

# BCM

*Bus Conversion Magazine*

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## Honeysuckle Rose Our Smokin' Hot Summer Habitat For Humanity and RVing Part 1 of 2



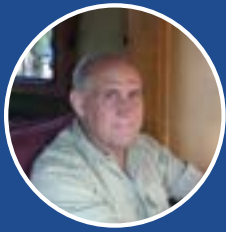
# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Gary Hatt

# BCM

*Bus Conversion Magazine*

## We Can Make You and your Bus Famous



Are you interested in receiving *Bus Conversion Magazine* absolutely FREE? As you know *Bus Conversion Magazine* is written by bus nuts for bus nuts. We are always looking for articles to include in "your" magazine. We are always in need of feature articles which would be an article about your bus for our cover and centerfold. Why you decided to buy a bus, did you buy it as a shell or was it already converted. What have you done to it? What do you like or dislike about it? How long have you owned it? Where have you taken it? What features do you have in it? How large are the tanks? Do you have solar? How many house batteries do you have? If you did it over again, what would you do differently?

Write an article and take photos of your bus and we will make you famous. All we need is a 1,000 to 3,500 word article about your bus, a high definition photo of the front/passenger side of your bus for the cover and another one of the side of your bus for the centerfold. If you are interested in submitting an article, send me an email and I will send you the Article Guidelines to help you get everything together.

If you cannot send us a cover story, then we also like other articles which would be about how to buy a bus, what to look for, how to maintain your bus or the components in it. Or it could be a travel story about where you have taken your bus and what you saw, be sure to mention any bus friendly RV parks or campgrounds you have visited.

You should include about two to three photos per 500 words and indicate in the article where you would like each photo to go. You can also send us up to 10 additional photos to be included in the Bonus Section of the Digital Edition.

We also like Bus Bits. These are short articles only a paragraph or two long which tell about a simple idea or fix for something on your bus.

We also like receiving photos of you in front of your bus or any landmark for all to see for our "Landmark Photo" section or a funny or interesting photo for our "As Seen On The Road" section.

Every article used in *Bus Conversion Magazine* will be rewarded by an extension of your subscription. Contact us to discuss how long we will extend your subscription for each type of article.

We are always looking for new authors and articles for BCM. It is readers like you that keep this magazine going as it is all about articles from bus nuts about living, traveling, and maintaining a bus conversion. This is your magazine. With more articles, we can start adding pages to the magazine to make it grow. But we cannot do this without more folks like you sending in articles to fill those additional pages. Without your stories, there would be no *Bus Conversion Magazine*.

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# Our Smokin' Hot Summer

BY BRYAN LARRABEE

The summer of 2015 has been one of the hottest on record. Dry conditions have contributed to one of the worst forest fire seasons in recent memory for the Pacific Northwest. We live in Vancouver, Canada,

one of the wettest cities in North America, but this summer we're experiencing severe water restrictions. Across the Province they are importing fire fighters from Eastern Canada and Australia to fight the forest fires.

July 31st was the hottest day of the year. We loaded up the bus, hooked up the car and headed out into the long weekend traffic out of Vancouver. We had a full tank of diesel and our fresh water tank was full of good Vancouver water. We had Zeke, our Border Collie/Aussie Shepherd dog with us, we were all set! After 90 minutes of hot bumper to bumper, the traffic eased and we actually got up to highway speeds. We stopped later for a mid-afternoon treat of coffee, apple crumble and ice cream in Bridal Falls.

The next leg of the journey took us through Hope and then a steady incline on Highway 5 towards Merritt. The first summit on the Coquihalla Highway starts a few miles out of Hope and climbs 4,081 feet. Our 8V71 engine dropped to 30 miles an hour at 1700 rpm as I took the hill at an easy pace.

The highway levels out somewhat then drops down into the Nicola Valley where the town of Merritt was hosting a huge Country and Western Festival on this particular weekend. The traffic was heavy but moving along and after we got past Merritt we practically had the highway to ourselves. We took the Highway 97C exit west and drove 20 minutes just as dusk was falling. I noticed that the brake telltale light on the dash was flickering faintly from time to time.

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At Logan Lake, British Columbia

Five and a half hours after leaving Vancouver, our 212 mile journey ended at the Municipal Campground alongside Logan Lake. In a fast car with no traffic you can do this trip in three hours as long as you don't get hungry for apple crumble and ice cream. The lake is picturesque under the full moon.

We've been coming here every August long weekend for the past 13 years. A group of about 20 of us converge to play bocce in the memory of two good friends who passed away from cancer. The bocce isn't serious and it's always nice to get caught up with everyone and have a barbeque and refreshments. For the second year in a row, Rhonda won the tournament and was presented with the prestigious marigold plant.

You know that sick sound you hear when parking your car and the front scrapes over a parking curb that you didn't see? Perhaps ours hit one too many curbs, but that piece of the car came loose. I put the car up on my bus ramps and discovered that the screws have all been ripped out and the plastic is too damaged to fix. The solution? Duct tape of course! All our tow package and braking system for the car is secured to this flimsy bit of plastic and was likely the cause of the flickering brake telltale on the bus.



Rhonda's brother Rod and his girlfriend Margit performing at "Hot Summer Nights" in Kamloops



At Logan Lake, British Columbia

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We departed Logan Lake on the Tuesday following the long weekend and drove 27 miles to Kamloops. We checked into the Silver Sage RV Park on the Thompson River across from the downtown area. Zeke can swim at the beach and they have both 30 amp power and water.



*At an RV Park in Valemount, British Columbia*



*Mount Robson towering over the highway near Jasper, Alberta*

On the downside, the parking spaces are too close, we had to buy one of those tennis racket bug killers to keep the wasps at bay, and the washrooms were busy and dirty.



*Bryan and Zeke in front of the propane fire in Jasper National Park*



*Rhonda and Zeke in Jasper National Park*

A lot goes on in the little city of Kamloops. While we were there, we took advantage of "RibFest" and the "Hot Summer Nights" vintage car show. Rhonda's brother Rod is a guitar wizard and his band was playing at both events.

On Monday morning we topped up the tank with diesel and headed northeast on the Yellowhead Highway towards Jasper, Alberta. The highway is beautiful and we stopped for the night in Valemount, BC. We were starting to notice a lot of rental RV's and many different languages spoken.

Tuesday, the highway turns from beautiful to spectacular, with Mt. Robson dominating the scenery rising high above the many lakes that we passed. The three hour drive plus the time change got us into the National Park in the mid-afternoon. Since we missed lunch we decided on an early dinner in town. The rental RV's were lined up one after another in the parking lots and tour buses were slowly roaming the streets. Rhonda shopped while Zeke and I found a place to sit and watch the other tourists. Jasper was well worth the stop and when we got back to our campsite, we fired up the propane fire pit for the first time.

On Wednesday we decided to drive all the way into Edmonton, about a five hour drive. Shortly after we left Jasper National Park, a car pulled out of a gravel road ahead of us throwing a rock off our windshield

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and putting a nice sized crack in it. Damn! The windshield will have to be replaced when we get home.

In Edmonton we eventually found an RV park that was so new that it wasn't on our GPS. We had to back-track about 15 minutes west to Spruce Grove where we found the Diamond Grove RV Park. It is a huge RV park, with very clean washrooms and a big laundromat. The only drawback was no Wi-Fi.

Surprisingly, the hot weather took a turn and dropped from 91 degrees to 64 overnight and it rained so hard that the sound of it pummeling the roof woke us up. The rain let up the next day for the outdoor wedding. Guests were arriving from places called Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort McMurray and Shell Lake, all communities in the Northwest Territories, Northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. We were definitely in the north.

The day after the wedding, I was looking at the dog, and he was looking back at me, no, he was squinting back at me. I noticed that his eyes were red and a bit inflamed. Zeke has Uveitis which causes his immune system to attack his eyes. He's on a regimen of 9 eyedrops a day for the rest of his life. I couldn't help but think "why does this happen when we're at the furthest distance from home?" Three years ago when it first flared up we were in Phoenix and the Uveitis turned into Glaucoma and his right eye had to be removed. Rhonda phoned the animal eye doctor

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in Vancouver on Monday and they suggested a more frequent dose of one of his drops and see if it helped the problem.

In the meantime, we were getting ready to leave on Tuesday, saying our goodbyes to everyone. We planned to fuel up at the local Flying J, before heading south through Calgary, then down through the tip of Idaho to visit friends in Newport, Washington.



*Smoke from the nearby forest fire blocking the sun in Cranbrook British Columbia*



*Zeke at the skateboard park in Cranbrook British Columbia*

We had a slight mishap when we tried to enter a regular gas station to get gas for our generator. We became impossibly wedged between gas islands after I made a poor decision to try it in the first place. We had to unhook the car but luckily we didn't damage anything. All this commotion for \$11 worth of gas!

We decided to leave the car unhooked and Rhonda would drive it to the Flying J to fuel up the bus.



*Crossing from Canada into Idaho*

Driving east on the Trans-Canada Highway, weaving through construction pylons like a downhill skier, I discovered that the exit to the Flying J was closed! With our GPS yelling at me to make a U-turn, I couldn't get off the highway for two more exits. We wandered aimlessly through industrial parks on the north side of Edmonton until we stopped and sent Rhonda and Zeke on a scouting mission in the car. She returned and led the way to the Flying J.



*Great hospitality with Don and Pam Evans in Newport Washington*

When we started to hook up the car, we discovered that we left one of the cotter-pins to the hitch on the ground at the first gas station. We can't hook up. To make things worse, a semi rolled over on the way out

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of the Flying J, blocking the only direct access to the freeway. After much discussion with the truckers and getting conflicting advice, I turned on our GPS to see if we could find a way out of the mess. We missed a key turn and got stuck for over an hour in another construction zone inching along in growing frustration. It took two full hours from when we left the RV park to clear Edmonton.

Red Deer is 93 miles south of Edmonton where they have an exit called "Gasoline Alley" with all sorts of services for travellers. We were able to get a cotter-pin for 48 cents and a very late lunch. Finally all hooked up, we could travel together towards our next destination, the Mt. Baker RV Park in Okotoks, Alberta just south of Calgary. The RV park was very rough with lots of rock and gravel but we got a riverside campsite. It's one of those places that you either love or hate. It was just a stopover for us.

Next day, as we headed south towards Cranbrook BC, we started to encounter smoke from nearby forest fires that seemed to be getting worse as we pushed on. Normally we keep in touch with current events but the lack of Wi-Fi and our travel schedule made us unaware that we were travelling towards fire. On

Thursday August 20th we arrived in Cranbrook and immediately called Zeke's eye doctor. We needed more eyedrops which were sent to a local pharmacy.

In spite of the forest fire danger, we pushed south across the border into Idaho. We were stopped at customs and an inspector went through the entire coach. Unfortunately the prestigious marigold plant that Rhonda won was seized, although the flower pot was kindly washed and returned to us.



*Smoke from the forest fires obscuring the bridge over the Columbia River in Vantage Washington.*

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Zeke's eye was getting worse so another phone call to the eye doctor was made and they suggested that we find a vet that could perform an eye pressure test for him. Eye pressure tests are very specialized and not many vets perform them anymore. What were the odds of finding a vet in tiny Sandpoint, Idaho that could do it for us? Dr. Ken Hallock, an old time vet not only agreed to see him without an appointment but could do the pressure test using an mechanical device.

The news was good as his eye pressure was acceptable but his eyesight was worsening. The doctor gave him some anti-inflammatory pills and suggested we see the animal eye doctor in Spokane.

Unfortunately Zeke was now nearly blind, walking into objects and having trouble with stairs. It was Thursday so we decided to cut the trip short and start the journey home.

We stopped along the way to visit good friends and fellow bus nuts, Don and Pam Evans in Newport, Washington. The drive from Cranbrook to Newport was some of the prettiest scenery on the whole trip. We finally caught the news on Don and Pam's TV to find out that the whole area had been placed under a

"State of Emergency" by the President. The fire was 15 miles away to the northeast and quite nasty.

