

Freightliner Chassis Owners Club

"10th Anniversary 1995 - 2005"

4th Quarter 2005



Freightliner Flyer

www.freightlinerchassisownersclub.org

It All Starts with the
Foundations !



FRED



XC
Chassis



Join with Friends & the FCOC Chapter for the Post Rally
"Adventure in the Desert" @ Tucson, AZ " ...
See Pages 10 and 11



Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
to each in the
FCOC
Family !



Freightliner Chassis Owners Club





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~ President's Message ~

Good Afternoon!!! (How do I know its afternoon?) to all FCOC members; as I write this note to you, I hope you had as wonderful of a Thanksgiving as Dorothy and I did. The only problem, WE ATE TOO MUCH. And why do we continue to do this on this holiday? We traveled to Houston, for a family dinner and even after promising not to over indulge, I did it anyway. Oh well, I am grateful that we all can do this with friends and family. Maybe next year I'll cut down.



We gave thanks for all of our blessings from throughout the year and prayed for continued blessing for the next year. We especially remembered the men and women in Iraq fighting for our prayerful freedom. I talked to a few folks that had an opportunity to talk with their sons or daughters in Iraq, and all of them said, "What a high" It was like they were right with them at their home. What a great idea to have phone calls from Iraq.

I have a few very important items to announce. As you may know, Gary Poole is no longer employed at Freightliner. He supported our club and we wish him well in his next venture.

The new Freightliner Product Manager is a person many of you know. His name is Tony Sippel and he starts his new assignment immediately. Our congratulations to Tony. His press release is included in this newsletter.

In August of this year, the nominating committee asked me to run for President for another term. I agreed to do so with some additional help. As you know the election took place and I was re-elected for another term. I thank all of you for your continued support.

With this being said, I have 2 appointments of people to assist me in doing a good or even better job as your president. My plan is to get other people aware of what I do as your representative. This will make the next president more qualified to take over. Katherine Henley has one more year to serve as your Executive VP, and she has indicated that she is not interested in moving up to the Presidents position. Katherine has done a wonderful job in this position and these appointees will be able to take advantage of her experience. This will offer more continuity in the working of your club. We believe that this will also help with the progression of leadership for our club.

The first appointment is Bill Buck. He will be the Operations Manager, for FCOC. Bill brings with him many new ideas along with computer technology.

The second appointment is Roy Hopper. Roy will be Advertising/Marketing Manager for FCOC. Roy brings with him plans on how to further the growth of our club and build a benefit base with our vendors. Roy is currently serving for FCOC as Alternate National Director and will continue in this position.

Both of these officers will report directly to me and shall be non-voting members of the Board of Directors of FCOC. If you have any questions or suggestions for these men, we encourage you to contact any board member or the new appointees. We value your input.

Another important note is the addition on our web site to make changes in the info we have on file. Our purpose is to simplify the change of address process. For those of us that have computers or access to computers, go to the FCOC web page at "freightlinerchassisownersclub.org" and click on Membership. The 2 options available are 1st, for re-newing your membership, just print it out and send it in, and the 2nd is to make an address change or phone, or e-mail etc, and push the submit button to up-date your personal information. My suggestion is to go to the web site and look at the options, so when you do have a change you can do it easily.

We have 2 very special rallies coming up and I encourage you to consider joining us for a good time and lots of learning. You also know that the Freightliner Tech team will be at both rallies to take care of minor problems for us at a no/charge basis. In March, Tucson is a wonderful place to be with great weather and many things to see and do. Join us for "A Desert Adventure" Bill & Judy Johnson are the Rally Masters for this activity.

The summer rally is called "The Homecoming Rally" because Freightliner wants to make us aware of what a neat addition the new facility is for FCOC members. They will have plant tours and a Bar-B-Q dinner at Freightliner. This rally is to be held in Charlotte NC at the Lowes Track with again much to do and have a little fun while we are at it. Denny & Grayce Ann Gartland are Rally Masters and Clint & Jill Bauman are assistant Rally masters.

There is more to talk about and it is further in this newsletter.

