

Roughing It Smoothly[®]



IN THIS ISSUE

- The 2017 Allegro 36UA
- Denali National Park and Preserve
- Destination: Asheville





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Roughing It Smoothly®

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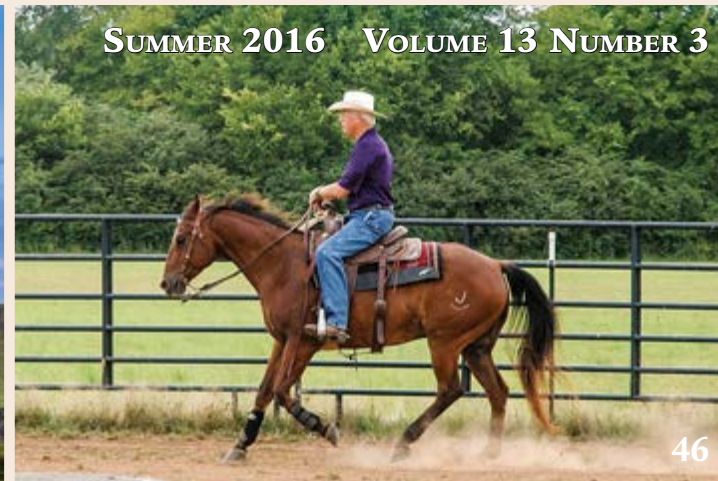
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8



22



46

SUMMER 2016 VOLUME 13 NUMBER 3

Departments

President's Corner	4	On the Road with Dave & Terri	44
New Technology in Woodworking Shops Enhances Quality		Owner Profile	46
		Bob and Carol Hill	
Tiffin Allegro Club News	6	News You Can Use	60
Tiffin Management Team	16	Traveling With Your Pets	66
Tony Lambert		From the Road	68
Dealer Profile	32	Serious Tech Talk	72
Transwest Truck Trailer RV			
Dealer Spotlight	40	Cover: Denali	
George Eidsness			

Features

- **The 2017 Allegro Open Road 36UA**
Tiffin's Ultimate Family Camping Machine
See page 8
- **Alaska! And Denali National Park and Preserve**
See page 22
- **Iconic Asheville**
Delightful for Over a Century
See page 50

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

Over 26,500 Tiffin owners are now receiving *Roughing It Smoothly* through the U.S. and Canadian postal service. Over 42,000 have chosen to read *RIS* online at the Tiffin website. Our dealers are distributing 12,000 copies in their showrooms. *Roughing It Smoothly* is in its 13th year and is the largest magazine published by an RV manufacturer in number of pages and total distribution.

In each issue you will still find two cards for sending information to the editorial office in Monroe, Georgia. Using the "From the Road" card, we invite you to tell fellow Tiffin coach owners about your experiences and the special places you have discovered in your travels. If the card is not large enough, please type a whole page double-spaced, and mail it to Fred Thompson, Book Production Resources, P.O. Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30655-1150. Be sure to include your name and address, phone number, and email address in case we need to edit or ask for more information.

Color prints are welcome and we will use them if we have the space. We do not return color prints or manuscript. You can also send your "From the Road" contribution by email to fredthompson1941@hotmail.com You may attach your images to your email. Images should be at least one megabyte in size. On the subject line of the email, please write FROM THE ROAD. We do not open emails without subject lines.

Change of Address

Please use a standard change of address card from USPS and send to *Roughing It Smoothly*, PO Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30655-1150. You may also change your address online by sending your email to risncoa@hotmail.com First, enter your old address as it appears on your magazine label (we must remove your old address before we can add a new one). Second, please enter your new three-line address including the zip code. **We do not accept phone calls for changes of address.**

Serious Tech Talk

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

New Subscribers

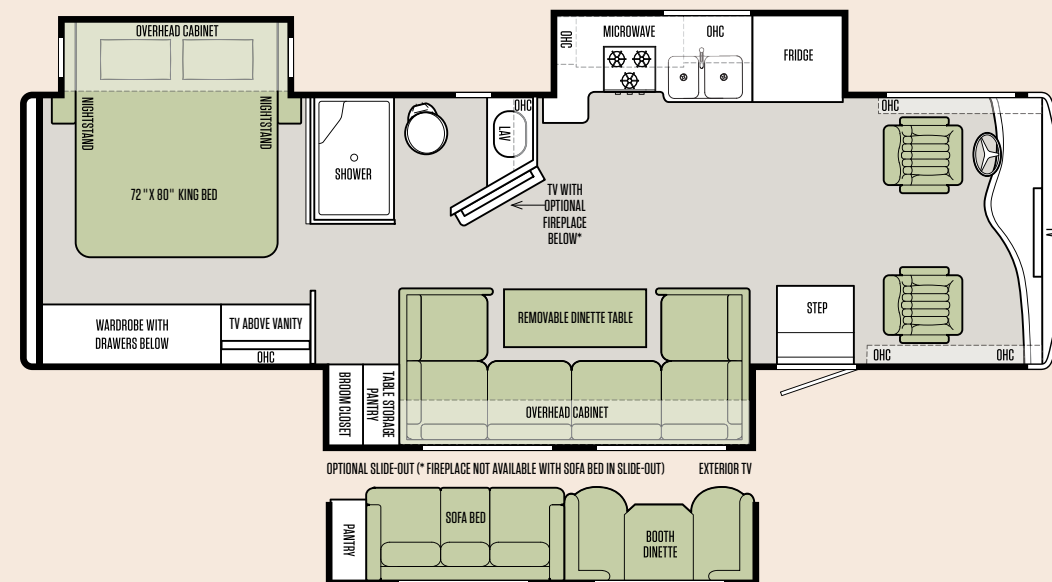
If you have just purchased a new Tiffin motorhome, your name will be added to our mailing list automatically. If you purchased a pre-owned Tiffin motorhome, send the year, brand, length & floorplan, your name and address, and VIN to *Roughing It Smoothly*, PO Box 1150, Monroe, GA 30655-1150.

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The Allegro Open Road 31MA is now shipping to dealers. Built on the Ford chassis with the V10 Triton engine, it is loaded with standard features at a base price of \$155,000. Three options put this 31-footer in a class by itself: a residential refrigerator with 4 batteries (\$1,160); a king size bed with memory foam mattress (\$870); and a dinette with computer workstation (\$725).



New Technology in Woodworking Shops Enhances Quality of Tiffin's Cabinets and Paneling

by Bob Tiffin

Building a coach at Tiffin Motorhomes is a progression of steps that begins with the acceptance of a dealer's order in the Tiffin Sales Department and concludes in a department that we call Final Finish. The production of all departments must be coordinated in order for the units to flow evenly through the scheduled production process.

In all of our six brands over the last 15 years, the quality of our cabinetry has been raised to the level of fine furniture and has distinguished our interiors in the industry. A careful examination of those interiors will reveal the hundreds of parts required to build the furniture in each coach, including the featured wall panels and compartment modules. In fact, the number of parts are so numerous that the woodworking shops have a separate Small Parts Department that cuts and shapes all of the parts required to assemble the cabinets in each floorplan.

However, the thousands of small parts and assemblies that are created for the 12 motorhomes we build each day have to be sanded, stained, sealed, sanded again, and varnished before they are delivered to our craftspeople for assembly. The parts destined for an Allegro Bus or a Zephyr must all be hand-glazed with finishes selected by our customers.

Prior to April of this year, the approximately 3,500 parts stained and finished each day were processed in a 12,000 sq. ft. area where each part was placed on a rack and air dried. We had created a bottleneck in the production process and new technology and systems processing were needed to keep production moving smoothly.

Van began his involvement with Tiffin's cabinet manufactur-

ing nearly 20 years ago when he opened a plant in the nearby village of Vina to construct and finish the raised panel doors and other components which added significant quality to the motorhomes' interiors. As the primary woodworking shop in Red Bay expanded, Van selected a wide variety of more efficient, computer-controlled equipment to produce our fine interiors.

Van did most of the research to find a company to design a closed tunnel system into which wood parts and components enter from one end and the finished stained, coated, and glazed parts and components emerge from the other end of a 247-foot tunnel. The tunnel design was used to eliminate the tiny particles floating in the air that can land on the wet surfaces of stain, varnish, or glaze and flaw the ultimate finish of the furniture.

A predetermined, controlled amount of filtered air is inducted into each section of the tunnel based on the operation taking place in that section — staining, sealing, sanding, gloss coating (varnishing), glazing, and heat drying. Air in the tunnel is continuously exhausted through filters that collect particulate from spraying and sanding. The parts are placed on carts or racks that move through the tunnel at a speed of 1.5 feet per minute, transported by a floor-mounted conveyor. Employees who spray stain, gloss coatings, and glazes wear head gear supplying fresh air.

The time consuming process of open-air drying on racks has been eliminated. The final stage in the tunnel system is the heat and air drying process that delivers all of the 3,500 parts ready for assembly.

The tunnel occupies one-half of the old chassis building




At left: Bob Tiffin made a visit to the new paint tunnel two weeks after it opened to congratulate the key management personnel who played a role in its development. From left, Tony Lambert, Allen Howard, Bob Tiffin, Van Tiffin, and Andy Pounds.



which is 330 feet long and 100 feet wide. The other half of the building is occupied by the department that assembles all of the finished parts into overhead and galley cabinets, fascias on the slide-outs, valances, doors, bedside tables, dinette-computer workstations, wall modules, and tray ceilings and accents.

When the finished components emerge on carts from the end of the tunnel, the carts do a U-turn and move at 1.5 feet per minute down the alley between the tunnel and the assembly department. Each component is numbered for a specific assembly and keyed to the motorhome on the assembly line where it will be installed. Three transport assistants check the IDs of each part and component and take it to the correct workstation where it will be used in the assembly of a module for a specific motorhome.

The bottleneck has been eliminated, the finished quality has been improved significantly, and the efficiency of the new system will very likely reduce costs.

We are indebted to Andy Pounds, Allen Howard, and Tony Lambert who oversaw the development and installation of the new system. Our employees and their dedicated teamwork is the foundation of Tiffin's success in the U.S. motorhome industry. My sincere thanks goes out to every employee who sees the importance of his or her job in the overall process of a successful company. 

From top left: Unpainted parts for cabinets and wall modules are staged into the staining room of the paint tunnel. ♦ After stain is applied to a unit, a technician wipes the stain to achieve an even application. A sealer is applied before the unit enters an oven. ♦ Coming out of the oven, a technician does a light sanding and rubbing of the sealer application. *From top right:* A glaze is applied followed by a top coat prior to drying in the second oven. ♦ Parts destined for the Zephyr and Allegro Bus get the Luster Sheen upgrade option and a second pass through the oven. ♦ All of the parts passing through the tunnel are transported on racks or trolleys moved by a conveyor mounted in the floor. These parts are entering the second tunnel. ♦ Trolleys emerging from the oven are turned around and placed on another conveyor that runs between the tunnel and the cabinet assembly department.



Tiffin Allegro Club Rally GILLETTE, WYOMING

by Sally Moore

The Tiffin Allegro Club hosted our third rally for 2016 in beautiful Gillette, Wyoming, June 20–24. The weather turned unseasonably hot and dry, but cool heads prevailed and everyone enjoyed the rally despite the heat. Located in the Black Hills between Yellowstone National Park and Mt. Rushmore, Gillette was a good central location for touring the area. We were very excited to host 307 coaches from 35 states and three provinces of Canada.

Monday saw coaches arriving early and steadily throughout the day. Thanks to a top-notch parking crew of volunteers, the coaches were guided in and parked quickly and efficiently. Guests made their way to the Energy Hall where they were greeted by more volunteers manning the registration tables and then visited the vendor area for shopping. We were very happy to have several vendors present, even though Gillette is an area that is more isolated than other rally locations we have visited. A very popular booth was the folks representing the Tiffin Parts Store. We hope to include this benefit in more of our future rallies!

The rally officially kicked off Monday evening with a welcome by Kelly and Sally Moore and Andy Baer, Tiffin national sales manager. Tiffin motorhome owner, Noel Chalmers, from Richmond, BC, blessed everyone by playing Amazing Grace on his bagpipes. Beautiful! After a delicious meal from Prime Rib Catering, we were honored to salute our many Tiffin owners who have served our country and Canada both in the military and as first responders. Anthems from each branch of the ser-

vice were played as the veterans stood. Lee Greenwood's "Proud to be an American" had everyone on their feet waving American flags. Veterans, we are honored to pay tribute to you! Thank you, volunteers, for the beautifully decorated stage! After the veterans salute, Tom and Pat Webber of Tampa, Florida, entertained everyone with our version of Bingo, aka TIFFIN BINGO! Thank you, Webbers, for helping throughout the rally!

Our trusty crew of golf cart and trolley drivers were out early on Tuesday morning bringing everyone to Energy Hall for a delicious buffet breakfast. Seminars began immediately following breakfast in three conference rooms. Among other topics, rally attendees learned more about the operation of their television & navigation systems from Triple H Electronics, the Tiffin electrical system by Daniel Allen, and better ways to utilize the convection/microwave oven with convection/microwave expert, Janet Sadlack. After all of these talks and discussions, it was time for ice cream. Thank you to Mary Moppins, goclean.com, for sponsoring our ice cream social. It was a perfect treat for a hot, sunny afternoon. A special feature for attendees was visiting the Craft & Hobby show hosted by other Tiffin owners. Beautiful handiwork was on display. Everything from wood working to quilting to jewelry was shown and all of it was made by Tiffin RV enthusiasts.

Bob Tiffin addressed the group on Tuesday evening and welcomed everyone to the Tiffin rally. Bob and Judy Tiffin are very gracious to take time from their busy schedules to attend many of the Tiffin rallies and visit with the owners. After a great meal served by the caterer's staff, everyone was treated to a fantastic performance by Sarah Getto from Norman, Oklahoma. Sarah was born blind with a cleft palate. She taught herself to play the piano at a very young age as well as several other musical instruments. Her singing voice has a beautiful quality and the crowd fell in love with her. Her greatest desire is to use her col-



lege degree to teach music in high school. We know she would be an awesome teacher, but we will really miss her if she can no longer perform for us.

Wednesday brought another series of seminars with popular presenters such as Marcus McCluney from Freightliner Custom Chassis and Tom Webber with his "Tips for Terrified RV Drivers". With a break for hamburgers and hot dogs at lunch, the seminars concluded mid-afternoon. Always a fun activity is the RV and campsite decoration contest among the owners. Competition was fierce! We had some fantastic entries this year in the theme of "The Old Wild West." Three winners were announced at dinner and each won \$75 Tiffin gift certificates. They are George and Sandi Fizell from Tucson, Arizona; Wayne and Diane Heath from Kent, Washington; and Doyle and Doris Freeman of Jackson, Tennessee.

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

awarded Tiffin gift certificates for two embroidered Tiffin jackets! We certainly hope all of these folks enjoy their beautiful new coaches and have many miles of safe travels. After another fantastic meal, the group was treated to some Motown hits by DD & The Fayrohs.

Thursday had everyone up and out early again to partake of another delicious breakfast buffet. More seminars followed breakfast. We were very fortunate at the Gillette Cam-Plex to have three large seminar areas where everyone could comfortably enjoy learning more about their coaches. Gary Harris, Powerglide chassis manager, drew a large crowd as always


along with Harold Kimbrough and Ross Fischer from Cummins Onan. The information gleaned from seminars alone is worth the price of a Tiffin rally! Delicious meals, good entertainment, fun and fellowship with other Tiffin owners are great side benefits.

Despite the high temperatures and a dust storm, we are thankful to our owners who participated in the Tiffin swap meet. Bargains were found and another great opportunity to visit with everyone.

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

Thursday night was our farewell evening and many took the opportunity to break out their 10-gallon western hats and boots. Thanks to everyone who participated! After door prizes and a fabulous meal of prime rib with all the trimmings, everyone enjoyed the country and western band, Chancey Williams and the Younger Brothers. A few couples even broke out in the two-step!

Gillette was the conclusion of our 2016 rallies. Watch for an email from Tiffin Sideroads in September or October announcing our 2017 schedule. Tiffin rallies are very popular so make your plans early if your travel schedule pairs up with ours. Registration will be made online at tiffinmotorhomes.com for each rally. When we announce the 2017 locations and dates, we will also announce the date that each rally will be available for sale (approximately six months prior to the rally). We look forward to hosting you at a Tiffin rally next year!

Until next time, "Happy Trails!" 



Left: Tiffin attendees honored all veterans on the opening night of the rally. ♦ Kelly Moore demonstrating the photo booth at the campsite of Doyle & Doris Freeman, Jackson TN. ♦ Tiffin motorhome owner, Noel Chalmers, from Richmond, BC, blessed everyone by playing Amazing Grace on his bagpipes. ♦ Bob Tiffin greeted everyone during the rally. ♦ Above: Wayne & Diane Heath of Kent, WA built their covered wagon scene which was among the top three contenders in the RV and campsite decoration contest.



Text and interior photography by Fred Thompson

The 2017 Allegro Open Road 36UA

TIFFIN'S ULTIMATE FAMILY CAMPING MACHINE

During the last three generations, census records show that American families have “downsized.” My own ancestry bears that out. My maternal grandparents had five children, each of whom married and had children. Two of them produced two children each; two produced only one child each; and one produced three. My paternal grandparents had seven children: two of them produced three children each; two had two children each; two had only one each; and one never married. With one exception, all of the

grandchildren followed their parents’ examples.

So why did Tiffin Motorhomes build a 36-foot Allegro Open Road capable of sleeping two adults and *seven* children? There are two answers to that question. Kids love to invite their friends to join them for great camping trips to state or national parks where there are lots of fun things to do.

And the second answer is — adventurous grandparents who enjoyed the camping lifestyle while bringing up their own children now are looking forward to taking their

grandkids camping. Carolyn and I are amazed at how many grandparents have related stories to us about taking their grands on an RV camping trip.

Believe it or not, we have seven grandchildren all of whom are asking, "When can we take a camping trip with Papa and Nina?" We are hoping the three sets of parents who produced these seven beautiful kids will book a room at the park's lodge or a hotel not more than 10 miles away! At least until we are seasoned at getting seven active youngsters to settle down and go to sleep before midnight.

But we are definitely looking forward to great fun this summer: hiking, swimming, fishing, canoeing, campfires, s'mores, ghost stories, weenie roasts, rock hounding, star gazing, and more. Of course, we could do it in tents. But after 13 years of traveling in a Tiffin motorhome, these two old grandparents are just flat out spoiled. We can regale our grandchildren with stories about camping in tents with their parents but – you guessed it – we are going to let our three children do the tent camping with our grands and we are going to spoil them with camping trips in this Allegro 36UA every chance we get. Now let's take a look at this unique motorhome.

An Overall Look

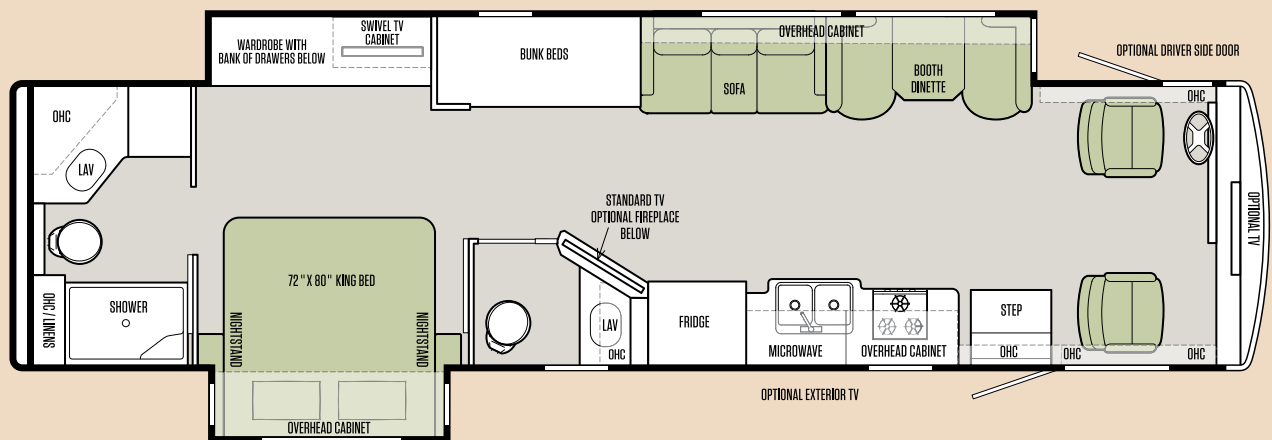
The 2017 edition of the Allegro Open Road features several major changes, making Tiffin's gas-powered motorhome look

more like its diesel-powered big brothers. You could easily be deceived when you see the new front and rear caps: The front with big bold lines and a solid tri-color paint design; the rear with understated graphics; strong, new typography; and beefed-up taillight treatments. The new dash design is clean and easy to read. Denso redesigned the HVAC controls in the dash. Overall, especially at this price point, the 2017 Allegro Open Road is an exciting new coach.

What's Under a Great Coach

We are enamored with the 36UA not only because it will sleep two adults and seven children (actually, you can spec the optional air coil hide-a-bed sofa and change that to four adults and five children). We like it because it is an exceptionally well-designed motorhome built on a Ford 26K chassis. Ford matches the chassis to a 6.8-liter V10 power plant that develops 320-hp at 4,250 rpm. At 3,000 rpm, it offers 460 lb.-ft. of torque. The TorqShift® 6-speed automatic transmission with overdrive has the Tow/Haul Mode that will select the correct gear to efficiently tow your vehicle or trailer. Cruise control and an emergency start switch are standard. The cargo carrying capacity is 3,567 lbs. The basement storage capacity is approximately 203 cubic feet. The coach has ample capacity in its wet tanks. It carries 80 gallons of fuel, 70 gallons of fresh water, and has black and grey fluid capacities of 50 and 66 gallons respectively.

The Floorplan



The daytime living area measures 17 feet N/S and 10.67 feet E/W, including a front galley and a mid-section sofa and entertainment center. Even though the PS galley is not built into a slide-out, there is ample room in the living area for everyone to move about (admittedly, I did not have seven grandchildren moving about the coach when I wrote this review). It is worth noting that even when the DS slide-out is retracted you still have plenty of floor space to prepare and serve lunch on a travel day. You also have plenty of room to enter the PS half bath.

An accommodating feature is the location of the PS mid-section television directly across from the DS sofa that has three seat belts. That translates into entertainment for the kids under seatbelts while you are traveling.

Another good feature in this floorplan is the large sliding door that completely separates the master bedroom and rear bath from the children's sleeping quarters. At night, the children have access to the half bath which is on the south side of the master bedroom compartment.



The Galley and Dining Area

The galley's solid surface countertop measures 6'2" by 29", perfect for serving buffet style. On pretty days, we will take our food out to the picnic table. If the weather doesn't cooperate, we will turn the driver and passenger chairs sideways and put a card table between them. Four more can sit in the dinette and we'll bring out the TV trays to take care of three on the sofa.

The galley features a 3-burner propane cooktop with gas oven and overhead microwave as standard. The microwave in this coach was upgraded to an optional convection-microwave. Three task lights brighten the galley's work areas. The double stainless steel sink features a brushed nickel gooseneck faucet with spray head and single-lever water controls. Three 110v outlets serve the galley area for connecting a coffeemaker or other appliances. An optional designer backsplash created with tiles and solid surface accents

puts the galley in a class by itself. While washing dishes, our grandkids can check out what's going on outside on the patio through a 14 × 19-inch sliding window (washing dishes is one of the prices to pay when you camp with Nina and Papa).

The Spyder control center is located on the wall by the double sink. It covers lighting in the living area; lights for the entry, porch, and awning; gas/electric water heater switches; water heater fault; and water pump. A Fan-Tastic ceiling fan with a color-coded thermostat control is centered over the galley area. A vent in the base of the microwave/convection oven removes the heat from the cooktop, expelling it directly to the outside.

Storage in a Tiffin coach is always a top feature. Under the double sink you will find five cubic feet of storage space. Tiffin leaves it up to the owner to customize how the space is used. To the

left of the oven, a stack of three drawers (17×7×5.5 in.) will take care of your utensils, tableware, hot pads, dish towels, etc. The overhead cabinets (left to right) include a slide-out pantry, a cabinet (1.6 cu. ft.) above the microwave, and a large cabinet (6.9 cu. ft.) above the double sink that can be divided into shelving to suit your personal choices. You can replace the gas oven with two large drawers (18.5×19×[3.25 & 5.25])

Given the choice, most Tiffin owners are selecting the optional residential refrigerator. Tiffin offers in this coach a 20-cu. ft. freezer-over-fridge 2-door unit with an icemaker at an optional price of \$1,160 including four batteries. The fully-featured refrigerator includes two humidity-controlled vegetable drawers, a meat drawer, butter keeper, and two large shelves in the door that accommodate gallon jugs.





Entertainment

The mid-section 40-inch LG television is mounted in the recess of a wall that angles out approximately 30 degrees from the corner of the refrigerator, behind which you will find the coach's spacious half bath. The television is mounted on an extendable arm that makes it viewable from the sofa, the dinette, and the driver and passenger chairs.

