

SOI

News



Spring 2005

Scamp Owners International

Volume VII Number 2



More than 60 SOI members attended the Tech Session during ScampCamp 2005 at Highlands Hammock State Park near Sebring, Florida. See the report of this annual gathering on page 3. Photograph by K R. Cranson

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From the Editor's Desk



Rod Cranson
Editor

Checking out a blooming yucca at the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge along the Rio Grande River in southern Texas.
Photograph by S. K. Cranson

What a great time everyone had at ScampCamp 2005. The weather cooperated for the full schedule of activities planned for the seventh annual SOI gathering at Highlands Hammock State Park near Sebring, Florida. A full report with pictures on all the good times and fun starts on the next page of this issue of the *SOI News*. Thanks to the many people who helped make this year's event the best ever.

Sharon and I spent most of January volunteering at Wycliffe Associates Headquarters near Orlando, Florida. You may recall the article in the 2004 Spring issue of the newsletter describing WordSpring, an interactive center at Wycliffe Bible Translators. It features the many people groups in the world without any written languages and Wycliffe's efforts to translate the Bible into their native language. Our experiences this year were most gratifying and put a whole new 'twist' on spending time in the south during the winter months.

Following ScampCamp 2005, we headed for the Rio Grande Valley in southern Texas. On the way, our route included a drive through Gulf Shores to check on the effect of the hurricanes this past summer on that portion of the Gulf Coast. Although the 15 miles of this major beachfront tourist destination were not represented by a large number of damaged building, there was nobody around except construction workers and road repair crews. For all practical purposes, the entire area was closed - high rise condos, restaurants, and all the businesses.

We arrived at a campground near Edinburg, Texas, just a few miles north of the boarder with Mexico. It is an interesting part of the country and the culture seems to reflect that of our south-

ern neighbor. Many people are bilingual and there are places where English is seldom heard. We enjoyed the opportunity to walk across the boarder at a small town called Progreso and sample the Mexican culture, food, and goods. There is a very nice park along the Rio Grande River, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, that attracts many birding enthusiasts as does the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge (see page 16).

Perhaps this will be "old" news by the time you read it, but predictions for gas prices for summer travel do not sound promising. When we arrived in the Rio Grande Valley, gas was less than \$1.60/gal. When we left a month later, it was pushing \$2.00/gal and on our return to Michigan we paid \$2.30 at one stop. I am wondering what this all means for SOI Members at the various ScampCamps planned across the country during the next year? On a completely different level, how will fuel cost's affect Scamp-Eveland, Inc. and their sales? During the 1970s when a sharp spike in fuel prices hit, Scamp and similar units did quiet well as people looked for a small RV that could be towed with a fuel efficient vehicle. On the other hand, in the last couple years Scamp could not keep up with demand, so further increased interest may not mean much. However, should they be able to increase production (as I've heard in rumors) SOI may also experience a significant growth. Time will tell.

see Editor on page 4

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SOI News

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ScampCamp 2005

February 8 - 11

Highlands Hammock State Park
Sebring, Florida

Scampers started arriving early for ScampCamp 2005. By Monday afternoon 35 of the more than 60 Scamps expected were set-up ready for the gathering scheduled to start the next day. Of course, more arrived on Tuesday by the 5 PM start of the first official event, a hot dog roast and pot luck. A series of 6 large picnic tables were filled with all kinds of good food, especially the desert offerings. **Jack Freed** began roasting 130 hot dogs over an open fire for the 90 SOI members attending. After everyone was satisfied, actually too full, chairs were moved to the fire pit for the evenings entertainment. **Dick Freed** and **Jim Converse** played guitars, sang, and led the group in a sing-a-long. It was a great start to the seventh annual ScampCamp at Highlands Hammock State Park in Sebring, Florida.

Bright sun greeted those attending the Tech Session as **Bob Anderson** and **Ivan Moore** opened the discussion. As usual, many topics of interest were covered as

participants raised questions while others responded with the answers. One special treat this year was a large selection of items for a raffle provided by Scamp-Eveland, Inc. Immediately after lunch, everyone gathered for the traditional group portrait. Following the portrait, many participants joined **Judy Freed** at the recreation hall for a craft time. This year's project was a "cup of paper flowers" made out of died coffee filters.

At 6 PM, SOI members gathered with other Highlands Hammock campers for the weekly potluck. A great selection of food was laid out along with many delicious deserts. **Kate Filer**, the park's activity coordinator, welcomed everyone and introduced the raffle that is held at each potluck. Attendance topped 110, a new record for the park's potluck. After dinner, **Alice Vernezze** organized a time of card bingo with prizes for the lucky winners.

Coffee and donuts along with homemade biscuits and strawberry jam are offered each Thursday morning at the recreation hall and many SOI members joined other park visitors for this treat. At 11 am another tradition was observed as



Winners of the second annual SOI Dumpster Diving awards hosted by **Bob Anderson** (L-center).

Photographs by K R. Cranson



Alice Vernezze calling out numbers at card bingo.





SOI Members gather with other campers at the weekly Wednesday evening potluck. Over 110 campers participated to set a new attendance record for the park.

ScampCamp 2005 participants gathered at Homers Buffet in Sebring for lunch. The great weather continued in the afternoon for the Great Giveaway held back at Highlands Hammock State Park. A special feature of this year's raffle honored

all those attending who had been married for 50 years or more - they had first pick of the gift items. We were amazed at how many there were - **John and Flow Zuidersma**, married 65 years, were first up! In addition, the annual "Dumpster Diving" award event was expanded to include several prizes for the lucky winners. Following the raffle, **Linda Freed** hosted a recipe exchange.

It is clear that a major interest of SOI members is food and many excellent recipes were traded.

