

12-20-2023

My Lifetime RV Adventure

Mark Nemeth
mmw@escapees.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/visions>

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

Recommended Citation

Nemeth, Mark (2023) "My Lifetime RV Adventure," *Visions in Leisure and Business*: Vol. 25: No. 2, Article 10.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25035/visions.25.02.10>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/visions/vol25/iss2/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Visions in Leisure and Business* by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

MY LIFETIME RV ADVENTURE

Mark Nemeth, Author and RV Technical Specialist

Livingston, TX

mmw@escapees.com

[**www.escapees.com**](http://www.escapees.com)

[**http://www.marxrv.com/**](http://www.marxrv.com/)

ABSTRACT

In 1997, Mark Nemeth quit his job, sold his house, bought an RV and joined the Escapees RV Club. He has been the club's technical advisor for 23 years and served as director of both the SmartWeigh and Boot Camp programs. He is a regular contributor to Escapees magazine and other RV industry publications. Mark is still traveling and maintains an RVer's resource website with technical articles, tips and information at www.marxrv.com.

Key Words: RV resources, RV Technical Information, RV Blog, RV Lifestyle

START

It seems I've always been an RVer. Beginning with childhood camping trips in my parents Shasta 16-foot travel trailer, RVing has always played a role in my life. Growing up, I remember my

mother and father talking about buying an RV and selling the house when my dad retired. They wanted to travel the country and see it all! In 1975 I graduated from high school and joined the Navy. The following year, my dad retired at 65, and my parents began to live their dream. They bought a van and a 30-foot Silver Streak travel trailer and hit the road, selling the house and most of their stuff, and putting what remained in storage. Back then, the term “full-timer” had not yet been coined, but that's what my parents were. They spent two years RVing all around the country and enjoying my dad's retirement and then one day he passed away in his sleep with no warning. I remember thinking that it was so unfair to wait your whole life to do something that you have always wanted to do, and then have it cut short before you really had a chance to enjoy it. I believe that was the motivation for my decision to retire at age 40 and hit the road in an RV.

In the 1990s, I was working in the aerospace industry out in California and enjoyed camping and boating with friends. I had an old 65 Dodge power wagon 4x4 pickup with a slide in truck camper, great for lakeside and beach camping. And, always, in the back of my mind was the desire to follow in my parents' footsteps someday and do the RV thing like they did. The only worry I had was I didn't want to wait till I was old and retired to do it. I figured, if life is uncertain, I want my dessert first!

RETIREMENT

And that was just a daydream until 1995, when we were told at the office that our contract with NASA and the Air Force would end in May of '97, and something about the date lining up with my 40th birthday triggered the decision to retire when our contract ended, sell everything and buy

an RV. I figured I had enough saved up to get a few great years of travel in before I would have to go back to earning a living. I bought a used 30' Jayco 5th wheel and a '78 F-250 to tow it and did extensive work on both to make them long distance road-ready.





In July of '97, I headed out in my new rolling home, leaving only a few mementos of my previous life behind in a storage trailer at my sister's place in Auburn. I still remember how amazingly liberating it felt to disengage from everything I used to know and head into something new. After years of preparation, I was really going to do it! It was like a huge load was lifted from my shoulders. Over the next 5 years, I travelled all around the country, spending time in 46 of the lower 48 US states.



BLOG

Since I left all my friends and family behind, I started a website, Mark's Fulltime RV Adventure, and began posting monthly travel logs for my friends to follow.



Mark's Fulltime RV Adventure

On June 1st 1997, I set off on an extended trip around the USA. Over the course of the next 4 1/2 years, I traveled all over the country in my RV, meeting great people and seeing unforgettable sights. The original website, titled Mark's Fulltime RV Adventure, started as a simple site to keep friends and family apprised of my whereabouts. Over the years, the site grew and was discovered by thousands of readers in the RV community. In late 2001 my trip finally ended when it was time for me to go back to work. Knowing that I couldn't maintain the travel logs online forever, I decided to market the complete website on a CD. Well, here it is! Longtime readers will notice some substantial changes in the layout, but every bit of information on the original website is here. Plus, there are additional features and new, unpublished content. Below is the main navigation area and you can get to each area of the site from here. I hope that you enjoy your own personal copy of my adventures and thank you very much for your support!



Travel Logs by State



Travel Logs by Date



The Fulltimer's Lifestyle



RV Technical Articles



Meet the Author

The term "Blog" hadn't been thought up yet, but that's what it was. Quite advanced for it's time, my site gained a large following of folks who were dreaming of such a life, so I began writing articles on full-timing and also RV maintenance and modifications. Somewhere in there, I started writing for *Escapees* magazine, a publication of Escapees RV Club, and began volunteering remotely with Janice Lasko, the editor. You could say I was an early digital nomad.

I loved full-timing! I always refer to it as the most self-indulgent life I've ever lived. I had no plans, itineraries, or schedules. I moved when I wanted to, and stayed wherever I found something interesting to see and do. And I met a slew of the most amazing people along the way! After 4+ years on the road, though, my nest egg of money was starting to run low. It was time to start thinking about landing somewhere and going back to work (shudder!). I started seriously looking for a job in 2001, but still travelled for the whole year. Since I had been a member for years, and had established a working relationship with Escapees RV Club, I sent a letter to Janice asking if she thought there would be an opportunity for me to go to work for the club. Her response was "send in a resume", which I did. Long story short, I began to work full-time for the club in January of 2002. Once I recovered from the shock of being back at work again, I dove into my new career with gusto. I started off as a technical advisor, and worked as part of the magazine team. I continued to live in my 5th wheel as I bought and developed property in Livingston, Texas. Once my house was finished in 2004, I sold my RV and said goodbye to the road for a while. As the years passed I got involved with the club's RV safety and training programs, and eventually became Safety Education Director. I created, and taught RV classes in, the RVers Boot Camp program, and also operated the club's SmartWeigh RV weighing program. I continued to work with the magazine team and provided content for Escapees magazine. I was busy doing all that and building a home base in Livingston until about 2007. That's when the RV urge became strong enough for me to purchase another RV and begin to travel again.

NEW ADVENTURES

This time, I found a small class-C fixer-upper on eBay and bought it. It needed a lot of work, but I had it ready for the road in the spring of 2008. I started travelling to club events and rallies, and although I wasn't a full-timer anymore, I was overjoyed to be back on the road.





Over the next 15 years, I took that RV to almost every state in the lower 48. Most years, I was on the road 6-8 months, still working for the club, teaching RVers Boot Camps, helping with rallies, and attending social events. I spent 2 summers in Alaska, several winters in Mexico, and most summers in the mountains of New Mexico and Colorado, escaping the East Texas summer heat. Today, I'm still working for the club and travelling in that little class-C, and I have no plans to hang up the keys anytime soon!

Yes, being an RVer has had a huge beneficial effect on my life and happiness. First of all, I did indeed get my dessert first, and I've been enjoying it immensely for the last 25 years! It led me to a second career helping others get started RVing and the Escapees RV Club has become my family. The best move I ever made in my life was to bail out of my first career and hit the road. Absolutely no regrets!

The future of RVing? Well, from where I'm standing, it looks bright indeed! Covid taught us that you don't have to be in an office cubicle to be productive. Today, there are a huge number of working age families choosing the RV lifestyle and hitting the road fulltime. These folks have figured out that you don't have to wait till you retire to begin living the dream. Maybe you should, too!