

RV Consumer e-Magazine

Nov 2014

Volume 4

ISSUE 11



DISCOVER

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Fall Camping Season is Here

Restoring a
Vintage Tow
Vehicle for the
Vintage 67
Yellowstone
Trailer



RV DIY – Protecting your RV
water system at the campground

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- Devin T., Georgia



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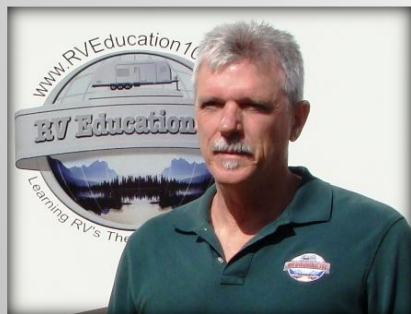
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Fall is one of my favorite times of year, especially when it comes to camping. You can turn the AC off and enjoy the crisp cool air during the day and sit around the campfire to stay warm at night.

We have a couple fall camping trips planned that I am really looking forward to, and then it will probably be time to winterize the water system to prevent it from freezing. You need to protect the RV water system when temperatures plunge below freezing, even if you enjoy using the RV during the winter months.

Oh, and don't miss my article on tuning up your RV furnace in case it really cools off at night and you need some heat during your fall and winter camping trips.

Enjoy this month's issue of RV Consumer Magazine.

Mark

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MEDIA KIT

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Enjoy the Journey

Experience RVing

Fall Camping Season is Here



By Mark Polk

Instead of swimming pools and flip-flops it's time to switch gears and think about campfires and hiking boots.

Fall camping season is finally here. Autumn ushers in shorter days, colder nights, spectacular landscapes and prime RV camping season. There's just something about getting the sweatshirts and sweatpants out and sitting around a campfire gazing at the star-filled sky that makes fall camping special.

You don't really need to make any special preparations to the RV, other than checking out the furnace (see pg. 24) to enjoy all that fall camping has to offer.

You can enjoy a trip to the mountains or a solitude trip to the beach after all the swimmers and sunbathers are gone for the season. You can go tailgating at a college football game or plan a Thanksgiving RV trip with family and friends.

The point is just because summer is over doesn't mean camping season is over. You can enjoy camping in colder regions of the country too, even if the RV water system is winterized to protect it from freezing. It is actually much easier to winterize an RV than most

people think it is, and it's not very expensive either. I have winterized and de-winterized our RV as many as three times during one winter.

The good news is it is still possible to use the bathroom facilities when you are traveling with the RV winterized. We take one gallon jugs filled with water to use in the toilet, and if your holding tanks are not heated you can put some RV antifreeze in the gray and black water holding tanks to prevent the contents from freezing. Add the RV antifreeze through the toilet for the black water holding tank and down the shower or tub drain for the gray water tank. The antifreeze will also protect the shower or tub P-trap which is usually located below floor level.

The amount of antifreeze required for the holding tanks will be based on the size of the tanks, and it will be necessary to add more RV antifreeze as waste water is added to the tanks to prevent the antifreeze from being too diluted.

Don't allow the holding tanks to fill completely before emptying them during cold weather camping. This will reduce the chance of freezing, and possible

damage to the holding tanks. Take bottled water along for drinking and other needs like cooking, washing up and brushing your teeth when the RV is winterized. We have a five gallon jug we always take on trips, filled with tap water from our house, for our pet's drinking water and our other needs. This really comes in handy when the RV is winterized.

When we arrive at our camping destination I try to select a site that is exposed to the sun throughout the day, but also where there is some type of wind break available. Position the RV on the site so the front or rear is facing the brunt of any wind, not the sides of the RV. If there is an electrical hook-up I de-winterize the water system so we can use the sinks, toilet and shower. All of the water lines in our motorhome are above floor level, in heated space, so we don't need to be too concerned about the water system freezing **as long as the RV has heat**. We leave the water heater turned on whenever the water heater tank is full so there is no chance of it freezing. Some water heaters operate on LP gas and electricity. Keep in mind if it's in the electric mode it will use 9 to 13 amps.

