

Northern California Airstream Club
Member Handbook
Region 12, Local Club 11



In this document we explore with you who we are, what we do, how we function, how to best use our Airstreams, and some of our history. We also include some special terms associated with being a member of the Airstream Club.

Who are we?

The Northern California Airstream Club is one of eleven clubs in Region 12, California and Nevada. Region 12 along with eleven other Regions in the US and Canada make up Wally Byam Caravan Club International (WBCCI). Each has a webpage where more information can be found: [Northern California Airstream Club](#) , [Region 12](#) and [Wally Byam Caravan Club International](#)

While “Wally Byam Caravan Club International” is the official corporate name of the Club, we are also known as Wally Byam Airstream Club (WBAC), and Airstream Club International (ACI.)

What does NorCal offer?

With our Airstreams we attend rallies, go on caravans, and/or travel independently.

- NorCal offers as many as eight **rallies** each year. The First Vice President (VP) selects rally sites for his/her Presidential year. Registration forms along with a description of proposed rally activities are made available through the NorCal News and/or email blasts. Each person signing up for a rally pays a rally fee that covers one-night parking for the host(s), welcome bags, table decorations, morning gathering expenses, etc. Money is also collected to cover the parking fee(s), group meals and activities. Most rallies begin on Wednesday and end on Sunday. The rally host(s) plan the activities of the rally that include a happy hour/social hour each evening where new members are welcomed and announcements are given. Most rallies include the celebration of birthdays and anniversaries, an Executive Board (EB) meeting, and general membership meeting. Many rallies offer workshops, craft activities, tours of local tourist attractions, etc. During the November rally we hold our Annual Business Meeting to elect officers and, if proposed, approve amendments to our constitution. The President may call other Business Meetings when member input is needed on NorCal, Region 12 or International issues. See also The Rally Planning Guide on our website [Northern California Airstream Club](#)

- A variation on the rally concept is the “**Carally**”. Leaders choose the site(s), duration, maximum number of Airstreams allowed and activities. Based on anticipated expenses (parking, tours, meals, etc.), participants pay a kitty fee. There are no meetings.
- NorCal usually offers at least one **caravan** per year. The leader(s) decide the route, duration, maximum number of Airstreams, and the dollar amount of the kitty fee. The leaders produce a driver’s manual given to each rig that includes the names of the caravanners, driving instructions and daily schedules. Most caravans make a minimum of three stops; the group may spend several days at a site. Usually the plans include a welcome dinner and a farewell dinner.

What is the history of our garden flag, our badge, and our decal?

- In October of 2017 NorCal hosted the Region 12 Rally at the Jackson Rancheria RV Park. Many of us spotted **garden flags** displayed by many of the other local clubs who joined us. And we decided to have one for NorCal. Each flag features our logo, the California Poppy and the words “NorCal, An Airstream Club.” Jane Kiskaddon, a member of NorCal, supplied the artwork and John Bibby guided us toward our purchases. Members may personalize the flag with names and/or Big Red Numbers, etc. Details can be found in the January, 2020 issue of The Poppy.
- Around 2018, we noticed other local clubs had issued new, unique membership name **badges**. Carmen Ortiz worked with graphic artist (and member) Laurie McAdams to design a new badge incorporating our beloved poppy and other new features to make a beautiful badge. Ms. Ortiz guided the Board until a final design was approved in 2019. These are available free of charge to members who attend a NorCal rally.
- After creating a new badge, our **decal** needed refreshing. Carmen Ortiz worked with Ms. McAdams to incorporate the new name badge design into a new decal which was adopted by the Board at the December Rally in 2019. The new decals, one per trailer, are available free of charge at a NorCal Rally.

How does NorCal function?

- NorCal is governed by an **Executive Board** (EB) made up of the NorCal President, two VP’s, Secretary, Treasurer, and Four Trustees. We have a Constitution, By-Laws, and Leadership Guides which can be found on our web page: [Northern California Airstream Club](#)
- Our NorCal **dues** support officer and standing committee expenses. Rallies, carallies, and caravans are self-supporting.
- We have several means of **communication**. The NorCal News, “The Poppy”, is published on a regular basis and distributed electronically. The NorCal Directory contains our contact information (and some of our photos) plus a listing of our rally schedule, current leaders, and governing documents. It is distributed electronically. On occasion an “e-mail” blast may be sent with information that may have some urgency. Approved minutes of the EB meetings are distributed to members in a timely manner.

What does Region 12 offer?

