



Celebrating 50 Years – 1973-2023

The Newstream

Southeastern Michigan Airstream Club
Region 4 Club 137

Having Fun in Our Airstreams Since 1973



2nd Qtr 2023 – Spring Edition

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Airstream Links:

[SEMAC Website](#)

[Region 4 Website](#)

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[WBAC Caravans](#)

[SEMAC Facebook Group](#)

[Region 4 Facebook Page](#)



President's Scoop

I do believe that Spring has sprung! I've seen robins in my yard and my daffodils are poking through the ground. I told Robert that if he would get the garden rototilled then I would get my garden planted. He told me, "No, it's a little too early!" I'm not sure about that – I have tomatoes and all sorts of veggies growing in my Dining Room just waiting for the ground to warm up.

How about you? What signs of Spring are you seeing? Are you itching to get your Airstream out and ready for a summer of travel and camping? We certainly are. We have a few projects to do in our home away from home. New fridge, new hot water heater for starters, but there are other items on the list.

Our biggest news is that my dear sweet hubby is finally retiring! We are now in the process of creating a long "honey do" list to keep him busy.



Our wonderful Southeast Michigan Airstream Club continues to grow and even though we haven't done our luncheons like we normally would, *we are* getting ready for that trip to Kalamazoo this May. Region 4 Rally here we come. If you haven't yet made your reservations, please do so... and soon!

This is our Club's 50th anniversary and we have plans for a gathering at the Region 4 Rally to celebrate. In addition, there will also be a big Anniversary bash this June in Traverse City at the Silver on Silver Rally. It's shaping up to be a full house, but if you want to come please let us know as soon as possible, there's always options.

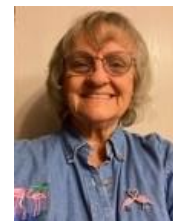
This July, there will be a great opportunity for Club members to get together, meet or catch-up, at a social outing led by our Vice President Steve. (*Thank you, Steve!*) And in August, there will be another Lighthouse weekend in Harbor Beach.

This great club will be looking for new leadership soon. June is when the calls will be coming. In October, I will be moving to Past President, Steve will be moving to President and Mark's term as a trustee will be done. So, we will be looking for a 1st Vice President, a 2nd Vice President and a new trustee, at least. One role that is also available is Membership Chair. If you have any interest in serving your Club in this manner, please let me know. We all need to do our part.

See you down the road,

Linda Smith, SEMAC President

248-284-3627 or SEMACpresident@gmail.com



Club & Membership News

Join our New SEMAC Facebook Group

Keep connected with fellow SEMAC members through our new Facebook Group. This new group page is here to serve as a hub for sharing information and events with current and future members.

We encourage you to share rally info, pictures of your Airstream adventures, and anything else that may be helpful for others!



Search “Southeast Michigan Airstream Club #137” on Facebook or if you have a compatible smart phone, use the QR code above to connect directly!

Don't Miss “SEMAC on Tap” this July

Not every event in the summer involves a weekend rally! Come and join us for a fun afternoon get-together at the **Bearded Lamb Brewery in Plymouth, Michigan on Sunday, July 23 at 1pm.**

An old-style pub located in Plymouth's historic Old Village, the Bearded Lamb Brewing Company combines a quaint local feel with craft brews that can compete with the big boys.



Catch up or meet news Airstreaming friends and share your summer adventures.

Welcome NEW Members!

Deanna & Daniel Blaskie

#29539

Douglas & Margaret Coburn

#1404

Sidney & Elizabeth Johnson

#9080

Douglas & Maggie Cervin

#1102



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Birthday Celebrants!



April

Cindy Thoman
Richard Lieblein
Carol Jane Beard
Jim Conant
Jackie Klare
Dee Henn
Mark Stephenson
Kathleen Taylor
Gary Miller
Marc Cram
Margaret Coburn

May

Ann Tonkin
Ralph Steinberger
Sharon Bryant
Linda Marquardt
Amy Lieblein
Ardene Jones
Lee Klare
Steven White
Daniel Blaskie
Martina Bode
Jim Chellman

June

LaVerne McHenry
Brian Schmidbauer
Lorrie Robertson
Ralph Volk
Karen Fisher
David Tuck
Ed Polsdofer
Elyse White
Christine Bliss
Brian Burke

Happy ACI/WBCCI Anniversary!