It's important that you know where all of the plumbing is located on your RV. Some RVs have heat ducts going to the basement storage areas where the water system is exposed to outside temperatures, but many RVs do not. If

portions of the RV water system are below floor level, in areas that are not heated, it is possible for it to freeze and damage the water lines. If you are hooked up to an external water supply one option is to leave a faucet in the RV dripping, to keep the water moving, and decrease the possibility of water lines freezing. Another option is to use heat tape to protect the exposed water lines. Heat tape can be purchased at most hardware or building supply stores. Make sure it is suitable for the types of water lines in your RV, and the hose if you plan to use it on a water hose.

If it is really cold outside and the possibility exists that the outside water supply could freeze, or if the campground water supply is shut off for the winter, I fill our fresh water holding tank and use it for all of our water requirements. Again, keep in mind where your fresh water tank is located; ours is in a heated area. If the campground shower facilities are still open it's a good idea to use them to avoid the gray water holding tank from filling so quickly. In this situation it might be in your best interest to keep the RV winterized and just use the campground facilities.

The best source for heat is to use the RV's forced air furnace. Read my RV furnace tune-up article (page) . Fall camping trips in your RV can be lots of fun with a little prior planning. Whether you head north, south, east or west get out and enjoy some fall RV camping.

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How will you
Remember
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*The laptop we would've used to
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*The guy from Ed's Towing.
Spent three hours with him.*



*Cook's Field, the week after we
missed the Bluegrass Festival.*

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Q&A with Mark

Question:

I have purchased you RV Education 101 10-DVD set to learn from before a purchase of a fifth wheel, and have avidly been learning from them. I would appreciate it if you could give us some of your expert advice on a tow vehicle. Here is my dilemma:

1. I have read and tried to learn from several online calculators, but just get more confused what to get.
2. What we really want is a **regular cab** (not long bed) **SWR**, preferably a **Chevy**. I read a plethora of conflicting opinions on this online.
3. There are so many factors such as engines, axles, and transmissions out there.

Here is the info I have on the 5th wheel:
Base Unit Weight (w/o water) 12600,
Unloaded Vehicle Weight 12900,
Hitch Weight (w/o water) 2880,
Weight on Axles 10020,
Combined Axle Weight Rating 14000,
Payload Capacity 4600,
GVWR 17500

Fresh tank 88 gal

Gray tank 67 gal

Black tank 44 gal

Two 30 lb propane tanks

I would like to equip it with four 6-volt golf cart batteries (62 lb per battery)

Both of us will weigh ~340 lb total,

Traveling comforts in tow vehicle 25 portable generator 46 lb

Extra gas for these ~ 20 lb

Hitch (Reese 20K?) 1 150 lb?

Plus full tank of diesel.

Based on this, do you know a configuration of a regular cab, SWR truck, preferably Chevy, that would be a safe match for the 5th wheel?

Mark's Answer:

Here is some basic information that might be helpful, but I want to stress you need to check the truck you are considering purchasing for the exact configuration and ratings.

The short version is you need a tow vehicle capable of safely towing 17,500 pounds (the GVWR for the 5th wheel trailer you are considering). This means if you fully loaded the trailer to maximum capacity (17,500 pounds) the truck could still tow it.

With that said towing a 5th wheel adds a few more important weight considerations into the equation, mainly the truck's payload capacity and the Rear Axle Weight Rating (RAWR). To keep it simple the kingpin or 5th wheel hitch weight will be 15 to 25% of the fully loaded trailer weight so the truck not only needs to be able to tow the trailer weight, it must be capable of handling the pin weight as well.

Another important weight consideration that is often overlooked is the Gross Combined Weight Rating (GCWR) which is the maximum allowable weight of the fully loaded trailer and the fully loaded truck when weighed together.

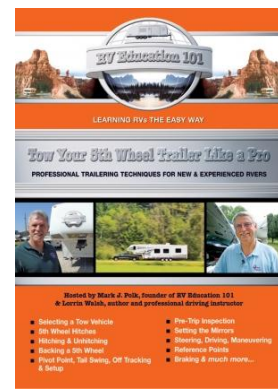
For starters you are looking at a 2500 or 3500 HD diesel model Chevrolet. You mentioned that you prefer a regular cab with a standard bed. That will be nearly impossible to find in a configuration that can tow the amount of weight you want to tow. Most regular cab diesel pickups are long bed models and when you look at standard bed models they are crew cab models.

