

Roughing It Smoothly[®]



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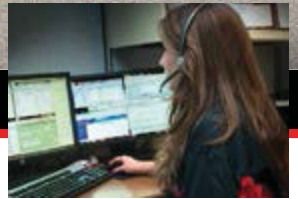


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Roughing it Smoothly®

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Cover: The Wayfarer leaving Monument Valley. Original photo by Suzanne Clemenz.

Roughing It Smoothly circulation jumps to 85,500 printed and online magazines.

Over 30,000 Tiffin owners are now receiving *Roughing It Smoothly* through the U.S. and Canadian postal service. Over 42,000 have chosen to read *RIS* online at the Tiffin website. Our dealers are distributing 13,500 copies in their showrooms. *Roughing It Smoothly* is in its 14th year and is the largest magazine published by an RV manufacturer in number of pages and total distribution.

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

them if we have the space. We do not return color prints or manuscript. You can also send your "From the Road" contribution by email to fredthompson1941@hotmail.com You may attach your images to your email. Images should be at least one megabyte in size. On the subject line of the email, please write FROM THE ROAD.

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Change of Address

Please use the enclosed change of address card in this magazine which is pre-addressed to the publishing office in Monroe, Georgia. You may change your address online by sending an email to risncoa@hotmail.com First, enter your old

address as it appears on your magazine label. Second, please enter your new three-line address including the zip code. **We do not accept phone calls for changes of address.**

Serious Tech Talk

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

New Subscribers

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

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Tiffin Launches New Website for *Roughing It Smoothly*

To enjoy reading *Roughing It Smoothly* in our new easy-to-read, facing pages format, visit the Tiffin website at tiffinmotorhomes.com. At the landing site, click on OWNERS on the left edge of the screen, then on *Roughing It Smoothly*. If you want to read the most recent issue, click on the cover and scroll to the Contents on pages 2-3. You can click on any page number to jump directly to the story. Scroll through the magazine in facing pages by clicking on the arrow bar on the left and right edges. To make the type larger, move the cursor to the top center and the +/- symbols will appear to make the type as large as you wish. Move the cursor to the upper right corner of the screen and a toolbar will appear. Click on SEARCH and you will open a REFINE SEARCH chart on the left side of a clear screen. If you are looking for a travel story in a certain state, put in the state name and click on SEARCH at the bottom of the chart. The first pages of the stories mentioning that state will appear. Click on any first page and it will jump you directly to the story in the issue where it originally appeared. While your cursor is in the upper right corner, you will notice seven round buttons with familiar function icons. We have not made them active yet, but they will be soon. The software will reformat for use on your laptop, iPad, iPhone, or Android. To go directly to the RIS site, enter rismag.org.

Stan Posey Joins Tiffin Motorhomes as National Sales Manager

In September, Tim Tiffin, general manager at Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc., announced the appointment of Stan Posey as the company's new national sales manager. Posey is not a stranger to Red Bay, having served for six years in a similar position at Sunshine Homes, a local company building manufactured and modular homes.

A North Alabama native, Posey was born in Huntsville and grew up in Haleyville. He earned a B.S. degree in marketing and business management at the University of North Alabama in Florence. He honed his management skills at Books-a-Million, a subsidiary of Anderson News Company, Sears, Lowe's, and Enterprise Car Rentals before accepting a position with Sunshine Homes as a sales representative, a position he held for 14 years before becoming national sales manager.

Stan is married to Sanda, a high school librarian in Winfield, where the couple makes their home. They have a daughter, Anna, and two sons, Matthew and Will. The children are actively engaged in cross country and indoor track.

A member of the United States Tennis Association, Stan is a competition player with a 4.0 rating. He also enjoys turkey hunting and is an avid golfer and fisherman. The family enjoys vacationing on the Gulf Coast where Stan tries to find time for deep sea fishing.

Training Our New Owners

by Bob Tiffin

Throughout the 45 years that TMH has been manufacturing motorhomes, I have received feedback from owners regarding the amount of training they received by their dealers at the point they acquired their coaches. The feedback has been both positive and negative, with more of the former than the latter. As I visit dealerships, I inquire about customer training, encouraging our dealers to be thorough. Depending on the customer's previous experience, training on a motorhome should take from four to eight hours, and in some cases, even more.

The following column ran in 2007 after I visited King's Campers in Wausau, Wisconsin



and talked with shop foreman Mark Gajewski about his owner training program. Since Mark is no longer with the company, his successor, Adam Viegut graciously agreed to update the text of their training program to correctly reflect today's technology and our new brands and floorplans.

I still am very favorably impressed with their customer training program. Adam is in charge of employees who train owners in the use of their new Tiffin motorhomes. As you know, I have been driving our rigs ever since we started the company, so I have a few points that I will add later. Following is Adam's approach with King's Campers' customers.

We are very particular about how we train our customers to use their new Tiffin motorhomes because it makes our job easier in the future and assures that we will have satisfied owners.

We have several techs to train customers on Tiffin motorhomes. Each tech must show adequate knowledge to me before he is allowed to train a customer. Once a month we get together and go through all of our Tiffin coaches to make sure we are all on the same page with training procedures. We add to and reinforce each other's knowledge base.

When we train, we make sure that we are training the owners who will be using the coach. Often an owner will bring his son or best friend, as if they will learn it and help him in the future. But we make participants out of the owners as we train them. They have to practice as we demonstrate each item in the coach.

We start on the outside and go around the coach. We stress documentation in the manuals, cut through the superfluous material and show where pertinent information is found.

Our trainers stress understanding the warranties. For example, you must run your Onan generator at least an hour a month with a load on it to validate the warranty. We go over the warranties for the HVAC, the jacks, the furnace, and the refrigerator. We try to teach patience in dealing with problems that will invariably arise at some time in the future.

There are just a lot of details that you have to talk about like taking care of the entry door. Then there is the awning and its operation. We emphasize checking the surroundings before putting out the awning. Will it hit a limb or a low-hanging power

line? And that goes double for the slides. How many times has a slide-out been damaged because the post holding the 50-amp box was two inches higher than the slide-out?

In a few coaches, a storage bay contains the control panels for the inverters and converters. After we go past the storage bays on the passenger side, we come to the storage area for the batteries. Batteries are not maintenance free in spite of what some manufacturers advertise. We show owners how to check the water and fill the cylinders.

We then can take the customer up in a manlift to show them the roof. It can be slick and new owners need to be warned to wear rubber sole shoes and move about very carefully.

As we start around the coach, we spend as much time as each customer needs on any area of the coach. We make sure the owner learns how to do the water flush on the black tank and we stress how important it is to run that procedure frequently.

The next major outdoor feature that we spend a good bit of time on is the Onan generator. We show how to check the oil, and change the oil and the filter, we show them the antifreeze reservoir and how to check it. We show where the circuit breakers are located and how easy it is to overload the generator, especially in the summertime, and kick the breaker. Of course with the new technology that Tiffin is using, in many cases the Energy Management System will not let you overuse power as often as the older coaches did.

The techs go over all of the important breaker locations, especially the ones that serve the slide-outs. If they activate, you

won't be able to bring the slide in. Knowing where that breaker is located can save a lot of grief.

When we are training on Tiffin coaches we show the owner that they have a couple of large fuses that, if blown, can leave you without any 12V-DC for the entire unit. If your engine batteries have lost their charge and you want to use your auxillary start switch, you should first plug in or run the generator and let the battery control module get some charge into the chassis batteries before you try the auxillary.

We then go over the fuses and 12-volt breakers that are accessible from the outside. They are placed in many different locations around the coach and there are quite a few of them, but Tiffin does a great job of labeling. Powerglide, Freightliner, Spartan, and Ford also do a good job of labeling the fuses that they place on the coach, such as the left and right turn signals.

Tire pressures are very important. Most owners seldom think about checking the tire pressure on their cars so it is important to emphasize that they do it regularly on their motorhome. We show them how and urge them to check pressures after they have driven their first 250 miles. We point out that you should be able to place your hand on a tire after you have been driving for several hours. If it is too hot to touch, then you need to find out why. We make sure they know how to check the inside tires on duals by using the extenders.

We spend several minutes on how to use keyless entry before we start on the inside. As the tech walks up the entry steps, he

turns around and sits down in the step well and explains all of the switches.

Over the years, controls for just about everything have been moved, sometimes for ease of use and sometimes due to design. Around this time, we will run out the slides and emphasize putting the driver's and passenger's seats forward before extending slide-outs. The 2017 and 2018 brands place the slide-out switches on the top corner of the seat backs to prevent that mistake. Of course you can't stress enough the checking of the outside clearances on both sides before extending the slide-outs or the awning. At this point, or soon after, we teach the emergency crank-in procedure for the slide-outs. On the hydraulic slide-out, we teach the emergency retract system.

Continuing through the coach, we spend considerable time on the television (going through the programming for stations on antenna, satellite, or cable), the DVD, and the satellite receivers.

We give a thorough explanation of the relationship between the Magnum inverter, Energy Management system, and the batteries. We note what items you can operate including the televisions and several appliances when plugged into specified inverter-sourced outlets.

Thermostats, which may vary from model to model, are a key training point. We make sure the owner spends time operating them before we go on to the next feature.

On the Zephyr, Allegro Bus, and Phaeton, training on the Aqua-Hot is very important. The owner must understand the



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design and how the system works. We make sure they know how to check the fluid levels and resets. Next, we go over the use of the major appliances: the refrigerator, furnace, water heater, and the cooktop and microwave. Many of the new Tiffin motorhomes come with residential refrigerators, so we don't have to teach them about those, except for the importance of keeping an eye on the batteries so they will not run down. While discussing the manual for a gas-electric RV refrigerator, the trainer opens the doors and leaves them open while he continues to talk. He does it nonchalantly so that the two-minute alarm will go off while he is talking. He explains the refrigerator's diagnostics. From the outside, the trainer makes sure the owner understands the importance of keeping the vents for the furnace, water heater, and the refrigerator clean and free of debris—for example, keeping bugs out of the burner tubes of the water heater, screens to keep dirt doobers out of the vents for the furnace, etc.

Most owners have microwaves at home, so we don't spend a lot of time on them. After demonstrating how simple it is to light the gas burners, we also show how to clean the orifice if it gets clogged with a spill. The Zephyr, Bus, and Phaeton have induction cooktops that require different training with the ferromagnetic cookware.

During the training session, we have the owner put chemicals in the black tank for the first time (if they are planning to use the coach immediately). We emphasize that they must use toilet paper made specifically for RVs—leave the Charmin at home. We point out that you must keep the black tank valve closed until it is nearly full when you are hooked up in a campground. Many incorrectly assume that when you flush the toilet, waste goes directly into the hooked-up sewer line.

When we reach the cockpit, the first training exercise is the jacks. We make sure that the owner practices the leveling procedure two or three times. We instruct how to check the hydraulic fluid and emphasize that they should add only clear hydraulic fluid when needed.

Emergency window exits could save a life. The owner learns how to open them, and then close and reattach the windows. We go through this procedure for all emergency exits.

Detectors: LP, CO, and Smoke. We demonstrate what the warning sounds are, how to reset, and how to check the batteries. You get a persistent beep when the battery is low.

The cockpit is a major training place. Participation is definitely a must here. We teach and demonstrate, but the owner must do all procedures and show proficiency. For example, we show the owner how to check the oil in the transmission (i.e., push both arrows to check the oil level, temp, etc.) If he gets a "LOC 7" code, then it shows that the transmission has not been on long enough to get a reading.

We demo the use of the in-dash computer and then have the owner use it until he understands its use and functionality.

Understanding how to use the parking brake on a diesel pusher is critical since it is totally different from an automobile. We emphasize that after bringing the coach to a stop, you press

the Neutral selector, and then pull the big yellow knob up to set the brake. On gas-burners, you move the gear selector to Park and set the brake with a foot pedal. We demonstrate the correct procedures and then require the new owner to practice.

For those who have owned several coaches, the training period may take only 2–3 hours. For first-time owners, it may take 8 hours. If we cut it short, we know we will have a lot of phone calls, so it is better to take sufficient time during the training session.

When we are through, we always tell the owner: contact us first before you contact Tiffin's service techs. This gives us a chance to see how good a job we did in the training session and another chance to bond with our customer.

Thanks, Adam, for developing and implementing a very good owner training program. I would like to add a few points which may be useful to our new owners at some time in the future. In our magazine, you will find a wallet-size insert card listing all of the service numbers to call. Please make special note that the contacts for our chassis manufacturers are available 24/7.

Tire pressure is different on every coach. Both of our suppliers use a maximum cold pressure as the recommended inflation. However, after you get your coach loaded, you should go to the scales and have it weighed front and rear, and then deflate the tires according to the manufacturer's chart. This will take a little time, but gives you a much better ride. Generally, a tire will lose a little pressure over time; 5 to 10 lbs. of pressure loss will make a big difference in the tire's longevity and the eventual breakdown of the sidewalls. Tire manufacturers recommend that you check the tire pressure every day while you are traveling.

Owners should check oil levels before starting the engine. Next check the coolant level while the engine is cold. On the Freightliner and PowerGlide chassis, you should check the recovery tank. If the chassis manufacturer furnishes a radiator cap, then the coolant level needs to be checked *in* the radiator. If the coolant gets below the vacuum point in the radiator, you could ruin your engine. The coolant must be at the top of the flue. Ford chassis have a radiator cap. Rear engine diesels have recovery reservoirs only. Other fluid levels need to be checked at regular intervals, but engine oil and coolant are the most important.

Be sure to check all marker lights and turn signal lights at regular intervals — at least once a week while you are traveling.

If you tow a vehicle or trailer, you should check the ball regularly to be sure the nut is tight. I recommend that you spot weld it to prevent it from coming loose. Never tow without safety chains attached to the car and the tow hitch. Leave some slack in the chains to make turns, but tighten the chain enough so that the tow bar will not hit the ground if it becomes detached from the ball.

If you are driving a diesel pusher, make certain the front cap housing the generator is securely latched. If it isn't and you hit the brakes hard, then your generator is going to shoot forward and possibly damage its mooring to the rails.

Rear-end diesels *cannot be towed*. You must have a "low boy"

haul your coach in order to prevent damage to the front cap. You can attach cables to the front or rear axles to winch it onto the low boy. If you get stuck, you must know where the attachment points are for pulling it out. The cables must be attached to the axle or the frame. Do not attach cables to the front generator frame. It will jerk the whole generator assembly right out of the coach.

What happens if you lose air pressure? When it gets below 40 psi, your rear air brakes will lock up. Get the coach off the road. You can drive it a few feet without damage. Call road service and they will know how to fix the line or divert the line to build air pressure. As you lose air pressure, the motorhome will start slowing down. If you are in a one-lane construction situation on the interstate, slow down to 5 mph and disregard the blowing horns. The brakes will get warm, but will not flame.

When you take delivery of your coach, the dealer's tech needs to spend at least an hour training you to use the televisions, DVD, and CD player, surround sound, and the IF repeaters.


As Adam pointed out, you need to understand thoroughly how the slide-outs work, and how they can be manually retracted in the event of motor failure. Remember that the leveling jacks should be down before you deploy the slides. Be sure you understand how the jacks function with the ignition switch. If there is a problem and the jacks will not deploy, you can still use the slide-outs if the coach is level.

With the dealer's tech nearby, be sure to practice extending and retracting the awnings. Locate and check all of the fuses and re-

lays. Practice implementing the wind sensor setting with its three levels of sensitivities. Window awnings are all manually deployed.

If you are driving a Zephyr, Allegro Bus, or a Phaeton, be sure you understand how the Aqua-Hot system works in conjunction with the heat pumps in the roof ACs. Most of the heat pumps will operate down to 28°F at which point the Aqua-Hot comes on automatically. You may choose to activate the Aqua-Hot at a temperature well above 28°.

It is extremely important that you correctly attach the coach's power cord to the campground's receptacle. *Before you connect*, turn off the campground's breaker to the receptacle. Most campgrounds use electric stove receptacles which were not designed to be used repeatedly. The receptacle gets sloppy in its fit and in some cases the neutral is lost going into the motorhome. Most people press the motorhome's plug in at an angle, allowing both 110v lines to touch before the neutral is in place. That delivers 240v right into the motorhome. Since electricity cycles at 60/sec, it only takes two cycles or 1/30 second to burn up your TV, inverters, microwave, etc. By shutting the power off at the breaker and seating the motorhome's plug flush with the face of the receptacle, you will avoid this mishap. When breaking camp, turn off the breaker first. TMH does not recommend surge protectors.

I hope these guidelines for taking delivery of one of our new coaches will be helpful to both owners and dealers. Until next time, keep on *roughing it smoothly* with Tiffin. 



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Tiffin's 2018 Wayfarer 24TW

Raising the Bar for the Luxury Class C Motorhome

Text by Fred Thompson

When the sales department, R&D team, and interior designers at Tiffin Motorhomes doubled down in early 2016 to create a then unnamed Class C motorhome, they were certain their research had clearly identified two receptive markets for a luxury 24-foot Class C. Customer feedback and TMH research overwhelmingly favored the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 3500 Series chassis with the 188-hp 3.0 6-cylinder Turbo Diesel Engine and a 5-speed automatic transmission as the foundation and power plant for this new coach.

The Class C Wayfarer is being built in a completely rehabbed production plant in Winfield, Alabama, about 60 miles from Tiffin's main plant in Red Bay, Alabama, and just 55 miles from Birmingham. The location allowed the company to tap into an expanded labor market, a factor that will become more important as they increase production which is now two units a day.

"A segment of mature owners are trending toward a small

coach that is much easier to drive and handle than their 40-foot Class A's," TMH general manager Tim Tiffin explained. "But as we expected, they want to move into a Class C that has some of their favorite amenities and the feel of luxury to which they have become accustomed.

"We see another market in young professional couples who love the outdoors and will see the Wayfarer as the perfect base-camp for day hiking on weekends in our state and national parks and for two-week vacations," he continued. "It's also the perfect length for those same parks that weren't designed for our Class A's. When those young professionals have a family, the Wayfarer is still the right coach with an over-the-cab bunk and a sofa-bed.

"With the luxury and amenities offered by the Wayfarer, we are confident we have a Class C at the right price point to serve these markets," he concluded.

Selecting the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter with a world-class chassis and diesel engine provided many driving safety features that Tiffin owners had experienced in their automobiles, such as a light and rain sensor, lane keeping assist, collision prevention assist, and high beam assist. As the coach is being manufactured, Tiffin adds as standard equipment the SumoSprings ride assist system.

In creating this luxury Class C motorhome, Tiffin incorporated many of the Class A's standard features into the Wayfarer. In the plumbing infrastructure, for example, you will find an instant hot water system, house water filtration system, a flush system for the black tank, accurate percentage measurements for the volume of fluids in each wet tank, a DS exterior service center with clearly labeled plumbing, drains, hook-up points for water and cable, and 68 cubic feet of outside storage.

A walk-around examination of the Wayfarer will confirm its claim to superior quality. Trickle-down technology from its Class A brands assured the strength of laminated walls built with Tiffin's high-tech fiberglass manufactured by vacuum extrusion.

Tiffin pioneered the use of one-piece,

formed fiberglass slide-outs, a system patented as Seamless Slide-Outs™. Surveying the walls and roof, you will see a 14-foot lighted awning with a wind sensor, an HD TV antenna with amplifier, an HD Over-the-Air TV antenna, prep for the Winegard™ Dome system, pre-wire for solar panels, and a 13.5K Coleman roof mounted air conditioner. Optionals include an exterior TV for patio viewing and a 15K AC with a heat pump upgrade.

Living Area

As soon as I entered the Wayfarer from the side door, I was impressed. The smooth teak cabinetry (a medium blond) with rounded doors is combined with a subtle print wallpaper. All of the corners of the cabinets and walls are rounded, creating a clean, crisp look. I dropped into the comfort of the 52-inch tri-fold sofa-bed upholstered in a cream white UltraLeather to let it all sink in. When you rotate the driver and passenger chairs 180 degrees, the Wayfarer provides luxurious seating for four.

The large windows over the sofa and galley (DS, 38 × 18-in; PS, 34 × 14-in) give the living space a light and airy feel-

Options

Tiffin has provided several options to accommodate owners' needs. The entertainment center over the cab (shown here) or an additional bunk bed (see overleaf) can be selected. If a dinette is preferred over a sofa-bed, choose the 24QW floorplan. Choose a split bath or an enclosed bath, twin beds or a queen.





At no extra charge, owners interested in more sleeping arrangements can choose a bunk bed over the cab in lieu of the entertainment center. ♦ The couch is a tri-fold bed that expands to 43 × 70 inches.

ing. While the Fantastic vent in the center of the room was originally intended for moving hot air from the galley, it can also be an attic fan to bring in cool air through the large windows. Nothing like a cool and relaxing breeze.

From the back of the driver-passenger cockpit to the rear wall, the coach's architect had 17 feet to use effectively. The interior width is 87 inches. In the 24TW floorplan, that space was increased by a DS forward slide-out for the sofa-bed. The exterior volume of the Seamless Slide-Out is 70 cubic fit. Above the driver-passenger compartment, a clever

fiberglass bubble provides the space for a 40 × 78 inch bunk bed. With the help of a vertical ladder that latches into the side of the bed frame, I climbed into the bunk, stretched out, and decided it was quite comfortable. Exiting was more of a challenge. This bed would be perfect for our grandchildren, I mumbled, which I am sure is what the coach's architect intended.

The sofa-bed has a solid tri-fold frame. A clever dipsy-doodle flip-out produces a bed measuring 43 × 70 inches. Two cabinets above the couch provide nearly four cubic feet of storage for the bed linens and blanket. Two LED reading lamps attached under the cabinets and two more recessed LEDs in the ceiling of the slide-out provide excellent lighting for the sofa and bed.



ENTERTAINMENT

From the comfort of the sofa in the slide-out, the Wayfarer's owners will enjoy viewing an 80 centimeter (31.5-in.) LG SmartTV mounted over the side entrance door. The swivel mounting makes viewing possible for the kids sleeping in the over-the-cab bunk. An optional 80-cm TV can be ordered for the bedroom. It is mounted on a slide-out next to the DS wardrobe. An optional TV is also available mounted in the exterior wall under the awning.

An AM-FM Jensen radio with Bluetooth and DVD features has stereo speakers in the ceiling in both the living area and the bedroom. From the radio panel, you can select all of the speakers or just the ones in each room.

SPYDER CONTROLS

The master Spyder control panel is mounted on the curved wall facing into





the living area. The HOME folder has a volume display for the three wet tanks and the LPG tank, plus a read-out for the battery. Two touch points control the water pump and the heat for the wet tanks.

The SLIDES folder has touch points for extending and retracting both the DS and Rear slide-outs. The 24BW and 24QW have a rear slide-out for a queen bed. There is also an info display to remind the operator to check the settings for the ignition and parking brake.

The SWITCHES folder has pairing options for the entry, bath, and bedroom areas.

The MAIN LIGHTS folder presents lighting controls for the entire coach. The primary folder takes care of entry, cargo, main ceiling and bunk, porch, sofa and reading, hall, front accent, and task. A BED/BATH sub-folder controls the bedroom, bed reading lamps, cabinet accent, bathroom, and shower. Touch MAIN to go back to the primary folder.

LIGHTING

Tiffin's architects and designers never miss a beat when it comes to lighting. Without excellent lighting, a coach can be drab, even depressing. In addition to the lights already mentioned, there are two bright LEDs over the bunk, two task lights over the galley, six LEDs in the ceiling of the living area, three in the hallway

connecting the split bath, six more LEDs in the bedroom ceiling, plus two LED reading lamps at the head of each twin bed. The shower has two LEDs and the lav-toilet has three.

The Galley

In a small coach, ingenuity and concise design are the key factors necessary to create an efficient galley that facilitates

the preparation of complete meals. With my tape measure in hand, I was surprised to find 10 cubic feet of storage surrounding the galley's work surface. The two cabinets above the cooktop are 44 inches wide, providing five cubic feet of storage space. A three-shelf pantry pull-out is mounted at eye-level.

The cabinet under the solid surface countertop (SSCT) contains a microwave-convection oven, two drawers (20 × 11 × 3), and an oval storage cavity directly beneath the round sink that pushes out slightly into the room. It surprised me with 4.5 cubic feet of storage. The extended cabinet is enclosed by a handsome curved door.

Tipped with a spray head, the single-lever polished chrome water supply arcs over the round stainless steel sink that is 16 inches in diameter. The sink's 8-inch depth allows you to wash and rinse without quickly filling it up. The sink's two-piece SSCT cover increases your food prep area while you have two pots or pans working on the twin burner cooktop. A 110v outlet gives you the option for cooking with additional electric appliances. A 3-speed reversible Fantastic ceiling fan removes the cooking odors and heat.



The Bedroom

The sleeping compartment in the 24TW could be a case study in maximum storage, efficient design, and comfortable sleeping. Just inside the bedroom, a PS cabinet presents controls at eye-level for the water heater, cable/antenna selector, gen start, remote switch for the Magnum inverter, and a solar panel control (solar panels are optional). Since we are inveterate bedroom readers, I feel compelled to point out again that the lighting in the bedroom is perfect.

The twin beds measure 30 × 75 inches. Slide-out boards under the twin bed mattresses extend to support two bolsters that convert the twins into a king size bed measuring 87 × 75 inches. The bedroom is well-appointed with other features that will keep you comfortable. The center nightstand between the twin beds has a 110-volt outlet plus two USB charging ports. Two AC delivery ducts, one return duct, and a third 3-speed Fantastic fan will take care of the room's climate. If you don't have a natural breeze coming through the coach, this fan in exhaust mode will create one through the two large windows: 38 × 18 and 40 × 20 inches.

The Spyder control has lighting touch points for the main ceiling, bedroom ceiling, and bedroom reading. A light master touch point will turn off all of the 12-volt lights in the coach; no need to walk through turning off individual lights. The HVAC control is located just above the Spyder panel.

The storage in the bedroom is phenomenal. Deep cabinets with top-hinged doors encircle the side and rear walls of the room, attached to the ceiling and the top 17 inches of the walls, creating 18 cubic feet of storage. Under the head of the twin beds and the center nightstand, an open area extends 87 inches across the back of the bedroom. It is 19.5 inches deep and 14.5 inches across, creating 14 cubic feet of storage. The cavity has outside access doors on both sides of the coach. Two deep drawers under the DS bed provide another four cubic feet. Two spacious wardrobes (34h × 15w × 20d) extend out over the foot of each twin bed.



The Split Bath

The hall space between the PS shower and the DS lavatory-toilet can be closed off with the doors to each compartment that open in opposite directions creating a full

private bath, another example of thoughtful design. The 32 × 24-inch shower has a rolled Lexan containment door that slides out and snaps into place while the occu-



pant showers. A sky light provides additional illumination to the compartment.

In the DS compartment, the solid surface countertop hosts a stainless steel lavatory. A 14 × 30-inch mirror separates

His & Her medicine cabinets, each with multiple shelves. The compartment has a heat duct from the furnace, an AC duct in the ceiling, a 110v outlet, and a Fantastic 3-speed exhaust fan. A hand-towel ring

and a bath towel rack are mounted on opposite walls. A Spyder touch panel has controls for the water pump and lights for the shower, lavatory, and the connecting hall.

Driving the Wayfarer

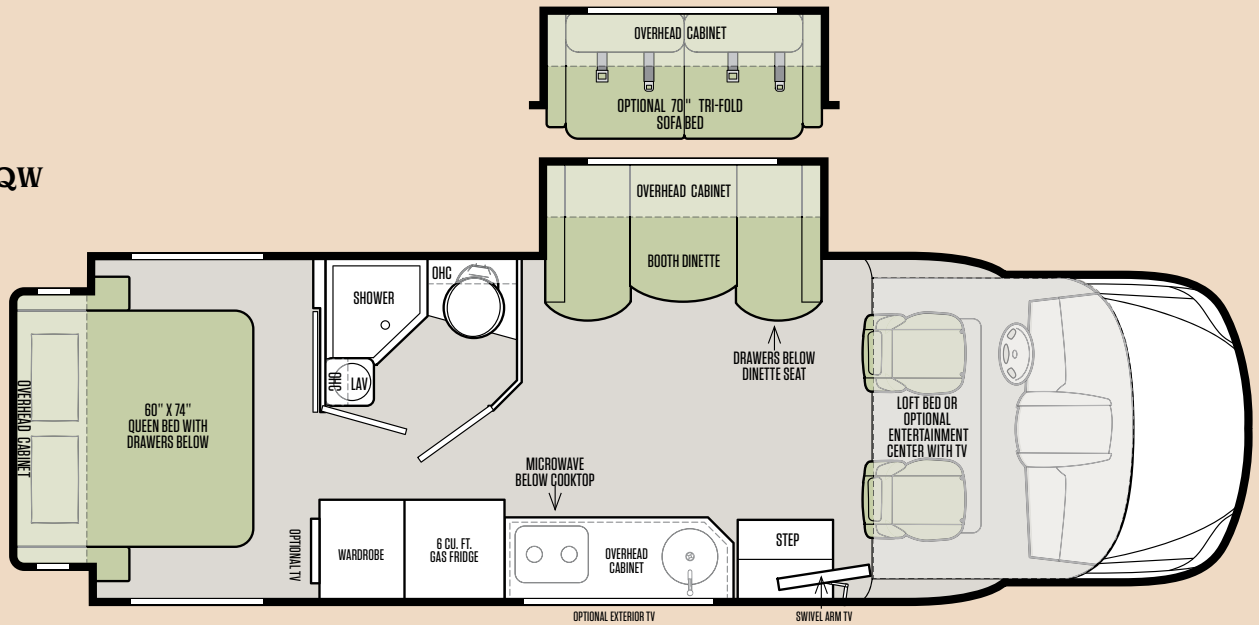
While I was parked in the Tiffin Allegro Campground working on this story, several Class A owners came over to take a peek inside and ask about how this Class C handled on the road. I compared it to driving a Chevy Suburban. It handles really well at standard interstate speed limits: 65 or 70 mph. It has driving features that are standard on Mercedes-Benz automobiles that you will likely pay extra for on most brands: light and rain sensor, lane keeping assist, and high beam assist.

