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Keep debris, water and snow off your RV while enhancing the look with a slide-topper awning. Page 53
LUXE
The Essence of Luxury

Heading in a new Direction
Augusta RV is leaving the age old model of selling through dealers. Now selling direct to you! Call us today for a great deal on your next Fifth Wheel!

Augusta RV LLC, Circle 101 on Reader Service Card
Living in the Lap of Luxury

Some fifth-wheel trailers have evolved into palaces on wheels, taking a run at highline motorhomes

It's easy to make the case that today's fifth-wheels are the crown jewels of the towable segment in the RV lifestyle. Not long ago, it was unheard of to find fifth-wheel models priced in the six-figure range; today it's pretty common. Most manufacturers are injecting higher levels of luxury into brands that were once relegated as upper-middle class, and the market is easily supporting this transition as demand for creature comforts — and space — moves along at a brisk pace.

An important factor in the proliferation of larger, more luxurious fifth-wheels is full-timing. I don't think anyone will argue that a fifth-wheel makes the best RV for those who partake in the full-time lifestyle, simply because the inherent design and features make a fifth-wheel more versatile. Space is always a prime consideration, and a big fifth-wheel offers an incredible amount of usable interior real estate and storage. It can be argued that to get the utmost in luxury, you'll have to go with a highline motorhome in the 40-to-45-foot category, fitted with opulent fixtures and decor, but companies like New Horizons are working hard to close that gap. A perfect example is the 40-foot Summit featured on page 24.

New Horizons, a builder tucked away in small-town mid-America, has evolved into a manufacturer of luxury fifth-wheel coaches, and hangs its hat on the premier Majestic nameplate. Technically, the Summit is a step down from the ultra-luxurious Majestic, but you'd be hard-pressed to call it anything but high-end. Granted, fifth-wheels pushing or exceeding 200 grand are not an option for the majority of RV enthusiasts, who only dream about owning such a machine. Although they might be out of financial reach, such units benefit the market. Companies that produce highline RVs have the resources to improve their products and add innovative features. Many of the features originally earmarked for luxury fifth-wheels will trickle down into more modest rigs, and many owners eventually become the recipients of such advances in technology and product development. It's just the way the RV industry works.

There's not much missing when it comes to super-luxury fifth-wheel ownership, except for the need to find RV sites with enough room to handle the sheer size of the rig, and a suitable tow vehicle, which in itself is usually pretty long. If you find there is something missing or need to upgrade appliances and accessories to make your home on wheels even better, check out the gear guide starting on page 87.

A big part of ownership is individualizing any RV, even if it's a luxury model.

— Bob Livingston, publisher

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DID YOU KNOW? On September 16, 1908, William C. Durant founded General Motors with a single brand, Buick. GM soon acquired more than 20 companies including Oldsmobile, Cadillac and the predecessor of GMC, and launched Chevrolet.
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Holy Grail of Rail Museums
July’s roundup of railroad museums, “On the Right Track,” in the Around the Bend section overlooked the National Railroad Museum in suburban Green Bay, Wisconsin. Locomotive exhibits include a Union Pacific Big Boy, a 1955 Aerotrain and British Railways’ Dwight D. Eisenhower. The museum also offers train rides and interactive displays for all ages. My wife and I have been there numerous times over the years and have always enjoyed the visits. You can explore the website at www.nationalrrmuseum.org.
Rick Warnke, Cambridge, Wisconsin

RV History in the Making
As a happy Lazy Daze owner for 14 years, I was surprised that “The Evolution of RVing” in July’s 75th-anniversary issue made no mention of the Class C motorhome, beginning with Lazy Daze, originated by Paul and Ed Newton 50 years ago. To us, the advent of the Class C is an important facet of the RV picture.
Dellamae Kline
Mountaintop, Pennsylvania

Although we didn’t mention Lazy Daze’s debut in July’s RV history timeline, Trailer Life didn’t overlook it. The October 1966 issue published a test of the 16-foot Lazy Daze Sportsman, built on a Dodge van chassis and selling for $5,295 from the factory in Pomona, California. The article rated the “intriguing” mini-motorhome “one of the nicest riding and handling units” the author had ever encountered and lauded its “impeccable workmanship.” Fifty years later, the company is still selling the factory-direct Lazy Daze brand, widely credited as the first Class C motorhome. — Editors

The Heat Is On
In the October 2015 issue’s “Turning Up the Heat” letter, reader Dave Michaels said he replaced the mechanical thermostat in his trailer with the digital LUX9600Tsa from Lux Products. Based on his statements, I ordered one. However, when I called the Lux customer-service department, I was advised that this thermostat would not work in a 12-volt RV. I sure would like to know the right answer.
Dale Siemsen, Austin, Texas

Fifty years of Class Cs: Unlike the original Lazy Daze, tested in the October 1966 issue (left), the 2016 models come with an HDTV, LED lighting and a USB port in the sound system.

Sweet Dreamers
I have truly enjoyed the 75th anniversary articles on the history of camping in this year’s Trailer Life. My wife, Helen, and I started camping in 1966 by renting a truck camper and taking it out for a weekend. That trip was a good experience, and in 1967 we bought our first RV. We had a half-ton pickup at the time and chose a Dreamer truck camper made in Oswego, Kansas. As I recall, we paid about $1,300 for it and spent another $300 for a recirculating toilet that worked well for many years.

One of the neat things about the Dreamer brand was that it had national rallies each year, and we also had Indiana rallies two or three times a year. That’s where we learned to make caramel corn and chili in an iron kettle. We still keep in contact with some of those families.

In the early days, we camped mostly in state parks, which cost about a dollar per night. We can’t forget our first trip to Beech Bend Park in Bowling Green, Kentucky. That park was unique in that it had an entrance fee of one dime per camper, and you paid extra for the things you wanted to do. If you wanted to go swimming, you paid a fee. If you wanted to go on carnival rides or play arcade games, you paid a fee. If you wanted to sit by the campfire and do nothing, that was free. What a deal!

Beech Bend Park had a camping store that was no larger than 20 by 20 feet and was filled with all the things campers had to have. That little store grew to become the Camping World we know today, and the amazing thing is that it still has all the things campers have to have.

We have owned quite a few RVs since that first Dreamer and have been fortunate to do a lot of traveling that would not have been possible without them.
Joe Zeiner, Greencastle, Indiana

Dreamer truck campers came on the scene in 1959 and soon established a loyal following of owners who got together at national rallies and state outings.
Dave Michaels replies: The LUX9600TSa doesn’t depend on the voltage of the heating or cooling circuitry. It runs on its own batteries and merely completes connections between the several screws on the back of the mounting plate, depending on the ambient temperature and the thermostat’s set points. For example, to heat, when the thermostat senses a lower temperature than its set point, it connects the red and white wires in back of the mounting panel. It does not rely on any voltage source except its own batteries.

I’ve had a LUX9600TSa in my trailer for almost two years with no problems. My heating furnace runs on 12-volt DC power, and the thermostat controls it just fine. I should probably add that the switch contacts in the thermostat have a finite voltage and current capability — they won’t handle a 120-volt AC electric-heater element, for example, but a 12-volt DC camper furnace is easily within the capability of the switch contacts within the thermostat.

Putting in a Good Word
We are the proud owners of a 2015 Desert Fox toy hauler made by Northwood Manufacturing. The trailer had a slow leak in one of the tires, but we never bothered to have it looked at while under warranty, as it was leaking only about 20 PSI every four months. We finally took the tire and wheel to a tire shop to have the technicians replace what we assumed was a leaking valve stem. What they found was a very slow pinhole leak in the aluminum wheel.

Six months out of warranty, we decided to call our dealer, Apache Camping Center in Everett, Washington, and they immediately got Dave Mann at Northwood to contact us. Dave asked us to email a photo showing the leak with soapsuds. After seeing the picture, he had a new wheel with a new mounted tire shipped to us free of charge.

We highly recommend Northwood Manufacturing and Apache Camping Center. They both know what great customer service means to the consumer.
Craig and Karen Kackman
Cle Elum, Washington
While attempting to back our small Class C Winnebago Rialta into our carport, we scraped the left-rear side of it. We wanted to leave on an extended trip right after the Fourth of July weekend, but the larger repair shops were solidly booked, as everyone was anxious to get their RVs ready for the summer season. We were lucky to find RV Specialists in northern San Diego. The results of the repair are stunning, and we cannot overemphasize how pleased we are. I heartily recommend RV Specialists to anyone in Southern California who requires body and paint work done on their rig.

Steve Gerner, Evans, Georgia

Our 2008 Keystone Montana 3295RK fifth-wheel had both of the MORryde LRE shear springs replaced in 2014. After one of the new shear springs failed, Maria at MORryde offered to solve the problem by shipping two new shear springs to us. Now that’s great customer service.

Ed and Anita Weikman
West Greenwich, Rhode Island

Our 2008 Keystone Montana 3295RK fifth-wheel had both of the MORryde LRE shear springs replaced in 2014. After one of the new shear springs failed, Maria at MORryde offered to solve the problem by shipping two new shear springs to us. Now that’s great customer service.

Ed and Anita Weikman
West Greenwich, Rhode Island

Turn On the Headlights
It has been about seven years since my wife, our two cats and I went to Alaska for four months, and we are planning to go back again next year. We purchased a Forest River Flagstaff Classic 26-foot fifth-wheel because we had trouble finding state and provincial campgrounds that could handle our previous 38-foot Keystone Montana.

One thing I got used to doing in Alaska was turning on the headlights whenever we got in the truck to travel, as this is the law on the many roadways where it is posted to do so. I wish more people would get in the habit of doing this in the Lower 48, as it is not only one of the easiest ways to increase visibility and prevent collisions, it is also very much a courtesy gesture.

Thomas McCall, Smithsburg, Maryland

In 2013 we purchased a new Jayco White Hawk travel trailer. The brown fiberglass front end began deteriorating shortly thereafter. Last December we decided it looked shabby enough to warrant refinishing. We received a $1,500 estimate for removing the old finish, repainting it bright white and applying a gelcoat finish.

We emailed Jayco and asked if the company would assist with the cost of the repairs, despite the trailer being out of warranty. An extremely nice customer–service representative responded, “Yes, we will help.” We then emailed him a copy of the estimate and a photo of the damaged front end. His response totally surprised us when Jayco offered to pay the entire cost. Jayco’s desire to fully stand behind its product is remarkable, and we are very grateful and happy to be Jayco customers.

Steve Gerner, Evans, Georgia
We may not have kings and queens on this side of the Atlantic, but we do have our own brand of royalty, the fabulously wealthy industrialists and tycoons. A number of these so-called captains of industry erected dwellings that are every bit as grand as any Old World castle. Among them are Boldt Castle and Singer Castle, both built at the turn of the 20th century in New York’s Thousand Islands of the St. Lawrence River.

Boldt Castle was built by German immigrant George C. Boldt, who had a rags-to-riches career as a hotelier and made his millions as proprietor of the largest, most luxurious hotel of its day, the art deco Waldorf Astoria in New York City.

Boldt chose Heart Island as the site for his home, which was planned as a full-size replica of a 16th-century Rhineland castle. Construction of the six-story, 120-room manse began in 1900 and included tunnels, Italian gardens, a drawbridge and a powerhouse. The 11-building complex on several islands, one of the largest private homes in America, was to be a Valentine’s Day gift to Boldt’s beloved wife, Louise.

But in early 1904, Louise died suddenly, and Boldt, inconsolable, abandoned the site. He immediately wired from New York that all work on the castle be stopped, although he had invested $2.5 million and employed some 300 stonemasons and carpenters. For the next 73 years, it stood open to the elements.

The Thousand Islands Bridge Authority acquired the property for $1 in 1977, by which time damage was extensive. But it was opened to the public the following year, and ever since, all revenue collected for admission has been used to restore and finish the castle as Boldt had envisioned. Today, the magnificent complex is nearly complete, with many rooms furnished as they would have been in 1904. This year, Boldt Castle is open for tours until October 16.

As Boldt Castle was being built, construction of another, similarly grand though smaller manor was also under way, Singer Castle on Dark Island, 9 miles to the east. The 28-room estate, completed in 1904, was built by Commodore Frederick Bourne, millionaire president of the Singer Sewing Machine Company. Architect Ernest Flagg drew inspiration for the castle from Sir Walter Scott’s novel Woodstock, set in 17th-century England and Scotland. Appropriately, the magnificent Singer mansion includes dungeons, turrets, towers and secret passageways.

Long a private residence, Singer Castle is now owned by a German investment group, which opened it to the public in 2003. This year, it’s open for guided tours through October 9.

Thousand Islands Mansions

On the Saint Lawrence River between New York and Ontario, elaborate Boldt and Singer castles invite the public to tour their towers, turrets and secret passageways

article by Pamela Selbert  photos by Steve Sturtz

Tons of granite was transported across ice and water from nearby Oak Island to build four-story, 28-room Singer Castle on Dark Island.
Salem Hemisphere Hyper-Lyte

The Salem Hemisphere Hyper-Lyte travel trailer is back for 2017 after being introduced by Forest River in 2016. Seven floorplans in the Hyper-Lyte series range from 25 feet 11 inches to 32 feet 8 inches, and can sleep from four to 10 people. Claimed unloaded vehicle weights start at 4,768 pounds and go up to 6,273 pounds.

Each of the seven Salem Hemisphere Hyper-Lyte models has a 54-gallon freshwater tank, in-floor heat ducting, a 32-inch HDTV and CD/DVD/AM/FM with an MP3 hookup and surround sound. The 24BH has an EZ Lift Bed System with a Jiffy Sofa, in lieu of a bedroom. Most models have a laundry hamper in the bedroom that goes to the pass-through storage, accessible from the outside. A freestanding table and four chairs are optional.

Step inside the 24RK (pictured here) through either of two doors, one leading into the front bedroom and the other entering by way of the rear kitchen, which features a Dometic refrigerator, a recessed stove with a glass cover, a microwave and a high-rise pull-out faucet. The booth dinette and the trifold sofa bed in the opposing slideout provide sleeping space for up to four overnight guests. Between the living area and the bedroom is a large bathroom with a residential-type radius shower. In the bedroom, nightstands and mirrored wardrobes bookend the walk-around queen-size bed, which has drawers built into the platform for additional storage.

Enjoy music outdoors with marine-grade speakers while relaxing under the 16-foot awning, which can be controlled with a touch-screen remote control, as are the awning’s LED lights, the slideout and the power stabilizer jacks. Base MSRP starts at $28,000.

Forest River, 574-533-6673, www.forestriverinc.com

NEWswire

Dutchmen Purchases EverGreen Plant

EverGreen Recreational Vehicles, manufacturer of travel trailers, fifth-wheels, toy haulers and Class B motorhomes, has closed its doors in Middlebury, Indiana. Earlier this year, the company was in growth mode, so the shutdown came as a surprise. The 100,000-square-foot facility has been purchased by Dutchmen Manufacturing, a division of Thor Industries’ Keystone RV Company.

According to Troy James, Dutchmen’s president, “Demand for our products is at an all-time high. The addition of this new plant and the quality workforce in the Middlebury area will enable us to further ramp up production to meet our dealers’ needs while maintaining our high level of quality.”

www.dutchmen.com

Lippert Celebrates 60 Years

Lippert Components, Inc. (LCI) is celebrating 60 years in business. LCI employs more than 7,000 people and operates 45 facilities throughout the United States, Canada and Italy.

“LCI has become the company it is today because of people, both inside and outside our organization,” said Jason Lippert, CEO of Lippert Components. “To our employees, past and present, thank you for your tireless efforts to make LCI great. I want to especially thank our customers who have stuck with us through good times and bad. At LCI, we have always put our customers first, building long-lasting relationships on trust.”

www.lci1.com

Transfer Flow Honored

Transfer Flow, manufacturer of after-market fuel-tank systems for the travel trailer and motorhome industry, was honored by California Assemblyman James Gallagher at California Small Business Day on May 25. Founded in 1983 by General Motors engineer Bill Gaines and his wife, Jeanne, the company now employs more than 90 people from across Northern California.

Small businesses reportedly contribute 75 percent of California’s gross state product and more than half of the state’s private sector jobs. In addition to Transfer Flow, the event honored 84 small businesses for their contribution to the state’s economy.

Said Gallagher: “The team at Transfer Flow has been an incredible asset to the North State community.”

www.transferflow.com
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The Heart of Family Recreation
Stargazing Across America

Some of the best views of stars and constellations can be found far from the city lights at America’s national and state parks, and RVs make it easier to enjoy the nightly spectacle. Here are a few fall events that RV astronomers will appreciate, from ranger-led stargazing evenings to several-day festivities.

**CALIFORNIA**

Night Sky Festival
October 28 through 30
Joshua Tree National Park
www.nps.gov/jotr/planyourvisit/night-sky-festival.htm

**COLORADO AND UTAH**

Explore the Dark Skies
Saturdays through October 1
Hovenweep National Monument
www.nps.gov/hove

**IDAHO**

Idaho Star Party
September 30 and October 1
Bruneau Dunes State Park, Bruneau
www.boiseastro.org

**MAINE**

Acadia Night Sky Festival
September 22 through 25
Bar Harbor and Hancock County
www.acadianightskyfestival.com

**NEVADA**

Great Basin Astronomy Festival
September 29 to October 1
Great Basin National Park
www.nps.gov/grba/planyourvisit/greatbasinastronomyfestival.htm

**PENNSYLVANIA**

Black Forest Star Party
September 2 through 4
Cherry Springs State Park, Coudersport
www.bfsp.org

**UTAH**

Celebrate the Stars
September 3
Canyonlands National Park
www.nps.gov/cany
Cowabunga at Chicagoland Speedway
Dubbed the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 400 and sponsored by Nickelodeon, the September 15 through 18 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race takes place at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, Illinois. Four days of fast-paced fun includes the ARCA Racing Series, the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, the NASCAR XFINITY Series and, on September 18, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 400. The event will also feature an array of Nickelodeon-themed activities, musical acts and NASCAR personality Q&A sessions.

Located less than an hour from Chicago, Chicagoland Speedway offers more than 1,800 camping spots at the event. Coolers are permitted, and pets are allowed in the campgrounds.
Chicagoland Speedway, 888-629-7223, www.chicagolandspeedway.com

Take a Spin in Branson, Missouri
A 150-foot-tall Ferris wheel formerly stationed at Chicago’s Navy Pier has been relocated to Branson, Missouri, at the Track Family Fun Parks. The much-anticipated observation wheel has 40 gondolas that can each hold up to six passengers, and takes seven and a half minutes to make a full rotation. The Branson Ferris wheel is illuminated with 16,000 LED lights and surrounded by new landscaping and walkways.

Known for its classic and high-rise go-kart courses, the Track Family Fun Parks also offer bumper cars and boats, black-light miniature golf, laser tag, batting cages, kids’ rides and arcades.
The Track Family Fun Parks, 417-334-1612, www.bransontracks.com

51 years and counting...
Because Quality Never Goes Out of Style

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series driver Danica Patrick with Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael and Donatello.
Go with the Flow in Utah and Idaho

Through October, Holiday River Expeditions is offering 65-plus seniors a $100 discount on Utah and Idaho rafting vacations. The company, which has been in business since 1966, has float trips that are fun and challenging but not too advanced for the whole family to enjoy. Well-trained river guides handle all meal preparations.

Here are a few upcoming river-rafting trips that may float your boat:

**IDAHO**

**Main Salmon River:** Departs September 2 for the six-day trip. Seniors: $1,240 with the discount. Adults: $1,485. Youth: $1,340.

**UTAH**

**Colorado River/Cataract Canyon:** Departs September 4, 18 and 26 for the six-day trip (eight-day trips are also available). Seniors: $1,025 with the discount. Adults: $1,175. Youth: $1,025.

**Colorado River/Westwater Canyon:**
Multiple departures each week through October 1 for the two- and three-day trips. Seniors: $425/$560 with the discount. Adults: $465/$610. Youth: $425/$560.

**Green River/Lodore Canyon:** Departs August 23, 25 and 30 and September 2 for the four-day trip. Seniors: $815 with the discount. Adults: $935. Youth: $815.

If you’re interested in taking the plunge, mention that you saw this in Trailer Life and ask for an additional $100 off the senior, adult or youth (ages 8 to 18) rate on any three-day or longer Utah trip. RV parking should be plentiful, but make sure to check on availability when booking.

Holiday River Expeditions
800-624-6323, www.bikeraft.com
California Camping
From mountains to beaches to rocky coastlines and everything in between, California has it all. Throw in numerous recreational opportunities, family entertainment, festivals and food, and you have the makings for a great RV getaway. But where to stay?
Camp-California! The Camper’s Guide to California lists RV resorts and state and county parks across the Golden State, as well as events and happenings, travel tips, dog-friendly beaches and special offers. The printed directories are free at California Camping World locations, California Welcome Centers, Bass Pro Shops and numerous other California business locations, as well as online and by mail.
Camp-California, 530-885-1624, www.camp-california.com

Winnebago Minnie 2500
For the 2017 model year, Winnebago Industries has added the 2500RL floorplan to its Minnie line of travel trailers. The 27-foot 11-inch travel trailer has a large, open living space with one slideout that houses the dinette. The optional 32-inch LED TV is easily viewed from the dinette or the jackknife sofa. The galley features a large Dometic refrigerator, a microwave, a three-burner stovetop, an oven, a stainless-steel sink and ample counter space.
Up front, the master bedroom has a queen-size bed, a wardrobe and overhead storage. The bathroom can be accessed from either the bedroom or the living area. Freshwater capacity is 43 gallons, gray-water is 41 gallons and black-water is 25.
Base MSRP is $23,193.
Winnebago Industries, 574-825-5250, www.winnebagoind.com

Maxxis International, Circle 128 on Reader Service Card

**ST RADIAL M8008 TRAILER TIRE**

Tire Sizes - Ply Rating

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<th>Size</th>
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<tr>
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*3 ply sidewall construction

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RVing in the Reagan Era

On the road again with downsized cars and unleaded gas

In 1981, the year Trailer Life turned 40, Ronald Reagan entered the White House hoping to boost the nation’s confidence after nearly a decade of “stagflation.” The 40th president promptly ended price controls on domestic oil, which had played a role in the fuel shortages of the 1970s. The 1980s also ushered in stricter government standards for more efficient vehicles and completed the phaseout of leaded gasoline — positive steps for energy conservation and the environment, but real challenges for RVers.

