PHRED SEZ.....

J. Fred Ettline, WBCCI #27910

Colorful Campfires

Don't you enjoy sitting around a campfire at night! It is especially relaxing to sit in a circle, talking with friends, staring at the flames, adding wood when necessary, and moving closer to the fire as the night progresses and the temperature drops. It must be something that we have inherited from our forefathers who spent many hours doing just that.

Wouldn't you like to add green and blue colors to the flames? If so, try a hint from Stuart Blakeney, WBCCI #6688. Get 18 inches of Copper pipe of sufficient diameter to allow ½ or ¾ inch diameter **plastic** garden hose to be inserted through it. Find some old **plastic** garden hose around the house, cut it to the same length as the pipe, and insert it into the pipe. When the fire has burned long enough for some embers, place the pipe containing the hose on the embers in a relatively horizontal position. Somehow the chemistry of the two combined with the intense heat of the fire produce beautiful flames and add immeasurably to the enjoyment of the fire. Stuart says that the copper pipe can be used about four times if a shifting block of firewood does not crush it.

12 Volt Monitoring

If you do much dry camping it pays to know the true state of charge of your Airstream house batteries. If your RV original equipment sensor says Battery Condition and registers 12, 11, 10, and 0-9 volts like mine does, it does not provide me with enough information. I recommend purchasing Item 19983, a 12 volt liquid crystal display Voltage Meter from Camping World for about $15.00. It plugs into 12 volt sockets and gives a digital reading like 13.2 volts. In my motorhome I can get a reading for the house batteries, and after moving the meter, a reading for the engine battery.

When you know the exact voltage, you can compare it to the following chart:

Voltage	Charge
12.6 or higher	100%
12.4 – 12.6	75 - 100%
12.2 – 12.4	50 - 75%
12.0 - 12.2	25 - 50%
11.7 – 12.0	0 - 25%
11.7 and below	0%

I recall awakening at night in February in the middle of a very cold Florida dry-camp rally to the sound of a central heat fan going very slowly. When I checked the battery meter the voltage was 10.6 volts and was not strong enough to open the fan sail switch. This switch ensures sufficient fan speed before the gas is ignited. We were so cold I needed to run the generator in the middle of the night. Fortunately both of our immediate neighbors had already left for home. The more aware we are of 12 volt reserve battery capacity, the more successful will be our camping experience.