



A publication dedicated to the preservation of a classic and timeless vehicle

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PETE THE PIEPERSON

by Walt Sener

In the good old days, people would greet vendors with a friendly smile. The iceman, postman, milkman and breadman were typical. Gender never seemed to be an issue. Firemen responded promptly, policemen were ever present, and an endless list of servicemen were available to solve daily problems, including those related to the GMC Motorhome.

Point in fact. A service manager in Billings, Montana confirmed my suspicion that a “clicking” constant velocity (CV) joint needed to be replaced. Since all the service bays were busy, he suggested that new components be obtained from the parts counter in the interim. At lunch break, a mechanic would probably be available.

A courteous partsperson identified the GMC Motorhome part number by gazing at a spot on the ceiling. She also suggested a replacement dust cover, citing a different GMC Motorhome part number from the same mysterious source. How did she know? It seems there had been several intensive GMC Motorhome parts seminars, and she had retained the vital group categories of information. Besides, spares were usually in stock.

While waiting, I became fascinated by one mechanic whose sole responsibility was to perform lube, oil and filter (LOF) service...in thirty minutes flat! This, coincidentally, was the same mechanic who, with a sandwich in one hand and borrowed tools in the other, asked me to park my motorhome outside his LOF bay so the CV joint could be replaced. With considerable mental reservation, I complied. The CV joint was installed, the sandwich consumed, a soda swallowed and the wheel jack removed all during lunch break!

Fortunate survivors of World War II came home instilled with a deep sense of discipline, camaraderie and need for recognition. To fulfill this need, practically every fire department in the nation found an excuse for uniformed members to engage in parade competition with other fire companies. Musicians, not unlike Presidents, are

born egotists and are easily induced to provide melodious cadence for any parade. Instead of polishing fire equipment for the next parade, musicians polish technique with a local band, which is most often in dire need of replacement uniforms. Some method must be employed to raise funds. Well, how about selling pies?

Accordingly, the pie committee promptly appointed the (only) member with a motorhome — and his muscular friend Pete — to “fetch” freshly-baked Shoofly pies from a bakery located where else...near Paradise, Pennsylvania. Each pie was sealed in a pie box. There were eight boxes in each two-cubic-foot shipping carton. Weight was estimated at thirty-two pounds per carton. At this point a quick weight and balance computation seemed to be in order. After all, we had promised to pick up two hundred and seventy-two Shoofly pies!

In true GMC Motorhome fashion, four cartons were stashed under the bed, sixteen cartons on top of the bed, two under the (now converted) dinette, eight on top of the dinette bed, two stacked between the barrel chairs, and sixteen individual pie boxes carefully nested on the (clean) floor of the shower.

There were a number of sobering and nostalgic moments experienced on our return journey. First, the motorhome smelled like a bakery — for weeks! Second, the floor of the motorhome was startlingly close to the ground at the entrance door. Third, on the way to the “cockpit,” I was reminded of numerous uphill treks to the “office” of a Douglas DC-3 aircraft. Forward vision was now well above the horizon, and the rear-view mirror revealed approximately sixteen square feet of parking-lot asphalt.

There was a slight rise at the access of our busy highway. At an opportune moment, we expedited our entrance into traffic, and burned rubber for fifty yards before the front wheels finally settled to

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