**I t's not the destination
... it's the journey**

Please take care and drive safe and have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Thank You,

Ken Hawk



THE LEADER AT EVERY TURN™



A Message from the President, FCCC

On behalf of the entire team at Freightliner Custom Chassis, I would like to wish all Owners Club members a safe and happy holiday season and a rewarding New Year. In 2005 FCCC will build over 45,000 RV, walk-in van, school bus, shuttle bus, and printer vehicles making it our best year ever! However, our outstanding year would not have been possible without all of you, our valued customers.

With your continued support of FCCC chassis products, 2006 promises to be another banner sales year filled with innovative products and services. We have some exciting plans on the horizon with the completion of our new service center and taking an active role in all the FMCA and FCOC rallies especially Charlotte NC. I would like to extend an invitation to all of you to visit our plant when you have the opportunity. It is our sincere wish that 2006 will be equally as successful for you.

Thank you again for making Freightliner Custom Chassis your chassis of choice.

Sincerely,

Reid Bigland



THE LEADER AT EVERY TURN™



For Immediate Release
November 20, 2005

For More Information, Contact:

Melissa Grey
Marketing Coordinator
864 – 206 – 8638
melissagrey@freightliner.com



Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation Announces New Product manager for RV Product Line

Gaffney, S.C... Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation (FCCC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Anthony (Tony) Sippel as Product Manager for the RV Product Line. Tony will be relocating to Gaffney SC, FCCC headquarters.

Tony joined FCCC as a Senior Design Engineer in October of 1996. In 1998 he was promoted to Development Engineer at FCCC and in 1999 promoted to Technical Sales Manger for the RV Product Line and for the past four years he has resided in Middlebury, IN responsible for several OEMs in the Elkhart area.

According to Dean Schaper, FCCC Director of Sales and Marketing, “We look confidently to Tony to lead our RV Marketing and Product Development projects, helping us maintain and enhance our industry lead.”

Sippel is a graduate of Purdue University with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering Technology and a minor in Electrical Engineering Technology.

Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation manufactures premium chassis for the motorhome, delivery walk-in van, school bus and shuttle bus markets. It is a subsidiary of Freightliner LLC, the leading heavy-duty truck manufacturer in North America. Freightliner produces and markets Class 3 – 8 vehicles under the Freightliner, Sterling, Western Star and Thomas Built Buses nameplates and is a company of DaimlerChrysler, the world’s largest commercial vehicle manufacturer.





Freightliner Chassis Owner's Club
join today!

Freightliner Chassis Owners Club Membership *Renewal* Application

Name _____ Application Date _____

Co-Pilot _____

Phone (_____) _____ Cell Phone (_____) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____ Circle One Freightliner, Oshkosh, John Deere

Manufacturer of Motor home _____ Model _____

Year _____ Length _____ Vin # of Chassis _____

Purchase Date _____ Applicant must have a FMCA # _____

or Applied for #. _____ Application Date _____

Dues are \$10.00 per Year or 5 Years for \$45.00 US Dollars

Send to: Kathy Kyzer c/o FCCC

552 Hyatt St. Gaffney, SC. 29341

(864) 487-1700

RECALL Notice :

It has been brought to our attention that a recall was issued on certain XC Chassis. First, let me put everybody at ease, FCCC has not experienced any failures to date. This recall is to insure that FCCC does not have any failures. This recall identifies chassis' manufactured between April 8, 2004 and December 23, 2004. This is the ZF Independent Front Suspension model.

Their normal procedure is that FCCC sends out a recall notice by mail to the owners of those chassis effected and also notifies all dealers.

Larry Dorer of FCCC stated that if you are out of reach via mail, etc. the best thing for concerned customers, is call the help line 1-800-FTL HELP (1-800-385-4357), have the last 6 digits of your chassis vin # available and inquire if their chassis is part of the recall. If you are asked to leave a message, leave your name, phone number, the last 6 digits of their chassis vin # and the reason for your call. Someone will get back to you with the information they need.

~Check Out the "2006" Schedule~



- FMCA's 75th International Convention

March 20,21,22 & 23, 2006

FairPlex ~Pomona, CA.~

- FCOC Post Rally "A Desert Adventure"

March 25,26,27,28 & 29,2006

Beaudry's RV Resort

Tucson, AZ



- FMCA's 76th International Convention

August 14,15,16, & 17, 2006

Lowe's Motor Speedway

Charlotte, NC.

