



The Grapevine

NEWSLETTER of the
NY FINGER LAKES AIRSTREAM
CLUB

THE GRAPEVINE—October 2022

Website: <https://newyorkfingerlakes.airstreamclub.net/>

Volume 21, Issue 8

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The Grapevine

The Grapevine will be published **at least** 8 times/year (Feb/ March, April, May, June/July, Aug, Sept, Oct, Nov) or as needed.

Newsletter Editor is Liz Kirk.

Next deadline is Nov. 10

The President's Corner

Hello everyone!

I am Dick Saxton, newly elected NYFLAC president. I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. Cora and I purchased our 25' RBQ in 2018 and have enjoyed traveling from our home base in Wayland, NY. Cora and I are looking forward to serving the club 2022-2024.

During the Oktoberfest Rally at Letchworth State Park we held an election and installation of officers and advancement. I would like to welcome the new officer positions of Mary Fein-Silco as 2nd Vice President and Val Davis as a new director.

Special thanks to Liz Kirk for her efforts with the club website and newsletter.

Thank you Gary Russo for your leadership during and after the pandemic with overseeing rallies and socials. Gary will be moving forward as the 1st VP position of Region 2. As past President, Gary will remain active in our club and provide support and guidance.

We encourage anyone interested in hosting a rally or an event to email myself or any of the officers with your ideas.

Looking forward to the next year!



Dick Saxton, President



It's dues renewal time for anyone who joined before July 1, 2021.

NY Finger Lakes Airstream Club
2022-23 Officers and
Committee Members

President: Dick Saxton
saxtonrg@aim.com

1st V.P.: Chris Cappelletti
ccapp68@me.com

2nd VP: Mary Fien-Silco
msilco12@gmail.com

Past President: Gary Russo
fulloflife123@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Ted Smith
Ess18294@gmail.com

Recording Secretary: Charlie Kirk

Directors: Charlie Kirk (1 yrs.)
John Andersen (2 yrs.)
Val Davis (3 yrs.)

Membership: Randy and Diane Hill
randy_diane_hill@me.com

Caravan Leader: Ray Wagner
rwagner2722@outlook.com

Safety: John Hussar
husharts@greygoosegraphics.com

Media: Liz Kirk
002newslettereditor@wbcci.net

Sunshine: Suzanne Russo
suzanne.russo21@yahoo.com

OUR WEBSITE ADDRESS IS:

<https://newyorkfingerlakes.airstreamclub.net/>

OR
find us on Facebook

[https://www.facebook.com/
groups/1472017733005344/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1472017733005344/)

Membership Update

Randy and Diane Hill, Membership Chairs.

Greetings to everyone from Vermont.

This week, as I write this, Diane and I are traveling this great state attending a couple of New England rallies and enjoying the fall colors before heading home to prepare for our longest trip ever. We plan on leaving for the International Rally in Rock Springs, Wyoming this December and do a lap of the US, hitting many states that we have not visited before along the way.

In the past quarter, our membership has continued to grow as we have added five new regular members and four affiliate members to our club. Please join me in welcoming Michelle Adamovich & Miles Ferris, Brody (David) Clack, Joseph Howard & Adriana Amgulo-Howard. Eddie Carl, Kathleen Gonzalez Landis, and Maurice & Kathy Rowe to the club. Diane and I have had the pleasure of meeting some of you this past summer at our rallies - those of you we have not met yet, we look forward to seeing you at future club events.

I also would like to take a moment to congratulate our officers for the 2022-23 season! It was my honor to induct all of you to your new offices at Letchworth last month. We are looking forward to your leadership and a great year of camping and rallies in 2023.

Attached in your email you will also find our most current membership list. Remember that we no longer print and mail our membership directory. I have highlighted our newest members in yellow and our executive board in blue. I plan on sending out updated member lists every quarter with the newsletter.

See you down the road...
Randy & Diane **30876**
Membership Chairs

An **Updated Membership Directory** was sent to all NYFLAC Members and Affiliates.

If you didn't receive your copy please notify
Randy or Diane Hill.

The directory was sent as an email attachment.



NY Finger Lakes Airstream Club 2022—23 Activities

All activities are subject to change.
Please refer to upcoming issues of The Grapevine Newsletter for current activities. You can also find activities listed on our website.

ATTENTION NEW CLUB MEMBERS!!

ALL rally campsite fees will be covered by the NYFLAC for ANY NEW MEMBER WHO HAS NEVER ATTENDED A RALLY. New members will be still be responsible for any additional costs associated with a rally. This offer does not apply to individuals who have transferred to our club AND have attended a rally elsewhere. This is only offered to members and affiliates of the NYFLAC.

