

RV Consumer e-Magazine

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Volume 5

Issue 12



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Winter Camping or Storage?



Extended RV Service Plan
Do you need one?

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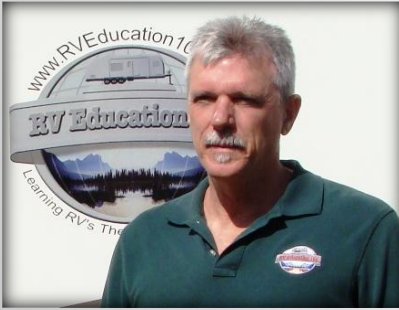
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When you read this issue of RV Consumer Magazine we will be in Louisville Ky. attending the annual National RV Trade Show. I attend this show every year, but this is the first year Dawn will be attending the show too. I told her to pack her comfortable walking shoes!

The annual RV trade show is packed with new RVs and new RV vendor products , and is a great indicator of where the RV industry is now, and where it is going in the future. Stay tuned, we will post daily show updates to our Facebook page, and I will cover the show more in-depth when we return back to the office.

Enjoy this issue of RV Consumer Magazine, and if you have RV friends and family tell them to subscribe, and to like us on [Facebook](#)

Happy camping & stay safe,
~ *Mark*

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This helps accomplish two things; it eliminates the guess work as to which DVD titles go together, and it saves the RV consumer a significant amount of money with our DVD box set discounts. Our goal at RV Education 101 is simple, to help RV owners until they are comfortable operating and using their RV, and to make their entire RV experience safe, fun and stress free. [Browse the product catalog now](#)



**Enjoy the RV Journey -
wherever it takes you**



By Mark Polk

Winter RV Check Up

I enjoy using our RV as late in the year as possible, but this requires some cold weather preventive maintenance. Especially if you live or travel in a colder region! Do not confuse this winter RV check-up with winterizing or preparing the RV for cold weather storage. All we are doing here is preparing the RV to better deal with the cold temperatures.

In no particular order, here are my top 7 pre-winter RV checks:

1. Inspect your RV batteries

Check all battery connections for secure mounting. Clean the batteries with a 50/50 mixture of baking soda and warm water, if necessary. If you have lead-acid batteries check the electrolyte level in each cell and add distilled water, if necessary. Many older converter chargers provide a constant charge of approximately 13.5 volts, which is too high for fully-charged batteries and can cause the electrolyte to evaporate, resulting in an early death for the

batteries. Check the water levels weekly, at a minimum, when using the RV. Test the battery state-of-charge and charge any batteries that are at or below 80 percent charge. A discharged or partially-charged battery will freeze much faster than a fully-charged battery. Use a digital voltmeter to measure voltage and to get a quick picture of the batteries' depth of discharge. **Note:** *If you do not feel comfortable working on or around batteries have a reputable RV service center perform battery maintenance for you.*

Note: A 12-volt battery that is charged should read 12.5 to 12.7 volts. Readings less than 12.5 indicate the battery state of charge is below 80 percent and the battery needs to be charged. A 6-volt battery that is charged should read 6.25 to 6.37 volts. Readings below 6.25 indicate the battery state of charge is below 80 percent and the battery needs to be charged.

2. Test automotive antifreeze



The antifreeze in your tow vehicle or motorhome radiator should always have a 50 to 70-percent concentration of antifreeze to water. Water does a good job helping to cool an engine but it freezes quickly during cold winter temperatures. Water can also cause certain metals to rust and corrode over time. The proper concentration of antifreeze is necessary to provide freeze protection and chemical protection against corrosion.

To test the antifreeze, use quality test strips, a float-type hydrometer or a refractometer. A refractometer is the most accurate testing device.

Inspect all coolant hoses for signs of damage or leaks. Coolant hoses deteriorate from the inside out. Inspect all hoses for wear, cracks, soft spots, brittle areas and leaks. Inspect all hose clamps for secure mounting and replace any damaged coolant hoses or clamps as required.

