RV MAGAZINE

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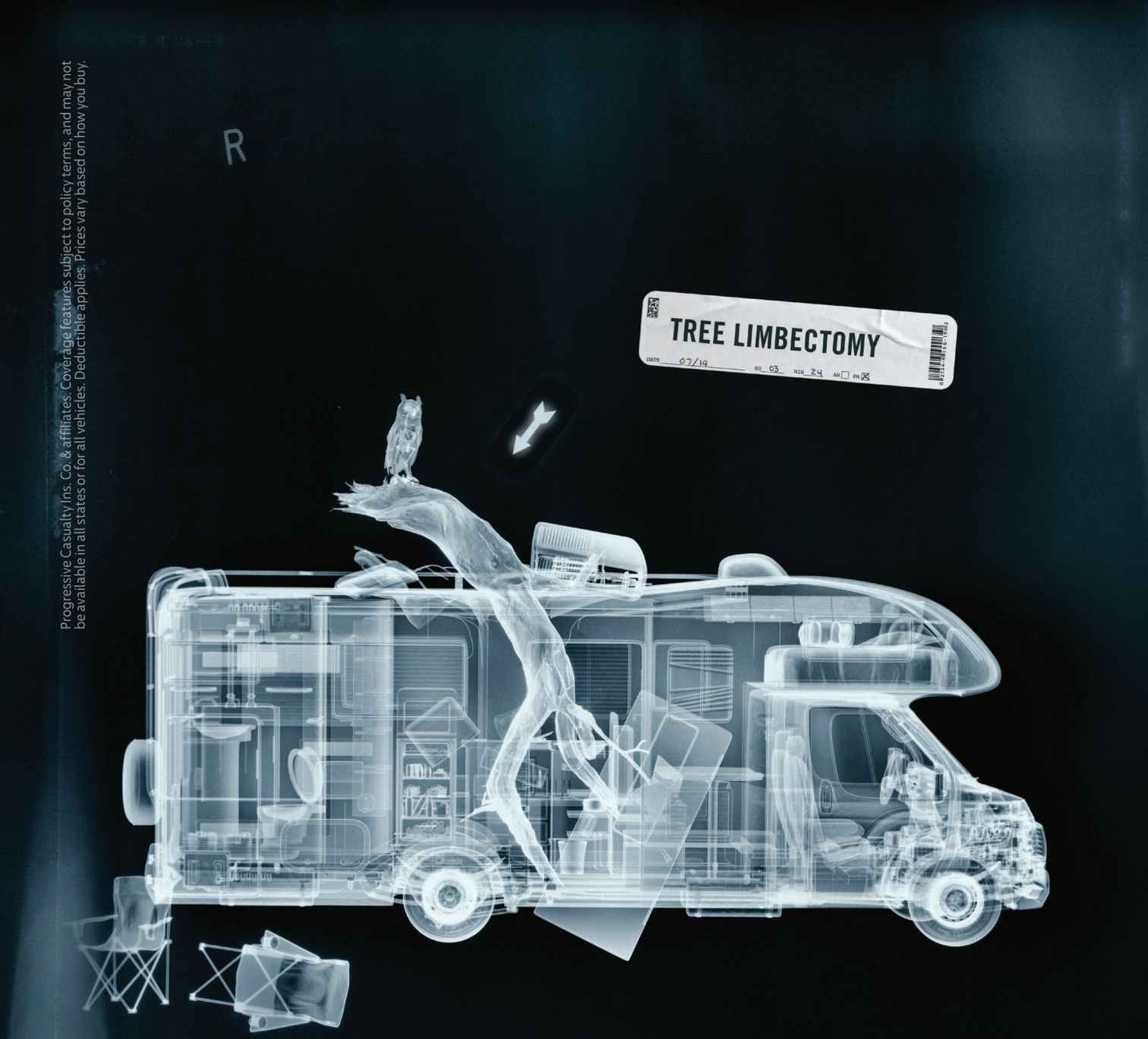
A full-time RVer since she was 10, Abby Holcombe is a renowned champion kayaker at just 17 years of age. See story on page 46.

PHOTO: PETER HOLCOMBE



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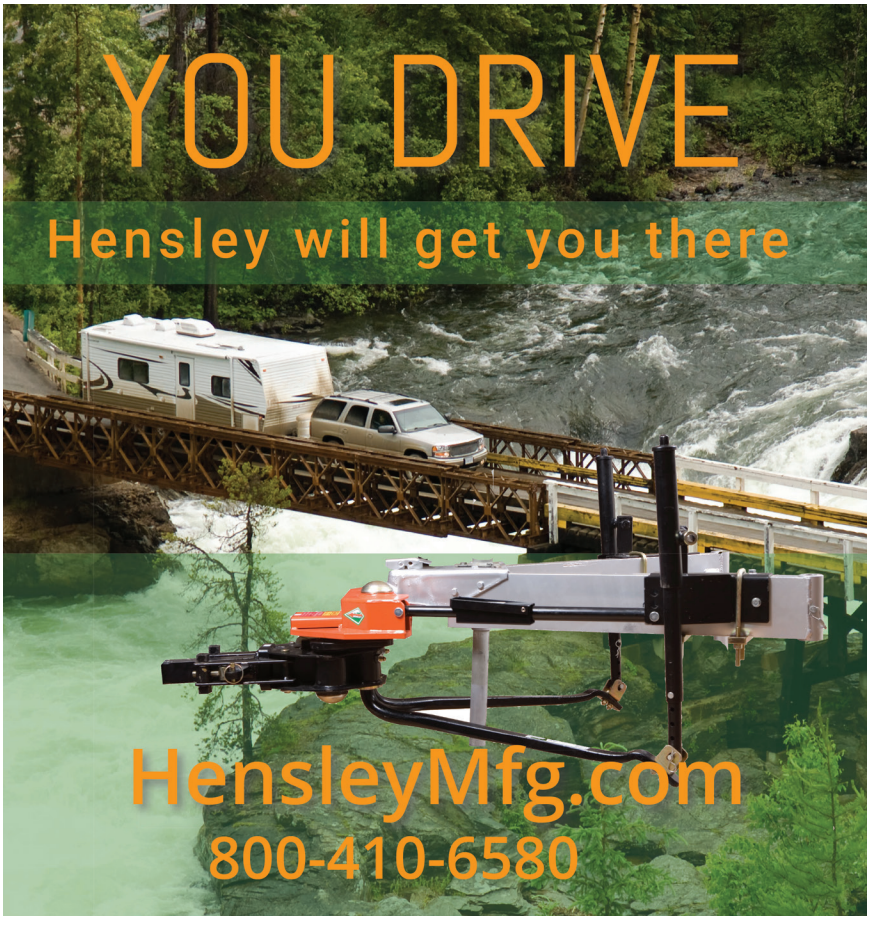

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LEAVE IT BETTER THAN YOU FIND IT

We love the outdoors—savoring and exploring all of it—and more than anything we love our national parks.

Each year, National Park Week (April 16–24 for 2022) is designated as a time to celebrate national parks and to inspire everyone to discover the nation's diverse landscape and heritage. From arid deserts to rolling plains to coastal wonderlands, the National Park Service delivers on all fronts. Check out page 44 for some suggestions about how you can celebrate.

We are fortunate to have more than 400 national parks in the United States. That may sound like a lot; however, with the popularity of RVing at an all-time high, it can also be tricky to visit some of the most popular spots without planning ahead.

The rise in popularity of RVing has unfortunately led to an increase in litter and vandalism.

If you're ready to give it a shot, Bryanna Royal has laid out some suggestions on how to hit multiple national parks in one trip on page 22.

The rise in popularity of RVing has unfortunately led to an increase in litter and vandalism on public lands as well as private campgrounds because people aren't cleaning up after themselves. While many people want you to think about this on Earth Day (April 22), I urge you to think about it on every trip you take. The team at Parks Project may have some volunteering opportunities to help in this endeavor—visit ***parksproject.us*** to learn more.

No matter where your next adventure takes you, please don't simply leave the park or campsite just as you found it. Always leave it even better, and pick up after yourselves, and others. That's how we can truly make a difference. And in so doing, we can ensure that future generations will enjoy the beauty and serenity the outdoors brings to us all. ■

Marcus Lemonis
Publisher
@marcuslemonis

MILITARY HISTORY

The "RV Road Trip" article on Charleston in the February issue was very good but it left out a piece of history not far from downtown. The Friends of the Hunley museum (*hunley.org*) has the *H.L. Hunley* on display. It is the first successful combat submarine in history and successfully sank a Union ship in Charleston Harbor during the Civil War. It is being preserved, and relics from on board are on display. It is a piece of military history that shouldn't be missed. All proceeds stay with the museum.

Frank M., via email

FROM TWITTER

If you were granted one wish today, what would it be?

@thekandilee
To go on a weekend getaway with my husband ...

@jenannrodrigues
To own my dream camper.

@bumbleberry509
For an RV vacation for my family. My veteran hubby had foot surgery this summer and our toddler has special needs ... both love camping.

@extremecakespet
An RV to enjoy the peace and quiet of the outdoors. Overlooking the water and open to where you can see the stars.

• • •

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DON'T BITE

I enjoyed reading the article regarding rattlesnake avoidance training in the January issue. We have dogs that have gone through this type of training and know that it works. Prior to training we had a dog that was bitten on her nose by a young snake. We rushed her to a vet and she was treated but was very sick for several days. Since then, we also have our dog vaccinated each year for snake bites. If bitten, she still will need vet treatment, but the treatment will be at a much lower cost as the vaccine slows down the impact of the snakebite.

Bill Wilkinson
Auburn, California

IN FULL VIEW

The "Reservation Rules" article in the February issue is excellent and informative. We would like to add a comment that could also be useful. We always use the Google Earth app to view potential campsites before renting. We saw one site with a railroad not 100 feet from some sites. Can you imagine ole 99 midnight 200-car special just feet away waking you up?

Matt and Tina Miller
Chocowinity, North Carolina

PICK IT UP

I would like to comment about some dog owners and their lack of respect for others. Dog owners and their children seem to always train their dogs to poop along or on other camper's campsites. This disrespect even extends to while walking their dog by neighboring campsites they think their dog defecating has priority of the moment while families are outside eating their meals. My observations also include how often that when they think no one is watching they do not pick up after their pet. Being an early riser while quietly sitting outside our camper reading, I often witness dog owners standing while their dog does its business, glance around, not see me, and walk away. However, when they do see me they pick up after them. Come on pet owners, pick up after your dogs no matter what and (may I echo) please do not leave them in your camper all alone to bark all day.

Art Hendrickson, via email

MUST BE LIVING RIGHT

I just read the article in the February 2022 issue about "Stopping Power" that discussed brake controllers. The article caused me to look at

Good morning, Sunshine!
Sunrise at Sea Rim State Park, Sabine Pass, Texas.
– Bonnie and Jeff Hull, via email

PHOTOS: BONNIE AND JEFF HULL, COURTESY TEKONSHA, JAN BECHTEL

ARE SO!

In the January issue, Neil von Koehe pointed out that the November 2021 feature on South Dakota contained an error in identifying bighorn sheep as "pronghorn antelope." Being originally from South Dakota, I concur; however, I have to broaden your knowledge as there are definitely antelope in the Badlands, as well as plenty of prairie dogs. – **Duane Bossman, via email**

my tow vehicle, a 2017 Jeep Grand Cherokee Trailhawk, to see where my controller was … NOT! There was none, but when I checked the invoice for our 2018 17-foot Rockwood Geo Pro trailer, sure enough, the Tekonsha Prodigy P2 was listed as part of my install package. In short, for almost four years we have been towing without the control unit, but never once realized it (as the saying goes, "The Divine takes care of fools and drunks").

So, two things: Our embarrassed dealer made things right immediately (his slogan is "Service doesn't end with the sale"), and this also is a testament to the stopping power of the Jeep, which we matched to the weight of the Geo Pro and all it carries based on a previous article similar to the "2022 Guide to Towing."

Thanks to your articles, we are no longer dodging bullets that we didn't even know were coming our way.

Steve Lente, Colorado Springs, Colorado

"I'LL PASS" CONTINUED

The January question in the Join the Conversation asked what drinks would you like to see in upcoming "On Tap This Month" installments. My vote would be coffee and/or hot chocolate. I drink coffee nonstop and often add a packet of Swiss Miss cocoa to it.

Georgia Hollis
Banner Elk, North Carolina

PASS IT TO ME

"On Tap This Month" is a department that I, and many friends, look forward to each month. The selection of new brews is so varied, and it's nice to find good, trustworthy recommendations. Our only challenge has been to find some of them to further our own experiences and enjoyments. Keep up the good work and tip one for us.

Ron Cole, via email

HANDY ADVICE

Here's some advice for backing up a trailer. Have the spotter stand at the back of the truck and on the side so the driver can see them. Use hand motions waving back and for any change of direction. When within 3 feet hold your hands up and spread them the same distance as the truck from trailer. Narrow your hands as truck gets closer. When within 5 inches use your thumb and finger. This is the system we used on the farm each time. No yelling needed!

Jerry Irk, via email

MORE STATE STICKERS

Here's another way to display the states you've visited. We stuck ours onto a section of dry erase board and then mounted it inside the entrance door (we painted the screws white). No weathering, and you can also see it outside with the door open. The whole project cost about $3.

Jan Bechtel, via email ■

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Send us your favorite RV Quick Tips and images to info-rvmagazine@rv.com

TRANSFER FLOW INC., CIRCLE 124 ON READER SERVICE CARD

LOW-COUNTRY BOIL

SERVES 4 **PREP TIME** 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME 25 MINUTES

With the arrival of spring, longer days and warmer temperatures means outdoor dining is back! This mouth-watering one-pot feast requires little prep, cook time, or cleanup. The Low-Country Boil, also known as Frogmore Stew, has been a Southern staple for more than 150 years. The popularity of traditional seafood boils in South Carolina's Lowcountry is rooted in the social customs of the Gullah Geechee people, who made large-batch stews while working on plantations. This casual meal is a combination of fresh seafood, potatoes, corn, and spicy sausage simmered in a zesty aromatic broth. The secret to a perfect Low-Country Boil is to not overcook the ingredients, especially the shrimp. Grab your biggest pot, boil your feast, toss it out on a newspaper-topped table, and dig in. —***CATE BATTLES***

You'll Need

- 1 lb small red-skinned potatoes, unpeeled
- 1.5 lbs andouille sausage cut into 1–2-inch lengths
- 4 ears of corn, shucked, and cut in half
- 1 sweet onion, quartered
- 3 bay leaves
- 3 lemons cut in half (set two lemons aside for garnish)
- 2–3 qts of water or enough to cover the ingredients
- 1 can of beer (preferably a lager or pale ale)
- 4–6 tbsp Old Bay Seasoning (can add additional when served)
- 2 lbs large shell-on shrimp
- 1 head garlic (sliced horizontally to expose cloves)
- Salted butter for dipping sauce
- Hot sauce
- Newspaper

In Camp

1. Place the potatoes and sausage in a large stockpot. Squeeze one lemon and throw the halves in the pot. Add the Old Bay Seasoning, onion, garlic head, bay leaves, and can of beer.
2. Add the water, bring it to a boil, and let it cook for 15 minutes or until the potatoes are fork tender.
3. Keeping the water at a low simmer, add the corn, and 5 minutes later, add the shrimp. Let it boil another 3–4 minutes or until the shrimp are pink. Remove from heat.
4. Drain and pour the contents out onto a picnic table covered with newspaper. Sprinkle extra Old Bay Seasoning on top.
5. Serve with melted butter, lemon wedges, and hot sauce (preferably Crystal or Louisiana). ■

PHOTO: RAY DIEHR

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LOCAL FLAVORS

A Taste of Minneapolis

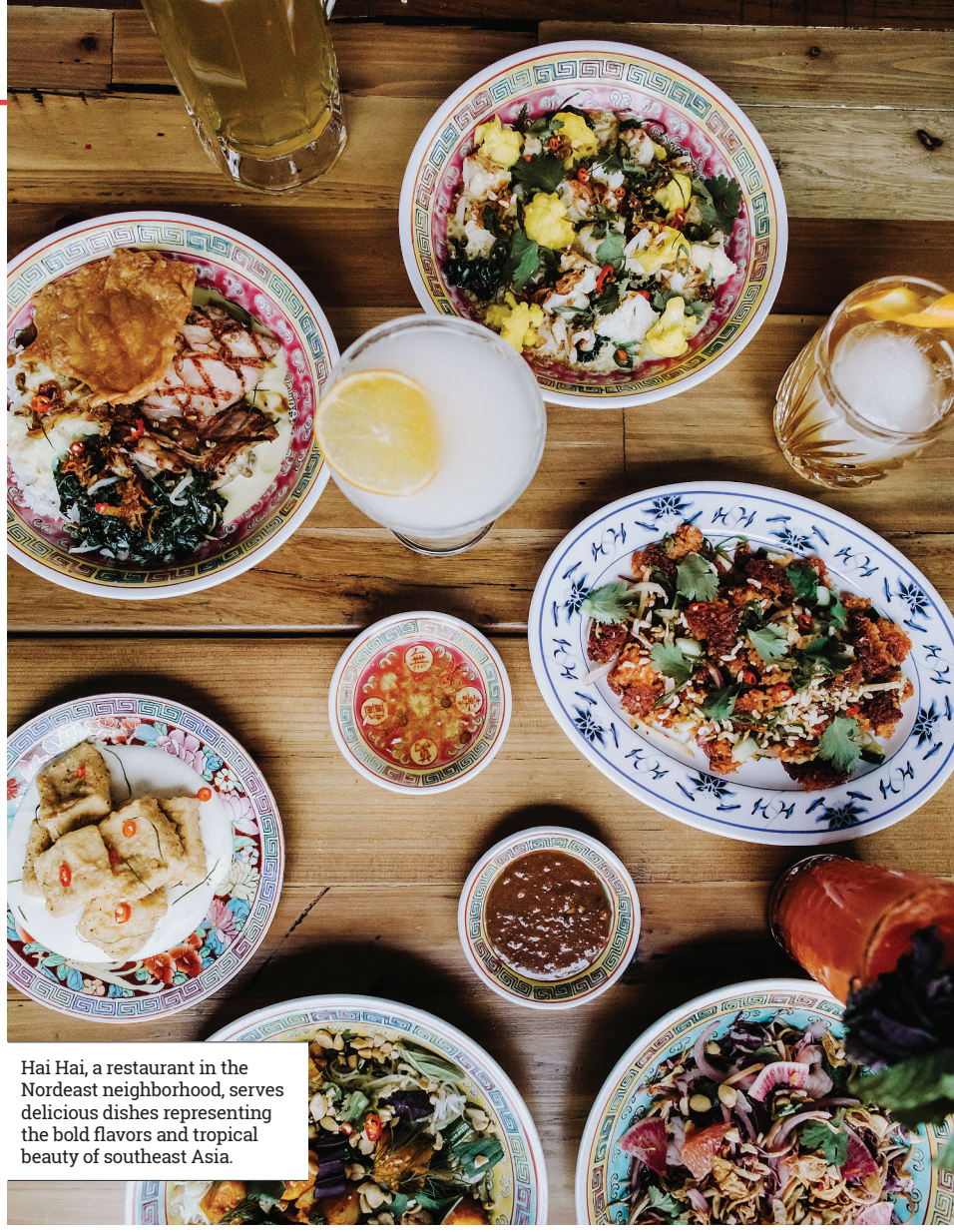
For a delicious slice of the City of Lakes' history and culture, tailor a tour to your tummy.

BY TERRI PETERSON SMITH

Standing on the iconic Stone Arch Bridge in downtown Minneapolis with the Mississippi River rushing below, you get a sense of history swirling up in the cool mist from roaring St. Anthony Falls. Still considered sacred Dakota space, Native Americans called this location Mni Sota Makoce, "the land where the waters reflect the clouds."

It's also where timber and grain from around the Midwest came to market on the river and where—though it's no Niagara—St. Anthony Falls was big enough to power the flour mills of the Pillsbury family and others starting in the 1800s. Minneapolis has been a food town ever since, with each new wave of settlers adding its own food traditions and spicing up life in Minneapolis. That's one reason the city's chefs and restaurants regularly stack up James Beard Foundation Awards the way snow piles up in February.

Now, Minneapolis and its savvy food entrepreneurs are redeveloping the historic mills and industrial areas, blending the city's history with a host of new and trendy drinking and dining spots meticulously integrated into and around the old buildings. These creative and casual eateries offer a great way to explore Minneapolis, meet its people, and get a taste of the cultures they represent.

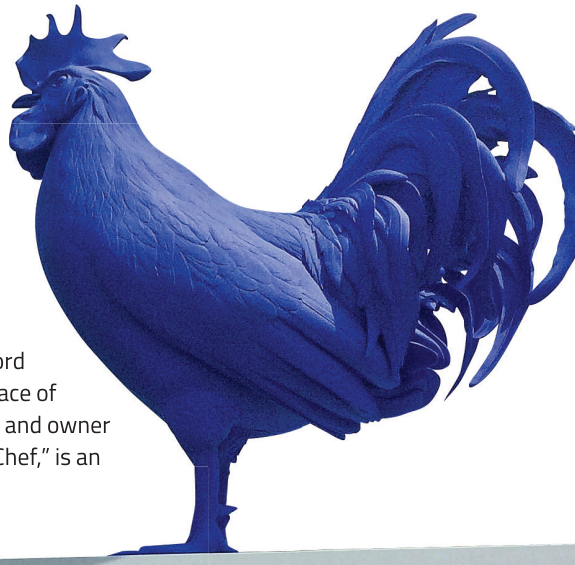


Hai Hai, a restaurant in the Nordeast neighborhood, serves delicious dishes representing the bold flavors and tropical beauty of southeast Asia.

First Food

Start your tour in Mill Ruins Park and the adjacent Water Works Park on the downtown riverfront where walkers, runners, and bikers take to the historic paths. One of the city's newest restaurants, Owamni, is built into a former mill and perched above the river overlooking the sacred falls, Owámniyomni, a Dakota word that roughly translates to "the place of the falling, swirling waters." Chef and owner Sean Sherman, a.k.a. "the Sioux Chef," is an

Minneapolis has been a food town ever since, with each new wave of settlers adding its own food traditions and spicing up life.



Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Sculpture Garden is open daily. There are 60 sculptures, including a 25-foot-tall blue rooster.

St. Anthony Falls Heritage Trail, along the Minneapolis riverfront, loops under and over the 1883 Stone Arch Bridge, which is open to bicyclists and pedestrians only.