Offering hand operated adjustments and retractable arm rests, the seats are very comfortable.

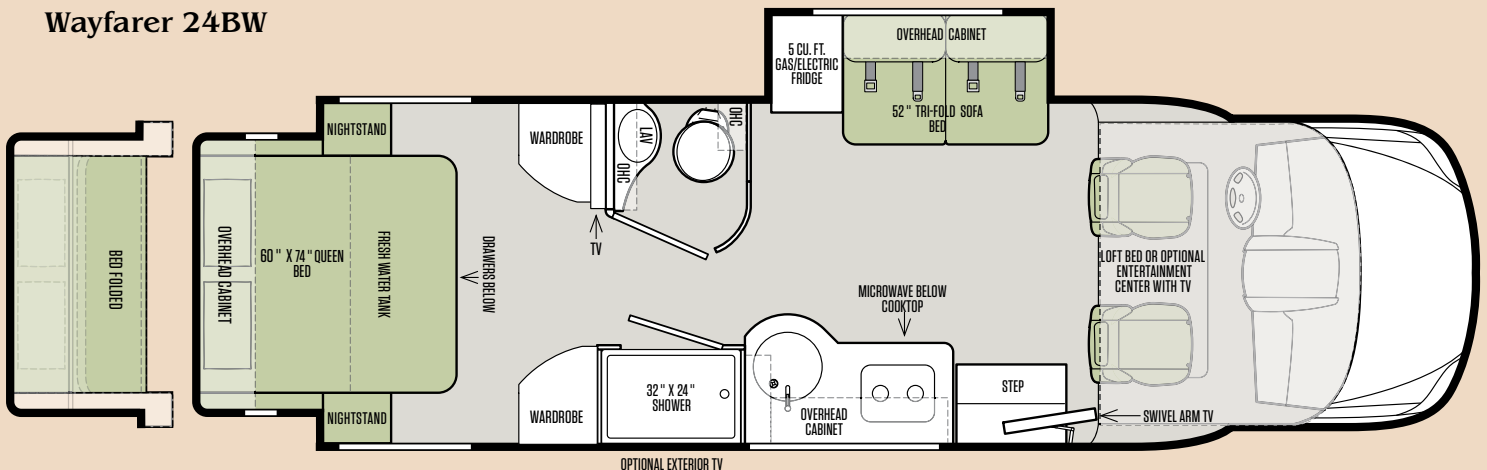
Using the cruise control levers was intuitive with a simple set lever for speed and another lever to increase/decrease speed without canceling the cruise function. The engine produced ample power for passing and climbing hills, although the speed dropped about eight percent with a load equal to about half of the cargo carrying capacity. While the Wayfarer

is rated for towing up to 5,000 pounds and has a 7-pin connector, we did not have a car in tow during our test drive. I am thinking that a M-B Smart or a Fiat 500 would make a perfect match for the Wayfarer to hit the road touring. If downsizing from a Class A or finding the right Class C with luxurious features is your gig, you should make an appointment to test drive and spend an hour checking out the 2018 Wayfarer. **RIS**

Wayfarer 24QW



Wayfarer 24BW



SPECIFICATIONS: Model reviewed 2018 Wayfarer 24TW, Single Slide Base MSRP* – \$131,618 MSRP with options added – \$133,785

STANDARD FEATURES

Structural

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

Automotive

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Chassis
M-B 3.0 6-cylinder turbo diesel engine 188 HP/325 lb torque
M-B 5-speed automatic tip-shift transmission
Lighting package with Bi-xenon headlamps
Multi-function steering with trip computer
Light & rain sensor
Matrix display
Heated, electric, adjustable mirrors
Windshield with filter band
Overhead control panel with reading lamps
Lane keeping assist
Collision prevention assist
High beam assist
Stainless steel wheel liners
Tow ratings & ability are subject to gross combined weight ratings on the tow vehicle
SumoSprings ride assist system
Instant hot water
House water filter system
Black tank flush
DS exterior service center with plumbing & drain connections
12-volt pad heaters on black & grey tanks
Water pump (Shurflo® 3.0 gpm/55 psi)
Gravity potable fresh water fill
Pressurized city fresh water fill

General Exterior

One-piece Seamless Slide-outs™
68-cubic feet of outside storage
HD TV antenna with amplifier
Two 12-volt house batteries (Group 27 / 180 Amp Hours)
30-amp, 110-volt house service
Power cord – 30' permanently attached
3.2-kw Onan® diesel generator
1000-watt Magnum® inverter
110-volt & 12-volt house load center with power converter
HD Over-the-Air TV antenna

Prep for Winegard® Dome System
Pre-wired for solar panels
Park cable & ground satellite hook-up
14' Awning
Wind Sensor
Combination carbon monoxide & propane detector
Automatic lights in exterior compartment doors
13.5-k Coleman roof-mounted AC
Wall-mount thermostat with built-in temperature sensor
30-k BTU propane ducted furnace
12-volt wiring supplied through engineered wiring harnesses

Driver's Compartment

Dash entertainment system
Back-up camera
Power cab door locks
Power cab door windows
Power mirrors with defrost
Cruise control
Tilt telescoping steering wheel
Chassis-house battery radio power switch
Sun visors
12-volt power outlet
Central cab locking with 2 IR remotes
Privacy windshield and window shades
Swivel seat base for driver & passenger seats
Dash entertainment system

General Interior

Stereo system
LED lights
Spyder® multiplex coach control system
Satellite system compatible
Privacy shades
Booster seats
Soft vinyl ceiling
Vinyl flooring throughout
Entrance door assist handle
USB ports
Professionally designed interior décor packages
Premium fabric suites – Teak or Windsong

Living Area

Living area TV
Entertainment system over cab – Choice
Loft bed over cab – Choice

52" Tri-fold sofa bed
Tinted living area windows

Galley

2-burner cooktop with tempered glass cover
Convection microwave oven
5-cubic foot gas/electric refrigerator
Single bowl stainless sink

Bedroom

Twin beds (32" x 76") convert to king bed (86" x 76")
Two wardrobes

OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

15,000k AC w/heat pump
Exterior LCD TV
Power rear stabilizers
Amber Glazed Alder cabinets

OTHER OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

In-dash navigation system
Bedroom TV
Premium sliding windshield & window shades
Russet cabinets

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 170"
Overall height – 11' 4"
Overall length – 25' 7"
Interior height – 6' 8"
Interior width – 90"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 11,030 lb.
GCWR – 15,250 lb.
Front GAWR – 4,410 lb.
Rear GAWR – 7,720 lb.
UVW – 10,200 lb. (will vary depending on options)
CCC – 830 lb.
Trailer hitch capacity – 5,000 lb. rated hitch with 500 lb. vertical tongue weight & 7-pin connector.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – 3.0 6-cyl. turbo diesel engine 188 hp
Torque – 325 lb.
Transmission – 5-speed automatic tip-shift transmission
Tire Size – LT215/85R16
Alternator – 160 amps

ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – 4
Fuel tank – 26.4 gallons
Fresh water – 40 gallons
Black water – 27-gallons
Grey water – 33-gallons
DEF – 2.5 gallons
Propane tank – 20-gallons / 16 gallons usable

MSRP

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

UVW

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

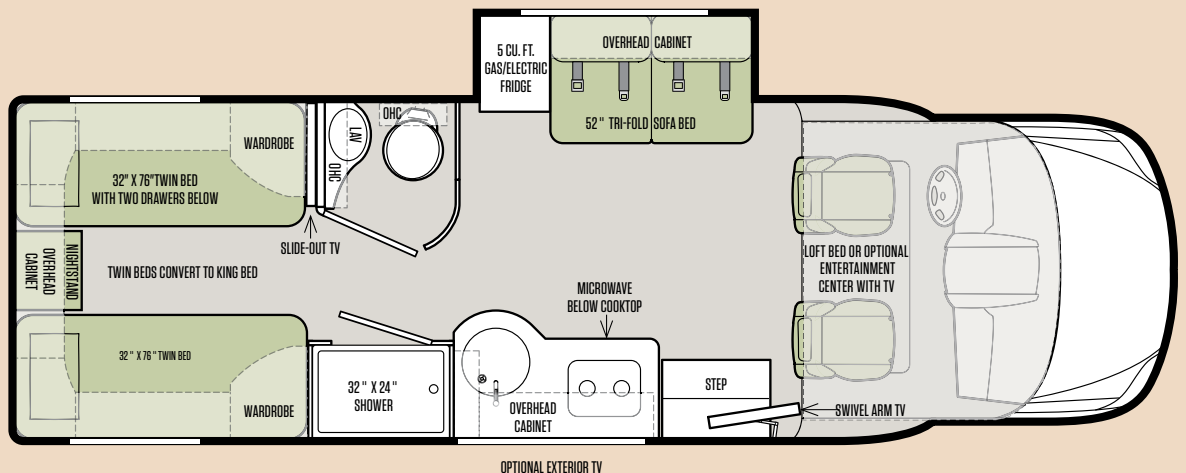
DEALERS

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

PLEASE NOTE

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

Wayfarer 24TW



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INSIDE THE NAVAJO NATION

Riveting Landscapes and a Vibrant Culture

Text and photography by Suzanne Clemenz

Visiting the Navajo Nation for the first time is like finding a stack of huge, unique, and colorful gifts. The gifts are labeled “Canyon de Chelly National Monument,” “Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park,” and “Lake Powell/Antelope Canyon.” The gifts are all from Arizona and the Navajo Nation. They promise to expand your explorations into places where the very air seems charged with excitement and timelessness. And, as foreign and other-worldly as these landscapes, canyons, and waterways are, you won’t need a passport, currency exchange, or language translator as you visit.

What you *will* need is to let go of the perception that natural beauty is limited to forests, mountains, lakes, streams, and ocean shores. You’ll need to embrace a spirit of discovery. Tall sandstone needles, buttes, and canyons will boggle your mind as

you view them on foot, in a 4-wheel drive vehicle, on horseback, or in a boat. You may find yourself in a pontoon raft drifting 16 miles down the Colorado River to Lee’s Ferry, or on a Lake Powell boat tour to a truly immense stone rainbow. And in a very special place the sculpted sandstone and limestone layers seem magically to swirl and dance all around you. If you’re thinking, “Why do travelers go to rocky places?” you’ll only understand when you experience that child-like spirit of wonder at the colorful landforms and vistas, and the warm, relaxed welcome of the Navajos.

What Is the Navajo Nation?

The Navajo Nation encompasses over 27,000 contiguous square miles of the Four Corners region, mostly in Arizona and

New Mexico, and a small bit of Utah. With 300,000 residents, it has the largest population of Native Americans in the U.S. Since settling a lengthy lawsuit in the 1990s against the U.S. government for mismanaging tribal lands and enterprises for decades, the Navajos and the Federal government are transitioning to a government-to-government relationship. The Navajos have executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government, and other important departments. Tourism is a crucial chunk of the Navajo’s revenue, including money visitors spend on lodging and campgrounds, food, vehicle expenses, guides and tours, ceremonies, souvenirs, and purchases of beautiful Navajo handwoven rugs, turquoise jewelry, and other art. A coal mine that employs 725 Navajos may be on the chopping block; if so, tourism will become the main economic driver.

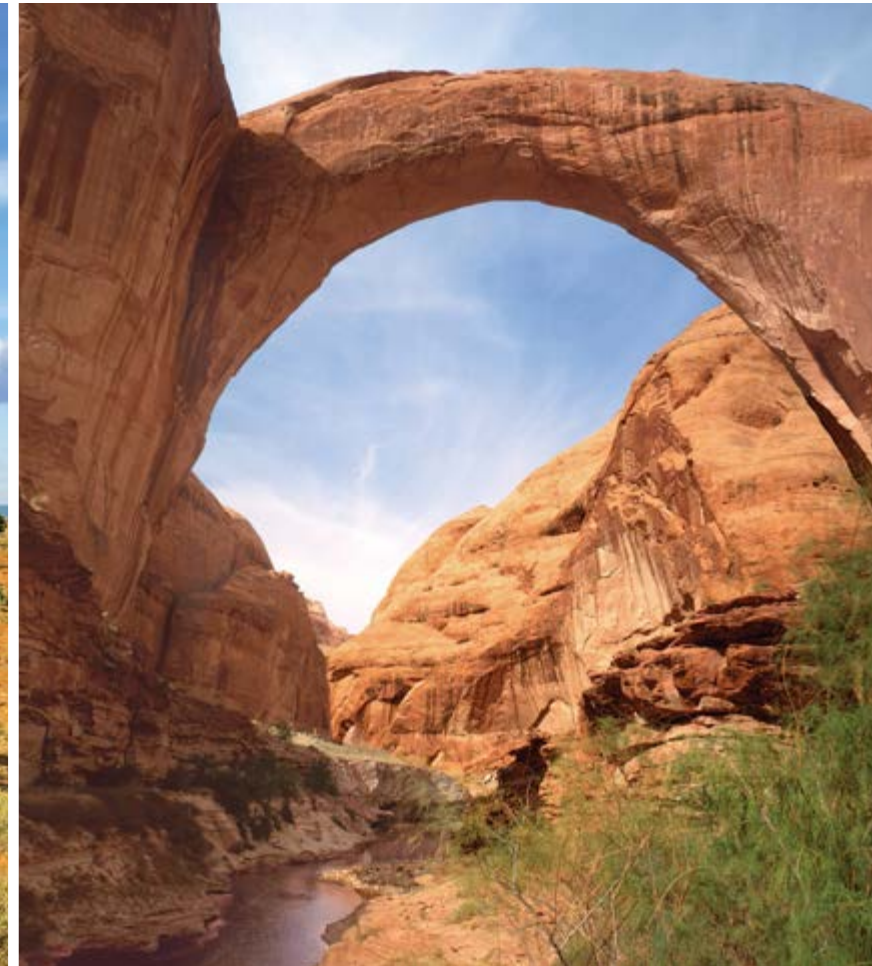
Based on their spiritual beliefs and oral traditions, the Navajo’s history of themselves varies greatly from that of modern archeologists. They tell of evolving from three previous worlds. In those worlds elements of their present culture came into being through characters and experiences that taught important lessons and introduced spiritual beings such as Spider Woman. They speak in the Athabaskan language group, which includes the Western Apaches in the Southwest and many native peoples in Western Canada and Alaska.

Modern archeologists posit that Navajo predecessors (Paleo

Indians) crossed a land bridge to Alaska from present-day Russia some 15,000 years ago. Over many centuries they migrated slowly south in pursuit of animals such as woolly mammoths, bison, and sabre-toothed tigers. There is fossil evidence of these animals in Arizona. These creatures disappeared due to a warming climate, overhunting, and combinations of other factors. As glaciers withdrew over a millennium, the Paleo Indians began to hunt smaller game and supply a significant amount of their food by farming, enabled by new technologies such as basketry for grain storage, the development of permanent housing, and increased trade with more southerly cultures.

An earlier culture called the Anasazi disappeared before the forebearers of today’s Navajos arrived in their present homeland. Archeologists believe that the Navajo became a distinguishable culture in the Four Corners area between 1100–1500 A.D. The Navajos have never been a warring tribe. They are a peaceful, family-loving culture that demonstrated courage, when necessary, by launching effective retaliatory force. The Navajo prefer to be called Dineh, meaning “the people.”

The Dineh first encountered Spanish explorers from 1581 to 1583. The Spanish introduced sheep and horses which greatly expanded their economy over the next century. Today the Navajos believe their cultural and religious practices originated within the tribe, but that weaving, farming, livestock raising,



Canyon de Chelly

At South Rim Drive’s last stop, view Spider Rock, a 750’ tall stone spire. A prominent Navajo deity, Spider Woman is a benefactor, teacher, and mother.

Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park

Valley Drive is 17 scenic, dusty miles. Here West Mitten’s iron-rich colors shimmer in a stock-watering pond. Many Navajo ranchers live in the park.

Rainbow Bridge National Monument on Lake Powell

Rainbow Bridge’s sandstone arch is 234’ W × 290’ H. After a 50-mile boat ride up stunning Lake Powell, best views require a 1.25 mile round-trip hike.

silversmithing, and some legends were learned from the Spanish and other southwestern Indian tribes. Spanish efforts to subjugate them ultimately failed. The Navajos drove the conquistadors off their lands (now eastern New Mexico) in 1774—simultaneously with the Revolutionary War in the east! However, the Spanish returned to massacre 100 Dineh in Canyon de Chelly in 1805, and dominated them until the U.S. established an Army fort near current Window Rock, New Mexico. That city is now the capital of the Navajo Nation.

In 1863 Kit Carson led a scorched-earth campaign against the Dineh which resulted in a 350-mile march of 9,000 innocents from their Arizona homes to Fort Sumner, New Mexico. The fort was ill-equipped to feed, clothe, and shelter the mass of captives. Many Navajos died enroute and many more died from privations during their captivity. After the Treaty of Bosque Redondo in 1868, both the number of surviving Dineh and the size of their former homelands were greatly reduced. Nevertheless, they trekked back home and wept with joy when they arrived. Their population gradually rebounded as they reestablished their farms and pastures, and built or restored

their hexagonal hogan homes. Surprisingly, the Treaty of Bosque Redondo was honored by the U.S. government, and most of the Dineh's former homeland was eventually restored to them.

Twentieth Century Progress

After the work of creating a Navajo Tribal Council was completed in 1927, the reservation was divided into chapters similar to counties. In the first half of the twentieth century, the U.S. government required Native American children to attend boarding schools where only English was spoken, creating a large population of bilingual Native Americans. When the U.S. entered WWI, this pool of Native Americans willingly defended the U.S. as their own country.

When the need became critical in WWI for sending encrypted messages that enemies could not decipher, Choctaw service men pioneered the use of their unwritten language to secretly transmit battle plans and instructions. Later, during WWII, some of the 450 Navajo Marines took their unwritten and unknown language and mastered translating English commands that no foreign cryptographer could understand, even if they intercepted transmissions. Sometimes they created

more than one native word for an English word, further confusing the enemies. This “code talking” was a highly classified secret. Code talkers were embedded in a platoon, company, battalion, or any forward command to receive messages directing that group in battle. The large part that Navajo Code Talkers played in winning WWII wasn't known for many years.

After their work was declassified, President Bill Clinton in 2000 proposed the Congressional Gold Medal for the code talkers. On July 26, 2001, at the Capitol Rotunda, President George W. Bush presented the Congressional Gold Medal to four of the five living American Na-

Ribbon of fall color, shaded wall across canyon

From Junction overlook, Canyon de Chelly twists through walls up to 1,000 feet high. Below are Navajo homes, hogans, orchards, livestock, and many ruins.

Antelope House ruins below tall cliff

The Basketmaker culture first built cliff houses between 750–1300 AD. Antelope House can be seen from the North Rim, but ground level viewing is best.

Looking down on ruins

White House is Canyon de Chelly's best-known ruins. The only trail into the park is from the White House overlook. Trail is 600 feet down and up!

vajo code talkers and to relatives of the 25 others. Congressional Silver Medals were authorized for every serviceman who qualified as a Navajo code talker or his surviving family member. Today it is widely recognized that we are indebted to the Navajos for their unique service to the United States.

Dazzling Destinations

Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, and Lake Powell/Antelope Canyon are quite different from each other. Antelope Canyon near Page, Arizona, is small compared to the adjacent attraction of Lake Powell, but it deserves special attention. These attractions will be described in the sequence in which they occur north of Interstate 40's Exit 333 (Chambers/Ganado.) It's about 1½ to 2½ hours' drive between the three destinations on good, mostly 2-lane roads. If you're approaching these destinations from Kanab, Utah, or the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, you can take the tour in reverse order of this article.

Canyon de Chelly, Top to Bottom

Canyon de Chelly (“shay”) and Canyon del Muerto join each other like the ears

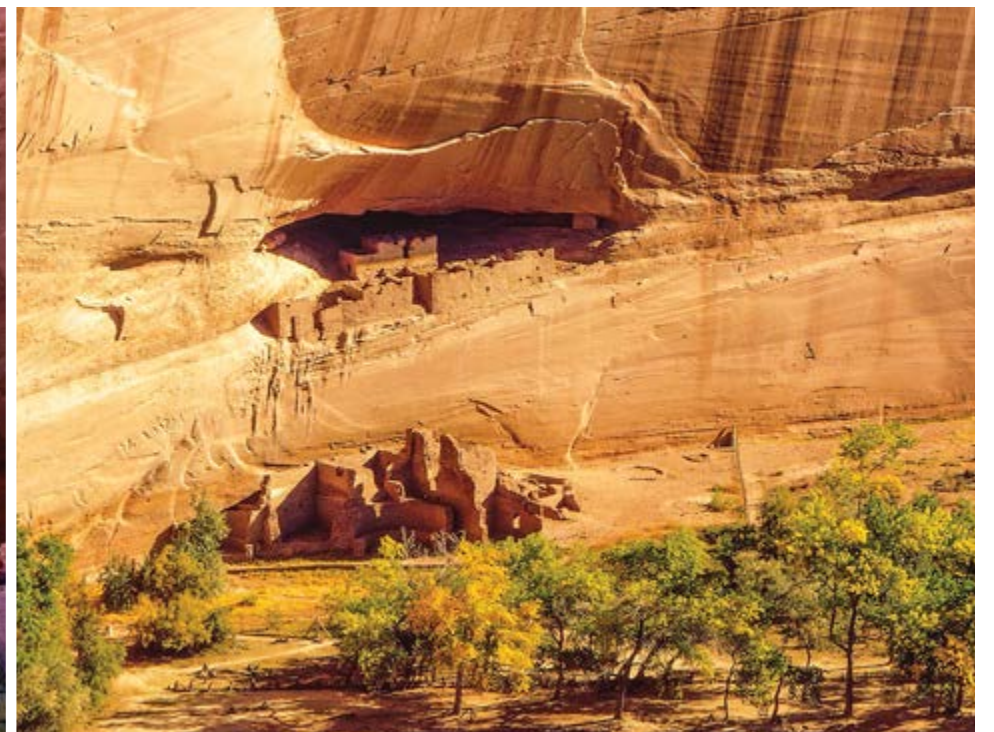
on a rabbit within Canyon de Chelly National Monument. Get oriented, hear a talk, visit displays, and walk inside an authentic Navajo hogan at the park visitor center. Don't be surprised if the docent at the hogan is a teenage boy who started volunteering at age 13. The well-spoken young Navajos you will encounter are unobtrusively proud of their culture and lands. Many Dineh are also delightfully humorous, given the opportunity.

The vista points on the North Rim Drive of Canyon del Muerto and the South Rim Drive of Canyon de Chelly provide stunning views from elevations of 250 feet to over 800 feet above the canyon floors. From the overlooks you'll see beautiful, geologically complex formations, as well as occupied Dineh farms and dwellings far below, and a number of centuries-old cliff dwellings. You can visit all the vista points of both canyons in a leisurely four hours. Note how the centuries-old ruins are often sited on ledges inside protective alcoves. Many of them are also oriented for summer sun, winter shade, and nearby natural rain water catchments.

In spring, you'll see orchards blossoming below. In summer green ribbons of tall cottonwoods line meandering, usu-

ally dry, streambeds of deep sand. But winter and summer storms can scour the canyon floor, creating areas of quicksand and widespread flowing water. Navajo tour guides know when and where it is safe to drive. Late September into mid-October is especially beautiful with the gold of fall foliage against red canyon walls. Winter can mean occasional snow on the vista points, and many cool but sunny days for visiting the rim drives.

From the White House ruins overlook, there is one trail into Canyon de Chelly. It is steep—600 feet down, and then back up! This should be hiked in late spring and after mid-September because the trail is strenuous enough without adding summer temperatures that can hover near 100 degrees. The downpours of the July to mid-September monsoon season also create hazards of slippery footing and lightning strikes. Carry a gallon of water any time of the year, preferably in a hands-free water bladder in your day-pack. Don't wear sandals. Hiking shoes and walking sticks are essential! Once you've hiked down, you can examine and photograph the famous White House Ruins nestled at the base of a sheer, mineral-streaked red sandstone wall rising up hundreds of feet. Common courtesy and



park rules ask that you do not take photos of the Dineh farm families or their homes.

Even if you've experienced Canyon de Chelly's rim drives, it is a multi-dimensional experience to travel the canyon floor with a Navajo guide. There's lots of shade down there even on a hot day. The stories the guides tell about growing up in the canyons, the amazing number of ruins you can't see from the rim, the chance to see the Dineh planting or harvesting their fields, and the unimaginable beauty of the ever-changing geological features framed by cottonwood trees will haunt and color your memories forever. Ask your guide about growing up in the canyons for a wealth of personal stories. One guide tells that as a boy he and his friends found a route down from the rim into a small, high cave, hid in it and played a transistor radio loudly when Jeep tours came by below. The echo-chamber effect made the passengers jump out and look all around, trying to figure out the source of the music.

There are many types of tours. Four-person 4WD open and enclosed Jeep tours give you great opportunities to get to know your guide, hear his or her stories of scrambling up various cliffs as kids, and ask questions about Navajo traditions. The small Jeep rides are quite jarring due to maintaining a constant speed to avoid getting bogged down in the multiple deep, soft, criss-crossing sandy tire tracks. You'll spot numerous ruins, petroglyphs, and pictographs everywhere, and the drivers stop so you can photograph the views and numerous cliff dwellings. Judge whether your joints, heart, breathing of dust, and energy are up to a small Jeep tour—but it's hard to beat!

You can also choose from enclosed SUV tours; shaded, flat-

Wall detail with many petroglyphs

Rock art called petroglyphs is seen everywhere from 4WD tours in Canyon del Muerto. This one has a Kokopelli flute player and many handprints.

Monument Valley

This scene approaching Monument Valley from Hwy. 163 has been used in countless ads and commercials. It hints of sculptural landscapes soon to come.



bed truck tours for six or more people; guided rim tours by bus; half-day, full-day, and extended tours; camping tours, guided hiking tours, special event tours including study groups, and horseback tours (primarily for experienced riders). Weather may cause cancellation of tours and closure of rim vista points temporarily or for a season. Private vehicles are not permitted in the canyon bottoms.

Cottonwood Campground near the Park Visitor Center is the only RV park available for dozens of miles in any direction, and is flat and shady. It does not accept reservations, so arrive early. It has four flush-toilet restrooms and a dump station, but no hookups. Be sure your coach batteries are charged. The close-by town of Chinle is tiny but has a supermarket, gas station, and a few major chain motels. Thunderbird Lodge and Best Western have restaurants where some tasty Navajo (and other) food is available, and there are other chain and fast food restaurants.

If you'll be traveling on Interstate 40 as part of your visit to Canyon de Chelly, stop at the Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site in Ganado, which is half way between I-40 and Chinle. The trading post has been in operation since 1878. The adjoining Hubbell residence has tours most days. This site is as authentic as trading posts get. Founder John Lorenzo Hubbell advertised and created a market for only the finest work made by Navajo rug weavers and silversmiths. It is still an operating trading post run by the National Park Service and is a favorite stop for many Arizona travelers.

Heading north to Monument Valley from Chinle on Hwy. 191, turn left onto Hwy. 59 at Many Farms. It's a fine 2-lane road with nice scenery and ends just a few miles east of Kayenta. Look for little golden prairie dogs on or beside the highway.

Monument Valley = Magnificent Vistas

Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park will look familiar. You've seen bits of its stark landscapes in movies such as *Stagecoach*; *The Searchers*; *How the West was Won*; *Easy Rider*; *2001, A Space Odyssey*; and many others. You've also seen it online, in TV and



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magazine ads, and in travel articles. Seeing it in person adds depth and height and breadth and interactions with the Navajo culture to those glimpses. Its geologic oddities such as the Totem, the Mittens, or Eye of the Sun, invariably evoke a sense of wonder. You'll return to your twenty-first century Tiffin time capsule at the end of each day a changed person—which may be why you travel in the first place.

There are no campgrounds in the nearby town of Kayenta, but north off Hwy. 163 there are two at or near Monument Valley. The Gouldings Campground is a few minutes west of Goulding's Lodge on Tribal Route 42. The campground is pretty, clean, fairly shady, and modern. It is nestled quietly between rounded red sandstone bluffs and has full hookups, pull-through paved sites that can handle a 45-foot coach, restrooms with hot showers, and an indoor swimming pool. It is open all year. The historic Goulding's Lodge has a restaurant (try the Navajo tacos), museum, trading post, gas station, ATM, and groceries. Many tours of the Monument Valley area can be booked at Goulding's.

