

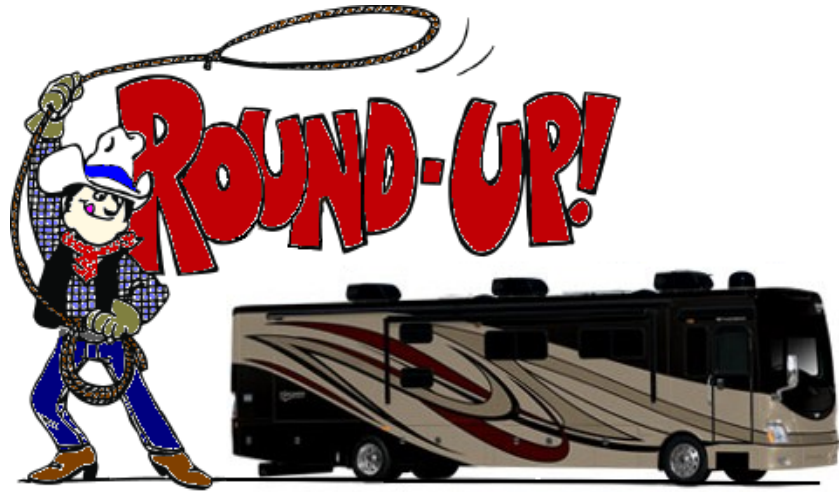
Discovery Express



Volume 16, Number 3

Discovery Owners Association, Inc. — Established 1998 — www.discoveryowners.com

July 2014



It's time to load up the D fer headin' on down the trail, pardners! The 2014 DOAI national rally is a'comin' soon, and we don't want anyone to miss the whoopin' and hollerin' good time we'uns are a'gonna have in Gillette, Wyoming!

Head wrangler **Bob Williams** and his ranch hands have been a'workin' overtime to git the vittles planned, the dance hall ready, the bunkhouse all arranged, and gatherin' some mighty fine dudes to give y'all good advice and laughs. Yer a'gonna enjoy a heapin' helpin' of knee-slappin' fun this a'comin' August in Cowboy Country.

This hyar's issue is the last chance we're a'gonna git to let y'all know what's in store fer ya, so don't miss anythin' inside these hyar pages. We're a'lookin' forward to sayin' "Howdy!" as you git to that thar place in Gillette.

Y'all c'mon, now, ya hear? YEE-HA!

Seriously, though...

We really do have some fun things planned, as well as helpful seminars, eager-to-serve vendors, and rousing entertainment. Not only is the venue (CAM-PLEX) top notch, but so are the opportunities to see some of America's most beautiful sights within an easy drive.

The last date for registrations to be received is **August 4**. Don't put it off ... git that registration in pronto, pardner. We'll see y'all soon!

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John Baker

President's report

The harsh winter is long past and by now, many of us have already put hundreds of miles on our D's, seeing new places, returning to old favorite locations, or visiting friends and family. Good friends and fun places are really what DOAI is all about. **Felesa** and I recently revisited Mountain View, Ark., with friends from the Ozarks Discovery and Louisiana Mudbugs chapters. We have forged hundreds of great friendships during our 15-year association with DOAI and expect to establish many, many more.

You demonstrated the depth of your friendship in a very important way when so many of you expressed concerns and prayers for my recent eye surgeries. Thank you more than words can express. It was a scary scenario that could have resulted in permanent total loss of the eye. I am ecstatic to report 100 percent success – 20/20!

National rally time is closing in. The Northwest Adventurers are planning a great time for us August 26-31 in Gillette, Wyo. Rally Master **Bob Williams** has provided much more information elsewhere in this newsletter. Be sure to register by August 4. I look forward to seeing you (with BOTH of my 20/20 eyes!) there.

A new notice is prominently displayed on our website and in this newsletter introducing the Amazon Affiliate program in which DOAI recently enrolled. This program will pay us a commission on all your Amazon purchases. It is completely transparent, private, and your purchase price does not change. I encourage you to read **Bob Cook's** article that provides more detail, bookmark the link and use it for all your purchases. This is not an endorsement for Amazon but simply taking advantage of their program to secure additional revenues. It will help us keep dues low and continue to provide high quality services such as membership communication – software updates, web services, postage, printing, etc. Thanks to our guru **Bob Cook** for bringing this new revenue stream to fruition.

MORE GOOD NEWS: "There's gold in them thar hills!" was the cry in 1849 as gold was the "discovery" in California. I am happy to report that in 2014 there is a new and different "Discovery California" – the newest DOAI chapter.

Local chapters are the very lifeblood of our association. That's where we get to really know one another and become a family. Although we have north of 100 members in California, we have been lacking a local chapter there for almost a decade. We searched high and low for someone who would take on the task of establishing this chapter and found three!

In a cooperative effort, **Phill Seaman**, **Jim Sullivan**, and Southwest Region VP **Mike Scott** figured out a way to do it. They worked tirelessly to contact California members and organize them into a new chapter named Discovery California. Congratulations, fellas! (By the way, this is the second chapter **Mike** has been instrumental in forming over the past three or so years.)

Phill is the chapter's first president. They will rally at various spots in California and, while their emphasis is for California residents, any DOAI member will be welcomed as a visitor or member. Especially if you live in the "Golden State," contact **Phill** at phillip_seaman@hotmail.com; he wants to meet you! ❖

Caring for our DOAI family

Please keep these members who have experienced the loss of a spouse in your prayers:

Freddie Perry, whose husband, **Del**, died in May.

Liz Marien, whose husband, **Angel**, died in March.

Ed Doss, whose wife, **Jean**, died in February.

Please pray for a return to good health for these members:

Jody Bruce, recovering from a bout of pneumonia in March.

Lorrie Keneson, recovering from an April 15 heart attack.

Pete Shaffer, recovering from surgery in May.

Please email **Nina Soltwedel** (doaiexpress@discoveryowners.com) when a club member is ill or hospitalized, or a death has occurred in a member's family. ❖

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DOAI is not responsible for opinions or facts presented by contributors to this newsletter.

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If you wish to receive the printed b/w version of this newsletter instead of this electronic version, please email the editor.

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ARE YOUR DUES DUE?

**Find your membership renewal
date at**

www.discoveryowners.com/login.asp

2014 national rally details

It'll be August 4 before you know it, folks. That's the final date we can accept registrations for the exciting 2014 national rally happening in Gillette, Wyo., August 26-31. We have lots planned for your time in Wyoming, and here's just a taste of what you can expect:



Agenda

Responding to requests from those who want to know what we have planned, here's the tentative agenda. It is subject to tweaks between now and August 26, but this gives you a fairly good idea of how the week will go.

August 24 and 25 (early arrival days) --

No activities planned

August 26 (scheduled arrival day) –

First timers meeting

Welcome party w/catered food and guest speaker

August 27 (open/free day) –

Golf tournament

Durham Bison Ranch tour

Explore Gillette and surrounding areas on your own

Dinner on your own

August 28 (open/free day) –

Deadwood/Devils Tower tour

Explore Gillette and surrounding areas on your own

Dinner on your own

August 29 –

Seminars

Vendors

Catered dinner

Entertainment with a Western twist – **Jack Jensen**

August 30 –

Seminars

Vendors

Catered dinner

Entertainment with a Western twist – **Gordy Pratt**

August 31 (departure day)

Seminars/meetings/discussions/events

In addition to the first timers meeting scheduled for August 26, there will be a chapter presidents' meeting, the DOAI board meeting, and the DOAI general meeting.

Seminars and roundtable discussions plans are still under development. The following list is subject to change and additional seminars are planned:

- ✿ Escaping my RV (approximately two hours, hands-on)
- ✿ Keeping your computer and you safe on the Internet (PowerPoint presentation)
- ✿ What is a password manager and why do I need it? (PowerPoint presentation)
- ✿ Cloud computing (PowerPoint presentation)
- ✿ Full-timing ... is it for me? (discussion)
- ✿ Co-pilots' roundtable (discussion)
- ✿ Pilots' roundtable (discussion)
- ✿ Ladies' tea
- ✿ Quilting class
- ✿ Book swap/craft and white elephant sale
- ✿ Seminars by vendors (T/B/A)

Entertainment

We have some great entertainment on tap:

Friday

Jack Jensen and his musical variety show is on the "menu" for Friday evening. A solo act since 1978, **Jack** has performed for quite a few RV rallies across the country, and has been a favorite at CAM-PLEX. He has also performed at county, state and world fairs to appreciative audiences.



