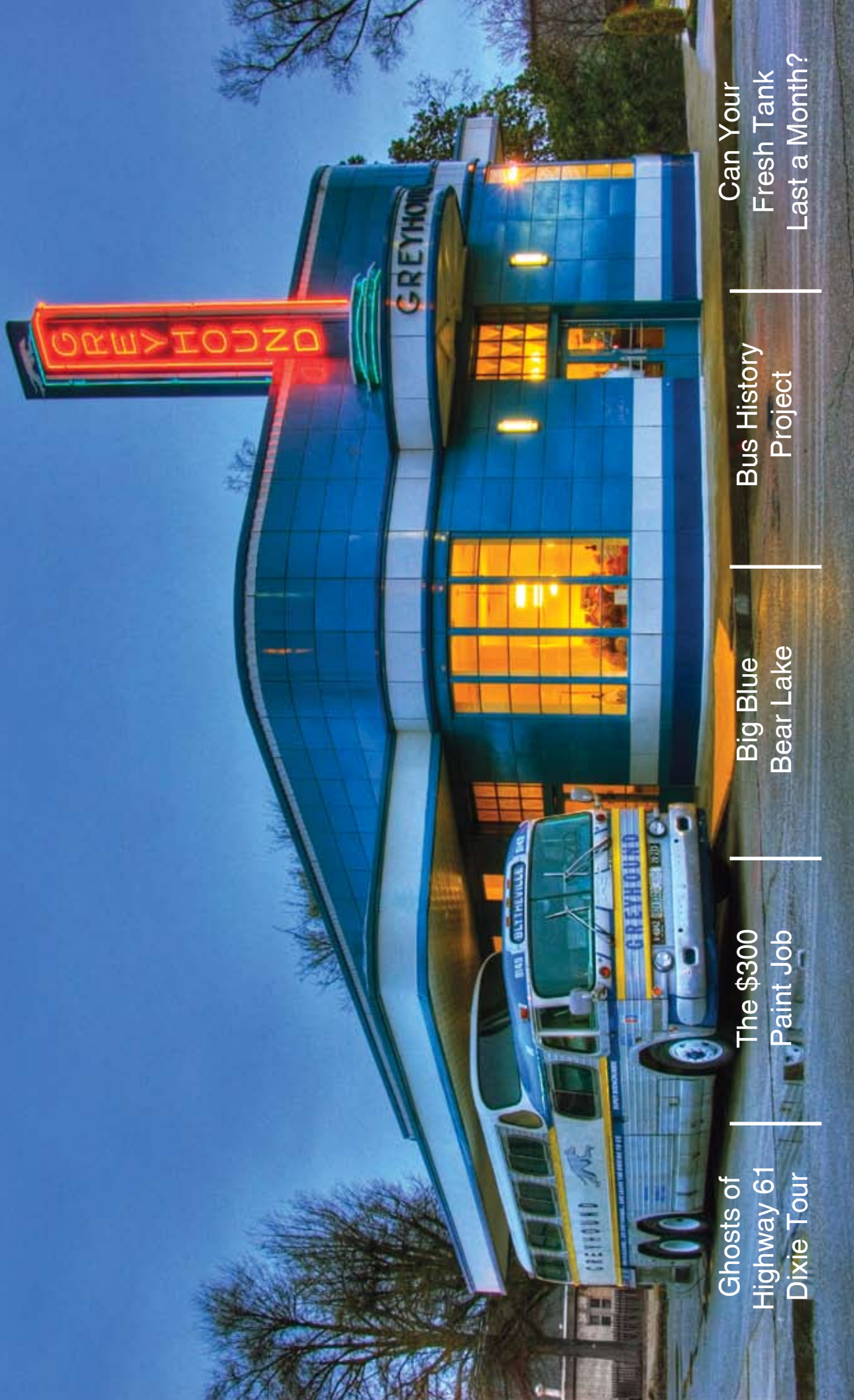


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Bus Conversion Magazine

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June 2013



Ghosts of
Highway 61
Dixie Tour

The \$300
Paint Job

Big Blue
Bear Lake

Bus History
Project

Can Your
Fresh Tank
Last a Month?



YOUR BUS ON THE COVER!

Do you think your bus should be featured in *Bus Conversion Magazine*? Send high resolution digital files to the Office Manager, Lisa@BusConversions.com. To be considered for the featured centerfold, files must be very high resolution. See the article submission guidelines on page 28 for more information.

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Publisher's Note
Gary Hall

Get Your BCM Back Issues Now

After traveling close to 100,000 miles in various RVs, before I bought my first bus, like many of you, I did a lot of research. I was fortunate enough to live in the same area that *Bus Conversion Magazine* was published, so I went over to meet the owner. He had been driving buses since he was 18 and had driven many different buses. He told me several reasons why a bus conversion is significantly better than a regular stick-n-staple motorhome.

I still wasn't 100% convinced, so I subscribed to *Bus Conversion Magazine* to learn more. I read the first magazine, then went back the next day to buy some of the back issues in stock. Soon after that I ended up with every issue of BCM ever printed since 1991. I really enjoy reading the back issues and looking at the pictures to see how buses have evolved over the years, and I gathered a ton of ideas as to how I would configure my next bus when I design it.