The technology for the entertainment center is located in a louvered cabinet just below the bedroom television. The LG Smart+ TV using the system's Launcher Bar will allow you to select programming from Today, Netflix, Hulu Plus, Amazon, Facebook, YouTube, Skype, M-Go and more. You can switch back and forth between apps, movies, and TV shows using the Launcher and its nimble interface.

Input includes data discs, USB devices, MKV playback, external HDD playback, and Blu-Ray 3D discs. Stereo

surround sound output in the living area emanates from four speakers in the ceiling. The LG system is certified by the Digital Living Network Alliance. The DLNA certification makes it easy to set up your home and coach networks to share and stream photos, music, and movies. For more information, see DLNA in Wikipedia. The LG entertainment system also permits recording current programming and playing it back at your convenience.

The television itself, an LG HDTV 4K, displays 8.3 million pixels, making the resolution four times that of full HD. The television uses technology called OLED (organic light-emitting diodes). Unlike traditional, synthetic LEDs (light-emitting diodes), OLED uses an organic substance that glows when an electric current is introduced. This revolutionary material is part of a new design ap-

proach that drastically reduces the thickness and weight of the TV. The light passes through a combination of filters to reproduce spectacular high-definition images. LG utilizes this technology to produce big-screen sizes up to 77 inches diagonal that have the same clarity as a 42-inch unit.

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

The cabinet just below the mid-section television is designed to house the optional Dimplex electric fireplace. It will knock the chill off a cool morning in just a few minutes. Of course, if it is really cool, you can use the optional heat pump in your AC or the propane furnace.

The Full Bath

The full bath is in the rear of the coach. It does not connect to anything except the *master bedroom*. It's a HIS & HERS bath except by permission granted to the grandkids for showers and emergencies.

With a footprint of 4' 8" x 8', this is a spacious full bath by RV standards. The solid surface vanity top puts 12 sq. ft. at your disposal. The extended vanity is





designed to house the optional Splendide combo washer/dryer under the counter top. If you decide against the combo washer/dryer or the stacked washer/dryer, you will gain eight cubic feet of storage. Directly under the ceramic lavatory is another two cubic feet of storage. The corner cabinet over the vanity has a 17 × 20-inch mirrored door and two shelves, each with 2.5 sq. ft. of surface area.

The macerator toilet is positioned in the center of the rear wall. Its electrical flush panel is attached to the side of the vanity.

A large linen and towel storage cabinet fits snugly into the NW corner of the bath, backing up the shower stall that measures 24 inches wide by 38.5 inches long. The adjustable shower head

is mounted on a vertical tube, allowing the bather to raise or lower it for his / her height. A seat and a grab handle provide a safety factor and comfort level for bathing while sitting. Four small shelves offer space for toiletries and soap. Hot water for the galley and the baths is supplied by a 10-gallon DSI gas/electric water heater.

The skylight above the shower is a standard Tiffin feature in all of the company's motorhomes, as is the Fan-Tastic vent with a color-coded thermostat that will quickly evacuate moisture and air. A Spyder control panel takes care of the overhead (OH) lights, water pump, vent lid, and vent fan. A hand towel ring and a bath towel rack complete the amenities in the rear bath.

The Half Bath

This may be the most spacious half bath in the Tiffin lineup of bath-and-a-half coaches. Its footprint measures 58 inches (along the sidewall) by 42 inches (along the wall adjacent to the master bedroom). The solid surface countertop and lavatory has a designer backsplash, a 110v outlet, and a hand towel ring. A large towel rack and a 24 × 24-inch mirror occupies the opposite wall. The single-door wall cabinet has a 17 × 20-inch mirror.

The upper half of the wall cabinet has

an AC 110-volt breaker box plus a DC Loadcenter box with 24 breakers. It is one of the most conveniently placed AC-DC breaker centers in any of Tiffin's floor plans.

The cabinet under the lavatory houses the water panel control center for the coach and also provides 2.5 cu. ft. of storage space. A wall-mounted Spyder control panel services the Fan-Tastic ceiling fan and lid, the water pump, and the OH ceiling lights. A second cabinet and a 13 × 22-inch mirror are located above the toilet.



Sleeping Nine in the 36UA

Kids being kids, they probably will think the two bunk beds are the coolest places to sleep in the 36UA. The bunks are 28 inches wide and 70.5 inches long. Each bunk has its own sliding window, a reading light and an OH center light, plus a 110v outlet. With the privacy doors closed, the two in this sleeping compartment will likely be playing with their iPad, iPod, Gameboy, or whatever, long into the night.

When you are not traveling with the children, the bunks fold up against the wall and a clothes rod across the ceiling converts the bunks to a closet that will accommodate full-length coats and dresses. It would be an easy aftermarket conver-

sion to add a row of drawers or shelves at floor level for shoes.

Moving south from the bunks, the sofa bed (jack knife style) is 68.5 inches long. With the flick of a concealed lever, it pops down into a 40 × 68-inch bed that is quite comfortable for two children up to 5'6" in height. The sofa also provides three seatbelts. As an option, owners may choose a leatherette air-coil, hide-a-bed sofa that comes with an electric pump for quick inflation (\$1,595). This bed will sleep two adults.

The dinette, immediately behind the driver's chair, is 70.5 inches wide. The table drops down to create a bed for two, also measuring 40 × 68 inches. Under the



dinette benches, two large drawers (20 × 21 × 7) provide clothing storage for the night time occupants.

Six compartments above the dinette and sofa bed will give our munchkins plenty of space for clothing storage—about two cubic feet per child. We will order clothing baskets to perfectly fit the space. When it's just the two of us traveling to produce *Roughing It Smoothly*, we can go back to making this coach our rolling office for producing the magazine.

Last year Tiffin brought back the optional drop down bunk above the driver and passenger chairs. With a 32 × 74 mattress, it will take care of our future basketball players. Stored flush against the ceiling, it eliminates the front overhead TV.



The Master Bedroom

With the slide-outs extended, the master bedroom has a footprint of 8 × 13 feet. Between the foot of the king size bed and the wardrobe in the DS slide-out, we were surprised by a five foot corridor of walk-through space, and of course, plenty of room for dressing and morning exercise stretches.

The bedroom opens to the out-of-doors with an 18 × 38-inch window in the slide-out for the standard king bed with memory foam. Side windows in the slide-out will assure cool breezes for the evening when you have a pleasant campsite in the mountains or at the beach. Each of the bedside tables have 110v and USB service plus individual reading lights just above your pillows.

The bedroom meets Tiffin's "Store-It-All" guarantee with two cabinets in the slide-out over the bed that offer nearly 14 cubic feet of storage. Under the bed you will find another four cubic feet of storage to stash your items that are used infrequently. In the DS slide-out, TMH has included a handsome chest of drawers under the twin wardrobes. Four of the drawers measure 18 × 11 × 6.75 inches, and two measure 11.5 × 11 × 6.75 inches. The double wardrobe measures 44 inches high, 44 inches wide, and 19.5 inches deep. The four doors are framed mirrors.



A deep clothes hamper will hold your dirty clothes until you are ready to run a load or two. The review coach did not have the washer and dryer; however, you can order your coach with the optional combo washer/dryer (\$1,595) or stacked washer/dryer (\$1,740). With all those kids on board, we are going to need the stacked washer/dryer.

While the kids are watching their TV program or movie in the living room, Carolyn and I can put on our Bose headsets (not included with the 36UA) and watch our movie in quiet repose, even after they fall asleep. The review coach also has the optional 32-inch outside television, a perfect option when the Fall football season is in full swing.

The Cockpit

Tiffin aims for maximum functionality in its cockpit designs. All of the controls are at fingertip length or less. As you ramp up to full speed, it is easy to check the RPM against the speedometer since they are the same size dials. The dials for the four key engine systems can be checked at a glance: oil, oil pressure, coolant, and fuel.

To the right of the instrument dials, the Kenwood entertainment and optional navigation system is positioned above the HWH hydraulic leveling controls. A 3-tab bar to the right of the steering column provides engine information, plus set-ups and resets for trip mileage, miles per gallon, fuel range, and oil life.

Toggle switches on the dash cover several functions. On the right side of the steering column you'll see the DRIVER FAN, SOLAR SHADE, NIGHT SHADE, and RADIO master switch. Two USB connections and a 12v socket are located just to the right of the Denso controls. The monitor for the rear and two side cameras is positioned immediately above the Denso controls.

For 2017, Denso came out with new dash controls for temp, five air positions, a variable speed fan, AC/heat, and air recirculation control—more attractive graphically and much easier to use.

On the left side of the steering column, three toggle switches take care of the GEN START, AUXILLIARY START, and MAP LIGHT. The headlights, dash lamp brightness, and genset hours are also here. The windshield wiper and spray are mounted in a lever extending from the steering column. The cruise control buttons are mounted in the steering wheel.

Kenwood's in-dash system comes with a Quick Start Guide that does a good job of introducing you to an amazing resource for entertainment generated from

many devices, verbal and map navigation by Garmin with RV profiles, and communication via Bluetooth for hands-free smartphone operation.

Entertainment can be sourced through media discs, USB devices, iPod, and iPhone; CDs and DVDs; Pandora and iHeartRadio through the application installed in your iPhone or Android; SiriusXM satellite radio by subscription (3 months free); HD radio broadcasts; and through apps operating on your iPod, iPhone, or Android.


The optional Garmin navigation software provides both verbal and visual navigation. Although it requires a subscription, Garmin offers a traffic congestion feature and suggests reroutes. The user can also get map updates at garmin.com/kenwood.

After pairing your smartphone through Bluetooth, you can initiate calls by flicking through your call list and touching the name. From that point, calls are hands-free. Incoming calls can be received by a single touch.

Driving the 36UA

Unfortunately, Google and Garmin haven't linked up their skills to drive the 36UA for you. But I think you will enjoy driving this coach. It is the heaviest of the Allegro coaches and this unit had the optional Ride Assist—Sumo Springs. Tiffin's noise-reduction insulation in the engine cowlings does a good job of controlling the decibels.

Taking the time to balance your cargo will pay dividends in the smoothness of the ride delivered by the 36UA. The Ford V10 320-hp engine has the power to tow a full size car and haul 1.75 tons of cargo with ease. The coach negotiated Northwest Alabama's hill country with a maximum loss of only 10 miles per hour. The steering is tight and has very little wandering.

As I have noted earlier in this review, the Allegro 36UA is designed for a family to have wonderful experiences and build great memories. Ask each member in your family to keep a daily diary of every trip. That will add a whole new dimension to *Roughing It Smoothly* in the future. 



SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2017 Allegro 36UA, Two Slides

Base MSRP* – \$169,650 MSRP as tested with options – \$184,296

STANDARD FEATURES

Structural

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

Automotive

Ford TorqShift® 6-speed transmission with overdrive and Tow/Haul mode
Ford 6.8 L, V-10, 320 HP @ 4,250 rpm
460 lb-ft torque @ 3,000 rpm
Cruise control
Fog lights
Daytime running lights
Emergency start switch

Exterior

Fiberglass front & rear caps
Fiberglass roof cap
Gel-coat fiberglass walls
Tinted one-piece windshield
7.0 Onan® gas generator
Two 13,500 BTU high profile roof ACs (high efficiency)
Quiet AC roof-ducted system
Double electric step
¼-inch thick single pane windows
Horizontal mounted wipers
Heated power mirrors
Awnings over slide-outs
Hydraulic automatic leveling jacks
BASF full-body paint with protective film on front cap
Two 6v auxiliary chassis batteries
Four 12v house batteries
Exterior TV
Exterior rinse hose/shower
Water filtration system
Low-point water drain lines
Lighted utilities compartment
Lighted basement storage
Side-mounted access doors with gas shocks
Rigid long-life storage boxes
Single handle lockable storage door latches
Heated water & holding tank compartments
Roof-mounted digital TV antenna & cable-ready TV
Cable ready hookup
Chrome mirror heads with integrated turn signal cameras
Backup camera mounted in rear cap
Power patio awning with aluminum weather shield
LED patio & door lights
Water heater bypass system
50-amp service
Black holding tank flush system
Gravity water fill
110v exterior receptacle
110v-12v converter (integrated with optional 2,000-watt inverter)
Undercoating
Roof ladder
External tripod satellite hook-up

Driver's Compartment

Entry step well light
Step switch and 12v disconnect switch
Color monitor for backup & sideview cameras
Powered leatherette passenger & driver seats
Lighted instrument panel
Single CD player & stereo AM/FM radio
Satellite radio prep (requires subscription)
Front overhead TV
Two cup holders
Passenger slide-out desk
One 12v dash receptacle
Two USB dash receptacles
Tilt steering wheel with cruise control

Dual dash fans
Power solar & privacy windshield shades
Manual solar & privacy shades for driver & passenger side windows
Fire extinguisher

Living Area / Dinette

Leatherette booth dinette with large pull-out storage drawers
Mid-section TV in entertainment center w/ surround sound (digital system located in bedroom)
Inverter for TVs and surround sound
68-inch leatherette DE sofa
Decorative wall art

Kitchen

Single satin nickel sink faucet w/extension rinser head
Under counter mount double bowl stainless steel sink
Solid surface galley countertop
Solid surface backsplashes
3-burner recessed cooktop with solid surface covers
Gas oven
Microwave with exterior venting
2-door gas/electric refrigerator
Slide-out pantry

Full Bath

Molded fiberglass one-piece shower on PS
Skylight in shower
Satin nickel controls w/flex hose and adjustable shower head
Solid surface countertop & backsplash
Ceramic lavatory with satin nickel faucet
Macerator toilet with electric switches
Medicine cabinet
Roof vent fan with wall switch
Water pump switch

Half Bath

Solid surface countertop & backsplash
Ceramic lavatory with satin nickel faucet
Toilet with foot flush
Medicine cabinet
Roof vent fan with wall switch
Water pump switch

Bedroom

Wardrobe with automatic lights
Six drawers & hamper under wardrobe
Bed comforter & throw pillows
King bed with memory foam mattress
Storage under bed, lift top w/gas struts
Tile flooring
Solar/privacy shades
Carbon monoxide detector
LPG leak detector
Television w/concealed entertainment center at eye level
110v outlets and USB ports in bedside tables (inverter powered)
Individual reading lamps

General Interior

High gloss raised panel hardwood cabinet doors & drawer fronts
Solid wood cabinet faces
Mocha, English Chestnut, and Cordovan finishes
Home theater surround sound system
Soft touch vinyl ceiling
Ball bearing drawer slides
Wall-to-wall vinyl tile flooring throughout coach
LED lighting
Treated fabrics
Solar shades & blackout night shades

Powered roof vent
Tank level monitor system
Smoke detector
Satin nickel hardware
Home theater surround sound system
10-gallon DSI gas / electric water heater
Prep for combo washer/dryer
Two 35,000 BTU ducted furnaces
Extraordinaire™ AC system
Carbon monoxide detector
LPG leak detector

OPTIONAL FEATURES & STANDARD CHOICES ON THIS COACH

English Chestnut finish on cabinetry (STD)
Rocky Mountain Brown Full Body Paint (STD)
Six choices offered for Allegro Open Road coaches
Raw Silk interior (STD)
Fawn Leatherette (STD)
7.0KB Onan generator (STD)
Ride Assist – Sumo Springs
Heat pump (15K BTU) on one high profile roof AC
Solid surface countertops and backsplash upgrade
Driver's power window
In-dash navigation
In-motion automatic satellite
CB Antenna
PS power foot rest
Central vacuum system
Cooktop / gas oven / microwave, convection
Residential refrigerator w/4 batteries & ice maker
Bedroom ceiling fan
2000-watt pure sine inverter upgrade
Prewire for Trav'ler satellite
Prep for combo washer/dryer
Electric Fireplace

OTHER OPTIONAL FEATURES & STANDARD CHOICES AVAILABLE

Cocoa and Truffle interiors (STD)
Espresso leatherette (STD)
Cordovan or Mocha finish on cabinetry (STD)
Cooktop / oven / microwave (STD)
2-door refrigerator w/pantry (STD)
Ice maker (2-door refrigerator)
Wood panel inserts for 2-door refrigerator
4-door refrigerator
Prep for solar panels
Luxury lounge DS
Dinette with computer workstation
Leatherette sofa with air-coil hide-a-bed DS
Drop down bunk over cockpit
Stacked washer / dryer
Combo washer / dryer

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 252"
Overall length – 37' 6"
Overall height with roof air – 12' 10"
Interior height – 83.5"
Overall width – 101"
Interior width – 96"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 26,000 lbs.
Front GAWR – 9,000 lbs.
Rear GAWR – 17,500 lbs.
GCWR – 30,000 lbs.

UVW – 21,027 lbs.
CCC – 3,567 lbs.
Trailer hitch capacity – 4,000 lbs.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – 320-hp Ford 6.8 L, Triton V-10
Torque – 460 lb.ft. @ 3,000 rpm
Transmission – TorqShift® 6-speed automatic overdrive with tow/haul mode
Tire size – 255/80R 22.5
Alternator – 175 amps

CHASSIS

Frame – Single channel, ladder type
Frame design – 50 psi hi-strength steel with deep C-channel side rails
Steering – 50 degree wheel cut
Anti-locking braking system – Standard 4-wheel anti-lock brakes
Suspension (front and rear) – Tapered multi-leaf springs
Shock absorbers – Bilstien gas pressured
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

ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – Eight (two adults, six children) OR Eight (four adults, four children)
Fuel tank – 80 gallons
Fresh water – 70 gallons
Black water – 50 gallons
Grey water – 66 gallons
LPG tank – 24 gallons (can be filled to 80% capacity)

MSRP*

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

UVW

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

DEALERS

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

PLEASE NOTE

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

Tony Lambert's Career in Production Supervision

Tony Lambert thrives on process planning, organization, and production supervision. In his 21 years with Tiffin Motorhomes, he has held five supervisory positions. He now has a fresh challenge in overseeing the new painting and assembly shop for the manufacture of cabinets and room modules that move directly to the motorhome assembly line after completion.

Lambert, who recently celebrated his sixtieth birthday, grew up in Tishomingo County, Mississippi, not far from Tiffin's

Standing: Tony, grandsons Cody and Brady, and wife Rebecca. *Sitting:* Son Brent and daughter Brook.



paint plant in Belmont. His father served in management for General Shoe Company (Genesco) for 45 years. One of four siblings (three sisters) who grew up on a 100-acre family farm that specialized in raising Black Angus, Tony had plenty of job opportunities.

"With the help of my father and uncle, I ran the fence lines and maintained them," he recalled. "But that was just the beginning. I cut the hay, baled the hay, and hauled the hay to feed the cattle."

The Lambert children attended school in Iuka, a farming town located in the northeast corner of Mississippi near the Tennessee River. "After my high school graduation in 1974, I attended a trade school, part of the Manpower Training Program, and earned a certification in tool and die making."

Soon after her graduation, Lambert married Rebecca Pruitt from Belmont, where the couple decided to make their home.

His training led to his first job with a small furniture manufacturer. "There were many 'mom and pop' furniture shops in this area at the time, and it was not difficult to find a job," Lambert explained. The experience he gained soon led to a new position with Schnadig Corporation, a high-quality manufacturer whose furniture was sold throughout the U.S.

After a five-year tenure in supervisory management with Schnadig, Lambert was recruited to oversee the start-up operation of a furniture manufacturing plant in Jasper, Alabama. "After the building and equipment were in place, I became the plant manager," Lambert said. "Several employees came from a furniture company in the area that had failed and closed down operations, so I had several employees who could train the new ones I was hiring. Ironically, after just one year of operations, upper management decided they needed to move the plant to Hickory, North Carolina, which is a huge area for furniture manufacturing and sales."

By now Tony and Rebecca had doubled the size of their family with Brent, born in 1978, and Brook, who came along three years later. They decided to move back home to Belmont. It wasn't long before he got a call from Corinthian, Inc., also a manufacturer of fine furniture located in Boonville, 30 miles west of Belmont. "They wanted to increase production by correcting problems in scheduling," Lambert said. "I also worked with customer service."

In 1995 with 21 years of manufacturing experience on his résumé, Lambert learned that Tiffin Motorhomes was expanding operations and hiring. "I was hired to set up the painting department for cabinets," he explained. "The process required sanding, staining, sealing, re-sanding, and final coating. I worked for Donald Holland, who is now in the Small Parts Department."

Text and photography by Fred Thompson



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About the same time, Van Tiffin began overseeing plans to improve the overall quality of cabinet construction and finishing for the company. He and Lambert approached Bob about using the old church building to expand the cabinet and paint shop. “With Bob’s approval and encouragement, we extended the length of the building and nearly doubled the floor space,” he said.

Lambert’s next move in management was to Final Finish, the department where completed motorhomes go to finish all the exterior and interior detail work. “They had just constructed a high-roofed, steel ‘porch’ to accommodate the expanded Final Finish operation and I was glad to get the position,” Lambert continued.

As supervisory production management positions opened, Tiffin continued to ask Lambert to step in, feeling confident he could quickly learn to supervise manufacturing processes that were new to him. “In 2003 Woody Edwards, the supervisor for assembly line stations 9–12, retired and I was offered the position,” he said. “Because each unit remains in a station for a fixed amount of time, the supervisor is constantly on the move checking on issues that come up in any of the four stations. I liked the challenges and the pace.”

When Human Resources posted the job opening in 2007 for the new Final Finish Department in the Belmont Paint Plant, Lambert applied for the position. Since he had four years of experience in the Red Bay Final Finish Department, he got the job. But his extensive experience in cabinet manufacturing brought him back to Red Bay in 2012 to serve as plant manager over the rapidly growing department that manufactures cabinets and

Tony’s grandparents lived for many years in this home in the northeast corner of Mississippi. Tony spent many weekends with them when he was growing up and helped his grandpa on the farm. They often use the house now for weekend retreats and family picnics. ♦ Tony takes pride in preserving the old barn that was built by his grandpa. ♦ A lake on the property was built originally for watering livestock. Today it provides a beautiful scenic feature.

wall modules. “I now had four supervisors reporting to me who oversaw the Solid Surface, Hardwood, Saw Shop, and Small Parts departments,” Lambert explained.

“The thousands of components required to build the cabinets and wall modules for the 12 motorhomes manufactured each day have to each be sanded, stained, sealed, sanded again, and final coated. The cabinets in the Allegro Bus and Zephyr receive an additional glaze. Although the work was being done in vented areas, the wet applications had to be placed on stationary racks for air drying,” he continued. “The process was time consuming and inefficient. We really had a production bottleneck.”

A solution to the bottleneck began to evolve last year when top management decided to build a new PowerGlide chassis plant on a recently acquired parcel of land adjacent to the company’s western perimeter (see *RIS*, 13:1, pages 4–5). That move made the old chassis plant available for an automated painting system and assembly area. Bob Tiffin gave his approval for the new system and made it the subject of his column in this issue (see pages 4–5).

Tim Massey, the general plant manager for Tiffin’s Red Bay operations, asked Lambert to take the job of overseeing the as-



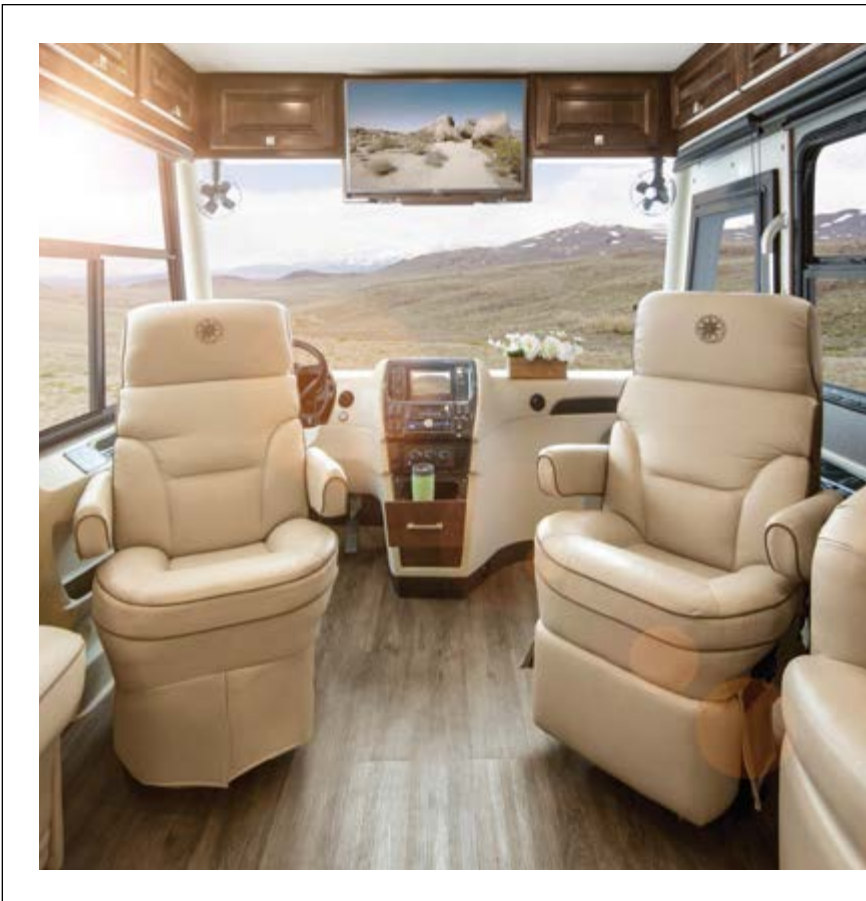
sembly of the new system and its continuing operation as the painting system and assembly areas are brought online.

