



Missouri-Kansas Airstream Club

Gopher News



WBCCI - Unit 059

November 2022

President's Message

This past summer on our epic trip through Maine, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, when the 5 units travelling together were camped in Northern Nova Scotia, one neighboring camper - after observing our group of jokers, storytellers, appetizer makers, and all-around jolly company - yelled over to us and said:

“Man, I’ve got to get me a group like this!!”

We all chuckled and then we realized, yeah, we are truly blessed with such good travel companions.

As a club, we are lucky too. It has been like this at every campout that Dave and I have attended – great stories, some silliness, helpful hands, intelligent conversations, lessons learned. *And it is getting bigger.* We had 21 rigs camped for our fall rally and we are adding new members every month.

This year as President, I’ve set some goals that I hope will help continue this tradition of fun while working to make running the club a little easier, increasing member involvement, setting up successive presidents for success, and looking forward to new kinds of activities including assisting Region 8 in the hosting of the International Rally in Sedalia Missouri in October of 2024.

Right now, we have a core group of 33 units that have participate in our rallies and other events during the past two years – that leaves about 50 who have not. We need to reach those 50 Airstream families.

Core to those principles is first have great camping events; semiannual rallies, pop-up meetups, Just for Fun Rallies, luncheons, and main street boondocking. We are beginning the planning for our Spring Rally set for May at Basswood near Park City Missouri and the Fall Rally in late September in the areas near Humboldt and Chanute Kansas.

The executive committee will work to further clarify and establish roles for all officers. **Ed O’Connor** (1st VP) is planning on reviewing and reworking the bylaws to reflect any necessary changes now being made at the International Club level and reworking our club functions. Our current by-laws are required to be reviewed and possibly revised by 2025 – Ed is on the right track to tackle this now. We hope to receive great input, thoughtful discussion and make this as painless as possible. And get back to the joy of camping in our Airstreams.

“Stream”lining the registration process with an internet registration option (as well as paper for the traditionalist) might help us attract and keep younger members who do all their work online. So, I will be exploring this option for future rallies. Finding activities that will encourage all our members to attend a function knowing that there will be something for everyone; old, young, goofy, quiet, or not.

Communication is so very critical – in addition to the monthly Gopher News and Facebook pages, the executive members will be zooming, texting, and talking routinely to keep each other up on what is going on with projects. If you have a question, comment, or concern; we want to hear directly from you.

Lastly, we need help. As **Larry Poage** pointed out during the fun and game time during the fall rally - we are a club full of talented, diverse people with amazing skills and life accomplishments. So, to that end, in January we will be sending out a survey – that will help us identify some of those special skills that can be shared with the club or drive our activity choices.

Until next time, see you all further down the road and thanks for being our “group”.

Be Safe, Stephanie Porto





Welcome New Members!

David & Heather Hosea

Pleasant Valley, MO

Monte, Susan & Jessie Griffey

Kearney, MO

We hope to meet you at a future luncheon or Rally!



Welcome New Members!

D. Cary Peaden

Wichita, KS

Michael & Michelle O'Neill

Lake Lotawana, MO

We hope to meet you at a future luncheon or Rally!

A big *Thank you* for those who made the *Fall Rally* and the Melvern "Just-for-Fun" Rally special.

You all set the bar really high!

Linda & Larry Poage,

Ilona Baumhofer & Chris "Vana" Shotton ,

Louise & Terry (fire maker *and* contrarian extraordinary) **Mercer,**

Christine & Dustin Whitney, Rachel & Martin Hughey,
and **Sue & Lynn Anderson**

November Celebrations!

Birthdays

Joyce Cantrell - 11/03	Carrie Lamb - 11/18
Larry Poage - 11/15	Rick Embers - 11/21
Paula Timmons - 11/15	Martin Hughey - 11/26
Kerstin Roberts - 11/16	Linda Poage - 11/27

Anniversaries

Wayne & Ginny Gurtler - 11/12
Frank & Coke Melton - 11/30

Heads up!

Mark your calendar for *December 1st* - this is when you need to make reservations for our "**Just-For-Fun**" Rally at Melvern Lake, June 1-4.

<https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/233695>

(This campground fills up fast!)

Upcoming Mo-Kan Club Activities

LUNCHEONS

November 5, 2022

Jack Stack BBQ

8721 Ryckert St, Lenexa, KS
Hosts – Richard & Christine Embers
913-269-4135

December 3, 2022 – 11:30am

Holiday Luncheon
Cascone's Italian Restaurant

3737 N. Oak Trfy, Kansas City, MO
Hosts – Charles & Nadine Colbert
913-484-9864

January 7, 2023

Fields & Ivy Brewery

706 E. 23rd St., Lawrence, KS
Hosts – Dave & Stephanie Porto
785-764-2154

RALLIES

April 26 – 30, 2023

Region 8 Rally

Sebetha, KS

Sycamore Springs White Tail Ranch
More info to come!

