

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

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Vintage Airstream Club 25th Anniversary at Salem

The **Vintage Airstream Club (VAC)**, the WBCCI Intra-club for those who own or are fascinated by Airstreams 25 years old and older, is planning to celebrate history and maybe make a little history at the upcoming 61st WBCCI International Rally in Salem, Oregon.

First, a little background about the VAC. At the 1992 International Rally, long time WBCCI member Rutherford L. "Bud" Cooper, began talking to owners of older Airstreams about forming a Vintage Airstream Club.



Bud & Betty and their 1948 Airstream

Finding much interest, organizing the club quickly became Bud's full-time job, and the WBCCI International Board of Trustees approved the Vintage Airstream Club as an Intra-Club only a few months later on January 29, 1993. Bud became the acting President of the VAC, sent out the first VAC Newsletter to members on March 29, 1993, and immediately began planning VAC activities for the 1993 WBCCI International Rally in Bismarck, ND. Vintage Parking, a Vintage Airstream Open House, a Vintage Pre-Rally, and a Vintage Caravan to the International Rally were organized. Most of these events quickly became VAC traditions and have been offered nearly every year since. Bud found volunteers to



help take leadership positions within the VAC and organize other VAC sponsored events, but he remained its driving force for many years.

Bud's passion for vintage Airstreams was infectious and he even helped the VAC organize a month-long Vintage Airstream Caravan to Belize in November 2000, with ten of the eleven participating Airstreams being from the 1940s thru the 1970s! Vintage Airstreams are more popular than ever, and we are fortunate that many WBCCI members with a passion for them have taken the reins and helped the VAC grow and prosper for a quarter century.



The VAC is therefore proud to announce its "VACation in Oregon" 25th Anniversary Celebration at the 2018 International Rally in Salem, OR. With over 100 vintage Airstreams expected to be at the rally, it will be the largest such gathering in many years. The VAC will host a large variety of activities at the International Rally and even a few before it starts, so you may be able to partake in some of these on your way to Salem.

The VAC will offer its first numbered caravan since the nationally numbered Wagon Wheel Caravans of 1998, 2000, and 2003. **VAC Caravan U-428-VAC** will begin in Wally Byam's hometown, Baker City, OR on June 13 and end at the VAC Rendezvous in Brooks, OR on June 21, just 8 miles from Salem. Many activities are planned, including a visit to the Wally Byam Exhibit at the Baker Heritage Museum in Baker City, which features many artifacts donated by Wally's cousin and current WBCCI member Dale "Pee Wee" Schwamborn. The Wally Byam exhibit is a recommended stop for anyone coming to Salem from the east, even if you are not part of the VAC Caravan. The VAC Caravan will also make a stop at the Bend Classic Special Event Rally. As of this writing, spots on the VAC Caravan are still available. For more information or to sign up, contact Caravan Leaders Paul Drag at pdrag1933@gmail.com / 949-677-7512 or Dal Smilie at dalsmilie@aol.com / 406-461-3714.

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The **Bend Classic Rally**, June 17-20 in Bend, OR, is a WBCCI Special Event Rally that is being co-hosted by the Oregon Unit and is billed as a VAC 25th Anniversary Rally. The focus of this rally, besides vintage Airstreams, is Bluegrass and “old timey” acoustic music. Bring your instrument if you play.



Playing Music at the Bend Classic

The vintage trailer restoration company **Flytecamp** will host an open house and BBQ as part of the Bend Classic Rally. This rally is open to all WBCCI members, vintage trailer or not. Proceeds from the rally go to a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the **J Bar J Boys Ranch**, where the rally is being held. For more information contact Rally Host Dal Smilie at dalsmilie@aol.com / 406-461-3714.

The **VAC Rendezvous**, June 20-23 in Brooks, OR, is the annual VAC Pre-Rally before the International Rally. The rally is being held at the **Powerland Heritage Park**, specifically behind the Northwest **Vintage Car and Motorcycle Museum**. There will be a large Early Gas Engine and Tractor Association Swap Meet, a total of 14 museums, a working trolley, and several miniature trains at the rally site. For more information contact Dave Morrison at 1vp@vintageairstreamclub.com.

The annual **VAC Vintage Airstream Parade** will tour the Salem Fairgrounds on Saturday, June 23. Among the dozens of vintage Airstreams and Argosys in the parade, expect to see the oldest known factory-produced Airstream, the oldest known Curtis Wright trailer (built when Wally Byam worked for Curtis Wright),

and several trailers that participated in the 1963-64 Around the World Caravan.



2008 VAC Vintage Airstream Parade

The **VAC Vintage Airstream Open House** will occur on Sunday, June 24. This is your chance to see and possibly tour a slew of Airstream, Argosy, and “Airstream related” vintage trailers, most likely including:

- A 1936 Airstream Silver Cloud, a Masonite sided trailer and possibly the oldest existing factory-produced Airstream.



1930s Airstream Silver Cloud

- A 1936 Airstream Clipper, one of the first riveted aluminum Airstreams.



1930s Airstream Clipper

- A 1946 Curtis Wright Model 1, one of two known, designed and built when Wally Byam worked for the Curtis Wright trailer company before he restarted Airstream in 1947.

- A white 1955 26' Airstream that Wally and Stella Byam personally used during the 1956 European Caravan.
- Five Airstreams that participated in the 1963-64 Around the World Caravan.
- A collection of 1968 Airstreams for their 50th birthday.

As part of the Open House, the VAC will hold its annual **Concours De Elegance** judging for trailers and motorhomes 25 years old and older.

The VAC is also hosting several events that are open to all WBCCI members to celebrate the 55th anniversary of the start of the **1963-64 Around the World Caravan (ATWC)**.



ATWC Parked Amid Roman Ruins

The five Airstreams that participated in the ATWC will be the largest such gathering in decades. We also expect to have at least two ATWC participants at the rally, including one of the ATWC scouts. Planned ATWC activities include a showing of the ATWC movie, two ATWC related seminars, an ATWC slide show narrated by ATWC participants, and possibly a Round Table/Q&A with ATWC participants and/or current ATWC trailer owners.

The VAC will also host a variety of other seminars during the rally that are open to all WBCCI members, including Restoration of a 1936 Airstream Silver Cloud, absorption refrigerators, engine monitoring apps for your phone, vintage trailer values, food and wine pairing, and wine and cheese tasting. Also open to all WBCCI members will be the VAC Happy Hour each afternoon and the VAC Movie Night each evening that will feature a selection of early caravan films and/or movies featuring Airstreams.

The VAC hopes to see you in Salem!