

## Not-The-President's Message

For this month, I didn't want to bother Charlie for a president's message since he is most likely making sure Carol is comfortable and has what she needs. Carol is recovering from knee surgery quite nicely, but it will be a long recovery. We are hoping for a speedy recovery for Carol. Hope to see them both in Bandera.

Even though we didn't have a president's message or a unit rally this month, I wanted to get a newsletter out to welcome our new members and provide some Airstream related blogs which I find quite helpful.

Bob Grimes worked with Airstream Life Store (<https://store.airstreamlife.com/>) to allow us to publish, in our newsletters, some Airstream Tips, Tricks, and general information. I've read through a few and they are pretty informative. I will be publishing a couple of the blogs in this newsletter and going forward, I will publish one or two. If you would like to subscribe to their blog, you can definitely do so too. I will also provide a link for each blog I post so that you can peruse each with pictures and workable links. Thank you to Bob Grimes for getting us this access for our newsletter. I hope you find these as informative as we have.

The first blog is "The practical guide to sanitizing your fresh water tank". I did not realize this was something you had to do, but it makes complete sense. It is very detailed with options and examples. The second one is "Quick battery maintenance tips". As you start taking the Airstream to rallies after being cooped up during the winter, this one is really important to know. Batteries are also so expensive, so basic maintenance is super helpful. I like that Rich explains the 'whys' to a non-battery expert...which I'm not. Now I get it and understand when Tim freaks out and starts hooking up all these batteries on a battery tender or he starts unhooking everything that could suck power from the batteries even without being used (those darn energy vampires).

Welcome to the many new members since the last newsletter! Welcome to Louis and Andrea Coldwell, Lauren and David Allen, and Ken and Susan Roe. Hope to see you all at the next THCU rally in Bandera, TX from May 11-15 (super shameless plug). The itinerary for this rally is on the next page. Hope we can see many of you there.

Member spotlights will resume next month's newsletter. I did not have a lot of time this month.

Stay safe and be happy. Ally Ebbers

### In this issue:

Not-the-President's Message P.1

"The practical guide to sanitizing your fresh water tank" P.2

"Quick battery maintenance tips". P.4

Bandera Rally Itinerary P.6

General Announcements P.7

2022 THCU Rally Schedule P.8

**Editors: TnA Ebbers**

This first blog from Airstream Life Store is: [The practical guide to sanitizing your fresh water tank \(airstreamlife.com\)](https://airstreamlife.com) Rich Luhr. Feb 14, 2022

Sanitizing the water system is a task that intimidates a lot of Airstreamers. Especially newbies. The truth is, it's pretty easy to do and it doesn't require any special equipment.

Why sanitize the fresh water tank? If you don't keep the tank clean, bacteria can grow and that's never a good thing. Here's the procedure in a nutshell: Dilute some bleach with water, fill your tank with it, let the bleach/water solution sit for a few hours to kill bacteria, drain it out, and flush the tank and system with clean water.

Once you do this procedure a few times, you'll feel like a pro. Honestly, the only (sort of) complicated part of the procedure is calculating the amount of bleach and working with a diluted bleach solution.

**BUT FIRST...IS THE TANK WATER SAFE TO DRINK?**

I get this question a lot and the answer is, yes. Unless you are extremely particular about your drinking water, the water is safe to drink as long as you regularly sanitize the system.

It is true, however, that not all Airstreamers agree with me on this one. I know some who have elaborate filtration systems to maintain the purity of their drinking water. If you are one of them, read your specific filtration system's Owner's Manual BEFORE following the sanitation steps below. You may have to bypass or remove the filters before you can run bleach through the plumbing.

Even if you're not a purist, you probably won't often pour yourself a big glass of water from the tank. Many Airstreamers, ourselves included, take jugs of purified water for drinking when boondocking, as well as for making coffee or tea. But at some point, you're going to use the tank water for cooking, brushing teeth, washing, or perhaps the dog's water bowl. That's why sanitizing is important.

**PREPARING FOR THE JOB**

Dump the gray water tank as you normally would. You'll need the gray water tank for flushing water through the system.

Get these items together. Sanitizing the tank requires no special tools. You probably have all these things in your house or shed already.