You would need to look at the specific model you are considering purchasing, but 2014 Chevy tow guides state that a 2500 HD standard bed 2WD with a Duramax 6.6 Liter turbo-diesel and 3.73 rear axle has a 17,400 pound tow rating and a 24,500 pound GCWR. The 3500 HD standard bed 2WD with a Duramax 6.6 Liter turbo-diesel and 3.73 rear axle has a 17,200 pound tow rating and a 24,500/30,500 GCWR. Payload ratings range from 3,400 to 4,500 pounds and the truck GVWRs range from 9,900 to 11,100 respectively.

Keep in mind that any deviation to the truck's configuration will change these numbers. Examples are: long bed, 4WD, different engine, different transmission, different axle ratio. The point I am trying to make is you need to verify all these numbers for the exact truck you plan to purchase.

This is about as close as you will get to matching your criteria without moving to a dual wheel or different brand truck.

~ RV 101



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Tow Vehicle Axle Ratios



How does the axle ratio affect fuel economy in modern day vehicles? Do you need a lower axle ratio to tow a trailer? Can auto manufacturers build trucks that meet stringent government imposed fuel standards, and still offer the power and performance we expect from a truck? Let's take a closer look.

Some Axle Terminology

Before we go any further let's look at what a vehicle's final drive/axle ratio is in the first place. To make it easier to understand the final drive axle or gear ratio you need a very basic understanding of what the different gears in transmissions and final drives are designed to do. A vehicle's transmission is made up of different

sets of gears that can be changed, allowing the vehicle to travel at different speeds. The gears used in the final drive (axle/differential) serve a couple of different purposes.

- 1) The gears in the axle reduce the speed at the vehicle's wheels.
- 2) The gears in the axle divide the torque between the two rear wheels.

On rear wheel drive vehicles power is delivered from the transmission to the rear wheels by way of a drive shaft. So, the axle ratio of a final drive assembly is basically a comparison of how many times the drive shaft rotates per minute (power coming from the transmission) in relationship to how many times the rear wheels rotate per minute. Axle ratios are

expressed in numeric values. For the sake of an example a 3.73:1 axle/gear ratio means the drive shaft (or pinion gear at the end of the drive shaft) rotates 3.73 revolutions for each rotation of the rear wheels (or ring gear in the axle).

Keep in mind that engine rpms play a key role in fuel economy, and that different axle ratios affect the vehicle engine's rpms, especially at highway speeds. With that said you will soon see why some axle ratios are good for fuel economy while others are better suited for towing and power.

Fuel Economy Axles:

For maximum fuel economy you want an axle ratio that is lower in the number of drive shaft rotations (pinion gear) for every tire rotation (ring gear). Examples of this would be a 3.21:1 and 3.42:1 axle ratio. These types of axle ratios result in lower rpms, which in turn result in better fuel economy. These axle ratios are well suited for towing and hauling heavy loads.

Towing Axles:

For maximum power and towing capability you want an axle ratio that is higher in the number of drive shaft rotations for every tire rotation. The reason for this is the lower gear sets (higher value numerically) put more low speed torque, or towing power, at the rear wheels. The result is, less acceleration is required to get the load you are carrying moving from a dead stop, but there is an increase in rpms at highway speeds. Examples of this would be 4.10:1 and 4.30:1 axle ratios. These

gear sets are better suited for towing and hauling heavy loads.

Note: The thing to remember here is different gear sets can drastically change a vehicle's performance characteristics.

When vehicle manufacturers build trucks and SUVs the base, or standard model, vehicles usually come equipped with a higher final drive gear set (lower value numerically) to maximize fuel economy. The problem is if you purchase the truck to use as a work truck or tow vehicle, the higher geared axle is not going to do the job. This is why auto makers offer optional axle ratios, as well as engine and transmission options for the vehicles they build.

What Axle Ratio Do I Need?