- Region 12 holds its **Annual Rally** in October at a site chosen by the sponsoring Local Club. Members from all the clubs of Region 12 as well as other WBCCI members attend to renew friendships and begin new ones. Region rallies offer meals, tours, and entertainment. During the rally the Region 12 President holds the Annual Business Meeting. The elected Region Officers are the Region President, First and Second VP's. The President appoints a secretary, treasurer, and parliamentarian who sit on the board along with the President from each local club. Region officers serve two years and are elected by the Region 12 local clubs. The President also appoints the editor of the Region 12 newsletter (The Gold and Silver), a membership chair, and a web master.
- Region 12 also holds the **Cali Rally** every two years. The site is variable, but has been the V-6 ranch outside Paso Robles for the past few years.
- For over 40 years Region 12 has sponsored a National Rally in Pasadena for the **Rose Parade**. Depending on the availability of the camping site and hosts, this will continue.

What does WBCCI offer?

- Official membership **badges** are our tickets to all rallies and other WBCCI sponsored events. Wearing them helps us get acquainted.
- **Big Red Numbers (BRN's)** show we are members of the oldest recreational vehicle club in the U.S. We apply them to our Airstreams with pride.
- WBCCI offers a seven day **International Rally (IR)** between June 20 and July 30 at a site chosen by the current International President. The International Board of Trustees (IBT) meets twice during the rally to conduct the business of the Club. The IBT is made up of twelve Region Presidents and an Executive Committee (EC). The members of the EC are: International President, Three VP's, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and the Immediate Past President. Non-voting members are the Parliamentarian, Corporate Manager, and the CEO of Airstream, Inc. The current International President conducts the first IBT meeting early in the rally. At the end of the rally, the newly installed President conducts the second IBT meeting. The Annual Delegates Meeting is held during the rally as well. Here the Delegates (Local Club Presidents) vote on the proposed slate of international officers, members of the international nominating committee, and any proposed amendments to the constitution.
- There is also a **Mid-Winter IBT** meeting in January. It is often associated with a rally to which all are invited.
- **National Event Rallies** occur during unique festivals or other events. Popular ones include the Swiss Festival, Balloon Fiesta, Pendleton Roundup and our own Rose Parade.
- **National Caravans** are a very economical way to travel and see the country. Well known caravans include Cajun Country, Southwest Adventure, Viking Trail and North to Alaska. Details can be found on the website: [Wally Byam Caravan Club International](#)

How does WBCCI function?

- In addition to the IR, the Club maintains **Headquarters** (HQ) in Jackson Center, OH. Here our employees process new and renewing memberships, produce the Membership Directory and Blue Beret magazine, maintain the Club's website, and coordinate National Caravans and Rallies.
- Most members renew on line. Members who join or renew by December 31 may choose to have their information listed in the **Membership Directory**, published in February. In its pages you can find our Code of Ethics, the Wally Byam Creed, WBCCI Constitution, photographs of our IBT members and Standing Committee Chairs, a listing of past International Officers and their rallies, and the current National Rally and Caravan schedule. Also listed are the Region and Club Officers along with a map showing the geographical location of each Region. Next find a numerical list of our Region and Local Club codes. (NorCal is 12-11.) Currently there are four Intra Clubs: Amateur Radio, Classic Airstream, Independent Airstreamers, and Vintage Airstream Club. Next is the listing of all our members (be sure to check out the explanatory section) followed by a list of the best kept secret of WBCCI: US, Canadian, and European Courtesy Parking. Some of our Airstreams have been around for a very long time and interesting histories. See the section about "Heritage Numbers." Big Red Numbers (Airstream Numbers) are listed in numerical order with member's last name. Did you just see # 777 going down the road? Who was that? There is also a list of Airstream Authorized Sales, Service and Parts Dealerships. And last in the directory is the list of WBCCI Past Club Caravans. Can't remember where you met that couple from Saint Louis? Compare the caravans you have taken with those listed next to their name. Voilà!
- The **Blue Beret**, the official publication of WBCCI, is produced monthly except for December and July. An electronic version is distributed via e-mail the first of each month. If requested, a "hard copy" usually arrives within a week.

*How can we best use our Airstreams? These suggestions are **starting points** for each member to develop, edit and update a check list for rallies, caravans, and independent travel.*

Before you go:

- Be sure your basic equipment includes two 25-foot lengths of 5/8-inch high-pressure hose with fittings, certified for **drinking/potable water**. Other useful items include a "water thief", water pressure regulator, and water filtering system.
- **Sanitation** equipment for the well-prepared Airstream camper consists of at least 15' of sewer hose. Use dedicated or disposable gloves to handle hoses.
- Dispose of **wash/grey water** according to the rules of the RV Park or Fairgrounds using either your sewer hose or twenty-five feet of "green" waste water hose. This can also be used when rinsing your sewer hoses at dump sites.
- **Electrical equipment** should consist of two 25-foot lengths of power cords appropriate to your Airstream and a surge protector. A voltmeter is useful to check and verify the shore power. Spare electrical fuses and bulbs will replace those that burn out. Some people have solar panels on/for the Airstream.
- Use **blocks** or boards to level the Airstream.

