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JANUARY 2011

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SNOWBIRD PARADISE
SWAP MEETS, BOONDOCKING & AN RV SHOW
IN QUARTZSITE, ARIZONA

**HAVE GUN,
WILL TRAVEL?**
CARRYING FIREARMS IN AN RV

NORTHERN EXPOSURE
EXPLORING THE YUKON
IN A RENTED CLASS C



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On The Cover: The luxurious and driver-friendly features of the Dynamax Grand Sport (see review on page 44) make this attention-commanding motorhome stand out on the road. Photo by Bob Livingston.

QUARTZSITE

Why do more than 1 million RVers congregate around the tiny town of Quartzsite, Ariz., every winter? Socializing tops the list — but taking advantage of their rigs' self-containment ranks right up there as well. There's something special about camping in the desert, off the grid. And even though the ability to temporarily live in beautiful surroundings while providing for one's creature comforts without the support of local utility companies is more romanticism than reality for most RV enthusiasts (more than 70 percent of all motorhome owners stay in full-hookup campgrounds), the freedom of complete self-reliance and the possibility of driving our coaches anywhere we want are important factors in choosing the right motorhome.

No doubt, coaches without large holding tanks, large battery banks, power inverters and AC generators would be much cheaper — and lighter — to build. But ironically, even motorhome buyers who frequent full-hookup parks still focus on water capacity, holding tank size and onboard power support during the purchasing process. To the casual onlooker, that may make little sense, but to motorhome owners, self-containment is their ticket to travel freedom.

The fact remains that many motorhomes are simply too big for backroad exploration. Even so, the idea of someday taking that big rig into the middle of nowhere and living off onboard self-containment systems remains high on the to-do list. Over the years I've talked to hundreds of owners who have expressed interest in living off the grid, but are uneasy about relying on their onboard systems.

Quartzsite is the perfect venue for neophyte boondockers. First off, motorhome length is not an issue. Forty-footers can easily find space to park. Obviously, you're not going to be alone if you venture into the Quartzsite area during the winter and want to be fairly close to the action. But you can still be far enough away from your neighbors to experience the solitude offered by the vast



Arizona desert. At night, the stars seem to bounce off your chest and there are no street lights to break up the darkness.

The payoff for camping in the desert is the morning. Crisp winter air — that eventually turns to shirt-sleeve temperatures — and gorgeous sunrises set the stage for the day. And if you're in Quartzsite that means shopping until you drop, especially during the Sports, Vacation and RV Show. We've always managed to walk out of the big tent with our arms full of gadgets and useful RV-related items.

As Mary Zalmanek writes about her first visit to Quartzsite (see page 19), the area's population swells dramatically during the winter, when the landscape is dotted with RVers for miles around the center of town. Zalmanek describes many of the main attractions in town — including the big RV show, the unusual bookstore and "yacht club" in the middle of the desert — but we've added a few other activities to our list over the years. For a spectacular view of the area, try walking to the top of one of the nearby hills. Other favorites include hiking and bicycling in the desert, four-wheeling and, of course, strolling the endless aisles of swap meet tables.

Quartzsite is considered the largest gathering of RVers in the world, and with that comes a socializing extravaganza. People tend to hang out in groups, and even those who go it alone eventually mix in with the crowd. Each encampment is special — and many times themed. Morning coffee leads to chores when water is fetched, tanks are dumped and system maintenance is performed. And fellow RVers are always ready to lend a hand.

Evening gives way to happy hours, potlucks and spirited discussions around the campfire. Once you hit the pillow, you're ready for sleep — but not before you bless that little rock show that uncovered a winter gem in the Arizona desert. ♦

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“HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT SMOKING AT CAMPSITES? SHOULD RV PARKS ESTABLISH NONSMOKING CAMPING AREAS?”

That's the question we asked in our October 2010 issue, and here are some of the replies we received.

WHERE WOULD IT END?

You sure did open up a can of worms on this subject. The worst critics of smokers are smokers who have quit. Having said that, I don't agree that there should be nonsmoking campsites. That would be the same as saying “no peeing in this end of the swimming pool.” Most RV parks wouldn't be able to accommodate this, but if they could, then what's next — no beer drinking, don't start your RV before I get up, don't park your toad too close to my space?

LES LLOYD | TACOMA, WASH.

A REFORMED SMOKER SAYS YES

As a reformed smoker, yes, RV parks need to control smoking. It's an individual decision on whether or not to smoke, but it's been proven that secondhand smoke is dangerous. Do not permit smoking in any common areas and create a smoking area and a vessel for smokers to throw their cigarette butts. If everyone obeys the rules, we can all benefit from enjoying each others' company. Isn't that what RVing is all about? If individuals want to smoke inside their own RVs and others are close by, as a courtesy to others, please do so with the windows closed. Your neighbor might just be allergic to smoke.

BOB ROWAN | OKEECHOBEE, FLA.

LOOK OUT FOR THE SMOKING POLICE

It has finally reached the campgrounds of America. The Smoking Police have arrived. I'm referring to the letter from Bob and Nancy Adamski complaining about people who smoke in RV parks. Do these two people sit around their fire ring and breathe campfire smoke?

A woman's perfume bothers me. Should I expect every woman around me to not wear perfume? Should I expect a campground to provide me with a special campsite free of women's perfume? I can see it now — campgrounds set up with smoke-free sites, perfume-free sites, dog-free sites, kid-free sites, etc.

DAVID MUSGRAVE | LANCASTER, PA.

BOOZE BARGAIN PROPOSAL

Tell you what. I'll agree to nonsmoking campsites if others will agree to alcohol-free sites. My wife and I both smoke. We do not leave cigarette butts on the ground or in the fire rings, or anywhere else except our own ashtray. But we both get very annoyed with people abusing alcohol at campsites, becoming noisy and boisterous or cranking up their radios and TVs while getting sauced. Obviously, my wife and I don't drink alcohol. So that's the bargain. Get rid of the alcohol and we'll go along with getting rid of the smoke.

DON AND PATTI CURTIS | LONGMONT, COLO.



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CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?

Here we go again. Another case of "I can't stand what my fellow RVers are doing." Come on people, can't we all just get along? RVing is a fun experience that can quickly turn into "the weekend from hell" if you allow it to. If your skin is that thin that you can't take the way the campsites were dealt to you then maybe the RV lifestyle is not for you. Or perhaps boondocking under the stars in the middle of the Mojave Desert is more to your disposition.

I have been camping for 55 years and the days of half-empty campgrounds, inexpensive site fees and uncrowded highways getting to your favorite spot are gone and they are not coming back. Continue to have that "slow burn" all week long at your favorite campground or learn to get along and make the best of it.

RANDY PETERSON
SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

SMOKE AGGRAVATES ALLERGIES

The Adamskis got it right when they suggested nonsmoking sections in RV parks! They also should not permit campfires near those sections. My husband and I have had to leave campgrounds because of campfire smoke blowing over to our site. Smoke of any kind can be a real problem for those of us who are allergic to it. We have also left campgrounds because of smokers nearby.

Until we do have nonsmoking campsites it would be nice if all smokers had the courtesy to ask their neighbors if their smoking would be a problem to them.

GINNY PIERSON
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLA.

NO TROUBLE — CAMP IN A BUBBLE

I am a nonsmoker. With that said: Camp in a balloon. That's the solution. When you publish the responses to this question you should have a cartoon at the top of the page with a motorhome, grill, fire pit and dog along with a couple sitting in lounge chairs with the site encapsulated in a bubble.

J. RICE | **GALENA, ILL.**

CHRONIC COMPLAINER CAMPFIRE

RV parks should not establish nonsmoking areas. They should, however, establish

areas for chronic complainers. They can all sit around the campfire and complain.

LARRY MASON | **ALTA LOMA, CALIF.**

MORE ARTICLES ABROAD

I was intrigued by Larry Hoffman's "Going Global" feature (October 2010). My wife and I are considering traveling full time in Europe for at least two years. We would love to see more articles about traveling abroad and any leads you might give us for information on full-timing in Europe.

ALLEN LOVEJOY
WOODBURY, MINN.

VERY HAPPY CAMPERS

Your remarks about Camper Coachman in the September 2010 issue (On Ramp) sure brought back a lot of memories! When our kids were young we traveled in a pick-up camper. We devoured every issue when Camper Coachman arrived and visited many places because of the articles. Our first two campers were homemade and when we bought a 10½-foot Winnebago camper in 1966 we thought we had died and gone to heaven!

In 1972 we loaded up the Winnebago with our four kids and headed for Alaska. We spent three months and traveled 12,000 miles on that trip. We all had a blast and still talk about it. After the kids grew up we switched to motorhomes, but in 1997 we headed for Alaska again. Decided to leave the motorhome and take the same size camper but only the two of us. You know what? After our plushy motorhomes, we didn't have enough room! We are now on our ninth motorhome since retirement and we love it.

JIM AND MERRELYN BRAND
STANWOOD, MICH.

A CAVALIER AND COACHMAN

Wow, I thought I was the only person who remembered Camper Coachman! It was a great magazine and I read it thoroughly each month. In 1972 we purchased an 8-foot Cavalier slide-in camper. During the next six years we traveled with our children. It was our home-away-from-home and remembered very fondly. Our children have grown and moved away but the memories of that camper live in our hearts.

CAROL HARRIS
LIVINGSTON, TEXAS

THOR

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"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

~John F. Kennedy

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A WARNING ABOUT WARNING LIGHT

I read with interest the article by Roger Hunsicker (“Adding a Low Oil Pressure Warning Light to Your Motorhome,” September 2010), as adding a light is something I’ve done on a variety of engines over the last four decades. I’m afraid the article could create problems down the road for unsuspecting followers of the parts mentioned. Over the early years I did the same as the article mentioned and had two failures and a number of leaks. The type of pipe that Hunsicker mentioned failed — breaks and cracks in the threaded portion of the nipples due, I suspect, to vibration. To solve this problem I began using schedule-80 nipples available through McMaster-Carr and never had another failure. I’d never had the need to use ¼-inch nipples for this purpose but have had the same type of failures on air compressor plumbing, which also was solved with schedule-80 nipples.

TERRY MCCONN VIA E-MAIL

GO WIDER

I wish the RV industry would standardize the nomenclature of bed size. In “Tiffin Phaeton 40 QTH” (October 2010), the Phaeton is shown with a queen bed at 60 inches by 80 inches. In the same issue (“Wide-Open Vista”), the Winnebago Vista’s queen bed is 60 inches by 75 inches. I have a 72-inch by 84-inch king-size bed at home and love it. I think it would be a big selling point if a manufacturer would introduce a wide bed in a 32-foot to 35-foot motorhome as opposed to the narrow 5-foot width.

JIM HAPGOOD | TURLOCK, CALIF.

WANTED: MORE PANTRY SPACE

As I looked at the two Class A coaches you featured in the October 2010 issue (Tiffin Phaeton and Winnebago Vista), I realized why it took me so long to find a replacement for my 2003 Class A Fleetwood Storm. There is absolutely no pantry storage in most of these new motorhomes. I recently upgraded to a 2011 Winnebago Sightseer 33C based on your review several months earlier. What storage! I can actu-

ally put everything away. When will RV manufacturers learn? Or do those who buy these big RVs just eat out all the time?

PETE RATHMELL | GARFIELD, ARK.

BETTER PLACED CONTROLS

Regarding John Decriscio’s letter (“Controls Difficult to Access,” P.O. Box, September 2010), I agree with his thinking on the placement of the transmission controls. It doesn’t make sense that you have to look down and to the side in order to change gears. I purchased a new diesel-pusher last year and I looked to make sure the controls were forward enough that I didn’t have to take my eyes off the road.

STEVE ALVERDES | ORO VALLEY, ARIZ.

QUESTION:

What do you see as manufacturers’ biggest design flaw in motorhomes?

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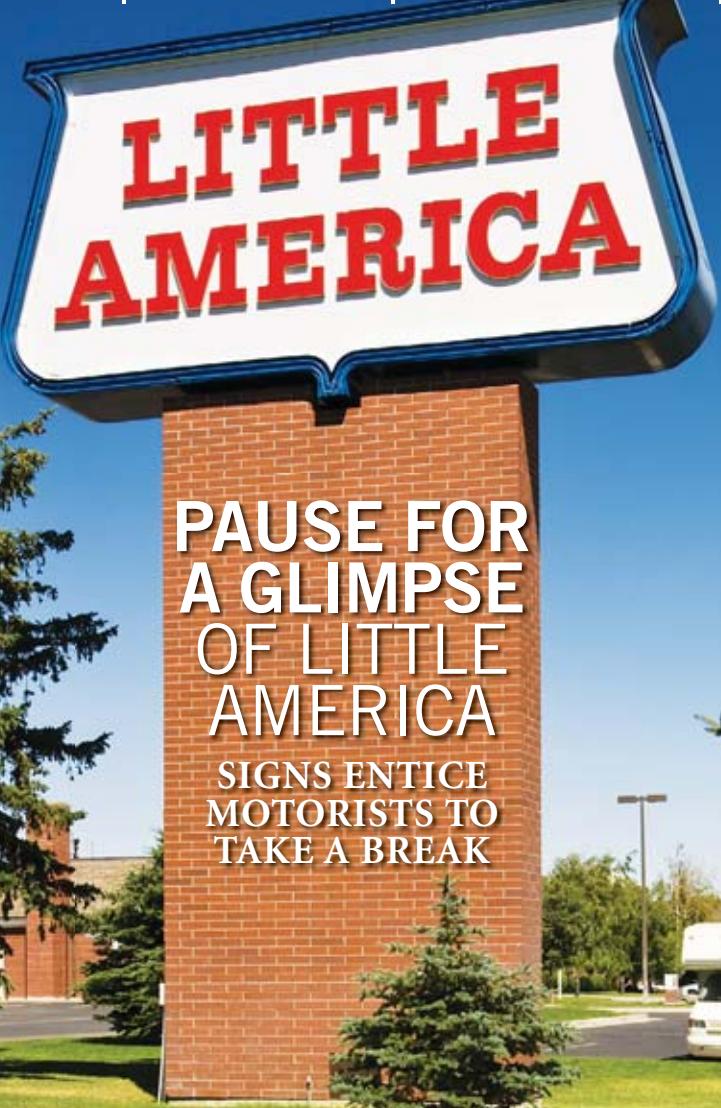
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escapes

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MOTORISTS TO
TAKE A BREAK

For motorists droning across the barren plains of southwestern Wyoming along Interstate 80, almost any diversion comes as welcome relief. Providing such diversion are countless billboards touting the services and roadside pleasures of Little America Travel Center. Billboards are visible hours before reaching the legendary traveler's oasis, founded as a truck stop nearly 70 years ago near Green River, some 150 miles east of Salt Lake City and 300 miles west of Cheyenne.

Most enticing of the boards may be those offering 50-cent ice cream cones, while others promote the center's suites with marble showers, fuel, food, heated pool, fitness center, laundry facilities, 24-hour convenience store, truck

and auto repairs, high-speed Internet and even a post office.

The story of Little America goes back to the turn of the century when its founder was a young man herding sheep on a ranch near Green River. He became lost in a blizzard and camped at a spot near where the travel center now stands. He longed for a warm bed and good food. Later, in the 1930s, as he was building his truck stop, he saw pictures of Admiral Byrd's "Little America" camp in Antarctica and borrowed the name.

Motorists can hardly resist pulling off I-80 at Exit 68. Sorry, no camping, but there's plenty of RV parking. For more information, call 307-875-2400 or visit www.littleamerica.com/wyoming. — *Dave G. Houser*



JAN. 1

For a New Year's Day experience with unmatched glitz and glamour attend the **Philadelphia Mummers Fancy Brigade Finale** in Philadelphia. After parading through the city streets in bedazzled, colorful costumes as part of the World's Largest Mummers Strut, the Fancy Brigade Mummers (the most theatrical and lavishly costumed of them all) convene in the Philadelphia Convention Center at noon for a family show where you can meet and take pictures with the performers; and enjoy the Broadway-quality skits from the 11 competing Fancy Brigades; 856-832-7244, www.fancybrigade.com.

JAN. 8-15 | A whole week is dedicated to connecting visitors to the Smoky Mountains with the great outdoors during **Wilderness Wildlife Week** in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Thousands of attendees will have the opportunity to share in the knowledge of more than 100 experts at 175 seminars, attend a hands-on workshop, get up close and personal with nature on more than 50 guided walks and hikes, or listen to the tunes of authentic Smoky Mountain musicians at AppalachiaFest at the Music Road Hotel & Convention Center; 800-251-9100, www.mypigeonforge.com.

JAN. 15-16 | The annual **Battle of Cowpens Anniversary Celebration** in Chesnee, S.C., is a living history event with something for the entire family. Attendees have the opportunity to partake in a musket drill or go on a guided battlefield walk

or tour by lantern, witness an 18th-century weapons-firing demonstration or hear a lecture by an author who has written about the historic national battlefield. Camping is not allowed at the battlefield but it is available at nearby state parks and campgrounds; 864-461-2828, www.nps.gov/cowp.

JAN. 21-23 | If you've taken the proper steps to prepare your motorhome for a winter adventure, take full advantage of your hard work by attending the **Ice Magic Festival**, held at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise in Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada. Watch 12 international professional ice-carving teams create 7-foot-tall sculptures to the theme of "magical madness," set against the shadow of towering Mount Victoria. Other family-friendly components of the festival include the One Carver One Hour One Block

speed-carving event and Little Chippers Festival, where kids can learn the ins and outs of ice carving; www.banfflakelouise.com.

JAN. 27-30 | Winter doesn't have to be all snow and no fun, as proven by the 10th annual **Blowing Rock Winterfest Celebration** in Blowing Rock, N.C. Bid on fine wines as part of a unique auction, watch an ice-carving competition, listen to live bluegrass music, fill your stomach at the chili challenge or take the Polar Plunge in Chetola Lake, if you're brave of heart. Add in a dog show, pancake breakfast and shopping, and you can see that there's lots of fun to be had; 877-295-7801, www.blowingrockwinterfest.com.

