

Roughing It Smoothly



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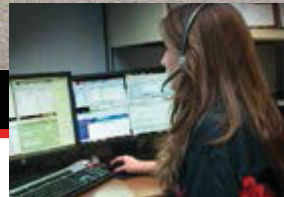
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- **Waco, Texas**



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Roughing it Smoothly®

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You can remove the address label to enjoy a clean front cover. Save it if you plan to change your address.

Roughing It Smoothly announces new digital magazine: rismag.org

In January 2018, Tiffin's owner-acclaimed quarterly magazine begins its 15th year of publication. In November 2017, we launched and tested the digital magazine our readers can enjoy online the same day we upload the typesetting files to the printer.

You can read all back issues (14 years) of *Roughing It Smoothly* online at rismag.org

Go to the Contents on pages 2-3. Click on the page number for the story you want to read and it will jump directly to that double-page spread. To go back to the Contents page, put "3" in the page selection box at top center of screen. You can enlarge/reduce the type with the +/- symbols at top enter of the screen.

The big feature now implemented is the "Search" function. In the upper right corner, clicking on SEARCH will open a column of options on the left side of your screen. Put in a word (such as "Utah" or "trains") or multiple words to find a story. Then click on "Search" at

the bottom of the column. You can search for a particular motorhome floor plan, such as Phaeton 40QTH or 33AA for a featured review or a Q&A in Tech Talk. Search for a travel story to use in planning your next trip to a state or national park, and much more.

The web address (URL) for each advertiser is "hot," meaning that you can click on it and go directly to the website.

This software was originally developed for daily newspapers and we have not succeeded in getting the software to print the pages of the story in the magazine format in which it originally appeared. However, you can double-left-click anywhere on the story to open a reformatted story in manuscript form (it fills an 8.5 x 11 page). This will allow you to print the pictures and the text in an easy-to-read digest. The programmers are working to create a software update to print the pages exactly as they appeared in the printed edition of the magazine.

Online readers will receive the magazine three weeks ahead of the approximate date *RIS* appears in mailboxes. Tiffin owners who use mail forwarding services will view the magazine about six weeks before it would normally be delivered.

The digital magazine is presented online in facing pages; it is formatted for laptops, iPads, iPhones, Android OS, and most tablets that are WiFi capable. Some of the digital newspaper features (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.) are applications that we are still developing for *RIS*.

We designed the expanded digital magazine to better serve both our readers and advertisers. We hope you will enjoy the digital *Roughing It Smoothly*. Please send your suggestions to fred1902@gmail.com

Magazine Continues to Grow

Over 30,000 Tiffin owners are now receiving *Roughing It Smoothly* through the U.S. and Ca-

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nadian postal service. Over 42,000 have chosen to read *RIS* online at the Tiffin website. Our dealers are distributing 14,000 copies in their showrooms. *Roughing It Smoothly* is in its 15th 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 three 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.

Advertisers

To advertise in *RIS*, contact Dale Cathey at 817-247-5147. dalecathey1942@gmail.com. An advertisement in *Roughing It Smoothly* does not constitute an endorsement of the product by Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc.

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 RISstechtalk@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. Also see below.

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Please let us know if you like this new system. Go to <https://Tiffin.dragonforms.com/RISMAG>. The landing site will give you four options:

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Buying from Dealer Inventory or Choosing Options for a Special Build

by Bob Tiffin



When a couple decides to buy a Tiffin motorhome, they look at every Tiffin the dealer has in his inventory, narrow it down to the brand they like best, and then start checking out the décors and options offered in that brand.

The combinations are almost endless. If I am talking with a prospective buyer at a dealer show, a rally, or here at the plant, they will invariably put the question to me: “Will we be better off buying from the dealer’s inventory or specing out a coach and getting *exactly* what we want?”

My answer usually is, “How much time have you got?” Buying a motorhome is not an impulse purchase. They have been thinking about buying it for a long time. Some will go through the dreaming process, the thrill of shopping and being inside the coach. From a distance, I have observed them in serious conversation about the major decision they are about to make or about which décor and options to select.

The floor plan is usually the most important factor.

The décor is the next most important choice for women. Then they each have options they prefer. The dealer can often make changes and provide one or two options they want. Sometimes we can make a change here at the Service Center if they are close enough to drive to Red Bay. But if the motorhomes in the dealer’s inventory require too much compromising, the next question is, “How long will it take to have our coach built?”

Depending on how many back orders we have, my answer will be, “Eight to 14 weeks.” Now the compromise becomes a matter of timing. For most, when they get *really* ready to buy, they want to take the coach home with them the next day. It may be they have just retired and have plans for a long trip out West. Or it’s

early September and they want to take advantage of the upcoming fall season. Buying directly from inventory gives you the opportunity to start using your coach immediately and to begin building a strong service relationship with your dealer. That is certainly the way a large majority of Tiffin coaches are sold.

For those who have the time and want their coach to have the exact options they prefer, the eight to 14 weeks is an acceptable delay. But in either case, the time element is a factor. If you have time to order exactly what you want, that’s the way to go. Your dealer can advise you regarding the options available and offer suggestions to help you make the best choices for your needs. The dealer then places the order for you and will provide updates on the building process as it happens. Ordering your coach also gives you the option to come to the factory in Red Bay and watch your coach being built. It is a unique experience. You will need to check with the plant to see if space is available for you to observe during the build schedule.


So what are the advantages of being here at the plant

while your coach is being built? You can learn a lot about how the coach operates and where everything is located that can’t be seen when it is finished. There are so many parts involved with the wiring, plumbing, and slide-out components that are in hard-to-access locations. To understand in greater detail where things are located, you can take as many pictures as you want. If you need to call the service desk later or visit your dealer’s service center, the pictures may make it easier to identify a problem. However, many of the same pictures could also be taken during a tour of the plant.

As far as the build process on the assembly line is concerned, you can be assured that our employees take the same care in construction whether or not you are present. In a study that I made, I found that the warranty claims on motorhomes ordered by dealers for their inventory are virtually the same as the claims made by owners who watched their units being built.

From the point where the naked chassis enters the assembly line at Station 1 until it rolls off the assembly line at Station 19, four-and-a-half days will have elapsed. After assembly, it takes two weeks for a motorhome to go through sanding, painting, and final inspection at our Belmont plant. Then the units return to Red Bay for cleaning and another final inspection.

Regardless of whether you buy a Tiffin from dealer

inventory or spec one out exactly to your taste and preferences, you will take delivery of a motorhome built with the same attention to detail and quality, thoroughly inspected before it is delivered to you. Our motorhomes are made to move you. Wherever you go, we go. 

Tiffin Motorhomes Founder Honored with RVDA Titan Award

(Louisville, KY) Tiffin Motorhomes founder, Bob Tiffin, was presented with the National RV Dealers Association Titan Award on Nov. 29 at the 2017 RVIA National RV Trade Show. The award recognizes pioneering efforts of individuals whose energy and vision helped create outstanding RV manufacturing firms.

In December 1972, Tiffin built the first Allegro motorhome, not far from the present assembly line in Alabama. The first design started with a hefty steel frame on a Chevy truck chassis, followed by 16-gauge structural steel skirts. This was a first in the RV industry, where competitors were using exterior plywood floors and a fiberglass or aluminum coach skin.

Bob's wife, Judy Tiffin, worked beside him every day from

December 1972, to April 2004. The Tiffins shared a large office together, building their company, where her desk remains today with her brass name plate on it. Together, they attend most Allegro Rallies, dealer shows, and major industry events.

Tiffin learned the importance of customer service from his father, Alex, whose policy was, "If you don't treat people fairly, you can't look them in the eye." The use of this motto has helped Tiffin provide top tier customer service, and as a result, maintain a competitive edge in the RV Industry. Today, Tiffin Motorhomes is one of the few privately-owned RV manufacturers.

RVDA bestowed the Titan Award for the first time in 1995. Prior award winners are listed on the RVDA website.



Above left: RVDA Chairman of the Board Tim Wegge (Burlington RV Superstore), presents the Titan Award to Bob Tiffin at the RVIA National RV Trade Show on November 29. *Above:* Bob Tiffin accepts the Titan Award with a brief speech that ended with "You will never go broke if you are making a profit!" *Left:* The Tiffin family gathered on stage to receive the company's 19th Quality Circle Award. From left, Jean-François Lussier (Horizon Lussier, Montreal), Lex Tiffin, Van Tiffin, Tim Tiffin, Judy Tiffin, Bob Tiffin, and Tim Wegge.

RVDA bestows the Quality Circle Award to RV manufacturers that achieve the highest rating in the Association's Dealer Satisfaction Index (DSI) Survey. The DSI measures dealers' overall satisfaction with manufacturers with whom they do business.

2018 Phaeton 37BH New Floor Plan Earns Accolades



**Text and photography
by Fred Thompson**

The 2018 Phaeton continues its 10-year reign as the best-selling Class A diesel pusher in the U.S. market. With the 37BH, Tiffin Motorhomes added its seventh floor plan to the popular brand's offerings to RV enthusiasts—two more than any of Tiffin's other five brands. With lengths from 38 to 45 feet, RVers are almost certain to find a floor plan that fits into their RVing lifestyle. Two at 38 feet (the 36GH and 37BH), four at 41 feet (40AH, QKH, QBH, and IH), and one at 45 feet (44OH). Four floor plans have the extremely popular bath-and-a-half. One floor plan can sleep eight!

As new features are introduced each model year, it is not unusual for Phaeton owners to trade every two or three years because the brand holds its value so well. Most Tiffin dealers have waiting lists for pre-owned Tiffins. The Phaeton is a major factor in the company's success story.

Dealers are lining up to order the 37BH. Why is it making such a splash in the market? When you reduce the length by three feet and retain the basic amenities, chalk up a point. When you offer the floor plan with a spacious bath and a half, chalk up another point. A full-featured galley with three propane burner cooktop, a 21.7 cu.ft. residential refrigerator, and a Sharp Carousel microwave-convection oven, another point. A 55-inch LG SmartTV entertainment center with surround sound, plus three more LG TVs located strategically throughout the coach, including one in the outside wall for movies under the stars—one more point. An UltraLeather Air Coil Sofa-Bed with seating for three in daytime and a queen bed for two at night. Plus, you will love the passenger-side 24-foot single slide-out.

All of the above is standard for a base MSRP \$306,675. You can spend just 7.8% more on options and put the 37BH in a price point that outclasses its peers in comparable brands. We will discuss the options that the 7.8% will buy in a few minutes.

Picture yourself in this cockpit driving the Phaeton 37BH to all of the Florida Panhandle's state parks with brilliant beaches of quartz sand. See story on page 60.





The 37BH's Daytime Living Area

Because of thoughtful and creative design, beautiful interiors, and technology that did not exist five years ago, Tiffin architects have successfully used 220 square feet of floor space in the 37BH (including the forward slide-outs) to create a daytime area. It includes a living room with seating for seven, a dining room with seating for four, a computer business center, an entertainment center with a 55-inch LG SmartTV and surround sound, a bedroom for two adults and two children, and a galley with an induction cooktop (optional), a microwave-convection oven, 18 square feet of workspace, and a 21.7 cubic foot residential refrigerator/freezer.

THE DÉCOR AND WOOD CHOICES

The décor in the production coach featured in this review is Tranquil. After you see your dealer's sample case, you may prefer the Cedar or Sterling décors. The cabinetry is finished in the optional Amber Glaze (MSRP \$1,450), new this year. Many owners select Mocha Wood and English Chestnut (standard). The valances and fascias surrounding each slide-out demonstrate exceptional creativity in the use of metal, wood, and fabrics. The use of several shades of brown in the backsplashes and the solid surface countertops (SSCT) are eye-pleasers. The UltraLeather upholstery comes in two standard choices: Brown Sugar and Molasses. UltraLeather's Toscana Bailey is optional (MSRP \$363).

SUPERB LIGHTING IN THE LIVING AREA

The 37BH's interior LED lighting system invites us to set the stage perfectly for our activities through the day. With the generous expanse of windows on the DS and PS slide-outs as well as the windshield and driver's window, it would have to be an overcast day to turn on the LED lights. But food prep is another story. There are four task lights over the countertop and one more in the bottom of the microwave/convection oven. In the PS ceiling immediately in front of the fascia, there are 10 LED lights, six of which illuminate the galley and extend all the way to the refrigerator. Three more ceiling LEDs are positioned over the sofa.

In the DS slide-out we especially like the three swivel reading lights over the sofa/bed. The designer's touch is evident in the sconce light between the two large windows in the slide-out. The DS slide-out ceiling has four LEDs, providing warm lighting for the dining table and the sofa/bed.

In the coach's center ceiling, six LEDs add more illumination to really brighten the room for the evening. Three of the six lights are part of a handsome tray ceiling design that disguises two AC ducts. The recessed edges of the rectangular tray hide accents that are perfect low lighting for TV viewing. A string of courtesy lights is also tucked away into the galley's toe kick. Just for fun, experiment with the combinations of lighting options at the control center (see pages 11-12).





A LIVING ROOM FOR THE GREGARIOUS

The living room offers comfortable seating for seven when friends drop by to visit. The DS sofa-bed has deep comfort seating for three made by Flexsteel using Ultraleather. The same manufacturer and material are used for the driver and passenger chairs, which come standard with full 8-way power seat controls. By using the two chairs at the dining table (also very comfortable), you can enlarge the conversation pit to nine. Bring the two matching folding chairs out of the basement and you can accommodate a crowd! We always appreciate the adaptability of Tiffin's living spaces.

The 75-inch DS sofa-bed opens into a queen-size Air Comfort hide-a-bed. The narrow-width enclosed cabinet behind the sofa-bed conceals two air ducts for the optional Aqua-Hot hydronic heating system (more on Aqua-Hot later). A conveniently placed 110v outlet in the top of the enclosure provides power for the hide-a-bed's air inflation system. I have used the Air Comfort mattress and found it very comfortable. The PS jackknife sofa-bed opens easily into a 50 x 53-inch bed, perfect for two children. If you select the optional luxurious recliner and fireplace, not included on this coach (MSRP \$761), you will now

have two recliners. The passenger chair is also a recliner with a powered leg lift.

Large windows in the living area are one of the nicest features in Tiffin coaches. In its window plant located in Tuscumbia, Alabama, the company can customize the windows for any coach (see rismag.org, April 2007, p. 36). When the PS lift TV is not deployed, occupants will enjoy a 24 x 54-inch window. On the opposite side over the sofa-bed and dinette/computer workstation, the windows measure 16.5 x 41 and 18 x 42. The pleasant warmth of sunshine in the cooler months and bright airiness in the warmer months are further enhanced by the picture window we call the windshield—would you believe 98 inches wide and 52 inches high (viewable area).

ENTERTAINMENT TO THE MAX

TMH makes sure that every coach it builds is equipped with maximum entertainment. This coach has four LG televisions as *standard* equipment: one 55-inch, two 42-inch, and one 32-inch unit. The forward section of the PS slide-out is the entertainment and comfort zone for the 37BH. The vertical cabinet located just under the large forward window conceals a 55-inch HDMI television with surround sound. The TV rises from its cabinet at the touch of a button and is framed by the window's valance. The LG entertainment system supports full HD as well as a wide variety of programming features including Bluetooth, BluRay 3D discs, DVD video disks; MKV playback; external HDD playback; DLNA certified; and USB 2.0. A DirecTV receiver is standard.

If you opt for the recliner/fireplace package, you will enjoy a very comfortable rotating recliner with leg lift that fits into the space under the power-lift television. It slides out easily on its base for repositioning anywhere in the living area. One of the 42-inch TVs is centered over the dash, offering a second television station if you are trying to keep up with multiple games during the Fall football season. With two additional 42-inch LG units, you can move your TV entertainment to the bedroom or outside under



The recliner/fireplace package option is shown here with the Mocha wood finish.

your awning where a sound bar enhances the music for dining under the stars. A 14-foot lighted awning extends to cover your picnic table. A free three-month trial subscription from Sirius-XM is available to listen to your favorite music on the Kenwood AM/FM stereo with four overhead speakers. Two USB ports are available to load your own music collection. Rand McNally's navigation software designed for the Kenwood system (MSRP \$870) is one of the options on this coach.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS WHILE WE TRAVEL

Many owners enjoy the coziness of the standard dinette. It is a very relaxing, deep comfort, bench style upholstered in UltraLeather. Under each of the benches is a long, deep drawer, each with approximately two cubic feet of storage space. This coach features the optional dinette/computer workstation (MSRP \$870).

Tiffin uses the same space occupied by the dinette and constructs an 18 x 73-inch SSCT credenza. A 25 x 40-inch SSCT table extends from the credenza to provide a generous workspace for taking care of business. When not in use, nearly half of the table retracts into the credenza. A computer desk is concealed in the cre-

denza on one side of the table, while the other side houses a filing cabinet plus two drawers. First appearing on TMH coaches in 2006, the dinette/computer workstation quickly became one of Tiffin's most popular options and has been widely copied by competitors.

On the south side of the dining table, the workstation features a slide-out tray for your auxiliary keyboard while your laptop rests atop the credenza. If you use one of the thin Chromebooks, it will slide in and tuck away out of sight. Below the Chromebook, double doors open to a second slide-out tray for your travel printer. A 110v outlet in the wall under the credenza will provide power for both units.

We have found the top of the credenza to be a convenient location for our four-color printer. A 110v pop-up power source in the credenza makes this location even more convenient.

Under the dining table, double doors open to four cubic feet of storage space for bulkier items. On the north side of the dining table, there are two deep drawers for office supplies and a filing drawer with rails for hanging folders completes the workstation. We have enjoyed using the workstations on most of our Tiffin demo coaches over the years.

The Dining Room

When it's time for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, the business workspace quickly converts to the 25 x 40-inch dining table. Use the two folding dining chairs to make more room for extra guests to join your for a meal. The credenza—the right place for a toaster, coffee pot, serving dishes, bread warmer, et cetera—prevents the dining table from becoming crowded, allowing space for a gracious residential table setting.

Just above the credenza and window, and behind three sets of handsomely crafted double doors, eight cubic feet of storage provides quick access to our dinner service and the large 6-qt. pot that we use to make a nourishing soup once a week during this cold weather.

That storage space is matched with another eight cubic feet of space above the sofa-bed where we stash all of the bedding and pillows for the queen-size Air Comfort bed. We have laughed at a bumper sticker sign we have observed on several motorhomes: "Our kids can't come back home and move in because they can't find us!" Well, if they do find you, the sofa-bed makes a pretty good landing spot for the son and daughter-in-law and the two grands will do just fine on the jackknife sofa. But they probably won't stay too long.

AQUA-HOT AND THE ALL-ELECTRIC COACH

This is a good place to discuss the all-electric coach that includes Aqua-Hot. Going all electric eliminates propane gas which requires extensive installations throughout the coach to serve the propane storage tank, two furnaces, a gas-electric water heater, a cooktop, and possibly a gas-electric refrigerator. Going all electric eliminates maintenance and repairs to one entire system, although it should be said that propane has been used safely and successfully on millions of RVs for decades.

An all-electric coach also reduces utility costs significantly. The heating of water as well as the interior of the coach can be accomplished by powering the Aqua-Hot



system electrically. During the unusually cold temps in January, we noticed that the optional heated floors (MSRP \$5,075) also warm the air above the floors. We dropped the two furnace settings to 68° and the coach remained very comfortable. Of course, when we want unlimited hot water for a long therapeutic shower, the Aqua-Hot is the answer.

The optional Dimplex electric fireplace has a hand-held control for selecting the amount of heat and blower speed. No real flames, but the warm air blowing out of the fireplace over its attractive faux flames make it a “buy” for us. It puts out a continuous 1500 BTUs. If you want just the “flames” without the heat, you can do that, too.

the energy generated ends up in the pot, with only 10 percent wasted.

Because the surface surrounding the pan on an induction cooktop does not get hot, any splatters on that surface won't burn. That makes cleanup easier. Induction cooktops heat more quickly than gas or electric, saving energy as well as time. A 12,000-BTU gas burner takes 36 minutes to boil five gallons of water, but an 1,800-watt induction hob will boil the same amount in 22 minutes, which is half the energy. An induction cooktop responds instantly to temperature adjustments. When we lower or increase the heat, we see immediate results—just like with a gas range!

Since induction cooktops can only be used with cookware that has ferromagnetic bottoms, Tiffin includes a set in case you are not already using induction cooking in your home. Aluminum, glass, or ceramic cookware will not work. If a magnet sticks to the bottom of the pan or pot, it will work with an induction cooktop.

Tiffin makes the residential Sharp Carousel microwave/convection oven a standard feature in all of its brands. Surveys show that most RV owners use the microwave feature for heating water and cooking prepared frozen dinners. Both the microwave and convection methods can be used extensively to cook casseroles and roasts and bake cookies, biscuits,

The Galley

When I attend the RVDA National Dealers Show every year the week after Thanksgiving, I enjoy visiting the Class A coaches that compete against Tiffin. The two main areas of comparison are the galleys and the luxury baths — probably the biggest selling points in a coach. Every year it comes down to design and quality craftsmanship, and Tiffin wins it in a walk.

One of the first things owners check is the amount of countertop space available for preparing meals. In the 37BH, the chef will enjoy ample space to prepare his/her favorite recipes—18 square feet to be exact, plus another three square feet when the island slide-out is deployed. An 18-inch tall backsplash surrounds the countertop protecting the area from an exuberant cook. The backsplash has three GFCI-protected 110v outlets to take care

of mixers, juicers, toasters, etc. You name it and bring it.

The galley is feature rich. Let's begin with the double induction cooktop that has its own fold-away SSCT cover, providing more countertop space when the cooktop is not in use. Induction cookware is made with a ferro-magnetic base. Induction cooking uses an electromagnetic field to quickly heat the bottom of the pan or pot, transferring heat immediately to the contents. Although heat from a flame or electric heating element is applied to the bottom of the vessel, the heat also flows around the outside of the cooking vessel, heating the air around the vessel. With a gas cooktop, only 40 percent of the generated heat actually cooks the food. The other 60 percent is wasted making the galley area much warmer. Induction cooktops, however, are about 90 percent efficient—meaning 90 percent of



rolls, and bread just like an electric oven. Cooking classes for both the induction cooktop and the microwave/convection oven are offered each year at Tiffin Allegro Club rallies.

The 21.7-cubic foot residential refrigerator/freezer is a top-of-the-line brand that features exterior ice and water dispensing, humidity control, a power-cold 6° option,

open door & temp failure alarms and a filter replacement alarm. The top two-thirds of the unit is a double-door refrigerator with well-designed compartments for different items. The bottom third is a slide-out freezer with four compartments. The residential refrigerator has been a standard in most of the diesel pushers for over a decade.

The double stainless steel sinks have exact-fit covers that increase the workspace during food preparation. If we need water from the chrome single-lever faucet/sprayer, we keep the larger sink covered. If we opt an old-fashioned, dish-washing clean-up, these large sinks measure 14 x 16 x 6.5 inches deep and 7.5 x 16 x 5 inches deep.

The double door cabinet above the sinks has an upper stationary shelf measuring 20 x 31 inches. A lower slide-out shelf/drawer is 26 x 19.5 x 3.75 inches deep. The cabinet on the other side of the C/M oven has an adjustable shelf 14.5 x 20 inches with a slide-out shelf/drawer below it.

The optional Fisher & Paykel dish drawer (MSRP \$2,030) has been a favorite with buyers who want a more residential coach. When cooking for invited guests, clean-up is so easy because we can put everything in the dish drawer and continue with our visit and activities. When it's just

the two of us, we accumulate the dishes in the F&P for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and then run it at the end of the day.

Five years ago Tiffin added a feature that made their galleys residential-plus. In the beginning, slide-out pantries had three shelves about 20 inches long and four inches wide. Today the pantry slide-outs have six 27-inch shelves, 6.5 inches wide. With a metal rod retainer to prevent contents toppling, each shelf is vertically adjustable to accommodate a selection of groceries. Regardless of the weight of the groceries, the 5.5-foot high slide-out moves easily in-and-out with a slight tug and pull. A pushbutton lock at the top of the slide-out is connected to the coach's ignition to prevent it from sliding into the hallway when the coach is in motion.

One more feature that we like about the galley is the variable speed Fantastic exhaust fan. Not only can it quickly remove cooking heat and odors, this fan is reversible to move cool air into the galley. At night the Fantastic can double as an attic fan to bring cooler outside air into the sleeping quarters. It also has a thermostat to turn it off in the night if the temps get a bit too cool. A second fan mounted directly above the cooktop exhausts air to the outside.



CONTROLLING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Tiffin Motorhomes partnered with Spyder Controls Corporation of Alberta, Canada, two years ago to begin a collaborative development of software that focuses on the motorhome *as an environment*. Located on the DS wall just before entering the bedroom, a 6 x 7.5-inch monitor presents six white icons on a black field located across the bottom of the interactive display. Each icon represents

a primary folder containing several sub-folders. The six primary folders contain set-up information and owner preferences: Home, Lighting, Power, Climate, Slides, and Settings/Diagnostics.

Touching the Home Folder icon will divide the display into quadrants for Lighting, Wet Tanks, Climate, and Power, showing the initial sub-folders for each of these areas.

