

The Cedar Creek RV Club is a totally FREE international RV club open to all owners of Cedar Creek, Silverback and Day Dreamer trailers.

Our club was started in 2001 and now has over 1550 club members from all over the USA and Canada. Our club members have over 50 years of Rving experience.

Because our club and everything in it is totally FREE we are putting together a collection of RV experience and helpful things to know in an effort to help fund our club web site and message base expenses.

All funds received from the donations for this helpful manual will be uses to help support our club message base.

## *The Cedar Creek RV Clubs Book of RVING*

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## *Introduction and Credits*

The Cedar Creek RV Club was started in 2001 when one of our members bought their first Cedar Creek and found there was no RV club for Cedar Creek.

Our club has now grown to over 1550 members as of November 2009. We have four chapters and countless rallies all over the USA.

Some of our members have over 50 years of Rving experience.

This book was put together to help provide some funds to support our FREE clubs message base and web site.

Credits

All the member of The Cedar Creek RV Cub

Bruce & Cindy club members #1 who started the original Cedar Creek RV Club in 2001 and have been over the USA twice now with over 100,000 towing miles.

Frank & Mary club members #1510 Many years of Rving experiences.

Dan & Betty club members #1528 Thanks for your suggestions.

## *To RV or not to RV*

Well Rving is not for everyone it is expensive and has it's good points and bad points.

Good points, you always know what bed you are sleeping in. You take your home with you everywhere you go and you know what you have.

If you are going down the road in the middle of nowhere and have t go to the bathroom you pull over and go.

RV sites usually rent anywhere from \$20.00 per night to \$ 35.00 per night that is about the average cost. Now the longer you stay the cheaper it usually cost for instace we stay at a small RV park in south Texas on the gulf and it is \$265.00 plus electric and that averages about \$40.00 per month for a total cost of \$ 305.00 per month or \$ 9.85 per night not bad. Some places even have yearly sites an example Rock Pond RV Park in South Carolina on the lake is \$ 2300.00 per year that would be \$6.30 per night plus electric in some places.

We have not stayed in a hotel for so long I could not tell you what the cost is but a lot more I know that and you have no idea who has been sleeping in that bed.

With an RV you are taking your home with you on the road it is very nice.

Some bad things. Your storage is limited but you get use to it. You do not have as much space in your house as you use to but your back yard can change daily.

Today's RV's have it all central air, the microwave, central vacuum, TV's recliners, king size beds, showers, on and on. You even have your own self-contained water supply and holding tanks for dry camping. With your 12-volt battery you have all 12 volt lights, radio, water pump and can open and close your slides. Now you can have a generator we have a 35 AMP propane generator so we can also watch TV use the AC and anything else.

Your stove, oven, refrigerator and furnace will work off of propane and 12 volts for the furnace.

So dry camping you can have all the comforts of home. How long you can go with out filling your holding tanks varies some people use more water than others but we can usually go for almost a week if needed before we have to find a place we can dump our tanks.

If you have never been camping before I would recommend to rent an RV for a couple days and try it out.

As far as we are concerned the best thing we have ever done so far in life was getting our first RV we have been places I never dreamed we would see. We have traveled all around the USA now twice and hope to do it a few more times yet.

We have made so many friends we can't count them all and enjoyed so many new sites and adventures you can't put a price of that.

If you have decided to join us in Rving, take your time though this is a big decision you are making. Go to an RV show if you can that way you get to see many types and brands at one location.

Do not rush into your choice this is a big decision you are about to make.

Think about what you want to do with your RV now and five or ten years from now.

How big is your tow vehicle BIGGER I better do not try and tow more than you safely can with the vehicle you have.

Make sure you pick the right RV for your life style now and in the future trading up for a bigger RV is an expensive thing to do.

If you are planning to buy your RV now and use it when you retire in five years wait five year to get it as they are changing all the time. BUT if you wish to buy it now and use it on weekend outings and vacations go for it.

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## *What Type Of RV Is Best For Full-Timers?*

Well that is almost impossible to say but here are some helpful hints based on our years of Rving experience.



What type of RV? There are many, many types of RVs. We will cover the basics, but we will concentrate a little more on the RVs that are most suited to the full-timing lifestyle.

In this section, we will discuss what type of RV you should purchase. As with many aspects of full-timing, the options are numerous and the choice is quite personal. It is very difficult to provide recommendations because of personal preferences, budgets, and selections.

### Things to consider

1. What can you afford, remember it also takes money to use your new RV.
2. What towing vehicle do you currently have and will it be large enough to safely tow whatever you chose.

1. The best scenario is to be able to pay cash for your new RV, however if you are planning to finance it remember it also takes cash to use your new RV.

RV's are deprecating asset this is just my personal opinion but I would never finance one for longer than ten years. Just like a car once you drive it off the lot it depreciates.

2. If you purchase a pop up, travel trailer or fifthwheel you will need the correct tow vehicle. Do not believe your RV sales person they want to sell you whatever and will most likely miss inform you as to how much your current vehicle can tow. Today even the pop up trailers are getting heavier and heavier.

Look at the end of this book to see how to figure out how much your vehicle can tow.

### Types of RVs

So here we will simply provide an education about the types of RVs and a few pros and cons about the most popular.

The basic categories of RVs are

- Motorhomes (including Bus Conversions)
- Travel Trailers (or towables)
- Truck Campers

Motorhomes are your vehicle and living quarters combined.

