

BLUE BERET

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

JUNE 2022



Streamin' on the Strand

—PG 19



President's Corner



I am sure we are all thrilled to be having better weather, green lawns, flowers and camping season for us all. The changes of the seasons bring many changes in life, in work, and in our club. Some of us want a new rig, new tow vehicle, a vintage trailer, or a younger body. We all at one time or another think the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. What we need to do is step back and appreciate what we have, repair our rigs and tow vehicles and work on our bodies (or what's left of them lol). I am on my fourth Airstream - two brand new ones, a vintage and my 1992 Excella 1000 34'. The new ones had warranty work (anything new needs the bugs worked out), the vintage I own was going to cost a fortune to rebuild, and my 1992 Excella gave me the best of both worlds. She had good bones, proven track record and I was very comfortable with the feel of my rig. My Airstream is something I can work on that's dependable and very few problems most of the time. I am beginning to bring my rig to be modern, sharper looking without beginning from the ground up. I know it's a rig that will not let me down. I have learned that sometimes they may get old but a little polish and problems fixed makes it more dependable than something brand new.

This can work in so many aspects of our life, relationships, our homes, and all of our clubs we belong to. We all need to step forward to problem solve, polish and get involved in all of our activities. There are so many ways we all can get involved to make it better. I would like as many of you to volunteer in

your club, your Region or International Rally. This will bring us all together while improving our club during this tough economy and crisis all over the world. A little volunteering from each one of us while improving our Airstream world as well as our communities. The action from all of us will change people and animal lives for the better. Do something simple as pick up a phone and talk to a member not towing any more, a VET, or a new neighbor (at home or at a rally). We all don't realize the impact that we have with our acts of kindness.

The Airstream Club International and the many names associated with it survive the test of time as it always has. The gem of this club is our many members from all walks of life that volunteer. We greet new and older members as lifetime friends which by the end of our rallies they all have become. We are the oldest single brand RV club in the world. That did not just happen overnight but by many years from all of you!! I will look forward to seeing all of you in Fryeburg Maine next month with open minds, kindness in your heart, positive attitude and ready to have a GREAT TIME!!

P.S. Doakie (my Welsh Terrier) is looking forward to seeing all of your pets there, too.

Tye Mott



Scan the QR code here to visit
the Fryeburg Rally website!

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on the cover...

Mardi Gras! Galveston
"Streamin' on the Strand" - page 19

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Copy Deadline for the August issue is June 15

Mardi Gras! Galveston

"Streamin' on the Strand"

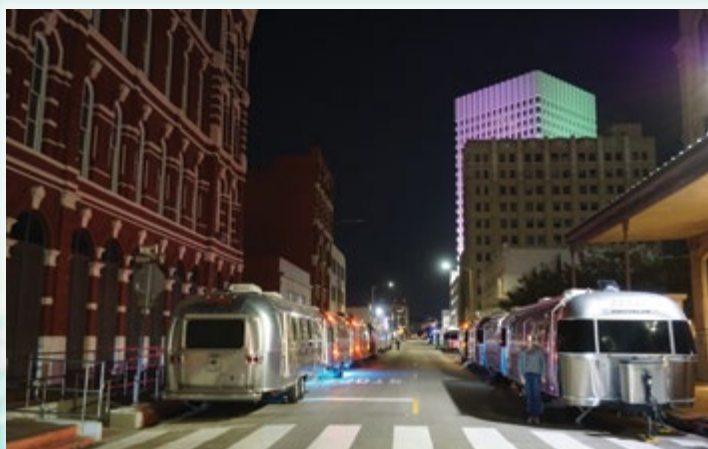
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The colors. The parades. The beads. The Airstreams. Forty-eight rigs lined bumper to hitch along the Mardi Gras! Galveston parade route in the historic Strand District in February. Region 9 members with participants from Arizona, Minnesota, New Jersey, Mississippi, Illinois, and Colorado partied for four festive days to celebrate the 111th year of Mardi Gras! Galveston with a "Streamin' on the Strand" Rally. We deflected beads, marveled at brightly lit colorful floats rolling between our Airstreams, and danced to the jubilant noise of nationally renowned music artists. We welcomed Friday morning with a Bloody Mary breakfast hosted by the Texas Gulf Coast Unit. It was cold and blustery, but we warmed up with Bloody Marys, coffee, and king cake. And we deserved it after the parking challenges we survived the evening before when in 3 and 1/2 hours, forty-eight rigs converged from two staging areas along a 4-block section of Mechanic Street inside the secured entertainment area. Jim Shults of Greater Houston Airstream Club was the logistics master. He designed the parking with us merging simultaneously on both sides of the street from two staging areas so that all rig doors opened onto the street. We had thirty minutes to unhitch, level, and move our tow vehicle to the off-site, patrolled parking area. Susan Postlethwait from Texas Alamo Unit tirelessly and cheerfully golf-cart chauffeured every driver to the parking area and back again to the rigs. We were all parked and leveled and only thirty minutes late to our complimentary drinks and hors d'oeuvres sponsored