Oglala Lakota (Sioux), born on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation and a longtime proponent of authentic indigenous American cuisine that he describes as "decolonized cooking." No fry bread here. Instead, the menu offers fish, game, berries, and wild rice and leaves behind the dairy, wheat flour, and processed sugar that European settlers brought with them. His cuisine hit the spotlight with *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen*, which garnered a James Beard Award for Best American Cookbook in 2018.

At Owamni you can savor native corn tacos with cedar-braised bison, smoked trout with dandelion pesto, and grilled forest mushrooms. Crunch lightly baked crackers made from sweet corn's ancestor, teosinte. It's all de-lish!

Flour Power

In the 1800s, the mills and canals along the river made up the largest direct-drive, water-powered facilities in the world for flour production. Part of the complex, the Mill City Museum, is built into the ruins of what was once the world's largest flour mill and offers a look at the city's early days.

Tucked between the museum and the river, the Mill City Farmers Market pops up every Saturday April through October and monthly in the winter. Stroll the stalls and buy organic produce under the watchful gaze of some of the world's great

FINE PAIRINGS

Our budget-friendly pick is a crisp Italian pinot grigio, **L'Auratae Catarrato**, which complements grilled pork shoulder especially well. The wine's acidity cuts through the fattiness of the pork while the aromas mix well with the smoky, earthy flavors that come from grilling. Made with organic grapes, it offers intense aromas of citrus and mango ($11). For a stylish Date Night wine, we chose **Lucien Albrecht Riesling Tradition**, from Alsace, France. It's a dry riesling—with spice and mineral notes—that pairs well with the Asian flavors of this dish ($20).

On the Menu

Grilled Pork Shoulder with Tiger Bite Sauce

This dish is adapted from Hmong chef Yia Vang's recipe, but slightly simplified for camp cooking. For best results, let the meat marinate at least overnight.

YOU'LL NEED

- 2–3 lbs pork shoulder

Marinade

- 4 tsp chopped shallots
- 4 tsp finely chopped cilantro
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 4 tsp lemongrass (optional)
- 4 tsp fish sauce
- 4 tsp oyster sauce
- 4 tbsp canola oil

Tiger Bite Sauce

- 2 tsp canola oil
- 2 small shallots, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, finely chopped (add more or less according to taste)
- 1 cup finely chopped cilantro
- 2 tsp fish sauce
- 2 tbsp oyster sauce
- ½ cup freshly squeezed lime juice (about 2 limes)

MAKE IT

1) Butterfly the pork so it lays flat.

2) Make the marinade by adding ingredients one at a time and mashing with a fork. Seal pork in a Ziploc bag with the marinade. Turn it occasionally as it marinates.

3) Make Tiger Bite Sauce by adding ingredients one by one and mashing them together to combine flavors.

4) Cook pork on grill at high heat. Cook for 5 minutes on each side and continue until the internal temperature is 160° F.

5) Cut pork across the grain and spoon Tiger Bite Sauce over it. Serve with rice.

PHOTOS: TERRI PETERSON SMITH, ©KRIVIT-MEET MINNEAPOLIS, LAUREN CUTSHALL

playwrights who look down from the walls of the acclaimed Guthrie Theater next door. Turn away from the river and you'll see the market's neighbor, U.S. Bank Stadium, home of the Minnesota Vikings, looming over the area like a giant futuristic Viking ship.

Explore Nordeast

Cross the Stone Arch Bridge and you've entered the neighborhood fondly called "Nordeast." Stop at Kramarczuk's, a longtime bastion of Nordeast cookery with hearty fare that reflects the Eastern European roots of folks who settled the neighborhood. You'll find varenyky (meat, cheese, and potato pierogis), holubets (stuffed cabbage rolls), and freshly baked old-world breads and pastries. Purchase some of the variety of house-made sausages to take back to your campsite.

In contrast to the kielbasa, Hai Hai (hai means two in Vietnamese) serves gorgeous Vietnamese street food. Chef Christina Nguyen utilizes her grandmother's recipes to create eye-popping and mouthwatering dishes—all meant for sharing.

A stop at the 105-year-old Northrup King Building, home to more than 350 artists and creatives who open their studios daily, is a must.

Award-winning Minneapolis Chef Yia Vang will open his restaurant, Vinai, this year. His cooking features large shared main courses, vibrant veggie dishes, and bold sauces, often cooked over an open fire. He shares a few recipes at exploreminnesota.com/culinarycampfire.

Prospect Park

There's plenty of room for your crew, a brew, and your dog, too, at establishments that have popped up in a section of old warehouses and grain silos in the Prospect Park neighborhood. Surly Brewing landed here first and revolutionized the brewing and dining laws in Minnesota. Well known for its hoppy "Furious" IPA, Surly also serves fantastic food. Settle into the giant dining hall or lounge outdoors next to a firepit to sip a brew and nosh on fish tacos or melt-in-your-mouth brisket.

Across the road from Surly an old machinery building houses The Market at Malcolm Yards, which is filled with a delectable array of local food with offerings ranging from meatballs to empanadas and Korean fried chicken to sushi. Thanks to a system that links to your credit card, you can meander the market to sample food and pour your own drinks at self-serve taps.

From there, wander over to the O'Shaughnessy Distilling Co., a state-of-the art operation partially built into a dilapidated potato-to-processing facility. The owners, two locally grown cousins of Irish descent, lured one of Ireland's top whiskey makers, Brian Nation, to Minneapolis, where he now makes American whiskey in the traditional Irish style that uses triple copper-pot distillation. Those shiny pots rise over the tasting room like giant sculptures.

nüCamp Cirrus 620 Truck Camper

At the helm of a half-ton truck outfitted with nüCamp's Cirrus 620 camper you can pilot the streets of Minneapolis, find parking, and then head out of town to camp in comfort. Inside the 620, you'll find a north-south queen bed with storage on each side, sleek Amish-made cabinetry, a sink and fridge, two-burner stove, and a hidden cassette toilet. Alde's quiet hydronic heating system keeps you cozy in this four-season camper. ***nucamprv.com***

WHY WE LIKE IT

- ***Weighs less than 1,500 pounds dry***
- ***Queen bed plus convertible dinette***
- ***Alde hydronic water and heating system***

Pedal and Paddle

When it's time to wear off some of that food, you're in luck because the Minneapolis waterfront lies smack in the middle of Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, a 72-mile river park. Mississippi River Paddle Share (paddleshare.org), a self-serve kayak-sharing system, rents everything you need to get out on the river, all aligned with the city's bike-rental system, Nice Ride Minnesota (niceridemn.com), to get you back to where you started. Nice Ride provides both conventional bicycles and e-bikes for use around Minneapolis and St. Paul. Also, the folks from The Fit Tourist (thefittourist.com) will happily take you on biking and walking tours to explore Minneapolis along the river and beyond.

From the Mill Ruins Park area, it's a short bike ride downriver to Bohemian Flats, a lovely park inhabited mainly by University of Minnesota students throwing frisbees. It's a pastoral place to enjoy the view of the river and the futuristic Frank Gehry-designed Weisman Art Museum. Or, from the river, ride about 4 miles to the Walker Art Center and Sculpture Garden. Snap pics with the giant blue rooster, "Hahn/Cock," by German sculptor Katharina Fritsch or the iconic Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen fountain, "Spoonbridge and Cherry."

From there, you may want to tour Minneapolis' famed Chain of Lakes, roughly 15 miles of paved bike paths. Enjoy the impressive architecture of homes around Lake of the Isles, paddle a canoe or stand-up paddleboard for rent at Lake Bde Maka Ska, or take in nightly concerts at Lake Harriet Park.

No matter how you slice it, Minneapolis offers enough activity to float any boat and fill any tummy. ■

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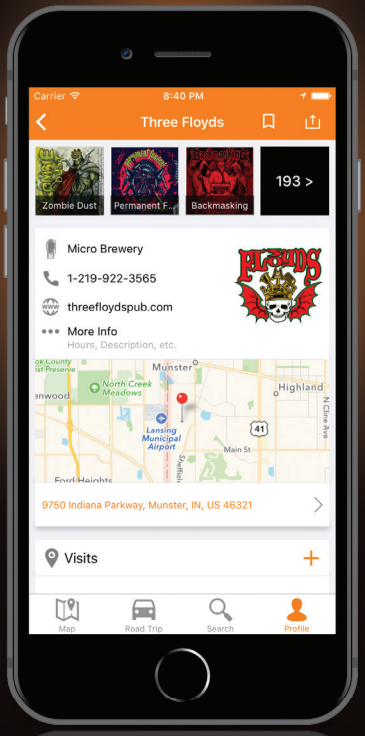
ON TAP THIS MONTH

APPS AND TAPS

Here's how your smartphone can help find the best craft brews near you.

by **ERIN PETERS**
@THEBEERGODDESS



The craft-beer industry has long been on top of the latest trends and technology when it comes to helping people create, find, and enjoy the best beer possible. In other words, when it comes to craft beer, yes, there's an app for that. In fact, there are several applications I recommend for beer lovers both geeky and curious.

Untappd

Drink socially. That's the mantra of Untappd. Imagine a beer app that's a combination of Facebook and Twitter. With Untappd, you check in by both location and beer type. If the beer you're drinking isn't listed, you can add it yourself. There's a great five-bottle-cap rating system. Taking a page from Facebook, Untappd allows users to "friend" other beer drinkers and say "cheers" regarding friends' beer check-ins. The app also recommends other beers based on the style you're enjoying. Drink new beers and unlock some awesome achievement badges! Yes, with this app, you're rewarded for your beery curiosity and willingness to expand your palate. On the brewery side, Untappd allows beer makers to engage with fans and grow an audience.

Untappd started five years ago and now boasts 3 million users worldwide—and the makers recently announced a strategic merger of Untappd and Next Glass, another alcohol-based tech startup. This means more updates, awesome features, and even more badges. This is a world-class social community for beer drinkers.

When you join, make sure to connect with me at untappd.com/user/epeters. We can enjoy a beer together online!

BreweryMap

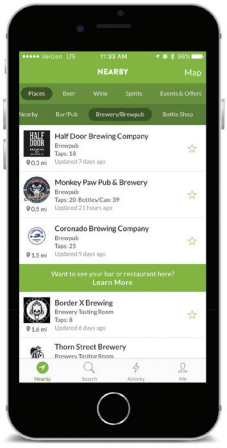
What do you get when you combine geeky algorithmic mapping with craft breweries? This awesome app! You can search by location or plan a trip. In fact, Wired.com recently called BreweryMap a "great beer trip planner." Enter your starting address and your destination to find all of the craft breweries along your route!

TapHunter

While TapHunter shares some similarities with BreweryMap, this app specifically focuses on local watering holes and—you guessed it—their taps. TapHunter sends alerts when

PHOTOS: COURTESY THE BREWERIES, WINZENT/GETTY IMAGES

your favorite beer goes on tap. Founded in San Diego, California, in 2009, TapHunter allows users to search for beers by location, brewery, or name. With this app, you can learn about the latest trends, check the current lineup of brews at a specific bar, and help update tap lists—earning points and winning prizes along the way. As with Untappd, TapHunter allows users to share findings through social media. You can also use the app to discover great local bars, restaurants, tasting rooms, and now bottle shops. This is a must-use app for bar owners: This app can keep menus up-to-date and let fans know about any changes.



BJCP

Even if you're not studying to become a certified craft-beer judge, the BJCP (Beer Judge Certification Program) is a great tool to learn more about beer styles, as written by the Brewers Association. Beer is not only fun and delicious; it's serious business. Take note: The 2015 BJCP Style Guidelines mark a major revision from the 2008 edition. The industry is moving fast, and brewers are pushing limits and creating new styles and hybrids. This app is updated with a plethora of information regarding emerging craft-beer market trends, modern brewing ingredients, and sensory characteristics. Learn more about the numerous beer styles, and get better at recognizing the appearance, aroma, flavor, and mouth-feel of a beer.

Trust me: These apps will better your beer-drinking experience. Find out what's new in the craft-beer world and join the craft-beer revolution—one app and one beer at a time. ■

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RV Road Trip

CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST

AVOID THE CROWDS AND EXPLORE COOL BEACH COMMUNITIES, SHOPPING, FINE DINING, AND SO MUCH MORE.

BY JULIE PERRY NELSON

Most people vacationing in California are drawn to big cities like San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. But I much prefer to visit the quiet Central Coast. Miles of beaches border sleepy communities making the area from Pismo Beach to San Simeon a welcome reprieve from the mass of humanity in The Golden State's larger cities.

But just because there are fewer crowds doesn't mean there is less to do. Wildlife watching, adventures on land and sea, fine dining, and historical tours are just a few of the things that await.

The weather is temperate along the California coast with fog often coming off the ocean, keeping temperatures mild. The cool-down is a pleasant escape from the summer heat in California's inland communities.

Our family's favorite Central Coast town is Morro Bay. Morro Rock, an egg-shaped volcanic plug, dominates the horizon. A long sand spit separates the bay from the Pacific Ocean. The result is a perfect place for kayaking and paddleboarding near noisy sea lions and curious sea otters.

While in Morro Bay we love to stroll down the embarcadero, popping into the cute shops, having a bite to eat for lunch, and looking for starfish in the rocks below the piers.

The Central Coast of California is a wonderful place to leisurely explore the many things the region has to offer. Visit one or all of these wonderful coastal towns and let the sea breeze blow your cares away.

Standing at 576 feet tall, Morro Rock was formed about 23 million years ago and is a California State Historic Landmark.

SAND DUNES | KAYAKING | HEAVENLY CUISINE | HISTORY

ON THE MENU

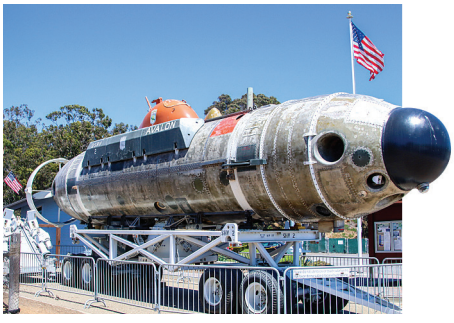
Established in 1986 as a walk-up dining establishment by Cal Poly graduate Dawn Borst, Bayside Café (*bayside cafe.com*) is a lovely Morro Bay spot for lunch or dinner. A favorite with locals, the café has an outdoor patio that is dog friendly. Savor a bowl of clam chowder, one of their most popular dishes, while viewing a spectacular sunset.

STAY HERE

Morro Bay State Park Campground (*parks.ca.gov*) is within walking distance of A Kayak Shack for paddleboard and kayak rentals, Bayside Café, Morro Bay Golf Course, and the Museum of Natural History. It's an easy hike from the campground to the top of Black Hill for a spectacular view of Morro Rock.

MUST-DO

Avila Beach Whale Watching (***avilabeachwhalewatching.com***) offers intimate trips with six guests maximum so everyone has a front-row seat. Depending on the time of year, you can spot California gray whales, humpback whales, dolphins, and sea lions. Keep your cameras at the ready!



OFF THE BEATEN PATH

You can't miss the Deep Submerge Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) submarine *Avalon* in front of the Morro Bay Maritime Museum (*morrobaymaritime.org*). See the museum's three other historic boats and learn about Morro Bay's history as a military training ground during World War II and as the Abalone Capital of the World.

FAMILY RVERS

MUST-DO

Rent a kayak or paddleboard from Rock Kayak (***rockkayak.com***) and paddle across Morro Bay to the sand spit. Bring sand shoes for the hike across the dunes to a nearly deserted beach. At the sand spit, look for some of the thousands of sand dollars that come to the surface at low tide.

PHOTOS: JANINE MOORE-WILLIAMS, SLOOT/GETTY IMAGES

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Montaña de Oro State Park (*parks.ca.gov*) has excellent coves for exploring tide pools. Before heading out, check a tide chart app (I like Tide Charts, free by 7th Gear) and go at the lowest part of the tide. Wear water shoes as the rocks can be slippery.

ON THE MENU

Linn's Restaurant in Cambria (*linnsfruitbin.com/Linns_Restaurant.html*) has to-die-for pies. The food is delicious and the atmosphere casual. Eat light so you can sample their famous olallieberry pie. Be sure to grab a jar of olallieberry preserves on your way out.

STAY HERE

Pismo Sands RV Resort (*pismosandsrv.com*) is a highly rated Good Sam Park close to Oceano Dunes. Equipped for large RVs, Pismo Sands has a beautiful heated pool, pedal-cart rentals, and a fun pirate-ship playground that are sure to delight the children.

FULL-TIME RVERS

MUST-DO

There is something cool about being able to drive on a beach. At Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area in Pismo Beach (***ohv.parks.ca.gov***), you can rent an ATV or use your own car to explore the beach. Reservations are required if you want to further the adventure by camping at the dunes.

ON THE MENU

It is hard to beat the view at the Great American Fish Company (*great americanfishcompany.com*) in Morro Bay. The extensive seafood menu and large windows make it a great place to sit back and watch the boats and sea life pass. Go early and check out the otters next door at Morro Bay T Pier. They are almost always there and are ridiculously cute.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Piedras Blancas Elephant Seal Rookery near San Simeon (*elephantseal.org*) is quite a sight. Hundreds of the huge animals gather at the beach to give birth, mate, and molt. They're fun to watch, with males fighting for dominance, females going for a swim, and pups curling up in pods. The number of the seals at the rookery peaks in January, May, and October.

STAY HERE

San Simeon Creek Campground (*parks.ca.gov/?page_id=590*) in Hearst San Simeon State Park is a peaceful place to watch the sunset, picnic, hike, go fishing, and bird watch. The maximum length for RVs is 35 feet and they do not have hookups.

RETIRED RVERS

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Avila Beach features beautiful Point San Luis Lighthouse (*pointsanluislighthouse .org*), founded in 1890. There is no private vehicle access, so reservations are required for tours held on Wednesdays or Saturdays.

ON THE MENU

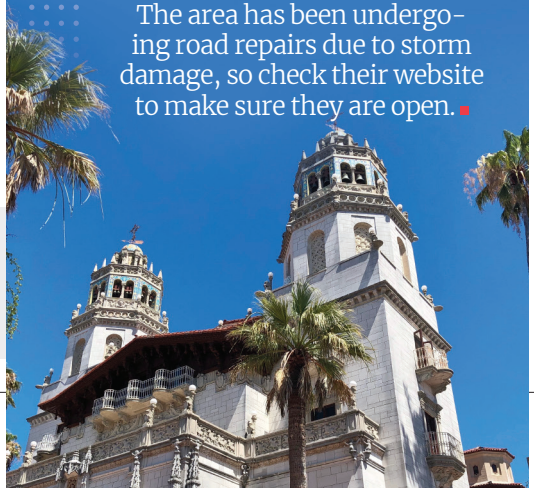
F.McLintocks Shell Beach Saloon & Dining House (*mclintocks.com*) features an authentic saloon, mouth-watering steaks, and western decor, Be sure to ask your server for a blindfolded water pour.

STAY HERE

Islay Creek Campground (*parks.ca.gov*) in Montaña de Oro State Park is best for smaller RVs (up to 27 feet for a trailer or motorhome). The park features shade trees, a stream, and easy access to hiking trails.

MUST-DO

Newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst's unusual Hearst Castle (***hearstcastle .org***) features lavish rooms and striking indoor and outdoor pools in a Romanesque style. The area has been undergoing road repairs due to storm damage, so check their website to make sure they are open.



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LENDING A HAND

WE CAN ALL CELEBRATE **EARTH DAY** AND **NATIONAL PARK WEEK** BY DOING OUR PART TO KEEP THE GREAT OUTDOORS CLEAN AND BEAUTIFUL.

BY BRYANNA ROYAL
@CRAZYFAMILYADVENTURE

When you live in an RV you are naturally more connected with nature. Part of it is having to know exactly what the weather is going to be like every day in case you need to "get out of Dodge," batten down the hatches, or enjoy a nice day sitting out by the RV. And it's just that our "house" is so small we tend to head outside more so we can spread out. Especially when traveling with kids as we do, the space inside an RV can start to feel really cramped!

All of this means we have a deeper appreciation for Mother Earth, and we want to take care of her and keep the world a beautiful place for our kids and many generations to come. With Earth Day and National Park Week in April, it is a perfect month to focus on celebrating, volunteerism, and evaluating what we are doing in our everyday lives to help the environment and world around us.

Following are a few ways to celebrate Earth Day this April 22nd. Of course, you don't have to wait for the specific day … there's no time like the present.

Plan a Trip to a National Park →

Even better, plan a national-park road trip this month, where you visit multiple national parks. We recommend the following six:

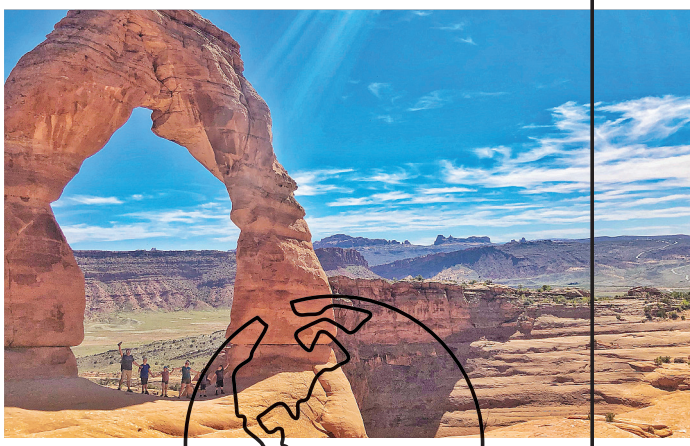
Utah
If you want to see a lot of national parks in a shorter traveling distance, then Utah is the perfect state to visit. With five national parks all within a day's drive from one another, you can cover a lot of ground. **National parks visited**: Arches, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, Bryce Canyon, and Zion.

Mountains
The Rocky Mountains region provides so much beauty and contains our two favorite national parks. **National parks visited**: Glacier, Yellowstone, and Grand Teton.

California
California is a HUGE state. If you really want to do the state justice, you will want to spend months exploring. If you don't have that kind of time, you can do and see a lot in a short amount of time but be ready to go-go-go! There are a lot of national parks in the Golden State. **National parks visited**: Joshua Tree, Death Valley, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Yosemite, Lassen, and Redwood.

Pacific Northwest
The Pacific Northwest is a fun place to explore. The variety with the coastline and beaches, rainforest, and the mountains makes it a unique trip. **National parks visited**: Crater Lake, Olympic, Mount Rainier, North Cascades.

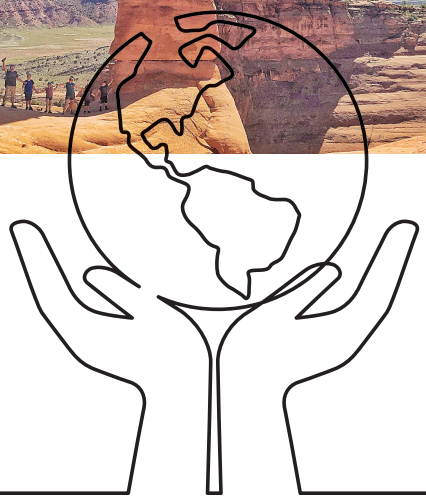
National-park-trippers can link hands around a giant tree at Sequoia and Kings Canyon, or pose beneath one of the namesake formations at Arches.