Travel trailers must be towed by a separate vehicle.

A truck camper is living quarters that sits in the back of a pick-up truck.

### Motorhomes

Let's start with motorhomes. Motorhomes are further divided into classes.

### Class A Motorhomes

Class A motorhomes are the largest. They are the RVs most people think of when you use the term RV. Although different than Class A motorhomes, Bus Conversions are also large (and can be luxurious) and they are the rigs most often associated with stars and athletes that travel over the road from city to city.



### Class B Motorhomes

Class B motorhomes are the smallest and are built on a van chassis. Although there are full-timers in Class Bs, they are generally too small to live in for long periods of time.



### Class C Motorhomes

Class C motorhomes are also built on a van chassis and are often referred to as mini-motorhomes although they can be as long as many of the Class As. They are distinguished by an extended section over the cab which usually contains an extra bed.



### Travel Trailers (Towables)

Towables include true travel trailers, fifth wheels, pop-up campers, and all others that are towed. Though there are full-timers in all shapes and sizes of towable RVs, only travel trailers and fifth wheels are practical for long-term living for the majority of people.

#### Travel Trailers

are large trailers towed completely behind the tow hitched to the back of the tow vehicle which can be enough power and torque to pull the trailer.



Travel trailers vehicle. They are anything that has

#### Fifth Wheels

Fifth wheels are trailers that have a gooseneck front section that extends over the bed of the pick-up truck (usually) tow vehicle. The hitch is located in the center of the truck bed, so fifth wheels can only be towed by pick-up or flat bed trucks.



NOTE: Many full-timers choose to pull their trailers with, large, semi-looking Medium Duty Trucks (MDTs) or Heavy Duty Trucks (HDTs). For very heavy trailers, MDTs & HDTs provide more safety in going down long, steep inclines and in stopping emergencies, but the trade-off is having to use them for store runs and exploring.

### Travel Trailers vs. Fifth Wheels

Between travel trailers and fifth wheels, travel trailers are generally less expensive. Fifth wheels tend to have more living space and are easier to tow.

With fifth wheels having much of their weight positioned over the tow vehicle, they are less susceptible to jack-knifing or fish-tailing. At least one source I have read stated that fifth wheels are the most popular among full-timers, but it seems to us to be about 50/50 between fifth wheels and motorhomes.

### Motorhomes vs. Towables

Again, the type of RV you choose is largely personal preference. However, there are some basic differences that may help you decide.

### Motorhome Pros

Non-drivers can pursue other activities while on the road (although it is highly recommended that they stay seated with belts on).

- You do not have to stop for bathroom breaks (but again, it is not recommended that you walk in the rig while in motion).
- You do not have to go out in bad weather to get to the living quarters when you stop.
- Many motorhomes have self-leveling jacks so there is no need to place boards or blocks under wheels to level.
- Motorhomes are a little easier to move and set up.
- Motorhomes allow you to tow just about any vehicle for exploring local areas.

#### Motorhome Cons

- If something needs to be repaired, your entire home has to go into the shop and you may have to find other accommodations until all parts are in and the problem is fixed.
- Motorhomes tend to be more expensive than towables, even when factoring in a tow vehicle for the towable.
- Motorhomes generally have less living space than travel trailers and fifth wheels.
- Because Motorhomes have a lot of value tied up in the motor, they depreciate faster.
- When towing a second vehicle, you cannot back up, you have the cost and maintenance of the second vehicle, and you are back to having towing and hitching hassles.

#### Towable Pros (large travel trailers and fifth wheels)

- They are less expensive and hold value longer.
- They have more living space.
- Because they require a tow vehicle, you can leave the RV and take the tow vehicle on short runs.
- It is usually the motorized vehicle that needs repair, so if the tow vehicle is in the shop, you still can live in the RV.

#### Towable Cons

- Towing and hitching/unhitching large trailers can be a hassle (although our experience has been that fifth wheel hitching/unhitching is about as easy as it gets).
- Due to overall length, parking and finding campsites can be a problem.
- Non-drivers cannot legally be in the trailer while moving.
- Depending on the size of the towable, the tow vehicle could be more expensive than the RV, and could make the overall cost rival a motorhome.
- Because of the size of the tow vehicle necessary to pull a full-timing trailer, exploring the area may be a less comfortable ride than in a vehicle towed behind a motorhome.
- If financing, the tow vehicle loan cannot be spread over a long term like RV loans; therefore, monthly payments could be higher on a trailer/tow vehicle combination than on a motorhome.

#### Pop UP Campers

Today's pop up campers have come a long way and offer many options they did not in the past like having holding tanks, showers and sinks. Generally I would only recommend these for weekend outings and if you have a small towing vehicle. I have seen people staying in these all winter as snowbirds though. Personally I would only use them for weekend outings and occasional vacations. They now offer so many new options

though and are pretty nice but also remember the bigger and more options the more they weigh and the bigger towing vehicle you should have.

### Decisions, Decisions

So how do you decide? Research, read, go to dealer lots, go to RV shows, and ask questions of full-timers that are on the road and on internet forums. You will develop preferences.

### Our Search

When we started looking, we just presumed we would get a motorhome. But after looking briefly, we quickly determined that we wanted the living space of a fifth wheel, the safety and ease of towing a fifth wheel over a travel trailer, and the convenience of having a detachable tow vehicle with a fifth wheel.