The final (Friday) morning of ScampCamp 2005 started with a park wide pancake breakfast hosted by the park

volunteers. Again, this offered a time to chat with other SOI members and share some great food. At 11 am the "Tour of Trailers" convened to provide an opportunity for everyone to see what modifications and innovations participants had made to their fiberglass "eggs." The final evening's campfire held at **Merle and Beverley Lilly's** site, another tradition of the Sebring ScampCamp, capped off a week of evening campfires. It provided one last opportunity to chat with many friends until we all gather next year for ScampCamp 2006.

Many people contributed to this year's gathering and only a few have been noted

in this report. A BIG THANKS goes out to everyone that contributed to another successful ScampCamp. krc

Thinking About Taking a Shortcut?

Vern loves back roads and this dirt road would save us more than 100 miles! The weather was dry and we were enthusiastic about exploring this area while saving miles. Pulling our 16-foot Scamp with our '97 Subaru Outback, we soon discovered the road to be more of a challenge than we expected. In some places it was unbelievably steep, rough and narrow. It had big wash-outs to swerve around or jump over, terrible washboards, hardly one lane traffic in spots, sharp curves with no view of what's ahead. Once, while climbing steeply in low gear wide open up toward the crest of what must've been a 45 degree hill, we could only see our hood and the sky, but we didn't dare slow down or we'd never get started again.

It took 3 hours to do the 39 mile shortcut. At road's end, we found the inside of our Scamp in shambles, including curtains down, dinnette table torn out of the floor, 17 screws scattered around the floor, fresh water tank dislodged, and grey water piping broken.

Even the ranger told us, as long as it wasn't raining, it was an OK shortcut from Kodachrome Basin State Park in UT to Page, AZ. It is road 400 and we're telling

Editor (from page 2)

Finally, Sharon and I were greatly saddened along with many other SOI members in the passing of Gene Gallmann. I received a note shortly after Christmas informing us that Gene had died on Christmas Day en route to his son's home in Illinois. It is still difficult to accept the fact that he is gone - he leaves a big void in our group and many will miss him. I know everyone wishes the best to Joan as she continues her Scamping. Rod



ScampCamp 2005 was the largest SOI gathering at Highlands Hammock State Park and occupied nearly half the camp sites.



This is the view that Vern and Betty had as they took a "shortcut!"

you so you won't make our mistake. Sometimes a shortcut isn't a shortcut.

Subsequently, we have repaired the damage. Now the table is hooked down, the tank straps reinstalled, and the various joints held together more securely than ever. But we will try to be more discriminating about shortcuts in the future.

Vern and Betty Groves, Aloha, OR.

Casita Visit

On our way back north from the Rio Grande Valley in southern Texas, we had the opportunity to visit the Casita factory near Rice, Texas. We were warmly greeted by Jeani Ivie, a Sales Coordinator, who gave us a nice tour of Casita's final assembly portion of the plant. The two halves of the trailer shell were already



Some 40 new Casitas were parked around the manufacturing site - all were reported to be sold.

Photographs by K R. Cranson



The Casita trailer manufacturing facility is located along I-45 near Rice, Texas, about 40 miles south of Dallas.

joined together and mounted on the frame at the point we started. Apparently they do not include the fiberglass fabrication or early assembly on visitor tours, although we did see an area where frames were being built. This article does not include any photographs to illustrate the assembly as they were not permitted.

Casita production averages 14 trailers a week and does require some weekend work to meet the demand. The company has three models; a 13-foot, called the Patriot, a 16-foot and 17-foot, known as the Spirit, Freedom or Liberty depending on the internal layout. A standard and deluxe model of the 16 and 17-foot Casitas are available, depending on how the unit is equipped. While specified equipment is included, depending on the selection of a standard or deluxe, there are some options available. All interior cabinets are fiberglass with wood doors and trim. Detailed specifications and options are nicely presented in their full color brochure along with pricing.

It appears the demand is strong and we were told that all those being build and stored on their lot were already sold and a waiting period of several months is now common. The assembly sequence is well managed as the units move from one area to the next. Casita's final inspection was impressive as we observed the water test area and several employees doing final clean-up and inspection.

A couple very nice features we noticed was the 25 gallon fresh water tank (on

deluxe models) and the large rear “picture” window. Another interesting feature is the single dump connection with both the black water and grey water feeding through the same outlet. This arrangement is possible as the relatively thin grey water tank is hung between the side frame members ahead of the axle. It is clear that Casita has made many improvements over earlier models, both in the design of the fiberglass shell and interior layout. When asked about future plans, there is nothing specific planned, but a longer model has been rumored for some time. There are, however, no plans to introduce a 5th wheel design. The Company employs about 80 people; 60 in production and the balance in administration and sales. Based on their weekly production, it appears that Casita produces about 700 units a year.

krc

SOI Profile

Ivan & Helen Moore St. Johns, Michigan

Ivan and Helen have a 2000 13-foot Scamp and have visited 34 states, staying in their trailer for periods of two months or more at a time. The longest trip was to Alaska and the Yukon for a

total of 13,100 miles - a fantastic trip! They have traveled in all 50 states; plus several other countries: China, Egypt, England, France, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Poland, Russia, Taiwan, Turkey; plus our neighbors to the north and south (not in their Scamp!). Getting to know new people at ScampCamps is one of their favorite expe-

riences while traveling in their Scamp.

