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JUNE 2009

34-FOOT DIESEL-PUSHER WINNEBAGO JOURNEY



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- FLORIDA STATE PARKS
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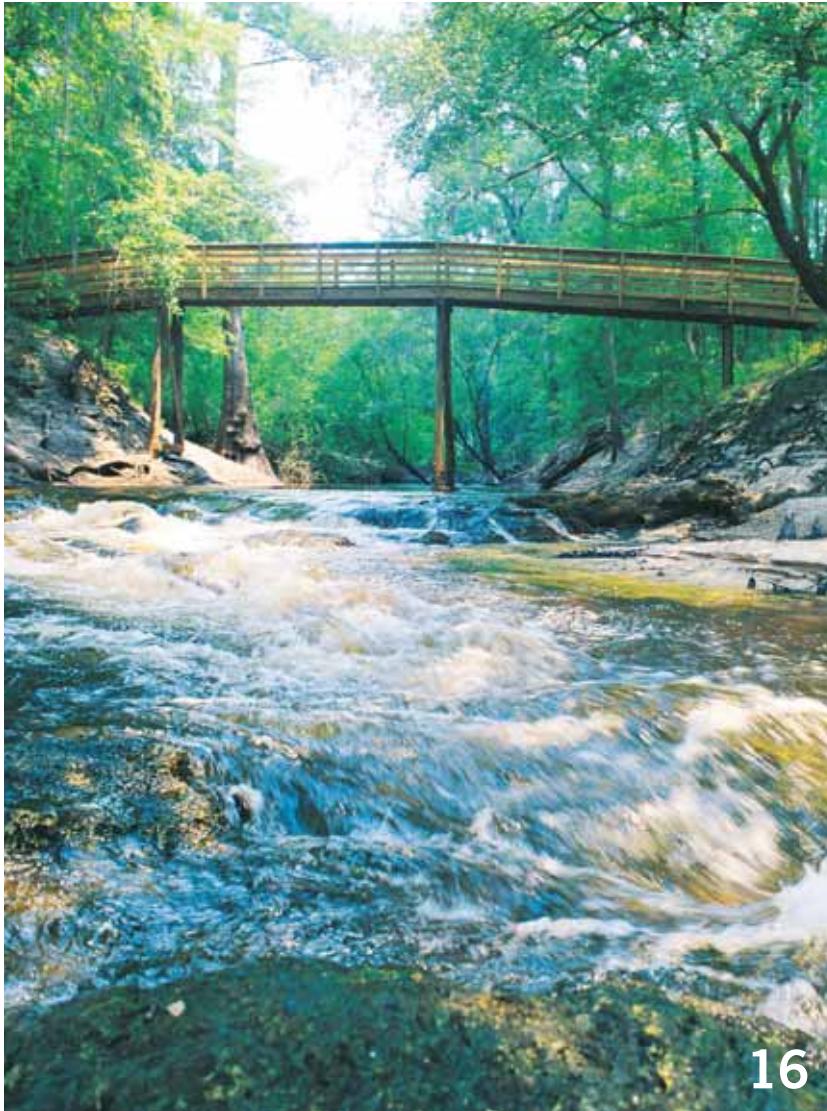
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On The Cover: The 2009 Winnebago Journey — in the new triple slide 34Y floorplan — makes it easy to vacation with friends at the Far Horizons 49er Village RV Resort in Plymouth, California (see test on page 36). Photo by Gary Bohinc.

LESSONS FROM THE ECONOMY

Take a moment and try to remember the last time you heard good news. If you're like most of us, your memory will be taxed pretty hard. That's because of late we've been bombarded daily with newspaper, magazine, radio and television reports on the recession, the potential depression and massive unemployment. Even the Internet is loaded with doom and gloom.

Now, I'm not going to pretend that everything is rosy; it's not. But there are a number of bright spots out there — and a few lessons to be learned.

Lesson One: Don't believe everything you hear and read from the "experts." Fuel cost is a perfect example. Just last spring, the message that we would never see fuel at less than \$4 a gallon was pounded into our heads, day after day. We were "informed" that fuel could likely skyrocket to \$10 a gallon. At the time of this writing gasoline was selling for \$1.75 a gallon in the Midwest — and diesel in California, where it seems to take on boutique status, was hovering around two bucks. I feel sorry for those folks who bailed out of the RV lifestyle because the experts were predicting draconian fuel prices. The irony of this debacle is that fuel prices do not play a dramatic role in our decisions to stay on the road; we simply don't log enough miles on our rigs every year.

Lesson Two: Don't put off pursuing your dream to own a motorhome because the financial world is in turmoil. This, too, will pass if we're careful with our finances and investments. In fact, we may be experiencing the best time in history to purchase a motorhome. Inventories are high and prices are low. Don't be afraid to purchase an orphan coach — Good Sam's Extended Service Plan will cover your new rig from day one (call 877-592-4169 and talk to a licensed specialist for guidance).

No doubt the RV landscape will change in the near future. We'll probably see smaller coaches and more fuel-



efficient drivetrains as the industry becomes greener. But America is all about choice. Don't give up on your quest for a big diesel-pusher if you want the extra space and luxury. Remember, traveling in large motorhomes is still more eco-friendly — and more cost effective — than flying to destinations, renting cars, staying in hotels and eating in restaurants. And motorhoming is more fun, too.

The motorhome industry will only recover when people start buying motorhomes again. Sure money is tighter now, but loans are still available. I personally know of five families that purchased rigs during the past few months and managed to finance them at very good rates and terms. The kicker is that people now have to qualify for the loans. What a concept!

Lesson Three: Don't put off seeing new places and experiencing new activities. We're not banking the years we're apt to lose while we wait out a sluggish economy. I hate the term "staycation." Sitting in your backyard moping over the economy is not a vacation or weekend getaway. Motorhome enthusiasts are driven by wanderlust. We need to explore and experience the natural wonders on this planet.

Everyone should carefully monitor their spending during a slowdown in the economy; that's just being fiscally responsible. But I can't see giving up on or even restricting a lifestyle we love, and in most cases worked hard for, because the media thrives on doom and gloom or because a few greedy people made a mess of our financial infrastructure. There are lots of ways to economize and still get out on the road. Longer trips don't always equate into better trips — there are many places close to home to visit. Stay in one place longer and enjoy the local activities; be creative.

I guarantee it will be more fun than sitting in your backyard. ♦

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LIFE-SIZE FUN

like the photo on the cover of the March issue, particularly the giant chess set. Would you tell me where I can buy one?

ROBERT GIBSON | GRESHAM, OREGON

We received many queries about the chess set pictured on the March cover.



You can find similar sets online at www.chesshouse.com, www.megachess.com and www.livingincomfort.com.

RECYCLING REBUTTAL

This is in response to Sylvia Ruble's letter about recycling at campgrounds ("Remember to Recycle," March). I had the same view as Ruble before I owned an RV park. I told my campground customers that we had containers in the park for aluminum and plastic, but some people used them for everything from dirty diapers to garbage. After three years I gave up. If there's a solution, I'd like to know about it. We all need to do what we can to recycle.

J.T. TRAVERSE | WEIMAR, TEXAS

FUEL FILLING FIX

From day one, my 2005 Safari Trek motorhome wouldn't take gas without spitting fuel onto the ground and the side of my coach. The dealer as well as other RV repair facilities, including Monaco's factory service center, tried to correct the problem but none of the fixes lasted more than

a few fill ups. Then Monaco referred me to Iron Horse RV in San Antonio, Texas. After working over the fill tube once again, they dropped the gas tank. When tanks are manufactured plastic plugs are put into openings to keep out dirt. Somehow a piece of plastic about the size of a dime had gotten into the tube, acting like a flap that caused "spit back." The plastic was removed, and the problem was solved.

**GORDON CRAIG
SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA**

CAMPGROUND CONVENIENCE

I'd like to see more RV parks offering "we pick you up" car rentals. I don't tow a car and often rent one when I get to a campground. When a car rental agency will come to the campground and pick me up, that's the agency I'll do business with.

**DORIE BATER
CAPE VINCENT, NEW YORK**

GRAND SERVICE IN MICHIGAN

Having dealt with many RV dealerships, I believe you missed including the best dealership in your "RV Business Names Top 50 Dealers" (January). Ron Neff and the staff at American RV in Grand Rapids, Michigan, are at the top of my own long list. Their service is unmatched, and their salespeople are first class.

**CHARLES WILKINSON
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

RV TRACKER

I fitted a poor man's version of a vehicle tracker to my RV. I use an old mobile phone with a dashboard charger and a prepaid SIM card. I hide it in my rig, connected to a convenient 12-volt source. If the coach gets stolen, I simply pay a fee to have my mobile phone tracked.

BILL MASSEY | DECATUR, TEXAS

Question:

What safety precautions do you take when traveling in your motorhome?

Write to us at letters@motorhome.com. ♦



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escapes

by DENISE SANTOYO

EVENTS | NOTEWORTHY | NEWS BRIEFS | CROSSROADS

LANDMARK LIGHTHOUSE

Lake Superior's Split Rock
illuminates the past

There are many first-rate lighthouses on the Great Lakes, but one of the most photogenic is Split Rock on Lake Superior near Two Harbors, Minnesota. The awe-inspiring Split Rock Light is a complete light station with the original tower and lens, a keeper's house, fog-signal building and oil house. The U.S. Coast Guard officially retired the lighthouse in 1969, and it joined the *National Register of Historic Places*.

Visitors can climb the lighthouse tower — perched on a 130-foot-high cliff — and visit a restored keeper's house and the fog-signal building. The lighthouse and historic site are adjacent to Split Rock Lighthouse State Park, and a number of hiking, biking and scenic driving trails of varying levels of difficulty are available for visitors to explore.

The lighthouse and historic buildings are closed in winter, but the visitors center and museum store are open year-round, and there are campgrounds nearby. For more information, call (218) 226-6372, or visit www.mnhs.org.

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escapes | EVENTS



JUNE 6–AUGUST 9

Kids come first this summer at Silver Dollar City's **National KidsFest** in Branson, Missouri. Highlights include a unique production by Swedish performance group JEERK, a live "Veggie Tales" stage show, a magic show with master illusionist Peter Gossamer and more; (800) 831-4FUN, www.silverdollarcity.com.

JUNE 5–7 | Don your kilt and head to the **Texas Scottish Festival and Highland Games** in Arlington, Texas. Enjoy an array of activities that include Highland dance and sports competitions; a Scottish dog show; workshops on topics from fiddling to Gaelic to genealogy; whiskey tasting and more. Off-site RV parking is available nearby; (800) 363-7268, www.texasscottishfestival.com.

JUNE 6 | Help Oregon celebrate its sesquicentennial birthday with free camping, fishing and park admission at Champoeg State Heritage Area. **Champoeg State Parks Day and Free Fishing Day** will feature a variety of complimentary activities, including use of fishing rods, reels and bait, as well as fishing instruction 10AM–3PM; camping Saturday night; and fishing without a license on the Willamette River all weekend long; (503) 678-1251, www.oregonstateparks.org.

JUNE 11–14 | Jazz it up in Danville, Kentucky, at the **Great American Brass Band Festival**. Bring a blanket or chair for concerts in the park, and enjoy ragtime favorites and big-band tunes, New Orleans-style parade marches, a Chautauqua tea, hot-air balloon race and more; (800) 755-0076, www.danvillekentucky.com.

JUNE 13 | Celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps' development of **Mount San Jacinto State Park** in Idyllwild, California, with a day of festivities that include a spike camp demonstration by the CCC, historic displays of Park Rustic architecture and stonework and original footage of the CCC at work. An evening campfire program, "A Tribute to the CCC," with hot cocoa and cider, culminates the day's events; (951) 659-2607, www.parks.ca.gov.

JUNE 13–14 | Break open a few bottles of vino at the **Uncork the Fun** wine festival in Cockeysville, Maryland. More than a dozen wineries are scheduled to participate, and the vintage samples will flow freely. A craft area, cooking and wine pairing seminars, live music and a kids activity booth make this a festival the whole family can enjoy; (800) 830-3976, www.uncorkthefun.com.

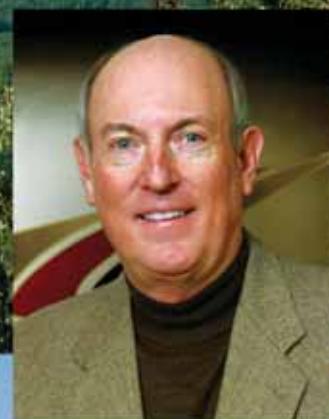
JUNE 27 | Help kick off the summer with a free festival in downtown Woodville, Alabama. The **Town of Woodville Festival** celebrates the town's heritage with live music, a barbeque, museum tours and a car, truck and motorcycle show; (256) 776-2860; www.800alabama.com.

Find more events at www.motorhomemagazine.com/calendar.

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WEAVING THE WEB

MotorHome's Web site

(www.motorhomemagazine.com) has recently undergone several revisions and updates. This means more features, exclusives and highlights for our readers.

Our home page now has a revamped "Web Exclusives" section that offers longer, more detailed travel stories that are only available on our Web site, with a new exclusive added every month.

Other changes include "Just for the Web" — a new online calendar of events that is updated weekly, and includes festivals, rallies and more; a new book review section within our "Lifestyle" page, which includes the latest guides, cookbooks and travelogues; and a revised "National Parks" section, which highlights events and news for the National Park Service.



News Briefs

The recently passed \$789 billion **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act** contains a provision specifically aimed at buyers of new motorhomes. Under the new stimulus plan, buyers of new cars, light trucks, motorcycles and motorhomes will be able to deduct a portion of the state or local sales or excise taxes from the purchase on their federal returns next year. The deduction is applicable to taxes paid applying to the first \$49,500 of a motorhome's purchase price. Individuals with an adjusted gross income of up to \$125,000 and joint filers with an adjusted gross income of up to \$250,000 are eligible for the deduction.

Winnebago Industries has been recognized for the eighth consecutive year as the nation's top-selling motorhome manufacturer according to **Statistical Surveys, Inc.**, a retail reporting service in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Winnebago Industries' dealers retailed more Class A and Class C motorhomes combined than any other manufacturer's dealer group in 2008, achieving 18.5 percent market share. Winnebago led the Class A gas market segment with 23.3 percent market share and the Class C market segment with 23.1 percent market share last year.

Kampgrounds of America (KOA) is adding 15 new parks in 11 states to its national system this year, bringing the number of KOA-affiliated campgrounds to more than 450 nationwide. The new parks range from convenient full-service overnight facilities to destination campgrounds, and include locations in California, Idaho, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

Aon Recreation Insurance has changed its name to **PoliSeek RV Insurance**. In addition to specialty RV coverage, PoliSeek offers a range of insurance services that includes auto and homeowners. The name transition will not have an impact on operations or policy benefits.

Thousand Trails is spending \$2 million to upgrade its camping preserves. Some of the projects include road improvements, campsite renovations, major electrical upgrades, and added amenities such as new playgrounds, paddle boats, kayaks, picnic tables and barbecue grills.



Pool furniture upgrades at Pio Pico Thousand Trails in California.

AUTOMATIC DINGHY BATTERY DISCONNECT

If you have a dinghy

vehicle that requires that its battery cable be disconnected before you tow — such as a late-model Buick Enclave, Chevy Equinox Sport, Dodge Dakota, GMC Acadia, Hummer H2, Jeep

Liberty or Wrangler, Pontiac Torrent GXP, or Smart fortwo — Roadmaster's Automatic Battery Disconnect eliminates the need to pull the cable. After the initial installation, the dinghy can be towed and then driven without any adjustment to the battery.

The Automatic Battery Disconnect provides a constant current to the battery during towing, as well as a power source for break-away systems or other accessories that must be connected to the battery, so there's always a full-charge on the battery during and after towing.

The Automatic Battery Disconnect has an MSRP of \$177 and is preassembled for easy installation.

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PRICKETT HOMESTEAD

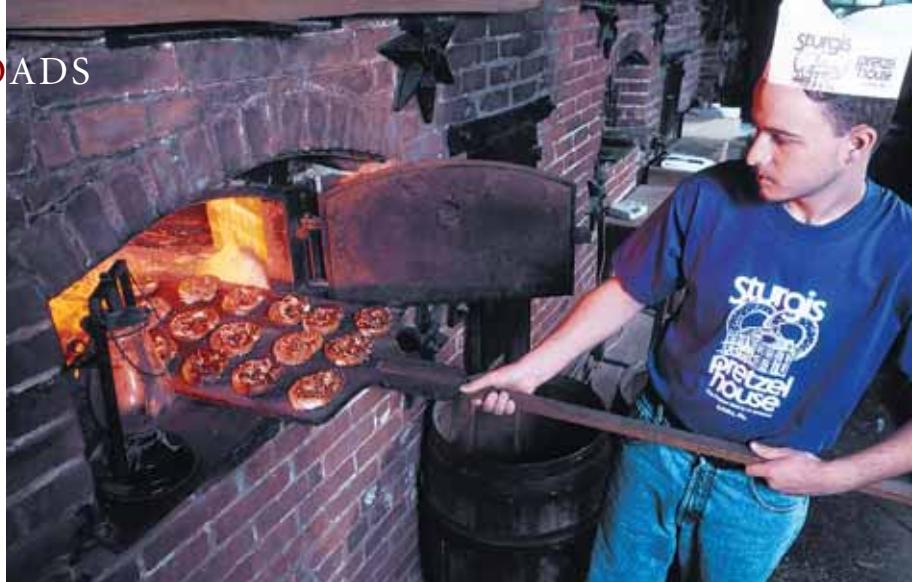
When Jacob Prickett, his wife and 11 children wanted to settle down, they chose a small knoll overlooking the Monongahela River. Prickett soon learned that he was settling in Shawnee country, so Pricketts Fort was established for the settlers' protection.



