Welcome to our newest issue!

By Bonnie Belza, editor

It’s been a while since our last newsletter and we’re proud to bring you the latest NATCOA edition. Our new editor, Bonnie Belza, travels in a 2005 S&S Montana Ponderosa on a 2500 HD Chevy Silverado with her husband, Mike. She posts to the forums as GalinAZ. If you have a story you want to share with members, pictures of your travels or want to brag about your rig, send your items to our email address newsletter@natcoa.com.

After 2 years of doing an excellent job, Bonnie Pascucci is retiring from the job of membership secretary. This is probably one of the most, if not the most, labor intensive job in this organization. We all owe Bonnie our thanks for doing this most difficult job. We have decided to split the job to make it a bit less time consuming on one individual. We have 3 sets of volunteers:

Mike & Sue White of Belfair, Washington (Near Seattle) will be processing the memberships and Rick & Joanne Bain of Colbert, WA (near Spokane) will be processing & mailing membership cards. Both sets of folks are relatively new members. Long term members, Robin & Clare Scheffer of Arlington, WA just north of Seattle, will be back-ups for both positions and will also be in charge of mailing this newsletter to those without emails.

Dan Quinn the accountant will process payments as usual and Paul Beddows is responsible for the database software. All may be reached by a single mailing etc list address members@natcoa.com.

EVENTS

Things to do, places to go

Southeast

October 14th - 16th, 2011

Cedar Key, FL

This weekend coincides with the 42nd annual Cedar Key Seafood Festival, which offers delicious local seafood, live musical entertainment and over 200 arts & crafts exhibits. Event is co-sponsored by NATCOA and the Lance Owners of America. For more information check out the blog site at: http://setcrally.blogspot.com/ or contact Don & Lucy Seijas at: FlaTCRally@yahoo.com

Northwest Caravan

October 7th - 10th, 2011

This is over the Canadian Thanksgiving weekend. Check out the forum for the latest information!
Satellite Radio for your Truck & Camper - What is the best option?

By Paul Beddows

Since the merger of the two satellite radio companies (XM and Sirius) into one, is there really any difference with which carrier to use? The decision may be made on the basis of a few channels which are still unique to either carrier, but if that is not an issue then the best option is probably Sirius. I say probably, because it depends on where you intend to travel. Here are a couple of technical facts that may help you determine which carrier is best for you.

1) Sirius has satellites in higher orbits. This means its coverage is far better south of the US or in Northern Canada. It will work well into Panama, whereas XM gives up in southern Mexico.

2) The 3 Sirius satellites move in a figure 8 configuration and your signal is passed from one to the other. The XM satellites are in geostationary orbit. This means that if you are parked under trees, you can lose your Sirius signal from time to time. If you have XM, and park so you have a signal, you will not lose it.

3) XM has more terrestrial transmitters if you travel mainly in large cities.

Built in or Portable?

I am a big believer in going portable, rather than built in. There are several reasons for this:

2) If you go built in, your subscription is stuck with the truck. You have to buy a second unit & subscription if you wish to use the service at home or in the RV.

3) The cab over of most campers will block or seriously impede the satellite signal. It is possible to wire an external antenna to the stock radio, but difficulty in doing this varies from brand to brand & model to model.

4) The signal from a portable docking station to the truck radio via the built in FM transmitter is not satisfactory in many cases. However, it is usually an easy matter to use the antenna model which goes between the radio & the stock antenna. This will provide an interference free signal, even if the portable docking station is using the same frequency as a local FM Station.

1) You can purchase additional docking stations for the home & camper. You can install a docking station in the camper, using the fridge vent cavity as a means to route the antenna cable from the roof to the dock. Simply adhere the antenna puck to the roof using Dicor, increasing your range. This requires some technical knowhow & skill with a soldering iron, as described below.

Increasing the Range of your Receiver

Satellite radios come with built in FM transmitters. FCC regulations have cut the allowable strength of these to the point where the receiving radio has to be within a few feet. I have worked out a way around this. The following information applies to Sirius, although XM will be similar. It requires some skill with a soldering iron or knowing someone who can help you out. In the case of Sirius, there are 2 types of docking station, home & auto. I am not sure if this is the case with XM. You want to use the auto variety, both at home and in the camper. The reason for this is that the home style has no external FM transmitter jack. The auto style works off 4.5 volts, so for the home you need to get yourself a 12 Volt adapter and splice it to a female cigarette lighter socket, so you can plug into 110. You can buy an auto lighter cord extension (From a place like Radio Shack) and cut off the female end and splice it into a 12v AC adapter. Use the 12v to 4.5 v cord supplied with the docking station to hook it up.

In the camper you need to do likewise, except in that case you do not require the 12 volt adapter since you can pull 12v from the camper battery. Be careful of polarity. You need to use a meter, or borrow one, and ensure the negative (black lead of the meter) is on the outside of the power plug you insert into the docking station.

The Sirius auto docking station comes with an external antenna cord a couple of inches long. You need to go to a place like radio shack & buy the same sort of mini plug and solder 2 lengths of speaker wire to it. You may be able to find a cheap set of ear buds you can butcher. In this case it will be a stereo plug and contain 2 wires with an outside shield. Using this, you need to solder the 2 wires to one length of speaker wire and the shield to the other.

Arrange the speaker wires in a Y-Configuration and your radio will transmit several hundred feet, covering your campsite for a portable radio, or your home. The optimum length depends on what frequency you wish to set your radio to, although anything between 27 & 34 inches will work okay. You can determine this using this formula:

\[ \text{2950 divided by the frequency} = \text{length in inches}, \text{for example,} \]
\[ 2950/88.1 = 33.5 \text{ inches}. \]
This column will discuss how to use the NATCOA online forum. While the forums can be viewed by non-members, there is a wealth of features available only to members. Let’s start out with the basics – signing in!

To reach the online forums, enter the following URL in your web browser:

www.truckcamperforums.com

In the upper left-hand corner, click on the

"Sign In" link to open the sign-in page. Enter your Username and password in the blanks provided. You’ll first have to register to obtain these. Once you’ve registered and entered your information, you’ll be taken to the forums. Be sure to click on the “Remember me” box if you’re signing in from your home computer so you will be automatically logged in the next time you visit the site.

Support the Corporate members that support NATCOA!

Adventurer Campers
www.amlrv.com

East End Campers
www.eastendcampers.com

Five Star RV
www.five-star-rv.com

Go Boondocking
www.goboondocking.com

Host Campers
www.hostcampers.com

Happijac
www.happijac.com

Hellwig Products
www.hellwigproducts.com

Lance Camper
www.lancecamper.com

Northstar Campers
www.northstarcampers.com

Torklift
www.torklift.com

Truck Camper Magazine
www.truckcampermagazine.com

Truck Camper Warehouse
www.truckcamperwarehouse.com
Coming this fall...

Taking Your TC into Mexico

If you received this newsletter in the mail please provide us with your email so we may save on postage and provide you a color copy. Email paul@natcoa.com. Thanks for your support!