May 4 – 7, 2023

Mo-Kan Spring Rally

Platte City, MO

Basswood Resort
More info to come!

June 24 - 30, 2023

Airstream Club Int'l Rally

Rock Springs, WY

Info and Registration at
AirstreamClub.org/Rally2023

June 1– 4, 2023

"Just-for Fun" Rally

Melvorn, KS

Melvorn Lake Outlet Campground
Make site reservations starting Dec. 1st!

Remember! There's lots of good info, photos and archived newsletters at our Club's website:

<https://airstreamclub.org/missouri-kansas>





2022 Fall Installation Rally

22 Airstreams (45 people) attended the MO-KAN Fall Installation Rally at Arrowhead Point RV Park in Osceola, MO, on Sept.29 with perfect weather.

Two of those were “First Time Airstream Rally” attendees: **Monte, Susan, & Jessie Griffey** and **Chad & Monica McAtee**.

Rick Everson, Region 8 VP, conducted the Installation. (See page 4!)

Thank you for the many hands that made this Rally possible, from keeping the campfire burning, preparation of food, presenting a movie, organizing the flea market, collecting non-perishable foods, Sunday Church service, & cleaning up.

Teamwork is what makes it happen.

Thank you from your hosts,
Larry, Linda, Chris, & Ilona



Introducing the 2023 Missouri-Kansas Airstream Club Executive Board and Volunteers!



Monica McAtee
Membership Chair

Linda Poage
Treasurer

Christine Whitney
Corresponding Secretary

Charles Colbert
Past President

Rick Everson
Region 8 1st VP
(Presiding over
Installation)

ED O'Connor
1st VP

Stephanie Porto
President

Not Shown:
Glenda Ridgeway, Recording Secretary
Christine Embers, Community Service Chair
Kirk Moore, Newsletter Editor

Lee Orth
2nd VP

Chris Shotton
3rd VP

Vern Wirka
Parliamentarian

Thanks to all who donated to our Fall Food drive at our Fall Rally! We gave 143lbs of food to the *St Clair County Food Banc* to help the community in Osceola, Missouri this weekend. Our donations were greatly appreciated!

- **Christine Embers**, Community Service Chair



Aluminum at the End of the Rainbow!



Kirk Moore caught this photo last September while camping at Chatfield State Park in Colorado.



"There will be a **Caravan Leaders' Course** provided via Zoom sometime in December according to John Becker, the WBAC Caravan Committee Chair. If any of our members are interested in receiving Caravan leaders training, please contact John Becker via email john_becker@me.com and Ray Combs at raycombs100@gmail.com."

- **Lee Cantrell**

Electric Bikes

Why We Bought Them, How We Chose Them, How We Transport Them *and What Could Happen.*

By John Eckardt, BRN **7352**

October, 2022

At the July International Airstream Rally in Fryeburg, Maine, one likely saw all of the bicycles that campers brought with them to get from their trailers to activities. Of the bicycles I saw, I estimated that about 40% were electric. *My wife Maria and I had two of them.* A few months prior to the rally we bought two foldable, lightweight, **Blix Vika + Flex bicycles**. The color of Maria's is Nu Cream. Mine is British Racing Green.



I bought electric bikes because I not only wanted to use them at the Rally, but also on our planned extended trip to Acadia National Park and Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. Prior to the trip, I read that between 1919 and 1931, John D. Rockefeller Jr., funded and supervised the addition of 45 miles of crushed rock carriage roads in **Acadia National Park**. It was stipulated that these roads could only be used by horse-drawn carriages, pedestrians and bicyclists. Riding bikes at Acadia was one of our anticipated activities on the trip. Our new electric bikes turned out to be great for the Rally, Acadia and Martha's Vineyard (mostly). Another reason we bought electric bikes was because my wife and I both enjoy camping in State Parks and we use the bikes to explore the parks. The problem we had in State Parks with our regular bikes was with the typical location of the campgrounds. We found too often that campgrounds were on top of a hill and the park amenities were at the bottom. Peddling back up those hills to the campsite kept getting harder. Now, after about six months of electric bike ownership, we both agree that the purchase (\$1,800 for each) was a good decision.

I like researching large purchases and had many hours studying the bike purchase. I found that it was easy to get bogged down in the research. As an example, after reading this article, type "Best Foldable Electric Bikes under \$2,000" into your web browser. I just did. The first website that popped up identified the top 83 selections from 93 experts and 2,897 users. These bikes are becoming increasingly popular and they are diverse in their offerings. When reading this article though, please be aware that my criteria and bike selection will likely not be the same as yours.