They continue making modifications and changes to their Scamp. Together, Ivan and Helen come up with ideas to better use the limited space in a 13-foot Scamp and Ivan implements them! Here are some of

their innovations; built extra cupboards and a bathroom vanity with sink, enlarged closet doors and sink access openings and added shelves for better accessibility and usability, converted table to 3-way use to allow more open area, built in a microwave, TV and electric heater, added a larger refrigerator, installed hot water dispenser on kitchen sink, installed two batteries with inverter to create 120-volt system, added extra 120-volt outlets and lights, wired for cable TV, added dispensers for towels, plates and napkins, rear bumper extension added with utility box, better jacks and clothesline, insulated bottom of trailer, installed “turbo-lube” oil bath-type wheel bearings.

Ivan’s background is in heavy mechanical, electrical, plumbing, automotive, and residential building work. He attended college for two years and is a Licensed Residential Builder. Helen graduated from Davenport University. Both retired in December, 1999 from an area hospital. Ivan was an Engineering Supervisor and Helen served as Communications Supervisor. Although they are retired, Ivan works for Uncle John’s Cider Mill every September and October, doing mechanical and repair work. Helen works per diem in Occupational Health.

They have two children. Their daughter, Sue and her husband Todd Cory live in Grand Ledge, Michigan. They have one child, Autumn, Helen and Ivan’s only grandchild, who is three years old and thinks the Scamp is



Helen’s mother crocheted colorful red and white pot holders for ScampCamp 2005.



Helen and Ivan with their 13-foot Scamp camped at Highlands Hammock during ScampCamp 2005.

Photographs by K R. Cranson

her “playhouse.” Their son, Mike, married Kristi on December 30, 2004 and Autumn was their flower girl. Mike and Kristi live in Holt, Michigan.

Special Interests and hobbies occupy much of their free time since retirement. Ivan enjoys wood and metal working, auto restoration, residential building, working in his workshop and on their 12-acre woods. Helen likes music, choir, piano, reading and spending time with Autumn. She is active in Clog Dancing and her group performs at local festivals and other events. Of course, both Ivan and Helen like traveling with their Scamp.

Great Parks

St. George Island State Park Eastpoint, Florida

Driving along Florida’s Gulf Coast on U.S. 98 near Eastpoint, St. George Island can be seen “floating” on the southern horizon. It seems to go on for miles as a hazy image barely visible from the mainland. In fact it does go on for miles, with St. George Island State Park occupying the larger portion of the island - nearly 2,000 acres. With some nine miles of undeveloped beaches along both the Gulf of Mexico and Apalachicola Bay, it may be the best example of Florida’s Gulf Coast Barrier islands.

It appears that St. George Island’s history dates back at least 5,000 years based on remnants of early human activity - pottery, shellfish harvests and trash mounds, among other phenomena. Much later, as Florida was explored and settled by westerners, the island’s pine forests became a rich resource for turpentine. “Catfaced” scars are still common on many of the larger slash pine where they were tapped for their sap. During WWII the island served as a training ground as troops used the vast array of sand dunes, especially found in the park at the eastern

end.

Purchase of land for the park was started in the 1960s and completion of the causeway in 1965 opened the area to increase use of the beaches for recreation. Park facilities began soon after and St.

George Island State Park opened in the 1980s. Due to its arid environment and location, the population and variety of animal life is limited. However, there are some unusual forms, especially marine animals, including Loggerhead Sea Turtles. Of course, birds are present and abundant - the barrier islands along the Gulf Coast represent an important “resting stops” for migrating species. The park is a favorite haunt for bird watchers, both in the woods/fields and along the shorelines.

Most of the park is covered by fine white sand. With the constant wind moving the sand about and occasional strong storms that wash over its surface, there is little opportunity for any significant soil development. This dictates the nature of sparse vegetation that struggles for existence on the dunes and flats.

There are a few trees that can eke out an existence, although there is a small forested area about half-way along the main road where the campground is located. Of course, all the surrounding

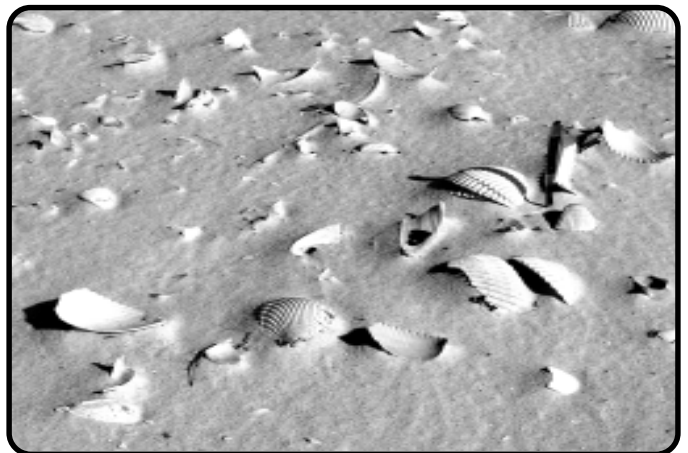


A number of small ponds in the park support a wide variety of wildlife - this one is near the campground.

Photographs by K R. Cranson



Chevron scars on a pine tree recall the time when pitch was collected to make turpentine.



Sea shells are abundant along the miles of white sand beaches at St. George State Park.



Hiking along one of the park's trails provides some interesting discoveries - here a small toadstool had "popped-up" through the sand overnight.

water is salty, but a few freshwater ponds (sloughs) have formed that provide favorable habitat for fish and great fishing for long legged birds.

While there is unlimited hiking along the shoreline, only one walking trail has been developed in the park. It starts at the RV campground and runs some 2.5 miles (3.75 km) to the East Cove Primitive Campground, used mostly

by canoists and kyakers. While biking opportunities are confined to the campground and main road, there is a non-maintained dirt and sand road used only by 4-wheel vehicles that leads to the far east end of the park (and island). A number of parking areas with access to the beach are located along the 4 mile main road leading from the entrance station to the Campground - two with picnic/sun shelters and showers for swimmers.