In January of this year, Lambert took the engineering plans for the footprint of the tunnel-based painting system and carefully marked the perimeters of each segment on the concrete floor of the 100 × 340-foot building.

Rupp Air Management Systems, Lakeville, Minnesota, designed the system that was manufactured in West Union, Iowa. Rupp technicians arrived in February to install the steel super-

structure for the tunnel. Next came the walls that were bolted into place, and then extensive technology for forced-air intakes and exhausts; monitored supply lines for stains, sealers, varnish top coats, and glazes; the heat curing section; fresh air supply lines for the sprayers' head gear; and the conveyor track to move the carts and racks carrying the wood parts and components through the tunnel. Conveyance carts and racks were manufactured in the TMH welding shop.

Everything came together in a well-orchestrated plan. The



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Tony's first cousin Beverly Hendrix and her husband Tim have a home on the property just a hundred yards down the road. Tim enjoys collecting old farm equipment such as this horse-drawn rake from the early 1900s.

new painting system came online the third week of April. The filtered, controlled air systems in the tunnel eliminate the tiny particles of dust normally floating in the air that would otherwise flaw the fine finish desired for the cabinets and furniture in each coach.

Lambert pointed out that much of the credit for the development of the new equipment and its operation should be given to Andy Pounds, Saw Shop supervisor, and Allen Howard, Small Parts Shop supervisor.

During his 21 years with Tiffin Motorhomes, Tony and Rebecca's two children have grown up, married, and given them four grandchildren. Brent is employed by Roger Johnson RV, a company that makes several sub-assemblies for TMH coaches. Brook is a purchasing agent at the TMH Belmont plant.

Brent and his wife, Christi, have two daughters, Adrienne, 17, and Lauren, 15. Brook and her husband, Rodney Brooks, have two sons, Cody, 16, and Brady, 13. Rodney works for Lambert Salvage.

Lambert grew up in the Baptist Church. "My great-grandfather was a deacon who started the congregation where we all worshiped in Cairo, Mississippi," he related. "In 1963 we moved from Cairo to Iuka. My grandfather and father were also deacons."


In 1997 Lambert began preaching regularly. "I felt the call to preach and over the last 19 years I have pastored three churches, with 10 years being my longest tenure," he said. "I like to preach

on faith and the power it gives to us. The most fulfilling thing about preaching is seeing people accept Christ for who He is: King of kings, Lord of lords, and Savior of us all."

His favorite thing for relaxation is to visit Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, where he enjoys visiting the Amish settlement. "We like visiting their farms and buying the products they make and sell at their homes," he said. "They make great outdoor furniture that we have bought for our porch, patio, and barn." When he has a scheduled vacation at TMH, he and Rebecca often visit the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Like many of the employees at Tiffin Motorhomes, Lambert is an avid deer hunter. He has been a member of the Rock Creek Hunting Club for most of his life. "I usually take two a year. I have a special recipe for making deer burgers," he boasted. Since he did not offer to share, the recipe may be a family secret.

When he was a young man just getting started in his career, Lambert's father advised him to invest in land every time he had the opportunity. He took that advice and made several purchases, the most important of which is the 25 acres where he built his home for his family. "The driveway to our house is over a thousand feet," he said. "It has a lot of beautiful trees that provide privacy. It is so nice to sit on the front porch and know this peaceful place is our home."

Asked about his plan for retirement, Lambert said he hopes to retire in two years. "But not all at once!" he emphasized. "My father-in-law retired at 62 and then went to work for Johnson RV. He is now 84 and still works two days a week. I don't want to just quit cold. Winding down slowly sounds much better." 



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Alaska!

and Denali National Park and Preserve

IT'S ON NEARLY EVERYONE'S BUCKET LIST

The Alaska Range from Denali State Park, with Denali in the upper right corner.

An introduction by Fred Thompson

Photography by Claudia Abbott

ALASKA IS A PLACE THAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED with superlatives. With 663,268 square miles of land area, it is nearly 2.5 times the size of Texas. Alaska is larger than the states of Texas, California, and Montana put together. Alaska could swallow the 22 smallest states in land area. It has over three million lakes and 34,000 miles of tidal shoreline.

The superlative that captures the imagination of so many is the height of Denali. Recent technology has established its height at 20,310 feet. The mountain is about 230 miles north-northwest of Anchorage.

Geologists believe that 60 million years ago the tectonic pressure from the subduction of the Pacific Plate beneath the North American Plate created an overlapping of the plates, causing the whole region to rise. Granite and sedimentary rock were forced upward to form the 400-mile Alaska Range. The sedimentary rock eroded away over several million years, leaving a cluster of spectacular peaks.

There is a significant distinction between measuring the “highest” mountain and the “tallest.” The highest mountain is determined by measuring a mountain’s highest point above sea level. The tallest mountain is measured from base to summit. The base is the plain or elevated range upon which a mountain rests. Using that measurement, Denali is taller than Mount Everest. Denali rises about 18,000 feet from its approximate base of 2,000 feet, which is a greater vertical rise than Everest’s 12,000-foot rise from its base at 17,000 feet on the Tibetan plateau.

Denali actually has two summits. The South Summit is highest, but the North Summit is only 840 feet shorter at 19,470. Permanent snowfields cover Denali and feed five major glaciers flowing off its slopes. The impressive Kahiltna Glacier begins high up on the southwest side of the mountain and extends 44 miles, making it the longest glacier in the Alaska Range. The state has over 100,000 glaciers covering 29,000 square miles—in fact, Alaska has over half of all the glaciers in the world.

Naming the mountain is a story unto itself. The Athabascans, whose archaeological and linguistic history may date to 500 AD, verbally called it Denali (“The High One” or “The Great One”), but it was not recorded historically. The Russians called it Bolshaya Gora (“Great Mountain”). Frank Densmore, a prospector, named it after himself in 1889 and the name appeared on a few maps. In 1896 William Dickey, also a prospector, named the mountain Mt. McKinley in honor of the nominee for president from Ohio who took office in March 1897.

In 1906 a conservationist promoted the idea of preserving the Denali area as a national park, but it took 11 years of negotiating by public and private groups before a bill was passed in Congress on February 19, 1917. Signed by President Woodrow Wilson on February 26, 1917, the legislation created Mount McKinley National Park. In the 1970s Native Americans faced opposition from Ohio lawmakers when they tried to restore the mountain’s original name.

In 1980 Mount McKinley National Park was combined with the Denali National Monument to form the Denali National Park and Preserve. At that time, the Alaska Board of Geographic Names changed the name of the mountain to Denali, but the U.S. Board on Geographic Names refused to recognize the change. The impasse was finally resolved on August 30, 2015 when President Obama by executive order changed the name from Mount McKinley to Denali.

Recorded efforts to climb Denali began in 1903. Judge James Wickersham and four team members made it about half way. Three years later explorer Frederick Cook claimed to have made a successful ascent, but he was later discredited.

In 1913 four untrained climbers, Hudson Stuck, Walter Harper, Harry Karstens, and Robert Tatum, were credited with a successful summit of the South Peak. Over the years there have been many other “firsts,” but the one I liked the best occurred

Continued on page 80

Denali National Park and Preserve

THE THIRD VISIT: A PLAN FOR GETTING IT RIGHT



Text and Photography by Claudia Abbott

DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE COVERS over six million acres of wilderness in south central Alaska. The entrance to Denali is 240 miles north of Anchorage and 120 miles south of Fairbanks on the George Parks Highway (Route 3). There is only one road into the park—a 91-mile graded strip that begins at the park entrance 11 miles south of Healy and ends at Kantishna. The Denali Visitor Center, Park Headquarters, Riley Creek Campground, and the Wilderness Access Center are located near the park entrance. The Visitor Center is at mile marker 1.5 on the park road and is the main source of visitor information and the point where most ranger-led programs originate. A restaurant, an exhibit hall, a bookstore, the Murie Science and Learning Center, the railroad depot, and the McKinley National Park Airport are within walking distance of the Visitor Center.

There are three RV campgrounds inside Denali National Park: Riley Creek, Savage River, and Teklanika have back-in sites for motorhomes up to 40-ft. in length. There are no hookups. Riley Creek has flush toilets, showers, and the only dump station. If you are camping at Savage River or Teklanika, be sure

to empty your grey and black tanks before you go to your site. Potable water and toilets are available at all three campgrounds.

The best way to really see Denali is to camp at Teklanika (Mile 29) and use the shuttle buses. By camping at Teklanika instead of Riley Creek (Mile 1), you save riding 58 miles roundtrip each day on the shuttle since most of the best wildlife viewing and views of the Alaska Range (including Denali) are beyond Mile 29. Since the road into the park runs for 91 miles, rangers urge visitors with health issues not to take the long tours or go deep into the park on the shuttles. Getting prompt medical assistance could be a serious problem.

We made our reservations online (reservedenali.com) for Teklanika Campground \$16 (\$8 for seniors) and selected the Wonder Lake shuttle bus pass (\$49 each). Wonder Lake is the closest the park road comes to Denali (27 miles). Reservations require a three-night minimum. The shuttle buses are the required transportation. You cannot move your motorhome once you are in a campsite. They only want you on the road twice (in and out) so we left our tow vehicle at the Visitor Center.

When you buy a shuttle bus *roundtrip* ticket at the Visitors Center to a specific destination (such as Toklat at Mile 53), it is only good for that one trip into the park. The shuttle buses do not include formal interpretive programs, but the drivers are all well-informed and can answer most of your questions. The

shuttle bus roundtrips, you will have to find a place to buy a box lunch, usually at a stiff price. It was so nice to have our own kitchen to make the lunches we took with us each day.

Tour buses offering guided, interpretive tours originate at the Visitor Center. Advance reservations are required. This pro-



roundtrip schedule allows a limited amount of time for wildlife and scenery photo-ops.

If you have a campsite at Riley Creek, Savage River, or Teklanika, you can buy a shuttle bus pass to a specific destination for a one-time charge and ride every day you are registered in the campground. However, you can ride only as far into the park as the specific destination you paid for.

Since the shuttles run about 30 minutes apart, you can get off for a hike, a photography session, or just extended viewing—and then board the next shuttle by simply waiting by the side of the road. From our Teklanika campsite, we were able to board the shuttle from 6:15 AM until 9:00 PM. We used the hop on/off flexibility to do our planned and impromptu stops throughout our four days in the park. At this time of year, there is no darkness in Alaska. There is enough light to take pictures at midnight. If you want a sunset, you'll have to wait a few months.

I cannot imagine how to visit and enjoy Denali National Park without our motorhome. The guided bus tours into the wilderness are an almost regimented experience. If you take one of the

program offers a Natural History Tour, a Windows into Wilderness Tour, a Tundra Wilderness Tour, and a 12-hour Kantishna Experience. Prices range from \$81 to \$175. The tours are fully narrated and include box lunches.

Prepaid tickets for reserved seats on the tour bus experiences and the shuttle roundtrips can be picked up at the Wilderness Access Center. Here you will find a small gift shop, a coffee stand, and an information desk. It's the main location to arrange bus trips into the park and reserve or check-in for a campground site. All shuttle buses depart from here, as do the narrated tours.

The Teklanika Campground is dry camping only but you can run the generator from 8:00 till 10:00 AM and 4:00 till 8:00 PM. Our rooftop solar panels provide 270 watts of power that allow me to run my PC with a huge monitor for several hours. We wished we had signed up for a whole week, not just four nights.

At no charge, you can drive your vehicle (car or motorhome) 15 miles to *Savage River* on the 91-mile park road where they will turn you around at a gate unless you have reservations at Teklanika. There is a nearby parking area for those who wish



Polychrome Pass



Denali reveals itself to guests at the Eielson Visitor Center.



The Eielson Visitor Center is tucked away into the mountain.

to hike the Savage River Loop Trail. Most of the road from here is only one lane wide. Because of the heaving created by permafrost, the road is not paved. Several sections of the road run alongside sheer precipices that drop off hundreds of feet at the edges. There are no guardrails. The bus drivers are trained in procedures for navigating the sharp mountain curves and yielding the right-of-way to park vehicles. When buses meet, they slow to such a crawl to pass each other that passengers can reach out and shake hands.

Polychrome Pass on a sunny day will present a kaleidoscope of color in its undulating hills. Its sheer dropoffs from the road may take your breath away. The early campers in Denali called it Poison Pass because one drop will kill you. The bus driver said they drag the buses away from the bottom so it doesn't scare the tourists. I think he was kidding. The color of the mountains in digital images and prints look over saturated, but that's the true color at Polychrome.

Denali is the number one reason most people go to Denali National Park. It's the tallest mountain in the world from base to summit, approximately 18,000 feet, even though Mt. Everest is the highest point above sea level. Since the mountain makes its own weather, it has the ability

to suddenly appear and disappear like it has been erased! You can't stop watching for it and still you will be looking way too low when it appears again. There are marks on the window in the Eielson Visitor Center so you can see where the mountain would be if it were visible.

The photo at bottom left (p. 26) was

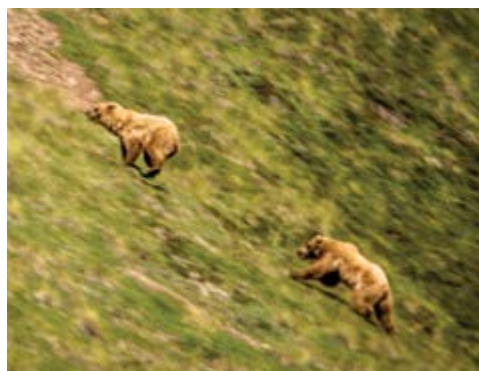
taken from the slope below the Eielson Visitor Center (Mile 66). The Visitor Center has been rebuilt since we were there in 2003. The new building's low profile was designed to blend into the landscape. The steep slope enabled the architects to partially bury the building, visually screening the structure from the park road. The

roof is literally "green," as tundra mats salvaged from the construction of the site were relocated to planters dispersed on the roof terrace. These camouflage the roof deck, blending it into the landscape. The green roof also assists in storm water run-off reduction and thermal energy conservation.

Travel Notes on Flora & Fauna



The Drunken Forest



A 600-lb grizzly can run 30 miles per hour, but maybe not that fast uphill. These two were only 200 yards away from our bus.



It's very disturbing when you come across grizzly footprints in your path. As one ranger said, "Don't follow the tracks."



GETTY IMAGES

Unlike the Dall sheep in Glacier NP who were often near the road, these fellas were always at high elevations.

The permafrost layer below the active layer of soil has been measured between 30 and 100 feet deep at different locations in the park. A stand of white spruce growing on a lower slope of Denali is called the Drunken Forest because of the oddly leaning trees which seem to look "drunk." The slight changes in the temperature of the rock-hard permafrost has influenced the freeze-thaw cycles in the soil, creating an unstable or sliding soil just beneath the tundra where the trees are rooted.

On this trip we saw seven of the 350

grizzly bears in the park. They were about two hundred yards from the road and seemed to pay no attention to us. We watched two of them wrestling for 10 minutes; then they ran straight up a mountain faster than we can run on flat land.

It was amazing how many people complained because the bus driver would not allow them to leave the bus to hike until the bears were gone. Watching them run *uphill* made us content to stay on the bus.

During a fall trip to Denali in 2003, the grizzlies were plentiful and stocking

up for hibernation. We were all hanging out the bus windows taking photos of a grizzly running up the mountain toward a couple as the bus went around a sharp bend with a sheer drop off. The bus driver yelled for us to sit down as the bear was on a mission! He backed around the curve and picked the couple up just as the bear came up onto the road. *Ursa Major* lumbered around the bus and ambled on up the road. We decided to ride the bus all day and not get off to hike.

We probably saw fifty of the 2,200 Dall



Bull moose



Caribou



Wolfpack

GETTY IMAGES



Leaving Teklanika

An Addiction to the Mountain

It's easy to understand why people come back year after year. The glorious mountain is mesmerizing, like gold fever! We saw the mountain two of our five days in the park. We left Denali and set up camp in Denali State Park (North Campground) where we could see the Alaska Range from the other side.

When we pulled in, we could recognize Moose Tooth and the mountains in the front of Denali. So we pulled parallel with the range on the highest place in the campground and waited for Denali to appear. We waited through three stormy days.

Even the lower mountains completely vanished, leaving a big empty stormy sky. We knew if we moved on, it would be stormy wherever we went and we would miss this view. So we waited.

Our campsite in Denali National Park was limited to a four-day reservation and we had to leave whether we saw the mountain or not. That was not the case here at Denali State Park—so we decided to stay until the mountain came out or we got severe depression, whichever came first.

Finally, now we can go see the rest of Alaska.



The Alaska Range from Denali State Park

Travel Notes on Our Trip to Denali

An Interesting Camper

A man camped near us in Teklanika took the early bus with us each morning. He told us that he had climbed Mt. McKinley in 1996. He has since climbed most of the highest mountains in the world. He comes back every year and hikes up to the Dall sheep and sits until they come to him. After listening to his stories of wind blowing his tent, gear, and one friend off the mountain, then surviving for five days in a blizzard, it's nearly impossible to believe that 1,300 people signed up to climb the mountain this year!

We will be going to Talkeetna this week where the climbers get checked out and then flown to the base camp at 7,200 feet. Many years ago the climbers hiked for two weeks across the valley before they reached the base of the mountain. Denali National Park celebrated the 100th anniversary of the first ascent of Mt. McKinley in 2013.

Disappointed DNP Visitors

On our drive to Alaska, we met several people in RV parks that had been to Denali and were disappointed they didn't see wildlife or the mountain.

Ask anyone that has been to Denali how they liked it. Five percent of them will say that they saw the mountain and there were so many grizzlies, moose, caribou, and Dall sheep on the mountains that the bus trip took 12 hours. The rest will say that they didn't see anything. If you ask them how they traveled into the park, they will likely say they only drove the paved 15 miles to Savage River in their car or on the free bus. That's where the pavement stops and the fun begins. The wildlife seem to avoid that area.

Things to Consider

It's not whether you should go to Alaska, but should you go in the summer or late August / September? In 2003 we were here in late August for three days and the tiny plants on the tundra turned from green to red overnight. The bears are much more active in the fall, but the green hills were so beautiful this year in mid-July.

There are three camping areas for motorhomes located inside the park: Riley Creek, Savage River, and Teklanika. Camper buses provide transportation to these campgrounds, but only passengers camping in the park can use these particular buses. The Toklat River Contact Station is located at Mile 53. All shuttle and tour buses make a stop at Toklat River. The Contact Station offers rest rooms, visitor information, and a small bookstore. Eielson Visitor Center features rest rooms, daily ranger-led programs during the summer, and on clear days, views of Denali and the Alaska Range. Wonder Lake, a six-hour bus ride from the Visitor Center, may offer the best views of Denali. During the winter, only the portion of the Denali Park Road near the Visitor Center remains open.

You do need to make reservations for Denali at least six months in advance. Due to “mountain fever,” people sign up for the next year when they leave.

Mosquitoes: Whatever time of the year you go, take Permethin (we got it on Amazon). We put it on two outfits (lasts thru 6 washings) and never sprayed ourselves. The mosquitoes were on everyone but us.

The Eight National Parks in Alaska


When you review a good map of Alaska, you may wonder if anyone visits the other seven. However, as you head back to the Lower 48, you most likely will take Route 1 bordering the northwestern knob of **Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve**. The park’s handsome visitor center is located in the village of Copper Center on Route 4 which goes to Valdez. A few miles south of the visitor center a narrow road peels off to Chitina, from which a gravel road makes a 61-mile penetration into the park from west to east to reach the little town of McCarthy. Most car rental companies forbid the use of their cars on this road. Rangers at the visitor center warn you to check your spare and jack. But if you go, you will be rewarded with incredibly beautiful scenery and up close views of 16,390-ft. Mt. Blackburn. When the road ends, take the footbridge leading into McCarthy where you will find lodging and dining, a general store, an airstrip, guide services, and a museum. Five miles up the road is the abandoned town of Kennecott, where the company by the same name once mined \$200 million in copper. The mill can be toured with a guide. The Kennecott Visitor Center opens on Memorial Day and closes on Labor Day.



Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve cannot be reached in your motorhome. Leaving Alaska on Route 2 and cutting across the southwest corner of the Yukon Territory and a little neck of British Columbia, you will connect to Alaska Route 7 into Haines. From Haines you can fly on Wings of Alaska into Gustavus and book a night or two at Glacier Bay Lodge (visitglacierbay.com). The park’s visitor center is located on the second floor of the lodge, offering exhibits, sign-ups for ranger-led hikes, and several films in the auditorium. A 10-mile road links Gustavus to Bartlett Cove, the center of park activity. You can arrange for a full day boat tour of Glacier Bay that is narrated by a national park ranger (visitglacierbay.com/glacier-bay-tours/bay-tour.aspx). The seven-hour tour leaves from Bartlett Cove at 7 a.m. and travels 130 miles around the bay. Visitors testify that the scenery and wildlife are worth the \$195 fare.

Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska’s smallest national park, is a shade less than 700,000 acres, which makes it larger than the Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks put together. The park’s information center is located near Seward’s boat harbor. An 8-mile road northwest of Seward will take you to a small nature center at Exit Glacier, the only feature in the park accessible by road (use your tow vehicle). A half-mile trail leads visitors to the foot of the glacier. The major feature in the park is the Harding Icefield, a 700-square mile chunk of ice that is thousands of feet thick. It is the source of 40 glaciers that reach to the sea, creating the fjords that give the park its name. If you are feeling adventurous, ask the ranger about the 7.8-mile Harding Icefield Trail that takes at least six hours. A flight-seeing trip may be the best way to see the park if you are not an avid hiker. Contact the Seward Chamber of Commerce (sewardak.org) for a list of companies offering flights.

Going to the other extreme, let’s take a quick look at the **Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve**. Located entirely above the Arctic Circle, this park is our second largest national park with 8.5 million acres. It is home to six national wild and scenic rivers. The main ranger station and visitor center is located in the village of Bettles, accessible only by snowmobile and bush planes. But there is another possibility that may interest our more athletic and adventurous Tiffin owners. Go to expeditionsalaska.com for choices between incredible hiking and rafting trips. The wild and scenic rivers flow north into the Beaufort Sea (Arctic Ocean). **The Kobuk Valley National Park** is west of the **Gates of the Arctic** and even more remote, but it boasts rivers with Class V rapids for those who want to be challenged to the max.

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve and the **Katmai National Park and Preserve** are located at the head of the Alaska Peninsula. Like most of Alaska’s national parks, there is no access to these parks by road. The mountains, lakes, and wildlife are beyond spectacular—justifying these areas being set aside as national parks and preserves. Floatplanes and boats provide the only entrance for those who have become “addicted” to the unmatched beauty of the Alaskan wilderness. 

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TRANSWEST: Truck Trailer RV ONE OF TIFFIN'S NEWEST DEALERS

Text by Fred Thompson

TRANSWEST, IN BELTON, MISSOURI, about 20 miles south of Kansas City, recently became one of Tiffin Motorhomes' newest dealers. Transwest comes on board with a strong background in Freightliner chassis service and three motorhome dealerships in Colorado.

When I arrived on June 1, Dave Bowe, branch manager, was overseeing the opening of the company's new 43,000 sq. ft. 18-bay service center, sales offices, and parts and accessories store. The facility represents an \$8 million investment for marketing and servicing *motorized* RVs. There's not a towable in sight.

Another equally impressive building houses the sales and service center for heavy trucks and specialized trailers. This side of Transwest represents the founding of a very successful business 26 years ago by George Eidsness. (See story p. 40)

Dave Bowe, while attending the University of Puget Sound, worked as a dispatcher for a tow truck service. "I was working on a degree in politics and government with a minor in economics," he explained. "But, ironically, during my academic career

I became dispatcher of the towing company which led down a career path I could not have imagined."

Bowe became vice-president of the firm after college and helped them start a separate company in 2003 in Fife, Washington, to distribute Jerr-Dan tow trucks and Landoll trailers. On a factory tour of the Jerr-Dan plant, Bowe met the product specialist from Transwest in September 2007 who was considering a request from Jerr-Dan to open a distributorship in Kansas City. Bowe applied for the job in KC with the blessing of his wife who was a Washington native. George Eidsness, the CEO of Transwest, liked Bowe's résumé and interviewed him on the phone. By October, Bowe was in Denver for training.

"George sees the good in everyone and empowers people to be effective," Bowe said. "He lets them do their jobs. I found a 5,000 sq.ft. building on less than an acre. We began with three service bays and sold tow trucks and parts.

"Ryan Eidsness, the manager of Transwest's commercial trailer division who was aware of my experience selling Landoll

trailers, called to ask if I was interested in selling trailers," Bowe continued. "I replied that I was, and based on Transwest's earlier success with Trail King and Mac Trailers, we added them to our product line in late 2008."

More product lines, buildings, and land began to fall into place under Bowe's management. "In 2009, George bought a building that housed a company that was going out of business. They had been marketing repossessed trucks for a bank. We got five acres and a 12,000 sq.ft. building, and added horse trailers and Summit truck bodies to our product mix."