Selecting an axle ratio really depends on how you plan to use the vehicle. If your truck is going to be used for towing and hauling loads you want a 3.90:1, 4.10:1 or 4.30:1 type axle ratio. This puts the power at the wheels, but in doing so will sacrifice some fuel economy.

If on the other hand, you need a truck that can tow a 7,000 pound trailer a couple weeks out of the year, but will be used as a daily driver the rest of the time, you want a compromise when it comes to the axle ratio. In this situation a 3.55:1 or 3.73:1 gear set

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would be a better choice.

It's important you are not only aware of the different types of axle ratios, but that you make sure the truck or SUV you purchase is equipped with the axle ratio you want or need to accomplish your goals.

You can take two trucks that are equipped identical to each other, with the only difference being the axle ratio, and the tow ratings can vary by several thousand pounds.

New Vehicle Technology

Today's truck manufacturers are not only confronted with meeting stringent government imposed fuel standards; they also need to deliver a truck that meets consumer demands for power and performance. And I must say they are doing a good job at both. Through technology like direct fuel injection, continuously variable valve timing (VVT), cylinder deactivation, six and eight speed transmissions, and aerodynamic design truck manufacturers are finding effective methods to compromise between fuel economy, power and performance.

Truth be known, even with an axle ratio designed for towing your fuel economy doesn't suffer much in normal stop and go type driving just because of the axle ratio. The loss in mileage comes more at highway speeds, and of course when you are towing or hauling heavy loads, which

is to be expected.

What I am saying is, a truck equipped with a towing axle will lose a percentage of mpg when traveling on the highway, but when you compare combined driving (daily stop and go and on the road driving) the loss is minimal.

Another consideration is your personal driving habits. This plays a major role in the fuel economy you will get, regardless of the axle ratio. I tested myself on this premise using my 2500 Dodge truck equipped with a 5.7 L hemi engine and 3.73:1 axle ratio. I usually average 16.4 mpg driving at highway speeds of 65-70. One day when I was traveling on the interstate I decided to keep the speedometer on 60 mph vs. 65-70. The result was 18.2 mpg.

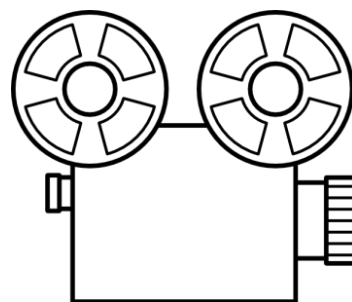
Of course there are many other factors that contribute to fuel economy, like the load in or behind the truck, weather conditions and vehicle upkeep and maintenance, but this demonstrates that fuel economy is not based on axle ratio alone.

The bottom line is fuel economy and towing axles are two distinctly different topics, but when you select the correct axle ratio for the job at hand, and combine it with new technology in engine and transmission design you can find a suitable compromise between the two.

~ **RV101**

30 Seconds of RV Education

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A Vintage Tow Vehicle Restoration for the 67 Yellowstone Trailer



Those of you who have followed RV Education 101 for a while probably remember when we restored (actually rebuilt) the old 67 Yellowstone travel trailer. I always wanted to restore a vintage trailer, but when it was all said and done I told myself never again. It was quite a project.

But, as time passes I tend to forget why I said “never again”, and start getting the itch for another project. Of course I am never comfortable unless I have 10 things happening at the same time.

This time I thought it would be fun to find and restore a vintage truck to tow the 67 Yellowstone trailer to some RV and car shows. The only criteria I had was the truck needed to be close in age to the trailer, and I wanted a



By: Mark J. Polk

Dodge truck since I have been an avid Mopar fan my entire life. After some searching I found a truck on Craigslist located about 3 hours from where I live.



