

# GMC

## MOTORHOMES INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER



Founded in 1982 by Ralph Luby

SPRING 2014

ISSUE 127

### CHAPTER STATUS

Membership now stands at 1100.  
We have 25 new members since the last newsletter.

### 2014 FALL CONVENTION

Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds  
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin  
September 26 - October 2

### SPRING CONVENTION REPORT

Montgomery, Texas was *THE* place to be the last week of March. Kim has included a detailed report in this mailing. I was able to attend for a change! Yippee! I had a great time and learned a lot. Many folks put on some very interesting seminars. It was fun hearing about others experiences and seeing what they'd done to make their GMC more livable. New and old parts galore to browse through. Meeting up with folks I've known for years through only voice or email contact. If you've never been, you've just got to make attending when you can a priority! Kim really does a great job putting it all together.

### ONLINE NEWSLETTER AVAILABILITY

We have available an online version of the newsletter. It is virtually the same as the mailed copy except for the included hotlinks, graphics, and photos. Columns are absent from the format to enhance readability.

You all must know that our printing and mailing costs continue to rise. For this we encourage you to volunteer to receive the newsletter digitally. We will continue to send you at least one mailing in the spring of each year that includes the Member Roster and the Parts Interchange Index. The other materials can be viewed online, printed, and/or stored on your home computer.

If you consent, please send an email to [admin@gmcmi.com](mailto:admin@gmcmi.com) with "Online Newsletter" in the subject line. You will then be notified by email when the newsletter is available online for viewing and/or download.

Thank you for your consideration.

### PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

As you likely know, there will be an election of officers in September at our fall Convention. All officers serve a one-year term and must be re-elected to serve longer.



The President has a two-year term limit. Area Vice Presidents have a four-year limit and the Secretary, Treasurer and FMCA Director and Associate Director have no term limit.

A Nominating Committee was elected at our Membership Meeting at the Spring Convention: George Baxter, Jaye Hodges, John Sharpe and Keith Weeks. If you have any interest in becoming an officer of GMCMI contact the committee or, if the committee should contact you, please consider it an honor and privilege and even an obligation to have your name on the ballot. It is your opportunity to give something back to the club. Don't let your talents go to waste.

A new membership benefit is in the making for members of GMCMI. The Board has approved putting the GMCMI Parts Interchange in electronic format in the Member's Only section of our website ([www.gmcmi.com](http://www.gmcmi.com)). This electronic format will also feature responsive screen (resizing) when viewing on smart phones and tablets (similar to how the GMCMI website works). This will take a while to write the code to get it established. Look for it by next spring.

Something available right now for members is a USB Drive, often called a "thumb drive". This is a 4 gb drive which will contain all past newsletters, the newsletter index, roster and a huge listing of GMC related information including the GMC Maintenance Manuals, Parts Book, Dealer Service Bulletins and Recall Information, Onan, refrigerator, air conditioning and furnace manuals. Over 400 useful items! Order yours today for only \$20. Contact Kim Weeks, [kimweeksgmc@gmail.com](mailto:kimweeksgmc@gmail.com) or 612-501-4600 to order.

I hope that you all have a great summer and I look forward to seeing many of you at our Fall Convention in Chippewa Falls, WI next September.

*Emery Stora*

## PARTS INTERCHANGE INDEX

The updated Parts Interchange Index for 2014 is included with this mailing. Digital subscribers will receive this update as well as the annual Member Roster via the postal service.

In addition to many new and updated parts numbers, a few pages have been added that are meant to alert you to certain abnormalities that have been discovered as of late. It seems that current manufacturers are no longer adhering exactly to original specifications of the parts we use. When shopping for these parts from other than a GMC specific supplier, be sure to educate yourself with what has been found to be detrimental to our GMCs. Some of these items could very likely lead to catastrophic failures. Items that have been found to require further examination will be marked with “(!)” following the manufacturers name.

In addition to letting me know about new and updated part numbers of items that will interchange with factory parts for our GMCs, please keep me informed when you find a part that uses the correct number but has a problem working where the original did. We'll share these on similar pages to keep everyone aware.

John Wright has compiled a two page list of spark plugs that work well in our GMCs and for our generators. It will also be updated as required with new or updated numbers annually.

