



Missouri-Kansas Airstream Club

Gopher News



WBCCI - Unit 059

January 2023

President's Message

“Oh’ She’ll be coming around the Mountain when she comes...”

It seems like April and June is so far away, but like the squirrels planting acorns in the fall, it is time for us to make reservations for the Spring and Summer Events.



The International Rally in Sweet Springs Wyoming has filled all their 1200 camping slots for the rally, and AIC has started a waiting list and possibly opening a large boondocking area. Several members of our club have gone the waiting list route and have also made a back-up plan of reservations at a local KOA.

The following information has recently been sent to us by our **Region 8 President, Greg Vadner**. As you can see from the proposed activity sheet for the Region 8, this will be a great Rally.

Caravan to Wyoming

Attached (*to our Newsletter email*) is information on a caravan to the 2023 International Rally in Rock Springs, WY. Joe Hauser, with Greater St. Louis is coordinating the caravan. The caravan is open to all members and details are in the attachment. Please share this with your members who are heading to the International rally.

2023 Region 8 Rally

We are super pleased about the participation in our rally, of Bill Thomas Camper Sales, Gateway Airstream. A closer relationship has long been a wish, members have asked for. Help cement a new partnership by attending this rally and participating in the joy.

We don't quite have the registration details ready for our 2023 Region 8 Rally at the Sycamore Springs Whitetail Ranch. However, the rally events are taking shape and they are exciting. Take a look at the attached tentative list of activities (*also attached to our Newsletter email*). We're hoping the list will help us generate a rush of registrations when the gates open!

Get ready for the rush!!!

Likewise, our clubs Spring meeting following the Region 8 Rally is finalizing our costs and registrations – So for both Rallies - as the final cost determination is done, Registrations will be sent out.

Until then, Stay safe, Stay warm and dream of the good times ahead.

- Stephanie

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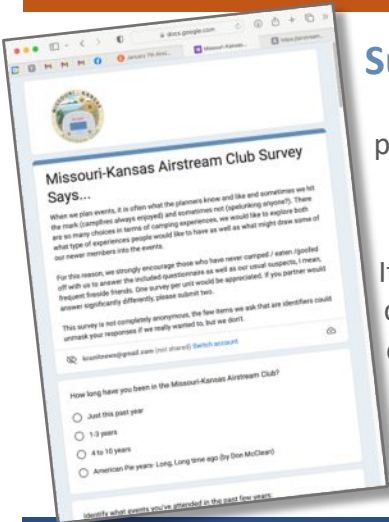
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Survey Says...

Please help the Club plan for future Rallies by completing this *fun* [online survey](#).

It will only take you a couple of minutes to complete, and we're hoping to receive all responses by the *end of January*.

Welcome New Members!
Marvin & Joan Herr
 Louisburg, KS
Sean & Bridget Pierson
 Forest City, MO
 We hope to meet you at a future luncheon or Rally!

“I remember their faces, but I don't remember their names...”

Maybe the Mo-Kan Photo Directory can help?

A couple a times a year we go through our Rally and Luncheon photos and update our Photo Directory - so that *we all* can have it at-the-ready for future get-togethers. You can find the December '22 updates here: airstreamclub.org/missouri-kansas/photo-directory



January Celebrations!

Birthdays

- Chris Jenny - 1/5
- Linda Spangler - 1/17
- Tracy Ridgeway - 1/17
- Christine Embers - 1/25
- Pat Harris - 1/26

Anniversaries

- Ed & Jill O'Connor - 1/3
- Tim & Paula Timmons - 1/27

Upcoming Mo-Kan Club Activities

LUNCHEONS

January 7, 2023 – 11:30am

Fields & Ivy Brewery

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



Please RSVP online at this [Eventbrite page](#)

February 4, 2023 – 11:30am

Rodeo Mexican Restaurant

15510 State Ave., Basehor, KS
 Hosts – Christine & Dustin Whitney
 913-221-6724

March 4, 2023 – 11:30am

Johnny's Tavern Shawnee

13131 Shawnee Mission Pkwy, Shawnee, KS
 Hosts – Deb & John Mitchell
 913-563-9370

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 your own site reservations at:

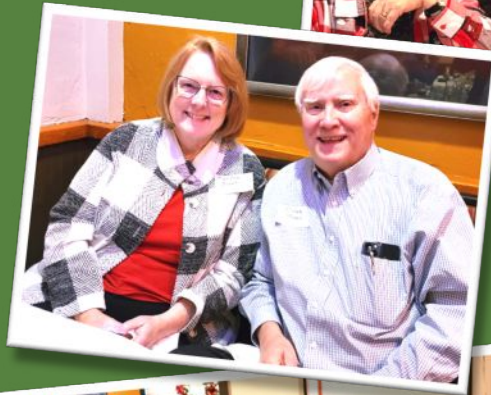
<https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/233695>