I spent all of my available time reading those old issues in chronological order from the first one printed on newspaper stock to the latest copy at the time. After reading about 10 issues and speaking to a couple other bus conversion owners, I was sold. I bought my first MCI-7 cargo bus. I was hooked and now I am running with the Big Dogs, other bus owners.

I liked the idea of Bus Conversions so much, I bought the company. When I purchased *Bus Conversion Magazine*, it came with about 2500 back issues of the magazine all the way back to 1991. Our first task was organizing the

—Continued on page 6

Index of Advertisers

Ardemco	32
All American Urethane	20
Autex	26
B & B Coach	21
Balance Masters.....	9
Byler Rivet Supply	6
Custom Instrument Panels	29
Engine Heat Protection	13
Engine Power Source	27
Fastening Systems International	24
HighwayBus.com	23
Special Event Vehicles	18
Wrico International	3

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Bus Conversion Magazine

June 2013



4



10



25



14



20

ON THE COVER

Blytheville, Arkansas restored their historic Bus Depot, and Tom McNally organized the Ghosts of Highway 61 Dixie Tour to celebrate. See the coverage beginning on page 14.

The rally included stops at Graceland and a parade. And keep your ear to the ground; they may be doing it again in two years!

IN THIS ISSUE

Index of Advertisers	2
Publisher's Note: Gary Hall	2
Big Blue Bear Lake: Sandy Koos	4
Bus History Project: John Swartley	10
Ghosts of Highway 61 Dixie Tour	14
The \$300 Paint Job: Anthony Brady	20
Can Your Fresh H ₂ O Tank Last a Month? ..	25
BCM Article Submission Guidelines	28
Service Directory	29
Classified Ads	30

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Big Blue

Bear Lake

F

Ever heard of Bear Lake? It straddles the Utah and Idaho borders. We hadn't heard of it and stumbled upon it completely by accident. The fires in New Mexico that changed our original route were behind us and we had practically exhausted the sights of Colorado Springs.

We were thinking about heading east toward Minnesota, Northern Wisconsin, and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Watching the weather channel and seeing the rains which flooded Minot, North Dakota and the tornados in the Midwest was one of those things that make you go Hmmm... Maybe the Midwest was not the place to be this year. Okay, so where then?

Time to get out the atlas. We both like the water. So someplace with water. Sitting on the border of Utah and Idaho, in the far east corner was a fair sized blue blob that turned out to be Bear Lake. Never heard of it, but it was water. We sort of wandered in that direction which allowed us to visit family and friends in the Denver area and another friend in Casper, Wyoming. We took 287 to Rawlins, then I-80 west. We spent the night in Little America, Wyoming where we picked up US 30 West and went to Sage. From there we took Utah 30 which runs into US 89. US 89 skirts the west edge of Bear Lake for about 30 miles.

If you are looking for wild night life with upscale restaurants and bars, the



Summer of Weather Avoidance

By Sandy Koos



Work Camping wasn't "so bad" and provided plenty of time to explore the area.



Bear Lake area ain't for you. There are three "towns" on that 30 mile stretch of Highway 89, Garden City, Utah, population 558, Fish Haven, Idaho, population 139 and St. Charles, Idaho, population 156. But, if you want a quiet place with pretty country, friendly people and a good place for families, take a look at Bear Lake. There is not an overabundance of RV parks, only five are in the area, one of which is "members only." Most of the visitors are weekenders from the Salt Lake City area, so they do not have "a seasonal rate."

We checked the KOA but they were a little out of our price range. We saw someone with a half dozen sites in their back yard—a little too rustic. We finally found Bear Lake North campground in St. Charles. While it was not upscale, it was neatly kept with lots of grass and trees. We went into the office and Kent, the owner, told us he didn't have any long term spots. The only one he had was for his work campers who, because of illness, had backed out. He asked us if we would be interested. We have never work camped before so we asked him how long and he said until the week after Labor Day. In exchange for 20 hours of work each week, we would get free rent and utilities. We thought, "What the heck! Give it a try." We stayed from the middle of June until just after Labor Day. It turned out to be not so bad; we weren't exactly working ourselves to death and it gave us a lot of time to prowl the area.

There are a couple of small grocery stores but for any real buying you will have to take a drive to Logan, Utah, for the "big box" stores, or to Montpelier, Idaho, for a "real grocery store." Montpelier is about 20 miles away. Logan is about an hour's drive, but it is a drive well worth taking.

—Continued on page 7

Publisher's Note

Gary Hall

—Continued from page 2

magazines; counting and cataloging all of the issues. Then we went through every issue and entered all of the articles and the authors' names of those articles in a spreadsheet. This document contains over 1300 articles, all relating to owning, operating, driving, maintenance, safety, and bus friendly places to travel to. It took us about four months off and on to complete this project.

The back issues we have are on the card stock insert. If you are missing one or two issues from your collection, order the missing issue from the list. We discovered subscribers out there who have every issue in their library and look forward to adding the next issue.

Or look for issues that match your bus projects, whether it is a full scale conversion, electrical, wiring, plumbing, or interior, there are articles for your make, year and model.

Go to BusConversions.com and see the entire list of back issues and all of the articles within those back issues. The list is also searchable, so you can find all of the articles about a particular subject and decide if you want to order one or more.

We have different quantities of printed back issues in stock. We only have one copy of some older issues and less than 20 for most of the back issues up until I became the Publisher last October. After October 2012, we have many more back issues in stock. When these copies are gone, there will be no more. So

if you would like a printed issue, now is the time to place an order; there are a limited number available and they will go fast.