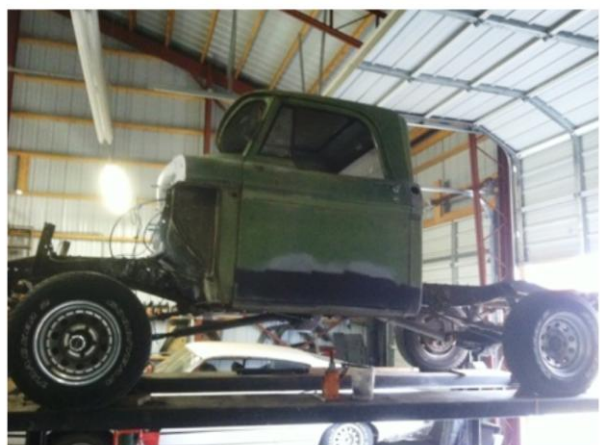
It was a 1971 Dodge Power Wagon and the last year for the Sweptline body style that I really like. Trust me when I say you either like the way the truck looks or hate the way it looks. When I told Dawn about my plans for another project she thought I was going to buy the truck, change

the oil, put some new tires on it and be done. I thought to myself, really, after what we did to the trailer that's what you think I am going to do? I figured I would save the surprise for later.

After negotiating back and forth with the owner for several weeks we settled on a price we both agreed was fair.

Not long after purchasing the truck I attended the National RV Trade Show in Louisville, Ky. where I ran into my friends and colleagues at the [Equalizer](#) Sway Control Hitch display. I always use Equalizer hitches when I tow trailers, and when I told Rich Elliott, VP of Sales and Marketing for Progress Manufacturing, about the project truck he said Equalizer wanted to be involved as a sponsor.

The first order of business was to remove the engine, transmission and body from the frame to see what I was dealing with. This is when Dawn realized there was a bit more involved with this new project than she originally thought.



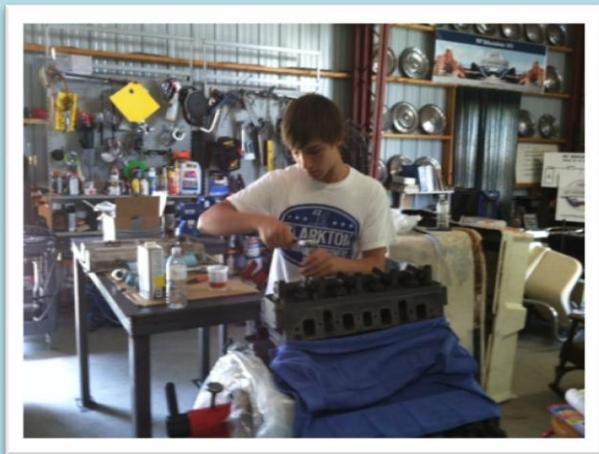
After closer inspection I noticed some rust in the floorboards and the old wiring was in bad shape so I decided to completely remove the interior as well. **Suddenly things began to resemble the old Yellowstone project and I remembered why I said never again!**



When I bought the truck it didn't have the original engine and I always wanted to rebuild an old poly head 318 engine (referred to as a semi-hemi) so the search began for an engine to rebuild for the project truck. Eventually I found one and drove 4 hours one-way to pick it up. This was about the time I decided this was not going to be your ordinary pickup truck with a stock engine. My plan was to drive the truck (not just trailer it to shows) but I was going all in and making this a high performance muscle truck. I located and purchased all the high performance parts I could for the old engine, and when I got it back from the machine shop Tyler and I started on the rebuild. I also found a very rare Edelbrock six-pack intake manifold and three Rochester 2-barrel carburetors to go on the intake.



The 1963 poly head 318 engine when I first purchased it



Tyler working on the poly head 318 during the rebuild



The poly head 318 installed in the truck after the rebuild

The truck restoration project was taking lots of my time, and Dawn kept reminding me I had a day job that takes precedent over my hobbies. Up to this point in the restoration I did all the work on the truck myself, but decided since I didn't have a spray booth I would take the cab of the truck to a local body shop to have it painted. Unfortunately it ended up having several runs in the paint, after what I considered to be a ridiculously overpriced job, so that did not end very well.



Needless to say I bought a good spray gun and after experimenting on the dashboard decided to paint the rest of the truck myself.



Prior to installing the engine I sanded primed and repainted the frame, changed the gearing to 3.55:1 in the front and rear axles, had the 727 transmission rebuilt, added a 4-inch lift to the front suspension and air ride to the rear suspension , rewired the entire truck and started putting the custom interior back together.

