

April 2017

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To succeed in life, you need three things: a wishbone, a backbone and a funny bone.

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People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do.  
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My favorite things in life don't cost any money. It's really clear that the most precious resource we all have is TIME.



## Ways to Keep Your RV Secure This Camping Season

By Julie T

Security is also a good thing to keep in mind with your RV, just as with your home or car. It's important to take precautions against theft and other types of crime, both during travel and while your RV is in storage. It's always best to be prepared, especially if you are in an unfamiliar area. There are several steps you can take to help protect your family and your belongings. After all, owning an RV is a big investment, and you'll want to do everything you can to protect it. This will give you greater confidence and peace of mind during your travels this camping season.

Locks are the most basic way to keep out potential thieves, as they are more inclined to go for something that's left open, or is easy to break into. Installing deadbolts on each door and

other appropriate locks on all of the storage compartments will go a long way toward keeping your belongings secure. You should switch the locks on the RV and storage compartments so they are not standardized. The CH751 is the standard key used for RV storage compartments. The Combi-Cam lock can be retrofitted into most compartment cam locks. It features keyless entry, with 1000 possible numerical combinations. Other types of available locks include electric door locks with a keyless entry. There are also security cables and locking cargo trays that can secure anything you have stored outside your RV. Vehicle & trailer theft, while improbable, is still a possibility. A trailer coupler lock, like the Fastway Universal Coupler Lock, will help keep your trailer safe from drive-away theft. Parking boots on tires will also prevent someone from stealing your vehicle.

Using a security system gives you a similar stronghold to the security system you may have at home. The CL-4001 WiFi Surveillance System from Pilot Automotive allows you to keep an eye on what's going on around your RV even when you aren't there. It uses a 32GB Micro SD & the GuardCam app to link to your smartphone or tablet, as long as they are on the same WiFi network. The camera has pan & tilt options, and gives you a 720p resolution. A microphone feature allows you to hear as well as see what's going on.

When coupled with a security system, lighting can offer the same increased safety for RVs as it can for homes & businesses. For example, a motion sensor light mounted near the door will help deter any potential criminals. It can also function much like a porch light at home, making it easier & safer for you to climb stairs or open your entry door. The motion sensor feature saves energy by only coming on when it's needed. The Smart Lights Motion Sensor Porch Light is one such example. It stays off during the day, and at night can be set to remain on or only come on when motion is detected. Spotlights and path lights can take this tactic even further by illuminating a larger area. An RV with security lighting also gives the impression that the RV is occupied.

Of course there are other basic things you can do to increase security. For example, when you park your RV or trailer, don't make it easy for someone to come along and drive off with it. Potential thieves are usually looking for the easiest & quickest way to take something, and are usually deterred if they have to put effort into it. Just like with a car, you'll want to make sure anything valuable is stored away, and not visible from the outside. It's also a good idea to store expensive items in other places besides the outside storage compartments. An outdoor set-up should not be left unattended. Being around other people at a campground also provides more safety than parking your motorhome in a spot that's separated and hidden from everyone else.

Also be aware of the campground's surroundings, make sure it is in a safe area.

# Boondock for the love of RV sunsets

By Dave Helgeson

RVers boondock for a variety of reasons. Some for the cost savings, others for the solitude, some for the freedom, many like myself would say yes to all these plus many other reasons.

One of my favorite things about boondocking is unadulterated sunrises and sunsets. In the boondocks there are no power lines, buildings or street lights to spoil your view of a glorious sunrise or sunset. Since you have no neighbors, you are free to throw open your window blinds and let the morning sun stream into your RV, even if you are just wearing your pajamas or less.

Click here to watch the awesome desert sunset I captured while boondocking with my brother and his wife near Joshua Tree National Park. This area is on the road between New and Old Dale, California, a historic mining district with many ruins to explore. You can spend a day with your Jeep, ATV or dirt bike exploring the area directly from your campsite.

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## Top 10 RV Destinations 2017

If you live or travel in an RV, you have far more freedom than other travelers. You can take any road you want, go as fast or slow as you want (within legal limits of course), spend the night just about anywhere you want and more. This freedom allows you to go and see virtually

everything but deciding what to see can be a challenge. Here is a list of awesome destinations that you and other RVers can go see. Let us know in the comment section which ones you have been to and if your favorite spot is not listed, let us know what it is.