We also have PDF files of many of the back issues available for download from our website, but not every printed issue has been converted.

There may be newbies out there just starting their bus conversion who want to buy one of every back issue available. In the future, we would like to be able to fulfill that need as well.

Take a look at the insert in this month's magazine. If you receive our E-magazine, click the link and view the entire list of articles. You can order directly from the website BCM Store. If you are a print subscriber, just go to www.BusConversions.com/BackIssues. Or use the order form on the insert to order by mail.

I expect many of you are just like me. Once I got bit by the bus bug, I wanted to read everything I could about Bus Conversions.

Don't forget, these also make great gift ideas and as you know Christmas is just around the corner. But you had better order now if you want printed editions as many of them will be gone by then.

—Gary Hall

Bus Conversion Magazine Publisher



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Big Blue

Bear Lake

—Continued from page 5

Highway 89 takes you from St. Charles to Logan up through the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. As you climb out of St. Charles toward the summit, take a few minutes to stop at the pullout. It gives you a great view of the lake and the three small towns nestled on its shore. The highway twists and winds its way through stands of trees and along a stream dotted with picnic areas. There is a stable located on the road and you can take a beautiful trail ride through the pines.

The lake itself is good-sized, covering 109 square miles. It sits at 5924 feet, which makes the summer weather really pleasant.

You can swim at a well tended beach on the north end of the lake (just you, not your dog), or fish for cutthroat, mackinaw, cisco, or whitefish. There is a lot of water skiing, sailing and even scuba diving in the blue waters. And while you are out on the lake, you might want to keep an eye out for the dreaded Bear Lake Monster. According to legend

it is a huge crocodile-like creature that Pecos Bill once fought to a standstill. The last "sighting" was in 2004. We didn't see it.

If you ride ATVs, Bear Lake could be your nirvana. Three wheelers, four wheelers, dirt bikes; they are literally all over the place. With all the up and down terrain and all the rural areas, I can see why. There is so much ATVing in the area that trail maps are a standard handout at all the



—Continued on page 8

Big Blue

Bear Lake

—Continued from page 7

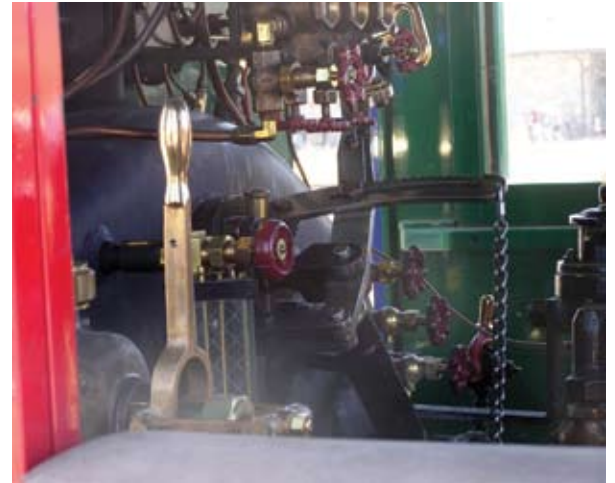
campgrounds. If you are a runner, there is a June marathon that goes through both states.

If, like Bob, you are a connoisseur of all things ice cream, you absolutely have to have at least one raspberry shake. Every restaurant and convenience mart serves raspberry shakes made with fresh raspberries. I didn't know this but the Bear Lake area is so famous for its raspberries that they have a yearly celebration. They start their harvest the third week in July and it runs for three to four weeks. Two days prior to the first Saturday in August they hold their annual Raspberry Days. There is a Little Miss Berry pageant, craft fair, entertainment, and a parade down Main Street, which is Highway 89. There is also a rodeo and a five kilometer run.

There are some things of interest in the area. On Forest road 412, which is paved, Minnetonka Cave sits at an elevation of 7700 feet. This limestone cave is the home to Townsend big eared bat. It is also home to some very impressive formations. Be forewarned. The interior temperature of the cave is about 40 degrees. Bring a sweater or light jacket. The tour takes about 90 minutes and is a half mile walk up and down 440 steps.

Between St. Charles and Montpelier is the town of Paris, population 512. The dominant feature of the main street is the Latter Day Saints Tabernacle. What makes it an eye popper is that this church in this small town will seat four times the population of the town. It was built between 1884 and 1889 by the residents of the town. It cost \$50,000 to build. The red sandstone was hauled by oxen wagon 18 miles from the area around Bear Lake. It is 127 feet long, 73 feet wide, and the tallest spire is 110 feet high. It is a historic site that is open for tours. What impressed me was the size and the intricately carved artistry of the woodwork. It is well worth a 30 minute stop.