PHOTOS: BRYANNA ROYAL, INSIDE CREATIVE HOUSE, BAKS/GETTY IMAGES

WHAT A WEEK!

*National Park Week is April 16–24. The national parks are offering free admission on April 16th. Throughout the week each park will have different programs and events to celebrate. There will also be digital events offered. Be sure to check the National Park website (**nps.gov**) for details!*



Views like this at Glacier National Park are just some of the reasons why we should all do our part for the enjoyment of future generations.

Florida
Florida is known for its beaches but also has some pretty special national parks. **National parks visited**: Everglades and Dry Tortugas.

East Coast
There are plenty of mountains to explore and beautiful trails to hike in the East Coast parks. **National parks visited**: Congaree, Great Smoky Mountains, Mammoth Cave, and Shenandoah.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Living La Vida Wild is a family of five who treats every day like Earth Day. They do multiple projects with Keep Nature Wild (see below) and have been Wild Keepers for four years. I love how they demonstrate how simple it can be to clean up nature on a consistent basis. Grab your Keep Nature Wild bag (you can buy them on their website) or any garbage bag and head out to clean up garbage wherever you are. Throughout their years traveling full time in their RV with their kids, Living La Vida Wild consistently cleans up national parks, state parks, and public lands. They really do their part in leaving the world a better place! ***@livinglavidawild***

Keep Nature Wild is a company that sells outdoor products and picks up one pound of trash for every product sold (cumulatively, the organization has picked up more than 567,000 pounds of garbage). Keep Nature Wild holds clean-up events and sells cleanup kits, plus you can join the Wild Keepers community where you commit to picking up trash at least once a month. ***keepnaturewild.com***

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How Can I Help?

Wondering how you can make a difference? Here are a few ways you can contribute in April and any time of year to lower your carbon footprint and help our environment!

Organize a Clean-up Hike

If you are near a beach, state park, county park, or any outdoor gathering place, chances are there is garbage that can be picked up. Grab a few garbage bags, some gloves, and a group of friends. Then head out to see who can collect the most garbage. You could even make it a competition based on weight or number of items picked up. Another option is to give a prize for the most unique item found, largest piece of garbage, smallest piece, etc.

Plant a Tree

It isn't always easy to find somewhere you can go to physically plant a tree, but it is super easy to donate to multiple different organizations so they can continue to plant trees. Most of them are just $1 to plant 1 tree. One of my kids' favorite organizations is #teamtrees (teamtrees.org), which is run by MrBeast and Mark Rober, who are both famous YouTubers.

You can make a donation yourself or turn it into a fundraiser and see how much money you can collect from friends and family for planting trees.

Skip the Plastic Water Bottles

There are so many great and super-cute reusable water bottles out there. Plus, they look awesome when you add some stickers from the amazing places you have visited while traveling! My water bottle is filled with national park stickers.

Want to take it a step further? Buy a water filter to have in your RV so that you always have fresh and clean water to drink, no matter where you are in the country.

Recycle

Unfortunately, most RV parks and campgrounds we stay at don't have recycling on site. This doesn't mean you can't recycle, it just means you have to put in a bit more effort to find a local recycling place where you can drop off your recyclables.

Normally, they have a weekly drop-off location and time. We have used the back of our truck as a place to store our recyclables throughout the week. It works out great!

Traveling in an RV and enjoying our beautiful country is all the more reason for us to pitch in, not just in April, but every day, to keep our country beautiful and healthy for generations to come! ■

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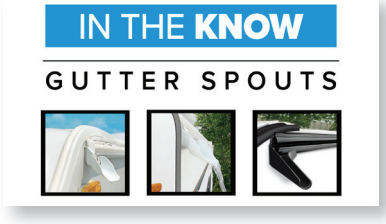

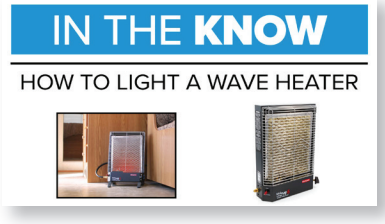

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MEDIEVAL ART, MODERN TRAVEL

SWORDS BY RV

AN RVING COUPLE DOES A CROSS-COUNTRY TRIP TEACHING THE ART OF SWORD FIGHTING ALONG THE WAY.

BY ERIKA KLEIN

When packing for an RV trip, you can't forget the basics: food, clothing, emergency supplies … and a few swords. My fiancé RJ McKeehan owns a Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) school, so I'm used to the piles of blunt steel or synthetic (plastic) swords and fencing masks in his trunk and stacked around our house, garage, and backyard. Since we got our Jayco Greyhawk Class C motorhome, it's natural to stick a few behind the bench or in a storage compartment when preparing for a trip.

The swords are useful for exercise, practicing drills, and explaining RJ's work or teaching the basics to friends on our travels. (We've also used them for more mundane things like retrieving a phone dropped between the couch and the back of the bench.) They're a particularly great piece of RV workout equipment since all you need is open space, something we have plenty of when boondocking. While the swords (designed after historical models) don't seem particularly heavy at first, waving a 2–4-pound object through the air for 15–20 minutes provides a solid upper body workout. Add in the footwork and the fact that you're doing everything in a slight squat, and you won't need to worry about getting more exercise that day—perfect if you're planning to hop back into your RV and drive to your next location.

While most of our trips already include swords in some fashion, HEMA recently became both the catalyst and a way to achieve our dream of a cross-country road trip. When one of RJ's very first HEMA friends invited us to his wedding in Orlando, Florida, we immediately started talking about driving our RV there from our home in Southern California. Since RJ already travels to teach at HEMA schools and events, this was a great opportunity to schedule classes while driving across the country.

COACHING BY COACH

This being our first cross-country road trip (planned with no pre-reserved camping areas), we had some challenges coordinating with schools and finalizing our route. Still, RJ was able to teach and practice HEMA in Houston, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Orlando. Unlike flying out to teach at a school, traveling by RV let us more fully

experience each city. It was also interesting to see each school's training areas and protocols as we moved through different parts of the country.

Because of HEMA's continuing development as a martial art, different schools teach varying curricula and interpretations of historical techniques. Students and instructors may even work together to reconstruct techniques, converting vague instructions and drawings from ancient manuals into functional, fluid movements that integrate with other maneuvers. Partly since Europeans switched to guns from swords, many martial arts weren't passed down through generations, meaning that studying the manuscripts and other instructors' interpretations is the only way to redevelop techniques. Many techniques are now broadly agreed upon in the community, forming the core of HEMA training. Still, the sport's ongoing evolution means instructors and participants in different areas may learn from each other as much as they teach.

Above: Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) school owner RJ McKeehan (facing camera) explains a sword grip during a lesson. Below: Author Erika Klein and RJ play with swords at California's Mojave National Preserve.

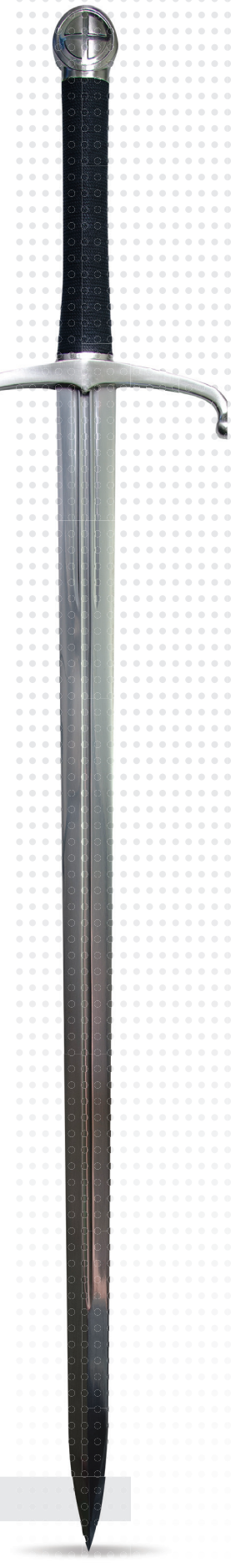
PHOTOS: ERIKA KLEIN, JONATHAN YING

"WHILE MOST OF OUR TRIPS ALREADY INCLUDE SWORDS IN SOME FASHION, HEMA RECENTLY BECAME BOTH THE CATALYST AND A WAY TO ACHIEVE OUR DREAM OF A CROSS-COUNTRY ROAD TRIP."

What is HEMA?

Although HEMA is based on sword and other weapon practices from around the 1400s, the modern sport is relatively young. Around the 1980s, researchers and scholars began translating manuals written hundreds of years ago by European weapon masters and reconstructing their techniques. HEMA participants now continue to research and drill these techniques, then use them when sparring one another. HEMA incorporates hundreds of years of fighting styles and a broad range of weapons (from longswords to polearms to bayonets and even wrestling), providing endless areas to study.

Unlike fencing, a sport that may award points regardless of the martial quality of strikes, HEMA treats matches as real fights where a solid defense may be even more important than landing a hit. In HEMA tournaments, competitors score points based on the quality, timing, and location of their hits and lose points if they were hit in return. (All fighters use blunt swords, protective padding, fencing masks, and heavy gloves for safety.) Over the past few decades, HEMA has expanded rapidly, leading to hundreds of clubs and schools in the United States and even more internationally, according to the HEMA Alliance, the nonprofit organization that represents the sport in the US.



At our first HEMA stop on our way through Texas, RJ taught one of his weapon specializations, messer (a large medieval knife similar to a machete). While the head instructor at Sword to Sword in Houston also specializes in messer, RJ brought his interpretation of one-handed grip changes and a specific defensive maneuver. In return, he learned several partner warm-up exercises to take back to his home classes, besides engaging in the usual HEMA technical debates well into the night. (I caught a few words of the conversation on my way to and from the shower in the house before I returned to our blissfully quiet RV in the driveway—an option that I would welcome at more HEMA events!)

The relatively small community also means that you have a high chance of encountering world-class fighters in nearly any area. After teaching the biomechanics behind basic sword grips to a primarily beginner class at the Cymbrogi School of Western Martial Arts in Oklahoma City, RJ sparred with one of the school's instructors. Back in our RV after the class, RJ expressed dismay that he could barely land a hit and wondered if his fighting skills had atrophied more during the pandemic than he'd realized. Through texting a few friends, though, he learned that the instructor recently became the top longsword fighter in the country and fifth in the world—a significant challenge for any fencer.

FENCING FUN IN FLORIDA

Our farthest stop, Orlando, emphasized HEMA's role in bringing about our entire trip. RJ served as a groomsman for a friend he'd met in his college HEMA club, an introduction that would never have happened but for their shared interest in swords. A couple of days before the wedding, we attended the bachelor party, a barbecue paired with a day of sword cutting. RJ, whose other primary HEMA expertise involves cutting with sharp swords, gave tips as

Adventuresome couple Erika and RJ traveled cross-country in their Jayco Greyhawk to attend a wedding in Florida, stopping along the way for RJ to teach sword fighting in Oklahoma City (top left) and Houston (above middle). In Florida, the wedding party celebrated by cutting reusable blocks of clay with swords (top right). Above right: Erika and RJ enjoyed a peaceful secluded campsite at Dagmar State Wildlife Management Area in Arkansas.

Ready, Fight!

Around a decade ago, RJ discovered HEMA through a recreational club on his California university campus. Intrigued by the combination of historical research, martial art, and (mainly) the chance to fight with swords, he eventually became an instructor. By graduation, he'd decided to start his own HEMA school. His business, SoCal Swords (socalswords.com), offers classes and gear in Orange County, California. He has competed in events around the world, appeared on TV shows as a medieval weapons expert, and gave me a sword fighting lesson on our first date.

guests (mostly active HEMA participants) swung a blade through rolled tatami mats, pool noodles, and reusable blocks of clay (the messiest yet most environmentally friendly option).

In fact, the entire event was something of a HEMA reunion, bringing other friends from that club and the California HEMA scene all together for the first time since college. Even the wedding featured HEMA, with the groom wearing a reproduction of a historical blade (provided and sharpened by RJ) as part of his wedding attire, and the bride sporting a dagger under her garter. After the wedding, we also finally emptied our dinghy vehicle of the stacks of swords and protective gear we'd hauled all the way from California for a new Florida HEMA club.

PLAYING WITH SWORDS

With HEMA playing a pivotal role throughout our drive, it brought our journey full circle as we met new and old sword friends across the country. This nationwide network is one of the great things about HEMA and other niche sports where everyone in the community often appears to know each other. It also provided some memorable places to stay as three local HEMA instructors each opened their driveway, field, and farm (complete with a couple of friendly, freely roaming pet pigs) to our RV.

It's easy to see the advantages of such a close-knit, yet widespread and growing community, especially for RVing: spending time with new and longtime friends in each city (who also know the best places to eat), having access to (free) places to stay all around the country, instantly being part of a local community, and finding opportunities to develop your skills. While my participation in HEMA generally only involves running through the drills for exercise and occasionally practicing cutting, often it will be me who checks that RJ has stashed a sword or two in the RV before a trip. Whether a sword is used for getting in that workout, fishing a phone from beneath the couch, or actually practicing an ancient martial art, you never know when it might come in handy. ■

NORTHWOOD MFG., CIRCLE 114 ON READER SERVICE CARD

FROM ROADWAYS TO FAIRWAYS

DRIVE TO WIN ON A GOLFING RV ROAD TRIP.

BY JOHN SULLAWAY

It's tee time across America.

Golf has surged in popularity in recent years, with players of all ages flocking to courses across the US in record numbers. RVers can get in on the fun with a leg up: an RV's mobility allows travelers to go from course to course with ease, and there's enough space on board to store your golf bag, clubs, and togs. Even better, many RV parks sit adjacent to top-ranked golf courses. What golfer doesn't dream of teeing up just steps from his or her front door?

You'll find places to swing a club in every state and province, from courses that cut through Canadian prairies to links that hug California coasts. And you'll never run out of fairways: According to *Golfweek*, if all US golf courses were combined, they'd form an area equal in size to Delaware. That's a lot of strokes.

So it's easy to tee up for a golf adventure and find a course that's right for you.

GETTING INTO THE SWING

Don't be intimidated by the sport if you're new. Golf welcomes players of all ages, from 7 to 70 and beyond. Worried about slicing, hooking, or missing the ball altogether? You'll find instructors at courses eager to help you refine every aspect of your game. And with an RV, you can motor to different courses, finding one that suits your skill level and tastes.

PHOTOS: COURTESY THE COURSES/CAMPGROUNDS

GOT THE RIGHT GEAR?

Before embarking on an RV golf odyssey, consider the stuff you'll need. Look for clothes that breathe and stretch with your movements, along with golf shoes that give you a solid footing for those long drives. Consider portable golfing practice aids for campground stays far from a course (perish the thought!); hone your putting, driving, and chipping skills at your RV site. Before buying clubs, consult a golf pro or research sites like globalgolf.com/selector.

FIND YOUR COURSE

Before reserving a tee time at a course, determine if it is right for you. Here are some of the course types you'll encounter on your journeys.

Stadium/Championship Courses: These venues are designed for hosting golf tournaments and generally have a high degree of difficulty. Novices should stay clear.

Par-3 Courses: With shorter fairways and fewer hazards, par-3 courses often have only nine holes. These courses are great for beginners. Executive courses are similar to par-3 courses but pose a bit more difficulty.

Parkland Courses: Here, you'll find wider fairways and flatter terrain. These courses include many human-made streams, ponds, and lakes.

Desert Courses: Primarily in America's Southwest, desert courses consist of fairways bordered by rugged and arid terrain. High summer temperatures and tricky landscapes (don't lose your ball in the cacti) are a small price for some of the most gorgeous courses around.

ON PAR

Stay safe on the course. Bring plenty of water for hydration, apply sunscreen, and dress in layers for the temperature shifts that can occur during long games. The only thing you should worry about is missing your tee time.

GEAR UP!

This white Lacoste Sport visor gives players a classic look on the course. ***lacoste.com***

The Champkey Professional Golf Sunday Bag is lightweight and collapsible with room for nine clubs. ***champkeyusa.com***

Available in bright colors, Titleist Velocity balls are designed for high speed and high flight. ***titleist.com***

SMALL BALL

RV Parks with Mini Golf Courses

My love of golf was sparked when I played miniature golf as a kid. As an adult, I had a blast with my family at magical mini courses found throughout Southern California. Join the whimsical fun on mini courses at the following RV parks.

Bald Mountain Camping Resort, Hiawassee, Georgia
Test your putting skills on a golf layout with more twists and turns than a plate of spaghetti. Unwind here after a day spent exploring the North Georgia mountains. *baldmountainpark.com*

Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resort, Williamsport, Maryland
A loop-de-loop and impossibly sharp angles are just a few of the obstacles that vex golfers at this course. Plenty of shade trees and a central waterfall keep the players cool. *jellystonemaryland.com*

Sugar Ridge RV Village & Campground, Danville, Vermont
This park's 18-hole miniature golf course stretches across grassy slopes and over a running stream. Hone your accuracy on long holes. *sugarridgervpark.com*

Oasis RV and Golf Course, Ephrata, Washington
The Oasis RV and Golf Course sits adjacent to a 9-hole executive course. The park's 18-hole mini course packs lots of fun obstacles. *oasisrvandgolfcourse.com*

Arrowhead RV Campground, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
This well-designed course stretches around the pool area and is a great warm-up for some of the Dells' epic courses, like Pirate Cove and Timber Falls. *rvonthego.com/wisconsin/arrowhead-rv-campground*

THE FRONT 9

Top RV Parks Near Golf Courses

Stay at an RV park that's within chipping distance to a golf course. The following RV parks are located within golf resorts or are affiliated with nearby courses.

Viewpoint RV & Golf Resort, Mesa, Arizona
With more than 200 courses in the Valley of the Sun, one need be pretty special to stand out. Viewpoint Golf Resort sets itself apart with beautiful, tree-lined fairways and unrivaled mountain views. The par-71, 6,324-yard championship course has four sets of tees to accommodate players of all ability levels. After a game, dip into the heated pool or set out on a nature trail to explore the desert landscape. ***viewpointrv.com***

The Great Outdoors Nature, RV & Golf Resort, Titusville, Florida
With a 10/10*/10 Good Sam rating, this park has tennis courts, an Olympic-size heated pool, and a catch-and-release fishing preserve. The par-72 course stretches 6,542 yards from championship tees and encompasses part of the St. John's Wildlife Refuge. Golfers will encounter protected wetlands, but elegant bridges and paved cart paths mean easy access. ***tgoresort.com***

Copper Court RV Park, Anaconda, Montana
Copper Court sits halfway between West Yellowstone and West Glacier, but hardcore golfers may prefer to take the short trip to the nearby Old Works Golf Course. Designed by golf icon Jack Nicklaus, the par-72 course challenges golfers with long fairways and black-sand bunkers. The fourth hole features a two-tiered green and the remnants of a flue in the background—a relic from the area's copper-smelting past. ***coppercourtrvpark.com***

Shadow Hills RV Resort, Indio, California
This resort sits just a short distance from the Shadow Hills Golf Courses in the Coachella Valley, a Golden State golf mecca. Shadow Hills North and South each employ natural desert plants to blend with the environment. Shadow Hills South is an 18-hole championship course. Back at the resort, take a dip in the pool or hot tub. In April, hop on a shuttle to the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival and Stagecoach Music Festival. ***shadowhillsrvresort.com***

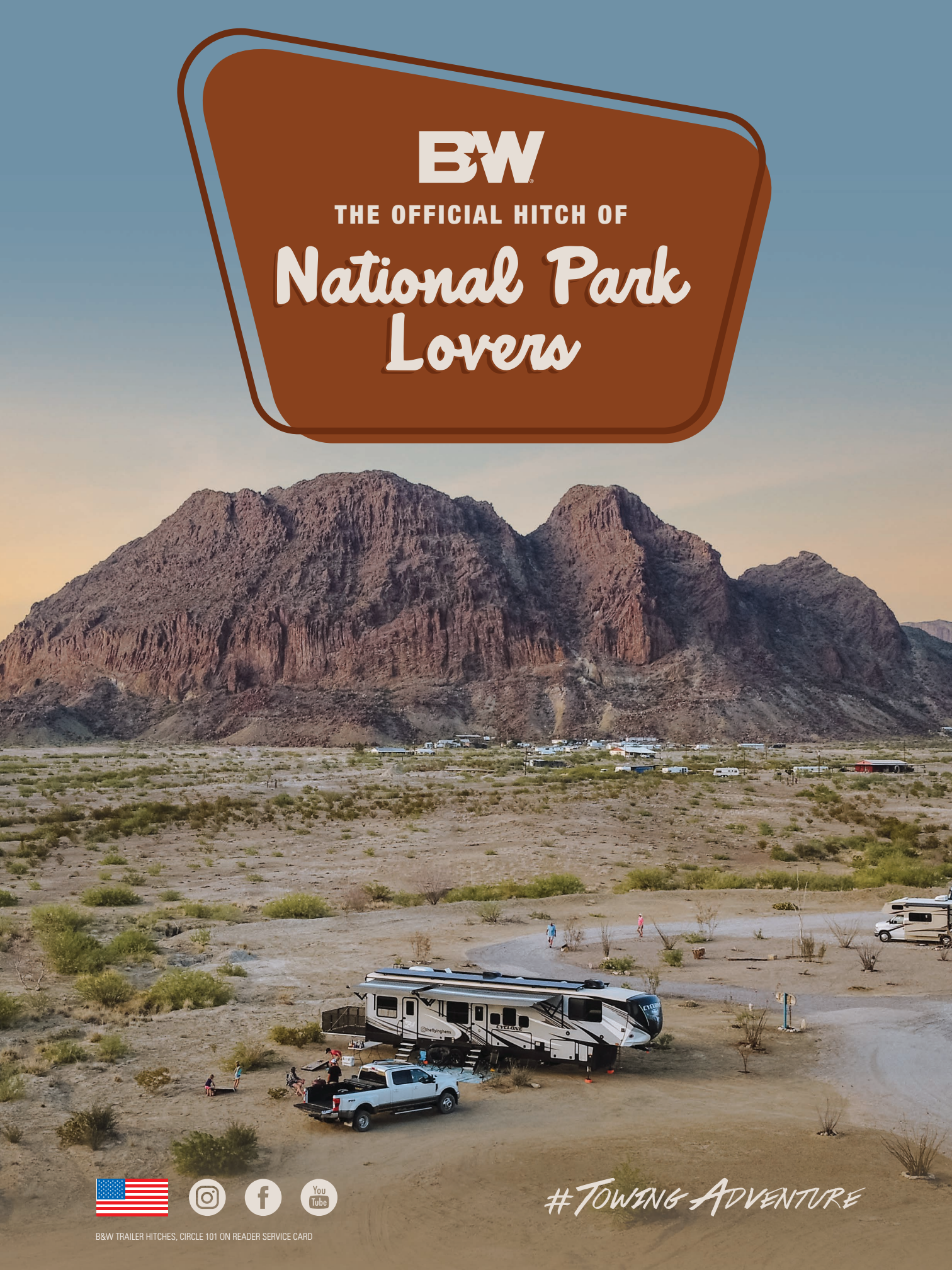
Challis Golf Course RV Park, Challis, Idaho
This nine-hole par-36 course packs lots of appeal for golfers. More than 3,184 yards of turf stretch at the feet of scenic mountains, and guests also can rent the clubhouse for parties and events. Plenty of tournaments keep things interesting, and guests can book a slot in a foursome and socialize. Adjacent to the course, the RV park treats guests to a cocktail lounge, fishing, and nature trails. ***golfcourserv.com***

Gold Dust West Casino & RV Park, Carson City, Nevada
This highly rated park sits amid a constellation of golf courses just miles from Lake Tahoe. To the east, the Empire Ranch Golf Course and Event Venue stretches along the Carson River and is sheltered between the bluffs. To the northeast, Eagle Valley East golf course features a user-friendly layout, while nearby Eagle Valley West is a desert links-style course. ***gdwcasino.com***

Pechanga RV Resort, Temecula, California
Nestled at the feet of the scenic mountains southeast of Los Angeles, Pechanga RV Resort entertains guests with gambling, a pool and spa, and restaurants. Next door, the Journey at Pechanga course treats golfers to fairways carved into the surrounding hills amid mature California oaks. The 72-par course stretches for 7,219 yards and has sweeping mountain views. ***pechanga.com***

Thunder Bay Resort, Hillman, Michigan
Test your golfing mettle on an 18-hole course carved out of a mature forest. Rolling fairways and towering trees dazzle golfers with their beauty, but don't let them distract you from the sand traps that lurk near the greens of the 6,677-yard public course. After a game, enjoy a hearty meal at the Clubhouse Grill before settling into your RV for the night and enjoying the resort's Wi-Fi. ***thunderbayresort.com***

The Llano Grande Resort and Country Club, Mercedes, Texas
The 18-hole championship course in this 55+ community in the Rio Grande Valley offers 6,781 yards of varied terrain. After a challenging game, invite your buddies for a tall one at the Double Bogey Bar & Grill or get new gear in the pro shop of the resort's historical clubhouse. Resort amenities also include tennis, a pool and restaurant, and roomy paved sites. ***llanogranderesort.com*** ■



B&W TRAILER HITCHES, CIRCLE 101 ON READER SERVICE CARD

YOU CAN DO THIS!

