

Things Change... with sinks, toyhaulers, and Tiffin

Like greyhounds coming out of the gate in a cluster, the 2020 to 2030 decade has brought in sinks that are short-lived, toy haulers that are easily overloaded, and a Tiffin that has a good possibility of going down the tubes. And, if any of these three stay as a trend, the RVing lifestyle will be hurt for longer than the decade ahead.

The first and last RV show I attended during 2020 showed me that the upcoming pandemic wasn't the only thing that RVers and potential RVers needed to watch closely. As one well experienced in watching changes during the last five decades, in this RV show I saw changes that could easily impact our lifestyle and maybe our lives. And because there were too many to write about in one article, I'll stay with the three items mentioned above.

During my search for RV problems at the show in Seattle, I noticed the proliferation of square-cornered sinks (also called zero-radius sink) as shown in photo #1. As an RVer myself, it didn't take much thinking to see problems for any RVer who, unfortunately, might come to own a model with a sink that takes much less abuse and much more cleaning power. And, to my dismay, it seemed that every lower and middle priced brand I inspected had at least one model with square-cornered sinks rather than the round-cornered (standard-radius) sinks. And upon close inspection and then some research, it appeared that most of these zero-radius sinks have much thinner stainless-steel walls than most radius sinks even though radius sinks are stamped rather than welded.

You can bet that I'll be watching sinks down the road with a sinking feeling that I'm going to be too right on the one.

And then there's the toyhaulers. At shows, I always look at toyhaulers for two reasons: One, they've been built to appeal to those of us who really like the forest, the desert, or a place to store anything that we must have when we get to those destinations. But whether a motor home or a



Photo #1

Cleaning this square-cornered (zero-radius) sink will be more difficult than the standard-radius sinks you have used most of your life. You will also find that the corners will collect scrub marks much sooner on the square-cornered sinks and that you probably won't like the reduced natural flow of liquids to the drain.



Photo #2

Although this toyhauler is a 3-axle fifth wheel, it is still a scary scenario. The amount of variable load placed on the hitch could mean steering problems for the driver. You must never consider loading as shown here as a serious possibility.

towable, many toyhaulers are designed so that it is impossible to regulate its balance because the variable load is always behind the rear wheels. And, for this reason alone, **toyhaulers** are dangerous vehicles unless the bulk of the load is above the rear axle(s). Simply, unless the owners are conscious of the hitch weight on a towable toyhauler and steering weight on a motor home toyhauler, any RV as loaded in photo #2 and #3 could be as dangerous as letting young children play with a loaded gun.

Then there's **Tiffin** Motorhomes (Allegro) and its sale to Thor Industries, a large corporation owned mostly by financial corporations and institutions—many of whose brands are very low rated by RVCG. Although I cannot know for sure how Thor will operate the Tiffin production facilities, I do know how Thor operates its many now-owned RV manufacturers. From Thor Industries' history I also know that they operate under a policy that requires high-profit taking and are very tight on paying for their mistakes. (Note: In early 2021, Thor's board compensated the president of the company, Robert W. Martin, with over \$7 million for his profit-taking during the 2020 year even as the complaints of their customer base went through the ceiling.)

Sadly, during the last decade, many of the best RV manufacturers born during the 20th century had to close doors because of country-wide economic issues. This was a bonanza for investment companies, like Thor, who gobbled up the smaller companies that couldn't survive the economic downturn. This major change left the industry with a potpourri of larger RV builders who are more investment and profit oriented than quality-oriented.

But something good could be happening. With the worst of the economic downturn behind us, the RV industry appears to be moving toward a mix of manufacturers who are building RVs for the new world ahead. This could be an exciting change.

Stay tuned!

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Photo #3

Having its own garage doesn't make this motor home toyhauler safe. This vehicle is safe either when loaded or unloaded. You can't have it both ways! (Notice the wheelbase and garage location.)



Although never considered a top-notch motor home by RVCG members, the Tiffin Allegro and Tiffin's few other brands received modest praise because of Bob Tiffin's attention to buyer's problems. Now, as a Thor product, I suspect that Tiffin's customer praisings will be greatly reduced.

As shown in the photo above, Allegro has been plagued by too many short wheelbases which I am sure attributed to its generally low highway control rating—which in turn contributed to Allegro's low crashworthiness score.

Unfortunately, this writer does not expect these two negatives to improve under Thor's ownership.

WE NEED YOUR OPINION

Changes during the pandemic have hit the RV Consumer Group hard. Because of it—our volunteers and staff members have had to struggle to keep up with getting good information. And, it's all about good information. You've undoubtedly seen the changes in the publishing of RV data yourself—especially the confusion of online publishing of brochures. For us, trying to keep with the changes has been daunting. Still we struggle on because we know that change is the nature of our modern world.

Because we rely on the manufacturers' data and your opinion to publish good information, as we begin returning to a more "normal" state we would appreciate it if you would fill out our **RV Owner Survey** form to tell us how your RV is doing. Your input is more than important—it's vital. If you haven't done one since the pandemic began, please do it **now**.



We Rate RVs

Thank you,
RVCG Staff



RV Owner Survey - 2021

Your input is very important to our research. Any information you give is kept in the strictest confidence - results are only used for our research.

We do not sell or share our mailing list with anyone or any other organization.

Thank you very much for your assistance!

* Name of Owner (will not be published or used for promotions):