Karen Beardsley #7654
Raffael & Gracie Guillen #25967
Richard & Cheryl Sands #5943
David Smith #20208
Nick & Ann Tonkin #18136
Marc & Elena Cram #3373
Jim Chellman #3764
Gary & Leslie Miller #2150
Denise & Greg Hampton #9885
Richard & Kathleen Taylor #2527
Bob Anderson & Don Johnson #2088

Remembering Al Miller

It is with sadness that we recently learned of the passing of Al Miller, a long time SEMAC member and avid Airstreamer! Al loved to travel with his wife, Dottie, who passed a few years ago. Many of us will remember fondly his devotion to nature and the land. One of Al's hobbies was bee keeping and he'd bring some of his wonderful wildflower honey to events to share.

Al was interred in early March in Great Lake National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan with military honors.

We will miss his smiling face.

Boondocking, Dry Camping, Dispersed Camping.

These are all terms that are commonly associated with free camping on public land, usually out in the “boonies,” and hence the name. Campers who are weary of crowded RV parks or simply want to get closer to nature love boondocking. A huge perk is that you can save money and stay in stunning locations.



Popular locations for boondocking include national forests and other lands that the federal government maintains. This includes thousands of acres around the country under the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) jurisdiction. The thing to bear in mind is that it's on public property and has zero amenities.

Harvest Host locations have become a great resource for RVers in recent years, but also generally require that you be self-contained, meaning you provide your own water, power, and sewer. This also applies to most National Parks that have campsites, but no hook-ups.

Airstreams come equipped with a freshwater tank, batteries, and grey/black water tanks. One or more of these could be your limiting factor when it comes to the length of time you can be “off grid”. Be diligent about minimizing your use of electricity and water. Take “Navy Showers” (rinse and turn the water off while scrubbing) and while you are waiting for the warm water to reach the shower, capture excess cold water in a tub to dump in your black tank or to return to nature. Capture dishwater in a rubber tub and dump it in the black tank to leave more room in your gray tank. Turn off your inverter when it's not in use, as these can be a hidden drain on your batteries.

You will need to fill your freshwater tank before arriving at your destination and dump your black and gray tanks at a dump station when you're done. You will also want to have a source to recharge your batteries (usually during daylight hours). Solar panels and/or generators are the most common solution for this.

If you are uncertain about boondocking, consider experimenting with it at a local state park with hook ups! Simply roll-in and set-up camp, but don't connect to the water or electricity, and “pretend” that you are boondocking! Can you make it 2 nights, 3, or more?

When we took delivery of our Airstream, it came with two AGM batteries and one 90W Solar Panel on the roof. We purchased an additional 180W Zamp Solar “suitcase” to assist in recharging our batteries. We found with that set-up, camping in the fall and running the furnace at night, that our batteries would be at 55% charge level in the morning and we could barely get them recharged before sunset. That charge level is generally recognized as the low point for where you should let AGM batteries discharge to, so this was not a great situation for us. We felt like we couldn't go more than 2 nights off-grid at that point.



The next spring, I upgraded to two 100ah Lithium batteries and added 180 W of solar to our roof (total of 270W), and I also replaced our converter and inverter with a new Victron multiplus (combination converter and inverter) and installed an upgraded Victron MPPT Solar charge controller. We couldn't believe the difference it made! Under the same conditions as above, we now wake up with the batteries around 90% and they are fully recharged by 11 am, even on an over-cast day! Now, our limiting factor is the gray and black tank capacity in our 23' Globetrotter. We can make it 5 nights and if we are careful, can probably stretch that to 7! We'll find out this June when we plan to spend 6 nights in Rocky Mountain National Park on our way to the International Rally!