A well maintained campground features 60 spacious sites with electric and water hook-ups. Two elevated restrooms (in consideration of possible flooding by strong storms) include hot water showers. Pets are allowed, but must be kept on a short leash and only on roads or parking areas. Like most Florida State Parks, the entrance gate is closed at sunset and the lock combination given to campers is necessary for entrance after dark. krc

State Park Directory - A new source of information on more than 1,600 state parks and recreation areas in 49 states is now available. **RV Camping in State Parks** provides an overview of each park, a park-locator chart, driving directions, fees and reservations information. The 256-page book can be

ordered from Roundabout Publication's web site (www.roadnotes.com) or toll free at 1-800-455-2207. Cost is \$14.95.

New Wildlife Refuge - Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge is a 35,000-acre area located near Crookston, in northwestern Minnesota. It joins 12 existing conservation areas to protect important habitat for migratory waterfowl and ground nesting birds. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service joins numerous partners in continuing one of the largest wetlands and tall grass prairie restoration projects in U.S. history. It becomes the 545th unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System. More information at www.doi.gov

National Park Blanket - Pendleton Woolen Mills has honored America's greatest treasure - our national parks - by producing a special collection of blankets. Half the purchase price will be donated to the National Parks Foundation. To date, unique designs have been created for seven national parks; Acadia, Crater Lake, Glacier, Rainier, Grand Canyon, Grand Teton and Great Smokey Mountain. More information or to order, phone 202-238-4200 or visit nationalparks.org.

Recipe Corner

CAMPER STEW

1 lb. ground meat
 1 med. onion, chopped
 1 med. green pepper, chopped
 Heat until meat is browned, then add:
 2 cans tomato soup
 3 cans vegetarian vegetable soup
 2 soup cans of water
 Salt and pepper to taste
 Simmer slowly for 20-30 min., stirring occasionally.

I omitted the water in this recipes that I handed out in Sebring at ScampCamp 2004. Sorry for the omission. **Judy Freed**, Punxsutawney, PA



Gene Gallmann

(1934-2004)

Many of you knew Gene Gallmann. He was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of SOI. As soon as he learned of our Scamp Owners group, Gene and Joan joined immediately. They were SOI #14. Gene initiated the idea of having a 'Tech Session' during ScampCamp gatherings and hosted many with Bob Anderson and others. He freely gave of his time to anyone who had questions about Scamp trailers and problems their owners may have encountered.

If you want to know a person's priority, just look at how they use their time. Time is the most precious thing we have to spend. While some would argue that money is more valuable, remember it is possible to get more money, but we can't make more time. The way a person spends this scarce commodity we call time says much about an individual. In Gene's case, his time was invested in people. And this was never more obvious than to watch him talking with other SOI Members.

I am reminded of the Apostle Paul's instructions to the church at Ephesus "*Use every chance you have for doing good.*" (Eph 5:16). He repeated this encouragement to the Galatians "*Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone*" (Gal 6:10). This characteristic certainly exemplified Gene.

Gene and Joan were on their way to their son's house on Christmas day when he became ill. He died later that afternoon.

Gene's excitement about Scamps and SOI was so intense that it might be called extreme. I recall several E-mails he sent me while he and Joan were looking for a 5th wheel Scamp about a year ago. There was one for sale not far from where we live and I had gone down to look at it and reported back to them. His desire for that Scamp was so great that he confessed he couldn't sleep at night.

This same intensity was also evident each time we would meet at ScampCamps

whether it was at Highlands Hammock State Park where we first met in Florida, at Sleeping Bear Dunes in Michigan, among the beautiful setting surrounding Devils Lake in Wisconsin or among the corn fields of northern Iowa.

*From a presentation at
ScampCamp 2005 at Highlands
Hammock State Park, Sebring,
Florida.*



Group Insurance - Would we as a group qualify for reduced insurance on our trailers? We are certainly a bunch of mature, conservative part-timers that some insurance underwriter would love to insure. Chances are that there is someone in our organization within the insurance world that would be glad to check on this. The reason this has importance to me is my insurance premium has increased from 200 to 400 \$ annually. Probably the result of my location. Harris County, densely populated. **Bob Kotch**, Kingwood, TX

Hanging it Up - I will not be renewing my membership for 2005. I have made the tough decision that everyone has to make or should make sooner or later. I am getting off the road, selling my Scamp and doing the things that old men do. Whatever that is. Any way, I am not comfortable on the road at highway speeds and do not think that it is a good idea to be traveling alone. It is not an easy decision to make nor a cause for celebration. I canceled my reservations at Highlands Hammock. I enjoyed last year's gathering and was looking forward to 2005 to renew some of the acquaintances that were made in 2004. I hope that you have another good ScampCamp and I shall be thinking of all of you. **Bill Thompson**, Zephyrhills, FL.

Lewis and Clark Trail - You may be interested to know that my wife, Pat and I recently finished our Scamp trip following the Lewis and Clark trail from St. Louis, MO to Fort Stevens, Or. In 2003 we drove down to St. Louis and followed the L & C Trail to Fort Mandan in Washburn, ND



Baja Anyone?

Sharon and I are considering driving down the Baja during February or March in 2006. Anyone interested in a Scamp Caravan down through this part of Mexico?

Rod

then returned to Minneapolis. In 2004 we drove back to Fort Mandan to continue and Scamped our way to Fort Clatsop, Or. In fact, it was for this trip that we bought our Scamp. **Tom Harris & Pat Vogel**, Minneapolis, MN.

