



HISTORICALLY SPEAKING



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The Canadian International Rallies

Airstream and WBCCI have had a long relationship with Canada. The 4th caravan led by Wally Byam visited Western Canada in the summer of 1954. WBCCI was founded on August 3, 1955 in Kent, Nova Scotia during the 1955 Eastern Canada Caravan. WBCCI includes all the Provinces of Canada within its 12 regions. The first Canadian Units were established in 1962 and WBCCI currently has 4 Canadian Units: Alberta Saskatchewan Unit 120, British Columbia Airstream Club 121, Ontario Canada Unit 124, and Quebec Canada Unit 125. Two other long standing Canadian Units disbanded in recent years: the Manitoba Unit 123 in 2009 and the Canadian Atlantic Unit 122 in 2013. Several special event rallies have been held in Canada over the years and WBCCI's biggest annual event, its International Rally, has been held in Canada twice, both times in Brandon, Manitoba - first in 1975 and then again in 1994. Let's talk about each of these special International Rallies.

The WBCCI 18th International Rally, held June 25 – July 4, 1975 at the Keystone Centre in Brandon, was a popular one, the largest one to that date and the 2nd largest ever with 4209 Airstreams and about 12,000 persons attending. The rally fee was only \$35 (in U.S. dollars) for an Airstream and two adults. It was reported that about 3000 trailers arrived on the first day of parking and the lineup of Airstreams waiting to enter the rally site stretched for over 4 miles!



1975 International Rally - Brandon, Manitoba

The rally was themed "Festival Canada" and was organized by WBCCI's first Canadian International President, Bruce MacLean and wife Wilma, who hailed from Toronto, Ontario. Bruce was a founding member of the Ontario Unit and the self-proclaimed "Chief of the WBCCI Clan". His rally had a distinctly Scottish flavor with the opening ceremony featuring a



4 Mile Lineup Goes to the Top of the Photo!

precision Bagpipe Marching Band. Bagpipers even provided morning serenades as "wake-up" music for the caravanners throughout the rally. Brandon hosted a Highland Scottish Festival during the rally and a group of Scottish families attended the International Rally as part of the Caravan America program sponsored by the Wally Byam Foundation. President Bruce even donned a Scottish kilt for some official photos. Bruce was our oldest living International President to date

when he passed away on January 12, 2018 at the age of 107!

Entertainment at the Rally also included the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on horseback, which required the indoor arena floor to be covered with 6 to 8 inches of dirt for their performance, as well as Native American and Ukrainian dancers.



Wilma & Bruce
MacLean

During the Rally, the WBCCI, jointly with the City of Brandon, presented the "Hands of Peace" sculpture to the International Peace Garden which was created in 1932 on the border between Manitoba, Canada and North Dakota, USA.

(Note: Due to decades of deterioration, the aluminum "Hands of Peace" sculpture was formally replaced on July 24, 2016 by a new stainless steel "Promise of Peace" sculpture that was also partially funded by WBCCI.)



Hands of Peace (1975)



Promise of Peace (2016)

The WBCCI 37th International Rally, held June 30 – July 7, 1994 again at the Keystone Centre in Brandon, was also very popular with 2263 Airstreams attending, a number only exceeded once since 1994. The cost was \$110 (in U.S. dollars) for an Airstream and two adults. It was organized by WBCCI's second Canadian International President Dr. Lawrie Stephen, and wife Betty. The Stephens called Dauphin, Manitoba home and were members of the Manitoba Unit. The 1994 rally theme was again "Festival Canada" with a Scottish flair as evidenced by the rally slogan "Will Ye No

Come Back Again?", which was taken from an old Scottish song, and the official rally colors of "Red, White, & Plaid". Both former International President Bruce MacLean and current International President Lawrie Stephen were seen sporting kilts during the opening ceremony.



Betty & Lawrie Stephen

Entertainment included the Manitoba Pipes and Drum band, the Canadian Armed Forces "Snowbirds" Aerobatic Team and "Skyhawks" Parachute Team, the Zirka Ukrainian Dancers, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.



Attendees were quick to compliment the friendliness of their Canadian hosts and those that had also been to the 1975 Rally commented on how much the city of Brandon had grown in 19 years.

It's now been 24 years since the last Canadian International Rally. Would you like to see another International Rally in Canada? If so, where would you suggest?

Historical Committee Needs Help

Request #1: The WBCCI Historical Committee is looking for material donations to fill in gaps in our caravan history. While we have not completed sorting and organizing all the materials in our archives, we are far enough along to recognize that we are missing rosters and itineraries for many Airstream Company Caravans from the late 1950s into the early 1970s. We would love to fill in the gaps if any long-time members have any such materials to donate to the archives. There are small gaps in later years as well in case you have some of those materials. We are not as far along in cataloging WBCCI National Caravans, but will likely find gaps there too, should you have any of that material to donate. Thanks in advance!

Request #2: The WBCCI Historical Committee needs help gathering recent (especially for the last 5 years or so) and ongoing materials relating to the annual International Rally and other club events to add to the Club Archives. This will involve gathering both paper and electronic materials, so the ability to search Facebook and other websites for recent event-related digital photos and newspaper articles is an essential skill. In return, you will receive full credit as a member of the Historical Committee, many personal thank you's, and a warm fuzzy feeling that comes from giving a little of your time back to the club that provides you so many opportunities to enjoy your Airstream. The committee looks forward to hearing from all members who are interested in helping.

