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JUNE 2011

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On The Cover: Winnebago's fuel-sipping View Profile 24G takes a break at a rest area overlooking Santa Inez Valley, after effortlessly taming the steep and winding San Marcos Pass north of Santa Barbara, Calif. (see test on page 50). Photo by Chuck Campbell.

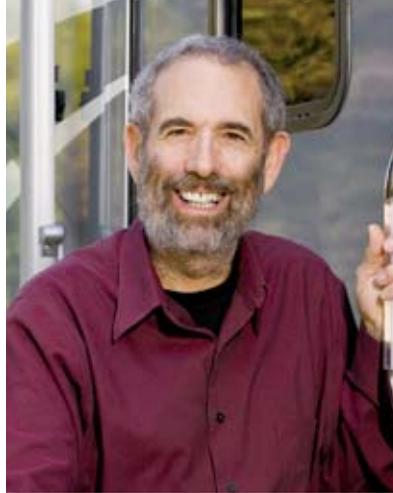
HITTING THE ROAD

Right around the day we pushed the June issue of MotorHome out the door to the printer, we set our clocks ahead to comply with daylight saving time. To most people, moving the clock ahead signals longer days and more time to hang out in the backyard; for me, the time change sends my body clock into frenzy. For the next six months or so, I'll be itching to get out of Dodge. And this is the time of the year I make travel plans for the spring and summer.

The article on Idaho's Henrys Fork area by Gerald C. and Sharon L. Hammon (page 35) really got my attention. The backside of the Tetons and Yellowstone National Park is one of my favorite RV playgrounds, even though the clear majority of visitors spend most of their time in two of America's most spectacular national parks: Yellowstone and Grand Teton. But if you're in the area, I encourage you to journey to the other side of the mountain, especially if you like to fly-fish.

Henrys Fork and adjacent Snake River areas are a couple of the nation's premier fly-fishing spots. Hard-core fly-fishing enthusiasts will tell you that Henrys Fork can get somewhat cheeky by jowl during the peak season, but I always find a way to carve out a little space for myself. As the Hammons report, the campgrounds, including Henrys Fork State Park, really don't get that crowded most of the time, but the river is pretty popular. If you're willing to hoof it a ways, you can certainly find a little solitude. And if you want a little more adventure, float Box Canyon in a drift boat. There are a number of outfitters that can guide you down this beautiful stretch of Snake River. Fly-fishing in Box Canyon is pretty good too, but be prepared for a challenging day.

Beyond Henrys Fork, there's a lot to do in this area, if you can break yourself away from sitting in your favorite chair under the awning and staring at the spectacular scenery. We enjoy exploring



the area in our Jeep Wrangler dinghy, after the pavement ends, and hiking — between fly-fishing sessions.

While it may be difficult to resist the lure of the Yellowstone/Teton region, keep in mind that there's much more to see and do in Idaho, and you'll be pretty close to other great motorhome destinations that cater to outdoor enthusiasts. I've likely commented on this in the past, but one of my favorite drives in the West is over Lolo Pass from Lolo, Mont., to Lewiston, Idaho. If you're planning to attend The Rally Presented by DISH Network in Redmond, Ore., in July, and want to aim your coach toward the Yellowstone area, I encourage you to work your way to Lewiston and head over the pass going east, and then drop down into either side of the parks. It will be a trip you won't forget.

Speaking of adventure, author Harriet Halkyard and her husband, John, are experts in seeking out off-the-beaten-path places to explore in motorhomes. Their trip to Tibet (page 30) is certainly off the charts for the overwhelming majority of motorhome enthusiasts, and might stir controversy as political unrest in that part of the world is currently unraveling.

But the Halkyards are serious adventurers with a number of exotic trips under their belts, including travel to Panama by motorhome, reported in this magazine a few years back. Many of us will likely never go to these places, but it's fun to be an armchair adventurer. That gives us fodder to plan trips that are more reachable, and certainly exciting.

Time to dust off the fly rod. ♦

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“WHAT CUSTOM OR NON-CUSTOM FEATURE DO YOU WISH YOUR MOTORHOME HAD AND WHY?”

That’s the question we asked in our March issue, and here is one of the replies we received.

TWICE THE COMFORT

Two recliners! And they both should have a clear view of the living room TV. Why should only one of us get the comfortable chair? I would give up the couch for a second recliner.
SUSAN AND RON WILSON | CLEARWATER, FLA.

FOR SAFETY ON THE ROAD, BUY A GPS

In response to “Know Where the Vets Are” (P.O. Box, March), that is good advice but even better is to purchase an inexpensive GPS and just type in “veterinarian.” You will get a list starting with those closest to you with a phone number and a map to get you directly there. The best thing about this is you can find any emergency service, such as hospitals, police stations and pharmacies, and it will tell you exactly where you are if you have to provide someone with your location. It’s also good for finding food, fuel, camping and shopping. It is one of the most important safety and convenience items you can have on the road.

STEVE MACKEY | WOODBURY, MINN.

EDISTO ISLAND MUST-DO'S

I’m glad someone else has discovered the beauties of Edisto Island (“Lazy Lowcountry Drive,” March). However, since we generally visit Edisto (one of our favorite places to relax) during the winter, most of the sights Ms. Selbert mentioned aren’t open while we’re there. I’d like to add a few “not to miss” things to do and see at any time of the year.

There’s Botany Bay Plantation with its driving trail and a beautiful beach, and the bay near the yacht club where the dolphins feed at dawn and dusk. And then there’s Whaley’s. It doesn’t look like much and the food isn’t the greatest, but we’ve met some interesting folks there. If you like to people-watch and chat with the locals, Whaley’s is the place to go.

PAT AND JUDY CARRATURA | TABERNACLE, N.J.

THE WRONG RUNWAY MODEL

In the February issue you feature a Walk-Through of a 2011 Thor Motor Coach Four Winds 31K. Why is there a picture of an exterior of a different Four Winds motorhome shown? It is obviously not the exterior of the motorhome featured in your article.

DEBBIE SMITH | MCKINNEY, TEXAS



The photo we erroneously published was of the 31P model mislabeled by the factory as a 31K. Here is a photo of the 31K.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



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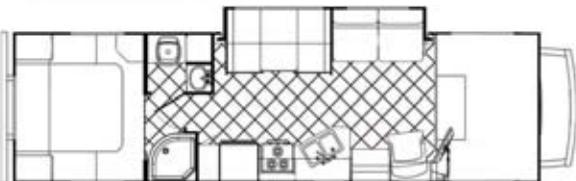


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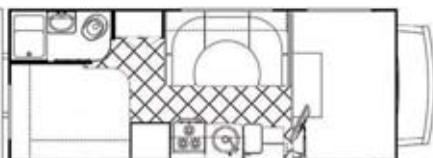


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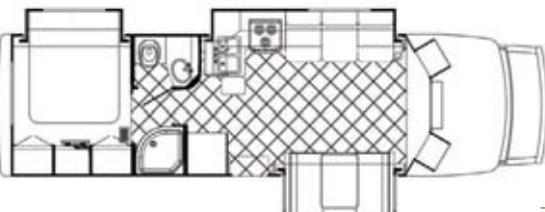
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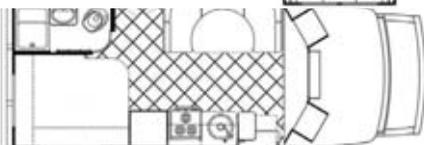


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WHAT YOU'RE SAYING ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE:

We posted an item sharing a link to an article about city officials in Flagler Beach, Fla., discussing an ordinance regulating parking and storage of RVs and boats. A city commission official said boats add "ambiance" to the city because it's a boating community but RVs are problematic. We asked our fans what they thought of this comment. Here's what they said:

Johnette Vodenicker:

I am from the Daytona Beach area (just south of Flagler). ... Couldn't believe when I read this. Don't understand how RVs are problematic, but boats, no matter what they look like, add ambiance?????

John Beaver:

RVs and boats should be treated equally! More important is the condition. I've seen plenty of derelict boats and RVs in these so-called boating communities.

Jacqueline O. Chaplin:

Sounds like discrimination to me — both are for fun, so treat them the same.

Don Whalen:

Typical city commission. Tend to use poor judgment more often than not. One would think that with the number of winter Floridians in RVs, they would be more than happy to have the additional income.

Bill Stiger:

I will never visit Flagler Beach in my RV. If they don't want my RV then they don't want my money either.

Dwight Nestrick:

Agree with Bill. ... no RV, no money from me. ... There are many nicer places in Florida to visit than Flagler Beach.



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QUESTION:

Would a community's restrictive regulations on RV parking and storage affect your decision to travel there? Why or why not?

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escapes

edited by PATRICIA MARROQUIN

EVENTS | NOTEWORTHY | WHEELS & GEAR | CROSSROADS

With June temperatures typically reaching the high 80s and only dropping to the mid-60s at night, you'll need a place to cool off in Appling, Ga. Wildwood Park offers access to the 71,000-acre Clarks Hill Lake — the largest man-made lake east of the Mississippi — where visitors can fish, swim or boat to their hearts' content.

About 30 minutes from the Georgia/South Carolina border, Wildwood Park is far away from the hustle and bustle of city life and busy highways, but there's still plenty to keep families entertained. Fishing is probably the most popular activity, with Clarks Hill Lake having played host to major sporting events and many fishing tournaments for organizations that include ESPN Bassmasters, FLW Outdoors, Bass Fishing League and Georgia Bass Federation.

Wildwood is also home to the Professional Disc Golf Association Headquarters and three courses for playing the sport (which is much like traditional golf, except flying discs are used in place of a ball and clubs).

Readers of Columbia County Magazine voted Wildwood Park the "Best Campground in Columbia County and Metro Augusta" for 2008 and 2009, and it's easy to see why — 61 mostly shaded campsites all have electricity and water for only \$20 a night. There's also a dump station as well as pull-through and back-in sites. Miles of trails for hiking and horseback riding, eight boat ramps and a picnic and beach area add to the park's family appeal. For more information, call 706-541-0586 or visit www.columbiacountyga.gov.

— Meaghan Alfier

FISHIN' AND SWIMMIN' HANGIN' OUT DOWN SOUTH AT GEORGIA'S WILDWOOD PARK



PHOTO: DAN MCKAIN



JUNE 25-27

Engines will be revving up on the Saginaw River for the annual **River Roar Powerboat Race** in Bay City, Mich. The powerboats include tunnel-hull SST45 and SST120 race boats, champ boats and inflatables, and the high-speed races will take place on Saturday and Sunday. An outdoor concert Friday night kicks off the festivities and a kids' zone and beverage and food tents will keep the fun going all weekend long. RV parking is available in the downtown area of Bay City; 866-287-7627, www.riverroar.com.



JUNE 3-19 | The brilliant pink, purple and white spikes of the lupine flower are the inspiration for the **Fields of Lupine Festival** in Franconia, N.H. The communities in the area offer special events and activities throughout the festival. Highlights include museum and historic inn tours, an open-air market on Main Street Sugar Hill, horse-drawn wagon rides, special sales and discounts at stores and restaurants, guided walks

and an art show; 603-823-5661, www.franconianotch.org.

JUNE 17-19 | You might find yourself getting into some sticky situations at the eighth annual **Avon Heritage Duct Tape Festival** in Avon, Ohio, the "Duct Tape Capital of the World" and home to the Duck Tape brand of duct tape. This year's theme is "Real Fans Stick Together" and some of the duct-tape creations include sports-inspired sculptures, fashions and parade floats. Participate in the duct tape scavenger hunt, go on rides, play games and enjoy live entertainment at this unique festival; 866-818-1116, www.ducttapefestival.com.

JUNE 18 | A great place to get ideas for the kinds of sandcastles you're going to build this summer is the 46th annual

Sandcastle Day in Cannon Beach, Ore. This event is one of the largest of its kind on the West Coast and displays hundreds of sandcastles and sand sculptures crafted by professional competitive teams, individual artists and casual competitors. Park the rig at the Good Sam Park Cannon Beach RV Resort, which has full hookups and pull-through sites; 503-436-2623, www.cannonbeach.org.



JUNE 18-19 | **Pasadena Chalk Festival** at Paseo Colorado in Pasadena, Calif., was the 2010 recipient of the Guinness World Record for the Largest Display of Chalk Art and promises the same caliber and amount of art this year. Hundreds of artists across Southern California gather here to create spectacular chalk murals that utilize various styles and techniques. There will also be a Kids' Chalkland where children can create Father's Day cards and get their faces painted; 626-795-9100, www.pasadenachalkfestival.com.

JUNE 21 | Cape Cod's Doug the quahog is the Cape's counterpart to the slightly more famous Punxsutawney Phil, and once a year he predicts how many weeks of Cape Cod beach weather lie ahead

— using his secret language interpreted by the Secretary General of Quahog Republic — on **Cape Cod Quahog Day** at Aselton Park on Hyannis Harbor in Hyannis, Mass. This quirky event kicks off the brief but beautiful summer season on the Cape, where beach campgrounds and family-friendly activities abound; 888-332-2732, www.quahogday.com.

JUNE 24-25 | Lecompton held an important place in the debate over whether Kansas should enter the Union as a free or slave state, and **Historic Lecompton Territorial Days** in Lecompton, Kan., is the way the town honors that turbulent time period. The annual event started in 1975 when Constitution Hall was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark. Re-enactments, tours of historic buildings, a parade, carnival, food and crafts are just a few of the attractions; 785-887-6617, www.lecomptonterritorialdays.com.

RV SHOW

JUNE 24-26

22nd annual Las Vegas Sportsmen's Boat, RV & Travel Show
Las Vegas; 702-348-1570

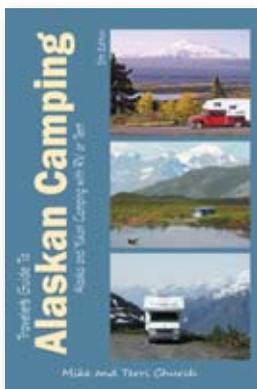


NAPLES SITES AUCTIONED

Signature Resorts' new Naples Motorcoach Resort, located on Henderson Creek in Naples, Fla., was scheduled to sell as many as 95 sites at auction this spring. Signature's managing partner, La Jolla, Calif.-based Paydar Properties Inc., was selling the lots from \$89,900 to \$245,000, about half of what they were selling for two years ago.

Paydar Properties acquired Signature Resorts' properties in Naples and Bay Harbor, Mich., two years ago at auction from Monaco Coach Corp. At that time, construction of these resorts had not been completed and the new owners invested millions of dollars to complete development.

The luxury resort features creek-front lots and boat docks. Other amenities include a lake with a sand beach; a fitness center; three pools with spas; an on-site theater; and a game room. **For more information**, visit www.signaturervresorts.com.



AN RVER'S GUIDE TO 'THE LAST FRONTIER' Alaska ... land of vast wilderness, truly "wild" wildlife, and acres upon acres of relatively untouched nature. "The Last Frontier" is an outdoor enthusiast's dreamscape, with camping opportunities that can't be found anywhere else. The newly revised 5th Edition of *Traveler's Guide to Alaskan Camping — Alaska and Yukon Camping With RV or Tent* (\$21.95),

by Mike and Terri Church, covers everything the motorhome traveler needs to know to have a great Alaskan trip.

The guidebook is organized by region, heading north from Dawson Creek, and within each region there are detailed driving instructions and clear maps. For the more than 500 campground listings, a price range for sites is given, as well as maximum RV length at certain campgrounds, dump station availability, types of hookups and more. Insider tips pertain to points of interest, free camping spots, where to stop for fuel and a comparison of fuel prices along the route, and fishing, hiking and wildlife-viewing opportunities. **For more information**, go to www.rollinghomes.com.

— Meaghan Alfier

MOTORHOME | June 2011

News Briefs

The Rally Presented by DISH Network is coming to Redmond, Ore., July 14-17. Dubbed the "Greatest RV Rally in the World," The Rally is where you'll find thousands of rigs to view, hundreds of new RV products, area tours, pet adoptions, a dog show, a youth program and seminars on all things RV — from maintenance and repair to healthy cooking and safe-driving tips. The entertainment will be top-notch with singer Bobby Vinton and High Street Band on the lineup. Redmond is a prime location for this event, with easy access to camping, hiking, fishing, biking, rock climbing, golf and more. For more information or to register, call 877-749-7122 or visit www.therally.com.

Winnebago Industries Inc. has been recognized for the 10th consecutive year as the nation's top-selling motorhome manufacturer, according to retail reporting service Statistical Surveys Inc. The service found that Winnebago's dealers retailed more Class A and Class C motorhomes combined than any other manufacturer's dealer group in calendar-year 2010, achieving 18.8 percent market share, according to a Winnebago news release. Winnebago Industries also became the top-selling Class A market leader for the first time since 1981.

New federal regulations that took effect in the spring now require RV parks and campgrounds to install handicapped lift systems for their swimming pools, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. President Obama signed a law last fall that requires all pools that are open to the public to have assisted entry systems. Pools longer than 300 linear feet will require two means of assisted entry. Campgrounds and parks that fail to abide by the new rules face fines up to \$110,000.

Yosemite National Park in California recorded more than 4 million visitors in 2010, marking the highest number in the past 14 years and building on a steady increase of visitors during the past four years, according to a news release. Yosemite received 4,047,880 visitors in 2010, up from 3,866,970 visitors in 2009 and 3,561,656 in 2008.



MOTORHOME SUNROOM



Want some added space to relax outside the motorhome that's also protected from the elements, bug-free and can keep your pet contained? Dometic's new **Alum-A-Room** is a patio room for RVs that uses your awning to create an enclosed outdoor space for you and your family to enjoy the outdoors while also having increased security and privacy.

The Alum-A-Room uses snap-in-place technology that makes it easy to install on concrete pads or level ground. Once the bottom track is laid out, the wall panels and panel joiners are snapped in, followed by the top track, and then the motorhome awning is lowered. Attaching panels to the awning tube and applying end panels completes the room.

The multiple-position windows are residential-style and built to withstand rain and weather, and the low-profile, no-trip tracks funnel water away from the motorhome. Dometic's exclusive "butterfly" wall seal ensures that no bugs will ruin your fun.

The Alum-A-Room comes in five colors and four sizes between 10 and 22 feet. Pricing ranges from \$487 to \$1,000. Dometic, 574-294-2511, www.dometicusa.com.

