

A woman and her Winnebago

By Malia Lane

Most people had one of two reactions when I said I was going to become an RVer on my own: either that I was really crazy or really inspirational. Now, after more than five years, I am often thankful that the irrational won out over the practical, because I love this lifestyle more than I can adequately express.

Even though I'd never driven anything larger than a van before, as a woman traveling alone, I knew I'd feel more secure in a fully self-contained motor home. When parked for the night, if I ever felt threatened in any way, I could drive off pretty quickly without going outside. Learning to drive something 36 feet long (and towing a car behind it) was easier than I thought it would be and I'm glad I didn't let my fears keep me from that choice.

And the benefits—unbelievable! At times I've shared the view from my humongous windshield with my mom as we toured Alaska. We over-nighted next to glacial streams and watched eagles fly overhead. We double-hugged trees in the redwoods, watched the earth boil up and spill over in Yellowstone, and both cried in joy when she said she thought she would die without her dreams of travel coming true. When we visited Disney World in Florida (thrilling the eight year old little girl in both of us by having lunch at Cinderella's Castle!) we both learned the truth of: *"When you wish upon a star - makes no difference who you are - when you wish upon a star, your dreams come true."* It makes me happy to be able to help make her dreams come true.



I've gaped in awe at the Grand Canyon, celebrated the Sunset festival in Key West and seen a lot on both coasts and still don't feel that I've even really started serious exploring yet. But I am content with the start I've made – at least I've started.

Driving on interstates or country roads - no matter what the scenery, there is something inherently satisfying about being somewhere I've never been before. Pulling into parks, getting all hooked again, greeting and swapping stories with the other campers, spending a couple of days (or months) and then taking off down the road to do it all again someplace else; it often hits me in the heart how much I enjoy this lifestyle. How great to be able to make up your mind to stay or go as you please, and no matter what, your comfy and comforting home is always right there with you.

So what have I learned about solo RVing in five years? For one, that I

haven't experienced all the bad things so many were so sure would happen to me being on the road alone. I'm not at all careless, but I've boondocked at discount store parking lots and along scenic roadsides in Alaska and never once felt threatened. What I have come across are extremely friendly people in the RV community, campground owners and park rangers willing to go out of their way to help. I feel like I have the best of both worlds – companionship when I want it and privacy and alone time when I need it.

So am I happy with my solo RV lifestyle? You betcha! What do I have to say to others who say it's too hard for a woman to travel alone? A quote I read when I was researching comes to mind:

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible."