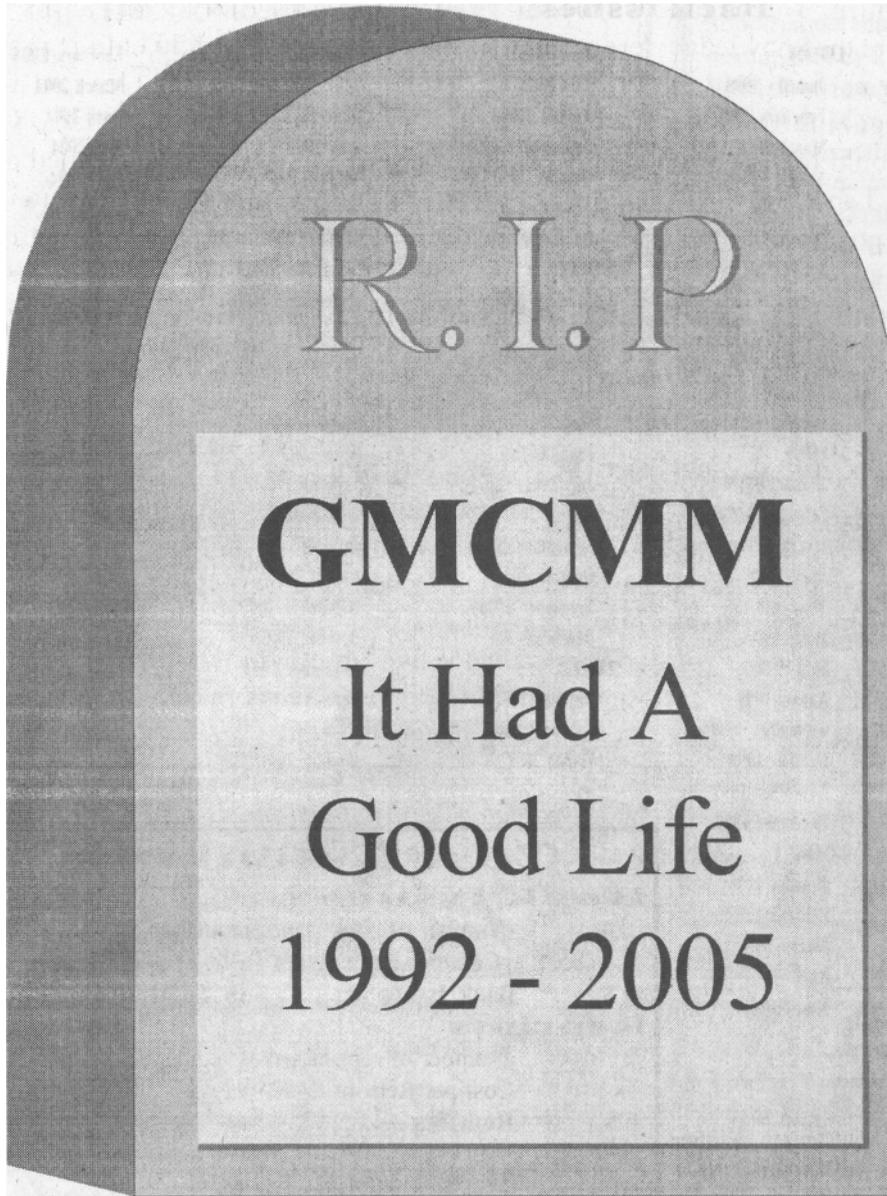


Rest In Peace

By Stephen Galovic
Publisher GMC Motorhome Marketplace



didn't even know if such base even existed. We spent the rest of the year and early spring of 1991 getting her road ready, doing many things the hard way and a few things were actually done totally wrong. However, we did manage to get her ready for her maiden voyage in May of 1991, which included The Glass Rally in Goshen, Indiana. There we discovered GMC heaven as we met many other GMCers and found them to have a wealth of knowledge that they were very willing to share. Unfortunately, it was a little too late for the things we had already done but well in time for the many things still on our to-do list and many new possibilities we hadn't even thought of yet. Through the summer we continued using and repairing our GMC and actually managed to include a trip to Gettysburg, PA, for a huge rally, our first GMC International Convention. Upon **entering the** campground at Gettysburg, our emotions were

We purchased our first GMC in the summer of 1990. Unfortunately it was in much need.