<p>June 2-6, 2023</p>	<p>2023 Region 2 Rally Niagara Falls, ON Details to follow</p>
<p>June 24-30, 2023</p>	<p>2023 International Rally Rock Springs, WY Registration is now open</p>

WOW!! What a fantastic rally year we have had!! I challenge you to consider hosting or co-hosting a NYFLAC rally or event next year!!! Plan something you love!! How about get-together at a winery or brewery? Snowshoeing? Lunch? Breakfast? Hiking? **There are no limits.** Charlie and I are even thinking of planning a rally in the fall! We've never hosted because we're often traveling in the summer. Who wants to help us?

Annual Business Meeting Elections

The meeting was called to order by President Gary Russo. The purpose of the business meeting was to elect officers for the upcoming year with results shown below.

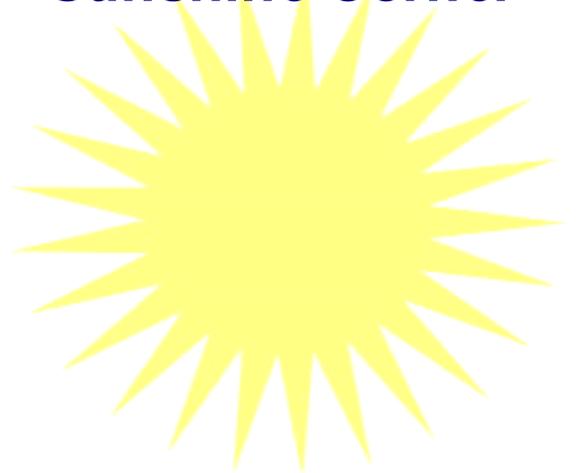
- ◆ President: Dick Saxton, nominated by Chris Cappelletti, seconded by Kathy Anderson. 26 votes
- ◆ 1st VP: President: Chris Cappelletti, nominated by Randy Hill, seconded by Val Davis, 26 votes.
- ◆ 2nd VP: Mary Fine-Silco, nominated by Diane Hill, seconded by Diana McIntosh, 26 votes
- ◆ Recording Secretary: Charlie Kirk, nominated by Mary Sweeney, seconded by Mark Sweeney, 26 votes.
- ◆ Director: Val Davis, nominated by Diane Hill, seconded by Suzanne Russo, 26 votes.

Meeting was adjourned.



Submitted by Charlie Kirk, Recording Secretary

Suzanne's Sunshine Corner



Welcome Autumn!

I don't know about other parts of the country but here in New York the weather changed to autumn right on schedule. We went from wearing shorts to wearing jackets overnight!

If you didn't attend the Oktoberfest Rally at Letchworth State Park, you missed a special event. Dick & Cora Saxton and Chris & Jenn Cappelletti organized an amazing feast, as well as a beer tasting. We also installed our leadership team for next year. Gary was an awesome leader (in my unbiased opinion), and we know Dick Saxton has creative ideas and look forward to his leading our club forward. All in all, it was a wonderful way to spend our last rally for 2022!

Gary and I decided we didn't want the camping season to end so we attended the Swiss Festival National Rally in Sugarcreek, Ohio. It's a beautiful part of Ohio. What an incredible week – no chance to be bored!

Several tours were available during the weekdays. We visited museums, a wagon wheel maker's workshop, a roundhouse with several steam locomotives, the world's largest cuckoo clock, the nūCamp manufacturing facility to watch them build teardrop-shaped campers, an Amish family's home for dinner, the Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center for a history of their culture, and several restaurants for lunch.

Amish families came to our campground to make apple butter in a kettle over a fire and to give us wagon and buggy rides. Our own members made traditional bean soup over fires in huge kettles for our enjoyment.

Each evening there was entertainment -- from a DJ with karaoke to a 60's band to an orchestra that played and sang in German. By the end of week and after all the great food, we had to loosen our belts. If I have piqued your curiosity, mark your calendars for September 23-October 1, 2023, and join us next year!

I'm missing lots of birthday and anniversary dates. Didn't see yours? Let me know so that I can update my list (Suzanne.Russo21@yahoo.com).

Closing Thoughts

Mary Ann II is heading into storage for the winter in a couple of weeks, but she'll be dreaming of her trip to WY next year. Gary and I will be doing the same! In the meantime, we hope to see you during our off season.

Until we next meet, best wishes for good health and safe travels!

