

# The Peach State Caravanner

Volume 59 / Issue 6 / November 2020



*Pandemic + Sister Rallies + Great PR = Full Park*

## ***President's Letter***



**F**irst and foremost, I would like to thank the members for putting their faith in me by electing me to serve in this position. I hope to fulfill at least some of your expectations.

I want to thank all the members and visitors who visited the park over the past months since this pandemic was declared.

**Favorite Mottos:** Keep it simple - Rome wasn't built in a day - I may have been born at night but not last night!

### **Goals:**

1. Keep it simple.
2. Stay calm and carry on.
3. Improve section E to be more aesthetically pleasing, easier to maintain and compliant with park rules. All this to make its occupants happy.
4. To continue and improve our public relations campaign. (Web page, Facebook page and mail outs)
5. To successfully achieve camaraderie between board and all members for the betterment of the park.

We both look forward to seeing you all!



**President, Murphy Harrell and  
First Lady, Cindy Harrell**

## ***Loving Concerns***

**First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for every one, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 1 Timothy 2: 1-2**

### **Ian Hampton**

*"I am suffering from a form of leukemia known as MDS. I have been treated with chemotherapy shots all summer but unfortunately the doctors have determined that the only cure is for me to have a bone marrow transplant. The week of this diagnosis my son Ross unexpectedly passed away from complications of sleep apnea. He and I were very close. To complicate matters further I am having a hip replacement on October 14th. Still recover and be back at the Top of Ga. next summer. I am grateful for everyone's well wishes and prayers. Ian"*

Ian really needs our care, prayers and support during this time. His mailing address is: Ian Hampton, 323 Signa Lane, Melbourne, FL 32934 email: [ianh7777.ih@gmail.com](mailto:ianh7777.ih@gmail.com)

**Norma Mantz's** surgery went well. It's so hard for anyone who has faced the cancer diagnosis to stay positive and hopeful. This is a time they need lots of encouragement, love and prayers. Always be an encourager who tells of those who have overcome cancer. Norma's address is: Norma Mantz, 527 Midline PL, Melbourne, FL 32934 email: [silverbullet1710@msn.com](mailto:silverbullet1710@msn.com)

### **Lynne Clements** - heart surgery

*"Oct. 6 2020*

*Lynne had surgery this morning that lasted 4 hours. They replaced her mitral valve and did an ablation. Her breathing tube has just been removed and all her vitals are fine. I will see her tomorrow at 10 am and she will be in the hospital for 4 or 5 days. Thanks for all the prayers and good wishes. Julian"*

We are thankful for the medical knowledge and skill that makes things like this possible for people to live a long and normal life. Keep them in your prayers as she recovers.

members. Today Lynne Clements sent the below message for me to forward on to you.

We are so happy that Lynne is doing well following her surgery.

Oct. 12

*"Dear friends,*

*I had my successful mitral valve replacement on October 6th and came home on Friday October 9th. Amazing how fast they try to get you out of the hospital with this Covid-19 everywhere! I'm feeling better every day and Julian is taking very good care of me. Thank you for all your prayers and positive thoughts. Prayer is very powerful. I agree with Myrna that we must pray for each other. We are keeping Myrna in our prayers as she continues to have successful treatments for her cancer. "*

*Lynne Clements*

**Mary and Al Holcomb** need our prayers and support during this time. Mary has been diagnosed with cancer and Al is having a cancerous spot on his face removed. Mary will have surgery on Nov. 23. Treatment will be determined once the biopsies are complete. As many of you know, these two have been Top of Georgia warriors from the early beginnings of the club! They have devoted more time and energy than any other couple I know in the club. Let's send them cards and messages of encouragement and love. **Clara**

From Myrna:

Since the beginning of time and the writing of the New Testament, it has been important to have faith with hope and to pray to God. We believe that there is power in prayer! Our prayers sometimes are for healing and sometimes for strength to endure problems as well as dealing with death. Prayers have been prayed for members and their families, as well as cards sent from the club and individuals. May we continue to remember those who need our support and encouragement.