When considering boondocking, it's best to avoid sweltering temperatures, because Air Conditioning consumes A LOT of electricity! Unless you invest in a much larger lithium battery bank and associated hardware, it is unlikely that you will be able to run your A/C off batteries (I could maybe run ours for an hour, but our batteries would be drained at that point!). However, if your travel plans have you headed for hotter weather, you could use an appropriately sized generator to run your A/C. Or if you are lucky enough to have a Ford truck with the Powerboost engine, you might even be able to plug into that if the situation demands it.

-Steve

Twin Bed Troubles

Submitted by Pageen Smith, BRN #8039

Whoops... I fell out of bed!

Something I have not done since I was a kid. Thankfully, my pillow had landed first, and I didn't hurt myself, but I was surprised to find myself between our twin beds in our 2020, 25ft Globetrotter, FB.

Tom & I bought our first Airstream within days of his retirement in August 2020. We bought one of the last trailers on the lot. Nature & Me was getting ready for their 2021 models. Fortunately, it was just what we were looking for and equipped with Tuft & Needle mattresses that are so comfy.



The problem we discovered was that our comfy mattresses overlapped the existing bed platforms by more than 3 inches. The mattress edge did not have support to sit on and bed linens were constantly in the way of the storage cupboards underneath. The mattress moved around on the existing platform, which made it really easy to make the bed, but made for a disruptive sleep. To prevent myself from falling out of bed again, I had to lay close to the wall and the twin bed became a mini-twin bed. We needed to get this fixed.

I am not a big fan of Facebook for a variety of reasons, but one thing I appreciate are the Airstream groups. Mostly I read the posts and learned but once, in a desperate state with our batteries, I posted a question and immediately received technical information that helped immensely to understand and solve our problem. I am now a fan of Facebook Airstream groups. One time I saw someone's post about their similar problem with their mattresses and a platform solution made by Matthew Hughes, BRN #2736, of Nomad Custom Crafts. I knew this was the fix I needed, so immediately reached out to Matt, placed an order, and made plans to go down to Jacksonville/St. Augustine area to have them installed.

Which is where we are now with our newly installed platforms and I have to say, they have exceeded our expectations. The mattresses fit perfectly in their platforms, they match our cabinetry beautifully, they provide easy access to the cupboards below, and they open up the space on either side of the nightstand. The best thing is that we can sleep on the entire width of the bed and no more falling out of bed!

And now onto conversing the cabinets below the beds into drawers with a carpenter recommended by fellow Airstreamers.

Still looking for a storage option?

Submitted by Linda Smith

Look what I found!! I'm often asked for ideas on where to store our Airstreams and that's always been a tough question to answer. Well folks, I have an answer!! [DeHondt Storage](#), Address is 15450 33 Mile Rd, Armada, MI 48005

Robert and I went with the Stephenson's to the MARVAC vendors but the one that really piqued our interest was this new storage facility. The storage units are 12' x 48' with 14-foot-high doors. Even the outside storage will have covered storage. The facility has propane fill, RV Dump Station, and an accessory store. It in Armada, MI which is north of Sterling Heights. If you check it out, please let me know what you think.

See you down the road,

Linda Smith

SEMACpresident@gmail.com

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If you live in the majority of North America, you've put your Airstream away for a long winter rest—and soon you'll be thinking about waking it up again.

Hopefully you [winterized](#) your Airstream before you put it away (or had your local service center do it). If it was winterized correctly, you should be able to get your Airstream back in operational condition without any trouble.

The de-winterizing process is basically the reverse of winterizing. You'll be putting fresh water into the plumbing, inspecting, and putting your personal items back into the rig. De-winterizing is easy and actually kind of fun, because it makes you realize you're getting ready for new adventures.

A detailed de-winterizing procedure is outlined in [my book, "The \(Nearly\) Complete Guide to Airstream Maintenance"](#). Here's a summarized look at the key steps:



BATTERIES

If you disconnected or removed the batteries, put them back and switch the battery disconnect to the ON or USE position.