WINE'S PERFECT MATCH



When it's time to unwind after a long day of fun in the sun, sometimes there's nothing better than uncorking a nice bottle of wine and adding a little bit of elegance to a dinner under the canopy. The **Vinturi Travel Wine Aerator** is a simple tool that can greatly improve the taste of red wine in the time it takes to pour a glass, making that relaxing evening extra special.

If you've ever been wine tasting, one of the first things the experts will usually tell you is that wine needs time to breathe in order to release its intended aromas and flavors.

The Vinturi does this by mixing the proper amount of air with the wine for the right amount of time as you pour it into a glass, so that you achieve optimal aeration in a fraction of the time. The end result is a better bouquet, enhanced flavors and smoother finish.

Measuring a compact 5½ inches tall and weighing just 4 ounces (including the case), the Vinturi aerator easily fits into an unused nook in a galley cabinet. It's packed in a sleek and sturdy tapered black case with stainless steel accents. The Vinturi aerator retails for \$39.95. Vinturi, 877-846-8874, www.vinturi.com.



TRIPLE E REGENCY GT24MB

Triple E Recreational Vehicles' newest motorhome features an innovative, space-efficient floorplan that truly makes the most of its 24 feet. The **Regency GT24MB** is built on a Ford E-Series chassis and has enclosed, insulated and heated holding tanks, and dual pane windows, which together make it ready to handle whatever weather conditions are encountered from spring through fall.

Instead of having the bed at the rear of the motorhome as it is traditionally, the mid-coach U-lounge dinette converts into a queen-size Murphy bed in just a few easy steps. This frees up the rear of the motorhome for a spacious bath with a large shower and skylight, and a mirrored-door medicine cabinet.

Throughout the coach, the trim and styling are classy but not over the top. Solid wood European-style cabinets, Ultra-leather upholstery, fabric-accented window trims, and full-body paint on the exterior all contribute to a tasteful, modern feel. In the galley, a three-burner glass-top stove, Dometic double-door 7-cubic-foot refrigerator and convection microwave make it more than adequate for preparing meals for a crowd.

The Regency GT24MB has a base MSRP of \$107,660. Triple E Recreational Vehicles, 877-992-9906, www.tripleerv.com.



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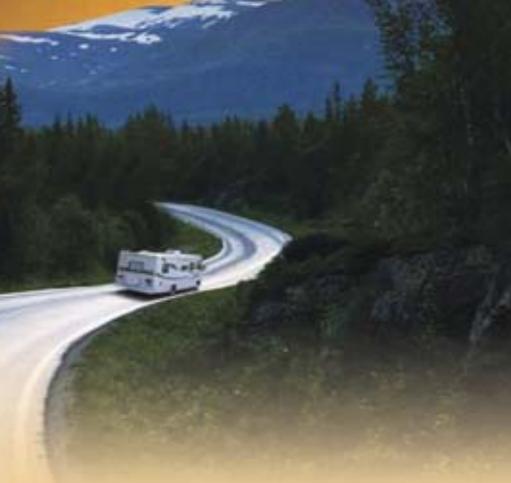


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Views from the Road

Al Luehmann and his wife, Mary, are committed RVers from the North Star State of Minnesota. When they're away from home, Al and Mary enjoy our country's beautiful landscape in their 2007 Itasca Horizon motorhome, spending the winter months in Casa Grande, Arizona.

Al describes his time on the road as "a way of life after you retire. I have a whole new set of friends from around the country - we've become a family."

Even when traveling, he enjoys the comforts of home, including live TV. Al chose DISH Network to bring TV to his RV because of the unique service benefits.

"The ability to deactivate it whenever we aren't using the motorhome is a terrific feature. Plus, the rate was better than the competition, and we can get high definition free. I would highly recommend DISH Network service."

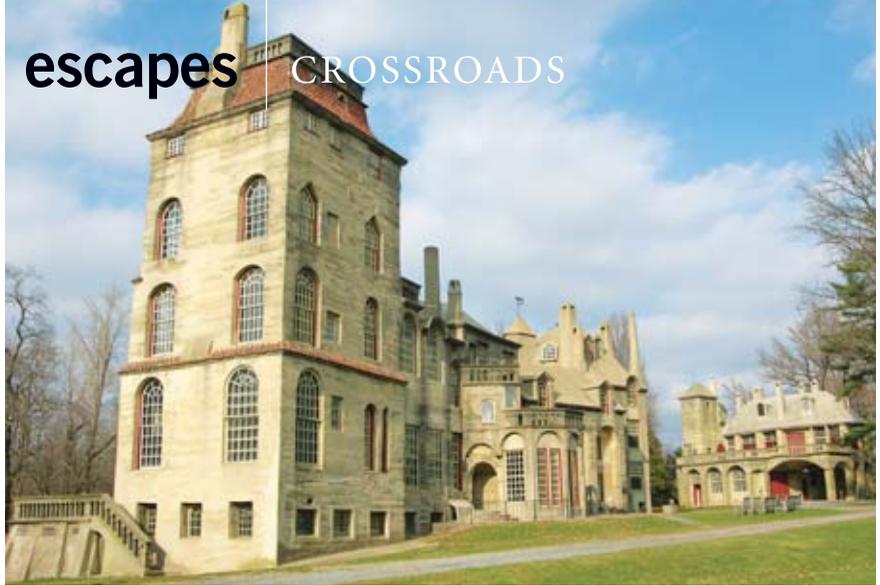
And what does he watch most when on the road? "Sports - the (Minnesota) Vikings and Wild, and my wife is a Jimmie Johnson (NASCAR) fan."

So what's next for Al and Mary? "Nova Scotia - beautiful country - and Yosemite."

Happy travels.



Al and Mary traveling the country



A LEGACY IN TILE

Doylestown, nestled in historic Bucks County, Pa., is home to Henry Chapman Mercer's Fonthill, Moravian Pottery and Tile Works, and Mercer Museum.

The two-year construction of his home, Fonthill, started in 1908 and it was built from the inside out. The rooms were created with mounds of "debris" followed by reverse-laid tiles and tons of hand-poured concrete. When the concrete dried, the debris was removed to reveal tile-lined rooms filled with arches and balconies.

On the grounds next to Fonthill, Mercer built Moravian Pottery and Tile Works. He incorporated his love of history into his unique designs and today the tiles are still handmade the way Mercer did 100 years ago.

In 1913 he built Mercer Museum. Showcased there are more than 60 crafts and trades, including woodworking, metalworking, agriculture, textile and dairy farming. **For more information**, call 215-345-0210, or visit www.mercermuseum.org (Mercer and Fonthill museums). For Moravian Pottery and Tile Works, call 215-345-6722 ext. 20, or go to www.buckscounty.org/visitors. — *Katherine Neis Haskins*

A REAL HOME BREW

John Milkovisch's "honey-do" list in 1968 included sprucing up the yard of his Houston home. The retired upholsterer for Southern Pacific Railroad inlaid thousands of rocks, marbles, metal and brass into concrete blocks and redwood, which he used to create fences, patios, flower boxes and other outdoor items.

With that task finished, he turned to the home's exterior to add aluminum siding — aluminum beer can siding, that is. Over 18 years, Milkovisch covered his home in flattened beer cans. He made curtains, fences, windmills and more from the cans. He hung garlands, which not only made the house sing in the wind but also cut energy costs. Ripley's Believe It or Not has estimated that more than 50,000 cans adorn this "pop-top art" tribute to recycling. Milkovisch, who died in 1988, never considered his work art; to him it was a pastime.

Today, Beer Can House is a permanent exhibit of the Orange Show Center for Visionary Art. It's open to visitors on weekends, and admission is \$2. **For more information**, call 713-926-6368, or visit www.beercanhouse.org or www.orangeshow.org/beer-can-house. — *Patricia Marroquin* ♦



PHOTO: ORANGE SHOW CENTER FOR VISIONARY ART

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User Guide

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WILD ISLAND

CUMBERLAND, GEORGIA'S MOST SOUTHERN — AND MOST ECLECTIC — BARRIER ISLAND, HAS ARMADILLOS, SEA CREATURES AND OLD MANSIONS ONCE OWNED BY THE CARNEGIES

The sunsets on Cumberland Island are nothing short of stunning. This one was viewed from near Plum Orchard.

n actual miles my wife, Janie, and I were not far from the campground we were staying at — A Big Wheel RV Park (in St. Marys, Ga.) — but in time and space we were in a different world. We had kayaked to a wild barrier island just off the coast of Georgia, near St. Marys, then pitched our tent near an old mansion, deserted by the Carnegie family long ago. The next day I explored yet a bit more by kayak, but returned several hours later — ecstatic.

But Janie, too, was ecstatic, and we both bubbled over.

“I heard this monster noise,” I gushed. “Like something huge sucking air.”



Left: Armadillos are numerous on Cumberland Island. They are one of North America's more primitive animals and have a leathery armor shell. Above: Tabby Sugar Works Ruins consists of walls constructed entirely from oyster shells and is located about a mile from A Big Wheel RV Park on the mainland.

PHOTOS: BERT GILDART

Janie countered. "The moment you left I had a herd of armadillos circling camp!"

"Did they attack?" I joked." And then before she could respond, I cut in: "That breathing, you know — it was dolphins. Five of them! And they swam around the kayak."

"Guess they know about paradise," said Janie with a smile.

For almost a week we had been enjoying a variety of adventures as we explored Cumberland Island National Seashore. After centering ourselves at A Big Wheel we made the short drive to park headquarters in the quiet town of St. Marys, and started learning about the various ways to explore this extraordinary island gem. It is the most southern of Georgia's sea islands, and at 18 miles long and three miles wide, it is also the largest. Called a barrier island, Cumberland separates ocean from mainland, and functions to subdue storms and to provide a wild intercoastal habitat dense with impressive concentrations of wildlife. Though several properties remain, 10,000 acres of this national seashore are managed as wilderness.

Appropriately there are no causeways or island bridges, but you can get there by boat by making reservations through the park concessionaire. One morning we boarded the ferry and took the 45-minute cruise from St. Marys to Cumberland Island. When we arrived on the island, we



Top to bottom: Hikers stroll Grand Avenue, not far from Dungeness. The hard-packed dirt and shell road follows a straight path and is popular for bicycling if you choose to rent a bike on the island. Kayaking to Cumberland requires coordinating with the tides, good maps and a GPS. The stately Plum Orchard was Lucy Carnegie's gift to her son, George Lauder Carnegie. Inside there is a huge swimming pool, squash court with a viewing balcony, and a grand staircase. The Park Service offers guided tours of the historically furnished house.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

A BIG WHEEL RV PARK
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www.abigwheelrvpark.com.
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www.nps.gov/cuis.



CUMBERLAND ISLAND



The 30,000-square-foot Dungeness mansion was destroyed by a fire in 1959. The ruins of the structure allude to a bygone era of grandeur. The name “Dungeness” applied to several residences in this same location before the one built in 1885 by Thomas and Lucy Carnegie, including a hunting lodge built in the 1700s.

the first version as a hunting lodge much earlier in the 1700s. The earlier structures do not remain as they too succumbed to fires. Years passed and others came, replacing and refurbishing sections, finally completing and rebuilding though always retaining the name Dungeness.

In 1959 a massive fire swept through the home, leaving a huge hull to recall a bygone era. In 1972 the Park Service acquired the island and today, most of the few remaining descendants from the various homes remain “grandfathered” in.

From the mansion we walked by early-day servant quarters and what must have once been a proud collection of Model T Fords. Farther along we stopped at a series of weathered grave markers, and one in particular was of interest. In 1818, Revolutionary War hero “Light Horse” Harry Lee took ill as a result of previous injuries while traveling on a schooner, and sought shelter on Cumberland. Unable to travel, he died at Dungeness and was buried nearby. And so his body remained until 1913 when patriots exhumed his remains and reburied them in

saw huge oaks surrounding an open meadow and several feral horses. “Island icons,” said park ranger Ginger Cox.

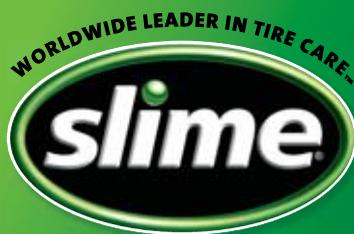
Like other passengers, we’d responded to Cox’s invitation to join this official ranger-guided tour to one of the island’s old mansions, an ostentatious one that had once been occupied by the Carnegies. We

followed Cox about half a mile to the remains of a 30,000-square-foot mansion known as Dungeness.

It was built in 1885 by Thomas and Lucy Carnegie, but they were not the first to own Dungeness. The Greene family built a Dungeness home in the 1800s out of tabby concrete, and James Oglethorpe built

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Virginia, next to his son, Gen. Robert E. Lee. Concluding her talk, Cox suggested we continue our exploration and hike on the beach until we picked up a boardwalk leading back to the ferry. She said the stroll was a must for anyone who wanted to see one of the last remnants of a wild and free Atlantic coast, and later we had to agree.

First to catch our attention was the total isolation. We saw but a few other people — and certainly no condominiums. The water was warm and it was shallow, for the waves were breaking some distance from the shore. The beach was packed with seashells, and we immediately identified one large shell as a conch. We also recognized the coquina, a clam once used in construction, and we recalled that several miles from our mainland campground we had visited Tabby Ruins, an old sugar mill whose walls had been completely formed from the shells of clams.

We saw a great variety of bird life, dominated along the beach by sanderlings, running ahead of the onrush of water as they searched for tiny crustaceans. We



During the height of tourist season, naturalists lay out nets to collect sea life for discussions. The beaches on Cumberland Island are packed with shells.

identified terns and several species of gulls, raucous as ever.

All too soon we reached the boardwalk, which we followed over the fragile dunes. From the slightly elevated walk we noticed areas marked off to safeguard the endangered loggerhead turtles. We also saw various types of vegetation, most notably the fragile sea oats, which serve to stabilize the sand dunes. These hardy

plants tolerate a salty environment and without them, beach and dunes would not be the same. Backlit as they were, clumps appeared stately and added a touch of wildness to the quiet beach over which we had just hiked.

Shortly the boardwalk ended and beach and dunes instantly transitioned to a live-oak forest complete with Spanish moss. The forest was magnificent and it created a low overhang that was cozy and perfect for the families of gnomes that most certainly dwelled in this verdant understorey of palmettos.

Though a healthy live-oak forest now dominates Cumberland, much of it is second growth. During the latter half of the 18th century the navy ship business depended on the species as a strategic war material. All might have disappeared were it not for the development during the Civil War of iron-sided ships such as the Monitor and Merrimac.

We continued our walk and now our forest trail crossed Grand Avenue, an old hard-packed dirt and shell road. As we

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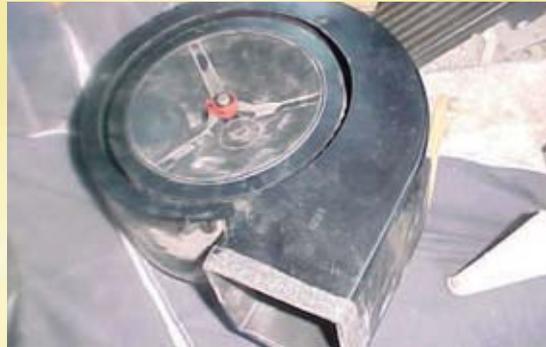
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WILD ISLAND

studied the road's straight-arrow route, we saw deer beneath the arch of trees. Moments later, we saw bikers, and though you cannot bring your own bike, you can rent one on the island, something many from our boat had chosen to do.

Farther north on the island is Plum Orchard — a multi-columned mansion that Lucy Carnegie had built for her son, George Lauder Carnegie. The structure was dedicated on Oct. 6, 1898.

As we wandered the premises a group of graduate students majoring in park management at Clemson University wandered over. They invited us to join and Victoria Jumper, a park intern, delivered an informative narration.

Jumper said Plum Orchard provided 21,724 square feet of living space to include a 9-foot-deep swimming pool, and a squash court with viewing balcony. James Nampushi, a student from Kenya, summarized it best when he suggested the Carnegies may have been "a little ostentatious." We laughed but the evidence also included a grand staircase, and a mammoth fireplace graced with dark walnut oak paneling.

Despite the home's relatively good care, not all of the mansion's more than 120 rooms are furnished and their absence tells a story that began in 1921 with the untimely death of George Carnegie. Shortly thereafter his wife, Margaret, married a French count who shipped all furnishings to a New York auction house. Not surprisingly the Carnegies informed the count that he was no longer welcome at Plum Orchard, and that must have been punctuated with an exclamation!

After that the mansion was occupied by many Carnegie family members and had some water and structural damage. In 1973 the Park Service took over Plum Orchard, and for a while the old home functioned as an administration office. Then, headquarters were changed and, today, upkeep of the mansion depends on congressional funding.

We would have liked to stay longer on Cumberland Island, but it was time to head back to the campground. When we returned to our campsite we started a small campfire and reflected on our special RVing lifestyle, and how it provides us with access to so many fascinating national parks. ♦

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PILGRIMAGE TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD

WITH THE SIGHT OF MOUNT EVEREST AS THEIR GOAL, A COUPLE IN A RENTED MOTORHOME TRAVEL A TIBETAN ROUTE PAST YAKS, YURTS, STREAMS AND STUPAS

by HARRIET HALKYARD



Although there are some modern roads in Tibet, most of them are poorly paved or dirt roads. Sometimes the road is so poorly defined that you have to hope that you are following the right tracks. Below: The vibrantly painted eaves of the previous summer residence of the Dalai Lama, the Norbulingka Palace and park.



We sat on a vast grassland looking at Mount Everest flushed pink in the setting sun beneath the arc of a rainbow.

After taking a motorhome along the road that “Lonely Planet” described as “the most beautiful and most perilous in the world,” we had reached one of the least hospitable places on Earth — the Tibetan Plateau. My husband, John, and I were camped there alone among fluttering prayer flags and lumbering yaks.

Pilgrims have been coming to Tibet for 1,300 years. Nowadays most of them fly to Lhasa, a few ride the train and some walk. We decided to rent a motorhome and drive from Shangri-La to the Top of the World.

We rented a 22-foot Iveco TC5040XLJ Class C motorhome in Yunnan Province, in southwest China. Our plan was to head due north from Shangri-La (Zhongdian), parallel to the Myanmar border, and turn west into Tibet. We were delighted to learn that the \$150 daily rental covered all fuel. We were not so pleased to find out that it also included a driver, whether we wanted one or not.