Saturday

Veteran entertainer **Gordy Pratt** will be our "second main course" on Saturday evening. An extraordinary guitarist, comedy writer and published songwriter, **Gordy** has performed his stand-up musical comedy show as *The Original Fabulous ONE GUY* for hundreds of corporations, associations and other organizations throughout the U.S. He has appeared on ABC's Good Morning America, and has opened for Kenny Chesney, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, The Beach Boys and many more.



Charitable Outreach

An important part of every national rally is our efforts to raise funds and provide non-perishable food for charitable organizations in the local area.

50/50 drawing

The 50/50 drawing allows participants to purchase tickets (\$1 each and six for \$5) at various times throughout the rally week. Several times during the week (usually during a group meal), a ticket or tickets will be drawn. The winner/s receive half of the collected funds, and the other half will be set aside for the year's chosen recipient. Previous recipients have been American Legion posts, as well as the Wounded Warrior Project. This year's recipient will be announced at the rally.

Quilt raffle

For a number of years, ladies of the DOAI have been creating handmade quilts that are themed to each particular rally, and this year is no exception. In true Wyoming fashion the quilt, entitled "Under Wyoming Skies," depicts a buffalo on the prairie.

DOAI quilters use a "round robin" approach to their quilting projects. In a round robin, the quilter begins with a

Continued on next page...

National rally details, continued

centerpiece, and each successive quilter adds her own unique border to the quilt. As the project is passed from quilter to quilter around the country, it grows into a beautiful one-of-a-kind quilt.

This year's quilters, coordinated by **Freddie Perry**, include **Hazel Allen, Felesa Baker, Judy Jo Bruton, Jana Davis, Tracy Sellers, Doris Smith, Anne Spearman, and Linda Zilinski**. At this time, we do not know what the finished size will be ... queen or king.

Although we will have just one quilt this year, we think you'll agree it's a stunner. The quilt will be on display during the rally and tickets will be available for \$1 each or six for \$5. Write your name on the back of the ticket and you won't have to be present to win. The winning ticket will be drawn on Saturday night and all proceeds will go to a local charity.



Food Bank collection

As in past years, the rally site will serve as a collection point for non-perishable/canned foods, to be given to a food bank serving the Gillette area. Look for the "Food Bank" sign in our rally hall and let's see if we can top last year's collection. The director of the food bank in Virginia said DOAI donated more in one week than the bank receives in three months!

Other events to pique your interest

As mentioned on page 3, there will be a number of roundtable discussions, seminars, and PowerPoint presentations. Two of the most popular annual roundtables are the pilots' and co-pilots' events. The pilots' roundtable discussion (mostly men, but women are welcome, too) focuses mainly on the operation of the D, as well as mechanical matters, etc. The co-pilots' roundtable discussion (mostly women, but men are welcome, too) focuses mainly on the interior of the D ... cleaning, cooking, storage, etc. There is likely to be something for everyone at each of these discussions.

Ladies' tea – a quilt trunk show

Plans are underway for a delightful afternoon in Wyoming, having tea and cookies and viewing an assortment of handmade quilts. Are you a quilter? If not, do you own a quilt or two? We'd very much like to have each lady bring a quilt from home for show and tell during the tea. Bring your treasure/s and get ready for a delightful time at the rally. Questions? Contact **Freddie Perry** at fperry3@gmail.com.

Book swap and white elephant/craft sale

Oh, my...what a treat we have in store! Bring your books to swap (leave one, take one) and go home with lots of new titles to enhance your reading hours. Clean out your coach (and home) and bring those unwanted goodies that someone else is bound to want, and those items you've created. Price 'em right and you can go home with \$\$\$ in your pocket!

The swap and sale will be a joint event in the main rally room at CAM-PLEX. There will be no charge for sellers; all you need do is set up your own table, make your own sales, and collect your own money.

Quilting class

Are you a quilter? Or a quilter-wannabe? We have something right up your alley: a quilting class! We will be paper-piecing a miniature quilt. Here's what you will need to bring:

- ✿ Sewing machine in good working order (don't forget extra needles, power cord, and foot pedal)
- ✿ Neutral color thread
- ✿ Craft scissors
- ✿ Good sewing scissors
- ✿ Cutting mat and rotary cutter, if you have them
- ✿ A seam ripper

Freddie Perry will lead the class, and she will have an extra mat and cutter for anyone to use. She will also have an extra sewing machine or two. A kit including fabric and pattern will be available.

Freddie needs to know how many kits to prepare, so if you have questions, or if you think you would be interested in this class, please email her at fperry3@gmail.com. **The deadline to register for the class is July 20.**



As mentioned in the beginning of this article, this has been just a taste of what we have planned for you. Between now and then, a lot more planning is on our agenda, and it's all for **you!** Send in your registration, get the coach ready, haul out the maps and program the GPS, then head to the wild west of America in August for a whoop-de-do time in Wyoming! See y'all thar, pardner! Yee-ha! ❖

Traveling to the 2014 national rally

If you have looked at a map of the U.S., you will have noticed that Gillette, the site of the 2014 national rally, is tucked away up in the northeastern part of Wyoming, and at first glance, it seems to be almost “off the grid.” Ah, not so! Interstate 90 passes through that nice town, so getting there from the east and further west will be, as they say, a piece of cake. If you live south of Wyoming, it’ll still be easy to get there. US highway 59 enters Gillette from the south.

If you do not have a GPS or a route-mapping program, an excellent way to get good directions is to use Google Maps. First, type CAM-PLEX in the Google search box. The page that comes up shows various links to the venue’s website. On the right side of the page is a starburst graphic and a small map and the words: “Cam-Plex-Multi-Event Facilities: Ticket Office.” Right below that is a tab marked “Directions.” Click on that and you will be taken to Google Maps. In the upper left hand corner will be a drop-down menu in which you can enter your home address. Then click on the car icon and wait a few seconds. The program will then give you a mapped route from your home to the campground. In some cases, alternative routes will be given, and an estimated number of hours the trip will take is included. The routing also will warn of possible toll roads, etc. If you don’t have a GPS or a route-mapping program, this will stand you in good stead.

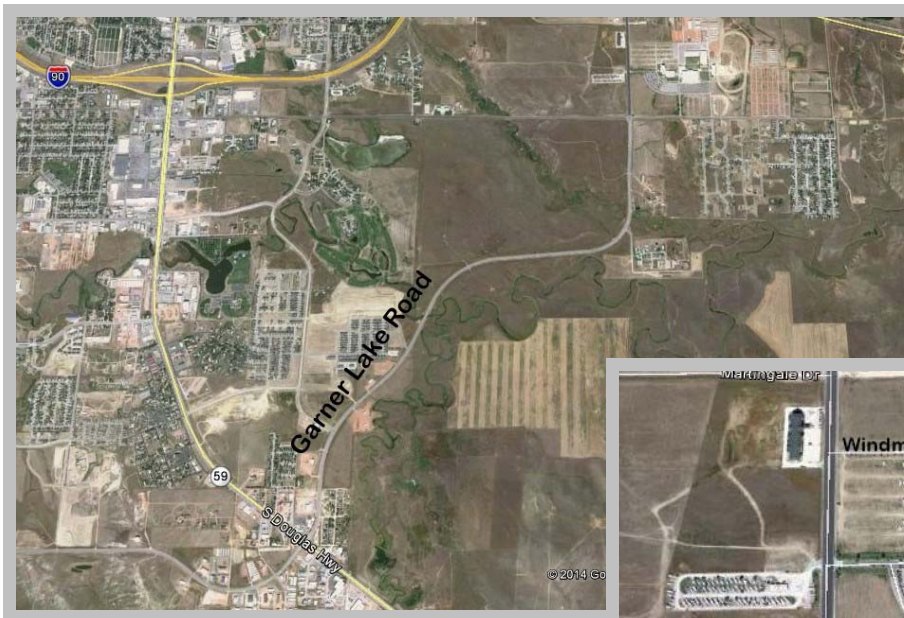
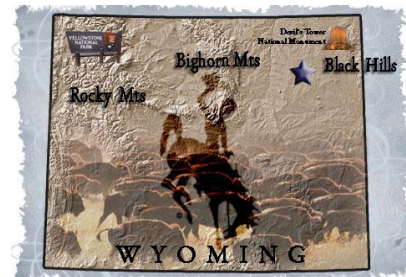
To give you an idea of the lay of the land, following are three views (two here and one on the next page) of the CAM-PLEX area, approaching via I-90. I-90 from the east, take the Garner Lake Road exit and go south to Windmill Drive. I-90 from the west, take the US 51 exit, go east to Garner Lake Road and then go south to Windmill Drive. The parking crew will meet you at the corner of Garner Lake Road and Windmill Drive. *Continued on next page...*



Traveling to the national rally, continued



This view shows the Reata Campground, both regular and handicap parking.



