

# AutoMate RV Club Newsletter

Issue #6, Winter 2003

Editor: Jim Stephenson

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Spring Rally Promises a Broad Array of Speakers and Social Events

Mark your calendars and register early for our March 25-28, 2004 Spring Rally at the Merced County Fairgrounds in Los Banos. It promises to be a great rally and you won't want to miss it! Full details are enclosed with this newsletter.

Here's a preview of what Rally Chair Bob Livesey and his committees have in store for attendees.

There will be social events on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, including a tri tip BBQ organized by Ross Stewart and his committee. Dave Pollack, with assistance from Ted Martin, Bill Morgado, and Jim Stephenson, has lined up a broad array of vendors and speakers, including two of our own members—Hud Hatch and Teresa Gaucin.

The RV Safety Foundation (Aweigh We Go) will be on hand to weigh rigs and mail a wheel-by-wheel analysis to members who so wish for a fee of \$40. They have a system to do this expeditiously.

Our business meeting on Saturday afternoon from 2-4 pm will be an especially important one, since the membership is being asked by the Board of Directors to approve a plan for incorporation and revised bylaws. See separate enclosures in this newsletter for details.

An added benefit to attendees will be the distribution of a Housekeeping Tips booklet compiled by Diana Storm and many others. A new feature will be a concept developed by Ed and Mary Robinson. Members who volunteer to share their expertise with other members in small groups may set up hands-on "porch side seminars" outside their own rigs. Two already planned are Ed Robinson on computer programs for digital photography and Teresa Gaucin for more in depth computer and web use training. Volunteers on other topics are encouraged.

So mark your calendars. I look forward to seeing you all in March.

**Betty**

## Spring Rally

March 25 – 28 at the Merced County Fairgrounds,  
in Los Banos

Thursday:

- Arrival – with wine & cheese @ 7:00 pm

Friday:

- Coffee/hot chocolate & donuts @ 8:30 am
- Welcome and Introductions
- Vendor presentations from 8:45 - 10:00 am
- RV Safety Foundation @ 10:00 – noon
- Dan Wilson – 2:00 to 4:00 pm
- Luau dinner at 6:00 – then bingo.

Saturday:

- Morning libations @ 8:30
- Educational seminars 8:30 – noon
- Membership Meeting & Elections 2:00 – 4:00 pm
- Santa Maria BBQ @ 6:00 pm – then dance!

Sunday:

- Weighing as you depart ( \$ 40)

Cost:

Rig with 2 persons	\$ 105
“ 1 “	\$ 85
Each additional person	\$ 30

Reservations by March 1 with full payment to:

Sue Tavernetti, Treasurer  
238 Rio Vista Drive, King City, CA 93930

Cancellations:

With \$ 10 cancellation fee up to March 8, 2004  
No refunds after March 8 !

## Fall Rally 2004

Date: October 7 – 10.

Site: Sonora Fair Grounds (1 ½ hour east of Merced , the Mother Lode Country.

**More on this soon, but SAVE THE DATE !**

**Pete Coffman**

## Newsletter Notes

You will notice that once again the Newsletter is going out via snail mail to everyone. We want to be sure that you all have a chance to review the proposed revisions in club incorporation and bylaws. You should also receive an E-Mail notification of the mailing, with the note that it is also posted on the WebPage – in case you are traveling or prefer than means of distribution. If you did not receive the E-Mail notification it means that:

- We have an incorrect E-Mail address for you, or
- You have a block on mail received from [automatenewsletter@earthlink.net](mailto:automatenewsletter@earthlink.net), or
- You don't have E-Mail.

So if you fit into one of these categories, and want to change it, let me know at the above address!

*Jim*

### WebPage Notices:

[www.automaterclub.com](http://www.automaterclub.com)

Once again we hope you'll understand if we don't post the entire Newsletter on the WebPage. We don't think the legal documents should be published, at least until they are approved. If you need an E-Mail copy let the Editor know.

All of the other regular features of the WebPage are posted, as are the photos of the Fall Rally.

## **New Feature !**

### Computer Column

#### *Editor's Note:*

*Teresa Gaucin has agreed to write a series of articles on computers and some of the mysteries that surround this Hi-Teck stuff. As a professional in this field she may be able to help us all understand our computers a bit more, and overcome some of the problems we encounter. If you have any burning issues which you would like her to address – please let us know for consideration in future articles in this series.*

### **Dangers when Surfing the Net**

One of the dangers lurking on the Web is catching an infection. These infections are dangerous and appropriately named viruses or worms. Viruses are simply a computer program that invades your PC instructing it to behave in a specific manner. A virus can be 'caught' from an infected disk, CD, or the Internet. Whereas a worm is a

computer program that has the ability to copy itself from machine to machine. Worms normally move around and infect other machines connected through a local network.

A virus can be 'activated' when you click on a delivered email or can be hidden in a picture or game. Computer viruses are dangerous because they can crash your PC or use all available memory, basically rendering your PC useless. Hackers even created some recent viruses to steal passwords.

