



## THE GLASS HALF FULL, OR MY LIFE WITH A HYPER POSITIVE

I never would have thought... But ever since Daniel and I go winter camping, when fall comes, I look forward to the first snowflakes. For both of us, our holiday celebrations in the Valin Mountains have become a special moment when we feel at home. Comfortable in our cozy nest, we forget for a moment the life at the bottom of the mountains. This year was no exception and for months I wished for our week of snowmobiling in the Saguenay region.

For the 2012 season, Daniel purchased a new Bombardier snowmobile with (you won't be surprised) the cleanest and most economical gasoline engine on the market. It delivered later than expected, only 2 days before our departure for the Valin Mountains. My "stress-o-meter" was not far from the red line as our old snowmobile was already sold. But, even with the delivery of the new snowmobile, we were not ready to go. Daniel expected that his new engine, being a little longer than the former, would not fit in the trailer. He was right; it was short a few inches. We therefore had to extend the trailer which had already been modified twice in the past for the same reason. With only 2 days to make the change, he had the idea of placing two metal salad bowls on the front of the trailer wall to raise the skis (I know it creates a funny

image in your head) and thus gain the missing inches. As the clock is ticking, he left for the Canadian Tire in Sainte - Marie to buy the two salad bowls while I looked after the installation of the snow tires on our Safari Condo. He only found a single salad bowl. A shortage? Meanwhile, Paulo our mechanic watched discourages at our Sprinter standing in his garage. He told me that he couldn't install the winter wheels on our vehicle. What? He did it last year! He explains while on our last vehicle, we didn't have aluminum wheels and that the bolts will be too long for our regular wheels on which our winter tires are now mounted. By the way, this is Friday before Christmas: Paulo usually closes in the afternoon for the holiday season. At the same time, Daniel joins me and we decide to drive to the Mercedes dealer in Quebec for the bolts and the missing salad bowl. After a quick round-trip in Quebec, we leave the dealership afternoon, just before closing, with winter tires and a pair of salad bowls. The next day, Daniel drills two holes in front of the trailer, slips in both bowls and secures them. We now have a double trailer with two salad bowls on one side. It gives an unbalanced look and looks a little weird, but it works! Daniel is pleased of his solution and his spirit already rises over the Saguenay. After the late snowmobile delivery, a too small trailer, a Canadian Tire with a single salad bowl and the longer bolts, I feel that we *really* deserve our holidays. We really have earned them.

Early morning on December 25th, it's time to go. The sun is shining; the strong wind could dehorn any cattle and the thermometer shakes at minus 20°. My husband's morale is at

the top! Sixty km later, we are on the boulevard de la Capitale when the engine loses much of its power. It is literally lagging. What now? We take the next exit and stop in a parking lot. We wait a few minutes and when we drive off; the problem seems to have resolved by itself. It is nothing Daniel tells me he believes the diesel had frozen because of the cold of the last few days. So, we decide to stop at the Petro Canada just before the Parc Entrance, to buy antifreeze for the fuel tank. I join him in the convenience store and while he seeks the fuel additive, I load up on snacks for the journey. Back to the vehicle, casually opening the side door as usual, what a surprise to see water cascading across the width of the door, flowing from the floor to the step and then to the ground! "Ψ? % & φ!" Impossible! We have no water on board, the plumbing is winterized! We immediately find the source of our problem. Our 10 L water container placed on the floor was overthrown and the small tap inadvertently opened... leaving the liquid to drain throughout the vehicle. There is water under the winter carpet covering the floor, in the cabinets and toilet area of our LDX. Daniel must hurry to drain the side door track so that it is doesn't freeze up. The door is wide open, the wind rushing in instantly freezes the water on the floor. I am sure that it is -1000°C. I must say that I'm starting to wonder if this is not a huge conspiracy or a sign of fate pointing out that we should not be in the Valin Mountains. When we finished draining the vehicle as best that we can, we sat down prepared to leave again. Daniel remained as calm as can be. "It's nothing" he said, "All's well! Think about it! We're on holidays! I looked at him, open-

