



# SeeYa Connection

Newsletter for our FMCA Chapter

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [www.AlfaSeeYas.com](http://www.AlfaSeeYas.com) JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2013 SPRING ISSUE #38

## President's Message

~ By Randy Scott ~ [rscott@antelecom.net](mailto:rscott@antelecom.net)

A warm hello to all our members! I imagine as the weather is warming up, many of you may be travelling, and/or may be snow birds and have left your winter locations down South and have made your way back North to your summer homes! Hopefully, you all have had (and are having!) safe trips. We recently returned from several enjoyable outings: we attended (along with a few other AlfaSeeYas members and friends) the annual FMCA INTO Area Rally held at the Lazy Days RV Park in Tucson, AZ in March. The weather was great and we had fun. They had almost 300 attendees, had a number of seminars, vendors, and good food and entertainment! In addition to the INTO area officers present, were several candidates for national office, so we were able to see them and learn more about them too. One of the most memorable occurrences was the demonstration by "Mac the Fire Guy". Hopefully many of you have had the opportunity to attend one of his seminars at an RV rally. He showed us, (using a number of volunteers), how to use the emergency escape window in the bedroom of an RV. It is not as easy as you

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might think - and the important messages were: #1 make sure you know how to open the emergency escape window, (in *our* Alfa, we tried it several years ago and found that the lever wasn't connected and therefore we had to get it repaired!), #2 make sure you lubricate the window seals periodically so it doesn't stick closed, and #3 practice going out the window and getting to the ground BEFORE you have a real emergency! Check out his video on his site, 'Mac the Fire Guy'.

In April, we attended the Annual Alfa Owners Club Rally in Casa Grande, AZ. It

was held at the Palm Creek Golf and RV Resort - a really fabulous venue, with really great staff and many volunteers! We had over 100 Alfa motorhomes and 5<sup>th</sup> wheels there, and had a great time with lots of discussions and seminars about Alfa's (several expertly done by our own members!). We were able to obtain RV repairs and modifications which were expertly accomplished by a number of service folks, and we were able to catch up with a lot of folks we hadn't seen in a while. One of the demonstrations was again by 'Mac the Fire Guy' using volunteer Alfa owners - showing how to escape from an Alfa motorhome bedroom window. The demonstration convinced us that we are going to have an exterior handle (like the one outside our coach front door), installed outside the bedroom emergency escape window, to help in exiting the coach in case of an emergency.

The location and staff of the Palm Creek Resort were so great, we voted to hold next year's Alfa Owners Rally at the same location! I would advise you to mark your calendar now to attend in April 7-13, 2014.

During the Annual Owners Rally, we took the opportunity to hold an AlfaSeeYas chapter meeting (as we have done in the past), since we usually have a number of Rally attendees who are also AlfaSeeYas members - and had quite a few. At the meeting, we reminded folks that Jean is always looking for ideas, items & articles

for the newsletter, we talked about our recently held outings and about our future planned outings, (more on that further on in this message), greeted new members, and had several drawings. The lucky winners were: Dolores Montambault (a new member!), - an FMCA insulated tote bag, Mel Kirkland - a set of 4 FMCA insulated tumblers, and Dan Gentry - an additional 2 years dues. Congratulations to all!

Regarding future outings: For our planned outing in September 2013 to Gettysburg and Lancaster, PA - unfortunately the only ones who signed up were the wagon masters (Fran and John Kurz), and Terry & I. Needless to say, we were very disappointed - especially since we had publicized it for over a year, and Fran had done a lot of work in putting it together. Therefore we have had to CANCEL it. We do have several of our members going to the FMCA Annual Family Gathering Rally in Gillette, WY in June. Although we are not having a "formal" pre-rally, we are meeting several days in advance (June 15<sup>th</sup>) at the Deer Park Campground in Buffalo, WY and then planning to all go into the FMCA Rally together on June 18<sup>th</sup> so we can park near each other. If you are interested in joining us, best to contact our National Director Mike Lynch, as he volunteered to get the placards from FMCA for us to all go in together. Even if you aren't able to do that but are still going to attend, please look us up, as

we would like to see you! We will also try to have some type of "happy hour" activity one evening for all Alfa owners attending the FMCA Rally, as we may find folks willing to join the chapter too. Looking further into the future: we will have our annual Chapter pre-rally in Palm Desert, Jan 3-7, 2014, and caravan to the nearby FMCA Western Area Rally in Indio, Jan 8-12, 2014, (at which we will again ask for volunteers to help monitor the seminars—it's fun!); March 17-20, 2014 is the FMCA Family Reunion in Perry, GA (plus FMCA has announced they will hold a second FMCA Family Reunion later in the year -date and location to be determined); and May 2-6, 2014 will be the next annual INTO Area Rally in Lebanon, TN.

