

I Slept at Walmart

“If I am just staying overnight while on the road, I will never stay anywhere except a Wal-Mart parking lot,” says a fellow Airstreamer. “Think about it. I pull to a reasonable level spot on the perimeter of the parking lot. I don’t unhook the towed car or hook up any water hoses or electric lines. I fire up the motorhome generator and the air conditioning in the summer or the central heat in the winter. We can watch television or eat a meal. This is true self-sufficiency.”

“The store managers from whom I get permission to stay overnight are universally happy to have me stay there. Their lot is well lighted all night with many stores open 24 hours. The lots are easy to get in and out of and the stores are generally near the major thoroughfares. My Family Motor Coach Association North American Road Atlas locates all Wal-Mart stores throughout each state map. We no longer have to search for and stop at separate grocery stores, pharmacies, or automotive parts stores. I get up in the morning, start the motor, and drive away. Why would I go anywhere else?”

As a matter of safety I reminded him always to park with the door facing the store and to set the steps to retract at all times that the door is not open. We discussed the added security of a trimode cell phone and major carrier. If he happens upon a non-level parking lot, a few boards under selected wheels bring the coach more level without the risk that leveling jacks might punch holes in the lot surface.

Of course, Airstream trailers may not have the convenience of a generator for summer AC, a factor that may have a tendency to limit overnight stays to more temperate times of the year. Many climates have warm days but cool nights. If that is the case, position the rig so that the front of the trailer is toward the setting sun (the rear bedroom will be cooler). If it is winter, position the side of the trailer toward the afternoon sun to pick up any solar heat gain for the rig.