We departed on Saturday morning for the 400 mile journey to the coast. The drive across Central Washington on the I-90 was very hazy and smoky but visibility was okay. We refuelled in Ellensburg and took a coffee break, then tackled the Snoqualmie summit over the mountains towards the I-5 northbound.

We decided to dry camp at the Tulalip Casino outside of Everett and while Rhonda played the slots for a while, I had a beer and enjoyed a walk leading our blind dog around the field near the parking lot. Does this make me a "seeing eye person" for our dog?

We fueled up in Ferndale on Sunday and crossed the border with no incident. After we got home we discovered that Zeke's eyesight couldn't be saved but he's coping well and still plays ball using his other senses. As for the cracked windshield it was covered by our insurance and I found a local glass company that was able to find a replacement windshield within two days. Overall we drove 1921 miles and were gone for 23 smokin' hot summer days. Not bad for a 45 year old bus!.

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**Bryan Larrabee**

Bryan and Rhonda Larrabee live in Vancouver Canada. They have been converted bus owners since 2008, the same year that their dog Zeke joined the family. Bryan is the primary driver; however Rhonda has her airbrake endorsement as well and drives now and then. Bryan retired from his career in Emergency Management in 2011 and still teaches one or two days a month for the Justice Institute of BC. Rhonda is the Chief of the Qayqayt Indian Band in New Westminster BC and is very involved in that community advocating for educational opportunities and services for aboriginal children and families.

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# Honeysuckle Rose

By JACK AMUNDSON

We call her Honeysuckle Rose after Hoyt Axton's Scenicruiser tour bus because she thinks she's a hound but she's really (a) Superior.

The initiation of this project and my subsequent elevation to the status of bus nut came hot on the heels of an unexpected Reserve Best of Show award at a large all GM truck show where my stock looking but highly modified '71 Chevy Suburban stole the day. Needless to say, I could hardly wait to find another project to enter in a subsequent show.

Later that summer, a friend returned from "Hot August Nights," a huge hot rod show and sale in Reno, Nevada with three Xeroxed colored pages of possible project candidates. Circled were pictures of Chevy Nomads, Ford T-birds and other worthy vehicles, but what attracted my attention was the picture of a tired looking 1935 Chevy school bus. There it was. It was a Chevy. It was a truck of sorts and it was yellow just as the Suburban had been. Done deal—almost.

I contacted the owner of the pictured bus and arranged to travel the 825 miles from my Southern California home to Bend, Oregon to look the bus over. I liked what I saw so I called the owner who was out of town for the day and agreed to purchase the bus. The seller agreed to give me a week to arrange for shipping, which I did. When I called him to finalize the pickup date he

informed me that he had sold the bus to someone else. Undaunted, I continued my search. With the help of Craig's List I found a 1936 Chevy school bus a mere 125 miles from home and went to check it out. There seemed to be enough of it left to work for me so I dialed the guy I'd talked to planning to complete the deal. The guy didn't answer—his wife did and when she heard what I was calling about she screamed "The bus ain't for sale!" and hung up on me.

Another Craig's List find was located north of Bellingham, Washington a few miles from the Canadian border. After a long discussion with the owner, I was assured that the bus was drivable and would, with care, make the trip to California. At the time I was working




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three days on and four days off so I figured that I had enough time to do a round robin 2650 mile dash for the bus. I talked a friend into helping me and we set off on a blustery January morning. My buddy and I took turns driving and sleeping, with him complaining about my adherence to the posted speed limit and how we would never get to the border at the rate I drove. I got the last laugh though when I awoke to see a large highway sign saying 50 miles to Lake Tahoe—that was a 200 mile error in the wrong direction, but I'm sure we got there in a hurry!

When we finally reached the storage lot the bus was parked in, it was immediately clear that the owner had no clue about buses or for that matter much of anything else. I managed to start the bus using the battery from the owner's 1984 Dodge Diplomat ex-cop car. After much gear crunching the bus reluctantly climbed its way out of its ruts and moved a few feet. I stomped on the brake which not only went to the floor but completely through the floor and onto the ground! I wanted to be angry at the seller, but he was such a train wreck that all I could do was laugh. It was probably just as well that the bus wasn't drivable as it snowed most of the way back to California and the bus had neither a heater nor windshield wipers. My copilot and I are longtime friends and

we laughed ourselves silly the whole way home.

It was now March of the next year and I'd had no luck finding a bus. I had nearly given up when one evening while cruising Craig's List and e-bay I found an e-bay ad for a 1935 Ford short school bus with a Superior brand body. I was able to chat with the bus owner and learned that he had owned the bus for 17 years having used it as a billboard for his antique shop in Sandy, Utah. During his ownership the bus was used in the film "Topaz," a documentary about the World War II Japanese internment camp of the same name. Prior to his ownership the bus was used as a medical clinic on an Indian reservation and, of course, as a school bus in rural Utah. When I explained my plans for the bus he seemed happy with my intentions and when the bidding dust settled I was the proud owner of a '35 Ford school bus!

I still had my heart set on this being an all GM project so I reviewed the Xerox sheets and found a 1935 Chevy 1-1/2 ton truck located in Reno, Nevada. I figured I'd take the bus body off the Ford Chassis, put it on the Chevy chassis and then sell the Ford leftovers, which I did. I then began to worry about the mechanical brakes, closed drive shaft and 2-speed rear axle on the old Chevy and came to the conclusion that placing the bus body and Chevy sheet metal on a late model frame would make the project highway safe to operate. In keeping with the all GM notion I chose a 2005 Chevy W3500 turbo diesel tilt cab truck for the job.



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*1935 Ford bus on day of arrival*



*'35 Chevy Truck on arrival day*



*Chevy W3500 on day of arrival*



*Superior brand bus body off frame*

The first step in the build was to remove all of the interior sheet metal, all the windows, all the rock wool insulation, all the floor covering and all the old wiring. That let me find and remove the ½" carriage bolts which held the body to the frame. I

ended up grinding the heads off the bolts and pounding them down through the floor. I lifted the bus body from the frame using 4" X 8" X 10' beams supported by heavy duty hydraulic house moving jacks on either end of the beam, one beam through the rearmost pair of windows and one beam through the front most pair of windows. Once the bus body was lifted from its original frame and all measurements pertaining to the location of the body mounts on the Ford frame had been recorded, I was able to sell all the Ford gear to a fellow who was restoring an old Ford tow truck.

The next step was to lengthen the Chevy W3500 frame to match the wheel base of the bus. This was complicated by the need to lengthen the drive shaft, fabricate double flared brake line extensions, extend shielded ABS wiring as well as lengthening whatever else went with

a modern computerized drive train. This process took me several months as every step had to be tested for proper performance before the next step was begun. It was an exciting day when I was finally able to position the bus body on the completed frame—everything lined up!



*Frame installation*

My wife and I considered many floor plans for the 10' X 7-1/2' living area. We wanted as much counter space as possible and a comfortably large table to dine at. We knew that we would have to settle for a combination bath, sink and shower (wet bath) and finally decided it would be best to put it at the rear of the bus. Because the back of the bus slopes down, the rear bath meant there would have to be a step down in the floor as well as a pop-up in the roof if I was going to be able to stand up in it. Once the bath was laid out, we were able to use masking tape on the floor to finalize the floor plan. That technique worked very well because it allowed us to design what was to be on top of the floor while considering obstructions that lay below the floor.

During this design time it became clear to me that the 5'6" of headroom in the bus body wasn't going to work for my 6' height. Fortunately, the bus had been built with a 3' wide 8' long single roof panel lengthwise and in the center of the body. Even more lucky was that there was a heavy steel frame surrounding the panel that made designing a pop-up roof pretty straight forward. I copied the design of the VW Westfalia pop-up except that mine opens via 12 volt linear actuators along the lengthwise axis rather than at one end.



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*Hole in roof for Pop-up*



*Pop-up fabrication*



*Pop-up installation*

With most of the floor space being taken up by the counter, bath and table, sleeping accommodations looked a little bleak. There was only enough room left for narrow bunk beds along the wall and neither of us



Body cut for slide out



Slide out fabrication



Final fitting

liked that idea. A slide out seemed to be the only answer, so I set about finding an electric drive mechanism around which to build a slide out. I knew I had to cut a section out of the side of the bus if I wanted a slide out, nevertheless, the initial cut was a stressful experience. I built the slide out frame from thick wall square tubing and used sealed roller bearings as glides. The frame was covered with sheet metal on four of its six sides and by the original bus panel on the fifth side. The covered sides were insulated with 2" thick PolyFoam as was the rest of the bus. With the slideout extended, a queen size air bed fits with room to spare. The portion of the bed that isn't supported by the slideout rests on a frame which covers two, 30 gallon water tanks and a good bit of storage. With the bed extended there is 16" of walk space between the head of the bed and the kitchen counter.

The original entry door on the bus was of the bi-fold type with half opening in and half opening out. The portion that opened in did so up against the end of the counter, thereby rendering the end of the counter useless unless the door was closed. While vacationing in Yosemite National Park I spotted a bus door that seemed to step out from the side of the bus and then migrate along the side of the body leaving a completely unobstructed entry way. A little reading on the Internet taught me that



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# *Honeysuckle Rose*

February 2016

these doors are called parallelogram plug doors because their path scribes a parallelogram. Most are pneumatically operated—I had to have one.

A local wrecking yard had a junk airport shuttle bus with the proper door and sold it to me for \$150 including everything related to it. I got the compressor, air tank, actuator, door, hinge pole, switches, emergency release, wiring, entry light switch—all I had to do was remove it myself which I did with much gusto. It took me a couple of weeks to cut down the size of the various components to make them fit my little bus. The door is without a doubt one of my favorite mods to the bus. It works flawlessly and opened up the end of the kitchen counter as a location for the electrical system including shore power, generator power, inverter power and circuit breakers.

Finding a spot to house the 3K Yamaha inverter generator was made simple when I decided to use the genny face plate and controls as the end of the counter made available by the pneumatic door. I put the genny in a roll out drawer under the floor along the side of the bus and added sound deadening material and forced air cooling for the motor. Next I moved the generator's computer into the area just behind the face plate at the end of the counter as a precaution against overheating.



Locating genny



building genny drawer



Genny controls relocated just inside parallelogram plug door

At this point I was ready to install insulation, rough plumbing and both 12 volt and 120 volt rough electrical systems. I fabricated the counters and cabinets from ½" square thin wall tubing and covered them with directly applied Formica. Built into the lower kitchen counter are a dorm size fridge, a propane gravity heater and a RV 4-burner propane stove and oven. Where the counter abuts the bathroom wall at the back of the bus I installed a small microwave oven and directly above it and

supported by the roof is a 6K BTU air conditioner. For hot water I used a propane fired tankless water heater that is housed in a sealed metal cabinet which gets its fresh air from under the bus and exhausts through the top of the bus. Tankless water heaters will only operate when there is both sufficient water flow and pressure. To prevent the heater from cycling on and off each time one opens or closes a spigot, I installed a solenoid valve that allows water to circulate from the fresh water tank through the heater and back to the holding tank when the heater is turned on. This also reduces water waste as you wait for hot water to arrive at the spigot.



