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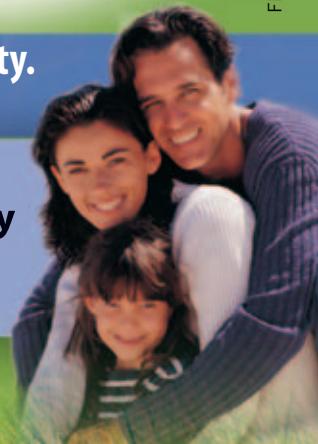


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On The Cover: Moviegoers may recognize Trona Pinnacles, near Ridgecrest, Calif., as the backdrop for Winnebago's Adventurer 37F coach (see test on page 44). Photo by Jeff Johnston.



A SPECIAL TOUR

Do you want to talk shop? Here's the deal: Every year *MotorHome* is a major sponsor of The Rally, the largest organized gathering of RVers in America. This year's festivities will be held in Louisville, Ky., July 22-25. The gigantic indoor Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center will provide complete climate control for all attendees strolling the exhibits, attending the seminars and enjoying the entertainment. And while The Rally is always exciting, this year we're adding a pre-rally program aimed at RV enthusiasts who really want to get an in-depth look at our lifestyle and industry — while socializing with others who have similar interests.

My wife, Lynne, and I are going to lead a group of RVers on a short journey into the past and present — with a little partying plugged in to enhance the experience. The plan is to meet on Friday, July 16, in Elkhart, Ind. — the heart of the RV industry. Once we get settled in at the RV park, we'll jump right into this special four-day event with a private, guided tour of an RV factory to learn firsthand how RVs are built. From there, we get to mingle with members of the Amish community and finish off the day with a fabulous — and very filling — meal prepared by people who relish the simple life and cook home-style food like you've never tasted before.

The next morning, we'll gather for coffee and head over to the RV/MH Hall of Fame Museum, strolling through an amazing display reliving the 100-year evolution of RVs. This is a tour not to be missed by RV enthusiasts — and we'll have a docent assigned to our group to give everyone detailed descriptions and plenty of insight.

We'll return to the RV park that afternoon to participate in an interactive tech and lifestyle seminar. I've asked Bill Gehr, of Bill's RV in Ventura, Calif., to join me on this tour, so we can team up to provide attendees with answers to all their questions. As you probably know,

Gehr participates in many of this magazine's technical projects on a monthly basis. He's been living and breathing RVs for more than 35 years, and he and his wife, Jenn, are full-timers.

After the afternoon session, everyone will be treated to a catered dinner in camp, followed by an evening of socializing.

On Sunday morning, we'll lounge around the park after a scrumptious breakfast, allowing attendees time to participate in worship services throughout the Elkhart community. Then it's off to the Studebaker National Museum in nearby South Bend. We'll retreat to camp that afternoon and talk some more about RVs. And, of course, we'll have dinner, followed by — you guessed it — more socializing.

Monday morning we'll break camp and head for Louisville. It's about a six-hour drive to The Rally site, so that afternoon we'll gather for a farewell party and give a preview of what's in store during the next six days at The Rally. And here's the kicker: As a participant in this special program, you'll be assigned a premium site close to all the action.

The cost for this special RV immersion tour, which includes an extra "early bird" day, is \$1,169 per rig (two people), if you're signed up for The Rally; for those not registered for The Rally, and departing on Tuesday morning, the tour price is \$1,299. For reservations, or more information, call 800-829-5140.

During the middle of July, Louisville will explode into a temporary vibrant RV city. The Rally is a wonderful destination for RV enthusiasts looking for social interaction, the chance to shop until you drop and an opportunity to expand your knowledge of this wonderful lifestyle. My pre-rally tour of Elkhart gets the fun — and learning — rolling even sooner.

I can't wait to talk shop! ♦

MOTORHOME

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“WHAT RV PARK AMENITIES ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?”

That’s the question we asked in our January issue, and here are some of the replies we received.

JUST A NICE PARK AT A REASONABLE PRICE

I agree with Sue Shiflett (“Customer Service Please,” January). My wife and I are not full-time RVers, but we are selective as to which RV parks and campgrounds we stay at. We don’t need swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses or spas — just a nice park with good sites at reasonable prices. Also, there should be optional sites for those who don’t want full hookups.

PAUL RIPLEY | ST. PAUL, MINN.

WINTER WISHES INCLUDE A SPA

In general, what I like at an RV park is having full hookups and cable TV. I can do without sewer until I leave in approximately five to six days and use my holding tanks if needed. However, when I travel south for the winter I want full everything, even a spa. I pay for it, so I might as well use it.

RON STORY | EUGENE, ORE.

EXPLORING — NOT BASKETBALL — IS HIS GAME

The amenities that I look for in RV parks are large, level sites with full hookups and cable TV. I like paved parking pads with grassy patio areas. In remote areas, laundry rooms and a general store are desirable. When I travel to a destination I am there to explore the area and culture, not to swim, play basketball, shuffleboard, etc.

ROGER BEEBE | VIA E-MAIL

FLORIDA NO LONGER ON THEIR WINTER ITINERARY

We read Sue Shiflett’s letter and thought it was interesting. While traveling through Florida last winter we also found that the RV parks were very expensive. We filled up our LP-gas tank in one RV park and it cost us \$28. The next time we took the tank to a place a couple of blocks outside the park and got it filled for \$15. We were very disappointed in the overall attitude of the people there and have decided to go elsewhere this winter.

PETER AND BARB KOSHOWSKI | DETROIT LAKES, MINN.

ROOMY SITE CLOSE TO THE GREENS

We are in our fifth year of RVing. We have a 36-foot motorhome and are enjoying it very much. The amenities we like are pull-through sites with space between campers for privacy; and close proximity to town or city for golfing. It would be nice if Texas State Parks offered a weekly or monthly rate for camping. As of now, they only offer a yearly rate. What about us “Winter Texans” who would like to stop in?

BILL AND BETTY NELSON | APPLE VALLEY, MINN.



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P.O. BOX

We contacted Texas State Parks and were told that most of its parks offer weekly and monthly rates at the park's discretion. It also offers an annual pass for park entry fees (see www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/parkin/passes).

NO WI-FI? BYE-BYE

The most important amenities to me are easily accessible utilities. Hookups should be clustered at a location about 25 feet from the front on the driver's side of the RV site. The electrical socket should be about 4 feet off the ground, where it would be easily accessible and not located inside an enclosure with a lid that drops down and injures the user. RV park designers need to recognize their clientele, for the most part, are senior adults.

The second amenity I want is a Wi-Fi connection and I mean one that works inside my coach. There are so many RV parks that do this right; it's amazing how many can't get it right. I return to parks with good Wi-Fi and drive right by parks that don't.

COURT WARREN | VIA E-MAIL

WIDE BUT NO WI-FI

I travel with my spouse, no animals or kids; and we are both near 70. Swimming pools are not high on our list of desired amenities. Neither are dog runs or playgrounds. What do we want? For stopovers we want a level site that's long enough so we can leave the truck we tow attached overnight. That means we need a 70-foot pull-through site. We want a site wide enough for our slide-outs. We want a site that we can drive to and exit from without hitting overhanging limbs. We want a hard surface. We want hookups that work. We used to look for campgrounds with Wi-Fi but learned that getting a signal in parks with so-called Wi-Fi was a challenge. We now have a phone card and get access wherever we go.

ERNIE MAIER | VIA E-MAIL

WHO'S WATCHING THE ROAD?

I just finished reading the January edition of *MotorHome*. I love the magazine; I can't wait to get my copy every month. However, on Page 37 you have a picture of a man driving down the road with a dashboard full of toys ("Total Vision Pan & Tilt Backup Camera").

This man has so many distractions in front of him, I wonder who is watching the

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P.O. BOX

road? I wouldn't want to be driving in front or behind him. Don't you think there would be a better way to present this?

LES LLOYD | VIA E-MAIL

We received several letters such as yours, Les, raising safety concerns regarding this photograph. The photo was taken in a motorhome parked on a driveway and the open laptop was used for pre-trip planning only, not while driving on the road. The caption should have made this clear. MotorHome regrets the misunderstanding.

RESORT LIVING ISN'T BIG IN TEXAS

We are from Texas and we want to know why there aren't more developers in our state putting in "grand RV resort communities" like they have in Florida, Arizona and other states. Florida has many adult-only RV parks that have grand homes that you can park your motorhome next to, or midpriced homes with an RV parking garage or cover. Many sites come with casitas, where you can entertain friends or spend the day and then go to the motorhome for sleeping. Most

of these resorts also have clubhouses, pools, fitness centers, etc.

Most of them seem to be on the two coasts (Florida and California). What are we here in Texas? Chopped liver? I'd like to see some spring up in Texas, away from the big cities but close enough for convenience. I think these would go over very well along the Texas coast, San Antonio area or elsewhere.

We love Texas and are retired here. We don't want to move to another state. If developers knew about the snowbirds we have here as far north as San Antonio, I think they would flock here. We are ready to buy, but not where they are putting them!

**HANK AND SHIRLEEN SMITH
SAN ANTONIO**

Question:

Which states do you think need more RV resort communities and why?

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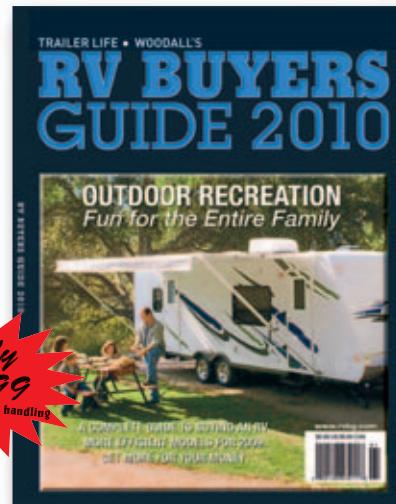
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escapes

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EVENTS | WHEELS & GEAR | NEWS BRIEFS | CROSSROADS

A PEAK AT HISTORY

PICACHO STATE PARK'S PAST IS AS TALL AS ITS MOUNTAIN

Travelers in prehistoric times used it as a landmark. The Forty-Niners passed it on their way to California in search of gold. In 1862, a Civil War skirmish took place near it.

With its storied past, Picacho Peak in southern Arizona remains a distinctive landmark today and its state park is a popular spot for RVers.

Sometimes mistaken for a volcanic cone, the 1,500-foot Picacho Peak in Picacho Peak State Park can't be missed while traveling on Interstate 10 between Tucson and Phoenix.

The state park's campground has 85 sites available on a first-come-first-serve basis. The fairly level sites are set amid a natural Sonoran Desert setting. Park facilities include a visitor center and gift shop, playground, historical markers, grills, a dump station, restrooms and showers. Visitors using the park's hiking trails are urged to carry water and have proper footwear, as the trails can be steep and challenging.

Area attractions include the Rooster Cogburn Ostrich Ranch (where you can get a close look at and hand-feed the creatures); Skydive Arizona (which also includes a state-of-the-art simulator); Casa Grande Ruins National Monument; and Old Tucson Studios, a Western movie set and family fun park.

In the spring the area is blanketed in the vivid color of Mexican gold poppies, and April's mild climate of 85 degrees during the day and 53 degrees at night makes it a delightful time to visit.

At press time, the Arizona State Parks Board voted to close 13 state parks, including Picacho, because of funding cuts. Its closing is set for June 3, so don't delay if you plan to visit.

For more information, go to <http://azstateparks.com/Parks/PIPE/index.html>. — *Patricia Marroquin*





PHOTO: SARASOTA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

APR. 9-11 | Millions of shark teeth wash up on the shores of Venice, Fla. (but hopefully Jaws stays in the water), inspiring the annual **Shark's Tooth Festival**. Fossil collectors and artists gather to display and sell shark teeth and other prehistoric fossils, while food vendors serve up everything from seafood to barbecue.

RV SHOWS

APR. 2-4

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APR. 8-11

5th Annual Pomona RV and Travel Show
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APR. 9-11

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APR. 9-11

Kitchener RV Show
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APR. 29-MAY 2

Puyallup Home and RV Show
Puyallup, Wash.;
206-719-1277

Live entertainment is on stage throughout the festival and there are fun events for children. All proceeds benefit Special Olympics of Sarasota County; 941-412-0402, www.sharkstoothfest.com.

APR. 15-18, 22-25 | There are few foods more Southern than catfish, and it will be served up in a variety of ways at the 18th annual **Mississippi Coast Coliseum Crawfish Festival** in Biloxi, Miss. This popular festival (held on two consecutive weekends) includes appetizing food, exciting rides, challenging games and one-of-a-kind vendors, and has been recognized by the Southeast Tourism Society as one of the top 20 events in the Southeast; 800-726-2781, www.mscoastcoliseum.com.

APR. 16-18 | Your nose will lead you to the **Pork in the Park BBQ Festival** in Salisbury, Md., where more than 100 barbecue teams will compete to create sizzling grilled dishes, for the competition itself and for spectators to enjoy, in addition to the classic festival-style food that will be available. This three-day event features blues and Southern rock music, regional craftsmen and artists displaying their wares, and a classic car show. The kids even get their own separate area complete with rides and amusements; 800-332-8687, www.porkinthepark.org.

APR. 18 | Seize the opportunity to learn more about the planet we sometimes take for granted at **Earth Day** at

APR. 16-18

Enjoy the beauty of spring while learning about Seattle's rich cultural history and diversity at the **Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival**, which commemorates Japan's gift of 1,000 blossoming cherry trees to Seattle in 1976. With the resounding booms of taiko drums, mouthwatering Japanese food, tea ceremony demonstrations and artwork, this free event is a feast for the senses. The trees were planted along Lake Washington Boulevard, in Seward Park and other places around the city; 206-723-2003.



PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA/JOE MABEL (LEFT); SEATTLE CENTER

Lake Metroparks Farmpark in Kirtland, Ohio. The outdoor fun includes a bicycle jumping and safety show from an internationally recognized team, the opportunity to challenge others to a rousing game of "corn hole" or "Wild Wetland Bingo," and plenty of kids' activities. Discover ways you can help protect the environment through presentations by modern farmers, renewable energy companies and more; 800-366-3276, www.lake-metroparks.com.

APR. 23-24 | If telling stories around a campfire is your idea of a good time, you'll definitely want to check out Montana's only storytelling festival, the 16th annual **Montana Storytelling Roundup** in Cut Bank, Mont. Professional storytellers, humorists, cowboy and cowgirl poets, musicians and singers will be demonstrating the many ways in which a story

can be told, including ghost stories, folk music, American Indian storytelling and cowboy poetry. Camping is available near this family-friendly event; 406-336-3253.



APR. 23-25 | Going over your bird-watching guidelines is a great way to get ready for the more than 300 species of birds you could see at the **Kansas Birding Festival** in Wakefield, Kan. This area is rich in birding opportunities during late April, as there are many native birds that inhabit the area year-round, and it is also the prime season for birds to migrate; 785-238-4161, www.kansasbirdingfestival.org.



BIG POWER IN A SMALL PACKAGE

Keeping the inside of your home-on-wheels clean may not be the most enjoyable activity you do on your travels, but a corded hand vacuum from Bissell will certainly make the necessary task easier.