East across Hwy. 163 from Goulding's on Tribal Route 42 is the entrance to Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park. The park's visitor center, museum, trading post, restaurant, patio talks, and tour guides are inside the View Hotel. The restaurant and hotel room balconies all have sweeping views of several of Monument Valley's dramatic stone buttes and needles.

Across from the hotel's north parking lot you can visit female and male hogans that are made of interwoven cedar logs and bark. Mud made from the clay soil is plastered onto the outside of the structure, and a hole in the roof lets out smoke from

Daylight with West Mitten shaded

Sunlight on the western horizon can burst open to spotlight The Mittens. Summer or winter clouds soften photos of many formations' stark geometry.

Line of sandstone spires with dunes

The Yeibichei Dancers, left, are named after ceremonial dancers/deities. The single spire to the right is simply called the Totem. All are sandstone.



the central fire. The structure is cool in summer and warm in winter. Today most Dineh live in modern homes with a nearby hogan used for ceremonies and some cooking.

The View Campground has no hookups and the sites are somewhat level. They lack shade but there is a restroom, showers, a dump station, convenience store, and a trailhead. You can quickly walk to sunrise and sunset views within the campground.

Exploring Monument Valley

The 17-mile drive through the most famous formations of Monument Valley can be done in an SUV with good clearance, though the condition of the dirt road varies with recent precipitation and how long ago the road was graded. Your insurance company's roadside service truck may not be allowed on dirt roads, and you also risk dings from stones launched by the tires of passing cars.

The valuable thing you miss by driving yourself is the wealth of history, cultural insights, and information gained from Navajo guides who were born and raised in the Monument Valley area. Most guides also know the best lighting and viewpoints for taking photos. There are tours to more private nearby areas for hiking, camping, horseback riding, and photography. Book a Back Country tour to see lesser known formations such as the Eye of the Sun and the Ear of the Wind in Lower Monument Valley, or the 4WD trek to Hunt's Mesa for serious photographers. The Mystery Valley tour visits labyrinth-like box canyons, Skull and Honeymoon Arches, ruins and petroglyphs, and some short, often rocky hikes to examine the work of ancient builders. There are also full-moon and starlight tours in the cool of the evening.

Vehicles range from 4-person Jeeps to shaded flatbed trucks to larger 4WD SUVs. Don't hesitate to ask your Navajo guide questions to start a conversation. Be aware that these tours can be in open or windy vehicles, usually on bumpy dirt roads or off-road. Don't go if you have heart, back, hip, knee, asthma, mobility, or other concerns, such as pregnancy. Weather may





Wahweap Bay with moored houseboats

Houseboats moored here in Wahweap Bay are just one way to enjoy Lake Powell. Rent power boats, ski tubes, water skis, kayaks, or launch your own boat.

Horseshoe Bend

Four miles southwest of Page, AZ, on Hwy. 89, hike the ½-mile trek to overlooks of Horseshoe Bend. Boat on the Colorado River below looks like a rice grain.

cause cancellations, so respect the judgment of the tour operators. Ask if water is provided. You'll need it.

Once you've made your Monument Valley memories, take Hwy. 163 south to Kayenta and turn west onto Hwy. 160. After 21 miles, you can take a short side trip to Navajo National Monument to see the large Betatakin ruins under an immense sandstone alcove, or to spend the night at the nice campground. Back on Hwy. 160, it's another 12 miles to Hwy. 98 where you'll turn north and travel 66 miles to Page, Arizona, to visit Lake Powell and Antelope Canyon.

Page, Arizona, and the Creation of A Mammoth Lake

Page, Arizona, was created for workers building the Glen Canyon Dam. Page has a number of good local restaurants, banks, ATMs, a Safeway supermarket, Walmart, a hospital and veterinary hospital, RV mechanics, a John Wesley Powell Museum, several multi-story motels, and many churches. The south shores of Lake Powell east of the Grand Canyon, with the exception of the city of Page itself, are Navajo Nation lands. Recreational opportunities abound, as 3 million annual visitors can attest.

Glen Canyon Dam impounds the Colorado River as it flows down from the Colorado Rockies, then southwest through Utah, Lake Powell, and the Grand Canyon. The Gunnison, Green, and San Juan Rivers are major tributaries above the lake. At Lake Mead the Colorado River turns south to create Arizona's western border with California.

Major John Wesley Powell was the first person to navigate what is now Lake Powell and the Grand Canyon. The Civil War hero lost most of his right arm in the Battle of Shiloh, but went

on to become a self-taught geologist, botanist, ethnologist, and explorer. He and his crew floated the Green and Colorado Rivers in 1869 and 1872 in wooden dories. He was constantly climbing canyon walls, creating accurate surveys, recording flora and fauna, and interacting with native peoples. This resulted in his appointment as first director of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Powell field-studied indigenous languages as well as oral legends, courtship and marriage practices, means of subsistence, and more. After his studies were published, he was appointed the first director of Smithsonian's Bureau of Ethnology.

In 1893, at a conference of Western farmers and developers, Powell accurately predicted, "I tell you gentlemen that you are piling up a heritage of conflict and litigation over water rights, for there is not enough water to supply the land." Learn more from his published diaries or Wallace Stegner's *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West*. Powell's extensive accomplishments in the Southwest certainly staked his claim to have Lake Powell named for him.

The Southwestern water wars which Powell foresaw ultimately necessitated the building of many dams on the Colorado River. Glen Canyon Dam at Lake Powell was completed in 1966. It took 14 years to fill the lake because the porous sandstone of Glen Canyon absorbed so much water.

Lake Powell, Glen Canyon, and neighboring Grand Canyon are all eroded from the Colorado Plateau, which is illustrated at hitthetrail.com/glen-canyon-rock-layers. The practical aspect of this geology is that if you rent a boat to explore Lake Powell and its side canyons, watch the weather report for predicted wind speeds. The breathtakingly gorgeous tall, red canyon walls often rise abruptly from the waterline. While piloting your boat, do not allow yourself to become distracted. When the wind comes up, the waves do, too. Narrow passages make the waves rougher. Keep a mental note of how far you are from the last beach, as finding beaches for shelter can be difficult, and storms on the lake can become quickly treacherous. Electronic signal reception is difficult.

Lake Powell's shoreline is 1,960 miles long when you include its 96 watery side canyons. The lake provides water for 400,000 Southwest homes, and about 25 percent of the nation's food is grown on land irrigated by the dam.

Where to Perch, What to Do

The Page Lake Powell Campground is a few minutes north of Hwy. 98 on Coppermine Road. It is convenient to Page's restaurants and shops, and close to the Antelope Point Marina's restaurants and tour operators. Most tours to Lake Powell, Lee's Ferry (by raft) and Upper and Lower Antelope Canyon can also be booked in downtown Page.

Wahweap Campground is across Glen Canyon Dam on Hwy. 89, then east a few minutes on Wahweap Blvd. The Wahweap area has three restaurants. Wahweap Campground has 17 pull-through

sites, a convenience store, and is only a quarter mile from a swimming beach.

Both of the Page area RV campgrounds have full hookups and all the amenities you expect, including some shade. Campground staff can help you with ways to experience the lake, from tour boats and fishing, to rentals of everything from water skis, ski tubes, and kayaks, and from small boats up to houseboats.

Page also offers golf, helicopter rides, and a close-by trail southwest off of Hwy. 89 to the Horseshoe Bend overlook. There the Colorado River makes a U-turn around a peninsular butte that dwarfs boats on the river as if they were grains of rice. Bring your widest camera lens!

Antelope Canyon, Wonder of Wonders

A can't-miss experience in the Page area is the Navajo guided tours to Upper and/or

Lower Antelope Canyon. Reserve a seat on a shaded, flat-bed truck or on a bus to this truly spectacular place. You've probably seen photos of Antelope's slot canyons and didn't know what they were, nor where.

Upper and Lower Antelope are two parts of one canyon where water continues to erode narrow slots in the soft sandstone at ground level. Centuries of flash floods scoured narrow, low areas that grew deeper rather than wider. So these short canyons are 100 feet deep but seldom more than about 12 to 18 feet wide. The rocks, logs, and debris that rush through these slots spiral around, sculpting the soft rock into visually swirling and dancing forms. Colors range from corals, purples, soft browns, reds, rusts, and golds. Shafts of light enter the canyons in the weeks before and after the June 21st solstice. Most visitors jaws are perpetually dropped as they tour the canyons.

The Navajo guides do a remarkable job of keeping groups together, letting groups that are on their way out (of Upper Antelope) get past incoming groups, telling you where to focus your camera in each of the 'rooms' of the canyons, and usually maintaining a positive attitude while answering people's questions. During the weeks around the solstice, it's like herding cats, but somehow you come away with lots of spectacular photos, even on cell phones. Read up on your digital camera about setting your ISO for dim light, because even though the canyon rooms never feel dark due to light seeping down from 100 feet above, a higher ISO setting means you can hand-hold without camera blur.

Photography tours for 8 to 10 people are timed for optimum light between about 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. That doesn't keep the busloads of 20 from coming into the canyons, but it means that when it's your group's turn to photograph a room, other visitors are shooed out of sight and you can quickly set up your tripod. In fact a tripod is *required* to be accepted into a photography tour, and tripods *are not accepted* on non-photographic tours.

In Upper Antelope Canyon you walk in at ground level and slowly walk for about



a breathtaking quarter of a mile. Of course you get to photograph on the way out, too. Lower Antelope Canyon tours enter down five flights of ladder-like stairs fastened to the curving walls. You slowly work your way through 1.1 miles of downright stupendous towering, colorful, carved sandstone walls, then ascend eight different ladder-like staircases to the surface.

Laced athletic shoes are essential, even for kids. People with knee, hip, or back problems, or mobility issues, should choose Upper Antelope. You may feel claustrophobic in spite of the natural light, especially in the often narrower Lower Antelope. The entrance to the tours is not far from town, but you'll be traveling quickly, perhaps in open trucks, over the wide and sandy approach to the canyons' entrances. Wind, dust, and summer heat in the vehicles are likely, although it is cool inside the slot canyons. Wear a hat with a chin strap and brim for the jouncing, windy ride! And the rides are jostling--not good for heart, back, hip, or knee limitations, or if pregnant.

The Dineh guides are extremely cautious about heavy rains occurring several hundred miles up the watershed. Flash

floods pick up debris and can travel 75 miles per hour, so if tours are cancelled on a sunny day, they have good reason.

Heading Out


It's interesting to learn a bit about the Dineh before you visit the Navajo Nation by exploring the topics on the website Navajopeople.org. You can also download a short introductory book, Charles Rivers Editors *The Navajos*, from the Native American Tribes series, or perhaps the lengthier *Dineji Na'nitin: Navajo Traditional Teachings and History* by Robert S. McPherson. Other books and DVDs are available in hotels and visitor centers throughout the Navajo Nation. Since this Nation encompasses as much land as Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island combined, covering all of its customs and places you can visit could fill this issue of *Roughing it Smoothly*.

Once you've created wonderful memories in Navajoland, what do you do for an encore? Head to Colorado for some trees, mountains, lakes, and cool breezes, or west to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Go east to Chama, New Mexico's excursion train, or south to Flagstaff and

Sedona. Back home, a year or two down the line, you may find yourself thinking that all that you experienced in the Navajo Nation was a beguiling mirage. Come back for a reality check.

The Hopi Nation

Although there is much intermingling of the Navajo and Hopi Nations, they are separate tribes with their own clans, spiritual practices, and traditions. The Hopi Nation is entirely surrounded by the Navajo Nation. Many of the Hopis live on one of three mesas, others live in nine nearby villages. The scenic pueblo of Walpi is on First Mesa; Shongopavi is on Second Mesa, where you'll also find the Hopi Cultural Center Restaurant & Inn; and Hotevilla is on Third Mesa.

Hopi art is renowned for its unique and beautiful silversmithing, carving, pottery, textiles, and painting. A Hopi Arts Trail tour is a most satisfying way to experience the artwork and the artists in their home workshops. Visit the Hopi Cultural Center to learn about the Hopi Arts Trail tour and tribal dances that are open to the public. Hwy. 264 accesses most of Hopi land. 

Ethereal shafts of light

For a month around June 21, the noon sunlight enters slots in the rock above Upper and Lower Antelope Canyons, creating ethereal shafts of light.

Soft coral ripples and a face-like darker sandstone

Violent flash floods sculpted soft coral ripples and a fiery counterpart. Each canyon has many natural 'rooms' up to 100 feet high with roof openings.



Spring 2018 Rally: Tucson, Arizona

by Sally Moore

The Tiffin Allegro Club will be hosting their spring rally in the beautiful desert region of southern Arizona on February 19-22, 2018. This will be a great area to visit and explore. The famous western town of Tombstone is nearby. This historic city located in Cochise County was founded in 1879 and is well known for the ongoing conflict that existed between the Earp brothers, Wyatt, Virgil, and Morgan, as well as Doc Holliday and a band of outlaws known as The Cowboys. Threats and conflicts escalated until the famous shootout on October 26, 1881. Tourism



and western memorabilia are now the main commercial enterprises, and the Tombstone Historic District is a National Historic Landmark.

For a totally opposite experience, visit the Biosphere2 located north of Tucson at the base of the Santa Catalina Mountains. This one-of-a-kind facility sits on a ridge at nearly 4000 feet and is surrounded by a magnificent natural desert preserve. Experience what Time-Life Books named one of the 50 Must-See Wonders of the World. Discover real-time research on the future of our planet as it unfolds in the world's largest earth science laboratory.

The Saguaro National Park in Tucson is home to the nation's largest cacti. The giant saguaro is the universal symbol of the American west. These majestic plants, found only in a small portion of the USA, are protected by Saguaro National Park to the east and west of Tucson. See these enormous cacti silhouetted by the beauty of a magnificent desert sunset. Also visit Montezuma Castle National Monument to see one of the best preserved cliff dwellings in North America. This 20 room high-rise apartment, nestled into a towering limestone cliff, tells a story of ingenuity, survival, and prosperity in an unforgiving desert landscape. Come marvel at this enduring legacy of the Sinagua culture.

Shop Early for Christmas!

Who do you have on your Christmas list that is hard to shop for? Who is downsizing and spending more & more time in their Tiffin rig? Who loves their Tiffin? We can help your shopping needs!

The Tiffin Allegro Club has a great selection of Tiffin polos, jackets, caps, and other logo items for those on your "hard to shop for" Christmas list. You can view our current merchandise online at tiffinmotorhomes.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/TiffinAllegroClubCatalog2017.pdf. However, we are not Amazon! We cannot get the merchandise to you over-

night because we do not have the space to stock every color of every size in our club store. If we have to order your item and



Be sure to catch these interesting sites before or after the Tiffin rally as we have every day packed with things to see and do during the rally. From craft shows to swap meets; educational seminars regarding your coach; ice cream socials; and live entertainment nightly with several delicious catered meals, we have many activities planned for you.

The Pima County Fairgrounds will host 300 coaches along with a display of beautiful new Tiffin Motorhomes available to tempt everyone! The rally activities inside the buildings will be closed to non-rally attendees, but everyone is invited to visit the new coach display outside on the fairgrounds.

The fairground's campground has **30-amps, water and sewer hookups, and wifi**. Where better to be than in southern Arizona in February! If the rally has sold out by the time you read this, check the waitlist to see if it has space available. If waitlist space is available, add your name to it for possible cancellations.

We hope your 2018 travel plans include spending time with us at a Tiffin Allegro Club rally! The comradery with other owners and local chapters is invaluable. Tiffin representatives from Red Bay will be on hand. Make your plans now to include a Tiffin rally in your 2018 travels!

get it embroidered, it can take two weeks. Therefore, we have an earlier cut-off date for "in time for Christmas" deliveries. Any orders for Christmas delivery must be placed by Thanksgiving. If we have your size/color in stock, your order will be shipped immediately. Gift certificates are also available.

Start early and let us help you with your Christmas shopping! Place your order by calling 256-356-8522; sending by fax to 256-356-9746; or email your order to AllegroClub@TiffinMotorhomes.com. Give us a call Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Central Time.

Summer 2018 Rally: Goshen, Indiana

by Sally Moore

Join us in the heartland of America on May 14-18, 2018, for our summer Tiffin Allegro Club rally in Goshen, Indiana! This is a wonderful area to visit and explore. Be sure to visit the RV/MH Hall of Fame in nearby Elkhart where Bob Tiffin was an inductee of the Class of 1999 and recognized as a champion for customer satisfaction and service. His nomination originated with support from customers like you! The RV Founders Hall displays trailers, photos and memorabilia reaching back to the 1920's and 1930's. Advancements in the RV industry are pre-



sented, dating from before WWI to the present. Be sure to visit Mae West's 1931 Chevrolet Housecar built for Paramount Studios when Miss West left vaudeville to make movies in 1931.

There are several botanical gardens and historic mansions in the area such as the Ruthmere Mansion. Railroad buffs should be sure to visit the National New York Central Railroad Museum to recapture the glory days when America's railroads were symbols of progress and goodwill ambassadors across the USA.

We will host 300 coaches at the Elkhart County 4H Fairgrounds in Goshen, Indiana and have a display of beautiful new

Tiffin Motorhomes available to tempt you!

The fairground's campground has **30 amp electrical service, water, wi-fi, and sewer hookups**. Our rally begins on Monday, May 14th, and coaches will depart on Friday, May 18th. If you wish to arrive at the fairgrounds prior to the rally, information will be provided after registration.

Your rally fee will include multiple catered meals, ice cream socials, live entertainment, four nights' camping, seminars, shopping with RV suppliers and local vendors, and other fun activities. Your rally fee also includes our terrific Tiffin Technicians performing up to three minor repairs on your coaches. You have made a sizeable investment in purchasing a beautiful motor coach. Take this valu-

able opportunity at our rallies to learn all you can by attending our seminars and talking with representatives from Tiffin suppliers such as Freightliner, Onan, Triple H Electronics and others.

Information required for this form:

Tiffin Allegro Club membership #
Name, address, cell #

Tiffin Allegro Club Chapter #
(if applicable)

Model, year & length of Tiffin coach

First time rally attendee?

Request for handicap parking area?

Complete the required information by filling in the blanks and click SUBMIT. Pay for the rally on the next page by entering your credit card information into this secure PayPal site. It is not necessary to have a PayPal account for payment. You can pay as a "guest" the same as those who have an account. If the rally sells out before you register, don't despair! Add your name to our waiting list and we will contact you if a space becomes available.

An outside vendor accumulates all registration forms and provides them to the Club in the order in which they are received to eliminate problems with overloading our email server, jamming the fax machine, etc. **No registrations will be accepted by mail, in person or by telephone.**

Anyone not having access to the internet can ask a friend or family member to register for them. This rally will sell out quickly so don't delay in getting your registration completed online. Call our office at 256-356-8522 ahead of time if you have any questions. **We do not recommend trying to register for the rally on a smart phone or mini-tablet!** Too much information in too small a space!

We hope your 2018 travel plans include spending time with us at a Tiffin Allegro Club rally! The comradery with other owners and local chapters is invaluable. Tiffin representatives from Red Bay will be on hand. Make your plans now!

Red Bay Lions Club Collects Eyeglasses

The Tiffin Allegro Club is honored to actively support the Red Bay Lions Club and Lions Club International by collecting used eyeglasses. We have collection boxes at every Tiffin rally across the nation as well as locally inside our Red Bay office. Usable glasses give new life! Refractive errors (far and near sightedness) can be easily corrected with eyeglasses, yet millions living in low and middle income countries lack access to basic eye care services. The lack of eyeglasses denies children and adults opportunities for education, employment, and a better quality of life. Lions have recognized the urgent need for corrective lenses and collect usable glasses to support the Lions Recycle for Sight Program.

Since Helen Keller, a native of nearby Tusculumbia, Alabama, challenged Lions to become “Knights of the Blind” in 1925, they have improved eye health and eye care for hundreds of millions of people around the world. Today, 80% of vision impairments are preventable or curable, so their service is more important than ever before. Lions screen vision, educate our communities, build clinics, and support the blind and visually impaired through assistive technology and vocational training programs. They work to preserve the precious gift of sight for the world.

We are proud to say that Tiffin Motorhome owners are making large donations of usable glasses to our local club. After collecting the glasses and placing

them in the hands of our local Lions Club, they are shipped to an official Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center for processing. There, the glasses are sorted to determine those that are usable or unusable, processed, and placed in inventory for distribution to optical missions around the world. Lions help to minimize landfill waste by supporting precious metal reclamation and scrap processing for damaged glasses that are unusable. Broken glasses that are discarded provide “scrap to cash” income aiding local community projects.

Your efforts count! Donate your used glasses, including sunglasses and reading glasses, at the Tiffin Allegro Club collection box in Red Bay and also at every Tiffin Rally!

Tiffin Rally Registration Process

The Tiffin Allegro Club is blessed to have a difficult problem! Tiffin rallies have become so popular, we can’t accommodate everyone who wants to attend! All of the 2017 rallies sold out between 5 & 90 minutes of the opening bell! In order to better serve Tiffin owners with our wonderful Tiffin service techs and personal attention at seminars and functions, *at this time*, we have no plans to expand our rally size beyond 300 coaches.

To make rally registrations fair and available to everyone, we use an outside registration processor in order to eliminate problems with overloading our

email server, jamming the fax machine, etc. This outside vendor will accumulate all registrations and provide us information in the order that registrations are received. **No rally registrations will be accepted by mail, in person or by telephone.** The **only way to register for a rally** will be online at Tiffinmotorhomes.com. Click on the Owner’s Club tab, then click Tiffin Allegro Club, finally click on Rallies and go to the specific rally you wish to attend. Complete the required information and pay for the rally online. A PayPal page will open immediately after you submit the registration form. It is not necessary to have a PayPal account

to make payment. You can also pay as a “guest” with your credit card the same as someone with a PayPal account.

Again, early registrations will not be accepted and you must have a current membership in the Tiffin Allegro Club to participate. Anyone not having access to the internet should ask a friend or family member to register for them as we will not be able to register anyone by telephone.

As always, we are here to answer any questions you have concerning upcoming rallies. Give us a call at 256-356-8522 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Central Time. Travel safe and enjoy your beautiful Tiffin coach!

2018 Tiffin Allegro Club Rally Schedule

SPRING RALLY

**Pima County Fairgrounds,
Tucson, Arizona**

Arrive Monday February 19, 2018

Depart Friday February 23, 2018

Registration opens at 11:00 a.m. CDT
October 17, 2017

SUMMER RALLY

**Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds,
Goshen, Indiana**

Arrive Monday May 14, 2018

Depart Friday May 18, 2018

Registration opens at 11:00 a.m. CDT
January 9, 2018

FALL FOLIAGE RALLY

**Champlain Valley Exposition,
Essex Junction, Vermont**

Arrive Monday October 1, 2018

Depart Friday October 5, 2018

Registration opens at 11:00 a.m. CDT
May 1, 2018



CLUB & RESORT COLLECTION

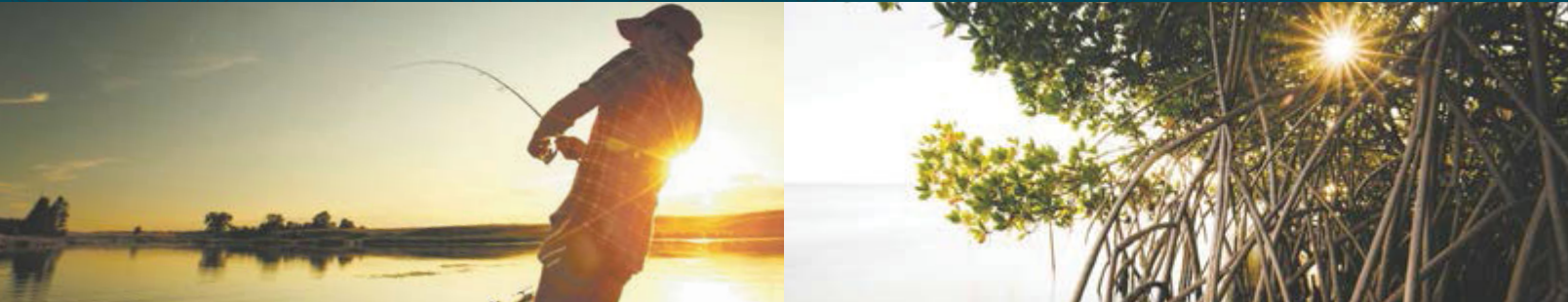
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The sketches, renderings, graphic materials, plans, specifications, terms, conditions and statements contained herein are proposed only, and the Developer reserves the right to modify, revise or withdraw any or all of same in its sole discretion and without prior notice. All improvements, designs and construction are subject to first obtaining the appropriate federal, state and local permits and approvals for same. The information provided, including pricing, is solely for informational purposes, and is subject to change without notice. This is not an offer to sell, or solicitation of offers to buy, the condominium units in jurisdictions where such offer or solicitation cannot be made or are otherwise prohibited by law. This offering is made only by the offering documents for the condominium and no statement should be relied upon if not made in the offering documents.

Recalls for 2016–2017

NHTSA # 15V-880, Transport Canada #2016-035 Coach Step Double & Triple Electric Entry Steps

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

Please contact Lippert Components, Inc (LCI) at 574-537-8900 or customerservice@lci.com to arrange for repair.

NHTSA # 16V-397, Transport Canada # 2016-305 ZF/Bosch Steering Gear Recall

Tiffin Motorhomes has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, could exist on the following models of motorhomes: **2015-2016 Allegro Buses, and 2014-2016 Phaetons.** The specific units affected were built on Tiffin Motorhome's PowerGlide Chassis. Tiffin Motorhomes was notified by ZF North America of the possibility that some steering gear boxes mounted on the front axle were built using the wrong spacer. If the wrong spacer was installed in a steering gear box, the insufficient height can result in too much play. This could lead to the connection wearing out, which could lead to a loss of connection between the steering wheel and front axle wheels. A loss of connection while driving may cause a sudden loss of steering control, increasing the risk of a vehicle crash.

NHTSA # 16V-532, Transport Canada # 2016-389, Tiffin Recall # TIF-100 Breaking of Windshield Wiper Arms

Tiffin Motorhomes has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, could exist

on the following models of motorhomes: **2007-2011 Allegro Open Roads & REDs, 2007-2010 Allegro Bays, 2010-2011 Allegro Breezes, 2007-2011 Allegro Buses, 2007-2011 Phaetons and 2007-2011 Zephyrs.** These motorhomes are equipped with windshield wiper arms that could break causing the wiper arms and blades to fall off. If the wiper arms were to break, this would reduce the driver's visibility in rainy conditions and could increase the possibility of a crash. Tiffin Motorhomes will be supplying owners with a new set of wiper arms to replace the defective ones.

NHTSA # 16V-692, Tiffin #TIF-104 Incorrect Weight Capacity Sticker on Allegro Open Road Hitch

Tiffin Motorhomes has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists on the following models of motorhomes: **2015 – 2017 Allegro Open Roads.** These motorhomes have a sticker attached to the tow hitch that lists an incorrect weight capacity for the hitch. The incorrect label states a gross trailer capacity of 10,000 LB with a max tongue weight of 1,000 LB. The correct label should state a gross trailer capacity of 5,000 LB with a max tongue weight of 500 LB. If the hitch is loaded to the capacity on the original sticker, this could lead to a failure of the hitch. Failure of the hitch could result in the loss of the tow vehicle which could result in a crash. Tiffin Motorhomes is sending out a correct weight capacity sticker to be attached to the hitch of your motorhome.

NHTSA # 17V-113, Tiffin #TIF-105 Incorrect Weight Capacity Sticker on Allegro Open Road Hitch

NOTE: This is an expansion of 16V-692, TIF-104, issued to include additional **2017 Allegro Open Road** Motorhomes.

NHTSA # 17V-163, Tiffin # TIF-106, Phaeton Exhaust Modification 2010-2012 on PowerGlide Chassis ONLY

Tiffin Motorhomes has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists on the following models of motorhomes: **2010 - 2012 Phaeton's** that are built with 2010 EPA-Certified engines on a PowerGlide Chassis. It has been found that the exhaust pipe

is mounted too close to the underside of the floor. A heat shield and insulation that was previously installed on these coaches may fail and allow excessive heat to contact the floor of the coach which can result in a fire. Tiffin Motorhomes will remove the existing *side inlet* DPF exhaust configuration, and install a new *end inlet* DPF exhaust configuration on these coaches to provide greater clearance between the exhaust tube and the floor. This repair will be made at no cost to you. This repair will take approximately 12 hours to complete. NOTE: This is an expansion of 15V-612.

NHTSA Recall # 17V-200, Tiffin Recall # TIF-107 2011-2016 Allegro Open Road Rail Attachment for Tow Hitch

Tiffin Motorhomes has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists on the following models of motorhomes: **2011-2016 Allegro Open Roads.** These motorhomes have incorrectly sized holes at the attachment point in the frame rail for the tow hitch. Under certain loading conditions the hitch and/or the tow vehicle could become detached from the motorhome. Failure of the hitch could result in the loss of the tow vehicle, which could result in a crash causing injury or damage to property. Tiffin Motorhomes will provide frame rail extension liner brackets that will correct the size of the bolt holes.

