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JULY 2011

70th Anniversary

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Special Issue



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User Guide

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Chevrolet Motor Division, Circle 106 on Reader Service Card

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ON THE COVER:

This 1950 Airfloat Land Yacht is a refurbished, fully functioning trailer that brings to life the early days of RVing. See story on page 50.

Photo by Peter Valia
Cover design by Rick Jimenez

DRIVER'S SEAT



by **Kristopher Bunker**

LUCKY NUMBER 70

W

hat were you doing in 1941? Back when gas was 19 cents a gallon, FDR was president and the New York Yankees became the World Series champions once again. When you could get a sackful of groceries for around a buck, when the nation was bracing for World War II, when TV commercials were officially approved by the FCC. Of course, many of us weren't even born yet.

It was July 1941 when *Trailer Life* magazine was born. Originally called *Western Trailer Life*, the publication initially focused on mobile homes as well as RVs, but the primary focus was always on towables.

It wouldn't be until the latter part of that decade that "Western" was dropped from the title, and *Trailer Life* as it's known today emerged.

And while 70 admittedly isn't necessarily a glamorous anniversary (fanfare is usually reserved for 25th, 50th and 75th), it truly is a tremendous accomplishment, and is a testament to not only the staying power of the Ventura, California-based publication, but to the RV industry as well — which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2010.

That's why we've devoted this issue to celebrating the storied history of this magazine. Through recessions, gas crises and world-altering events good and bad, RVing has remained a popular choice for those with a love of the outdoors and a touch of wanderlust. Vacationing in a home on wheels is a great way to connect with your family and loved ones, and is a downright bargain when compared to airline travel, hotel rooms and rental cars.

To gain some perspective on the ever-changing RV landscape throughout the magazine's existence, turn to page 34 for "Trailer Life Turns 70." Our longtime contributor Jeff Johnston is your guide on a trip down memory lane, taking you from the magazine's humble beginnings on up to recent industry events and beyond.

In "Memoirs of a Longtime RVer," photojournalist and RV-enthusiast Jim Elder recalls his nearly half-century love affair with RVs — especially truck campers — that still burns in him to this day. Follow along as he offers firsthand experiences of early RVs, often bringing along his wife and children bound for exciting destinations "you simply will not find on road maps."

The nostalgia continues with this month's installment of *RV Retrospective*, focusing on the 1950 Airfloat Land Yacht. As you can see on our cover, this popular head-turning trailer has been fully restored to its original glory. What you can't see is the painstaking process its owner undertook to make it road-worthy and to improve its aesthetics.

We're also featuring a selection of retro advertisements from product manufacturers who have been with us for many years. It's a fun diversion to see how these advertisements have evolved from days gone by.

And to polish off the anniversary festivities, we are highlighting the 10 top *10-Minute Tech* tips from over the years.

Regardless of how long you've been with *Trailer Life* during its tenure, we appreciate each and every one of you, our readers. Here's to the next 70 years! 

TRAILER LIFE

EDITORIAL

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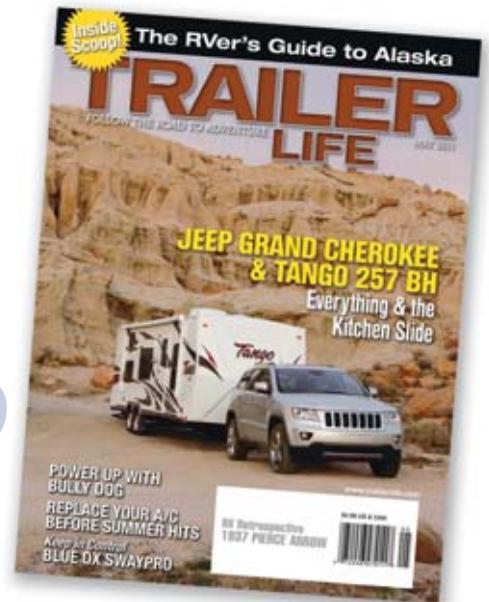
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LETTERS

from our Readers

“The story about Kennicott brought back memories of our trip in July of 1993, traveling in our '92 Ford Van Sportsmobile.



KENNICOTT MEMORIES

I really enjoyed Bill Graves' *America's Out-back* column in the May issue. The story about Kennicott brought back memories of our trip in July 1993, traveling in our '92 Ford Sportsmobile. We took the bus from McCarthy up the dirt road to Kennicott. What a beautiful site! We returned back across the cable tram and camped for the night there by the Glacier River.

We are so glad we made that trip, and no flat tires, dents or broken windows. We also went to Seward and Denali, then ventured to Hyder and dry-camped on the fishing pier in the Portland Canal. Thanks for all the stories you write.

Clarence & Gay Kirby,
Franklin, Kentucky

SAGGING FRONT END

In May's *RV Clinic*, Lowance Harwood had a problem with his truck sagging in the front when he attached his trailer to the front to park. He should get the plow package and the towing package with his next vehicle. Most plows are in the 800-pound range, which should solve his problem.

Doug Bissonette, Lake Placid, New York

MOOSEHEAD LAKE

In the May issue, Lisa Halvorsen wrote that Moosehead Lake in Maine was the "largest lake situated entirely within a single state east of the Mississippi River. It

covers an area of 75,000 acres." Well, Florida's Lake Okeechobee is an even larger lake, covering 467,200 acres. We have visited both and couldn't help but notice the discrepancy. We enjoy reading *Trailer Life* and look forward to each issue.

Jim & Sandy Sween, Avon Park, Florida

Editor's Note: *Moosehead Lake is the largest mountain lake within one state east of the Mississippi River — not simply the largest lake. Thanks for clarifying.*

SHORT QUEEN & OTHER THINGS

Thank you, Kay Wilt of Annona, Texas (*Letters*, May issue). I also hate the short queen bed featured in most RVs, and no other mattress will fit. Also, whoever decided to jam the mattress up against the

walls clearly didn't have to make up the bed. And why do we need a 40-inch TV? More kitchen counter space would be better. We, too, have been RVing for many years, and have found many things that could be improved.

Barbara Singley, Marion, Texas

IPHONE & IPAD APPS

I've been subscribing off and on for 20 years or more and am wondering if you are working on an iPad app. I know I could do the digital issues, but an app would make it easier for us on the go.

Joel Hansma, Corona, California

Editor's Note: *Trailer Life does, in fact, offer iPad and iPhone apps. You can find them at the iTunes app store.*

SNOOK'S NOOK



"Hi there neighbor! I'm the drummer ... Could I sit on your step for the night?"

To contribute to this column, write to 2575 Vista Del Mar, Ventura, CA 93001, or email info@trailerlife.com.

Professor Smart says...

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AROUND

THE BEND

NEWS • EVENTS • PEOPLE • PLACES • PARKS & RV TRENDS

Edited by **Marleen Canniff**

VERSATILE RV

Two years ago, Livin' Lite was named in the RV industry as an "Indiana Company to Watch" ... and we certainly have been watching. The company's sales are going up again this year, as it continues to roll out innovative designs. Its new-generation ultra-light toy hauler — the VRV (Versatile Recreational Vehicle) — has an all-aluminum construction, making it recyclable and half-ton towable. It's admittedly more garage than RV; however, the trailer has all the amenities necessary for living comfortably, including a kitchen, wet bath and plenty of sleeping space — and the tip-out bunks with zippered windows and screens create extra sleeping capacity. Its standard 6-foot 7-inch headroom can be increased at the factory by request, and customers can choose from a variety of floorplans, lengths and exterior colors. Base msrp starts at \$20,158.

To learn more, call (574) 862-2228 or visit www.livinlite.com.



THE FOURTH AT FORT McHENRY

On July 4, Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine — the only such doubly designated place in the country — invites all patriotic citizens to come and celebrate the nation's independence with fife and drum music, cannon firing, a musket salute for 18 states, period dancing and games from noon to 4:30 p.m. Highlighting the event will be a public reading of the Declaration of Independence.

The star-shaped fort, located on the Patapsco River near Chesapeake Bay, is famous for having repelled a British naval attack and saving Baltimore several years into the War of 1812 — a war that's sometimes regarded as America's Second War of Independence. The fort is also famous for the enormous flag that flew above shortly after the battle, a sight that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the poem, "Defence of Fort McHenry," which eventually became our national anthem in 1931.

Fort McHenry continued to serve as an active military post: during the Civil War as a temporary prison for captured Confederate soldiers and sympathizers; during World War I as a military hospital; and during World War II as a Coast Guard training facility. Congress made it a national park in 1925, giving it the double designation 14 years later.

A fine new visitor center with plenty of RV parking opened recently at the fort. A 10-minute video tells the old fort's story and the original copy of the "Star-Spangled Banner" is on display.

For more information, call (410) 962-4290 or visit www.nps.gov/fomc. — *Pamela Selbert*

THE RALLY IN REDMOND

It's not too late to get on over to The Rally, presented by DISH Network, in Redmond, Oregon, July 14-17! If you've been to The Good Sam Rallies before, then you know why this is the place to be. Rally-goers will have a unique opportunity to compare nearly every RV make and model in one central location, check out all the new RV products, tour the beautiful surrounding area, be entertained by award-winning county music artist Vince Gill, attend seminars, golf, get information and deals on RV travel opportunities, and so much more. And get set for next year, because the Greatest RV Event in the World will be held three times!

Register by phone at (877) 749-7122 or online at www.therally.com.



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PIMA AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

Anyone with an interest in the history of aviation and historic and modern aircraft should take a road trip to the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona. The museum covers 80 acres and houses more than 300 aircraft from the world's smallest biplane to some of the largest piston and jet engine aircraft in the world. Visitors can walk around aircraft in the four hangars in addition to those on display outdoors. There are tram tours around the facility as well as docent-led walks through the hangars, plus a huge free parking lot that can accommodate the largest RVs. **For more details and extra photos**, go to the Web Exclusives section on www.trailerlife.com. For hours, admission rates and directions, call (520) 574-0462 or visit www.pimaair.org. — *Joseph & Carol Berke*

WALLY BYAM SILVER-BULLET BIRTHDAY RALLY



Born on the Fourth of July, Airstream creator Wally Byam will be celebrated on his birthday weekend with a rally and an exhibit at the Baker Heritage Museum in Baker City, Oregon, which was his birthplace in 1896. Rare memorabilia from Byam's early life and his caravan adventures around the world will be featured in the "Caravanning

and Collecting" exhibit, on display daily now through October. The exhibit will be part of a summer of activities for Airstream enthusiasts, including a caravan across Oregon and the "Wally Byam Birthday Party Rally," which will take place in Baker City July 1-5, 2011. Airstreams will gather at sites throughout town, and an open house of vintage and new silver bullets will be on view for all on Independence Day at Geiser Pollman Park. Owners will be dressed in clothing from the year their Airstream was manufactured. The rally will be a highlight of the Oregon Unit of the Wally Byam Caravan Club International sponsored "Sampling Oregon Caravan," a 30-day, 1,450-mile Airstream journey across the state.

For more information, call (541) 523-9308 or visit www.bakerheritagemuseum.com.

FREE OVERNIGHT CAMPING

Kicking back and staying for the night after a day's visit at a winery along the way is an enticing plan, but the fact that you can do this for free makes it a



no-brainer. Harvest Hosts is a new RV membership program that provides RV owners with free 24-hour stops at wineries and farms across the country, with locations in all Lower 48 states, Alaska and Baja, California. For only \$30, members of Harvest Hosts receive online access to the Host Directory, which contains winery locations, contact information, hours, GPS coordinates and Host activities. Members also receive a membership card, vehicle I.D. badge and access to the members-only pages on the website. Most of the Hosts are small, mom-and-pop agricultural operations, so your visit requires that you dry-camp and that you agree to a common sense "code of conduct."

For more details, call (928) 277-1661 or visit www.harvesthosts.com.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HERITAGE MUSEUM, HELEN BYAM SCHAMORN ESTATE COLLECTION



NEWSWIRE

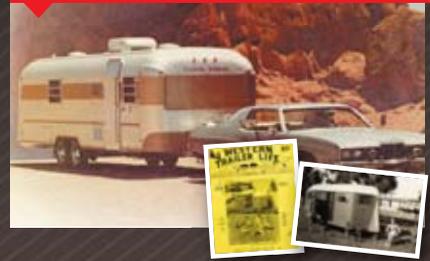
Camping World RV, the nation's largest recreational vehicle retailer, was honored by Statistical Surveys as the No. 1 seller of towable RVs. It was the sixth consecutive year Camping World achieved the status, and it comes on the heels of the retailer's recent ranking of No. 1 in motorized sales for the 2010 calendar year ... **The Trailer Life & Woodall's RV Buyers Guide 2011** is now available. The 176-page guide includes detailed specs,

photos, floorplans and prices on more than 400 RVs. Purchase your copy for \$7.99 at www.trailerlifedirectory.com/travelstore ... **The National Park Service** is in search of images that capture our nation's diverse and scenic natural features, and so it has launched its 12th annual National Historic Landmarks Photo Contest. All entries — one photo per landmark, up to 10 total — must be



submitted by July 31. Winning entries will be featured in the National Historic Landmark 2012 Event Planner. See contest rules at www.nature.nps.gov/nnl/photocontest.cfm ... **The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** announced that the number and rate of traffic fatalities in 2010 fell to the lowest levels since 1949, despite an estimated increase of nearly 21 billion miles in national vehicle miles

WEB EXCLUSIVE



► This month's Web-exclusive content features extra historic photos and trivia about the 70th anniversary of *Trailer Life* magazine.

Trailer Life editors take you inside the industry with the latest in RV news and offer a **forum** so you can **ask the experts** for tips on RV maintenance and new products.



Sign up for *Trailer Life* magazine's RSS feed to receive instant news, articles and updates.

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► Gain special subscriber-only access to more detailed information, extra photos and videos about new-product installs and trailer and tow-vehicle tests.

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► Join our RV Blog-O-Sphere for exclusive commentary, reviews and photos — where *Trailer Life* and others blog about all things RV.

RV LINKS

► Browse through our RV Links section for additional information about the best campgrounds, services and other info from the Good Sam family.



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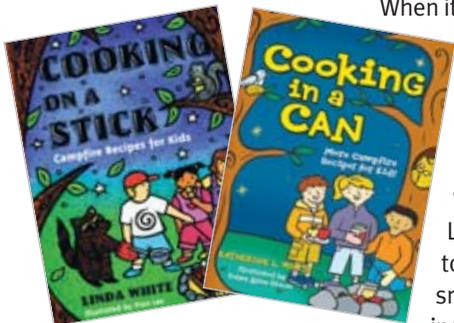
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TRAILER TIME

Tent camping was fun way back when ... but for those who think it's time to move up to trailering, Starcraft RV has an entry-level camping trailer that fits well for the first-time buyer. The 2012 Starflyer is designed for easy setup and take-down, and it can be towed by most family vehicles (the 8-foot model has a dry weight of 985 pounds). The 8- and 10-foot floorplans come standard with a domed, fiberglass roof; corrosion-resistant frame; aluminum exterior side walls and ceiling; and a booth dinette with inside/outside dinette table. The unit also has prepped access for 120-volt AC power and is pre-wired for battery hookup. The base msrp starts as low as \$3,700. **For more information**, call (800) 945-4787 or visit www.starcraftcamping.com.

COOKBOOKS FOR MINI CAMP CHEFS



When it comes to RVing, involving the kids in as much of the experience as possible is key to a good time. Two essential books to get kids involved at mealtime are "Cooking on a Stick" by Linda White and "Cooking in a Can" by Katherine L. White, geared for children ages 7 to 11. The 48-page paperbacks are small enough to fit in a backpack and include easy-to-follow recipes for

breakfast, lunch, dinner and everything in between. Besides its namesake technique, "Cooking on a Stick" also contains sections on cooking in a pouch and on the grill, and the book's introduction covers important safety rules, campfires, cooking equipment and a packing list. "Cooking in a Can" is the second book in the series, and it has a section on fire safety, cleanup, setting up camp and tips for cooking on a camp stove, in a paper bag, on a hot rock, in a pit, in a solar oven and on a spit. Both books are beautifully illustrated, and the recipes are simple and healthy. We can't wait to try some Hot Rock Chicken followed by Geysers Cake on our next RV trip. "Cooking on a Stick" and "Cooking in a Can" are available at most booksellers.

For more information or to order your copies, call (800) 748-5439 or visit www.gibbs-smith.com. — *Meaghan Alfier*

traveled. A regional breakdown shows the greatest drop in fatalities occurred in the Pacific Northwest states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska, where they dropped by 12 percent. Arizona, California and Hawaii had the next steepest decline at nearly 11 percent. The national anti-distracted driving campaigns — such as "Over the Limit. Under Arrest" and "Click It Or Ticket" — as well as higher

safety standards are some of the NHTSA programs credited for this record decline ... **Pilot Flying J** recently launched a new website, www.pilotflyingj.com, to unite the Pilot Travel Center and Flying J brands online and to provide for its customers enhanced, easy-to-navigate information about store locations, products and services. A mobile companion version is also available for smartphones.



Views from the Road

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

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

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

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

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

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

Happy travels.



Al and Mary traveling the country



RV ACTION LINE

IT'S IN THE DETAILS

Upset after being denied reimbursement for a warranty claim, a reader turned to *RV Action Line* for assistance:

We purchased an extended warranty through our dealer in Bend, Oregon, when we bought our fifth-wheel in 2007. The Administrator and Provider is American Guardian Warranty Services. During our travels this past summer we had a breakdown and had a bad experience trying to get payment from AGWS. After we had set the unit up at an RV park, we noticed a structural member (which has a rubber seal on it) on the main slide had separated from the undercarriage (on all but one end) and had become fouled on the wiring for the slide mechanism motors.

It appeared to us that much more damage could occur if we attempted to close the slide and tow to a repair facility. The park management knew of a reputable mobile repair unit, whom we called in to do the repairs.

The first problem we encountered was trying to get authorization over the phone to proceed with the repairs. After a long drawn-out process, we were finally told we would have to pay and then file a claim, which we did.

Our claim was then denied based on AGWS not accepting a mobile unit for the repairs. I could not find in the agreement any mention of a mobile unit not being acceptable. We then asked for reconsideration, as we felt that we not only acted properly in not moving the unit, but also because we couldn't find any rule about mobile-repair services in the contract.

AGWS's denial of the request for reconsideration was based on failure of the rivets, which they state are "fasteners,"

which they insist are not covered. This is based on the word "fasteners" appearing in a sentence about ignition parts as they quoted in their last letter.

It would seem logical that if all "fasteners" were excluded, there would be a separate sentence to so state. We feel there should have been a separate sentence to cover all fasteners if they were to be excluded.

In summary, we believe we lived up to our responsibilities to see no further damage was done by having the unit repaired on site. However, we feel strongly that AGWS has gone to great lengths to not pay for any of this work.

Robert Welsh, Bend, Oregon

There are a couple of issues here. First, many extended-warranty providers have rules about mobile repair companies. It's in your best interest to look into that aspect right off the bat, as most problems naturally occur at the campsite when there aren't many options but to call around the area. Always be sure to clarify this when selecting coverage.

Second and more importantly, the "rivets versus fasteners" argument seems a bit odd to us, given the exception was discussed in an entirely different section of the contract. At the very least, we wanted an explanation on that.

Given these facts, we passed along a letter to AGWS to reconsider, based more upon what we see as ambiguous contract language than for the mobile-repair-service aspect.

As you can see in AGWS's response, although the provider intends to stick by its original stance, there is a happy ending for Welsh:

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HD on the Road



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RV ACTION LINE

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

Mr. Welsh rebutted this decision, claiming ambiguous contract language should prevent AGWS from denying his claim. We respectfully disagree with his decision. AGWS does not intend to cover fasteners.

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

John Wendt, Claims Director,
American Guardian Warranty Services

WATER WOES

After his new travel trailer began to exhibit signs of water damage, a reader asked *RV Action Line* to intervene:

We purchased a new 2009 Flagstaff Super Lite in October 2008 from Diamond RV Centre in Hatfield, Massachusetts. We enjoyed using it during 2009 for 13 weekend adventures. Since then, we have not been so lucky.

During our second outing in 2010, we noticed a bubble on the outside fiberglass siding. We immediately had the problem looked at by Major's RV in Bourne, where the trailer is stored. They advised us to contact the dealer/manufacture about this issue, as the unit is too new to be experiencing this problem. Both companies were called right away, and we were advised that if the problem was water damage they would not be responsible. If it was a delaminating problem, the unit would need to go back to the factory for repair. To identify the issue, we would need to have a pressure test performed. We instructed the RV repair company to go ahead with the pressure test and document its findings.

Water damage was found to be the



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issue due to the lack of caulking (none on the right side at all) and the incorrect installation of a gutter on the downspout by the manufacturer. This information was submitted to the dealer by the RV repair company. We had hoped the dealer would assist us in this repair but they've refused. We ended up paying the RV repair company for the diagnosis at \$531 and still did not have a solution for fixing the bubble. The dealer/manufacturer was not willing to assist us in any way even though the lack of caulking from the factory caused the problem. The manufacturer wouldn't even discuss the problem with us and referred us back to the dealer. The dealer's only consideration on the matter thus far was to let us know that if we went with them to trade in the unit, they would give us a good deal.

At this point things are getting worse. Additional bubbles have begun to appear, and we have looked into having the siding replaced. The estimate we've received is approximately \$2,000 to \$3,000. It is unfathomable to me that a new RV would be experiencing an issue like this and not be covered by the manufacturer.

Gordon Ponte, Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts

Manufacturers always recommend checking the caulking as part of routine maintenance. Without it, seams are exposed and water can seep in, causing damage. However, since the determination was created because there was no caulking from the factory, we decided to write Forest River to see what it could do.

Turns out the manufacturer was merely waiting for some information that it had never received:

Thank you for your letter in regards to the water damaged sidewall issue that Mr. and Mrs. Ponte have experienced with their Flagstaff trailer. Forest River has reviewed this issue and we feel we have come to a suitable resolution for all parties involved.

After reviewing the customer's letter, and reviewing the warranty file for their unit, there was contact made by the retail customer and an independent dealer regarding this issue. Flagstaff's warranty de-

partment had originally requested that the customer bring their unit to a Forest River dealer, which did not occur, according to our records. After a seal test was done by the independent dealer, Forest River's warranty department requested pictures of the sealant to follow up with the claim from the dealer that no sealant was ever put on at the factory. The pictures requested were never received from said dealer or customer by the warranty division.

It would seem if more information could have been provided, this issue could have been resolved in the past.

With all sides of the issue regarding the water damaged side wall now brought to light, we at Forest River ultimately want to make sure our camping family is taken care of, and will extend to Mr. and Mrs. Ponte full repairs on their Flagstaff travel trailer at no cost to them as a goodwill gesture.

Jonathan A. Gust, Forest River, Rockwood/Flagstaff Warranty

We also heard back from Ponte:

We'd like to follow-up on a letter regarding our 2009 Flagstaff Travel Trailer Super Lite. Forest River agreed to fix the problems at no cost to us. They even agreed to come pick up our unit and take it back to their factory for repair. The unit was gone for a month or so. The trailer required quite a bit of maintenance as both sides and the roof were replaced along with some other fixes but it looks great. No more exterior bubbling on the outside fiberglass siding. We are grateful that Forest River stood behind its product and corrected the problems.

I'd also like Forest River to know that for us it really made a difference as to how the company took a bad situation and made it right. In fact, we've decided to upgrade to a fifth-wheel and will be purchasing another Forest River.

G.P. 🇺🇸

After exhausting all other resources without success, please forward information (typewritten only) with copies of appropriate bills and correspondence to *RV Action Line*, 2575 Vista Del Mar, Ventura, CA 93001. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. No phone calls, please.

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THE OUTSIDER ❖❖❖

by **Bruce Leonard Jr.**



RENO FORE ONE ONE!

"AS DID OTHER GOLFERS STAYING IN THE SPOTLESS, AMENITY-RICH RV PARK, I HAULED MY CLUBS FROM MY RIG, TOTED THEM TO THE RANGE, THEN STRUCK SHOT AFTER SHOT."

The television comedy "Reno 911!" pokes fun at its namesake city (as well as most everything else) and likely contributes to how the nation views this "biggest little city in the world." Reno has long been known as the place to go for a quicky divorce, should that form of dissolution be necessary, and as a smaller version of Las Vegas, should gaming, buffets, big-name entertainers and lounge acts find their way onto travelers' itineraries.

Rodeo also plays a large role in this city, which flanks the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Range. Various RV parks and dealerships sponsor cleanups of sections of the interstates that pass through town. Despite expecting to find most of the above during a visit to Reno and the Carson Valley to the south, I was surprised to learn that the area's golf courses are plentiful, top-notch and affordable, and that RVers specifically target these courses.

I learned just how golf-infused the Reno area is as I approached the entrance to the RV park at Grand Sierra Resort. Just a Phil Mickelson drive from my campsite sits an intriguing and, perhaps, unique driving range. A huge lake glimmers under sunlight or evening lights, and golfers hit shots toward the islands that sit at various distances from the tee boxes. Golfers earn prizes for extremely accurate shots, and a hole-in-one on the 200-plus-yard island green wins a trip to Hawaii. As did other golfers staying in the spotless, amenity-rich RV park, I hauled my clubs from my rig, toted them to the range, then struck shot after shot — some of them solidly — but secured no prizes.

I was not even slightly bothered by not winning goodies, since the golf in the region is jackpot enough. Only minutes from the Grand Sierra Resort sits the Resort at Red Hawk's



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THE OUTSIDER

Lakes Course, in the city of Sparks. More than 100 bunkers throughout the course penalize errant shots, and although I felt that too many of the holes dog-legged to the right and resembled each other, I enjoyed the round and found the four par-3 holes to be particularly memorable; although, I could be biased by the fact that I played them in one under par.