Suzanne



John Hussar	September 8
Shirley Trubia	September 26
Donna Smith	September 29
Suzanne Russo	September 30
John Anderson	October 6
Esther Dona	October 8
Diane Hill	October 15
Chris Cappelletti	October 19
Tom Underwood	October 22
Jessica Casey	October 25



James & KC Gillio	September 4
Randy & Diane Hill	September 16
Mark & Mary Sweeney	September 16
Jill Freidmutter & Kathy Herrer	September 18
Donald & Mary Farmer	September 28
Raymond & Audrey Wagner	October 24
John & Nancy Hussar	October 26

The Finger Lakes Club Celebrates Oktoberfest



The NY Finger Lakes Club gathered at Letchworth State Park during the weekend of September 8 through 11 for a taste of Oktoberfest. Our hosts, Dick and Cora Saxton and Chris and Jenn Cappelletti, put on a fabulous weekend of events and activities.

Twenty rigs joined together to celebrate the beginning of the Fall season. Members came from far and wide including central and western New York, Florida, Pennsylvania and Ontario, Canada. Our total number of attendees was 38. We even had a guest couple from Dayton, Ohio join us for some of the festivities. They are not members...yet! Charlie and Liz Kirk had just returned from the Viking Caravan. We welcomed the President of the Ontario Canada Airstream Club, Ray Barrick and his wife Vida (who brought loads of Cadbury chocolates...so come anytime, Vida!).



Members took advantage of the hiking trails and scenic overlooks of the gorge. The new Finger Lakes intra-group, "The Fawnies", explored the Kisil Trail with their fawn-colored dogs and encountered some historic buildings and stone tables. Many explored nearby towns including Mount Morris, Perry and Castile. Several members toured the Mount Morris dam and one couple even tried some white water rafting in the Letchworth gorge! Many enjoyed the restaurants of the area including those members of the Bills Mafia who were in search of a location to watch the game (Go Bills!). Members gathered nightly at the Saxton campsite for the campfire to share stories of our daily adventures and classic Airstream fellowship.



The Saxtons and Cappellettis treated us to wonderful meals. It started on Friday morning with French toast and bacon. Members enjoyed classic Kuchen, fruit and yogurt for Saturday's breakfast. The big meal came on Saturday night where the group was treated to a delicious smorgasbord of homemade pork schnitzel, traditional German potato salad, cabbage, beets and pickles. Diane Hill made some amazing peanut butter bars to share as dessert (I still want that recipe, Diane!). Kudos to the Saxtons and Cappellettis...It was delicious!



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The Finger Lakes Club Celebrates Oktoberfest



Friday afternoon's happy hour was the main event. Dick Saxton arranged to have a beer tasting event with brews from Hamburg Brewing Company <https://www.hamburgbrewing.com/>. Dick Saxton, Ron Silco and Chris Cappelletti took care of making sure members' cups were full while yours truly emceed the event. A variety of beers were tasted and members' names were put into a drawing to win some of the beers they tasted... a perfect end to this event.



Several members were heard saying that this was the largest rally the NYFLAC has had in quite a while. Thank you to all who attended to make this so successful, and a huge thank you to the Saxtons and Cappellettis for organizing this event.

Submitted by Mary Fien-Silco

“Life is partly what we make it, and partly what it is made by the friends we choose.”

Tennessee Williams



More Oktoberfest Pictures



SO MUCH FUN!!

Region 2 News—RJ Marquette, Region 2 President

I'm happy to announce that Region 2 Membership Chair Cody Klingler (#3937) has become the Membership Committee chair at the International level. Bad news for us, but good news for the club as a whole. He has a lot of great ideas and energy that will help the club in the long run. Cody, Congratulations!

On a related note, we're now in the market for a new region membership chair - if you're interested, please let me know (rjm1@yahoo.com). I'll be happy to chat with you about what the role entails, and Cody has offered to help with the transition as well. (On a related note, I am still in need of a Webmaster as well!)

Region 2 Caravan Coordinator Kerry Matilla (#5417) has completed the Meandering the Maritimes Caravan. They have a Facebook page for the caravan (search for the name of the caravan to find it), and it looks like they had a great time. Unfortunately, they had to shorten it a bit due to an incoming Hurricane Fiona. I've attached a picture of the attendees that Kerry sent me. Kerry is now turning his attention to planning a Capitol to Capitol caravan in May.



