

AUTOMATE RV CLUB

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Neil Zinn

Helen and I recently returned from 2 ½ months on the road in our AutoMate and are settling into the old routine. Our travels took us from Sacramento to Alpena, Michigan at the far reach of our trip. Alpena sits on Thunder Bay, on Lake Huron. We never saw another AutoMate on the trip, something unusual for us.

Typically, when I write the opening message for the newsletter, I try to add something in that is instructive to AutoMate owners about their rigs. This item is no exception although my lessons on this trip are generic. Item 1: never let your power cord drape over the side of your pickup loosely, keep the end in your hand. In trying to position the back of the truck with the king pin, our cord slipped off and down between the bumper and the rear of the truck bed. We managed to pull the cord out of the fifth wheel, severing all 7 of the connecting wires. Because the wires were poorly color coded, it took me two hours to put everything back together again. No fun at all. Item 2: make sure you have enough wire connector of the crimp variety in your tool box and the proper crimping tool. (I earned half credit for this). In my case, the original owner must have made the same mistake because the wires showed unmistakable signs of having been repaired once before. After completing repairs, I had a mobile RV repair service look the job over. He had a tool that he plugged the end of the power cord and it lit up correctly, showing I had done the job right. Don't know what that tool was but I am going to have to find one like it. Not happy with one problem, I've been struggling with our portable Wineguard antenna system. Nothing was working and it took a long time to discover that the receiver box was faulty. It's been replaced and now to figure out the wiring system.

It is time to begin thinking about our Fall Rally. I'm sure that in this Newsletter there will be other information on the details, including the sign-up sheet for reservations. I hope everyone can make it because it is always fun and good to get together with old friends. To remind everyone, this is our fun rally. No business to conduct, just enjoy the cool breezes and talk about our summer getaways. Helen and I look forward to seeing you all.

AUTOMATE REPAIRS & UPGRADES

By Ted Martin

As the years come and go our Automates grow a little older and need new care. Our Automate is a vintage 2000, and during the last couple of years, needed repairs and upgrades. Several of you have inquired about what I have done. So the following is kind of a synopsis of the care and feeding of our Automate.

In the summer of 2011, we took a summer trip to Texas and Oklahoma. It was blistering hot in Texas and my left rear tire blew out and took out the fender skirt and a living room slide support. A couple weeks later in Nebraska's high heat, my right rear tire did the same and again took out the fender skirt. We continued home and went to Automate for repairs. Other repairs were also needed: Both of the lids on our roof power fans had cracks and one would actually leak. Additionally the two skylights didn't look too good. The rear window seals were also leaking and the other windows and fittings caulking seals looked dry and cracked. The front cap frequently developed leaks which required frequent inspection and caulking. The decals were checking and peeling. The rubber roof was showing all of its eleven years, and the trim inserts needed replacement. I wanted the running lights replaced with LED's. I had decided to have all the above done at Automate. When I arrived at Los Banos, I saw an Automate with a new paint job. It looked great! It was expensive, but we wanted our Automate to look good for many years to come. A lot of what I came for would be included with the roof replacement and paint. We said yes! We are really happy with the results. Cleaning a painted trailer is much easier than cleaning Gel Coat. One mistake we made was not having the bathroom and hallway vents replaced at the same time. It was overlooked by us and Automate. We did have to replace them in 2014.

Also the center large decal strip installation has numerous flaws, we and Automate should have been more aware at delivery.

As mentioned above I have had tire problems. The trailer was originally equipped with load range "C" Goodyear 225/75R15's. After 2 ballooned tires, 5 tread separations, and 1 blowout, I threw away the Goodyear's (now upgraded to load range "E") and went with "E" tires from Les Swab. In 2011 I had two blow outs, and in 2012 another one, all with the Les Swab tires. Talking with Les Swab and others (including other Automaters) I upgraded in 2013 to 235/85R16 load range "G" wheels. We have taken three trips and so far no problems (knock on wood). However, I had a brake job done at the same time, and the break caliper bolts on the right front came loose and fell out, causing the caliper to fall and break the hydraulics. No brakes! Those bolts have been an Automate problem in the past, so keep checking them for tightness and use lock-tight. In the high heat of Oklahoma in 2007 we had to replace our 2000 Ford F250 Automatic transmission. They (Ford) also added an extra transmission cooler. That extra cooler has caused the fan clutch to operate erratically under heavy loads and/or high heat. It cycles engage/disengage causing the truck to hesitate/lurch every 3-5 seconds or so. It is very irritating. After talking to several mechanics and Automaters (Thanks Mick) I have decided to have two electric 12" cooling fans mounted in front of the radiator. They will be manually controlled by a lighted switch in the cab. Another option was to have a thermal sensor operate them, but I prefer the switch. In addition to the manual switch the fans will turn off with the ignition.