In order to get the permits required for foreigners to drive around Tibet we had to agree to be respectful of the local customs and not to import any religious material, fishing gear or sleeping pills. There was no question that we would respect the locals and I understood the problem with religious material, but I could not comprehend the

PHOTOS: HARRIET HALKYARD



This page, clockwise from top left: The travelers found the Tibetan people to be very friendly and welcoming. This Tibetan woman was working in a field to prepare the soil for the next crop of barley. At one of the 14,000-foot passes in Tibet, visitors and locals pause in the rare air for a rest. Much of Tibetan life revolves around the yak and they are commonly used here as a mode of transport. Stupas are religious structures that symbolize wind, fire, sky, water and earth. These mark the gateway to Tibet at a 13,000-foot pass that overlooks a wide, deep abyss.



fishing tackle or the sleeping pills. Fish hardly enter the local diet and many visitors suffer insomnia because of the altitude and lack of oxygen. We did not want to raise problems so we simply signed at the bottom of the page. The police checked our papers a couple of times a day but never caused a problem or entered the vehicle.

We set our sights on Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. National Route 214 is the main interstate highway so we didn't think it could be too bad. Wrong! The road was originally carved out of the mountains to accommodate traders; the Tibetans traded tea from the south for their small horses. It is called the Tea-Horse route and later became part of the lower Silk Road that was used to carry

silk to the Western civilizations.

Initially, near Kunming, there were stretches of modern four-lane toll roads where drivers were directed to maintain a distance of 200 meters from the vehicle in front. There was little chance of getting rear-ended there. The road then became mostly two-lane blacktop although we did manage to find long stretches of cobbled roads.

The farther we went from civilization the worse the road surface became and the more dramatic the scenery. The views were breathtaking in every sense of the word. Majestic valleys unfolded at each curve, and there were plenty of curves on these switchback roads. The wheels of the motorhome knocked rocks off the road and I held

my breath as I looked into mist that mercifully obscured the depths of the abyss. The drop was phantasmal. Then a wheel would lurch into a pothole and I would gasp and lose another 10 years of my life.

Luckily, there wasn't much traffic — we met about one vehicle an hour and most of those were local trucks or buses. We usually averaged 20 MPH in spite of the numerous landslides and streams that cut paths across the roads. On the worst stretch our average was cut to 5 MPH. On a couple of occasions our translator offered a cigarette to the driver of a construction truck to encourage him to clear the road for us.

For a week we climbed over passes and through valleys of the most varied terrain



Clockwise from left: This campsite is about as primitive as it gets — the motorhome sits on a vast grassland and in the distance is the mighty Qomolangma, the local name for Mount Everest. The author was invited into a nomad's yurt on the high Tibetan Plateau. The nomad holds a postcard of Texas that the author gave her as a thank-you. Colorful shops line Bakhor Street, which pilgrims have been walking for 1,300 years around Jokhang Temple, Tibet's most holy site. The travelers were halted by a landslide on the main interstate highway between Shangri-La and Lhasa. Construction crews would often help clear the road in cases where the motorhome could not pass.



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MAP ILLUSTRATION: SUE CARLSON

imaginable. The road was cut into sheer rock walls that disappeared into the clouds above. At particularly perilous corners faded prayer flags hung limp in the mist across the road or wrapped around boulders.

Then, finally we broke out of the clouds at a 13,000-foot pass at a row of stupas that marked the gateway to Tibet. The white religious structures symbolize wind, fire, sky, water and earth, which are also represented by the white, red, blue, green and yellow prayer flags that are ubiquitous in Tibet.

Above the tree line the mountains were stark and bare where they brushed the pearl blue sky. Their color varied from

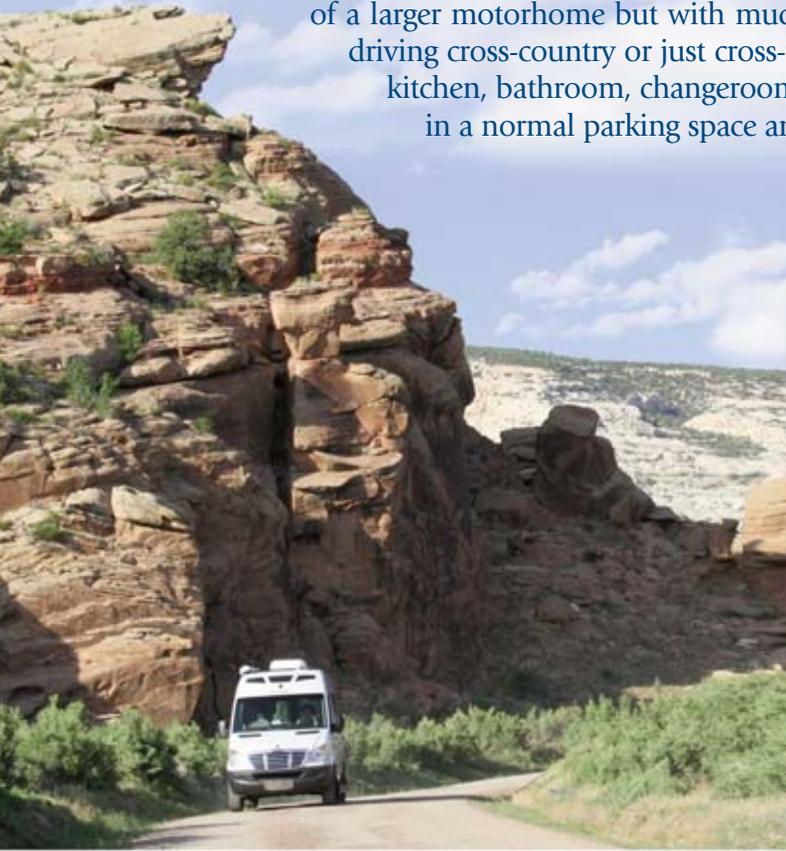
rust to gray to rich purple and then, where there was enough sediment for plants to take hold, they were tinged with green.

Hairy hulks of black yaks peered at us through thick eyelashes as we crested the 16,500-foot Yeshan Pass. Descending the other side snow blew across the desolate mountains as we came to a cluster of yurts crouched like rectangular rocks. Tibetan dogs, similar to Saint Bernards, sniffed in our direction and the gentle yaks simply looked and turned their backs to the wind.

Two hundred and fifty miles east of Lhasa we came across the first group of pilgrims on their way to Tibet's holiest shrine,

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Jokhang Monastery. Each person had a block of wood strapped to their hands that they clapped over their head, again in front of their chest and then hit the ground with them sliding forward until they were prostrate. They then walked to where their hands had been and repeated the cycle. For centuries worshippers have been congregating at Jokhang Monastery and circumnavigating the building in prayer; they walk clockwise around the temple spinning hand-held prayer wheels and fingering prayer beads.

The Jokhang Monastery is rich with gold and magnificent ancient treasures bedecked in jewels. Everywhere smoke from incense burners competed with flames in the burning yak butter for the little oxygen there was in the crowded rooms and narrow passages. Fortunately we went early when there were fewer visitors. Crowning the Jokhang are ornate golden emblems that glisten in the sun against Tibet's brilliant sky.

If it's precious gems that interest you, there are more than enough in Potala Palace. The Potala consists of the Red Palace and the White Palace. The White Palace is the

residence of the Dalai Lama and also where political affairs are handled. Over the centuries the city has grown around the red ochre and stark white fortress that is now the pictorial symbol of Tibet. It takes some effort to climb the hundreds of steps to the Potala as the air is thin — 12,000 feet above sea level. When you reach the complex there are 13 more flights of stairs inside, some of which are almost vertical ladders.

The Potala is a living complex containing accommodations for the monks who are the caretakers of the facility. There are thousands of rooms with as many worshippers winding through a maze of narrow corridors and adding yak butter to the flaming dishes in front of the statues and magnificent stupa.

We streamed into the living quarters of the Dalai Lama and out into the brilliant daylight and air as clean as from another planet. Our legs, lungs and minds were exploding by the time we wound our way down a cobbled path and into a pedicab that took us back to collapse in the motorhome.

We wanted to visit Lhasa, but our goal was to drive a motorhome to within sight of Mount Everest. Here they call the mighty mountain Qomolangma (Cho-mo-long-ma).

A half-day's drive north of Lhasa is Namtso Lake. According to local legend the lakes of Tibet are the broken chips from a goddess's mirror. They are considered sacred and are treated with the utmost respect.

We stopped to photograph a nomad tent home and were privileged to be invited inside by the friendly family. The yurt had a stone sill that kept the ever-present wind from blowing under the yak-felt fabric and a hole in the center to let the smoke from the yak-dung bricks escape.

As we continued toward the Himalayas we were surrounded by bare swaths of hills. Craggy gray peaks cast us into shadow in the middle of the day until we were suddenly faced with a range of snow-covered mountains shining in the sun. We had driven as close to Everest as possible in the motorhome so we pulled off the road and parked.

We sat mesmerized by the sight of the great Qomolangma. Within 20 minutes the sun had tanned us through our clothes, but then it was gone and we were suddenly very cold. We camped there alone, three miles high, at the top of the world, looking at Everest through our motorhome window and savoring the experience. ♦

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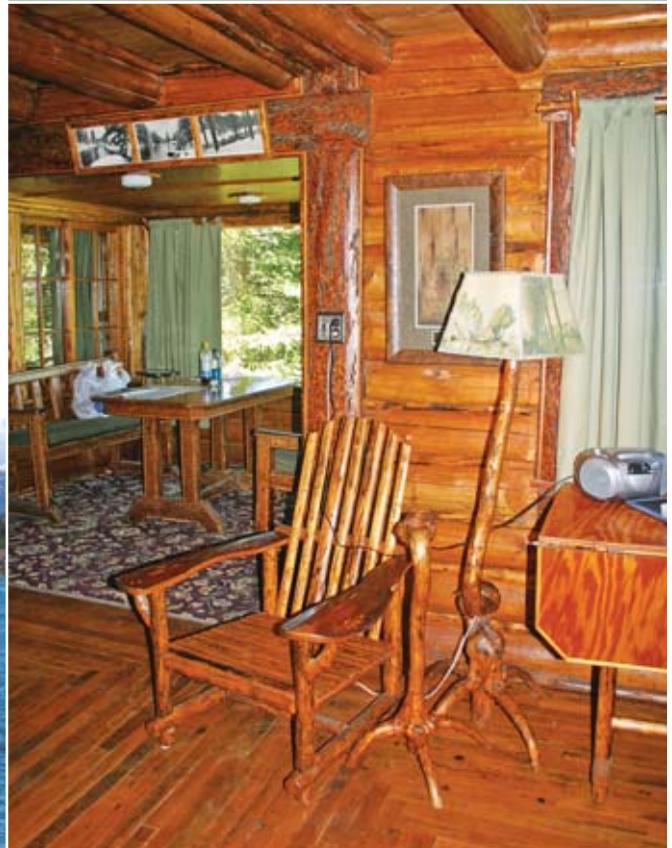
by GERALD C. AND SHARON L. HAMMON



Yellowstone. If you haven't been there, it must be on your ultimate bucket list. If you have been, we'll bet you already know what you missed last time, and filling in the gaps is no doubt in your plans. Where else can you find such abundant wildlife, spectacular colors and graphic displays of geothermal energy, all in one location? We've been back several times and still haven't seen it all.

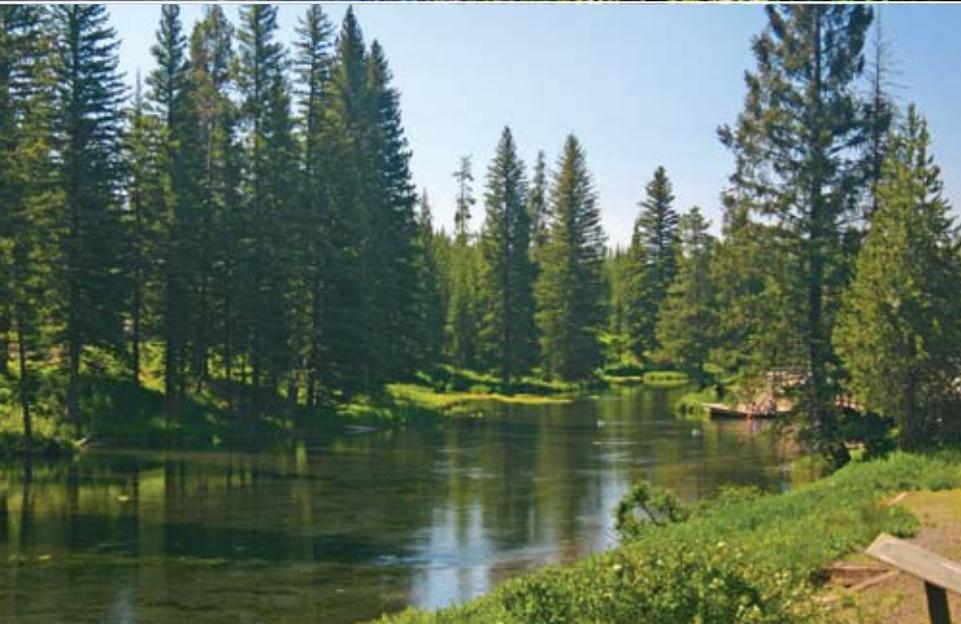
Unfortunately for RVers who want full hookups, there is a lack of these in Yellowstone National Park. Fishing Bridge RV Park is the only campground within the expanse of the park that offers water, electric and sewer hookups. It is popular and reservations are tough to get. And as those who have stayed there know, the campground was designed and built before the days of big rigs. We have rather vivid memories of navigating

Clockwise from top: The campground at Henrys Lake State Park is often uncrowded. It offers panoramic views of Henrys Lake and the surrounding mountains and is only a stone's throw away from Old Faithful. Handmade furniture showcases the woodworking skills of Johnny Sack, who also built the cabin. Henrys Fork of the Snake River is a prime fly-fishing spot for Yellowstone cutthroat trout.



PHOTOS: GERALD C. HAMMON

MOTORHOME | June 2011



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Left, top to bottom: The walkways along the edge of the spillway of Upper Mesa Falls are so close that you can see rainbows in the mist of the thundering falls. Visitors can watch for groups of huge trout in the clear waters of Big Springs, one of the largest springs in the United States. Horseback riding and hiking are popular at Harriman State Park, home to Harriman Railroad Ranch.

was occasional forays by black bears on the garbage cans. Our America the Beautiful — National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass — Senior Pass allowed us unlimited access in our dinghy to Yellowstone itself without charge. And, at the same time, we discovered the attractions of eastern Idaho.

Unlike the cheek-to-jowl camping at Fishing Bridge, RV parks along U.S. Highway 20 leading toward Yellowstone are spacious for the most part, and several offer spectacular settings. We chatted with Heather and Bill, who were on duty at the entrance station to Henrys Lake State Park, 15 minutes from the entrance to Yellowstone, and marveled at the half-full

our 40-foot motorhome around those 90-degree turns and then trying to shoehorn it into our reserved space without taking out a line of pine trees or a group of trash cans.

Your alternatives are to dry camp at one of several campgrounds in the park without hookups or choose a campground outside the park. An immediate benefit to staying outside the park is learning that

the stunning scenery and natural wonders don't stop at the park's boundaries. We discovered this not by design but through the happy circumstance of accepting a work camping assignment with The Nature Conservancy just west of the park in Idaho's Island Park district. We were provided a lovely tree-lined site affording good privacy in a quiet park. Our only concern

campground with its stunning views of Henrys Lake and the surrounding mountains. They marveled as well, knowing that their park, with water and electric hookups and a dump station on site, is actually closer to Old Faithful and the Upper Geyser Basin than Fishing Bridge RV Park. Other private RV parks we saw were similarly attractive.

Geologists will tell you that the geothermal “hot spot” that creates the natural wonders of Yellowstone previously was under the land west of the park.

Like the park itself, this was once a massive volcano that at some point in the

past blew itself into the stratosphere, leaving behind a huge caldera. The evidence is found in the roughly circular mountain ranges that enclose the highlands of Idaho’s Fremont County. Compared to Yellowstone, the volcanism that shaped this area occurred much earlier in geologic time, and there are no geyser basins or active reminders of the presence of that hot spot. Instead, this is a land of forests, vast meadows and stunning rivers.

Henrys Lake is a main water source of Henrys Fork of the Snake River, a prime location for anglers to try their luck on the famous Yellowstone cutthroat trout. If you won’t leave home without your fly rod, this is a place for you. The lake itself features cutthroat-rainbow hybrid trout as well, but a boat is almost a requirement for fishing there because of limited shoreline access.

We discovered that a second source of Henrys Fork was at a nearby place aptly named Big Springs. Here, more than 120 million gallons of water a day well up from the ground and flow out toward Snake River. It is one of the largest springs in the United States. The water is unbelievably clear, and from a bridge crossing the springs, you can look down at groups of humongous trout waiting patiently for you to feed them. Unfortunately, it is illegal to do so with a hook through the food, so you have to leave your fishing gear behind. For a quarter, you can buy a handful of fish food pellets, toss them in the water and watch the submarine-size trout leap high in the air to snap them up before the ubiquitous California gulls can grab them.

There was a time when Big Springs was the province of the wealthy, with cabins surrounding it and a nearby railroad station to ensure ease of access. Fortunately, the Forest Service eliminated the cabins, the railroad was abandoned and Big Springs, with one interesting exception, reverted to its pristine condition. A quiet Forest Service campground nearby and two parking lots allow the public in general to enjoy the beauty of this place. Paved paths provide easy access for visitors to walk around much of the perimeter of Big Springs and marvel at the volume of water gurgling to the surface.

The Forest Service permitted one cabin to remain, the former possession of a 4-foot-11-inch German immigrant

HELPFUL INFORMATION

■ **Henrys Lake State Park:** Water and electric sites (dump station in the park); \$18 to \$25 plus vehicle entry fee of \$5. Reservations accepted from the Thursday before Memorial Day through Sept. 5.

■ **Big Springs:** Access from U.S. 20 at Mack’s Inn; turn east on South Big Springs Road and drive 4½ miles. The road is paved and parking at the springs can handle any size motorhome. The Forest Service campground has no hookups and a fee is charged. There is no charge to visit Johnny Sack Cabin, but donations are appreciated. It’s open from mid-June to mid-September.