NHTSA Recall # 17V-232, Tiffin Recall # TIF-108 2017 Allegro Breeze Central Steering Ball Joints

Tiffin Motorhomes has decided that a defect, which relates to motor vehicle safety, exists on the following models of motorhomes: **2017 Allegro Breeze** Motorhomes. Tiffin Motorhomes has been notified that some Independent Front Suspension (IFS) modules manufactured by Reyco Granning and installed on these models of motorhomes could contain loose ball joints. If loose ball joints are not detected, they may eventually separate from their mating part, which could result in a loss of steering control. This increases the possibility of a motor vehicle crash. Specific involved motorhomes will need to be inspected to determine if the IFS modules contain loose ball joints. If loose ball joints are found they will be repaired.

Garnet Unveils New Bluetooth® Enabled Gauge for RV Holding Tanks

Garnet Instruments Limited announced recently the launch of its new **709-BTP3 RV tank monitor.** This new gauge now has **Bluetooth®** wireless technology, which allows Recreational Vehicle (RV) owners to check their tank levels via their smartphone or tablet device.

Tank levels and battery voltage can be displayed on a smartphone or tablet with a free downloadable app available on both iTunes and Google Play. The 709-BTP3 gauge monitors battery voltage, fresh and sewer holding tanks as well as connecting to your LPG tank sensor. It also has a switch for the water pump.

“Unlike so many other gauges on the market today that foul up with waste and often read full regardless of tank levels, Garnet’s SeeLevel II™ gauges do not foul up. They are easy to install and provide a consistently accurate readout. There is no more guessing how full your tank is.” stated George Fraser, president and founder of Garnet Instruments Ltd. “With the new Bluetooth® enabled gauge, we have taken it one step further and can now provide you with that same accurate up-to-date information via your smartphone or tablet.”

The 709-BTP3 is accurate to 3/8 of an inch (0.9525 cm). Functioning on a common bus system, the SeeLevel only requires two wires to connect the sensors to the display and can use existing wires. Accessible tanks are easy to retrofit as the sensors adhere externally to the holding tanks, eliminating sewage buildup on the sensors. The sensors are designed to be shortened with the option to stack two sensors for larger tanks.

For more information on this prod-



uct, please contact Garnet Instruments at (800) 617-7384 or visit their website at www.rvgauge.com. Commercial accounts should contact Scott Weatherall at (780)

467-1010 or sweatherall@garnetinstruments.com

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How is your fuel mileage?

Don't you just hate it when you listen to other diesel RV owners tell you their mileage, and it's a lot better than yours? Here are some tips and info on what you can do to improve fuel mileage. There are several ways to keep in touch with your motorhome's power plant and fuel system. I have a 2008 Phaeton 40QBH with a 360-hp Cummins engine. The Cummins certainly helps, but it's not the only claim to fame when it comes to mileage. It's only reasonable and reliable when you do the right calculations and maintenance.

I was ready to purchase a coach when the Tiffin factory did not have any more Cummins engines available. They offered a Detroit Diesel or Mercedes. I elected to wait for the Cummins and was fortunate to buy a coach prior to the required addition of the DEF system.

Considering road and motorhome conditions with my overloaded 40-foot Phaeton (we are full timers), my average mileage is 7.5 to 8.5 miles per gallon. There are too many variables to nail down what a specific average mileage quote should be, but I am averaging 8 mpg.

Be sure the fuel tanks are full. Usually the diesel fuel gets foamy so you have to be patient when filling the tank. When you fill up, be sure you can see the fuel in the fill tube each time you want to get an accurate mileage reading. Another tip is to fuel up at the same pump, if you can. If your coach is tipped, you will not get an accurate calculation on the fuel consumption.

When you pull up to the pump sometimes you may notice your motorhome tipping to one side (especially at truck stops). That is because those larger heavy trucks can permanently depress the ground. That happens more on an asphalt base than on concrete. If you're not level your tank may not be full and the opposite side will have more air. That may be enough to show up on your mileage figures. My calculations are based on

at least six long trips, using the average for my fuel mileage.

More of the important mileage variables are your driving habits, fuel system condition, correct tire pressure, weather, and less coach weight. I have my coach serviced at the Freightliner factory service area in Gaffney, South Carolina once a year regardless of mileage. They do inspections and some specific service based on the time of the last service, but most service is based on the accumulated mileage of the coach.

I always have the air filter inspected and changed as needed. My oil and filter, desiccant, and fuel filters are always changed annually. You also have to take into consideration your tire pressure. Although it does not affect mileage, don't forget to periodically pull the lanyards to drain the moisture that accumulates in the air tanks. You should take a look under your coach and check the transmission, engine, and radiator levels for leaks before each trip. Engine, transmission, and radiator fluids should be changed at the appropriate time according to your coach manuals. I also use a fuel conditioner at each fill-up. Be certain the conditioner is approved for your engine. Check your coach instruction manual for the recommended service intervals.

Other considerations for good mileage are your speed, road conditions, especially hills and winds. These can be definite mileage killers. I hold it to 60 mph and use economy mode on the Allison transmission whenever I can for the best mileage.

The following FMCA web site will give you information on mileage from other motorhome owners. As the saying goes, take what some owners say about their mileage with a grain of salt.

community.fmca.com/topic/7900-diesel-motorhome-mpg-honest-answers-please/

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Common Eye Problems in Dogs and Cats

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

Our pets are subject to a variety of problems involving their eyes. Some eye problems are hereditary and some are related to the environment, while others can be bacterial or viral in origin.

Hereditary conditions that can affect your pet's eyes are called Entropion (eyelids fold in) and Ectropion (eyelids droop). Both of these conditions can be resolved with surgery. Entropion and Ectropion are seen mainly in dogs, and only rarely in cats. Dogs prone to these conditions are from the Bassett Hound, St. Bernard, Cocker Spaniel, Bloodhound, and Mastiff breeds.

Conjunctivitis, where the white part of the eye becomes inflamed and red, is a common problem in dogs and cats. This can be caused by irritants in the air, chemicals, soaps, or by hanging their head out the window when riding in a car. Certain virus' and bacteria can infect the eye, causing redness and a discharge. Treatment involves identifying the cause and removing it by either flushing the eye or using antibiotic ointments or antiviral drops or ointment in the pet's eye.

Protective measures I recommend include applying a petroleum base ophthalmic ointment to the pet's eyes before bathing them. This helps protect their eyes if soap accidentally gets in when rinsing your dog or washing around his or her head. Also, to prevent eye irritation, don't let your dog ride in the car with its head out the window. Allowing your dog to do this is like riding a motorcycle without a windshield and wearing no goggles.

Another malady of the eye is known as Cherry Eye. Your dog has a third eyelid called the Nictitans Membrane which helps to protect the cornea. There is a lymph gland behind this eyelid that helps in the production of tears and also filters the conjunctiva. This gland may become infected or inflamed and will pop out from behind the membrane. When this occurs, you will see a bright red tissue in the corner of the eye that looks like a small cherry; thus, the name Cherry Eye.

Total removal of this lymph gland is not recommended unless the pet has been diagnosed with some type of cancer. The gland can be sutured back behind the membrane to hide its presence, and treated with antibiotics and steroids to reduce any swelling.

I used to see Cherry Eye often in English Bulldogs, Pugs, Cocker Spaniels, and Miniature Poodles. However, any breed can develop this condition.

Eyelash disorders are another common problem in dogs. The canine can be born with an extra row of lashes, a condition referred to as Trichiasis. The lashes may grow inward causing irritation to the eye, or worse, cause a small ulcer on the cornea. An-

other rare disorder, Distichiasis, is a condition where eyelashes grow in an abnormal spot on the eyelid. Distichiasis is treated by using an electro-surgical unit or laser unit to remove the extra lashes or the stray one that is irritating the eye.

Yes, dogs and cats do get cataracts, usually caused by aging, diabetes, infections, or trauma. Some cataracts are inherited and can affect the dog or cat at an early age. Breeds most susceptible to cataracts are the Afghan, Standard Poodle, and Miniature Schnauzers. Treatment consists of surgical removal of the cataract by a veterinary ophthalmologist. If the dog is not a good risk for anesthesia or surgery, do not fret. Dogs rely on their sense of smell and hearing more than on their sight. Once your pet knows its surroundings, it will navigate independently so well that others won't believe it is blind.

In the aging dog or cat, do not confuse Nuclear Sclerosis with cataracts. Nuclear Sclerosis is an aging process of the lens. The lens will lose moisture with age and become more dense, creating a whitish appearance, but the pet can see, and no treatment is necessary.

Another lesion often seen in younger dogs and cats is an opaque-like plaque on the cornea called Corneal Dystrophy. These lesions are fatty deposits that may or may not progress. Most of the time they do not affect vision and no treatment is available.

A common condition seen mostly in dogs is Kerratitis Sicca (dry eye). With this condition, the tear glands and third eyelid gland stop producing tears, so the cornea starts to become dry, irritated, and ulcerated. A heavy pigment may form over the cornea, causing impaired vision. To confirm dry eye, veterinarians can put a small strip of material called a Schirmer tear strip in the lower lid for one minute to measure tear production.

Treatment for dry eye involves the application of artificial tears along with cyclosporine ointment or drops to lubricate the eye and stimulate the tear glands to produce what they can. This usually works well. Applying drops 3 and 4 times a day can be a problem for some. There is a surgery in which the parotid salivary duct from the mouth is transplanted to the lower eyelid so that when the dog is given a treat or eats, it will salivate, coating the eye. This procedure can fail if the duct ruptures or scars.

This is just an overview of some of the many problems that your pet's eyes can develop. Yearly checkups can help identify eye problems, and early detection can sometimes assist in slowing down their progression. Also, be observant, as any change in your dog or cat's behavior can be a sign that a problem is developing.

Healthy, happy, and safe travels, John and Kay

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Don and Jinny Coban

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IF YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET DON COBAN, be sure to thank him for his military service to our country—38 years of military service in the USAF to be exact. And if Jinny is with him, thank her for over 30 years of keeping the home fires burning while Don served as navigator on military transport planes flying all over the globe.

Don was born and raised in Duluth, Minnesota where he graduated from high school in 1951. He studied electrical and mechanical engineering at the University of Minnesota while he



worked as a draftsman for Thermo-King, a company that manufactured refrigeration units for trucks. Since he was not enrolled as a full-time student, his draft board notified him in the fall of 1954 that his draft number would be up soon. Not wanting to enter the military as a draftee, he applied to the Minnesota Air National Guard which required a full day of testing for an applicant to be accepted. He passed with flying colors the day before the draft would have inducted him.

After six months of pilot training as an Aviation Cadet in Texas and Georgia, the Guard sent their recruits back to their home unit, requiring only weekend meetings and one month of training in the summer. In September 1957, Don was eliminated from this program and returned to the Guard where he received a direct commission as a second lieutenant. The routine worked well for Don who found a position with Western Electric installing switching equipment for dial systems that were replacing older central operator equipment. In the late fall of 1957 he began working on an installation in Pine City, Minnesota.

Jinny Lantis had grown up on a farm near Hinckley, Minnesota. After her father began suffering from a lung condition, the family moved to Pine City where he took a position with a security company. “I had a date with Kathy, Jinny’s girlfriend, to take her to a movie,” Don began. “Jinny joined us at the theater for the movie. I offered Jinny a ride home, but we decided to go for hamburgers first. After taking the girls home, I discovered Jinny had left her scarf in my car.”

The scenario was cast. Don returned the scarf the next day, asked for a date, and a six month courtship began. Jinny and Don were married May 31, 1958, and left town immediately for Don to begin navigation school in Waco, Texas. “We pulled a 42-foot mobile home to Waco with my 1952 Buick with a Dynaflo transmission,” Don laughed. “My friends said the Buick couldn’t do it, but it did, and it also pulled the trailer back to Duluth after I finished 18 months of training as a navigator and a radar intercept officer.” Don received the award of Distinguished Navigator Graduate, the first in the Air National Guard to receive this distinction.

For the next 10 years, Don worked several 12-hour shifts a week that allowed him to re-enter the University of Minnesota—Duluth to work on his degree. “As a radar intercept officer, I flew the Northrup F-89J Scorpion,” Don reflected. “The Scorpions



were interceptors assigned to several Air Force units stationed across the northern perimeter of the U.S. during the Cold War era. It was armed with two Genie air-to-air rockets with nuclear warheads plus four AIM-4C Falcon missiles. Our mission was to prevent Russian bombers from entering U.S. air space. In a week, it was not unusual for us to be scrambled six times, each time after radar detected aircraft coming over the polar regions.



Left: Don and Jinny renewed their vows on their 50th wedding anniversary, May 31, 2008, at a family gathering in Milbank, South Dakota on the family farm of Jinny’s sister-in-law. Two brothers, a sister, and nieces and nephews were present. ♦ The Cobans posed for a moment just prior to a captain’s dinner on a December 2011 cruise in the Caribbean.

But they always turned around and departed after testing our defenses. Two Scorpions were at the ready on the runway 24/7.”

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Anna and Hubble are the Coban's constant and faithful companions and a part of the family. They love to travel and each has a favorite spot in the Allegro Bus 45OPP.

During the first decade of their marriage, Jinny began a career with Target Department Stores. "I worked in two of the first three Target stores in the men's and children's shoe department," Jinny said. "We lived close enough to the store that I could walk to work. We lived in Duluth for nine years and then moved to Hopkins, Minnesota. I continued my career with Target, transferring to a store in St. Louis Park, a Minneapolis suburb.

"We got our first introduction to camping in the 1960s when we bought a pickup camper," Jinny said. "In 1967 we drove out to the San Juan Islands near Vancouver and then came home through the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. It was a great trip. We were camped by ourselves not far off the highway when two men knocked on our door late at night. They claimed to be Mounties and said they needed to search our camper for a kidnapped woman. Don suspected the ruse, loaded his shotgun, and pointed at them as he opened the door. They ran but we got the numbers on their license plate and reported it to the real Mounties the next morning. They hollered with elation and thanked us for the lead. Those two guys had pulled that stunt several times and robbed people."

As they continued their trip across Canada, they stopped in

Calgary and discovered they had landed in the middle of the week for the Calgary Stampede. "Bobby Kennedy was the grand marshal in the parade," Jinny said. "We didn't have tickets for any of the events and were just wandering about near the grandstands. A young man approached us and said, 'I have two tickets for you. Follow me.'"

"We looked at each other, thinking 'how could this be happening?'" Don said. "As it turned out, the young man had purchased four tickets when they went on sale a year earlier. Tragically, two members of the family had died in an accident and he wanted to give the tickets to someone he thought deserving. We received tickets for the chuck wagon races and the rodeo that evening. We thanked him profusely but he would not tell us his name."

As Don's career continued to advance in the Air Force, Jinny began thinking about advancement in her own career. "I will have to admit, the shoe department became boring. One day while I was fitting a child's shoe, I just decided 'This is not where I want to work the rest of my life.' I answered a newspaper ad for a proof operator in a local bank," Jinny continued. "I sat at a machine that had pockets for sorting checks by routing numbers to go to a bank clearing house. They offered to train me for a teller's job and I accepted immediately. Not long after that I became the supervisor of a detached teller group working in a drive-through bank."

In 1967, the Air Force went to a single-seat interceptor, designed to be flown by a pilot, no navigator needed, putting Don out of a job. While driving back to Minnesota from an out-of-state trip, Don noticed a billboard advertising the Navy's aviation division. "On my way to see my review board, I stopped at the Air Guard restaurant on base and got into a conversation with an officer about what the Navy offered," Don recalled. "He said, 'Wait a minute. I know a colonel you need to talk to.' Within the hour I met an Air Force colonel who needed a navigator for cargo flights to Vietnam."

Don got the appointment, received training for navigation on the Boeing C-97 Stratofreighter, and went through his check

Don Coban logged flight time in 23 different types of military aircraft. Three of his favorites are shown below. *From left:* Don flew as radar intercept officer in the F-89J Scorpion during the Cold War. ♦ His big break as a navigator on large transport aircraft came in 1967 in the Boeing C-97 Stratofreighter. ♦ He logged over 10,000 hours in the Lockheed C-130.



flights. With its double-lobe fuselage and four 3,500-hp Pratt & Whitney prop engines, the C-97 had a useful payload of 35,000 pounds. It was the first mass-produced air transport to feature cabin pressurization, making long-range missions more comfortable for its crew. It was a huge jump to a much bigger job than flying second seat on the F-89J. His crew flew the Boeing C-97 Stratofreighter on worldwide airlift missions.

The transport job lasted for three years after which the Air Force decided to use Don's skills and experience to train navigators. He became an instructor and an examiner. "I continued to fly in different aircraft until I was qualified to navigate in nearly everything the Air Force flew," Don said. "When I retired from the Air Force in 1988 as a lieutenant colonel, I had 10,000 hours in the Lockheed C-130. I had flown in 23 different types of military aircraft while on missions to Alaska, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Central and South America, all of Europe, Japan, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Mid-East. Taking the shortest routes to some destinations, we flew over the North Pole several times. I always wanted to do a mission to Australia, but never got the opportunity.

During his Air Force career, Don earned a chestful of medals, commendations, and ribbons and a retirement plaque. "The Air Force asked me to continue on reserve status for five years, which I agreed to do. There were times when I was flying to all points on the globe that I could have been on active duty status, reserve status, or civil service status," he laughed. "I was almost on loan to whoever needed me." In 1993, Don retired a second time as a lieutenant colonel with 38+ years of service. During that five-year interval, Don studied at an Air Force school and became the safety director at the base where he was attached.

Back in 1974, Don decided he wanted to integrate his flying skills into their recreational time. Jinny liked his plan and they bought a Cessna 172 and leased it back to a flight school to make ownership more economical. Jinny learned to fly in 1975 and earned her private license. Don had his A&P license plus instrument, instructor, and commercial licenses. "We toured the country in that plane," Don said nostalgically. "I could give Jinny her check ride in our own plane. To continue your flight instructor license, you have to take a three-day FAA course every two years to be recertified. I still maintain my private and commercial license."

Jinny thought sky diving would be fun after watching exhibitions at air shows. "I bought a chute and learned how to pack



Being South Dakotans by choice, Don and Jinny spend their summers in a condominium in Rapid City. They promote the state's landmarks with frequent visits. *Above:* Jinny enjoys hiking the trails around and behind Mount Rushmore. ♦ While the facial image in the Crazy Horse monument has been finished, Don and Jinny, like everyone else, are disappointed they may never see the monument completed.

it, took lessons, and made seven jumps," Jinny smiled, noticing my surprise. "That's not all!" Don said. "She also learned how to do hang gliding."

After Don retired in 1988 and accepted an appointment as a reservist, he knew a rocking chair was not in his destiny. While Jinny continued her career with the bank, Don took a position with Sears Business Systems in 1989 doing on-site computer servicing. "We were kind of like geek squads that you see today," he said. "I have been working with computers since they first hit the market. When I was 10, I built a small transmitter to broadcast ethnic music to about a one mile radius in our neighborhood. Unbeknownst to me, I was interfering with the broadcasting of a major radio station, shutting them down whenever I started sending my signal. They searched for the offender for two years before they found me. I guess because of my age and innocence they did not fine or penalize me."

In 2002 the wanderlust bug bit Don and Jinny again and they bought a 2002 Winnebago Journey. "Our home was close to the factory and a long way from the dealer," Don said. "We made arrangements to take delivery at the factory. When they handed



me the keys, I explained I had never driven a Class A motorhome. The man looked at me a little surprised and agreed to take me on a test drive and then let me drive it for a few minutes. We survived and drove it home safely. By reading the manuals—something I was accustomed to doing from all of my aviation training—I taught myself how to use everything in the coach and did a lot of my own troubleshooting when we had problems.”

Ironically, their first major trip in their new motorhome was to Loma Linda University Medical Center in Loma Linda, California, 70 miles east of Los Angeles. “My doctor diagnosed prostate cancer,” Don said. “After extensive research on treatments, I learned about the proton therapy treatment that was pioneered at Loma Linda. At that time it required 43 treatments administered over 12 weeks. We drove the coach to Loma Linda and I received the treatments as an outpatient while we lived in the coach. There were no side effects and obviously you can see it

was successful. Many cancer centers adopted the proton therapy soon after 2003, including Mayo Clinic and M.D. Anderson, Houston. After the treatments, I felt completely well and we took the long drive on the famed California Highway One from Los Angeles to Half Moon Bay.”

The Cobans are now enthusiastic South Dakotans, promoting the scenic beauty of the state. They can describe Badlands National Park as if they had served as NPS rangers. Ask them about Mount Rushmore and the unfinished Crazy Horse monument or the Wind Cave National Park in Hot Springs.

“The first time we visited Mount Rushmore, there were just a few trails to hike to reach vantage points for viewing the monument,” Jinny said. “Now there is a beautiful flag court and an amphitheater. An interesting hike is the one that goes behind the monument to view the backside of the carvings. Most visitors never realize you can see it from that angle.”


“We have been fascinated by the on-

going development of the Crazy Horse monument,” Don mentioned. “We learned about an opportunity to watch a night blast to remove a large section of granite. It is amazing how they can use dynamite to remove a specific amount of stone without taking out too much.”

Nine years later Don and Jinny traded their Winnebago for a 2011 Phaeton 36QSH. “We quickly discovered there was not enough storage for our needs—in the living quarters or the basement—and traded a few months later for a 2012 Phaeton 40QBH,” Don said. “We both liked the bath-and-a-half as well as the larger living area and king-size bed,” Jinny added.

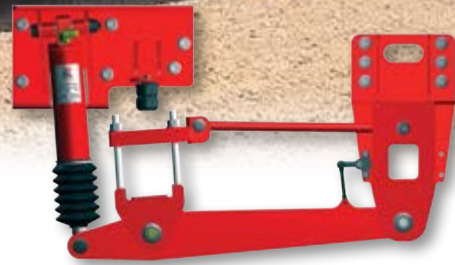
In June of this year, Jinny heard about the real bath tub available by special order in the 2017 Allegro Bus 45OPP. Don was equally impressed with the 605-hp Cummins engine available on the 45OPP. By this time, Don had acquired an enclosed trailer to haul their Jeep SUV as well as a wide assortment of things they couldn’t live without but couldn’t get in their motorhome. “Would you believe,” he smiled, “I can pass 18-wheelers going up a hill?”

Jinny enjoys telling a story about Don’s heavy foot, an incident that occurred soon after they bought their first motorhome. “We had made a trip to South Dakota to visit relatives. A couple of weeks later, we headed for Oshkosh, Wisconsin for the annual fly-in. It was a beautiful day with almost no traffic on a long stretch of wide two-lane road,” Jinny explained. “We weren’t talking and I think Don was kind of entranced with the beauty of the area. I could barely see the speedometer, but when I looked, I yelled, ‘Don, you’re doing 105.’ He was shocked, too, and promised to keep it down to 70.”

“We have enjoyed many wonderful trips in our three Tiffin motorhomes,” Don said. “We always enjoy coming back to Rapid City, South Dakota for three months every summer where we have a condominium. Long before the first snowfall, we head south to Tampa where we spend the winter at the campground on MacDill Air Force Base. We are almost full timers and love living in our Allegro Bus with our two companions, Anna and Hubble.” 



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Tiffin Owners from New York, Florida, and Quebec



Pat and Anita Lancor

Hometown: Fredonia, New York
 Interviewed: Gaffney, South Carolina

- Pat and Anita travel in their 2013 Phaeton 40QBH with the 380 Cummins engine. They purchased the one-year-old coach in 2014 from LaMesa RV in Fort Myers, FL.
- Like many RVers, they started with a pop-up and moved to a 24-ft. trailer, deciding then to be full-timers.
- Pat and Anita have been married 36 years and have a daughter Tamra.
- Pat retired in 2008 from NRC Power Plant in Dunkirk, NY. Anita had served as a special education teachers aid for 16 years when they decided to go on the road.
- They have been full-timers since August 2008, to get away from mowing, raking, and other home owner expenses. Every winter since 2008 they have resided at the Riverside RV Resort in Arcadia, FL. Every other year they go out West to the national parks; Teton is one of their favorites.
- Other than their winter residence they like Jo-Joba Hills in Aguanga, CA near Temecula as their bi-annual place to stay. They love it out West in Yellowstone, Yosemite, Black Hills, Grand Teton, and Reno, Nevada.
- Both enjoy playing pickleball, genealogy, scrapbooking, and spending a lot of time at casinos while on the road. Anita jokingly said, "But that costs \$100 a day."
- Future plans are to go to Hawaii, Alaska, San Diego, and the four states they have not visited.



Carlton & Wanda Hamm

Hometown: Florida
 Interviewed: Gaffney, South Carolina

- Carlton and Wanda purchased a used 2013 Allegro RED 33AA at LaMesa in Sanford, FL. Their previous RV was a 2014 Dutchmen travel trailer.
- They sold their home in June of 2016. We caught up with them on their first trip with the Red at Freightliner Service Center.
- They have been married 18 years and have two children, Tanya and Clayton. They also have 3 grandchildren Ava, Amya and Alex.
- Carlton worked as a facilities maintenance tech at Palm Beach Community College, FL and was a member of the Volusia County School Board, Deland, FL. Wanda worked at the Palm Beach Gardens fire department and at the Florida Dept. of Transportation in Deland, retiring in 2015. She also worked at the Medical Center as an admin assistant.
- Carlton enjoys painting, drawing, photography, the kids and grandkids. Wanda likes traveling, photography, and baking.
- They have traveled to MA, VT, PA, ME, NC, SC, NH, Canada, and more.
- Two years of camping has brought them to the Northeast. Some of their favorite places visited were Moody Beach RV Resort in Maine and the Cornwall KOA on Prince Edward Island.
- They plan to include California, Washington, Alaska and other West Coast destinations in their future travel.



Philippe and Vivian Charland

Hometown: Montreal, Quebec
 Interviewed: Gaffney, South Carolina

- Philippe and Vivian own a 2007 Allegro Bus with a Cummins engine, which they purchased used in 2009 in Montreal.
- They have been married for 37 years and have two sons, Eric, 31, and Stefan, 28.
- Philippe and Vivian started camping with a pop-up, then a hybrid trailer, a 2004 32' motorhome, and finally the Allegro Bus.
- They started RVing around 1996 mainly on the East Coast of the US. In January and February 2016 they toured the Southwest US, ultimately ending in Las Vegas.
- Currently they are half-timers, splitting between their lot on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina and trips to various destinations in the US and Canada. They fell in love with the charm of South Carolina which resulted in their purchasing at the Hilton Head Island Motor Coach Resort.
- Philippe worked in logistics for a national fashion retailer in Canada; retiring in 2012. He also served 32 years in the Canadian Naval Reserve. Vivian worked as an electrical engineer for Bell Canada, retiring in 2014.
- Club affiliations include: Good Sam, FMCA, and FOCC.
- Philippe and Vivian look forward to more travel across the Maritime Provinces, a Caribbean cruise, and Northern Spain & Southern France, with a transatlantic return.



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

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The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

It was time to sell our Allegro Bay.

After many years of “living the dream” in our Allegro Bay, we have reluctantly sold it and retired due to health issues and our age. Since 2002 we traveled and lived in the Allegro Bay for half of each year, returning to our Florida home for the Winter months. We traveled in all of the U.S. states (except Hawaii) and all of the Canadian provinces and territories. Our five summers in Alaska were the highlights of our 15 years of RVing. After selling the RV, we sold our Florida home and bought a place in North Carolina. We still miss our RV adventures. Many thanks to Tiffin Motorhomes for a wonderful retirement.

Daniel & Anna Cleveland, Charlotte, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Tiffin,

I love getting *Roughing It Smoothly*. I read it from cover to cover. And then I pick it up later and read it again! I keep them all on file.

Today I read about the new Wayfarer 24QW. I have an Allegro Class C and she is hurting! I would like the name of the dealer in southern Minnesota that has a model on hand to see. Thank you so much!

Joan Stoffel, Madison Lake, Minnesota

Dear Joan,

I am glad to hear that you are enjoying *Roughing It Smoothly* and saving the back issues for future trips. Our dealer nearest you is Shorewood RV in Anoka. They are located at 8390 Hwy 10 NW in Anoka. Their phone number is 763-421-2505. Visit their website at shorewoodrv.com.

Dear Bob & Tim Tiffin,

I am writing to thank you for all the wonderful magazines we received during our camping years. My husband passed away in May. He was 83 years old. We had many wonderful years of camping in our 64 years of marriage. Our last motorhome was a 1988 Allegro Class A. It was great! I sold it recently to a young couple who have two small children. They fell in love with it at first sight.

Thank you again for the helpful magazine.

Emma-Jean Stephens, Cattaraugus, New York

We were blessed . . .

To be able to travel for many years in motorhomes. We had several Tiffins and they were the best! Now my daughter and her husband own a Tiffin. Of course, they now receive *Roughing It Smoothly*. It's time to take us off your mailing list. Thanks.

Joe Hollar, Greenville, South Carolina.

Times Are Changing

We enjoyed our 2009 Allegro Bay FRED 35TSB from September 2008 until July 2017. We spent our Winters in Arizona where we enjoyed meeting many snowbirds from the USA, Canada, and the UK. Our motorhome exceeded our wishes. Tiffin makes a great RV and *Roughing It Smoothly* is a great publication.

Terrence Deans, Salmon Arm, British Columbia, Canada

It Was Time to Downsize

We enjoyed our Tiffin motorhome for 13½ years. We traveled over many states, from North Dakota, all across the lower states, and into Texas. This year we felt it was necessary to downsize and we bought a smaller one. My husband is almost 80 and I worried. So a smaller one is easier for him to drive. Thank you for all the memories made in our Tiffin. So please stop the magazine since we don't own a Tiffin anymore.