mouthed, as if he spoke Swahili or another totally exotic dialect. I looked panicky like a deer dazzled by car lights at night. I tried to calm down and install my I-pod on my ears for the Parc crossing. Nonsense to try to convince a hyper positive that things are not going really well. As the kilometers add on, I relax and begin slowly to enjoy the trip and the beautiful landscapes rolling before me. We crossed l'Étape safely. A few kilometers later, without any warning, the vehicle starts to vibrate. I turn to Daniel and with earphones on, I do not really hear the words coming out of his mouth, but I can read the word *flat tire* on his lips. FLAT TIRE? We have a flat tire on the trailer! What will happen next? A collision with a meteorite? We drive one more kilometer to a point where, in summer, we normally find a wayside stop. It is closed for the winter, but even if it is not cleared, the road is a little wider. While I fight a spontaneous hyperventilation, Daniel is already outside with the tools required to change the defective wheel. Of course, it is the one on the side of the road. I put my neck-warmer and get out complaining of the bad luck which is falling on us. Daniel pulled out the jack and is changing the wheel. Among the blowing snow and wind noise, I hear Daniel telling me with a smile in his voice "we are lucky, we have the flat tire in one of the only places where there is a road expansion. In addition, a few weeks ago, I had removed the trailer wheels and greased all the bolts, so they are were very easy to remove. » At the same time, a patrol car parks behind us and the police greets us with a smile and inquired if we need a tow truck. As Daniel replied "All's well!" the officer told us he that he would stay parked behind us so that we can safely change the wheel. Dan looked at me with eyes that said: "Well, I told you that we were lucky."

We spent a wonderful vacation in the Valin Mountains. We took advantage of the beautiful snow while the rest of the province was served yellowed grass. I wouldn't want to miss these moments for the world.

Daniel is a positive and extremely committed person. Unlike me, I rarely saw him lose patience with life's little hiccups. He

always told me that there are no problems, only solutions. For an anxious individual like me, to live with someone who always has a positive word on his lips in frustrating situations can sometimes be exasperating. Over the years, I've realized that it was he who is right and that life is much more enjoyable when one looks at a glass that is half full. There are things much more severe than a down fridge or a flat tire on a trailer. With Daniel, I have learned to rationalize... even if from time to time, I must confess, I do relapse!

Michèle

## OF ORGANIZATION AND EMOTIONS

### Five Months Aboard a Safari Condo Across the United States

*Here is the sequel to Julie Roberge's text about her journey alone across America...*

*A summary of this account appeared in the Voyage section of La Presse on Saturday November 26, 2011, page 8, under the title [34 142 Km Plus Tard](http://www.cyberpresse.ca/voyage/les-aventuriers/201111/28/01-4472208-34-142-km-plus-tard.php).*

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/voyage/les-aventuriers/201111/28/01-4472208-34-142-km-plus-tard.php>

#### April

I attack April in Texas. Not quite. Time to see *Cadillac Ranch*, where ten Cadillacs are planted nose down in the ground. If you do go, bring a can of paint to leave your mark on one of the cars. I didn't do it, knowing full well that I would have liked to become a graffiti artist for a few minutes while it isn't illegal. In Amarillo where I set camp, a limousine with a horn on its hood just led me to the *Big Texan* Restaurant; the driver

is a caricature: about 80 years, not even 5 feet tall, toothless, with cowboy boots and hat and an incomprehensible jargon! I love! It feels exotic! This evening, while I was eating alone, a couple of Americans from North Carolina sitting in the same limo invite me to join them for dinner. This is one advantage of being alone. People come more easily to me because I am alone. When you are as a couple, it often gives the impression that you're self-sufficient. But when one's alone, I would not say that people have pity, but it seems that they are more likely to risk an invitation or start a conversation. But I have never met people who insisted, rest assured. When at the *Big Texan*, do as the Texans do: have a steak. This restaurant that is known for one thing: if you can eat a 72-ounce steak with a baked potato, a salad and small bread, all that in one hour, it's free! The record belongs to a Californian who ate it in 8: 52 minutes! He's the type also holds the record for the largest number of hotdogs in an hour. This could be the explanation.