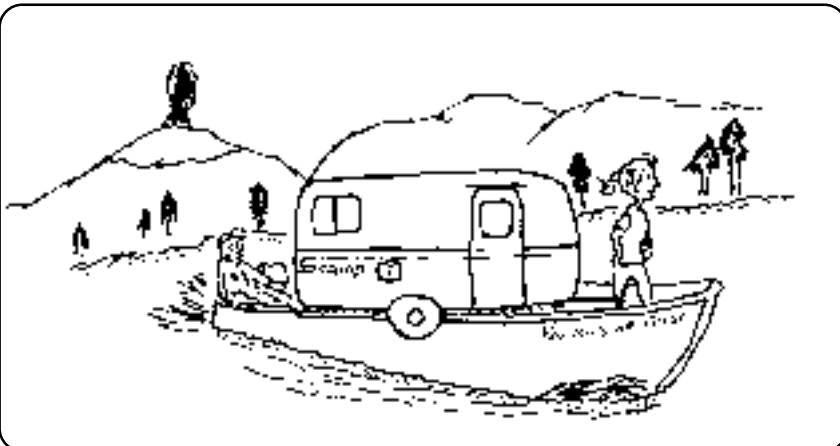
Alaska Trip - Just for your information. My wife and I and two oldest children are going to Alaska this summer. We will take our Scamp on the Alaskan Marine Highway from Bellingham, WA, stop in Juneau. From Skagway will drive the rest of the way and tour Alaska and return via land highways to Colorado Springs, CO. The entire trip will last 4 weeks. I am not proposing a ScampCamp, this is just for your interest. Perhaps we can submit an article after we are done. **Bob & Tedi Lojewski**, Colorado Springs, CO.

A "Real" Truck - I bought a 1992 16-foot Scamp from a local couple about ten miles from here last March. I have been on a couple trips since. The first long trip was a lesson learned - do not use a half-a-truck for pulling a Scamp 16! I used a Chevy S-10 - which pulled OK, but made the clutch assembly overheat. As a result, I spent the night in Caraboo, WI en route to the Midwest Renewable Energy Fair in Custer, WI getting a new clutch, etc. Lesson learned, after going through another clutch while babying her home! I've since got a truck - a Dodge 2500 with a diesel engine and five speed transmission. Took 'em to a family reunion up in MD the end of July and on a trip to Fletcher, NC. It's a nice

pulling "home-away-from-home." I hope to maybe cross paths with some SOI members in VA at the Blue Ridge ScampCamp. Best regards to everyone with a Scamp out there. **Bill Shuler**, Monetta, SC.

Heading Home - We camped on Blythe Island, Georgia, (on our way home from ScampCamp 2005) on a Thursday night. As soon as we pulled in, we noticed another Scamp. We walked over and told them how cute their camper was. They were all smiles and said, "Thank you!" Then we pointed in the direction of our Scamp, which they hadn't noticed, and we all laughed. They were not aware of the Scamp group, so we gave them some information. We let them read the newsletter, etc. They are from New York and camp at the same spot for three months each year. She makes quilts inside her Scamp! She showed us her set-up--unbelievable! We did have one problem, however, on . . . Friday night in Wytheville, Virginia. Jack had winterized the camper, so we couldn't hook up to water. We had only been there about an hour when our electricity went out. That's when he went to Plan B. Jack had a heavy-duty extension cord and was able to bring it inside the camper and plug in the heater. Thank goodness--it was only 15 degrees outside! We survived the night, nice and warm, and left early the next morning. Not only was I (Judy) not able to take my nice, warm bath, but the campground's showers were being remodeled and Jack couldn't bathe either! The bathtub looked really good when we got home. **Jack and Judy Freed**, Punxsutawney, PA

"I told you the forecast was for heavy rain up here!"



Questions and Answers

Travel Question - We are planning a trip from Wisconsin to Louisiana next fall (2005). We would like to drive about 10 hours the first day and find a nice Scamp ground on the Missouri side of where Kentucky and Tennessee meet. I am in my late 40's and Jerry is in his 50's and would like to stay at a rather quiet place. We will be traveling down on Hwy (I-55) with our 2003 16-ft Scamp and are thinking of taking it all of the way

down to the gulf. We would also like to find a Scamp ground in Louisiana. Does anyone have any ideas or experiences they would like to share with us? **Patti Brown & Jerry Gegare**, Bohners Lake, WI. E-mail: ttjeanbrown@voyager.net

Sticky Stuff - We recently purchased a 1993 13-ft Scamp. The interior insulation is coated with a grey sticky substance. I believe this is residue from the propane stove. Do you have a suggestion for cleaning this up? **Judy Huddleston** E-mail: huddles@juno.com

Scamp Cover - I own a scamp 5th wheel and am hoping that someone may be able to offer a reasonably affordable and user friendly suggestion for keeping my camper out of the weather. I've tried covering it with various tarps, but they are difficult to put over the camper and tend to blow off no matter how well I tie them on. Further, they are not the correct shape for a 5th wheel. **Scott Smith**, E-mail:

Tail Lights - I took my Sienna van up to the U-Haul shop that had originally installed my trailer wiring and hitch (in Q & A in a past issue of the *SOI News*). I am told that newer cars and vans have a three wire system to the lights, while most trailers still use a two wire system. There is a "box" that converts the three wire system of the van to a two wire system that the trailer can plug into. They said something was wrong with the "box" and replaced it (sold me a new one). They also put a new connector on a wire leading from the van's left tail light to the box. However, when I got home the left turn light on the trailer wasn't working. A couple of days later, I (took) both the van and trailer back in to have this problem fixed (had a 90 day warranty on the installation of the box, etc.). They checked out the wiring with both vehicles connected and found another connector to that same left turn light that was loose and replaced it. I have NOT tried it since then. **June Ahrens**, Columbus, OH