■ **Harrison State Park:** Entrance is \$5 and is good for entrance to Mesa Falls and Henrys Lake State Park on the same day. A Forest Service campground (West End Campground) is nine miles west of the park entrance. Vehicle parking could be tight. We recommend not taking your motorhome. Very primitive camping.

■ **Mesa Falls:** Upper Falls has RV parking with trails leading to the falls. Access is off the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway. Entry fee: \$5. Lower Falls can be viewed from a turnout from the byway. No fee is charged.

■ **Camping options:** There are numerous private RV parks and forest campgrounds along U.S. Highway 20 in the Island Park area and in Montana west of West Yellowstone. The town of West Yellowstone also has several RV parks.

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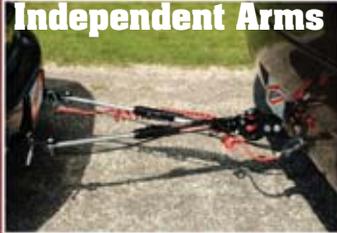


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named Johnny Sack. Originally, the Sack cabin was scheduled for demolition like the others, but because of the superb craftsmanship and woodworking skills of Sack, the cabin was opened to the public after Sack's death in 1957. Sack had not only been responsible for constructing the cabin but the furnishings as well. The result is simply stunning wood craftsmanship. Needless to say, it is a popular destination.

Sack and his neighbors were not the only ones who found the land west of Yellowstone to be worthwhile in its own right. A few miles west of Henrys Lake and Big Springs is Harriman State Park. The Harriman name connotes little in this day and age. However, if you rode on a passenger train around the turn of the 20th century, the likelihood was that Edward H. Harriman had an ownership position in the railroad. He was largely responsible for the construction of the Union Pacific's branch to West Yellowstone, which served the park itself. Due to the routing of this rail line through Island Park, Harriman was quite familiar with the attractions of the area.

Accordingly, Harriman — along with the Guggenheim family, who gained their wealth from copper — developed what was known as Harriman Railroad Ranch. It was a rustic settlement along a beautiful stretch of Snake River near two pristine lakes: Silver Lake and Gold Lake. For nearly three-quarters of a century, family members and prominent guests spent portions of the summer months in this idyllic setting. It was an operating cattle ranch in addition to a family retreat, allowing plutocrats from both the Harriman and Guggenheim families to play cowboy. In the mid-1970s, after years of negotiation, the state of Idaho was able to obtain Harriman Railroad Ranch and turn it into a state park.

Today, the public can fish Henrys Fork of Snake River or hike along paths around Silver and Gold lakes or on weekends explore the buildings that once housed some of the richest people in the nation. Surprisingly, we found that the buildings aren't particularly luxurious. Perhaps the Harrimans and the Guggenheims had enough luxury in the rest of their lives.

At Harriman State Park, U.S. Highway 20, the principal route to Yellowstone from the west, takes its leave from Henrys Fork

of the Snake River. For our first visits to Yellowstone, we were part of the thundering herd, pedal to the metal, roaring along the highway to get to the park without any concept of the beauty that surrounded us. As a result, it was only when we spent time in the Island Park area of Idaho that we discovered Mesa Falls Scenic Byway. It splits off from U.S. Highway 20 at state Route 47 and follows the river to the west, affording an opportunity to take in two stupendous waterfalls before rejoining the highway in Ashton, Idaho.

A side road from the byway leads to a delightful park with walkways leading down to the edge of the spillway of Upper Mesa Falls. It's close enough that you get the full impact of water thundering over the lip and plunging down into the abyss, replete with miniature rainbows in the mist. A small museum and gift shop is part of the park with exhibits taken from the history of the area. But the falls themselves are obviously the star attraction. Lower Mesa Falls must be viewed from an overlook, far above the river. It loses some of the immediacy of the upper falls, but the view is still well worth the stop.

Wildlife is abundant in the land around Island Park. Hikers along paths near Big Springs encounter moose with some degree of regularity. Howling wolves serenaded fellow volunteers on more than one occasion at a Nature Conservancy cabin. One of our assignments was to staff the conservancy headquarters at Flat Ranch, giving us the opportunity to observe pronghorn antelope as well as young sandhill cranes. Since we are seldom without our binoculars, we can vouch that birding in the area may surpass Yellowstone itself.

From a practical standpoint, staying outside of Yellowstone had other benefits. Island Park itself is a community that stretches for miles along U.S. Highway 20 with a variety of commercial development, including opportunities to rent canoes, boats and the like to explore Henrys Fork. West Yellowstone features grocery stores, gas stations and a number of restaurants, giving you an easy way to resupply without being limited to the offerings inside Yellowstone. There are good arguments for considering Cody or Jackson, Wyo., or Gardiner, Mont., as a base as well, but we will leave those for another article. ♦

CLASS DISTINCTION

WHAT SPECIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE REQUIREMENTS MIGHT APPLY TO YOU

by CHUCK CAMPBELL



Linger perceptions concerning drivers of Class

A and bus-type motorhomes often suggest that some kind of special driver's license certification or endorsement should be required before getting behind the wheel. This notion has persisted for years, especially in regard to older drivers.

The questions, then, are: Should a "special" license qualification process apply to some if not all Class A and bus-type drivers? Are these people fit to operate such vehicles without specialized training? Should medical certifications be required, and should drivers be made to demonstrate their driving skills to a testing official at a state motor vehicle office?

It is difficult to determine statistically if the public's prevailing viewpoint of "motorhome" drivers is accurate or justified, and

actually warrants a special type of license class. It is more than likely, however, that these perceptions are often based on a fuzzy equation that "older driver and large vehicle equal higher likelihood of an accident." I believe the average citizen's sense of the motorhome crowd as a whole is more anecdotal than supported by hard evidence.

Also, consider this: Traffic laws in most instances are justified when there is a demonstrated need, rather than just the simple belief or gut feeling that certain practices need some sort of regulation. What issues, then, come into play when considering specialized license certifications for drivers of Class A motorhomes? First, let's consider relevant data that may or may not support this hypothesis.

Is a current demographic profile of the average motorhome

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driver available? About the closest information is contained in a recent survey of the typical RV owner developed by the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA).

RVIA research reflects a person who is 49 years old and married, with a higher than median income of \$68,000 per year. These people travel an average of 4,500 miles and 26 days annually. Overall, RVIA estimates that there are roughly 30 million RV enthusiasts throughout the country, including those who rent their units.

Unfortunately, RVIA statistics do not break out motorhome drivers specifically. Nevertheless, my own instincts and experience within the industry tell me that the typical motorhome driver is more likely between 50 and 55 years of age, and predominantly male. The age alone implies that the average driver has had almost 40 years of driving experience behind him.

What unenlightened members of the public often fail to take into account when

forming their viewpoints of motorhome operators is that many of them have had previous large-vehicle operating experience. This includes towing longer and wider conventional travel trailers or fifth-wheels, or driving motorized rigs such as high-sided truck campers and Class C motorhomes.

Is there, then, any statistical traffic accident data that support the possibility of requiring special license classifications for motorhome drivers?

Combing through the latest available nationwide traffic collision data contained within the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), and collected for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), it is virtually impossible to determine the annual ratio of motorhome accidents to those of other automobiles. This may be due in large part to the fact that there is no uniform way that states report on motorhomes that have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

SHOULD A SPECIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE CLASSIFICATION/CERTIFICATION/ENDORSEMENT BE REQUIRED OF DRIVERS BEFORE THEY CAN OPERATE A CLASS A OR BUS-TYPE MOTORHOME?

Although it's tricky to get a definitive answer based solely on statistical evidence currently available, the following points may help to fill in some of the blanks.

1. Licensing of vehicles is a right held by individual states. As such, each one establishes its own criteria as to what vehicles it believes require "special" license certifications or restrictions. Sometimes it reflects federal law affecting commercial vehicles, but is more often than not based on perceived risk factors associated with driving such a vehicle, and related accident statistics.

States for the most part have exempted motorhome drivers from needing a CDL. However, at least 13 currently require some form of special license certification to drive vehicles within specified weight classes and lengths. At this time, there does not appear to be any further push at the state level to develop additional license restrictions on motorhome drivers.

2. If you have questions about li-

cense qualifications in your home state concerning a Class A or larger vehicle (Class C motorhomes with similar dimensions as larger Class A's can now be found on medium-duty truck chassis), contact your department of public safety or motor vehicles. This step is even more prudent before buying a new or used motorhome.

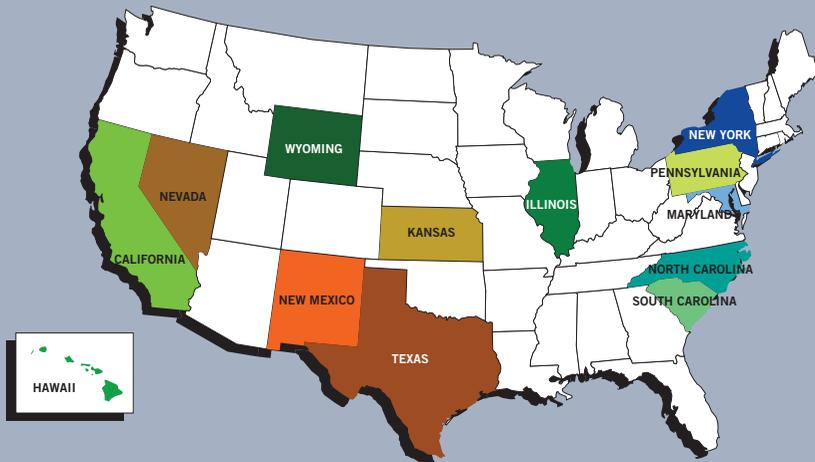
3. Most states recognize licenses and license classifications of another state (also known as reciprocity). In other words, if your state does not require a special license to operate your unit, you are legal to drive within other states that may have certain restrictions on similar vehicles.

4. RV manufacturers, dealers and motorhome advocates such as RVIA and Good Sam Club have historically resisted increased licensing standards on the average motorhome driver. The commonly held belief here is that more restrictive licensing could have an overall negative impact on vehicle sales, services and the industry as a whole.

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SELECTED STATE-BY-STATE INFORMATION

The following information on special driver's license classifications for motorhome drivers was gathered from official state websites, and is believed to be accurate to the best of our knowledge. For further clarification or questions, contact the appropriate state motor vehicle department directly.



1. CALIFORNIA: A non-commercial Class B license and endorsement is required for motorhomes over 40 feet, but not longer than 45 feet, on certain routes. A Physician's Health Report, skills test, driving test and a Driver's Examination for 45' Housecars are also required.

2. HAWAII: Class B endorsement is required if driving any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more. A Class 4 is required for any single vehicle with a GVWR of 15,001 to 26,000 pounds.

3. ILLINOIS: A non-commercial Class B license is required on vehicles with a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more.

4. KANSAS: Non-commercial Class A or Class B. Class A with a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) above 26,000 pounds, towing a trailer over 10,000 pounds. Class B, GVWR of single vehicle above 26,000 pounds.

5. MARYLAND: Non-commercial Class A or Class B. Class A with GCWR 26,001 pounds and heavier, towing a trailer over 10,000 pounds. Class B, GVWR of single vehicle 26,001 pounds or more. A Basic Vehicle Control Skills Test may also be required.

6. NEVADA: Non-commercial Class A or B: Class A with GCWR of 26,001 pounds and above, towing a trailer weighing more than 10,000 pounds. Class B, GVWR of single vehicle 26,001

pounds or more.

7. NEW MEXICO: Class E license required for vehicles with GVWR above 26,000 pounds.

8. NEW YORK: "R" endorsement for RVs with GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more, or rental vehicles more than 40 feet in length.

9. NORTH CAROLINA: Non-commercial Class A or B: Class A with GVWR 26,001 pounds and over, towing a trailer over 10,000 pounds. Class B, GVWR of single vehicle 26,001 pounds or more.

10. PENNSYLVANIA: Non-commercial Class A or B: Class A with GCWR 26,001 pounds and more, towing a trailer in excess of 10,000 pounds. Class B, GVWR of single vehicle 26,001 pounds or more.

11. SOUTH CAROLINA: Class E, non-commercial single vehicle exceeding GVWR of 26,000 pounds. Class F, non-commercial vehicle combination exceeding GCWR of 26,000 pounds. Must pass a knowledge test, off-road maneuvers test and an on-road test.

12. TEXAS: Classified Class A or Class B: Class A with GCWR over 26,000 pounds. Class B, GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more towing a vehicle less than 10,000 pounds.

13. WYOMING: Non-commercial Class A or Class B. Class A with GCWR over 26,000 pounds. Class B, GVWR of single vehicle over 26,000 pounds and towing a vehicle less than 10,000 pounds.

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CLASS DISTINCTION FROM PAGE 40

become involved in traffic collisions.

Put more simply, states have different definitions of just what motorhomes are, and how they are recorded and coded in associated crash reports. California, for instance, defines motorhomes and other vehicles of this type as "housecars."

According to Jay Landers, RVIA's senior director of government affairs, RVers are among the safest drivers in the nation today. "There is no hue and cry to change the license status of motorhome drivers at this time," Landers said. "The incidence of motorhome-related accidents throughout the country appears to be of no statistical significance."

One sector of the business community that seems to have figured out the risk factors associated with motorhome ownership and operation is the insurance industry. This industry has risk and other relevant aspects identified fairly accurately. As such, the average motorhome premiums including full replacement coverage of goods after an accident do not reflect the common misconception that older operators of larger RVs are more unsafe, or less than capable as drivers.

To the contrary, motorhome insurance premiums often run proportionately lower than their vehicular counterparts such as pickups, SUVs, sedans and sports cars. This may be due in part to the fact that annual average motorhome mileage is less than that of other automobiles, and appear to make them less risky to insure.

I believe there is an unseen but palpable force that guides most drivers of expensive vehicles. That is, the pricier the motorhome, the more care and consideration drivers will take to ensure they do not damage it. Considering the cost of the average Class A motorhome, I've seldom seen one being operated in a problematic or unsafe manner.

Many states currently require a form of commercial or extra skill certification for a variety of vehicles including motorcycles; passenger-for-hire conveyances (cabs and limousines); tour buses; and most types of commercial "18-wheeler/big rig" combinations.

In cases of interstate commerce, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) under the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) sets forth commer-

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cial drivers license (CDL) criteria for all 50 states. These apply but are not limited to endorsements for transportation of hazardous materials, oversight of driver hours of service, medical fitness requirements, and a host of other regulations focused mainly on interstate commerce, and national movement of goods.

At this time, motorhomes used solely for recreational and other non-commercial functions do not meet the FMCSA definition of a commercial vehicle, and are thus exempt from its guidelines. Despite this fact, however, there are actually some states that do require drivers of certain RV-type vehicles to pass various tests and/or obtain special license classifications/endorsements/ratings. Reviewing statistics available on U.S. states and their laws governing such coaches, it appears there are at least 13 that currently have one or more statutes requiring such certifications based on gross vehicle weight and/or length. There may also be others; check with your state motor vehicle department for more information.

The majority of state laws directed toward certification of Class A motorhome drivers apparently resulted from the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986. And though not specifically directed at motorhomes or recreational vehicles per se, it caused some states to set the bar higher in regard to licensing drivers of vehicles in certain heavier weight classes. More specifically, these laws often apply to single non-commercial vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) higher than 26,000 pounds, and vehicle combinations with a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) exceeding 26,000 pounds.

In addition, a few states stepped in to regulate certain aspects of motorhome operation when manufacturers began producing coaches with maximum lengths exceeding 40 feet. For instance, California now requires "resident" owners of motorhomes over 40 feet, but still under 45 feet, to obtain a special Class B, non-commercial license endorsement from the Department of Motor Vehicles (California's standard automobile driver's license is a Class C).

For further examination of the license issue, see the sidebars on pages 40 and 41. ♦

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FLEETWOOD JAMBOREE SPORT 28Z

Growing family? Need more room? Fleetwood's newest rear-slide family room floorplan can accommodate eight in just 29 feet

Having the ability to do more with less is one benefit of RVing and Fleetwood has scored a bull's-eye with the introduction of the Jamboree Sport 28Z two-slide floorplan. Fleetwood designers have duplicated the drop-down cockpit queen bed feature found in their Class A Storm, reviewed in our December 2010 issue ("Fleetwood Storm 32BH"), relocating it to the rear of the Sport in place of the conventional bedroom setup. Using this hideaway bed with the new rear wall slide creates valuable and versatile new space that allows a variety of uses. By day, it's a bright and airy family room thanks to the pair of 5-foot by 21-inch tinted windows to read by or shaded for movie viewing on the optional (\$665) 19-inch LCD TV mounted above the dresser/wardrobe module. In the evening, it's a comfortable bedroom for two or four by folding out the rear slide's 60-inch by 80-inch sleeper sofa and lowering the queen-size platform with its pneumatic mattress.

The Sport also sleeps two in the more traditional 54-inch by 80-inch cabover bunk that can be ordered with the optional (\$588) skylight/sunroof with pull screen and shade and the (\$1,680) entertainment center. AV cabinetry space is set up with the included DVD player and space for cable/satellite box connections. The 32-inch LCD TV is on a powered swing-out mount for bunk and cabin viewing. Kids can share the popcorn on the 42-inch by 84-inch wraparound dinette bed after dropping the double pole table.

The Sport's galley offers a residential-style twin-basin sink and pullout faucet with whole coach water filtration. It comes standard with both a gas oven and 900-watt microwave with a three-burner cooktop set in a handsome laminate countertop. Storage drawers and a large pot and pan drawer



are provided next to and below the gas oven. A double-door, top-freezer, two-way fridge handles food for eight and there is generous full-height pantry storage in the streetside slide next to the large dinette. Additional overhead storage can be found above the dinette. Two interior décor choices are available in the Sport line with light or dark tone cabinetry.

The full-width bath offers complete privacy by closing the family room's sliding door and fully opening the toilet room door across the aisle. A porcelain bowl is set next to the generous vanity with 40 inches of countertop length and a mirrored medicine chest above with storage below. A 6-foot-1-inch shower stall with domed skylight will accommodate 6-foot-3-inch users without ducking and is equipped with a glass door, soap and shampoo shelves and handy removable drip-dry clothes bar.