At times this restoration project seemed almost overwhelming, but getting the rebuilt engine installed and running gave me a second wind to keep moving forward with the project.

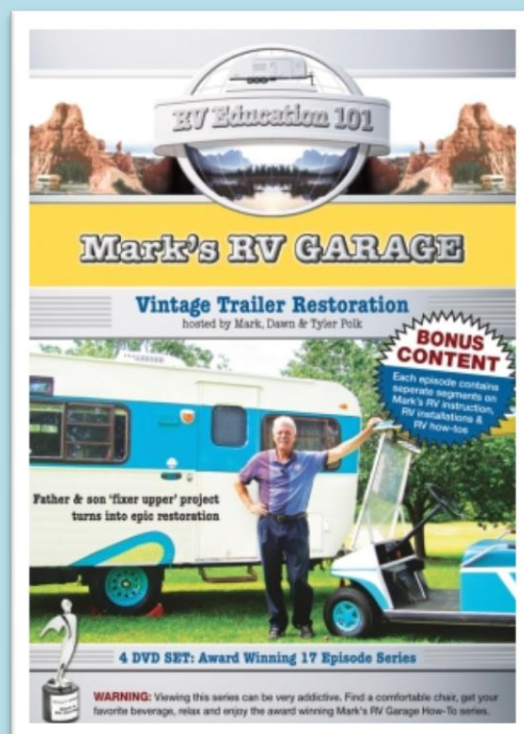
In today's world of restoring vehicles you can locate and buy almost any reproduced part you need for the vehicle, well at least for a Chevy or Ford. One thing I discovered is there are no reproduction parts available for old Dodge trucks. It probably has to do with their popularity (or lack of) back in the day but I really like this truck. I have spent countless hours scouring the internet, junkyards and parts stores for these hard to find parts. I have bought and shipped parts from the east coast to the west coast, and made a trip to Colorado to bring back a truck load of used Dodge sweptline truck parts I found from a You Tube video.

I still have lots of work to do but I am focused on getting it done. I need to finish the body work on the truck's bed and paint it, install new

brakes and put it all back together again. Call me crazy but this is what I enjoy doing in my time off . To me it will all be worthwhile when I can get in the truck and enjoy driving it down the road whenever I want to. Hopefully it won't be long before the 67 Yellowstone is hitched to the 71 Dodge Power Wagon, ready for another great camping adventure.

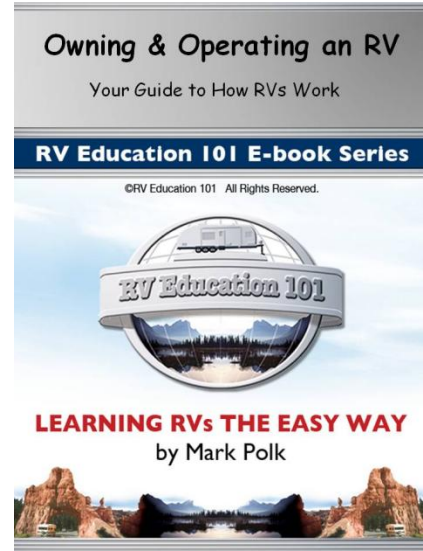
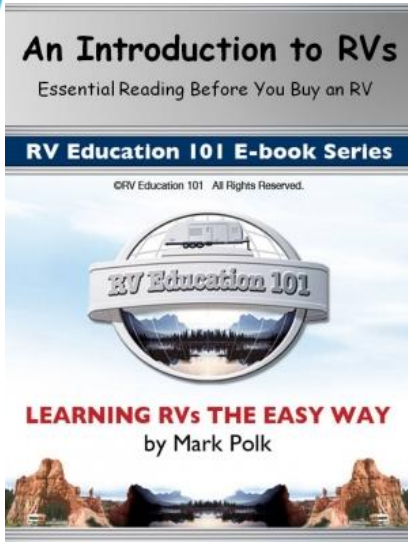
For more information on a great sway control hitch take a minute to visit the folks at [Equalizer](#)

If you would like to read and see more detailed information about the Dodge truck restoration project you can visit my [Auto Education 101 blog](#) and read the entire build thread. ~ **RV101**



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New RV education 101 E-books



Two brand new e-books by RV Education 101. These e-books are available in PDF and Flipbook formats. [More Information](#)



RV Education 101 recently teamed up with Explorer RV Insurance to provide the RV consumer with a free [RV driving video series](#) & [RV Care & Maintenance](#) download brochure.