RV MOD MADE EASY

HERE'S HOW A FAMILY OF FULL-TIMERS TRANSFORMED THE SOFA-BED SLIDE AREA OF THEIR FIFTH-WHEEL INTO A BUNKHOUSE FOR THE KIDS.

BY LINDSAY LANE @LANESLESSTRAVELED

Over the past two years interest in the RV lifestyle has skyrocketed. Between the changes in the travel industry, and the ability for many people to work remotely while living full time in a home on wheels or vacationing, RVing is becoming accessible to more people than ever before.

Making the initial decision to purchase an RV may seem like the biggest challenge is conquered but with so many floorplan options available you may soon realize that deciding to buy an RV was the easy part. After narrowing down the type of RV you want to purchase you may find that the rig needs some modification to fully meet your needs. Most people have a must-have list but there are times even that can't be fully checked off.

The great news is you can always adapt your space through DIY projects to make it work for you and your family.

MAKING A CHANGE

Our family decided to make the switch from a toy-hauler travel trailer to a mid-bunk-floorplan fifth-wheel but knew we would have to get creative with the sleeping arrangements for our children. The loft would comfortably sleep our two boys and we decided the bunk room would be the girls' designated space.

Most mid-bunk fifth-wheels, including the Keystone Cougar 368MBI we purchased, come with a sofa bed in the mid-bunk room. With two girls calling that room their bedroom we knew that such an arrangement was not going to work in that space for them. Since our family travels for extended periods

▲ *By purchasing a queen memory foam mattress, cutting it length-wise, and then trimming to fit, the Lanes were able to create custom comfortable sleeping spaces to help their daughters feel right at home.*

PHOTOS: LINDSAY LANE

of time the nightly task of pulling out the sofa to make a bed would get old, quickly. We also knew that each girl would prefer her own bed.

A second challenge for their space was where to hold all of their clothing. Mid bunks typically come with a wall-cabinet unit but with two teen girls that cabinet just wasn't going to adequately house all of their clothing.

Given these needs, we knew the sofa bed had to go and something had to be put in the slide space to meet the needs of each girl.

We decided that the best use of the space in the room would be to create built-in bunks in the slide. We contemplated purchasing an already built bunk-bed system and then modifying that to fit the space. Unfortunately, with the furniture shortage of the past two years the bunk beds we thought would work best were constantly out of stock. So, Plan A was out.

CUSTOM BUNK ROOM

Moving on to Plan B, we decided to build a custom bunk into the existing slide. Working around the stock window we would be able to frame in a platform within the slide walls. We also decided that creating built-in storage would help solve the issue of where all the clothes would be housed.

Once that decision was made, we went to work.

1 We removed the slide trim and removed the sofa bed and sold it.

2 We took measurements of the walls within the slide to give us the size of the beds we would be able to build. We decided that for clothing storage, two drawers would be built under the bottom bunk. These would provide drawers that were the depth of the bed and allowed each girl to keep the bulk of her clothing there. Because we were adding the drawers below the bottom bunk, and we had to work around the existing window in the slide, we were limited on how tall the top bunk could be in the slide area.

3 We measured the back wall and cut a piece of 1-by-4-inch pine to length. We also identified and marked the studs in the wall. You can use a stud finder or strong magnet to help find the locations. Knowing those locations would be needed over the next few steps.

4 In order to determine the tallest height that the top bunk could be,

Since the drawers would dictate the height of the top bunk, careful measurements were taken before assembly of the sturdy platform. With precision being so key, you should only tackle a project like this when you plan to be in one place for the duration of the task, in order to avoid distractions.

TO DIY, OR NOT TO DIY?

Trying to decide which type of DIY project you may want to tackle in your RV? Ask yourself the following questions to help you decide the best use of your space, time, money, and energy.

WILL THE PROJECT SOLVE A PROBLEM?

If so, will it make living in your space easier and more enjoyable? Or does it simply add comfort or aesthetic value to the space? Solving a problem makes the time, effort, and money spent well worth it.

DO YOU HAVE A BUDGET IN MIND FOR THE PROJECT?

Of course you do! But don't forget to add a little cushion for unexpected costs, inflation of materials from start to finish, and even added details you may decide to include at the end.

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU HAVE TO TACKLE THE PROJECT?

Whether it's a day, weekend, week, month, or longer, giving yourself a time frame to tackle the problem sets a realistic timeline and DIY project goal. Taking on a project that's realistically too big to tackle in a short amount of time, like over the course of a weekend, may lead to sloppy mistakes or frustration in the end. So, make sure you're realistic when it comes to the project you decide on within the time frame you have to complete it. If you truly enjoy this type of carpentry and custom-building work on a fun-endeavor-type level, the time frame to completion is far less important.

DO YOU HAVE THE TOOLS NEEDED, OR ACCESS TO THE TOOLS NEEDED, TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT?

If you are missing some of the necessary tools, consider investing in the ones you'll use again in the future and/or borrowing or renting ones that are not likely to be needed again. Make sure you are prepared with what you need ahead of time so there are no surprises mid-project. Also, don't forget to think through where you'll store these tools if you're already on the road in your RV.

IF YOU'RE ALREADY TRAVELING WHEN YOU PLAN TO TAKE ON THIS PROJECT, WHERE WILL YOU BE WHEN YOU START AND FINISH IT?

Think through your timeline; you don't want to find yourself having to move spots mid-project and end up frustrated. Tackle the project when you're in a location long enough to take it on.

Planning ahead and thinking through each step is a surefire way to make sure you're completely happy with the result and all of the steps you took along the way.

PRO TIP

Selling the sofa bed was a great way to offset the costs associated with building our own bunks in the bedroom.

we took a scrap piece of plywood that would be the same thickness as the plywood we'd be using as the decking of the top bunk and butted it up to the bottom of the window. Then we butted the top of the 1-by-4 to the scrap piece, so the scrap piece was sandwiched in between the 1-by-4 and the window. We then screwed the back 1-by-4 into the wall after checking for level into the marked stud locations.

5 We measured the two side walls, subtracted ¾-inch from one end of each board, and cut 1-by-4s to fit the sides. Making sure to align the side pieces to the back piece, we again screwed the boards into the side-wall stud locations. To further support the weight of the top bunk, we also cut vertical boards to span from the floor to the bottom of the back and side boards. The side and back boards will essentially sit on top of these vertical supports.

6 We connected a 1-by-6-inch board to go across the front, screwing the end into the side supports. The 1-by-6 was used so that the mattress would be inset in the top frame to hold it in better.

7 To finish the top frame we added 1-by-4 supports turned flat about 16 inches apart in-between the back wall support and front board and fastened them with pocket holes and screws. To complete the top bunk, we simply cut a piece of ½-inch plywood slightly smaller (¼-inch) than the frame's inside opening, to allow slack, slid it under the window, and fastened it to the top supports and frame ends with screws.

8 For the bottom bunk we repeated the same process for the back and side frame, except we used 1-by-6-inch boards placed directly on the slide floor. The 1-by-6 opening would allow extra space for the drawers underneath.

9 The bottom drawer frames were built from 1-by-4 boards, and we used drawer slides attached to 1-by-3 runners spanning from the back frame board to the front. We used L-brackets to fasten the runners and help support the weight of the drawers. After drilling holes in the drawer fronts and attaching handles, the drawers were complete.

▲ *Though the area may be a bit tight for Dad, there's plenty of room for a good night's rest. The built-in drawers provide a perfect spot for clothes storage. Each girl gets her own drawer.*

10 Finally, we had to find mattresses that would fit into custom-built beds. There are companies that customize mattresses, however, we decided to purchase a 5-inch queen memory foam mattress. By doing this we were able to cut the mattress in half and trim it lengthwise for each mattress to fit on the top and bottom bunks. This is a very budget-friendly way to get comfortable, custom-sized mattresses for any space you may need them in!

Since customizing this space for our girls they have slept extremely comfortably in their very own space in our RV. So many times we may see a rig we like overall, but it doesn't check off every box for us. Customizing with DIY projects in these tiny spaces will make your RV so much more livable and fitted to each specific need. ■

BRAKE BUDDY, CIRCLE 109 ON READER SERVICE CARD

GRILLIN' + CHILLIN'

All the gear you need to get to make this travel season your best one ever!

BY KRISTOPHER BUNKER

As an RV owner, you're already ahead of the curve. You know the convenience, comfort, and downright satisfaction that your trusty steed offers you on each trip. But even an RV needs help sometimes. And although you already have warm shelter, a place to lay your head, and a mobile kitchen and bathroom, it never hurts to maximize your experience with some of the latest gear. One of the main reasons we all took the RV plunge is to get outside even more, and the following products make that venture, well, more adventurous. All products can be found at ***campingworld.com*** and ***overtons.com***. Time to get your chill on.

PHOTOS: COURTESY THE MANUFACTURERS

GRILL FINDER

Blackstone 22-Inch Tabletop Griddle

The Blackstone 22-Inch Tabletop Griddle with Cover allows you to take the cookout with you wherever you may roam. Two independently controlled heat zones allow for full control of the 330-square-inch plate for simultaneous low- and high-heat cooking. Two H-style burners with a total of 24,000 Btu provide even heat distribution for optimal cooking across the entire griddle surface. Adjustable-height rubber feet make it easy to enjoy on uneven terrain. Upgrade the standard 1-pound propane fuel source to a 5-gallon (20-pound) version with an adapter (sold separately).

Coleman RoadTrip 285 Grill

The portable Coleman RoadTrip 285 Grill features three independently adjustable burners for the ultimate temperature control. Become the talk of the RV park while perfectly cooking steaks, poultry, fish, and veggies with up to 20,000 Btu of grilling mastery on 285 square inches of porcelain-coated cast-iron grill grates. For added versatility, the Swaptop interchangeable cooktops let you switch the grill grates with a griddle or stove grate (both sold separately). Two sliding side tables keep utensils and sauces at the ready, while the quick-fold legs make for hassle-free setup, takedown, and transport—not to mention storage in your RV. The Instastart ignition makes for push-button, matchless lighting, while an integrated thermometer offers accurate temperature monitoring.

Razor Portable LP Gas Griddle

Perfect for camping and tailgating, the Razor Portable LP Gas Griddle features 318 square inches of thick-rolled steel surface area. The ignition is simple push-and-turn and utilizes a 1-pound propane cylinder to offer up to 20,000 Btu of heat. A secure front access drain and cup make for easy grease disposal and cleanup, while the attached lid protects the cooking surface and can be used while cooking to steam or melt foods. A side shelf offers much-appreciated space for food prep, and the foldable cart design and dual wheels make storing and transporting the Razor a simple affair.

CAMPSITE CONVENIENCE

Looking for a roaring fire for cozying up at the campsite, but the park prohibits wood-burning flames? Check out the 18.5-inch **Mr. Bar-B-Q Portable Outdoor Firepit.** Featuring a lightweight steel design and locking lid, the firepit utilizes push-and-turn ignition to produce 58,000 Btu of wood-free heat. It comes with a propane tank stand, 10-foot regulator hose, and lava rock—everything to fan the flames of family fun.

What's an RV trip without cold drinks at the ready? Skip the countless trips inside and out of your rig with the **Coleman 316 Series 62-Quart Wheeled Cooler.** The fully insulated lid and body keeps the ice for up to five days in temperatures as high as 90° F, so you can enjoy cold drinks at the campsite after hiking the trails or cooking hearty meals. The heavy-duty 6-inch wheels and durable tow and swing-up handles help you transport the fully loaded cooler (up to 101 cans) to the perfect spot. And, the Have-A-Seat lid doubles as an extra seat that supports up to 250 pounds.

Perfect for bringing the party outside, the **Nautica 6-Sided Screen Shelter** will protect you and your guests from the hot sun or pop-up rainstorms. The spacious design (107 square feet of coverage) of the easy-set shelter accommodates eight people, with room for a picnic table. Mesh panels keep the bugs at bay, while the hub system allows for easy setup. Comes complete with durable all-terrain stakes and tie-down ropes, plus a convenient carrying bag.

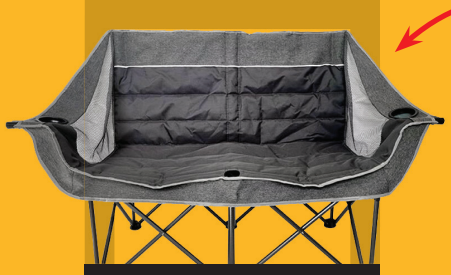
The **Illuminated Wave Patio Mat** improves visibility while adding some pizazz to your RV site. Just plug it in to your RV's 110-volt GFCI outlet and LED lights outline the edges of the rugged mat made of UV-coated polypropylene featuring tight weaving and reinforced stitching for long-lasting durability. Reinforced corners and stake loops (stakes sold separately) help keep things in place. The mat measures 9-by-12 feet.

Light up the night with the **Direcsource Blue Awning Rope Light**, which illuminates your campsite by attaching to an awning roller tube. Two or more of the 18-foot-long strings can be connected for additional length. The 120-volt rope lights are water-resistant and suitable for indoor or outdoor use.

TAKE A SEAT

Oversized Padded Chair

Goodbye, flimsy lawn chair, and hello Oversized Padded Chair! This chair is a comfortable, roomy seat that's packed with features and easy to carry. Made with a durable powder-coated steel frame and 600-denier polyester fabric, the chair features a molded wine-glass holder, cup holder, high-loft padding, and side mesh ventilation. Its 350-pound capacity makes it enjoyable for RVers of all sizes. The included carry bag and strap mean you can have the best seat in the house wherever you travel.



Doublewide Padded Sofa

CHILL FINDER

Cool off after your cookout on the soothing waves of the lake. **Towable Nautica Deck Tubes** are made with K-80, 66mm PVC and covered with 420-denier nylon, meaning they're built to last through the season and for many more. The 1-2 Rider tube (one adult, or two kids) supports up to 170 pounds, while the 2-Rider tube ups the limit to 340 pounds and adds soft neoprene body pads for an even more comfortable ride.

Jump the wake like a king (or queen) on a **Nautica Chariot Towable Tube.** Available in two-, three-, and four-person configurations, each tube features a heavy-duty, double-stitched, full nylon cover, durable RF-welded K80 PVC bladder, tubular webbing foam-filled handles with EVA knuckle guards, comfortable EVA foam seat and knee pads, a quick-connect tow system, and two reinforced tow harnesses. Weight capacity ranges from 340–680 pounds, depending on the selected model. Ride sitting up in the couch position, or unleash your inner Ben-Hur by towing from the other end for a chariot-style experience.

For a more personal (and much more tranquil) waterborne experience, the **Nautica Extra Large Water Saddle** lets you float lazily in the water while still allowing freedom of movement for your legs and arms. Made of five-ply poly foam material, the saddle doesn't need any inflating and dries quickly for storage. Now grab a cold one and let your cares float away with you.

Need an oasis on your lake or beach trip? Create your own island on the water's surface with a **Nautica Solstice Drop Stitch Inflatable Dock.** Constructed of highly durable PVC reinforced fabric, the dock supports up to five adults. Use it to extend the space (up to 80 square feet) from your boat to play or fish—it can even accommodate beach chairs and coolers. The 8-by-5-footer supports four to six adults, while the 10-by-8-foot version is good for six to eight people. The docks are lightweight and have six sturdy, reinforced grab handles for easy transport. They come with six stainless-steel D-ring tie-downs to secure the platform. The Solstice features an H3 high-pressure valve for a rapid inflate/deflate.

TABLE FOR YOU

Set up your own outdoor food-prep and serving space with the **Fold-N-Half Table with Heat-Resistant Top and Zippered Storage Bins.** Heat-resistant up to 212°F, the aluminum top is the perfect surface for setting up your portable grill. Storage bins underneath are perfect for storing everything from grilling accessories to toys and games to bags of chips and the like. The strong, lightweight aluminum frame is easy to setup and adjusts to four different heights. The weather-resistant table folds up and has a built-in handle for easy transport.

Impromptu barbecues may find you lacking table space to serve your hungry companions. The **Nautica Quik-Fold Side Table 2-Pack** solves that problem and so much more. Use them for an accent table for the patio, or for holding laptops, books, sunglasses, and more; each weighs in at only 3 pounds but can support up to 25 pounds. The tables fold flat to only 2.25 inches thick for storage.

Why not make it a double? The Black Sierra Doublewide Padded Sofa offers all the conveniences of the Oversized Padded Chair, but for two happy campers with a weight limit of a robust 500 pounds. Now you don't have to argue who gets the prime seat around the campfire … you both do!

Nautica Folding Director's Chair

It's a chair, it's a table, it's a cooler, oh my! The Nautica Folding Director's Chair with Side Table and Cooler offers sturdy, comfortable seating and all-in-one convenience. The sturdy steel frame and 600-denier polyester means it can hold up to 300 pounds. And, at less than 12 pounds and foldable, it's easy to transport to the campsite, the ball game, the picnic, or wherever your adventures take you. ■

PERFECT PARKS

DEER PARK RV RESORT

BY DONYA CARLSON

Nestled in a valley and surrounded by mountains just 20 miles from Spokane, Washington, family-owned Deer Park RV Resort is a little slice of tranquility. The 127-site gated resort, located in Deer Park, is open year-round, and can accommodate the largest RVs. An 18-hole golf course is connected to the resort so opt for a site overlooking the greens and enjoy spectacular sunsets.

High-speed Wi-Fi/internet is free, and each spacious RV site is on a level, concrete pad; has 510 square feet of patio space; green grass on each side; and a picnic table. Alongside a saltwater pool and jacuzzi, a pavilion houses a recreation center with a full kitchen, pool and poker tables, exercise equipment, large-screen TV, book exchange, and a piano and dance floor. Organized activities include water aerobics and golf tournaments. Within the park you'll find bocce ball, horseshoe pits, a playground, golf pro shop, free mini golf, and Divot's Grill & Sports Bar that serves up mouthwatering food every day of the week. And don't forget your furry friend—Deer Park is Fido-friendly and has a pet run plus a huge off-leash area in the field that borders the resort.

Within 50 miles of Deer Park are 50 lakes, and an hour's drive will get you to Silverwood Theme Park and two ski resorts that open for hiking, mountain biking, and huckleberry picking during the summer. ***g7rvresorts.com/rv-park/deer-park-rv-resort***

▲ Half of Deer Park RV Resort's sites are designed specifically for big rigs with 15-by-90-foot concrete pads. Beautiful parks and trails are nearby. Top: For an epic experience, head south a couple hours to the US's most scenic rails-to-trails, Route of the Hiawatha (ridethehiawatha.com).

3 *Reasons You'll Want to Stay!*

The city hosts its annual Settlers Days over the Fourth of July weekend and free concerts Saturday evenings during the summer.

10/10*/10
The resort has achieved a perfect rating from the *Good Sam Guide Series* for the facility, overall cleanliness, and visual appeal.

FIRST-CLASS SERVICE
On-duty camp hosts guide you to your RV site, help with parking if needed, and even pick up trash daily from your site.

NO FUSS, NO MUSS
The quiet, welcoming resort is full of amenities, near parks and recreational trails, and you can walk into town to pick up groceries. ■

PHOTOS: COURTESY DEER PARK RV RESORT, ROUTE OF THE HIAWATHA SCENIC BIKE TRAIL

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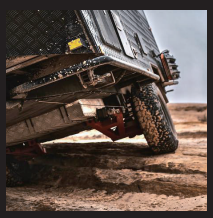

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Parks Project

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

In honor of National Park Week, step outside to discover the US's diverse natural beauty and cultural heritage.

BY ABBEY ROBERTSON

Last month marked the 150th anniversary of the founding of Yellowstone National Park, the United States'—and the world's—first national park. Now, with April upon us, we're taking a moment to celebrate all 423 sites in the National Park Service with National Park Week. Founded in 1991, the year that marked the 75th anniversary of the National Park Service, National Park Week has been a week where parks celebrate a variety of themes that all relate back to the same idea—that parks are important places worth preserving.

