

AUTOMATE RV CLUB

NEWSLETTER

Issue # 37 Spring 2012

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Neil Zinn

It's getting on toward Spring Rally time and our annual business meeting. I always look forward to it if for no other reason than learning some more about our rigs. A couple of days before Christmas, Helen and I fetched back our AutoMate from the old factory (now Los Banos RV repair) where it had been in the capable hands of Eddie for a number of weeks (and weeks). The original thought was to get a bunch of preventative maintenance done such as packing the bearings, looking for an air leak, replacing the seal around the bedroom slide out (alluded to in our last newsletter), resealing all seams related to the roof and end caps, installing LED tail lights, etc, etc. Turns out I needed a new roof because of past tears that had been repaired by the previous owner. OUCH! This will take more Euros than I had budgeted for but how do you dispute a new roof?

Now to my point; as I have said before, I love finding out new things about my rig. When they replace the roof, they don't just peel the old one off and glue a new one on. First they replace the plywood that lies below the rubber covering. But guess what? The plywood is a nominal 1/4 inch thick. Certainly not very stout but light in weight. So I say to Eddie, what's the best way to walk on the roof? Don't walk in the center he says, move near the outside walls. So if you are strolling amidships and you feel flexibility below you, it is indeed moving and possibly breaking down. Perhaps you can talk your lightweight grandson up on the roof to do what you need to do or put down some other plywood to sit on and spread the weight.

Also well under way is a new AutoMate trailer. I didn't ask the length but they are busily installing

the interior features on top of the floor before erecting the outside walls. There's also some previously manufactured framing for a fifth wheel stacked in the yard and some non-specific plans for another fifth wheel. One thing is certain and that nothing will be a full custom job as we were used to. Your design options will be limited according to Bill.

As an aside, Eddie has been with Bill since 1992 so he knows what makes AutoMates tick. While I was there, he answered a ton of questions I had; it remains to be seen whether I can remember everything he said. The old "steel trap mind" is a little bit sprung.

At this point, there will be little business to bring before the members at our Spring Rally. If anyone has concerns or something that needs to be on the agenda, please get it in as notice needs to be given to the members.

One item of business is that someone will need to volunteer to serve as rally planner for Spring 2013. Pressure on possible venues from other clubs is such that planning must begin a year in advance or we face the probability of being unable to find a site with a clubhouse and kitchen. Site selection and date of the event is the first duty of the wagon-master /host. The details of planning can come later. To reinforce the importance of this, the wagon-master is allowed to pick the meeting place and the date.

By all means, attend this event. I can guarantee you will learn something new and valuable about your rig unless you are a recluse and never leave your rig to visit with your fellow AutoMate owners. We look forward to enjoying the fruits of Jan and Andy Anderson's work to put this rally together. The club thanks you guys for your work. See you there and maybe in Phoenix at the western Good Sam Rally.

SPRING RALLY 2012

May 3, 4, 5 & 6, 2012

Lodi Grape Festival Fairgrounds in Lodi, CA.

That's right, folks, it's just around the corner so mark your calendars so you don't miss the Spring Rally.

Our rally hosts, Andy & Jan Anderson and their band of helpers have been working to put together a good rally.

Starting with **Thursday night at 5:00 p.m.** we have our Welcoming get together in the hall with **wine, cheese, meats, crackers and a veggie plate for your hors-d'oeuvres** and time to greet old friends before your dinner.

Friday morning Elmer Petersen and his crew will be fixing breakfast.

Friday's dinner will be a **Santa Maria BBQ**, prepared by Andy and Jan Anderson and Ross Stewart.

Saturday breakfast will be handled by Dale and Joleen Clark and Jim and Sharon West.

Saturday afternoon we will have our **member meeting** at a time to be announced at the rally.

Last but not least, **dinner Saturday night** will be **catered by DeVinci Catering.**

Don't miss it, the weather should be dry and clear and the fun and fellowship will be everywhere.

Editor's Note:

As the Newsletter Editor, I was thrilled when Bob sent in his first story for printing, as it meant that I didn't have to come up with all the "stuff" to fill the Newsletter. So I have asked him to type up a story or two about his "fun on the road" if only to give you all a laugh and to let you know that the "RV-ing devil of the road" picks on all of us at one time or another.

And now, the rest of the story...