As always, please feel free to contact me to suggest event sites, and especially if you would like to volunteer to be a wagon master. It is fun, and we are able to provide help, and it is very rewarding! Hope to see you at an upcoming event!

~~ Randy

#### SAFETY TIP

An amazing 'Mind Reader' reveals his phenomenal gift. This is really true and scary. It is only 2 minutes 30 seconds long and worth watching to the end !!!! Go to You Tube and type in:

F7pYHN9iC91

#### Editor's Note

By Jean Maddux

[jeansalfanews@gmail.com](mailto:jeansalfanews@gmail.com)

Summer is approaching fast and many of you will be out on the road again. Some are going home for the summer, like us, after a winter in the South. And the full timers are continuing to travel. Whatever you are doing, have a great time and be safe.

The annual Alfa Owners Club Rally was a huge success. It is always great seeing people you only see once a year and meeting new people. There were many new people this year, which is always great. Hopefully we will see some of you that didn't make it, next year.

One of the more interesting things a group of eleven people did was go to Tucson and participate in a Food Tour. We met our tour guide at 11 am and he told us what we were going to do and gave us a sheet of paper with a total of eight restaurants that we were going to visit. As we started off he gave us a narrative about himself and gave us a little history about Tucson and the restaurants. We started off in a coffee shop and ended the four hour tour with ice cream samples. By the time we were finished, we were *all* stuffed !!! Each restaurant was unique as far as the food and venue goes. One was very ultra-modern and one was the oldest Mexican restaurant in Tucson. Each place gave us a good size sample of their food.

This seems to be a new upcoming trend in Cities. It gives you a chance to try new restaurants and foods. And the owners hope you will come back and try other things on their menu. It was a lot of fun and we hope to do it again in another city. I think if you call the Chamber of Commerce they can get you in touch with a Food Tour guide.

Like Randy said in his message - 'Mac the Fire Guy' gives a great seminar. We have seen his seminar several times. It just helps us to refresh our memories. If you ever have a chance to see him - DO !!!

Keep having fun, it is the thing to do.

Happy Trails ~~

~~ Jean

A husband and wife are shopping in their local supermarket. The husband picks up a case of Budweiser and puts it in their cart. "What do you think you're doing?" asks the wife. "They're on sale, only \$10 for 24 cans" he replies. "Put them back, we can't afford them" demands the wife, and so they carry on shopping.

A few aisles further along the wife picks up a \$20 jar of face cream and puts it in the basket. "What do you think you're doing?" asks the husband. "It's my face cream. It makes me look beautiful", replies the wife. Her husband retorts "So does 24 cans of Budweiser and it's half the price".

That's him on Aisle 5 - he never knew what hit him !!

We have a 2005 Alfa. In 2011 we did an interior makeover with new laminate flooring (no tile), carpeting, MCD shades, and flat-screen TV. Then last year we did an exterior makeover, with partial paint and new vinyl graphics. Here is a photo of the result. We think it is one of a kind. The exterior work was done by VIP Enterprises in San Bernardino, CA. For more information, contact Valerie at (909) 376-0395 or [www.rvstripes.com](http://www.rvstripes.com).

Sincerely,  
Shirley & David Nebergall



photo.JPG  
3330K

Unfortunately, we are downsizing and this coach *is* FOR SALE:

We are asking \$89,900, or best offer.

The Alfa is now located in the Olympia, WA area.

Please call David at 360-280-4595



## ATTENTION BOOK LOVERS

By Lexie Huffman

If you love to read as much as I do, here are some hints that make reading on the road easier and sometimes less expensive.