1. **Yellowstone National Park**

Oh my gosh! Yellowstone, the flagship of the National Park system! See Old Faithful, amazing wildlife, stunning geological formations and much, much more. Lots of great campgrounds in and around the park but you may want to make reservations if during the peak season.

2. **Grand Canyon National Park**

It is what it is... a chasm 277 miles long and up to 18 miles wide. It was formed by the Colorado River which flows through the canyon. Check for campgrounds or boondocking locations in the area of the park you plan to visit.

3. **Redwood National Park**

Most visitors know Redwood National and State Parks as home to the world's tallest trees, icons that inspire visions of mist-laden primeval forests bordering crystal-clear streams. But did you know that the parks also protect vast prairies, oak woodlands, and nearly 40 miles of wild coastline, all of which support a rich mosaic of wildlife diversity and cultural traditions? Definitely a must see!

4. **Crater Lake National Park**

No place else on earth combines a deep, pure lake, so blue in color; sheer surrounding cliffs, almost two thousand feet high; two picturesque islands; and a violent volcanic past. It is a place of immeasurable beauty.

5. **Colonial Williamsburg**

The Historic Area of Colonial Williamsburg stretches over 301 acres, and includes 88 original 18th-century structures. Hundreds of houses, shops and public outbuildings are reconstructed on their original foundations. Some buildings are open to the public, while others are private residences and administrative offices. A flag at a building's entrance indicates that the site is open.

6. **Blue Ridge Parkway**

Outstanding scenery and recreational opportunities make the Blue Ridge Parkway one of the most visited sections of the National Park System. Split-rail fences, old farmsteads, mountain meadows and scenic overlooks with endless vistas make the Blue Ridge Parkway a popular attraction. The Parkway incorporates numerous campgrounds, picnic areas and trails.

7. **Mount Rushmore National Memorial**

Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a sculpture carved into the granite face of

Mount Rushmore near Keystone, South Dakota, in the United States. Mount Rushmore features 60-foot sculptures of the heads of former United States presidents (in order from left to right) George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. The entire memorial covers 1,278.45 acres and is 5,725 feet above sea level.

8. **Arches National Park**

Arches National Park preserves over 2,000 natural sandstone arches, like the world-famous Delicate Arch, as well as many other unusual rock formations. In some areas, the forces of nature have exposed millions of years of geologic history. The extraordinary features of the park create a landscape of contrasting colors, landforms and textures that is unlike any other in the world. Camping information is available [here](#).

9. **Rapid City, South Dakota**

There are so many things to see and do in and around Rapid City, it would take several paragraphs to mention them. The obvious things are Badlands National Park, Mount Rushmore, Dinosaur Park, Bear Country USA, Custer State Park, Devils Tower, Wind Cave National Park and more! If you want to see a whole lot and only go one place, Rapid City, SD is the destination you should set.

10. **Fall Foliage Tour**

Every autumn, nature puts on a brilliant show of color in many parts of the United States. From bright yellows to vibrant reds, the leaves transform, showing their rich and vibrant hues. From the Northeast United States, to the Southeast and Midwest United States, the foliage season begins in early September in the northern regions and ends in southern locations in late October or early November. Every year, people flock to these areas to take in the fall foliage, to catch a glimpse of nature's splendor.

## **Top 10 Reasons To Live In An RV 2017**

Cheap RV living is a valid way of life. Living in your RV or van doesn't mean you are a creepy old man trying to seduce children with free candy, it means you are choosing a life of freedom. You are free from the confines of a house, free from taxes and HOA fees, free to live where and how you want. Don't let other people influence your choice to be free, they are simply too afraid to do what you are considering (or already doing). Here are some of the best reasons to give up the old stick-n-bricks house and live in your van or RV...

1. **If you don't like your neighbors, moving is easy.**

Is it me, or do I see more and more cases on Judge Judy involving disgruntled neighbors? If you have a house and a horrible neighbor moves in next door, your

choices are quite limited as to what you can do about it. If you live in an RV, ask the park manager for a different spot... or if you are there on a day to day basis, move to another park. Ah, ain't the simple life just grand?

2. **Get a million dollar view for about \$25 a night.**

Imagine watching the sun set over the Grand Teton Mountains, or watching elk and buffalo grazing in your front yard. There are RV parks just about anywhere you would want to go and often times the prices are quite reasonable. I can't fathom what a house with a view would cost in some of our nation's most scenic places. And if you bought a house, you might want to re-read number 1.