We determined that storage space, quality cabinets, counter space, and a bathroom set-up where the toilet was separate from the vanity and shower were the features we had to have. Attending one RV show allowed us to dismiss a large number of rigs.

Of course we all have to keep our budget in mind. The consensus in the books I have read and the websites I have visited seems to be that full-timers should buy the largest RV that you can afford.

This seems to be backed up by full-timer surveys. Rarely does one say their rig is too large, most say their rig is just right, but many say that they would get a larger unit if they could change anything about their experience.

Again, budget and personal preference may determine whether you buy new or used. You have to weigh reliability, warranties, and the features you want against price.

My preference on new versus used is quite different for a live-in RV than it is for a car. I can't stand the depreciation factor on cars, so I tend to lean toward late model used cars. However, with a live-in RV and tow vehicle, I prefer new to ensure manufacturer warranties, safety, and the latest technology.

Many full-timers would disagree, but I am not mechanically inclined, so the less worry I have with maintenance the more I think the extra costs are worth it for us.

For those that are a bit more mechanically inclined, we have heard about tremendous deals on used RVs. Lots of people buy them and then do not use them as often as they thought. So low mileage, used RVs can be found at really great prices once you make a choice on what you want and are willing to do a little searching to find the deal.

## *RV Maintenance*

### Black Tank Maintenance

This message contains sensitive material and parental discursion is advised☺☺

Three years of black tank living experience have taught me the following.

After almost two years of living in my RV I have a problem, seemed as my pipe from my toilet to black tank was clogged as my tank sensor says the tank is empty.

First you must picture your black tank, they are long and wide but not very deep maybe five inches deep. Then your pipe coming straight down from your toilet and goes into your black tank usually going into the black tank about one or two inches past the top of the black tank.

So as you can picture straight down comes the sewage and deposits on the bottom of your black tank usually right below the pipe coming down from your toilet into your black tank. So if you are not moving and have little water in your black tank it begins to pile up. Even if you have water in your tank it usually is hard to get it to distribute evenly through your black tank but usually begins to pipe up under the dump pipe.

In a new tank the solids spread out forming a base of about one inch thick after sitting the bacteria takes over and they become like clay. Then as you use it the solids build up like a pyramid right below the pipe opening that comes down from the toilet and can back up into the pipe. This can become very hard to remove and eventually be impossible to get out and you must replace your tank.

So it is very important from the start of getting your new Forest River trailer to make sure you use black tank chemicals and most of all flush your tank out good each time and make sure it is empty then add some chemicals and water, do not let sit stored with a dry tank.

1. Forget your tank sensor they are worthless after about a month of use and can read empty when full. However I have found if I do the following my sensors usually work ok all the time.

2. Always keep about one inch of water in the bottom of your black tank just run your toilet for awhile and it will add water after awhile you will get how long to run it, usually run mine about one minute after I empty my black tank. NEVE, NEVER, EVER let your black tank valve open all the time, only when you dump.

3. Always use black tank chemicals to help break down the toilet solids.

4. Invest in a clear tank coupler that attaches to the outside drainpipe so you can actually see what is coming out of your tank. I recommend the Flush King from camping world. You can see what is coming out and it has a water hose attachment so you can back flush your tank. The neat thing about it is there is a close off valve after where your water hose attaches so the water cannot drain and it will backup into the tank. By closing your black factory black tank valve and letting your gray tank open you can back flush that tank also. You can back flush all your tanks this way by closing all the tank valves and just letting the one open you wish to back flush.

**\*\*CAUTION THOUGH\*\*** do not let your water run to long if your tank fills up completely and backs up you will have a MESS!

5. If you store your trailer never let the black tank empty always fill it up with some water and chemicals. If you are in a freezing area just add some RV antifreeze also. If you let it sit empty the bacteria will build up on the tank walls and any solids on the tank bottom will become like concrete.

6. If you think your tank has some build up invest in a RV Flexible Swivel Stik, this will rotary clean your tank using water pressure.

7. When you move your RV always make sure you fill your black tank half with water and add a double dose of tank chemicals and two cups of chlorine bleach. This is practically the only time you can get your tank clean. Because when you are driving down the road all the bumps and turns really slosh the water around in the tank and get it good and clean. The chlorine bleach will help clean your tank sensors by killing all that bacteria that has stuck to them. Once you reach your destination empty and flush your tank well.

8. I myself now flush my black tank out good at least once a week weather it is full or not. I must admit I usually do not use any chemicals except when I am moving but it is recommended that you use them each time you dump.

9. If you follow the above black tank maintenance you should not have any problems.

NOW I am not claiming by any means to be a black tank specialist, this is just my own personal maintenance I have found over the years that works for me.

Hope this helps someone.

The above is for informational purposes only.

## CLEANING AND PROTECTING RV RUBBER ROOFS

### WHAT DO THE MANUFACTURERS SAY?

I have been asked a lot about my RV roof.

There are different types of rubber roofs and each has different properties and requirements. But there is one thing that no rubber roof can withstand – Petroleum Distillates. In fact, Petroleum Distillates are not compatible with any type of rubber or vinyl, as well as many other types of plastics.

