



THE GOLD AND SILVER

February 25, 2019

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2019 R12 Membership



President's Message

The year has started on a great note with a very successful Rose Parade event hosted by Region 12 in Pasadena. Thank you to the Cecelia & Bob Stansbury and Hedda & Tom Smithson for hosting this annual event enjoyed by 60 Airstreamers. Registration for this year's event is already underway on our Region 12 website!

Next up, the Mid-Winter IBT in Robertsdale, Alabama which, despite the rains, was well attended by members from across the States and Canada. For clubs interested in a name change utilizing 'Airstream Club', and thereby making them easier to find online by new Airstream owners, the process has now been streamlined and can be approved throughout the year rather than just at IBT meetings twice a year.

Congratulations to the Sacramento Valley Airstream Club (formerly Golden West Unit) on your name and logo change which was approved at the Mid-Winter IBT.

Registration has opened for the 2020 Mid-Winter IBT to be held in Las Vegas in January. This is exciting for Region 12 as it's been almost a decade since this event has taken place in our Region.

We'll see you in Doswell!

Warm regards,

Jim Polk

With Cecelia & Bob Stansbury and Hedda & Tom Smithson at the helm, Region 12 hosted another exciting Rose Parade Rally with 30 Airstreams in attendance.

If you are interested in participating in this unique urban event just a few short blocks from the parade, registration has begun! Go to www.Region12.wbcci.net for more information on the 131st Rose Parade
December 28, 2019 - January 1, 2020



Thank you to Hedda Smithson (NorCal) and Bruce Morrow (GLAAC) for sharing your photos!

I am happy to provide an update on what I would call an epic Mid-Winter International Board of Trustees (IBT) meeting in Robertsdale, Alabama. Aside from the horrible sections of I-10 in Louisiana and crazy downpours while at the rally, there was definitely a sense of being part of something monumental for the leadership team as well as rally attendees.

With the support and authorization of the Executive Committee, a core team consisting of Lori Plummer, WBCCI Corporate Manager; Eric McHenry, Region 12 2nd VP and candidate for International 3rd VP; Marc Najdim, full-timer and web developer, and myself, have worked tirelessly to develop a strategy for a new website and database. It's been incredible to be part of a passionate, committed team with a diverse set of skills, all of which blend perfectly and cohesively. Additionally, the team would be remiss if we didn't thank Tom Smithson for all that he's done to vision the "What if?"

With a commitment to transparency and inclusion, presentations were made, meetings were scheduled, and steering committees formed, all of which culminated in the unanimous approval by the IBT for funding the development of a new website. We also conducted a Brand Workshop with a 15-member team composed of the Executive Committee, two Region Presidents and a diverse cross-section of our membership, which will lead to the development of a consistent voice for our Club. It was energizing to see everyone working together, hearing the discussions during the workshops and sharing their diverse experiences while members of this incredible Club.

Not ones to let grass grow beneath our feet (or tires) Eric, Marc, Lori and I have been working closely with the team at GoUpward <https://www.goupward.com>. Principals with this highly regarded firm worked extensively with Airstream, Inc. to establish the Brand Expression and Brand Identity for Airstream as well as their entire product line, and have now begun working with Thor. Eric and Marc can attest to the depth of their technical team and, based on the summary report from our Workshop, they're good...very, very good and they 'get' us.

Eric is serving as Project Manager with Marc on the website development, while working on a parallel path defining the database architecture. Lori and I will continue to steward the brand body of work.

I'm still a bit in shock as I float around on Cloud 9. As a founding member of a small, passionate group called *Moving WBCCI Forward*, I never thought I would see these improvements embraced so passionately by our members. Magical things are happening.

Mona Heath

International 1st Vice President

Wally Byam Airstream Club

All Aboard to Alabama!

Rather than tow the 2,400 miles to the mid-winter IBT in Robertsedale, Alabama, Ken and I decided to take an Amtrak Train and had a great adventure along the way.

Leaving our home in northern California we embarked on the first step, a 14-hour trip to Los Angeles. While Ken stayed at check-in with our luggage, I headed forward to the Dome car and a table with a view. This car affords the best opportunity to experience the landscape with its panoramic views and an ideal place to play cards along the way. We found the most beautiful landscape from the bluffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean, and with the winter's early sunset, twinkling lights could be found in the various towns we passed through. We arrived at LA's Union Station right on time which doesn't happen often on a train, largely in part due to freight trains which have priority over passenger trains.