By Bob Howe

Bad things come in threes they say. In last August's issue I described the happy ending to our broken trailing arm problem. Turned out that was the second mishap during our journey from New England to Florida.

We decided to spend a few days on Cape Hatteras since we enjoyed it so much 15 years ago. Not quite the same anymore; it, like many previously "undiscovered" places, has become a tourist trap. Nevertheless we enjoyed our stay as long as we were in a vehicle sheltered from the ever present mosquitoes.

Not far from the bridge to the mainland, I had to brake hard to avoid a suddenly changed red light. There was a thunk from the rear not unlike that when the coach moves on the hitch. I thought nothing of it, so proceeded on the green light. Within a few hundred

feet smoke was seen from underneath the Automate! Got out looked around and all looked well. Proceeded ahead and then smoke billows again. We pulled off onto a grassy strip where I noticed the front compartment door of the Automate was ajar. Among other things in that storage area WAS a near new Engle 12v portable freezer. It was gone. Nowhere in sight...until I looked under the rig to find it jammed between the axle and the ground, simmering away. That explained the thunk. After a struggle and help from passers by on their way to church we got it dislodged as a piece of thunked junk. The contents were scattered on the road about a mile back still frozen and intact. Mishap number one.

Fast forward to southern Florida two weeks later driving west on the Tamiami Trail through the Big Cypress Swamp when my wife uttered those dreaded words "what's that noise?" Glancing out the driver side window I saw the tell tale signs of blue smoke from a blowout. It's 90 degrees and 90% humidity and hardly a soul on the road. The best choice was to turn around and pull into a campground we just passed. Apparently nobody in their right mind camps here at this time of year. No humans in sight. It's a National Park area which like many others have no cell phone service. No problem, I thought, since we were "prepared" for such eventuality: I carry a 3000 lb floor jack in the bed of the truck. First break the Automate lug nuts. **Right !**. With only a short breaker bar, one of the nuts would not budge. I pull harder...and then I heard a crack and felt a stab of pain in my back. Now things were getting serious. Fortunately our daughter and son in law had been following in their rental car. Good son-in-law finally breaks the nut, jacks up the trailer and off goes the wheel and tire. End of story-**NOT**.

The tire tread had peeled off and wrapped itself around the brake backing plate woefully jammed with all those steel wires sticking out. Use of a hacksaw use proved futile. Now it was time to drive for help. About 10 miles east, my son-in-law and I came upon the small photo gallery of well known photographer Clyde Butcher. Here in the middle of nowhere we found help. They had assisted many a stranded motorist before and happened to have the tools we needed. Armed with enormous bolt cutters and other cutting tools we returned to the Automate where my

son-in-law spent an hour and a half gnawing the jammed tread off with the bolt cutters and put on the spare. Two weeks later we arrived home in San Diego after which I was diagnosed with a compression fracture in my back. The lesson learned is to carry a loong breaker bar for such rare occasions. Push, don't pull on the wrench handle, I also thought in retrospect.



Jammed !

AUTOMATES FOR SALE

1999 33' 5TH WHEEL

2 Slides, Air ride, 100 Fresh water tank, 3-50 gal. gray & black tanks, Hardwood floors, Corian counter tops, free standing dinette, 2 TVs, Auto Sat., 5 disc VCR, exterior shower. Electric steps, window awnings, 20' main awning, slide covers, 15k BTU A/C, 6V deep cycle battery, 2500W inverter-charger, 2 solar panels, 3 power exhaust fans, 5 kw Propane generator, Cast alum. wheels & spare with good rubber, more. No smokers / animals. Asking \$19,000.

Also 1998 4 door Freightliner, 110,000 miles, Cat 275 w/ Allison 6 speed. Air ride suspension, All Alum. 2 1/2" wheels Asking \$22,000

Location of vehicles Valley Springs, N. CA
Contact Ken Davey (209) 772-2827
or cell (209) 304-2063 kdavey15@earthlink.net

2000 28' TRAILER

Air ride suspension, wide body, double insulation, slide out, dual pane tinted windows with day & nite shades, 2.8 kw Onan generator less then 10 hr of use, A&E 9000 awning w/metal cover, aluminum LPG bottles, fluorescent lites, porcelain toilet, TV, DVD, VCR, radio, w/amplifier, 10 C.U.ft. fridge, power vents, outside shower, battery cut off switch, water filtration and many more extras, no pets or smokers, like New Condition in and out. Always stored inside building, towed less than 7000 miles, located in Grass Valley, Ca.