Prickett's Fort State Park in Fairmont, West Virginia, was rebuilt in 1976 as a living-history museum, where costumed guides demonstrate their skills as spinners, weavers and potters. The visitors center offers a 15-minute orientation video and exhibition, and posts a schedule of tours and demonstrations. The park also houses a pottery shop, gun shop, historic gardens, Prickett Cemetery and Prickett House, which is listed in the *National Register of Historic Places*.

After your tour, you might want to enjoy a riverside picnic or hike or bike along a picturesque trail that follows the banks of the Monongahela. Your visit could coincide with entertainment in the Pricketts Fort Amphitheater. The park hosts concerts, plays and other events throughout the year, many of them free. The park is open April 15 through the end of October.

For more information, call (800) 225-5982, or go to www.prickettsfort.org. — Beverly Edwards



A TWISTED BUSINESS

In 1850, Julius Sturgis — who, according to legend, was given the recipe by a hungry traveler he had fed — started baking pretzels in his bread bakery. So popular were his pretzels that by 1861 he gave up bread baking and became the first commercial pretzel baker in America.

Today, the Sturgis Pretzel Bakery still occupies the same sturdy stone home in Lititz, Pennsylvania. Built in 1784, the occupants of the fortress-like building may have at times protected themselves from attacks by firing muskets from its cellar windows. Today you can take a bakery tour and try your hand at pretzel twisting — and receive your own Official Pretzel Twisters Certificate.

For more information, call (717) 626-4354, or visit www.juliussturgis.com. — Bob Difley

LIFE ON THE RAILS

The Big South Fork Scenic Railway is a great way to see some lovely scenery while learning about Kentucky's coal mining history. Starting in Stearns, one of Kentucky's last remaining company-built coal and lumber towns, the train passes



through Barthell, a coal camp established in 1902.

From Barthell the train rolls through rugged timberlands, hugging the hillsides until it makes a stop at Blue Heron Interpretive Site. Here visitors take a self-guided oral history tour in which past residents and

workers tell their story in their own words via audio recordings housed in "ghost structures" — representative structures of where the actual buildings stood years ago.

In addition to the ghost structures, there is a picnic area, gift shop and concession stand. The railway operates seasonally, April through early November. Train fare includes admission to the McCreary County Museum, which is within walking distance of the depot in Stearns.

For more information, call (800) 462-5664, or go to www.bsfsry.com. — Ellen Clark ♦

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VENTURING OFF THE

From lush gardens and rivers to historic battlefields and limestone caverns, Florida's Interstate-10 state park system offers a diverse trove of treasures

by PAMELA SELBERT

Florida's state parks are as varied as they are numerous — 161 of them scattered throughout the Sunshine State. Studying the map as my husband, Guy, and I drove Interstate 10 west from Jacksonville to Pensacola, we noted a host of state parks positioned within easy reach of the highway. We visited as many of the parks as we could fit into our itinerary, though we weren't able to see all of the parks along the interstate. Larry Arrant, park services specialist at Suwannee River State Park, said, "We call our parks 'the real Florida'" — where visitors can hike, bike, camp, canoe, fish, birdwatch and enjoy some history. On our quest, we were able to do a little of all of that, and more.



1,800-acre Suwannee River State Park is a popular location for hiking, fishing, boating and canoeing.

PHOTOS: GUY SELBERT; VISIT FLORIDA; FLORIDA STATE PARKS

BEATEN PATH

OLUSTEE BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC STATE PARK

Leaving behind the modern metropolis of Jacksonville, we drove, on the interstate, into a seemingly remote world of tall pines, ferns and palmettos. This is the setting for three-acre Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park, the state's first designated historic site.

Here, where Union forces were defeated trying to cut the supply lines between Florida and the Confederate Army, is a small but first-rate interpretive center that tells the story. Through a variety of exhibits, including dioramas, artifacts and early photos, visitors learn that Florida was one of the Southern army's main sources of cotton, beef, pork, timber, salt and turpentine. A 40-minute video, *Battle*

of Olustee, with a cast of 2,000 re-enactors, explains the Federal army's 1864 attempt to bring Florida back into the Union and end the war. The Battle of Olustee was Florida's largest Civil War battle.

Today, a one-mile-long trail circles the battlefield and signs explain the fight and troop positions. There is also a monument erected by the Florida Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy located at the site. An annual re-enactment of the battle is held the third weekend in February.

STEPHEN FOSTER STATE FOLK CULTURE CENTER STATE PARK

The 850-acre Stephen Foster State Folk Culture Center State Park,



Clockwise from top: Though Florida Caverns State Park offers camping, hiking, biking and fishing, the main draw is its phenomenal cave formations, showcasing stalactites, stalagmites, soda straws and other breathtaking formations. Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park, the state's first designated historic site, is popular with Civil War buffs. Peak blooming season at Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park is January through April, when you can see vivid azaleas and other lush flora.





FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Above: Blackwater River State Park is popular with swimmers, waders and canoers. Though the water is colored a dark brown by tannin, it's one of the purest black water rivers in the country. **Right:** Lake Jackson Mounds Archaeological State Park is considered one of the most important archaeological sites in Florida.

named for the composer of “Old Folks at Home (aka Swanee River),” Florida’s state song, was next on our route west. Foster never actually saw the river, which glides slowly past the park. He simply chose the name “for its lilt.”

Drive the park’s loop road to the Stephen Foster Museum, built to resemble an antebellum plantation home. Here, among other exhibits, dioramas set into the walls depict scenes from many of Foster’s most popular songs such as “Camptown Races” and “My Old Kentucky Home.”

Also here is 250-foot tall Carillon Tower with a 97-bell carillon, the world’s largest tubular bell instruments, which plays Foster songs throughout the day. Nearby at Craft Square, artisans demonstrate the handiwork of early Florida settlers: quilting, pottery, candle making, blacksmithing and more. The Cousin Thelma Boltin Craft and Gift Shop sells a variety of regional foods,

crafts and Foster memorabilia.

The park offers 45 oak-shaded campground sites, a six-mile hiking/biking trail with dramatic overlooks of the river, and, near the south entrance, White Sulfur Springs, known for its curative powers.

Annual events include an Antique Tractor and Engine Show the first weekend in April, and a three-day Florida Folk Festival during Memorial Day weekend.

SUWANNEE RIVER STATE PARK

Continuing west, we stopped at 1,800-acre Suwannee River State Park in a lovely, more primitive setting at the confluence of the Withlacoochee and Suwannee rivers. Four hiking trails, totaling 13 miles, wind through the park and along the rivers, where boating and canoeing are popular.

From the boat ramp we watched the Suwannee glide past, red-brown with tannic acid, gurgling around knobby cypress

knees, and there met Dale and Teresa Goss, from Lake City, Florida, who were returning from a day of fishing. Dale had a cooler full of red-belly sunfish, and told us that nearly three dozen other types of fish inhabit the Suwannee — among them channel cat, largemouth bass and bluegill.

The park’s campground has 30 sites, all with electricity, water and picnic tables.

ALFRED B. MACLAY GARDENS STATE PARK

Next, we drove on to Tallahassee and the spectacular 1,184-acre Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park. The rolling red hills, lavish with camellias, azaleas, dogwoods, redbuds and dozens of others, were purchased by New York financier Alfred Maclay and his wife, Louise, in 1923. Here, at the family’s Southern retreat, Maclay designed 28 acres of magnificent formal gardens overlooking placid Lake Hall. Blooming sea-



MAP ILLUSTRATION: SUE CARLSON

son is January through April.

Paths lead visitors past a walled garden, a secret garden, ponds and a reflection pool. This day-use park also includes Lake Overstreet, rimmed by a hiking/biking trail; one-and-a-half miles of nature trails; and the Maclay home, now a museum.

LAKE JACKSON MOUNDS ARCHAEOLOGICAL STATE PARK

Lake Jackson Mounds Archaeological State Park, considered one of the most important archaeological sites in Florida, is a short drive west, also in Tallahassee. The 170-acre site was once an important religious and social complex of the Southern Cult, a prehistoric Native American culture, which flourished around A.D. 1200.

The complex is made up of six earthen temple mounds — two available for public viewing — where numerous artifacts have been found: shell bead necklaces, bracelets, pottery, stone tools and copper breastplates. Researchers believe that Lake Jackson Indians may have traded with tribes as far north as Tennessee and as far west as Oklahoma.

A half-mile-long loop trail leads through a wooded area of pines, oaks and wildflowers, and past remnants of Florida's territorial period and early statehood, 1825–1860, when the site was part of a plantation owned by Col. Robert Butler, the state's first surveyor general. Guided tours are available with two weeks' advance notice; an interpretive kiosk offers information.

TORREYA STATE PARK

We continued west to Torreya State Park, which has 13,000 acres, including bluffs along the Apalachicola River, laced with 16 miles of hiking trails through woods that are home to more than 100 bird species. The torrey tree for which the park was named was decimated by a fungal blight in the late 1950s. However, a few small trees still stand in the ravines and hills of the park. Restoration efforts to re-establish the torrey tree are underway.

During the Civil War, Confederate cannons guarded against Union gunboats from atop the bluff. The gun pits remain, and the once-grand Gregory House, built in 1849 by plantation owner Jason Gregory, is nearby, moved from across the river by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) when the park was established in 1935. Guided

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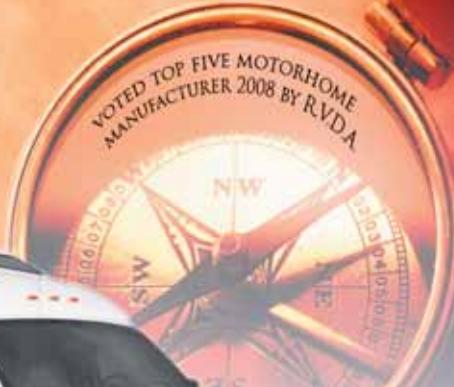
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VENTURING OFF THE BEATEN PATH

tours are available, and an annual candlelight house tour is held the first Saturday in February. The park's campground has 30 sites with electric and water hookups.

FLORIDA CAVERNS STATE PARK

Florida Caverns State Park, a 1,300-acre sanctuary webbed with six miles of hiking/biking/horse trails, is ahead. Wildflowers — red and gold columbines, trillium, white bloodroot, May apples and others — are at their finest here, and the Chipola River, which bisects the park, is immensely popular for canoeing and fishing.

The park offers 38 campsites with partial hookups, but the main reason to visit this park is for the caverns, which began forming some 38 million years ago, and are a showplace of speleothems: caramel-rich stalactites, stalagmites, flowstone, soda straws, draperies and other formations. Guided tours are available (on trails built by the CCC 70 years ago).

FALLING WATERS STATE PARK

Falling Waters State Park lives up to its name — though probably not how you might expect. Instead of cascades of water pouring over craggy bluffs, what you see here is an enormous sinkhole, 100 feet deep and 20 feet across, where the water "falls." A slender stream pours over the lip and disappears into the ground nearly 70 feet below. An observation platform provides a view deep into the straight-sided hole.

This sinkhole, and the 173-acre park's many other smaller ones, was created by surface water, acidic with rotted plant matter, seeping through the limestone bedrock, dissolving it into "karst" systems, or caves. Hiking trails totaling one mile wind among the sinkholes and to a two-acre lake where you can swim and fish. There's also a campground with two dozen sites, all of which offer partial hookups.

PONCE DE LEON SPRINGS STATE PARK

At 403-acre Ponce de Leon Springs State Park, some 14 million gallons of fresh water flow daily from an underwater cavern into a mirror-smooth pool, which may have been what the explorer hoped was the "fountain of youth." Bald cypresses stand along its edges, and a curved stone and concrete wall rimming it includes stairs descending into the crystal-clear water, which even on the

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The cool, clear water at Ponce de Leon Springs State Park comes from underground water flows, and produces a water temperature of 68°F year-round.

hottest summer afternoon stays at 68°F.

The 350-foot spring run empties into Sandy Creek, then into the Choctawhatchee River, which flows, not too many miles south, into the Gulf of Mexico. Swimming and fishing are popular here, as are picnicking and hiking on one mile of trails.

BLACKWATER RIVER STATE PARK

The last state park we visited was Blackwater River State Park, which spans 590 acres and includes a mile of pristine riverfront. The river, which begins 45 miles north in

Alabama's Conecuh National Forest, is perfect for swimming, wading and canoeing. From the park the Blackwater, stained the color of strong tea by tannin from tree bark and other plants, meanders another 13 miles south, emptying into Blackwater Bay and from there the Gulf. The river's color is misleading: it's considered one of the purest black water rivers in the country.

Chain of Lakes, a one-and-a-half-mile trail, parallels the river and passes several small oxbows. Once, the oxbows were part of the meandering river, but as its course changed, the small arcs of river were sealed off to become lovely tree-shaded lakes. A network of boardwalks spans swampy areas linking picnic pavilions; there's a playground, and also a campground with 30 sites for RVs.

With the Blackwater, our three-day tour of Florida's I-10 state parks came to an end — though not before we discovered places we'd like to visit again, as well as parks to visit that we missed this time around. I read somewhere that "folks who don't have time to stop and smell the roses drive the interstates." This trip proves you can do both. ♦

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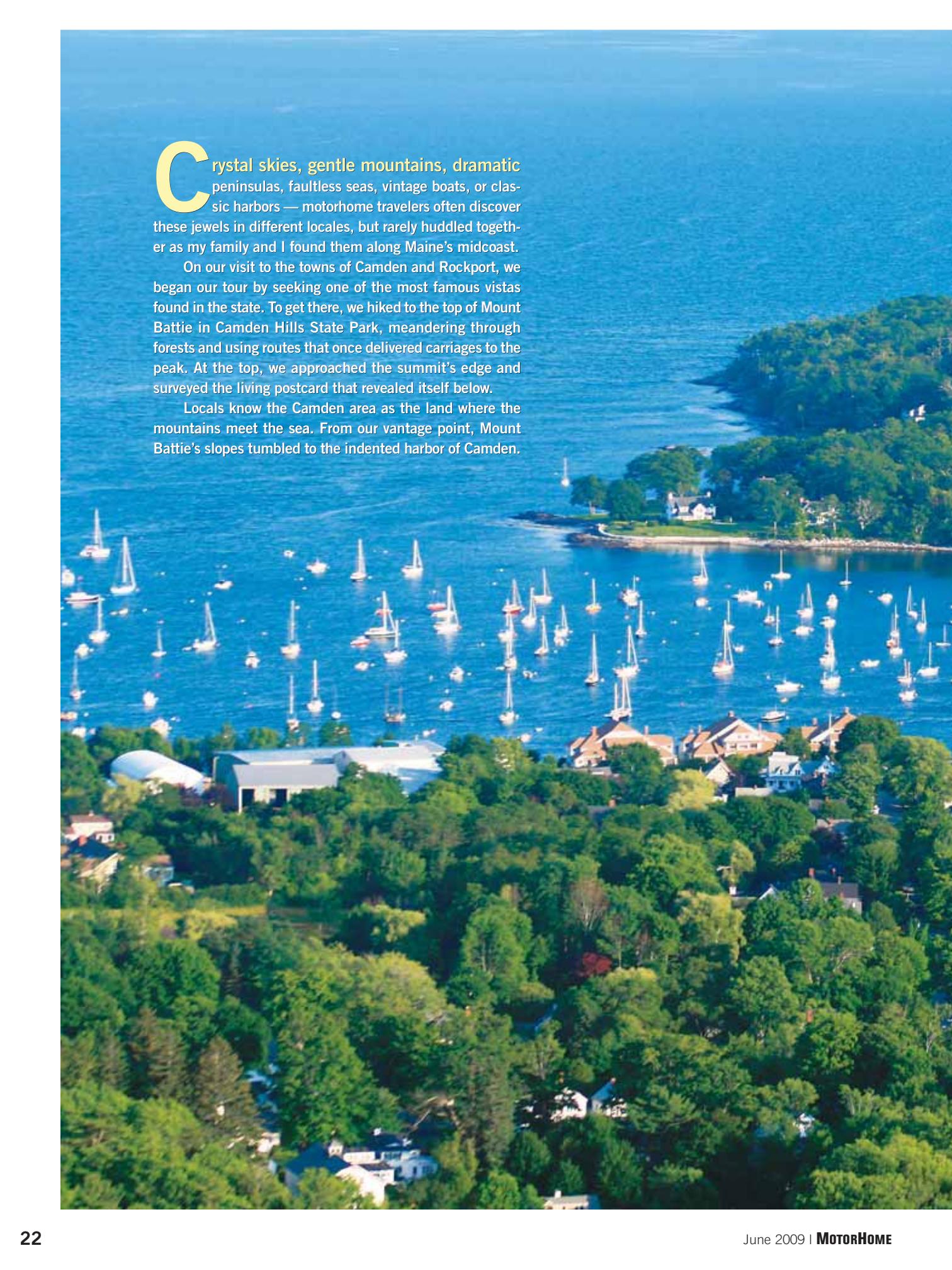
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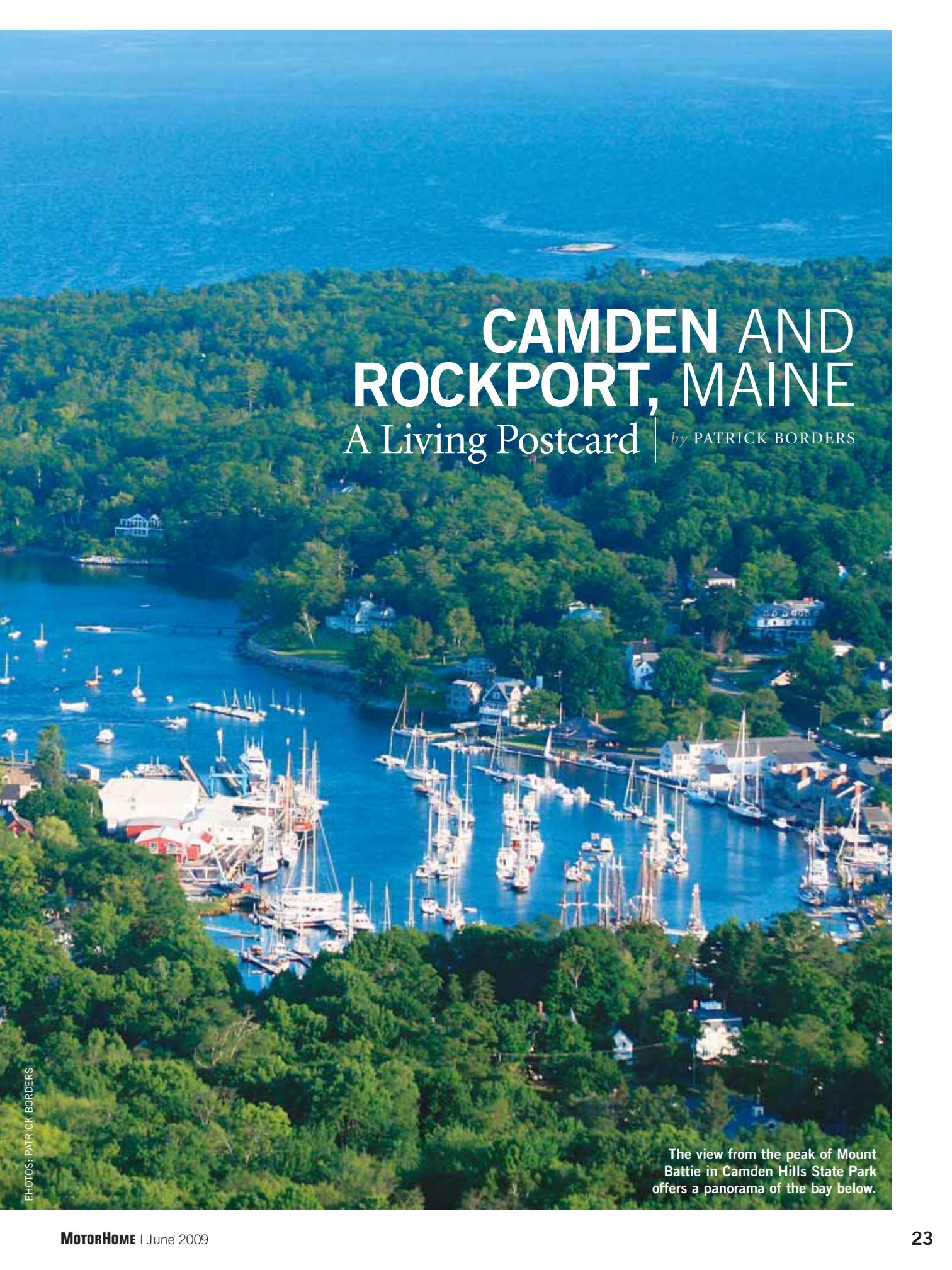
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An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Camden, Maine. The foreground is dominated by a dense forest of green trees. In the middle ground, a cluster of buildings, including a large white structure and several smaller houses, is visible. The background shows a large body of blue water filled with numerous sailboats, extending to a distant shoreline with more trees and a few buildings.

