

# BLUE BERET

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

APRIL 2022



## Welcome!

### 65th International Rally

Fryeburg, ME

July 23-29, 2022



65th INTERNATIONAL RALLY  
WALLY BYAM AIRSTREAM CLUB



# President's Corner



SPRING! For some of you, it is already beginning to happen, for others, it is just around the corner. With this season comes beauty and change as things begin to grow. This is the same with our Airstream Club, Intra-Clubs, and our Caravans. Many of you have planted a seed, nurtured an idea, cared for and made that idea a change for our members. There will be a lot of discussions and information going on in the next few months of possible changes for our club. Please take the time to listen, ask questions, and fully understand these. We are growing as a club at a pretty fast rate (which is great) but we need to be able to handle this growth. I need all of you to totally understand and let us know how you feel about them by voting your conscience. All of your voices matter to the club, so you all will be heard through speaking out to ask questions and voting process. If something does not make sense to you speak up, there are more people that have the same question but won't ask, for many reasons. So please ask questions. We as officers at all levels are here to answer them correctly for the membership to help this club grow and flourish for many years. There are officers and members that wish they could party and not have many meetings, but we do need structure and meetings to help us stay focused and grow in a positive way. We are the oldest single brand of RV club in the world. This is because we have leaders that care and members that keep us focused with their questions and opinions.

The Fryeburg Maine International Rally 2022 is coming up quick. The people in Fryeburg are very excited for our arrival. The Rally Team is working very hard on making this rally spectacular. If you are registered, you should be getting communiques from

HQ over the last few months. Please check your spam folders because there is a ton of information going out. If you have not already signed up for the Grupio app, then on the home page click on switch event on the bottom of that page, type in Airstream and click on the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Airstream Club International Rally. This will contain a lot of info for you over the next few months and on site in Fryeburg Maine. We still need volunteers, so go to our website under the International Rally and sign up. There are many jobs everyone can do from first timers, to seasoned members, from younger to older. There will be many activities for everyone to enjoy. Bring the kids, grandkids, and all pets because there is something for everyone.

I would like to close the president's letter by saying Thank You to all of you that have emailed, texted, met in person or have called me with questions, encouragement and ideas. My open-door policy is here for all of you to contact me. It is a privilege and honor to get to know all of you in this great club of ours. Let's not forget the HQ (Head Quarter) office team. Thank you Lori Plummer, Deb Sailor, Barb Langston, Amanda Hughes, Kristy Yonyon, and Amber Regula (our newest team member). This team keeps all of us informed, excited and enjoying our club by doing so much of the behind scene jobs of this Club. Thank You HQ! I hope that each of you think about coming to Fryeburg Maine to enjoy the town, the community, the people and the beauty of Maine. We have enough sites for everyone!

*Tye Mott*

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## on the cover...

Photos from the Fryeburg, Maine, area

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Copy Deadline for the June issue is April 15

# Rose Parade Rally '21-22

John Bibby, BRN 3854

Soon after joining NorCal, we noticed many member badges had a small embroidered red rose attached. We quickly learned this was a memento provided to those who attend the Region 12 Rose Parade Rally in Pasadena. Virtually everyone we talked to who previously attended said this was an outstanding rally, and highly recommended we add it to our list. I was finally able to attend this year!

This was the 133rd Rose Parade, also known as the Tournament of Roses Parade. It is held annually on New Year's Day in Pasadena, CA. If New Year's Day falls on a Sunday (which it will in 2023) – then the parade is held on Monday, January 2. The parade travels about 5.5 miles along Colorado Blvd. It features elaborate and beautifully decorated floral floats, equestrian units, and selected high school, college, and military marching bands.

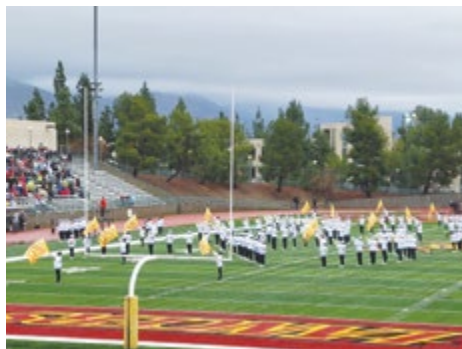
This year was also the 40th WBCCI Rose Parade Rally – easily making it the oldest urban Airstream rally ever. The Smithson's and the Stansbury's have teamed up to host this rally for the past 10 years. Their detailed planning and information bulletins prior to the rally were superb. It allowed those of us in attendance to arrive prepared, have a great time, and enjoy the many events associated with the parade. Most of us also used our free time to enjoy some of the interesting attractions and dining options in the surrounding area.



Official Greeters: Cecelia Stansbury & Hedda Smithson



The Rally registration fee pays for the parking, some meals (we had 2 dinners and 3 breakfasts provided), grandstand seat tickets for the parade, and other rally expenses. A few weeks before the start of the rally, the Hosts will give you an opportunity to separately purchase tickets for "extra events". This year our extra event options were Bandfest and Equestfest.



The Bandfest is a preview of the Rose Parade Bands as they perform their award-winning field shows that led to their selection. Three shows over two days give everyone a chance to see these talented musicians, dancers, and auxiliary performers in action before they complete the parade. This event is held in the Robinson Stadium at Pasadena City College (about 1 mile from rally site).

