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The Solari Report

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**Solution Series:
RV Living and Traveling Tips
with
Thom & Robin Walker**

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James White: Hello, this is James White once again for *the Solution Series*, brought to you by *Solari.com* and *CoreysDigs.com*. We are going to have a wonderful show today. It's will be a lot of fun. We have Thom and Robin Walker with us, and I'm going to give you Tom's bio quickly.

First I would like to welcome Corey Lynn, of course, our cohost. Corey, it's great to see you.

Thom is a business executive with 20+ years' experience leading teams, launching start-ups, growing various companies, and serving as a global CEO and RMO for different international companies.

He grew up in a rural and very impoverished area and had to be self-sufficient at a young age, earning everything. He worked his way through school while working full-time and for his own business while raising two children. Later, he owned over six businesses, selling, and attaining personal goals of becoming a global executive and realizing it wasn't what he dreamed.

After losing three mentors in six months, he agreed with his wife to move from their beach home with ocean views into their 20-foot travel trailer and chase life instead of money.

Having visited 43 national parks in 34 states, which started the day of the COVID pandemic, he utilized his risk mitigation skills and survival skills and became prepared for the pending collapse. Thom and Robin Walker, thank you so much for joining us here on the *Solution Series*.

Robin Walker: Thank you.

Thom Walker: Thank you for having us. It is interesting to hear that.

Corey Lynn: It's interesting to hear your story read back to you, right?

T. Walker: Exactly!

White: Let's start at the beginning; it's RVing, and we know what this is: RV stands for recreational vehicle. You have a 20-foot RV, and there are many

different sizes and shapes, which we will get into later. Essentially, you either sell your home and live in it full-time, or you have a home still and go out a couple of weeks a year or a couple of months a year that you use it, or you can go off on the weekends.

Let's just start with a background. How did RVing start? Has it been around for hundreds of years? Obviously, people always traveled away from their location, but for doing it in style, when did that come about?

T. Walker: It's been around forever. In fact, if you think about it, the original covered wagons going out West were essentially RVs. It wasn't used for recreation back then; they were doing it for homesteading and survival. So, it's been around in that fashion for a long time, but it really started gaining popularity as recreation in the teens and twenties with the onset of cars.

Ford built one of the first RVs with one of their campers in a Model A; they had a little camper addition for it. Then they built a back cover on it. That was the beginning of RVing in the United States for people going out West.

R. Walker: The national park Service really helped, too.

T. Walker: Yes, when the national parks started in the 1930's, which some were parks before, but not national parks. We've been to many of them. We certainly enjoyed going and we wanted to see them before we were unable to.

By the way, we don't have the 20-foot trailer anymore; now we have a giant 42-foot trailer.

Lynn: That's just 'crazy'! I can't even imagine hauling that!

The reason I wanted to do this and get you on is that I feel like over the last couple of years, we have seen people trying to figure out where their place is and where they want to be, what location they want to move to, what state they want to be in, and if they want to sell their house or go off-grid or live the RV style. Some people want to get a motorhome or a travel trailer just to have it parked at their home so that they have it in case they need to leave.

I think that it is an important one because you don't want to be in that situation where all of a sudden, you are losing your house or you need to leave town, and you kind-of throw it together.

I thought that with all of the travelling that you have done, I know that you have some great tips for people and some suggestions. So, let's start with the RV selection uses and needs. Depending on your need and what you're doing, a 20-foot might not work out. It also depends on if you have children with you or if it's only one person or two people. You can also look at a travel trailer versus a motorhome.

I know that you have met many people along the way and have probably taken much of that information in as well. So, what do you think about as far as uses and needs?

White: You are exactly right; it does depend entirely on your use and need – what you are going to do with it and what your goal is and what you want to accomplish. Are you going to be using it as your log-out rig where you have your home and you have a homestead or whatever it is, and you want something that you can hook up to or that you can jump in and take off?

Some people have used RVing as a solution. In fact, we have run into numerous Californians who have fled the state – quite literally. They took their children out of school, sold their house, bought an RV, and homeschooled their children on the road. They did solar and the complete thing. We've run into that many times; there is a whole network of homeschoolers.

In fact, we ran into a group of them in a clamshell tent outside. They had a homeschool school going on outside of their RV. There were probably about 20 children there.

T. Walker: Many of them will travel together, so their children have playmates and friends and that sort of thing. In fact, one of the 'coolest' things we saw when we were at Mt. Rushmore, a very special place, was parents homeschooling their children at Mt. Rushmore and giving lessons. The children were taking notes, talking with the rangers, and going around to all the different sites.