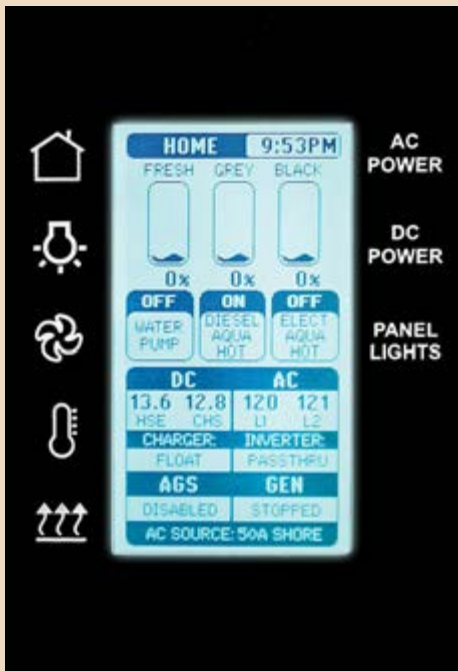




By touching LIGHTING, the screen opens with options to control the exterior lights (door, porch, road, and awning) plus 10 light sequences in the main living-galley-dining area. A third sub-folder BED/BATH LIGHTS opens all of the lighting options in the half bath, bedroom, and full bath. The LIGHT MASTER provides a one-touch switch to turn OFF all of the lights in the coach, and reciprocally, to turn the selected lights back ON.

The controls for heating and air conditioning are located in the lower left quadrant of the HOME folder. Touching either of the three interior zones will bring up a sub-folder that presents the controls for each zone. In this particular instance, the AC for the rear and front zones was ON

The Spyder control below is located at bedside. All functions available on the larger 6 x 7.5-inch screen are displayed here in a smaller format, still very readable and convenient for making your bedtime choices.



and set in the AUTO position at 74 degrees. The mid-zone AC was turned OFF. As you would have seen on the *three* previously employed separate Comfort-Aire controls, this single screen presents controls for the HIGH and LOW positions of FAN ONLY as well as the HEAT PUMP and the FURNACE. The “furnace” setting is the Aqua-Hot heating system that warms the coach as well as heating its unlimited supply of hot water. The heating sensors for warming the coach are located in the front and rear, and consequently there is no temp setting for the Aqua-Hot in the display’s MID section. The temp control setting is located just above the red triangle, and the actual temp is in a bar just above the temp control setting.

Spyder touch-control panels are located throughout the coach for management of specific lights, water pump, galley and bathroom exhaust fans, exterior lights, and awnings. The panel below is located in the galley.



Across the bottom of the CLIMATE folder, you will see Aqua-Hot’s power source: diesel or electricity. In either case, the Aqua-Hot unit heats on demand a transfer fluid that is pumped to six heat exchangers similar to small radiators. Air is quietly blown over the radiators to warm the air evenly throughout the coach. You can choose different temperatures for the bedroom-bath area and the living room-galley area. The Aqua-Hot system also heats the water. Diesel will produce hotter water as well as a continuous, unending flow of hot water when you are in the shower.

If you purchase a Phaeton, Allegro Bus, or Zephyr with the optional heated tile floors, you may select one of five heat levels in the lower left or right of the sub-folder’s screen. The bedroom and bath control is on the left and the living room-galley area is on the right. It is not a temp setting, but more simply one of five levels which you find most comfortable. From experience, we can tell you a warm floor on a cold morning is very comforting. The warmth from the floor heat rises, reducing the amount of heat needed from your other sources (Aqua-Hot diesel or electric, the heat pump, and the fireplace). Since the floor is electrically heated, you are using the 50-amp source in your campsite.

When you touch POWER on the HOME folder, it will take you to the screen (top center) that allows you to trace and analyze the source for incoming power and how it is being used. Formerly located in a cabinet over the driver’s chair, the touch panel for the inverter is now located in the lower left corner of the POWER folder. Touching it will lead to a screen with a series of owner-preferred set-ups for the inverter (not shown).

The first level of the SLIDES folder alerts you to the status of the ignition switch and the parking brake. It controls only the two rear slides. The two front slides are controlled by toggle switches mounted at shoulder level in the passenger and driver chair backs. The two locations prevent an accidental collision of the incoming slide with the back of the

chair. A second sub-folder brings up a screen to control the three exhaust fans and a third one controls the elevator for lifting the 55-inch TV in the PS forward slide-out.

The SETTINGS folder offers choices for Celsius and Fahrenheit, screen brightness, resetting the time, and color choices for the screen itself. A major option on the screen is DIAGNOSTICS. If you are having computer, technical, or mechanical problems, a diagnostics report from this folder will give a certified technician a big head start in isolating and identifying a problem in the coach.

A Luxurious Bedroom

Let's begin with the central feature in this luxurious bedroom: a full king-size *memory foam mattress* (MSRP \$290). Two sconces provide the necessary lighting for reading in bed. Courtesy lights in the toe kick of the PS cabinets offer soft lighting for watching a movie on the 32-inch LG Smart TV. Six recessed LEDs brighten the area on both sides of the two-speed ceiling fan. The PS 17 x 18-inch window and the two small windows in the sidewalls of the bed slide-out provide good ventilation.

The PS cabinetry features a double wardrobe with motion-sensitive lights

and mirrored doors. Each wardrobe is 23 inches wide, 20 inches deep, and 41.5 inches high. Since the wardrobe is in the slide-out, the hanging bar is within easy reach. Four identical drawers under the wardrobe are 19 x 11 x 7. A chest just below the window is capped with a 34.5 x 16-inch solid surface countertop. The louvered door conceals the equipment for the entertainment system. The adjacent area houses a 1.5 cubic foot clothes hamper.

The two compartments with four pop-up doors over the bed's headboard with 13 cubic feet and the cavity under the bed with 20 cubic feet constitute only a part of Tiffin's storage bonanza. IKEA makes a box with lid (\$14.99 ea., brand Kuggis, article no. 102.802.03) that fits perfectly in the four overhead compartments (14.4w x 21.25d x 8.25h), allowing removal of the boxes for easy storage and selection of the contents.

A Well-Planned Bath & Half Bath

Tiffin's architects put on their creative hats when they designed this rear bath. They gave up only one foot in the living area to reduce the length of the coach from 41 to 38 feet. To get most of the additional two feet, they moved the wardrobe to the PS slide-out and used the 96





inches across the rear to house the optional Splendide® washer/dryer (MSRP \$2,030), a 38-inch wide lavatory/vanity, and a standard 24 x 38-inch shower footprint. The electrical compartment with 12-volt and 110-volt breakers that is usually placed in the rear closet of 40-foot coaches was carefully repositioned in the upper half of the medicine cabinet above the lavatory-vanity. That left one shelf for toiletries and prescriptions. With a growing talent in slide-out design, the team created an ingenious triple shelf pull-out that slides in front of the mirrored meds/breaker cabinet—plenty of shelf space and very convenient. A hand towel ring is at-

With no large wardrobe at the rear of the coach to hide the 12v and 110v breakers, the medicine cabinet became an option that left only one shelf. Ingenuity to the rescue—a sliding medicine cabinet that emerged from behind the shower!

tached just above the backsplash. The lavatory has two 110v outlets and three LEDs for excellent illumination. Double doors conceal 1.5 cubic feet of storage directly under the lavatory. Two large drawers (10w x 17d x 6h) complete the vanity.

A slotted mount holds a large shower head that slides up and down easily on a vertical pole to any position. The large recessed soap receptacle is equipped with a

grab bar. The fiberglass shower stall has a molded seat and a towel rack. We always enjoy Tiffin's large skylight that has a sliding closure with a motion sensitive LED. In cold months, one Aqua-Hot heat exchanger pumps warm air across the top of the vanity and another from the base of the shower.

The half bath in RV parlance may be called the reading room or library. With less respect, farmers just called it the out-house and left last year's Sears & Roebuck catalog on the floor for obvious reasons. Having gained great respect and now appearing in four out of seven Phaeton floor plans, this half bath has porcelain floors, a ceramic toilet no less, a 34 x 11-inch solid



surface countertop with a ceramic lavatory, a spacious, mirrored, double door medicine cabinet, a 20 x 30-inch mirror on the opposite wall, a 110v outlet, an exhaust fan and window, two LED lights, a TP holder, and a towel hook. Under the countertop, there's another 1.5 cubic feet of storage, the perfect place to store a box of Aqua-Kim, since this is the point where it is added to the black tank. And . . . there is a magazine-book rack in the corner right at floor level.

The Cockpit

The cabinets surrounding the 42-inch TV above the dash are cosmetic with respect to the handsome carpentry and functional in providing places for several controls and small storage areas.

Moving clockwise from the first cabinet above the driver's chair, the compartment conceals the control for the Carefree awning, the selector for the antenna/cable, and the ON/OFF switch for the Winegard satellite system. As noted earlier, the Magnum inverter control was moved to the Spyder control panel in the hall. The cabinet is also a good place for map storage.

The second and third cabinets are convenient places for storing small items that are used frequently. To the right of the TV, the fourth cabinet hides the control for Winegard Connect, an option on the 37BH for extending WiFi connections and 4G LTE service.

The fifth cabinet is directly over the entry door and is the perfect place for storing your big flashlight. The sixth cabinet over the passenger chair offers 1.25 cubic feet of storage. We use it for storing all of our Woodall's directories and other manuals that we need frequently.

Certainly one of Tiffin's most ergonomically designed cockpits, the curved hoods over the three main combination gauges are its most prominent feature. Using white type against a black background, the center gauge displays the MPH/KPH. The left gauge presents the RPM in the top half, with the fuel, DEF, and battery in the lower half. The right gauge is quartered for front & rear PSI,



oil pressure, and coolant temp. The Info Center collects and presents monitoring data for all of the coach's systems in large, easy-to-read type. When necessary, System Alerts in panels on both sides of the Info Center will appear in bright colors with a repeating tone that you can't ignore.

With safety as the key factor in the design, several controls are located in the steering wheel at thumb reach. Cruise control and the dimmer switch are positioned on the left side of the wheel. On the right side you will find the windshield wiper/wash controls and the ICC switch.

Moving to the left side of the steering column, you will see the headlights/parking switch, the fog lights, the bright/dim switch for the dash display, and a USB port. Just below is the engine preheat and auxiliary generator start. The controls in the left console under the DS window begin at the front with the parking brake, the Allison transmission gear selector at your fingertips, and the controls for adjusting the outside mirrors. By using the air horn toggle, you move from an automotive strength to a truck strength horn when you press the center of the steering wheel. Next to the air horn toggle, you will see the compression brake, easily accessed when you need it for mountain driving or expedited speed reduction. The driver is favored with two cup holders, one in the left console and another in

the center console drawer under Denso's new HVAC dials. After you get into your campsite, the HWH leveling system provides automatic leveling, although it does have controls for manual adjustments.

In the dash to the right of the steering column, TMH has positioned eight toggle switches easily reached without having to take your eyes off the road. From left-to-right, you will see the STEP CVR, DRIVER FAN, SOLAR SHADE, NIGHT SHADE, GEN START, MAP LIGHT, DOCK LIGHT, and RADIO. Two 6-inch fans mounted in the upper corners of the windshield help with defrosting the large glass expanse and can also be turned to cool the driver and passenger.

With speakers at ceiling level on the left and right, the AM-FM RADIO-CD PLAYER will keep you entertained while traveling. The optional Rand McNally navigation software (MSRP \$870) is displayed through the Kenwood radio. The optional in-motion satellite (subscription required) can bring in TV programming for the 55-inch television in the PS slide-out.

To the right of the radio, the camera monitor with a color display keeps the driver alert to traffic on both sides and the rear of the coach. You can split the monitor display for views of both sides or rear and side at the same time. Denso's new automotive heating and cooling con-

trols are located just below the monitor. Eight air vents are located at both dash and floor level. As the dash curves toward the stairwell, three outlets for USB and 12v electronic devices are available. On the PS of the dash deck, a slide-out box is handily positioned for storage of receipts, note pads, etc.

The passenger side of the cockpit is integral to the coach's operation. The top of the Spyder console at elbow level has toggles for the MAP LIGHT, DRIVER FAN, AWNING LIGHT, STEP COVER, DOOR LIGHT, ROAD LIGHT, MAIN CEILING, and PORCH LIGHT, plus a cup holder and two USB ports. Built as a part of the console, but facing the stairwell as you enter the coach, a 12-position Spyder panel allows occupants to control the ENTRY LIGHTS, DOOR LIGHT, PORCH LIGHT, MAIN CEILING, DOOR AWNING, ROAD LIGHT, AWNING, LIGHT MASTER and PANEL LIGHTS. Two additional switches allow you to turn ON/OFF the 12v battery system and the exit step.

Driving the 2018 Phaeton 37BH
The Phaeton can attribute a large part of

its success to its comfortable ride and pleasurable driving experience. In this coach, both of those assets depend on three companies: Freightliner, Tiffin, and Flexsteel.

The engineers at Tiffin Motorhomes and Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation work closely to assure that 40 percent of the coach's weight is on the front axle. Major components have been moved forward in the chassis to counter the enormous weight of the engine, transmission, and rear axle. With tuned shocks and tested inflation of the coach's four air bags, the passengers receive a firm and very comfortable riding experience. Flexsteel has stepped up to the plate and built 8-way adjustable driver and passenger seats that address every point of contact the body has with their product. After eight hours of driving, you won't feel worn out.

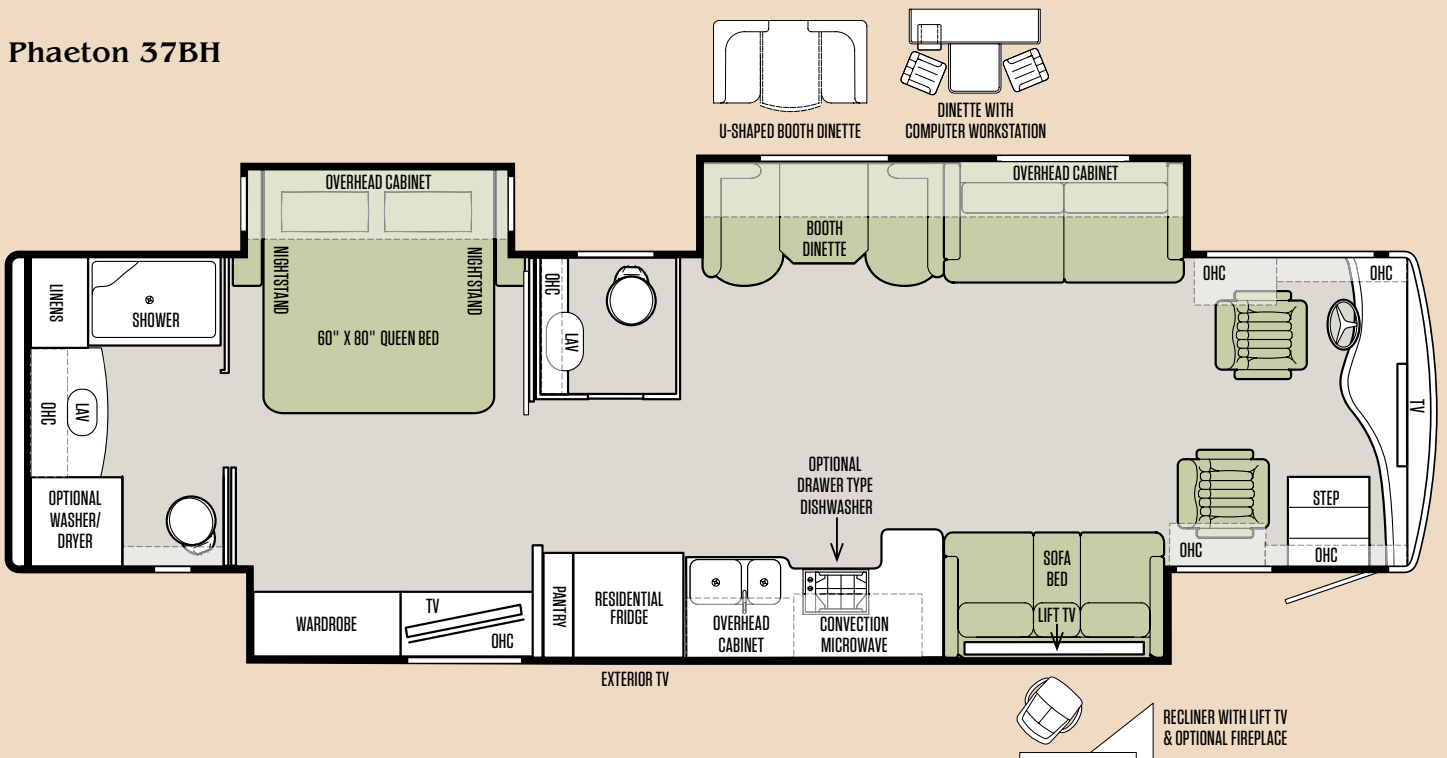
Cummins turned up the torque a notch in 2016 with an ISL 8.9L diesel power plant that produces 380-hp with 1,150 lbs-ft of torque. You can be sure that it made quite a difference. Still mated with Allison's 3000MH 6-speed automatic transmission, the take-off is

several seconds better from a standing start on an interstate ramp. I was never disappointed with the coach's power and handling on interstate highways as we moved in and out of commercial traffic. It cruised smoothly at 70 and handled four percent grades with downshifting that was imperceptible.

The road noise in the cockpit has been reduced noticeably. The Phaeton's suspension system and its insulation do a good job of absorbing noise created by the roughness of some types of pavement. While contemplating the possibilities, take an afternoon and visit your dealer for a test drive to see if my descriptions of this great coach still ring true when *you* are under the wheel. There's nothing better in RVing today than roughing it smoothly in a Tiffin. **RIS**

Tiffin chose the passenger-side of the 37BH to employ a single slide-out that includes the living room, all of the galley, and the master bedroom. The floor plan shows a queen bed; a king is optional. There are three choices for the dinette: standard with sleeper, UltraLeather U-shaped dinette (MSRP \$363), and the dinette/computer workstation (MSRP \$870).

Phaeton 37BH



SPECIFICATIONS: Model reviewed 2018 Phaeton 37BH, Triple Slide

Base MSRP* – \$306,675 MSRP with options added – \$330,674

STANDARD FEATURES

Structural

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

Automotive

Freightliner with raised rail chassis
Allison 3000 MH six-speed automatic transmission with lock-up (torque converter)
Cummins 380-hp, ISL 8.9L, electronic/turbo-charged diesel with 1,150 lbs.-ft. torque
Air ride (4 air bags)
Aluminum wheels
55° wheel cut
Two-stage engine brake
Air brakes with automatic slack adjuster & ABS
Adjustable accelerator and brake pedals
18-inch VIP Smart Wheel
Cruise control
Fog lights
Daytime running lights
Emergency start switch

General Exterior

Fiberglass front & rear caps
Dual fuel fills
Large tinted one-piece windshield
10Kw Onan® manual slide-out generator
Hydraulic automatic leveling jacks
Heated power mirrors with integrated cameras
Three power roof vents with 3-speed fans
Single motor intermittent wipers
Gel-coat fiberglass walls
Full-body paint with protective film on front cap
Deadbolt front entrance door
Double electric step
Dual pane windows
LED lights for entry door & patio
Automatic door awning
Metal wrapped automatic patio awning
Window awning package (2 windows)
Exterior TV with sound bar
Slide-out covers
Custom mud flap
Lockable swing-out basement storage doors with gas shocks; central locking on select compartments
Motion sensor lighting for exterior storage
Remote locking system for entry door
Chrome handles on compartment doors
Flush mounted & painted frame dual pane windows
Roof ladder
Electric hose reel
Electric power cord reel
Docking lights
Back-up camera
Side-view cameras activated by turn signals
Heated water and holding tank compartments
Six 6v auxiliary batteries
2000 watt sine wave inverter with 100 amp converter & transfer switching
Black tank flush system
Water filter
Gravity water fill
Undercoating
110v exterior receptacle
110v / 12v converter
Digital TV antenna
Hadley air horns
Pre-wired for in-motion or automatic satellite dish
Cable-ready TV hookup
Three 15,000 BTU low profile roof A/C systems with heat pumps
A/C condensation drains, power pumped to rear of coach

Driver's Compartment

Power Ultra Leather™ driver and passenger seats with power passenger footrest
Contemporary wraparound dash
Courtesy drawer in step well
Courtesy lights in step well
Dual dash fans
One drawer in DS dash
One 12v dash receptacle
One USB connector to radio for MP3
Single CD player & AM/FM stereo
Sirius-XM satellite-ready radio prep includes receiver and antenna (requires subscription)

Dash overhead 42.5" LG Smart+ TV
Two USB dash receptacles
Slide-out tray in PS dash with lock-out rails
Power solar & privacy windshield shades
Driver & passenger solar & privacy shades for side windows
Solid non-opening PS window
Custom infrared repeater system on all TVs
Solar / privacy shades for driver & passenger side windows
Color rear vision monitor system with side-view cameras activated by turn signals
Seatbelts integrated into driver & passenger chairs
Fire extinguisher

Living Area / Dinette

Ultra Leather™ booth dinette/sleeper
12v, 110v, & USB receptacles at dinette
Package A (standard): Ultra Leather DE sofa bed with Lift TV (PS) and Ultra Leather air coil sofa bed (DS)

Kitchen

Solid surface counter top with residential stainless steel sink
Solid surface sink covers
Sink cover storage rack underneath sink
Expand-an-Island
Permanently mounted folding solid surface cooktop cover
Single lever sink faucet with sprayer
Built-in soap dispenser
Stainless steel convection/microwave oven
3-burner stainless steel cooktop (LPG units only)
Exterior vent for convection/microwave oven
Galley backsplash guards
Stainless steel residential refrigerator with ice & water dispenser in door
Built-in soap dispenser
Built-in waste can (not available with dishwasher option)
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan

Full Bath

Two medicine cabinets with large mirrors over vanity in full bath
Solid surface vanity top with two lavatories
One cabinet over toilet
Macerator toilet with sprayer
Skylight in shower with LED light in sliding solar cover
Curved molded fiberglass shower
Large hand-held shower wand mounted on vertical pole slide with flex hose
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan
10-gallon DSI gas / electric water heater
Solid wood custom privacy sliding door

Half Bath

Double medicine cabinet with two mirrored doors
Full surround backsplash
Solid surface vanity top with ceramic lavatory
Ceramic toilet
Power roof vent with 3-speed fan

Bedroom

Ceiling fan
Four OH storage cabinets in bed slide-out
Bed comforter with designer pillows
Sleeping pillows with shams
Queen-size bed with pillow top mattress
Wardrobe with automatic lights
Under bed storage
Night stands with 110v and USB outlets
Ultra Leather upholstered headboard framed with wood molding
Two chests of drawers with solid surface countertops
Entertainment electronics for Living Area concealed with louvered doors in chest
Pre-wired for second satellite receiver
42.5" LG Smart+ television
DirecTV® receiver (subscription required)
DVD player with surround sound for living room
Carbon monoxide and LPG leak detectors

General Interior

7-ft. ceilings
Soft touch vinyl ceilings with tray ceiling in living area
Porcelain tile floor throughout the coach

Treated carpet in slide-outs
High gloss raised-panel hardwood cabinet doors and drawers
Extraordinaire™ AC system
Front overhead TV, PS Lift TV, Bedroom TV
Solid wood cabinet fascias & doors with concealed hinges
Medium alderwood cabinetry
12v disconnect switch
LED lighting
Complete cable wiring (interfacing with surround sound & satellite system)
Home theater surround-sound system with concealed speakers
Electric step well cover
Solar & privacy shades
Tank level monitor system
Smoke detector
Central vacuum cleaner

OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

All electric coach includes induction cooktop and Aqua-Hot hydronic heating (water & air)
Heated tile floors
In-motion satellite dish
Prewire for Trav'ler satellite receiver
Winegard Connect
One basement slide-out tray
In-dash navigation system
Stacked washer/dryer
Dishwasher, drawer type
Dinette/computer workstation
Memory foam mattress, king
Solar panel prep
Safe located in bedroom
Amber Glaze cabinets
Brown Sugar Ultra Leather™

OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

Extended cycle batteries
English Chestnut cabinet finish (NC)
Mocha cabinet finish (NC)
Toscany Bailey UltraLeather
Molasses UltraLeather
Vertical slide opening window (PS)
Mobileye Collision Avoidance System
Package C: UltraLeather air coil sofa/bed with std. Lift TV (PS); Theater seating (DS)
Package D: Recliner with std. Lift TV (PS); UltraLeather air coil sofa/bed (DS-std); fireplace (PS)
UltraLeather U-Shaped Dinette-DS (non-sleeper)
UltraLeather Booth Dinette-DS (sleeper)
Sleep Number bed, queen
Sleep Number bed, king
Memory foam mattress, queen

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 234"
Overall length – 38'8"
Overall height w/roof air – 12'7"
Interior height – 84"
Overall width – 101"
Interior width – 96"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 38,320 lb.
Front GAWR – 14,320 lb.
Rear GAWR – 24,000 lb.
GCWR – 48,320 lb.
UVW – 31,910 lb. as tested (will vary depending on options)
CCC – 6,292 lb.
Trailer hitch capacity – 10,000 lb.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – Cummins 380-hp, ISL 8.9 liter, electronic, turbocharged diesel
Torque – 1,150 lb.-ft. at 1,400 rpm
Transmission – Allison 3000MH electronic six speed with two overdrives
Tire Size – 295/80R22.5 Michelin
Alternator – 160 amps

CHASSIS

Frame – Freightliner chassis
Frame Design – Raised rail
Anti-locking Braking System – Full air brakes with anti-locking braking system (ABS)
Air Suspension (front) – I-beam front axle with air ride suspension
Air Suspension (rear) – Detroit axle with Freightliner V-ride suspension
Shock Absorbers (front) – Sachs tuned
Shock Absorbers (rear) – Sachs tuned
Leveling Jacks – HWH hydraulic automatic

CONSTRUCTION

Support – Steel/Aluminum reinforced structure
Front/rear body panels – One-piece fiberglass caps
Body – Laminated roof, sidewalls, and floor

Roof

One-piece, moisture resistant molded fiberglass roof cap provides insulation and strength and prevents water intrusion
AC Condensation Power Drainage System that runs internally through the roof insulation to the inside back wall of the engine compartment, redirecting water underneath the motorhome
5½" formed insulation
Quiet Air Cooling System with return air and foil-wrapped cooling exhaust ducts
Durable, tubular aluminum roof skeleton
Easy-to-clean soft touch vinyl ceiling panel

Sidewalls

Gel-coat fiberglass outside wall panel
High-performance thermal insulation
Durable, yet lightweight, tubular aluminum wall skeleton
Decorative inside wall panel
All sidewalls are approximately 2" thick.