3. Use a fuel stabilizer product

Fuel stabilizers provide excellent protection against stale fuel during periods of storage. They contain corrosion inhibitors, remove water and help clean fuel injectors. There are fuel stabilizers designed for use with gasoline and diesel engines.

Tip: I use a fuel stabilizer in gas-powered lawn equipment, ATVs, boats, and motorcycles too.

4. Furnace checkup

One LP-gas appliance that gets overlooked during warm weather is the forced-air furnace. Most service requirements for the furnace need to be accomplished by a reputable RV service center, but there are a few things the owner can do to prepare the furnace for cold-weather operation.

The battery plays a vital role in the proper operation of the furnace. Keeping lead-acid batteries watered and fully charged will prevent many furnace-related problems. Inspect furnace ducting that is above floor level for damage, such as crushed ducting or obstructions that could affect furnace operation. Make sure the furnace air return is not blocked or restricted. Test the operation of the furnace before the day arrives when you actually need it. Have a certified technician test your LP-gas system annually for proper appliance operating pressure and leaks.

[Watch the furnace check-up video](#)

5. Inspect all safety devices and replace all dry-cell batteries

Carbon monoxide is deadly. Test the CO detector, LP-gas leak detector and smoke alarm for proper operation every time you use your RV. Check the CO detector expiration date and replace it as required. Instruct individuals on symptoms, and what to do if they are exposed to carbon monoxide or if they hear LP-gas leak detector alarms. Replace all dry-cell batteries when you change the settings on your clocks in the spring and fall. Make sure you have a charged fire extinguisher on hand and that you and other adults know how to operate it.

6. Clean, inspect and reseal your roof

Not that this is directly related to fall or winter use, but I like to inspect the roof twice a year, at a minimum, and I think spring and fall are good times of the year to make these checks.

Note: Exercise caution any time you work on the roof of your RV. The roof surface can be slippery and a fall can result in serious injury, or worse.

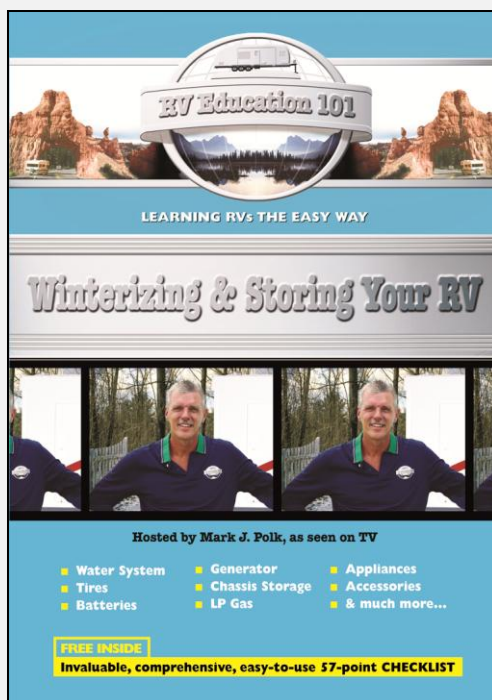
Clean your roof with an approved cleaner for the type of roofing material your RV has. Every time you clean the roof, inspect the sealants around all of the openings and the seams on the roof. Water will take the path of least resistance, and if there is the smallest opening it will find it. Thoroughly inspect the roof sealants for potential leaks and

reseal any areas of the roof seams and around openings where you suspect a leak. Make sure you use sealants compatible with your roofing material. Keep in mind that your warranty can be voided if you fail to perform some of these required inspections. Check your RV owner's manual for roof inspection intervals.

7. Plan for non-use

If you don't plan to use your RV over the fall and winter months winterize the plumbing system to prevent freezing and prepare all other systems and components on the RV for short or long-term storage.