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

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



December HOLIDAY Luncheon – Dec. 3, 2022
Cascone's Italian Restaurant



The Air Safe Hitch - Written and submitted by Lee Orth

Last April I invested in an addition to my Equalizer hitch, an addition I had never heard of before. Why this addition? Well, like most Airstreamers, I spent some time perusing various aspects of the trailering world. Jane and I were not new to the camping world, but we might as well have been, since our last adventures, featuring differing trailers over the years ended decades ago. Fast-forward to the fall of 2019, when we bought a 2020 25' FBT Flying Cloud, after our daughter and son-in-law bought a 30' rear bedroom Flying Cloud a year and a half before. Somehow, the camping bug hit us again. After a brief fling with the Airstream Nest, we settled on our present trailer.



In the process of learning and relearning as much as I could about the trailer world and it's systems, I came across several somewhat concerning, if not disturbing articles. Reports came in concerning dimpling of the aluminum just over the front A frame, popping rivets, and even the cracking of the A frame on two particular models of Airstreams: the front bedroom 25's, and the front bedroom 27's. In an effort to understand this phenomenon, it appears several factors contribute to this malady.

To begin with, the front bedroom (FB) configuration ends up being very tongue heavy, in relation to the back bedroom setup. The published TW (tongue weight) of our trailer is 837 lbs. But when weighed using a hitch scale, the weight is around 1100 lbs. Other similar trailers I have measured had yielded the same results. With the FB floor plan, there is a lot of storage available in the front half of the trailer, and not so much in the back. In addition, the underbelly tanks all go forward of the dual axles. The water tank begins at the axles, preceded by the black and the grey water tanks both in front of the axles. This of course will increase the TW, especially in relation to back bedroom trailers, like our kids' 30' FC, which has tanks at and then extending behind the axles toward the back, as well as a large storage area in the very back, underneath the huge double bed, where Greg, our SIL stores various items, including tools. (Most of my tools are stored in the front, behind the propane tanks. I have put some in the very back, under the dinette seat.). Take note that, in measuring our FB TW, the black and grey tanks were NOT full...in fact empty and 20%...which is to say that the TW was at a minimum; full would have added even more TW.

So why does this play into possible trailer damage, and what can be done about it? To begin with, we all no doubt realize that the purpose of the WDH (weight distribution hitch) is to transfer some of the TW from the back axle of the TV (tow vehicle) to the front axle, resulting in a more balanced setup. Usually, the back axle ends up with 60% of the TW and the front 40%. In order to achieve this, the WD bars experience severe stress...this stress is transferred to the A frame of the trailer. The net effect of the WDH is to create a single platform; that is, when set up, the WDH plays out as a solid platform between the TV and the trailer frames. Incidentally, to exhibit this, years ago, one of the WDH companies ran an AD in a magazine showing an Oldsmobile Toronado (which was one of the first

(Continued next page...)

full-sized vehicles to have front wheel drive only) hitched to a trailer via a WDH with the back wheels removed. Obviously, they over torqued the WDH bars, but the phenomenon was, and is real.

Well, the net effect of this setup, which we all use, is to transfer any bump experienced by the TV to the trailer, and vice versa. So when you hit a bump, each component, the TV and the trailer, each receive not just one, but two jolts. (When you hit a bump, the truck transmits it to the trailer, and when the trailer hits the bump, it re-transmits it to the truck.) Again, this is because you have one solid platform.

While this obvious phenomenon is known to us all, in some cases, it appears that a certain combination exacerbates the situation. In thinking this through, I believe a combination of a TV with a stiff suspension, combined with a stiff WDH, combined with a heavy TW is the perfect storm. Which it is in my case. I have a $\frac{3}{4}$ ton pickup with a High Capacity Tow Package (I didn't order it this way, I just took what was available as I simply wanted a white truck with LED lights... and this combination was found in Harrison, AR, then sent to Harrisonville, MO). Be it as it may, I have in essence, a heavy duty (unforgiving) suspension, mated to a very stiff (Equalizer) WDH, with a front heavy trailer. While the Equalizer WDH works well, the bars are so solid as to not provide any cushioning when one hits a bump. Contrast that to the Blue Ox WDH my SIL has for his 30' trailer, which bars noticeably bend upon hitching. It seems to me that bend also allows some cushioning. And he has a much better-balanced trailer with the back bedroom setup. So, my unqualified opinion is that a $\frac{1}{2}$ ton mated to a hitch like a Blue Ox may be a more forgiving combination.

But back to my inherent problem. I came across a solution for my unfortunate malady. BTW, I did not experience a problem with my setup, I just wanted to avert one. It turns out there is a type of intermediary to a hitch designed to specifically address this problem. This has to do with an addition to a hitch that cushions the blow delivered by each bump with an air bag. I found two companies that address this issue: Shocker and **Air Safe**. Shocker appears to be cheaper, but I went with Air Safe, based on reviews, and interactions with other Airstreamers online via Airstream Addicts, who were navigating through this same issue.