Floor

Porcelain tile floor bonded to three part laminated floor
Three-part laminated floor
High-performance thermal insulation
Durable, tubular floor skeleton
Woven moisture barrier material

ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – 4 adults
Fuel tank – 100 gallons
Freshwater – 90 gallons
Black water – 50 gallons
Grey water – 66 gallons
DEF tank – 13 gallons

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 www.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.

Tiffin Introduces the Wayfarer 24FW

THE BRAND'S 4TH FLOOR PLAN IN LESS THAN A YEAR

Tiffin Motorhomes crashed the Class C market in February last year like an uninvited guest to a country club party. After evaluating the less than stellar competition, TMH put on its best tuxedo and introduced the Wayfarer with quality appointments that left the big name manufacturers surprised. By using their long-tested skills in manufacturing high-quality Class A coaches, Tiffin's new Winfield plant did not have to climb its way to the top. It started at the top!

The R&D department introduced the 24QW with an enclosed bath and followed quickly with the 24BW with a walk-through bath and a larger shower. Both campers have a rear slide-out housing a queen bed plus a DS slide with choices for a booth dinette and a sofa/bed. The buyer can choose between an en-

tertainment center and a loft bed over the cab.

By late summer Wayfarer's R&D was ready with the 24TW, featuring twin beds that can be converted into a king size, double wardrobes, and 18 cubic feet of storage in shoulder-height cabinets that encircle the bedroom.

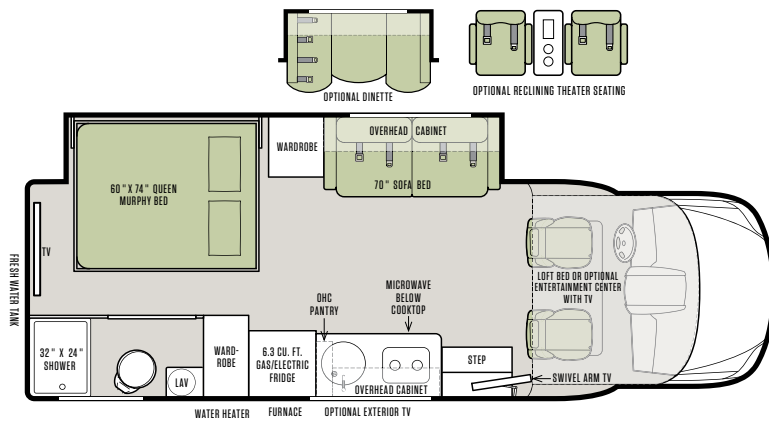
At the RVIA National RV Trade Show in early December, Tiffin did a slam-dunk again with the 24FW—a full panel DS slide-out that features a queen-size Murphy bed that morphs into a large table when the bed is folded away into the wall. That left room on the passenger-side for a fully enclosed bath with a 24 x 32-inch shower with an elegant bowl-shaped lavatory with spigot and single lever control extending from the backsplash. A wardrobe, drawers, and cabinet complete the bath. A second wardrobe with drawers underneath

serves as a divider in the driver side slide-out.

The slide-out offers three choices for seating: a 70-inch wide sofa/bed (standard), a dinette, and reclining theater seating (both optional). All three choices have seatbelts for two. In this coach, the living area has an HDMI television positioned over the door. A second TV is located on the back wall, perfect for watching television in bed. An exterior television in the PS wall under the awning is optional.

There are two choices for the space over the cab: An entertainment center with TV, storage compartment, and radio with CD player or a wide bunk bed that can accommodate one adult or two children.

The Winfield plant is now building three Wayfarers a day. Prices run in the mid-\$130s with options. See your dealer for exact pricing.



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Recalls for 2016–2018

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@lci1.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.

Kidde Fire Extinguisher **RECALL**

Kidde NHTSA Recall #17E-062
Tiffin NHTSA Recall #17V-841

Customers with Tiffin units from models 2003 to early models of 2018 should immediately contact Kidde to see if your fire extinguisher is involved. If so, you can request a free replacement fire extinguisher and instructions on returning the recalled unit, as it may not work properly in a fire emergency.

Contact Kidde toll-free at 855-262-3540

Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time,
Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Eastern Time, or online:

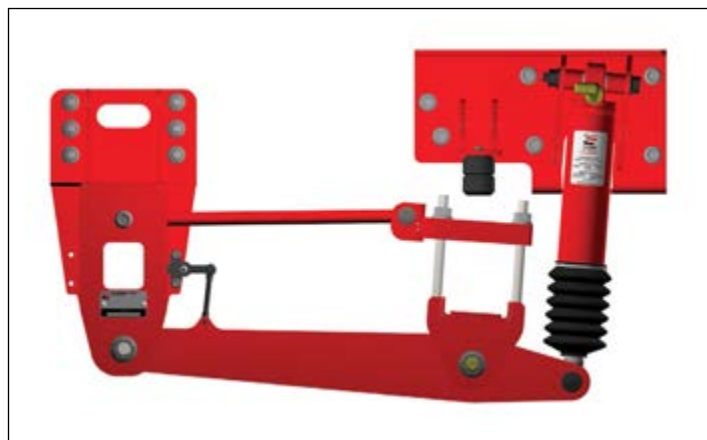
www.kidde.com and **click on “Product Safety Recall”**
for more information.

A Smoother Ride for Recreational Vehicles

LiquidSpring™ LLC offers CLASS® suspension systems for recreational vehicles to provide a smoother and more comfortable ride than conventional suspensions, leading to less fatigue for the driver and less wear and tear on the vehicle. CLASS® suspensions improve ride, handling and safety, and provide an improved overall driving experience. These systems are available for Chevrolet/GMC, Ford, RAM, International, and Freightliner models of motorhomes.

Utilizing a strut, with a compressible fluid as the spring/damping medium, and its sophisticated on-board micropro-

cessor, CLASS® suspensions adapt the entire motorhome's response to road variations and the driver. Unlike current steel and air sprung suspension systems, CLASS® is the only commercial suspension system that can automatically and instantaneously change the spring stiffness and damping at each wheel over a very broad range with minimal power consumption while the vehicle is being driven and without driver intervention.



By automatically changing the spring stiffness and responding to road variations, the ride is smooth and soft even on rough roads. When making sharp turns, corners, or emergency maneuvers, the CLASS® suspension also stiffens to provide superior stability and eliminate roll. Rocking, bouncing, and noise levels are also reduced when driving on driveways, gravel roads, city streets and freeways. The suspension makes adjustments without driver intervention with the on-board processor, offering a fluid, seamless driving experience.

The system has three ride modes: comfort, normal, and sport. The comfort mode is geared towards a better, smoother ride and the sport mode is focused on handling. Modes can be changed through the user-friendly driver interface, which adjusts ride modes, changes suspension heights, and notifies the driver of system issues with a red warning LED.

Several LiquidSpring customers expressed their satisfaction with the improved ride and smoother handling over their previous vehicles. Stuart Leishman, of British Columbia, Canada, installed the LiquidSpring suspension on his 2016 Tiffin Allegro 36LA motorhome and immediately noticed improvements, especially when crossing bridge decks on the interstate. "What had been bone jarring impacts on many bridges were smoothed out to the point that we barely noticed crossing the bridges," said Leishman. The system's sport mode also made Leishman more comfortable when negotiating sharp curves through mountains in California.

Bill Goldman also has a LiquidSpring suspension on his 2017 Tiffin Allegro 32SA. He was very pleased with the reduced vibration, rattling, and creaking the coach would normally make. The most surprising change for him was the lack of "white-knuckle" driving, even on rough, narrow and twisting roads. After ten hours of driving, Goldman said he would normally be exhausted, stiff, and tense. "But when I pulled into my campsite, I was not tired, tense, or sore, just hungry," said Goldman.

The LiquidSpring CLASS® system is installed to the axle and frame of a chassis, adding about 200 pounds to the overall weight of the motorhome, mostly to the rear axle. These systems can also be retrofitted to existing motorhomes, in which case, all existing suspension components need to be removed from the chassis except the factory sway bar.

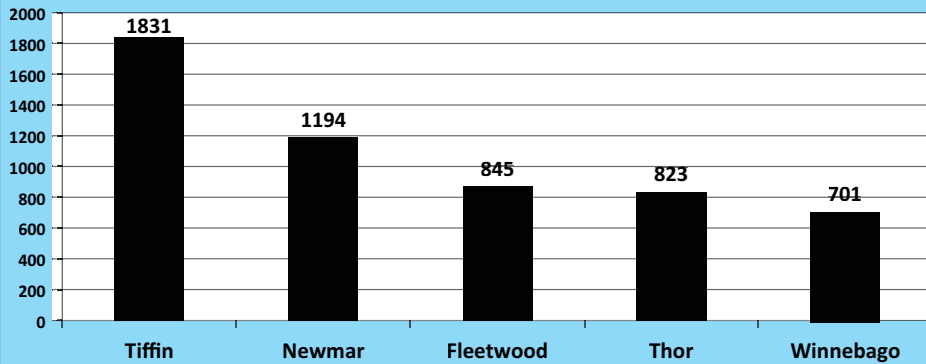
LiquidSpring™ LLC offers its CLASS® suspension products for several light and medium duty truck applications such as Class C motorhomes, ambulances, and shuttle buses. The products have demonstrated significant ride and handling performance improvements over conventional suspension systems. Other products are available for Class 3–7 trucks. LiquidSpring provides sales, application guidance, manufacturing, distribution, and service of CLASS® suspensions.



Thanks for making Tiffin the #1 Class A diesel manufacturer going on 10 years!

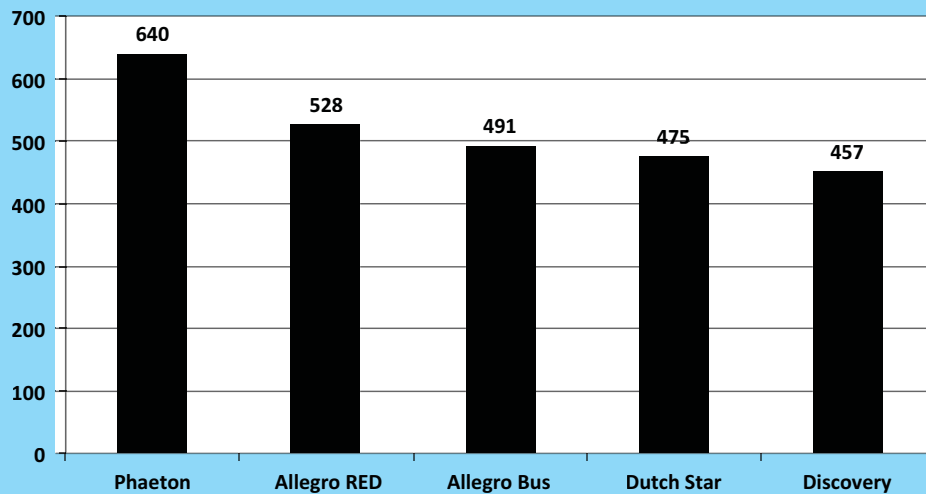
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SOURCE - NOVEMBER 2017 STATISTICAL SURVEYS RECORDS & CHARTS BY MARK LANE

Battery Selection, Care and Maintenance

Over the years there have been numerous advances to lead-acid based battery technology. Perhaps the most significant to date has been the advent of absorbed glass mat (AGM) style batteries.

Perhaps one of the most publicized traits of AGM batteries is that they require little to no maintenance, but there are a few things to know to insure the best return on your investment. The following information provides insight into key points regarding the application of AGM batteries. Whether you have purchased or are preparing to purchase AGM batteries there are some things you might not know. Although your new batteries



The shorter of the two batteries pictured is one of the most popular selling group size batteries in the RV industry (Golf Cart 6V). The taller battery just behind is also a 6V battery with the identical footprint as the Golf Cart 6V, but roughly 3 inches taller with 1/3 more capacity. It conforms to the same footprint as the smaller 6V battery and only needs a few more inches in height to greatly enhance the power of a battery bank.

should come to you fully charged, shortly after you begin cycling (using) your batteries, the capacity will generally increase in some cases to levels as high as 104% of rated spec (For Lifeline AGM Batteries). Therefore, you will achieve the best results by beginning to use your batteries sooner than later.

Sizing a battery bank is similar to that of building a fuel tank to fit demands without going over or falling short of your consumption requirements. While trying to determine the necessary battery bank size, keep in mind that you will need to have adequate charging capabilities for the best long-term results. In the RV industry a battery bank typically would be twice the

capacity of your daily power usage (usage = 100amps, battery bank size = 200amps). The 50% discharge point will allow for the optimum number of battery life-cycles (between 1000 and 1100 for Lifeline AGM Batteries). You should pay close attention to insure adequate charging capabilities, especially if you are heavily reliant on solar panels as there may be limited time for sunlight and room for panels.

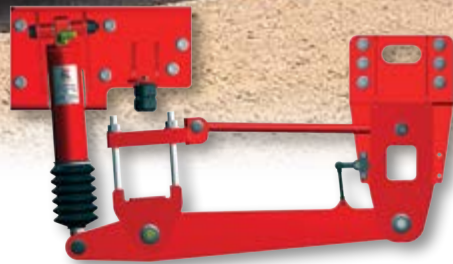
The proper installation of a battery bank is paramount to overall success. One good resource for battery connection diagrams is located in a Technical Manual on the Lifeline Battery website (www.lifelinebatteries.com). This Technical Manual provides a wealth of information surrounding the care and maintenance of Lifeline AGM Batteries.

Although it can be a daunting task to try and determine the best charging system (s) to use in a specific application, there are many online resources to help or simply contact Lifeline Batteries directly to simplify this process. There are numerous devices that can be used to charge batteries such as solar panels, alternators, generators and/or inverter chargers and converters. For the best results, set charging systems as close to manufacturer recommendations as possible (few are ever exact).

Proper maintenance procedures during the storage of an RV can greatly increase the lifespan of the battery bank. If there is access to power and the onboard charger settings are inline with specific battery requirements, this is an excellent option. If there is no power available, solar panels along with a controller can be used to maintain batteries. If an RV will be stored without these two options, make sure that batteries are fully charged before disconnecting them from all power draws. Battery manufacturers will provide data on how often stored batteries will require maintenance charging (Lifeline AGM Batteries only lose 2% of charge per month and require maintenance charging every couple of months). For batteries stored in colder climates, the need for maintenance charging will decline.

Although there are several AGM battery options, Lifeline AGM Batteries have established a reputation as the 'gold standard' of absorbed glass mat batteries. Lifeline is known for delivering the perfect combination of ample cranking power, industry leading reserve capacities and exceptional life-cycle (life span) capabilities. Concorde Battery Corporation manufactures Lifeline AGM Batteries using the same construction and manufacturing processes as used in their industry leading Aerospace AGM batteries. Both Lifeline and Concorde Battery are US family owned and operated companies with all facets of manufacturing and distributing headquartered in the USA. For questions regarding batteries, Lifeline Battery technical support is available Monday–Friday, 7:30 to 4:00PM @ 800-527-3224.

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Waco, Texas

City of Historic Attractions

AND MAGNOLIA MARKET, MAKING HISTORY NOW

Text by Norman Spray

Photography by Rhonda Spray

Sometimes I travel just to go someplace I've never been before. Sometimes I go to places to see great attractions, made by Mother Nature or man or both. I seldom follow crowds. Truth be told, I have an aversion to crowds whether on the highways (okay, especially on roads), concerts or ball games. However, this crowd piqued my interest.

"Why would 15,000 tourists a week stop off in Waco, Texas?" I asked. "I know there are some historic attractions there, but they don't cause a lot of excitement. What's going on?"

Jill, my always in-the-know stepdaughter tried to enlighten me. "They are going to Magnolia Market by the Silos," she said. "It's a big home-designs-gifts-house-wares-lifestyle store."

"Whoa," I answered. "I can't believe that many people would stop to see a simple store."

"No! No! No!" Jill corrected me. "Not just a simple store! This one is special. It is owned and operated by *Fixer Upper* stars Joanna and Chip Gaines. Women are 'wild' to see what *the Joanna Gaines* has found and stocked in the Magnolia Market complex. It's always packed."

So that's how on a lovely day heralding the arrival of fall, we exited I-35, the North-South interstate that runs right through Waco, and followed a crowd toward the two tall grain silos that stand over the 2.5-acre Magnolia complex only a few blocks west of I-35.

It was crowded. Magnolia Market at the Silos does indeed attract more visitors by the thousands than Waco's other unique attractions, including the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum and the Waco National Monument where you can see the skeletons of prehistoric mammoths lying where they died 65 thousand years ago. But as more visitors stop in Waco, more visit these sites, too.

So what's to see under the silos (which are not open to visitors)?



Magnolia Market and Bakery at the Silos has become Waco's number one tourist attraction bringing in up to 25,000 enthusiasts a week.



Magnolia Market is more than just a place to buy "stuff." It exudes the very essence of the *Fixer Upper* lifestyle.



The Waco Cattle Drive, by artist Robert Summers, consists of 28 large bronze sculptures depicting cowboys herding longhorn cattle.



This bronze statue is dedicated to the legendary Texas Rangers, founded in 1823 by Stephen F. Austin. The Rangers served the Republic of Texas and continue to serve the State of Texas today. In the war with Mexico they fought with such ferocity they came to be called “Los diablos Tejanos”—the Texas Devils.



The Texas Ranger museum is well known for its extensive collection of firearms. The Republic was one of the earliest customers of a New England gun maker, Samuel Colt, who had invented a .36 caliber five-shot revolver, a weapon the rangers used with deadly effect in defense of the Texas frontier.

Perhaps the most lasting and famous Texas Ranger depicted by Hollywood is the Lone Ranger who appeared on radio, television and in the movies. The Lone Ranger was created in 1933 and was an overnight success. Eight decades later, the popularity of the Lone Ranger remains. Clayton Moore starred in nearly 3,000 radio episodes, two movie serials, three feature movies, 18 novels, and over 220 television episodes as well as uncounted newspaper comic strips, comic books, cartoons and promotional items.



There’s the home-gifts-housewares-lifestyle shop in a 20,000 sq. foot barn; a garden supply-seed-plant store; a bake shop specializing in cupcakes, and a “big” green (artificial grass) lawn where guests can play and picnic. Several of the city’s acclaimed food trucks routinely stop at Magnolia to serve folk picnicking at tables on the “lawn.”

Magnolia’s popularity almost certainly is attributable to the success of Chip and Joanna’s *Fixer Upper* TV show broadcast Tuesday evenings on the HGTV Home and Garden network, now in its final season. On the show, the couple often is contracted by a Waco area homeowner to remodel and redesign an existing home, though sometimes their work is on a home they buy to “flip.” Chip is shown on-camera doing and supervising construction, sometimes adding a bit of comic relief, consulting with Joanna as the job progresses. Her designs that always result in a lovely, comfortable, and “livable” interior that preserves past history yet embraces the lifestyle of the owners, have helped establish Joanna as the master designer she is.

Aside from their TV celebrity, Chip and Joanna’s entrepreneurship is a story illustrating the power of positive mental attitude, self confidence, learning, setbacks, and success. Both graduated from Waco’s Baylor University, he with a marketing degree and she with a communications degree. Joanna says *Magnolia Market* “grew out of a dream I didn’t know could ever come to life.” She says Chip “pushed” her and they opened their “Little Shop on Bosque” in 2003. They gave it up after the first two of their four children arrived. Before long, Joanna joined Chip in his Magnolia Homes Construction business that both contracted jobs and reworked and “flipped” homes, hopefully for profit. “We loved the idea that we were making Waco beautiful, one home at a time,” Joanna recalls.

With the success of *Fixer Upper* achieved, Joanna revived her “dream” for Magnolia Market and they opened it under the silos in 2014. Then they bought and remodeled a vacation home, “Magnolia Manor,” in nearby McGregor which sleeps up to eight. Renting for \$695 a night, it was booked solid through all of 2017 as early as May. Following that success, they’ve renovated “Hillcrest Estate,” another for-rent vacation home in Waco that sleeps 12 and rents for \$995 nightly. Now they have bought and are hard at work renovating and saving the old Elite, a restaurant that was a Waco landmark for nearly a hundred years before it closed in 2016. As in most of her work, Joanna is retaining much of the flavor of the old in a design that’s original, lovely and modern. Named “*Magnolia Table*,” it “hopefully” will serve break-

fast, brunch and lunch by year's end. Also in 2017, they began publishing *Magnolia Journal*, a slick four-color quarterly magazine covering home, garden, lifestyle subjects, and even some Gaines philosophy.

Through it all, Joanna says, she has developed a deep appreciation for a person's ability to realize dreams if he but has confidence and is willing to work and assume risk. "Chip and I would never be where we are today if not for a steady diet of risk, failure and reward all woven together," she writes. That said, Joanna says she "finally" has come to realize that one's destiny is to discover what he or she was meant to be and make that one's priority. "Creating beauty feels like what I was created to do. It's hard to describe the confidence that comes with owning that and flourishing in my small part of the bigger picture. For me, confidence is knowing that's enough."

Chris thinks his own confidence comes from "a little voice in my head"—self talk—that makes him believe he can do the impossible, even when others say it can't be done. Without that self-propelling "voice," he adds, "I don't think I would have had the guts to invest in my first flip project. I most likely would have quit the first time I lost money on a deal."

Today Magnolia is far and away Waco's biggest, newest attraction—but there are others you don't want to miss in the city that claims to be the "Heart of Texas," figuratively and maybe even nearly geographically accurate. Among them:

The *Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum*. Located on the east access road to I-35 only blocks from Magnolia at the Silos, it honors the history and current service of the Rangers, easily recognized by their cowboy hats, boots, and the silver stars pinned to their usually-white shirt pockets. Considered by many (Texans for sure) to be the elite law enforcement officers of the 21st century and one of the world's most effective investigative agencies, this force of 172 Rangers becomes involved in virtually every high-profile crime investigation in Texas.

Their storied history, including the take-down of Bonnie and Clyde, is documented from the time colonizer Stephen F. Austin enlisted 10 men in 1823 to "range the frontier" to protect the state's 600 to 700 newly-settled families. Some 14,000 artifacts in the Museum include shotguns taken from Bonnie and Clyde's "death car" and firearms the Rangers used in the famous ambush. A rotating exhibit displays 2500 historic firearms and accessories. In the Ranger Research Center, history buffs and writers can access over 300,000 books, archives, clippings, genealogies, case files and oral history accounts



The Dr. Pepper museum.



Dr Pepper was created, manufactured, and sold beginning in 1885 in the Central Texas town of Waco.



The Dr. Pepper museum collection focuses on the different brands in the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group portfolio including Dr Pepper, 7UP, Squirt and A&W.



Dr. Pepper delivery vehicles have changed greatly over the years as this truck shows.



The Waco Mammoth National Monument is a paleontological site and museum where fossils of 24 Columbian mammoths and other mammals from the Pleistocene Epoch have been uncovered. This is the only known site of a mammoth nursery in America.



Shown here are the skeletal remains of a female Columbian Mammoth.

of famous kidnappings, riots, the Texarkana Phantom Killer, horse thieving, murder investigations, and others.

The **Dr. Pepper Museum**. Yes, there really is a museum devoted to this soft drink, oldest in America, invented in 1885, a year ahead of Coca-Cola. And it is quite a place, located in little more than throwing distance from the Texas Ranger Museum. Here you'll learn how Dr. Charles Alderton created the drink at the Old Corner Drug Store. The original bottling plant, built in 1906, is the museum's largest artifact, but hardly the only one. In fact, the museum houses one of the world's best collections of soft drink memorabilia. It covers much of the soft drink industry history including brands not related to Dr. Pepper.

Yes, you can still be served a Dr. Pepper here (belching not encouraged) though the original company now is owned by Cadbury Schweppes American Beverages which does not own the museum but continues to support it.

Waco Mammoth National Monument. In the spring of 1978, two arrowhead hunters stumbled on a large bone eroding out of a ravine. It was identified as that of a Columbian mammoth, an extinct species that lived during the Ice Age. A Baylor University Team began painstaking excavation that unearthed fossil remains of 16 Colum-

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bian mammoths by 1990. Six more, including a large bull, have been discovered since, along with remains of a Western camel, a dwarf antelope, an American alligator, a giant tortoise and the tooth of a saber-tooth cat.