My *ride* on highway 66 stops in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I'll ride it again in Arizona, in a few weeks. But it is not the purpose of the trip. Here, this was it. Because of *The Grapes of Wrath*, of course, but also because it represents the industrial - and possibly touristic - United States of the inter-war period. Roosevelt had been impressed by the German motorways and he asked to have similar roads in his country...

I just love Albuquerque. Same with Santa Fe. In the capital of New-Mexico, what a treat: a Japanese spa (Yes, Yes, I'm still in New-Mexico) in the mountains on the outskirts of Santa Fe. Upon arrival, it's not very impressive especially with the rain this morning and cool (just 8°). Everything is outdoors. "They're crazy!" I said. It's freezing. It's raining. And there's a winter here... Everything is built of wood, in separate small cottages. It's quite calm, with plants, flowers, and the smell of jasmine floating around. As it is in the mountains, one must climb two steps to go here, three for there. I am under the spell. It starts with an open air *hot tub*. Let me remind you that this is in the mountains: the *hot tub* (a large round tub which could contain 8 people, but I am all by myself) is surrounded by wooden walls and is outside. Almost: on one side, the mountain. Trees, flowers starting to grow, yellowish herbs recovering from the winter, a deer... Fifty-five minutes soaking in hot 40° water and out for ten minutes in the surrounding fresh air. Fifty-five minutes of pure bliss. Fifty-five minutes admiring the sky above raining on me. Fifty-five

minutes with your mouth open and eyes full of water, jealous of my own luck, my own life. And telling myself that even if I'm a girl and I'm travelling alone, it's easy.

It is in New Mexico that I saw a somewhat scary road sign: *Beware of rattlesnakes*. So be it. I who is scared of any reptile that crawls, I'm delighted. Fortunately, all I see is a *Rosy Boa*, somewhere in Arizona, who crawled across a fairly busy road. I'm not a taker for his handbag skin: he'll be run over, it shouldn't take long.

After New-Mexico, I head north: Colorado with Denver almost empty on Sunday and the magnificent Peak to Peak Highway, winding through the mountains. It is from Denver that I return to Montreal for a few days. My father needs to be reassured and I have to file my income tax report! Life has put across my route Nicole, another Condist, another woman travelling alone. And chance has it that we were able to see one another in my busy Prime Minister like schedule during this short week: we met in the Place Versailles parking lot for a coffee and a chat about the Safari Condo and travelling alone. I have reassured her: it is not as difficult as one might imagine. In fact, it's quite the opposite. I was expecting to live it a little in the rough... but zilch! Living in the RV is easy. Finding campgrounds is easy. Dumping wastes and refilling is easy. And there, in the middle of the parking lot, I suddenly miss my Azarius, abandoned in a hotel parking lot, near Denver airport. Fortunately I'll join it tomorrow!

Back to my trip, a change in plans: I can't go to *Yellowstone*; it is too early in the season and the roads are not yet opened: there is still eight feet of snow on the road! So I must bypass. I will go visit the faces of Presidents carved into the granite of *Mount Rushmore* in South Dakota. You've never been? Don't bother. Unless it's really is on your way. Don't make a detour... even if the price of gasoline is low. A photo or postcard will do.

I crossed Wyoming diagonally, through snow and buffalos. I fear only one thing: that something freezes overnight, while it's only -80°. Even if I continue to be somewhat organized, it is really in Utah that I experienced strong emotions. First, the Great Salt Lake Desert. What's this? What's the deal here? End of April, there is a thin layer of water on the white desert, of rugged breathtaking beauty. I could not resist walking

barefoot, scraping my skin on the salt and chatting – for a while - with some young people who happen to be around. They remind me of my students that I somewhat miss a little. In Salt Lake City, a guided city tour led me to the Mormon Temple on this Easter Sunday, just in time to hear the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sing Easter hymns for TV. Oh it was so beautiful. I would have stayed for hours. And still some. Just for me, I bought a few CD's. I had a great discussion with Scott, a young man (in his twenties, I'd say) at the camping entrance. The subject? Tuition fees for University studies. For \$ 30,000, in Quebec, one can generally obtain a Bachelor's degree. In the USA? A single year. Jokingly, the beautiful Scott asked me to marry him. He would study in Québec and in exchange, I would have my *Green Card* if I wished to work in the land of Uncle Sam! What a charming boy. I would take a class!