This view shows Garner Lake Road crossing US 59 (coming from the south). Below is a closer view showing the approach to Windmill Drive from the south on Garner Lake Road.



More “tastes” of Gillette!

If you plan to arrive early (August 24 or August 25), here are some fun things to do around Gillette, and a little history.



Campbell County Rockpile Museum

This museum serves as the local history center for residents of and visitors to Campbell County. Permanent and changing exhibitions focus on local and regional history with an emphasis on the culture and people of the county, including large collections of rifles, saddles, fossils, Native American artifacts, wagons, homesteading artifacts, coal, oil and gas artifacts, and much more. Admission is free. Open 9am to 5pm Monday through Saturday, the museum is handicap accessible. 912 W. 2nd Street, Gillette; phone 307.682.5723.

Campbell County open-pit coal mines

The open-pit coal mines work around the clock, producing more than 40 percent of the coal used to fuel America’s electric power plants. To put that figure in perspective, if Campbell County were a country, it would be the sixth largest coal-producing nation in the world! From June through August you can experience one of the coal mines and its massive equipment right up close. Just stop by the Campbell County Visitors Center, 1810 S. Douglas Hwy, Ste A, Gillette, to schedule a free guided tour (phone 307.686.0040). Or, spend as much time as you like at the coal mine overlook, or at the retired equipment display, both open year-round.



← Historic downtown Gillette

Take a stroll down Gillette Avenue and shop at one of the many independent boutiques. Enjoy dining at any of the various restaurants. One such restaurant, Lula Belle’s Café, 101 N. Gillette Avenue, is right next to the rail yard. There you can view coal trains as they pass through town ... approximately 90 each day. Each train car holds 100 tons of coal.

1911 Jail Cell →

One of the oldest buildings in Gillette is accessed via Country Elegance store, 219 S. Gillette Avenue. The cell is part of the original Wyoming territorial prison which housed famous (or infamous) outlaws such as Butch Cassidy. When you visit, find bullet holes in the metal door. For information, call 307.682.1760.



How Gillette got its name

Edward Gillette was a surveyor, working for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad in 1891. The track was originally planned to follow Donkey Creek, with the station to be at Donkey Town (at that time, an end-of-track tent city). **Gillette** located a shorter route, eliminating a number of bridges that would have been required, thus saving the railroad company a considerable amount of money. History claims that **Gillette** was hoping the savings might be translated into a pay raise. Well, he was recognized...the company appreciated the savings and named the town for him! **Gillette** was later employed as chief engineer exploring a layout for a possible railroad in Alaska’s interior (1899). He recommended the track begin in Port Valdez and go into the interior. Congress engaged in debate over the next seven years ... in fact, Congress was still debating the subject in the 1970s, except that the method of transportation changed from railroad to pipeline. Ultimately, Port Valdez became, for reasons expressed by **Gillette**, the port at which the pipeline ended. *Thus endeth today’s history lesson!*



Rally opportunities

You are welcome (and encouraged) to attend any of these rallies! Contact chapter president (see **page 10**). See also the consolidated rally schedule at www.discoveryowners.com.

August 2014 –

- 26-31 Northwest Adventurers, Gillette, Wyo.
- T/B/A Texas Discovery Road Runners, rolling rally
- 26-31 **National rally, Gillette, Wyo.**

September 2014 –

- 9-14 Midwest Discoverers, Gettysburg, Pa.
- 12-16 Florida Discovery Sunshiners, Dunedin, Fla.
- 19-22 Discovery California, Red Bluff, Calif.
- 22-26 Texas Discovery Road Runners, Austin, Tex.
- 26-28 D’Zonas, Fool Hollow Lake Rec Area, Ariz.
- 28/10-5 Blue Ridge Discoverys, Lewisburg, W.V.

October 2014 –

- 8-12 Mason-Dixon Discoverys, Whaleyville, Md.
- 16-19 Ozarks Discovery, Eureka Springs, Ark.
- 17-20 Discovery California, Escondido, Calif.
- 17-21 Florida Discovery Sunshiners, Fort Myers, Fla.
- T/B/A Desert Rats, location T/B/A
- T/B/A Texas Discovery Road Runners, location T/B/A

November 2014 –

- 7-9 D’Zonas, Apache Junction, Ariz.
- 12-15 Discovery Texans, location T/B/A
- 14-17 Discovery California, Paso Robles, Calif.

January 2015 –

- 25-30 **Southeast region rally, Seffner, Fla.**

February 2015 –

- 13-15 D’Zonas, Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

March 2015 –

- T/B/A Discovery California, Paicines, Calif.

April 2015 –

- 23/5-4 D’Zonas, Death Valley/Las Vegas/Grand Canyon

May 2015 –

- T/B/A Discovery California, Lotus, Calif.

September 2015 –

- 25-27 D’Zonas, Lake Powell, Ariz.

November 2015 –

- 6-8 D’Zonas, Lake Pleasant, Ariz.

Helpful contacts for Discovery owners

Allison Transmission, GM Corp.	800.252.5283	Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp	800.385.4357
Atwood Mobile Products	800.825.4328	General Electric	www.geappliances.com/geac/
Camping/rest areas/dumps/fuel websites:		Goodyear Tire & Rubber	800.321.2136
..... www.accesscamping.com ✓ ✕ ✨		Intellitec	800.251.2408
..... www.campingroadtrip.com ✓ ✕		Kidde Safety products	800.880.6788
..... www.gasbuddy.com ✓ ✕ ◻ ✨		Kwikkee products	800.736.9961
..... www.interstaterestareas.com		Magnadyne	800.638.3600
..... www.rvdumps.com/dumpstations		MCD Innovations	800.804.1757
..... www.rvparking.com ✓		Michelin North America	800.847.3435
..... www.rvparky.com ✓ ✕		Norcold, Inc.	800.543.1219
Caterpillar RV engine support	877.777.3126	Onan	800.888.6626
Carefree of Colorado	800.621.2617	Power Gear	800.334.4712
Carriage Carpets (Shaw Flooring)	877.706.3054	Riverpark	800.442.7717
CCI Controls	800.521.5228	RV Doctor	www.rvdoctor.com
Cummins, Inc.	800.343.7357	RVP (Coleman)	316.832.4357
Denso (call Fleetwood)	800.322.8216	RVP (Suburban)	423.775.2131
Discovery parts:		RV Tire Safety	www.rvtiresafety.com
Fleetwood RV, Inc.	800.322.8216	Spartan Chassis, Inc.	517.543.6400
Sullivan RV Sales & Service	800.720.0484, Ext. 6	Splendide	800.356.0766
Walt’s RV Surplus	909.421.1107	Thetford Corp.	800.521.3032
DOAI badges: The Sign Man	407.365.3722	Trojan Battery Co.	www.trojanbattery.com
Dometic Corp.	800.544.4881	Velvac	800.783.8871
Fan-Tastic Vent	800.521.0298	Winegard	800.288.8094
Fleetwood RV, Inc.	800.322.8216	Xantrex Technology	800.670.0707

Apps for smartphones (free or paid): ✓ Apple; ✕ Android; ◻ Windows; ✧ Mobile Web; ✨ Blackberry
For other member-recommended helpful contacts, visit www.discoveryowners.com

DOAI officers/chapters/committees/website

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Webmaster's report



Bob Cook

We keep DOAI dues low by implementing cost-saving measures such as the GoGreen newsletter program. Now, we have a new program to generate additional revenue and we need your help. DOAI has joined the Amazon Affiliate (referral) program. Instead of typing Amazon.com in your browser (or using the Amazon app

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- North Central region vice president **Bev Kaiser** has informed the board that Heartland Discoverys chapter members are not interested in hosting the 2015 national rally. As a result, that rally will be hosted by the DOAI board of directors. The general consensus was that the Tom Raper RVs proposal was too good to be true, and that one building had not even been started. The board will look into the situation and make a decision.
- The 2016 national rally is to be held in the Northeast region. The Midwest Discoverers chapter has stepped forward to host since many of its members reside in the Northeast region. Chapter president **Jerald Call** and chapter secretary **Bev Kirk** will begin site search for a time of Labor Day through mid-October 2016. The board requested an interim proposal at the meeting during the 2014 national rally.