JAN. 28-30 | California's Central Coast wine country, with its scenic ocean vistas and year-round moderate climate, is host of **The Cambria Art & Wine Festival** in Cambria. Taste the wines of the region from more than 25 local vineyards and learn what foods to pair with them, attend an art show/silent auction featuring local artists' creations and demonstrations, eat a barbecue lunch and listen to musical entertainment; 805-927-3624, www.cambriaartwine.org.

JAN. 28-30 | Do you always keep a bottle of hot sauce in your motorhome's galley? If you like a little fire in your food, **ZestFest** in Irving, Texas, is the place to be this month. Hosted by Chile Pepper Magazine, this sizzling event will include cooking demos from celebrity chefs, contests, live music, thousands of food samples and vendors of all things spicy; 845-661-3616, www.zestfest2011.com.

RV SHOWS

JAN. 7-9
North Carolina
RV and Camping Show
Greensboro, N.C.;
800-441-0013

JAN. 7-9
RV and Campgrounds Show
Allentown, Pa.; 610-360-3253

JAN. 12-15
Colorado RV Adventure
Travel Show
Denver; 303-892-6800

JAN. 12-16
Chicago Boat,
RV and Outdoors Show
Chicago; 800-441-0013

JAN. 12-16
Florida RV SuperShow
Tampa, Fla.; 813-741-0488

JAN. 14-16
Grand Rapids
Camper Travel and RV Show
Grand Rapids, Mich.;
800-328-6550

JAN. 14-16
RV Vacation & Travel Show
St. Louis; 314-355-1236

JAN. 14-16
Southern Louisiana
Boat, Sport and RV Show
Houma, La.; 888-948-1355

JAN. 14-16
Washington Camping RV Expo
Chantilly, Va.; 804-425-6556

JAN. 20-23
Inland Northwest
RV Show and Sale
Spokane, Wash.;
509-466-4256

JAN. 20-23
Toronto RV Show
Toronto; 888-331-8885

JAN. 21-23
New Jersey
RV and Camping Show
Edison, N.J.; 732-403-1610

JAN. 22-30
Quartzsite Sports,
Vacation & RV Show
Quartzsite, Ariz.;
714-377-7940

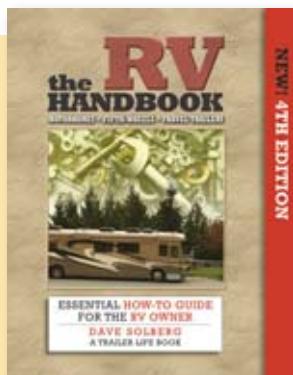
JAN. 27-30
Calgary RV Exposition and Sale
Calgary, Alberta; 888-858-8787

JAN. 27-30
Halifax RV Show
Halifax, Nova Scotia;
888-454-7469

JAN. 27-30
Mid-America RV Show
Kansas City, Mo.;
816-931-4686

JAN. 27-30
San Antonio Boat and RV Show
San Antonio; 512-481-1777

JAN. 28-30
Central Gulf Coast
Boat, Sport and RV Show
Lake Charles, La.;
888-948-1355



RV HANDBOOK

Trailer Life Publications has

released its fourth edition of The RV Handbook, a best-selling guide to owning and enjoying an RV. The RV Handbook 4th Edition is designed to be used as a fast-reference guide and a comprehensive textbook. It contains helpful checklists, photos and schematics with easy-to-under-

stand operating tips, preventative maintenance guidance and user-friendly how-to advice. The RV Handbook is available at www.trailerlifedirectory.com/travelstore, or by calling 877-209-6659.



Florida Keys

BEST TOURING DRIVES

Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., teaming up with America's

Byways, has unveiled a list of the "50 Most Comfortable Touring Drives." They are:

Delaware River Scenic, N.J.
 Merritt Parkway, Conn.
 Great Lakes Seaway Trail, N.Y., Pa.
 Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway, Calif.
 Ebbetts Pass Scenic, Calif.
 San Luis Obispo North Coast, Calif.
 Historic Route 66,
 Ill., Ariz., N.M., Okla.
 Lincoln Highway, Ill.
 Brandywine Valley Scenic, Del.
 Historic National Road,
 Pa., Ill., Ind., Md., Ohio, W.V.
 Blue Ridge Parkway, N.C., Va.
 Journey Through Hallowed Ground,
 Pa., Md., Va.
 George Washington Mem. Pkwy., Va.
 Millstone Valley Scenic, N.J.
 Baltimore's Historic Charles St., Md.
 Woodward Ave. Automotive Heritage
 Trail, Mich.
 Red Rock Scenic, Ariz.
 Stevens Pass Greenway, Wash.
 Chinook Scenic, Wash.
 Mountains to Sound Greenway, Wash.
 Grand Rounds Scenic, Minn.
 Florida Keys Scenic Highway, Fla.
 Florida Black Bear Scenic, Fla.
 A1A Scenic and Historic Coastal, Fla.

Ormond Scenic Loop and Trail, Fla.
 Lariat Loop Scenic and Historic, Colo.
 Gold Belt Tour Scenic-Historic, Colo.
 Ohio River Scenic, Ohio, Ill., Ind.
 Amish Country, Ohio.
 Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail, Ohio.
 Meeting of the Great Rivers, Ill.
 Mount Hood Scenic, Ore.
 West Cascades Scenic, Ore.
 Cherokee Foothills Scenic, S.C.
 Natchez Trace Pkwy,
 Tenn., Ala., Miss.
 Connecticut State Rte. 169, Conn.
 Nebo Loop Scenic, Utah.
 Loess Hills Scenic, Iowa.
 Woodlands Trace, Tenn., Ky.
 Selma to Montgomery March, Ala.
 Flint Hills Scenic, Kan.
 Wetlands and Wildlife Scenic, Kan.
 Talladega Scenic Drive, Ala.
 Alabama's Coastal Connection, Ala.
 Las Vegas Strip, Nev.
 Death Valley Scenic, Calif.
 Route 1, San Luis Obispo North Coast,
 Calif.
 Santa Fe Trail, N.M., Colo.
 Turquoise Trail, N.M.
 Lincoln Heritage Scenic, Ky.

News Briefs

Bill Fenech, president of **Damon Motor Coach** and **Four Winds International**, announced a plan last fall to consolidate the operations of Damon and Four Winds to form **Thor Motor Coach**. Damon and Four Winds combined are the No. 1 retail selling motorhome in the industry, Fenech said. This consolidation is a natural progression of bringing the two companies together to form one company to maintain this market-leading position, he stated in a news release.

RVers insured with **Progressive Casualty Insurance Co.** now earn benefits with its Loyalty Rewards program, according to a news release. Customers start earning rewards on day one. The longer they stay with Progressive, the more savings and benefits they receive. "We give our loyal customers tangible rewards, like accident forgiveness and discounts, the longer they stay with us. Plus, the program is free and the rewards get better with time," said Chris Johnson, director of customer relations. For more information, visit the Loyalty Rewards page at www.progressive.com.

Pace International, a national authorized distributor for **DISH Network LLC** and a leader in integrated home-theater solutions, has introduced a new "pay-as-you-go" satellite program designed specifically for the RV market. The program, marketed as "HD for the road less traveled," is the first of its kind and is supported by a customized RV toll-free support line, according to a news release. **Winnebago Industries Inc.** has named the satellite program "Your HD" and is offering "Your HD" along with the DISH Network Mobile HD receiver on select 2011 Winnebago and Itasca models in anticipation of the high demand this program will create, Rochester, Minn.-based Pace stated. The new DISH Network Mobile HD program allows RV owners to pay month by month, only when they want to watch satellite TV programming. Subscribers purchase the receivers outright; there are no contracts, no equipment to return and no activation fees. For more information, visit www.paceintl.com or call 800-444-7223.



COMPACT KEYBOARD

Want to send an e-mail to your kids about the great time you're having at a new campground, but the keyboard on your iPhone, iPad or Android device is just too small?

There's no need to pack along your laptop, just the new **Jorno**

Bluetooth Keyboard, a deck-of-cards-sized, foldable Bluetooth keyboard that weighs 8.8 ounces.

With keys that are only 15 percent smaller than the keys on a regular keyboard, you should have an easy time making the transition from your computer keyboard at home. Its rigid design and Bluetooth capability mean that you can type just about anywhere in whatever position is comfortable for you. The keyboard comes with a detachable cradle to hold your iPhone or other device right beside the keyboard in either a landscape or portrait orientation, or you can use the kickstand to have it stand alone while you sit back and relax with the Jorno on your lap. The Jorno Bluetooth Keyboard retails for \$99. **Jorno, 877-445-6766, www.jornostore.com.**



DEFEND YOUR IPAD

While the sweeping advent of the iPhone and iPad might be overwhelming to some, the advantages that this technology offers are undeniable. Not only is reading MotorHome on your iPad an enhanced reading experience, but you can also have instant access to the current issue and back issues all from one device, without having to keep stacks of the printed magazine in your motorhome. A case to protect your iPad is a must, and the **OtterBox Defender Series** case offers the ultimate protection plus some cool features.

There are three layers of protection: a velvet-lined black polycarbonate case; a silicone cover with plugs to provide coverage for all ports and grip pads to keep your iPad in place; and a cover that can be quickly snapped over the iPad's face to protect the screen during travel. Whether you drop it or bump it, your iPad will be defended.

One of the more unique features of this case is that it has a built-in stand that works great for watching a video at the dinette or just browsing. The case can also be used with the iPad dock accessory simply by snapping off an access panel. The OtterBox Defender Series case sells for \$89.95.

Otter Products, 888-695-8820, www.otterbox.com.

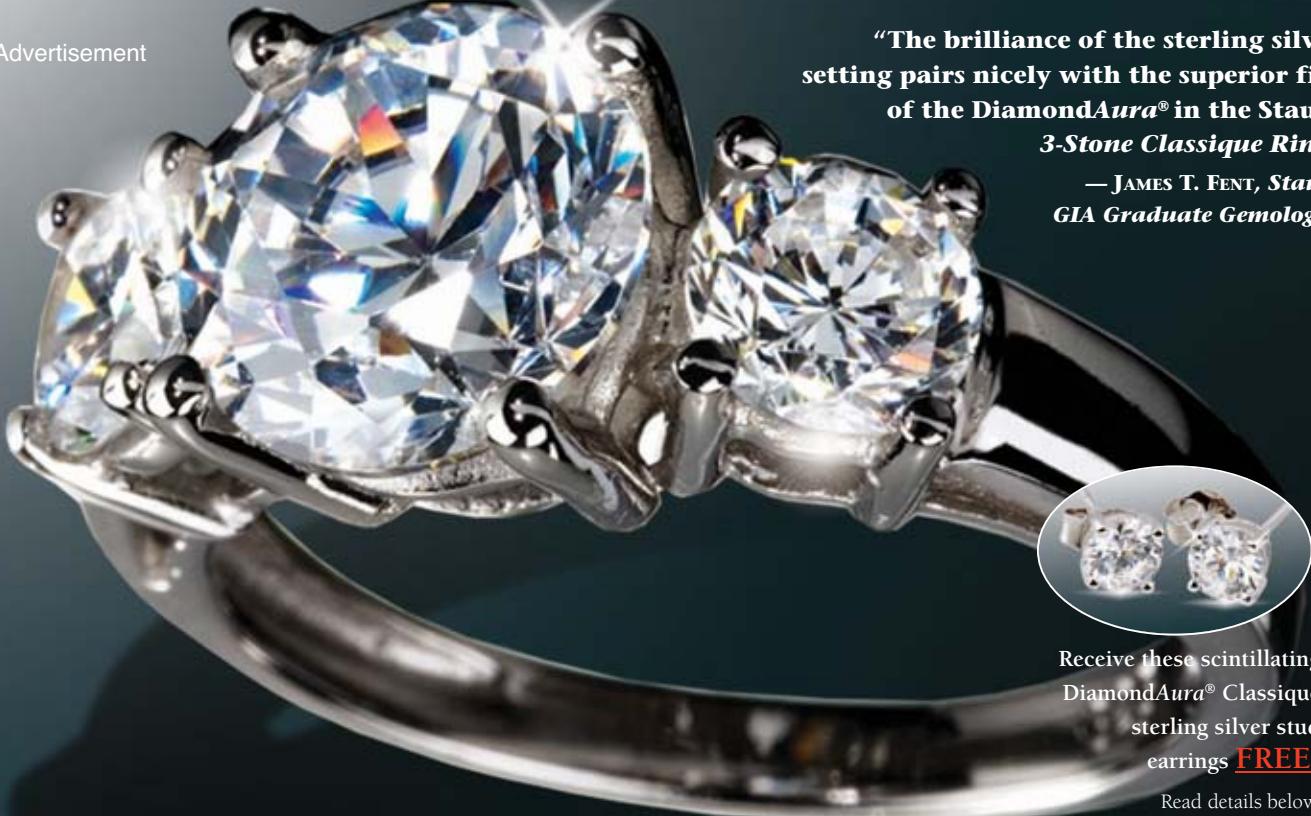


CAFÉ AT THE CAMPGROUND

A great cup of coffee can get your day started on the right foot. Once you have your morning coffee, you can sit in that driver's seat awake and alert, or set off on a day of walking and sightseeing. For RVers who are also coffee lovers and are looking for an easy, portable way to brew a great cup of coffee, look no further than the **AeroPress** by Aerobie. Unlike French presses, which can sometimes allow the grounds to slip through, the AeroPress delivers a smooth, rich cup of coffee without any grit at the bottom.

The process might take a little getting used to until you get the steps down — once you've boiled the water and set the AeroPress over a mug, let the water temperature come down a few degrees Fahrenheit to 175, pour the hot water very slowly over the grounds up to a certain level, stir, and then press the plunger slowly to the bottom of the chamber. The process only takes about 20 seconds and produces a fantastic cup of coffee, plus cleanup is a snap.

The AeroPress is \$29.99; the travel-friendly tote-bag version is \$31.99. **Aerobie, 650-493-3050, www.aerobie.com.**



“The brilliance of the sterling silver setting pairs nicely with the superior fire of the DiamondAura® in the Stauer 3-Stone Classique Ring”

— JAMES T. FENT, *Stauer*
GIA Graduate Gemologist

Receive these scintillating DiamondAura® Classique sterling silver stud earrings **FREE!**

Read details below.

The Fifth C?

Cut, Color, Carat, Clarity...Chemistry?

Is it possible that the mind of a scientist can create more beauty and romance than Mother Nature? The laboratories at DiamondAura® were created with one mission in mind: *Create brilliant cut jewelry that allows everyone to experience more clarity, more scintillation and larger carat weights than they have ever experienced.* So, we've taken 2 ½ carats of our lab-created DiamondAura® and set them in the most classic setting—the result is our most stunning, fiery, faceted design yet! In purely scientific measurement terms, the refractory index of the DiamondAura is very high, and the color dispersion is **actually superior** to mined diamonds.

Perfection from the laboratory. We named our brilliant cut stones DiamondAura, because, “they dazzle just like natural diamonds but without the outrageous cost.” We will not bore you with the incredible details of the scientific process,

COMPARE FOR YOURSELF AT 2 ½ CARATS		
	Mined Flawless Diamond	DiamondAura® Compares to:
	Cuts Glass	Cuts Glass
Hardness	Cuts Glass	Cuts Glass
Cut (58 facets)	Brilliant	Brilliant
Color	“D” Colorless	“D” Colorless
Clarity	“IF”	Clear
Dispersion/Fire	0.044	0.066
2 ½ c.t.w. ring	\$60,000+	\$145

but will only say that it involves the use of rare minerals heated to an incredibly high temperature of nearly 5000°F. This can only be accomplished inside some very modern and expensive laboratory equipment. After several additional steps, scientists finally created a clear marvel that looks even better than the vast majority of mined diamonds. According to the book *Jewelry and Gems—the Buying Guide*, the technique used in DiamondAura offers, “The best diamond simulation to date, and even some jewelers have mistaken these stones for mined diamonds.”

The 4 C's. Our DiamondAura 3-Stone Classique Ring retains every jeweler's specification: color, clarity, cut, and carat weight. The transparent color and clarity of DiamondAura emulate the most perfect diamonds—D Flawless, and both are so hard they will cut glass.

The brilliant cut maximizes the fire and radiance of the stone so that the light disperses into an exquisite rainbow of colors.

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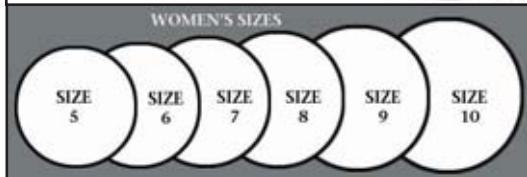
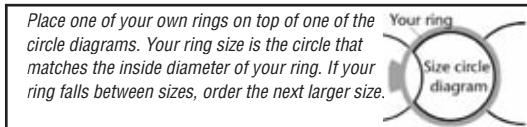
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escapes

CROSSROADS



BIG WHEEL KEEP ON TURNING

On the afternoon of Sept. 5, 1856, the "Great White Arabia," a 171-foot steamboat bound for Nebraska and Iowa, headed north from Kansas City carrying 130

passengers, a mule and 200 tons of cargo taken on in St. Louis a few days earlier. But the journey was cut short when a few miles upriver the boat hit a tree and sank. The mule died and the entire cargo was lost. For the next 132 years the boat and cargo remained hidden, though several salvage attempts were made. Finally, in 1987 River Salvage Inc., a group of steamboat enthusiasts from Independence, Mo., located the vessel, mired in mud nearly four dozen feet beneath a Kansas farmer's cornfield. The farmer agreed to let the group excavate. Slowly what remained of the Arabia began to appear: boards from the paddlewheel, the deck, the boiler, and finally the cargo, the largest collection of pre-Civil War artifacts ever discovered.