R. Walker: They were doing reports, and the parents were giving them assignments.

T. Walker: What an amazing education that is. It's an experience unlike sitting in a classroom, especially with all the things that are going on with schools these days.

We thought about it when we were growing up, but now the schools have gotten horrible. They are basically an indoctrination process. Many parents are realizing that. As you have done a series on it, these parents are getting their children away from a government school. This is one way that many of them do it, and it enables them to see the country while they can, and be free.

Going back to what you said, you have to first establish what your goal is going to be and what you want it to be. Then you have to establish what your budget will be. Once you've identified those two things, you can begin a series of decisions like you've done recently with what you want, what you need, and what you are going to end up with.

Lynn: And what is the budget?

R. Walker: With our little travel trailer, we started with a bucket list. We went for three months across country. Neither of us were working; his last company was bought and sold, and I said, "Nope, we are taking time off," and we did that. We had not taken more than five days off in over 14 years.

We made a bucket list of what we wanted to see – from the Grand Canyon to the Redwoods to the Mighty Five of Utah. We just did it. Thom had always wanted to go mountain biking in Moab, and so we made that list and marked off as much as we could.

We torqued our axel on our little rig outside of Zion, so we limped it back home to Florida. Then we decided that I would start travel nursing because I always wanted to do travel nursing. So we upgraded, bought the bigger fifth wheel and the bigger truck, and now we are in places from eight to 13 weeks at a time.

T. Walker: Doing that gave us an opportunity to explore and to learn about

things that we wouldn't get to see otherwise. Corey, you and I were talking earlier, and you mentioned that you were at the Grand Canyon for a half-day. That is what most people spend there – a half day to a day – at a national park.

We were at the Grand Canyon for ten days. As I mentioned, we hiked to the bottom, and we camped overnight at the Indian Garden Campground. It wasn't really planned, but we did it.

Lynn: I think what is so important about this as well, is that many people are 'hung up' – including myself through my work – with everything going on. It's so heavy, it's so negative, it's depressing, and in some cases, it's debilitating.

I think it is important that people still live their lives and have enjoyment and explore and meet people. That checks off all of that on the bucket list as well, which is very important right now.

T. Walker: I'm glad you brought that up because it's very important. It affects us, too; we hear it every day. It's sad to see the things going on with your country. I'm wearing a Glacier National Park shirt. Glacier is one of the most 'woke' parts in the country. They recently took down all their signs that said the glaciers were going to be gone by 2022. They continue to do things that way.

We wanted to experience those parks while we still have the opportunity to do it without whatever they will next require for you to go across state borders and that sort of thing if those things happen.

We decided to do it, and thought, "If we have to sneak into a park, we will do that." We wanted to see our country.

We do this often: We go outside and be in nature. It's such a stress reliever. It's important to be spiritually fit, mentally fit, and physically fit so you can accomplish the things you want to do in life. That is kind of why we started going out and doing it. I was sitting at a desk chasing a stroke and a heart attack, and she (Robin) was basically tired of watching that. She said, "I'd rather have you than ocean views. We've got to do this. We've got to go."

White: I recently received a call from legal. They said they don't encourage

anybody to sneak into the national parks.

Lynn: You're funny!

T. Walker: If you camp there without a permit, you may get a citation. I happen to speak from experience on this.

Lynn: I want you to discuss camping as far as locations and where you stay. There are places where you can stay for free; there are day locations, there are hook-ups, and there are obviously campsites and national parks, but there are also websites.

Let's talk about that.

T. Walker: I think the first thing you have to do in going after your goal, is, after you have selected your RV and have decided that you are going to do this, and you've made your test runs and gone to little parks and that sort of thing, you have to decide where you are going. Back to RV's, there is one thing to remember, and that is there is no perfect RV. You are not going to get one that you are absolutely 100% in love with because there will be something about it. We call this an 80% rig, and most of them are 60%, meaning that it may achieve 60% or 80% of your bucket list items that you needed to have.

So, decide where you are going, and make out your itinerary and how you are going to go about getting there. One of the things we found funny is that most people who do this have an actual atlas.

Lynn: That is a very important item which everyone should have right now.

White: Indeed.

R. Walker: Google will take you into some random places.

T. Walker: And you need to be able to map out where you are going. Most RVers have an atlas, and it also helps document and track what you've done; it creates memories, and that sort of a thing.

Once you've done that, then you can map out where you want to go and what you want to do. Maybe it's not seeing the national parks; maybe it's going to state parks. Maybe you don't want to see Idaho (although Idaho is probably the most underrated state).