Yet no bias of any kind is necessary to rate D'Andrea Golf Club highly. Also in Sparks, this extremely hilly and demanding course delivers the breathtaking views that Red Hawk only hints at. From the third tee, I could see the Grand Sierra Resort, Reno surrounding it and snowcapped peaks in the distance. One of my playing partners that June day was Brad Newman, who owns a 26-foot Class A. Online Brad had paid \$40 to play the course, and for that price, D'Andrea is one of the great golf bargains anywhere. My foursome found the greens to be excessively fast, but a three-putt now and again was a small price to pay after having paid so little.

LakeRidge Golf Course, located in Reno, is a Robert Trent Jones Sr. design that will appeal to golf traditionalists. A relatively short course by modern standards, LakeRidge delivers a parklands experience with ample challenges, including plenty of water. *Fairways and Greens* magazine has rated LakeRidge's signature 15th hole among the best par 3s in the nation, and as I stood more than 100 feet above the island green, trying to gauge how much club to hit toward a pin that was 195 yards away, I momentarily wondered if admiring and photographing the hole didn't make more sense than trying to play it. Trust me when I recommend under-clubbing by two clubs: In other words, I did not par LakeRidge's signature hole.

I did, however, start birdie-par-birdie at Wolf Run Golf Club. In a classic case of chicken-or-the-egg, readers may wonder if I loved Wolf Run because I played it well, or if I played Wolf Run well because I loved it. This is a distinction without a difference, because I LOVED this course. Wolf Run is the best combination of convenience, quality design,

course maintenance and affordability (about \$50, including cart) of any course in the Reno area, and perhaps anywhere. The greens held balls as well as any greens I've ever played and rolled as truly. Time and again, I chose my line, then watched my Titleist hold it. My playing partner, Mike O'Bryan, who owns a 29-foot McKenzie Rogue, claimed on the first hole that putting troubled him, then he proceeded — I kid you not — to drop about 150 feet of putts during one round, so true are Wolf Run's greens. Of course, creeks run through so many holes that the course could be named Wolf Creek (or Creek Creek), so players should choose their clubs carefully, since grip-it-and-rip-it will likely result in "I-need-another-ball."

The dreaded ball-exchange program can easily be in effect at Dayton Valley Golf and Country Club, since water insinuates itself from out of nowhere, then shouts its presence on other holes. This Arnold Palmer-designed course is well southeast of Reno, nearer to Carson City, but may be worth the drive to golfers who appreciate a truly great finishing hole and a recession-inspired, seven-days-a-week bargain price of \$40, including cart.

Golfers who want to play this Arnie design may prefer to spend their nights at the Carson Valley Inn RV Park, located in Minden. The oldest settlement in the state — Genoa, home to Nevada's oldest thirst parlor, Genoa Bar — is only minutes northwest of the Carson Valley Inn, as is the Lakes Course at Genoa Lakes Golf Club. This links-style course features a gorgeous clubhouse and a fun layout, one offering plenty of risk-reward options.

All of the above courses belong to a promotional organization called Golf the High Sierra, which has 18 member courses. Four other member courses decorate the Reno-Carson Valley landscape.

Golfers who experience all of the member courses, however, should do so with their spouses, lest a Reno divorce come into play. 📧

Golf the High Sierra, (877) 332-4465,
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DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

by **Len Cousineau**

The water flows between Pennsylvania and New Jersey like an endless stream of outdoor possibilities. Within the nearly 67,000-acre expanse of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, the Middle Delaware River meanders, its generally accommodating waters and the surrounding terrain granting recreation to five million visitors annually. So alluring is the 40-mile stretch of water that flows through the recreation area that the Middle Delaware has earned the distinction of being a National Scenic River. Float tubers, rafters, kayakers, canoeists and motorboaters experience the water's gravitational tug at their own pace, and anglers pursue numerous species in the river and in the various nearby lakes and ponds. An annual shad run occurs in the Middle Delaware River during May and June.

As plentiful and diverse as aquatic activities are in Water Gap, however, the recreation area appeals even to hydrophobic visitors. Birding, biking, rock climbing, horseback riding, hunting, model-airplane flying and cross-country skiing are all options within the park. More than 100 miles of hiking trails skirt streams and surmount ridges and peaks. Within the park, 27 miles of the Appalachian Trail lure hikers. Among the

hemlock groves and rhododendron-laden ravines, wildlife thrives, including bald eagles, peregrine falcons and majestic black bears. Campers should store food adequately to prevent encounters with bears.

Yet Water Gap certainly delivers more than wilderness to guests interested in history. Along the park's 200 miles of scenic roadways, visitors will encounter historic villages that house approximately 200 structures, many of them reminders of the area's colonial past. The only hotel within the park is a farmhouse named the Cliff Park Inn, which dates from the 1820s; it features a restaurant and a nine-hole golf course. And the sites of seven outposts that served the British during the French & Indian War exist within the recreation area.

Dingmans Campground in Pennsylvania and Worthington State Forest Campground in New Jersey complement the numerous campsites that exist on the river around Walpack Bend. Plenty of nearby campgrounds also exist outside the park boundaries, and various canoe liveries will shuttle visitors and their crafts back to their put-in spots. 🚐

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, (570) 426-2452, www.nps.gov/dewa.

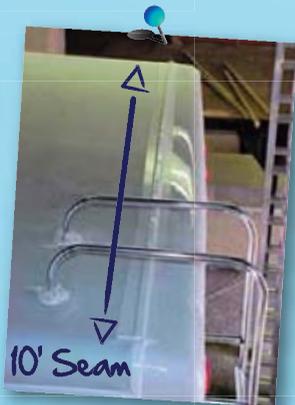


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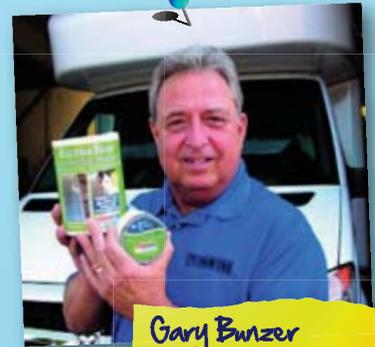


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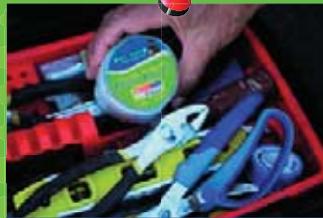
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HONORABLY AT REST

**THE STORIED HISTORY BEHIND ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MAKES IT A MORE-THAN-WORTHY RV DESTINATION**

by **Steven B. Waite**

Of all the national cemeteries none stirs up as much emotion as does Arlington National Cemetery. It's not the first, nor is it the largest, nor does it perform the most burials in a year, but it is the only cemetery to render full military honors and perform gravesite interment services and it certainly carries an aura that separates it from the others. Arlington National Cemetery represents what it means to be a free nation, and if you're planning to travel to our nation's capital, a visit to this military burial ground should be on top of your list.

A NATION DIVIDED

Arlington has a unique history — one that goes back to the father of our country. The marriage of George and Martha Washington produced no children, but Martha's two children from a previous marriage were raised by the couple. Martha's son was John Parke Custis, who after marrying and starting his own family, bought 1,100 acres of land north of their home at Mount Vernon. He intended to model this tract of land after Mount Vernon. Unfortunately, John succumbed to illness at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781, leaving behind a



PHOTOS BY STEVEN B. WAITE

Left: The inscription on the tomb reads "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God." The tomb is never without an honor guard.

Background: Just below the hill from Arlington House is Kennedy's grave site. The contour of the hill was changed to eliminate pedestrian traffic coming down the hill to the back of any of the graves.



wife and four children. George and Martha adopted the two youngest, Eleanor Parke Custis and George Washington Parke Custis. Young Washington, as the boy was called, became captivated by all his adoptive father did. He began a lifelong mission of collecting memorabilia from George Washington's lifetime. To house it all, he decided his home would be on the property that had the spectacular view over Washington City, the new federal capital. Arlington House, as it became known, took 14 years to complete. During this time, he married Mary Lee Fitzhugh and had a daughter, Mary Anna Randolph Custis. She was doted upon and received the best of everything. Of course, this meant as she got older she was courted by many, but it was a distant cousin and old friend that won her over. Mary wedded Robert E. Lee and within years the history of Arlington House and our country were soon to be embroiled in a conflict that divided a nation.

Lee was a graduate of West Point and an up-and-coming officer in the Army Corps of Engineers. Lee distinguished himself as a very competent officer and a rising star in the military, but he also realized the importance of Arlington House. As much demand as a military career has on a person, he took on the burden of maintaining the estate with the same military precision. Like his father-in-law, Lee was an ardent believer in George Washington and felt the collection was a part of the estate and his responsibility. His aging father-in-law's inability to care for Arlington House allowed things to begin to fall to disrepair. After receiving permission, Lee took time off from his military duties and returned to the estate. But soon life had a different plan for the nation and Lee. When called back to duty to squelch a rebellion by John Brown at Harpers Ferry and then being assigned to Texas, he began to hear more talk about secession from many of the Southern states. This talk was disturbing, but as much as he cared for the nation, his allegiance was to his home state of Virginia and peace.

This was an agonizing period in his life. He was being promoted by the Army to full colonel and at the same time was trying to fulfill the wishes of his deceased father-in-law that the slaves on the property become free within five years of his death. His allegiance to Virginia and his knowledge that Arlington House could be pivotal for the defense of the federal capital because of its prominent location also weighed heavily. Things escalated when Lee was offered command of the Union Army being formed. This was always his dream, but his heart



Top to bottom: An eternal flame watches over the site of John F. Kennedy and his family; the stones are from his family home in Cape Cod. The Kennedy grave markers are the most visited area of Arlington and crowds can be very large. Throughout the cemetery are rows of the standard white grave marker, as space no longer allows for larger markers or monuments. The older areas have more elaborate stones and should be visited.

GETTING AROUND

While Arlington can accommodate parking for larger trailers and motorhomes, driving and getting around Washington, D.C., can be very difficult, so you're best suited to unhitch the trailer at a campground and tour in the tow vehicle.

The D.C. area has several nearby campgrounds. From the northeast in Maryland is Cherry Hill Park in College Park. Travelers from the southeast could stay at Capitol



KOA in Millersville or Duncan's Family Campground in Lothian. Farther south is Aquia Pines Campground in Stafford, Virginia. We stayed at several of these campgrounds and were not disappointed.

Some of the campgrounds offer tour buses that take you right to the cemetery or to a Metro Station. A station is just 200 yards from Arlington's entrance, making it an advisable method of transportation.

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HONORABLY AT REST

would not allow him to invade the South. After turning down the position, Lee returned to agonize over coming events. Walking the grounds at Arlington House, he weighed the most important decision of his life. Nothing could make him change his mind about taking up arms against his fellow Virginians. Late one night his decision was made: He would resign his commission in the regular Army and within days had accepted a position as commander of Virginia's forces. The face of Arlington House was to be changed forever. Less than two months after his decision, Lee's family had abandoned their beloved home for a safer haven and federal troops were occupying the high ground over Washington.

As the events of the Civil War dragged on, Arlington House was confiscated by the government because taxes were not paid in person by Mrs. Lee. The estate became the property of the government and placed under the control of Gen. Montgomery Meigs,

quartermaster general of the U.S. Army. Meigs, an acquaintance of Lee's in the Army, despised all who had left the Army to take up arms against her. Since Lee was such an officer, Meigs did all in his power to be vindictive. He felt the greatest blow to Lee and his family was to turn this magnificent property into a graveyard for the deceased from nearby hospitals and battles. It is said he personally supervised burials in Mrs. Lee's rose garden. His goal was to render the property uninhabitable by its former owners. Upon learning of the conditions at their home, the Lees never returned to the property. As the result of a divided nation, Arlington National Cemetery began its storied trust.

ARLINGTON TODAY

A visit to Arlington should begin at the visitor center. It is here you may purchase tickets for the tour bus. You have the option to include parts of Washington, D.C., in a tour as well. The tram

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makes stops at the Kennedy grave sites, Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington House and the Visitor Information Center. You may spend as much time as you like at each, as buses continue to make stops throughout the day.

Although many of the views are of the same standard white grave markers — 13 inches across by 4 inches wide with 24 inches showing aboveground — there are also some more diverse stones. Some markers are surprisingly humble. Audie Murphy, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, as well as receiving more medals — 28 total — than any other soldier has the same standard white stone. Academy Award-winning actor Lee Marvin chose the standard Arlington marker. Of course, throughout are markers with names that are of significance in our history — generals, Supreme Court justices, astronauts, war heroes and more. Although the markers are the story of Arlington, each marker is a story in itself.

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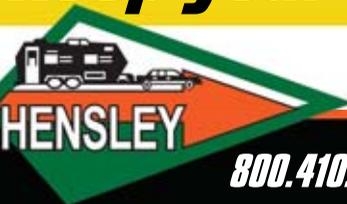
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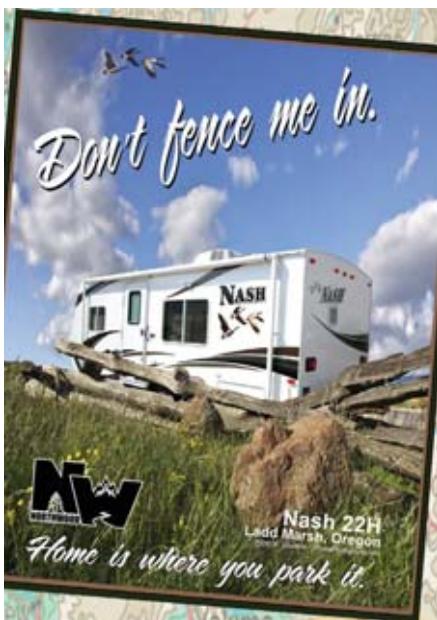


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HONORABLY AT REST

Our first stop was the Kennedy grave, which lies at the base of the hill in front of Arlington House. The granite steps lead you to an overlook of the city below and engraved in the stones before you are portions of the moving words from President Kennedy's Inaugural address "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Many of the surrounding markers prove these words were taken to heart. An eternal flame marks the simple site where John F. Kennedy, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis and two of their children are buried. Their markers are surrounded by smaller granite stones originating from Cape Cod.

Along the same granite walkway is the grave site for Robert F. Kennedy. A small white marker and a white cross lie in an expanse of green, and in stone nearby are parts of speeches from Senator Robert Kennedy.

Forward on is the grave site of Senator Edward "Ted" Kennedy. Once again, the same simple marker and white cross as that of his brother, Robert, mark the site. They are the only two crosses of this type in all of Arlington.

The next stop on the tour is the Tomb of the Unknowns. Members of the oldest active-duty infantry unit in the Army, the Third U.S. Infantry Regiment, are the honor guards. Located behind the stone auditorium, the tomb also overlooks Washington. Notice the lone tomb guard, and you'll see the marks of his steps worn in the Vermont marble. The precision of his moves are unchanging. Twenty-one steps, pause 21 seconds, turn, pause the same 21 seconds, relocate the rifle so it is always away from the tomb, pause the same 21 seconds and so it continues. The routine is rigid, precise and unchanging. The steps are the same as those who stood guard in the many years before them. Watching them you cannot find a flaw in their moves. Regardless of weather, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the dedication to the task continues.

Every hour on the hour in the winter and at night, and every half-hour during the day from April 1 to September 30, the changing of the guard takes place. Be



Before a new guard takes on his duty, he undergoes an inspection of his uniform and weapon by a sergeant. Don't miss this change of the guard during a visit.

sure to arrive early to witness this as the viewing area is small. If you were amazed at the precision of the single guard, appreciate the exacting maneuvers when two more join the cadence. A sergeant performs an inspection of the uniform and weapon of the new guard, including a white glove wipe down of the weapon. Each move is exacting and the inspection is performed face-to-face. Upon completion, the change commences. Complete silence ensues as all in attendance are captivated by the perfect execution of the drill.

The last stop for the tour bus is Arlington House. Ongoing renovations are taking place to bring the property back to its original splendor. The columns on the facade have been repaired and the faux marble restored. Presently, the interior work continues but visitors can still tour during construction. Structurally, the building is sound and the work repairing leaks, cracks and flooring has necessitated the removal of all furniture and the historical property that had remained after the Civil War from the family's Washington collection. It's a beautiful setting, making it easy to see why it was chosen as a homestead with its magnificent views over Washington, D.C.

Robert E. Lee was an honorable man who knew the horrible cost of war and viewing the land of Arlington House today, he would appreciate the respect and dignity given his property. 🇺🇸

Arlington National Cemetery, (877) 907-8585, www.arlingtoncemetery.mil

www.trailerlife.com

PHOTOS BY STEVEN B. WAITE



Background: The rounded roof of the main building of the Udvar-Hazy Center resembles a Quonset hut.

Top: Planes are inverted and pointed in every direction, but are well placed to take advantage of available space in the commercial exhibits.

Right: Placed around the museum are interactive stations that keep visitors of all ages interested.



RVING TO A NEW DIMENSION

SHARE THE DREAM OF FLIGHT WITH A TOUR OF THE NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM'S STEVEN F. UDVAR-HAZY CENTER

by **Steven B. Waite**

Behind the wheel of our tow vehicles, we yearn to explore, to take ourselves out of our everyday lives. For some that may be as simple as RVing to a local campground, but for many it's as if we were pioneers, with a need to travel to places we've never been. Such a destination is the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, located in Chantilly, Virginia, just west of Washington, D.C. This is a place where going forward and backward, left and right wasn't enough; they had to add that third dimension: up and down.

Now, some might think that simply moving forward in the densely populated D.C. area would be a deterrent to visiting Udvar-Hazy, due to the traffic. However, surprisingly, pulling our trailer here was no problem at all. The museum is located off of a major highway about 25 miles west of town and can easily handle parking for trailers and larger motorhomes. For our visit we found a great place to camp just 20 miles south of the museum: Bull Run Regional Park (see sidebar, "D.C. Camping," on page 31, for more information about the campground).



TRAILER LIFE July 2011 27



Top left to right: The SR-71 Blackbird, the fastest jet-powered airplane in the world, was the U.S. premier spy plane and one of the most radical ever built. Modern fighters from the Vietnam era showcase examples from opposite sides of the conflict. Bottom left to right: The B-29 Enola Gay dwarfs the fighter exhibits in the World War II area. This line of helicopters is part of the rotary wing section. From hang gliders to jets, exhibits cover every color and means of flight.



Considering the dimensions of the Udvar-Hazy Center, this place is huge: The main display area is more than 100 feet high and close to three football fields in length. The building is an architectural and engineering feat in itself. It's easy to imagine the building as a giant Quonset hut, with its semicircular arching roof. A major design feature of the museum is that all aircraft are displayed side by side, floor to ceiling under one roof with no walls impeding a person's view, which was the Smithsonian Institution's objective.

The main National Air and Space Museum facility on the Mall in Washington, D.C., is too small to display all of its exhibits and artifacts for the public's view. But within just six months of its opening in 1976, developers knew they'd have public support to build an additional facility, after a record-high 5 million visitors came to see its popular "Milestones in Flight" gallery.

Since 2000, some of the largest aircraft ever flown have been housed in the new facility. Upon entering, I encourage visitors to only quickly check out the immediate surrounding displays, because the real excitement is a short walk away toward an overlook. Forward, hanging inverted overhead, is a red and white starburst-patterned Pitts Special aerobatic biplane. Farther ahead, suspended from above is the distinct shark's mouth paint scheme of the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk, made famous by the exploits of General Claire Chennault's Flying Tigers while serving in China. Adjacent to this is the bent-wing Vought F4U-1D Corsair, one of the Pacific Theater's premier fighters. Feel the need for speed? How does Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., in 1 hour 4 minutes and 20 seconds sound? That's 2,124 mph!

Then, drop your gaze and take in the world's fastest jet-powered airplane, the SR-71 Blackbird. This spy plane ranged



much more we had to learn to get off the ground.

From this point the walkway divides the exhibition area while crossing to the other side of the building. To the right is the World War II area and to the left the commercial and sport side of aviation. The World War II exhibits feature examples from American, British, German and Japanese air forces. What were once adversaries now rest quietly in honor beside each other. Restoration specialists painstakingly work to bring these relics back to life. In many cases, all planes would only need batteries and fluids replaced to put them in the air once again. The biggest attraction in the World War II area is the B-29 Enola Gay, which dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, bringing an end to World War II. Restoration took more than 300,000 hours to complete.

Planes are on display upside down, suspended from the ceiling, parked and hanging at odd angles and all pointing in different directions. It's a colorful mix.

This building really is grandiose. How else could a Boeing 367-80, the Air France Concorde, Lockheed 1049F Constellation and the Boeing 307 Stratoliner all fit in this area at the same time? OK, these may not mean much to a layman, but they were all groundbreaking designs at the time. Comparatively speaking, the Concorde is the length of five motorhomes and could fly supersonic to Paris in little more than two hours. The Constellation has a wingspan that's more than the length of three and a half motorhomes with four massive radial design engines. The Boeing 367-80 is similarly sized. This aircraft led the way to the modern passenger jet in the airline community, eventually becoming known as the Boeing 707. It made a huge impression on airline officials and the public when at a show near Boeing's home in Seattle: Unbeknownst to Boeing officials, the pilot rolled the aircraft. It not only thrilled the thousands at the show, but it also convinced those from the

all over the world with nothing available anywhere to challenge it. With the Blackbird measuring at a shade less than 110 feet long, it's easy to appreciate the size of the building.

To get the best experience, I suggest following the elevated walkway that directs visitors above the majority of the exhibits, allowing for a clear view of displays above and below. If you feel the need to test your own flying skills, below are several full-motion simulators that offer visitors the experience of World War I, World War II and up to the more modern fighter aircraft — or you could ride aboard the space shuttle.

Early cloth-covered, wood-frame aircraft such as the Nieuport 28C.1 or the Spad XVI make you aware of just how far we had to come to get where we are today. One of the more complex of these, the Langley Aerodrome A, seems more suited to be a clothes dryer than a flying machine. Built in 1903, this example shows where the thinking was at the time and how

airline industry that this was an airliner they should buy.

These behemoths sit with smaller aircraft under and over them. I didn't count, but I wouldn't be surprised if there were more than 50 aircraft in this area. Of course, the smaller aircraft are a large part of the displays and are significant in their own right. Business and private-use jets, experimental and aerobatic craft, helicopters, high-flying balloons, solar-powered crafts and so on are positioned for all to see.

Some exhibits made me chuckle. Take, for instance, the Double Eagle II gondola, which was used for a record-breaking flight across the Atlantic Ocean. This balloon flew as high as 24,950 feet with three men on board. It was equipped with computers for navigation and many types of radios. It took more than 137 hours to make the journey, but they did it sitting on regular nylon-webbed aluminum lawn chairs and used lights that were cheap plastic



Space Shuttle Enterprise sits in a dramatic pose as you enter the building housing the space artifacts.

that probably came from the camping section of a large department store. And the portable toilet must have come from the same aisle!

At the opposite end of the building are the modern military jet fighters, those from Korea, Vietnam and later. Names such as Tomcat, Phantom, Intruder, MiG and Sabre belong to these sleek jets. Because the history of the Soviet aircraft is unknown, it is possible they were serving in the conflict at the same time. What may seem out of place with high-powered jet aircraft in this venue is the high-wing, propeller driven Cessna O-1 Bird Dog hanging overhead. This style aircraft was used extensively for reconnaissance, forward air control, artillery spotting and so on. While not as glamorous as other aircraft in the display, the magnitude of its role could never be downplayed.

The first-built F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, a rare exhibit, is on display and the actual jets are only recently being put in service with the Air Force and Marine units. This



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design will satisfy requirements for all branches of service using minor modifications to support different roles. There is talk that this will be the last piloted jet, as more unmanned aircraft play a prominent role in future plans.

Entering the adjacent building, a stirring vision greets visitors. Head on is the Space Shuttle Enterprise and a large American flag on the wall behind it. This room houses all of the center's space and rocket exhibits, and the ceiling is painted a darker color to give the appearance of outer space. Suspended here are various satellites plus an astronaut in a manned maneuvering unit. Space capsules from the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo projects are on display beside the shuttle. The perimeter floor displays all types of missiles that protected us during the Cold War.

You can also go into a simulated control tower 175 feet above the ground and get a spectacular view many miles out — plus see all the air traffic going in and out of Dulles International Airport.

Other points of interest are in the IMAX theater, where movies show space

travel, shuttle launches, fighter jets and even some first-run films that pertain to subjects related to the museum. Tours given by docents are geared toward specific subjects or the greater museum. Regularly, guest speakers and authors doing book signings are present. A food concession is also on location. Spring and summer are the busiest times, as many school groups visit. Our visits have been in the fall and have been very pleasant. Admission to the museum is free but parking is \$15. If you plan to see an IMAX movie, purchase your tickets early.

The Udvar-Hazy Center houses aircraft that pushed the limits of pilots and designers. Its displays instill appreciation for technology and evoke dreams of flight for those young and old. Seeing the evolution represented can start a person wondering which gravity-defying crafts today will become the new historic exhibit tomorrow. 📍

National Air and Space Museum, Udvar-Hazy, (703) 572-4118, www.nasm.si.edu/udvarhazy.

D.C. CAMPING

It's easy to camp in the D.C. area. Surprisingly, being so close to our nation's capital is not a deterrent to visiting Udvar-Hazy. We stayed just 20 miles south of the museum at Bull Run Regional Park (703-631-0550, www.nvrpa.org/park/bull_run).