We joined FMCA and learned about GMC Great Lakers and GMC Six Wheelers, which we also joined. Like many new GMC owners, we were on our own... no knowledge base, guidance or experience to draw from for our repairs and refurbishing. We actually

bombarded by the awe inspiring sight of 200 plus GMCs, and it was overwhelming. As we felt the spring Glass Rally was heaven, the International rally went way beyond our expectations and ability to describe. The knowledge base, educational offerings and willingness to share exceeded even our wildest dreams.

I had a brainstorm! I felt there should be a forum

for all GMCers to share their knowledge, love, experiences and expertise surrounding these fabulous pieces of machinery — one that would be available before attending any rallies or conventions and even possibly before ever actually purchasing a coach. Wouldn't it have been nice if this had been available to us when we first purchased our GMC?

Upon returning from Gettysburg, we began researching possible ways to help share the knowledge base with those in need during their earliest time of need. We decided a monthly magazine devoted exclusively to GMC Motorhomes would be the most likely possibility. Before proceeding, I spoke in depth with Johnny, the brother-in-law of my good friend Jack, about my desire. Johnny (may he rest in peace) was the retired publisher of an Alaskan newspaper. Upon asking how we proposed to get a publication of this type into print, I told him we would produce it using home computers and some type of publisher's software. Johnny adamantly advised against it. "That's not possible," he told me. "It has never been done." He went on to explain, "In order to make any viable publication work, you need a printing press or a good printing house that is capable of handling the type of publication and the volume you intend to print. You need advertisers. They should be the backbone of your publication paying for the costs of production, and subscriptions should pay for the mailing costs."

I also spoke with other friends, who were into publishing. Basically, all of them said the same things... -It can't be done." or "It has never been done."

For me this presented a challenge similar to waving a red cape before a wild-eyed bull. My wife, Kathy, and I (along with other family members and friends) Discussed it at great length. However, even with Johnny's and other people's discouraging advice - advice that might have frightened someone else away, Kathy and I along with other family members and friends took on what to some people may have seemed an insurmountable task. After nearly a year's worth of ground work and preparation, the first edition of GMC Motorhome Marketplace Magazine was delivered by mail (without solicitation or much advertising support) in September 1992. We included free advertisements for the companies we found to be GMC Motorhome Oriented. Our first paid subscriber was the late Elam Fayard.

It was fun walking through the GMC International
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Convention held in Sedalia, Kansas that fall of 1992 as we passed out complimentary copies of the first issue of the magazine. It was fun talking to people who were extremely excited to learn about this "new" publication. Most of them agreed it would help connect them with many of the vendors and shops that specialized in parts, upgrades and whole coach renovations. The late Zack Cartright even got stacks of the magazine and proceeded to travel through the convention passing them out to everyone he met who hadn't learned about it yet. It was fun meeting the vendors and shop owners (many for the first time); and, when they signed on as advertisers, it was not only exciting for them but for us as well. This magazine opened a new avenue of growth opportunity for them and us alike.

As the magazine grew, it was fun watching the influx of several subscribers from Europe — Great Britain mostly, but there were others from Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. Even more exciting was the acquisition of a few subscribers from Australia and New Zealand. We had definitely become an international publication.