Bissell's bagless Auto-Mate is compact, taking up little space in your coach. We found that the 4 amps of 120-volt AC power really packed a punch. The hand vacuum's strong suction easily and quickly consumes tracked-in dirt and debris, dry spills and pet hair.

The Auto-Mate's 18-foot power cord enables you to clean a wide area. The versatile accessories consist of a flexible rubber nozzle that works great on upholstery and picking up pet hair; and a hose that attaches to one of two tools: a crevice tool for small spaces and between cushions; and a wide-mouth tool handy for cleaning underneath seats and inside storage areas. Our favorite attachment is the wide-mouth tool. In a test, the powerful suction did a thorough, fast job of picking up dirt and dog hair from a carpet runner.

While the Auto-Mate sports a handy, curved handle, those with carpal tunnel, arthritis or other problems of the hand could find gripping the device for extended periods of time while using the flexible rubber nozzle difficult. But fortunately, because the Auto-Mate makes quick work of dirty jobs, you won't be spending a lot of time using it.

Besides being compact in size, the Bissell Auto-Mate is also compact in price. It retails for \$39.99 and is available at major retailers such as Target and Best Buy.

Bissell Inc., 800-237-7691, www.bissell.com. — *Patricia Marroquin*



WIRELESS TIRE MONITORING

Minder Research Inc. has introduced two wireless systems to monitor tire pressure.

The TMG400C and TMG500HD TPMS systems for motorhomes are designed to continuously monitor tire pressure and temperature, and offer both visual and audible warnings if a tire's pressure drops or if tire temperature exceeds 167 degrees Fahrenheit (a blowout warning). Drivers can easily monitor the motorhome and dinghy tires.



According to the company, the TMG400C has a pressure range of 0 to 145 PSI and includes four screw-on pressure/temperature transmitters with replaceable lithium batteries (eight are included). The TMG500HD is said to have a pressure range of 0 to 233 PSI, and includes six permanently sealed screw-on transmitters with a five-year minimum life expectancy.

Both systems include an easy-to-read monitor; heavy-duty, multi-angle bracket; transmitters; 12/24-volt car charger; anti-theft locks; and a one-year warranty.

The TMG400C (with four transmitters) sells for \$299; and the TMG500HD (with six transmitters) retails for \$599.

Minder Research Inc., 772-463-6522, www.minderresearch.com.

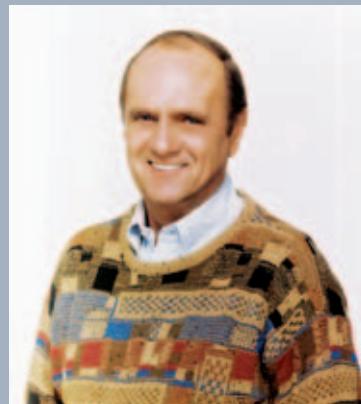
News Briefs

The Recreation Vehicle Safety and Education Foundation has scheduled an **RV Lifestyle, Education and Safety Conference** for June 3-6 in Bowling Green, Ky. The conference is an educational opportunity for current and potential RV owners to learn about different aspects of RVing. Classes will include lifestyle, safety, technical courses and a mini maintenance course for RVers. This conference will also allow consumers to learn how to select the right RV for them. For more information, go to www.rvsafety.com or call 321-453-7673.

The Good Sam Club, the world's largest RV owners' organization with nearly 1 million member families, has announced the recipients of the Good Sam 2009 RVer of the Year Award. **Monty and Susan Scales**, hurricane relief volunteers living in San Leon, Texas, were recognized for their hands-on refurbishment work and volunteer coordination in communities throughout the Gulf Coast region. The annual RVer of the Year award recognizes a member of the RV community for achievements that benefit fellow RVers or the community at large. The couple will accept the award at The Rally 2010, which takes place in Louisville, Ky., July 22-25.

It's only natural that the "Greatest RV Rally in the World" would have someone larger than life open it.

And so it will be, as legendary actor-comedian **Bob Newhart** will perform on opening night of **The Rally**, set for July 22-25 in Louisville, Ky. Newhart is best known for his role as the psychologist Dr. Robert



Hartley on the 1970s TV situation comedy, "The Bob Newhart Show," and as innkeeper Dick Loudon on the 1980s sitcom "Newhart." The Rally brings together novice and experienced RVers, who get a chance to meet industry experts, find bargains on RV products and enjoy camaraderie among fellow RV enthusiasts. The event features hundreds of RV dealers and manufacturers; supplier exhibits showcasing thousands of RV-related services and products; informational seminars on RVing; and daytime and evening entertainment. For more information about The Rally, visit www.therally.com.

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VEGAS, NATURALLY

There are no showgirls here, but you will find the Springs Preserve to be quite a showplace. The 180-acre, \$250 million preserve, located just three miles west of the famous neon-studded Las Vegas Strip, has been called a window into the natural history of "the birthplace of Las Vegas."

Representing a rich and unique cultural and biological resource in southern Nevada, it features botanical gardens, galleries, trails meandering through scenic wetland habitat, interactive exhibits and outdoor concerts.

The Desert Living Center, with five buildings and gardens, embodies the preserve's message of sustainability. Through 43 interactive exhibits, guests learn ways to protect the desert's natural resources and discover sustainable solutions to current and future environmental issues. The ORIGIN experience (taking its name from the words "original" and "generations") allows visitors to explore the history and culture of the Las Vegas Valley — from early American cultures to Anglo-European settlers.

There is no charge to enter the Gardens and Trails, but there is an admission fee to the other facilities at the preserve, which has been listed in the *National Register of Historic Places* since 1978.

RV parks abound in the Las Vegas area. A few are Oasis Las Vegas RV Resort, just south of the Strip; Sam's Town Las Vegas adjacent to Sam's Town Hotel and Gambling Hall; Hitchin' Post RV Park and Saloon; and Circus Circus RV Park, on the Strip and operated by KOA.

For a different kind of desert living experience that doesn't involve bars, buffets or blackjack, pay a visit to the Springs Preserve.

For more information, call 702-822-7700, or visit www.springspreserve.org.

— Patricia Marroquin



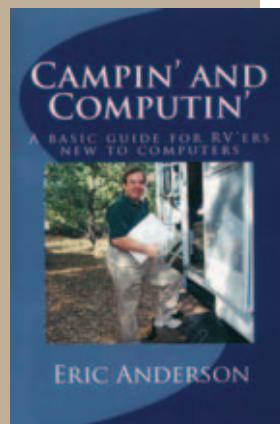
CAMPIN' AND COMPUTIN'

Just as motorhome manufacturers produce bigger and better models every year, computer manufacturers come up with new technologies to make their machines more efficient and easier to use, putting a world of information at our fingertips. Unfortunately, not all of us have grown up with this technology, and this is where Eric Anderson steps in with his new book, "Campin' and Computin'" (Create Space Inc., \$18.95). The book helps RVers conquer their fear of the computer by using easy-to-understand language, comparisons to RVing and a comprehensive index for quick reference.

Whether you want to just check your e-mail or add a new program to your hard drive, Anderson explains the steps you need to take and what to do to fix problems before you're ready to throw in the towel. He also explains all of the components of a computer so you'll know what you're dealing with, and how to set it all up in your RV to make the most of a small workspace.

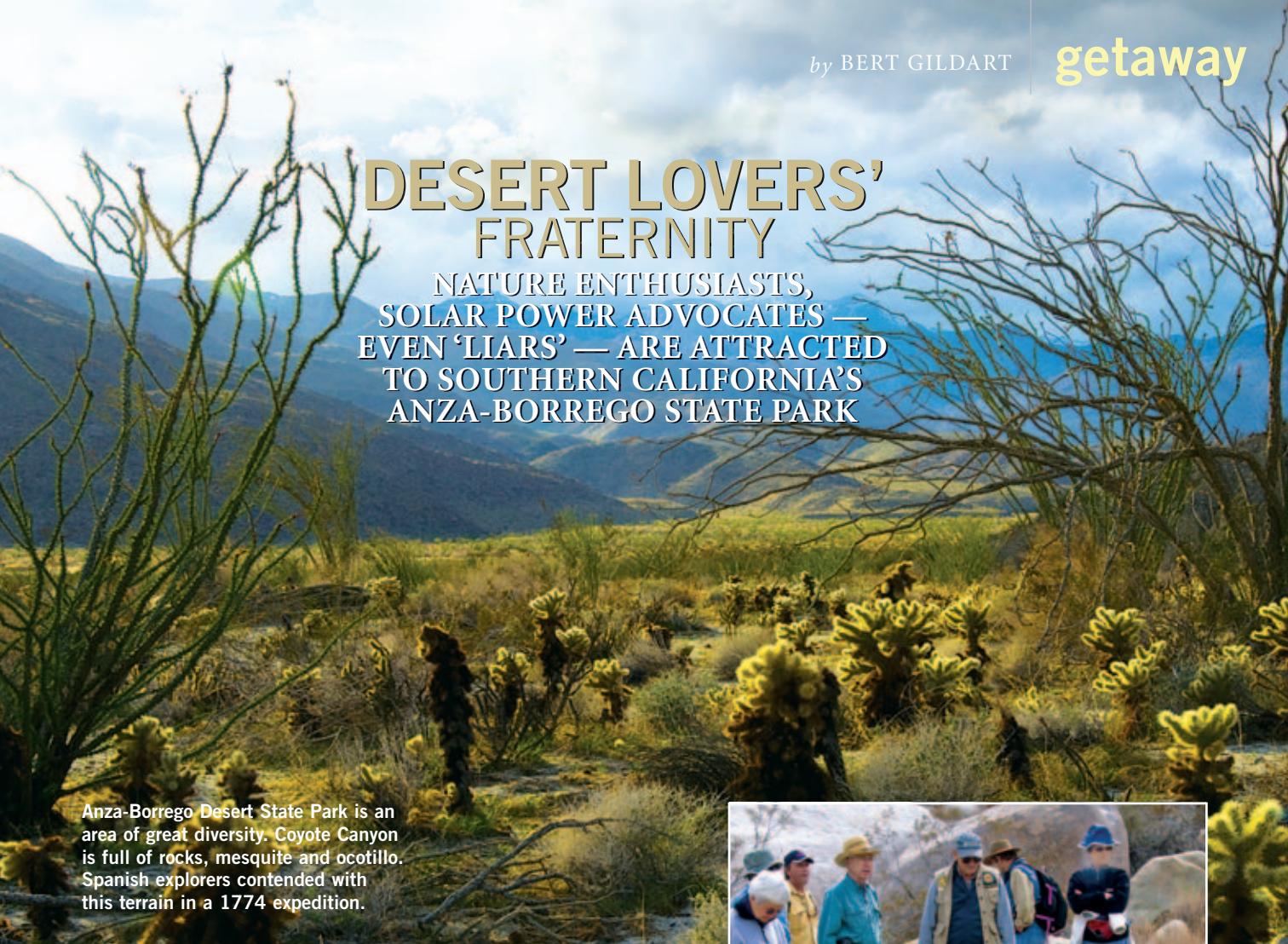
Using clear, concise language, and drawing from Anderson's experience as a full-timer, "Campin' and Computin'" is a no-frills guide to computers that an aspiring tech-savvy RVer should not be without.

Anderson is a self-proclaimed "computer geek" who has been working in IT since 1985. He and his wife, Carol, along with their dogs and cats, are full-timers in Northern California. — Meaghan Alfier ♦

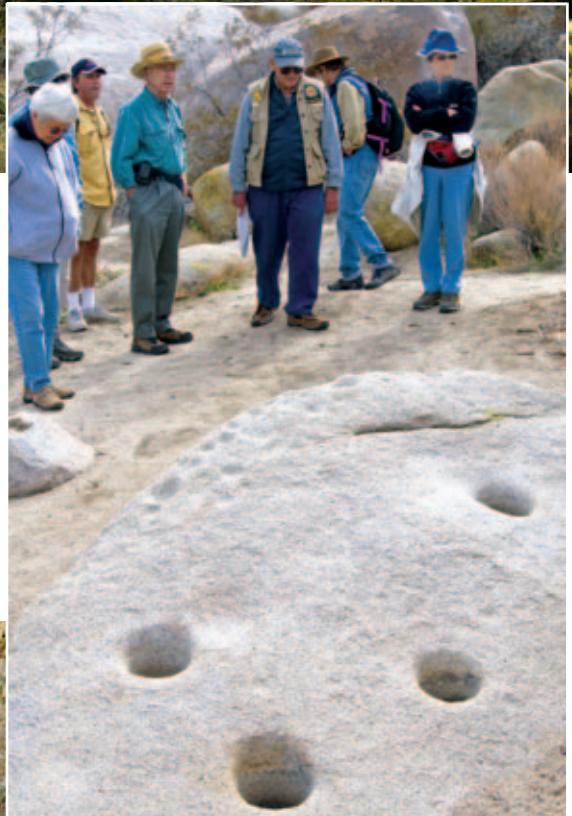


DESERT LOVERS' FRATERNITY

NATURE ENTHUSIASTS,
SOLAR POWER ADVOCATES —
EVEN 'LIARS' — ARE ATTRACTED
TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S
ANZA-BORREGO STATE PARK



Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is an area of great diversity. Coyote Canyon is full of rocks, mesquite and ocotillo. Spanish explorers contended with this terrain in a 1774 expedition.



Volunteer park archaeologist Sam Webb leads a mile-long walk to morteros, above, and pictographs. The Kumeyaay Indians placed agave into holes — the morteros — where they ground it into flour. On a hike up Borrego Palm Canyon Trail, desert bighorn rams strike classic poses.

Peg Leg Smith's Monument, essentially an extension of Southern California's Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, attracts some mighty independent characters. Throughout the winter it lures RVers of all stripes to this lonely expanse of creosote and rabbit brush. If you study those camped here, you'll see many have spread out their lawn chairs, "Blue Boys" and water jugs. Others have gone a step further and covered their rigs with so many solar panels it seems they want to sustain themselves until Peg Leg himself rises from the grave to preside over the Liars Contest celebration held the first Saturday each April.



PHOTOS: BERT GILDART



Clockwise from left: Marshal and Tanya South lived a primitive existence from 1930 to 1947 at Yaquitepec, a name they gave to their cobbled home, whose ruins are seen here. Agave grows throughout Anza-Borrego, which is the largest state park in California. At Borrego Palm Canyon Campground — located one mile north of park headquarters — RVs are dwarfed by the desert park's peaks. A good way to learn about the California park is to stop at the visitor center. With the exception of one wall with entrance doors, the entire structure is embedded in the earth. There are interpretive displays, and volunteers answer questions and lead nature walks that may focus on single topics such as birding or archaeology.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

**ANZA-BORREGO
DESERT STATE PARK**
760-767-5311,
www.parks.ca.gov.



Historically, the park has always attracted independent characters, as my wife, Janie, and I discovered on a steep, rocky climb to the evaporating homestead of Marshal and Tanya South. They lived here from 1930 to 1947, and like so many others, had been searching for a way of life that would allow them independence, in this case, to work as writers and poets. “They were popular,” wrote Randall Henderson, editor of *Desert* magazine, “because he (South) expressed the dreams which are more or less in the hearts of all imaginative people.”