✉ Meeting adjourned ❖

Report submitted by *MaryAnn Crowell*

National rally master's report



Joe Stewart

Extend thanks for **Mike and Judy Scott's** interest and work in establishing a new DOAI chapter in California. I know it took a huge amount of effort. Welcome, Discovery California!

August is almost here and already plans are being made for attending the 2014 national rally in Gillette. Have you begun planning for the trip? I sure hope so. Several of us here in Texas have already made arrangements for a rolling rally. In fact, we had a member from southeastern Oklahoma ask to join us in the Texas panhandle. Any others out there?

See you in Gillette! ❖



John Curtis

After leaving Camp Discovery in January, we took a cruise through the Panama Canal and didn't return home until March 1. Texas was experiencing cooler weather but, due to a four-year drought, we are still in much need of rain.

Judy and I have attended two rallies with our local Texas Discovery Road Runners group and enjoyed their friendship while visiting the Texas area, specifically the towns of Weatherford and Wichita Falls, two towns which, in the past, we just drove through. We were pleasantly surprised and enjoyed the visit.

Please watch for and use a new service provided by DOAI. It is called Amazon Affiliate program. The newsletter will include information on how to use this service, and the service will benefit DOAI.

Judy and I are making plans to attend the national rally in Gillette in August. If you haven't signed up, please do so ASAP. An application is in the newsletter.

I look forward in seeing everyone. Remember RVING is all about fun-fun-fun! ❖

Secretary's report



Freddie Perry

Minutes of the board meeting held in Seffner, Fla., January 28, 2014. Present were **John Baker, MaryAnn Crowell, Jay Keneson, Jack Romeyk, John Curtis, Marshall Godwin, Dick Tracy**. Quorum present, plus one guest, **Jody Bruce**.

✉ President **John** called meeting to order; minutes of last meeting approved; no financial report.

✉ New business:

- Name tag holder inventory at zero; President **John** will order 500 more.
- 2015 Camp Discovery set for January 25-30, following FMA rally at Lazydays, Seffner, Fla. Florida Discovery Sunshiners chapter will host, and *Camp Discovery* technical notebooks fee will hold at \$17 each.

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Region vice presidents' reports

Southeast



Bob Deal

Here in North Carolina, we are looking forward to a nice summer of exercising the D. I'm sure some of you are planning rallies or have already attended a rally this year.

Our Mason-Dixons chapter had a fun rally in Wilmington, N. C., in April. We had a number of members visiting us from the Blue Ridge Discoverys. Some visited the sights and enjoyed local restaurants. Those playing golf had great weather and enjoyed their day. Five of us went fishing. Our fishing trip was, to say the least, not productive. We hooked a few, very small fish, not much larger than the shrimp we used as bait. We were not discouraged... we just plan on using larger hooks next time. I hope you have a safe and enjoyable summer. Enjoy this beautiful country while traveling in your Discovery. ❖

Southwest Region



Mike Scott

It has been a great quarter in the southwest. The Desert Rats and D'Zonas chapters have been active with both joint and individual chapter rallies. But that's not the best news. The best news out of the southwest is the formation of a new California chapter – Discovery California.

A group from across California met at Pinto Lake Park just south of San Jose April 25-27 to form this new chapter. A huge "thank you" to **Phill Seaman** for setting this up. We had five rigs attending, and several others are very interested; we intend to see them join soon.

Attendees included **Phill**, along with **Jim and Susan Sullivan**, **Al and Donna Anderson**, **Terry and Shari Shick**, and **Mike and Judy Scott**. Officers of the new chapter are: President - **Phill Seaman**; Vice President - **Jim Sullivan**; Secretary/Treasurer - **Shari Shick**; Rally Masters - **Al Anderson** and **Terry Shick**. Please join me in welcoming this new chapter to the DOAI. Next on my list is New Mexico. Happy trails! ❖

Chapter presidents' reports

Blue Ridge Discoverys



Glenn Camp

Well, spring has sprung and I love it. What a way to celebrate spring by going to Stone Mountain, Ga., for a great rally. **Gail** and I had not been to Stone Mountain State Park before, and it was a pleasant surprise to see this beautiful site. The rally was hosted by **Bob and Barbara Zumwalt**, **Bruce and Margaret Ellen**, **Charlie and Elaine Harvell** and **Pat and Sue Stanton**. It was the usual activities such as cookouts, golf, going out to dinners, touring the park and other items of interest in the Atlanta area. To me, one of the best parts of a rally is seeing old friends again and enjoying the camaraderie that comes with a rally.

Our next rally will be in Lewisburg, W. V., at the state fairgrounds. We are planning our first full-week rally beginning September 28 and ending October 5. This will be a cook's vacation rally, so cooks won't need to bring their aprons – just a hearty appetite. Other than gathering to break bread together, some of the planned events will be a tour of the now-inactive famous government bunker located beneath the Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs, W. V. Also, we'll tour an exhibition coal mine, visit the Tamarack, as well as the tallest single arch bridge in America. Folks come from all over the world on Bridge Day to jump from this bridge into the National Historic Gorge. We'll tour a local distillery, plus a few other activities. **Gail** and I will be the rally hosts. Come join us.

We are pleased to continue to add members to our chapter – four new members in the last three months! **Jim and Marilyn Brown** from Parsonsburg, Md.; **Gene and Pat Howell** from Fayetteville, N. C.; **Tommy and Emily Bailey** from Flowery Branch, Ga.; and **Terry Merrion and Bonnie**

Worley from Sebastian, Fla. A big welcome to all of you! ❖

Desert Rats



Gary Velasquez

The Desert Rats and D'Zonas chapters conducted a co-rally on April 11-14 at Buckskin Mountain State Park on the Colorado River just outside of Parker, Ariz. The Desert Rats were represented by **Gary and Patty Velasquez** and **John and Shirley Bujnovsky**. Representing the D'Zonas were **Mike and Judy Scott** and new chapter members **Jim and Janet Lamphere**. A burrito dinner was provided by the D'Zonas on Friday night and a dinner of pork tenderloins was provided the Desert Rats on Saturday night. Everyone enjoyed an excursion to Nally's Desert Bar on Saturday; the Velasquez's and the Bujnovsky's enjoyed a round of golf at Emerald Canyon Golf Course on Sunday morning. A good time was had by all, with the pledge by **Gary and Mike** to stage more co-rallies in the future.

The Desert Rats do not typically stage rallies through the summer months, as the heat in the desert southwest is prohibitive. Our next rally is tentatively planned for late October at a destination to be determined. ❖

Discovery Texans



Jim Pellow

The Discovery Texans held a rally in May at Colorado Landing, La Grange, Tex. We will report on this rally in the next newsletter.

We had yet another successful rally in March at Miller Creek RV resort, south of Johnson City, Tex. Our first night coincided with the park's Wednesday night dinner. They
Continued on next page...

Chapter presidents' reports, continued

furnished a taco bar, Spanish rice, chips dipped in queso, bean bowl, and chocolate pie ... only \$4 per person ... a very reasonable price.