Three years after the excavation began, the Arabia Steamboat Museum opened in Kansas City's historic City Market. The 30,000-square-foot museum includes a paddlewheel turning in a pool of water; a full-scale replica of the main deck with boilers, engine and anchor; the mule's skeleton; and a 14-minute video of the excavation. About 100 tons of artifacts have been restored, and the work continues. **For more information, call 816-471-1856 or visit www.1856.com. — Pamela Selbert**



PHOTO: PATRICIA MARROQUIN

SHED YOUR TEARS HERE

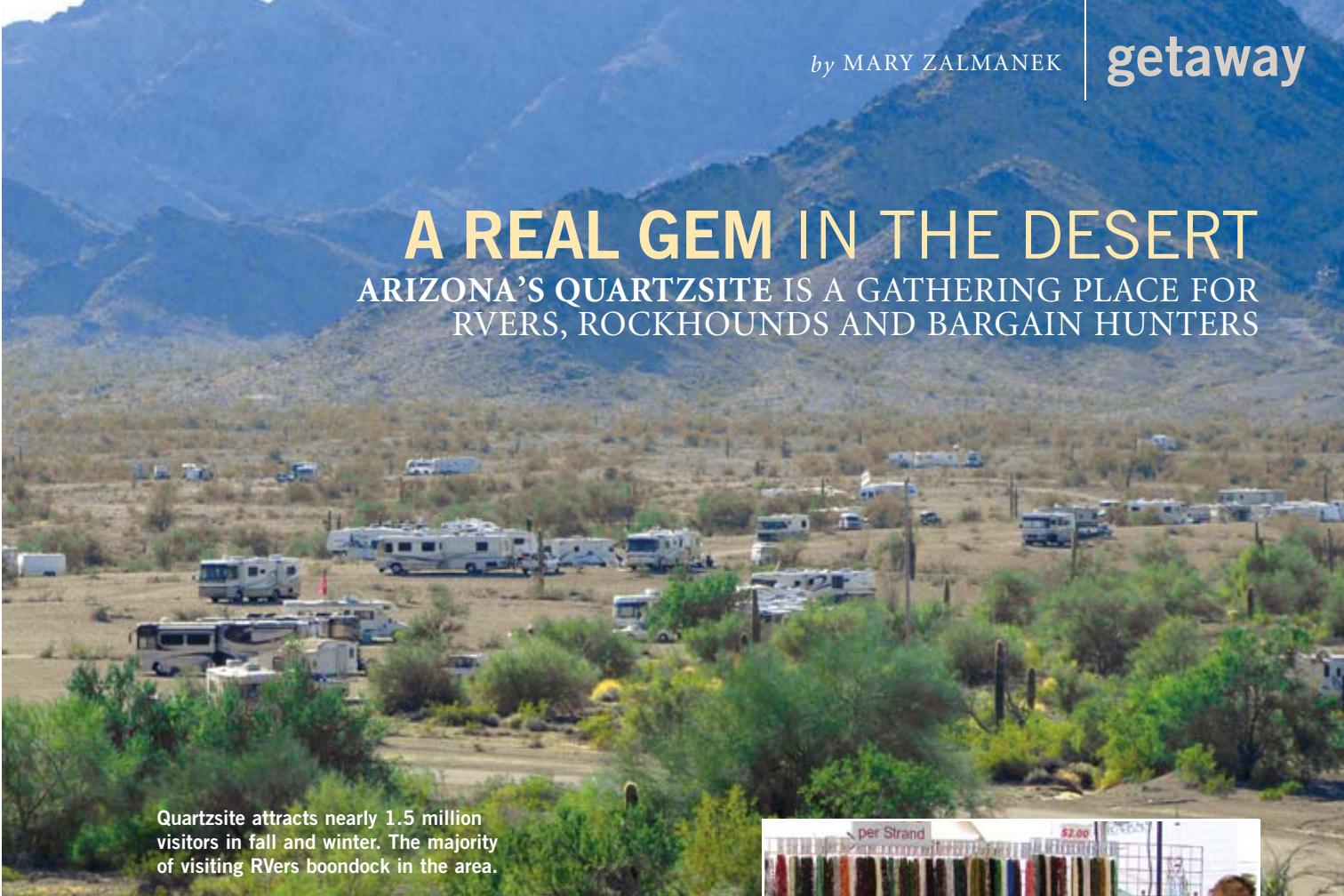
It's not common to find boxes of tissue placed throughout a state park facility. That's what you'll see on benches and tabletops in the visitor center and chapel at Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park off U.S. Highway 64 just north of Angel Fire, N.M. The touching and emotional complex, completed in 1971, is the first and only state park dedicated exclusively to Vietnam veterans. Victor and Jeanne Westphall established the memorial as a tribute to their son, Marine First Lieutenant David Westphall, who was killed in Vietnam in 1968. In 2005, it became the 33rd park in the New Mexico State Parks system.

The 8,500-square-foot visitor center, renovated in 2010, receives about 80,000 guests a year. Among its features are photos from some of the 1,600 service members killed in action; the HBO film "Dear America: Letters Home From Vietnam"; a research library; and a gift shop. Also on the grounds are the Peace and Brotherhood Chapel; an outdoor amphitheater; and a UH-1 Huey helicopter. Entrance is free, and there are RV parks in the Angel Fire area.

For more information, call 575-377-2293 or visit www.emnrd.state.nm.us/PRD/VietnamVets.htm. — Patricia Marroquin ♦

A REAL GEM IN THE DESERT

ARIZONA'S QUARTZSITE IS A GATHERING PLACE FOR RVERS, ROCKHOUDS AND BARGAIN HUNTERS



Quartzsite attracts nearly 1.5 million visitors in fall and winter. The majority of visiting RVers boondock in the area.

In January, some call it Arizona's third-largest city.

Located 125 miles west of Phoenix at the junction of Interstate 10 and State Highway 95, Quartzsite draws nearly 1.5 million RVers, rockhounds and bargain hunters in the fall and winter. We'd been hearing tales of Quartzsite ever since we bought our first motorhome, and we promised ourselves we'd do it at least once.

The crowds peak in January and February when the Quartzsite RV show, gem and mineral shows and swap meets are in full swing. When the sizzling summer heat sets in, traffic jams are a distant memory and the population is just shy of 3,700.

This gathering place got its start in 1856 when Charles Tyson built Fort Tyson to protect settlers and travelers from Native American raids. Eleven years later the dusty settlement was renamed Quartzsite. The few people living in the area were



Above: Gem and mineral shows and swap meets in Quartzsite offer bargains. Left: The Southwest Trek Fun Club, a group of Trek motorhome owners, gathered for a small rally in the desert near Quartzsite last January.



PHOTOS: MARY ZALMANEK



FOR MORE INFORMATION

QUARTZSITE BUSINESS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

928-927-9321,
www.quartzsitebusinesschamber.com.

QUARTZSITE SPORTS, VACATION AND RV SHOW

714-377-7940,
www.quartzsitervshow.com.



Top left: Diane Sears shows the desert roses she found on a field trip hosted by the Quartzsite Roadrunners Gem and Mineral Club. The miniature village of Adamsville was created in 1974 by Babe and Babs Adams. It was donated to the Quartzsite Historical Society and is displayed in Celia's Rainbow Garden. Vendors sell food and other items in the midway at the Quartzsite Sports, Vacation and RV Show.



prospectors and miners searching for gold, silver, copper and other ores in the mountains surrounding the station.

Today tourism is Quartzsite's major industry, with gems and minerals still the main attraction. It all began when the Quartzsite Improvement Association Pow Wow Gem and Mineral Show debuted in 1967 — 1,000 visitors came that first year. With the enthusiasm of tourists and the commitment of community volunteers, the Pow Wow now attracts huge crowds of rockhounds annually.

Kenny King started selling RV awnings at the Quartzsite Pow Wow in 1974. After the 1983 show, he asked his wife Emilene, "What if I threw up a circus tent and called it an RV show? Do you think people would come?" She thought it was a great idea and the following January they

opened the first Quartzsite RV Show.

While most things went according to plan, there was one factor King hadn't anticipated — attendees' unwillingness to pay admission. He charged a quarter, but it kept people away in droves. Finally, vendors collected quarters and handed them out to people in the streets. King got the message and posted a "free admission" sign. It worked then, and it's been free ever since. Now the Quartzsite Sports, Vacation and RV Show draws 150,000 visitors each year. This year, the show is scheduled for Jan. 22-30.

Fourteen years after the first RV show, King saw another opportunity. Since the tent was already up, why not fill it with other shows? His plan was to use the tent for a five-day Hobby, Craft and Gem Show (the 2011 show is slated for Feb. 2-6) after the

RV show moved out. Since there was still space available in the tent, the following year he introduced the Rock & Roll Classic Car Show, which shared the tent on the last two days of the gem show. Last year, the car show drew 250 high-end hot rods and classic cars, some worth as much as \$1 million.

All around Quartzsite, we found plenty of bargains for shoppers with more modest budgets. Beads start at \$2 a strand. High-thread-count king-size sheet sets go for \$25 or less. Amethyst and citrine geodes, salt lamps, Campfires In a Can, cutlery, obsidian-needle wind chimes, jewelry, RV patio mats, deep-fried Oreos and Twinkies, and puppies — really cute puppies — provided further temptation.

When RVers come to Quartzsite, they can choose between RV parks with full amenities or nearby public lands managed

Good looks run in our family



DynaQuest XL
From 32' to 38'



DynaAire – 36' and 40' models available

Take a good look at Dynamax.

Dynamax's reputation for elegantly styled body lines and head-turning paint is renown. Dynamax owners are indulged in first-class comfort with standout amenities that are second to none. Contemporary conveniences like brand name appliances and dramatic Multiplex lighting amp up the "ahh" factor.

For the motorhome enthusiast, the drive is as important as the destination. We start with a commercial grade chassis designed to exceed the comfort and safety demands of professional drivers. Our signature curved design handles cleanly, cutting cross winds for a smoother, more stable and aerodynamic ride. Engine access is just under the hood, so service is a breeze. Dynamax offers up to 5' of metal for front crush zone protection. The result...total engineering synergy from one end to the other, mile after mile, year after year.

The ingeniously tailored DynaAire fifth wheel living suites feature both 36' and 40' triple slide out floorplans with island kitchens. And Dynamax will even paint your tow vehicle to match!

Experience the complete package. Luxury living inside with head-turning good looks outside – all in a fun to own package – hand crafted by Dynamax.



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by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Visitors who prefer a private RV park should make reservations well in advance since most parks are filled to capacity during the winter months.

The majority of RVers dry camp on BLM land. There are two options: pay a modest fee to camp in the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area (LTVA) or stay for free in BLM-disbursed camping areas. The La Posa LTVA covers a large area, more than 11,000 acres. The fee is \$40 for a stay of up to 14 days or \$180 for as long as you want between Sept. 15 and April 15. For your money you get to use the potable water station, dump station, trash bins and vault toilets. Located two miles south of I-10 on both sides of Highway 95, this is the BLM land closest to town.

Disbursed camping is allowed for up to 14 days in a 28-day period. At least five of these areas are located within 10 miles of Quartzsite (see sidebar). Anyone who has ever stayed in any of these BLM lands during peak periods will fully appreciate the value of a flag or windsock as a reference point.

Rather than going for instant immersion in the Quartzsite culture, we decided to ease into it. We stayed at Desert Palms Golf and RV Resort in Salome 40 miles northeast of Quartzsite for the first two nights, with full hookups and a nine-hole golf course. We forayed into the wintertime boomtown to understand the lay of the land. Then, with a full water tank and empty holding tanks, we were ready to join the hordes of boondockers, those hardy folks who camp out in the boonies without any services or utilities.

From a distance, the area around Quartzsite looked like any suburban community filled with housing developments. As we got closer, I realized it was a vast expanse of motorhomes and other RVs nestled among the creosote bushes, mesquite, ironwood and palo verde trees and various species of cacti.

With so many RVers boondocking in disbursed camping areas, getting fresh water and dumping tanks and trash could present major problems if you stay more than a few days. Well water can be purchased at Tyson Wells RV Park, Pattie's RV Park and RV Pit Stop. These places also have dump stations. Trash can be dumped at the Refuse Transfer Station north of Quartzsite just past mile marker 115 on

Highway 95. It's open from 7:30 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday. There's no fee to dump household trash at the transfer station.

The number of boondockers also presents an opportunity for many enterprising vendors to solve problems. If you have a crack in your windshield, the Windshield Guys will come to your motorhome to repair it. If you can't risk missing a basketball game on ESPN, Satellite Advantage will install a satellite antenna on your coach. A honey wagon can come to your motorhome to pump out the holding tanks. These enterprising folks intend to make your boondocking experience as carefree as possible.

Not only can you buy everything imaginable for your motorhome, you can also get some great deals on new ones. If you're satisfied with your own RV but it needs mechanical work, you've come to the right place. Brazel's Performance RV brings most of its equipment from Centralia, Wash., and sets up shop in a paved 3,200-square-foot area near the RV show's big tent.

5 SITES FOR FREE DISBURSED CAMPING ON BLM LAND

PLOMOSA ROAD

From Quartzsite, go north on Highway 95. Turn right on Plomosa Road. Camping is available north and south of Plomosa Road.

HI JOLLY/MILE MARKER 112

From Quartzsite, go north on Highway 95. Look for mile marker 112. Turn right at the entrance. Camping is east of Highway 95.

DOME ROCK MOUNTAIN

From Quartzsite, go west on I-10. Take exit 11 to Dome Rock Road. Camping is south of I-10.

SCADDAN WASH

From Quartzsite, go east on I-10. Take the frontage road from the mile marker 19 exit east. Camping is south of the road.

ROAD RUNNER/MILE MARKER 99

From Quartzsite, go south on Highway 95. Look for mile marker 99. Camping is west of Highway 95 between the gas line road and La Paz Valley Road.

Once we had oohed and aahed at the new motorhomes and bought all sorts of things I never knew we needed, we were ready to explore the area around Quartzsite. Maybe we'd get lucky and find some interesting rocks or minerals on our hike. The Quartzsite Roadrunners Gem and Mineral Club is eager to help amateur rockhounds. The club hosts field trips to search for red and yellow jasper, banded agate and desert roses, to name a few. We joined our wagon master and about 20 other vehicles to caravan to a location teeming with desert roses.

After an hour or so of searching, we novices were quite satisfied that we'd found enough desert roses to fill our pockets. On the trek back to our dinghy, we met a woman who'd filled a bucket with desert roses and a few other treasures like bubble agates and fire agates. Diane Sears joined a rock club two years ago and last year started making her own jewelry. She considers Quartzsite a mecca for rockhounds.

Not wanting to miss any of the must-see sights, I asked some more experienced

Quartzsite visitors for advice. In addition to the various shows and swap meets, two names of local establishments came up repeatedly. The Quartzsite Yacht Club, the "must-see" restaurant, features fresh Alaskan halibut. On a Friday night when the special is fish and chips for \$9.95, the place is packed. If you are wondering how fresh Alaskan seafood could be in the Sonoran Desert, you can relax. If the taste alone isn't convincing, you'll realize the volume of fish and chips served on a Friday night demands fast and frequent shipments.

Falling into the must-see-to-believe category is Reader's Oasis Bookstore. Also known locally as the Naked Man's Bookstore, it's surely the nation's most independent of independent bookstores. The owner, Paul Winer, waits on customers au naturel, or as close to it as the law allows. He wears a little pouch to cover his privates. That's not all, of course. Astute observers will also notice that he wears shoes, a hat, and, if temperatures demand, a sweatshirt.

While curiosity seekers may come to Reader's Oasis for the novelty, book lovers will stay for the novels. The selection of more than 180,000 new and mostly used titles includes fiction and nonfiction. Winer also has an impressive selection of vintage and rare books. Westerns are the store's best sellers.

Even casual observers will notice the signs in Reader's Oasis about Celia's Rainbow Garden. In 1994, 8-year-old Celia died suddenly of a viral heart infection. The community rallied around her parents, Paul and Joanne Winer, the Reader's Oasis bookseller and his wife. A year later, Celia's parents got permission from the town to build, in her memory, a botanical garden, which covers 20 acres of the 80-acre town park. Community volunteers worked, often with donated materials, to create this tribute to a little girl and her dream of making the world a better place. Celia's Rainbow Garden includes a cactus garden, nature trail and the village of Adamsville with miniature buildings created in 1974 by Babe and Babs Adams and donated to the Quartzsite Historical Society.

Originally we planned to visit Quartzsite once. Now we know better. Once is not enough.

Besides, we left without one of those really cute puppies. ♦

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FOLLOWING FEATHERED FRIENDS' TRAIL

IN SOUTH TEXAS, 9 WORLD BIRDING CENTER SITES DELIGHT BIRDERS

by DAVE G. HOUSER



Resaca de la Palma State Park in Brownsville, Texas, preserves 1,200 acres of wetland, mature woodland/thorn scrub and mesquite savannah, and provides refuge for a diversity of wildlife including endangered ocelots and jaguarundis.



Left: An eco-sensitive “green” building houses a state-of-the-art exhibit hall at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park in Mission, Texas. The multi-habitat 760-acre park serves as headquarters for the network of nine south Texas parks and refuges that make up the World Birding Center. Right: South Padre KOA nestles at the foot of Queen Isabella Causeway, with sites overlooking lovely Laguna Madre Bay.



I'm standing atop the five-story obser-vation tower at the striking new South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center where I have an amazing wide-angle view of some 50 acres of pristine salt marsh and intertidal flats on the shores of Laguna Madre Bay on the Texas Gulf Coast.

A khaki-clad couple toting large, expensive binoculars stroll along a sinuous boardwalk bisecting the scene, scattering flocks of skittish shorebirds. It is an eye-soothing, pulse-calming moment that transports me as if by magic carpet to a wetland wilderness. I lose sense of the fact that this \$6 million center, which opened in September 2009, stands on the bay-front chockablock with high-rise hotels and condos. South Padre Island's sprawling convention center looms right next door.

Back on ground level, I explore the birding and

nature center's state-of-the-art exhibits, arranged along a U-shaped ramp in the spacious two-story, 4,500-square-foot hall. Here, a glass-encased exhibit depicts a typical Gulf of Mexico oil rig and the various species of fish and invertebrates that inhabit oil rigs. Larger marine animals and a variety of birds are dramatically suspended overhead. Next, I take a seat in the auditorium to view an informative 10-minute documentary on South Padre wildlife. Then it's down to the boardwalk for a stroll that will give me an up-close and personal look at this eco-wonderland.