The Equestfest showcases the beautiful horses and talented riders as they perform drills and demonstrate trick riding and roping. Despite a

light rain, we were still able to see some of the horses up close and talk to the riders. There was a food truck, along with some vendors selling various souvenir items. This event is held at a beautiful venue: the LA Equestrian Center in Burbank (about a 25-minute drive from rally site).

My advice is to get tickets for ALL extra events!

The rally location is a secluded parking lot associated with the Pasadena School District. The Hosts provide rented security fencing to close off the parking lot, and a large tent with tables and chairs for meals and gatherings. Due to the limited space for staging and maneuvering at the rally site, arriving rigs are directed to first stop at the "bull pen" – this is actually a very large parking lot at Pasadena City College with room to stage the rigs. One of the Hosts will greet you and contact the rally site parker to announce your arrival and length of rig. Once the parker is ready for you, you will drive a few blocks to the rally location. Since this is dry camping, it doesn't take long to park and get set up. After everyone is set up, it's amazing to see how the Airstreams are expertly arranged into such a confined parking lot. Luckily, we had a drone pilot in attendance to provide a unique overhead view!

The rally kicked off on the first day with a happy hour, announcements, introductions, and dinner.



continued on page 24

# HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

Joe Peplinski BRN 702, WBCCI Historian  
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## Argosy 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Fifty years ago this month, the first 1972 Argosy travel trailers started appearing in dealerships making this the perfect time to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Airstream sub-brand.

Until 1971, Airstream always considered itself the premium travel trailer brand and wanted to be nothing else. In fact, in the 1950s, Wally Byam specifically told his staff that Airstream should be the best travel trailer possible and should command the highest price of any brand. As a sign of changing times though, in early 1971, Airstream management decided to expand into the mid-priced trailer market with a new sub-brand. A suitable plot of land for a new factory was obtained in the town of Versailles, OH, 36 miles southwest of Jackson Center and construction of a new \$1.5 million, 117,000 sq. ft. factory began in September 1971 with a target opening date of February 1, 1972. Initial employment was planned at 200 with a starting run rate of 50 trailers a week, but capacity to support an eventual run rate of up to 100 trailers a week.

As this new plant was being built and employees hired, Airstream kept quiet on the name of this new product. Finally, on February 29, 1972, in a nod to Wally Byam's habit of naming his trailers after ships, the name was finally revealed as "Argosy", representing a richly laden merchant ship.

The next day, on March 1, 1972, a partial production team of about four dozen employees, including 23 transfers from Jackson Center, started building the first Argosy trailer, a 26-footer•. As staffing increased, that first Argosy trailer moved down the production line and was completed on March 21, 1972. This very first Argosy was then shipped on April 1, 1972, to Northwoods Trailer Sales in Mt. Morris, MI. By October 1972, Argosy was shipping 50 trailers a week to its 131 dealers around the USA and Canada and had even shipped one Argosy to its dealer in Germany!

This new Argosy trailer line had been created by Airstream to serve two primary purposes. First was to expand into the "mid-priced" trailer market. To illustrate, 1973 Argosy base prices ranged from \$4190 for a 20-footer to \$5990 for a 26-footer, while comparable 1973 Airstream base prices ranged from \$5680 for a 21-footer to \$9295 for a 27-footer and then extended to \$14,660 for the 31-foot Excella 500 model.

To keep costs down, Argosy trailers were painted rather than clear coated to allow use of damaged aluminum panels not suitable for Airstreams as Bondo and paint could easily hide scratches and dents. From 1972 through 1974, Argosy trailers were two-tone beige, with a lighter upper and darker lower. For 1974 Argosy motorhomes and 1975 and later Argosy

### 1972: The Beginning



Unbadged Argosy Prototype in Front of the Almost Completed Versailles Plant



Early Argosy Trailers in the Versailles Plant



Northwoods Trailer Sales Gets Argosy #1



1972 Argosy Publicity Photo



1972 Argosy Interior



## Sho-Me the Ozarks Caravan

Joan Anderson, Caravan Promotions

How many folks have driven along I-40 thru Arkansas as they traveled from East to West or West to East and wondered, "what would it be like to explore this beautiful area"? Mountains in the Western US are very popular with tourists, along with the Smoky and Blue Ridge Mountains in the Eastern US. As a graduate of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and a frequent visitor to Smoky Mountain National Park, I have heard boasts that this park hosts the most visitors of all National Parks.

If you pause long enough to consider a potential visit to The Ozark Mountains, you could take the journey many Airstreamers have not yet enjoyed. What better way to visit these mountains than traveling with 26 Airstream couples/singles, making seven stops, visiting many entertainment venues and enjoying great meals together.

This year we will start our caravan in Mountain View, AR and end in Mountain View, MO. Examples of the entertainment planned for y'all include a paddle boat dinner on Lake of the Ozarks and a meal and ghost tour in Eureka Springs, AR. One of the RV parks is alongside a multi-mile bike trail. On the 2021 caravan, many wished they would have brought bicycles along and enjoyed that trail! This year everyone will be encouraged to bring along a bike or two.

Leaders of the caravan are Tim and Caroyl Johnson, Past President and First Lady of the Top of Georgia Airstream Club & park. Co-leaders are Bill and Diane Byrum, current President and First Lady of the Piedmont Airstream Club in North Carolina.



Wanderlust RV Park in Eureka Springs enjoying a campfire and sunset



Special music at first stop at the RV park in Mountain View, AR



Glass Chapel near Eureka Springs, MO



Alley Spring Mill near Eminence, MO



Presleys' show in Branson, MO