With automakers rolling out smaller, less-thirsty cars, Trailer Life readers were making the switch to tow vehicles built on light-truck chassis. As Editor Bill Estes pointed out in his April 1986 column, “Big-Car Squeeze,” this was another positive trend. “Frankly,” Estes wrote, “most of them are better and safer tow vehicles than passenger cars because they are designed to handle more weight. Their wheelbases often are longer, which adds to towing stability.” And it didn’t hurt that the fuel economy of pickups, vans and the new class of sport-utility vehicles, launched by the Jeep Cherokee XJ in 1984, was regulated less strictly than cars.

Even so, readers still loved their old sedans. When Trailer Life asked for nominations for the best tow vehicle ever built, the most-coveted models were four-door V-8s from 1970 to 1973. The top vote-getter, announced in July 1983, was the robust 1972 Oldsmobile 98.

President Reagan reflected on the environmental and economic policies of the 1970s in a February 1981 Trailer Life interview, calling for “balance” and “common sense.” He also voiced his ardent support for outdoor recreation. Echoing those sentiments in the October 1982 issue, Vice President George H.W. Bush stressed, “Recreation isn’t a luxury. It’s the stuff that recharges our batteries and keeps us going.”

By the end of Reagan’s two terms in the Oval Office and the start of the elder Bush’s four-year tenure, the Cold War had thawed, and the RV industry was heating up again. With rising optimism and lower fuel prices, Baby Boomers in particular were buying RVs in greater numbers, investing in then-innovative models with slideouts, basement storage and garages. For RVers, America had indeed become the “kinder, gentler nation” coined by Bush at the 1988 Republican National Convention.

Fueling Up in the Trickle-Down Economy

(Clockwise, from above) In a 1983 poll, Trailer Life readers named the 1972 Oldsmobile 98 their favorite tow vehicle (also pictured above in aqua). A photo of Ronald and Nancy Reagan on horseback accompanied a 1981 interview with the new president that focused on outdoor recreation and policies that affected RVers. In the July 1980 cover story, prior to that year’s presidential election, the candidates outlined their positions on issues of interest to the RV community.
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Out Like a Pilot Light
A full-timing Florida couple asked RV Resolutions for help getting paid back for a service call to repair their fifth-wheel’s kitchen range, which was still under warranty:

› After purchasing a 2015 Forest River Sierra fifth-wheel from Campers Inn RV in Jacksonville, Florida, we had numerous problems keeping the pilot light lit on the RV’s Suburban range. We live in the Sierra full time and don’t have the luxury of leaving it at a dealership for repairs because it is our home. Therefore, we paid a service technician to come and research the problem. After inspecting the range, the technician contacted the manufacturer, Airxcel, and was told there had been problems with the pilot assembly in that model and that a new part would be shipped to him directly at no charge under the warranty.

While we are thankful that the pilot assembly was replaced free of charge, Airxcel denied reimbursement of the service call. We would appreciate any assistance you can give in recouping the $75 we are out of pocket.

Terry Van Fossen, Orange Park, Florida

THE COMPANY RESPONDS
A warranty administrator in Airxcel’s Suburban division sent the following note after receiving RV Resolutions’ petition to reconsider the Van Fossens’ request:

Although we do not cover service calls, after review of this request, we will cover the amount of $75 under customer goodwill.

Ronnie Ellison, Airxcel, Dayton, Tennessee

Pandora’s Pin Box
At an RV rally in Indiana last year, a Trailer Life reader purchased a pin box from a vendor but later discovered that he couldn’t level his fifth-wheel with the new setup. Unable to settle the matter with the manufacturer, he asked RV Resolutions to mediate:

› We purchased a Flex-Air pin box for our fifth-wheel at the 2015 Forest River Owners Group Rally and had it installed at the nearby Goshen, Indiana, Lippert Components facility. After the installation, I asked the technician if our fifth-wheel was level, and he answered, “Yes.”

At our first night’s stop on the way home, I started to unhook and thought the nose of the fifth-wheel was riding high but didn’t give it much thought. A few weeks later, we went on a campground with friends, and several commented on the front of the fifth-wheel looking high. I took the fifth-wheel to Razorback Camper Sales in Hot Springs, Arkansas, where we had purchased it, and the technician confirmed that the nose was riding high and that there was a possibility of a blown rear tire or damage to the rear axle.

I contacted Lippert technician Scott Seggerman, and he told me to email pictures of the fifth-wheel hooked up to our truck, which I did. He emailed a reply that the pin box had been installed in accordance with Lippert’s standards and that we should adjust the contents of our fifth-wheel to keep additional weight toward the front of the axles. I don’t have the option of moving furniture or the appliances in our rear-kitchen fifth-wheel.

Although the Flex-Air pin box is excellent, I believe Lippert’s salesperson or technician should have advised us that our fifth-wheel could not be leveled using that pin box and our PullRite SuperGlide fifth-wheel hitch on our 2013 GMC 2500HD. I have since installed Lippert’s Trailair Rota-Flex pin box, which is compatible with our truck.

I am seeking your help in having Lippert refund the cost of the Flex-Air pin box.

Mark Maxim, Greenbrier, Arkansas

After contacting Lippert Components on Mark Maxim’s behalf, we received a letter from Lippert thanking us for the information and letting us know that the company would reach out to him directly. Maxim later followed up with a thank-you note:

› I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your intervention with Lippert Components in resolving our fifth-wheel pin-box issue. I received a call from Emily Stahley, a technical coordinator at Lippert. She conveyed to me that Lippert would reimburse us the full cost of the Flex-Air pin box.

Today, I received the check for $1,095. Thank you for all your help.

M.M. 🎉

NEED HELP? 🎉 RV Resolutions is a forum for the settlement of conflicts between consumers and RV dealers and manufacturers, accessory suppliers and service providers. After exhausting all other resources without success, please send a typed letter to Trailer Life RV Resolutions, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, California 93036. Include copies of appropriate bills and correspondence as well as a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
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GOING PLACES WITH GOOD SAM
From special events and regional gatherings to RV tours, let the Good Sam Club be your guide

2016 EVENTS
Don’t miss the chance to connect with fellow Good Sam Club members at the following RV-friendly regional events:

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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama Fall Festival at the Beach</td>
<td>September 18 to 25</td>
<td>Johnny’s Lakeside RV Resort, Foley, Alabama</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Prosser Balloon Rally</td>
<td>September 23 to 25</td>
<td>Wine Country RV Resort, Prosser, Washington</td>
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<td>Norsk Høstfest Festival</td>
<td>September 28 to October 1</td>
<td>North Dakota State Fairgrounds, Minot, North Dakota</td>
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<td>Country Fest/Bellamy Brothers</td>
<td>October 7 and 8</td>
<td>Red Barn Convention Center, Winchester, Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun Valley Jazz and Music Festival</td>
<td>October 19 to 23</td>
<td>Sun Valley and Ketchum, Idaho</td>
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2017 EVENTS
Experience world-class events and must-see destinations on members-only RV tours:

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<tr>
<td>Beer and Wine at the Vines</td>
<td>November 4 to 6</td>
<td>Vines RV Resort, Paso Robles, California</td>
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<td>Havasu Balloon Festival and Fair</td>
<td>January 11 to 15</td>
<td>Lake Havasu City, Arizona</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taste of California</td>
<td>May 5 to 7</td>
<td>Golden Village Palms RV Resort, Hemet, California</td>
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<td>Autumn in New England</td>
<td>September 20 to October 17</td>
<td>Start: Kennebunkport, Maine End: Niagara Falls, Ontario</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta</td>
<td>October 7 to 10</td>
<td>Balloon Fiesta RV Park, Albuquerque, New Mexico</td>
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2017 TOURS
New Orleans Mardi Gras
February 21 to March 1
New Orleans, Louisiana

An American Civil War
March 26 to April 9
Start: Charleston, South Carolina End: Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Australia and New Zealand
March 28 to May 5
Start: Christchurch, New Zealand End: Sydney, Australia

Alaska Your Way
June 26 to August 26
Start: Anchorage, Washington End: Prince George, British Columbia

Best of the Canadian Maritimes
July 21 to August 16
Start: Bar Harbor, Maine End: Saint John, New Brunswick

New Orleans
Christmas Rally
December 6 to 12
New Orleans, Louisiana

Calgary Stampede
July 13 to 18
McMahon Stadium, Calgary, Alberta

Autumn in New England
September 14 to October 11
Start: Kennebunkport, Maine End: Niagara Falls, Ontario

Polar Bear Migration
September 29 to October 13
Start: Dunseith, North Dakota End: Île-des-Chênes, Manitoba

Florida Sunshine Getaway
October 10 to November 13
Start: Pensacola, Florida End: Daytona Beach, Florida

Rose Parade Rally
December 28 to January 2, 2018
Pasadena, California

Flashback to the ’80s
With the Good Sam Club celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, I wanted to share a little about our family’s Good Sam history. We are Cindy Fitzgibbons and my husband, Raymond, the middle of three generations of a Vermont Good Sam family.

Ray and I joined the Good Sam Club in December 1984, and my parents, Carl and Carrie Guild, joined at about the same time. That month we found out we were expecting our first child, Jeremy. Jeremy’s first campout, at the age of three and a half weeks, was the 1985 Vermont Samboree. Julie, our daughter, was just 10 days old on her first camping trip, a 1987 outing in Henniker, New Hampshire, with our Good Sam chapter, the Rolling Wheels Sams. At that time, we had a three-passenger truck to pull our newly acquired Shasta trailer, so two-year-old Jeremy rode to the Samboree in his grandparents’ GMC pickup.

Since then, Ray and I have attended our state’s Samboree every year but one, and Julie, who is now 29, has not missed a single Vermont Samboree her whole life. Ray and I have served on the state Good Sam staff for a dozen years and are currently wagonmasters, and Julie also works on the state staff.

Carl and Carrie were proud of their grandchildren and enjoyed many years of camping with us and the rest of our Good Sam family, prior to their passing in 2007 and 2009, respectively. Thanks for the memories, Good Sam! — CINDY FITZGIBBONS

Thanks for the memories, Good Sam! — CINDY FITZGIBBONS
Kickoff to Fall Savings

Game Day Deals: Tailgating season is here, and football fans can load up on everything they need to enjoy the fun with Game Day Deals at Camping World, presented by Honda Generators. From August 22 through September 11, Camping World shoppers can save $50 when buying any Honda portable generator and score extra savings on grills, chairs, tables, recliners, patio lights and more. To top that off, on August 26 and 27, shoppers can take advantage of Camping World’s two-day Doorbuster deals on RV and outdoor accessories. On both days, the first 100 customers will receive a mini football, and free lunch will be served from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.

U-Bag-It Sale: During the annual U-Bag-It Sale, September 16 and 17, Camping World shoppers who join the Good Sam Club or renew their membership can save an extra 10 percent on everything they can stuff, squeeze or cram into a free reusable shopping bag. The 10 percent discount is on top of the already low sale prices for Good Sam members. All items must be in their original packaging and extend no higher than 6 inches above the top of the bag. Life and Elite members receive the shopping bag and an additional 10 percent savings simply by showing their Good Sam membership card. Some restrictions apply; ask for more details at any Camping World SuperCenter.

Good Sam Days: Mark your calendars for Camping World’s Good Sam Days, October 7 through 16, when members can fill up on half-price LP-gas and enjoy exclusive savings on a wide selection of RV, outdoor and towing accessories.

To find all 120 Camping World SuperCenters, including driving directions, maps, hours of operation and available services, go to www.campingworld.com/stores.

NEW: Pet-Supply Discounts

The Good Sam Club has partnered with the following pet-supply companies to offer members discounts on products for dogs, cats and other family pets. PawPack delivers all-natural dog treats and toys on a customized schedule, Pet Stuff sells high-quality pet food without the fillers, and Rover lets users book dog-sitters in more than 10,000 cities. Good Sam Rx Saver, another club benefit, helps members save on common pet medications.

Visit www.goodsam.com/pets for more details and to get the members-only discount codes.

Good Sam Mail Service

Traveling Good Sam members and full-time RVers can check on their mailboxes daily, just like at home, with easy-to-use online tools from Good Sam Mail Service. The basic mail-forwarding plan ships mail and packages to requested destinations at selected intervals, shreds and recycles unwanted mail, sends email notifications for certified mail and jury summons, emails package-tracking information and provides a unique Florida mailing address. The premium plan adds online viewing of senders’ names and other details about letters, magazines and packages, and offers scans of urgent mail for $2.50 per letter. For both plans, there’s no limit on the amount of mail or packages received and no storage fees.

Go to www.goodsammailservice.com or call 877-388-2753 to learn more.

READY TO ORDER? Before the advent of online shopping, Camping World made a name for itself as a mail-order business. Three years after the company launched in 1966, Camping World’s first catalog rolled off the presses with a modest lineup of products that has since expanded to more than 10,000 RV parts and accessories.
The 2017 New Horizons Summit successfully integrates traditional design with some very unexpected features.

Innovation — the truly game-changing stuff — comes once in a blue moon in the RV industry. Most of what we’ve seen in the past decade amounts to product evolution, added features and interior design influenced by the residential sector. This isn’t a criticism so much as it is an observation. After all, there’s only so much you can do with a maximum of 400 square feet and a living space that amounts to a large rectangle. However, when several interesting ideas are integrated in a single floorplan, the result can be truly inspiring. Such is the case with the Summit S39FB4S fifth-wheel by Junction City, Kansas-based New Horizons RV.

Now boasting a 102-inch-wide body (up from 96 inches), the S39FB4S combines a traditional living area, a main-floor guest bathroom and a forward master bath, which work together to great effect. However, what will likely grab your attention immediately is the entry door in the slideout, which offers the functional advantage of making the living area feel more open when you walk in. Though rarely seen, even this is not a totally new idea; Peterson Industries and its popular and well-respected Excel line of fifth-wheels offered this unique feature as an option, and two thirds of buyers ponied up for it during the Excel’s final two years of production.

So when the manufacturer closed its doors last year, it was no surprise that New Horizons scooped up Peterson’s president, Bryan Tillett, to head up operations, and tapped him as a resource for ideas like this one.

Instead of facing a hallway or kitchen cabinet when you walk into the Summit, you enter the living area, with the kitchen and large island in front of you. This arrangement requires unique entry steps that remain attached to the doorway, and fold up and lock against the door during travel. Once the slideout is deployed, the steps are unlocked and lowered to the ground.

This setup is bigger and taller than traditional entry steps, but the real plus is that the step angle is more natural. The steps are designed to pivot back up to the door, adapting to rising or falling grades. Adjustable feet beneath the bottom step allow for bumpy, rocky or otherwise uneven ground. It’s a little bit of an extra effort when setting up and taking down, but not much, and the weight that must be lifted to stow the steps amounts to a paltry 14 pounds. Don’t worry about some joker using the steps to trap you inside; the lock arrangement prevents the steps from being set in place without the key.

Many motorhomes, even midline gas models, are now offered with a guest bath, so it just makes sense to offer one in a high-line fifth-wheel. With the master bath up front, you wouldn’t want guests traipsing through your bedroom to get to the bathroom anyway. The idea of a living area guest bath is also not new, but the way Summit optimizes the space is. Having a bathroom
on this level means a very tall ceiling, and empty space above that is essentially wasted. Instead, New Horizons puts the ceiling at a normal height, and then places a huge storage compartment above it that can be accessed from the living area (with a step ladder) or readily from the bedroom. The space is plenty large enough for extra blankets, comforters, pillows or any other bulky items you’d like to keep out of sight.

The Summit line is just one step down from the flagship Majestic and has a price tag that averages about $20,000 less. In some trailers, you can tell that you’re not in the top model, but not in the Summit. Natural Cherry hardwood cabinetry (made in-house, and sanded and stained by hand) is everywhere, lending a contemporary cabin feel when combined with the stainless-steel appliances and other high-end finishes. Hand-scraped genuine hickory wood flooring ($3,750) was used throughout the test unit.

The Summit shares the Majestic’s core features: a 12-inch I-beam frame (stacked with 2x4-inch box tubing) built in house, a four-point Bigfoot automatic hydraulic leveling system, hydraulically operated slides, Goodyear load range G truck tires on aluminum wheels and Dexter 7,000-pound axles. Electric drum brakes are standard, but we highly recommend the electric-over-hydraulic disc-brake option ($2,470) that the test unit was equipped with. If you opt for the hydraulic disc brakes, be sure your truck’s brake control works with the electric-over-hydraulic pump unit; not all integrated trailer-brake controls are compatible. Your choice of 10 full-body exterior-paint combinations in three colors is standard, or you can choose a four-color scheme like the Silver Mist on the test unit ($1,495) with deep cherry, black and silver graphics.

So where, then, is the money saved between the two lines? The Summit comes standard with pleated shades (optional solar/blackout shades were in the test unit), the shower is fiberglass instead of solid-surface, the furniture isn’t quite as fancy, and customization is not available. Of course, since New Horizons is a factory-direct, build-to-order manufacturer, you can choose from a long list of options, but as the price begins to rise, the line between Summit and Majestic will begin to blur.

The cozy bedroom features a queen bed in one slideout with storage underneath and equal-size nightstands on either side. The opposing slideout houses a wardrobe with room for hanging clothes on either side, a computer desk and more storage below, plus another chest of drawers to the left. A door leads into the forward bath.
There’s no denying that a base price of more than $187,000 is a lot relative to other 40-foot fifth-wheels on the market, but much of what you get for the money isn’t readily apparent. For example, all Summit models have a heated and enclosed basement, as well as a fully insulated and heated forward exterior-storage compartment. A revised air-conditioning system, which features two 15,000-Btu units, operates off a single duct that runs directly down the middle of the fifth-wheel. The advantage here, and it’s a big one, is that one A/C unit can be used to cool the entire trailer when placed on auto mode. We quickly learned how nice this is during our stay in Kansas when the heat soared to 100-plus degrees with 50 percent humidity and we had only the public park’s 30-amp power source to work with. Even so, the duct system, combined with the high-density foam in the exterior walls and 4 inches of insulation in the roof, kept the living area, the bedroom and the bath at a comfy 78 degrees. Ordinarily, working the A/C system that hard all day in humid conditions would result in a small waterfall of condensation dripping down the side, but New Horizons uses a pump that routes the water through a tube in the ceiling that exits at the rear bumper and underneath the front storage compartment.

As mentioned, the living area is pretty traditional, with a large bay window at the rear and a window on either side of the Ultraleather couch that converts into a traditional fold-out bed. On the curbside, two manually reclining theater seats face an entertainment center that features a 50-inch Samsung LED flat-screen with a Yamaha sound bar, plus cabinetry above and below, and an electric fireplace. We took the opportunity to sample the system on one blustery evening and found both the picture and the sound — which is augmented by a subwoofer behind the theater seats — to be more than adequate. A stereo system isn’t standard, but the sound bar is Bluetooth-enabled so you can stream music from your phone or
A large center island with an undermount dual-bowl stainless sink and a commercial-style high-rise faucet with a sprayer dominate the galley. The island offers an abundance of storage underneath, which can be accessed from either side, as well as storage cabinets on either end. A nice feature is a bottom drawer on the living area slideout that houses pet food and water bowls recessed into a laminate panel for easy cleanup. There are also 120-volt AC outlets on either end, and two drawers on the galley side.

Opposite the island is the kitchen counter with a two-burner Thetford “gas-on-glass” cooktop concealed by solid-surface covers for more prep space when needed. We would prefer three or even four burners, but New Horizons has yet to find another range that suits its standards, and we have to admit that the two-burner unit, with its electric ignition and high-output burner, is pretty nice. Above the cooktop is a stainless-steel residential Whirlpool convection microwave, and next to it is a 19-cubic-foot Samsung residential double-door refrigerator. There’s plenty of storage offered by the tall pantry with pull-out shelves, cabinets above the kitchen counter, and a tall pantry/spice rack in the corner next to the fridge.

All the way at the front of the living area is the aforementioned half bath, which offers plenty of room for the job at hand, as well as a porcelain toilet with a sprayer, solid-surface countertop and an under-mount sink with a stainless-steel residential faucet, plus storage underneath and a mirrored medicine cabinet. Because storage is located above, there is no ceiling fan, but there is a window for ventilation. We liked that even this area had solar/blackout shades on the window, as well as accent lighting above and beneath the cabinet.

Next to the bathroom door on the forward wall is a utility cabinet with switches for the dual Carefree of Colorado power awnings, two deep storage areas above and a coat closet at chest level. On the curbside is a smaller closet (ideal for that “one” jacket you always grab when heading out) and a two-
place dinette with an extension. Two folding chairs, which stow underneath the bed, accommodate guests.

Walking up four solid wood steps takes you into the master suite, with a queen bed in a streetside slideout and a wardrobe in the curbside slide. The wardrobe offers large storage cabinets on either side of the window, six large drawers beneath, and a shallow, wide drawer that can be used as a computer workstation. To the left of the wardrobe is a small chest of drawers, and on the forward wall, next to the bed, is another cabinet with a sliding door. Above the bed are more cabinets, and an open display area with built-in reading lights is underneath. Because the bed is appropriately sized for the space, there is room for nightstands with storage on either side.

The forward bath really adds to the residential experience, with an en suite feel that we felt was preferable to the Jack-and-Jill arrangement necessitated by the usual common bathroom in the hallway. Slide the solid wood pocket door by the usual common bathroom in the curbside living area and, courtesy of the guest bath, you can be assured there will be no late-night interruptions or surprises caused by a hallway door you forgot to lock.

A standard door opens into the bathroom, which features a porcelain macerator toilet and a vanity on the right, a large closet up front, and a washer/dryer-prepped cabinet to your left. Behind the door is a large fiberglass shower with a sliding glass door and stainless-steel detachable showerhead. There is plenty of room to move around while showering, and the skylight helps wake you up in the morning. There is plenty of countertop space as well, along with drawers and cabinets for all of your necessities. One cost-saving measure here is that the closet isn’t cedar-lined, as it is in the Majestic, but you could easily add cedar panels, if desired.

Another great feature of all New Horizons fifth-wheels is the lighting. It’s everywhere, and sections such as the living area, galley, bedroom and forward bathroom are controlled by multiplex panels that are easy to use. When a light group is active, the button for it glows blue; when it’s off, it’s white. The rest of the lighting, such as the sconces in the curbside living area slideout and some fixtures in the bathrooms, is controlled by independent switches. Accent lighting throughout is a great addition that makes the interior feel cozy and welcoming. When it’s time to clean up, the hardwood floors and central vacuum system make the job quick and easy.