With its blinds and observation decks, the boardwalk allows visitors an intimate view of this microcosm of rich habitats that are home to a dazzling array of bird, plant and marine life. Some of the more than 306 species of birds recorded here are full-time residents. Others, including a virtual rainbow of colorful song-



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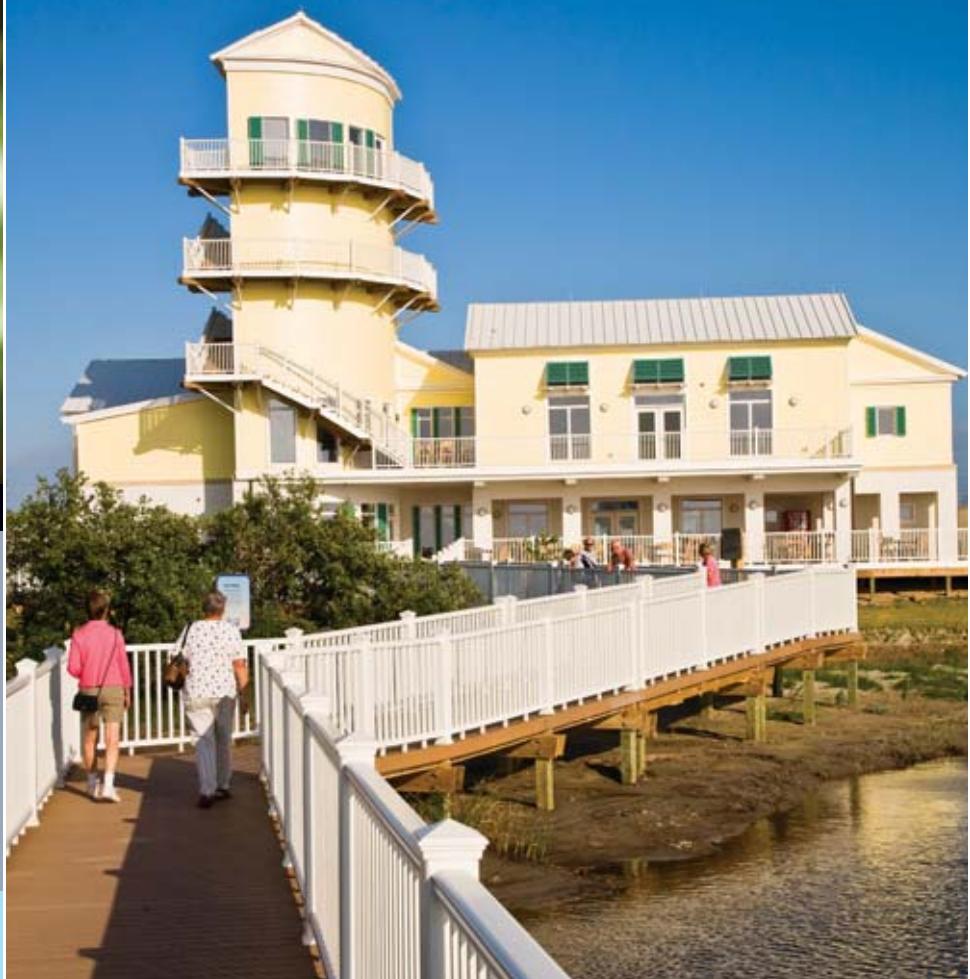
956-243-8179, www.spibirding.com.

WORLD BIRDING CENTER

www.worldbirdingcenter.org.



MAP: BILL TIPTON



Top left: Visitors entering Estero Llano Grande State Park in Weslaco, Texas, are greeted by a colorful array of butterflies. About 250 species of birds can be found here. **Above:** Featuring an observation tower rising five stories above Laguna Madre Bay, the striking new South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center opened in September 2009 to provide a world-class facility dedicated to environmental education and conservation.

birds such as orioles, tanagers, warblers and thrushes, are migrants. For many of them, South Padre Island is the first land-fall after a remarkable and arduous seasonal crossing of the Gulf from southern Mexico and Central America.

At one of the seven bird blinds, I pause to observe a pair of spindly legged herons that are stalking prey with great patience and unwavering intensity. Elevated and railed, the boardwalk is nearly a mile long and there are a number of informational placards along the route that help identify and explain various features of this fascinating environment.

Birding is one of the most popular visitor activities in the surrounding Lower Rio Grande Valley and, as a testament to that interest, nine regional parks and refuges have convened to form a cooperative network known as the World Birding Center. The South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center is the network's newest member. Seventy miles away, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park just south of Mission serves as the network's headquarters.

I'm no binocular-bearing, camo-wearing birder to be sure, but the new South Padre Center has definitely stirred my interest in our feathered friends, so I decide to spend a couple of days visiting other nearby World Birding Center parks and refuges. I soon discover I'm hardly the first person to make such a choice. Signage indicates I've embarked on the Lower Texas Coast section

of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail that more or less follows U.S. Highway 83 for about 100 miles alongside the Rio Grande from South Padre to Roma.

As the network's headquarters, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park seems a good place to start the tour. After reluctantly pulling up stakes at my waterfront space at South Padre KOA, I motor up Highway 83, easily accessing the park via Bentsen Palm Drive. The park borders the Rio Grande and offers a diverse mix of habitats from riparian woodland to scrub brush to wetlands. You can hike, rent a bike or catch a ride on a tram to get around the 760-acre preserve. Hanging out for a bit at Hawk Tower, I spot a number of raptors, including whitetail and Mississippi kites, red-tailed hawks and a peregrine falcon.

Birds aside, the park's most impressive feature may well be a building — but a very green one. Designed for ultra-efficient air circulation that minimizes the need for heating or air conditioning, the tin-topped exhibit/interpretive center presents a series of informative exhibits and some graphically exciting displays and murals. I notice, too, the center is flanked by cisterns that collect and store rainwater piped from the structure's roof.

After spending far more time at the park than I expected, I decide to overnight here in Mission, saving the run up to Roma for the morning. It is a move easily accomplished at the superb



Clockwise from top left: A historic Mediterranean-style 1935 adobe mansion serves as the visitor center for Quinta Mazatlan, an eight-acre urban nature/bird sanctuary in the center of McAllen, Texas. More than 100 species of birds have been identified along the nature trail. The reserve, frequented by school groups, is owned and operated by the city of McAllen. The 200-acre Estero Llano Grande State Park is notable for having the largest wetland habitat of any World Birding Center reserve.

Bentsen Palm Village RV Resort, conveniently situated adjacent to the park entrance.

Roma Bluffs, as the name suggests, is a scenic promontory overlooking the Rio Grande in the historic town of Roma, about 30 miles to the northwest on Highway 83. Roma Bluffs is a unit of the Lower Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge and is noted as a preserve favored by a number of rare migratory tropical birds, including the green kingfisher and Audubon's oriole. It is the westernmost of the nine World Birding Center sites.

Of significant interest here, as well, is the town's impressive 19th-century architecture, well-preserved as a National Historic Landmark District. This nine-square-block area around Roma Plaza traces its roots to the Spanish colonial era of the 1760s and consists of more than 30 structures, many of which have been meticulously restored.

Plotting my return to South Padre, I decide which of the six remaining World Birding Center sites I'll visit, realizing there's no way to see them all in a day's time. On my agenda is Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen, Estero Llano Grande State Park in Weslaco and Resaca de la Palma State Park just outside Brownsville. That leaves three wings (no pun intended) of the World Birding Center for another visit, including Harlingen's Arroyo Colorado, Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and Old Hidalgo Pumphouse Nature Park.

Quinta Mazatlan is quite different from the rest of the World Birding Center member reserves. It's an urban refuge headquartered in a historic Mediterranean-style 1935 adobe mansion. The site is owned and managed by the city of McAllen. More than 100 species of birds have been identified along the nature trail that weaves among eight acres of woodlands surrounding the mansion. The home is a beauty and, coupled with its fascinating history, is worth a visit all by itself.

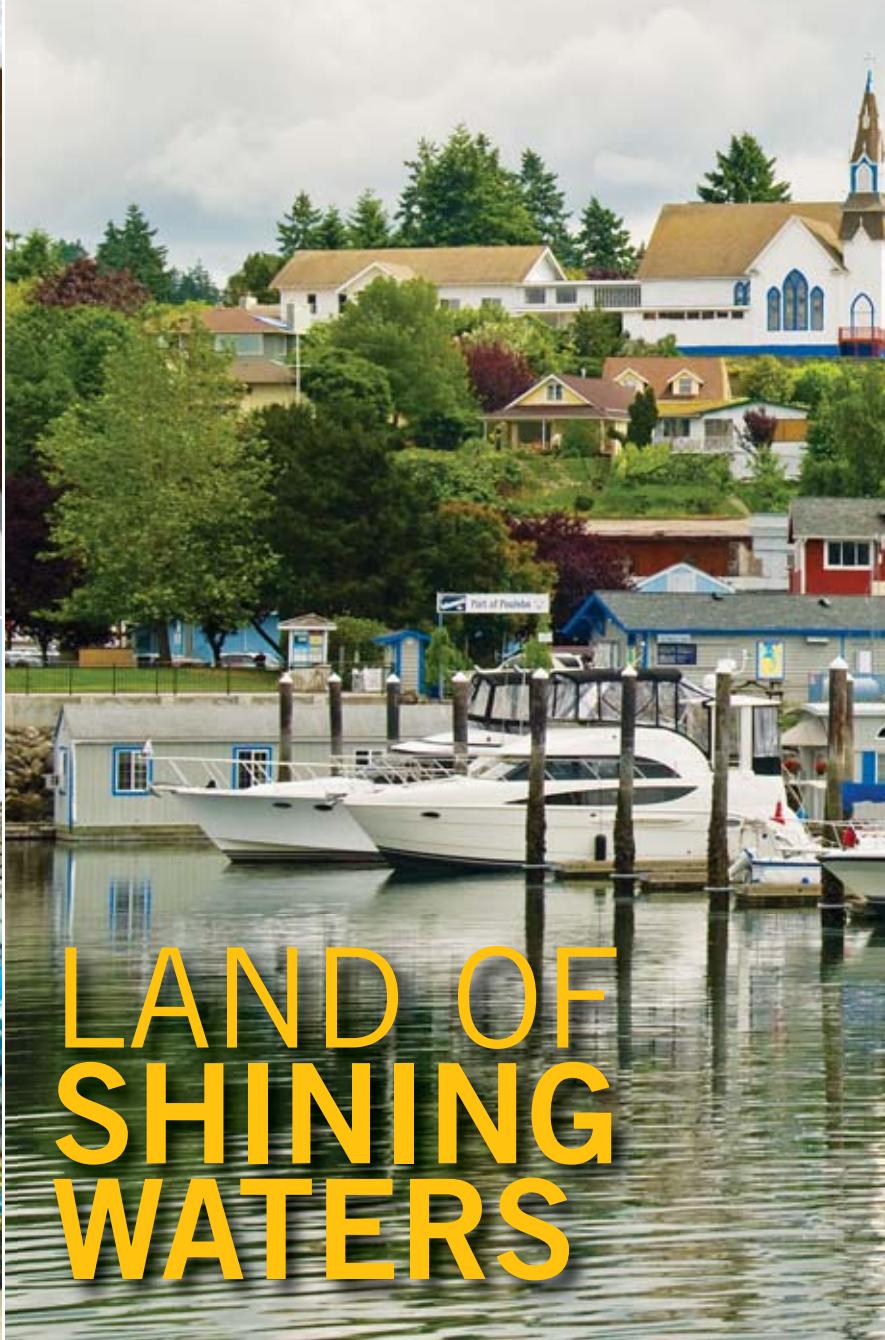
Approaching the visitor center at Estero Llano Grande, I'm

greeted by a veritable swarm of butterflies. These colorful insects — along with scads of dragonflies that inhabit the region — are becoming nearly as popular with visitors as are the park's nearly 250 species of birds. I also encounter park interpreter John Yochum, who has joined a group of birders and is reeling off butterfly names and vital statistics. He appears to know some of the visitors by name and confesses to spending a great deal of his time out on the park's network of trails, chatting up guests.

"Being out here is a lot better than working," he says with a big smile — a man who obviously loves his job. "Besides, I have to stay on my toes," he says, "because some of these folks know the birds better than I do." I come to doubt that statement as we stroll the 200-acre refuge, noted for having the largest wetland habitat of any World Birding Center reserve. Yochum is pointing out differences between coots and teals and ruddy ducks (they all look the same to me) when I spot a creature that has absolutely no feathers and I do a double take as the word "Gator!" escapes my mouth. It has not occurred to me that these big reptiles even exist in south Texas. They do indeed.

Bobcat sightings are fairly common in Resaca de la Palma State Park, as well as throughout Texas, so I keep my eyes peeled as I hike one of the trails through this sprawling 1,200-acre subtropical conservation area. A resaca is an oxbow lake or pond-like area, formed by the changing course of the Rio Grande and edged with thick vegetation.

I hear frogs croaking in the distance and spot coots, teals and kingfishers, plus a regal black-crowned night heron — but no bobcats. This park, along with most refuges in the region, is home to a host of other mammals including armadillo, javelina, coyote and opossum. As I drive from the park, it occurs to me I'm virtually in the city of Brownsville. It is reassuring to know that such parks as these exist — and flourish so close to human development. ♦



LAND OF SHINING WATERS

THE SHIMMERING LANDSCAPE OF WASHINGTON'S KITSAP PENINSULA IS A YEAR-ROUND DESTINATION FOR RVERS

by RICHARD AND ELLEN THANE

There are few areas more beautiful than Washington state's Kitsap Peninsula.

Almost an island, its many fingers spread out into the sparkling waters of Puget Sound and Hood Canal with more than 300 miles of picturesque shoreline. Deep green coniferous forests cover the inland regions while, across Hood Canal, the snowcapped Olympic Mountains fill the western horizon with dazzling views. To the east, across Puget Sound, Seattle glitters in nighttime skies with a kaleidoscope of brilliant color and provides big-city amenities — all just a short ferry ride away, or take the Tacoma Narrows Bridge to the south. To the southeast Mount Rainier punctuates the horizon with its graceful, cone-shaped mound and in some locations you can see Mount Baker rising along the northeastern skyline.

Initially built to serve the logging and fishing industries and then the U.S. Navy, all of the towns are located along the shore and still reflect the ethnicities of early settlers. Life continues to be centered around the sea coast where, for thousands of years, Native American tribes such as the Suquamish, S'Klallam, Chemakum, Skokomish and Toan-hooch thrived on forests teeming with game and seas rich with aquatic life.

The peninsula has had its share of boom times followed by decades of economic decline, but in recent years prosperity is returning and tourists from around the world trickle



PHOTOS: RICHARD AND ELLEN THANE

in to enjoy the incredible beauty, history and aquatic activities. Fishing villages, once nearly forgotten through the passage of time, have transitioned to tourist attractions with first-class marinas, good seafood restaurants and shops featuring Native American art and local crafts.

Yes, it does rain, especially from the end of September through May, but the rains are seldom torrential and misty, fog-shrouded days create magical watercolor vistas where you might expect to see fairy wings flitting among the trees or leprechauns perched beneath dripping fir and cedar boughs of century-old trees.

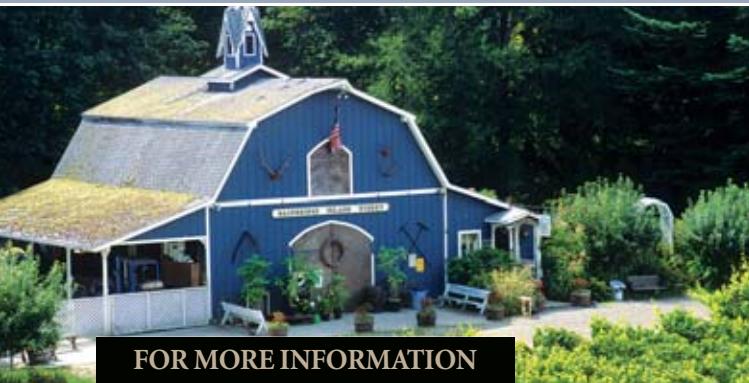
In spring and summer deep pink rhododendrons bloom at the forest's edge and tall spikes of foxglove wave from the roadsides. Any time of year you will hear crows screeching from the treetops and sea gulls and great herons keening along the shore. Seals bark from floats anchored offshore and occasionally a pod of orcas makes its way into Puget Sound. It's not unusual to spot a bald eagle perched high on a tree limb or deer grazing in a field.

Marine activities abound with beachcombing, fishing, diving, canoeing or even zipping around on a personal watercraft. For fishing or collection of shellfish, check with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for seasons and license information. If you'd like a more leisurely exploration of Puget Sound waters take a harbor tour or dinner cruise.

Opposite top: Joan Skelly cracks Dungeness crab aboard her boat Options in Bremerton, Wash., considered the largest town on the Kitsap Peninsula. Opposite, bottom: Poulsbo, Wash., has been dubbed "little Norway" because of its Scandinavian heritage, architecture and stores. There are shops selling Northwest arts and crafts, fresh-baked bread and chocolate. Poulsbo also has a lively waterfront, above, with a steady stream of pleasure craft and fishing boats coming and going from the marina.



Clockwise from above: A short stroll along a boardwalk at the Bremerton, Wash., waterfront leads to the USS Turner Joy, a Vietnam-era destroyer. Visitors may take a self-guided tour from the bridge to the engine room of the ship, which is open daily. A camping option in the Hood Canal/Union area is Belfair State Park, which offers 47 full-hookup sites and a dump station. The award-winning Bainbridge Island Vineyards and Winery features tours and German-style wines made from local grapes.



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You will probably reach the Kitsap Peninsula either by traveling north on Interstate 5 and taking the State Highway 16 exit to cross the Tacoma Narrows bridge, or by taking the more scenic and lighter traffic route up U.S. Highway 101 west from Olympia and connecting to State Highway 3 through Shelton and Belfair, crossing the peninsula's only land connection to the mainland. There are also frequent ferry crossings via Edmonds/Kingston, Seattle-Bainbridge or Bremerton, but that can be expensive with a big motorhome.