## ALCOA WHEEL LUGNUT COVERS

Rob Mueller notes: Here's a killer deal on lug nut caps for your Alcoa wheels. \$1.68 each at Inflation Solutions, 877-648-7624 ([www.inflationsolutionsgroup.com](http://www.inflationsolutionsgroup.com)). Search or ask for part# ISG-H-190. Probably won't last long so get your order in while you can.

## A TYPICAL GMCnet EXCHANGE

I'll share a recent GMCnet exchange:

While sharing stuff is nice, the real value is the ability to keep a far flung community in touch, and to share GMC specific experience and knowledge. It's like having next door neighbors with GMC motorhomes. While distance makes helping with the wrenches impractical, the advice is priceless.

This is what drew me in to the GMC, the idea that there is a community to help you along. Technical knowledge, the Black List, specialty vendors to sell replacement parts that fix original shortcomings – These things help to keep the act of buying a 40 year old motorhome from being absolute evidence of mental instability.

Written in response to this prior note: I had noted to the GMCnet recently that I'd broken my turn signal lever. In the mail shortly thereafter, (after a confirming phone call) came a replacement, presumably from a coach which was fitted with a new cruise control. At any rate, it was most thoughtful and much appreciated. And as soon as he provides me with the value and shipping costs, I'll send him a check. <hint>. Thank you.

\*Editors Note: Folks, that's what it's all about.

## SMALL BODY REPAIR

*by John Heslinga*

Last month I purchased a PlastiFix repair kit to restore the ABS grill on (My GMC) “The Never Ending Story”. The repairs included reconstructing a missing threaded mount, forming a 3/4” square missing section of the grill, repairing hairline cracks and several nicks, chips and wear points found on the 37 year old grill.

The PlastiFix was easy to work, easily sanded to a feather edge and set-up fairly quickly.

The company literature states PlastiFix works on most rigid plastics such as ABS, PC, PVC, nylon, PET, and fiberglass as well as glass, metal and wood. It does not work on PE or PP.

Just thought I would share my good experience using this product with the GMC community. Additional information is available at [www.plastifix.com](http://www.plastifix.com).

## FIRST TRIP REPORT

*by Kevin Spriggs*

Given that I've taken much advice from this group and others the last few months, I thought I'd provide some feedback on our first trip in the GMC since buying it last fall.

Over the winter, we spent as much time as we could getting her ready for some use this summer. We were definitely limited by the fact we store the coach in the suburbs and the storage facility has complained a couple times when we had the wheels off for an extended period. However, mechanically we were able to replace all fluids and filters, replaced the cracked exhaust manifolds with Thorley headers and new mufflers, replaced most belts and hoses, replaced the front knuckle assemblies with remanufactured parts from Dave Lenzi so that we have new bearings, rotors and a method to properly grease them. Much thanks to Dave for his help here.

We replaced the front ball joints, brake calipers and lines, serviced the rear brakes and found the shoes to be in pretty good shape, and greased the rear bearings/bogies. Installed a new mechanical fuel pump and an electric fuel pump in-line with a separate switch. We rebuilt the Onan carb and got it tuned properly.

On the interior, we re-upholstered all the seats and replaced the headliner and wall boards. We installed a new Suburban Furnace, a new Norcold N641.3 and a new Atwood 3-burner stovetop. We replaced the water pump and built a replacement dinette table.

We still have a lot to do, but felt confident that we had the major things done to the point that we could use her for a long weekend trip to northern Michigan. So, we loaded up and set off. The coach runs, drives and stops very nicely. The only complaint is the steering is a bit loose.

After a stop for gas, I was also pleased at the performance – although very skeptical. We had gone 267 miles and I only put 23.1 gallons in before I started getting fuel backing up to the filler. I was happy not to be seeing something in the 5mpg range. For what it's worth – the fuel gauge when we stopped

read just over 1/2 a tank on the main switch and just under 1/2 a tank on the auxiliary switch.

After reaching our destination, we figured out that the water heater doesn't work, Hensley air bags system doesn't have enough range to level us properly and the sewer valve needs some attention.