When you’re full-timing, you can never have too much exterior storage, and the Summit doesn’t compromise here, either. The forward storage compartment is 42 inches tall and measures a cavernous 120 cubic feet. The floor is covered in rubber tread plate, and it is carpeted elsewhere. The plumbing is neatly arranged and labeled, and everything is accessible for service or repair.

The most unpleasant part of RVing is emptying the tanks, so New Horizons makes it as easy as possible with a tidy utility center featuring a fresh water drain valve, cable-operated black and gray dump valves, cable and satellite hookups, a freshwater inlet, and black- and gray-tank flush connections. Next to this compartment is a feature we haven’t seen in other fifth-wheels—a sewer-hose storage compartment that uses a steel grate for the floor. This makes it easy to rinse off the hose when you’re done, and provided you aren’t driving through a lot of rainy weather, it will by dry and odor-free by the time you reach your next destination.

The decision to go full time isn’t one that should be taken lightly, but with a beautifully crafted, well-equipped and unique fifth-wheel like the New Horizons Summit S39FB4S, the choice becomes a lot easier.

Special thanks to Ryan Gnagy, camp host of Milford State Park’s Cedar Point Campground in Milford, Kansas.
Carefree of Colorado was established 45 years ago when RV enthusiast Gene Upton introduced the first truly automatic roll up awning for RVs. The awning was an instant success and quickly thereafter became the most popular awning in the RV industry.

Since then, Carefree has developed a rich tradition of quality, value, performance, and style and is widely regarded for the depth of its product line, product innovation, quality, customer service and long-standing business relationships.

Our exclusive focus is on the design, development and innovation of RV Awnings and RV Awning Accessories. In our 45 year history, we have had millions of awnings installed worldwide on every type of RV imaginable. This experience, history, and focus is why we are a leading supplier of RV Awnings worldwide. Our innovation is what sets us apart from our competition. Here is a list of key RV Awning innovations championed by Carefree:

- **First powered patio awning**
- **First motion-based wind sensor**
- **Creator of the Slideout Awning**
- **First open-frame lateral arm awning**
- **Awning Fabric Protection**
- **Easy pitch adjustments**
- **Variable pitch retraction**
- **Premium Vinyl Fabrics**

We at Carefree would like to take this moment to thank all of our partners, dealers, and customers for an incredible 45 year journey!
AMERICA’S NEWEST NATIONAL PARKS

TAG ALONG AS WE CELEBRATE THE CENTENNIAL OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND ITS COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING AMERICA’S TREASURES

On August 25 in 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Park Service Organic Act with a mission to administer, preserve and protect the country’s then-fledgling network of 14 national parks and 21 national monuments. Following a century of progress, the NPS today oversees national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, seashores, lakeshores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails in every state, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam and American Samoa.

Park visitation topped 300 million for the first time last year, and visitors contributed more than $30 billion to the U.S. economy. Operating on an annual budget of a little more than $3 billion (roughly the cost of four B-2 Spirit Stealth Bombers), the NPS rates a big thumbs-up from citizens. Sixty-eight percent of those polled say they’re satisfied with the government’s management of national parks. Surveys also show that the parks get a 95 percent overall approval rating from visitors.

“The public looks upon national parks almost as a metaphor for America itself,” says Loran G. Fraser, chief of the NPS Office of Policy.

America gained its 59th and newest national park, Pinnacles, in 2013 when President Obama signed legislation redesignating the then-national monument a full-fledged national park. The 26,606-acre preserve on California’s central coast near Hollister is home to the endangered California condor, the largest North American land bird. With its massive volcanic monoliths and spires, Pinnacles is a favorite spot for hikers and rock climbers.

Although Congress must approve new national parks, the president has executive authority to designate other units, such as national monuments, memorials and historical parks, without congressional approval. Obama has been busy doing just that, aiming perhaps to cement his legacy as an environmentally friendly president. Conservationists have cheered Obama’s unprecedented protection of public lands and waters, more than any other president, but the big winners are park visitors who gain improved access and interpretation at sites across the country that celebrate brilliant scenery or commemorate history and heroic figures.

Since 2014, the following national monuments and historical parks have joined the NPS roster:

The Arkansas River, known for world-class wild trout fishing, meanders through Browns Canyon National Monument in Colorado.
CALIFORNIA

Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument
Located near Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area, this sprawling 330,780-acre monument features a remarkable diversity of ecosystems ranging from chaparral-studded lowlands to mountainous wilderness areas. The site provides habitat for threatened and endangered species such as northern spotted owls, bald eagles and mountain lions, as well as waterways for Chinook salmon and steelhead. It also offers great potential for recreation, including hiking, camping, fishing and boating.

Castle Mountains National Monument
On a remote and desolate stretch of the eastern Mojave Desert near the Nevada border, this monument was established largely to protect an historic open-pit gold mine. A Canadian company had held the rights to excavate up to 10 million tons of ore from the old Castle Mountain Mine but forfeited its claim, forcing transfer of the mine area to the National Park Service. The monument, which encompasses 20,920 acres, incorporates land on three sides of the mine that were part of Mojave National Preserve.

Mojave Trails National Monument
Spanning 1.6 million acres in Southern California, Mojave Trails is a stunning mosaic of ancient lava flows, jagged mountain ranges and spectacular sand dunes. The arid landscape reveals remnants of a fascinating history dating back to ancient American Indian settlements and was the training grounds used by General George Patton to prepare his troops for battle in North Africa. Crossed by historic trading routes, trails followed by Spanish explorers, a transcontinental rail line and the nation’s most famous cross-country highway, Route 66, Mojave Trails tells the story of American exploration, migration and commerce.

Sand to Snow National Monument
This appropriately named Southern California monument, 45 miles east of Riverside, covers 154,000 acres from the Sonoran Desert floor up to the sometimes-snow-covered 10,000-foot peaks in the San Gorgonio Wilderness of the San Bernardino National Forest. The monument protects a diverse ecosystem, including 12 endangered species, and serves as an important habitat linkage between the San Bernardino and San Jacinto mountain ranges. A demanding 24-mile stretch of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail passes through the monument.

San Gabriel Mountains National Monument
The San Gabriel Mountains form a dramatic backdrop to the Los Angeles Basin and provide Los Angeles County with 70 percent of its open space and roughly 35 percent of its water. Although somewhat protected from development since 1908 as part of the 700,176-acre Angeles National Forest, a 350,000-acre chunk of the forest was proclaimed a national monument in 2014. Monument status provides additional protection to the region, where rugged slopes and canyons are home to a number of rare and endangered species including desert bighorn sheep, mountain yellow-legged frogs and Santa Ana suckers.

COLORADO

Browns Canyon National Monument
Marked by rugged cliffs, stunning mountain vistas and iconic wildlife, including bald eagles, mountain sheep, black bear and mountain lions, this 21,586-acre site near the town of Salida is a popular area for hiking, whitewater rafting, hunting and fishing. Natural cathedral spires tower over the Arkansas River. Obama designated Browns Canyon a national monument at the request of Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, following failure of a bill to turn the region into a national park.

CONNECTICUT

Coltville National Historical Park
This 260-acre park is dedicated to Samuel Colt and the role played in the American Industrial Revolution by his firearms, manufactured in Hartford, Connecticut, for nearly 100 years. The park, still under development, will feature a 10,000-square-foot visitor center housed in the 1855 Colt Armory complex.

DELAWARE

First State National Historical Park
Delaware was the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution in 1787, and now it is the last one to get its own national park unit. Vice President Joe Biden undoubtedly rejoiced at his boss’ action to designate the three-unit park, which includes Dover Green, 1,000 acres of parkland in the Brandywine Valley and the historic New Castle Court House complex.
HAWAII
Honouliuli National Monument
Honouliuli was the largest and longest-used internment camp in Hawaii during World War II, where thousands of Japanese-Americans and some 400 resident German and Italian civilians were incarcerated during the war. The 160-acre camp was hidden away in a deep gulch that internees called Hell Valley. The monument was established to vindicate the honor of those incarcerated and recognize the historic site as a lesson in injustice.

Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument
This one is huge. Encompassing 490,343 square miles of the Pacific Ocean (an area three times the size of California) surrounding seven U.S.-controlled islands and atolls situated south and west of Hawaii, Pacific Remote Islands is the world’s largest marine conservation area. The Obama proclamation expanded the existing reserve by six times its original size. The monument will more fully protect one of the world’s most pristine tropical marine environments.

MARYLAND
Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park
More than a century after her death, the most famous “conductor” on the Underground Railroad is being memorialized for her heroic efforts to help free slaves fleeing the Confederacy. Set amid the woods and waterways of Maryland’s Eastern Shore, the park can be explored along a 125-mile byway tracing a network of churches and safe houses that served as waypoints on the path to freedom.

NEVADA
Basin and Range National Monument
Spanning 704,000 acres of remote, undeveloped mountains and valleys in southeastern Nevada, this vast region was designated a federal monument for its recreational potential and long history of human habitation, evidenced by numerous Native American cultural sites.

Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument
Established to protect the area’s prehistoric heritage, this 22,605-acre expanse of low-lying gullies in the desert just north of Las Vegas was once home to Ice Age mammals including mammoths, lions and camels, and fossilized remains are visible everywhere. The park is open only to hikers at present, but road access and visitor services are in the works.

NEW MEXICO
Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument
Known as the Organ Mountains because their needlelike peaks resemble the pipes of a church organ, the steep, angular spires that bracket the city of Las Cruces jut majestically up to 9,000 feet above the Chihuahuan Desert...
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floor. The 497,000-acre monument comprises four sections featuring a variety of landscapes, including the aforementioned peaks, narrow canyons, open woodlands, desert and volcanic lava flows, and provides abundant opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, photography and camping.

**Rio Grande del Norte National Monument**
Stretching north from Taos to the Colorado border, this 242,445-acre expanse of high plains, steep canyons and volcanic cones is best known for the 800-foot-deep gorge through which the legendary Rio Grande River flows.

**Valles Caldera National Preserve**
The volcanic explosion that formed this 12-mile-wide caldera in New Mexico’s Jemez Mountains occurred roughly 1.2 million years ago and was 2,000 times bigger than the eruption that rocked Mount St. Helens in 1980. It’s a popular year-round recreation area, offering hiking, mountain biking and cross-country skiing.

**NEW YORK**

**Harriet Tubman National Historical Park**
In addition to Maryland’s new Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park, a 26-acre park is under development in Cayuga County, New York, to preserve the home of the former slave and celebrated abolitionist.

**Stonewall National Monument**
A gritty Greenwich Village bar where the modern gay rights movement took root, New York City’s iconic Stonewall Inn is the first national monument to highlight the history of the LGBT community. A 1969 raid during which Stonewall patrons fought back against police persecution is widely viewed as the watershed moment in the campaign for LGBT equality.

**OHIO**

**Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument**
This monument, still under development in the town of Wilberforce, preserves the home of Charles Young, a barrier-busting African American who graduated from West Point in 1889 and went on to achieve the rank of colonel in the U.S. Army. He later served as superintendent at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in California.

**TEXAS**

**Waco Mammoth National Monument**
This paleontological site represents the nation’s only recorded discovery of a nursery herd of Columbian mammoths, an extinct species unique to North America. Visitors can view female mammoths, a massive bull mammoth and a camel that lived more than 67,000 years ago, situated in their original locations and positions.

**WASHINGTON**

**San Juan Islands National Monument**
This 1,000-acre monument is made up of about 75 sites, many of them coves, reefs and small, isolated islands that were deemed in need of protection. Among the most accessible locations

**Basin and Range National Monument**
Nestled in a watershed that drops more steeply and rapidly than the Colorado River, the titular waterway in Massachusetts’ Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park offers kayakers and canoeists some challenging Class III rapids, especially along a stretch just north of Millville.

**Remains of 19 prehistoric mammoths buried at Waco Mammoth National Monument**
In Texas weren’t discovered until 1978 when two arrowhead collectors stumbled across a huge bone and took it to a local museum to find out what it was.

**Local officials estimate the area surrounding Northern California’s Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument will benefit to the tune of $26 million in extra economic activity over the next five years owing to the monument’s designation.**

**Five lighthouses are part of Washington’s San Juan Islands National Monument and have kept many ships and mariners safe throughout history.**
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MASSACHUSETTS AND RHODE ISLAND
Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park
The fast-flowing 46-mile-long Blackstone River was the site in 1790 of the Slater Mill, the country’s first water-powered cotton-spinning factory, and it was the river’s important role in the American Industrial Revolution that led to its designation as a historical park. Visitors can paddle and portage the entire length of the river. Coming in 2017, a 48-mile bikeway along the corridor will allow cyclists to pedal from Worcester, Massachusetts, to Providence, Rhode Island.

WASHINGTON, D.C.
Belmont–Paul Women’s Equality National Monument
Just steps from the domed capitol in Washington, D.C., the historic 1820 Sewall–Belmont House that has served since 1929 as home to the National Woman’s Party is now a national monument in honor of its founder, Alice Paul. A tireless advocate for women’s equality, Paul led the fight for the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote, and later crafted the language for the Equal Rights Amendment.

National World War I Memorial
Memorials dedicated to veterans of World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars have existed for years in the nation’s capital, and now at last there will be one honoring veterans of World War I. Still awaiting design approval, the memorial will occupy a space in Pershing Park on Pennsylvania Avenue. Plans call for it to be dedicated on November 11, 2018, the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I.

NEW MEXICO, TENNESSEE AND WASHINGTON
Manhattan Project National Historical Park
Under the code name the Manhattan Project, development of atomic weapons in the 1940s at facilities in Los Alamos, Oak Ridge and Hanford in the respective states of New Mexico, Tennessee and Washington changed the world. The unique tri-state historical park recognizes this seminal scientific and technical achievement. The Department of Energy and the National Park Service co-manage the three locations, which offer walking tours of Los Alamos’ historic downtown and guided tours of the Oak Ridge and Hanford reactors.

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Towing a trailer comes with the responsibility of making sure the combo is safe for travel on public roads. It’s incumbent on all owners to ensure that their trailer or fifth-wheel is hitched properly using equipment that’s rated to handle the job, the brakes are in optimum shape, and the tires are suitable for the load and inflated to specifications.

Ask any owner what he or she worries about most when towing a trailer, and the answer will likely be “the tires.” Concern about tire safety is not unexpected; there are way too many tire-failure stories out there that don’t end on a happy note. The influx of poorly made tires from China, sporting unknown names, has made it more important than ever to pay close attention to wear indicators in an attempt to mitigate the frequency of blowouts and expensive collateral damage.

The number of top-of-mind companies that build and distribute Special Trailer (ST) tires is very small. Maxxis is one that is looking to provide the lion’s share of premium-grade ST tires to trailer owners. To learn more about Maxxis, we installed a set of ST225/75R15 LRE tires on a fifth-wheel for field-testing under varying conditions over a period of time.

First reaction to Maxxis might be, “These tires are also made in Asia.” True, they are made in Thailand, but the company has a technical center and marketing department in the United States, and its business model is quite different. Rather than contracting for tires from some obscure plant overseas, Maxxis owns the factory and hovers over quality control and production, which is counter to how most of the other “unknown” trailer tires are built in Asia.

**MADE FOR TRAILERS**

Designed and built specifically for trailer use, Maxxis Special Trailer (ST) tires are available in the common sizes for travel trailers and fifth-wheels.
Where many of these contracting factories prioritize production speed and are nowhere to be found when warranty issues arise, Maxxis’ approach is much different in that it is committed to the American market in a big way. The company has a 15-year U.S. track record and uses its tech center to follow up on problem areas on a timely basis, something that is very important to trailer owners who are often far from home and familiar service centers when a tire failure occurs. Maxxis focuses on the aftermarket, which helps facilitate communication between owners and service centers.

To understand how this company ticks, you have to delve into the motives of the founder. His mantra was and is to purchase the best possible materials, over-engineer the product and offer exceptional service. Maxxis owns the molds, and all manufacturing is done in-house. To ensure safety, Maxxis ST tires have an additional layer on top of the steel belts that reinforce the structure, which the company claims won’t be found in competitive brands. The gauge of rubber is different from other ST tires on the market, using tough textile materials like high-strength polyester, which is designed to withstand the load better and prolong longer storage times without compromising the tire’s integrity.

As part of the manufacturing process, antioxidants are employed to resist long-term exposure to ozone and UV rays, which is important for tires on trailers that are stored for long periods or even set up in campgrounds where warm weather and strong direct sunlight are common. This doesn’t preclude the use of a tire cover for increased longevity or the use of a good protectant that’s not petroleum based, but it does give owners a hedge against buying replacement tires sooner than expected. Maxxis even markets its own line of tire covers.

Regular maintenance is expected of the owner for maximum tire life. Maxxis recommends keeping the tires clean using a brush with mild soap and water. Rather, it prefers that the tires are inspected by owners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tire Size</th>
<th>Max Speed Rating (mph)</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>45</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST175/80R13</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,100(B)</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>1,270</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST185/80R13</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>1,200(B)</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST205/75R14</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>1,430(B)</td>
<td>1,530</td>
<td>1,640</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST215/75R14</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>1,410</td>
<td>1,520(B)</td>
<td>1,660</td>
<td>1,790</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>1,220</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td>1,480(B)</td>
<td>1,610</td>
<td>1,720</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST225/75R15</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1,430</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>1,760(B)</td>
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<td>65</td>
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<td>1,920</td>
<td>2,090(B)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Letters in parentheses denote load range for which boldfaced loads and inflations are maximum.
professionals when tread depth reaches \( \frac{7}{32} \) of an inch. These tires should be taken out of service when tread depth is reduced to \( \frac{2}{32} \) of an inch and, for better safety, replaced at \( \frac{4}{32} \), especially if the trailer is towed on wet roads.

It goes without saying that maintaining tire pressure is paramount — and definitely the owner’s responsibility. Maxxis recommends checking pressure at least once a month and before each trip. The test tires are rated at 80 PSI to handle the maximum load of 2,830 pounds; we allowed the tires to sit for two months, and pressure loss was around 3 to 4 PSI.

After towing the fifth-wheel close to 6,000 miles, the tread depth on the Maxxis tires was \( \frac{8}{32} \) of an inch, which represents a negligible loss. Maxxis

---

### I) FOR ST METRIC TIRES USED IN NORMAL HIGHWAY SERVICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inflation Pressure (psi)</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>55</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>65</th>
<th>70</th>
<th>75</th>
<th>80</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,360(C)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,480(C)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1,870(C)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1,820(C)</td>
<td>1,940</td>
<td>2,040</td>
<td>2,150(D)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2,270</td>
<td>2,380</td>
<td>2,540(D)</td>
<td>2,620</td>
<td>2,720</td>
<td>2,830(E)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>2,730</td>
<td>2,870</td>
<td>3,000(D)</td>
<td>3,130</td>
<td>3,260</td>
<td>3,420(E)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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recommends rotating the tires, and the wheels on the test trailer have been balanced. The tread is showing no adverse wear patterns. The sidewalls have been treated with a suitable protectant, and there are no signs of cracking or crazing. Proper axle alignment and the use of shocks can also improve longevity dramatically.

Tread design is always a critical element when it comes to building ST tires. Typically these tires take a lot of abuse because of undulating terrain, campgrounds with unpaved roads, and sidewall twisting when backing into tight sites. Maxxis uses a rib design that allows the tire to carry a lot of weight and, according to the company, prevents premature wear. Traditional rib blocks are individual, which means they can be squirmy and heat up faster. The Maxxis tires have no individual blocks, as the ribs continue around the circumference of the tire and are stronger — and restricted from too much movement. This type of design allows the tires to "stick" better to the road and limits flexing.

While the tires are engineered to run faster than 80 MPH, the company limits its speed rating to 65 MPH, in accordance with agreements with the Tire and Rim Association. Exhaustive testing assures confidence in safety, but should not be considered a free ticket to pull a trailer faster than 65 MPH. Traveling at greater speeds is unsafe and not encouraged.

Maxxis offers ST tires in sizes that are most commonly used on trailers and fifth-wheels. They are backed by a five-year warranty with a replacement provision if a tire fails within the first 12 months of service and the amount of tread wear is no more than 2/3 of an inch (25 percent of service life). There are a number of stipulations, and owners should read the extensive — and very clear — warranty details carefully. The limited warranty and maintenance information is presented on the company's website.

Maxxis specifies a 65-MPH speed rating for these tires, in accordance with Tire and Rim Association guidelines. Tread depth is checked with a Wheel Masters gauge that also has provisions for determining tread wear. Here, the tires are showing negligible signs of wear after 6,000 miles of service.
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article and photos by Larry Keller

DEEP-SOUTH DOUBLEHEADER

STEP UP TO THE PLATE FOR TWO MAJOR-LEAGUE MUSEUMS, JUST 66 MILES APART IN GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA

In a little more than an hour’s drive, baseball fans can visit the museums and gravesites of two of the most extraordinary and controversial players in the sport’s history. Mystique and notoriety are synonymous with Tyrs “Ty” Cobb and “Shoeless” Joe Jackson. The men were contemporaries who starred in the early 20th century, long before incessant ESPN coverage analyzing athletes ad nauseam. So it’s left to their respective little museums to rehabilitate the reputations of Cobb, widely portrayed as a ruthless and racist crank, and Jackson, banished for life from Major League Baseball for purportedly conspiring to throw the 1919 World Series.

Both museums can be seen in one day. The Ty Cobb Museum in Royston, Georgia, is a 90-minute drive northeast of Atlanta. The Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum in Greenville, South Carolina, is the same distance heading northwest of Columbia, and a bit farther from Charlotte. The museums are less than 70 miles from each other.

TY COBB MUSEUM
It’s a straight shot up Interstate 85 from Atlanta to the Royston exit, then a 15-mile drive past rolling countryside, poultry warehouses and humble homes. With a population approaching 2,600, Royston likely has fewer people than chickens. This is where Ty Cobb, nicknamed “the Georgia Peach,” grew up. Cobb honed his baseball skills playing for local teams before turning pro. He went on to play 24 seasons, getting more hits than anybody until Pete Rose passed him. Cobb, however, compiled the highest lifetime batting average of any player in history. The famously aggressive base runner was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame’s inaugural class in 1936, getting more votes than Babe Ruth.