We're starting work on the 2023 Region 2 Rally details with upcoming information in the next few weeks. Save the date for June 2-6, 2023, in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

Most of the local clubs are holding their installations during this time of the year. Congratulations to the new officers, and a hearty thank you to the outgoing officers! However, I know of a few clubs who have had the same President for several years running. While I appreciate their service, I also worry about burning out our volunteers. Please consider volunteering in your club if you haven't before. They will train you, and you'll be helping your club stay active.

See you down the road!
RJ Marquette, #13270

Adding Solar and Lithium Batteries to your Airstream

Submitted by Randy Hill



As Airstream owners we all dream of the ultimate camping experience of being out in nature, with breathtaking views, and endless hiking trails. Where the sun set can be watched from the panoramic windows on the end of our Airstreams. What is great about our Airstreams is they come equipped with 12V lights and batteries that allow you to camp overnight without having to plugging in.

For many of us, that overnight experience is a stop at a Harvest Host or rest area. But what if you want to extend that experience to a few days at a National Park or a week of camping on BLM land? Without a way to recharge your batteries, you will quickly run out of power. Or maybe your overnight is in cold weather and you need to run your furnace? Or you want to be able to use microwave when boondocking? In this article I share my experience upgrading our Airstream from “solar ready” to 450 watts of solar, 200 amp hours of lithium batteries, and a 2000 watt highbred inverter that can power most of our AC electrical needs.



We are asked all the time about our solar, batteries and inverter upgrades that we have made to our Airstream. I am not an electrician, but did my research on what products would work together to build the system I wanted. Please use this article as a guide and not as a “how too.”

Solar -

There are a number of options available when adding solar to your Airstream - portable panels, flexible panels, and rigid panels. I chose to use rigid panels - same as what Airstream installs at the factory.



Our trailer came pre-wired for solar, that included a Zamp triple port roof cap and 10 AWG wire from the roof down to the front of the trailer. This allowed me to plug in 3 solar panels. I added three Zamp legacy Series 90 watt long roof mount solar panels - these are the same panels that Airstream would have installed at the factory.

You can buy this as a kit with a charge controller or as an expansion kit with just the panels. Because we were pre-wired for solar, I went with the expansion kit and purchased the charge controller separately.

Continued on the next page.....

Adding Solar and Lithium Batteries to your Airstream continued...

The charge controller I used is the Zamp 30-Amp Controller. You will need to size the charge controller to the number of solar panels you will eventually have. The 90 watt panels put out max of 5 amps, I have room for 4 panels on the roof and I added a portable solar panel that is made up of 2- 90 watt panels (for a total of 30 amps).



As I said above, I added a 180 watt portable panel. I would highly recommend getting, or starting with, a portable panel. Many times we have camped when the sun on the Airstream is blocked by trees or is low in the sky (winter) and it is helpful to be able to position the portable panels to get the best view of the sun. You can also chase the sun's movement through the sky during the day, making the portable panels very effective. The fixed roof panels are great for maintaining the batteries when in storage or traveling down the road, but portable panels add more amps of charge when camping. On a sunny day, I can be charging with over 25-27 amps at mid-day.

Lithium Batteries -

I went with two Battle Born Batteries - they seem to be the go-to battery for most RV lithium upgrades. These are direct replacement for the Group 24 batteries that are installed in most RVs. They weigh less than half the weight of wet cell batteries that you would be replacing, reducing the tongue weight of your trailer, and they will fit in most battery compartments.



Each battery is rated at 100 Amp hours of usable output vs 80 Amp hours for the group 24 wet cell batteries - of which only half is usable (100 vs 40). Two 100 Amp hour lithium batteries have more that double the output of wet cell batteries that came in your Airstream.

What is great about these batteries is they can be mounted anywhere, inside or out, they can even be mounted on their sides or upside down! Battle Born recommend installing the batteries inside your RV in a climate controlled area, as they will stop taking a charge below 25 degrees (F) but will continue to discharge to -4 degrees. You can get battery warmer pads if installing them outside is your only option. On the high temperature end, Battle Born recommends to stop using them above 140 degrees. I mounted our batteries under the front lounge.

Per Battle Born - when storing your Airstream for more than one month, you should fully charge your lithium batteries, then disconnect the batteries from the system - I installed a battery disconnect switch on the ground cable. This makes sure the batteries are totally disconnected vs. using the "Store Switch" installed by the factory that keeps some items hot (i.e. propane monitor and jack). Letting them sit in this state, they will only lose 3% of their charge per month. At 10V the battery management will kick the batteries into low voltage disconnect to protect them - then they will need a jumpstart to get them out of this state.



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Adding Solar and Lithium Batteries to your Airstream continued...

