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The RV Education 101 newsletter
Learning RVs the easy way www.rveducation101.com
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Quote of the Month
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"When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete, everybody will respect you." - Lao-Tzu
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Editorial by Mark
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Well, spring has sprung for many of us across the country. The flowers and trees are blooming and it's that time of the year to get busy with all of the outdoor projects we put off last year. For all of us RVers springtime also means it's time to get ready for another great camping season.

I have a routine I follow to get ready for camping season. The first step is to de-winterize the motor home. After that I like to sanitize the water system, and then I complete my spring preparation checklist on the RV. It's one of the checklists included in my "Checklist for RVers" e-book. I find it helpful to follow a checklist so nothing is overlooked. When all of this is finished I think it's a good idea to take the RV on a short trip, fairly close to home and make sure everything is working properly. Last weekend we loaded the motor home and took a three-day, two-night shakedown trip to the North Carolina coast. We had a great time and everything on the motor home checked out.

These short shakedown trips can save you a lot of time, headaches and money by identifying any problems before you're 500 miles from home and you discover there is a problem. These trips also help you identify anything you forgot to take along so you'll have it with you when you go on a longer trip. Actually you don't even have to go anywhere, you can do it in your back yard if you have access to electricity and water for the RV. Spend the weekend in the RV. See if everything is working properly and make a list of anything you forgot to pack.

I am including the spring preparation checklist in the feature article section. It may be useful to you in getting ready for a adventurous and exciting camping season.

And remember if you enjoy the newsletter please pass it along to your friends and RV companions. Happy Camping,

Mark

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Feature Article **Spring Preparation**
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After a long winter sleep we finally decide that spring is here for good and it is safe to prep our RV for this years camping season. Now that the decision is made we need to figure out what steps to take to prepare the coach and the chassis for camping and traveling. If you're like me, you want to have some type of logical sequence to follow rather than haphazardly checking the unit out. This is a simple checklist to use so that nothing is overlooked. I prefer to do the majority of spring preparation myself. If you're more comfortable having someone else do it contact a reputable RV dealer and schedule an appointment to have it done. Let's get started!

- Depending on how your unit was winterized it will need to be de-winterized. If you used nontoxic RV antifreeze you need to run fresh water through the entire system until the antifreeze is gone. To remove it from the 12-volt water pump add water to the fresh water-holding tank, turn the pump on and open all water faucets. When antifreeze is out of the system turn the pump off and take the water heater out of the by-pass mode (if applicable.) Reinstall any water filter cartridges you removed for storage.

- At this point I like to sanitize the water system. Make sure all of the drains are closed and drain plugs are installed. Take a quarter cup of household bleach for every fifteen gallons of water your fresh water tank holds. Mix the bleach with water into a one-gallon container and pour it into the fresh water holding tank. Fill the fresh water holding tank completely full of water. Turn the pump on and open all faucets, run water until you smell the bleach. Close the faucets and let sit for at least four hours. Drain all of the water and refill the tank with fresh water. Turn the pump on and open all faucets until you no longer smell bleach. It may be necessary to repeat this process to eliminate all signs of bleach.

- While the water system is under pressure inspect for water leaks. Check the operation of the toilet.

- Wash the unit thoroughly. This is a good time to inspect the roof and body seams, and window sealant for cracking that would allow water to get in. Consult a dealer for sealants compatible with these materials.

- Inspect the operation of the awning and check the awning fabric for any damage or tears.
- Inspect the tires for signs of dry rot. Inflate all tires to the manufacturers recommended COLD tire pressure.
- Lubricate all hinges and locks with spray lubricant.
- Remove any tape or protective covering you may have put over LP gas vents to keep insects and rodents out. Check any mousetraps you may have put out. Open all doors and compartments and check for rodent intrusion and water damage.
- Inspect and clean the interior.
- Plug in any appliances that you unplugged for storage and replace any dry cell batteries you may have removed. This is a good time to put new batteries in items like smoke alarms.
- Test the operation of the carbon monoxide alarm, LP gas leak detector and smoke alarm.
- Check the fire extinguisher. Be sure it is fully charged.
- Reset any breakers you may have turned off. If you removed any fuses for storage reinstall them.
- Clean or replace air conditioner filters if it wasn't done prior to storage and remove any covers that were put over air conditioners.
- Open vents and windows and air the unit out.
- If you removed the coach and chassis batteries for storage install them. Whether they were removed or not check the electrolyte levels, clean the terminals and clamps, and check the charge level in all batteries. Recharge batteries as necessary.
- Check the operation of the electric steps if applicable. Lubricate step mechanism.
- Test the operation of the hydraulic jacks if applicable. Check the hydraulic fluid level.
- Test the operation of the back up camera and monitor if applicable.
- If you didn't change the oil and filters in the generator prior to storage this is a good time to do it. Inspect the generator exhaust system for damage prior to starting. Start and run the generator for one hour with at least a half rated load on it. Consult the generators owner manual for load ratings.