In southern Utah... I start my countless visits to National Parks, along with my membership card: *Zion Canyon* vibrant under the Sun, *Bryce Canyon* its pink peaks still covered with snow, *Capitol Reef* that I didn't plan to visit... Boy, would I have missed something! I am still surprised to see young people walking in their flip-flops in these steep paths through mud and rocks. A teen, in Quebec or in the States, is a teen.

### May

It is May and I am continuing my discovery of the southern part of the Mormon State: *Arches National Park* and its 2 000 carved arches. It allowed me to put our Percé Rock into perspective. Near Moab, *Canyonland* and its plateaus created by the passage of time and water. Such beauty will make you stand in open mouth awe.

In Moab, the second oil change. Tire rotation, checking of fluids and testing the brakes: on the road again... Azarius and I. Then... Nothing. No radio. Dead. What now! Serge, through Patricia's keyboard, suggested checking the fuses, behind. Pfff I had already thought about that! Even a single girl sometimes has sound reflexes! Really nothing to be done. So desperate that I sent an email to Frédéric to keep him posted. Just like that, even if I'm convinced that he can do nothing for me.

I drive on. I returned a bit to Colorado to visit *Mesa Verde National Park* where centuries ago Indians lived in houses built on the mountainside. Fascinating! I chatted for a while

with a lady whose husband and mother-in-law wanted to see that before dying. She entered the canyon with her oxygen tank. What courage one can muster when realizing a dream.

I also played tourist in *Four Corners*, where all four Southwestern States, New-Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Arizona meet. I then drove to Arizona, where I saw the famous *Monument Valley scenery*, visible in about all cowboy movies. Like all the other tourists around me, I took pictures. Yes, a real *Kodak Kid*.

At the Flagstaff *KOA Kampground* for a few days, I relaxed a little. In a trip like that, one can't visit something "every" day. Stop from time to time: take some time to breathe. Then, Friday May 6th, I did nothing. Well almost. I did a wash load, I reviewed my travel plan, I cleaned up a bit... and I had guests for aperitif! Because this morning, I met Diane and Jean-François, a couple of Condists, set up a few sites away from mine. Since I don't have wine glasses, Diane will bring theirs. But I have a *squeegee* for cleaning mosquitoes off the windshield at the end of the day for example! And I'm jealous of Jean-François' fly swat (it seems that mosquito hunting is a male activity) as I was jealous of Serge's small heater (heating being also a male thing). I will purchase both, of course.

Change of plan: I wanted to go to Phoenix. After all, it's the State's Capital. But both the tourist guide and the cowboy boot salesman had other plans for me: "Go to Tucson", they said. So I went to Tucson. And I have no regrets at the additional mileage! I fell in love again. With the *Saguaro* Cactus. You know? This large cactus with arms that we see in the *Road Runner* and Coyote cartoons. Well, don't tell me that this is not a comforting tree you want to cuddle up to! Fascinating! I wanted to volunteer as Patron of the unloved cactus *saguaro*... because they are so ugly. Poor them! I visited the *Arizona Desert Museum* in Tucson where, despite the 40 degrees heat, I stayed there, to walk in the sunshine. In love, really!

I visited Tucson's *BoneYard* (an open-air aircraft warehouse), looked for golf clubs to find some thingamajig for a golfing friend who dreams of hitting the ball in Arizona, and visited the House of architect Frank Lloyd Wright at *Taliesin West*, drove on highway 66 between Arizona and California, where I crossed a village really out of touch: Oatman. There are

donkeys that roam freely. I also have a corpse on my conscience: I hit a bird bang on while driving at 100 on the highway. Conclusion: it entered my truck' front grille, now full of beautiful white feathers, as a reminder.