The rest of the weekend was very relaxing. Our trip home uneventful. Sometimes it's a bit nerve wracking thinking of all the things that might go wrong, but we'll continue to prepare as best we can, fix the known issues and enjoy.

Much thanks to all you fine folks who continue to provide detailed assistance and advice. It would be much harder with only a shop manual.

### *THE REST OF THE STORY*

We took a 2,800 mile trip out west shortly afterwards that went without incident.

While enjoying the first trip of the year to Muskegon State Park in Michigan, disaster struck as unexpected tornadoes moved into the area and felled a 50 foot white pine directly on top of us. Fortunately, we only had minor injuries. But, our '75 Eleganza did not fare so well. I'm afraid she is totaled.

Unfortunately we only had liability coverage on her as we were waiting to complete our refurb before getting it fully assessed and covered – big mistake.

We definitely want to get back on the road someday, hopefully in something as fine as our beloved '75 Eleganza II.

Photos are available at: [www.gmcmhphotos.com/photos/g6590-crushing-disaster.html](http://www.gmcmhphotos.com/photos/g6590-crushing-disaster.html)

\*Editors Note: Jim Kanomata and Jim Bounds are qualified and accepted GMC appraisers for "Agreed Insurance Coverage". They have the forms required, can do it online or over the phone, and their fee is very affordable. Contact one of them today to assist you in getting your GMC covered!

## **FLOOR BOLTS**

It was recently found that the bolts to attach the plywood floor to the steel structure below can be purchased at McMaster Carr with the number of 92361A469. They are described as 5/16"-18 X 1-3/4" Flush Head Bolts with Square Neck, made of 18-8 Stainless Steel. Price at the time was \$4.72 for a bag of 25.

## **STEERING BOX ALIGNMENT**

Many drivability problems stem from the fact that the components from the steering wheel down to the steering gearbox are aligned incorrectly. Furthermore, some components must be tightly clamped while others should be a slip fit.

The correct position for the steering box is for it to be centered when the steering wheel is horizontal and the wheels are pointing straight ahead. At this point, the flat index point on the input shaft should be parallel with the box cover. In order

to magnify this alignment, you can use two pieces of flatbar and four magnets. Their placement magnifies the relation between the flat spot on the input shaft with the cover plate. The steering gearbox is in its "centered" position when the bars are parallel.

To be certain that the steering wheel remains horizontal, it should be locked in place with a long object and tie wraps (do not use the ignition switch key lock). Also, at the same time, the wheels should be pointing straight ahead as you drove it straight into position.

With these starting and ending components in their correct positions, you can now install the lower steering shaft being careful not to move either of these components. If they don't line up, adjustments can be made at the steering shaft flange, CV joint, slip shaft (make sure it slips easily), and/or tie rod ends. An adjustable drag link is especially handy at this point ([www.appliedgmc.com/prod.itml/icOid/653](http://www.appliedgmc.com/prod.itml/icOid/653)).

Be sure to grease everything well and replace all dust covers and moisture boots.

## **MAKE YOUR GMC A "SMART COACH"**

*by Jim Bounds*

New technologies are rapidly affecting our lives. It's simply amazing what some of the "guru's" of the electronics and internet world tell us we can do with our new devices. The problem is sorting out what is helpful or not and the fact that the learning curve makes many of us just leave it all alone. Even though we know it would be nice to have new technologies in our lives, still we fight that change.

The "Smart Phone". If you don't have one, get one. They are amazing devices. Not only is it a phone but a personal digital assistant like no other. Don't be afraid of this technology but embrace it. Used to have a huge tube radio? Now it's the size of your pinky! That smart phone will do away with the need for a satellite dish! I picked up an inexpensive device the other day that will put anything onto my TV screen that is on the screen of my phone, which is connected to the internet, which is where EVERYTHING is!

We've become accustomed to having WiFi provided at campgrounds and complain when the service is poor. With a smart phone, you really don't need to worry about that anymore.

It is a GPS driven navigation device, goodbye TomTom. It's an accurate speedometer, our GMC speedometers are falling apart and inaccurate. You can get music, news reports, and oh yea, it's also a cell phone! It's a day planner, your email and text center, calender, and really good digital camera, and even a camcorder! Stay connected with friends and family by the minute with texts, photos, voice, or not, at your leisure.