## Membership



Hello TOG Members!

I am Jaime Collins, Membership Chair for Top of Georgia. I hope this email finds you all well!

Just a quick update for what to expect for your WBCCI & TOG membership renewal for 2021! It is that time again, and we hope to have all of you back as members again next year!

### HOW TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP

First, many of you long time members may recall that renewals are typically done with triplicate, carbon copy renewal forms, but for 2021, WBCCI has decided to go paperless with online and phone renewals going forward. The renewal form is short and easy, and you can add your TOG membership at the same time! You can renew online at <https://airstreamclub.org/current-members/membership-renewal> or by calling WBCCI directly at 937-596-5211. Questions about your WBCCI Membership can also be emailed to [membership@airstreamclub.org](mailto:membership@airstreamclub.org).

If you are a WBCCI member and a member at another park, but would like to be an affiliate member with TOG, you can renew AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP ONLY at <https://topofgeorgia.airstreamclub.net/wbccigeorgia-unit-application/>. Once you submit your form, I will contact you for payment information.

### DUES FOR MEMBERSHIP, 2021

WBCCI has raised their annual membership dues to \$75/year beginning in 2021. Top of Georgia Membership dues will remain at \$15/year. Total dues for 2021 for both parks would be \$90/year.

### DEADLINE FOR RENEWAL

While there is no official deadline to renew for 2021, if you want to be included in the Blue Beret (WBCCI Membership Directory) and the Top of Georgia Membership Directory, you will need to register by December 31, 2020.

### TOG MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Currently, we hold 328 regular members, 8 affiliate members, and 4 honorary members for 2020. We are ever growing, and already have many renewals and new members for 2021!

Top of Georgia is one of the largest (if not largest) Airstream Clubs in the country and I believe that is due to the amazing property and location that we have, but more importantly, because of the dedicated and welcoming members that make up the TOG family!

### MEMBERSHIP PERKS AND BENEFITS

If you have ever visited TOG, you know that it is a place of infinite beauty. With the rolling mountain tops, rushing creek and sea of Airstreams, it is quite a sight to behold. The location is perfect for access to Helen & Hiawassee, which offer great restaurants, bars and shopping. If mountain drives, biking, hiking or fishing is more your speed, we are surrounded by waterfalls, mountain trails and amazing winding mountain roads. If you want to grab a spot in our beautiful park and spend your time sightseeing North Georgia, you have found your place! But, if you are looking for a place to plug into a community of like-minded people, TOG is the place for you too! Many of our members may not know this about our park, but Top of Georgia is operated by volunteer members. This means that we all have a voice in how our park works, looks and is utilized. There are so many ways that members can get involved, depending on how much time and energy you want to commit. Members can participate on committees, volunteer for long term projects, ground maintenance and clean up, or by simply voting in our elections. Everyone is welcome and there is always a need in the park, so feel free to ask the campground host how you can help! You never know...you may be EXACTLY the person we have been waiting for!

We can't wait to see you at the TOP!

Thanks, and please let me know if you need anything additional!

Jaime Collins

TOG Membership

404-433-7268

[togairstream@gmail.com](mailto:togairstream@gmail.com)

## Summary of Board Actions -2019-2020

Your Board Members discussed a variety of topics during the past year, some that may require Rule or By-Law changes. The majority of the discussions concerned the Park and not the Club.

2020 has been a great year at the TOP in terms of financial gain from a higher occupancy rate. The Public Relations Committee has been busy promoting the park through social media and postcard mailings and people are checking us out! COVID has contributed to this increased interest, due to many campgrounds closing and campers looking for other places to stay.

