

# Roughing It Smoothly<sup>®</sup>



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- Downsizing to a 2012 Phaeton 42LH
- Galveston Island  
Recovered and Ready to Entertain



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# Roughing it Smoothly®

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*On our cover:* The Strand in Galveston

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## Letters, We Get Letters . . . and Postcards and Emails

### A Note About Norm Spray

Our winter travel story was researched and written by Norman Spray and photographed by his daughter, Rhonda Spray. Norm and I met eight years ago when he submitted an article about an arduous journey down Mexico's Baja Peninsula to find his long lost cousin, J. P. (Jim) Smith whom he had not seen since they were boys. Norman and his wife, Barby, found Jim in Los Barriles, head of a Mexican family and husband to Lupe, a charming woman who operated a small neighborhood store. The story was a bit long for our new magazine, but it was fascinating. When I learned that Norm had a degree in journalism from Tulane, I published his story.

Since October 2004, the readers of *Roughing It Smoothly* have en-

joyed 18 stories from the keyboard of Norman G. Spray. By far the most poignant was "A Journey Beautiful, A Journey Ended," set in the colorful hills of Vermont in the fall of 2004. "We were tired and turned in a little earlier than usual," Norm said in the story. "Barby fell asleep, as I did. The difference is, she never woke up." She died from a massive stroke that hemorrhaged the brain stem. A true professional who practiced his art in agricultural journalism, Norm revisited Vermont the following spring to add to his story, "Of Maple Trees and Maple Syrup."

Ever the wanderer and adventurer, Norm went on to write 17 more travel stories for *Roughing It Smoothly*. The engine in his faithful "Harvey" (Texan for Rrrr - Vee) gave up last year and he found a good buy

in another Allegro. In this issue you will enjoy Norm's story on "Galveston Island 2012," certainly one of his best. At 81, Norm has no plans to retire and we look forward to his well-planned trips uncovering interesting places that we can add to our own itineraries.

### Serious Tech Talk

To address your technical questions to Danny Inman, you may use the postcard bound in this issue, send a longer letter to the address at left (put "Serious Tech Talk" in the first line), or send an email to [RIS techtalk@gmail.com](mailto:RIS techtalk@gmail.com). If you need an immediate answer to a service problem, you should call 256-356-0261.

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### First Time Subscribers

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Recovered and Ready to Entertain  
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**40** Years  
**TIFFIN MOTORHOMES**  
WHEREVER YOU GO, WE GO.  
1972 / 2012



1972



2012

## The Way It Was — How It All Began

by Bob Tiffin

The summer of 1972 was a dry year. It was so bad that the farmers were *expecting* to lose their crops. To a certain extent, having a good year at Tiffin Supply depended on the farmers having a good year, especially at our cotton gin which I operated in the fall.

Selling just about every item that a farmer, a home construction company, and a home owner would need, Tiffin Supply in 31 years had become a very successful business under my daddy's leadership. That summer marked my twelfth year of working full time at Tiffin Supply. Judy and I had two sons, Tim, 10, and Van, 7. Judy's parents lived nearby, too, and both family's roots went back several generations. Red Bay had a pretty stable economy. I had no way to know that a decision I would make that summer would have a major effect on the town's future.

Tiffin Supply (what was called Alex Tiffin's Store back then) offered credit terms to most of its customers, who would settle their accounts at the end of the month. On larger accounts, Daddy or I would usually visit the businesses and collect. Two of my accounts were small motorhome companies in Mississippi: Safari Motorhomes in Iuka and Sunliner Motorhomes in Tremont. When I visited the companies each month, I often would go into the production area and just watch. I was fascinated by how they built their units and decided right off that I really liked that kind of business.



Daddy and I talked about how the two companies operated and what we saw as their weaknesses. When July came, everyone knew the cotton harvest was going to be terrible. Since I had been running the gin for several years, I had learned to predict the crop with a "boll count" and kept records. I would pick two rows in the middle of a cotton field, mark off a hundred feet, and count the bolls. The count was very low.

We had just completed the construction of a new cotton warehouse earlier in the year and realized that due to the failure of the cotton crop, it would be smart to find another way to use that building—26,000 square feet. Sales were down for both Safari and Sunliner and they closed about the same time. We incorporated Tiffin Motorhomes in September 1972 and started the company with six employees, most of whom had worked at Safari and Sunliner. The number of employees quickly rose to 20.

We built five motorhomes that fall and took two of them to the National RV Dealers Show in Louisville. Since I did not know about reserving space inside the big exposition center, we just arrived, parked on the huge parking lot, went inside and tried to bring dealers out to see our two little Allegros. The show management staff politely told us we could not do that. So I signed up for show space for the fall of 1973 and we have been

*Continued on page 64*





# The RV bed that changes with you wherever the road may lead



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## Charles Ashley

Nine years of driving Tiffin motorhomes

Charles Ashley will tell you he's a homebody. But if a motorhome needs delivering, he is ready to go. Just one of the many drivers Tiffin Motorhomes employs to deliver motorhomes to their network of dealerships, Charles has been delivering coaches for the last nine years. "I started on October 27, 2002," he recalled. "I had a friend driving motorhomes for Tiffin and he wanted me to go on a trip with him. I had just retired from Sunshine Mills. When we got back, I began driving.

"I just enjoy meeting a lot of different people and talking to them—it's one of the better things about my job at Tiffin. This job is different from what I did previously. When it comes to driving the motorhomes, I really don't have a preference. The last year I have driven a lot more of the smaller units," Charles said.

While some drivers deliver as far away as Canada and California, Charles usually makes trips closer to home. "I went all the way to Albuquerque and Houston when I first started delivering," Charles said. "I also drove to Wausau, Wisconsin, and Anoka, Minnesota. Right now, I mainly deliver to the dealers in Montgomery, Huntsville, and Anniston, Alabama; Sherman, Mississippi; and Memphis, Tennessee. I take people to the airport and do other odd driving jobs. I also drive the motorhomes for the ad agency when they are doing photography for the brochures and videos. This year we went to Gulf Shores and last year we went to the Smoky Mountains to do the marketing videos. That's always pretty interesting and usually my wife, Sue, accompanies me on those trips," he added.

Charles and Sue have five children, 12 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. They reside in Belmont, Mississippi.



## Ray & Jane Chapa

Delivering motorhomes in their retirement

Ray and Jane Chapa are one of the many husband-wife teams Tiffin employs to deliver motorhomes. A vibrant, friendly couple, the Chapas started team driving on November 20, 2006. "I prefer driving the longer ones—38 to 42 ft., although the new little Breeze is fun to drive, too," Jane shared. "I don't mind the length," Ray said.

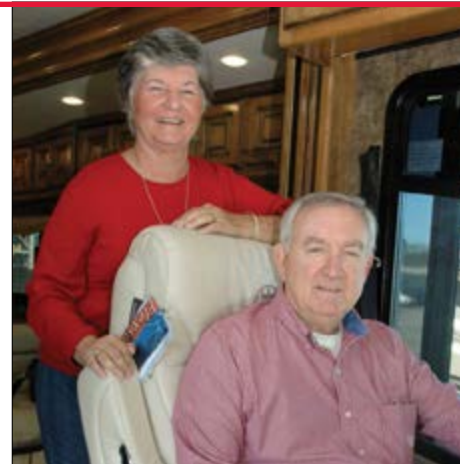
The Chapas were familiar with the Tiffin line before they started delivering. "We owned a Tiffin motorhome that we used in our business, but we were in the process of retiring when we met Mr. Tiffin," Jane noted. "Ray wasn't really ready to retire, so I asked Mr. Tiffin about our delivering motorhomes. He put us in touch with H.T. Scott and we started working soon after our interview," she said.

"We've really enjoyed it. We are not only delivering the motorhome but we are also test driving it. Tiffin Motorhomes makes a good product—we have driven all of them and we know," Ray said.

"I was in the service and had seen Europe, but I had not seen much of the United States. It's all beautiful country and really fascinates us. Everything is gorgeous although the best part is coming back home," he shared.

The Chapas, who are originally from Houston, have resided in Tusculumbia since 1984. They have four grandchildren—Ashton, Blake, Ray, and Anyessa. They also have one great-granddaughter, Isa-Bella Kaye.

"When we aren't delivering motorhomes, I like to do yard work and gardening, plant and maintain flower beds, and make peanut brittle," Jane said. "Ray likes to piddle with the yard and cut down trees, plant shrubbery, and work around the house. We have eight acres at our house and a stocked pond with a deck where our grandchildren love to fish."



## Tommy & Linda Fikes

Motorhome deliveries bring new experiences

Tommy and Linda Fikes were Tiffin owners long before they started delivering Tiffin motorhomes. Warm and personable, the Fikes always had an interest in delivering motorhomes. "We have had an Allegro since the early 1980s," Tommy said. "Our 1989 Allegro is used for tailgating. We are from the same town as Dewel and Martha Emerson, another couple who delivers for Tiffin and they told us about this job. When we got out of our convenience store business, we decided to do this and we do like to travel," he said.

"We have been delivering motorhomes for the past four years as a couple," Linda said. "We deliver in pairs to the dealerships most everywhere we go. We will deliver anywhere—United States or Canada."

Delivering motorhomes does have its perks for the Fikes. In 2009, these avid Alabama fans were able to stay and watch the national championship game in California after delivering their units. "We've made a lot of friends during our travels—one couple we are friends with is originally from Opp, Alabama, but now live in Gallup, New Mexico. They noticed my Alabama gear I had on and greeted me with 'Roll Tide.' We began discussing Alabama and our friendship took off from there," Tommy said.

"We have been fortunate enough to visit strawberry festivals, national parks, the Boeing aircraft plant in Everett, Washington, the White Sands Missile Range, and Niagara Falls from both sides," Linda shared.

The Fikes have one grandson, Dylan, who is six years old. When they are not delivering motorhomes, the Fikes return to their home in Hamilton, Alabama. Tommy likes to hunt and fish, and of course, both Tommy and Linda enjoy going to the Alabama football games.

**Editor's Note:** After earning a B.S. degree in professional writing from the University of North Alabama, Stephanie McCarley began working in the sales department at TMH in May 2005. She writes and edits the owner manuals for all six brands, answers emails coming in over the website, and assists in sales administration. Born in the Philippines, she has lived most of her life in Red Bay.



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THE HYBRID QUIET DIESEL, 2011



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# Downsizing to a 2012 Phaeton 42 LH

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THE CASE FOR FULL TIMING IN A TIFFIN

Text and photography by Fred Thompson



*The word “downsizing”* was used recently in *Roughing It Smoothly* to describe buying an Allegro Breeze after you sold your Allegro Bus. But the word has a much broader application—it simply depends on your perspective. Many potential buyers who are dreaming of becoming full-time RVers in a 40- to 45-foot Tiffin motorhome are struggling with the decision to leave a 2,400 sq. ft. home and fit their lives and belongings into a luxurious coach like the 2012 Phaeton

42 LH, which with its slide-outs extended offers a total of 406 sq. ft. to its owners. Now *that* is downsizing. To solve this problem, one need only go as far as his/her laptop and Google. In 1950 the National Association of Home Builders tells us that the average home size was 983 sq. ft. Just five decades later that number had jumped to 2,400 sq. ft. Surprisingly, the NAHB notes that buyers today are asking for smaller, better designed, more efficient homes.



Another article offered four good reasons to live in a smaller home.<sup>1</sup> And in this article, “smaller” means less than 500 sq. ft. The arguments are convincing, especially when you consider that 406 sq. ft. is just barely 17 percent of 2,400 sq. ft. So, should I weigh those reasons by a factor of five? Here is the list:

*Small homes cost less to operate.* Think about what it costs to heat and cool 2,400 sq. ft. In a small home, everything demands less energy. Even pets, appliances, and computers generate heat for the small spaces in winter. Think about the maintenance cost of a full size house: repainting the exterior, replacing the roof, or changing your decor. You will spend a lot to furnish and decorate all of those extra rooms.

*Small homes save time.* It takes some serious time to clean a large home and maintain the yard. Living in a small home means you can reduce at least by that factor of five the amount of time you spend on cleaning and maintenance. Think of all the places where you will spend the extra time: reading, playing with the children or grandchildren, cooking, volunteering, enjoying your hobbies.

*Smaller homes make it easier to live simply.* Yes, you will have less space to store your belongings. Now you can make good choices about the things you really need to keep and what you should donate to charitable organizations, sell, or give to your kids.

A mainstream architect in the Pacific Northwest who brought attention to the tiny house trend, Ross Chapin made a reputation building small homes around community-fostering spaces — an “ah-ha” idea on which upscale RV resorts have capitalized.

Living simply in smaller spaces creates unexpected benefits. “Humans gravitate toward small spaces if they are cozy and well-designed,” Chapin explains. “Benjamin Franklin used to say that the conversation around the table is much livelier when knees are touching, than at a formal dinner with proper distance.”<sup>2</sup>

*Smaller homes mean quality splurges.* You could spend a fortune installing high-end upgrades in a 2,400 sq. ft. three bedroom, three bath home: granite countertops, porcelain floors, solid cherry cabinets, leather furniture, recessed lighting, handsome bathroom fixtures, and the list goes on. But when you are splurging in a 400 sq. ft. home, you still get to enjoy the quality, just in smaller quantities with less expense.

Stacy Rapacon, in *Kiplinger’s*, examined a trend she discovered of couples living in small houses, all less than 500 sq. ft. “Deciding to live in a tiny house involves making some big lifestyle choices,” she began. “You’ll need to be happy with minimum belongings . . . and have maximum tolerance for intimacy if others will be sharing the space.” Rapacon described 10 tiny houses.<sup>3</sup> Following is one example:

*Tiny Texas Houses.* With a front and back porch to encourage outdoor living, this little house comes with a six-color paint job. Sleeping quarters include a king-size Murphy bed, a loft, and a built-in couch that makes into a queen-size bed. The kitchen includes a Sub-Zero fridge and freezer under the counter and a two-burner induction cooktop with a microwave above.

“If nothing else, the mini-house trend is cause to re-evaluate

just how much space we really need,” Chris Solomon suggests.

“But whatever the bare minimum, good design is crucial,” says Tim Russell, CEO of v2world. “If you ask people whether they could ever live in 400 sq. ft., they categorically say ‘No Way.’ Yet visitors to the company’s 384 sq. ft. model often think it is 700 sq. ft. or even 800 sq. ft. thanks to floor-to-ceiling windows and smaller appliances that are unobtrusive.”

*From our stationary downsizers,* we found several reasons to take the plunge to live in smaller spaces:

(1) Less utilities and maintenance costs than a 2,400 sq. ft. house. (2) Small homes save time. (3) Live a simpler life. (4) Enjoy high quality features in small spaces. (5) Good design.

#### ***Enter the 2012 Phaeton 42 LH — Making a Few Quick Applications***

(1) *Less utilities and maintenance costs.* Keep in mind, we are comparing the living space in a motorhome to the living space in a stationary home. Many full-time RVers head south in the winter and north in the summer. That’s one of the advantages of owning a motorhome. If you purchase an RV lot in each climate, your utilities will be billed separately and you will definitely see lower costs. If you are traveling, your utilities are included in the price of renting your lot in a park. Your costs will be significantly less than utilities in your 2,400 sq. ft. home.

(2) *Smaller homes save time.* You can bet on that. A woman who owned a 450 sq. ft. stationary small home boasted she could vacuum her home by plugging in the vacuum cleaner only one time. The Phaeton 42LH has only one place to attach the central vac hose. Plus, your central vacuum comes with VacPan,<sup>TM</sup> a vacuum slot installed at floor level in the baseboard that eliminates the need for a dustpan. The Phaeton’s porcelain floors can be cleaned in minutes. You will notice more timesavers as we go deeper into the 42 LH’s features.

(3) *Live a simpler life.* The well-designed storage compartments found throughout the 42 LH will amaze you. The floorplan integrates smoothly into your desire to have an uncluttered lifestyle. The galley simplifies storage and organization. If you are a full-timer, you can rotate your seasonal wardrobes from the basement storage—all 114 cubic feet of it. Actually, there’s at least another 50 cubic feet when you include the space on all sides of the chassis rails which extend down into the basement compartment.

(4) *Enjoy high quality features.* Solid surface countertops, cherry cabinetry, brushed nickel or bronzed plumbing fixtures, porcelain floors, high-end wallpaper and lighting fixtures, leather furniture, and the list goes on. “My permanent home doesn’t look this good” is a remark heard often when the uninitiated enter a Tiffin for the first time.

(5) *Good design.* Tiffin’s architects do not draw a two dimensional floorplan and pronounce their efforts “good.” In the company’s R&D department, they build a three dimensional house, then get inside it with all of the furniture and move around to see if it works.

Now let’s go inside the 42LH and apply these observations.

## THE LIVING ROOM AND ENTERTAINMENT CENTER



When you review the living room floor plan on page 16, you will see a 68-inch sofa in the passenger-side slide-out adjacent to a 42-inch television diagonally positioned over a square cabinet. This arrangement is standard. In the pictures, you will notice the television is mounted above a cabinet housing an optional electric fireplace (MSRP \$735). With an output of 1200 BTUs from the slotted vents, the fireplace brings “warm and cozy” to your living room with the flick of a switch. The entertainment center includes two leather lift recliners (MSRP \$1,820). A second option for the entertainment center includes one leather lift recliner and a cherry flip table positioned just under the window. The cabinets in the slide-out above the television and entertainment

center offer 16 cubic feet of storage, a hallmark of Tiffin design.

The L-shaped chaise lounge by Flexsteel is standard with cloth upholstery, but is offered optionally in Ultra leather® (MSRP \$1,540). The package includes the solid cherry coffee table. The extended leg of the L-shaped lounge has removable cushions which allow the extension’s framework to slide back into the primary system prior to bringing in the slide-out for travel. The lounge conceals Flexsteel’s patented air-coil queen-size hide-a-bed sofa. The forward segment of the sofa has a 29-inch wide leg lift. The cabinetry above the chaise lounge provides 17.7 cubic feet of storage.

Both the Flexsteel driver and passenger chairs are redesigned for 2012 with firmer back support and adjustable armrests. The 8-way powered seats with Ultra fabric are standard equipment, plus the passenger seat has a leg lift. Each chair has full 180-degree rotation to add two comfortable recliners to the living room, which certainly qualifies for Benjamin Franklin’s definition of a lively conversation area.

The 37-inch television over the dash is optional (MSRP \$1,120). Two surround sound speakers are concealed in the overhead dash cabinetry, plus two more in the dining and galley area.

Designed by Triple H Electronics in Red Bay, the surround sound and television technologies in Tiffin coaches have been one of the features that have catapulted the company’s brands to take four of the top five slots in diesel pusher sales. The system uses component audio-visual cables to distribute input/output data from a central, easily serviced black box (mounted under the floor). The box receives high definition broadcast input from the optional in-motion, low profile satellite dish which can pull programming from network satellites while you are traveling. Programming from satellites is received by subscription from DIRECTV or DISH.

Additional input comes from (1) an enclosed rotating digital TV antenna receiving local programming, (2) HD programming via cable service, and (3) a 5-disc DVD-CD player with high quality picture and digital sound technology. The system transmits output to the coach’s four HD-ready Panasonic televisions and sound equipment. With the optional satellite radio (MSRP \$259) and a subscription to XM, you can enjoy an almost unlimited selection of music genres in surround sound.

Throughout the Phaeton 42 LH, the easy-to-clean porcelain floors add that splurge of luxury we noted in the introduction — a feature you would expect in the president’s suite of a fine hotel. It is a standard feature in the living, galley, dining, and bath areas, and an option in the bedroom (MSRP \$560).

As always, Tiffin gives you choices in decor for selection of coordinating fabrics, wood, and cabinet finishes. The three decors offered for 2012 in the Phaeton are Fabric Suites for Capri, Palmetto, and White Diamonds. The Palmetto Fabric Suite is shown in our story. Wood choices include alderwood and cherry. Stains for the former include Medium Alderwood and English Chestnut. Cherry is offered in a Cherry Bark stain and is optional



## THE GALLEY AND DINETTE



(MSRP \$700). English Chestnut cabinetry is shown in this story.

If you enjoy cooking, the Phaeton 42 LH offers you a galley that is efficient, compact, very functional, and at the same time, spacious. The solid surface countertop is nearly six feet wide, with a depth varying from 31.5 inches at the cooktop to 42 inches deep at the sink. The slide-out counter provides another 2.75 sq. ft. of work space which doubles as a buffet when you are ready to serve your guests.

The recessed three-burner cooktop has a unique folding solid surface countertop that restores three square feet of work surface when not in use. The cooktop and the residential-size microwave/convection oven, which is vented to the outside, are standard in the Phaeton. Underneath note the slide-out trash can conveniently positioned next to the cooktop and sinks. You will find many uses for the two slide-out boxes. One owner uses the top box for cooking utensils and measuring containers, and the lower box for vegetables and fruit that do not require refrigeration.

The double stainless steel sinks are also residential size (18.5 × 15.5 × 9 inches and 16.5 × 12.5 × 8 inches) and serviced by the restaurant-style gooseneck faucet, sprayer, single-lever control, and soap dispenser. Note the handsome towel bar just above the double doors. The solid surface sink covers have a storage rack in the cabinet (7.5 cu. ft. of storage) directly underneath the sinks.

Six drawers will take care of your kitchen storage requirements. In the slide-out cabinet, two drawers measure 26 × 10 × 7 inches and one 26 × 10 × 3.5 inches. On the opposite side, the top drawer is sectioned for tableware and the two below are 14 × 9 × 5.25 inches. The switches above the drawers take care of two recessed lights directly over the sink and four over the cooktop, the water pump, and recessed ceiling lights. The switch by the towel rack controls the Fan-tastic vent in the ceiling.

Each of the overhead cabinets adjacent to the oven have lower slide-out shelves for easy access to the whole shelf. The shelves above the slides are adjustable. The combined storage space is over six cubic feet.

In the 42 LH the dinette is located on the passenger side, giving you a view of your own patio area. The optional computer work station (MSRP \$980) on the left side of the cabinet offers a keyboard tray behind the first drawer front; the second drawer is storage for your laptop, and the bottom drawer conceals a shelf for your printer. On the right side of the credenza, the two drawers can be used for office supplies and the bottom drawer is designed for hanging file folders.

The valance design integrates the fabrics in the decor suite with handsome molding and wrought iron accents. The 18 × 72-inch credenza top provides workspace for business activities or a buffet for serving guests. When the table is extended to 40 inches, you can seat four for dinner. Two folding chairs upholstered with the same fabric are stored under the king bed.

The double-door, residential refrigerator with a bottom slide-out freezer is standard. It has an icemaker and ice water dispenser.

## THE BEDROOM AND HALF BATH



In your home, the master bedroom should not only be functional. It must be inviting! This bedroom meets and exceeds the challenge. It will make you eager to select the Phaeton 42 LH as your full-time domicile. The handsomely patterned wallpaper combines with the rich tones of the English Chestnut cabinetry and molding to focus attention on the elegant bed and comforter with accent pillows. Perfectly placed sconce lighting above the headboard suggests that here is the right place to get started on that book you purchased last week at Barnes & Noble. With a fingertip control in the bedside table, you can turn on the ceiling fan. Side windows in the slide-out will create a nice cross breeze when your book falls into your lap and you drift off into a pleasant afternoon nap. The valances conceal both solar screens and privacy shades. With the optional king-size bed with memory foam mattress, this comfort zone will exceed all of your expectations.