- Your Airstream Owner's Manual
- Some household bleach (like Clorox)
- 1 gallon jug of water, about 80% full
- A flexible funnel (you can find these at Amazon by searching for "flexible funnel")
- Measuring cup (metal or glass preferably)
- Rubber gloves (optional but recommended)
- Calculator

**1.ADD THE CAPACITY OF YOUR FRESH WATER TANK, IN GALLONS, TO THE CAPACITY OF THE WATER HEATER TANK.** A water heater with a tank, it usually holds 6 gallons. If your Airstream has a tankless water heater (generally 2021 model year and later) you can count it as zero gallons. You'll find the fresh water tank capacity in your Owner's Manual

For example, the fresh water tank in our Globetrotter 23FB holds 30 gallons and the water heater holds 6. That makes our total water system tank capacity 36 gallons.

**2. MULTIPLY THE TOTAL TANK CAPACITY BY 0.13 TO DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF BLEACH YOU'LL NEED TO USE, IN OUNCES.**

Using my example above, here's the math: 36 gallons x 0.13 = 4.68 ounces.

So, I need 4.68 ounces of bleach to sanitize our system.

## [The practical guide to sanitizing your fresh water tank \(airstreamlife.com\)](http://airstreamlife.com)

Rich Luhr. Feb 14, 2022 (Continued)

3. MEASURE THE BLEACH AND POUR IT INTO THE GALLON JUG OF WATER THAT'S 80% FULL.

This dilutes the bleach, making it easier to pour. Here's where the rubber gloves come in, if you want to keep possible splashes of bleach off your hands.

4. POUR THE JUG OF WATER CONTAINING THE DILUTED BLEACH INTO YOUR FRESH WATER FILL.

Use the funnel so you don't drip or splatter bleach water on your clothes or your skin. If some bleach gets on the Airstream it won't hurt it immediately, but you should rinse with plain water just to be sure.

5. AFTER YOU'VE DUMPED THE CONTENTS OF THE JUG INTO THE SYSTEM, FILL THE REMAINDER OF THE FRESH WATER TANK WITH WATER.

6. DISCONNECT THE CITY WATER HOSE (IF CONNECTED), TURN OFF THE WATER HEATER, TURN ON THE WATER PUMP, AND THEN RUN EACH OF THE FAUCETS AND OTHER WATER OUTLETS.

It's easiest if you do this one faucet at a time. Run it full hot and keep the water flowing until you can smell the bleach, then switch to cold and again wait until you smell bleach. Then close the faucet and move onto the next one. Don't forget the toilet, shower, and outside shower if you have one.

7. LET THE DILUTED BLEACH SOLUTION SIT IN THE SYSTEM.

This equation (fresh water tank capacity + water heater capacity) will tell you the right amount of bleach to use. If you have Let it sit for at least 4 hours to sanitize the system. (Leaving it longer will not hurt anything, so don't worry if you don't get to it until the next day.) If next time you want the sanitizing process to go faster, double the bleach ratio and you will only need to let the water sit in the system for 1 hour.

8. AFTER THE SITTING PERIOD, DRAIN ALL THE WATER FROM THE FRESH WATER TANK.

You can get the bleach-water mix out of the fresh water tank and plumbing by opening the kitchen and bathroom sink faucets fully (midway between hot and cold) and letting the water pump run at full blast. This will take a while, perhaps 6-10 minutes depending on the size of the water tank. Turn off the faucets when the water starts to sputter (indicating that the tank is nearly empty).

This process moves the remaining bleach-water mix from the fresh water tank to the gray water tank. Although there are drain petcocks in the fresh water tank that will dump the water on the ground fairly quickly without requiring the use of the water pump, the runoff on the ground might kill plants nearby so we don't recommend that method.

9. REFILL THE TANK WITH FRESHWATER, AND DRAIN IT.

Now refill the tank with fresh water. Then open all faucets, shower and shower head, outdoor shower, etc. as you did before, until the bleach smell subsides. There will probably be a slight lingering odor of bleach for a while, but the water will be safe to use.

10. DUMP THE GRAY TANK AS YOU WOULD NORMALLY.

### TIPS AND TRICKS

If you're bothered by a chlorine smell after flushing the system, rinse the system with a solution of 1 quart of vinegar to 5 gallons of water. While you are refilling the tank in step 9, dump it in. Then flush the water out again until there is nothing left in the tank. Refill the tank with fresh water.

An option for making the water taste less bleach-y: Vitamin C tablets. A lot of people swear by these, but I have never tried them. There are also commercial products to make the water taste better, which you can find in RV stores and camping stores.