Bull Run Regional Park is a part of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and has 150 wooded sites that can easily handle larger trailers and motorhomes. Some sites have 50-amp service so it's not your usual county or state park. Park personnel are very helpful and can answer all questions concerning navigating around the D.C. area and give hints as to how to get to the Metro, D.C.'s transit system. Located just off Route 29 and adjacent to the Manassas (Bull Run if you're a Yankee) National Battlefield Park of Civil War fame, this park has easy access for visitors.

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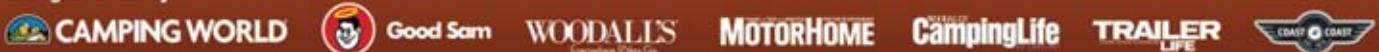


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Evolve RV Cooking With eFoods

For an absolutely amazing meal that's totally good for you ... just add water. Really!

by J. Andrew Van Sciver

There are many quick recipes you can make in your RV, but we're not talking about the ones that call for a can of cream of mushroom soup or a box of Hamburger Helper. It's not that we're slamming Campbell's or Betty Crocker; but if you've ever read the nutrition facts on most "instant" meals, then you know they don't mix well with a healthy lifestyle — not to mention they taste only satisfactory at best. However, we found an exception that is exceptionally delicious and good for you, too: the Quick-Fix meals at eFoodsDirect.

First and foremost, the Quick-Fix eFoods meals are amazingly tasty, but that's just the beginning of this story. They are also easy and fast to prepare — just add to boiling water, simmer and serve; they are healthy and nutritious; and they are storable in a cool, dry location for up to 25 years, which means your dinner will retain its full nutrients and flavor even longer than your RV will hold up to usage and weather!

In the packaging process, eFoodsDirect dehydrates the food and uses carbon dioxide to carefully remove all oxygen from the package. The Quick-Fix Mylar pouches are also designed to keep the sunlight out. With moisture, oxygen and sunlight out of the picture, these meals have an extended shelf life, so you can always have a healthy variety of foods at hand, whether you use them for everyday meals or in preparation for emergencies. The packets are compact, lightweight and easy to stow away in your RV for those "just in case" moments — just in case you decide to stay at the campground longer than your groceries allow; just in case the weather turns worse and you're unable to get to a store; just in case you have a hankerin' for some corn chowder or



beef stew or chicken and rice casserole or tortilla soup or cornbread muffins....

We tested all of the above. All we had to do was add the food to boiling water and simmer for 15 minutes. And the cornbread muffins? Sorry grandma, but you have competition. And, oh, the tortilla soup ... delicious. All eFoodsDirect products are vegetarian to make them more universally appealing, but we decided to add some meat and extra veggies to a pasta dish for our own special recipe. It tasted like we had spent the whole day in the kitchen.

eFoodsDirect promises with each meal that you have purchased the finest products in the marketplace, and fine foods equate to great taste and superior nutrition. All of its recipes are cholesterol free with no trans fats or added MSG. You can find meals with your unique nutritional concerns in mind; for instance, many are high in fiber, made with enriched complex carbohydrates, whole grains and fortified with vegetable protein. Some are gluten free, some are rich in soy, while others are soy free. The company also prescribes to a balanced-sodium approach in formulating its recipes for a healthier diet. And you will not find any artificial flavors, colors or preservatives in any eFoods recipes.

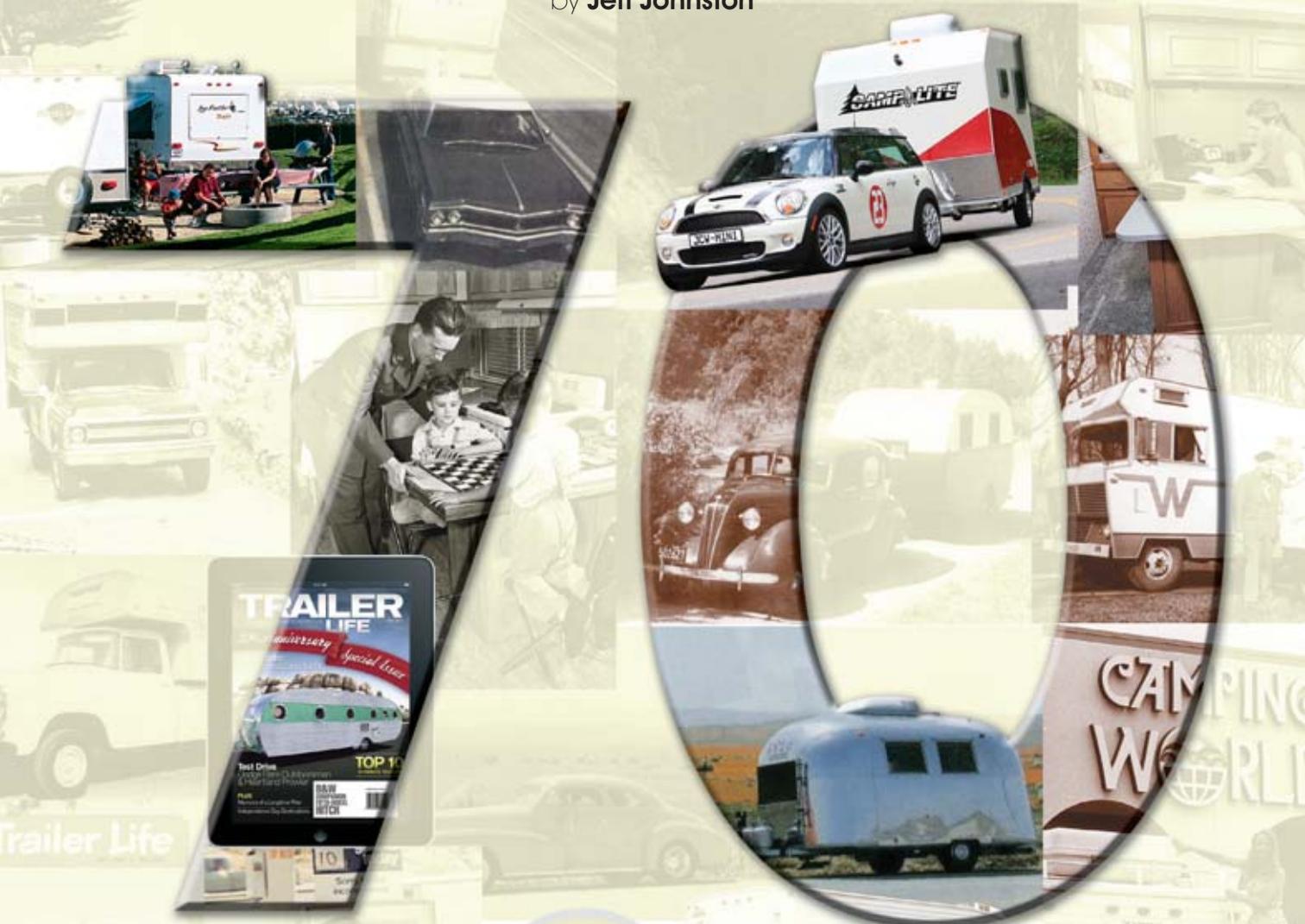
Every package is date-stamped for the day the product was manufactured, to ensure you are getting the full shelf life you are paying for. Also, all of the raw ingredients in the eFoodsDirect line of products (with the exception of tropical fruit) are grown seasonally in the USA and follow strict quality-control standards established and audited by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

For more information or to order some meals, call toll-free (866) 685-9622 or visit www.efoodsdirect.com/RV.

See our ad on page 65 of this issue.

Trailer Life Turns

by Jeff Johnston



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User Guide

Contents

Trailer Life is 70 years old this month. That's an amazing run, to employ a much-overused term — but how else can you describe a publication's track record of that kind of longevity? *Trailer Life* has been in the thick of things, month after month,

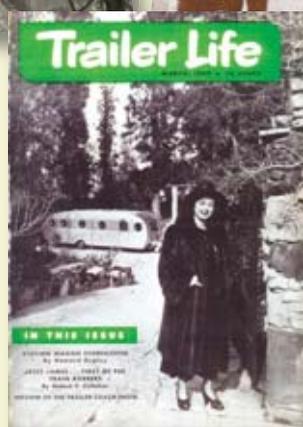
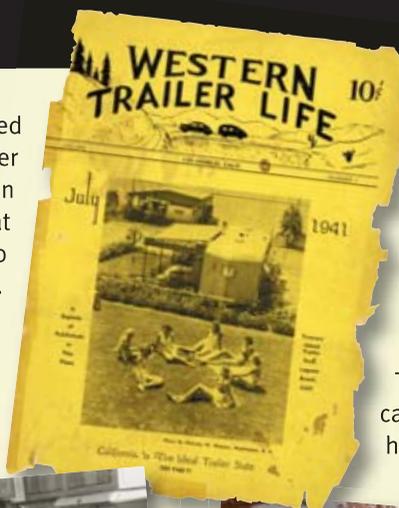
through the industry's good times and bad, bringing the RV reader inspiration, education and entertainment. The magazine has moved through the decades with glamour, growth and grace. Here's a quick glimpse of *Trailer Life* and the RV industry over the past 70 years.

1940s

It all started with an 18-page magazine called *Western Trailer Life*, published by the Trailer Coach Manufacturer Association (TCMA) in July 1941. The magazine — sized like what we'd call a brochure today — sold for 10 cents, and a year's subscription was \$1. Using the Consumer Price Index, the initial cost of a subscription back in the day compares almost to a tee with today's subscription rates.

Trailer Life's decidedly humble beginning was right in step with RV technology and product offerings: As the industry matured and progressed, so did *Trailer Life* in its quest to keep its readers informed and entertained.

People started building custom-made home-built RVs about as soon as there were motor vehicles. But those early "one-offs" don't really count when you're discussing the beginnings of the RV manufacturing industry. The mass-market start was just before World War II, but the government needed huge numbers of housing units for defense plant workers, so companies that built mobile homes bent to the task of churning them out by the thousands for the nation's soldiers and their families. The war, as well as the lack of aluminum materials, even affected Wally Byam's fledgling Airstream business.



Yet after the war, buyers had choices that included a do-it-yourself kit camper on up to big trailers in the 30-foot range. There was still confusion between what constituted a "mobile home" and an RV, but that was being worked out in the industry and the consumers' minds.

In 1946 and '47 the first telephones and TVs were reported in RVs, although they called for custom wiring. The late '40s also had bottled LP-gas replacing oil-fueled heaters, as self-containment was an industry goal. In 1948 a portable shower was introduced, and in '49 a bathtub made an appearance as an option in a Stewart coach. Also in that same year a flushing toilet made it to the trailer scene.

Those early RVs were pretty sturdy, built with mainly wood framing and skinned with aluminum or a variety of sheet-board products of varying degrees of durability. In some cases the skin was akin to canvas painted with a "waterproof" coating.

And, of course, *Trailer Life* was there covering this newly flourishing American lifestyle. The magazine assumed its current title in 1949, when "Western" was dropped from the name. The magazine, and the industry it served, had doubled in size since its launch.

1950s



The '50s were a serious growth time for the RV industry. These were the days of the “canned ham” trailers, which were produced by the thousands. Many of today’s big-name companies were founded in this decade. Coach Specialty, for example, started business in 1950 in Paramount, California, and eventually came to be known as Fleetwood. The first tire designed specifically for trailers was released during the early '50s by B.F. Goodrich, and weight-distributing hitches were produced by Reese, Eaz-Lift, U-Neek and Perfect-Tow. Van conversions also blossomed during this decade.



In November 1958, advertising executive Arthur J. Rouse purchased *Trailer Life* magazine and turned it around into a reader-friendly and versatile publication, operated by people who really loved RVs.

Among Rouse’s many changes were eliminating mobile-home coverage and focusing on RVs, including “house cars.” Rouse also started publishing compar-

isons between RV types as a means of helping customers make good purchase decisions.

Also in 1958, Ray Frank started Frank Industries. He is generally credited with building the first Class A factory-built motorhome. The '50s were also the start of an Aljo trailer factory in Forest City, Iowa, a failed venture that was reopened in 1961 by John K. Hanson and renamed Winnebago Industries.

The magazine also began to blossom. By *Trailer Life*'s 10th anniversary, its cover price had increased to 15 cents with a year’s subscription running only \$1.50. That was a pretty good deal for the 52-page publication.

1960s



Lasting innovations and market expansions continued in the '60s, when aerodynamics, style and towability became the decade’s industry trends. Rounded fiberglass bodies and attempts at stylish aerodynamics resulted in some highly interesting-looking vehicles. Among the new coaches — which, by the way, were hardly aerodynamic compared to today’s standards — were the Corvair Peterson House Car/G-Home/Ultravan, Open Road Coronado, Dodge motorhome and Cruiseair.



Fold-down trailers grew in popularity, as did chassis-mount motorhomes built on pickup cab-and-chassis units. Dodge, too, became a prominent part of the industry with its two popular Class As, the M-300 and M-375.

Winnebago Industries’ first Class A motorhome, called a Life-Time, came along in 1965, priced around \$6,000 (almost 43 grand in today’s dollars). And Ray Fore of Nacogdoches, Texas, built his first Foretravel motorhome in 1967. It led to decades of success and a later innovation that included the 1987 Grand Villa Unihome with monocoque construction and a full-width air suspension system.

In 1966 Kenskill launched a model with a 4 x 8-foot “tip out” room extension, the forerunner of today’s slideouts.

This decade also brought with it towing-speed records. A Dodge Coronet towed an Airstream at 94.2 mph in 1964, and a Chevrolet

Caprice towed another Airstream at 100.5 mph in 1969. As this lifestyle became more popular, tow packages for cars and trucks started appearing.

The growth of motorhome sales by 1968 inspired Trailer Life Publishing Company to create *MotorHome Life* magazine. Its title later evolved into today’s *MotorHome*.

The Good Sam Club entered the picture in late 1968 when Trailer Life Publishing bought out Griffin Publishing and acquired the Good Sam Club, *Trailer News* (formerly *Trail-R-News*) and *Camper Coachman* magazines.

1970s

In the '70s, *Trailer Life* continued to grow right along with the number of people interested in RV ownership and use. Part of the growth was fueled by circulation numbers and part came from acquisitions. In the first year of the decade, Trailer Life Publishing Company purchased *Trailer Topics* and *Mobile Life* magazines and combined those readerships with *Trailer Life*. These were prosperous days for many in the United States, and in May 1973 *Trailer Life* published its largest issue to date, a 348-page magazine.

The fifth-wheel trailer was added to the lineup of available RVs as early as 1971. Some included models designed to be towed by automobiles via a hitch mounted on the car's roof, while others grew to 40 feet long, requiring a heavier-



duty tow vehicle.

The '70s also brought with it the national fuel crisis. These were the days when the Emergency Highway Energy Conservation Act set the new maximum speed limit of 55 mph, to help reduce fuel consumption. The shortage also spurred some smart de-

velopments of downsized RVs including smaller trailers and the "micro-mini" Class C motorhome built on an imported truck cab and chassis.

The common design of the times for RVs was a boxy, top-heavy vehicle; however, in 1973 GMC introduced its Model 230 and Model 260, making the company a new trendsetter in the RV industry. Its new design placed an emphasis on the traveling experience, an innovation that's still echoed today.

1980s

Americans were going through some tough economic times in the '80s, but *Trailer Life* held its own as the only surviving consumer-oriented monthly RV magazine. The October 1981 issue revealed *Trailer Life's* new cover, a much-needed freshening of the magazine's visual image. By the January 1984 issue, the entire magazine had been redesigned, giving it an even more colorful, bold and fresh look. The cover price was an even \$2, with a 1-year subscription at \$16. Adams Communications then purchased Trailer Life Publishing Company in 1988, and the company later grew to become Affinity Group Inc.

But more changes than that were afoot during the '80s, including significant new towing powerplant models. Ford Motor Company introduced the Navistar diesel in its light trucks in the 1982 model, and the same year, GM added the 6.2-liter diesel to its offerings. In 1989, Dodge added the Cummins 5.9-liter turbodiesel engine to its light trucks.



Mobil Villa was an early adopter of the slideout-room concept in its trailers, and Fleetwood's groundbreaking Bouncer set the style for basement-type, high-profile motorhomes that's still the standard today. Meanwhile, Champion's Eurocoach was equally innovative as a gas-powered motorhome, styled like a much more costly diesel pusher.

The strong, flexible, rubber roofing material, called ethylene propylene diene monomer (EPDM), was also introduced during

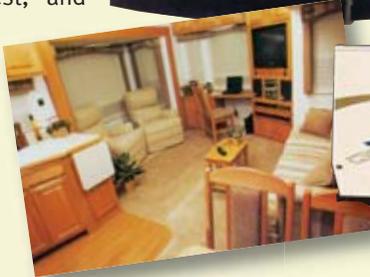
this decade, and to this day it remains a popular and more economical alternative to aluminum roofs.

SURV (toy hauler) trailers began to make a presence in the RV industry during the '80s. New and innovative models from big-name companies like Weekend Warrior and Alfa Leisure trickled into dealers' lots, but that segment of the market didn't explode in popularity until later in the 1990s and especially the early 2000s.

1990s

This was the decade of *Trailer Life's* golden anniversary. Its cover price had increased to \$2.95 and a 1-year subscription was \$22. The magazine's tagline read "RVing at its Best," and RV manufacturers of the '90s played a huge role making this lifestyle even better by implementing some amazing and widespread advancements.

The start of the '90s saw a huge expansion in slideout-room technology. Slideouts were becoming available in new models across the RV manufacturing spectrum, including their use in slide-in truck campers; Snow River was first in 1995. And multiple slideouts were on their way to becoming the status quo. Motorhomes grew larger, with 40-footers available from many manufacturers. Diesel pushers increased in popularity as chassis and engine options expanded and crept down in price.



Laminated-construction practices became more commonplace, as did aluminum framing and smooth fiberglass skins. So-called "hybrid" trailers that feature solid-wall construction with fold-out end bed platforms resembling the technology used for pop-up tent campers were introduced and spread throughout the industry.

As an experiment in downsizing, the Amera Cruiser Class A motorhome featured a Dodge small-block V-8 engine and unique styling ... but it disappeared quickly from the scene.

Trailer Life's then parent company, Affinity Group, was also pressing forward along with the industry, making a gutsy purchase: it bought the Camping World store chain in 1997, which added to the reach and readership base of *Trailer Life*.

2000s

July of 2001 marked the magazine's 60th anniversary, and with six decades under its belt, *Trailer Life* had certainly earned its tagline of America's No. 1 Magazine. Although subsequent devastating events on American soil changed the world forever that year, *Trailer Life* remained the voice of RVers around the world and America's champion for the fun, freedom and adventure of recreation in motion.

Anyone even remotely involved with RVs could recognize that the RV industry went through a massive, seismic series of changes during the first decade of the century, changes that continue to this day. And even though it's known that the RV business is highly cyclical and must bend with the wind of the economy, nothing before matches recent happenings in scope and intensity.

Some very big, long-time companies went bankrupt and closed their doors for good this decade. The loss of these



companies — including Alfa Leisure, Bigfoot Industries, Blue Bird Coachworks, Country Coach, Hi-Lo, King of the Road, National RV Incorporated, Sunline Coach, Teton Homes, Travel Supreme, Weekend Warrior, Western RV and others — evoked feelings that were often shocking, given their historical contributions to the industry.

Along with these changes, high fuel prices over the final years of the last decade made it tough for many RV owners to full-time or to travel long distances. But as in years past, with an eye to the future, manufacturers responded accordingly by offering downsized vehicles and more fuel-efficient powertrains.

Also with an eye to the future, *Trailer Life* saw the need to enhance its print magazine by making available digital issues for those RVers who prefer the online medium.

Today & Beyond

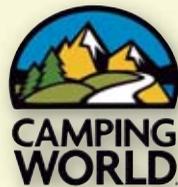
July 2011 brings us to today's 70th anniversary issue. The print cover price is \$4.99, and its current 1-year subscription rate of \$15.97 is actually \$6.03 less than it was 20 years ago. This decade has also already brought with it more options for our readers, such as a greater online presence and the magazine's iPhone and iPad apps, which cost \$1.99 — a price that only seems decades old.

More good news is that the RV business is once again growing, as it no doubt always will. New RV sales are picking up in some sectors, campgrounds are reporting healthy occupancy rates and many manufacturers today are enjoying the best times in several years.

Despite the ongoing economic upset, more than a handful of brave new RV manufacturers have appeared on the scene and are making industry-wide waves of their own. Each is finding its own niche and carving out a piece of the RV sales pie. And although it would be unheard of to find a brand-new Winnebago motorhome for \$6,000 today, there are many very affordable travel trailers on the market. New names to watch for include Livin' Lite, Northern Lite Manufacturing, Earthbound RV, Trail Creek RV, Evergreen Recreational Vehicles, MVP RV, Riverside Travel Trailer and NeXus RV, among others. These "small" guys, all independents, enjoy the freedom to follow their instincts in pursuing their dreams in the RV design, manufacturing and sales arena.

Although the industry's growth has been slow, the RV market is continuing to strengthen with many manufacturers setting new trends to reflect today's economy. Many savvy RV companies are working on new, lightweight fuel-saving RVs, and the trend toward developing downsized RVs is especially gaining momentum. Even RVs that are built with limited or claimed zero wood content, principally travel trailers, are starting to appear on the market.

"Green" RVs that feature earth-friendly materials that are either recyclable or require less resources to manufacture are also growing in popularity. Taking a complete departure from conventional travel trailers are companies like EverGreen Recreational Vehicles. Its totally wood-free Element travel trailer is made with all aluminum-and-composite materials



and features a design more in line with European models, another trend that's making a splash. Combined with ultra-lightweight trailers, the green phenomenon may be the defining design influence on the RV market for some time to come.

The trends today are plentiful, and not every manufacturer has completely abandoned the conventional travel trailer. In fact, what's old in RVs is in again, and many manufacturers have jumped on the retro bandwagon with fervor. Some companies use classic design in a modern package, but others go for the whole retro look and feel. Even the old "canned ham" trailer style from the '50s has made a comeback. For example, Riverside RV recently rolled out its popular retro-styled Whitewater 130, using design cues evocative of the diminutive trailers of years ago — with modern amenities, of course.

Fortunately, the oil-fueled heaters, iceboxes and propane-fired lamps have given way to safer and more functional amenities, but these early-style RVs have more than enough nostalgia in their design and function. These RVs lead to interesting customer discussions that start with questions like "Where on earth did you find that old-style Formica?"

Along with the industry, *Trailer Life* is setting new trends with big plans for the future. The magazine's parent company

Affinity Group has recently joined forces with Camping World and has together become Good Sam Enterprises — a new partnership poised to increase awareness about the RV lifestyle. And as the economy continues to improve, the size of the magazine will continue to grow: More pages with beefier content and an even larger Web presence are in the magazine's future. Its newest tagline invites all RV enthusiasts to "Follow the Road to Adventure," because through it all, *Trailer Life* has been right there, leading the way and observing and reporting and evolving, while also riding along with the industry and consumers — and that will never change.

Trailer Life and its kin will be around for years to come. Stick with us and enjoy the ride! 🚐

For a nostalgic look at more great photos from over the years, check out the Web Exclusives on www.trailerlife.com.

Memiors

of a longtime RVer

An outdoor enthusiast shares fond memories of life in a pickup camper

by Jim Elder



So Trailer Life began publishing in 1941. That is about the same time I started serious fantasies about pickup campers. I doodled pictures of such wondrous vehicles on my homework papers, much to the dismay of my teachers. It would be 1965 before I got to experience a real camper.

I grew up as a shop rat, in the family hardware/farm implement/truck business. Like most kids in rural America, I was driving as soon as I could see over the steering wheel. But because my father had MS and could not drive, I was driving on streets and highways by 1941, in shop trucks and trade-ins.

One of my jobs was to bring trucks from the GM distributor in St. Paul to Wyoming, by twos and threes, saddled. I was 15. Back then Wyoming had more laws about horses than vehicles.



The Avion on a 1967 Chevy

PHOTOS BY JIM ELDER

Special Anniversary Section

TRAILER LIFE July 2011 41

I had been “camping” with pickups for several years, on hunting and fishing trips, and just exploring. Bedroll under a tarp, Coleman stove and lantern, a water jug and a cooler. My favorite was a 1938 Diamond T, but Dad sold it. After Air Force service and college, I got a 1948 F3 Ford and camped with it. Saw an Alaskan camper being set up in 1955. The owner let it down, then let me set it back up. Amazing!

By 1963 I was making a living as a photographer and writer, mostly in the skiing industry, and doing some location shooting for TV and movie clients. This involved travel. Perhaps some camper company could use photos of their products in scenic places, I thought. So I went to an RV/boat show and looked over the exhibits. I soon found the star attraction to be the Avion.

After contacting Avion, I suggested the six-month loan of a camper, for which the company would get photos from upcoming assignments including the television series “American Sportsman” and “Wide World of Sports,” as well as photos on various locations. Avion agreed.

Meanwhile, Ford had just introduced the F-250 Camper Special. It was “special” only in the nameplate; it was really just a ¾-ton pickup with the proper specs for a camper. I ordered one and drove it to Benton Harbor. The truck was everything I had hoped for, including the bucket-seat option. The seats themselves were a surprise, however: black leather, with silver trim, comfortable, but the mounting brackets looked strange. Years later, talking with a Ford tech guy, I learned that there were no bucket seats ready for the Camper Specials. So somebody had grabbed two Thunderbird seats and cobbled up mountings for my truck.

I sent photos to Avion, who asked if I could shoot the new catalogue and advertising portfolio in Jackson Hole. I did. Then I got a call that said there was a problem: The new camper material made the trailer brochure and ads look dated and dull. There were to be new models with improved windows, so Avion wanted to update that portfolio, and I could trade “my” camper for a new one.