by Yaga's Entertainment at Tsunamis Restaurant on The Strand. Parades on Friday and Saturday and a Mexican Heritage Festival on Sunday provided plenty of Mardi Gras glitz. The IN-OUT parking privileges made visiting the many museums, galleries, restaurants, and famous seawall accessible. But food vendors lined up around the corner from our rigs, and Strand Avenue one block away was an oasis of restaurants, bars, and shopping, and many of us never left the entertainment area. We could set up chairs between our Airstreams and crowd watch as well as collect pounds of beads from any of the ten parades that passed five feet from our doors. Some of us opened our doors as the parades passed by and beads landed inside the Airstream! All felt safe and secure with hundreds of police on patrol continuously throughout the weekend. We were ambassadors to the hundreds who walked up and down Mechanic Street throughout the rally asking questions about who we were and marveling at how we managed to secure such a prime spot for Mardi Gras. Those who felt comfortable held spontaneous open houses to show off their Airstreams to the curious. All of us educated the uninitiated to Big Red Numbers and Wally Byam. The images of the iconic Airstream juxtaposed against the historic buildings did most of the talking for us.

How did we make this urban event happen? A Region 9 goal has been to organize several urban rallies to bring our members together more often



HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

Joe Peplinski BRN 702, WBCCI Historian
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Who Was Wally Byam? (Part 1)

Wally Byam passed away 60 years ago on July 22, 1962, making now an appropriate time to celebrate this man who was the founder of the Airstream Company, the father of trailer caravans, and the namesake of our club. Though I have only specifically written an article about Wally Byam once, a quick check of past Historically Speaking articles finds Wally Byam mentioned by name in about two thirds of them, reflecting his huge influence on Airstream and club history. Those articles mainly talked about some aspect of Wally's Airstream Company or "caravanning" life, but rarely dove into any detail about who Wally Byam was before Airstream or outside of Airstream. This anniversary is a good time to explore that part of his life. Fortunately, this story can now be told more accurately than ever before thanks to the treasure trove of historical Byam family documents and photos that were donated in recent years to Airstream by the Estate of Helen Byam Schwamborn. Research in online newspaper archives filled in some additional details.

It should be noted that Wally Byam used his formal first name "Wallace" from birth until just after he relaunched Airstream in 1947. In acknowledgement of this detail, I may use both Wallace and Wally in this article according to which seems appropriate at the time.

Wally came from pioneering stock. His paternal grandfather Loren Byam served in the Union Army during the Civil War and both his paternal and maternal grandparents migrated to eastern Oregon in the late 1800s. Wally's parents,

Bert Byam, a veterinarian, and Carrie Biswell, a bookkeeper, were married on June 21, 1893, and Wally was born about three years later on July 4, 1896, in Baker City, OR. Wally lost contact with his biological father at the age of three, when his parents divorced on October 9, 1899, and his father moved away.

On April 4, 1901, Wally's mom Carrie remarried. Her new husband, David T. Davis, was a butcher in Baker City. About 1905, the Davis family moved to Astoria in northwest Oregon. The 1910 census records show David Davis, wife Carrie, and son Wallace living in Astoria with Wally's last name recorded as Davis, though it is unknown if David Davis ever formally adopted Wally.