Crystal skies, gentle mountains, dramatic peninsulas, faultless seas, vintage boats, or classic harbors — motorhome travelers often discover these jewels in different locales, but rarely huddled together as my family and I found them along Maine's midcoast.

On our visit to the towns of Camden and Rockport, we began our tour by seeking one of the most famous vistas found in the state. To get there, we hiked to the top of Mount Battie in Camden Hills State Park, meandering through forests and using routes that once delivered carriages to the peak. At the top, we approached the summit's edge and surveyed the living postcard that revealed itself below.

Locals know the Camden area as the land where the mountains meet the sea. From our vantage point, Mount Battie's slopes tumbled to the indented harbor of Camden.



CAMDEN AND ROCKPORT, MAINE

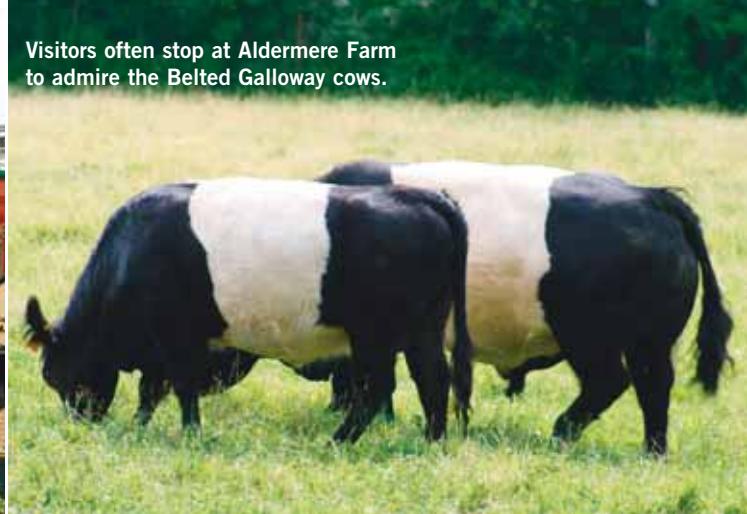
A Living Postcard | *by* PATRICK BORDERS

The view from the peak of Mount Battie in Camden Hills State Park offers a panorama of the bay below.

A view of Camden and the Public Landing from the harbor.



Visitors often stop at Aldermere Farm to admire the Belted Galloway cows.



Rockport's most famous resident: Andre the seal.



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There, the emerald Penobscot Bay cut along the shore, stretching from Camden to the neighboring Rockport Harbor. The bay's sparkling waters and gentle winds caressed the windjammers and yachts that drifted among the islands.

The view evoked a postcard image with its startling beauty. For an even better view, we climbed the summit's World War I-commemorative stone tower for a 360-degree panorama of the shoreline and the 5,500-acre park. There, we could observe the mature forests, rolling hills and the peak of Mount Megunticook.

In addition to the views, Camden Hills State Park offers 30 miles of trails, which wander among fertile lowlands, cliffs and peaks, and offer glimpses of whitetail deer, foxes and turkey vultures surfing on the thermals. The park also extends across U.S. Highway 1 where it abruptly meets the bay. Along the water's edge, the Shoreline Trail provides a pleasant spot for picnicking.

Next, we hiked down the Mount Battie Trail from the summit, stopping occasionally at clearings to soak in ever-closer views of Camden. After half a mile, we arrived at Megunticook Street in town, ready to enjoy the harbor and in-town treasures.

Once downtown, we headed to Commercial Street and a picture-perfect scene at the Public Landing, where we found a bench to rest and watch the bustle of dockside activity. The deep harbor has a long history of ship activity. In the late 19th century, hundreds of sailing vessels transported material between local mills and ports along the coast. Many local windjammers got their start during that long-ago heyday but have since been refitted for modern passenger service.

At the Public Landing, visitors can experience the region's maritime tradition by hopping aboard one of the boats for a one-

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to two-hour excursion, or a one- or multiday cruise. Passengers traveling across the shimmering bay enjoy the sights of schooners passing by, lobstermen hauling traps, and mountains and rocks jutting into the sea.

Visitors can also take a lobster boat trip where they learn first-hand how the beloved crustaceans are caught, and water lovers can kayak to Curtis Island at the harbor's entrance. The island hosts a lighthouse and keeper's house and provides a unique picnic locale surrounded by colorful lobster buoys bobbing in the sea.

As with many coastal towns, the summer draws plenty of tourists and traffic. Camden roads can clog during that time, so we opted to do most of our sightseeing on foot.

Ready to tour the town, we began with the Chamber of Commerce office just off the Landing. The center offers information regarding the activities in the area, including a self-guided tour of more than 50 historic sites in Camden and Rockport.

It's easy to get hooked on Camden's eateries, galleries and shops. As a booklover, I made a beeline to The Owl and Turtle Bookshop, one of the town's more distinctive stores. Located in the Knox Mill a block from the waterfront, it's Camden's oldest year-round full-service bookstore.

Off Bay View Street, shoppers will find ABCD Books, which offers a large stock of rare and out-of-print books. If the weather turns inclement, visitors can peruse the Camden Library, which sits atop Harbor Hill on Main Street. The library occupies one of the most scenic spots in town, with ideal views of the harbor.

While on Main Street, we visited the Smiling Cow, a Camden tradition since 1940. The Smiling Cow offers the perfect spot to pick up collectibles and food with a distinctive Maine flair. Its back deck also lures customers to its impressive view of the harbor and the Megunticook River waterfall.

One more place shoppers often visit is Once a Tree, a fascinating store that showcases the work of talented woodcrafters. For 25 years, the store has sold finely crafted items, such as hanging chairs, masterful chessboards and pieces, and jewelry boxes hewn from maple, cherry and bubinga.

Once visitors work up an appetite from all that shopping, they can hit some of Camden's many restaurants for steamed lobster, lobster rolls or creamy chowder. The Waterfront Restaurant offers a large waterside deck; the Atlantica bistro cooks up original seafood dishes; and Cappy's Chowder House delivers a lively local atmosphere.

After touring Camden, we headed on foot to the adjacent town of Rockport. Camden and Rockport were once the same town, but separated in 1891 over the cost of a new bridge. The two towns are still connected by a well-known arch that spans over Union Street. The white arch reads "Camden" and "Rockport" on opposite sides and is familiar to many people who recall the opening scene from the 1957 movie *Peyton Place*.

We took the walking tour toward Rockport, which follows

Chestnut Street then turns into Russell Avenue. The route ascends near the coast and showcases a parade of quintessential Maine "cottages." Dramatic trees and flower gardens adorn the yards of the grand shingled, clapboard and brick homes.

Between the towns, we discovered the picturesque farm of Aldermere, which remains as it did more than a century ago. However, the fields and pond didn't attract our attention as much as the cattle grazing on the farm. America's first herd of Belted Galloways — imported from Scotland beginning in the 1950s — call Aldermere home. People often nickname them Oreo-cookie cows for their distinctive hide pattern with a vertical white midriff. There, we stood along the fence with other tourists to photograph the lumbering beasts.

Once in Rockport, we crossed the Rockport Bridge and headed to Rockport Marine Park at the harbor. Although smaller than Camden's, Rockport's harbor is home to a windjammer and many boats. Rockport was once one of the largest lime-producing towns and provided lime for the Capitol in Washington, D.C. Rockport Marine Park includes the 19th-century remains of lime-producing kilns and an antique steam engine that transported raw rock from quarries.

The park is also home to a granite statue of Rockport's most famous citizen: Andre the harbor seal. In 1961 a local resident, Harry Goodridge, tamed Andre, and for more than two decades, Andre entertained visitors to the harbor. Andre wintered at the New England Aquarium in Boston, but every spring he would be released into the Boston Harbor and would make his way home to Rockport. Several books and even a motion picture have retold Andre's story.

After visiting Rockport, we caught our ride for the short drive back to Camden Hills State Park. Along the way, however, we stopped at the Vesper Hill Children's Chapel in the woods off Calderwood Lane. With a view of Penobscot Bay, the nondenominational outdoor chapel — dedicated to the world's children — is considered one of the most picturesque spots in Maine to be married. Once there, we basked in the scenery's contemplative beauty and walked around the elaborate gardens and lawns that surround the chapel.

Another ideal spot for nature and contemplation is the 66-acre Meryspring Nature Center, which is also found between Rockport and Camden. The privately owned park and education center offers gardens and nature trails. The 10-acre Kitty Todd Arboretum also showcases many of the area's native trees and shrubs. From the meadows, visitors will find exquisite countryside views, and from trails along woods and wetlands, they can glimpse sightings of animals, such as deer and fox.

As the summer sun approached the horizon, we returned to Camden Hills State Park and enjoyed a picnic overlooking the harbor. The reds and oranges of the fading day filled our panoramic postcard, while shadows inched across the now-familiar landscape. We sat on a large rock, ate lobster rolls and relished the postcard that our footsteps had brought to life. ♦

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Often known by the moniker Festival City, Edmonton, Alberta, is redefining Canada's creative age

by KAITLYN VOYCE

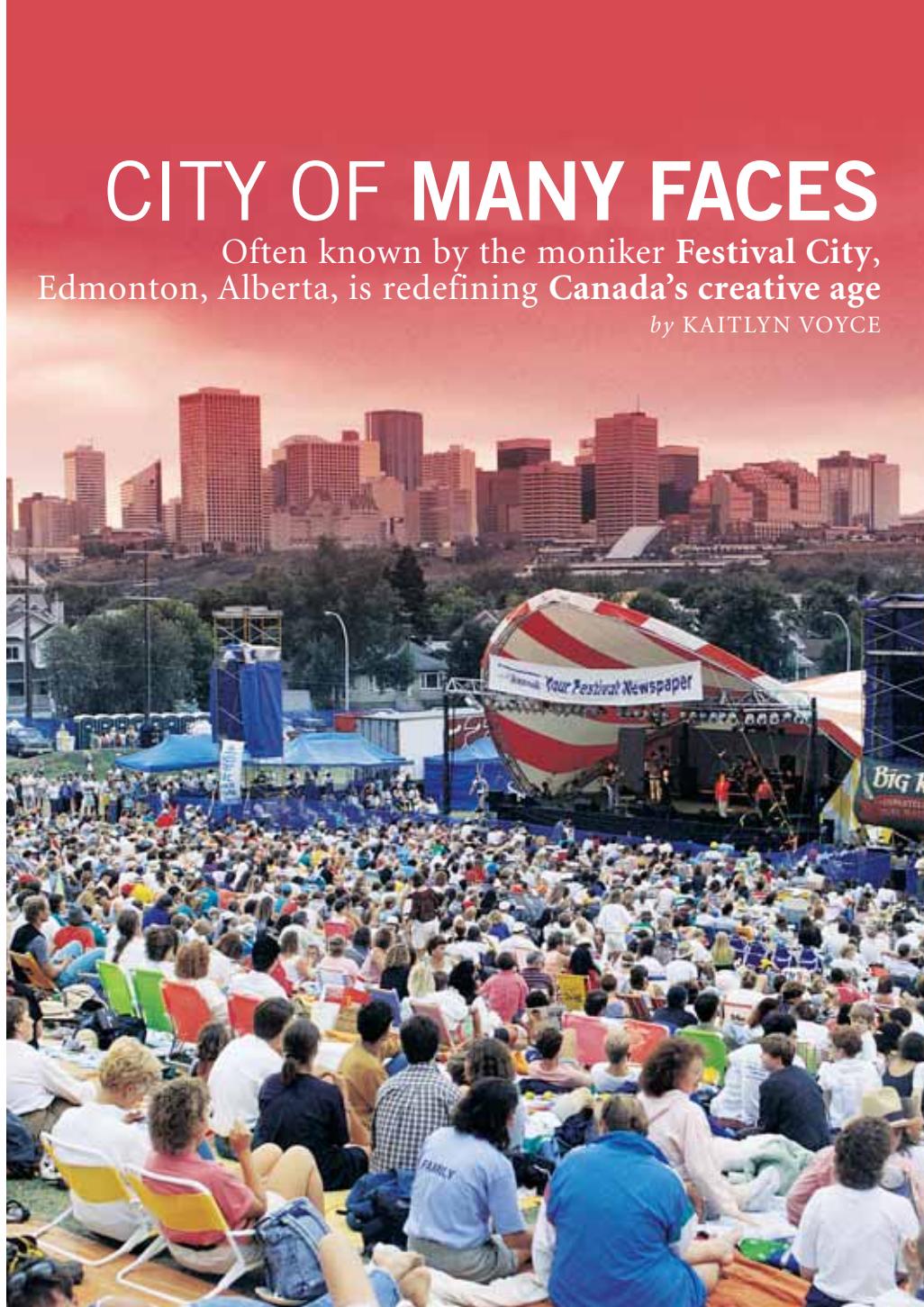
As I drive toward Edmonton, Alberta, all I see is open space — not something I usually associate with cities and urban areas. Then, from the open landscape of miles of valleys and rivers, the tall buildings and life of a city emerge.

Edmonton is located in the central part of Alberta, Canada, with most other major cities and attractions located at least three hours away. The city is growing by the day as more and more people are drawn to what it has to offer — it is the capital of Alberta, the Gateway to the Canadian Rockies, the Festival City and was named Canada's Cultural Capital. Whether you are visiting as a stopover on your way to Jasper or Banff, or coming to town for a festival, Edmonton has enough culture, history, outdoor activities and shopping to keep any RVer busy for days.

Edmonton is motorhome friendly, with mostly wide and easy-to-navigate streets. As with any metropolitan area that is home to around a million people, there can be some traffic and parking issues. And, while it feels less urban than other cities of the same size, those with larger motorhomes may want to use their dinghy vehicles to avoid any parking problems.

The city's somewhat isolated location led locals to develop it into the cultural epicenter that it is today. Although modern transportation has made travel

Top: At Gallagher Park in the River Valley, thousands of spectators gather to hear a mix of Canadian and international artists at the Edmonton Folk Music Festival. **Bottom:** The Edmonton Dragon Boat Festival is a popular cultural and sporting event for Edmontonians.





Clockwise from top: The month-long Vocal Arts Festival features performances by members of Opera NUOVA, a training organization for operatic musicians across Canada. Edmonton's International Fringe Theatre Festival, showcasing unjuried, cutting-edge theater, is the largest festival of its type in the world. The dioramas and galleries at the Royal Alberta Museum are one-of-a-kind, such as this Wild Alberta exhibit, in which visitors learn about the wildlife of the area. The inaugural year of the Creative Age Festival offered arts workshops on painting, singing, acting and more. The Festival Party featured a night of entertainment from the popular Trocadero Orchestra, swing and ballroom dance with Arthur Murray students and a special address by the mayor of the city.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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throughout the province and country easier, it still takes a considerable amount of time to reach Calgary, the nearest major city. As a result, Edmontonians take great pride in their city and have developed their own theaters, music venues, art galleries and, perhaps most notably, multiple festivals.