I got more than a new camper with new windows. I also became the “house photographer” for Avion, traveling from Wyoming to Michigan several times each year. I had been shooting and writing for outdoor and adventure travel, boating and ski magazines, as well as for *Sports Illustrated*, *Time*, *Life*, *National Geographic* — but Avion was my first steady commercial client.

The new Ford/Avion rig traveled 60,000 miles in the next three years, all over North America. On some trips we included our four children. Six people in a truck camper? No problem. Load the kids in the back, turn off the intercom and you’re all set. That was then, and we never even considered the potential risks. Today, we would most likely be convicted of child endangerment.

Those four kids? Sometimes they shared the big overhead



Prudoe Bay, Alaska



Alaskan camper on a 1997 F-350 Diesel Dually in Labrador, Canada

bunk, while my wife and I slept on the convertible dinette. Once in a while we would put the kids in a tent.

In 1968, Chevy wanted into Avion ads, brochures and editorial coverage. It seemed Chevy had been caught asleep on the RV market, but starting in 1968 there would be a Custom Camper pickup, and towing options on sedans and wagons. The Custom Camper would have the 327 engine. What color did I want?

I had just loaded a camper onto a new Chevy when the founder of United Mainliner called and asked if I wanted to work for a new magazine, called *Chevy Camper*, which would be a travel/adventure quarterly.

We had a great time with that magazine. We photographed and wrote about interesting destinations, with campers and trailers from many manufacturers, including



The Avion on a 1970 Chevy roaming North America

Avion. RV choice was based on quality, usually my call. Chevys were mentioned, and sometimes photographed, but in an editorial arms-length manner. Neither Chevy corporate nor the ad agency was involved. But no Camelot lasts forever and in 1973 the plug was pulled.

We moved over to *Dodge Adventurer*, *Chrysler Spectator*, *Pontiac Safari* and several other company-backed travel magazines. During those years I had the opportunity to test, sometimes for a weekend but more often for a few weeks or more, on long trips, a wonderful variety of campers, trailers and motorhomes. I worked for *Trailer Life* and *Woodall's*, as well as several other RV magazines that are now long since dead. Whenever possible my wife and often my children went along, to Mexico, Québec, California, Utah, Wisconsin — all over North America.

Highlights included a one-month expedition using an Avion and a Chevy on the first-ever run of two Polaris snowmobiles from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Portland, Maine, for *Sports Illustrated*. I did the story, photography and press coverage on a route that wound back and forth across the United States-Canada border, covering most of the snow states and provinces. I also carried fuel and spare parts for the snowmobiles.

In 1972 I terminated my connections with Avion when it became apparent that quality compromises were appearing. Later, at an Outdoor Writers conference in Colorado, lunching with the editor of *Popular Mechanics*, friends from Coleman and Ford, I was lamenting the fancy van craze: murals, white-shag carpets, low-ride wheels and side pipes. Said I'd like to do a story on a "practical van." Start with the display model, build a custom interior that would serve as a passenger vehicle, camper and toy hauler. Ford said he'd furnish an

E-150. Coleman said he'd outfit it. *Popular Mechanics* said he'd print it.

A year, 42,000 miles, that van and several more stories later, I called Ford and said I didn't want to return the van. I wanted to buy it. "Why?" they asked. "Nothing broke. And don't want to de-rig it," I replied. Ford then offered me a deal I could not refuse.

But I still wanted a pickup camper. At 120,000 miles, I passed "Robert the Red Ford" on to one of my sons and asked Ford for another loaner, this time a 1997 F-250 4WD turbodiesel. I had hoped to put a highly modified Alaskan Camper on it. Alas, Alaskan said it was too busy to deal with a special project.

I still wanted a pop-up. I had tested a few big hard-side campers, and saw many more swaying all over America in winds and when buffeted by big trucks. Cornering? Mileage? The only full-size camper I ever loved was the Avion, and that company was history. And I had tested several soft-side pop-ups. I liked the Northstar models, which offered an Arctic Pack winter option and double-insulated windows. The company offered to build one to my specifications. I drove it up the Dalton to Prudhoe Bay, to Texas, to Maine, and throughout much of Canada. After 120,000 great miles, I bought the truck and camper.

But I still lusted for an Alaskan. This time, finally, Alaskan agreed to consider a project. When I sent in my plans, the company was still lukewarm, but the owner's son said Alaskan would build the basic shell if I would do most of the electrical and plumbing modifications. He would give me a key to the plant and I could work nights. Ford offered me an F-350 4WD dually Powerstroke, with a one-year buy option, the same deal Alaskan offered. I sold the F-250/Northstar combination.

Into the Alaskan went everything I had learned in 46 years of RV testing and living, plus the trial run with the Northstar. My

wife Suzanne and I knew what we wanted for our “keeper,” and what we did not want. All our needs and a few luxuries. Mobility, independence, performance, durability and the economy of a diesel. Compact, because we sometimes go on ferries, where you pay dearly for long rigs.

Then the problem. Suzanne and I had worked on a Habitat for Humanity “Blitz Build” — 20 houses in six days — in Georgia. Now came an invitation to work on a similar build in St. Johns, Newfoundland. We had been to Newfoundland once before, and wanted to go back. *Trailer Life* wanted a story. But the 1999 F-350 was still on the assembly line.

Ford found a low-mileage press fleet F-350 Dually Powerstroke to loan me. It was shipped to Chehalis, Washington, where Alaskan loaned me a clean trade-in 10-footer.

Off to Newfoundland. While building houses, I heard that the Canadian government was building a road from Goose Bay, Labrador, to connect with roads in Québec. Goose Bay had forever been an “outport,” reachable only by sea or air.

Two phone calls confirmed that there was a road being built. Could we get through? Driving what? F-350 Powerstroke dually 4WD. Maybe, but there is only one fuel stop for 332 miles, and no service anywhere. So we took another ferry to Goose Bay. Three days, two nights, and wonderful wilderness



Running the F-250 and Northstar through it all

Your Results May Vary

So, what is the result of 46 years and a million miles of RV travel, most of it in pickup campers?

My decisions will not fit everyone. But for the Elder lifestyle and work, these are my current Ford and Alaskan features and modifications.

PRIORITIES

Handling: Low center of gravity, minimal wind resistance in front (mileage) and sides (safety).

Hard sides: They're warmer, and bears can't so easily rip through them.

Self contained: Independence from hookups, with all the essentials, and a few amenities.

Durability and Performance: At least two decades of low-maintenance use, speed when wanted, torque when needed and decent fuel economy.

THE TRUCK

To begin with, I ordered the Ford F-350 with dual rear wheels. The gross combined vehicle weight rating needed to be close to 12,000 pounds, and four E-rated tires equal 12,000 pounds, given perfect balance. I do not want to run at the limits.

The dually solution was verified when the finished rig weighed 11,800 with full tanks and gear.

The 7.3-liter Powerstroke has been trouble-free and has thus far needed no “chips” or modifications. Fuel economy averages 13 mpg at 75 mph. I wanted 4WD because we live in Montana and often travel on back roads and in the winter.

We have also added two visors taken from a preproduction Ford Excursion that was bound for the crusher.

Using hook-and-loop patches, I installed a CB, scanner, GPS, cellphone and the VHS radio we use on Alcan 5000 Rally trips. Relays for the Brite-Lite system, so the low beams would stay on when switching to high beams, auxiliary fog and driving lights, and good QH fogs on the camper to supplement the wimpy factory backups. A grille guard with a 2-inch hitch receiver and home-built headlight washers, plumbed into the windshield washer system.

THE CAMPER

I asked Alaskan Camper to change the 48-inch dinette/bed to a 36-inch model to provide more counter and storage

space. More interior storage was gained by omitting the LP-gas cylinder compartment. I mounted a 10-gallon horizontal LP-gas tank between the frame and fender, and an auxiliary water tank on the other side. Valves allow me to choose the water source.

Sink water runs through a filter. We also have the exterior shower. Instead of the normal twin sinks, both too small for even a dinner plate, a hole was cut for one big sink, with sprayer. Hot water comes from an LP-gas “demand” flash heater.

We opted for a cassette toilet, so we never had to use a dump station. A folding bucket collects gray water.

I installed an Atwood three-burner stove/oven with piezo ignition. A 16,000-BTU forced-air furnace provides heat, but I moved the thermostat to the bedside. We like to sleep cool, but hate to get up to turn on the heat.

Before I got to Chehalis, Alaskan had wired the roof for two solar panels, the overhead lights and a satellite dish. I added a rear fin to deflect air and to prevent the dust and snow buildup typical on vehicle backsides. The solar panels feed two AGM batteries and a 2,000-watt



On a writing assignment in Alaska

later, we were in Québec, on real roads. Luck and pluck saw us through some stretches of rocks and mud and more survey stakes than road. A great adventure with a pickup camper. Not recommended for a fiver, travel trailer or motorhome. Probably better now that the road is finished, but it was special to have it all to ourselves.

Back home, truck now ready, and off to Chehalis. Finished the camper in four nights. To Baja for whale watching, then running legs of the Baja 1000 I had raced in 1992. To Alaska,

the Yukon and Northwest Territories. To Vermont, New Orleans, Texas, California, and again to Alaska. Bella Coola, and Telegraph Creek at the mouth of the Stikine in British Columbia. We run the Winter Alcan 5000 Rally as competitors. Summer events include motorcycles, so we drive the camper to serve as timers; sweep, tow and sometimes rescue; and pull a trailer to haul biker's luggage, and to pick up dead or wrecked motorcycles. Routes include places in Alaska like Prudhoe Bay, Yellowknife, Inuvik, Dawson City, Valdez, and Chicken, usually finishing in Anchorage 10 days after starting in Seattle.

Pushing 200,000 miles now, aiming for half a million with this camper. Seventy years of dreaming about campers. Fifty-six years since I first saw an Alaskan Camper. Forty-six of driving, testing, camping and exploring with RVs, mostly pickup campers. And wherever, on back roads and dead ends.

No big RV could give us the freedom and versatility to go where we go. That's what makes a pickup camper so special. Most treasured are the priceless gifts of a sunset on a remote Baja beach, watching beavers play and eat while we were camped at an unmarked trail off the Dalton haul road, and having a nightcap while listening to loons and coyotes singing duets in the dark, at the Chief One-Eye lakeshore. You simply will not find these places on road maps. 🚚



The Alaskan camper on another F-350 on the ferry in Dawson City, Yukon, Canada

inverter. No noisy AC generator for us. The 12-volt DC feed from the truck to the camper is No. 2 AWG cable with welder-type plugs.

Lighting is LED, which draws modest power and produces no TV or computer interference. Yes, we did have a 15-inch TV/VCR combo hooked to the satellite antenna. All 12-volt D.C. circuits were run through a relay/fuse panel, so everything — lights, water pump, water heater igniter and furnace —

can be "killed" with a switch mounted just inside the door. Except the refrigerator, which is a 12-volt DC/120-volt AC compressor design. I never have liked LP-gas models; they don't work when off-level, and the pilots always seem to blow out when there's a tub of ice cream or a fresh trout inside.

I do not like, nor trust, a long whippy "stinger" hitch extension. Nor do I like the typical "scissors" folding entry step. One slip and you have a broken leg. A creative welder in Jackson Hole looked at

my sketches, improved on them and built a perfect solution to both dilemmas.

He welded an extra 2-inch receiver on each side of the existing Class IV hitch. Into those went a pair of 2-inch stingers, joined by another 2-inch crossbar. Rock solid, even with a heavy trailer attached. This setup also provides a base for a 16 x 67-inch aluminum mesh cargo tray. Two-piece steps slide into the center receiver, and can be removed for towing, clearance in rough country and to avoid extra length charges on ferries.

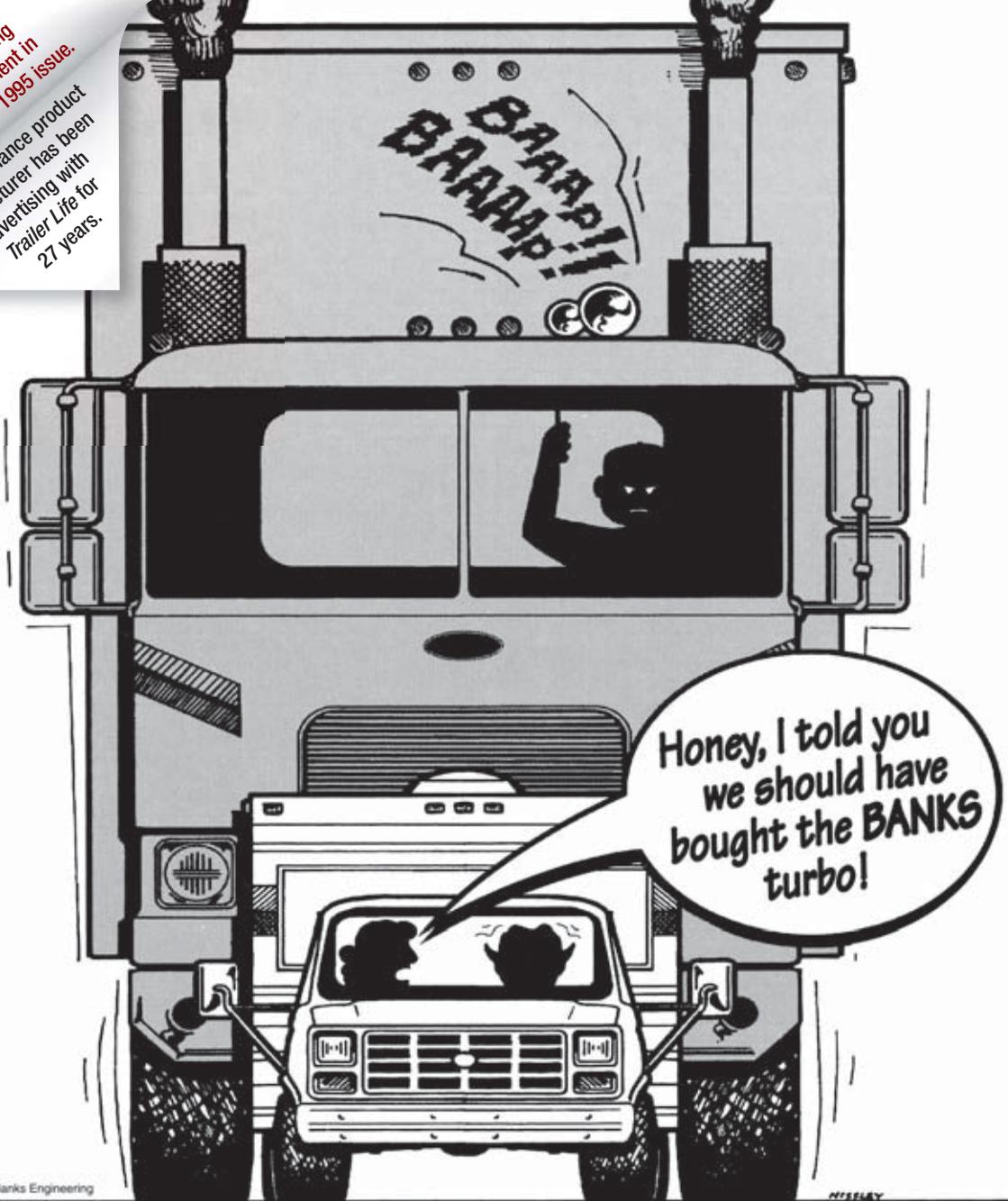
TODAY

The camper is still a work in progress. Last year we replaced the original marker lights with LED units. One big Lifeline AGM battery replaced the two original AGMs. We plan to add a CD player and a glue-on oil pan heater, as the Ford came equipped with block heaters, but diesels tend to like warm oil on startup. I installed Yakima roof rails for crossbars to carry a canoe, and a step to make it easier to climb on the roof. I may have to someday install a stronger water pump. Mine works hard to pull from the low outside tank. And I wish I had not sold my slip-in Warn winch. Never used it, but might someday.

Next project? Who knows?

Gale Banks Engineering
ran this advertisement in
Trailer Life's March 1995 issue.

This performance product
manufacturer has been
advertising with
Trailer Life for
27 years.



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User Guide

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Carefree Awnings
 ran this advertisement in
 Trailer Life's February 1975 issue.
 Carefree of Colorado has been
 advertising with Trailer Life
 for almost
 40 years.

we started out with Carefree Awnings™ and one good thing just led to another...

99er Awnings

The economical automatic roll-up with proven, quality features. It's the Carefree Awning with a carefree price.

Shadow Box Awnings

The great new self-contained, mount anywhere, automatic roll-up awning in a box, with proven 99er and Carefree Awning strength and quality features—mounts easily on the side or roof of vans, bubble top camper vans, pickup truck campers, pop up tent campers and mini-motor-homes.

Screen Enclosures

Made specifically for 99er and Carefree Awnings—the front panel slips right into the extra channel of your 99er or Carefree Awning roll bar. You can't get a better fit anywhere.

Fifth Wheel Skirts

For kids, for pets, for convenient campsite storage that sets up in a snap.

Wheel Well Covers

The convenient way to protect your tires from the damaging effects of the sun.

Window Awnings

Spare Tire Covers

RV Rafters

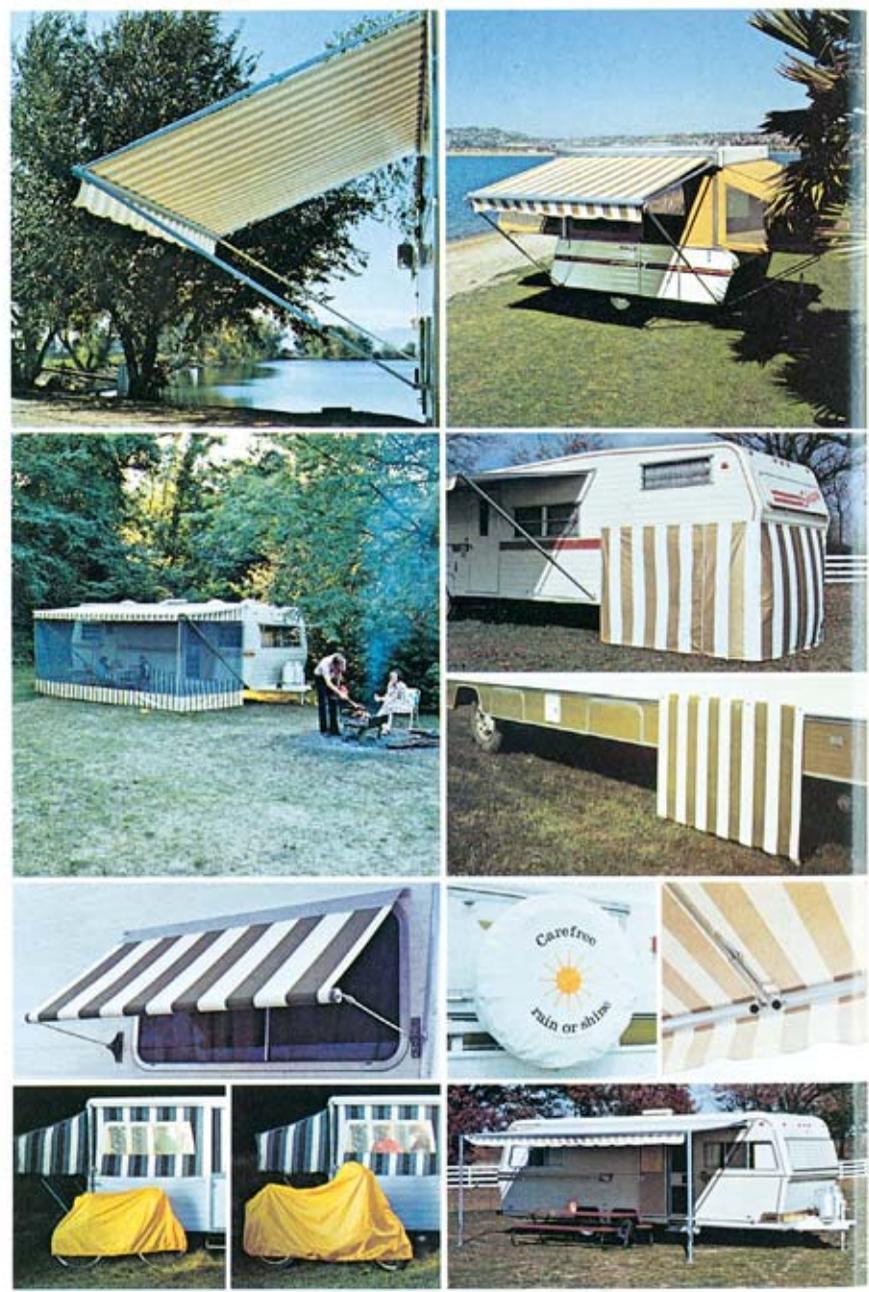
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Buy a Pioneer Upgrade Kit & Crank Handle and we'll send you a **FREE SunBlocker (retail up to \$160!)**

Change your existing Carefree Spirit, Fiesta or Simplicity patio awning to easy manual crank operation! Buy the Pioneer Upgrade Kit and replace your springs with a crank mechanism. Available in white or black finish that will complement any arm color.



Buy a Pioneer Upgrade Kit (part # 850001-white) or (850001blk-black) and a Crank Handle (part # R001546-RP) and Carefree will send you a **FREE SunBlocker!**

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime phone _____

Purchases must be made between 7-1-11 and 9-30-11. Limit of one FREE SunBlocker per U.S. residence. Send proof of purchase (sales receipt) and this completed ad including SunBlocker size & color choices by 10-28-11 to:

Carefree 40 Year SunBlocker Promo • 2145 W. 6th Ave. • Broomfield, CO 80020

Please mark your SunBlocker size and color selections:



10'



15'



17'

NOTE: All SunBlockers have a 6' drop



Bordeaux



Black



Navy



Sierra Brown



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LIFE.com

User Guide

Contents

RV RETROSPECTIVE

1950 AIRFLOAT LAND YACHT

by Ken Freund

Peter and Linda Valia of Riverside, California, own this fine example of an Airfloat brand Land Yacht. But it wasn't always in such pristine condition. When they first saw it, it was lying derelict in a trailer park in Chula Vista, California, after its owner had passed away.

The 1950 Airfloat Land Yacht trailer has a 24-foot-long body and is 28 feet in length overall. Its exterior is entirely constructed of aluminum and the aerodynamically rounded, streamlined design and round windows are major styling features of this handsome trailer. The Airfloat still had the original tires on it when the Valias towed it home, but it needed to be completely gutted and restored inside and out.

This was the first restoration project for Peter Valia, who already owned an SURV trailer and a pickup for towing. Fortunately he's a building contractor and while business has been slow, he was able to devote about 10 months of painstaking labor to bring his "baby" back to tip-top shape. A few modern amenities have been added because the Valias actually use the trailer, but the basic original appearance, warmth and styling have been retained. You can see from the photos that Peter's excellent workmanship would have made its original builders proud. So far it has been displayed at several local shows and has garnered numerous awards and kudos from the public.

AIRFLOAT HISTORY

Airfloat is one of the oldest names in American trailer manufacturing. In 1929 automotive engineer and inventor Omar Suttles built a 12-foot camping trailer in his Los Angeles backyard. His first trailer was registered by the California Auto Club because the Department of Motor Vehicles had no category for travel trailers. A gas engine was installed to drive a generator to run a modern electric refrigerator and charge batteries for lights. His design featured the signature port-hole windows, which proved so popular that Suttles started trailer production at his 10-man automotive shop in Pasadena in 1930, at the height of the Great Depression. In 1935, he introduced a sleek new trailer at the Outing Show in Los Angeles, and the newly named Airfloat Coach Manufacturing Company moved downtown to larger quarters.





PHOTOS BY KEN FREUND

Omar Suttles, who was a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers and had worked with Chrysler Corporation, designed and patented many features used in the Airfloats. Each model has a distinctive round aluminum “top-hat” roof ventilator with screened vent holes that let hot air rise up out of the ceiling cavity when a panel is slid open, using a small knob. Daytime heat can also be retained by closing this panel, helping to keep warm at night. A screw-post is used to raise or lower the lid by twisting an aluminum handle inside the trailer. Ventilator lids can also be partly opened even during storms to vent the coach, while still keeping out rain.

In 1942 Airfloat introduced a 24-footer called the “Commodore Third Wheel” that used a third wheel in front. Invented by Suttles and later marketed by Atwood, they used small swiveling tires attached under the A-frame. It greatly reduced hitch weight and led to the sales slogan “It’s easy on your car.” Third wheels were standard on Airfloats from about 1947 through 1955, except on the 16-foot Skipper. The feature was removed from Valia’s trailer.

During 1947 Airfloat switched from Masonite to aluminum exterior skin,

and it was also the first year of the “double-door” system that separated the rear bedroom from the rest of the coach. When the rear closet doors on both sides are opened at the same time, they meet in the center of the trailer, serving double-duty as bedroom doors.

Airfloats were among the most expensive post-war trailers; typically from \$1,000 to \$1,500 more than other brands of comparable size. According to a survey in *Trailer Topics* magazine, by 1951 a 28-foot Airfloat Custom Land Yacht was \$4,050, \$729 more expensive than a 29-foot 9-inch Spartan Mansion.

Airfloat Coach Company’s silver anniversary arrived in 1955, and to mark the occasion a large party was thrown in honor of Omar and Ruth Suttles, with more than 1,000 people attending. To commemorate the milestone, Suttles decided to have the aluminum skin of all future coaches anodized in a gold color. Additionally, Suttles added rectangular windows to both sides and the front for the first time, to provide more light and ventilation (because the port-hole windows never opened). In 1956 Suttles sold Airfloat Coach Company with his patent rights and retired, and within a year Airfloat closed its doors forever. 🚐



This vintage Airfloat ad ran in the July 1950 issue of *Trailer Life*.