1. Don't try to carry a ton of books with you. Save the space for more critical items.
2. The cost of e-readers is way down. Now is the time to invest in one. I love my Kindle fire. It is excellent for reading at night in bed while the spouse is sleeping. If you frequent the beach or read mostly in daylight, ask your sales person for a non-glare model.
3. Once you have an e-reader, each month will give you opportunities to buy books at greatly reduced rates. Amazon (and I expect Nook, too) have free lending programs for an annual fee. If you read a lot, it may very well pay off. Several websites will let you download thousands of the "classics" for free.
4. Libraries are the best deal yet. Any time you spend more than a couple of weeks in one location or area, get a library card. Check the internet for rules for a temporary or visitor card. They usually want proof of a local address. Next time you have your mail forwarded to you, hang on to the package from UPS (or whomever). If you're staying on private property, have the owner give you a rental receipt. I've collected 5 library cards that take care of most of my book needs. Now you're able to download free books from any library for which you have a card.
5. Don't forget the library at your RV park. Borrow some or leave behind the books you're done with.
6. MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL - Use a website like **fictfact.com** to track your reading. You can produce lists of what's next in your favorite series and be notified when your favorite authors have new books arriving soon from publishers. It makes ALL OF THE ABOVE easier. It helps prevent buying books that you've already read, too.

For more information, please attend my seminar next spring at the Alfa Rally at Casa Grande, AZ or write to me at [lexiehuff1@gmail.com](mailto:lexiehuff1@gmail.com). See you on the road.....

Lexie Huffman (Roadrunner, Alfaseeyas)

OMG, I'm rich !! Silver in the hair, gold in the teeth, crystals in the kidneys, sugar in the blood, lead in the butt, iron in the arteries, and an inexhaustible supply of natural gas !! I never thought I would accumulate such wealth !!

Unknown Author



A warm welcome to our newest AlfaSeeYas members. To paraphrase, Sonny Gillespie, President of our FMCA association, the International Area Organization (aka INTO): *"The most important member of the AlfaSeeYas is the newest member"* Thanks so much for joining us!

Norm and Jeannette Harper

Leon and Dolores Montambault

Roger and Kathy Hewlett

Dale and Susan Prichard

Lenny and Linda LeBlanc

Randy and Debby Sherow

Ronald and Andria Lee

## AlfaSeeYas Officers & Other Volunteers

President	Randy Scott	<a href="mailto:rscott@antelecom.net">rscott@antelecom.net</a>
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The AlfaSeeYas Chapter Website is at: [www.alfaseeyas.com](http://www.alfaseeyas.com)

Send U.S. Mail, dues to Treasurer at:

*(Checks payable to AlfaSeeYas)*

AlfaSeeYas Chapter

3590 Round Bottom Road

Cincinnati, OH 45244-3026

**Membership is \$10 per year. Multiple year renewals are encouraged at \$10 per year.**

## Alfa Repair Facilities

Dick Albritton, Choudrandt, LA (318) 278-1677, email [dickalbritton@gmail.com](mailto:dickalbritton@gmail.com)

Alfateers, Fontana, CA (909) 428-6775, website <http://www.alfateersrvservice.com>

"Follow Alfateers on Twitter and Like us on Facebook"

Charlie's Service, Sunset, UT (801) 547-7630 website <http://www.charliesservice.com>

Mike Ewing, Robertsdale, AL (south of Loxley) (251) 508-3102 email [ewingrvrepair@gmail.com](mailto:ewingrvrepair@gmail.com)

Bretz RV, Missoula, MT (406) 541-4800 website [www.bretzrv.com](http://www.bretzrv.com)

Gene Kelley's Mobile RV Repair (RVSA Certified Master Technician) Tucson, AZ (502) 906-9676

California RV Specialists, Lodi, CA (209) 334-4500 website [www.californiarvspecialists.com](http://www.californiarvspecialists.com)

## Useful Internet Sites for Alfa Owners

Our Chapter Website AlfaSeeYas.com: [www.alfaseeyas.com](http://www.alfaseeyas.com)

You'll find lots of great information, including Rally info, Chapter documents, membership and dues information, past issues of the Newsletter, Tips and Tricks, a photo album and much more.

Family Motor Coach Association: [www.fmca.com](http://www.fmca.com)

**Yahoo Message Boards** - these are Internet forums where Alfa owners ask question and exchange information about our coaches. To read the messages, and post your own, you will need to "join" the group (click the blue button that says Join This Group).