The end tables have a front storage compartment, solid surface countertops, and a 110v outlet for nighttime appliances. Twin speakers pipe in music from your favorite NPR station or the CD player. The four doors over the bed conceal 12 cubic feet of storage space and you will find another six cubic feet under the bed. Comparing a Tiffin motorhome to the small houses mentioned in the introduction probably isn't fair. Their architects don't understand storage.

Look across the room to the driver-side slide-out and you will smile again at the two chests: Four deep drawers under the window in one chest with a large countertop for your plants, pictures, knick-knacks, etc. Next to it another chest provides a clothes hamper, a large drawer, and a cabinet wired for a DVD-CD player and a second satellite receiver. Your 32-inch HD-ready Panasonic flat screen television is ready for your evening movie selection or favorite TV program. A small double cabinet above the window is a great place for stashing your books and other reading material.

The rear bath and a half is probably the hottest feature in Class A motorhomes. If guests are visiting overnight and sleeping in the queen-size bed in the living room, they will have their own "water closet," as we euphemistically call it. But most of the time for a couple who have decided to go full time, it's "Pop's library." Whatever the nickname, this is a very nice one.

Of course, Pop does get to shower in Mom's full rear bath. So he gets a full size towel bar in his library. Here are the specs: Fantastic vent in the ceiling; not one medicine cabinet, but three; a solid surface countertop and lavatory with a 14.5-inch high back splash front and side with pewter medallions and laser-carved ornamentation; a cabinet underneath the lavatory for storing black tank treatments; a peddle-flush toilet; a screened window with solar and privacy shades; and the reason for its nickname—a magazine and book rack.

The heavy solid door to this hideaway, its richly finished chestnut cabinetry, its "almost marble" lav and backsplash, and its porcelain floor make me think of a private compartment in the Orient Express.



## REAR BATH AND WASHER/DRYER



With measurements of 96 inches E-W and 78 inches N-S, it is amazing how spacious the rear bath feels. The footprint is only 52 square feet. Yet it has a lavatory with a solid surface countertop measuring 49 inches in one direction and 34 inches in the other, plus a 14.5-inch decorative backsplash. The solid surface lavatory material is laminated into one piece with the countertop, a feature normally found in luxury homes. Above the lavatory, Tiffin's woodworking shop challenges you to fill up three cabinets, each with mirrored doors. Four long, deep drawers provide plenty of storage space under the countertop, and you have approximately 12 cubic feet of storage space in the corner under the lavatory.

Immediately on your right as you enter the rear bath, Splendide's stacked washer and dryer is perfectly located for convenient use, just two steps away from the clothes hamper. Moving to your left and across the back wall of the coach, the master closet is 58 inches wide and features double sliding doors with mirrors. The closet is 21 inches deep and 63 inches high. Wainscot and chair rail on the

passenger side follow the bedroom's decor. Adjacent to the closet and positioned under a window on the passenger side, a Dometic electric macerator toilet pulverizes waste with a bladed turbine. This eliminates clogs in the sewage line to the black tank located near the middle of the basement infrastructure.

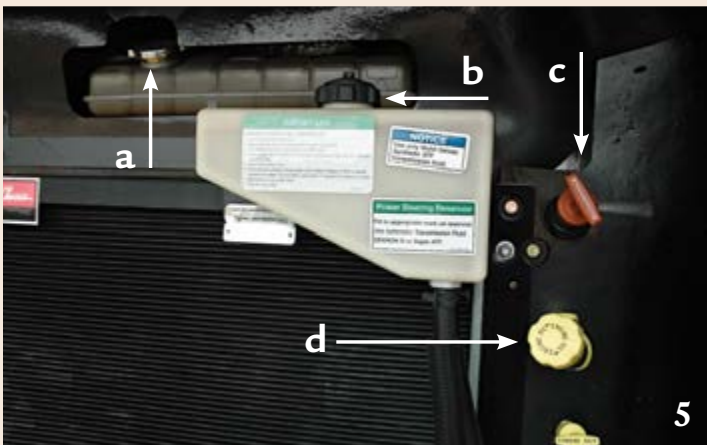
The elliptical shape of the shower in the forward corner of the floorplan uses a double radius door with translucent glass. It is well appointed with two chrome towel racks, a recessed soap dish, grab bar, a shelf for bath products, and a chrome adjustable shower head with an on/off button and a flexible hose. Water volume and temperature is controlled by a single rotary lever. This 42 LH has an optional tankless LP water heater (MSRP \$1,400) which will keep you from running out of hot water during a long, relaxing shower. A skylight above the shower illuminates the entire rear bath on sunny days, but a sliding insulator panel can be pulled across the skylight in colder temperatures to reduce heat loss. The bath is ventilated by a screen window and a Fan-Tastic vent in the ceiling.

## A WALK-AROUND TO LOOK AT THE 42 LH's BASEMENT & ITS INFRASTRUCTURE

Beginning on the passenger side near the entry door, we will walk around the coach, open the doors, and take a look into each bay. (1) The first compartment houses the LP tank which is installed horizontally across the chassis for better weight distribution. To the right is the HWH hydraulic system which operates the jacks and two of the coach's slide-outs. (2) The next three doors open up one of the largest bay storage compartments in all of Tiffin's coaches. Measuring from the bottom of the chassis rails, the compartment has 114 cubic feet. The first bay has an optional exterior slide-out tray (MSRP \$700) which is extended in the picture. You will notice the Dirt Devil central vacuum system

in the third bay. (3) The fifth bay houses electrical equipment including an assortment of relays and solenoids. Note the well-engineered arrangement and labeling of every component which simplifies future servicing. (4) The sixth compartment houses the DEF (diesel engine fluid) tank, an additive to the clean emissions system. (5) Under the rear cap which is lifted out of the way by air struts, you will find all of the engine's service points. You can check the (a) coolant, (b) hydraulic fluid, (c) transmission oil, and (d) engine oil at eye level.

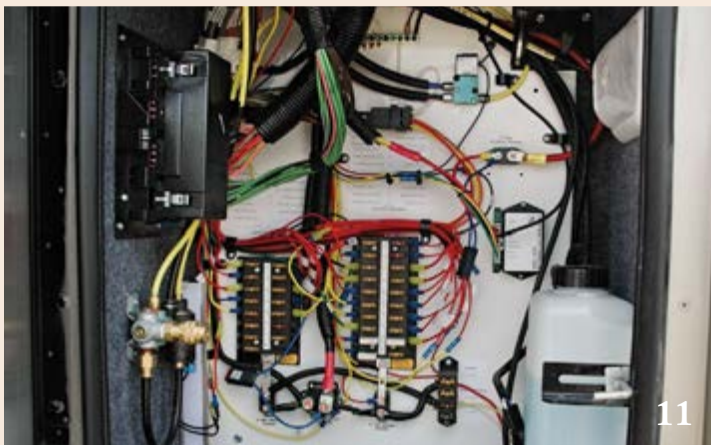
Moving from rear to front on the driver side of the coach, (6) a shallow compartment conceals the access to the engine's





large air filter. It is also a good place for storing flat items, hose pipes, or even a folded lawn chair. (7) The second bay houses two service-free starting batteries, located close to the engine. Note the cutoff switch mounted top center. It should be used to prevent the batteries from draining when the coach is not in service. (8) Tiffin's motorhomes have the most efficiently designed utility bays in the industry. Everything is clearly labeled and easily accessed. (9) The next three bays are the driver-side access to the huge storage compartment. Note that the slide-out tray can be extended on both sides. The 50-amp service is located in the smaller bay on the right. (10) The house electrical service

requires six batteries to take care of the residential refrigerator. If you are dry camping or tailgating at a football game over a weekend, the inverter will automatically start the generator to recharge the batteries. These batteries require service. Note the disconnect switch in the upper right corner, which will prevent depletion when the coach is not in service. (11) The last compartment at the front of the coach on the driver-side houses two fuse blocks, access to air pressure, the window washing fluid reservoir, and the release for the generator slide-out, among other things. (12) Finally, we are back at the front of the coach where you can slide the generator out for servicing.



## THE COCKPIT



The Freightliner instrument cluster features two large displays for RPM and speed. It is surrounded by six smaller dials showing air pressure, oil, temperature, and fuel. An **INFORMATION CENTER** at the bottom of the cluster gives the driver data on the transmission temperature, fuel economy, engine hours, battery condition, two trip mileage meters, and a diagnostic system.

To the right of the steering column, nine toggle switches at your fingertips take care of the step cover, driver and passenger fans, solar and night shades, gen start, map light, docking light, and radio. The monitor for the rear and side

view cameras is positioned just above the toggle switches. The optional navigation system offers satellite-sourced mapping plus vocal driving instructions. The screen for the navigation system flips for access to the tuners for the standard radio or the XM satellite radio (optional, requires subscription), and the CD player.

The three switches for the automotive heating and air are large and easy to read. Electrically controlled solar and opaque shades for the windshield can be adjusted to deal with the sun's direct rays and glare. The side windows and the door window can be adjusted with pull loops

Footnotes to page 9:

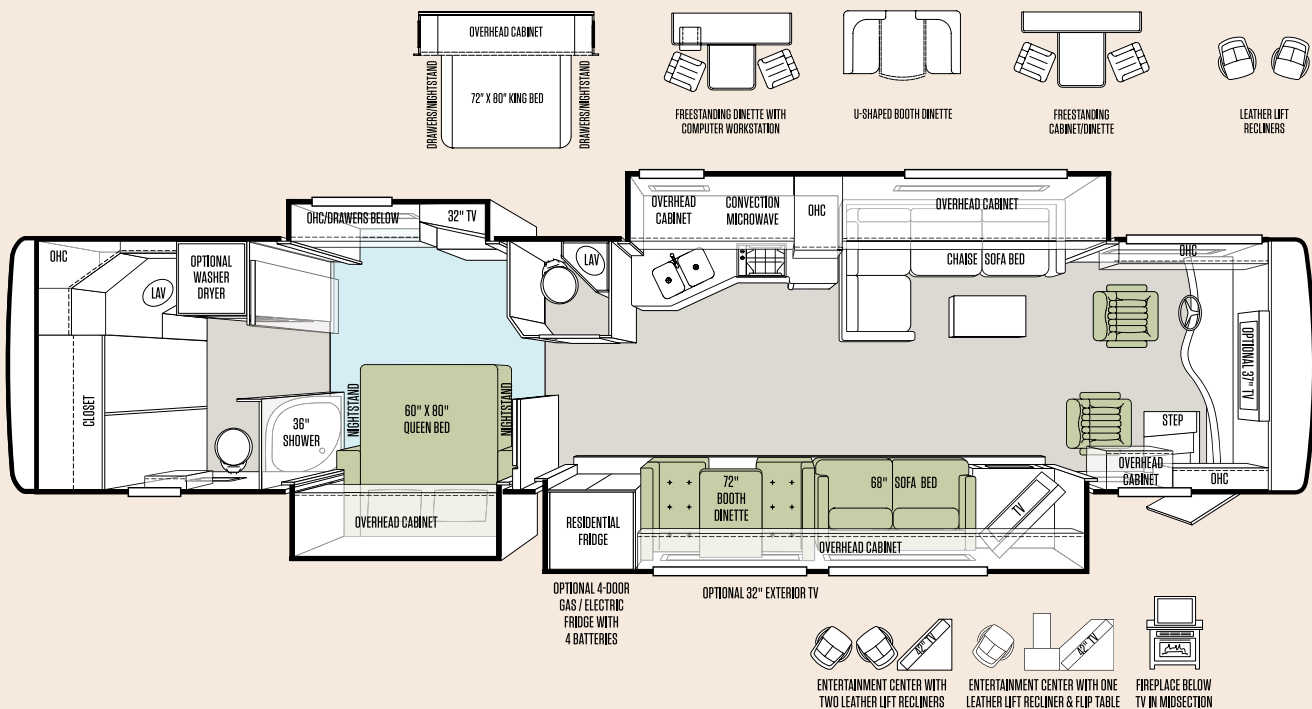
(1) Heather Levin, *Money Crashers*. usnews.com Oct. 4, 2011. (2) Christopher Solomon, MSN Real Estate. msn.com Jan. 9, 2012. (3) Stacy Rapacon, *Kiplinger's*. MSN Real Estate. realestate.msn.com Jan. 9, 2012.

that are within arms reach of both the passenger and driver.

To the left of the steering column, the dash houses the headlight switch and the rheostat dial for cockpit lighting, the air-driven emergency brake, windshield wipers/washer, heat-AC vent, and three toggle switches for engine preheat, auxiliary start, and pedal adjustment.

The cockpit continues along the left sidewall in a wraparound console. The electronic gearshift is located in the forward end of the console at your fingertips. Three toggle switches activate an optional air horn, the courtesy flasher, and the supplementary exhaust brake. The HWH leveling system and a cupholder complete the console. **RIS**

For a real life application of the decision making process to live full time in your motorhome, read Dave McClellan's story in "From the Road" on page 46. In this final segment, he evaluates their decision one year later.





# SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2012 Phaeton 42 LH, Quad Slide, Base MSRP\* – \$308,000. MSRP as tested with options – \$324,254.

## STANDARD FEATURES

### Structural

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

### Automotive

Allison 3000 MH six-speed automatic transmission with lock-up (torque converter)  
Cummins ISL 8.3 liter 400 hp, electronic/turbo-charged diesel with 1,250 lbs.-ft. torque  
Raised rail chassis frame  
Air ride (6 air bags)  
Aluminum wheels  
55° wheel cut  
Air brakes with automatic slack adjusters and ABS  
Exhaust brake  
Adjustable fuel and brake pedals  
VIP 18-inch steering wheel  
Cruise control  
Fog lights  
Daytime running lights  
Emergency start switch

### Exterior

Fiberglass front & rear caps  
Dual fuel fills  
Large tinted one-piece windshield  
10 Kw Onan manual slide-out generator  
HWH hydraulic automatic leveling jacks  
Chrome heated power mirrors with remote adjustment  
Power Fantastic® roof vent with 3-speed fan  
Single motor intermittent wiper  
Gel-coat fiberglass walls  
BASF full body paint with protective film  
Deadbolt front entrance door  
Double electric step  
Dual pane windows  
Exterior patio light  
Entry door awning  
Automatic patio awning  
Window awning package (2 windows)  
Slide-out covers  
Custom mud flap  
Lockable swing-out storage doors with gas shocks  
Remote locking system for entry door  
Lighted exterior storage  
Roof ladder  
Docking lights  
Heated water and holding tank compartments  
Six 6v auxiliary batteries  
2000 watt inverter with 100 amp converter & transfer switching  
Park ready telephone  
Black tank flush system  
Water filter  
Undercoating  
110v exterior receptable  
110v / 12v converter  
Digital TV antenna  
Cable ready TV  
Park telephone ready  
Three 15,000 BTU low profile A/C with heat pumps & 10kw Onan® generator  
A/C condensation drains

### Driver's Compartment

Flexsteel® Ultraleather™ power driver and passenger seats with passenger footrest  
Custom infrared repeater system on all TVs  
Dual dash fans  
Full-width power windshield solar / privacy shades  
Driver / passenger side window solar / privacy shades  
Color rear vision monitor system with side-view cameras activated by turn signals  
Snack-beverage tray with drawers  
Step switch and 12v disconnect switch  
Dual 12v dash receptacles

Single CD player & AM/FM stereo  
Fire extinguisher  
Computer slide-out tray in dash with lockable rails

### Living Area / Dinette

Booth dinette with laminate tabletop & solid surface edging  
12v, 110v, & phone jack receptacles at dinette  
42-inch flat screen LCD HD color television wall-mounted in forward passenger slide-out  
Custom infrared repeater  
68-inch Flexsteel® Ultraleather™ DE sofa bed (passenger side)  
96-inch Flexsteel® Cloth L-shaped sofa bed (driver side)

### Kitchen

Solid surface counter top with residential stainless steel sink  
Solid surface sink cover  
Sink cover storage racks (underneath sink)  
Permanently mounted folding solid surface cooktop cover  
Single lever sink faucet with sprayer  
Built-in soap dispenser  
Convection / microwave oven with exterior vent  
Galley splash guards  
Residential stainless steel refrigerator with ice maker in freezer (6 batteries)  
3-burner cooktop  
Expand-an-Island  
One Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan

### Rear Bath

Three medicine cabinets with mirrors  
Vanity lights & recessed ceiling lights  
Skylight in shower with sliding solar cover  
One solid surface vanity top and bowl  
Custom flat panel bath door to bedroom  
Electric macerator toilet  
Fiberglass molded shower base  
Hand-held shower head with on/off switch  
36-inch molded fiberglass shower with radius doors  
Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan next to shower  
Wardrobe with automatic lights  
Screened window with solar & privacy shades

### Half Bath

One solid surface vanity top and bowl  
Medicine cabinet with mirror & vanity lights  
Two additional wall cabinets  
Ceramic toilet with pedal flush and spray cleaner  
Fan-Tastic® power roof vent with 3-speed fan  
Screened window with solar & privacy shades  
Magazine rack

### Bedroom

Pre-wired for DVD & satellite receiver  
Ceiling fan  
Four OH storage cabinets in bed slide-out  
Stackable washer/dryer-ready closet  
Bed comforter with throw pillows  
Sleeping pillows  
Queen-size bed  
Pillow top mattress  
Under bed storage  
Night stands with 110v outlets  
Wood/fabric headboard  
Chest of drawers with laundry hamper  
32-inch LCD television  
Carbon monoxide detector  
LPG leak detector

### General Interior

7-ft. ceilings  
Soft touch vinyl ceilings with tray ceiling in living area

Porcelain tile floor in kitchen, living area, bath & entry landing  
Carpeting in bedroom & driver's compartment with Scotchgard®  
High gloss raised panel hardwood cabinet doors & drawers  
Fan-Tastic® power roof vents with 3-speed fans  
Solid wood cabinet faces with concealed hinges  
Medium alderwood or English Chestnut cabinetry  
12v disconnect switch  
Bullet lights in ceiling  
Complete cable wiring interfacing with surround sound & satellite receivers  
Home theatre sound system with concealed speakers  
Air driven step well cover  
Solar & privacy RollEase® shades  
LED bulbs in ceiling lights only  
Home theater sound system with concealed speakers  
Tank level monitoring system  
Smoke detector  
10-gallon DSI gas/electric water heater  
Two ducted furnaces (one 30,000 BTU & one 35,000 BTU)

## OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

In-motion satellite dish (receivers and service contract required)  
Satellite radio (subscription required)  
In-dash navigational system  
One exterior slide-out tray  
Hadley air horns  
Exterior 32-inch LCD television in galley slide-out wall  
Bedroom tile  
37-inch dash overhead television  
Stacked washer/dryer  
Built-in vacuum cleaner  
Tankless gas water heater  
Entertainment center with two leather lift recliners (passenger side)  
96-inch Flexsteel® Ultraleather L-shaped sofa bed (driver side)  
Dinette computer work station  
Electric fireplace  
King-size memory foam mattress  
Spotlight

## OTHER OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

Automatic satellite dish  
Second exterior slide-out storage tray  
Gas oven with convection microwave  
Free standing dinette with built-in cabinets  
U-shaped dinette  
Combo washer/dryer  
Entertainment center with one leather lift recliner & flip table

### DRIVER SIDE

None

### PASSENGER SIDE

68-inch Cloth DE sofa bed  
68-inch Ultraleather™ Air Coil Hide-A-Bed  
Two leather recliners  
68-inch Ultraleather™ Magic Bed  
68-inch Cloth Magic Bed  
King bed mattress  
Select Comfort bed – queen or king  
Memory foam mattress – queen  
Cherry bark cabinetry (simulated)

## MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 296"  
Overall length – 42'5"  
Overall height w/roof air – 12'7"  
Interior height – 84"  
Overall width – 101"  
Interior width – 96"

## WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 45,000 lb.  
Front GAWR – 14,000 lb.  
Rear GAWR – 21,000 lb.  
Tag Axle GAWR – 10,000 lb.  
GCWR – 55,000 lb.  
UVW – 32,200 lb.  
CCC – 10,500 lb.  
Trailer hitch capacity – 10,000 lb.

## POWER TRAIN

Engine – 400 hp Cummins ISL, 8.9 liter electronic, turbocharged diesel  
Torque – 1,250 lb.-ft. at 1,400 rpm  
Transmission – Allison 3000MH electronic six speed with two overdrives  
Tire Size – 275/80R 22.5 XZA1 Michelin  
Alternator – Leece-Neville 170 amps

## CHASSIS

Frame – Freightliner  
Frame Design – Raised rail  
Anti-locking Braking System – WABCO 4M/4S ABS System  
Air Suspension (front) – Hendrickson HTB  
Air Suspension (rear) – Hendrickson HTB  
Shock Absorbers – Bilstein tuned  
Leveling Jacks – HWH hydraulic automatic

## CONSTRUCTION

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

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – 6 adults  
Fuel tank – 100 gallons  
Freshwater – 90 gallons  
Black water – 45 gallons  
Grey water – 70 gallons  
LPG tank – (35.7 gallons; can be filled to 80% capacity) – 28 gallons

## MSRP

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

## UVW

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

## DEALERS

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

## PLEASE NOTE

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

# Galveston Island 2012

RECOVERED AND READY TO ENTERTAIN



Text by Norman Spray  
Photography by Rhonda Spray





***Escaping the snow-covered fields*** of the north and finding an island retreat could be as easy as driving your motor-home as far south as Interstate 45 takes you. The last leg is a causeway soaring above Galveston Bay. On the other side you descend onto Galveston Island, a place where temperatures are more user friendly and you can almost taste sea salt on the Gulf breezes. It's a bit like entering another country steeped in its own unique history and culture where opportunities to play, learn, and pursue special interests are limitless.

It's true that Hurricane Ike dealt Galveston a devastating blow in September, 2008, tracking a path eerily identical to that of "The Great Storm" that destroyed bustling Galveston in September 1900, killed at least 6,000 of its nearly 40,000 people, and remains the nation's deadliest natural disaster. In 2008, Ike's mountainous waves cascaded over Galveston's vaunted Seawall, surging flood waters into 75 per cent of all Galveston buildings.

But that was then. Recovery, Herculean in scope, is phenomenal. Today this island, only 32 miles long and two and a half miles wide, is an amazing destination. It's packed with 60 unique attractions ranging from the premier \$400 million Moody Gardens complex (see story on Page 26) to historic Victorian era antebellum mansions and world class air, sea, and rail museums. Seafood doesn't get any better, and there are 100 restaurants here, some winners of prestigious awards and ratings. Four RV parks offer monthly rates starting at \$450 for full service. A big 172-slot state park limits stays to 14 days, however.

Whether your thing is fishing, boating, beach combing, surfing, birding, golfing or sight seeing, you can enjoy most outdoor activities even during the winter months. High temperatures average 61 degrees in December, 58 in January, 60 in February, and 78 in March. Lows average 50 in December, 47 in January, 48 in February and 56 in March.

The culture here might be called part Texan, part Southern, and maybe even part Victorian, but mostly friendly. Though Galveston remains an important port (two cruise lines sail from here) and is home to some big businesses, making tourists welcome has become Galveston's lifeblood. That was not always the case.