These latter discoveries remain in situ for viewing by visitors guided along a 300-yard path to the Dig Shelter. There you can look down on part of the remains of “the nation’s first and only recorded discovery of a nursery herd of Pleistocene mammoths.” About 10 to 15 minutes of the guided tour is outdoors and a half-hour indoors. No digging is allowed.

Armstrong Browning Library and Museum. Housed on the campus of Waco’s Baylor University, where nearly 17,000 students are enrolled, this building, open to visitors, features one of the largest collections anywhere of letters and manuscripts by renowned English poets Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Her writing desk and chair are among the few Browning artifacts also displayed. Works and items of certain other Victorian writers also are part of the collection.

A visit here is sure to enthrall any serious literature addict. The library is adorned with two brass doors weighing three fourths of a ton each with lettering depicting themes from Robert’s poetry. Also amazing: 62 stained glass windows said to be one of world’s largest secular displays. The library is named for Dr. Andrew Armstrong, for 40 years a Baylor professor of English. He donated much of the material and worked for years to raise funds for the facility. It opened in 1951, three years before his death.

The Historic Brick Suspension Bridge. Now listed in the National Register of Historic Places, this bridge made life easier for most ranchmen and cowboys driving herds of cattle along the famed Chisholm Trail from south Texas to northern markets, though some elected to dangerously float cattle across the Brazos River. For Waco, it was the avenue to growth, making it easy for settlers to cross the river with their horse-drawn carriages and wagons. Closed to all but foot traffic since 1970, crossing it is a popular stroll affording excellent views of the river, lovely at this point.

Homestead Craft Village. Here you can watch expert craftsmen create pottery, blacksmithing, woodworking, fiber crafts, and more. Their products are displayed in the two-century-old “Hope Farms” barn.

Other Attractions. You might like to relax for a while enjoying a classic old movie at the 104-year-old **Hippodrome Theater**. Closed and reopened many times, it now offers complete dining, bar service, current and vintage movies and, at times, performing arts plays and concerts. 



Armstrong Browning Library, Baylor University
Located in the library, the Elizabeth Barrett Browning Salon contains books, furniture, and mementos of the poet and wife of Robert Browning. The room contains five stained windows that depict “poems and themes” from works of the Brownings in their design.



The famous Waco suspension bridge was first opened January 7, 1870 as a private toll bridge over the Brazos River for cowboys driving cattle on the Chisholm Trail. At that time it was the longest (475 ft) single span suspension bridge in the world. Many years later the county bought the bridge and turned it into a pedestrian and biking thoroughfare.

RV Campgrounds in or near Waco

Flat Creek Farms RV Resort, 1633 Greig Drive, Waco, TX, 76706.

10 minutes from downtown Waco. 57 sites with full hook-ups. \$37.50/night. flatcreekfarmsrvresort.com or (254)662-9858.

I-35 RV Park & Resort, 15131 N Interstate 35 Frontage Road, Elm Mott, TX, 76640. Located just north of Waco at I-35 exit #346, Russ Road. Over 200 pull-thru sites with full hook-ups. \$39.00/night plus \$3.00 for 50-amp service. (254)829-0698 or i35rvpark.com.

Lake Waco Marina, 3201 Overflow Road, Waco, TX, 76712. 100 new luxury RV sites available Spring 2018, with full hook-ups at each site. Email marina@lakewacomarina.com or go to: lakewacomarina.com.

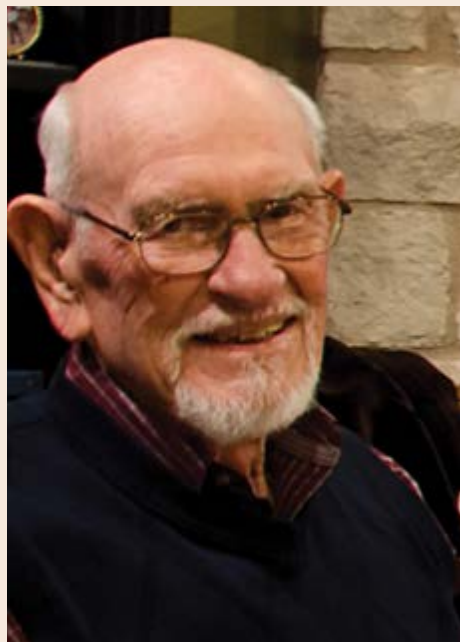
Saying Goodbye to Norman G. Spray

by his friend and editor Fred Thompson

Before Norman Spray retired in 1995 after a successful 45-year career that moved from news reporting to industrial and agricultural journalism, his wife Barbara cashed in a “fun money” investment account she had been managing for 20 years and bought a 1995 Class B motorhome. “We’ve had too many years of airplanes, airports, and city centers,” she announced to her family. “Now we’re going to see the country—and we are taking our dogs with us!”

Having been accustomed to a business lifestyle requiring the fastest movement from points A to B, Norm was skeptical. That all changed quickly after first-year trips from their home in Bedford, Texas, to California and a glorious fall tour of New England. Before they traded the Class B in on their 2001 Allegro, they had logged over 115,000 miles touring the U.S., the Canadian Rockies and the mid-western provinces, and Alaska. That was “roughing it smoothly” compared to their parenting days of tent, open-air, and “run-for-the-car-a-storm-is-coming” camping.

Travel in their Allegro 32BA was a dream by comparison, Norm said. By 2004 they had logged nearly 50,000 Allegro miles on trips to New England, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Michigan UP, and several trips to New Mexico. Their trip down the Baja



Peninsula in 2003 was an epic journey of 2,400 miles to find Norm’s long-lost cousin, J.P. (Jim) Smith, whom he had not seen in 52 years.

When Norm and Barbara received the first copy of *Roughing It Smoothly* in January 2004, he sent his 23-page engaging story about the Baja trip with an explanation that *MotorHome* magazine had rejected it because it was too long. It was not too long for this magazine and I published it in our third issue (see rismag.org Oct 2004, p. 28). It was the beginning of a 14-year relationship in which Norm wrote

over 30 stories for *Roughing It Smoothly*.

Norm was born October 10, 1930 in Matador, Texas. He grew up on his parent’s farm in Motley County, the oldest of five children. From his childhood, books and writing were his first love. While in high school, he sold his first story to *The Cattleman*, a respected trade publication based in Fort Worth that is still published today. He was a big fellow even in high school and played on the six-man football team. It was a six-man team because there were only 11 in his graduating class.

After high school graduation, Norm enrolled in a junior college in San Angelo, where he got involved with the student newspaper. The following year his stories received recognition in an awards banquet at an annual conference sponsored by the Texas Collegiate Press Association. Norm was called to the stage to receive award after award, which caught the attention of a young woman named Barbara Jean Beard from the junior college in Sweetwater. He was hard to miss because he just kept winning awards. She introduced herself to the young man, who told her his name was Norman Spray. They went on their first date while they were there at the conference, and then they kept in touch by writing letters when Norm transferred to Tulane University in New Orleans. It wasn’t long before Barbara persuaded her

Editor’s note:

Writing a remembrance of Norman Spray has been both a joyful and sad experience. The relationship began with a phone call from Norm to ask if I would be interested in running a story about a trip down the Baja peninsula. Not a four-page manuscript from an owner who made a few notes and took a few pictures, the Baja story was 20 manuscript pages and an envelope full of human interest pictures. I loved the story and published it a year later. That opened a 14-year pipeline of well-written pieces of journalism describing trips across the U.S.

The same year he began writing for *RIS*, Norm’s wife and soul mate, Barb, passed away in her sleep while they were on a fall trip in Vermont. Carolyn and I were terribly saddened by his loss, but amazed at his desire to press on and keep writing more stories.

Norm renewed an old friendship with a high school classmate two years later. Their fondness for one another blossomed into a romance. Sadly, Billie Hudgins succumbed to a second battle with breast cancer. Norm pressed on yet again.

A mutual friend introduced him to Jimmie Clayton and Norm was smitten after their first meeting. After a three-year courtship, the two octogenarians married in 2015. Jimmie traveled with Norm on several of his trips to create stories for *RIS* and was thrilled with the RV lifestyle. Sadly, for all of us who knew and admired them, the beautiful sunset years relationship was all too short. Jimmie asked for copies of all of the magazines containing Norm’s stories. She is now vicariously enjoying all of his trips. Carolyn and I will also miss Norm very much. He was a humble man with immense talent for finding good stories for us to publish in *Roughing It Smoothly*.



mom to accompany her to New Orleans to visit Norm. Two days later they decided they wanted to get married. Mrs. Beard called her husband and said something to the effect of, “We have a sort of situation here. They want to get married, and they want to do it soon.” Mr. Beard and Barbara’s sister took the train to New Orleans where the family witnessed the wedding the next weekend. And that was the start of a 53-year marriage.

Following his graduation from Tulane in 1952 with a degree in journalism, he landed a job with the New Orleans Times-Picayune. As an editor on the city desk, Norm was so shocked with a particularly upsetting and gruesome story that he decided to look for a different position in other media because he didn’t want to become callous and desensitized in order to do his job.

In 1953 he accepted a position with United Press International and soon was receiving choice assignments interviewing presidents and celebrities like Lucille Ball. He was especially pleased when he was published in *Reader’s Digest* in 1960. He was also published in *Guideposts* and his daughter Misty did the same exactly 30 years later.

His career in industrial journalism began with a four-year stint as an award-winning editor of Bell Helicopter’s corporate publications. He later established a marketing communications and public

relations agency specializing in agricultural work. His daughter, Rhonda, began her career in that agency and Barbara became the administrative vice president for the new company: Norman Spray Editorial Services. “Barbara organized us into a business,” Norm said, “and that was a good thing. I was a writer, not an administrator. Without her, I may never have been able to retire.”

In the 1960s Norm was assigned by IBM to work with Ross Perot, then an IBM account representative, to develop “case history” success stories featuring IBM customers serviced by Perot. A year or so later, Perot called him. “Norm, are you still doing technical writing?” he asked. “I’ve started my own little company and I need someone to develop manuals that tell hospitals how to handle Medicare data for processing,” Perot explained. Norm responded, “That’s not exactly the kind of writing I do, and anyway, IBM pays me quite well. You might not be able to afford me.”

Norm’s skill in freelance writing for both his industrial and agricultural accounts made his company a success for over three decades. But Norman Spray was a success in whatever he attempted. He took a people-first approach to life. A story could be written only after he had spent quality time interviewing and getting to know the people who had a role in his story or who supplied the informa-

tion about the subject.

Norm and Barby Spray wave goodbye to friends before leaving on their epic Baja trip. ♦ Norman introduces the Spray schnauzers, Wilhemena (Willie), Heidi, and Sir to the sand and sea. ♦ Norman and Barbara Spray drove their Allegro motorhome 2,400 miles from Bedford, Texas, to Los Barriles, Baja California Sur, to visit with Jim Smith. First cousins who grew up together, Norman and Jim had not seen each other for more than 50 years.

His dedication to complete any assignment was over the top, far beyond what an editor could expect. Norm’s next major story for *Roughing It Smoothly* was a trip to Vermont to do a story on that state’s dependable and spectacular fall color and follow it up in the spring with a story about its acclaimed maple syrup. The destination was his choice to celebrate his 74th birthday.

After traveling through seven states to reach Vermont, Norm and Barbara’s plans were dampened by engine trouble in Salisbury. Harvey (the name of their Allegro) had to be towed into Binghamton for serious repairs. With indefatigable determination, they loaded their three miniature schnauzers into Scat, their 2000 Geo Tracker tow car, along with the limited amount of luggage the little car could handle. The incredible fall color almost made them forget the inconvenience of traveling in Scat.

After working their way north through several beautiful villages and green pas-



tures framed by the reds, yellows, and crimsons of maples, oaks, and beeches, they arrived in Stowe. Norm wrote, “Our first challenge was to find lodging that would accept three miniature schnauzers. That came in the person of Al Holzgruber, owner and operator of the Northern Lights Lodge. The back rooms look out on a beautiful wooded lot fronting the West Branch River. Here schnauzers Wilhemena (Willie), Heidi, and Sir could exercise while we enjoyed the multi-colored foliage canopy and the soothing bubbling of a rushing mountain stream.”

On their second evening in Stowe, they enjoyed a memorable dinner at the Stowehof Inn. However, it was not the dinner itself, but the reminiscing that revealed stories from their childhoods, things they had never shared, favorite vignettes that just bubbled out. As they left the inn, Norm later wrote, “. . . I could not know how precious the memory of that evening would become.”

Another day of touring in the color-splashed hills was followed by a visit to the Nebraska Knoll Sugar Farm and the Bragg Sugarhouse where Norm began gathering pictures and notes for a sequel to the fall color story. The poignant moments of that evening and the following morning created the ending for the Vermont story.

“After visiting Doug and Barbara Bragg at the Bragg Farm and having an

unmemorable dinner in Montpelier, we were tired and turned in a little earlier than usual. Barby fell asleep, as did I. The difference is, she never woke up. I found her in a coma the next morning. A catastrophic stroke that hemorrhaged the brain stem took her from me and our precious daughters, Misty and Rhonda.

“Like the leaves of autumn, Barby is gone now but, like those leaves, she left beauty in her wake. It was a journey beautiful, a journey ended in Vermont, a place

she loved and one I hope to visit many more times,” Norm wrote later when he submitted his story for publication.

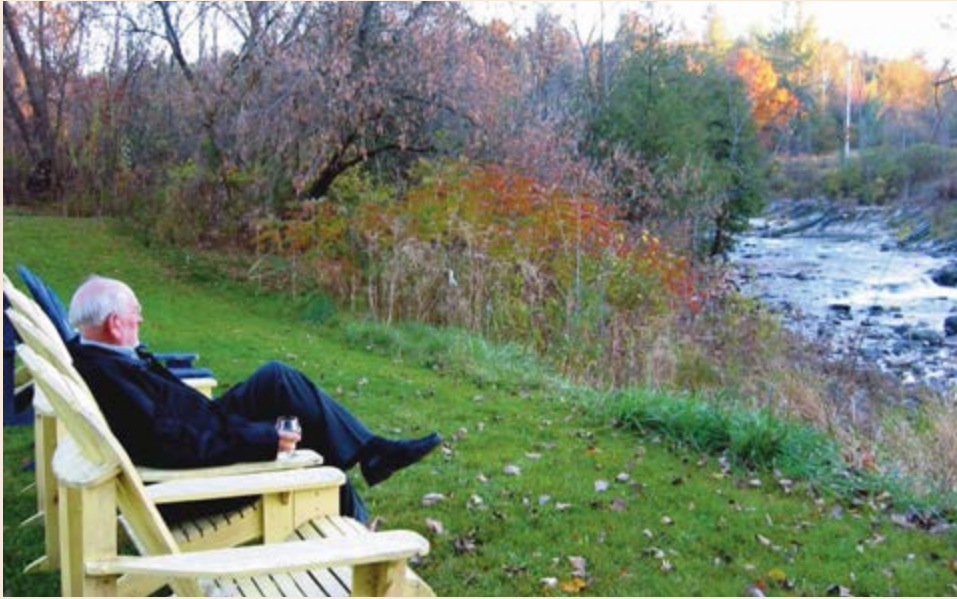
It had been three weeks since I had heard from Norm and discussed his plans for the Vermont trip. I called to check on them and was surprised that Rhonda answered the phone. “Fred, this is Rhonda. We are driving through Memphis now on the way home. You need to talk to Dad,” she said. Norm broke the sad news to me and explained they were returning to Fort

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Worth for a memorial service and a later interment at Barbara's childhood home in the Texas Panhandle. He assured me he still wanted to write the Vermont story. Did I mention commitment and dedication?

A Journey Beautiful, A Journey Ended. The story began, "This is not your ordinary travel story, though it was meant to be." (See rismag.org, July 2005.)

Perhaps with Barbara gone, writing became even more important to Norm. His ideas for new stories kept my corkboard cluttered. After a phone conversation and a "go ahead," I could count on a fresh manuscript with well-documented picture captions, always delivered on schedule. Our observant readers became famil-

iar with a new byline that became a regular as they enjoyed stories about snowbirds, exploring coastal cities on our southeastern coastline, and "These Hills Are Alive with the Sound of (Texas) Music."

After Norm did a story on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad near the Four Corners, Bob Tiffin, an aficionado of steam driven trains, suggested doing more stories on that subject. Norm jumped to the ready and did eight more stories on trains that our readers could actually ride.

A visit with a high school classmate, Billie Hudgins, energized even more Norm's desire to continue writing. She encouraged and helped him plan new

Clockwise from top left: In solitude by a stream behind his hotel, Norm reflects on the beauty and fragility of life while waiting for his two daughters to join him in Vermont, just hours after his loss. ♦ Rhonda sometimes traveled with Norm and served as his photographer. ♦ After another sad loss of his dearest friend, Billie Hudgins, Norm's life was brightened by Jimmie Clayton whom he married in 2015. ♦ During a trip to Rhode Island to do a story on Newport's mansions, Norm and Jimmie dined at the Castle Hill Inn. ♦ His first story on trains pulled by steam engines, the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, led to a series of eight more.

trips. Their biggest success was "Riding the Great River Road Through Minnesota." Unfortunately, their collaboration was short-lived and wrote another sad chapter in Norm's life. Billie had won one battle against breast cancer, but a mammogram discovered a significant return. Her first battle had been very difficult to say the least and she chose to forego further treatment, passing away a few weeks later. Billie had planned a trip to visit the great sugar cane plantations on the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Carolyn and I followed her plan and produced "When Sugar Cane Was King." Dedicated to Billie, the story ran in the July 2010 edition.

Two years later and a few months past Norm's 82nd birthday, a mutual friend introduced him to Jimmie Clayton. The friend, Jimmie, and Norm had lunch in





Weatherford. After lunch Jimmie learned that Norm was on his way to his home in Bedford. She said, “You know, you’ll pass within a mile of my house. Do you want to stop by for a cup of coffee?” The visit turned into a four-hour cup of coffee and afterward, as soon as Norm got home, he called to tell her what a great time he had.

They kept finding things in common and discovering how much they enjoyed being together—playing games they enjoyed, going to the movies, dining out, dancing at the country club in Weatherford, going to see plays and musicals. After about three months, Jimmie invited Norm to join a gathering of her family at Grand Teton National Park and Jackson Hole, Wyoming. It wasn’t long after that when Norm asked Jimmie if she would consider marrying him. She just wasn’t sure about it. She had been married for 55 years, he had been married for 53, and they had both lost their spouses about 10 years earlier. Norm kept courting and hoping. Almost three years later, Jimmie couldn’t really think of a reason not to get married. So they went out looking for rings, and the jeweler asked who the rings were for. They replied, “They’re for us; we’re getting married!” The jeweler did a double take and took pictures of them in the store.

They were married by Jimmie’s minister at Ridgley Christian Church in October 2015. Norm had worshiped there with Jimmie during their courtship. Soon after

their marriage he joined the church after investigating and studying their beliefs and theology. Within a short time he began serving as a deacon and was faithful in fulfilling his duties as a servant leader.

Jimmie traveled with Norm as he continued with his trips to write for *RIS*, the

most memorable of which was a trip to Rhode Island where he did a story about the mansions of Newport. They extended the trip into upstate New York and Niagara Falls. With Rhonda accompanying them as photographer, they spent a week

Continued on page 80

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Kidney and Bladder Stones—OUCH!!!

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

If any of you talk to a person who has had kidney stones, they will tell you how painful they are. Most of the pain occurs when the stones try to pass out of the kidney to the ureter and then into the bladder.

In dogs and cats, most stones are formed in the bladder. Rarely have I seen a stone in the kidney of a dog or a cat. Some signs that your dog or cat may have stones include straining to urinate or staying in the urinating position for a very long time with no urination occurring. Or there may be blood in the animal's urine, and frequent licking of the genital area. Cats may sit in the litter box for an extended time or visit the litter box more often than usual. Frequent accidents in the house from a well-trained pet may also be experienced.

Diagnosing bladder or kidney stones usually requires a urinalysis and radiographs to confirm their presence. Animals not showing symptoms are sometimes diagnosed by palpating the abdomen and feeling the stones in the bladder. It feels like grabbing a bag of marbles on some affected pets.

Bladder or kidney stones are formed by minerals that precipitate out from the urine as tiny crystals that over time bind together, becoming larger and larger. In my practice I removed bladder stones the size of a golf ball, and some so varied in size and numerous that you could not count them.

There are several types of bladder stones in dogs and cats. Struvite stones are composed of magnesium ammonium phosphate. Other stones are made up of calcium oxalate, calcium phosphate, cystine, and urates. Some stones consist of a combination of these minerals.

Many factors influence the formation of bladder stones, including dehydration, an unbalanced urine pH, diet, a bacterial infection, or a genetic predisposition.

When pets are dehydrated, minerals can become more concentrated and more prone to precipitate out. The concentration of proteins and minerals in the diet are nutritional factors that affect the formation of stones.

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The urine pH is important in determining whether minerals will precipitate out from the urine or stay dissolved. Stones such as struvite form in alkaline urine, and calcium oxalate forms in acid urine. The pH is influenced by the pet's diet. Bacterial infections, especially those that are chronic, make the urine more alkaline which enhances struvite formation.

In our feline friends, the stones formed are triple phosphate and are very tiny granular specimens similar to sand. The stones accumulate in the bladder and pass into the urethra, where they become impacted. This is an emergency situation in a male cat because of the very small size of the urethra in the penis. If the obstruction is not removed, the kidneys shut down, leading to kidney failure which then affects the heart and death ensues. Female cats can pass these small crystals more easily than the male cat. If the male feline becomes obstructed, then a catheter is placed in the penis and the stones are back flushed into the bladder. The catheter is left in place and fluids are given to hydrate the cat and allow the crystals to pass thru the catheter. This gives time for the urethra to heal and helps to avoid scarring in the urethra from the impaction.

Genetically, some dogs produce higher levels of substances that are precursors to bladder or kidney stones. Some breeds seem to be more prone to forming stones. In my practice, I found the schnauzer to be the breed most affected with bladder stones. Also, the Dalmation was prone to uric acid stones. I saw stone formation in other breeds but not as prevalent as in these two.

Treatment of bladder or kidney stones can be medical and/or surgical. If a large number of stones, or stones large in size are found in the bladder, surgery and removal are recommended.

If surgery is not an option, diets such as s/d for cats and dogs can be fed as the sole food source in hope of dissolving the stones to a size they can pass on their own. This process can take months or even a year to accomplish. Unfortunately, with mixed stones, these diets may not work and surgery will be needed.

Most animals are put on antibiotics to clear up any underlying infection. A change of diet to s/d or c/d from Hills is recommended. I am most familiar with Hills products but Purina and Royal Canin also make diets to help in stone prevention. Increasing water consumption is also important.

Diet, hydration, and genetic predisposition are the main factors in dogs or cats developing kidney and bladder stones. The same applies to humans. This disease is very serious so immediate attention is needed for a positive outcome.

Happy Travels, John & Kay



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ON THE ROAD WITH DAVE AND TERRI

Tiffin Owners from Vermont, Florida, Massachusetts, and New York



Mike & Pattie Lancaster

Hometown: Florida

Interviewed: Coastal RV Brunswick, GA

- Mike and Pattie own a 2012 Phaeton 40QBH purchased from LaMesa RV in Sanford, FL. It was just a year old. They traded in a 2008 Phaeton 36QSH.
- They have been married 38 years. They have one son Michael who is an avid Florida State fan.
- The Lancasters are members of the “Lake Eola Sams” club and go on trips once a month for seven months of each year. Florida Travecade is a once-a-year outing at the discretion of the club’s president.
- Mike and Pattie started RVing when they lost their home to hurricane Andrew. Pattie had vowed never to RV, but she stated, “It grows on you.”
- Previously they have owned two other RVs, a trailer, and two fifth wheels.
- Like most RVers, they love traveling the country, meeting people, and eating at “out of the way” restaurants.
- They travel with their two dogs: Shelby, a 15-year-old Yorkie and Zelda, a 3-yr-old Brussels Griffon, who is a rescue dog.
- Mike retired after a 32-year career with Bell South. Pattie retired from banking in 1996.
- They both are NASCAR fans and have camped at NASCAR races.
- Future travel plans include trips to Redwood National Park, Oregon, Texas, and Alaska.



Chip Litchfield & Penni Brink

Hometown: Montpelier, VT

Interviewed: Silver Springs, FL

- Chip and Penni purchased a 2004 Phaeton 40TGH with a 330 CAT on a Freightliner chassis in October 2015 at General RV in Orange Park, FL.
- They have been friends for 30 years, engaged for three. Chip has two children: a 39-year-old son and 23-year-old daughter.
- They have been full-timing since April 2016.
- Previous RVs include a 1997 Coachman Santana 30-ft. Class C and a 1996 Winnebago SunCruiser 35-ft. Class A.
- Club affiliations include Good Sam, Boondockers, and Welcome RVillage.
- Some of their favorite RV places are: Shenandoah Hills KOA in Virginia, Dumplin Valley Farm RV Park in Tennessee, and El Governor RV Park and Wilderness RV Park Estates in Florida.
- Chip worked at Ben and Jerrys Ice Cream and retired from Keurig Green Mountain Coffee. Penni still operates a home-based decorating business, specializing in window treatments.
- At the present time they do not travel with pets, although for 20 years they raised 30 sled dogs in New England.
- Chip’s hobbies include golf, pickle ball, and hiking. Penni likes crosswords, card games, and jewelry making.
- They plan to visit as many states as possible.