Topics and accomplishments:

1. BUDGET - We approved a budget for the park so the entire board did not need lengthy discussions for projects of a few hundred dollars. Our Property Management team managed their budget well and only a few projects required our discussion and vote. The Property Management Team shared with membership all the projects that had been accomplished over the year.
2. ACTION ITEM LIST - An Action Item List is developed by the Property Management Team, listing current and future projects with estimated completion dates and cost of the project.
3. ACCESS To DOCUMENTS – An Internet Cloud location was created to house all of our documents, including minutes of board and business meetings, financial reports, membership handbook, rules, by-laws, hosting, Caravanner, Public Relations Committee and others. Presently, this resource is only accessible to Board Members and Committee Chairs. A method for allowing all members “read only” access is underway, so you can peruse the documents without the risk of changing or deleting the documents!
4. TRANSPARENT BOARD MEETINGS at the TOP! Unfortunately, we had only two Board

Meetings at the TOP this year. Previous meetings were via Zoom or a conference call program. During the “live” board meetings at the TOP, everyone interested was invited to attend the Board Meetings held in the Pavilion and were frequently invited to participate in the discussions.

5. PARK RULE VIOLATIONS - The toughest discussions concerned trailers/owners that did not comply with the park rules. These rules require that trailers must be roadworthy, licensed, insured, good tires and neat appearance. The rules apply to everyone, including long term parking and widow/widowers row.

PARK QUESTIONS discussed

- a. Do we allow dangerous breed dogs into the park
- b. Should we ask the park cat, “Wally” to be adopted?
- c. Should we contract a company to mow the park?
- d. Should we install a better sign for people driving South on Hwy 75?
- e. Should we have a second pickup of trash during rally weekends at over \$300 for the one pickup?
- f. Should we open the bathrooms for the last rallies of the year?
- g. How do we handle meal preparations for rallies without a volunteer for the Kitchen Manager’s position?
- h. Do we need a new laptop for the Board?
- i. How do we manage sites for winter visitors and others that want to park their trailer at the TOP over the winter? Can we use the center section of the lower level for this purpose without any water hookups?
- j. Campers liability - Some are not aware of the liability of ALL campers at the TOP = **park at your own risk**. The park is not responsible for any damages to your trailer, or tow vehicle. This disclaimer is common in most campgrounds.

6. **IMPROVED CHECK-IN PROCEDURE** – No changes are planned for the near future, but an electronic solution would provide a better alternative.

BENEFITS of improved check-in procedures:

- a. Database would allow immediate tracking of number of trailers in the park. Presently, the host must count the paper registrations or consult an updated parking map.
- b. Historical data could track park usage to predict rally attendance and serve as a tool for financial and project planning.
- c. Distinctions between temporary campers and long term campers can be determined, thereby distinguishing “pay upon departure” guests and monthly paying guests.

7. **LAUNDRY** – At the October meeting, the majority of board members passed the motion to construct a laundry facility with two washers and two dryers. This will be a cabin type building delivered and installed on a foundation and located outside the pavilion in the grassy area in front of the archive room. Many of the non-board members in attendance were in favor of this decision.

8. **SISTER CLUB RALLIES AT THE TOP** – After months of inviting other clubs to utilize our park, the Argosy and Palmetto Cove held rallies at the TOP! Due to some scheduling confusion, both clubs visited our park on the same weekend in mid-August! We knew that this heavier than normal use of our park could provide some unique challenges.

The park was nearly full and both clubs were very appreciative of our hospitality! Many thanks to the Meeks, Siblys, Sells, Jumpers, Fontanezs, Rabrens and others that made this “experiment” a success! One of the many compliments we received was based on our extremely low nightly rates of \$15 for WBCCI members and \$20 for non-WBCCI members for full hookups, internet and TV!

9. **UPGRADING SITES** – The board approved the funds to improve our infrastructure by upgrading the sites B1-B16 with new electrical pedestals, frost proof water connections and new cable connections. This will give us more

availability during the winter months! We have plans to perform upgrades to the rest of the park one section at a time.