Check the voltage using the built-in SeeLevel monitor. If the batteries are depleted give them some time to charge with the Airstream plugged into power. If they don't seem to hold the correct voltage after the Airstream is unplugged, they should be checked by a service technician.

If your Airstream has the type of lead-acid batteries that have removable caps on the top, check the water level in them and add some distilled water if needed.

WATER SYSTEM

Sanitize the water system. [We've written a guide that shows you how it's done.](#)

De-winterizing is the perfect time to follow this procedure. Not only will you start the season with a fresh plumbing system, the sanitizing process will displace [the RV Anti-freeze that was probably pumped in during the winterizing process](#). So you've accomplished two important tasks at once.

IMPORTANT: If you have a 2020 model year or earlier Airstream (meaning that it has a water heater with a tank), move the winterization bypass on the water heater back to the normal operating position before you sanitize.

CHECK THE TIRES

Check the air pressure on all the tires (including the spare). It's a good idea to have a portable air compressor on hand to top up the tires as needed.

Check all the tires for wear and damage at this point too. We made [this video](#) to walk you through the steps. It's also described in the "When to replace the tires" discussion of my maintenance guide.

APPLIANCES

Before you turn on any appliances, walk around the Airstream and open the exterior access hatches for the refrigerator, water heater, and furnace. Look for spider webs, wasp nests, leaves, or any other debris that might be clogging the exhaust vents or burners.

Make sure at least one propane tank has gas and that the propane tank valve is open, then check that the regulator shows green.

Now you can give all the major systems a test: furnace, refrigerator, water heater, stove, gas oven (if equipped), lights, water pump, and fans. Also check the power stabilizer or power awning if your Airstream is equipped with those items.

If you have 30-amp or 50-amp power available, test the air conditioner or heat pump as well.

On 2020 models and earlier, check the drain plug after the water heater is fully up to temperature, to ensure the plug is not leaking. A little dripping at the P/T valve is not unusual—just run the hot water for a few seconds and the drip should stop.

LEAK AND RODENT CHECK

Check the interior of the Airstream, including inside cabinets and closets, for signs of leaks that might have occurred over the winter.

Sniff for weird smells, and check drawers and cabinets for signs of mice. [We've written a blog and provided a short video to describe this inspection.](#)

WINDOWS

Check that none of the windows are sticking shut. If you have a problem getting a window open because the gasket is sticky, don't force it open by the handles—it may break! Instead, loosen the gasket from the outside with a credit card, and then lubricate it as described in my maintenance guide.

CONSUMABLES

Install fresh 9-volt batteries in the smoke and/or Carbon Monoxide detectors. After you've replaced them, press the Test button on each unit. They should beep loudly. If you use a water filter, replace the filter cartridge.



HITCH, 7-WAY PLUG, AND BRAKES

Lube the hitch as recommended by the manufacturer. Once hitched up, check all the trailer lights and check the 7-way plug for corrosion if you (or your clever tow vehicle) spot any problems.

[Our Maintenance Essentials Kit](#) contain tools specifically for fixing and preventing problems with the electrical connections.



Before you take off, verify proper braking by doing a few test stops at low speed. As you go, listen for any strange noises from the hitch and trailer that might indicate a need for repair or adjustment.

That's it! Your Airstream is de-winterized and ready for another fun season of travel. Go plan a trip and hit the road! Maybe we'll see you out there.

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Want to know more about the Region 4 Rally in Kalamazoo?

By Newstream Editor



The [Region 4 Spring Newsletter](#) is full of great updates on events and activities taking place at the Rendezvous in Kalamazoo from May 16-21, 2023. From a **Swap Meet & Hobby Show** on Saturday from 9-10:30am to a **K-Zoo Scavenger Hunt** that will take place throughout the weekend, there will be something for everyone to enjoy. Also, learn more about how you can support this year's rally charity, **Animal Rescue Project**, by bringing donated food and other items.