The city hosts an average of one festival per month all year long. With cultural and sporting events such as the Edmonton Dragon Boat Festival and arts, family and music events like the Edmonton Folk Music Festival and the Vocal Arts Festival, the festivals cover everything. They range in size from the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival, which draws more than 500,000 people per year, to the smaller

Creative Age Festival, which drew some 1,000 visitors in 2008, its inaugural year.

I came to Edmonton to experience the beginnings of the Creative Age Festival. The goal of the festival is to “recognize the vital contributions of the arts to lifelong learning, creative expression, health and well-being in later life” and the enthusiasm and passion everyone had for the cause was infectious. For the first week of June, venues throughout the city filled with festival-goers attending classes, workshops, film screenings, parties, events, lectures and more. (This year's festival will be held June 9–16.)

The first night began with a film screening at the Edmonton Public Library. *The Courage to Dream*, a film about a group

COSMOPOLITAN FRONTIER



of actors who discover and rediscover their passion for the theater later in life, embodied the theme of the festival, as many in attendance were coming back to the arts after years of raising families and working. *Do Not Go Gently* was a powerful film about a quilter, a dancer and a composer who worked into their 80s, 90s and 100s. After the films, a panel of experts on aging and the arts led a discussion.

By far, one of the most interesting workshops was “Act Your Age — Improvisation and Play Building” with a group called the GeriActors. While most of the participants were members of the company and seasoned veterans at improv, everyone was eager to include newbies in the exercises. We partnered up, acting out instructions of our partners’ favorite activities, and creating a “family portrait.” Participants were anywhere from 60 to 90 years old, from all over North America. The mayor of Edmonton, Stephen Mandel, even stopped by to visit with festival participants.

Another interesting class was music composition, where everyone sang the “Creative Age Blues” and learned how sounds and words become music. The watercolor workshop was intimate and informative.

Edmonton has more to offer than just festivals, however. The city is home to numerous theater and music venues. There are 20 theater companies and dozens of acting co-ops that perform throughout the city at places such as Whyte Avenue — an area that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

Past meets present in Edmonton, Alberta, as today’s tourists cool off at World Waterpark in West Edmonton Mall (top), while visitors to the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (above) interact with re-enactors portraying Ukrainian pioneers.

In Edmonton, a small store’s stock consists of barrels of coffee, sugar and flour, a few packets of spice and a dozen other staples. It even takes beaver pelts in trade. Five miles away, under one roof, are more than 800 stores and services, an ice-skating rink, an amusement park, movie theaters and an enormous water park. This indoor urban city is North America’s shopping Mecca — West Edmonton Mall.

Edmonton is a well-rounded city made up of more than just a shoppers’ paradise. In addition to West Edmonton Mall, the area offers Fort Edmonton Park (Canada’s largest living-history museum), the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, the largest stretch of urban parkland in North America, 80 golf courses, greenhouses under glass pyramids and a chance to see Canada’s northern frontier. Edmonton is indeed a frontier city — the last cosmopolitan stop before the Arctic.

Edmonton’s claim to the most parkland is based on the 18,348-acre North Saskatchewan River Valley that wriggles through the city and has 100 miles of trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding. Adding to the greenery is Muttart Conservatory, where four glass pyramids protect collections of exotic plants. With themes of tropical, temperate and arid, the conservatory’s 79-foot-high peaks shield plants from outside temperatures.

The ultramodern glass structures contrast with sprawling Fort Edmonton, which displays four important historic eras in the development of the city. It starts with an 1846 Hudson’s Bay trading post with its sparse stock of food, moves on to a typical 1885 street, evolves to a commercial scene from 1905 and then presents a 1920s avenue complete with streetcars. Rides on a steam train and streetcar are included in the admission and stagecoach, wagon and pony rides are available for an extra fee.

Alberta’s camping season runs May through early October and RVers can find

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



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CITY OF MANY FACES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

is becoming known for its independent theater scene — or at the Citadel, the premiere venue for stage shows in Western Canada.

Twice a year the 12-block Gallery Walk, the first of its kind in Canada, takes art lovers on tours of eight member galleries. These galleries, just a few of more than 60 galleries and exhibits scattered throughout the city, display local, national and international art. I particularly enjoyed the West End Gallery, which has been family owned for more than three decades. More than 65 glass artists and 40 painters, including Canadian painter Gerald Sevier, have displayed their work here. Another excellent gallery is the Douglas Udell Gallery, which focuses on contemporary art and had amazing paintings of native North Americans by Nicholas de Grandmaison.

The Royal Alberta Museum displays the history of the province and nation. Their First Nations exhibit, Syncrude Gallery of Aboriginal Culture, is one of the best, with more than 3,000 artifacts on display. The exhibit includes the Manitou Stone, an ancient meteorite that is sacred to the Cree tribe. The museum, especially the Syncrude Gallery, is known for its lifelike murals, and throughout the museum the muralists left their mark on their work. One artist painted his grandfather's "spirit" into the trees of a mural in the Aboriginal gallery; another worked his initials into the yellow leaves of a beaver display in the Wild Alberta gallery.

Although Edmonton is known for culture, it is still a very casual city. Edmontonians love being outdoors and many head to the North Saskatchewan River Valley for a jog or hike on their lunch breaks. The River Valley gives Edmonton its lush, green landscape. With 18,348 acres, the River Valley is 22 times larger than New York's Central Park. Beyond the approximately 93 miles of trails for biking, hiking and jogging, there are opportunities for kayaking, picnicking and more. And, best of all, you can enjoy any of these activities and still go out to dinner with minimal effort, since most restaurants don't have strict dress codes.

Edmonton may have the sizeable population and tall buildings of a typical urban city, but being the Festival City, Canada's Cultural Capital and Gateway to the Rockies make it so much more than just another North American metropolis.

COSMOPOLITAN FRONTIER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

10 or so parks that are close to the city. Glowing Embers RV Park, which is just eight minutes from West Edmonton Mall, is open year-round and has 288 full-hookup sites. Whitemud Creek Golf and RV Resort is adjacent to an exclusive nine-hole golf course. About 30 miles east of the city, Elk Island National Park provides basic camping and offers a chance to see herds of wild bison as well as elk, deer and moose. Bird life is abundant with trumpeter swans and sandhill cranes making appearances. The main campground is at Sandy Beach on Astotin Lake.

East of Edmonton the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village honors one of the oldest settlements of Ukrainians in North America. Starting in 1892, waves of settlers from western Ukraine found new homes and farms in east-central Alberta. The village duplicates rural and urban settlements, and the guides dress in the costumes of the time.

Although the heritage parks, buffalo herds, greenhouses and greenway are all worthy attractions, there's no doubt about what brings most tourists to Edmonton: shopping. Any visitor to the spectacular West Edmonton Mall, which first opened its doors in 1981, will readily agree that West Edmonton Mall more closely resembles a small city than an average urban shopping mall. In addition to a proliferation of retail shops and restaurants, the mall hosts a dizzying array of entertainment choices, including an ice skating rink, themed amusement park and a water park, which is home to more than 20 water slides and attractions, including the world's largest indoor wave pool, a children's play area and the world's tallest indoor permanent bungee tower. Next to a cluster of 13 movie screens a monstrous fire-breathing dragon keeps you entertained if you have to line up.

Throughout the day, shows with sea lions relieve the drudgery of shopping. The skating rink attracts figure skaters and hockey teams alongside those who are putting blades on their feet for the first time. An incomplete list of things to do and see at the mall includes bumper boats, aquariums, miniature golf, billiards, bowling, arcades and dinner theater. Did I mention shopping? — *Jim Couper* ♦



Does the sight of frothy white water whirling down a mountain canyon make your river sandals quiver? Do you dream of rafting over giant rapids and careening off rocks as you plunge through swirling waves of green water cascades? Even if this isn't your idea of "fun," you can watch others enjoy the simple pleasures of rafting on the rampaging Payette River along Idaho State Highway 55 — the Payette River National Scenic Byway.

Though you may delight in the sights and sounds of the shrieking rafters, the natural scenic beauty of the Payette itself as it flows through South Fork Canyon merits the trip. Luckily, there are several turnouts along the byway to safely experience the power and the beauty of the Payette, one of Idaho's famous white-water rivers.

The rain and snow that fall on more than 2,200 square miles of forest tumble down dozens of mountain canyons, eventually emptying into the Payette River, which in turn merges into the Snake River at the town of Payette on the Idaho–Oregon border. You can follow the river upstream from

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HIKING, FISHING AND
WHITE-WATER RAFTING
AWAIT ALONG THE
PAYETTE RIVER
NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

by BOB & LYNN DIFLEY

Top: Parts of the North Fork of the Payette River — a major tributary of the Snake River — can be deceptively calm. Right: Adventurous rafters and kayakers may encounter Class III and IV rapids along some of the more tumultuous sections of the river, especially the South Fork.





Cascade Reservoir supports a large population of rainbow trout for fishing enthusiasts.

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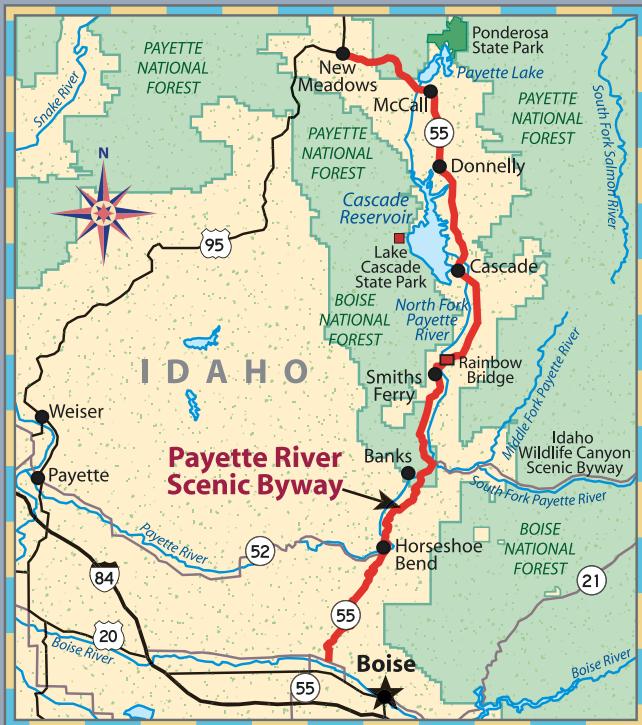
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Boise in the south, through the forested canyons of Boise and Payette national forests until the river abruptly abandons its tumultuous ways and levels out as it meanders down a long and serenely bucolic mountain meadow, making its way toward the headwaters at Payette Lake.

The byway starts at the junction of State Highway 44 and Highway 55, a few miles northwest of Boise. As you leave the cityscape of Boise behind, the highway begins a gentle climb through the foothills of Boise National Forest to Horseshoe Bend, where you first meet the main Payette River.

The next 14 miles to Banks follows the gentlest of the three branches of the Payette, a tranquil stream compared to the ram-paging South and North forks. This stretch is a good spot for beginning rafters or kayakers, as the rapids are moderate, but large enough to experience white-water thrills. The takeout point for this main Payette Run, Beehive Bend, is about seven miles down river from Banks. For a wilder run, check out the five-mile section of the Lower South Fork, where the Class IV rapids have names like Staircase, Bronco Billy and Slalom. The put-in is at the old Deer Creek Bridge, with the takeout at Banks.

If your adventurous spirit starts poking you in the ribs and you decide to try rafting or kayaking, Cascade Raft and Kayak, between Highway 55 mile markers 70 and 71 near Horseshoe Bend, offers a variety of rafting and float trips — from three-hour beginner and family trips to a heart-pounding plunge down the South Fork Canyon through continuous Class IV rapids.

A worthwhile side trip from the byway is the Banks–Lowman Road, which branches off to the east from Banks and follows the South Fork for 33 miles along the Idaho Wildlife Canyon Scenic Byway up to the town of Lowman and Deadwood Campground. This byway winds through a narrow, rocky canyon where you can see herds of elk in the spring and winter and the scenery along this steep canyon warrants the detour. A visit to Pine Flats Campground, with its bubbling hot spring right at the river’s edge, is particularly worth the trip.

Heading back to Banks, the drive from Banks up the North Fork threads through a narrow canyon with three Forest Service campgrounds set close along the road. You can stop and enjoy a stay at any of these campsites — the scenery is great and the campgrounds are nestled under giant ponderosas in a mountain canyon forest.

Eighteen miles above Banks, the river passes under the 410-foot Rainbow Bridge, built in 1933 and listed in the *National Register of Historic Places*. The bridge separates the dual person-

Below, left: The Payette runs under Rainbow Bridge — the largest single-span arch structure in the state. Below, right: Kirkham Hot Springs, with its own campground nearby, is nestled on the South Fork of Payette River and is a popular summer destination.

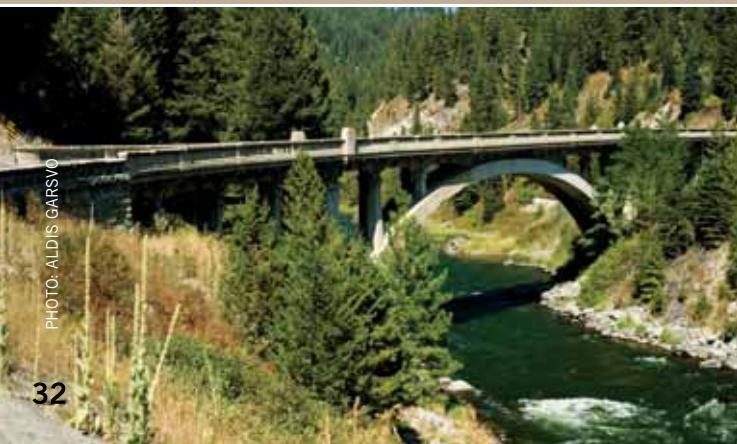


PHOTO: ALDIS GARSVO



MAP ILLUSTRATION: SUE CARLSON

alities of the river — from the snarling beast cascading down through North Fork Canyon below the bridge, to the lazy millstream above the bridge that flows through Long Valley and the resort towns of Donnelly, Cascade and McCall.

The experts-only stretch of river below the bridge is one of the most challenging found anywhere in the West. In late summer, water released from Cascade Lake creates a 15-mile white-water maelstrom, attracting daredevil kayakers and a faithful following. Observers can enjoy the sight from the safe and dry environs of river-view pullouts along the byway.

Long before white-water enthusiasts discovered the Payette, cattle was king of Long Valley. Ranchers drove their cattle to the calm river crossing at Smiths Ferry, just below the bridge, to cross the river and begin the long journey down the canyon to the livestock markets in Boise.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The combination of Boise and Payette national forests and the contiguous 2.4

million-acre Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness make the area encircling the byway an outdoor lover's paradise. With 2,100 miles of trails, 15,000 miles of streams and rivers, and 103 campgrounds, outdoor adventures like camping, hiking, rafting, mountain biking, fishing, bird and wildlife watching, sightseeing and road touring can quickly fill your days.

The fishing along Payette River is especially good, and a variety of fish — bass, trout, mountain whitefish, catfish and black crappie being the most abundant — can be found. The Payette's South Fork supports a healthy population of rainbow trout, as does Cascade Reservoir. Cascade also contains populations of yellow perch.

The town of Cascade lies at the south end of 26,307-acre Cascade Lake in a high mountain meadow 4,828 feet above sea level. This destination recreation area has 86 miles of shoreline and campgrounds at Lake Cascade State Park as well as in the surrounding national forest. Boat launches are scattered along the shoreline and at the state park. Add swimming and

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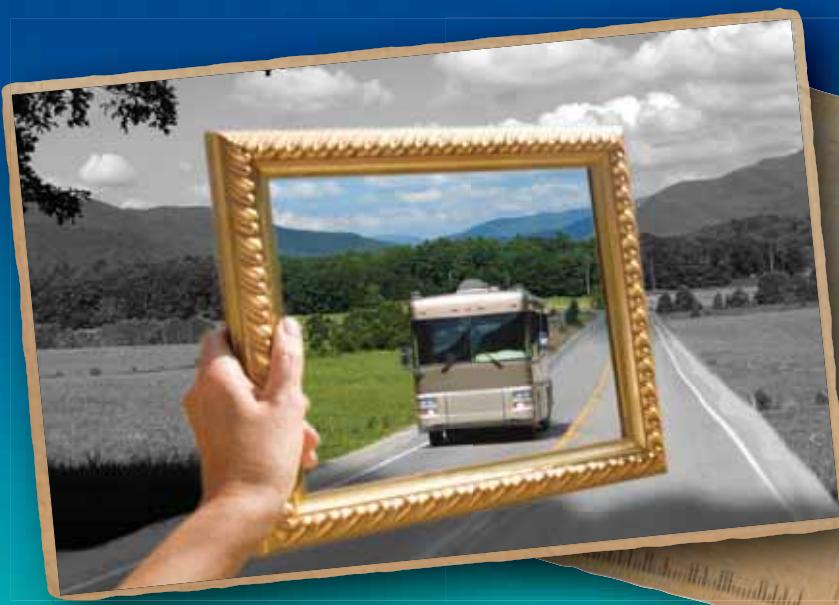
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boating to your list of outdoor activities and watch for osprey, as 90 nesting pairs have been spotted around the lake.

MCCALL

At the north end of the Payette River Scenic Byway, the resort town of McCall on the deep blue Payette Lake was named for homesteader Tom McCall, who settled here in 1891. The mining and timber industries fueled the town's growth, and dance halls, gambling establishments and houses of ill repute soon sprang up, drawing a predictably wild and raucous crowd. It wasn't until the early 1980s that firearms were outlawed in local watering holes.