Outside, the handsome and optional (\$2,520) full-body paint highlights the new contoured fiberglass front cap. The chrome front bumper adds some flash along with the progressive use of a powdercoated, color-coordinated rear bumper (with 5,000-pound hitch receiver) for long-term, all-weather protection. Generous storage is available in both saddlebag and basement pass-through styles along both flanks. No problems here handling large items, folding chairs and tables, and there is also a handy exterior compartment door to access the interior under-dinette storage area.

The standard Cummins Onan 4-kW generator has excellent access for maintenance and the utility compartment



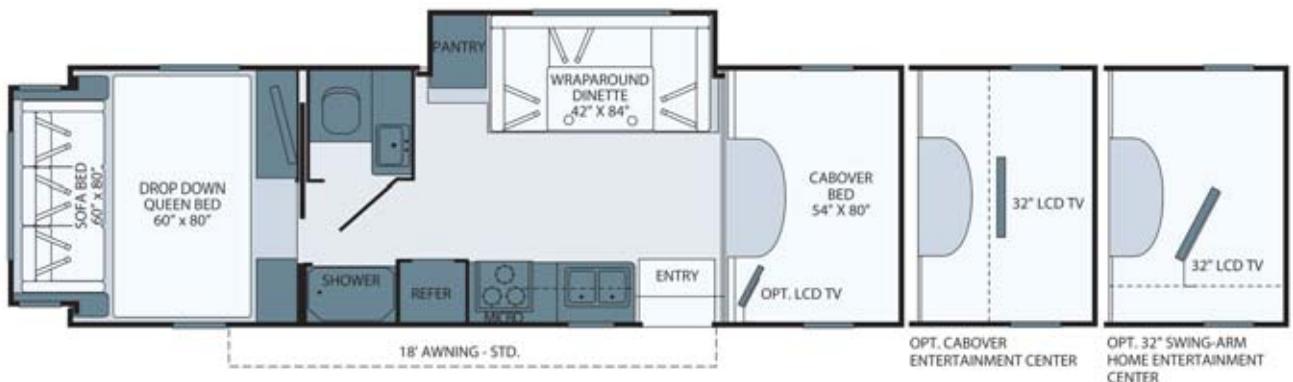
valves and controls are also easily operated, clearly labeled and protected from the elements. On the radius, one-piece TPO roof, a single ducted roof air-conditioning unit handles the heat by directing cooling throughout the coach using tunable directional flow controlled outlets while the ducted 30,000-Btu furnace handles any chill. Additional roof options are available for a substitute air/heat pump and an auto-locating satellite dish.

The Jamboree Sport has brought to market a unique and versatile new floorplan for those who value multipurpose living areas over current conventions. And as observed by Sher Lyckman of Giant RV in Southern California, who provided this coach for our review, "You get 35 feet of living in only 29 feet." We have to agree. More *is* possible with less. ♦

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FUEL: 55 GAL	GRAY-WATER CAP: 37 GAL
GVWR: 14,500 LBS	BLACK-WATER CAP: 37 GAL
LENGTH: 29' 2.5"	LP-GAS CAP: 14 GAL
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INTERIOR HEIGHT: 6' 10"	

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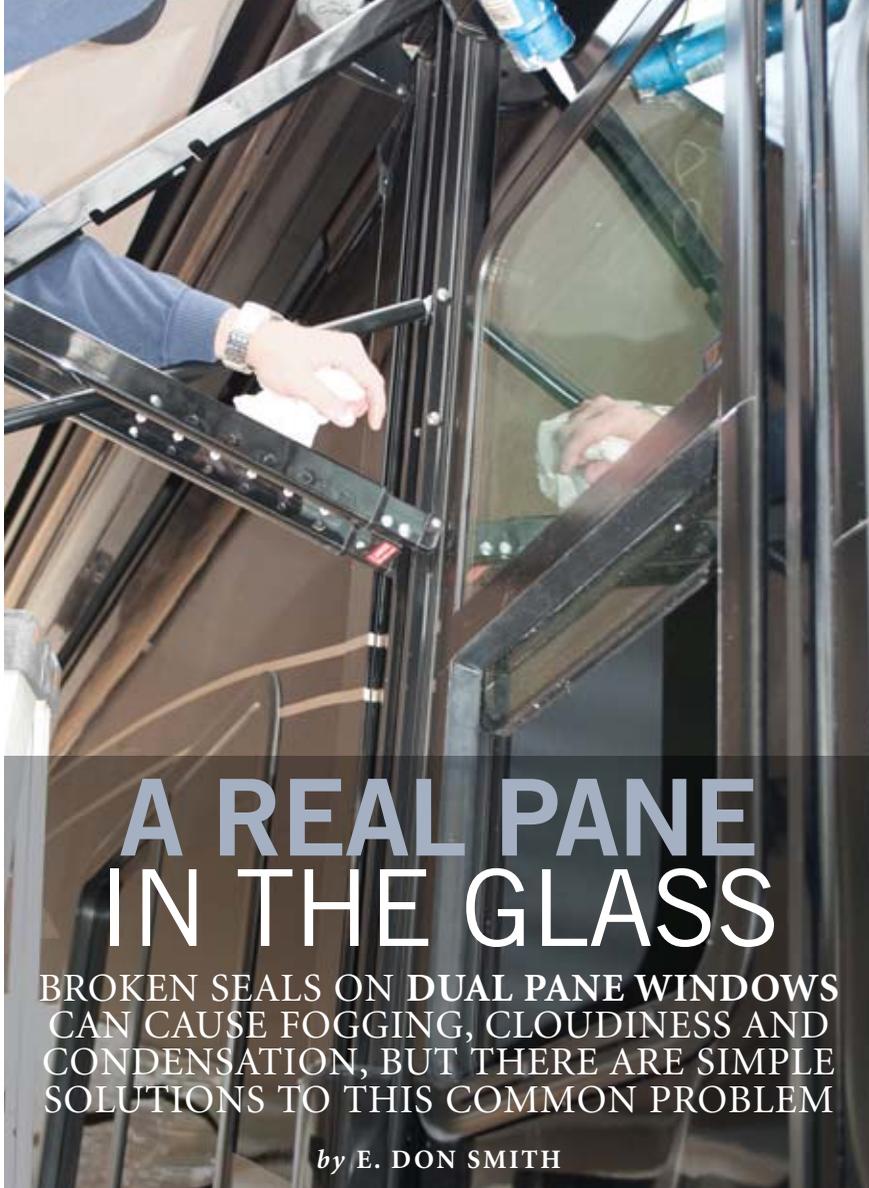
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User Guide

Contents



A REAL PANE IN THE GLASS

BROKEN SEALS ON DUAL PANE WINDOWS CAN CAUSE FOGGING, CLOUDINESS AND CONDENSATION, BUT THERE ARE SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO THIS COMMON PROBLEM

by E. DON SMITH

Fogging of dual pane windows in motorhomes is, unfortunately, a fact of life for many owners. Dual pane windows are widely used in houses and their energy savings are well-documented, which is a major reason why they are also used in motorhomes. The air layer between the two layers of glass provides a huge increase in the insulation quality of the window and prevents condensation from forming inside as long as the window's inner air seal is unbroken.

These windows have been used for decades in houses and work very well mainly because houses do not experience the degree of movement that motorhomes do. The movement of driving down the road puts a lot of strain on these seals and seal failure is the reason windows fog.

There are rubber (or other material)

seals that close off the inner air pocket in the window and prevent humidity (from the air) from penetrating inside the two panels of glass, which are sealed and dry when built at the factory. Once that seal is compromised, the humidity is allowed to enter the air pocket of the window and condensation and fogging are the result. Not only is this a nuisance, it can also be a safety issue if the fogging is on those windows used during navigation of the coach.

Today a motorhome owner has several choices when it comes to restoring a clear view to their fogged dual pane windows. The easiest, but perhaps most expensive, is to simply buy and install new windows. You can do this on your own or take your motorhome to a service center and have them install a replacement window.

Another option is to have your windows removed and take them to a local,

qualified glass/window shop and have them repair the windows. Some readers have reported good results with this method and it seems to be a reasonably priced option. Depending on the turnaround time, this also means that you need to have the motorhome covered while the windows are out.

As you are searching for a qualified shop make sure you let them know they would be dealing with RV dual pane windows. Some shops simply will not or cannot make these kinds of repairs. We have also discovered that square or rectangular glass windows are a lot easier to work with than glass with rounded corners.

Some, but not all, of these windows are factory filled with argon or nitrogen, which is a dry gas ideal for occupying the space between the panes of glass. If you can find a facility that has the capability of refilling the space with a dry gas, your chances of success are a lot better, because it is the moisture inside the cavity that causes the condensation. We have talked with some RVers who have performed their own DIY repair and they simply drilled a small hole in the window frame and used welding argon gas to inject inside the window cavity, then resealed the hole with silicone sealant.

There are RV-specific repair facilities that can do this work for you. In most cases you would bring the motorhome to the facility, they remove the windows one at a time and disassemble them completely. They then clean the glass to remove the fogging, and reassemble the glass with completely new seals. They also use better materials in hopes of preventing this from occurring again.

In some cases the interior glass is etched beyond the point of normal cleaning or polishing and must be replaced. To try to prevent this, as soon as you see fogging on your windows you should have them repaired quickly rather than waiting months or years. The longer you wait the more difficult it is to remove the deposits.

Some of these companies also offer the option of shipping your windows to them for this repair service and you perform the removal and reinstallation.

In several of these options, motorhome owners can save money by doing their own removal and reinstallation. So, on the following pages, we will walk you through a basic how-to on removing and reinstalling a window on your own.

Some manufacturers offer extended warranties for window fogging. Tiffin has an extended warranty beyond the normal one-year coach warranty. Also, in our case Tiffin provided a replacement window at no charge and we supplied our own labor.

Depending on the size of the window you may need two or three people to ensure the window can be safely removed and reinstalled from a ladder without risk to those performing the work. The window we replaced was fairly small and only required two people to completely remove it and install a new one.

You will need some basic tools such as a ladder, outdoor-rated clear sealant, a plastic scraper (to remove the old sealant) and a rubber mallet (just in case). You will also need to obtain the same type of gasket or butyl rubber sealing tape originally used by your coach manufacturer to seal the window. We installed a new window and it came with a new rubber self-adhesive gasket.

Of course, every coachbuilder uses slightly different methods and parts so your process may vary slightly from the one shown here in which we worked with a 2008 Tiffin Phaeton Class A. Even if your method is slightly different, this offers you enough information to do the work yourself and save a lot of money in the process. If you prefer not to try this approach we have included a list of companies that will do all the work for you. In some cases they also show up at RV rallies so check their schedule and you could save on driving, too. ♦

FOR MORE INFORMATION

DAVE ROOT RV GLASS REPAIR

541-280-3612,
www.daverootrvglassrepair.com.

DUNCAN SYSTEMS INC.

800-551-9149,
www.duncansys.com.

RV FOG DR.

501-278-3015,
www.rvfogdr.com.

RV GLASS SOLUTIONS

888-777-6778,
www.rvglassexperts.com.

SUNCOAST DESIGNERS INC.

727-868-2773,
<http://suncoastdesigners.ccwindow.com>.



STEP 1. Start from inside the motorhome and remove the screws that secure the trim ring around the window. You'll need a helper outside to catch the window, as some are loose and fall out while others are tight and require more work.



STEP 2. Next, cut the adhesive sealant around the top of the window outside the motorhome. Be very careful and only slice deep enough to cut through the sealant and not into the body of the motorhome.



STEP 3. Position one person on the inside and one on the outside and push from the inside (or pull from the outside) to start removing the window. If it doesn't come out easily, use a rubber mallet to very carefully tap the frame from the inside or use a plastic pry bar and gently slide it between the lip of the window and the outside of the coach body. It helps to have the window open to allow you to reach in or out when pushing and pulling on the window.



STEP 4. Once the window starts to move, press it out evenly on the top and bottom to prevent it from getting crooked and caught in the opening. If this happens, push it back in and start the process over.



STEP 5. Remove the window and set it aside to prepare for the new window. Using a plastic scraper, remove the old sealant around the top of the window frame. Clean the inside of the window opening so the window will easily slide back into place.



STEP 6. This window uses a rubber gasket that must be attached to the frame before installing and it is critical that the seam be located at the bottom of the window. Take one end of the gasket material and start peeling the cover off the self-adhesive and apply it to the frame. If the frame is not 100 percent clean be sure to wipe it down first so the adhesive will stick properly.



STEP 7. After the gasket has been applied all the way around the frame you will have to cut the gasket. It is better to cut it slightly long and then trim it shorter as needed. Make sure there is no gap in the seal or this can become an opening for moisture and air to enter the coach.



STEP 8. Next, lift the window into place from the outside of the coach and press it firmly into the window opening.



STEP 9. While one person is holding the window in place, start installing the window trim ring (from the inside) with a manual or power screwdriver and bit. Be sure to line up the trim ring with the pre-drilled holes in the window trim so the left and right halves of the trim go back exactly as they were made to line up the screw holes properly.



STEP 10. If you are careful with the alignment the trim piece should match up like this with no unsightly gaps.



STEP 11. After installing all the screws go back around the window two or three times to tighten each screw. This pulls the window firmly against the outside of the coach. You will have to judge the torque carefully or use a torque-limiting drill like the one shown here to prevent stripping the screw heads or window frame.



STEP 12. After the window is securely in place apply a fine bead of a high quality, outdoor-rated sealant to the top and sides of the window. Use a fine bead to prevent getting the sealant on the outside wall of the motorhome. If you get any on the paint you can use a solvent-based bug and tar remover to clean it up before it cures. Allow the sealant to cure for 24 hours before exposing it to water.

Winnebago's 2011 Euro-styled View Profile 24G, built on a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis, features all the comforts of home in a dual-slide Class C motorhome.

Behind the front cab is a stylish curbside galley and opposite is a streetside convertible sofa sleeper segment with slideout. Combined, these two elements create what could be considered a modest but feature-rich lounge area. Mid-coach streetside is a fully enclosed — though diminutive — bathroom with shower stall, wash basin and china toilet, while the aft slideout compartment houses a queen bed.

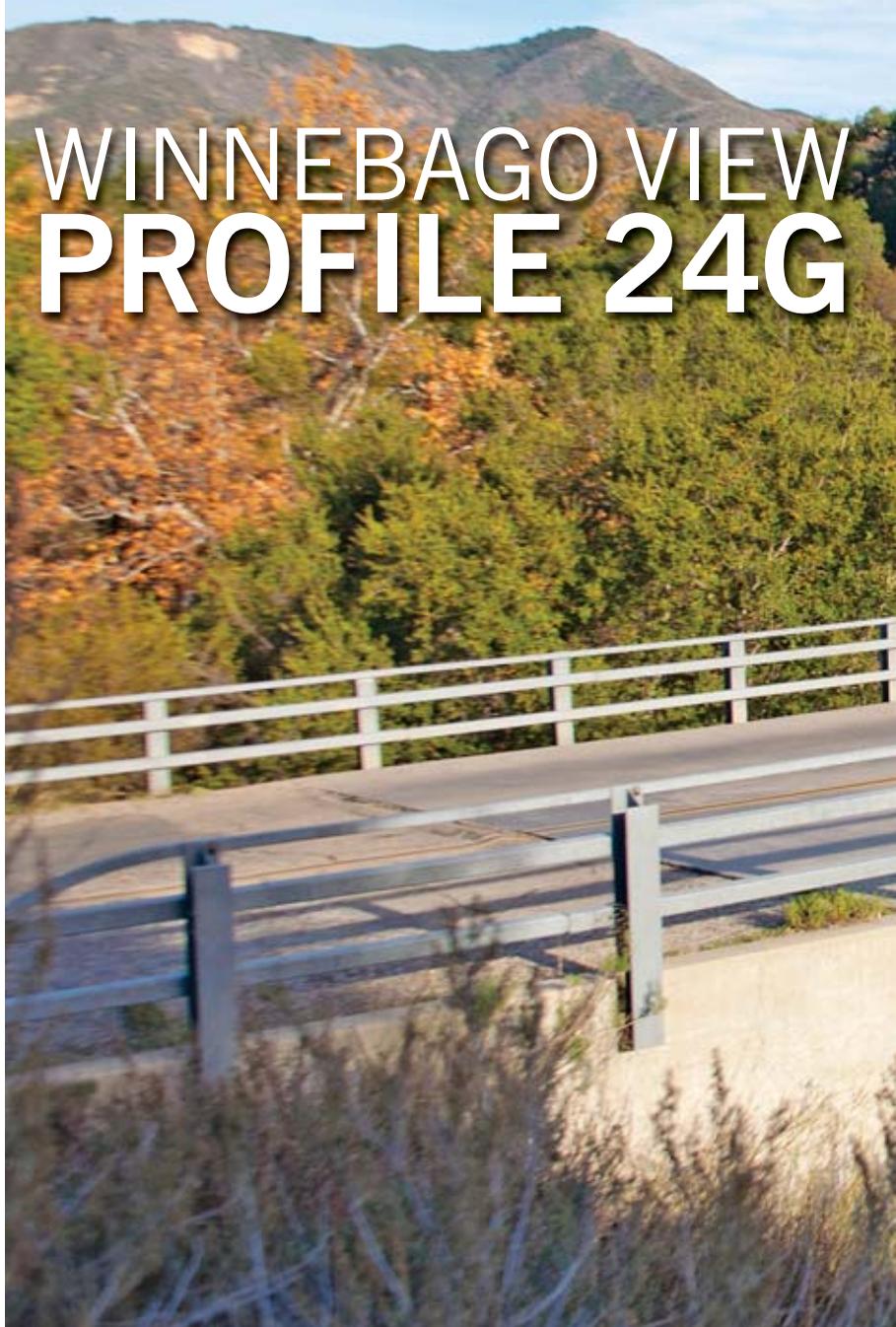
Architectural elements employed on the View Profile are much like those used on Winnebago's larger motorhomes, such as steel and aluminum substructures that secure internal cabinets and appliances. Similarly, metal framework above and below the main floor deck is secured with interlocking joints for optimum strength and durability. Wall segments are comprised of exterior gelcoat fiberglass, high-density interior block-foam insulation and aluminum support pieces, laminated together using Winnebago's proprietary "Thermo-Panel" process. Topping things off is a crowned, one-piece fiberglass roof.

Our motorhome was appointed with many upscale standard amenities seldom found in an RV of this size, including a 26-inch LCD TV, convertible sofa with inflatable bed and a microwave/convection oven. With these features and many more, the base price for the 24G is \$101,769.