[Top] Ty Cobb, left, and Shoeless Joe Jackson, pictured in 1910 and 1913, respectively, were two of baseball’s greatest hitters and most controversial figures. [Below] Fluor Field, across the street from the Jackson museum in Greenville, is home to a minor-league farm club of the Boston Red Sox.
The Ty Cobb Museum is housed inside an office building. A receptionist tells me that between three and 10 people typically visit on a weekday. A 14-minute film provides an overview of Cobb’s life and career. Curiously, the narrator says that Cobb, at age 18, had to cope with the murder of his father at his own home — neglecting to mention that it was Cobb’s mother who shot him. She was charged with manslaughter but said she mistook her husband for an intruder and was acquitted at trial. That aside, it is a treat to see old footage of Cobb and hear him speak briefly in an interview he gave a year before he died in which he discussed the unusual split-grip he used to swing a baseball bat.

Many of the most despicable qualities attributed to Cobb, such as being a racist, have been debunked over the years, most recently by Charles Leerhsen in his biography Ty Cobb: A Terrible Beauty. Still, he was a nasty hothead who fought other players, a grocer and a hotel night watchman. He even pummeled a heckler with no hands. Those qualities are lightly touched upon or ignored by the museum. More common are exhibit captions such as “considered by many to be the smartest man to play the game” and “regarded as a genius on the base path.”

The museum has some fine photos of Cobb and his baseball contemporaries in their baggy, wool-flannel uniforms. Life-size cutouts depicting Cobb in action give a real sense of his style of play.

A few of Cobb’s personal and professional items are displayed. These include trophies and awards, one of his uniforms, a timeworn bible given to him by his mother and one of his antiquated gloves that even a Little Leaguer would disdain today. Cobb’s shotgun is also here, and photos of him hunting. The museum devotes space to his philanthropic deeds — a still-active

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Ty Cobb Museum
The museum is in a one-story building at 461 Cook Street in Royston, Georgia, and is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. Admission for adults is $5, $4 for seniors, $3 for students, and active military and under age five are free. 706-245-1825, www.tycobbmuseum.org

Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum
Located at 356 Field Street in Greenville, South Carolina, in Jackson’s old house, the volunteer-staffed museum is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays and on weekdays by appointment (send email requests to info@shoelessjoejackson.org). Admission is free. 864-346-4867, www.shoelessjoejackson.org

(Above, from left) Ty Cobb in action at his namesake museum in Royston, Georgia. Dark Corner Distillery in Greenville, South Carolina, specializes in aged whiskey. Also in Greenville, Falls Park on the Reedy welcomes the public to enjoy nature, trails, outdoor art and the waterfall view from Liberty Bridge.

scholarship fund that has given more than $15 million to eligible Georgia undergraduate students, and a $100,000 donation for construction of a hospital in Royston. Thanks to smart investments, especially in Coca-Cola, Cobb was a millionaire by the time he retired from baseball.

The museum still shows Cobb’s lifetime batting average as being .367, but archival research reduced it to .366. The gift

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shop sells items such as Cobb bobbleheads, books and caps.

A couple of miles away is the cemetery where Cobb is at rest in a prominent mausoleum. He died in 1961 at age 74. Graves of many famous ballplayers are bestowed with offerings from fans — balls, gloves, baseball cards and the like. The day I visited Cobb’s tomb, there was a Pete Rose button, a new baseball and a small photo of a sliding Cobb. That’s all.

SHOELESS JOE JACKSON MUSEUM

Like Cobb, Shoeless Joe Jackson was an outfielder. The Chicago White Sox team on which he played in 1919 lost to Cincinnati in the World Series. Jackson and seven teammates were accused of accepting money from gamblers in return for deliberately losing. The scandal was the subject of the book and movie Eight Men Out. The players were acquitted in court but exiled from Major League Baseball for life. Jackson’s career was finished at the age of 32.

In autumn a canopy of gold, orange and red leaves colors the trails that ribbon through Royston’s Victoria Bryant State Park.

Nearly a century later, debate continues as to whether Jackson got a bum deal. He did, after all, hit a robust .375 in the series — the highest of anybody on either team. He also belted the only home run in the series. The Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum comes down on the side of his innocence. It used to collect visitors’ signatures on a petition asking the commissioner of Major League Baseball to remove Jackson from its ineligible list and clear the way for him to be elected to the Hall of Fame. The request was denied last year.

There are few original artifacts in the museum, but lots of old newspaper stories and nicely staged photos. One of my favorites was of the teenage Jackson and his older teammates on a local textile-mill team with faces hardened and weary from toiling at grueling jobs. There is a photo of Jackson and his bride on their wedding day, images of Jackson in action and with contemporaries, including Cobb, as well as pictures of him later in life when he looked older than his years.

All of this is crammed into the five-room, 950-square-foot house that was home to Jackson and his wife, Katie. What had been a small screened porch is now a library stuffed with hundreds of donated baseball books.

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On a living room chair is a replica of Jackson’s bat, which he called Black Betsy. A small gift shop has T-shirts, postcards and specially made poker chips with images of Jackson.

The house itself is a throwback with its original pine floors, tiny bathroom and vintage kitchen with a linoleum floor and counters so low that a young child could reach them. It’s a reminder that baseball players once earned modest salaries. Today, the Major League Baseball minimum salary is more than $.5 million a year, and the average wage, according to a 2016 Associated Press study, is $4.38 million.

Jackson grew up in Greenville, working as a kid in textile mills. He quit school early and never learned to read or write. He signed a professional contract when he was 20, and hit .408 in his rookie season two years later. That’s the highest batting average ever by a rookie. Jackson’s .356 career average was topped only by Cobb and Rogers Hornsby at .358.
When his baseball career ended abruptly, Jackson and his wife moved to Savannah and operated a dry-cleaning business. They later returned to Greenville, and he opened a barbecue restaurant, then a liquor store.

Jackson died of a heart attack in this home in 1951. He was 64. Largely through the efforts of Arlene Marcley, Jackson’s home eventually was moved 3 miles to its current spot and opened as a museum in 2008. Marcley and her husband run the place.

From Jackson’s home and museum, it’s a short walk to the statue of him erected in 2002. The man who Cobb described as “the best natural hitter I’ve ever seen” has just completed a swing, eyes watching the trajectory of the ball, his glove stuffed in a hip pocket.

From there I drive to the cemetery where Jackson and his wife are buried. A flat, bronze marker tops the grave. What distinguishes it from others are the coins scattered around it, the three-dozen baseballs placed by fans, a ceramic child’s baseball glove with a ball in it, several pairs of socks, a tennis shoe and a boot. Shoeless Joe was shoeless no more.

**GEORGIA**

Commerce

Twenty-six miles west of Royston, **Georgia RV Park** accommodates RVs with 30- and 50-amp electrical service, water, sewer, Wi-Fi and cable. The park is pet-friendly and has a saltwater pool, a laundry room, a playground and a picnic pavilion. 706-335-5535, www.georgiarvpark.com

Royston

The 502-acre **Victoria Bryant State Park** has 27 sites with water and 30-amp electrical service for RVs up to 40 feet. Two comfort stations provide hot showers, flush toilets, and a washer and dryer. The public park is pet-friendly and has two fishing ponds, a swimming pool, nature trails and an 18-hole golf course. 706-245-6270, www.n-georgia.com/victoria-bryant-state-park.html

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

Anderson

Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, **Lake Hartwell Camping and Cabins** is about 30 miles from Greenville and 36 miles from Royston. Eighty pull-through sites have full hookups and fire rings. Guests can fish from the dock or shore and hike among 35 acres of trails. 888-427-8935, www.camplakehartwell.com

Fair Play

A pet-friendly park on Lake Hartwell, 44 miles from Greenville and 21 miles from Royston, **Carolina Landing RV Resort** has mostly pull-through sites with 30- and 50-amp electrical service, water hookups and some sewer hookups. The park offers showers, a laundry room, a Wi-Fi hotspot and two dump stations, as well as miniature golf and a swimming pool. 877-570-2287, www.rvonthego.com/south-carolina/carolina-landing-rv-resort

Greenville

**Springwood RV Park** has 65 full-hookup sites with 30- and 50-amp electrical service, concrete patios and free Wi-Fi. The park accepts pets with some restrictions and can accommodate big rigs. 864-277-9789, www.springwoodrvpark.com

Travelers Rest

Nine miles north of Greenville, **Travelers Rest KOA** has back-in and pull-through sites with full hookups, 30- and 50-amp service, Wi-Fi and cable. Pets are allowed except for pit bulls, Rottweilers and Dobermans. 800-562-5631, www.koa.com/campgrounds/greenville

If you time it right, you can combine a visit to Shoeless Joe’s museum and grave with a Class A Greenville Drive baseball game at Fluor Field. The handsome brick stadium stands across the street from the museum. It’s a 10-year-old gem with lively bars and restaurants nearby.

The Drive is a farm club of the Boston Red Sox, and Fluor Field features a mini version of Fenway Park’s famous Green Monster, the 37-foot-high wall in left field. Fluor Field’s version is 30 feet tall, and the ballpark’s outfield dimensions mimic those of Fenway. There’s even a quick burst of fireworks after the team wins. You can’t help but think that Shoeless Joe would have loved it all.

An oasis of nature in Greenville, Falls Park on the Reedy stretches across 32 acres of land formerly occupied by textile mills.
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Just about all fifth-wheels and trailers these days have at least one slideout. The additional square footage enhances livability, but dealing with rainwater and debris that collect on the roof of these room extensions is not always welcome. A common solution is to install a slideout awning, commonly referred to as a topper, which will divert rain, divert the pathway of water, and keep out leaves and dirt that can be barriers to complete sealing when the slideout is retracted. In some cases, the awning only worsens the problem by allowing water to puddle or debris to gather, which complicates the retraction process, especially in bad weather. When awning fabric is not taut enough to prevent sagging, owners devise interesting ways to lift the material, including the use of beach balls and PVC pipe.

Carefree of Colorado’s Ascent line of slideout awnings has been upgraded to not only ensure that the common objections mentioned above are minimized but also to add visual appeal to any RV. Protection from the elements and good looks aren’t the only attributes of the Ascent. Carefree’s design makes it possible to add a slideout awning to rooms that are positioned close to obstructions like patio-awning arms, as was the case with the test fifth-wheel. The Ascent butts up against the outer edge of the slideout room, so if the slideout clears, the Ascent will also clear. Slideout awnings that rely on arms that protrude past the room flanges will not work on this fifth-wheel.

The box-type enclosure is also a big selling feature. It is much nicer to look at than fabric on roller tubes that remains exposed to the elements, and the ability to remove debris and water [in squeegee fashion] limits trips to the roof for cleanup before retracting. And the box matches Carefree’s Travel’r patio awning with the FLXguard protective wrap, rather than the box style, the dark color and smooth lines of the Ascent still complemented the overall exterior aesthetics.

A number of other features have been incorporated into the Ascent, including an improvement in the pitch that is said to have the best rainwater runoff in the industry. While we appreciated the style and quality, the component design and ease of installation were even bigger selling points. All the mounting hardware is concealed when installed on the slideout, and the roller cover is hinged so it’s easy to remove and gain access to the fabric for cleaning. The hardware is available in black or white, and the fabric can be ordered in acrylic, polyweave or vinyl. We matched the acrylic fabric to that used in the patio awning.
Establishing the right length for each slideout requires accurate measurements, and the awnings are available in standard and XL sizes. Standard lengths run 46 to 196 inches (with an extension of up to 42 inches available), and XL starts at 197 inches and can be ordered up to 384 inches.

There are two methods for mounting the slideout awnings: direct or via bracket kits ($55). Carefree gives a three-question test in the instructions to help buyers make the installation determination based on the style of the slideout. The direct mount is basically for nonrecessed rooms with flat flanges, and there is a specific clearance requirement for the top. If you can make it work, it's the best way to go.

The slideouts in the test fifth-wheel have recessed front sections and raised flanges, so it was impossible to flush-mount the chassis (also called the deflector assembly). In this case, we used the brackets, which offer a precision fit on the wall of the slideout.

Once the chassis is hung on the brackets, the roller tube is threaded into the railing, which was already installed from the factory on this fifth-wheel. If the RV is not so equipped, an awning rail is provided and will add time to the installation process. From here the...
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11) Once the roller tube is in the railing, it’s mounted in the chassis using fender washers and thread-cutting screws. This is another segment of the job that requires a second person. 12) The roller tube spring is pre-wound from the factory, and once the spring lock pin is removed, the spring will quickly roll up, taking out any slack in the fabric. 13) Installing the cover is really easy, but again, it takes two people. 14) With the slideout room open at least 3 inches, the cover is held perpendicular to the chassis, lifted and hooked onto the back of the chassis. 15, 16) After rotating the cover up, it is secured onto the chassis using shoulder screws.

Roller tube with the fabric is mounted to the chassis, the spring-lock pin is pulled, and the front cover installed. Figure on around an hour for each slideout awning, and you’ll need at least one helper to assist with positioning the components and threading the awning fabric into the railing.

Right from the get-go, the fabric opened and closed perfectly, and laid relatively flat. The fabric remained under a good amount of tension, which prevented billowing and limited the aforementioned maladies.

We subjected the fabric to strong desert winds, and at times the flapping noise was disconcerting. We worried about how the fabric was going to sustain many hours of strong wind and considered closing the slideouts, but in the end there were no signs of damage, a testament to the quality of the fabric and hardware. A minimum amount of water collected during a rainstorm and was easy to deflect off the fabric.

Carefree of Colorado Ascent slideout awnings not only enhance the look of an RV but also add a layer of convenience that will immediately be appreciated by any owner. In the end, we installed three slideout awnings in 154-, 142- and 79-inch lengths. Prices, of course, are dependent on size. The ones installed on the test fifth-wheel retail for $682, $657 and $533 respectively.

Carefree of Colorado
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17) Spacing between the patio-awning arm and the edge of the slideout is very close, which makes the design of the Ascent ideal for this fifth-wheel. 18) Woven-acrylic fabric matching the patio awning was ordered for the three slideout awnings. Fabric is held taut and at a good pitch to allow for effective rainwater runoff. 19) The fabric rolls out smoothly while the room is extending, and strong springs facilitate retraction without a glitch. There’s no fabric billowing, and after subjecting the Ascent to strong, sustained desert wind, there were no signs of damage to the fabric or hardware.
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Replacing an RV refrigerator isn’t as difficult as you might think

An RV refrigerator is a pretty remarkable piece of engineering. Not only does it allow us to live a reasonable facsimile of the life we’re accustomed to at home, it must survive the rigors of the road, heat and cold that can border on extreme, and humidity that would make an ordinary icebox cry uncle. And it does all this on your choice of LP-gas, 120-volt AC or, on some models, 12-volt DC. While it’s not uncommon for RV refrigerators to live 10 or more years under normal use, at some point they will cease to function correctly, or they may give up the ghost altogether.

Technically speaking, it’s almost always possible to repair an RV refrigerator — items like the fan and igniter are easy and cheap to swap out, for example — but in some cases, components like the cooling unit, control board and optical board cost enough to make a good argument for a replacement fridge. In this case, the good news is that you have options. You might elect to install a fridge with more features, a larger unit (if the cabinet is big enough) or even a residential model, if you have the extra real estate and storage space for additional batteries and an inverter.

But by far, the easiest route is to install an exact replacement for the failed unit. And when we say “exact replacement,” we mean just that. The major RV refrigerator manufacturers can often furnish a model so similar to the original, the only things missing are the food stains and vague scent of mildew. A duplicate fridge may not sound as glamorous as installing a fancier one, but if you’re doing the job yourself, it becomes a pretty attractive option. There’s no need for fabrication, electrical work or gas-line rerouting or modification, which saves a lot of time and aggravation.

While replacing the original refrigerator isn’t terribly difficult, it does require due diligence to prevent unforeseen problems. First, make sure you get the model and serial number off the original unit and contact the manufacturer to double check that you’re about the order the right replacement. Next, measure the doorway to see if it will serve as a suitable port of egress and ingress. You might be surprised to find, as we were, that you’ll have to use a window if the doorway is too narrow, which complicates things a bit.

To see how it’s done, we sat in with the experts at C&S RV Service Center in Oxnard, California, and observed as a Norcold replacement refrigerator was installed in a 2006 Class C motorhome. The process is the same for a trailer. Although the job appears daunting, it took only an hour for one technician to complete, with a little help from an associate during the heavy lifting.

If your fridge is on the fritz and can’t be repaired economically, replacement is a viable DIY option.
1, 2, 3) In this RV, the refrigerator measured 24 inches wide, while the door opening was only 22.5 inches wide. The large living area window, however, was more than 26 inches tall. So guess what? You’re going to learn how to replace a window, too. 4) The first step to removing the window is to get everything else out of the way. The lambrequin is removed, followed by the pleated shades. 5) Next, the screws that secure the window flange to the wall are removed. The putty will usually hold the window in place once all the screws are out, but it’s a good idea to have a friend stand outside to hold it, just in case. 6) Grab the edges of the exterior flange, and the window should come out. If the putty is baked on, it may require a little encouragement in the form of a putty knife to break the window free, or even better, a non-marring putty scraper, such as those available from Harbor Freight, to avoid scratching the RV.

7) Don’t forget to remove the interior window flange and put it in a safe place where it won’t get stepped on or bent. 8) Next, it’s time to begin the refrigerator removal. The LP-gas valve is turned off first, then the supply line is carefully opened to allow any propane to escape. It can then be disconnected. 9) A few screws secure the refrigerator housing to the cabinet floor. Clearance was tight in this application, so the technician used a ratchet with a screw bit attachment to remove them.
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10, 11) Unplug the 120-volt AC and 12-volt DC leads, and your work here is done.

12, 13, 14) Back inside, the trim pieces are removed on both the outside of the refrigerator and inside the door. There may be more screws underneath the doorway trim piece (as was the case here), so be sure not to overlook these.

15, 16) Carefully wiggle the refrigerator from top to bottom and side to side to work it free, then you can begin to pull it out. 17, 18) Here’s a useful tip: Once you get the refrigerator loose, go back outside and make sure the propane line and any wiring harnesses are not getting hung up on any part of the refrigerator. Use a flashlight and follow the harness up into the cabinet. This one wasn’t tangled on anything, so we continued with the removal.
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19) Realizing that the door could open as the refrigerator was turned on its side, it was removed as well. This also made it easier to grip the appliance as it was moved to the window opening. 20, 21) The window opening is lined with a vinyl tarp to protect it, then two technicians (one inside) carefully push the refrigerator out. The second tech then steps out to help lower the refrigerator to the ground.

22) The new refrigerator goes in the way the old one came out, and since it’s an exact replacement, the removal process is simply reversed. 23) The wood panels from the old refrigerator are removed and reused on the new one, and secured with new trim pieces supplied with the unit. 24) The new refrigerator is a perfect match for the original and is ready for another decade (or more) of service.

25) Before turning on the refrigerator, you can perform a simple leak check by opening the LP-gas service valve and using soapy water at the connection, as demonstrated here. It is also recommended that you take the rig to a qualified RV service center to have an LP-gas-pressure drop-down test performed as soon as possible. This will confirm the integrity of the entire LP-gas system and give you extra peace of mind. 26) Next, it’s time to replace the window. The old adhesive is carefully scraped off with a razor blade. If you are concerned about nicking the surface, you may consider using 3M Adhesive Remover or Winzer Tech-Solv. 27) The putty inside the window frame is removed with a screwdriver. The putty on this RV was still soft; older RVs and those that sit in the baking sun may require more effort to get the putty cleaned out.
28) Butyl putty tape is applied around the entire perimeter of the window frame and gently pushed into the channel.

29) Once the window is screwed back into place, a putty knife is used to remove the excess putty on the exterior wall. A plastic putty knife will also work for this step and will ensure against scratches.

30) The final step is to place a thin bead of white calking around the top edge of the window to further prevent water intrusion.

SOURCES
C&S RV Service Center
Oxnard, California
805-983-1673, www.candsrv.com

Norcold/Thetford Corporation
800-543-1219
www.thetford.com/products/refrigerators
Flush with possibilities for fishing, crabbing, clamming, kayaking, surfing and hiking, the glorious northern Oregon coast lures sightseers, seafood lovers and outdoor enthusiasts. I feel the tug on my fishing line. At first, it’s just a little bump, then a series of strong pulls. I’ve caught a salmon, and it feels like a whale. As I struggle to keep my fishing pole upright and reel it in, Captain John Bowles of JB and Water Sport-fishing says, “If she’s pulling, let her run. When she stops, reel like crazy.”

I brace both knees against the pads on the side of the boat and focus on reading this fish — reeling in when there’s little pressure on the rod and holding fast when the fish fights. And fight it does. I hang on for dear life, feeling like this big fish will rip the $1,000 rod and reel right out of my hands. I grit my teeth and use all my strength as the fish yanks, flips and twists.

But wait, I get ahead of myself….

It’s fall in the Pacific Northwest, and we’re heading to Tillamook County on the gorgeous Oregon coast. Unlike other more-traveled parts of the coast, the Tillamook stretch is wonderfully undeveloped and largely undiscovered. Bookended by Cape Falcon and the small town of Manzanita on the north and Cascade Head and the even smaller community of Neskowin to the south, Tillamook has everything for a perfect autumn RV getaway — fishing, crabbing, clamming, surfing, beach horseback riding, kayaking picturesque inlets and bays, and hiking forested shorelines, sandy beaches and rugged seaside cliffs. And it’s all in a neat package that doesn’t require hours of driving.

While the fall shoulder season means fewer crowds and better prices on the coast, weather can be iffy. It’s a chilly 50 degrees under cloudy skies when we leave Oregon City on the southern outskirts of Portland. However, 45 minutes later when we reach U.S. Route 26, the clouds have disappeared, and the temperature has climbed to 60. As we cruise by farm fields and signs for freshly picked apples, we also leave behind the workday traffic.

**REACH THE BEACH**

Route 26, a two-lane highway with plenty of passing lanes and turnouts, takes us over the Coast Range though thick forest. We climb up and up — 500, 1,000, 1,500 feet. Vine maples set the forest ablaze with splashes of bright red and vibrant orange and yellow. We crest David Douglas Summit, pass over the Necanicum River and head south on U.S. Route 101, the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway.