Henderson was referring to the novels and articles South wrote and to the poetry his wife scribed. But he could also have been referring to their unorthodox lifestyle, which included a primitive existence at Yaquitepec, the name they gave to their

cobbled home. Here they produced much of what they needed. But they also wore no clothes and insisted that all visitors do the same. Eventually, something went tragically wrong and we hoped to learn what that was — and perhaps acquire enough cussedness to compete in the Liars Contest. Idiosyncratic pursuits, sure, but in this vast expanse of palm oasis, bighorn sheep, Native American ruins and independent characters, this immense sweep of the Sonoran Desert seems to handle a great deal in stride.

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is, in fact, a park of great diversity and appeal, something appreciated by many RVers. Though you’ll find luxurious RV resorts in the area, you can also do as the Peg Leggers do and equip your motorhome with panels that will reap all that free desert

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DESERT LOVERS' FRATERNITY

sunshine. The park remains one of the few places in the country where open camping is permitted. But wherever you stay, your first order of business will be to learn as much as you can about this largest of all of our nation's contiguous state parks, and you can do that by spending time at the visitor center, an exceedingly environmentally friendly structure.

Except for one wall with entrance doors, the building is embedded in the earth. The center contains interpretive displays about desert critters and creatures such as the mammoths. Volunteers detail the creatures' former presence and stand ready to give information on upcoming nature walks and the many single-topic weekends, devoted, for example, to archaeology or birding.

The center has posted quotes from well-known authors such as the Souths and in its small book section offers publications about the park's history and some of the many characters who once lived here. One tome contains all of Marshal South's contributions to *Desert* magazine and details South's impressions of life in the desert, which he loved and openly expressed in his writing.

"If there is one thing more than another which has heartened us," he wrote, "it has been the realization of the great invisible bond of friendliness which binds all desert dwellers and desert lovers into one solid fraternity."

There are a number of ways to establish yourself in this fraternity, and cycling — as one of our RV neighbors claimed — is an exceedingly good way. One day a friend and I mountain biked a dirt road along Coyote Canyon, learning about the hardship of early exploration through the region. Rocks, mesquite and cactus stabbed through the desert floor and were terrain with which Spanish explorer Juan Bautista de Anza contended during his 1774 expedition through this canyon.

Another day I rode to Yaqui Pass. Rain had fallen several days earlier, and green leaves from the ocotillo had sprouted almost overnight, a survival tactic of the species.

But you can also acquaint yourself with Anza-Borrego by driving to several of the overlooks — and gaze as the panoramas unfold. The park provides an abundance of such opportunities, but a very nice driving adventure takes you along a good

4WD road to Fonts Point. The overlook was named for a historical figure who was a member of the de Anza exploration.

Here is a view of extraordinarily rugged terrain, badlands that once were home to such mega-fauna as the short-faced bear, dire wolf and sabertooth cat. Its staggering beauty invariably elicits profound reactions. The land rolls for miles, spilling into Mexico.

That night we returned to our rig at Peg Leg Smith Monument, where we were dry camping and downloaded photos onto our laptop, all charged (with the help of an inverter) during the day by free solar energy. Images of the badlands generated more curiosity and the next day we decided to venture into this ostensibly hostile terrain.

Slot Canyon offers that opportunity and from the trailhead we began threading our way through a narrow defile that passed through towering sandstone cliffs. The walk required about an hour and then we ascended to a ridge where, unlike the barren canyon, mammalian life seemed to abound. At the base of virtually all creosote bushes the holes of kangaroo rats were so dense that the ground literally caved in beneath us.

We stopped for a few moments to test the advice of a park naturalist who said that if we patted a kangaroo rat hole we'd elicit a response. He said it would come as a signal of alarm or a challenging note "made by the animal striking its hind feet repeatedly and rhythmically against the sands."

Janie craned her head, hoping, as I patted, to hear a response. Though our efforts were in vain, we'll keep trying, for wouldn't a story of a rat answering our thumps make a good one for the Peg Leg Liars Contest?

Thomas L. Smith, better known as "Peg Leg" Smith was, of course, a prospector and the contest began (most say) in 1926, as a way of celebrating a story about a lost mine. The winning tale that year told of vandals stealing 300 feet of the mine's shaft. Thieves, according to the yarn, then bootlegged bits and pieces, which eventually turned up at a posthole digger's convention. Any story that I told would have to compete favorably with that story, so I needed to work further at park familiarity.

One morning Janie and I hiked from the park's Borrego Springs Campground up the contiguous Borrego Palm Canyon Nature Trail. Within an hour we came across a band of sheep — all rams. Several were

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sparing but one of the 21 rams walked to a cliff face and struck a classic pose.

In the Blair Valley area of the park, we took a walk on the .4-mile Morteros Trail with park volunteer archaeologist Sam Webb, who led us to pictographs and morteros. One huge boulder included four morteros. Here the Kumeyaay Indians would place agave into holes — the morteros — where they ground it into flour. They also pulverized seeds from the mesquite.

This area was adjacent to the site of Yaquitepec — the eroding ruins of a home Marshal South and his wife Tanya began building in February 1930. We made the steep one-mile trek to the homestead at the top of Ghost Mountain.

When we had first learned about the couple, we had cheered for them — hoping to learn of a happy ending. But that was not to be, and we came to believe they were lucky to have made it as long as they did, for so much was against them, which included, according to the Desert magazine editor, Marshal's inflexible nature. Wrote Randall Henderson in a book we had carried in our daypack: "Marshal's tragedy was that he tried too hard to fulfill his dream. ... He wanted to raise a family — and impose upon his family his own unconventional way of life."

Tanya eventually wanted out, Henderson wrote, and in 1947 she did. Two years later, Marshal died alone, though Tanya lived 50 more years.

Janie and I closed the tome and continued poking around. Immediately we found the old bed that all five used in the winter for warmth. We found evidence of the cisterns Marshal constructed to funnel water following the desert's infrequent rains. But elsewhere agave poked through-out the old structure. Cholla blocked the frame that once supported a wooden door.

That night we returned to our rig, thankful for this beautiful desert land. Though it was late winter, we thought we might hang out a little longer. Flowers of all descriptions would soon be brightening the desert floor, and the Peg Leg Liars Contest was just around the corner. After all, anyone who hangs out in this park for a while leaves with tales to tell. We'd like to hear them all — and perhaps share a few of our own. ♦

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SEE WORTHY

OREGON'S NEWPORT BUSTLES WITH THE SIGHTS, SMELLS AND SOUNDS OF A CHARMING SEAPORT TOWN

by BOB DIFLEY

Row after row of brawny fishing trawlers strained against their dock lines, while weary fishermen in knee boots cleaned the decks to rid them of the last evidence of the day's catch. Crab traps, stuffed with coils of frayed line and scuffed cork floats, were stacked on the dock and in the distance a foghorn moaned as the fog enveloped the ghostly bridge that spanned the harbor entrance.

This is the scene along the harbor in Newport, Oregon — home to the Oregon coast's largest commercial fishing fleet — where sea-hardened, leathery-skinned fishermen in rugged fishing boats haul in their daily catch.

Newport's Historic Bayfront District is a treat for the senses. Fishermen sell their catch directly off their boats, commercial fish processing plants bustle with activity and the sweet aroma of crab cooking in steaming pots fills the air. The district is filled with fresh seafood markets, chowder houses (including Mo's Restaurant, famous for its clam chowder) and fancy white-tablecloth dinner houses, as well as gift shops, art galleries and 100-year-old buildings serving as giant artist canvasses.

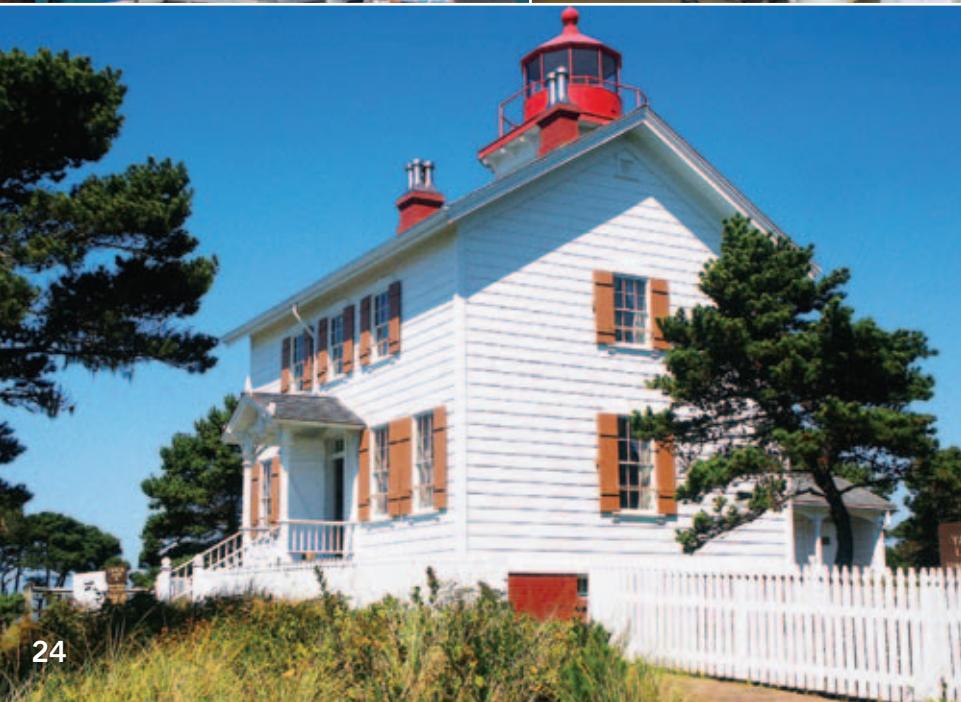
If you're going to spend some time exploring the Historic Bayfront District, Harbor Village RV Park is the most convenient spot to set up camp. The park offers 140 full-hookup spaces surrounded by trees, cable TV, laundry and shower facilities.

Clockwise from left: The harbor in Newport is home to Oregon's biggest commercial fishing fleet. Yaquina Head Lighthouse is one of the most visited lighthouses on the West Coast and it's also Oregon's tallest light. A child gets an up-close look at otters at the Oregon Coast Aquarium, Newport's No. 1 tourist attraction and rated among the top 10 aquariums in the nation. Starfish inhabit the Hatfield Marine Science Center, a research, laboratory and teaching facility.

PHOTOS: BOB DIFLEY; OREGON COAST AQUARIUM/CINDY HANSON



The distinctive arched Yaquina Bay Bridge spans Yaquina Bay, south of Newport. Clockwise from left below: A fisherman cleans his day's catch at the harbor. Many fishermen sell their catch directly off their boats. Visitors view one of the scientific displays at Oregon State University's Hatfield Marine Science Center. The facility also includes an aquarium, one of the few places where you can touch a giant Pacific octopus. The Yaquina Bay Lighthouse is the centerpiece of Yaquina Bay State Park. Its museum contains historic furnishings and a gift shop. It's the only wood lighthouse in Oregon and the only one in the state that combines a lighthouse and living quarters in one building.



OREGON COAST AQUARIUM

Newport's No. 1 attraction, the Oregon Coast Aquarium, lies just over the Yaquina Bay Bridge along the Yaquina Bay estuary. Rated among the top 10 aquariums in the country — one of only two in the West — the aquarium brings a broad variety of sea life, from tidal zone inhabitants to the denizens of the deep, within eyeball-to-eyeball range. The mission of the aquarium is to make the public aware of, understand and help conserve the world's marine resources.

Indoor and outdoor tanks display permanent residents such as sea otters, harbor seals and sea lions, as well as changing exhibits such as "Oddwater," which focuses on more unusual sea creatures, such as the chambered nautilus.

Enter "Passages of the Deep" if you dare, where you can mingle with a manta, challenge a shark, grin at a grouper or stare down a starfish. You don't need to strap on a scuba tank, either, since a 200-foot-long acrylic tube extends through the middle of the 1.32-million-gallon tank — 8 feet below the surface and 8 feet above the sea

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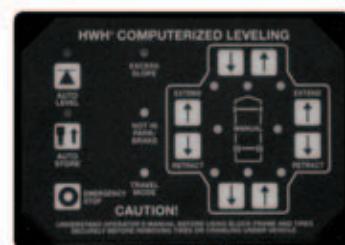
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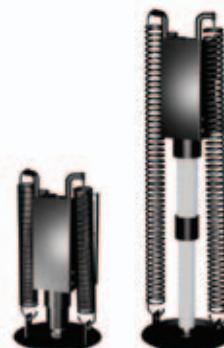
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bottom — with views above and below as if you were cruising through the watery habitat in an underwater submersible.

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Visit the "Sea Bird Aviary" to see common murre, pigeon guillemots and rhinoceros auklets "fly" underwater through large underwater windows. The aviary's local Oregon coast seabirds, along with the black oystercatcher, inhabit one of the largest seabird aviaries in North America.

HATFIELD MARINE SCIENCE CENTER

Just down the road from the aquarium, scientists and marine biologists do their scientific and biological studies and exper-

iments at Oregon State University's Hatfield Marine Science Center, a research, laboratory and teaching facility.

The budding scientists and non-scientific types in your crowd can all explore the geology of the ocean floor, learn about coastal hazards such as earthquakes and tsunamis, find out about advancements made in whale tracking, and other fascinating oceanic research projects and discoveries.

The visitor center has several aquarium tanks and exhibits illustrating the fascinating world of the sea, and is one of the few places you can go to touch a giant Pacific octopus. I couldn't wait.

With a Hatfield staff member at my side, I tentatively reached my hand into the octopus' tank. It gently touched my hand with its tentacles; the built-in suction cups grasped and held my arm, while another tentacle explored the shape of my hand and fingers. The Hatfield visitor center, let me assure you, is not in the habit of feeding its visitors to this carnivorous eight-armed marine mollusk. This skillful predator possesses keen vision, a strong sense

of curiosity and a well-developed brain.

I was told an urban legend about a previous octopus that would crawl out of its tank every night after the building was closed and slither across the floor to dine on some of the aquarium's other creatures. In the morning the staff would find only a watery path across the floor and a few missing specimens. Now there is a retractable top on the tank. No more nighttime forays for this cunning creature, whether real or imaginary. However, it is quite friendly and the most popular resident of the aquarium.

Within walking distance to the Oregon Coast Aquarium and the Hatfield Marine Science Center is the Port of Newport's RV Park. The port offers two reasonably priced parks to choose from: Marina Park, with 92 pull-through sites with 50-amp power and TV, or The Annex, which features large sites and full hookups. Dry camping is also available and includes access to showers and laundry facilities.

LIGHTING THE WAY

Soon after Newport established itself as a

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fishing and fur trading center, the discovery of gold in California and Alaska and the influx of settlers coming off the Oregon Trail fueled a rapid growth spurt. The Yaquina Bay Lighthouse was built in 1871 on a bluff overlooking the bay, harbor entrance and Pacific Ocean to assist the steady stream of trading schooners that sailed into Yaquina Bay.

Two years later another lighthouse was ordered for Cape Foulweather, 15 miles north. But a local Army colonel decided instead to locate it on Yaquina Head, just three miles north of the Yaquina Bay lighthouse. Because the 22-mile light was much more powerful than the "old" lighthouse's 12-mile light, and because of confusion among sea captains unfamiliar with the entrance to Yaquina Bay, the Coast Guard decommissioned Yaquina Bay light just three years after it was built.

