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## REALLY ROUGHING IT

by William C. Anderson

Big Red and I think that state campgrounds are nifty because they've got lots of trees. And trees are nifty 'cause when you find a couple close together you can hang a hammock between them. And hammocks are nifty 'cause you can lie in one with a good book and a jar of grape squeezings and toast the sunset in regal splendor while watching the spouse wash the motorhome.

Recently in one of our favorite campgrounds I was thus employed, happily hammocking away, when my reverie was shattered by the low growl of a diesel that could only have come from an Amtrak locomotive. Half expecting to see the Sunset Limited chugging through, I laid down my book to see a sight equally as disturbing. A motorhome roughly the size of Shea Stadium was backing into the campsite next door.

The maneuver was being beautifully orchestrated by a healthy young damsel wearing a black leather outfit that could only have been donned with a shoehorn. Standing in front of the video camera that commanded the rear of the coach, she skillfully guided the driver into the spot, using body language one seldom associates with the plugging in of a motorhome.

With the motorhome precisely positioned, she slid her forefinger across her throat and the driver dutifully chopped the engine. She spotted me, gave a friendly wave, then skipped around the coach to disappear inside. A whirring noise punctured the silence, then levelers extended from the motorhome's nether regions to level it fore and aft. This was followed by a pneumatic thump as room extenders began blossoming from both sides of the unit. It quickly assumed dimensions that could easily hangar a dirigible.

Another whirring noise issued from the roof where a satellite dish was rising like a phoenix from the ashes. The automatic satellite-seeking system made several bracketing maneuvers, then locked on to the orbiting satellite that would provide crystal-clear reception to the televisions below.

As I watched in bemusement, a very large man dismounted, then walked slowly around the motorhome, checking things out. Spotting me, he came over to my hammock and introduced himself. "Hi, neighbor." My hand was gripped in a heavy-duty vise disguised as a fist. "Name's Harry Throckmorton."

With some difficulty I extracted myself from the hammock, retrieved my mangled fingers and said, "Andy Anderson. Nice to know you."

"Nice spot you got here, Andy."

"Thank you. We like it." I noticed he was wearing a bulky survival vest, not unlike the type worn by jet pilots in combat. "It's none of my business, Harry, but wouldn't it have been easier to plug in your sewer hose before extending your slide-outs?"

"Sewer hose?" He chuckled. "You're living in the dark ages, Andy. This motorhome is equipped with the state-of-the-art Incinolet."

"Incinolet? I don't believe I'm familiar with..."

"Greatest RV john ever invented. No germs or liquids to worry about. Uses toilet-bowl liners. After heeding nature's nudge, you push a button. The paper liner and waste drop into a chamber where the works is zapped with a heating element that incinerates everything. You just empty the ashes every week or so. No smell, no muss, no fuss."

"But how about gray water? Surely..."

"Gray water's nothing but soap suds. Soap's made out of the same ingredients as fertilizer. I just find a spot that needs to be fertilized, and let fly. Environmentalists love me."

"But with all those electrical gadgets, don't you use an awful lot of juice?"

"Yep. I'm an engineer. Designed this motorhome myself. See my roof? One huge solar panel. And I carry more batteries than a submarine. Have a nice 10-kw generator I crank up when Minerva uses the treadmill. That's what she's doing now."

"You have a treadmill? When you have this beautiful forest campground to hike around in?"

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