

## The Cliffs of Colorado

# Trucking couple discovers love does conquer all

**G**reg and Bonnie Cliff are living proof that where there's a will, there's a way. Their will was to stay together as much as possible. The way they did it is proof-positive that love knows no limits.

Greg Cliff, who has been a trucker since the mid-1970's, said he and his wife, Bonnie, who doesn't drive commercially, "bought our first truck in 1999, leasing on to different companies for about a year before we got our own authority. We named our company G.B.B.A.D. Cliff Trucking LLC. The initials are mine, my wife's, Bonnie, and those of our children, Brittani, Adam and David.

"Bonnie and I planned to spend time together on the road after the children had all left home, but as soon as the last one was out of the house her father, Lloyd Newbanks, was in the last stages of lung cancer, so she stayed with him until we lost him in October of 2005.

"Bonnie was ready to leave home for the road when we found out we were going to be grandparents not once but twice. Bonnie then thought she should stay home to help them out, but after the births of our beautiful granddaughters, Marianne last March and Brya in May, we knew they were in good hands. Bonnie decided that same month to come out on the road with me."

Bonnie told *The Trucker* in February that she had intended to accompany her husband for only a "very short time, but it's been almost a year already. I'm having a ball. I love it."

"By July, Bonnie had figured out that negotiating with brokers is not a fun endeavor," said Greg Cliff. "Bonnie is a numbers person, so she started doing research about different companies to lease on with. After a few months of research, we decided to lease to Mercer Transportation.

"We were very happy that they take care of all of the dirty tasks, or at least the ones we didn't like to do. Most of the owner-operators we visited with had been with the company for years. One gentleman we visited with had been with Mercer for 19 years. We also discovered

that drivers aren't just a number there, either, which is very important to us.

"One evening while watching television in the driver's lounge at a truck stop, a driver walked up behind me and started coughing. Not wanting to catch whatever he had, I asked Bonnie if she was ready to go home. A fellow driver that we had been visiting with asked if we were deadheading home without a load. His words made me think about what we were doing. We had been on the road for approximately eight months and had gone home only for a couple of weeks in all that time and that was for Christmas.

"We were living in cramped quarters so that we could make our house payment, car payment and all of the other payments we have at home," Cliff continued. "We hadn't driven our car in eight months, but were continually making payments on it, plus paying for the insurance. We were even paying for trash removal and weren't even home to generate any trash. We were paying for cable and we weren't even there to turn on the television set. So, we finally decided to put our house on the market and a for-sale sign on our car."

"In February," Cliff said, "we bought a new 2007 Peterbilt with a 132-inch ARI Sleeper from the best and most helpful dealership we could find, Peterbilt of Little Rock.

"As I said earlier, Bonnie is a numbers person and when I first made the comment about buying this truck, Bonnie started figuring. We were spending about \$1,200 a month for food and dining in the truck stops. Shopping at a grocery store, we can eat for under \$300 per month.

"On top of those savings, the added-on auxiliary power unit burns only about one pint of fuel per hour. Compare that to the one gallon of diesel that our old truck burned every hour that we were idling and you can see there's a big savings.

"We are now an efficient unit making fewer stops," said Cliff. "Our new truck being pretty much self-contained has allowed us to eliminate a lot of useless dead-



**PROUD NEW OWNERS:** Greg and Bonnie Cliff, residents of Akron, Ohio, pause beside their beautiful new Peterbilt, which they say has all the features of home on a miniature scale.

head time, fuel and mileage. With all that we're saving, making a larger truck payment isn't as hard as we initially thought it would be. And we are very comfortable in our new surroundings. We're up and running and ready to hit the road."