- Place **wheel chocks** and/or wedges to secure the wheels before unhitching the Airstream.
- Check your **Tires** with a gauge. Check and adjust the **lug nuts** with a heavy-duty torque wrench. Tire pressure-monitoring systems will detect tire failure and can prevent accidents.
- An **electrical heater**, a size appropriate for your Airstream, will keep your rig warm enough in California's winter and save a lot of furnace noise, propane, and money. Look for one that turns off if the heater tips over. Set the furnace thermostat at the lowest temperature desired. It will kick on only if the electric heater cannot provide adequate heat.
- A **catalytic heater** of appropriate size will allow you to dry camp in cold weather for longer periods. The electrical fan of the furnace will drain your battery rapidly. Only use with adequate ventilation.
- **Tools** such as a shovel, a crowbar, and a set of road reflectors will be good in an emergency.
- **Odds and ends** include a good flashlight or lantern, hydraulic jack for trailer, spare tires for car and trailer, tow chain, cable or nylon rope, and hand tools as desired.
- A **CB radio** may keep members from getting lost. Many use Channel 14.
- Carrying a **generator** is optional. Use during daylight hours to charge batteries or brew coffee, etc. when dry camping.
- **Walk around** your vehicles before leaving. Check tire pressures, wheel torque, windows, doors, vents, TV antenna, door step (stowed properly and locked), turn signal and headlight function, water pump off, and trailer hook up is totally completed and secure.
- Periodically check trailer **propane fittings** for leaks by applying soapy water to all connections; bubbles indicate leaks. Or use an electronic gas leak detector.
- Check the nut that holds hitch ball for tightness.

On the road:

- **GPS** technology help travelers choose routes. Many carry a road atlas.
- **Apps** on a smart phone that are popular include AllStays, Gas Buddy, and AccuWeather.
- **Travel** on the highway in small groups (3 or fewer Airstreams) and maintain about 300 feet between. A good rule to remember is, "If you can read the Big Red Number on the Airstream ahead, you are too close." Know and comply with motor vehicle highway traffic laws and regulations.
- When traveling on a **two-lane highway** keep an eye to the rear to see if traffic is piling up behind. California law requires pulling off the roadway in a safe manner if there are five or more vehicles behind.
- On a **multi-lane highway**, drive in the right-hand lane except when passing, preparing to make a turn, entering or leaving the highway, or when changing lanes. A new California law permits the use of either of the two right-hand lanes when there are three or more lanes in the same direction.
- Currently it is legal to use a **CB radio** and/or a hands-free **cellphone** while traveling in California.

At your destination:

- **Take your time** to set up; make sure the Airstream is as level as possible before disconnecting. Prevent Airstream movement with a clamp or chocks. Connect to power, water and sewer as needed. Pull out your camp chairs and relax.
- Allow **recent arrivals** to set up before greeting them.
- **Pet owners** must assume responsibility for keeping their pets under control at all times. Dogs and cats must be kept on a leash ten feet or less in length when outside. All dogs and cats must be exercised in the designated area of the campsite, and the owners are responsible for cleaning up after them. No pets, regardless of size, will be permitted on a tour or shuttle bus, in any gathering area where there is food, or inside buildings.
- **Campsite** (the area around and under the Airstream) is to be kept neat and clean at all times. Do not hang clothing, bedding, etc. outside the Airstream. Leave your campsite in as good or better condition than you found it. One of the reasons NorCal is always welcome to return to a previous rally site is that our sites always look neat in use and are clean when we leave. Let's keep it that way!
- Ensure adequate ventilation when using unvented gas heaters, lights or stove in the Airstream.
- In case of an accident or a fire in or around the Airstream, shut off gas bottles immediately.

For more information:

- *Newbies Guide to Airstreaming* and *The (Nearly) Complete Guide to Airstream Maintenance* from [Airstream Life](#)
- *A Beginners Guide to Airstream* from [Airstream.com](#)
- [AirForums](#) is a free website for exchange of ideas
- Facebook has several Airstream groups including Airstream Addicts.
- [Airstream.com](#) offers YouTube videos

Who was Wally Byam?

Born on July 4, 1896, in Baker City, OR, Wallace Merle “Wally” Byam led an interesting life. Time spent in a sheepherder’s wagon led him to the invention of the Airstream trailer. Under the name of Wallace Davis, he graduated from Stanford University with a BA in History. He was a born salesman and promoted his Airstreams by leading caravans all over the country and eventually all over the world. For more information about him, feel free to do an internet search.

Tell us about our history.