The Air Safe hitch is mated to either a simple ball hitch or a WDH hitch (in my case). Now this combination is heavy. Together they weigh 100 lbs...add the bars, and it is a total of 127 lbs. In order to load it, I purchased lift table from Harbor Freight, for around \$200. With this table, I can easily, and precisely slide this WDH combo into my truck's receiver, and also unload it.

When you hit a bump, the Air Safe absorbs the blow (90% the manufacturer says) and does not pass it on to your trailer. Conversely, the trailer does not pass the bump back to your TV. The result is a smoother ride, a supposed savings in fuel, tire wear and a damage preventative to your trailer.

How effective is it? I'm not 100% sure. It seems to me that the trailer rides more smoothly...maybe it is psychological...I do know that it makes me feel better. Other people, who are no doubt savvier than I am, have to a person claimed a marked improvement. One of these, Marvin Williams, who bought an Air Safe partly upon my recommendation, has noted improvement. His is mated to a Blue Ox WDH I believe. BTW, even though my SIL's longer, better balanced 30' FC sports a Blue Ox WDH, he has experienced popped rivets in front that I never have.

Air Safe has been making models for 5th wheel setups for decades. Also, they are popular for people towing horse trailers. Regarding the models for trailers, there are currently eight:

Classes 1 & 2 are no longer featured...out of production? Anyway, few of us would use those anyway.

Class 3 features a 2" draw bar, 600 or 800lbs TW, 6000 or 8000 lbs GTW (gross trailer weight). It appears this model cannot be mated to WDH.

Class 4 2" draw bar (hollow shaft), 900lbs TW, 9000 lbs GTW

Class 5 2 or 2 ½" solid shaft draw bar, 1400lbs TW, 14,000lbs GTW. Also available with 8.5" extended shaft, 1050 TW, 14,000 lbs GTW

Class 6 2 or 2 ½" solid shaft draw bar, 2000lbs TW, 20,000 lbs GTW. Also available with 8.5" extended shaft, 1500 TW, 20,000 GTW

Class 7 2 ½" or 3" solid shaft draw bar, 2500 lbs TW, 25,000 lbs GTW. Also available with 8.5" extended shaft, 1875 lbs TW, 25,000 lbs GTW.

Class 8 Same, except 3000 lbs TW, 30,000 lbs GTW, 2250 lbs ext shaft.

The reason I have a Class 7 is because my truck, with the heavy-duty tow package, comes with a 3" receiver. The distributor, Lloyd Stegemann (407-759-4212, out of Island Park, NY, [5th Wheel, Gooseneck & Receiver by Air Safe | Air Safe Hitches](#).) recommended that so that there is no slop. I probably could have gotten by with a much smaller size, but I didn't want the slop. Evidently, my extra built in capacity (1875 lbs TW) still works well with a smaller sized trailer as mine, as one blows up the rubber airbag to where the silver side bars are level. 40lbs in my case (which I have never had to adjust). Obviously, this allows a softer bounce; a heavier TW would require more air pressure, up to 100 lbs. Lloyd said this would work, and it does.

Prices vary among the various models, depending on each model's specifications. Current prices, as of October 2022 were (without extras and without shipping) online: Class 4 - \$950, Class 5 - \$1195, Class 6 - \$1695, Class 7 - 3" shaft - \$2095, Class 8 - \$2295. For classes 4 and 5, extended shaft models add another \$100. The size of the shaft will influence the price a bit, usually \$45-\$100. I suspect the extended shaft models allow one to drop the truck's tailgate without hitting the trailers jack. In my case, the addition of the Air Safe hitch mated to my Equalizer hitch extended the setup far back enough to where my tailgate easily clears. (It must be noted, that when one extends a hitch, it also tends to add to trailer sway; however front heavy trailers naturally exhibit much less sway, and besides, not hitting your tailgate is a real bonus). I gave \$2185 for my Class 7 hitch (including shipping for \$85). Not cheap, but when one considers the alternative...ie., popped rivets, dimpled aluminum, and even cracked A frames, then add in the often-frustrating warranty claims process, I felt the price was worth protecting our investment. I am a bit of a worrywart, and I know I sleep better now.

BTW.... Lloyd reminded me that the capacities of each of the hitches is decreased by 25% if you mate it to a WDH (which we all would). These capacities can be seen above in the extended shaft number...for example, with a WDH Class 5 has a TW capacity of 1050 lbs, Class 6, 1500 and Class 7, 1875lbs.

Most of you have towed your trailer for many more miles and for many more years than Jane and I. And obviously, if you haven't encountered any problems, so you may be good to go. Yet, physics being what it is, those of us owning trailers in the purported vulnerable realm may benefit from this unique device. *Happy towing to all!*