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Slow Cooker Pork 'N Kraut



The Cooking Ladies

The Cooking Ladies, Phyllis Hinz and Lamont Mackay, are freelance writers, restaurant consultants, cookbook authors, event speakers, and RVers. Please take a minute to visit their website:

www.thecookingladies.com

(Makes 6 servings)

28 ounces (850 mL) sauerkraut with juice
6 medium-size potatoes, peeled & halved lengthwise
1 medium-size sweet onion, diced
3 pounds (1.36 kg) boneless pork loin roast
10 ounces (284 mL) tomato soup, undiluted
1 tablespoon (15 mL) prepared mustard

- Spread the sauerkraut and its juice evenly over the bottom of the slow cooker bowl.
- Nestle the potatoes, flat side down, into the sauerkraut.
- Sprinkle the diced onion over the potatoes and sauerkraut.
- Trim the pork loin of any excess fat and place it on top of the onions.
- Combine the undiluted tomato soup and mustard in a small bowl. Mix well. Pour the mixture over the tenderloin, potatoes and sauerkraut.
- Slow cook on the low setting for 5 to 6 hours or on high for 3 hours.
- Remove the pork to a cutting board for slicing. Use a slotted spoon to lift the sauerkraut and potatoes to serving bowls.

[Happy Hour Recipes PDF E-book](#)

This #1 best selling e-book is the first in The Cooking Ladies' Favorite series. And to make this cookbook even more outstanding, The Cooking Ladies have included a photo of each finished dish. Recipe ingredients are given in both Imperial and metric measurements.

RV DIY – 5 Tips to a Warm RV this Fall & Winter

When you use your RV for cold weather camping it's nice to have a warm place to retreat back to after enjoying some outdoor activities. Here are 5 tips to help keep your RV warm and cozy during those cold weather camping trips.

Tip #1

The first thing we want to do is test the RV furnace. Make sure the LP gas supply is turned on and fire up the furnace. The fan should come on and within a minute or so you should feel heat coming from the heat ducts in the RV.

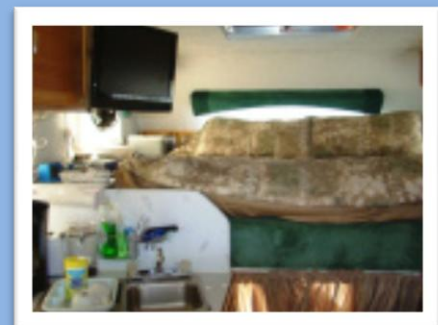
Tip #2

Check the propane level in your LP cylinders or LP tank and check the condition of your auxiliary battery(s). The furnace consumes more LP gas than other appliances and the furnace fan requires a fully charged battery, if you are not plugged into an electrical source. Checking the propane level is self-explanatory and you can check the battery condition using the RV's monitor panel or with a 12- volt DC multi-meter.

Tip #3

Pack warm clothes, extra blankets and don't forget the electric blanket! Sweatshirts, sweatpants and a good pair of winter socks makes resting and relaxing inside the RV much more enjoyable when it's cold outside. For your personal protection in cold outdoor temperatures dress in layers and make sure you have the proper clothing and footwear to stay warm and protected when outdoors.

By Mark Polk



Tip #4

Pack a couple portable electric heaters. Supplementing the heat with thermostatically controlled ceramic heaters does wonders. These heaters work extremely well and you don't need to be concerned about fire or carbon monoxide gas.





Tip #5

Keep the heat in the RV. Make sure all the windows and vents are closed and close the curtains or shades to help keep the heat in. Remember heat rises, use some foam cushioning or aftermarket accessories to seal the area around roof vents.