Bicycle weight and size were two important factors to me. I also placed a high value on cost, foldable frame, size of motor, maximum speed, multiple gear shifter, multiple power assist modes, type and width of tires, type of brakes, supplying company customer satisfaction from reviews, headlights, brake lights and fenders.

The weight, size and folding aspects come into play when transporting during camping trips. One issue that arises when campers travel with bikes is how to transport them during the two primary traveling situations. First, while traveling to the campsite with the RV in tow. And second, while traveling with the bikes in or on the tow vehicle to a destined bike ride. For example, during the time we traveled to Martha's Vineyard to bike the island, we were

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camped at Pinewood Lodge Campground in Plymouth, MA. To get the bikes to the island, we first had to transport the bikes in the truck roughly 40 miles to Woods Hole, MA, and park. Then, ride our bikes about four miles to the ferry and then take the 45-minute ferry ride to the City of Vineyard Haven. We've often found that we need to transport the bikes to get to the actual place that we want to ride. As a sidebar, be careful relying on a commuter bus to carry your e-bikes—even if the bikes will be carried outside. We were denied putting our bikes on the shuttle bus at Acadia National Park by the bus driver because the battery in the bikes was considered dangerous.

For transporting the bicycles to the campground, I accepted the recommendation from Airstream, and installed a **Fiamma bike rack** for Airstream trailers on the back of the trailer. The Fiamma bike rack is the only one endorsed by Airstream. It cost about \$600 and was listed as being able to support 100 lbs. The rack itself is about 20 lbs. and since I needed to carry two bikes, I assumed I would need to buy a bike that was close to 40 lbs. To transport the bikes to the biking location after we were camped, I decided that our best option was to look for foldable bikes and store them for transport either in the bed of the truck or in the back seat area with the seats raised. We have a truck bed topper that is even with the roof height of the cab. I hoped that if I bought foldable bikes, I would not have to bring and store a separate bike carrying rack for the back hitch of the truck. Truck bike racks are typically heavy, clunky and take up a lot of valuable storage space. I have seen others carrying bikes on the front, back or top of the truck. I've also seen bikes with the front tires removed and carried upright in the truck bed. No options seemed to me to be convenient but I decided to go with foldable bikes, mostly due to the transporting issue. That was a big decision because typically, foldable bikes have smaller tires and are lighter, but do not ride as smoothly or efficiently as standard sized bikes. I read reviews where owners of boats or airplanes would carry foldable e-bikes due to storage limitations and foldable bikes seemed to work for them. Camping seemed similar enough to those uses.



When purchasing an e-bike, one needs to make a decision on the "Class" of bike and size of electric motor. *The National Park Service* (NPS) provides the following definitions for E-bikes:

- **Class 1 e-bikes** have a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 20-mph.
- **Class 2 e-bikes** have a motor that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle and that is not capable of providing assistance when the e-bike reaches 20-mph.
- **Class 3 e-bikes** have a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 28-mph

The NPS also states that the Park Superintendent has the authority to restrict speeds and/or throttle only biking depending on circumstances, so it's always best to check before riding in certain locations especially when throttle-only biking is expected.

Maximum bike speeds are dependent on many things but mostly on the size and type of electric motor in the bike. How the electric motor works to propel the bike is a head spinning research event only a mechanical engineer could love. What I found is that the options in available motors will lie somewhere between a 250 and 750-watt motor.

The Jetson Bolt folding bike which sells at Costco for under \$400, has a 350-watt motor and 14 in. wheels. Most
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mountain bikes will have a 750-watt motor. One will also need to choose between a hub motor and a mid-drive motor. Hub motors are typically located in the center wheel hub of the back wheel. Mid-drive motors are located at the center of the bike, between the pedals. Hub motors are lighter and considered more reliable and easier to use.

Generally, if one plans to use their bikes on short recreational rides of 10-15 miles, a 250-350 watt motor will be a lighter option and likely be large enough. For longer rides of 20-40 miles, or commuting, a 500-watt motor may more appropriate. Mountain biking, longer trips or riding speeds of up to 28 mph may be best with a 750-watt motor



Maria and I are recreational, scene enjoying bicyclists. Our bike speeds are typically between 8 and 15 mph. On occasional stretches up or down a hill, we can accelerate up to 20 mph. Twenty miles per hour is fast for us on any bike let alone a foldable bike with 20-inch tires. The motor on our Blix Vika + Flex is a 500-watt, geared motor, with a companion 48-volt battery. This combination seems plenty for us. We have been on a few 35-mile rides while using constant pedal assist and have had plenty of battery supply remaining at the end of the ride. You don't want to be 10 miles away from home with no battery supply left and have to ride home the old-fashion way! Yikes