10. **CABLE/INTERNET** - The board is currently investigating the possibility of upgrading the entire park to a higher speed internet service. With the increase of members and visitors in the park there is a greater demand for the service. We have a committee looking into our best options.

**FINALLY** – Your board members have spent many hours volunteering on Committees and working to keep our park clean and beautiful! The 2019/2020 Board was humbled to be elected by you, the membership, and performed all tasks, cognizant of the fact we represent you! This year’s president was blessed by superb teamwork and support in all facets of administering the club and park! We as a club have been recipients of many hundreds of hours of volunteerism that results in one of the finest parks in the country!

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## ***Top of Georgia Board of Directors***

2020-2021



Left to right: John Meeks, Treasurer; Mary Anne Meeks, President Elect; Tim Johnson, Past President; Murphy Harrell, President; Doug Ralston, First Vice President; Directors: Clara Ellis, Bill Harris, Jiji Haque, Dick Sells Kimberly Funderburg, Secretary (not pictured)

## SISTER RALLIES 2020

One goal of our PR Committee has been to show off our beautiful park to other Airstream groups, build relationships with other Airstream Clubs, and, of course, increase Park revenue. The wonderful video and presentation made at the International Rally in Virginia last year no doubt led to an increase in out-of-state visitors to our Park in 2019 and also created interest for other clubs to have rallies, the Palmetto State Airstream Club Unit #22 and the Appalachian Argosy Adventure Group. We hadn't planned to host two groups at once, but it worked out just fine. Our President and First Lady, Tim & Caroyl Johnson, parked the 23 SC Airstreams in the middle and upper loop and 9 Argosies in the lower loop with military precision. It was fun to see the Park full, flags flying, people everywhere, and those funky Argosies providing some color.



In preparation for the rallies, John and Mary Anne Meeks pressure washed the Pavilion and cleaned the kitchen for use by the Palmetto club. Kimberly Funderburg made decorative signs reminding everyone to social distance. Rick Sibly arranged to have the dumpster emptied on Friday afternoon, so we would not have an overflow before the regular Tuesday pick up. Bear alert! Other dedicated volunteers stepped in to make the Park look its best. (BTW, we need more volunteers.)

Many of the sister rally people came in well before the Friday starts and some stayed after the Sunday finishes enjoying the camaraderie in the Park, the beauty of the surrounding area, and the kitsch that is Helen. The Argosy people mainly stayed in the lower loop and entertainment for the folks in silver was to walk down there and check them out. While in the Park, a popular

congregation point for the Palmetto folks was the Upper Shelter replete with their Club Flag hanging from the mantel. They played Bingo in the Pavilion Friday evening and had breakfast and a Low Country Boil on Saturday. Most of their cooking equipment they brought with them and they left the kitchen spic and span.

Now, for the question many have asked, how can other groups have a rally at the Top when we have not? The answer to that is caution. COVID-19 is still an issue. The Board of the Georgia Club felt that they could not take the chance of exposing anyone to this virus. The Palmetto and Argosy Clubs assumed that liability on their own. The Top of Georgia is still taking baby steps in that direction.

There are lessons learned from these two sister rallies. Palmetto has tentatively scheduled another for August 2021. In the meantime, we have time to refine the process. If you'd like to be on the Committee to help with that, please let Tim know.

Argosy Fun Fact: Did you know that Argosies are made of aluminum that wasn't quite good enough to meet Airstream standards, so they painted it? I always thought they were fiberglass. At the Top, we have two Argosies belonging to regulars Sammy, Christee, and Jacob Fontanez and also Doug Ralston and Jaime Collins. Some of the Argosies that visited were painted in bright colors, with a red and white and a yellow and white with matching décor inside and out. The next time you're polishing your Airstream, think about paying \$6,000 to have it painted.

Nancy Sibly, Rally Chair

PS - We had 16 new visitors between 9/26-10/3. As of right now, 11/11, the TOP has had 175 new visitors this year.