The building served many uses in the following years, but still suffered from age and lack of maintenance, until the threat of demolition spurred local historians to save it. Complete restoration began in 1974 with a five-mile electric light in-

stalled in 1996, and today it is the centerpiece of Yaquina Bay State Park, popular with locals and visitors for its wooded park setting with paved walking trails, museum with historic furnishings, gift shop, and expansive views of the harbor, coastline and ocean. It is believed to be the oldest structure in Newport, the only wood lighthouse still standing in Oregon, and the only one in the state to combine the lighthouse and living quarters in the same building.

Congress dedicated 100 acres of Yaquina Head, home of the new lighthouse, as an Outstanding Natural Area, one of the best places on the coast to view migrating gray whales, explore tide pools and watch harbor seals sleep on the rocks. The rocks off the head are also home to the largest variety of resident and migrating seabirds on the coast.

BEACHES

You can visit many of Oregon's beaches on an easy drive from Newport to Beverly Beach State Park seven miles north of town, which also has a campground with full and partial

hookups, and at South Beach State Park, two miles south of town, with 228 electrical hookup sites. There are also several other beachside state parks without camping.

COAST ROUTE

While you're in the area, plan to spend some time exploring the rest of Lincoln County, with towns such as Yachats (try pronouncing that without help, it's Yah' hots), Seal Rock and Depoe Bay, and more state parks and public waysides than any other county in Oregon.

Sandy beaches and teeming tide pools, high coastal bluffs with spectacular viewpoints, seals, sea lions and seabirds, fog and foghorns, hiking trails through secluded pine forests that extend right to the water's edge — all characterize this part of Oregon's central coast. And as you would expect, lots of motorhomes cruise the mostly two lanes of U.S. Highway 101 and there are plenty of RV parks to choose from. So relax, don't hurry, stop often at viewpoints, stretch your legs and enjoy. There is too much to see and do to rush. ♦

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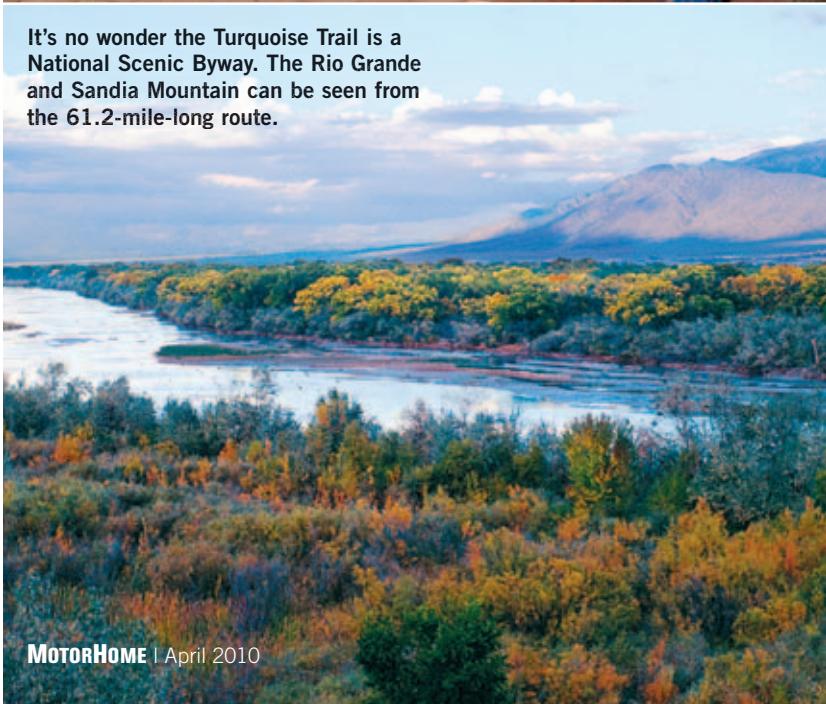
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Although downtown Albuquerque, N.M., is full of modern buildings, the historic Old Town area seen here contains original adobe structures around a central plaza.



It's no wonder the Turquoise Trail is a National Scenic Byway. The Rio Grande and Sandia Mountain can be seen from the 61.2-mile-long route.



A JEWEL OF A ROUTE

NEW MEXICO'S TURQUOISE TRAIL SCENIC BYWAY IS RICH IN ART, ARCHITECTURE, HISTORY AND SPIRITUALISM

by RICHARD AND ELLEN THANE

Sometimes the high road, not the highway, is the way to go. Such is the case with the Turquoise Trail, a 61.2-mile National Scenic Byway that starts 14 miles east of Albuquerque, N.M., and stretches north toward Santa Fe. The name came from the rich turquoise deposits found at the byway's northern end.

Thought to be a trail initially used by Native American tribes, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado also passed this way on his legendary quest for gold. Later, Kit Carson traveled the route. The byway winds through the magnificent high desert country of central New Mexico, passing through historic ghost towns and interesting artist communities.

We first learned of the Turquoise Trail while camped in Oklahoma City. Overhearing several other RVers discussing it as their next destination, we asked a few questions and they gave us a brochure. It was close to our route home so we decided, on the spot, to make time for it. That's one of the many wonderful things about motor-home travel. Fellow campers are quick to share information on interesting things to see and do — things we might never know about otherwise.

Following their suggestion, we made reservations for a campsite at Hidden Valley Resort in Tijeras, N.M., where the Turquoise Trail begins at the southern end. Good thing we had reservations; Hidden Valley was full when we arrived.

Using a map of the Turquoise Trail, we began our adventure in Tijeras at the Sandia Ranger District Visitor Center. A short trail (about ½ mile) took us over a mound that was once a 200-room Tijeras pueblo occupied by prehistoric Native American tribes. The partially excavated ruins have been covered by earth so they will be protected until time and money are available for a complete excava-

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MAP: SUE CARLSON



Clockwise from top: Sandia Crest can be reached from State Highway 536 or via Sandia Peak Tramway — the world's longest aerial tramway. The Turquoise Trail area is known for its jewelry, which can be purchased in shops and on sidewalks. One of the highlights of the byway is Tinkertown Museum. Not your average museum, Tinkertown houses an eccentric collection of Americana. Whimsical miniature figures carved in wood are placed in kitschy dioramas. Santa Fe Skies RV Park offers spacious sites with panoramic views of four mountain ranges and a large outdoor display of antique engines. San Felipe de Neri church is among the restored adobes in Old Town Albuquerque.

tion, but a small model of the pueblo and many plaques along the trail made it easy for us to visualize the village during its occupation in the early 14th century.

After visiting the pueblo, we detoured off the byway and headed to Albuquerque. The area was first explored by Coronado in his search for gold long before the pilgrims settled at Plymouth Rock. Then, in 1706, Francisco Cuervo y Valdes founded a villa along the banks of the Rio Grande and called it the Villa de San Xavier de Albuquerque.

Today, lovely modern buildings fill the thriving downtown sector, but our destination was the historic Old Town area formed around a central plaza and the beautiful San Felipe de Neri church. Original adobe

buildings, splendidly restored, surround the plaza. Galleries and specialty shops fill what were once gracious Spanish-style homes.

After touring the church we were ready for lunch. Our newly acquainted RV friends had recommended La Placita Dining Rooms, along whose portal sidewalk vendors sold handmade jewelry. Inside we were seated in what was once the courtyard of the Hacienda Casa De Armijo. Tables covered in red cloths circled an ancient shade tree in the center of the room. Though portions of the adobe structure were constructed as long ago as 1706, the building has been well restored.

After lunch we returned to the Turquoise Trail (State Highway 14) and made our way north to the town of Cedar Crest. We stopped



at the Museum of Archaeology and Material Culture, where we got a good perspective on the region's history and human activities dating back to the ice age. On our way out of town we drove through Turquoise Trail Campground and RV Park and found that it, too, would be a suitable spot for camping.

We continued following the byway north to Sandia Park where the trail turns west (State Highway 536) up through the Sandia Mountains Cibola National Forest to the top of Sandia Crest — the high point along the trail at an elevation of 10,678 feet. On our way up, we stopped at Tinkertown Museum, which was the highlight of our trip. This is no dusty, boring museum — but 22 rooms alive with an eccentric collection of Ameri-

cana along with whimsical miniature figures made of wood or clay and arranged in kitschy little dioramas depicting an 1880s Western town and a three-ring circus.

Many of the figures move — drawing guns, doing carpentry work, swinging from a high wire or sitting in an outhouse with the door blowing open and shut. Fifty thousand glass bottles of various sizes and colors make up the walls surrounding the museum.

Up at Sandia Crest the hum from a forest of radio towers floated across the wind-swept mountaintop. Atop the peak, the Four Seasons Visitor Center carries a wide range of Southwest gifts and jewelry and several restaurants provide everything from quick snacks to full meals. Ranger-led nature walks and many hiking trails offer great outdoor activities.

An alternative way to reach Sandia Crest is to take the Sandia Peak Tramway, the world's longest aerial tramway. An evening ride is especially enchanting as you float above a desert brushed in soft shades of pink as the sun dips below the horizon.

Back on the Turquoise Trail the next day, we passed a picturesque old church at Golden, a town named, in 1880, for the first gold rush west of the Mississippi. Our next stop was Madrid, a historic town since the 1880s and a thriving coal mining town from the 1930s to the 1950s. Following its boomtown years it became a ghost town until the early 1970s, when artists and craftspeople moved in, creating an eclectic artists colony.

Fellow campers told us that Madrid's Java Junction served better lattes than Starbucks, so we had to try one. "Better than Starbucks" might have been stretching it a bit but the coffee was still great.

Down the street at the Great Madrid Gift Emporium we couldn't resist a few of the unique and well-priced turquoise and silver pieces for folks back home. Our campground host had told us this was the only place she bought her turquoise jewelry.

Across the street the Old Coal Mine Museum displays local railroad and mining history while, next door, The Mine Shaft Tavern, with its delicious selections of New Mexican and cowboy fare, serves a great green chili burger. Tired after an oh-satisfying day, we headed back to camp.

The next morning we followed the Turquoise Trail to the historic mining town of Cerrillos, where volcanic, cone-shaped

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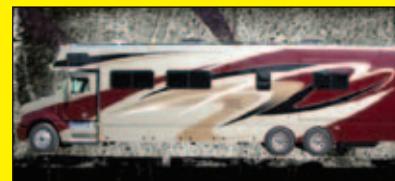
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hills once yielded rich deposits of silver, gold, lead, zinc and turquoise. Some of the turquoise of Cerrillos, one of the oldest Spanish mining areas in the Southwest, is said to be among the crown jewels of Spain.

Although Cerrillos was a boomtown in the 1880s, it is nearly a ghost town now. Only a few restored adobe buildings line the dusty streets where Hollywood has filmed several movies. The rambling old Casa Grande Trading Post, Petting Zoo and Mining Museum draw tourists traveling the Turquoise Trail.

The northern point of the Turquoise Trail officially ends north of Cerrillos at the junction of State Highway 14 and Interstate 25, just south of Santa Fe. We set up camp at Santa Fe Skies RV Park, which offers panoramic views of four mountain ranges and spacious sites that can accommodate even the largest motorhomes.

The last few days of our Turquoise Trail adventure were spent in Santa Fe, a graceful old city known worldwide for its art galleries and pueblo-style architecture. Settled by the Spanish in 1609, it is the oldest capital in the United States. Early Spanish settlers, with their lives centered on their Catholic faith, named their city La Villa Real de la Santa Fé de San Francisco de Asis, which was later shortened to Santa Fe, meaning "Holy Faith."

Several churches stand in the city's historic plaza, as does the block-long Palace of the Governors, where, along the portal, Native American artists sell their arts and crafts.

Several blocks away is the Loretto Chapel with its miraculous staircase. With several corkscrew turns, the staircase was built by an unknown craftsman and from an unknown type of wood. An amazing feat of engineering, it was constructed without nails and has no visible means of support.

Don't miss the nearby Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. With her dramatic large-scale paintings of flowers, New York cityscapes and works in modernism, this is one of the most visited museums in Santa Fe.

There is a timeless quality to the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway and a sense of spiritual connection with those who passed this way before. We've mentioned only a few of the many highlights, but with its scenery, history, fine art galleries, museums, shops, churches and exquisite turquoise, you will love your journey through this part of New Mexico. ♦

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BOUNDER CLASSIC 30T

Fleetwood's iconic Class A features increased functionality in a new 30-foot length

The Bounder motorhome brand has enjoyed a long, successful history and Fleetwood RV continues that heritage in 2010 with its new Classic line. The Classic inherits many of its predecessor's innovative features and livability while shedding some added-cost décor to provide a feature-rich coach at a more affordable price.

Unfortunately, the company dropped the traditional predominantly brown Bounder color scheme that made the exterior of these rigs so distinctive in favor of a more generic Class A look, but there are still enough Bounder color cues to let sharp-eyed RV enthusiasts know this isn't any ordinary Class A.

The Classic 30T is one of three floorplans and lengths and Fleetwood's first 30-foot Bounder that answers a growing call by enthusiasts for a shorter but fully equipped and easy-to-drive Bounder.

The Classic 30T answers those needs and more, focusing on features and equipment that have been proven over decades of use and experience. The long list of standard equipment begins with Fleetwood's Power Platform, providing impressive compartment and pass-through basement storage with heated center-mounted storage tanks, straddling the Ford V-10, front gas chassis.

Tasteful exterior graphics rather than full-body paint, a 20-foot Dometic awning, dual-pane tinted windows, four-point automatic levelers, as well as a 4kW Onan Micro-Quiet AC generator — often optional items — are just a sampling of the Classic's standard equipment. Increased water capacity is also available in the form of an auxiliary tank, available as a factory-installed option, for those who may enjoy more remote destinations and boondocking.



Inside the dual-slide floorplan, low maintenance vinyl flooring is used throughout the cabin, galley and bath, with wall-to-wall carpeting reserved for the bedroom and cockpit. A conventional dinette that employs Fleetwood's "Dream Table" mechanism gently lowers the tabletop into the bed position using a wall track and gas strut. Next to the dinette, the 8-cubic-foot fridge comes with matching cabinet insert and handy pullout basket pantry to form one side of the cabin while the streetside slide holds the double-size jackknife sofa bed, with more storage below, and the galley.

A GE stainless steel micro-convection oven is set into the beautiful medium-tone raised-panel cabinetry used throughout, and the matching range with oven and sink are set into deep countertops with a large side extension that provides additional food prep area. Storage is a hallmark of this coach and is found throughout the interior as well. Most cabinets that ring the cabin are more than 24 inches deep with additional storage in a second pantry cabinet next to the sink.

Even small items for ease of use, often added by a new owner after the sale, are found everywhere on this Bounder. A built-in countertop knife holder, large spice rack, unique pull-down utensil service tray, sink sprayer and coat and hat hooks at the entry door are all examples of conveniences provided and/or designed by Fleetwood folks who camp.

A large, wide makeup vanity with more drawer storage and offset single sink is provided in the bedroom passage, and there is a full-width medicine cabinet above with the enclosed toilet room and shower with skylight and china bowl



SPECIFICATIONS

CHASSIS: FORD F53	INTERIOR HEIGHT: 6' 7"
ENGINE: TRITON 6.8-L V-10 GAS	WHEELBASE: 208"
FUEL: 75 GAL	FRESHWATER CAP: 50 GAL
GVWR: 22,000 LBS	GRAY-WATER CAP: 40 GAL
LENGTH: 30' 7"	BLACK-WATER CAP: 30 GAL
WIDTH: 8' 6"	LP-GAS CAP: 20 GAL
HEIGHT WITH A/C: 12'	BASE MSRP: \$100,940

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opposite. A pair of hard doors slide across the passageway to provide useful and multiple privacy options.