- FCOC Post Rally "Home Coming Rally #2 "

August 18, 19, 20, 21,22 & 23rd. 2006



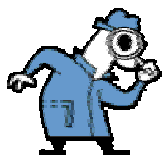
Lowe's Motor Speedway

Charlotte, NC.



See Preview page 22 ...

More information to be posted in future Newsletters



D/C-Rewards Program ...

Note:

There have been some questions and comments about the D/C-Reward program for purchasing new Chrysler Autos. I also have misinformed you regarding our FCOC pricing. The employee price is called the EP price. EP price is somewhat different. The FCOC price is called PP or Preferred Price and it allows us to purchase 2 autos per year and we get the price of 1% below the factory cost. All other available rebates apply also. The only addition is that we pay a \$75.00 activation fee on top of the determined price. In the past there were some restrictions on the models available and this was determined by the activity or availability of the model. As of September 6th most D/C autos except Mercedes, Dodge Viper, Sprinter, and all SRT 8 models are available for FCOC pricing. If you want to know if there are any exceptions, call the 888 number as listed in this note. Please understand that this is a fantastic program for us. We eliminate the hassle of negotiating a price, and it can save somewhere between \$100. to \$1000.00. I still suggest that we shop and find the car you want and get a best price and then call the D/C Re-wards center for a control number (888)-444-4321 Opt #2 Give them your company code which is D88123 They will give you a D/C control number and this you take and present to your dealer This information is for FCOC members only.

This is a program offered to FCOC by the Daimler/Chrysler Corporation and is a real benefit for those belonging to the Freightliner Chassis Owners Club. For further questions let me know.

Thanks

Ken Hawk

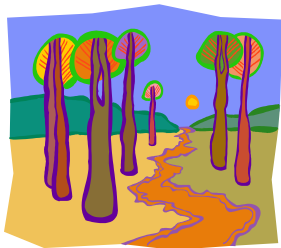
Fuel Mileage Food for Thought ...

Adriaan Pruyssers reports the results of a recent fuel mileage experiment.

He owns a 2003 39L 4-slide Fleetwood Discovery with 38,000 miles on the coach. His coach with 90 gallons of fuel, 90 gallons of fresh water & their usual personal belongings weighs in at just under 27,000 lbs and he tows a F150 Pickup weighing 5000 lbs. His engine is a 3126E Caterpillar, 330 HP.

At the end of his last trip for about 2000 miles, he changed his driving speed from 62 mph @1700 rpm to 55 mph @ 1500 rpm and much to his delight, his mileage changed from 7/7.5 mpg to 9/10 mpg.

Making a few conservative assumptions and applying a little simple arithmetic to this data shows that the 2000 miles took only 4.11 hours longer at 55 than at 62 and used at least 43.5 gallons less of fuel (calculated as change from 7.5 to 9.0 mpg). At \$2.50 per gal, this saved \$106.25 or \$25.85 per hour. Of course any individual results will vary from these but this example can be cause for thought!



Caravan Into The Pomona, CA. - 2006 FMCA Convention

Charlie & Ruth Hoffstatter Caravan Organizers

Phone # 512-567-1499 or 888-218-0008

E-mail crvacc@yahoo.com

For many of you who have attended a FMCA convention and caravanned into the convention grounds with the FCOC in the past, Pomona will be a little different. We will be gathering at the FMCA Holding area at the convention site. Our caravan will be a SHORT trip across the parking lot to our final destination on Saturday, the 18th of March. For those that want to come in on Friday evening the 17th a \$15.00 charge will be required by FMCA and payable to the FMCA people at the will call office in the parking lot that evening. For those coming in on Saturday morning the 18th please be at the parking area at least by 10:30 AM, so we can go over information pertinent to our parking and to hand out the caravan placards for the windshields. We will hold a short meeting about 12:00 PM prior to our moving across the parking lot to our final parking area. We have been scheduled with the FMCA parking personnel to be parked at our final spot at 12:30 PM on Saturday the 18th.

The FCOC will have personnel there on Friday evening and Saturday morning to help our group get together prior to our final move on Saturday afternoon. There will also be FMCA parking attendants in the area to assist if needed.