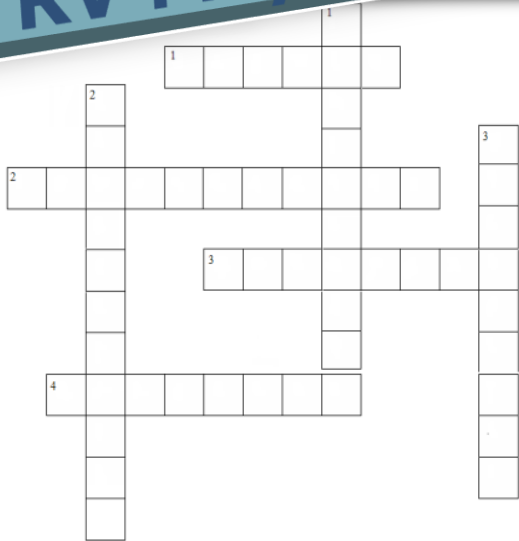
~RV101



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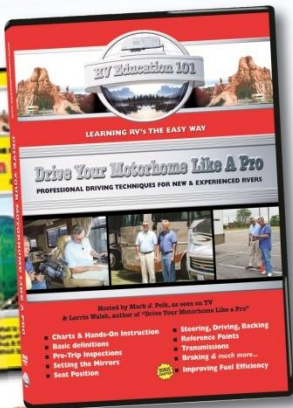
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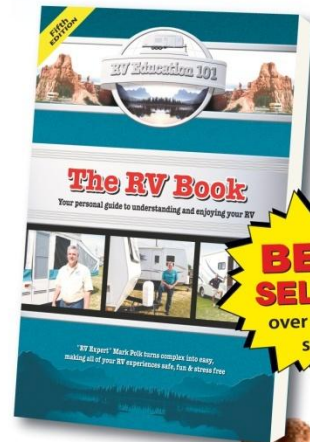


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RV Quick Tips

RV Storage Tips

Block & Cover Tires

If the RV tires will be exposed to the elements during storage block the tires with blocking that is larger than the tires footprint and cover the tires to protect them from damage caused by the sun and UV rays.

Clean & Protect the RV Roof

Prior to storage clean the RV roof with a cleaner that is compatible with the RV roofing material. Thoroughly inspect the roof seams and sealants and reseal as required. Only use sealants compatible with the roofing material. Consult your RV owner's manual or local RV dealer for information pertaining to the type of roof your RV has. For more helpful information on cleaning and protecting your RV roof check out [our roof care & maintenance videos on You Tube](#)

RV Battery Storage

If you plan to periodically charge the batteries while in storage leave the batteries in the unit. Plugging it into shore power once a month for about eight hours will help keep the coach batteries topped off. At a minimum, you should check and adjust the water levels in all batteries and make sure the batteries are fully-charged. A discharged battery will freeze much quicker than a fully-charged battery. If the RV is in long-term storage, it's better to remove the batteries and store them where they will not freeze. If you remove the batteries label the connections to help with reinstalling them next spring. Regardless if you leave the batteries in the RV or remove them keep the batteries fully-charged when they are in storage.



Automobile Antifreeze is Important Too

Normally I would be discussing RV antifreeze used to protect the water system in your RV or boat from freezing, but today I want to talk briefly about automotive antifreeze. If I were the CEO of an automotive antifreeze company my entire focus would be on the need to regularly flush the coolant system and add new antifreeze to the vehicle cooling system.

I would do this for two reasons:

1) From a business standpoint I would do it to increase revenue. The average consumer doesn't relate changing antifreeze in their vehicles the same as they do to changing the engine oil on a regular basis. If they were educated on the benefits of replacing the antifreeze in their vehicles company profits would increase.

2) The coolant system on any vehicle performs a very important job; to prevent the heat producing engine from overheating and quite possibly seizing up. When you don't flush and replace the antifreeze periodically rust, scale and corrosion can build up in the

radiator and engine coolant passages, resulting in an overheated engine.