The bluebonnets began to make their appearance. Many of our members made car trips through the surrounding areas, and to Fredericksburg in particular, for sightseeing and shopping. We enjoyed our hosts' (**Jim and Kathy Pellow** and **Bill and Elaine Holley**) breakfasts and dinners Friday and Saturday, spent time visiting, played some Jokers and Marbles and card bingo (**Kathy and Jim** cleaned up!), and the men beat the ladies at beanbag baseball. We also attended to chapter business: had our board and general membership meetings. **Denis and Joan Matties** joined our chapter since our last rally; we look forward to their attending one of our rallies. It was great to see **Lonnie and Nell Johnson** again, and we got to welcome our new members **Mike and Sandy Keliher**.

Sunday included breakfast at the park for only \$4 each, if desired: Texas waffles, bacon, sausage and scrambled eggs, biscuits and gravy, coffee and orange juice ... can't beat that! **Bill and Elaine, Jim and Kathy, and Pete and Martha Palasota** participated.

Hope to see y'all in the near future. ❖

Report submitted by Elaine Holley



Mike Scott

D'Zonas

Whew – who turned up the thermostat here in Arizona? Looks like a pretty warm summer is in store for us. Can't wait to head north to Gillette to cool down.

The D'Zonas had one official rally this last quarter and one unofficial event. Several of us attended the FMA rally in Yuma and we all had a great time. Most of the snowbirds had left town and the rally was pretty small, but that just let us get to visit with more folks. FMA intends to be back in Yuma next year, as well.

A week later, the D'Zonas and Desert Rats met at Buckskin Mountain State Park near Parker, Ariz., on the Colorado River. We all had a great time visiting, eating, and checking out the area. One of the highlights was traveling back in the hills to Nally's Desert Bar. This was a five mile trip down a ripple-y dirt road to a saloon that is totally solar- and propane-powered and only open a couple of days a week, and only in the afternoon. Great burgers and fries. If you are ever in the area, this is a neat stop, but you will need a car wash when you get back.

We extend a welcome to our newest members, **Jim and Janet Lamphere** and **Greg and Barbara Watkins**.

Next up for us is Showlow, Ariz. in September, and Apache Junction in November. Hope to see many of you there. Happy trails! ❖

Florida Discovery Sunshiners

Chapter members, under the leadership of **Ron Wacker**, caravanned to the FMCA rally in Perry, Ga., in March. Despite the rain and the cold, everyone attended seminars, enjoyed happy hours even when we had to move them inside with 17 people, had a steak and lobster cookout, and so much

more.

At our April rally in Orange City, Fla., the boys used some of their knowledge from Camp Discovery and FMCA to figure out how to make the D even better.

The Sunshiners didn't work all the time, as they went for breakfast at the Old Spanish Sugar Mill Restaurant at De Leon Springs State Park. What a way to start the day! We sat at tables with a griddle in the middle and got to prepare our own breakfasts. Whether we had eggs or pancakes, we cooked our own. We all stayed busy cooking, eating, and visiting the gift shop. Watching skydivers, taking a boat tour, touring the Daytona Speedway, getting free samples at the Chocolate Factory, and eating at wonderful locally-owned restaurants were also part of this jam-packed rally.

In May, the Sunshiners headed for the NASCAR races in Charlotte, N. C. From there, we traveled to Asheville to see the Biltmore Mansion and toured horse farms in Lexington, Ky. The caravan continued to the Fleetwood factory in Decatur, Ind., and then on to Branson, Mo.

The Florida group invites all to join them as they travel and use their D's to see Florida and the country. ❖

Report submitted by Jean Hoffman



Ron Wacker

Louisiana Mudbugs



Fred Reid

This winter and spring have been a busy time for the Louisiana Mudbugs. It started with a rally near Lake Charles at a facility that we had not used before. Unfortunately, it had rained the day before the arrival of the members and good spots to hook up were hard to find. By the time everyone arrived, it was difficult to get a good spot. Attending were **Fred Reid, Jerry and Glinda Hussey, Don and Frankie Caldwell, Joe and Glenda Reed, Keith and Carolyn Barnes, Don and Emily Burgess**, new members **Joe and Sandra Mire**, and special guests (former D owners) **Alfred and Betty Miller**. The room where we gathered was good and comfortable.

I was concerned for **Joe's** arriving after dark, since I knew very little about his ability to drive a new rig, especially at night in a strange location. As it turned out, he had driven 18-wheelers for a living and this was like a small bus for him. That is what I like about our club; each and every one of us has a different background and experience that, in the end, allows each of us to help each other with problems occurring with our coaches.

Thursday evening's dinner was at a small seafood restaurant in Kinder, La., which was just a few miles from the campgrounds. Friday's meal was in Lake Charles at Steamboat Bill's. As you can see, the Mudbugs spend most of their free time looking for different places to eat and, as usual, that is seafood. Most of Saturday was spent preparing for some true Louisiana cooking. **Betty and Alfred** made chicken and sausage gumbo. This was the entree and the pot luck side dishes were excellent.

Continued on next page...

Chapter presidents' reports, continued

As **Alfred** prepared the gumbo for the dinner, the ladies were cooking up a scheme of their own: hold an informal rally in April with a crawfish boil being the main theme of the rally. This was to be for all present and past members. This was a new venture for our club.

Attending the informal rally were **Joe and Glenda Reed, Don and Frankie Caldwell, Keith and Carolyn Barnes, Don and Emily Burgess, Joe and Sandra Mire, Fred Reid, Jerry and Glinda Hussey,** and guests **Lee and LaNell Breithaup,** and **Jan McIlvain**. The weather for the event could not have been better.

Initially, **Alfred Miller** volunteered to do the crawfish boil. He had to bow out later because of it being an election weekend and he was a poll commissioner. We had to scurry around and find someone else to do the cooking, since very few of us knew the art of cooking crawfish. As it turned out, **Don Burgess** was the man. Not only did he know how to prepare the crawfish for cooking, but he had all the supplies that go along with the chore. It started out with a trip to Hessmer, La., to get the mudbugs fresh, as they were trapped that morning by a friend of one of the club members. Next was a trip to Walmart, where all of the supplies were at the front of the store. **Don** bought ten boxes of salt and I thought he was losing his mind. As it turned out, that was to "purge" the crawfish. This took a lot of muscles, as each sack of crawfish weighed 35 pounds and we had three sacks. After this, the crawfish were dumped into a pot of water that was highly seasoned and mixed with potatoes and corn.

As the weather was predicted to get bad for Saturday night and Sunday morning, some of the members started leaving Saturday night after the boil. A good time was had by all, and we hope this will be just the first annual crawfish boil for the Mudbugs, with more to follow. ❖



Bruce Plumb

Ozarks Discovery

Our chapter rallied in Rogers, Ark., April 24-27. Attending were **Ricky and Debbie Keen, Dave and Beth Tillery,** and **Wes and Altha Toomay,** with **Bruce and Nancy Plumb** zooming in on Saturday via motorcycle (their D is in pieces in their garage – generator and several other problems). Thursday evening we went to the Family Chicken Restaurant in Monte Ne, where we had a good old chicken dinner like grandma used to make on Sundays after church. We spent Friday at Crystal Bridges Museum (we all got our culture fix), and on Saturday we went to the famous Pea Ridge National Park where a Civil War battle was fought. Thanks to **Dave's** fishing abilities, we had a delicious crappie fish fry Friday night. Then the **Keens** smoked chickens for Saturday evening. As usual, we didn't go hungry.

We'll report on our end-of-May rally in Mountain View, Ark., in the next newsletter. ❖

Report submitted by *Debbie Keen*

Continued on next page...

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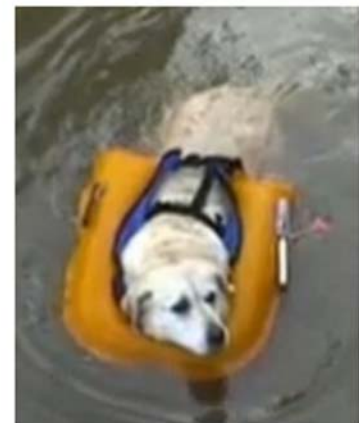
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DOAI photo album



Ozarks Discovery group rallied in Arkansas in April. Shown here, L to R: **Ricky and Debbie Keen, David and Beth Tillery, Wes and Altha Toomay, and Bruce and Nancy Plumb.**



Florida Discovery Sunshiners toured a lake house. Shown returning are **Ira and Lee Minor, Betty Guthardt, Lennie and Wendy Williams, Rich and Joan Dumont.**



The D'zonas and Desert Rats had a great view of Parker Dam (above), as well as the mighty Colorado River (below) as it wends its way to Mexico.