*[This blog post is being used with permission from the Airstream Life Store, which retains copyright to the content. Visit https://store.airstreamlife.com to shop for curated, best-in-class products for Airstream owners and sign-up to receive new blogs and how-to videos.](https://store.airstreamlife.com)*

## [Quick battery maintenance tips \(airstreamlife.com\)](http://airstreamlife.com)

Rich LuhrFeb 08, 2022

Recently I got an email from a customer who was boondocking in Quartzsite, Arizona and wondering why her portable solar kit wasn't charging her batteries anymore.

After a little diagnostic work, we determined that the problem was most likely not the solar panels, but the batteries themselves. Despite being only six months old, the batteries were already reluctant to accept a charge. Sadly, I hear versions of this story frequently. A friend once mentioned to me that he had to replace his batteries every spring, at a cost of about \$500 each time. He thought the problem was "cheap batteries," but the real issue turned out to be that he didn't understand the correct way to maintain them. I soon learned that the Quartzsite customer didn't, either.

Before we get into proper maintenance, let's review the three types of batteries most commonly found in an Airstream.

### “Wet cell” (Lead-Acid)

These are the most common type found in Airstreams. They're just like most car batteries. Inside each battery is a bunch of lead plates with sulphuric acid surrounding them.

Sometimes the battery will have plastic caps on the top, which can be carefully removed to add distilled water from time to time. Others are "maintenance free" and don't have removable caps.

In normal operation, wet cell batteries release a small amount of hydrogen gas. Because hydrogen is flammable and sulphuric acid is corrosive, these batteries are always kept in a separate battery box, isolated from the living quarters of the Airstream.

### Absorbed Glass Matt (AGM)

These are also lead-acid batteries, but instead of liquid inside they have a paste that doesn't dry up, and they may have spiral plates instead of flat plates inside. But what you'll care about is the fact that AGM batteries don't emit hydrogen gas in normal operation, never need maintenance, and last longer.

The only downside of AGM batteries is that they cost about twice as much as wet cell batteries. But if you take care of them they'll end up being cheaper per year, because you can get more life out of them.

### “Lithium” (Lithium Iron Phosphate, or LiPO)

LiPO batteries are all the rage right now, and for good reasons: they last a long time, have zero maintenance, are about half the weight of lead-acid, and they can be discharged deeply many times without shortening their life. But they're expensive. Really expensive, like 2-3 times more than AGM. Also, LiPO batteries have quirks of their own that owners need to think about before they switch. (I'll write about that in more detail in a future blog.)

### Basic maintenance for all batteries

Regardless of what you have, you should periodically inspect your batteries in their storage box. Look for tight, clean connections to each battery, with no obvious corrosion (like fuzzy whitish-green buildup). There should be no cracks or damage to the battery cases or cables, and the hold-down brackets should be tight so the batteries can't move.

Also, keep your batteries charged. Remember my customer in Quartzsite? Her AGM batteries were toast after only six months because she didn't know that you need to keep them charged at least 50% all the time. (The same is true of wet cell batteries.)

## [Quick battery maintenance tips \(airstreamlife.com\)](https://www.airstreamlife.com)

Rich LuhrFeb 08, 2022 (continued)

Discharging below 50% is like leaving the headlights on your car overnight. Do that a few times and you'll find your car doesn't start on the next cold morning. In this case, she had let the batteries run down to 11.2 volts for a few days while boondocking. That means the batteries were at about 10% of their capacity. They normally should be 12.7 - 13.0 volts when full, and never less than 12.3 volts.

You may well ask: "But if the lights still go on, the fridge still runs on propane, and the furnace still works, how can my battery be dead?"

Many appliances that run on "12 volts" will actually continue to work at much lower voltages, far below the minimum healthy level for a battery. You can't rely on those as a guideline. It's important to keep an eye on the voltmeter (which is standard equipment in every modern Airstream) and don't let wet cell batteries get below 12.2 volts or AGM batteries get below 12.3 volts (as measured when they are resting with no appliances running).

So if there's one thing you take away from this, it's this: The most important maintenance you can do is simply to keep the batteries charged above 50% at all times.

This is particularly true during periods of storage. All types of lead-acid batteries will gradually "self discharge" over time, whether or not they're connected to anything.

Remember my friend who had to buy new batteries every spring? He didn't top up the batteries during the long New England winters, and so he always came back to find dead batteries that didn't want to charge again.