**History.** Swashbuckling, educated, feared, dangerous Pirate/Privateer Jean Lafitte set up shop on this island in 1817, the first European to settle here. He established the colony of Campeche, which grew to as many as 1,000 people. When forced to leave, he burned his town behind him. Legend says he left buried loot, none of which has been found so far as is known.

Galveston was incorporated in 1839, quickly growing into the Gulf's most active seaport west of New Orleans. It became the largest city in Texas, exciting, sophisticated, and a bustling center of commerce. Galvestonians built the state's first post office, first opera house (still in use and a venue for nationally rated performances), first hospital and on and on. Millionaires built mansions. Life was good.

Then disaster! The hurricane of 1900 left the city in shambles. Many community and business leaders, the Moody family notable among them, elected to stay on the island and rebuild

homes and businesses. But Galveston never recaptured its past glory. The Houston ship channel, dug in 1917, "stole" much of its shipping industry and dampened commerce.

A shadier, if sometimes exhilarating, era followed. Prohibition and associated bootlegging opened the way for Galveston Island, acting as if it were a country in its own right, to ignore existing state law and establish itself as a drinking and gambling resort. Sam and Rose Maceo's elegant Balinese Room casino became upper-end famous, showcasing Frank Sinatra, Sophie Tucker, Tony Bennett, the Marx brothers and others of stature. High-rolling patrons, oil tycoons Glenn McCarthy and Diamond Jim Walker among them, were frequent visitors. Many not-so-swanky, even seedy, saloons catered to visiting sailors.

None of this escaped the notice of state authorities. Texas Rangers made repeated abortive raids on the Balinese, which stood on the end of a pier over Gulf waters at 21st Street and Seawall Boulevard. By the time the Rangers sprinted down the length of the pier (nicknamed "Ranger Run") and through six heavy glass doors, they'd find gambling tables converted to legal backgammon. Slot machines disappeared, folded into the walls. Gambling chips got stashed in the kitchen where, it's recalled as fact, one full suitcase was unintentionally roasted in an oven. It's also told that the band sometimes broke into "The Eyes of Texas" as Rangers arrived, prompting patriotic Texans to stand in reverence, honoring the Rangers and further slowing their invasion.

All this fun and games came to an abrupt and permanent halt on June 10, 1957, when the Rangers swept the entire city, backed by a new no-nonsense attorney general. This time they served injunctions, chopped up slot machines, and conclusively ended Galveston's Las Vegas-like existence. Now even the Balinese building is gone, obliterated by Hurricane Ike in 2008.

The island's magnificent beaches and good fishing continued to bring people to the seashore but it was not until the early eighties that a concerted revitalization campaign, spearheaded by Galveston-born Oilman George Mitchell, put the city on a roll that's made it a booming year-round vacation destination. Early focus was the historic 36-block downtown district, claiming one of the country's largest collections of Victorian iron front commercial architecture. Famous architects designed unique festive Mardi Gras arches to span streets of The Strand district. Galveston's 12-day Mardi Gras celebration was revived and now attracts over a quarter million people every February. Today over 100 unique shops, restaurants and art galleries draw people downtown. It's a major attraction, but only one of many.

To plan what you want to see and do on Galveston Island, contact or stop by the Convention & Visitors Bureau, 2328 Broadway, Galveston, Texas, 77550 (888-425-4753 or 409-797-5144, [www.galveston.com](http://www.galveston.com), [www.facebook.com/visitgalveston-island](http://www.facebook.com/visitgalveston-island), [www.twitter.com/galvestonisland](http://www.twitter.com/galvestonisland)). You'll find friendly help, a well-done visitor's guide, brochures describing most attractions and information about restaurants and services.

Hosts there will help you develop a self-guided itinerary or book guided tours that go by helicopter, amphibious "duck"



At the Seaport Museum at Pier 21, you can board the 1877 tall sailing ship *Elissa*. The 134-year-old square-rigged barque first appeared in the Galveston harbor on December 27, 1883, with a cargo of bananas. • Joggers enjoy 10.3 miles of free beach access along Galveston's Seawall.

vehicle, boat, horse-drawn carriage or even the Segway personal transporter. There's something for most everyone, including:

**Beaches.** "Coming down to the sea" is easy on Galveston Island. One road, Seawall Boulevard (which becomes County Road 3005, also called San Luis Pass Road west of the actual Seawall) runs beach-side from one end of the island to the other. Access roads to free beaches are clearly marked.

Most popular is the free beach below Galveston's 10.3 mile-long cement Seawall. The first Seawall section, three miles long, was built in three years beginning in 1902 as part of a project to raise Galveston's elevation and protect it from a repeat of the hurricane disaster of 1900. The remaining seven miles, added between 1904 and 1963, completed "the world's skinniest park." The wall is 17 feet high, 16 feet wide at the base and is topped by a 30-foot wide sidewalk or "cement boardwalk" at street level. It's a promenade happily used by hikers, bikers, runners, skaters, artists, photographers, and sea watchers. Between 27th and 61st streets, people frolicking on the beach between the Seawall and the Gulf waters can look back at "See-Wall" paintings, hundreds of them, on the wall. Designed by three local artists and completed with the help of 14,000 volunteers and 8,500 school kids, these paintings may make up the world's longest mural.

Parallel parking is free along the Seawall. Downtown, though, plan to feed closely-monitored meters.

County Road 3003 continues for 18 miles west of the Seawall to end at San Luis Pass at the western tip of the island. Beaches along this route are less populous though beach houses abound at some. Beach access roads are marked, including one into the Galveston Island State Park, which has excellent birding and nature trails on the bay side as well as beach access for fishing, water play, shell hunting, and whatever folks do on beaches.

Also available and popular are public beaches that provide showers, have concessions, rent umbrellas, and other beach items. These include Stewart Beach (\$8 entry fee) at the eastern end of the Seawall and East Beach (\$8 entry). Alcohol is banned on most beaches excepting licensed concession areas. No glass containers are allowed.

**Museums.** Everything Galveston has done to interest and please visitors, it seems to have done well.

At the *Galveston Historical Foundation's Seaport Museum* you can board the 1877 tall sailing ship *Elissa*, docked at Pier 21 on the Harborside Drive waterfront. This square-rigged barque, launched in Aberdeen, Scotland, Oct. 17, 1877, first docked in Galveston on Dec. 27, 1883, carrying one passenger and a cargo of bananas. After loading with Texas cotton, she set sail from Galveston's harbor for Liverpool, England, on Jan. 25, 1884.

*Elissa* came back to Galveston for good in July 1979. Volunteers and \$4.2 million restored her. When you visit, you can walk the decks, inspect the quarters and spin the teak wheel. You'll not be allowed to climb even one of *Elissa's* three soaring masts, however. Said to be the third oldest ship afloat, *Elissa* sails in the Gulf of Mexico at least once each year with a Sail Plan involving 10 square sails totaling a fourth acre and seven miles of rigging. She's a National Historic Landmark designated one of America's treasures by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In the adjacent museum and theater, a film documents *Elissa's* rescue from a Greek scrap yard in 1968. Museum displays and artifacts tell a story of seaborne commerce and immigration. A computer database lists names of more than 133,000 immigrants who entered the U.S. through Galveston, "Ellis Island of the West."



# HWH The Look of the Future

HWH's slide-out components bring **the look of the future** to Tiffin's luxury coaches.

HWH slide-out mechanisms are not visible from the outside of the coach, creating a beautifully clean "automotive" look, while the HWH® True Flush Floor system matches tile flooring in slide rooms to the main floor. HWH's computerized leveling system with finger-touch controls has been an industry standard for years.







The USS *Cavalla* is permanently berthed at Seawolf Park as a memorial to the lost submarine USS *Seawolf*. *Cavalla* was commissioned on February 29, 1944. On her maiden patrol, she sank the 30,000 ton Japanese aircraft carrier *Shokaku*, earning her the Presidential Unit Citation.

- Built for Colonel Walter Gresham, a prominent Galveston lawyer, by architect Nicholas Clayton, Bishop's Palace, a four-story Victorian, was once declared one of the country's 100 most important buildings. Completed in 1892, its construction required six years.

In a building next door (Great Storm Theater, 21st and Harborside Drive, 409-763-8808, [www.galvestonhistory.org](http://www.galvestonhistory.org)), Foundation movies detail two events that shaped Galveston. “*The Great Storm*” (\$5, adults, \$4, students) runs every hour on the hour between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. “*The Pirate Island of Jean Lafitte*” (\$4 adults, \$3 students), every hour on the half hour, explores contradictions and legends surrounding this real-life, bigger-than-life buccaneer whose very name could send merchant ships in the Gulf of Mexico racing for safe harbor.

*The Railroad Museum* (25th and Strand, 409-765-5700, [www.galvestonrrmuseum.com](http://www.galvestonrrmuseum.com)) packs over 40 engines and cars among 20,000 railroad items in an impressive Art Deco building once the Union Passenger Depot. It is the fifth largest railroad collection in the country.

*Seawolf Park* (Pelican Island via Seawolf Parkway, 51st Street across Galveston Bay, 409-797-5114, [www.galveston.com/seawolf-park/](http://www.galveston.com/seawolf-park/)) displays a WWII submarine, the USS *Cavalla*, a destroyer escort, the USS *Stewart*, and other military items. The park has a fishing pier, volleyball courts, picnic area, and a pavilion with a view of incoming freighters. The Seawolf name honors a submarine lost in World War II. (Parking, \$6; fishing, \$6 adults, \$3 seniors.)

*Ocean Star Offshore Drilling Rig and Museum and Education Center* (Pier 19, 409-766-7827, [www.oceanstaroec.com](http://www.oceanstaroec.com)) is a real floating jackup drilling rig built in 1969 that drilled some 200 wells in the Gulf of Mexico operating at depths up to 173 feet and drilling as deep as 25,000 feet. Three floors of educational and interactive displays on this rig tell the story of offshore oil and gas, how it is formed, and technologies that find it, evaluate seismic and core data, drill for it and produce it. It's all on this platform, including a blowout preventer, equipment that figured so prominently in the British Petroleum well disaster that oiled many Gulf Coast beaches.

An escape capsule, remotely operated underwater vehicles, and diving equipment and methods are displayed and explained. Ocean Star is a fascinating learning experience that leaves you with new knowledge and respect for the men and women who work these rigs. (\$8 for adults, \$5 for seniors 55 and older and \$5 for students).

**Fishing and Outdoor Activities.** You can fish free off the breakwaters or rock groins along the Seawall and in the surf at the free access beaches. Flounder, Speckled Trout, Sand Trout, Bull Reds and Gafftop often are caught this way. These fish also are commonly taken in the bays on the north side of the island. The Seawolf Park fishing pier is favored among shore-based anglers. Varying fees may apply at other piers, some of which are still being repaired for damage caused by Hurricane Ike.

The choices are many for offshore salt water fishing. You can charter a boat or join others on a fishing excursion vessel with costs related to how far out to sea you want to go and the boat you choose. Generally, anglers can boat Tarpon and Black Tip Shark only a few miles from shore through the fall months but winter months are not so good. Further out, 50 to 70 miles, the list grows to include Kingfish, Snapper, Dorado, Shark, Cobia



(Ling), Amber Jack, Grouper, and Wahoo. Overnight trips to waters 70 to 100 miles from shore increase chances to land Blue Marlin weighing up to 800 pounds, White Marlin, and Tuna. On a Bluewater trip, 100-plus miles out, you can hope to catch any of these plus Sailfish.

At least two dozen fishing charter operators work these waters. The Visitors Bureau has lists or you can find many at the boat ramps where you also can float your own boat, if you've brought or rented one. These include a free ramp at 61st Street and Offatts Bayou; Galveston Bait & Tackle, 9301 Broadway, 409-740-1185, (\$3.50 fee); and the Galveston Yacht Basin, 715 Holiday Drive North, 409-762-9689 (\$10 fee). On the island, you can rent most any kind of vessel from a pedal-boat to a kayak, outboard or banana boat.

A Texas Fishing License is required if you're between ages 17 and 65, plus a salt water license if applicable. Most sporting goods stores and many convenience stores sell licenses.

*Birding* is good on Galveston Island. A wide variety of water and shore birds abound year-round. Other species, some rare, visit in fall and spring migrations. There are a dozen recommended birding locations on the island. Lists are available at the Visitors Bureau.

During April 11-14, Galveston will host "FeatherFest," a four-day birding and nature gathering timed (hopefully) with arrival of 300-plus winged species. Birding classes, tours, and a live bird of prey show are included. For information, go to: [www.galvestonfeatherfest.com](http://www.galvestonfeatherfest.com). Birding tours are offered by Upper Texas Coast Birding Tours (409-737-4081); The Colonel Paddlewheeler (409-740-7797 or 888-740-7797); and Galveston Harbor Tours (409-765-1700).

**Historic "Palaces."** The Galveston Historical Foundation's mission is to preserve and restore buildings, ships, and artifacts important in the city's past. More than 2,000 Galveston buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Foundation conducts daily tours through four of the city's old-

est and grandest homes, giving visitors a look and feel for how the affluent lived "way back when."

*1859 Ashton Villa and Galveston Island Visitors Center*, 2328 Broadway (409-762-3933, [www.galvestonhistory.org](http://www.galvestonhistory.org)). Best place to begin a tour of "the Broadway Beauties" (and all of Galveston, for that matter) is this home which houses the Visitors Center. Here you can get information about most attractions on the

island, then be guided through Ashton Villa, "the first of Broadway's Palaces," for a sense of Victorian life and the escapades of the owners. Built in 1858-59, Ashton's mistress was the artistic and eccentric Miss Bettie Brown.

*Bishop's Palace*, 1402 Broadway (409-762-2475, [www.galvestonhistory.org](http://www.galvestonhistory.org)) impresses with a four-story Victorian exterior of ornate, colored stone. Inside are intricately-carved ornaments, rare woods,



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The Moody Mansion, built in 1895 and purchased by W. L. Moody after the great hurricane of 1900 has 28,000 square feet and 32 rooms under roof. It's now a museum but the Moody family occupied it until Mary Moody Northern was forced to move out to allow workmen to repair damage caused by Hurricane Alicia in 1983. • Carnival and Royal Caribbean cruise lines have weekly departures through April featuring four to eight night cruises. • Fishing off piers like this one and wading in Gulf waters are signature Galveston pastimes.

stained glass windows, bronze dragons and other sculptures, luxury materials and furnishings. Fireplaces from around the world include one lined in silver. Galveston Architect Nicholas Clayton designed it for Colonel Walter Gresham, a lawyer. The American Institute of Architects once named it one of the country's 100 most important buildings.

1895 *Moody Mansion Museum*, 2618 Broadway (409-762-7668, [www.moody-mansion.org](http://www.moody-mansion.org)) is an imposing 28,000 square foot edifice. It has 32 rooms, including a grand four-floor ballroom where the W. L. Moody family hosted many social affairs, including Daughter Mary's debut ball in 1911.

Moody bought this huge house for \$20,000 six days after the 1900 hurricane obliterated much of Galveston. The story is he made a "lowball" bid for the house before the storm hit. After the hurricane calamity, competing bids were withdrawn. The owner, then living in New York, asked



PHOTO BY THOMAS DOERFER





Moody if his \$20,000 bid was still good. The Moodys moved in and W. L. continued building a business empire that made him one of the country's 10 richest men by the time he died in 1954 at age 92, *Time* magazine reported.


The daughter, Mary Moody Northern, having lost her husband only months earlier, moved into the home after her father's death. There she remained, heading up over 50 family-owned corporations, until Hurricane Alicia so damaged the house in 1983 that Mary was forced to move out during renovation. She died in 1986, before the repairs were complete. Her will directed her Mary Moody Endowment Foundation to maintain the house as a museum. Through her foundation, established in 1962, and the Moody Foundation established by her father in 1942, the Moody family's philanthropy is legendary in Galveston and elsewhere.

1838 *Michel B. Menard Home*, 1604 33rd Street (409-762-3933, [\[tonhistory.org\]\(http://tonhistory.org\)\) was built by Menard, one of Galveston's founders and a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. He arrived in the 1830s and began speculating in Texas land. Since Texas was still controlled by Mexico at that time, land was only granted to Mexican-born Texans. Menard made many land deals through Juan Seguin, a Mexican citizen who eventually fought under Sam Houston at the Battle of San Jacinto. Seguin purchased 4,600 acres at the eastern end of Galveston Island on behalf of Menard in December 1836. With this claim, Menard formed the Galveston City Company with several prominent Texas businessmen in 1838. They incorporated the city of Galveston a year later. A classic Southern mansion of Greek Revival style, the house was built in Maine and shipped to Galveston in pieces. Built in 1838, it is the oldest building in Galveston.](http://www.galves-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

The current owners purchased the house in 1994 and spent several years restoring it. The house is now a museum.

**Caribbean Cruises.** If this is the winter you've decided to take a cruise ship to warmer climates, you could combine cruising with a stay in Galveston. Two cruise lines, Carnival and Royal Caribbean, depart Galveston through April for trips lasting as few as four nights to as many as eight nights. Ports of call include Cozumel, Progreso, Belize City, Roatan, Costa Maya or Georgetown (Grand Cayman).

For information, reservations or booking: Galveston Cruises (1-800-593-8678, [www.galvestoncruises.com](http://www.galvestoncruises.com)) or CruiseCheap (800-543-1915, [www.cruisecheap.com](http://www.cruisecheap.com)).

Whether you're cruising or looking for a place to dock your own motorhome for a winter stay, Galveston Island deserves consideration. The island's storied history makes it possible to imagine bumping into Pirate Jean Lafitte's ghost on a moonlight stroll. Not likely you'll do that—or find his loot, which could indeed be buried here—but “his” island is itself a unique treasure among this country's travel destinations. 

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# Moody Gardens

## PYRAMIDS OF WONDERS



**They call it Moody Gardens**, this \$400 million, 242-acre wonderland that is Galveston's biggest man-made attraction. It hosts over two million visitors every year. Calling it "gardens" hardly describes this complex.

But what should you call a one-of-a-kind facility that's part theme park, part experience-it-yourself educational university, part dedicated rehabilitative center and, yes, even part garden? Where else can you stroll into a pyramid 10 stories high and walk among a thousand plants and over 5,500 animals, birds and critters that occupy the rainforests of Asia, Africa, and the Americas?

Or cross the way into an adjacent blue-colored glass "pyramid" that's 12 stories tall and navigate under-water tunnels in it that bring you eye-to-eye with 8,000 species of fish, seals, otters, coral reefs, six species of penguins and other denizens of the deep that live in the world's oceans.

Then board a replica of an 1800s paddlewheel steamer that'll take you and as many as 799 fellow passengers for a 45-

minute spin around Offatts Bay. Next you may want to sit in for an educational movie playing on a six-story 3-D screen. Or amble into a third pinkish-colored glass pyramid exhibiting scientific marvels, then take a diving, dipping, turning simulated "ride" with 17 other passengers in a seat surrounded by a seamless 180 degree wraparound screen, images and sound.

How all this came about is one result of immense wealth created by a far-flung business empire built and still operated by the Moody family of Galveston.

This business was founded by Colonel William Lewis Moody in the 1850s and expanded by his son, W. L., Jr., a publicity-shy man who *Time* magazine called one of the 10 richest men in the U.S. when he died in 1954 at 92 years of age. A foundation W.L., Jr. established in 1942 to support religious, educational, scientific

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Scarlet macaw parrots seem right at home -- and social -- in a Moody Gardens Rainforest setting. • There are six separate species of penguins in the Moody Gardens Aquarium Pyramid. These guys seem to be standing to honor the folks watching them through a glass wall.







and health institutions has grown into the largest private philanthropic foundation in Texas with assets well over a billion dollars. This foundation funds, operates, and supports Moody Gardens which, by complex agreement, is owned by the city of Galveston.

Moody Gardens began in 1980 in a single horse barn after Russell Moody, son of foundation trustee Robert L. Moody, suffered a traumatic closed head injury in an automobile accident. Learning that interaction with animals and nature could have healing benefits for people with disabilities like his, the foundation founded the Transitional Learning Community. Known now as Hope Therapy, it is an internationally recognized program with several campuses offering rehabilitative horseback riding (Hippotherapy) and horticultural therapy for mentally and physically disabled individuals.

Hope Therapy's goal is to help its clients improve sensory awareness and motor abilities, gain confidence, and learn new skills to prepare for employment opportunities.

This is done in graduated levels from post trauma to long-term living. In fact, many of these people are given full and part-time jobs in Moody Gardens with job coaching provided. The only time tourists see this part of Moody Gardens is when they

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In his normal South American rainforest treetop habitat, the omnivorous white-faced Saki monkey feeds on fruit, leaves, small mammals and birds. • You can see all sorts of creatures in the Moody Gardens rainforest. Poison dart frogs, like this sapphire blue specimen, are extremely toxic. Bright colors warn predators to keep their distance. • This colorful starfish is one of many on display in the Moody Gardens Aquarium Pyramid. • Young visitors thrill at antics of white faced Saki monkeys in the Moody Gardens Rainforest Pyramid. These occupy tree tops, even sleep on tree branches.




meet rehabilitated people working, thankfully working because they've learned they can do it. An annual Mardi Gras Ball for special people will be held Feb. 12, 2012.

Conservation of natural wonders, particularly the oceans and rainforests and life within them, is an underlying theme of these educational facilities. More than 25 naturalists are on the Gardens' staff. Several research programs are progressing in cooperation with professionals from major universities.

When one first enters the Moody Gardens compound, he's impressed with towering palms and 25 acres of lush plants, some exotic, some flowering. He drives by a five-diamond, 428-room hotel with a spa and a fine dining restaurant. An 18-hole par 72 golf course is part of the complex. Most visited are:

*The clear glass rainforest pyramid.* First you follow a 300-foot long path that's 35 feet above ground, getting a tree-top look through the canopy of hundreds of trees at monkeys, sloth, and other free-roaming tree dwellers including Rodrigues fruit bats, plus an exhibit of cloud forest amphibians. At ground level, lushly landscaped trails take you through forests of three continents. You'll pass waterfalls, trees adorned with lovely orchids, and meet animals like the giant anaconda, vampire bats, Blue Duker, and Chinese alligators. There's an ocelot, coatimundis, chevrotains, two-toed sloths, and cottontop tamarins. An exhibit featuring the endangered Amazon River Giant Otter is one of only five in North America.

*The blue glass aquarium pyramid.* Here you view aquatic life — fishes, invertebrates, mammals, reptiles and plants— native to four oceans. Some of these swim over you as you wander through tunnels surrounded by water. Examples: in the North Pacific section, you'll see fur seals, squirt, and a blind sea lion rescued by Moody Gardens; in the South Atlantic section where waters are cooler, over 20 penguins stand at attention honoring your visit; the South Pacific section displays beautiful coral reefs loaded with many species of psychedelic-colored fishes; the Caribbean, largest section in the pyramid, has sharks, sea turtles, eels and thousands of tropical fish.

Visiting the Moody Gardens is not free. A day pass that costs \$39.95 lets you see exhibits in all three pyramids, sit in on showings at the 3-D and 4-D theaters and cruise on the Colonel Padlewheeler. Tickets can be purchased separately for any one or several of these. For information: Moody Gardens, One Hope Boulevard, Galveston, Texas 77554. [www.moodygardens.org](http://www.moodygardens.org). 800-582-4673, 888-388-8484. 