The Mudbugs' crawfish boil, overseen by **Don Burgess**, starred one of many delicious crawfish to the delight of diners!



Blue Ridge members had a good time at Stone Mountain, Ga.



Midwest Discoverers at SE region rally, mistakenly identified as first timers in April issue. We apologize for the error.

Chapter presidents' reports, continued

Discovery California



Phill Seaman

At Discovery California, one of our goals is to provide a complete coverage for all our members and potential members in all regions of California. Our rally masters and guest hosts are congratulated for putting together such a wide and far-reaching calendar on such short notice.

All DOAI members are welcome to attend any Discovery California event. Event fees are \$5 per rig, or \$2.50 per person, payable to chapter treasurer **Shari Shick**. See page 9 for our planned events, or check out the consolidated rally schedule online at www.discoveryowners.com.



Review of Allied Recreation Group's Factory Service Center



Susan and Jim Sullivan

Have you ever had to deal with a reluctant RV dealer or RV shop that can never seem to take care of warranty work or normal service jobs in a timely fashion? Does your Discovery spend more time at the dealer waiting for repair work than on the road? We recently discovered a place that could alleviate these concerns on the west coast: Allied Recreation Group Factory Service Center in Coburg, Ore. Just north of Eugene, home of the Oregon Ducks, Coburg was once the headquarters for Monaco; before the RV downturn, over 2,700 Monaco employees



worked in Coburg. Allied Recreation Group is the parent company of our Fleetwood Discovery. We went by with the purpose of evaluating how the Coburg facility compared to the Fleetwood service facility in Decatur, Ind.

We spent a week in Decatur last fall, having warranty work done on our 2013 40X that we couldn't satisfactorily receive from our dealer at home. We were extremely pleased with the level of service we received from everyone we encountered. We would recommend the Decatur Fleetwood facility to anyone. Our trip to Indiana and back was a 5,000-mile investment made to alleviate my frustrations with the lack of response from our dealer. So, when we found out that Allied Recreation Group was opening a west coast facility, we wanted the opportunity to see what they had.



Our visit began with service scheduler **Janet Barry**. She explained that the Monaco facility was bought by the parent company of Fleetwood in May 2013. The service center is equipped to handle all warranty work, regular maintenance items, or complete rebuilds, repair or upgrade needs. They are pretty new in the conversion to service Fleetwood products, but they have all been trained to work on our rigs. The 35,000-square-foot facility dedicates 25,000 square feet to service. We toured nine bays, two paint rooms, parts supply area, sewing room for awning repair, and the waiting room. During the tour, **Janet** mentioned that March through October is usually their busiest time. There is normally a six- to eight-week lead time for service. Unlike Decatur, customers cannot be in their

coaches during service. They do have a nice, large waiting room with coffee and water. There is a variety of reading material and a television. One can also have well-behaved pets in the waiting room.

We continued our tour with service manager **Jimmy Mackin**. He has a crew of twelve technicians and three painters who also do body work. All of the staff that we spoke to had previously worked with Monaco. The technicians and painters in Coburg have over 200 years of combined experience in motor home repair. **Jimmy** commented, "Ultimately we would like to expand the facility to its original state." Just as in Decatur, the service personnel appear to be dedicated to doing quality work for their customers.

Parts stock is not as extensive as in Decatur due to limited storage area and that the manufacturing headquarters is located in Indiana at the Fleetwood facility. Because of the limited stock, service can be delayed if parts are required to be shipped from Indiana. Shop foreman **Erlin Mitchell** said they often save time by purchasing from local distributors. "As we get more converted, the faster we will get parts." No matter where one goes to have work done on their motor home, waiting for parts is always an issue and the staff in Coburg is dedicated to finding local stock, if available, to facilitate repairs.

Allied Recreation Group Factory Service Center is located at 91186 N. Coburg Industrial Way, Coburg, Ore. The center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 4:00pm and closed during lunch from 12-1pm. While waiting for one's coach to be serviced, free camping is available in one of sixteen campsites, complete with water, 50 amp electric hook-ups, and an onsite sewer dump station. If the coach is just dropped off, Coburg has secure storage onsite. Owner relations manager **John Hurd** said, "The facility can do anything from regular maintenance items to complete rebuilds."

Although we did not have any repairs or service to our rig this time, we are looking forward to stopping by to take advantage of the Coburg service operation on our journeys up Interstate 5 when we visit the grandkids. ❖

HAVE YOU HAD YOUR DISCOVERY SERVICED?

Post your review of that service as an assist to others. Go to www.rvservicereviews.com and share the facts. If you are contemplating service, check out that site and read what others have to say about your potential provider.

One Man's Life



Pete Shaffer

Oh, Poo Two!

Some of you old timers may remember my story about dropping my reading glasses into the BigD black tank [Winter 2003-2004, page 13]. They say lightning doesn't strike twice, but I'm not sure that applies to me.

We just purchased a new-to-us 2006 Discovery 35H this past winter and named her BigD2. Sharon and I purchased it from an exceptionally nice elderly couple who said, sadly, "We have gotten to the age where being close to our doctors is more important than traveling in the motor home." I hope I never reach that age. Anyway, we struck a deal for the coach, fully loaded with everything needed to hit the road, including things like trash bags and every sort of bug/ant/wasp spray you could think of. The compartments were full. You name it and it had it.

After the paperwork was signed, and money exchanged hands, we said our goodbyes and Sharon drove our future toad, a Honda CRV, and I drove the coach the five hours to get home. The next day, we started to go over BigD2 with a "fine tooth comb." We found a few things we didn't want, like a used toothbrush, and added a few things the boss just "had to have."

All in all, the coach was in excellent shape. There was this slight leak in the sewage bay, so I decided to flush the tanks, and then remove the gray and black water tank valves to be inspected and replaced if needed.

All went as planned – sort of. I ran water through the sink and shower drains and a hose through the flapper valve in the toilet and watched the discharge from both the gray and black tanks until clear water ran out. With the tanks clean, I removed the two knife valves and inspected the blade and the gaskets, where I found the cause of the slight water leak. There was this small round tiny silver thing wedged in the rubber gasket. I had no idea what the silver thing could be, so I did what any first-rate mechanic does when he has parts left over: I placed it into my tool box. Then, as I looked up from my toolbox, I saw a second water hose inlet coupling right next to the fresh water hose inlet coupling. Thoughts and questions ran through my head and I wondered, "What on earth could this be? Two water inlets?"

Our last Discovery was a 1997 and I've noticed the coaches are getting better. So this second garden hose inlet coupling was exciting to me, an improvement I could investigate. Something I could play with. Being an inquisitive retired engineer, I hooked up a garden hose to it and "let 'er rip," as they say, to see where the water went. OK, while the water is rushing into the newly-found water inlet, let's review a few facts:

- First: I found a new-to-me second water inlet coupling
- Second: I have clean tanks. I know they're clean since I ran a bunch of water directly in and out of them and it was clean.



- Third: Both of the waste tank valves are laying on the ground, ready to be reinstalled.
- Fourth: I am sitting on the ground right in front of the two valve-less gray and black tank pipes.

Now I have some good news, bad news, good news, bad news, good news to tell you about.

Good news: I found out what that second water inlet coupling does! I'm so excited! It is a black tank flush system. I never expected that option. Water rushes in and sprays the inside of the black tank, really-really-really cleaning all of the "stuff" out! Way cool!

Bad news: The black tank wasn't as clean as I thought it was. Stuff came out. I mean stuff **really** came out. When it hit the compartment floor, it splattered all over the compartment and my lap, which, if you remember, was conveniently placed right in front of the open pipes. After the initial shock wore off, I looked at my lap and I could tell what the previous owners had for supper the last time they used the coach!