AlfaSeeYas: <http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/alfaseeya/>

SeeYa DP: <http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/SeeYaDP/>

SeeYa Travels: <http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/SeeYaTravels/>

**Chapters of Alfa Owners:**

[Roadrunners](#) - Non-Regional (Full Time/Half Time/Part Time)

[South Loafers](#) - Southern California, Arizona, & Nevada

[Mavericks](#) - Central California

[Sun Seekers](#) - North of Eugene, Oregon & Washington

[Lonestars](#) - Texas

[Alfa One](#) - Southern California

Rallies ~~ the most FUN you can have in your Alfa ~~~~

If you would like to suggest a local rally, please contact our President, Randy Scott. A group of AlfaSeeYas can get together very easily for a few days during the week, or over a weekend. **NEED HELP PLANNING A RALLY?** We have several documents to help those interested in planning a pre, post or other rally for our members. You can contact Randy and ask for any or all of the documents. They include: Rules of Thumb for Estimating Costs and Planning a Pre or Post Rally in Brief.

## Upcoming FMCA Rallies

For FMCA Rallies - Members should reserve General Parking for FMCA Rallies by calling FMCA reservations (800) 543-3622 or using the FMCA web site: [www.FMCA.com](http://www.FMCA.com)

June 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 - FMCA'S Family Reunion & Motorhome Showcase  
CAM-PLEX, Gillette, Wyoming

July 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 - Northeast Area Rally  
Champlain Valley Exposition, Essex Junction, Vermont

July 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013 - Midwest Area Rally  
Delaware County Fairgrounds, Manchester, Iowa

August 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013 - Northwest Area Rally  
Linn County Fair & Expo Center, Albany, Oregon

September 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 - South Central Area Rally  
Missouri State Fairgrounds, Sedalia, Missouri

September 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 - Great Lakes Area  
Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds, Goshen, Indiana



**RALLY CALENDAR ~~ UPCOMING ALFA CHAPTER RALLIES**

September 11<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Gettysburg/Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Wagon Masters: Fran & John Kurz

**CANCELLED**

**Due to lack of interest.**

**SUN SEEKERS CHAPTER OUTINGS**

Contact Mel Kirkland at [Mel\\_Kirkland@msn.com](mailto:Mel_Kirkland@msn.com) OR call (360) 666-1621 (360)-991-7436 for information and a registration packet on all outings.

**JULY OUTING**

Dates: July 14<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 (6 nights)

Location: American Sunset RV Park, Westport, WA

Wagon Masters: Randy & Cheryl Fabian and Warren & Betty Withers

**OCTOBER OUTING** 'Oktoberfest Outing'

Dates: October 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 (5 nights)

Location: Blue-Shastin RV Resort, Pershastin, WA/ Leavenworth, WA

Wagon Masters: Rick & Pamela Gordon, Howard & Susan Klock, Gerry & Elaine Winey

**SOUTH LOAFERS CHAPTER OUTINGS**

**AUGUST OUTING**

Dates: August 19<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013

Location: Belknap Hot Springs, Hwy 126, four Miles East of the town McKenzie Bridge, OR

Co-wagon Masters: Jerry & Jean Maddux and Dale & Diana Manners

**OCTOBER OUTING**

Dates: October 18<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013

Location: Cal Expo RV Park, 1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95815

Co-wagon Masters: Bill & Joan Weaver and David & Judy Sabol

**SOUTH LOAFERS CHAPTER OUTINGS (CONTINUED)****JANUARY OUTING**

Dates: January 22<sup>nd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Location: Holiday Palm RV Resort, 355 W. Main, Quartzsite, AZ 85346

Wagon Mistress: Mary Jo Verzic. **NEEDS A CO-WAGON MASTER/MISTRESS**

**ROADRUNNERS CHAPTER OUTINGS****OCTOBER OUTING**

Dates: 2013 TBA

Location: Ft. Collins, CO

Wagon Masters: Charlie & Donna Musgrave

**JANUARY OUTING**

Dates: 2014 TBA

Location: Quartzsite Boondock/BLM, La Posa North, Quartzsite, AZ

Wagon Masters: Doug & Wendy Ferguson

**APRIL OUTING**

Dates: April 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Location: Alfa Roadrunner Pre-rally/Palm Creek Golf & RV Resort, Casa Grande, AZ

Wagon Masters: Joe Hughes & Val Nelsen

**APRIL ALFA OWNERS CLUB ANNUAL RALLY**

Dates: April 7<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Location: Palm Creek Golf & RV Resort, Casa Grande, AZ

Wagon Masters: Mike & Lorraine Lynch

**Should children witness childbirth?**

Due to a power outage only one paramedic responded to the call. The house was very dark so the paramedic asked Kathleen, a 3 year old, to hold a flashlight high over her mommy so he could see while he helped deliver the baby. Very diligently Kathleen did as she was asked. Heidi pushed and pushed and after a little while, Connor was born. The paramedic lifted him by his little feet and spanked him on his bottom. Connor began to cry.