LiPO is a bit different. Those batteries can be discharged way below 50% and come back smiling. That's one of the big advantages of them—you essentially get more usable power because you can use the entire capacity of the battery. Their "self-discharge" rate is much lower too. Still, it's important to make sure they're charged before long periods of storage.

There's more to know about battery maintenance and use. It's one of the many topics covered in my book, "The (Nearly) Complete Guide to Airstream Maintenance," available in the Airstream Life Store or Amazon.com.

*[This blog post is being used with permission from the Airstream Life Store, which retains copyright to the content. Visit https://store.airstreamlife.com to shop for curated, best-in-class products for Airstream owners and sign-up to receive new blogs and how-to videos.](https://store.airstreamlife.com)*



2231 Hwy. 16N, Bandera, TX 78003

Call for reservations: [830 796-4958](tel:830-796-4958)

Make sure you let them know you are with the Texas Hill Country Unit to be included in the group price

Bandera Rally Itinerary  May 11 – 15

Wednesday, May 11 FOR EARLY ARRIVALS, Steak Night, 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bring own meat to grill, bring own plates and utensils  
Salad and baked potato sides available to purchase  
Beer & Wine available, permitted to bring own hard liquor.  
\*\*\*Will need count by Monday 5/9 to reserve table/s\*\*\*  
If inclement weather, maybe Backyard Bistro in Pipe Creek or on your own.

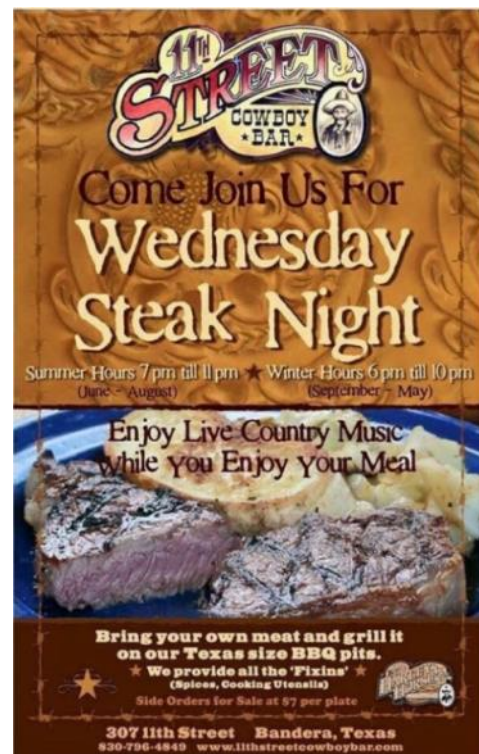
Thursday, May 12 Breakfast and morning on your own  
Lunch Ideas: Dough Joe, Pizza/Italian, Main Street, Bandera,  
Suggest High Café in Comfort, shopping, wine/distillery  
Dinner/Drinks 5PM, bring hot hors d'oeuvres to share, games after

Friday, May 13 Breakfast and morning on your own  
Lunch Ideas: The Dodging Duck in Boerne, OST in Bandera, or PAPS Italian  
Afternoon shopping Boerne Main Street  
Tour Cibolo Nature Center or Herff Farm if desired  
5 PM: Dinner/Drinks, MEXICAN NIGHT, bring your favorite Mexican dish to share; Games after

Saturday, May 14 Breakfast and morning on your own  
Day trip to Fredericksburg for those interested  
Allstadt Brewery  
Wine Road F'burg to Stonewall  
Wildseed Farms  
Garrison Brothers Distillery, Hye  
Lunch Ideas: Trail Boss Steak House or 11<sup>th</sup> Street. Bandera  
4 PM: Unit Business Meeting  
5 PM: Dinner/Drinks, Dinner catered by Bill's BBQ, Kerrville; games

Sunday, May 15 9AM: Continental breakfast....bring own coffee / drink of choice

Places to see/go in Bandera: Natural History Museum (fee), Frontier Times Museum (fee), Western Antique Mall, Bandera General Store, Spirits of Texas Store, Bandera City Park (fee), Country Accents Antiques in Pipe Creek



Suggestions will also be provided should you wish to travel outside Bandera for lunch / afternoon activities