Pete & Sharon Schoordyk, Selah, Washington

Married for 70 Years

Thank you for sending your magazine for so many years. My husband, Clarence, died seven years ago. I am now 96. We were married for 70 years.

We enjoyed our Allegros and traveled to all 49 states and through Canada. We flew to Hawaii three times. We visited Finland, Norway, Sweden, London, Australia, and the Holy Land etc. and wished we had our Allegro to travel in all those places.

On most of our trips, we took our grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We enjoyed *Roughing It Smoothly* and our Allegros. Now I must say thank you and goodbye.

Evelyn Hanson, Tucson, Arizona

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Traveland RV Supercentre

A RECREATIONAL VEHICLE COMPANY WITH A PURPOSE-FILLED APPROACH TO SERVICE AND SALES



Text and photography by Fred Thompson

On Sunday morning, September 10, I boarded a non-stop, almost five-hour Delta flight from Atlanta to Seattle, en route then by car to Langley, British Columbia. Over the next two days I had scheduled interviews with the management at Traveland RV Supercentre to produce my 50th Dealer Profile story. Bob Tiffin suggested the profiles 13 years ago to acquaint our readers and owners with the approximately 100 dealership locations in the Tiffin network throughout the U.S. and Canada. The dealerships have similarities, but each has distinguishing characteristics setting it apart.

I handed my card to the receptionist and asked to see Dale Howes, the owner. “He has not arrived yet. Chris Clarke will be with you in a few minutes,” she answered courteously. The building’s interior is an eye-catcher with its high ceiling and use of stone columns and accents. I began to walk through the showroom anchored on one side with a big Phaeton holding court with many smaller RVs surrounding it. The high walls separating the offices are floor to ceiling glass, creating spacious interiors that allow visitors to observe beehives of activity. Everybody was moving

at a crescendo pace. It made me want to find out everything about this dealership that seemed to be electric with purpose.

Chris appeared as promised and invited me to his second floor office, also enclosed with glass walls. The company’s officers and staff are surprisingly young—most under 35—with the exception of Milfred Abrams, sales manager, and Bill Verhagen, service manager, who have both been with Dale for 38 years. Gray hair is in short supply.

Chris, 33, is the general manager who has the critical task of ordering new product and managing the inventory. He began his career in 2004 in the parts department. He followed Dale Howes’ prescribed career path and moved into sales: tent trailers, towables, fifth wheels, motorhome overflow, high-end motorhomes. His climb up the ladder led to the position of sales manager in 2011 and then to general manager in 2015. His knowledge and command of the business is obvious.

“Traveland RV Supercentre Langley is the hub of our operations,” he began. “We acquired the West Kelowna (British Co-

lumbia) store in 2013 and the Airdrie, Alberta, store in 2016. To infuse our corporate culture and operational policies and procedures into the two new stores, a manager spends two days a week in each store, training personnel in each department. Four of us are on a rotation providing the management training: myself and Dale’s three sons, Shaun, Brad, and Kris.”

When Traveland acquired Art Pike’s store in West Kelowna, it was well-known as a Class A motorhome business. While wanting to hold on to that reputation, Dale felt the sales would grow faster if they added fifth wheels and towables. “The store still sells more Tiffin Class A coaches than we do here in Langley, but adding towables has definitely pushed our sales growth into a new pattern,” Chris said. “At the end of August in Airdrie, we had exceeded our projected sales for Airstreams. Towables far outsell motorized in that store.”

In Class A coaches, the Langley store offers three diesel pusher brands: Tiffin, Newmar, and Entegra. In gas Class A’s, they sell the Allegro, Newmar, and Jayco. “Tiffin is our #1 diesel pusher. Tiffin also outsells our other lines in the gas brands,” Chris noted.

Having studied the Class A manufacturers for many years, the management team at Traveland RV Supercentre lists several reasons why Tiffin leads the market in Class A diesel pushers. “When we were negotiating to buy the West Kelowna store, the first thing we did was call George Victorine, our Tiffin rep, to see if we could have the Tiffin dealership in that market,” Chris said. “Here’s why we value the Tiffin product:

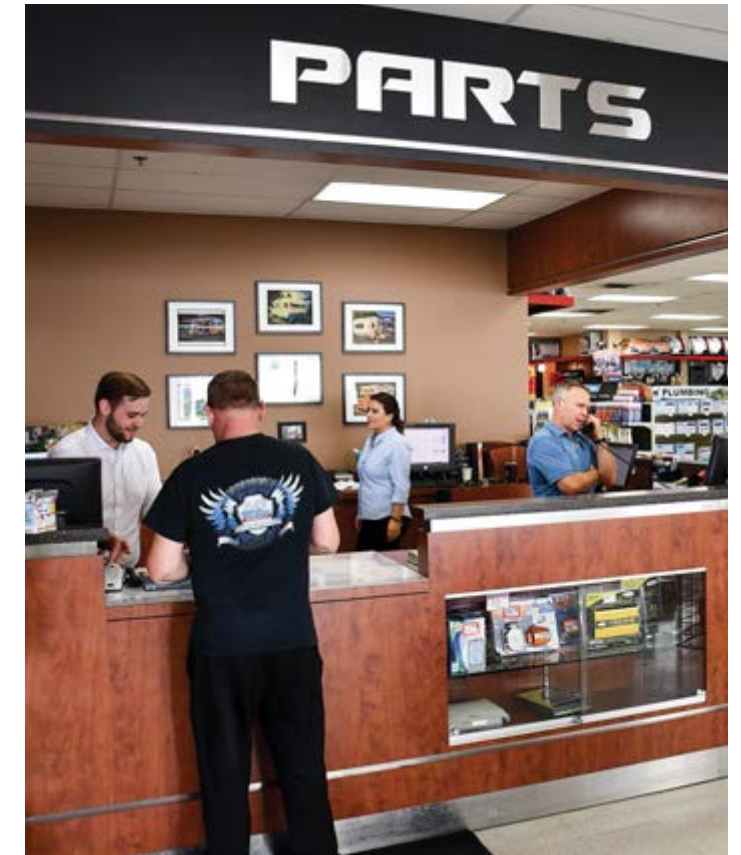
- Tiffin is a family-owned business. You know the owners on a personal level.
- We built our motorhome business on the Tiffin model. You can pick up the phone and talk to the owner.
- Tiffin has a great looking product, inside and out.
- In the diesel line, we have been successful in selling the Allegro Bus and the Allegro RED. One appeals to our high-end buyer and the other draws the entry-level diesel pusher buyer.
- We carry Tiffin in both our Langley and West Kelowna stores: In 2016, West Kelowna proved to be the largest Tiffin market of all our stores.

• Tiffin has better floorplans. The Allegro 36LA, the Allegro Bus 37AP, and the Allegro RED 33AA are probably the most copied floorplans in the Class A industry.

“In our market, the Allegro RED may push the Phaeton out of its #1 spot,” Chris said. “Buyers are trending toward shorter coaches, but they still want the bath-and-a-half floorplan. In the Class A gas, we are selling a lot of 26- to 33-ft. units. In the Class A diesel, they are buying the 33- to 38-ft. units. In British Columbia, we have a lot of beautiful provincial parks that are not built for the 40- to 45-ft. coaches.”

Traveland RV has planned its growth in service to match and even exceed its growth in sales. The Langley store has 10 service advisors, three warranty writers, and 27 technicians. A night shift with four techs does the final work on four to six units per shift, getting them ready for a return to their owners the next morning.

“In Canada we have a different approach to training technicians than the system used in the states,” Chris explained. “In two of the provinces, the training is offered by a local college. Okanagan College in Kelowna developed the RV technician training program for British Columbia. In Alberta, where our Airdrie store



Luke Hibbs takes care of a customer while Tamara Smith and Brian Curzon handle other details. Parts department employees not shown: Jorden Buchan, Chris Walker, Tim McHeffey, and Rick Hargreaves.

is located, the training program is provided by Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. RVDA sponsors the curriculum in the other provinces.

“The two ratings in the U.S. are called TECHNICIAN and MASTER TECHNICIAN; our similarly skilled training is referred to as BASIC and RED SEAL,” Chris continued. “We alternate the college’s course work with interning here in our service department. Traveland pays for the classes that run three to four months. We donate older RVs to be used in training at the two schools. After attaining certification, the technician is eligible for a pay grade increase. The techs are also in a rotation for attending factory training. They are scheduled to visit each RV manufacturer every two years.”

“We have an unusual depth of experience in key positions here at Traveland RV,” Chris pointed out. “Bill Verhagen has 40 years of experience as our service manager. Chris Carter, our shop fore-



Service Advisors: Mike Macyshen, Brandi Gadon, Jamie Thomas, Stefanie Wirsciuk, Richard Seltitz, Dan Anderson, David Bianchi, Dave Brunham, Jeff Weisgerber

Sales Department: *Back row from left:* Guy Stewart, Brodie MacDonald, Balwinder Mand, Dan Kramarik, Jordan Brock, Cam Scouten, Dale Howes, Milfred Abrams. *Front row from left:* Kris Howes, Mike Bennett, Mason Ashdown, Kyle Humphries. *Not Shown:* Lorin Collins, Drew Snell, Dan Klakowich, Laurie Edwards, Les Mitchell, Al Steel, Kenny Rogers, Rex Leemhuis, Shaun Howes

IT Department: Michelle Buchan, Brodie MacDonald, Kyle Humphries, Melissa Stevens, Camille Carter

man, has 30+ years with the company, and Connie Drake, our warranty manager, has been with us for 20+ years.

“In our three locations this year, we expect the combined sales to amount to another record setting year.” Chris said. “Langley may be the largest RV store in a single location in Canada. However, Kelowna will sell a higher percentage of motorized than we do here in Langley.”

The Langley store has experienced milder winters in recent years, creating a business cycle that is less seasonal. “Our business only slows down in December and January,” Chris noted. “West Kelowna and Airdrie are more seasonal. Their sales slow down in the colder months because they get a lot more snow than we do.”

Traveland has a somewhat unusual approach to performing PDIs. By definition, pre-delivery inspections are usually done on RVs arriving from the manufacturer to assure that the incoming units have no damage incurred in transit, all parts and systems are fully operational, and that all options listed on the invoice are actually installed in the unit. At Traveland, to get the unit into the inventory quickly during the busiest months, two people attached to the sales department perform a cursory check for damage and the inclusion of all options shown on the invoice.

When the RV is sold, a technician is designated to perform a thorough PDI to assure the unit is ready for delivery. The parts department employees will then perform a unit demonstration for the customer to ensure they are well acquainted with their new RV. The parts employees improve their knowledge base by shadowing a service department technician. During the unit demonstration, the new owner has the opportunity to review aftermarket products that will make his coach more efficient and enjoyable.

Tiffin Motorhomes views “Owner Training” as a key event in the successful sale of a motorhome (see Bob Tiffin’s column, page 4 in this issue). “The parts employee is trained in the operation of an Allegro RED, for example, and is capable of taking a new owner through the training program in a few hours,” Chris said. “The time it actually takes depends on the buyer’s comprehension of what is presented and his mechanical ability. As the orientation and training develops, the amount of time needed varies with each new owner. We encourage them to camp for a few days in nearby campgrounds to learn by using the systems in their RVs. We continue to answer their questions by phone. If the problem cannot be resolved by phone or if there is a defect that has to be repaired, we have a mobile tech who is on the road full time. He will go to an owner’s motorhome instead of them breaking camp and coming back to our service center.”

Bill Verhagen, Traveland’s service manager, who supervises the service advisors and the service center, was the first person that Dale hired when he went into business in 1977. Today Bill supervises two shop foremen, 27 technicians, 10 service advisors, and three warranty writers.

“Keeping our customers happy is our first priority and probably the most important factor in operating this business,” Bill began. “Within the next 12 months, we expect the service advising process to be paperless. At this point we are still using print-outs to provide the owner with the list of repairs we will make under warranty or at his expense. When the owner signs the repair order, we go into action with parts orders, creating an estimate, and building a schedule.”

After the repair job is entered, the warranty department, headed by Connie Drake and assisted by Guy Dubois and Ashley Stubbs, investigates the records for the coach to determine if any warranties are still in force that will cover the repairs. "Sometimes we find coverage the owner missed in his records and that brings smiles. And if we determine the warranties have expired, we can count on Tiffin Motorhomes to be fair about standing behind their product. They have assigned Traveland a computer savvy warranty person to work with us," Connie said.

"At the end of each day," Bill continued, "we have a general meeting to discuss and address repair problems. We evaluate shop time with regard to being able to meet the customers' requested deadlines. The service advisors update the owners by telephone, email, or texting (owner's choice)."

Bill acknowledged the service business at Traveland is going full steam. "We would love to find more certified technicians and increase the size of our service center. We have several techs with 20+ years of experience which is a big asset. They are teaching the younger ones coming along. Our shop foreman, Chris Carter, evaluates each job and selects the technicians with the right skill sets to make the repairs.

"My job gets better and better every year," Bill said. "I enjoy seeing our employees grow and improve their abilities to contribute to Traveland's success in making our customers our best friends."

Dave Brunham is one of six external service advisors. "When an owner brings his coach in for service, I go through the unit with him with my notepad and green tape," he began. "I make notes detailing the repairs to be made and put green tape at the key points he described. All of the notes are entered into the IDS system to create a job order. The technician creates a photo record to go with the job order. After the job order is completed, the owner signs a work order. I will put the job in the shop as warranty work and let the warranty department make the ultimate determination.

"As the techs get into the job, we can send images of what is happening as the job progresses," Dave continued. "We contact the owner with a minimum once-a-week call. If we find the job not as originally described, we resolve the differences as quickly as possible with phone calls. The service advisor checks the technicians' notes daily to stay informed and remain able to advise the owner."

Traveland's service center is equipped to do extensive repairs and body work. Within the last year, the company added a 60-foot sidedraft paint booth to complete a full-service body shop. All component parts are serviced in the coach including gas-electric refrigerators, residential refrigerators with extra battery trays and inverters, furnaces, cooktops, air conditioning units, electrical problems, hydraulic jacks, windows, and more. Slide-outs can be removed for repairs. Roof repairs and comprehensive waterproofing are standard services. Chassis repairs for PowerGlide, Freightliner, and Spartan including oil changes, wet and dry filters, and the DEF system are handled by factory service centers that are approved for warranty work near each facility. Windshields and Denso HVAC are handled by specialists under contract to Traveland who guarantees the contractors' work.

Traveland's sales department is directed by two sales managers, Milfred Abrams and Cam Scouten. It is a really young team. Not including Milfred, a majority of the sales associates are 35 or younger and started out in parts.

"In 1980 after Dale bought Frank Dunn Sales in Burnaby, his partner, Gordon Bird, asked me to stay on for a few months to help with the transition in management and other issues," Milfred began. "I stayed and managed that location until 1986 when the stores were combined into the location where we are today. We added the service building that was adjacent to the dealership's double-wide trailer housing our sales and management offices. I launched our F&I department in 1989."

When Traveland built its present facility in 1994, Milfred took the position of sales desk manager, reviewing and accepting trades and making deals for new RVs. Now, with 22 sales associates working at Traveland, Milfred was joined on the sales desk by Cam Scouten in 2015. When the sales traffic is really busy, Shaun and Kris Howes and Chris Clarke can jump in and assist in approving deals.

"I really enjoy working for the Howes family. They are fair and honest and this is a great job," Milfred said. "I have never looked for another job. Maybe I don't know what the real world is like

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Service Technicians

Back row from left: Travis Mufford, Dan Gerspacher, Anjay Singh, Gary Crawford, Warren Trotman, Tim Sheffield, Craig Driediger, Dennis Duck, Brian Boulter, George Lombard, Tom Lawrence, Craig Sullivan. *Front row from left:* Ron Schmidt, Robert Dayag, Teryn Hogan, Gino Kossowski, Darryl Goddard, Nick Molloy, Greg Dixon, Briana Steele, Jeff Wiesgerber. *Not Shown:* Bob Barron, Ian Schultz, Jun Garnace, Mike Pippus, Ed Ives, Lloyd Bernsten, Matthew Drake, Albert Kramer.

out there, but I can tell you that Traveland RV is a really good place to work.”

Lorin Collins, a 13-year veteran in sales at Traveland, is a Tiffin devotee. “We carry quality products for every price segment, because we want to ensure that everything we sell here will produce satisfied owners,” Lorin said. “Tiffin builds a high caliber product that focuses on reliability and longevity. At the Tiffin plant, we watched the motorhomes being built from the chassis rails to the finished, painted product. The inner details of how Tiffin coaches are built is amazing. It is great to be able to share the TMH story with our customers.”

Ron Livingston wears the hat of the senior sales associate. At 64, he began selling tent trailers at Traveland in 1996 during the spring and summer months. “I had previous sales experience selling the little Skamper trailers,” he smiled. “Traveland didn’t carry Skampers, so I started selling Coleman tent trailers. Dale wanted me to train his three sons in RV sales and usually they would be selling to first-time buyers. It was a good experience for them, and for me.”

Today Ron is the lot man. “I check in

the new units coming in from our manufacturers to make sure there is no transport damage. I also take the sales order sheet into each RV and make sure all of the options were included. It’s a fun job and keeps me busy.”

“Ron has been a key part of Traveland for over 20 years.” Says Dale.

Cam Scouten was actually hired by Milfred Abrams in April 2000. Fifteen years later Cam began his tenure working on the sales desk with Milfred, both as sales managers.

“I had just graduated from high school and was looking for a job,” Cam said. “When I saw Traveland RV, I walked in off the street. I had my resume in hand, but zero expectations. Milfred hired me and I began helping out in the parts department, cleaning up, sweeping floors, doing some shipping and receiving. After a year, I was promoted to working on the parts counter and continued in that job for four years. After really learning the ropes in the parts department, I began doing customer orientations and the whole delivery process. I just loved helping new owners be-

gin realizing their dreams. It was a thrill to me to show families how to use their RV and to see their eyes brighten as they anticipated their first camping trip. I was providing information on parts and accessories to the new owners to make sure they had everything they needed to enjoy their new RV.”

Dale saw Cam’s enthusiasm for customer service and upselling and decided to offer him the opportunity to try out in the sales department. He sent Cam to Ron Livingston for sales training in tent trailers. A short time later Cam worked an RV show and sold six Colemans. The following spring he went full-time in sales.

“I sold tent trailers during my first year in sales,” Cam continued. “Then I moved to travel trailers from 2004 to 2010 and was usually #1 in sales. In 2010 I earned a spot in the motorized division and began selling Tiffins and other high end units. I have a passion for learning specs and details and how each unit is built. I go to the factory as often as possible to continue learning. I am really grateful to Dale for affording me the opportunities here and giving me the chance to grow. Two years ago he asked me if I wanted to work the sales desk with Milfred. Being a sales manager was a goal that I had set for myself.

“My goal now is to develop a sales team that has my passion,” Cam said earnestly. “I focus on stats, policies, product knowl-

edge, and what is happening in our marketplace that affects us here. We concentrate on matching a customer's wants and needs with a unit that is perfectly suited for them and their family. The Sobel School gave me a good baseline structure for becoming an effective salesperson. But the bottom line is passion. I really do enjoy seeing people smile when they drive off in their new RV. I try to meet every customer that comes in. When I earn the customer's business, I enjoy making it a good experience for them. There is a strong trust between my sales team because they know I can help them work to earn the customer's business."

Kris Howes takes a very active role in managing advertising, sales, and F&I for the company. "Social media is changing how business is done," Kris assured me. "Michelle Buchan is a full-time employee who does online marketing through social media. She does posting on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. As an example, Michelle runs an ad on the Woolly Bear, a utility camping trailer with a tent on top. We find that social media is effective for matching up our ads with people who are

interested in the product. We don't want our ads to be presented to people who don't want to see them."

Kris hired Brodie MacDonald, Dan Klakowich, and Kyle Humphries, who already had good sales and computer skills, to set up sales appointments from leads that come in through the internet.

"We take inquiries for all three companies," Kyle explained. "We can handle a range of customer services from a simple information request to the purchase of an RV. If an interested buyer is within reasonable driving distance, we set up an appointment with a member of our sales team. We jump in as quickly as possible to pick up the online feed and take care of the interested buyer."

"Advertising today is a tricky business," Kris continued. "We give each member of our sales team the opportunity to make YouTube videos of every travel trailer, fifth wheel, or motorhome in our inventory, demonstrating the specific features and advantages of each unit. Customers often come in and ask for the salesperson who made the video of the unit in which they are

interested. These channels have moved us away from traditional advertising. We don't do TV ads. We only do radio and print ads in our provincial newspapers to bring people in to our RV shows in major venues."

Camille Carter maintains the websites for the Langley, Kelowna, and Airdrie stores. "All inventory goes on the website," Camille said. "We upload 25 images for every motorhome, fifth wheel, and travel trailer: exterior shots from all four corners and front to back interior images. Our photographer emphasizes the galley and does close-ups for features on the baths and half-baths, bedrooms, and cockpits," she explained.

Camille and her assistant, Melissa Stevens, load, organize, and watermark the images using Adobe's Lightroom software for batch editing. "Counting our inventory at all three stores, we currently have 708 new units, 149 pre-owned, and 8 consignments," Camille noted. "We take current data from our F&I team to update warranty and finance information. We also advertise parts specials and aftermarket products. Our 'Part of the Week' goes up

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on Saturday. Right now it is heated water hoses that are popular at this time of the year.”

Kris Howes and Chris Clarke both take an active role in planning and implementing sales training. “Our sales team is divided into product groups,” Kris explained. “Our motorized team, for example, has one woman and three men who are full time, and two overflow members who are moving up from towables and are still in training.”

“We use several training methods,” Chris continued. “Sobel University in Tacoma, Washington, provides our baseline sales training. We mix our own sales training techniques with Sobel’s to make their program more applicable to recreational vehicles. One of our manufacturers has a very good sales training program that requires two weeks of interactive viewing. However, the most effective thing we do in sales training is sending our sales team to the manufacturer to acquire first-hand knowledge. We want our

Forklift and Lot Organization

From left: Dennis Duck, Ted Verbeek, Ron Livingston, Mark Goodwin, Dan Cassidy, Josh Peardon, Adam VanAlstyne, James Boyd.



sales people to be the most educated in the business. Our sales force very likely has the youngest average age in the industry. Increasing our knowledge base is like building an ongoing asset.”

A motivated buyer and an enthusiastic sales associate can go only so far without financing to complete the deal. Kris Howes, the manager of the company’s finance and insurance department, realizes how important the F&I team is to the success of the company. The Langley store requires four associates to work with buyers to find the right financing. Perrin van Westen, Craig Giesbrecht, Aaron Conlon, and Dave Klakowich have 40 years of combined experience in placing loans with the best financial services company for each buyer.


“There are five banking choices and three credit rating companies,” Dave said. “There are very few alternative options. We do not have the corporate financing penetration you have in the states. In Canada you cannot write off interest on a motorhome as a second home like you can in the U.S.”

“We are here to get our customer the lowest possible rate with the financing options that best suits his credit rating,” Craig explained. “He can get up to 20 years on a loan for a new coach. It will be an open loan with no penalties for an early payoff.”

“A lot of executing is necessary to make and conclude the loan process successfully,” Perrin noted. “We have a process that informs the customer completely and assures that he leaves with the RV he wants and the appropriate financing.”

“Areina Preston sequentially organizes all of our files to make the process run smoothly,” Dave said, crediting her skills. “She efficiently moves the paperwork through the banks that provide the financing.”

At the end of the day, the F&I team provides the oil that keeps the business wheels turning. Without their skills to locate the financing to make dreams come true, there would be a lot of disappointed buyers. Since over 60 percent of RV purchases are financed, the RV industry would grind quickly to a halt without them.

Dale Howes’ success in building Traveland RV Supercentre lies in his ability to find and mentor key managers and loyal employees who have built a solid company where they can grow their careers in a customer-friendly, supportive family atmosphere. 

An Interview with Dale Howes

CONSISTENT GROWTH THROUGH MENTORING SUCCESSFUL CAREERS

Now operating from three locations in Langley and West Kelowna, British Columbia, and Airdrie, Alberta, Traveland RV Supercentre, Tiffin's largest Canadian dealer, has 240 employees, each with special skills that have built a company emphasizing customer satisfaction and service.

"Our excellent service makes satisfied owners who keep coming back to upgrade or buy their second or third RV from us. We find ourselves selling RV's across multiple generations," laughed Dale Howes, owner and CEO. "Often I see the grandchildren of previous customers coming in to buy their first RV." Traveland's sales continue to grow year over year as a result of referrals from satisfied customers.

To many of the employees, Dale Howes, 62, is a mentor, father figure, encourager, and teacher. "Building strong relationships in your own family, with your fellow employees, with your managers, with your customers—that's how you succeed," Dale emphasized. "The relationships are based on unselfish caring and integrity. That's how a company becomes a family. We help each other learn to do our jobs, be the best that we can be, and build careers."

Dale's father emigrated to Saskatchewan from England. "The oldest child inherited everything in that culture," Dale said. "My father was not the oldest so he decided to leave England and come to Canada."

Dale's father, Charles Wesley Howes (b. 1899) was a good mechanic who ran a local service station and a farmer. He homesteaded a quarter section of land (160 acres) and raised wheat. "My father ran the farm where I was born in 1954. I began driving the wheat truck when I was 11 years old," Dale remembered vividly. "Dad put a box behind my back to push me forward enough to reach the pedals."

In 1966 Dale's father decided

to move his family to Abbotsford, British Columbia where he opened a Phillips 66 service station. "I worked in the station as a teenager although I was not legally old enough to pump gas,"

company. "I had an accident and cracked a bone in my foot," he said. "While I was off from work, I visited my cousin who was the sales manager in an RV dealership. The phone was ringing

in the middle of the oil embargo and fuel was scarce in some areas, but Dale's cousin told him that the founder of Winnebago (John K. Hanson) said, "You can't take beer and weekends away from the



Dale explained. "My job was changing tires. I ran the front end of the station from 3 till 8 p.m. when dad would come back and close up.

"Young kids today are not brought up and expected to have a job after school or on the weekends," he continued. "They don't know what they like or what they might be good at doing. They don't get the opportunity to learn business skills or how to deal with people. Learning new skills is something you should get excited about. It was something we looked forward to."

After graduating from high school in 1972, Dale took a job driving a forklift truck for a

Traveland RV's Management Team: Shaun Howes, sales and special projects; Chris Clarke, general sales manager; Brad Howes, IT and HR; Dale Howes, owner and mentor; Kris Howes, sales and F&I.

while the receptionist was away for a few minutes, so I picked it up and answered, announcing the name of the company and asking how I could help the caller. My cousin overheard the episode and offered me a job. I responded that I had a job. 'How much are you making?' he demanded. '\$3.18/hour, I responded. 'I'll guarantee you \$600/month for three months.' I figured I could always get another forklift job if it didn't work out, so I agreed!"

In 1973, North America was

American people."

"We decided Canadians wouldn't give them up either," he smiled. "I sold RVs for four more years. Being an RV salesman was so much fun I couldn't believe it was a real job!"

An unexpected opportunity developed in 1977 while Dale was dealing with a problem at his cousin's store. Aware of Dale's consternation, a Triple-E manufacturer's rep who was on-site that day suggested there was an RV dealership down the street that was for sale. "After investi-

gating the business opportunity, another salesperson, Gordon Bird, and I each borrowed \$10,000 and bought it," Dale related. "It was April 26, 1977. On April 25, I had no intention of buying a business. By May 1, 1977 we were officially open for business. It is amazing. Throughout my entire business career, things have happened unexpectedly—just a natural set of circumstances. Within 3 months we had proved to the bank that we were capable of running a business and they advanced us the money to continue to operate."

The year also was marked by another major event in Dale's life. Sweethearts since high school days, he and Jeanette were married on Aug 20, 1977. This year both Dale and Jeanette and Traveland RV are celebrating their 40th anniversary.

"We were competing with two other RV sales companies when we started Traveland RV," Dale continued. "By 1979 we had become the largest Travelaire dealer in Canada and were doing well enough to buy out Frank Dunn Sales, one of the competing stores in Burnaby.

"The former owner's son came with the store," Dale joked. "Milfred Abrams was asked to stay for a short time to assist in the transition to new ownership. We are blessed and fortunate that he agreed to stay on. He is one of our two general sales managers. Another interesting situation happened in the spring of 1978. A car salesman and friend of mine asked me to hire his son to wash travel trailers. Bill Verhagen came to work and 39 years later is our service manager. Milfred and Bill have been and continue to be crucial to the success of Traveland RV."

In the next few years Dale began to develop a management plan for hiring new employees. "We like to hire younger people who have a family, want a career, have responsibilities and commitments," he said. "It is a model that works. Find a younger gal or guy, start them in one of the jobs in the parts department. When they master two or three positions in parts, we offer them an entry level job in sales. Of course, there is plenty of room

for growth in sales. When an applicant has more experience, I look for a little more advanced position. I hired a service advisor last week who had worked nine years for Home Depot. After camping with friends and learning more about the RV industry, he decided he wanted a career in this business."

As the 1980 decade began, Traveland was struggling with a financial crisis that RV dealerships all across the U.S. and Canada were facing. "In 1981 the interest rate soared to 20 percent and nearly wrecked us all," Dale began. "We were really 'out of business' but we didn't tell anyone. We had just bought a new location in Abbotsford and were faced with a huge mortgage when the bank called our note. In fact, the Bank of British Columbia called everyone's note in the RV business. We had not missed a payment."