This year, National Park Week takes place from Saturday, April 16–Sunday, April 24, and here are some highlights for the week and how you can celebrate.

Saturday, April 16

ParkRx Day

Time outdoors has been proven to help your emotional and mental health, but don't just take it from us—go out and experience it! Spend some time recharging and reconnecting with nature, whether it's doing some yoga in a park, going on a relaxing hike, or meditating near a tranquil stream.

Sunday, April 17

Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Day

Take a moment to give back to parks by volunteering in a park! Check out the NPS website for a park near you to find out what volunteer opportunities there are for you to get out and get involved.

Monday, April 18

Military Monday

Our parks protect more than just stunning mountain ranges and beautiful waterfalls—they also preserve some important US history. On Military Monday, the NPS encourages active-duty military and veterans to get out and enjoy time in the parks. America the Beautiful annual parks passes are free for current US military members and their dependents, US military veterans, and Gold Star Family members.

Tuesday, April 19

Transformation Tuesday

It takes a lot of work and upkeep to keep parks in good shape. From conservation efforts to building projects, the maintenance and betterment of our national parks are a work in progress.

Wednesday, April 20

Wayback Wednesday

Take a moment to learn more about the history of our parks. We believe that by learning about parks and how they came to exist, we can be better advocates for the future. Delve into the National Parks Conservation Association's podcast "The Secret Lives of Parks" or a documentary like Ken Burns' "The National Parks: America's Best Idea" to get started.

Thursday, April 21

Transformation Thursday

Parks have changed a lot over time—sometimes for the better, like more accessible trails, and sometimes for the worse due to climate change. Make sure you're helping parks transform for good by taking time to learn Leave No Trace principles and other things you can do to keep parks pristine.

Friday, April 22

Earth Day

Earth Day has been a quintessential part of National Park Week since its founding in 1970. Celebrate by doing something good for a green space near you, like spending time picking up litter, exploring with friends, or writing letters to decision-makers in support of park protection and climate justice.

Celebrate National Park Week by taking a stroll under a canopy of Coastal Redwoods, like the ones at California's Redwood National Park.

PHOTO: YAYA ERNST/GETTY IMAGES

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BIZ RV

TAKING THE PLUNGE

A champion kayaker and her parents, all born with a thirst for adventure, have spent seven years seeking new experiences from their home on wheels.

BY DONYA CARLSON

Three-time Freestyle Kayaking National Champion Abby Holcombe has lived full time in an RV with her parents since she was 10 years old. Now at 17, Abby is currently on Team USA and placed fourth in 2019 at the Freestyle Kayak World Championships in Sort, Spain. The Holcombe family is heading to England this summer for the World Championships, where Abby will be competing again. Following in the footsteps of her adventurous parents, the "Adventurous Miss" (name of her Instagram and TikTok) loves to travel, and all she needs to be happy is a kayak, a paddle, and a river.

So, what is freestyle kayaking? "The river forms standing waves," explained the teenager, "that can be surfed, and I use the water to throw acrobatic tricks like cartwheels and loops and flips and turns in my kayak … it's like gymnastics in a kayak." She likes the consistency of training and having a routine. The family's priority is spending time together and that usually means doing something outdoors. Abby credits her mom for keeping them in line, while Abby and her dad spend a bunch of time on the water. Traveling in their RV has given her the gift of making friends all around the world.

Born to be Wild

It didn't come as much of a surprise when Abby's parents, Peter and Kathy, who were avid climbers, moved their photography business and family of three into a Winnebago View Class C motorhome. When Abby was younger, she remembers hitting the road in whatever vehicle her parents had the minute school was out for the summer, and then returning when school started. She grew up in Boulder, Colorado, but didn't spend much time there because her parents were always blasting out of town with her on some new escapade whenever the opportunity arose. When the Holcombes sold their house in 2014 with plans to move to the mountains they decided to do a one-month road trip between moves "since we were packed up anyway." One month turned into six months, and then a year … and then they just kept on traveling.

And the family doesn't just travel throughout North America. When Abby competed in the World Championships, the family shipped their Winnebago Revel Class B to Belgium and toured Europe for six months before shipping it back. As for Abby, "I really love just traveling. For kayaking, I love paddling in France, England, and in Colorado—those are some of my favorites. As for

PHOTOS: PETER HOLCOMBE

"If we hadn't been on the road, I probably wouldn't have had that opportunity and would not have gotten into kayaking on that level."

Abby Holcombe in 2021 at the GoPro Mountain Games in Vail, Colorado, where the best kayakers from around the world compete.

FLIPPED OVER KAYAKING

Abby Holcombe is heading to Nottingham, England, this summer to compete in the 2022 Freestyle Kayak World Championships, where she placed fourth in 2019. "In the finals you get three rides, and each ride is 45 seconds. You want to do as many tricks as possible—flips and cartwheels and other technical maneuvers—and the tricks are worth a certain amount of points. Each trick has certain rules on how it scores, and whomever has the most amount of points, wins."

traveling, I love Hawaii and Portugal and Croatia."

When Abby was 4 she got her own kayak, and then started competing at age 7, but didn't really love it until she was 11 when she went to the world finals in Canada, which changed her perspective. Two female world-champion kayakers assured her that she was capable of paddling big rapids and were instrumental in showing her that she could get her kayak right-side up if it got flipped over. "But if we hadn't been on the road," she says, "I probably wouldn't have had that opportunity and would not have gotten into kayaking on that level."

In 2017, when she was 12 years old, Abby became the youngest female to kayak all 280 miles of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. She also holds the record for paddling the smallest boat (5 feet long), and her pink kayak is archived in the Grand Canyon Museum Collection. Her biggest challenge on the 25-day trip was mustering up the courage to paddle over Lava Falls, a highly technical rapid that's one of the highest rated on the Colorado in the Grand Canyon. She sat on the rocks above Lava Falls for three hours. "I knew I could do it," she said, "but it was whether I had it in me to conquer my fears. It was my goal to paddle all 280 miles, and I didn't want to give up on that goal because I was so capable, but it was intimidating, especially at 12."

A River Runs Through It

Abby has spent every winter in Columbus, Georgia, since she was 10, kayaking daily on the Chattahoochee River with her parents and pals from the kayaking circuit. The city is hosting the 2022 World Cup Kayaking competition in October and the 2023 World Championships. The kayaking circuit is relatively small, Abby says—about two dozen kayakers were in Columbus this past winter—making them a close-knit group.

Whenever tackling a new river she researches it so she has an idea of what to expect and any trip hazards. Anywhere she feels unsure, she hops out of her boat and scouts the rapids to see the most fun way or the most safe way to run it. When we asked her if she gets dizzy doing all these rolls and flips, she laughed and said "sometimes, but not that often."

Abby now has her own "apartment," a Winnebago HIKE travel trailer that is towed behind the Revel. At any given time, there are generally 10 kayaks onboard, though they've had as many as 27! A PAKMULE cargo carrier on the back of "Abby's caboose," as they call it, adds storage.

After six years of road schooling, Abby graduated high school last year and is applying her public speaking and content-creating talents to "pursue my passions off the water and build my Adventurous Miss business." Kayaking has taught her to overcome challenges, and she gives inspirational talks at various events, including at the Winnebago Grand National Rally. She prefers talking about life lessons she has learned on the river, "rather than the nitty gritty about kayaking." She is into digital art and is also following in the footsteps of her dad and his passion for photography and videography.

After her Grand Canyon experience, Abby says she realized how important it is to convey the message that we all can do anything in one way or another when we set our mind to it. Abby Holcombe is certainly an excellent example of this. ■

abbyholcombe.com

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Ready, Set, HIKE!

by **KRISTOPHER BUNKER**

PREVIEW

WINNEBAGO HIKE 100 H1316FB

BASE MSRP
Starts in the upper $30,000s

DIMENSIONS
Ext Length: 15′ 9″
Ext Width: 7′ 9″
Ext Height: 10′ 2″

CAPACITIES
Freshwater: 31 gal
Black-water: 4.75 gal
Gray-water: 25 gal
Propane: 5 gal

WEIGHT
Dry weight: 2,748 lbs
Hitch Weight: 462 lbs
GVWR: 4,200 lbs

CIRCLE 150 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Towing an RV can be intimidating to prospective campers, especially when you factor in the learning curve of pulling a larger trailer. Winnebago has recognized this, and has created a fully equipped, rugged compact travel trailer with enough residential comfort and off-grid appointments to get people off the fence and behind the wheel. Available in five floorplans, the HIKE 100 is less than 16 feet long—and the H1316FB configuration featured here has a dry weight of less than 3,000 pounds—so the typical small- to midsize SUV shouldn't have any problems with towing (staying within vehicle/trailer weight ratings, of course). Inside, a wet bath and compact galley with a 3.1-cubic-foot compressor-driven fridge offer the comforts of home, while a large queen bed and a loft bed for a kiddo brings the sleeping capacity to three.

But since the HIKE 100 is designed for intrepid explorers, its exterior really shines. The "exoskeleton" accepts Thule accessories for gear (think kayaks, canoes, and SUPs); there's a 2-inch accessory receiver for a bike rack; a 190-watt solar panel is standard, with provisions to add an additional portable panel; and awnings on three sides add nearly 200 square feet of outdoor space—perfect for sheltering the exterior kitchen area with its propane quick-connect, or to flip down for a private changing room.

winnebago.com

Weather Tough With enclosed holding tanks heated with 12-volt pads, 1½-inch-thick side walls, fiberglass skin, radiant foil roof insulation, a 13,500-Btu A/C, and an 18,000-Btu heater, the HIKE 100 can handle most any climate.

Versatility Plus The wet bath doubles as a gear-drying area, plus the H1316FB includes a portable Truma cooler and portable induction cooktop, making it easy to take meal prep outside.

[1] An east-to-west configuration allows for a queen-size bed. The 28-by-72-inch loft bed is at the rear of the trailer. [2] A fully equipped galley includes a 3.1-cubic-foot fridge, sink with a high-rise faucet, and a microwave. [3] The wet bath features a power vent and integrated wet/dry storage.

PHOTOS: COURTESY WINNEBAGO

TECH Q&A

Charging electric cars at a campsite, a generator that doesn't, a fridge that runs too cold, and propane container 101.

by **KEN FREUND**

Take Charge

Q *We have an Airstream Excella 29-foot travel trailer. Reading the "Towing an Electric Car?" letter in the January 2022 issue, I am bothered by your answer that "…campgrounds are not wired to handle the heavy power draws of electric car charging and won't appreciate you doing so on their electric bill." This is incorrect, as a happy electric vehicle owner I can tell you precisely that using my NEMA 14-50 plug, it uses only 32 amps of power to charge, and a full charge would be less than $10 of electricity. Not only are electric vehicles configured to charge using any power available, they incorporate smart controllers to limit the amperage based on the tested draw (safety) or user selection. An RV with two air conditioners running would use more power than my car would.*

I believe campgrounds may turn their nose up at the idea of someone charging up, but they should be more concerned about the double air conditioner thermostat set to 60° F in an RV than the EV. Furthermore, other than a dedicated super charger location (240–480 voltage), a campground is actually the most equipped to charge EVs, and this could in fact be a business opportunity for some well-located ones to expand upon. I look forward to the day when I see a plug-in hybrid class C or A or even full electric.

Jacob Marsh
Lexington Park, Maryland

A The subject of electric vehicles is rapidly evolving, and I suspect will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Opinions also vary considerably on subjects such as the ability of the power grid to handle such future increased loads, who should pay for it, and sources of power for recharging, such as coal, natural gas, nuclear, wind, and solar.

All the Airstream Excellas I've seen have at least one rooftop air conditioner, and some have two. I assume that when you are in a campground you will not only plug your electric vehicle into campground-supplied power but will also be using that power to run your RV—making you one of the highest power users in the campground. You may not have noticed it, but many campgrounds already suffer from low voltage during periods of heavy electrical demand. This causes electric motors such as those in air conditioners to overheat, and demand even more amperage, creating a sort of snowball effect. The 32 amps you mention just for your car is more power than an entire RV that's using a 30-amp power cord draws at peak load.

Upgrading a campground grid to handle widespread charging of electric vehicles would be very costly, in the many thousands of dollars, especially in this time of supply shortages, high copper prices, and runaway inflation. The campground is going to have to pass that cost on to customers. Have you asked your campground hosts if it's OK to charge your electric vehicle using their grid? Using your figure of $10 for additional electricity use (not including the cost of wiring upgrades), that is a substantial portion of a typical campground fee. Who do you think should pay for that? Should RVers who aren't charging vehicles share in the cost, or should it be those who benefit from it?

Generator Quit

Q *We have a NuWa HitchHiker Discover America. While dry camping for two days, my Honda Generator EX4500S generated electric to the unit and then quit, but the engine continued to run without output of electric. My assumption was it must be a circuit breaker, but I was informed by Honda it was not. I was informed that due to age, no parts are available. I have a generator with an engine that runs great, but with no electricity being generated. Do you have any answers for me?* **—Adam DeMello, Greeneville, Tennessee**

A **I suggest that you familiarize yourself with your generator. Here is a URL for an owner's manual download: *honda.co.jp/ownersmanual/pdf/power/generator/32ZB7620_web.pdf?genpo=HondaMotorEurope&model=EX4500S*. Page 13 shows the AC circuit breaker location. Try resetting it and let me know if that solves the problem. Parts are available if needed. Was the source of your information a local dealer? They may be trying to get you to buy a new generator.**

A member of the Good Sam family since 1988, **Ken Freund** has been helping readers better understand their RVs for more than 30 years. Throughout his career, he has been a service manager, technician, shop owner, an ASE Certified Master Technician, an instructor of the California Smog Check Program, and author of Haynes Repair Manuals.

Propane Container Recertification

Q *I was just made aware that propane containers are dated and must be recertified. Neither my husband nor I were aware of this. What happens if they aren't recertified? Could you possibly get a ticket for this? Could you please publish something about this for all the readers? My understanding is that motorhomes have different rules.*

Denise Knowles, via email

A There are two types of RV propane containers used in RVs: the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) tank, which is permanent and used in motorhomes; and the Department of Transportation (DOT) cylinder, which is removable and used in trailers. The ASME motorhome tanks do not require recertification, but they still should be inspected periodically for rust and dents. Propane containers are tough; they're built to safely contain liquified propane gas under high pressure, while also standing up to rough handling and weather. But the portable cylinders do have an official service life, and as such must be periodically inspected and recertified.

In the USA, a new DOT cylinder is qualified for 12 years from the date of manufacture. In Canada, it's good for only 10 years. A recertified cylinder is good for 5, 7, or 12 years, depending on the method and type of recertification. The collar or handle area of a portable propane cylinder near the valve is stamped with the date of manufacture. It typically reads in a four-digit month-year format. So, if the cylinder was built in July 2021, it would read "07-21."

A propane tank's recertification date usually starts with a letter instead of numbers. The letters A, B, C, and D correspond with a calendar year quarter. The letter "A" would mean the tank was recertified in January, February, or March, followed by the two numbers of the year. A tank stamped "B 21" would indicate the second quarter of 2021. Additional letters indicate the type of recertification, which determines the frequency of follow-up inspections.

Propane sellers are supposed to check the date and not fill expired cylinders. I've never heard of someone receiving a ticket for having an out-of-date cylinder, although I guess it's possible. It's more likely that the propane seller would receive a summons for filling an expired cylinder.

Dometic Refrigerator Too Cold

Q *My wife and I have a 31-foot Palomino Puma 31BHSS. The fridge is a Dometic RV (gas and electric), model number DM2652RBX. Electricity is easy to come by where we are currently located; gas is a little more complicated, but available as well. The unit seems to operate more "normally" on gas than it does on electricity, but I can't say for sure that is the case. Lately, we have been running the fridge on electricity during the day and shutting down the unit at night. This seems to prevent the freezing issues we were experiencing. We are currently located in cooler, damper weather conditions in Northern California. During the summer months, we generally locate ourselves in warmer, drier climates and haven't had this experience before. I'm hopeful you have some insights that will take the worry out of our refrigeration system, but still provide nice, cold beer!*

Steve Long, Post Falls, Idaho

A Cold, but unfrozen, beer is vital! A likely issue if it's too cold is a problem with a dislocated or faulty thermistor. This could cause overcooling. Check for that and let me know if this helps. Here is the URL for that fridge's owner's manual: ***dometic.com/assets/47/45/operating%20manual_64745.pdf.***

Backup Camera Inoperative

Q *We have a 2017 THOR ACE 27-foot Class A motorhome. It has an Axxera (model number AV615BHM), which is a Multimedia DVD receiver with Dual Mirror Technology and Bluetooth featuring a 6.2-inch digital TFT LCD and with rearview camera. I need contact information where I can get additional information, because I have sent them an email and tried to call with no response. I recently had to replace the motorhome's chassis battery, and since then there's no function from this device.*

Richard Slider, Redlands, California

A Axxera's (***axxeraaudio.com***) customer service number is 866-383-5476, which I called and it went through. In case you can't resolve the problem, I've seen on the THOR online forums that some owners have switched over to Kenwood units such as DDX8905s due to problems with this unit. Vendors such as Amazon and Crutchfield offer a number of reasonably priced options.

Slideout … Doesn't

Q *We have a Class A motorhome. The leveling jacks work, but the slideout room doesn't. How do you get a hydraulic slideout to work when the switch fails?*

Julius Ketsenburg, via email

A You didn't mention what model coach or slideout mechanism you have. Many come with manual levers that allow you to move the slide in in an emergency when the power fails. There are many components in slide mechanisms that can fail, such as relays and motors, not just switches. If there is no clicking or noise when the switch is operated, it may be a problem with electrical power not getting to the motor. Try running the engine to increase voltage to the slideout. Also, have an assistant try pulling the slide when you are operating the switch to extend it. The switch can be removed to measure voltage at the terminals; it's low (nominally 12-volt) voltage so it's safe.

The switch can be temporarily jumpered with wires. If you are not a skilled DIYer, you may want to take it to an RV shop.

Hydraulic Leveler Won't Retract

Q *We own a 2014 Itasca Sunstar 35F Class A, which we bought new. Previously we had an error indicator issue with the control panel for the Lippert leveling system, and the dealer replaced the pump for us on warranty in 2015. Just recently the rear passenger side leveler won't retract all the way. This appears to be the farthest ram away from the pump. The pump on this unit is located behind the driver side front wheel. I have checked for fluid levels and leaks and found good fluid level and no leaks. Do you have any suggestions on how to rectify this problem?*
Jim Lenz, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

A There can be a delay in retracting, especially in cold weather when the fluid is thick. However, if one leveler simply won't retract, there's definitely a problem. Inspect the shaft when it's extended for corrosion or damage. Clean it with WD-40 and wipe it off with a clean rag. Check the retraction springs for weakness compared to the others, or damage. You might try swapping the springs with another leg to verify this. Manually release the solenoid valve to see if it will retract. You could swap valves to verify you have a bad one. If none of this helps, you may need to rebuild the sticking leg with a replacement cylinder.

Water Leak Under Toilet

Q *We have a 2017 Winnebago Minnie Winnie 31D motorhome and have been searching high and low to find the source of a water leak. It has a raised toilet, and fresh water leaks under the toilet between the bedroom wall (no water on that side) and base of the toilet. It leaks when connected to city water and when the pump runs while dry camping. We camped for 10 days last September, connected full hookups, and had no leaks (no pressure gauge). In October while dry camping, water leaked on day two off the pump. In November, we connected to city water (with pressure gauge at 60 psi), and it leaked for two days. Would you suggest we remove the toilet, remove the pedestal molding (assuming that's where the leak is located), or cut into the wall to expose the water lines to see if the line has cracked? Any help is appreciated.*
Doug Razzano, via email

A I would remove the toilet and remove the pedestal molding first as it's not as destructive. Don't cut into the wall unless you really find it necessary. I would try hooking the water line to the toilet while it is detached from the floor and raised up on blocks, then pressurize it to look for leaks. Good luck.

Owner's Manual Wanted

Q *My husband and I bought a 2005 Condor by R-Vision motorhome. Any idea where we might find an owner's manual, or any info on it?*
Kathie Gaenslen, Willis, Texas

A The manufacturer of your coach is out of business, unfortunately. It is built on a Ford E-Series cutaway chassis; shop and owner's manuals for the chassis can be found on Amazon, eBay, and elsewhere. Faxon Auto Literature (***faxonautolit.com***) is another good source. Manuals for individual components such as the furnace, water heater, refrigerator, A/C, stove and oven, microwave, TV, radio, etc., should be readily available with an online search engine, using the model numbers copied from the items. If you ever meet another owner of your model at a campground or wherever, chat them up about if they have the manuals to copy.

Determining Tongue Weight

Q *I have a question about the answer to "Determining Tongue Weight" in the January issue. The answer says to park the trailer on a truck scale and crank the jack up so the entire tongue weight is on the scale. If you jack up the trailer tongue so that the weight is no longer on the truck hitch, I would think the trailer angle would cause some of its weight to shift to the trailer wheels and give you a low estimate of tongue weight. I would think you should unhitch the trailer, move the truck off the scale and lower the trailer tongue until it is at the same level as when connected to the truck. That would maintain approximately the same weight on the trailer wheels as*

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when connected to the truck. Wouldn't that be more accurate?

Mike Cliburn, via email

A Thanks for writing, Mike. Technically you are right. However, if you jack up the tongue just a small amount, it shouldn't cause a significant weight shift that would affect the tongue weight reading. It only takes enough lift to clear the hitch ball, only a few inches at most. It depends on how stiff the suspension is on the tow vehicle and trailer, and how much tongue weight and lifting is involved. Next time you measure tongue weight, try both ways and let us know your results.

Slideout Problem

Q *We own a 2009 Carriage Cameo 37-foot fifth-wheel. It has three slideouts that are RBW model GSO-46391. The kitchen slide is having problems retracting. It goes out fine but when retracting, the motor/gears make a skipping noise. If someone on the outside pushes while someone operates the retract button, we can get it retracted with the motor.*

I think the motor bolts may be loose. Do you have any thoughts on how to correct the problem? I do not believe the gears are stripped. I recently had to manually crank out the slideout because it had no power, but I found that problem and fixed it.

David Weaver, Fredericksburg, Virginia

A You'll need to expose the slide mechanism and determine what is wrong. It may be that something is coming loose. RBW has closed down and Leisure Coachworks (*leisurecw.com*) has purchased their old stock of parts. You might be able to get an exploded view of the slide mechanism from them, along with any parts needed. ■

HAVE A QUESTION?