The company was doing quite well on five acres when a friend called Eidsness in 2012 to announce he had a building with more acreage available in Belton, 25 miles south of the present location. "George called me for an opinion on the property," Bowe said. "I was familiar with the building and liked the location. George bought the property in 2012. We immediately began a renovation of the 10-acre site and building, formerly the location for Harmon-Crabtree school bus manufacturing and service.

"We opened the facility in 2013 with the intention of getting into the Class A and Class C RV market," Bowe explained. "We acquired an additional four acres in mid-2014, giving us much-needed parking."

An interesting scenario occurred soon after Transwest established its RV dealerships. *Eric Wooley*, a nine-year employee with Featherlite, a Prevost conversion company, was on his way to Tiger Run, a winter and summer resort in Breckenridge, Colorado. "Our coach had a mechanical problem in the mountains outside of Denver on a Saturday," Wooley related. "Transwest got a service truck to us that afternoon and got us back on the road. I was so favorably impressed that I made inquiries about the company and learned they were looking for an RV sales manager. Dave interviewed me and then arranged for George to interview me. I started with Transwest in September 2014. We quickly secured dealerships with Newmar, Renegade, and Roadtrek.

"Our RV team had already been providing service to Class A coaches, and our service to Tiffin products was favorably received," Wooley said. "I think you could say we were in Bob Tiffin's black book."

"When Andy Baer, Tiffin Motorhomes' national sales manager, and Mark Lane, Tiffin's manufacturer's rep, contacted us last summer to discuss our becoming a dealer in the KC area, we were ready," Bowe said. "Since we were already performing Tiffin's warranty service, it made a good fit. George Eidsness flew in for the meeting with Baer and Lane and we soon had a deal. We became a Tiffin dealer last Fall.

"When George visited us in June 2015 to review the Belton dealership, he said simply, 'Dave, you need another building.' He was referring to the fact that we were mixing our motorhome service into the same bays that were designed to focus on our heavy truck business. For both segments of the business to grow, it made sense to separate the service centers," Bowe said. "Architectural planning began immediately and construction was under way by October. Now, we are in the process of opening our new 18-bay motorhome service center with accompanying sales offices, parts and accessories store, and repair center."

The Transwest-Belton dealership has enjoyed explosive growth under Dave Bowe's leadership, but he is quick to recognize the entire leadership team that collectively directs each department.

"We will always try to do the best we can, but sometimes we are going to prove we are human and make a mistake," he said. "It makes me very anxious when I have an upset customer, but we will do whatever it takes to correct a problem. This new facility is George's vision and he is really the guiding spirit here."

Transwest-Belton is working with Tiffin to inventory 12 to 15 coaches on a regular basis. Bowe has set goals for the next *three to five years*. (1) Make the dealership a "destination" in the

In nine years, Transwest–Belton under Dave Bowe’s leadership has built strong teams in management, sales, and service.



region for sales and service, focusing the baseline for growth on 70 percent repeat business. (2) Plan for a 250 percent increase in the sales staff, from the present four to 10, with sales team education reinforced annually with factory and on-site training. (3) Double the number of certified and master certified technicians in the next three years and triple the number in five.

In addition to the weekly corporate management meeting via the internet that outlying dealerships have with corporate headquarters, Bowe schedules weekly Friday meetings with the sales staff and the key managers of each department. “We analyze the sales for specific products for each time period and then work on sales techniques and goal setting,” he explained. “I believe in goals—having goals and the goal setting process. Each person needs to think creatively about what they want in his/her job and in life itself. We also look at process failure. When something did not turn out as planned, we work on how to correct it.”

Bowe is also very interested in the company’s presence in the Belton community. He is serving this year as president of the Belton Chamber of Commerce. Impressed with its effective service programs in the community, he became a member of the Belton Rotary Club.

The sales team members at Transwest–Belton were glad to talk about taking care of customers. I began with an interview with Eric Wooley. He grew up in Oklahoma and graduated in 2001

Management Team (top left): David Parker, Eric Wooley, sales manager; Ed Turner, fixed operations manager; David Bowe, branch manager; Darnell Johnson, business F&I; Robyn Domer-Blede.

Sales Team (top right): Eric Wooley, sales manager; Glen Spotts; Tim Williamson; and Brian Johnson. Not pictured: Dwayne Pinnell.

Parts Team (lower left): *Back row* Greg Walworth, Brad Howse, Zach Zirhut, Mike Regan. *Front row* Dale Dove, Nicholas Kraft, Danelle Kincade.

Service Team (lower right): *Back row* Terry Lowe, Logan McCoun, Rusty Small, Benjamin Sivulka, Ed Turner. *Front row* Rebecca McKinney, Joe Turner, Randy Smith, Jeff Denny, Chad Freemyer, Luis Cruz.

from Oklahoma State where he met and married Jodi. An entrepreneur at heart, Wooley started Cowboy Trailer Sales in Stillwater which he sold in 2003 when he was offered a job at Featherlite.

After accepting the position with Transwest, Wooley began building a sales team. He now has four on staff—two having started this year, and two who have been on board for over a year. “We are trying to keep at least eight Tiffin units on our lot,” he said. “We will sell custom orders whenever a client doesn’t find exactly what they are looking for in our inventory. We have a very good planning room in which our customers can spread out the vast array of samples that Tiffin supplies. We are stocking extra sofas for change-outs when a customer wants to modify a new coach.”

Bowe and Wooley are very proactive in sales training. "Every salesman goes to every manufacturer at least once a year for on-site training. Then we do follow-up training here in our facility after our sales staff returns," Wooley said. "That provides immediate reinforcement."

Bowe pointed out that Transwest takes advantage of manufacturers' training programs for both technicians and sales professionals. "In our service programs, we ask our manufacturers to direct their training toward helping our techs become solution specialists. Finding the source of a problem can often be a matter of identifying the symptoms and making a diagnosis."

"In our sales training, we analyze the market for the products that we must sell against," Wooley said. "We have to be completely familiar with the plus and minus features of all the other brands. In the slow winter months, we ask each salesman to choose a subject to teach, such as Aqua-Hot, and then do a salesman-on-salesman challenge with a round of Q&A."

Bowe disclosed a planned expansion for a 10-site campground for owners who are waiting for service or full-timers who need to stay in their coaches during the service period. The campground will also be used for new customers who are taking a delivery and learning how to use all the features of their new coaches.

Bowe often shares his complementing experiences in the truck and trailer fields with Wooley. "We do a lot of TV ads from February through June," Wooley said. "We use Tiffin's commercials and our own in-store commercials. Dave budgets about \$25,000 monthly on TV ads. We do SEO (search engine optimization) campaigns and send out about 6,000 mailers per month. We also test with analytics to measure visits to a unique website."

After inviting me to interview each salesman individually, Wooley offered a quick overview of their diverse qualifications:

"Brian Johnson worked for Transwest in Colorado for 12 years as an RV technician. He wanted the opportunity to grow his career and has become the top RV sales

person in all four of the RV dealerships. With his background, he can walk an owner through a problem over the phone.

"Dwayne Pinnell came to Transwest from the luxury car business, and most recently as the new car sales manager for Volvo. He wanted the opportunity to expand his career. He spends the time to understand the lifestyle of each customer. With a great grasp of the design and décor of each brand, he does a lot of custom orders.

"We met Glen Spotts at the Kansas City RV Show last year. He was working for Camping World at the time. Dave Bowe was impressed with how Glen greeted people at the show with genuine warmth and friendliness. Bowe got Glen's business card and set up a meeting that he turned into an interview.

"Tim Williamson came to us from the coffee industry on a recommendation from one of our employees. With 25 years of sales experience, he and his wife were

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getting ready to be empty nesters and Tim was ready for a new challenge in a completely different field.”

Interviews with each man proved that Wooley was spot on. They have an interesting array of diverse sales skills that are going to exceed their individual goals for 2016 and the company’s goals for the future.

Dwayne Pinnell began his career at Transwest in December 2014. “I never meet strangers. It is important to interpret your customer’s lifestyle and recognize his needs,” Pinnell said. “There are vast differences in our RV products, making it so necessary to learn the information and features on each coach that will help you show the customer the appropriate unit.

“We are a very proactive sales team,” he continued. “We don’t wait for a customer to come to us. We often take coaches to them at the Kansas City NASCAR Speedway and the Branson, Missouri campgrounds. I knew in a couple of weeks that I had made a good decision in accepting the sales position here. The owner is totally invested in making Transwest a success.”

Pinnell is a classically trained tenor who has traveled widely in Europe. He is a member of the International Customer Service Organization and the Color Marketing Group.

Glen Spotts has been a camper since childhood. “After experi-

encing a torrential rainfall one night in our tent, mom said we needed something better,” Spotts laughed as he began an interesting story he had obviously told many times. “Dad and I went to Westphalia (Missouri) and bought a 62-passenger school bus and made a full RV rig out of it. He built bunks for the kids, a shower and toilet with holding tanks, a gas cooktop and fridge—but no heat.

“We were avid skiers,” he continued. “On Friday I fueled the bus, my brother got the pickup and boat ready, and my sister loaded the refrigerator. We left as soon as mom and dad got home from work. Summers were a wonderful time for my family.”

After high school Spotts joined the Navy and became a paramedic. When he mustered out, he became one of the first military paramedics to be licensed for civilian practice in Missouri. Although the family still owned the old school bus, Spotts decided that they needed a good Class A coach.

After a career as a risk manager, he “retired” to a 500-acre

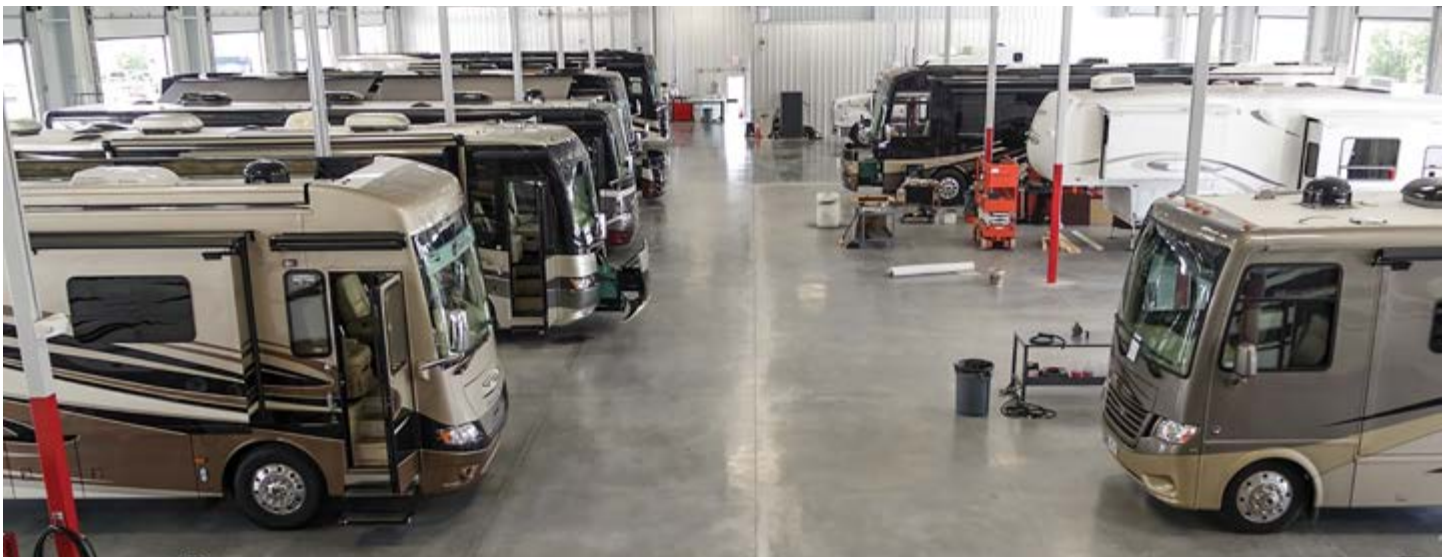


PHOTO BY SARAH BEATY

farm where he raises Scottish Highland cattle, the oldest registered breed in the world. "I keep about 30 head," he said. "They are grass fed, no steroids, no hormones. I finish them on grass. Their meat is lower in cholesterol than white meat chicken."

"In 2001, I visited a friend who worked at Camping World," he related. "CW offered me a job as an RV salesman for Class A's. Then I met Dave Bowe at the Kansas City RV Show and the rest is history. When I tell you that I drive over 100 miles to work here from the farm, you know that Transwest is a great place to work."

Brian Johnson began his career at Ralph's Welding Shop in Canon City, Colorado. "I earned my first paycheck for welding when I was 14," he said. The shop specialized in dump trucks and dump trailers. "By the time I was 16, my parents could no longer claim me as a dependent."

After becoming a diesel mechanic, Johnson made a move into the RV industry when he accepted a position with a company that serviced Prevost and MCI conversions. When that company became an Airstream dealer, he worked on their diesels.

"In 2006, I moved to San Diego to work as an RV technician for La Mesa," he said. "When the recession hit, I moved back home and eventually went to work as a technician for Transwest in their Frederick store. Watching how Transwest did business and took care of their customers really motivated me. I had become their lead RV technician but I wanted to move into sales to expand my opportunities in this industry."

Johnson volunteered on Fridays and Saturdays to learn the ropes in the sales department. Because of his strong technical background, the company supported his determination to become a salesman. "After I understudied in sales for two years, Mr. Eidsness offered me a choice of two positions: The store in Grand Junction, Colorado and the Belton store in Kansas City-Belton," Johnson explained. "I felt like Kansas City was a larger metropolitan area and would offer me more opportunities in the long run."

He was right. In the second half of 2014, Johnson sold 18 motorhomes. In 2015 he sold 64 coaches. By the end of June 2016, he had sold 34 units. "I see customer support and product knowledge as the two keys to success," he said. "When I arrive at my office in the morning, I ask myself, 'Who am I going to sell a motorhome to today?'"

"Customer support means taking care of the customer after the sale," he continued. "After I sell a motorhome, I tell my customer I will answer my cell phone 24/7. Whenever he needs help, I want to be there to make sure he has a great RVing experience. In many cases, especially when an owner has a new coach, he could struggle over a problem I can probably take care of over the phone in 10 minutes."

Tim Williamson has an energy about him that draws people in – a magnetic friendliness and smile. "I am a 'relationship salesman.' You can buy anything on the internet at any price," he

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began. “But you can’t buy customer service on the internet. I was in the coffee industry for 25 years and built a customer network with service: doing whatever I promised and being there whenever I was needed. It is the relationship that makes the difference. This is a ‘long haul business.’ Service is going to earn the customer’s business every time.

“January 20 was my first day on the job at Transwest,” he related. “I began to learn about motorhomes from the ground up. I study every day to increase my product knowledge. If I don’t know the answer to a customer’s question, I never try to guess or stonewall. I simply say, ‘I don’t know the answer to that question, but I will find out immediately for you and for me.’”

“I take a motorhome to the Lucas Oil Speedway every time there is a two-day event. The exposure of our products at the Speedway is great,” he continued. “I am expecting that to be one of my first sales.”

Dave Bowe and Eric Wooley emphasized the importance of having top-quality pre-owned coaches in their inventory. “When we take a trade-in that we want to resell from our inventory, we put it through rigorous inspections, upgrades, and repairs,” Bowe said. “If the date on the tires exceeds five years, we replace them even if the amount of tread is acceptable.

“We do a complete fluids replacement and spend at least 10 hours going over every inch of the unit—the coach, the chassis, the engine, the generator, the electrical system, and the plumbing. If wear or damage in any way is evident, we repair or replace,” he emphasized.

“Typically, we spend \$5,000 to \$10,000 and up on refurbishing our pre-owned coaches before we offer them for sale,” Wooley said. “If it is a high-end, late-model unit, we may spend up to \$20,000 refurbishing it.

“George Eidsness surprised me when he said, ‘I should be able to fly into Kansas City, buy one of your pre-owned coaches, and have an enjoyable experience,’” Wooley related. “That was expected in the Prevost business when I worked at Featherlite. I did not know anyone did this level of refurbishing in our market at this price point. We have very, very few come-

backs. Transwest offers a fair price for a superior product.”

Including all of the Class A brands, Transwest stocks 40 to 55 new coaches and approximately 10 pre-owned units. “Most of our trade-ins are sold before we put them on the lot,” Bowe said. “We keep a list of RVers who are looking for a particular brand with specific features.”

A company selling motorhomes must have a conscientious business and F&I manager. *Darnell Johnson* fills that role for Transwest–Belton. A four-year veteran with the U.S. Marines, Johnson came to Transwest eight months ago from a Chevrolet dealership. He interviewed with the company in December and began his new job on January 4.

“Of course, there are some similarities in financing a car and financing a nice motorhome,” he laughed. “But the differences far outweigh the similarities. RV customers are in a different world compared to those whom I helped finance their cars. Cars are a necessity. Motorhomes are a luxury. Credit scores to purchase a luxury coach must be 700+ and even higher.

“That said, I still must be vigilant to help an RV buyer make the best decision in financing his motorhome,” Johnson explained. “We verify income to support the purchase and do a liquidity evaluation and a chart to establish disposable income. It would be unfortunate for anyone to get in over his head or suffer from the situation of being upside down in the loan. We also look at tax returns and a personal financial statement. We want to help a buyer make the *right* decision.”

Transwest uses outstanding banks familiar with the RV industry: US Bank, Ally, Bank of America, and Bank of the West. “Banks are requiring 10 percent down and financing the loan for a maximum of 20 years,” Johnson said. “I have done a good job when I help my client negotiate a loan that is right for him.”

Ed Turner is the fixed operations manager at Transwest. He formerly served as fixed operations manager over six Camping World stores in Memphis; Bossier City, Louisiana; Calera, Alabama; Lowell and Little Rock, Arkansas; and Kansas City. “I was the FOM and regular services director for Camping World’s corporate organization in Little Rock,” he said.



Parts and Accessories Store

PHOTO BY SARAH BEATY

At Transwest, the management of fixed operations includes all parts and service and all of the maintenance for buildings, grounds, infrastructure, and facilities. "It has been a pleasure working with George Eidsness," he said. "He only sells top quality products and he understands the need for providing service for those products."

In his long-term planning, Turner expects to employ 15-18 certified and master certified technicians, 3-4 service advisors, 3-4 specialists in the Parts and Accessories Store, and 3-4 parts specialists working with the technicians to supply in-house parts to the service center. The movement of parts and supplies will require two employees in shipping and receiving. Turner is planning for two merchandising specialists to keep the stock fresh and keep Transwest's and the manufacturers' point-of-purchase displays current.

"Our service advisors play a key role is assuring customer satisfaction in our RV Service Centers," he said. "The advisor uses the customer's input to determine if the repair or work will be covered by warranties, an extended service contract, by the customer, or internally by Transwest. "The advisor uses digital photography and our charts on his clipboard to gather information for the repair. He records the customer's preferred contact method. At a minimum, the customer is contacted and informed every three days and every time something changes in the plan for the repair. Calls go out at 10-2-4 each day," he explained.

"When the fixed operations is fully staffed, I expect to have 40-45 new employees," Turner said. "The most challenging part of my job is finding good people. I do all of my own interviewing. We are very vigilant in pre-employment, random, and post-accident drug testing."

Dave Parker, parts manager, is overseeing the organization of building the inventory of parts for the Parts and Accessories Store as well as the Parts Department for the Service Center. "When we are fully stocked, we will have \$500,000 in inventory. We stock based on the top 20 items from our primary distributor and our own sales tracking software," he said.

Ed Turner is looking forward to building a service team that he anticipates will expand rapidly. "We are currently using and will continue to use RVIA distance learning, on-line continuing education programs, and manufacturers' training programs, both here and in their facilities," he said. "Most manufacturers find it easier to train on-site than in their plants. Aqua-Hot, Thetford, and several others have accredited training programs. If we see deficits in specific areas, we will respond immediately with training.

"At present we are excluding body work, although I think that will come within the next three years and will include a downdraft paint facility," he said. "We can do all slide-out work and repairs. Four of our bays have overhead slides with safety harnesses that

Continued on page 80

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George Eidsness — A 26-Year Career in Marketing Trucks, Trailers, and Motorhomes

AFTER SPENDING THE FIRST 18 YEARS OF HIS life on a North Dakota farm, George Eidsness decided in 1969 to pursue a degree at the University of North Dakota. He studied mechanical engineering for the first three years, then changed his major and graduated with a business degree. With his sheepskin in hand in 1973, he took a position with W.W. Wallwork in Fargo, a well-established company selling cars, trucks and trailers in North Dakota and the surrounding states. Wallwork focused heavily on parts and service sales, as well as heavy duty commercial trailers. The company also had a well-established lease company that accounted for a significant part of its annual revenue.

Eidsness began his career at Wallwork as a new car salesman. His skills developed and he moved rapidly into new positions with greater responsibility: the new truck division one year later; then used truck manager, branch manager, and eventually manager of the new truck and trailer division.

During Eidsness' tenure with Wallwork, the company was one of the top dealers in the nation, and focused on leasing equipment to contractors, allowing the customer to keep their cash free for other business operations. Learning about leasing as a finance option for customers would become a major part of his future.

By 1990, Eidsness felt he was ready to run his own business and went to Albuquerque to evaluate the acquisition of a Ford-Kenworth dealership, but another opportunity presented itself.

"Dave Syverson heard I was looking and approached me about selling his operation in the Denver area," Eidsness explained. "Transwest was a GMC-Freightliner dealership that had been in operation for two years on a 6.7-acre lot in the Denver suburb of Commerce City."

The two men struck a deal. In the next four years, Eidsness' entrepreneurial skills began to flourish. "I guess I was feeling a little cocky after the business took off really well in Commerce



George and Barbara Eidsness have worked together for over two decades to build Transwest and its 18 locations in Colorado, Missouri, Kansas, Wisconsin, Georgia, Arizona, and Alberta, Canada. With the company's rapid expansion, Eidsness decided in 2012 to build a new state-of-the-art 230,000 sq. ft. headquarters on 46 acres in Brighton, Colorado.

specialized service trucks and lube bodies that are used to service heavy equipment in agriculture, construction, mining, railroads, and oil and natural gas industry segments.

In 2008 Transwest acquired Summit Bodyworks. Out of its core business building mobile tool trucks for franchisees of such companies as Matco, Cornwell, and Snap-On, Summit

City," he smiled. "Over the next few years, we built or acquired dealerships in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Grand Junction, Colorado; a small trailer dealership in Commerce City; a used truck and horse trailer dealership in Longmont, Colorado; and a Freightliner dealership in Missoula, Montana. Freightliner continued to play a major role in our growth, and in fact had pushed us to expand in New Mexico and Western Colorado.

"I was designing buildings, working with contractors, and hiring people," he continued. "In 18 months we acquired or built five new locations. By 1995, we had six branches. It is easy to build buildings. It is more difficult to staff and put the right people in the key positions. I don't micromanage. Each branch manager runs the location like it was his own store."

Following the successful pattern he witnessed at Wallwork, Eidsness launched Trans Lease in 1991. "Our financial backing for leasing is provided by the Mercedes-Benz Financial Services, which is a perfect relationship for us since Freightliner is owned by Mercedes-Benz. Mercedes-Benz has also been instrumental in funding our corporate growth," he said. "When we started Trans Lease, I set a goal of growing it to \$30 million in leases. That number today exceeds \$380 million, with lease contracts in all 50 states and several of the Canadian provinces."

Diversification plays a large part in Transwest's ability to service its customers. "In 2001 we launched All Truck and Trailer Parts here in Commerce City. We inventory over \$4 million in parts and constantly track demand and use," Eidsness explained. "Our service center here operates 24 hours/day, 365 days a year. We can service and repair any truck, not just the brands that we sell. At least 70 percent of our sales and service is to repeat customers. That's the baseline for our success. It's the way I was trained."

Eidsness continued to diversify in 2003 when he started Summit Truck Bodies, a small manufacturing company in Wathena, Kansas. The company begins with a cab and chassis and builds

has expanded to work with other clients to custom design and manufacture mobile units for medical exams, mammography, dental practice, and blood labs. Law enforcement vehicles are another area of growth, and applications include emergency response vehicles, mobile command centers, and SWAT vehicles. Community outreach vehicles include mobile libraries and bookmobiles, as well as other specialized vehicles that serve a wide range of industries and needs.

Within Summit Bodyworks, a production need created another operation. SBW Graphics designs, prints, and installs large informational and advertising graphics onto the units manufactured by Summit Bodyworks and other Transwest affiliates (sbwgraphics.com). The quality of the graphics created demand by outside customers, driving additional growth for SBW Graphics. Every vehicle wrapped becomes a message, an impression, or a moving billboard.

A request by an out-of-state trucking company in 1995 led to the creation of All Fleet Services in Denver. "A customer approached me with a need for a small office and space to park four 18-wheelers," Eidsness related. "I took care of his request and others were soon on our doorstep asking for similar services. We opened All Fleet Services in 2011 to provide offices, parking, maintenance and repair, and fueling for companies that are expanding their transportation services into the western states. AFS has 321 pull-through parking spaces on 25 acres, a 14-bay service facility, and 39 offices to rent. We have a waiting list of 50 companies. We would expand if we had more adjacent land."

