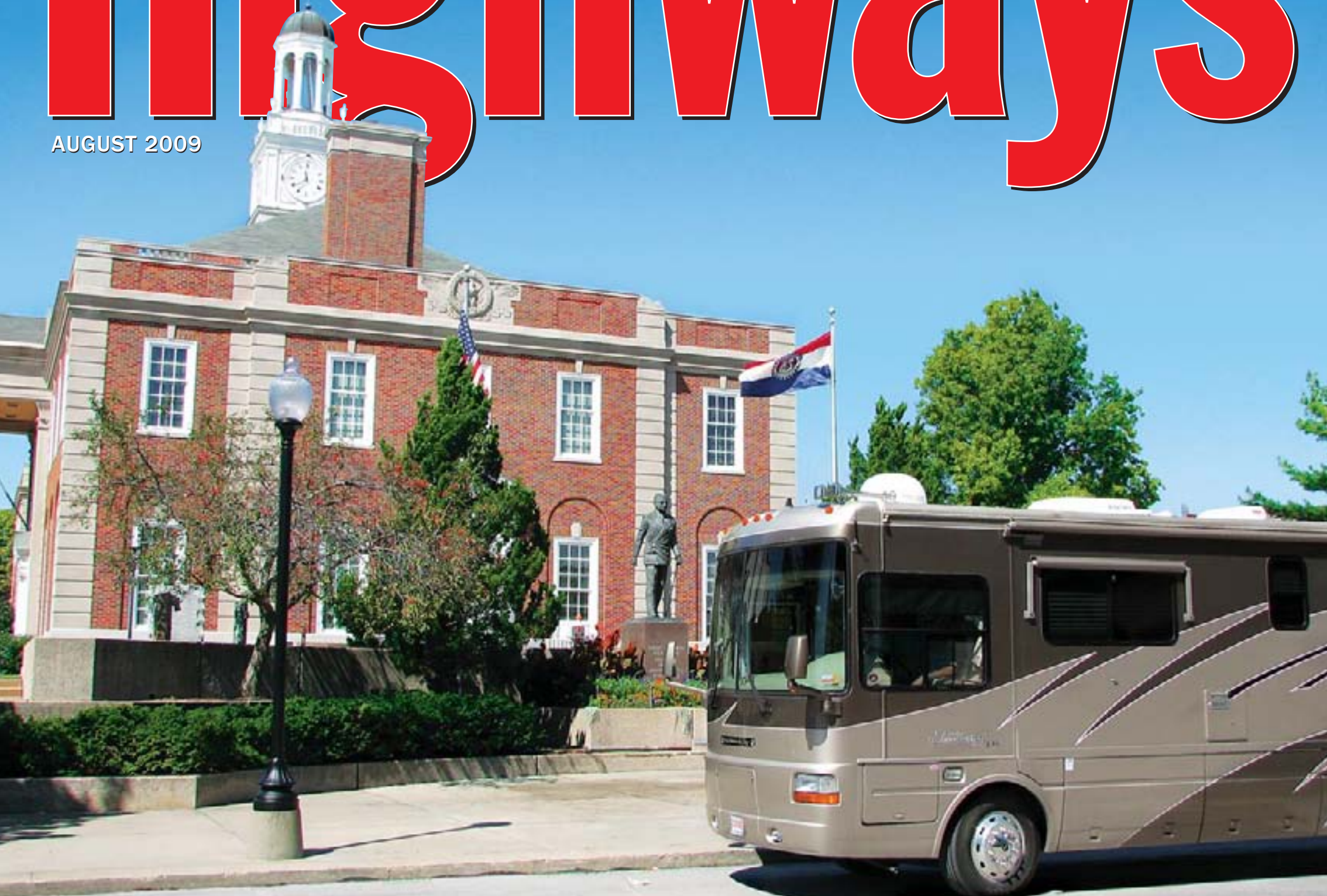




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Highways

AUGUST 2009



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The BUCK Stops Here

INSIDE Harry Truman's Independence, Missouri, AND NEARBY Kansas City

+ All Charged UP
Boost Your RV's 12-Volt System

Tire Talk
Don't Leave Home Without a Spare

Hot Stalk Tips
Tempting Recipes for Sweet Summer Corn

RV R&D
Member-Tested Travel Gear

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GOOD SAM CLUB

August 2009
VOLUME 43 NUMBER 8

What's New Online

www.GoodSamClub.com



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Independence, Missouri, is just wild about Harry—Harry Truman, that is. The good people of this Midwestern town and its neighbor, Kansas City, know a thing or two about honoring their history and paying tribute to the 33rd president. Stop by to see why the buck stops here. **BY RICHARD VARR**

26 FIRST AID FOR POWER FADE

Got sluggish slide-outs? Dim marker lights? Halfhearted batteries? We'll help diagnose the symptoms and prescribe a power boost for your rig's 12-volt charging system. Here's to your RV's good health. **BY JOEL DONALDSON**



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ON THE COVER: Harry Truman presides over Kansas City, Missouri's Jackson County Courthouse. PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD VARR.

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— 2009 View —

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The Top Dog

Help us find Good Sam's next RVer of the Year

To nominate an outstanding Good Sam Club member, couple or family for our RVer of the Year award, send an e-mail to rveroftheyear@goodsamclub.com. Please provide plenty of supporting details.



In the January issue of *Highways*, we announced the first recipient of our new annual award, the Good Sam RVer of the Year. The choice was easy and unanimous. We had been following the postings on the Good Sam Club's online forum relating to Richard Daniels of Waynesboro, Georgia. Richard, a retired minister, had gained attention by rescuing elderly and often sick or injured dogs and other animals, and finding them homes.

It all started in 2005 when Richard and his wife, Sue, spotted an aging dog at a South Carolina campground. The limping stray visited their campsite looking for a handout, just like he'd been doing for years with other RVers. But as the couple was leaving their campsite, Richard spotted the black dog sitting and staring at him. And that sight haunted him for weeks.

Richard shared that experience in a online post on our Good Sam Forum, and other forum participants encouraged him to go back and get the stray. Richard returned and adopted the dog himself and, with the help and contributions of many other forum members, provided him with medical care and a home.

In June 2008, Old Fella passed away, but Richard and Sue have since opened their home

to two other rescued dogs, Susie and Peaches. Richard is now devoting his efforts to developing a dedicated animal shelter in Burke County, Georgia, the Old Fella Burke County Animal Rescue. Old Fella is also remembered at the Old Fella Memorial Statue in Waynesboro City Park, and his portrait hangs in the Burke County Library.

We've had a great time celebrating Richard's award with him, particularly at our 2009 Rally in Albuquerque where he was honored with a \$3,000 check for the shelter. Recently, we found Richard and Sue shuttling a mother cat and her kittens to Florida to meet up with a Good Sam member who offered the animals a new home.

Now it's time to assemble nominees for the 2009 award. We hope to find a deserving Good Sam member or family who, like Richard, give back to their community and enhance the world of RVing. This year, we're asking for your help. We'd like to hear who you think should be considered for this prestigious award.

E-mail information about your nominee to rveroftheyear@goodsamclub.com. We'll select the most worthy candidates and post them on *Highways'* home page, www.goodsamclub.com/highways, on September 1. From there, you'll



A Man and His Dog

Richard Daniels, winner of the 2009 RVer of the Year Award, reflected on his animal-rescue experiences in a guest sermon he delivered recently at the Lebanon Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia.

I never intended to become the founder of an animal-rescue organization, but God gave me an old black stray dog and a vision beyond my understanding and then led me in a direction I never intended to go. I cannot tell you the joy I have seen on people's faces and the laughter of children when they embrace for the first time one of God's creatures that have come my way because of one old black stray dog that captured the heart of a nation.

Richard Daniels continues to post messages on the Good Sam Forum's Old Fella thread, where he first told his story about his rescued dog. To read these posts or leave your own comments, go to www.goodsamclub.com/forums, select RV Pet Stop and click on "A Very Old Stray (The Old Fella Story)."

be able to cast your vote for our next RVer of the Year. We know they're out there. Let us hear from you. ●

Tripping through history and pining for simpler times

Scratching the 300-Year Itch

“MONTICELLO TO GETTYSBURG” in *Highways*' June issue was a terrific piece on the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area. Nancy Hoyt Belcher's fine words and images captured so much about the historic route.

As director of communications for the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, I especially appreciated Nancy's remarks about her tour of James Monroe's Virginia home, Ash Lawn-Highland, with guide and re-enactor Dennis Bigelow: “It's the only time I've ever seen an audience applaud at the end of a biographic talk.” One of our goals at the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership is to help all visitors enjoy experiences similar to the one the author had with Dennis. Thanks for the story, and well done.

John K. Jones, WATERFORD, VIRGINIA

NANCY HOYT BELCHER did a great job revisiting three centuries of our heritage. I've been interested in history for a long time, and Nancy found spectacles within that historic corridor that I'd missed.

Tom Beckius, MONTVERDE, FLORIDA

Giving the Green Light

In the June issue's On the Road column, Sue Bray mentioned that July's *Highways*

will be available exclusively in digital format. I'm sorry to see that *Highways*' editors are subscribing to the misconception that everyone uses a computer.

Although I have a computer, I don't have time to sit in front of it to read a magazine. Instead, I usually read *Highways* and other magazines and newspapers while sipping coffee or tea after a meal or during TV commercials.

We enjoy the magazine and look forward to August's print edition.

Tony Gobbett, VERNON, BRITISH COLUMBIA

WE'D PREFER TO VIEW *Highways* online because our mail is often delayed in reaching us. But when I went online, I had no luck finding the digital issues.