During his youth, Wally also spent several summers back in eastern Oregon with his maternal grandparents James and Sally Biswell and uncle, Roger Biswell, a physician. During those summers Wally would get jobs working on farms or herding sheep. This is where he got his first exposure to living in a trailer while using a shepherd's wagon to tend sheep in mountain pastures.

The summer Wally turned 14, he did something different. Since Astoria was a Pacific Ocean port town near the mouth of the Columbia River, Wally became fascinated by the sailing ships that would come to dock there. That summer he got permission from his mother to sign on as a cabin boy on a fishing vessel bound for Bristol Bay, Alaska. His job during that 5-month voyage

1890s - 1900s



Wally and Carrie Byam in 1897



Wally, Grandparents James and Sally Biswell, and Cousin Ernestine Circa 1904



The David T. Davis Family Circa 1909
(Wally on the left)

Fryeburg, Maine

Martin Womer, BRN 6002

Driving Through New Hampshire's Dramatic White Mountain National Forest

Just west of Fryeburg lies the exquisite White Mountain National Forest. You should consider including four geographic landmarks in your exploration: The three major north-south glacial notches created by the Ice Age (**Franconia Notch** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franconia_Notch, through which Rt. 93 passes; **Crawford Notch** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crawford_Notch, through which Rt. 302 passes; and **Pinkham Notch** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinkham_Notch, through which Rt. 16 passes); and the **Kancamagus Highway** <https://kancamagushighway.com/>, Rt. 112 running east-west from Conway to Lincoln.

The glacier-carved notches are very dramatic to see from the road, especially Franconia and Crawford Notches. They are classic U-shaped notches scraped through the ancient Appalachian Mountain range by the mile thick ice sheet as it expanded southward from what is now Canada. One of the most easily accessed and popular lookouts to admire a classic U-shaped notch is at the top of Mt. Willard, atop the huge Mt. Willard cliffs, overlooking Crawford Notch. The north side of Mt. Willard is a gentle slope scraped like a wedge by the south-bound glaciers.

The Mt. Willard Trail was once a carriage road for Victorian-era visitors to the luxurious Crawford House, now eroded to a gently sloping but nonetheless challenging hike among rocks and tree roots. At the end of the trail, you stand atop the huge rock cliff

scraped and plucked clean by the glaciers, looking down the notch. If you prefer, you can enjoy views of Crawford Notch without hiking, by stopping at official scenic lookouts along Rt. 302 near the top of the notch.

Along Rt. 302 north of Crawford Notch is the famous Omni Mount Washington Hotel & Resort in Bretton Woods, NH, overlooking the Presidential Range, <https://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/bretton-woods-mount-washington/property-details/history> This is where the 1944 Bretton Woods International Monetary Conference that set the \$35 per ounce gold standard took place. <https://newengland.com/today/travel/new-hampshire/mount-washington-hotel-2/>

A totally different experience is to drive across the White Mountains on the **Kancamagus Highway**. This is the 34.5-mile **Kancamagus National Scenic Byway**. The eastern end was once a simple dirt town road completed in 1837 from Conway to Passaconaway. One hundred years later, the road was expanded and extended through to Lincoln, NH by the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). Work halted during World War II, then was resumed by the NH State Highway Department after the war as funds became available, finally completed in 1959. The Kancamagus Highway (or "the Kanc", as some call it) is a delightful drive on a sunny day, with many official scenic lookouts, several White Mountain National Forest campgrounds, short hikes to waterfalls,



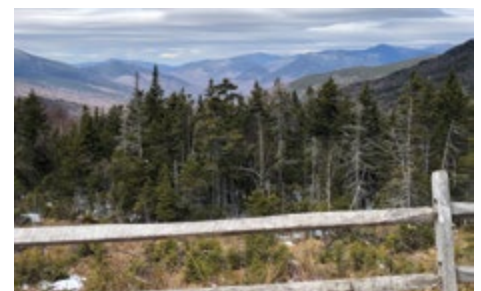
Pemigewasset River along the Lincoln Woods Trail



Omni Mount Washington Hotel



Lower Falls



Pemigewasset Overlook near the Kanc's Hairpin Turn