We found Union Station gorgeous with beautiful lights hanging from the fabulous ceilings. Each corridor that makes up the station was different in design and the overall effect was breathtaking.



LA's Union Station

In LA we booked a room near the train station and enjoyed a leisurely breakfast the next day before returning to Union Station's VIP Lounge where we checked our baggage through to New Orleans. With such a rainy day we took in a movie at a theater near Staples Center and toured the area.

Judy & Ken Bechthold, Sacramento Valley Airstream Club



Judy & Ken

At 10:00 p.m. we boarded the Sunset Limited to New Orleans and were shown to our roomette, a private seating area with two large seats facing each other. The sliding entry door, with a privacy curtain, had glass so you could watch people go by. The room contained a small closet for our coats and two steps to the upper berth which was closed at the time.

Upon returning to our room later that evening, the steward had arranged our beds for the night. Taking the top berth I found was easy to get into, however, I had to twist around to my pillow at the top of the bed which was not an easy feat with such a low ceiling, not large enough to sit up in. With a leather strap hooked to the ceiling to keep me from rolling out of bed, I slept like a log. Amtrak rooms have a small bath, similar to our Airstreams, but our roomette did not. However, we were very close to the restrooms and showers which were clean and neat, towels provided.

The next two days were spent reading, playing cards, eating delicious meals in the dining car and watching the scenery go by, how relaxing!

The dining car, with its shared tables, gives one a great opportunity to meet fellow travelers. One meal was shared with a retired policeman from Chicago who 'travels the rails' a lot. Another meal was with a biker dude and his wife and yet another breakfast companion was a young man in his 30s who shared tales of the places he has toured around the world.

All Aboard to Alabama!

Judy & Ken Bechthold, Sacramento Valley Airstream Club

Probably our most interesting dinner companions were a family of 10 we met as we pulled out of Houston. The two fathers sat with us, the younger one an educator in a Houston charter school, the other, an emergency room doctor. The family included five children age 7 to 10; two moms and a grand mom, all traveling to New Orleans.



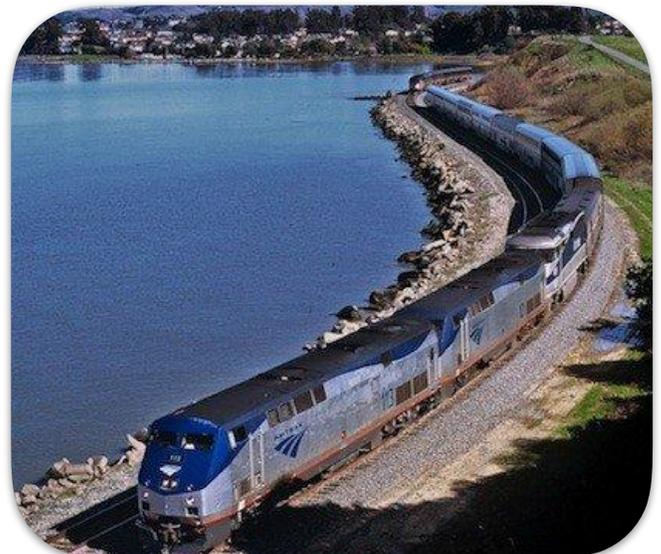
An interesting experience occurred while in Deming, New Mexico where our train, while not at a station, was stopped for some time. We found out later that one of the cars was boarded by law enforcement officers and a dog when it was determined a passenger was traveling with illegal drugs. They were removed from the train and we proceeded to New Orleans. In all our train travel we had never experienced this and

have always found fellow passengers to be very nice and easy going.

Our final destination of New Orleans, originally scheduled for 9:40 p.m. was met at 11:00 p.m. on Friday. We enjoyed two nights in New Orleans where we toured the French Quarter on Saturday. Sunday was spent watching the NFL playoff game with New Orleans buzzing with excitement about the Saints.

Later in the afternoon we headed to the airport where we met up with Bob and Cecelia Stansbury and made our final journey together to an Air BnB in Loxley, eight miles from the Mid-Winter IBT in Robertsedale, Alabama.

We recommend train travel to everyone with such an easy pace. In the next year or two we would like to make the Amtrak trip to Chicago!



National Park Bucket List, check!