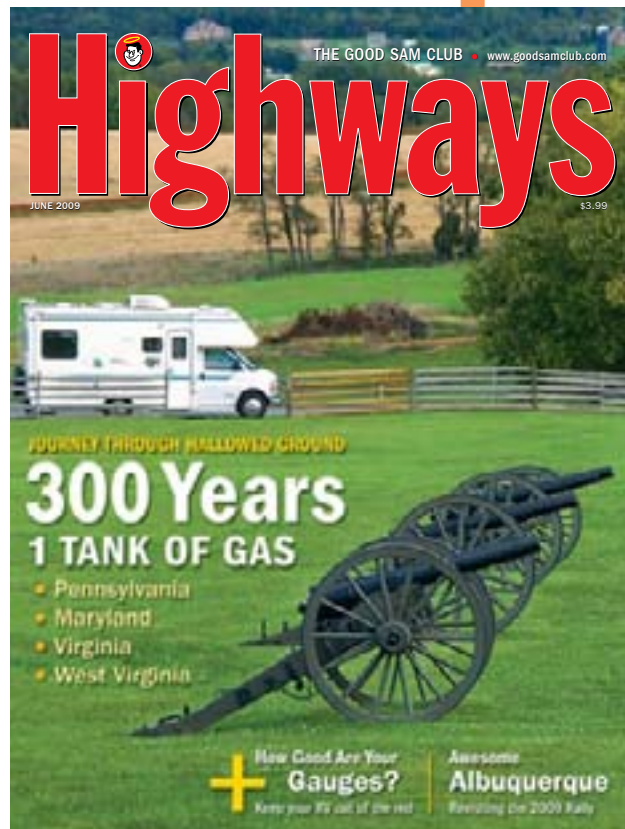
Iva Oshaunesy, APACHE JUNCTION, ARIZONA

You can find digital versions of past and current issues of *Highways* at www.goodsamclub.com/highways/digitaledition. The Web page is up and running now after an initial technical hiccup.—Editors

Golden Years

WE'RE BOUND and determined to make 50 trips this year, which happens to be our 50th year of marriage.

As novice RVers, we have to praise the information available on www.goodsamclub.com. How in the world would we have been able to press on without the Travel Checklist? More important, the Good Sam members we've visited with on the road are without equal in their



online...

Read more comments from Good Sam members and send letters to the editor online at www.goodsamclub.com/highways.

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Digital editions of *Highways* are now archived on our website. Just go to www.goodsamclub.com/highways/digitaledition to read back issues as well as the current issue. www.goodsamclub.com/highways/digitaledition

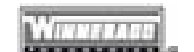


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This, then, is our unsolicited praise for a bunch of folks who've made the Good Sam Club the fine outfit it has become.

We're glad we're here.

Dan and Amanda Lee
WARSAW, INDIANA

Antiseptic Outdoors

IN THE JUNE Dear Good Sam section, a reader expressed concern about

How in the world would we have been able to press on without the Good Sam online Travel Checklist?

the lack of Wi-Fi availability at a lot of campgrounds. This letter led me to ask, is this really what passes for camping these days?

When did camping need to become so civilized? People used to go camp-

ing to get away from the congested urban life, spend some time outdoors and enjoy some quiet time with family and friends. Recently, however, camping has become a semi-luxury vacation. We now have all of the

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amenities of home right at our fingertips, including TV, videogames, Wi-Fi, hot showers, laundry, electricity, swimming pools, gas grills, microwaves and more. We don't even have to get our hands dirty anymore.

Camping like this can still be fun, in spite of all the luxuries, but how is it any different from what you can do at home in your backyard? If you're not going to get outside

and discover the natural world, why bother leaving the house?

Holt Webb
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Soft Landing in Laughlin

WHILE VISITING in Laughlin, Nevada, one of the landing jacks on our 2009 Cougar fifth wheel stopped moving.

I called Keystone customer service, and they informed me that the

nearest Keystone dealer was in Las Vegas or Lake Havasu City, Arizona. The next day, my wife fell and broke her leg. Not being able to move the RV to either locale for repairs, I called Bret at Road Runner RV service in Bullhead City. He asked a few questions, got some numbers and informed me that the jack was made by Lippert Components and should be covered by them.



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Ben and Lyn Bengurszka
HOBART, INDIANA

Two for the Road

ON OUR RECENT trip to Alaska, we had a problem

When we see homes getting sold instead of foreclosed, then I think we'll be in recovery.

with the EGR valve on our motorhome. Thanks to Rob at Choice Exhaust and Lube in Dawson Creek, British Columbia, the problem was fixed, and we were on our way in 30 minutes. I recommend him to anyone who needs exhaust help. He was also the only

person in Dawson Creek who would work on large motorhomes.

P. Bridges
DIAMOND SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Turning the Corner?

IN HER JUNE COLUMN, Sue Bray asked members to give their impressions of

the economy. Right now, we just don't have the money to RV as much as we truly desire. Gas is on the rise again. Naturally, this means that diesel prices also are rising. I've witnessed two of my neighbors lose their homes

because they lost their jobs and the banks foreclosed. When we see homes getting sold instead of foreclosed, then I think we'll be in an economic recovery.

Pat Walsh
LAKE CITY, FLORIDA ●

DROP US A LINE

We love to hear from Good Sam members. Write to us at deargoodsam@goodsamclub.com or Dear Good Sam, P.O. Box 8545, Ventura, California 93002 or send us your comments online at www.goodsamclub.com/highways. Please include your name, hometown and state or province. Letters may be edited for length and clarity and published in *Highways* and on our website.

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good news

EDITED BY
JOHN
SULLAWAY



GOOD SAM TOURS

Fling Your Beads

Party at Mardi Gras with the Good Sam Club



New Orleans, Served Up Hot

For two weeks every year, the city known as the Big Easy bustles with beaded necklaces, raucous crowds and colorful floats bearing masked revelers. You can join the fun on the Good Sam Club's Mardi Gras Samboree, February 9 through February 17, 2010, in New Orleans.

Participants will take part in the wild days and nights culminating in Fat Tuesday, February 16. From grandstand seats on St. Charles Avenue, right in the center of the Uptown New Orleans parade route, you'll watch marching bands, dance troupes and entertainers of every kind.

Want to blend in? Don a mask for the Samboree's masquerade party and contest featuring a live jazz band, a buffet dinner

and an open bar. Wear a costume and find out who'll reign as Good Sam's Mardi Gras king and queen.

You'll also soak in the rich history and culture on a tour that takes you to the Crescent City's elegant architecture, vibrant street life and quirky hot spots. During a visit to the National World War II Museum, you'll peruse exhibits on military campaigns from Normandy to Iwo Jima.

Included are eight nights of camping with full hookups on the campus of the University of New Orleans, 10 minutes from downtown New Orleans, and transportation to the venues. To learn more, click on the website below and select Events and Tours.

www.goodsamclub.com/community

Feeling peckish? Samboree guests will get a hearty sample of the Crescent City's rich culinary heritage. You'll dine at the world-famous Court of Two Sisters Restaurant during the Samboree's French Quarter jazz buffet brunch. You'll also savor breakfast at Brennan's, a legendary New Orleans eatery, and visit the New Orleans School of Cooking for an entertaining culinary demonstration and a light lunch. Of course, no visit to New Orleans would be complete without coffee and beignets served hot and fresh. Good Sam delivers this pastry treat in the colorful French Quarter.

CHAPTER NEWS

Kids' Stuff

For Good Sam's Haulin' Highlanders, campouts are child's play

Wander into a campground gathering of the Northeast's Haulin' Highlanders Good Sam chapter, and you're more likely to find coolers filled with colorful juice boxes than frosty six-packs.

Because the Haulin' Highlanders chapter is made up primarily of families with young kids, it's not surprising that the group's itinerary is filled with kid-friendly destinations like Frontier Town in Ocean City, Maryland, and Knoebels Amusement Resort in Elysburg, Pennsylvania. At a recent New Jersey Samboree, the kids dressed up in lights and reenacted Disney's Main Street Electrical Parade.

The child-friendly chapter was founded by New Jersey Good Sam member J.T. Bolger, who had been looking for a camping group made up of young families.

"Most of the chapters we met when we joined the Good Sam Club were a bit older. My family had very young kids," says Bolger, who's now



New Jersey state director. "Brad Hipple, who was state director at the time, said, 'There's a way to fix the problem. Start your own chapter.'"

At a state Samboree five years ago, Bolger and his wife, Bevin, started recruiting. Today, the chapter is comprised of 23 families.

To learn more about Good Sam chapters, visit the website below and click on Chapters.

www.goodsamclub.com/community

CLEANUP DAYS

Good Sam Comes Clean

Members pick up litter across North America

Good Sam Club members from across North America descended on parks, campgrounds and other public lands, trash bags in hand, during Good Sam Cleanup Days, May 16 through 17.

The club provided chapters with trash bags for the event, which was aimed at clearing litter and debris in time for camping season.

Good Sam chapters turned out in force, including the Foot Hill Campers of Frederick, Maryland, who scoured local Baker Park along with other members of the community. The previous week, the chapter was recognized by Frederick Mayor Jeff Holtzinger with a proclamation honoring Good Sam Cleanup Days.

Good Sam's



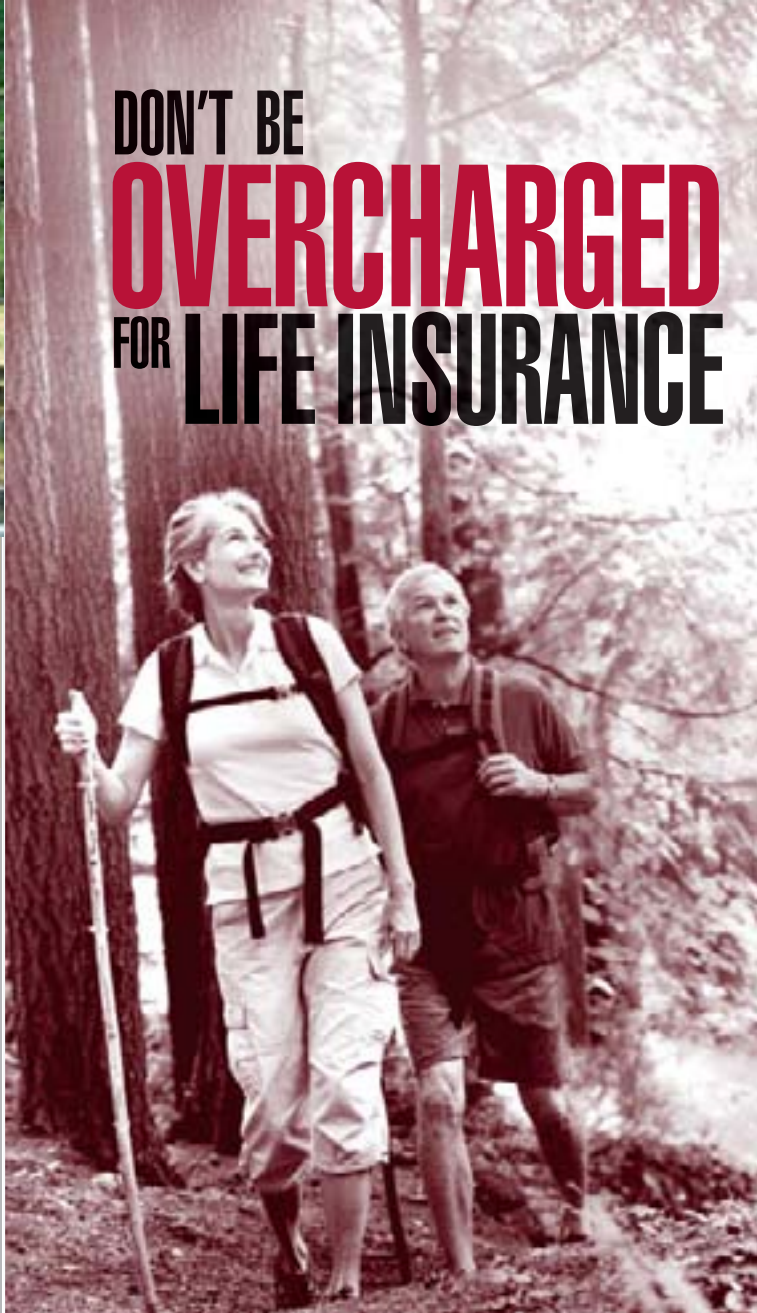
Good Sam staffers spiff up California's Painted Turtle. Left: Maryland's Foot Hill Campers clean Baker Park.