Instant water heater cabinet

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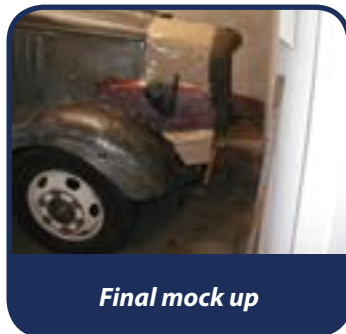
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With the body, drive train and interior more or less figured out it was now time to decide what to do with the front sheet metal. The Chevy trucks of the time all had what is known as “butterfly hoods.” To raise them you twisted a handle on the side of the hood and lifted the butterfly wings to access the engine compartment. No doubt without exception, at one time or another a mechanic would lose his grip on a handle and a partially extended wing would come crashing down on the fender leaving its tell-tale mark behind. To avoid this and to make the engine compartment more accessible I built a tilt front end that rises from the cowl and tilts forward. The entire hood, radiator shroud and front fenders move as one. It was such a simple idea but it took me a month of sliding a paint stir stick mock up back and forth on the garage floor before I understood how the mechanism would work. I added an electric winch and a few pulleys and now with the press of a button the front end tilts open and closed like magic.



**Working model for tilt front end**



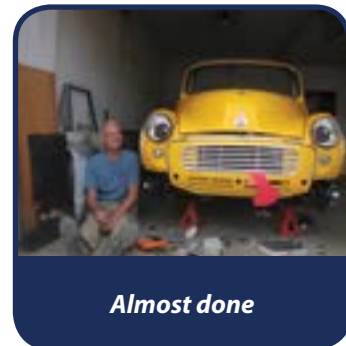
**Final mock up**

With the front end done I set my sights on making replacement panels for the bus body sides below the floor height as these panels were very rusty. I talked to the owner of a local metal fabricating shop and learned how metal stamping dies work and how they are made. Armed with this new knowledge I built my own dies and was allowed to use the shop’s huge metal press to stamp out my own panels—too much fun! With the replacement panels welded in place I was down to basic body work and a paint job—both activities I enjoy.

Having finished the paint work and the various systems I was left with tail end tasks like installing linoleum in the kitchen, carpet in the cockpit and window shades and screens.



**Morris Minor on day of arrival**



**Almost done**

My story about Honeysuckle Rose would be incomplete if I neglected to mention her TOAD. His name is Clarence and he is a 1959 Morris Minor Traveller woody wagon. He was chosen as the TOAD because of his

general body shape and styling—tear drop fenders and lots of round surfaces. In keeping with the (nearly) all GM theme, Clarence has had his chassis exchanged for a Chevy Geo Tracker 4X4 chassis and running gear with fuel injection and all. His paint scheme is the reverse of Honeysuckle Rose and the pair cause quite a stir.

Honeysuckle Rose has been a joy to use and has led us to meet many interesting and talented people. I’m sure that in the years to come that pleasure will only increase.



**Jack Admunson**

My wife Lorna and I both started out as Biologists. Although originally trained as a scientist, my affinity for problem solving led me through multiple careers, including teaching, research, housing development, automotive reconstruction and a final gambit as a police officer, before finally actually “retiring”. We camped out of Suburbans for many years and a “sticks and staples” had no appeal, so when we wanted more comfort, a bus just seemed the natural next step. Problem one: it had to fit into our garage. Problem two, no such bus existed. Therefore I built Honeysuckle Rose. Q.E.D.

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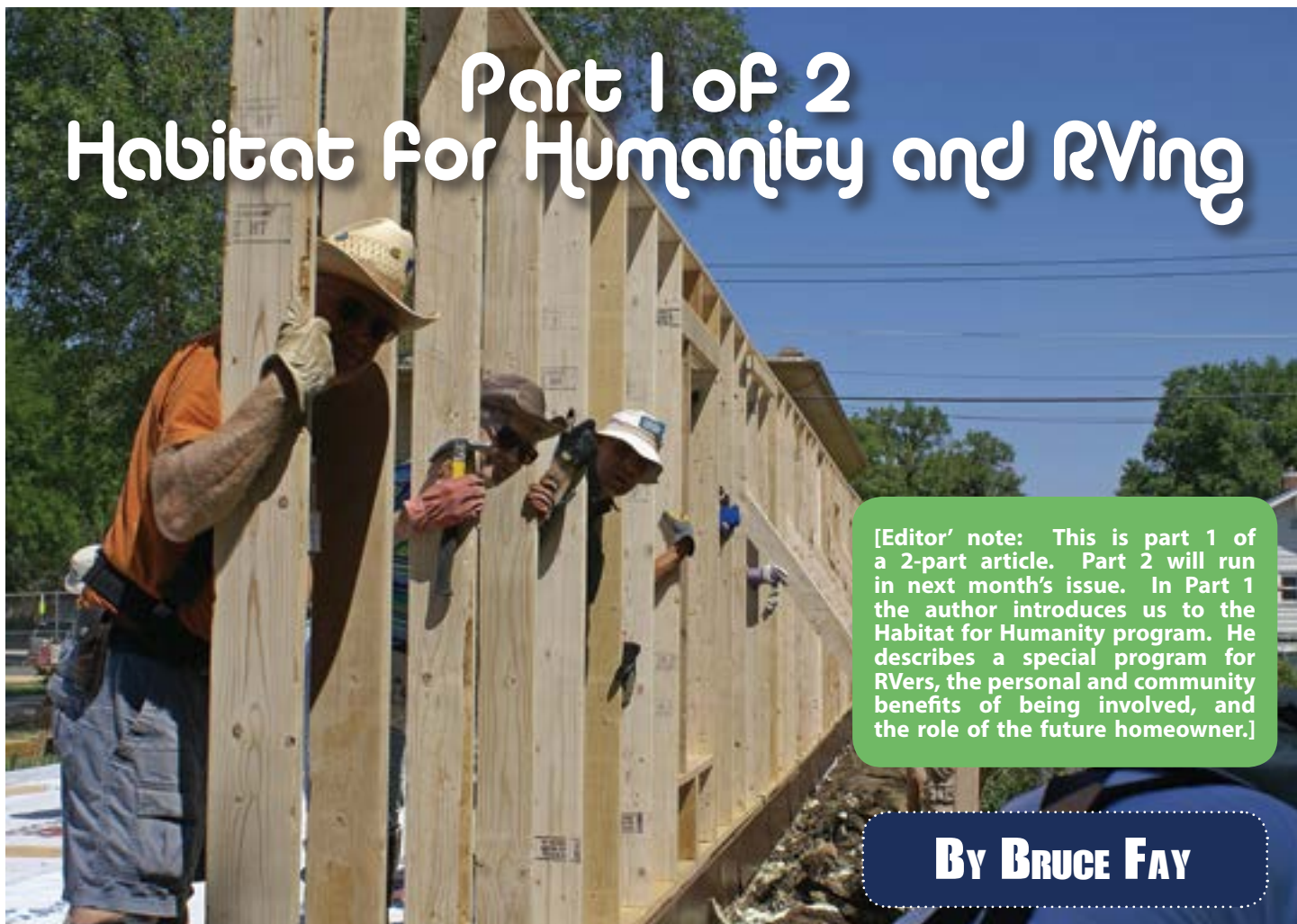
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# Part 1 of 2 Habitat For Humanity and RVing



[Editor' note: This is part 1 of a 2-part article. Part 2 will run in next month's issue. In Part 1 the author introduces us to the Habitat for Humanity program. He describes a special program for RVers, the personal and community benefits of being involved, and the role of the future homeowner.]

**By BRUCE FAY**

## The Overview

So you've gone and converted yourself a bus. Now what? Oh sure, you can take it to a secluded beach, drive it out into the middle of BLM land with no one around for miles, travel the country and see all sorts of amazing sights, or go to converted bus rallies and see what other bus nuts are doing with their buses (besides working on them constantly).

which does not require special training or certification, just a willingness to show up, learn, and work. And it really helps if you can stay a while in what may be a dry-camping situation.



*The team gathered for a pot-luck at the RV Park.*

To be able to do all of these wonderful things you have worked very hard for a very long time. You deserve to do them! There are others who are not so fortunate, however, and being able to travel in a converted bus also provides some



*Part of our team at morning circle getting assignments for the day. Our HFH construction supervisor, Brian, apparently wants "it" over there.*

unique opportunities for service; not 24/7, but as you have the time and interest. One such service opportunity is with the American Red Cross, where trained RVers in self-contained RVs are highly valued in disaster situations. Another is with Habitat for Humanity (HFH)

As we were getting ready to retire we were thinking about how we might mix some occasional volunteer work into our travels. We did a lot of work on our first house over the 34 years that we lived there and recently moved to a different house, post retirement. We now have a whole

new set of house projects, but the important point is that we have always enjoyed working on our houses and have acquired some knowledge and skill over the years along with an assortment of tools. A program that can use all of that is Habitat for Humanity (HFH) and it was something we wanted to try. To be clear, HFH does not require you to bring your own tools beyond basic personal safety equipment (eye protection, hearing protection, hard hat, work gloves, work boots), and a tool belt with a hammer and tape measure.



*Shirley, one of our team co-leaders, in the HFH tool trailer.*



*The author (with the hose working with an AmeriCorps volunteer from the Virgin Islands (running the concrete polisher).*

### How It Works

There are lots of HFH affiliates around the country, but there is a special program run out of the Americus, Georgia headquarters that interested us. It's called RV-Care-A-Vanners (RV-CAV). Through this program, HFH headquarters coordinates RVers to work on builds with local affiliates. Unlike the 1-day or 2-day weekend experiences most people have if they work on an HFH build near where they live, the RV-CAV program asks for a two-week commitment. Not only do you get to work on a house (or houses) long enough to accomplish something tangible you get to spend two weeks getting to know a group of fellow RVers. Some of them may become new friends; if not, it's only for two weeks.



*A husband and wife team working on the east wall of the house.*



*Getting ready to raise the east wall of the house. It is 76 feet long! You don't see that every day.*

The Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA) has an HFH Chapter and until recently the Escapees RV Club (SKP) had a HFH BOF (Birds Of a Feather, their name for a special interest group). The SKP BOF was instrumental in getting the RV-Care-A-Vanners program established. The program is now so successful that the original purpose of the BOF was no longer relevant and it was discontinued in the fall of 2014. We joined the SKP HFH BOF at the September 2010 Escapade so we were aware that they were organizing a special SKP/RV-CAV build in Sheridan, Wyoming immediately following the 2013 Escapade in Gillette, Wyoming. Not only would this build be mostly RVers, they would mostly be SKPs, assuming enough of us signed up. The Escapade started one week after the FMCA Family Reunion and Motorhome Showcase, and it was being held at the same facility in Gillette, Wyoming, so this provided the opportunity to spend five or six weeks in Wyoming with a mix of RV rallies, sight-seeing, and service.



*The east wall standing up. We had to hold it until it was braced.*



*The women really carried their own weight on this job; literally.*

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## The Benefits

Habitat for Humanity exists to provide shelter, one of the three basic human needs (food and clothing being the other two), to people who are struggling to acquire it on their own but are willing/able to contribute to the construction project in one way or another. HFH's motto is "Habitat for Humanity is not a handout, it's a hand up." Having people properly sheltered benefits not only them but the whole community. We started each workday with a team meeting (circle) where we reviewed safety issues, the status of the project, and selected work assignments.



*The house is starting to take shape. It was a thick slab-on-grade design with hot water radiant floor heat.*



*This is how we got the roof trusses up onto the roof; lift from below and pull from above. HFH builds are usually single story houses and rarely (if ever) use heavy equipment like cranes.*

Just to be clear HFH is a Christian mission, so the morning meeting usually concluded with a reflection or bible passage. Circle ended by everyone joining hands and repeating the HFH motto, with everyone putting their hands forward (into the circle) on the phrase "not a handout" and raising them high overhead on the phrase, "it's a hand up." If that sounds a bit corny, so be it, but it really did serve to remind us each day why we were there and what we were trying to accomplish. HFH welcomes anyone who is willing to contribute to a build and participation in the religious aspects of the morning meeting is optional. We had four people on our team who were not Christians.