GIG HARBOR

If you enter the peninsula by way of Highway 16 and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, as many of us do, spend the night at Gig Harbor RV Resort in Gig Harbor. Check with the Chamber of Commerce for a list of the art and music festivals scheduled throughout the year, including an art walk the first Saturday of the month, in this charming old fishing village where the character of its Scandinavian and Croatian history lingers. You'll love poking around the docks, browsing the little boutiques or farmers markets and eating at the delicious seafood restaurants. Many travelers continue on up Highway 16 to Port Orchard from here but we strongly recommend you take a few days to explore the beautiful southern part of the Kitsap Peninsula with its lush forests and miles of quiet shoreline.

KEY PENINSULA

You are close to the remote Key Peninsula, a small appendage to the larger Kitsap Peninsula, so follow State Highway 302 down to the little village of Longbranch. Make it a day trip or camp at Penrose Point State Park and spend a few days hiking and beachcombing.

HOOD CANAL/UNION AREA

From Key Peninsula, continue west to Highway 3 and on to Belfair, unless you arrive heading north on Highway 3 from Shelton. From there you can explore the northwestern and southern shores of the magnificent Hood Canal. Reminiscent of a deep Scandinavian fjord with the dramatic Olympic Mountains rising steeply along the western shore, it was named by Capt. George Vancouver when he sailed his ship *Discovery* into Puget Sound in 1792. Belfair and Twanoh state parks offer camping and for those hardy souls who enjoy saltwater swimming, Twanoh has some of the warmest waters in the region. Plan to treat yourself to a meal at Alderbrook Resort while in this area.

PORT ORCHARD/MANCHESTER

Port Orchard has plenty of parking along the waterfront adjoining what is one of the finest marinas in Puget Sound. Numerous shops fill nearby historic buildings nestled beneath a frontier-themed facade that was added some years ago. It's a little funky but old enough to have a bit of charm. To see more of this part of the peninsula take Beach Drive and follow the scenic Sinclair Inlet shore around to Manchester, where a state park offers camping. Take a drive out along Colby Drive to Harper, where you'll see sailboats tacking across Puget Sound, breathe in the tangy smell of the sea and watch ferryboats carrying passengers back and forth to Seattle. The views are stunning as you look across the water and right into the heart of the beautiful Seattle skyline.

BREMERTON

Then to explore the central portion of the peninsula, continue on around the Sinclair Inlet to Bremerton. Still considered the largest town on the peninsula, it's a far cry from the bustling city it was up until the end of the Vietnam War as it served the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. But after decades of decline, this old town is finally awakening from its long slumber and exciting new development is taking place along its waterfront. A short stroll down the new boardwalk leads to the USS *Turner Joy*, a Vietnam-era destroyer moored at the water's edge. A self-guided tour of the boat is available to the public daily and if you are lucky you just might encounter a sailor who served aboard her and hear his fascinating stories of life at

sea. You don't have to be a sailor to find the nearby Bremerton Naval Museum a fascinating place with its excellent collection of naval history and the warships serviced here.

For evening entertainment take in one of the theatrical performances in the lovingly restored, art deco Admiral Theatre. Illahee State Park in East Bremerton is a good camping choice for this area. A word of caution: Use your dinghy when visiting downtown Bremerton and be careful where and how long you park. It's not uncommon to find expensive little slips of paper stuck beneath windshield wipers.

SILVERDALE/CENTRAL

Continue north on Highway 303 to reach Silverdale, the region's major shopping area. Along the way, jog out to Keyport to visit the Naval Undersea Museum, featuring some first-rate exhibits of the ocean environment and the history of undersea warfare.

SEABECK

Heading west from Silverdale continue out to Seabeck's Scenic Beach State Park, with its fantastic view of the Olympic Mountains, and camp beneath a green canopy of fir trees. When the tide is out you may walk along the rocky shore and explore the tide pools or gather oysters in season. Check with the park ranger before gathering any shellfish.

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

Considered a part of the Kitsap Peninsula, this beautiful island with its miles of gorgeous waterfront is the upscale living area of the peninsula. Only 35 minutes from downtown Seattle by ferry, the island has a rich history of Japanese berry farming and during the summer you can purchase fresh fruit from roadside stands or browse the farmers market in Winslow on weekends. A walk through Bloedel Reserve takes you through a shimmering green paradise of Pacific Northwest gardens. Located in the middle of the island is award-winning Bainbridge Island Vineyards and Winery, which offers tours and excellent German-style wines from local grapes. Fay Bainbridge State Park has nice camping close to the beach but is small so you might want to check it out before driving your motorhome over to the island.

POULSBO/SUQUAMISH AREA

To explore the northern end of the Peninsula, move on up to Kitsap Memorial Park at the base of Hood Canal Bridge or Eagle Tree RV Park in Poulsbo. Termed "little Norway" because of its Norwegian heritage, Poulsbo is an especially charming little fishing village.

The lively waterfront has a steady stream of fishing boats and pleasure craft coming and going from the marina. Interesting shops brim with Northwest arts and crafts and whiffs of fresh bread, steaming clams and frying calamari drift from little restaurants and bakeries along Front Street. Add to that the enticing aroma of chocolate from Boehm's Chocolate Shop and you won't be able to resist nibbling your way through town. Just remember all those miles of beaches where you can walk off the calories. While in Poulsbo be sure to stop at Central Market for fresh Dungeness crab. Buy several, as they are superb. Then cap off your day with a live performance at Jewel Box Theater.

PORT GAMBLE/HANSVILLE

Explore the northern tip of the Peninsula by driving north of Poulsbo on Highway 3 out toward Hood Canal Bridge, but at the bridge, continue north and east to Port Gamble instead of crossing the canal. This is where the famous Pope and Talbot dynasty began with the building of a lumber mill in 1853. After more than 140 years of operation the mill closed in 1995 but the charming old mill town still exists and is now a National Historic Site. The Port Gamble General Store, Café and Historic Museum offer wonderful glimpses into logging history. Down the street, the Kitsap Peninsula Visitor and Convention Bureau can fill you in on many more Kitsap-area activities.

Choose one campground as your home base and make day trips to see the entire peninsula or drive your motorhome from place to place as you explore the surrounding attractions. Most of the country roads weren't built with large motorhomes in mind so it's best to use your dinghy vehicle for daily excursions.

Whether you spend a few weeks or an entire month, you're sure to fall in love with the Kitsap Peninsula and its splendid "shining waters." ♦



PHOTO: BOBBIE HASSELBRING

CATCHING GOLD FEVER IN THE YUKON

AN ADVENTURE THROUGH THE CANADIAN
REGION INCLUDES STUNNING SCENERY,
HOSPITABLE HOSTS AND A FUNKY PARADE

by BOBBIE HASSELBRING



PHOTOS: ANNE WEAVER

Canada's Yukon Territory is bigger than we ever imagined. We were struck again and again by the beauty of this magnificent region that covers nearly 187,000 square miles, just south of the Arctic Circle. It has high mountain ranges, and deep, clear lakes, thick spruce and poplar forests, and sweeping tundra plains. It also boasts a rich history, communities of warm and friendly people, and miles of traffic-free road and RV parks and campgrounds with all the amenities we needed for a long trip.

We began our Yukon adventure in Whitehorse, Yukon's capital, where nearly two-thirds of the area's 34,000 residents live. Rather than make the drive (about 1,800 miles) between Portland, Ore., and the Yukon, we flew in and rented a motorhome. Because the area is popular with RVers — many who fly in from Europe — RV rentals are plentiful (see "RV Rental Agencies in Whitehorse," page 36).

After a quick orientation to our 22-foot Class C motorhome, we purchased groceries at Fireweed Community Farmer's Market, including local specialties such as fireweed honey and Arctic char, a fish that tastes like a trout that married a salmon.



Top left: Gold panning at Claim 33 may (or may not) yield riches. Above: Lakes in the Yukon are pure, deep and cold, and offer fishing for trophy-sized grayling, Arctic char and koanee.



The Discovery Days parade in Dawson City is a homegrown affair with fun and funky entries. Old miner and pioneer cabins dot the Yukon landscape.

Then it was on to Dawson City and Discovery Days, the town's annual celebration of the Klondike Gold Rush. Though it was the height of tourist season, traffic was light and the Klondike Highway's mostly well-maintained pavement allowed us to sail along at a good clip. We kept a sharp eye out for occasional frost heaves that turned the road into hills and valleys, and the two bears that lumbered into our path reminded us not to break speed records.

STEP BACK INTO HISTORY

Six hours later, just before 6 p.m., we rolled into Dawson City. Since this is the land of the midnight sun and the sun does not set until after 11 p.m., it looked like early afternoon. We arrived just in time to hop aboard the Klondike Spirit, a paddleboat that tours the glacial Yukon River.

After our long drive, the peaceful riverboat ride was a great way to relax.

The entire town of Dawson City is a National Historic Site. This community of 1,900 looks much like it did in the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898-99. False-front wooden buildings, dirt streets, wooden sidewalks, and resident placer miners and dog mushers make for a Wild West feel. Some of the old buildings have been restored; others are quietly turning to dust.

We began exploring the town's gritty, golden history at the visitor center on Front Street, where we found mining and natural history displays, historic videos, and visitor literature and maps, including self-guided walking tours. Across the street, the Dānojà Zho Cultural Center gave us a glimpse of the history and culture of the First Nations people. We also drove by the pioneer cab-

ins of legendary writers Jack London, Robert Service and Pierre Berton, though tours were closed when we arrived. And, like miners a hundred years ago, we stopped at Diamond Tooth Gerties Gambling Hall (Canada's oldest operating casino) for a quick game of blackjack and a peek at the scantily clad cancan dancers.

We also caught the "fever," gold fever that is, and tried our luck at gold panning. We drove nine miles up a dusty gravel road to Claim 33, where Jenny, who's been panning since she was a girl, gave us pointers in troughs "salted" with gold flecks. We panned a tiny vial of gold that inflamed our fever. We rented a shovel and gold pan (\$2 each) and, with visions of our pockets bulging with nuggets, headed to the free Klondike Visitors Association gold claim on Bonanza Creek. Alas, like many Klondike

A sightseeing air tour over the magnificent glaciers of the St. Elias Mountains is a must-do activity.





The Klondike Spirit in Dawson City gives passengers a relaxing ride and insights into the area's history.

miners, we came up empty-handed. Heading back, we toured Dredge No. 4 National Historic Site, the largest wooden-hulled, bucket line dredge in North America — an impressive monster that chewed up the landscape for 60 years in search of gold.

Back in town, we watched the fun and funky Discovery Days parade that included local firetrucks, homemade floats and lots of candy thrown to kids. Someone tossed me a pingpong ball with a message to return it to the Fortymile Gold Workshop and Studio for a \$20 gold-filled glass bead. At last, I'd struck it rich!

We had decided we'd alternate between staying at RV parks and at hotels and lodges. It enabled us to relax after long miles on the road and experience the hospitality of both. Our first night in Dawson City, we stayed in the motorhome at Bonanza Gold Motel and RV Park a few miles outside of town because it offered more space. We also cooked up the deliciously mild and sweet Arctic char for dinner.

Most Yukon RV parks have gravel parking areas with smallish trees, and Bonanza is no different. This Good Sam park has all the amenities — 15 to 50 amps, free Wi-Fi, cable TV, and full service and pull-throughs. For us, the best part was Bonanza's customer service. When our black-water tank failed to empty, manager Sarah came to our rescue, first with a referral to an RV shop (they were booked),

then with telephone advice from her mechanic friend, and finally (and successfully) with hands-on help from her employee, Rae, who'd full-timed for two years.

Early the next morning, we took the free ferry over the roiling, silty Yukon River to the Top of the World Highway, one of the planet's great roadways. As soon as we rolled off the ferry, the road climbed up and up and up until the dizzying views of sweeping tundra-covered hills convinced us we were, indeed, on top of the world.

At the Alaska border, the road went from well-maintained gravel to dirt. Then the road turned really bad. Rains had washed out portions of Taylor Highway. After being closed for weeks, the highway had reopened with two daily, pilot-led convoys. We arrived in plenty of time and promptly at 9 a.m., a long, dusty line of vehicles took off, making us glad we were one of the first in line. It took two hours to travel 13 miles on this twisting dirt road. At Chicken, Alaska, a tiny community that consists of a café, gift store and RV park, the convoy ended and we pulled off to re-

ward ourselves with one of its legendary cinnamon rolls — and a Chicken, Alaska, refrigerator magnet.

We looped back into Canada, reaching the community of Beaver Creek around 6 p.m. We pulled into Westmark RV Park and the lighthearted, Canadian-themed Rendezvous Dinner Theatre next door with its comical Royal Canadian Mounted Police master of ceremonies proved just the thing to unkink our funny bones after a long day.

GLACIERS AND GRIZZLIES

The scenery along the Alaska Highway between Beaver Creek and Kluane National Park is spectacular, with soaring peaks and miles of lakes filled with nesting swans and goslings. The land here is so big, it's difficult to get a sense of perspective. But thawing tundra also made the road a frost heave roller coaster. Just outside of Burwash Landing, we took a road break at the Kluane Museum of Natural History. This surprisingly sophisticated museum features displays and dioramas of the area's wildlife — caribou, moose, black and griz-

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zly bear, lynx, wolves, coyote — and gave us an appreciation for the natural cycles of this special region.

We also stopped at Cottonwood RV Park, arguably one of the prettiest in the Yukon. Nestled between Kluane Lake and the St. Elias Mountains, Cottonwood offers hookups (limited to 15 amps), pull-throughs, a shower house, hot tub and grassy areas. You can also fish for grayling and lake trout right from your door.

In Haines Junction, we hopped a six-seater plane with Sifton Air for a breathtaking glacier flight-see. Minutes after takeoff, we were engulfed by giant snow-capped peaks and endless rivers of ice. Despite the razor-close proximity of ice fields, jagged cliffs and pools of crystalline turquoise water, we were never afraid. We were captivated by the unearthly beauty and busily snapped photo after photo.

After our exhilarating flight, we spent the night at Dalton Trail Lodge, one of the oldest fishing camps in the area. While this lodge doesn't offer RV camping, its parking lot can accommodate lodge guests with motorhomes. Its European-style lakeside rooms are comfortable and its meals are delicious. You can fish, hike, canoe, motorboat, play tennis or simply relax. We opted for a two-hour hike to St. Elias Lake for a paddle in one of the lodge's canoes.

The lodge's owner, Trix, made sure we had water, sandwiches and the all-important bear spray (tear gas for bears). The St. Elias Trail angled up and then up some more, making us pant and sweat, despite the overcast weather and cool temperatures. The bear spray bumping from my waist reminded me that a bear could be anywhere and we kept up a loud stream of conversation to alert them (bears hate surprises!). By the time we arrived at the lake, clouds threatened rain, but we'd come too far to turn back.

We slipped the aluminum canoe into the dark water and fell into the familiar rhythm of paddling with an old friend. Halfway across the lake, we heard the haunting call of a lone loon and watched as he dove only to re-emerge 20 yards away. When we turned our canoe homeward, rain spattered us, making us glad we'd packed some light rain gear.

The following morning, we met Ron Chambers, a First Nations elder who oper-

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ates boat tours in Kathleen Lake, named after his pioneering grandmother. While the weather was blustery and the lake choppy, Chambers' wide, flat-bottomed boat stayed stable and its cover kept us snug. We landed on a distant shore and took a short hike to see the remains of his grandmother's trapping cabin. As we stared at the tumbledown log remains of the 10 x 10 shelter, it was difficult to imagine the rigors Kathleen endured raising eight children here.

Before leaving Haines Junction, we stopped at Raven Hotel Restaurant, renowned for its gourmet food, to enjoy an amazing meal of musk ox and venison, a wonderful final Yukon meal. Then we hit the road for Whitehorse and an early morning flight home feeling both exhilarated by our Yukon RV adventure and sad to be leaving this truly magnificent country. ♦

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ARMED WITH INFORMATION

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE CARRYING WEAPONS IN YOUR MOTORHOME

by CHUCK CAMPBELL

Traversing lonely stretches of highway; staying at unfamiliar and dimly lit campgrounds often removed from the mainstream; traveling in strange and sometimes unfriendly neighborhoods — these and a host of other travel scenarios can present considerable challenges to casual and even veteran RVers. There is occasionally the possibility that when you least expect it, you might run across potential threats or hazards to your personal safety.

Because of these risks and others, RVers often consider carrying defensive weapons such as handguns, rifles, Tasers, stun guns and even chemical sprays (for example, Mace and pepper spray) in their vehicles. It's no wonder, then, that the biggest question facing most who wish to equip themselves for such reasons is: "What are my legal rights regarding weapon possession and concealment?"

Unfortunately, there is no single or easy answer. Moreover, it is virtually impossible to discuss all aspects of weapons possession, search and seizure, and citizens' gun rights in a single article. The complexity of the laws at both the state and

national levels makes it extremely difficult for the average citizen to understand just what is legal and what is not.

On a more positive note, with a general awareness and understanding of a few applicable statutes of the U.S. Constitution, and several federal case laws, most RVers should at least be able to make informed and correct decisions for themselves while traveling throughout the United States.

FIREARMS, TASERS, STUN GUNS, CHEMICAL SPRAYS

In the U.S., laws governing possession and concealment of firearms, Taser-type devices, stun guns and chemical sprays vary by location, and are often difficult to understand. They differ state by state and even city to city.

Nationally, the Gun Control Act of 1968 and the National Firearms Act have regulations that forbid certain people, such as convicted felons and illegal immigrants, from carrying arms; and regulate the licensing of full-automatic weapons, among other issues.

At the state and local levels, carrying a concealed

firearm on one's person or in an easily accessible location within a vehicle without a permit is almost always against the law. Merely transporting a loaded but unconcealed firearm on one's person or in a motor vehicle can also be a violation; again, location is a factor.

Currently, 48 states allow "carry concealed weapon" (CCW) handgun permits for qualified residents. Some states now even let residents with valid CCWs carry in other states where "reciprocity agreements" are in place.

As an example, and based on information available at press time, Florida issues CCW permits on a "shall issue" basis to both residents and non-residents. Florida also recognizes permits from any other state that recognizes Florida's permit, provided the individual is a resident of the other state and is at least 21 years old.

Likewise, Texas has a permit process that regulates the carrying of a concealed handgun in public. CCW permits are awarded on a "shall issue" basis to all qualified applicants, and the state recognizes most out-of-state concealed-carry permits.