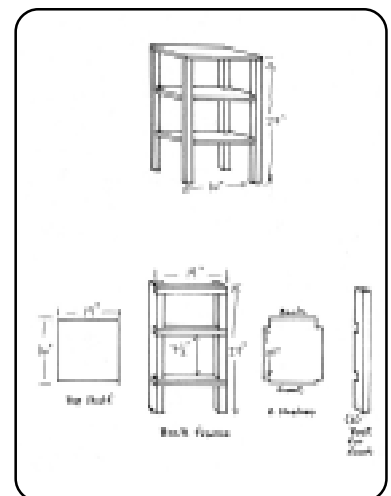
Modification and Changes

Extra Storage - We have modified our Scamp for more storage space. The change was made to the wardrobe closet located next to the door in our 2004 16-foot Scamp. The closet only had a door on the top part leaving the bottom area as an excellent area for storage, but no way to access it. Nothing was replaced, rather we made usable space for an area that was not effectively being used.

You will need some materials and a few tools. Materials: 2"x 4" (cut in half lengthwise to get 2"x 2"), 1/2" plywood for shelves, big eyelets (need 6, 2 per shelf), 1/2" plastic paneling strip (to edge the fiberglass of cutout area), screws and nails (no more than 1' long), and bungee cords to secure the contents in the shelves. Required tools: Roto-zip with a blade that cuts plastic, level, drill with drill bits and a Phillips screwdriver bit, table saw or skill saw, hammer and screwdriver (Phillips).

Construction details. When installing the framework, place the back framework in first. It may be necessary to cut each shelf differently to fit the curve along the back wall. Start with the bottom shelf, it will set on the back framework cross beam and fit into the front post notches (see sketch). Secure the bottom shelf to the back frame cross beams and install the second shelf in a like manner. Before installing the top shelf, be sure the framework is tight and secure. Cut the top shelf to fit the opening and screw it in place so the framework does not wiggle. Once all shelves are in, secure the two lower shelves with nails (or screws) to the front post for extra support and stability. Once the shelves are in, drill the eyelet holes and install the eyelets. Fit and install the 1/2" plastic paneling trim on the exposed edges of the fiberglass opening.

Additional notes. Use caution and go slow when using the roto-sip. Know where the bottom of the closet is and measure up 1" as the closet casting does not go all the way to the floor, it is about 6" above the floor. Suggestion for the piece



of fiberglass left over. Use scrap lumber and make a tray to go over the stove top burners to provide more counter space. It can also serve as a serving tray.

David & Kate Watling, Pleasant Prairie, WI.

Tech Corner



The SOI Bird says "What have you done to improve your fuel economy?"

Over the winter months the price of fuel has risen dramatically and regular gasoline has topped \$2 a gallon in many locations. With the cost of crude oil rising and predicted to go even higher, anyone traveling can expect to pay more for fuel in the coming months and years. Although it may sound strange, the cost of gas in the United States is relative low when compared to other parts of the world. In many places a gallon of gas will cost two or even three times what we pay in this country. Even so, that does not make a visit to the gas pump any less traumatic - it's another form of "sticker shock!" So what can you do as someone contemplating travel with your trailer? Good question, and maybe the following information will help a little.

As you might expect, there are several factors that affect your gas mileage. Here is a partial list:

Temperature

Wind

Roads:

hills/mountains

condition (gravel, curves, snow, etc.)

Traffic conditions

Speed

Rate of Acceleration

Wheel Alignment

Tires - type and pressure

Air Conditioner/Defroster

Trailer - size and weight

Have you noticed that your gas mileage is better in the summer than during

winter? Fuel economy is lower during cold weather because the air is denser and it takes more energy to move the vehicle (and trailer) through the air. While there is not much you can do about this, it is one factor that must be considered and a difference of 50° F can reduce a vehicle's average fuel economy by 5% and as much as 13%. Wind is a two-edged sword, it may help or may be detrimental. Experts suggest that driving directly into a 20 mph headwind may reduce your fuel economy up to 6%. I certainly can relate to this, while driving into a much stronger wind across New Mexico my gas mileage went from about 15 mpg down to 10 mpg (30+ %). Hills and road conditions can play a major role in fuel economy too. Driving on hilly roads can increase fuel use by as much as 25% and road conditions can lower your fuel economy by as much as half (50%). Traffic conditions (congestion, stop and go, etc) can contribute to a reduction of another 15%.

While there is not much you can do about these factors, there are some others that you can control to some degree. Speed is the most obvious. In general, the faster you drive the lower your fuel economy. Gas mileage decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 mph. Experts indicate that driving 70 mph as compared to 55 mph will cost you up to 25% more in fuel. Similarly, the way you accelerate is important. Aggressive driving (rapid acceleration and braking along with speeding) is a major waste of fuel and can use up to 33% more fuel. So, gently pulling away from stops and anticipating stops by slowing gradually are significant habits to increase gas mileage.

Maintenance can also be important and is something you are mostly able to control. For example, good habits for checking routine maintenance pays off at the gas pump. Having your vehicle serviced regularly according to the manufacturer's recommendations will catch items like dirty or clogged air filters. A clean air filter can improve fuel economy up to 10% over a dirty one. Keeping your engine well tuned can be a major factor in achieving the best fuel economy possible. Faithfully checking the tire pres-

sure is another easy way to help with good fuel economy. Tire pressure, on both your tow vehicle and the trailer, should be at the value printed on the sidewalls. One estimate is that gas mileage is reduced by about 2% for each 5 psi of under inflation for the four tires of your vehicle. Also, radial tires tend to increase the miles/gallon achieved over non-radials by a small amount.