Ventura, California, headquarters also got in on the act. On May 16, staff members volunteered to help clean up the Painted Turtle, one of the late Paul Newman's Hole in the Wall Camps, Good Sam's official charity. The following Tuesday, 32 members of the Good Sam team, including Mike Schneider, Affinity president, and Sue Bray, Good Sam executive director, spruced up San Buenaventura State Beach.

To learn more about the Good Sam chapters that participated in Cleanup Days, click on the website below and select Good News.

www.goodsamclub.com/highways

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good news



CHAPTER NEWS

Lemon Law UPDATE



Proposed legislation for motorhomes that go sour

The future looks a lot less sour for motorhome buyers who unwittingly roll off the dealer's lot behind the wheel of a lemon. The Good Sam Club recently unveiled model lemon law legislation for motorhomes that will give owners significant protection when states enact the proposed measure.

Developed by Good Sam representatives in conjunc-

tion with RV-industry officials and the International Association of Lemon Law Administrators, the model legislation outlines the buyer's rights if a motorhome doesn't conform to the provisions of the manufacturer's warranty. Remedies can include replacement or repurchase of a rig by the manufacturer.

"A new motorhome is

a major life investment," says Sue Bray, executive director of the Good Sam Club. "It's imperative that state lemon laws protect the rights of new motorhome buyers."

Most states currently provide no lemon law coverage for motorhome purchases or offer limited protection, typically covering only the chassis. The model legislation extends coverage to the structural integrity and major system components in the motorhome's living quarters.

For the full text of the proposed lemon law legislation, [click here](#).



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WHO'S ONLINE

Meet Texas Boomerang

Drive on the edge with George and Anita Rice



Good Sam member George Rice of Waco, Texas, will never forget the time he took his wife, Anita, for a drive along Utah's infamous Moki Dugway. By the time they reached the bottom of the steep, twisty, gravel road dotted with signs warning drivers of the 1,100-foot drop, Anita was hyperventilating.

The Rices share the story of that unforgettable road trip on the Good Sam Club's website under their online name, Texas Boomerang. To learn more about Texas Boomerang's adventures in their Damon Challenger motorhome, visit the *Highways* homepage, www.goodsamclub.com/highways, in August.

If you've taken an RV journey you'd like to share, click on the website below and go to Stories.

www.goodsamclub.com/community

SMILE AND SAVE

Camping World COUPONS

Find out why Camping World was named Best RV Parts and Accessory Store in the Good Sam Club's 2009 Welcome Mat Awards. See page 28 (or page 47 of the printed *Highways*) for coupons with savings worth \$500 in merchandise and services.

www.campingworld.com



RV ACCESSORIES

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Keep your house secure while you're away

RVers have enough to worry about these days, from fluctuating gas prices to the noisy kids in the rig next door. Who needs the added headache of fretting about the security of your home?

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Our buyers just discovered one of the most significant European Bank hoards of U.S. gold in years. With so few classic U.S. gold coins that remain in existence, the New York Mint surprised the world by announcing the release of historic U.S. gold coins—all guaranteed to be over 80 years old!

During the Great Depression, people were clamoring for gold. No one wanted to be left out in the cold without tangible assets. In the economic frenzy, the United States government pulled millions of gold coins out of circulation and ordered a government meltdown in 1933. Years later, another meltdown was ordered to help rebuild a war-ravaged Europe, leaving relatively few behind. Today, as gold values soar against the falling dollar and continued uncertainty in the stock market, demand for these coins has skyrocketed as collectors scramble to scoop up vintage U.S. gold coins for their scarcity and pure gold content. Guaranteed uncirculated specimens create additional value over bullion, making these coins even more attractive.

The New York Mint has brought these classic beauties home and is releasing to the public a limited quantity. Please call our toll-free number today for FREE information about this incredible discovery and a FREE collector's DVD!

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The Spare Essentials

Don't leave home without an extra tire, no matter how much it weighs



Dear Joe and Vicki:

We just finished watching your *RVing Alaska* DVD and enjoyed it greatly. We found it very informative, but one question came to mind.

We're leaving for a three-month trip to Alaska in our 40-foot diesel pusher with 22.5-inch tires. We've never carried a spare. This type of tire's so heavy, we probably couldn't change it anyway. Still, we're considering bringing a spare on this trip. Do you recommend an unmounted spare or a mounted spare, or do you trust luck and rely on the availability of tires along the route if you need a replacement?

JOE: We'd strongly recommend that you carry an unmounted spare tire. Let me tell why.

A number of years ago, we had a blowout on an inside dual tire that occurred 35 miles from the nearest town on Easter weekend. We didn't have a spare tire at the time because our motorhome didn't come equipped with one. The RV dealer had patiently enumerated the reasons for this. First, "Those tires never blow out." Second, "The lug nuts are so tight you'd need a 10-foot-long wrench to loosen them." Third, "The tire and wheel weigh 100 pounds each, and the manufacturer doesn't want the liability of you getting hurt while handling one." Fourth, "The roadside-service truck will bring a new tire and mount it."

Silly me, I thought the rig didn't have a spare

because the manufacturer could save the expense.

Anyway, because that blowout occurred on Easter weekend, and our 10R 22.5 tire size wasn't readily available, it took the Good Sam Emergency Road Service folks about three hours to finally locate a used tire that would, hopefully, get us home. And they'd have to make a 60-mile round trip to get it. (We could've gotten a new tire if we'd been



Tire failures never seem to happen in a convenient location. Fortunately, we had the now seven-year-old spare tire.

willing to wait until Tuesday).

The used tire got us home where we replaced all of the rig's tires. We kept the best of the old tires as an unmounted spare. Fortunately, it fit inside one of our storage bays.

VICKI: Our next flat tire occurred a couple years later on our way out of a campground. Joe was maneuvering through a tight right turn. According to him, a small, cleverly concealed decorative wall attacked and tore open

online...

To read archived RV Insight columns, click on www.goodsamclub.com/highways. To post your own RV-lifestyle tips, go to www.goodsamclub.com/community, click on Stories, then click on the Share a Story button.

the right-rear outside tire.

Tire failures never seem to happen in a convenient location. A few phone calls revealed that the closest tire shops with our size tire were either 100 miles behind us or 227 miles in front of us. Fortunately, we had the now seven-year-old spare tire. We

called Good Sam Emergency Road Service, they removed the damaged tire from the wheel, mounted the spare, and we were on our way. One day and 227 miles later, we rolled out of the shop with new tires, a different spare and a much lighter wallet.

So, based upon our experience, we recommend carrying a spare tire. Don't count on a replacement tire being readily available. We also recommend subscribing to an RV roadside-assistance plan that will respond anywhere in the North America and, if unable to

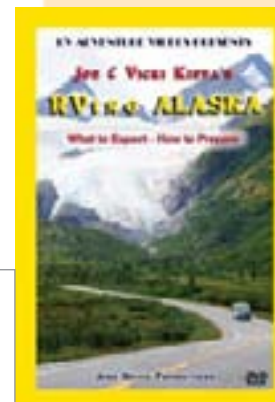
solve the problem on the side of the road, one that will tow your RV (no matter the distance) to a facility that can make the repair. Good Sam Emergency Road Service meets these criteria and has a great reputation with RVers. Enjoy your Alaskan RV adventure. ●

GOT A QUESTION?

Joe and Vicki Kieva have the answer. E-mail your RV-lifestyle questions to highways@goodsamclub.com or mail a letter to RV Insight, *Highways*, P.O. Box 8545, Ventura, California 93002.

Get Flat-Tire Relief With Good Sam ERS

Don't let a blown tire deflate your travel plans. Sign up for Good Sam RV ERS for roadside relief throughout North America. In addition to tire service, ERS perks include emergency fuel delivery and roadside mechanical repairs. Learn more by clicking on www.goodsamers.com.



Discover Alaska with the Kievas

If you're planning to motor up the Alaska Highway, make

sure you pack a spare and watch Joe and Vicki Kievas' DVD *RVing Alaska: What to Expect, How to Prepare*. The Kievas share tips based on their own experiences navigating the often-rugged roadways along the route. Get the inside scoop about road conditions and learn what to expect from the region's campgrounds, fuel stops, repair facilities and more. To find out more about the Kievas' books, e-books and DVDs, visit their website, www.rvknowhow.com.

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BY BOB BLUMER



Met your corn quota? Americans consume about 25 pounds of the sweet yellow kernels each year.

Online...

To read previous recipes, go to www.goodsamclub.com/highways.

Bob Blumer is the creator and host of the Food Network TV shows *The Surreal Gourmet* and *Glutton for Punishment* and the author of five cookbooks. When not at home in California, Bob can be found traveling in his Toastermobile, an Airstream trailer customized with a stainless-steel professional kitchen and topped with two 8-foot slices of toast.

Eating an Earful

Coaxing fabulous flavors from the sweet corn of summer with the help of butter, garlic, bacon and fresh herbs



During a recent interview, a journalist from an Asian magazine asked what my all-time favorite dish was and what makes it so special. After contemplating all the amazing meals I've had the privilege of eating around the world, I landed on an answer that surprised me: corn on the cob, straight from the field.

A simply boiled ear of corn, slathered in butter and sprinkled with salt, is one of the only dishes that can evoke childhood memories and, at the same time, appeal to an evolved sense of taste.

I had the pleasure of meeting many Good Sam Club members at the 2009 Rally in Albuquerque in April, and you confirmed my suspicions that *Highways* readers, too, have a very evolved sense of taste. I'm also confident that you've all mastered the art of boiling corn.