Ironically, the bank appointed Dale to begin selling all of his inventory on a reducing line of credit basis. No new inventory! Because of his knowledge and success in the RV business, the bank, instead of bringing in an outside company, asked Dale to liquidate the bank's position with Traveland RV. In 1986 the Bank of British Columbia filed for bankruptcy. Leading up to that moment, the RV business was an easy industry to go after because it would affect the least number of people and raise the most cash.

"We lost money for nine months," Dale continued. "As partners, Gordon and I took no paycheck at all. Bill Verhagen and Milfred Abrams stayed, taking only 50 percent of their salaries. The crunch hit in August 1981. We were in survival mode all of 1982, with just five new travel trailers to sell."

In the Fall of 1982, the Travelaire sales manager called to ask how the company was doing. "We haven't lost our property yet," Dale said. "We may try to sell used cars."

To his surprise, the sales manager offered to ship trailers on credit and allow selected dealers to pay when sold—no interest. "All of a sudden things changed for us," Dale said. "Our competi-

tors did not get this offer and it was pivotal in turning us around. A mining company needed 10 trailers to house miners as they opened up a new mining operation. We sold 10 more and made enough money to get us through the 1983 winter and into 1984.

"Toward the end of 1985, we were operating two stores," Dale said. "We were consolidating the two stores into the Langley location when we found five acres strategically located on the Langley By-Pass.

"We met with the three partners who owned the five acres," Dale said. "I told them we would like to buy the land but we had no cash but we did have equity in the Abbotsford property. One of the partners asked me to stay as the meeting broke up. To my surprise he said, 'When could you move in?' I said, 'Soon. If you could make the payments on my mortgage, I will personally finance you for the difference,' he replied. As I said earlier, things have happened unexpectedly in my career—this time two sets of circumstances just naturally intersecting and coming together."

In January 1986 Dale and Gordon opened the dealership on the Langley By-Pass with offices in a double-wide trailer. "We sold the Abbotsford land a year later which qualified us to take over the bank's first mortgage on the five acres. Our 'benefactor' financed us on a second mortgage to cover the difference in the appraised price and the bank's loan. It was a roller coaster, but we pulled it off."

To expand their brands, the partners took on Triple-E, a Canadian manufacturer, quickly making Traveland a viable Class A motorhome dealership. Perhaps not realizing that Triple-E and Travelaire jealously regarded Traveland RV as the prime dealership in the Vancouver area, Dale negotiated to take on Vanguard motorhomes and trailers. In a squeeze play, Traveland lost both Triple-E and Travelaire but took on all of Vanguard's brands for motorhomes and travel trailers, getting an ample inventory that pushed their annual sales numbers in the right direction.

Realizing the need for an upscale new facility, and better

approaches to effective management, Dale and Gordon in 1992 contacted Bill Gorman of Virginia Beach, a highly respected business advisor to RV dealerships. Gorman formed focus groups usually limited to 15 dealers who were not in direct competition with each other.

"Bill came to our location in Langley to evaluate our business and select a focus group for us to join," Dale explained. "After he reviewed the service facility, he shocked me with a terse report: 'You have outsold your costs and covered your weaknesses. Your fixed operations do not measure up to your sales volume.'"

Dale and Gordon added an IDS computer system to manage all of the dealership's departments and asked Gorman to design a modern superstore. Construction began in early 1994 and Traveland RV moved on October 31 into a modern facility that provided a new work flow in sales, service, and parts.

"We were now able to provide better direction to customers from the moment they arrive, park, and begin walking through our store," Dale noted. "The flow brings everyone into a general reception area. A right turn takes you to the parts and accessories store and our service advisors. A left turn takes the RVer into our indoor showroom and sales center. We zero in on helping the customer immediately, determining interests and needs, and efficiently serving him or her."

Traveland RV joined a focus group in which key owners and managers come together periodically to address business problems, find solutions, and share ideas that are mutually helpful to all of the members. One member may have already experienced and solved a problem that another is dealing with for the first time.

"The focus group has been the major influence on my business career," Dale acknowledged. "I quickly realized that I needed to do business with manufacturers who owned and controlled their own businesses and did not have to consult a board of directors to make strategic decisions. Twenty years ago several companies fit that profile, but that is no longer

true. Today that number has been reduced to two or three.”

In 2012 Dale bought out his long-time partner Gordon Bird and began thinking about building a family management team and a viable succession plan. Dale and Jeanette have three sons: Shaun, 35; Brad, 33; and Kris, 31.

“I am very fortunate that our three boys have grown up in the business and decided that Traveland is where they want to build their careers,” Dale said. “Because I enjoy working with them, I don’t want to retire. I have decided when you don’t *have* to come to work, it is more fun to come to work. I love being a mentor to Shaun, Brad, and Kris and so many other talented young people who are trained or are being trained in all facets of this business.

“We have a sub-group to the focus group—young people who are learning the business from *their* perspectives. They will one day operate our dealerships,” Dale said. “As they rotate in and out of the departments of their companies, they are adding depth to their management experience that they share with each other.”

Dale’s sons meet his criteria for the type of employee he wants to hire: young, motivated, have a family, and career minded. Kris and his wife, Chalie, have three children: Tristan, 5; Charles Wesley Howes II, 3; and Evelyn, 1. Brad and his wife, Carly, have a little girl, Misa, 2. Shaun is married to Priscilla and they have three children: Camryn, 12; Vienna, 9; and Pax, 6.

Like all trainees, Shaun began his career washing RVs during holidays and throughout the summers. “When I finished high school, I started as a forklift yard man, but often gravitated to the service department to help the techs. Two years later I moved into tent trailer sales. Every morning we swept out all of the trailers. Keeping them clean makes a big difference in moving the inventory.

“Ron Livingston, who is now 86 and still working here, taught all three of us how to sell tent trailers,” Shaun continued. “We soon moved up to travel

trailers and then to motorhome overflow. In 2009, I began a four-year term in sales management approving deals.”

Shaun found his niche in special projects. “When we heard in 2013 that Art Pike’s motorhome store in West Kelowna was for sale, we made calls to determine if we could secure product lines with Tiffin, Open Range, and Prime Time. With those assurances,” Shaun noted, “we made an offer and bought the store. I spent a lot of time getting that store up and running. Then in May 2016 we acquired the store in Airdrie, Alberta. I spent the spring and summer setting up the departments in that store.”

Perhaps falling under the influence of the Old West, Shaun competes in cutting horse competitions. He also enjoys hunting, fishing, and water and snow skiing. “We grew up on a small farm where I spent five years in 4-H and beef production,” Shaun said. “I started riding horses and got to know Keith Smith who taught me how to identify a good horse. Dad enjoys riding, too, and we occasionally get to ride together.”

After dating her in high school, Shaun married Priscilla Krueger whose family moved to British Columbia from Brazil in 1998. Priscilla’s grandparents were dairy farmers in Russia before they emigrated to Brazil. Her father, Harry, is a cabinet designer and her mom, Monica, is the manager of Traveland RV Rentals, a Howes company that rents RVs to anyone looking to explore Canada or the US from May to mid-October.

Kris’s earliest memory is his dad trying to make a sale while he was jumping up and down on the RV’s bed. “My first job was washing trailers,” Kris said. “I began working counter sales in the parts department when I was 15. Then I worked two years selling tent trailers and a year in towables and fifth wheels.”

Kris moved to Houston in 2006 to do an internship at Holiday World of Houston. “Michael Peay, who is in Dad’s focus group, mentored me for a year,” he explained. “I worked two months in each department. It was a big eye opener to me

that Michael and Dad were both successful but they did a lot of things very differently. Holiday World’s general manager, Charlie Power, introduced me to his daughter, Chalie, and I married her! Friends tease me about having such a successful year in Houston. Michael still mentors me today and Charlie is now a partner with Paul Everett. Here in Langley I spend most of my time in finance and sales, but sales is really my ‘cup of tea.’

“Our key management people rotate in and out of Airdrie and West Kelowna in two-day stints to infuse our management style, methods, and philosophy into those stores,” Kris continued.

“In studying our marketplace, we see our generation moving toward smaller RVs with higher technology. The American influence got us into selling big units,” he smiled. “Now we are trending back to smaller. From January to August in the Airdrie store, we sold a lot of Airstreams and the most popular size is the 16-footer. A large percentage were bought by 30 to 35-year-olds.” Kris is a golfer and likes to spend time on the links with Dale whenever they both can find the time.

Following his dad’s plan for getting into the business, Brad also washed travel trailers during the four summers of his high school years. “After I finished high school in 2002, I took a different ‘career’ path at Traveland and started in shipping and receiving. The parts department didn’t have any openings,” Brad joked. “I did eventually move into parts where I had two jobs: running parts and working the front counter. After you have been in the parts department for a couple of years, you move into doing unit demonstrations for new owners. Mr. Livingston also taught me how to sell tent trailers, and then travel trailers. He was and still is a good mentor to all three of us.”


In 2004 Brad decided to take a year’s sabbatical to go backpacking through Southeast Asia which included Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, and Australia. He met Carly, an Australian, while backpacking in Thailand and persuaded her to visit Canada

for backpacking in the Rockies. “We went to Australia in 2008 on a Jayco dealer trip,” Brad said. “I decided to stay in Australia to attend college and earned bachelor’s degrees in information technology and business management. We moved to B.C. two years ago. I now head up our IT department and handle most of our responsibilities in human resources. Monitoring all of the HR requirements that come out of Canada’s legislative bodies is a job by itself. We now have employment agreements and extended health benefits.”

Having expressed no interest in retiring, I asked Dale about his plans for the future—or at least for the next five years. “I would love to expand here in Langley with a new location and a physical store that is designed for the way we do business,” he began. “We long ago outgrew the footprint of this five-acre property. Finding land that does not add an exorbitant amount of overhead will be a problem.

“It is a great time to expand. We have a very capable management team, most of whom are in their thirties, which will be a major factor in successful growth,” Dale continued. “We have several mentors like Bill Verhagen, Milfred Abrams, and Chris Carter who will continue to share their knowledge and experience. All of our sales team are 35 and under, including Cam Scouten, one of our two sales managers.

“My health is great. Exercise? No, I don’t do that. Exercise wears out your body,” he joked, perhaps seriously I thought. “Are there any new stores to buy? Can we successfully run this business with the government constantly in our face creating new obstacles?

“Social media and high tech will be the biggest factors in changing RVing in the next ten years. By 2027 the way we do business will be very different,” Dale predicted. “But with our young and intelligent leadership and team, I think we are ready for the challenge.” 

Ricky Johnson

A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN THE PARTS DEPARTMENT

This year Ricky Johnson completes his 27th year with Tiffin Motorhomes. Most of those years parallel the early and ongoing development of Tiffin's parts department.

Ricky did not plan his initial career in parts. Far from it. When he graduated from Red Bay High School in 1989, he enrolled in Northwest Alabama Junior College in Phil Campbell, about 30 miles from home, with an interest in becoming an elementary school teacher. "I really admired my elementary school teachers and realized what a huge influence a grade

school teacher could have on the life of a young person," Ricky explained.

"After two years, I transferred to the University of North Alabama in Florence. By that time I needed funds to complete my education and took a full-time job on the Tiffin production line installing ceiling lights in the roof module. The shift finished at 3:30 p.m. I got in a couple of hours studying and then drove to Florence to attend night classes. I had to be up at five the next morning to start the 7 a.m. shift. For the long haul, nineteen hour days were just too much and I decid-

ed to focus on my career here at Tiffin."

Bill Emerson moved Ricky to the parts department in 1991. At that time, the department had five employees. "Each employee took phone calls, wrote the orders, gathered and boxed the parts. At that time, every UPS shipping document was handwritten," Ricky explained. "If a dealer had placed a parts order that was concurrent with a motorhome being shipped to him, we would put the parts in the basement of the motorhome, especially if it was a large item that we could slide across the width of the motorhome."

As the parts department grew, the jobs were redefined and based on function, he said. "Jack Elliott and Jesse Vess took the phone orders. Norris Sparks, Billy Herring, and I pulled the orders and boxed them. We had so much going out every day that UPS supplied us with a program to generate and print the shipping documents which created another position."

In 2000 Ricky's job took a new turn. "I was moved to the division that supplied parts to the repair bays," he explained. "We had to carefully track the parts that were dispensed under warranty and those that were chargeable to the motorhome owners. In 2004, I moved into the parts office and was joined by Mark Richardson and Lloyd Griffus to receive orders, process the paper work, and turn it over to shipping."

Now under the same roof as Tiffin's 60-bay service center, the parts warehouse and shipping area has over 20,000 square feet for computer-controlled inventory plus a woodworking shop to build shipping containers. The biggest part shipped by motor freight is a front or rear cap.

"We have four call operators," Ricky continued. "Bob wanted to have a live person answering incoming calls and directing them to either parts or service technicians. Sixteen people receive parts calls, write the orders, and give them to three order entry clerks who type the orders for three pullers. Four people do the boxing for shipments and three operate the computers for creating the shipping documents for UPS, Fedex, or motor freight carriers. Five warranty clerks check and evaluate repairs and parts orders from dealers as well as the work being done at the service center."

In the same office complex, thirteen service techs receive on average 2,000 calls a week from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Central

Time from owners and service departments at dealerships. All of the service techs handle general questions and each has areas in which they specialize. The parts department handles on average 4,000 calls a week.

Ricky was instrumental in developing the dealer website in 2011 for ordering parts. Most parts have pictures from several angles plus part numbers and pricing. The customer website for ordering parts was launched in 2015, store.tiffin-motorhomes.com.

In April of this year, Jesse Vess retired and Ricky accepted the position as director of the parts department. Richard Blanton was appointed office manager of the parts department to keep internal operations running smoothly.

Recognizing the magnitude of his new position, Ricky acknowledges that end-

less questions are the most challenging part of this job. "Of course, questions are necessary and expected," he said. "Other challenges are insuring that we meet customers' needs in a timely manner. We take five to six thousand calls a week in parts and service. Monday is always our busiest day."

When asked what keeps him coming back to work every day to an obviously stressful job, he smiled. "Some people might think this is an obsequious answer, but I really like working with the Tiffins. They are good people. We have a talented staff in this department and it is a pleasure working with them. I like to think effective communication is my forte."

Ricky and Effie Johnson live six miles east of Red Bay on SR 24. Effie has worked at TMH for 21 years, the last five of which have been in the sales department where



Text by Fred Thompson

At left: Jonathan Humphres visits with Ricky to check on the inventory for incoming parts that have been ordered.

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At left: Ricky and Effie vacationing at the harbor in Savannah, Georgia. Right: Ricky competing in the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in Nashville. Far right: Effie and Ricky both placed second in the Riverhill Elementary 5k in Florence, Alabama.

she processes motorhome orders and works daily with Tiffin's dealers. Since their schedules are not always the same, they usually arrive in separate vehicles.

"I met Effie through my first cousin, Sarah, who used to hang out with us on weekends," Ricky said. "Sarah introduced me to Effie and, as a group, we would do things together—go out to eat, movies, rodeos. Effie and I started dating when

the group had other interests. Trina was 11 when we married in 1994. As step-dad and -granddad, I am enjoying Trina's five children."

In 1994 Ricky began working with Bill Page cleaning motorhomes. Two years later he started his own business and now has one full-time employee. With regular ads and word-of-mouth, the business handles three to six coaches a week. They

clean inside and out, wash and wax. In their long driveway, three 50-amp hook-ups allow owners to remain comfortable in their coaches while they work on the outside. In warm months, customers relax around the pool and have lunch while they wait.

At a Friday night high school ballgame five years ago, Effie and Ricky were sitting next to Krista Scott. After the game ended and spectators were leaving, Krista said, "Why don't y'all come run with me in the morning?"

"Effie and I looked at each other and said, 'Why not?'" We set up a time to meet on Saturday and Krista led us through what she had learned in the sport.

"We were hooked," Ricky said. "My first race was a two-miler. Next was a four-miler. After five months, I was doing a 5K almost every weekend. In October 2012, I ran a half-marathon one year after I started running. Now it was a passion. Effie really got into it, too. We have run several races together, and she has run eight half marathons and two full marathons."

Ricky ran his first full marathon (26.2 miles) in August 2014 in Tupelo, Mississippi. "I have run eight marathons so far, including races in Little Rock, Savannah, and the Mercedes-Benz Marathon in Birmingham in 2015," he said. "When I am in training for an upcoming marathon, I run 25 to 50 miles a week, but you have to back off two weeks before you run a marathon. I am signed up to run the Rocket City Marathon in Huntsville in December. So far my best time is 4:33. My goal is 4 hours even."

The Huntsville race is a qualifier for the famed Boston Marathon. "You are automatically qualified if you finish at 3:25," he explained. "If they do not get 20,000 registrants at that cut, they will raise it to 3:35, and then to 3:45, et cetera. On a few years, they have raised it to 4:00. It's a long shot, but I am hopeful.

"At the Savannah Marathon, I met



a lady, 68, who had been running for 27 years,” Ricky related. “I had always thought of running as an exercise. She told me when she began running she had

a drinking problem, was overweight, and was in a marriage that was on the rocks. She hired a trainer, began running, and got her life together. She had run the

Alaska Marathon, the Chicago Marathon, and the New York City Marathon. She entered a qualifying race for the Boston Marathon and ran 3:59:37 and got in. She realized her goal and was selected to run at Boston. I was inspired!”

Ricky Johnson’s accomplishments in 46 years are to be admired. When they can find the time, he and Effie enjoy trips to Hawaii and to islands in the Caribbean, but their favorite place for a week or a long weekend is the Ramada Beach Resort in Fort Walton Beach. “The waters are so blue and the sand is so white,” Ricky said.

Future goals? “Effie and I want to travel the east and west coasts of the U.S.,” he said. “In my job, I want to make parts ordering and fulfillment a ‘get-it-right-every-time’ process.

“My personal goal is to continue running and working here at Tiffin Motorhomes. I love working here and hope to retire from here in about 20 more years,” he smiled. **RIS**

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North Carolina's Outer Banks

North Carolina's 200-mile string of barrier islands have been known for two centuries as the Outer Banks (colloquially called OBX). Beginning at Virginia's southeastern shoreline and extending to Ocracoke, the islands create the calmer waters of Pamlico Sound and several smaller sounds (3,000 square miles), protecting North Carolina's mainland and providing safe harbors for the state's fishing industry. Barrier islands are found on every continent in the world except Antarctica. The width of these protective islands along the coasts of Georgia and the Carolinas can vary from 300 feet, sometimes called spits, to three miles, the width of Georgia's Cumberland Island which is nearly 18 miles long.

The Cape Hatteras National Seashore

The Outer Banks and the sounds are an ecological phenomenon that the U.S. Congress recognized on August 17, 1937, when it authorized the establishment of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore (CHNS). The funds to purchase the land for the national seashore were provided by philanthropist Paul Mellon, and included Bodie, Hatteras, and Ocracoke islands. There are three major NPS visitor centers: The Bodie Island Visitor Center is located adjacent to the Bodie Island Lighthouse. The Hatteras Island Visitor Center and the Museum of the Sea is located in the lightkeeper's quarters at the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in the village of Buxton. The Ocracoke Island Visitor Center is located near the Ocracoke Lighthouse in the village of Ocracoke. The park was officially established as the first national seashore on January 12, 1953, and dedicated on April 24, 1958.

The National Park Service coordinates the management of Cape Hatteras National Seashore with two other NPS parks on the Outer Banks: the Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kill Devil Hills and the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site on Roanoke Island. This story will weave in and out of the CHNS as it includes its lighthouses and natural wonders.

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

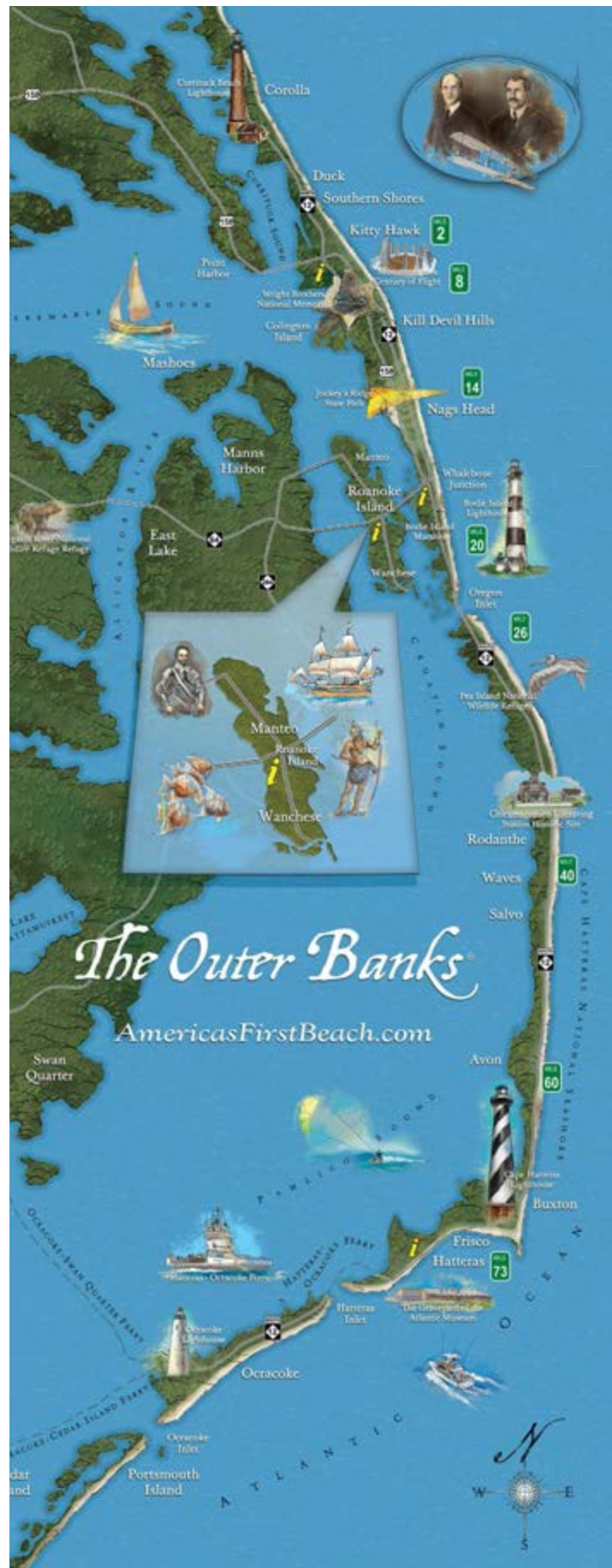


IMAGE COURTESY OF THE OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU

Today, the tourist economy of the Outer Banks depends on NC 12, an historic artery that began its existence in the late 1800s when early residents transported their supplies in home-made carts pulled by oxen. Henry Ford's Model T's over a century ago struggled through ruts in shifting sand to deliver their passengers to the best picnic and swimming sites. In the early days, the Model T's reached the OBX by ferries. Then rickety bridges were built from Point Harbor to Kitty Hawk (Wright Memorial Bridge) and from Whalebone Junction to Roanoke Island and the mainland. The Depression followed by WWII halted the development of the OBX until the late forties and early fifties when families began searching for new places to spend their summer vacations.

Finally, by 1960, a continuous highway from the Currituck Lighthouse in Corolla to the southwestern tip of Ocracoke Island was paved and designated as NC 12. A free 40-minute ferry ride connects Hatteras and Ocracoke islands at the Hatteras Inlet. If your itinerary takes you farther down the NC coast, a two-plus hour ferry service (\$45 for a Class A coach and tow car) will deliver you across the Ocracoke Inlet to Cedar Island, a nice cruise on a sunny day. When you disembark, you will follow the famed NC 12 for a few more miles. That was a short excursion into recent history. Now let's turn the pages back half a millennium.

Roanoke Island

RALEIGH'S COLONY ON ROANOKE ISLAND

In recorded history, the first European sighting and awareness of the Outer Banks occurred in March 1524 when Giovanni de Verrazzano was sailing under the flag of King Francis I of France. Departing in the Fall 1523, an attempt to take a northern route via the Grand Banks of Newfoundland failed in a violent storm in which two of his four ships were lost. The two surviving ships returned to the northwest coast of France for repairs. Departing in December on a southern route, they stopped in Madeira. After deciding *La Normande* was not seaworthy, Verrazzano's ship, *La Dauphine*, departed on January 24, 1524 with supplies for an eight-month voyage. His commission from the king was to find a passage to China.

They made landfall on March 1 near what is now Cape Fear, North Carolina, just south of Wilmington, and began sailing in

a northeastward direction along the coast. When they reached Pamlico Sound of modern North Carolina, Verrazzano believed he had found the Pacific Ocean from which access might be gained to China. His coastal sketches and reports of the area were the beginning of many mistakes that created errors in subsequent maps of North America for two hundred years to come. Verrazzano followed the Atlantic coastline of North America to New York Bay, the coast of Long Island to Narragansett Bay, Cape Cod, Maine, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, returning home to France on July 8, 1524.

Six decades later on April 27, 1584, an exploratory trip planned by Walter Raleigh (later to become "Sir") left Plymouth, England. The two ships and crews led by Philip Amadas, Arthur Barlow, and the pilot, Simon Fernandez, landed on the Outer Banks on July 13, and made their way to Roanoke Island where they met the brother of the chieftain. They returned to England two months later with a wide variety of cultural items. Two Native Americans, Manteo and Wanchese, consented to make the trip to meet Queen Elizabeth I. They were received with great fanfare that helped raise support for a colonization trip the next year.

A contingent of five ships and two pinnaces sailed from Plymouth on April 9, 1585, led by Sir Richard Grenville. They landed on June 24, but it was over a month later before land was secured. The seed they brought for planting had been ruined by salt water and the 107 colonists were left with enough food for only three weeks. Before the ships departed for England, Ralph Lane was placed in command. Initially, he was successful at negotiating with the Indians for supplies. As a military man, Lane took the wrong public relations tact several times and damaged the colony's good relations with the Indians.

A 1586 venture led by Sir Francis Drake focused on capturing Spanish ships returning to Spain with silver and gold bullion taken from Central America. Since the venture was sponsored in part by the swashbuckling Raleigh, Drake may have felt obligated to check on Raleigh's colony that had landed a year earlier on Roanoke Island. His timing was perfect. Storms and a lack of

Four sixteenth century explorers influenced the history of the early attempts of colonization in North Carolina. *From left:* Giovanni de Verrazzano, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Richard Grenville, and Sir Francis Drake.

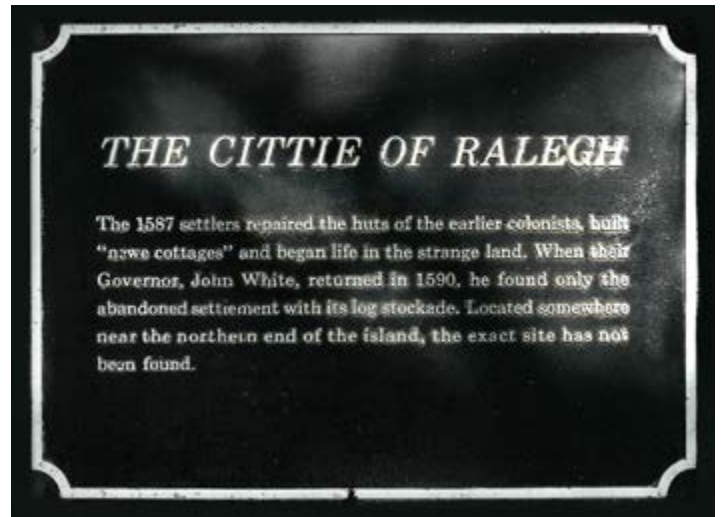


supplies had put the colonists in desperate circumstances. They accepted Drake's offer to take them home on June 19, completely unaware that Raleigh's relief ship would arrive in four weeks with supplies. Finding the living quarters and fort deserted, Raleigh's ship returned to England.

In September, Sir Richard Grenville sailed with more supplies shortly before Drake arrived with the colonists and Raleigh's ship returned with their news. When he found the deserted colony, Grenville left 15 men with plenty of provisions to sustain England's claim to Virginia. He returned to England, arriving in December.

The indefatigable Raleigh immediately started making plans to establish a colony by sending families and workmen with a variety of skills. A new site on the Chesapeake Bay was selected by Raleigh who promised each colonist 500 acres. Given the problem with earlier landings on the Outer Banks in which six crewmen were lost, the captains of the six ships agreed to the new site. Raleigh selected Governor John White to lead the colonists: 85 men, 17 women, 11 children, and Manteo.

After a stop at the original site, one of the captains, Simon Fernandez, overruled the plan to continue on to the new site on Chesapeake Bay, forcing the colonists to settle on Roanoke Island. Surprised by an Indian attack, colonist George Howe was killed as Governor White was in the process of discovering that the 15 men left to hold the fort had also been attacked and killed or captured. On August 27, at the insistence of the colonists, the governor re-



turned to England to secure more supplies and reinforcements.

With England at war with Spain, the ship on which White arrived was commandeered for war service. Queen Elizabeth refused to allow even one of her ships to take relief supplies to the colonists. Raleigh could only provide a pinnace stocked with supplies. White elected to wait while Raleigh searched for other options. In April 1588, Raleigh arranged for two privateering ships to take White, 15 new colonists, and provisions for the colony. After attempts to seize Spanish ships were unsuccessful, the privateers after 30 days at sea had to return to England for repairs.