I'm a history nut. Bob is a good sport. So when I came up with the idea of driving to Promontory Summit outside Ogden, Utah he just sighed, nodded and filled the car's tank. It meant a couple of hours on the road and Bob kept cautioning me not to expect too much. As he recollected the area around Ogden



Summer of Weather Avoidance

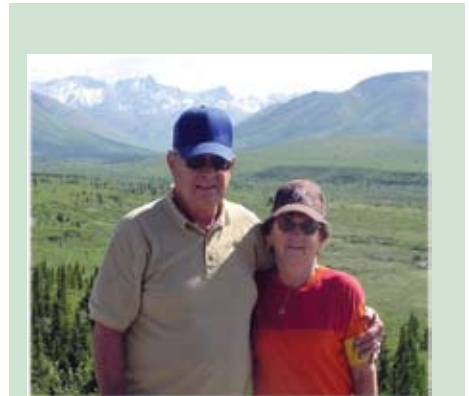
wasn't all that much, mostly brown grass and stubby weeds. He was right about the landscape, but I figured there might be some sort of marker that indicated where the Central and Union Railroads had joined track with the famous golden spike on May 10, 1869. But, to me at least, it was a chance to see another historical site. We were both pleasantly surprised. The National Park Service has a modern building which shows a film depicting the building of the railroad, interactive stuff for the kids and a number of artifacts. Among these was the famous golden spike which had been removed from the rail bed and brought inside. With the price of gold these days, it's no wonder!

An original section of track sits behind the building and that is where the show

is. They have two locomotives which are exact replicas of the two original trains. When we got there, the engines were sitting cow catcher to cow catcher. A platform was built so you could walk up the stairs and see into the cab of the engines. A replica of the gold spike replaces the real one. We prowled around a bit and were then asked to step back from the tracks. They fired up the engines, backed them up and then had them steam toward the onlookers. Even ever-patient Bob was impressed. All in all, it turned out to be a pleasant day trip.

So far our summer of wandering around trying to avoid natural disasters was turning out okay. But, it still wasn't time to return to the desert.

Where to next?



Sandy is a retired accountant who loves United States history and writing about her travels. Bob is a retired truck driver and did 90% of their bus conversion himself. They live in Happy Trails RV Resort in Surprise, Arizona. Contact them at carokonc@msn.com.

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Bus History Project



Since I claim to be a Bus Nut, I have given a lot of thought to what a bus is. Whenever I have a question I usually go to my instant information source, Wikipedia.

“Bus is a clipped form of the Latin word Omnibus. The latter name is derived from a hatter’s shop which was situated in front of one of the first bus stations in Nantes, France in 1823. “Omnes Omnibus” was a pun on the Latin sounding name of that hatter Omnès: omnes meaning “all” and omnibus means “for all” in Latin. Nantes citizens soon gave the nickname of Omnibus to the vehicle.

When motorized transport replaced horse-drawn transport starting in 1905, a motorized omnibus was called an autobus, a term still used.”

This answered what the term “bus” meant but didn’t really answer my question, so I started Googling. I found too much information, so I went to bus images which produced many sizes, shapes, and forms of the basic bus. All of the older photos were basically trucks someone had added seats to so they could haul people instead of stuff.

This worked all right but created a problem when it got cold outside, so they added walls and windows. This passenger bus was used in Springfield, Missouri for public transportation.

As the road system in the United States was improved, the bus transportation companies started competing for the passenger dollar with the established railroads. They could access small towns the railroads could not. Greyhound Lines





White bus that was brought to you by the same company that brought you the sewing machines, steamers, tractors and trucks. This photo was probably taken in the 1930s.



A bus delivers passengers to the new fledgling airplanes; little did they know how the airplane would affect the bus industry.



The railroads owned much of the bus action during the buses heyday. The bus above was used to haul workers to the war manufacturing plants during WWII.



The intercity bus and the automobile almost did away with railroad passenger service and now the airlines are taking over the passenger business.

started in Hibbing, Minnesota in 1914 and incorporated in 1929. By the 1930s, Greyhound was getting large and had such a monopoly that Trailways started in 1936 to give them some competition. They were called intercity bus lines. In 1935 Congress passed the Motor Carrier Act to place bus transportation under the authority of the Interstate Commerce Commission—ICC.

As the passenger trade increased, the intercity bus lines were in the market for faster, safer and more comfortable transportation.

Over the years the big bus companies fought for the paying public and overnight freight business with bigger and better buses.

In the last half of the twentieth century the major intercity bus companies introduced many bus improvements. The bus became a small building on wheels providing air, heating, bathroom, personal TV screens and air ride comfort for the passengers. The intercity bus industry had its highs and lows during this time frame.

The intercity bus and the automobile almost did away with railroad passenger service and now the airlines are taking over the passenger business.

As I reread my ramblings I realize I have touched on only one facet of what, in my mind, the term bus means. The transportation of people is really what the word bus means. Years ago I owned a VW bus and we installed a pad over the engine

—Continued on page 12

Bus History Project



—Continued from page 11

for my sons to ride on. I guess it was all right to use the term VW bus because I hauled people. By putting the bed in back maybe I really had a bus conversion which opens up a whole new conversation using the term bus.

Bus conversions are an industry in and of themselves. I assume one day someone was bored and looked at a retired intercity bus and realized he or she could live in this small building on wheels, by adding a bed and kitchen and moving it around to where the weather is warm all year.

It did not take the new industry long to take off with the term bus conversion. Google “bus conversion” and look at all the conversions in different stages and the wide selection of buses that are proudly displayed. The bus manufacturing industry soon started selling shells. One of the dictionary terms for shell is a hard casing or covering that protects or holds content. There are 26 different definitions for the word shell. Now the almost 80 bus manufactures, according to Busweb.com, offer all kinds and sizes of shells that are used for almost anything that needs to move people in one way or the other.