This article will focus on two types of roofing materials – EPDM and TPO. The two leading distributors of these rubber roof systems are Dicor Corporation and Alpha Systems, both located in Elkhart, Indiana. EPDM stands for Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer. This type of rubber roofing membrane is made to last 20 years and has a 10 to 12 year guarantee, depending on the brand. EPDM is one of the most versatile and long lasting materials ever manufactured for outdoor exposure. Most RV industry experts consider EPDM the most dependable, most cost effective and easiest to maintain roofing material. EPDM is described as “ideal for outdoor applications because of its excellent resistance to ultra-violet light, ozone, oxidants and severe weather conditions”. EPDM roofing membrane oxidizes slowly. In a dozen years it may only oxidize 10% of its thickness. This oxidation is what causes the white-gray or gray streaks that run down the sides of RV's – especially in heavy dew or light rain. EPDM also becomes very slippery when wet.

TPO – Thermal Poly Olefin – was introduced to the RV and Marine Industries in 1994. It is resistant to algae, mold, fungus, and other biological agents. The chemistry of TPO allows for no chalk residue or degradation of the membrane through its useful life. The TPO membranes are non-skid when wet and therefore are used frequently as floor covering in the pontoon boat industry as well. The chemical additives used in TPO for protection from UV light are not self-sacrificing. Instead, they operate in a regenerative fashion as they interfere with the degradation reactions that occur from UV light exposure. Some features of TPO are the advanced polymer technology, weight reduction and easy installation due to its soft and pliable nature. TPO carries a 12 year manufacturers' warranty.

There are different opinions when it comes to cleaning and protecting rubber roofs, but everyone agrees that EPDM's solvent and oil resistance is poor. Care and maintenance instructions from both manufacturers have the following warning: “DO NOT use cleaners or conditioners containing petroleum solvents, harsh abrasives or Citric based cleaners. You may cause irreparable damage to your roof”

The percentage of petroleum distillates doesn't matter. **THERE IS NO LEVEL OF PETROLEUM DISTILLATES THAT IS RECOMMENDED.** Laboratory tests conducted in July of 1996 evaluated the effect of a leading RV 'roof treatment' product on EPDM roofing membrane using standard sunlamp and immersion testing procedures. The 'roof treatment', which contained petroleum distillates, caused a 63% mass change (swelling). Petroleum distillates soak in and cause the adhesive to loosen and the membrane to balloon. Then, when the ballooning goes down, the rubber roof may never again adhere properly or completely. Don't be fooled by names such as “organic solvent”, “hydrocarbon carrier”, etc. Petroleum distillates by any name should NEVER be applied

to EPDM. If you aren't sure about a product, contact the manufacturer and request a copy of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). Look under the section entitled "Hazardous Ingredients". If it lists any petroleum distillates, do not use it on EPDM.

To maintain your warranty, all that is required is periodic cleaning at least 3 to 4 times per year. What you use is wide open as long as it does not contain petroleum distillates, harsh abrasives, or delaminane (citrus based cleaners). Dicor recommends a non-abrasive type cleaner such as RC 100™, Borax or Dawn™ and a medium to stiff brush. Alpha Systems recommends using a household cleaner such as Comet™, Spic-N-Span™, Ajax™, etc. They say to use a medium-bristled scrub brush in place of a sponge because the EPDM rubber roofing material is not smooth like fiberglass. For more stubborn stains, i.e. oak leaves, pine sap, mold or mildew, the use of a kitchen cleanser with bleach, such as Tilex™ or Soft Scrub™ can help. Monoethalomine is also very effective, non-abrasive and minimizes the effort in removing oxidation, pitch, sap, mold and mildew, as well as berry stains from birds and trees. A quick rinse with chlorine (bleach) is necessary to kill the mildew spores and retard their regrowth. Caution should be exercised when washing your roof to prevent cleaners from running down the sides since this could cause streaking. Always pre rinse your RV sides before you rinse your roof. On TPO roofing, Alpha Systems suggests using Murphy's Oil Soap™ with a soft nylon brush or sponge. **DO NOT USE SOLID OR GRANULATED CLEANERS on TPO, AS THEY WILL MAR THE NATURAL FINISH.** A good thorough cleaning with some elbow grease, along with the oil soap should keep your roof looking good and remove most stains. Again, any non-granulated, non-abrasive cleaner may be used as long as it does not contain petroleum distillates or delaminane (citrus).

Protecting rubber roofs is a topic of great debate. Per Dicor's web site, "the guarantee does not require the use of any protective 'roof treatment' or 'roof protector' product and recommends only cleaning". This is consistent with both Dicor and Alpha Systems. However, Dicor states that when the roof no longer looks good to "clean the area and treat it with a product that will repel soiling and is safe for EPDM". Both Dicor and Alpha Systems stated that they have never had issue with any protectant provided that it contained **NO PETROLEUM DISTILLATES.**

In summary, you must maintain your rubber roof to protect your warranty. Neglect can cause damage to both your roof as well as RV sidewalls from oxides. **DO NOT** use any products containing any amount of petroleum distillates. Wash routinely with any appropriate cleaner and pre-rinse your RV sides before rinsing your roof to prevent the cleaner from running down the sides. While no protective coating is required to maintain your warranty, you may use one if you choose – without jeopardizing your warranty. If your roof becomes dull, flat or unsightly, then you may use a protectant to improve the appearance and make maintenance easier by eliminating gray streaks, minimizing black streaks and providing protection against staining. The protectant you choose should be intended for walking surfaces in that it will not make them slippery. It should also provide a reasonable amount of protection, be durable enough to wash, and have a reasonable longevity when exposed to the elements.