Owners Club members #296

\$16,900 or OBO

Louie or Anna Croce 510-797-3647 or
acroce@sbcglobal.net

2002 33' 5th WHEEL (& TRUCK)

2 Slides, Rear kitchen, Corian countertops, Oak kitchen floor, 2 heaters, 2 Fantastic Fans,, Microwave/hood combo, side by side refrigerator with ice maker. Shower skylight. Light earth tone interior in great condition. No smokers or pets. New custom paint, Hydraulic disc brakes, air bag suspension, air hitch, 17' awning, window awnings, double insulation, independent front power leveling jacks, Roof 2 1/2 yrs old. Bicycle rack for 2 bikes (hitch style). Good Sam Extended Repair Warranty (assumable) Asking \$23,000

TRUCK 2006 Ford 350 SD

Super duty, super cab, long bed, Lariat chrome pkg, 20,600 miles, trailer hitch. 6.8L V-10, power adjustable pedals. Heated exterior mirrors, AM/FM/CD changer audio system, chrome tube style running boards, 5 speed tow haul transmission, heated seats, power sliding rear window, exterior mounted turn signals, limited slip rear differential, 18" wheels. 16K 5th wheel hitch plus 5th wheel tailgate, comes with original tailgate, diamond plate tool box, spray in bed liner, two-tone white & gold with matching pin stripes to match trailer. No smokers or pets. Asking \$23,000

Will sell trailer without truck, BUT not truck without trailer.

Both rigs are in Elk Grove, CA Photos available upon request.

Contact: Dick Larkin (916) 804-3634 or
dmlarkin@frontiernet.net

1996 27' 5th WHEEL

No slides, side kitchen, Oak table & 2 chairs, Chair & sofa in rear. Very open floor plan. 30lb propane tanks, AC, gas/electric water heater. Patio awning. Blinds for window coverings. FANTASTIC fan. Rear reciever for hitch to tow boat, etc. New roof, skylight in bath vent covers approx. 3 yrs. old. No leaks. Good rubber on road & spare. Plenty of storage. Only blemish is roadside decal sun damage. Nice unit for 2 people. No pets or smokers. Low miles, unit has only seen Calif., Oregon (3 x's) & Wash. 1 x. Unit well maintained by only owners. Asking \$5,500 Will include complete 5th wheel hitch if needed. Rig is in Livermore, CA Contact Chuck or Sandy Creevan (AutoMate club # 35) (925) 455-1705

FALL RALLY 2012

Remember to mark your calendar for the Fall Rally

Oct. 4, 5, 6 & 7, 2012

Mother Lode Fairgrounds

220 Southgate Dr. (Off Highway 49)

Sonora, CA 95370

Hosts, Jerry & Pam Richichi will be passing around a sheet for sign ups to help at the Spring Rally.

BUT if you aren't going to make the Spring Rally but plan on being at the Fall Rally and are willing to help, please contact Pam or Jerry at (209) 529-7230 or (209) 404-2959

Remember the more people that sign up to help the smaller the chore becomes.

CLUB DUES

It's that time again. Just as a reminder that the yearly dues for our AutoMate RV Club are **due in April of each year**. While you're thinking of it send your dues in now to continue getting the Newsletters and so to not miss out on all the fun at the rallies. **Please use this coupon when sending in your dues.**

Here is my 2012 dues check in the amount of \$20.00, made out to **The AutoMate RV Club**.

Mail to:
Pam Richichi
25 Schooner Lane
Modesto, CA 95356

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

Email _____

Check here if you can receive your Newsletter by email

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SPRING RALLY REGISTRATION FORM

May 3, 4, 5 & 6, 2012

**Lodi Grape Festival Fairgrounds
413 Lockford St.
Lodi, CA**

Mail to:
Pam Richichi
25 Schooner Lane
Modesto, CA 95356

Cost \$160.00 per rig with 2 persons, \$112.00 per rig with 1 person

Any **extra nights camping** will be **\$25.00 per night & needs to be paid to the AutoMate RV Club**.

Dead line for registration April 18, 2012

Here is my check made out to **AutoMate RV Club** in the amount of _____.

I am also paying for _____ extra nights @ \$25.00 each night.

I will be arriving on (Date)_____ I will be leaving on (Date)_____

There will be _____ people in my rig. I need handicapped parking.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____