We’re treated to our first stunning views of the mighty Pacific when we pull over at Neahkahnie Mountain Wayfinding Point. At a height of 1,680 feet, Neahkahnie (from the native Tillamook language meaning “place of supreme deity”) is best known for legends of buried Spanish treasure. For us, the embrace of the cool, briny
Flush with possibilities for fishing, crabbing, clamming, kayaking, surfing and hiking, the glorious northern Oregon coast lures sightseers, seafood lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

Just south of Manzanita, we pull into RV-friendly Nehalem Bay State Park. The campground features 265 blacktopped electric sites under the pines with picnic tables and fire rings. There's also an equestrian camp with corrals for those who bring their own horses. The campground is tucked behind the first dune, so the sites don't have ocean views, but an easy trail grants access to pristine beaches you have almost to yourself.

We have reservations elsewhere, so we head southward, passing through the tiny burg of Wheeler to the town of Rockaway Beach. Rough-around-the-edges Rockaway is a strip of shops, bakeries and restaurants along the highway. We stop at Old Oregon Smoke House, a fish market and restaurant that's famous for clam chowder, fish and chips, and smoked salmon and oysters from nearby waters. "We make everything here," owner Harold Brecht tells us, as he serves up our chowder. "The only things in a jar are ketchup and mayonnaise."

The chowder is über-creamy with plenty of clams, but it's the smoked oysters that make me swoon. After boiling, they put them on a smoky fire, spritzing them with brown-sugar water until the edges are crispy. The result is a smoky-sweet earthy flavor that's crazy-good.

REEL 'EM IN
We stock up on Old Oregon Smoke House's smoked oysters and salmon for later, and head to the fishing town of Garibaldi with a community of 800, our stop for the night. Both sport and commercial anglers dock at the busy marina where we find Harborview Inn and RV Park, a modest motel and RV campground with great views of Tillamook Bay. The 30 spaces feature 20-, 30- and 50-amp service, free Wi-Fi and cable TV, grills and a firepit. Because it's close to boat parking and a launch ramp, this park is popular with RVing fishermen and women. The Port of Garibaldi operates a larger gravel-topped RV park near the marina, but because it's directly across from the lumber mill, it may be noisy.

We settle our rig and stroll the busy marina, taking in the shops and seafood restaurants. At Community Supported Fishery (CSF), we meet Jeff Wong, founder and owner of the custom cannery, smokehouse and fish-processing plant. Wong is a former commercial fisherman whose goal is to make fishing more sustainable. CSF works with local fishermen and small boats that line-catch salmon, lingcod.
and albacore tuna, most within 30 miles of Garibaldi.

“We provide a number of local chefs with fish caught the same day,” Jeff says. “We also work with Eco-Trust to help put displaced fishermen back to work.”

The two-year-old company employs eight former fishermen and also develops new markets for products like purple varnish clams, an invasive species. “Harvesting those clams cleans up the bay,” he says.

We buy a couple of cans of CSF’s tuna and, back at our RV site, enjoy a seafood feast for dinner.

The next morning we wake before sunrise for chartered salmon fishing. Under cloudy skies and a cool breeze, Captain John Bowles motors his 26-foot boat into Tillamook Bay. John has been fishing these waters for more than three decades, and under his guidance, it doesn’t take long for that monster salmon to swallow the herring on the end of my fishing line, and then I’m in for a battle.

After 10 minutes of pulling and reeling, I’m practically spent. I’m hoping the fish is, too, but it suddenly bolts under the boat, a move that can snap the line. “Put your rod tip in the water,” hollers John.

Finally, the fish swims out from under the boat, and I catch a glimpse of a muscular streak of silver. John expertly moves the big net into the water. “Easy, bring her alongside,” he advises.

Then suddenly the fish is in the net and flopping on the deck. It’s huge, weighing at least 25 pounds — a wild king salmon. “Nicest fish of the season,” John says, grinning like a proud papa. “Good job, sister.”

A few minutes later, another fisherman on our boat lands a salmon. Then the weather takes a turn, with steady rain, choppy seas and winds gusting to 40 MPH that leave us wet and cold. It also makes the fish stop biting. After a soggy hour, we call it quits.

Back in port, Captain John cleans and fillets my catch, which we stash in our fridge back at the campsite. We then spend the afternoon tucked in our RV reading novels. Listening to the steady rain on the roof, sleep comes early.

The following morning, our last in Tillamook County, the sky dawns brilliant blue, and the water is calm. There’s no trace of yesterday’s storm. We stop at Garibaldi Maritime Museum to learn about the nautical and timber history that has shaped this area. There’s the original bow of the Morningstar, a sailing ship wrecked here in 1814, and a terrific exhibit on Captain Robert Gray, the first recorded European to navigate the Columbia River.

We drive north a few miles to Kelly’s Brighton Marina in Rockaway Beach to sample fresh Dungeness crab, one of Tillamook’s delights. At the marina, you can rent a small motorboat (no license needed) with...
crab rings and bait (two hours for $85), or you can crab from the dock (ring and bait for $10). Or Kelly Laviolette and his team will just cook fresh crab, clams and oysters for you to eat.

We rent a boat and, after several minutes figuring out how to steer, motor into the water and toss our traps overboard. The day is gorgeous with soft breezes and gentle swells. Harbor seals bob in the water and lounge along the shore. However, after two hours of setting and resetting and pulling up our traps, they yield mostly small female crabs and only one male large enough to keep.

We buy a couple more crabs at the marina to add to our modest catch, and Kelly, in his signature floppy red crab hat, cooks our meal. Then we sit on the sunlit deck overlooking the water and enjoy some of the freshest and most delicious Dungeness crab I've ever eaten.

QLUITS, CHEESE AND TREES

It’s early afternoon before we head south on Highway 101. In Bay City, we make a quick stop at the Tillamook Country Smoker Factory Outlet Store in Bay City to pick up some of their 2-foot-long teriyaki beef sticks ($1 each) for the road.

Soon we reach Tillamook, a dairy-farm town of about 5,000 a few miles from the coast. We spot a sign for the Latimer Quilt and Textile Center...
and, down a country road, find a quilt museum in an 1880s schoolhouse. Dedicated to preserving quilting and the fiber arts and providing space for fiber artists to work and exhibit, the center features beautiful handmade quilts that date as far back as the 1700s. While the modest museum has limited space to showcase their 400 antique quilts, groups of four or more can book a “bed turning” to see different types of quilts.

Tillamook is so crazy about quilting, there’s even a Quilt Trail with more than a hundred giant square painted on barns and businesses throughout the county. Visitors can pick up a Quilt Trail map at the visitor center and spend the day searching out these colorful icons.

We also stop at the Tillamook Cheese Factory, the landmark farmer’s co-op that put Tillamook on the map. Once a modest cheese-making facility, the Tillamook Cheese Factory is the Disneyland of cheddar. The sprawling complex, which draws a million visitors a year, showcases how cheese is made with a self-guided tour, and sells Tillamook cheese, yogurt, butter, ice cream, fudge, hot food and “cheesy” souvenirs from hats to T-shirts.

Armed with cones topped with softball-size scoops of Tillamook Chocolate Peanut Butter ice cream, we head toward home on State Route 6. When we spot the Tillamook Forest Center sign a few miles out of town, curiosity gets the better of us. This modern exhibition center doesn’t disappoint. There’s a giant fire lookout and a bright and airy exhibit hall made to look like a 1920s sawmill.

The Tillamook Forest Center tells the unique story of a forest ravaged by multiple fires and brought back to life by the local community and state government working together. The 364,000 acres that’s now Tillamook State Forest was owned by timber companies. Starting in 1933, the area was devastated by four huge fires dubbed the Tillamook Burn. After salvaging the burned timber, the timber companies wanted nothing to do with the blackened and now-worthless land.

In the largest reforestation project of its kind, the forest was replanted by hand between 1949 and 1973 by the state and Tillamook communities. Even schoolchildren helped out. There’s an exhibit with notes from those who participated, including a girl named Peggy who wrote, “My school came here in buses in ’52 to plant trees. Now our trees are big.”

The stately Douglas firs that tower 80 feet or higher in today’s Tillamook State Forest are just part of the fascinating story of Tillamook County, and we’ve just scratched the surface. There are trails to hike, clams to dig, beaches to walk or ride horseback on, waves to surf and kayak, and so much more. We’ll be back soon to discover more Tillamook treasures.
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CHOOSE THE RIGHT GENERATOR

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Pulling a fifth-wheel trailer with a shortbed truck is fairly commonplace these days. Owners enjoy the versatility and maneuverability of shortbed trucks when used as a daily driver, as opposed to running around town in trucks with longer wheelbases and overall lengths. Properly rated, the shortbed truck will do a good job moving a fifth-wheel trailer — until it’s time to make sharp turns necessary to back into an RV site or even negotiate tight roads.

A number of hitching options are designed to provide proper clearance between the front of the fifth-wheel and back of the cab when maneuvering in tight areas. If money is no issue, you can spring for an automatic sliding hitch which, of course, adds weight and normally occupies a bigger chunk of the bed. Another option, if you find yourself less frequently in situations where there’s a need for extremely tight turning, is to use a manually operated sliding hitch.

B&W Trailer Hitches, a company that has long banked on its popular Turnoverball hitches, offers a slider that can be mounted on standard rails. Called the Patriot Slider, it’s rated at 18,000 pounds and exudes the same quality as all the other hitches in the company’s extensive lineup.

Operating a manual-sliding hitch requires more diligence on the part of the owner, meaning someone has to physically get out of the truck and move a lever to allow the hitch to slide back when it’s time to make sharp turns. Failure to do this could result in contact between the front of the trailer and the rear of the truck cab, but the process should become second nature after a short while.

B&W puts a lot of emphasis on strength, and it shows in the way the company builds the components. A fully articulating saddle is mounted on a slider carriage that is part of a base structure that pins into the standard rails mounted in the bed of the truck. If the rails are not already mounted, B&W offers kits that use beefy 7/8-inch steel and robust brackets.

The hitch components are made from 1/4-, 3/8- and
5/8-inch steel that has been meticulously finished to look good and be free of burrs and sharp edges. All the parts are treated with a gray powdercoat finish. The footprint is 31 3/4 inches wide by 33 1/2 inches deep, and the hitch weighs 161 pounds. Removing the coupler for easier handling reduces the overall weight by 52 pounds. For safety, any such hitch-handling job should be a two-person operation.

Not only will you find the required high-end hardware among the pallet of packaging, but also tucked in are clearly written and detailed installation instructions. You will need an assortment of tools for installing the rails in the bed, but if they are already in the bed, all that’s required are wrenches, a socket set and a hammer.

Mounting the rails will require drilling 7/8-inch holes in the bed, and unless you have this bit already in your toolbox, it might take a little doing to find one locally. The home-improvement stores typically don’t carry these bits, and if there’s no tool supply in town, plan on sourcing from companies on the Internet like McMaster-Carr. An extra-long 1/8-inch drill bit along...
with the standard length 1/8-inch bit will be necessary to get all the way through the frame’s cross members. When buying bits for this job, don’t skimp on quality.

If you’re installing the rails, take your time with the measurements. The measuring process can make or break the whole deal. After the rails are located, begin marking the mounting holes with a center punch and drilling 1/8-inch pilot holes. Once the pilot holes are done, it’s time to go underneath, taking in hand both the driver’s- and passenger’s-side rear brackets, as well as the corresponding U-bolts with the spacers, washers and nuts necessary for the installation. By carefully studying the diagram and the text in the instructions, you’ll be able to see how and where the brackets will line up based on the pilot holes. After confirming that the brackets are aligned properly, and following the instructions precisely, the rear mounting rail holes can be enlarged by stepping up using a 9/16-inch bit before drilling out the holes to the final 7/8-inch dimension. Follow this immediately by positioning the U-shaped spacers and carriage bolts, including the two underneath requiring the threaded fish wire, and locking straps for inside the frame rails. With all hardware and spacers permanently positioned, secure everything by hand for the time being.

At this point, the Patriot base is lifted into the bed for final alignment between the rear and front mounting rails. Setting the base onto the rear attachment point of the mounting rail first will allow the front end of it to be easily lifted to position the front mounting rail. This is also a good time to recheck the measurements and be sure all parts are lined up and centered. Now, essentially the same drilling and bolting process for the rear rail is mirrored, but this time to suit the front frame brackets’ differing shapes.

The next step is to take a moment to verify that all of the hardware is where it belongs by matching the brackets and fasteners to the images in the instructions. Set the torque wrench to 80 ft-lb and tighten all the nuts to make it final.

With the Patriot Slider base fully pinned into place, it’s necessary to measure the trailer hitch height so that the pivot arms can be set for the coupler. The pivot arms can be attached using six different positions to account for hitch height and the distance from the cab. Height can be adjusted from 17 to 19 inches.

The torsion spring that levels the saddle is bolted to a clip that is hammered onto the pivot arm before installing the coupler. After determining the best spot for the pivot arms, the coupler leveling kit (torsion pin) must also be affixed just

With the entire hitch assembled, the pins in place and the bolt torquing confirmed, it’s time to connect the fifth-wheel. Once the latch is released, the coupler will slide back 12 inches to allow the fifth-wheel to turn sharply without contacting the back of the truck cab. The process is easy, but you have to remember to pull the lever before making the turns.
prior to resting the coupler onto the pivots. This task can be done relatively quickly with a single bolt assembly and hammering a very tough clip into position. Once the saddle is in place, it’s towing time.

Operating the Patriot Slider is not very complicated, and the ¾-inch wraparound jaws rely on a cam-action handle to release the grip around the kingpin. For our tastes, the coupler handle is a little on the short side, but we quickly learned to compensate. The mechanism works smoothly, even on undulating terrain.

The side-to-side pivot of the coupler is spring-cushioned, and the use of polyurethane bushings prevents metal-to-metal contact. The articulating coupler makes it easy to hitch up, and the jaws open and close smoothly, which makes fighting with the release handle a thing of the past. The tolerances around the kingpin are very tight, and thus we experienced no noise during towing.

When it comes time to release the slide before making a tight maneuver, the trailer brakes are activated or trailer wheels chocked, and the handle is pulled toward the rear of the truck to unlock the mechanism. The truck is then inched forward until the handle falls, which indicates a locked position; the slide will move 12 inches. To return the coupler to the center travel

Anytime a trailer or fifth-wheel is towed, an electrical umbilical cord must be connected to the tow vehicle. This cable sends electronic signals to the trailer to operate the clearance lights, signals and brakes, and one wire is used to charge the trailer battery. The mainstay of the industry in this department is the use of a seven-way plug and receptacle with flat pins. This type of connector is subject to poor contact points and corrosion, and in many cases causes owners fits when it comes to ensuring the trailer is ready to be towed safely.

A few years ago, a company out of central California, EZ Connector, introduced a completely different concept for hooking up the ubiquitous umbilical cord, and simply put, it’s a game-changer when it comes to ease of use and reliability.

Rather than relying on bent blades and poor connections that stifle connectivity and fail prematurely, the EZ Connector uses O-ring-sealed connections with a help of very strong rare-earth magnets. Not only has the innovation of the EZ Connector revolutionized the way trailer electrical cables plug into the tow vehicle, it has also managed to ease the pain of the installation process. What you get when upgrading to the EZ Connector EZ57-09 system are cables with a factory-sealed receptacle and plug and an adaptor that makes hooking up to the tow-vehicle OEM wiring a cinch.

At the end of the receptacle cable is a Y that terminates with adapters that are used to connect to the back of the standard seven-way factory receptacle mounted on the tow vehicle. All you do is unplug the harness in the factory receptacle, plug in the appropriate end from the new cable and connect the other end to the plug that was removed from the original receptacle.

Installations will vary, depending on whether you’re towing a travel trailer or a fifth-wheel. Most owners of fifth-wheels prefer to install a second receptacle in the side wall of the bed, toward the rear. In that case, the existing seven-way receptacle is removed, and the cable is routed to the factory receptacle and plugged in. If the install is on a truck without a receptacle already installed in the bed, a 2-inch hole will need to be cut, as it was in our case when we tested the EZ Connector.

There’s plenty of cable to route to the factory receptacle, and the housing is attached to the bed using self-tapping screws. If you have to cut a hole, take the time to make sure there’s adequate clearance behind the outside wall of the bed. The cable must be routed through the hole before connecting the wiring at the factory receptacle — for obvious reasons. The cable can be routed along the frame rail and secured with cable ties.

The plug end is hardwired into the existing junction box on the trailer. There’s enough correctly sized heat-shrink tubing, uninsulated butt connectors and cable ties to get the job done in an organized manner. Fifth-wheel junction boxes are usually mounted on the kingpin box, and access is fairly simple. The junction box can be located on the A-frame of a trailer or in an up-front compartment or access space.

The wires are color-coded, so there’s no schematic to follow, assuming the factory wiring has not been modified.
position, the trailer brakes are again engaged or the trailer wheels chocked, the handle is pulled toward the rear to unlock the system, and the truck is moved slowly in reverse until the handle falls and the mechanism locks. The process is very easy — you just have to remember to do it.

Considering all that’s involved to install a fifth-wheel hitch, the Patriot Slider was actually an enjoyable afternoon project, with credit given to the explicit instructions. While the Patriot Slider may not be equipped with fancy on-the-fly sliding action, it’s built to withstand the rigors of long-term fifth-wheel towing, and it feels secure. Maintenance is relegated to lubricating the coupler (or using a lube plate), the jaws (with automotive chassis grease) and the saddle (through the zerk fitting) every six months or as needed. The Patriot Slider retails for $799, and the optional rail kit is $230. The hitch is made in the USA, and B&W backs it with a limited lifetime warranty. B&W is family-owned and -operated in Humboldt, Kansas, and like many great American companies, it all started in a garage with two people who had a vision.

B&W Trailer Hitches
800-810-4918
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The only thing demanding some extra attention is the placement of the splices, meaning each splice needs to be slightly offset from the rest to prevent a huge bulge in one spot and allow the provided large heat-shrink tubing to fit and seal properly.

To make the connection, the self-closing spring-loaded door is opened, and the plug just about jumps out of your hand as it seats in the receptacle. It’s so smooth and simple to operate that looking isn’t required, just keep turning the plug until the magnets draw the ends together once the indexing notches are aligned. The connection is very tight, and the door seals nicely, so corrosion is kept at bay. When unhitched, the plug is seated in a dummy receptacle that can be mounted in a convenient location. This also limits moisture intrusion and corrosion.

There is no question that this system is light years ahead of the standard seven-way plug and receptacle.

The EZS7-09 we installed for the truck retails for $120. The trailer end with an 8-foot cable goes for $75, and adapters are available to make the system backward compatible for four-pin-flat, six-pin-round and the standard seven-way plug/receptacle.

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EZ Connector, 559-686-5889, www.ezconnector.com

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1) Blades on a standard RV seven-way connector have a tendency to become bent, which leads to poor connections. Weather creates corrosion that decreases conductivity. 2) The EZ Connector relies on super-strong rare-earth magnets that hold the contacts face to face for reliable performance. The receptacle has a spring-loaded door, and housing is protected by an O-ring seal that is waterproof and prevents corrosion. 3) The connector is removed from the OEM receptacle on the truck, and terminals from the new cable 4) are plugged into the back of the receptacle and factory wiring harness. This vastly simplifies the installation without cutting wires. 5) A 2-inch hole will need to be cut into the side wall of the bed to accommodate the new receptacle. Be sure to verify clearance behind the side wall before drilling. 6) A new cable is hardwired into the fifth-wheel junction box located in the kingpin box. Here is an example of connecting the wires using the factory wire nuts; its best to use the provided butt connectors and shrink tubing.
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AUTUMN IN THE ADIRONDACKS

In northern New York’s “forever wild” preserve, brilliant fall foliage paints the forests around Lake Placid, a family-friendly destination the kids won’t want to leave.

Our first fall morning in the Adirondacks was crisp, clear and bright. We filled our travel mugs with coffee, packed snacks for the three boys, and headed directly to the Olympic Jumping Complex, just 12 miles southwest of the Lake Placid/Whiteface Mountain KOA in Wilmington, New York, our base camp for the week. As we drove to the complex, we were amazed that the red and orange leaves had become even brighter and more vibrant overnight. We had heard about peak foliage but were still stunned by the natural show unfolding in front of our eyes.

Parking our tow vehicle at the base of the complex, we caught the chairlift that rose above the colorful tree line and deposited us near a glass-enclosed elevator. Minutes later we found ourselves on the observation deck of the 120-meter ski jump enjoying a panoramic view of the Adirondack High Peaks. Goosebumps broke out on our arms, as we stared down the steep and dramatic arc of a ramp that launches ski jumpers over the length of an entire football field.

The experience left us awestruck at the bravery of Olympic athletes and the blazing glory of the Adirondack Mountains in autumn. The unique combination of sports history and natural beauty defines this storied region of New York and beckons visitors back season after season. Lake Placid offered our family the chance to immerse ourselves in the annals of the Winter Olympics, held here in 1932 and 1980, and simultaneously enjoy one the country’s greatest wild spaces, where rivers and streams wind their way through forests filled with maple and birch.

The size and scope of New York’s Adirondack Park is astonishing. It covers more than 6 million acres of land, including 3.4 million privately owned acres and 2.6 million acres held by the state and designated “forever wild.” Glacier, Yosemite, Great Smoky Mountains, Yellowstone and Grand Canyon national parks could all fit within the boundaries of the forest preserve with room to spare. So while the park has scenic wilderness that compares to many of our great national parks, it also has more than 100 towns and hamlets, the crown jewel of which is Lake Placid.

When we arrived at Main Street in Lake Placid, we were returning from the ski-jump venue, located a few miles from

The 2.1-mile trail to the top of Mount Jo rewards hikers with spectacular views of Heart Lake.
AUTUMN IN THE ADIRONDACKS

downtown, and looking to visit the Olympic Center and Lake Placid Olympic Museum. The museum is small, and we spent only 45 minutes there. Nevertheless, it was pivotal in setting the stage for our trip down Winter Olympics memory lane.

The uniforms, medals and photos in the museum are fascinating, but the real star of the show is the looping original footage of the remarkable triumph of the 1980 U.S. hockey team, dubbed the "Miracle on Ice." This exhibit captivated the imagination of our boys, and we were coerced into purchasing the 2004 Disney movie version, Miracle, from the museum gift shop. The DVD was practically worn out by the end of our vacation.

When Lake Placid hosted the 1932 Winter Olympics, it marked the first time the event was held in North America. Many of the original facilities were revitalized for the 1980 games, and as we walked through the echoing halls of the Olympic Center, it was easy to believe that more Olympic athletes have come from Lake Placid than from any other American town. Standing in the dim hockey arena, we could imagine Olympic sports feeling like a birthright for children growing up in these surroundings.