White: You definitely recommend that everything should be planned out. If not, you waste time and waste gas and waste resources and that type of thing. So, it's very important to have it mapped out.

T. Walker: It absolutely is. Having said that, we are also very spontaneous. One thing about RVing is that we have everything with us. We can hook up to our truck, pack up everything, and pull out in an hour and head across the country - no problem. Once you meet people in RVing, they will meet you anywhere in the country. Quite literally, you can say, "Hey, will you meet us in Colorado? We want to go out there for this or that," and people will meet you there.

R. Walker: I think she was asking us about the sites. When we were in Florida; Florida has Water Land Management districts. So, you can go to their website. It's somewhat like BLM land out West. You can go to their website, and put in for an RV spot. Those RV spots will only be a spot. There might be water hook-ups, but sometimes they won't even have that. You normally won't have electricity.

On our little rig, it was fine because we had solar; we had solar, and we could stay in these places. We did a little trip through Florida, going to these free little spots while we were waiting to go out West because it was still winter and we were waiting for the weather to get better.

T. Walker: There are six different districts, and all of those spots were free; it didn't cost you anything to stay at them in Florida, and this was in the spring.

R. Walker: Usually they will have a dump station, and one of them had hot showers.

T. Walker: And some have water. You don't have to have solar; you can do it with a generator. Most rigs will survive off their batteries for a day or two. If

you are doing it during a cooler time of year, you don't necessarily need that.

R. Walker: When we were in the Grand Canyon, we stayed at the National Forest next to the Grand Canyon, which was awesome. We got six inches of snow, but we stayed free right next to the Grand Canyon. We actually even found a back road, so it was quite nice.

Lynn: Legal is calling again!

T. Walker: You do have to have a park pass to go on this land, but you can get away from the crowds and go on the back roads.

Lynn: I've also seen websites where people with land or farmers will say, "You can stay here." It's like an overnight thing, or maybe only for a few days. In most cases, they don't have hook-ups, but they have a bathroom that you can use or they might have a farmers market happening. So, you will want to tip them by buying some of their goods, which you probably need on the road anyway.

R. Walker: That website is www.HarvestHost.com, and for that, you must have a membership; it's a yearly membership. We had it for a while.

T. Walker: The sites are free, but they do ask you to support them.

R. Walker: If it's on a vineyard, you can buy a bottle of wine. If it's a farm, they may ask you to help with chores. We had the membership for a year, and we used it a few times.

T. Walker: They've since purchased another site, but it was largely in the West. Now they are moving further East. There is also 'The Dirt', which is another site, and 'Free Roam'. Free Roam is very good because it lists those sites as well as giving you the ability to filter what you want. You can pull up free sites or pay sites, state parks, and it has reviews from individuals like you and I. We can list where we stayed and that sort of thing.

R. Walker: The one we used the most, especially on our long trip, was the 'Compendium' website.

T. Walker: They have a pro version that will allow you to use it free. One thing they will do is search the other sites. Also, people can list if they have a hook-up at their house where they will let you stay.

You will run into quite a few people across the country who will do that. That surprised us. We were in Yosemite, and met a fantastic couple there. They invited us to hook up at their house and stay there for a week because they had a hook-up.

We've run into that several times where people have offered to let us stay with them.

White: For a certain sized boat, you have to have a captain's license if you operate that boat. You see some of those giant RV's - the huge ones. I can't even imagine what it would be like to tow one of those. Do you have to have special permitting or licensing or anything, no matter how long or how big it is? Is it the same in every state?

T. Walker: If it's over 65 feet, some states will require you to get a different license, but over 65 feet is huge.

Lynn: Are we talking specifically travel trailers or motorhomes? Isn't it different with motorhomes?

T. Walker: No, there is no special license needed.

R. Walker: Any 'Joe Schmo' can use one.

T. Walker: You can go today! In fact, if you go to an RV dealership today, they will give you a brief rundown and take you for a test drive.

The first time I drove a motorhome was when I went to look at one. I had never driven one. We saw one that we really loved, and we had a purchase agreement on it. Unfortunately, there was something wrong with it; it was a 45-foot Class A motorhome. We went for a test drive and they taught me how to drive it while we were on the test drive.

Lynn: Do you know what I want to get into? Let's talk about technical tips; batteries and solar. I know that you are doing something rather fancy with hydroponics, which is quite 'crazy'.