I wanted a bike with multiple gears, multiple power assist modes and a throttle. The throttle works easily. When one gently pushes the throttle thumb lever, the bike begins to accelerate. I often use the accelerator to start the bike—just to get moving—and then begin peddling. I also often use the accelerator up hills or when I start to get tired. When using the accelerator, the bike acts more like a motorcycle than a bicycle so one has to be careful. Since we have a Class 2 bike, our bikes only reach a maximum speed of 20 mph. Our bikes have seven gears and five pedal assist modes. I've found that on most rides which include hills, I use all of the seven gears. Our bikes also have five pedal assists modes. Pedal assist, gives the rider an extra boost whenever the rider pedals the bike. On our bike, pedal assist one, helps the bike accelerate to a speed of about 10 mph and will keep that speed constant, as long as the rider is pedaling. When the pedaling stops or when the brakes are engaged, the pedal assist action stops and the bike coasts. Pedal assist two accelerates the bike to about 12 mph. This pattern continues until the maximum pedal assist five, which tops out for us at 20 mph. The pedal assist five on a bike with a 750-watt motor would top out at 28 mph.

I didn't want to worry about flat tires and I wanted a responsive ride with a little cushion. The bikes we ended up with had 20-inch wheels—but the tires were 2.4 inches wide, a little wider than normal, but not too wide. Tires get up to 4 inches wide. Bikes with 4-inch wide tires and often purchased for trail riding or mountain biking. I found that most bikes with 4-inch-wide tires were too heavy for my need. The **2.4-inch-wide tires** I ended up with seemed about right and were advertised as having puncture resistant Kevlar technology. That sounded pretty good to me.

After seeing multiple on-line bike reviews, I also wanted several other aspects on our bikes. Like: disc brakes, for long-lasting and immediate stopping power; led headlights and brake lights, so we could see at night and motorists could see us, both in front and behind; fenders, so when we rode in an unexpected rainfall, we would not get the "waterline of shame" up our backs; a good digital display on the handlebars, so we could keep track of the number of miles we've ridden and also keep track of our battery life and bike speed; a pedal kickstand mounted back far enough on the frame so the pedal could not contact it when the kickstand was down and the pedal was moving. The last aspect our bikes have is a step-through frame. Yes, step-through frames "used" to be for girls and women. I'm getting older and I like it.



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There you have it! All laid out on the near-perfect bikes for my wife and me. What could possibly go wrong? You may have noticed that I haven't spoken about customer service. Well. Remember the trip I spoke of earlier to Martha's Vineyard? The 40-mile drive from Plymouth, MA to Woods Hole, the four-mile bike ride from our parking lot to the Woods Hole Ferry, the 45-minute ferry ride from Woods Hole to the town of Vineyard Haven on Martha's Vineyard? I was already tired at this point. After departing the ferry, we rode the bikes about four miles over to the town of Oak Bluffs and then another eight miles down the coast to Edgartown. What a wonderful ride down the Joseph Silvia State Beach Road with great views of the beaches and Nantucket Sound to the left. Then, while getting to our farthest point away from home prior to turning back, we rode through the small town of Edgartown (population 500). While cruising along one of the residential back roads of Edgartown, I felt an unfamiliar and unwanted wobble in the base of the back tire. Never good. Then—boom! Like a shotgun blast. Maria turned around on her bike. I was ghost white with that "oh no" sinking feeling of how far away from a solution I was. The tire was flat. Of course, the bike would not ride, and was even hard to push. To the left, across the street, I noticed that a construction worker on lunch break had rolled his window down and asked if I needed help. I did. I asked if he knew of a bicycle repair shop anywhere nearby, thinking – not likely in a town of 500. "Yes", he said, "would you like me to take you there", he asked. I accepted immediately, being wary that the shop would neither be open nor not have my odd sized 20-inch tube or 20-inch x 2.4-inch-wide tire. I rode my wife's bike while she rode with the worker in his car with my bike in the trunk of his Honda Accord—another good reason for a foldable bike.

Not only, was the **Edgartown Bicycle shop** open, the mechanic immediately put a new tube and tire on the bike and I was ready to go in only 45 minutes. In addition, the good Samaritan construction worker was Brazilian, like my wife. They spoke Portuguese all the way to the bike shop. Whew! Back to my point though, which is customer service for the bike repair. When I returned home, I called a representative from the bike distributor, Blix. They answered the phone immediately and stated that the company would send me a new tube and tire to replace the temporary tire. They said the new tire would be a factory warranted tire possessing the puncture resistant Kevlar technology. He also said that Blix would pay for the installation of the new parts at my hometown chosen bike dealer in Kansas City, Missouri. A happy ending to a short but stressful biking episode. It did however convince me that customer service is an important aspect of a bike purchase.



Happy Biking!



Wow! Two rainbow photos in one issue!
How lucky we are!

If you want to share your photos, travel stories, or camping advise, send them to us for upcoming issues of
The Gopher News!

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