The paramedic then thanked Kathleen for her help and asked the wide-eyed 3 year old what she thought about what she had just witnessed. Kathleen quickly responded, "He shouldn't have crawled in there in the first place....smack his bottom again !!!"

## New York City Trip

By: Tom & Maureen Mathison

We had a perfect day to drive from West Wareham, MA to New York City. Hwy I-95 is good, and has "Travel Plazas" where we could easily pull in for lunch, fuel, & food. These don't show up on the maps as rest areas but are well signed and they tell you how far to the next one. We stopped at a service area near Fairfield, CT for lunch and prepared ourselves for our trip into the Liberty Harbor RV Park in Jersey City. The further south we travel, the gentler the hills and the trees have really thinned out. The terrain is completely different. Our GPS was set and off we went but unfortunately the GPS location in the book was wrong so we ended up in the wrong place, but more on that later.

We have not mentioned the amount of road work that we have encountered in the US. Most construction areas were well laid out so we could keep up a reasonable speed with the scary part being the right truck lane which is made the smallest width. Unfortunately we had to spend 45 minutes in heavy stop and go traffic, in a huge construction zone, trying to cross the Washington Bridge into New Jersey. We went on the upper level designated "trucks" and any vehicles with propane (all propane turned off). These truckers were not happy. A lot of horns, revving of their engines and Jake brakes when not needed. We followed the GPS to the Woodall's location (on all maps, and at the same GPS coordinates that Woodall's gives) and guess what - wrong place! Close, but that doesn't matter when you have to turn around and go through a number of toll booths to try again. On the third try we stopped to the side and I called the RV Park and they said take Exit 14C. "Don't worry if you see the Holland Tunnel ahead, there will be one last road off - Columbus St. Trust me". Well, we couldn't live with that (not wanting to make the front page of NY newspapers getting stuck in the Holland Tunnel and Manhattan). We came off, we think at 14C but *not* within sight of the Holland Tunnel and then tried to reconcile her verbal instructions with our GPS map (we put the street address in, and that worked). We arrived, eyes big as saucers, and set up for 3 days.

The forecast for Friday was for heavy rain, so we made this our museum day. We took the weekday passenger ferry from the RV Park over to near Wall St. in Manhattan, caught the subway uptown to 53rd St. We walked over to 5th Ave near Central Park, and then visited the Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and lastly the Museum of Modern Art. We purchased a 'City Pass', for about \$90, which gave us access to all of the Museums plus a lot more. On our previous visit we took a tour bus around Manhattan but did not have time to stop to see these amazing museums, so this was a big thrill for us. We are Picasso fans and luckily the Guggenheim had a Picasso exhibit. The Met is so large that it would take days to do properly so we chose the areas we wanted to see and stuck to these. There were lots of neat things to see. Although the MOMA was not our cup of tea it still had a lot of neat things. We both especially liked the 'industrial art' such as helicopter blades and blades from a jet engine.

These have a beautiful form while being designed for practical purposes. We're back home, tired but happy.