California, on the other hand, is a "may issue" state for concealed carry. A license to carry a concealed firearm may be issued or denied to qualified applicants at the discretion of the county sheriff or municipal police chief where the applicant resides.

Storing loaded handguns and rifles in the residential confines of a motorhome is usually considered legal in most states, as long as they are not readily accessible to drivers or passengers while the vehicle is being operated on a highway. If a person still feels the need to have a firearm close at hand while traveling, it should be carried unloaded, in plain view, and with the bolt/cylinder open or clip removed.

Despite a national plethora of weapon laws, there are some noteworthy absolutes to consider before arming yourself. These are rather easy to remember, and may ultimately keep you out of jail:

Travel outside the U.S. Never attempt to carry/transport a gun, Taser, stun gun or chemical protectant into Canada or Mexico. You will usually go directly to jail and your weapon will be confiscated, if permits have not been obtained ahead of time.

Assault rifles. Mere possession of an assault rifle (the definition varies from state

to state) may be cause for arrest and seizure of the weapon. Before acquiring or traveling with such an item, be sure to check with individual state and local authorities first.

Automatic weapons. Fully automatic rifles, pistols and machine guns can only be possessed with a special tax stamp issued by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. You'll also need authorization to transport these items across state lines.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees people the right to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable search and seizure. Furthermore, these rights shall not be violated unless there is probable cause for a warrant to be issued describing the place to be searched, and specified persons or things to be seized.

To further reinforce the intent of this statute and others within the Bill of Rights, the 14th Amendment promises that all personal liberties and rights bestowed at the federal level are likewise protected from infringement by state governments. These complex doctrines additionally contain the concepts of due process, right to privacy and equal protection of the law.

How does this translate into issues that RVers might find themselves involved in? The following focuses mainly on situations where officers can search associated with the commission of an illegal act (including traffic violations).

Whether your home is on wheels or permanently attached to a city lot in suburbia, it is not exempt from a legal search as long as due process has been observed. What makes motorhomes and other types of recreational vehicles on or near highways more vulnerable to being searched for probable cause without a warrant is a case law known as the "automobile exception rule."

The automobile exception is spelled out in court rulings that include *United States v. Ross*, 456 U.S. 798 (1982); *California v. Acevedo*, 500 U.S. 565 (1991); and *California v. Carney*, 471 U.S. 386 (1985). These legal decisions and several others apply to vehicles being used on highways or are capable of such movement, including those found stationary in a place not regularly used for residential

purposes, such as a parking lot.

Conversely, if an RV-type vehicle is located and hooked up at a campground or commercial park, an officer suspecting a crime at such a location would more than likely be required to obtain a search warrant from a judge or magistrate before conducting a search.

In all states, motorhomes, vans and vehicles towing trailers or carrying camper-type structures are considered "automobiles" for the purposes of search and seizure. When being operated as such on the highway, an officer with probable cause that a crime has or is being committed involving such a vehicle may stop it and perform a warrantless search for items relevant to the suspected crime (including driver and passengers if legally justified).

There are four primary ways in which an officer or government official may legally search premises, habitation or motor vehicle where the owner, operator or resident has a reasonable expectation of privacy. These are:

Search warrant: To obtain a duly authorized written search warrant, officers must articulate probable cause to a magistrate (judge) in the form of factual knowledge and evidence of a crime. The training and experience of requesting officers is also taken into account.

Warrantless search: Where exigent (emergency) circumstances exist for officers investigating a crime or during an arrest, they may perform warrantless searches of persons, vehicles, locations or premises. Exigency means that an officer or innocent party is at immediate personal risk if a search is not performed (such as a pat-down for concealed weapons). When pertaining to a motor vehicle, the issue is whether the vehicle in question could be moved to places unknown before an officer might reasonably obtain a written search warrant.

Incidental to an arrest: If an officer is legally inside a residence, RV or other location and is then required to make an arrest, he may search cupboards, drawers, etc., for items directly related to the crime (*Chimel* [1969] 395 US 752). For the search to be legal, the original "entry" must also have been valid.

Consensual search: This refers to permission that is granted to an officer by a

person in control of a vehicle, premises or other location. Under these conditions, case law is very explicit in protecting citizens against duress by authorities. However, if consent is willingly given, an officer has free reign to look for just about anything. Furthermore, whatever is found of an illegal nature may be used against the owner of an individual vehicle or property.

TO CARRY OR NOT TO CARRY?

So what weapons, if any, can law-abiding citizens legally carry to protect themselves while engaging in RV-related activities? And how can they avoid running afoul of the law?

Here are a few basic tips to consider regarding the often-arcane jumble of laws affecting such devices:

1. Whenever possible or practical, check with state, county or city law enforcement agencies in areas you plan to frequent regarding the carrying, storage and concealment of such items.

2. All guns carried in or near the driver's compartment of a mobile vehicle (without a CCW permit) should be kept unloaded. Store ammunition in separate areas removed from the weapon.

3. Keep pertinent licenses and/or permits for firearms, Tasers, stun guns and protective sprays, as well as a current list of all of the firearms that you own, handy at all times.

4. Do not voluntarily consent to a search of your person, RV or motor vehicle unless you are fully prepared to answer for whatever is found. If an officer requests permission, it is well within your legal rights to respectfully say no.

We all wish to demonstrate what good citizens we are, and don't want an officer thinking we have something to hide that might make things worse. Nonetheless, you are never obligated to submit to a search upon mere request alone.

On the other hand, don't ever stand in the way of a law enforcement official engaged in a search. Even if you think it is inappropriate, illegal and/or done without your permission, the place to sort out the legality of such actions is in front of a judge in the calmness and quiet of a courtroom.

Furthermore, your resistance or interference could make a difficult situation even worse by adding charges of "delaying an officer in pursuit of his or her duties."

Even if the search is deemed unlawful at a later date, you could still be held to answer for interfering.

5. Don't create situations for yourself with actions such as flashing (brandishing) firearms/weapons in public, or bragging about how well-armed you are. False bravado such as this might just give an officer reasonable cause to obtain a search warrant for your personal vehicle and belongings.

6. Another item to consider: Law enforcement officers are frequently shot or attacked with their own weapons; and most are highly trained. Before arming yourself, make sure you are up to the task. It's a tough call.

7. Situations warranting the use of a firearm or other defensive weapons are extremely rare. If you make the decision to either carry or ultimately use such devices, a variety of less than desirable, and sometimes unintended, consequences can befall you. These may include your own arrest on criminal charges or civil lawsuits.

If you choose to carry and store firearms or other weapons for personal protection in your vehicle or RV, do your planning and research of relevant laws well ahead of time. Do not rely on pleading "ignorance of the law" if you get caught; this usually won't work.

What to carry and if to carry are questions that can only be answered by you, after much research and deliberation. Violating weapons laws far from home and in unfamiliar surroundings can turn some of the best years of your life into a very unpleasant experience.

The best starting points in researching the legality of carrying firearms, Tasers, stun guns and chemical sprays can often be found on the Internet. However, these sites should be used for research purposes only, and may not always interpret actual laws correctly. From there, it is then up to you to make sure that information is correct by contacting appropriate local law enforcement agencies where you reside or expect to travel. ♦

Chuck Campbell served 31 years as a sworn member of a state law enforcement agency before retiring. He has spent the last 16 years as an RV and automotive journalist, and is a former consulting editor of MotorHome.

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LIBERTY AND VICTORY



GETTING A 2011 JEEP LIBERTY READY FOR DINGHY TOWING WITH A DEMCO VICTORY SERIES DOMINATOR TOW BAR AND BASEPLATE

by CHRIS HEMER

Dinghy towing has long been an integral part of the motorhome lifestyle. Being able to establish a base camp, then unhook your dinghy vehicle and discover what's around you is one of the most liberating experiences an RVer can enjoy.

In the early days, a tow bar and baseplate often had to be fabricated in order to fit a specific vehicle, or there were "universal" kits that made towing possible, albeit with a lot of work. Today, there is no shortage of model-specific base-

plates, and tow bar features and technology have grown by leaps and bounds. Whether you want to tow a vehicle that has been in the family for 10 years, or a new model you just brought home from the showroom, the odds are good there's a company that makes products that will allow you to tow it safely and easily.

Demco is one such company. In business for almost 50 years, Demco manufactures not only tow bars and baseplates, but also tow dollies and trailer towing components. Some of

PHOTOS: CHRIS HEMER

its most popular products are baseplates for Jeep vehicles. With that in mind, and the fact that Demco recently began offering a baseplate kit for the 2011 Jeep Liberty, we took a look at what it takes to make one of these vehicles tow-ready using Demco products.

First and foremost, if you've never had a tow bar baseplate installed on a vehicle, you should know that it can be a time-consuming process, especially when you take into account the necessary wiring. So before buying one, it's important to ask the manufacturer how much time the kit takes to install. In fact, you may want to do this before you consider purchasing a vehicle.

We had a Demco baseplate (part no. 9518222) and Demco Dominator tow bar shipped to Bill's RV Service in Ventura, Calif., for installation. Ready for a project that would take the better part of a day, we were pleasantly surprised that, on this application, the baseplate installation only took a few hours, and the Dominator tow bar worked flawlessly.

A couple of things worth mentioning: Because this kit is designed for 2008-11 Jeep Liberty models, certain instructions tend to be a little vague, so some mechanical experience and/or aptitude by you or the installer will help things go more smoothly. Also, depending on the year of your vehicle and how it's equipped, some modifications may be required to accommodate the baseplate. For example, on this Liberty, the front tow hooks and skid plate had to be removed permanently, as they are mounted where the baseplate must bolt up. In addition, some small alterations to the baseplate were required in order for the supplied universal plug bracket to fit properly. But this may not be the case with your vehicle or even your Liberty.

Now, let's follow along with the guys at Bill's RV as they install a Demco baseplate and Dominator tow bar. ♦

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1, 2. The first step is to drill out the plastic rivet heads on the front fender lip, then pry the plastic buttons out with a flat-blade screwdriver to loosen the inner fender panel.



3. Next, remove a single bolt located next to the headlight wiring harness.



6. The front bumper fascia can then be carefully removed.



4. Carefully pull the plastic fender flare away from the body to release the three plastic clips that secure the flare to the front bumper fascia.



7. Next, remove the metal covers from each side of the bumper.



5. After the plastic clips have been released on both sides, some careful wiggling releases the plastic spades that secure the front bumper fascia to the bottom of the grille.



8. Because the front tow hooks are located where the baseplate will go, they must be permanently removed.



9, 10. The front skid plate must also be removed and discarded, as it would otherwise interfere with the installation of the baseplate.



11. Fasteners are installed into this metal nut strip, and the fasteners inserted into two existing holes in the frame. Doing so provides a template to drill a starter hole in the frame.



12. Blue thread locker is applied to the fasteners to prevent them from loosening.



13. The metal nut strip is then inserted, welded nuts facing down, into the hole in the bumper (previously covered by the metal boss that was removed earlier). Here, you can see the threaded nuts through the holes in the frame.



14. Have an assistant help you get the baseplate located, then bolt into place using the six 7/16-inch x 1 1/4-inch bolts and lock washers. Demco's instructions specify torquing these fasteners to 56 ft-lbs.



15. Here's what the baseplate looks like in place.



16. On the 2011 Liberty, the front grille must be trimmed to allow clearance for the tow bar brackets. The instructions suggest trimming only a small amount off, but this left the ends of the horizontal bars just hanging. So the decision was made to cut the horizontal bars all the way back to the next vertical bar, which ended up looking much better.



17, 18. Demco supplies "convenience holes" on the top of the bracket, next to the chain anchor, to secure the universal power plug receptacle bracket. However, a trial fit of the front bumper fascia showed that mounting the bracket on the convenience holes would not work, so new holes were drilled and tapped in a more convenient area for this application.



21. Weighing only 30 pounds, the Demco Dominator can tow up to 7,500 pounds and has a variety of features. For example, the arms move independently, allowing you to connect one leg at a time. The tow-bar mount (that goes into the receiver) has a built-in 1½-inch rise/drop, and an adjustable towing angle allows 3 inches of adjustment. An Easy Trigger Release system (black levers on the side of the aluminum body) allows you to connect/disconnect even on uneven ground. The Dominator is self-aligning, and has a limited lifetime warranty to the original purchaser.



19. The receptacle bracket was then bolted into place. This is a universal bracket, so the mounting "ear" (nearest to you) was trimmed for clearance and then repainted to prevent corrosion.



20. The baseplate installation is complete and looks very clean with the minor modifications made to the plug-receptacle bracket. In fact, if you weren't looking for the tow bar, you probably wouldn't see it. Demco also supplies plastic covers to go over the ends of the bracket, which look good but fit loosely. However, Demco has assured us that it has had to replace fewer than 10 during the past two years because of loss.



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Mating the body to the Freightliner chassis cab is virtually flawless. The result is a body that flows nicely, front to back, taking advantage of flush-fitting dual slideouts, smooth window frame transitions and well-integrated accessories. Large exterior steel compartments are easy to access and the insulated aluminum doors function smoothly; two are devoted to an optional entertainment center and pullout LP-gas barbecue. A clever rear trunk that blends in nicely with the lines of the rear cap augments storage capacity.

Full-body paint, incorporating striping, enhances the visual flow of the exterior and gives the motorhome a very aggressive stature, one that says "moving forward." The paint job is finished with a clear coat that exudes perfection.

Owning a coach that turns heads is just part of the fun; sitting behind the wheel and rolling up the miles is the real payoff. The cab is obviously designed for truckers who spend a lot of time behind the wheel. The plush driver and copilot's seats are mounted on air-ride pedestals that provide the utmost in comfort — especially on long journeys. The cab is surrounded by ergonomic placement of instrumentation and

controls and sealed against noise using premium insulation in strategic locations. While the big 500-HP Cummins is mounted up front, cab noise abatement allows the driver and passenger to communicate freely without using loud voices.

Besides the long list of electronic gadgets such as navigation, entertainment components and even a CB radio, the cab is fitted with doors on each side with electric windows and door locks. Drivers will swoon over the large, four-spoke, leather-wrapped steering wheel, especially after making fine adjustments with the tilt and telescoping controls. One feature that really stands out with this Freightliner cab configuration is the efficiency of the dash air conditioner. While most motorhome dash air units seem to go anemic in hot weather — and need to be supplemented by the house air conditioning — the Grand Sport unit blasts the occupants with an abundance of cold air. On hot days, it will even keep the rest of the coach comfortable, without the use of house air.

Road visibility is exceptional, as are the side-view mirrors, which work so well we never paid much attention to



views captured by the optional side wall-mounted cameras. Brisk acceleration, a sharp turning radius, very effective air brakes and the air ride suspension all contribute to a positive driving experience. And with fuel economy in the 10 to 12 MPG range, coupled with the 140-gallon tank, stopping for fuel will not be frequent.

Once you get to your destination, the fun and comfort don't stop. Surprisingly, the interior feels much bigger than its body suggests (this year's model is 4 inches wider and 7 inches taller). The big street-side slideout in the front living room offsets the space occupied by the cab. Inside the slide are the Ultraleather couch and compact galley. While the kitchen is not designed for preparing elaborate meals, it does have all the amenities, including a Corian countertop with a concealed two-burner electric cooktop, double sink and microwave/convection oven. Cabinet and drawer placement is very efficient, so storing enough foodstuffs, cookware and utensils is not an issue.

Realistically, this is a two-person

motorhome, although the Lexington Wall Hugger sofa makes into a queen bed (air mattress) should guests pop in for an over-nighter. Opposite the sofa, the dinette serves two comfortably on thick cushions (with innerspring bases) complemented by a sturdy wood table. Additional seating can be realized by swiveling the cab seats.

Adjacent to the dinette, the 10-cubic-foot refrigerator and pantry round out the kitchen amenities. Gorgeous hardwood cabinetry available in three styles (natural cherry, stained cherry and natural maple), tile floors, tasteful coverings on large windows and a 32-inch Samsung LED TV — mounted in proper view of the sofa and forward-facing dinette seat — make for a very pleasant place to hang out. The motorhome is chock-full of electronics, including a very listenable home theater with a Blu-ray DVD player. An automatic satellite dome is standard with an in-motion model optional. All the controls for the slideouts, automatic leveling jacks, inverter and comfort systems are housed in a central location behind the driver's seat.

Don't expect to be pampered by the bathroom. It's utilitarian at best, but has all the necessary accoutrements. In the enclosed room on the left is the Tecma china toilet with macerator. While toilet controls are different from the majority of its counterparts on the market, the use of this toilet allows the manufacturer to position it other than directly over the holding tank. It uses a vacuum system that makes a unique sound when flushing, but is very efficient, especially when using the water-conservation cycle.

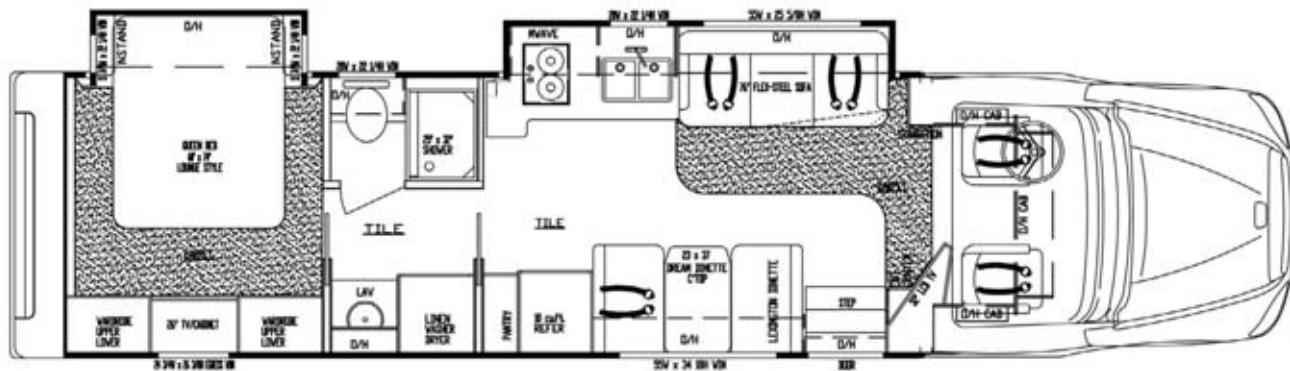
Next to the toilet is the shower, which limits legroom when using the commode. The shower is compact but workable. Us-

ability could be improved by installing a full-height sliding shower door, with the top portion of the frame abutting the ceiling. That way owners will not lose any hair — or scalp — when ducking under the frame.