Do not let the guru's of this knowledge scare you away, all of this can be yours and it's really not hard. Technology is here to stay, get used to it and have it work for you. Your service provider can help you, call them.

**ONAN STARTER ANOMALY**

We've heard this story too often: Started the Onan today, everything seemed fine until I realized there was additional racket coming from back there.

I tried to shut it down remotely but when it was almost dead and I released the button from the off position, it would start right back up. Ran outside and hit the off button on the Onan itself and the same thing happened. Pulled the spark plug leads and the Onan shut down but the starter was still trying to crank it back up. I summarized that the Onan starter had been possessed.

If (when) this happens to you, pull the small control wire off the back of the starter solenoid. It is usually attached with a spade lug but if not, just cut it as close to the solenoid as possible so that it can be repaired with a new terminal. If the starter stops cranking then the problem is in the control board or the slave relay below the control board.

*To determine which one, disconnect the 12-pin connector for the control board, 'momentarily' touch the small control wire to its solenoid terminal. If the starter turns, replace the slave solenoid. If it does not, suspect the the control board.*

If that doesn't work, then the problem is mechanical in nature and will be found in the starter or the it's solenoid and you'll have to yank the battery cable or perhaps tap on the solenoid until it stops. The starter must be repaired. While in the starter, replace the loose and worn down bushings and brushes. They're very inexpensive items at JN Auto Electric, the brushes are JN-141-48038 1.04/ea, DE bushing JN-133-48000 and CE bushing JN-133-48001 @ 0.50/ea.

**WHEEL CYLINDER**

The Bendix 33469 wheel cylinder suggested by the Parts Interchange Index was recently purchased as a replacement. Rather than perpendicular as is standard, the line port area is angled which requires bending the brake line to make it fit.

Be advised to compare the new part to your old to be sure of fitment.

**FMCA CORNER**

*National Director, John Smyrsky*

**2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Redmond, OR – August 13-16

**2014 AREA RALLIES**

**Great Lakes Area**

June 11-15  
Goshen, IN

**Northeast Area**

July 17-21  
Essex Junction, VT

**Midwest Area**

August 27-30  
Lincoln, NE

**Eastern Area**

September 24-28  
Asheville, NC

**South  
Central Area**

October 1-5  
Shreveport, LA

**SUNSHINE REPORT**

We're still traveling after the great convention we had in Texas (with some of those wonderful GMCMI friends), but the spreading of sunshine still goes on. We did send 13 cards to some members who normally attend but were unable to be at the spring convention for various reasons.

Since the last newsletter, I have sent welcome emails to 33 people which included the women involved in the memberships. The total new memberships and emails sent were actually 19. Condolences were sent from the club to Norma Moss with the death of Bob 12-4-13 and to Henrietta Mueck after Frank died 1-18-14 and to Jaye Hodges whose mother died. Several of our members have been dealing with serious health situations and I have let them know the club is encircling them with thoughts and prayers. Dan Gregg, Bob Price, Bob Drewes, and George DelVecchio are still working on recovery. Margie McLaughlin is facing surgery to get some new parts by the end of April as is Larry Weidner (sounds like some of our GMC's). We wish them all well.

We have just learned that Bob Drewes and Marlys could use prayers, cards and lots of love. Bob does not have much time left in his fight with cancer. Bob requests there be NO phone calls.

I would like to ask each of you to please ask your local club's sunshine person to put my email address in their computer so they can keep me informed of happenings. Perhaps they do not know if the member belongs to GMCMI, but I can check it. And, each of you is responsible to inform me too. We don't want anyone to feel forgotten or alone during rough times.

Sending GMCMI Sunshine  
Carol Swartzendruber – crdruber@gmail.com

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**Please** send article contributions and newly found part number crossovers to the editor for publication.

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**THANKS FOR CONTRIBUTING**

Jim Bounds	Alex Ferrara	John Heslinga
Jim Miller	Rob Mueller	Kevin Spriggs
Emery Stora	Carol Swartzendruber	

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**DISCLAIMER**

Newsletter articles are contributed by members and are published as a service to members. Accuracy is not guaranteed. Independent verification is urged.

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