Directions to the Fairplex Parking area are as follows:

Coming north or south on I-210 (Orange Fwy.) take Exit 45 Arrow Highway (although it may not be numbered). Head east on Arrow Highway and proceed approximately 3.8 miles. Watch for Fairplex signs along the way. Go past Fairplex Drive and White Avenue. Turn right in to Gate 14A off Arrow Highway. There will be a very large parking lot in front of you and in there will be our staging area.

We will be looking for you !!!

CONTACT US IF YOU WILL BE GOING @ 512-567-1499 OR TOLL FREE 888-218-0008 OR AT OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS crvacc@yahoo.com

WE ESPECIALLY NEED TO KNOW IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT STAY OVER NIGHT ON THE 17TH.

NOTE:

When registering for the FMCA Convention make sure you register for General Parking Area. This will allow you to run your generator from 7:00 AM till 11:00 PM.

**Post Rally
March 2006 !**

A Desert Adventure



FCOC Tucson Rally - March 25 - 29, 2006

Saturday 3/25/06

All day - Arrival and check in. Distribute the Welcome Bags.

6:00 PM - Opening Reception sponsored by Beaudry's with Hor's D' Oeuvres , cocktail plus dinner.

7:00 PM - Opening comments by FCOC President, Rally Masters, Representative from Visitors and Convention Bureau, and Beaudry Representative.

7:30 PM - Entertainment by the Tucson Chorus and Barbershop Quartets.

Sunday 3/26/06

8:00 AM Coffee and Donuts a FCOC Tent.

9:00 AM Church Service Carolyn Morris Spiritual Leader

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM. Motor Coach Trip to Tombstone, AZ. Lunch and Activities on our own.

6:00 PM - Dinner at the Beaudry Convention Center.

7:30 PM - Entertainment by Shawn Wilson "DJ" 50's and 60's music.

Monday 3/27/06

8:00 AM Coffee and Donuts a FCOC Tent.

Through out the day - Tours of Pima Air and Space museum and Davis Monthan AMARC facility.

5:00 PM - Dinner at the Pima Air and Space Museum. (Car pool to the Museum for tours and Dinner)

Tuesday 3/28/06

8:00 AM Coffee and Donuts a FCOC Tent.

All Day - Seminars, time on your own for self-guided tours, etc.

10:00 AM - Seminar - Cheri's Desert Harvest - Prickly-Pear Cactus, From Field to Store, at Red Hat Soc. Mtg. (1hr.)
Red Hat Society Meeting.

10:00 AM - Seminar - Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp.

12:00 Noon - FCOC Business Meeting with Lunch

2:00 PM Caterpillar and Cummins engine seminars

6:00 PM - Dinner and Closing Ceremonies at the Beaudry Convention Center.

7:30 PM Entertainment - Dancing to the Sounds of The Tom Patrick Band. (Big Band Music)

Wednesday 3/29/06

Departure - Arrangements can be made to stay on to participate in the many activities in the Tucson Area.

- *See Special Notice for Camp Freightliner Page 15 !!*



A DESERT ADVENTURE !

FCOC Tucson AZ Rally—March 25–29 2006



Beaudry Resort and Rally Park



5151 S. Country Club Rd. Tucson, AZ. 85706

Registration

Pilot (First Name) _____ (Name Tag) _____

(Last Name) _____

Co-Pilot (First Name) _____ (Name Tag) _____

(Last Name) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone#(____)-____-____ Cell Phone #(____)-____-____ e-Mail _____

FMCA# _____ Mfg. of MH _____ Model _____

Year _____ Length _____ License. # _____ State _____

Is This Your First FCOC Rally ? _____

Will you help with: Registration ____ Seminars ____ Meals ____ As Needed ____

We have only 200 sites reserved, So get your reservations in Now!



Deadline: March, 1 2006 * Make check Payable to FCOC for \$295.00 and send to:

Clint & Jill Bauman

3100 South Kinney Rd. #15

Tucson, AZ. 85713

Phone (520) 883-4278

Since Bus Tours are planned, Please let us know if you are going on the bus to:



Tombstone, AZ. On Sunday 7 March 26th 2006 Yes ____ No ____

Davis-Monthan AMARK Tour March 27th 2006 Yes ____ No ____



Note !