At this point during our visit, we were bitten by the bug. Although we had long planned on exploring Winter Olympic history during our visit to Lake Placid, seeing the jumping complex, the museum and the hockey arena had turned a mild interest into a fascination. We had already purchased the Olympic Sites Passport ($35 per adult), and now we were determined to take full advantage of the offerings, including riding the Cloudsplitter Gondola to the top of Whiteface Mountain and touring the Olympic Sports Complex, where we watched athletes race down the bobsled, luge and skeleton tracks.

The Olympic Center is located on the south end of Main Street, and after our tour we walked north along the edge of Mirror Lake, peeking into the boutiques and shops and enjoying the views of fall foliage popping against a brilliant blue sky. Starbucks is located a few blocks away, but we enjoy seeking out local roasters whenever we travel. In the back of the Alpine Mall, we stumbled upon Coff E Bean, bought steaming cups of java and perched on stools that offered a panoramic view of the lake. Unfortunately, the posted operating hours were estimates at best. We dropped by at other times during our visit to find the shop had closed early for the day.

At first glance the stores along Main Street seemed to be of the souvenir T-shirt and mug variety, with every manner of Adirondacks slogan one could imagine. But upon further inspection, we discovered the Bookstore Plus, pleasantly crammed with towers of well-curated book selections. We also stumbled into the Saratoga Olive Oil Company, where time passed quickly as we sampled delicious oils, vinegars and seasoned salts, purchasing a few to enjoy later. Our shopping highlight was the Cornerstone Rustic and Craft

Atop the 394-foot tower at the Olympic Jumping Complex, visitors get an athlete’s perspective of the ski jump and a scenic view to boot.
Whiteface Mountain, New York’s fifth highest peak. There we found a Memorial Highway (State Route 431), which brought us to the top of the majestic beauty of fall foliage. It’s there that we still awaited us during our stay. There was no better way to soak in downtown culture, it was amazing how much outdoor adventure was available. We hadn’t been there a minute before the librarian introduced herself and offered a few choice reading picks to the boys. Our time in the Placid Public Library drew us in with its quaint, white-clapboard front and promise of a children’s reading room. We whiled away many hours in this cozy and welcoming space. Chairs are situated in front of floor-to-ceiling windows that offer views of Mirror Lake. Mazelike staircases led out to a lakefront garden with Adirondack chairs, where we were surprised to find a haven of calm nestled in the middle of a bustling downtown.

The kids’ floor was full of beanbags, armchairs and dollhouses. We hadn’t been there a minute before the librarian introduced herself and offered a few choice reading picks to the boys. Our time in the library brought us away from the tourist attractions of the region and gave us a taste of the local culture.

Lake Placid has turned itself into a year-round destination for festivals and events of every kind. Visitors stream into the town for one shindig after another, from the annual Ironman triathlon to barbecue festivals and classic-car shows. We prefer a quieter experience, and the Wild Center is the perfect place to do something we would not have found in a travel guide. The Lake Placid Scenic Railroad’s Fall Foliage Train departs twice daily from Lake Placid, chugging its way to the small town of Saranac Lake. Passengers have time to wander around and eat lunch before boarding the train for the return trip.

Walk on the wild side: Suspended 30 feet above the ground, the Wild Center’s trail of swinging bridges takes hikers into the treetops for a unique forest experience. Gallery, where the owner showcased souvenirs that would remind us of our New York trip without feeling kitschy or cliché.

Our favorite time in downtown Lake Placid, though, was spent doing something we would not have found in a travel guide. The Lake Placid Public Library drew us in with its quaint, white-clapboard front and promise of a children’s reading room. We whiled away many hours in this cozy and welcoming space. Chairs are situated in front of floor-to-ceiling windows that offer views of Mirror Lake. Mazelike staircases led out to a lakefront garden with Adirondack chairs, where we were surprised to find a haven of calm nestled in the middle of a bustling downtown.

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stone castle and an elevator that led to a tower offering a 360-degree view of the Adirondacks.

The campground manager had warned us about chilly temperatures at the top, so we were prepared with hats and gloves. Hot chocolate from the Castle Café also kept us warm, while we attempted to identify the many lakes and peaks in the distance.

We discovered the hard way that the peak of Whiteface Mountain is often socked in when we headed up one day only to be forced back because of fog. After that experience, we paid close attention to the weather and scheduled our next journey on a clear day. Another thing we discovered? The toll to drive Veterans Memorial Highway is a bit steep for a family of five, so we were happy it was included in our purchase of the Olympic Sites Passport.

The Adirondack Park contains more than 3,000 lakes and ponds, and 30,000 miles of rivers and streams, making the region a paradise for kayakers, canoers and fly-fishers. We met angler Evan Bottcher at the Hungry Trout Resort, perched on the banks of the Ausable River in Wilmington. Evan was raised at the Hungry Trout and was happy to tell us about his family’s small business that has grown into one of the area’s most distinguished outfitting companies. The resort has a long roster of fly-fishing guides, and Evan took his role as matchmaker seriously, considering experience and temperament when scheduling a guided wading trip.

We also enjoyed one of the best meals of our vacation at the Hungry Trout Restaurant, where a fine-dining experience is complemented by river views. Even though this restaurant
has a hushed and elegant air, the staff welcomed our young children with friendly smiles, coloring pages and crayons. The menu offers everything you would want from a steak house, and then fittingly includes plenty of trout dishes. We enjoyed the crisp blue-cheese wedge salad and then created our own surf-and-turf meal, splitting a bone-in rib-eye steak and grilled rainbow trout.

If the restaurant’s fireplace and dining room had not seemed so inviting, we might have tried the more casual R.F. McDougall’s Pub, owned by the same family and located just down a flight of stairs. For our next visit, the McCheesy fries are high on the agenda. We woke up early on our last morning in the Adirondack Park, made coffee, packed lunches and laced up our hiking shoes. Our trusted Appalachian Mountain Club guidebook described Mount Jo as an “easy climb” of 2.1 miles that leads to “spectacular views” of Mount Marcy in what is often called the region’s “finest square mile.” With three kids in tow, this sounded like our kind of hike.

The climb up was stunning. Blankets of bright red leaves covered the ground, and shallow streams of crystal-clear mountain runoff sluiced past us, as we picked our way around rocks and thick tangles of trees. But halfway to the top, we started to realize that while the hike might be “easy” for an Olympic athlete, it was not so for us. Our twin six-year-old boys are troopers on the trail, as long as snacks are packed and frequently provided, but our two-year-old still gets carried in a hiking pack, and he’s not exactly light.

By the time we reached the top, we were sweating and short of breath, but the views of the High Peaks were astonishing, particularly because they were awash in radiant fall colors. We pulled out a picnic blanket, unpacked our lunches and stretched our legs across the cool rock. Red and yellow leaves filtered down around us, but the majesty of that perfect fall day seemed like it would last forever.
Water hoses are certainly not a new invention, but selecting the wrong ones can not only make hooking up unpleasant but can even harm your health. That’s why it is important to understand which water hoses and accessories to have on hand, and how to properly hook up your RV to a city-water source.

Water hoses intended for RV and marine use aren’t just a ploy by manufacturers to get you to buy another hose. Unlike garden hoses, which are made of materials that contain lead, phthalates and BPA, and can leach lead and other chemicals into the water, especially when heated by the sun, RV hoses are made of materials that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has declared safe for use with drinking water.

RV water hoses come in a variety of lengths with an inside diameter (ID) of ½ or 5/8 inch. While a ½-inch hose will work, it’s best to use one with a 5/8-inch ID for more efficient flow and output pressure, especially in larger RVs. And because a longer hose has greater friction loss, it’s better to have two shorter hoses than one longer one. Not only will you have a backup if one hose fails, the two can be connected when a longer hose is needed.

As with other RV accessories, you get what you pay for with hoses. Inexpensive ones have a tendency to fail from high pressure, and the ends get out of round and leak more easily. In addition, cheaper hoses are more likely to kink, and they will grow mildew on the outside over time because they are not treated with Microban, an antimicrobial additive. Hoses with heavy-duty machined ends also tend to last longer. The male ends on low-grade hoses crush or deform easily, and then leak. The ends also get loose at the crimp joint and can leak from there, too.

Spending a little extra on a higher-quality hose also makes sense because RV hoses get beat up more than garden hoses. They’re constantly under pressure for longer periods of time, and they’re coupled and uncoupled frequently while traveling. They’re also often stored in compartments with larger items where they can be damaged.

Besides having two lengths of freshwater-supply hose, it’s a good idea to have a couple of short-length hookup hoses in your RV. If you use a standalone water filter, for example, you will want a short length to feed the filter. Also, it’s convenient to have a short utility hose that is dedicated for use with the black-tank flusher and to clean out the sewer hose.

RVers who brave cold weather during winter travel can opt for heated hoses, like those from Camco, Pirit and Valterra, which are substantially more effective and less problematic than applying heat tape to a standard hose. The compounds used to make these hoses can withstand the heat, and the hoses come with the heating element built in so abrasion damage is minimized. Heated hoses aren’t inexpensive, but they’re safe and convenient, and they really are the best way to go for cold-weather RVing.

Another type of specialty hose is designed to retract for storage in small areas. These hoses are heavily advertised on TV and are theoretically convenient, but they have a reputation for failing after a short time in service. More importantly, these hoses are not designed for use with drinking water.

On the high end of RV water hoses, Teknor Apex
recently introduced the Zero-G. These hoses are advertised as being 50 percent lighter and 40 percent smaller than their equivalent-size counterparts, so they pack in smaller spaces. They are also more expensive (Camping World sells the 25-foot for $29.99), but our initial experience using this product was very positive.

The Zero-G is not a shrinking hose; it’s a compact hose made of very durable materials, according to the manufacturer, and is backed with a five-year warranty. It has a full 3/4-inch ID, which gives maximum flow, and is available in 25- and 50-foot lengths. The Zero-G’s ends are machined aluminum and have a 900 ft-lb crush rating, far above most of the competition, and a 4,600 ft-lb tensile strength. The hose material is drinking-water safe and has a 600-PSI burst strength, which is greater than any other hose on the market. It can be put on a reel just like regular hoses, but not too bulky, these hoses are best for RVers who have ample storage space.

Another product that is approved for drinking water is the Handi-Hose from American Specialty, available at Walmart, Sears and other chain stores. Made of DuPont Hytrek, said to withstand up to 450 PSI, the Handi-Hose comes with a self-squeegee hand reel and is a tight package when rolled up. While the hose is abrasion-resistant, it doesn’t last as long as some other hoses with full-time use, but the small size for a 3/4-inch-ID hose is unmatched. The Handi-Hose is also convenient as a dedicated utility hose to carry along for tank flushing and rig washing, where allowed.

One of the most important accessories when hooking up to a water faucet is the pressure regulator. Many RV parks have water systems with pressure upward of 98 PSI, which is well above the limiting pressure [45 PSI] specified by RV manufacturers. The issue with high pressure in the RV isn’t so much the PEX piping, which can take more than 100 PSI, but the fittings, faucets and appliances, which need lower pressure, especially on older rigs with polybutylene plumbing. Regulators are available in fixed-pressure units, fixed with a gauge, and adjustable-pressure units with a gauge, which gives the option of pushing the envelope without exposing your RV to line pressure that’s guaranteed to break something.

Other accessories worth considering include a strain-relief hose (especially if you have an inline filter), various hose adaptors (such as those for hooking up multiple hoses), shut-offs and a utility spray nozzle. A water-tank filler for gravity-feed systems makes filling your RV’s freshwater tank much easier, allowing better airflow around the inlet. Quick-release ends are a great convenience for connecting and disconnecting hoses, and also to save the threads on the hoses. Filters are also necessary for managing drinking-water contaminants and improving the taste.

A little thought and a wise investment in the right hoses and accessories ensures a trouble-free water-transfer experience in your RV.
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- Full floating head for easier hitching and smoother ride
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- Skid plate pivots 5 degrees side-to-side for easier hookup on uneven ground and smoother towing

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RESE® TITAN® 5TH WHEEL HITCHES
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- Vibration isolator gives you a smoother ride
- Sidewinder compatible for short bed trucks
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- NEW contoured Handle
- NEW Cast Head for commercial durability and strength
- Requires rails & installation kit (sold separately)
- Limited lifetime warranty

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We all know that the best way to see the country, spend time with friends and family, and get out in the great outdoors is in a recreational vehicle with all the comforts of home. But even with an RV, you’ll still need an assortment of accessories to make everything work just right. After all, what good is a plumbing system without a way to get clean water into the RV and dirty water out? An electrical connection is great, but what if you need to insert a 50-amp plug into a campsite’s 30-amp receptacle? And your trailer won’t get far if your tow vehicle doesn’t have a suitable hitch.

To simplify the process of equipping and upgrading your rig and its various systems, we offer the following guide to the most common RV accessories and the companies that make them.

**Freshwater Systems**

**Water Hoses, Appliances and Connectors**

The plumbing system is one of the top benefits of RV camping, and a plethora of products can help get water into your rig. A food-grade drinking-water hose and an assortment of small connectors and hose valves are a must, as are a non-drinking-water hose and a sprayer for non-sanitary cleanup. Replacing a basic water pump with an upgraded model can give the benefits of higher flow, higher pressure and quieter operation when the RV is disconnected from hookups.

- **Camping World**, 888-626-7576, www.campingworld.com
- **Shurflo**, 800-854-3218, www.shurflo.com
- **Teknor Apex**, 800-556-3864, www.apexhose.com

**Water Filters**

We can’t always be sure of the quality of the water we put in our RVs, so some kind of water-filtration system is essential. RV water filters come in a variety of sizes and types, from inline disposable filters...
that connect to the freshwater hose to more intricate built-in systems that range from basic sediment filters to those that remove rust, cysts and microbiological contamination.

**Culligan,** 877-386-0823, www.culligan.com  
**Hydro Life,** 800-626-7130, www.hydrolife.com  
**Multpure,** 800-622-9206, www.multpure.com  
**The RV Water Filter Store,** 602-625-1875, www.rvwaterfilterstore.com  
**Water King,** 337-988-2360, www.waterking.com

**Exterior Showers and Accessories**  
Many RVs come with an outside shower, but if yours didn’t, it’s a useful thing to have to rinse sand off a beach chair or clean your pets, and, yes, even to take a quick hot shower to get most of the mud off yourself.

**Camco,** 800-334-2004, www.camco.net  
**LaSalle Bristol,** 800-718-7187, www.lasallebristol.com

**Sanitation**  
**Sewer Hoses**  
Once you’ve used your RV’s freshwater plumbing system, you want to dump out the dirty water with as little fuss as possible. Handling RV sewage is one place where spending some money for an upgrade is worth every penny, and there are some great new products worth investigating.

**Blueline [Prest-o-Fit],** 888-770-5849, www.prestofit.com  
**Camco [RhinoFlex],** 800-334-2004, www.camco.net  
**Lippert Components,** 574-535-1125, www.lci1.com  
**Thetford,** 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com  
**Valterra (Odorlos, Pure Power),** 818-898-1671, www.valterra.com  
**Walex,** 800-338-3155, www.walex.com  

**Toilets**  
If your bathroom throne doesn’t match up with the rest of your mobile castle, there are options for every budget, from basic low- and high-rise plastic toilets to electric-flush ceramic models.

**Dometic,** 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa  
**Thetford,** 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com

**Chemicals**  
Holding-tank additives not only make RVing more enjoyable by deodorizing the most odiferous of effluents, but most aid in the breakdown of solid waste, which allows for better sewage transfer when dumping, and some also lubricate the rubber valve seals. Additives are available in regular and non-formaldehyde versions, in liquid, crystals and single-dose drop-ins.

**Tip:** After dumping and rinsing your RV’s black tank, add some water to the holding tank at the same time you put in the toilet chemicals.

**Camco,** 800-334-2004, www.camco.net  
**Century Chemical [Travel Jon],** 800-348-3505, www.centurychemical.com  
**Dometic,** 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa  
**Eco-Save,** 800-950-9666, www.eco-save.com  
**Star brite,** 800-327-8583, www.starbrite.com  
**Thetford,** 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com

**Sewer Vents**  
It’s essential that your wastewater system be vented for proper operation and to expel odors. Vents range from small under-sink vents to roof vents that create negative air pressure.

**Tip:** If you notice more odors coming through the toilet or sinks or if the drains are “burping,” you may have a nest in the roof vent.

**360 Products,** 503-559-8094, www.360productsnorthamerica.com  
**Camco,** 800-334-2004, www.camco.net  
**Coil n’ Wrap,** www.coilnwrap.com  
**LaSalle Bristol,** 800-718-7187, www.lasallebristol.com  
**Lippert Components [360 Siphon],** 574-535-1125, www.lci1.com  
**Ventline,** 574-848-4491, www.ventline.com

**Macerators**  
Macerators make dumping holding tanks a breeze by grinding waste and pumping it out through a hose into a sewer cleanout, campground sewer hookups or even a toilet. There are built-in and portable models for trailers, some with wiring kits for plugging in by your RV’s sewage connection.

**Clean Dump,** 360-798-2437, www.cleandump.com
Why you **SHOULDN’T** insure your RV like your car.

Big car insurance companies will sell you RV insurance, and then cover your rig like a big car. The Good Sam Insurance Agency offers you top-of-the-line specialized RV coverage that can save you money. Customers who switch save an average of $400 a year!

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Unless you plan to upgrade the truck, it is crucial to use the correct hitch for the vehicle. The maximum tow rating cannot be exceeded, so don't waste money by buying a heavier-duty hitch than it is rated to handle. This can strain the truck, making driving a stressful experience.

The capabilities of the vehicle itself play a significant role in determining the appropriate hitch to use. Opt for a proper hitch that matches the capabilities of the vehicle. Some new weight-distribution hitches are worth taking a look at, as well as bottom- and top-shelf hitches. The difference between an enjoyable drive and a hair-raising adventure can be striking.

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Disposable tanks, or “rolling tanks,” offer a temporary solution for RVs that don’t have a permanent dump station. These tanks can be accessed via standard RV sewer hoses and can accept the waste directly from the RV's dump outlet. These tanks can also be used in conjunction with a portable sewage system.

When camping without sewer hookups, you may find yourself with a full black tank. A water source is necessary to empty the waste tank, a process that can be dicey, especially for the black tank. Some companies have worked to make tank reading more reliable. For instance, the Thetford Sani-Con provides a straightforward way to determine the tank’s capacity and contents. The Sani-Con uses a built-in sensor to monitor tank levels and includes a digital display that shows the status of the tank.

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Weight-Distribution Hitches
All hitches are not created equal. While it’s true that any properly rated and matched hitch will get the trailer down the road, the difference between bottom- and top-shelf hitches can be the difference between an enjoyable drive and a hair-raising adventure. Some new weight-distribution hitches are worth taking a look at, as well as venerable designs that, while complex, make towing a pleasure.

Tip: Remember that your truck’s maximum tow rating can’t be exceeded, so don’t waste money buying a heavier-duty hitch than it is rated to handle, unless you plan to upgrade the truck.

Brake Controllers
A brake controller activates the trailer’s electric brakes in conjunction with the tow vehicle’s brakes to help slow the combination down. Many tow vehicles today have trailer-brake controls built in from the factory that work in harmony with the vehicle’s computer and are simple to set. If yours doesn’t, aftermarket brake controllers can make driving more enjoyable. Tip: As with all RV accessories, you get what you pay for. If you’re willing to spend a little more money, opt for a proportional brake controller.

Holding-Tank Monitors and Sensors
Just about every RV has a tank-level monitor. To help improve the accuracy of common monitors, which tends to be dicey, especially for the black tank, some companies have worked to make tank reading more reliable. For instance, the Thetford Sani-Con provides a straightforward way to determine the tank’s capacity and contents. The Sani-Con uses a built-in sensor to monitor tank levels and includes a digital display that shows the status of the tank.

Many tow vehicles come with a hitch installed from the factory that matches the capabilities of the vehicle itself. Yet in some cases, especially with smaller family vehicles, hitches and wiring are still an option, so selecting the appropriate hitch for the vehicle is important.

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Towing Equipment

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Motor Oils and Lubricants
Your tow vehicle is a major investment, and it has to work much harder when towing a heavy trailer. The best way to counter this stress is to perform important maintenance like changing the engine oil and other fluids, as recommended by the manufacturer. Tip: Moving parts need to stay in tip-top shape.

Powertrain

Motor Oils and Lubricants
Your tow vehicle is a major investment, and it has to work much harder when towing a heavy trailer. The best way to counter this stress is to perform important maintenance like changing the engine oil and other fluids, as recommended by the manufacturer. Tip: Moving parts need to stay in tip-top shape.
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With Advanced DualAir™ technology, you can adjust the firmness on each side of your Sleep Number® r5 bed at the simple touch of a button. So you can both wake up refreshed and rejuvenated, ready to face whatever the day may bring.