The bedroom offers a large curbside wardrobe for two with lower cabinet storage alongside the tall four-drawer dresser with optional LCD TV above. The queen-size bed with nightstands fills the second slide and for those tall campers, Fleetwood provides a mattress extension that drops between the headboard and mattress to give an additional 4 inches of bed length whenever needed. Nice touch.

The cockpit is sensibly laid out. It's simple and clean with easy-to-read gauges and everything within reach. Comfortable cockpit chairs and the tank monitor panel on the co-pilot's side of the dash offer comfort and convenience while directly above the cockpit is a complete audiovisual entertainment center that includes a standard 26-inch LCD TV and AV switching box to keep the crew entertained during the drive.

It is immediately obvious that Fleetwood has integrated decades of coach-building experience in outfitting the 30T. Storage abounds in this well-equipped, very livable floorplan with few options to ponder and fewer things to do after the sale. The Bounder Classic 30T is the kind of turnkey motorhome that offers the features and conveniences RVers expect on the road.

Our thanks to Mike Thompson's RV Super Stores in Southern California for making this coach available for review. ♦



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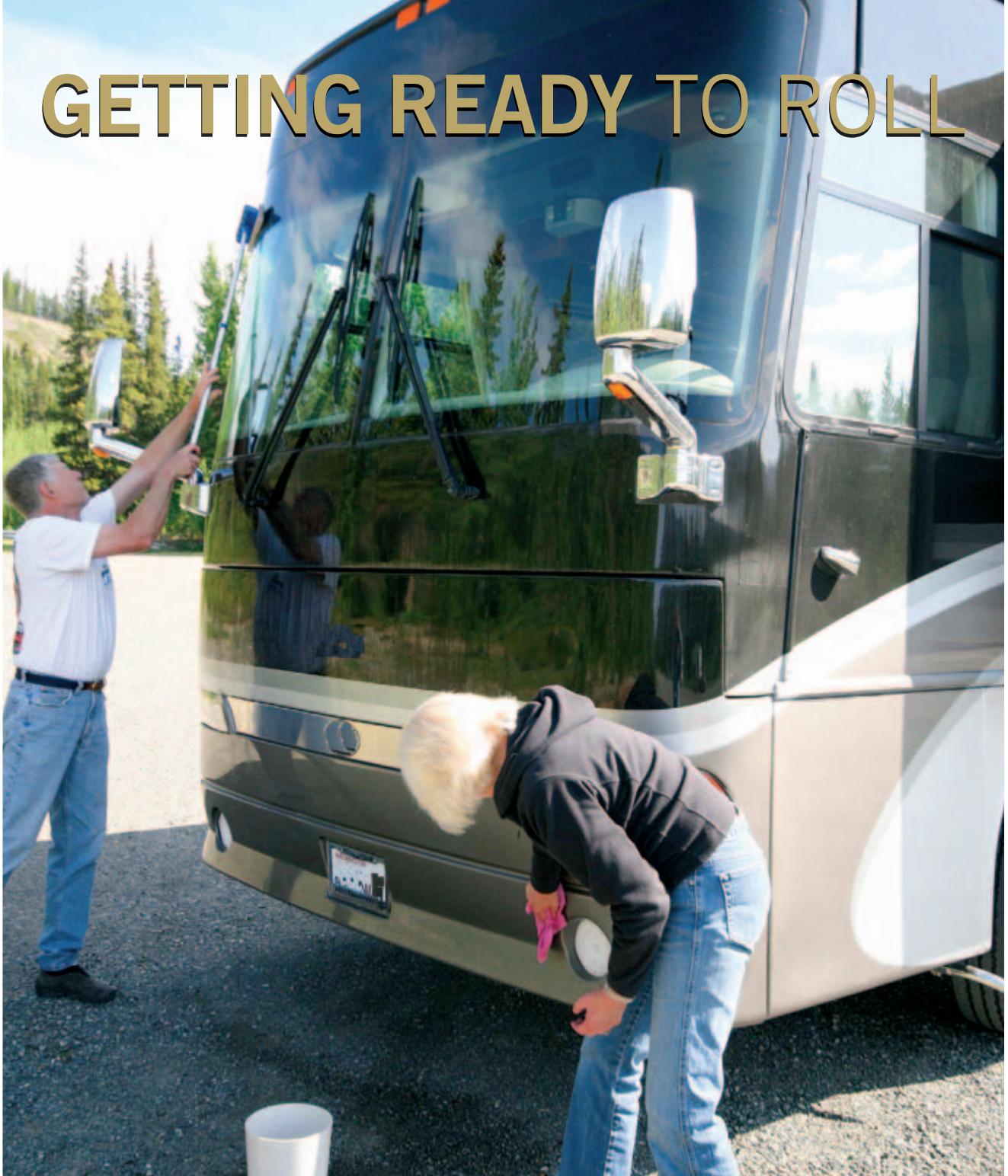


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GETTING READY TO ROLL



PHOTOS: GARY BOHING

Depending on your local weather and how you store your motorhome each winter, getting it ready for spring could be as big a chore as storing it each year. Not only has it been sitting for several months, but it has also been exposed to some wide temperature swings. These environmental swings may cause some unexpected problems and it's better to find them while parked at home rather than on the road. If you follow our program it should make your first trip of the season a lot easier.

The first thing you should do is a visual inspection of the exterior of the coach. Walk around and look for obvious issues such as cracked joints or missing caulk. Look high and low on the sides and pay particular attention to the windows and doors to

**CHECK. INSPECT.
TEST. CLEAN. REPLACE.
BEFORE YOU HEAD
OUT ON YOUR
FIRST TRIP OF THE
SEASON, FOLLOW THIS
PREPARATION GUIDE**

by E. DON SMITH



Check all caulked seams for signs of cracking or lifting and reseal with the proper lap sealant.

find potential leaks, both inside and out.

If you are able to climb on the roof, you also need to look it over as well. The roof can be dangerous so tread lightly and carefully to prevent damage to you or the coach. The roof is covered with potential problem areas such as openings for vents, skylights, etc. Carefully inspect them all while looking for cracks or other defects that could lead to a leak.

Next, you will need to address your water system. It has been unused all winter so a complete disinfecting is required. If you bypassed your water heater in the fall, don't forget to reverse it back to normal flow. If you have your water lines filled with RV antifreeze, it is a good idea to flush them first using fresh water, then fill the tank with water and add 1 cup of bleach per 60 gallons of water. Run enough water through each fixture (check your fixtures while you are doing this) to ensure the lines are all full of the bleach mixture. Allow this to stand at least four hours, but longer is OK too. Then completely drain everything.



The material on this anode rod was completely gone, which could have resulted in tank damage; replace when 25 percent of material remains.



The roof vents and components should be inspected for seal integrity, even if there are no signs of water leakage. It's best to remove the old sealant before reapplying the appropriate sealing product, depending on the type of roof.

If you want to remove the bleach odor you can repeat with a fresh tank of water along with one gallon of water with half a cup of baking soda mixed in. Allow it to run completely through the entire water system and it will be as fresh as the spring air. You can leave the baking soda water in the system or drain the fresh tank and refill it from the fresh water source of your choice.

While you are filling and draining the waterlines take note of the fresh water tank drain as well as the black and gray tank drain valves. If they are stiff and difficult to operate, replace the drain valve seals.

You should also drain the hot water tank and inspect any anode rod. Replacing one is easy and inexpensive so we suggest you replace it if it has lost more than around 75 percent of its original diameter/weight. While you are looking at the water heater you should also inspect the burner to ensure no foreign visitors have made their home there over the winter, and also inspect it for rust or other damage.

While you are outside, check the tire



Always check air pressure when the tire is cold. Use a gauge capable of measuring PSI of application.



Sanitize the fresh water system with 1 cup of bleach per 60 gallons of water.

pressure and inspect the tires for sidewall cracks. If you performed fall maintenance before storing the coach and everything looked good (oil, other fluids), you should be fine. A coach is best stored with fresh oil in the engine, because that oil doesn't contain the combustion contaminants that are present in used oil. If you haven't completed a proper chassis service, better late than never. At least look under the coach for obvious leaks or signs of problems.

After you perform a visual inspection and are sure the coach oil/coolant levels are OK, you should then start the chassis engine and allow it to warm up. This gives you an opportunity to ensure the battery bank and engine are working as they should. While the engine is running, check all exterior and interior lights using a partner to relay information on the status of brake lights, blinkers, etc. After the engine reaches operating temperature, shut it down. If your coach and generator batteries have been on a maintenance charger all winter all you will need is to check their



Check the AC generator's oil level and then start it up. Let it run for at least an hour under load.

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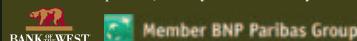
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GETTING READY TO ROLL



If batteries have been on a maintenance charger all winter, be sure to check their electrolyte levels.

electrolyte level (remember to wear eye protection). If your batteries have not been on a charger all winter, connect them to a good-quality multi-stage charger before heading out on the road. If you notice corrosion on the battery posts, clean and protect them with a battery corrosion preventative spray.

After checking the oil/coolant in the generator, start it up. The generator should run at least one hour under a load. This gives you time to turn on all the major appliances inside the coach using generator power only. In order to ensure everything is working inside, start at the front or back and turn each AC-operated device on to test its operation. Then shut it off and move to the next device. Of course, be mindful of your total electrical draw to keep from tripping a circuit breaker. Turn on each AC unit, exhaust fans, TVs, radios, etc. Check your remote controls (and other battery-operated devices) and replace the batteries if needed. Hopefully you removed these batteries before winter storage.

Next, check the microwave by heating some water. Test the proper operation of the refrigerator as well as any washer and dryer. If you disconnected the water line for an ice maker, don't forget to reconnect it.

Another very important step is to check or replace the batteries and operation of all on-board detectors. This includes smoke, fire, LP-gas and carbon monoxide.

Check the location and condition of your fire extinguishers. You should have at least one inside and one outside the coach. Another important safety item is your first-aid kit. Before heading out for the first trip of the year ensure your kit contains everything you or your family might need. This

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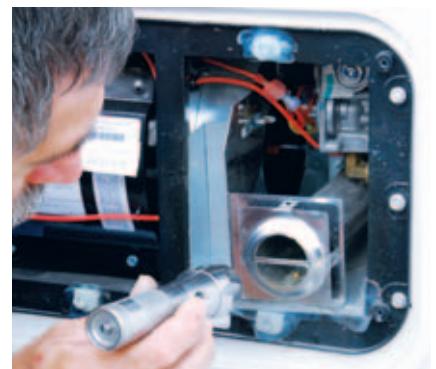


Always test the carbon monoxide detector before venturing out in spring.

includes common medications as well as anything specific required such as an epi-pen for allergies to insects or bee stings.

While you're inside the motorhome open every cabinet and storage area to inspect for spoiled food or signs of insect/rodent damage. Your unused coach makes a great winter home for unwanted critters so look around in every possible area for their presence. If you utilize traps or insect bait, replace them with new ones to start the year off right. You should also take this opportunity to perform a good cleanup inside the coach. Even if you cleaned it in the fall, it is probably dusty and in need of a good spring cleaning. This includes the floors, walls and cabinets as well as plumbing fixtures and cockpit area.

The LP-gas tank is another important aspect of your coach and one that is critical. First you need to inspect the tank to ensure that it looks safe for operation and that no obvious damage has occurred. If all is well turn on the gas and inspect the



Remove any bird nests or other debris from the furnace and water heater. Never tape off or use a screen cover on the furnace exhaust and intake vents.



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Vent space behind the refrigerator, accessed via an external door, must be kept clear of debris; compressed air is used to clean the burner area.

area for characteristic gas odor. Then make your way into the motorhome and test the gas by lighting the stove top.

It could take a few tries to purge the air out of the lines. After all the burners light, you can turn them off and move to the next LP-gas appliance. Before lighting the LP-gas refrigerator go outside the coach and uncover the back of the refrigerator (if it is equipped with an LP-gas model). Check the burner for rust or other damage or foreign matter. Clean out any debris with a vacuum cleaner and low-pressure air, if needed; if all looks well proceed to lighting the gas mode on your fridge. It, too, may take several attempts to light, so be patient.

If you are sure the hot water tank is full of water then you should also light the water heater in gas mode to test its operation. Usually you can hear the burner ignite or your motorhome may have a light to indicate it is working. It's best to allow it to run long enough to produce hot water to completely test its operation.

If weather permits you can also use this time to open all of the windows and turn on the exhaust fans to completely circulate the stale air inside the coach. You might also want to use an air freshener or air sanitizer at this time. Don't forget to open your slides and awnings. Lubricate them if needed, including the rubber seals and slide track.

After completing these tasks you should be well on your way to a good first trip in your motorhome. Every coach is slightly different, and you may need to modify our list to fit your specific model, but this should serve as a good overview to get you started on your first trip of the year. ♦

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WINNEBAGO ADVENTURER 37F



DUAL BATHROOMS AND A FULL-WALL SLIDE GIVE THIS 37-FOOT CLASS A COACH EXTRA-FLEXIBLE LIVABILITY

by JEFF JOHNSTON

A simple yet complete instrument cluster keeps the driver's controls fairly close at hand. Forward visibility and rear-mirror viewing are good.

Appliances in the L-shaped galley include a refrigerator/freezer, three-burner stove with oven and a microwave. Other features include a Corian countertop and pullout storage shelves.



When camping fever hits there's no getting away from it. As soon as we laid eyes on our road test assignment, the 2010 Winnebago Adventurer 37F coach, we knew we needed to hit the road ASAP. Nothing short of a few miles of open highway and a campfire or two takes care of the lust for RV adventure.

We boarded, quickly stowed our minimal gear, and reveled in the rig's wide-open interior. Its streetside full-wall slideout that houses the entertainment center/buffet/dining table unit (\$2,030), galley, storage and a bedroom wardrobe unit is a fine example of the RV interior designer's art. Curb-side, up front, a smaller slideout includes the optional Ultraleather dual control Rest Easy sofa/recliner/bed (\$1,190) and easy chair with ottoman. Mid-coach there's an enclosed half-bath with toilet and vanity sink, the queen master bed moves out via a traditional slideout, and aft, the master bath encompasses the coach interior wall-to-wall.

After admiring the beautiful "coffee glazed" Sierra Maple cabinet finish and correspondingly tasteful fabric and floor coverings, we stowed the slideouts for travel. The controls are sensibly placed high up in the company's OnePlace systems center, away from curious young fingers, and an integral key-lock feature means the slideouts are virtually impossible to operate accidentally. Winnebago also includes manually switched mechanical slideout lock mechanisms for secure travel time.

As open as it is in camp mode, the coach has tight quarters with slideouts stowed. The L-shaped kitchen counter is close to the lounge chair so you need to squeeze by, and unless you want to climb over the bed, the half-bath is easiest to use in travel mode. Users shouldn't be moving around on the road anyway so the clearances are inconvenient but not a deal-breaker.