- Turn the generator off and plug the unit into shore power. Turn the refrigerator on in the electric mode. Allow sufficient time to cool and check for proper operation.
- Check all 12-volt interior lights and accessories.
- Test the monitor panel for proper operation.
- Check the operation of slide outs if applicable.
- Check the remaining 120-volt appliances for proper operation.
- Test the Ground Fault Interrupter (GFI) for proper operation.
- Turn the refrigerator off, leave the doors open and allow sufficient time for it to get to room temperature so it can be checked in the gas mode.
- Before I use the LP gas system I have a leak test and gas operating pressure test performed. A qualified technician with the proper equipment should do these tests.
- Once this is accomplished turn the LP gas valve on and check the operation of all LP gas appliances. Be sure the water heater is full of water before testing the water heater. If a gas appliance is not operating properly have it inspected by a qualified technician. Insects are attracted to the odorant added to LP gas and build nests that can affect the appliance from operating properly.
- If your unit was in long-term storage and you didn't change the engine oil and filter prior to storage this would be a good time to do it
- Check all fluid levels in transmission, power steering, engine coolant, engine oil, windshield washer and brakes. Consult vehicle owner's manual.
- Start the engine and check for proper readings on all gauges. Check for proper operation of dash air conditioner.
- A full chassis lubrication should be performed if it wasn't done prior to storage.
- Check the condition of windshield wiper blades replace if necessary.
- Check the operation of all chassis lights.
- Make sure the vehicle emissions / inspection sticker is up to date.
- In addition to this if you have a pop up or travel trailer the wheel bearings and brakes (if equipped) should be inspected at least once annually. Inspect any canvas for dry rot and tears;

inspect all hitch work and the coupler for damage. Inspect the breakaway switch and pigtail for proper operation.

This list is not all-inclusive, but it seems to work for me. Now for the fun part, load your clothes, food, and personal belongings, hit the road and have fun exploring this wonderful country we live in.

Happy Camping

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Tip of the Month
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I know you have probably heard this before, but one of the most common repairs for RVs is a damaged TV antenna. Whenever your TV antenna is up hang your keys for the RV (motorized) or the tow vehicle (for trailers) on the antenna crank handle. This way it is impossible to leave without realizing the antenna is up.

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Readers Favorite RV Destinations
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I included this section in the newsletter for our readers to write in and tell us your favorite RV destination. It can be a campground, a resort, where you boondock or anything else. In 200 words or less tell us where your favorite RV destination is and why it's your favorite. If we print your short story in a future issue you get your choice of an RV Education 101 e-book free of charge. Thanks for all the submissions!

Last months winner wrote this.

My very favorite destination that I love to take my family to is Walt Disney's Fort Wilderness Campground! You can take a pop-up, motorhome, tent...whatever suits you. The prices are incredible for a Disney property. There is a military discount that we take advantage of, but I think there is also AAA and some other discounts if you look around.

Once you get set up in the campground, you don't ever have to leave it if you don't want to! There are swimming pools, bike and boat rentals, camp stores, walking trails, play ground things for the kids....the list goes on. The kids always have a blast at the petting zoo (I have to admit it is neat for me too) and there is also a cow that has black spots that form the image of Mickey Mouse!

There is a river that has a lighted musical boat parade at night. If you don't have a travel vehicle there are lots of free trolleys that take you to monorails and buses and a boat that goes to the magic Kingdom or any other place within Disney. I just can't tell you how amazing it is...but I do think it is like Walt Disney said.. "The happiest place on earth"!

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Readers Favorite Recipes
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Part of the fun in RVing is not spending all of your time in the kitchen cooking, unless that's what you enjoy doing! We want simple and easy meals that don't require a lot of time to prepare. Send us your favorite RV recipes or easy ways to make a meal. If we print it in a future newsletter you will receive a free RV Education 101 e-book of your choice.

Last months recipe winner sent us this recipe:

Tangy Roast Beef Sandwich
1 can tomato soup
2 tbs. vinegar
1 tbs. packed brown sugar
1 tbs. Worcestershire sauce
12 oz. sliced cooked deli beef
4 hamburger rolls

Mix soup, vinegar, sugar and Worcestershire sauce in skillet. Heat to a boil add beef and heat through. Serve on the rolls.

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FAQ and Answer
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Another question I get asked frequently is what does COLD tire inflation pressure mean? This means that you should only check and adjust the tire pressure when the tires are COLD, before you travel more than a mile. When a tire gets hot the air pressure expands resulting in a false (higher) reading. If you let air out of a hot tire it will be underinflated when it is COLD. You should try and get in a habit of checking the tire pressure, with a quality inflation pressure gauge, every travel day. Do not exceed the recommended COLD tire inflation pressure.