CAMP
FREIGHTLINER
Get to Know Your Chassis

KEEPS ON ROLLIN'

Here's the schedule for 2006:

- Class 1: March 20 and 21
- Class 2: April 10 and 11
- Class 3: May 8 and 9
- Class 4: June 5 and 6
- Class 5: August 7 and 8
- Class 6: September 18 and 19
- Class 7: October 9 and 10



~ More ~



Camp Freightliner Continued ...

For anyone still unfamiliar with Camp Freightliner, let's recap the facts:

- Camp Freightliner is a lively, informative two-day education experience created exclusively for FCOC members who own motorhomes equipped with an air-brake system.
- Classes are conducted at the Freightliner Custom Chassis plant in Gaffney, SC.
- Participants get thorough instruction not only in the air-brake system, but also the electrical system, maintenance intervals, weight distribution, vehicle storage and other, related topics.
- A fully functional Freightliner chassis is on hand, so participants can see its features up close and get a better understanding of how those features work.
- Each class is limited to 10 participants, with seating filled on a first-call basis.

To learn more about Camp Freightliner and how to register for a session, visit freightlinerchassis.com. You can also register by calling Mike Cody at (864) 206-8738. If you leave a message, please include your name and phone number as well as the last six digits of your Vehicle Identification Number.

Once you've registered, we'll send you an information packet with details on the training and the actual campground. Not bringing your motorhome? We'll provide rate information for hotels close to the FCCC plant. If you do bring your motorhome and it needs servicing, you can call ahead and schedule the required service to be completed at our plant during the time you're here.

Act now. Camp Freightliner fills up fast, and we would really like you to join us. Past participants will tell you this is a great opportunity to learn about your Freightliner chassis and get the most from it.





THE LEADER AT EVERY TURN™

FRONT ENGINE DIESEL RV CHASSIS

Engine:

Cummins 5.9L Electronic Diesel
300 HP 600 lb-ft Torque
Variable Geometry Turbo-Engine Brake
Leece-Neville 160 AMP Alternator

Transmission:

Allison 2100MH
5 Speed Transmission with Overdrive
Transynd Transmission Fluid
Arens Push Button Shift Selector

Steering:

TRW Infinitely Adjustable Tilt Column
VIP Steering Wheel Optional

Front Axle:

Hendrickson STEERTEK
55 Degree Wheelcut
15" Disc Brakes with ABS
10,000 lb Capacity

Front Suspension:

Hendrickson SOFTEK
Parabolic Springs
10,000 lb Capacity
Custom Tuned Sachs Shocks

Rear Axle:

Axle Alliance Corp.
4.78 Ratio
15" Disc Brakes with ABS
17,500 lb Capacity

Rear Suspension:

Hendrickson 60" Taperleaf Springs
Custom Tuned Sachs Shocks



Frame Rail:

5/16" X 3" X 9-1/8" 50,000 PSI Steel

Fuel Tank:

80 Gallon Between the Rail

Tires:

255/70R 22.5 LRG

Wheel Bases:

228", 242", 246", 250", 252", 260"

Gross Vehicle Weight:

26,000 lbs

Gross Combined Weight:

30,000 lbs

Warranty:

3 Year, 50,000 Miles

Service:

More Than 350 Locations

Help Line:

1-800-FTL-HELP

Chassis Owners Club:

Daimler Chrysler Vehicle Purchase Program
1st Year Free Membership
Discount at Gaffney Service Center





Special Notice for Camp Freightliner.

Mike Cody has agreed to hold additional Camp Freightliner classes for those that would like to attend and stay a few days longer in Tucson. It will be a 2 day class just as usual and will start on march 29th and then on March 31st Usually we would depart on the 29th but in this case those that want to sign up can start the class on the 29th (Wednesday & Thurs) The second class will start on the March 31st and be for 2 days (Fri & Sat.) If you would like to register for this informative class call Mike Cody at Freightliner (864)206-8738 Mike agreed to this so the west coast folks can have an opportunity to attend. The class is open to anyone from FCOC in any location.

The newsletter article explains the class and I will tell you that it is worth the \$100.00 for the time spent and the knowledge obtained.
Remember our club objective "To be better informed more knowledgeable, safer motor home drivers"

To All FCOC members :

It was brought to my attention that a long time member of FCOC has passed. His name is Ed Colburn and he passed away on the 21st of November. Mr. Ed & Ms. Jane made us many of the freightliner badges for us and was instrumental in the design of our badge. Due to health reasons, they sold their business to now Mr. Ken Zillmer, and he offers the same fine service as Mr. Ed.
Let us offer our prayers to Ms. Jane and the family.