Let's talk a minute about what a vehicle coolant system is intended to do. First of all, if an engine did not have methods for transferring the heat that is produced through combustion and friction the hot metal parts would melt down and seize up. Heat that the engine produces is basically removed through the exhaust system and through the cooling system. All heat producing sections of an internal combustion engine need to be cooled, including the combustion chamber, heads, cylinder walls and the engine block itself. The way this is done is by circulating coolant around these heat producing areas of the engine. The coolant picks the heat up and releases it as it circulates through the vehicles radiator.

Water does a good job helping to cool an engine but it has some drawbacks. Most importantly it freezes quickly during cold winter temperatures. Water can also cause certain metals to rust and corrode over time. This is why the

water in a vehicle cooling system is mixed with what we refer to as antifreeze. Glycol antifreeze does several things to help your engine:

- 1) It helps raise the freezing point of water.
- 2) The corrosion inhibitors that are added help prevent scale and rust build-up in the cooling system.
- 3) It provides protection against boiling in the hot summer months.
- 4) Antifreeze helps keep the engine operating at its most efficient temperature regardless of operating conditions and outside temperatures.

When you don't flush and replace the antifreeze at recommended intervals these chemicals start to break down and cannot perform the job as effectively as new antifreeze can. Just like used engine oil breaks down and needs to be replaced for maximum lubrication and cooling performance.

Have you ever witnessed a vehicle sitting along the side the road with steam billowing out of the engine compartment from overheating? I cannot count the number of times I have seen this. The cause is usually due to the failure of a part within the cooling system. If a radiator hose, heater hose, water pump, thermostat or fan belt fails the result is an overheated engine. Or, if the coolant system hasn't been flushed and the antifreeze replaced for several years the result is an overheated engine.



The bottom line is periodic inspections of the cooling system components, and flushing and replacing antifreeze at recommended intervals will add years of life to the vehicles engine and prevent untimely breakdowns.

Keep in mind that glycol antifreeze is poisonous to humans and pets and that it needs to be disposed of properly.

Follow the guidelines in your vehicle owner's manual for flushing and replacing antifreeze and make sure you are using the proper type of antifreeze recommended for your particular vehicle.

Remember, getting there is supposed to be half the fun! Add the vehicle cooling system to your pre-trip inspection checklist and it will be one less thing to worry about on your next camping trip.

~RV101

RV Education 101 products to help you use & maintain your RV

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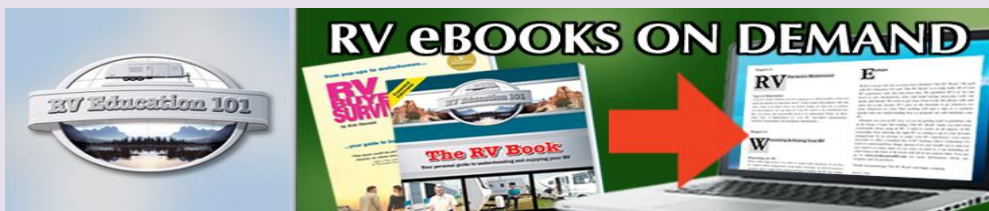
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RV Storage Reminders

Don't forget to clean all awning fabric, and let it dry completely before storing. If you have a pop-up or hybrid trailer, make sure all of the tenting material is clean and dry prior to storage. Ideally, you should try to store your RV under a covered area, and on a solid surface like pavement or concrete. If this isn't possible, avoid parking the RV under trees and in tall grass, fields or wooded areas. If the RV won't be parked under some type of covered shelter, you may want to invest in a cover. Covering your RV can be a logical and cost effective way to help protect your investment.



RV Education 101 Releases Video App

The new RV Education 101 App gives you instant access to the videos you purchase and is available in both Apple and Android operating systems.

Tablets and smart phones are forecast to be the majority platform for video by 2016 and we wanted to offer our customers a bulletproof method for instant video content delivery. Our goal was to perfect this technology, for both download and streamed video, so our customers can view the content with or without an internet connection. It took us over eight years, but our new [RV Education 101 video App](#) perfected the instant video download process.”