# This Is A Flight Museum That Flies

FOR \$425, THE LONE STAR FLIGHT MUSEUM WILL GIVE YOU A RIDE IN A FLYING FORTRESS

The Texas Aviation Hall of Fame and Lone Star Flight Museum at Galveston's Scholes International Airport displays more than 20 historically significant aircraft, most of World War II vintage. Most are airworthy and fly in air shows from time to time.



The B-17 "Flying Fortress" was a workhorse in the European theater in WWII. This one, owned by the Lone Star Flight Museum, Galveston, is one of only 13 still airworthy. You can hitch a 20 to 25 minute ride in it for \$425. • The AT-6 Texan advanced trainer is one of four "war birds" the Lone Star Flight Museum has available for "joy rides." Here a veteran is congratulated by a museum pilot following a just-completed flight, which costs \$290. • This P-51 Mustang on static display at the Lone Star Flight Museum in Galveston was flown by Ray Lancaster while escorting bombing missions of the Eighth Air Force.

Even more interesting: if you're so inclined and have folding money in your pocket book, you can treat yourself to a 35 to 40 minute flight experience in any of five of these old war birds including (really!), a four-engine B-17 Army Air Corps Flying Fortress; a twin-engine B-25 Mitchell; a T-6 Texan trainer; a PT-17 Stearman and a P-51 Mustang. Details:

**B-17 Flying Fortress.** A ride in this heavy duty bomber will cost you \$425. At least five people must book for each flight. Seats are available on a first come basis. If too few passengers sign up on the day you want to fly, the museum will schedule you for flight later that day if possible. If not, the museum will put you on a master list or refund your money. You'll be flying on one of only 13 B-17's still airworthy out of the 13,000 manufactured during World War II. The Flying Fortress flew over Europe armed with .50 caliber machine guns and loaded with 5,000 pounds of bombs. This one is painted in the colors of "Thunderbird," a B-17 that flew 116 missions with the 303rd bomb group.

**B-25 Mitchell.** Fare is \$375 and four people must book. This versatile medium-duty bomber flew in both the Pacific and European theaters during World War II. The Flight Museum's B-25 is the official aircraft of the Doolittle Raiders, honoring the 80 brave airmen who flew 16 of these land-based aircraft off the USS Hornet aircraft carrier to make the first bomb run over Japanese soil in World War II.

**T-6 Texan.** For \$290, you get the only passenger seat in this advanced "pilot maker" trainer. Most WWII pilots completed their last 75 hours of advanced flight training in a T-6 before commanding a single engine fighter. The Flight Museum's T-6 is an SNJ-5, the Navy variant of the trainer.

**PT-17 Stearman.** Flight in this old-timer will set you back \$225. It's the airplane in which most World War II pilots learned the basics. Instructors demonstrated from the back seat, taking control if necessary. Its legendary acrobatic capability let trainees practice dogfight maneuvers.

**P-51 Mustang.** A flight in the ultimate fighter of WWII runs \$1,995. It's a 30 minute instructional flight and you actually get to fly the airplane with a qualified instructor. The Mustang is powerful, fast and was referred to as the *Cadillac of the Skies* by its pilots.

Though these five currently are the Museum's only planes available to fly passengers, the hangar is full of aircraft beautifully restored by a cadre of volunteers. Among them are a F4U Corsair, F6F Hellcat, P-47 Thunderbolt and SBD Dauntless. The museum has hundreds of artifacts and exhibits related to the history of flight. For information:

Texas Aviation Hall of Fame/Lone Star Flight Museum  
2002 Terminal Dr., Galveston, TX 77554  
www.lsfm.org, 409-740-7722, 888-359-5736  
flight@lonestarflight.org



# RV CAMPGROUNDS IN GALVESTON



Five RV parks will be happy to serve you whether you're planning to visit Galveston for the winter or a few days. Four offer monthly rates but the big Galveston Island State Park limits you to 14-day occupancy. Listed alphabetically, they are:



**Bayou Shores RV Resort**  
6310 Heards Lane  
Galveston, TX 77551  
409-744-2837  
888-744-2837  
[bayoushoresrvresort.com](http://bayoushoresrvresort.com)  
Closest RV Park to the Historic District. RV pads look out over Offatts Bayou. There's a free boat ramp. 84 full hookup sites, 8 pull-throughs, some with 50 amp power. Free Wi-Fi, no cable TV. Monthly rate: \$500 for 30 amp; \$550 for 50 amp.

**Delanera RV Park**  
10901 San Luis Pass Rd.  
Galveston, TX 77554  
409-797-5102  
888-425-4753, ext. 102  
[www.galveston.com/delanera/](http://www.galveston.com/delanera/)  
This park has 1,000 feet of sandy beach, now restored (after Hurricane Ike damage) and 65 full hookup sites including 24 pull-throughs. Picnic table at each site. Wi-Fi. Monthly rates: \$450 for back-in sites, \$550 for pull-throughs.

**Galveston Island State Park**  
14901 San Luis Pass Rd.  
Galveston, TX 77554  
409-737-1222  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/)  
This 2,000-acre state park has 170 paved back-in sites. Water and 30/50 amp, dump. Walkway from sites to the beach. Wi-Fi. Picnic tables, 2.5 mile nature/interpretive trail, 4 miles of multi-use trails for hiking, mountain bike riding, two-lane boat ramp on bay side. Day rates: \$30 to \$35.

**Jamaica Beach RV Park**  
17200 San Luis Pass Road  
Galveston, Texas 77554  
866-725-5511  
409-632-0200  
[www.jbrv.net](http://www.jbrv.net)  
**Email: [rongustafson@hotmail.com](mailto:rongustafson@hotmail.com)**  
The 50 sites here are all on cement, all full hookup, all 30/50 amp, cable TV, Wi-Fi. Park sits across road from the Gulf. Beach access near. It's where daughter Rhonda and I stayed during Galveston visit and we rated it two thumbs up. Monthly rate: \$545. Weekly rate: \$225. Weekday rate: \$38.70. Rates include 10% discount and tax.

**Tiki Tom's RV Park**  
333 Jones Lake Rd.  
Tiki Island, Texas 77554  
409-935-5599  
[janattikitomsrv@gmail.com](mailto:janattikitomsrv@gmail.com)  
You enter this 68-site park even before you get to Galveston. Take exit 4 off the I-35 causeway. The park is on the right, along the access road. Faces Jones Lake, has 3 lighted fishing piers. Full hookups, 30/50 amps, cable TV on some sites, Wi-Fi. Call for rates.



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## Steven Coon

IN HIS NINTH YEAR WITH TMH, COON IS DESIGN ENGINEERING MANAGER

Petoskey, Michigan, on the shores of Lake Michigan, is 930 miles north of Red Bay, Alabama. That tidbit of information has no relevance to anyone at Tiffin Motorhomes except Steven Coon, who was born there 36 years ago. In 2010, seven years after he joined TMH, Steven became the company's design engineering manager.

"My dad maintained gas compressors for a pipeline company that pumped natural gas throughout the U.S.," Steven said recently as he explained how Mississippi became his home. "By the time I was nine years old, we had moved 11 times. I have an older brother and a younger sister," he continued. "Keeping up in school was a challenge."

After the family moved to Aberdeen, Mississippi, Steven's dad was ready to put down roots, and Aberdeen became his base of operations. His job still took him in different directions each week, but Aberdeen was home. Just two years from retirement, Richard Coon is now supervisor of gas platforms in the Caribbean near Trinidad.

Steven finished high school in 1993 and enrolled in Itawamba Community College to study drafting and design technology, a two-year program from which he earned an AAS degree.

Using three-dimensional software, Steven consults with Tammy Roberson to modify a plumbing layout for the Allegro 36 LA.



"In school I focused on architecture, but the precision of mechanical and micro engineering got my attention when I had the opportunity to visit HMC Technologies in New Albany, Mississippi," he said. He worked at HMC while continuing his classes at Itawamba. Steven met his wife, Dawn Tucker, on the Tupelo campus of ICC in 1994. The couple married in 1997.

"As an original equipment manufacturer (OEM), HMC Technologies created machines to build specific products. They built the machinery and assembly line to build compressors. Later we created a machine to fold automotive air bags and then to test them. Our machine blew up the air bag and then compressed it until it exploded. We also built a machine that tested medical needles. It was a fascinating job," he concluded.

His position at HMC was dependent on the company bringing in new contracts to build specialized systems. Periodic layoffs were insulated with a part-time job at Lowe's. "I got laid off for the first time the day before I graduated from ICC, which was a turning point in my career—the summer of 2001," Steven said. "Lowe's was not the right place for me to try and launch my career."

Steven continued to look for positions within driving distance of Tupelo. "We really wanted to stay in Tupelo. It is big enough to find anything you want and small enough to get around easily. Plus, our son, Austin, was four and we like Tupelo's schools," he continued.

"We did not know about Tiffin Motorhomes, but Dawn found their website which also listed their job openings. I applied online, was interviewed soon after by Rodney Johnson, and started in 2003," Steven said.

Steven started working with the engineers who designed the sidewalls and roof. "We do the drafting first and then translate the data into the program that runs the CNC-router. The router creates the recesses in the high-density insulating foam into which we insert the aluminum framing and wiring harnesses," Steven explained. "I learned the programming skills after I got to TMH. The sidewall router was quite a learning experience for each of us. We started the summer of 2004 by practicing on the slide-out walls before working on the entire composite wall."

The team encountered a special challenge when they began roof applications. Since the roof is curved on top, the team

designed a cradle to hold the four-foot wide foam forms with the smooth side up to the router. "When the cradle design was perfected, we began routing recesses for the heating ducts and return air, the wiring harnesses for recessed light pockets and vents, as well as the structural aluminum frames," Steven said.

Since the production line starts at 6 a.m., production line employees, supervisors, and engineers in outlying towns often begin commuting to Red Bay at 5 a.m. In April 2005 Steven's morning journey ended in a serious accident. Falling asleep for a few seconds, he sideswiped a tractor trailer, colliding with tandem tires on the tractor. His car was totaled and the tibia in his left leg was shattered. With plates and pins, surgeons put his leg back together. After nine days in the hospital, Steven came home to find that Tiffin's IT department had set up his computer to work online at home until he was well enough to come back to work—which turned out to be five months.

In 2006 the design team was split into two teams: one to address front engine coach designs and the second to handle rear engine units. Brad Witt designed and developed the logistics to create two production lines running parallel in the assembly plant. "I was on the diesel team. Rodney Johnson moved to R&D and I took over the diesel pusher team," Steven said. "Jeff Shook headed up the front engine team. We both reported to Brad Witt, who was the director of engineering."

Two years later the bottom fell out. Production slowly sank to three units a day and there was no longer a need for two production lines. "Our staff was reduced by 30 percent. Jeff became the design engineering manager for the single team that was reassembled," Steven said. "We knew we were in for some tough times, and those of us who remained were just happy to have a job."

By mid-year in 2010, sales were on an upswing and top management reorganized the engineering department to take advantage of the evolving leadership and talent. Three engineering teams were developed. Steven Coon became the design engineering manager. Brad Witt now directs industrial engineering. Brad Warner is chassis engineering manager.

Steven finds his new position very challenging and rewarding. "When Van Tiffin, who directs R&D, and Chris Melvin create a prototype from two dimensional plans, we work with Chris to create the three dimensional engineering," he explained. "The engineering design for the infrastructure requires an enormous amount of planning and detail: wiring harnesses, plumbing, electronics, HVAC,

CNC-router programming, integration of cabinetry and decor into the floorplan, and planning for the tasks to be completed at each workstation in the assembly line. We literally create a three-dimensional guide to build the unit."

Amazingly, the design engineering team shoots to complete this complex process in six weeks. After another three weeks of meetings and checking how everything is coming together, the pilot will be built on the assembly line. The time in R&D is usually four to six weeks. "We are working out the details to create six new floorplans a year," Steven said.

In his career prior to Tiffin Motorhomes, Steven Coon was engaged in design engineering that created some very unusual technology for OEMs. So the question in this interview was, "Steven, why is this job the right place for you at this point in your career?" The answers flowed with no hesitation.

"It never gets boring. Problems develop every day that are challenging — and that really makes it fun," Steven began. "We take a chassis provided by our own chassis department or one of our suppliers, and we provide the house that goes on top of it. The customers know that when they push a button something is supposed to work. I like being the person who with the help of a great team makes everything work!"

"A major reason I like working at TMH is that it is a small, family-owned business where you can talk to the owners whenever you need to. You can go to top management in minutes to get help solving a problem. You are never a number or just a name somewhere in the hierarchy.

"Another reason that is important to me is that I can take

Steven and Charles Spencer, supervisor of the slide-out department, look on as Adam Wright, slide-out designer, alters the corner of a new slide-out box. Doug Strickland assists.



Text and photography by Fred Thompson





Steven, Tucker, Dawn, and Austin enjoy a sunny winter day in a park near their home in Tupelo, Mississippi.

pride in my work. Dawn and I have two boys now, Austin, 12, and Tucker, 6. When Dawn and I are driving on a major highway somewhere with the boys and I see a Tiffin motorhome coming toward us, I can say, 'Boys, there's a Phaeton and that's what Daddy builds where he works.' Believe me, they are impressed."

In a reflective moment, Steven goes back to "challenges" again.

"The challenges that I enjoy most are applying new technology and being able to implement it to serve the customer. Being a part of implementing the success of the Breeze was particularly satisfying to me," he said with emphasis. "What has driven me to the position I am in and keeps me here is my ability to implement change. We never want to allow ourselves to get into 'design ruts' because it is easier to 'do it that way.'"

Steven and Dawn find great satisfaction and joy in their family. "Both of the boys play on soccer teams," he said. "I am the coach for Tucker's team. Dawn and I were leaders when Austin was in Cub Scouts and we look forward to getting him into Boy Scouts and Tucker into Cub Scouts now that he is old enough. We are very proud of Austin's becoming involved in the city's recreation program. At 12 he is a referee for the younger children's teams."

Dawn has a full-time position with the Lee County circuit clerk's office working with elections and voter registration and issuing marriage licenses. "We both know how important it is to get away for family vacations," Steven noted. "We visit my grandparents and other relatives in Michigan. This past year we went to Mackinaw and took Dawn's mother and sister to see the area. Last year we did Disney at Christmas which was a great experience for the boys." **RIS**

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# Alpin Haus

"EVERYONE IS FAMILY IN OUR HAUS"



PHOTO BY KEVIN ZABAWCZUK

Nearing its fiftieth year of serving the recreation industry in mid-state New York, Alpin Haus with four locations successfully markets a wide variety of outdoor products, addressing all of the state's seasons. While motorhomes have for many years been in their product mix, Tiffin is now their "most asked for" brand.

During its fourth decade the company became one of the leading outdoor recreational retailers in the northeast, employing over 200 in its four stores. The company's success in both towable and motorized RVs during the 1990s pushed the development of a new 70,000 sq. ft. headquarters on Rt. 5S just a few miles west of Amsterdam where it began 48 years ago. The signature design of the building follows the Alpine theme used to brand the company's marketing concepts. The eight-year-old facility offers a large indoor RV showroom, 22 indoor service bays and six outdoor bays, a parts department, plus a well-stocked RV accessories and supplies store. While the Heck family made an impressive statement with their new headquarters, more importantly they created an inviting and pleasant year-round environment for doing business.

Alpin Haus began in 1964 when Bud Heck graduated from Siena College and decided to turn his passion for skiing into a business. Bud and his high school friend, John Daly, opened a ski shop in Amsterdam in an A-frame building with two flat-roofed side wings. Being near the Adirondacks, the business did well— but it was seasonal. Looking for recreational products that could be sold from their store for outdoor activities in the

warmer months, they quickly realized small travel trailers and camping equipment were the obvious answer.

The product line was increased in 1967 by adding above-ground pools in the summer and snowmobiles for the winter trade. The growing business demanded a 7,000 sq. ft. addition in 1970. By the mid-70s, Alpin Haus began selling motorized RVs. They soon became dealers for several manufacturers and had strong success in the Class C market.

Bud and his wife, Kay, were also thinking about another line—their descendants. Andy was born in 1966, followed by Greg and Katie. All of the children would eventually become involved in the business.

The product line continued to expand: in-ground pools, spas, and a marine division. In 1987 a shopping mall with over 100,000 sq. ft. became available. Heck and Daly opted for the new location and opened a 65,000 sq. ft. store.

Andy followed his father to Siena College where he earned a degree in accounting in 1988. Accepting a position with Ernst & Young, he spent four years with the high profile accounting firm before deciding to return to the family business in 1992. At that time, the company was still operating from its single location in Amsterdam, and carrying several large products which needed more space — motorized and towable RVs, snowmobiles, pools, and spas. In 1994 Alpin Haus became a single-family enterprise when Andy and Greg Heck purchased John Daly's 50 percent interest.

In 1998 Alpin Haus opened a second location in Saratoga to specialize in towable RVs. A third RV facility was opened in Clifton Park in 2001.

Text and photography by Fred Thompson





Bud Heck and his three children (from left) Katie Osborn, Andy, and Greg Heck, are actively involved in the operation and management of Alpin Haus which Bud and his friend, John Daly, started 48 years ago. • Erich Kress (left), service manager, coaches Peter Gressick in the use of the company's customer service software. Peter joined the company last year after a 30-year career with Travelers Insurance. • Alpin Haus uses the latest equipment in its service center, such as this 60,000 lb. lift. • Right: The company operates 22 indoor service bays which have hydronic heat in the floors to cope with the cold New York winters.



As the RV business surged with three locations in operation, the Hecks saw a need and an opportunity to refocus their RV sales effort. With the completion of the motorized RV center and their headquarters on Rt. 5S in 2003, the Clifton Park RV and boat store was eventually closed. Recently, Alpin Haus opened the company's second ski shop in a Clifton Park mall. The timing for opening the RV Super Center in 2003 was perfect. The six years including 2002 to 2007 were boom years and business doubled.

Saratoga continued as Alpin Haus' towable RV store. Greg works in the Amsterdam store where the company offers its widest variety of outdoor products, including ski apparel and equipment, pools, boats, and snowmobiles, plus the fitness center. Katie, the youngest of the siblings, handles the marketing and advertising for the company.



"We had been growing consistently over the years, but saw the need for more internal organization," Andy explained. In 2008, Bud Heck became CEO and appointed Andy president of the company. "At 70, dad is our visionary, still does marketing, and stays involved in the daily flow of the business," Andy added.

In 1991 Alpin Haus became a member of a "20-Group." Dealers from across the U.S. and Canada, who do not directly compete with one another because of geographical separation, meet three times a year and confide in one another as they solve financial and strategic operational problems. "Lee Berryman from Florida is the moderator for our group," Andy explained. "Those in the group have be-



come close friends. At any time I can call an owner whom I think may be particularly strong in one area, or who has experienced and solved a problem similar to what I am currently facing, and get advice that is relevant.” Andy attributes a significant amount of his success as a manager to the positive exchanges with members at the group meetings.

With a great concern for the economic health of the RV industry, Andy Heck agreed a year ago to serve as chairman of the National RV Dealers Association for 2011- 2012 after having been on the RVDA’s board for many years. The uncompensated leadership position often takes him away from his own business for days at a time. “I have been to a lot of conferences over the years,” he said. “Dealers want to help each other succeed. By joining RVDA, a member benefits from a constant stream of idea sharing and gains a better view of the industry. For example, a big issue over the last two years has been financing. How do dealers approach the banks for floorplans in a severe recession? RVDA’s finance committee worked on this issue and came up with new avenues that helped address the problem.”

“One of the major problems being dealt with by RVDA is the federal government’s desire to generate red tape, create a bureaucracy, and exercise excessive

oversight of dealerships who try to set up loans for RV buyers,” Andy explained. “Instead of helping the RV industry make a comeback from the recession, the government has choked many dealerships into bankruptcy. The government wants the controls for dealerships *arranging* loans to be the same as the controls for banks *making* the loans,” he said.

In addition to his service to RVDA, Andy finds time to serve on several boards in his community, including the local chamber of commerce, the hospital board, the advisory board at Siena College, the Albany diocese school board, and the parish council at his church.

When the recession brought the RV industry to a screeching halt in the fall of 2007, dealerships had to scramble to keep from tumbling into bankruptcy. Alpin Haus was no different. “We started company-wide meetings on a monthly basis,” Andy said. “The meetings were required for managers, but all of our employees were invited to attend. We had to brace our employees for what we knew was happening and what was going to happen. Dad, Greg, and I approached it on the basis of (1) what we could control, and (2) what we could not control. We took each area in the company, applied this basic approach, and started from there.

“In sales we knew we would take big

losses, especially on our motorized inventory,” he continued. “The market was flooded with repossessions and there were auctions throughout the country – which, of course, drove down the prices of our units in inventory. We consolidated three RV locations into two. Our RV market here in mid-state New York had been an almost year-round business. Now most sales occur in early March through Thanksgiving.”

Alpin Haus began to take large losses on Monacos and Holiday Ramblers. “I knew we had to get our balance sheet back in order and move forward,” Andy lamented. “We looked at our company and departmental spreadsheets line by line. A lot of ideas for cost savings came from our employees. Those who are ‘in the trenches’ can often come up with the best ways to deal with problems. We have a very loyal employee base. As bad as things were, we found success stories to share. Owners still had to get their units serviced and, of course, that is where a large portion of our RV revenue was generated. Our accessories and parts stores and our service center shared positive stories in our company-wide meetings.”

In 2010 a few rays of light began to streak through the clouds. “We saw limited growth then and we saw a definite upswing in RV sales in 2011,” he said cautiously. “When you categorize our RV





From left: Ron Craig, director of parts and service, consults with Bill Anagnostopoulos on a service order for a Tiffin motorhome. • Dave Baker (left), general sales manager, and Steve Quill, the leading Tiffin salesman at Alpin Haus, enjoy a moment checking out a new 2012 Allegro. • Andy Heck, president of Alpin Haus meets frequently with his two top managers, Ron Craig, director of parts and service, and Dave Baker, general sales manager.

inventory, we are selling more towable units now in the \$25K price range than anything else. That has forced us to reduce our motorized RV inventory. Four years ago we were stocking 75 units. Today we are stocking 20.”

David Baker, the company’s RV sales manager, mentioned a phenomenon which surprised the sales staff in 2011. “Prospects we have never seen before and our customers who were loyal to other brands have visited our store and asked specifically to see Tiffin motorhomes. Tiffin has become our *most asked for brand*,” he said.

Another factor is surfacing that dealerships are noticing. “The trade cycle is longer now,” Andy noted. “It is probably five plus years. Four years ago we had customers who traded annually – almost like cars. Now our customers are being patient and conservative. They have adjusted their portfolios to deal with the big swings in the market, which apparently is making our more mature buyers more conservative. If the stock market itself were not such a newsmaker, it would help our business.” During the 2012 model year Alpin Haus expects to sell 25 Tiffin units. They generally keep seven of the models

in greatest demand in their inventory.

Executing a strategic plan today is much more critical than it was four years ago, Andy emphasized. “Budgeting and fiscal planning are so important. When the busy season comes, you must be prepared and have all of your metrics in place: inventory goals, aging your inventory and knowing when to turn it, accounts receivable goals,” he explained. “We have to be more conscious of our sales goals and re-evaluate them frequently. We emphasize sales training and having the right staff in place who are meeting their goals.”