ON THE ROAD

We took our positions and hit the pavement. A simple yet

complete instrument cluster informs the driver and all vehicle controls are fairly close at hand and logically placed. Forward visibility, along with rear-mirror viewing, is fine.

My wife, Pam, enjoyed the pullout dashboard workstation while tackling her crosswords, and the optional side-view cameras (\$434), activated by the turn signal lever, provided that extra measure of lane-changing peace of mind.

The optional powered front shade (\$350) makes for squint-free driving when it is lowered somewhat to block the sun — definitely a good investment.

Despite heavy winds on our departure day the base-model Workhorse W22 chassis — more on that, and other chassis options, later — under our high-profile coach performed superbly. We didn't need to wrestle with the steering wheel; we simply guided it, and enjoyed the confidence that the motorhome would move as directed.

The rig's 8.1-L GM big-block engine runs quiet and smooth, thanks in part to excellent sound insulation, and it propels the coach as it should. The transmission would drop a gear or two on the freeway grades but we maintained traffic speed, usually around 65 MPH, with little effort.

A necessary stop for groceries can seem agonizingly slow when you're on the road to camp. Yet, we were pleased with the big rig's steering maneuverability in the non-RV-friendly parking lot. Our perishables and general kitchen cargo were quickly stashed in appropriate spots with more than enough room left over.

Our longest side trip was a five-mile dirt road jaunt to explore Trona Pinnacles, in the Ridgecrest, Calif., vicinity, a site of many film and video shoots for movies and TV. The casually maintained road and its partial washboard surface challenged the Workhorse leaf-spring suspension and Bilstein shock absorbers, but we managed the trip with nothing shaken loose or dislodged.

The downhill into Panamint Valley (on the west side of Death Valley National Park) included some 4-percent grade (not that bad a hill), and the chassis' grade brake transmission shift-down feature helped hold us back to 60 MPH in direct gear. A 6-percent section required some occasional brake pedal to hold speed and avoid engine over-revving.

As the sun dropped behind the Argus Range mountains fronting the west side of Panamint Valley, we pulled into our

2010 WINNEBAGO ADVENTURER 37F

WHAT'S HOT

Sensibly placed controls; safety key-lock feature for slideouts; dual bathrooms; convenient side-hinged storage compartment doors; comfortable lounge area.

WHAT'S NOT

Tight quarters when slideouts are stowed; one gas furnace with no second furnace option; 860-pound occupant and cargo carrying capacity (occc).



With the slideouts extended, the motorhome has a wide-open living area. The optional Ultraleather dual control Rest Easy sofa/recliner/bed creates a comfy place to read.

SPECIFICATIONS

PERFORMANCE

FUEL ECONOMY: 7.5 MPG

ACCELERATION:

0-60: 23.57 SEC

40-60: 13.27 SEC

CHASSIS

MODEL: WORKHORSE W22

ENGINE: GM VORTEC 8.1-L V-8

SAE HP: 340 @ 4,200 RPM

TORQUE: 455 LB-FT @ 3,200 RPM

TRANSMISSION: ALLISON 1000MH

6-SPD W/O D

AXLE RATIO: 5.86:1

FRONT TIRES: 235/80R22.5

REAR TIRES: 235/80R22.5

WHEELBASE: 248"

BRAKES: POWER DISC

SUSPENSION: LEAF SPRING

FUEL CAP: 75 GAL

WARRANTY: 3 YRS/36,000 MILES

COACH

EXT LENGTH: 37' 4"

EXT WIDTH: 8' 5"

EXT HEIGHT: 12' 3"

INT WIDTH: 8'

INT HEIGHT: 7' 2"

CONSTRUCTION: STEEL AND ALUMINUM FRAMING, STEEL CAB STRUCTURE, POLYSTYRENE INSULATION, FIBERGLASS SKIN AND ROOF

FRESHWATER CAP: 97 GAL

BLACK-WATER CAP: 52 GAL

GRAY-WATER CAP: 71 GAL

WATER-HEATER CAP: 10 GAL

LP-GAS CAP: 28 GAL

AIR CONDITIONER (1): 27,000 BTU TRUEAIR

FURNACE: 40,000 BTU

REFRIGERATOR: 8 CU-FT

INVERTER/CHARGER: 600 WATTS/55 AMPS

BATTERY: (1) 12-VOLT CHASSIS,

(2) 12-VOLT COACH

AC GENERATOR: 5.5 KW

BASE MSRP: \$154,032

MSRP AS TESTED: \$166,079

WARRANTY: 1 YR/15,000 MILES

WET WEIGHT

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

FRONT AXLE: 7,020 LBS

REAR AXLE: 14,120 LBS

TOTAL: 21,140 LBS

CHASSIS RATINGS

GAWR, F/R: 8,500/15,000 LBS

GVWR/GCWR: 22,000/26,000 LBS

OCWC: 860 LBS

GAWR: GROSS AXLE WEIGHT RATING

GVWR: GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT RATING

GCWR: GROSS COMBINATION WEIGHT RATING

OCWC: OCCUPANT AND CARGO CARRYING

CAPACITY RATING

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With its roomy corner shower, a vanity counter with extra space and plentiful storage, the aft master bath is superb.



An optional 40-inch LCD TV rises from the streetside dining table/buffet unit in the main living area.

all-time favorite campground in the area — Panamint Springs Resort (www.deathvalley.com/psr, 775-482-7680). A short drive to our easy-access spot with a 50-amp hookup and wide-open space for the slideouts made our day's-end chores more agreeable. The mostly level pad meant we could skip the hydraulic leveling jacks because we enjoy the feel of the coach rocking in the desert wind.

The microwave made fast work of our casual dinner, which we consumed while sitting by the campfire in the gloaming. The extra-convenient side-hinged storage compartment doors ensured we had painless access to our firewood supply, camp chairs and the like, and we had more roomy compartments we didn't even use on the trip.

There's nothing quite like the view from a Panamint Springs campsite. Even in the fading daylight the entire north end of the valley with its sand dunes and rugged far-side

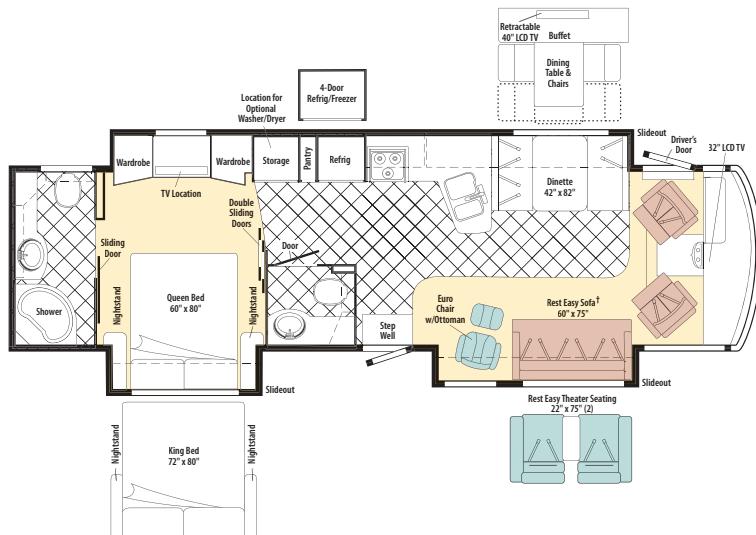
cliffs entrances a visitor. When our fire died down and the brisk desert wind started, we ducked inside to enjoy Winnebago's best.

HIGH-STYLE LIVING

From the sleek fiberglass exterior with full-body paint and graphics — ours was the Amber Fire color scheme — to the well-chosen interior components, this coach looks higher-end than its \$166,079 MSRP.

There's no doubt the lounge is the heart and soul of this rig. In socializing mode, its sofa, two dinette chairs, two extra folding dinette-type chairs, padded lounge chair with ottoman and forward seats that turn partway around provide comfort for a small group.

In entertainment mode the Rest Easy sofa comes into its own. Extend the footrests, use the power switch to angle the backrest to taste and you have a pair of adjustable and very welcome recliners



for viewing the optional 40-inch LCD TV that majestically rises from the streetside dining table/buffet unit. We didn't use either that TV or the standard 32-inch unit in the cabover cabinet, which is a bit redundant along with the 40-incher nearby, as we prefer socializing or relaxing with good reading material in a road test camp.

After-hours, the master suite and rear bath served us well. The optional king-size bed (\$252) is on a powered base, in addition to the slideout, that helps the bed fold upward to fit the interior room with the slideout stored. In sleep mode there's a lot of floor space between bed and wardrobes for interference-free maneuvering.

The aft bath is superb. A roomy corner shower, a vanity sink and counter with extra space, plentiful storage and a non-cramped toilet fitment create a no-compromise functional area.

Way too early the second morning a knock on the door revealed our fellow *MotorHome* contributor Fred Pausch had tracked us down and joined us at Panamint Springs. The early hour was forgiven when we spied the tray of hot coffee cups he held. "Well, that's different, then; come on in!"

Pausch parked his sleeping bag on the Rest Easy sofa and found it more than accommodating for overnight guests.

With company aboard, the dual-bath floorplan proved its value. Pausch employed the mid-coach half-bath and, with privacy ensured by the sliding opaque doors separating the master bedroom from the forward area, we experienced firsthand how well the dual-zone living plan worked.

Our Adventurer time was not fully without its challenges.

We had learned the LP-gas furnace was malfunctioning, due to a bad gas valve, before we started the trip. No problem; we opted to use the TrueAir heat pump, which also has an electric heating component. The system is not designed as a primary heat source, but for moderate secondary use we thought it should do OK.

The first night of 50-degree-Fahrenheit weather was fine; the interior stayed comfy when wearing long-sleeve shirts. The second night, when temps dropped to 28 degrees Fahrenheit, the heat exchanger shut down because there was no heat for it to exchange. A company spokesman said the heat pump component is only good

down to about 40 to 45 degrees Fahrenheit, below which it stops functioning as a heater, and at which time the gas furnace is supposed to be doing its job.

A Winnebago spokesman explained this coach is generally sold to users who head to warmer climates in cold weather, and we'd have to agree. With just one gas furnace and no second furnace option, this coach might be a bit chilly for wintertime fun. One of Winnebago's other products with an optional second furnace would be a better choice for that kind of use.

The next morning we woke up, made some tea and oatmeal, and broke camp. Once we hit the road we fired up the dash heater. The motorhome's rear-coach auxiliary heater, which works off engine coolant heat just as the dash heater does, warmed the coach's aft-end while we drove.

HEADING HOME

Some of those blind corners on the climb west out of Panamint Valley can make even an experienced Class A driver a little nervous, so we took it easy and kept well to our side of the pavement. Thankfully, we met no large opposing traffic on this part of the ride.

While our chassis' 22,000-pound gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) handled the coach well, it only allowed an 860-pound occupant and cargo-carrying capacity (OCCC) on top of the rig's 21,140-pound wet-but-empty weight. Those who want to load this model down with cargo should consider the optional Ford or Workhorse chassis with a 24,000-pound GVWR or the Freightliner Fred front-engine diesel model with a 27,000-pound GVWR. Not including chassis weight variations, any of those alternates should provide somewhat more OCCC.

The balance of the run home was uneventful. We even enjoyed some tailwind, amazingly enough, and the Adventurer ran steady and true from the two-lane backroads to the morass of Interstate 5. Guess which one we enjoyed more.

Apart from the little heat problem, we enjoyed our time with the Adventurer 37F. Good driving, great looks, fine livability and all the features we expect in a top-notch Class A motorhome presented a package that was fun to use and flexible in operation. When that camping itch strikes, this is a great rig to cure it. ♦

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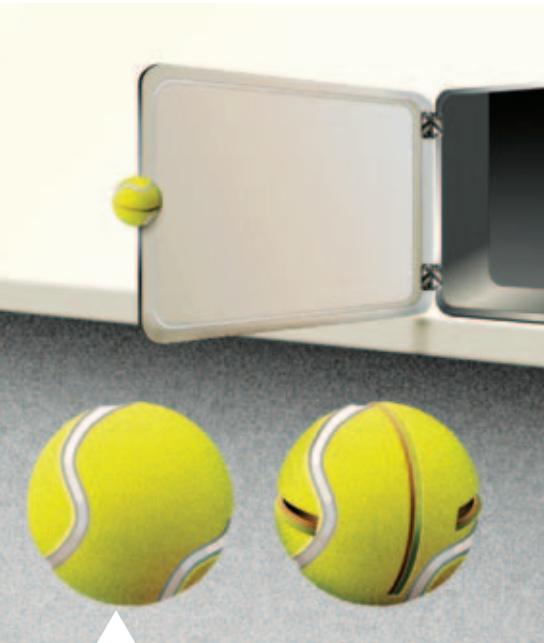
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IN THE GROOVE

I temporarily place a tennis ball on a bin door to protect it from damage when the door might bump into a utility post or rock. The compartment doors on my motorhome have two different thicknesses, so I cut two grooves of appropriate widths on opposite sides of the ball perpendicular to each other.

ROBERT FALK | LOS ANGELES



GOING UNDER COVER

Since there isn't any "cover" area available on a motorhome, like there is on a fifth-wheel, we devised a "garage" for our bikes, camping chairs, tables, etc., by attaching a tarp to the underside of the bedroom slide using large clamps and anchoring the bottom with tent stakes and a bungee cord.

This provides shelter from the elements and is very easy to assemble/disassemble and store.

JAMES AND NORMA SCISM | KINGSTON, N.Y.



POP STOP ▲

In order to keep the soda cans from rolling around in the refrigerator of my motorhome while driving, I made shelving out of sheets of plastic canvas. The sheets can be purchased at craft stores and come in various sizes and colors. After cutting the material to the desired length, I used plastic craft lace to weave it together so that it could be washed. The holes in the plastic canvas let the air flow through so it keeps the soda cold.

CAROL LUCAS | BURLINGTON, COLO. ♦

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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. Be sure to include any photos, illustrations or drawings, if necessary. If your tip is selected for publication, you'll receive \$35.

techsavvy

HANDS-ON | HOT LINE | COACH & CHASSIS | POWERTRAIN



HANDS-ON | by KEVIN LIVINGSTON

I CAN SEE CLEARLY

RAIN-X'S LINE OF WINDSHIELD CLEANING AND TREATMENT PRODUCTS DOES BATTLE AGAINST POOR VISIBILITY

Bad weather always makes driving more difficult; restricted vision through the windshield is a safety hazard and interior fogging can make motorhome drivers swear at the defrosters, which are often undersized for the expanse of glass.

To the rescue is longtime automotive aftermarket supplier Rain-X, with an arsenal of supplies ready to do battle against impaired windshield visibility. We tested four of the company's window cleansing and fog prevention products. We first revisited Rain-X's Interior Glass Anti-Fog window treatment, a product that addresses the problem for which it's named. Then we tried out a new product from Rain-X, 2-in-1 Foaming Glass Cleaner and Rain Repellent, again designed to tackle the obvious. While we were at it, we sprayed the exterior side of the windshield with Rain-X's original treatment after a super cleaning with its new X-treme Clean glass and plastic cleaner (12-ounce squeeze bottle sells for \$6.99). X-treme Clean does an amazing job of cleaning, but it takes quite a bit of rubbing to remove the haze.