Other things within your control is use of the air conditioner and defrosters. While it is nice to roll-up the windows and turn on the A/C, it may cost you when you fill up the next time. One estimate indicates that in extreme heat, use of the air conditioner can eat up to 20% of the energy produced by the vehicle's engine. Defrosters may behave in a similar way. Also, use of accessories that require excessive electrical energy may fall into the same category as use of A/C in reducing your fuel economy some.

Now for some myths. For those of us who use pickups for tow vehicles, it seems logical that the open space in the box would cause a "drag" that would reduce fuel economy. Not true according to engineers who should know about these things. They say an empty pickup's aerodynamics are best with the tailgate up, so money spent on some of the special tailgate replacements might be better spend buying fuel. Another story often repeated is that lower axle ratios will significantly reduce your gas mileage. Again, not a major factor in the miles/gallon you will get. While the choice of axle ratios does have a small effect (perhaps 0.25 mpg), the advantage in improved towing performance is a good trade off.

Most of us are familiar with the fuel fig-

Special Note

Keeping up to date with all the SOI Members' records is quite time consuming. Recently, there has been a series of requests from members who have not received one or more of the quarterly newsletters. In most cases this was caused by a change of address, either permanent or temporary. The *SOI News* will not be forwarded, so it is critical that a correct address be used for each mailing. If you change your address, it is important to notify the SOI Editor so your records can be updated and the correct address used for subsequent mailings. Thanks.

ures posted in big print on the stickers of new vehicles. These give the estimated miles/gallon that the vehicles might be expected to deliver. Can these be a guild in buying a tow vehicle for your Scamp (or other small "fiber glass eggs")? Maybe, but these values are not what you may think they are. The testing that results in the numbers posted is done by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). One would expect that the numbers would be obtained the same way you and I check our fuel economy - simply divide the miles driven by the amount of fuel used while driving down the road.

Wrong! It is all done on a dynamometer in a laboratory somewhere by technicians watching gages under strictly controlled standardized conditions. A dynamometer is a device used to measure mechanical power, especially one that measures the output of the driving torque of a rotating machine, like the wheels of an automobile or light truck. A special blend of gas is used along with many other aspects to provide a controlled environment during the tests. This is what standardization means. Among the standard procedures is the "speed" at which the vehicle is operated during the "test drive," the length of time the test lasts, the temperature, kind of road traveled, and a host of other factors. Two basic sets of conditions are used, one to simulate city driving and another for highway - the two numbers listed on new vehicle stickers as mentioned above. One of the most interesting aspects is how the actual fuel economy numbers are obtained. Not as suggested above (dividing the miles by the amount of fuel used),



Leon's Logic - "Here are some ideas to help you improve your gas mileage."

but by sampling and measuring the kinds and amounts of carbon compounds coming out of the tailpipe!

The bottom line is that these EPA values are not the same as what you can expect with the type of driving you do, especially while towing an RV.

For those of us who have small, light weight, aerodynamically shaped fiberglass trailers, we may enjoy the best of all the factors discussed above. Since our RVs weigh less, we can chose a tow vehicle that promises higher fuel economy while still giving good performance when towing. Wind does not have the detrimental effect that it does on the "boxy" trailers that present a larger forward facing surface area. While traveling and living in a small unit does present other challenges, fuel economy in these times of high prices is just another added benefit.

Editor's Note: Much of the information used in this feature was presented in an excellent article in the December 2004 issue of Trailer Life entitled "Fuelish Thinking."



Thanks to SOI member Gary Adamson

canyon.com) for information. It is so complete it will even give you a map from your front door to theirs. Just click on the e-mail icon at the upper right of the page to make your reservation or you can phone at 1-866-866-5253. Be sure to say you are with the Scamp group. Jim or Julie will take good care of you but don't delay. The campground is small. After you have secured your reservation, please send us your mailing address so we can send you an information packet. Thanks. **Bernie & Evelyn Stremlau**, 12729 B St., Omaha NE 68144, e-mail StremlauBE@aol.com phone 402-334-0855.

Oregon Gathering - July 15 - 17, 2005 at Bullard's Beach State Park, Brandon, OR. All Fiberglass Trailers Welcome. Join us for good fellowship, information, food and fun! Owners of all types of fiberglass trailers are welcome. Two years ago, the Oregon Gathering started with 17 trailers, last year there were 70 trailers present, and this year there are more than 30 trailers registered nine months in advance! At the last Gathering, we had trailer tours, pot lucks, campfire gatherings, workshops on Dutch oven cooking, and solar installation. People also enjoyed the coast, the quaint town of Bandon and all the many local attractions and activities. Consider joining us this year! For more Information contact **Nancy Wolf** at: nkwolf@hotmail.com or PH: (541) 496-0573.

Devils Lake ScampCamp August 15-18, 2005 at Devils Lake State Park near Baraboo, WI. This 9,000+ acre park is one of the most popular in the state. It features spectacular scenery, great recreational activities, a nature center and miles of hiking trails. The famous Wisconsin Dells and other tourist attractions are nearby. Gathering will be in the Quartzite campground, request campsites: 41,42, 47, 49,51-61 or 85-100. Call Reserve America at 1-888-947-2757. If you have a Golden age, Golden Eagle or Golden Access Passport card, be sure to let them know. For more information contact **Joan Gallmann**. E-mail: ggallmann@ticon.net or PH: 262-251-7283.