Good news: I found something in that smelly stuff. Right on my lap was a small plastic thing that, after rinsing it off, I discovered was a hearing aid. Yep, the tiny silver thing I found lodged in the knife valve gasket was a hearing aid battery. Now I had the complete set, hearing aid and battery.



Bad news: When I checked the battery, it was dead, dead, dead. I guess sitting in all of that soup, it became totally discharged.

Good news: Searching the Internet, I found out hearing aids are basically waterproof. I mean, that makes sense, since you stick it in your ear, right? Yep, that thing could still work. The problem is, I doubt I could find anyone willing to put the odoriferous hearing aid in their ear to try it out.

I scooped up the tiny battery and the well-saturated hearing aid in my hands and rushed into the house yelling, "Eureka! Look what I found!" The boss was not as enthusiastic as I had hoped. In fact, when she learned what I had and where it came from, all she kept repeating was, "OUT! OUT! OUT!" and pointing toward the door. Next large problem was my clothing. She wanted me to strip outside and hose myself down before I came into the house! Gee, you would think changing all of those poopy diapers a long time ago would still count for something, wouldn't you?

Now I need to figure out what to do with my saturated hearing aid. Maybe sell it on eBay? I could bundle the hearing aid with my reading glasses and sell all for "one money," as they say. What do you think? ❖

Polk's top 5 motor home driving tips to avoid RV insurance claims



Mark Polk

Prime camping season is here and that translates into hitting the road and logging some miles in our motor homes this summer. Driving a motor home is not that difficult, but if you're used to driving an average-size automobile, there are a few driving tips and techniques to keep in mind.

My RV insurance company has informed me of the causes of the most common insurance claims for RVs. The claims relate to: hitting concrete islands at gas pumps, hitting obstacles when making right turns, hitting overhead obstructions, backing the RV into something, and sideswipe damage to the RV.

If you think about it, all of these incidents are caused by the length, width or height of the RV, because it is longer, wider and taller than what you are accustomed to.

Here are my top five (yes, I'm straying from my typical top seven) RV driving tips and hints on how to avoid becoming an RV insurance statistic.

1. Accidents at the fuel pump

When it's time to refuel, look for an exit where there are several gas stations available. This gives you a better selection for finding one that is easy to navigate in and out of.

The two most common incidents at the pump are when you turn into or away from a concrete island or pole at the gas station. If you are turning away from the pole, tail swing is the culprit. If you are turning toward the pole, your pivot point is the culprit. Tail swing is when you turn the RV in one direction, and the rear of the RV swings out in the opposite direction. Depending on the motor home, tail swing can be more than 30 inches.

The pivot point of the RV is the center of the rear axle. If you turn in the direction of an object before the pivot point reaches the object, you will hit it. If you turn in the direction of an object after the pivot point reaches the object, you will clear it.

2. Right turns

Making right turns made the list of top RV insurance claims for the same reason as gas stations. When you make a right turn in your motor home, you need to drive out farther than you are accustomed to before you start into the turn. If you start to make a right turn too early, before your pivot point clears an object, it can result in hitting an object or driving over a curb.

When you make a right turn, tail swing applies, too. If you are too close to an object on the opposite side of

the direction you are turning in, your tail swing can hit the object.

3. Height of motor homes

When you drive an automobile, height is not a concern. An average-size vehicle can drive through or under any bridge, tunnel, overpass or fast-food drive-thru that you encounter.

When driving a motor home, always be aware of heights. It's not uncommon for RVs to exceed 12 or more feet in height. When traveling on back roads, an overpass that you can easily clear in an automobile can result in serious damage to your motor home.

I recommend writing the height of the motor home and posting it where it is easy to see as a constant reminder.



4. Backing the motor home

Backing an automobile is easy because it's small and you can look over your shoulder and see where you're going. This is not true with a motor home. It's larger, you cannot just look over your shoulder, and it requires practice to become proficient.

For starters, you should always try to avoid backing from your right side. This is your blind side. It is much easier to back from your left. The best method for backing is to have a spotter guide you. You need to be able to communicate using hand signals or radios.

The spotter needs to be positioned where they can be seen in your mirror. This means the spotter may need to move as you turn and back. You should always be able to see each other's faces during the backing maneuver. If something doesn't look right, stop, get out and look.

If you need to back the motor home without assistance, walk the area first. Establish pre-determined stop points, and then stop, get out and check when you reach each pre-determined point. Repeat this process as many times as necessary.

Before you start backing, tap your horn to warn people around you. Always be on the lookout for small children and pets.

5. Roof and sideswipe damage

This is a big one. It goes back to driving a smaller automobile, again. In a car, you don't need to be concerned with tree branches and other overhead obstacles, or with sideswiping a roof overhang or with hitting a mirror on a bridge.

Always keep in mind that a motor home is wider and taller than an automobile. When you add mirrors and

Continued on next page...

Five motor home driving tips, cont.

awnings to the equation, it's even wider. And with items like roof-mounted air conditioners and antennas, it's taller, too.

When you arrive at the campground, get out and look before attempting to park the unit on the site. Tree branches and other overhead obstacles easily can damage the roof and sides of the RV.

The folks at the insurance company didn't talk about claim numbers 6 and 7, but I bet they can be grouped into categories like RV awning and step damage, and tire blowout-related damage. These types of claims can be avoided by performing simple preventive maintenance and pre-trip checks on your motor home prior to heading out on your next RV adventure.

This was a crash course on RV driving, but it should help when it comes to avoiding the top RV insurance claims.

Travel safe this summer, and have fun. ❖

© 2012 Reprinted with permission. *RV expert Mark Polk owns RV Education 101, a North Carolina-based company that produces and sells educational videos, DVDs and ebooks on how to use RVs. Mark has more than 30 years of experience in RV maintenance. He retired from the U.S. Army in 1996 as a chief warrant officer three, specializing in wheeled and track vehicle fleet maintenance operations. He and his wife, Dawn, started RV Education 101 in 1999. They travel with their two sons in a 35-foot class A motor home.*



Overheard on our two-way radios as we watched a big diesel pusher backing into a campsite:

Her: "...left."

Him: "Remember to push the talk button first, and then talk, dear."

Her: "...am! Left, left, left."

Him: "Remember to push the talk button and count to one second before you say anything, dear."

Her: "...am! You better turn....or you will hit...."

Him: "Push the button first and hold it as you talk. Which left do you want me to turn? My left or your left?"

Her: "...t be a smart as....no, no, not that left....mean right, right, watch ou....!"

Him: "OK, I've stopped. Now tell me which way to turn."

Her: "That way, turn that way!"

Him: "I can't see you. Where are you?"

Her: "...am next to the door. I thought you could hear me better if I was closer to you."

Pete and Sharon in BigD2, 2014

RV tire safety



Roger Marble

How to avoid a tire blowout and calculate your needed cold tire inflation

If you want to avoid blowouts, you need to ensure you **always** have enough air in your tires. If you start your day low on inflation, your tire will run hotter than desired and this will accelerate the rubber degradation. With enough degradation, your tire will lose strength and this might lead to a failure.

You need to do two things to help avoid this problem. First, you need to have at least the minimum inflation needed at the start of **every** trip. Second, you should monitor your inflation so you receive a warning if you have a puncture, cut or valve leak. This means having a tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS).

Let's address the minimum cold inflation level needed.

Some people get different opinions on what inflation to use based on the idea that what others inflate their tires to is what they should use. Sometimes they depend on what the

salesman at the RV store says and sometimes they depend on their brother-in-law. Well, my job as a tire engineer is to give you the facts on tire loading and how to confirm you have at least the minimum needed tire inflation for your motor home.



It is very desirable to know the actual loads on each corner of your RV, as your loading is never exactly balanced side to side. Now I know that it is not easy to get your actual corner loads. While some have used RVSEF and others have found truck scales where they can do the multiple weights

needed to complete the worksheet at www.bridgestonetrucktires.com/us_eng/rv/index.asp, a good portion can only get their total axle loads at a CAT scale.

The goal of this article is to walk you through the process of what to do if you can only get axle loads. You can use this until you learn your real corner loads. **[Editor's note: see Roger's article on corner loads in the April 2014 Discovery Express, page 15.]**

Continued on next page...