Saturday started off foggy but by the time we took the Jersey City subway (called PATH - the ferry did not run on the weekend), to lower Manhattan, it had cleared into a spectacularly sunny day and as we walked towards Battery Park we could see the construction of the two new towers at the World Trade Center site. One is very sleek and breathtaking to behold. We did not reserve tickets beforehand to visit the 9/11 site, so will put that on the list for next time. Our 'City Pass' included a cruise out to Liberty Island and Ellis Island. We got in line and waited about 2 hours for our turn to get to the ferry. The Statue of Liberty is such an amazing sight to see up close. That image is near and dear to the hearts of all Americans and I envy their pride in that image of their country. We took a free National Parks Ranger tour. There were lots of interesting facts and stories. We had always thought that the statue was from the Government of France, but actually a group of French people decided to build it as a gift *from* the people of France. It was kind of poke at the French Government's failure to set up as stable a system of government as the United States had. The structure supporting the copper statue was designed by Eiffel and in a cut-away model it was easy to see that was the start of the Eiffel Tower. Apparently her face is modeled on the sculptor Bartholdi's mother and body of his wife. We visited Ellis Island as well, and they have a large display on the main floor detailing where and when the immigrants arrived here. Very informative. Then we came back into Manhattan to catch the Subway up to the area of the Empire State Building. Unfortunately a lot of subway lines were down for maintenance on Sunday, and we were looking at the map when a man came by and told us what to do. He was on the platform and gave us the nod when our train came. We found that typical in that New Yorkers keep to themselves but are willing to help if asked. We went to the 86<sup>th</sup> floor of the Empire State Building (another ticket in the City Pass). This was about 3 pm, and it was perfect as the lineups were not that long. The view is incredible - no one rushes around up there. It is a view to be savoured. Our pass included the audio tour and it was helpful to have a narrative of what you are looking at. We took the PATH transportation system back to the RV Park, and discovered that friends that we met in Summerside PEI were there, so we had a wonderful visit with them.

A great visit to New York City, but the traffic and highways to get there are unbelievably busy. And we thought Boston drivers were aggressive! They were meek compared to NY/NJ drivers. I think this is a good fly-in destination. We wouldn't tackle the traffic here again.

We all left together the next morning. We left by the back door road from Liberty Harbor RV onto Jersey Street, drove right/ north to Columbus, left/west on Columbus, under Hwy 78, immediate left onto Merceles and straight ahead to Hwy 78 South. We stopped in New Jersey at the Thomas Edison service area, Exit 6 (good info on Gas Buddy), then we headed to Lancaster, PA....Amish country, quilts & food.

### Senior Night With The Hypnotist

It was entertainment night at the Senior Citizens' Center. After the community sing song led by Alice at the piano it was time for the Star of the Show....Claude the Hypnotist !! Claude explained that he was going to put the whole audience into a trance. "Yes, each and every one of you and all at the same time", said Claude. The excited chatter dropped to silence as Claude carefully withdrew from his waistcoat pocket a beautiful antique gold pocket watch and chain. "I want you to keep your eyes on this watch", said Claude, holding the watch high for all to see. "It is a very special and valuable watch that has been in my family for six generations". He began to swing the watch gently back and forth while quietly chanting "Watch the watch....Watch the watch....Watch the watch". The audience became mesmerized as the watch swayed back and forth. The lights twinkling as they were reflected from its' gleaming surfaces. A hundred and fifty pairs of eyes followed the movements of the gently swaying watch. And then, suddenly the chain broke !!!! The beautiful watch fell to the stage and burst apart on impact. "SHIT" said Claude. It took them three days to clean the Senior Citizens' Center and Claude was never invited to entertain there again !!!

A wife, being the romantic sort, sent her husband a text: "If you are sleeping, send me your dreams. If you are laughing send me your smile. If you are eating, send me a bite. If you are drinking send me a sip. If you are crying, send me your tears. I love you!" The husband, typically non-romantic, replied, "I'm on the toilet....please advise."



## Residential Fridges, Dry Camping and Solar Panels

By Tom & Maureen Mathison

We bought our 2005 Alfa Founder 2 years ago and have enjoyed travelling and camping in it. It was 'born' with a Whirlpool Residential Fridge (RF) and after a number of iterations we think we have found the "right combination" to allow us to dry camp for an extended time.

### Summary

We like the RF for a number of reasons but it does make extended dry camping more of a challenge. When we are traveling, there is no problem in that the diesel engine (ours is a CAT) can easily run the fridge on the inverter and charge the coach batteries. We have six 6 volt batteries and these easily handle an overnight stop with RF left on the inverter. In fact we can typically go two days before we see the 'red low battery light'. We do not run the microwave on the inverter and tend to watch less TV when travelling. We also have an 180 watt solar panel. But for short stays the solar panel is not a big factor in charging the batteries (overnight).

We are happy to dry camp and use the microwave, coffee maker, vacuum and hair dryer only when the diesel generator is on, limit our TV to about 3 hours per day on a 22 inch LED and satellite receiver (both get 'unplugged' when not in use), limit computer usage to 6 hours per day, charge my CPAP medical machine, reasonable usage of our LED lights (not dark but not leaving lights on when not needed), and running the furnace or the vent fans to keep us comfortable.