Las Vegas. Friday the 13th. It is here that I will have visitors. My father's girlfriend, Carole, will join me for a week. A girls' week. I took a nighttime city helicopter tour: it looked like a giant LITEBRITE. We saw a show by the *Cirque du Soleil*, we went to the Casino for a refill (I even won \$ 120 in a slot machine!), and we visited the *Hoover Dam*, and headed for the *Grand Canyon*. Finally! I've been on the road for 86 days and here I am finally at the *Grand Canyon*. Remember... it was to visit the *Grand Canyon* that I undertook this adventure! But I've had so much fun seeing everything that I've seen since I left that I don't have the impression I have missed anything or lost my time on my way to the *Grand Canyon*. I really saw what I wanted to see and lived as I wanted to live. At 5: 45 a.m., we saw the sun rise a few minutes later than expected because of clouds. But the group of visitors from China didn't: they all left before the sunrise because the bus was leaving. Oh how I'd hate to be on such a tour.

To really see the size of the *Grand Canyon*, we took a helicopter ride. Even if it's US funds (worth less than the Canadian money!), it still cost \$ 250. But it was worth every single penny. It really is from above that we can see the extent of the thing. To return to Las Vegas, we took the road northward to Arizona with a detour to visit *Antelope Canyon*, as suggested by Nicole, my new Condist friend (met her in the parking lot of Place Versailles, remember?). What a stunning visit. Nothing to do with the grandeur of the *Grand Canyon*. Nothing to do with the immensity of *Zion* or *Bryce*. Just pink rocks up there, carved by air and water. Friable rocks easily crumbling into sand so soft, soft, soft like powdered sugar. But it infiltrates everything: ears, nose, shoes, camera... I think that I ground my teeth for the next three days.

Ah yes, for those who were worried: I have a new radio. Remember? All functions stopped. I wrote Frédéric, at the Safari Condo plant, thinking that he could surely do nothing. Oh one must never underestimate Frédéric! He sent me a new radio by Carole who brought it to me. This afternoon, for \$ 70, I had it installed. No, I couldn't do it myself: I just have absolutely no patience (I would have just ripped it apart) or

the talent to install a car radio. Carole returned with the old for Frédéric. So, now I can listen to the insanities of local music and radio hosts. I find that it adds to the charm.



### 1 Antelope Canyon, AZ

This is it for Nevada. Heading for California. I cross *Death Valley* on Sunday May 22. The *Death Valley*. This is the place for superlatives: the warmest, driest and lowest. Oh that is weird. Sometimes, we're at 4 000 feet and it is 24 degrees. Then we descend, down, down... and reach the "lowest" spot of the United States: 85.5 meters below sea level. It is also one of the warmest and driest places in the country: in the 1930s, they recorded 57 beautiful degrees. Today, I was lucky: it was 39° when I started the *Badwater* visit and 41° when I returned to Azarius after a short 30-minute walk in the sun, in the desert. In 2001, it was 100° (35°) for 154 consecutive days... This is what is called a little hot. In January 1995, a record rainfall: 2.51 inches. This is somewhat staggering: we're 250 feet below sea level and all around, mountains rise to over 10,000 feet. It is a desert quite different from those I've seen up to now and it looks more like the Moon, I think. But I'm sure that it is cooler out there.

May ended on my way to San Francisco through the *Sierra Nevada*, the orange groves along the Pacific from Santa Barbara on, the visit of the *Hearst Castle* (confirming again

once it is not because we have money that we have any taste...), the Danish village (Yes, Yes: Danish) of Solvang, *Santa Ynes* and *San Miguel Archangel* missions or the John Steinbeck Museum in Salinas. After all that, I move to San Francisco for a week. In a campsite with a view on the Pacific Ocean. It's there, 15 feet in front of me. There. Over the cliff. It is cool; it will remain cool throughout my stay on the coast: 15 degrees and rain every day.



### 2 The San Francisco Cable Car

I loved San Francisco. The *Golden Gate*, the Castro, *Fisherman's Wharf*, Alcatraz prison, the winding *Lombard Street* with its sharp turns and the *Cable Car* Tower. And seeking a stylish look, I had my hair cut in downtown San Francisco. Believe me! A haircut at the *Diva International* is really not cheap! That'll teach me to flash: I sprained my ankle and spread out in the middle of the street in Little Italy. Two elder Italians who helped me up and back on the sidewalk. There is sometimes a disadvantage of being alone: no one to take care of me back in the RV. Even Azarius could do nothing! I stayed two more days in San Francisco to dress my wounds...