I am not sure if using the term “bus” for these more-or-less buildings on wheels is correct. One company, Prevost, calls them Induscar. Prevost, by the way, is a division of Volvo Group Canada and considers it a car. Several different companies have their own names. But for now when I meet one of these big beautiful masterpieces coming down the road it will always be a “BUS” in my mind!

—John Swartley
Springfield, Missouri

John Swartley is a frequent contributor to *Bus Conversion Magazine*. He researches topics of interest and shares with others through his writing. Buses are one of his main interests. He covered the Eagle rally in Branson in December 2012. Look for more articles by John in future issues of BCM.



Could this be one of the first bus conversions?



This is one of two buses built by tax payers to haul around the President and the Republican candidate during the 2012 election.



Inside view of ambulance bus. These are now being built by large cities for use in major disasters.



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Ghosts of Highway 61 Dixie Tour National Antique Bus Show



Having a staging area on the outskirts of town was a brilliant idea! Jim Shepherd proved true to his name and tirelessly and patiently guided all the buses in groups into town, through the one way streets and to our individual parking spots, making sure everybody got situated comfortably.



The one big worry in Tom McNally's mind when he started thinking about organizing a vintage bus rally at the newly restored Blytheville, Arkansas Greyhound Station was, "What if you gave a party and nobody came?" He articulated this thought on the closing evening of the Ghosts of Highway 61 Dixie Tour and National Antique Bus Show at a bandstand set up outside the Blytheville, Arkansas Greyhound Depot. About sixty people were gathered, listening to the local talent rock the stage. Tom's remarks came in between sets on the last evening of the very successful Ghosts of Highway 61 Dixie Tour. Participants had just been fed another spectacular meal, this time genuine southern barbecue with the best cole slaw ever.

Tom has gathered vintage buses together before but not on this scale.

The city of Blytheville—pronounced Bly-vuhl—rolled out the red carpet for the vintage (and not so vintage) buses. The



—Continued on page 18

Blytheville's Big Bash

By Wendy Crosby



Whether it's night or day, Blytheville's restored Greyhound station is a community landmark to be proud of.



Randy Lemmons of the Blytheville Area Chamber of Commerce joined in the festivities on Opening Night.



Mayor James Sanders of Blytheville welcomed participants at the depot for a Meet & Greet the first evening. He also led the parade.



John Musgraves of the City Council and a friend socialized at the Meet & Greet



Local residents mingled with the bus people all weekend.



Ghosts of Highway 61 Dixie Tour



Blytheville's Big Bash



Ghosts of Highway 61 Dixie Tour

—Continued from page 14

gleaming restored depot on a busy downtown corner is a proud monument to local and regional history and a nod to the old days of “dress up and ride the bus” mindset prevalent when buses were a major form of transportation.

As Tom explained to the local press, “A lot of people who attend events like this are retired bus drivers, or people who had bus drivers in their family,” he said. “But the thing about commercial vehicles like these, as opposed to antique cars, is that they hold vast amounts of public history. So many people have memories connected to bus travel. Maybe they’re ex-military and it was one of these buses that took them to war, or they rode the bus back and forth to college, or they were salesmen and rode the bus for work. A lot of people have these romantic memories about bus travel— people would dress up; it was an event to travel by bus. So a lot of the attraction is also that whole ‘good old days’ thing.”

And the people of the town were so welcoming and eager to see the buses and talk to the people in them. Several restaurants stayed open later for the participants and there was lots of interaction and appreciation from the citizens of Blytheville.

Even though the event started on April 4, buses arrived at the staging area



L.C. Hartsfeld and local dignitaries joined the festivities at the Thursday Meet & Greet



outside downtown all day on the third. This was a very good plan as it allowed Parking Czar Jim Shepherd a chance to group buses into similar types and arrange them for best display in the closed off streets of the downtown. Maneuvering those one-way streets and finding a suitable spot for everybody was quite the job, but Jim performed patiently and did his best to satisfy everybody’s requests. Hats off to him!

Once all the buses were parked, they were everywhere—all around the depot and in the lot, with that photogenic Scenicruiiser taking the prime spot alongside the station. The oldest vintage models, including the Flixibles and GMs were clos-

est to the depot and across the street. The Eagles had a quiet spot just behind the depot and along the main street. Others were in the library lot and on the streets across from the depot. Getting around to see all the buses was easy.

Let the fun begin! The first night was cool and rainy but the food at the local Mexican restaurant was good and hot and hit the spot.

The next day it was still rainy and overcast but everything was within close range and there was a lot to see. Thursday evening kicked off the rally officially with a Meet and Greet held inside the station.

Blytheville's Big Bash



We were right over the border from Memphis, so a trip to Graceland sounded interesting enough. The best part of the trip? Not the jungle room, not the billiard room; but the convoy of four vintage buses, including two Scenicruisers to and from the site. One good thing about Graceland; once you've seen it you never have to go back.



—Continued on page 21

The Eyesore Fixer: My \$300 Paint Job

By Anthony Brady



The perfect paint job it's not, but the \$300 I spent makes it look great for the money. This may not be legal in some states.

I purchased a bus that was an eyesore, and I knew that both my wife, and my neighbors would not approve of it sitting around because it looked so bad. Different colors, primer spots a few dings and some old name decals that were removed, but not forgotten. I needed a quick fix to first drive it home without Johnny law giving me a once over followed by a red light, and second, to keep the wife and the neighbors at bay.