Across from this room is the lavatory, tucked into a cubbyhole formed by the bedroom wall on one side and the wardrobe on the other. Counterspace is limited, but it gets the job done. The wardrobe has lowered doors and is plumbed for a washer/dryer. Those who are not hung up on large bathrooms will soon discover that the smallish quarters devoted here result in more space for the living room and bedroom.

Out back, a queen-size bed consumes just about all the space afforded by the streetside slideout. The mattress is comfortable and the interior surroundings are pleasant — especially with the use of a sculptured headboard. Access around the mattress to make up the bed is good. Those lying in bed have a clear view of the 19-inch (or optional 26-inch) Samsung LED TV. Surrounding the TV are glass-door cabinets, shelves and plenty of storage for clothing and personal belongings. Superb lighting and an Intellitec multiplex control system are strategically placed for reading or illuminating the entire bedroom, and for that matter, throughout the coach.

This was our third adventure in a Dynamax Grand Sport since its inception in 2001. During the last 10 years the company has made a number of changes that keep improving the product. The list of features is as long as your arm and the company prides itself in quality craftsmanship while staying on the leading edge of technology. This is a driver's coach and certainly no slouch in an RV park. Just be prepared for lots of oohs and aahs. ♦





GO TO THE SOURCE

SOURCE ENGINEERING'S TRAILING ARM KIT FOR ROADMASTER R4R AND R4RR CHASSIS SOLVES A CRITICAL SAFETY ISSUE

by CHRIS HEMER

We feature many articles in this magazine that can help you improve the handling, performance and comfort of your motorhome. And while we also touch on the topic of safety from time to time (such as proper tire pressure and weight/loading), this article is different in that it deals with a critical safety issue on some Monaco Roadmaster chassis and a company that offers an effective solution.

We're talking about the TRA-1003 Trailing Arm Kit offered by Source Engineering of Elmira, Ore. As you may have heard, the trailing arms on the Roadmaster R4R and R4RR chassis equipped with "Monaco Gold" suspension manufactured by the former Monaco Coach Corp. (MCC) are prone to failure, which can cause sudden handling problems and even a loss of vehicle control that could result in a crash.

The problem was originally discovered in 2005 and was subject to a National Highway Traffic Safety Ad-

ministration (NHTSA) recall that included model years 2002-03 Holiday Rambler Ambassador and Monaco Knight; 2002-04 Safari Sahara and Zanzibar; 2002-05 Holiday Rambler Neptune and Monaco Cayman; and 2003-05 Safari Cheetah motorhomes manufactured from Nov. 30, 2001, through Oct. 1, 2004.

According to Source Engineering, the recall remedy provided by the former MCC was to replace the defective trailing arms and mounting hardware with re-engineered arms — but unfortunately, these are prone to cracking as well. In addition, the R4R and R4RR chassis were also used on some MCC products as recent as the 2009 model year, so many coaches that were not originally included in the recall may be equipped with the defective trailing arms.

To provide a permanent solution to the problem, Source Engineering designed new trailing arms for these coaches that are reported to be stronger than the original parts and are backed by a lifetime warranty to the original purchaser.

The founders of Source Engineering, Scott Zimmer and Jim Walls, should know a thing or two about MCC chassis; Zimmer logged 25 years at MCC in various positions including director of powertrain development, while Walls spent more than 13 years in the technical support department.

Source Engineering was formed in 1995 as a supplier to the RV air-conditioning industry and was reorganized in 2009 when Walls joined the company. Today, Source Engineering specializes in suspension kits/chassis components and cooling products (charge air coolers, radiators and hydraulic fluid coolers) for Monaco, Country Coach and Western RV chassis. In fact, Source Engineering is the sole distributor of JB Radiator Specialties, the OEM supplier to MCC and others.

The Source Engineering TRA-1003 trailing arms are made from reinforced steel, which is then shot-peened to increase surface hardness (which helps stop surface cracks from forming). Powder coat is then applied to prevent corrosion and provide a long-lasting finish. These arms are a direct replacement for the original parts, and can be installed in about eight to 10 hours by



1. According to Source Engineering, the original trailing arms on the Roadmaster R4R and R4RR chassis with the four-air-bag “Monaco Gold” suspension could eventually crack and fail. This typically occurs between 16,000 and 25,000 miles.



3. The lower shock mount bolt is loosened, but before it is removed, the rear of the trailing arm is supported to prevent it from falling down.



a competent repair facility.

To observe the installation of the Source Engineering trailing arms, we visited Redlands Truck and RV in Redlands, Calif. Redlands Truck and RV is an authorized Source Engineering dealer, and is equipped with an expansive RV maintenance and repair facility.

With a suggested retail price of \$1,800 plus freight, the Source Engineering trailing arms aren't inexpensive, but considering a factory trailing arm failure could cause serious damage or even an accident, they're well worth the cost. ♦



6. The Source Engineering TRA-1003 arm (top) is compared with the stock trailing arm. Note that the TRA-1003 is made from a single section of straight steel (instead of bent like the stock arm) and is reinforced in the load-bearing midsection.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

REDLANDS TRUCK AND RV
 888-249-0124,
www.redlandstruckservice.com.
SOURCE ENGINEERING INC.
 541-935-0308,
www.rv-chassis.com.



2. Once the air has been released from the air bags, the first step is to remove the nuts from the $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch U-bolts that secure the arms to the rear axle. Next, the nuts that secure the air bag to its perch are removed, followed by the rear track bar mounting bolts.



4. With the shock removed, the arm can hang freely.



5. A crack begins to form at the weld. Once a crack starts, the arm can fail completely (and without warning) within 3,000 to 4,000 miles.



7. The TRA-1003 kit comes with new $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch U-bolts, which are far more robust than the stock $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch bolts.



8. The new bar is installed, ready for years of trouble-free travel.



2011 ITASCA CAMBRIA 30C

THE BEST OF
ALL WORLDS IN ONE
CLASS C MOTORHOME



It's happened gradually, quietly even, but the Class C motorhome has emerged from its place in the entry-level ranks to compete in a luxury market once dominated by larger, more expensive Class A motorhomes. Perhaps this transformation was spawned by the economy, fuel prices or the need for many baby boomers to downsize, but the luxury Class C motorhome is here to stay, and the 2011 Itasca Cambria 30C from Winnebago Industries is elegant proof.

While some manufacturers seem to overlook the Class C's history as a family traveler, Winnebago has managed to embrace

it while still maintaining a high-end feel. For example, the cabover area normally occupied by an overhead bunk features a 26-inch LCD TV, as well as home theater sound and video systems housed behind curved glass doors. Another example is the streetside slideout that features a 40-inch by 79-inch sofa bed that can be upgraded to either an Ultraleather Rest Easy or Ultraleather Comfort Sofa Sleeper so sleeping capacity isn't sacrificed. On the curbside, a 38-inch by 69-inch fixed dinette converts into another bed, and there are five seat-belted positions in the living area so friends can travel, too.



SPECIFICATIONS

CHASSIS: FORD E-450	EXTERIOR HEIGHT: 10' 5"
ENGINE: 6.8-L V-10 GAS, 305 HP	WHEELBASE: 220"
FUEL: 55 GAL	FRESHWATER CAP: 27 GAL
GVWR: 14,500 LBS	BLACK-WATER CAP: 27 GAL
EXTERIOR LENGTH: 31' 7"	GRAY-WATER CAP: 35 GAL
EXTERIOR WIDTH: 7' 11"	LP-GAS CAP: 18 GAL
	BASE MSRP: \$88,588

WINNEBAGO INDUSTRIES,
641-585-3535, WWW.GOITASCA.COM



Entertaining guests should be easy in the roomy galley, which features a three-burner Amana range, Sharp microwave oven and a 6.3-cubic-foot Norcold refrigerator. The bath area features an interestingly arranged toilet room with an offset porcelain toilet and a curved lavatory countertop, and across the hall is a large shower with radius glass door. In the master suite, you'll find a walk-around 60-inch by 75-inch queen bed in a small streetside slide-out, across from which is a large wardrobe.

Standard equipment is plentiful on the Cambria, and Itasca adds to it this year with power remote side-view mirrors with defrost, an exterior wash station and a power entrance doorstep. It also offers owners the ability to personalize the motorhome with a variety of options to suit their needs. An interior upgrade package, for example, adds a Benchmark Dream Dinette, rope lighting, American Duo Day/Night Shades from MCD Innovations and other details. In addition, buyers can select from stand-alone options, such as a King-Dome HD-ready in-motion satellite dish system, stainless steel convection microwave, cold-water filtration system and a 19-inch LCD bedroom TV.

Outside, the choices continue. A standard Deluxe Graphics treatment is available in two colors, but you may opt for one of four full-body paint schemes, including Smoke, shown here. And if you entertain outside, you'll appreciate the available exterior entertainment package, which includes an AM/FM radio/CD player with remote, AC/DC receptacles, two speakers and a TV jack. Other stand-alone options include a 4kW Cummins Onan gas generator, 300-watt inverter, power patio awning, auxiliary rear air springs, hydraulic leveling jacks and stylized aluminum wheels.

If you like the idea behind the Cambria 30C, but want something a little smaller, Itasca also offers the similarly equipped double-slideout Cambria 28B floorplan. ♦

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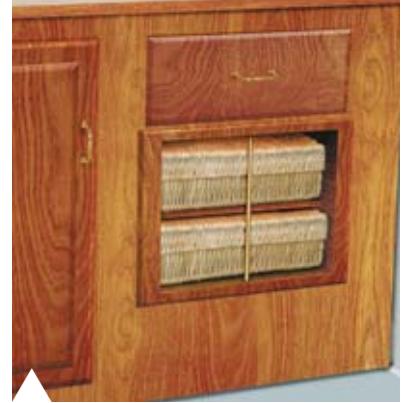
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BASKET CASE

I needed more bathroom storage in my motorhome so I talked my husband into modifying an existing (and useless) magazine rack into a handy storage area. He removed the two screws that held the magazine rack in its frame and built a box around the frame with a shelf for two removable wicker baskets. The original brass rod is inserted (and removable) to hold the baskets in place while traveling. After the new wood is stained, the piece looks like it came from the factory. It was a very easy project and now our countertops will stay cleared.

BRADLEY CAGANELLO
HARWINTON, CONN.



IN SINK ▲

Here's a portable sink idea for those RVers who love to cook outside. Using a storage bin, cut a circular hole in the bottom for a plumbing hose that's long enough to reach the sewer. Insert the "sink" into a cutout folding tabletop. Then attach another water hose to a faucet (bought at a hardware store), which is attached to the folding table. Now you'll have a portable washstand for easy cleanup.

STACEY CAGANELLO | BRANCHBURG, N.J.

POST MARKS

Here's an easy way to keep track of your battery's wiring. All you'll need are some multi-colored plastic pull ties.

Make a sketch of your battery layout. Show the battery post positions and number them. For example: No. 1 post, black ties; No. 2 post, white ties; No. 3 post, red ties; No. 4 post, yellow ties; No. 5 post, green ties, and so on. Also, on your sketch make a note of the number and size of the wires and cables at each post.

Keep the sketch in a safe place; it will help you keep the wires from getting mixed up if the batteries are ever removed.

RAY AND JUDY ANDERSEN
OAK HARBOR, OHIO

STAYING UNDER COVER

After losing the cover of my motorhome's refrigerator vent and buying a new one, I decided to keep this from happening again. Using some drapery cord, I threaded it through the ventilation holes, and leaving enough slack, I tied it to the 12-volt DC cable clamps feeding the refrigerator. I hope that if it comes loose again, it will dangle on the cords, and at least I will be able to see it flying around in the side mirror.

BILL SIEBERT
LOS ALTOS, CALIF. ♦



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, or e-mail info@motorhomemagazine.com. Be sure to include any photos, illustrations or drawings, if necessary. If your tip is selected for publication, you'll receive \$35.

techsavvy

HANDS-ON | HOT LINE | COACH & POWERTRAIN



HANDS-ON | by BILL AND JENN GEHR

SIMPLE SATELLITE SETUP

Delsand's PDQ Signal Stand takes the guesswork — and frustration — out of pointing a manual dish for HD service

Setting up a satellite dish antenna that needs to be manually positioned can be challenging at best. The process becomes more complicated when adding an HD DVR to the system. Setup can be even more frustrating when dealing with uneven ground and, of course, that nemesis of the satellite user, trees. Using a Delsand PDQ Signal Stand eliminates the headaches associated with dish setup and pointing.

Most people who use a dish on the ground rely on some type of tripod. While there are many tripod choices, it's usually necessary to use a compass and signal finder to locate the appropriate satellites, since most basic tripods are not equipped with a level or markings for azimuth settings. For HD service, it is also necessary to set the proper skew/tilt along with elevation and azimuth. And that's the rub. Unless you get lucky, you can spend an inordinate amount of time setting up the dish so it provides a decent signal to the receiver.

The PDQ Signal Stand has been designed to be much more accurate with its built-in levels, compass, and azimuth setting knob and gear. And to make life easier, Delsand has added a unique line-of-sight tool that allows you to look through the device to pinpoint a clear, unobstructed pathway for your dish before the actual setup.

Once a clear line of sight has been established, you insert the PDQ Signal Stand mast that's been preinstalled to your dish antenna. Next, you set the skew/tilt (for HD models), elevation and drop the mast onto the PDQ Signal Stand. By using walkie-talkies, we're able to communicate the different signal strengths, and with a few minor adjustments a strong satellite signal is achieved, in most cases within five minutes. Once it's set, we use two 10-pound dumbbells (recommended by the manufacturer but not supplied) to stabilize the stand.

The PDQ is easy to store, lightweight, quick to assemble on any terrain and has a high-wind tie-down kit to keep it from moving in bad weather. Virtually any dish is compatible with the Delsand PDQ Signal Stand.

Delsand's website has a very good instructional video that can be used along with the instructions for assembly and setup. The company also offers excellent customer support over the phone or via e-mail, and Delsand will be happy to walk you through any difficulties you may experience while using the PDQ Signal Stand. The product is backed by a one-year limited warranty and retails for \$250.

Delsand, 425-879-2929, www.delsand.com. ♦



Workhorse Safety Recall

IN MAY 2009, WORKHORSE CUSTOM CHASSIS ANNOUNCED SAFETY RECALL 50901-C, WHICH AFFECTED CERTAIN W20, W21 AND W22 CHASSIS BUILT FROM JULY 24, 2000, THROUGH DEC. 19, 2007. THE FOLLOWING LETTER IS ONE OF MANY THAT HOT LINE HAS RECEIVED FROM READERS CONCERNED THAT THE BRAKE ISSUES ON THEIR WORKHORSE CHASSIS MIGHT BE RELATED TO THE RECALL:

I have had issues with the brakes on my 2004 Class A on a W20 Workhorse chassis ever since I bought the vehicle. In 2007 I spent \$2,029.46 for a total brake overhaul. I've also had problems with the ABS light coming on. I'm planning on taking a trip soon, but I don't feel comfortable leaving until I have the brake system checked.

It is my contention that the reason for my brake problems was because of sticking calipers, as per the Workhorse safety recall. I have sent letters to Workhorse and it appears the company still doesn't have a permanent fix for the brake caliper issue.

I am quite pleased with the overall performance of the Workhorse equipment, when all is operating normally, but I am not at all pleased with the runaround I have received. Hot Line's expertise in helping me resolve this issue would be greatly appreciated.

CHARLES OSBORN
TUCSON, ARIZ.

Hot Line contacted Workhorse Custom Chassis on Osborn's behalf. Shortly thereafter, the company replied, letting us know that Osborn's case was "fully evaluated" and that according to the

WORKHORSE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE REDESIGNED BRAKE CALIPER ASSEMBLIES, WHICH REPRESENT THE FINAL REMEDY FOR RECALL 50901-C, ARE AVAILABLE AT AUTHORIZED WORKHORSE SERVICE CENTERS OR DEALERSHIPS.

repair order that Osborn submitted to Workhorse, there was no indication of a caliper malfunction.

Though we couldn't help Osborn in this instance, there's some good news regarding the safety recall: Workhorse has announced that the redesigned brake caliper assemblies, which represent the final remedy for recall 50901-C, are available at authorized Workhorse service centers or dealerships. The company has assigned a new safety recall number, 51101-C, for the final remedy procedure. Workhorse will be contacting owners of motorhomes affected by this recall. For additional information, go to www.workhorse.com/brakeresourcecenter.

AT THE BREAKING POINT

Experiencing post-purchase problems with their motorhome, two readers turned to us for help. They explained:

In July 2009, we purchased a 1997 National RV Dolphin motorhome from Dusty's Camper World in Bartow, Fla. A couple of months later we noticed vibration and noise in the right front tire. Thinking the tire was bad, we drove directly to Conley Buick in Bradenton, Fla. The mechanics at Conley's pulled the tire and found that the front brakes were worn to the point of being hazardous. We spent

the night in Conley's parking lot, they ordered parts and we had the brakes repaired late the next day.

We called the service director at Dusty's and told him about the brakes and that we would send him the bill for the brake repair. On our way home, we had a blowout of two tires — fortunately they were duals — and barely made it to our local repair shop. We ended up replacing all six tires, because even though they looked good they were more than 5 years old.

We think that Dusty's Camper World should be responsible for covering the cost of the brake repair. We hope you can intercede on our behalf and restore our enthusiasm for traveling in our motorhome.

DONALD AND JANET HOLT
LAKE PLACID, FLA.

The Holts' complaint was forwarded to Dusty's Camper World for consideration. The company responded to the Holts as follows:

Thank you for taking the time to write to us. We greatly appreciate you voicing your concerns. It is through feedback such as yours that allows us to develop our business as we strive for excellence in customer satisfaction. Our mission is to consistently deliver the highest quality recreational experience to all our guests. If yours was any less, we do apologize.