Except for a GMC-Buick-Isuzu dealership, Transwest had not ventured out of the medium and heavy duty truck segment until 2007 when it began providing Freightliner and Spartan with warranty chassis service for school buses, fire trucks, and RVs. "We were working on just about every brand of motorhome that had a Freightliner or Spartan chassis," Eidsness said. "But we did very limited work on the coach itself."



George Eidsness reviews with Jeremiah Brodal, truck sales, one of the many types of specialized trucks sold by Transwest. ♦ Each summer Eidsness participates in a one-week trail ride through the Rockies that includes 165 riders from 15 states.

little money early on until we learned the business.

“Our success has been in offering full service to RV owners for both the coach and the chassis,” Eidsness said. “We were drawn into this segment by having expertise in motorized chassis. As you can see, we decided to stay out of the towable RV market.”

With the marketing success of motorhomes in Frederick, Transwest added motorhomes and chassis service to their stores in Grand Junction and Fountain, Colorado, and Belton, Missouri (Kansas City). “We were interested in Tiffin for our Frederick store, but that was not possible because of Tiffin’s prior commitment to an existing RV dealership in this franchise area. However, we were delighted when we secured the Tiffin franchise for our Belton store.”

With his company now operating in 18 locations in Colorado, Missouri, Kansas, Wisconsin, Georgia, and Arizona, as well as Alberta, Canada, Eidsness decided in 2012 to build a new state-of-the-art 230,000 sq. ft. headquarters on 46 acres. In addition to sales and finance, the facility offers 96 service bays and a full parts department, along with heavy duty commercial trailer sales and a body shop.

As one would expect, in the 26 years George Eidsness has owned and operated Transwest, he has developed a very successful *modus operandi*. “We have elected to operate in the heavy truck and trailer industry and the specialized service truck business,” he began. “We want to sell a customer a truck and trailer, service it, and finance it. A lot of our success is in niche markets. We concentrate on growth niches that are too small for major players, but they are good for us.

“If we are interested in a product, we assign a product specialist to research it and do our due diligence,” he explained. “A product specialist studies both the product and its market. Each sales person becomes a specialist in a small number of products. Our truck and trailer salesmen do not sell RVs.

“We teach ‘relationship selling’ in our business,” Eidsness emphasized. “The first two minutes a sales person has with a customer usually determines the success of the opportunity. A customer will not buy from a sales person with whom he is not favorably impressed or that he does not like almost immediately. A successful sale should become a relationship that will last for years and generate repeat business.

“In both sales and service, we empower any employee to make a decision to take care of the customer,” he said. “We want to push the authority level as far down the management ladder as possible. Is it a \$50 or a \$1,000 problem? Many years ago, at the age of 24, I was empowered to buy \$1.5 million in used trucks from a wholesaler. I quickly learned a person makes a better decision if the responsibility is on his shoulders. Rarely have I regretted empowering an honest person. People will make

In 2005 Transwest opened a new dealership in Frederick, Colorado, that included an authorized Freightliner service center. Earlier in the planning stage, Freightliner persuaded Eidsness to consider building a service center that could accommodate motorhomes.

“When the recession began in 2008,” he continued, “Randy Pennington, a motorhome owner and enthusiast and my partner in Transwest, strongly recommended expanding the Transwest product line to motorhomes in Frederick. Randy and I decided to get our feet wet by selling pre-owned motorhomes that we acquired during the recession. Before long, RV manufacturers were approaching us to take on their brands. We picked up Renegade, American Coach, Itasca, and Roadtrek. We lost a

mistakes. If you learn from your mistakes, it is part of the cost of your business education.

"If we have a problem in a department, we are one person away from success," he averred. "I always want to hire people who are smarter than I am. They will make me look good."

Transwest currently has just over 930 employees in the company's 18 locations. Eidsness has been successful at bringing four family members into the company's management team. His wife, Barbara, works full time and oversees daily operations. Kristopher, their son, manages Summit Truck Bodies in Wathena, Kansas. Kris and his wife Debbie have three children. Their son-in-law, Andrew Lyons, is general manager of the company's Frederick location and oversees the RV divisions in the three Colorado stores.

Meredith, their daughter, oversees the family's ranching and horse operations. Meredith and Andrew have a son and a daughter.


Eidsness takes a personal interest in the ranch because he is an active rider himself. "I am 65 now, but I don't feel any different than I did when I was 45," he said. "I keep in good physical tone with Pilates exercises twice a week. Horseback riding has been my hobby for 25 years. One week each summer is very special to me.

"Usually in July, I take part in a trail ride through the Rockies that takes us to remote places very few people have the opportu-

nity to see. This will be my seventeenth year participating. There are usually 165 riders from 15 states who join the weeklong trail ride. It was started in 1948 by Colonel Sage Kester who was on his horse at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked in 1941. He was a stickler for punctuality and created printed schedules down to the minute for each day's ride. Riders come from all walks of life: doctors, lawyers, businessmen, engineers, firemen, policemen, etc.

"Each trail ride is planned two years in advance. Permissions are secured to travel across private land and national forests. Caterers provide five-course meals every night at our campsites. Campmasters arrive at each site and set up tents that sleep 14 men each. The staff bring in trailers with toilets and showers. We are awake by 5:30, served breakfast, and begin the ride at 7:30. We ride 18 to 30 miles a day. It is a men-only event. A medical staff travels with us each day. Two or three veterinarians who are on the ride take care of doctoring the horses when needed. A farrier also travels with us.

"The trail rides are usually in Colorado, but we have done rides twice in Wyoming during my 17 years of participation. So far, I have ridden at least 2,000 miles of trails in Colorado."

As you might expect, George Eidsness has no plans to retire. Operating Transwest is almost like a hobby that he enjoys every day. "I am currently designing buildings to expand operations in six locations," he said. "That is really a favorite part of my job." In his second life, he most likely will be an industrial architect. 

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Interviews from South Carolina, North Carolina, and Florida



Rick & Karen Arena

Hometown: Hinsdale, MA

Interviewed: Narragansett, RI

- Rick and Karen purchased a 2007 Allegro Bus with a 400 Cummins diesel engine on a Spartan chassis from Crossroads RV.
- Previous to their Tiffin motorhome they had a tent, a pop-up, and 2 trailers.
- Rick and Karen met in 1982 through a mutual friend and have been married 13 years. Between them, they have fun with their 5 children and 9 grandchildren.
- Rick is still working. Therefore, summer camping is mostly weekends. The most memorable trips were 2 weeks at the Country Fest in Nashville, TN and going to Fish Creek in the Adirondacks. Rick loves mussels and eats them every day when they go to Maine.
- They love the fun of traveling and seeing new places and meeting new friends.
- Club affiliations include the Green Mountain Allegros, FMCA, and Good Sam.
- Rick owns PenRo Mold & Tool (injection molding) in Western Mass, and Karen retired from the Western Mass Electric Company after 22 years.
- Rick and Karen are big NASCAR fans. They take their RV to Loudon NH, Lime Rock CT, and Watkins Glen NY every year.
- After Rick retires, he says "Alaska, here we come!" Their trip will be for the entire summer—May to September.



Dave & Linda Cochran

Hometown: Reeds Landing, MI

Interviewed: Silver Springs, FL

- Dave and Linda own a 2013 Allegro Bus 45LP, Cummins 450HP purchased in 2015. They started with a motorcycle and nylon tent, then four other types of RVs.
- They met in 1982 through a mutual friend and are married 33 years. They were each married twice before and say "three's the charm." They have a daughter and son-in-law in SC with their "grand-dog."
- Before retiring, Linda worked in banking and finance. Dave retired from corporate and on-site sales.
- They sold their house in 2013 and hit the road. They want to visit Washington and take an Alaskan cruise.
- Dave and Linda are "Snow Birds," calling Pueblo El Mirage in Arizona their winter home, near Linda's dad and sister.
- They attended the FMCA rallies in GA and IN, and belong to Thousand Trails, Good Sam, and KOA clubs.
- Dave and Linda's favorite places to visit include the northern and mid-western states, but not during the winter.
- They travel with their special dogs. Mandy, a Tennessee Brindle Mountain Cur, and Riley, a Shiatzu/Maltese mix.
- Leisure retirement for them means golf, pickle ball, and walking nature trails with their dogs.



Rick & Cindy Yuris

Hometown: Ludlow, VT

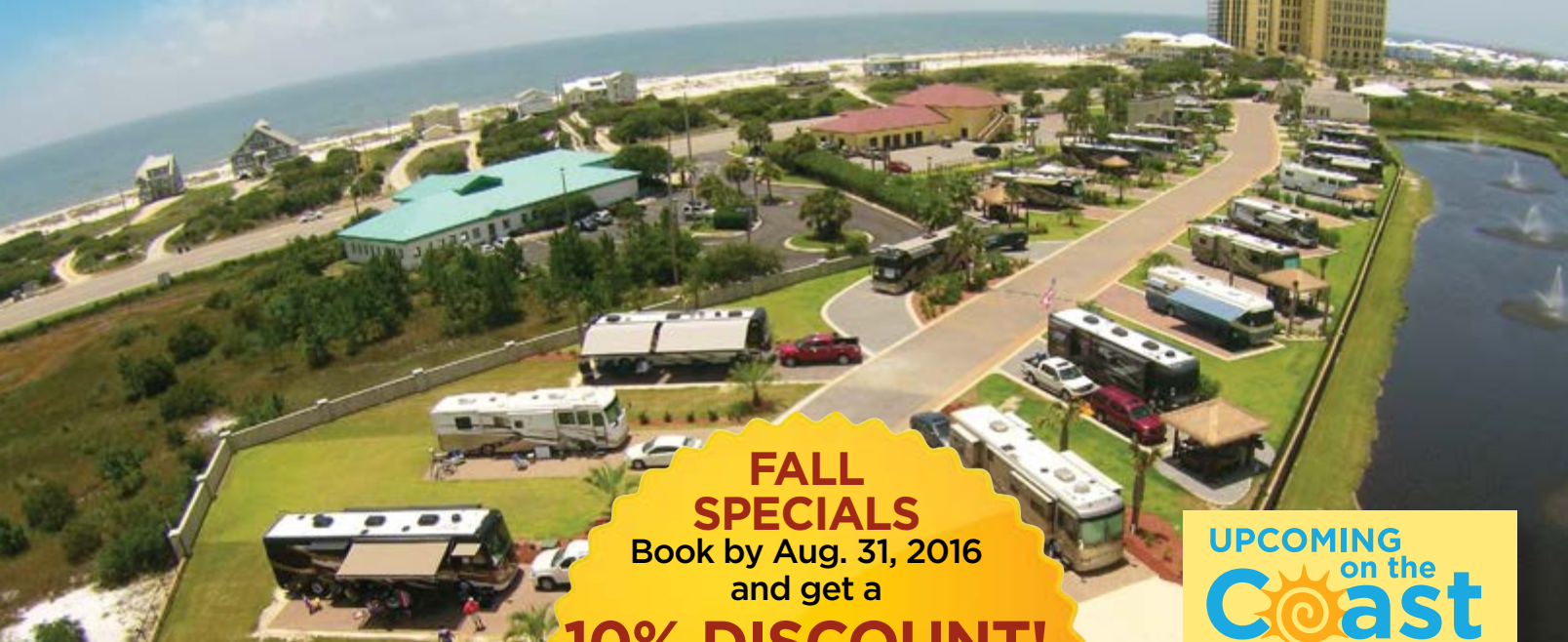
Interviewed: Narragansett, RI

- Rick and Cindy purchased a 2009 Allegro RED new at the Tiffin rally in Key West, Florida. It has a Freightliner chassis and Cummins 340-hp diesel engine.
- In the past, their RVs included 2 trailers and 2 motorhomes – one RED and one FRED!
- They have been married for 18 years. Rick has 2 children, 6 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.
- They say they are "more-timers" rather than "less-timers." They hit the road as often as they can fit it into their busy schedules.
- Club affiliations include Green Mountain Allegro Club, FMCA, Good Sam life membership, FCOC (Freightliner Chassis Owners Club), and Thousand Trails.
- Their favorite RV destinations include Maine, upstate NY, PA, KY, Branson MO, Nashville, and the Everglades.
- Rick retired from Aetna in 2004 and Cindy from ZYGO Corporation (a worldwide supplier of optical instruments) in 2014.
- Eleven years of traveling has them wanting more. They say that there is so much to see in this country. They enjoy traveling, and believe RVing is the best way to go. They have made so many new friends.
- Rick and Cindy want to travel to states they have never visited, to national parks, and to historic sites.



Editor's Note: Dave has been camping for 52 years in tents to motorhomes. Dave and Terri purchased a new 2008 Phaeton 40QSH. In 2010, they sold their home and purchased a 2.8 acre lot in the Berkshire Mountains (Peru, MA) for summer use. They named their mini-campground "Beech-Wood Acres." In 2012 they purchased an RV lot at Wilderness RV Park Estates in Silver Springs for use in the winter months. Dave and Terri are now full-timers who are living their dream.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF BOB AND CAROL HILL

Bob and Carol Hill

THIS TIFFIN OWNER BECAME AN “EXTREME COWBOY”

One of the best parts of my job as publisher of *Roughing It Smoothly* is getting to meet Tiffin motorhome owners, learn about their professions and hobbies, and listen to their fascinating travel stories that I attempt to relate to our readers in the Owner Profile column.

Two years ago Carolyn and I were docked in the Birmingham South Campground (Alabama) for five days while we worked on the magazine with Andy Cargile. Next door was an Allegro Open Road with Lauderdale County plates, a county in the very northwest corner of Alabama where Florence is the county seat.

When I introduced myself to Bob Hill, I didn't have a lot of time to visit but I learned he grew up in Florence, graduated from the University of North Alabama (UNA), and had a home on Shoal Creek adjacent to 40 acres where he stabled and trained horses. After we parted that afternoon, I stashed his business card in my “future stories” folder.

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

Two years slipped by before I called the Hills to ask for an appointment and interview. Bob answered and remembered our meeting in Birmingham. He was receptive to my request to do a story, but held back for a second. “Carol is a very private person,” he said. “Let me talk it over with her and I'll call you back.” Fifteen minutes later my phone rang and Bob said, “Carol's all in. Let's do it.”

Shoal Creek flows into the Tennessee River behind Wilson Dam, one of the contributing streams that form the many scenic sloughs where mild southern winters permit year-round retreats as well as permanent homes.

We visited Bob and Carol on a hot Saturday morning in June, a couple of hours after Bob had finished working with Shango, a six-year-old registered Quarter Horse, and were invited to their heavily shaded, screened-in back porch overlooking the lake. As two overhead fans and cool drinks dissipated the hot air, Carolyn and I listened as they unfolded their stories.

“I have loved horses since I was a small boy,” Bob began. “My

parents bought my first horse when I was 10, and since we lived in town I had to board him. I continued to have horses through high school and college. They just became part of my life.”

Bob graduated from Coffee High School, one of the schools my Russellville High School Tigers struggled every year to beat. He got an early taste in college for his future career by working weekends, holidays, and summers at Rogers Department Store, an unusually upscale store for a town the size of Florence at that time. He graduated from UNA in 1971 with a degree in marketing and a minor in economics and accepted a position with Mercantile Department Stores, a holding company for over a dozen department store chains.

After nine years with Mercantile as a buyer and department manager with Gayfers and later Castner Knott, Bob was offered a sales position with a children's wear company. He decided to move over to the wholesale side of the business covering four states. As his career advanced, there was little time for his favorite pastime. “I played golf with my buddies but I sure missed my horses,” he said.

“My dad was in the Coast Guard and we lived on bases from Alaska to Puerto Rico and many points in between,” Carol began. “When I was five we lived on an island in the Aleutian Islands chain while he had a search and rescue assignment. I wanted a pet but we were not allowed to bring any non-native animals to the island. I found a grey wolf that almost became a pet until my Dad found out he wasn't imaginary. Brown bears on the village's streets were a common occurrence.

“My career path into sales was totally different from Bob's,” Carol said. “I began working for an established sales representative who became my mentor. After a few years, he suggested that I was ready to go out on my own. I followed his advice and never looked back.

“Bob and I started dating in 1982 when we were working with competing boys wear apparel companies,” she continued. “He has always said he married his strongest competitor. We married in 1983 and built our first home in Birmingham.”

After a decade working as regional sales managers and sales reps for different companies, Bob and Carol hatched a plan in 1992 to launch Bob and Carol Hill, Inc. and became independent sales representatives for several children's clothing manufacturers traveling seven states. “We leased showrooms in the Atlanta Apparel Mart and the Charlotte Merchandise Mart and represented as many as twelve different companies at one time,” Bob said.

Bob and Carol arrive at Lynnville, Tennessee with Shango for a recent competition. ♦ Bob spends many hours each week with Shango putting him through exercise and training routines that require Shango to place complete confidence in Bob.





PHOTO COURTESY OF BOB AND CAROL HILL

By 1994 their son James was out of the nest with a home of his own and the Hills began planning their retirement home. “We had always planned to live on family land in Florence,” Bob said.

After selling their home in Birmingham, the couple acquired a lot on Shoal Creek for the construction of their home, a sentimental location since Bob’s parents had owned land in that area for over half a century. Moving their membership to First Christian Church on Wood Avenue was an easy decision to make. They are currently co-chairs of their church’s Community and World Outreach Programs.

“We finished the house in 1995. An adjacent 40 acres — land that my dad had bought from a cousin when I was 12 — made it possible for me to really get into my hobby,” Bob continued. “After ten years of not having horses, I started trail riding with friends. I began to trade horses to get the Quarter Horses I wanted to have for riding in different situations.

“My buddies and I made some great trips out west to do trail rides: Canyon de Chelly near Chinle, Arizona, Colorado, and the Black Hills in South Dakota, to name a few,” he said with increasing enthusiasm. “In 2006 Carol and I met a group of riders from southern Arkansas

during a St. Jude ride at the Bar 50 Ranch in Bismarck. I ride with them a couple of weeks every year in Arkansas’ Ouachita Mountains. Arkansas has some very nice horse camps devoted to trail riding.

“We bought our first motorhome in 2006 to make these trips, a Gulfstream Class C,” he related. “But it didn’t have slide-outs and it was just too small. We traded a year later with Bankston Motor Homes for a new 2006 Allegro Open Road 32BA with a Workhorse chassis and GM engine and really enjoyed using it. When we traveled for me to do trail rides, Carol made the Allegro her office, placing orders with our manufacturers to keep product flowing to the stores we were serving.”

“Our business continued to do quite well,” Carol said. “When the Atlanta Apparel Mart and the Charlotte Merchandise Mart were doing shows, as well as smaller regional children’s wear markets, we were there writing orders. We represented clothing manufacturers to department stores, children’s clothing stores, and boutiques. We were the notorious middleman everyone wants to get rid of,” she joked. “But the manufacturers can’t do without their sales reps.”

“In 2012 we decided it was time to retire,” Bob said. “Looking in the mirror, I said, ‘What will I do with myself now?’ We both love to travel in the motorhome and continued to enjoy the 32BA, but we started looking at some of Tiffin’s new floorplans. In 2014, right after the model year change, we traded with Bankston again for a 2015 Allegro Open Road 31SA. We have been very pleased with the Ford chassis and the V10 Triton engine.”

“We love all the new amenities Tiffin added. The quiet new AC system, fireplace, LED lights, and residential refrigerator are great. Bob really likes the exterior television, especially during football season,” Carol said.

“We make ‘horse trips’ and ‘regular trips,’” Carol continued. “Bob loves trail



Last October, Bob competed as a novice in his first EXCA World competition in Hamilton, Texas at the Circle T Arena. ♦ Bob and Carol enjoy relaxing with Dixie and Izzy, who travel with them in the motorhome wherever they go.

riding. We go to beautiful areas and campsites where I enjoy just kicking back, visiting, and reading while he rides. We are always pulling something, either a loaded horse trailer or a Chevy Equinox. Our Allegro moves right on.”

“We make regular trips without the horses to some great parks for just the R&R value, especially Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores, Alabama,” Bob related. “We visit there at least two or three times a year. We both love Cody, Wyoming and Stampede Week during Fourth of July week. At South Dakota’s Custer State Park, watching the wildlife – the buffalo and pronghorns – is a favorite activity. We have been to the Grand Canyon twice and Yellowstone is a favorite place, too. Our state and national parks are just amazing. It is not surprising that visitors come from all over the world to visit our parks.”

The Hills traveled with friends on one of their trips to the Grand Canyon. “The girls took an amazing helicopter ride over the canyon,” Bob said. “My buddy and I decided to do the mule ride from the rim to the Colorado River. They gave us an hour’s orientation to bring everyone up to speed on safety and procedures and to give those who were squeamish about the ride a chance to back out gracefully. After I mentioned to the guide my experience with horses, he made me the tail gunner to keep an eye on the inexperienced riders.”

A week in June last year completely changed Bob Hill’s perspective about horsemanship and riding after he attended Craig Cameron’s Horsemanship Clinic in Bluff Dale, Texas. “The clinic was on my bucket list,” Bob began. “It is designed to help the rider to feel, think, and ride smarter. Cameron’s techniques teach effective communication with your horse and finding solutions to old problems. He really gets down to the basics of correct posture when riding, use of your hands and legs, and balance and rhythm of movement to develop oneness between you and your horse. You have to understand the location of a horse’s feet in all gaits in order to ride effectively.”

Cameron is the founder of the Extreme Cowboy Association (EXCA) that focuses

on good horsemanship for all riding levels. “There is friendly competition at all levels but members are always helpful and encouraging as riders strive to improve,” Bob explained.

Participation levels are YOUNG GUNS (7–11); YOUTH (12–17); NOVICE (18+); INTERMEDIATE (by experience); NON-PRO (very experienced riders); PROFESSIONAL; and RIDE-SMART (55+).

“In June 2015, I entered my first EXCA competition in Pontotoc, Mississippi, racing in the novice division, and I was hooked,” Bob explained. “Now I ride in the Intermediate and Ride Smart divisions and have qualified for the World Finals to be held in Hamilton, Texas this October.”

This year Bob became a member of the Sheriff’s Mounted Reserve in Lauderdale County which has 36 members. “We train for search and rescue and crowd control,” he said. “Training involves different scenarios such as a lost child, an injured hunter, and even a body for recovery. When you search in the woods or in a field on horseback, you are higher up. Often a horse sees or hears things before its rider. Our Mounted Reserve trainer says, ‘One person on horseback is worth five on the ground.’” We raise most of our own funding with trail rides, chicken stew sales, and bake sales.”

Bob stables four horses at his Lauderdale County farm adjacent to their home on Shoal Creek.

Tuff is a 29-year-old registered Quarter Horse gelding. “He is still a great trail horse and is used for S&R.”

Shango is a 7-year-old registered Quarter Horse gelding. “He is my preferred horse for EXCA competition.”

Goldie is a 29-year-old retired Palomino Quarter Horse mare.

Bonanza Silver Son, or *Bo*, is a 16-year-old Palomino Quarter Horse gelding. “He handles well on trail rides and S&R.”

Retirement for Bob and Carol Hill was a smooth transition from the apparel industry into the world of motorhome travel to America’s great parks, service to others, trail rides, becoming an Extreme Cowboy, and enjoying life on Shoal Creek. We wish them all the best. **RS**

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Iconic Asheville — Delightful for Over a Century

Text by Norman Spray / Photography by Rhonda Spray

THERE'S THE SCENIC AND RELAXING BLUE RIDGE Parkway; the bigger than imaginable 250-room “summer home” George Vanderbilt built between 1889 and 1895; cool, clean air on mountain-top trails; and there's the plush Omni Grove Park Inn with walls made of granite stones, some weighing tons, and 36-foot wide fireplaces a six-foot-tall man can stand in upright, so huge they burn logs as big-around as telephone poles.

These famed Asheville, North Carolina attractions have for more than a century wowed, even mesmerized, both ordinary folk and rich and famous personages the likes of Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Eleanor Roosevelt, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John D. Rockefeller and 10 U.S. presidents, our last three among them.

Today's visitors enjoy all that—and much more. A week's stay convinces us that Asheville merits a place on anyone's bucket list, yours too. You'll find the welcome warm and probably, like us, you'll find more to see and do than you can experience in a week or maybe two, or ever. Finding a place to dock your motor-home should not be a problem, but *Asheville is a popular destination*. Advance reservation at one of the dozen or so RV parks in the city and nearby towns could prove prudent. (See listings, page 59). So what's in Asheville and its environs?

In the mountains, certainly along and off the fabulous Blue Ridge Parkway, sight-seeing from overlooks is eye-popping exciting. At different times and elevations, you may look thousands of feet down on slopes ablaze with spring and summer wild flowers, flame azalea, rhododendron and mountain laurel. In the fall, hardwood tree foliage begins turning golden, red,

and orange at higher elevations as early as late September. At lower altitudes, bright leaf colors last through early November. In Asheville, the city, weather is generally agreeable: not too hot in summer and bearable in winter. In July, the hottest month, the average high is 85 degrees, average low 65. In the coldest month, January, the average low is 28 degrees, the high 47.