Today, McCall is a recreation destination with many welcome amenities, including a first-rate RV resort, a large indoor skating rink in the center of town, city parks along the city front shoreline, open-air restaurants, coffeehouses, tasteful shops, and a varied cultural and events calendar.

Also in McCall is the Central Idaho Historical Museum — a group of eight-buildings built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1936. The site once served as headquarters for the Southern Idaho Timber Protective Association and the restored fire warden's house and several other interpretive displays about the Idaho forest and its history are on exhibit.

North of McCall the North Fork offers flat and serene floating for those who prefer a gentle river experience, and where you also have a good chance of spotting deer, elk, moose, beaver, bald eagles and other wildlife along the shoreline.

The 800-acre Ponderosa State Park fills the ponderosa pine-forested peninsula that juts into Payette Lake just north of town. The park contains three campgrounds, plenty of trails for hiking and biking, picnic areas, and boating options, and is rich in wildlife, birds and wildflowers.

The byway ends 12 miles farther on, over the pass at New Meadows and the junction of U.S. Highway 95. You have the option of turning south and dropping down out of the forest onto the flatlands at Weiser on the Oregon border, or continuing north following the Salmon River downstream through White Bird, over the Camas prairie through Grangeville and into Lewiston at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater rivers. ♦

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LIFE'S A JOURNEY



There are two types of Class A motorhomes: Those you drive because you have to — it's the only way you can get to where you're going — and those you love to drive. Winnebago's Journey 34Y is definitely an example of the latter. Powered by a spirited 350-hp Cummins ISB diesel, the nimble Winnie is a barrel of fun to drive no matter what type of terrain and conditions road engineers and Mother Nature throw at it. Living in it is not too shabby, either.

For years I've been whining about the lack of shorter diesel-powered motorhomes that exude luxurious amenities and leave the owner wanting naught. So when Winnebago brought back the 34-footer in the 2009 Journey line — and actually made it close to 34 feet in length — I jumped at the chance to take it on an extended cruise.

The 34Y is built on Freightliner's fully air-suspended XC chassis fitted with an Allison 3000MH transmission and four-wheel ABS air brakes. Grace the cab

**WINNEBAGO'S 34Y
HANDLES THE
ROAD WITH
SPIRIT AND
CAMPGROUNDS
WITH APLOMB**

by BOB LIVINGSTON



Clockwise from above: The full-wall streetside slideout opens up the living area an additional 325 square feet, which gives the interior the feeling of a much larger motorhome. A king-size bed comes standard on this floorplan and occupies much of the space in the bedroom, so there's limited legroom between the mattress and rear sliding-door closet. Corian countertops and brushed stainless-looking appliance fronts grace the galley, which has an inventive L-shape design that allows for more than enough food-prep counterspace.



2009 WINNEBAGO JOURNEY 34Y

WHAT'S HOT

Fun to drive, short body length and 55-degree wheel cut; quiet cockpit; one-piece windshield offers good visibility; interior seating for nine adults; bathroom and shower are roomy and luxurious

WHAT'S NOT

Watching TV while sitting at the dinette is somewhat awkward; lack of a sturdy cup holder and small table to hold snacks in the cockpit; heat distribution leaves cold spots



Clockwise from top, left: The Journey's cockpit is ergonomic and comfortable for the driver. The coach's bathroom features a Corian countertop and large china-bowl commode. In the bedroom, a large corner cabinet is already plumbed for the optional washer/dryer.

with very comfy seats, a one-piece windshield for superior visibility and ergonomic instrumentation, and the driver will be hard pressed to vacate the captain's mount, other than to take breaks to answer nature's call or refuel the coach and his or her stomach.

Part of the experience is attributed to the amazing quiet inside this coach while on the road. Even the notorious expansion joints on concrete highway couldn't rattle the interior, although potholes managed to break the near silence. Obviously, this is a great testament to the overall fit and finish of the

interior components — and the smooth-riding features of the Freightliner platform.

I had to look hard to find fault with the driver's compartment, but I found the lack of a usable cup holder and small table to hold munchies somewhat disconcerting for my tastes. The logical modification would be to transform the small drawer in the center of the dash (at floor level) into a suitable catchall for snacks and cups. There are loads of compartments within the cockpit to compensate for the loss of this smallish drawer — and the driver wouldn't have to balance



SPECIFICATIONS

PERFORMANCE

FUEL ECONOMY: 10.7 MPG

ACCELERATION:

0-60: 28.38 SEC

40-60: 16.62 SEC

CHASSIS

MODEL: FREIGHTLINER XC

ENGINE: CUMMINS ISB XT 6.7-L TURBODIESEL

SAE HP: 350 HP @ 2,600 RPM

TORQUE: 750 LB-FT @ 1,800 RPM

TRANSMISSION: ALLISON 3000MH 6-SPEED

AXLE RATIO: 4.78:1

TIRES: 255/80R22.5G

WHEELBASE: 208"

BRAKES: 4-WHEEL AIR WITH ABS

SUSPENSION, F/R: NEWAY AIR

FUEL CAP: 90 GAL

WARRANTY: 3 YRS/36,000 MILES

COACH

EXT LENGTH: 34' 7"

EXT WIDTH: 8' 5"

EXT HEIGHT: 12' 2"

INT WIDTH: 8'

INT HEIGHT: 7' 2"

CONSTRUCTION: FIBERGLASS EXTERIOR WALL AND ROOF; STEEL AND ALUMINUM ROOF/WALL/ FLOOR FRAMING; POLYSTYRENE INSULATION

FRESHWATER CAP: 82 GAL

BLACK-WATER CAP: 57 GAL

GRAY-WATER CAP: 81 GAL

WATER-HEATER CAP: 10 GAL

LP-GAS CAP: 28 GAL

AIR CONDITIONER (1): 27,000 BTU

FURNACE: 40,000 BTU

REFRIGERATOR: 12 CU-FT

INVERTER/CHARGER: 2,000 WATTS

BATTERY: (2) 12-VOLT CHASSIS;

(4) 12-VOLT COACH

COACH

AC GENERATOR: 8 KW

MSRP: \$217,902

MSRP AS TESTED: \$229,744

WARRANTY: 1 YR/15,000 MILES

WET WEIGHT

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

FRONT AXLE: 7,540 LBS

REAR AXLE: 16,660 LBS

TOTAL: 24,200 LBS

CHASSIS RATINGS

GAWR, F/R: 10,410/19,000 LBS

GVWR/GCWR: 29,410/39,410 LBS

OCWC: 5,977 LBS

(DEDUCT WEIGHT OF PASSENGERS AND WATER FOR NET CARGO CARRYING CAPACITY)

GAWR: GROSS AXLE WEIGHT RATING

GVWR: GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT RATING

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lunch on his or her lap. It comes with the territory when the driver's not eager to stop, because it's more fun to be behind the wheel.

We carefully checked fuel economy, covering 1,200 miles over varied terrain and speed. The best mileage was on flat highway, traveling 60–62 MPH, where we recorded 10.7 MPG. It dipped to 7.6 MPG while scooting over California's infamous Donner Pass at a constant 65 MPH. Surprisingly, the mileage did not dip that much when we took the speed up to 65–70 MPH on flat highway; here we recorded 9.5 MPG. Even the stint that included California's notorious Grapevine only reduced fuel consumption to 8.8 MPG.

As indicated above, pulling grades came easy to the 34-foot Winnie. We hit the hard parts of a 6 percent climb going 65 MPH and eventually dropped to 55 MPH before cresting the hill. Going down, the exhaust brakes helped control speed to 50 MPH, and by the time we hit the bottom, we needed to work the fuel pedal to move us up from 46 MPH.

While it was comforting to know that the coach can navigate great distances due to a

standard 90-gallon fuel tank, it was more amusing to have that smirk on my face when I made tactical errors and was forced to turn the coach around in tight spaces. Normally, I'd complain unjustly that my copilot "allowed" me to go the wrong way, but the 55-degree wheel cut and short body length facilitated corrective maneuvers with alacrity.

The Journey stands smartly whether traveling down the highway or situated in camp. The sharp-looking body graphics, complementing the full-body paint, create a very handsome package, especially since the basement air-conditioning keeps the roofline aesthetically free flowing. The tiny headlights take some visual acclimation.

Inside, the interior is transformed by a full-wall slide on the driver's side and slides in the bedroom and the opposite wall in the front living room. Once fully opened, the coach looks much bigger than a 34-footer. Outside of a few quirks, the floorplan works amazingly well, affording exceptional livability for two people. By the time you turn the cockpit chairs, position the Euro chair and add the two extra

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folding chairs to the freestanding dinette, the coach can seat nine comfortably. We entertained a group of eight for dinner with little body clashing.

The dinette, though, is an acquired taste. It sits adjacent to a large, wall-hung flat-screen LCD TV flanked by two windows. Watching TV while sitting at the table is not optimum, unless you're seriously farsighted. It does provide fabulous viewing from the Euro chair and optional (\$1,190) Ultraleather upholstered Resteasy couch — with its two section, electrically controlled recliners. Soundwise, the audio components complement the big screen TV nicely, but setting up the surround-sound system takes a lot of instruction manual browsing — or the help of kids who seem to be savant in this department.

When the table is retracted, it provides perfect accommodations for two diners. It extends far enough to add the two folding chairs, but the lip created by the slideout floor makes four-chair positioning a little tight. When we had our dinner shindig, two people straddled the corners of the table to improve elbowroom.

The expanse of vinyl flooring from the cockpit to the rear bedroom works well with the cherry cabinetry and curved wall that encloses the curbside bathroom. The eye candy is continued with the Corian kitchen countertops and brushed stainless-looking appliance fronts. While not huge, the L-shaped galley works exceptionally well.

So does the bathroom. The corner shower is luxurious and roomy, and would be even more appreciated by upgrading the fixtures. Corian graces the oval sink, and the large china-bowl toilet and suitable cabinetry/drawers round out the list of functional items. Floor space in the bathroom is disproportionately large without feeling like it takes up too much square footage for a coach this size.

We had a love-hate affair with the furnace, because we needed it every day on our trip. The bathroom received more than its share of the warm air, which was heavenly stepping out of the shower in the morning, but the front section was a little chilly in places. Temperature control in the bedroom was just right.

If you prefer the king bed out back (queen is available), you'll need to wrap your arms around the fact it will occupy the

greater portion of bedroom space. That means you'll have limited legroom between the mattress (optional \$770 Sleep Number unit in the test coach) and rear sliding-door closet. The chest of drawers at the foot of the bed houses another flat-screen LCD TV and the optional (\$448) DVD player and stereo system. An optional washer/dryer can be installed in the corner cabinetry since the plumbing fixtures are provided by the factory. Overall there's plenty of space for hanging and folded clothing within in the confines of the bedroom.

Keep in mind that the rear closets and cabinets can only be accessed by climbing over the bed when the slides are retracted. That posed little concern for us; we were more annoyed with the limited access to the bathroom while on the road because the Euro chair butts up to the galley counter, blocking the aisle. The space loss is exacerbated by the structure needed to enclose the outside entertainment center. If the outside flat-screen TV and audio components (\$1,386) are opted for, the required box formed on the inside wall pushes the Euro chair closer to the kitchen counter.

The other exterior compartments are accessible via side-hinged doors, which make access much more convenient (even the ones below the extended slideouts). And they are big enough to handle most of the gear typical owners will take along. There's a little pass-through space for longer items, although height is restricted. The utility compartment makes it easy to hook up to water and sewer; the 50-amp power cable is stored in an adjacent compartment.

Winnebago loads this coach with all the amenities, thinking as if it's a highline 40-footer. No doubt the standard list is much longer than its optional counterpart, but you can easily add \$10,000 to final tab by loading the coach with electronic gadgetry and comfort items — as was the case in the test coach. Amusingly, it's not hard to fill your arms with all the remote controls it takes to operate the electronic components. (Where's that aforementioned youngster when you need him or her?)

In a nutshell, Winnebago has pulled off the type of coach that offers the best of all worlds: A nimble machine that gets good fuel economy, is incredibly fun to drive and is loaded with all the goodies discriminating owners appreciate — and expect. ♦

FIDDLIN' ON THE ROOF

INSTALL A REPLACEMENT EPDM RUBBER ROOF TO AVOID LEAKS AND DAMAGE DOWN THE ROAD

by JEFF JOHNSTON

There may come a time when the rubber roof on your motorhome needs to be replaced. Whether it's because of old age due to sun and general weathering, damage from tree limbs or even poor original installation, it's the kind of job that can be done successfully and effectively to make your roof as good as new.

While it is possible for an experienced do-it-yourselfer to install a new roof, it's a lot of work, and after reading the following story you may conclude that the job is best left to the professionals. If you do decide to go with a professional you'll also enjoy the benefits of the work being warranted by the installer.

We recently spent some time at the George M. Sutton RV service center in Eugene, Oregon, to observe a complete rubber roof removal and replacement project. Sutton service technicians Mark Swanson and Pat Tallderday did the work and explained the step-by-step details an owner would need to know to complete such a job. The material prices quoted here are courtesy of the Sutton parts department per the manufacturers' suggested retail pricing, so your local prices might vary. The materials are available at most RV parts centers nationwide.

Our project vehicle was an older Yellowstone Class C motorhome. Some minor roof damage, long

ago repaired, had allowed some leakage in the curb-side front corner, and minor leakage had been detected inside near the holding tank vent tubes. The original rubber roof had aged ungracefully, so the owner decided it was time for a change. This project not only called for a full roof replacement, a bit of deck underlayment repair was also in order.

GETTING STARTED

Sutton's techs started by removing all trim strips and other fasteners, plus rooftop appliances, such as the air vents, sewage pipe caps, air conditioners and so on. At this stage, it's helpful to note which vent or fan goes in which rooftop opening, and which trim strip fits where, for correct reassembly later.

Pulling the old rubber roof loose is the most physically demanding part of this project. Properly installed, the adhesive hangs tight, and ensures it's necessary to peel the rubber back using pure muscle. Doing so in a warm environment may help soften the adhesive. One trick is to use a sharp utility knife to cut the rubber into strips between 6 and 12 inches wide, and pull up a narrow strip one at a time. This Class C's roof was stuck tight and the newly re-exposed adhesive still had a tacky feel to it. As the rubber comes up, it sometimes pulls some of the wood decking with it, like pieces of the first layer of the lauan plywood, and that's normal.



DECK REPAIR

Small portions of the lauan underlayment had rotted near some water leaks, so replacing those bad sections was the next step. The Yellowstone's roof had a polystyrene core assembled with a lauan plywood deck, and fortunately the damage was isolated to the upper wood deck material.

Swanson used a framing square to mark the damaged section perimeter, and then cut the piece out using a sharp utility knife. Most of the rotted wood came loose without damaging the polystyrene underlayment, and gaps or holes were patched with the wood filler used in the next step.

EPDM is thin and flexible so it will reveal any defects in the surface over which it's applied. Fix-it-All wood filler is the product of choice for the Sutton technicians when prepping the surface for the rubber installation. Loose chunks or splinters of wood must first be removed, and adhesive-backed fiberglass joint tape, designed for plaster drywall work, is used to help reinforce the joints before adding filler. The filler is troweled into any cracks, gaps or irregular spots in the wood deck and, after drying, is sanded smooth. The smooth surface also makes for improved adhesion by the rubber roof glue. The wood filler is allowed to dry overnight before applying the roof adhesive and installing the rubber.

The new EPDM rubber and some of the adhesives and sealants are from Dicor Corporation. Several standard-size EPDM rolls are available to fit different RV widths and lengths, or you can place a custom order to fit your vehicle. For this Class C, the techs used #13-1215, a 9-foot 6-inch by 30-foot roll, which retailed for \$564.

Sutton's technicians used an air hose to clean the sanding dust from the roof deck, but a vacuum, broom or shop rags will also work.

ROOF RUBBER INSTALLATION

There are a couple of ways to engineer the rubber roof installation. The first method, generally used for longer RVs, starts with unrolling the fabric the length of the roof and positioning it to ensure it has roughly the same overhang side to side and that it reaches all the way from end to end. This also verifies that the new rubber is large enough to cover the vehicle. The techs then reroll the fabric about halfway and finish the gluing-down procedure from there to one end, then they reroll the opposite still-loose half and complete gluing it down. By starting in the middle, they know the rubber is properly aligned for the opposite half of the roof, and, most importantly, the part being glued down will likewise be suitably positioned.

Because this coach was a fairly short vehicle,

When the old rubber roof is peeled up it may pull some wood underlayment with it. This minor damage will need to be repaired before installing the new rubber material.



The new roof patch is carefully fitted in place. Taking time with this step helps ensure a smooth, durable roof substructure.



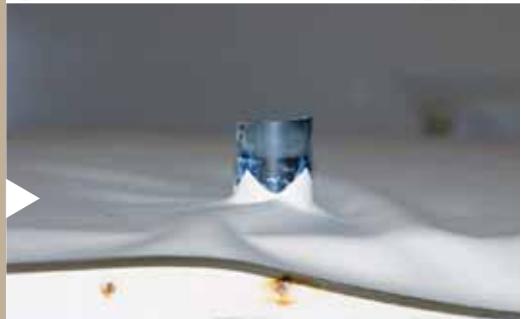
Fix-it-All is used to fill screw holes and the joints between wood underlayment roof panels. Adhesive-backed fiberglass drywall joint tape reinforces the filler at the joints between underlayment panels. The filler is then sanded smooth and the edges are feathered out for a bump-free surface. Good prep is the key.



Mark Swanson and Pat Tallerday (foreground) use short-nap rollers to apply a healthy coat of Dicor 901BA adhesive in a strip about 24 inches wide prior to laying the next section of EPDM rubber.



The new rubber membrane is slipped over the vent pipe and the "X" cut, which is smaller than the pipe's diameter, and makes a nice, snug fit around the pipe.