Looking for answers on all things RV, including systems, engines, accessories, or construction? Submit it to our expert at techqa@rv.com and it may be selected for publication. **You must include your name, city and state, phone number (will not be published), and type and model of your RV.**

BRAZEL'S RV PERFORMANCE, CIRCLE 105 ON READER SERVICE CARD

PROGRESS MFG., CIRCLE 117 ON READER SERVICE CARD

NEW RVS

SMALL RVS WITH BIG FEATURES

These weekend-warrior rigs have what it takes to make short getaways and cross-country touring even more enjoyable.

by **BRUCE W. SMITH**

Greek storyteller Aesop said, "Good things come in small packages." He was right. Just take a look at today's RVs: You don't have to buy the biggest, most expensive one on the lot to have one with the right stuff to make escapes enjoyable. There's a wide variety of well-suited smaller motorhomes, camper vans, trailers, and toy haulers available.

That's good news for RVers who want to escape from the stresses of daily life to recharge body and mind on a road trip while enjoying the company of family and friends. For others, it might mean soaking in the peace and quiet of nature while having the freedom to pursue recreational passions like mountain biking, kayaking, fishing, and hiking.

We've highlighted a sampling of smaller RVs that make it easy to get away in comfort. Prices and configurations range widely, but each RV here has the right stuff to make your outdoor adventures enjoyable for years to come.

Winnebago Revel 44E

Winnebago is well-known for staying on the leading edge of mainstream RV design, and the company has fully embraced adventure-bound RVers with the on-demand 4x4 Revel camper van. On road or off pavement, the 2022 Revel 44E is engineered to get a couple of adventurers to their destination and provide a stylish base camp. The 44E is built on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van 4x4 platform matched with the fuel-sipping 3.0-liter turbodiesel V-6. It packs the comforts of home, downsized into an easy-to-drive van that can also be a nice daily driver.

The new model has a number of changes from the previous year to make camp life fun and efficient. The power lift bed provides 49-by-79-inch cross-coach sleeping and this area has more storage features. Amidships is the galley with a portable single-burner induction cooktop, larger 12-volt refrigerator accessible from outside, and a new table and counter extension. The all-in-one wet bath and gear closet boasts a 5-gallon cassette toilet that eliminates the need for a separate black-water holding tank, and Winnebago has upgraded to a new 21-gallon internal freshwater tank and simplified water center panel. Hydronic heating, dual lithium batteries, larger inverter/charger, updated exterior table, and other features make this a fine couple's camper van. Base MSRP: $207,250

winnebago.com

PHOTOS: COURTESY THE MANUFACTURERS

Winnebago's Revel 44E camper van is built on the Mercedes-Benz on-demand 4x4 system chassis, with a 3.0-liter V-6 diesel and high/low-range 4WD, so it's well-suited for both on- and off-road travel.

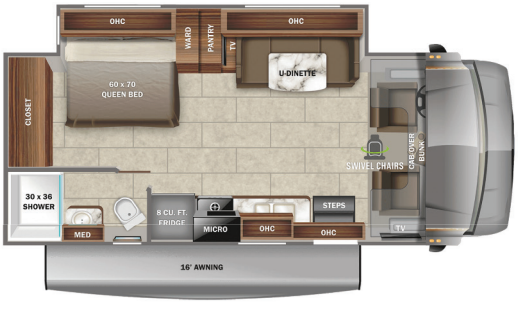
Leisure Travel Vans Wonder

The Wonder from renowned motorhome manufacturer, Leisure Travel Vans, brings all the upscale comforts of a larger motorhome into the smaller 24-foot, 9-inch footprint of the 2022 Ford Transit Cab Chassis powered by the gutsy 3.5-liter EcoBoost V-6. The Wonder has a ton of windows and offers three floorplans (rear lounge, rear twin bed, and front twin bed) to accommodate different lifestyles and likes. We favor the Euro Sport model with the front twin bed because it has the wet bath in the rear, leaving the rest of the interior for socializing, entertaining, and cooking.

Standard features in the Wonder include Truma's AquaGo comfort plus water heating system for instant hot water, Winegard ConnecT 2.0 WiFi Extender to keep you in touch with the rest of the world, an auto-start 4kW Onan generator so there's instant power wherever you camp, and high-quality fixtures, a nice galley, comfortable seating, and Euro-style cabinetry so everyone feels pampered. The dual-rear-wheel Wonder can be ordered in either 2WD or AWD (a $6,500 upgrade), with solar power, lithium batteries, and various interior and exterior color schemes as options. Base MSRP: $141,726

leisurevans.com

Leisure Travel Vans' Wonder is an ideal getaway RV for those who like to feel pampered in luxury while having the freedom to camp wherever the road leads. Interior configurations vary in the Wonder depending on floorplan. But all three have high-end cabinetry, comfortable seating and sleeping, and a nice galley.



Jayco Redhawk 24B

The Redhawk 24B Class C motorhome is consistently among the most popular motorhomes in its class. For 2022, Jayco took the new V-8 gas-powered Ford E-450 cab chassis, turned it into a 26-foot coach, and loaded it with the most popular slideout floorplans and features to get a big value for the price and size. The budget-friendly Redhawk includes upgrades to solar, 30-amp 120-volt AC and 12-volt battery systems, 4,000-watt MicroQuiet Onan generator, along with both rear- and side-view cameras for the most technologically advanced Redhawk yet.

Inside, a queen bed in the rear of the slide and over-cab bunk easily sleeps four, while a 15,000-Btu A/C and 31,000-Btu furnace keeps the interior just right in all seasons. A Furrion all-in-one cooktop oven, 8-cubic-foot double- door fridge, and residential-size microwave fill out the spacious galley. There's ample room to rest and relax, and store clothing, gear, and provisions in the cabinets for a multiday road trip. Want to bring along a boat, ATVs, or another vehicle? No problem. The 7,500-pound Class IV hitch is up to the task. The Redhawk even comes with Jayco's JRIDE suspension package that includes larger sway bars and Hellwig Helper Springs to make the ride and driving on twisting roads more enjoyable. Base MSRP: $128,543

jayco.com

Off Grid Adventure Vans

Don't see any camper van that you really like? Have Off Grid Adventure Vans build it. You supply the van, or have them source it for you, and they'll deliver a truly custom handcrafted, turn-key touring van. OGA offers four standard floorplans with a starting price of $42,500 built in a RAM ProMaster High-Roof 159-inch wheelbase model. OGA has also developed similar layouts for the Ford Transit 148 wheelbase (WB) and the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 144 WB and 170 WB. Or, work with the company's design team to build a truly custom interior of your dreams, which can add $5,000–$10,000 to the price of the Standard conversion.

The differences between Off Grid's designs are minimal, and mostly have to do with the integration of the bed, which can be a fold-out Murphy-style unit or fixed, and the location of the galley and cabinetry. Standard conversions include 115 watts of solar power on the roof so you can live comfortably with minimal use of fossil fuels, and a Nature's Head composting toilet. OGA is committed to promoting sustainable building and living practices. For example: All of the wood used in the vans is harvested from stable local forests and processed by a Mennonite mill near the Frederick, Maryland, facility. Base MSRP: $42,500, plus cost of the van.

ogavans.com

A 60-by-68-inch rear ramp door opens up to reveal the garage/galley area that has a flip-up sofa on the curb side of the RV. Overhead cabinets and exterior cargo compartments provide storage of gear, food, and clothing.

Forest River Rockwood Geo Pro G19FBTH

Want to bring some of your toys on the trip? Forest River's little Rockwood Geo Pro G19FBTH is a great 21-foot toy hauler to hitch behind a midsize pickup or SUV. This travel trailer weighs less than 3,500 pounds unloaded and has a 1,500-pound cargo capacity, so it should accommodate a small ATV, a pair of motorcycles, a snowmobile, kayak or canoe, or other adventure toys in its garage area. Up-front is a 54-by-74-inch bed and a wet bath with flush toilet is just a step away on the driver's side of this RV. Overhead cabinets are on each side in the living/garage area, while the 70-inch flip-up seat provides additional seating between outdoor forays.

The cooktop, 12-volt refrigerator, and microwave handle the needs required to replenish calories. Summer or winter, the 13,500-Btu A/C and 20,000-Btu furnace will keep the interior comfy. And if you are dry camping and want more electrical power, Rockwood offers a Power Package option that includes such things as triple 190-watt solar panels, 3,000-watt inverter/charger, a 400Ah lithium battery, and an 11,000-Btu Coleman Soft-Start A/C. The Geo Pros also come with a high-clearance axle setup and 15-inch Mud Rover Radial tires well suited for backcountry RVing. This is a small, yet nicely equipped toy hauler. Base MSRP: $32,405

forestriverinc.com ■

They say that home is where the heart is. Maybe that's why so many people have fallen in love with Big Pine Key and Florida's Lower Keys. As home to two wildlife refuges, epic ocean views, miles of unspoiled wilderness and everything from cozy campsites to luxurious RV parks, and Stock Island's delightful restaurants and rustic charm, Florida's Lower Keys should be at the top of your vacation list.

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BIG PINE KEY & FLORIDA'S LOWER KEYS, CIRCLE 102 ON READER SERVICE CARD

ROOF MAINTENANCE

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

RV roof maintenance may not be a glamorous task, but it's essential to ensure enjoyable travels.

by **JAMES ADINARO**

Years ago, when I was a new homeowner, I got a rude awakening to an aspect of home maintenance that I had never thought of before: the roof. Water from snow melt was leaking through the attic, making a soggy blob of insulation, and seeping through the ceiling into the hallway where it made a puddle on the carpet. Fixing that turned out to be a very expensive proposition, and it put roof maintenance permanently on my radar.

I'm sure I'm not alone here, because let's face it, roofs aren't that exciting. Apart from a few lines in the home inspector's report, we tend not to think too much about them when buying or living in a home … until it's too late.

RVs, it turns out, are no different. Their roofs aren't super exciting either, and I'm fairly certain nobody starts out their hunt for the perfect RV by looking at the roof. But caring for and maintaining your RV's roof is vital to the long-term enjoyment of your RV, so it's important to have a basic understanding of the roof and the maintenance it requires.

Roof Types

RV roofs are not all the same, so the first step on your roof maintenance journey is figuring out exactly which type of roof is over your head. Fortunately, there are only a few types, and none of the choices are "bad." You'll need to know what type of roof you have so that you can select the right products and procedures to maintain it.

Membrane Roofs

It's a safe bet that the lion's share of RV roofs are membrane, so we'll spend a bit more time here. You might also hear them referred to as a "rubber roof" (though they aren't natural rubber). These roofs consist of a synthetic rubber membrane that is stretched over the roof substrate, which is likely plywood. There are two main types of membranes used today for RV roofs: EPDM and TPO. (Spoiler alert: I'm not going to tell you that one is better than the other.)

Ethylene propylene diene monomer (EPDM) has been used on RV roofs since the 1980s. EPDM roofing is manufactured in a black color, and then a coating is applied to create the white RV roof you'll see. This tidbit becomes important later.

Thermoplastic Polyolefin (TPO) is a newer product than EPDM, but it's been around for a long time as well. TPO is manufactured the same color throughout the membrane.

PHOTOS: JAMES ADINARO

SAFETY FIRST!

Washing your RV's roof doesn't have to be complicated, but you shouldn't take safety lightly. An RV roof that's covered with soapy water can be slippery, so if you have any doubts about your safety, it's best to wash from a sturdy ladder alongside the RV. Soap and water work just fine, but do pay attention to the runoff. It can be very dirty, and could potentially leave streaks on your RV's side walls.

1) Membrane roofs are far and away the most common type of roofing found on today's RVs. Every RV in this photo has a membrane roof. 2) If this roof had any issues, you might not see them for all the debris. Clearing the roof of debris is the first step in your roof maintenance check.

In an RV installation, the choice is a wash. But RV manufacturers do have to choose between the two types, so how do they make that decision? Is it just based on price?

I spoke with Adam Christoffersen, senior product manager for Winnebago Towables, to see how they make the choice. "It's not entirely cost-driven," he told me. He then listed a bunch of factors that go into the decision. These included ease of installation, feedback from their warranty data, the level of familiarity with the material, and (especially lately) supply chain considerations. In other words, it's a business decision. Nothing in our conversation led me to believe that one of these materials was "better" than the other.

But even though one isn't "better," it's still important for you to know what kind of membrane your RV roof is. Because, for all their similarities, the materials are chemically different. You'll need to know what kind of roof you have so that you can select compatible cleaners and sealants to use with it. So how do you know?

While you can find lots of tips online, there are a few reliable ways to know for sure. The gold standard is to simply ask the manufacturer or look it up in your owner's manual. The other reliable way has to do with the information I gave

Even if this roof might hold your weight, walking on it could be a bad idea. The front and back roll away without any transition, and you might quickly find yourself on the ground.

Can You Walk on it Safely?

Any RV roof maintenance is going to require you to access the roof. The most obvious way to do this is to just climb up there and get to it. But you'll need to know two things before getting on your RV's roof: First, is it safe for the roof? And more importantly, is it safe for you?

A walkable RV roof is one that you can safely walk on without damaging it, and not all RVs have them. What makes a roof walkable is a combination of the surface itself (which you can see), and the supporting structure underneath (which you can't). Since it's partly determined by things you can't see, the only sure way to know if the roof is walkable is to consult with your manufacturer or owner's manual. But if you can't do that, and you don't like the thought of creating unintentional skylights in your rig, there are a couple of rules of thumb that may help you.

The most obvious is the presence of a ladder. If an RV manufacturer included a ladder on your RV, it's a reasonable bet that the roof is walkable. Fiberglass roofs, due to their rigidity, are generally walkable, though there are exceptions. Automotive-style metal roofs on Class B motorhomes might hold your weight, but you'd probably dent them if you tried to walk around up there. Walk on the roof areas supported by internal structures and you'll help avoid such damage. Clean and easily moved plywood panels that help spread your weight around can also help protect your roof structure. If I had doubts about the walkability of my RV's roof, I'd elect to perform any roof maintenance from a sturdy ladder.

But the bigger concern about walking on the roof has to do with your safety. RV roofs can be quite a distance from the ground, and they don't have guardrails. When they're wet and soapy, they can be EXTREMELY SLIPPERY. A fall from your RV's roof can lead to serious injury. So if you do decide to climb up on your RV's roof, make sure you can do it safely, wear appropriate (grippy) footwear, have an assistant to be your spotter and hand you up supplies, and observe any warnings or safety labels on the roof or in your owner's manual. If any of that is difficult or impossible, it's best to perform your cleaning, inspection, and maintenance from the side of your RV, using a ground-based ladder.

you earlier about the material's color. Find a place in the RV where you'll be able to see both sides of the material. The easiest place to find one is typically inside the roof opening of a fan or vent, so you may have to remove a trim ring to see it. If the material is the same color all the way through, it's TPO. If it's black on one side and white on the other, it's EPDM.

One significant advantage to TPO is it can be heat-welded when repairing a tear in the fabric, for example. Using a special heat-gun tool, the material bonds with itself in a joint virtually as strong as the undamaged material. EPDM has to be glued when making a repair, but using the right adhesive and preparation results in a functional repair.

Fiberglass Roofs

Besides being used in boats and bathtubs, fiberglass is also used in RV roofs. A fiberglass roof on your RV will be hard to the touch, and very resistant to damage other than oxidizing and puncture damage. Fiberglass roofs are lightweight, and generally require less maintenance than rubber roofs. But even fiberglass roofs require periodic cleaning and maintenance to keep them working their best.

Metal Roofs

Though less common, your RV may have a metal roof. Many times, this will be an aluminum roof because that material has been used for RVs for decades, although it's far less popular today due to the availability of membrane-type roofs. In the case of Class B RVs, it will be an automotive-type steel roof because that's what the van is made from. Metal roofing is obviously extremely durable, and you're not likely to pierce it with an errant tree branch. But even with the durability of metal overhead, you still won't be immune to roof maintenance, as these roofs will have penetrations that need to be sealed and maintained, just like their membrane and fiberglass counterparts. Aluminum roofs also tend to oxidize and cause black streaks on the RV's side wall over time as the rain washes the oxidization down the rig.

Spray-on Roofs

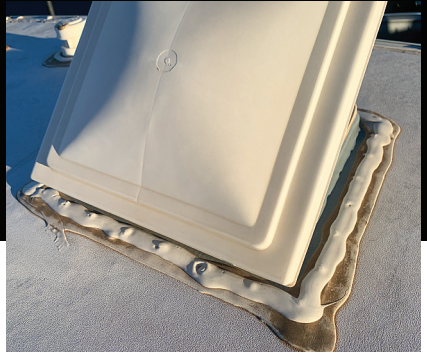
A fairly new alternative for RV roofing is a spray-on material from companies such as FlexArmor (*rvroof.com*). This material is very similar to the spray-in bedliner material used on pickups but is chemically designed for durability in a rooftop application and adhesion to the RV roof substrate such as wood, fiberglass, aluminum, EPDM, or TPO. Spray-on installation requires specialized equipment, meticulous roof prep, and a controlled application environment. This is also a fairly expensive type of roofing but it's tough, durable, and lasts a long time.

Pro Tip

Know when to say when. Applying sealants and roof-repair tape should be manageable for most RVers, but if a repair involves heat-welding, special solvents, extensive patching, or removing a heavy air conditioner, it might be best to leave that to the pros at an RV service center.

Take Action

Most times, your roof inspection won't call for any further action. But occasionally, you might find issues needing attention. Here are some common scenarios you might find on your roof, and what to do about them:



AGING SEALANT

Sealants that are cracked, separating or just past their useful life are the most common RV roof maintenance item you'll encounter. Most times, you can simply clean up the area and apply new sealant over the old, as has been done around this roof vent.

TREE DAMAGE

Rips or tears in your RV's roof from low-hanging tree limbs or branches is another common problem. If the damage is minor enough, you might be able to cover the rips with RV roof-repair tape. More extensive damage might require patches, as seen here.

MINOR SCRATCHES

Very minor scratches, as seen around these ladder roof mounts, could probably be left as they are. But if you really want to stay ahead of any potential problems, you can cover scratches like these with RV roof-repair tape, or self-leveling lap sealant.

Maintenance

Winnebago's Christoffersen told me "The more care you give something the longer you can prolong its life." Besides offering me a metaphor for life in general, it was clear he was a big proponent of roof maintenance. "Most failures are due to neglect," he concluded.

As it's mostly cleaning and inspection, RV roof maintenance isn't difficult, but it's easy to put it off. Don't. It's best if you can wash and inspect your RV's roof every few months. But at a bare minimum, I'd recommend twice a year. If you live or RV in areas with high humidity that can contribute to mold growth, or if you park your RV under trees that can drop leaves and sap, you'll want to wash and inspect the roof more frequently.

The first step is to clear the roof of debris, dirt, and leaves that can accumulate up there. You can use a broom for this, but I like to use a lightweight battery-powered leaf blower. (If you don't have one, use this as your excuse to go buy one!) Once the roof is clear of debris, perform a quick inspection of the caulks and sealants, and look for any obvious flaws in the roof. You'll look at all this more closely when you wash it, but since washing involves putting water on your roof, you don't want to make any obvious problems worse.

Assuming your initial clearing and inspection goes well, you can proceed to washing the roof. There are numerous products available for this job. Just make sure to choose one that is compatible with the type of roof that you have. Washing the roof doesn't require any special cleaners though; you can always use a mild detergent like Murphy Oil Soap with plain water.

Wash a small section of the roof at a time, perhaps a square yard, using a long-handled sponge mop. Don't forget your RV's slideouts (if you have them) as well! You'll want to pay closer attention this time to the sealants, looking for any cracks or separation. Be sure to check around all the roof penetrations for vent pipes, antennae, etc. Also look for rips and tears (membrane roofs), hairline cracks or oxidation (fiberglass roofs), or dents or chipped paint (metal roofs). As you rinse each section off, mind the runoff. It can be quite dirty, and you don't want it drying on the side of your RV and streaking it. Make sure to rinse it all the way off. Work your way from one end of your RV to the other, being careful as you back up to not trip over any roof-mounted obstacles.

If your washing and inspection has traveled down the "happy path," and you haven't found any issues, you may be done at this point. Rubber roofs don't technically require anything further, but many RVers like to apply a protectant, which makes future washing easier. I do recommend applying a protectant to a fiberglass roof to guard against oxidation, which over time can make the gelcoat lose its shine and turn hazy and chalky. Metal roofs in good repair don't require anything else at this point, but you can always wax them to make future washing go quicker.

In Case of Trouble

Let's say you do find something during your periodic inspection. What then? You've always got the option to take your RV to a qualified service center, but some of the repairs you should be able to do yourself, as long as you can access the roof safely.

Patching up sealants isn't terribly difficult. The most important thing here is that you use a sealant that's chemically compatible with the roofing material and the existing sealants. I've written here before ("Close Inspection," July 2021) about the process. Basically, you just clean up the old sealant, and apply new, compatible sealant over the old—completely covering any problem areas. Since you're working on the roof, you'll want a self-leveling lap sealant.

Errant tree branches can cause small tears in membrane roofing materials. If you find one of these, probably the easiest way to repair it is with specialized roofing repair tape. Dicor (*dicorproducts.com*) makes such a product, that you should be able to find at most RV centers. I've also used Eternabond tape (*eternabond.com*) in the past with excellent results.

These tapes are the closest thing I've found to a miracle cure for RV roofs. They go on easily and quickly. They're waterproof immediately. They don't crack or harden. And they stick to any RV roofing material you can imagine, and be sure you have it where you want it because once it's on, it's really difficult to remove and adjust. I've used these tapes on roof penetrations, seams, and cracks, and on metal and fiberglass roofs to boot. I still keep some of this tape in my RV toolkit.

Fiberglass oxidation—a dull, chalky appearance to the fiberglass roof—is something you might run into. Fortunately, due to its long history in the marine world, fiberglass repair materials and oxidation restorers are well-known quantities. Any fiberglass repair product or oxidation remover, when used according to directions, should be safe to use on your RV's fiberglass roof.

I know caring for your RV's roof isn't too exciting. But since one of the main benefits of RVing is having a roof over your head wherever you travel, it's something that shouldn't be neglected.

RV TECH FOR EVERYONE

James Adinaro is a former aerospace engineer who discovered a love of RVing, and especially RV modding, when he and his wife, Stefany, bought their first RV more than a decade ago. Since that time, James has tackled hundreds of complex RV modifications, usually without a net. He's chronicled his RV mod adventures —and misadventures—on thefitrv.com. Check it out to learn more.