*(The final section of the Julie's journey will appear in the next edition of La Coquille)*

*Julie Roberge*



## SOMETHING NEW

On June 23, a new rest area opens in Quebec. Located on the parking lot of the former zoo, it offers the services of potable water, pump out station and garbage disposal.

Go to: [regiondequebec.com](http://regiondequebec.com) for more information.

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## FROSTY SNAILS

Upon reaching the Summit, after a demanding two and a half hour climb on skis from the bottom, (when I am involved, I tend to boast) we had a stunning view! On our right, the warmth of the heated shelters while on the left coming from the top, three snowshoers emerged from the frosty wall formed by the mummified trees. What a sight! And they were part of our group, *the Frosty Snails*, who had also climbed the mountain. And they all really deserved their name contrasting with all the frost around them.

We were almost 30 at the Massif du Sud this year, near Buckland, in the Bellechasse region. From Friday evening on, we spent the weekend in the section set aside for us near the ski slopes. Mild temperature, a light layer of new snow combined with everyone's energy made life comfortable in our vehicles, in stand-alone mode, while enjoying a variety of outdoor activities.

This ski resort, not well known, offers exceptional snow conditions and a vertical drop worthy of major ski resorts. According to Denis Drouin, alpine skiing is almost always in powder snow. And snowshoe trails offer a vertical drop painful for many, but invigorating for most. Access to a nearby provincial snowmobile trail is possible from the ski lodge. In short, activities for everyone.

And, following a group meal served in the warm main lodge cafeteria, our mummified bodies quickly slipped into the night's frosty air.

*Camil*



3 The Brave Snowshoers

## SAFARI CONDO IN THE LIMELIGHT!

On the *On va se coucher moins naïseux* show on Z Channel, Mario Jean explains in his own words and with his special humor, how objects around us are manufactured and where services that we often take for granted come from. Here is the synopsis of the last program:

"In Beauce, Mario Jean meets Daniel Nadeau, the very ingenious inventor of the Safari Condo and Alto recreational vehicles." Promoter of a family business which has become a success story in his field, Daniel has designed motor vehicles and caravans each more aerodynamic, practical, beautiful and green than the previous. Pure joy for campers who, like Mario, enjoy freedom and comfort when camping."

On February 9, the team *On va se coucher moins niaiseux* arrive at Safari Condo to shoot a documentary which was broadcast initially on March 23rd. Being an avid VR enthusiast, Mario was already quite familiar with motor vehicles and caravans; he knew what he was talking about and asked very pertinent questions. Because of Mario's simplicity and sincere interest in working people, the employees at Safari Condo quickly forgot they were in front of cameras and proudly explained the importance of their work in putting together a *Safari Condo* vehicle and an *Alto* trailer.

*Michèle*

## ST-DAMASE GET-TOGETHER

Sparing no expense, the *La Coquille* team visited Florida to meet with Yvan and Rita, the organizers of the big 2012 rally to be held in St-Damase from August 2 to 5 2012. The team is restless! Here are the main points that emerged from our interview:

- You can register up to June 30th 2012. For the Saturday night dinner, registration is limited to 385 people.
- Dinner on Saturday includes a 5 course meal.
- You can arrive on Wednesday before the get-together and stay until the following Wednesday.
- The Knights of Columbus hall will be available at all times.
- Bicycle paths nearby.
- And above all, Premiere, the show on Saturday night with a famous group, Boogie Wonder Band!

Organizers are eager and will be more than happy of your presence at the Festival du Maïs that attracts nearly 15,000



people to St-Damase each year. See our December 2011 edition for more information and the registration form.

On this occasion, all Condists at hand joined in celebrating Diane Thibeault's birthday: Happy birthday, Diane!

