

Larry Thomson and Jimmy Diesel

A Great Combo for Diesel Engine Repairs

Maxwell/Gurdjian
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We became acquainted with Larry Thomson while moderating diesel engine seminars at FMCA conventions. When it comes to diesel engines, Ed considers Larry to be one the most knowledgeable people he has ever met. Ed is comfortable working on his own diesel, but when he has a problem, he turns to Thomson. On several occasions, we were extremely fortunate to have had the benefit of Larry's expertise and sound advice. Now that Thomson is working for a repair facility instead of a manufacturer, individual diesel owners have the opportunity to engage his services.

Larry Thomson has been the General Manager of Jimmy Diesel in La-

Grange, Illinois since 1998, but his relationship with buses began much earlier. Thomson was born in Teaneck, NJ, and shortly thereafter, his family moved to Cedar City,



Utah. His father was employed by Utah Parks Company, a company that managed Bryce Canyon, Zion, and Grand Canyon (North Rim) National

Parks. Utah Parks Company was owned by Union Pacific Railroad and when they installed a spur, the elder Thomson was responsible for the bus service that brought visitors from the rail spur to lodging and other concessions in the national parks. This was young Larry's first exposure to buses. While growing up in Utah, he often accompanied his dad and helped with maintenance. From 1955 to 1958, Larry, himself, worked for Utah Parks Company. From 1958 to 1962, Thomson served in the military. Following military service, he began working for White Bus Company in New Jersey as a mechanic. He subsequently became the Supervisor of Maintenance and stayed with that company until 1975 when he joined Penske Power,



Cylinder Head Assembly Area

the Detroit Diesel/Allison distributor for northern New Jersey. From 1983 until 1993, Thomson was employed by the Broward County Transit Authority as their Maintenance Manager. From late 1993 until 1998, he worked for Detroit Diesel as Product Service Manager for Bus and Coach, North America and Canada. During that time, he began participating in educational seminars for a number of organizations including Bus Ride Magazine, American Bus Association, National Motor Coach Association, and Family Motor Coach Association. Thomson was employed by Detroit Diesel until he took his present position with Jimmy Diesel. In addition to Thomson's employment obliga-

tions, he has been involved with the Eastern Bus Maintenance Management Conference for more than 25 years. He served as president and for the last 11 years has fulfilled duties of the Meeting Chairman. With all these years of experience, Thomson accumulated a vast knowledge of diesel engines. His expertise ranges from the Detroit Diesel in-line 471 and 671 to the V

engines and, of course, the Detroit Series 50 and 60. His knowledge base also includes both mechanical and electronic Allison transmissions. We suspect he is understating when he says, "I know a little about Cat and Cummins engines."

Jimmy Diesel has been doing business in LaGrange for 24 years. The company is a dealer for Detroit Diesel, Allison Transmission, Cummins Engine, and Caterpillar. They are also a distributor for Racor filters. Aside from their main building, they have an adjacent warehouse and an

even larger warehouse in Indiana. This means the parts department is very well stocked and rarely needs to special order a part. The company has 53 full-time employees plus part-time help. All work is done "in-house" with 70% being electronic engines and transmissions. The facility is extremely well equipped and includes an engine dynamometer and two transmission dynamometers-one for V drive and one for T drive. 92% of their business comes from tour buses, transit buses, and motorhomes. They also provide service for trucks and firetrucks.



A Small Section of the Parts Department

Jimmy Diesel does all the engine and transmission repairs for the city of Chicago. Their services even extend to the marine market, which includes fire-

boats, police boats, and barge engines.

In spite of being very busy with commercial fleet repairs, Thomson says their doors are always open to the individual motorhome owner. They can handle a minor problem at any time and can schedule a major repair within a day or two. Of course, an

emergency can always be worked in. The facility is open 12 hours per day, from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., Monday through Friday, and Saturday from 6 A.M. until Noon. If someone is coming in on Sunday for a Monday morning appointment, Thomson will have someone at the shop to meet them. Jimmy Diesel

is a Commercial Member of FMCA, whose members get a 10% discount on parts and labor.

For more information about services, contact Jimmy Diesel, 550 So. East Ave, LaGrange, IL, 60525; (708) 482-4500; FAX (708) 482-4511; web site: www.jimmydiesel.com email: jdiesel@flash.net.



A Section of the Transmission Shop



Rebuilt Engine Supply



V Drive Transmission Dynamometer