

## The Quiet Corner

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# PUTNAM TRAVELER

Supporting Tourism & Communities in Northeastern, CT & Beyond...

ISSUE NO. 35 • NORTHEASTERN, CONNECTICUT



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## OFF THE ROAD WITH X-TREME MOBILE™ ADVENTURES

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Carl Reidemeister has a passion for marketing. He has taken a longtime dream of his own, married it with a unique advertising platform and offered it as an inexpensive and intriguing way of getting the word out about his sponsors. “It’s as nontraditional as social media was or some of these other advertising online things were 10 years ago,” says Reidemeister.

BY CRIS CADIZ

Reidemeister started Xtreme Mobile Adventures in 2011 after years of enjoying a sport called overlanding, which combines two of America’s favorite pastimes: motorized vehicles and exploring. Xtreme Mobile Adventures (XMA) is—in its most basic sense—a rolling billboard. The billboard happens to be a souped-up 4WD van called a Sportsmobile, which is loaded with equipment that allows its passengers to head into the wild to camp out and explore terrain no regular vehicle could handle. “The whole overland scene, vehicle exploration, is a huge market on the West Coast,” explains Reidemeister. “Since there’s so much public land available for people to drive on, lot of people out west will take either a 4 wheel drive vehicle with a tent or a trailer or they’ll have something like I’ve got. They’ll travel, camp and explore places you might not normally go in a 2-wheel drive vehicle.”

Reidemeister has enjoyed overlanding for years. On a trip to California, he visited

the Fresno-based Sportsmobile West company and fell in love with their high-end, all-terrain recreational vehicles. Since Sportsmobile didn’t have any presence on the East Coast, Reidemeister explored the idea of becoming a representative—blending his 26 years of sales and marketing experience with his love for the sport of off-road vehicle exploration.

The XMA Sportsmobile is an attraction in its own right. This impressive 4WD van can sleep four and is equipped with an electric roof, solar power, a diesel furnace, a refrigerator, an outdoor shower and much more. “I get attention no matter where I go with the van,” says Reidemeister. “What happens is people snap pictures of it, they go on the website, they see it. And if I’m out driving anywhere I often get stopped and people ask me what is it that you do?”

Reidemeister’s plans for his new van didn’t end with representing Sportsmobile. He saw a niche he could fill by attracting overlanding and adventure

sports sponsors to advertise on the sides of the Sportsmobile. In addition, he travels with the van to expos, shows and events along the east coast where he demonstrates the sponsor companies’ products.

“It started with representing the company OEX (Overland Experts) on the East Coast and then I thought why not represent these other companies that could benefit from the van and it kind of just grew from there,” says Reidemeister. “Once I had my first two or three sponsors it mushroomed into a bigger thing. The cost to do what we are talking about is very inexpensive for each sponsor—extremely low when compared to traditional advertising.”

Reidemeister says the best way to describe XMA is as “...an advertising concept broken into passive mobile ad platform and an active component with visits at other locations. The company is competing for normal passive advertising dollars, like magazine ads, or they may be sending people to attend different functions or events. This covers both and allows them to get to events that they may not normally attend.”

The Sportsmobile carries sponsor companies’ products and literature to display and demo. “I have every company’s products unless they are a service, for example, Overland Experts—they are a training company so all I have is information and my knowledge on it. But in the case of Superwinch, for example, the van has a brand new winch. I have an onboard welder by Premier Power Welder, which I just added that is custom built into the rear bumper by another local CT company, All Pro Automotive in Old Lyme. If you are out in the middle of nowhere and you break a leaf spring

or you break a part, I can weld anywhere from 25 feet away. I can run power equipment and power tools like a grinder. They are all the products you would want to use if you were to travel and go overlanding.”

Superwinch, a forty-year-old company based in Dayville, CT, is one of XMA's newest sponsors. They manufacture high performing winches for everything from industrial use to trailers, ATVs and, of course, off road vehicles. Reidemeister's

leads adventure travel expeditions all over the world. “You can join me in Iceland, Mongolia, Bolivia for two or three weeks using a vehicle as a modern camel,” he invites.

Like Elfström, Reidemeister recognizes the value to his sponsors of XMA's cooperative marketing strategy. “You have diverse companies, all with their own agenda, coming together and finding the benefit of each other. We live in a world of everyone being out for themselves...

van and I'd say ‘Hey, what do you think of my wife's condo?’ And just strike up some conversation. If people can touch and feel and learn about something then they can appreciate why they might want it. Usually it's an educational process and that's what you don't get in a passive advertisement.”

Xtreme Mobile Adventures will be at Opsail 2012 at Fort Trumbull on July 7, in York, PA, for a jeep event on July 21st and rallies in Georgia and Vermont this fall. XMA's current sponsors read like a “who's

**“I've known Carl for a long time and I think we were his first sponsor,” says Elfström. “The concept is great; it's tough for small businesses like mine and others to go to every one of these shows and get exposure in places that really might not be worth the capital expenditure for the product you get. So having him go there without having sponsors that we are competitive with ... made perfect sense.”**



Sportsmobile has a Talon 12.5 SR unit on its front bumper, the same winch Superwinch supplies to US armed forces for vehicle recovery. “Superwinch chose to work with XMA because of their no-pressure, no sales-tainted presentation,” explains Product Marketing Manager Jon Mason. “Consumers are bombarded with marketing messages, sales tactics and noise; XMA's approach flies in the opposite direction: a quiet afternoon chat with a man who is passionate about the products on his van. Word of mouth has always been an asset for Superwinch and we believe XMA will further our effort.”

Based in East Haddam, CT, Overland Experts (OEX) is a training company that teaches off-road and four-wheel-drive skills and overland logistics to professional, military and recreational drivers. Overland Experts was founded in 1998 by Bruce Elfström, an explorer and a former biologist, who now trains Navy Seals, Army Rangers and utility companies, among others, how to drive off-road, how to recover vehicles that get stuck, how to fix vehicles that break and how to cross borders without getting shot. Elfström also

large corporations, people with their own issues, problems with economy...yet these sponsor companies are able to ‘leverage’ the relationships between themselves using tools like social media due to the fact they don't compete, but rather benefit from each other. XMA helps bring this together.”

“For anyone who's done a trade show of any kind, they know it's a lot of work,” says Reidemeister. “So for me to charge a sponsor \$50 or \$100 is amazing. It gives them the power of 15-20 sponsors collectively paying a small fee to get that exposure when they wouldn't spend \$2,000 on their own.”

Reidemeister plans to attend a number of events and expos this year with the XMA Sportsmobile. Some are specific to the industry, and others are places to be seen, such as the America's Cup sailboat races in Newport, RI. “I've got true events that I go to where I rent a booth, and then there are visits, where, say, if I go to America's Cup in downtown Newport with the van, 10 to 20,000 people might walk by us. At shows, the vehicle is really the booth. I have all the stuff out on display and available for discussion. So people would walk up to the

who” of great companies and include Connecticut-based Overland Experts, Superwinch, and Ashlawn Farm Coffee, plus MasterPull, Hi-Lift, Cobb, Ditch-Hitch, Sportsmobile, Pull-Pal, Load Tamer, Premier Power Welder, Titan Gun Safe, United Four Wheel Drive Association, Zamp Solar, Star Lights, Amsoil and Maxtrax. XMA is proud to donate a portion of all proceeds to the Wounded Warrior project.

For more information visit [www.XtremeMobileAdventures.com](http://www.XtremeMobileAdventures.com).