## ToG OCTOBER RALLY RECAP

After cancelling our earlier 2020 rallies, we went out on a limb and had an abridged version in October. One, we needed to install the new officers elected at our Business Meeting in September. Two, October is such a pretty month at the Top. And, Three, we've missed everyone! Some of our long-time members, worried about COVID, stayed home. The rest of us did our best to maintain social distancing and enjoy as many activities outside as possible. The official count was 62. Not bad considering the year we've had.

We lucked out on the weather. After monsoons the week before turned Andrews Creek into a raging river, we had mostly sunny skies and the leaves changed as the week went on. We enjoyed field trips to Brasstown Bald and the Helen to Hardman Heritage Trail. Thankfully, the shuttle is again operating at Brasstown Bald, although a few stalwart folks hiked it. Personally, I was surprised at how much higher the elevation was since the last time I did that several years ago. A few who had ridden up, hiked down. One who had hiked up, rode down. From the top of Brasstown Bald, you can see for miles. The Helen to Hardman Trail, recently completed, is a flat, paved trail that meanders along the Chattahoochee River between Helen and Hardman Farm. Some walked to Hardman and back. Others took advantage of the Mary Anne Meeks Shuttle, while Nadine Johnson buzzed back and forth on her motorized bike. The woods were tranquil with fall wildflowers blooming along the path and leaves fluttering down around us.

And what do we do best at our rallies? EAT, of course. On Thursday morning we had folks lined up to buy Mike Dyer's yummy meats and produce from Dyer Farms, a weekly tradition that is one good thing to come out of 2020. Many of the Brasstown Bald folks stopped at Jim's BBQ in Booger Hollow for delicious ribs and sides, etc. on the way back to the Top. If you haven't been there yet, do try it. And we had popcorn with our beloved Bingo on

Thursday night. With everyone six feet apart, we really filled the Pavilion. On Friday morning, we had coffee and doughnuts before heading to Helen. On the way back from Hardman we started phoning in pickup orders to Big Daddy's. The first caller was told 15 minutes, then the next group 20 minutes, and finally 25 minutes. We picked up our food and met at the open-air pavilion across the street to eat. Friday night we had hot dogs and s'mores at the Fire Pit.

And Saturday night we had Dyer Farms Brunswick Stew and cornbread for our pre-installation dinner.



Faye Murrell, Nadine Johnson, and Eleanor Flory did a bang-up job of decorating the Pavilion for the festivities. They even put Navy flags to honor outgoing president Tim Johnson into tiny hay bales to honor incoming president Murphy Harrell's farming background. Even with our many tables set for two people, we had enough fall décor for each.

## Other Activities at the Rally



Our very own Bill Wild, now Region 3 President presided over the installation of our new officers.

We have had a lot of new members this year and Jaime Collins held a well-attended New Member Orientation on Saturday morning. New members, new visitors, return visitors, this has been a busy year at the Top. Judi Sells has writer's cramp from all those postcards she's been sending out.



On Saturday afternoon, Christian Jones, a popular musician in and around Helen, performed for us outside in the flagpole circle. You might remember Christian from the Labor



Day Rally last year. I hummed "Sweet Caroline" for weeks. He can perform just about everything and by the end of the afternoon, people were calling out requests. The day was sunny, the wind was cool, some people had lap blankets and others danced to stay warm.



Fun times at the Top. Sorry if you missed it. Let's all pray that things are back to normal in 2021.



*Nancy Sibly, Rally Chair*

## 6 Gap Ride at the TOG

by Mary Anne Meeks

Campers at the Top of Georgia on Sunday, September 27, 2020 had a fun day welcoming hundreds of bicycle riders to the Top of Georgia. One of our members who is a bicycle enthusiast and active rider, Daniel Jessee, asked the Board if the Top of Georgia could provide an Aid station for the riders who take part in the annual 6 Gap Ride that takes place all over the north Georgia mountains. One of the rides comes down Hwy. 75 in front of the TOG.



