



March 2006
Number 47

INSIDE:

LETTERS

COACH TALK

- CELL PHONE BATTERY LONGEVITY
- DIGITAL VS. ANALOG
- BRAKE BOOSTER REPLACEMENT
- 1973 – 1976
- 1977 – 1978
- BRAKE FAILURE
- FORD HIGH PERFORMANCE DOT 3 BRAKE FLUID
- HVAC PROBLEM
- HVAC CONTROL VACUUM
- 12-VOLT DC VACUUM PUMP
- PERIODIC MAINTENANCE
- TEMPERATURE VS. PRESSURE
- GAY LUSSAC'S LAW

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

THE CHRISTMAS PRESENT

by William C. Anderson

One would not normally opt to spend Christmas in a western Kansas prairie smack in the middle of nowhere. However, in a freak accident, a pheasant had tried to mate with Rocinante's windshield at a closing speed of about Mach 1, and before Dortha knew it, she had received her first serving of pheasant under glass. So, instead of heading east for a jubilant Yuletide get together with family and friends, we found ourselves stranded in the remote vicinage of Oakley, Kansas, awaiting the shipment of a windshield replacement.

Everyone in Kansas must go to the Bahamas in December, as there are no RV parks open. After spotting several motorhomes parked in a trailer court, we checked it out and found we could park there if we didn't need any hookups other than electric. We lost no time reining our battered beast into the trailer court and putting on her oat bag.

Always making the best of a situation, Dortha decided that since it looked like we would not be near the ones we loved at Christmas, we should love the ones we were near. In no time at all my roommate had launched into lifetime friendships with the RVers on each side of us.

We admired a chilly kaleidoscopic Kansas sunset with a couple of vagabonds in their 80s who hailed from Wisconsin, and a widower from Nevada who was traveling in a small Ford camper with four dogs, three cats and a very nervous parakeet. "There are times," says the Nevadan, "when I even wish I had my wife back."

But we both fell in love with the chipper octogenarians who were celebrating the occasion of just turning 100,000 miles on the odometer of their GMC Motorhome.

"We don't need much of an excuse to bust out the lemonade," giggles Maggie Simpson, a lively little sparrow. "Course Homer always adds a dash of sour mash to his when no one's looking."

"That's a lot of miles on a motorhome," I say, admiring the well-maintained coach.

Maggie pooh-poohs the thought with a wave of

her hand. "Pshaw, it's nothing. This is our second roving home. Would you believe that we ran the wheels right off a Holiday Rambler trailer before we traded up to this motorhome?"

"Really?" says Dortha.

"That's right," says Homer. "Had a couple hundred thousand miles on her when we traded her in. You might say we sorta pioneered this way of life."

"It all started," says Maggie, "when I retired from my teaching job and Homer retired from the railroad. Well, we found out you can only do so much rockin' on the front porch without going batty. So we decided there must be more to life than just rockin' into the hereafter. That's when we got the idea. Sold the house, and we've been roaming ever since."

I studied the faces of the travelers. The march of time had left footprints on their features, but their eyes were clear and sharp and their faculties unimpaired. "I would say this way of life has certainly agreed with you both."

Homer adds, "Hell's bells, we've never felt better. You know what causes senility and old age? It ain't the clock. It's boredom. Rust. We just don't have time to get bored." He pointed to his coach. "If it weren't for old Betsy here, we'd been angleworm chow a long time ago."

"Land sakes, I guess," says Maggie. "Nobody enjoys life more than we do. We have a bushel of grandkids scattered around the country that we have to keep tabs on. And Homer likes to fish. If he finds a good hole, we're likely to take root in one place for a week. I'm a rock hound, so while he's fishing I'm hunting for rocks."

"That's marvelous," says Dortha.

"Yep," adds Homer, "Betsy's paid for. We eat a lot of the fish I catch. We go out into the fields and pick fruit and vegetables during the season, and Maggie cans 'em. We each get a little retirement pay from our jobs, and along with Social Security we don't even have to dip into our nest egg. Fact is,

Continued on Page 9