As we reach peak season, with roadside farm stands

offering insanely sweet corn at impossibly low prices, it's hard to resist buying an extra dozen or

I Can't Believe It's Not Creamed Corn

This "creamed corn" recipe contains nothing more than fresh corn and a pinch of salt and pepper. The secret rests in separating the sweet milk and meat of the corn kernels from their less-tasty casings.

8 ears of corn, husked
salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Using a sharp paring knife, start at the top of the cob and score the middle of each row of kernels. The object here is to slice the surface of the individual casings so that it's easier to force out the milky prize contained inside. The depth of the incision, as well as your ability to slice a straight line, is of no consequence.

Grab your largest pot and a common dinner knife. Hold the cob inside the pot. Starting at the top of the cob, run the backside of the blade down the cob, using pressure to force out the meat and milk from the casings. Be forewarned, this is a messy job and requires a healthy amount of muscle power (think of it as your daily workout). If possible, do this outdoors.

Discard the cobs and transfer the corn mash to a smaller pot. Warm over medium heat for a few watchful minutes, stirring frequently. If you warm the corn too long or at too high a temperature, the natural liquids will evaporate, and the corn will become gooey.

Season with salt, pepper and a bit of butter, if you buy into the credo that everything's better with butter, and serve immediately.

Yield: Serves four as a side dish

Sumptuous Succatash

I would've called this Sufferin' Succatash, but it's so colorful, flavorful, fresh, fast and healthy that there's absolutely no suffering involved.

- 3 slices smoky bacon, sliced crosswise into 1/4-inch-wide strips**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 tablespoon butter**
- 3 ears corn, kernels cut from cob**
- 1/2 cup frozen lima beans, thawed (optional)**
- 1/2 red bell pepper, diced finely**
- 3 green onions, trimmed and sliced finely**
- 1 tablespoon fresh herbs (thyme, tarragon, cilantro, whatever), stemmed and minced**
- 1/4 teaspoon dried chipotle powder (optional)**
- salt and pepper, to taste**
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice**

In a large sauté pan over medium heat, cook bacon until it just begins to get crispy. Stir in garlic for 30 seconds.

Add butter, corn, lima beans, bell pepper and green onion. Cook for five more minutes, stirring occasionally. Finish with herbs, chipotle, salt, pepper and lime juice. Toss and serve.

Yield: serves four as a side dish

two...or three. What to do with all these ears? Here are two of my favorite recipes that will help you transform your bounty into a corn lover's dream. Add these to your list of all-time favorite side dishes. ●



Getting to the bottom of battery-charging mysteries and making a delamination determination

Online...

To read more of Bob's replies to your technical questions, go to www.goodsamclub.com/rvcentral.

In addition to answering your letters, Bob Livingston is the publisher of *Trailer Life* and *MotorHome* magazines, director of the Rally's seminar program and author of *Trailer Life's RV Repair and Maintenance Manual*. To purchase the fourth edition of the manual at the Good Sam discounted price, click on www.goodsamclub.com/travelstore.

Refrigerator Headaches

I'm fortunate in that I can store my rig on my own property without offending my neighbors. I have a concrete pad with 50-amp shore power installed.

Over the winter, temperatures in Florida dropped lower than usual. I usually don't run out of propane, but this winter, I ran out. Luckily, it was after the cold snaps had disappeared. While getting the RV ready for a trip, I noticed that all the

ice I had stored in the freezer compartment had melted and the refrigerator had mold. I cleaned up the mess and got rid of the items we stored in the refrigerator. Then I noticed that once I shut the refrigerator off, as instructed, and restarted, the "auto" light came on, stayed on for about five minutes, but then switched to the "check" position. Again, I turned off all the breakers, waited a few minutes, and then turned them on. Again, the "auto" light came on and stayed on for about another five minutes before the "check" light came on.

Is this because I'm out of propane? I'm connected to shore power. I simply can't understand. To make sure the unit was working, I placed a half-cup of water in the freezer compartment to check the next morning. It didn't work out. I'd appreciate any help you could give me.

Nick Monte, CRESTVIEW, FLORIDA

BOB: Nick, the first thing I would check is whether the refrigerator is plugged into a circuit (120-volt AC) that incorporates the ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). If it is, and the GFCI is tripped, the refrigerator will fail to operate on AC power. At that point, providing the

control is set to "Auto," the refrigerator will attempt to operate on LP-gas. If you're out of propane, the check light on the panel will illuminate, informing you that the refrigerator is not working.

If you have propane, and the check light illuminates, then you're probably experiencing a problem with the circuit board.

I recommend using a Dinosaur Electronics (541-994-2796, www.dinosaurelectronics.com) replacement if the circuit board needs replacing.

Where's the Charge?

I HAVE A two-year-old Arctic Fox 22H travel trailer that's in dry storage in Alaska, where I now live. Almost one year ago I winterized it and had the two house batteries disconnected so that nothing inside would drain the batteries. I was able to plug into AC power so that I could run dehumidifiers inside during the coldest part of winter (batteries still disconnected). A few weeks ago, I decided to connect the batteries to the terminal and leave my trailer plugged in for a few days to top off the batteries.

I went inside to look at my meter for the 12-volt and, to my astonishment, it was reading 12.5 volts and I was able to turn on all lights! How could this be? I was under the assumption that the batteries would either be at half-strength or at least almost if not completely drained.

I had an RV technician perform winterizing and disconnection of the house batteries. Waiting for your 12-volt electrified response!

Nancy York, HOMER, ALASKA

BOB: Based on your voltage, the batteries were only at about 70 percent of full charge. After leaving the batteries connected to the converter/charger, you should deplete the surface charge before taking an accurate reading. You can do this by running a 10-amp load for five minutes. For example, you can turn on a few lights and run the furnace fan. A fully charged battery should read 12.7 volts.

While getting ready for a trip, I noticed that the ice I'd stored had melted and the fridge had mold.

I think you'll discover that even though the batteries appear to be OK, after depleting the surface charge, the voltage will likely be lower. In fact, there's a good chance the bat-

teries are sulfated since they were subjected to a long period of natural discharging, and an onboard charger in your trailer is not capable of

charger, the batteries will never be charged/conditioned properly. The generator provides 120-volt AC power to the converter/charger, which provides

I know some RVers who almost make a career out of keeping the paint looking good.

providing proper conditioning.

Where's the Charge, II?

I CAN RUN the generator for hours and it barely charges the house batteries. I can run the engine for a short time and the batteries get charged.

Where and how do I start to find out if there's a problem? Is this normal?

Roy C. Billington
SHERIDAN, OREGON

BOB: Roy, continuing with the answer to Nancy York's question, yes, this is normal. If your rig is equipped with the standard-issue converter/

basic charging. That's because voltage is regulated to 13.8 volts so that the batteries will not boil out the electrolyte while hooked up to campground power for long periods of time.

The alternator in your vehicle provides a healthier charge rate, but it's not the ultimate answer to proper battery charging. To do it right, and I have stated this in a number of columns, you need to use a multi-stage charger that's capable of conditioning your batteries. Not only will you have 12-volt DC power when necessary, the batteries will last longer.

Paint Protector

WE PURCHASED a new 32-foot Class A Four Winds Hurricane motorhome. The unit will be stored outside. We've been quoted \$1,000 for paint protection to our unit. Is it worth the money or will regular waxing suffice?

David Johns

VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

BOB: If you're religious about waxing your motorhome, the paint will probably last for a very long time. But that means applying a good wax at least twice a year—and maybe more often depending on the elements, which can be harsh in your neck of the woods. Most owners are not that obsessed, but I do know some who almost make a career out of keeping the paint looking good.

There are a number of products on the market touted to keep your paint looking nice for a long time without the need for frequent waxing. The only one I've personally experi-

"Picking up 2.85 miles per gallon and 11 miles per hour while pulling the grade is significant."
MOTORHOME MAGAZINE

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GM Motorhome

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enced is DuPont's Automotive Paint Protection process (autoprotection@mail1dupont.com, 888-227-3093). This product is a liquid that's applied only by certified distributors, and it seems to work extremely well.

The process isn't cheap, but neither is a new paint job.

Batteries and Wiring

YOUR ANSWER to Sterling

Your RV will get more available amp hours out of two 6-volt batteries wired in a series.

Carpenter's question in the December 2008 issue's Tech Topics confused me. I've heard the discussions surrounding 6-volt golf-cart batteries vs. 12-volt batteries, but I gathered you felt that two 6-volt golf cart batteries wired in series

provides more power than two 12-volt batteries wired in parallel.

Would you suggest I convert my Power Stroke diesel engine batteries to two 6-volt golf cart batteries wired in series, rather than the factory-furnished

two 12-volt batteries wired in parallel?

J. David Stillwell
GILBERTSVILLE, KENTUCKY

BOB: Running two 12-volt batteries in parallel will obviously provide power for a period of time, but you'll get more available amp hours out of two 6-volt batteries wired in series. And the 6-volt batteries are more durable because they can handle deeper discharging—and

more charging cycles.

Because golf cart batteries are designed as deep-cycle counterparts, they're not effective as starting batteries. I don't recommend making that change to your Power Stroke.

Defogging Headlamps

THIS CONCERNS your reply to Ed Esschaf regarding fogging headlamp lenses in the March issue's Tech Topics. I own a collision-

repair shop in Billings, Montana, and have found several products on the market that work to remove fogging from headlamps. I haven't used the procedure you suggest, but there are several compounds on eBay that I've used. These work quite well. Additionally, 3M markets a headlight restoration product that works exceptionally well. Headlamp restoration usually takes about 30



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to 45 minutes to fix both headlamps. RVers can also check with collision-repair businesses in their area to see if they offer this service; the cost is usually \$25 to \$50 for both headlamps. Just thought I'd suggest alternatives other than sanding and clear-coating the headlamp.

Rodney W. Hessler
BILLINGS, MONTANA

BOB: Thanks, Rodney. I appreciate the input.

Engines in Storage

I'M CONCERNED about the alcohol in the gasoline we buy. I'm under the impression that the alcohol will separate from the gasoline over time and cause a problem. Is there an additive that will prevent this? I store my motorhome for three to four months at a time. I try to drive it locally every month or so just to keep it limbered up, but it gener-

Alcohol will separate from gasoline and cause a problem. Is there a fuel additive for this?

ally isn't driven very far.
Bill Goodmon
CROSSVILLE, TENNESSEE

BOB: I recommend using Sta-Bil Fuel Stabilizer (www.gold-eagle.com/brands/stabil) before putting your rig into storage. It's designed to work with ethanol-based fuels. If you drive your vehicle, you'll need to add more stabilizer. Follow the directions on the bottle. Overdosing doesn't work better.