*Michèle and Camil*

## IN THE WORKSHOP WITH FRÉDÉRIC

### Solution When "Ground Fault" Triggers

Several Safari Condo 2010 or older, equipped with a Triplite inverter have problems when plugging into a ground fault outlet via the 30 A to 15 A adapter. The problem comes from the fact that when we plug the vehicle on a ground fault (leak detector) receptacle, it triggers instantly. Richard Careau, a Condist friend, found a simple solution to avoid this problem. Before connecting the vehicle, turn on your UPS for at least one minute, then plug the vehicle in the outlet and then wait at least 30 seconds before turning off your UPS. Each time you have to plug in this way, all you have to do is repeat this procedure.

### Checking Electrolyte Level in Batteries

For all owners of Alto and Safari Condo 2008 and older, it is very important to check or have someone check the electrolyte level of your battery or batteries, as the case may be, at least twice a year. **Attention**, if you are the owner of a Safari Condo 2009 or newer or if your vehicle has been re-equipped with maintenance free 6 V batteries, these batteries do not require any maintenance and you should never open any of the sealed plugs. If you open a plug, the battery will be destroyed and no warranty will apply. This battery is marked no maintenance, do not open.

## Procedure for Annual Maintenance and De-Winterizing

Remember that there is no need to de-winterize your vehicle before May 15. If you ever do it earlier, in case of frost, operate your car's heating to avoid damaging the plumbing. Some parts, such as the water filter near the pump, are sensitive to frost, even a light frost. You will find the complete de-winterizing procedure in your user's manual.

## Annual Inspection of Your Alto

It is necessary, at the beginning of the season, to carry out the annual inspection of your Alto. Refer to your user's manual.

Don't forget to check before and at mid-season the clamping of your wheel nuts. It is much more critical with aluminum wheels and since all our Altos are so equipped, make sure you do this.

## Inspection of Exterior Joints on Your Alto and Safari Condo

For any vehicle over two years of age, an annual inspection of the gaskets around the fan, the solar panel wires and, for the Safari Condo, the solar panel anchor bolts as well as the seal around the canvas or the electric roof is recommended. If you find a disbonded or doubtful joint, remove the sealant and replace it by a new seal using *Flextra* by *Mulco*. This product is available in any good hardware stores.

*Frédéric*

## THE CONDISTS' FORUM

Are you planning a trip on the American West Coast or a weekend in Sainte-Luce-sur-Mer and would like some advice so you don't miss anything? The Condist forum is the appropriate place to find answers to your questions. The Forum community is made up of dynamic Condists and, for many of them, experienced. You will always find people more than happy to share with you their travel experience, their knowledge of the latest electronic gadget, or the way in which they have customized their Safari Condo. Initiated by Condists for Condists, the forum is the link which allows the Condists to easily communicate with each other, an accessible tool anytime and anywhere, which can be very useful when we need advice quickly. Do not hesitate to register, it's a free service! [www.lescondistes.org](http://www.lescondistes.org)

*Michèle*

## DANIEL'S CORNER

### What's New on the Alto

We've improved the 2013 Alto. There is now recessed LED lighting with LEDs above the front table and the sink. The new lighter-design front storage cabinet is now standard. We also replaced the curtains under the seats with sliding rigid ultra-light panels. The outdoor shower is now standard. The new lighting cannot be installed on existing Altos, but you can purchase the sliding panels for installation beginning in the fall. For panel and installation pricing and schedule an appointment, call Frédéric at the plant.

### The New XLT in Florida

Michele and I are currently in Florida to test of our new XLT, on a 22-foot Mercedes chassis with enclosed telescopic shower and toilet (slide-in!). After two weeks of use, it is an excellent model, very user-friendly, and despite a closed

toilet, much more airy than most similar vehicles offered by the competition. You can see our new XLT on our website and videos of the toilet-shower opening, and others. We are currently developing a version of this product for the 19 -foot Mercedes chassis.

### Lithium Ion Battery

I installed a lithium ion battery in my XLT and will test its performance in the coming months. It is a technology that, I am sure, will replace lead-acid batteries in the coming years because of its light weight: it is three times lighter than a conventional battery, and should have a very long-life.

To be continued...

*Daniel*