A push broom and hand-held plastic Bondo spreader do the job of moving trapped air bubbles out from under the rubber while the glue is still wet.



Vent openings have an "X" cut, not all the way corner to corner, and the flaps can be stapled to the wood framing inside the opening. Stapling these flaps in place is optional and a personal preference by the installer.



The rubber is pulled snug before installing the edge trim screws. A sharp utility knife, gently applied to avoid damaging the side wall fiberglass, makes fast work of removing the excess rubber below the trim strip.



Installing a new cosmetic trim filler strip helps cap off the look of the new roof.



Two sealants were used on components adjacent to the roof. Dicor 501 LSW Lap Sealant is thin and self-leveling and used on parts on the flat or nearly flat rooftop. This is the last step of the project. After the sealant cures, the motorhome is ready for the road.

the Sutton techs used an alternate technique that involved starting at one end with the fabric completely rolled up. They positioned the fabric and "squared it by eye" to aim it at the opposite end of the rig, then began the gluing-down process, working their way along the coach. These techs have done so many roof replacements they can eyeball the rubber alignment and have the correct placement by the time it's rolled to the far end of the rig.

Dicor's 901BA adhesive (MSRP \$59/gallon) is specifically designed for gluing EPDM rubber to a porous substrate. The Sutton techs applied it with short-nap paint rollers, applying about 24 inches across the roof at a time and working from the bare-wood side of the roof. After laying down a healthy coat of the adhesive (but not enough to leave puddles), they reached over and unrolled the rubber over the glue, pulling it snug as they went. They used their hands to do the initial smoothing and pressing the rubber into the glue. The 901BA is not a contact adhesive and is fairly slow drying, so it allows time to reposition and work with the rubber as it's laid down. Hand-held plastic squeegees, usually sold as Bondo spreaders, serve well to work any remaining air bubbles from beneath the rubber and ensure the rubber is bonded well to the wood deck.

Some rooftop obstructions, such as holding-tank vent pipes, are very difficult to remove before installing the new roof. It's necessary to cut the roof rubber to fit over those pipes. This calls for some guesswork, as the rubber is laid up to the obstruction, then an "X" is cut in the fabric and it's stretched up and pulled down over the pipe.

As each section of the new rubber is applied, the technicians move back, lay down more adhesive and continue. When they reach the end, they move to the new rubber side of the project, lay the last segment and work the air bubbles out.

Although the hand-application and plastic squeegees eliminate most of the air bubbles, it's possible a few may remain. A household push broom is highly effective for working any remaining bubbles out from under the new roof. As a rule, the technicians prefer to stay off the roof when the adhesive is wet, but it is necessary to be on the roof to work out some air bubbles and ensure proper rubber adhesion.

It's recommended that the new roof adhesive be allowed to cure overnight so it's stable when it's time to climb back up and start reinstalling the roof vents and accessories.

BUTTONING IT UP

All of the original putty and sealers must be removed from the trim, vents, skylights and other

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FIDDLIN' ON THE ROOF

rooftop accessories. A putty knife works to remove those stubborn bits of dried gray putty tape. There's a plastic tool sold at auto body shop suppliers called a "putty-bone" that also does a good job if you're working on a delicate surface, such as a plastic shower stall skylight dome, and you don't want to scratch the surface with a metal tool. You can't get a good seal unless you start with a clean surface.

After applying a new line of gray putty tape to the underside of each sealed surface, the roof edge trim and end cap trim, as applicable, are installed in their original locations. The technicians normally use new fasteners because at this point it just isn't worth it to reuse rusty screws. Before installing each screw, the excess roof fabric is pulled snug under the trim strip to avoid wrinkles. This can be tricky for one person to do alone, so a helper makes the job a lot easier.

Once the trim is screwed tight, a sharp utility knife works well for trimming the excess rubber hanging past the trim. By not cutting too hard or deep the wall material isn't damaged by the knife.

Back up top, the techs locate each vent opening and make an "X" cut, almost corner to corner, with a sharp utility knife. The resulting flaps are pulled down snug and can be left hanging loose or stapled to the wood frame lining each opening. No adhesive is used for this step.

Any pertinent wiring related to rain sensors, fans or lights is reattached with the vent or other device in its approximate location. Putty tape is applied to the flange and the part is set loosely in position. Swanson goes inside the motorhome to visually check each component if possible and make sure the vents, for example, are centered in the opening before screwing them down.

A Dicor product called 501 LSW Lap Sealant (MSRP \$8) is the Dicor-recommended material, designed for use with EPDM rubber roof fabric, for sealing screwheads, flanges and the like when the seal is on a fairly flat surface. The 501 LSW type is fairly thin and after application in a "blob" it flows down a bit and smooths itself before curing. For parts on vertical or steep surfaces, such as the trim that holds the rubber to the RV side wall, Dicor 551 LSW (MSRP \$8) is recommended because it's a bit thicker and

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holds its shape until it dries. As is true for the roof adhesive, allow the sealant to cure overnight before exposing it to the weather.

When the seal is between two hard surfaces, such as the edge trim and fiberglass wall or end cap with no roof rubber in contact, Sutton's techs recommend and use Sikaflex 221 (MSRP \$8.95).

WRAP UP

After much ado, that's all there is to it. The new roof is as good as when the motorhome rolled off the factory line — possibly even better — and its owner should enjoy leak-resistant travel and camping for years to come. ♦

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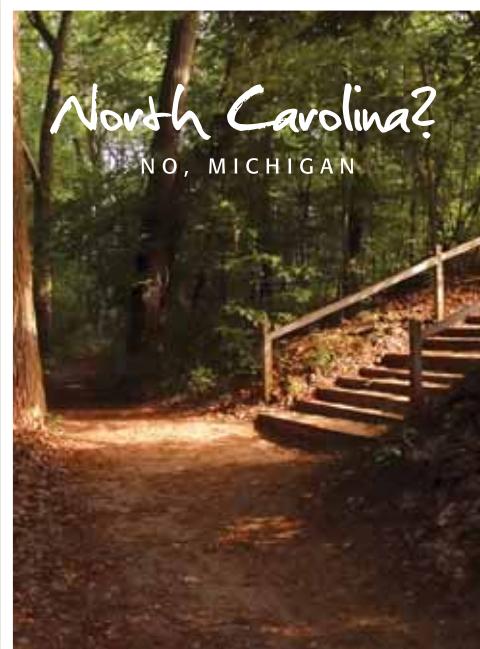


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are upholstered in Ultraleather and Ultrasuede, and swivel to face a removable center dining/entertainment table that stores against an out-of-the-way galley cabinet. The removable table means your group can relocate to the more comfortable sofa bed in the rear of the van with ease.

And, speaking of well-planned seating, this floorplan allows the front seats to recline even when pushed rearward to the limits of the seat rails — a real bonus when you are more than 6 feet tall. Each seat has five adjustments to enhance your comfort, too. And if you like lots of cup holders in a motorhome, the Interstate sports no fewer than seven of these — four in the rear and three in the cockpit.

Much like Airstream's traditional designs, the interior of the Interstate includes quality cabinet construction with extruded aluminum and solid-wood components. While the stainless panels and riveted ceiling might seem cold to some, they — along with the laminate vinyl flooring — are easy to clean and provide the illusion of a larger interior. Overhead running lights, reading lamps and recessed track lighting warm up the interior and add to the cozy feel of the space. As a bonus, overhead cabinet storage is ample for a rig of this size.

Headroom is adequate for those up to 6 feet tall, although the optional ceiling-mounted Carrier air conditioner found the top of my head. However, the same can be true in many full-size Class A's, so this should present no real problems for average-size RVers. I liked the retro look of the lavatory door's portal window, which harks back to the company's early design days and makes the space seem more homey.

The galley's 3.1-cubic-foot refrigerator is said by the manufacturer to use 90 percent less energy than a typical RV unit by using an AC/DC compressor. The streetside galley is also equipped

Airstream has long been a name recognized in the RV community for the distinctive aluminum exteriors and rounded shape of its popular travel trailers. What is less familiar, but no less distinctive, to many RV enthusiasts, is the company's sole offering in the motorhome market: the diesel-powered Class B Airstream Interstate.

Based on the Sprinter 3500 chassis with a 11,030-pound gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR), the Interstate is said by Airstream to be capable of rolling 18–20 MPG. And that's clean-burning, efficient CDI diesel power, provided by

the 3.0-L turbocharged Mercedes-Benz V-6 that cranks out 154 HP and up to 280 LB-FT of torque.

The Interstate interior provides an interesting, compact floorplan that is designed to sleep two adults when the rear sofa/lounge is reclined into the RV-sleeping mode, yet this layout is also capable of seating up to eight adults: four captain's chairs up front and four belted positions in the rear. This allows the Interstate to do double duty as a family's second vehicle, and makes entertaining in the Interstate's compact interior surprisingly easy.

The four captain's chairs up front





SPECIFICATIONS

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GVWR: 11,030 LBS	BLACK-WATER CAP: 26 GAL
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with a 1.2-cubic-foot Apollo oven that combines the compact functionality of a 1,800-watt convection oven with the microwave that provides 10 power levels and one-touch cooking for common items. A flush-mounted two-burner stainless-steel stove cooktop includes a glass cover that adds to the countertop workspace. A stainless-steel sink, also riding underneath a glass cover, efficiently finishes off this Euro-design counter.

One thing to remember if looking to downsize your motorhoming lifestyle is that a Class B unit is, by design, much more compact than a Class A or C motorhome. This requires careful planning and efficient use of every last square inch of living space. A feature in that direction is the expandable bathroom.

In order to maximize the available elbow and hip room in the aforementioned galley, the curbside bathroom is a study in compact wet bathroom design. To describe this novel idea: the aisle-side wall folds outward, affording additional shoulder room, and a once-cramped bathroom becomes more comfortable.

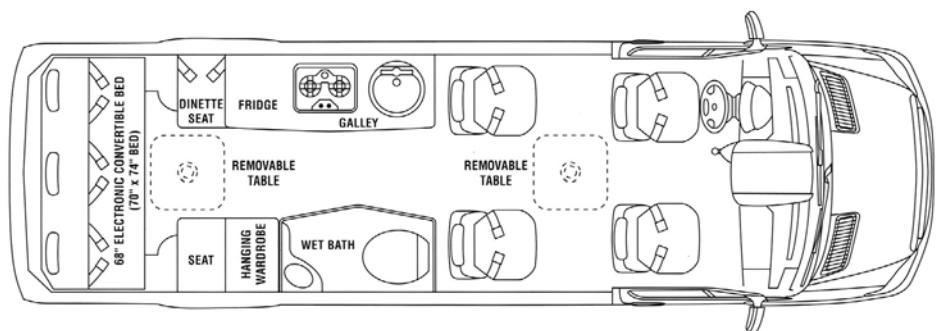
Thanks to the standard heavy-duty Sprinter 3500 chassis — which includes dual rear wheels for improved stability and hauling capability — you can increase the recreational versatility

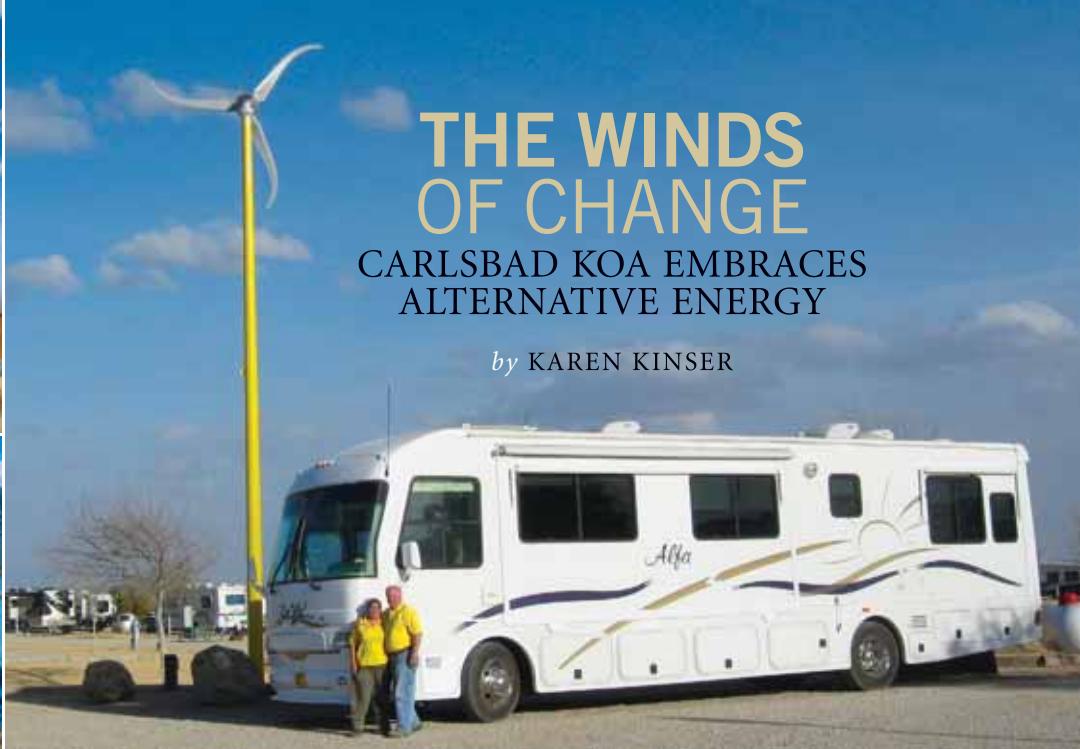
of this Airstream by towing a ski/fishing boat or small trailer along behind; the 5,000-pound tow rating and prewired standard hitch receiver facilitate towing.

An optional rear backup camera mated to a 5½-inch LCD screen makes trailer hookup much easier, and also affords additional peace of mind when backing this motorhome up while taking care of daily chores such as going to

the grocery store or dropping off the kids for a sporting event.

Overall, the Class B layout found in the Airstream Interstate 3500 offers an adaptable RV choice that can function as a second vehicle with ease and without sacrificing good mileage to do so. This dual nature makes the Interstate a Class B motorhome model to consider with the best of of them. ♦





THE WINDS OF CHANGE

CARLSBAD KOA EMBRACES ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

by KAREN KINSER

Maybe Bob Dylan was right when he suggested that “the answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind.” Of course, at the time, most of us weren’t exactly sure what the question was. But Carlsbad, New Mexico, KOA owners Scott and Susan Bacher recently hit upon the right question when they asked themselves, “How can we cut back on our electricity bills?” and discovered that the answer was literally blowin’ in the wind.

“Our electric bills are staggering,” says Susan, “and we were looking for ways to reduce them.” They considered solar power, but the cost was far higher than wind power. “The payback wouldn’t be for 25 or 30 years,” says Susan. After months of research, the couple decided wind power was the way to go, and installed a Skystream 3.7 wind turbine on their campground.

GOING GREEN

The Skystream unit is manufactured by Southwest Windpower in Flagstaff, Arizona. The company ships turbines all over the world, but it also makes small units to recharge RVs that are remote and have no source of electricity and can’t always rely on a generator.

The Bachers’ turbine is a 2.4 kW-rated unit, and will be used to help power the largest building on their site. Scott expects that the turbine will reduce the use of electricity for that building by 5–10 percent, depending on the amount and speed of wind.

The Carlsbad area has an average annual wind speed of 12.8 MPH. Unlike solar panels, which often have batteries to store unused energy, the extra energy that this unit might produce will result in the meter spinning in reverse.

The Bachers would have preferred to install a much larger turbine, but the costs were prohibitive. Scott notes that there’s no grant money for medium-size turbines, and there are minimal tax credits. The cost for their unit runs from \$15,000–\$18,000, but to install a 150 or 200 kW unit — one large enough to meet the campground’s total power needs — would run about \$500,000.

“This is a test pilot program for us,” says Scott. He and Susan

have paired with a local computer company, Luna Services, which will collect and analyze data, including wind speed and direction, kW hours being produced, etc. The main office will have a video screen for their guests to see the data as it’s being collected. “It may interest homeowners,” says Scott, “because the payback for something like this in a home can be as little as five to 10 years.”

If the data results are positive, Scott foresees the possibility of installing a larger unit and selling shares to help pay for it. A larger turbine would also open up the possibility of selling renewable energy credits (RECs) to others, and that income would be put toward paying for the unit. A REC can be purchased from renewable energy providers — such as wind farms — and represents 1 kW hour of renewable energy. Purchasing a REC is a means to support renewable energy generation, even if you’re unable to create renewable energy yourself.

One way the Bachers are helping to pay for their turbine is to sell advertising space on the tower pole, at \$1,000 for a square-foot-sized ad. “We’re just trying to market it as much as we can to help pay for it,” says Scott. They’re also adding wind-mill graphics to their logo so they can sell mugs and T-shirts.

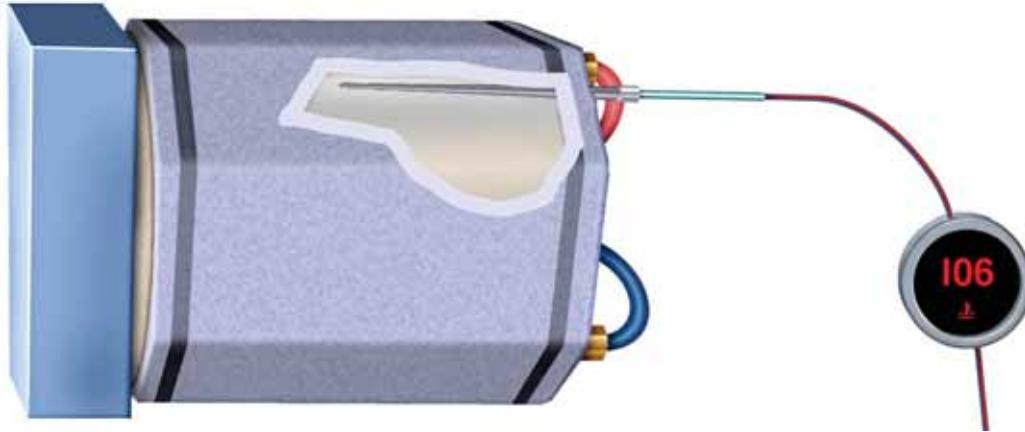
FUTURE PROJECTS

The Bachers want to make their park as green as possible, and are changing over from sodium lights to more energy-efficient P.L. Lights. They’re also planning on using passive solar heating for the pool by installing coils filled with water on the roof. The water will heat up and then be funneled back down into the pool.