Coming south from Hiawassee, there is a pull-out just before the entrance to the Park that used to be the entrance to the old lodge that was part of our property. Rotary Club sponsored the Aid station there, and

their Rotoract Club on the University of North Georgia campus provided the volunteers to serve the bicyclists. The TOG provided the parking and hot coffee, hot chocolate, and hot tea in the pavilion for the volunteers, our own type of aid station.



Starting around 10 AM until 1 PM the cyclists either entered the Aid station or rode on by. When they reached our entrance to the Park they had quite a surprise, for anywhere from 6-15 fellow campers greeted them with lots of hooping, hollering, fist pumping and best wishes for a safe and fun ride.

The bike riders really seemed to appreciate our good will.



On My Mind  
2021 Caravan

If you're getting cabin fever from all of the sheltering in place, good news--Spring will be here before you know it! Why not consider a caravan not too far from home? There are some marvelous sites to see & activities to experience along the way!

Get online & register for the Georgia On My Mind Caravan (March 11-April 1, 2021.)

See you then!

Lynn & Jim Soltys #19794

Georgia On My Mind Caravan Leaders

[lynnsoltys@bellsouth.net](mailto:lynnsoltys@bellsouth.net)

[jimsoltys@bellsouth.net](mailto:jimsoltys@bellsouth.net)

***(The following pages contain a special poem written by your new Caravanner Editor !)***

## Halloween at the Top

Halloween morning at the Top,  
campers' bellies still starving.  
The children imagine,  
the Jack-o-lanterns they'll be carving.



Covered in goop,  
displayed without hesitation.  
Showing off with a smile,  
their orange vegetation.



We break for a while,  
while the Top members dine.  
Reconvening at sundown,  
to have a great time.

Graveyards and bones,  
swinging monsters galore.  
Spider webs and fog,  
trailers bedecked with Halloween  
gore.



During this odd time of Covid  
and County insisting,  
We gave pre-packaged candy,  
to respect social distancing.

Anime and soldiers,  
werewolves and flamingoes.  
Superman, Wonder woman,  
and cute little dingoes.



Carrying glow-sticks,  
to see in the dark.  
The young and the old,  
running around our great park.



From trailer to trailer,  
yelling out, "Trick-or-Treat".  
The children imagine  
all they candy they'll eat.

As the evening progressed,  
and the children had calmed.  
We played scary movies,  
and sat on the lawn.

A Halloween to remember,  
filled with fun and good cheer.  
A new Top of Georgia tradition.  
Hope to see you next year!

By Christee Fontanez



**The Peach State Caravanner**  
**Top of Georgia Airstream Park**  
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**Helen, Georgia 30545**

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**2019–2020 Top of Georgia Airstream Club Rally | Events**

*Rallies held at Top of Georgia Airstream Park unless noted otherwise.*

Date	Event
Nov 28, 2019	Thanksgiving Gathering
Dec 7	Holiday Luncheon at Eatonton (Rock Eagle)
Mar 30–Apr 5, 2020	Airstream Club Int. Region 3 Rally, Myrtle Beach, SC
Apr 13-14	Spring Work Days
Apr 15-19	Spring Rally   Business Meeting
May 20-25	Memorial Day   Buddy Rally
Jun 20-27	Airstream Club International Rally, Loveland, CO
Jul 4	Patriotic Celebration
Jul 22-26	Youth Rally   Buddy
Sep 2-7	Labor Day Rally   Elections
Oct 14-18	Fall Rally   Installation of Officers



**Officers**

President: Murphy Harrell; President-Elect: Mary Anne Meeks; First Vice-President: Doug Ralston; Secretary: Kimberly Funderburg; Treasurer: John Meeks; Directors: Dick Sells, Clara Ellis, Bill Harris, Jiji Haque; Past-President: Tim Johnson