### **What can you do? Tips for protecting yourself.**

- ❖ Use an Internet Firewall. A firewall is a piece of software that helps to prevent hackers, viruses, and worms from invading your PC. Some systems come with a firewall installed and most do not. Microsoft Windows XP comes with a built-in firewall that allows you to apply the Automatic Updates feature to get the software updates for the Internet Connection Firewall (ICF) delivered automatically.
- ❖ Purchase a Virus Protection program (personal or software firewall) and install it in your computer before you decide to download anything.

McAfee's and Symantec (Norton) AntiVirus Software are two that can be readily purchased. McAfee's has a website that keeps you informed of any new viruses created and provides a patch for you to download and install. Visit the website periodically to check for new viruses.

McAfee's site:

[http://us.mcafee.com/virusInfo/default.asp?WWW\\_URL=www.mcafee.com/anti-virus/default.asp](http://us.mcafee.com/virusInfo/default.asp?WWW_URL=www.mcafee.com/anti-virus/default.asp)

- ❖ Get on an email listing for notification of viruses released. One source is Microsoft.

<http://register.microsoft.com/subscription/subscribe.asp?id=166>

- ❖ You can even get free (12 months) Antivirus and Firewall Software by visiting: <http://www.my-etrust.com/microsoft/index.cfm>
- ❖ Shut your PC off, when not in use. Keeping your PC on and connected provides an opportunity for someone to invade your PC. DSL and cable are more accessible as they connect using a network address that does not change.
- ❖ If you send an email to someone, always include a subject title. If you get an email from some source unfamiliar to you, and there is no subject title, or the title includes words like love, sex or 'me nude', delete immediately without opening the email.

Hackers find that people will open emails that have enticing words in the title. I guess we tend to be a bit too curious.

- ❖ Do not insert a disk or CD from an unknown source or person. If you need to download files from outside sources, run your Virus Protection software and scan the files, disk, or CD. The software will inform you if any viruses are present.

### **Be aware that some warnings about viruses are hoaxes. How do you recognize a hoax?**

You should be suspicious of any email that contains a request to "*send this to everyone you know*". This should alert you that the warning is probably a hoax. No credible source would send you a valid warning message telling you to send that same email to everyone you know. So where can you turn to when trying to determine if a warning message is real?

Some sites to look up virus hoaxes are:

<http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html>  
<http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/>

### **How do you know if your PC is infected and how do you get rid of the problem?**

Your PC may start to act crazy and you might think it has some unrelated problems. Unless you have virus protection software on your PC telling you that it is infected you really won't know. When your Virus Protection Software informs you that a virus is detected, you can follow the directions by going to the manufacturer's website and downloading the latest updates that will fix or remove the virus. Some vendors offer on-line support to help you to remove the virus or manually remove viral code within your PC system.

### **What more can you do to protect your self?**

There are a thousand more things that could be said about computer viruses. I hope that this article will alert the reader to the dangers and encourage research of various web sites to provide additional information. Users should always practice safe "PC'ing". Being prepared, alert and investing in protection will help keep your PC safe.

IMPORTANT: Any advice, fixes, information, recommendations, etc. received from this document are meant to offer ideas on how to fix your problem. We are merely trying to help out. You should always follow the directions and recommendations of the manufacturer of those items that you are trying to fix.

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### **Why RVers Don't Fit Into "Regular" Society**

Try this: The next time you go on a trip and stay in a luxury hotel make it your goal to make a friend. In the

morning when you open your door to get the paper, look around for that friend. Someone in the hall? Yes! Invite them into your room for a cup of coffee.

No luck? Next go down to the coffee shop for breakfast. While you are waiting for your breakfast walk around the room, say hi and find out where everyone is from. Certainly offer them your name, address and telephone number. Find out where they are going next and offer to meet them there.

No new friend yet? At lunch time go down to the lobby or walk around the halls, looking for someone you may have seen before. Say hi to them or other guests and see if someone wants to get together for cocktail hour.

Nothing yet? Last chance. At dinner as you see people finishing their dinners introduce yourself, tell them where you are from and invite them up to your room for some dessert. By the end of the day you may not have found a friend but you will be much sought after. Sought after most likely by hotel management, hotel security maybe even the sheriff.

My personal note is that my husband and I have found RVers to be the friendliest and kindest people to meet. Thanks for your attention.

Doris Cole

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Nominating Committee comprised of Andy Anderson, Bob Cohen, Betty Pollack and Ross Stewart places the following members in nomination for a two-year term beginning at the end of our March 25-28, 2004 Spring Rally. For Vice President: Bob Livesey. For Secretary: Teresa Gaucin. The election will take place at our Annual Business Meeting to be held from 2-4 pm on Saturday March 27, 2004 at the Merced County Fairgrounds in Los Banos. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

## **TRIBUTE TO BOB COHEN**

Our Club is deeply indebted to Founding President Bob Cohen for his vision and leadership in establishing the AutoMate RV Club three years ago. We are saddened to learn that Bob and Marlene are selling their AutoMate since they have now purchased a motorhome. Without Bob's diligent efforts we would not have a Club. Thanks, Bob. Good luck motorhoming, and we will miss you.