*A few of the women teamed up to use the sheet metal brake to bend flashing.*

## The Future Homeowner

Remember that motto "HFH is not a handout, it's a hand up"? HFH houses are not built on speculation; they are built for someone specific. The recipient is selected and qualified before the build is planned and executed. Qualified in this case means they have: a) a demonstrable need; b) the ability to contribute to the project (sweat, equity) and; c) the ability to make the mortgage payments. Mortgage payments? Yes; HFH houses are not gifts. The future homeowner is required to contribute to the building of the house. If they are physically able, and their circumstances permit, they may be on the build site sawing and nailing alongside the volunteers. If they are not able to participate in the actual construction, they contribute in other ways.



*Some of the team having lunch at the local Catholic Church which was a short walk from the building site. It was air-conditioned.*



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The house we were building was for a single mother with a special needs child (autistic) and she provided day care services to support her and her two children. Due to her circumstances she was not able to help us build the house. Instead, she was responsible for organizing the daily lunch meal for the various teams that worked on the build over the many months it would take to complete. Lunch was served at the local Catholic Church just a short walk from the build site. She was often there during our lunch break so we got to meet her and her children. When you work on an HFH build you almost always get to meet the people for whom the house is being built and that really puts a human face on the work.



*The future homeowner (center) and her two children.*

The local affiliate raises the money and materials needed to purchase a lot and build the house. This particular build, and perhaps others around the state, were the focus of a statewide charitable campaign by the Archdiocese of Wyoming for 2013. As with all HFH builds some of the materials were donated and some had to be purchased but everything was new. Volunteer labor (like us) is used to do as much of the work as possible such as carpentry, roofing, drywall, painting, and trim. This helps keep the final cost down. Local tradesmen (and women) are usually hired for jobs like concrete, plumbing, electrical, and HVAC. HFH provides the mortgage in the amount of the actual costs of the build. I believe the mortgage is interest-free or at very low rates that are way below prevailing commercial rates.



*Our full 18-member team. (Photo not taken by the author).*

(Note: The author blogged about this experience as it was happening. You can read his blog postings in the July 2013 archive (8th – 20th) at [www.omnibus-mi.us](http://www.omnibus-mi.us).)

[Editor's note: In the second and final part of this article the author describes the building process, the challenges of the work, and the rewards of participation, including some of the things the participants were able to do in their free-time.]



### Bruce Fay

Dr. Bruce Fay is a retired educational assessment and evaluation consultant and a former electrical engineer, photographer, and teacher. Linda is a retired CPA & corporate controller. They live in S.E. Michigan, and started traveling North America in their 1990 Prevost H3-40 coach conversion in June 2013.

Their website and blog are at  
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<p><b>2008</b> Aug Sep Nov</p>	<p><b>2009</b> Jan Mar May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec</p>	<p><b>2010</b> Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec</p>
<p><b>2011</b> Jan Feb Mar May Jun</p>	<p><b>2012</b> Oct Nov Dec</p>	<p><b>2013</b> Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec</p>
<p><b>2014</b> Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec</p>	<p><b>2015</b> Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug/Sept Oct Nov Dec</p>	<p><b>2016</b> Jan Feb</p>

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When you contact our advertisers, please let them know you saw their ad in *Bus Conversion Magazine*. We want to hear from you! Write to us. Email us, call us. Tell us what you like and don't like. What types of information would you like to see in the magazine? Send us a story! Do you have Before and After photos of your conversion project? During? Maybe a story about adventures while traveling, or a wonderful place to camp that you found.

Contact [Gary@BusConversions.com](mailto:Gary@BusConversions.com) to learn more or discuss your article idea.

## 1983 MCI MC-9 LOG CABIN CONVERSION



Log Cabin Bus owned by BCM Publisher for 5 years. This bus was converted to be a demo model in 2002. The extra attention to detail and all of the optional features offered at the time. This is an MCI MC-9 with solid Knotty Pine interior, so it is very easy to keep clean. The features are very simple so the kids can run around without having to worry about anything getting broken. Headroom is 6'6". Front cargo bay contains a carpeted sleeping area for kids to ride in and they love it down there. It can also be used for visitors to stay with small windows on each side on the bay doors, or a place to just take a nap on a hot summer day. Access is available via a porthole under the dining table which has been closed off, but can easily be re-opened to be used. 5000 miles on rebuilt 6V92 turbo coupled with an Allison HT-740 Automatic Transmission. 7.5KW Onan Genset. Two Coleman 15,000 BTU Roof Airst, Over-the-road air, 26" flat screen TV. Bath/ Shower, 3-Burner Propane Stove w/Oven, 2-7.5 Gallon Removable Propane Tanks. Two Refrigerators, one 2-Way, 2-Door Fridge/Freezer, and one small 110V Supplemental Fridge. 30,000 BTU Propane Furnace, Four 12V Deep-Cycle House Batteries, 2500W Prosine Inverter. Propane/110V 10 Gallon Water Heater. 50A shore power connection. Recently driven from Anaheim to Quartzsite to attend the bus rally. Read two different articles about this bus from previous BCM issues at <http://www.BusConversions.com/Gary/GHMC9.pdf>

**\$29,995**

Call Gary at (714) 614-0373  
[Gary@BusConversions.com](mailto:Gary@BusConversions.com)  
Located in Anaheim, CA

To advertise in the Classified Ads: Please call (657) 221-0432 or email [Gary@BusConversions.com](mailto:Gary@BusConversions.com)

**RICO AND MONICA  
SWISS ARMY TRUCK**

Can be seen at the Quartzite Rally after February at the Quartzite Market Place.



**1968 Heavy Duty Swiss Army Truck**  
(Saurer 2DM)

4-Wheel Drive with Trailer, ideal for the Desert or Off-Road camping, Air brakes on truck and trailer, V6 135 HP Diesel Engine, (Truck is not fast, but very strong), 4-speed manual transmission with split shaft.

**SOLD!**  
ANOTHER ITEM LISTED IN BCM HAS SOLD

**35' - 1966  
MCI MC-5A CONVERSION**



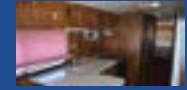
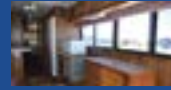
8V71 with Out-of-frame rebuild with approx. 40K miles. New brakes approx 6K miles, new rims and tires, approx. 150 miles. New tie rod ends and drag link. 10KW diesel generator, 2,500W Heart Interface inverter, 100-Gal. fresh tank, 110-Gal. waste tank, electric/gas water heater, 3-way refer, Flexsteel furniture, cabinets w/stained glass doors, 2 large propane tanks, 2 roof A/C, hardwood floor and wine colored carpet, Corian counter tops, full stove w/oven, microwave, washer/dryer, full size walk thru bath, full size neo-angle shower, center queen bed w/storage underneath, Prevost mirrors, Zip Dee awnings w/screens.

**\$23,500 O.B.O.**  
Call Roger at (231) 838-8628 or email [RStump@gmail.com](mailto:RStump@gmail.com)  
Located in Charlevoix, MI

**1964 - SILVER EAGLE**



435 horse 92 series Detroit turns the 750 Allison transmission in this coach. Two roof top air conditioners. Three catalytic heaters. The bus has always been stored indoors. The fridge is 110 volt only and the stove is a four burner with an oven which has never been used. The stack washer and dryer is new. Jacuzzi tub with built in shower. All systems work and this is a nice bus to travel in. Read more about this bus at <http://busconversions.com/bcmclassifieds/index.php>



**\$35,000**  
Call Dan at (308) 765-1020  
Email [danflower@yahoo.com](mailto:danflower@yahoo.com)  
Located in Gering, NE

**1972 MCI MC-7  
CHALLENGER**



For Sale: 1972 MCI 7, Challenger, converted in 2002 from Air Force Satellite Tracking bus by using 1999 Airstream trailer cabinets and appliances. 8V71 Detroit Diesel with retarder, Allison 6 speed automatic transmission. Alcoa aluminum wheels. Trailer hitch. Propane furnace, stove top, refrigerator (also electric). Microwave/convection oven. 10KW generator.

**\$15,000**  
Call Rick at (505) 379-7796  
Located in Bosque Farms, New Mexico



**1972 40ft Silver Eagle  
WITH 18FT MATCHING TRAILER**

Ground-up restoration adding 10" cap, converted to RV 1995. New 2000 thru 2004: 6V92 Silver Detroit, HTB748HD Allison Automatic Transmission, Power Tech 20KW Generator, and complete front suspension redo. Interior removed and replaced with insulated ceiling, walls, carpet, and kitchen/dining area Parquet flooring. Bus now has 29,900 miles since redo. Matching 18ft 2001 Trailer has storage cabinets, rear legs, 2 flood lights, power tongue lift and reinforced rooftop for viewing with ladder and safety rail.



**\$185,900**  
Call Jerry at (502) 648-9864 or email: [jboyett@mfc.com](mailto:jboyett@mfc.com)  
More info at [www.Go4lessllc.com](http://www.Go4lessllc.com)  
Located in Louisville, KY

To advertise in the Classified Ads: Please call (657) 221-0432 or email [Gary@BusConversions.com](mailto:Gary@BusConversions.com)

## A RARE OPPORTUNITY MADDEN'S CRUISER II IS AVAILABLE FOR SALE



Converted by Custom Coach for John Madden, the famous football coach and broadcaster, this deluxe 45 foot MCI 1994 DL 3 coach has been immaculately maintained. The comfortable interior living quarters have been carefully upgraded with every convenience for relaxing, working or pursuing your hobbies while on the road. Special interior features include two baths (mid and rear) with granite floors, brass fixtures, granite shower (mid bath), china air operated toilets; Corian countertops throughout; a walk around queen bed; a rear desk with storage & flip up table; beautiful pecan woodwork with plentiful storage, including two full length & four mid length closets; insulated and sound dampened rosewood Traffic Master Allure Vinyl flooring; new GE 14 Cubic Foot refrigerator; Sharp Carousel II Microwave/convection oven; Splendide washer/dryer; built-in clothes hamper; central vacuum; ceiling & indirect lighting throughout;

lined draperies. Exterior upgrades include Peninsula sliding windows throughout; Zip Dee Window Awnings; window screens; Alcoa wheels; new Michelin tires; an Intec Military Spec Backup camera & monitor; a Garmin 7 inch GPS; DDEC engine monitor; a Cobra 40 channel CB radio; joey beds; 20KW generator. The cruiser is wired for towing. There is no LP gas to worry about with this all electric Coach. In addition to bus air, it has four CruiseAir AC units and five 110 VAC heaters to keep you warm in winter and cool in the summer.

Click this link to read the article and view the photos: [www.BusConversions.com/madden.pdf](http://www.BusConversions.com/madden.pdf)



**\$145,000**

Call Laird at (251) 979-9430 or email  
[leehin77@gmail.com](mailto:leehin77@gmail.com)  
Pensacola, Florida area

### 1984 EAGLE 10 8" ROOF RAISE



All Electric Coach, Webasto Heating System, Diesel Generator, 6V92 Detroit Diesel, Allison Transmission, Professional Conversion, Garage Kept, Painted by Star Jet. Must See!!! Illness is reason for sale. E-mail for more info and pictures!!

**\$65,000**

Call Becky at (937) 548-0686  
E-mail: [mamaw0831@gmail.com](mailto:mamaw0831@gmail.com)  
Located in Greenville, OH

### 1995 DINA



43'X102", 11.1 60 series 375hp, Allison B500, 10mpg at 65mph, new 22.5's on Alcoa's, new brakes, electronic Jake and cruise, 7.5 water cooled Generac diesel generator, 200 gal fresh and waste water, 20 gal hot water heater, 40k BTU A/C and heat pump, 100k BTU Webasto and bus A/C, 8 new shocks, flexible suspension IFS, solid hickory and leather, A4 in motion satellite with Bose surround sound, original 12v bus lights and 120v track lights with dimmers, 3k watt inverter, 100amp and 50amp Vanner's, new 10 group 31 batteries. Read about this bus in the Jul and Aug 2013 issues in BCM.