Jo Salzer, Las Vegas Airstream Club

(Article used with permission and first appeared in GLAAC's Urban Update, Jan/Feb 2019)

Well, we did it! We finally made it to all 60 National Parks. It's been decades in the doing, but we picked up speed when we bought our first Airstream in 2014. The Airstream gave focus to our wanderings as this was a new lifestyle for us. The first thing we did was research how many actual NP's there really are as the National Park Service now manages over 418 entities. Besides the National Parks, 88 are National Monuments, 19 are Preserves and 129 are National Historic Sites or Parks and so on. Our goal was just the National Parks. The Michael Joseph Oswald Guide to National Parks became

We spent many years as sailors and were able to explore several parks by water. Most memorable were the three days inside Glacier Bay, where there is a nail-biting lottery for private boat admittance. We spent a week in Northeast Harbor in Acadia NP in Maine, where we were weathered in for a few days due to Hurricane Dan back in 2009. We never imagined we'd have hurricane trouble in Maine. St. John Virgin Islands or maybe Biscayne Bay or Key West's Dry Tortugas but not Maine. And for years our own Channel Islands National Park was our boating playground. With those accomplished along with a trip to American Samoa's Pago Pago, a newly established National Park in the late 80's (it wasn't officially recognized by Samoa until 1993 when the NPS was able to lease the land for 50 years) we thought we had the hard parts done. However, there were still almost 30 parks we'd not visited and at least a dozen more that warranted a closer, second look.



Wandering Star, Glacier Bay National Park

Our summers, of late, have been spent crisscrossing the country and tying together visiting family and friends with visits to National Parks. Some were right along the way, but others took us off the beaten path, and some are not even accessible by road.

Voyageurs in northern Michigan and Isle Royale in northern Minnesota are best explored by boat or kayaks. In both cases, we camped as close as possible and went to visit by boat.



Ade & Jo

We never try to camp IN the park's boundaries except during off season. We are not skilled at securing coveted reserved sites six months in advance, nor carefree enough to try to grab a spot on the morning of our arrival. Our formula was finding camps adjacent to the parks where we can secure a reservation.

We're often asked which park is our favorite. Our answer is we like them all – well, except maybe Guadalupe Mountains. We have come to appreciate how each park was established and the exceptional people that were responsible for making it happen. The politicians only get involved long after the often-times heroic vision, passion, and endurance of one person or a small group of ordinary people decide that this place is special, they must protect it for the generations to come.

Alaska is extra special. We've done its eight parks in three visits. First on our boat. Next, we rented a Class C and explored Denali and a bit of Wrangell-St. Elias and Kenai Fjords. And finally, this summer we flew bush planes to visit the Final Four – those you can't reach by road or boat.

Our first stop took us north to tiny Beetles, Alaska, 35-miles above the Arctic Circle. From here we flew into both Kobuk Valley NP and Gates of the Arctic NP. We stayed at the Beetles Lodge, the only accommodations, bar and restaurant in this region with a tiny air strip and just steps from the National Park Visitors Center.

National Park Bucket List, check!

Jo Salzer, Las Vegas Airstream Club

It was here that we first encountered “Park Collectors,” individual travelers who are also on a quest to “Collect” all the parks. We proudly stated that we were here to get #56 - #59. Then someone said, ‘But there are 60 now.’ What? Nooo! It was then we learned that the St. Louis Arch area had been re-designated a national park in July, just days before this trip. Ah, but then we were assured that since we’d visited the Arch and Memorial a few times, we could still count it as done. Phew. So, we added Gateway Arch National Park to our done list and we were still counting down the Final Four.

No roads enter Gates of the Arctic NP. Most visitors need to take a bush plane to visit the park. Some get dropped off and then backpack and paddle out miles of this pristine wilderness. We took the 4-seat bush plane option into the park’s Brooks Range. It was magnificent flying over the endless oxbow rivers and through the towering, snowcapped craggy mountains. There are no landing strips allowed in the park, so our mid-summer visit made it difficult for our pilot to find a place to land. Continuous snow melt changes the water levels of the rivers hourly making a dry landing difficult. After some searching, we able to put down on a newly exposed rocky beach so we could explore some of the area on foot. It is the quiet that is most remarkable. All we could discern was the movement of the water and the slight rustle of the leaves. We saw no one.