Here is some additional information, which may prove helpful. Black streaks are the result of dust and dew, which mixes to slurry and then migrates over the edge and down the sides. Unsightly as they may be, they are not harmful to the RV sides. But gray streaks are another matter. The gray streaks are a combination of the roof oxides and

black streaks. When this mixture reaches the vinyl stripes, repeated exposure to sunlight will leach out the pigment and leave permanent vertical streaking. Washing should be done out of the sun and preferably in the early morning to take advantage of the emulsifying action from the dew. Cleaning should never be done on a hot surface. What does Bruce personally use to wash my RV roof is Dawn dish soap for stubborn stains I also use Outdoor Clorox. I then treat my roof with Protect All RV Roof Treatment.

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### *Helpful Hints From our many club members.*

Frank & Mary Said

Some things to consider when choosing a floor plans:

If you plan on eating lunch in the RV or using the bathroom facilities instead of using those at a rest areas or truck stops, you may want to insure you have access to the dining area, refrigerator and bathroom when the slide(s) is(are) in. It's also great being able to catch a power nap while DW fixes lunch.

A shower with a tub may be a great idea, if you are young and have children. However, remember stepping out you have to step up and over then down with the floor several inches lower than the tub bottom. Could be a real safety hazard since it can put you off balance and depending on your age and physical condition it can be dangerous.

Sanitizing your water hoses:

We always think about sanitizing the water tank but usually forget the hose. It may sit unused for weeks or longer and mold and bacteria can grow in them. Since  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of a chlorine bleach (not the color safe bleach that is available whaic does not have chlorine) per 15 gallons of water is all that is needed to sanitize the fresh water system,  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz or even  $\frac{1}{2}$  an ounce to a gallon of water should be more than adequate to sanitize the hose. One method is lower the hose into a previously sanitized bucket with the sanitizing mixture ensuring that water is allowed to enter and fill the hose. A second method is hold the ends of the hose up and using a funnel pour the sanitizing mixture into the hose until it comes out the other end. Make sure the ends are equal height so that the mixture fills the hose. Screw the ends of the hose together and leave for 3 hrs or longer. Be sure to flush the hose well when

finished. As an added measure vinegar can be poured into the hose as a secondary treatment. Acetic or boric acid (common household white vinegar) can also be a good sanitizing medium. It is often used by people with home nebulizers as a sterilizing solution for their equipment. Fill the hose with undiluted vinegar as with the bleach solution. Allow 3 or more hours then flush well.

Alternatives to chemicals in holding tank (Black water).

Two options to using harmful chemicals that can also save money. I have had problems with odor with all the chemicals I have tried when I had a class C and a TT. I have used the first alternative to chemicals for 5 years with my Cedar Creek and I have not had odor problems or sensor problems except for the one time I ran out of bleach and had to use only 1/4 to 1/2 cup. Added another 1/2 cup later and odor problem solved. Also, chlorine is added to drinking water at treatment plants so it is safe to dump where chemicals can be a problem especially in septic systems.

I still use RV Trine in the galley and bath tank when the RV is not in use simply because it is supposed to help maintain the seals and I had it left over from the TT.

for 60 gallon black tank.

Calgon water softener - 2 ozs (Can be found at most Walmarts)  
Laundry detergent - enough for 2 extra large loads. (Since some are more concentrated than others)  
Bleach - 1 cup

The calgon seems to make the water slipperier and may help prevent paper and waste from adhering to the tank walls and sensors.  
The soap helps break down the waste and along with the bleach will help control the bacteria and in doing that control the smell.

Since most laundry detergents are ecologically safe and chlorine breaks down the impact on the ecology is much less than with chemicals.

Another alternative:  
One cup borax,  
one cup Pinesol,  
one tablespoon of household ammonia  
water to make a gallon.

Add borax in hot water to aid in dissolving. Use about a cup and a half in 60 gallon black tank.

I like the first option better since the second is premixed and could be more caustic and be a problem storing.

Frank & Mary

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## *Snowbird or Not*

To snow bird or no to snow bird that is the question?

What are snowbirds, Rvers that live in warm climates and go to warm places during the winter months.

There are all types of snowbirds, full timers that spend half a year up north then there winters down south.

People that are still working but can get away I there RV for a month or tow.

Retired people who spend the entire winter in a warm state.

Myself I have a saying when you have to put on long pants it's time to head south.

- 1.How to snowbird?
- 2.What about the house?
3. What should we take?
- 4.Where should we go?

1.How to snowbird well you can actually do it in an RV or rent an apartment or condo somewhere but we will only talk about Rving snowbirds.

First let me say once you spend winter in a nice warm place walking on the beach you will say I should have done this years ago.

How to snowbird is simple just go away for the winter ☺

There are many options and most will be discussed in sections of this article.

If you have never tried it and have never been in your RV for extended stays they I would suggest just trying it for a month first you can always stay longer. If you have been in your RV for extended times then go for it spend as much of the winter away as your time allows.

2.If you still own your house like we do you have to take care of some things. If you are just planning to buy your home if possible make it so you can drain or blow all the water out of your water system in your house.

If you have an existing house like us it is impossible to get the water out. Here is what we do. We live in Central PA you never know what winter will be like it can stay about 25 to 30 all winter or we can go weeks in the teen and even extended days down to zero.

We let our heat set to 55 degrees, I also let all the cabinet doors open that have water pipes in them. I turn the water main off that way if something were to break from the cold only the water left in the pipe will come out.