But we're not done there. The unit also came replete with a load of available options that raised the final price tag to \$118,842. Significant among these were a 3.6-kW Onan MicroQuiet LP-gas generator (\$3,073), aluminum wheels (\$2,135)

Bottom, left to right: The galley definitely makes the most of a limited space. The Ultraleather sofa/sleeper converts into a 54- by 75-inch bed and when used as a sofa with the portable 30- by 19-inch tabletop it creates a compact but sufficient dining area. Space in the View's rear slideout bedroom is tight, but it's a small sacrifice to make for a queen-size bed in a 24-foot Class C. The cab is Spartan but well-organized and features a 6.5-inch LCD radio/rear camera touch screen.

WINNEBAGO VIEW PROFILE 24G



PHOTOS: CHUCK CAMPBELL

**SMOOTH PERFORMANCE,
DIESEL FUEL ECONOMY
AND TWIN SLIDES HIGHLIGHT
THIS SLEEK CLASS C**

by CHUCK AND TERESA CAMPBELL



MOTORHOME | June 2011

2011 WINNEBAGO VIEW PROFILE 24G

WHAT'S HOT

Fuel economy, aerodynamic design, galley makes good use of space, upscale standard amenities, including a 26-inch LCD TV, convertible sofa with inflatable bed and microwave/convection oven

WHAT'S NOT

Compact floorplan, limited storage options inside and out, only 4 inches of aisle space at the foot of the queen bed, coach shudders a bit when hit by wind gusts or passed by large rigs



and an electric patio awning (\$945).

RESPECTABLE ROAD TRIPPER

Easing into the Winnebago's comfy and adjustable Ultraleather captain's chairs in the Spartan but nevertheless well-sorted-out cab with 6.5-inch LCD radio/rear camera touch screen, we pointed the aerodynamically crafted unit northward toward California's Central Coast. Driver visibility forward was excellent because of its slanted nose, and initial steering feedback indicated this would be a very easy vehicle to drive. We were also duly impressed with the motorhome's external full-body Silvermist paint scheme (\$6,006).

Acceleration of the unit with its 188-HP, turbodiesel V-6 engine is smooth and relatively quiet, though not of the head-snapping variety. Once up to freeway speeds, the experience is more like driving a multipurpose van than a motorhome.

Though the View Profile is no ball of fire off the line, it more than makes up for itself when it hits highway cruising speeds. In fact, the unit's average freeway performance was so fluid and seamless that drivers needed to pay close attention to the speedometer to stay within the legal speed limit.

Handling and maneuverability for the most part is commendable, though the unit tends to move and shudder a bit when passed by larger rigs or hit by strong wind gusts. The cab is quiet under most driving conditions, though it does get pretty noisy when tires encounter rough highway surfaces.

Due in part to the Winnie's aerodynamic profile and frugal, fuel-sipping turbodiesel, we logged mileage figures of 18.6 MPG. With this in mind, users can expect a generous average travel range of more than 460 miles per tank if they don't get pedal-happy.

Heading out of Santa Barbara, Calif.,



The mid-coach bath contains a curtained shower stall with 76 inches of headroom and 15 inches of foot space in front of the china toilet.

and up the steep and winding San Marcos Pass, the unit motored along smoothly and confidently. As the ground rose beneath us, the unit's tip shift gear lever allowed the driver to manually up- or downshift the automatic transmission as needed.

We piloted the Winnebago up this challenging highway without losing too much momentum in the curves, and only had to pull over on a couple of occasions to let faster traffic go by. As we approached the summit with its 7 percent incline, we were still able to maintain a respectable 55 MPH at 2,600 RPM in fourth gear.

Descending into the Santa Inez Valley, we downshifted to third and allowed the unit's modest holdback capability to slow our descent (without having to use the front/rear disc brakes) to 58 MPH at 3,800 RPM in third gear. The transmission is fully capable of selecting a sufficient gear on its own; however, we preferred to choose what we thought was an appropriate gear by

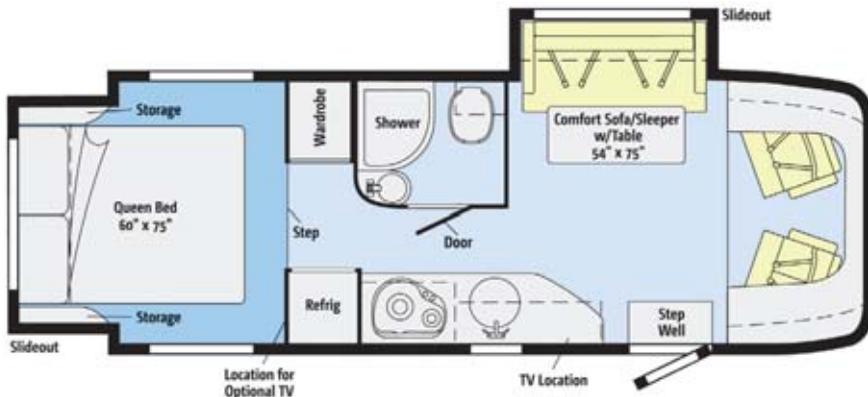
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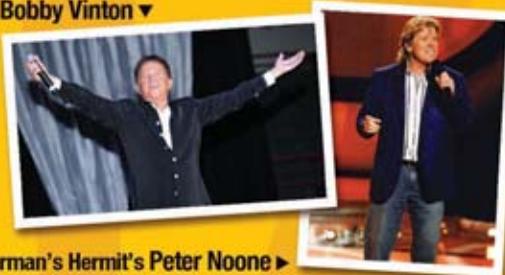
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User Guide

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again using the handy tip shift feature.

Navigating a variety of roads throughout the test was an enjoyable and confidence-inspiring experience because of the motorhome's agility and positive highway feedback. No matter how narrow or winding a road or campground lane turned out to be, we were able to thread our way through with usually room to spare. Even several U-turns were made with ease, thanks to the unit's tight 54.6-foot turning diameter.

LIVING SMALL

Livability is surprisingly cozy in the Sprinter-based unit, due in large part to its two slideouts. A forward slide streetside contains a convertible Ultraleather sofa/sleeper (\$623) that also substitutes as a dinette. The other slide is situated to the rear, and features a 60- by 75-inch queen bed. Though this unit is obviously laid out for two adults, the sofa can be converted to a 54- by 75-inch bed, with a self-inflating mattress, for an extra guest or a couple of kids.

Interior décor reflects a modern treatment with the combination of Mocha Cherry cabinetry and brushed-nickel fixtures and hardware. The company's Platinum with Surfside Ultraleather fabric/upholstery collection graces the coach's interior, using lighter shades of beige and tan, while floor covering in the higher-traffic galley and mid-coach bathroom segments is light, easily cleanable vinyl. Similarly hued carpet graces bedroom and forward cockpit areas.

After arriving at our campground, we easily backed into a space and set up for the evening. Once the motorhome was leveled and hooked up to shorepower, our next order of business was to put together a quick dinner in the forward lounge/galley area.

The galley is a veritable study in making the best use of a limited space. Though the laminate countertop offers a modest usable surface area, Winnebago engineers have maximized the space by installing hinged, smoked safety-glass covers for the round stainless steel sink and two-burner stovetop. With lids folded down, we had a reasonable amount of room to put together our evening meal, cooking on the LP-gas stovetop or in the overhead convection/microwave oven.

Across the aisle in the forward slideout, we set up a compact dinette area using the sofa and an included portable 30- by 19-inch tabletop. This arrangement is dining

space on a reduced scale, but nevertheless gets the job done. When dinner was finished, the tabletop stowed away neatly in a cupboard beneath the countertop.

The compact lounge area is quite suitable for either kicking back and watching the curbside wall-mounted 26-inch LCD TV, or hosting a visitor or two. Adding further flexibility to the area, the cab's captain's seats can be swiveled around to face rearward.

For the most part, we enjoyed restful slumber in the View's rear slideout bedroom, sleeping on its segmented memory foam queen mattress. One slight hurdle we had to accept was a narrow, 4-inch aisle space at the foot of the bed. This required us to enter the rear room extension by crawling over the top of the mattress. Once in the room, however, there was at least 12 inches on either side of the bed that provided minimal dressing areas, plus room to make up the sleeper the next morning. You have to accept compromises in a unit this size to reap the overall benefits of its versatility.

The View Profile 24G comes with an enclosed bathroom located mid-coach, between the lounge and rear bedroom. Though its dimensions are compact, the room offers the necessary elements for cleaning up, including a wash basin and curtained shower stall with 76 inches of headroom. Even in this tight configuration, the compartment provides an appreciated 15 inches of foot space in front of the china toilet.

Loading the Winnebago before our trip took some calculated planning. Outside, there is one main rear compartment of about 13 cubic feet, plus a very small recess curbside. Despite these limitations, we managed to stuff a pair of folding chairs into the rear cargo space along with several bundles of firewood. Inside, one sizable location that we used was a 21- by 48- by 28-inch hall closet that accepted clothing on hangers, as well as smaller containers below. With all this at hand, we managed to squirrel away enough travel essentials and food items to last us for more than a few days.

Winnebago's take on how to best utilize the nimble Sprinter chassis has resulted in a bravura performance, despite constraints in overall size and available horsepower. With decent fuel economy, a traditional but tight floorplan and a dedicated queen bed to boot, the View Profile 24G is a good choice for efficient travel. ♦

SPECIFICATIONS

PERFORMANCE

FUEL ECONOMY: 18.6 MPG

ACCELERATION:

0-60: 22.1 SEC

40-60: 12.9 SEC

CHASSIS

MODEL: MERCEDES-BENZ SPRINTER

ENGINE: 3.0-L MERCEDES-BENZ V-6 TURBODIESEL

SAE HP: 188 HP @ 3,800 RPM

TORQUE: 325 LB-FT @ 1,400-2,400 RPM

TRANSMISSION: 5-SPEED AUTOMATIC WITH TIP SHIFT

AXLE RATIO: 4.18:1

TIRES: LT215/85R16

WHEELBASE: 170"

BRAKES: HYDRAULIC DISC WITH ABS

SUSPENSION, F/R: INDEPENDENT WITH MONO-LEAF SPRING AND STABILIZER/

LEAF SPRING WITH STABILIZER BAR

FUEL CAP: 26.4 GAL

WARRANTY: 3 YRS/36,000 MILES

COACH

EXT LENGTH: 24' 9"

EXT WIDTH: 7' 6"

EXT HEIGHT: 10' 6"

INT WIDTH: 7' 3"

INT HEIGHT: 6' 5"

CONSTRUCTION: ALUMINUM/STEEL FRAMING, FIBERGLASS SKIN AND ROOF, POLYSTYRENE BLOCK FOAM INSULATION

FRESHWATER CAP: 35 GAL

BLACK-WATER CAP: 32 GAL

GRAY-WATER CAP: 32 GAL

WATER-HEATER CAP: 6 GAL

LP-GAS CAP: 13 GAL

AIR CONDITIONER (1): 13,500 BTU

FURNACE: 20,000 BTU

REFRIGERATOR: 8 CU-FT

INVERTER/CHARGER: 300 WATT/30 AMP

BATTERY: (1) 12-VOLT CHASSIS,

(2) 12-VOLT COACH

AC GENERATOR: 3.6 KW

BASE MSRP: \$101,769

MSRP AS TESTED: \$118,842

WARRANTY: 1 YR/15,000 MILES

WET WEIGHT

(WATER AND HEATER, FUEL, LP-GAS TANKS FULL; NO SUPPLIES OR PASSENGERS)

FRONT AXLE: 3,360 LBS

REAR AXLE: 6,540 LBS

TOTAL: 9,900 LBS

CHASSIS RATINGS

GAWR, F/R: 4,410/7,720 LBS

GVWR/GCWR: 11,030/15,250 LBS

ROCCC: 1,130 LBS

(DEDUCT WEIGHT OF PASSENGERS FOR NET CARGO CAPACITY)

GAWR: GROSS AXLE WEIGHT RATING

GVWR: GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT RATING

GCWR: GROSS COMBINATION WEIGHT RATING

ROCCC: REALISTIC OCCUPANT AND CARGO CARRYING CAPACITY (FULL WATER, NO PASSENGERS)

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MONACO VESTA 32PBS

This 'downsized'
Class A may be
a harbinger of
things to come



Downsizing is a wave of the future for some motorhomers and some coach manufacturers are addressing that trend with enthusiasm. The new Monaco Vesta Class A is the company's answer to new-style motorhomes built for today's market needs.

Although this coach is by no means "downsized" — it's 32 feet long, 11 feet 7 inches tall, 8 feet wide (the standard before wide-body motorhomes became the norm) and it has a 29,000-pound gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) — Monaco has positioned it as a vehicle that's aimed at those who might want to move down a bit in size. Compared with a full 40-foot-plus coach, it definitely seems trimmer.

The Vesta model 32PBS is built on Monaco's own Roadmaster chassis, with a MaxxForce 6.4-L V-8 diesel engine and an Allison 2500MH transmission up front, air bag suspension and full air brakes.

The Navistar-built engine employs the company's Advanced EGR emission controls, which eliminate the need for the diesel emission fluid (DEF) required by most diesel-powered coaches.

All aluminum framing with polystyrene insulation and fiberglass skin, including the roof, combine in a typically durable, well-insulated package.

Its sleek fiberglass body is visually striking. The swept-back aerodynamic front end resembles the styling on some luxury automobiles. Awnings molded into roof-edges streamline those areas and enhance the clean appearance, and the body aft end tapers down and together somewhat to aid aerodynamics while adding visual appeal. Polished aluminum wheels are standard and bring a touch of class.

Side-opening exterior storage compartments abound in this coach. Out back, an especially large aft-end storage bay can swallow extra-sized sports or other hardware.

There's nothing downsized or shortcut about the interior. It's a familiar single-slideout floorplan with the for-

ward jackknife sofa bed and U-dinette in a large streetside slideout opposing the curbside galley. The walk-through bath amidships includes a curbside shower and streetside toilet and sink enclosure, and aft is the bedroom.

Motorhomers accustomed to the digs in a large Class A will be right at home in the Vesta. Every surface and feature is designed to emulate the classy feel of a high-end diesel pusher.

Up front, an automotive-like dash presents the owner with clean and functional controls and gauges. Forward visibility is good and the seating area seems comfortable for driver and passenger.

Most system monitors and controls are grouped in a panel by the front door in a handy and effective arrangement.

Power accessories include an Onan 6.0-kW diesel generator, a 1,200-watt inverter with two house batteries and a 50-amp coach distribution panel. The usual array of the latest electronic goodies are aboard or planned-for as options, such as prewiring for the optional home theater system, in-motion satellite TV, Sirius radio and portable GPS navigation system with dock.

Comfort enhancements include the dual 13,500-Btu air conditioners with optional heat pump upgrades (\$601 each), a 30,000-Btu furnace and dual pane windows for extra noise





SPECIFICATIONS

CHASSIS: MONACO ROADMASTER	INTERIOR HEIGHT: 6' 8"
ENGINE: NAVISTAR MAXXFORCE 6.4-L V-8 260 HP	WHEELBASE: 220"
FUEL: 51 GAL	FRESHWATER CAP: 50 GAL
GVWR: 29,000 LBS	GRAY-WATER CAP: 61 GAL
LENGTH: 33' 9"	BLACK-WATER CAP: 46 GAL
WIDTH: 8'	LP-GAS CAP: 16.2 GAL
HEIGHT WITH A/C: 9' 9"	BASE MSRP: \$203,850
	MSRP AS REVIEWED: \$208,852

MONACO RV

800-634-0855, WWW.MONACORV.COM.
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and thermal insulation.

From the Ultraleather furniture and Corian countertops to the tile floor and contemporary cabinetry, the interior is all upscale. Most noticeable is the Italian Sienna hardwood cabinetry with its curved surfaces. The cabinets have a quality feel about them. The curved doors and drawers are built from 11-ply-plus veneer furniture-grade plywood that's solid and durable. A curved-front kitchen counter 33-inch-wide bump-out frames an oval stainless steel sink and complements the curved-face cabinet door below. A touch of tile backsplash visually accents the galley.

While the U-shaped dinette would seat four adults, their legs would be jammed into the middle leg space. It's a better fit for two adults, and makes for plush accommodations at mealtime.

The main 32-inch LCD TV is mounted in the divider wall at the back of the living area/front of the bathroom. It would be best visible from the forward or side dinette seat or looking sideways while seated on the sofa.

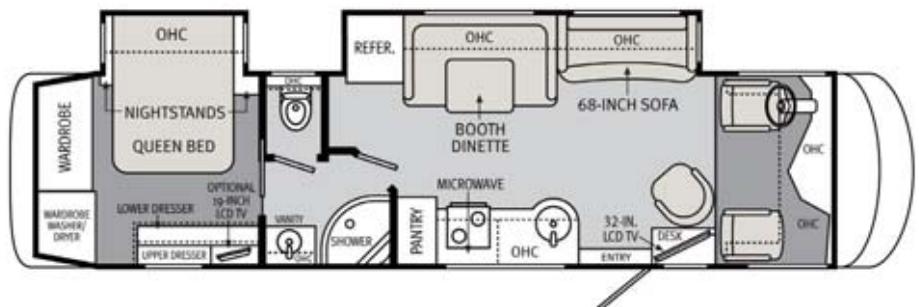
Pocket doors isolate the walk-through bath for overall privacy or to separate it as a suite with the master bedroom. Backsplash tile and a Corian counter are part of the vanity sink and cabinet in the toilet enclosure and the faucet is a modern single-handle fixture.

A china toilet with hand sprayer and single-piece fiberglass shower surround are standard model 32PBS features.

Out back, the no-slideout bedroom has enough space to handle most of one's sleeping and dressing needs. Maneuvering around the end and sides of the bed is par for the course. The curved-face shirt closets (the only hanging-clothes space in the entire coach) and overhead cabinets are complemented by the slick wood accent ceiling trim

that houses a brace of lights. Extra reading lights with no-burned-fingers adjustment handles are well-placed above the head of the bed, and flanking nightstands corral those bedside necessities.

A ream of desirable features and smart design add up to an interesting new front-engine-diesel motorhome. The Vesta seems like a smart addition to the traditional Monaco motorhome lineup for those who seek something a bit different in a Class A coach. ♦



LADDER MOUNTING PIN REPLACEMENT ▼



▲ SEWER LINE SINKER

I have an idea for keeping the sewer hose from jumping out of the drainpipe. Use a horseshoe or two over the hose or the 90-degree hose fitting. It works like a champ.

