

Swing into Springfield

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**West Springfield is the site of Good Sam's 1998 International Samboree, but there is also much to do across the Connecticut River.**

BY LISA MULLENNEAUX

**Q**uick: Where is the birthplace of basketball, the children's author Dr. Seuss and the horseless carriage? Where was the country's first postcard printed and its first armory established in 1794? If you guessed Springfield, Mass., you are one in a million — and you are right. Springfield's fame may not be a household word, but it should be. The commercial hub of western Massachusetts, settled in 1636, is a city of world-class inventors.

Inventions aren't the city's only claim to fame. Across the Connecticut River that divides Springfield from West Springfield, New England's largest state fair, "The Big E," takes place at the Eastern States Exposition. Each September, more than a million visitors enjoy everything from cows to cotton candy at the two-week-long fair. In August, Good Sam Club members will gather there for the 1998 International



**A Storrowton docent dressed in period attire welcomes visitors.**

Members will find examples of New England's rich heritage all around them on the exposition's 175-acre grounds. They can stroll the Avenue of the States and see models of the capitol buildings of six New England states. A

early America is enacted every day by costumed interpreters at Storrowton Village Museum. Timber by timber, the farms, meetinghouses, school, blacksmith shop, mansion and tavern were brought here by Helen Osborn Storrow

England and rebuilt around a village green. Actors impersonating 19th-century villagers bring the past vividly to life.

One of the area's finest restaurants, Storrowton Tavern, is also on the exposition grounds, serving clam chowder, Yankee pot roast, scallops and Boston scrod, as well as non-New England fare. "Tie" the RV up to one of the granite hitching posts linked with iron chains and admire the wood paneling and granite fireplaces that grace this 1789 treasure.

More attractions await in Springfield, with about 155,000 residents, the state's third-largest city. Its location at the junction of two major highways — the Massachusetts Turnpike and Interstate 91 — makes it a commercial, financial and industrial center. (It also makes for some challenging traffic patterns.)

On the eve of the Civil War, Springfield was best known for two items that are somewhat contradictory: its rifles and its pacifier