We have two children that live in the area so they check the place about once a week and see if everything is ok. They also will do our snow when it snows for us. I do pay them some for doing this because I know it is a pain for them to do this. If you have no children you can get snow services to do this usually landscaping companies clear the snow in the winter. Also if you have good friends or neighbor maybe you can pay them to do this for you.

We turn off every thing that is not necessary and unplug things not being used because most electrical appliances use electric even when turned off.

We fill out a temporary change of address card at the post office and our mail is forwarded to our daughters house she informs us of anything needed and mails us our income tax papers about the end of February so I can do the taxes and send them in.

Most all our bills are paid automatically, we set this up on line and the money is automatically deducted from our bank account. Since all banks have Internet these days I can see what is going on with the bank accounts on line.

All our money is also directly deposited in the bank and I can transfer funds into any account on line.

We can keep in touch with almost anyone through email and send picture to the grandkids and we get pictures of them.

Since we are more or less full timers we have Verizon national wireless cell accounts so we can call from anywhere in the USA. I also just got the Verizon Aircard or USB Internet Modem for accessing the Internet. While the 5GB limit seemed small to me I use the Internet allot as you can guess and have never even used 3GB yet. One GB is equal to 1024 MB so that gives you over 5000MB per month and that is allot of transferring.

3. What to take? Well anything you usually use at home, however remember your RV does have a maximum weight limit. We take both winter clothing and summer clothing as it can get cold and warm. We usually have more warm climate clothing than cold. Your medication, needed food and other normal needed items.

Our first winter away in 2002 we went to south Texas Corpus Christi Area. Being from the north our dog has never needed flea stuff as he never had any flea problems here in central PA. Well the first week in south Texas I noticed him scratching more and more when I looked he was covered with fleas. The Vet gave me a very small pill the size of a pin head that knocked all the fleas off him and then I gave him the monthly flea stuff we used front line. So if you have a dog or cat make sure you give them the Front Line before leaving the north.

If you will be going to Mexico you now need a passport to cross the boarder.

Take any necessary papers with you. I keep a copy of our insurance papers in the RV and truck and at home because if anything happened to the RV most likely the insurance papers would be lost.

I also have the insurance company phone numbers listed in my cell phone.

4. Where should we go some place warm ☺ just kidding.

There are three main areas most snowbirds go to.

1. Florida
2. South Texas Corpus Christi Area and the Rio Grand Valley
3. South Arizona

1. Florida first off if you do not have an RV Park book get one like the Trailer Life Directory. Also the Internet is a very good source to research places.

RV message bases like the one found on The Cedar Creek RV Clubs web site are good places to ask for recommendation as to where to stay.

One thing that determines location for some people depends on what area of the USA you live in. Such as people from Washington state would go to the Rio Grand Valley because it is closer.

I have stayed in Florida somewhat, it depends on what activities you are looking for. If you like doing things with people you will find not all snowbirds are just like you they want to have fun.

The place you stay can be the most influential thing as to whether you enjoy your winter away or not.

You want a friendly RV Park with planned activities and club a house. It is also nice to have an on site laundry facility. We find the smaller RV Parks to be more friendly but that is not always the case. When you get there say HI to your neighbors, see what activities are planned and participate that way you meet people. Go for walks around the RV park say HI to people we all seem to be the same we want to meet new people and have fun.

Well I have away of getting side tracked let me stick to the different place first.

These are just my findings and personal opinions over the last eight years of snow birding.

1. Florida a lot of RV parks hundreds, most parks along the coast will be very expensive except if you stay near the top of Florida the farther south the more the cost. The local people are not very friendly, the beach is owned with very few access areas. The prices I have found to be near the top of FL about \$350 to 400 per month. Half way down \$ 400.00 to \$500.00 per month. Along the coast \$ 1000 to 2000 per month.

Florida is warmer than south Texas usually if you get south of the middle of Florida.

2. South Texas Corpus Christi Area. There you are winter Texans the locals like you being there most of them anyway. There are more and more RV parks each year. We stay in a small RV Park and it is within walking distance of the bay, and about 15-minute drive to the Gulf of Mexico. We like the beach there you can still drive right out on the beach with your car or truck or even motorhome if you like. The prices are from \$400.00 per month to about \$250.00 per month the place we stay at is \$265.00 per month plus electric and that usually cost about an average of \$35.00 per month.

3. The Rio Grand Valley, right along the Rio Grand River with Mexico on the other side. Hundreds of RV Parks with a lot of activities. If you stay south near Brownsville you can have beach access at South Padre Island it usually takes about 30 minutes to get out there. A lot of people love going across the border to Mexico we have done so a few times. Not our cup of tea but thousands of snowbirds love it. Not sure how safe it is these days with all the problems they are having over there. Prices very greatly down here from around \$200.00 per month up to \$1000.00 per month.

4. Arizona well I am sorry I can't tell you much about that, as we have not stayed there. We have been there on trips many times and it is a nice state most of which is very dry dessert country. There are hundreds of RV parks there in south Arizona though not sure what the monthly prices are.

What I recommend is go to a different place each year that is what we did then we found a place we love. Try Florida then south Texas and Arizona. Even if you spend your first winter away for a couple months in one place like Florida move around from area to area.

Ask on some of the RV message bases or forums list what you like and what your are looking for and how much you wish to spend you will get a lot of answers to your questions.

But one thing I can tell you for sure is being out on the beach in the sand in sunshine sure beats shoveling snow back NORTH.