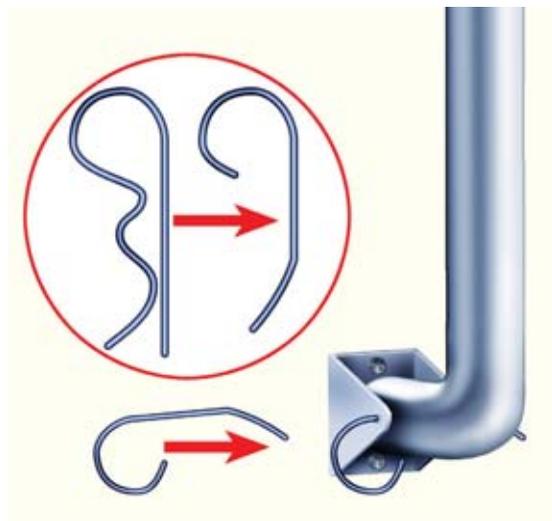
THOMAS MILOWSKI | ANTIOCH, ILL.

Many motorhome ladders must be able to disconnect the lower base from the ladder body mounts so there is access to the door panel of the engine compartment. The ladder base is connected to the motorhome body mounts by removable pins.

When these pins need to be replaced they can be obtained from the manufacturer; however, in many cases the pins rust and are very expensive. I have found that readily available hitch pin clips can be used as a replacement. They are made of hard strength aluminum and will not rust. You can buy these hitch pin clips at any hardware store for about 50 cents.

To make the hitch pin clips fit, first cut 2 inches from the bottom of the clip and then make a cut at the end of the loop. Next, measure 1½ inch along the bottom of the clip and bend it at a 45-degree angle. The pressure created by the snug fit will prevent the pin from falling out.

ALEXANDER ALFIER | MIDDLETOWN, N.J.



CAT COMFORT STATION

One problem with traveling in a motorhome with a cat is what to do with the cat box — both while driving and then when camping. We simply put a cat door through to the storage area under one of the bench seats and the cat's litter box fits great! There's no smell and the cat can do its business in private. Don't know if she needs it or not, but we even installed a motion-sensor light in there so she can see.

JEFF AND BUNNY BUTELO | CERRITOS, CALIF.



HANDY HELPER

I've found that a grab bar in the motorhome's bathroom helps to lift your body out of tight places, such as the toilet closet. I purchased a small grab bar from Home Depot and installed it across from the toilet at a height that can easily be reached for pulling up my body weight.

DEE EARL VADEN | PAHRUMP, NEV. ♦

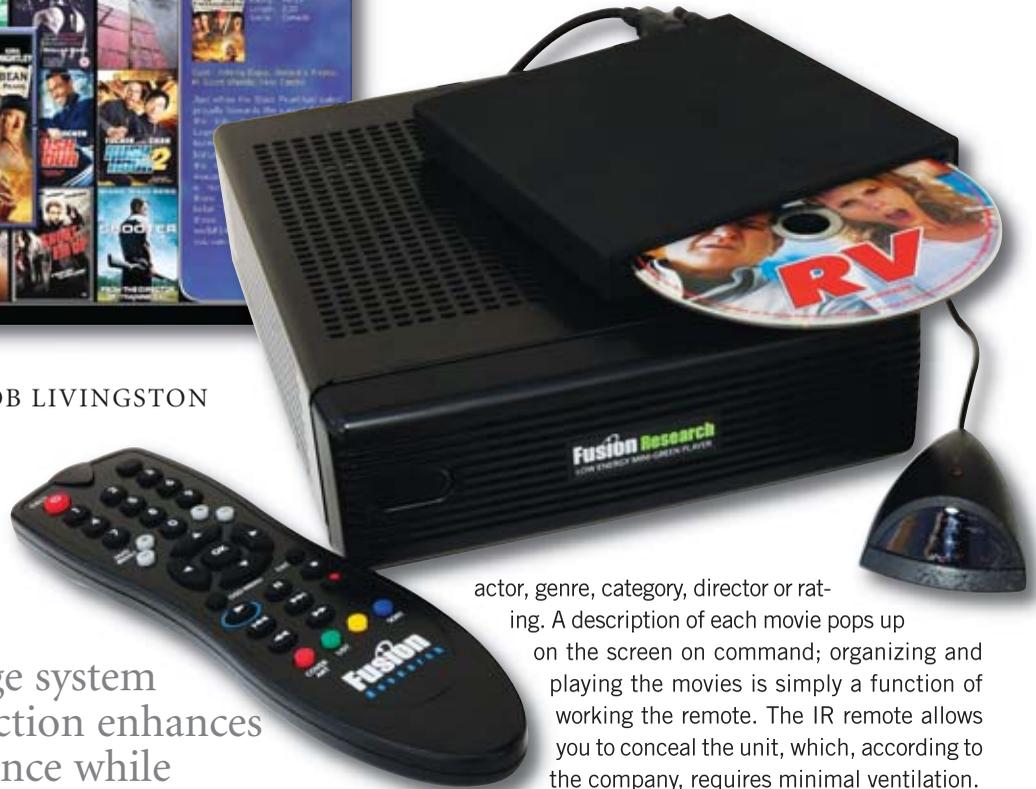
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Quick Tips, MotorHome's monthly column of useful, handy and simple tips by fellow RVers, is looking for submissions. Please send your favorite do-it-yourself ideas to: MotorHome Quick Tips, 2575 Vista Del Mar Drive, Ventura, CA 93001, or e-mail info@motorhomemagazine.com. Be sure to include any photos, illustrations or drawings, if necessary. If your tip is selected for publication, you'll receive \$35.

ILLUSTRATIONS: BILL TIPTON

techsavvy

HANDS-ON | HOT LINE | COACH & POWERTRAIN



HANDS-ON | by BOB LIVINGSTON

MOBILE MOVIE SERVER

Fusion Research's DVD movie storage system for your film collection enhances the theater experience while on the road or at home

Entertainment systems in motorhomes are becoming as common as kitchens. Lightweight, energy-efficient electronics make it possible to have audio and visual components that rival any stationary home. If you're a movie buff, storing stacks of DVDs is as important as the daily staples. Fusion Research's Rocket Movie Server empties the shelves but gives you access to hundreds of movies — in a package that measures only 2½ by 7½ by 9 inches and weighs only 5 pounds.

Although the Rocket Movie Server is specifically designed for RVs, it takes its technology from big brother systems the company supplies to the high-end home-theater crowd. These systems sell upward of \$10,000; the Rocket Movie Server retails for \$1,495 and gives the user the same features and picture quality. The unit supports 720p, 1080i and 1080p video resolutions, which covers later-model LCD, plasma and LED TVs. Dolby Digital, DTS and analog-stereo audio formats are also supported.

The server is primarily a storage device. The base unit can store up to 150 movies and external 2TB hard drives (\$295) can be connected that add an additional 300 movies. Once the movies are loaded, you have total control over the titles and can filter by

actor, genre, category, director or rating. A description of each movie pops up on the screen on command; organizing and playing the movies is simply a function of working the remote. The IR remote allows you to conceal the unit, which, according to the company, requires minimal ventilation.

Hookup to the TV is straightforward. The most common method is to use the HDMI connections, which makes the hookup a one-cable process. If you only have component cables, a converter box (\$150) can be used to connect to the HDMI terminal in the server.

Since the device is a server, movies will have to be loaded. The process is simple, but requires a connection to the Internet. An external disc reader plugged into the server is used to load movies. All you do is insert the movie into the reader, the company's huge database is then accessed before movies are automatically loaded onto the system. It took 25 minutes to complete a typical 99-minute movie upload. Blu-ray movies can be loaded, but they severely limit storage capacity.

There's not much setup after connecting the server to the TV. After you've framed the screen using the remote on a compatible TV, it's ready to go. Playback quality is superb, taking full advantage of your particular TV's HD video capabilities. The server requires only 18 watts of 120-volt AC power to operate.

Fusion's Rocket Movie Server adds a whole new dimension to collecting and watching movies in a motorhome, and can easily be moved to the house when your coach is sidelined.

Fusion Research, 925-217-1233, www.fusionrd.com. ♦

PHOTOS: BOB LIVINGSTON



Refrigerator Replacement Request

AFTER A READER DROPPED OFF HER MOTORHOME FOR EXTENSIVE WORK AT A SERVICE CENTER — AND LEFT FOOD IN THE RV'S REFRIGERATOR — SHE THOUGHT THE REPAIR CENTER SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESULTING DAMAGE. SHE EXPLAINED:

We are full-time RVers. We took our Tiffin Phaeton to Bretz RV & Marine in Missoula, Mont., to get some work done on our motorhome that would take a couple of weeks.

The people at Bretz RV thought we would be living in the coach during repairs, but we decided to visit friends so that the work could get done faster. A couple of days after we dropped off the rig, I remembered there was some food left in the refrigerator. I called the service advisor at Bretz and he said he would make sure the RV was plugged in to electric. A couple of days later I called to make sure he did it. Well, he forgot and said he would take care of it as soon as we got off the phone.

After two weeks had passed and all the work was completed, we picked up the motorhome. As soon as we walked in, we could smell the odor. Our next mistake was to just leave. When we got home, we cleaned the mess in the refrigerator, which included mold growing on the walls.

I have done everything I can to remove the smell. Someone at Bretz told me I need a new refrigerator and that they are not responsible. I think Bretz should replace my refrigerator. Any assistance that you can provide in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

KATHY HANSEN
SANTA ROSA, CALIF.

We contacted Bretz RV & Marine on Hansen's behalf. Soon afterward we received a copy of the company's service statement along with the following letter:

This is in response to the letter from Kathy Hansen. At any given time, our service department has hundreds of RVs on our lot. We absolutely do not have the resources available to monitor personal belongings in each of them.

We have a policy posted at each of the stations on the service counter that reads: "We will not be responsible for valuables or perishable items in your RV while in for service or storage. We cannot guarantee that your refrigerator will remain cold. We do not have the ability to monitor your refrigerator or keep your vehicle plugged in." Hansen read this sign and requested that her service writer make an exception for her and keep an eye on her refrigerator. She was told upfront that we could plug it in while in the shop, but absolutely could not monitor her refrigerator after it was parked outside. The service adviser told her that the food should be removed.

I have been in contact with Hansen and I am willing to work with her on getting a replacement refrigerator for the best price possible; however, we will not replace the refrigerator at our expense. I am sympathetic to Hansen's situation, but ultimately she is responsible to remove the food from her refrigerator.

BRANDON BRETZ
BRETZ RV & MARINE
MISSOULA, MONT.

EXTENDED FRUSTRATION

Unhappy with the way they had been treated by their extended service provider, two readers asked for help on their behalf. They wrote:

In 2007, we purchased an extended warranty through American Guardian Warranty Services Inc. During our travels last summer we had a problem with the main slide while we were at an RV park. We called American Guardian to request preauthorization for a mobile repair unit to make the repair. We were told that we would have to pay for the repair and then file a claim. We had the slide repaired, paid the mobile unit

\$246.70 and then filed the claim.

Sometime later, we received a denial letter from American Guardian stating that we did not receive prior authorization for the repair, and that American Guardian does not accept independent mobile service repairs.

We sent a rebuttal to the company explaining that we had spoken to five people at American Guardian in order to get the required preauthorization. In addition, we were confident that if we had tried to retract the slide in order to drive it to a repair facility, that would have caused more damage. A mobile repair unit was the most prudent choice.

American Guardian then sent us a letter denying our second request "because the failed items were rivets and not the slideout rail and seal, and fasteners are listed as excluded."

We believe the repair should be covered by our American Guardian warranty, less the \$50 deductible.

ROBERT AND PATRICIA WELSH
BEND, ORE.

To help the Welshes resolve their problem, we contacted American Guardian, which provided the following reply:

Our records show that Mr. Welsh reported a claim for a slideout weather seal rail that had become loose due to improperly secured rivets. After speaking to the repairer our claim agent determined that the rivets were fasteners and they were declined under the exclusions stated in the terms and conditions of the service contract.

In order to provide the consumer with some satisfaction, I have authorized the issuance of a check for \$246.70 as goodwill for the amount they paid for the disputed repair.

JOHN WENDT | CLAIMS DIRECTOR
AMERICAN GUARDIAN WARRANTY SERVICES INC.
GLEN ELLYN, ILL. ♦

TO CONTRIBUTE TO HOT LINE, please refer to Contact MotorHome, on page 12.

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Ethanol in Gasoline

We own a 1975 Argosy motorhome with a GM 454 engine and 78,000 miles. What effect does ethanol gas have on the engine? Are there any additives that I should add? The motorhome is an oldie but a goodie. Thanks for your help.

C.E. JOHNSON | DALLAS

Up to 10 percent ethanol by volume is currently added in the U.S. The Environmental Protection Agency has approved an increase to 15 percent, but 10 percent blends would still be available for older vehicles. Ethanol contains considerably less energy per gallon than gasoline, and contains oxygen, which tends to make engines run leaner than on straight gasoline. In some cases this reduces harmful emissions. However, older carbureted engines such as yours (which don't have oxygen sensors and can't adjust their fuel mixtures to compensate) tend to run hotter on the lean mixtures. This can lead to problems with exhaust valves and other engine components. Fuel pumps, hoses and other fuel-system parts in older vehicles not designed for it also have problems with reformulated fuels.

Reformulated fuels seem to deteriorate considerably faster than pure gasoline and clog jets when left for months in storage. There are also problems with phase separation when excess moisture gets in the fuel tank. Unfortunately, once ethanol has been added, there's no practical way to take it out. There are some products designed to help owners cope with these problems, including those made by Starbrite, 800-327-8583, <http://mystarbright.com/startron/content/view/119>.

MILEAGE CONCERNS

I am planning to buy a Class C motorhome. With the price of fuel going sky-high, I'm looking for a comprehensive

place to study fuel mileage for various brands so I don't have to e-mail 15 manufacturers with the question. Do I go to the Ford or Chevy site and add 3,000 pounds for the weight of the RV? I will go with a tent if I can't get the information without a lot of hassle.

PAULA WESTON | ALLIANCE, OHIO

The EPA requires manufacturers of lighter vehicles to provide estimated city and highway mileage figures. However, it doesn't require heavier vehicles such as motorhomes to have mileage test results. Fortunately, MotorHome magazine does list mileage results in its tests, so you can review them here.

ENGINE QUITS

I have a 6.8-L V-10 engine in my 2007 Coachmen Concord Class C motorhome on a Ford E-450 chassis. When pulling long grades, when RPM reaches 4,500 and higher for a sustained time the engine will shut down without any warning.

There is no hesitation or sputter and the CHECK ENGINE light does not come on. I will wait 5 to 10 minutes and the engine will start up and run fine until next time. I have replaced the in-tank fuel filter and fuel pump, but it didn't help. I replaced the in-line fuel filter too.

A Ford dealer checked out the problem and told me that because the CHECK ENGINE light did not come on he was unable to get a problem code. He also said it will be very difficult to find the problem. I asked some of my mechanic friends about it and they think it might be a heat problem in the main computer.

**DAN DOUGHERTY
KELSEYVILLE, CALIF.**

Intermittent problems are the most difficult to find. It could be an electrical component in fuel or ignition systems, including the computer, that quits when it gets hot. Have the dealer leave a "flight recorder" plugged into the diagnostic port while you drive to capture the malfunction.

DIESEL WON'T START IN COLD WEATHER

My 2009 Itasca Navion with a Mercedes-Benz diesel engine has had very little usage for the past year. But I do try to start and run the engine every month or so. Today it would not start, but we have had below-freezing temperatures. Should I connect the Battery Tender, should I remove the battery and bring it inside to warm up, or something else? I have not checked the house batteries.

**WALTER LENSKOLD
TOMS RIVER, N.J.**

The colder it gets, the less power a battery is able to provide, even if it is fully charged. The Battery Tender should be connected. Batteries permanently lose capacity if they are left in a partially discharged condition, and can freeze and be ruined if they are left deeply discharged.

Whenever this happens, your best bet is to take the batteries indoors, warm them up and give them a full charge. When the weather warms up, perhaps around noon on a sunny day, it's the best time to try firing it up again.

REFORMULATED FUELS SEEM TO DETERIORATE CONSIDERABLY FASTER THAN PURE GASOLINE AND CLOG JETS WHEN LEFT FOR MONTHS IN STORAGE. THERE ARE ALSO PROBLEMS WITH PHASE SEPARATION WHEN EXCESS MOISTURE GETS IN THE FUEL TANK.

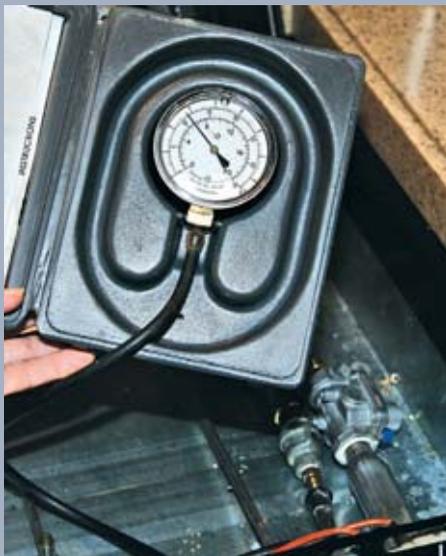


PERFORMANCE OF OUR MOTORHOME REFRIGERATOR MAY SEEM LARGELY BEYOND OUR CONTROL, OTHER THAN SETTING THE DESIRED TEMPERATURE. IN FACT, WE CAN INFLUENCE SEVERAL FACTORS THAT DETERMINE HOW WELL THE UNIT FUNCTIONS.



The ability of absorption refrigerators to keep food in the proper zone may be questionable in hot weather. The Department of Agriculture states that foods stored in a refrigerator should not exceed 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperature monitoring is needed, along with a refrigerator that's in good working order.

Most motorhome refrigerators have no moving parts and operate on the absorption principle in which heat (an LP-gas burner or an electrical heating element) is used to circulate ammonia and hydrogen gas under high pressure through a system of pipes that extract heat from the inside of the refrigerator and release it into the air. Using heat to create refrigeration may appear to be a conflict in terms, but it works — and the principle has been honed to a high level of sophistication by Dometic and Norcold.