Eric Tallberg & Diane Garry

Hometown: Massachusetts & New York

Interviewed: Silver Springs, FL

- At a dealership in Liberty, NY Eric & Diane found a 2006 Allegro 34TGA with a GM V-8 engine on a Workhorse chassis.
- They have been together for seven years. They each have three children.
- They travel for six months in the winter and split the summer months between NY and the New England states.
- Travels include the southern US, & a San Francisco to Key West cross-country trip.
- Diane started tent camping for vacations around 2003 while Eric lived aboard a 36-ft. Carver aft-cabin motor yacht for two summers in Boston Harbor.
- They love the freedom to meet new people and make life simpler.
- Diane was a middle school counselor in Liberty, NY until retirement in 2012, while Eric worked in quality control in the paint and coating industry.
- Hobbies for both include kayaking, reading, eating out, hiking, and festivals in New Orleans.
- Diane does shelling, photography, wire-wrapped jewelry, and writing. Eric enjoys golf, fresh water fishing, and writing.
- For more information, you can find Diane’s blog at lovinusonline.com.
- Their bucket list includes Alaska, Utah, Northern California, Michigan, and Canada.



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 Best Year of Our Lives

It was January 1, 2005, when Jonny and I both officially retired, packed up our camping gear, and climbed into our brand new 35 ft. Allegro Bay built by Tiffin Motorhomes in Red Bay, Alabama. We named her *Serendipity* and thus began our trip traveling the periphery of the entire United States and the Maritime Provinces of Canada. The trip was the greatest experience of our lives.

We left our home in Montevallo, Alabama, and headed south through Mississippi and on to New Orleans, one of Jonny's favorite cities. We loved San Antonio and the hill country of Texas, southern New Mexico, and Arizona.

The scariest part of the trip happened when we arrived in California. We took Highway 1 which is right on the coast overlooking the beautiful Pacific Ocean. At times I thought we would slip off the edge of the highway and down into the ocean but what a beautiful drive it was. We spent about three weeks in California,

but we decided to bypass Los Angeles.

The coast of Oregon, Portland, the Columbia Gorge, and Mt. Hood territory were beautiful. Lots to see in Washington State as well as in Seattle, and the Olympic Peninsula. On a boat trip to Victoria, British Columbia, we visited the beautiful Butchart Gardens and had afternoon tea at the Empress Hotel.

From there we headed east on Highway 2 all the way across Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, making stops along the way. Highway 2 was the way to go because there was very little traffic compared to Interstate 95.

From Michigan we went through a little bit of Canada to get to Buffalo, New York and on to northern New York and the New England states which were gorgeous as well. I think the photo attached was taken in Maine.

We continued north to New Brunswick, Canada, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. From there we made it to a family

reunion in Boston. We then flew back to Alabama for previously arranged doctors' appointments and then back to Boston.

We traveled down the east coast, headed home through North Carolina, and stayed in a campground in western North Carolina that we liked so much we spent several more summers there in future years.

In addition to such an exciting great year of travel, Jonny and I were so grateful that the *Serendipity* brought us home safely with lots of happy memories to this day!

We continued to take shorter trips in the following years. Jonny passed away in 2016 and I sold our *Serendipity*. Keep up the outstanding work with the magazine and give my very best to Mr. Tiffin and his great company.

Barbara Williams,
Montevallo, Alabama

It Was Time to Sell the Allegro

We had the privilege of traveling from 1967 to 2011. At first we traveled on weekends and scheduled vacations and then went full-time when we retired from our jobs. We traveled the 48 states and Canada. Over the years we met a lot of folks who became friends, many with whom we still keep in touch. Colorado is our favorite state, but we saw a lot of beautiful places and parks and ate our share of a lot of good regional food.

We had to sell our last 2008 Allegro Open Road because of eye problems. We built a little cottage like our last camper. It's time to let someone else enjoy our copy of *Roughing It Smoothly*. We will always remember the good times we enjoyed in our Allegro. Thanks to Mr. Bob Tiffin and Tiffin Motorhomes. They are the best.

William & Bessie Ishee
Collinsville, Mississippi

South Texas Our Favorite Place

Since buying our 2012 Allegro Open Road in 2015, we have been to south



Barbara and Jonny Williams in Maine



Texas twice, Sevierville, Tennessee, Nova Scotia, and Red Bay. South Texas takes the cake for both deep water fishing and shore fishing off of South Padre Island. We stayed at Tropic Winds RV Resort in Harlingen. There is also good fresh water fishing not far from the resort, and hunting in this area is excellent. The resort has large lots and great activities that will keep you busy from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m.

Bill & Marilyn Woodside
Macedon, New York

Another Generation Gets into RVing

Max, our three-year-old grandson who is autistic, loves to sit down with *Roughing It Smoothly*. He picks out his favorite Tiffin motorhome in each issue. He then asks Grandpa to read to him and answer his many questions.

Max went on his first RV trip with Grandpa and Grandma in their Phaeton 40QKH. His task was unlocking and locking all the basement doors. He's also pretty good at giving Grandpa directions when lining up the tow car.

He sure enjoys the Phaeton and *Roughing It Smoothly*. Thanks, Tiffin, for helping another generation get into RVing.

Bill and Judy Lubben
Kirkwood, Missouri

Our Home Away From Home

We have been and camped in all of the states west of the Mississippi plus Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, and North Carolina. I am now 88 and have sold our 2002 Allegro 32 DA. It was a good home for us away from our real home. We will miss it but for safety's sake

we needed to quit. I love reading the magazine but it now needs to be passed on to the new owners.

Mr. & Mrs. Howard J. Frische
Blue Eye, Missouri

Tiffin Builds the Best Motorhome

My wife and I purchased a new 2016 Phaeton 40QBH. We absolutely love the motorhome! We own a large collision repair shop in New York state and repair a lot of damaged motorhomes during the summer. I can tell you that Tiffin builds the best motorhomes for sure.

We are not retired yet, so most of our travels are long weekends. Among our favorite destinations are the many wineries in the New York Finger Lakes region.

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**Fall 2017 Rally:
Salem, Oregon**

by Sally Moore

Early fall 2017 saw a steady stream of beautiful Tiffin coaches making their way to the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem, Oregon for our last rally of 2017. The fall foliage was just beginning to peak and with snow on the mountain-tops, it was a beautiful time of year. We hosted 300 coaches from across the USA and Canada for a week of fun, fellowship, and comradery. The weather was as close to perfect as one could expect! Crisp, cool mornings and sunny afternoons were delightful. B. Young RV brought several Tiffin coaches to show our owners and made many folks very happy by helping them move into the coach of their dreams. Thank you B. Young and all of your great staff for being a part of our rally.

Our volunteers came early to help the Tiffin staff get everything ready for the rally. *We love our volunteers!* They pay to come to the rally and then work hard all week to be sure everyone has a good time just as

they do! Our volunteers are fantastic!

As soon as coaches arrived, guests made their way to the Tiffin Store to stock up on the newest Tiffin swag and receive their agendas and welcome bag of gifts. Everyone gathered in the Jackman Long Building on Monday evening for a delicious meal followed by welcoming remarks by Bob Tiffin and Kelly Moore. We appreciate the support of Bob Tiffin, Tim Tiffin and the management from Tiffin Motorhomes for our rallies! Door prizes were awarded and everyone enjoyed a few games of Tiffin Allegro Bingo. We couldn't have bingo night without our official "Bingo Experts," Tom & Pat Webber! Prizes were awarded with much fun and laughter. All veterans were recognized and celebrated during the evening. We salute our veterans and thank you for your service to our nation!

Tuesday morning saw several of our energetic souls out for an early morning power walk around the fairgrounds to get the blood flowing before our big country breakfast. Immediately after breakfast, seminars on RV related topics were

held. Great topics that interested all RV owners were covered, such as convection microwave cooking, updating and understanding your navigation system, and deciphering the coach's electrical system. Onan generators and Freightliner chassis always have great participation at their seminars. Owners participated in a craft & hobby show Tuesday afternoon as well as a jack-o-lantern decorating contest. It's always interesting to see the crafts that RVers make while touring the country in their Tiffin coach.

Ice cream was enjoyed by everyone in the new coach display. This was a great opportunity to visit with one another and share travel experiences. Tuesday night we welcomed old friends of Bob and Judy Tiffin, Charles Suniga and the Angels. Charles was successful in bringing Bob to the stage for an Elvis impersonation complete with the famous sunglasses. Tim Tiffin, General Manager of Tiffin Motorhomes addressed the group Tuesday night. This was the first rally to be attended by Tim and Lynn Tiffin and we were delighted they came across country to be with us.



Wednesday morning saw our dedicated walkers out and about very early enjoying the beautiful sunrise again. Interesting seminars were held in the Jackman Long Building and Cascade Hall. Everyone gathered at noon for a tailgate buffet of delicious grilled burgers and hot dogs with all the trimmings.

Owners were invited to participate in our "Fall Harvest" site decoration contest. Lots of originality and thought went into this. We were treated to everything from a real, live scarecrow to crops grown in southern Alabama and a corn maze for old people! Tiffin Allegro gift certificates were awarded to the winners. Thanks to everyone who participated!

The Young Bucs treated us to a wonderful concert after dinner on Wednesday evening. This multi-talented group is from the Oregon coast area and performed many hits from the 50's & 60's.

On Thursday morning, everyone gathered in the Jackman Long Building for another delicious buffet breakfast followed by a morning of educational seminars.

Ice cream was enjoyed again Thursday afternoon while touring the beautiful Tiffin coaches one last time. B. Young was able to make several people's dream

come true! Folks gathered after lunch for a "Swap Meet." Owners were invited to bring any of their unwanted junk—I mean treasures! Others made their best deal to take the junk/treasures home with them!

Thursday evening brought an end to our festivities. After another delicious meal, more fantastic Tiffin door prizes and Red Bay stories by Kelly Moore, everyone enjoyed entertainment by Danny Vernon, Elvis tribute artist. Danny presented a fantastic show complete with scarves presented to many lucky ladies!

A special round of heartfelt thanks goes out to the hard working service technicians from Tiffin & B.Young RV. They are our unsung heroes and do a remarkable job of visiting each coach during the rally to perform minor repairs/adjustments to the coach. Hats off to them!!

Friday morning Tiffin friends hooked up the tow and headed on to their next destination. Whatever your plans, travel safely and we hope to see you at a Tiffin rally somewhere in the near future! The schedule for our upcoming rallies in 2018 has been announced and you can see it at TiffinSideroads.com. These rallies will sell out so make note of the on-sale date & time so you don't get left out. Happy trails!



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Tiffin Allegro Club 2018 Summer 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! (*For the most advanced notice of Tiffin rallies, be sure you have subscribed to our online newsletter, TiffinSideroads.com.*) 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 was originated by support from his consumers like you! The RV Founders Hall displays trailers, photos, and memorabilia reaching back to the 1920's and 1930's. The chronological and technological advancements in the RV industry are presented 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 for the studio 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 4-H 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 and water. A sewer hookup or one complimentary pump-out will also be available.** Wi-fi is available in some areas of the facility, but bandwidth will not allow movie or TV streaming. 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 technicians performing up to three minor repairs on your coaches. You have



made a sizeable investment in purchasing a beautiful motor coach. Take this valuable 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.

The cost for one coach and two adults is only \$479. (Coach with one adult is \$379.) Additional guests staying in the coach with you will be \$150 per person. **We began accepting reservations on Tuesday, January 9, 2018.** Our rallies sell out very quickly! Don't delay if you are interested in attending! ***The only way to register for the rally*** is online at Tiffinmotorhomes.com. The Registration Form will be removed when the rally is full. If the rally has sold out before you attempt to register, don't despair! Add your name to our waiting list and we will contact you if a space becomes available.

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. Call our office at 256-356-8522 if you have any questions.

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!

**TIFFIN ALLEGRO CLUB
FALL FOLIAGE RALLY
ESSEX JUNCTION, VERMONT
OCTOBER 1-5, 2018**

Mark your calendars now! The Tiffin rally in beautiful Essex Junction, Vermont will go on sale Tuesday, May 1, 2018 at 11:00 AM Central Daylight Time. This is a perfect time of the year to visit New England and enjoy the fall foliage. Details of the rally will be available closer to date, but this rally will follow our normal schedule. Coaches will arrive on Monday and depart on Friday. Days and evenings will be filled with meals, seminars, and entertainment! Save the dates!

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Happy Daze RV's Focus

MAKING YOU A CUSTOMER FOR LIFE

FRED LEMKE HAS BUILT A SUCCESSFUL CAREER by capitalizing on business opportunities, some of which go all the way back to his childhood. Today, with two locations for Happy Daze RV's in Sacramento and Livermore, California, Lemke depends on general manager Ronnie Raddigan, general sales manager Ralph Graves, sales manager Sam Slaughter, and finance manager Joel Perez to oversee and run the business. "Selecting key managers and brands is one of the main reasons we are successful today," Lemke said. "While through the years we have had several brands in each category of RVs, we decided when we became a Tiffin dealer in 2008 that they would be our only brand in Class A motorhomes."

Last year Happy Daze sold 84 Tiffins and ranked #7 in the top 10 Tiffin dealerships.

It was a good decision. Last year Happy Daze sold 84 Tiffins and ranked #7 in the top 10 Tiffin dealerships. Gross sales for 2017 will tip out around \$75 million for both stores, Lemke said.

"I started selling newspapers on a street corner in Santa Anna when I was eight. By the time I was 10, I was running a lawnmower business beyond the borders of my neighborhood," he related. "I began working for my dad in his RV rental business when I was 15. Less than a year after I started, he was injured in a serious car accident and was out for six months. I oversaw the operation even though part of that time I was in high school. Dad then established a dealership with manufactured housing where I began to learn a lot more about running a business."

Lemke finished high school in 1971 and enrolled at Fullerton State College with plans to major in business with a concentration in finance. "I wanted to be a banker," he said. But his first experience with banks pushed his future career in an entirely different direction.

"During the Recession of 1973-75, interest rates soared to 11 percent, money got tight, and banks that floor-planned dealers selling manufactured housing and recreational vehicles began calling their loans," he explained. "Although my dad had never missed a monthly payment, the bank cancelled his loan. Since he was held in high regard by his bankers, they asked him to

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

liquidate his own inventory. He handled the assignment quickly and was hired to liquidate other inventories."

Since the banks were aware of Lemke's experience in his dad's company, he was offered a position with Home Federal Savings & Loan. "From Friday to Monday, I closed failing RV and manufactured housing dealerships. After publication of their inventory, I did a liquidation sale and was paid everything over dealer cost

ship here on this very property where we are today (1199 El Camino Avenue)," he said. "I was 27 when I bought the dealership. During the first year we began adding RVs, towables at first, and later on, motorhomes. In 1983 we decided Sacramento was the right place for us and we sold the dealership in San Jose. In 1985 we bought the dirt. We stopped inventorying manufactured housing in 1986."

"We have always focused on repeat

ally well. Today, we have a fleet of 30 to 35 Class C's. If people get started with a rental and really get into RVing, they will usually become an owner. One guy who had rented from us for several years returned last summer for what I assumed would be another rental. I pulled out the rental agreement and he said, 'Nope, we decided to buy this time.'" The company keeps each unit in its rental fleet for 18 months, refurbishes it to look nearly new, and then sells it. Turning over the fleet regularly has created a clientele who anticipate the sell-off.

Lemke read *Raving Fans: A Revolutionary Approach to Customer Service* by Ken Blanchard a few years ago and came away with two key points. First, how much does it cost to establish a customer? And second, if a customer is really happy with his sales or service experience, he will tell two people. If he's not happy, he will tell 12.

"Blanchard's business philosophy was never far from my mind after I read his book," Lemke said. "After studying it, teaching it to our managers, and then applying it, we changed our approach to fixing problems. If there is any possibility the customer is right about a demand to fix a questionable situation or problem—even if it's something we may not have caused, we will take care of it. If it's wrong, we will make it right. If it should have been corrected in the past and we missed it, we will take care of it. If the customer is reasonable, we will do our best to make everyone whole again. We want our customers to be happy because we want to make customers for life. After all, RVing is about building good relationships. Blanchard's question was right to the point. Every business needs to know how much it costs to establish a customer. We have tried to align this company with RV manufacturers who are not going to resist taking care of problems because of their *primary* commitment to the profit factor," Lemke pressed.



Happy Daze Management team

Back, from left: Fred Lemke, Jeremy Johnson, Ronnie Raddigan, Sam Slaughter, Dave Casares. Front, from left: Cathy Lemke, Kathleen Dolan, Mark Ross, Joel Perez. Not shown, Ralph Graves.

for each unit I sold. As the economy continued its slide, I was closing a dealership every two to three weeks. I made it a point to talk to the dealers and learn what they had done wrong."

On May 5, 1974, while he was studying part-time for his business degree at San Jose State, Lemke opened a new manufactured housing dealership in San Jose when he was just 21 years old.

"In 1980 I moved to Sacramento and bought a manufactured housing dealer-

business and have developed a 35 to 40 percent repeat business every year," Lemke continued. "Some years ago, I sold one man a motorhome and recently I sold his son a fifth wheel. That's not unusual. Treating people fairly and providing good service is the best avenue for building a business and, of course, it's just the right thing to do."

Happy Daze RV's established itself in the greater Sacramento region in the eighties. "By 1989 we employed 20 and were selling everything across the recreational vehicle spectrum, including towables of all kinds, Class A's, and Class C's," he said. "In 1987 we got into the rental business which has gone re-



“In his brief acceptance speech for the ‘Titan of the Industry’ Award in Louisville last month, Bob Tiffin said, ‘Just remember, if you’re making a profit, you’ll never go broke,’” Lemke noted and then added his experience. “If you are making a profit, it gives you the ability to fix problems.

“We were so pleased when we signed an agreement in 2008 to become a Tiffin Motorhomes dealership. We wanted to represent Tiffin because they build a great product and take care of their owners,” Lemke said. “Everybody you take care of will be your customer tomorrow.

“It was around 2008 when we began to take a serious interest in the internet,” Lemke said. “When it first became popular, buyers shopped the internet and sent their specs to RV dealers requesting a bid as if they were a purchasing department. I decided we were not going to respond to that market. Dealers who seem to be desperate to make a sale will ‘bid’ \$1,500 over dealer cost. That hurts the industry by driving the selling price too low for dealers to be viable enough to grow their business and provide good service. Younger buyers shop dealer websites to learn and that’s good. We respond to questions about inventory the same day or by the next morning.”

Part of the company’s Five-Year-Plan is to find a new location. “Land is a precious commodity in this area,” he noted.

“We will grow the business at a controlled rate that will not jeopardize what we have accomplished. We expect a 15 percent growth in total sales in 2018.”

Happy Daze RV’s under Fred Lemke’s leadership has become one of the largest recreational vehicle dealers in California. He was one of the original founders of the California Recreational Vehicle Dealers Association (RVDA) and has served as the organization’s Treasurer and as a member of its Board of Directors. He has also served on the Board of Delegates for the National RVDA and as president of the Sacramento RVDA.

Ronnie Raddigan at 41 has already been with Happy Daze for over half of his life. Today he is the company’s general manager. “I grew up in Loomis in the foothills. With one year of experience out of high school when I applied for a job here, I started in the parts department where I spent 18 months as a parts driver and lot attendant. I paid attention and learned from everyone who would talk to me in each department.

“Fred Lemke gave me opportunities and direction, and a reason to work hard. This is the first job I had with challenges,” he said. The next 18 months Ronnie served as a service advisor, quite an advancement for a 20-year-old. Not surprisingly, he became the service manager at 22 where he began an upward climb through the com-

From left: Fred and Cathy Lemke ♦ Sales team Back, from left: Chris Hepworth; Sam Slaughter, sales manager; Keith Stovall; Marc McClure. Front, from left: Tim Courtney, Franceska Barker, Jeanette Tulloh. ♦ Sales team Back, from left: Roger Hurlow, Branden Kollmar, Steve Ognissanti. Front, from left: Ralph Graves, general sales manager; TJ Mahoney.

pany’s departments: parts & service director; finance department, assistance manager; sales manager; and finally in 2010, general manager. While Ronnie was working in parts & service and finance, he sold RVs on weekends and at shows.

“The 14 years of experience working in all of the company’s departments created a platform to work from when I became general manager,” he explained. “My job provides me with so many rewarding experiences. Just being a part of and watching this company grow during the last decade has been gratifying. Every day has its challenges. Logistics and organizational problem solving is a challenge. Probably the most rewarding experience is helping a frustrated owner figure out what is wrong with his RV, getting the people in place to take care of his problems, and sending him on his way satisfied and happy.”

When Ronnie first took on the mantle of general manager, he pushed his work week to 60+ hours. Then he and DeAnna expanded their family with a daughter and son. “About seven years ago, we start-



ed RVing,” he began. “Our first trip was to Disneyland in a motorhome with our daughter, Taryn, 4, and our son, Tyler, 2. It was one of our family’s greatest vacation experiences. It sold us on the importance of taking a family-oriented vacation

at least once a year if not more. We were so enthusiastic about it that we got my brother and his family into RVing.

“It took a couple of years, but I realized by improving my management skills and organization that my job could be

done in a 40-hour week,” he continued. “How can I give my kids a better life if I am not a part of their growing up? They are the reason why I do this.”

Ronnie also made a serious assessment of how he managed. “I would hire



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people and train them and then try to do their job for them if I thought they were not doing their job up to my standards,” he said. “Now I hire people who have the potential to become managers. We teach, supervise, advise, and correct. Employees take ownership, grow, and move forward in their careers. I learned ‘What’s the point of employing people if you try to do their jobs for them?’”

The Happy Daze sales department has 10 sales associates directed by general sales manager **Ralph Graves** and sales manager **Sam Slaughter**. “We organize our schedules to allow each sales associate to have at least two days off every week,” Ronnie said. “We bring everyone in on the weekends which are our busiest days. During weekdays we generally have five sales associates on duty with Ralph and Sam alternating to approve deals. Eighty percent of our sales team has five or more years of experience. When you sign on here, we want you to stay forever.”

With a total of 12 bays, the company’s

service department has three locations: the first is directly across the street at 1188 El Camino Ave.; the second is six blocks away at 1925 El Camino; and the third at the Livermore dealership, 91 miles away at 5605 Southfront Road in Livermore.

Ronnie defined the company’s service capabilities very simply with regard to Tiffin motorhomes. “We service everything that Tiffin adds to the chassis,” he said. Within an hour’s drive, chassis service is available for Freightliner, Spartan, Workhorse, and Ford.

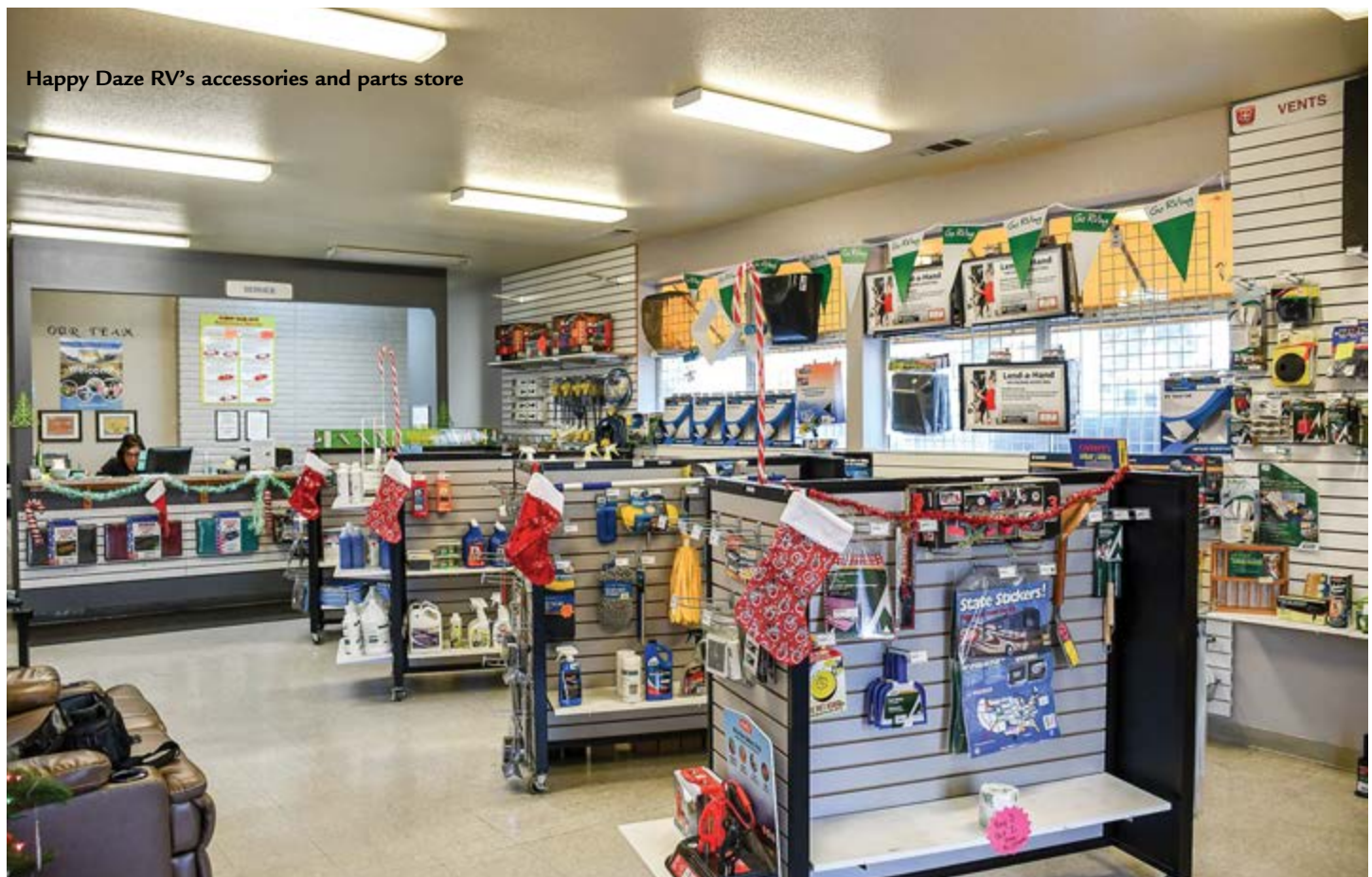
“We do not offer rehabs because they take so much time,” he said. “This area has a skilled manpower shortage. We do tile and window repairs as well as body work caused by accidents. Because the state regulates painting so stringently, we contract all exterior painting to companies that are state-certified to perform the work. We also contract out windshield replacements.”

