

## Dry Camping By Wheels Wheeler

We had an enjoyable stay in Death Valley with a small contingent of the Sierra Nevada Unit and an even smaller, but welcome, contingent of the Four Corners Unit. We then moved south to the Family Campgrounds at Edwards Air Force Base. We parked in a nice pull through with some trees in fall color.



From Edwards we made a day trip north to the US Naval Museum of Armament and Technology at China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station. Most of the air launched missiles used by the Air Force, Navy, Marines and Army have been developed here and their museum shows the pride they take in their work.

When we returned to our camp site at Edwards I noticed water dripping under our trailer.

From the outside it appeared that the fresh water tank was dripping. Wait that can't be right, our fresh water tank was almost empty

from our stay in Death Valley. Inside the trailer water was coming out of the shower and flowing down through a hole in the floor for plumbing to the area around the tanks. I found the faucet on the bathroom sink had not been completely shut off and during the whole day enough water had gone into the grey water tank to back up into the shower. I quickly drained the grey water tank. Well that is I retrieve the fitting to connect to the sewer connection from the depths of my truck under the chairs I was bringing to my step daughter for use at Thanksgiving, and behind the kindling I had brought for starting campfires at Death Valley. Someday I'm going to have to organize that stuff. Maybe I don't need all those things. I pulled out the dump hose from under the trailer. Fortunately, I have not had time to make that more difficult. Although I might, the cover came off on the road about 50 miles north of Bakersfield. Nothing was lost just a 60 mile an hour test of the tether. I emptied the grey water tank successfully. We wiped up the water. A little water got on the rug in the bedroom and gave use wet feet for a few days. I made a new rule-when hooked up to city water and leaving for any period of time turn off the water supply out side.

I visited the museum at Edward that displays some of the aircraft that have been tested at the Air Force Flight Test Center there. A trip to Palmdale to see the Blackbird (SR-71) on display there was a bust because the display is only open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

We moved the trailer to the RV Campground at Naval Air Station Lemoore in the center of the San Joaquin Valley, west of Visalia.



From there we visited Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. These are some big old trees. The sequoias are

not as tall as the redwoods but they are older. There is lots of evidence that they have survived some significant wild fires in their time.



One morning, after breakfast, I went out to empty the trash. When returning to the trailer I noticed it was leaking water again. How could this happen. I was sure we had turned all the faucets off last night and the rug had finally dried out and I didn't get wet feet getting up this morning. Wait this is coming from someplace else. After a closer inspection water was coming out of the fresh water overflow. How could this be happening? I had not put water in the fresh water tank since leaving home. The water from the city water must be getting to the fresh water tank. I shut of the city water and the over flow stopped. I looked at the water pipes in the vicinity of the pump and could see nothing I recognized as a check valve to prevent back flow through the pump to the fresh water tank. I called Airstream and they said the check valve is part of the way the pump is built. They would replace it if I took it to a dealer for determination of the problem, performance of the replacement and return of the defective part to Airstream. This didn't sound too appealing. I think I'll shut of the water and go to Yosemite National Park like I planned.

Yosemite has lost none of its beauty. It is particularly beautiful when there is snow. There was very little snow. I used to be stationed at Merced and would visit often. Nothing has changed except more people and more controls to keep them from damaging the park. It was cold in the shadow of the mountains in the valley. Oh yeah I'm supposed to think of a way to avoid towing my trailer to a dealer to have them take a day to figure out what I know and then remove the pump and wait for the replacement to arrive. I can't do that until I get home and then I'll have to wait to winterize the trailer. There must be a better way. I think I'll install a conventional check valve in the output line of the pump and live with the pump I have. It seems to pump and hold pressure with out cycling when not in use.



I found a brass check valve at Lowes and when I got to Bakersfield I put it in. When I tested it under city water pressure it had a slight leak, it even had a leak under pump pressure, cheap China products. I got another check valve from Home Depot, still made in China. It did not leak this time.

It was a very worthwhile trip to spend Thanksgiving with my step daughter and to visit later with my daughter. We returned with out incident and winterized the trailer and decided to worry about the pump next spring. I may not do anything since it seems to work now.

Since things have settled down I have had time to think about the whole affair. If I stuck to dry camping none of this would have happened.