The first item in a refrigerator performance/maintenance checklist is LP-gas pressure, which is critical to peak performance while operating on the GAS setting. Pressure should be 11 inches of water column, which translates to about 0.5 PSI. It should be checked by a qualified service technician.

A motorhome must be reasonably level for the refrigerator to operate properly while parked (not an issue when traveling). Norcold specifies that the unit must not be off-level more than 3 degrees side to side and 6 degrees front to back, specifying that operation beyond those limits could cause damage to the cooling unit. Dometic is more general, stating that the unit should be level enough to be “comfortable to live in.” Using a bubble level indicator on the floor of the freezer, level the coach so at least half the bubble is inside the circle.



Also, check for effective door seal.

In hot weather, ventilation of the cooling unit (accessed via an exterior removable panel) is an important key to adequate refrigerator performance. Check for any obstructions such as insect nests behind the refrigerator as well as inside the burner



area. Add a thermostatically controlled fan (available at RV supply stores) to move more air across the cooling unit if subpar performance is chronic.

Inside the refrigerator, overstuffing restricts airflow and is a common cause of poor performance. Allow at least a little space between food items, especially in the back of the unit.

In hot weather, it's important to activate the refrigerator several hours before loading for a trip, and to refrigerate items before loading.

Excessive frost on walls inside the freezer (especially near an icemaker) and on the heat exchanger fins at the top of the refrigeration compartment can reduce performance. Turn the unit off, move food to an ice chest temporarily and defrost the unit using a pan of warm water positioned where heavy frost exists.

A good source of 12-volt DC power is necessary to operate refrigerator controls, and when voltage drops lower than 10.5 volts, refrigeration will cease. If the refrigerator operates properly on one source of heat but not another, for example it operates on electricity but not on gas, the problem is the heat source, not the cooling unit.

With proper care, RV refrigerators are known to last for decades, and the tips featured here will help you get the best performance from your unit. ♦

Diesels can be hard to start in cold weather; consider adding a block heater.

BUSTED BLOWER MOTOR

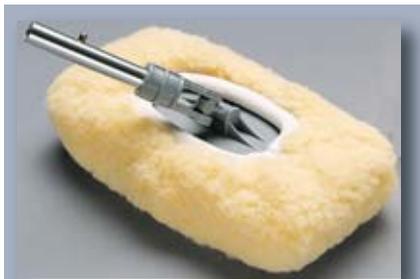
I have a 1996 Winnebago Adventurer Class A motorhome on a Ford chassis with a 7.5-L V-8 engine. All of a sudden the dash air-conditioner blower quit working. I have checked the fuse box and all the fuses are good. Is there a hidden fuse that I missed? Or is it even fused? The owner's manual tells me nothing.

DON GREGORY | CHICAGO

There should be a fuse for it in the panel. There is also a resistor for all but the highest speed. If that goes bad, the blower still will work on HIGH. Usually when the blowers quit altogether and the fuse is good, the motor is done. They are standard Ford parts, easy to get at dealers and through the aftermarket. Before buying a new one, try running a 12-volt DC lead directly to the motor's power wire to see if it runs that way.

UNUSUAL SOUND

I own a 2000 Coachmen Mirada 30QB



FLEXIBLE CLEANING COMBO

Trying to clean the hard-to-reach areas of a motorhome can be frustrating. But you can eliminate that frustration with Shurhold's flexible and soft washing tool, the Swivel Pad Combo. Part of Shurhold's exclusive One-Handle-Does-It-All System, this adaptable combo includes a swivel pad base and synthetic lamb's wool cover. The swivel pad's free-floating design follows contoured surfaces and fits into narrow spaces; and the pad adapter attaches to any of Shurhold's telescoping or fixed-length handles. Shurhold Industries, 800-962-6241, www.shurhold.com/rv.

Class A motorhome with 13,000 miles. It has a "wa-wa-wa" sound that increases with speed, until it is a constant rumble at highway speeds. The driveline and joints are tight, the front end is solid and there's no change with brake pedal pressure. Do you have any suggestions?

VAN EMERSON | POCATELLO, IDAHO

I looked in my manuals, and all I can find is "doo-wop-wop" and "wa-wa-baby." Seriously, sounds are difficult to diagnose when you can hear them and almost impossible when you can't. You didn't mention if the sound has always been evident or just started one day. If the sound varies directly with engine RPM, I'd suspect an exhaust resonance. If the sound varies directly with road speed, I'd suspect a differential noise. Have an assistant drive past while you crouch down on the edge of the road and listen. You should be able to tell what area it's coming from — front, rear or middle. Also, have a shop run the motorhome in gear while it's on a lift with the axles supported in a normal position but wheels off the ground.

CONDENSATION AND MOLD

I own a 2007 Fleetwood Tioga 26Q Class C motorhome and have a problem with condensation and mold. The condensation buildup is underneath the overhead bed mattress. There is so much humidity under the mat that a lot of mold has grown. How can I get rid of the condensation during storage and especially the mold?

EDGAR LOPEZ | LONG BEACH, CALIF.

Long Beach is an ocean-side community and gets a lot of fog and moisture. If you are storing it near the beach, it would be better if you could move it more inland if at all possible. Mold can be killed with bleach and other chemicals. However, you may have to hire a mold remediation company if it's very bad. Then, the key is ventilation. Consider adding a small fan in a roof vent that keeps out rain (such as Maxxair) powered by a small solar panel.

Even though you're in balmy Southern California, it may also help to add heat to your motorhome's interior. The apparatus doesn't need to be huge; in fact, you can set up a couple of sockets and 100-watt bulbs that sit on the coach floor, powered

when the coach is plugged in to shorepower, and these bulbs will produce enough heat to help keep the moisture and mold at bay, long term. Pull back the mattress, since this seems to be the spot most affected.

SHORTSTOP FAULT

I've had a problem with my motorhome's slideouts. When I push the slide switch, the slideout starts to move, then it gets "tired." After a pause, I'll push the switch and it continues. It takes several pauses for the action to complete. This struck me as a problem with the transfer of the battery's energy.

I bought a multistage charger, and it showed the battery to be at about 100 percent. I then tried to troubleshoot by bypassing the house electrical system. When I disconnected the house 12-volt and ground from the slide motor and ran a jumper cable to the slide motor from my engine-starting battery, everything worked fine. Then I disconnected the battery and slide motor from the house 12-volt system and tied them together. Again, everything worked fine. I wondered if something in the house 12-volt system was loading down the battery.

I narrowed it down to a sort of connecting block on the metal side of the front battery compartment. There are two of these "shortstop" blocks and each has two terminal posts for attaching leads from the 12-volt system. What I found is that by removing the slide motor 12-volt lead from one side of one of the blocks, and double jumping the other binding post with the battery and slide motor leads, everything worked OK.

What's the purpose of these blocks? Does it sound like a high resistance open between the halves of the binding posts on the shortstop device? Is there any danger in bypassing the arrangement as I have done?

RANDY SEEBECK | KANSAS CITY, MO.

They are Bussman Short Stop Circuit Breakers installed to protect the circuit. If the slideout mechanism binds, current draw will go up and pop them. Your system may have tripped them with a heavy load. You are experiencing voltage drop, not something "loading down" the battery. If you leave the engine running, the higher charging voltage should make it work. If the circuit breakers have high voltage drops through them, do not remove them

from the circuit; replace them. You may need to run heavier wire and/or clean connections to reduce voltage drops.

FOGGY FLAIR HEADLIGHTS: VOLTAGE

I had a problem similar to the one described by Marilyn Freitas in "Foggy Flair Headlights" (December 2010). When I measured the voltage on the headlights, it was quite low even while revving the engine. I ran a heavy wire from a good voltage point through a relay (controlled by the original wire to the lights) directly to the lights, thereby bypassing the light switch and any other voltage drops.

JOHN KOVAL | SANTA ANA, CALIF.

As long as the plastic headlight covers aren't "frosted" from oxidation or "foggy," this is a good place to start. If voltage is too low, it must be corrected.

KEEPING RODENTS OUT

The subject of mice in motorhomes is a recurring topic and there are many suggestions for keeping them at bay. However, the root of the problem is seldom addressed, namely how do they get in? Just look under your coach. There are lots of unsealed openings in the underbelly that provide ways for rodents to access the cavities between the underbelly and the interior floor, and from there through openings in the floor and other areas into the coach's interior.

The solution is to seal the openings permanently with expanding spray foam and perhaps some steel wool. Most holes can be sealed with just a bit of foam. If the hole is large, loosely insert some steel wool and then add spray foam into the steel wool. No rodent will chew through this. Small scraps of plastic sheeting can be pressed over the foam to control its positioning. The foam will harden and permanently seal the openings but still allow access for service. Cured foam should be painted if it is exposed to UV light.

NORMAN DUST | ST. ALBERT, ALBERTA

Thanks for writing with this potential solution for a problem many owners have with rodents getting into their motorhomes. ♦

TO CONTRIBUTE TO COACH & POWER-TRAIN, refer to Contact MotorHome, on page 12.

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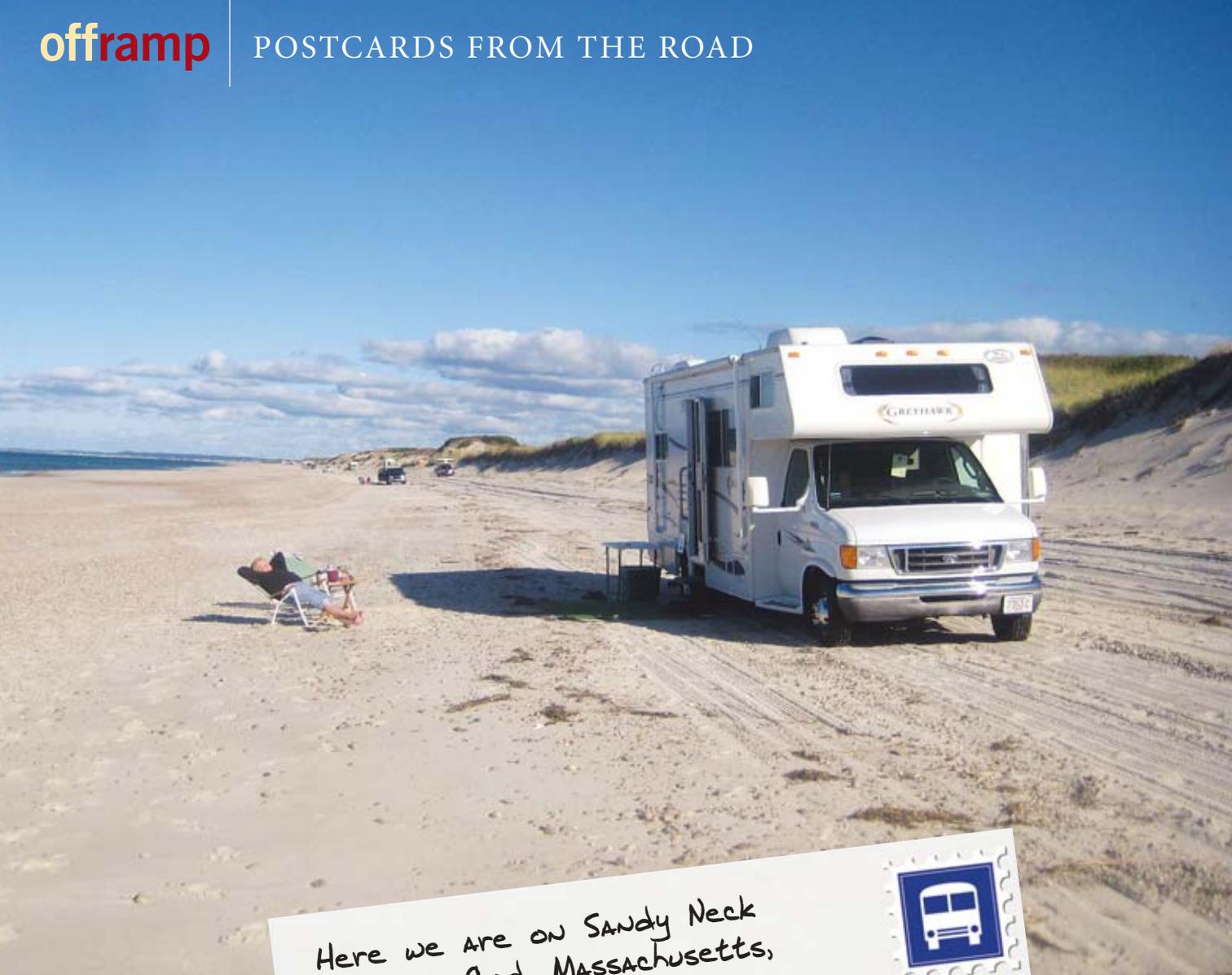
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Jerry Cahalane
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Fig. 1 Saturn



Fig. 3 Asteroid Gaspra



Fig. 5 Mercury



Fig. 7 Jupiter



Fig. 2 Neptune



Fig. 4 Phases of the Moon



Fig. 6 Mars

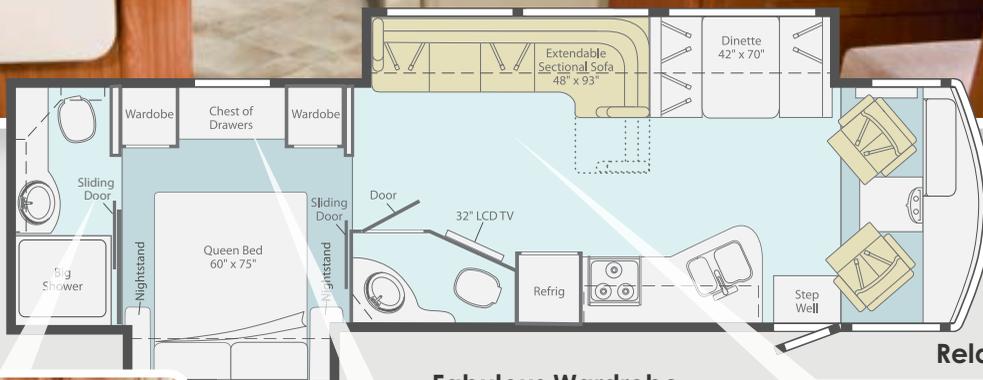
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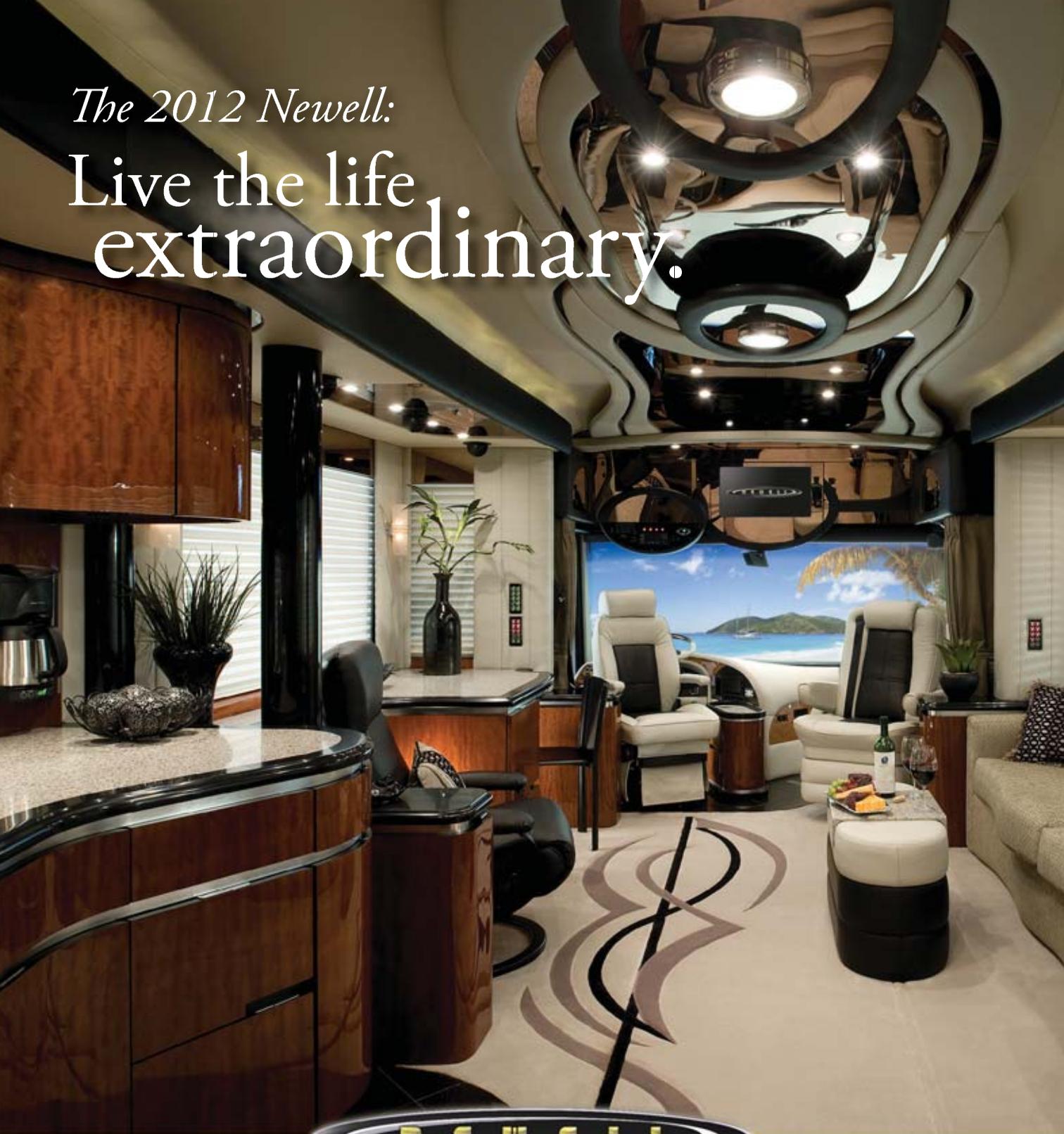
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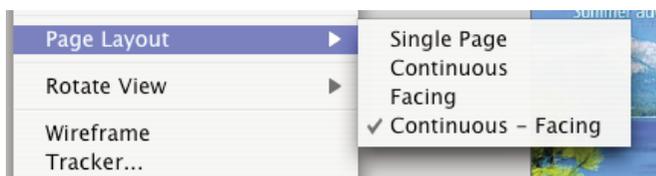


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