Reverse Dolly Towing

I HAVE a five-speed man-

ual Ford Ranger rear-wheel drive that I want to tow on a dolly. I believe that the best way to tow would be to have the rear wheels on the dolly with the steering wheel locked and secured with a strap. Is this OK?

Réal Morin
MONTREAL, QUEBEC

BOB: Dolly manufacturers do not recommend doing this. I'd opt for a driveshaft disconnect and towing on all four wheels. Remco (www.remcotowing.com, 800-228-2481) will have a product that works for your truck. ●

GOT A QUESTION?

Tech Topics columnist Bob Livingston has spent countless hours exploring the inner workings of RVs and finding ways to make life on the road easier for all RVers, particularly Good Sam members. Got a question about your rig? Send an e-mail to techttopics@goodsamclub.com.

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No Bucks for the Bang

Our truck and fifth wheel were damaged during a recent stay in Rockport, Texas. We had pulled into our site and were watching TV when we heard two large explosions followed by a big thud on top of our fifth wheel. Then we heard a third explosion. We went outside and saw dust so thick you couldn't even see the other side of the road.

We called 911, the police soon arrived, and we discovered a 6-foot-deep, 10-foot-wide hole adjacent to our lot. We were very fortunate that no one was hurt. We later found out that an oil line had exploded.

The next day, the president of Wallis Energy, which owned the oil line, came out and told everyone in the park that the company would wash all vehicles affected by the blast. We told him about the damage to our rig and were told the company's insurance would cover the harm to our vehicles.

Later, an adjuster came and told us that the rig's awnings would all need to be replaced, the truck required repainting and the windows would have to be replaced. Then the nightmare really began. We started getting the runaround from the insurance company. They said they'd pay only so much and that we'd have to pay the deductible. We didn't think this was right because we weren't responsible for the damage.

All we want is for Wallis to fix the problems they caused and get us back to where we were when we pulled into the park.

Roxanna Boenker, DECATUR, INDIANA

ACTION LINE: A petition was sent to Wallis Energy on behalf of Roxanna and Dale Boenker. The couple later sent the following letter:

A big thanks goes out to Action Line. We feel in our hearts that Action Line's actions got us what we deserved. After you contacted Wallis Energy, they sent us four checks that covered all our damages. We're very happy campers now and are getting all the work done on our fifth wheel and truck.

Going Off the Rails

AFTER TOWING our Keystone Outback on a 700-mile round trip to New Mexico, we went to the back of the trailer to extend the bedroom slide-out and found that the locking rack had pulled away from the trailer and had broken the latch away from the frame. The slide-out rails were broken, and the bed had fallen onto the couch, table and bench set.

We contacted the local Keystone dealer, and they assured us that they could work on our trailer after getting approval from Keystone

RV Company. The dealership sent pictures to Keystone, but the manufacturer refused to honor the warranty. We called Keystone and spoke with a representative, and he informed us that the claim was denied because it appeared that the rig was not locked down correctly and that someone had been jumping on the bed while the rig was towed.

We'd never jump on the bed while our trailer was being towed; that would be illegal. I'm meticulous about checking the trailer before, while and after we tow it. I would've noticed

He said that someone had been jumping on the bed while the rig was towed.

at any of our stops if something wasn't secured properly.

The local dealership did the repair work and told us that the rails hadn't been screwed in tight, causing the problem. This ended up costing us \$2,774.91.

Richard Pierce, LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO

ACTION LINE: After sending a petition to Keystone RV on behalf of the Pierces, we received the following update from the Good Sam members:

Today we received a check from Keystone for \$1,310. This is half of our original claim, but we're satisfied with the amount. We're happy with Action Line's help in this settlement.

Dodging fallout from a pipeline explosion and refuting bed-jumping accusations

Since September 2005, Action Line has received 5,163 letters from you and recovered

\$353,238.85

online...

The Good Sam Club's Action Line has resolved thousands of disputes in favor of members. *Highways* highlights a sampling of these results in each edition. If you have an issue to resolve, go to www.goodsamclub.com/community and click on RVer Rights.

Wireless Refund Runaround

LAST DECEMBER, I went to an Alltel Wireless store in Iron Mountain, Michigan, to inquire about canceling my cell-phone service. I had just received my monthly bill and was only a few days into it. The Alltel representative said that I should pay the bill and that I'd get a refund for the unused portion at the end of the billing cycle.

When the refund didn't arrive, I contacted Alltel Wireless' main office and was informed that no part of the bill was refundable. I then called the Iron Mountain store, but they told me that

All I want is the unused portion of my service, which is owed to me.

they didn't know that this was the policy and said they'd get me a customer-satisfaction refund.

After two more weeks of waiting, I called the main office again and was told to expect a check in the next 15 to 20 days. A few days later I received a statement with attachments saying that a check was being issued. However, when I called back, I was told the bill was listed as nonrefundable in their system. All I want is the unused portion on my monthly service, which is owed to me.

MYRON WILSON, NIAGARA, WISCONSIN

ACTION LINE: A petition was sent to Alltel Wireless, prompting the following update from Myron Wilson:

Today I received a check from Alltel in the amount of \$44. It was a little less than expected, but at least Action Line got some answers for me. It was more about the principle than the money, so I thank Action Line for your help in getting some action.

Satellite Border Bust

IN OCTOBER, I contacted Bell ExpressVu to get satellite TV service to go with my King Dome in-motion satellite antenna. I explained that

we'd be traveling in our motorhome to various places in North America, particularly in the southern states.

The Bell ExpressVu representative explained that the satellite provided good coverage throughout North America, but it could have difficulties with some channels in certain areas.

I purchased the digital satellite box for \$111.86. Shortly after the trip, I received a call from a Bell ExpressVu representative who was horrified to learn that I had crossed the border and was using a Bell ExpressVu digital box in a motorhome that was traveling in the United States. Her supervisor confirmed that this was illegal and that our service would be termi-

nated immediately. I explained that U.S. use had been discussed on several occasions with a Bell ExpressVu representative and was told that the information given to me about U.S. travel was incorrect.

Because I was misled from the start, I asked Bell ExpressVu to refund my money for the cost of the digital box plus \$124.30 in monthly bills leading up to my cancellation. Bell ExpressVu flatly refused and has been very difficult to deal with since this situation was brought to their attention. The supervisor said she'd look into this further and call me back. Not surprisingly, I haven't heard from her.

Greg Gee, PETERBOROUGH, ONTARIO

ACTION LINE: After sending two petitions to Bell ExpressVu, now Bell TV, Action Line received the following update from Greg Gee:

Thank you, Action Line, for intervening on my behalf. After months of inaction, a Bell ExpressVu representative contacted me and agreed to provide me with a \$236.16 credit. There's no question in my mind that nothing would have been done to resolve this without the involvement of Action Line. ●

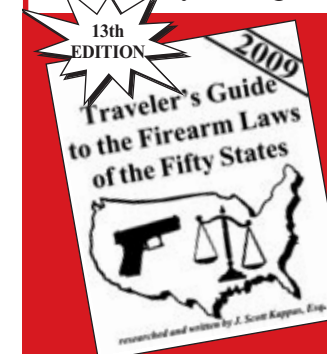
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"If you carry a weapon in your rig, you need this book"
 - Highways Magazine, May 2005



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INSIDE



HARRY S. TRUMAN
1884 – 1972
PRESIDENT
OF THE
UNITED STATES
1945 – 1953

Independence

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD VARR

His voice is strong and calming, his words simple and measured. I'm listening to an actual recording of Harry S. Truman as I step into his Oval Office the way it appeared in 1950—a replica, of course, in the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum. “The furniture, the rug, the drapes are duplicates of those used in the White House when I was president of the United States,” echoes the recording, made during Truman’s retirement.

I see his presidential desk adorned with family photos at one end; a portrait of George Washington hangs over a marble fireplace at the other end.

And for a moment, I imagine Truman sitting here making the decisions that created a legacy on par with some of history’s most revered leaders.

“I think people walk away with the feeling that Harry Truman was a guy just like them,” says Amy Williams,

deputy director of the Truman Library. “I think you would hear a lot of people saying, ‘You know, he was our last ordinary-man president. He was our last farm-boy-to-president president.’”

“He’s the only president from Missouri and he was from our town,” says Williams. “And that’s really something special.”

My visit to the Truman Library marks the start of my tour of Independence, home of the 33rd U.S. president, who

Wild about Harry: His home, below, and his likeness outside the County Courthouse, far left. Lower left, the Bingham-Waggoner Estate.

From the Wild West to the home of Harry S. Truman, American history unfolds in Independence, Missouri and nearby Kansas City





left behind an indelible presence here—from his North Delaware Avenue home to his iconic statue outside the Jackson County Courthouse, where he once served as county judge. Aside from Truman’s footprints, this RV-friendly Kansas City suburb also embraces a dramatic Wild West heritage, where rickety covered wagons by the thousands once embarked along the three major pioneer wagon trails and where outlaw Frank James of the notorious James Gang was once jailed.

With its wealth of photos, letters and artifacts, the Truman Library details his personal life and the turbulent times and accomplishments of his presidency: World War II, dropping the atomic bombs on Japan, formation of the United Nations and NATO, and the beginning of the Cold

War. The gravesites of Truman, his wife, Bess, and their daughter, Margaret, are within the library’s quiet courtyard.

His hometown legacy, meanwhile, comes to life on the streets of Independence, where a silhouette of an older Truman sporting a hat and cane adorns street signs along the Truman Historic Walking Trail, a tribute to the retired president’s love for taking walks. Forty-three stops with bronze plaques highlight the tour, which includes the Truman Home, still furnished exactly the way it was when he died in 1972 at age 88. Even his coats, hat and cane remain hanging behind the door. Other sites include Clinton’s Soda Fountain where a teenage Harry Truman secured his first job for \$3 a week, and the Truman Depot, now an Amtrak stop, where 8,500 cheering supporters welcomed the outgoing president on his arrival home in 1953.

Looking back at local history, my next stop is the National Frontier Trails Museum, showcasing how 19th century Independence, fraught with muddy wagon trails, was crucial to the nation’s westward expansion. “Independence was the major jumping-off place and preparation point for the California, Oregon and Santa Fe trails,” says museum education coordinator Richard Edwards. “There are some who would argue that the Gateway Arch should truly be here rather than in St. Louis.” The museum re-creates the story of hitting the trails, beginning in the 1820s with life-size exhibits using original artifacts: Conestoga wagons, gold digger’s tools and pans, cooking utensils, quilts and more.

