

BLUE BERET

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WALLY BYAM CARAVAN CLUB INTERNATIONAL, INC.

NOVEMBER 2021



Making the Most of Your Membership

PG 16



President's Corner



With Mother Nature's amazing touch of the changing of the leaves, some of us are looking for pumpkin spice coffee, hot apple cider and cider donuts. Then some members are looking forward to the trip down South or out West before Old Man Winter begins his season. All of this brings to mind the changes in our lives and the way we have adapted to our Airstream adventures this year. We still need to make sure that we watch out for the many old and new friends that we have been with this year. We all seem to take for granted that the people we encounter and love will always be there for us. Then one day we wake up and our world has changed and the people we counted on are no longer in our life. During this holiday season, I am asking all of you to reach out to your family, friends, loved ones, and of course our pets, to remind them how important they are to us for making each of us complete. I know this last year some of us have lost contact with our Airstream family because of Covid. Let us all take time to pick up the phone, mail a card, text message or walk across the street, to make someone feel special so they don't feel alone or forgotten.

I have been to a lot of rallies since being installed as your President in July. This has been some of the happiest adventures of my life as well as some of the toughest and saddest. I have seen amazing things done to be safe and have rallies

while having a great time. I have seen some of our members come forward to keep us moving in grand fashion. Then I see members that are overwhelmed and struggling, with some giving up their positions for many reasons. Let us all remember we are a family/club of many volunteers with many opinions. We need to communicate, respect, and be open-minded to our leaders, members and our office staff. We all are being bombarded every day with Covid, website changes, and the news and it gets overwhelming. We should all take a step back, breath, count to ten, then respond in a professional, courteous way. The members of our club can change the world, and someone, someday by doing this. All of us have bad times in our lives, but a little bit of kindness can change everything for someone's life.

During Thanksgiving, let us all reach out in our communities and show the world that Airstreaming is an adventure of travel, compassion, kindness and diversity. No matter where we go in our travels, we leave a positive mark on the communities we are in. Enjoy the adventures of life in your Airstreams. Wave to all the Airstreams on the road; you may make a new friend when they wave back. Happy Thanksgiving!

Tye Mott

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on the cover...

Making the Most of Your Membership - page 16
Louisiana Airstream Club - photo by FinePhotoART - Ferdera Broussard-Hubbard (BRN 11100)
Inset: Club Airstream International - Unit 125 Quebec
L-R Sherri Cofer (East TN Airstream Club, BRN 4533, Member Services Committee Chair) and Terry Madden (Arkansas Razorback Airstream Club, BRN 3909) volunteering their friendly help to members at the International Rally

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Copy Deadline for the March issue is January 15

Making the Most of Your Membership

Kristy Yonyon, Marketing Communications Manager

As you've hopefully heard by now, be it from the postcards, the social media posts, emails or the couple of pigeons we sent flying, it's membership renewal season! (That is, unless you're a new member as of July 1, 2021, which is when we began our new and improved annual membership plan based on an anniversary date vs. calendar year cycle for renewals.)

First and foremost, thanks to everyone who has already renewed your membership to guarantee you another great year in the club. Visit our website at www.airstreamclub.org often to find updated offerings and news.

We have 367 life memberships in our club. Life members are the enduring embodiment of Wally Byam's creed, "To open a whole world of new experiences... a new dimension in enjoyment where travel adventure and good fellowship are your constant companions."

Life members are asked to go through the renewal process to confirm their contact information as well as to pay any local and affiliate club dues. Life members: your devotion to the club is appreciated and your investment is sure to pay off in surplus!

A heart-felt thank you to all of our members who have already renewed - by paying your annual dues well ahead of the end of the calendar year - you are making our job at headquarters easier so we can try to find some time to relax as we head into the holiday season.

As a final friendly reminder: to be included in our annual Member Directory that is published in February, your renewal will need processed by December 31. You can renew online by visiting www.airstreamclub.org/renew.

As we head into the new year, make a resolution to try to get one new thing out of your membership that you haven't in the past. Whether it's taking a new trip or using your member discounts, read on to be sure you're in the know about all that membership in Airstream Club International has to offer!

Caravans

Let's begin with the original purpose of the club: to go caravanning! Today's club caravans come in a variety of options: there are National Caravans, Region Caravans and Club Caravans. There are caravan routes to suite your schedule whether you are seeking an extensive multi-week journey or can only afford the time for a few days.

It's a given that you love to travel and to camp in style and comfort if you're an Airstream owner. But a more elusive secret held by our members are the experiences of travelling as a club caravan. Caravans travelling in numbers provide road-side safety that allows for exploration to more remote areas. When you travel in a caravan of other Airstream owners, you'll find yourself getting to know the ins and outs of 'Streaming much quicker than when you hit the road by yourself.

By being a member of the club, you are connected to a wealth of knowledgeable caravan leaders who are like volunteer travel agents with an expertise in Airstream expeditions: they arrange your travel itinerary, make reservations, meal plans, organize mail services, happy hours, tour agendas and more. Caravans also often offer your trip experience at a fraction of the cost you'd find through a travel agency or on your own.

National caravans usually travel throughout the U.S. and Canada, tend to be most wide-ranging and are repeated year after year if popularity demands it. Then there are region caravans that often travel within the limits of any of our twelve regions. Finally, local club level caravans offer the option for a trip that is usually shorter in length and limited to local areas.