We have dry camped for more than a few days by using four approaches. The first and most obvious is to run the diesel generator to keep the batteries topped up and the RF on the inverter. This works but requires operation of the diesel generator for about 3 hours per day. Typically an hour in the morning and two hours before bed to be kind to the batteries. We could not tolerate operating the generator this long per day. Typically we would find that on the first and second day we *thought* we could get by with only an hour of the generator - resulting in a need to run the generator for 7 hours on the third day - you need to keep up every day.

To limit the generator hours, we purchased a small Freon cycle high efficiency fridge that operates on 12 volt (brand name of Waeco). It is basically 2 by 2 by 4 feet tall. When we used this we would try and limit the amount of frozen and fresh purchases the week before we went dry camping but it has an amazing amount of space. Without solar panels the need for the generator is cut to about 2 hours per day. On sunny days in March and later the 180 watts of solar helps to limit the diesel generator to about an hour per day and about 1.5 hours on cloudy days. On sunny summer days we did not need to run the generator except for the microwave etc. We can tolerate the generator for this length of time. We started this approach with a 120 volt 'bar fridge' but did not save as much energy as we thought we would.

Our next experiment involved using a small generator to blend in with the other campers' Honda portable generators. This was a failure - the small generator and the Xantrex could not work together to rapidly charge the batteries. We could make the small generator work with a plug in battery charger but it charged at about  $\frac{1}{4}$  the capacity of the Xantrex - 4 times longer operation. Perhaps there is a way to make this work - technically it seems very possible but I have adjusted all the settings we have and it still does not work well. [Ed. Note: We checked with several experts - the Xantrex *should* work with a 2000 Watt Honda (or other brand) generator. You should set the Xantrex shore power to 15 amps, but realize that while you are hooked up to it, if some high-current coach appliances (such as the TV and RF) turned on, the Xantrex may stop charging the batteries]. We have a small generator for sale !! I should say that the Honda was much quieter than the diesel generator and if we did not need to recharge the batteries rapidly this has some merit.

Our final approach has been to install a lot more solar power. We are stunned by how low prices have become. As a DIY project we have added 380 watts for less than \$900 with all new equipment - including a very fancy, high efficiency solar controller. Wiring for the new 'high voltage' panels is also a lot easier. With a total of 560 watts we can now run with the RF on a sunny day in March without the diesel generator (only used for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour per day for the microwave). In the Southwest this works well. We are not sure of how this will work in the Pacific Northwest with the weather and treed

Campsites but will try it out this summer. We may need to use the small fridge and will test this out before removing it.

The benefits of the Residential Fridge when 'tied to the power post' makes it a good choice, but if you dry camp for months then the decision maybe be towards the RV fridge. From a 'green' perspective the Residential Fridge on solar panels is a clear winner.

The bottom line is "are you prepared to keep the batteries and diesel generator in good shape and how long are you prepared to operate the generator per day when dry camping?" If solar panels and/or a small fridge appeals, then you can limit generator hours dramatically.

We also find it interesting that a lot of people shake their heads about having a big 120 volt fridge but already have a small 120 volt fridge or freezer 'in the basement'. We find the interior room in the RF limits the need for a separate fridge or freezer. Keep in mind that the small fridge or freezer needs substantial power.

Bottom line is, you lose some flexibility with the RF but there are choices to make it possible to dry camp for extended time. You *do* need to pay more attention to the batteries and power usage while dry camping.

**Editors Note:** If you would like more information, Tom & Maureen would be happy to give you more details. Their email address is: [maureenmathison@hotmail.com](mailto:maureenmathison@hotmail.com)

### Slow Cooked Beef Stroganoff

Submitted by Irene Renfro

2 lbs. lean stew beef	One 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. reduced fat Cream of Mushroom Soup
1 pkg whole fresh mushrooms	One 16 oz. fat free or low fat sour cream
1 pkg Hidden Valley Ranch mix (dry)	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Marsala cooking wine
One 14.5 oz. can beef broth	12 oz. bag Mueller's Old Fashioned Dumpling Noodles

In a crock pot, stir together the stew beef, mushrooms, ranch dressing mix, beef broth and mushroom soup. Cook on the low setting for 6-8 hours. Give the ingredients a good stir and add in sour cream and marsala wine. Cover and continue to cook while preparing noodles. Follow package directions for noodles, drain and stir into stroganoff mixture. Serve immediately.