Down the road I want a nice paint job, but that's after I've completed the conversion. Now I just wanted it quick, cheap and done, my version of the one day auto paint.

Step one was washing the bus. I used Tide soap mixed really heavy, one cup of soap to one gallon of water. This makes for a great, quick grease, fuel and dirt cutter off the back of the bus. I use a broom to brush it on, let it sit and work for ten seconds, give it another quick brush and rinse it off. Works great—first time, every time.

Next, using a putty knife I scraped off any loose paint or decals and followed this by wiping it down with acetone. This cut the glue from the stickers, as well as other "things" that had stuck to the body and paint.

Next step, Bondo! In the few dings that there were in my belt line, I ran some masking tape around one inch larger than the ding or scratch. This helps me to spread the Bondo only in the area needed and did not make the area larger, which often happens. I mix my Bondo "Hot" meaning it dries quickly, and then I sanded it with a palm sander and 220 grit paper. I'm done with it. Is it perfect, no. But it's pretty darn good for a quick once over.

I did a quick walk around the bus with 220 grit sandpaper and sanded any major scratches to blend the edges down. I followed this with a quick once over with the primer from the spray can. I used 1 can of Rust-O-leum spray primer for the entire bus!

Because I only painted the belt line, area below the windows and above the baggage doors, I didn't even need a ladder. I masked off the top window area, which is painted black, and used another roll of paper to protect the stainless. The paper I used comes from Home Depot, is light green and lightweight. It is 30 inches wide by 200 feet long. One roll is all I needed. After taping off the belt line and a few lights on the tailgate, I then wiped off the area I was painting really fast with acetone. I'm ready to paint.

I purchased one gallon of Rust-O-leum oil based paint for \$39. It comes in seven colors, and is the only easily obtainable paint you can buy in California without being rich or owning a paint store. I mixed it one part paint to one part acetone to spray. I have actually used a roller in the past and ended up with a pret-

ty good finish. I used a gravity feed spray gun from Harbor freight I purchased for \$20. I already had a small compressor to run the spray gun. I made one light coat and followed with a heavier coat to get a nice glossy shine.

It was a lot of area to cover and took about two hours to paint, but then I was done. I started the project at 8:00 in the morning and was completely finished with paper and masking tape removed by 8:00 PM. I spent an hour wiping off a light coat of over-spray from a few of the windows, but it came off with one pass with acetone drenched rags. It looks great sitting in the driveway as well as driving down the road—for what it cost. Later when I complete the conversion, I'll have to pop for the \$5,000 paid job, but for now I'm good.

Supplies Needed

1 can Rust-Oleum Primer	\$5
2 gallons Acetone	\$32
1 gallon Rust-Oleum Gloss	\$39
4 rolls tape	\$20
1 quart Bondo	\$20
1 roll masking paper	\$15
1 bag of rags	\$8
1 box tide soap	\$10
Sandpaper	\$20
1 spray gun	\$20
1 pack spray mask	\$10
Borrowed compressor	\$10 (beer)
Dinner for Wife's help	\$82
TOTAL	\$300

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Blytheville's Big Bash



—Continued from page 19

The tireless volunteers from the Blytheville Area Chamber of Commerce dished up hamburgers and hot dogs for the crowd. The off and on rain made the shelter of the restored station cozy and inviting. Everybody enjoyed dinner and conversation before heading back to the buses to turn up the heat. Mayor James Sanders welcomed all the attendees and many area business people and Chamber of Commerce and City Council members attended.

Friday morning was an early start for those who were going on the trip to Graceland. The four vintage buses loaded up and took off for the land of The King.

After touring the grounds the buses took a short trip to a local community center where lunch was served. No going hungry with this crowd! After an uneventful ride back to Blytheville, everybody fanned out to look at some more buses.

So many Scenicruisers! This may well be the largest gathering of vintage buses ever, according to Tom McNally. One was a fully restored seated bus just purchased by an English fellow who is taking it back to England! When he wasn't putting out fires around the site, rally organizer Tom McNally and his fellow author, Fred Rayman personalized their popular Scenicruiser book, *Greyhound Scenicruiser, Flagship of the Fleet*.



—Continued on page 22

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Ghosts of Highway 61 Dixie Tour



Bud Henderson of St. Louis with his 1955 PD 4101



Main Street Blytheville Board Member L. C. Hartsfield takes a well deserved few minutes of rest. L. C. and the whole crew did a bang-up job.



Mike Kitsock of Pennsylvania decked out in his Trailways driving attire



Michaela says girls can drive buses too and she's right!



Patricia Wilson and Coco from Yucaipa, California



Ed, Michelle and Theresa Atzert, the rest of Megan's family. Chloe is the puppy.

Blytheville's Big Bash



Gail and Al Anderson attended their first rally in their 1947 PD 4104. They are no strangers to bus life; they wander back and forth between British Columbia and Guatemala.



Mike Leslie of KJAM did an on the scene broadcast and interview with Main Street Blytheville coordinator Megan Atzert.



Don West and his pup, Pappi, live in Blytheville and joined the crowd admiring the buses



Megan not only put the event together; she documented it too!



Darlene Montesino of Origami Owl donated all her proceeds to the Greyhound Rescue Group.