Oh almost forgot how warm is it? Well south FL is the warmest the average temperature in Dec, Jan and Feb high around 70 to 80 nights high 60 and low 70.

South Texas average Dec, Jan and Feb low 70 to middle 60 and lows 60-50's In south Texas they do get what they call Blue Northern and it can get cold for a few days usually in the low 50's but on occasions but not to normal into the upper 40's day time. It can get very windy in south Texas though when the different fronts move in you never know one winter the wind is not that back the next it can be windy quite a lot. But we put up with it and enjoy being there.

## *Should I go Full-time RVing:* Is It For You?

Many full-time RVers are happily living their travel dream. But full-time RVing is not for everyone. You should have an exit plan.

Make sure you know if this is the right lifestyle for you do not make a mistake and have no going back plan.

Our purpose is to help you to decide which will work better for you—full-timing or extended trips from a home base.

Who are the full-time Rvers anyway?

Today's full timers are from all ages and walks of life. Some are retired, some still working, some single while some are families still working and home schooling their kids.

While you are reading this article or raking up leaves and worrying about how you'll pay the winter fuel bills, thousands of full-time and snow bird RVers will be heading for the warmer Sunbelt states in their travel trailers and motor homes.

Full Timing is not for everyone though.

You should have an exit plan what will I or we do if we do not like full timing.

You are taking the right first step doing your research and planning.

Maybe you are retired and not sure one option is to rent your house, another if you have children living in an apartment ask them to stay in your house rent free just pay the utilities. They can save towards buying a house and you have no utility bills for a set number of years. Make sure they know after one, two or three years the must move out.

Another option is just try extended trips and see how things go while still keeping your house like snowbirds do go away for the winter.

No matter what you should have an exit plan if you do not like the full timing lifestyle.

If it's so easy, why don't more people do it?

Most Americans are living in ground hog day. They are caught in the trap of living there day to day life just like mom and dad did.

They learned to have that big house with its two-car garage; you learned at an early age to measure success by the number of possessions you could acquire. Marriage was a partnership dedicated to doing everything bigger and better than your neighbors. By the time the first baby arrived, you were convinced that a disaster was having water spots on the drinking glasses when the boss came to dinner.

Keep up with the neighbors and have what they do.

BUT more than ever people are now realizing it maybe better to down size, not have so many material things and bills to pay. While living in an RV does have it's monthly bills also they are allot less. One nice thing about living in a RV is you can take your home wherever you wish and you do not have the room to buy to many personal items.

You are scared

Leaving one's home is an awesome experience it does mean leaving behind all that is familiar. It means getting rid of all those treasures you've been collecting for a lifetime just give the kids what they want now.

It means saying good-bye to your family and friends but believe me you will make many, many new friendships.

It means leaving your grandchildren behind but you may see them even more once you are living in that RV possible taking them along on one of your countless trips. Would that that not been a cherished memory when you were growing up.

Starting with the right attitude

The adjustment to full-time RVing life will take time, just as it did with every other major change in your life. Be patient with yourself and with your mate.

One day you'll look back and laugh about all the personal possessions you had.

Remember every day will be a new adventure and you now will have the entire USA as your back yard.

Modern technology is so nice with that cell phone and a nation wide calling plan you will never be out to touch with anyone.

We have been all over the USA twice now and the satellite TV worked everywhere even at Yellowstone National Park oh yes it did not work one place at Glacier National Park but what a view we had we would not have looked at the TV anyway.

The Internet is such a blessing for full timers.

We can send pictures to anyone of our travels but be careful those old friends back home get awful jealous. All our bills are paid automatically by on line banking and we get our money directly deposited and can transfer cash to whatever account we wish.

CASH while I am not wal-marts best fan you can get cash back at so many stores now that is no problem any more.

With email you can stay in touch with all your friends.

You can share all your pictures on line now and if you do not know how to do this believe me most Rvers will be more than happy to help with just about anything.

Mail-forwarding service

We just use our daughters address but you can get a permanent address at so many different places these days just look in the back of any Rving magazine they are full of mail forwarding and address places.

Voice message service

All cell phones these days offer and or have message service.

3. Illness while traveling

We usually schedule all our doctor and dental appointments back at what we call our home port where the kids and grandkids are. We are there alot during the summer and make all our appointments for one month when we are there.

BUT we have been sick and also gone to the dentist on the road we never have had any problem yet all the RV parks can recommend a place to go. We know alot of people that have had emergency surgery when on the road no problem. A lot of our friends get their prescriptions and dental work done just across the boarder in Mexico.

We get our prescriptions through the mail and at Wal Mart we have never had any problems wal mart even calls our doctor when they run out and get them refilled for us. Allot of people use Walgreens there are many options for this.

Your new Life

Yes full timing is not for everyone but there are millions now doing it.

We just love this life style I never thought I would see so many places in my lifetime. I truly feel blessed in having done what I have already but we hope to have many new adventures ahead of us yet.

I can say now that I do not say some day anymore, some days has finally came because I made it happen.

My poor parents never were out of the city they were born in so I also say at each new place this is for you mom and dad.

While my dad passed away a long time ago my mother was in a very nice nursing home for 12 years. So we new she was being taken good care of I was lucky enough to be home when she passed away last July I know she would be very happy that we have seen and done what we have.

I have two favorite sayings.

Life sure is sweet in my Cedar Creek.

Life's too short to spend it in one place.

How true they both are so even if you do not go full time give this wonderful life a try and you two will feel truly blessed.