**\$75,000**

Text Wulf at (773) 858-3473  
Or [wulf@menatworkscs.com](mailto:wulf@menatworkscs.com)  
Located in Chicago, IL

### 1978 35 FOOT TWO AXLE MCI MC-5C



Never a passenger bus. Detroit 6V71, Jake Brakes - Aluminum Wheels, Allison Automatic 6-speed. Kohler genset 12.5KW, Air suspension Leveling. Webasto hot water, factory A/C and roof A/C. Refrigerator, Freezer, Ice Maker, Microwave, Electric stove/oven, Beautiful oak kitchen, big pantry. Twin beds, Large closet in bathroom. Two flat screen TV's 104k original miles, 100 gal fresh, 100 gal gray, 140 gal fuel. All original records. See more photos in our Classified Ad section on our website..

**\$50,000 O.B.O**

Call Debbie at (619) 445-4815  
Or Email [db.wallace@cox.net](mailto:db.wallace@cox.net)  
Located in Alpine, CA

To advertise in the Classified Ads: Please call (657) 221-0432 or email [Gary@BusConversions.com](mailto:Gary@BusConversions.com)

**FABULOUS 1990 LIBERTY  
PREVOST BUS CONVERSION!**



120,000 miles, 3 Roof Air Conditioning Units, Built on a factory-made bus conversion chassis, 8V-92 Detroit Diesel, Allison 5-Speed Automatic Transmission, 40' x 102" wide, 12KW diesel generator on slide-out, 225 gallon fuel tank, Aluminum wheels, 10,000 lb. capacity tow hitch, New brake pads and drums all the way around, New turbo and air compressor on Detroit Diesel, Queen Bed, Spray foam insulation throughout entire coach, New power steering unit, Silver-gray and blue.

**\$69,900**

Call Jeff at (512) 468-3850  
or email at [jeff@planetearth-mail.com](mailto:jeff@planetearth-mail.com)

**1970 GMC 4905 40ft 1993**



Recent conversion. 8v71 Detroit. v730. 74,000 miles on rebuilt motor. Sam Caylor supply conversion. New tires. 15KW 4 Cycle Kubota generator. Freedom 2500 inverter. 50A hookup. Webasto diesel furnace. Body needs TLC. Full size bed. Ceiling fan. Shower Porcelain toilet. Washer hookups, Central vacuum. Walnut cabinets. Newmar electric panel. All LED lights. Matching furniture. New cook top and fridge. Ice maker. Convection oven. New dash with Isspro gages. Center console. Air suspension. Electric wipers, 2 drivers fans, LED dash lights, 2 fuel gages. Ramco mirrors. Brand new sinks, battery's, power steering.

**\$27,000 O.B.O.**

Call John at (603) 327-6931  
[johnjem84@gmail.com](mailto:johnjem84@gmail.com)  
Located in Brentwood, NH

**EAGLE 10-40'**



2014 Rebuilt 6v92ta engine 1,000 miles, 2008 Rebuilt Automatic transmission 4000 miles, Jake brakes, 8kw diesel generator, 2500 watt trace Inverter Raised Roof, 160 gal fresh water, 160 gal holding tank, holding tank washout, 2-12 gal propane tanks, rebuilt radiator, misting system on radiator, high volume water pump, power steering, telescoping tilt wheel, new dash, new compressor, new headlights and driving lights engine heater, blower by pass on engine, new steering box, 2011 new tires, 3000 miles Alcoa wheels, 6 house batteries, fully insulated walls, 2 roof air, 2 vented cat heater back up cameras wired for towing heavy duty hitch, 2 fantastic vents, Corian counter tops, flex steel furniture sleeps 6, rear bedroom w/queen bed, walk through bath with Full size shower, color TV, VCR, 5 CD changer, Sony

radio-Cassette CB Radio, wired for cable TV, monitor panel, Norcold 2 way refrigerator, microwave, gas stove, oak interior, 4x8 slide out storage tray, front bay new paint, mural of eagle on back, lights in bays, stainless catch tank on engine to prevent dripping, entire coach totally rewired new style headlights, new style turn signal & parking lights, Rosen sun visors, electrically heated pressure tank on water system, remote control mirrors.



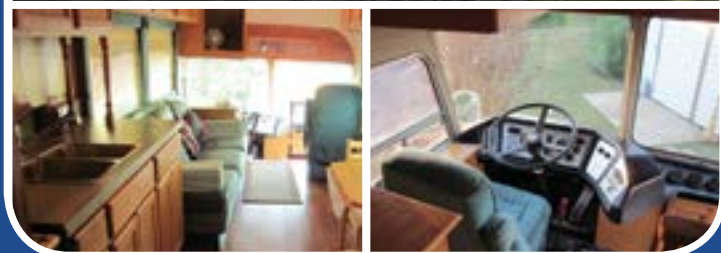
**\$50,000**

Call John  
at (928) 242-1308 or email  
[jmcfall@iceasp.com](mailto:jmcfall@iceasp.com)  
Located in Lakeside, AZ

To advertise in the Classified Ads: Please call (657) 221-0432 or email [Gary@BusConversions.com](mailto:Gary@BusConversions.com)

## 1970 EAGLE – A DREAM CUT SHORT

This bus was recently gone through and everything checked out and replaced if necessary to travel and live in full time just before my husband passed away. So this bus is ready to go.



My husband is no longer with us and I must sell this bus quickly. I will take asking price O.B.O. Engine 8V71 rebuilt in 1996, Transmission rebuilt by Haygood in 1996. Model 10 caps, New: clutch pack, air compressor, brakes, shocks, all brake chambers, all belts & hoses, alternator and bracket, air dryer, converter, charger, house and coach batteries, generator. Electric driver's seat, Auxiliary heat and air in dash, New windshields, and backup camera to be installed, Training Manuals (parts and trouble shooting), Spare furnace, Oak cabinets, Tires in good shape, and much more.

**\$38,500**

Call Marilyn at (469) 486-1045 or  
email: [runningeagle@att.net](mailto:runningeagle@att.net)  
Located in The Colony, TX

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Sterling Classified Ads are for Bus, Bus Parts or RV Lots only and must be prepaid. There are no refunds for early withdrawal. All ads and cancellations must be received by the 15th, two months prior to publication.

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Email your ad and photos to [Gary@BusConversions.com](mailto:Gary@BusConversions.com). Or mail your completed ad and photos to *Bus Conversion Magazine*, Attn: Classified Ads, 661 E Main St # 200-3131, Midlothian TX 76065. You can also call us at (657) 221-0432.

## WANTED

### GM PD41xx SERIES BUSES



I am putting together a list of surviving GM 41 series buses left in the world. Coaches are being tracked by serial number and location, city and state. Any status: conversion, a seated bus or scrapped. To date I can account for 450+ of 5,065 PD 4104's. Contact me to share your info and I will share mine with you.

Contact Jon Usle [jusle@aol.com](mailto:jusle@aol.com)

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# **BCM**

***Bus Conversion Magazine***

**January 2015**

Digital Edition Bonus Content  
Exclusively Available In The BCM  
Digital Edition



Bonus Photos!

# HONEYSUCKEL ROSE

PHOTOS BY GARY HATT



Bonus Photos!

# HONEYSUCKEL ROSE

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Photos!

# HONEYSUCKEL ROSE

PHOTOS BY GARY HATT



**Bonus  
Photos!**

# BUILDING WITH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



*Team leader Steve (L) conferring with architect Terry (C) on details of the design.*



*At least four smaller crews working on various aspects of the project. We used electric chop saws set up for working at waist height to cross-cut most of the dimensional lumber to the needed lengths.*



*Framing in an opening for a window in the 76 foot long east wall.*

**Bonus Photos!**

# BUILDING WITH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



*The east wall being worked on. You can see most of the 90 foot long foundation slab in this photo. Author is on the left (photo by Linda).*



*The east wall part way up. Yes, many hands make light work, but don't let go!!!*



*A few team members pose for a portrait as they hold the east wall in position while other team members secure the bracing.*



*The building site after erecting the east wall. The photo clearly shows the foundation slab. Partition walls are stacked to the left.*



*The west wall being braced. It was also 76 feet long and built as a single unit before standing it up. This is a "shotgun" house, 14 feet wide and 76 feet long not including the front porch.*



*Once the interior partition walls are up the project looks more complicated, but just like building a bus conversion, you follow the plans and do it step-by-step. You have plans for your bus conversion, right?*

**Bonus  
Photos!**

# BUILDING WITH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



*The author measuring for something on the rear wall  
(photo by Linda).*



*Picking up the roof trusses from another building site.  
(The house in the background is NOT an HFH home.)*



*This is how the roof trusses were delivered to the other site. We had  
to un-band them and load them onto a flatbed truck one at a time.*



*A 4-person crew from Colorado joined us for a day.  
Here they are securing trusses and bracing them with spacers.*



*An all-female crew running sheets of siding plywood through the  
table saw. Two of the women in this group were singles.  
HFH builds are not just for RVing couples.*



*Another all-female group painting the siding.  
It was easier and more efficient to do this before it was installed as  
that allowed smaller teams to work in parallel  
without getting in each other's way.*



# **BRANSON 7 DAY EAGLE RALLY October 5-11, 2016**

**BRANSON LAKESIDE RV PARK LAKE TANEYCOMO IN BRANSON, MO  
300 S Boxcar Wilie Drive | Branson, Missouri 65616**

**The park is next Branson Landing which feauters a water show every evening,  
one mile of shops including Belks department Store, Bass Pro Shops, several  
restaurants, and several small shops - all within walking distance!**

**RALLY FEE \$225 FOR TWO PEOPLE AND ONE COACH**

INCLUDES FULL HOOK UP FOR 7 NIGHTS FOR THE FIRST 35 COACHES

NOTE: IF YOU WANT TO STAY LONGER, VISIT [WWW.CITYOFBRANSON.ORG](http://WWW.CITYOFBRANSON.ORG) FOR MORE INFORMATION.



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CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

# IBP Industries Products

## XL, XLII, H3

### PREVOST Headlight, Taillight & Marker Lights

#### Headlight Conversion Kits Incandescent LeMirage



**C43-0093S** Prevost Dual Rectangular  
Headlight Conversion Brushed



**C43-0093PS** Prevost Dual Rectangular  
Headlight Conversion Polished

#### Marker Lights L.E.D. XL, XLII



- 93-0323** LED Seal
- 93-0332** LED Seal
- 93-0334** LED Roof Marker Light Red
- 93-0337** LED Roof Marker Light Amber
- 93-0340** LED Marker Light Red 12V
- 93-0340-24V** LED Marker Light Red 24V
- 93-0341** LED Marker Light Amber 12V
- 93-0341-24V** LED Marker Light Amber 24V
- 93-0346** Pigtail



- 1A-S-2000A** LED Marker Light Amber 12V (10 Diode)
- 1A-S-2000R** LED Marker Light Red 12V (10 Diode)

#### Taillight L.E.D. Conversion Kits XL, H3



**M3-01024** LED Taillight Conversion Set,  
Early H3 Prevost w/Formed Bezel



- M3-00982** Red Lamp Assembly, H3
- M3-00996** Back Up Lamp Assembly, H3
- M3-01016** Amber Lamp Assembly, H3
- M3-00978** Wiring Harness, H3
- M3-00979** Wiring Harness, H3



**M3-00887** LED Taillight Conversion, LeMirage, XL



- M3-00927** LED Insert for Prevost, 7 Stack, XL
- M3-00932** Wiring Harness for 7 Stack Conversion, XL

#### Taillight L.E.D. Conversion Kits XL, XLII



- M3-00896** Lamp Conversion Assy - Red LED, XLII  
(Replaces Bosch Lamp) Polished
- M3-00230** Amber Led Conversion, XLII  
(Replaces Bosch Lamp) Polished
- M3-00312** Clear Led Conversion, XLII  
(Replaces Bosch Lamp) Polished