Taking part in a caravan is the pinnacle experience that carries on the Wally Byam Caravan Club International tradition. If you have never read much on our club's caravan history, spend some time doing so - you're sure to be inspired to take your Airstream on a caravan experience - it seems every owner owes its Airstream to be taken on at least one!

For a listing of currently scheduled caravans, see page 63. Visit www.airstreamclub.org/events throughout the year for an updated listing.

Pendleton Round Up National Rally "Let'er Buck"

Bryan Stewart, BRN 20163

Held annually the second full week of September, the Pendleton Round Up is an epic rodeo that has been bringing all the cow folk to northeast Oregon since 1910 (with the exception of 2020, when the event was canceled due to COVID). And, since 1965, the Airstreams have arrived in Pendleton, too! The 2021 Pendleton National Airstream Rally, hosted by the Oregon Airstream Club (OAC), was a considerable success given the challenges to rallying this year. Fourteen trailers attended this year, with one trailer traveling all the way from Maine. Each was warmly welcomed by the residents of the homes surrounding the park in which we camp. From the first day locals began appearing at our gathering spot, "The Chuckwagon," to welcome us, bringing homemade gifts, vegetables, and good wishes. Hosts Bryan and Michelle Stewart, Amy D'Abbraccio, and Stacey Rovinelli were glad to have ample help from rally guests who rolled their sleeves to help as needed. In particular, Bill Muth, who got up early every morning to get the coffee going, and Bonnie Muth who was always ready to lend a hand.

Unlike many rodeos, Pendleton is not commercialized. There are no advertisements anywhere on the rodeo grounds, giving the event a hometown feel, though the contestants include both locals and nationally ranked cowboys. The whole town shuts down regular business to support the rodeo. Schools are closed and their grounds turned into makeshift campgrounds. School buses are repurposed to provide a low-cost shuttle alternative to move attendees around town. Members of local Native American tribes are a large part of the Round Up, performing native dance and competing in thrilling bareback races. Some tribal members camp on the rodeo grounds in teepees. The Round Up motto is "Let'er Buck!" This motto is heard very often during the week's events.

The Airstream group has a beautiful, separate camping area a mile or two from town center at a lushly green city park in a residential area, with a nice picnic shelter dedicated to our use and supported by a nice bathroom facility. There are walking trails that wind across open spaces, under shady oak trees, and across McKay creek. We set up our rigs on tarmac bordering the

park, with water faucets graciously installed by the town for our use. Each rig has water, but no electricity or sewer. We did enjoy one truck pump out of tanks mid-week. The weather this time of year is almost perfect with cool nights and warm days, so there isn't a lot of need for air conditioning. With Amy and Stacey providing delicious meals, it wasn't too difficult to make the gray tanks last.

The rally began Monday with the Airstreams arriving and getting rigs situated. There was a happy hour with an orientation followed by a delicious BBQ dinner by Amy and crew. Tuesday began with a visit from royalty. We joined the 2021 Pendleton Round-up Queen and her Princess Court and the Happy Canyon Princesses for breakfast at a local eatery. This breakfast with these remarkable young ladies is always a rally favorite. The two courts are chosen by the community every year to represent the Round Up and the Happy Canyon show on the basis of their leadership, life skills, and of course, their horsemanship. After breakfast, the ladies shared with us their personal stories, and told us a bit about the



continued on page 26

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

Joe Peplinski BRN 702, WBCCI Historian
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The 1951-52 Central America Caravan

This month we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the first trailer caravan ever run, the 1951-52 Central America Caravan, an activity that led to the formation of our club less than 4 years later.

Wally Byam's love of camping and travel led him to start the Airstream trailer company in 1931. In the summer of 1947, longtime friend Neil Vanderbilt showed Wally how to get even more enjoyment from a travel trailer when they toured Europe together in a 22' Airstream.

In early 1951, Wally decided to show his friends and customers how to see foreign countries by travel trailer. After a bit of planning, the **Inter-American Trailercoach Caravan Tour to Mexico and Central America** was first publicly announced in the Los Angeles Times on June 24, 1951. Trail-R-News magazine signed on as a sponsor and retired British Army Major W.A.F. Millinger assisted Wally as the trip "Managing Director" since he had made a similar trip in 1947. In addition to helping with the planning, Major Millinger would drive the "advance rig" scouting for campsites and making arrangements. Before long a brochure advertising the caravan had been created that was mailed to anyone who requested more information.

From its first announcement, this trip offered two options. For a \$150 fee, one could tour Mexico with the caravan, or for \$250 the "more adventurous" could continue with it to Central America as far as Managua, Nicaragua. A rough "pre-caravan" estimate for total expenses was \$900 to \$1000 for the full three-month trip to Nicaragua and back, less if just doing the Mexico portion.

Because a section of the Pan American Highway had not yet been completed in southern Mexico, the "adventurous" group would load their rigs onto flatcars at Arriaga, Mexico and ride by train about 180 miles to Tapachula, Mexico, near the Guatemalan border and then continue their drive thru Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras to Nicaragua.

Caravan Documentation



Map from the Caravan Brochure



First Caravan Commemorative Plaque