Application of Rain-X's Interior Glass Anti-Fog treatment is uncomplicated. Once the inside windows have been properly cleaned, using a 100-percent cotton cloth or paper towels, just add a squirt or two and wipe until the area has been covered. The Anti-Fog should dry clear. If it leaves a haze, sprinkle the window with a little water and wipe again with a dry towel until it's clear and shiny.

Anti-Fog's performance was as expected. While it did work, it did not completely stop the fog from building up over time. However, if applied correctly, it does greatly reduce the extent of fogging and significantly shortens the time needed for the defroster to work. For \$3.50 (3.5-ounce bottle) and a little bit of elbow grease, the results are well worth the cost.

Rain-X's 2-in-1 Foaming Glass Cleaner and Rain Repellent (we'll just call it 2-in-1) comes in an 18-ounce aerosol can (\$4.99) and foams up as it's applied to the windows. Grab a roll of good quality paper towels, spray the window with a layer of 2-in-1 and vigorously wipe until the window is crystal clear and the towels no longer pick up dirt. For the best results, use a microfiber towel to polish.

2-in-1 does a good job of cleaning the windows and its ability to repel water is impressive. The 2-in-1 treatment eliminated all wiper-induced streaking, providing a smoother and cleaner surface for the blades. The company's original product for exterior glass does an even better job of repelling water (\$7 for a 16-ounce spray bottle), but isn't designed for cleaning. Once bug season returns we'll see if the company's claims of making the windshield surface slicker (so bugs can be removed easier) are accurate. The instructions for all Rain-X products must be followed explicitly.

For more information, call 800-237-8645, or go online to www.rainx.com. ♦



Busted Brakes

BELIEVING THAT PROBLEMS WITH HIS MOTORHOME'S BRAKES SHOULD BE COVERED UNDER A RECALL BY THE CHASSIS MANUFACTURER, A READER ASKED *HOT LINE* FOR HELP. HE WROTE:

I own a 2005 motorhome on a W22 Workhorse chassis. Last May I received a notice from Workhorse (Safety Recall 50901-C Interim Repair Procedure) that related to Bosch brake caliper assemblies. At that time I hadn't noticed any of the warning signs listed in the notice.

Four months later, as I set out on a trip, the motorhome would not accelerate normally. I pulled to the side of the road and checked the brake rotors. The front left rotor was hot. I called the local Workhorse dealer and was told I likely had a sticking caliper. They said I might get it to release after it cooled down, which it did.

I took the coach to Baughn Brake and Alignment in Pensacola, Fla., and they pulled the two front tires. The shop owner, Rick Haynes, said the rotors showed signs of heat damage and that the lower pin on the front left caliper was sticking, which caused the brake pad to wear unevenly. He also noticed the right front rotor had heat cracks. Haynes suggested I take the unit to a nearby shop — Sandy Sansing Chevrolet — for further examination, which I did.

The service adviser at Sandy Sansing wrote up the brake problem and e-mailed Workhorse about the findings. Workhorse replied that it would cover the replacement of the front calipers but not the rotors or pads. I ended up purchasing a new front brake rotor for \$169.20 and front hub seals for both sides for \$99.80.

I contacted Workhorse to plead my case and explain that my motorhome

WARRANTY WORK SHOULD BE PERFORMED BY A MANUFACTURER-AUTHORIZED FACILITY.

IF THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, IT'S BEST FOR THE CONSUMER TO CONTACT THE MANUFACTURER DIRECTLY PRIOR TO HAVING ANY WORK DONE.

did have the factors listed in the notice, to no avail. I'd appreciate *Hot Line's* assistance in trying to recover some, or all, of the cost listed above from Workhorse.

MIKE THOMPSON | PENSACOLA, FLA.

The interim notice alerted affected Workhorse owners of a defect in certain Bosch brake caliper assemblies used on W20, W21 and W22 chassis models. It described the authorized interim repair procedure, at no cost to the customer, for those brake problems related to the defect. However, brake repairs related to typical wear and tear or other issues are still the financial responsibility of the customer. As with any recall, misunderstandings about the defect and about who is responsible for what often arise.

According to Workhorse, the problem is usually noticed as a sudden seizing or locking up of the brakes. It also typically appears in motorhomes 5 years old and older that have not been driven for extended periods of time.

Warning signs include a distinct brake burning smell; having to apply more engine power to overcome an unaccounted-for slowing of the vehicle commonly associated with brake drag; an ABS light that is continually on; smoke coming from the wheel end; and a soft or spongy feel when applying the brakes.

Owners of the affected chassis models who experience any of the signs indicated here should have their brakes inspected at an authorized Workhorse service center. The inspection is at their expense; however, if the problem is related to the Bosch defect, Workhorse will provide an interim repair at no cost to the chassis owner.

Hot Line's inquiry into Thompson's circumstances resulted in the following note from Thompson regarding the outcome. He wrote:

Thank you for your help in my attempt to get reimbursed for repairs to my RV's brake components. When I originally contacted *Hot Line*, I also contacted Daniel Ustian, chairman, president and CEO of Navistar International Corp. — the parent company of Workhorse Custom Chassis. Ustian contacted Todd Wisniewski with Workhorse sales and asked him to investigate my problem. After talking with Wisniewski, and sending him documentation of the repairs, it was decided that Workhorse would grant me a full reimbursement for all of the expenses (\$978.78).

I couldn't ask for a more professional, fair outcome. Wisniewski restored my faith in Workhorse. Thanks again for helping me reach a satisfactory settlement.

M.T.

CATERPILLAR CONFUSION

Seemingly unable to resolve a warranty issue on his own, a reader asked Hot Line for assistance. He wrote:

Last March, the engine in my motorhome ran but would not pull the coach. I had it towed to Wayne Cat in Lexington, Ky., but the on-highway engine service coordinator there told me to take it to Clarke Power Services in Georgetown. I had it towed to Clarke, where a technician inspected the transmission. He said it was a Caterpillar problem that was under warranty and that they could fix it. The repairs amounted to \$5,200.

I submitted the bill to Caterpillar

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61



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Honda Generators, go to www.motorhomemagazine.com/info

Dual-Tire Replacement

I am a new subscriber to *MotorHome*, and a new motorhome owner.

From time to time you have discussed tire ratings. A question came to mind that I hope I will never have to answer. If a rear-dual tire needs replacement, should both tires be replaced at the same time? I am thinking more of a road hazard problem, rather than normal-wear replacement.

I have a new 2007 Class A motorhome and should not have to face this problem for a while. But, before the

THE MAXIMUM PERMISSIBLE DIAMETER DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TIRE AND ITS DUAL MATE IS ¼ OF AN INCH.



need arises, I would like to know what is necessary so I won't buy something I don't need.

**RICHARD MUELLER
LEWISVILLE, TEXAS**

When one tire in a pair of dual tires fails, Richard, only the bad tire needs to be replaced. However, it must be properly matched with its mate for long-term use. Dual tires are matched by measuring the diameter of the individual tires, and pairing the tires that have similar diameters.

Mismatching dual tires forces the larger-diameter tire into an overload condition, causing it to over-deflect and overheat. The smaller-diameter tire, lacking proper road contact, wears faster and irregularly. This can cause both tires in the dual pair to fail prematurely.

According to the Rubber Manufacturers Association, for tires found on most motorhomes the maximum permissible diameter difference between a tire and its dual mate, having equal inflation pressure, is ¼ of an inch. To determine the actual difference in diameters, measure the circumferences of the tires 24 hours after initial inflation with an accurate, flexible measuring tape and divide by 3.1416 (pi). If a flexible measuring tape is not available, a string gauge can be used instead, and then the string can be stretched out and measured.

Incidentally, when replacing a couple of tires, most motorhome owners mount the old tires on the front. Since two new tires are closely matched, mounting them as a dual pair on the rear will produce the best tire mileage, if they are kept properly inflated.

LOAD LEVELERS

I have a 2007 29-foot Class C motorhome that has only 9,000 miles on it. The coach is built on a Ford E-350 chassis that has leaf rear springs. It leans to the passenger side because the LP-gas tank, water tank, refrigerator, water heater and one holding tank are all on that side. Also, it has a lot of body roll when passed by large trucks.

Would air bags help correct the list

to one side and make driving easier? I prefer not to have heavier springs installed.

RAY LOVELL JR. | COLUMBUS, OHIO

Yes, Ray, air bags will help. Air Lift helper springs are specifically designed to mitigate the problem you describe. See www.airliftcompany.com.

However, air bags cannot correct the problem because the coach manufacturer simply ignored weight distribution when your floorplan was designed. You will always be carrying more weight on the passenger side, and that will affect steering, braking and tire life even though you can improve vehicle attitude and stability.

With respect to stability, a set of Bilstein shock absorbers will significantly improve the handling of a Class C motorhome built on the Ford E-350 chassis. These shock absorbers are available from local distributors and national companies such as Camping World.

FURNACE TEMPERATURE

I am in the heating and air-conditioning business and just replaced the original furnace in my motorhome with a new 30,000 Btu Suburban. The new furnace was easy to install and seems to work fine. However, the temperature of the heated air is somewhat hotter than I would expect.

I have used high-quality temperature measuring instruments and find that the outlet temperature can reach 220 degrees Fahrenheit when there is no restriction in the three 4-inch ducts. The furnace cycles, but I am concerned that it may be cycling on the high-limit switch instead of the thermostat.

Is an outlet temperature of 200 to 220 degrees Fahrenheit normal? At what temperature does the high-limit switch shut off the gas burner? How can I determine whether the thermostat or the high-limit switch is cycling the furnace?
TOM JOHNSTON | DES MOINES, IOWA

According to Suburban, Tom, heated air should be 200 degrees Fahrenheit or higher right at the furnace outlets. The high-limit switch on the 30,000 Btu fur-



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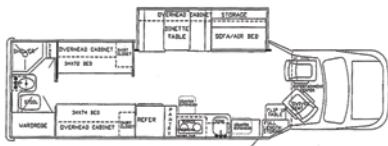
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nance does not open until 230 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

Since you are in the heating and air-conditioning business you are more aware of things that can go wrong than most motorhome owners, and your concern is valid. No furnace should cycle on its high-limit switch. If it does, gas pressure is too high, the blower is not developing adequate speed, the blower is not getting sufficient intake air, the outlet ducts are undersized, or the outlet ducts are restricted in some way.

The thermostat and the high-limit switch are wired in series so it is hard to determine which one is turning off the gas valve. If it is the high-limit switch, there would be no anticipation delay between cycles. However, that may be difficult to sense.

Using a simple multimeter set at 15 volts DC or higher, either device can be checked by measuring the voltage across its terminals. Neither device will show voltage across its terminals when the gas valve is open because both of them will be closed. When the gas valve closes, the controlling device will show plus or minus 12 volts DC across its terminals, making it easy to identify which device is causing the furnace to cycle.

Since the thermostat is the easiest to test, and the outlet temperature is lower than the open temperature for the high-limit switch, test the thermostat first. I suspect you will find that it is controlling the furnace properly.

NO TIRES

I just had a bad tire experience that might help others to be better prepared. I have a 2004 36-foot diesel-pusher. The motorhome weighs 25,000 pounds when fully loaded for a trip, and I tow a Jeep CJ that weighs about 3,000 pounds. The chassis' gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) is 29,750 pounds and the gross combination weight rating (GCWR) is 40,000 pounds, so I am not pushing any weight limits.

The motorhome came with Michelin 255/80R22.5 LRG tires and no spare. The sales pitch was that you need to call for road service to change a tire, because the lug nuts are tightened to 425 ft-lbs, and an air wrench is needed to remove and install them. The road service provider could

theoretically bring a new tire and make the change at the side of the road.

I was on my way to the West Coast, when the tread separated on the left-rear, inside-dual tire just across the Idaho border. I had inflated all tires to 95 PSI before I left home that morning, so I am relatively sure the tire was properly inflated. The tires are 5½ years old and have 40,000 miles on them.

I called Good Sam Emergency Road Service on my cell phone, and it was very responsive as usual. The problem was that a tire could not be found within a 200-mile radius. This particular size is only made by Michelin, and it is not found on many trucks. The best I could do was buy a patched and retreaded tire for \$150. The roadside mechanic said he had put on a lot worse for higher prices.

I decided to change all the tires when I got home. I bought seven new tires and put one tire without a wheel on the roof. Now I have a spare if one is needed, and I hope others will do likewise.

ROBERT HOWELL | BOISE, IDAHO

Learning the hard way is sometimes difficult, Robert. Nevertheless, I have some problems with your solution. Carrying a tire on the roof is not a good idea because it is constantly exposed to ultraviolet radiation and other atmospheric components that are known to deteriorate rubber. In fact, Michelin uses the roof of its Southern California distribution center as a severe testing laboratory to study the effects of this exposure.

Another problem is weight. A 255/80R22.5 LRG tire weighs 97 pounds, which should be carried as low as possible in a motorhome. Also, someone has to put the tire on the roof and get it off. That could cause a problem, because an unmounted tire can be damaged by dropping it off the roof of a motorhome.

Carrying a spare tire is, of course, a good move so you won't be inconvenienced in the future. I have been concerned about the absence of spares and jacks in many larger motorhomes, and I don't buy the lug-nut argument. A torque-multiplying TIA X-12 Geared Lug Nut Wrench can reduce 425 ft-lbs to less than 36 ft-lbs. See www.times12.com.

My biggest concern is getting the tire

properly mounted out in the middle of nowhere, but some emergency road services can do it. You might consider buying a spare wheel even though an aluminum wheel will add about 50 pounds, and a steel wheel about 75 pounds to the weight of the tire.

A mounted tire and wheel combination should slip into a basement compartment in larger motorhomes. However, even though the mounted tire is less than 39 inches in diameter, many large motorhomes do not have a compartment wide enough or in a good location to carry a 150-pound spare. This is something prospective motorhome buyers should seriously consider. ♦

TO CONTRIBUTE TO COACH & CHASSIS, please refer to *Contact MotorHome*, on page 10.

CORRECTIONS

In the February *Coach & Chassis* item "Unnecessary Service," we inadvertently omitted the word "fluid" at the top of Page 58 during the editing process. The sentence should have read: "He then told me that I was also due to have the rear differential fluid changed." Also on that page, the first sentence of the pull quote should have read: "It is not uncommon for gross axle weight ratings to add up to more than the GWR."

We apologize for these editing errors.

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The Rally, go to www.motorhomemagazine.com/info

Wanted: Dead or Alive

I own a used 1987 Mallard 28-foot motorhome on a GM chassis with a 454-cid engine. When I inspected it and drove it, all seemed fine. After I owned it a few months the deep-cycle batteries would no longer hold a charge, so I replaced them. Less than a year later the new ones won't hold a charge.

I realized that in the literature the previous owner gave me, the wiring diagram of the engine and circuits supplied by the deep-cycle batteries was missing. There are so many wires going to all four posts of the two deep-cycle batteries, I'm wondering if they're where they should be. Do you know where I can obtain a wiring diagram?

MIKE SMITH | MORENO VALLEY, CALIF.

The chassis service information with wiring diagrams is available through Helm Inc. (www.helminc.com). You could do Internet searches for the coach wiring diagram, or post a request on www.rv.net, but you likely won't find one. However, you really don't need one to solve this problem.