To counteract the area’s labor shortage, Happy Daze is offering service tech

positions to employees in other departments. “By evaluating a person’s aptitude and interest, we expect to be successful in this program by doing our own training,” Ronnie said. “Members of our Spader 20-Group have found online training as well as mentoring to be very successful. When we see a person who *wants* to work, we will find a way for his or her career to grow. We want them to advance.”

Those who are already registered as RV technicians by state standards are now working on their Certified and Master Certified RVDA ratings. Several of the techs have specialties in electrical, heating and air, and plumbing repairs. Happy Daze sends its techs to component manufacturers such as Aqua-Hot, HWH, Lippert, and Dometic, as well as the training classes offered by RV manufacturers.

Happy Daze keeps its business office open seven days a week to close a deal and complete a purchase whenever it is convenient to the buyer. With 25 years of experience in automotive recreational vehicle



Happy Daze RV’s accessories and parts store

finance, **Joel Perez** joined the company in 2011 as finance manager soon after he was interviewed by Ronnie Raddigan. When Joel is away for two days each week, Sam Slaughter steps in to close deals.

“When we are developing a financing package for a buyer, we look at deal structure, the customer’s credit report, time of residency, and time on his present job,” Joel said. “We are seeing buyers today who could not get a loan four years ago because of a job modification or losing their home in the four-year recession. Lenders now are inviting a ‘credit rescoring’ that reevaluates the buyer’s present debt based on his ability to make regular payments on given segments of the total debt, but not a scheduled payoff on the buyer’s entire debt.”

For each deal structure, Happy Daze explores options with Bank of the West, Bank of America, Ally Financial, M&T, and credit unions. The minimum down is usually 10 percent with the age of the loan running 10 to 20 years. Happy Daze

does not offer an on-site insurance broker but suggests one they can recommend.

Joel’s following remarks were completely unprompted by my questions. “The overall camaraderie between the managers and Ronnie Raddigan, the company’s general manager, is really great. Our good work relationships develop into good friendships outside the store. We are a dream team here. Our offices are not in pretty buildings that some might consider essential to a good work place. There is no friction here. Everybody gets along and supports each other.

“Here the sales staff takes the time to go over the different types of RVs with the customer. They offer an education that I call RV101 to determine what the customer really wants and needs, and then they show him/her RVs within his/her ability to cover financially. When I was considering the offer to work here, at that time the major deciding factor was knowing that we would be selling Tiffin motorhomes. Now I also enjoy the job be-

cause of the people I am surrounded with. This is a very healthy work environment.”

From a manager’s perspective, Sam Slaughter gets to see both sides of the process of acquiring a recreational vehicle: selling/closing process and the financial process. “The more experienced sales associates on Tiffin motorhomes train the newer sales guys just getting started with us,” he began. “Ralph Graves, our general sales manager and my long-time friend, and I make each sale a sales training experience with the sales associate. We do not have any self-centered sales associates on our staff. We help each other.”

Sam and Ralph go back nearly 20 years. “We both worked for an RV dealer in Fresno who owned seven stores with Fleetwood franchises,” Sam said. “I also worked for the dealer’s health club while I was attending classes at Fresno State to become a corporate accountant. After graduation, I took a position with a dealership in Rocklin for two years, after which I moved to the dealership where

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Ralph had taken a new position. When the recession hit, I left the RV industry and began flipping houses while Ralph remained in the RV industry.

"I considered looking for a position in corporate accounting, but then I remembered what one of my teachers said to me after class one day. 'Sam, you have too much sparkle in your eyes to be an accountant,'" he related with a smile. Almost serendipitously, Ralph called in 2012 and offered Sam a sales position with Happy Daze RV's where he had become the general sales manager.

"We know that people *want* an RV, but there are very few who *need* an RV," Sam continued. "Ralph and I understand that and have built our approach to selling and training around that fact. You are not selling an RV to take care of a need; you are helping people fulfill a dream of enjoying recreation in our great outdoors. Every day is different. You are helping people do something they have always wanted to do. That's why I enjoy this job so much." Sam is married to Gabriella, a speech therapist. They have two children, Jacob, 3, and James, 1.

Ralph Graves began his RV career in 2003. "Sam helped me get my first sales job at a Fresno dealership and we worked together in the finance department. When I'm on my two-day breaks, Sam covers for me as the sales manager," Ralph said.

"The core of this company is built around Fred Lemke's values," Ralph said. "He is conservative in his management philosophy, but he allows us to do our jobs without his micromanaging in any way. He believes in family time. Joel, Sam, and I are cross trained on each other's jobs to allow us to keep our work week to five days even though the company is open seven days a week.

"When people buy an RV, they want to buy a relationship," Ralph said as he pushed hard on this point. "Many stores sell product and then leave the new owner on his own when a problem arises. Happy Daze sells an RV to a family who loves the outdoors and then becomes a support team to keep them enjoying it throughout the year. There are core values here.

I believe in having a *genuine* relationship with every family. I want our associates to be able to greet them by their names when they stop by for supplies or come in for service. We need to know where they went on their last camping trip and what they did for recreation. Good products, good staff, and good service."

The company takes a strong position regarding its service capabilities. "We have a lot of very good sub-contractors that we use and stand behind," Ralph said. "We cultivate those relationships so that we stand first in line when we need them to provide the extra service skills to keep our customers rolling. Our service team can service and repair everything Tiffin puts on the chassis except the engine and the generator."

"We are slow to hire and long to keep," Ralph notes. "Our team realizes the timing of sales service is very important. We follow-up with our new owners soon after the sale. We don't wait for them to call us with questions and problems. We want to know how they are doing with their new dream. To be blessed with the right products and manufacturers makes that job easier. I really like the fact that Tiffin Motorhomes is a family-owned RV manufacturer. We both can talk to the president and CEO. Bob Tiffin has set the benchmark for empowering the customer to pick up the phone and talk to the owner. Many of our owners have gone to Red Bay to see their coaches built. It is a little embarrassing when they come back with hundreds of pictures of their coaches being built and have more product knowledge than our guys. The employees at the factory are so welcoming and willing to explain what they are doing."

Ralph is proud of how well the sales team knows their inventory, so well in fact that they can pick the three best units to show a customer after they do an interview to understand needs, financial ability, family members involved, and camping lifestyle.

"Tiffin's reps do a great job teaching here at our store and conducting factory tours for us in Red Bay," Ralph said. "A sales associate cannot sell a Tiffin at this

store until he or she has been to Red Bay for factory training."

From the conversations I had with some of the sales associates at Happy Daze, I believe our readers will gain a perspective about the company and valuable insights on how they serve their customers.

Tim Courtney's sales career spans 35 years, a part of which was selling for Mercedes-Benz in Modesto. After several years with another RV dealership, he moved to Happy Daze. "We have such good products here with Tiffin motorhomes and Grand Design fifth wheels. We are selling the top brands in the market in those two categories," he said. "We can sell with enthusiasm because we know who has got our back. After we share our product knowledge with prospective customers, they learn the right questions to ask at other dealerships. Eighty percent of those to whom we make a demo come back and buy here."

Franceska Barker has been selling RVs for 14 years. "We had an outdoor lifestyle when I was growing up," she said. "While I was at Home Depot shopping, I struck up a conversation with a lady who told me I had the personality to sell RVs. I was a stay-at-home mom 'til I was 26. I love interacting with people and educating them about RVing. Many people don't know what they want when they visit Happy Daze. I am brutally honest about each unit I show them. I like the 33AA Allegro RED, but I love the gas line best. I sell more of the 32SA in the Allegro Open Road brand." This year Franceska sold 142 units, 40 of which were motorhomes.

Mark McClure joined the sales department last August. His past experience includes 27 years in general retail sales and four years in RV sales. "Ralph had an opening here in 2016. I was interviewed and offered the job, but decided to stay in that position out of loyalty to that company. Ralph offered me the job again and I am glad I got a second chance," Mark said. "I spent five days in sales training in Red Bay in September and also got to see the paint plant and the new Wayfarer assembly plant. Brian Granlund did a great job conducting the training and tours. I learned so much going through the fac-

tory. When I returned to Happy Daze, I took a 2014 Allegro gas unit in on a trade for a new Allegro Bus. The trade-in sold the same day it came in.”

Chris Hepworth has seven years’ experience in RV sales and 15 years in boating. “We are successful here at Happy Daze because of our management,” Chris said. “They do exactly what they say they will do. Tiffin has the customer’s back. After visiting the assembly plant in September and meeting Bob Tiffin, I am confident that what I say about Tiffin will be backed up by the company. It’s a quality product. I have sold 10 to 15 Tiffins every year since we became a Tiffin dealer. I grew up camping with my parents. We camped with our four girls and now with our two grandchildren.”

After **Keith Stovall** got out of the U.S. Coast Guard, he went into automotive sales. The last 10 years he sold for three RV dealerships before joining Happy Daze in mid-2017. “I sell across all of our brands. I went with Mark in September

to see Tiffin’s full operation. Impressive! I sold three Tiffins in 2017. The fact that TMH is so family-oriented and you can pick up the phone and talk to the owner. I don’t think that happens anywhere else in the RV industry.”

Marketing and sales must be closely linked departmentally. Ralph recognized a weak spot in the company’s marketing support provided by the Happy Daze website. “We had a time lag in getting our new inventory and recently acquired trade-ins up on our website because we were outsourcing our online marketing to a nearby company,” Ralph said. “It was also very expensive.”

After the decision was made in December 2016 to bring the daily website maintenance in-house, Ralph called **Jeanette Tulloh** to see if she might be interested in the newly created position. Her resume revealed she had a degree in computer science and web development and a minor in marketing.

“I was doing the same job for another

RV dealership here in California,” Jeanette said. “I was interviewed and offered the job two weeks later. I had the experience to start immediately.” The synergy was perfect and Jeanette accepted the offer. She brought everything in-house, making market planning and execution much faster and cost effective.

When new units arrive, the information about each RV is populated to the IDS computer system by Lauren Wilson. Sam Slaughter and Ralph Graves assign pricing. Jeanette does 15 to 30 interior and exterior images and posts them with the data file. It all happens within a few hours. “We often receive client responses the same day,” Jeanette noted. “I also post to Facebook and Twitter as well as ‘RV Tips’ and other blogs we run in connection to our website.”

Jeremy Johnson, the parts and service manager, began his career in the RV industry with Workhorse chassis and came to Happy Daze in 2004. After serving as the service manager for three years, he

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Service Team Standing, from left: Jeremy Johnson, Chris Liles, John Vasques, Preston Friend, Rutger Miller, Dave Casares, Frank Springer. **Kneeling, from left:** Melissa Swink, Gavin Gosz, Mo Sharess, Brian Hahner, Dennis Thompson, Amanda Rowett, Abdul Ali, Crystal Hale, Wesley Sarantis. ♦ **Located across the street from the sales center, the Happy Daze service center houses six bays, the accessories and parts store, and offices.** ♦ **PDI Team Back, from left:** Ben Rowett, George Coons, Kionte Olivia, Jermaine McKinnie, Mark Ross. **Front, from left:** Jose Cruz, James Corwin, Cosme Gomez, Richard Jackson.



the owner's plans for travel by integrating into our shop schedule as quickly as possible the anticipated time required for his work order."

The service advisor goes over the work order with the shop foreman who assigns technicians with the skills needed to successfully repair the coach. When the work order is completed, the service advisor goes over the repairs with the shop foreman, checking the quality of the work and the correctness of the repair. When the owner comes to get his RV, the service advisor will go over each point on the work order with the owner to check the quality of the work and the correctness of the repair.

The company's store for accessories, aftermarket components, and over-the-counter parts is run by *David Caseras* who has a staff of four to assist owners in finding what they need or placing orders if items are not in stock. The parts department for the service center is supervised by *Dennis Thompson*, a veteran with 15 years of experience in the RV parts field. He is assisted by special order clerk *Crystal Hale* and retail counter clerk *Chris Lyles*.

At 1925 El Camino Avenue, six blocks from the service center, **Mark Ross** oversees eight in the delivery center and reports to Jeremy Johnson. Once a unit is sold, pre-owned or new, it goes to the delivery center to make sure everything functions properly and safely.

"We have four PDI technicians, three detailers who wash and clean the RVs, and two in the office who process the records and receive the new owners who are taking delivery," Mark explained. "Three of

accepted a service position with Johnnie Walker RV in Las Vegas. "I worked on the service desk as a service writer and was introduced to Tiffin motorhomes," he said. "I later became the service manager.

"I was pleasantly surprised last year when I received a call from Ronnie Raddigan to see if I was interested in making a change," Jeremy said. "Knowing they had Tiffin, I wanted to come back. I also returned because I have a loyalty to Ronnie. He is a man of his word as is Fred Lemke. Both have high character and everyone can depend on what they say. You know where they stand at all times."

Jeremy supervises a staff of 25 in the service and delivery centers. Just across the street from sales and administration, the service center at 1188 El Camino Avenue employs 13 technicians, two service advisers, a shop foreman, and a warranty

clerk. The two service advisers, *Melissa Swink* and *Abdul Ali*, work closely with the shop foreman, *Joe Grover*, who also serves as assistant service manager. The department has three technicians who were factory-trained at Tiffin's service center plus seven techs who have specialties. Happy Daze sends two new techs each year to TMH for training.

"We encourage owners to call and discuss their repair list with a service advisor before they arrive in their RV," Jeremy said. "This allows us to go over their concerns carefully and base the appointment on the allocated hours that were estimated during the call. We use the IDS software to turn the appointment into a work order after we do a walk-through of the interior and exterior, marking each repair location with tape and creating a written record. We try to accommodate



the PDI techs train the owners to use their motorhomes, trailers, or fifth wheels in addition to checking out the operation of each unit and prepping it. There is no cap on the amount of time that we spend with a new owner,” Mark said. “We try to work on an owner’s schedule. We can schedule training on towables every two hours. With a motorhome it may take three hours or an entire day. When a new owner leaves the delivery center, he receives contact numbers. If he or she has a problem, we want to be the first call they make. We often continue training by phone.

“Sacramento Truck Center does our safety inspections for pre-owned diesel motorhomes. They are also certified to do our chassis inspections and warranty work. Another company does the safety inspections on gas motorhomes. Happy Daze has its own check list,” Mark said. “We will take however long is needed to put the unit in good condition.”


The delivery center does its own safety inspections on towables. “We do a full axle service—pull the bearing out, repack, and reinstall,” Mark continued. “Tires are checked for age and wear. If they are five years beyond the manufacturing date, they are replaced regardless of the tread wear. Brakes are checked at the same time. Less than 50 percent lining, we replace them. All driveables get full fluid

service and all filters. All brake work is done in-house.”

Mark has been with Happy Daze two years. “There is a big emphasis here at Happy Daze on safety. The company advertised for an experienced manager because they are expecting to expand the delivery center. As you get larger, you have to install standard procedures and policies to make sure everything is done correctly. Motorhomes and towables have very specific but different checklists.”

The delivery center has an accessories and consumables store to supply new RVers with the items they need to get started.

“I enjoy my job very much. It is very rewarding for me to assure our owners are pleased. I do a departure interview with each owner to be sure they are satisfied,” he said. Mark is planning to get into RVing himself. He has four grandchildren, ages 8, 9, 12, and 13, and is looking forward to taking them camping at Bodega Bay.

Departure interviews are certainly not the end of RVing relationships between Happy Daze and new owners when they drive off into the sunset. Fred Lemke years ago made Ken Blanchard’s philosophy a core value at his company. Without exception, the employees want every customer to become a “customer for life” and give at least two more RVers a reason to do business at Happy Daze. 



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Paul Williams

PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR, CARGO DOOR PLANT

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

With 22 combined years of service at Tiffin Motorhomes, Paul Williams, 51, accepted an offer in August from Tim Tiffin, the company's general manager, to become the production supervisor at the cargo door plant. Paul may have the record for working in the most departments at TMH, but one thing is for sure: he has a lot of experience.

Like many teenagers in Red Bay, Paul spent two summers working at Tiffin while he was in high school, first assembling valances and later working in the final prep area. Intermittently, he spent a year on the assembly line and several months building slide-outs.

In 2000 Paul moved to the receiving warehouse to work with supervisor Charles Inman. "We received incoming shipments for the assembly line," Paul said. "Each item was tagged for inventory and stored. At the right point on the schedule, it would be delivered to the correct station on the assembly line. We were building eight motorhomes a day when I accepted a new position in 2002 to move to the purchasing department. Since I had a wide familiarity with many of the parts and components used in building our motorhomes, the transition to purchasing was not difficult."

The Williamses found a calm moment for a family picture on their front porch. *From left:* Leah, Sarah, Eliza, Luke, Jessica, and Paul. ♦ Things were not so calm a year and half ago when they rafted the Ocoee River.



Working with Greg Thorn, purchasing director, Paul supervised the purchase of electronics, windows, and lighting fixtures. "Really, in many ways, purchasing is a parts management job," Paul explained. "I kept track of over 500 parts used in the construction of our motorhomes. I really enjoyed the job because I learned the business skills of negotiating pricing, terms, and delivery times.

"When the IT department installed SAP in 2007, the software really changed the nature of how we did procurement," he said. "We loaded *every* part it takes to build each motorhome into the procurement software. When an order to build a motorhome is entered into the system, the program checks inventory and determines if we have everything in place to build that unit. As build orders continue to be entered, the software combines all of the same part numbers and the schedules for getting those parts to the assembly line. Based on the supplier's order fulfillment and delivery times to the Tiffin plant for each item, the software posts the purchase orders each day for the procurement person to approve. In addition to negotiating contracts and pricing, a significant part of my job focused on developing solid relationships with our vendors."

After 15 years in the purchasing department, Tim asked Paul in July of last year if he would be interested in managing the cargo door plant. "I gave the offer a lot of consideration. I knew



it would be a big step in my career with Tiffin since I had never supervised the work of other employees. This would be a step of zero to 33,” Paul laughed. “I anticipated more stress in overseeing the quality and accuracy of the parts manufactured as well as completing on schedule the parts for 13 Class A and three Class C units per day! I brought with me the job of purchasing most of the raw materials.”

The 45,000 sq.ft. cargo door plant is divided into two sections. The east side of the plant houses the two CNC flatbed lasers that make multiple cuts on 60 x 120-inch sheets of aluminum and steel. In the west side of the plant, technicians working at individual tables and on an assembly line put the double-sided insulated doors together. The laser department produces 11,251 parts every week for the Red Bay assembly plant and over 1,000 parts weekly for the Wayfarer plant in Winfield.

“I had several concerns when I accepted the challenge of supervising the cargo door plant,” Paul said. “First, some of my best friends are in purchasing. Having been there for 15 years, I felt like I was part of a family. I was also concerned this job might turn out to be more than I had bargained for. I thought it would be more pressure to be produce parts for the assembly line in the ‘just-in-time’ environment. My greatest concern



While he was in school at the University of North Alabama, Paul studied and worked with Robert Elser, an artist who created stained glass windows for churches. For his own satisfaction, Paul created the double headed dragon shown above in crimson stained glass.

is knowing these jobs are part of the lives of each person. I want to manage in such a way to put employees in a position to be successful. And I hope to bring everyone together so that we feel like a family helping each other. We should want to have each other’s back.”

Obstacles have been few, he noted. The flu swept through the plant recently and took out four employees at the same time in both departments. The plant’s two lead men juggled their jobs and doubled up. Anticipating the need for more production in the cargo door plant in the near future, Paul is developing a training program for a second shift.

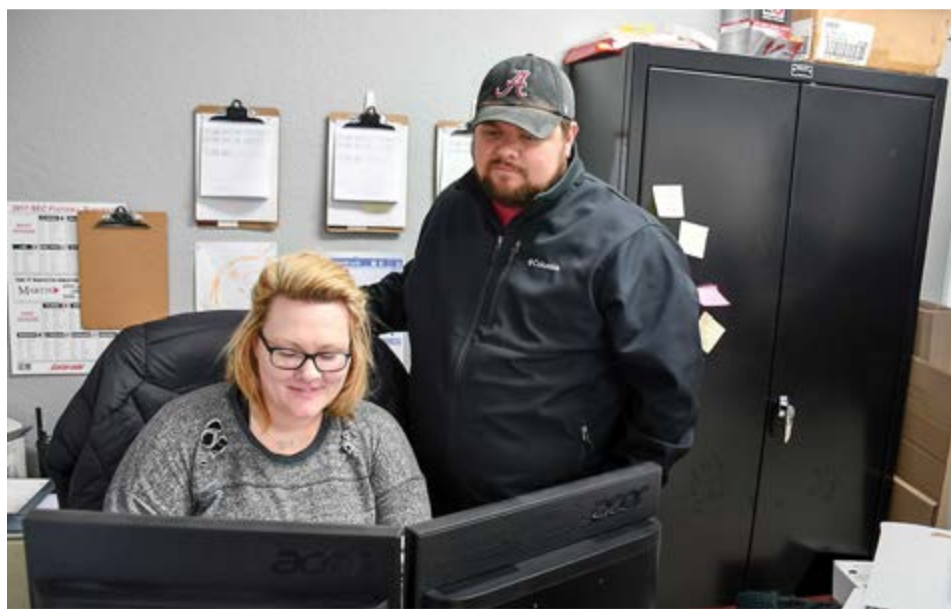
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As most of our readers know, Red Bay is a very small town—four red lights. The old cliché “everybody knows everybody” is not far from the truth. In fact, everybody knows you, your parents, and your grandparents—maybe even your great-

Counterclockwise from top: Hugh Bates is the lead man in the door department. He works with Paul to oversee the assembling of the cargo doors and other components. His broad experience allows him to fill in at any position when a production employee is absent. ♦ Jordan Hester, materials handler, works with Derek McCollum to verify data in the cargo door planning office. Using SAP software, Jordan controls the movement, storage, and distribution of all materials in the plant that are used in production. She is also responsible for distributing schedules and other documents to production personnel. ♦ Derek McCollum is the engineering programmer for the cargo door plant’s fiber optic Trumf TruLaser, a flat-bed system that is used to laser-cut door parts efficiently from large sheets of aluminum and steel. He is conferring here with Paul on the implementation of a new cargo door. After leaving Tiffin to attend college in 2007, Derek returned in 2015 with a degree in linear design and drafting technology. ♦ Ashley Rhodes is the lead man in the laser department. In addition to working with Paul to oversee the flow of work, he handles the movement of flat, raw materials to manufacturing points.



grandparents. If you've been to Red Bay, you may have had lunch at Back Street BBQ (it's closed now). When you placed your order at the counter, you walked down a narrow hall to several small dining rooms. On my first visit, I thought, "how neat to have these little individual dining rooms, each decorated differently." On the next visit for BBQ, I learned those little dining rooms were the examining rooms for Dr. Dempsey's Clinic and the order counter/kitchen area was the doctor's office and reception area. I tell this story because this is where Paul Williams was born. There was no hospital in Red Bay in those years.

"I was born just two blocks away from my home," Paul smiled. "Dr. Walker Dempsey delivered most of the kids in my generation. My mother is an RN who worked for Dr. Dempsey and in later years helped him start the Red Bay Hospital."

Jane and Johnny Williams made sure Paul had plenty of opportunities to work. "Dad farmed 1,200 acres here in the county—horses and cattle, corn and soybeans," Paul explained. "I worked on the farm with dad whenever he needed me."

Paul attended Red Bay schools from the first through twelfth grades. During his four years in high school, he participated in band, basketball, and football in his senior year. "In extra-curricular activities, I was interested in art and music," he said. "My art in charcoal and acrylics went to Montgomery for statewide competitions."

Paul enrolled at the University of North Alabama in Florence. "I attended UNA because they offered a degree in commercial music, an academic program that was linked to the recording studios in nearby Muscle Shoals," he explained. "I met Tom Mimms, a professor in the art school who was a contemporary abstract artist. I took two classes with him, got excited about fine arts, and changed my major. I just really fell in love with painting. I earned a degree in fine arts in 1991."