RV tire safety, continued

Let's look at a sample problem: Suppose your coach has a tag axle. You have received a variety of suggestions for tire inflation around the campfire, but you want to know the facts. Well, here's what to do:

1. You should have a tire placard or spec sheet posted on the wall of your RV. It shows the suggested inflation based on what the manufacturer thinks you will be carrying. Use this 'til you get on a scale.
2. With your RV fully loaded with the fuel, food, clothes, people, toys (and even your bowling ball collection, if you normally carry that around), get on a truck scale to learn what your axle weights actually are.
3. Assume you have some imbalance, so calculate that one side of each axle is loaded to 55 percent of the total.

Example for reading Michelin's *Load & Inflation Tables* brochure (www.michelinrvtires.com/michelinrv/tires-retreads/load-inflation-tables.jsp): The "dual" loads shown are for the two tires. You can confirm this by reading the sidewall of your tires. Other companies give individual tire capacities when in single (front or tag) or dual (drive) application.

Let's assume your front axle gave you 8,910 lbs., so 55 percent of that is 4,900.5 and rounding up, we would want the minimum inflation needed to carry 4,901 lbs. According to MI chart, that would be 4,975, which gives 100psi as your minimum cold tire inflation. Add your 5psi margin and you know you need to set the fronts to at least 105psi when "cold."

Moving to your rear duals, with a scale reading of 15,010 lbs., we would find 55 percent of that is 8,255.5 or 8,256 lbs. for the **two** tires on the heavier side of the RV. Looking at the MI chart, we find 8,410 as the load number which indicates 90psi; add the 5psi margin and we have 95psi.

Tag axle

Assume you have the axle loading set so the scale reads 7,560 lbs.. Fifty-five percent of that is 4,158, and looking at the chart we see 80psi. Adding the 5psi margin, you now know you need 85psi cold in the tag tires.

Remember, all tires on each axle should have the same cold inflation. Cold inflation means not having been driven on more than **two miles** in the previous **two hours** and not being in any sunlight in the last **two hours**.

Hope this helps. ❖

© Roger Marble, 2013. Reprinted with permission. *Before retiring, Roger Marble spent 40 years in the tire industry, working for a major manufacturer developing tires for applications in North, Central, and South America. During his career, he worked on many kinds of tires – heavy truck, passenger, light truck and Indy-car types. Roger's blog, "RV Tire Safety with Roger Marble," is a top-notch informative posting found at www.rvtiresafety.com. You can sign up to receive his blog postings right in your email inbox at no charge. The website carries all his previous blog postings which make very interesting reading to anyone concerned with the tires on their RV, car, truck, or trailer.*

Environmentally friendly RVing

Seven ways to reduce RV fuel consumption



Mark Polk

Can you drive a 35-foot motor home and still be conscious about the environment around you? YES!

To the non-RVing onlooker, though, traveling by RV equates to a gas-guzzling behemoth that is destroying the environment. The stereotype is, RVs and the people who use them are reckless, self-serving individuals with no regard for the carbon footprint they leave behind.

The biggest culprits related to energy consumption and environmental concerns are, of course, the fossil fuels burned getting from point A to point B in our RVs. But when compared to air travel, RVs — even at 7 to 10 miles per gallon — are the better choice environmentally.

In an edition of the weekly periodical, *The Nation*, an article stated the levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released by jets during air travel are around 270 percent greater than those of average emissions caused by driving the same distance. **George Monbiot**, the author, went on to say that this makes air travel "one of the most destructive things we can do."

At the last several RV and auto shows I have attended, it was evident that innovative RV and automobile manufacturers

are designing green RVs, smaller and lighter RVs, and engines that run on alternative fuels. In addition, there are ways the energy-conscious RVer can improve the amount of energy consumed while driving down the highway.

Seven ways to improve RV fuel economy

For starters, we can slow down. Speeding and rapid acceleration reduces fuel economy from 5 to 33 percent, depending on your individual driving habits. Here are seven other simple ways to lower your fuel consumption:

- 1 Check and adjust the tire pressure to the proper pressure. This can increase fuel economy by 3 percent. It can also prevent premature tire wear and failures or blowouts caused by over-inflated or under-inflated tires. Tires can look normal when they are seriously under-inflated.
- 2 Use a clean air filter. It's simple, but can improve your fuel economy by up to 10 percent.
- 3 Use overdrive whenever you can. It will save fuel by decreasing the engine speed.

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Environmentally friendly RVing, continued

- ④ Use the cruise control whenever possible. This saves fuel because it keeps the vehicle at a constant speed rather than variable speeds. Note: This applies when you are driving on a relatively flat surface.
- ⑤ Keep the RV tuned up and in top running condition. A poorly tuned engine can lower fuel economy by 10 to 20 percent.
- ⑥ Poor emissions and/or a faulty oxygen sensor can cause a 40-percent reduction in fuel economy. Can you believe that -- a 40-percent reduction!
- ⑦ Added weight, which you don't need, reduces fuel economy significantly. We're all guilty of this one.

Water consumption: house vs. RV

After arriving at your destination, the amount of energy consumed by a motor home is far less than that of your home. By design, the RV is an environmentally friendly house. You have water-saving devices such as a 6- or 10-gallon water heater as compared to a 40- or 100-gallon water heater tank in your home. There is a water-saving toilet, and you aren't watering the lawn or using the dishwasher when you're RVing.

According to the American Water Works Association, the average U.S. residence uses about 110 gallons of water a day. I would venture to say that when we use our RV, as a family, we probably use less than 40 gallons of water a day.

In addition to the built-in water-saving features of an RV, there are many other ways we can lower the amount of water we use. Here are a few ideas touted by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service:

- When brushing your teeth, don't let the water keep running. Instead, half fill a glass and use that water to wet your brush and rinse your mouth.
- When washing your hands or shaving, do not let the water run. Fill the basin and dip your hands or razor, as needed.
- Turn off the shower while shampooing your hair.
- Teach children water-saving techniques.
- Take short showers, not baths. Limit showers to five minutes or less.
- Install flow restrictors on individual water fixtures like shower heads and faucets. They automatically reduce flow and aerate the water.

Electricity use: home vs. motor home

On the electric side of energy consumption, your RV uses less than your home, too, even when the RV is plugged in to a campground electrical service. It's more efficient to heat and cool the RV, simply because of the amount of space we are heating and/or cooling, as compared to our homes. Another reason is your RV has many devices that operate on 12-volt DC power, that at home would require 120-volt AC power to

operate.

If your house uses LP-gas as an energy source for heat, cooking, and heating water, your home on wheels will use much less propane to do the same thing.

Renewable energy source: solar power

If you are really interested in reducing the carbon footprint left behind in your RV, and going green, you can start by looking at renewable energy sources. America depends on fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas and coal for everything we do. Fossil fuels are not renewable energy sources and cause pollution whenever they are burned.

Renewable energy, unlike fossil fuels, can never be used up and does not cause pollution.

For RVers the most logical renewable energy source comes by the way of the sun. Solar energy is produced by the sun's rays. By using solar panels, batteries and inverters, we have a way to harness this renewable energy for use in our RV. Solar energy is clean energy that never can be used up, doesn't pollute and is almost always available at no charge.

Basically, a typical solar-power system for an RV would consist of solar panels, batteries, some type of charge controller and an inverter. The solar panels capture the sun's energy and produce direct current, or DC power. This captured power is stored in the RV's auxiliary batteries. A charge controller makes sure the RV batteries are fully charged, but not overcharged. The power inverter converts the DC power stored in the batteries to alternating current, or AC power, to be used by the RV's appliances.

Many of the inverters found in RVs today are inverterchargers. This means they are inverters, battery chargers and a transfer switch all in one.

Yes, it is possible

As I stated earlier, it is possible to drive a 35-foot motor home and still be conscious about the environment. We as a country, and even more so as RVers, can and should protect the environment and leave it in as good of, if not better, condition than we found it. We can all do our part, in some way, to be good stewards of the land we enjoy so much.

One of my wishes is for my children's children, and their future generations, to visit some of the same spectacular places we have visited in our RV; and when they do, to see it the same way it was when we first saw it. ❖

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