Steve Quill, the company’s No. 1 motorized salesman, put the company’s sales success on five stages. *Teamwork*: “We help each other, push each other, and compete with each other.” “Push,” he explained, “means providing suggestions and tips to a comrade to help him/her make a sale.” *Sobel & Associates*: After an evaluation period, new hires are sent to Seattle for three days of intensive sales training with Sobel & Associates. When the new hire returns, he/she receives two additional weeks of training that includes intensive study in product knowledge and a full day in the service bays. To tie

sales and service together, the sales intern spends a day helping prep a new unit for delivery. *Green Haus*: Steve emphasized that keeping all of the employees fully informed about the company and the industry is very important. Once a month the corporate management, sales management, and staff organize and lead a meeting to keep everyone up-to-date on events, products, and happenings within the company and the RV industry nationwide. *Customer Service*: Alpin Haus’ service is rated by a third-party company within 24 hours through a survey emailed the evening after the service event. “In service, if something did not go right, we know it and try to correct the problem immediately,” Andy added. “Most owners are reasonable and sincere. If we do what we say we are going to do, we can please them.” *Sales*: Customers are never pressured in any way to buy. “Selling is a service to inform and help the customer make the right decision to fulfill his/her desire to enjoy the outdoors,” Steve said.

Experience runs deep at Alpin Haus. David Baker began his career with the company in 1987. He attended Houghton College and later Asbury Theological Seminary where he met his wife in a Greek class. “She made an A and I got a D,” he laughed, “but she accepted my marriage proposal in spite of the fact she is smarter than I am.” The couple came to the Albany area to establish a congregation of the Christian Missionary Alliance. He left the full-time ministry in 1990 and became sales manager at Alpin Haus in 1994.

David attributes the company’s success to the business philosophy of its owners. “Alpin Haus has honest owners who do the right thing every day without exception and take care of the customer

first,” he said. There is a maxim which he quotes as he would a passage from the Bible: “It is not what it costs to do the right thing. It is what it costs not to do the right thing.”

As sales manager, he teaches self motivation. “The best training is self training,” he proclaims. “You dig into the product literature and learn everything possible about each RV that you sell. When you visit the manufacturer, you watch how it is built. When you meet a visitor to our store, you listen to find out how they want to use an RV and where they want to travel and camp. You learn how much they are able to spend and then you help them find the RV that matches needs with financial ability. It’s that simple,” he says, “but you must have a genuine desire to help the customer purchase what they want and can buy. Good salesmanship is about doing things *for* the customer, and not *to* the customer. Together you align the circle and square, and go through the needs-ability reconciliation process.”

Each Tuesday and Wednesday David asks a salesperson to select an RV and sell it to two members of the sales staff while the rest of the staff observes. The salesperson must have a thorough knowledge of every feature in the the RV, be aware of similar RVs sold by competing dealers in order to demonstrate why the Alpin Haus unit is best, and then stand for a critique by his/her peers. “Our people do a lot of preparation for these critiques,” David said, “and it definitely hones their ability to help the customer make the right selection.”

“We encourage our sales staff to go camping,” David continued, “so they can tell the client, ‘When I go camping, here is what I do or where I go.’ All of us have to walk the walk and talk the talk.”

Andy, his wife, Lorraine, who was an elementary school teacher, and their three children, Nicole, 19, Ryan, 17, and Danielle, 13, stay involved in outdoor activities year-round. To stay familiar with what they sell, the family camps in both trailers and motorhomes. Andy is currently in training for an Iron Man competition, a swimming, biking, and running triathlon which has to be completed in 17 hours.



Nicole, a marketing major, and Ryan, a high school senior, work summers and weekends, Nicole in ski apparel and pool chemicals, and Ryan in the ski shop and pool equipment.

During May through October—the warmer months in New York, RV shopping at the Route 5S location is usually an outdoor experience. But in the colder months, the 10,000 sq. ft. indoor showroom and sales facility invites RVers to move inside, see the latest equipment arriving from manufacturers, and make their plans for Spring. They can also shop in one of the best parts and accessories stores in the Northeast. Store manager Kevin Zabawczuk makes sure that the industry’s latest innovations for camping, as well as all of the basics to take care of the RVers’ needs, are in stock.

To extend the Heck family’s interest in community service, a large indoor area next to Kevin’s store is reserved many Saturdays during the Summer and Fall for a Farmers’ Market. In addition to vegetables and flowers, the visitor will find an interesting variety of products made by local craftspeople.

While the welcoming center, show-

room, and offices for sales and service are easily found across the front of the Alpin Haus facility, it is also not difficult to find the office of Ron Craig, director of parts and service. “I started at Alpin Haus in September 1986 as a technician. We made the repairs and then cleaned the motorhome after we worked on it,” he remembered. “I had been a journeyman plumber and steamfitter.” Two years later Ron became the service manager. “We only had four service bays when I started at the store in Amsterdam,” he said.

Today Ron supervises 17 technicians working in 22 indoor bays. Of the 17 techs, five are certified and five are master certified. The department is certified to do warranty work on Workhorse, Roadmaster, and PowerGlide chassis.

The service department at Alpin Haus is organized into four teams, each with a team manager. The four team managers are David Behuniak (1982), Victor Van Avery (2001), Joey Liszewski (2003), and Peter Gressick, who joined the company this year after a 30-year career as a senior manager for Travelers Insurance and as a parts and service director for a car dealership. Service manager Erich Kress (1995) ad-



vises and assists the four team managers.

“Each team has a lead technician who assists with quality control and scheduling, but works alongside the four regular technicians who make up the team,” Ron explained. “The service department is a flat rate shop with 20 pay levels. A technician’s pay level is based on ability and certification level. The service manager’s and the team managers’ salaries are based on billable hours which is a huge incentive plan.”

On each service job the owner receives a quotation that he authorizes. The flat rates for the quotation are based on the best skill levels and certifications in the department. The hourly pay will be lower for a technician whose skill level requires more time than estimated on the quote. His work, however, is supervised by the lead tech who guarantees the quality of workmanship.

“The flat rate shop is more profitable because each technician is in business for himself,” Ron pointed out. “They invest in their own tools and can improve their pay levels by taking RVDA-approved courses. Master certified technicians in our industry are highly skilled people.”

In their body shop, the company offers fiberglass and sidewall replacement as well as front caps supplied by the manufacturers. “We sublet our paint work,” Ron said, “but we partner with quality shops and fully stand behind their work.” The department also handles awning repair and

Several Saturdays a year during summer and fall, Alpin Haus hosts a farmers market featuring a variety of locally grown vegetables, flowers, and other agricultural products, and items made by local craftspeople. Many of the market customers also enjoy checking out the RVs.

replacement; rubber roof repair and replacement; all types of electrical work; tire replacement and balancing; furnaces, AC, and refrigeration repair and replacement; all types of accessories including satellite dishes, jacks, tow bars and hitches; and tow packages for vehicles.

“We hardly have any turnover which means that our skill levels are on an upward curve,” Ron emphasized. “Erich has a degree in chemical engineering. Carole Barber, our parts manager, has been with Alpin Haus for 24 years, and Denise Alvarez, our warranty manager, has been with the company for 22 years.”

“As you can tell, I really enjoy this job,” Ron smiled. “It’s the people I work with, the team relationships. We work together extremely well and help each other out. And it’s that kind of cooperation that produces the quality service our customers depend on and appreciate. People in our focus group are shocked at how long we have each been here.

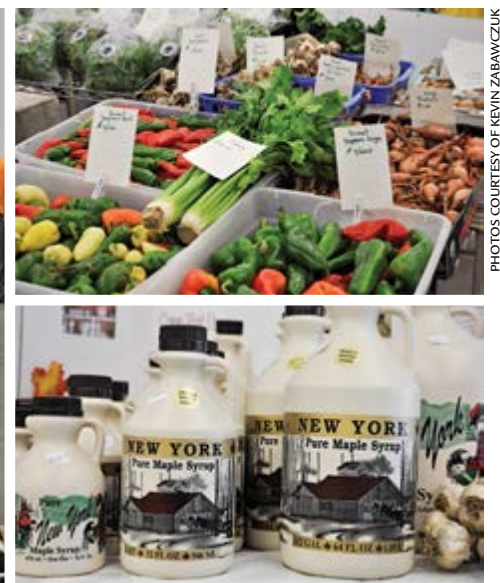
“There are service departments in some dealerships that take the attitude ‘If we don’t sell it, we don’t want to service it.’ We will help any RV owner,” Ron said with pride. “Many owners are not going back for service where they bought their coach for good reasons. In the recession, 2008 and 2009 were tough years. If our service business had not been built up to the level it was in 2007, we may not have survived. If Alpin Haus as a business can help owners continue that passion for the RV lifestyle, that will make us successful.

“I love our slogan: Everyone is family in our haus,” Ron laughed. “It may sound a little corny to some, but I truly believe

we try to make everyone feel that way. Our owners enjoy the rocking chairs on the front porch, or just hang out, read the newspaper, or watch a movie in the customer lounge. We encourage them to stay at the shop while we are doing the work and interact with the team manager and the techs. We want owners to talk to our techs: ask questions, tell us how they want the job done. Many times our team manager will put more techs on a job so it can be finished in one day if at all possible. We want the owner to see the repair while the tech is still here at the shop to talk with them. If the repair goes through the lunch hour, we invite them to come back into their coach to fix their lunch.

“There is so much that we do differently today,” Ron continued. “A few years ago we would never schedule a waiter (someone who waits at the service center for his/her job to be completed). Now when we get a call, we do the planning right then over the phone, figure out the time required and the parts needed. We reconfirm the service date and emphasize to the owner that we will have the techs lined up to start the job. We emphasize that we will meet them at eight sharp and take them into the service bay. We want it to be like a NASCAR pit stop – longer, of course, but totally planned and ready.”

Ron had one more point to make. “We have been working on Tiffin motorhomes since the late 1980s. Although we were not a Tiffin dealer, we were happy to do their warranty work because we knew we would always get paid. Bob Tiffin was the only manufacturer for whom we would do that.” **RIS**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KEVIN ZABAWICZUK

## Interviews from Alabama



### Ken & Cathy Boulton

Hometown: Cambridge, Ontario  
Interviewed at FL-AL Welcome Center

*While driving in the panhandle of Florida, a Phaeton passed us. We got on our CB and asked if they had their ears on. Ken did and said he was en route to meet Cathy in Arizona for a meeting with full-timer friends they'd met while racing. Ken agreed to an interview and suggested stopping at the Florida/Alabama Welcome Center.*

- Ken & Cathy own a 2009 Phaeton 42 QBH with a Cummins 360 on a Spartan Chassis.
- They have been married 26 years.
- Ken & Cathy have 1 son and 2 grandsons. Scott and his 2 sons live in Sarnia, Ontario.
- Since 1998, Ken & Cathy have owned 3 RVs and have traveled in 24 states.
- Their Phaeton mileage is over 10,000.
- Ken prefers driving 300 miles daily, drives 100% of the time & travels 7 months annually.
- They used to drag race & found RVing suited their lifestyle - with all the comforts of home.
- Favorite states are Colorado and Arizona.
- Future destination: Newfoundland.
- Ken & Cathy have been motorhoming over 13 years and their 'bucket list' is almost empty.
- Ken retired in 1998 after 32 years in law enforcement.
- His hobbies are NASCAR and drag racing.
- Cathy had 2 careers - as an accountant and manager of an auto collision business. Her hobby is their grandchildren.



### Joe & Pauline Mitternacht

Hometown: Covington, Louisiana  
Interviewed in Theodore/Mobile, Alabama

- Joe & Pauline own a 2009 Allegro Red Open Road 36 QSA with a Cummins 330 on a Freightliner Chassis.
- They have been married 52 years.
- They have 1 daughter and 1 granddaughter. Helen lives in Annandale, Virginia.
- Pets traveling with them: 2 Yorkshire Terriers named Puddin, 6; Beignet, 5; and their Siamese cat, 'Migo', 12.
- Joe & Pauline have owned 4 RVs since 1970, traveled in 30 states, and driven over 23,000 miles.
- Joe does 100% of the driving and prefers to drive 300 to 400 miles daily.
- Their top 3 reasons for RVing are: travel to visit their daughter; rendezvous with square dance friends & clubs in LA, MS, AL & TN; and using their Allegro Red Open Road as an evacuation convenience.
- Joe & Pauline are members of the Ozone Squares in Covington, Louisiana.
- They enjoy the Southeast and feel their 'bucket list' has been accomplished!
- Joe retired in 1994 after a 20-year career in the steamship industry, and they have owned a freight consolidation company.
- His hobbies are square dancing, reading, gardening, and woodworking.
- Her hobbies are square dancing, reading, and sewing.



### Richard & Sue Payne with son Keith

Hometown: Theodore/Mobile, Alabama  
Interviewed at Payne's RV Park

- Richard & Sue own a 2007 Allegro Bus 42 QRP with a Cummins 400 on a Spartan chassis.
- They have been married 49 years.
- They have 2 daughters, 2 sons, 7 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. Linda Carol lives in Porter, TX - has 2 children; Susie lives in Theodore, AL - has 1 child; Michael lives in New Boston, TX - has 2 children; Keith lives in Theodore, AL & has 2 children.
- Pets' names are Precious, Gabriel, and Shiloh.
- Richard and Sue enjoyed full-timing before purchasing land and opening Payne's RV Park in 1997. The park is family owned with son and daughter-in-law, Keith and Tammy.
- Richard and Sue have owned 4 RVs and now travel part time.
- They've driven over 34,000 miles in 20+ states and prefer driving approx. 250 miles daily.
- Richard drives 75% of the time - Sue 25%.
- He enjoys TX & states with mountain scenery.
- Sue's favorite state is Utah and she enjoys meeting new people.
- The top line on their 'bucket list' is traveling to Alaska.
- Richard served in the United States Air Force. He was a self-employed business owner and his hobby is working!
- Sue was an office manager and her hobbies are gardening, sewing, and crocheting.

**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 40 QTH.





# The Premier FOUNDATION

## The Roadmap to a Great RV Ownership School

PROVEN



For more than a decade, Spartan has provided service training to service centers across the US and Canada to improve product knowledge and ultimately to reduce the costs of repair. From that beginning, they took their product knowledge on the road to offer their fire truck customers a department-specific training that caters to their needs and at an affordable price. In 2008, Spartan decided the next step in the process was to provide an RV Owner School designed exclusively for RV end users.

The program was a year in the making. The preparation for the class was a new challenge for Spartan as they knew they would not be training technicians, but rather improving the product knowledge of our end users. This challenge quickly became a passion for the service group working on the program.

RELIABLE



The beta classes were attended exclusively by Spartan Chassis International Club (SCIC) members. Spartan solicited their honest feedback on all aspects of training, and was pleasantly surprised to receive so many words of praise. The program was ready to go "live."

The 2010 & 2011 classrooms sold out with only word-of-mouth and web-based promotion. Enthusiasm for the program has spread through the market. In the photo on the left, Tom Gorman, Spartan Motors Chief Operating Officer, joins one of the classes for lunch and Q&A.

The 2012 Spartan RV Owner School has been optimized using customer feedback from 2010-2011 and appears ready to WOW current and future customers alike.

STRONG



**The following customer feedback is typical of that received from all class participants.**

*"I had no idea there was so much to learn about a chassis! All instructors were very informative & know their subjects. I am very glad I attended, thank you very much!" - Louise Kant, Casa Grande, AZ*

*"This was one of the best training programs I have had. Very professional! The small class size was perfect for addressing everyone's needs. This is our first Motorhome and I am so thankful it rides on a SPARTAN CHASSIS. I know that no company is perfect but Spartan is going in the right direction. Please, Please stay on this course. THANK YOU!!!" - Ron Pierce, Lovettsville, VA*



# RV Owner Training

Training Program Certifies the Spartan Chassis Owner and Covers Maintenance, On-road Driving Instruction, and all the Other Ownership Details.

May	7-11
June	11-15
July	9-13
August	6-10
September	10-14

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Visit [www.regonline.com/2012rvownertraining](http://www.regonline.com/2012rvownertraining) to register

After you have registered if you wish to schedule a service appointment, please call 517.543.6400, ext. 3478. Service appointments should be made as far in advance as possible. Appointments are best scheduled on the days following the training sessions. Service cannot be guaranteed without an appointment.

Should you have any additional questions, please contact Greg Rinehart at 517.543. 6400, ext. 3122.



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## Alabama Gulf Coast Resorts Report Successful Year

Two leading resorts on Alabama's Gulf Coast, Bella Terra of Gulf Shores and Lake Osprey RV Country Club, announced in January that 2011 was one of their strongest years to date. Bella Terra Realty Holdings, LLC (BTRH) the parent company, credited top ratings, strong sales and rentals, and the launch of their new campaign, *The Other Florida*.

With Gulf beaches remaining clear of any oil from the Deep-water Horizon spill, visitors returned to the Gulf Coast in record numbers. Bella Terra of Gulf Shores, Foley, Alabama, reported rental occupancy up 20 percent and site sales up 10 percent. In addition, both Bella Terra and Lake Osprey received top ratings from Best Parks in America, Woodall's Directory, and the Good Sam Club.

"The recognition by the industry with these awards coupled with a major rebound in rental and sales numbers truly make this a top performing year for us," Chuck Smith, president and CEO of BTRH, said in a recent interview. "Adding Lake Osprey RV Country Club to the Bella Terra family and the successful launch of our ad campaign, *The Other Florida*, made 2011 a truly successful year for our team. I'm very proud of the work they have done over these past 12 months."

Located in Baldwin County, Alabama, Lake Osprey Country Club is a luxury mixed class RV resort and boasts all the amenities of a country club with a laid-back, natural charisma. Designed with 188 superbly landscaped RV sites, comfort never falls short at Lake Osprey. The resort is a full-service country club that includes such amenities as an infinity pool, hot tub, tiki bar, fitness center, laundry, and a bath house complete with private shower rooms. In addition to the many amenities, guests can enjoy the Championship Soldiers Creek Golf Course, an 11-acre fishing lake, and the pristine beaches of the Emerald Coast.

"October brought the successful launch of the resorts' national campaign, *The Other Florida*," Smith continued. "Knowing that each year tens of thousands of RVers fire up their rigs and head south chasing the warmth of the sun, our campaign encourages RVers to take a look at the Alabama Gulf Coast and tell the Bella Terra team why Alabama is the other, and yes, the better Florida. By the close of the year, hundreds of comments were submitted through the contest. Our owners and visitors offered a colorful look at the passion they have for the Gulf Coast."

"Three things: weather, weather, weather. It's amazing here."

"Two words: Emerald Water"

"600 Miles Closer to Heaven"

"Two of the best words: Lower Taxes"

"My dog loves it here."

"Our owners continue to enjoy one of the most beautiful destinations in the country, our visitors are returning in record numbers to this stretch of the coast, and our company continues to bring quality products to the market as we expand the Bella Terra brand. We are energized about our plans in 2012!" said Tripp Keber, COO of Bella Terra Realty Holdings, LLC.

To learn more about Bella Terra of Gulf Shores, visit: [www.BellaTerraRVResort.com](http://www.BellaTerraRVResort.com).

For more about Lake Osprey visit [www.LakeOsprey.com](http://www.LakeOsprey.com).

## Pre-Delivery Inspection (PDI)

There are dozens of acronyms to learn in any business or academic pursuit. That is no less true in recreational vehicles. One of the most important acronyms you should know if you are buying a motorhome is PDI, or pre-delivery inspection. A PDI on a small travel trailer may take an hour. On a luxury motorhome it could take a full day or more.

This checklist is intended as a guide for inspecting new and used recreational vehicles. Download the checklist at <http://changingears.com/rv-checklist-inspection.shtml>

When buying a **new RV**, use this as your **pre-delivery inspection (PDI)** checklist. The dealer will provide their own pre-delivery inspection, but those tend to be less detailed and performed by someone other than you. In case you are not able to perform a detailed inspection before taking delivery, inspect the RV as soon after as possible, while still near the dealer to request warranty repairs.

When buying a **used RV**, consider running through this inspection checklist with several new RVs first, so that you will be able to spot problems on used units more easily.

Most items on this list can be inspected by a person with average knowledge about RVs; for more specialized items such as brakes, engines, etc., consider hiring a qualified technician to do the inspection.

## Rand-McNally Develops a Custom RV-Style GPS

Rand McNally has released a product that is cutting edge technology: a custom GPS system for RV and camping enthusiasts called Rand McNally's TripMaker RVND. First introduced to consumers in June, the TripMaker provides an impressive level of detail in terms of RV-specific routing and unique features designed for RV and camping travel with safety in mind.

Rand McNally showcased the dash-mounted 5-inch TripMaker RVND 5510 (\$299) and high-definition 7-inch TripMaker RVND 7710 (\$399) at RVIA's 49th Annual National Trade Show, Nov. 29–Dec. 1 in Louisville. Amy Krouse, a public re-

lations director for the company, says the new system utilizes proprietary data and routing for certain types of RVs.

"The routing is specifically for the size of the RV," says Krouse, who was working the show with John Peters, vice president and general manager for Digital Strategy and Business Development. "You can choose from 11 different configurations – Class A, Class B, fifth-wheel, toy hauler, etc., – and the routing will take into account the general configuration of that size vehicle. If it's a larger vehicle, you are always going to have a left-turn preference. If it's a smaller vehicle, you're always going to have a right-hand preference."

Krouse said the new system was under development for a year and a half and takes into account plenty of RV owner input as well as various legal restrictions.

"The software deals with low overpasses, weight restrictions, carrying propane, and more," she said. "A general GPS has none of that data in it. In addition to navigation, we also do amenities for the RVers. When we tell you there is a campground, we are going to tell you if it has a dump station, electrical hookups or different size places for you to park.

"If we tell you about a Walmart, we list the phone number and note if there are any restrictions on overnight RV parking," she said.

TripMaker provides easy search tools to find more than 13,000 RV campgrounds, 6,000 travel center locations, plus 24,000 pet-friendly locations including animal hospitals. More than 150,000 places near interstates are organized by exit and number.

Based on consumer research, this new GPS system also includes suggested RV trip plans – with photography and video – on anything from a weekend getaway to a week-long excursion with places to stop and things to do.

Although Rand McNally is utilizing distributors in Canada, it's marketing directly to OEM's, dealers and U.S. consumers through organizations like the Family Motor Coach Association, the Good Sam Club and Equity Lifestyle Properties.

## The Best Ribs in the Country

I have traveled in my motorhome from California to New York and eaten barbecued ribs in several states. But nothing compares with Charlie Vergos' Rendezvous Ribs in Memphis. He predates Elvis. Most of our presidents when they land in Memphis make a point of getting a slab of ribs from Vergos.

In 1948 Charlie cleaned out a basement below his diner, discovered a coal chute, and started a basement rib shack that quickly became a legend. The coal chute provided the vent for grill and allowed him to expand from a ham-and-cheese sandwich shop. He has served Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Al Gore, and a host of entertainers.

Charlie passed away on March 27, 2010, at 84. He left the restaurant in the hands of his three children, and their children, so that the Memphis tradition can continue for generations to come.

Rendezvous Ribs is in downtown Memphis. The entrance is in the alley one-half block north of the Peabody Hotel. All of the waiters are men, most of whom have nicknames and have been there for many years. Visit them on the web at [www.hogsfly.com](http://www.hogsfly.com). They ship by Fedex all over the U.S.