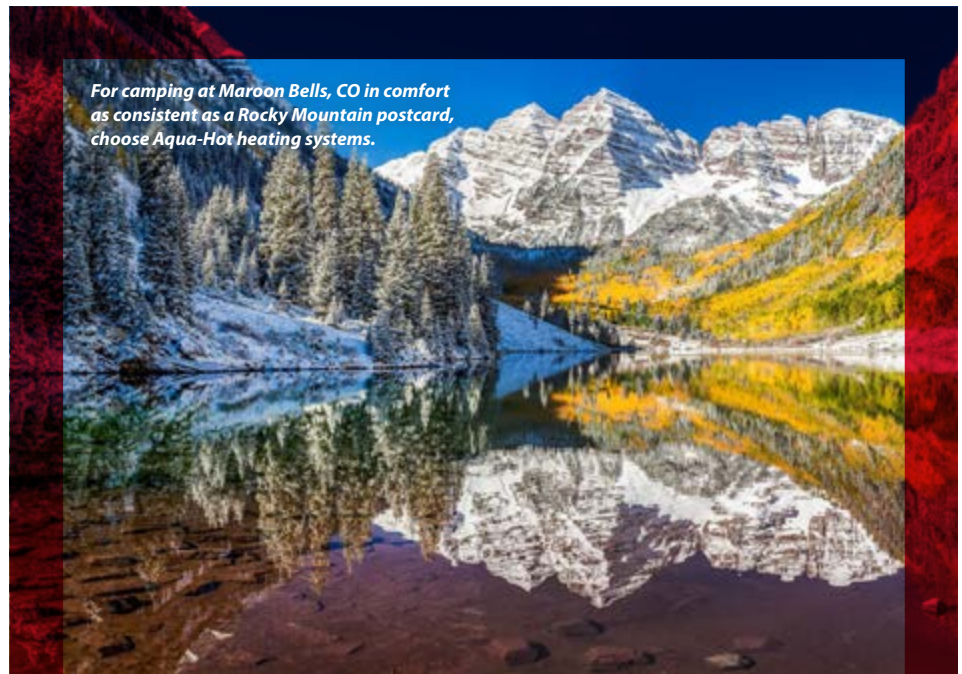
While studying at UNA, Paul worked as the morning clerk at UPS where he met custodian Robert Elser whose passion was stained glass. "He invited me to

visit his shop in Center Star, a small town not far from Florence," Paul said. "I was hooked. Over the next two years, I worked with Bob creating stained glass windows for churches."

In 1992 Paul entered graduate school at the University of Alabama to study for a master's degree in fine arts. "To make it happen financially, I worked as a graduate assistant for two professors, in addition to bartending and waiting tables at a Quincy's Steakhouse."

One day an attractive young woman from Barre, Vermont came into Quincy's to apply for a job. Jessica Woodward's sister Laura lived in Northport, a Tuscaloosa suburb, and had a new baby. Jessica had come to help her and to study English and journalism at the university. "We met, became good friends, started dating, and married in 1996," Paul said. "In December 1998 when she was almost finished with her program for a bachelor's

Continued on page 80



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The Winter Beaches in Florida's Panhandle



Text and photography by Fred Thompson

Having spent over half of my life in Georgia, I thought of the east and west coasts of Florida when someone began discussing where they planned to go for a beach vacation. It was usually St. Augustine, Daytona, Fort Lauderdale—most of us never got to Miami Beach; on the west coast, it was Clearwater, Sarasota, Sanibel and Captiva Islands. And it wasn't like the Florida beaches were the only place we went for vacations. The North Georgia mountains and the Smokies were also our vacation destinations.

About 20 years ago, one of my first cousins and her husband began vacationing in Destin in a beautiful beachfront home owned by some of her mother's kinfolks. My nephew picked Destin several times for a Thompson family reunion in an eight bedroom house close to the beach that he rented for the clan the week after Christmas. Another cousin, a Fedex pilot, bought a place in Destin, and years later his brother moved there, too.

After we attended the reunion and did a couple of brief vacations to the Panhandle, it dawned on me what we had been missing. Some of the most beautiful beaches in the U.S., even the world, are here in Florida's "handle." This story is the result of a trip in a Phaeton late last Fall.

A little research revealed that Grayton Beach State Park was usually in Dr. Beach's "Top 10 Beaches in the U.S." So who is this "Dr. Beach" fellow, I wondered. Was he the figment of the imagination of a zealous promoter in Florida's Department of Tourism? Not at all. Dr. Stephen P. Leatherman is professor and director of the Laboratory for Coastal Research at Florida International University. He received his Ph.D. in Environmental

(Coastal) Sciences from the University of Virginia. His career includes tenures at the universities of Maryland, Massachusetts, and Boston, and authoring 16 books. He also developed a 50-point criteria for evaluating beaches. That got my attention.

During one of our previous trips to the Panhandle, we picked up a copy of the guidebook to Florida State Parks and learned the Florida Park Service was the nation's only three-time winner of the prestigious National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in the management of state park systems. No other state park system has won twice. The National Recreation and Park Association in partnership with the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration presented the award at the NRPA's Annual Congress and Exposition in Houston in October 2013. State park systems cannot apply for the award within five years of receiving a Gold Medal.

With that information, I decided to focus our beach story on the four beaches in the Panhandle's state parks that could accommodate Class A motorhomes: Henderson Beach SP, Topsail Hill Preserve SP, Grayton Beach SP, and St. Andrews SP. When I scanned availability at ReserveAmerica.com, I discovered the four state parks operate at near capacity year-round. Reservations in the winter months are an absolute necessity unless you want to depend on your luck to find a cancellation or an early departure. Unless the area is hit by a severe cold front, as it was in mid-January of this year, the temperatures are very pleasant November through February. Using Panama City as a mid-point on the coastal trip, I checked the low-high temps for the four months: Nov(51-73), Dec(44-65), Jan(42-63), and Feb(46-66).

About the Dunes, Sugar White Beaches, & Emerald Green Water

THE WIDE BORDER OF DUNES found on the beaches in the Florida Panhandle is strictly off-limits to walking, hiking, or exploring. The prevention of beach erosion is largely dependent on the maintenance and survival of the dunes. To that end, the Florida Parks System constructed well-designed boardwalks to transport visitors across the dunes and made them fully ADA accessible. To help our readers better understand the importance of Florida's coastal ecology and the importance of dunes, I am inserting the next three paragraphs from *Native Plants for Coastal Dune Restoration* by M. J. Williams, a plant materials specialist with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Beaches form when offshore sand deposits are moved landward by wave action usually during the spring and summer. Sand, which is stirred up as the wave breaks on the shore, drops out of suspension as the water moves up the beach face. Thus the beach becomes gradually higher, wider, and steeper. In the wintertime, larger, higher energy waves associated with winter storms overflow the beach area and stir up the sand deposited earlier in the year. The sand is pulled off the beach as the wave recedes and is deposited in an offshore sand bar. If these two forces are in equilibrium, the beach area will be stable from year to year. However, naturally occurring factors such as storm events, littoral drift (lateral movement of sand because waves approach the beach at an angle), and offshore winds upset this equilibrium and result in the ever shifting nature of the beach environment.

Dunes form because of offshore wind action on beach sand. When wind speeds are sufficient (at least 10-12 mph), individual grains of sand start to roll and bounce along the surface. The windborne sand is transported landward until the wind speed drops below that needed to move the sand. Stems and leaves of coastal vegetation are critical for slowing wind and causing sand to be deposited. Where limited development has occurred, well-vegetated foredune ridges can reach 20 feet above sea level.

These newly formed dunes will be relatively stable under normal tidal conditions, but may be completely eroded away in storm events. Thus, one of the major functions of coastal dunes is to serve as a reservoir of sand for the beach. (The following paragraph is excerpted, not quoted.)

Coastal dunes generally have three vegetation zones. Just past the highest tides, the *frontal zone* of the dunes is stabilized by the sand trapping action of rhizomatous grasses and low growing forbs that are tolerant of salt spray. Trough areas and additional inland dunes may fall in the frontal zone area. Continuing past the frontal zone, the *backdune zone* supports less



salt tolerant grasses and forbs plus shrubs and dwarfed trees. The *forest zone* is the vegetation zone farthest from the ocean. The vegetation in this zone transitions from maritime to non-maritime plants. Marsh and grassy areas (and occasionally small lakes, but rarely) occur between the backdune and forest zone.

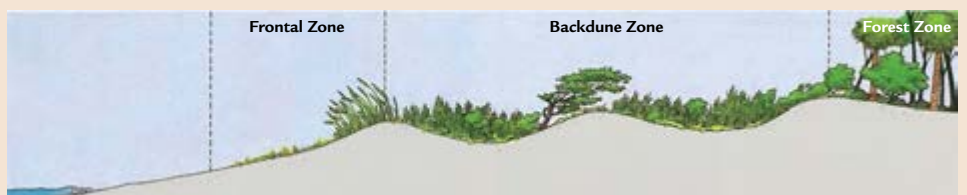
When crossing from the scrub and forest areas to the beach, visitors may overlook the fascinating ecology of the dunes and wonder why walking through them is not permitted. As you visit the beaches in this article, see if you can identify the zones. When dunes are destroyed, beach erosion is inevitable.

Two questions are invariably asked by first time visitors:

Why is the sand so white? Collecting water from many tributaries that drain the southern Appalachians, the Chattahoochee River flows in a southwesterly direction across Georgia until it turns due south to become the Georgia-Alabama border. Near the Florida border, the confluence of the Chattahoochee and the Flint forms the beginning of the Apalachicola River that flows into the Gulf of Mexico. The Chattahoochee carries the ancient Appalachian quartz grains washed from the mountains and grinds it into ever finer particles that lose their color as they mix with gypsum. The Apalachicola River takes over and pushes the fine particles into the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf's currents over millions of years have distributed the quartz sand along the beaches of the Panhandle.

What creates the emerald color of the Gulf? The emerald green color is caused by sunlight reflecting off of harmless microalgae floating over the white sand in the shallow waters near the beach. Other rivers flowing into the Gulf east and west of the Apalachicola fortunately do not carry any discoloring sediment.

This cross section is representative of many coastal dunes. There is much variation, however, in the shape and elevation of the dunes and width of the vegetation zone.



Henderson Beach State Park



WE CHECKED IN AT HENDERSON BEACH on November 7, with plans to spend the next 11 days enjoying the Panhandle's sugar white sand beaches. As we left US 19 and approached the check-in station, it was like entering an oasis. The building and noise melted into the background and "the real Florida" opened up—just like the sign says. The campground has four loops, each with 15 sites—36 back-ins and 24 pull-thrus. We found our site on Loop C and were surprised to see a 2009 Allegro Bus on the site across the street.

There are five ADA sites with concrete pads and paths to the roads. All sites have water and 50/30 amp service, ground grills, clothesline posts, and a picnic table. There are no individual sewer connections at campsites. The loops are connected to a single exit road where we found the dump station. There are two central bathhouses, one between Loops A & B and another between C & D. They are spotless and each facility has a family restroom and a laundry room. We found no problem with using the restrooms and showers, making it unnecessary to visit the dump station during a longer stay. Rate is \$30/night.

If you are a bicyclist, bring your bike. Bicycles are the most convenient transportation and it seemed like everyone had one, except us! It's really the best way to get to the beach where there are parking racks. There are several really nice pavilions for picnicking. One pavilion has restrooms, vending machines, and outdoor showers to wash away the sand when you return from adventures on the beach.

Although the length of the nature trail is only $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile, identi-

fying the native plants in this setting known as "Coastal Scrub" could take the better part of a day. You can see the dramatic effects that wind and salt spray have on the growth and appearance of sand pine. Surrounded by the city of Destin, the park preserves the natural environment of more than 200 acres along the Gulf Coast. This coastal ecology existed for eons before the arrival of the Europeans. Be sure to ask for the nature trail brochure.

Although Carolyn prepares most of our meals in the Phaeton while we are traveling to produce the magazine, we do want to recommend Harbor Docks, a moderately priced seafood restaurant introduced to us by Charlie Thompson, my cousin. The restaurant is located in Destin near the docks where the fishing boats return to unload the day's catch. You can't get much fresher than that.





Henderson Beach State Park is surrounded by the city of Destin as it continues to protect a 200-acre oasis of natural environment. The park has maintained pristine beaches where you can enjoy a great Florida experience. ♦ *At left*, beachgoers can wash away the sand with three well-designed showers. ♦ *From the top*, the image shows the frontal and part of the back dune section of the protective mound that prevents beach erosion. ♦ The campsites have excellent separation with natural Florida vegetation. ♦ Florida has spent generously on picnic pavilions and bath houses.

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WITH GREAT CONCERN for the ongoing preservation of over 2.5 square miles of one of Florida's unique natural environments, the state of Florida purchased Topsail Hill Preserve State Park from an RV resort company in 1991. The 1,640-acre preserve encompasses rare dune lakes, longleaf pine forests, unique sand pine scrub, maritime hammocks, and a variety of wetlands.

Today the park garners reviews and ratings that place it in the top one percent of all resort parks in the U.S. The white quartz sand beaches attract those who want to fish, swim, and sunbathe. While we were there in November, the beach was never crowded and visitors were enjoying all three activities. Fishermen can expect to catch sea bass, bream, and panfish. Three coastal dune lakes provide freshwater fishing. Both in-state and out-of-state fishing licenses (as they apply) are required. Fishing near the shoreline in kayaks or boats is not allowed.

The park's 3.2 miles of powdery pristine beach are perfect for jogging, hiking, or just leisurely beachcombing. The dunes here rise as high as 25 feet above sea level, perhaps a record along Florida's beaches. The Morris Lake Natural Trail took us through a variety of wetlands, old growth longleaf pines, and scrubby pine. If you compare this trail or the beach trail to hiking in the Appalachians (where we have done most of our hiking), you may conclude the area is really not very pretty. It was an adjustment, but we soon realized that this ecology has a beauty all its own. The path to the beach runs eight-tenths of a mile beside the paved beach tram road that originates in the day use parking area. Most bike riders use the paved road. The tram to the beach runs frequently from 9 a.m. until sunset. You can ride, walk, or bike.

If you are not a regular hiker, this is a good place to get started since you are not going to find any strenuous hills to climb. The extensive trail system at Topsail Hill offers 11 miles of loops through pine flatwoods, scrub, and coastal dunes around Morris Lake and Campbell Lake. "Nature Trails of South Walton," a brochure you can pick up at the park store, includes several state parks along the coast. The park rangers can supply more maps. On your iPad, go to floridahikes.com/topsail-hill for a detailed description of all of Topsail's trails.

If you did not bring your own, kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, and bikes of every description can be rented at the park store. You can also rent fat tire bikes for cruising the beach. A beach wheelchair with fat tires is available at no charge.

Topsail's 157 RV sites have full hookups that include 50-amp electrical, water, and sewer. Natural vegetation provides privacy between most of the sites. The rate is \$46.62/night.

Topsail is often full throughout the year. It is best to make a reservation months ahead to avoid disappointment. The park consistently gets 5-star reviews.

With 3.2 miles of quartz-white sand to enjoy, you will not experience difficulty finding a place to park your chair or spread your blanket. The water is a little chilly in the winter months, but it's always just right for wading. The winter skies are bluer and the contrasts with the emerald green Gulf is perfect for memorable pictures. ♦ The well-built boardwalks through the Back Dunes zone provide an opportunity to observe how the natural vegetation preserves the beachhead and stops erosion. ♦ Nearly a mile away from the beach, the park immerses the visitor in a forest pine ecology with a quiet lake for freshwater fishing. ♦ We found several Tiffin owners at Topsail. These native Floridians reminded us to make reservations 11 months ahead. ♦ Bicycling and hiking at Topsail are terrific ways to see the entire park. Beach cruiser bikes rent for \$20/day and carts for \$15.



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Grayton Beach State Park



WHEN I FIRST BEGAN PLANNING this trip, Dr. Stephen Leatherman’s annual ratings of the “Year’s 10 Best Beaches in the U.S.” kept popping up. Grayton Beach State Park ranked #6 in 2016 and then moved up to #4 in 2017. With that input in my notes, I was looking forward to paying this Florida state park a visit.

For decades the land along the beaches in the Panhandle was not settled. The sandy soil could not support farming and the timber was too skimpy to support a lumber industry. In 1885 Major Charles T. Gray forged his way to the area that would later bear his name, mostly because he liked the climate and the beautiful beaches. Five years later General William Miller and William Wilson settled near Major Gray, saw the value of the area becoming a resort, and began mapping out streets. They honored Major Gray by naming the village Grayton Beach.

Nearly a quarter century later—things didn’t happen fast when the only access road was loose sand—W. H. Butler and his son Van from DeFuniak Springs “discovered” Grayton Beach and made it their project to promote the area. Finally, in the

1930s, U.S. 98 was built, making it much easier for people to find it and get there. Development as a tourist area was severely slowed by the Depression and WWII.

In September 1964 the Florida Board of Parks acquired a 356-acre parcel that formed the core of Grayton Beach State Park. The park opened in 1968. Later acquisitions in the eighties and nineties pushed the size of the park to 2,200 acres. The park lies on both sides of Highway 30A that dips down from U.S. 98 and skims along the Gulf coast for 15 miles.

In addition to sunbathing on powdery quartz crystals and swimming in the inviting emerald green Gulf waters, hikers, bicyclists, fishermen, kayakers, canoeists, and birders will find the natural environments to enjoy their pursuits of relaxation and fun. Hikers and cyclists traverse the 4.5-mile Flatwoods Trail that extends into the Eastern Lake Trailhead. A less ambitious hike on the Western Lake Loop will satisfy most. The Loop trail has educational markers to suggest a more leisurely hike. When the tide is out, you will see a few joggers taking advantage of



At left: During the summer months, the immense snow-white beach at Grayton Beach State Park draws large numbers of short-term vacationers. In the winter months, it belongs to those of us who can linger longer. ♦ 17 pairs of Nikes were left on the bench while their owners were hiking. ♦ The stunted growth of oaks illustrate the Forest Zone on a trail leading to Western Lake. Above: Hikers explore a wide sandy trail through a Backdune Zone near Western Lake. ♦ This “Gang of 8” plovers own the beach—or seem to think they do. ♦ The brackish 214-acre Western Lake attracts both freshwater and saltwater species.

the firm sand. The powdery beach defeats a jogger after a few strides and makes hauling sunbathing gear to a select spot a real challenge.

Fishermen can choose surf fishing for grouper and snapper or wetting a line in the brackish waters of 214-acre Western Lake that harbors both fresh and salt water fish. The ranger said catches might include redfish, bass, and bream.

Located on the Great Florida Birding Trail, Grayton Beach is a favorite destination for birding clubs as well as individual birders. Birders hike the 4.5-mile Flatwoods Trail to spot bald eagles and barred owls. The loop around the shallow eastern end of Western Lake is a haven for ospreys, blue herons, and cattle egrets. On the beaches, birders will see royal terns, common terns, snowy plovers, and several species of gulls. The Southern Magnolias and Sand Live Oak give shade and shelter to nuthatches, several species of sparrows, and more on the Barrier Dune Trail on the southeastern side of the lake.

Continued on page 80

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St. Andrews State Park

ST. ANDREWS STATE PARK DID NOT HAVE the benefit of beginning its existence on primitive lands as did Grayton Beach. However, most visitors would never guess that it was a former military reservation that the government gave to the state of Florida. Today, its popularity, like that of the other three parks we visited, is staked on its one-and-a-half miles of sugar-white powdery sand and emerald green waters. When blended with spectacular sunrises and sunsets, these contrasts provide memorable occasions and beautiful pictures you can frame.

Activities at St. Andrews focus on the Grand Lagoon and the Gulf, although there are two nature trails with a wide diversity

of coastal plants and opportunities for bird watching. Always bring your field glasses even if you are not an avid bird watcher. If you are into water sports, St. Andrews is the place to be: swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, and canoeing. The park rents kayaks and canoes.

For most of us, it's the beach. While you can see the high rises of Panama City Beach in the distance, the park still provides insulation with undeveloped land surrounding its visitors. On the sunny days in the late fall and winter, the beach population was sparse. You may find yourself feeling as we did—we felt like we almost owned the place.

From the number of small boats our neighbors had parked next to their RVs, we guessed that fishing might have been the leading attraction in the late fall. Not being fishermen ourselves, we asked the campers what they were catching. One man who was dedicating most of his retirement to fishing said that over the year he had caught mackerel, flounder, redfish, sea trout, bonito, cobia, and bluefish. He volunteered that he had a freezer full of fish at home. The Grand Lagoon, jetties, the Gulf (both shore and open boat), and two fishing piers provide unlimited




Sunsets in the Florida Panhandle are spectacular when you can include the beach and waves in the image, a vantage point not usually found in the peninsula's beaches farther south. ♦ With the shelter of a tall dune, a family enjoyed a late afternoon picnic and stayed to watch the sunset with us. ♦ The Canadian owners of an Allegro Breeze found a secluded site in the campground.

opportunities, regardless of the season.

The 176-site campground is quite nice, but privacy offered by ground plants between the sites is not as good as at Henderson, Topsail Hill, and Grayton. At this writing, approximately one-third of the campsites have 50-amp service. All have water, picnic tables, and grills, but none have sewer connections. Of course, a dump station is available. Most campsites can handle 40-ft. motorhomes and a few can accommodate 45-ft. units. The rate is \$31.36/night (same rate, 30- or 50-amp).

After September 4, 2018, St. Andrews will not be accepting reservations as they prepare to make significant upgrades to the campground. Enhancements will include site elevation, storm water management, 50-amp electrical service, and the addition of sewer service to many sites. During construction, approximately 75 campsites will be available on a first come, first served basis. We are looking forward to a return visit, hopefully in the fall of 2019.



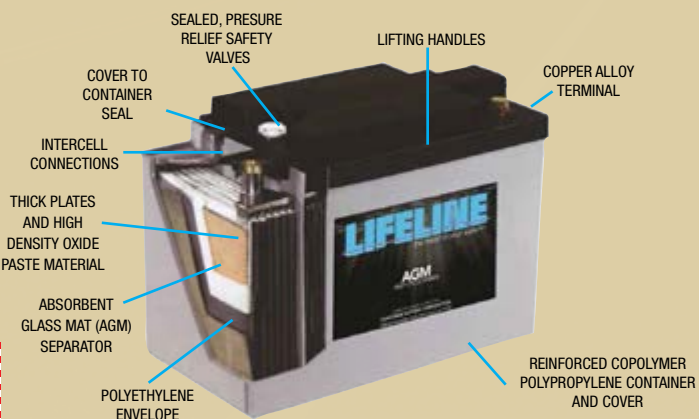


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Eden Gardens State Park

WILLIAM WESLEY WAS A VERY SUCCESSFUL timber baron in the Florida Panhandle in the 1890s. In 1897 he acquired 180 acres facing the east end of the Choctawhatchee Bay with plans to build a home for his wife, Katie, and their nine children.

With an apparently unlimited supply of yellow heart pine, he built a magnificent 5,900 sq. ft. home with 12-foot ceilings and eight fireplaces. Although the home was not wired for electricity and had no plumbing, it did not suffer from a lack of beautiful antebellum window treatments, wainscoting, and French mirrors. Over 95 percent of the windows still have the wavy glass, indicating the glass was made locally. Oddly enough, there were no closets in the bedrooms because owners were taxed on the number of doors in the house—armoires were used instead.

While William was away on business trips, Miss Katie guarded the house from a cupola at the peak of the roof reached by an attic stairwell. Anecdotes from family historians say she was a good marksman.

The property became a community as William built 22 cottages for his workers. After the timber business declined, the cottages were moved to nearby Grayton Beach for vacation homes.

William Wesley died in 1947, but Miss Katie continued to live in the big house until she died in 1953 at the age of 77. The house had been vacant for nearly 10 years when Lois Matson purchased the house and 10.5 acres in 1963 for \$12,500. An author and publisher from NYC, Miss Matson lavishly renovated and restored the home to its original condition. She wrote to a friend saying, “I have found my Eden.”

The property is accented by ancient live oaks. Arborists estimate the massive live oak in the front yard to be 600 years old.

Sadly, failing health in 1968 forced her to move to Pensacola to be close to her doctors. She gave the property to the state not long after she moved away. Guided tours of the home are offered hourly Thursday through Monday. Park entrance: \$4. House tour: \$4. Visitors can enjoy the grounds daily from 8 a.m. until sunset. The property is on the north side of US 98 near the intersection of US 331, and close to Grayton Beach State Park.





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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:

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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 . . .

Battery Maintenance in Off Season

We have a 2016 Phaeton 40QBH. In our off season, the coach is stored in a heated building. What is the best way to keep the batteries charged? Why does Tiffin not offer automatic (Butler) locks for the basement doors? Our previous older coach (not a

Tiffin) had them. I was unaware Tiffin did not offer the automatic locks as an option.

Doug Miller, Pemberville, Ohio

Dear Doug,

You can keep the batteries charged by simply keeping your unit plugged in to a 110v outlet that is supplied by at least a 20-amp breaker. The inverter should regulate the amount of charge going into the batteries and keep them charged.

As of 2018, we made the automatic locks standard on the Phaeton for the basement door locks.

Getting Hot Water ASAP to 36LA's Rear Bath

You recently wrote about an owner of a 36LA who re-routed hot water lines to stop having to wait for hot water in the rear shower and sink. Can you furnish a drawing or pictures on how to do this? Thanks.

Larry Schmuehle, Plano, Texas

Dear Larry,

Using two "T" intersections, Jim Church connected the two hot water lines behind the toilet, allowing hot water to flow directly to the shower. If hot water was turned on in the half bath or galley, it would probably pull enough hot water from the shower to make it uncomfortably cool. Making this intersection only reduced the distance the hot water had to travel to the galley and back before it got to the shower. Tiffin has since corrected this problem by using a manifold near the water heater and another one near the galley.