DIY ORGANIZER

SLICK SLIDERS

MORryde's heavy-duty cargo trays are a fast way to organize your RV's "storage piles" and provide instant access to otherwise hard-to-reach items.

by **BRUCE W. SMITH**

Regardless of what it is that I'm trying to find in my RV's pass-through storage compartment, the item always seems to be the one that's in the middle and buried at the bottom of the storage pile. As hard as I try to keep some semblance of order in storing items that aren't used a lot, or are a little too big to keep inside my trailer, disorder always seems to win out. So I end up half crawling into my fifth-wheel's pass-through "storage pile" to dig out what I need.

MORryde's sliding cargo trays are easy to install and can handle up to 800 pounds of cargo (RV weight ratings permitting). They can slide in both directions, which makes it simple—and convenient—to organize and access the odds and ends that can accumulate in your RV's basement storage over time.

But that's no longer the case. The solution is one I should have taken from the very beginning of my life as a full-time RVer—installing sliding cargo trays.

Sliding cargo trays for RVs (and pick-ups/SUVs) have been around like forever. They work in the same manner as slide-out drawers. The tray sits in a frame that has slide rails supported by roller bearings so it's easy to pull out the tray, get what you need, and slide the tray back in until it locks in position.

There are no better built and designed sliders than those manufactured by MORryde and sold through a variety of RV dealers and RV accessory retailers such as Camping World. They come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, can handle up

PHOTOS: BRUCE W. SMITH

to 800 pounds of cargo (presuming that your RV's weight ratings can accommodate such a load), are fully assembled, and are even carpeted. This makes solving RV cargo organizational issues and installation a breeze.

In my case the problem compartment was the big pass-through in a 2021 Keystone Sprinter 3570LFT. The curbside opening was nearly twice the width of the opening on the streetside. So it required two MORrdye sliding cargo trays, one 29-by-72 inches and the other 20-by-72 inches, to handle the job. I also chose the trays with 80% extension (double rollers) instead of those with 60% extension, so I had maximum access.

The sliding-cargo-tray installation took less than a half hour with the help of a buddy, and the trays are heavy-duty steel and built in the USA. The only tool we needed was a DEWALT Compact ¼-inch 20-volt MAX cordless impact driver (from *northerntool.com*) with a Phillips bit. So easy. So simple. So efficient. Sliding cargo trays are a great investment for those who like to be organized and have quick, easy access to items stored in exterior RV cargo compartments. ■ *morryde.com*

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Simple DIY

1) The trays come fully assembled, so installation is just a matter of setting them in place and using the supplied mounting hardware to secure them to the floor. Make sure you know what's under the floor before attaching the tray frames to the floor. My fifth-wheel has a 3-inch subfloor between the pass-through compartment floor and the holding tanks beneath. 2) Before anchoring trays to the floor, make sure they clear both sides of the cargo-door opening. Allow at least ¾-inch clearance between the sliding tray/frame and the rubber seal. 3) MORryde supplies a variety of fasteners with each tray, from wood screws to bolts. We used our DEWALT cordless 20-volt impact driver and the shortest wood screws in the kit to attach the cargo tray frames to the floor. Three screws around each corner and one on each side in the middle of the frame is recommended. All the mounting holes are predrilled to ease installation. 4) The author fastens the MORryde tray frame to the floor. Note: Double-roller trays (shown here) need to be extended to one end and then the other to get the anchors installed. The single-roller (60% extension style) trays can be easily removed from the frame, which would make installation even easier.

Having a cargo tray that slides both directions makes it convenient for use in an RV pass-through storage compartment. We used MORryde's 80% sliding tray (20-by-72 inches) in this application.

FOCUS ON SAFETY

SAFE TRAVELS

Bringing along a first-aid kit—and knowing how to use it—is essential when traveling in your RV.

by **JERRY SMITH**

For many of us, an RV is a home away from home, a place to leave the hectic pace of city life behind, grill steaks over an open campfire, and chill out. Odds are you have at least a basic first-aid kit to deal with minor cuts and burns. But more and more these days, folks are using their RVs as base camps for more strenuous activities. In this case, a box of Band-Aids and a tube of antibiotic cream may not hack it if you get hurt. In a real emergency, where help isn't a 911 call away, you should be prepared to deal with more serious injuries, and getting proper first-aid training is wise. Here are some must-haves for the active RVer's first-aid kit.

Be Prepared

Since there's no guarantee accidents will happen in daylight, a good flashlight is essential. LED flashlights are small, searingly bright, and thrifty with battery power. Headlights—LED lights on a headband—leave your hands free for more important jobs. Bring spare batteries and swap out the ones in the flashlight regularly, but if you'd rather not, hand-cranked flashlights can be charged manually; some are powered by batteries as well as charged with hand cranks and come with built-in AM/FM/weather band radios.

If the hike that started in bright sun ends in freezing rain, a space blanket helps you retain body heat. Weighing only a few ounces, space blankets are wind- and waterproof and reflect up to 80% of your body heat back at you to help prevent hypothermia. They can be used as emergency shelters and ground covers, and their shiny appearance stands out against natural backgrounds, making them more visible to rescuers.

Not everything you meet in the outdoors is happy to meet you. Use insect repellent, but if you get stung or bitten, insect-sting treatments can take the itch away. A first-aid cream helps prevent infection, and an antihistamine takes care of mild allergic reactions. If someone in your party is known to suffer severe reactions from bee stings, an EpiPen can be a lifesaver. You'll need a prescription and they're pricey, but certainly worth it should you need it.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR KIT

Naturally, there are several essential items for every first-aid kit, from bandages to ointments and creams to wipes and gloves. Be sure to add to that list with personal needs, such as prescriptions, a back-up pair of glasses, tools, batteries, hand sanitizer, etc.

HANDLING AN RV BREAKDOWN

Make sure your RV has its own first-aid kit in case of a breakdown. Flares or warning triangles, either reflective or LED-illuminated, prevent a bad situation from getting worse at night or in fog; the same goes for a high-visibility vest worn by anyone outside the RV. Tire chains and traction mats can get you out of a sticky—or muddy, or snowy—situation, and tow straps make it easier for someone else to pull you out of the problem.

Not everyone wants to work on their RV, but there are some tasks everyone should know how to perform. A basic toolkit should include the tools to put on a spare tire, tighten accessory belts under the hood, replace broken hinges, remove and install hose clamps, check tire pressure, add air to tires, and replace blown fuses and bulbs. Duct tape has more uses than humanity has yet discovered. Nitrile gloves and hand cleaner make cleanup easy.

Jumper cables and a portable jumpstarter, a coil of rope, zip ties, and a can of WD-40 may take up little room but can save the day. Adding a good roadside assistance plan is always a good idea.

Happy Feet and Skin

You might spend more time on your feet in a weekend of hiking than you do all week at home. Start your hike wearing clean, dry socks made of wool or a synthetic material—not cotton. Smear a thin layer of Vaseline on areas prone to chafing, or sprinkle talcum powder in your shoes. For an extra layer of protection moleskin adhesive pads work well.

Carry alcohol wipes, antibiotic cream, and moleskin on hikes, just in case you do get a blister. To treat a blister, clean it and apply antibiotic, then cut out a "doughnut hole" (you do carry a pocketknife, right?!) in the moleskin that's just larger than the blister. Place this "doughnut" around the blister and put another layer of moleskin over the blister.

Even skin covered by light clothing can burn in the summer sun, especially at altitude, so apply sunscreen and lip balm regularly. Sunglasses with UV protection are a must, too, as is a hat to prevent dehydration. If you think you might run out of water before you get back, take along a water purifier in case you find a stream.

Build Your Own Kit

For more serious injuries, your first-aid kit should contain supplies like examination gloves, a CPR mask, hand sanitizer, a multi-tool or Swiss Army knife, tweezers for removing bee stingers and ticks, surgical scissors to cut away the clothing around a wound, and a sewing needle and sterile thread.

Pack over-the-counter painkillers in their original bottles so there's no mistaking what they are. The same goes for a few days' supply of any prescription medications you take. Write down the names and dosages of your meds, your doctor's name and contact information, and the phone numbers of those traveling with you who are back at camp. Before you set off on your trip find the hospitals and clinics nearest to the places you intend to visit and keep the contact info in your first-aid kit.

If traveling with pets, get them their own first-aid kits and add a copy of their vet's contact info, and make sure they're up on their shots and licenses. Research where you're planning to stay; if ticks or fleas are particularly troublesome there, consider kenneling your fur babies.

There could come a time when the most important item in your kit is your own first-aid knowledge. The Red Cross offers first-aid and CPR classes in most communities that cover everything from simple cuts to broken bones and worse.

Carrying a first-aid kit without knowing how to use it is only a little better than not carrying one at all. Be sure to plan ahead, and your travels will continue to be happy in the long run. ■

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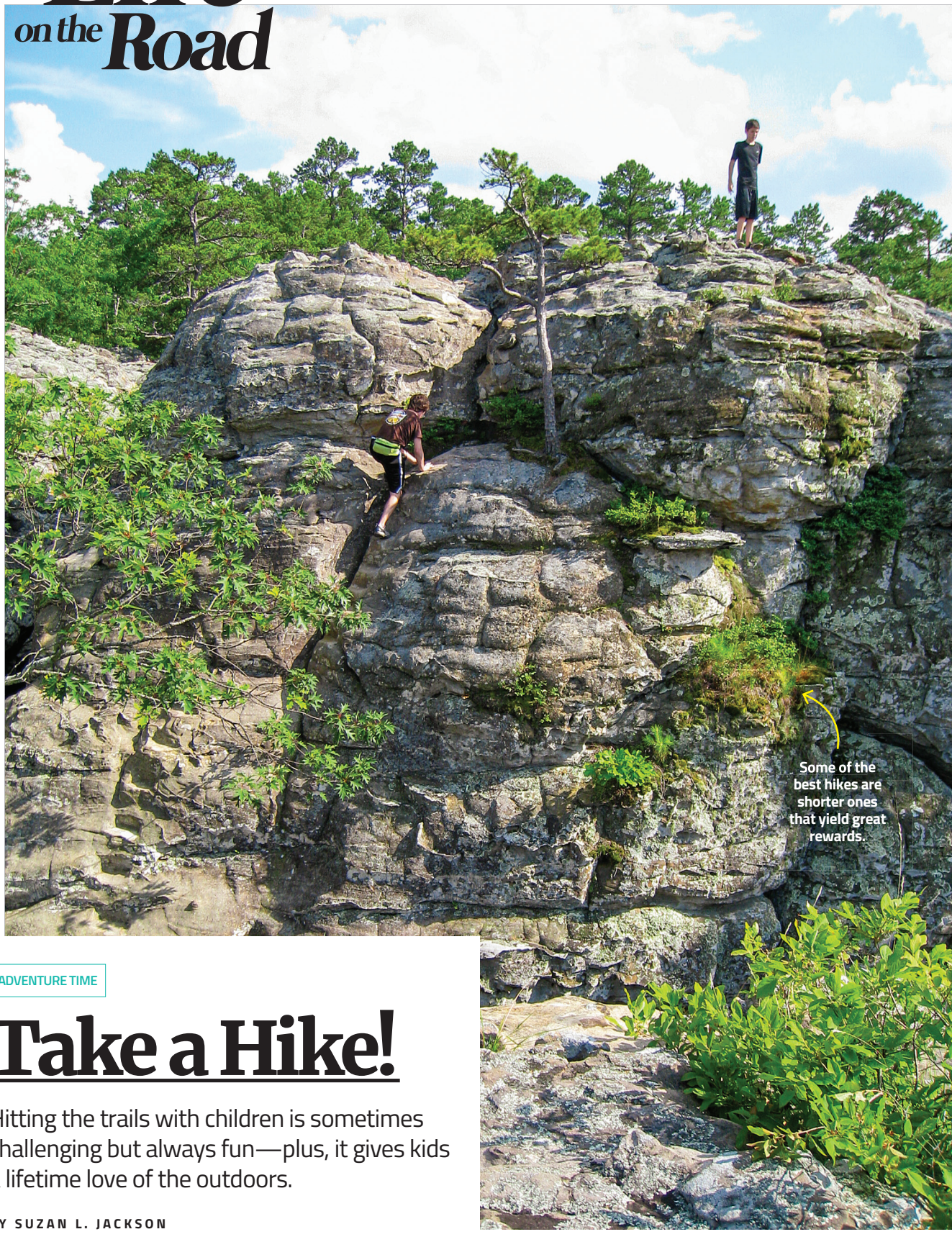


Some of the best hikes are shorter ones that yield great rewards.

ADVENTURE TIME

Take a Hike!

Hitting the trails with children is sometimes challenging but always fun—plus, it gives kids a lifetime love of the outdoors.

BY SUZAN L. JACKSON

PHOTOS: SUZAN L. JACKSON

SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS

and exploring new places is one of the best parts of RVing, and hiking is a great way to do both. Each of our sons went on his first hike at about six weeks old. They didn't actually hike at that tender age, but they were outdoors with us, enjoying the fresh air and new surroundings. We continued hiking with our children as they grew from infants to toddlers to teens and beyond. There have been a few bumps in the trail, but those hikes when things go wrong make the best stories! Now in their 20s, our sons still enjoy hiking.

CAVE OF WONDERS

The Early Bird Loves to Hike

Take children on hikes when they're infants, and enjoying the outdoors together becomes a natural part of family life. Besides, hiking with infants is about as easy as it gets. Their needs are simple, and they can be carried easily.

Some basic equipment (save money by buying used) will make your hiking experiences comfortable and enjoyable. From birth through much of the first year, babies can ride comfortably in a soft front carrier; the best ones can be worn with the baby facing in or out. Our younger son loved facing out in the front carrier when he was 3–10 months old. He'd hang there waving his arms and legs and grinning at everyone. I once had a park ranger laugh while

▲ **Hikes are about so much more than the trail. The natural setting lends itself to some off-the-beaten-path exploring (where permitted, of course).**

Bear Cave Trail at Petit Jean State Park in Arkansas is an easy ¼-mile day hike where you can walk around, under, and over sandstone boulders, which form a number of rock shelters.

Rather than setting time and distance goals, live in the moment and enjoy your surroundings. You'll find that the hikes are so much more fulfilling this way.

telling me there were no campsites available because she couldn't resist his smiling face!

Once the baby is able to sit up on her own and hold up her head, she can ride in a baby backpack. Look for one that is substantial, with a wide hip belt and ample, padded shoulder straps. Kids can ride this way for years (check the weight limit). Throughout this stage, you can hike as you would without children—keeping up a comfortable pace and covering varied terrain.

Once your child begins to walk, your hikes change. Some toddlers are content to sit in a carrier, but most new walkers don't like to be confined for long. Toddlers often cover more ground from side to side on the trail than they do moving forward. The whole family will enjoy hiking more if you just accept that it will be different for a few years. Continue to bring the backpack because your toddler will likely tire out.

SONGS AND GAMES

When the going gets tough, the tough ... sing a song! Fun songs and games help when a hike goes too long. I reached back to my own childhood and Girl Scout days. And ask your kids to teach you songs!

SONGS

The Ants Go Marching

Calamine Lotion

I'm Happy When I'm Hiking

John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt

If You're Happy and You Know It

There Was an Old Lady

The Other Day I Met a Bear

GAMES

20 Questions
(We love "Guess My Animal")

I Spy

Going on a Lion Hunt

I'm Going on a Trip
(ABC memory game)

Scavenger hunt
(Planned ahead or on the fly)

"Take children on hikes when they're infants, and enjoying the outdoors becomes a natural part of family life."

Great Expectations

When your child is ready to hike on his own, adjust your expectations, especially if you've hiked B.C. (Before Children). As with many aspects of family life, hiking with young kids is different, but it's just another kind of fun.

Forget about time, distance, and goals. You'll only frustrate your children and set yourself up for disappointment. Instead of covering a certain number of miles, learn to live in the moment and enjoy the journey. Not sure how to do this? Watch your kids! You'll be amazed at what you see through their eyes. While my husband and I were looking ahead at the trail, our sons noticed rocks, sticks, and bugs. Does it take longer to hike this way? Absolutely! But nothing compares to experiencing the delight of a child discovering the world around him.

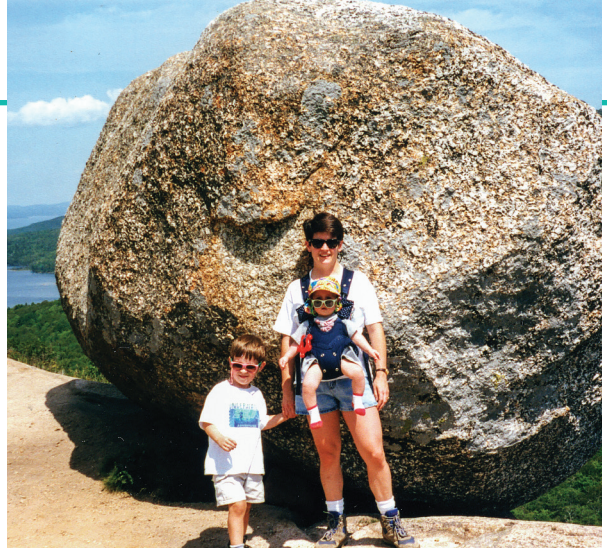
Our sons rarely rode in the backpack carrier after age two, preferring to walk (or run) and having enough stamina for a real hike. I remember the first time our oldest son hiked a 1½-mile trail without being carried. As he was climbing up a large rock, a teen boy went by and yelled, "Hey, big guy! You rock climbing?" Our son was so proud as he replied, "Yeah!"

A rough rule of thumb is that a child is capable of hiking as many miles as his age. Of course, all children are different, and some just naturally enjoy longer hikes and have more stamina than others of the same age.

This guideline was generally true for us, but take into account the type of terrain you'll be hiking, the time of day, and the conditions. Our younger son, at 2 years old, could easily hike 1–2 miles of fairly level land, but if he was hungry or tired, he wouldn't make it 100 yards without complaining. It's better to plan a shorter hike, with kids begging for more, than to push them beyond their limits.

Engage Kids

Choose a hike with a point of interest to inspire your kids. Hiking to a waterfall, cave, lake, or pond, or to the top of a hill will give them something to look forward to and a goal to meet. Hikes with interesting features along the way help to encourage kids, too. Our sons loved any hike with large rocks to climb.



Top: Don't be afraid to bring along your infant. Front-facing carriers allow you both to enjoy the scenery. Above: Beginning hiking during their younger years has given the author's sons a lifetime of outdoor memories.

Celebrating your kids' hiking milestones (without pressure) is a great motivator! At Acadia National Park when our older son was 4 years old, he did his first "peak hike," without being carried, to the top of a (small) mountain. He was so thrilled at making it to the top of South Bubble Mountain, a 1.4-mile loop, that he chose an 8-by-10-inch postcard of the mountain in the gift shop that I framed and hung in his bedroom.

Kids love to be in charge. Let your child lead the hike, following the trail markers and/or map and telling you which way to go. Who knows? Maybe taking charge on the trail will get some of that toddler bossiness or teen silence out of his system!

When the Going Gets Tough

Hiking is just like life: Stuff happens. You can ward off disaster with preparation and a few tips.

Start with sturdy footwear. Although you can hike in sneakers, it is more enjoyable for all with more substantial shoes. Hiking shoes or boots have rugged, grippy soles that prevent you from slipping on slopes and provide traction when it's wet or muddy. Outer coverings made of heavy-duty cloth and/or leather protect your

feet against sharp sticks and rocks.

We bought our oldest son his first pair of boots for hiking when he was 2 years old and noticed a significant difference. In sneakers, he'd slip and slide down even minor inclines. The boots gave him firmer footing, which is important for a toddler who isn't all that stable anyway! He loved having boots like Mom and Dad. Those first boots weren't actually hiking boots but just inexpensive children's boots with solid soles (like tiny work boots) from Walmart. Check discount stores, garage sales, hand-me-downs, and sales or outlets of outdoor stores. Older kids may like lightweight trail shoes that feel like sneakers but still have those grippy soles.

When energy begins to flag on the trail, taking a break for water and snacks can do wonders. Watch your child bounce back with an apple or granola bar. Encourage your kids to drink water throughout the hike to prevent dehydration.

Sometimes, things go wrong, and distraction is your last resort! In Shenandoah National Park, when our sons were 5 and 1½, we hiked to a waterfall and cave (fun points of interest, remember?). The guidebook listed the hike as 2½ miles round-trip when it was actually 2½ miles each way.

Our younger son got into the backpack carrier when he wore out, but our older son was tiring on the long hike back up the hill from the falls. We sang silly songs and played games to pass the time, making a potential disaster into a fun memory. When we got back to the car, our son was elated to have achieved a new personal best: hiking 5 miles at 5 years old!

Hiking as a family has been immensely satisfying for all of us. Our sons gained an appreciation for the natural world and a sense of confidence. My husband and I were able to continue an activity we loved. Hiking has been an essential part of our lives for many years, and we're better for it. ■

WHERE TO FIND HIKES

Pick a trail that's right for your kids' ages, abilities, and interests. Three sources:

Hiking Guidebooks and Park Trail Guides

Buy a guidebook or pick up a list and map of hiking trails in a park. Check distance, difficulty, and points of interest.

Apps

There are lots of different hiking apps, like AllTrails. Be sure to download the hike you're going on because you can't count on cell service on the trail.

Ask a Ranger

In a local, state, or national park or forest, ask a park ranger. They know the area best and may suggest something you wouldn't have found on your own.

Product Spotlight

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Let the Outdoor Games Begin!

Adding a lively game at the campground will up the fun and treasured memories and connect you with loved ones.

BY JAMIE SCHMIDT

If baseball is America's pastime, my hometown must have missed the memo. Not that we didn't appreciate the smack of leather and the crack of hickory, we just preferred to get it through a game called fastball. Perhaps better known as softball, and notable for its larger ball and windmill pitching style, fastball was king where I grew up. There was even a regional men's league with each town having a team sponsored by a local business.

None of which would have anything to do with camping had my father not been a fastball player as a young man. He was a slick center-fielder in his prime and though he stopped playing in the years after my arrival, he still enjoyed tossing that ball around once I was old enough to reciprocate.

Kubb and camping: This simple game can be played anywhere, and you can even make your own set with a few basic items.

It was always an exciting moment when Dad grabbed his mink-oiled ball glove from the station wagon and asked me if I wanted to play catch. And those moments almost exclusively happened on sunny summer days at our seasonal campsite.

My wife and I have continued this tradition with our own kids, though admittedly with less reverence. For one, my ratty—dare I say moldy—glove lacks the awe of my dad's treasured mitt. And with so many other things to throw, the four of us don't always settle on a baseball.

We humans do love to throw things. I suppose the survival of our species depended on it. Seems only fitting that when we're reconnecting with nature and cooking over fire that throwing things would be a favored pastime.

Frisbee, a popular campground sport, makes for affordable fun and no matter how packed your RV may be, there's always room for one of these flying discs!