There's summertime swimming, whitewater and calm water rafting, kayaking, canoeing, and tubing on the French Broad River and other creeks and streams from which fishers also harvest trout. Dozens of trails, easy to breath-wheezing difficult, serve hikers, bikers, birders, back pack campers, and plant and nature viewers. In winter, mountain slopes get enough snow for

skiing, snowboarding and tubing but in Asheville, 2,500 feet lower, there's only 13 inches of snow in an average year. Streets normally stay dry.

Downtown is compact—and loaded. Within a few blocks you'll stroll by art museums and galleries; performing arts theatres; dance and music (all kinds) venues; two art districts with dozens of studios and galleries; the Grove Arcade which houses over 20 shops, galleries and restaurants in Asheville's largest building, one completed in 1929 that's been called one of the country's first indoor “malls”; and restaurants serving everything from traditional down-home biscuits and gravy or barbecue to four-star fine dining fare, even Mediterranean cuisine or

locally-sourced vegetarian. You name it, Asheville's got it.

Then there's a whole other “paradise” for shoppers, just minutes from downtown. It's the Biltmore Village that Vanderbilt developed to sell provisions to those who worked on and visited the Vanderbilt Estate. Today the Village's 100-year-old cottages and structures house 70 distinctive shops, galleries, and restaurants, many offering high-end merchandise.

How do you find all this? Best to plan in advance. Start by contacting the Asheville Visitor Center (805-258-6129, ExploreAsheville.com). They'll send a 71-page “discovery guide” listing names, phone numbers and internet addresses for major attractions, restaurants, cultural history and current outlets, historic places, and city and area maps.

Once you're in town, stop by the Visitor Center at 36 Montford Avenue Hosts will guide you to places and venues that interest you and sell you tickets where required, including for open-air Gray Line “trolley” tours that begin on the center's parking lot and take you into many of the city's most interesting areas, among them downtown and its conglomeration of Art Deco, Beaux Arts and Neoclassical architecture buildings. Ours took us by places we noted to visit later, gave us a chance to take some pictures—and included a humorous narration by a guide named Roger whose wit and knowledge conveyed an honest “feel” for much of the unique architecture and history of buildings, businesses, and culture of neighborhoods on the tour route.

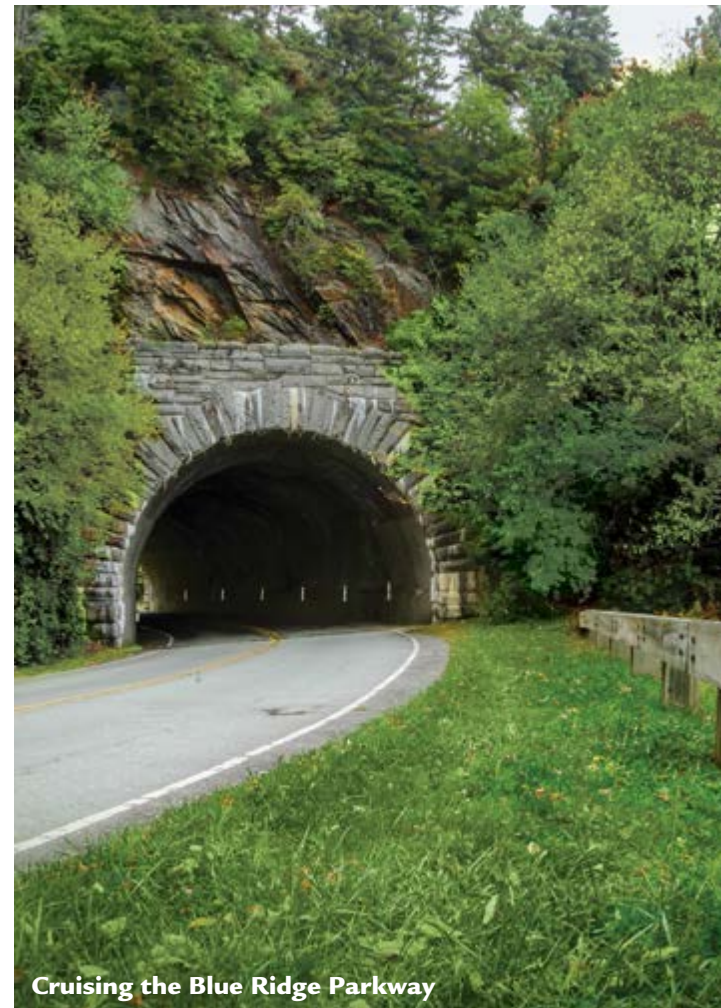
Clockwise from top left: The veranda at Biltmore overlooking Pisgah National Forest. ♦ Grove Park Inn ♦ Thomas Wolfe Memorial ♦ The Grove Arcade ♦ The Blue Ridge Parkway ♦ Floating the French Broad River



Your “must see” tour in Asheville may expand as you go. Ours did. Highlights included:

Blue Ridge Parkway. Surprisingly, more vehicles exit and enter this “recreational,” slow-speed scenic wonder road in Asheville than any other place along the 469 miles it hugs mountain crests between the Great Smoky Mountain National Park on the southern end and the Shenandoah National Park north in Virginia. Since our visit centered on Asheville, we limited our exploration of the Parkway to places we could reach in an hour’s time. Many of the Parkway’s noted attractions thus were outside our self-imposed geographic limits, among them a mile-high swinging bridge at Grandfather Mountain near Linville; Blowing Rock; and Virginia’s Natural Bridge.

But we found many, beginning with two almost immediately after we climbed up to the Parkway: the Folk Art Center and the nearby Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center. At the Folk Art Center, home of the Southern Highland Craft Guild and its membership of 900 Southern Appalachia artisans, we enjoyed works in three fine galleries, one featuring contemporary embroidery. During one of the craft demonstrations that the center sponsors daily, we saw wood artists Bill and Tina Collision of Unicoi, Tennessee, turn ordinary maple tree burls and scraps of cherry and rosewood into lovely wooden bowls.



Cruising the Blue Ridge Parkway

At the Parkway visitor center, exhibits and a high-definition movie instilled appreciation for the natural beauty and honesty of mountain culture. A 22-foot interactive map of the entire Parkway let us “explore” parts of the road we never saw on this trip. As you drag a monitor across the map, photos and information pop up at highlighted points.

Some 30 miles south and a dozen viewing points later, we arrived at the Mount Pisgah Visitor Center, one of six along the Parkway. Here there’s trail heads, a campground where motor-home travelers can dry camp (no hookups, neither here nor any of the other campgrounds), and an inn with a restaurant that served us one of the most memorable dinners of our trip. Some 20 minutes further south we breathed 6,047-foot-altitude-air at the Richland Balsam pull-off, highest point on the Parkway and the southern-most point of our drive. The following day, we drove a similar distance north, climbing to the Craggy Gardens Visitor Center but found ourselves too early in the first week of May for the purple Rhododendron show these “gardens” are noted for.

Riding the Parkway, we found, is like climbing into a different world, a different, more-relaxed state of mind, even. Up on the ridges, you’re above the hustle and bustle that is daily living. The speed limit is 45 miles per hour, so you’d better not be in a hurry. Mostly, we found courteous fellow drivers maintaining a



George Vanderbilt’s masterpiece

safe speed. There’s little undue tailgating or impatient passing.

Kind of relaxing at the wheel, though there are well-laid curves and tunnels along the way. Pull into any one of the many conveniently placed overlooks, stroll to the edge and before your eyes, a new and different vista unfolds. Air is crisp, un-polluted. Signs at many of these pull-off sites tell you what you are seeing. Those which serve also as trail heads list the hiking distance and usually indicate whether it’s an easy or more difficult walk. You’re not looking out for bikes or motorized vehicles on Parkway trails. These trails are for foot traffic only.

Biltmore Estate. It’s simple truth: unless you tour Biltmore House and the estate built and left by George Vanderbilt, nobody back home is going to believe you’ve been to Asheville. Biltmore is, no question, the number one attraction here, known the world over. It’s a unique study of refined opulence, an example of what America’s first very, very rich could do when things that cost millions in 1900 would price out in billions of 2016 dollars.

The Vanderbilt legacy in North Carolina began after George, a bachelor, visited Asheville with his mother, fell in love with the place, and began buying land in the 1880s, eventually up to 125,000 acres. As a grandson of Cornelius “Commodore” Vanderbilt, founder of the family fortune, George didn’t have

to pinch pennies when he decided to build on some of this land.

After Architect Richard Morris Hunt signed on to design an elegant mountain retreat for the young bachelor, the two visited the great chateaux of France’s Loire Valley. George came back with a plan to build a majestic manor house modeled after the 16th century chateaux Blois and Chenonceaux, and the Chambord style of French Renaissance castles. The work began in 1889, both on the house and surrounding landscapes created by Frederick Law Olmstead, a family friend who designed New York’s Central Park and became known as the father of American landscape architecture. Included were formal gardens to beautify; and farms, a dairy, stables, and utility housing meant to grow and supply food to make the property self-sufficient.

George’s house first opened for a Christmas Eve bash for family and friends in 1895. Majestic it was, and so it remains! How many square feet? How about *four acres* of floor space! With 250 rooms, it is still the largest private home in the country. On the standard self-guided tour of Biltmore House, which takes about two hours, you’ll see things most people could not have dreamed of when it was built — and remain amazing now.

We’re talking a grand entrance hall where guests were welcomed; a banquet hall with a huge fireplace, an “organ loft” housing a Skinner pipe organ, and a table and padded cushion



The Biltmore dining room

chairs that sat 38 people at one dinner; a music room; a 90-foot tapestry gallery displaying Flemish tapestries from the 1530s; George's library that's stacked with 20,000 books and displays a chess set and game table once owned by Napoleon Bonaparte; an indoor bowling alley; a 90,000-gallon indoor *heated* swimming pool; George and Edith Vanderbilt's private bedroom suites and the oak "sitting room" between where they breakfasted; guest quarters, including a bachelors' wing; smoking room; ladies' "changing rooms" and a gun room; two elevators and two dumb waiters; kitchen and servant quarters. Classic works of art grace walls in many areas, reflecting George's life-long love of art. Included are portraits by John Singer Sargent, Renoir, and Whistler and, in George's library, *The Chariots of Aurora*, a 1720s painting by Italian artist Giovanni Pellegrini first shown in Venice's Pisani Palace.

The standard Biltmore tour also includes visits to a natural shrub garden, an Italian Garden and an English Walled Garden. For an added fee, you can go on a house tour with a guide who tells the history of the many rare artifacts, works of art, and stories about the Vanderbilts, their friends, and how they lived. There's also a rooftop tour that takes you to amazing views from balconies and roof tops of Biltmore House.

Today, Biltmore House and some 8,000 acres surrounding it are owned by George Vanderbilt's descendants. It's operated for profit. *For profit*. Unless you have special passes, you'll ante up at least \$50 for the standard tour. We groaned but, by the

A Great Hall entrance lobby with high ceilings and a huge fireplace at each end often surprises arriving guests at the Omni Grove Park Inn. Despite spawning visions of another time, today's technology accompanies this young lady warming in front of one of the big fireplaces.

time we left, we'd seen things we'd never imagine existed in that day—and even felt it may be worth adding to the coffers of a "business" that provides jobs for over 2,000 and works to preserve an interesting page of history. It's somehow comforting to know also that George Vanderbilt's dream of introducing scientific method to silviculture has happened. Before he died in Washington, D.C. in 1914 at age 52 of complications from appendectomy surgery, he was instrumental in founding America's first forestry school. After his death, his widow sold 86,000 acres of his holdings to the U.S. Forest Service for \$5.00 an acre. That land, as George wished, is now the core of Pisgah National Forest, a historic site recognized as the "Cradle of Forestry in America."

Omni Grove Park Inn. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Asheville hosted numbers of people who came for their health, recommended by doctors who hoped the "magic mountain climate" could help patients with malaria, tuberculosis and other respiratory problems. One who arrived for the first time in 1897 suffering from bronchitis and insomnia had himself made a fortune formulating and selling a malaria and common cold treatment he called "Grove's Tasteless Chill Tonic."

That was Edwin Wiley Grove, a small town pharmacist who first hit it big with an elixir that made bitter quinine easier to take and whose Paris Medicine Company later introduced the world's first cold tablets. Enamored with the Asheville area, the visionary Grove bought over 400 acres on Sunset Moun-

Colorful buildings lined up like these are studios where artisans do their work and show wares daily—everything from blown glass to fine oil paintings. It's a little kooky, but a great place to find interesting and excellent work that can sometimes be had at bargain prices.

tain with plans to develop a residential division and, later, a resort lodge grand enough to attract well-healed tourists. In a rare public appearance years later, Grove said his idea was "that Asheville could be a great playground for eastern and western tourists and . . . could be to the east and south what Los Angeles is to the west."

While that prediction might be a bit overly optimistic, the resort hotel he built, now the Omni Grove Park Inn, has for over 100 years ranked among the world's best resorts. It's worth a walk-through, even if you have no intention of ever renting another hotel room.

Unable to find a local architect who would share his concept of erecting a building with the natural rough stones of the mountain on which it was to be built, Grove gave the job to his son-in-law, Fred L. Seely. Though he had no formal architectural training, Seely, as designer and contractor, completed the project in 11 months and 27 days.

Walls and chimneys are made of granite stones quarried from the mountain by 400 workers, many of them Italian stonemasons, earning \$1.00 a day. Hundreds of tons of boulders were moved up the mountainside using mules, wagons, ropes, pulleys, and only one steam shovel. The inn's 500-foot frontage was built in five sections that join step-like along the mountain ridge. Looking on it today, one must be impressed by the intimacy between the building and its natural environment, the effect Grove had in mind when he ordered that "not a piece of stone was to be visible to the eye except it show the time-etched face given it by thousands of years of sun and rain that had beaten on it."

Walking into the Great Hall entrance lobby with its 24-foot high ceilings and two giant fireplaces is an experience. It's fa-

mous for elevators hidden in the fireplace chimneys and some of the 400 original Arts and Crafts furnishings from Stickley and Roycroft that are showcased throughout the hotel. Opened originally July 1, 1913 with 150 rooms, the resort now has 513 guest rooms. There are six restaurants, indoor and outdoor bars, a \$50 million, 43,000-foot underground spa that's consistently voted one of the world's best, a golf course designed by Donald Ross in 1926, and too many amenities to mention. It became a part of the Omni Hotels & Resorts family in July, 2013.

Arts, Museums, Cultural. Symphony to Bluegrass, fine classic art to murals on building walls, glass blowing to ceramic turning, Shakespeare to contemporary theatre. All that and more is part of the amazing diversity you'll find in a few blocks in Asheville.

To be a part of it, just walk. In the evening, you'll see people in line for plays or concerts. By day, you can marvel at the art deco architecture as you pass galleries displaying all kinds of art from jewelry made by the resident artist to classic landscape paintings to pottery. On the way you'll likely hear street performers making music with everything from a mandolin to an electric fiddle.

The place to start a downtown tour is Pack Place, considered Western North Carolina's center for education and science. The Asheville Art Museum; Museum of Science; and the Diana Wortham Theatre home here. The Thomas Wolfe Memorial State Historic Site and the YMI Cultural Center stand nearby.

One of Asheville's early fire trucks, a 1922 American LaFrance, and the antique autos shown here are displayed in the Estes-Winn Antique Car Museum on the Omni Grove Park Inn property. Admission is free, donations appreciated.





PHOTO COURTESY OF AARON DAHLSTROM

Shindig on the Green in Pack Square Park



Asheville at twilight



A glassblower and his creations in the River Arts District



In Pack Square Park, roaming troubadours show up spontaneously. There's a free "Shindig on the Green" every Saturday night, June through September third. Celebrating its 50th year this summer, the Shindig features Southern Appalachian music, bluegrass, jam sessions, and folk dancing.

Pack Square is the suggested starting and ending place for Asheville's Urban Trail, a 1.7-mile "museum without walls" walk that takes you by 30 bronze sculptures and plaques detailing some of the town's history; by its iconic "Flat Iron Building;" and many galleries where artists may be at work.

Downtown cultural attractions include also the Asheville Community Theatre, the Contemporary Dance Theatre, the Asheville Lyric Opera, the Asheville Museum, the Symphony Orchestra, the Center for Craft Creativity and Design; the North Carolina Stage Company; the Downtown Art District; and the River Arts District.

Outdoor Adventure Choices. Hundreds of hiking and biking trails wind, dip and climb for thousands of miles through the million acres of forest and around mountain peaks that surround Asheville. Trails accessible from the Blue Ridge Parkway are marked. None of these are open to bikes but mountain bikers will have little trouble finding paths where they are welcome on U.S. Forest Service lands or other places. Go to or contact the Visitor Center for information and

trail maps. Or check exploreasheville.com/outdoor-adventures/hiking/.

You'll get information for easy trails, challenging trails, short or long trails, most all of them beautiful and some popular, maybe even crowded in peak times. You can even get on a trail without leaving the city limits, starting in Carrier Park which connects to Asheville's biggest greenway. It takes you up-slope for picturesque views of the French Broad River.

Hikers and bikers alike enjoy some 22 miles of trails and paths on the 8,000-acre Biltmore Estate. At times, they run beside the French Broad River and through meadows where George Vanderbilt's environmentally-based land stewardship practices remain today.

Nine of North Carolina's 11 major waterfalls are in western Carolina, most of them not far from Asheville, including the highest in the eastern United States, Whitewater Falls which falls 411 feet. You can see most of these falls by driving to a trailhead and hiking a reasonably-short way along a marked trail.

Professional guide services like Blue Ridge Hiking Company (828-713-5451, trips@blueridgehikingco.com) and Tumblestone Tours (828-242-5563, TumblestoneTours.com) offer full and half-day trips to waterfalls. On two days only this year, October 8 and 9, the Friends of DuPont Forest organization will run a 12-mile shuttle bus to three falls, Triple Falls, High Falls, and Bridal Veil Falls and also to Lake Julia. Reservations are not ac-

cepted but information is available at the Hendersonville Visitor Center (800-828-4244).

Calm water float trips on the French Broad River through the Biltmore property can be arranged at, and leave from, the Asheville Outdoor Center (800-849-1970, ashevilleoutdoorcenter.com). For guided whitewater rapids fun, go to Blue Heron Whitewater (888-426-7238, blueheron-whitewater.com); French Broad Adventures (828-649-0486, frenchbroadrafting.com); or Wildwater Rafting at the Asheville Adventure Center (800-451-9972, wildwater rafting.com). You can rent gear for calm water floating also at all these outfitters.

In addition to the float trips, both Wildwater and French Broad Adventures operate ziplines. French Broad has a 10-line, tree-based canopy tour. Wildwater has five zipline canopy tour locations. Other zipline operators include Asheville Zipline at the Adventure Center (800-

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Jonas Gerard Gallery



The Quilt Garden in the North Carolina Arboretum



Making brooms at the Folk Art Center

451-9972, adventurecenterofasheville.com) which operates 11 ziplines up to 1,200 feet long near downtown; Treetops Adventure Park, also at the Adventure Center which has tree-to-tree bridges and other unique features; and Navitat Canopy Adventures (855-628-4828, navitat.com) which claims to have some of the nation's highest, fastest and longest ziplines.

With some 4,000 miles of public trout streams and rivers in the mountains around Asheville, some heavily populated with three species of trout and several kinds of bass, fishing is good – and popular. You can help yourself to it if you have equipment and know where to go or you can book an experienced guide who will demonstrate “how to.”

Outfitters who offer guide service also supply maps, equipment, and advice if you prefer to set out on your own. They include Hunter Banks Fly Fishing (800-227-6782, hunterbanks.com), Brown Trout Fly Fishing (803-431-9437, browntroutfly-fishing.com), and Curtis Wright Outfitters (828-274-3471, curtiswrightoutfitters@gmail.com).

Birding is rewarding along the Parkway where 250 bird spe-

cies have been spotted or heard. “As you climb up in elevation, you go out of one bird’s range, and into another. The diversity is staggering,” says Ornithologist Simon Thompson owner of Ventures Birding Tours (828-253-4247, BirdVentures@gmail.com).

The North Carolina Arboretum. Though our first week of May visit did not turn out to be the best for blooms along the part of the Parkway we traveled, we found plenty of color, a fantastic collection of sculpture art in outdoor garden areas at the North Carolina Arboretum. Its professional-quality fine works in oil, watercolor and fabrics were displayed inside the Education Center and Baker Exhibit Center. We happened to visit at a time when locally-made quilts were on exhibit. This seemed more than coincidence when we walked to outside gardens and looked down on brightly-blooming pansies, planted in perfect quilt-like patterns in, appropriately, the Arboretum’s “Quilt Garden.”

The Arboretum maintains 65 acres of cultivated gardens within a 434-acre property. There are 10 miles of hiking and biking trails.

The Western North Carolina Nature Center. With more than 220 animals representing over 60 species, a visit here let us see close-up much of the animal life that inhabits woodlands of the Blue Ridge, whether or not we happened to see them in the wild. Our favorite was the pokey black bears we were able to watch and photograph from the center’s 250-foot-long elevated board walk.

Dining. This, we’re good at. But with 250 restaurants to choose from, to revise one of Winston Churchill’s famous lines: So much food, so little time. Sampling we did, however, left us thinking the Visitor Center people may not exaggerate when they say Asheville is one of the country’s fastest-growing culinary hot spots. Certainly, you can find a restaurant that serves any type of food you crave—from Southern fried chicken to fine dining cuisine. The restaurants favor local sourcing wherever possible.

There’s a walking tour daily between 2 and 4:30 p.m. that lets you sample menus at six or more downtown restaurants “one



A resident in the Western North Carolina Nature Center

bite and sip at a time.” They call it “decadent, educational and fun.” (828-489-3266, eatingasheville.com)

We enjoyed excellent dinners at the Red Rocker Inn in nearby Black Mountain, the Mount Pisgah Inn up on the Parkway, and the Tupelo Honey Café downtown. All were excellent and we could not agree which was the best. We did agree that our best breakfast was Sunday brunch at Carmel’s Kitchen and Bar located in a corner of the historic Grove Arcade downtown.

Where to Hook Up in and Near Asheville

RV Parks in Asheville:

Mama Gertie’s Hideaway Campground (828-686-4258 or 877-686-4258 for reservations, mamagerties.com). This is the park where we stayed and we give it a 10+ recommendation.

Asheville Bear Creek RV Park. (828-253-0798, ashevillebearcreek.com)

Campfire Lodgings. (828-658-8012, campfirelodgings.com)

French Broad River Campground. (828-658-0772).

Wilson’s Riverfront RV Park. (828-254-4676)

Jaymar Travel Park (828-685-3771, jaymarnc.com)

Town Mountain Travel Park (828-697-6692, townmountaintravelpark.com)

Lakewood RV Resort (888-819-4200, lakewoodrvresort.com)

National Park and U.S. Forest Service RV Camps Near Asheville:

Pisgah/Lake Powhatten (828-667-0391)

Mount Pisgah/Blue Ridge Pkwy (828-648-2644)

Pisgah/North Mills River (877-444-6777 or 828-890-3284)

One week is not enough to “do” Asheville. It’s a place where you’re comfortable, even when others, both young and only young at heart, may be dancing, picking, cavorting or beating drums in the streets. Suddenly, your cares are on hold and you just might join in.

It’s not just the city, you see. It’s also the mountains, the clean air, beautiful things around you. Maybe what it is, is God’s country—like the rest of this great nation. RIS

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*According to independent mattress review site, sleeplikethedead.com (May 2016)



IMPORTANT SAFETY RECALL NHTSA RECALL #15V-880

This recall is for the Coach Step brand of Electric Double and Triple Entry Steps

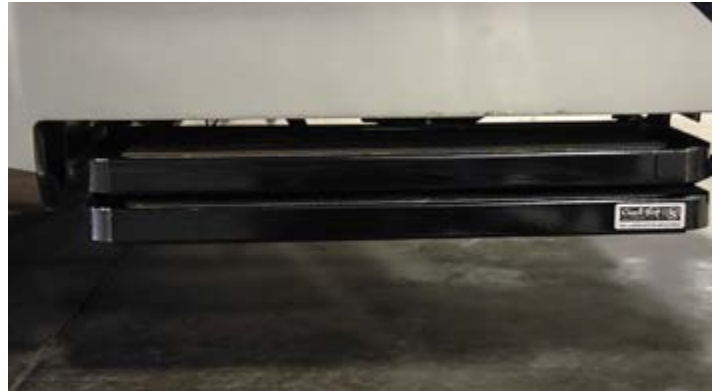
This notice is sent to you in accordance with the requirements of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

Tiffin Motorhomes has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, could exist on the following models of motorhomes: 2007-2010 Allegro Bays, 2008-2015 Allegro Open Roads and REDs, 2008-2015 Allegro Buses, 2008-2015 Phaetons. The specific motorhomes contain Coach Step Electric Double or Triple entry steps that were manufactured between May 25, 2007 and December 18, 2014 by Lippert Components, Inc. On certain motorhomes equipped with these Coach Step electric entry steps, an internal bolt on the steps that attaches the fan gear assembly to the steps could fracture. This results in the fan gear disengaging from the steps, which could cause the steps to stop in an unexpected position and appear to be loose or unstable. If the steps become unstable, it could cause a person to fall, resulting in injury.