Deep wagon ruts can still be seen on part of the old Santa Fe Trail on the grounds of one of the most notable homes in Independence, the 1852 Bingham–Waggoner Estate. With mostly original furnishings, it was once the residence of Civil War artist George Caleb Bingham.

More Wild West history comes alive at the 1859 Jail, Marshal’s Home and Museum, where I hear my voice echoing off solid-limestone walls. The jail’s most notable inmate was Frank James, brother of the notorious outlaw Jesse James. Fearing for his safety after Jesse was shot to death, James turned himself in and was incarcerated there while awaiting trial. Although the jail’s six dungeon-like cells are stark and dank, James’ cell reveals he was a privileged inmate. “It’s pretty nicely furnished because he had made friends in the area,” says Steve Noll of the Jackson County Historical Society. “He was allowed to bring in all the comforts of home.”

Back at the Truman Library, I meet full-time RVers Jim and Bronwen Soukup from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, who travel to Independence once or twice a year to visit their son and daughter. “Because of the fuel costs, we’ll pick locations where we can stay for three or four months and travel around with the tow vehicle,” says Jim. “And Independence is just an ideal area.”

“Things are collected in such a small area, we can walk to a lot of it. And we can use the tow to run in to Kansas City,” says Jim, adding that he appreciates the conveniences of RV travel. “I don’t forget my toothbrush.”

From the Truman walking tour, left, to the Truman train depot, the 33rd president lives on in Independence.





expansion of the Nelson–Atkins Museum of Art.

My first stop is the recently opened must-see National World War I Museum, designated by Congress as the nation's official WWI museum. Located atop a hill south of downtown skyscrapers, it was built into the infrastructure of the 1926 Liberty Memorial, with its imposing concrete tower and twin pavilions, originally constructed as a memorial to the war. Inside, a centerpiece timeline and more than 50,000 items—from cannons, tanks and artillery to uniforms and helmets—are intertwined with interactive exhibits, personal accounts, a life-size diorama and a trench-warfare exhibit that all keenly elucidate the war's scope and sacrifice.

Located in the vibrant 18th and Vine Historic Jazz District, the American Jazz Museum highlights how Kansas City's lax Prohibition era attracted musicians and allowed jazz and blues to flourish.

Sharing the same roof, statues command the baseball diamond as an imaginary game takes place at the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. "The story is not really about baseball but truly about American and African-American history, and baseball is just one way to try to get at that story," explains Ray Doswell, the museum's deputy director.

At nightfall, I stroll the streets of Country Club Plaza, 14 square blocks with upscale shops, restaurants and cafés. Fountains with Roman- and Greek-style statues grace the sidewalks and courtyards adjacent to chic boutiques and bistros within the shadow of Moorish architecture influenced by Kansas City's sister city, Seville, Spain. But I sit next to a statue a bit more American, one of a pensive Benjamin Franklin reading a newspaper on a park bench near a popular café.



Kansas City, as seen from Liberty Memorial Tower. Above, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.

OUTSIDE Independence

With Kansas City now on my mind, I drive 20 minutes or so on Interstate 70 West to get to this cosmopolitan town known for its barbecue restaurants, its jazz and blues, and its 200-plus frothy public fountains, more than anywhere except maybe Rome.

The city has been undergoing a facelift of sorts, with \$5 billion in new developments including the downtown neon-light-splashed Power and Light entertainment district, the new Sprint Center arena and the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, as well as the

Back in Independence, I drive five or six blocks west on Walnut Street from the historic downtown and behold the town's highest and most unusual landmark, the twisted silver spire of the Community of Christ Temple. A modernistic work of architecture, the temple supports a ceiling shaped like a nautilus seashell.

The plain storefront entrance of Leila's Hair Museum masks the unique weaves and even bizarre contortions of human hair collected as family heirlooms over the last few centuries. Hair wreaths—many in their original gold-trimmed frames—line the walls of this compact, quirky museum, with Victorian hair wreaths the largest part of the collection.

"They were like a family portrait," says museum staffer Linda Gouldsmith. "Before photography became real popular, they would collect hair from family members, make it into these elaborate flowers, in a horseshoe shape generally, put it in a shadow box and hang it on the wall in their parlor," she says. "They could look and see their family."

Other sights include the Mormon Visitors Center, which explains the story of Independence's Mormon heritage, dating back to 1831. Opened in 2008, the town's Midwest Genealogy Center is the largest such public facility in the nation. The 1881 Vaile Mansion, with its 31 rooms, has a grand Victorian-style facade.

As I leave Independence, I recall a quote from favorite son Harry Truman: "I tried never to forget who I was and where I'd come from, and where I was going back to," he once said of his hometown. And after feeling his presence during my visit, it occurs to me he never left. ●



Making a big splash: Volker Memorial Fountain and, below, Northland Fountain and the Volker Waterfall.



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First Aid FOR POWER FADE

Got sluggish slide-outs? Dim marker lights?
Give your 12-volt DC charging system a power prescription

BY JOEL DONALDSON



Like insidious diseases, ailments involving your 12-volt DC charging system manifest themselves in a wide variety of spurious and misleading symptoms. Batteries wear out prematurely. Headlamps and exterior marker lights fail to shine at full brightness. Slide-outs and leveling jacks extend and retract listlessly, house batteries charge only partially after a full day's drive, the fridge doesn't cool properly when operated from 12 volts...the list of symptoms goes on and on.

In a similar vein, diagnosing and repairing a charging system is a little like treating a sick patient. By observing the symptoms, conducting a few carefully chosen tests and implementing purposeful treatment, you can cure the malady yourself. Don't worry, this isn't exactly brain surgery and you shouldn't feel intimidated by the abundance of wires and connections. So slip on some scrubs, grab that voltmeter and show the patient in.

Charging-System Physiology

Before diagnosing charging-system infirmities, RVers should understand the system's inner workings. In a healthy charging system, a process of power consumption, replacement and regulation occurs constantly whenever the engine is running. The crux of the system lies in the relationship between the voltage regulator, battery and alternator. The voltage regulator measures battery voltage, comparing it to an internal "reference" voltage. When loads on the battery cause its voltage to drop below this reference voltage, the regulator applies current to the alternator's rotor windings.

This current magnetizes the rotor, which in turn generates AC voltage in the alternator's sta-

tor (stationary) windings. A set of diodes converts this AC voltage into the DC voltage that charges the battery and operates all the vehicle's electrical devices. As soon as the battery voltage rises above the regulator's reference voltage, the regulator stops supplying current to the alternator rotor, thereby causing charging to cease. This cycle repeats itself over and over, often occurring many times per second.

In a normally operating electrical system, the regulator maintains the battery voltage at around 14.1 to 14.7 volts. Since the ideal maintenance voltage will vary with temperature (higher voltage is required in cold weather), most regulators also include some provision for automatically adjusting their charging voltage with temperature.

On many recent-model vehicles, the voltage

regulator is housed inside the alternator. Typically, the regulator measures battery voltage through an independent, low-current connection to the battery. This separate "sense" wire avoids any measurement errors caused to voltage drops in the high-current stator wire.

Let's Run Some Tests

Before dealing with any potential problems, it's important to see whether the components in the original charging system are operating properly. Keep in mind that some complications result in a loss of performance rather than total failure. One common problem, for example, is the failure of one of the alternator diodes. The alternator in this case still produces some charging current from the other functional diodes, albeit at lower efficiency.

All Charged Up



Need a boost?
Here are
some resources
for RV power products.

BALMAR
www.balmar.net
HEHR POWER SYSTEMS
www.hehr-international.com

PENNTEx INDUSTRIES
www.penntexusa.com
POWERMASTER MOTORSPORTS
www.powermastermotorsports.com
TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH CORPORATION
www.trci.net
WRANGLER NW POWER PRODUCTS
www.wranglernw.com
XANTREX TECHNOLOGY
www.xantrex.com

Some complications can result in a loss of performance rather than total power failure.

The factory service manual for most vehicles includes a procedure for testing the alternator and voltage regulator. Typically, this consists of turning on a heavy electrical load, running the engine at a specific speed and measuring the resulting voltage across the battery terminals. If the voltage is within a specified range of values, the alternator and voltage regulator are working normally. Many automotive service shops and parts stores also have the proper equipment for load-testing the charging system.

Often, a healthy alternator and voltage regulator are prevented from delivering sufficient charging current to the battery by poor electrical connections. Usually, the best method of locating the offending connection involves measuring voltages at various points in the circuit while a heavy current is being drawn. Ideally, the voltage at the batteries should be at least 90 percent of the voltage at the charging source, not including any additional voltage drop across the battery isolator. (Solid-state isolators can

add a volt of additional drop; relay-type isolators typically contribute less than 0.1 volts.)

For example, if your tow vehicle isn't doing an adequate job of keeping the house batteries in your fifth wheel charged, you might switch your RV fridge over to 12-volt DC operation to provide a heavy load on your RV's house batteries, run your tow vehicle's engine at several thousand RPM to provide plenty of alternator output current and measure the voltage at various points between the charging source (the alternator's stator terminal) and the house batteries.

If your measurements showed 14.8 volts at the alternator stator, 14.5 volts at the output of the battery isolator, 14.2 volts at the tow vehicle's electrical connector, 12.8 volts at the trailer's power cord connector and 12.6 volts at the house batteries, you could safely conclude that your trailer power cord connector was causing an excessive voltage drop.

Note that a digital volt meter, also referred to as a digital multimeter, or DMM, is essential for performing this kind of test, because your measurements will often differ from each other by only a fraction of a volt—much too small to discern with an analog-type meter. Also, it's important to make all measurements as quickly as possible, since the alternator output voltage will change over time. Often, this error can be minimized by averaging the results of several successive tests.

Prescribed Treatment

Now it's time to isolate the problem and make a fix. Plug-in connectors are a common problem source of excessive voltage drops, as moisture and dust oxidize the connector's contacts. Oxidized contacts can be cleaned by bur-

nishing them with a Scotch-Brite scouring pad, followed by a few drops of concentrated isopropyl alcohol on the end of a Q-tip. After they're swabbed, the contacts can be further protected against moisture entry by a liberal application of dielectric bulb grease (sold in most auto-parts stores).

Crimped connectors are another common problem spot. Wire flexing and moisture tend to degrade the tightness of the crimp, introducing resistance into the circuit. Current flowing through this resistance heats the connector, further degrading the connection.

Although it's possible to make a good crimped connection, consistently doing so requires specialized tools. For this reason, soldering the wire to the connector is the recommended alternative for do-it-yourselfers. Typically, the connector is lightly crimped around the wire first, and then the combination is soldered. The soldering must be performed quickly so as to avoid overheating the connector's vinyl insulative jacket. Alternately, an uninsulated connector can be used, insulating the completed connection with heat-shrink tubing.