3. **No yard to take care of!**

There is no snow to shovel, no leaves to rake, no grass to mow, no watering, no fertilizing, no weed eating, etc. Doesn't that sound wonderful? Well, it is!

4. **Run from or follow the weather.**

Hate cold weather? Go south for the winter. Hate hot weather, go north or up (in elevation, that is). They call them Winter Texans in Texas and Snowbirds in Florida. You can be either or neither. A hurricane headed your way? Hook that camper up and move out of the way. You can't do that in a house.

5. **You can make new friends everywhere you go.**

Campers are a friendly bunch of people, generally speaking. You can make some really great friends in every park or campground you stay at. We met some folks in a Tennessee campground and actually parked next to them again a year later in Texas. And it is easy to keep in touch if you have an RV Number.

6. **Less is more.**

Having less stuff means having less to worry about, less to maintain and less to keep up with. Is it so much nicer to have everything you own with you and have it all be as mobile as you are.

7. **You get to see more.**

Since your home is mobile, you can go to anywhere you like. Ride the Blue Ridge Parkway, get your kicks on Route 66, drive the Pacific Coast Highway and stop as often as you like, stay as long as you like and enjoy the RV life.

8. **There is less to clean.**

Less space means less space to clean. And having less to clean means less time spent cleaning. Most people hate cleaning but it is something that has to be done. Would you rather spend hours or days cleaning a house or about 30-45 minutes cleaning an RV? And remember, if you clean as you go then it doesn't pile up. And if you don't make a mess, then you don't have it to clean up.

9. **Your pet loves RVing just as much as you do.**

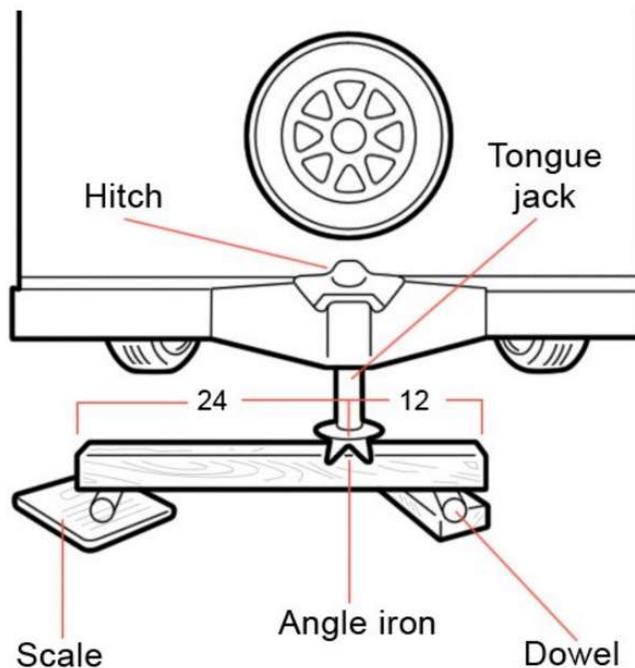
Yep, good ol' Fido or Fifi will spend hours gazing out the front window as you travel. He/she will love experiencing new sights and new smells at every campground and your pet will bond with you more than ever. That being said, get one that will live a long time because losing a pet is very hard on you. If you do lose a pet, the best remedy is to immediately get a new one!

#### 10. It is generally cheaper to live in an RV.

If you are currently living in a house, condo or apartment, you can afford to live in an RV. And you can probably do it for less than what you are currently paying. Consider buying a used RV, it is not necessary to have a Class A motorhome and the longer you stay in one spot, the cheaper it is. And if you are really frugal, just know a lot of people live in vans full time!

## Checking tongue weight at home

Adjusting the tongue weight of your trailer is critical to good handling. It should be between 10% and 15% of the trailer's full-up weight. You can easily trim it by shifting cargo fore and aft on the trailer. You can easily check your tongue weight when you measure the weight of the laden trailer by simply moving the trailer forward a few feet on the scale platform until the trailer jack is on the ground, and weighing a second time; just subtract the second weight slip from the first. That's your tongue weight.