**APRIL**

- 03 Peggy Knox
- 05 Paul Mock
- 06 David Allen
- 09 Doug Wylie

**MAY**

- 08 Martha Gosnell
- 15 Jan Grimes
- 22 Tolley McCormick
- 28 Nicky Allen

*welcome*

**New members:**

- ⇒ Louis and Andrea Coldwell
- ⇒ Nicky and David Allen
- ⇒ Ken and Susan Roe



- Apr 29 Tim and Allison Ebbers
- May 13 David and Nicky Allen
- May 26 Bob and Sylvia Lemley



- ⇒ You will notice that our Facebook page has become Private. If you are a new member and would like to join our Facebook group, search for the page name = Texas Hill Country Unit.
- ⇒ If you have rally or airstreaming pictures you would like to post on our Facebook page, please do so. We would love to see you there too!
- ⇒ If you are not a Facebook user or a seldom Facebook user (like me) BUT would like to provide news or pictures in this newsletter, please send it to me at ally.ebbers@gmail.com and I will post on the next newsletter.



**Website:** <https://airstreamclub.org/TexasHillCountry>  
**THCU President:** ncw123@aol.com  
**Facebook Page:** Texas Hill Country Unit



## THCU Rally Schedule 2022

Below is the 2022 Rally schedule for THCU. We are also being invited to other Units' rallies, which is usually posted in the email where the newsletter is attached. Those won't be listed below, but you can check [airstreamclub.org](http://airstreamclub.org) for other Units' rallies. As always, please check with the hosts first before showing up.

Date	Location	Comments
January 13-16	<b>Oakwood RV Park</b> 78 FM 2093, Fredericksburg, TX 830-997-9817	<del>Hosts: Dan and Zephyr Marek</del>  Call to reserve your spot, \$47 per night if we get 10 rigs, otherwise \$57 per night
February 10-13	<del><b>Top of the Hill RV Resort &amp; Cabins</b></del> 12 Cedar Rd, Boerne, TX 830-537-3666	<del>This rally has been cancelled.</del>
February 17-20	<del><b>Streamin' on the Strand</b></del> Galveston, TX	<del>Email Philip Vasquez at <a href="mailto:pdvasquez@outlook.com">pdvasquez@outlook.com</a></del>
March 10-13	<del><b>Bay View RV Resort</b></del> 5451 Hwy 35 North, Rockport, TX 78382 (361) 400-6000	<del>Hosts: Charlie Williams &amp; Carol Wallace and Doug &amp; Sheryl Wylie</del>  Call to reserve your spot, \$45 per night—no credit cards (cash/check only). Let them know you are with the THCU Airstream Club.
<b>April 26-May1 Region 9</b>	<b>Region 9 Rally Mineola, TX</b>	<b>Region 9 officers</b>
May 11-15	<b>Skyline RV Park</b> 2231 Hwy 16 N, Bandera, TX 830-796-4958	<b>Hosts: Bob &amp; Jan Grimes and Doug &amp; Sheryl Wylie</b>  Call to reserve your spot, \$43 per night if we get 10 rigs, otherwise \$46 per night.
June 09-12	<b>Big Chief RV Park</b> 1420 FM 690, Burnet, TX 512-793-4746	<b>Hosts: Charlie Williams &amp; Carol Wallace</b> Call to reserve your spot, \$40 Thurs night and \$45 Fri & Sat night
<b>July 23-29 International</b>	<b>Fryeburg, ME</b>	<b>International Officers</b>
August	Mid-Year Luncheon at Black's BBQ in Lockhart TX	Time and date TBD
September 15-18	<b>Brazos Valley RV Park</b> 2190 TX-21, Caldwell, TX 979-200-3007	<b>Hosts: Dave Toy and Joane Ermis</b>  Call to reserve your spot, \$35 per night
October 13-16	<b>Braunig Lake RV Resort</b> 13550 Donop Rd., Elmendorf, TX 210-633-3170	<b>Hosts: Charlie Williams &amp; Carol Wallace and Doug &amp; Sheryl Wylie</b>  Call to reserve your spot, \$35 per night
November 17-20 Thanksgiving and Installation rally	<b>Schulenburg RV Park</b> 65 N Kessler Ave, Schulenburg, TX 78956 979-743-4388	<b>Hosts: Ed &amp; Yvonne Michek and Tim &amp; Ally Ebbers</b>  Email Micheks/Ebbers if you plan to attend. Each night is \$35 per site
December	Holiday Luncheon; location TBD	