NEW! DualAir™ technology:
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• Finds your individual Sleep Number for you
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Sleep Number® r5 Bed
• NEW! Comfort layer for responsive and resilient support
• NEW! Intuitive, wireless Sleep Number® remote

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• Decades of durability
• Lighter on the road
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In Clinical Studies ...
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Offer valid through 5/8/16 only at Camping World SuperCenters. Picture may represent features and options available at additional cost. *For a summary of clinical studies, visit sleepnumber.com. See a Camping World Associate for details and restrictions. SLEEP NUMBER, SELECT COMFORT and the Double Arrow Design are registered trademarks of Select Comfort Corporation. ©2016 Select Comfort Corporation.
TireMinder® Smart TPMS™
- iPhone, iPad and Android Compatible
- Bluetooth LE Adapter with Backup Alert System
- Rhino Signal Booster included for Superior Range
- Auto-Scroll, Auto-Search and Mode Indicators
- Low, High, Leaking, Temperature and Blowout Alerts
- Up to 22 Tires (0-232PSI), Simultaneous PSI and Temperature

Phone not included

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NEW TireMinder® TM-77
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- Signal Booster, Auto-Scroll, Auto-Search and Mode Indicators
- Low, High, Leaking, Temperature and Blowout Alerts
- Up to 22 Tires (0-232PSI), Simultaneous PSI and Temperature

Tires
Tires keep your RV going, and a blowout not only stops a trip dead in its tracks, but especially with trailers, it can cause a lot of collateral damage. To avoid blowouts, maintain the proper air pressure by following the tire-inflation label included with your RV. Better yet, weigh your RV, by wheel position, if possible, and adjust the air pressure in accordance with the manufacturer’s load and inflation tables. Never overload your RV. Have it weighed when it is packed for a trip. Before and during each trip, inspect the tires for damage, cracks, bulges and tread separation. **Tips:** Once your tires reach five years of age by the DOT manufacturing date on the sidewall, have them professionally inspected annually. Replace them when they reach seven years of age, regardless of their condition. Cover the tires while in storage, and never use tire dressings that contain petroleum distillates. Lastly, when changing tires, remember that trailer tires are different from truck tires. Look for ST or LT tires. Goodyear, 800-321-2136, www.goodyearrvtires.com
Michelin, 888-622-2306, www.michelinrvtires.com

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Lubricated to prevent wear, so don’t forget to lube the tow-vehicle suspension and the hitch.
Amsoil, 800-956-5695, www.amsoil.com
Castrol, 800-462-0835, www.castrol.com
Delo, 800-822-5823, www.deloperformance.com
Havoline, 800-822-5823, www.havoline.com
Lucas Oil, 800-342-2512, www.lucasoil.com
Mobil 1, 800-662-4525, www.mobil1.com
Quaker State, 800-237-8645, www.quakerstate.com
Royal Purple, 888-382-6300, www.royalpurpleconsumer.com
STP, 888-446-7871, wwwstp.com
Valvoline, 800-832-6825, www.valvoline.com

Engine Power Enhancements
Sometimes you just want a little more power from your tow vehicle. Engine-enhancement products such as tuners, chips, programmers and monitors work with the engine’s electronics to provide more oomph by...
**Suspension Enhancements**

Your RV journeys should be safe and enjoyable, but unfortunately, sometimes a stock suspension on either a tow vehicle or a trailer is less than desirable, leading to poor handling and a rough ride. A number of companies offer suspension upgrades for pickups, SUVs and even trailers that make towing more of a pleasure and help prevent wear and tear from bumps in the road.

- **Bilstein**, 858-386-5900, www.bilsteinus.com
- **Blue Ox**, 800-228-9289, www.blueox.com
- **MORryde**, 574-293-1581, www.morryde.com

**Fuel Additives**

Available for diesel- and gas-powered applications, fuel additives are often attributed to increasing mileage, prolonging an engine’s lifespan by cleaning injectors and even increasing horsepower.

- **Amsoil**, 800-956-5695, www.amsoil.com
- **Gold Eagle (Sta-Bil)**, 864-601-9841, www.goldeagle.com
- **Lucas Oil**, 800-342-2512, www.lucasoil.com
- **Marvel Mystery**, 800-887-8539

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- Up to 22 Tires (0-232PSI), Simultaneous PSI and Temperature

More info at www.mri.link/77app

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*Phone not included*
Although many of us began RVing as a means to unplug, there’s nothing wrong with catching up on the news or munching on popcorn in front of the television. TV technology is constantly evolving, and good-quality flat-screen TVs are more affordable than ever, provided you don’t go overboard on the bells and whistles. Tip: Be sure to select a model with picture quality that doesn’t diminish when viewed at an angle or from below, which is typical with RV installations.

Most RVs come with a stereo/DVD player and speakers, but upgrades can provide better sound, Bluetooth connectivity, content streaming, HDMI input/output and more. ASA Electronics, 877-305-0445, www.asaelectronics.com
Furrion, 888-354-5792, www.furrion.com
Insignia Products, 877-467-4289, www.insigniaproducts.com
IRV Technologies (Patrick Industries), 888-373-3939, www.patrickind.com
King, 952-922-6889, www.kingconnect.com

Satellite-Programming Providers
Unless you plan on relying on the often-inconsistent cable hookups at RV parks or watch only over-the-air channels, you’ll need a satellite provider. The receiver can be rented (under contract) or purchased, and plans designed for RVers can be turned on or off depending on your travel schedule.
Bell, 866-897-4117, www.bell.ca
DirecTV, 855-567-1665, www.directv.com

Dish, 888-434-0112, www.dish.com
Shaw Direct, 888-554-7827, www.shawdirect.ca

Antennas
To receive satellite programming and over-the-air channels, you’ll need a satellite and/or an broadcast antenna. These are available in permanent-mount and portable configurations, and have come a long way in terms of ease of use and functionality.
King, 952-922-6889, www.kingconnect.com
KVH Industries, 401-847 3327, www.kvh.com
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Friday & Saturday 9-7  
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Coupon up to two adults*

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Address__________________________________________
City___________________________ ST_____ Zip________
E-mail____________________________________________

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*Coupon valid up to two regular priced adult admissions, under 16 free, not valid with any other offer.

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Proceed to Rte. 481 S. to Rte. 690 W. to Exit 7

FROM THE WEST
Rte. 90 E. to Exit 39,
Proceed to Rte. 690 E. to Exit 7

FROM THE NORTH & SOUTH
Take Rte. 81 into Syracuse to Rte 690 W to Exit 7
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**The Truck Cover That Pulls Its Weight**

Bedlocker® stands alone as the secure, remote-control retractable cover that’s ideal when you’re hauling any type of trailer. It opens or closes in less than 30 seconds and can stop at any point.

- Great for fifth-wheel hitches; keeps the latch securely locked away when not in use
- Hands-free remote operation from truck or trailer
- Powerful electric motor wires to your truck battery
- Heavy-duty, powder-coated aluminum exterior retracts into canister
- Manual override release in case of lost remotes or dead battery
- No-drill installation
- Three-year warranty

To learn more, visit www.Pace-Edwards.com

**Internet/Wi-Fi/Cell Boosters**

Many RV destinations offer spotty service at best, making these gadgets a necessity for some folks. They don’t create Wi-Fi or cellular signals but amplify the existing signals to give users the best opportunity for the most bars.

- C. Crane, 800-522-8863, www.ccrane.com
- PDQ Connect, 858-598-5001, www.pdqconnect.com
- Shakespeare Marine, 803-227-1590, www.shakespeare-ce.com
- WeBoost, 866-294-1660, www.weboost.com

**Indoor Living**

**Shades**

An RV parked in the sun can get quite hot, which puts additional demands on the air conditioning. Window shades can be your first line of defense against the penetrating heat, especially when you cover the large windows. These shades can be so effective that they drastically reduce the time the air conditioner runs, and as a bonus they offer an additional measure of privacy.

- Auto-Motion Shade, 905-470-6198, www.automotionshade.com
- Carefree of Colorado, 800-621-2617, www.carefreeofcolorado.com
- Dicor (United Shade), 877-262-0954, www.unitedshade.com
- Irvine Shade and Door, 574-522-1446, www.irvineshadeanddoor.com
- Magne Shade, 336-753-0905, www.magneshade.com

**Climate Control**

Having an efficient climate-control system is one of the joys of RVing.

Little Guy Worldwide is bringing back the iconic Scotty camper that fueled a small-trailer craze in the ‘60s and ‘70s. Its retro look and modern conveniences will delight travelers.

Already the premier distributor of teardrop campers, Little Guy will manufacture and distribute Scottys at dealerships all across the USA, coming in 2017.

Sign up to be notified of Scotty rollout and availability at serroscottytrailers.com
Whether it’s a roof-top air conditioner or an LP-gas furnace, upgrading these components is easier than you might think. Heat pumps can provide heating and cooling from a single unit, and options are available for ducted and non-ducted applications.

**Airxcel (Coleman), 316-832-3400, www.airxcel.com**
**Atwood Mobile, 800-546-8759, www.atwoodmobile.com**
**Dometic, 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa**

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**Roof Vents**

Not only does circulating air inside an RV help keep things cool, but moving the air around can eliminate odors and reduce the likelihood of condensation and mildew. Roof fans are a good low-current-draw option to keep the air flowing freely. Some models have a thermostat, which is great if you have pets, and some offer a rain sensor that will automatically close the dome when the wet stuff hits. Roof vent covers are excellent add-ons, allowing you to keep the vents open even in the rain.

**Advent Air, 877-305-0445, www.advent-air.com**
**Airxcel (MaxxAir), 316-832-3400, www.airxcel.com**
**Fan-Tastic Vent, 800-521-0298, www.fantasticvent.com**
**Hengs Industries, 877-295-1205, www.hengsindustries.com**

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**Appliances**

Old-time iceboxes and portable LP-gas-powered stoves have long since been replaced with full-size refrigerators and microwave convection ovens. Even so, few RV upgrades are as instantly noticeable as the kitchen appliances.

**Airxcel (Suburban), 316-832-3400, www.airxcel.com**
**Atwood Mobile, 800-546-8759, www.atwoodmobile.com**
**Dometic, 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa**
**Fisher and Paykel, 888-936-7872, www.fisherpaykel.com**
**Furrion, 888-354-5792, www.furrion.com**
**Thetford (Norcold), 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com**
**Truma, www.truma.net**

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**Outdoor Living**

**Awnings and Accessories**

Rather than simply offering a nice patch...
of shade, RV awnings have evolved, and so have their accessories. A number of lights and decorations are on the market, and some companies even offer powered awning channels that let you plug in fans, speakers and other campsite electronics.

Awnings by ZipDee, 800-338-2378, www.awningsbyzipdee.com
Carefree of Colorado, 800-621-2617, www.carefreeofcolorado.com
Dometic (Power Channel), 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com
EEZ RV Products, 510-910-5397, www.eezrvproducts.com
Girard Systems, 800-382-8442, www.girardrv.com
Lippert Components, 574-535-1125, www.lci1.com
Leveling Systems
Automatic leveling systems make setting up camp easier with the flip of a switch. And these days, being level is more important than ever, as slideouts and some refrigerators may not work properly unless everything is on the straight and narrow.

Dirt, road grime and environmental fallout can ultimately lead to cracked seals, bound slideouts and even mechanical failure, not to mention the RV looking old, dirty and tired. Spending some time cleaning your RV and protecting it from UV rays isn’t merely a suggestion, it’s a necessity.
Dometic, 800-544-4881, www.dometic.com/usa
Gel-Gloss, 800-243-3272, www.gel-gloss.com
Meguiar’s, 800-347-5700, www.meguiars.com
Poli Glow, 800-922-5013, www.poliglow-int.com
Protect All, 800-521-3032, www.protectall.com
RejeX, 469-583-9218, www.rejex.com
Roadmaster (Voom!), 800-669-9690, www.roadmasterinc.com
Shurhold, 772-287-1313, www.shurhold.com
Star brite, 800-327-8583, www.starbrite.com
Thetford, 800-543-1219, www.thetford.com
Walex, 800-338-3155, www.walex.com

Sealants
Whether it's a leaky roof or a punctured side wall, sometimes it’s just not feasible — or necessary — to perform a complete replacement. Sealants come in a variety of forms, including tape, foam, caulking, silicone and more. 

Tips: Make sure you know which type of roof your RV has, inspect the sealants regularly for dryness, cracks and separations, and renew as needed. Never use silicone on roof membranes.

Eternabond, 800-248-4010, www.eternabond.com
Dicor Corporation, 800-837-2059, www.dicor.com
GE Silicone, 866-275-4372, www.caulkyourhome.com
Loctite Products, 800-624-7767, www.loctiteproducts.com

Covers and Tire Covers
Blistering heat, UV rays, rain, sleet and snow all take their toll on the exterior of any RV. Covers help prevent damage by protecting the surfaces from UV degradation, moisture intrusion and other types of environmental fallout. They range from basic covers for use in mild climates to all-season, all-climate covers that are appropriate for even harsh winter storage. Materials range from Tyvek, which releases moisture, to Poly-Oxford, which is super heavy-duty and water-repellent but still soft enough not to damage RV surfaces.

ADCO, 800-541-2326, www.adcoprod.com
CalMark Cover Company, 800-838-7236, www.calmarkcovers.com
Camping World (Elements), 888-626-7576, www.campingworld.com
**Ready to Roll**

Covercraft Direct, 800-274-7006, www.covercraft.com  
Coverking, 800-268-3754, www.coverking.com  
CoverQuest, 888-726-9300, www.coverquest.com  
Empire Covers, 844-859-0910, www.empirecovers.com

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**Electronics/Electrical**

**Backup Cameras**
Backup and monitoring cameras are now available in wired and wireless applications for tow vehicles and trailers. Backup cameras are a great way to see behind the trailer and make sure nothing, or no one, is in the way. Hitch cameras make connecting the truck and trailer a snap.

ASA Electronics, 877-305-0445, www.asaelectronics.com  
Furrion, 888-354-5792, www.furrion.com  
Hopkins Towing Solutions, 800-835-0129, www.hopkinstowingsolutions.com  
iBall, 877-298-2055, www.iballhitchcam.com  
Toren (Swift Hitch), 617-600-8282, www.swiftitch.com

**GPS Devices**
It’s true that many of us will never fully relinquish the folding map in our glove compartment, but GPS units can do so much more. RV-specific GPS devices allow users to program in their vehicles’ profiles and pre-plan their trip at home, offering the best route without leading them under low overpasses or through tight turns. Modern units can also update traffic and weather conditions, and display the location of the nearest campgrounds, restaurants, fuel stations, convenience stores and places of interest. And virtually all of them feature audio directions, so you don’t have to squint at the thin lines and tiny type on your old printed map.

ASA Electronics, 877-305-0445, www.asaelectronics.com  
Garmin, 800-800-1020, www.garmin.com  
Magellan GPS, 800-707-9971, www.magellangps.com  
Rand McNally, 877-446-4863, www.randmcnally.com  
TomTom, www.tomtom.com

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Solar-Powered Systems
Using the sun’s rays to generate usable power, solar systems are a valuable resource for RVers. From battery charging to full-power delivery, their electrical output typically offsets the sometimes large up-front investment. And perhaps most importantly, they represent an important step toward getting off the grid and going wherever your imagination — and your RV — can take you.

Deltran USA (Battery Tender), 877-456-7901, www.batterytender.com
EEZ RV Products, 510-910-5397, www.eezrvproducts.com

Surge Protectors
With the sophisticated and sensitive electronics in today’s RVs, a few seconds of faulty power or a power surge may be all it takes to fry the circuits of your stereo, TV, DVD player or refrigerator. Surge protectors plug in to the pedestal to protect your RV from unsteady power.

Hughes Autoformers, 888-540-1504, www.hughesautoformers.com
Technology Research, 800-780-4324, www.trci.net

Inverters
An inverter uses 12-volt DC power from the RV’s house batteries to make 120-volt AC power so you can run things like the refrigerator, TV or...
small appliances when not connected to shorepower. Don’t scrimp here, as clean, pure sine-wave power is necessary to run your sensitive electronics. Inverters come in a wide range of sizes, and some also include chargers as well. When AC power is available, an inverter/charger will charge the house batteries when not inverting.


**Sensata Technologies (Magnum-Dimensions)**, 425-353-8833, www.magnum-dimensions.com


**Xantrex**, 800-962-7926, www.xantrex.com

### Generators

Some trailers are already equipped (or at least prepped) for a generator, but for the rest of us, a portable AC generator is good to have on hand to power most appliances and electronics when a 120-volt AC source is not available. **Tip:** Remember to calculate your likely power draw before purchasing and keep in mind that your air conditioner requires an inordinate amount of amperage upon startup. Err on the side of more power, and you’ll be fine.

**Cummins Onan**, 800-888-6626, www.power.cummins.com


### LED Lighting

Most newer RVs include LED lighting in one way or another, whether it’s in the taillight fixtures, overhead lighting or even mood lights. They may cost a bit more up front, but their lower draw and longer life make them worth a few extra bucks.


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Ruggids RV Step Rugs
- Deep treads trap dirt at the door
- Easy to install on manual or electric steps
- Heavy-duty UV-protected olefin for all-weather durability

Two-Way Radios
Nothing strains a relationship more than a stressful RV backing-in situation. Owning a two-way radio set is a great way to settle everyone’s nerves, as the spotter can guide the driver into the correct position without gesturing frantically or screaming to be heard over the engine. They’re valuable in camp, helping with clearance and leveling issues, and on hikes and with kids, keeping both users in constant contact.

Tip: Consider purchasing a set with NOAA weather-alert capability to stay informed of hazardous weather.

Cobra, 773-889-3087, www.cobra.com
Midland, 816-241-8500, www.midlandusa.com
Motorola, 800-668-6765, www.motorola.com
Uniden, 800-297-1023, www.uniden.com
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Reg. $129

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Free & Clear EcoSmart 12-Pack Toss Ins #65794
EcoSmart® 12-Pack Toss-Ins #44088
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Dual steel EvenTemp burners with heat core technology. Quick starting with InstaStart™ ignition. Reg. $199.99

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Includes bag of charcoal, BBQ tool set, bottle opener, plates, folding charcoal grill, cups, utensils, napkins and trash bag, all in one box. Reg. $29.99

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Club Chair, Gray #90248
Cushy padded chair is covered in 600-denier polyester. Reg. $58.99

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Perfect for RV Living!
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Range Revival

Atwood Glass Bi-Fold Cooktop Cover adds eye-appeal and additional space while the Stove Wrap shortens cleanup.

When a company comes up with products that improve the galley, RV owners react favorably. After all, trying to make do in a small kitchen takes some acclimation and changes the way cooking and cleanup are handled. Kitchen gadgets are not new, and many don’t pass muster in real-world conditions. But Atwood, a major supplier of appliances to the RV industry, has come out with a couple of products — the Glass Bi-Fold Cooktop Cover and the Stove Wrap — that enhance galley convenience without requiring difficult or time-consuming modifications.

After removing the grate, the Stove Wrap is installed and simply lines the area around the burners. Once in position, the grate is replaced with its feet at the four corners, secured in grommets.

Sized to fit Atwood and Wedgewood ranges and cooktops that are recessed into the galley counter, the internally hinged Glass Bi-Fold Cooktop Cover lies flat and flush to provide additional counter space in an otherwise wasted location when the burners are not being used. During cooking, the hinge locks the cover in the upright and folded position to prevent movement; it even stays in place if the cook forgets to unfold it before traveling. The cover comes with

**SPACE SAVER** The Glass Bi-Fold Cooktop Cover is available in black or gray tint. It fits flush with the countertop and folds up at the back when the burners are in use.
Stove Wrap, which is made from nonflammable material, can be easily removed for cleaning; it's even machine washable.

Installing the Glass Bi-Fold Cooktop Cover is a simple job. Begin by doing a quick strip down of the stove and removing the cooking grate. Then it's just a matter of screwing the new hardware in place. If the stove has a metal cover, remove the existing hardware and the original top, and replace them with the new cover. The result of this quick project is a stove that has a much nicer looking top with a flush-fitting cover that adds workspace when the burners are not in service.

As far as the Stove Wrap is concerned, just place the cloth over the three burners, then align the metal grommets with the grate’s four feet, and you’re done. It’s one of those why-didn’t-I-think-of-that products that keeps the stove tidy with almost no effort.

The Atwood Glass Bi-Fold Cooktop Cover retails for $83 in gray (model 50112), and its black counterpart (model 50200) goes for $87. The Stove Wrap has a $39.99 retail price. For a small investment, these products are sure to be appreciated by anyone who spends time in front of an RV range.

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PHOTOS BY KEVIN LIVINGSTON AND COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER
Compact Leveling Blocks

Most owners know the problems related to stabilizing trailers at campsites. Sometimes you need more blocks to put under those four jacks. I came up with a simple solution that solves two problems — limited storage space and not enough blocks.

I made a pair of wooden boxes that are just large enough for one 6x6-inch leveling block to nest inside each one. The sides are built of 2x6-inch lumber, and the bottom is plywood. When I need to elevate a jack more than 6 inches, I stack a block on top of its nesting box.

The two boxes and two leveling blocks do the job of four blocks, but when nested, they take up about half the space, which makes more room for other gear.

Jeffrey Dore, Millbury, Massachusetts

Stop Drawers in Their Tracks

My travel trailer’s drawers don’t have stops to keep them from being pulled out all the way, and this became an issue when our three-year-old granddaughter stayed with us. My solution was to purchase a five pack of the Hillman Group’s Drawer Pull Out Stops (item number 57061) on Amazon. I drilled two holes in the back of each drawer to match the holes in each plastic stop, then attached the stops with screws (not supplied). The plastic is pliant enough to allow the stops to be bent when a drawer needs to be pulled out completely.

Jeff Allen, Midlothian, Virginia

Basic Battery Disconnect

Most travel trailers have the battery or batteries on a tray on the frame at the front of the RV, and there is no place for a battery-disconnect switch. I solved this problem by purchasing a set of welding cable connectors at my local welding-supply store.

I cut the negative cable from the battery in half and installed the male connector on one end and the female connector on the other. I then plugged the two connectors together and gave them a twist, which locks the connectors in place and gives the battery a secure and waterproof connection.

When it’s time to disconnect the battery, I simply twist the two connectors the other way.

Gordon Hansen, Springfield, Oregon

To send your submission, write to 10-Minute Tech, 2750 Park View Court, Suite 240, Oxnard, California 93036 or email 10minutetech@trailerlife.com. Please include an illustration or photo, if applicable. Trailer Life will pay $35 for original 10-Minute Tech ideas. All payments require an SSN or FEIN.
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A Breath of Fresh Air

Air-helper springs are a godsend to RVers who want to control their tow vehicle’s attitude, handling and ride quality as driving conditions change. Firestone Industrial Products has taken these to a new level with Ride-Rite All-In-One wireless kits that bundle high-performance air springs with the Air Command F3 wireless air compressor for maximum performance and driver convenience. Wireless operation gives owners the freedom to adjust the air springs to accommodate load variations and road conditions from either the driver’s seat or outside the tow vehicle. These new all-inclusive kits utilize existing holes in the frame rails, making installation easy, according to Firestone. An analog kit is also available.

MSRP: Varies by vehicle make and model
800-247-4337, www.riderite.com
Circle 156 on Reader Service Card

Bundle of Energize

Sometimes we simply want to replace an aging product with a newer version of the same thing, particularly when it’s something we’re comfortable using. Such may be the case for owners of the Hayes Energize III proportional brake controller. The latest model, the Energize III+, has all the safety benefits of the earlier brake controller but combines them with features of the heavy-duty Energize XPC. The added benefits allow it to be used in medium- to heavy-duty towing applications with up to six trailer brakes. As with all Hayes controllers, the Energize III+ works with electric and electric-over-hydraulic braking systems. Installation is said to be simple using the included high-bonding peel-and-stick tape.