These quick tips can help prepare your RV for cold weather camping, and it's worth it when the end result is a nice warm RV on a cold fall or winter day. There are other concerns with cold weather camping in your RV, like protecting the plumbing system from freezing, but when it come to staying warm these 5 tips are a great start during those cold weather camping trips. ~ ***RV 101***

[Click here to learn how to winterize your own RV and save money](#)

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Tips to Help Protect your RV Water System

When you arrive at your favorite KOA and you make your campground connections a couple nice to have items for the RV water connection are a water regulator and some type of water filtration system. Let's take a closer look.

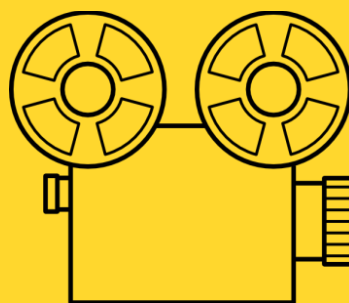
In addition to a drinking safe water hose I always keep a water regulator and some type of water filter close at hand. Water pressure at some campgrounds can be extremely high, especially when there aren't that many campers. If you regulate the water pressure you don't need to be concerned with possible damage to your RV's plumbing system.

I prefer a water regulator with a gauge on it so you know what the actual pressure is, and I always use a lead free regulator. Always connect the regulator directly to the campground water supply to regulate the pressure where it originates. If you connect it to the RV the pressure could cause the



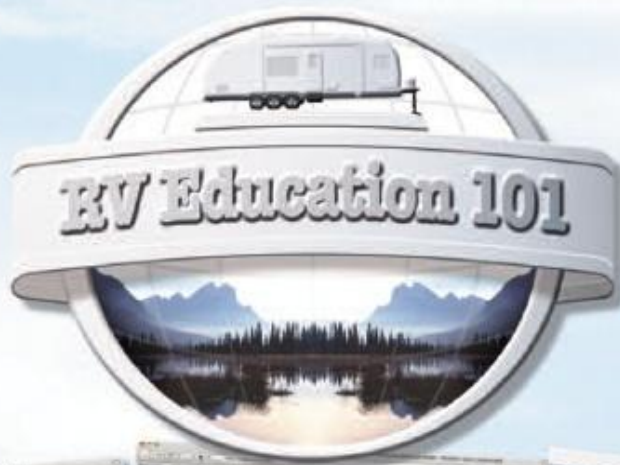
water hose to expand and possibly burst.

Next is the water filter. When we are camping in our motorhome we have a built-in water filtration system which is great, but when we camp in our vintage travel trailer we want an easy way to filter all the water coming into the RV. You can purchase a filter similar to the one pictured above that connects inline and filters all the water going into the RV.



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The image features a promotional graphic for the 'RV Education 101' series. On the left, a stack of colorful DVD cases is shown, with the top one titled 'An Introduction to RVs'. A red starburst graphic with the text 'Video download & DVD Box Set Deals' is overlaid on the stack. To the right, a circular logo with a mountain scene and the text 'RV Education 101' is displayed. Below the logo, the text reads 'RV Education 101 Learning RVs the Easy Way with MARK POLK'. A red banner with white text says 'Americas most popular RV Training Series'. Below this, the text 'Videos, Books, E-books' is followed by 'Looking for a bargain on some RV training materials? Check out Box Set deals in our Bargain Room'. A blue button with white text says 'BARGAIN ROOM'. The background of the entire section is a scenic landscape with red rock formations, a lake, and mountains, with a small RV visible in the distance.

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Our goal with RV Consumer E-Magazine is to provide you with helpful information to make all of your RV experiences more enjoyable. I left my position as an RV Sales and F&I manager in 2000 to start RV Education 101.

We produce RV educational videos & DVDs and publish books and e-books on how to safely & properly use and maintain your RV. The reason I left my job was because of my concern about the lack of educational and safety awareness material available to the RV consumer, in other words you.

My wife Dawn left her position in RV sales to help start the company, and is our Sales and Marketing Director. We currently have a 35-foot Class A motor home. We have two boys, Tyler 17 and Josh 23, both avid RVers and two dogs, Roxie and Gracie.

If you would like to learn more about us and about RV Education 101 please visit www.rveducation101.com

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