STILL ALUMINUM,
STILL ICONIC, STILL
GOING STRONG

by **Kristopher Bunker**

As Coca-Cola is to soda, as Cadillac is to luxury and as Winnebago is to motorhomes, so too is Airstream to travel trailers. The company is as American as apple pie, to steal from the old adage. So American, in fact, that Airstream has thrived for decades, and actually shares an anniversary date with *Trailer Life* — only in 2011, the venerable manufacturer started by Wally Byam back in 1931 celebrates its 80th year, as

opposed to our “fledgling” 70th. So it would seem only fitting to include a profile on what is perhaps RVing’s most recognizable icon, the Airstream Classic.

To begin with, the Classic 31 — like all Airstreams — features the manufacturer’s trademark aircraft-type construction technique that consists of an inner and outer layer of stretched aluminum skin riveted to extruded aluminum framing. This type of construction lends itself to a relatively light weight of about 7,200 pounds including LP-gas and no water; not exactly light as a feather, but by no means should it push a properly equipped half-ton tow vehicle to its limits. But keep in mind that a full freshwater tank will add about 450 pounds.

The Classic’s rounded, low-profile shape is intended to enhance ease of towing and stability, assets we can attest to based on our experiences towing Airstream trailers over the years. The enclosed LP-gas cylinder compartment up front is another trademark of the “silver bullet.”

One thing about stepping into an Airstream: there’s no doubt you’re in one — even after you’ve shut the door behind you. This 31-footer proudly displays the smooth aluminum finish on the interior walls, and there’s absolutely no mistaking the rounded ceiling-to-wall transitions and top-shelf workmanship throughout the trailer. Real

AIRSTREAM CLASSIC 31



QUICK INFO

EXT LENGTH: 31'
EXT WIDTH: 8' 6"
EXT HEIGHT: 9' 7"
INT HEIGHT: 6' 5"
FRESHWATER: 54 gal
BLACK-/GRAY-WATER: 39 gal/ 37 gal
LP-GAS: 20 gal
HITCH WEIGHT: 805 lb
GVWR: 10,000 lb
MSRP: \$89,226



hickory hardwood cabinetry, solid-surface countertops as well as upgraded plumbing fixtures combine with a smart floorplan layout to give a sense of residential living.

The front lounge area shares space with a writing table, resulting in a highly usable area for watching TV, relaxing or pecking away at your laptop. The comfortable booth dinette works well for a family of four, and it affords an overflow TV-viewing area for the multiple guests you'll have once you show up in the RV park towing this trailer.

The galley features gobs of counter-space to help with food-prep and washing duties, while the three-burner stove,

oven and microwave ensure you'll be able to feed all the hungry guests.

The bathroom is amidship, street-side, and offers enough space to get the job done without feeling too cramped. An additional wardrobe and linen closet curbside provide more storage space for towels and your Sunday best.

The floorplan profiled here features the rear queen bed with decent-size wardrobes on both sides. Buyers can also opt for dual twin beds (with a nightstand between) or a second queen-bed floorplan with a freestanding dinette. We feel either queen configuration will work best for the target audience; the convertible dinette offers sleeping

space for the young ones, and the front lounge can accommodate additional weary travelers.

After all these years, Airstream is still going strong. So, is it worth it? That all depends. Those who buy an Airstream understand that they're not only paying for high-quality construction and attention to detail, but also for eight decades of tried-and-true durability, traditional styling and general envy among fellow RVers. To many, that's more than worth the price of admission. 🚐

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SOLAR POWER

CAPTURING ENERGY FROM THE SUN TO POWER YOUR RV IS EASIER AND MORE EFFICIENT THAN YOU MIGHT THINK

by **Chris Hemer**

Ever dreamed of freeing yourself from noisy campgrounds, hookups and the ever-present hum of someone's AC generator, all while your RV still has power? To camp wherever you want, for extended periods, without sacrificing anything, and do so without enlarging your carbon footprint? Well, you can do it with solar power.

Unlike an AC generator, a solar-power system has no moving parts, makes no noise or smell and requires little maintenance. It can be cost-effective in the long run and a solar system can be sized to suit your needs, whether that's just keeping a single battery charged or maintaining a large battery bank for running all the modern conveniences of a large fifth-wheel.

A basic RV solar-power system consists of one or more solar panels to generate charging current, a charge controller, batteries and ancillary components such as brackets, mounting hardware and wiring.

SOLAR PANELS

Solar panels are made up of photovoltaic cells that convert the sun's energy into electricity. Solar panels are rated in watts of output and the wattage rating is determined by multiplying the panel's peak power voltage by its peak power amperage.

There are three basic commercially available types of photovoltaic material: amorphous silicon, monocrystalline silicon and polycrystalline silicon, the latter two being most common. The cells have a positive and negative side. The middle, where electrons are held, is called the P-N junction. When light strikes the surface of the cells, the electrons become excited and begin generating pure DC (direct current) electricity. The number



Shade can be produced by the air conditioner, batwing TV antenna (when raised) and vents on your roof, so placing solar panels near these should be avoided. This customer chose AM Solar's large-area 150-watt panels, placing one forward on the streetside and one on the rear curbside to avoid shading.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AM SOLAR

This installation included the optional stainless-steel tilt bars to allow the panels to angle for better power output in the winter months.



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The back of the controller and the wiring loom that goes to the panels and batteries are accessible from inside the microwave cabinet. The oven was temporarily removed before installation.



Mounting the Heliotrope charge controller next to the RV's doorway was a good idea, as it made it easy to keep an eye on battery conditions frequently.

and size of the cells that are connected in series control the amount of voltage and amperage created. Each cell has a potential voltage of about 0.5 volt, so roughly 1 volt is produced per two cells in series.

According to the crew we talked to at AM Solar, you'll need a minimum of 36 standard cells in series to develop enough voltage to fully charge a battery. AM Solar uses a custom-made 100-watt RV100 solar panel with 40 cells producing 20.8 volts in its installations. That may seem like a lot of voltage to charge a 12-volt battery, but there are factors that affect output (such as the intensity of the sunlight, amount of shade, cell temperature, angle of sunlight, etc.) that must be compensated for.

CHARGE CONTROLLERS

A charge controller's purpose is to prevent the solar panels from overcharging the batteries, and although features vary depending on the controller and its manufacturer, there are two basic methods for regulating the charge current: series regulation and shunt regulation.

A shunt controller regulates the charging of the batteries by short-circuiting the solar panels, thereby interrupting the charge current. A blocking diode is required between the batteries and the switching element to prevent the batteries from shorting when the solar panels are shunted. This control strategy is commonly referred to as an "On/Off" controller, as it will push the batteries up to a preset regulation point and then turn off. It then waits for the batteries to fall to a pre-set reconnect voltage, and switches back on.

The shunt controller is an older strategy that works reasonably well, but the techs at AM Solar think it has some serious drawbacks. For example, shunt controllers rarely, if ever, reach full charge and can either boil off water in the battery or sulfate the battery plates depending on the controller's set points. By contrast, a series controller with pulse-width modulation uses a series element that is switched on and off at a variable frequency with a variable-duty cycle to maintain the battery at the voltage-regulation point. In plain English, that

means it will charge the batteries up to a preset voltage-regulation set point, then taper off the charging current from the solar panels, rather than switching it off completely. This strategy maintains the highest state of charge with the least amount of water consumption.

BATTERIES

To begin with, you want a deep-cycle battery for your RV, not a typical automotive starting battery. A deep-cycle RV or marine battery can withstand repetitive discharges of up to 50 percent or more and still continue to provide its rated capacity after hundreds of cycles. This characteristic, combined with more reserve capacity, makes deep-cycle batteries ideal for use in an RV application.

Reserve capacity in your RV battery is the primary consideration, and you can get more by going bigger and/or using more batteries. Note that we didn't say "adding" batteries. Adding new batteries to older ones in a system will severely shorten the life of the new batteries. If you're going to add battery capacity, go with a completely new set of batteries.

Many RVs have more than one house battery, and if they suit your needs already, you may choose to go with direct replacements when the time comes. But if you need more power, you can upgrade to bigger batteries, if they'll fit. You'll

BATTERY MAINTENANCE TIP

Lead-acid batteries typically begin "gassing" (or boiling) between 14.1 and 14.4 volts when the batteries are at 80° F. This gassing threshold changes as the temperature of the battery changes. It will be lower in hotter temperatures and higher in lower temps. Pushing the batteries beyond their gassing threshold will cause them to lose water too quickly. Not pushing them close enough to the threshold will leave sulfur on the plates, diminishing the battery's capacity. This is why it's so important to keep a close eye on flooded-cell batteries as they charge.

want batteries with the highest amp/hour (ah) rating that is available.

For those with more demanding power needs, adding 12-volt batteries and connecting them in parallel will double the amount of time before the batteries are discharged. If your RV has the room, you may want to opt for 6-volt golf-cart batteries, connected in series to produce 12 volts. This setup can endure more deep discharges than a 12-volt RV/marine product (sometimes twice as many) and is popular with those who only operate their RVs through an inverter on battery power. Remember that parallel connection combines amps, not voltage, and series connection combines voltage, not amps.

There are several types of batteries on the market today. Flooded-cell batteries, or those using water as the electrolyte, remain the most widely used, primarily because they are inexpensive, work well in a variety of applications and have a good service life (when properly maintained).

Gel-cell batteries are also a flooded-cell battery, but one in which silicates have been added to the electrolyte material to make it a gel. These batteries fall into the sealed-lead acid (SLA) or maintenance-free category, but should not be confused with Absorbed Glass Mat (AGM) batteries, which are often incorrectly referred to as gel-cell batteries.

An AGM battery utilizes a fiberglass mat material, in which the electrolyte has been absorbed. These batteries are therefore dry internally, and are more resistant to vibration and shock than their flooded-cell counterparts. AGM batteries cost about twice as much as common flooded-cell batteries, but may be worth the added cost in an RV-solar environment.

AM Solar did extensive testing on AGM batteries and found their charge time shorter and charge acceptance greater than in flooded-cell batteries. The AGM batteries tend to hold up better under heavy loads, such as running a microwave through an inverter. They also don't outgas — unless severely overcharged — don't corrode the battery terminals nor do they require water.

continued on page 60

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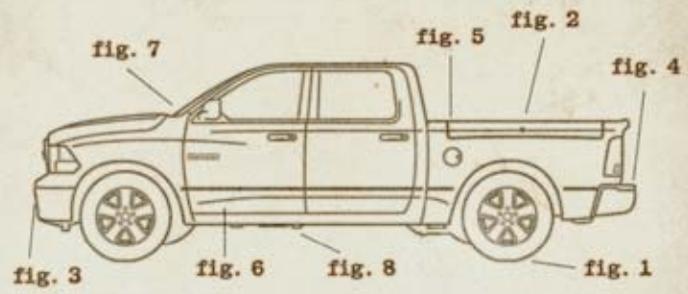


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SYSTEM SIZING

There are a variety of ways to calculate your RV's power requirements, but AM Solar's recommendation is to boondock using no AC generator or shorepower for as long as it takes to run your house batteries down during normal usage.

Let's say it takes three days to drain the batteries. Assuming you have two relatively new Group 27 deep-cycle

batteries rated at 100 amp-hours of storage each, you theoretically have 200 amp-hours of energy to draw from. However, only about 75 percent of that is usable. You really only have about 150 amp-hours on tap. Now, divide the storage capacity (150 amp-hours) by the number of days you boondocked (three) and you get 50 amp-hours consumed on an average day.

Now that the battery storage capacity has been established, you'll need to determine how many solar panels you'll need to replace the 50 amp-hours consumed on an average day. Assuming you use your RV primarily during the spring and summer like most of us, you'll be exposed to an average of five peak-sun-hours a day. A 100-watt panel produces an average of about six amps per peak-sun-hour, or about 30 amp-hours a day. So, in our example, you would need two 100-watt solar panels to fully recharge on an average day.

In AM Solar's experience, the average RVer consumes between 75 and 150 amp-hours of energy a day; thus, three to six 100-watt panels would be required to break even on a daily basis.

SOLUTIONS

With roof vents, air conditioners, antennas and other components taking up space on the roofs of our RVs, you may wonder where to mount solar panels large enough to generate the power you need. AM Solar offers 50-, 100- and 150-watt panels, as well as custom panels to fit almost any area on the roof. It also offers rocker foot mounts that allow the panel to tilt toward the sun when used with its optional tilt bars. Made from stainless steel, these mounts conform to the roof and allow access to the junction box for expansion or troubleshooting.

The example here is a Class A motorhome at the AM Solar factory in Springfield, Oregon; however, the process and hardware are similar for most RVs. As you can see, it's not complicated and adding solar power to your RV will allow you to truly get off the beaten path. 🚚

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CLEAR THE BED

B&W'S COMPANION HITCH FOR FIFTH-WHEELS MAKES REMOVAL EASY — AND PRACTICAL — USING TURNOVER BALL VERSATILITY

by **Bill & Jenn Gehr**

If you're towing a fifth-wheel, a large portion of the truck's bed is likely filled with hitch hardware. To use the truck to its full capability, most owners either have to remove a bulky — and heavy — hitch or stuff items around it. Obviously, the latter won't work if you need the bed to haul large items, so in that case we're relegated to hitch removal, which can be a pain.

The B&W Companion hitch has a simple, innovative design that allows you to clear the truck bed with the pull of a lever. Most conventional fifth-wheel hitches use a bed-rail system for fastening the hitch to the truck. These rails are typically not removable and seem to always be in the way. With the Companion hitch, the bed-rail system is obsolete because it's actually two hitches in one: a fifth-wheel hitch and a turnover ball/gooseneck hitch. The turnover ball is

also the mounting system for the fifth-wheel hitch. Most RVers towing fifth-wheels use the standard kingpin and saddle setup, but there are those who also use their trucks to pull horse trailers or have added a gooseneck extension to their fifth-wheel, which makes the B&W hitch very versatile. We installed the Companion, which is rated for 18,000 pounds, on a Ram pickup that's used to tow a 33-foot fifth-wheel.

B&W incorporates vibration-dampening polyurethane bushings for rattle-free towing and stylish good looks with a durable, powder-coated finish. Another feature that makes for safe and smoother towing is the wraparound jaws that secure the king pin to the saddle. A patented hydraulic damper also assists in connecting and disconnecting the fifth-wheel and contributes to a smoother ride.

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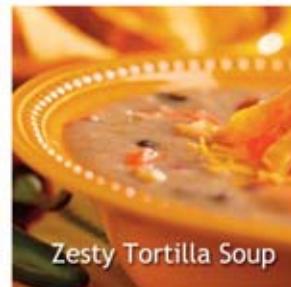
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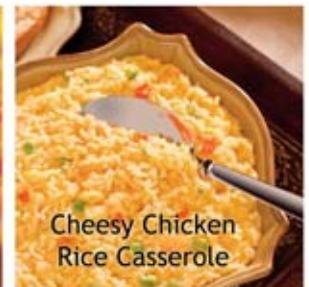
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The only drilling required for the B&W hitch installation is in the bed of the truck: one 4-inch round hole for the post and four small holes where the safety chain U-bolts attach.



B&W's rail system mounts from underneath for an extra clean, unobstructed truck bed. The rail mounts securely without any drilling or welding to the frame.



B&W's Companion Hitch has a simple, innovative design that allows you to clear your truck bed with the pull of a lever.



This is the view of the underside of the hitch and the U-bolt attachment for the upright post.

The Companion arrives in two separate boxes, one with the base and the other with the coupler assembly. The only real assembly required was attaching the two upright arms using eight bolts, and securing the mounting post with two U-bolts. The Companion can be assembled in about 10 minutes. The upright arms need to be bolted to the base, which has a series of holes used to adjust the position of the arms and the coupler. The adjustments are front-to-back and up-and-down, providing a custom fit.

All of the necessary hardware needed for assembly is included in the Companion hitch kit. The only drilling required is in the bed of the truck: a 4-inch round hole for the post and

four small holes where the safety chain U-bolts attach. A wide heavy-duty steel rail with the latching system is bolted to the truck through holes that are already pre-drilled in the frame. Unlike some other in-the-bed rail systems, the clean-looking B&W under-bed mounting system installs without any welding, drilling or removal of the truck bed, and the installation can be completed in about an hour, depending on your skill level.

To install the hitch, the post — which is U-bolted to the base — is fed through the hole in the bed and latched in place. The fully articulating head is then set in its cradle and pinned into the base. While the assembly can be moved as one piece,



The post is inserted into the B&W turn-over ball.



The turn-over ball is also the mounting system for the fifth-wheel hitch. So whether you are pulling a gooseneck horse trailer, your fifth-wheel, or needing the full bed of your truck for routine errands, the versatile 18K Companion Hitch makes converting from one to the other very simple.



The head of the hitch easily mounts to the polyurethane rubber bushings that act as a sound dampener.

it's easier and lighter to make this a two-part process. The lever for locking and unlocking the base can be accessed at the driver's side wheel well.

Once adjusted for the particular fifth-wheel, hitching and unhitching is fast and easy. The articulating head provides enough movement to accommodate uneven surfaces and the cam-action latching handle in the saddle works smoothly. The aforementioned polyurethane bushings in the saddle cradle helped quiet down rattle caused by rough roads.

The Companion retails for \$849, is warranted for five years to the original owner and is made in the USA.

The people at B&W Trailer Hitches have been in the towing segment of the RV industry for more than 20 years with a commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. 📧

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www.turnoverball.com. Circle 205 on Reader Service Card.



The head is then secured by two safety pins.



The kingpin slides into the B&W Companion wraparound jaws.

AT HOME ON THE RANGE

**THE RAM OUTDOORSMAN CREW CAB 4 × 4
AND HEARTLAND PROWLER SPORT 26P BH
PROVIDE AMENITIES AIMED AT OUTDOOR ADVENTURE**

by Chris Hemer



For some, RVing is an adventure in and of itself; a means to escape the monotony of everyday life, to be with family and to experience new and exciting places. For others, RVing is but a vehicle to experience alternate types of adventure, a convenient way to enjoy one's hobbies, comfortable in the knowledge that home is only as far away as the campsite.

Today, adventure is big business. The choices are dizzying — from hunting and fishing to hiking, biking, kayaking and windsurfing, there are practically endless avenues to pursue an “active lifestyle.” And both automobile and RV manufacturers are taking notice, offering many versions of their most popular products that are tailored specifically for the customer who thrives on adrenaline.

PHOTOS BY CHRIS HEMER





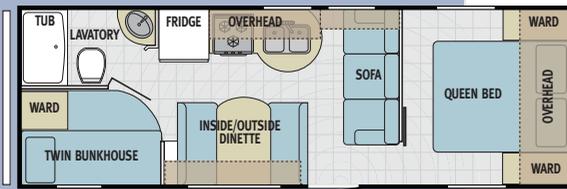
With that in mind, we thought it'd be interesting to pair a truck designed for "Outdoorsmen" with a trailer designed for "Sport." This year, Dodge introduced the Outdoorsman version of its popular Ram 1500 pickup, replete with all the features campers, boaters and fishing enthusiasts were looking for, according to Dodge. These include towing features like a standard Class IV hitch, four- and seven-pin harness plugs, heavy-duty cooling and limited slip differential. It also includes a larger 32-gallon fuel tank (26 gallons standard), fog lights and a handy dash-mounted 120-volt AC auxiliary power outlet.

The test unit also included the available integrated brake controller and RamBox, which includes two lockable, lighted storage areas outside of the cargo box where you can store just about anything that will fit in them. Rifles and fishing rods are apparently among the most popular items, so Dodge

OUTDOORSMAN CREW CAB 4 × 4

MPG: Solo, 19.4; Towing: 8
0-60 MPH, TOWING: 17.5 sec
40-60 MPH, TOWING: 10.0 sec
ENGINE: 5.7 liter Hemi V-8
HP: 390 @ 5,600 rpm
TORQUE: 407 lb-ft @ 4,000 rpm
TRANSMISSION: 5-speed automatic
AXLE RATIO: 3.92:1
FUEL CAP: 32 gal
TIRES: LT275/70R17 All Terrain
SUSPENSION, F/R: Upper and lower "A" arms, coil-over shock absorbers, stabilizer bar/Five-link with track bar, coil springs, stabilizer bar
BRAKES: Four-wheel disc with ABS
TOW RATING: 10,000 lb
GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT RATING: 6,800 lb
GROSS COMBINATION WEIGHT RATING: 15,500 lb
WEIGHT AS TESTED: 5,940 lb
LENGTH: 19' 1"
WHEELBASE: 140.5"
MSRP, AS TESTED: \$44,310
BASIC WARRANTY: 5 yr/100,000 mi

PROWLER SPORT 26P BH



EXT LENGTH: 31'
EXT WIDTH: 8'
EXT HEIGHT: 11' 5"
INT WIDTH: 7' 10"
INT HEIGHT: 7' 1"
CONSTRUCTION: Wood framing, aluminum siding, rubber roof, R7 insulation in walls, floor and roof
FRESHWATER CAP: 50 gal
BLACK/GRAY-WATER CAP: 37 gal/37 gal
LP-GAS CAP: 14 gal
WATER-HEATER CAP: 6 gal
REFRIGERATOR: 6 cu ft
FURNACE: 35,000 BTU
AIR CONDITIONER: 13,500 BTU
CONVERTER: 45 amp
TIRES: ST225/75R15-D
SUSPENSION: Leaf spring
WEIGHT: (freshwater, water heater, LP-gas full; no cargo): 6,220 lb
HITCH WEIGHT: 700 lb
AXLE WEIGHT: 5,520 lb
GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT RATING: 9,500 lb
GROSS AXLE WEIGHT RATING: 2 @ 4,400 lb ea
CARGO CARRYING CAPACITY: 3,280 lb
MSRP, BASE: \$10,069
MSRP, AS TESTED: \$11,718
BASIC WARRANTY: 12 mo



Above: Heartland designed the Sport with a full 7 feet of interior headroom. Right: The RamBox storage system is complete with locking bins along the bed of the truck.

Far right: The bunkhouse has a radiused base to make it safer for access to the upper bunk.



thought it appropriate to offer the Mopar RamBox holster, which "gently yet securely cradles two rifles or shotguns, or can be rotated 90 degrees to hold up to six fishing rods," according to Dodge. Our tester also included this option, and just for grins, the PR folks even fitted it with a couple of replica air rifles with scopes to demonstrate its functionality.

Though the press materials suggest that the Outdoorsman could be had for as little as \$28,350, the base price for our Outdoorsman Crew Cab 4 × 4 was \$34,810. With the Customer Preferred Package 26T (\$2,595, which includes the Outdoorsman gear and other equipment), the Technology Group (\$495, which includes ParkSense Rear Park Assist System, 506-watt Alpine stereo system) 5.7-liter Hemi engine (\$1,310),

media center with Garmin touch-screen navigation and 30 GB hard drive (\$1,895), the aforementioned RamBox (\$1,895) and other stand-alone options, that price swelled to \$44,310 — and that, friends, doesn't even include leather. That is a princely sum for a half-ton pickup in just about anyone's book. And features notwithstanding, the truck doesn't look expensive with its blacked-out grille and satin-finish wheels.

Ah, well. Sportsmen care more about functionality than fluff anyway, right? And when it came time to pull the 6,220-pound Prowler Sport Trailer, the Ram, with its mighty Hemi V-8 and optional 3.92:1-geared limited-slip differential, never missed a beat. The engine delivered more than enough smooth power to get the rig moving, and the



cabin sound level, even during downshifts, was remarkably quiet.

Speaking of downshifts, a small button on the column shifter allowed quick and easy manual shifting on the fly. It's a handy feature when you want to kick down a gear or two, but don't necessarily want to mash the throttle or fuss with a balky column shifter to do it. Our truck also had the optional trailer-brake control (\$230), which, when combined with the Ram's excellent four-wheel disc brakes, made stopping a no-drama affair.

The Crew Cab has plenty of room for your 6-foot friends in the back, but like all such pickups, this extra legroom comes at the expense of some cargo area. And when you add the RamBox feature, which effectively narrows the bed, the cargo box approximates that of a small or midsize shortbed truck. To be fair, it's simply a matter of priorities; if you don't plan to haul quads or dirt bikes, but you do like to bring your friends (who happen to be former linebackers), then the Crew Cab is definitely the right choice. It is a comfortable truck for long trips, it rides smoothly, and with features like touch-screen navigation and Bluetooth hands-free calling, it

would make a very nice commuter, if you could stomach the 13 mpg city/19 mpg highway mileage at \$4-plus a gallon.

Okay, on to the Prowler. In a sea of travel trailers, there are few names that are more recognizable. Originally established in 1969, and generally associated with now-defunct Fleetwood Travel Trailers, it's doubtless that you've seen a Prowler in your campground or passing you on the highway at one time or another. The model's light weight and reasonable price are likely one reason, and the fact that it is offered in a wide range of floorplans (17 total across the Prowler line as this is written) probably doesn't hurt either. After Fleetwood closed its doors (to travel trailer manufacturing, anyway) in 2009, Heartland RVs recognized the value and longstanding tradition of the Prowler name, and began manufacturing models of its own.

The Prowler Sport 26P BH is what you might call an old-school travel trailer, with its wood framing, aluminum siding and lack of any slideouts. This floorplan, with a queen bed up front and bunkhouse in the rear, isn't anything out of the ordinary, either, but that's not meant as a criticism. The market is flooded with trailers sporting the latest bells and whistles, but sometimes all you really want is a trailer with the basics that is as close as possible to the unit you likely grew up in. In that regard, this floorplan and its slightly more than \$10,000 base price deliver.