The story of WBCCI is intertwined with that of NorCal. The following is from the 1978 Unit Handbook and the revised Unit Handbook released in 2012 with a few updates.

History of the Wally Byam Caravan Club International, Inc.

The Wally Byam Caravan Club International, Inc. was named in honor of its founder, Wally Byam, who was the originator and developer of the Airstream travel trailer. He devoted his life to developing a comfortable way for people to travel. He was a forerunner in caravanning, and led a number of factory sponsored caravans before the Club was formed.

It was during a caravan to Eastern Canada in 1955 that the Wally Byam Caravan Club was organized on July 24th at Halifax, Nova Scotia, with 55 charter members. In 1962, with the formation of Canadian units, the Club became International and the name was legally changed to the present Wally Byam Caravan Club International, Inc. (WBCCI)

In the early days there was only the national club and a Western unit. Later more units were formed - the Northwest and Southwest, Midwest, Northeast and Southeast. State units soon were organized and, in 1959, the state units were authorized to charter local groups to be known as chapters.

In 1964 the club structure underwent a major reorganization into its present form, elevating all chapters to full unit status. The units were grouped into Regions, originally seven in number and now twelve. While closely affiliated with the International Club and their Region, each unit is reasonably independent, with its own constitution, bylaws, officers and programs.

Originally the WBCCI headquarters was in Cerritos, California and is now located in Jackson Center, Ohio, home of the Airstream factory.

Fewer than 300 Airstreams attended the first International Rally in 1958 at Bull Shoals, Arkansas. In contrast, the 20th anniversary of the club, celebrated at the 1975 International Rally at Brandon, Manitoba, attracted 4209 trailers.

The growth of our club truly was fantastic into the seventies. With more than 25,300 trailers (60,000 members) in 157 units, the club had become, in those 20 years, the largest trailer organization in the world and engaged in more activities than all others combined. Its members represented every state in the Union, about every province in Canada and several states in Mexico as well as some other foreign countries. Since then there has been a significant change in the American lifestyle. In 2020 we have an estimated 6500+ WBCCI members with as many as 700 Airstreams at our International Rally.

History of the Northern California Unit (NorCal)

The Northern California Airstream Club, as it is known today, was formed just four years after the founding of the Wally Byam Caravan Club (WBCC). The group was organized at Boyes Hot Springs in October 1959, concurrently with authorization to form Chapters, and became the first chartered Chapter in WBCC as the California Unit, Chapter 1.

There were 49 charter members in our Chapter, who were known as the "Forty-Niners". The fledgling Chapter held its first rally at San Jose in December of 1959.

At the WBCC Board of Trustees meeting at Palm Springs in 1961 it was decided to change the "Forty-Niners" name to the Northern California Chapter to better identify it. Already the membership had more than doubled to 101 Airstreams. It started out as a dynamic group and remains so to this day.

In 1964, after a broad reorganization of WBCCI, the name was converted to "Northern California Unit (# 011)" and it became a part of the new Southwest Region. Further changes occurred in 1967 when the rapidly increasing membership made five more regions advisable. Our Unit then became affiliated with Region 12, as we are today, which consists of the Local Clubs in California and Nevada. Recently, NorCal changed its official name to include the word Airstream.

In 1963, with a membership of 250, the Northern California Chapter sponsored its first caravan, traveling together to the International Rally at Bemidji, Minnesota. By 1965 membership had increased to 450, and the first Unit caravan to a foreign country was

successfully completed to Mexico. During the winter of 1966-67 the first unit caravan traveling into two foreign countries (Mexico and Guatemala) found NorCal leading the way. In 1976 the Northern California Unit was again in the forefront, conducting the first Unit caravan overseas with “Caravan Scotland ‘76”.

1967 saw the appearance of the Unit news bulletin. Originally titled “Rally Cry”, it later became the “Rally, Caravan and Carally News”. Now it is simply the “NorCal News” or “The Poppy”. It is distributed about ten times a year to keep us informed of NorCal activities as well as news about or of interest to members.

Our members have been active in the International Club as well at the local level. Otto Kinney, a charter member of NorCal, was International President in 1957 and presided at the first International Rally at Bull Shoals, Arkansas. He is the only International President to be installed by Wally Byam. His daughter, Grace Weaver, was a club member. NorCal still uses the pancake griddle provided by her dad. In addition, many NorCal members have been Chairs or members of International Standing Committees.

In 1971 there were a number of groups breaking off and forming new Units. NorCal membership hovered around 700 Airstreams. Activities included approximately ten rallies each year, four to six caravans and four to six carallies. NorCal continues to be one of the biggest and most active Local Clubs in WBCCI.

***Suggest improvement(s) of this document to the Constitution and Bylaws Chair
Revised March, 2022***