The biggest technological feat RV Education 101 faced was developing a system that worked 100% of the time for portable devices using Apple and Android operating systems. “It seemed like every time we got our current download process to work on one device a new product came out that it didn’t work on. That problem was solved when RV Education 101 developed the new video App. Apps are faster, more convenient and provide additional functionality, like the capability to download videos directly to a device for offline viewing.

The new App is titled “RV Education 101” and is available through both [Apple](#) and [Android](#) App Stores. The IOS App works on iPhone, iPad and iPod touch devices.

When you open the App’s main menu it lists all of the full-feature RV training titles currently available, and you have the option to purchase individual chapters, or the entire video. And because it is an instant download with limited overhead we can pass the savings onto you.



Should I Purchase an Extended Service Plan for My RV?



I get asked lots of questions about how RV appliances can be affected by RV travel or is sensitive to infrequent use, excessive vibration and in some cases neglect or improper operation.

Most RV appliances operate differently than the appliances we are accustomed to in our homes. For example the water heater in our home works automatically, with no operational steps required, and very little maintenance. When you want hot water you open a tap and there it is. On the other hand the water heater in our RV requires certain procedures to operate and use it properly. The LP gas supply needs to be turned on, or it must be switched to electric (if equipped) to use in the 120 volt AC mode. The tank must be full of water prior to lighting it, and depending on the type of water heater it is you may need to go outside to physically light the burner. If you forget to drain the water for winter storage the water can freeze, expand and break the tank.

That can be a lot to remember, and unfortunately if you forget one of the

required steps to properly operate the appliance it can lead to component failure and expensive repair and replacement costs.

This is true for other RV appliances as well. If you don't operate the RV air conditioner properly you can damage the compressor or other expensive components. If you don't have the proper amount of AC voltage coming into the RV appliances can be damaged.

Another common problem is excessive vibration. Most appliances aren't designed to take the abuse many of the poorly maintained highways and roads subject the appliances to. Fittings and screws come loose, sensitive electronics and circuit boards get damaged, and in many cases continued exposure to vibration results in total failure of an appliance.

The problem is there is no fix for damage caused to RV appliances because of infrequent use and excessive vibration. I recently read that

the Good Sam Extended Service Program will hit a record \$10 million in refrigerator repair payments. Ten million dollars in refrigerator repair payments, can you believe that?

This is why I always recommend RV owners purchase an RV Extended Service Plan. After the factory warranty period expires replacing an RV appliance can get very expensive. And unfortunately RV appliance problems associated with infrequent use and constant vibration normally occur after the factory warranties have expired.

The key to RV Extended Service Plans is to purchase a good reputable plan, one that will be there when you need it, when you are traveling on the road away from home.

Take your time researching and comparing plans. Make sure you read and understand the extent and time period of coverage before signing any agreements. If you don't understand something, ask to have it explained. You also want to make sure the company offering the plan is reputable and will be acknowledged by other RV dealers and RV repair centers when you are traveling. It should offer coverage in all of the USA and/or Canada.

Ask how a claim is paid. I have seen cases where you pay for the repairs up front and then get reimbursed when you send in a copy of the service order or repair bill. If the repair facility agrees

to file the claim most plans only require that you call for approval before any repairs are made.

A good plan should be **transferable** if you sell your RV, it should be **renewable** so you can extend the coverage and it should offer **a pro rated refund if coverage is terminated** during the term of the contract.

Pricing for these plans is based on several factors including the length of the plan, the extent of coverage, if the RV is new or used, the age and mileage, and the deductible. The deductible can range from \$0 to over \$200. This is not bad considering a \$1,000 average repair bill if an appliance fails.

Some items on the RV, like slide-outs, awnings and entertainment systems may not be covered unless you pay an additional surcharge. Make sure you understand what these items are and if you want them to be covered by the plan.

Do not be pressured into purchasing a plan. Ask your RV dealer to give you a price on the plan they offer and then you can shop around and compare pricing on other plans. Just make sure the plans you are comparing offer similar coverage.