What do people need to prepare? I look at it, and think, "I'm not sure if I'm ever going to use the solar or have the ability to use it, but I think I want it just to have it as back-up." Tell me about that and the batteries. It gets confusing, and expensive. I started looking into that. I don't have a travel trailer yet, but I looked into the batteries, and you have to determine how many days it will last. So, it gets quite complicated.

T. Walker: It does. Let's start with solar. While we were in St. Augustine, we ran into a couple who travel the country extensively. We had our little travel trailer, and were looking at big Class A RV's and talking about buying one. They said, "Listen, keep your little one first, and go do the things that you want to do because you can put that anywhere."

20 feet is kind of the magic number; 20 feet (up to 22 feet maximum) will get you into most national parks. If your rig is bigger than that, many national parks won't let you in.

R. Walker: You can get in, but you might not be able to stay in the national park and camp there.

T. Walker: Some of them do. Grand Teton had a spot for our rig, which is 42 feet, but at the Grand Canyon, you have to be 22' or less.

This couple actually gave us some advice. They said, "Listen, keep your small one because you are going to upgrade at some point and get a bigger one, but when you do, you will miss having the little one because you can take the little one anywhere."

We said, "We are thinking about putting more solar on it so that we can run our air conditioner and do all of those things," and they said, "Don't."

They had 700 watts of solar on theirs. They could run their air conditioner for several hours, and they had lithium Battle Born batteries, which are the high-

end, expensive batteries. It was a sponsorship for them. They said, “Don’t chase solar. Get enough solar that you can run your 12-volt system.”

RV’s have at least two different systems: They have a 12-volt and a 120- or 240-volt system. So, the 12-volt is usually what you run for some lights. The lights that are on now are on a 12-volt system. So, they are running off the battery, and the shore power plugs in and feeds that.

They said, “Don’t chase the solar. Have enough solar that you can stay off, and buy a small generator. That is what you need to do.”

Going back to the batteries and the costs, the Battle Born batteries can be \$1,000 for a 12-volt/100-amp power battery. While that is very nice to have and it lasts much longer and gives you more power, you don’t have to have that. You can have an inexpensive regular car battery, but it’s not going to give you as much power during off-time.

Those are things that you have to take into consideration. It depends on what you want to do and what your goal is. Some people are completely solar set-up where they have 1,500 watts, and they have a complete bank of batteries, but that is hugely expensive. If you have that much solar and that amount of batteries, you are talking about \$50,000 in batteries, solar, solar controllers and chargers. So, that equipment is going to cost you \$50,000-\$60,000 if you have that much of it so that you can run your air conditioner. But you don’t have to do that; you don’t have to spend that much.

R. Walker: You can follow the weather, too. We try to stay out of the heat.

T. Walker: Most RVers are following the weather. Somehow we became snowbirds, I guess. We definitely chase the 70’s (Fahrenheit).

Lynn: What other items do you recommend? You obviously want to have some tools. When I was talking with you, someone came over and asked if they could borrow one of your ladders. That is another aspect that we will talk about, too, which is the networking part of it.

As far as ham radios or internet, ammo and guns – ‘all that good stuff’ - what

do you want to make sure that you have with you? You definitely need tools.

T. Walker: For tools, one of the impacts that I wrote down was to make sure that you have a wrench socket for every bolt that is on your rig - every size. If you don't, if you have a flat tire or whatever, you want to be able to handle things yourself as much as you can.

There are services that you can call. We have roadside assistance on this rig, but you will be waiting for half a day, at least, to do that for a flat tire when you could fix it yourself.

This thing will jack itself up. You can change the tire and put the other tire on, and you are on your way. But you must have a wrench to be able to take the lug nuts off. So, make sure that you have those wrenches, and make sure that you have the bits for the screws in your rig. The screws in your rig are different than the screws in your house. So, you have to make sure that you have them. You also have to make sure that you have some small electrical tools like a meter or a tester, and at least know how to do some minor things like that.

It's not very difficult to do once you get into it. It's quite simple. Everybody will help you, and I think that is what you were referring to; everybody will offer to help.

R. Walker: Also, have the mindset that things are going to break. You are taking your home, and you are going 65-70 miles per hour on a road. Roads are not great. We learned that in South Dakota when we lost a bedroom window. It just flew out.

So things are going to break, and you have to be in the mindset, "Okay, we are just going to fix it. These are the solutions." So, we had to stop at a hardware store and get a piece of Plexiglas. Thom had to tape it up, and it stayed that way for a couple of months before we could get it replaced.

We were going cross-country; through Yellowstone. Luckily it did great and it didn't leak.