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Classified Ads & Informative Links
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Visit our e-book page. <http://www.rveducation101.com/other.htm>

#1 selling e-book "Checklists for RVers"

"RV Towing, Weights, Hitch Work & Backing"

"Pop-Up Basics 101"

"RV Maintenance for Motor Homes"

"101 Tips for RVers"

Watch for new titles coming soon

FIVE of RV Education 101's training videos now available on DVD

Pop-Up 101 DVD

Class A Motor Home DVD

Class C Rental/Owner DVD

Winterizing and Storing Your RV DVD

Trailer Towing, Weights, Hitch Work & Backing DVD

<http://www.rveducation101.com/>

Are you considering the ultimate RV trip to Alaska? If so, or if you would just like to learn more about it check out John Holod's "The Last Great Road Trip", and his newest production "Alaska's Inside Passage", (VHS & DVD), and Bob and Judy Howens "Alaska by RV" (VHS).

<http://www.rveducation101.com/travelvideos.htm>

Do you have questions concerning trailer towing, weights, hitch work and backing? If so we have the answers. We just completed our 7th video, "Trailer Towing, Weights, Hitch Work & Backing" It is available in VHS and DVD. <http://www.rveducation101.com>

The National Automobile Dealers Association, N.A.D.A. guides are appraisal guides to determine new and used vehicle values. N.A.D.A. is now offering a Towing Guide that can be downloaded from its website. While you are there why not check out the value of your RV.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/05-05-2004/0002167530&EDATE=>

Some more towing tips from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/equipment/towing/index.htm>

Would you like to communicate with other RVers about certain topics or maybe there's a specific question you would like to ask. If so, there is an excellent forum available to RVers. It's called the Open Roads Forum and with over 30 forums available you're sure to find one helpful to you.

<http://www.trailerlife.com/cforum/index.cfm?site=TLM>

Do you have spare time on your hands, but don't know what to do?

The US Army Corps of Engineers can use you. The Corps of Engineers is the steward of almost 12 million acres of land and water across the country. Volunteers play an important role in protecting the natural resources and maintaining recreation facilities. You could serve as campground hosts, staff visitor centers, conduct programs, maintain park trails and much more.

www.orn.usace.army.mil/volunteer

If you're a solo woman RVer, or you're thinking about taking an RV trip by yourself we recently added a new e-book written specifically for you. "The Woman's Guide to Solo RVing"

<http://www.rveducation101.com/ebooks.htm>

What's in store for overnight RV parking at Walmarts?

<http://north.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=yuk-whsewalmart05052004>

Would you like to camp for half price at over 800 quality resorts and campgrounds?

http://www.rveducation101.com/happy_camper.htm

Do you monitor campground voltage coming into your RV? Did you know if voltage drops below 105 volts or goes above 135 volts you could damage expensive electronic equipment and appliances. Campground voltage fluctuates based on the demand. Check out how

you can protect your electronics and appliances.
<http://www.rveducation101.com/rvproductsandservices.htm>

Would you like a free 168 page, 2004 KOA campground directory?
<http://www.koa.com/orderadirectory/>

Do you own a pop-up or you're considering getting one? Did you know there is a magazine and a website dedicated solely to pop-ups and their owner's?
<http://www.popuptimes.com>

How will vacationers travel this summer? Read what two university professors have to say. I agree with most of it but not their take on the two distinct markets for RV travel. See what you think!
<http://www.ascribe.org/cgi-bin/spew4th.pl?ascribeid=20040504.130256&time=13%2042%20PDT&year=2004&public=1>

Would you like to learn more about our National Parks? You might get some great ideas for your next RV trip.
<http://www.nps.gov/>

The Recreation Vehicle Safety Education Foundation (RVSEF) is dedicated to the improvement of recreation vehicle safety, with a focus on education provided in a professional and objective way. To learn more about RVSEF visit their website at
<http://www.rvsafety.org/index.htm>

RV Companion Magazine is an RV lifestyle & travel magazine written by RVers for RVers. For more information or to subscribe <http://rvcompanion.com>

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About us:
Our goal with this monthly newsletter is to provide you with helpful information to make all of your RV experiences more enjoyable. I left my position as an RV Sales and F&I manager in 2000 to start my own company, RV Education 101. We produce educational videos, DVDs and e-books on how to use and maintain your RV.

The reason I left my job was due to my concern about the lack of educational and safety awareness material available to the RV consumer, in other words, you. We are a small company. My wife Dawn left her position in RV sales to help start the company and is our Sales and Marketing Director.

We currently have a 28-foot Class C motor home. We have two boys, Tyler 7 and Josh 13, both avid RVers and two dogs, Gracie and Buck. Gracie is the good one. If you would like to learn more about us and RV Education 101 feel free to visit our website at <http://www.rveducation101.com>

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Happy Camping,
Mark

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