The interior layout is a cozy one and perfect for gatherings with friends or family, with its fixed dinette and convertible couch offering enough room for five to six people to socialize comfortably. Our tester was delivered with Rustic Mandarin interior decor and the Prowler Sport Value Package (\$2,000), a "forced option," which, of course, means it's not an option at all regardless of how the manufacturer spins it. This package includes (among other things) a residential-size 50/50 sink, microwave, AM/FM/CD/DVD entertainment system (with two outside speakers), cable/satellite TV hookup, 13,500-BTU air conditioner, a porcelain toilet with foot flush and a patio awning (our unit

was upfitted with an electric awning, a \$340 option).

When it's time to turn in for the night, the rear bath area offers adequate room for cleaning up with a tub/shower combo and a small lav and sink. The rear bunkhouse is perfect for kids, and there is a removable panel underneath the lower bed that allows access to the large rear storage area. Our only complaint here was that the mattress padding on the bunks was pretty thin, making it an uncomfortably firm bed that would likely get even firmer as the padding gets compressed over time.

Up front, the queen bed was almost the opposite, feeling a bit on the squishy side for our liking. Storage overhead and on either side of the bed was enough for two adults, and while we appreciated the privacy the hard wall between the living area and bedroom provided, it made the area feel a little closed off. But this is purely subjective; you might prefer it to a curtain, for example.

So where's the "Sport" in this trailer that outdoorsy folks would appreciate? Well, in addition to the aforementioned rear storage, there is also a large front pass-through storage area that will swallow most anything you plan to bring along. With a cargo carrying capacity of more than 3,000 pounds, that's a lot of stuff. The Sport model also comes with a slick bike rack that pulls out of the rear frame and a removable dinette table for alfresco dining. Some useful options on our test unit included an optional exterior shower (\$90), spare tire and carrier (\$160), four stabilizer jacks (\$175) and keyless entry (\$395).

Whether you enjoy hunting and fishing with your friends or just weekend outings with the family, the Dodge Ram Outdoorsman Crew Cab 4 x 4 and Heartland Prowler Sport 26P BH have all the ingredients you need to enjoy Mother Nature's bounty. 📍

Ram Trucks, (866) 726-4636, www.ramtrucks.com.

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PHOTOS BY KEVIN LIVINGSTON

SPEEDY STABILITY

BAL'S SCISSOR JACKS FOR TRAILERS LIMIT THE ROCKING AND ROLLING; ADDING POWER-PAK MOTORS MAKES THE PROCESS PUSH-BUTTON SIMPLE

by Kevin Livingston

Seasoned RVers quickly become dependent on features that make the setup and take-down process more convenient and comfortable. And in today's world, making everything happen by pushing a button is often more desirable. Yet one of the most commonly used RV accessories, the stabilizing jack, has basically remained manual — until recently.

Although employing power stabilizing jacks is one option,

they require a significant investment in something like a hydraulic or electric leveling system. For a whole lot less money and easier installation, the BAL Power-Pak add-on motors may be just the ticket to break free from the antiquated manual systems. Granted, stabilizer jacks do not lift for leveling, but many trailers do not have frames that are stout enough for this type of system, so the lack of a lifting capability is fine. Their use for stabilizing is their intended and best purpose.



Power-Pak motors are sealed against moisture intrusion. The self-contained unit slips over the hex head (screw drive) used to manually crank the jacks up and down.



Motors are designed to easily fit on either scissor or C-jack stabilizers (single leg). Each kit has two motors and all the hardware for mounting and wiring.



Once the Power-Pak motor is in place, the outside brackets are placed on the 1-inch trunnion before lining up with the threads in the casing.

BAL has been making scissor and C-jack stabilizers (single leg) for a long time and now offers an optional 12-volt DC motor package, which is intended for use with certain stabilizer models. Each Power-Pak set is comprised of two water-tight sealed motors, brackets for both style jacks plus all the necessary hardware. Also, to help complete the fitting process all necessary switches, circuit breakers and connectors are included, making for a trouble-free installation.



Outside brackets are attached to the motor housing using ¼-inch 20 bolts and torqued to 8 ft-lb. The fit is tight, which created a fit problem, but the issue was rectified with some grinding.

For testing purposes, we installed the motor kits on BAL scissor jacks, a type of jack commonly used on trailers. Setting up the Power-Pak is a simple procedure involving only a few steps from start to finish. To begin, the jack is extended for easier access and the motor is slid into position over the hex head of the jack's drive screw. After locating the correct mounting brackets for your specific stabilizer jack, they are placed on the outside of the scissor jack on the 1-inch trunnion. The brackets

are then secured to the motor using four of the supplied ¼-inch 20 bolts with lock washers. The bolts go right into the body of the motor, lining up the threads with

the holes in the brackets. At this point, the bolts are torqued to 8 ft-lb.

While the fit was pretty close, we discovered a slight installation problem

on the side of the motor where the bracket is rounded. In our case the rounded section demanded further grinding to get both bolts to line up with

LOCK-ARM STABILIZING BAR

ADDING EXTRA SUPPORT TO CORNER JACKS SMOOTHS OUT THE WIGGLES

by **Kevin Livingston**

A

lthough your travel trailer may already be equipped with four corner

stabilizing jack supports, potential weaknesses still exist. One of the most vulnerable points of movement is where the jack is mounted to the frame. While in an extended position during camping the stabilizing jack has a tendency to wiggle and wobble beneath the mounting point.

To remedy this ailment, BAL offers the Lock-Arm Stabilizing Bar, a device that is basically an adjustable track or support bar that simply moves up and down with the stabilizing jack. Mounting in this fashion allows the jack to be reinforced at any point in its travel capability.

The installation of the Lock-Arm Stabilizing Bar consists of only a few easy steps. The first step requires measuring a minimum of 27 inches from the spot on the jack where the Lock-Arm



PHOTOS BY KEVIN LIVINGSTON

will attach to the frame. It's important that the frame has a 4 x 1-inch clearing so the bracket can lay completely flat against the frame.

The second step is determining where the Lock-Arm will bolt on to the jack. Using the jack's foot, leg or pad, find the leg's closest location where it touches the ground. For our BAL scissors jack, we were able to use the foot mounting bolt by replacing it with the included longer bolt as the mounting point. Some jacks may require drilling new holes.

For the last step, we loosened the lock bolts and ran the jack down and

back up to ensure there's no binding. Be sure to tighten the lock bolts before traveling so they don't rattle going down the road. The process is repeated every time the jacks are deployed. For convenience, the lock bolts use the same crank handle as the scissors-style jack, so no new tools are needed.

We found it best to install the Lock-Arm Stabilizing Bars at

the same time as the Power-Pak to aid with the additional weight and to create what we feel is a complete stabilizing package. The addition of the Lock-Arm Stabilizing Bars made a dramatic difference in the amount of shimmy and shake in the trailer compared to the previous setup. For \$80 for two bars (retail), a little install time and a few screws and bolts, this is definitely a worthwhile addition to any trailer. 🚐

Norco Industries Inc., (800) 347-2232, www.norcoind.com/bal. Circle 207 on Reader Service Card.



Longer bolts are used in the stabilizer foot to facilitate a location to mount the Lock-Arm bar.



There must be a minimum of 27 inches from the stabilizers to the point where the arm attaches to the frame of the trailer.



It's best to test the stabilizers by running them up and down with the arm attached before tightening the lock bolts.

their respective holes. It's best to check to make sure all the holes line up before continuing. If they don't, call BAL. (Do not cut away the rubber motor cover, as this could result in weather damage.) Repeat the same steps on each corner of the trailer to finish the hardware install.

From this point you're left with wiring the new Power-Pak motors to the batteries. There are a couple things to consider before running wires and mounting switches. The first is knowing that BAL recommends that the positive wire go directly to the battery. This means that your switch location could require extra wire, in which case a minimum of 10 gauge is suggested (or even 8-gauge for longer trailers). Keep in mind that BAL recommends putting the switches as close to the motors as possible. This may require a lot of disassembly to reach the right spot for wire routing as well.

We chose to mount our switches on a wall section inside one of the compartments. This does two things: One, the

switches are now indoors, so to speak, for weather protection; and two, when settling into a campground site all the switches are centralized where every other camp hookup necessity lies, thereby saving steps. Once the switches are settled into their new home they were wired to the battery and motor.

Another step is necessary before completing the wiring. Each motor necessitates the use of an included 30-amp circuit breaker, all of which are protected from the elements via special rubber boots and must be spliced inline with each positive wire, between each switch and motor. The ground wire for each corresponding motor and its circuit is the next step. The ground wire can be routed all the way from the battery, like the positive, but this is not mandatory. Merely string the negative wire from the motors to the switches and from the switches to the frame nearby your switch location. For longer runs, make sure you use 8-gauge wire.

Convenience is key. BAL's motorized upgrade for its stabilizer jack is spot on and turns a manual job into a push-button operation. The Power-Pak motors run the jacks up and down at an impressive rate so stabilization is a pretty quick process. BAL also did a good job of paying attention to detail and covering every base when it came to weather-proofing and quality.

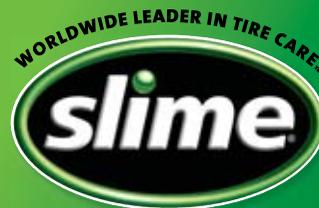
In our case, we installed a new set of BAL scissor jacks before adding the motors. The BAL jacks are higher quality than the ones that came with the trailer and are definitely much more stout. They extend to 24 inches and are rated for either 5,000 or 7,500 pounds, depending on model. They retail for \$101 and \$106, respectively, for two jacks. The motors come in pairs and have a retail price of \$345 for two. 🚚

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September 9-11 | Greensboro, NC

Big East Powersports Show

Sept 30.-Oct. 1 | Syracuse, NY

Rocky Mountain Snowmobile Expo

October 7-9 | Denver, CO

St. Paul Ice Fishing & Winter Sports Show

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User Guide

Contents

AWNING ARMOR ↓

One of the most commonly sought after and used RV accessories is the patio awning. Like many other RV appendages, required service and regular maintenance procedures keep these accessories working without failure. In the case of awnings, this usually means fully opening it, followed by a thorough cleaning — and drying — and treating the entire length of fabric.

In an effort to reduce cleansing intervals and to further enhance fabric protection, Awning Pro-Tech, a company out of Phoenix, Arizona — a place where intense sunshine is common — has developed a simple yet effective cover specifically designed to protect the awning when rolled up between uses.

PHOTOS BY KEVIN LIVINGSTON



The Awning Pro-Tech system is basically a series of covers which snap into position directly onto the rolled-up awning. Each Awning Pro-Tech kit is comprised of five equal-length pieces measuring 51.33 inches, allowing total coverage for awnings up to 20 feet long with diameters ranging from 3.65 to 4.25 inches, which covers most late-model awnings. Aside from simplicity, Awning Pro-Tech has also taken longevity into consideration by using UV-resistant polymers as opposed to plain old PVC plastic. Using this type of material affords a possible life span of up to 60 years without cracking, breaking or discoloring, as well as maintaining its original physical properties, according to the company.

HANDS ON

by **Kevin Livingston**



The installation procedure for the Awning Pro-Tech is as easy as it looks. To begin, go to one end of the desired awning and start snapping the pieces onto the awning by spreading the slit side open to help with positioning. Make sure that one piece is overlapping the next by at least 2 inches. This will help to cover any butt joints where sun may get through and ensure the fit can be configured for any awning shorter than 20 feet without cutting. For those of you out there who have RVs equipped with enormous awnings spanning beyond 20 feet, don't worry; individual pieces are available, too.

Although the Awning Pro-Tech is an excellent product due to its sheer simplistic design, some owners may find it a little difficult to get the material to spread over the awning. Because of the very same UV-resistant polymers that promote long life, there is also a small amount of tension created when assembling the pieces. This sort of plastic makes the Awning Pro-Tech stiff and a little tough to get started. The only other hindrance is that each time you plan on taking a trip the Awning Pro-Tech must be removed and stored, but that's a minor inconvenience for fabric longevity. The product carries a 15-year warranty and is manufactured in the USA.

All in all, this is a great inexpensive device for awning preservation. The five-piece kit retails for \$119.99 and can be ordered from the company online. Shipping is free. Single sections are available for \$23.99, also with no shipping charges. 🚚

Awning Pro-Tech, (602) 418-7186, www.awningpro-tech.com. Circle 208 on Reader Service Card.

10-MINUTE TECH

Top 10 favorite tried-and-true tips through the years **From RVers**



HOLD TIGHT

Outdoor tablecloths often fly up in the wind. Commercial hold-down springs are often too small for the thick concrete or the very thick wooden tables found in many parks.

At the hardware store, I bought a couple of feet of 6-inch PVC pipe and sliced it into 2-inch-wide circular sections. Then I cut across each circle to allow each to spring open. After the cutting, I sanded the edges smooth. These rings spring open to fit virtually any table thickness, and always hold tightly.

Robert White, Franklin, Kentucky



OLD GLORY

After September 11, 2001, I wanted a way to fly my flag that was easy to disassemble for travel, as I am a full-time RVer. I made this flagpole out of varying diameters of PVC pipe for less than \$20. When I travel, I just lift the 10-foot section and flag out of the holder, and store it in the trailer. I leave the 30-inch section of PVC secured to the ladder, where it is ready for the next flag raising.

Rich Vedder, Tremont, Illinois



KEEP 'EM CLOSED

The illustration shows an inexpensive, easy way to secure drawers while in transit. The dowel rods are held in place by a cup hook placed in the fixed cabinet surface between any two drawers, and another hook, installed lower, further secures the drawers. Use of two hooks also works when the drawers don't have loop-type handles. When not in use, the dowel rods are stored in our closet.

K.P. Moreau, Livingston, Texas

LP-GAS REMINDER

On our fifth-wheel, a door covers the compartment for the LP-gas cylinders. We try not to travel with the LP-gas on, but have sometimes found that we have forgotten to shut off the gas valves. Once the compartment door is closed, it seems to be a matter of "out of sight, out of mind." Our simple solution was to make a colorful sign on card stock, printed on both sides. We then laminated it and put it into a luggage-tag pouch. Then we attached a screw eye on the inside of the top front edge of the LP-gas compartment and hung the tag.

When we turn the LP-gas valves on, we just pull the tag out over the door and close it. The doorjamb stops are partially cut out to allow for ventilation so that the hanging tag does not make the door hard to close. When we're ready to leave, the tag serves as a bright reminder to shut off the LP-gas.

Phil Turcotte, Clinton, Massachusetts



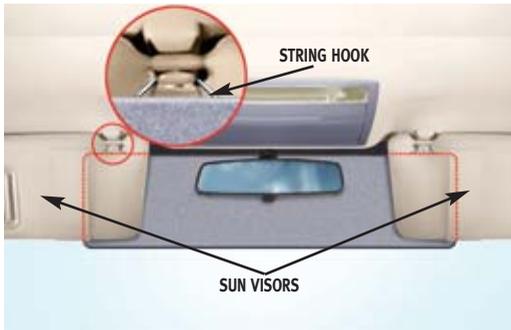


TENNIS ANYONE? ↑

After RVing for many years, we have found used tennis balls to be almost as useful as bungee cords on or around our RV. Placed under the wiper arms, they keep the expensive wiper blades from “cooking” on the hot windshield when the RV is in storage. Cut an X in them, and they cover the hitch ball when not in use. Slide them over the ends of tent stakes to protect people walking by. Slide them over the handles of bicycles on the storage rack to keep them from poking holes in the cover. I’m sure that you can find many other uses for those worn-out balls that can be picked up at most stores or around any tennis court.

Kenneth Orr, Jensen Beach, Florida

SUN-VISOR EXTENSION ↓



If you’re plagued by glaring sun that comes through the part of the windshield that’s not covered by the sun visors, you can block it out for less than a dollar’s worth of materials and a little time.

Measure between

the two inside hooks that hold the sun visors in place. Cut material dense enough to block out the sun’s rays and long enough to overlap both hooks (match the color to the interior of the vehicle). The width should be approximately that of the sun visor’s. Using string, make hooks. The new center visor can be hung in place after removing the vehicle’s visors from their hooks; the visors can then be rehooked, leaving the material in place. When not in use, you can roll it up and secure it with a piece of hook-and-loop material, or remove it and store in the glove box.

Richard Pearce, Salt Lake City, Utah



PULL-TOP CAP A SNAP

The pull-top caps found on sports drinks and syrup bottles fit nicely on one-quart plastic motor-oil, power-steering and transmission fluid containers. The pull-cap permits you to maneuver the bottles into hard-to-reach places without spilling and frequently eliminates the need for a funnel.

Ron Uhle, Tucson, Arizona

SQUIRT-GUN FUN

If you don’t have one of those fancy toilets with a sprayer attachment, just buy a kid’s squirt gun and holster it next to the john. Mine is one of the pump-up, air-pressure pistols, but any squirt gun will do. A few quick shots and you’ll have a clean bowl. Plus, over time, as your marksmanship improves, you’ll need fewer and fewer shots — and the volume of cleanup water you’ll be adding to the holding tank will shrink accordingly.

Mark M. Steele, Livingston, Texas

IN THE BAG

We enjoy using an electric casserole pan in our RV, but don’t enjoy the cleanup that must be done in our small sink afterward. A simple solution is to use an oven bag (such as a Reynolds oven bag) inside the pan and fill with your favorite recipe. When it’s done cooking, remove and dispose of the oven bag. We find cleanup to be minimal when using this method.

Jacque Cohen, Troy, Michigan

THOSE SHORT QUEEN BEDS

With otherwise excellent RV equipment, there are still frequent complaints by tall people about short queen beds (60 × 75 inches). As a 6-foot 1-inch person who likes to sleep flat on his back, I found the 75-inch bed caused foot cramps and toe pressure problems. My wife and I teamed up for an easy solution.

Realizing that the way I lie on a normal pillow “wasted” about 6 inches between my head and the wall, we decided to make a narrower pillow. We opened a fiber-filled pillow (shredded foam, feathers or other filled pillow will also do) enough to remove about one-third of the filling and then sewed it back to about two-thirds of its original width, while keeping its original length and thickness.

Now the top of my head is about 1 inch from the wall (an inch miss is as good as a mile), and I sleep as comfortably as in our regular queen-size bed at home.

Paul Binder, Sarasota, Florida

Illustrations By Bill Tipton
To send a submission to
10-Minute Tech, write to
2575 Vista Del Mar, Ventura,
CA 93001. Please include an
illustration if applicable.

PERFORMANCE CORNER



by Ken Freund

BILSTEIN SHOCK ABSORBERS

With their larger, heavier tires, wheels and axles, greater overall weight and high load capabilities, RVs, light trucks and SUVs used as tow vehicles put extra demands on their shock absorbers. Original equipment shocks are all too often chosen by vehicle manufacturers mainly for their low cost, and cheap shocks don't hold up well to heavy-duty usage.

Fortunately, most owners can dramatically improve ride quality and handling by simply upgrading the shock absorbers. Bilstein's monotube design with deflective-disc split valving is designed to handle heavy-duty conditions yet provide a compliant, well-controlled ride. They are engineered to react faster to road inputs, which helps reduce or eliminate excessive sway and bouncing common with conventional shocks, making your vehicle more stable, comfortable and easier to handle.

The main advantages of single-tube designs over conventional twin-tube shocks are better heat dissipation and greater piston area, which allows greater sensitivity for small piston movements. Shocks must convert kinetic spring-oscillation energy to thermal energy and the resulting heat has to be dissipated as quickly as possible. A shock's performance is directly proportional to its ability to dissipate heat because a hot shock loses its damping ability as the oil thins. With conventional multi-tube shocks, heat must pass through two tubes.

Bilstein's mono-tube design results in a cooler-running, more-efficient shock that the company claims can perform from sub-zero weather to 480° F.

Bilstein gas-pressure shocks consist of a telescopic unit filled with nitrogen gas and hydraulic oil. The gas, sealed in a special compartment at about 360 psi, prevents cavitation and foaming by exerting pressure on the oil inside. Eliminating oil foaming and cavitation results in much more consistent damping, especially under extreme conditions. Bilstein has built shocks for competitors in the famous Baja off-road races and Dakar rallies, and this engineering reflects the knowledge gained through decades of racing. Many RV manufacturers also



choose Bilstein shocks as original equipment because of their ride qualities and durability.

Bilstein shocks are available for nearly any RV or tow vehicle, including popular pickups and SUVs, from stock configuration to lifted trucks or custom applications.

For more information, call (800) 556-3479 or visit www.bilsteinus.com. Circle 209 on Reader Service Card.

FORD F-150 RECALL

Ford has expanded a recall of F-150 pickups that may have defective air bags to include nearly 1.2 million vehicles, covering 2004-2006 model years. An electrical short can cause the air bags to deploy unexpectedly, possibly injuring drivers or causing a crash. Contact your dealer for more information.

ALCOHOL-FREE GASOLINE

The U.S. EPA is planning to introduce E15 (15 percent ethanol, 85 percent gasoline) this year and many vehicle owners are concerned about the adverse affects that ethanol alcohol mixed into gasoline has on their vehicles. In older vehicles, components such as gaskets, seals and fuel lines that contain rubber can harden and fail much sooner with ethanol-blended fuels.

Many fuel dealers already sell a blend of 10 percent ethanol (E10), and nationwide, ethanol is blended into about 70 percent of gasoline. In some regions virtually all gasoline is blended as E10. Vehicles built in 2001 or newer are approved by the EPA to use the higher-ethanol E15 fuel, while owners of older vehicles should avoid it. Ethanol has less energy per gallon than gasoline, which results in lower mileage and makes carbureted engines run leaner, which can cause drivability problems.

Vehicle manufacturers are concerned that, even in some late-model vehicles, higher ethanol content can cause premature failures for various fuel and emissions components that were not originally designed for the fuel blend. Ethanol also has a greater tendency to attract moisture from the air, which can cause problems with vehicles that are stored for long periods.

As a result, a new website, www.pure-gas.org — which lists stations selling alcohol-free gasoline — has been launched.

Advice from our **Tech Team**

AUXILIARY FUEL TANK

I have a 2009 Chevy ¾-ton Crew Cab with the 6½-foot box and the Duramax diesel. I want to install a combo toolbox/auxiliary fuel tank with a 10- to 30-gallon capacity. I need for it to be fully integrated with my diesel-fuel system. Can I do this inexpensively? Also, I don't want to have to manually pump the diesel into my main tank.

Chuck Goetz, Marysville, Washington

AUXILIARY FUEL TANK II

I'm considering replacing my stock 2006 Chevy Silverado's 26-gallon tank with a larger tank that Transfer Flow makes. I think a 35- or 36-gallon tank fits into the same space as the smaller original tank.

I am concerned about how well it will integrate with the truck's instruments and electronics. For example, will it fully work with the gas gauge, how many miles the computer says you can drive on a tank of gasoline, and so on, or are there any other problems to consider?

R. Fenton, Fremont, California

The auxiliary fuel tank/toolbox manufacturers are your best source of vehicle- and product-specific technical information. They are continually updating their products to meet today's more complex systems integration requirements. The system integration is important because even a simple thing, such as leaving a fuel cap ajar, can trigger a problem code in the engine. Fuel-tank vapor management is part of the truck's emission system, so you can't skip on the small details if you want to keep your truck running legally and efficiently.

Regarding the first letter, those auxiliary tanks you see with the hose and fuel nozzle are typically portable fuel tanks used to refill construction equipment on a job site. The tank for your truck will include



“The system integration is important because even a simple thing, such as leaving a fuel cap ajar, can trigger a problem code in the engine.”

plumbing to connect directly to your pickup's fuel system either automatically or via a manual changeover valve.

Regarding the second letter, much of the truck's fuel-system information — miles to empty, mpg and so on — takes place in the fuel-delivery system, but fuel level is still an old-fashioned sending unit. The rest of the electronics use programmed information, such as fuel-tank capacity,

and that may need to be reprogrammed so you'll have accurate data readings. The tank manufacturer you have in mind should cover all of these points in its product information or via its local dealer, online or by phone. — Jeff Johnston

ADDING OIL TO BATTERIES

I've read a number of posts about adding mineral oil to batteries. What is your advice, and how much should you add to a standard deep-cycle, 12-volt battery?

Clyde W. Uber, Huachuca City, Arizona

ThemOil Batteries successfully use special oil on top of their electrolyte. A thin layer of mineral oil floating on top inside the battery cell is said to retard bubbles and reduce the amount of water and sulfuric acid that escapes. Normal outgassing results in external corrosion problems around terminals, hold-down brackets and other nearby items. Some RVers have claimed adding oil increased their battery life significantly, reduced the corrosion on



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RV CLINIC

battery posts, cables and holders, and cut water loss, but I don't know anyone who has tested it. RV batteries get bounced around a lot, and the mineral oil might get on the plates, particularly if the electrolyte level gets low. The oil could coat the plates and prevent the chemical reaction between the electrolyte and the plates. Another problem could be that the tube on an electrolyte tester may get contaminated, and sucking oil into the tester may coat the floating balls or readout, and that may affect test readings.