Things are going to break. When we stop, Thom will do a walk-around and

check the rig and things like that. You walk inside, and you're like, "Oh no! The refrigerator opened, and stuff is on the ground."

It's going to happen, but it's fine.

T. Walker: Just be prepared for it.

Lynn: So magnets, bungee cords, and duct tape come to mind.

T. Walker: You need bungee cords and duct tape. Those are essential. You need a cordless drill with a bit that will fit your sockets. Make sure that you have a few of those; make sure that you have a drill bit.

Lynn: And back-up batteries.

R. Walker: Of course, when we are travelling for several days – if we are going to our next assignment – we have to have everything packed up. When we are stopped for a few weeks, we take out the glassware and things like that. But when we are travelling to the next spot, everything gets packed away so they don't get broken on the road.

T. Walker: Right now, our wine glasses are hanging, but when we get going, we take all of that and pack it away.

White: Speaking of that, how does that work? I think firearms are mentioned in here. Different states have different regulations as far as firearms are concerned. Certainly, you can't drink and drive anywhere. But isn't a motorhome considered your home? Does that fall under a different set of rules and guidelines?

I know you can't drink while you are driving, but what if you are in the back? Are you allowed to have open alcohol if you are in the back of the RV?

T. Walker: If you are in a motorhome, sure. You can go to the back with alcohol. But that depends on the state. It is also going to depend on the officer that stops you.

Going back to the gun laws, I am going to say the same thing. In fact, I questioned it a lot. One of my good friends was in the military and I talked with him about it. He has been all over the country as well; they are also RVers. He said to me, “You’ve got the Second Amendment that constitutionally protects you. If you have to protect yourself somewhere and you don’t have a firearm, would you rather be in court defending yourself or buried?”

That is the way that many people view it. That is a decision you have to make. The legal way to do it by most states – although some are doing constitutional carry, and some of them will allow it – is, if you take guns across state lines, you have to have written permission from the state in order to do that.

If you get written permission, you have basically told the state that you are going in with firearms. You can do it; you can travel with it. Most RVers do; most RVers just have their guns in their RVs.

Lynn: You did something unique with hydroponics.

T. Walker: Yes, we have a hydroponic garden growing in our basement.

Lynn: In your ‘basement’! That ‘kills me’!

T. Walker: This rig is very unique in that it actually has the most storage that you can get in an RV, other than a toy hauler. A toy hauler is an RV that you can put inside side-by-sides or four-wheelers and motorcycles and that sort of thing. When you do that, it has a garage, so you lose a great deal of living space. The biggest ones are 16 feet. Usually, in that garage-it’s like a garage-it has a floor that is like a rubber mat. They have a loading ramp, and usually have some sort of a bunkbed system. They also will have a separate bathroom, what you might have in your garage at home. But you give up a lot of living space in order to do that.

This is very similar to a toy hauler except that all of the storage is underneath it.

Lynn: How do you have hydroponics set up? What do you do when you are loading up to travel with all of that?

T. Walker: First off, we ordered a small hydroponic garden.

R. Walker: We ordered that from Amazon. It's has a little light that goes over it.

T. Walker: But you don't have to do that. We wanted to do it to see if we could do it, and if it would travel, and if it was going to be a mess everywhere. We wanted to see if we could actually grow in it and sustain it.

It started as that.

R. Walker: Now it's a giant tomato plant.

T. Walker: It produces so much; it produces about 40 tomatoes.

Lynn: You're growing tomatoes while you are traveling across the country.

T. Walker: We are growing hydroponic tomatoes. In fact, I took a cutting of it and gave it to my mom, and she now has part of my 'killer' tomato plant. I say that because it grew so big. It has taken up one of my entire bays. It grew so big that it started killing out the other plants.

R. Walker: We had romaine lettuce and celery.

T. Walker: I was growing six heads of romaine lettuce, and those were continually producing for us. We really enjoyed doing that.

R. Walker: We made a lot of salads with it.

T. Walker: Yes, we had about ten salads that we grew from that, but the lettuce was killed off by the tomato plant. It got so big that it killed those out. We had bell peppers growing, and it killed the bell peppers. It only has little cherry tomatoes on it, but it's given us around 40.

Lynn: Are they in fully-enclosed containers so that when you're travelling there isn't water sloshing all over?

T. Walker: It's in a container that is covered, so it doesn't splash out all over the place. But it does splash a little. I take a big trash bag and put it under the hydroponic pods. When we are going down the road, it will spill a bit, but they don't move much. In fact, they are in the same spot when we get to where we are going.