Now back to the brakes. When starting on two trips recently all four brakes locked solid. Nothing but time would unlock them. One mechanic thought that the master cylinder made by Master Brake Systems of Dallas, TX was bad. The company closed several years ago, thus no in kind replacement is available. The latest theory is the break-away switch is intermittently causing the problem, so I have had it replaced and will see what happens.

I have Ed Robinson to thank for the following: Thanks to numerous discussions with Ed, I am going to replace my analog tube TV's with flat screen digitals, which will restore my over-the-air antenna reception. Previously I wired the trailer with a satellite feed by replacing the

telephone/cable jack at the rear of the trailer with a cable/cable jack and running a coax to the entertainment center. Ed also motivated me to replace the air tank bottom plug with a 125 psi relief valve with a pull lanyard to drain moisture collecting in the tank. This means clean moisture free air for the air ride suspension. Thanks again, Ed.

As you have read several times in this article, I have discussed numerous technical issues with Automaters. These technical nut and bolt discussions are invaluable and add greatly to the social aspects of our club!

If any of you would like to comment or ask questions on what I have shared with you, please do so.

Ted & Carole Martin
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2014 FALL RALLY COMING UP

Hi, everybody!

Our Fall Rally is right around the corner- Sept. 25th thru the 28th. With the good Lord willing and the creek don't rise and NO more fires, we'll have our rally this year.

We, your hosts, are inviting one and all to join us and have a grand ole time. Lots of good things planned.

Looking forward to seeing you at the rally because having you all there is what makes our rallies so great!!!

Your Fall Rally hosts,
John & Bette Perry and Jim & Evette Dilley

Just as a reminder to those of you who were at the last Spring Rally and to inform those of you that couldn't be there. The attending members voted to change the wording of ARTICLE 3, MEMBERS, of our By-laws to read as follows.

All current and former owners of AutoMate recreational vehicles **and sponsored guest owners of a recreational vehicle** shall be eligible for membership upon payment of annual dues.

So what that means is, if you have friends that do not now own an AutoMate or have never owned an AutoMate, but you have always wanted to do more camping with them, now is the time to invite them to join. Start by inviting them to the Fall Rally or to any of our upcoming rallies. Let them come see what fun we have and the bargain they get for the

price of the rally. Think of it, welcoming social, 2 breakfasts, 2 dinners, fun and games and 3 nights camping, all for 1 low price.

SPRING RALLY 2015

The Spring Rally 2015 will be held at the Lodi Grape Festival Grounds. The date will be **May 14, 15, 16 & 17, 2015**. As was reported in the last Newsletter, the Lodi Festival Grounds did not carry over our reservations from when they were made so Mick & Judy Serra had to go with the first available open weekend. They have been putting together their committee and are looking forward to you all coming and enjoying the weekend. Remember the Spring Rally is when we have our annual meeting and elections, the offices of President and Treasurer will up for election.

SAD LOSS

After a short illness, Lynn Spurr lost his battle and left this world on Friday, Aug. 8, 2014.

Lynn and Gretta joined our club in 2008 and have been to several rallies making fast friends with several of our other members. They just celebrated their 45th anniversary in April. Lynn loved traveling in general and really loved going around the states in their RV visiting friends, old and new. He will be missed by all who knew him.



FALL RALLY REGISTRATION FORM
Sept. 25, 26, 27 & 28, 2014
Motherlode Fairgrounds
220 Southgate Dr. (off Highway 49)
Sonora, CA

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

Cost \$150.00 per rig with 2 persons \$125.00 per rig with 1 person

Any extra nights camping will be \$20.00 per night & needs to be paid to the AutoMate RV Club.
(If you pay the Fairgrounds directly, you will not get the group rate.)

Dead line for registration Sept 16, 2014

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

I am also paying for _____ extra nights @ \$20.00 each night.

I will be arriving on _____ I will be leaving on _____

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

Name(s) _____

Address _____

_____ Phone _____

e-mail _____

For those of you that are not yet members, please fill in the following information.

We are not members but are the guests of (member name) _____

Please remember to bring hors d'oeuvre to share for 8-10 people Thursday social.

**There will be a WHITE ELEPHANT gift exchange on Sat. night.
Please bring a new (\$10.00 limit) or "slightly used" wrapped gift to participate.**