Business Meeting :

Please be advised that the business meeting normally held at the FMCA National Convention will not be held in Pomona Ca. The business meeting will be held in Tucson, AZ. at the FCOC rally immediately after the FMCA National Convention. The rally is scheduled for the Beaudry RV Campground from March 25th thru the 29th in Tucson. Reservations are being taken now and will be until the 1st of March. Come join us.



NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the past few months, I have received many notes of encouragement and compliments about our club. From the last 2 good rallies, to the workings of the Daimler Chrysler Re-Wards program to the actual success of the 2 rallies themselves. The comments have been very positive and tells us, the board of directors, that we are doing something right. First, I want to thank those that took the time to write a note to us and second to tell everybody else that this club is a combined effort of all of it's members. As you know it takes a large group of people to put on a rally, and I thank each of you for your loyalty and support in working with the rally masters to have such successes.

This being said about your club, I am asking for your comments and suggestions on how we can do things better. We are approaching a new level of membership and rally attendance, so we need your suggestions and participation with your comments. I have appointed 2 additional people to help bring us to the level I refer to. So to all of you, I ask for your participation and comments. I promise I will respond to you note and each suggestion will be considered.

Now the task is in your hands. Let us know what you would like to see out of your club, or at a rally.

With the many clubs available for you, I thank you for choosing FCOC.

Sincerely
Ken Hawk



More About "A Desert Adventure"

For those who don't know about Tombstone, It is an old west mining town, east of Tucson, that remains much the same as it was 100 years ago. There are street activities, shops, restaurants, and museums. The gunfight at the OK Corral is recreated. Boot Hill Cemetery is part of the charm of the old town, and the bus will run shuttles to see that attraction. We planned to go on Sunday, since there are more activities on weekends.

The tour of the Pima Air and Space Museum will include a visit to the Davis Monthan AMARC facility. At this location, on the Air Force Base, airplanes are placed in storage, and can be made ready to fly, if needed, in record time. There is also a static display of aircraft, and a chance to see where planes are salvaged for parts and also destroyed when they are no longer viable. The tour will be followed by dinner at the museum, in a hanger, under the wings of antique aircraft.

Also The Sheri's Desert Harvest seminar will be held during the Red Hat Society meeting.

Safety Notice:

The facts about safety are sometimes taken for granite. We think, first, that "this won't happen to me". Or even "not in my motorhome" Or even "I'll take care of this warning tomorrow" attitude.

There have been many warnings about the propane being left on while traveling, or I'll check the tires on the next trip. I am not here to tell you what to do in either case, except be ready to accept the consequences if you ignore things like this for a long period of time.

In my mind, I leave at least 30 to 45 minutes before my trip, for just that amount of safety checks before leaving. There are many lists published these days but we get to the point that, they work so well, that we stop using them. My suggestion is to get a list, any list and use it consistently when preparing to depart on a trip. No matter how long of a trip.

On my list I even have a item that says "Kiss Mate" because I know she is about fed up with me sitting in the drivers seat and barking questions about if this is checked, that checked, or is this done? I have a question on my list about the regular antenna as well. Now I know when I put up the antenna then I should put it down, but guess what, sometimes my co-pilot puts up the antenna because the picture is not good or we want to see the local channels. I don't know she has done that. You know what the outcome could be without a checklist. A \$350.00 repair job.

Now for some serious stuff. (As if that is not serious enough) We had 3 bad motorhome fires in the last 3 months. #1 was in a dealer parking lot waiting for repairs when the smoke alarm went off. The pilot went outside to inspect and yes the rear of the motorhome was on fire. Presence of mind and at risk, the pilot got in, started the engine and pulled the motorhome up 60 feet away from other motorhomes and buildings and then proceeded to watch his motor home go up in flames. No one injured and the motorhome is destroyed. #2 In Texas at another location (the details are sketchy) of a fire where the smoke alarm sounded but the occupants could not respond quick enough. A couples' motor home burned to the ground and the wife perished. #3 Another case of electrical malfunction. While parked with the generator running to give a last minute charge before retiring for the night. Just then the lights dim like a short and the pilot goes outside to see if a problem exists. Yes the entire rear end of the coach is on fire. This couple made it out and had a chance to retrieve some important matters, but even this is risky eh??