The Lost Colony, now in its 80th year, is the longest running symphonic outdoor drama in the United States. It is the only outdoor theater ever to receive Broadway's prestigious Tony Award. The drama opened in the summer of 1937 on the grounds of the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, the very location of the first English settlement in the New World called Fort Raleigh. Four years later on April 5, 1941, Fort Raleigh was named a National Historic Site under a cooperative agree-

ment with the Roanoke Island Historical Association and the National Park Service. When you visit the OBX, the drama is a "must see." You will see and feel the anticipation and joy of the colonists' arrival in the New World, the problems they faced as they built their village, their concerns turning to fear, and the despair when their options ran out. It is an amazing story that took place right here over four centuries ago. Google "The lost colony" if you would like to take backstage tour. ♦



Many factors played a role in the fate of the colony planned by Sir Walter Raleigh. Queen Elizabeth I was an early supporter who later



felt compelled to use every ship in England's war with Spain, denying Raleigh a supply ship rescue the Roanoke colony.

After England defeated the Spanish Armada in July 1588, Raleigh formed a holding company in March 1589, secured three privateers and two shallops, and loaded provisions to relieve the colonists on Roanoke Island. They finally left Portsmouth, England on March 20, 1590, for privateering ventures, with a stop planned for Roanoke Island. Governor White was on board only as a passenger.

Finally arriving on August 15 on what is now Bodie Island, the governor and 18 men found the settlement completely deserted and overgrown. By previous agreement, if something dire happened, the colonists were to carve a symbol in the fort's palisade indicating where they had gone. If a cross was added to the geographical symbol, it meant they were forced to leave. The letters CROATOAN were carved into the palisade, CRO was scratched into a tree, and there was no cross. Governor White interpreted the characters to mean the island on the Outer Banks where Manteo was born. That island was probably Hatteras.

Governor White had christened Manteo and made him Raleigh's representative to his people, a position of importance that the natives recognized. Captain Abraham Cooke and Governor White tried to sail to Hatteras, but their ship was nearly driven aground in a storm. Another cable to an anchor broke, leaving them with only one anchor out of four. Their other ship was in a bad state of repair and had already sailed for England. Cooke as captain overruled White and sailed south to get food, water, and repairs. The fate of "The Lost Colony" was sealed. ♦

FORT RALEIGH

Archaeology over the last 125 years has filled in some of the gaps of information about the Lost Colony. The rough dimensions of an earthen fort built by the colonists who landed in 1585 or 1587 were revealed by an archaeological dig in 1895. Further excavations done in 1947 revealed a common method of constructing forts at that time—dig ditches and pile the dirt inward to form a high wall. The depth of the ditch and the



The revetments that were dug over 400 years ago can still be seen at the site of Fort Raleigh. Archeological projects continue today.

height of the wall would have made it difficult for an enemy charge to go down into the ditch and then up over the wall. In 1950 the NPS made a more pronounced demonstration of the method by excavating a defensive ditch and building a wall as high as the colonists built earlier. A dig in 1991 may have unearthed Thomas Hariot's and Joachim Gans' metallurgy workshop. A 2008 excavation discovered over 200 artifacts from the late 1500s.

The north end of Roanoke Island played a role during the Civil War. In February 1862 General Ambrose landed 13,000 Union troops to flush out the Confederates. After the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Lincoln, hundreds of former slaves sought refuge in a Freedmen's Colony established by a Union chaplain. By 1865 over 3,000 freedmen had built 560 log homes, plus a hospital, church, schools, and a sawmill. ♦

THE ELIZABETHAN GARDENS

In 1950 four individuals of noted wealth and social position visited the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site and attended *The Lost Colony* outdoor drama. After walking through the Fort's revetments and beautifully shaded grounds, they collectively agreed to approach The Garden Club of North Carolina and suggest the creation of a two-acre garden as a permanent memorial to the lost colonists.

A fortuitous connection between The Garden Club and U.S. Ambassador John Hay Whitney resulted in a valuable gift of garden statuary that the ambassador was removing from his garden in Thomasville, Georgia, in preparation for the sale of his home. The ambassador was considering a gift to the Metropolitan Museum when he was contacted. He and Mrs. Whitney contributed the statuary to honor the lost colonists.

The stately entrance wall of old handmade brick supports great iron gates that once hung at the French Embassy in Washington, a gift of the U.S. Treasury Secretary C. Douglas Dillon and Mrs. Dillon. ♦



Seven years in development, the Elizabethan Gardens were opened August 18, 1960, on the 333rd anniversary of the birth of Virginia Dare.

The Natural Wonders of the Outer Banks

CURRITUCK BANKS COASTAL ESTUARINE RESERVE



Stretches of undeveloped, unspoiled shoreline in the northern section of the Outer Banks are not an oversight of developers, but rather the result of a careful environmental plan assuring that certain areas of the OBX will always remain pristine and open to everyone who appreciates the ecology of the beaches, estuaries, and tidal marshes.

The Currituck Banks Coastal Estuarine Reserve is a 965-acre natural mari-

time habitat. With field glasses, camera, and fishing equipment, you will enjoy birding, photography, fishing, hiking, and diverse new adventures. Boardwalks take you safely into the wetlands. Walk quietly to get photo opps you never expected. The reserve will present the Outer Banks as they were decades ago, even centuries ago. For excellent literature on this area, google Currituck Banks Coastal Estuarine Reserve. ♦

ALBEMARLE-PAMLICO SOUND



Most often referred to as just Pamlico Sound, the interconnected network of lagoon estuaries include Pamlico (the largest), Albemarle, Currituck, Croatan, Bogue, Core, and Roanoke sounds. While covering over 3,000 square miles of open water, the depths of Pamlico rarely exceed six feet and the deepest hole found so far is only 26 feet.

If you are RVing on the Outer Banks, don't become preoccupied with the Atlantic beaches and overlook Pamlico Sound. If you

did not bring your own equipment, you can find stores online to outfit you for fishing and crabbing, birding, sailing, windsurfing, kiteboarding, parasailing, personal watercraft, boating, and kayaking. For example, google "outer banks crabbing" or "outer banks windsurfing." A search on "crabbing" will take you to outerbanks.com/crabbing.html. An OBX real estate company publishes a large "bed-sheet" size map that shows outfitting stores. iPhone's Maps also shows these locations. ♦

I was surprised to learn the dunes are a great place for hang gliding. However, you must have a USHGA Hang 1 license. Anyone can fly a kite from the top of the ridge. Just let the string out as the wind launches your kite. When we were there, several experienced kite flyers were really putting on a show with kites that had unusual shapes. If you have the skills for snowboarding, then you will find sandboarding a piece of cake.

If you are on the west side of the park,

you can depend on good windsurfing in Roanoke Sound just about any day it isn't raining. The park has a designated area for swimming and kayakers can go wherever they please. Windsurfers must launch from a designated area.

Jockey's Ridge has picnic shelters, a visitor center and museum, and an auditorium. But there are no camping facilities. The park is located at 300 W. Carolista Drive in Nags Head or at Milepost 12 on Hwy. 158. ♦

THE NAGS HEAD WOODS ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE



The preserve is a gem of sand dunes, ponds, marshes, and wetlands occupying 1,092 acres on the Outer Banks, just north of Jockey's Ridge State Park at 701 West Ocean Acres Drive in Kill Devil Hills. Operated and owned by the

Nature Conservancy, it was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1974. For information on hiking and fishing, google Nags Head Woods Preserve or call 252-441-2525.

Seven hiking trails in the preserve are

open dawn to dusk every day for foot traffic only. One is a half-mile ADA trail that goes around an interdunal freshwater pond and through a maritime swamp forest with an overlook of a brackish marsh. Visitors travel over a wooden boardwalk and paved concrete paths. The trail was designed for those in wheelchairs, but we noticed it was also convenient for mom's pushing strollers. There is no fee, but hikers should register at the outdoor information counter. You can print a trail map at the website. To safeguard the sensitive diversity and history of the Preserve, trails are for foot traffic only.

Fishing is catch and release only in the preserve's freshwater ponds. Game fish include Bluegill, Largemouth Bass, Black Crappie, and Pumpkinseed (one of the state's smallest and most brilliantly colored sunfishes). Freshwater fishing is permitted on the Discovery and ADA trails. Saltwater fishing is allowed in the Roanoke Sound at the end of the Roanoke Trail. ♦

JOCKEY'S RIDGE STATE PARK

The sand dunes at Jockey's Ridge are the tallest active sand dune system in the eastern United States. They are often called "the living dunes" because shifting winds are constantly reshaping them. Amazingly, there are no prevailing winds that just blow the sand completely away. That phenomenon is attributed to the very localized northeast and southwest winds that compensatingly move the sand back and forth in a kind of swaying motion.

The 420-acre environment creates harsh conditions that will not support plant or animal life along the sides and peaks of the dunes. The bases of the dunes are controlled to some degree by grasses that provide a habitat for insects and small animals.

There are more activities to enjoy here than I would have anticipated. A word of warning: On bright days, the sun's rays are magnified by the sand. The sand can be 30 degrees hotter than the air temperature making shoes a must. There are no entrance fees to the park.

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THE NORTH CAROLINA AQUARIUM
AT ROANOKE ISLAND



The North Carolina Aquarium is designed as a teaching facility for school groups, teacher workshops, and indoor/outdoor programs. The sharks in the large aquarium seem to pace (swim?) back and forth, perhaps looking for the exit to the ocean. The variety of smaller fish is fascinating, and the touch tanks displaying the stingrays draw both children and adults to the experience. Children are especially interested in the interactive Sea Turtle Recovery facility where a marine biologist explains how they diagnose injuries and treat their patients. As the patients' health improves, they are moved to the Sea Turtle Assistance and Rehabilitation Center. If you are carefully planning your day, set aside two hours for your visit. Fees: adults, \$11; seniors, \$10; children, \$9. Located at 374 Airport Road in Manteo. Daily, 9-5. 252-475-2300. ♦

THE DIAMOND SHOALS

While the Diamond Shoals have caused incalculable loss to shipping over the last 500 years, the shoals also provide real benefits to fishermen and shell collectors. Cape Point lays claim to being one of the best fishing destinations on the East Coast. Located at the tip of Cape Hatteras where the Labrador and Gulf Stream currents meet to form the Diamond Shoals, Cape Point has excellent surf fishing conditions most of the time for both in-shore and off-shore species, including cobia, croakers, bluefish, pompano, sea mullets, mackerels, trout, and drum.

The other "best" for visitors is the wide variety of seashells that wash up on the southern Cape Hatteras beaches, referred to as "South Beach," located just south of Cape Point.

The best time to visit Cape Point and South Beach is the off-season months when shelling and fishing are at their peak. Both beaches may be closed by the NPS during the summer due to the breeding season of endangered bird species. A 4-wheel-drive vehicle is recommended to access either beach since they are located two to three miles from the nearest public parking. Be sure to purchase an off-road vehicle (ORV) permit at the Hatteras Island Visitor Center. Remember that the beaches that border the Diamond Shoals area *are not suitable for swimming*. ♦

Lighthouses and the
Graveyard of the Atlantic

For nearly five centuries, grim records have been kept on the number of ships that have run aground on the shoals of the Outer Banks. The risks are most severe over the Diamond Shoals area off Cape Hatteras. Since 1526 the records now kept by the U.S. Coast Guard show that more than 5,000 ships lay in a watery grave. The loss of human life is in the tens of thousands.

Hidden beneath the waves and constantly changing in formation and depth, the underwater sandbars of Diamond Shoals extend for miles in various directions. The records show over 600 ships have run aground on the shoals off of Hatteras. After their hulls are damaged, the ships are whipped by the currents until they break apart and sink. It's not unusual for masts and timbers to project above the waves until they are finally washed ashore or out to sea where they are no longer visible.

By the mid- to late 1700s, as coastal shipping flourished between the colonies (soon to be states) and between the colonies and Europe, the shipwrecks along the Outer Banks and especially the Diamond Shoals escalated to alarming numbers, making the area known as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic." The federal government made its initial effort to deal with the problem in 1803 with the construction of a 90-foot tall lighthouse. It was ineffective and replaced by one 150 feet in height. On dark nights it was barely visible just a few miles offshore. Slow to act, the government in 1870 finally built the current **Cape Hatteras Lighthouse** that is 208 feet in height. Sometimes called "America's Lighthouse," it is the tallest brick beacon in the U.S. It was later fitted with a first order Fresnel lens that is strong enough to be seen by ships 30 miles out to sea. For an admission fee, visitors can climb 257 steps to the top from mid-April to Columbus Day.



Hatteras



Ocracoke



Bodie Island

Concurrently, the government authorized the construction of seven Lifesaving Service Stations on the Outer Banks, the first of which was the Chicamacomico station built at Rodanthe and completed in 1874. The original station had a keeper's room, a crew room, a boat room, and a mess hall. The elevated lookout point was manned 24/7. The weather took its toll on the original station which was moved to the back of the property while a new station was constructed in 1911. When you visit the station, you will be thrilled with the account of the crew's rescue in 1918 of the British sailors aboard the tanker *Mirlo* after it was torpedoed by a German U-boat and burst into flames. The six crew members were each awarded The Grand Cross of the American Cross of Honor. This medal of valor was forged in the late 1800s with requirements so high that only 11 people have ever received it.

By 1999 the erosion of the shoreline brought the ocean to the base of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. To save it, the 5,000-ton lighthouse was cut from its stone base, hydraulically lifted onto steel beams, and moved on railroad tracks over a period of 23 days. The extraordinary engineering feat received the 40th Annual Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The **Okracoke Lighthouse** is North Carolina's oldest operating lighthouse if you count the 54-foot wooden tower that was built in 1798. Its purpose was to mark the channel at the point of Okracoke Inlet. Shifting sands made a replacement necessary in 1820 and again in 1822. Built the following year primarily as a harbor light, the replacement is 75-foot tall. With its fourth-order Fresnel lens emitting a constant beam, it can be seen 14 miles at sea. Its foundation is

dressed stone and timbers, but its walls are brick with mortared surface. It is not open for climbing.

The **Bodie Island Lighthouse**, now located just north of the Oregon Inlet, was originally built in 1847 south of the Inlet on Pea Island. After a poor foundation forced its abandonment, a second one was built in 1859, but dynamited two years later by retreating Confederate troops who feared it might be used as a Union observation post.



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The third lighthouse was completed in 1872, boasting its original first order Fresnel lens. In 1932 the lighthouse was automated with an electric lamp with its reliability being guaranteed by two oil-fueled electric generators. Two lighthouse keepers remained until 1940 when it was fully automated. In 1953 the facility was transferred into the care of the National Park Service, the generators were disconnected, and power was supplied commercially.

Restoration was begun in August 2009 and completed in March 2013 after being halted intermittently by structural integrity issues, funding problems, and damage by Hurricane Irene. Now fully restored, the public may climb 214 steps to the top of the 170-foot lighthouse.

The **Currituck Beach Light** filled the 80-mile void between the Bodie Island Lighthouse and the Cape Henry Lighthouse at the entrance to Chesapeake Bay. The height of these four lighthouses seems to vary depending on the reference source you select. This 162-foot unpainted brick structure was put into service in December 1875. It began its existence with a first order Fresnel lens.

The lighthouse went through an interesting progression of light sources. The original source was a Funck's hydraulic float lamp fueled with lard oil that sup-

plied four concentric wicks. In 1884 the technology switched to a kerosene lamp with five concentric wicks, the largest of which was four inches in diameter. Twenty-nine years later, an advancement created an incandescent oil vapor lamp in which kerosene was vaporized and forced into the burner by use of a hand pump attached to a storage tank. Does that sound complicated? Weights similar to those found in a grandfather clock were used in a mechanism that rotated the huge lenses, making the light appear to flash. Finally, in 1939 the lighthouse was completely automated with a device that turned on the four 1000-watt bulbs. Actually, only one of the bulbs was used; the other three were back-ups that would light automatically if the primary bulb went out. Only two of the 1000-watt bulbs have been replaced since 1939. The Currituck Beach Light can be seen for 18 nautical miles. All of the four lighthouses on the Outer Banks are still used for navigation.

While the Outer Banks' sandbars and shifting shoals were a constant danger to mariners who plied the Atlantic coast, there were residents who made their living scavenging wrecked ships. It is said that some lured ships to their destruction by tying a lantern around the neck of a horse and walking it up and down the beach. The lanterns' up and down motion would appear to other ships a few miles out at sea to represent a ship ahead in clear water. The unsuspecting captain would then steer his ship straight toward the shore following the false light.

The **Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum** in the village of Hatteras has interesting exhibits that tell the stories of ships and their crews who were lost in the treacherous waters of Diamond Shoals and other points along the Outer Banks. Exhibits at both this museum and the Chicamacomico Life Saving Station tell the tragic stories of the vast amount of shipping that was torpedoed by German U-Boats during WWII along the coasts of Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

The museum has an exhibit explaining the Fresnel lens that changed the effectiveness of lighthouses along our coasts.

The admission is free (donations accepted). Allow two hours.

Okracoke Island

Although we did our research for this story three months ago when we entered the Outer Banks via the Wright Memorial Bridge, we first visited the OBX in July 2014, making our entrance using the ferry from Cedar Island to Okracoke. Reached by three ferries, the island is not accessible by any roads, although the main thoroughfare is still designated NC 12. The smallest of the OBX islands, Okracoke is nonetheless charming.

It compresses NC 12 into two narrow lanes while non-existent sidewalks force tourists to compete for the same space as they shop the village's quaint stores. Thankfully, driving an Allegro Breeze and towing a Smart car, we found a parking place across the street from the Okracoke Preservation Society Museum.

The museum's permanent and changing exhibits tell stories of life on the Outer Banks during the 19th and 20th centuries. A boat cradle in the museum's backyard displays a fully restored fishing boat built in 1934 by master boat builder, Tom Neal, for Okracoke fisherman, Stacy Howard. Howard named the boat "Blanche" after his teenaged daughter. While you are in the museum, ask for directions to Robbie's Way. The heirs to Charles and Robbie Runyon's estate honored their parents by deeding a 15-foot wide path to Pamlico Sound from the south side of the island, providing one of few accesses to walk on the beach.

Since we arrived on the morning ferry, lunchtime slipped up on us, prompting a search for an interesting eatery. We felt like we had made a discovery when we walked into The Fig Tree Bakery, Deli, and Sweet Tooth. They serve breakfast, coffee, and lunch. For the menu, first google "fig tree bakery and deli Okracoke." From the options that pop up, click on obxguides.com/ocracoke/thesweettooth/menus. There are breakfast breads, sweet potato biscuits, bagels, egg-sausage burritos, and more. The variety of healthy sandwiches and soups will make your mouth water.



Jennette's Pier

AERIAL PHOTO BY RAY MATTHEWS

We're betting you can't resist homemade fudge, candies, ice cream, and desserts.

In the months immediately following Pearl Harbor, Great Britain loaned 24 trawlers to the U.S. Navy for coastal patrol of our Atlantic shores to reduce the success of German U-boats in sinking our shipping. The HMT Bedfordshire and its British crew were destroyed by a torpedo from German submarine U-558 on May 11, 1942. All hands were lost at sea, but four bodies were recovered on the shores of Ocracoke. They were buried in a cemetery on the island. A lease for the small plot was given to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, making the small site officially a British cemetery. The Union Jack flies there perpetually. One of the sailors was identified, the other three are known but to God. The cemetery is maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard station. A memorial ceremony is held each year in May.

Jennette's Pier in Nags Head

Located at 7223 S. Virginia Dare Trail in Nags Head, Jennette's Pier is an institution. The 1,000-foot pier is a prime fishing location from 6 a.m. until midnight, Apr–Nov, and 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Dec–Mar. During the summer months, the pier is dedicated to Family Fishing 9–11 a.m. every weekday and 2–4 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Experienced fishermen teach adults and children the basic skills necessary to catch a fish. Topics include species and identification of fish commonly found near the pier, how to cast and tie your rigs, and catch and release techniques. (Fees: \$15 per person; \$8 for 5 and under). Other programs include Fishing Day Camp (ages 8–12, \$40), Surf Fishing Workshop (\$40), and much more. On Tuesdays 9–noon, the Catch-it, Clean-it, Cook-it Class (ages 15+, \$35) is taught by an expert angler and avid fisherman. The morning fishing is followed by a cooking lesson just in time for a fried

fish lunch. The \$35 fee includes an all day pass for fishing.

Just to get acquainted with Jennette's Pier, you can purchase a walk-on pass for \$2. All day fishing passes are \$12 adults and \$6 children. The North Carolina Aquarium in the building where you enter is free.

THE OBX STORY CONTINUES ➔

The Wright Brothers at Kill Devil Hills

December 17, 1903



Yes, it happened right where you are standing . . .

on this very ground. It was a long sandy expanse 114 years ago, not the green turf you see now. The date was December 17, 1903. The brothers flipped a coin to determine who would attempt the first controlled flight in a heavier-than-air craft powered by an engine. Orville won the toss and piloted the Wright Flyer into a freezing headwind gusting to 27 miles per hour at 10:35 a.m. The flight lasted 12 seconds and covered 120 feet at a speed of 6.8 miles per hour. The next flight by Wilbur also lasted 12 seconds and stayed up for 175 feet. Orville made the third flight: 15 seconds, 200 feet. Finally, just before noon, Wilbur pushed the distance out to 852 in 59 seconds.

Five men witnessed the four flights, one of whom was John T. Daniels who snapped the iconic “first flight” photograph

on Orville’s camera. As the men moved the Flyer back to its hanger, a gust of wind snatched the ropes from their hands and flipped the little bi-plane over, severely damaging it. The plane was shipped home to Dayton where Orville many years later restored it. After lending it to several museums, he finally permitted Smithsonian to give it a permanent home.

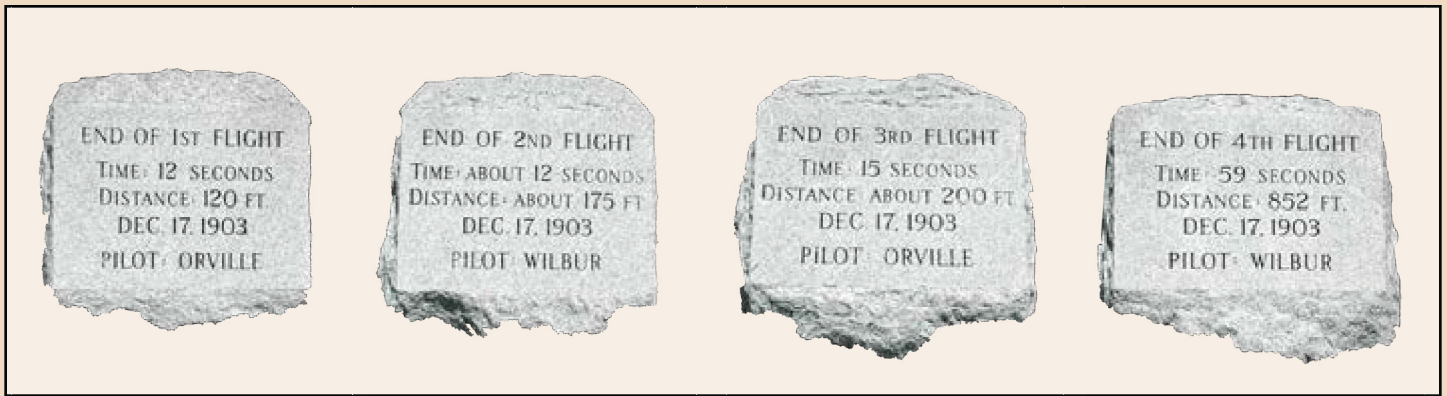
The Wright brothers were not the first to build and fly an experimental aircraft. Others had put large engines on frames with wings and virtually rocketed themselves through the air in an uncontrolled trajectory. The Wrights were the first to invent aircraft controls that made a fixed-wing powered flight guided and controlled by a pilot.

Their father, a bishop in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, traveled often on church business. In 1878 he brought home a toy helicopter for his two boys. Based on an invention of French aeronautical pioneer Alphonse Pénau, the craft was made of paper, bamboo, and cork with a rubber band to spin its rotor. The boys played with it incessantly until it broke. Then they built their own little helicopter that worked. In later years they both recalled their experience with the toy as being the spark that ignited their interest in flying.

Years of research and preparation preceded the historic first flight in December 1903. Both boys attended high school but



A replica of the Wright Flyer I is on display in the visitor’s center at the Wright Memorial in Kill Devil Hills. This picture is taken from a 30-degree angle from the front of the plane. The image above is from the rear of the plane.

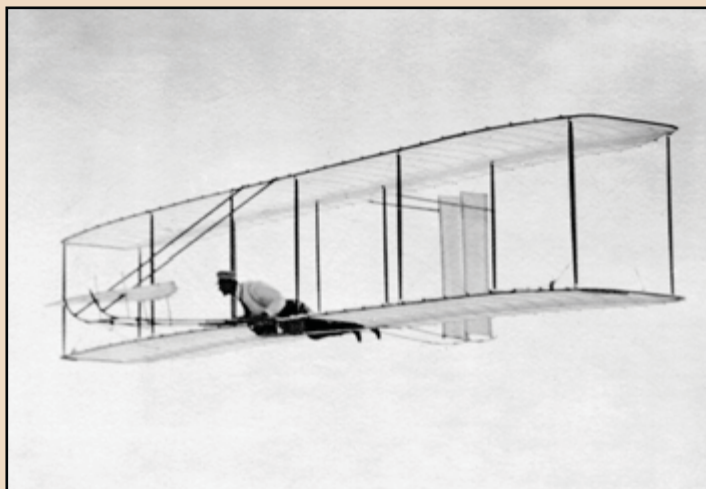


Since each of the four test flights began at the same point, the National Park Service was able to place markers on the sandy test field showing the length of each flight. Their progress is evident: the last flight was slightly more than seven times longer than the first. Each flight was fully controlled by the pilot, a feat that pilots in other countries could not claim.

did not graduate. Orville dropped out his junior year to start a printing business in 1889 and built a printing press with Wilbur's help. Wilbur joined the venture the following year and they launched a weekly newspaper which soon became a daily. The daily survived only four months, after which they used their equipment to start a commercial printing company.

The 1890s are remembered as the decade of the bicycle craze in America. Orville and Wilbur opened a sales and repair bicycle shop and in 1896 began manufacturing their own brand. In the mid-1890s inventors and engineers were experimenting with their ideas for flying machines. In 1896 Samuel Langley flew a fixed-wing, unmanned model aircraft that was steam powered. Octave Chanute and his engineers tested a variety of gliders over

Testing wing designs and controls, Orville and Wilbur Wright spent the summer of 1901 at Kill Devil Hills flying their gliders. In their Dayton shop, they constructed a wind tunnel to test miniature wing designs. Out of 200 designs, they selected 38 for further testing. Those tests resulted in the shape and air foil curves which they used in the 1902 glider. After obtaining the lift that they wanted, they implemented those features into the Wright Flyer I.

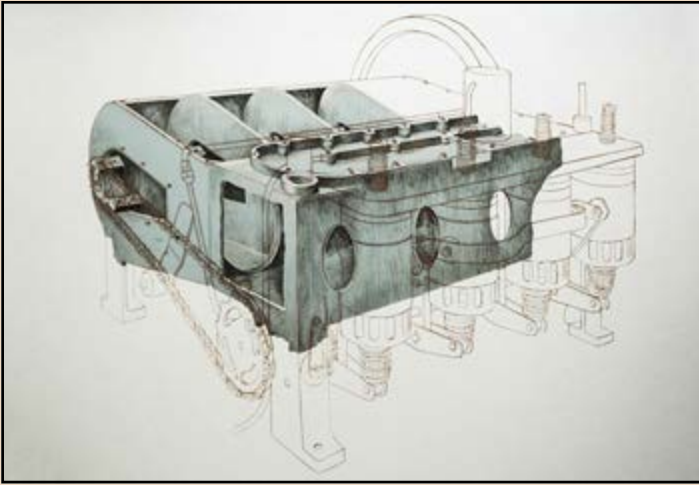


the sand dunes along Lake Michigan's shores. Otto Lilienthal, a German aeronautical pioneer, compiled data gathered during his studies of wing designs. In August 1896 he died in the crash of his glider. The Wrights later recalled in an interview that his work came to their attention when he died, refocusing their interest in flight research and aviation. Influenced by his fatal accident, their strategy was to develop systematic controls for the glider before they attempted powered flight.

In searching for a place to test the gliders they had designed and built, they learned of the flat sands and prevailing winds at Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills and had their glider shipped there in an arduous seven-day trip. In early October 1900, Wilbur boarded the glider that was flown as a kite a few feet above the ground, controlled by several men holding tether ropes. On October 20, Wilbur made a dozen free glides. They scrupulously recorded data on each flight.

In 1901 they built a glider with a larger wing area and made dozens of flights in July and August for distances up to 400 feet. Two problems were discovered. The glider was producing only a third of the lift they had calculated based on Lilienthal's research and it sometimes pointed in the opposite direction of the pilot's intended turn. To learn if Lilienthal's data was wrong, the Wrights built a bicycle to which they attached a model-size airfoil and a counter-acting flat plate, both the same dimensions that were used in Lilienthal's experiments. They also attached an extra bicycle wheel mounted horizontally in front of





When the Wright brothers needed him most, Charlie Wilson, their shop mechanic, designed and cast the block, machined the pistons, and built a 12-horsepower engine in six weeks! ♦ A fitting monument honors Orville and Wilbur Wright on a hill overlooking the field where history was made.



the handlebars. The experiment substantiated that either the standard Smeaton coefficient or Lilienthal's coefficients of lift and drag—or all of them—were in error.

