

At closing

249.97

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Dow Jones  
13,113.38

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Nasdaq  
2,565.70

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NYSE  
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S&P 500  
1,453.55

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2,24

## RVers thread their way to fairground

*Couple will spearhead project to sew clothing for injured soldiers during Escapees event*

By MARILYN ODENDAHL  
Truth Staff

GOSHEN — While reconnecting with old friends, meeting new people and basking in the RV lifestyle, some members of the Escapees RV Club gathered in the Maple City will be threading needles and tailoring garments for wounded soldiers.

The 47th National Escapade, Monday through Friday, will bring an estimated 2,000 RVers from around the country to the Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds. The RV enthusiasts, all members of the Escapees, meet once or twice a year for week-long rallies that include seminars about vehicle maintenance, classes that teach such things as line dancing and wood-carving and nightly entertainment.

The group last visited the fairgrounds in 2004.

Escapade directors Bill and Jeanette Fisher have been full-time RVers since the day after Bill retired from his job as a pharmacist.

"It's amazing when you get out there, the feeling of freedom you have," Jeanette said of living in a recreational vehicle and giving up a lawn to mow, electric bills and alarm clocks. "If you don't get the laundry

### Donations welcome

During the Escapees RV Club's rally in Goshen, community members can donate new clothing to Sew Much Comfort effort. Items most needed are men's cotton or cotton-polyester blend boxer shorts (L, XL and 2XL) and nylon/polyester basketball shorts (M, L and XL). The clothing can be delivered to the box outside the fair office at the Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds Monday through Friday.

For more information about Sew Much Comfort log onto [www.sewmuchcomfort.org](http://www.sewmuchcomfort.org).

done today, you'll get it done tomorrow."

After a while, however, life on the open road can become a little too unstructured, sending some RVers in search of a meaningful activity.

The Escapees organization historically has had a commitment to community service and during its Escapades have held blood drives and collected items for food banks.

For the Goshen Escapade, the project will be Sew Much Comfort, spearheaded by U.S. Air Force veterans Craig and Terilu Christen.

Founded almost three years ago, Sew Much Comfort relies on a contingent of more than 1,000 volunteer seamstresses who rip out the seams of boxer shorts, T-shirts and shorts and insert strips of Velcro so injured soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan can maneuver the clothing around their medical devices or

disabilities and dress themselves.

Volunteers with Sew Much for about a year, the Christens keep three sewing machines and piles of material and clothing to be adapted inside their motorhome. Reaching into a tote bag, the pair pulled out pairs of modified pants that can be worn by soldiers who have external devices attached to their broken legs and T-shirts that come apart at the left shoulder and can be slipped over an IV placed in the soldier's arm.

Although it occupies much of their time, the couple does not consider the detailed, tedious pursuit as work.

"I love to sew," said Terilu, who had a small pair of scissors tied to a string around her neck.

On Monday, the husband and wife team will introduce the Sew Much Comfort organization to their fellow Escapees and setting up the six extra sewing machines they brought for any interested sewing enthusiasts at the fairgrounds.

On Wednesday, they will travel to Indianapolis to meet with physical therapists at the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center and learn what items of adapted clothing the soldiers recuperating there need.

"It's an easy, nonpolitical way to support our troops over there defending our freedom," said retired Col. Craig Christen. "We recognize what it means to military families, what it means when something happens to their loved ones."

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**Modifiers:** Craig and Terilu Christen show a pair of over a brace or cast. The Christens are volunteers for an organization that modifies clothes for wounded. They will introduce their work next week to member Club during a week-long rally at the Elkhart County