- 99-5555PS** Taillight Housing Set Polished, XL
- 99-5556PS** Taillight Housing R/S Polished, XL
- 99-5557PS** Taillight Housing L/S Polished, XL
- 43-0287-88PS** Taillight Cover Set w/4" Reflector
- 43-0444-45PS** Taillight Cover Set w/7" Reflector
- IBP-PRV-TRM-121** Taillight Trim Set
- M3-00306** Taillight Cover Set w/Hella Lights
- M3-00907** Taillight Trim Set w/Hella Lights & Fog Light



- 78230** Lamp Assy - Amber Oval. LED
- 78232** Lamp Assy - Clear Oval. LED
- 78233** Lamp Assy - Red Oval. LED



- 80802BP** Grommet - Oval

**IBP Industries, Inc. 800-468-5287**

*\* All listed parts are manufactured by IBP Industries to OEM specifications.*

# IBP Industries Products

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**NS-198F** Lamp - Fog, Clear Glass Lens (H3 12V 55W)



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**NS-2203HL** Headlamp - Low Beam (9005/HB3 - 65W/12V)



**NS-2210S** Headlamp - 7" Round (HB2 - 60/55W/12V)



**NS-2240H** Headlamp - High Beam, 165mm w/LED Position Lamp



**NS-2240L** Headlamp - Low Beam, 165mm w/LED Position Lamp



**NS-2243** Headlamp - High/Low Beam, 7" LED



**NS-2265** Headlamp - High/Low Beam, 7" LED w/ Indicator Lamp



**NS-2302S** Tail Light - Curved Banana Light, 12V LED



**NS-2303S** Lamp Assy - Curved, Red (Double Contact)



**NS-2409S** Lamp Assy - Curved, Red (Single Contact)



**NS-2603S** Lamp Assy - Curved, Clear



**NS-4302H** Headlamp - High Beam 90mm



**NS-4302L** Headlamp - Low Beam 90mm



**NS-4307H** Headlamp - High Beam 90mm, LED



**NS-4307L** Headlamp - Low Beam w/Position Lamp 90mm, LED

IBP Industries, Inc. **800-468-5287**

*\* All listed parts are manufactured by IBP Industries to OEM specifications.*

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## Blast From The Past

*This special is about the Eagle.*

Part 2 of a 12 part series of articles about the Eagle from a 1982 Bus World magazine

We are grateful to our friends at BUS WORLD for their desire to put together a special issue devoted to the past, present, and future of Eagle International and the American Eagle coach. Mr. Ed Stauss, Editor and Publisher, has asked me to make a few introductory remarks and, accordingly, I'd like to talk about four things: the product itself; the people behind the product; our customers; and the future of Eagle.

The product itself, as you'll discover in the ensuing pages, represents a refinement process of approximately twenty-five years. In the beginning, the Eagle coach was totally European in concept and product. Today, it is thoroughly Americanized and represents, in our view, the best of American engineering and the best of American componentry. With the development and production of the Eagle Model 10 during the last three years, the product has been advanced with four things in mind: (1) fuel efficiency; (2) durability; (3) maintainability; and (4) passenger appeal. For example, during the last three years, the aerodynamics of the coach have been painstakingly wind-tunnel tested for a maximum improvement in drag coefficient. Rockford fan clutches have been added, axle ratios and transmissions have been computer-matched for maximum fuel efficiency, and 800 pounds of non-essential weight have been eliminated.

All of these improvements have been the initiative of Mr. Frank Hines, President of Eagle International, and his staff. During this period of time, Hines, a relative newcomer to the bus industry, has listened to the suggestions of literally hundreds of bus operators around the country in order to build the type of product the marketplace wants. Hines has also added more than a dozen key engineering, production, and management people to his staff during the past eighteen months, including men from Grumman, G.M., T.M.C., Peterbilt Truck, and Piper Aircraft. Two of the biggest benefits of these additions have been a greatly expanded field service organization and an enhanced replacement parts capability.

Of considerable significance, New Trails formed a wholly-owned marketing entity in 1980, American Coach Sales, to take the Model 10 story to the independents in the marketplace. New Trails hired Mr. Frank Zarider out of the Hausman organization to be president of American Coach Sales and to put together the sales organization to take Model 10 demonstrators to the marketplace. The marketplace has responded favorably to the product, some might even say very favorably. In 1979 Eagle sold 49 buses to independents. In 1981, Eagle sold 345 buses to independents, and in 1982, 470 production slots have been earmarked for independents, of which 432 have been committed to as of this writing.

The breadth of our customer base has been particularly gratifying this past year. The 345 deliveries to the independents represented 161 different customers, including line-haul operators, charter operators, tour operators, a transit district, two hotels, several colleges, the U.S. Government, churches, several custom conversion shells, a number of country-western singers, and a rock-and-roll group. Our largest single customer purchased twenty buses; most of our customers purchase one, two, or three buses.

We think the future of Eagle is extremely bright. Product refinement will continue through 1982 and 1983 as we listen to your suggestions. The strong demand for the Model 10 has necessitated the acquisition of a second assembly plant located in Harlingen, Texas. This plant will concentrate on production of approximately 200 Trailways buses per year and the production of our new Model 10 Suburban. The Model 10 Suburban — a single-rear-axle version of the Model 10 — is lighter than the RTS-IV transit coach and will be marketed primarily to airport and suburban commute operators. The second plant will give New Trails nearly a half-a-million square feet of manufacturing space and productive capacity of about 1,500 coaches annually.

I personally am excited about this special issue of BUS WORLD and hope that you will find it an interesting and informative history of Eagle.

**Steve Griffith**  
Executive Vice President  
New Trails, Inc.

## Blast From The Past

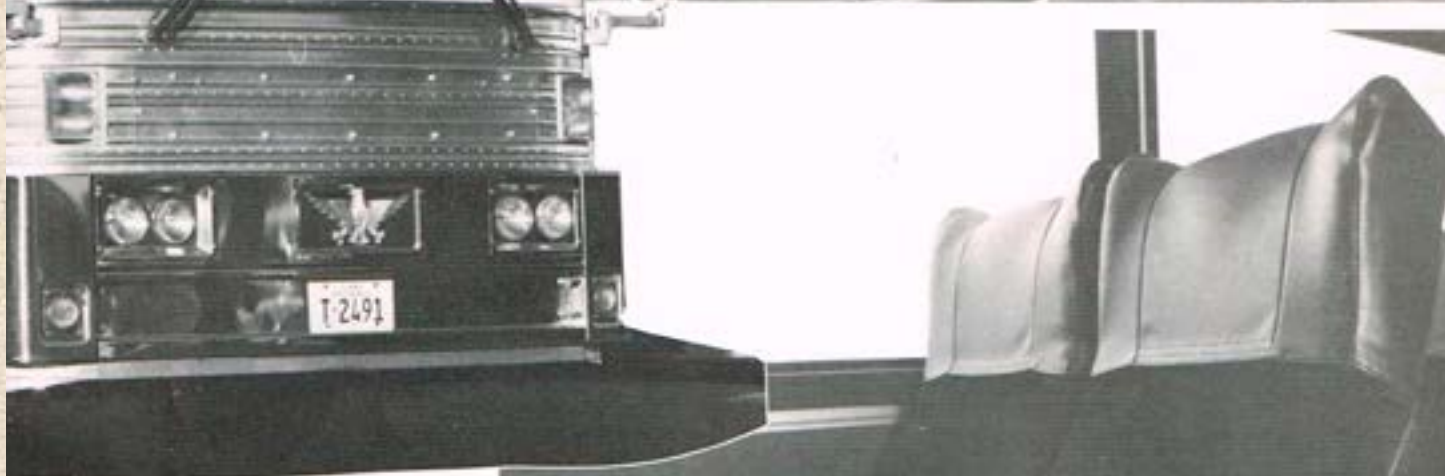
*An Eagle is something special.*

***The Model 10 was created for the 80s with many value-added features.***

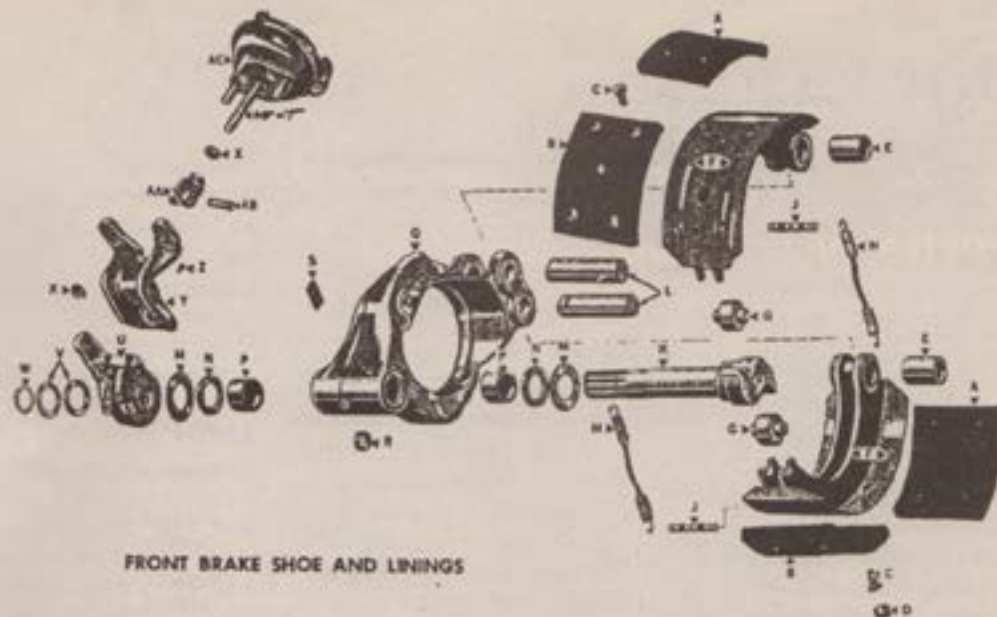
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# Blast From The Past



## Blast From The Past



FRONT BRAKE SHOE AND LININGS

# AIR BRAKES

Nearly all converted coach owners are aware that their vehicles are equipped with air brakes, but how much do most of us really know about these braking systems? This article will introduce you to the world of the air brake. While we will be discussing the brakes on buses specifically, the principle holds true for other vehicles equipped with this system.

### The basics of braking with air

A constant source of compressed air is an absolute must for operational air brakes. This air is supplied by a compressor that is driven (usually directly coupled to an accessory drive port at the rear end on one of the engine camshafts, but sometimes belt-driven) by the bus engine. Normally, the air compressor is liquid-cooled with engine coolant, and is pressure-lubricated by the engine's oil system. Since the compressor operates whenever the engine is running, some means of controlling the air pressure is needed; thus, the compressor intake valves are held open via air pressure that is applied to a control port on the compressor known as an "air governor." This air governor monitors the pressure in

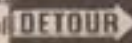
one of the air storage tanks. When the air pressure reaches the preset level (usually 100 to 120 psi), air pressure is supplied to this control port, the compressor stops pumping, and the air pressure in the system ceases to rise. Later, when the air pressure in the tank drops about 20 psi, the air governor releases the pressure on the control port, and the compressor pumps once again. This air governor, by the way, is the most common cause of "runaway" air pressure problems. In most cases, the governor is bolted right to the back of the compressor with two 5/16-inch diameter cap screws, and the compressor will have a single 1/4-inch or #4 line connected to it.

Visualize an air brake system's "master cylinder," which is called a "treadle valve," as an air pressure regulator. Instead of adjusting a knob to regulate the air pressure, you control the pressure by pressing the pedal (treadle) with your foot. The farther you depress the pedal, the greater the air pressure that is supplied to the brakes.