Barry and Laurie Hebert of Sunset, Louisiana travel around in their 14' vintage RV.



Maya, Madison and Lexus Harrington of Blytheville enjoyed the face painting.

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Blytheville's Big Bash

—Continued from page 23

Saturday was sunny and beautiful. The Bus Depot was hopping with live radio broadcasts, vendors and lots of people roaming around touring the buses. The people of Blytheville turned out again in numbers for the parade which went both ways through town. The Greyhound Rescue group also decked out some of the dogs and participated in the parade.

What a great rally! The people of Blytheville should be very proud of their restored bus depot, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. They should also be proud of the excellent hospitality offered to their weekend guests. The vintage buses did indeed come to the party and it was a great one.

Mayor Sanders summed up the event, saying, "The City of Blytheville would like to express our sincere gratitude to each and every person who attended the rally. We very much enjoyed speaking with everyone and can't say enough about the beautiful buses. We would like to extend an invitation to everyone and hope this wonderful event will grace the streets of our city again soon!"

Were you there? Send some pictures! Look for more photos from the rally and parade in upcoming issues of *Bus Conversion Magazine*.

—Wendy Crosby is a freelance graphic designer, photographer and writer. She and her husband, Jim Wilkerson chronicle their adventures at mightybus.wordpress.com.



More than one type of Greyhound in the parade!



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BUS CHAT

Making Your Fresh Water Tank Last a Month

Recent Discussion from the
BusConversions.com Bulletin Board

Post by: [Scott Bennett](#)

I've been poking around the forum and trying to find some references to a fresh tank water reclamation system that I thought Sean (Odyssey) was using in his Neoplan. We have 100 gallon tanks on board and since I'm recording this week here at the studio we've been parked in our coach in their production truck ramp for what will be 12 days. We've had no problem making 100 gal of freshwater last us even with house faucets and shower head (navy showers) but I'd love for us to get a month out of our freshwater. I already know we easily have a month of holding tank, but our fresh runs out. Besides being more of a miser or running larger tanks, can anyone fill me in on a water filtering/reclamation system that can be practically used on the coach and will extend the use of our fresh water?

Post by: [buswarrior](#)

There have been bus nuts who rigged up the toilet to flush with gray water in order to not use fresh water for this purpose. This has increased maintenance potential as others have reported that the contents of the gray water, soap and whatever residues, fouling lines/valves and/or seals. If money is no object, NASA will have some lovely, proven equipment. Happy coaching!

Post by: [Scott Bennett](#)

Cliff, I have no idea what to think, I am wary about reusing grey water for toilet unless its filtered. The charcoal filters we used when going overseas basically insinuated we could stick the pickup tube into some really brackish water and as long as iodine was added or chlorine tablets, we could drink it. A larger version of this might work!?

Post by: [Lin](#)

The low desert here, Palm Springs, etc, recycles gray water for golf courses and landscaping. There would only appear to be three ways to extend your water fill time: get more water, recycle, use less. We have a five gallon water jug that I wheel over to a tap, fill, and pour into our tank when we dry camp.

Post by: [TomC](#)

What Sean has is a smaller (I think 20gal) water tank just for drinking water with a separate faucet. He does not recycle the gray water. I don't think it is a good idea to recycle the gray water into the toilet. Can make for quite a stinky mess. Good Luck.

Post by: [belfert](#)

The only thing I know Sean does is he recirculates cold "hot" water in the shower back to the freshwater tank until he gets actual hot water.



Post by: [Midwilshire](#)

If you were to upgrade to 250, what size black and grey would you use?

Post by: [Scott Bennett](#)

We only run a black/grey combo tank. We have valves on every drain that lead to the ground in the places that allow us to dump our grey out. Those are getting fewer and far between. If we go 250 it won't be until we have a truck conversion. We are in the midst of laying out the floor plan and I'm keeping my eye on Freightliner cab-over chassis.

Post by: [lvmci](#)

Hi Scott, I have a 5 gallon distilled water bottle for my radiator misting, with a 12 volt pump, back where the air conditioner compressor was. Couldn't you put some plumbing in place with a diverter at the toilet water inlet that you could tap a tank like my mister tank either in the engine compartment or add a tank, with that tap in the bay when needed?

Post by: [TomC](#)

On my truck conversion, I'm using two 98 gal fresh water tanks plumbed together to make 196 gal fresh, a 115 gal gray water tank, 69 gal black water tank, two 10 gal water heaters. The fresh water tanks, black and two water heaters are mounted just forward of the tandems. The gray water is right over the tandems. One of the many advantages of using a truck chassis. I'm just tired of the crampedness of working on the bus. REALLY looking forward to the ease of maintenance, workability and driveability of the truck. The only drawback-there is no real forward vision when in the back. I'm going to setup a high def camera outside with a flat screen TV on the front wall for a virtual window. It will second as a security camera. Good Luck.

—Continued on page 26

—Continued from page 25

Post by: sommersed

I've known a couple people that have used gray water for flushing, and used no filter whatsoever. The only method they used to prevent solid particulate from being introduced was to place the gray water tap about six inches or so off the bottom of the tank. When draining the tank they provided for flushing water in some gallon jugs with water from the gray water tank, or one just saved urine for flushing till water in the tank was up sufficiently. They did tell me that they did not allow bleach, or other bacteria inhibiting things into their gray water so as to not introduce it into the blank tank, which tends to smell up the process.