Lippert Components has devised a remedy that involves installing a step retainer bracket to reinforce the operating mechanism. This will prevent the fan gear assembly from disengaging from the steps in the event that the center bolt was to fracture and that also reinforces a stable platform. This repair will be made at no cost to you. Please allow up to 30 minutes for the repair to be completed, depending on if there are double or triple steps installed on your motorhome.

Tiffin Motorhomes is aware that not all of the units identified above will have Coach Step brand entry steps installed. To confirm whether your motorhome is involved, you can look to see if your steps have a sticker identifying them as “Coach Step” brand steps. This sticker will be in the right corner of the bottom step. Please note that if your steps do not have a sticker or if the sticker has been painted over, the steps will have to be examined by a service center or dealer to determine if they are involved.

If you determine that you do not have Coach Step entry steps, please make note of the brand installed and call Jeannie Madden at 256-356-8661 extension 2176 or send an email to jeannie.madden@tiffinmotorhomes.com so that we can clear this recall from your motorhome.



This is a Coach Step brand step



This is a different brand step

To arrange for the completion of this recall, please call Lippert Components at 574-537-8900.

If you are unable to have the defect remedied without charge and within a reasonable time after you tender the vehicle for repair, please contact the Tiffin Warranty Department, at 1-256-356-8661, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Central Time. You may also wish to notify the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington DC 20590, or phone 1-888-327-4236 (TTY: 1-800-424-9153); or go to <http://www.safercar.gov>.

We regret any inconvenience this action may cause, but feel certain you understand our interest in motor vehicle safety.

Tiffin Warranty Department

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Spinning Wheels

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The year 1969 will forever be ingrained in the hearts of many folks. As a sophomore in college that year, I said goodbye to several friends who left to fight the war in Vietnam. Neil Armstrong took his historic leap for mankind and “Tricky Dick” pledged his allegiance to uphold the Office of President of the United States. That summer “The Blood Sweat and Tears” belted out *Spinning Wheels* at Woodstock.

Ironically, *Spinning Wheels* represents the various cycles a person traverses during their lifetime, including the RVing cycle. In the 1940s Fay Clark, father of a friend of mine, built one of the first trailers, the Hiawatha, named after the Iowa town he founded. Clark’s fascination with “spinning wheels” was soon joined by Eagle, Airstream, and Holiday Rambler, then Mr Tiffin in 1972.

Just as the cycle of life spins so do tires but only with proper care. Let’s take a look at the dos and do nots of tire care, awnings and other nuisances.

Tread Lightly

Prevention is not only the key to speed cleaning as you will learn in later articles, it also keeps your Tiffin motorhome in prime condition, including the tires. Keep track of the date your tires were manufactured then replace them every five to six years (seven is a stretch) despite the number of miles traveled. Tires naturally deteriorate with time even stored in a dark warehouse. A six-year-old tire with 1500 miles can blow on the next voyage.

To find the age of a tire locate the tire’s identification number. The last two digits of that number are the year of manufacture and the two numbers in front of them are the week. The number 3513 means they were manufactured the 35th week of 2013.

Add life to your tires by rotating and aligning them every four to 5,000 miles. Check the tire’s pressure once a month, especially after climbing to high altitudes or driving through extreme temperature changes.

Outside of an unexpected nail puncture, proper tire maintenance assures safe arrival without the worry of being left stranded on the trail. Tire manufacturers recommend the following care:

1. Drive between 50 and 100 miles a month. As wheels turn, the natural oil within a tire pulls to the surface where it lubricates and protects the tire against drying and cracking.

2. Clean tires three to four times a year using an aggressive scrub pad. (See note.) Tires must be scrubbed to remove oxidation, which occurs naturally. If you are full-timing or your coach is out in the elements all year, scrub them four times a year, otherwise three times a year suffices.

3. Never clean tires with degreasing agents, heavy duty cleaners, orange-based cleaners or liquid dish soaps. These cleaners are formulated to break down grease and oil. Over time and continued use, they break down the rubber weakening its structure. Use either baby shampoo

or powdered laundry detergent. However, never wash your coach with powdered laundry detergent as it contains sawdust, a filler, and will scratch the paint. If the oxidation persists on your tires and they are still under warranty, have them inspected as they may be defective.

Note: Scrub pads come in various colors. White, a gentle non-scratching pad, is not vigorous enough for tires. The darker the color the more aggressive a pad scrubs. Yellow is the next step up from white followed by bright red, green, gray, dark red, brown and finally black. Look for a bright red or green scrub pad or try an SOS pad.

Tire Treatments

“It takes time.” Those words cannot be repeated often enough. Now that the song *Spinning Wheels* is stuck in your memory, add the words “It takes time.” It takes time for the scratches caused by micro-fiber to appear on a sealed, painted or finished surface. “It takes time” for the dulling effects of heavy duty cleaners to become apparent on exterior paint. “It takes time” for the petroleum distillates in tire treatments to deteriorate tire rubber to the point of a blowout.

Unfortunately tires do not come with an alarm system that warns you of oncoming problems. Combine tire treatments with the use of degreasing cleaners and you have the makings of a Class 4 hurricane. Keep in mind that the use of tire treatments voids the warranty even if

a tire blows while under warranty. Guarantees and warranties only apply to manufacturing defects whether it is the paint, engine, refrigerator, or tires.

Wheels Just Keep on Spinning

The wheels on most RVs are either aluminum or sealed. Sealed wheels have a shiny appearance. Consult the owner’s manual if you are unsure about the type of wheel on your coach as the abrasives in metal polishes grind away the sealant.

Before cleaning sealed wheels, spray them with a cleaner or Mary’s CleanEz. Wait five minutes and wipe clean. Shine, clean and polish aluminum wheels by using a metal polish like Metal Polish carried by Mary Moppins. Flitz is another good polish.

Mary’s Simple Solutions: Head to the hardware store for some sponge paint

brushes. The end is thin enough to clean under the lip of the wheel and around wheel nuts. A cotton toilet bowl brush found in some grocery stores or janitorial supply stores does a quick job of cleaning around brake holes.

Awnings

For an afternoon of entertainment watch the body-bending tricks people use to clean awnings. Always remove dust and grit before rolling up awnings. Even though they are tightly rolled up, awnings shift during travel. Any grit caught in their folds grinds away at the fabric as you travel.

To wash awnings, first brush off the debris, then throw a bucket of water with baby shampoo or Mary’s CleanEz on the awning. Spread the mixture around using her Lambswool Wash and roll the awning

up for 30 minutes. Remember Mary’s number one rule: give your product time to work. Rolling the awning up for 30 minutes cleans the top and bottom at the same time. Unroll, scrub, rinse and air dry.

Add two to three cups of hydrogen peroxide (purchase a fresh bottle as old peroxide has lost its effectiveness) in your bucket of water to remove mold or mildew. Test a spot for color fastness then follow the above directions. Rinse with one half cup of food grade distilled white vinegar per gallon of water. Vinegar stops the bleaching effect of peroxide. Never mix the two together as they negate the mold-killing effects of each other. The heat from the sun also kills mold spores so leave awnings open for a few days in the hot sun.

Tree sap is difficult to bust off awnings. It always lands in the middle of the



Mary Findley is a veteran cleaning expert, cleaning consultant to the RV industry, author of *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Green Cleaning*, and owner of Mary Moppins. Mary’s cleaning tips appear in magazines such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *This Old House*, *Woman’s World* and other national publications. Mary Moppins is now for sale. You may reach Mary through her website goclean.com or call 541-607-9498.



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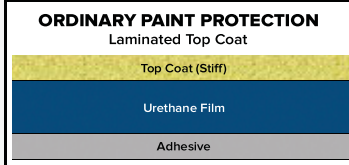
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awning where it's hard to reach so — good luck! The only safe way I know to remove sap is to freeze water in a ziploc bag or use a blue ice pack. Haul out the ladder and scoot the ice across the awning with a handle until it lands on top of the sap. Wait 30 minutes, then tape a plastic scraper to a handle. Slowly scrape off the sap to avoid puncturing the awning.

I Can See Clearly Now

Glass is porous. When bugs muck up your windshield they immediately soak into the pores of the glass where the heat of the afternoon sun ensures their difficult removal. Busting bugs off the windshield once required excessive elbow grease until the invention of microfiber. Microfiber, made from 80% polyester or plastic, scratches. It scratches the bugs off windshields without scratching the glass. Never use it on sealed, painted or finished surfaces.

Mary's Windshield Wizards, which are microfiber, come as a pair. One removes the bugs as it washes the windshield while the other dries. They attach to the same pad holder as Mary's Lambswool Wash so they don't take up much additional room in the bay. Look at your microfiber pads. The course, nubby pad washes and the softer pad dries. Mary's concentrated window cleaner, Benya, leaves windows sparkling and streak free.

A word of caution about applying a treatment like RainEx to your windshield: don't. The chemicals in products like RainEx can block the chemicals used to repair a rock chip. There are chip repair companies who can circumvent this issue, although success is not guaranteed.

Wiper Blades. Clean your windshield wiper blades monthly to remove grime and buildup. Cover them when parked longer than a day. Heat coming off glass is 10 to 15 degrees hotter than the outdoor temperature and quickly dries the rubber resulting in frequent replacement. Extend their life by covering them with wiper blade covers or pipe insulation.

Decals and Stripes

You regularly wash and wax your coach. In spite of all this TLC, the decals and stripes may be pulling away from the surface and/or oxidizing. There are two culprits charged with this crime: (1) Harsh degreasing cleaners, and (2) Petroleum distillates found in most waxes.

Heavy duty, degreasing cleaners dissolve adhesive including the ones used to bind decals and stripes to the side of your coach, boat, motorcycle or other people transporters. Then along comes the petroleum distillates in the wax that further softens the adhesive. When a sticker needs to be removed, folks reach for WD40. It contains 100% petroleum distillates that dissolve adhesive. Remember—"it takes time." Decals and stripes also oxidize or lose their color due to the use of heavy duty cleaners, distillates, and exposure to the elements.

If your decals or striping are pulling loose, they must be removed since they cannot be re-attached. First grab a concentrated all-purpose cleaner like Mary's CleanEz or a heavy duty cleaner. Then snag two old cotton T-shirts and dampen one with water. Next grab a hair dryer and a can of WD40 with the red tube attached to the nozzle.

Work on dry pavement. Set the hair dryer to the highest heat. Begin by heating one end of the stripe until the adhesive loosens allowing you to pull the stripe away from the surface. Wind the stripe up with the adhesive side facing inward to prevent the adhesive from sticking to other surfaces.

When the entire stripe has been removed, work in small sections spraying any remaining adhesive with WD40. Immediately remove over-spray and drips. Wait a few minutes then pour CleanEz or a concentrated general purpose cleaner onto the damp cloth and wipe the surface to remove the remaining adhesive and WD40. Rinse with ¼ cup food-grade distilled white vinegar per quart of water.

Word of Warning: Use of a heat gun to speed up this process will only result in damaged paint, a bruised ego, and an expensive paint job.

If the decals or striping are oxidizing but not peeling, remove the oxidation by pouring a concentrated general purpose cleaner or CleanEz on a damp cloth. Wipe over the stripe or decals. Wait a few minutes and rinse with the vinegar and water solution. Then apply Mary's petroleum distillate free Advantage to the decals and entire coach. The polymers in Advantage protect paint, decals and striping from continued oxidation.

Cleaning Aluminum Sides

Please forgive me for neglecting to cover the Tiffin motorhomes with aluminum sides. Let me back track to cover cleaning these surfaces.

Aluminum siding can be polished,

sealed or painted. Polished aluminum sides oxidize with time and if it is sealed, the sealant wears down over the years. Test your coach for oxidation by pouring a bit of aluminum polish like Mary's Metal Polish on a cloth. Rub a very small spot for one minute. Any grey showing on the rag indicates oxidation. If your coach was sealed, the sealant has worn away and needs to be removed then reapplied. Oxidized unfinished aluminum requires a good polishing to restore the shine. No residue on a cloth means the aluminum is sealed and not oxidizing.

First, wash an unsealed or polished aluminum coach with Mary's CleanEz or other organic cleaner. Wash with 100% pure Lambswool to prevent scratches.

To restore the shine on polished aluminum or remove the remainder of a sealant, use a buffer—Cyclo is excellent—and a dozen sheep skin polishing bon-

nets. Work with a good metal polish like Mary's Metal Polish. Pour the polish on your lightly dampened bonnet then work from top to bottom. You can hand buff aluminum but the shine may be uneven.

After polishing, clean your coach to remove any residue. Then apply two coats of Mary's Advantage or your distillate free protectant to protect the shine. The polymers build a protective barrier but also leave a slick finish so bugs and road grime slide off with regular washing. Re-apply two to three times a year to maintain the shine and reduce oxidation.

Note: Always hand launder polishing bonnets or pads in a bucket of sudsy water. Never wash them in a washing machine. Whatever has come off onto the pad or bonnet will adhere to the sides of the washer and transfer to other wash loads.

Wash painted aluminum as discussed in RIS 13:2.

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Really, Is Your Dog a Service Dog?

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE abusing the Americans with Disabilities Act by calling their pets service animals. Unfortunately, anyone can go online and purchase vests and download documentation stating that their pet is a service animal. This situation is producing problems for owners of legitimate service dogs because it puts them under more scrutiny when they enter a business or restaurant.

Not every human disability is readily apparent, such as deafness, epilepsy, autism, multiple sclerosis, and life-threatening allergies. The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) allows you to ask a dog owner only two questions: (1) Is this a service dog; and (2) What tasks does the service animal perform? A business owner is not allowed to demand proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed.

Businesses may not require special identification. They may not ask about the person's disability or charge an extra fee because of the animal. They may not refuse admittance, isolate, segregate, or treat this person less favorably than other customers.

Most people are used to seeing Labradors, German Shepherds and Golden Retrievers as seeing-eye dogs. Other breeds such as Jack Russell terriers or most any small breed can be service dogs if trained properly. So please do not judge whether a dog is a service dog by its breed.

While many service dogs are supplied documentation and vests by legitimate organizations, it is not required, and the disabled are not required to have their service animal use them. A service animal means any animal that is trained to do work or perform certain tasks for the benefit of a person with certain disabilities. The task must be related specifically to the handler's disability.

We are used to seeing service dogs for the blind helping a blind person navigate, but service animals are also trained to aid the deaf, pull a wheelchair, assist during an epileptic seizure, alert a person who is diabetic to a low blood sugar, alert a person with a severe peanut allergy to a reaction, or retrieve items such as medications or a phone. These animals can be used in helping to provide physical support for individuals, and may be used by persons with psychiatric or neurological disabilities. As you can see, these latter situations would be hard to identify, and are likely to bring scrutiny to their service dog.

There is no nationally recognized certification for service dogs. They may be trained by an individual trainee, an organi-

zation or the disabled handler themselves. The best indication of an animal being a trained service dog and not a pet is by its behavior. If the service animal is interrupting a business' daily operation with its behavior, causing problems in a housing situation, or is presenting a danger to anyone, such conduct is not acceptable of a service dog. If they are barking, growling, stealing food from other clients, jumping up on people, or relieving themselves of urine or feces inside the establishment, by law the manager of the business has every right to ask the owner to remove the dog from the premises even if they are a service dog. The manager cannot ask the disabled person to leave but can ask that the dog be removed.

Some characteristics of a service dog are:

- Focusing on their handler at all times.
- Possessing an even temperament with no anxiety or aggression present.
- Walking on leash without being distracted.
- Remaining quiet by their handler's side.
- Ignoring distractions.
- Responding quickly to their handler's commands.

Service animals undergo very vigorous training for a very specific job. Individuals who try to pass off their pets as service animals just to be able to take them in restaurants or other establishments are doing a disservice to these well-trained dogs and the truly disabled.

Since the ADA guidelines permit use of any animal as a service animal, I have found some disabled people using miniature horses. Yes, I said miniature horses! They are about the size of a Newfoundland dog, ranging from 24–30 inches to the shoulder. These horses live 20–30 years, longer than most dogs. Rules for public admittance are the same for them as for dogs as long as the horse is house-broken and the facility can accommodate the horse's size.

So next time you are out and see a miniature horse pulling a wheelchair, do not be surprised. When you do see a service animal with its handler, do not go up to pet it without asking permission, and do not feel bad if the owner says, "No, he/she is working."

Please do not try to pass off your pet as a service dog when they aren't as this creates more scrutiny and potential problems for the real service dog and its handler.

Happy Travels, John & Kay

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Dear Mr. Bob Tiffin,

My name is Ashley Beckwith and I've been full-timing with my parents and sister in our motorhome for almost nine months. We have been in 32 states so far. It has been so much fun. My family and I came to the repair place to get a water leak fixed in our slide-out. I love to draw, so I decided to draw our motorhome. We have a 2016 Phaeton. I love it and wanted to thank you for everything! I hope you like the picture!

Ashley Beckwith (14 years old), Corona, California



Considering Full Timing

My wife and I have been considering full timing. But until we make that decision we have enjoyed some great trips. During last summer, we took a trip to the Southwest to see the Grand Canyon, Sedona, and Zion and Bryce Canyon national parks, and stopped along the way back to Florida at the Texas Grand Canyon (Palo Duro Canyon). We made a stop at Red Bay for 10

days to have a few things taken care of and then met our daughter, her husband, and our grandson at Stone Mountain for a few days before getting home and back to work. We love our 36LA and can't wait until our next adventure to the Northwest.

Ron & Georgia Padgett, Jacksonville, Florida

Visited an RV Show, Bought a New Tiffin, Won the Dog Show

We spent December 2015 through March 2016 at Far Horizons Tucson Village in Tucson, Arizona. One day, with nothing else to do, we decided to go to the RV Show and ended up back in the "Tiffin Family" after owning another brand for the three previous years. We purchased our 2016 Allegro RED through LaMesa RV with several added amenities which were put to good use during the balance of our trip.

Several days before we headed back to Nebraska, Far Horizons held their annual Southminster Dog Show and, of course, we entered our boy Jakey. We were pleasantly surprised when he won "Best of Show." On an added note, we like to pull out the recliner to the other side of the fireplace and then put Jakey's bed under the long window, giving him a full view of all the happenings outside while we are gone.

Gale & Barbara Hager, Glenvil, Nebraska



A Three-Month Trip Cross Country Trip in Our Phaeton

After deciding to make the California coast our destination, we left our home in Barre, Vermont on August 1, 2015. By the end of October, we had logged 10,400 miles and visited 22 states and four Canadian provinces. We filled our trip diary with visits to nearly 60 places. Here are some of our favorite places that left memorable impressions.

John Deere Museum in East Moline, Illinois. John Deere moved there from Rutland, Vermont. As a Vermonter and an owner of John Deere equipment, this definitely was on our bucket list. The story behind his success was very educational.

Badlands/Black Hills in southwestern South Dakota. The

Badlands are miles and miles of a beautiful mixture of eroded buttes and spires with colors of red, brown, purple, orange, and grays. Custer National Park in the Black Hills was another favorite because of its acres of prairies with herds of roaming bison. The Bison rule the area. We were in awe of the immense faces of four presidents carved into the granite at Mount Rushmore in Keystone, South Dakota. Coming from Barre, Vermont and a granite industry in my own family, these iconic symbols in U. S. history are a must see. Minuteman Missile National Historical Site in Philip, South Dakota made us acutely aware of the years when we were in the Cold War and nuclear arms race.

The majestic snow-capped mountains in Banff National Park



Richard and Susan



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Destination: Pacific Coast

in the Canadian Rockies are unmatched by any in the U.S. Lake Louise is famous for its turquoise waters. Just beautiful.

We also loved the Coast of Oregon with Coos Bay and its views of the Pacific Ocean. Around each corner was a picture better than the last. And then the highlight of our trip was Crater Lake National

Park in Oregon with breathtaking views and water as blue as blue can be.

We ended our adventure at our winter home in Zephyrhills, Florida. This is what owning a motorcoach is to us – seeing and traveling as much of the U.S. and Canada as we can. Happy travels.

Richard Otis & Susan Barnett

Best Fishing Ever

During the winter of 2016 in our 2011 Phaeton, we traveled to southern Mississippi, New Orleans, and Naples, Florida. While on this trip, I caught this 30 pound Redfish near Hopedale Saint Bernard, Louisiana, in the Gulf of Mexico.

Bev Milligan, Mission, South Dakota



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First Camping Experience

The day we purchased our motorhome, our dealer, Transwest, gave us weekend passes with infield camping at the Kansas Speedway. Not only did we have a wonderful customer service experience, we had an amazing first camping experience. We have thoroughly enjoyed our Tiffin Allegro. Everyone in the campground has stopped by to check out our Tiffin.

Victory Macias, Kansas City, Missouri

Meeting Other Tiffin Owners

While we were in Colorado Springs, we met three other couples with Tiffin motorhomes. We all hit it off and had a great time talking about our adventures and how much we enjoy our Tiffins. Every Tiffin owner we have met is top notch.

Rick Greene, Gilbert, Arizona



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Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, a 42-year veteran with Tiffin Motorhomes, invites your questions.

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

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

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

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

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

brake engaged, which in turn apparently prevents extending or retracting the slide-outs. After setting and removing the parking brake several times, the light will usually stay on, thus enabling me to extend or retract the slide-outs. Could you tell me how to solve this problem? Is this item under warranty? If so, where is the nearest service center that can address this problem?

Gale Hager, Glenvil, Nebraska

Dear Gale,

This malfunction is under warranty. The problem may be an electrical connection in the activator that is just underneath the yellow pull knob for the air brakes. The closest Tiffin dealer to you is Leach Camper Sales in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Snake Oil in My Tank?

Are the diesel fuel additives on the market really effective as advertised, or are they really just "snake oil?"

Doug Glover, Tampa, Florida

Dear Doug,

We do not feel that you should use additives on a regular basis. If you are going to store the coach for an extended period of time, use an algae-preventing additive.

Removing Floor Marks Made by Slide-Out Rollers & Moving the Passenger Chair

I just read the latest *Roughing It Smoothly* articles with interest. We, too, have floor marks from the rollers on the large DS slide-out. In our case, it is more than just marks. During travel, the vibration of the retracted slide-out has caused scratching and abrasion of the floor tiles.

We purchased our pre-owned 2013 Phaeton 40QBH from La Mesa RV-Tucson in 2015 and are otherwise happy with it. La Mesa told us it would cost several hundred dollars to replace the rollers and that no amount of slide adjustments would correct the problem. Being very unhappy with that response, I decided to clean the rollers myself. Your readers may be interested.

I extended the slide-out nearly all the way. The rollers were visible from the inside by lifting the carpet. I lifted the seal on the outside and held it up out of the way with several 1.5-inch square foam blocks. Using an air hose, I blew out all of the loose debris, dust, and dirt from the inside. With a yardstick covered with damp rags, I wiped away the remaining dirt.

To remove debris from the rollers, I took a "For Sale" sign purchased at a hardware store (thin plastic) and cut it into 5 x 16-inch strips. Then I "reverse wrapped" the strips with clear packing tape with the sticky side facing out and placed them over the roller marks. Running the slides in-and-out several times over the sticky 5 x 16-inch strips cleaned nearly all of the debris from the rollers and the tile. The problem is not gone. But by cleaning the rollers periodically, it is minimized. I hope

Tiffin can find a "roller solution" soon.

When traveling, we are not able to recline the PS seat even when it is in the full forward position due to interference with the retracted slide-out sidewall. Can the track for the PS seat be relocated a few inches forward to allow a bit more of reclining room?

Bill Woodrow, Green Valley, Arizona

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your input to remedy this problem. With regard to reclining the passenger chair, we are limited by the length of the floor space between the step well and the retracted slide-out. If we reduced the length of the slide-out box, we could get a few more inches of space for the recliner. However, the designers opted for more features in the slide-out. We will register your vote for a modification.

Flexible Vinyl Tiles Move in the Allegro

I own a 2013 Allegro 32CA with vinyl tile throughout the coach. The glue holding the tiles to the plywood deck seems to be too soft, allowing them to move when we are in transit. Our dealer said it was designed that way to allow flexing. Is this true? If so, what can I do to correct the problem? Sometimes the gap between the tiles will reach nearly an inch. I reposition the tiles

after each trip, but they keep on moving on the next trip.

Terry LeBeau, Tucson, Arizona

Dear Terry,

The vinyl tiles will move a little, caused by hot and cold weather. But tiles that have the amount of space you described are too loose. Pull them up and reglue them. You should have received several extra tiles in the basement of your coach when it was delivered.

1999 Allegro Bus Cruise Control & 12v Problem

We have a 1999 Allegro Bus that we have thoroughly enjoyed. Recently, after the coach was parked for a month, the cruise control would not engage and function. Both fuses checked out okay. Please advise me on what I should do next.

When I turn off the 12v disconnect, it also turns off the gas-electric fridge. Can this be changed to only turn off all of the lights? Thanks for your help. We love *Roughing It Smoothly* magazine.

Jim & Joyce Johnson, Lexington, Mississippi

Dear Jim & Joyce,

After you check the fuses, check to see if the brake lights are working properly because they activate the shut-off on the cruise control. Next item to check is the cruise control box under the dash which probably will require the skills of a trained technician.

