

Dear Friends & Relatives,

When we sent you news of the great RV escape via our 2004 Christmas letter, we thought we would follow up about once a month. Little did we know how hard we would be working in order to make the escape possible. We apologize for the delay. Some of you have been writing to see if we are okay and if we got away. So here is the latest.

Our first piece of news is that getting an RV in the winter and then staying in the mountains with rain and snow is not the best strategy. We're still in Trinity County and, although the motor home is very nice, we long to hit the road and go somewhere where we can bar-b-que outside and walk Annika on the beach.

11/17 - 11/19/2004 Our first trip after picking the motor home up in Coburg, Oregon, was to go to DeMartini RV in Grass Valley, California, and have a television satellite system installed. We selected an S-3 KVH system because it can be programmed with a laptop computer. If you don't like the satellite service you've chosen, you can program in another one. This is an automatic system and with the push of a button, it will go find your satellite. It can also be upgraded to track the satellite while you're moving and it can be upgraded to receive Internet service. We did not take these two options as they were very pricey. All in all, the system works well, but because of its small size, it doesn't have the power to bust through rain clouds the way a larger dish on a home can do. We do recommend this system.

On the way, we spent the night at Colusa Indian Casino. We love this little casino. On Wednesday nights they have the best seafood buffet for your dollar that you could ever hope to find. Free RV parking and great food.

12/21 - 12/30/2004 This entire trip saw terrible weather. We had rain, hail, snow, and high winds. Not a lot of fun for a novice motor home pilot, but technically rewarding.

Our first destination was Camping World in Cordelia, California. At Camping World, we had minor modifications made to one of our basement storage bays to allow us to add another 4 deep cycle house batteries. That brings our total to 8 in addition to the 2 regular batteries used to start the engine. Some of you may ask why we need so many batteries and Chuck will cover that issue in another newsletter.

Our next major destination was the Elks parking lot in Walnut Creek, California, so as to spend Christmas with Chuck's cousins, Paul and Ellie. If it had not been for the Elks, we would have never found a place to park in the Walnut Creek/Concord area. Since that time, Chuck has become an Elk in the Red Bluff Lodge. Chuck is also a Moose, so between the Elks and the Moose, we have many welcome places to stay across the United States.

We next rolled South to RV Lifts of America in Watsonville, California. Here we had a very strong, but detachable, motorcycle lift installed. It is also set up to tow a car or small truck, 4 wheels down, behind the lift. This now gives us the ability to put our motorcycle on the back of the motor home. It also gives us the option of carrying the motorcycle and pulling a car. After the install, we hoped to head South, but the wind

and rain were so bad we went inland and North ending up in a Sears parking lot in Mountain View, California. A very nice Mountain View couple took us out to dinner and it became a lovely evening in spite of the surroundings.

Heading home, we stopped for the night at Cache Creek Indian Casino West of Williams. Out in the middle of nowhere is this very large and opulent casino and hotel. It looks like it came from Vegas and was transplanted into the middle of farm land. Very strange indeed. Very nice, but also rather expensive. (Free RV parking.) Leaving the next morning, we got an important RV lesson. As we rolled out of the parking lot at just a few miles per hour, Donna yelled, "Stop." Chuck had not seen a car coming down the narrow road. The fast stop caused our kitchen cabinets to open and the coach was showered with our dishware. It was ugly and scary. It became obvious that if we ever had any kind of a mild collision, we'd probably be killed by our own dishes.

Because our coach has a side aisle, our kitchen cabinets face the front of the coach, as opposed to the usual arrangement of facing the side. The side aisle has the benefit of a nicer kitchen and a nicer bathroom, but little did we know of the dish hazzard. Having cabinets open had never occurred to us as every drawer and every cabinet in our Lance truck camper had positive locks to prevent this possibility. At first, we were outraged at Monaco for building such dangerous cabinets. After further research, we are outraged at the whole RV industry. We have not found any manufacturer of trailers, fifth wheels, or motor homes that have positive locks. It's unbelievable that whether you spend \$100,000 for a motor home or \$500,000, you still get ineffective friction locks that will open in a hard stop, a bad bump, or a collision. We are now investigating all kinds of locks to positively secure cabinets and drawers while the motor home is in motion.

Our last stop before heading home was an overnight stay at Red Bluff RV Park. Very nice, and only a block to the Green Barn bar and restaurant which is also very nice.

3/26 - 3/28/2005 This was supposed to be a quick trip to exercise the motor home. Monaco recommends driving 20 miles or more every two weeks to keep everything functioning properly. So on Saturday afternoon, we drove to the Moose Lodge in Lewiston, California, and stayed overnight. We had dinner and breakfast with the Moose and then made a loop around Lewiston Lake and ended up back at Donna's office in Weaverville to write this progress report. However, writing to you about RVing got us all excited and at the end of the day we couldn't bear to go "home" to the RV park. So, we went back to Lewiston Lake and found a lovely spot to park in Ackerman National Park Campground. Ackerman is a large campground with 66 spaces. All have BBQs and picnic tables. No hookups at the sites, but there is water, a dump station, garbage dumpsters, and bathrooms. All in all, a darn good deal particularly if you have a Golden Age Passport which gets you into all National parks at half price.

GOLDEN AGE PASSPORT

The Golden Age Passport is available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents who are age 62 or older. There is a one-time charge of \$10, but the pass is good for life. It provides free entrance to most federal recreation areas and provides a 50% discount on use fees, such as camping fees.

THE FUTURE.

Donna is, of course, still up to her ears in taxes. Chuck is still busy modifying and improving the motor home and an enclosed trailer that we can, if we wish, pull behind the motor home. We have sold our car and our truck camper, but still have 3 storage sheds of stuff to liquidate. We expect that our first major trip will start about the middle of May and last about 5 weeks. We will be touring Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

Well, we hope our next report will be shorter, but this is the format. We expect to report on destinations both good and bad and to offer technical and equipment insights as well. Perhaps boring

to some, but may be of interest to RV enthusiasts.

COMING EVENTS.

We are registered and going to two upcoming major RV events which might interest you.

Life on Wheels Conference, Moscow, Idaho, June 27 - July 1. For more information, go to:
www.lifeonwheels.com

Great North American RV Rally, Redmond, Oregon, July 11 - July 14. www.rv.net/rally

'Till next time,

Chuck & Donna

catsdogs713@hotmail.com

(530) 524-5020

PMB 7202, PO Box 779
La Pine, OR 97739-0779