It's amazing how stable everything is underneath there. When we first got it, I strapped everything down. I was so nervous that everything was going to be sliding back and forth and going all over the place. So, I spent two hours strapping everything down with ratchet straps and all that, and nothing moved.

I did that a couple of times, and then we did it again. My buddy said, "You don't have to strap all of that down. It's going to stay there," and it does. For the most part, it doesn't move much.

Lynn: That is awesome!

You told me something interesting as far as ham radios, internet, and cell phones. I wasn't aware of this with national parks and cell phone usage and that type of thing.

R. Walker: When we were in the Grand Tetons, we had no service at all the entire time. There was a lady walking by our rig, and she asked us about it. We started talking to her, and she received a phone call.

We asked, "How do you have cell service?" and she said, "I'm with AT&T."

So apparently, AT&T had bought all the towers in the national parks.

T. Walker: They have their first responder network, and it's the only network that is inside of the national parks; it's AT&T's towers. As you may know, there are only three companies that have towers inside the United States. AT&T is the only one that has towers inside the national parks – for the most part.

We were recently at Cumberland Island National Seashore, which is a national park, and they have service there because they are so close to the mainland. Dry Tortugas National Park is kind of the same way.

Most national parks are in the middle of nowhere, and the only service is going to be with AT&T.

It's a love/hate thing that we have with AT&T because they give us unlimited data. Because Robin being a nurse, we are on the first responder network. Our data doesn't get clocked; they don't slow us down or kick us off. It stays at a constant speed, and we have true unlimited data.

Outside of that, the only other option for that is Starlink. Starlink is quite expensive, though. It's basically \$150 a month. Then you could do whatever cell service that you wanted to do, or you could use Starlink for wireless calling.

We do have a wireless router on our rig, and it amplifies the signal and boosts it. The signal goes through our RV. It sits on top of the RV and boosts the signal from there.

Lynn: Do you have the small Motorola radios that can transmit up to a mile that you take with you when you're out hiking?

T. Walker: We do; we use ham radios for that. I know that you did a series on those as well. You can use ham radios for up to a mile, and they are very good in the mountains – if your spouse has hers turned on.

Lynn: Robin!

R. Walker: I'm guilty of that!

White: As far as getting supplies, I know that in Montana there are many places because of the parks here. Many of the RV parks have convenience stores and grocery stores and things like that. Is that rather consistent across the country? Do you usually supply up, or are there places that you go?

I know there is a question here about storage facilities. Do you have storage facilities strategically placed across the country where you may leave certain things because you know you're going to be back to get it?

T. Walker: We actually have a storage unit in Florida for our home base, and

then when things ‘hit the fan’, we have places that we will go. We have three or four of those set out. Then we have a group of people who will meet there in those scenarios. That could be anything from a hurricane to another weather situation.

We were in St. Augustine last September when Hurricane Ian hit. We had to decide whether or not we were going to stay or go. Because we have a generator and are fully self-sufficient, we were debating. Our rig will sustain about 100 mile-per-hour winds, and we had 80 mile-per-hour gusts while we were there. We stayed in our RV.

I don’t necessarily recommend you do that.

R. Walker: It made for an exciting night!

T. Walker: It stayed as a stronger hurricane much longer than anybody anticipated. I know you have done some things on weather, too. One of the things that I did in business was bottled hurricanes. I’ve never seen a hurricane that came in that late in the season and stayed that strong over land. There has never been one that has done that before. The temperatures shouldn’t have supported a hurricane being that strong.

Anyway, we decided to stay, and we were fine.

Lynn: With the locations that you have gone to, are they mostly the people that you’ve met along the way on your travels?

T. Walker: There is one that is an actual park in north Georgia that is a self-sufficient park. It’s in the middle of a national forest, has its own water, and it has a farm.

R. Walker: It has 200-foot waterfalls and access to the Appalachian Trail.

T. Walker: It’s a group of people like us. She said, “Bring some patriots with you when you come.” So, that is one of the places that we would go. Another is my cousin’s wife’s farm in South Georgia. We have a couple of other places that are dispersed where we would go in the event that we needed to.

With an RV, you don't really have to have things in various places because you have your things with you.

James, you had asked about supplies. We have with us a 27 cubic foot refrigerator that is bigger than the one we had at our beach house, and we also have a fridge/freezer in our basement. We have a fair amount of dry goods in our basement, just like you would have. So we have supplies.

We stop at the big box stores. We were looking on your site at the resources, and we may do some of that. But wherever we are, we try to frequent the local farmers and the farmers markets.

We were in Idaho, and met a farmer from Oregon. He was from east Oregon, on the border. He was in the part that was looking to merge.