More Reclining Space in Phaeton for Passenger Seat

My wife and I really enjoy reading your pages addressing owners' concerns about their motorhomes. We purchased a new 2016 Phaeton 40QBH. It is a wonderful coach and we enjoy it very much. Last year I read a letter from another Phaeton owner whose wife was having the same problem with the passenger seat as we were having: the seat will not recline enough before it hits the slide-out. I removed the foam above the wheel to access the seat bolts. I drilled new holes and moved the seat forward. My wife is very happy now.

Guy Sisson, Delevan, New York

Dear Guy,

I am glad the modification worked for you. Making that change certainly required a lot of time and ability on your part. However, I cannot recommend that other owners attempt to make this modification because it is complicated and requires special tools. There is a high probability that a less experienced person would not make the change correctly and safely.

Bad Shake in Front End of 2017 Allegro Open Road

We had a number of problems that Tiffin took care of soon after

we bought our 2017 Allegro Open Road; however, we have not been able to solve a bad shaking in the front end. Any suggestions?

Jim Hale, Burlington, North Carolina

Dear Jim,

This could be a problem with the alignment of the front-end or an unbalanced or out-of-round tire. If the problem still exists after you have eliminated these two possibilities, the coach should be taken to your local Ford service center for inspection.

Getting a Manual for Ford F-53 Chassis/Engine

We have a 2012 Allegro Open Road. I have just noticed in the last *RIS* journal (14:4) a card bearing the service numbers for Ford and others who supply components to the Open Road. I would like to get a chassis/engine manual for the Ford F-53, but the person at the Ford service number could not send me a copy. Can you help me with this?

R. P. Savoy, Opelousas, Louisiana

Dear R.P.,

On the internet, go to fleet.ford.com. Under "Parts and Service," check "Owners Manuals" and fill in the specs for your Ford F-53. Then click "Submit" to purchase.

Fuel Tank Cannot Be Filled to Full Mark

I purchased a 2016 Phaeton 36GH from LazyDays in December 2016. I cannot put in a full tank of fuel. Diesel starts running out the fuel spout when it reaches three-quarters full. Is there a solution to this problem?

Everett Crawford, Mesilla Park, New Mexico

Dear Everett,

Fuel running out the fill spout usually indicates the tank is full. That said, the problem may point to a faulty gauge. If this is the case, you will have to take the coach to a Freightliner service center where they will probably have to drop the tank to correct the problem.

Replacing Heating Element in 2015 Allegro Water Heater

I have a 2015 Allegro 34TGA. The heating element is burned out. Do I have to pull the water heater completely out or can I take the back cover off to replace the element?

Harry Brenneisen, Surfside Beach, South Carolina

Dear Harry,

You can change the element if you can get to the rear of the water heater. The unit may be installed against the wall which will



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require taking the unit loose and pulling it out from the wall to gain access to the element.

Eliminating Mirror Glare When Backing at Night

Responding to the inquiry about glare in mirrors when backing at night (13:2). I own a 2016 Allegro 34PA. When backing into my covered storage, I get the glare. I discovered I could lower my front window night shade and remove the glare. I hope this works for Bill Carberry. I enjoy your Serious Tech Talk column.

Bob Gentry, Moreno Valley, California
Dear Bob,
Thank you very much for the solution.

Phaeton's Entry Steps Cannot Be De-Activated While Parked

I have a 2006 Phaeton. My entry steps go in and out every time the door is opened. When turned to the OFF position, the step switch in the vertical panel by the entry door does not turn off the motor. Changing the module did not solve the problem. The only way to keep the stairs out is to remove the magnet from the screen door. How do we solve this problem?

Steve Welch, Deerfield Beach, Florida
Dear Steve,
This problem should be easily corrected. In the outside compartment under the driver's seat, there is a fuse block with three fuses: a 20 and two 5's. Check to see if one of the 5-amp fuses is blown. If the fuses are okay, and there has been no rewiring done to the step, the problem should be a loose or bad connection that will have to be traced.

Manual Crank-in Procedure for Tiffin Motorhomes

In Bob Tiffin's column recently, he mentioned an emergency crank-in procedure for the slide-outs. I have a 2015 Allegro 34TGA. I could not find anywhere in my owner's manual the instructions to manually retract a slide-out if the motorized

retraction system fails. My 2001 Allegro Bay had a crank to bring the slide-outs in when the motor failed. We were at the Tiffin Service Center in October last year. What an amazing facility!

Harry Brenneisen
Surfside Beach, South Carolina
Dear Harry,
Tiffin's older motorhomes with electric slides had the crank mechanism to assist the owner in bringing the slide in if a problem developed. The HWH hydraulic systems do not have a crank to bring them in. Therefore, you have to bleed pressure off the system and recruit several neighbors to help you push the slide-out in.

Slide-Out Problem in 2012 Allegro 36LA

We have a 2012 Allegro 36LA that was purchased new in July 2012. At the end of our first trip, the big slide-out (the hydraulic one) would not retract. Our manual does not address the hydraulic slide-out, only the electric one. No information for the hydraulic slide-out was in the blue bag.

We called our dealer who informed us that the only way to retract the slide-out is to push it inside after we released the oil pressure in the hydraulic system's two manifolds. Eight men helped us push the slide-out inside.

After a visit to our dealer who changed an electronic sensor, the slide-out operated correctly. At the end of this past summer, the slide-out problem is back and once again we recruited eight neighbors to push the slide-out back into the coach. Also after this last trip, our step does not close when we start the engine. Can you help us with a permanent fix for these two problems?

Denis Pellerin
Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, Canada

Dear Denis,
The slide-out problem could be the same issue that you had before, but there is no way of knowing for sure until you have it checked in a service center. The steps

could be something as simple as a blown fuse or a loose connection.

Battery Problem in 1998 Allegro Bus

A few years ago in replacing the chassis batteries, I got one turned the wrong direction and caused a very scary arc. I have a 1998 Allegro Bus. A local RV tech says there is a black fuse box that has a blown fuse, but we cannot find it. I have called the dealer and the factory service center, but they were not able to help me. I hope you can help.

Joseph Barnett
Pinson, Tennessee

Dear Joseph,
The chassis ignition fuse and ignition relay is located up front, either underneath the dash by the steering column or in a compartment accessible through the panel above the instrument cluster. Depending on what is working or is not working, it could also be a starter relay. The best way to find it is to go to the starter and trace the battery lead from the starter back to the relay. If this does not solve the problem, you will have to visit a Freightliner service center.

The Best Way to Mount AMS Shades

Thank you for your response in 14:4. I thought it interesting to see the ad on the same page as your response (pages 74-75), showing the AMS shades moving in the direction I suggested.

Dale Wilkins
Gig Harbor, Washington

Dear Dale,
Our R&D has tested several ways to install the shades. We believe our installation method is best for this application using our valances.

An Aftermarket Surge Protector

I was surprised at Bob Tiffin's comment in his recent column: "TMH does not recommend surge protectors." After procrastinating for a long time, I finally purchased and installed an inline

surge protector on my 2016 Allegro RED 37PA—but not before calling the Tiffin Service Center. The service tech said that he recommends every coach owner use a surge protector. What gives? Can I damage anything by using a surge protector? Why two different recommendations?

Gene & Jeanie Volpe
Vineland, New Jersey

Dear Gene & Jeanie,
Bob did not mean he was against the use of surge protectors. He meant that he would not *recommend* a particular brand of surge protectors.

House Batteries Expire During Winter Storage

We own a 2006 Phaeton 35DH and love it. Family issues have reduced our opportunities for long trips, but hopefully that time will come for us. Since we purchased the Phaeton, we have had difficulty with the coach batteries. We unplugged the coach one winter and had to replace the coach batteries the following spring. When we left the coach plugged into 110-volt house current, they failed again. We hope you can tell us the best way to handle this.

Craig & Kay Long
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania

Dear Craig & Kay,
When storing a coach for long periods of time, be sure the battery disconnect is turned off and the inverter is in the OFF position. To be on the safe side, make sure the batteries are fully charged. Then disconnect the battery cable to the positive pole. Take a picture with your phone or make a diagram to be sure that you reconnect it the same way.

Why Not Use Air Leveling on All Tiffin Brands

In the Winter 2017 issue (14:1), the Allegro Breeze with its air leveling system is featured. I just traded in a Beaver Contessa with air leveling which I think is better than hydraulic jacks, especially if the

campsite is muddy. Why aren't all of your motorhomes using air leveling? My new coach is the 2018 Phaeton 40IH.

Paul L. Sagunsky
Medford, Oregon

Dear Paul,
Cost is the main reason we do not install air leveling on the Phaeton, RED, and Allegro brands. Most of our owners have come to expect hydraulic jacks on these brands because it stabilizes the coach after the jacks are deployed. A second reason is the expense. On these three brands, air leveling would move those coaches above their projected price point. We do install air leveling as a standard product on the Allegro Bus and the Zephyr.

Lockable Fuel Cap Activates Check Engine Light

We are the proud owners of a 2013 Allegro

36LA. We store our RV in a secure fenced facility. My biggest concern is someone siphoning fuel out of the RV. To prevent this, I called the Tiffin Parts and Service Center for a lockable fuel cap. They did not have one, but gave me the product number of a lockable cap that I could purchase at NAPA. After installing the cap, we drove to Alabama to visit friends. After refueling, I drove 10 miles and got a check engine light. I had it reset and again got the same check engine light. Help!

Lane Ramsdell
Harker Heights, Texas

Dear Lane,
For a reason I cannot identify, the lockable fuel cap does not appear to be holding enough pressure in the tank that ordinarily would assure the sensor that the cap is on tightly. If you put the original cap back on the entrance spout and every-



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thing works okay, that points to a faulty lockable cap.

The Battery Disconnect on a 2011 Allegro

I have a 2011 Allegro 34TGA. If the battery disconnect is in the OFF position, does shore power charge the coach batteries?

On our last trip, something new started happening. Every time we moved to a new location and plugged into shore power, the power in the overhead lights in the galley area ceased. After pressing the battery disconnect switch to the ON position, the power comes back and I have no problems until we move again. I am thinking a loose wire, but where do I start looking?

Curtis Martin
Hazen, Arkansas

Dear Curtis,

The batteries should be charging even if the battery disconnect is in the OFF position.

The 12v disconnect should affect all the 12v lights, not just the ones over the galley. This problem points to a loose connection or possibly a faulty toggle switch causing those specific lights to work intermittently. You should also check the power feed for those lights at the junction which is located behind the bottom drawers in the galley.

Two Products That Keep Mice Out of Your Motorhome

We have found an effective product to keep mice out of our motorhome. We were told by an exterminator that mice do not have bladders. They drip their urine as they move around, making it possible for other mice to follow a trail into your motorhome.

Home Depot and Lowes sell two products: Repels All and Critter Ridder. Spray the underside of your unit where openings for wires or hoses may be providing an entry for mice. The spray will smell (mostly outside) for an hour or two, and then dissipate to the human's sense of smell. You do not have to spray the entire underside of the motorhome, just the openings

where mice might enter. We have had no mice since using these two products.

Russ & Robyn Geren
North Fort Myers, Florida

Dear Russ & Robyn,

Mice have a urinary bladder, but not a gall bladder. Mice do not need a gall bladder because they secrete bile frequently along with their feces. Regardless of that anatomical technicality, we are glad to hear that your use of these products has been successful in getting rid of mice in your motorhome.

Changing the Depth of the Cup Holder

In response to Ms. Tininenko's letter about the cup holders being too shallow, she can go to a hardware store and get a PVC pipe that is three inches in diameter. Cut it three inches long, smooth the edges with sandpaper, and slide it into the cup holder. This will hold cups upright and prevent them from tipping over.

Jack Collier
Dothan, Alabama

Dear Jack,

Thanks for your suggestion. We are always amazed at the ingenuity of our owners to find ways to modify their coaches to take care of a situation.

Manufacturing Wiring Suggestion

We purchased a 2015 Allegro 31SA in June 2017 from Kings Campers in Wausau, Wisconsin. On our coach, the under awning light and the porch light are wired on the same ON/OFF switch located in the entry step well. The LED porch light is so bright that it blinds those who sit under the awning and face the outside wall.

When we took the 31SA back to Kings Campers in September for some minor repairs, we asked Nate Linder, the service technician, if the under awning lights and the porch LED light could be wired to separate switches. By taking power off the map light, Nate added a switch for the awning LED lights. Now we can

turn on the under-the-awning lights only and leave the porch light off, making it a lot easier on everyone's eyes. The awning lights provide sufficient light for the campsite area. I suggest that separate switches for the under awning lights and porch lights be installed during the manufacturing process.

In his regular column in the Fall 2017 issue (14:4), Bob Tiffin wrote that TMH does not recommend surge protectors. Don't all new Tiffin coaches come with surge protectors? Mine has one.

Gerald & Gail Carlson
Gwinn, Michigan

Dear Gerald & Gail,

In the 2017, the Allegro Open Roads and Allegro REDs now have separate switches for the porch light and the awning light.

The word "recommend" was misunderstood in Bob's column. He meant that TMH does not endorse or recommend particular brands of surge protectors. There is a box located at the point where 30- and 50-amp service enters the motorhomes. The brand name of this product is Surge Guard Transfer Switch. It does offer some protection against a few electrical problems, but it is not a full-blown surge protector.

Winterizing an All-Electric Phaeton

Dear Danny,

Could you please describe for me the proper configuration of all the water valves to winterize an all-electric Phaeton?

I have had difficulty winterizing my all-electric 2014 Phaeton 42LH every year since 2013. I drain the fresh water tank and the water lines. I blow out the lines with 25 psi air before I start and fill the empty water filter canister with antifreeze.

I then move the water valve from city to fill and disconnect the blue fresh line from the water pump and attach a clear line to a 5-gallon bucket of antifreeze. I open an inside faucet and turn on the pump. The pump runs and I go outside and no antifreeze is being drawn from the

bucket. I shut off the pump and go inside and shut off the faucet. I go outside and turn on the outside shower and then the pump. The pump will start and draw antifreeze for a few minutes and then the draw will stop, the antifreeze will stop coming out from the open shower line. The pump will continue to run until I shut the pump off. I will then turn off the shower. I have waited up to 5 minutes before shutting the pump off with nothing coming out of the open shower line. I wait another 5 minutes and turn on the pump and the outside shower and it will start to draw antifreeze. I immediately turn the shower to a trickle and run inside and open a faucet, it will draw antifreeze at a low pressure for a few minutes and then stop, but the pump keeps running. I do this over and over until I get about 8 gallons into the lines, frig, washer and dishwasher.

Should the water valve be in the fill or city position? I have tried it both ways with the same result. I have also tried it without blowing out the lines and had the same problems. It is not a leak. I always use my water tank and water pump and not city water pressure. I leave the pump on while in the RV and it only runs when a valve is turned on. I did not have difficulty winterizing my travel trailer. This should not be that difficult, I am stumped.

Graham Mongeon
Jeffersonton, Virginia

Dear Graham,

You should be able to winterize an all-electric coach with two to three gallons of solution.

It is not necessary to blow the lines out with air pressure unless you just really want to do so. Disconnect the intake side of the water pump in the utility bay. Be sure to hook it up on the filter side of the pump. Leave the valve on City Water and turn the pump on until the system is pressurized. Once the pump cuts off and pressurizes, go to low point drains and open them up until you see antifreeze running

out on both the hot and cold sides.

Once the antifreeze runs out, shut them off and go inside and open each faucet until antifreeze comes out into each sink. Don't forget to flush the toilets and run the water through the lines until antifreeze is apparent. Run the dishwasher and washing machines on hot and cold

until antifreeze is apparent.

Remove the water filter in the fridge and be sure to drain the water out of the water dispenser. Remove the exterior panel on the back of the refrigerator and disconnect the ice maker line at the valve. Allow antifreeze to fill that line. Close the line off and leave the refrigerator discon-

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nected to allow the water to run out of the line.

Don't forget to do the outside shower. Then turn your incoming valve to Tank Fill for two or three seconds to allow it to push any water back toward the tank. Finally, make sure there is no water left in the holding tanks.

The 2017 Allegro Bus 45OPP—the Best Bus We've Ever Had

We have been in the apparel business for 40 years: New Orleans, Lafayette, Dallas apparel marts. We would never ever leave Tiffin. Many years, many "Buses." This is the best Bus we have ever had — the best service and support in the industry.

We were told while at Red Bay for a few "fixes" that the jerk and louder noise when the new Denso AC compressor kicks in is just normal and what we should expect. When the Bus is at a standstill, like at a traffic light, you feel the entire coach jolt when the compressor kicks in. Is this really the way the new improved Denso system is supposed to operate? I love the better and more powerful AC that it puts out, but is the jolting start-up putting more stress on the belts and compressor? I cannot imagine the stress on the engine is good. Thanks old buddy. Tiffin is still the best!

Steve Ecton
Heber Springs, Arkansas

Dear Steve,

It is not the new Denso A/C causing the jolt you are feeling. What you are feeling is the engine fan engaging while the dash A/C is turned on and the engine is at idle. We do this to get more air flow across the A/C condenser while the vehicle is not moving. Whenever the A/C compressor cycles on, we also cycle on the engine cooling fan. That is why it comes and goes frequently while the vehicle is sitting still.

About a year ago, we made a change to the programming to improve the fan cycling. When the coach is below 5 mph and

the dash A/C is on, we turn the engine fan on and let it run continuously until the vehicle is back above 5 mph. This prevents the constant jolt that comes from the engine cooling fan cycling off and on frequently. Older units with this concern can have the programming updated to the current configuration whenever they are in Red Bay.

Instructions for Manually Retracting Slide-Outs

In the latest issue of *Roughing It Smoothly* (Fall 2017, 14:4), Mr. Tiffin presented a lengthy article about the owner training provided by the Kings Campers dealership, and then added his comments on the same subject. Both writers discussed the emergency crank-in procedures for slide-outs, both electric and hydraulic. Although I have never experienced a problem with my slide-outs, this caught my attention since I have thought about what I would do if the problem occurred while I was camping.

I have a 2011 Allegro RED 34QFA. We received owner training when it was delivered, but nothing on the emergency procedures if the slide-outs could not be retracted under power. Can you tell me if my unit has such capabilities, or is this something that was included in later model years? If my unit is so equipped, could the company provide written directions about how the manual retracting works and how to operate it?

We find *Roughing It Smoothly* to be a welcome addition when it arrives. The questions and answers in your section have helped us better understand our unit as well as lead us to solve some of our own issues. Thanks and please keep up the good work.

Jay Hosburgh
Palisade, Colorado

Dear Jay,

The 2011 Allegro RED does not have the crank-in device. See the answer to Mr. Brenneisen on page 74. For bringing in

the electric slide-outs in the bedroom, google "swintek slide outs" where you can view several U-Tube videos on bringing the slides in manually.

Request for Torque Specs on Breeze

I own a 2012 Allegro Breeze. What is the torque specification for the two nuts on the rear wheel bracket into which the hub cover "jam nut" screws? This is the bolt with the Tiffin logo which holds the hub cover onto the wheel.

Kevin Gross
Bremerton, Washington

Dear Kevin,

Torque on this nut should be 20 pounds.

Leveling Control Panel for Breeze in Bad Location

I own a 2017 Allegro Breeze. I really like it, but the control panel for the leveling system is in a very bad spot. So I made a hard cardboard frame to put over it, took a picture of the leveling control panel and printed it. Then I glued the picture to the top of the board so that it looks like the leveling panel. When I need to level the coach, I lift the picture-cover board and put it back when I am finished.

Another question: why did they put the drain for the water tank in the middle of the basement storage area?

Elaine Rose
Kennewick, Washington

Dear Elaine,

Thanks for sharing your neat solution for an inconvenient location of the leveling control panel. Ingenuity always wins out. Now about that drain: the water tank is located toward the front of the motorhome for weight distribution purposes. The drain is in the center to prevent it from interfering with storing gear in the basement.

Arizona Owner Wants More Ventilation

We own a 2012 Allegro 35QBA. Is it possible to install two windows in the bedroom sidewalls without compromising

the sidewalls? Rewiring two lights should not be a problem. Also is it possible to install a window in the back wall without compromising the back wall? We need more ventilation. Thanks.

Robert Wasielewski
Tucson, Arizona

Dear Robert,
Adding windows in the sidewalls of the slide-out or the rear end cap will compromise the integrity of the walls' strength. I advise you not to make this modification.

Owner Recommends Upgrade to Gas-Electric Refrigerators

We own a 2008 40QDH Phaeton with a gas-electric refrigerator. We started with Bob Tiffin in 1975 and have owned five units. We have owned the best motor-homes in the industry. I have been in the refrigeration business for 50 years and an instructor for 16 years in heating, AC, and

electrical. I have had numerous problems with the 1210 model absorption gas-electric refrigerator on both my Allegro Bus and Phaeton. In my research, I found the answer to my problems: JC Refrigeration Co. in Shipshewana, Indiana. They can exchange the cooling unit in most Norcold and Dometic gas-electric refrigerators. The units are extremely well-built and efficient (45% better). They run cooler (fridge) and colder (freezer). They offer a 2-year better warranty and they are 20% less expensive. They will not overheat, even in the extreme heat of a summer in Yuma, Arizona. I recommend the units to everyone I meet.

Capt. A. C. Lowe (Ret.)
Livingston, Texas

Dear Capt. Lowe,
Thank you very much for sharing your experience with JC Refrigeration Co. in Shipshewana, Indiana. I feel sure there

are many owners who will want to upgrade their gas-electric refrigerators

1994 Allegro Bus with Delamination

I have a 1994 Allegro Bus. It has always been stored in a covered facility. The exterior fiberglass walls on both sides have large bubbles that have separated. The average diameter of the bubbles is 10 to 12 inches. The odometer has 71,000 miles. What is the fix for this problem?

Paul Hall
Kennedale, Texas

Dear Paul,
The delamination can be caused by water intrusion or the separation of the glue in the wall sandwich. The wall will have to be opened up, the problem identified, the section re-fiberglassed, and the wall repainted. Most well-established shops experienced in fiberglass repair should be able to handle this.

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SAYING GOODBYE *Continued from page 35*

in Asheville, North Carolina, in May 2016 and created a fine story on “Iconic Asheville—Delightful for Over a Century.”

Last summer we planned a story on Waco, Texas as a destination story. Unbeknownst to me, Norm and Jimmie had been struggling with respiratory illnesses for a number of months. With his typical persistence, Norm spent hours researching and writing the story and finished it just a few days before his death on October 9, just one day before his 87th birthday. Rhonda photographed all of the places that Norm featured in his story.

People were important to Norm. His family described him as having a people-first approach to life. That before he moved his business to a bank, he wanted to go in and get to know the people. That to understand one of the places he was writing about, he had to get to know the people. And with neighbors, and church folks, and colleagues—he was all about getting to know them as people. It’s something it would be good for all of us to remember—because it’s so easy to focus on other things, and forget that most of what we encounter in life comes down to people. And Norm loved people, cared for people, and was quick to make friends and quick to become part of a new family. He showed us what a life looks like when you make it about people.*

*The last paragraph and several other remarks were taken from a homily by Russ Boyd, senior minister at the Ridgela Christian Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

TIFFIN MANAGEMENT TEAM *Continued from page 59*

degree, we had our first baby. We moved to Red Bay to be closer to my family and find a more substantial job. I took a position with Belmont Homes as a crown molder. By mid-fall the mobile home industry began experiencing significant layoffs.

“The last Friday in October, I stopped after work to visit with Lex Tiffin and ask about job openings at Tiffin. He promised to check on it and call me. As soon as I arrived home, Lex called and told me I could start Monday in the slide-out department. It was the beginning of what has become an 18-year run and a solid career at Tiffin Motorhomes.

“After six months in my new position at the cargo door plant, I have found it to be very rewarding,” Paul began. “In purchasing, solving a logistics or acquisition problem is rewarding. This job is more tangible. You handle the product you are making. I enjoy facilitating the smooth operation of the team. If you can help someone enjoy their work, they will do a better job. My goal is to help my employees do a good job.”

Paul currently serves as bishop for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for the Russellville area. “The most important thing for me is serving my Heavenly Father and Savior Jesus Christ,” Paul said thoughtfully. “Everything else is a part of that service: my family and then the people I work for and with. A job should not be about earning more to get more. We all need to be thinking about serving others.” **RIS**

BEACHES OF THE PANHANDLE *Continued from page 67*

Western Lake is the second largest coastal dune lake in the Panhandle. Fishermen often use kayaks or canoes while other paddlers use them to explore the lake’s diversity and find interesting vantage points for photography. Kayaks and canoes can be rented for \$10 for five hours or \$15 for all day.

For those of us who are camping in our motorhomes, there’s good news and bad news. The good news: the park has a total of 59 campsites for motorhomes – 24 sites have 50/30 amp ser-

vice, water, and sewer. Those site numbers are 32, and 37–50. The lower site numbers offer 30 amp service and water, but no sewer. Both loops have spotless bathhouses. Washers and dryers are located in the bathhouse serving the 50-amp loop. The sites are nicely separated with natural growth vegetation that provides privacy, something rarely found in commercial campgrounds. The bad news: make reservations 11 months ahead of your planned visit at ReserveAmerica.com. Rates: \$26.64/night, 30-amp. \$33.30/night, 50-amp.

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