If the wire itself is identified as a source of excessive voltage drop, it will either need to be replaced with thicker-gauge wire or augmented with a second wire connected in parallel with it. Typically, the latter approach is used in situations where the original wire is buried inside a hard-to-access wire harness. Rather than removing it, a second wire of suitable gauge is routed alongside it and connected to it on both ends.

Time for an Organ Transplant?

If you're still unable to obtain satisfactory charging



It's not brain surgery. So slip on scrubs, grab the voltmeter and show the patient in.

performance after correcting any problems in the original system, it's time to consider upgrades. On many vehicles, a high-output alternator is offered as a factory-installed option, and it may make a suitable bolt-in upgrade over the original standard-output version. High-output alternators also are widely available in the aftermarket, in both internal- and external-regulator versions.

Internal-regulator alternators are popular as drop-in replacements for vehicles that used them as original equipment, often requiring no wiring modifications. However, external-regulator alternators offer more options for performance "tweaks." Also, the ability to mount the external regulator in a cooler location may improve the charging system's reliability.

One-wire alternators are a popular aftermarket upgrade among hot-rodders and custom-car builders. They have an internally mounted regulator that uses the high-current stator wire to measure the battery's voltage, thereby reducing

the number of required connections. Unfortunately, the voltage drop across the stator wire also degrades the regulator's precision.

Another often-overlooked candidate for upgrades is the voltage regulator itself. Original-equipment regulators tend to be conservative in their charge profiles, typically tapering off the alternator's output long before the batteries have reached a full state of charge.

For this reason, aftermarket regulators are especially popular in applications where it's desirable to get the quickest recharge in the minimum amount of engine run-time.

For example, Xantrex and Balmar make regulators that offer a three-stage recharge profile. This approach delivers current to the batteries as fast as they're capable of safely accepting it, providing complete recharges in just a fraction of the time required with a conventional regulator. Some models can also be fitted with battery and alternator temperature sensors, reducing their charge times even further. ●



Go to www.goodsamclub.com/highways and click on "First Aid for Power Fade" in the August lineup to find out how to size up your charging system's wiring connections and determine the minimum wire size necessary for an acceptable voltage drop.



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Service work not available at Tucson, AZ location.

good stuff

EDITED BY ROBIN DUFFIELD
TESTED AND REVIEWED BY MEMBERS



Vazu Expandable Flower Vase

Red roses can spruce up a rig's interior, but who has enough storage space, to say nothing of bubble wrap, for transporting fragile and cumbersome vases? Enter the Vazu, an ingenious and inexpensive vase that stows flat and transforms into a full-size container by just adding water. With 35 different colors, patterns and shapes to choose from, the decorative Vazu is fit for just about any rig. Made from polyethylene and polyester, the vase is reusable and easy to clean. Percy and Freddie Middlebrooks, Good Sam product testers from Jonesboro, Georgia, filled up the Vazu, plunked in some flowers and report, "It's nice that it's so lightweight and it looks great on our table."

PRICE: \$4.99 to \$9.99

CONTACT: VazuUSA, 216-382-1805, www.vazuusa.com



Brilliant Frame

Looking to hang framed photos of your recent trek to Baja without drilling holes in the walls of your RV? The Brilliant Frame relies on good-old Velcro hook-and-loop technology for easy placement and removal. To update the picture, simply remove the acrylic picture holder from the wall and replace the image. Connectors attach multiple Brilliant Frame pictures for display. Good Sam product tester Wayne Cook of Berea, Ohio, mounted the Brilliant Frame and reports, "This frame is lightweight and simple to put together. It allows you to easily change the photos when you want to."

PRICE: \$10.99

CONTACT: Brilliant Frame, 303-717-6875, www.brilliantframe.com

AfterBite Itch Eraser

Ravenous mosquitoes and other pesky insects can transform a carefree outdoor barbecue into an itchy ordeal. The AfterBite Outdoor Combo Pack helps you squeeze out some relief with a half-ounce tube of ammonia-based Itch Eraser, formulated for fast relief of insect bites, stings and other minor skin irritations. Also included is a 7-ounce tube of AfterBite Kids cream formula for gentle relief from the pain and swelling that accompanies insect encounters. Hubert Hall, a Good Sam product tester from Oak Ridge, Tennessee, applied AfterBite Itch Eraser and says, "It relieves the pain and itch of insect bites quickly and it's nice that it works well on children and adults."

PRICE: \$5.99

CONTACT: Tender Corporation, 800-258-4696, www.tendercorp.com



Quick 10 Upholstery Cleaner

Remove your dog's grubby paw prints and your spouse's messy coffee spills from your sofa with a shot of Quick 10. A powerful but nontoxic concentrate, Quick 10 eliminates stains and exudes a pleasant odor. It also acts as a powerful prewash stain remover that won't damage fabrics or fade colors. The Quick 10 kit comes with a 33.8-ounce spray bottle and two packets of concentrated formula. Just add water and reuse the bottle. Good Sam member David Hanson of Williston, North Dakota, cleaned up with Quick 10 and says, "It smells fresh, cleans well, is easy to activate and travels well in the RV."



PRICE: \$16.99

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Go to [www.goodsamclub.com/
community/eventsandtours.aspx](http://www.goodsamclub.com/community/eventsandtours.aspx)
for our complete calendar.

AUGUST

VERMONT • DISNEY VISITS VERMONT SAMBOREE, August 7-9. Tunbridge Fairgrounds, Tunbridge. \$55, \$65 after 7/15. Contact: Matthew Adams, 236 NH Rt. 120, Cornish, NH 03745. 802-375-9628.

info@vermontgoodsam.com
www.vermontgoodsam.com

MINNESOTA • WIZARD OF OZ SAMBOREE, August 13-16. Alexandria Shooting Park, Alexandria. \$60, \$70 at gate. Contact: Brenda O'Neil, 7584 Hillton Rd., Royalton, MN 56373, 320-584-8076.

2bcool@clearwire.net
www.mngoodsamclub.com

COLORADO • FREEDOM FOR ALL SAMBOREE, August 14-16. Gunnison County Fairgrounds, Gunnison. \$60. Contact: Norma Emerson, P.O. Box 1468, Elizabeth, CO 80107, 303-646-1137.

emer801@msn.com
www.coloradogoodsam.org

NEW HAMPSHIRE • AMERICANA SAMBOREE, August 14-16. North Haverhill Fairgrounds, North Haverhill. \$60, \$70 at gate. Contact: Dick Coderre, 520 Main Dunstable Rd., Nashua, NH 03062, 603-882-1224.

dickcoderre@nhgoodsam.com
www.nhgoodsam.com

NORTH DAKOTA • STATE SAMBOREE, August 20-23. Lake Region College, Devils Lake. \$50. Contact: Don Strube, 5300 42nd St. SE, Minot, ND 58701, 701-838-2388.

strube99@srt.com
www.geocities.com/ndgoodsam/index.html

SEPTEMBER

ILLINOIS • HAPPY BIRTHDAY ABE SAMBOREE, September 4-7. Marshall-Putnam Fairgrounds, Henry. \$70, \$75 at gate. Contact: Sandi Howard, 9N914 Beckman Tr., Elgin, IL 60124, 847-697-2119.

bsktchck@hotmail.com
www.illinoisgoodsam.com

UTAH • TAG-A-LONG SAMBOREE, September 10-12. Millard County Fairgrounds, Delta. \$35. Contact: Glenn Carroll, 1449 Woodhill Dr., Sandy, UT 84092, 801-571-1803.

carroll@utah-inter.net
www.utahgoodsam.org

DELAWARE • RED, WHITE AND BLUE SAMBOREE, September 11-13. Delaware State Fairgrounds, Harrington. \$85. Contact: Barry Larkin, 2472 Chance Rd., Clayton, DE 19938, 302-653-0110.

degoodsam@aol.com
www.degoodsam.com

MAINE • GOOD OLD DAYS SAMBOREE, September 11-13. Fryeburg Fairgrounds, Fryeburg. \$85/2 at gate. Contact: Diane Qualey, P.O. Box 271, Limington, ME, 207-651-3133.

dianequaley@roadrunner.com
www.mainegoodsams.org

WEST VIRGINIA • ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL SAMBOREE, September 11-13. Butcher Bend 4-H Grounds, Mineral Wells. \$55 at gate. Early bird \$45. Contact: Don and Kathy Wise, 239 Williams Hwy., Parkersburg, WV 26105, 304-482-7568.

kloua@suddenlink.net
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NEW MEXICO • FAMILY REUNION SAMBOREE, September 15-20. Red Rock Park, Gallup. \$55. Contact: Judy Weatherford, 540 Mesilla NE, Albuquerque, NM 87108, 505-254-2299.

judyinabq@aol.com
www.nmgoodsams.com

GEORGIA • TROPICAL LUAU SAMBOREE, September 17-20. Georgia National Fairgrounds, Perry. \$85. Contact: Perno Scott, 1865 Poplar St., Conyers, GA 30013, 770-922-5794.

gladigotta@comcast.net
www.georgiagoodsam.com

MICHIGAN • LOONEY TUNES ADVENTURE SAMBOREE, September 18-20. Clare County Fairgrounds, Harrison. \$60/family, \$53/single before 9/5.

Contact: Joseph and Cheryl Halhober, 1845 Everest Dr., Monroe, MI 48161, 734-241-3740.

joe_and_cheryl@comcast.net
www.michigangoodsam.org

OHIO • NASCAR SAMBOREE, September 18-20. Fulton County Fairgrounds, Wauseon. \$45, \$50 at gate. Contact: Dave Spragg, 3930 Old Wheeling Rd., Zanesville, OH 43701, 740-454-3704.

dspragg@columbus.rr.com
www.ohiogoodsam.com

PENNSYLVANIA • NEW YEAR CELEBRATION SAMBOREE, September 18-20. Clinton County Fairgrounds, Mackeyville. \$75, \$80 after 9/5.

