

I Could Live in This! We Could Do This!

“I could live in this!”

We didn’t realize then the far-reaching implications of this statement.

Bonnie DeWilde and I were both off work, recovering from shoulder surgeries. In March 2005, I fell at work and tore my rotator cuff; surgery followed in May. Bonnie took her dirt bike out in the hills on Memorial Day and dumped the bike, tearing her right rotator cuff; surgery followed in June.

Now you may be wondering—what has this to do with the above statement? Well, tearing our rotator cuffs led to a chain of events that lead to our story.

travel trailer with two sliding glass doors. What really caught our attention was the slideout deck on the back. Of course we had to look inside.

The living/dining area had a 12-foot slideout with the kitchen adjacent. With the sliding doors, this big room was bathed in light. Beyond that was the bathroom and bedroom. Bonnie and I looked at each other—she was in the living room, I was in the bathroom area. At the same time we said it: “I could live in this!”

We bought the travel trailer in late July and soon received invites to vari-

stay. But we did stay, and we talked to the host, Donna. She gave us the story on the park.

On our way out of the park the next morning, we both agreed it was a shame that the little RV park had been let go, and we both concluded that it had a lot of potential. That week the little park kept coming up in conversation. We both had ideas as to how to make it productive again, ideas about what we would do if we owned it.

On our way back home, we stopped again at the little park and found out from Donna that the owners might be interested in selling. We took the contract information home with us. For the next two weeks we talked about the possibility of buying the RV park. Admitting to ourselves that we were crazy, we called and made an offer. We could see the possibility of incorporating this business adventure with our dreams. After all, we were out of work and needed jobs.

After extended negotiations and riding a roller coaster of emotions, we became the proud owners of the Trail Break RV Park in Glens Ferry, Idaho.

Cleaning up the park was a definite challenge, and winter was coming on fast. It was October—not the best time to buy an RV park, but we knew if we waited until spring or summer, someone else might buy it.

It was decided that Bonnie would stay in Ellensburg to sell our property there, and I would stay in Glens Ferry to oversee the park and get a part-time job to help supplement our income. The new 29-foot travel trailer became our second home.

Owning an RV park is like everything else—there are good days and bad days. The benefits include being your own boss, meeting lots of inter-



After staying in this campground in Idaho, Nancy Kurtze and Bonnie DeWilde both agreed that it needed some care, but it had potential.

Photo courtesy of Bonnie DeWilde

We had been looking at new RVs for a couple years, with dreams of touring the country when I retired. During one of our post-op doctor visits, we stopped at Canyon Country RV in Yakima, Washington. We were just looking around as usual. They had RVs of all kinds.

Mind you, we were just in the looky-loo mode and had no intentions of buying anything.

The salesman was taking us through the back of the lot when we spied a

ous resorts for the obvious sales pitches. We decided to go to a couple.

The first invitation we accepted was to a Thousand Trails Preserve in LaConner, Washington. We met Dee Johnson there, and she told us about RVW. (We joined in October.)

Later we went to St. George, Utah, to another resort. On the way there, going down I-84 in Idaho, we stopped for the night at a run down, little RV park in Glens Ferry. The park was not at all appealing; we almost didn’t

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Bonnie DeWilde and Nancy Kurtze are the new owners of an RV park in Idaho.

Photo courtesy of Bonnie DeWilde

esting people, and having flexibility. Donna stayed on as host, which allows us freedom to travel back and forth to Washington to tend to other affairs.

Like any other business, bad days happen, too—such as when you are away in another state and you get a call from your host that the sewers are backed up and the pipes are frozen. One

of the locals came to our rescue and fixed that problem. Being new to the area, we didn't have a lot of resources to call upon. Fortunately, Glens Ferry is a small town with small town values and people who are willing to help out in times of need. As women owners of a business such as this, we thought we would encounter a condescending attitude from the local men. Not true! They have been very helpful and supportive and treat us with respect, acknowledging us as equals who are intelligent and resourceful.

There are many facets of owning an RV park that we never considered. For example, there are fees for everything,

including irrigation water, highway signs, licenses and sales tax. There are also employer responsibilities and day-to-day operating expenses. The list goes on and on.

Would we give this up? No! It's fun, and it's a challenge. With hard work and a little luck, the little RV park in Glens Ferry will provide us with a place to call home and the opportunity to travel when we want to. We do hope to attend some of the RVW gatherings around the country this summer—particularly the balloon fiesta in New Mexico and the national convention in Kansas—and we hope to see many RVW friends coming through Idaho.

Nancy Kurtze and Bonnie DeWilde are members of the Cascadia Chapter. You can reach them at yakamarn@rtci.net or see their website at www.trailbreakrvpark.com.