the driver's view of the mirror.

(2) Move the dinette to the passenger side of the coach so we can enjoy the view of our own patio, versus looking at our neighbors.

(3) Memory seats on the driver's seat. We both drive and it would be nice to pre-set our preferences. Also, when the seats are turned back around after our stay at a

campsite, it would be nice if we could just press a button and it would all be ready to go.

Paul & Lisa Schoonover  
Hastings, Minnesota

Dear Paul & Lisa,

Thank you for your suggestions. I will be glad to pass them on to our design team.

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Fortunately, in response to your second suggestion, many of our new floorplans are incorporating passenger-side dinettes.

### Camera Display Works Intermittently

This question is in regard to the camera display on our 2007 Phaeton. As we started our trip from Colorado to Arizona last fall, the monitor remained off, including when the coach was in reverse gear. As we backed into our RV site for the winter, it came on and worked fine as we ran our engine every few weeks. Then, as we started our return trip to Colorado, it went blank again. Everything else works fine in the coach. What do I do?

Jim Arnold  
Lake City, Colorado

Dear Jim,

This is a problem that will have to be traced out by the process of elimination. It will either be a loose connection or a bad component. This will require the attention of an electrical technician.

### Yellow Spots Under Diamond Shield Coating

I have a 2010 Phaeton 40QTH. Behind the Diamond Shield coating, yellow spots are spreading across the entire front of the coach. I have removed two areas around the headlights. Any suggestions for removing the glue?

David Dronet  
Evath, Louisiana

Dear David,

The Diamond Shield employees here at the factory use 3M Citrus Base Cleaner, 18.5 oz. can. It can be purchased through amazon.com.

### More on the HWH “Store” Issue

This letter is in reference to the HWH “store” issue in Volume 10, Number 2. On our 2004 Allegro Bay, we experienced a failed solenoid on the right front jack. Upon contacting HWH for a repair part, they recommended to always “store,” then push the “off” to keep power from

the solenoids. We have been doing this, and have not had a failed part, but we have to push “store” regularly because the “Jack Light Buzzer” will come on. What do you think?

Patrick & Sandra Ryan  
Birmingham, Alabama

Dear Patrick & Sandra,

If you are going to run with the system OFF to deny power to the solenoid, occasionally the buzzer is going to come on requiring you to hit STORE and then turn it off again. The system was designed to warn the driver if there is *any* downward movement in the jacks. Since the warning sensors are very sensitive, rough pavement or bumps can move the jacks slightly and cause the buzzer to go off.

### Offensive Odor in the Water is Gone!!

We can sympathize with Charles Benoit about the odor in the water. When the ice maker was on, we had a very offensive odor in our 2010 Phaeton QTH. If we turned off the ice maker, the odor stopped. When we were at the service center and mentioned it, the techs knew the remedy. They replaced the hose to the ice maker and the problem went away. Now there’s no odor or bad tasting ice. Thank you very much!

Jo Savoy  
Madison, South Dakota

Dear Jo,

Thanks for the follow-up report.

### Galley Slide-Out Noise in 1999 35-ft. Allegro Bus

The slide is moving in and out at its normal pace, but now it’s making a loud growl under the cooktop. The slide valance is coming very close to the forward overhead cabinets as the slide seems to have moved forward a bit (under 1/2”).

During a visit to Red Bay some years ago, the techs checked scratches being made in the linoleum tile in front of the sink. They found a roller with one side of its bracket broken and decided it would

not cause the slide to work improperly. So they made no repair.

Has another roller bit the dust? Is the slide-out’s mechanical system straining because there aren’t enough rollers to assist? Several questions: (1) How many rollers are under this slide? (2) Is there a way we can add and/or repair the rollers from the cabinet floor? (3) Can you recommend an RV service company in Washington, Oregon, or California that has experience repairing galley slides on Tiffin motorhomes? Or is it best to make the trek to Red Bay?

We still like this model – the 35-ft. length with the kitchen on the utility side. We can sit at meals and watch the activities in OUR campsite! The Bus has taken us from Alaska to Florida and California to Newfoundland with many stops in between including Red Bay. Thank you for any and all assistance and advice.

Laurie Singer  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Laurie,

It is very possible that one of the rollers or gears has broken. If you are going to be in the southeast, it would be better and less expensive for you to have the work done in Red Bay. But, if not, there are several very creditable service centers that can do the work. Call our service center and ask for recommendations.

### Steering Concern on the 2013 Allegro

I just purchased a 2013 Allegro 32CA. Going down the interstate, it’s all over the road. You really have to turn the steering wheel back and forth constantly to keep it straight. I was told that Tiffin recommends the Safe-T-PLUS to remedy this problem. Is this correct and should I also put a Davis Tru-Trac on the coach? Thanks.

George Bailey  
Robert, Louisiana

Dear George,

Before adding a Safe-T-PLUS or a Davis Tru-Trac, check to see if there are related



problems you may be overlooking, such as a bad front-end alignment or tire pressures that are out of sync. In the paperwork that came with your coach, there should be a Michelin tire guide that gives the proper inflation to run with the size and weight at each tire location. When you get your coach loaded with the usual things that you carry, go to a truck scale and have the front and rear axles weighed separately. Then adjust the tire pressure accordingly. I suggest you have the front end aligned before adding any aftermarket modifications.

### Suggestions for Aqua Hot

We are owners of a 2011 40 ft. Allegro Bus. We would like to suggest that they put in a bigger electrode in the Aqua Hot unit. With a larger electrode, it would not be necessary to turn on the diesel burner when parked with 50 amps.

Ron & Carole Haug  
Epping, North Dakota

Dear Ron & Carole,

Because so many of our units with the Aqua-Hot system are going all electric, it would be problematic to devote more amps to Aqua-Hot.

### Horizontal Windows Are Difficult to Open

Yesterday when I got home from work I was pleasantly surprised to find I had received several back issues of *Roughing It Smoothly* in the mail. It is an excellent magazine and the articles are great. Last fall, my wife and I purchased our first motorhome, a 2007 Allegro Bay 35TSB FRED. We have some issues to correct: Two of the horizontal slide windows are extremely hard to move. It takes both of us to move one of them. They are dual pane windows. One is on the living room slide and the other is the passenger seat window. The driver's door window is electric. It comes up about halfway and seems to bind before it will finally come fully up. The arm rest on the passenger's

seat pushes past the stop point when it is in the down position. Since living in northern Colorado is not real conducive to winter camping, we have only gotten to use it one time. I am so impressed with the vehicle that I can hardly wait for summer to take it out of storage and begin

using it. I'm not real sure I can wait two more years to retire before we can hit the road full time.

Mike Dunn  
Greeley, Colorado

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your kind comments. We

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recommend the use of a product called Plexus. It is available at most RV stores and we currently use it here in the plant. The arm rest problem can be corrected by a Tiffin dealer.

### Looking for GFCI Breakers

I have a 2011 Phaeton which I am very pleased with. This is my second coach and by far the best. Recently I lost the 110v outlets located in the kitchen area (passenger slide). The one that is near the TV is fine. These are GFCI outlets but I cannot find any GFCI breakers. I have voltage on all the other outlets in the coach. Is it possibly a cable that came unplugged due to the movement of the slide? If not, what do you think this could be? I also lost the recessed lights in that slide (maybe in the same cable group). If I have an unplugged cable, how would I gain access? Any insight you might have with this problem would be appreciated greatly.

Dave Browne  
San Antonio, Texas

Dear Dave,

The connections for the 110v and 12v wiring going into the slide-out are in the rear of the slide and can be accessed by removing the lower cabinet drawer. Depending on the floor plan, there could be a second GFI breaker located either in the bathroom or in the cabinet next to the pantry. The electrical plug and the recessed lighting will not be on the same circuit. They both could have come unplugged where they tie into the system.

### Installing Security Locks on Battery Compartments

We have a 2004 34-foot Allegro Bay and unfortunately have been the victim of an engine battery theft. Other than removing the battery while in storage, is there any way to install locks on the hood?

Maurice McChesney  
Frazier Park, California

Dear Maurice,

There is not a locking system designed

for that location. Perhaps a motion detector that would set off an alarm would be more effective.

### Proper Procedure for Checking Hydraulic Fluid Level

We have a 2009 43QGP Allegro Bus. There are two hydraulic fluid reservoirs; one for the HWH jacks, and one for the hydraulic slides. What is the proper procedure for checking the fluid level? On coaches that have a "double stack" hydraulic fluid reservoir, what is the proper procedure for checking the fluid level?

Donald E. Borey  
Gonzales, Louisiana

Dear Donald,

To check the fluid level, you must be on a level surface with the leveling jacks up and the hydraulic slide rooms out. This will put the most fluid back into the tanks. The dipstick should show "full" when you check it. If not, then add fluid. If you check it with the rooms in, you could have a possibility of overflow.

### Water Pump Problem

My 2001 Allegro Bay Pusher has a water problem. When not connected to a water source and I turn on the water pump, water flows out of the "city water" connection. I think there is a reverse flow valve failure. Thank you for advice on how to solve this problem.

Leo Still  
Waynesboro, Virginia

Dear Leo,

There is a check valve located in the city water connection. It needs to be replaced.

### Replacing the Fish Eye Docking Light

What is the procedure to follow to replace a bulb in the "fish eye" docking lights? What would cause the porch light to blink intermittently?

Frank Baldauf  
West Melbourne, Florida

Dear Frank,

The docking lights are a sealed system

and you have to change the complete unit. Disconnect the two lead wires in the wheel well. A large plastic nut unscrews to remove the unit. With regard to the porch light's intermittent operation, it is probably a loose ground or a loose wire on the back of the light itself or on the toggle switch inside. If it is slightly dimming, it could be picking up interference from another appliance or electrical system.

### Repainting Older Coaches

I'm a happy owner (original) of a 1997 Allegro Bus. The exterior finish is beginning to show 16 years of exposure to the elements and the wife and I are contemplating a new paint job. Does Tiffin offer such service? If so, would you supply me with our next step? Thanks.

Mac Dalgleish  
Camarillo, California

Dear Mac,

The factory body shop does not offer repainting. But there are several body shops in this area that provide this service and do a very good job. Call our service center for names of the companies.

### Identifying Inverter-Supported Outlets on 2000 Pusher

We recently purchased a 2000 Allegro Pusher. The AC outlet above the kitchen sink does not work. Is that one on an inverter? Is there even an inverter on this coach? I found the power converter, but have not seen an inverter. All fuses are good and no circuit breakers are tripped. Thanks for your help.

Rod Rodriguez

Dear Rod,

On this unit, inverters were optional and we did not install a lot of them. If your unit has a converter, then more than likely it does not have an inverter. That outlet will only work when you are plugged in to shore power or running the generator. That plug will be on a ground fault interrupter which will be located on the outlet in the bathroom.



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