Contact: Nathan Strite, 5871 Olde Scotland Rd., Shippensburg, PA 17257, 717-385-1168.

pagooodsam@pa.net
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NEVADA • HARVEST TIME SAMBOREE, September

CLUBevents

24-26. Winnemucca Event Center, Winnemucca. \$55/2, \$35/1, \$10 extra at gate. Contact: Linda LeChien, 1380 Centerville Ln. #40, Gardnerville, NV 89410, 775-782-5352.

rllechien@aol.com
www.nevadagoodsam.com

MISSOURI • PIRATES OF THE BIG MUDDY SAMBOREE, September 24-27. Boone County Fairgrounds, Columbus. \$50, \$60 at gate. Contact: Jean Gardner, 39456 Omega St., Anabel, MO 63461.

mogoodsamdirector@gmail.com
www.missourigoodsamclub.com

INDIANA • HARVESTING FRIENDS SAMBOREE, September 25-27. Shelby County Fairgrounds, Shelbyville. \$50. Contact: Wayne and Carole Crise, 601 S. 2nd St., Garrett, IN 46738, 260-357-3216 or 260-438-6668.

ingoodsam@yahoo.com
www.indianagoodsam.com

KENTUCKY • FALL SAMBOREE, September 25-27. Meade County Fairgrounds, Brandenburg. \$50. Early bird 9/24, \$10. Contact: Linda Lane, 1296 Lake Forest Ln., West View, KY 40178.

www.kentuckygoodsam.com

NORTH CAROLINA • PILGRIMS PARADE SAMBOREE, September 25-27. Tom Johnson Rally Park, Marion. \$65, \$75 after 9/1. Contact: Don and Eunice Fletcher, 110 Riviera Ln., Sanford,

NC 27332, 919-499-2512.
defletch@windstream.net
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SOUTH CAROLINA • BY THE SEA SAMBOREE, September 27-October 4. Ocean Lakes Family Campground, Myrtle Beach. Price varies. Contact: Sammy and Judy Dorn, 399 Gethsemane Cr., Ware Shoals, SC 29692, 864-861-3330.

sammy37@prtcnet.com
www.scgoodsam.org

OCTOBER KANSAS • GHOULS, GOBLINS AND GHOSTS SAMBOREE, October 1-4. Winfield Fairgrounds, Winfield. \$60, \$70 after 9/15. Contact: Marty Ward, 2201 E. MacArthur, Lot E-3, Wichita, KS 67216, 316-213-8297.

leward@cox.net
www.kansasgoodsam.org

ARKANSAS • FALL SAMBOREE, October 8-11. Kay Rodgers Park, Fort Smith. \$55. Contact: Melinda Wiggs, 2501 Skyline Pt., Jonesboro, AR 72404, 870-972-0951.

mwiggs2501@yahoo.com
www.arkansasgoodsams.com

TENNESSEE • HARVEST FESTIVAL SAMBOREE, October 16-18. James E. Ward AgriCenter, Lebanon. \$70/2, \$60/1. Contact: Terry Minger, 6582 Carriage Glen Dr., Bartlett, TN 38135-1555, 901-387-1412.

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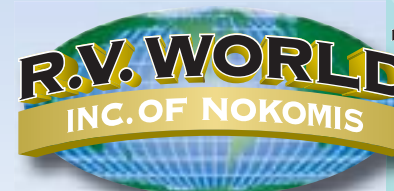


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Rockingham County Fairgrounds, Harrisburg.
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amitch@shentel.net
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38965, 662-473-1077.

hugo5358@bellsouth.net
www.msgoodsam.org

TEXAS • GAME TIME IN TEXAS SAMBOREE, October 22-25.

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Bishop, TX 78343, 361-584-1919.

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www.texasgoodsam.com

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Fairgrounds, Frederick. \$70/2, \$65/1.

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LOUISIANA • TASTE OF LOUISIANA SAMBOREE, October 29-November 1.

Kemper Williams
Park, Patterson. \$70/2, \$60/1. Contact: Burk
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registrar@lagoodsam.org
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SAMBOREE, October 30-November 1. Antelope
Valley Fairgrounds, Lancaster. \$70/1, \$85/2
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Reva St., Cerritos, CA 90703, 714-521-1076
or 562-833-3691.

pebbles-10@sbcglobal.net
www.socalgoodsam.org

NOVEMBER

FLORIDA • UNDER THE BIG TOP SAMBOREE,

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Box 348, Nobleton, FL 34661, 352-796-
8867.

bward5@bellsouth.net
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Please note: The November 2009 issue of Highways closes on August 25 (arrival date, September 25). The December issue closes on September 21 (arrival date, January 9).

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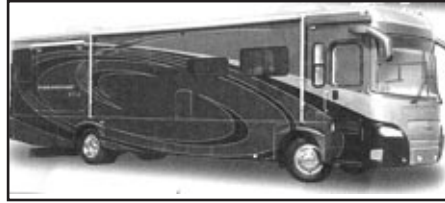
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1999 FLEETWOOD JAMBOREE 29', Ford V10, single slide-out, Onan generator, sleeps 8, 35,000 miles. Mint condition. \$25K. (631) 474-3298 (NY).



2006 LUXURY FRIENDSHIP G7 by Gulfstream 40' dsl pshr. Cat 350, ext warr, 3 TV, cherry int, lg frig, W/D, 16K mi, auto awn. Must sell, health reasons. Tow car pkg neg. \$190K. (817) 326-1190 or (817) 247-0104.



2003 COACHMEN LEPRECHAUN 31' Class C V10 Ford with slide, 11K mi. 2003 Honda CR-V dinghy, 75K mi, runs great. Falcon towbar and toad braking system. Screened-in porch hangs from awning. \$51K. (586) 463-8362 (MI).

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2005 ALLEGRO BUS 40'. 4 SO, 400 Cummins, 6 spd, 18K mi, blk/gray, K bed, HydroHot, auto lvl, bit-in comp, 3 TV, DVD/stereo/sat/CB, cent vac, frt bra, many exts. Nonsmk. Warr. + '04 Jeep Lib. \$199K. (503) 695-5463 (OR).

2005 MONACO KNIGHT 40'. 8500 mi, 330 Cummins, 6-spd Allison, Onan gen, 4 slides, jacks, awns, full paint, sat, camera, new batteries, warranty, many extras. TTN membership. \$138K. (804) 712-6888, Hinson1806@msn.com

1997 MONACO SAFARI 38' 300 CAT DSL Pusher. Allison 6 spd, 6.3KW Onan gen, hyd jacks, 2 solar panels, 87K mi, Corian tops, 2 air. Near new tires & batts. Fully loaded. Xlnt cond. \$35,500. (423) 954-2171 (TN).

2002 WINNEBAGO 40', 330 Cat, 6-spd Allison, BR/LR slide, 30K mi. Dbl dr frig/frzr/icemkr, RVP heat pump air, dsl gen. Nonsmoker, no pets. \$99K. Will email pics. rshelenberger@yahoo.com, (814) 807-0339 (PA).

2003 WINNEBAGO JOURNEY DL 39 ft, 330 Cat, 6-speed trans, 27K mi. Two slide-outs, W/D prep. Transferable warranty. Nonsmoker. \$125K. (719) 346-0350 (CO).

2000 DOLPHIN 36' FORD V10, 21,500 miles, 12' S/O, 5.5 gen, W/D, Corian tops, awnings, 2 TV, DVD/VCR, 2 air, rear camera, level jacks. Must sell, health reasons. Reduced to \$31,000. 407-654-3863 (FL).

1999 FOUR WINDS CHATEAU 32'. Auto jacks, in-motion sat, 30K mi, V10 gas, 2 TV, rear queen bed, lg bath, linen & dishes. NS/NP Slps 6. Xlnt cond. Garage kept. \$28K. (850) 592-2473 (FL); meemaw61@yahoo.com

2003 GULFSTREAM YELLOWSTONE 40' CLASS A 330 Cat dsl pusher. 4 S/O, 2 A/C, 2 TV (1 flat screen), new carpet, stove, micro, 2-dr frig, W/D, tub/shwr, awns, gen. Nonsmkr. Good cond. \$96K. (708) 567-5804 (FL).

2007 COUNTRY COACH ALLURE 430 Quad 40', 400 Cummins, 19,000 miles, heated floors, Silverleaf Hydro-Hot, home garaged, in-motion sat, 2 Euro chairs, custom computer desk, safe. Nonsmkr. \$299K. (719) 527-8054 (CO).

2005 WINNEBAGO JOURNEY 36'. 2 slides, 350 Cat, new sat, leather, 4-dr frig, 24K mi, Sleep # qn bed, dsl gen, micro/conv oven, inverter, elec awn, TripTek, loaded. Nonsmkr. \$120K. Showroom cond. (218) 678-4625.

2000 HR AMBASSADOR 36' DIESEL. 1 slide-out, 45K mi, 11 mpg. New batteries, tires, solar, radio & CD. 4-dr frig, 2 TVs, 3 AC. \$45K. (858) 675-7587 (CA).

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2000 CARRIAGE 38' 5th WHEEL. 3 slides, sleeps 4, island queen. No pets, nonsmoker. \$38,000. (207) 946-5002 or rbeckey@fairpoint.net (Maine).

2003 ALL AMERICAN SPORT Toy Hauler 36'. Loaded, new A/C 2008, Onan gen 4KW, propane model, 4-30 lb bottles, cent air/heat. Diamond plate garage floor & ramp. Xlnt cond. \$23K, neg. (330) 565-8344, Florence, SC.

TRADING POST: As a benefit of membership, Good Sam Club members may advertise personal items for sale in the Trading Post classified ad section of *Highways*.

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Above: Yorkies Honey and Fresno greet Good Sam member Kathy Litchfield. Right: Jill stands guard over Jon and Jan Crampton's rig. Bottom: Ron and Linda Santee's dog, Gracie.



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«Craggy Conundrum.

Care for some rock-solid financial advice? Tell us the location of the forbidding landscape pictured on the left and you might win this month's \$50 prize in our Where's Good Sam photo contest. To enter, simply send an e-mail identifying the photograph's location and state or province to whereisgoodsam@goodsamclub.com and include your name and contact info. On September 1, we'll pick one \$50 winner at random from among the correct entries. Look for the answer and the winner in the November 2009 issue.

WHERE'S GOOD SAM IS NOW ON FACEBOOK.

For more photo fun, go to www.facebook.com and enter Good Sam Club in the search box.

» **Get on board.** Good Sam Club member Jonathan Medlock won \$50 after correctly identifying the ferry crossing in the May issue's Where's Good Sam photo, reprinted on the right. The RV with the Good Sam sticker is about to cross the Liard River south of Fort Simpson on the McKenzie Highway in Canada's Northwest Territories. Member Bob Dickford earned \$50 for shooting the photo.

Now it's your turn. Take a photo of an RV in an interesting or scenic location with the Good Sam decal prominently displayed. E-mail the high-resolution image to whereisgoodsam@goodsamclub.com and don't forget to provide your name and contact information. If your photo's selected, you'll receive a check for \$50. ●