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## Allegro Club 2011 Fall Rally Normandy Farms, Foxboro, Massachusetts September 26 – 29

by Gail Johnson

**Fall in New England** . . . a perfect time and place for Tiffin motorhome owners to get together! Late September found around 140 Tiffin-built coaches at the beautiful Normandy Farms campground in tiny Foxboro, Massachusetts . . . a charming village located southeast of Boston. All of the things that come to mind when one thinks of “New England” and “Fall” were in evidence in Foxboro: picturesque stone walls, roadside pumpkin stands, barns and apple orchards, brilliant fall leaves beginning to make a show, and even wild turkeys grazing the fields around the campground. What a delightful setting! The leaves were just beginning to turn as we gathered for this rally. We had several lovely days of informative seminars, delicious food, games and activities, and good fellowship!

Monday, after registration, attendees were invited to a “Meet and Greet” at the display of our partnering dealership, Campers’ Inn. Following this social time, everyone walked across the driveway to the Recreation Lodge for a delicious catered evening meal. After dinner, an outdoor movie was provided on a big screen; folks were encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets and enjoy the screening of “Soul Surfer” . . . thanks to David Humphries and Marty Vanderford of Triple H Electronics for their expertise in providing this entertainment!

Following the customary format of Allegro Rallies, Tuesday was set aside as seminar day. There were several presenters who were well prepared to provide valuable information about the Tiffin products...from how to use the Sharp Convection microwave to all you ever wanted to know about your generator, these folks were there to inform you. Some of our presenters were: Winegard, Erik Guldager; Sharp Convection microwave, Gail Johnson; JVC, Jim Branyon and Malik Bey; Triple H Electronics, David Humphries and Marty Vanderford; Cummins Engine, Mark Phillips; TMH, Tom Webber; Freightliner, Brian Caudell; Michelin Tires, Fred Quinn and Kevin Woodley; Onan Generators and Power Glide Chassis, Harold Kimbrough. Also of interest to many were: Today’s Microwaveable Tupperware, Ginger Charters; Small Steps to a Greener Life, Pat Webber; and afternoon tea hosted by Gail Johnson.

This very busy, informative day was capped off with another delicious meal at dinnertime, followed by a rousing session of line dancing with our own favorite line dance instructor, Tammy Wyatt, from Ontario, Canada!

Wednesday was mild and sunny—just perfect for our off-site



day trip! Rally attendees boarded buses for a short ride south to Providence, Rhode Island. There, we met step-on guides who gave us a bus tour of the city. Following this, we were taken to the harbor where we boarded a fast catamaran for the popular Lighthouse Bay Cruise, on which we were able to view 10 lighthouse sites in Narragansett Bay. We also enjoyed cruising Newport Harbor, chancing upon a surprise sighting of the cruise ship Queen Mary II which was anchored there. The final stop on this delightful outing was at a local former military installation which housed a unique restaurant, the Quonset O Club, where we enjoyed an excellent catered luncheon. Upon our return later Wednesday afternoon, we were treated to an ice cream social provided by Hearthside Grove Resort.

On Thursday, the final day’s activities included games, opportunities for viewing the Campers’ Inn display, lunch with a “Sports and Fans” theme and afternoon entertainment provided by musician Jim Hollis. The rally activities ended with a deliciously catered farewell “Thanksgiving” dinner Thursday night.

There are many people to thank for making this rally a big



success, and foremost among them would be the wonderful staff and management at Normandy Farms. This old farm site is a family operation that has been in business for many years; if you have never been to this facility, we heartily recommend your planning a trip when you have an opportunity!

One of the highlights of the rally, for us as well as for the Allegro Club members in attendance, was the presence and participation of Tiffin founder and CEO Bob Tiffin, and his wife Judy. It was a real treat to have them on hand at our meals, our seminars, the activities and the events. Our appreciation goes out to them for taking time from their busy schedule to spend several days with us in beautiful Massachusetts in September!

If you have never been to an Allegro Club rally, we would love to have you join us! We are registering now for a large “buddy” rally in Sarasota, Florida, the first of March 2012. We are expecting more than 350 rigs (well over our usual limit). “Other brands” are invited to this rally! Help Tiffin Motorhomes celebrate its 40th Anniversary. Check the website and consider joining us. We will have a great time “Roughing It Smoothly”! <sup>RIS</sup>



## Sarasota Spring Rally March 1-4, 2012 Hosted by Tiffin Motorhomes All Brands Welcome

Allegro Club members have asked for different types of rallies, so how does this one sound: an expanded rally near the warm Sarasota beaches in early March 2012?

Two top Tiffin dealers in Florida, Lazydays in Seffner and North Trail RV in Fort Myers, are joining with Tiffin Motorhomes and the Allegro Club to host a major rally March 1-3 (checkout March 4) at the Sarasota Fairgrounds. As many as 400 coaches are expected.

Unlike typical Allegro Club rallies which are restricted to Tiffin rigs only, owners of non-Tiffin RVs are invited to attend this “buddy rally.” This unusually large rally is one way Tiffin Motorhomes is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2012.

“This event is actually an RV rally and an RV show. Those who do not plan to attend the rally are still invited to visit the spectacular motorhome exhibit. We plan to have 40 Tiffin coaches on display at the event,” said Jerry Williamson, National Sales Manager for Tiffin Motorhomes. “Sarasota is about halfway between Lazydays and North Trail RV, so it’s an opportunity to tell the Tiffin story and show the Tiffin product to other RVers. We hope Tiffin owners will invite their friends and fellow RVers.”

Williamson said the location of the rally is a strong point. “Allegro Club members have asked for exciting, different events and this is one of them. The location is just blocks from the Gulf. The entertainment and food will be first-rate.”

Allegro Club President Jimmy Johnson sees the rally as a tremendous opportunity to escape frigid winter weather, have a great time and introduce friends to the satisfaction and enjoyment of being a Tiffin owner.

While the rally arrangements are still taking shape, Johnson expects the bargain registration fee (**\$299**) to include two evening meals, three nights of camping fees, plus on-site entertainment, activities, and seminars.

Johnson said, “Though the Sarasota Fairgrounds do not offer full hookups, each site will have a 30-amp electric connection. There is a dump station available at the fairground but no sewer hookups. Water availability will be limited; we will have some hoses to stretch around in case of emergency. **We strongly advise folks to arrive with their fuel, LP, and water tanks full and their waste tanks empty.**”

To register, or for additional information, e-mail the Allegro Club at [allegroclub@tiffinmotorhomes.com](mailto:allegroclub@tiffinmotorhomes.com) or check the Tiffin website at [www.tiffinmotorhomes.com/Owners](http://www.tiffinmotorhomes.com/Owners).





## She's Happy – He's Lucky PART 5

by Dave McClellan

*Entering Pigeon Forge, Tennessee*, was quite an experience. The traffic was horrendous and we finally came to a stop. A huge car show with thousands of people and autos lined the streets and parking lots up ahead. It took two hours to advance one hundred feet. Being impatient, knowing we had another five miles to go on the main road through town, we referred to one of our six GPS gizmos which offered a different route to the Eagle's Nest campground. Terri found the alternate road and directed me to turn right up ahead. I always do what she tells me. This side road was about six miles long. So off we went into unknown territory and did exactly what we both had agreed not to do. After a mile or so the road became very narrow and I started sweating. I kept thinking this was not a good idea while my heart started pounding like a

bass drum. The next few miles included terrible curves and hills like a roller coaster. I had to lift myself off the seat at the crest of the hills to see what was on the other side. The sweat was now dripping from my forehead. My thoughts were to turn around immediately—but where? If we meet a car headed towards us, what will happen while we're on this roller coaster? What if there are small cement bridges with weight limits? Are there any low overpasses? Just then it happened . . . here comes a car and it wasn't a Volkswagen bug. It's now time to PANIC! My hands were shaking on the steering wheel as I moved the Phaeton over to the side as far as possible. The right rear outside tire was hanging off the road over the two-foot deep ditch. I wanted to close my eyes as the car passed. Wow! How we managed to avoid a collision I'll never know and I

can't find the right words to describe Terri's reaction! We finally made the rest of the way to the Eagles Nest Campground without any trouble, and I didn't have the heart attack I was expecting.

We had heard a lot about Pigeon Forge. It was on our bucket list from the beginning, and it is a fantastic place to visit. The town has just about everything and more for tourists to enjoy. Of course, the big attraction is Dollywood, which we plan to come back to see later. This time we enjoyed the Smith Family Dinner Theater (you can't beat the two different shows for one price), Mel's Diner, the beautiful Smoky Mountains, and many other great attractions. As usual there were tornado warnings. We attract tornados. Because we had experienced that kind of weather in Alabama, we decided to move on and stay in front of the weather, hoping it would take a turn north as predicted.

Our next stop was the Stoney Creek Campground in Greenville, Virginia. From there we drove on to a campground called

Little Bennett Campground in Clarksburg, Maryland. We love camping where it's not too busy or noisy but convenient to the areas we will visit. Little Bennett is actually run by Montgomery County. It has 50 amp for \$37 a day. There are no sewer hook-ups (only a dump station) and you must ask to be within reach of a water faucet. This is a beautiful park, wooded and a very quiet location with deer walking through the area.

Terri was anxious to get to Washington and Arlington National Cemetery where her parents are buried. From their gravesite you can see the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier so we watched the changing of the guards. A short distance from there, on the other side of the Amphitheater, Terri and I witnessed and took part in a special anniversary ceremony to honor those military personnel who died attempting to rescue the US hostages in Iran. It was a moving ceremony. We personally met and spoke to several dignitaries including the leader of the rescue team and members of Congress. Adjacent to that ceremony there was another monument honoring the astronauts who perished in the shuttle explosion.

The storm we ran from in Pigeon Forge fizzled out; but being the weather magnets that we are, we were in the path of another storm with tornado warnings and were in a hurry to move to our next bucket list destination: Hershey, Pennsylvania. On the way we noted that this weather front was closer than we anticipated, so we passed by Hershey and headed north towards Massachusetts. Realizing that this last leg of our trip home would be more than 400 miles, we called our friends in Cobleskill, New York, to see if they wanted company. They obliged and we had a nice visit with John and Ellen Cutler who recently purchased a 42-ft. Phaeton. From there we arrived at our lot in Peru, Massachusetts, on exactly the day we had predicted five months earlier.

Our lot in Peru was a warm and welcome sight. Finally, we were back after an exhilarating, first-timing winter trip. While in Peru, we attracted another weather event that I have never seen before in the summer. I've witnessed hail but never four inches of dime-size hail that fell in about 15 minutes. It was still there the next day. The other weather event that took place was an earthquake shaking my chair and table while at a restaurant one day. Two other storms that occurred in Massachusetts were the deadly tornado and hurricane Irene.

*From left:* Bob Tiffin and Dave McClellan in front of Dave and Terri's Phaeton at Normandy Farms in Foxboro, Massachusetts, September 2011. • Our 2008 Phaeton 40 QSH at Wilderness RV Park Estates, preparing to "Hit the road Poppi!" as our grandchildren Danny and Nicole would say. • John and Ellen Cutler (left) at their home in Cobleskill, New York, with Tiffin drivers Ken and Cathy Carter who were stranded there the day after hurricane Irene.



Knowing that the eye of the hurricane was predicted to pass up the Connecticut River Valley and close to our Peru lot, we accepted an invitation to join our friends John and Ellen Cutler. We moved west to Cobleskill, New York, where rain with only light winds was predicted. Wouldn't you know it; our weather magnetism moved the eye of the hurricane west and up the Hudson River valley traveling north along the New York-Vermont border. It dropped so much rain that Rtes. 88 and 7 were washed out and no one could enter or leave Cobleskill for days. This proves our theory for attracting bad weather, and all our friends are now apprehensive about our visits. →

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The best thing that happened for us during the hurricane in New York was meeting Ken and Kathy Carter who were delivering two Tiffin motorhomes to Canada. Because all roads were washed out, they were stranded in the Cobleskill Walmart parking lot along with many tractor trailers and more than 60 electric utility trucks from Indiana dispatched to the New England area. All the hotels and motels were booked so we invited the Carters to join us for the day. They are a wonderful young couple who travel all over the country delivering Tiffin coaches. It was quite a coincidence and a pleasant surprise. We now keep in touch and hope to see them next spring in Red Bay.

The highlight of the summer was our trip to Normandy Farms Campground in Foxboro, Massachusetts, to join 131 other Tiffin owners at the Northeast Tiffin rally. There were many seminars, great meals, entertainment, tours of Providence, Rhode Island, and a boat excursion through Narragansett Bay. Bob Tiffin was in attendance and everyone had the opportunity to chat with him. See the Allegro Club story in this issue and you'll realize why these rallies are worth your participation.

Our winter travel began on November 1, 2011, back to Pigeon Forge to see more of what we missed last April, and to visit with old friends. Then we took another (bucket list) trip to take the two-day class at the Freightliner Service Center in Gaffney, South Carolina to learn more about our chassis, engine and transmission. The course is taught by Mike Cody, who has the right answer for every question you ask. I don't know how he does it but he has been an instructor for many years and goes all over the country to train Freightliner Oasis technicians. And he, as well as all the Freightliner personnel, were very courteous and super friendly. I advise that everyone owning a Freightliner chassis should take this course.

During our five month journey, I have to say that our Tiffin Phaeton performed flawlessly. The Cummins 360-hp engine, with 1050 lbs. of torque, coupled to the Allison transmission has provided 9.1 mpg and power to spare. The Freightliner chassis is the backbone of our motorhome. It's the brahma bull waiting to be saddled and kept us moving smoothly and efficiently throughout our journey. With the proper maintenance, we expect this combination will take us many more hundreds of thousands of miles.

I still can't believe the number of friends we have acquired. It's a pleasure to meet people with the same interests. I love to share stories and help others whenever we can. Our experiences, especially at the Wilderness RV Park Estate in Silver Springs, Florida, have given us the opportunity to be with old and new friends. We are so pleased with its central Florida location, the activities, the layout, and the people we have associated with. It has encouraged us to purchase an RV lot there. We will be staying there for most winters, taking side trips to visit all areas of Florida. We will take the opportunity to see the rest of the country during the

*Continued on page 64*

## Thanks for the Memories

In 1987 Donna and I purchased a 30-ft Allegro from Russ Dean in Pasco, Washington. We were farming at the time so we were only able to RV during the winter months. In 1990 we retired so we had more time to enjoy seeing the beauty of the western states. In December 1993, I had a heart valve replaced. In 1994 we went to Foretravel Northwest in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, and traded the Allegro with 45,000 miles for a 34-ft. Allegro Bay diesel pusher with a 230-hp Cummins and an Allison 6-speed. We had more time to travel and we drove nearly every primary and secondary road in Montana, the Dakotas, Wyoming, Arizona, Utah, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. We also visited Red Bay for a delamination repair on the fiberglass siding.

Now because of health problems, we took our last trip earlier this year to the Oregon coast, Seattle, and Bremerton, Washington, and sold the Allegro Bay. It had 113,000 miles on it, but still ran trouble free. Mr. Tiffin, we want to thank you for making all of our memories possible. Donna is now in assisted living so our lives have changed. Thank you all for your personal care when we had any problems. We felt like we were family. You can quit sending your very interesting magazine to us.

Don & Donna Hermann  
Lewiston, Idaho

## First Extended Trip in Our New Breeze

We just returned home from our first extended trip in our new Breeze 28CA. We drove 2,078 miles between Florida and Ohio with a stopover in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Our Breeze had no problem making it to the top of Clingman's Dome (6,643 ft.). We averaged 11.7 mpg on the return trip home with no major issues. We can hardly wait for our next adventure – either the Florida Panhandle or Key West, whichever one our two pugs decide on!

Tom & Cecilia Christy  
Apollo Beach, Florida

## Thanks to RVs Northwest

Just a thank you note for the great service we received at RVs Northwest in Greenacres (Spokane), Washington. We had a slide failure at a campground in Idaho. RVs Northwest sent a tech to make a temporary repair to get our coach to their service center near Spokane. They realigned our slide-out (one side was coming out more than the other) and did an outstanding job. If you need service, RVs Northwest is one of the best.

Miles Munzer  
Scottsdale, Arizona

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**Use the postcards in this issue to send in *your* "From the Road" experiences as you travel through this great country.**



# Chronic Ear Infections

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

Does your dog cringe or cry out when you go to pet him on the head or rub behind his ears? This is a good sign your dog or cat is suffering from ear disease.

Ear infections in cats usually are not chronic, with ear mites and bacterial infections being the common cause. Ear infections in dogs, on the other hand, can originate from a myriad of causes. Most infections are treated with antibiotics and the problem is solved. However, dogs frequently have repeat ear infections after an initial treatment.

First, let's consider the anatomy of the dog's ear. Because the ear canal is in the shape of an L, cleaning a dog's ear can be a problem. Do not use Q-tips! This will only push the debris further down the ear canal. It is much better to flush the dog's ears with an appropriate solution. Do not use alcohol as it will burn, cause more irritation and inflammation, and subsequently more build-up of debris.

If your pet is testy or becomes aggressive when you treat his ears, then sedation with a full workup at a veterinary office will be necessary. With your pet sedated, the veterinarian can examine the ear and do a complete flushing of the ear canal. Care must be taken not to rupture the eardrum. A ruptured eardrum can cause an inner ear infection.

Prior to flushing the ear, it would be advisable to do cytology, culture, and sensitivity testing of the ears. Culture and sensitivity will identify the organism involved and indicate which antibiotics will be the most effective treatment.

A good cleaning solution for the ear contains TrisEDTA and low concentrations of chlorhexidine and acetic and malic acids. When first used on a severe infection, the dog should be sedated. The cleaning solution will help remove debris and kill bacteria. Steroids are very important in the treatment of ear infections. Used topically and systemically, they reduce the inflammation that produces all the wax and fluids in the ear canal, allowing the antibiotics and/or antifungal to work.

Most ear infections need to be treated for four to six weeks. Many owners stop after five to seven days when their pet seems to be a lot better. When this happens, the ear infection returns in a month or two. Complete healing for some of my patients required up to six months of treatment. Persistence is golden. Follow up with your veterinarian if your pet is experiencing chronic infections.


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Dr. Pilarczyk practiced veterinary medicine for 38 years in Tampa, Florida. He and his wife, Kay, travel most of the year in their 2007 Phaeton.

Some other causes of chronic ear infection are polyps in the ear canal, yeast infections, and, low and behold, allergies to food or pollen. With polyps, a good visual exam and surgical removal will allow the ear to be cleaned properly and medicated. Yeast infections can usually be identified with cytology. The primary organism is *Malassezia*. These infections can be highly resistant to treatment and may require long-term therapy.

Finally, atopy (food and inhalant allergies) is one of the main causes of chronic ear infections. Because the ears are just an extension of the skin, they become inflamed, causing your pet to scratch continually. If you suspect allergies, put your pet on a hypoallergenic diet. It can be a minimum of six weeks before results are seen. Food trials may be necessary if this does not work. Allergy testing by intradermal tests or Radio Immuno Assay involving blood samples will help to isolate inhalant allergies and allow desensitization.

As you can see, chronic ear infections are very complex and require identification of the underlying cause. Remember, persistence is the only way to handle ear problems. Find the cause and the treatment will be much more fruitful.

If any of my readers would like a certain topic addressed, please contact me at [parkwayvet@yahoo.com](mailto:parkwayvet@yahoo.com) 

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# Bill & Judy Ingalls

CAMPERS ON MISSION – FULL TIMING IN A 2001 ZEPHYR

Finding a purpose-filled mission in life is a goal that requires a lot of prayer, soul searching, and thought. In 1997 Bill and Judy Ingalls had been enjoying the motorhome lifestyle for most of their married life when they “discovered” Alabama Campers on Mission, RVers who accept assignments from the Southern Baptist Convention to use their skills to construct and repair church buildings. The Ingalls had a successful photography business in Montgomery, Alabama, that they were in the process of turning over to Bill, Jr., and they were looking at the possibility of going full time in their 1996 Allegro Bus.

Initially, Bob Franklin, mission director for the convention, regularly put together teams of couples who used their vacation



PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL INGALLS, JR.

time and construction skills to build church buildings for congregations, usually in small towns or rural areas. Congregations over several years would accumulate funds to pay for the materials and the volunteer workers provided the labor. To expedite each project and keep it within the workers’ three-week vacation schedules, the congregation arranged for the foundation slab to be poured and ready when the workers arrived.

Bill and Judy liked the plan immediately and signed up for their first mission, a small congregation in Arizona. “When we left two weeks later, we handed them the key to a new building that only needed painting,” Bill said. “It was very gratifying for Judy and me to have a part in that project. We were hooked.” Judy had already retired on January 3, 1997, and Bill officially retired the last day of that year.

Bill grew up on a tobacco farm near Washington, North Carolina. After several bad years from flooding, the family moved into town. “I set up pins in a bowling alley, bagged groceries for tips, and worked for Woolworths as the stockroom manager during my high school years,” Bill said, “and then joined the military in 1952.” After his four year obligation in the Air Force was completed, he transferred into the Air National Guard and spent eleven years at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, the city that would eventually become his home.

“I attended the ‘University of the Air Force’ at Lowry AFB in Colorado, which is where I got all of my training in photography, camera repair and maintenance, mapping, and aerial reconnaissance,” he continued. “We worked for the 9th Air Force doing aerial reconnaissance throughout the southern hemisphere.” Bill later took a position with Maxwell’s audio-visual laboratory creating educational products. When the audio-visual products were outsourced to a civilian contractor, Bill went with the job and began working in the civilian sector.

“I saw President Reagan when he visited Maxwell and later President Ford when he delivered a speech at the Air War College,” Bill said. “I set up the stage lighting and photographed every Secretary of Defense who visited, as well as a national news conference for the first POW returning from Vietnam. It was an interesting job and an exciting time from 1967 to 1982.”

Bill and Judy met at Maxwell in 1974. “His building was next

door to mine, but his did not have vending and coffee machines and mine did,” Judy laughed. “That’s how we met. We married December 31, 1974. It was a second marriage for both of us. Bill had five children and I had three. Now we have nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.”

Judy worked for the U.S. government for 34 years, with three of those years spent at Maxwell assisting in the reconnaissance and intelligence documentation of the Vietnam War. From 1974 until her retirement in 1997, Judy served as a paralegal specialist with the Social Security Administration, in the Office of Hearings and Appeals. After retiring, she worked part-time in that office until October 2011. Bill retired in 1982 from his position in the private sector, but stayed in the Army National Guard until 1994, ending his military career with 38 years and 9 months of service.

Bill started his photography business in 1982 with a twin lens Mamiya reflex camera that cost \$225. “I specialized in weddings and portraits. Today, we still do student portraits, but 90 percent of our business is commercial photography,” he said.

Bill and Judy are now in their fourth motorhome. “We began in 1978 with a 28-ft. Winnebago Sunflyer,” Bill began. “Then, two years later we sold it to a 78-year-old man who bought it to go on his honeymoon. We kind of smiled about that. But guess what? Here we are thirty years later— I’m 78 now and we are still plugging away.

“In 1992 we became confirmed Tiffin fans when we bought a 33-ft. Allegro Bay with a 454 Chevy engine,” he continued. “We kept it for four years and traded it on an Allegro Bus in 1996. At that time we still had our house. But in 2000 we stopped by Marlin Ingram’s RV Center in Montgomery and saw the Zephyr. Then

On the roof to check the square of the 4 x 8 decking before nailing, Bill Ingalls’ agility belies his 78 years. • While the men work on the church building, the ladies sew reversible jumpers for children in poverty-stricken countries.



in October 2001 we purchased the Zephyr solely for the purpose of going full time and working with Campers on Mission.