Bruce & Cindy On the road since 2002 now 2009

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## *What we love about Rving*

WOW what's is not to like about Rving you got me?

We have been camping ever since 1072 mainly in tents. It was not until 2002 that we bought our 1<sup>st</sup> RV. I was told if you plan to spend time in it get the biggest one you can afford and tow. SO we did out first Cedar Creek was a 36 Foot Rear Den Quad Slide or 36RDQS.

We just loved it and had it around the USA some places more than once we put about 100,000 towing miles on it and it still looked good. HOWEVER you should not look at the new models as they make allot of changes you like so in 2007 we traded for a new Cedar Creek 37 foot Rear Den Quad Slide or 37RDQS.

The 1<sup>st</sup> year we had it we put around 14,000 miles on it leaving PA heading to Texas for the winter then traveling from there slowly to California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia with allot of side trips in each directions.

We have been so blessed to enjoy this life even though I am physically disabled I feel like the luckiest man alive sometimes seeing what we have. We take our house with us, always know what bed we are sleeping in and who was in it. We have all the comforts of home with us because we take our home with us. The entire USA is our back yard so what is not to like about this wonderful life. We hope to keep doing this for as long as we possible can.

Without our RV we never would have seen so much of the USA as e have next fall's trip to Maine will complete every state we have been in more than once with the exception of Alaska we almost mad it there but the body would not let me and Diesel prices in 2007 were \$6.00 per leader in Canada so we had to turn back towards PA and then back to Texas for the winter.

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## *Truck and towing accessories and issues.*

Member number 1528 Dan offered some suggestions and also asked me to mention my experiences with some pin boxes and hitches.

I have had two towing trucks now.

- 1.Silverado 2500 HD Duramax Short Bed 4X4
- 2.Silverado 3500 Long Bed 4 door Duramax Diesel

When I bought my 2001 Silverado and my 2002 Cedar Creek 36RLTS on my trip home the ride was not to bad. On the second tow I went over some rough concrete roads and could hardly keep hold of the steering wheel. This was a forward and backward motion of push pull.

After attending the 1<sup>st</sup> Cedar Creek National Rally and talking with TrailAir I bought the Trailair pin box. After driving from Indiana back to PA this made my ride worse. I never contacted Trailair but posted my results on the message base. Then Trailair contacted me and to make a long story short they came up with a completely new pin bob model that took about 75 percent of this bucking away. (I can't say enough good about the outstanding service I got from Trailair)

So when I purchased my 2004 long bed I assumed my ride would be even better. BUT I had the bucking back with my truck not as bad but not good either. It just so happened I

was at another Cedar Creek RV Club National Rally and Mor/Ryde was there showing s there new pin box. They told me if this did not take 100 percent of my bucking motion away they would come to PA and reinstall my old pin box for free. So I bought one and right away new it did take 100 percent of this away no more bucking or forward and backward motion at all.

HOWEVER if you have not seen the old Trailair they have an air bag that absorbs the up and down motion also making the ride better but even more importantly taking all that stress out o your trailers pin box frame.

So now having my bucking gone I can see my pin box actually moving up and down about an inch when I hit big bumps. I was told this was ok by Cedar Creek but it was not ok with me so I then purchased the Trailer Saver air hitch and put that in my truck bed to absorb the up and down stress, now I am a happy camper once again.

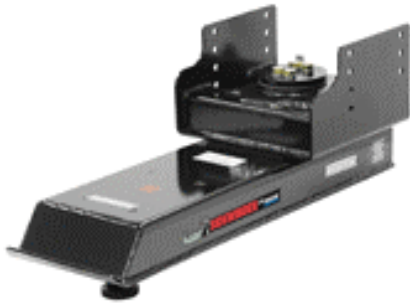
Here are the three top models not listed in any particular order.



Trail Air Tri Glide Pre Production Photo



>> See the Pin Box System in Action </>



1. Trailair
2. Mor/ryde
3. Fifth Air borne

Now since my models have been purchased naturally they all have improved these.

All three models now address both motions; I cannot say how these do because I have not tested them myself in action.

I have seen the new Trailair and was impressed at what they have designed and would think it would take care of both motions but have not tested it myself.

The Mor/Ryd I have not seen their new model yet so can't comment on that one.

I have seen the new 5<sup>th</sup> Air borne it is a pretty impressive pin box also and would think it would take care of both motions.

I say again I have not tried any of the new models.

## Hitches



Most people use the Reese hitch but make sure you get the rocking hitch model. Reese has been making hitches since the beginning of time but you should get the rocking model to help compensate the side motion of roads and turns ect.



## Trailer Saver Hitch

This hitch I am using it has two shocks in the back to help absorb the forward and back motion and two air bags in the front to absorb that up down motion. I also have the optional air compressor that is right inside the hitch glad I got this as when you forget to

put the air in the airbags you can just pump them up going down the road and also add more air if you want.

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### *Helpful links and files.*

RV message base <http://www.cedarcreekrvclub.com>

RV Message Base RV Net open road forum <http://www.rv.net/forums/index.cfm>

Blue book <http://www.rvvaluesonline.com>

Low bridge info. [http://www.aitaonline.com/Info/Road/Low\\_Clearances.html](http://www.aitaonline.com/Info/Road/Low_Clearances.html)

Everything you have wanted to know about 12 Volts  
<http://www.ccis.com/home/mnemeth/12volt/12volt.htm>