I can certainly sympathize with your feeling of frustration on your recent trip to Bradenton. In the interest of good customer service, I am enclosing a check for \$2,901.72, which will cover your expenses for the brakes and the tires.

If we can be of any assistance to you in the future, please do not hesitate to contact us.

JEFF CRUM
GENERAL MANAGER
DUSTY'S CAMPER WORLD
BARTOW, FLA. ♦

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

Misfiring Vortec

I have had problems with my 2001 Winnebago on a Workhorse chassis with an 8.1-L Vortec engine. It starts misfiring after being run for more than an hour. No codes appear. It sounds like backfiring when accelerating or under load from about 1,500 RPM to 3,700. Kicking down to a lower gear sometimes helps.

One highly reliable mechanic suggested that the coach (with 29,000-plus miles) had apparently been left to sit with a low gas level, the tank rusted and it takes a while for the fuel pump to suck up enough rust to partially clog. I'm sure there are others who have experienced the problem. Any help would be most appreciated as the estimates to remove, clean and fix the tank are high.
BERNARD LEWIS | CHESAPEAKE, VA.

Remove the gas filter and cut it open to see if it has rust in it. If it has a significant amount, drop the tank for inspection and cleaning. If not, test the fuel pressure under load while driving to determine if there's a fuel starvation problem. If the fuel system checks out OK, have the ignition tested on a scope.

FRUSTRATING FRIDGE

I'm having a problem with the refrigerator in my 2002 Safari Cheetah. When the motorhome is plugged into 30- or 50-amp service the fridge works great. But when it's running on LP-gas, it doesn't stay cold. Everybody I took it to said they can't find anything wrong with it, but when I open the freezer door, melted ice runs out and the food in the freezer is bad. What do you suggest?

JIM ANDREWS | ATLANTA

Have you actually checked the flame when it is running on LP-gas? You are

probably not getting enough heat when you run it on gas. Have gas pressure tested at the back of the refrigerator. It's also possible the orifice is partially clogged. Also look for rust chunks blocking the burner; it's possible that rust flakes from the exhaust "stack" could fall onto the burner. A shop vac and nozzle can clean that out.

BLACK SEDIMENT IN WATER

Last fall, water from my motorhome's kitchen sink started coming out black. It runs clear for about five seconds, then turns black for about five seconds, then clears up. I've noticed the black-tinted water at the bath lavatory and shower only when I use water from the storage tank and the tank is almost empty. The black in the water feels gritty. I tried emptying the storage tank and running some bleach through the system, but the black water didn't go away. Your ideas would be appreciated.

FRED PALMER | TUCKER, GA.

RADIATORS CAN BE GUNKED UP ON THE OUTSIDE FROM BLOWBY, BUGS AND DIRT.

THEY CAN ALSO BUILD UP MINERAL DEPOSITS AND RUST INSIDE, WHICH YOU CAN'T SEE BUT CAN SEVERELY LIMIT COOLING.



Originally I told Palmer it might be black carbon particles from inside a deteriorating hose or a component somewhere, or some mold or mildew residue that broke loose. I suggested he check the hoses and connections and pump for black rubber and replace if found. Otherwise, I told him to do another thorough disinfecting of the water system, with at least ¼ cup of bleach for every 15 gallons of water.

After some e-mails back and forth, Palmer replied: "I had my unit in the shop to take care of a few things, and one of the things that needed to be done was to change the water filter at the kitchen sink. Once the filter was changed, the problem went away. The fresh-water line to the filter is stained gray. Evidently the filter had failed at the top and the charcoal was being siphoned out into the line to the kitchen sink, directly adjacent to the filter." Lesson: Change those filters!

FUEL PUMP FIASCO

We have a 1985 Winnebago 22-foot Chieftain. With the exception of the automatic transmission, I have done all the repairs. My mechanical fuel pump quit. The old one came out easy, but I can't get the new one in. The instructions with the pump say the engine might have to be rotated to get the plunger in far enough to install the pump. I've rotated it several times and the plunger moved about ½ inch or so. Does rotating the engine move the plunger, or just provide clearance to be able to move it? And how many revolutions are necessary to get enough clearance to install the pump?

KENNETH CLARK | VIA E-MAIL

When you rotate the crankshaft, the camshaft turns half as many degrees, so it takes two full revolutions (720 degrees) for a complete in-and-out cycle. The fuel pump pushrod in the engine is probably all the way out, preventing you from installing the pump. You need to remove the small cover there, put grease on the pushrod (an old mechanic's trick to hold it in place temporarily) and push it all the way

PREVENTIVE CARE CAN ENSURE THAT WATER HEATERS SUCH AS THIS ATWOOD 10-GALLON UNIT FUNCTION TROUBLE-FREE



BURNER TUBE INSPECTION

Turn off the remote switch and use a nut driver to remove screws; disconnect the igniter wire and remove the assembly. Inspect the tube for spider webs and debris. Use steel wool to clean the flame igniter. Remove the gas jet and inspect to see if it's clear; clean with alcohol.



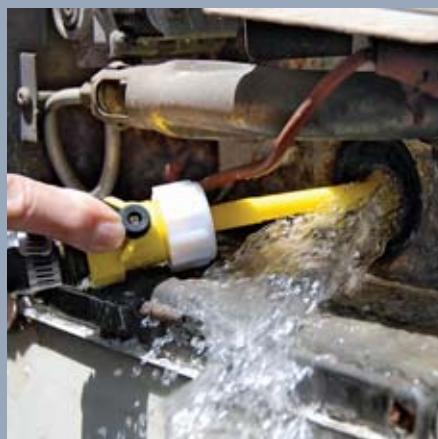
AIR SHUTTER ADJUSTMENT

Air shutter should be adjusted if flame is yellow and sooty — or if the unit makes excessive combustion noise. If flame problems persist, check gas pressure (11 inches water column).



ELECTRICAL CONTACTS

Disconnect the wiring harness and clean contact strips on the terminal block with an eraser. Reconnect the wiring harness. Note the 2-amp fuse at the bottom of the terminal block, which should be checked if the water heater fails to operate. Also, clean the ground connection, a green wire in the harness that's attached to a nearby metal component.



CLEANING AND REMOVING ODORS

If your water system has a rotten egg odor, you can use vinegar or chlorine to remove it.

To clean with chlorine: Drain the water heater as well as the freshwater tank; refill the tank and add chlorine

(household bleach) to the tank at the rate of half a cup per 15 gallons, mixing chlorine with water before adding. Use the water pump to refill the heater, and periodically circulate chlorinated water through the system for 24 hours. Drain and refill.



AIR GAP

Water heaters are designed to operate with a pocket of air at the top of the tank, which dissipates over time. To re-establish the gap, turn off the unit and allow water to cool. Turn off water pressure. Open any hot water faucet inside the coach, then lift the handle of the pressure relief valve, allowing water to drain, expanding the air pocket.



To clean with vinegar, remove the drain plug, drain the tank and remove the pressure relief valve. Replace the plug and use a funnel to fill the tank (via the pressure relief port) with a mixture of two parts vinegar to one part water. Replace the valve and

operate the water heater through three or four cycles over several hours. Allow water to cool; drain and flush thoroughly.

If possible, clean the tank with a wand attached to a water hose inserted through the drain port. With Suburban heaters, inspect the anode rod attached to the drain plug and replace when 25 percent of material is showing.

in. Then install the cover and pump with gaskets.

FRIDGE FAN-DANGO

We have a 2002 Jayco Class C with two slides. My problem is the refrigerator is in the front slide and it has a fan that runs all the time. The fan runs my battery down. The unit came with one house battery and one chassis battery. I have to start the engine and run it until the battery comes back up. Can I disconnect this fan, or do I have to leave it running and live with the problem? Would a small battery-powered fan work just for dry camping?

WANDA GREEN | VIA E-MAIL

If you keep deeply discharging your battery it will soon be ruined. Consider getting a solar panel to keep the battery charged. A small battery-powered fan may work for dry camping. However, if the fan runs all the time, the thermistor may be faulty; have this checked.

LAZY DIESEL

I have a 2000 Coachmen Sportscoach. It has a 330-HP Cat diesel engine and I tow a Jeep Liberty. When I start off in the morning the engine runs great for about 300 miles. As the day goes on it feels like it is lazy; it also has a tendency to run hot when going up a large hill. I changed the antifreeze and flushed the system. I also washed the outside of the radiator with Simple Green. It helped on a flat road but still runs hot going up a hill. If I turn the A/C off and downshift the temperature goes down. I also changed the fuel filters and air filter. My feeling is 330 HP isn't enough power for this coach.

**DONALD LIEBERMAN
CORAL SPRINGS, FLA.**

Performance is relative and subject to driver expectations. Not that long ago, many tractor-trailers were powered by 290-HP Cummins. The 330 Cat should be enough to get you down the road safely. However, if it loses power, that's another issue. You didn't mention if it has always been this way or if the problem started suddenly or slowly got worse. Almost always, it's caused by some fuel delivery problem. You may have some microbes in the fuel, partially blocking filters.

Radiators can be gunked up on the outside from blowby, bugs and dirt, which you attempted to address with Simple Green. They also can build up mineral deposits and rust inside, which you can't see but can severely limit cooling. If the temperature is normal when you downshift, it may mean you were lugging it, as the fan speed varies with RPM. If it is overheating, the fuel may be getting cut off by a low oil pressure/high-coolant temperature protection system. You may need to have it run on a chassis dyno at a Cat dealer.



XM SNAP!

Satellite radio is great for RVers who travel cross-country and in rural areas. But for some, an in-dash satellite radio receiver isn't affordable. SIRIUS XM now has a new portable, transferable XM Snap! satellite radio for less than \$60 (plus subscription fees). It mounts on an adjustable stalk that attaches to the dashboard power socket or cigarette lighter and receives power there. XM Snap gets all the stations that XM's other models receive, but it then relays them to the stock in-dash radio, using a magnetic antenna. Snap can also output directly into an Aux-in connection if the radio has one. Sirius XM radio is also available as a smartphone application and certain newer radios allow mobile devices to be played through the in-dash audio system. Sirius already sells a product called Skydock, which allows users to play satellite radio from their phones through their in-dash radios. XM Snap! is available at retailers or visit www.xmradio.com.

TIP: REMOVING CEILING STAINS

Roof leaks can leave ugly, stubborn stains on motorhome ceilings. Fortunately there's a simple and inexpensive way to remove these stains from fabric. Obtain hydrogen peroxide from a drugstore and use a clean sponge to apply it on the stains. Cover carpeting underneath with a plastic tarp or newspaper. (Be sure to color-test a hidden section before using the hydrogen peroxide on visible open areas.) Absorb the stains with paper towels until they are gone.

CHAIN UP?

I own a 2006 Monaco Cayman diesel with a single drive axle. Which tires do I apply snow chains to when required?

DAVID SOTO | SAN PEDRO, CALIF.

You're supposed to put them on the drive-axle tires. Chains are available for dual tires and these are best. If you only have chains for single tires, I recommend putting them on the outside. Before you venture out in a storm, make sure you have enough clearance, as that model doesn't look like it has a lot of clearance between the outer rear tires and wheel-well lips. The faster you drive, the harder and more the chains pull outward, away from the tires. You need to use rubber or spring tensioners that go on the sides to pull them back in. I also recommend waiting for the storm and roads to clear; if you've ever experienced a loss of steering control on an icy downhill curve on a mountain road with a heavy vehicle before, you'll know what I mean.

CHARGING LINE

I would like to run a charging line from my motorhome to the dinghy that I tow. I know that I can run it from the motorhome's engine. The coach batteries are in the middle of the coach. Could I run the charge line from the coach batteries to the car?

**BILL SLAVIN
HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIF.**

A charging line should be run from the engine's alternator to the dinghy vehicle's battery, not from the coach batteries.

HOT FEET

We have a 2006 Fleetwood Tioga Class C

with a V-10 engine. On a recent trip the cab got so hot on the floor and around the engine cover that my wife couldn't touch it. I removed the cover to see what was wrong, but couldn't see anything suspicious. I took it to the RV dealer and they said everything was in place (heat shields, etc.), but the problem still exists. Can you help?

MIKE SIMONS | VIA E-MAIL

These chassis are known for that problem. Try adding some aftermarket insulation, such as Dynamat (www.dynamat.com, or www.carinsulation.com). Car stereo shops also install this or similar brands.

MUDFLAP MUSINGS

I own a 2004 Fleetwood 32-foot Southwind and it has a rear mudflap across the back. I've been towing cars behind my coaches for 20 years and I've never had rocks and tar cover the car as it did on my last trip. I was told that those mudflaps could cause that. I also read something like that in MotorHome a few years ago. What are your thoughts?

GARY CRATON | LANCASTER, CALIF.

You could install a deflector panel rock shield on the tow bar, a front "bra" cover for the towed vehicle or the blanket-like Tow Defender from Roadmaster (800-669-9690, www.roadmasterinc.com). There are also thin, clear plastic films (such as 3M) that are installed by detailers and window-tinting shops that protect paint from rock chips and debris.

MOTOR OIL STANDARDS

I own a 1990 Fleetwood Flair with a 1989 Chevy 454 big block that employs a flat tappet cam. The sliding cam-to-cam-follower interface in a non-roller lifter engine requires a special EP additive, which has historically been ZDDP, which is now reduced in all API-rated automotive oils. What should people with flat tappet engines do to protect their engines if the ZDDP is eliminated? I use 15w40 Delo 400 with hopes of protecting my engine. I am not sure if this is the proper thing to do. I have read plenty of pros and cons about using diesel motor oil in gasoline engines. What is your

input on this subject?

**JAKE HARPER
CALIFORNIA CITY, CALIF.**

The Delo oil can be used and does offer protection. You can also get the additive separately; go to www.zddppluscentral.com.

ENGINE STALLS

I'm the owner of a 2005 Fleetwood Southwind coach on a Ford chassis with a V-10 engine. About a year ago the engine began stalling for no reason. The engine will lose all power when going down the road, usually at highway speeds, and I hit a pothole or rough roads, anything that jars the motorhome. All the dials work, the tachometer is still reading, but I press the gas pedal and nothing. I coast over to the side of the road and when the motorhome is almost stopped, the engine stops. I can put it in PARK and the engine restarts with no problem.

I've taken it to a couple of Ford dealers. They replaced the mass airflow sensor and the throttle position sensor, but that didn't help. Then they decided the gas tank had rusted out so they replaced the gas tank, gas filter and gas sender, and fuel pump. Again, nothing. It's got everyone stumped! I've spent about \$4,000 and they still can't find the problem. Any ideas?

R. PAGE | HENDERSON, NEV.

They should have tested fuel pressure with a test gauge under load before changing the pump. They also should have opened up the gas filter before deciding the tank had rusted. It appears that shop doesn't know how to do diagnostics and you need to find a more competent facility.

There is probably a loose connection somewhere in a harness or connector that provides electrical power to the engine ignition, computer or fuel pump. I'd try shaking and pulling on all the applicable wire harnesses while the engine is idling to see if the engine falters. ♦

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TRAVEL: FEATURES MO/PAGE

AL: The Natchez Trace	10/26
AL: Sandy Southern Sojourn (Gulf Coast)	2/20
AK: A Vine Time (Ozarks wineries)	9/31
AZ: After You've Seen the Grand Canyon, Then What? (Cliff Dwellers, Glen Canyon Dam, Tuzigoot, Jerome, Wupatki and Sunset Crater National Monuments)	10/22
AZ: Rocks of Ages (Four Corners)	2/32
CA: Golden Opportunities (Death Valley NP)	11/32
CA: Wintry Inspiration (Yosemite NP)	12/36
CO: Rocks of Ages (Four Corners)	2/32
GA: Soaking in Warm Springs	11/29
KS: Touring the Herd	3/30
KY: Touring Central Kentucky: Glasgow to Lexington	8/28
MD: Gaited Community (Assateague Island)	7/25
MI: Go With the Flow (Upper Peninsula)	9/24
MO: Doing MO. for Less (St. Louis)	3/22
MS: The Natchez Trace	10/26
MT: A Glacial Coming of Age (Glacier NP)	5/22
MT: Reeling in Montana	8/36
NM: A Jewel of a Route (Turquoise Trail)	4/29
NM: Rocks of Ages (Four Corners)	2/32
NV: 'America's Loneliest Highway'	7/30
OK: Following the Herd (Chisholm Trail)	3/30
OR: Oregon's Lakeside Drive	12/31
OR: See Worthy (Newport)	4/23
SD: From Canyons to Custer	6/25
TN: The Natchez Trace	10/26
UT: Hanging Their Caps at Mexican Hat	6/30
UT: Rocks of Ages (Four Corners)	2/32
VA: Acres of History (Lower James River Plantations)	5/27
VA: Gaited Community (Assateague Island)	7/25
WY: From Canyons to Custer	6/25

TRAVEL: GETAWAYS MO/PAGE

AZ: Exploring the Grandest Canyon of Them All (Grand Canyon NP)	10/17
AZ: Tucson: A New Look at the Old West	11/25
CA: Desert Lovers' Fraternity (Anza-Borrego Desert SP)	4/17
CA: Lonely Sands (Mojave Preserve)	6/21
CA: Magical Markers (Joshua Tree NP)	3/15
LA: Let the Good Times Roll	2/27
ME: Splendor, One Section at a Time (Mount Katahdin)	9/17
NB: Flocking to Kearney	7/19
NJ/PA: A River Runs Through It (Delaware Water Gap)	8/19
TX: No Barriers to Fun (Padre Island)	1/17
UT: In Awe of Arches (Arches NP)	5/17

TRAVEL: INTERNATIONAL MO/PAGE

Africa/Asia/Europe: Going Global	10/34
Australia: Driving Down Under	1/32
Canada: Where the Sea Is the Soul (Halifax)	8/24
Europe: A Gap Filled With Memories	5/32

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This is our youngest son, Kevin, age 12, at Devils Tower KOA campground in Devils Tower, Wyo. We stayed here while visiting Devils Tower National Monument — one of the many stops we made last summer as we traveled this great nation. Devils Tower — America's first national monument — offers great views, hiking trails for different skill levels and free ranger-led walks.

John Geiger
Flanders, New Jersey



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