## **SPECIAL THANKS TO SECRETARY BARBARA LUTHIN**

Board Secretary Barbara Luthin has advised the Board that she will not stand for re-election next March due to family commitments. Barbara has served as Secretary since the inception of the Club. She has provided the Club with comprehensive Annual Meeting minutes and has diligently maintained and updated our membership roster in an outstanding manner. Thanks Barbara for your valuable service to our Club.

## Electrical Usage

Most of us are wired for 30 amp service, but what if the park only provides you with 20 amps. If you turn on everything you may be accustomed to under these circumstances, you will blow the circuit and do without electricity, or have to go and find the circuit reset. The trick is to add up the electricity demand of the items you would like to operate, and see if it matches the amount of power you have available. The following list is the typical draw of items you might use:

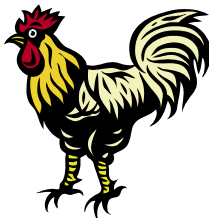
- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| • Air Conditioner   | 12.5 amps |
| • Converter (with no load)  | 1.5 “     |
| • Water Heater (6 gal.)   | 12.5 “    |
| • Refrigerator  | 4.0 “     |
| • Microwave Oven  | 12.5 “    |
| • Electric Coffee Pot   | 9.0 “     |
| • Toaster   | 10.0 “    |
| • Hair Dryer  | 10.0 “    |
| • Computer (typical)  | <1.0 “    |
| • TV  | 2.0 “     |
| • Vacuum Cleaner  | 2.0 “     |
| • Electric Frying Pan   | 10.0 “    |
| • Iron  | 10.0 “    |
| • Food Processor  | 6.0 “     |
| • Crock Pot   | 1.5 “     |
| • Others – may be shown on appliance, or divide the watts by 120 (volts) to get amps drawn. |           |

Keep in mind that some of the appliances may draw a higher load on startup, which could kick the breaker. Better to be on the safe side, and turn off things like the hot water heater until you really need the hot water.

Using the generator for power? Most of us probably have 3.6 kW units, which at 120 V is equivalent to the 30 amps parks typically provide. To be on the safe side, use the same rules, and be particularly aware of the surge load on startup. Our generators are neatly hidden away over the axels, making it a rather nasty trip if you have to go down and reset the breaker!

## Heart Attack Chicken

- 4 – 6 skinless chicken breasts
- 1 can mushroom soup
- 8 oz sour cream
- 1 can onion rings
- Butter



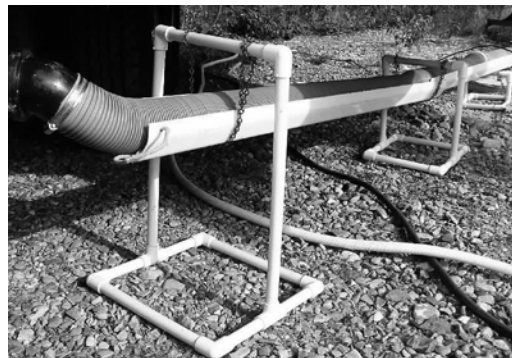
Butter baking dish. Add chicken and cover with sour cream and mushroom soup. Bake at 350 for 40 mins. Sprinkle onion rings on top and bake 5 mins. More.

## Healthy Chicken

Place chicken breasts in a non-buttered baking dish. Do not cover with anything. Bake at 350 for 40 mins. Choke it down with beer or wine.

## Tiny Tips

For enhancing AutoMate ownership!



A cheap and convenient way to support that vital hose can be made with PVC gutter and a few pipefittings. The gutter costs \$3.79 for a ten-foot length – cut it into two pieces, which will fit inside each other in your hose storage tube, along with the hose itself. The supports are ¾ “ pvc pipe, sized to nest – no need to glue. The hangers can be light chain as I use, or Velcro straps.

As always, if anyone wants more details of this or any other “Tiny Tip”, please contact the Editor or other Author. If you have ideas to contribute – let’s hear them!

## HELP

Last summer we had brake problems, which probably wouldn’t have gotten solved, as conveniently had we not had with us the phone numbers for Kodiak, the key supplier of that particular equipment. The thought comes to mind that we should develop a list of the key phone numbers of this nature, and by listing them in a future newsletter we will be simultaneously posting them on the Web for our individual future reference.

Next edition we will be providing that information for the Air Suspension systems. **How about helping us with this by providing a list of the vendors you think should be included in this list.** Help us even more by providing the numbers, but if you can’t – give us the names anyway, and we will complete the listing.

### **Full Issue**

A few articles/themes had to be dropped this edition because we had some new columns and a lot of “business materials” to include. We continue, however to look for contributions of technical, travel, tips, recipes and all other matters of RV and AutoMate interest.

The next edition will be out right after the Spring Rally. Please get your contributions in to the Editor by April 18.

**Just after finishing your taxes!**

### **Members Only**

The snail mail edition of this Newsletter includes materials relating to the proposed Bylaws and Incorporation proposals, which will be discussed at the Spring Rally. If you need an additional copy please contact the Editor, although be patient as he will be out of the country and slow to reply until immediately prior to the Rally!