As you apply the brakes, air is sent to each wheel via a copper tube (nylon on the newest vehicles). These wheels are

equipped with "brake chambers," which are metal canisters that are flanged and split in the middle. When the two halves of the chambers are joined, a reinforced rubber diaphragm is placed between them, and then the assembly is secured using a special metal band clamp. Inside, this diaphragm has an opening on one side for the incoming air line, and on the other side it has a metal rod with a smooth, flat, metal plate welded to one end. The diaphragm presses against this plate when air is applied to the opposite end of it. The rod, in turn, is attached to a lever (slack adjuster) that has a round splined hole in one end. This splined hole is actually located in a gear that can be turned by a worm arrangement in order to adjust the position of the splines in relation to the lever. By turning this worm screw, which is fitted with a locking device, you can effectively adjust the brakes.

At the other end of the splined shaft that goes into the slack adjuster is a doubled-ended cam that is shaped like the letter "S." Rollers are attached to one end of each brake shoe riding on the cam; the other ends of



# Blast From The Past

Bus Conversions

## AIR BRAKES, Cont'd

the shoes are furnished with bushings and are mounted on a shaft that is attached to the "brake spider" (in a car or light truck, this would be the brake backing plate). Because of the way in which the shoes press against the brake drums, these are known as "S cam brakes." They are by far the most popular type of brakes used in buses.

In order to allow the brakes to disengage quickly when the treadle is released, each axle is equipped with a "quick-release valve," which has a very lightly spring-loaded rubber sealed disk in it. This disk is arranged in such a way that it seals and allows the passage of air to the brake chambers, but when the incoming pressure diminishes, the valve opens and allows the air in the brake chambers to be exhausted quickly to the atmosphere. On newer buses, this valve is incorporated into what is known as a "relay valve" (at least this is true on the drive axle). Further

weight (such as you would use on other chassis fittings).

### Adjustment

This is the most important factor in maintaining optimal braking action. Brake adjustment should be checked at least every 5,000 miles, or more frequently if you detect a loss of braking power. Should you find that one particular wheel frequently needs adjustment, this is usually a sign of a defective slack adjuster, or of an adjuster that is not locking after adjustment. Other than loss of braking power, a sure sign that your brakes need adjustment is a longer than normal delay between the time the brake pedal is applied and the time when braking action begins.

The actual adjustment is simple and is well within the scope of the backyard mechanic. To accomplish this task, you will need the following:

1. A way to get under the bus, just inside the wheels. A large sheet of cardboard laid on the floor usually will be just dandy.
2. A 9/16-inch or 3/4-inch box wrench (depending on the vintage and make of the slack adjusters) and a small hammer. Self-ratcheting box wrenches and a brass hammer are preferred.
3. Air pressure in the bus' air system

**Although bus air brake systems require little in the way of special maintenance, that which IS required is of almost crucial importance.**

discussion regarding the relay valve and its purposes comes later in this article.

Although the above description of the operation of air brake systems is admittedly an oversimplification, it should provide a general idea of how the system works.

### Care and feeding of the system

Although bus air brake systems require little in the way of special maintenance, that which IS required is of almost crucial importance. A detailed look at some of the most common maintenance points follows.

pumped up to the maximum. (As a safety precaution, I generally connect the bus to my shop air compressor, so as to avoid running the engine within the confines of my garage.)

4. A helper to depress the brake pedal while you make the adjustment checks.

5. Wheel chocks to keep the bus from rolling while you adjust the rear brakes.

With air pressure up, crawl under the front of the bus. As you observe the slack adjuster, note the travel of the end that is attached to the brake chamber push rod as your assistant applies normal pressure to the brake pedal. This travel should be on the order of one inch. Now, place your hand on the brake drum in such a position that allows you to detect movement of the brake shoe in relation to the drum. Have your helper make another brake application and release the pedal. The idea here is to adjust the brakes to the point at which the shoes are just barely away from the drum when the brakes are in the released position. The exact travel of the slack adjuster will depend upon the make and model of the bus and upon the wear to which the individual components of your particular coach have been subjected.

To make the adjustment, place the wrench on the slack-adjuster's adjustment

### Lubrication

ALL bearing points on a bus chassis are equipped with grease fittings; the brakes are no exception. These fittings need attention at least every 10,000 miles, or once a year, whichever comes first. Many coaches have a fitting on the brake shoe anchor pins, and all coaches have one or more fittings on the camshaft. Additionally, there is a fitting on each slack adjuster, and on the treadle valve actuator arm and/or brake pedal pivot point. Lubricate the anchor pins sparingly, so as to prevent excess grease from reaching the brake linings or drums, and, likewise, exercise caution when greasing the camshafts. Grease the slack adjusters liberally. Grease fittings are found near the mounting flange on some types of rear brake chambers; these fittings should also get a small shot of grease. Use a good grade of water-resistant chassis grease with a #2

bolt, and tap the wrench with the hammer so as to depress the spring-loaded locking collar. Then, while continuing to apply pressure on the wrench with your other hand in order to keep the lock depressed, turn the bolt in the direction that makes the camshaft rotate in the direction that it travels when the brakes are applied. Usually, a half turn on this adjustment bolt will be sufficient. Now have your helper try the brakes again. Once you adjust one or two, you will develop a feel for how much turning is required to change the slack adjuster travel by the desired amount.

After you have completed the adjustment of the front brakes, pump up the air pressure once again, and release the parking brakes if your coach has the air-type parking brake. At the rear of the coach, repeat the above procedure, then double-check the adjustment bolt locks to make certain that they have gone back into place. If the bolt locks are gummed up with old grease, it may be necessary to pry them back into place with a screwdriver, using the lip on the outside of the locking collar for this purpose. In some cases, it will be necessary to turn the adjustment bolt very slightly so that the locks fall back into place.

Some late vintage buses

**DETOUR**

**DETOUR**

## Blast From The Past

### AIR BRAKES, Cont'd

(mid 1970s) may be equipped with optional automatic slack adjusters. If your bus includes these devices, periodic attention will still be required, and a close manual adjustment will greatly enhance braking. Adjusting automatic slack adjusters normally requires a 12mm wrench, although some have a 1/2-inch square adjustment. The bolt on those with the square adjuster will turn easily in one direction (tighten) and not in the other. Do not force the bolt in the backward direction without removing the ratchet spring and pin that are held in place by a small hex-headed plug located about an inch or so down the adjuster bolt housing. The 12-mm-type slack adjuster has no conventional lock for the adjusting bolt, and it will turn easily when it is being tightened, but not so easily when it is being loosened.

**Many older coaches are equipped with brakes that fall short of modern braking standards by a substantial margin.**

After you have completed the brake adjustment procedure, a road test is in order to determine what you accomplished. If the coach pulls to one side when the brakes are applied, check the equality of the braking action of the front brakes, adjusting the brakes until the two are equal.

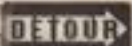
#### Better brakes for older coaches

Many older buses are equipped with brakes that fall short of modern braking standards by a substantial margin. In fact, these brakes will not slide the rear wheels on dry pavement, even under a maximum-effort-stop. Several things can be done to improve this situation, none of which costs a bundle of money.

First, adjust the brakes as indicated above. Now, they should work as well as they were designed to, assuming that all

components are in good working order. After performing this adjustment on my own coach and meeting with only moderate improvement, I started researching. My rear brake drums measure 16-1/2 by 7 inches, a size similar to those found on most modern coaches with excellent brakes. The Model 10 Eagle, for example, has 16-1/2-by-8-inch brakes on the drive axle, and MCI coaches are equipped with only 16-inch diameter brakes. After I determined that all of the essential parts were there, I checked further, and I determined that my rear brake chambers were of the 30-square-inch type, the same as those used on current model buses and on many trucks. The center-to-center dimensions on the slack adjusters is 5 inches, however, while most buses now are in the 7- to 8-inch category. To use longer slack adjusters, the brake

chamber must be repositioned and tapered shims installed to provide the correct push rod angle. Not wanting to leap right into this procedure (which would decrease my ground clearance and, therefore, subject the brake chambers to possible damage), I investigated some alternatives. First, I could install softer, more aggressive brake linings. When you buy linings, "cheaper is better," as the cheaper linings are softer. Softer linings will not last as long as will harder premium linings, but the softer linings will provide superior friction.

Since my brakes were nearly new, I continued my investigation. If space permits, larger diameter rear brake chambers could be installed, such as 36- or 

## ONE FOR THE ROAD



Frank Allen of Lexington, North Carolina sends this note: "Thought there might be some interest in this bus. It's a 1948 International we spotted on a car lot in Blacksburg, VA. It was a school bus. It is beautiful inside with all kinds of things and has all wood walls, etc.

"We are still working away on our 4106, always one more thing to do. Love the magazine!"

# Blast From The Past

*Bus Conversions*

## AIR BRAKES, Cont'd

even 40-square-inch units. However, the single most important modification would be the installation of a relay valve. In my case I bought a Bendix-Westinghouse type R-6 valve. This valve replaces the rear quick-release valve, and - using the line from the treadle valve to provide a signal only - it draws air from the main air tank located nearby and quickly provides pressure to the brakes. As the R-6 features a built-in quick-release valve, the installation of such a valve is not required.

Mount the R-6 valve securely to the area where the old quick-release valve was attached, and connect the hoses that run to the rear brake chambers to the "del" ports, plugging the two unused ones. Connect the "sup" port to the "dry" air tank using large nylon air brake line that has an outside diameter of at least 5/8

inches. Connect the old line from the treadle valve to the port on the top of the R-6 valve's dome. For even better operation, run a new nylon air brake line with 3/8-inch outside diameter all the way to the treadle valve and completely abandon the old line. Do this only if the coach is equipped with "spring" brakes (this refers to spring-activated parking/emergency brakes such as Maxi Brakes, or DD3 brake chambers).

While you are working under the bus, and moving the brake hoses about, take time to examine them for stiffness, cracking, or wear. When reinstalling or replacing the lines, position them carefully so that they do not make contact with one another or with anything else that they could rub against. Should you find it necessary to replace these hoses, be certain

that the new hoses are approved for air brake service. Nylon air brake line is NOT approved for this particular application. The fittings used for this hose are designed to be reused, with the replacement of a brass ferrule only. Hose with a 3/8-inch inside diameter is most commonly used, and fittings with 1/4-inch or 3/8-inch NPT thread will fit nearly all bus brake applications.

Another way to improve braking on the PD 4106 is to replace the brake application valve.

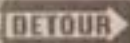
Don Mathews, F10342, replaced his brake application valve, which had limited application pressure to 70 lbs, with one delivering full reservoir pressure at maximum, and noted a great improvement.

The book says that the 4106 valve delivers from 5 to 75 pounds on depressing the pedal 3 to 20 degrees, and beyond that gives full tank pressure, but this may not always be the case. The old valve is the "regulated" type; the new one is "unregulated".

There is almost a 100% increase in braking power and much more precise control, - requiring only about 60% as much pedal depression and pressure! Just like all-new brakes! The new brake valve part number is 2424841.

Those of cautious bent might get their brakes tested with a pressure gauge to verify the actual application pressure being delivered to the cams before getting the valve repaired or replaced. So if you have a coach with soft brakes, it may pay to put pressure on the persistent problem.

Spring-type parking/emergency brakes.

The benefit of installing these special brake chambers, which have been fitted to the drive axles of all new intercity buses since the mid-'60s, on a motor coach cannot be overstated. It is possible to install these chambers yourself on most coaches at minimum cost, and in only a few hours. Two types are in general use - the "DD3" type, made by Bendix-Westinghouse, and the "Anchorlock," which is by far the simplest and easiest to install. The 

All readers are invited to submit their favorite humorous, offbeat or engaging photos for possible inclusion in this magazine. If we use your photo you will receive a one year Online subscription to **Bus Conversions Magazine**, absolutely FREE. Send photos to: Bus Conversion Magazine, C/O "One For The Road" 9852 Katella Ave STE 361, Anaheim, CA 92804 or email them to [Gary@BusConversions.com](mailto:Gary@BusConversions.com). Be sure to include your name, address, and phone number with photos.