White: Yes, I hope they do.

T. Walker: He is one of those people. We bought some beef from him while we were there. In fact, when we first met him, he had four or five of his children with him. His wife was home, and he sold us some fillets.

R. Walker: He said, "Before I sell it to you, how are you going to cook it?"

T. Walker: He wanted to know how we were going to cook it before he would sell it to us. He said, "If you are going to cook it well done, I'm saving it for somebody else."

Lynn: That's funny!

T. Walker: We try to do things like that wherever we go. As you mentioned, there are resources like that wherever you go. In saying that, we don't go to the big cities; we avoid the big cities largely because of a number of things. Most of the big cities aren't the places that we want to see or where we want to go.

Lynn: And it's also 'cool' with the travels that you are doing across the country to just familiarize yourself. For people who haven't done a great deal of travelling, familiarizing yourself with the roads and with the back-country roads

and the different areas and the people in those areas is important. I know one of the things you said is that even if a person converted their van or something, and it's only one person going solo, they are never going to be lonely because the people you meet are so fantastic.

Tell us a little about the networking and the people. It feels like it's its own kind of community; it's like a travelling community.

T. Walker: It really is.

R. Walker: Yes, we've made a large number of friends all over the country. We had a weird start because we decided to move into our camper and put everything in storage –

T. Walker: Which we'd been planning for months –

R. Walker: It was April 1, 2020. We found a little RV park that was very nice, and it was in St. Augustine. We were both still working. I was commuting to Jacksonville for my job, and he (Thom) was starting to work from home. Then, of course, they shut down the country. So, we were stuck at this little RV park. We made some of the best friends – really amazing friends. These are people who actually inspired us, especially our friends Joe and Sandy, to do the country. They had already done the country four times.

T. Walker: They're the type of friends who will drive across the country and meet you.

R. Walker: They inspired us to do this and go fulltime. And then we've met people on the road. We met several female solos. One converted her minivan. Her ex-husband helped her convert it, and she was going cross country solo with her dog.

T. Walker: She had a kitchen and a bed.

R. Walker: Many female travelers will see us as a couple, and they will park closer to us just because they know we're a couple, and they feel a little safer being close to us.

T. Walker: We've run into that often.

R. Walker: We knew one girl who went through Canada in a tent.

T. Walker: Yes, and she met us several places across the country. She traveled before the whole COVID 'plandemic' thing. So before all of this transpired, she did that. She went throughout Canada and into Mexico. She had a tent, and did it from a Honda Accord.

You can absolutely do it without spending a large amount of money. She is another person who we most recently met while we were in Glacier last summer. She said, "Hey, guys. I'm actually coming through there. I'd like to get together again. Are you going to be able to meet me?"

We said, "Yeah."

R. Walker: We started our Instagram, *Sideways Adventures*, just so our grown children could keep track of us, know where we were, and see what we were doing. They think it's awesome. In fact, our youngest son lives in California. When we were in Idaho, he flew out and hung out with us for the weekend. So they think it's amazing. We went whitewater rafting in Idaho.

There are other seasoned RVers who have groups, and they meet up in the group; they're called 'Escapees'.

T. Walker: Many of those people travel with their children. We met a large number of those. We met a couple in Idaho who were fleeing California. They sold their house, bought a big toy hauler fifth wheel. He was having some issues with his solar, and asked me to help him and track it down. He was brand new to it and didn't know how to use his solar controller.

I helped him figure out how to work his solar controller – because they are all similar – and everybody is willing to help you. We walk around every evening with a cocktail or something. We walk around the park, and when we do, we will run into other travel nurses. There are ten travel nurses in this park where we are now. They are all in RVs.

Lynn: That is one of the questions I had. Of the people you meet, what types of different work do they do, especially the ones travelling with children? They are probably not retired yet. So what type of work are they doing? How are people making a living while doing this fulltime?

T. Walker: Many different ways. We met one couple the day that we got this rig. We traded in our little one and bought this one. We saw this couple from California, and we thought, “Oh, Californians. Okay.”

They had this little Class B Plus. It’s a small van that has a bigger body on it and one slide-out. There were two children, two dogs, and two parents in that little Class B.

They had been there for a little while before we went over. We were out one morning, and they said, “We saw you guys got a new RV. Our daughter really likes them. Do you mind if she takes a look at it?”

We said, “Absolutely not. Bring your daughter over.”

They said, “We started to bring you some wine the other night because she was so excited about your RV, and she wanted to see it.” So they went in. We showed them, and then they told us their story.

