

Vayas con lesbos

Highway Holly and Amblin' Amber are poised to take the country, one mile at a time

Amber is sure to be the hero of this story. When you take off cross-country in a 19-foot 1972 motor home, you need a good solid butch at the wheel. My traveling companion is carpenter, mechanic, plumber and electrician, wrapped up in a tall, dark and handsome package. I am one lucky girl.

Of course, I'm not the only lucky one. Betty, our homely but lovable recreational vehicle, has been rescued from an ignominious state of mildew and mechanical disarray by Amber's tender ministrations.

It's a classic butch-femme triangle. Amber takes care of Betty and I take care of Amber. And Betty,

destination, you do not get to park and hop out. You must drive the vehicle back and forth over stacks of boards for at least half an hour before you can sit back and enjoy the stupendous absence of road noise.

Lesson No. 2 revealed itself when we pulled into a Warm Springs filling station on our return trip. That's right, at 10 miles per gallon, Betty could not make it over Mount Hood and back on a single tank of gas.

There we were, at the end of a highly successful first run with Betty. The bed had been delightfully comfy. The kitchen had hosted several meals and even baked us biscuits in the morning. We were ready to head back to one final month of work in Portland, starting with



we hope, motors us across the country and back during the waning months of the millennium.

When you read this, we'll be sunning ourselves in the desert of southern Utah, on the first stage of a seven month road trip adventure. As I write this, I'm wondering how we'll ever make it out of town. The trip has been in the works for more than a year. The checklists began in earnest on Valentine's Day. Betty joined our family a few months ago and has since occupied many a night and weekend. But the reality of our bold plan didn't fully hit until our maiden voyage at the end of April.

When we pulled into the RV camping area at Kah-Nee-Ta, we realized what we'd done. Despite our queer sensibilities and bohemian rig, we were joining the mainstream in a more scenic version of suburban cul-de-sac living.

As we sputtered into place among the mobile mansions that lorded over the campground, a friend observed: "They would zone you out if they could." Satellite dishes, portable Astroturf side yards, extra rooms popping out all over, not to mention scads of boats and bikes and U.S. flags.

You can guess what we did first. That's right, we scoped out the other dykes. Sure enough, two older women were holding down the far corner of the lot in their inconspicuous and terribly sensible pickup truck and camper.

Ignoring the raised eyebrows around us, Amber proceeded with the post-arrival ordeal called leveling. That was Lesson No. 1 in our new RV lifestyle. When you pull in to your

the media event I was coordinating with the mayor the next morning. And Betty wouldn't start.

Keep in mind, we are two highly competent lesbians, and one of us is even mechanically inclined. Amber worked a little under the hood. Nothing. We waited for Betty to cool down. Nothing. We called AAA.

We waited 45 minutes for the mechanic to drive up from Madras. He worked a little more under the hood. Nothing. We prepared to get towed back over the mountain to the outskirts of Portland. We lined up a ride to fetch us from wherever the tow truck dumped us.

Only then, almost two hours later, when the mechanic reached inside by the steering wheel, he noticed that the gear shift was still set on drive.

"Hey, it's good news!" he shouted kindly. It did little to lessen this sobering smack to our supercompetent egos. Starting up Betty in park or neutral is a lesson we won't need to learn again.

More importantly, we got to practice waiting for a rescue vehicle—something we will surely get to do again in the long months and many miles ahead. And we waited in style, kicking back on Betty's vintage avocado-green and har-

vest-gold couches, listening to CDs, doing a little housekeeping, a little paperwork. At least that's what I did.

Amber was outside in the drizzle tweaking stuff under the hood, waiting for the mechanic and then working with him. That's why she's bound to be the hero of this story.

■ En route, HOLLY PRUETT will be checking her e-mail for travel tips. She can be contacted at hjpruett@aol.com.

TRAVELS WITH BETTY
BY HOLLY PRUETT



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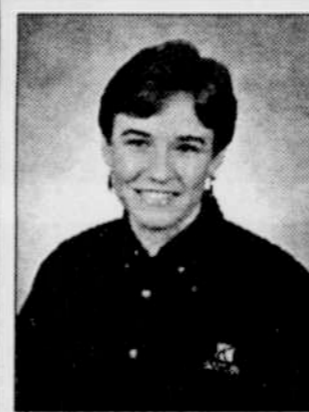
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