Hints & Kinks
for Your Airstream

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ITEM: WINTER AGAIN Recent experience has updated and improved the annual procedures to perform the job of winterizing our RV water systems. The practice of filling the entire water system plumbing with a suitable "antifreeze" chemical has its usual downside which provides a long lingering after taste in the system. The solution to this dilemma is to simply remove and clean out all of the plumbing involved with fresh clean air under pressure. The procedure is as follows: (It is assumed that the black water holding tank has been drained and that drain valve is open.) Also open the grey water drain valve & install a blowout plug into the fresh (potable) water inlet fitting (plug available at WalMart, Campers' World) Attach to that plug the compressed air source. The compressor can be a regular 12V DC tire inflator device or preferably a 120 VAC compressor which provides a stronger air source and reduces work time. Fifty five psi (pounds per sq. inch) of air is sufficient in either case to move the water out of the plumbing lines via the drain valve.

It is suggested that a clamp on air fitting be used at the junction of the air hose onto the blowout valve. This will permit leaving the air hose attached while you open and close the outlet faucets alternately during the operation inside the rig. Do not forget to open and close the shower head and the toilet flush valve to evacuate those outlets.

A positive test of complete evacuation of system water is to open each faucet or water outlet onto the back of your hand until pure air with no moisture strikes the hand. Turn off the air compressor for at least 10 minutes to permit water to collect in the plumbing low spots as a result of condensation on the piping interior walls. Restart the compressor to eliminate the water collected again testing with the back of your hand. A dry hand verifies a thorough cleanout.

A frequently asked question is "How much time does this process consume?" From experience, a 25 ft. RV takes approx. 3/4 of an hour to complete. The length of time is dictated by the length of plumbing lines and the number of water outlets involved.

In conclusion, it is advised to leave open all faucets and water outlets (except the toilet) during the nonuse period. It is time now, in this process, to close your black and grey drain valves to preserve interior integrity.

ITEM: SANITIZING Some time ago, this column suggested the use of a small spray bottle containing a mix of Clorox and water to sanitize the campground fresh water faucet source before attaching your fresh water hose to that fitting. This will further assure that the last user did not flush his drain hose after disconnecting from that source. I have been informed that a better solution is contained in the "Lysol" (and similar brands) type of sanitizers available in supermarkets. This self-contained,

pressurized can contains an antibacterial solution that remains potent more than twice the time of the Clorox solution and is effective against viruses, bacteria, as well as mold formation. These benefits together with its scent will be well received in poor drain hose storage areas.