The daughter had been in school in Southern California. The day they went back to school, they had them use Plexiglas shields around their desk; they were separated.

R. Walker: They also had to wear masks.

T. Walker: They had to wear a mask and a face shield inside their Plexiglas shields. Then they started talking about critical race theory in the class and why they were racist because they were born white.

That was her first day back at school after all the pandemic issue, and she was like, “This is insane.”

R. Walker: She was only twelve.

T. Walker: She said, “I know that I’m not a racist. I know that my parents aren’t racist.” So that was her first day back.

She packed up her things, left school, and they said, “You don’t have to take your stuff. You are coming back tomorrow.”

She said, “No, I’m not coming back tomorrow.”

Lynn: Good for her!

R. Walker: She told her mom, “You’re going to homeschool me.”

T. Walker: The parents took their other child out of school; their younger son. They sold their house and bought that little Class B RV.

R. Walker: They had their own company.

T. Walker: They had a business selling T-shirts and things. They had a T-shirt company, and hit the road with their business. They started doing their business on the road, and were in Florida because of freedom. That’s why they were on the road homeschooling and doing this.

We’ve met so many people who are like that.

R. Walker: With Instagram, it has helped us to keep in touch with people. We’ve made very good friends.

When we were in South Dakota and I was on my first assignment, we made some great friends from there. I still talk to them and message them – either through Facebook or Instagram.

T. Walker: We learned something from him while we were there. He was a retired trucker. His truck went missing for several days when we were parked next to him. He said, “Hey, if you don’t have a lock on your truck, you need to get one. Some environmentalist poured water down the diesel tank in my truck,” and they basically blew up his engine because he was driving a diesel truck.

Lynn: I wonder how many people travel and then go to farms or look online for local gigs where they can earn some money when they are hopping from location to location.

R. Walker: There is a site called www.workamper.com. It used to be free, but I guess you have to pay to take part in it now.

They have many things listed. Plenty of times there will be a couple who may want to be work campers and work for these places. The husband may be doing grounds keeping and the wife will work in the office or something like that. They have plenty of that type of thing.

We also know another young couple who were full-timers. She was a personal assistant, but she did everything from her RV.

T. Walker: Her husband worked in marketing for a bicycle company.

There are several people here who work for the campground. Sometimes they will get their site at no cost, or they might get paid. It depends on where you are. But there are many different jobs that you can do while you are out.

I was a contractor; my first business was in construction. While I was here, someone asked if I wanted to do construction work, and I said no.

White: Thom and Robin, we are getting towards the end of the podcast. It's great having you on. Can you give us any websites? I know you have a YouTube channel. Can you let people know where to go to find out more about you and maybe follow your travels?

T. Walker: We would love for people to visit us. The best sites for us are Instagram and YouTube. We are at Sideways Adventures on both. That started because the little rig we had, the first site that we were on was for the big rig we had a purchase agreement on but we didn't buy. So, we had this huge site, and this 'little bitty' RV on it. We pulled up, and we were on a marsh site looking out at the marsh.

We said, "We can't see the marsh. Why don't we turn it so the RV is facing the

marsh?”

So we turned the RV sideways. It had a small wheel on the front, so we grabbed the wheel, pulled the trailer around, and turned it sideways facing the marsh. People were coming by and asking, “How did you turn your RV sideways?”

So, they started calling us the ‘sideways couple’ while we were there.

Lynn: And that’s how you got that name?

T. Walker: And that’s how we got the name.

Lynn: Thank you so much for sharing all of this information. Hopefully we will see you on the road one day.

T. Walker: Definitely. Thank you for having us on.

White: If you go to Glacier Park again, come through Montana. Drop me a line, and we will go out and grab a burger or something.

T. Walker: Definitely.

White: Great having you both on here. RVing is a great thing if you want to get a chance to see the countryside and have a little freedom and break the monotony of everyday. We appreciate Thom and Robin Walker being here today, telling us about that.

If you want to follow the *Solution Series*, you can go to CoreysDigs.com or Solari.com. Click on the link there, and you can find all the great guests that we’ve had.

Thank you again, both of you, for being here today. We appreciate it.

T. Walker: Thank you.

R. Walker: Thank you.

White: I also want to thank my cohost, Corey Lynn. As always, it's great to be here with you.

Lynn: It's great to be here.

White: Until next time, this is James White for the *Solution Series* saying goodbye for now.

MODIFICATION

Transcripts are not always verbatim. Modifications are sometimes made to improve clarity, usefulness and readability, while staying true to the original intent.

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