We have no scientific data on the degree this may work or not. A study such as that could take years to complete. Therefore, I'd like to hear from readers who have done this for an extended period and find out what results they had. — **Ken Freund**

SANITIZING FRESHWATER

At a recent seminar on RV maintenance at our local dealership, we were told that they are no longer recommending chlorine to sanitize freshwater systems. Instead, they

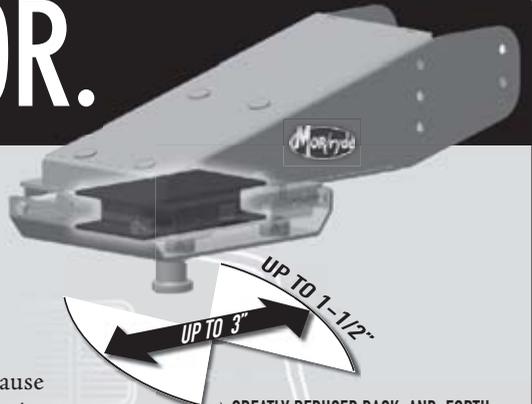
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recommended using hydrogen peroxide. They said it was safe to leave in the system and that you would not have to drain and refill the tank as with chlorine. However, they did joke that you might get some bubbles in your mouth.

Have you heard of this and if so is it safe to leave in the system? How much peroxide would be needed to treat a given amount of water?

Burt L Bork, Painesville, Ohio

This is one of those subjects that will have a long life on blogs, forums and around campfires. Yes, you can use hydrogen peroxide to sanitize your freshwater system. Its main drawback is cost. A bottle of hydrogen peroxide is about 97 percent water already, and you'd need a couple of gallons to make a high enough concentration in your water system to have any cleansing effect. Check the cost of a pint at your local grocery store or pharmacy and do the math to see how much you'd need to spend for each use to disinfect.

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RV CLINIC

If anyone tells you they've stopped using bleach as a disinfectant — it takes about ¼-cup per 15 gallons of freshwater capacity — due to some alleged newly discovered health or mechanical drawback, well, remember that's just one person's opinion. As long as you do the freshwater flush afterwards, and optionally follow up with the baking soda flush to eliminate any bleach taste, then household bleach continues to work fine. — J.J.

MORE ON BATTERIES GO DEAD

I read CJ Johnson's letter "Batteries Go Dead" in the November 2010 issue about the batteries in his 2003 Ford F-350. I have the identical vehicle and there is something all Ford truck owners from that era should watch for.

The glove compartment is quite wide and with sufficient weight from articles inside can hang just far enough that the inside light plunger doesn't get pushed in to turn off the light. Best to check it at night, otherwise it is like trying to watch the light



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go out in a refrigerator. This light can drain the batteries if left on over a weekend.

Paul Cordingley,
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Thanks for writing and sharing your experience. The test I suggested would turn up that problem, but only if it was doing it at the time. This is a perfect example of why we value reader's experience with identical vehicles. — K.F.

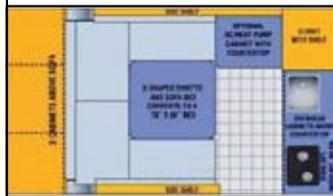
BEFUDDLED BY BLOWOUTS

I have a 2005 Thor Jazz fifth-wheel trailer, and I had two blowouts with Carlisle tires on the unit, causing damage to the fender area. I changed all the tires with new Goodyear ST225/75R15 tires and again had a blowout, which again damaged the fender. Can I upgrade to a 16-inch tire for this trailer or should I go to a Cooper brand and upgrade to an E-rated tire?

I want to take a trip across the states, but I am afraid I will have more blowouts.

Bill Phillips, Houston, Texas

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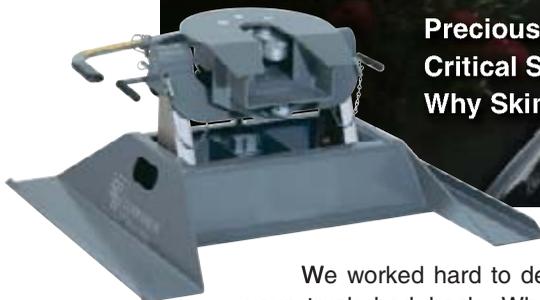
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RV CLINIC

Tires can fail for a number of reasons, and we find that tire failures increase rapidly after about five or six years of age. First, you should determine if you are having the blowout problem because the tires are overloaded (or underinflated). The only way you can do that is to weigh the axles on a truck scale with the trailer fully loaded as you travel. Then consult a load-inflation table to look up the proper pressure; they are on the tire manufacturer's website. If the load is greater than allowable, you'll need to go to a higher-rated tire. We don't make brand endorsements, but go with a quality model.

Tires often blow out because the pressure was too low, either because of a leak or they were set too low to start with. Also, Chinese-made tires historically have terrible failure rates, so avoid these if possible. And to prevent under-inflation, consider adding a tire-pressure monitoring system.

In addition, have your trailer axles checked for alignment. If the alignment is

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out of spec, it can stress the tires almost as badly as if they're overloaded. Finally, have your tires balanced before you hit the road again, as unbalanced tires are likewise at risk of early failure. — K.F.

SAGGING FIFTH-WHEEL SUSPENSION

I own a 29-foot Cardinal fifth-wheel. I bought it 11 years ago; it's been a great trailer. My question is the somewhat-reduced distance from the body of unit to the top of the tires; is this something to be concerned about? I'm sure the weight has sagged the springs. Any thoughts or advice would be nice, as I like to keep the trailer up where it belongs.

Margo Loewen, Via email

If your trailer's suspension has sagged enough that the top of the wheel well is getting too close to the tires for comfort, you should indeed do something about it. Pay a visit to your local RV service center and they can inspect your trailer and, as needed, order a new set of leafsprings

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directly from the axle manufacturer. That should raise the trailer back to its proper ride height.

Have you seen clear evidence of the wheel well contacting the tires? Do you see any scuff or rub marks inside on the top of the wheel well, or perhaps on the tire sidewalls where the wheel-well lip may be contacting the tires? If the contact is taking place more often than when the trailer hits a bump in the road that causes the body to move down on the suspension, it's time to do something before the tires and body are damaged. Even then there should be adequate suspension travel to avoid contact.

Have you weighed your trailer? It seems like 11 years is a short time for the springs to be sagging and worn out — not that it couldn't happen. But overloading will also cause suspension sag. Take the trailer to a scale and check the axle weight against the gross axle weight rating on the trailer's data sticker. If it's overloaded, you may need to lighten your load to avoid a repeat of the suspension damage. — J.J.

RV GRAPHICS

We have a 2008 Skyline Malibu 2411 travel trailer. When I purchased the unit, I was warned that the graphics, in particular the name "Malibu" on the nose of the trailer, would eventually shrink, fade and crack. It did, but at least the graphics on the side and rear still look new. We keep our camper looking good, but the faded, cracked lettering makes it look a bit run-down.

What's the best way to remove the old graphics without scratching the Lamilux gelcoat finish? Also, I am wondering what solvents are safe to use on the fiberglass finishes. Can I remove the old graphics well enough that I could forego the trouble and expense of having to apply new graphics? If I do replace the graphics, are they simply peel-and-stick? What is the secret to keeping graphics looking fresh, besides wash and wax? Since I have not noticed any questions on RV graphics, perhaps it is one of those better left to the pros, but I hope not.

Vince Miller, Knoxville, Tennessee

Most graphics are peel-and-stick, and removal is less tricky than installation. Take pictures and measure the layout carefully before removing anything if you plan to replace it. It's also a good idea to find replacements before removing anything. Check with the RV's manufacturer for availability of replacements. There are a number of aftermarket suppliers, and you can find many of them online.

You can try using a hair blow dryer — warm the graphic and the adhesive film softens — and a thin plastic scraper to remove deteriorated graphics. If you do end up removing the graphics and they leave a sticky film behind, 3M Adhesive Remover from an auto-body supply shop removes the residue effectively without harming the finish, and 3M also sells products to remove graphics. Small graphics aren't too hard to put on, but large ones can be a real handful. I don't recommend it. Body shops, sign painters and local graphics shops can often supply or install graphics. — K.F.



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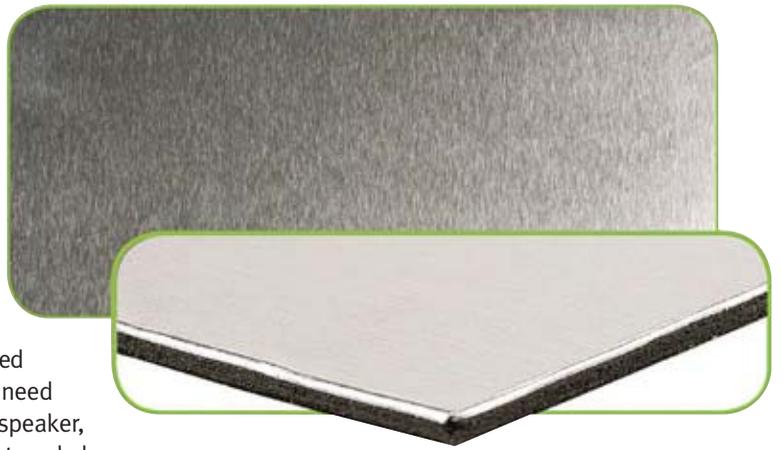
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USED 2006 Keystone LAREDO 26RKS WAS \$23,995 NOW \$17,995 SAVE \$6,000 (888) 568-2177 Burlington, WA STK# FRV9920



USED 2003 Coachmen CATALINA 246RLS WAS \$16,980 NOW \$12,995 SAVE \$3,985 (888) 315-7967 Tucson, AZ STK# TUC13736



USED 2006 Keystone CHALLENGER 34TBH WAS \$34,685 NOW \$24,995 SAVE \$9,690 (888) 315-7967 Tucson, AZ STK# TUC13516



NEW 2010 Dutchmen FREEDOM SPIRIT FSU240 WAS \$26,955 NOW \$17,995 SAVE \$8,960 (888) 348-5909 Avondale, AZ STK# AV08727



NEW 2010 Keystone BULLET 180FBS LIST PRICE \$27,489 NOW \$17,995 SAVE \$9,494 (888) 331-1595 Santa Clarita, CA STK# AMRV20976 VIN# 421281



USED 2003 NuWa HITCHHIKER CHAMPAGNE 35CKQG WAS \$42,855 **NOW \$29,995** SAVE \$12,860 (888) 315-7967 Tucson, AZ STK# TUC13735



USED 2004 Coachmen CHAPARRAL 276RLS WAS \$29,745 **NOW \$17,995** SAVE \$11,750 (888) 315-7967 Tucson, AZ STK# TUC13731



USED 2010 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 26B-DSL **NOW \$17,999** (888) 905-0490 Anthony, TX STK# LC15494A



USED 2007 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 30PRS WAS \$29,874 **NOW \$17,995** SAVE \$11,879 (888) 348-5909 Avondale, AZ STK# AV013841



USED 2004 Ameri-Camp AMERI-CAMP 305DSBS WAS \$22,999 **NOW \$17,999** SAVE \$5,000 (866) 648-5288 St. Augustine, FL STK# JAC38439



NEW 2011 Crossroads ZINGER 27BH WAS \$23,990 **NOW \$18,544** SAVE \$5,446 (866) 673-0250 Statesville, NC STK# STA124118



USED 2010 Komfort TRAILBLAZER T240S WAS \$24,950 **NOW \$18,850** SAVE \$6,100 (888) 850-5575 Wood Village, OR STK# POR36231



USED 2006 Holiday Rambler SAVOY SL 28SL **NOW \$18,962** (888) 641-0925 Kaysville, UT STK# KY36729



NEW 2011 Thor COLEMAN CTE184 LIST PRICE \$26,898 **NOW \$18,995** SAVE \$7,903 (888) 479-3568 Vacaville, CA STK# VAC11628 VIN# 128602



USED 2008 Forest River WILDWOOD 32DSB WAS \$26,999 **NOW \$18,995** SAVE \$8,004 (866) 502-8238 Bath, NY STK# BAT67838



USED 2002 Carriage CAMEO F32RIK3 WAS \$32,500 **NOW \$18,995** SAVE \$13,505 (888) 727-2952 North Little Rock, AR STK# LIT13828



USED 2008 Forest River WILDWOOD 282RLSS WAS \$24,997 **NOW \$18,997** SAVE \$6,000 (888) 463-3995 Fountain, CO STK# KC210708C



NEW 2010 Thor COLEMAN CT225 WAS \$30,706 **NOW \$19,858** SAVE \$10,848 (866) 755-9604 Charleston, SC STK# CHN122969



USED 2004 Terry QUANTUM AX6 305RLDS WAS \$35,895 **NOW \$19,858** SAVE \$16,037 (888) 848-7312 Columbia, SC STK# COL14837



USED 2008 Keystone OUTBACK 29RKS **NOW \$19,858** (888) 696-2165 Savannah, GA STK# SAV15362



USED 2008 Forest River WILDCAT 30LSBS WAS \$32,900 **NOW \$19,878** SAVE \$13,022 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN STK# CH5987



USED 2009 Keystone COUGAR 245RKS
 WAS \$29,900 **NOW \$19,899** SAVE
 \$10,001 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN
 STK# CH6338



USED 2005 Fleet-wood PROWLER REGAL 290FQSG
 WAS \$35,858 **NOW \$19,985** SAVE
 \$15,873 (866) 755-9604 Charleston, SC
 STK# CHN125112



NEW 2011 Jayco JAY FEATHER SPORT 199 WAS \$25,405 **NOW \$19,987** SAVE
 \$5,418 (888) 896-2801 Albuquerque, NM
 STK# ARV15281



USED 2009 Thor DUTCHMEN 28B WAS \$44,838
NOW \$19,989 SAVE \$24,849 (888) 672-5049 Syra-
 cuse, NY STK# SYU67213



USED 2007 Crossroads RV ZINGER CROSSFIRE 24 WAS \$25,690 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE \$5,695 (866) 610-5049
 Akron, OH STK# SRV18082



NEW 2010 Dutchmen AEROLITE 721FBS
 LIST PRICE \$25,834 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE
 \$5,839 (888) 479-3568 Vacaville, CA STK#
 VAC11156 VIN# 126274



USED 2008 Dutchmen FOUR WINDS 27D-DSL
 WAS \$26,320 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE \$6,325
 (888) 315-7967 Tucson, AZ STK# TUC13730



USED 2007 Keystone LAREDO 25RK WAS
 \$28,140 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE \$8,145 (888) 542-
 3819 Mesa, AZ STK#
 MES11609



NEW 2010 Thor COLEMAN CT280 WAS
 \$28,457 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE \$8,462
 (888) 474-1330 Bartow, FL STK# DCW7581



USED 2004 KZ VISION ULTRA WAS
 \$28,690 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE \$8,695
 (866) 610-5049 Akron, OH STK# SRV18138



USED 2007 Skyline ALJO 3150 WAS
 \$28,788 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE \$8,793
 (888) 348-5909 Avondale, AZ STK#
 AV014449



USED 2007 Cruiser RV LAND ROAMER 295RL
 WAS \$29,995 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE \$10,000
 (888) 682-3036 Church-
 ville, NY STK# CHU69751



USED 2008 Keystone COPPER CANYON 252 WAS \$31,999 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE
 \$12,004 (866) 502-8238 Bath, NY STK#
 BAT66729



NEW 2010 Starcraft HOMESTEAD 314RE
 WAS \$34,110 **NOW \$19,995** SAVE
 \$14,115 (877) 450-7415 Island Lake, IL
 STK# CRV5253



USED 2004 NuWa HITCHHIKER II LS 30.5RLBG **NOW \$19,995** (888) 844-
 1758 New Braunfels, TX STK# SW9635A



USED 2006 Crossroads CRUISER 25RS
NOW \$19,995 (888) 815-7523 Wood-
 stock, GA STK# WDS16129



USED 2008 Forest River SURVEYOR SV301 WAS \$24,997 **NOW \$19,997**
 SAVE \$5,000 (888) 463-3995 Fountain, CO
 STK# KC210605B



NEW 2010 Keystone SPRINGDALE 283FWBSSR WAS \$28,941 **NOW \$19,999** SAVE \$8,942 (888) 457-4801 Colfax, NC STK# CFX3018



USED 1999 King Of The Road GRAND MARQUIS 35CK WAS \$33,995 **NOW \$20,858** SAVE \$13,137 (888) 254-9145 Meridian, ID STK# MER10665B



USED 2003 Keystone MONTANA 2955RL **NOW \$20,995** (888) 815-7523 Woodstock, GA STK# WDS15669



USED 2007 Gulf Stream CANYON TRAIL 30FBHS WAS \$31,900 **NOW \$20,871** SAVE \$11,029 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN STK# CH5671



NEW 2010 CrossRoads SUNSET TRAIL 28RK WAS \$33,973 **NOW \$20,995** SAVE \$12,978 (866) 754-7302 Greenwood, IN STK# GRW324818



USED 2007 Keystone COPPER CANYON 294DBS WAS \$35,995 **NOW \$21,190** SAVE \$14,805 (866)775-0682 Roanoke, VA STK# ROA12691



NEW 2011 Thor COLEMAN CTS260BH WAS \$30,175 **NOW \$21,751** SAVE \$8,424 (888) 454-1707 Kissimmee, FL STK# KS8063



USED 2008 Holiday Rambler SAVOY LX 31BHD WAS \$31,900 **NOW \$21,862** SAVE \$10,038 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN STK# CH6003



USED 2003 NuWa CHAMPAGNE 32 WAS \$27,932 **NOW \$21,977** SAVE \$5,955 (888) 692-9016 Myrtle Beach, SC STK# MB124239



USED 2006 Jayco EAGLE 281RLS WAS \$26,995 **NOW \$21,985** SAVE \$5,010 (888) 848-7312 Columbia, SC STK# COL124606



NEW 2010 Keystone HORNET 32BHBS WAS \$29,172 **NOW \$21,995** SAVE \$7,177 (888) 474-1330 Bartow, FL STK# DCW7492



NEW 2011 Keystone PASSPORT 3050BH WAS \$31,514 **NOW \$21,995** SAVE \$9,519 (866) 610-5049 Akron, OH STK# SRV17957



USED 2007 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 30FKD WAS \$34,995 **NOW \$21,995** SAVE \$13,000 (888) 682-3036 Churchville, NY STK# CHU67131



NEW 2011 Dutchmen COLORADO 290BH WAS \$36,464 **NOW \$21,995** SAVE \$14,469 (866) 610-5049 Akron, OH STK# SRV17678



USED 2006 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 319BHS **NOW \$21,998** (888) 815-7523 Woodstock, GA STK# WDS15678



NEW 2011 Crossroads SLINGSHOT 29BH WAS \$36,473 **NOW \$22,495** SAVE \$13,978 (877) 450-7415 Island Lake, IL STK# CRV5628



USED 2004 Keystone MONTANA 297RKS WAS \$32,650 **NOW \$22,500** SAVE \$10,150 (888) 860-8684 Strafford, MO STK# STR10699B



USED 2008 Ameri-Camp SUMMIT RIDGE 30RK **NOW \$22,960** (888) 641-0925 Kaysville, UT STK# KY35592



NEW 2011 Crossroads SLINGSHOT 24RL WAS \$29,787 **NOW \$22,988** SAVE \$6,799 (888) 475-5918 Robertsdale, AL STK# RD37867



USED 2010 Evergreen EVER-LITE 31BHS WAS \$28,995 **NOW \$22,995** SAVE \$6,000 (888) 682-3036 Churchville, NY STK# CHU68107



NEW 2011 Forest River WILDWOOD 26RKS WAS \$29,181 **NOW \$22,995** SAVE \$6,186 (888) 819-7952 Longmont, CO STK# KC110768



NEW 2011 Keystone SPRINTER 250RBS WAS \$32,995 **NOW \$22,995** SAVE \$10,000 (888) 450-7060 Dothan, AL STK# DOT36965



NEW 2011 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 305BHDS WAS \$34,521 **NOW \$22,995** SAVE \$11,526 (877) 450-7415 Island Lake, IL STK# CRV5568



USED 2006 Forest River SANDPIPER 325BHD WAS \$39,995 **NOW \$22,995** SAVE \$17,000 (888) 682-3036 Churchville, NY STK# CHU67136



USED 2004 Gulf Stream PRAIRIE SCHOONER 34FBR **NOW \$22,995** (888) 815-7523 Woodstock, GA STK# WDS15533



USED 2009 Arctic Fox ARCTIC FOX 26J **NOW \$23,500** (888) 905-0490 Anthony, TX STK# LC15253A



NEW 2011 Keystone SPRINGDALE 253FWRLS WAS \$29,970 **NOW \$23,788** SAVE \$6,182 (888) 457-4801 Colfax, NC STK# CFX3228



USED 2006 Heartland BIG HORN 3055RL WAS \$44,900 **NOW \$23,896** SAVE \$21,004 (866) 289-0113 Chattanooga, TN STK# CH5992



USED 2002 Peterson EXCEL 35SKO **NOW \$23,900** (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK# ABRV36257



USED 2007 Keystone COUGAR 291RLS **NOW \$23,985** (888) 696-2165 Savannah, GA STK# SAV15371



NEW 2011 Keystone OUTBACK 270BH WAS \$30,246 **NOW \$23,995** SAVE \$6,251 (888) 475-5918 Robertsdale, AL STK# RD36726



NEW 2011 Keystone BULLET 288RLS WAS \$34,820 **NOW \$23,995** SAVE \$10,825 (877) 450-7415 Island Lake, IL STK# CRV5529



NEW 2010 Dutchmen DENALI 260RKX WAS \$40,401 **NOW \$23,995** SAVE \$16,406 (888) 542-3819 Mesa, AZ STK# MES9413



USED 2007 Keystone SPINTER 350BHS
NOW \$23,995 (888) 801-3226 Byron, GA
STK# MAC15739



USED 2008 Recreation By Design LUXURY BY DESIGN 32FB **NOW \$23,995**
(888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KAT9891



USED 2009 Coachmen CHAPARRAL 267RLS **WAS \$35,602 NOW \$24,877** **SAVE \$10,725** (888) 860-8684
Strafford, MO STK# STR13228A



USED 2004 Travel Supreme RIVER CANYON 36RL **WAS \$45,000 NOW \$24,500**
SAVE \$20,500 (888) 860-8684 Strafford, MO
STK# STR13140A



USED 2005 Keystone SPINTER 307
WAS \$34,220 NOW \$24,858 **SAVE \$9,362** (888) 254-9145 Meridian, ID
STK# MER9497D



USED 2008 Sunnybrook BROOKSIDE 310FWMS
NOW \$24,900 (888) 844-1758 New Braunfels, TX
STK# SW9437A



NEW 2011 Thor COLEMAN CTU225KS
LIST PRICE \$35,519 NOW \$24,995 **SAVE \$10,524** (888) 331-1595 Santa Clarita, CA
STK# AMRV21115 VIN# 127882



USED 2007 Keystone MONTANA 307RKD **NOW \$24,995** (888) 617-5406
Oakwood, GA STK# ORV15472



USED 2006 Potomac POTOMAC 5231RLS
WAS \$49,995 NOW \$25,789 **SAVE \$24,206** (866) 775-0682 Roanoke, VA
STK# ROA11873



USED 2003 K-Z NEW VISION 3450 **NOW \$25,900** (888) 844-1758 New Braunfels, TX
STK# SWC9599



USED 2007 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 31RLD **WAS \$35,895 NOW \$25,985**
SAVE \$9,910 (866) 755-9604 Charleston, SC
STK# CHN125678



USED 2006 Keystone MONTANA 2950RK **WAS \$39,784 NOW \$25,995**
SAVE \$13,789 (888) 242-0293 Madison, WI
STK# MAD15074



USED 2003 Coachmen SOMERSET DREAM CATCHER 370RLS **NOW \$25,995** (888) 801-3226 Byron, GA
STK# MAC15809



USED 2007 Frontier ASPEN F3200 **NOW \$25,995** (888) 801-3226 Byron, GA
STK# MAC15951



USED 2009 Jayco EAGLE 256RKS **WAS \$33,076 NOW \$25,998**
SAVE \$7,078 (888) 484-3906 Spartanburg, SC
STK# GR125828



USED 2006 Recreation By Design LUXURY 36FB **NOW \$26,875** (888) 641-0925
Kaysville, UT STK# KY36810



USED 2011 Coachmen FREEDOM EXPRESS 29RLDS NOW \$26,875 (888) 905-0490 Anthony, TX STK# LC15467A



USED 2007 Keystone SYDNEY OUTBACK 31KFW WAS \$36,958 NOW \$26,995 SAVE \$9,963 (888) 727-2952 North Little Rock, AR STK# LIT14282



USED 2007 K-Z SPORTSTER 37PX2 WAS \$40,690 NOW \$26,995 SAVE \$13,695 (866) 610-5049 Akron, OH STK# SRV18004



USED 2004 Terry QUANTUM AX6 34RLTS NOW \$27,458 (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK# ABRV36341



USED 2010 Dutchmen FREEDOM SPIRIT 259REX NOW \$27,875 (888) 905-0490 Anthony, TX STK# LC14921A



USED 2007 Fleetwood ADVANTAGE 365BSQS NOW \$27,987 (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK# ABRV36989



USED 2006 Sunnybrook TITAN 28RKFS WAS \$40,513 NOW \$27,988 SAVE \$12,525 (888) 348-5909 Avondale, AZ STK# AV014448



USED 2008 Holiday Rambler ALUMASCAPE 33CKT WAS \$49,999 NOW \$27,995 SAVE \$22,004 (866) 648-5288 St. Augustine, FL STK# JAC36028



USED 2004 NuWa HITCHHIKER 33RL WAS \$34,997 NOW \$27,997 SAVE \$7,000 (888) 463-3995 Fountain, CO STK# KC211139B



USED 2006 Glendale TITANIUM 39QS 4/ SLIDES NOW \$27,998 (888) 801-3226 Byron, GA STK# MAC14847



NEW 2010 Jayco EAGLE SUPER LITE 255RKS WAS \$39,062 NOW \$28,827 SAVE \$10,235 (888) 896-2801 Albuquerque, NM STK# ARV14920