Nothing will ruin a trip quicker than spending \$500 or \$1,000 of your vacation money on a repair bill when you least expect it. A good Extended Service Plan can prevent this ~**RV101**

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Top 10 Consumable Items to Keep in the RV



When you go camping in your RV there are items that are essential like a drinking water hose and RV sewer hoses, and there are nice to have items like a GPS designed for RVs and a portable BBQ grill. Today I want to talk about consumable items that you should always have on-hand in your RV.

In no particular order here are my top 10 consumable items we keep in the RV.

1) For starters you need holding tank treatments to treat the black water holding tank after you empty it. There are dry and liquid type holding tank treatments available. I suggest products that are biodegradable and environmentally friendly. **Camping Tip:** After emptying the gray water holding tank you can add some liquid dish soap down all the drains and run the water long enough to get the soap past the P trap and to cover the bottom of the tank. The dish soap and water will help control odors and assist in cleaning the tank.

2) While we are on the subject of holding tanks it's a good idea to stock up on toilet paper designed for use in RVs. This is one consumable item you don't want to leave home without. **Camping Tip:** To see if toilet paper is compatible with your RV waste-water system put one sheet of the toilet paper in a glass of water. If it starts to break-down and fall apart within a few seconds of being in the water it is suitable for use in RVs.

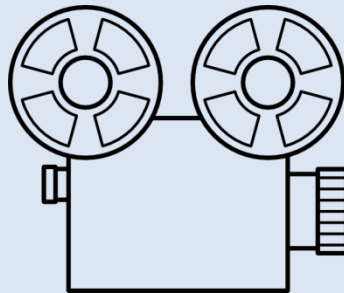
3) Laundry soap & dish soap are must have consumable items too. Clothes are going to get dirty and need to be washed, especially if your camping trip is more than a weekend excursion. You can purchase these items at the campground store, but it is less expensive to purchase them where you normally shop and just keep some in the RV.

[Click here to read more](#)

RV Emergency Items

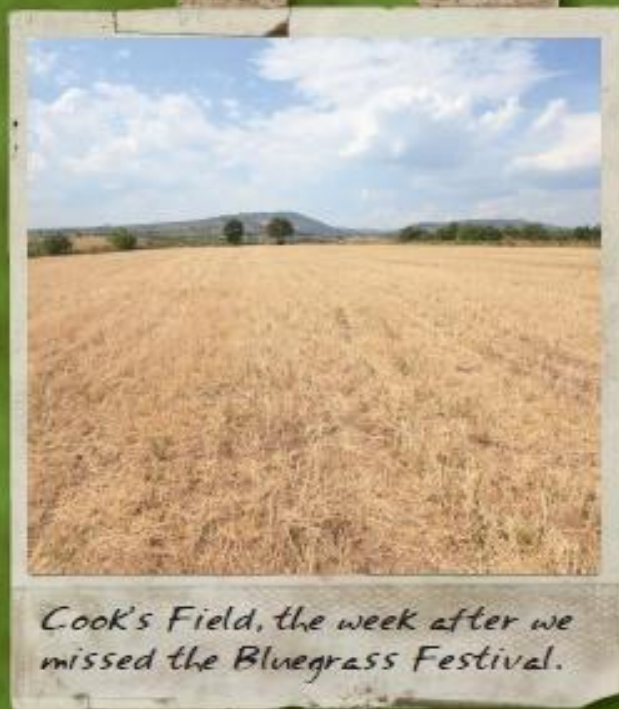
What RV Emergency Items do you keep in your RV?

Do you have items available in your RV to help in the event of an unexpected emergency. If not, watch the video to discover what Mark considers the top 5 emergency items he thinks RV owners should have on-hand in their RV, and get started on your RV emergency items list today.



[Top 5 Emergency Items for your RV](#)

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It's a great place to sharpen up on your RV skills and learn more about how to use and maintain your RV.

