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# **OUR RVING EXPERIENCE, A SHORT HISTORY OF RVING, AND ITS FUTURE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This article offers a unique perspective about a passion for exploration and adventure and the development of new experiences. An important part of the experience is the journey and the development of new and old relationships. Travel experiences provide memories and opens up new understandings for individual development.

**Key Words:** Travel Experience, Travel Blog, RV Books, RV Lifestyle

## **START**

During the COVID pandemic of 2020-2023, RVing soared in popularity. Social distancing forced people to shelter in place and work from home. For the most part, vacations were suspended; that is until people realized that there was an extremely safe way to enjoy the great outdoors with minimal contact with other people: RVing!

It even became a novel way of working from home and having a vacation at the same time. As luck would have it, the surge in RVing coincided with a period of relatively inexpensive gasoline and a wave of Baby Boomer retirements. Government financial assistance for Covid often provided the cash people needed to finance their new freedom vehicle. Sales of RVs skyrocketed to the highest level (600,000 units in 2021) since the Great Depression.

## **OUR RVING EXPERIENCE**

My husband and I were already two of those retirees. In fact, we had retired a decade earlier than when the pandemic started. So, we understood perfectly the reason for the craze that was being born. From 2009 to 2017, we lived in a 37.5-ft. motorhome full-time. After getting married in 2008, and selling my husband's business in 2009, we rented out

our respective condos and the RV became our vehicle for what seemed like a never-ending honeymoon.

Indeed, we began our union with the grandest of adventures. It even became my immersion in a culture that I had adopted as my own. We covered the North American continent in six cross-continent runs, reaching 49 American states, nine Canadian provinces, and seven Mexican states. We visited 38 of less than the 63 national parks of today, 84 national monuments, and countless other recreation areas, state parks, and provincial parks not only in the US but also in Canada and Mexico.

A year after we began our odyssey, I started documenting our RV cruising lifestyle in a blog, [rvcruisinglifestyle.blogspot.com](http://rvcruisinglifestyle.blogspot.com). After several years of posting weekly, I realized the material I had created was enough for a first travel book: *[Carolina: Cruising to an American Dream](#)* was published in 2015. Five years later, another made it to the bookstores: *[Cruising Past Seventy: It's Not Only about Outer Journeys. It's Also about Inner Ones.](#)*

In the first book we shared the destinations we discovered while following special itineraries; and in the second, the many lessons we learned from traveling during the RVing period and beyond. We happily found out that the nomadic lifestyle was even cheaper than living in a condo in downtown Seattle. Here is an article published by TravelAwaits magazine in May 4, 2023: [“We’ve RVed Full-Time For 8 Years — Here Are 10 Key Tips We’ve Learned Along The Way.”](#)

## A SHORT HISTORY OF RVING

When we wanted to move on to conquering the world, we sold the RV and settled in a resort-lifestyle community in Phoenix as a home base. Looking back to our RVing days, we are appy we took the opportunity to travel to Elkhart, Indiana, dubbed “the RV Capital of the World.”

At the [RV/MH Hall of Fame and Museum](#) we saw some 55 RVs dating from the early 1900s, including Mae West's “Housecar.” It was so nice to learn the history of “luxury” camping through the different models, starting with the time a wagon was hitched to a horse to carry settlers and prospectors from the East to land and gold in the West. Then a trailer was first hooked onto a Model T...

RVs really started when people wanted to go back to nature but looked for something better to sleep in than a tent. The [Smithsonian Magazine](#) cites the 25-foot Gypsy Van of the Conklin family, which in 1915 traveled from New York to San Francisco, providing comfort while roughing the road. The “covered wagon” had become the travel trailer that could be disconnected from the motor vehicle that pulled it.

The RV industry grew even more when the need for semi-permanent housing surged as the veterans coming home from WWII wanted to settle down and start families. Numerous

mobile home parks and campgrounds were set up. At the Museum you will see the very travel trailer that was selected to develop these places. Later, these trailers developed into two new trends: the fancier, larger, and more luxurious RVs for recreational travel, and the manufactured houses that became the cost-effective homes of today.

We also visited the manufacturing facilities of Newmart, our RV brand of choice. We saw how the fine cabinetry skills of the Amish helped in the making of the lovely interiors, artfully complementing the technology that had developed to run the increasingly larger rigs.

## **THE FUTURE OF RVING**

But today, with persistent high inflation, including the high cost of gasoline, the appetite for RVs has dampened. They say the craze is over, and that the projected soft-landing recession will make that a certainty. As a matter of fact, 50% fewer RVs are being produced and shipped nowadays. So what is the future of the RV industry?

Although there are no electric RVs on the market yet, [several prototypes were launched in 2022](#). The electric vehicle market is projected to grow by 17% until 2027, so I am sure that eRVs will be part of the industry's future. If charging stations are spread in campgrounds strategically across the American landscape, then RVers will find them very cost-effective

and convenient to use. Another resurgence of RVing may happen and perhaps one that will lead to more stability, with less dependence on the rise and fall of the cost of gasoline.

Surely, a large part of the future market for RVs will remain as before: those who are retirees and or about-to-retire workers who seek adventure in the great outdoors. But a new impetus for this future growth may be parts of the current workforce. Employers are learning to grapple with the increasing popularity of working-from-home. If portable jobs become more widely accepted, it can lead to more mobility for the American worker, especially with millennials and GenZers.

These new workers are also changing the way they view homes. In fact, many are postponing buying one, what with the rising interest rates. This has given rise to the acceptability of tiny homes, instead of spacious houses, for living in. When we lived in our motorhome, 350 sqft (when the slides are out), was all the space we needed because our living and entertainment rooms were the vast outdoors. We even made a video I called “[Our 7-Room Mansion on Wheels.](#)”

Our RVing saga taught us not to tie our money in idle living space and instead spend it on memories and experiences. It’s a trend many of the new workers are embracing well. Given all these scenarios, I can say that the RV is the best tiny home available, because you can move it elsewhere just in case you get a new job, do not like your neighbors, or simply need a change of scenery.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY



**My Husband at Work Inside our 350-sqft Moving Home**





**My Husband Enjoying the Spacious Deck at a North Carolina Campground**



**Thrilled to Start a Week-Long Journey through the Alaska Highway (Canada to Alaska)**



**Parked at Chena Hot Springs near Fairbanks, Alaska**