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We do not recommend that you try to rewire the 12v service to the refrigerator. Removing it from the main 12v cut-off switch can be done, but we urge you to engage a trained technician to make the modification.

Adding a Rear Ladder to My Bus

I purchased a 2015 Allegro Bus without a rear ladder. Now I would like to have one installed. Can you tell me if there are metal reinforcement panels embedded behind or in the fiberglass to support the ladder?

Judy Brant

Stoystown, Pennsylvania

Dear Judy,

A rear ladder can be added to the Allegro Bus, but you have to be careful not to puncture one or more of the condensation drains from the air conditioners. They are located in the space just behind the rear cap. Measure the exact position of a factory-installed ladder on another 2015 Allegro Bus and follow the points for attaching the screws. When you order the ladder from Tiffin's parts and service, be sure to ask them to include the correct screws to attach it to the rear cap. To be safe, you may want to have a Tiffin dealer or the Tiffin Service Center do the work.

Tightening Hose Clamps on Rear Toilet

We own a 2012 Allegro 36LA and we love it. We have traveled about 16,000 miles in it so far after purchasing it from the original owners three years ago. We currently are living in it full-time while I work an out-of-town job for a year.

Our rear bath toilet leaks water on the floor when it is flushed. I unbolted it from the floor and tightened all of the hose clamps I could see and reach. That solved the problem for a short time, but now it is leaking again. Do you have any recommendations?

Ron & Georgia Padgett

Jacksonville, Florida

Dear Ron & Georgia,

Try checking the clamps again to see

if they remained tight. If this does not work, then I suggest you replace the water valve underneath the toilet.

Time to Replace a Refrigerator?

I have had trouble with my Norcold 1200 refrigerator ever since it was new. Do you have a suggestion for a replacement refrigerator? The doors never have closed tightly. I have tried every repair kit made and nothing works. So far I have replaced the cooling unit and the ice maker. My coach only has 58,000 miles on it. I am not a full-timer.

Diane Bowen

Chula Vista, California

Dear Diane,

Unfortunately, you will have to change out your refrigerator. If you do not wish to go back to a Norcold, Dometic makes a couple of units that will fit this space. Some owners are choosing to replace the gas-electric refrigerator with a residential unit. We have two local suppliers here in Red Bay who can do that for you. Check with your nearest Tiffin dealer in California to see if they offer the residential conversion.

Tape Graphics: What Is the Best Solution When They Peel?

I have a 2005 Allegro 32CA. The tape graphics are peeling off only on the driver's side. The opposite side is starting to roll up. Are there any RV dealers in the Houston area that can replace the graphics or do I need to bring it to Red Bay? Can the graphics be removed and the same design replaced with paint? Please advise.

Donald E. Wright

Alvin, Texas

Dear Donald,

If you like your motorhome and want to keep it, I would recommend removing the graphics and painting the stripes (see procedure for removal, p. 64). There are a few dealerships that can do this, but most of our dealerships send this job out to body shops when the graphics are to be removed and replaced with paint. However,

we can order new graphics if that is your preference. The TMH parts and service department can provide a quotation. Replacing the stripes is a tedious job that is usually done by a professional paint shop.

Nitrogen in Tires

I enjoyed the article Dave McClellan wrote "Riding on Air" in the Spring issue (13:2) of *Roughing It Smoothly*, but there was no mention of nitrogen in tires.

We are driving our fourth Tiffin coach (a 2014 Allegro RED 33AA) and have opted for nitrogen over air in all of them. This was suggested by our tire dealer because it runs cooler and the tire sidewalls are more impermeable to nitrogen. Your take on this please.

William (Bill) Hill

Summerdale, Alabama

Dear Bill,

Nitrogen in your tires is a plus until you have a leak or a blowout and have to find a service center that offers nitrogen. But otherwise, everything we hear about nitrogen is positive.

Replacing Brake Light on 2011 Allegro RED 34QFA

The rear third of the brake light burned out and I bought a replacement from TMH Parts and Service. How do I replace this fixture? I removed two screws holding it to the body. That allowed the fixture to come out approximately one inch, but there is no access from the rear grille. A foam pad in the upper compartment prevents access to the wiring.

Tom Sadecki

Peotone, Illinois

Dear Tom,

After you remove the two screws, there should be enough slack in the wiring to allow the tail light assembly to swing out, giving you room to reach in and remove the bulb for replacement.

Electrical System on 2012 Allegro Breeze

We purchased our 2012 Allegro Breeze

32BR new in 2012. I have been noticing lately our overhead lights in the galley, bedroom, and bathroom "flicker" from any movement in the coach. It is especially noticeable in the bathroom when the lavatory faucet is running. Can you think of anything that might cause this?

Also, we just got new batteries. When we are at home, everything in the coach is turned off and the coach is not plugged into shore power. After three weeks, the batteries are dead. This also happened with our first set of batteries. What could be draining the batteries?

Mary Walker

Payson, Arizona

Dear Mary,

On the flickering of the lights, it is most likely a loose ground. Check your connections at your 12v breaker box located in the vanity under the lavatory. With regard to the batteries running down: when you park your unit and do not expect to use it for several days, turn the 12v power inverter off. Also you can turn the chassis battery breaker off underneath the steps at the batteries. This should prevent the drainage problem.

Using Propane Furnace at High Altitude

On our return to Idaho from Arizona, we stopped for the night at Ely, Nevada (elev. 6,000 ft.) where the temperature was in the mid-30s. I turned on the furnace in our 2015 Allegro 31SA and set the thermostat at 70 for about four hours. Everything worked fine. Then I set the thermostat to 55 for the night and awakened at 2:30 a.m. with the inside temp at 49. I tried to restart the furnace. The blower came on and cycled off, but we got no heat. I cycled it four times without success.

When we stopped at 10 a.m. for a coffee break, I tried to restart the furnace. It started up immediately where the outside temp was 28 and the elevation approximately 4,000 feet. A propane supplier suggested the pressure regulator was not set high enough for the altitude at Ely. Do

you have an explanation for this event?

William & Gwen Davis

Filer, Idaho

Dear William & Gwen,

I definitely think the problem is going to be in the pressure regulator. The pressure should be set at a high enough volume to

operate at any altitude in North America where you could drive your motorhome. Your regulator should be checked to verify that it has a minimum of 11 water column inches of pressure. If it does not, it is probably defective and should be replaced while it is under warranty.

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Store with Slides Out or In?

When we store our 2015 Allegro RED, should we deploy the slides or leave them in? The jacks are down during this time.

Earl Landry
Pierre Port, Louisiana

Dear Earl,

If you store it in a building, it really does not matter. If you store it outside and not under cover, I would store it with the slides in.

How Long Should Fully Charged Batteries Provide Power for Fridge?

I own a 2010 Phaeton 40QTH. It has a Zantrex inverter and six Trojan AGM 6-volt batteries that are two years old. On our first dry-camping experience, I ran the generator from 7 to 11 p.m. and then relied on the inverter to provide power to the refrigerator through the night. At 7 a.m. the battery alarm was sounding and there was not enough juice to start the generator. The fridge was the only thing drawing power. Shouldn't fully charged batteries run the fridge for eight hours?

Jerry Ammerman
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Dear Jerry,

If the refrigerator was the only item pulling power through the inverter, it should last eight or more hours. The refrigerator when running will pull about 50 12-volt amps. Your AGM batteries should be at least 200 to 250 amp-hour batteries which would have given you a total of 600 to 700 12-volt amp-hours. This should have been enough to run your refrigerator for at least 12 hours. So there must be something else in the coach drawing power or the batteries are connected improperly.

The RED 33AA or the Allegro 34PA?

My husband and I went to La Mesa RV in San Diego this weekend. We are looking to upgrade our 2006 Allegro in the next year or two. We absolutely loved the layout and especially the bathroom in the 2016 Allegro 34PA. However, my husband

wants to go with the Allegro RED 33AA for the diesel, but its bathroom is horrible! Very tight! Any chance the RED may be getting more bathroom space soon?

Bill & Kim Jungers
El Cajon, California

Dear Bill & Kim,

La Mesa RV apparently did not have in stock the Allegro RED 37PA. From what you described, I think it is the coach you will like the best.

300-Amp Fuse Replacement Solved a Charging Problem

We had the same problem as Roger Auck (see 13:2). The house batteries were not charging while we were driving the coach. On the advice of our Tiffin service tech, Art changed the solenoid in a PS rear compartment of our 2010 Phaeton 40QTH. It did not correct the problem. New batteries were not the answer. Finally, Art found a 300-amp fuse in a DS front compartment. Six bucks corrected the problem and now we have a spare solenoid.

Jo & Art Savoy
Madison, South Dakota

Dear Jo & Art,

It is fortunate that Art was able to find a 300-amp fuse to replace the defective one. The fuse is difficult to locate when you don't know what you are looking for. I apologize for the misinformation you received. Ninety percent of the time, it is the solenoid that causes the problem.

Solving the Glare Problem When Backing at Night

I hope this letter finds you and others there at Tiffin all doing well. We continue to love our Allegro Bus and enjoy reading *Roughing It Smoothly* from cover to cover.

In the latest edition, you asked readers to send ideas to solve the reflection issue when pulling into a campground at night and having to back into a campsite. Since we both work full time, we leave after work on Friday for weekend camping trips, and that usually requires arriv-

ing after dark. Most of our campsites are back-in spots. We experienced the terrible glare problem to the extent that Dwayne could not see anything, even when he used the back-up camera.

I came up with a solution. First, when we pull up to the campsite, I run a set of blue rope lights along the driver's side of the site's parking pad. I then take two dark blue, plastic mesh placemats with holes punched on the top corners of the short side. Using two suction cups with hooks on them, I hang the placemats over each backup light to mute the brightness of the lights. It cuts the glare and Dwayne backs onto the parking pad with no problems. This takes a few minutes, but we get into the campsite quickly without hitting anything. I hope this helps the owner from Washington that posed the question for you.

Karen & Dwayne McAbee
Fort Worth, Texas

Dear Karen & Dwayne,

Our readers have some very good ideas to solve problems. Thank you for this one.

Making Repairs to Walls on 2013 Allegro RED 34QFA

How do I remove the sliding door to the bedroom in order to repair the panel behind it?

The bases that support the mirrors on the PS and DS have a coating that is blistering on the right side of each base. What can be done to correct this problem?

The camera system did not come with a manual or any information about the manufacturer or the model number. Does TMH have manuals on this system that failed to get put into the big blue bag? If Tiffin does not have a manual available, please provide the manufacturer's website or phone number. Thanks.

Douglas Carr
Venice, California

Dear Douglas,

The top of the sliding door has two extensions, each with a little knob that slides

into a cradle and is secured by a swing latch. The cradle runs in a channel allowing the door to slide back and forth. Push the swing arm out and it will release the knob from the cradle, allowing you to remove the door from the channel. When you reinstall the door, be sure the swing arm is locked around the knob to prevent the door from falling out of its track.

Other than replacing the entire mirror arm with a new one, the base can be sanded and repainted. To get a good color match, you will have to repaint the complete arm.

The cameras on this coach were supplied by Triple H Electronics, 902 Gates Street, Red Bay, AL 35582. 256-356-9005.

Eliminating Glare When Backing in Daylight

You asked for suggestions to solve the "glare in mirrors when backing up at night." I own a 2015 Allegro 34TGA and have that problem when backing into the garage, even in the daylight. I solved the problem by lowering the solar shade when the sun is in a certain position.

In your suggestion about how to turn off the inverter, you left out another possible solution. Purchase a wire harness kit and install a switch inside the coach.

Joe Vieira
Tracy, California

Dear Joe,

Thank you very much for your suggestion. I am sure many will find this useful.

Algae Buildup in Fuel Tank After Long Storage

I have a 40-foot 2003 Allegro Bus with a 400-hp Cummins. We love the coach, but we have one problem that has developed and is getting worse. How do you remove a large algae build-up in the fuel system? The coach often sits for long periods. We were told to use an algaecide and replace the filters when they clog. Please advise.

Robert & Gwynn Cope
Venice, Florida

Dear Robert & Gwynn,

The best way is to drop the tank and have it cleaned. This is an expensive solution. However, you can use a biocide for diesel fuels to kill the algae. Once you treat it, you will need to change the fuel filter every 200 miles for the next 1,000 miles to remove all of the dead algae from the system.

Clogged Fuel Filter and Water Separator

Please help us with our first diesel pusher, a 2008 Phaeton. We live in Buffalo, New York. In October last year, I filled the fuel tank, parked the coach in our backyard, and put it under cover. We uncovered it in March, drove approximately 400 miles, and lost power. The fuel filter and

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water separator was clogged. Why?

George Sparks
Lake View, New York

Dear George,
Not knowing the history of your coach, it is difficult to give you an accurate answer. However, your best solution is probably the same that I suggested to the Copes in the previous question.

Generator Won't Start on a 2011 Allegro Bus

After completing a 2,000-mile trip in our Allegro Bus, we stopped for three days in New Orleans. The generator tried to start a couple of times while we were plugged in at a park. A few days later on our way to Florida, the generator tried to start while we were driving. Tiffin built this Bus for us, and we have never seen this problem on any of the past Allegro Buses we have owned. All of the Magnum settings have remained the same since we got it. Where do I begin to look to figure out and solve this problem?

We haven't been to Red Bay for a while. We miss seeing you and Jack. Tiffin is the best company we deal with anywhere!

Steve & Cynthia Ecton
Heber Springs, Arkansas

Dear Steve & Cynthia,
The first place I would look is the connection from the generator to the remote start on the dash. The connection should be next to the generator on the right side as you are looking into the slide-out from the front. The connection will be well covered with electrical tape. Untape and check to see if there is any moisture at the connection. If there is moisture present, clean and dry it thoroughly and use some electrical petroleum on the place where the connection is made. Then retape it to be sure it is sealed off.

A Suggestion for the Electronics Cabinet

I own a 2014 Allegro Bus 37AP. The two 8-port HDMI splitters in the bedroom AV cabinet both failed within a week of each

other. Because of the heat they generate in the very small cabinet, I assume the failures were due to overheating. The 12-volt fan was working, but there is very little, if any, fresh air access into the compartment.

I bought two new splitters from Mike Thompson RV for \$983.51 and installed them in the adjacent cabinet with plenty of air space, and moved the fan over to the new location.

Can the failed units be rebuilt or refurbished? The failure occurred while we were in Palm Springs in mid-March. Two other 2014 Allegro Bus 37AP coaches were at Outdoor Resorts and experienced the same identical problem.

Jim Wolpert
Valencia, California

Dear Jim,
TMH buys this component from a distributor. I am not aware of this unit being rebuilt or refurbished. We do not currently have rebuilt units in stock.

Factory Installed Wheel Stabilizers to Control Steering

First, I would like to thank you for helping me get the main TV replaced in my 2015 Allegro 32SA. It all worked out very good! It was a pleasure to talk to you at the Sarasota Rally.

After I saw your article in "Inman's Answers," I decided to write a letter concerning an issue that really bothers me.

Why doesn't Ford install wheel stabilizers to control steering on its F53 chassis? It is sometimes a challenge to control wandering and the "blow by" from 18-wheelers. It could almost be called a safety issue. The stabilizers are readily available as an aftermarket installation, but they should be stock from the chassis factory. I hope you can give me some insight on this issue.

Ronald Sohn
Garner, North Carolina

Dear Ronald,
Ford looks at it as an additional cost factor which they feel the coach does not

need. If Tiffin adds the wheel stabilizer during the manufacturing process, Ford could choose to void the warranty. While we see your point and tend to agree with you, it is a very sticky problem for Tiffin.

AC Failures on a 2014 Phaeton

We have a 2014 Phaeton 40QKH with three ACs. Last year the middle AC went out just after we left Red Bay. We were there for warranty work. While at the service center, I asked about the front AC making a chirping noise. Sometimes it almost sounds like a siren going off. The technician said if he replaced the compressor it would very likely make the same noise. We love our coach, but the noise is getting worse. Help! What is the warranty period on my air conditioners. The purchase date was July 2014.

Glenn Wesselski
Garwood, Texas

Dear Glenn,
The Coleman roof AC units have a two-year warranty. I think it will most likely be the fan or the fan shroud making the noise and not the compressor. For the service center nearest you, go to RV-Comfort.com and enter your address. If you cannot get there before your warranty expires, ask them to note that you called prior to the expiration date.

Rear Jacks Retracting Too Slowly

We have a 2007 Phaeton 40QBH. The rear jacks on this coach are retracting very slowly. If they are within an inch of full retraction, I go ahead and travel. Within 20 minutes or so, they will fully retract. Any idea what could be causing this problem?

Frank Crane
South Daytona, Florida

Dear Frank,
One of the reasons could be that the springs that pull the jacks up have become weak and are not keeping enough pressure on the jacks to pull them up. But this is normally not the case. Also, the electric solenoid that allows the fluids

to go back into the reserve tank could be weak and not opening completely.

Intermittent Operation of DS Rear Slide

We purchased a 2011 Allegro 35QBA and have not been successful in correcting two problems. First, the rear DS slide works intermittently. Our sequence of operation is: start the engine, apply the E-brake, and deploy the jacks. The two front slides and the rear PS slide deploy every time. The DS rear slide deploys occasionally. After I reset the E-brake multiple times, retract and redeploy the jacks, it will finally start working. As a test, when it does start working, I release the E-brake, and it stops working as it should. I then reapply the E-brake and it starts working as it should. When we have taken it back to the dealer, it works. When we return home, it is right back to intermittently working. Any ideas or suggestions?

Second, oil from one of the hydraulic lines drips sometimes when moving the front PS slide in and out. A plastic tray has collected several cups of fluid. Any thoughts on this?

Richard & Beverly Wood
Nanoose Bay, BC

Dear Richard & Beverly,
The only suggestion I can make regarding the deployment of the slides is to check the Schwintek control box for the slide rooms and be sure all of the connections are tight. Several wires on this box go the motors that operate the slide-outs. The control box is located in one of the rear compartments near the slide-outs.

If the hydraulic line is not leaking at a fitting that can be tightened, then the whole line should be replaced.

A Leaking Basement Compartment in the Allegro 34TGA

We purchased new in 2007 an Allegro 34TGA. From the beginning, the PS basement compartment immediately in front of the rear wheels has leaked when we were driving in the rain. The dealer and

I both have replaced the rubber seals around the door.

During a springtime clean-up, I washed the roof and sprayed water down the vent pipes to the grey and black tanks. My wife noticed water the next day on the floor and in the basement compartment where we have always had a problem. I then checked the vent pipes on the roof and found a gap between the pipe and the device attached to the roof. I took both of the vent pipe fixtures off and discovered that the vent pipes were not sealed around the roof. On the passenger side, there was a one-inch gap all the way around the pipe. The DS vent had a one-quarter inch gap around the pipe. On both vents, the vent pipes did not fit tightly to the fixture. The passenger side was an inch short and the driver side was a half inch short.

I extended both pipes so they would fit tightly against the fixtures and sealed around both pipes. I sealed the inside of the fixtures so that when I screwed them to the roof it created a water-tight seal.

We just got back from a trip and had to drive in the rain a few times. No water anywhere! The basement compartment was dry. In a back issue, I read that another owner had a similar problem. Hope this helps. We love our motorhome and are so glad that we decided to buy a Tiffin coach. We now have 75,000 miles on it.

Robert H. Trexler
Center Valley, Pennsylvania

Dear Robert,
Thanks very much for sharing your solution to the leaking problem. I am sure others will find this very helpful.

Parking Brake Failure on Allegro Bay FRED Coaches

Since I recently purchased a 2007 Allegro Bay FRED 34XB, I am very interested and concerned about the parking brake failure described by Anthony Baune on page 49 of *RIS* 13:1. My coach has just over 40,000 miles on it. What would you recommend in the way of preventative maintenance for the FRED motorhomes? I enjoy reading *Roughing It Smoothly* and look forward to the many interesting articles in each issue.

Jim Rixmann
Bella Vista, Arkansas

Dear Jim,
We can offer no recommended preventative maintenance for the parking brake. Because we have not tested it here at Tiffin, I cannot recommend Don Buckingham's solution to the parking brake failure on his Allegro Bay FRED that appeared in 13:2, page 69-70. However, you may wish to do your own due diligence with Don Buckingham and Brazel's RV Performance. If satisfied with that solution, you could opt for the modification prior to a failure of the parking brake. At least it would give you some peace of mind.

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Next time you are in Red Bay, Alabama, contact Ricky Johnson for a quote.

INTRODUCTION TO ALASKA! AND DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE *Continued from page 23*

100 years after the first ascent: Tom Choate, 78, broke the record as the oldest male to summit the South Peak.

Alaska has approximately 9,728 officially named rivers, creeks, and streams. The mighty Yukon River dwarfs them all. Beginning in British Columbia and flowing through the Yukon Territory before it reaches Alaska at Eagle Village, it is the third longest river in North America, nearly 2,000 miles in total length with approximately 1,270 miles in Alaska.

The Yukon River is home to one of the longest salmon runs in the world. Each year Chinook, coho, and chum salmon return to their terminal streams in Alaska, the Yukon Territory, and British Columbia. The Chinook have the longest journey, with an estimated 35–50 percent bound for Canada. As salmon do not eat during their spawning migration, Yukon River salmon must have great reserves of fat and energy to fuel their long journey. As a result, Yukon River salmon are noted for their especially rich and oily meat.

Another superlative to describe Alaska is the 200-degree variance in the state's hottest and coldest recorded temperatures. Its highest recorded temperature was 100°F at Fort Yukon on June 27, 1915. Its lowest officially recorded temperature was -80°F at Prospect Creek on January 23, 1971, although a weather device at 15,000 feet on Denali recorded -100°F twice and a wind chill factor of -118°F.

The following piece of history might be called a reverse superlative. In 1866 the Russian minister to the United States, Baron Eduard de Stoecki, returned home on leave. Fearing that

Russian Alaska might be overrun with American settlers now that the Civil War was over, he urged his government to sell it. When he returned in March 1867, Secretary of State William H. Seward offered \$5 million. After minor haggling, the two men agreed on \$7.2 million. The treaty and purchase were ratified by the Senate on April 10, 1867. Alaska was organized as a U.S. Territory on May 11, 1912, and became the 49th state on January 3, 1959. When modern surveying technology finally determined just how big Alaska really is, the Department of the Interior realized that we paid 1.7 cents per acre. We paid France 2.8 cents an acre for the Louisiana Purchase.

One more reverse superlative: Alaska has the lowest population density of the 50 states in the Union — 1.11 persons per square mile. The first U.S. census in 1880 counted 33,426 people, of which nearly 33,000 were natives. By 1910 the population had nearly doubled. It took another 40 years for the population to double again. Since 1950, the population has multiplied nearly six times to 738,432 (2015).

If you haven't been there yet, you most likely have talked with someone who has and then felt the urge yourself. The story and photography by Claudia Abbott beginning on page 24 will very likely activate your urge to make the motorhome trip of a lifetime. Claudia and Charlie in 2015 made their third visit to Alaska in their motorhome. Originating from their home in Englewood, Florida made their roundtrip over 10,000 miles. Just talking about their trip last year as we assembled this story seemed to tweak Claudia's interest in yet a fourth trip.

DEALER PROFILE *Continued from page 39*

protect our employees when they work on the roof of an RV.”

Turner arranges mentoring apprenticeships, placing a new hire with a seasoned certified or master certified technician. “When an apprentice shadows a certified technician and then reinforces live training with online classes, we can count on marked growth in the skills we need in our service center,” he said. “Today we have five certified and master certified technicians. By the end of August, we expect to have 10 — eight certified techs and two master certified techs who can handle anything we do. Our knowledge base is outstanding and perhaps our major asset. I would like *RIS* readers to know we have RVIA-trained technicians who can handle any issue they present to us.”


Joe Turner, shop foreman, began his career with Transwest in April. His past experience includes service advisor, technician, and service sales manager. As foreman, he oversees and expedites the flow of service in the shop and its organization. He emphasizes that keeping the 35,000 sq. ft. service area clean and neat has a positive effect on efficiency.

“I monitor our work orders/tickets to be sure they are aging appropriately,” he explained. “When our techs write orders for parts, I check them for accuracy and ask for clarification when

needed. I stay informed about the progress of each job and log that information frequently into our computer to keep the service advisors abreast of the work they have accepted from owners. They, of course, keep our owners informed.

“I am looking forward to seeing 10 techs in our shop,” he said. “I would like for our next tech to have a strong electrical background. The HVAC sector has supplied us with good hires in the past. When they go through mentoring, RVIA classes, and online training, they develop skill sets that help them qualify quickly as certified technicians.

“Transwest is a very well organized company,” Turner noted. “I watched a YouTube video that George Eidsness did about Freightliner. After meeting him in person, I knew this was the place where I wanted to work.”

Tiffin Motorhomes is pleased to have Transwest as a dealer with the strong backing of George Eidsness and the first class service, sales, and management teams they have in place in Belton, Missouri. Eidsness' foresight in building a state-of-the-art service center demonstrates his savvy that assuring customer confidence in excellent service will bring the sales to justify the investment. “Build it and they will come.” 

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