When we attended rallies, including those of our local clubs, clubs that were not so close and those sponsored by the two largest clubs, GMC Motorhomes International and GMC Western States, Kathy, the editor of the magazine, took it upon herself to walk among the dozens to hundreds of beautiful GMC Motorhomes talking with owners, looking for any who would allow her to interview them for our cover story and featured article, *Coach and Owner*. This feature column was suggested by my friend Jack, who actually wrote the first *Coach and Owner* to introduce Kathy and me to the community. Jack was an avid aviator, and there had been a similar type column presented in one of the airplane magazines that he subscribed too. At first, people were very open and accepting. Kathy could often get enough interviews and photographs at one rally to cover six months' or more of *Coach and Owner* articles.

In the first years, it was her honor to be accepted into the "traveling homes" of many GMCers, who graciously opened their doors to her. Once she had interviewed them, she would make them and their coaches shine in the pages of GMCMM. She was extremely pleased when people told her how much they enjoyed reading her articles. One woman remarked, "You have such a way of describing a coach's paint

scheme that I can see it as I read the article. You do a beautiful job painting a mental picture!"

I have always maintained, "This is not *my* magazine but belongs to all the readers." Through the years of publication, we took great pride in the fact that we "listened" to the "masses." We know now that doing so (in some cases) may not have been in our best interest. In other situations, however, the changes made the magazine more visible and desirable. The best example of this was "listening" to comments about the quality of the first printings.

When we began publishing, we were using a small-press out of state printing-house. The first few magazines looked okay on the exterior, but our subscribers and we were never quite happy with the pages inside. Although the print was legible, the photographs were reproduced with very poor quality. With each successive printing, not only did the interior degrade further, but the cover photograph also lost its color, quality and appeal. Subscribers wrote praising the wonderful work we were doing but asked for better quality in the photographs and eventually in the print.

We began to research other printing companys, as the magazine was not healthy enough either to buy or support its own printing press. We found an establishment not too far from us here in Indiana. They have printed GMCMM ever since.

There was a time in GMCMM's past when we not only catered to the "do-it-yourself mechanic" but also to his spouse or mate. There were two columns specifically designed to keep the interest of the women within the GMC community: *Tasting Good* and *Crafts on the Road*. Although they usually took up only two (sometimes as many as four) pages of the magazine, many of the men in the community began to balk and asked that we remove them. After a couple of years, we "listened" again., although we are still not sure if it was in the best interest of the magazine.

With two of the, columns removed from the publication, there were at least two more pages that needed to be filled with 'man stuff.' We have always "asked" for the subscribers' contributions. In the early days of the magazine, there were always people who were willing to share their experiences, ideas, challenges and victories with the other readers. There were often prominent members of the community like Tony Bell, Jim Bounds, John Clement, Ken Frey, Cliff Golby, Norm and Julia Kasch, M. O. "Moe" Lewis,

Joe Mondello, Ken Thoma and Darrel Winterfeld who were always willing to "fill" the magazine. The articles they supplied were good for the entire community, sometimes at the expense of their businesses or shops, as they were often 'how to do-it- yourself' articles.

Others, well known in the GMC community, contributed time after time: Jim Anstett, Bob Blekinsop, George Boal, Jim Bolick, Mike Bond, Claude Brousson, Ralph Brumbaugh, Bill Bryant, Ray Dzierzek, Larry and Barbara Frear, Dave Greenberg, Jack Grossi, Jim Jackson, Ivan Johnson, Chuck Kokesh, Gary Kosier, Doyle R. "Hank" Polvado, Jose' Silva, Dan Stuckey, John and Darlene Sue, Manuel "Manny" Trovao, Harry Westcott, Bruce Winslow, J. R. and Roxann Wright and so many others we dedicated a full page in each magazine to the contributors "Hall of Fame."

Some of these are no longer members of the GMC community, some have passed on and others still enjoy their GMCs. With our hats off we wish to bow in deep appreciation for all the contributions they made to fill this publication with lively stories and vital information.