Susan and Scott are committed to alternative energy. A few years ago Susan bought a hybrid car and she and Scott were so happy with it that they wanted to do something even bigger — for themselves, the environment and, hopefully, for their check-book. It’s their hope that their 33-foot tower, topped with 177 pounds of wind turbine blades, sweeping a diameter of 12 feet, meets the model of something bigger. ♦

Carlsbad KOA, (800) 562-9109, www.carlsbadrv.com.

TANK TEMPERATURE ▼



I wasn't sure how hot the water was in my motorhome unless I felt it or left the LP-gas heater running all the time. In order to accurately determine the temperature, I bought an automotive LED water temperature gauge and a sending unit, connected it to a 12-volt DC power switch nearby and ran the temperature sensor just under the insulation so that it's sitting on top of the hot water tank, which is located under the kitchen sink in my rig.

Now when I use LP-gas to heat the water I can turn it off when the temperature reaches 106°F, which is a good level for showering and washing. By looking at the gauge it's easy to see if the water is hot enough to use, plus this saves money on LP-gas.

JOSEPH VOLK | PAHRUMP, NEVADA



SHELTER AGAINST THE WIND ▲

I had so many relighting issues with my gas grill on breezy days that I almost gave up on grilling until I fabricated a solution. I made a custom wind screen for the grill, which took less than an hour to cut out and assemble.

I bought 3/8-inch tempered hardboard at a home improvement store and cut it into five pieces — one for the back, two for the sides and two for the bottom pads. Next, I pop-riveted eight 2-inch hinges in place. Care was taken to ensure there was ample clearance on the back, sides and bottom to protect the wind screen from open flame and high heat. When not in use, it folds flat for storage.

LARRY CORDER | BEDFORD, TEXAS

SHAKE 'N' RATTLE NO MORE

Driving over washboard roads had my window locks coming unfastened, which caused the windows to slide open and rattle. To solve this problem, I bought a single refrigerator bar from Camping World for about \$5. The bar is similar to a shower curtain rod. I adjusted the length to fit snugly against the slider window and frame, about halfway from the top to the bottom, and haven't had a rattle since.

**JIM DOUTHITT
BISHOP, CALIFORNIA**

STEERING WHEEL COVERUP



While in camp, I like to sit in the pilot's seat of my motorhome and take in the vista, so I made a cover for the steering wheel that I can use for reading or writing.

I used a scrap piece of plywood to cover my steering wheel (anywhere from ¼-inch to ½-inch-thick). Cut the plywood to fit your steering wheel and sand all edges smooth. Turn the best side up and nail a piece of ½-inch-square wood across the bottom to hold a book or a copy of *MotorHome*. I prefer mounting it so some of the steering wheel is visible at the bottom. I used two 1½-inch roofing nails to hold my board in place. Hold on! Don't nail that board to your steering wheel.

Sit in the pilot's seat, adjust the seat and steering wheel for comfortable reading, position your board the way you want it, then hold it with one hand and mark the top half of the wheel on the underside of the board. Turn the board over and measure equally from both sides to intersect the steering wheel line (about 3 inches from each edge). Drill a hole (just a little larger than the size of the nails) at each of the two points (be careful not to push hard on the drill as it will splinter the face side of the board) then turn it face up and countersink each hole just enough for the nail heads to be just under flush. The nails' sharp ends should be rounded off with a file and sanded smooth. With nails in place it hooks over the steering wheel. The nails are removed for easy storage of the board while traveling.

You can finish the project by painting it, staining it, covering it with material, or glass with pictures under it, or leave it natural and use it as an autograph board so visitors can sign and date it.

PERRY SEXTON | SHENANDOAH, VIRGINIA

Quick Tips, *MotorHome's* monthly column of useful, handy and simple tips by fellow RVers, is looking for submissions. Please send your favorite do-it-yourself ideas to: *MotorHome* Quick Tips, 2575 Vista Del Mar Drive, Ventura, Calif., 93001. Be sure to include any photos, illustrations or drawings, if necessary. If your tip is selected for publication, you'll receive \$35.

BLOWN AWAY

When taking the plug out of my water heater to drain it, there's always a little bit of water left inside because the drain plug is not on the bottom. In order to get rid of the excess water, I use my air compressor and put an extender on the end of the air hose, stick it inside and blow the water out of the heater. After doing this a few times the water is gone, leaving the water heater nice and clean. This process also removes some of the sediment.

HILARY RINEHART | MANKATO, MINNESOTA

MORE DRAWER SPACE

I can always use additional drawer space in my Winnebago Sightseer 30B. I noticed that the area under the kitchen sink was blocked off, so I ordered a drawer (similar to the one below it) from Winnebago. Once I received the drawer, I made it fit into the existing space by cutting it in half and regluing the back to the new middle. I also had to cut down one side of the back about an inch in order to clear the sink. New 12-inch rollers from a home improvement store worked just right and the left side screws to the wall brace after I built up the wall on the right side to support the track.

SAMUEL WILSON | OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON ♦



techsavvy

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

HANDS-ON | by KEVIN LIVINGSTON

TV TAKES FLIGHT

Winegard's Wingman extension enhances the digital broadcast capabilities of its Sensor batwing antennas

It's clear that television has taken massive steps in technology. Digital broadcast is one advancement that will be mandated this month after the original February deadline was moved to June 12. For RVers, the digital transition is good news, especially for those who rely on over-the-air broadcasts to watch their favorite programming. Most RVers know that getting analog signals can be a bit challenging due to broadcast range and quality. Digital opens up many more channels for those who are outfitted with the proper TVs (or converter boxes) and antennas.

If you've been relying on the quintessential Sensor batwing antenna, you're probably already pulling in some digital signals, but you can get a lot more. Thanks to Winegard, the creators of the very antenna most of us have been cranking up and down for years, its new Wingman addition will change the way you view broadcast TV.

The Wingman (MSRP \$29.99) is a ruggedly constructed, molded plastic and white powder-coated steel extension

of the batwing antenna that matches its contours. Winegard cleverly arranged this small assembly so that it fits perfectly, and functions mechanically with your existing antenna, but allows UHF and VHF frequency signals to be gathered and processed through the batwing more efficiently. The result is a higher number of traditionally broadcast shows that can be viewed on your digital TV, as well as providing the opportunity to pick up high-definition transmissions at no extra cost.

Winegard's exceptional design provides a truly fast and trouble-free installation. As long as you're starting with any Sensor antenna, adding the Wingman is a snap. With the antenna in the raised position, using pliers or your fingers, simply remove the four rubber bumpers. Once the landing bumpers have been extracted, four provided clips are pushed firmly into position, installing the extension. It's virtually impossible to make a mistake since the Wingman only mounts one way.

The Wingman is certainly an easy solution to the digital TV revolution, func-



tioning exactly as advertised, pulling in a variety of channels many viewers probably never knew existed. Ultimately, the only limitations are a result of landscape and distance from the broadcast antennas. For a small investment of time and money, a whole new universe of free digital broadcast opportunities is opened up. The Wingman is sold at Camping World and most RV supply stores.

For more information, call (800) 288-8094, or visit www.winegard.com/wingman. Circle 216 on Reader Service Card. ♦

Costly Decision

BELIEVING HE WAS OWED FOR DAMAGES TO HIS TOWED VEHICLE, A READER PRESENTED HIS CASE TO *HOT LINE* FOR ASSISTANCE. HE EXPLAINED:

Recently, after towing my 2008 Chevy Malibu Maxx behind my latest motorhome, I discovered that the Chevy's brakes were not working. There was no indication that anything had been wrong with the car's brakes while it was in tow, such as dragging or smoking.

I had the car towed to a Chevy repair shop and found that the Chevy's brakes were burned out. I had to have all the calipers, brake pads and associated hoses replaced. By the time it was done, my bill came to \$1,534.43.

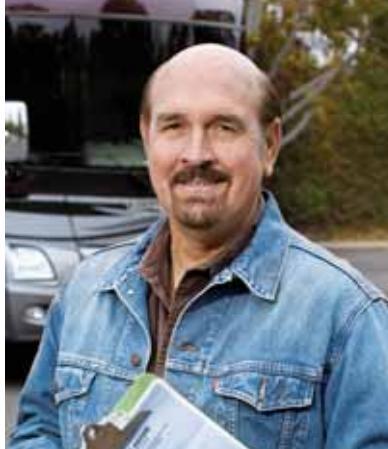
I called Roadmaster, which is the company that manufactured the 9700 supplemental braking system used to brake the Chevy. The representative who I spoke with offered to replace my existing 9700 with a new system, and he had it shipped at my request to the original installer, Diversified Machine and Welding, in Sebring, Florida.

When I asked if Roadmaster might help with the cost of repairing the brakes, the Diversified technician asked if my dashboard braking sensor light came on while the car was being towed. I said that I'd recently changed motorhomes, and didn't have the sensor installed because it would've been difficult to view it anywhere I might have mounted it.

The Diversified technician replied that without the sensor and its warning light in place, it would have been impossible for me to know if my dinghy vehicle's brakes were operating or not. Despite this explanation, I don't believe an intermittent warning light would have been visible enough to do me any good — especially in busy traffic situations where my attention would have been predominantly focused on the road.

So far, Diversified and Roadmaster have declined to take responsibility for the cost of my brake repairs. Can *Hot Line* help?

GERALD M. OTT
AVON PARK, FLORIDA



“MANY PART AND COMPONENT WARRANTIES SPECIFY REPLACEMENT OF PARTS ONLY, NO LABOR INCLUDED, ESPECIALLY AFTER A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TIME HAS ELAPSED.”

By his own admission, Ott did not have the warning device for his supplemental braking system installed on the dash of his motorhome. In not doing so, he put himself well beyond any help Hot Line could offer.

Ott's situation is akin to disconnecting the smoke alarm in one's motorhome, and then asking the coach's manufacturer to pay for any fire damages that might occur.

We are publishing this case primarily as a caution to others in similar situations associated with the warning device on their auxiliary braking systems. We also contacted Roadmaster for its side of the case. The company responded as follows:

All of Roadmaster's supplemental braking systems, including the 9700, are equipped with visual and audio safeguards to prevent damage to the brakes of a towed vehicle. These include an LED indicator with an audio alert to be mounted on the front [dashboard] of the motorhome.

When you chose to omit the LED indicator from your most recent motorhome, you eliminated both safeguards. Had these safeguards been in place, the damage to your dinghy vehicle's brakes could have easily been avoided. That is, when your brakes began to experience problems, you would have either seen the LED stay illuminated, or — if

your attention was on the road — you would have heard the audio alert.

I am very sorry for the inconvenience and expense you have incurred. However, since the LED and audio safeguards were not installed in your motorhome, we do not feel we have an obligation to reimburse you for your damages.

MICHAEL CANON
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
ROADMASTER, INCORPORATED
VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

EXTENDED SERVICE DISSATISFACTION

Running into a stone wall when he tried to obtain what appeared to be a valid refund from his service contract provider, a reader asked Hot Line to get involved. He wrote:

In 2004, I purchased a new motorhome from River City RV in Sherwood, Arkansas. At that time, the dealer also sold me a Heritage Platinum RV Service Contract for \$7,500. Coverage on the contract was to be provided for seven years or 80,000 miles, with a \$50 deductible.

Recently, I had a problem with the AC generator on my coach, and I took it to an authorized service center in Shreveport, Louisiana. Prior to the repair, I obtained authorization from Heritage to go ahead with the necessary work.

As a result, the repair shop was given the OK to proceed with the job, and was told to collect full payment from me when it was done. I was told to submit documentation to Heritage for reimbursement, minus my \$50 deductible. I went ahead and paid for the work, and immediately forwarded all necessary papers to Heritage for reimbursement of \$569.19 (the total bill was \$619.19).

After a month passed without reimbursement from Heritage, I called the company. I heard that my claim was “in the computer,” but that my check had not been cut. I then called my dealer to see if anyone there could help me.

All my efforts to collect my reimbursement have gotten me nowhere. I have what appears to be a worthless service contract. I am owed \$569.19 for

the authorized repair of my generator. Can *Hot Line* help me resolve this matter?

WILLIAM DON CHAMLEE | NASH, TEXAS

Hot Line contacted Heritage at the two addresses Chamlee had listed on his paperwork. As might have been expected, the company did not answer our inquiry, either.

Fortunately for Chamlee however, the company did eventually respond to him. Below is a follow-up note from Chamlee, filling us in on the conclusion of his case.

I appreciate *Hot Line's* intervention very much in helping to resolve my claim against Heritage. Within three weeks after your letter was sent to the company's Claims Department, I received full payment of the money that was owed to me. Keep up the good work. **W.D.C.**

GOING IN CIRCLES

Caught between a repair facility and a component manufacturer in trying to collect on a repair bill, a reader turned to Hot Line when he ran out of options. He wrote:

Last summer, I took my coach to American RV in Anthony, Texas, for warranty repair/replacement of a hydraulic pump. The pump was manufactured by Lippert Components, Inc., and was still under warranty.

When I picked up my motorhome, I was charged \$195.33 for labor, fluids and shop supplies. This didn't seem right to me, as I was under the impression that warranty coverage should have taken care of these items as well.

After discussing this matter with the manager of American RV, I was told that Lippert had not authorized payment for labor. I then spoke with a representative of Lippert, who said that American RV was authorized to bill Lippert for any additional expenses, but they had not done so.

As it stands now, I am being given the runaround by both companies. They each say it's the other's responsibility to pay me. I would appreciate anything that *Hot Line* can do to help resolve this issue.

**HANK DUERST
ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO**

Duerst was not clear regarding the specifics of his pump warranty or age of the compo-

nent in his letter to Hot Line. This would have been helpful, as many part and component warranties specify replacement of parts only (no labor included), especially after a certain amount of time has elapsed.

To help get to the bottom of his dilemma, Hot Line contacted both Lippert Components, Inc. and American RV, for further clarification. We did not receive a response from either company, but did

receive the following from Duerst. It read:

Thank you, *Hot Line*. Within three weeks after you interceded on my behalf, I received a check from Lippert for the total amount of \$195.33.

H.D.

TO CONTRIBUTE TO *HOT LINE*, please refer to *Contact MotorHome*, page 7.

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Tire Pressure

I've read articles about the importance of correct tire pressure, but I've never seen a tolerance mentioned. As you know, all engineering dimensions have a tolerance "minimum or maximum/plus or minus." What brought this to mind was that, one day when checking my tires, I found a 4-pound difference between the sunny side and the shady side of the motorhome, and between the inside dual and the outside dual on the sunny side. What are your thoughts on this?

HARRY TREACY
MANASQUAN, NEW JERSEY

You should never bleed a hot tire down, Harry, and you should leave the differential alone between the inside and outside duals. Tires are designed to permit temperature-induced pressure changes from the cold inflation pressure.

The fact remains there is a minimum pressure required to carry the load of the tire. It may be taken from a load/inflation table, or it may be the minimum pressure required to carry the maximum

"A MOTORHOME IS A HOME, CAR AND POWER/WATER/SEWER COMPANY ALL AT ONCE.

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load that is embossed on the sidewall of all motorhome, light truck and truck tires.

The cold inflation pressure should never go below the required minimum, and readers of this column know I have always recommended an additional 10 PSI to give you some room to work. However, the cold inflation pressure should never exceed the maximum pressure rating of the rim portion of the wheel.

LIFE EXPECTANCY

My wife and I are full-time RVers, and are enjoying the experience. We bought a 1999 Holiday Rambler Endeavor gas-powered Class A. Our plan is to try the lifestyle with this motorhome until retirement in a couple of years, then purchase something newer — maybe diesel powered — for extensive traveling.

My question is about how long parts of the motorhome last in full-time use: the furnace, water heater, refrigerator, etc. We may purchase used a second time, but only something a couple of years old.

DALE FRIDLEY
DAMASCUS, MARYLAND

While motorhome appliances don't seem as durable as home appliances, Dale, they often outlive home appliances, if for no better reason than they are used intermittently. I've known all of the appliances that concern you to last more than 15 years in my own motorhome. With reasonable care yours can do the same.

Interior longevity is usually not as big of an issue as exterior longevity. Tires need replacing regardless of tread in around seven years. Wheel bearings need to be cleaned and repacked. Roof joints need to be caulked, as do the windows, to keep moisture from getting in. A motorhome is a home, car, power company, water company and sewer company all at once. All of these entities require periodic maintenance to keep the motorhome going down the road smoothly.

HOT DRIVER

I own a 1997 Class C motorhome on a Ford F-350 chassis with V-10 engine. On road trips I notice excessive hot air and temperatures coming from the engine cover, which makes it uncom-

fortable to drive.

The cover itself is in good condition, as the insulation is still attached. The engine is stock with no add-ons (headers and such) and does run at normal temperature. I'm at a loss as to what to try.

AL MATUSKA | MONTVILLE, OHIO

This is a common complaint, Al. More insulation is the only solution. There's a product called "The Insulator" that works well. It's a foil-faced insulation that reflects the heat back into and out of the engine compartment. It can be purchased from automotive upholstery shops and other auto supply companies.

NO START

My 1998 32-foot Fleetwood motorhome, which was built on a GM P-chassis with a 454-cid engine, has a starter problem. When I try to start the engine, the starter clicks with no engagement off the chassis battery. When I use the house battery, it will turn over and start.