Setting tongue weight is critical enough that you should check it anytime the loadout of your trailer changes significantly. It's easy enough to do, just drop the tongue jack onto a scale, and read the weight directly. Is your trailer heavy enough that you have too much tongue weight for your bathroom scales? Try this: Be sure the trailer is on flat, level ground. Block both wheels on the trailer. Set the scale, and a piece of lumber the same thickness as the scale, three feet apart on either side of your trailer jack. Put a piece of pipe, round dowel or even a piece of angle iron, angle up, exactly three feet apart, centered on the wood and the scale.

Now lay a piece of 4x4 across the top of the pipe/angle iron. Measure one foot across the 4x4 from the wood, two feet from the scale, and lay another piece of pipe right there.

Zero out the scale. Put the foot of your tongue on this pipe; you may need to remove the caster on the jack if you have one. Now multiply the reading on the scale by three for your tongue weight. This should let you set tongue weight for a trailer as heavy as 9,000 lbs. For an

even heavier trailer, put the scale 4 feet from the wood and 3 feet from the tongue jack, and multiply by four instead of three.

## Summer RV Trip Planning

With winter behind us and the busy travel season fast approaching, I know a lot of RVers are starting to think about where they are going to go this summer. So today I thought I would talk a little bit about RV trip planning.

There are many ways to plan your RV travels. Some people I know spend days going over routes, making lists of attractions they want to see on the way, creating schedules, making reservations, even planning where they are going to stop for fuel along the way. It works for them, but I don't need that much organization my life.

There are people who take that to an extreme. We've known at least two fulltime couples who always had a year's worth of reservations made in advance. They both said they just needed the security of knowing there would be a place for them to stay wherever they were. The husband of one of those couples went so far as to have two-week reservations made and paid for in advance for the next 52 weeks at all times. Once they arrived at a destination for their two week stay, he immediately made another reservation to tack onto the end of their schedule. Twice that we know of they ran into unexpected delays because of mechanical breakdowns and didn't get to the next stop when expected. So instead of just staying 12 days instead of the planned 14 to make up for the time they were in the shop, he would go through their schedule and start canceling and changing reservations until he was back on his two week stay schedule everywhere they went. Seriously, what fun could that be? Apparently not much, because they lasted less than a year and got off the road. His stress level was so high worrying about every little thing that could possibly happen to mess up their schedule that he was having chest pains, his blood pressure had skyrocketed, and his stomach was constantly knotted up.

Just as bad are the people who are in what I call "get there" mode. They leave wherever they are and head for their destination, never slowing down along the way. No stops to sightsee, no leisurely evenings or mornings, they get up, they drive 300 or 400, or even more miles per day, stop and sleep, and get up and do it all over again the next day until they get where they are going. That can be a real grind. I know because when we were teaching at Life on Wheels and working RV rallies and all of that, or when we had to get to a printer to get a new issue of the Gypsy Journal ready to go, back when we had the printed edition, we did that far too many times. Sometimes it's just unavoidable if you are working RVers. More than once we've wrapped up an RV rally on a Sunday, packed our vendor booth and seminar equipment, and were setting up at another rally 700 miles away on Wednesday. I'm sure glad those days are behind us!

And then there are others who are more laid-back about things. They know where they are going to go, they know which route they are going to take, when they are going to leave, and they know when they plan to arrive, and that's about it. They build a little buffer room into their schedule for unexpected delays, or unanticipated opportunities to check out something new along the way. I would say this is probably close to a majority of the RVers we have met, to one extent or another.

A great category to be in are those that know they are going to be someplace during the month of June, for example, and they may even have reservations if it's a busy destination. But they are in no hurry to get there. If they see something interesting along the way they may stay a day or two, or a week. If they bump into friends and decide to hang out with them for a while, their schedule is flexible enough that they can do so. Once we stopped chasing the RV rallies and speaking gigs all over the country, we fell into that group,

And believe it or not, there are some free spirits who have no idea where the heck they are going or how they are going to get there. I envy them most of all. Early in our fulltime RV life, before we got too tied down with working rallies and teaching, we actually did that. You will never feel more free in your life than when you pull up to an intersection and flip a coin to decide if you're going to go right or left, North or South, East or West.

There has been a lot of talk lately about how difficult it is becoming to travel spontaneously in an RV like that, because there are more and more RVs hitting the road and only so many campgrounds available. Which means that if you go to a busy area in the peak season and have not made reservations in advance, you may have some difficulty finding a campsite. But those free spirits I mentioned above do not want to go to those places and be part of the herd, anyway. They would rather seek out the road less traveled and see where it takes them. Like I said, I envy them most of all.

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