“After selling the house, we acquired 35 acres just south of Clanton in Verbena, Alabama,” Bill said. “That’s our home when we are not working on a church building or traveling for fun. I poured a 24 x 50-ft. slab with full hook-ups and added a 24 x 20 patio with roof. It is really peaceful and relaxing out there. We often see 10 or more turkeys and deer in the hay field.”

But R&R in the country is not where you will usually find Bill and Judy Ingalls. “We might get a call from a group in a town just about anywhere,” Judy said. “They can’t pay for the labor, but they have saved up enough for the materials. Bill is one of five regional coordinators for the Alabama Campers on Mission who can be contacted to arrange for a church project. When he receives a call, he sends a project leader to evaluate the church’s goals and see if the project is a good fit for our team. Most often the church will provide sites for camping that have temporary electric and water hook-ups. The church members provide one meal a day. We take care of pumping out our wet tanks into the church’s sewer system.”

“About 50 percent of our projects are adding on to an existing building or making repairs to an older building. The start-ups begin with a concrete slab in place and that’s where we come in,” Bill added.

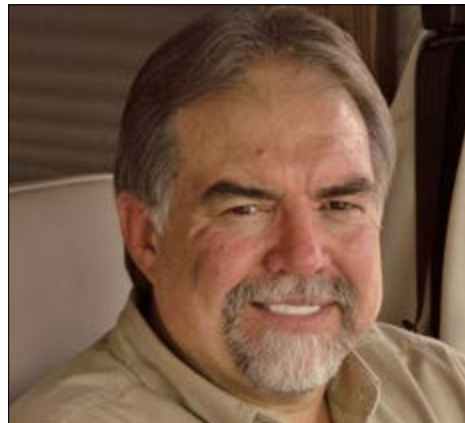
There are 37 states with Campers on Mission chapters, operating under the North American Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention. The men do the construction almost entirely. In most situations, the women bring their sewing machines and do sewing projects for the needy. “Glenn and Jeanette Whiddon’s daughter, Mary Beth Turberville, went to Nicaragua on a mission trip several years ago. She was upset that the little girls had almost nothing to wear except T-shirts,” Judy said. “She developed a pattern for a double-sided, reversible jumper that the

*Continued on page 63*



Text by Fred Thompson





### Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, 38-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.

We look forward to seeing this column grow larger with each issue. For *answers to urgent questions and problems*, call the Parts and Service number at 256-356-0261.

Dear Danny . . .

#### Kudos and Thank You

After our first visit to the Tiffin Service Center, we really can't find the right words to describe the great bunch of people who worked with us. We learned so much from the technicians in the Service Center. We enjoyed working with Wade Humphres very much. Since this is our first motorhome, we have called you, Danny Abbot, and the other guys many

times and you have always been helpful.

John & Nancy Allevi  
Livingston, Texas

#### Corrosion from Battery Acid

We have a 2005 Allegro Bus. My problem pertains to the battery compartment and keeping it free of excessive corrosion when charging the house batteries. Is there anything I can do to eliminate this situation? The flooring will have to be replaced if this cannot be controlled. I have been using baking soda to clean the batteries. If I have to replace the flooring, please recommend the best procedure and materials to use. Danny, your assistance is appreciated, as your regular column is also.

Charles R. Gunn  
Youngsville, Louisiana

Dear Charles,

If the batteries are all good and the charging system is operating properly as far as charging and cutting down to a trickle charge, then the excessive corrosion should not be an issue. First, have the batteries checked to see if one or more have bad cells that could cause the charging system to not cut back because it cannot reach a full charge. Second, it is possible that the Xantrex converter is not cutting back after the batteries reach a full charge. To check the batteries, disconnect them and check them one at a time. If the Xantrex converter is the problem, you should have it checked by a dealer or a service center.

#### Suggestions to Improve the Phaeton

We have a 40-ft. 2011 Phaeton. Here are a few suggestions to improve it. (1) There was no separation between the garbage pail slide-out and the two adjacent pull-out drawers. We had a wall installed to separate them. (2) The bathroom and shower vanity lights face upward and have halogen lights that make the ceiling very hot and will eventually dry and discolor the ceiling. The lights should either face down or have LED bulbs. (3) When traveling with the slides in,

small pets can get under the bed and get tangled in the wires and mechanisms. Is there a way you could seal that area?

Janet Pritchett  
Brick, New Jersey

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your suggestions which we will pass on to our R&D department. We are using more LED lights in all of our 2012 models. We have not found a good way to enclose the area under the bed and still make it user friendly for the owner. One suggestion we like is using a large block of foam to keep small animals from crawling under the bed. Of course, you will have to remove it when you bring the slide in, but no damage will be done if you forget to remove it.

#### Drawer Slings Open When We Take a Corner

We have a 2010 Phaeton 36QSH with a reclining chair and two-drawer cabinet (instead of the couch). The large lower drawer slides open when we take a corner — which eventually destroyed the slide mechanism (replaced last year in Red Bay). Is there some easy way to secure the drawer other than the bungee cord we are presently using? Thanks.

Richard Weiss  
Salinas, California

Dear Richard,

Our service center carries a "bull nose" catch which attaches just inside the drawer facing. It is somewhat difficult to install because you are working blind when you align the inside receiver. It will make the drawer a little stiff to open, but it will help stabilize the drawer when cornering.

#### Breeze Braking

There was a reference in the last issue of *RIS* about lack of engine braking in the 2011 and 2012 Allegro Breeze 28 BR. You indicated the transmission could be reprogrammed since the brochure implies there is additional braking available. Is this reprogramming covered by the war-

ranty? Where can the work be done? Another issue with the 28 BR (at least in my case) is a steering problem. When I took delivery, it pulled hard to the right. This was corrected by adjusting the ride-height control on the individual wheels. Is this a common problem that will require repeated periodic adjustments?

Gerry Hoffer  
Lantzville, British Columbia

Dear Gerry,

The reprogramming of the transmission is covered by your warranty. Contact Tiffin's chassis warranty department (256-356-0261) for the location of the Allison service center nearest you. The work can also be done here at the Tiffin Service Center. It is possible that the ride-height control may need to be adjusted in the future, but it is not an on-going problem requiring frequent service.

#### Peeling Decals & 4-Way Flashers

We own a 2005 Allegro 32 BA which has decals that are starting to crack and peel. What can be done to repair or replace the decals? We are also having an intermittent problem with the 4-way flashers not working. Can you tell me how to troubleshoot this problem?

Charlie & Barbara Lamberson  
Milford, Massachusetts

Dear Charlie & Barbara,

Replacement decals are available through the Tiffin parts department, or you can look into having a body shop remove the decals and replace them with paint — which, of course, would be permanent. On the 4-way flashers, the first place to check is the flasher itself which is located in the main fuse panel. The second most likely location to check is where the wiring harness for the steering column connects to the main wiring harness, which will be about halfway down the steering column at the A-frame that connects the steering column to the chassis. If the plug making the connection is loose, you can re-insert it, which will be an easy solution.

If not, you will have to test the wiring when the flasher is not working, which will be more problematic. At this point, I recommend you take it to a dealer.

#### Inverter Outlet for Select Comfort Bed

I have a question regarding the "Select Comfort Mattress" which we have in our 2008 Allegro Bay 35 TSB FRED. It is plugged into an electrical outlet under the bed which works only when the motorhome is plugged into shore power or the power plant is running. Our problem is that many of the campsites we visit do not provide power and they also have limited hours in which campers power plants can run. As you probably know, these air controlled beds change firmness as the room temperature changes. I have awakened during the night feeling like I'm sleeping on a big beachball and can't do anything about it short of getting out of bed and starting the powerplant (which is a no no). My solution would be to plug the bed into an inverter plug. My questions are (1) can I do this without harming anything? (2) Since the nearest inverter plug is on the opposite side of the bedroom above a small cabinet; can I somehow run a new inverter circuit to terminate under the bed? Your recommendation would be greatly appreciated.

Gary Demke  
Redcliff, Alberta, Canada

Dear Gary,

Running a wire from the TV outlet plug to operate the bed would be no problem. The problem will be getting the wire through the cabinetry to the other side of the motorhome to prevent it from looking unsightly. For safety's sake, I recommend that you have a master certified technician in RV electrical service do this job or bring it to the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay.

#### Pressure Washing Radiator Prevents Engine Overheating

We have a 2002 Allegro Bus which we



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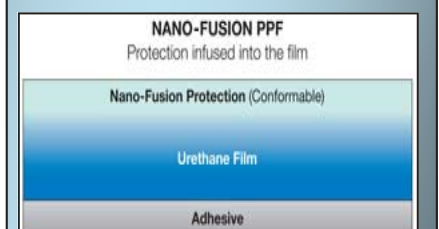


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bought new. While traveling in New Mexico on those long uphill climbs, the 330-hp CAT engine kept overheating, forcing us to pull over to let it cool down. After seeing a billboard advertising “Big Rig Repairs,” we pulled in to have it checked. The mechanic thought the radiator might be plugged up and proceeded to pressure wash it with steam. That solved the overheating problem and only cost \$20.

When I wash the coach now, I pull out my pressure washer and clean the radiator, being careful not to use too much pressure. I have never read anything about cleaning the radiator in the engine manual, Tech Talk, or general maintenance guides. I feel sure other owners have experienced the same problem. Hope this remedy helps your readers.

Bruce Russell  
Brooks, Georgia

Dear Bruce,  
That is a great recommendation. Just be careful not to use too much pressure which could damage the radiator fins.

**Broken Weld on Steps**

I have a 2007 Allegro Bay. The entrance steps have had to be welded twice. They are weak and break at the factory weld. Is there a stronger 2 or 3 step unit that can be purchased to replace the original? If so, where can I order one? Can you give an estimate on cost? Thanks.

Donald H. Ahrens  
Hermiston, Oregon

Dear Donald,  
The steps that we were using at the time your unit was produced was a Kwikkee brand. Since then we have changed to a Liepper brand step which could possibly be a little stronger. You can purchase it through the Tiffin Service Center for \$525.

**Wiring for Electric Brakes on Trailer**

I have a 2005 Phaeton 38GH. I am installing an electric brake controller for the trailer I tow. Is the Phaeton already wired for electric brakes at the rear trailer receptacle?

I believe a blue wire is used for the electric brakes on trailers. If it is pre-wired, where is the wiring located under the dash?

Mike Little  
Jupiter, Florida

Dear Mike,  
You should have a 7-prong receiver which will have the wiring for the brake control already in it. It terminates in the cockpit at the left of the steering column. It should be a red 12-gauge wire with a white stripe. You will also have a ground and a hot wire at that location to use with your brake controller.

**Moisture Under Diamond Shield Protective Coating**

I own a 2008 40-ft. Phaeton which has the Diamond Shield (DS) protective coating. Apparently moisture has seeped behind the DS coating, creating mildew which is unsightly. Is there any remedy available short of removing the DS, cleaning the coach, and applying new DS protection? If not, is there any warranty still available from DS for this condition?

Morris P. Hebert  
Houma, Louisiana

Dear Morris,  
As far as Tiffin’s warranty on the Diamond Shield, we stand behind it for one year. For Diamond Shield’s warranty, call 888-806-5862.

**Fuel Gauge Problem**

We have a 2004 Allegro 40QDP with a fuel gauge problem. Periodically the gauge goes to empty and the info center flashes a “fault.” In June 2009 the Tiffin Service Center in Red Bay worked on it, but the repair lasted about 50 miles after we left Red Bay and then started again. Any suggestions? By phone, a technician at the service center suggested that I check the ground wire. Could you tell me where it is? Thanks.

James Adkins  
Twin Falls, Idaho

Dear James,  
The main ground wire for all of the in-

strument cluster components is on the firewall above the generator just to the right of center. There will be a ground lug and a power lug. Check and make sure both are tight. Sometimes it may be necessary to run a ground wire from the instrument cluster to the chassis. Because of the possibility of your making a mistake and burning up the instrument cluster, we recommend you have a certified technician do this for you.

**Inlet Hose Rubbing on the Frame and Wearing**

When our 2008 Allegro Bay FRED was being serviced, the technician observed that the inlet hose for the turbo was rubbing on the frame and wearing. Cummins maintains that this is a Tiffin or Freightliner problem. Has this been a problem on other Allegro Bay FREDs? Who should make this repair? Should I expect to be charged to correct this problem?

Gene Hoyer  
Castle Rock, Colorado

Dear Gene,  
Take your coach to a Freightliner service center and have them look at your problem. If they determine that it is a problem caused by Tiffin, please contact our service center and we will take care of it.

**White Spots on Cabinets in Bathroom Area**

We own a 2007 Allegro Bus and have thoroughly loved it. I do have one problem. We have stained cherry cabinets that get white spots on the wood in the toilet area of the bathroom. The only thing that will take these spots off is a furniture cleaning cloth I found that has a “white ring remover” impregnated in the cloth. Do you have any suggestions for a product that I could put on the wood that would make it impervious to the white rings? Or any cleaning product readily found in stores that will remove white rings? Thanks.

Heidi Fyle  
Fallston, Maryland

Dear Heidi,  
After you have cleaned the surface, cover it with two to three coats of polyurethane. We use Sherwin-Williams here at the plant. That should allow you to wipe the surface clean, leaving no residues.

**A Musty Smell in Rear of Coach**

We own a 2008 Allegro that we love, and we are quite pleased with Tiffin’s customer service. We have a problem that has recently surfaced—a musty smell mostly in the rear of the motorhome. We keep our coach very clean and leave no food in it when not in use. We wash all of our towels and linens after each use. Matter of fact, we clean the entire coach after each outing. The smell is very bothersome. We can sometimes smell it right outside of the coach.

John Munoz  
Manteca, California

Dear John,  
The grey and black holding tanks are the most common cause of musty odors in the motorhome. It is possible that the short vents under the kitchen and bathroom sink could be faulty, allowing odors from the holding tanks to come into the motorhome. You should also check for a water leak in areas where you notice the smell.

**Anticipated Problems on Ford V-10**

I have a 2011 Allegro 35 QBA (Ford V-10). I have heard and read about several negatives on this engine–chassis regarding rusted exhaust manifold bolts, spark plugs welded into the aluminum head, Dupont intake manifolds that fail at approximately 25,000 miles, and head gaskets that do the same. From what I am reading, I understand these problems appear to be significant on Ford chassis from 2002 to 2008. Do you have information on solutions for addressing these problems?

Herschel Anservitz  
Winchester, Kentucky

Dear Herschel,  
We are not getting this type of feedback about the Ford chassis and engines we

have used in our Allegros. After the unit leaves our plant, Ford takes care of their warranty issues separately from Tiffin. Since Ford is the only option we have for a gas-powered unit, you may want to take a look at one of our diesel products.

**Sometimes They Can’t Be Repaired Satisfactorily**

I am writing this a long time after the fact, but I wanted to tell you. We have so many trips in our 2004 Allegro Bus. But we had a nightmarish problem with the King Dome that came on it. The unit began malfunctioning about two years after we bought the coach. We sent it back to the Tiffin Service Center several times. Of course, they repaired it and returned it to us each time. It never worked properly and we finally just quit sending it back. We finally bought a portable satellite re-

ceiver and love it. But it was rather upsetting to have to spend \$2,460 to solve our problem. Thanks for listening.

Douglas Lawson  
Yukon, Oklahoma

Dear Douglas,  
I can understand your financial pain and inconvenience with the King Dome product. Satellite receivers over the years have been a somewhat delicate piece of electronics. They usually can be repaired satisfactorily. We have switched to Winegard’s satellite receivers exclusively because we have found them to be more dependable.

**Water Input Hose Problem on 1999 Gas Burner**

I have a 1999 Allegro gas burner. The water input where the hose screws on has become worn so that the threads do not fit well. The hose threads will pull out with

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very little tugging. I recently ordered a replacement from the Tiffin Service Center (9-28-11). I talked with "GG" and explained what I needed — a chrome metal type with female metal plug on the back. The water line has a male plug that screws into this piece. I received a replacement (#3974) which has a non-metal male plug on the back. I called and talked to "GG" and explained my problem. He said they had never had a plug like the item I requested. If possible, I prefer not to change the way the water line was originally designed and connected. The markings on the original chrome plug are "water inlet only-Lm 38166" (with metal female connection on back). Can you tell me where to order this item? Thanks.

Bill Gleaves  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dear Bill,  
Many of our vendors who supplied us with parts that long ago have gone out of business or may no longer have a certain part available. Older parts we usually keep in storage but they are not catalogued as being in stock. We will search our old inventory and try to find the part you need. We rarely throw anything away.

**Water Pump and Holding Tank Filling Problems**

We have a 2011 Allegro purchased on August 8, 2011, from Tom Raper RV in Richmond, Indiana. We have two problems: (1) When hooked up to city water, our fresh holding tank fills very slowly. (2) When not hooked up to city water and using water from our fresh water holding tank, the water pump runs in spurts every 10-15 seconds (on & off, on & off) until we can't stand it anymore and turn it off until we must have water again later.

The city water tank fill regulator has been replaced and adjustments to the water pump were made under warranty by the Tom Raper RV service department. But we still have the same problem. We have been on chat forums and have spoken with

other RVers and we always hear the same thing: you have a water leak. We cannot see any water leaks. Any suggestions?

Fran Bloom  
Houtzdale, Pennsylvania

Dear Fran,  
The problem should be in the three-way water valve that changes from city water to tank fill, which on city water should not allow water to go into the holding tank. Your valve is letting water seep back into the water tank, which in turn will fill your water tank even though your valve is set to city water. Then when not hooked into city water and your water pump is on, water is passing back through the faulty valve into the fresh water tank. The faulty valve is acting just like a faucet which is being turned on & off every few seconds, which is causing your pump to activate. Your solution is to replace the faulty valve.

**Top Heavy Rocking**

We purchased a 2008 30DA earlier this summer. We love the quality and workmanship of the motorhome. I need help to correct one problem. If the coach hits a bump or dip on one side of the pavement, we get a lot of top heavy rocking. Would new shocks or a stabilizer bar be of any help in correcting the problem? The unit has 26,000 miles on it.

Elton Brigham  
Lampasas, Texas

Dear Elton,  
There are aftermarket stabilizer bars available which will help with the rocking. Our feedback from owners indicates that they make a significant difference. For example, Roadmaster makes a stabilizer that companies like Camping World sell and install.

**Slide-Out Will Not Retract Enough to Make Tight Seal**

We have a 2006 Phaeton 40QDH. The front passenger-side slide-out will not retract enough to make a tight seal. Looking under it while extended, I can see where it

appears to be rubbing on something and actually making a dent in the bottom of the slide-out box. I am afraid to extend the slide for fear of not getting it back in. Since I cannot see the bottom of the slide from the storage compartment, there is no way to see what is causing the problem.

Tim Essley  
Cape Coral, Florida

Dear Tim,  
This is a problem that needs the attention of technicians at one of our dealers. Your closest Tiffin dealer is North Trails RV in Fort Myers.

**Water Pump Switches**

Our new 2012 Allegro 34TGA has three water pump switches. It is very confusing how these operate. There is no indicator light on any of the switches. I have found the pump running several times when we thought it was off. We travel with the fresh water tank empty, so the pump has to be checked carefully before we start driving. Can you explain how these switches work?

Lee Kissell  
Lawrenceburg, Indiana

Dear Lee,  
I will admit that an indicator light would be useful. Each switch goes to the pump separately. You have to turn the switch off at the same place you turned it on. The off position is down on each switch, but it is easy to accidentally trip the switch.

**Is My Aqua-Hot Valve Stuck?**

One of my Aqua-Hot valves must be sticking. The floor vent does not expel warm air when the unit is turned to gas heat in the master bedroom of my 2007 Allegro Bus 40QDP. Any way to unstick the valve?

Jack Bartels  
Boerne, Texas

**Aqua-Hot Problem**

My 2008 Allegro Bus 43QRP is equipped with an Aqua-Hot which has three zones for heating. Recently, while using diesel fuel in our Aqua-Hot system, zone 3 (bed-

room) began producing only cool air. Air in the other two zones is warm. The air flow is the same. Any suggestions on how to investigate or remedy the problem?

Rene Drolet  
Thetford Mines, Quebec

Dear Jack and Rene,  
It sounds like both of you have the same or similar problems. The Aqua-Hot has two zones, one zone for the living room and galley area, and another for the bath and bedroom. There is a check valve located at the brass fitting where the fluid lines go into the main tank. If these units are not used for a period of time, they will stick. Take a small hammer and tap the fittings lightly. This should unstick the check valve. If that does not work, you may need to have the valve replaced.

**Bounce Fabric Softener Has New Use**

In the Fall 2011 issue of *RIS*, Mary Tichenor stated that she is having problems with rats entering her Phaeton motorhome. My wife discovered that Bounce

fabric softener sheets work like a charm to keep the rats away. Just place them around the motorhome and live rat free.

Winn Hammond  
Bailey, Mississippi

Dear Winn,  
Thanks for the tip. But be careful about the use of fabric softeners. They contain chemicals that can create health problems and allergies. Google "Health Risks of Fabric Softeners" on the internet. Fabric softeners have an ingredient that causes hyperanemia in the lungs of mice which is probably why they avoid the Bounce sheets.

**No Coolant, But the Bus Did Not Overheat**

I purchased a 2008 Allegro Bus with a 425-hp Cummins engine about six months ago from Kite Brothers in Deridder, Louisiana. It had approximately 800 miles on the odometer. I made a trip to Colorado and now have 4,400 miles. I checked the engine coolant recently and could not see any fluid in the reservoir.

I opened the radiator cap and could not see any coolant. Below the cap there is an instruction on how to add coolant by opening and closing valves. My questions are: (1) Why can't I add coolant to the full mark on the coolant tank just as I would do on my car? (2) Why did the engine never run hot when the coolant was obviously below the "add level"? (3) Do I have to buy a Cummins-approved coolant from a Cummins dealer? Thanks for your help.

Ronnie W. Sepulvado  
Zwolle, Louisiana

Dear Ronnie,  
My first question is, Why did the low coolant light not come on with the warning buzzer? If the coolant is not too low, you can top it off and fill it to the full mark. If not, you will have to go through their procedures to add coolant using the open/close valves. As far as the unit not running hot, the cooling system holds approximately 10 gallons. To run hot, extreme conditions would have been necessary for the coolant to be at least three

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gallons low. As far as the coolant brand, you must use the Cummins recommended product or ethylene glycol with SCA additive, although you do not necessarily have to purchase it from a Cummins dealer. I advise that you have a service center determine why the “low coolant” light did not activate.

**The Sprinter Chassis?**

Are there any long-term plans or any R&D being done currently to build a Tiffin RV on a Sprinter chassis?

Louis Goldman  
Fernandina Beach, Florida

Dear Louis,  
At this time there are no plans in R&D for the Sprinter chassis. The Breeze has taken the place of any earlier ideas we had for the Sprinter. We may look into this possibility again in the future.