The starter has been replaced, along with a new engine battery and new house batteries, which have been checked and are good. After starting the engine about three times or so, it goes back into the no-start mode.

My mechanic checked the wiring from the battery to the starter and other wiring, but could not find anything wrong. I hope you have some suggestions.

R.M. PAUL | CLARENDON, TEXAS

The problem is low voltage, R.M. It is caused by resistance in the wiring from the battery to the ignition switch to the starter. Over the years we have written extensively about this problem, and have advised our readers about GM Service Bulletins on the subject.

Your motorhome may or may not have the latest wiring that includes a relay. The relay became original equipment, and it can be retrofitted on earlier models following instructions in a Service Bulletin. Chevrolet Motorhome Service Centers have that Service Bulletin, and will be able to install the relay in your motorhome at your expense. The relay sends chassis battery power directly to the starter rather than through the ignition wiring.

If your motorhome is already equipped with the latest wiring and the relay, check the integrity of the grounds. Follow the negative cable from the chassis battery to its mounting bolt on the engine, and find the ground strap from the engine to the frame. Make sure there is no corrosion on the ends of the cable and the strap. There are two sides to a 12-volt DC circuit. The ground side is all too often neglected.

ELECTRICAL TROUBLESHOOTING

I agree with you about the value of having a wiring diagram to troubleshoot electrical problems, but every once in awhile a problem occurs that is truly baffling — step on the brake pedal and the dome light illuminates, or select reverse and the right turn signal indicator lights up, for example. In cases like these, the cause is often a bad fuse, a bad ground or installation of an incorrect bulb for the type of socket.

The next time you encounter a bizarre malfunction, before you get out the schematics, start ripping and tearing or jotting down voltage readings, do the following.

Check all the fuses on the vehicle regardless of which circuit you think is involved. Check not only that they are “good” but also that there is no corrosion between the fuse and the holder. Remember, a fuse may look good but have internal resistance for adequate amperage flow. Most motorhomes today have multiple fuse boxes, so check them all.

Use a jumper wire to check for bad grounds by using a known good ground. Again, it may look good, but still have excessive resistance.

Check all the bulbs on the vehicle. In each case, is it the correct bulb and is it good (i.e., not open or shorted internally)?

Finally, for all troubleshooting, check the simple things first. It’s usually something basic.

GORDON MOOG NINE MILE FALLS, WASHINGTON

Thanks for your note, Gordon. Bad grounds are very common, and almost always overlooked. I’ve seen capable technicians tear out the inside of a motorhome looking for the positive side of a circuit, only to find that the ground had simply rotted away with bimetallic corrosion.

SECOND AIR CONDITIONER

In your March column, “30 Amps/50 Amps,” a reader inquired about converting his 30-amp coach to 50 amps. You advised it was possible, but very expensive, especially just to run a second air conditioner.

My 30-amp coach, which I bought used, came with a wall-switch-type circuit breaker in the 120-volt AC generator compartment. It cuts the second air conditioner out of the coach supply, and enables a separate plug-in — using a heavy-duty extension cord — to the 20-amp outlet on the RV park supply post.

When I disconnect the extension cord, I flip the switch back to “generator.” The coach’s previous owner was an industrial maintenance manager, and he installed mine, but I’m sure any competent electrician could do the same thing.

KEN DALTON VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

If you can electrically isolate the second air conditioner, Ken, a second 20-amp shore-power cord will usually do the job. However, this assumes the 20-amp receptacle in the park supply post isn’t on the same circuit as the 30-amp receptacle, and the RV park doesn’t try and charge you for two hookups. The switch must be a 20-amp, double-pole, double-throw, non-shorting switch. As you point out, a competent electrician should be consulted.

BRAKE RUST

When I store my motorhome (and dinghy vehicle) during the off season for a long period of time, rust forms on the brake rotors and drums. Is there any way to prevent this rusting, short of spraying the rotors with a rust inhibitor? I think a rust inhibitor might damage the brake pads and shoes.

ED HUCK FRANKLINVILLE, NEW JERSEY

All rust inhibitors will lubricate the brakes and destroy braking, Ed. Do not even think about using them. The rust on brake rotors and drums is surface rust, and usually rubs off with the first application of the brakes. It’s really nothing to worry about. ♦

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Tag Axle Trivia

I'd like to sell my 2005 Winnebago Vectra and move up to a larger model. What are the pros and cons of tag axles? Is the ride smoother? Can the drive axle get hung up and suspended? Have they been known to come loose? Thanks.

MIKE VATUNA
WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

Tag axles are used by chassis manufacturers to increase the amount of weight that a given chassis can carry. It happened more often in the past than today, but some motorhome manufacturers plan a big coach on a chassis — usually gas powered — that is too small for the vehicle. The coachbuilder extends the frame and adds a tag as a means of making the smaller (i.e., less expensive) chassis do the job. It's better to choose the right size, fully engineered and certified chassis for the planned load. This doesn't apply to big diesel-pusher motorhomes with tag axles, because those are designed for tag use right from the start.

I have not experienced a tag axle-equipped coach that I felt rode better, and I guess that depends on what it's compared to, but in some driving situations, a tag can add stability in crosswinds. Having a third axle increases the turning radius and also raises tolls on many toll roads. It is possible in some situations for the tag axle to hold a drive wheel above the pavement (which could cause it to lose traction). Many tags can be raised when making tight maneuvers, such as when entering/exiting a steep driveway. Adding mechanical components increases the number of parts that can wear out and fail. For these reasons, I'm not a big fan of some tag axles.

WINNEBAGO/ WORKHORSE WORRIES

I have a 2000 Winnebago on a Workhorse chassis with a 7.4-L Vortec engine and 4L80E transmission. With the ScanGauge, I can read transmission fluid temperature through the PCM, but what is the maximum value it should be limited to? I don't know where the PCM sensor is located: pan, cooler inlet or outlet? I see 140–170° cruising in lock-up, depending on speed, 170–190° in stop-and-go traffic. The highest I ever saw was 220° climbing an 8-percent grade in low gear. What's the maximum allowable temperature from the PCM transmission temperature sensor?

I also wonder if there's a way to activate the fuel pump without starting the engine. This would allow me to replace stale fuel with fresh when the coach sits for long periods.

BOB MERRITT
ASHEBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

“WHEN CLIMBING A STEEP GRADE IN SECOND GEAR, MORE DEMAND IS PUT ON THE MOTORHOME'S FUEL SYSTEM THAN IN ANY OTHER DRIVING MODE.”



The transmission fluid temperature sensor is in the internal wire loom of the transmission, so it's reading in the fluid pan or sump. GM recommended a short-term peak temperature of 275°, such as on a steep grade, for these transmissions. If it goes above this, pull over where it's safe, put the transmission in PARK, set the parking brake and let the engine run at fast idle until the fluid cools down.

The fuel pump can be turned on with the factory scan tool for testing, but I don't recommend do-it-yourselfers opening the fuel system and spraying gasoline under pressure. This could easily result in a fire. Instead, add a gasoline stabilizer product such as STA-BIL to the fuel. It's safer than trying to change fuel, and then what would you do with the old gas, anyway?

FALTERING FORD

My 1994 Class C motorhome is built on a Ford E-350 chassis with a 7.5-L fuel-injected engine. I have a problem with it stalling at high altitudes following a long second-gear pull up a steep grade.

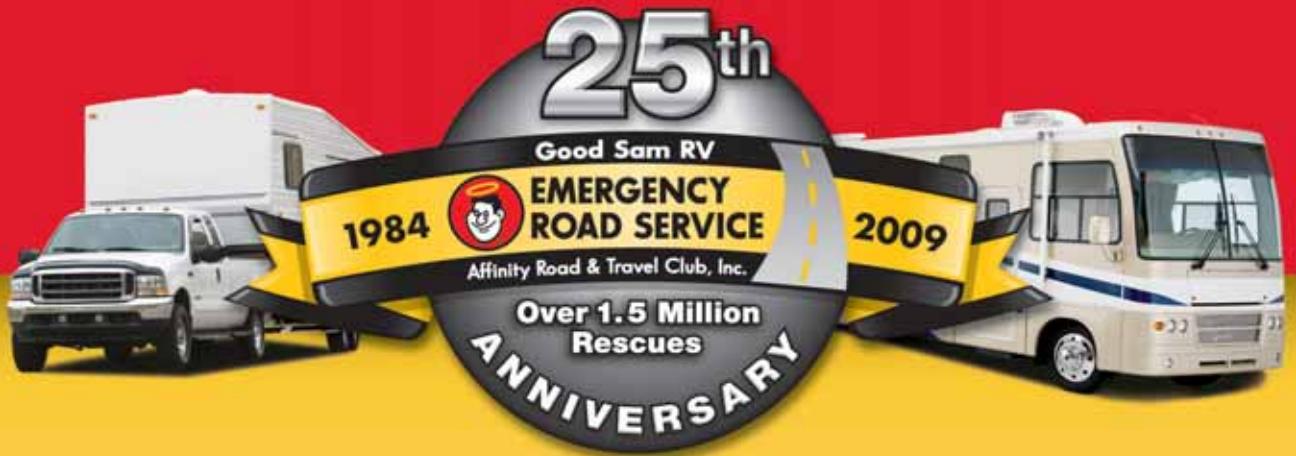
During a climb from 4,000 to 8,500 feet (about 15 miles, eight miles of which is in second gear) the coolant temperature stays in the normal range and the engine is not overheating. At the end of the grade, when I reduce speed, the engine sputters and eventually stalls. After stalling, the engine can be restarted in a few minutes but will stall again after running under load a short distance. The next day the engine starts and runs normally back down the mountain and performs normally at lower elevations. I suspect the problem involves the manifold absolute pressure (MAP) sensor, but I have since driven at high altitudes without any problem — albeit not in second gear under the aforementioned conditions. Hopefully you can provide some insight as to what the problem is.

ANDY WOLFE
DENVER, COLORADO

Yes, it does appear that it's not updat-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61

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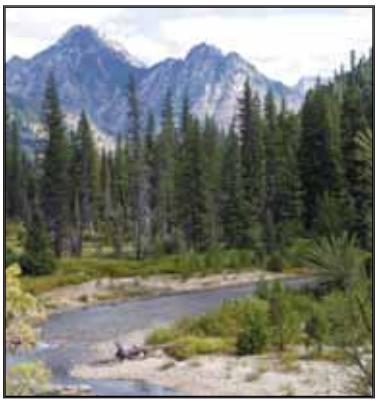
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by DENISE SANTOYO



EILEEN'S CHICKEN CHERRY SALAD

2 heads, or 2 bags, Bibb lettuce
 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
 salt, pepper, garlic to taste (optional)
 1 cup dried cherries
 1 cup sliced celery
 1 cup candied pecan pieces
 1 cup green or red seedless grapes, halved
 ½ cup sliced red onion
 raspberry vinaigrette dressing

- Season chicken with salt, pepper and garlic if desired. Cook over open grill, slice into strips.
- Shred lettuce into a large salad bowl.
- Add remaining ingredients and toss with raspberry vinaigrette dressing.
- Divide the salad into 4 servings and garnish each with a grilled chicken breast. Makes 4 servings.

This recipe is courtesy of Eileen Brys, proprietress of Brys Estate Vineyard and Winery in Traverse City, Michigan. Established by Eileen and her husband Walter in 2001, Brys Estate wines have become a favorite choice for mealtimes.

An accomplished chef, Eileen recommends pairing a pinot noir/Riesling with this dish. Brys Estate's award-winning pinot noir/Riesling is a delicious blend of the two wines with a hint of sweetness, perfectly balanced to showcase ripe tropical fruit and citrus notes.

For more information, go to www.brys-estate.com.

Got a recipe or a tip for the galley you'd like to share?

Let us know! Send your recipes and hints to letters@motorhomemagazine.com. Selected e-mails will be edited and published. ♦

if it will hold a vacuum. There may be a leaking diaphragm or hose, etc.

POLE BARN PROGNOSTICATIONS

Last May, I parked my 2003 Itasca Sunova motorhome in my barn. About a month later I took the coach to HWH for a new rear jack. The engine air wouldn't work, the speedometer was so faint I couldn't read it and the video on the backup camera wouldn't work. I checked the fuses and breakers for house and chassis (inline fuses and in-dash and under hood) and found nothing. I even replaced or rotated the large fuses under the hood.

In addition, the open/close valve for the rear heater under the hood will sometimes release about a cup of antifreeze. Usually it leaks only at a cold start up, never going down the highway. I also replaced both house batteries — the backup camera came on for a moment, but then lost video again. These problems are baffling me. Any help would be appreciated.

**TOM WILSON
 CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA**

The electrical problems seem to be associated with the engine-starting battery; the speedometer, auto-air fan and rearview monitor are all powered by ignition hot. Rodents gnawing on wires could cause it, or it could be a ground-path issue. I recommend tracing the wiring circuits for each component (wiring diagrams can be found at www.winnebagoind.com) and verify if there's a common denominator.

The "motor-aid" bus-heater plumbing is a mystery to me as I don't understand why the water valve would intermittently burp coolant. Perhaps it is temperature (expansion/contraction) related. However, you really wouldn't notice if it's leaking when you're driving, so it may be doing that, too. I really doubt if it's related to the electrical problems. ♦

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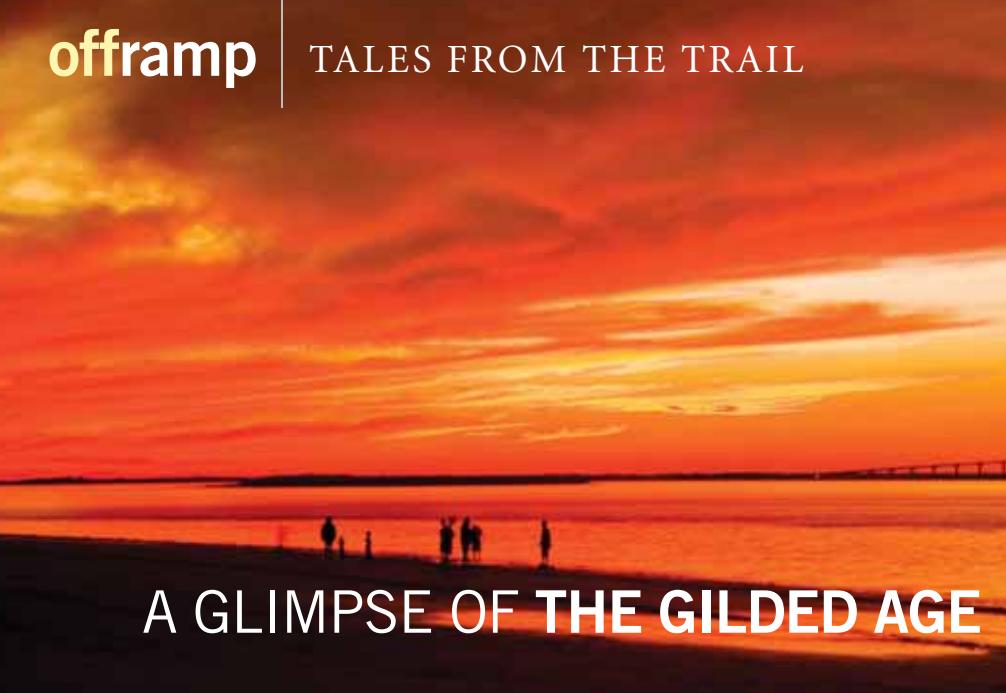
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A GLIMPSE OF THE GILDED AGE



Jekyll Island, Georgia — A century ago you and I wouldn't have been allowed on this island, unless, perhaps, we were servants for America's wealthiest captains of industry and finance. Only members of the Jekyll Island Club, or those they approved in advance, could visit these 2,400 acres, an exclusive winter retreat for the rich and famous.

Today, you can drive your motorhome to Jekyll Island, set up in an RV park with full hookups and walk in the footsteps of the Rockefellers, the Pulitzers and the Morgans. You can tee off on the golf course their money built and play croquet on the lawn of their clubhouse.

The clubhouse, cottages and servants' quarters still stand. Many are museums, allowing a glimpse of America's Gilded Age, a time when a few corporate titans controlled much of the nation's wealth, spending money on inconceivably lavish lifestyles.

In those halcyon days members arrived by yacht. J.P. Morgan's was so big it couldn't approach the dock; instead he

was lightered ashore to the thundering roar of cannons. Today, you drive across a six-mile causeway opened in 1954, and circle the island to the 206-space Jekyll Island Campground on the north end. Reservations are recommended.

The Jekyll Island Club was founded in 1892, and those rich enough to be invited to join had to purchase two shares for \$600 each, a cost that represented more than a year's income for almost every other family in the nation back then. Originally there were 53 members/investors. Lesser categories of membership were established later, but by and large only America's wealthiest could participate.

Conceived as a hunting club, the Jekyll Island Club quickly evolved into a more family-oriented winter retreat. Golf, tennis and bicycling became favored recreations and remain so today. A paved bike trail circles the island, and there are now three 18-hole golf courses and a nine-hole course.

Much of the wildness that made

this a prime hunting attraction in the late 1800s remains. Since the state of Georgia obtained the land in 1947, 65 percent of the island remains undeveloped by law. The opportunities to view wildlife are many, particularly deer, birds and turtles (the Georgia Sea Turtle Center is located here), as are the opportunities to walk or cycle mile after mile of hard-packed beaches. My wife, Jennifer, found a whole knobbed whelk shell on the beach at the St. Andrews Picnic Area, a shell she has never before found despite decades of beachcombing.

Of everything we did and saw on the island, though, nothing compared with one of the most spectacular sunsets we've ever experienced. We were taking photographs on Driftwood Beach when the sky evolved into a riot of colors, brilliant oranges to the west and deep purples in the clouds to the east. Every direction we looked just glowed with color. Those few minutes made the discovery of this island the highlight of our trip to Georgia. ♦



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