New York ScampCamp at Letchworth State Park from September 12 to 16, 2005. This park has been called to as the grand

Future ScampCamps

S a n d h i l l s ScampCamp - NEW CAMPGROUND Due to circumstances beyond our control, the campground has been changed. We will be meeting at Eagle Canyon Hideaway June 6-10, 2005, NW of Ogallala, NE. You can checkout their web site (w w w . e a g l e -

canyon of the east and is very beautiful. Cost should be about \$100 for the 4-nights which includes electric hookup. While there are no water hook-ups, spigots are generally within 125 feet of all sites. All sites are equipped with a picnic table and ground grill. There is a facility building with hot showers and flush toilets. A dump station is available and recycling is mandatory. The gathering will be in the northern section of the park, called Highbanks, on camp loop 200. Pets are allowed, but will need proof of current rabies vaccination and must be on a leash at all times. Of course, droppings must be removed and pets are not allowed at the camp store, playground or camper building. Reservations can be made thru Reserve America either online or by calling 1-800-456-2267. **Ray Johnson** will serve as the contact person for additional information and questions. E-mail: Scamp1940@aol.com.

ScampCamp 2006 - February 8-11, 2005 (Tues-Fri) at Sebring, Florida is planned for our 8th Annual ScampCamp at Highlands Hammock State Park. More than a hundred SOI Members attended ScampCamp 2005. If you are planning to attend, reservations should be made as soon as possible. To place a reservation, have your credit card ready and call 800-326-3521. Request a campsite number between 71-138. Once you have a reservation, please contact **Alice Vernezze** at ezzeal@bellsouth.net or PH: 321-773-2676. Alice has her registration sheet started and would like to collect the following information: 1) Names of all attending; 2) City & state; 3) Site number; 4) Dates attending; 5) SOI number; 6) size of Scamp or trailer and 7) is a name tag needed?

Santa Ana (continued from page 16)

books, maps, and gifts. Of course, the knowledgeable staff will be able to provide detailed information and answer any questions you may have. They have field guides and binoculars to lend out for use during your visit. It is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 7 days a week.

There are numerous trails throughout

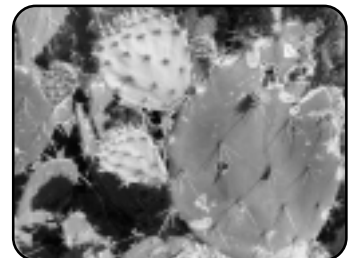
the 2,800 acre site for hikers and bicycles. In addition to more than 12.5 miles (20 km) of trails, a number of other activities are offered including canoeing on the Rio Grande River and a tram tour along the 7-mile Refuge Drive route (November through May). Cars and bicycles can also use the same road to view the "back country" of the refuge. Sharon and I were able to participate in one of the guided canoe trips in the morning and biked the 7-mile loop road in the afternoon. Of course, bird watching events are conducted by the refuge as well as many independent groups.

This preserve is managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and was established in 1943. It is one of 544 refuges scattered across the country. Hundreds of these are located along the four major corridors (or flyways) that waterfowl and other migrating birds use. They are vital to breeding, feeding and resting as millions of birds make their annual journey south and return each year. Some 700 species of birds, more than 200 kinds of mammals and 250 reptiles and amphibians types use these refuges. You can learn more about the National Wildlife Refuges at www.fwd.gov. The Santa Ana Refuge can be contacted directly at 956-787-3079 or Route 2, Box 202A, Alamo, TX 78516.



The National Wildlife Service offers a guided tour on the 7-mile loop road in the refuge on their trams.

Photographs by K R. Cranson



Spring at Santa Ana brings new growth (the lighter colored leaf) on a Prickly Pear cactus.



One of the more exciting activities offered to visitors is the opportunity to paddle a 4.5 mile portion of the Rio Grande River that separates the U.S. from Mexico.

Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge

by K.R. Cranson



Plaine Chachalaca, one of the common birds that visit a feeder near the visitor center.

Photograph by S.K. Cranson

Nestled in a sweeping bend of the Rio Grande River, the Santa Ana National Refuge (NWR) offers some interesting nature activities to anyone traveling in southern Texas. It lies along the Central and Mississippi flyways that funnel migrating birds from the north to both Central and South America. This refuge is home, either permanent or temporary, to nearly 400

bird species and is one of the top birding destinations in the world. In addition, it hosts half of all the butterfly species found in North America.

Numerous types of wildlife also thrive in the Santa Ana NWR including the rare and endangered ocelot (a member of the cat family) as well as many other mammals, amphibians and reptiles. The bottom lands along the river and lakes feature hardwood forests that provide nesting and feeding habitats for birds and other forms of wildlife. Before dams were built along the Rio Grande River, it flooded pe-

riodically to provide fertile silt to the lowlands along its banks. These floods also created crescent-shaped oxbow lakes (called "resacas" locally) when a channel was first cut than abandon as the river shifted its course. A number of these can be seen at Santa Ana NWR as small lakes.

Prior to that time most of the native vegetation was rapidly being cleared so the land could be used for agriculture. In fact it narrowly escaped becoming part of a large scale river development project when the federal government purchased it to protect migratory birds. Today, of course, it makes an enticing break from the cleared and altered lands that make up much of the landscape in this area just north across the river from Mexico.

Your first stop should be the Visitor Center. There you will find many exhibits featuring the birds and other wildlife found in the refuge along with a nice selection of



Exhibit of the very rare Ocelot on display in the Santa Ana NWR Visitor Center.

Photograph by K.R. Cranson

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SOI Web Site

Dan Meyer has done an outstanding job with the SOI Web Site over the past couple years. I never cease to be amazed at how effective the web site is in letting Scamp owners know about our group. He has requested some assistance in maintaining it. Dan is looking for someone who knows Microsoft Front Page who might be willing to pick up some of the work. In particular, he would like someone to keep track of the classifieds and forward them to him twice a month. If you would like to contribute to this important aspect of SOIs work, please contact him at E-mail: nokfb@skypoint.com or by phone: 763-784-8835.