# Blast From The Past

Bus Conversions

## AIR BRAKES, Cont'd

simplicity of this latter system also makes it more dependable, in my opinion, and it is much less prone to a "won't release" situation in coaches that are not in constant use. Here's a brief rundown of the installation of Anchorlock units.

### Construction

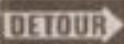
The Anchorlock brake chamber is constructed of high-strength die-cast aluminum alloy, and it looks like a conventional brake chamber with another brake chamber grafted onto the back of it. The front half of this brake chamber (the part with the rod connected to the slack adjuster that protrudes from it) contains a conventional brake diaphragm and push rod but has a plunger sticking into it from the "piggyback" section. This plunger will apply pressure to the back of the diaphragm and, therefore, to the push rod, if there is not sufficient air pressure on the rear diaphragm (the one in the piggyback

section). The pressure necessary for this operation is derived from a spring with 2,200 pounds pressure. This tremendous spring pressure is held in check by air pressure that is applied to the rear port of the Anchorlock brake chamber. If pressure is lost, the brakes are applied by the spring - therefore, the term "spring brake."

Since removal or installation of the diaphragms in such an assembly could be dangerous and maybe even impossible, a special "T"-headed bolt known as a "spring caging bolt" is supplied with each unit. This bolt is permanently stored in a pocket that was cast into the unit for this purpose.

Control of this system is the epitome of simplicity. A control valve on the dash is of the palm button type, and it is spring-loaded to the "out" or brakes-applied dumped out the quick-release valve. In case of brake system air loss, the button will "pop" out, and the brakes will be applied.

**After taking the usual safety precautions - such as blocking the body of the coach... and chocking the wheels...**

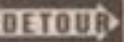
Installation is likewise uncomplicated on most coaches. After taking the usual safety precautions - such as blocking the body of the coach in the case of air suspension coaches, and chocking the wheels - back off (loosen) the adjustment on the drive axle brakes. If your present brake chambers are in good structural condition, I would suggest that you use "piggyback" brake chambers. The "piggyback" model attaches to your existing brake chamber base and uses the existing brake push rod. Model 3030PB fits nearly all popular coaches. A new pair of these 

chambers costs about \$80. To install them, have a helper step on the brake pedal, and when the push rod is extended from the brake chamber, clamp a pair of vice-grip pliers around the push rod to prevent it from being drawn back into the chamber when the brakes are released. After you have accomplished this, have your helper release the brakes. Remove the band that holds the sections of the brake chamber together. Remove the section with the hose attached to it and discard it. Examine the rubber diaphragm. If it is not in perfect condition, replace it with a new one. You will also want to replace the clamping band and the bolts that hold it with new parts, which you can purchase where you buy the brake chambers. Be certain to purchase the special extra-deep nuts to fit the clamp bolts, as these nuts are much easier to install.

Following the instructions embossed on the unit or the printed instructions that

are included with the Anchorlocks, carefully "cage the spring" in each unit. Lubricate the threads on the special bolt and nut with STP or a similar material before beginning the installation. The caging operation is complete when the plunger inside the open end of the chamber rests flush in its recess in the housing. Now, install the Anchorlock chamber, brake diaphragm, and clamp ring on the old brake chamber base. In most cases, it will be necessary to squeeze the ends of the clamp ring together using large water pump pliers in order to get the clamp bolts started, especially with a new diaphragm in place. As you squeeze this clamp ring together, tap LIGHTLY around its perimeter with a soft-faced hammer, then feel the clamp to make sure that it fits properly (evenly) at all points. This is very important, as it is possible that the sheet steel of the existing brake chamber is not seated in the groove of the clamp

ring. As you alternately tighten the clamp bolts, continue to tap lightly around the ring, making certain that it seats properly.

On some coaches, such as the PD-4104 and PD-4106, it will be necessary to raise the body of the bus enough to clear the spring caging bolt while installing the brake chambers. After mounting both brake chambers in the manner described above, with the tapped air hose holes aimed toward the centerline of the coach, remove the vice-grip pliers from the push rods, allowing the rods to retract into the brake chamber. Note that the rods will be pushed back out as the spring cage bolt is removed. After the chamber is in place, remove the spring cage bolt, and secure it in the storage hole from which it was removed. Now, connect the hoses that were removed from the old brake chambers to the tapped air hose hole nearest the base of the old brake chamber (usually located toward the 

# Blast From The Past

*Bus Conversions*

## AIR BRAKES, Cont'd

rear of the bus). These holes are tapped 1/4-inch NPT, and you will probably want to install a 45-degree brass street elbow here to provide the best angle for the brake hose.

Now, mount a new quick-release valve near the existing one (about six to eight inches below it is generally satisfactory), allowing for easy routing of lines. Make up new brake hoses for the release ports in order to connect them to this new quick-release valve. Next install these new hoses, taking care to achieve a satisfactory angle. Make sure that the hoses are long enough to allow for vertical axle travel but are not overly long. As outlined above, run a nylon air brake line with a 3/8-inch outside diameter to the button valve, which will be installed next to the driver's seat.

After these connections have been made, pump up the air pressure and check for leaks. Next, depress the button to release the Anchorlock brakes. The button should stay down. If it does not, make certain that air pressure is in excess of 60 psi. If the pressure is adequate, and the proper connections have been made on the valve, the button will stay down unless you actually pull it up. Once you're satisfied that this is working correctly, readjust the rear brakes in the conventional manner. (Note: the Anchorlocks must be released to do this.) Now pull out on the button valve. A fairly loud "whoosh" of air should be released at the rear of the coach as the spring brakes come on. If, instead, you hear the sound of substantial air escaping from the valve itself, check for a stuck quick-release valve. This can usually be cleared by inserting a blunt object, such as the eraser end of a pencil, into the exhaust port of the quick-release valve, and pressing the rubber valve inside up, releasing it.

The procedure for installing a complete 3030 Anchorlock unit is similar to that described above, except the old brake chamber is removed entirely, and the new one is installed in its place. The mounting-bolt spacing and diameter are SAE standard, and instructions packed with the units will describe the procedure for

cutting the new push rods to the correct length for your particular bus.

This completes the installation of your very own "spring brakes," an important safety addition to any coach. At this time, you might want to rid yourself of the old hand-brake lever, and perhaps more of the old, now unused parts. The levers

themselves are fastened in place with two bolts, which can easily be removed through the access door just under the driver's area on most coaches.





## Air Bag Plating Kit Installation Question

### Post by: brianzero

Hi All,  
I just received my air bag plating kit, but the air line reroute installation has me a little confused. The new air line is supposed to "T" into one of the air lines that supply the leveling valves? I'm not sure which of the lines is which. In my image I labeled A,B,C and D. Can somebody tell me which line I'm supposed to "T" into?

### Bonus question:

Alternately, why can't you just delete those leveling valves? Since the bus load is static (unchanging) wouldn't it be easier to remove these and simplify the system?

### Post by: Oonrahnjay



You would have to measure and set your body/axle levels every day or at least every day you drove the bus. And then if you have a minor leak or even a change in volume/pressure due to temperature or something, then it would need setting again. You \*could\* delete them but you'd be left with a bus that would take lots of fussy maintenance and might even let you down (literally) at the worst possible time.

### Post by: brianzero

OK, so that wasn't a good idea. Just forget I ever asked that question...

### Post by: Oonrahnjay

I think it was a good question. My airbags are made out of steel so I'm not the one most involved with an air suspension system but I've been looking at the systems and possibilities for upgrade myself so I hope I'm catching on to a few things. And if someone doesn't ask, how will they learn? And maybe someone will have some ideas or tips for you.

### Post by: Jriddle

You can remove the leveling valves. You would need to install a manual leveling system to be able to read the pressure at each rear bag and one for the front air bags. I put a system on my MC-9 for campsite leveling and it works well. I removed the troublesome automatic valves and have never had any troubles with ride as the coach is always loaded the same.

### Post by: Icen John

Bruce, are you thinking of adding air helper springs? I'm thinking of doing this to correct a lean. PM me if you have any ideas how best to do this; I have some ideas but I want to see if anyone else has done this.

### Post by: eagle19952

but ... you can't compensate for the road...

### Post by: Scott Bennett

Oonrahn, I thought there was a large consensus here that the leveling valves are the biggest leak source and removing them and replacing with manual valves and dash gauges was an improvement. Set the regulators at 85 psi and call it a day.

### Post by: Tom Y

Scott, Not 85psi. Adjust regulator to get the right ride height,

there should be a spec in the book. I do not have gauges on mine but will, and also need to move regulators to driver's seat. I want to be able to add some air for parking.

### Post by: bevans6

I think if you stop calling them leveling valves and call them ride height valves, you get a better picture of what they do. Leveling is only a side effect of what they do, which is control the suspension height of the bus under varying load conditions. A passenger bus can vary its total weight by 6 or 8 thousand pounds in a few minutes, if it drops off a full passenger load at a terminal for example. The valves let the bus automatically adjust to these loads in a quick (not fast) manner, since they have a delay built into them so that they don't react to road bumps, turns, etc. In my view, since the load of my bus changes only slightly and seldom (taking on a tank of fuel that weighs say 800 lbs., same with water, although I tend to load fresh water at the same time as I dump roughly the same amount of black/grey water) eliminating the ride height valves and going manual is not an odd thing to contemplate. It takes relatively little pressure to obtain the desired ride height, so a set of regulators and a gauge (or even tape measure) could set you up just fine. Retaining the single control for both front sides along with independent control of the rear axle sides would keep the three legged stool effect and eliminate racking of the chassis under different road conditions, and you can then use the air bags to level the bus at a camp site, by manually adding or removing air from the high end or low corner. This has been done many times.

To answer the "which air line" question, you connect the air plates to the output of the ride height valve, which is the line now connected to the air beam that the original air springs are fastened to.

### Post by: Oonrahnjay

Yes, yes, yes! That's a good way to go -- and I suppose that I should have mentioned it. (It's what I'm going to do on my bus.) But Brian was mentioning just removing them with no other mods. Having gauges also will tell you if your system is tight; if you have to "bleed in" extra air more than occasionally, you're aware that you have a leak or at least some situation where you're losing air.

And Tom makes a good point about the use of manually controlled air systems (with gauges for info/control) for parking leveling.

### Post by: sledhead



### Post by: gg04

Four pressure gauges, four air seat valves. Just know what your ride height should be (height from bump stop) and set your air pressure. Only been done a few hundred times.

### Post by: bobofthenorth

Or just maintain the original leveling valves which have worked for years on hundreds of thousands of coaches around the world. And have the advantage of reacting to changing loads as well as crosswind loads. You don't need to reinvent the wheel guys.

### Post by: Scott Bennett

Speaking of crosswinds, man did I have the ride of my life driving our coach from Indiana to Michigan last week with nearly 45 mph winds on US 31. The entire two lane road became my one lane.

### Post by: Jriddle

There are a lot of viewpoints and that is what makes this board good. I agree with Bob that properly maintained automatic RIDE height valves work very well and serve a purpose on thousands of vehicles across the world. In my situation I was installing the camp site LEVELING system and didn't want to have to MAINTAIN the automatic valves anymore. I was fighting air leaks and the auto valves were continuity exhausting air when people moved around the coach or if the wind was blowing. I agree with Brian on making one gauge and manual valve for the front to help reduce chance of stress on the body if the Ride Height is out of whack side to side front to back. I think Scott may enjoy his ride at 85 PSI. I don't think he meant to say all should adjust to this pressure setting. I find my settings are different on the front than on the back two gauges. Each person needs to make their own choice on what to do and that is what makes this board great. All can post their thoughts and beliefs and the rest can make a choice based on the others posts.

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