Kobuk Dunes Lunch

Kobuk Valley NP is not far from Gates of the Arctic, but the topography is vastly different. This arctic wilderness is flat and barren. The tundra is soggy as the permafrost prevents drainage. It is also home to the Great Kobuk Sand Dune. There are no roads, trails or facilities in the park and again the best way to see it is by bush plane. Experienced backpackers and paddlers can work with an outfitter if they want to create a multi-day exploration. We flew in and landed on a pristine sand dune and set up a picnic lunch under the wings. Again, total silence. No footprints, not a soul around. We were too early in the year to be able to catch a glimpse of migrating caribou.

We revisited Wrangell-St. Elias, this time taking the teeth rattling McCarthy Road into Kennecott Mill and Inn. The Root Glacier is easily explored from the historic Inn. We also returned to Kenai Fjords just to hang out in a tiny cabin on the shores of Resurrection Bay. We’d arranged a private boat to take us out to the little coves and bays, however the weather did not cooperate. Looks like we will have to go back again for a deeper explore. Not a bad thing.

Our 59th park was Katmai on the Alaskan Peninsula. We really wanted to get up close to the Grizzly Bears at Brooks Camp, which is also home to the NPS center, and so was our best option. Again, this park is only accessible by plane or boat. We took a seaplane in and were delighted to immediately see bears frolicking in nearby Naknek Lake. There are no fences, so the mandatory first stop for everyone is the National Park HQ where we underwent a hour-long training on how to handle the inevitable bear encounters. There are viewing platforms so you can observe, out of harms way, literally dozens of bears at a time in the lake or along the Brooks River as



Gates of the Arctic National Park

they are fishing for spawning salmon in the falls. The bears, usually two or three together, would roam throughout our scattered sleeping cabins to eat the grass, scratch their backs on the trees and wrestle with each other. What a show!



Near Brooks Falls, Katmai National Park

Our most elusive and final national park was beautiful Lake Clark on the Alaskan Peninsula where the Aleutian Mountain range meets up with the Alaska Range. It is only accessible by air and there are many bad weather days when flights are grounded. The miserable weather cancelled our planned float plane excursion, but we didn't give up. We scrambled and were able to find a

6-passenger scheduled all weather flight through the mountain passes and into Port Alsworth, site of the NPS office. It was the most frightening flight of our lives. There was much comforting hand squeezing as we watched the pilot use his radar screen, with bright red mountain warning indicators on both sides, as he carefully navigated us through miles of narrow canyons as we bumped and gyrated through the storm.

Finally breaking out of those clouds and seeing the 32-mile milky azure lake was a "Hallelujah" moment for us. It turned out to be a magical day. Our arrival was on Sunday morning and we soon realized that every local native Alaskan and visitor alike were making their way to their outdoor chapel. Soon we were all part of a celebratory joyful service featuring a remarkable missionary family from Iraq.

Afterwards, we were able to have a picnic, hike the trails, stroll along the lakeshore, and have a long visit with the very lonely NP ranger who said he gets less than 200 non-native visitors a summer. To cap it off we were asked to grab a U.S. flag and join the locals on the landing strip to say, "Welcome home" to wounded veterans and their spouses arriving for a week-long retreat to help them rebuild their shattered lives.

We will be forever grateful for this opportunity to say Thank You to these brave soldiers. It somehow seemed a fitting end to our quest to experience this country's greatest treasure, our National Parks.



Jo & Ade at their 60th, and final, National Park



Membership Don Williams, Chairperson

Our members, unit and region officers have celebrated two successes in less than five years. While not consecutive, Region 12 membership growth took top honors twice, the most recent announced at last year's International Rally in Salem, Oregon.

Upcoming R12 Events

July 20-27, 2019

62nd International Rally

Doswell, Virginia

October 9-14, 2019

Region 12 Rally, Bakersfield

Dec 28, 2019 - January 1, 2020

Rose Parade, Pasadena

April 16-19, 2020

Cali Rally, V6 Ranch, Parkfield

June 20-27, 2020

63rd International Rally

Loveland, CO

Maybe its Region 12's mild winters giving us an almost year round camping season that helps us attract friends and families into the WBAC. More likely it is the character of our clubs, the camaraderie and friendship that we offer to our members.

Early last year I challenged all to help us to grow to 800 members in Region 12. It's too early to tell if we will take the award at Doswell but we're on track to welcome our 750th WBAC member to Region 12 in 2019. Pat yourself on the back and then shake the hand of the current and new members in your club; welcome them to the next luncheon or rally to enjoy our Airstream lifestyle.

We'll look for you in Doswell!

<https://doswell.wbcci.net>