To summarize with these situations, I would like to say that this is unusual and is not very probable ... but !!! Some thoughts to ponder and add to the check list,

Are the batteries in my smoke alarms and CO2 alarms fresh?? Now's a good time to check, if you have not already done so. Next the big question, "Have we practiced getting out of our coach using the escape hatch in the rear??" because the coach is high up in the air, we have a couple that has a rope ladder for such an emergency.

What are we going to do now???

The old boy-scout motto is "Be Prepared".

To All **"Be Safe"**



RV MAINTENANCE & REPAIR

BRAKES * A/C HEATING
LEVELING JACKS * COMPUTER
DIAGNOSTICS * TUNES-UPS



INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR
REPAIRS * APPLIANCES
GASOLINE OR DIESEL REPAIR

AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY CENTER
FULL SERVICE RV REPAIR

Automotive Technology Center
23650 Kingswood Place Dr.
Kingwood, Texas 77339

Phone: 281-359-4422
FAX: 281-359-1274
Email: NOXCAPP@argolink.net

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Tow Bars Wear Out?

By Mark Penlerick
Engineering Team Leader
Blue Ox Towing Products

This might sound like quite an odd title coming from the leading manufacturer of tow bars and towing equipment in general, but facts are facts and I'm here to give you a few pointers about tow bars, their use, maintenance, setup and even their life span. Since experience is something you don't usually get until just "after" you need it, I hope you will gain some valuable experience from these topics "before" you need it.

The Middle Child

Have you ever heard the adage that the middle child in a family feels left out? Overworked? Under appreciated? Even just plain ignored? You know, big brother gets everything he wants and little sister gets by with everything. I'm sure some of you can relate. The RV, tow bar and towed vehicle are like siblings, and the tow bar; well it's the middle child in most families. Not just because it's between the two vehicles (great memory aid) but also because it too often is left out, ignored and overlooked when it comes to regular maintenance and life span.

A tow bar, any tow bar manufactured by any company is a piece of technology, a piece of machinery, not unlike your motorhome or car, van, truck or SUV that you're towing. Would you drive a 6-figure valued motorhome 10,000 20,000 how about 50,000 miles without checking or changing the oil? Neither would I. Most motorhome owners are so strict with their maintenance routine on their units that they hardly exceed the window of oil changes by more than a few miles if at all. Maintaining a tow bar is just as important and just as potentially costly if ignored.

Know when its "terminal"

Of course as manufacturers we would love to sell each RV'er out there a new tow bar every six months, but consider this; the average RV'er buys or trades their towed vehicle every 2 to 3 years. The average RV'er buys or trades coaches every 5 to 6 years. The problem is the average RV'er still has the same tow bar they started with or at least have owned their current bar longer than one or both of their vehicles. The middle child...neglected again... sigh! The one that does all the work, the one subjected to every bump, stop, start, jerk and unusual occurrence. The one burdened with the responsibility of pulling 3,000-10,000 Lb. "little sister" along everywhere it goes is left to fend for itself and sooner or later will rebel.

Nothing lasts forever. Consumers and dealers/technicians alike should be keenly aware of the condition of older tow bars. I feel it's worth a few hundred dollars every few years to insure that my \$40,000 "little sister" is safe and secure.

Hook-up

Having been to several rallies over the years I've seen some strange hook-ups out there, and even some dangerous ones that I've spoken to the owners about correcting. As a dealer you should take it upon yourself to correct unsafe hook-ups when RV'ers stop by your dealership.

Tow bar angle is probably the easiest one to spot. It seems that since all of us manufacturers have moved the industry into "coupler less" towing i.e. motorhome mounted and stored tow bars...some RV'ers do not feel the angle of the tow bar is important. Our recommendation is no more than 4 inches higher at the motorhome side and absolutely never lower at the motorhome side. If an extension is added for say a bike rack it is even more imperative the tow bar not be at a severe angle. It's all geometry and physics. The farther back you move the pivot point of the tow bar from the rear axle of the coach, the more vertical movement you get and the more leverage is applied to the receiver hitch, tow bar and the base plate.

