

Hermon couple renovates school bus into roaming home

BY JODI HERSEY
SPECIAL TO THE WEEKLY

Buses are everywhere these days, transporting anxious students to school and sporting events as the new 2015 school year gets underway.

However, there's at least one school bus currently on the road that won't be making its usual bus runs -- it's been carefully and painstakingly converted into a single family home on wheels.

Former Hermon residents Derrick and Beth Towers purchased their 1996 Thomas school bus last June and have spent a year renovating it in hopes of reducing their living footprint, eliminating their debt and gaining much more quality time with their growing children.

"I was looking at the tiny houses and off the grid houses and none of it really called out to me. Then I saw a guy who converted a school bus into an RV and I looked into the space requirements and constraints and proposed it to Beth and she said, 'Let's just do it,'" said Derrick Towers.

After tearing out the seats, ceiling and flooring, the couple then created their very own floor plan. The back of the bus has two Murphy beds for 8-year-old Julia and 5-year-old Janelle that sit atop their shared dresser. The girl's space

also includes a bookshelf full of books for their home school curriculum and a large collection of stuffed animals.

The bathroom is next located directly across from the kitchen sink, to keep all the plumbing in one area. The kitchen also houses a large countertop, small fridge, a two-burner propane cook top and a pantry. The Towers added four old Chevy Cruiser van swivel chairs to their space along with a futon couch that converts into a bed for Derrick and Beth at night. The family has even created a custom made wooden ceiling for their new abode. And they've added a few house plants to their home as well.

"We homeschool our children and both have fallen in love with national parks and historical sites, so rather than just read about the stuff in textbooks, we decided what better way to learn and experience it than to go see it? Our first stop is Mount Rushmore in South Dakota," said Derrick.

The Towers plan to stay in the Dakotas for several weeks for work.

"Every year they harvest thousands of acres of sugar beets and are looking for people to drive truck alongside the harvester. It's usually six to seven weeks long and that will get us through the next six to seven

months," said Derrick. "Because we've downsized our living footprint so much and eliminated most, if not all of our bills, our required work to pay for our lifestyle is very minimal."

From there the Towers are headed to the Aztec Ruins National Monument in New Mexico where they will remain until December.

"A lot of national and state park services and privately owned RV centers have a system set up where if you work 10-20 hours a week for them, they'll have a place for you to park for free with all the amenities like electricity and water and stuff you'd need for an RV. It's a great educational opportunity for our children and it benefits the national parks as well," said Derrick.

The family, along with their dog, plan to continue their nomadic lifestyle for the next five years before eventually planting their roots.

"Hopefully by that time we'll have a better understanding where we want to settle down," said Derrick. "I just think it's a great way of life especially for people who are struggling to pay their bills or struggling to find time to spend with family."

To follow the family's journey, like their Facebook page, Bus Living.



DERRICK TOWER/THE WEEKLY

The Tower family, comprised of Derrick and Beth Towers and their children, Janelle and Julia, is spending the next few years traveling around the country in their renovated school bus home.

Bangor Grange schedules fall lineup of events

The Bangor Grange will begin their Fall supper and show schedule on Saturday, Sept. 19 with a chicken pie supper with all the fixings at 5:30 p.m.. The Wildwood Band, a traditional ensemble will appear at 7 p.m. for their first appearance at the Bangor Grange.

A baked bean supper will take place on Saturday, Oct. 17, followed by

the return of the Mainely Country band, a favorite among grangers and community members alike.

The annual Veterans Tribute will take place on Saturday, Nov. 7 with a full turkey supper, followed by a musical showcase by members of the Maine Country Music Association.

The very popular family event 'Breakfast with the Claus' will take place the morning of Saturday, Dec. 5, with fun and food for all and, of course, a special visit from Santa

Claus for the kids.

Call 973-3976 for more information on any event and on everything else the grange does. The Bangor Grange is located at 1191 Ohio Street in the historic Bangor Grange Hall.

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