NEW 2010 Jayco EAGLE SUPER LITE 255RKS WAS \$37,708 NOW \$28,900 SAVE \$8,808 (888) 850-5575 Wood Village, OR STK# POR34908



NEW 2011 Dutchmen DENALI 259RLX WAS \$37,271 NOW \$28,995 SAVE \$8,276 (888) 819-7952 Longmont, CO STK# KC110783



NEW 2011 Dutchmen DENALI 312BH WAS \$37,995 NOW \$28,995 SAVE \$9,000 (888) 450-7060 Dothan, AL STK# DOT37342



NEW 2010 Keystone ENERGY 240LFB WAS \$35,745 NOW \$28,999 SAVE \$6,746 (888) 859-6653 Hillsboro, OR STK# HIL35308



NEW 2011 Keystone LAREDO 265RL WAS \$38,873 NOW \$28,999 SAVE \$9,874 (888) 471-3546 Chichester, NH STK# GRV506667



NEW 2011 Keystone OUTBACK 282FE WAS \$38,349 NOW \$29,203 SAVE \$9,146 (866) 775-0682 Roanoke, VA STK# ROA15200



USED 2006 Northwood ARCTIC FOX 32.5S WAS \$36,950 **NOW \$29,950** SAVE \$7,000 (888) 850-5575 Wood Village, OR STK# POR36802



USED 2007 Keystone MONTANA 2980 FW WAS \$37,690 **NOW \$29,976** SAVE \$7,714 (888) 386-5187 Houghton Lake, MI STK# HL5563A



USED 2006 Keystone MONTANA M3650RK WAS \$37,506 **NOW \$29,995** SAVE \$7,511 (888) 625-5187 Ft. Myers, FL STK# FTM1087E



USED 2007 Forest River CARDINAL 36 WAS \$36,995 **NOW \$29,995** SAVE \$7,000 (888) 474-1330 Bartow, FL STK# DCW7585C



USED 2008 Keystone MONTANA MOUNTAINEER 285RLD WAS \$36,995 **NOW \$29,995** SAVE \$7,000 (888) 902-8565 Tallahassee, FL STK# TAL38289



USED 2009 Jayco EAGLE 345BHS WAS \$38,788 **NOW \$29,995** SAVE \$8,793 (888) 348-5909 Avondale, AZ STK# AVO14450



USED 2007 Gulf Stream SEDONA 34FBRW WAS \$39,995 **NOW \$29,995** SAVE \$10,000 (888) 450-7060 Dothan, AL STK# DOT38661



USED 2006 Keystone RAPTOR 3712 WAS \$41,843 **NOW \$29,995** SAVE \$11,848 (888) 625-5187 Ft. Myers, FL STK# FTM13536A



USED 2008 Forest River SANDPIPER 305RLW **NOW \$29,995** (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KAT9876



USED 2006 NuWa HITCHHIKER II LKTG 29.5 **NOW \$29,995** (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KAT9878



USED 2009 Dutchmen DENALI 259REX **NOW \$29,995** (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KAT9406A



USED 2008 Coachmen CHAPARRAL 299TSB **NOW \$30,495** (888) 696-2165 Savannah, GA STK# SAV15464



USED 2006 Dutchmen GRAND JUNCTION 39RL WAS \$46,995 **NOW \$31,995** SAVE \$15,000 (866) 502-8238 Bath, NY STK# BAT68711



NEW 2011 Keystone SYDNEY 321FRL WAS \$41,365 **NOW \$31,999** SAVE \$9,366 (877) 554-3516 Lakewood, NJ STK# LAK8194



USED 2007 McKenzie DUNE CHASER 38SKS **NOW \$32,487** (888) 614-5201 Draper, UT STK# ABRV36981



USED 2006 Keystone EVEREST 343L WAS \$67,500 **NOW \$32,540** SAVE \$34,960 (866) 775-0682 Roanoke, VA STK# ROA13415



NEW 2011 Keystone SPRINTER 314FWRLS WAS \$41,995 **NOW \$32,995** SAVE \$9,000 (888) 902-8565 Tallahassee, FL STK# TAL37384



NEW 2011 Forest River SANDSTORM 2935SLR WAS \$45,302 **NOW \$32,995** SAVE \$12,307 (888) 819-7952 Longmont, CO STK# KC110767



USED 2008 Dutchmen MONTE VISTA 35RB WAS \$43,690 **NOW \$33,595** SAVE \$10,095 (888) 386-5187 Houghton Lake, MI STK# HL5759



USED 2006 Keystone EVEREST 343 WAS \$63,250 **NOW \$33,869** SAVE \$29,381 (866)775-0682 Roanoke, VA STK# ROA13378



NEW 2011 Jayco EAGLE 320RLDS WAS \$46,205 **NOW \$33,958** SAVE \$12,247 (888) 896-2801 Albuquerque, NM STK# ARV15296



NEW 2011 Keystone AVALANCHE 290RL WAS \$54,633 **NOW \$33,995** SAVE \$20,638 (866) 610-5049 Akron, OH STK# SRV17524



USED 2008 Forest River SILVERBACK 35L4QB **NOW \$34,595** (888) 668-6715 Katy, TX STK# KAT9430A



USED 2007 Heartland LANDMARK SHENANDOAH WAS \$49,888 **NOW \$34,988** SAVE \$14,900 (888) 348-5909 Avondale, AZ STK# AVO13837



USED 2007 Fleetwood REGAL 325RKTS WAS \$44,995 **NOW \$34,995** SAVE \$10,000 (888) 454-1707 Kissimmee, FL STK# KS7995A



NEW 2011 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 285RLD WAS \$45,527 **NOW \$34,995** SAVE \$10,532 (888) 242-0293 Madison, WI STK# MAD14582



USED 2008 K-Z SPORTSMAN 38P WAS \$54,995 **NOW \$34,995** SAVE \$20,000 (888) 727-2952 North Little Rock, AR STK# LIT14477



USED 2009 Forest River SANDSTORM 39SASP WAS \$59,855 **NOW \$34,995** SAVE \$24,860 (888) 339-8393 Las Vegas, NV STK# LVNC1766



USED 2007 McKenzie LAKOTA ESTATE 36RLQ **NOW \$34,995** (888) 617-5406 Oakwood, GA STK# ORV15673



USED 2007 Gulf Stream PRAIRIE SCHOONER 34FLR WAS \$44,997 **NOW \$34,997** SAVE \$10,000 (888) 463-3995 Fountain, CO STK# KC211024B



NEW 2011 Dutchmen COLORADO 310RG-FW LIST PRICE \$50,549 **NOW \$35,599** SAVE \$14,950 (888) 479-3568 Vacaville, CA STK# VAC12209 VIN# 626313



USED 2010 Keystone COUGAR 326MKS WAS \$44,554 **NOW \$35,999** SAVE \$8,555 (877) 554-3516 Lakewood, NJ STK# LAK8486



NEW 2011 Dutchmen COLORADO 310RG-FW LIST PRICE \$50,886 **NOW \$36,091** SAVE \$14,795 (888) 480-3175 Roseville, CA STK# SAC11781 VIN# 626245



USED 2006 Holiday Rambler PRESIDENTIAL 30SCD WAS \$46,997 **NOW \$36,997** SAVE \$10,000 (888) 463-3995 Fountain, CO STK# KC211242B



NEW 2011 Keystone AVALANCHE 290RL WAS \$55,405 **NOW \$36,999** SAVE \$18,406 (877) 554-3516 Lakewood, NJ STK# LAK8263



USED 2007 Keystone MONTANA 3400 WAS \$47,995 **NOW \$38,858** SAVE \$9,137 (888) 254-9145 Meridian, ID STK# MER10905A



NEW 2011 Dutchmen COLORADO 310RG-FW WAS \$48,115 **NOW \$37,995** SAVE \$10,120 (888) 819-7952 Longmont, CO STK# KC111045



USED 2008 Heartland BIG HORN 3055RL **NOW \$37,995** (888) 696-2165 Savannah, GA STK# SAV15628



USED 2007 Alfa SEE YA! 35RLIK 314 WAS \$62,888 **NOW \$38,995** SAVE \$23,893 (888) 339-8393 Las Vegas, NV STK# LVN36462A



USED 2010 Keystone RAPTOR 300MP WAS \$49,995 **NOW \$39,858** SAVE \$10,137 (888) 254-9145 Meridian, ID STK# MER11470A



NEW 2011 Keystone AVALANCHE 335RB WAS \$59,627 **NOW \$39,995** SAVE \$19,632 (866) 754-7302 Greenwood, IN STK# GRW324862



USED 2010 Heartland BIGHORN 3400RL WAS \$56,790 **NOW \$42,941** SAVE \$13,849 (888) 896-2801 Albuquerque, NM STK# ARV15095A



NEW 2011 Crossroads KINGSTON 30SB WAS \$54,841 **NOW \$42,988** SAVE \$11,853 (866) 820-0335 Council Bluffs, IA STK# CBI11545



USED 2009 Keystone EVEREST 348R WAS \$59,895 **NOW \$44,995** SAVE \$14,900 (888) 692-9016 Myrtle Beach, SC STK# MB124884



NEW 2010 Dutchmen GRAND JUNCTION 350RE WAS \$71,301 **NOW \$44,995** SAVE \$26,306 (866) 754-7302 Greenwood, IN STK# GRW325291



NEW 2010 Keystone MONTANA 3400RL WAS \$73,522 **NOW \$45,900** SAVE \$27,622 (866) 775-0682 Roanoke, VA STK# ROA8261



USED 2009 Heartland BIG HORN 3600RE WAS \$62,187 **NOW \$45,995** SAVE \$16,192 (877) 450-7415 Island Lake, IL STK# CRV5281A



NEW 2010 Forest River CEDAR CREEK 36RL WAS \$67,344 **NOW \$45,995** SAVE \$21,349 (888) 903-6787 Harrisburg, PA STK# HAR62870



NEW 2011 Keystone AVALANCHE 340TG WAS \$59,995 **NOW \$46,995** SAVE \$13,000 (888) 450-7060 Dothan, AL STK# DOT39446



NEW 2011 Keystone MONTANA 3150RL
 WAS \$62,775 **NOW \$47,995** SAVE
 \$14,780 (888) 692-9016 Myrtle Beach, SC
 STK# MB123248



**NEW 2010 Dutchmen
 GRAND JUNCTION
 350RE** WAS \$73,116
NOW \$47,995 SAVE
 \$25,121 (888) 542-
 3819 Mesa, AZ STK#
 MES14324



NEW 2011 Crossroads SEVILLE 35RL
 WAS \$70,759 **NOW \$49,888** SAVE
 \$20,871 (866) 820-0335 Council Bluffs, IA
 STK# CBI9980



USED 2009 Coachmen WYOMING 364SIQS WAS
 \$64,995 **NOW \$49,895** SAVE \$15,100 (888) 903-
 6787 Harrisburg, PA STK# HAR65120



**NEW 2010 Keystone MOUNTAINEER
 345DBQ** LIST PRICE \$63,967 **NOW**
\$49,967 SAVE \$14,000 (888) 897-0901
 Bakersfield, CA STK# SLV22211 VIN#
 731199



NEW 2011 Keystone ALPINE 3640RL
 WAS \$70,744 **NOW \$49,980** SAVE
 \$20,764 (888) 896-2801 Albuquerque, NM
 STK# ARV15156



**USED 2009 Keystone
 MONTANA 2980 RL**
 WAS \$63,840 **NOW**
\$49,995 SAVE \$13,845
 (866) 755-9604 Charle-
 s- ton, SC STK# CHN124882



**USED 2009 Keystone
 MONTANA 3400RL**
 WAS \$69,995 **NOW**
\$49,995 SAVE \$20,000
 (888) 454-1707 Kissim-
 mee, FL STK# KS7278BB



NEW 2011 Crossroads SEVILLE 35CK
 WAS \$71,392 **NOW \$49,995** SAVE
 \$21,397 (866) 820-0335 Council Bluffs, IA
 STK# CBI9979



NEW 2011 Keystone MONTANA 3400RL
 WAS \$72,958 **NOW \$49,995** SAVE
 \$22,963 (888) 242-0293 Madison, WI
 STK# MAD14587



NEW 2010 Keystone ALPINE 3640RL
 WAS \$81,121 **NOW \$49,995** SAVE
 \$31,126 (866) 754-7302 Greenwood, IN
 STK# GRW324754



**NEW 2010 Dutch-
 men GRAND JUNCTION
 345RE** WAS \$83,043
NOW \$49,995 SAVE
 \$33,048 (866) 755-9604
 Charleston, SC STK#
 CHN123200



NEW 2011 Keystone MONTANA 3465SA
 WAS \$89,375 **NOW \$53,995** SAVE
 \$35,380 (866) 755-9604 Charleston, SC
 STK# CHN123254



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U	2008 Thor SUMMIT 25BH	FRV9871	\$15,150	\$12,995	(888) 568-2177
U	2004 R-Vision TRAIL-LITE THUMPER TH26	KC511119B	\$13,999	\$12,999	(866) 415-9726
U	2006 Jayco JAY FLIGHT 29BHS	KC110746B	\$16,900	\$13,995	(888) 819-7952
N	2011 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 196RD	RD37659	\$18,318	\$16,018	(888) 475-5918
U	2006 Forest River SURVEYOR SV291	KC110604B	\$17,995	\$16,995	(888) 819-7952
N	2011 Thor COLEMAN CT286BHGS	COL15150	\$19,627	\$17,286	(888) 848-7312
U	2005 Thor JAZZ 2780BH	AMRV21871	\$21,530	\$17,795	(888) 331-1595
U	2008 Forest River CHEROKEE 29B	KC510748B	\$19,600	\$18,599	(866) 415-9726
N	2011 Thor COLEMAN CTE184	DOT37804	\$20,925	\$18,616	(888) 450-7060
U	2007 Forest River SUNSET CREEK 298BH	SYU65897	\$22,788	\$18,778	(888) 672-5049
U	2007 Keystone OUTBACK 28KRS	FRV9638	\$21,995	\$18,995	(888) 568-2177
U	2010 Keystone BULLET 180FBS	KC210845B	\$20,997	\$18,997	(888) 463-3995
U	2007 Sunnybrook SUNSET CREEK 267RL	GR125829	\$22,744	\$19,888	(888) 484-3906
U	2010 Cruiser RV FUNFINDER XTRA X215WSK	CB113012	\$23,655	\$19,889	(866) 820-0335
U	2006 Fleetwood WILDERNESS 320DBHS	CFX3523	\$22,988	\$19,988	(888) 457-4801
U	2006 Keystone LAREDO 31RL	KSC2113	\$23,995	\$19,999	(888) 454-1707
N	2011 Thor COLEMAN CTS260BH	RD37183	\$24,448	\$21,751	(888) 475-5918
U	2009 Dutchmen AEROLITE 29RLK-SL	CFX3565	\$23,988	\$21,899	(888) 457-4801
N	2011 Crossroads ZINGER 28BHS	STA124119	\$23,990	\$21,930	(866) 673-0250
N	2011 Keystone SPRINTER SELECT 28RL	STA125356	\$26,618	\$23,885	(866) 673-0250
N	2010 Starcraft AUTUMN RIDGE 309BHU	HAR65279	\$26,835	\$23,897	(888) 903-6787
N	2011 Dutchmen AEROLITE 288RLSS	KS8133	\$27,198	\$24,444	(888) 454-1707
N	2011 Thor COLEMAN CTU280BH	SAC11373	\$28,997	\$24,676	(888) 480-3175
U	2007 Keystone OUTBACK 31RQS	GR125891	\$28,988	\$24,995	(888) 484-3906
U	2009 Dutchmen DENALI 270RL-DSL	GR125864	\$30,394	\$24,995	(888) 484-3906
N	2011 Dutchmen DUTCHMEN 305BHDS	DCW7817	\$30,474	\$24,995	(888) 474-1330
N	2011 Thor COLEMAN CTU280BH	STA124217	\$28,997	\$25,995	(866) 673-0250
N	2011 Starcraft TRAVEL STAR 299BHS	TAL37981	\$30,017	\$25,995	(888) 902-8565
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N	2011 Keystone COUGAR 26BHS	SLV22112	\$35,378	\$29,995	(888) 897-0901
N	2011 Keystone LAREDO 293RK	SAC11404	\$35,824	\$33,101	(888) 480-3175
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U	2003 Starcraft STARCRAFT 26SBS	KC210621B	\$15,997	\$12,997	(888) 463-3995
U	2009 Forest River CHEROKEE GREY WOLF 29V	CB113141	\$22,650	\$14,995	(866) 820-0335
N	2011 Thor COLEMAN CTE184	SRV17974	\$22,239	\$15,995	(866) 610-5049
U	2005 Fleetwood PROWLER REGAL 290FQSG	CHN125112	\$35,858	\$19,985	(866) 755-9604
N	2011 Jayco JAY FLIGHT 24RKS	LC15291	\$24,283	\$20,995	(888) 905-0490

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U	2006 Sunny Brook SUNNY BROOK 30RKFS	HL5380A	\$32,690	\$26,988	(888) 386-5187
U	2005 Forest River CARDINAL 34	FRV9737	\$32,995	\$28,995	(888) 568-2177
N	2011 Keystone SPRINGDALE 253FWRLS	SLV20903	\$34,928	\$28,995	(888) 897-0901
U	2009 Keystone OUTBACK SYDNEY 31KFW	TAL38657	\$34,995	\$28,995	(888) 902-8565
U	2007 Sunny Brook BRISTOL BAY 3150RL	HL5320A	\$33,690	\$29,988	(888) 386-5187
U	2007 Keystone MONTANA 2955	KC5P10770	\$34,995	\$29,995	(866) 415-9726
N	2011 Keystone COUGAR 244RLS	MES16172	\$36,336	\$29,995	(888) 542-3819
N	2011 Thor COLEMAN CTF259RE	STA124467	\$33,888	\$30,149	(866) 673-0250
N	2011 Dutchmen COLORADO 260RL-FW	CFX3256	\$35,782	\$31,897	(888) 457-4801
U	2006 Keystone MONTANA 3400RL	LAK8482	\$35,766	\$31,999	(877) 554-3516
U	2005 Recreation LUXURY BY DESIGN 42	FTM1129C	\$35,900	\$33,900	(888) 625-5187
U	2009 Jayco EAGLE 345 BHS	MER9468A	\$39,995	\$34,858	(888) 254-9145
U	2006 Keystone RAPTOR 3712-TS	LIT14932	\$39,871	\$34,995	(888) 727-2952
N	2011 Keystone SPRINTER 314FWRLS	KS7994	\$42,286	\$34,999	(888) 454-1707
N	2011 Thor COLEMAN CTF325RL	CFX3386	\$40,079	\$35,657	(888) 457-4801
N	2011 Thor COLEMAN CTF325RL	VAC608562	\$43,275	\$35,795	(888) 479-3568
U	2010 Keystone MOUNTAINEER 285RLD	GRV507441	\$43,955	\$35,988	(888) 471-3546
N	2011 Keystone SPRINTER 248FWRBS	SLV21142	\$40,275	\$36,152	(888) 897-0901
N	2011 Keystone LAREDO 266RL	VAC11659	\$38,197	\$36,887	(888) 479-3568
N	2011 Keystone LAREDO 310RE	TAL36571	\$44,995	\$36,995	(888) 902-8565
U	2008 Crossroads KINGSTON RF33RK	FTM1138C	\$41,900	\$37,900	(888) 625-5187
N	2011 Keystone COUGAR 325SRX	LAK8133	\$44,132	\$37,999	(877) 554-3516
N	2011 Keystone COUGAR 327RES	HAR68636	\$48,510	\$39,897	(888) 903-6787
U	2008 Forest River CEDAR CREEK 34RLSA	HIL37241	\$44,950	\$39,950	(888) 859-6653
N	2011 Starcraft LEXION S-LITE 295RLS	SAC12168	\$43,392	\$41,155	(888) 480-3175
U	2008 NuWa HITCHHIKER 348SB	HIL35687	\$49,950	\$41,950	(888) 859-6653
N	2011 Keystone SYDNEY 325FRE	RD36822	\$44,995	\$42,995	(888) 475-5918
U	2009 Heartland BIGHORN 3385RL	MER12584A	\$49,995	\$44,858	(888) 254-9145
U	2009 Heartland LANDMARK CAPE COD	BAT68268	\$54,999	\$46,995	(866) 502-8238
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U	2009 Keystone RAPTOR 3602RL	COL15731	\$64,985	\$59,858	(888) 848-7312
N	2011 Keystone MONTANA 3455SA	SLV20889	\$83,302	\$77,673	(888) 897-0901
N	2011 Dutchmen COLORADO 260RL-FW	KC110788	\$38,443	\$27,995	(888) 819-7952
U	2006 Forest River CEDAR CREEK 362 BTS	HIL36768	\$39,950	\$32,950	(888) 859-6653
N	2011 Keystone SPRINTER 262FWRET	POR36005	\$36,782	\$34,650	(888) 850-5575
N	2010 Jayco EAGLE 351RLSA	KC510423	\$55,038	\$37,995	(866) 415-9726
N	2011 Keystone MONTANA 2955RL	FRV9030	\$55,236	\$42,995	(888) 568-2177
N	2011 Dutchmen GRAND JUNCTION 352MS	ARV15275	\$77,688	\$54,946	(888) 896-2801
N	2011 Keystone MONTANA 3455SA	COL15575	\$73,415	\$62,985	(888) 848-7312

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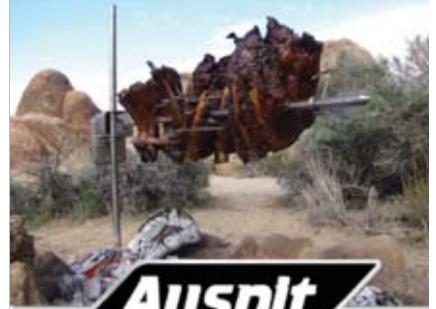
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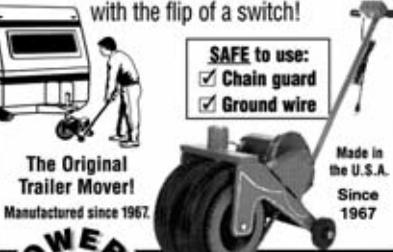
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AMERICA'S OUTBACK

by Bill Graves

OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE

"FENCES AND ROADS APPEARED ALMOST OVERNIGHT. SIGNS WENT UP SAYING, 'SMALL LEAKS SINK GREAT SHIPS.'"

John Rice Irwin remembers it well: "A paper was pinned on our screen door. My mother took it off and read it to my daddy. It said we had 16 days to move." The year was 1942; our country was 11 months into World War II. The paper was an order from the U.S. government.

In the Black Oak Ridge Valley here in northeastern Tennessee a thousand families got the same notice that fall. "We were all scrambling to find a new place to live and get moved into it by Thanksgiving," John said. "But it was 'an-ox-in-the-ditch situation.' There were no trucks available. We had a 325-acre farm with out-buildings and a graining crib. We ended up on 110 acres. The government gave no help except to move the graves in the county to a new cemetery. They did do that."

For many here, it was the second time in a decade they had been forced from their homes. But then it was the TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) doing the evicting. And they could see the need for it and were given time to get organized. The TVA was going to build dams and reservoirs along Tennessee River that would bring low-cost electric power, recreational lakes and jobs to the area.

But this was not like that. They were told nothing except "don't ask." All they knew was what they saw with their own eyes: armed guards in Army khakis, construction workers streaming in by the thousands who were working around the clock. Fences and roads appeared almost overnight. Signs went up saying, "Small leaks sink great ships."

The town of Oak Ridge was quickly assembled with trailers, wood-frame dormitories and hundreds of prefab houses. Schools were built, as was a movie theater, a swimming pool and a shopping center.

And then came the buses full of workers, recruited from all across the country, usually from colleges. Oak Ridge, with a tall fence around it, quickly became the fifth-largest city



Today, experts at the American Museum of Science & Energy explain the Manhattan Project and the construction of this secret city. John Irwin recalls what it was like living in Oak Ridge during the war.



in the state, but it never appeared on any map.

Judge "Buddy" Scott's father worked in one of the "project buildings," but he never said what he did there. "It was a storybook existence," is how the judge described life here as an 8-year-old. "The government ran everything. There was no caste system, everybody was young, very few autos. We used buses to get around. Of course, nobody could get in or out of town without an ID, and kids could not get out at all without their parents. Security was tight. Our mothers loved it."

Of the thousands who worked here — the population reached 75,000 — only a handful knew what they were doing vis-à-vis the big picture, even fewer knew why.

In August 1945 the United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Japan, with devastating, unbelievable results. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped. (We only had two.) The next day Japan surrendered and the war was over.

Only then were the people in Oak Ridge told that they produced the enriched uranium that made those bombs. Called the Manhattan Project, it was — and remains — the largest industrial project in the history of the world. For three years, the Manhattan Project used one-tenth of the electric power produced in the United States — more than New York City.

The Manhattan Project gets little mention in the history books of World War II — reason enough for us, the explorers of America's outback, to discover it for ourselves.

With world-class museums and the experts still around to explain things, Oak Ridge today could not be more open and accommodative.

Welcome to America's Outback. 🗨️

Bill's e-mail address: roadscribe@aol.com.

Next month Bill will be at Oswald's Bear Ranch in Michigan.



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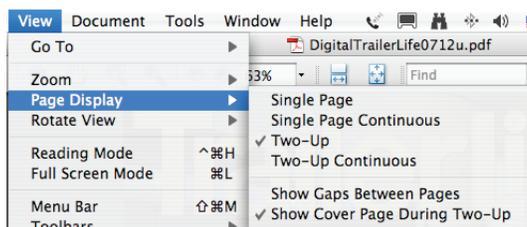


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