Inspection

OK, now lets cover some technical items. As with any mechanical device manufactured today, parts wear out. Here are a few critical areas to pay particular attention to while performing a pre-trip inspection or for technicians, things you should be aware of when your customers stop by.

Pins are probably the easiest item to check. Visually inspect that the pins attaching the tow bar to the baseplate are in good condition. Pull them out, feel the surface to insure they are not wearing. Check the operation of the retainer pins that hold the main pins in place. Make sure those still have a good strong resistance when you snap them in place to secure them. Don't forget to check the 5/8 pin that holds the tow bar to the motorhome receiver hitch too. Replacement parts are cheap and I recommend replacing any of these pins if worn. A good rule of thumb is; when in doubt, replace it.

I recommend using only genuine factory replacement parts if some are in need of replacement. Buying bolts or pins from a hardware store does not insure you are getting the proper hardness, metallurgical properties and overall strength required.

Another easy item to check are the bolts. Check to insure all bolts are in place and tight. Move the tow bar through its complete range of motion and verify that it operates smoothly without being too loose or too tight.

Maintenance

Check to insure the legs of collapsible tow bars latch properly and adjust them according to the instructions provided with the unit from the manufacturer. The two biggest contributors to premature wear on tow bar parts are loose bolts, which allow excessive movement between mating parts, and miss-adjusted leg latches, which allow too much for/aft movement while towing.

Some tow bars are equipped with a rubber boot which protects the inside legs from dirt and water. If a tow bar is "sticky" or the legs do not slide in and out easily follow these simple steps. Remove the small cable ties holding the rubber boots on the legs and slide the boots back. Wipe clean each inside leg and apply a light coat of multipurpose grease to insure smooth operation. Secure each boot back in place with an 8-inch nylon cable tie.

Tow bars with exposed legs require a closer watch. Since they are not protected, dirt and road grime can get into the latches and actually cause them not to latch properly.

Conclusion

Now, after saying all that I need to remind everyone that towing a vehicle 4-wheels down is the ultimate way to bring auxiliary transportation with you. It's easy, fun and safe when good judgment is exercised. I hope some of the things I've discussed here make us all think a little about tow bars and the role they play in allowing RVers the ability to "Pursue their Passions".

AMBASSADORS For Freightliner Chassis Owners Club 12/10/2005

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HANKY PANKIES

by Carol Julian

2 pounds mild sausage
1 pound hot sausage
1 box (2 pounds) velveeta cheese
Oregano
Party Rye Bread

Cook sausage and drain
Melt Cheese
Mix cheese and oregano (to suit taste) with cooked sausage
Spread on party rye slices
Bake at 350 F for 15 minutes
Serve while hot or warm

Recipe for the Season !

White Christmas Fudge



- 3 CUPS WHITE CHOCOLATE CHIPS
- 1 (14 OUNCE) CAN SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK
- 1 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT
- 1/8 TEASPOON SALT
- 1/2 CUP CHOPPED PECANS OR WALNUTS
- 1 CUP CHOPPED CANDIED CHERRIES (OPTIONAL)

1. Line an 8 inch square glass dish with wax paper.
2. In a double boiler, melt white chocolate chips with sweetened condensed milk. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla extract, salt, pecans or walnuts and cherries. Spread in prepared dish.
3. Chill 2 or 3 hours. Remove fudge from dish and peel off wax paper. Cut into squares. Store covered at room temperature. Yield 20 to 24 servings.

From the editors of *Taste of the South*.

Preview

HOME COMING RALLY #2

AUG. 18TH 22ND 2006



The Home Coming Rally that was held several years ago was enjoyed by all and our next one will be even better. There will be no need for a travel day for this rally. it is being held in Concord, NC. very close to the location of the FMCA National.

As always we will have a tech day with many interesting seminars being held on Saturday Some tours are planned as well as going to the Freightliner Factory and the new facility plus a BBQ dinner there. Bus transportation will be furnished by Freightliner Corp.

We will have good entertainment and lots of food as always.

This rally will be extended an extra day to make sure we have time to go on the tours and do lots of shopping at the outlet mall. The next newsletter will have the application and the itinerary will be published at that time.



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