Mediterranean Pasta Salad



**The
Cooking Ladies™**

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

www.thecookingladies.com

Mediterranean Pasta Salad

(Makes 4 to 6 servings)

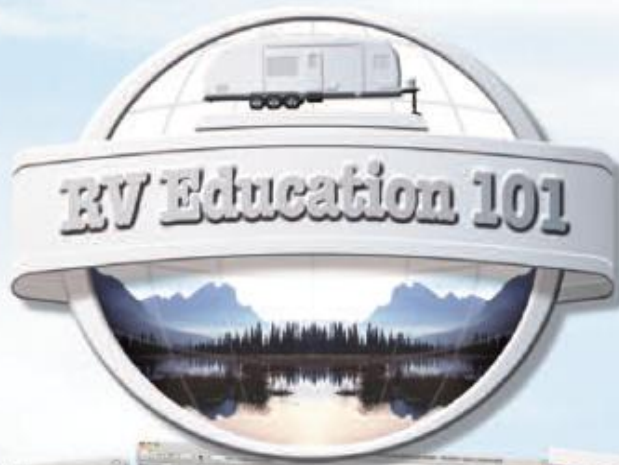
3 cups (750 ml) uncooked penne pasta
1/2 cup (125 ml) mayonnaise
2 tablespoons (30 ml) Dijon-style mustard
2 tablespoons (30 ml) fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons (30 ml) red wine vinegar
1/2 cup (125 ml) olive oil
2 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon (2.5 ml) black pepper
1 1/2 teaspoons (7.5 ml) salt
1/2 cup (125 ml) crumbled feta cheese
1/2 cup (125 ml) chopped green onions
1 cup (250 ml) grape tomatoes
1/2 cup (125 ml) sliced ripe olives
1/4 cup (60 ml) finely chopped fresh parsley

- Cook the pasta in boiling water for 11 minutes or until cooked but still firm, stirring occasionally. Don't overcook.
- Put the cooked pasta into a sieve and rinse under cold water. Drain well. Place in a large bowl. Set aside to cool.
- Whisk the mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice, wine vinegar, olive oil, garlic, pepper, and salt together in a bowl or large measuring cup. When the mixture is smooth and creamy, stir in the feta cheese.
- Just before serving, pour the mayonnaise mixture over the cooled cooked pasta. Stir gently to coat the pasta with the dressing.
- Stir in the chopped green onions, tomatoes, and olives.
- Transfer to a serving dish. Sprinkle the chopped parsley over top.

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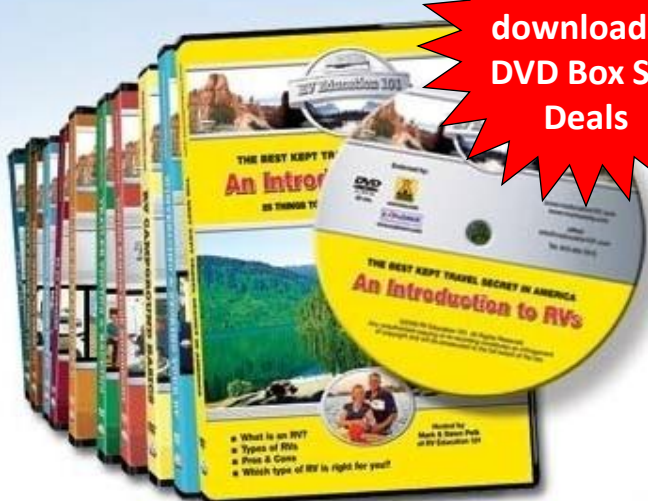


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Our goal with RV Consumer E-Magazine is to provide you with helpful information to make all of your RV experiences more enjoyable. I left my position as an RV Sales and F&I manager in 2000 to start RV Education 101.

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

My wife Dawn left her position in RV sales to help start the company, and is our Sales and Marketing Director. We currently have a 35-foot Class A motor home. We have two boys, Tyler 18 and Josh 24, both avid RVers and two dogs, Roxie and Gracie .

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

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