After all, not every campground is a sprawling paradise in the wilderness. Just hanging out at a campsite, playing with family and friends, can be the very best kind of camping. It surely is for seasonal campers. Sometimes, you just want a fun game to play at your site and throwing stuff fits that bill perfectly.

Stroll around any campground and you'll find people joyfully tossing baseballs, footballs, or Frisbees. Some may have open fields where you can really give your arm a workout. I've even camped at places with full baseball diamonds. But most often, it's just a couple of people on the road in front of their site, tossing something back and forth, chatting, laughing, and living in the moment.

This reminds me of another quirk of my hometown: horseshoes. There were leagues for that, too. In fact, horseshoes were so popular when I was a kid that it was common for folks to have their own backyard pitches. We did. I know because I had to mow around two car axels sticking out of the ground long after the pits had grown over with grass.

Whenever we camp somewhere with a forgotten horseshoe pitch tucked away next to a playground, I imagine the bustle there must have once been around those dilapidated pits. But maybe "forgotten" is the wrong word to use. Horseshoes hasn't so much disappeared as it has evolved, with washer toss its most obvious successor. To play the game, each player tosses a washer toward the opposite target box that has a center pipe or cup. Get the washer in the box, you score a point; get it in the pipe and you score extra points.

We first learned of this excellent game when we visited my aunt and uncle at their cottage during a cross-country RV trip a few years back. They couldn't wait to show it to us, and we couldn't get enough of it after they had. As soon as we returned home, I built my own set with only a few items from the hardware store.

Fun for all ages, portable, and rife with home-handyman potential, washer toss is a perfect horseshoes replacement for RVers. It's become a staple of our camping entertainment repertoire. And when one of the washers misses the box and rolls 50 feet into the underbrush, we have a spontaneous scavenger hunt.

Of course, washer toss is only one of many tossing games, with ladder toss and cornhole two of the most popular. You'll see lively games of each happening at campgrounds everywhere. The simplicity of these games means young and old can not

"Just hanging out at a campsite, playing with family and friends, can be the very best kind of camping."

TEAM SPORT

Invented in Sweden, kubb (pronounced koob), sort of a cross between bowling and horseshoes, is played on a 5-by-8-meter pitch, or playing field, you can set up just about anywhere. Teams of one to six aim to be the first to knock down their opponent's five field and baseline kubbs, plus the king, in one turn by tossing the six batons. Ready for a challenge? Head to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, for the annual U.S. National Kubb Championship (usakubb.org), July 8–10 this year.

PHOTOS: JAMIE SCHMIDT, LINUS_FORSBERG, PETRO VWADIM/GETTY IMAGES

only play but compete. They're great for groups and a wonderful way for kids to make new friends.

A newcomer to the tossing-game catalog, though hardly "new," is kubb. Swedish in origin, kubb is another simple, portable game with a homemade flair that any amateur garage carpenter can whip up in short order. Find an open patch of grass and you're ready to play.

Another old-world game you sometimes still see at the campground is bocce. Popularity has waned from its peak a few years ago, but true to our late-adopter form, we gifted ourselves a set of bocce balls this past Christmas.

With all this throwing and tossing going on, we mustn't forget hitting. I love the ingenuity of campers. Full volleyball courts aren't a hallmark of campgrounds and hauling around nets and poles isn't practical for many RVers. From that conundrum, Spikeball was born.

This game requires a small ball and a square, trampoline-like "net" on which you spike the ball in hopes of outwitting, or outlasting, your competition. Unlike most of the afore-mentioned games, this one can really get your heart pounding. With yummy treats on most campfire menus, burning extra calories during the day is never a bad idea.

As most parents can attest, where there's hitting, there's kicking. Soccer, the most popular game in the world, continues to grow in North America, the land of last resistance. At larger campgrounds, with open fields, you'll inevitably find someone practicing their ball-handling tricks or an impromptu game.

The common theme to all these activities? Simplicity and portability. And, of course, fun. Life is complicated. Fun doesn't need to be. All you need are a couple of items and a bit of space, be it on your campsite, on the road, or on a nearby open space.

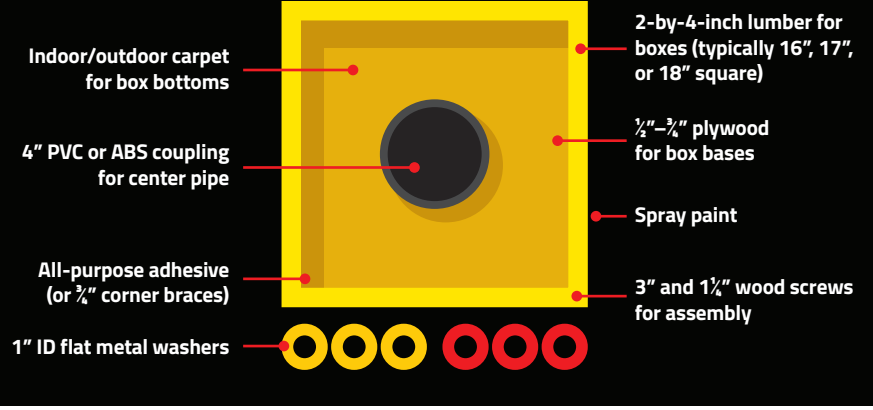
What you get in return is hours of joy, laughter, and heartwarming memories you'll reflect upon each spring as you ponder the mysterious lack of swing-bowling knowledge outside of my hometown. Yup … there was a league for that, too. ■

Washer toss is a staple of author Jamie Schmidt and his family's RV outings. The game for young and old gives everyone a chance to interact with one another.

If your kids are bouncing off the walls of the RV, send them outside for a rousing and entertaining game of soccer to burn off all that energy!

MAKE YOUR OWN WASHER TOSS

Building your own washer toss is simple enough for even the greenest DIY amateur. Here's all you need:



Healthy RV Travels

For the tastiest —and most nutrient-rich—fruits and vegetables you'll ever experience, visit a local farm while on your next RV road trip.

BY STEFANY ADINARO @THEFITRV

Calling all lovers of real food … Rejoice! Spring is here, and right about now, farm stands all around the country are beginning to refill their shelves once again. Who else besides me is ready to hit the road and find some?

James and I have long loved visiting farm stands on our RV trips. It's hard to beat the satisfaction of spotting a hand-painted farm-stand sign along the side of the road, doing an impromptu stop, and then leaving with our RV fridge stocked with a colorful display of freshly picked fruits and vegetables. I'm not sure why but eating foods we find locally (or even pick ourselves) makes them so much more enjoyable. There's something special about knowing we only have them because we happened to be RVing in that region at that particular time.

Farm stands can be so much more than a place to stock up on fresh and healthy local foods. There's an "experience" aspect to visiting them, too. Each has its own personality. They allow you to get to know an area you're visiting in a unique way. Many farm stands are right at the farms where the produce was grown, and they offer more to do than simply to buy produce. From farm tours to made-from-scratch lunches to volunteer opportunities, here are a few interesting farm stands worth going out of your way to visit.

Red Acre Farm: Red Acre Farm is a small-but-mighty 2-acre farm located in Cedar City, Utah. Throughout the year, this working farm grows more than 177 varieties of fruit, vegetables, and herbs—and without any pesticides or fertilizers. There's plenty of fun to be had at Red Acre Farm, from frolicking with their goats and barnyard animals to roaming the farm and seeing what's growing. You can even roll up your sleeves and join in on the farm work, as they gratefully welcome those who'd like to volunteer in exchange for fresh produce. There's a fully stocked farm stand on-site so

"Each farm has its own personality. They allow you to get to know the area you're visiting in a unique way."

The farm stand at Red Acre Farm in the pastoral Cedar Valley region of Utah sells farm-grown produce, fresh baked goods, and so much more.

PHOTOS: COURTESY THE FARMS

you won't have any trouble filling your RV's fridge with a freshly picked local bounty before you leave. That is, IF you leave! Harvest Hosts members have the option to spend a night in their RV right on the farm—or to rent the farm's Airbnb apartment and stay even longer. Red Acre Farm keeps a busy event schedule, from farm-fresh meals to music nights to cooking/baking and craft classes. As if this homey little farm isn't busy enough, they also offer farm tours and holiday celebrations. ***redacrefarmcsa.org***

POCONO ORGANICS CELEBRITY CHEF LINDSAY MCCLAIN

Chef McClain has created a delicious farm-fresh menu, featuring breakfast and lunch options made with USDA regenerative organic produce brought right from the farm to your plate.

Pocono Organics: If you're both a foodie and a fan of the show "Chopped," then this is a destination for you. Pocono Organics is a sprawling 380-acre regenerative organic farm located in the beautiful Poconos area of Pennsylvania. They are especially proud of their celebrity chef, Lindsay McClain, who not only competed on the 20th season of the Food Network TV show "Chopped," but also walked away as the season champion. There's an on-site café where you can enjoy farm-to-table meals prepared by Chef McClain, like her falafel dusted cauliflower over baba ghanoush.

Even though Pocono Organics is only 2 years old, it gives the impression that it's been around for ages. It was founded by Ashley Walsh, the granddaughter of the founders of Pocono Raceway—a NASCAR track located across the street. Ashley was diagnosed in her 20s with gastroparesis, an incurable condition which causes difficulty digesting food. She refused to accept "incurable" and went on a personal journey where she discovered the healing powers of food. When she realized how

Did you know?

Local farm produce tends to be more nutrient-dense than commercially grown foods. Here's why:

HEALTHIER SOIL

Many small-scale local farms use healthy farming methods like cover cropping, crop rotation, and organic practices to nourish the plants and put nutrients back in the soil. Healthier soil increases the nutrient content in the produce it grows.

GROWN AT ITS OWN PACE

While commercial produce is picked before it's fully ripe so it can survive transport, produce grown locally is allowed to naturally ripen at its own pace. This gives roots a chance to grow deeper into the soil, which increases the nutrient levels it pulls from the earth.

SHORTER TIME FROM HARVEST TO FORK

It's not unusual for produce you see displayed at local farm stands to have been picked within the past 24 hours. The sooner you eat produce after it's been harvested, the more nutrients it has.

GROWING PRIORITIES

Local farms have different growing priorities than commercial farming operations. Large operations grow varieties that are bred to handle long transports and sitting on supermarket shelves. Since long transports aren't a concern for local farms, they can focus on growing varieties where nutrition and taste are the priority, like heirloom plants grown from seeds that have been passed down for generations.

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hard it was to find sources of high-quality organic foods, she decided to do something about it—and Pocono Organics was born. Besides the farm-fresh restaurant, Pocono Organics offers farm tours, hands-on cooking classes, and educational workshops. The produce and food offerings in the farm store vary with the seasons, but you can be sure to find a variety of organic breads, meats, fruits, and vegetables year-round. ***poconoorganics.com***

JULY IS CHERRY-PICKING MONTH AT WALTERS' FRUIT RANCH! Pick-your-own farms are a fun tradition that lets you play farmer for the day and harvest your own produce.

Walters' Fruit Ranch: You'll find Walters' Fruit Ranch nestled in the foothills of Mount Spokane, one of 30 or so family-run farms in the scenic Green Bluff area of eastern Washington. With 50 total acres, Walters' is a lovely example of the fruit farming culture that has characterized the Green Bluff region for well over a century. They grow a wide variety of fruits, and vegetables and sunflowers, too. When the fruit is ripe, you can hop on the Fruit Loop Express, a fun tractor and trailer contraption, and head for the orchards where you can pick all the fruit you want. The tractor meanders through the orchards all day long, so when you're ready to move on, just hop back on and go.

Swing by the café for breakfast or lunch, and enjoy some of the menu options made with produce grown on-site, like peach pancakes or seasonal fruit salads. Visit on a weekend summer evening and you can hear live music while sipping a peach bellini or an apple cider mimosa (yes, made from peaches and apples grown just steps away from where you're sitting) or try the hard cider from the ranch's outdoor bar area. And why should the adults have all the fun on the farm? Walters' Barnyard Play Area is a dedicated area for kids, with a pallet maze, a Sweet Pea Pit (think enormous sandbox only with dried peas instead of sand), a human hamster wheel, a giant tunnel slide, and more. The farm store not only sells in-season produce, it also offers a variety of other products. Their apple butter and fresh fruit preserves are especially popular. Ask the locals, and they'll tell you Walters' is famous for their frozen farm-made take-'n'-bake pies. ***waltersfruitranch.com***

While these are just a few examples, there are hundreds more farms across the US that welcome visitors. So this RV season, be on the lookout for those roadside farm-stand signs. When you do see one, make the time to stop. And while the healthy, fresh produce should be reason enough to stop, don't ONLY stop for that. Take some time and absorb the classic beauty of the American farm you've been lucky enough to land on. It quite possibly could end up being the highlight of your trip. ■

A WALTERS' FRUIT RANCH PEACH COCKTAIL REALLY HITS THE SPOT AFTER WORKING UP A THIRST IN THEIR ORCHARDS!

FREE INFORMATION

Mail the attached postage-paid card to find out more about these products and services.

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While every effort is made to maintain accuracy and completeness, last-minute changes may occasionally result in omissions or errors.

PETS

Growing Your Traveling Family

How to adopt a pet to share the joys of RVing with you.

BY RACHAEL JOHNSON @2TRAVELINGDOGS

Have you ever planned a vacation or a road trip with friends? Traveling with the ones we love can add to the enjoyment of the places we visit. We may see things on our journey that we may not have thought of when we travel with others. We may experience different viewpoints, and gain knowledge from our travel companions as well. Yes, I am taking about our pets. Are you looking for your next traveling companion? We may know of a few places to start.

In 2010, our family was forever changed by adopting our dog Peanut Butter Brickle from the Humane Society of Tampa Bay, Florida. And just a few months later, we added Digby Pancake to our family from that shelter as well. Were they the ones who gave us the travel bug? Not at first.

We had a great life and a house without wheels. But something was missing. We were going through the motions, but we knew there had to be a way that we could spend more time together and more time with our dogs. We didn't know how to make that possible, so we just jumped in with open paws to the RV lifestyle.

We sold our home, and we decided that if two rescue dogs could change our outlook on life and help us to enjoy life to the fullest, we had to tell others. So we spent the next few years visiting shelters and rescues to encourage others to adopt and travel with their pets. We visited shelters and rescues in each of the lower 48 states and we met many animals and people along the way. There is a pet looking for you.

We love to travel. We love to learn. We love to experience new places. And when we do that with a pet, we can say firsthand (and first-paw) that you will see things and visit places you never knew you wanted to. You will be forced to slow down. You will linger at a creek longer with your pet. You will look over the vistas just a little while longer. You'll pack a picnic and stop at a park in your new favorite national park. And you'll look at your pet and wonder how you ever lived without each other. You'll wonder why more people don't do this. And you'll thank yourself that you made the decisions to lead you to that point.

New family members mean new surprises! It may take a while for your new friend to get used to her new home.

You will be forced to slow down. You will linger at a creek longer with your pet. You will look over the vistas just a little while longer.

The Process

Is adopting your pet easy? Sometimes yes and sometimes no. Pet adoption can be overwhelming to some. There are different regulations and rules for each shelter or rescue that you may consider adopting from. Because these organizations spend so much time and money to get a pet ready for adoption, they want to make sure that pet will be valued and taken care of. You will most likely have forms to fill out and adoption fees. But we sincerely believe that most potential adopters have the right intentions. Just because one rescue or shelter may turn you down doesn't mean the right pet is not out there for you. Don't give up on the pet waiting for you.

We have heard stories of some rescues requiring adopters to have fenced-in yards. That, of course, does not work if you are a full-time RV traveler. So if you are a full-timer, can you still adopt your traveling pet? The answer may be yes! We asked the founder of AnimalLuvr's Dream Rescue (***animalluvrs.org***) in Tampa, Florida, how she viewed RVers who potentially wanted to adopt a furry family member.

"We have adopted out to RV travelers," says Cecilia Nieves of AnimalLuvr's Dream Rescue. "It all depends on the family and the individual pup for ideal matching. We strive on having our fosters be totally upfront and honest on the pups' (or cats') perks, quirks, medical needs, energy levels, etc. We do not want to set them up for failure, so this is where the screening process is important."

Some dogs may only be comfortable sleeping in a crate, while some may prefer "other" uses for such contraptions.

PHOTOS: DEBORA VANDOR, INSIDE-STUDIO, GLOBALP, PHOTOSCHMIDT/GETTY IMAGES

NOW WHAT?

You've adopted your pet. Great choice! What items do you need those first days and nights? A collar and leash, plus water and food bowls are great starting points. A comfortable bed is a must. Give your pet her own spot to call her own. And don't forget your patience, flexibility, and understanding.

Before you embark on that first road trip give your pet a few days to settle in. If you are a full-time RV traveler there are extra items you may want to have on hand like portable dog fencing and waste bags. Some pets may not feel confident walking up RV steps, so have a ramp, especially for older pets. And no matter if you are a weekend warrior or full-time traveler, always carry vaccination and vet records with you at all times. We like to keep multiple copies in our tow vehicle and fifth-wheel.

You'll look at your pet and wonder how you ever lived without each other.

The Particulars

It's also important to know what size, breed, or mix of breeds you are looking for. It's fine to love specific breeds, and there are many breed-specific rescue organizations. When you are traveling, it's common for many campgrounds to enforce their own breed restrictions or sizes of dogs or the number of pets you may have, so make sure to check policies before booking. Also, keep the size of your RV in mind when deciding on a pet to adopt. Our motorhome was great for Brickle and Digby, who were both large dogs. A small travel trailer would not have worked for our needs.

What kinds of activities do you like? Hiking, kayaking, boating, running? Do you like skiing or

swimming? Do you like cold weather or warm temperatures? All of these factors should be considered when choosing your potential new family member.

If you aren't sure that you want to adopt, there are ways to get your feet wet … literally. Many shelters and rescues offer the public a chance to take a shelter pet hiking for the day or to even have sleepovers. What better way is there to see if a pet is right for you while having so much fun?

The Payoff

With the amount of effort it takes to adopt a pet, is it worth it? We cannot imagine how our lives would be now if not for traveling full time with Brickle and Digby for almost six years. We loved our dogs before traveling the US, but we didn't really know their potentials fully. Their way of looking at life, appreciation for the little things as big things and seeing them pick their favorite places and destinations has been a life-changing experience for us. But we also got to be a part of saving their lives. That is one of the best feelings in the world. How much of an impact can a rescue pet make on your life? How much of an impact can travel make on your life? Now imagine when you put the two together. Happy traveling to you and your new rescued traveling pet! ■

DIGBY PANCAKE

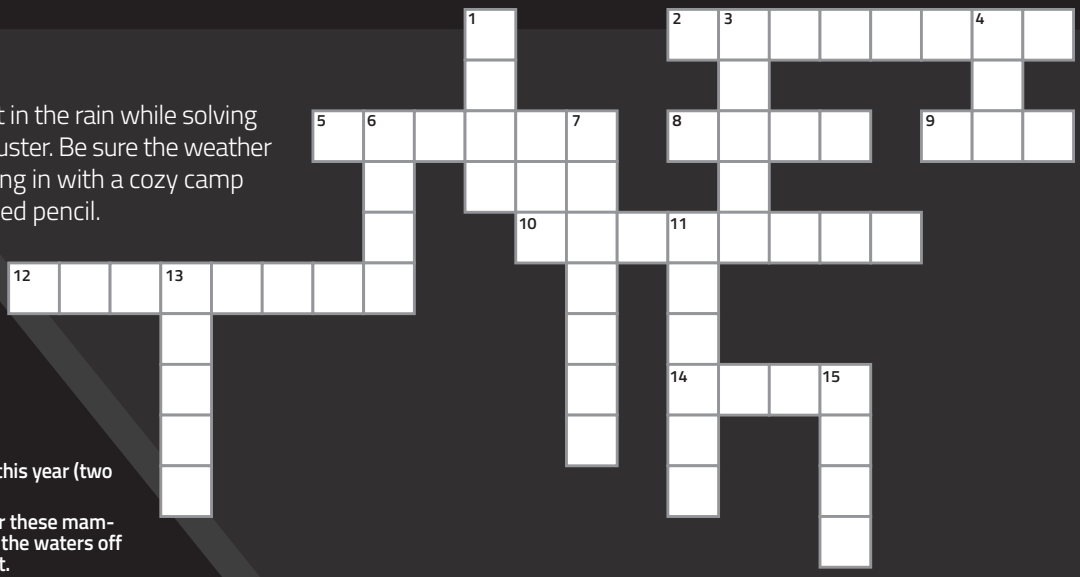
After 12 years of loving life together, we recently lost part of our hearts and souls, Digby Pancake. When I look back at our pictures and videos together, I don't see the times we broke down. I don't see the trials of road life. I see a happy dog. I see a happy me. I see our happy family. And although this life hasn't made us rich in things, this life has made us rich in experiences, rich in love, and rich in attitude. Because helping Brickle and Digby transferred over to other areas of our lives in helping people, too.

PHOTO: RACHAEL JOHNSON

FUN + GAMES

Outside In

Don't get caught out in the rain while solving this month's brain buster. Be sure the weather is clear before settling in with a cozy camp chair and a sharpened pencil.



ACROSS

2. It falls on April 22 this year (two words).
5. Keep an eye out for these mammoth mammals in the waters off the California coast.
8. A portable oasis found in "Grilling + Chilling."
9. Celebrate National Park Week with this organization.
10. This type of kit is an essential while on the road (two words).
12. Break out the grill and host one of these for your friends and family.
14. Don't neglect this important component that sits atop your RV.

DOWN

1. A fun activity for RVers who enjoy "driving" more than their tow vehicle.
3. A great way to add to your traveling menagerie.
4. Looking for the nearest craft brewery? There's an _ _ _ for that!
6. A lightweight travel trailer from Winnebago … or a great activity for you and your children.
7. These types of trays from MORryde are easy to install and great for storage.
11. These medieval weapons can also be useful for less "intense" tasks while RVing.
13. As "RV Mod Made Easy" shows, the Lanes added these to their fifth-wheel.
15. Visit one of these stands for healthy fresh ingredients.

Across 2: Earth Day, 5: Whales, 8: Dock, 9: NPS, 10: First Aid, 12: Barbecue, 14: Roof **Down** 1: Golf, 3: Adopt, 4: App, 6: Hike, 7: Sliding, 11: Swords, 13: Bunks, 15: Farm

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Crown of the Continent

An engineering marvel, Going-to-the-Sun Road winds its way through Glacier National Park in Montana, crossing over the Continental Divide. It's hard to keep your eyes on the road with stunning views of hanging valleys, impressive glaciers, dramatic rock walls, and cascading waterfalls around every bend, but save your head-turning for one of the stopping points.

Share your photo with us: info-rvmagazine@rv.com

PHOTO: DIFFERENT_DREAM/GETTY IMAGES

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