MSRP: $89.99
800-882-1204, www.hayesbc.com
Circle 157 on Reader Service Card

Triple-Play Antenna

Simplifying and improving Internet, cellular and TV connectivity in an RV makes life on the road just that much nicer, and the new OneSource marine and RV antenna does that while also boosting the signals, according to manufacturer PDQ Connect. The pedestal-mounted OneSource antenna provides long-range cell, Wi-Fi and HDTV reception via a single cable for easy installation. PDQ says this new system gives mobile users long-range 3G and 4G voice and data service up to 20 miles from a cell tower, plus the bonus of free over-the-air HD TV. It also provides a hotspot to connect Wi-Fi-enabled devices inside or outside the RV. The wide-band antenna works with all cellular providers.

MSRP: $169
858-598-5001, www.pdqconnect.com
Circle 158 on Reader Service Card

Remote-Control Tonneau

Conventional tonneau covers require lifting, pushing, pulling, flipping or rolling to get access to the truck bed. Pace Edwards takes out all that extra effort with the remote-controlled Bedlocker Electric retractable cover. With the push of a button on a keychain fob or manual switches positioned in the bed or cab, the motorized tonneau’s aluminum panels can extend and stop in any position or retract all the way into the canister at the front of the bed. The Bedlocker fits over a fifth-wheel hitch, so the truck bed can be fully covered when not towing. On most installations the system’s clamp-in rails require no drilling.

MSRP: Varies by vehicle make and model
800-338-3697
www.pace-edwards.com/bedlocker-electric
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Honda Portable Generators

What Can a PORTABLE HONDA GENERATOR Power?

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<th>Model</th>
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<th>Computer</th>
<th>Coffee Maker</th>
<th>Small Microwave</th>
<th>Electric Fry Pan</th>
<th>Small Heater</th>
<th>Large Microwave</th>
<th>Fridge/Freezer</th>
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For optimum performance and safety, we recommend you read the owner’s manual before operating your Honda Power Equipment. ©2016 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. Connection of a generator to house power requires a transfer device to avoid possible injury to power company personnel. Consult a qualified electrician. Spark arrestor approved by U.S. Forest Service for use in National Parks.

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Integrated Trailer Brake Controls
Ever since brakes were first used on trailers, there has been a need for a way to control them and coordinate braking of the tow vehicle with the trailer so they are proportional. Unequal braking at either the front or back can cause serious problems. Too much braking on the tow vehicle relative to the trailer, and the trailer can jackknife. Too much braking from the trailer relative to the tow vehicle, and stopping distances get dangerously long and the trailer’s brakes can overheat.

Electric brakes require some type of controller that can detect when braking is initiated on the tow vehicle and activate the trailer brakes proportionally. Before antilock brakes (ABS) became popular, most electric controls tapped into the hydraulic brake system on the tow vehicle with a tee near the output of the master cylinder. This gave a pressure signal that was proportional to the amount of braking by the tow vehicle. However, the universal adoption of ABS made these units unusable because tow-vehicle manufacturers recommended against tapping into the hydraulic system.

The next generations of electric brake controls often used a pendulum or some other type of accelerometer to detect how hard the tow vehicle was braking. These systems are still available and are widely used in the many vehicle models that don’t come with factory trailer-brake controls.

About a decade ago, vehicle manufacturers started offering integrated trailer-brake controls (ITBC) as optional equipment on heavy-duty pickup trucks. Ford was first to the market with its TowCommand in 2005, followed soon thereafter by General Motors, Ram and other manufacturers.

There are a number of compelling reasons for integrating the trailer-brake controller into modern tow-vehicle systems. The vehicle’s onboard computer already has continuous...
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(Above, left to right) Aftermarket trailer-brake controllers like the Tekonsha P3, Hayes G2 Brake Boss and Hensley TruControl mount on the dash and offer some of the features of factory-integrated systems.

be largely because the trailer-brake preferences were not set up properly initially. Before towing, owners need to adjust the settings to match the weight of the trailer being towed and the type of trailer brakes. This process is described in the owner’s manual provided by the manufacturer, if the vehicle is so equipped.

Many vehicles that offer an optional ITBC but didn’t have one installed on the factory assembly line are set up with the necessary wiring and connectors to allow one to be retrofitted and reconfigured using a dealer scan tool.

Some of the features offered on factory systems are also available on aftermarket trailer-brake controllers, using solid-state electronic accelerometers to measure braking force. These include the Prodigy P2 and P3 from Tekonsha, TruControl from Hensley Manufacturing and the Hayes G2 Brake Boss. Tuson offers DirecLink, which receives data from the OBD-II diagnostic port to allow proportional control of the trailer brakes.

Not all brake controllers work with disc-brake systems on trailers. In some situations, a controller adapter module, such as the HydraStar CAM-HBA, will be necessary to allow brake controllers that are not compatible with hydraulic systems to operate properly. Before installing any aftermarket unit, make sure to consult with the vehicle manufacturer or dealer for guidance on your vehicle’s particular system.

Sources
Hayes Towing Electronics
www.hayesbc.com
Hensley Manufacturing
www.hensleymfg.com
HydraStar Trailer Brake Actuators
www.hydrastarusa.com
Tekonsha/Cequent Products
www.tekonsha.com
Tuson RV Brakes
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USB-OUTLET REPLACEMENT

Q I have a 2013 Keystone Bullet, and my family and I camp as often as we can. We all have electronic devices that utilize a USB and/or a two-prong receptacle for charging. In my home I have replaced a couple of the regular receptacle outlets with outlets that have 2.1-amp USB outlets that allow fast, full-speed charging for smartphones, tablets and readers. This takes the regular receptacle outlet from two standard plug-ins to as many as four USB port-type receptacles.

Can I use these USB receptacles, purchased from the local hardware store, in my travel trailer?

R Ron Rancourt, Virginia Beach, Virginia

A Sure, from a functional standpoint, a replacement USB-equipped wall plug can be used in your trailer. The main consideration is fit. Some of those USB receptacles are deeper, front to back, than their conventional counterparts due to the electronics involved with the USB powering and charging circuitry. Not all RV wall-socket boxes are as deep as the boxes used in a home residence, partly because not all RV walls are very thick. As such, some RV builders use very slim wall receptacles.

With the power off, remove the receptacle cover plate in your RV and measure from the wall face to the back of the box. Take that measurement with you when you go shopping for the USB-style replacement to be sure it’ll be a good fit. — Jeff Johnston

TIRE-TREAD SELECTION

Q I am concerned about tires and tread pattern, or lack thereof. I have a 2016 Keystone Montana fifth-wheel with load range E ST 235/80R16 tires. My local tire dealer said there have been problems with these tires, so I am looking at getting new tires on a trailer with only 60 miles on it. The new style of 10-ply is treadless and looks like the old, bald farm-tractor tires. If there’s no tread, won’t this cause problems in rain or snow? The dealer said the industry is going to this style.

Rick Clendenning, Mountain Home, Idaho

A Thanks for a very interesting note, Rick. I’m not sure why a tire dealer would tell you to get rid of your RV’s new tires when they’ve hardly been used, unless, of course, it’s because he thinks he sees a hot prospect for the sale of a set of new tires. Yes, there have been a lot of trailer tire problems out there, but that doesn’t mean you should automatically dump the new tires. Take care of them, keep them inflated as per specs, and don’t overload or over-speed them, and you’ll likely realize good longevity.

“Treadless tires” — and the industry is going to that style? On which planet is he selling tires? You would never buy treadless tires unless you were only towing the trailer from your beach house to your favorite sand dune and back. I’d suggest you stay well away from that tire dealer to start with because he’s giving you all kinds of bad advice. The term “10-ply,” along with “six-ply” and such are obsolete tire-sizing terms, but it’s no surprise that the dealer was pushing those, given the other bad information he provided.

Most tires are rated using letters, such as an E-rated tire, or an F-rated, which has a higher capacity, and so on. If you are really looking for replacements, select new tires that are rated at the same, or higher, carrying capacity than the existing ones, with a conventional tread shape and pattern. Tread is as important on a trailer tire as it is on a tow vehicle for traction, braking, stability and other functional reasons. — J.J.

RAM TRUCK-BED SAG

Q I have a 2016 Ram 3500 with single rear wheels and am hauling a 40-foot Grand Design Solitude fifth-wheel with it. Everything is as it was from the factory. There are about 2 to 4 inches of sag once the load is put on. I have not noticed anything wrong with the way the truck handles.

Should I be worried? At the dealership, they assure me that it looked fine, so I am not sure what to believe.

Shawn Kirchner
Albuquerque, New Mexico

A A 40-foot fifth-wheel puts a lot of hitch weight on a pickup, Shawn, so some sag is normal and to be expected. Many trucks of that type sit with a back-end-high attitude when empty, so some sag tends to bring them down to a more even keel. If that’s the case with your truck, and you feel it’s working OK, you’re in good shape and can keep

THE TECH TEAM

KEN FREUND: Ken is a former ASE Certified Master Technician, service manager and shop owner who has authored numerous books on automotive repair.

JEFF JOHNSTON: Jeff served as technical director of Trailer Life for 20 years and has been an RV enthusiast, mechanic and writer since he could hold a wrench.

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driving and enjoying it. If the sag bugs you, install a set of air bags, and that will help provide the extra support you want. You should also weigh the rear axle with the trailer hitched to make sure you don’t have an overloaded condition. — J.J.

LIGHTS GO DIM AGAIN
Q I read the answer to Larry Jones’ “Lights Go Dim” letter in the February 2016 issue. I tried to apply it to the problem my RV has, but it didn’t seem to fit. The lights go bright for maybe half a minute or so, then dim. They may stay dim for a minute or two, then go bright again. This repeats over and over. I have a DC voltmeter plugged into the DC outlet on the island in the kitchen. The voltage hardly varies as this happens. The power supply is a WFCO WF-9875 converter. Any help will be appreciated.

James Roberts, Wake Village, Texas

A An RV’s 12-volt DC lights go dim for one reason: low voltage. If they start bright and then dim, and then go bright again, the voltage is fluctuating. Your plug-in meter indicates something is happening, but you may need a more accurate device to show exactly how much the voltage is changing.

As the February RV Clinic letter suggested, a weak battery is a primary suspect in a case like this. As you start to add loads on a 12-volt DC system, sooner or later the converter kicks in and starts charging the battery that also provides nominal 12 volts to the system. If the battery is weak, the converter charges it for a while, producing full voltage and bright lights, until it cycles off and only the battery is providing power, and the lights go dim because the battery is not holding the charge.

If you have a battery that’s in good condition, and you know for sure that it’s fully charged, it’s also possible the converter is defective and not producing a consistent battery-charging current. As 12-volt DC power demand fluctuates, so does converter output. The converter may not be adequately charging the battery, which results in bright and dim light cycles, as you’ve experienced.

There could also be bad wiring between the converter and the battery, or between the battery and the load.

Check the voltage at one of the lights that seems to be changing its brightness. The DC outlet in the kitchen may be on a different fused circuit, and while it would also be subject to the same voltage variations, it doesn’t hurt to check right at the problem.

Turn on some lights to add load to the system, and check and monitor the voltage right at the battery posts, while watching the bright and dim cycles. Under normal charging mode, most converters put out about 14.2 volts, and the battery voltage should look like about 13.4 volts immediately after the converter switches off and, presumably, the lights go dim.

Contact WFCO regarding its closest service center and have the local technicians test the converter for proper output. You didn’t say how old your trailer is, but the converter may be past its prime and due for replacement. — J.J.

LP-GAS SECURITY
Q We are thinking about chaining or some other method of preventing theft loss of our RV’s LP-gas cylinders. This has made us wonder why there are no locks on LP-gas compartment doors and if any safety or legal regulations would prevent us from locking the cylinders while traveling.

Harold Huelsen, Howard City, Michigan

A There’s no legal reason why you can’t lock down the LP-gas cylinders, Harold. Lots of people do that to avoid theft, as you suggested. Some cylinder hold-down brackets include holes for padlock use, or lacking that, a cable-type lock can handle the job.

There are no locks on those compartment doors for safety reasons — and that’s specified in the building code for RVs. Mainly, if there’s a fire, an emergency responder can get easy access to the cylinders to shut off the flow of gas without having to mess around with an access key. Time is of the essence in a situation like that. — J.J.
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FORD F-150 BRAKE PROBLEM

Q I have a 2013 Ford F-150 with a 3.5-liter V-6 that I use for towing. Recently, the low-brake-fluid light came on, and the engine was low on fluid. I added some, and checked around to see if there was any sign of leakage, but I couldn’t find any traces. The pedal also feels a little spongier than before. I took it to the dealership, but they said they couldn’t find anything wrong. What should I do?

Howard K. Smythe, Fort Worth, Texas

A Ford is recalling about 271,000 F-150 pickups sold in North America for brake problems similar to those you noted (see “Newswire,” page 18 in the May issue). The recall is to fix a brake-fluid leak, which may reduce braking effectiveness. The recall covers 2013 and 2014 model years with 3.5-liter V-6 engines. Ford states that brake fluid may leak from the master cylinder into the brake booster, and this could explain why your F-150 lost fluid but you didn’t see any leakage.

The defect is said to reduce the ability of the front brakes to stop the truck. Ford reports nine possible crashes with no serious injuries. Under the recall, dealers will replace the brake master cylinder for free. They’ll also replace the brake booster, if they find leaks from the master cylinder. Ford says it’s working with suppliers to get parts to dealers and is notifying customers. Check with a Ford dealer right away. — Ken Freund

ANOTHER FIX FOR HOLDING-TANK VENTS

This is in regard to the June issue’s “Holding-Tank Vent Solution” about dealing with holding-tank odors that enter the RV through a vent under the sink. I had the same issue in a 2014 Cedar Creek fifth-wheel. The problem is the design of the vent valve. If you take a close look at how these valves are made, you will see why they won’t work for long. The rubber flange won’t return to the seat after a short time. If you invert the valve, this keeps the rubber flapper valve on the seat.

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I installed some threaded PVC fittings (street Ls) from the hardware store that turn the valve over 180 degrees. It works fine now.

Wilfred "Pat" Schultz, Monmouth, Oregon

Thanks for writing, Pat. This fix is quick and inexpensive, and should help quite a few readers. — K.F.

CRUISE CONTROL WHILE TOWING

I read with interest Gary Bressler’s “Know What to Tow” comment in the May issue’s Letters section. Bressler makes several references to towing while using cruise control. I would appreciate your input on the pros and cons and advisability of using cruise control while towing.

Our previous tow vehicle was a 1998 1500 Chevy conversion van, which we used to tow a Dutchmen Kodiak travel trailer. The owner’s guide for the van does not address towing while using cruise control, so I contacted Chevy’s customer service department to ask about it and was referred to my local Chevy dealer. The dealer made two recommendations: install a transmission oil cooler, which I did, and don’t use cruise control when towing.

Our current tow vehicle is a 2004 F-250 Super Duty turbo-diesel, and our trailer is a 35-foot Keystone Outback. The first thing in the F-250 owner’s guide under the heading “Driving While You Tow” is the statement “When towing a trailer, turn off the speed control.” I now have two recommendations against using cruise control when towing. However, Bressler appears to be very successful when doing so.

Larry Vavrinek, Ralston, Nebraska

This is sure to open up a can of worms, but here goes. I believe the main reason manufacturers recommend against the use of cruise control when towing a heavy trailer is because, when a steep uphill grade is encountered, the tow vehicle’s speed may drop rapidly. This sudden decrease in speed may cause the cruise control’s “brain” to disconnect the cruise control. If this
occurs, and the driver does not react fast enough in reapplying the accelerator pedal, vehicle speed will decrease rapidly, but the brake lights will not be applied to warn following vehicles, such as semitrailers. This, in turn, could cause a chain-reaction crash.

Cruise control also does not anticipate upcoming grades, as a driver might do, and apply extra power just before ascending the grade. Additionally, cruise control does not have the “sense” to slow down before reaching a steep downgrade to maintain safe control.

Your truck has sophisticated engine and transmission-control algorithms that help it determine the best transmission gear and engine power output for a given situation. However, there are times when you, the driver, know better. For example, you should manually shift out of overdrive when starting to drive in any hills, because overdrive is not meant for use when towing under these conditions. Cruise control might think it prefers overdrive in situations where it’s not right to use it.

With that said, cruise control can work just fine when towing on mostly level roads. There are long stretches of flatlands where cruise control can help you enjoy the journey because the system gets settled into a good towing gear and stays there. — K.F.

PUMP THAT WON’T

We have a Shurflo pump with a pump strainer attached. It will pump about 2 gallons of water and quit pumping. It still runs, but it just stops pumping. I can turn the pump off and back on, and it will pump about ¼ to ½ gallon and quit again. I am sure about the amount because I measured with a gallon jug. I have removed the strainer to check if it’s clean, and it is completely clean. It seems that the pump is getting warm and stops pumping. It does not feel warm to the touch, though.

Is there something else I can do before removing the pump? Plumbing and I are not friends!

Nat Wade, via email

It seems like it may be losing its prime. Did you make sure there is...
enough water in the freshwater storage tank? You didn’t mention what make and model RV you have, or how old or what model number the pump is.

If it is an older model, the head assembly may need rebuilding. Connect a hose to the intake side of the pump temporarily and place it in a large bucket of water to see if it will pump that normally. If it does, that indicates that water is not getting to the pump reliably, or there is an issue with the pump head not being able to create enough vacuum for lift into the pump. This may be caused by a poor hose connection or crimped intake line, low water level, a tank vent that’s not working, loose screws around the pump head or a small slice in the pump diaphragm.

Check the piping from the intake side of the pump to the tank for tight fittings or other places where there could be voids that allow the pump to lose prime. The intake filter into the pump, if so equipped, can also be a source of this kind of vacuum loss.

If the pump motor stops, test voltage at the motor; it should be around 12 volts DC. If the motor stops but has sufficient voltage, the problem is in the motor or the pressure switch, which can be accessed in some pumps but not in others. If the motor stops because of insufficient voltage, the power circuit to the pump (or ground) is faulty.

A visit to the pump manufacturer’s website or a call to the company’s technical center may also be of help. — K.F.

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**TOWING WITH FRONT-WHEEL DRIVE**

**Q** Is it ever advisable to tow a travel trailer with a front-wheel-drive vehicle? How about with an all-wheel-drive vehicle?

**A** The main concern with using a front-wheel-drive (FWD) model for towing is that, when a properly adjusted weight-distributing (WD) hitch is not used, the weight of a trailer tends to unload the front drive wheels, and acceleration shifts additional weight aft. This can become problematic, especially in...
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SLIDEOUT WON’T RETRACT
In reference to Loyd Flynt’s “Slideouts
Not Retracting” letter in the May issue,
I was led to believe it was an electrical
slide. But I had the same issue with a
hydraulic slide, and it turned out to be
a 50-amp circuit-breaker problem.
Once I replaced the circuit breaker,
there were no more problems.
Ron Stevens, Littleton, New Hampshire

Slideout problems are among the most
frequent complaints we hear about
from readers. Both hydraulic and
geared electrical slide mechanisms
are powered by electricity. Slideout
rooms require a lot of current because
they operate from 12-volt batteries (not
120 volts AC). Anything that causes the
mechanism to bind or prevents full
electrical power from getting to the
controls and motor will cause the slide
to not function properly. Sometimes
circuit breakers will degrade over time,
especially if they get tripped frequently.

Thanks for sharing your experi-
ence, Ron. — K.F.

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The State of Water
Millions of gallons of water and lots of fun flows year-round in the Wisconsin Dells

We who roam the country often ponder things that don’t occur to our stay-at-home friends. I’m in Wisconsin — Wisconsin Dells, actually. I left my home in California, where residents have been told to cut back water usage, some by as much as 36 percent. I saw lawn signs that read: “Brown is the new green.”

Here is the ponder point: How about creating giant pipelines to move water from place to place, as we now have to move oil and gas? We in drought-prone states like California would appreciate trusty water spigots we can turn on in the summer when the snowmelt from the mountains doesn’t fill the reservoirs. Building water pipelines certainly wouldn’t be ecologically contentious — a spill is hardly a hazmat problem. In fact, in many places, getting free water might be a reason to celebrate.

The people in Wisconsin, I think, would not mind sharing. They not only have 15,000 lakes, but their state borders two of the largest in the country, Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. That’s not to say that plentiful water is a gift from nature that Wisconsinites take for granted. They know it helps drive the economy and enriches their lifestyle.

Having grown up in neighboring Minnesota — a state with a measly 10,000 lakes — I am sure most kids here are into swimming and other water sports at an early age. And when lakes freeze over, the ice skates come out.

Since Wisconsin claims to be America’s Dairyland, it follows that milk is the state’s official beverage. But let’s not forget the state’s dedication to the alchemy that turns water into beer. Wisconsin has 132 breweries, and Milwaukee is home to some of America’s largest, plus a baseball team called the Brewers.

Wisconsin has thousands of beaches and the world’s highest concentration of water parks. In Wisconsin Dells, nearly 16 million gallons of water flow through more than 20 water parks every day during the summer. In the winter, it’s almost that much, since many of the parks have vast indoor facilities.

The primary water source in the Dells is the Wisconsin River, which runs through town. The river is a natural wonder that drew tourists here long before anybody thought about enhancing a playground slide with a water hose.

Almost 15,000 years ago, a natural dam that was holding back a lake of glacial meltwater gave way, creating a flood that carved gorges through this area’s rich, red sandstone. The result is the Dells of Wisconsin, the Midwest’s version of the Grand Canyon, albeit smaller and greener.

A sedate river cruise is the ideal way to see the river and the Upper Dells towering rock formations and palisades. For those more into thrill rides than scenery, a 1,200-horsepower jet boat offers an hour of 360-degree spins, 40-MPH sprints and sudden, soaking stops.

When I boarded the Wild Thing jet boat ride, I was handed a plastic bag to put things in that I wanted to keep dry. Since I was going to sit on my wallet, I thought that it would be well protected, but I discovered that when the driver of that boat puts it in a hard turn and then pulls off the power, the bow goes down hard. When it resurfaces, it scoops up a lot of the river with it, and water goes everywhere. And he does that over and over.

Should you, too, choose to sit on your wallet on this ride, I can report that U.S paper currency here is worth as much wet as it is dry.

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