**Confining the Dash Heat on Cold Days**

Clarence Barinowski sent a question to Tech Talk about staying warm when using the dash heater. We followed the advice of a fellow Tiffin owner whom we met at the factory. Purchase an insulated curtain (Walmart) and an adjustable shower rod. On diesel pusher floorplans, place the curtain on the rod and place the rod between the slide-out ends just behind the driver and passenger chairs. Amazing! Works for heating and cooling. We have used this remedy when traveling in 100+ and very cold temps.

Joe DeVane  
Dothan, Alabama

Dear Joe,  
Thanks for passing on a good solution.

**Rusted 4-Yr Old Fuel Tank**

I have a 2008 Phaeton on a Freightliner chassis (mfg date 8-3-2007). I have been experiencing an erratic fuel gauge once the tank gets down to one-half or less actual fuel. While I was in Red Bay to have a windshield replaced, I took the coach to Bay Diesel which was recommended by a

manager at the Tiffin Service Center. Bay Diesel ran diagnostics and checked the gauges before replacing the sending unit, which did not correct the problem. Thinking that perhaps a baffle had broken loose in the tank and was causing issues with the sending unit, the technician decided to raise the coach, empty the fuel tank, and examine it with a scope. After removing the drain plug, the tech had to push his finger through the opening to penetrate the layer of rust and sediment in the bottom of the tank to get it to drain. The scope inspection revealed the interior of the tank was rusted. Bay Diesel recommended replacing the tank at a cost of \$2,500.

I always fill the tank after returning from a trip. The coach is parked in a climate controlled storage facility. I have drained small amounts of water from the bottom of the water separator unit which I check prior to each trip. I find it very surprising that the tank would be heavily rusted just four years after it was manufactured and put into use. Is this a common problem at four years? Are there any other options short of the complete tank replacement?

Larry Emrich  
Theodore, Alabama

Dear Larry,  
This is a very unusual problem. We do see this occasionally when a unit has been stored a long time with the fuel very low. The tank sweats and starts to rust. The rust falls off the walls and settles in the bottom. There are companies that can remove the tank, clean, and flush it out, which is an expensive process. To be on the safe side for a good quality outcome, I would replace the tank.

**V-10 Over-Revving When Using Cruise Control**

I must disagree with your comments regarding Don Knight’s reported V-10 Triton engine over-revving in cruise control. On a trip to Missouri and Oklahoma in September, I used the cruise control in my Allegro Open Road for the first time

and had the same problem. The noise was incredible and the tach topped out about 4200 RPM. On the second incident, I realized the problem and henceforth disconnected the cruise when approaching a hill or grade. The transmission downshifted but the engine revs were just over 3000 RPM and easily controllable by using the tach and “feeling” when the need to downshift was apparent. Love our Allegro!

Steve Spear  
San Antonio, Texas

Dear Steve,  
Thanks for the feedback on this problem. Perhaps other owners will want to add their experiences to this problem.

**A Tiffin Toy Hauler?**

Tiffin Motorhomes should build a Class A toy hauler. It would be great to have a diesel toy hauler on a Freightliner chassis. The garage should be a minimum 8 x 10 feet in size. I currently have a Four Winds 34Y Hurricane and want to move up to a diesel. If you’ll build it, I’ll buy it.

Don Blodgett  
Meridianville, Alabama

Dear Don,  
At this time, we have no plans for toy haulers due to the cargo carrying capacity of the front engine Ford chassis. Our rear engine diesels present a totally different design problem for a toy hauler motorhome with a rear garage.

**What’s Under the Breeze’s Black Paint?**

We have a 2011 Breeze 28 BR with a black table hinged in the center. If I strip the paint off, what kind of wood will I find?

Larry Phillips  
Zephyrhills, Florida

Dear Larry,  
It is cherry wood with a Sherwin-Williams dark black stain with a polyurethane coating.

**Safety Concerns on the Workhorse Chassis**

Will Tiffin Motorhomes address safety

concerns with a Workhorse chassis/engine on a 2003 Allegro 35DA, or do I have to find a Workhorse-approved service facility? If the latter, can you identify such a facility near my home?

John Chisum  
Pearland, Texas

Dear John,  
Anything chassis or engine related will have to go through a Workhorse service center. The Workhorse service center nearest to you is in the Houston area. Call 877-946-7731.

**Paint or Custom-Made Decals?**

My 1996 Allegro Bay has 41,000 miles and is in mint condition inside! But my graphics and decals outside are really hurting. This unit is stored under cover. Is there any availability of getting these decals through Tiffin? We need help. We love this unit.

Duane Knopf  
Anna, Texas

Dear Duane,  
The decals for this model year will have to be custom made and will be very expensive. You may want to have the decals removed and the stripes replaced with paint.

**A Phaeton Want List**

As a potential Phaeton buyer, I would require a (1) larger shower, (2) GE Profile Advantium 120 microwave/convection oven, (3) AGM Batteries, (4) spring loaded, filtered, drinking water faucet at the sink in the galley, (5) a tank monitor with percentage read-outs, and (6) a flush system for the black and grey water tanks. Some available options that would be nice: (1) dishwasher, (2) remote locking storage doors, and (3) a power reel for water and electric lines.

Jim Barton  
North Augusta, South Carolina

Dear Jim,  
Most of these items can be optioned on our Allegro Bus. It is not possible to add these items to the Phaeton because it is produced in a production line environment with only certain options available.

The last three options you mentioned can be added aftermarket. The AGM batteries can be ordered for production line installation. Items (4) and (6) can be added aftermarket. It is not possible to offer a larger shower in a fixed, standardized floorplan. The Phaeton is still the most

popular diesel pusher brand in the U.S. because we incorporated the most popular features as standard.

**Can’t Turn Off the Gearshift Light**

I have a 2008 Allegro Open Road on a Freightliner chassis. The gearshift is on

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the dash. Problem: The light that shows what gear it is in does not go off, even when the ignition switch is off. Is this something I can fix?

William Cass  
Anniston, Alabama

Dear William,  
Other than removing the shifter from the dash and checking the wires that come directly to the shifter, there is nothing more you can do. The shifter and the wiring harness were supplied by Freightliner Chassis. Your best bet is to take it to a Freightliner service center.

**Thermostat Location in an Allegro RED**  
We have a 2010 Allegro RED 36 QSA. The thermostat (AC-Heat control) is mounted on the living room slide-out wall by the overhead storage cabinets. It seems to respond to the temperatures outside the coach rather than to interior temps. Can the thermostat be relocated? What suggestion do you have to make it more functional? Thanks.

Richard Mock  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Dear Richard,  
Relocating the thermostat will be problematic. First, try removing the thermostat and put insulation in the hole where the wire is going through, and if possible additional insulation between the wall and the thermostat. If it is installed on the overhead cabinet adjacent to the speaker box, remove the inside panel in the cabinet and add insulation in that cavity. This should prevent exterior air from creating a false reading on the thermostat.

**Battery Straps Dissolved**  
I have a 2011 Allegro 32BA. When I checked the water level of the batteries, I discovered that the plastic hold down straps for both batteries had disintegrated. There was no evidence of heat or acid on the tops of the batteries. The straps had been dissolved, not melted. What happened and what should I do to pre-

vent this problem in the future? What do I use now to secure the batteries? Has this problem been reported before?

Russell Thackery  
Dade City, Florida

Dear Russell,  
I do not know what could have caused this. The problem as you describe it has to our knowledge not occurred before. I suggest you replace the straps by ordering the same item from our parts department. Check the battery tray frequently to see if you can observe any deterioration.

**Entry Steps Won't Close**  
I have a brand new 2011 Allegro Bus 43 QGP. The entrance steps worked fine when I bought it in September. Now, when I turn on the toggle switch for the entrance steps and close the door, the steps do not retract. They will retract when I turn on the ignition key. Replacing the control box did not solve the problem. The batteries are charged and I have checked the fuses I was asked to check. What else could be wrong?

Thomas Sheehan  
Spring Hill, Florida

Dear Thomas,  
Double check the three fuses which operate the steps. They are located in the outside storage compartment under the driver's seat. You should see a black holder with three fuses: one 20 and two 5-amp fuses. Be sure all three are good. If that is not the problem, the only thing left is the magnetic switch at the entrance door. Take it apart and touch the two wires together. If the steps work, you have a defective switch.

**Charging Batteries Takes Too Long**  
I have a 2004 Allegro Bay 37DB on a Workhorse chassis. My problem is the amount of time it takes to charge the house batteries using the generator. Would it create a problem running the generator to operate a battery charger, and then charge the house batteries with both the battery charger and the inverter

at the same time? I assume it would be fairly simple to install a switch to turn off the "Jacks Down Alarm" so I could run my engine to charge the house batteries with the jacks down.

We use our motorhome every weekend from March 15 to November 15, thus doing a lot of dry camping because the parks are not open that early or late in western New York. My motorhome is always plugged into shore power when not in use and during the four months of winter storage. I just replaced my house batteries this year.

Ned Fenton  
Salamanca, New York

Dear Ned,  
There should be no problem running a battery charger on the batteries at the same time the converter is charging them. By-passing the jacks down switch is a pretty simple task, but you must remember to double check the jacks before you move the coach. It would be very easy to forget and try to move the coach with the jacks down (which, needless to say, would be very costly).

**Engine Overheating Problem**  
My 2008 Phaeton 36 QSH (Freightliner chassis, 360-hp Cummins 8.3 liter engine) has a very troublesome overheating problem. It has been checked by the local Freightliner dealer twice and once by the Cummins dealer. They have not been able to duplicate the problem.

The last Freightliner diagnosis came up with the result that the overheating may be a false alarm. They believe some of the electronics in the dash area may be operating improperly. On several occasions since the coach was new, the temp gauge registered a rapid increase and the alarm sounded. In one situation we had been driving on interstate highway for several hours. We pulled into a rest area for 10 minutes and left the engine running. Upon returning to the interstate and 65 mph, the alarm sounded. After pulling to the shoulder, the temp gauge

returned to normal within two minutes. The engine has never boiled over in any of these episodes and there has never been a reduction in engine power. I will appreciate your direction on what to do next.

Joe Rousseau  
Framingham, Massachusetts

Dear Joe,  
Your situation does sound like a false code is going to your alarm. However, you cannot rule out the possibility of something else being wrong. Contact the factory Freightliner chassis service center (800-385-4357) with your VIN number. They should have the information from your local Freightliner service center where they put your unit on the computer. Your symptoms may be similar to previously diagnosed problems in other

units. This is something Tiffin has not seen on other Phaeton units.

**Air Filter Got Soaked Four Times**  
I have a 2005 Allegro Bay. During the second week in September (Alabama-Penn State game) while driving in the rain, the air filter began taking on water. The filter would get wet and the engine would cut out. I replaced four filters that week. Is there anything I can do to prevent the filter from getting soaked when I have to drive in the rain? Help!

Jimmy Carringer  
Florence, Alabama

Dear Jimmy,  
Depending on the chassis you have, the air intake for the filter will have a water drop box in front of the filter. It allows

the air to go in and the water to drop out. If the box has not been damaged, the fix may be some type of shield to restrict water from hitting the air intake directly, but still allowing the air to flow in.

**AM Radio Reception While Traveling**  
We have a 2005 Allegro Open Road. When we are underway, we cannot get any AM radio reception except when parked, even though we have replaced the dash-mounted original equipment radio. We do get FM reception and the CD player works well. Any suggestions? Also, can you suggest the best way to remove the damaged and aged graphics from the exterior without damaging the fiberglass? We can't afford to have it done professionally and repainted at this time.

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This coach has lots of nice spaces for both living and travel. Enclosed are several pictures showing additions and modifications we have made that others may want to copy. Your Tech Talk is a great column and a must read for owners. Thanks.

Wally & Ann McMinn  
Farmington Hill, Michigan

Dear Wally & Ann,  
During daytime hours, most local AM stations have a limited range and serve a market in the counties or towns where they are located. As you pass through those areas on major highways you are probably on the periphery of the station's service area. At night powerful stations come on line, and you can pick them up easily. For a better explanation, key the following into your URL.

<http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/why-am-radio-stations-must-reduce-power-change-operations-or-cease-broadcasting-night>

The best way to remove the defective decals is to use a heat gun. Be very careful not to get the fiberglass too hot. Replacement decals can be ordered from the Tiffin Service Center.

### A Comment on Operating Fridge on Gas While Traveling

I would like to comment on the Tech Talk letter from Dick Dabney and your reply pertaining to his fridge turning off en route.

With a little preparation, it is not necessary to operate your fridge en route. Before leaving home, I hook up to my house current for 48 hours and turn the refrigerator and freezer on high. Then I load the fridge and freezer (freezer stuff already frozen before loading). En route each day, I open the fridge only when I stop for lunch or for a rest stop. While stopped I start the generator and turn the fridge on. In 15 years of RVing, I have never had a problem keeping food cold and frozen.

Mr. Inman, in your answer, you said to keep the fridge operating on gas while traveling. I have been told and I believe that it is

dangerous to travel with the gas on. In case of an accident, if the propane is on and the valve open, there is a greater chance of fire. I hope RV owners will follow my protocol, play it safe, and avoid any problems.

Dwight Caler  
Colebrook, New Hampshire

Dear Dwight,  
Thanks for your MO. As the old maxim goes, better safe than sorry.

### Microwave Not Vented Correctly?

I have a 2011 Allegro Open Road. When I turn on the fan in the microwave, air comes out all around the sides of the unit. I thought the microwaves had vents to the outside. Is this unit hooked up wrong?

Sherrod Mitcham  
Monroeville, Alabama

Dear Sherrod,  
First, check the outside vent to see if there is a restriction between the vent and the microwave. If not, the motor for the microwave may have been installed in a reversed position, causing air to be drawn into the unit instead of pushing it outside. If this is the case, you will need to take it to a service center to remove the microwave and reverse the fan.

### Discoloration on Front of Allegro Bay

We own a 2005 Allegro Bay with full body paint which was purchased new. We recently noticed rust-colored spots on the front of the coach (see attached picture). The spots are underneath the clear plastic coating. The coach has been housed under a shed since it was purchased. Do you have any ideas on what has caused the discoloration and how it can be fixed? Thanks.

Robert & DeVon McDaniel  
Hueytown, Alabama

Dear Robert & DeVon,  
Your unit probably came equipped with the 3M plastic paint protection on the front. The rust-colored spots are mold that have developed from moisture build-up. The only fix we know to correct it is to remove the 3M film, clean the front

cap and wax it, and then use Diamond Shield's protective cover (which we use today on all of our units). Be extremely careful not to pull the paint off when you remove the 3M product.

### 10-year Old Norcold Fridge Shuts Off Intermittently

We have a 2001 Allegro Bus that has a double-door Norcold refrigerator. The refrigerator has all of the updates. The unit can work fine for two to four days and then shut off completely, regardless of whether it is running on LP or 110v. Restarting the unit immediately has been futile. After remaining idle for one to two days, it can be restarted. But then we begin the same ordeal again. When it is operating, the fridge temp occasionally increases to 50-55 degrees and the freezer works fine. An authorized Norcold service center and the Tiffin Service Center have failed to find a remedy in 18 months. We are desperate for a solution and would appreciate your input as soon as possible.

Don Dunn  
Valley Springs, California

Dear Don,  
Replacing the refrigerator is the only sure solution we can offer. Otherwise, your only option is to return to an authorized Norcold service center and hope they can make an accurate diagnosis for a successful repair.

### Workhorse Ignition Protector Kit

I received your package in the mail today with the "Installation Instructions for Ignition Protection Kit." I will take this to the RV shop that is authorized to do Workhorse chassis maintenance. It kind of bothers me that in earlier correspondence with Workhorse, they never acknowledged having a problem. If there is no persistent problem, why then would they have developed this "ignition protector kit"?

Bruce Wharram  
Sylvania, Ohio

Dear Bruce,  
You've got a point!



OWNER PROFILE *Continued from page 51*

girls could wear. The women who work with Campers on Mission saw an opportunity to contribute to this need while their husbands were working construction. The project has spread throughout the United States and there are now over 100,000 articles of clothing being provided per year to destitute children all over the world.”

Bill picked up the story of their mission. “We constructed a building for a black congregation in Ansley, Alabama. They had been saving for 15 years and they had a slab ready for us. We built their building in three weeks. Those folks really cooked up some great meals for us everyday at noon. One day I asked, ‘Does anyone know how to cook collards with pigs feet?’ They laughed and I knew they did. The next day I had one big pot of collards with pigs feet. Their old building which had to be torn down was 114 years old, built out of heart pine.”

“We did another building in Bloomfield, New Mexico. The congregation had only 18 members. The day we finished and gave them the keys to the building, we left 18 members in the parking lot crying,” Judy recalled. “Our work is very rewarding and sometimes very emotional.”

Now in service just over 10 years, the 2001 Zephyr has performed up to Bill Ingalls’ expectations. “Since we began our service with Campers on Mission, we have been coming to the

TMH Service Center twice a year for maintenance. We have had excellent service at TMH on a regular basis. I have yet to meet an unreliable employee,” Bill said. “We get our Cummins and Freightliner service done at Bay Diesel here in Red Bay. For our purposes, this Zephyr has been a dream machine. It allows us to have a relaxed lifestyle in a very reliable motorhome. I drive 60 miles an hour and usually no more than 250 miles a day. We do not travel at night. At least 90 percent of our travel is for Campers on Mission.”

“The coach now has 93,400 miles on it,” Bill continued. “I keep a record of every gas fill-up, oil change, and service event. Today we get 7.4 miles per gallon. We were getting 9.2 until the advent of ultra low-sulfur fuel.”

The Ingalls’ experiences with Campers on Mission have been a fulfilling way to spend their retirement years and an inspiration to those who hear their story. **RIS**

### LET US HEAR FROM YOU

“Serious Tech Talk” is a very important section of *Roughing It Smoothly* in which information sharing flows in both directions. Please continue to send your questions to Danny Inman on the enclosed postcard. A separate postcard is enclosed for “From the Road,” a fun part of the magazine for readers to share their motorhoming experiences. You can email us at: fredthompson1941@hotmail.com. — Fred Thompson, editor



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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER *Continued from page 4*

there every year since. We were naive but we sure were determined. This makes our 39th year in the show.

Red Bay in 1972 was the same little town that it had been for decades. However, for a small town, we really had some very good businesses providing jobs for the population within a 20-mile radius. We had Sunshine Mills, Keeton Lumber Company, Wrangler, Lance Garment Company, and a few other small companies. Sunshine Mobile Homes (manufactured homes built on an assembly line) had a wonderful workforce base that understood building concepts. As Tiffin Motorhomes grew, quite a few of our employees came from Sunshine Mobile Homes and other manufactured mobile home companies.


In the northwest corner of Alabama, Red Bay has access to three major arteries used for commercial transportation. The Tennessee River to the north and northeast is only 25 miles away. Two major four-lane highways, U.S. 72 and 78, are within 30 miles. For many years the Illinois Central Railroad came through Red Bay and provided a great opportunity to expand the town's manufacturing base.

The mainstay for Red Bay has always been timber and agriculture. Today you will still see big logging trucks passing through town. The farmers are a little more diversified now, planting soybeans, corn, and cotton. At this time of year you'll see winter wheat in many of the big fields. As the years passed, Red Bay kept up with the progress that business was making throughout the country. Our school system grew, too. We have

over 1,000 students in 13 grades. I had the privilege of serving on the school board from 1972 to 1988. Red Bay was and still is a fine place to live and raise a family.

In the beginning, our Allegro campers were very simple to build. We used 1-inch tubing on 12-inch centers in the walls, and a structural steel floor frame with 16-gauge steel skirting. The outside skin was roll-formed aluminum. Our basic camper had water, LP gas for heating and cooking, holding tanks, and a bathroom with a shower. All of the following items were *options*: air conditioner, generator, radio, and TV antenna. We did not even offer microwaves, gas ovens, or TVs.

In 1972 our Class A campers were either 21- or 25-foot. The entry door was 24 inches wide. The first chassis had GVWR of 10,800 and 11,800 pounds. Today our 40-ft. diesel pusher carries 20,000 to 24,000 pounds on the rear axle — twice as much as our 1972 motorhome's entire weight. The 21-ft. Allegro retailed for \$7,500 and the 25-ft. unit sold for \$9,500. Then, as now, weight and cost have a direct relationship.

The people in Red Bay seemed to appreciate that a motorhome company was located here. Most of our employees had worked at Sunliner and Safari. Except for a few places where a building has burned or been torn down, Red Bay today still looks a lot like it did 40 years ago. Our customers who come to the factory for service really enjoy visiting the Red Bay Museum and seeing the past that Scotty Kennedy, Jane Williams, and others have preserved with untold hours of work. When you visit our town, I highly recommend a visit to the museum. 

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## FROM THE ROAD *Continued from page 48*

spring, summer, and fall. We have an amazing journey ahead of us. It's our time to do what we have dreamed of.


So, is it worth the sacrifices of giving up a comfortable home, being away from the family and friends? We can't deny that we miss them all, and it is depressing at times. Although we don't like some of the circumstances, we will not be giving up this lifestyle any time soon. We'll make the necessary adjustments and sacrifices in order to see this wonderful country. Our families are only a phone call or email away, and with the new technology available, we can have visual calls to them over the internet. Not quite the same as giving them hugs but they've all been very understanding, knowing that it's our time in life to do the things that we have been planning for many years. Also, there is always air travel for emergency situations back home. This lifestyle will fulfill our dream in the short time we have left on this planet.

I am very grateful to *Roughing It Smoothly* and editor Fred Thompson for the opportunity and space I have been allowed to give something to our fellow campers. Whether its facts about places to see, campgrounds, a little humor, my opinions, or to tell Tiffin owners just what to expect when they purchase one of the best RV products on the market today, is satisfaction enough for me. I also have to congratulate Terri for her patience and put-

ting up with all the humor aimed her way. She is my soulmate and I hope she will stay with me till the end of our journey on earth. I'm just hoping and praying that her six GPS gizmos will take us both in the same direction in the afterlife. She mentioned buying a new (that would make 7 of them) RV Rand McNally 7" screen GPS unit . . . maybe it will help us get there.

If you see us on the road, in an RV park, rest area, fuel stop, or maybe parked in a Walmart or Cracker Barrel lot, please take the time to say hello. We invite all of you to stop by the Wilderness RV Park Estates at Silver Springs, Florida in the winter or our lot in the Berkshire Mountains of Peru, Massachusetts, in the summer to say hello. Email us...we love swapping Tiffin-Freightliner-Cummins stories and information that may help each of us. We have learned a lot about the problems and fixes that might arise, especially those of interest to many folks out there that are contemplating a full-time RV lifestyle. Our journey to date has been both delightful and adrenaline-charged.

Have Terri and I made the correct decision to sell our house, buy a Tiffin Phaeton and be full-timers? We wouldn't have it any other way and most all full-timers will tell you the same thing. You can't beat the enjoyment and pleasure to do what you want ... go where you want... any time you want.

May God bless and keep you all safe on your journeys. 





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We figure the best way to guarantee a top-of-the-line chassis, is to build one yourself. So we do. Right here in Red Bay, Alabama. We design, custom-build, and install the chassis with the same quality standards we've used since 1972. The end result is a chassis that delivers superior performance, reliability, and customization. A true thing of beauty.

[TIFFINMOTORHOMES.COM/POWERGLIDE](http://TIFFINMOTORHOMES.COM/POWERGLIDE)



**TIFFIN MOTORHOMES**

WHEREVER YOU GO, WE GO.