They built their own wind tunnel in their Dayton shop and for three months tested dozens of miniature wing designs. Out of 200 wing designs demonstrating different shapes and airfoil curves, they selected 38 for further testing. Many years later, their biographer, Fred Howard, noted the tests “were the most crucial and fruitful aeronautical experiments ever conducted in so short a time with so few materials and at so little expense.”

With their new data, the Wrights designed their 1902 glider with a flatter airfoil and a reduced camber. Upon returning to Kill Devil Hills, they flew the new glider as an unmanned kite and got the amount of lift they expected. They also added a fixed vertical rudder to the rear of the craft to eliminate turning problems. The improved wing design produced longer glides and the rear rudder prevented adverse yaw. They made the change to a hinged rudder that the pilot controlled separately after they discovered the true purpose of the movable vertical rudder was not to change the direction of the flight, but to align the glider correctly during banking turns. The actual turn was done with roll control using wing-warping. The principles remained the same when aeronautical engineers installed ailerons.

With their new data and modifications, the brothers now had true control in turns, a milestone they marked in their diaries on October 8, 1902. Their three-axis control addressed wing-warping for roll or turning (lateral motion), forward elevator for pitch (up and down), and rear rudder for yaw (side to side). In September and October they made nearly 1,000 well-controlled glides, convincing themselves they were ready to build a powered flying machine.

In 1903 the Wrights built the Wright Flyer I using spruce for the frame and wings and muslin to cover the wings. The aircraft was essentially a flying double wing with a forward elevator and a rear rudder—but no fuselage. They had no guidelines for shaping the two propellers that were driven by the engine mounted in the center of the lower wing. They came to the conclusion that a propeller was a wing rotating in a vertical plane and used their data to carve it.

No engine manufacturer in the U.S. offered a lightweight engine with enough horsepower to drive two propellers. They turned to Charlie Wilson, their shop mechanic, who designed and built an engine with a cast aluminum block in only six weeks! Given there was little current technology in 1903 for casting aluminum blocks, Wilson's achievement is almost unbelievable.

They shipped the new aircraft (the term “airplane” was not yet in use) and engine unassembled to Kitty Hawk in November. The Flyer's wingspan was 40.3 feet. It weighed 605 pounds and had a 12-horsepower engine.


After assembling the aircraft, the Wrights fired up the engine on a test stand. Satisfied with its performance, they mounted it to the lower wing, flipped a coin to see who went first, and the

rest is history. It was December 17, 1903. There was no press observing the historic event. Orville sent a terse telegram to his father:

Bishop M Wright
7 Hawthorne St

Success four flights thursday morning all against twenty one mile
wind started from level with engine power alone average speed
through air thirty one miles longest 57 seconds inform Press
home Christmas. Orevelle [sic] Wright 525P

The visitor center at the Wright Brothers Memorial is presently closed for repairs. The NPS hopes to reopen it by Summer 2018. A replica of the Wright Flyer I will be on display. You may want to check this before you visit.

Our week's visit to the OBX was complete and we left very pleased with all we had seen and learned. We crossed the Wright Memorial Bridge, heading for Virginia. 

Eateries and Campgrounds

NOT FANCY, JUST GREAT FOOD

Harbor House Seafood

While we were seeing the sights on Hatteras, we got a lunch tip from a volunteer working in the Hatteras Island Visitor Center. The Harbor House Seafood offers locally sourced, wild-caught seafood. Fresh seafood is displayed on ice and sold for you to take home and cook. Though she does not advertise, the owner, Vicki Harrison, will take your order, cook it to perfection, and box it up for you to take to a picnic table. Another tip: the picnic tables beside the local library are sheltered from the sun and very nice. We had boiled shrimp, corn on the cob, crab burritos, hushpuppies, and freshly made salad with homegrown tomatoes. 58129 Hwy 12, Hatteras, NC 27943. 252-986-2039.

Kill Devil's Frozen Custard and Beach Fries

When we were at Kill Devil Hills to visit the Wright Brothers Memorial and Visitor Center, we found Kill Devil's Frozen Custard and Beach Fries. I don't think I have ever eaten a better burger. Thick hamburger, big slices of fresh tomato, onion, and lettuce on a toasted bun with an order of hand-cut fries. The creamy frozen custard in several flavors is delicious.

killdevilsfrozencustard.com 1002 Croatan Highway, Mile Post 8.5 Highway 158, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948. 252-441-5900.

The Fig Tree Bakery, Deli, and Sweet Tooth

See story on page 68. 1015 Irvin Garris Hwy (NC 12), Ocracoke, NC 27960 252-928-3481.

WHERE WE CAMPED

Frisco Woods Campground

After spending the day on Ocracoke, we took the 40-minute free ferry to Hatteras Island and spent the next three nights at Frisco Woods. Very pleasant surroundings with full hookup sites on Pamlico Sound. The Fall rates are \$56 and \$60 per night. 53124 NC-12 South, Frisco, NC 27936. 252-995-5208 thefriswoodscampground.com

OBX Campground

Located on Colington Island in Kill Devil Hills and convenient to the Wright Brothers Memorial. Well maintained, quiet, with nicely spaced lots. Rate for full hookups through October \$70/night. Nov-Mar \$50/night. 126 Marshy Ridge Road, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948. 252-564-4741. obxcampground.com

CAMPGROUNDS WE VISITED & LIKED

Ocean Waves Campground

Located in Waves, NC on Hatteras Island, a small intimate campground with nice lots. We would have stayed on Site 9 if it had been available. Campground opens out to ocean access. Current Fall rate \$65 for full hookup. \$3 cable. 14 miles south of Oregon Inlet. 252-987-2556. oceanwaves-campground.com

Hatteras Sands Campground

60 paved RV sites, full hook-ups. Cable and WiFi. No shade trees. Beautiful pool. Shoulder season full hook-ups \$47.50/night. 10% discount for Good Sam, AAA, Military and AARP. Located less than a mile off of NC 12 at 57316 Eagle Pass Road, Hatteras, NC 27943. 252-986-2422. Hatterassand-srvpark.com

TWO CAMPGROUNDS WE LIKED IN THE CAPE HATTERAS NATIONAL SEASHORE

Cape Point Campground.

46700 Lighthouse Road, Buxton, NC. No hook-ups. Each campsite is equipped with a paved parking pad, picnic table, and a charcoal grill. Some sites can accommodate 40-ft Class A motorhomes when tow parked in general lot. Four sets of restrooms and outdoor shower facilities. Water spigots in several locations. Reserve sites at recreation.gov or call 877-444-6777.

Oregon Inlet Campground.

Hwy 12, Nags Head, NC. No hook-ups. Each campsite is equipped with a paved parking pad, picnic table, and a charcoal grill. Some sites can accommodate 40-ft Class A motorhomes. Same specifications as above. Reserve sites at recreation.gov or call 877-444-6777.

HELPFUL LITERATURE

Outer Banks Visitors Guide, Vol. 25, 2017-2018. See "Outer Banks Beaches Guide," pages 73-84.

Your Complete Guide to Nags Head, Kill Devil Hills & Kitty Hawk.

Outer Bank Magazine, Summer 2017, Vol. 5.

OuterbanksTHISWEEK.com, Vol. 14.

In The Park, National Park Service. A guide to the Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

The Outer Banks Travel Guide, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau. outerbanks.org. 877-629-4386.

The Outer Banks 12 x 18-inch flat map and guide.

"Exploring the Outer Banks" (29 sites described and marked on map). Outer Banks General Information: Beach Accesses, Sound Accesses, Outer Banks Fishing, Mileage Chart. outerbanks.org

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Laura Poole: 919-259-5547

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*Coach must be at least 34 feet in length.



Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, a 43-year veteran with Tiffin Motorhomes, invites your questions.

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

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

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

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

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

Dear Danny . . .

Slide-Out Mechanism on 2017 Phaeton

I own a 2017 Phaeton 40QBH. I have noticed a loud popping noise on the last few times of extending and retracting the DS slide-out. After watching the slide-out's movement from underneath, I discovered some teeth missing on the gear and concluded

that it may be breaking a gear tooth with every extension/retraction. I am afraid that I may get it extended and then cannot retract it. I have attached pictures of the gears.

The coach is still within its one-year warranty period. Since I purchased the coach at Lazydays, I hope to get an appointment for the repair there versus making a long drive to Red Bay. I have researched this problem on the internet and found several instances of it. I spoke with the owner of a 2016 Phaeton 40QBH who has the same problem. How common is this problem? Is Tiffin doing something to create a "permanent fix" for the slide-out mechanism?

Bryan Zecher, Lake City, Florida

Dear Bryan,

It is not a common problem, but we have seen several instances of this in older units. If the slide-out was not adjusted properly, it could have created a bind and stress on the gears during deployment and retraction. We use different slide mechanisms on different floorplans, but we have used this mechanism for 12 to 15 years and it has been reliable.

Access to Air Filter Case on 2014 Allegro

I have a 2014 Allegro 31SA. Is there an easy way to change the air filter on the Ford V-10? After my effort to remove the top from the filter case was unsuccessful, I gave up and took it to a local repair shop. The mechanic also struggled with it for a long time and finally got it off.

Has Ford made any modification to the design? Do you have a suggestion for an easy way to gain access to the air filter? I have discussed this with several owners and they all had the same problem with similar frustration.

James Griffin, Aragon, Georgia
 Karl Bausman, Monroe Michigan

Dear James & Karl,

Getting to the filter case is relatively easy. Getting the filter out of the case is very difficult. The air intake hose going into the engine behind the filter case has a clamp on it. Loosen the clamp enough to get sufficient movement in the lid of the box for you to lift it high enough to slide the filter out and replace it. Fortunately, this filter does not require frequent replacement.

Installation Problem with Shades in Allegro Bus

I have had numerous problems with the AutoMotionShade electric shades in my 2014 Allegro Bus. After the warranty expired, I made a repair myself with AMS supplying the parts free of charge. The cause of the failures are due to the day and night shades hanging up against each other, resulting in broken wires, broken end pieces next to the motor, and a motor failure.

I believe the majority of the problems occurred because the shades were installed incorrectly at the factory. AutoMotion-

Shades instructions call for the day and night rollers to rotate in opposite directions, allowing for space between them. All of my shades are installed with the day/night rollers operating in the same direction. This causes them to catch each other and bind. What should I do at this point to correct the problem?

Dale Wilkins, Gig Harbor, Washington

Dear Dale,

We have had a few problems with the shade motors, but we do not think your situation is an installation problem caused by the shades being too close together. We install the shades to unroll clockwise in tandem on the driver's side and counterclockwise on the passenger side. We install them this way to eliminate a wide gap between them and keep the shades as close to the window glass as possible. If you think they are too close together, one of the axis could be moved a half inch away from the other if they are mounted on separate brackets.

Replacing Carpet with Tile in 2014 Allegro RED

We would like to replace the bedroom carpet with tile in our 2014 Allegro RED. Can you recommend anyone in our area to do the work?

Jim & Bonnie Outwater, Lawrenceville, Georgia

Dear Jim & Bonnie,

We did not use tile in the rear bedroom because it significantly reduces the cargo carrying capacity of the coach. We cannot recommend this upgrade to your coach.

The Best Repair of a Gas-Electric Refrigerator

My wife and I have a 2012 Allegro 36LA that we purchased new from La Mesa in Tucson. We have run the gamut with problems that have been identified and fixed. I would like to compliment Jeannie Madden in Tiffin's Recall and Warranty department. While we were still under the factory warranty, she took care of several problems for us and paid our claims. We are very satisfied Tiffin owners.

We have had an ongoing problem with the RM1350IM gas-electric refrigerator. It can't produce the amount of cold needed in hot weather. I installed internal and external fans without success. Two years ago I heard about J.C. Refrigeration in Indiana and he assured me he could fix the problem. In July we did a three-month cross country trip and stopped to see his operation. In a half day, he removed the unit, took out the existing coils, installed a double set of coils, tested them, and sent us on our way with a COLD refrigerator. I highly recommend him and want to spread the news about his solution to this problem. Keep up the good work in your column. I really enjoy the publication.

John & Margarita Ljepava, Vail, Arizona

Dear John & Margarita,

Thank you for the input about the solution to your refrigera-

tor problem. We also appreciate Jeannie Madden and the good work that she does for Tiffin Motorhomes.

Need Specs to Replace a Sealed Beam Headlight

I have a 1995 34-ft. Allegro Bay diesel. I need to replace one of my headlights that has water in it. I cannot find a product number on the headlight. Can you supply me with the specification number to help me get a replacement ordered? Thank you very much. I enjoy reading your column.

James Sylvia, Cordova, Maryland

Dear James,

We try to use headlights and tail lights from the automobile



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and truck industry. The 1995 Allegro Bay headlight assembly was from an Audi 100 automobile. The headlights are from Hela. The part number on the driver's side is 95160; passenger's side, 95161.

Regulator Problem on Propane Tank

I have a 2010 Phaeton. I installed a quick disconnect between the on-off valve and the regulator on my propane tank to service my outdoor grill. When I connect the hose and turn on the valve, my grill will light, but it quickly goes out. I checked the grill regulator with a small bottle of propane and it is okay. Any ideas?

I read recently that Onan recommends an additional water-fuel filter due to the increased use of bio-diesel. News to me. Your comment?

Jerry Ammerman
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Dear Jerry,
Your setup for sourcing the motorhome's propane tank is not recommended. However, if you are going to do it, I recommend that you put the hose connection for the grill *after* the motorhome's regulator. The pressure coming out of the coach's LP tank is too high for the regulator that came with your grill.

We have not heard any recommendations directly from Onan on this. But if you are using a high percentage of bio-diesel, it would probably be a good idea to add the additional water-fuel filter. Occasional use of bio-diesel would not warrant adding the additional filter.

Repairing a Sagging Awning After a Rain Storm

I have a 2007 Allegro Bus 40QSP. The patio awning is 20-feet long and is practically flat when it is fully deployed. During heavy rain, the center of the awning fabric sags as it traps water, even when the "dump arm" is fully lowered.

The weight of the trapped water bowed the awning tube and required a replacement. I corrected the problem by increas-

ing the "dump arm" travel by 2.5 inches. I drilled out the flare on the pin in the travel slot, then pulled out the slotted arm and made the slot 2.5 inches longer. Then I cut 2.5 inches off the end of the slotted arm. I then slid the travel arm back in, installed the pin, and used a 1/4-inch pop rivet to replace the flared end of the pin. The awning now works perfectly.

Richard Spurr
Huddleston, Virginia

Dear Richard,
Thank you very much for your post-engineering solution to the problem.

Emergency Brake Slippage on 1996 Allegro Bay with P-30 Chassis

My wife and I own a 1996 Allegro Bay 34-ft. motorhome on a Chevrolet P-30 chassis. At this point, the emergency brake does not hold at all. The problem started several weeks earlier with slippage and got progressively worse. I seem to recall several years ago in your column that someone corrected this same problem for approximately \$700. When I took my motorhome to a local RV mechanic to check out and correct the problem, he quoted me over \$3,000. I need your advice and input. We enjoy reading *Roughing It Smoothly*, and especially your technical answers to various problems.

Bob & Sue Whitnah
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dear Bob & Sue,
The price you were quoted seems excessive. We can't find an earlier story that mentions the pricing for this repair. In 1999 Workhorse bought out Chevy's motorhome chassis division. The chassis that Workhorse built after 1999 are similar to your 1996 chassis. When we did a Dealer Profile story in January 2014 on Bayou Outdoor in Bossier City, Louisiana, we learned that the Brazzels bought out a Workhouse dealership and brought over two technicians in the deal. However, they send repairs for brakes and engines to a shop in Longview, Texas, about an

hour away. Contact Cody Brazzel at 318-629-2628 for more information. They may be able to help you.

The Correct Cup Holder Is Important

We just purchased a 2017 Phaeton. One small problem: the cup holder is so shallow. When we use our insulated tall cup, it is forever tipping over. I looked in your dealer's supply catalogue and found no solutions. Could there be another supplier who offers a larger diameter cup holder that will fit in the fiberglass hole that holds the receptacle?

Linda Tininenko
Longview, Washington

Dear Linda,
Unfortunately we do not have and could not find a replacement cup holder that would suit everyone—from coffee mugs to the big cups. With the molded panels, there is very little room for modification.

Adding a Banks Power System

Which Banks system do you recommend for the Ford V-10 with air flowing in and out to improve mileage?

Curtis Hurson
Wimauma, Florida

Dear Curtis,
The Banks system is an aftermarket system that we have not tested. Unfortunately, we do not have a lot of information to offer, either positive or negative.

A Fix for Black Marks Made by Slide-Outs

My wife and I have a 2016 Allegro 32SA. The DS slide-out that houses the sofa-bed and dinette is leaving black marks on the floor. I was at the Tiffin Service Center in November 2016 and was told they were very aware of the problem, but there was no solution at that time. Is there any fix for that yet?

John Hawk
Danville, Pennsylvania

Dear John,
We still do not have a true fix for the rollers leaving black marks on the porcelain

tile. We have not been able to find a roller that does not leave a mark. We tested a long strip of material similar to a mouse pad. It is thin enough for the rollers to go over. You can put it down in front of the rollers before retracting the slide-out and pick them up and store them when you deploy the slide. One of our owners uses a Brillo pad (not steel wool) with a little dab of Dawn detergent to quickly remove the black streaks.

Location of Gas Filler Cap on Allegro Open Road

I agree with everything that Carolyn and John Ach of Beavercreek, Ohio, wrote in the July 2017 issue of *Roughing It Smoothly* about the unfortunate placement of the gasoline filler cap on their Allegro. Furthermore, I disagree with the response from Tiffin. They were not suggesting that the filler cap be moved to the middle of the coach. It should be moved to the side of the coach (DS) near the rear, not the middle. This placement (only about 18 inches from the present location) would not involve any slide-outs or other factors.

The Ach's are also right on the money concerning the placement of gas pump lines in so many convenience stores. The RV industry should lobby to encourage more accessible pump lines. It should help advertise "RV friendly" gas stations, too.

Larry Novicki
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear Larry,
If the pump lanes are perpendicular to the rectangular store building, there are usually two pumps on each lane. By positioning the nose of the coach by one of the pumps, you will line up the rear of the coach with the other pump. I do not see an advantage of moving the filler cap to a point 18 inches from the rear corner. If you are towing, you may have difficulty exiting that type of layout. From my experience, I look for stations where the lanes are parallel to the store and you can

enter and exit by making 90-degree turns. I agree that the RV industry could lobby for companies to build pumping stations that will better accommodate gas-powered coaches.

Tire Change for the Allegro Breeze

I have a 2014 Allegro Breeze 32BR with

Michelin 265/70R19.5 XZE2 Plus tires, which are now due to be replaced. The Michelin RV Tires website does not show any 265/70R19.5 tires available. Have they been discontinued? What tire are you now using on the 2018 Allegro Breeze?

Ken Manning
LaGrange, Georgia

Have you looked inside a Splendide lately?

Take a peek inside a Splendide combo or stackable washer and dryer and you may be surprised. Over the years, we've added a variety of cycle options to our laundry centers while increasing the size of their tubs to astonishing proportions. However, we've never lost sight of why a Splendide laundry center has always been the best choice in RV's — it does more with less, so you can travel light, conserve resources and spend less time doing laundry while you're out on the road. The Splendide tradition of quality RV laundry products and superior after sales care is a combination that can't be beat.

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Dear Ken,
The Michelin tire we are using now is 265/70R19.5Z. Keep in mind this is a directional tire when mounted.

Unused Washer Compartment Attracts Varmints

My rig does not have a washing machine installed in the closet that is plumbed for same. The opening in the floor is also open to the outside and can be accessed from under the rig by varmints—pack rats to be exact. I have kept the door to the compartment closed at all times when I am not using the coach. I also left traps waiting for them to appear—and they did!

It bothers me that a company with Tiffin's reputation would neglect such an obvious defect in design. Any suggestions on how to close up the openings?

Richard L. Neveu
Ramona, California

Dear Richard,
In most cases, the washer/dryer cabinet on a dealer-ordered coach is pre-plumbed before it leaves the factory in case the new owner wishes to have it installed later. We use an expandable insulation spray foam that you can buy at Lowe's or Home Depot to close the holes.

2014 Phaeton Slide-Out Alignment

I am having an issue with my rear DS slide-out going out and coming in crooked. The right side (standing facing the bed) lags behind a considerable amount and misses sealing up by about one inch. When coming in, the slide makes a full seal and does not move when traveling. Is there an adjustment I can make and if so where is it?

Bruce Dietz
Tuppers Plains, Ohio

Dear Bruce,
This problem is fairly common and easily corrected. The bedroom electric slide mechanism and motors are made by Schwintec. The system has two motors that run in sync with each other. Occa-

sionally, the motors get out of sync and cause the slide-out to misalign. To resynchronize these motors, fully extend the slide-out using the wall control. Keep the switch engaged until the motors stop making any noise and shut down. Then, retract the slide-out three to five inches and repeat the step fully extending the slide until the motors stop running. In some cases, this may require repeating two to three times. Then, fully extend and retract the slide-out all the way in, engaging the switch until the motors shut down. This should realign the slide-out.

Engine Hood Latch Should Be Redesigned

In 2017 Tiffin changed the engine hood latch on the Allegro Open Road brand. Since I work for an RV dealership doing PDI, I have seen what a problem this has created. The pop rivets are not holding and the handle gets loose and sloppy. It is difficult to get your hand in between the grill and the latch.

I know manufacturers change things to improve their brands and keep up with the competition, but this is a poor design that needs some attention. I would like to thank our loyal Tiffin owners. We are proud to service Tiffin products.

Andy Fisher
Bonita Springs, Florida

Dear Andy,
Thank you for your input. Our engineers are looking into this issue and will have a better design in the near future.

Passenger Side of Frame Not Rising Enough to Be in True Travel Mode

I have a 2007 Allegro Bus with 31,415 miles and I'm having problems with the coach not rising high enough on the passenger side to be in "true travel mode." The computerized leveling monitor tells me the coach is in travel mode when the passenger side is lower than the driver side. In this mode the wheels are not touching the frame, but the bounce of the highway has caused wheels to touch

the frame. A local RV repair shop tried to find and solve the problem (they called Freightliner) but could not because the frame finally adjusted to the normal position. It would not slump to the lower position while they were checking it. We just came from a trip of 220 miles and it started out low, adjusted to normal, and then went back to low. On Wednesday, August 9, I talked with two different departments at Tiffin. The hydraulic jack department promised to call me back. My question is, where do I go to get this fixed? I plan to do more traveling in September.

David Ellis
Little Rock, Arkansas

Dear David,
The "travel mode" means that the leveling jacks are stored and not necessarily that the unit is level itself. The leveling of the chassis is done by vertical metal arms attached to the air bags from the rails of the chassis above. If an arm becomes loose or is slipping, it could cause the problem you are having. You will need to take the coach to a Freightliner service center to have the problem corrected.

Winterizing Our Tiffin

We have a 2015 Allegro Open Road and are going to live in it this winter. We are in northern Colorado between Denver and Fort Collins. Our question is: Do we need to put a skirt around it or is the insulation in the basement enough to protect the water pipes and the holding tanks?

Michael & Dawn Newbre
Arlington, Washington

Dear Michael & Dawn,
The skirt would definitely be important in making sure your pipes did not freeze during some of the extremely cold temperatures that area has every winter. The wet bays are heated but the amount of heat supplied may not be enough.

Allegro 32CA Has a Fire Escape Hazard

We have enjoyed traveling in our Allegro 32CA along with our children and grand-

children. It has come to our attention that using the sofa as a bed can block the door. After deciding to replace this sofa with a jackknife sofa (\$500.00), we scheduled an appointment with the service department at Dixie RV in Hammond, Louisiana. The service advisor explained that it is necessary to remove the front window to exchange the sofas, which added considerable expense to the job.

We now realize this sofa is more than just an inconvenience; it is a fire hazard since it blocks the only exit door. We are hoping that Mr. Tiffin will understand the fire hazard created by this type of sofa bed and seriously consider recalling this type of sofa bed and replacing it with the jackknife sofa.

George & Dottie Bailey
Robert, Louisiana

Dear George & Dottie,
We do not agree that the bed is an escape hazard. First, you have an escape window in the rear of the coach. Second, the lower third of the bed is hinged and can easily be lifted to allow people to pass by and get to the door.

Checking the Remote Locks on a 2016 Allegro Red

In the Spring 2017 issue, there is a question regarding the remote locks on an Allegro Bus working intermittently. On our 2016 Allegro RED 38QBA the locks worked during the PDI, but never again, until I did a proper investigation. There are a number of parts in this system: the transmitter, the receiver, the lock itself, and the connection between all the parts. Since the system in question works from time to time, it is unlikely to be the receiver or transmitter unless it is a geographic issue, i.e., it works fine except when we are parked, at which point there can be major RF interference that will keep such a system blocked. Same reason that in one location it works from 100 yards where in another it only works from five feet.

To solve the problem, I separated the

systems. I am able to check the RF at work so I knew the transmitter was working, but I didn't know it if was on the correct frequency. However, it did send a signal. Next issue, is the receiver receiving? I can't find mine! But there are two contacts on the door post that are the connection to the lock system in the door. They should pulse with 12V when the system is activated. I placed a meter on them and got a 12V reading.

So at this point, transmitters and receiver are all good. There is no corrosion on the contacts. Alignment cannot be off far enough to miss and still close the door, so I removed the contact panel from the door and found that the wires to the lock were not connected! Apparently, the contacts are simply a screw stud and spring arrangement and the wires are connected with a Stak-on splice. The Stak-on was well crimped to the wires, but only slipped over the studs and they both fell off! This was a simple fix and a simple place to check.

Jim Norman
Hillsborough, New Jersey

Dear Jim,
Thank you for diagnosing the problem and explaining how to make the repair.

Manuals for the HWH Leveling System

We have a 2012 Allegro Open Road (VIN 1F66F5DY1C0A00568, Tiffin serial number 32CA0088632124306). The HWH Leveling System part & serial numbers label on the fluid tank has a black overspray obliterating the numbers. Is it possible to trace these numbers given the VIN or Tiffin serial number? I would like to obtain the proper HWH manuals for this unit.

Thomas Parrish
Tampa, Florida

Dear Thomas,
The HWH leveling jacks on the 2012 Open Road are the Series 725.

New Owner's Questions about Her 2016 Tiffin Allegro 31SA

I recently purchased the above mentioned

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RV and cannot get the electric steps to stay in when I go to store the rig without leaving all the power on. I was told to turn off the power to the rig by shutting down the master switch to the 12V battery by the door entrance but when I turn the power off, the steps do not retract up.

So I have to leave the power on, close the door, the steps retract but the master battery switch is left on, and my battery is slowly draining. Also the switch to the step is left on, draining the batteries even more.

1. Is it ok to leave the 12V master battery switch on? *No, it will run down the battery.*

2. What is the correct procedure to retract the steps prior to disconnecting the batteries? *The storage facility will not allow steps to be left down. See answer below.*

3. Are these switches attached to the engine battery or the house battery? *House battery. But when you turn the ignition switch on, it overrides that shut-off.*

4. Is it possible to put in more batteries so as not to lose power while storing? *No.*

I also have one solar panel on the top that I think is trickle charging the main storage batteries but not sure of that. I received a quick PDI when I purchased the coach, but not a very thorough one. I am

planning on taking a trip to Red Bay soon to get more training on my rig. I have read the manual several times, but I find the directions a little confusing.

Carolyn Williams

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Dear Carolyn,

The best way to keep your steps up without having an external battery disconnect (which your unit does not have) is to take a small thin magnet and put it on the switch that brings the step in when the door is closed. This will override the step control and make the step retract and stay retracted. Before closing the door, turn off the battery disconnect by the door and then also turn your inverter to the off position. The inverter is located in the DS box immediately behind the front wheel. The solar panel on top is trickle charging the house batteries.

Installing an HDMI Cable to Use PS4 Game Console

I have a 2017 Phaeton 40QBH with four TVs. Excluding the bedroom TV, can I set up either of the three for the kids to use a PS4 game system? If so, how? Any help you can give me would be greatly appreci-

ated. I asked my dealer service folks to do it. They said it could not be done.

Lucius Dixon

Southworth, Ohio

Dear Lucius,

You have to remove the unit to gain access to the HDMI cable connection on the back of the television. All of the connections will be in use. You can get a one-to-two or one-to-three HDMI splitter box and connect your game. You will need to attach an A-B switch that drops down behind the TV to allow you to choose TV programming or the game.

Freshwater Overflow Drain on 2017 Allegro

I bought a new 2017 Allegro 31SA on 17 March, 2017. I filled the freshwater tank (sanitized) and expected to see overflow out of a drain under the unit. Instead, the overflow ran out (up and out) the gravity fill tube and door. Is this how the system is designed to work?

Greg Malinak

Patrick AFB, Florida

Dear Greg,

Yes, that is correct. The overflow tube exits at the same point as the fill.



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