Charging and Inverter—

Lithium batteries have a different charge profile than most 12v converters have (newer Airstreams from 2020 and up will have lithium ready 12v converters). As our Airstream is older, I needed to upgrade our battery charging to handle lithium batteries, I did this by replacing the 1000 watt inverter with a Victron 2000 watt MultiPlus Inverter/Charger. This inverter is a hybrid pass-through inverter, the 30 Amp AC shore power coming into the Airstream passes through the inverter before connecting to the circuit breaker box - now all circuits can be powered by the inverter. This allows me to supplement the incoming power when I am unable to connect to 30 Amp - Example: I can plug into to a 15 Amp outlet in our garage and set the inverter at 15 Amps max, and when the Airstream draws more than 15 Amp, the inverter will pull the additional from the batteries. With this set-up I can power the air conditioning or microwave from a 15 Amp outlet. This is one of my favorites upgrades to our Airstream.



This inverter can be controlled by Bluetooth using an Victron Smart Dongle. This allows me to use an app on my phone to turn on or off the inverter and set the incoming Amps.

I also added a Victron Battery Monitor. With this monitor, I can quickly see the charge state of the batteries, how many Amps are we using, and how much charge the solar panels are providing. This is also Bluetooth and can be monitored using the same app. I mounted mine on the wall of the Airstream and can quickly see the battery percentage as well as for all other information.



Other Stuff—

You may need other stuff when installing this system in your Airstream, like a power bus, Anl Fuse, and heavier gage wire. I upgraded the wire between the batteries and the inverter from 6 gage to 2 gage. I also installed a 300 Amp Anl (slow-burn) fuse. I added a power bus for the incoming solar, as I want to combine both the roof panels and the portable panels to one charge controller. (I found that when I used the charge controller on the portal panels, the roof charge controller turned itself off. I believe this is programmed this way so when you are on shore power the solar is not charging the batteries). I also added a second disconnect switch on the incoming solar for any maintenance.

What would I do differently?

After using this system for a few years, there are a few things I would change and additions I'd like to add in the future. I am very pleased with the Zamp solar panels, the only change I would like to make is to add one more panel to the roof for a total of 4. (Not that 4 is a magic number, it is the max number of panels I can fit on our roof). Battle Born recommends 200 watts of solar for every 100 Amp hour of battery. I don't see that as a hard rule, as I have a friend with the same trailer as us and they have 600 amp hours of batteries with the same 4 panels on the roof and the same portable panel as we have. My suggestion with solar is to plan out the maximum number of panels you can fit on your roof, then buy what you can afford to get started. Size your charge controller to the maximum number of panels - then you can easily add to the system in the future. I would also like to add a third battery. I have space for a third battery, so it would be an easy upgrade. I have found that my current 2 batteries will not power the microwave, but talking to Battle Born, adding a third will. Not that we use the microwave much when boondocking, but it is nice to be able to use it at a rest stop for heating up our lunch.

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Adding Solar and Lithium Batteries to your Airstream continued...

I also would use a Victron rather than Zamp charge controller. I bought the Zamp Controller with the panels, and at the time, did not know that much about the different controllers. The Zamp is a PWM (pulse with modulated) and the Victron is MPPT (Maximum Power Point Tracking). MPPT controllers are 30% more efficient than PWM controllers and will charge your batteries faster.

In conclusion—

I am very pleased with the system I have put together. When we boondock, we use about 30%-40% of our batteries at night. This is with us using the inverter to power the TV for a couple hours in the evening. The solar panels usually recharge them by mid-afternoon (depending on the time of the year). This gives me a reserve of over half of our batteries for cloudy days. Having fixed and portable panels gives me flexibility to adjust the solar to work in most any campsites.

My suggestion for anyone concerning this upgrade is to look at what type of solar panels and batteries you would want in the future and then build it piece by piece as you can. Start with the batteries and charger, then add portable solar panels and a battery monitor. Then someday when you are ready, you can add additional roof panels and inverter when you feel you need more power. As they say in the solar business - "How much solar I need depends on how much money you want to spend!"

Let me know if you have any questions. For a more detailed look at our solar, batteries and inverter set up, check out our Youtube Channel - Zephyr Travels.

Randy Hill
30876

New Club Members

David Clack
Lockport, NY

Michelle Adamovich and Miles Ferris
Brewerton, NY

New Affiliates

Maurice and Kathy Rowe
West Falmouth, MA

Drew Webb and Dan Gallagher
Norfolk, VA

James and Catherine Heffernan
Carlisle, PA

