

## Island Girl's One Year Pit Stop



While in Denver, we

took Island Girl in for her annual service visits after logging over 11,000 miles in our first year. She had her chassis, engine and generator serviced at the Freightliner dealer and some small repairs/changes at the RV interior shop. We also reorganized the basement and closets, cleaned up the wiring for our computers and devices, upgraded phone and data services and added a TV antenna and an Apple TV.



1. *The Freightliner shop* – As I mentioned in my previous

post, Island Girl did not check out 100%. She had leaking wheel seals on the front wheels. The seals leaked fluid onto the brake drums so we had to replace both. Not cheap! But it's always best to identify and fix these issues before they cause a real problem on the road. We also had a tire fixed that had developed a slow leak ... caused by a nail in the tire as it turns out.

This was in addition to the standard annual service for both the engine and the generator that includes changing the oil, oil and fuel filters, lubing the chassis, and generally checking all the driving elements "underneath".

As a side note, below is a summary of maintenance items that were repaired during the year. The

ones we had repaired by professionals:

- Bedroom slide failed – we were able to push the slide in and drive to our next destination, push it out and then back in to drive to one more destination where an RV mobile repair man replaced the worm gear
- Toilet valve wore out – replaced at the same time as the bedroom slide repair
- Refrigerator failed – we took Island Girl in to a repair shop, they replaced the power control board (luckily they had the part)
- Ballast on two fluorescent lamps failed – replaced at the same time as the refrigerator repair
- Some appliances stopped operating on the generator – RV mobile repair replaced the 50 amp transfer switch

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Fresh water inlet fixture snapped off (our first week

full timing!) – Hector found out how to repair it on an RV forum, ordered the part by mail and replaced it with some coaching by fellow RVers

- Rubber piece on our screen door handle broke twice
- Door handle broke twice
- Several molding pieces in the coach came loose
- Pantry drawer slide fell apart on two of the drawers
- Sink clogged – found the solution on an RV forum, which was to run boiling water with baking soda down the drain
- Water heater stopped working – found the solution on an RV forum which turned out to be a simple reset

Now back to the one-year pit stop:

2. *Interior repairs* – After all these months, a few interior items also needed attention. We had an edge of carpet come undone, a pull down shade that needed restringing, a broken light fixture, and a couple of mystery leaks. So off she went to the shop where we had some renovations done last year to get those taken care of.



– Hector and I went through all of the items in the basement and purged a number of them.

Most of the contents of our basement are in plastic bins. We took all of the bins out and went through every single one to decide what to keep and what to purge. This is the second time that we reorganized the basement, and we hope it's the last.

Now that our basement is clean and organized, and contains less stuff, everything in it is easier to access.

We also took all our clothes out of our closets and drawers and sorted them. Even though every single blog we read said to bring as few clothes as possible with you, we still brought too many.

I had to learn the hard way, but I was able to significantly reduce my items of clothing. Once again lightening the load.



4. *The wiring maze* – Hector also took this opportunity to redo all of the

wiring at our “  
out and starte



ces and the wiring had gotten crazy, so he pulled everything  
clearly labeled and neatly run. Definitely a big

improvement.



5. Phone and data services – This was also an

opportunity to upgrade our smart phones and rethink our data plan. We were using older iPhone 3's,  
the AT&T plan for our iPhones expired, and most importantly, we'd also been regularly maxing out our  
data on our Verizon iPad, which we used as a hotspot in places that had no wi-fi.



So based our research – mostly reading blogs written by people much

more tech savvy than I, and studying all the various pricing plans, we chose to go to an all Verizon plan  
on our new iPhone 5c's and iPad. We previously had the phones on AT&T and the iPad on Verizon,

but after traveling all around we consistently found Verizon to have better coverage. So we consolidated phones and iPad into one account, which is cheaper, and signed up for the minimum data plan since in the future the data consumption on this account will be on those devices only.



For internet access on our laptops and iMac (when we have no access to wi-fi), we signed up with Millenicom, a reseller of Verizon cellular data that allows more usage at a much discounted price. With their Novatel 4620 Mifi Hotspot device you can use up to 20 gigabytes for \$69 month as opposed to Verizon's \$80 rate for 10 gigabytes. And the contract is month to month so we can cancel anytime if we identify a better option. So far it has worked well.

There are many options for cellular service and data usage. There are less expensive options and more redundant options. It's really important to do your research and find what's best for your individual needs and budget. The following blogs offer some excellent explanations of their choices – [RVnet](#), and [Technomadia \(internet\)](#). And for a good overview of options, see [Jack Mayer's RV communication page](#).



6. The boob

*tube* – We cancelled our Dish Satellite TV contract a few months ago, so we made two more changes

to allow access to (some) television channels. For local channel access, we had a Jack antenna from King Controls installed. This over the air signal antenna has received excellent reviews.

So far we've been able to access local channels in the Denver, Santa Fe and Albuquerque areas and the picture quality is very sharp. bit quirky about getting all the channels. Certainly not as reliable as cable - we'll see how it goes as we try it in other



cities and in more remote areas.

We also purchased an Apple TV to stream internet shows from online services like Hulu which we just from our computer to the TV using Apple's Airplay feature.



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Since we're not huge TV watchers and plan to be pretty



over the air TV

So, after having

Island Girl checked out, repaired, reorganized, her load lightened, plus upgrading our internet and revamping how we access TV, we're all set and excited to continue our journey south and west.

~ Brenda

**Category**

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