Post by: Scott Bennett

Lvmci, actually we have plenty of space to add various tanks like you said. Freshwater could be several tanks tied together like Tom C has. But of course, black really needs to just be one main tank if possible. It's interesting how full timing for 20 months opens your eyes. We are always parked with full hookups, or thought we would be. But this past summer we were parked in a school parking lot for two months without hookups. Dumping into a 30 gallon roller tote was a nasty

experience and I intend to never have to again. We know without a doubt that if we are water misers we can go a full 16 days on 100 gallons of capacity with no hookup at all and that's with a 2.5 GPM shower head. Now, if we can merely get a hose connection which is much easier to find than a sewer connection at some of the places we stay, we can drop our grey water sometimes using our diverter valves at every drain (we use organic soaps a lot) then we literally can go for a solid two months or more without dumping the black tank if we had 200 gal capacity. I wish there were some sort of transportable tank that you could slide onto a hitch platform on our truck and take the black tank away to dump and the fresh tank to fill without having to move the coach.

Post by: Sam 4106

Scott, when we re-did our shower last winter we put in a Kohler K8543CP 2 GPM hand held shower head. Not cheap, about \$70 without the hose, but worth it to us. It has good flow and in addition to being 2 GPM I think the head design allows a quicker rinse. We like it and it works so well, we later put one in our home shower too.

Good luck.

Post by: belfert

I have an old fashioned style shower faucet with the two handles for hot and cold. This allows one to also adjust the water flow. The single handle shower faucets these days only have one water flow setting.

Post by: Sam 4106

Some single handle shower valves don't control the flow, but the Moen L4625 that we use does. You pull out the handle to adjust the flow and turn the handle to adjust the temperature. Good luck.

Post by: Scott Bennett

Actually this is delightfully on topic. I'm intrigued by the kohler shower head. Ours is leaking and being dumb. We need a new one. As for flow control, we do have it at the shower valve handle. We also have an on and off navy shower type lever/valve at the shower head.

Post by: technomadia

We're fans of Oxygenics Body Spa showerhead, which can be had for under \$40 on Amazon. It significantly reduces water usage, while giving a lot of pressure. The one we just got in was marked being rated for a max of 2 GPM. My cold water reclamation system isn't as fancy as Sean's, but I simply collect the cold water in a bucket that we then use for flushing the toilet or even washing dishes. When we were living in the Virgin Island during a draught off a rapidly depleting cistern, we even resorted to placing pots and pans in the shower stall to collect water to do dishes with.

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Making Your Fresh Water Tank Last a Month

Other tips for saving water: Go no-poo (no shampoo). I've not used shampoo in over 5 years, which can be a major water saver and my hair is healthier and we save lots of money on shampoo. Pre-rinse dishes with a squirt bottle with diluted dish soap instead of running water over them. Let them soak, then scrub. Then rinse with as little water as you can. I also recommend washing in a basin, or closing the drain - this way you're very aware of how much water you've used. And if grey tank space is an issue, you can then easily dump or evaporate the dish water by placing the basin out in the sun.

On our previous RV that we full timed in, we had 38 G of fresh water that we could make last for nearly two weeks when needed. Now with 100 G on board, we're darn right abundant, and feel we could easily make it last a month if we really needed to. We also modified our water pump so it could suck in fresh water from a container, which makes it easier to refill if a hose isn't handy.

Post by: Emcemv

Lots of great info on this topic! We just bought a 0.5 GPM low flow shower head. A bit pricy but was the lowest flow I could find. Have not had the chance to use it yet, will let you all know how we like it in April!

Post by: Scott Bennett

Definitely want to know how you like that shower head! Cherie, a month on 100 gallons!? I can't hold a candle to your water miserliness!!! Wow!

Post by: technomadia

Scott - We've used the Oxygenics since we got our bus. We just replaced it because the plastic holder broke, and well, we wanted it in brushed nickel instead of white :) We love it tremendously.

See additions to this article and
Join the conversation at BusConversions.com



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2. Write a story about your bus or your technical project. Maybe you have Before, During and After photos showing the evolution of your conversion. Send your story as a MS Word (file extension .doc or .docx) or a newer version PDF and make a note where photos should be placed along with a brief description of the photo within the body of the article. Example:

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The Pyrometer (How HOT is it?), Shifting Into the Higher Gear, The Centerfold: Dixieland Delight, Healing Troubled Cells, Beyond Laughlin Lights

March 1994

System Design, California Country: My First Rally, The Centerfold (Fly Like an Eagle)

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Boondocking Down The Freeways, Magic, Marvel, Marathon, Centerfold: "Mighty Oak," Sweetwater Coachworks, The Quest

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4104 Window Screens, The Hammer Headed Bus Mechanic, How to Install a Rear Window Awning, The Quest, Part 3 (John Ash's MCI 8), Target Rich: The Boondocking River

January 1995

Making a Hanging Screen Door, Positive Practical Propane, Installing a Motorized Drain Valve, A 1957 Flexible, Turbo Charged Tidbits

February 1995

Climate Control Without Full-time Air Conditioning, Conversion of GMC 4104/06 Oil Bath Filters, Is Your Pine Bus Ready?

April 1995

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Road Fix: A Jake Does It Again, Moving Cloud Down Under, OMA: Gypsy Lady of the Road

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