The batteries are probably getting ruined from being drawn down while in storage, or overcharged while connected to the converter for long periods, or both. With fully charged batteries and everything shut off, check for current draw. Remove one fuse at a time until you find the circuit(s) with significant draw. If the draw can't be turned off, you can add a battery disconnect for storage.

DIAGNOSIS VS. 'SHOTGUN' APPROACH

I recently purchased a 1992 Tropi-Cal 29-foot Class A motorhome built on a GM P-chassis with a 7.4-L Chevy engine with 30,000 miles on it. When cranking up from a cold start the engine won't idle normally. It speeds up and then

slows down to the point where it wants to cut off, and then speeds up again. It does this for four or five minutes, until it partially warms up and then idles normally. My mechanic can't find the problem; he says that all of the sensors and computer have been replaced. After keeping it for 10 days he gave up. I'd appreciate any advice you can give.

PAT CORLEY | LEXINGTON, S.C.

It appears that your mechanic comes from the "replace everything you can think of, until either the problem or the customer goes away" school, also known as the "shotgun" approach. The idle-speed control (ISC) actuator, which contains a small stepper motor that opens and closes an air passage into the intake manifold to vary idle speed under computer control, is likely the problem. The ISC may be gummed up

or defective, the wiring going to it may be damaged, rodent chewed, or the connections faulty. I'd remove it for inspection and testing before checking anything else. Take it to a more capable shop and ask them to start there.

WON'T CRANK WHEN HOT

I have a 33-foot 2004 Hurricane Class A motorhome with a Ford Triton V-10 engine. I took a trip to Las Vegas from Idaho and when I arrived at the campground in Vegas the engine wouldn't turn over. I called a mechanic to look at it; he replaced the neutral switch and it started right up. I drove to Reno and shut the engine off and it wouldn't start again; I had to jump-start it at the starter solenoid. Every time I stopped to gas up on the way home I had to jump-start it. Thanks for your help.

MIKE CALLAGHAM | VIA E-MAIL

I assume that the engine-starting battery wasn't dead and that you tried unsuccessfully to use the auxiliary start function that connects the coach batteries to help start the engine. They need to work backward from the starter to the ignition switch until they find what is not working. I'd start with a cranking amperage test when cold and hot. It's likely that either the starter or solenoid is getting heat soaked and starts working after cool-down. The Ford dealer should have a wiring diagram for an F53 chassis. Independent shops also can access them through services such as Alldata and Mitchell On-Demand.

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HOT EXHAUST AND
CATALYTIC CONVERTER
AND POSSIBLY
START A FIRE.**



CHARGING FEEDBACK

A couple of years ago I bought a 1999 Holiday Rambler 40-foot Imperial with a Cummins engine. The low-charge indicator light on the dash will come on if the generator is started with the coach engine running. The generator is a factory-installed 7500 quiet diesel. Will this damage the motorhome's alternator, or should I be looking for a problem?

**FRANK VANGOOL
SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN**

It's likely that the voltage from the genset is feeding back into the main en-

gine's charging circuit and causing the charging lamp to light. This shouldn't damage the alternator, but you should have the system checked out by a Cummins dealer, as both engine and genset are sold and serviced by the same company (Cummins/Onan).

TRANSMISSION SWAP

I have a 24-foot 1984 Holiday Rambler Class C on a Ford E-350 chassis with 55,000 miles, a carbureted 7.5-L V-8 and three-speed automatic getting around 8 to 9 MPG. A transmission specialist told me he can swap out the three-speed for a four-speed with overdrive for about \$2,000. I plan on keeping the motorhome for as long as it lasts and was wondering about the benefits of doing the swap. Any thoughts?

BOB JOHNSON | VIAN, OKLA.

Changing to a four-speed automatic would make driving at highway speeds quieter and your mileage probably would go up slightly, maybe by 1 to 2 MPG. You can es-

timate fuel cost savings based on the miles you plan to drive per year. Based on the fact that it's been driven 55,000 miles in 25 years, that's only about 2,200 miles a year. Let's say you drive 2,200 miles and get 8.5 MPG; that's 259 gallons and at \$3 a gallon that's \$777 a year. If the overdrive transmission raises it to 10 MPG, that's 222 gallons; at \$3 per gallon that's \$666, a savings of \$111 a year. Based on these calculations (\$2,000/\$111=18), it will take 18 years to recoup your \$2,000 investment in the transmission swap. At that point the coach will be 43 years old.

OVERFILLED AUTOMATIC

I have a motorhome on a GM P-chassis and overfilled my 4L80E automatic transmission by one quart. A garage that is 23 miles away can suction it out. What could be the consequences of driving the motorhome 23 miles at 45 MPH to the garage for this service? The manual says that there could be consequences, but does not specify what.

JIM FAULHABER | LIVINGSTON, TEXAS

Well, you likely drove it by now and it probably didn't do anything. However, a seriously overfilled transmission could cause seal leaks, etc., and in a worst-case scenario blow fluid out the vent onto the hot exhaust and catalytic converter and possibly start a fire.

INCENDIARY IGNITION II

I bought a new 2002 Winnebago Brave on a Workhorse chassis. While traveling through Tok, Alaska, with a group caravan, I pulled into a gas station to refuel. After refueling, I tried to start the engine, but nothing happened. I called Workhorse customer service. It had me check the fuses, battery terminals, etc., which I had already checked.

Finally, it authorized me to take the coach to a Workhorse repair facility. Luckily, there was one in Tok, Grizzly Auto Repair. When I got there the owner said he remembered reading a technical bulletin from Workhorse about a problem with the ignition switch. Something about it draw-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61

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ing too much current, resulting in the plastic heating up and the internal pins in the ignition switch separating, causing an opening in the circuit.

Not only did the repair facility know about this problem, but the local NAPA Auto Parts store had the part. I was back on my way midafternoon.

About 10 months later, I noticed that the ignition switch seemed to be acting up. I needed to jiggle the key to get it to start.

I took it to my local Workhorse repair shop, Gallo GMC Truck Repair, in Vineland, N.J. It was also aware of the problem and said that Workhorse had developed a kit that would, through using relays, lower the current through the ignition switch. Workhorse authorized Gallo to install the kit in my rig.

I never had any problems with the ignition switch after that. All of the above-mentioned work was paid for by Workhorse.

JACK LOCKWOOD | SEWELL, N.J.

Workhorse has had a number of cases where the ignition switch has failed. It is the opinion of Workhorse that the body builder added an excessive load to the ignition switch wiring, and it's really a "body builder"-related issue. Workhorse has been covering the costs of repairs and relay upgrade on a case-by-case basis, as you found out. ♦

TO CONTRIBUTE TO *POWERTRAIN*, please refer to *Contact MotorHome*, on page 10.

HOT LINE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

for reimbursement but was refused payment because the repair had not been done by a Cat dealer. When I contacted Cat headquarters, I was told that since the work was done by Clarke, they wanted it inspected by a Cat dealer before they would stand behind the warranty. I took the motorhome to Ohio Cat in Perrysburg, Ohio, and they checked the engine.

Since that time I haven't heard back from Caterpillar or received any recovery of expenses. I'd appreciate *Hot Line's* consideration of this matter. Thank you.

DAVID GOTTFRIED | WILLARD, OHIO

Whenever possible, this type of warranty work should be done by an OEM-authorized service center. In those cases where repairs are made elsewhere, it's best for the consumer to contact the manufacturer's customer service department directly prior to having any work done, so as not to place any warranty compensation at risk.

Hot Line contacted Caterpillar Inc. on Gottfried's behalf. A company representative, as well as the complainant, responded as follows:

You may have recently received a letter from Mr. Gottfried voicing concern about a repair to his coach in March 2009. Many issues surrounding Gottfried's repair resulted in reimbursement delay pertaining to repair charges to his Cat engine. The repair was performed outside of Caterpillar's authorized warranty network, which is the significant source of delay in this case. Caterpillar is committed to accurately resolving the issue with Gottfried and he should receive reimbursement within 15

days. Many of our representatives have spoken with Gottfried to ensure his awareness of the situation.

**BRAD ZINGRE
GLOBAL ON-HIGHWAY DIVISION
CATERPILLAR INC.
INDIANAPOLIS**

I am pleased to report that Caterpillar has settled this issue in a timely manner. I had tried since March, without success; less than a month after contacting *Hot Line*, the problem was resolved. Thank you.

D.G.

SERVICE CONTRACT CLARITY

Feeling uneasy about the transfer of paperwork after purchasing a service contract for her motorhome, a reader asked Hot Line to help. She explained:

When I purchased a used motorhome last year I also bought a Star RV service contract through Interstate National Dealer Services Inc. to go with it. The salesman promised that Interstate would send me a card and advised me to carry it and use it in the event a repair was needed. I have received nothing from Interstate and have tried contacting my dealer and the company, with no response.

I'm afraid that the insurance company didn't receive the paperwork or it doesn't really exist. I paid \$2,500 for the policy. Can *Hot Line* please assist me? I'd like to get my money back or some solid insurance that I have a valid service contract, guaranteed to pay for repairs as outlined in the policy.

SHIRLEY PYLE | CRYSTAL, MICH.

Hot Line's inquiry into this situation brought responses from both Interstate and Pyle.

Thank you for your recent letter regarding Shirley Pyle. As the administrator of this vehicle service contract, we are writing to make you aware that the coverage is in force and has been active since June 2009.

We understand the frustration experienced by the customer and we only recently received the documents for processing. If the customer wishes to have her money refunded, she would need to contact the selling dealer. This should clear up any concerns the customer has regarding coverage on her motorhome.

**MARY DOLAN
CUSTOMER RELATIONS MANAGER
INTERSTATE NATIONAL
DEALER SERVICES INC.
UNIONDALE, N.Y.**

More than five months after the purchase, the Interstate insurance card arrived. There was no mention of *Hot Line* nudging them, but I'm absolutely sure it was that nudge that moved things along. Thank you.

S.P. ♦

TO CONTRIBUTE TO *HOT LINE*, please refer to *Contact MotorHome*, on page 10.

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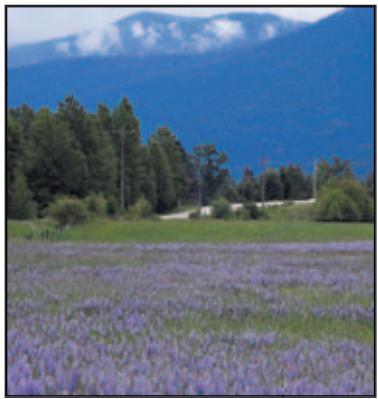
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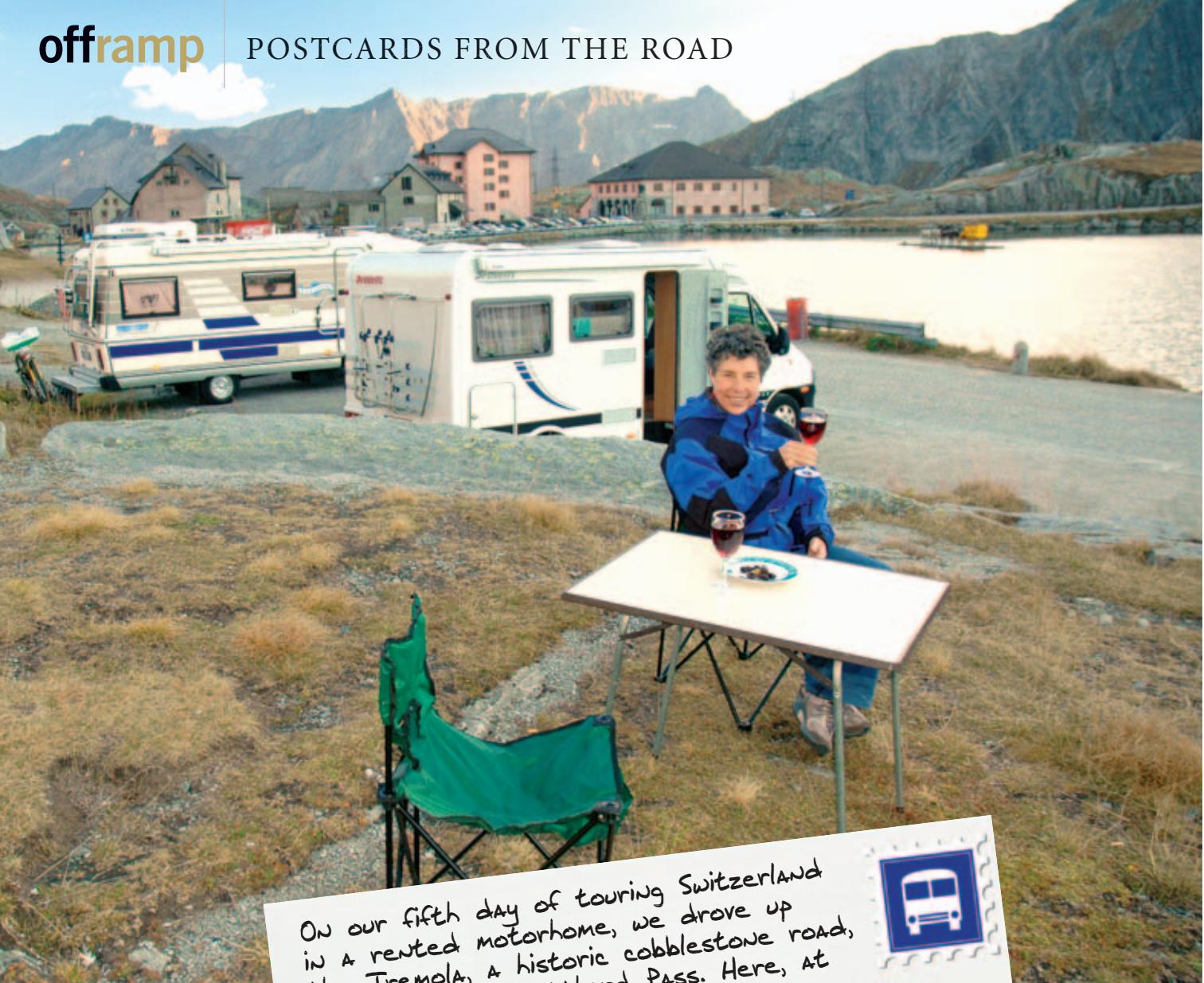
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On our fifth day of touring Switzerland in a rented motorhome, we drove up the Tremola, a historic cobblestone road, to the famous Gotthard Pass. Here, at the top of the pass (6,860 feet) we wild-camped. Before dinner we enjoyed a glass of Italian Barbera and watched the sunset. As darkness fell and a full moon rose over the Swiss Alps, two of our RVing neighbors, who are Alphorn musicians, serenaded us, their melodic tunes echoing off the mountaintops. Does it get any better than this? Off to St. Moritz tomorrow.

Gary and Monika Wescott
Grass Valley, California



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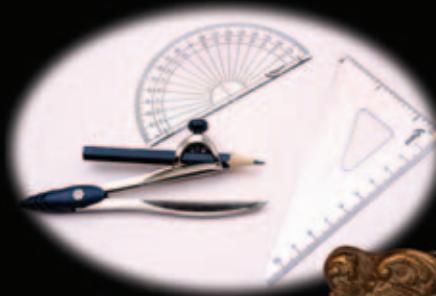


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