We also experienced some sad times. When. we received news that Rod Thurgood had suffered a stroke and had been put in a nursing home, we were deeply touched. Rod had a wonderful sense of humor and one of the last things he said to Kathy and me at a rally was that he wanted to put a comedic genealogy of GMC Motorhomes together to present to his fellow GMCers as a type of skit during a rally. We thought it was a wonderful idea as he shared bits and pieces with us but unfortunately; it never happened. •

It was sad when we received our final note from Irma Wolf saying she would be selling her GMC due to health problems. Irma, in our opinion, was a cornerstone for the women within the GMC community. She, like Kathy, was an avid advocate for women knowing how to drive their GMCs, even if they did not do so on a regular basis.

It was extremely sad for us to hear about the passing of Elam Fayard. Not only was he a prominent figurehead among GMCers, having built two of the most unique GMC's we've ever seen, but also having been GMCMM's very first paid subscriber, made him and his wife, Sarah, extra special to Kathy and me. There were other deaths that we learned about (Bob McCarthy, Tony Bell and Darrel Winterfeld to name a

few), which made our hearts ache, as well; but Elam's was the most painful loss: His contribution to the GMC community will not be forgotten easily.

When a newer magazine, Motorhome Classics, (that promised to be everything the GMC reader wanted and more) began soliciting subscribers, we and many of our subscribers climbed aboard. We actually thought this might be our opportunity to "pass the baton." Unfortunately, it turned out to be an extremely short lived publication, and some of our former subscribers never returned to our reader base.

We also supported GMCnet when they first developed and have continued to do so ever since. We realized it would likely have an adverse effect on our subscription base, but it wasn't our position to hinder progress. It was inevitable, and we realized then that eventually we would not be able to compete with an almost instant messaging system.

It has been over thirteen years since GMC Motorhome Marketplace Magazine appeared in the mailboxes of unsuspecting GMCers for the first time, — fourteen years since we actually began working on it. To say the least, the journey has been interesting. Most of the time it has been fun. Sometimes it has been sad. Most often it was challenging; but all in all, we must say, "GMCMM was a success."

It was fun taking on a challenge that, until 1992, no one else had endeavored to do. When I say, "no one." I mean we were the first ever to publish in the manner we did. We were also the first to publish a monthly magazine geared specifically toward the GMC Motorhomes and their owners. Yes, there were (and may still be) other magazines that publish an occasional article about these fabulous vehicles, but we were the first independent publisher to exclusively espouse the GMC Motorhome.

Now it is time to announce another death in the GMC family. We have always said we would continue to publish the magazine as long as the community supported it. In fact, community support started falling off in late 1999. In 2000, we had to start financially subsidizing the magazine again, as we had done from its inception until late 1997 when it began to cover at least its monthly cost of operation. We were hoping the initial drop in support was caused by national economic factors and a recovery was in the offing. First we reduced our personal GMC use and travel expenses, so we could afford to continue Publishing'. Eventually

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we were only attending International Conventions, but even that wasn't enough as support continued to dwindle.

We haven't been able to use our coach since returning from the Mobile, Alabama Convention in the spring of 2003. We continued publishing hoping for a trend reversal. It didn't happen. Now after consuming our personal savings, it has come to the point where we are no longer financially able to continue subsidizing the magazine. We've watched readership submissions drop to almost nothing as is apparent by the large number of reprinted articles. We've watched subscriptions drop to less than 25% of their peak. We've watched advertisers go out of business or diversify so that GMCs were no longer a Significant part of their operations.

With sadness in my heart and a lump in my throat, I must "put to bed" *our baby* (GMC Motorhome Marketplace Magazine) for the very, last time with this issue. GMCMM has always been a labor of love, and we are pleased to have been able to provide it to the community.

Our Final Accounting'

Although we will not be making any unfulfillable promises to refund the unused portions of remaining subscriptions, we will allow you to exchange the remainder of your subscription for back issues on a one for one basis, with you paying only the shipping and handling costs.

Back issues will be available through the balance of 2005, so we will need your request before December 31, 2005.

We will also be filling any additional requests for back issues or magazine protectors that we receive.

Finally, we will be reconciling our display advertiser accounts and sending final statements.

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