*Specific to SEMAC members, our club will be hosting a **SEMAC Social Hour** on Tuesday, May 16 after check-in. On Saturday, Barb and Ralph will share a presentation about their latest **Alaskan Adventure**. Don't miss it!*






**Let's
Rally
Together**



Upcoming SEMAC, WBAC/ACI and other Airstream Events At-a-Glance

(We continue to monitor COVID guidance for gatherings. Adjustments to the calendar may be made)

May 4-7, 2023	Urban Air's "Wake Up Downtown®" Logan, Ohio	Registration CLOSED https://wakeupdowntown.com/urbanair/wake-up-registration/
May 16-21, 2023	Rendezvous in Kalamazoo Region 4 Rally Kalamazoo, Michigan	 REGISTRATION DEADLINE is APRIL 15 https://airstreamclub.org/region4/region-4-rally
June 8-12, 2023	Silver on Silver Lake Rally Holiday Park, Traverse City Mi 	TWO SPOTS REMAING – REGISTER ASAP, IF INTERESTED! Hosts: Linda Smith, Barbara Derian, Sharon Bryant https://airstreamclub.org/silver-silver-lake-2023
June 23-30, 2023	Rolling to Rock Springs 66th International Rally Rock Springs, Wyoming 	ACI Rally2023 is currently sold out but you have two options to attend the rally: (1) a waitlist for cancellations for the full-hookup sites and (2) off-site registrations for members who want to stay at a nearby campground or hotel and attend the rally. For more info visit: https://airstreamclub.org/Rally2023
July 23 at 1pm	SEMAC on Tap Bearded Lamb Brewing Co. 149 West Liberty Street Plymouth, MI 48170	More details: https://airstreamclub.org/semac-tap RSVP to Steve Rowley at: SEMACvicepresident@gmail.com
Aug. 18-20, 2023	Harbor Beach Lighthouse Rally Northpark, MI	Register here: https://airstreamclub.org/harbor-beach-rally
Sept. 5-10, 2023	Alumapalooza Jackson Center, Ohio	Register here: http://alumapalooza.com
Oct. 5-10, 2024	67th Annual International Rally Sedalia, Missouri Missouri State Fairgrounds	Mark your calendars!!! This is the first time an International Rally will be held in the fall.

—RENDEZVOUS IN KALAMAZOO—

47th Annual Airstream Club International Region 4 Rally

RENDEZVOUS IN KALAMAZOO, Michigan, with Region 4 members, May 16-21, 2023, for our annual region rally! We are adding a day to the rally this year, driving in on Tuesday at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center.



Wednesday, we are very excited to kick off our rally with performances by the Mall City Harmonizers, along with a catered meal. As always, we are supporting a local charity. This year, we are pleased to announce that proceeds from our local club basket raffle will support the Animal Rescue Project. This organization is a rescue shelter that is open to the public for dog and cat adoptions. Throughout the rally, there will be opportunities for tours to area businesses and museums such as the AirZoo.

The location of Kalamazoo is perfect as a base for exploring the Southwestern Michigan area, including the shoreline of Lake Michigan. Breweries and wineries are available for tastings. The Kalamazoo River Valley Trail is just minutes from the Expo Center, so we encourage all to bring their bikes. Other outdoor activities include hiking, canoeing, and kayaking—all in the local area. The Expo Center will serve as our location for several seminars and craft sessions throughout our time at the rally. We will have our annual Flea Market on Saturday morning, so please bring the items you wish to sell or trade.

Saturday night is the highlight of the week and starts with hors d'oeuvres and a catered meal. Because of the changes made at the international level, we are installing our Region 4 officers this evening.

Please attend and help make this a memorable evening for those taking on Region 4 leadership roles. Following the meal and activities, we have booked a local band that performs the 60s through 80s hits for your listening and dancing pleasure! The 2023 Region 4 Rally Registration includes 6 days/5 nights with electric, water, and one pump-out, two catered meals, two nights of entertainment, and fun for all! We look forward to “Rendezvousing in Kalamazoo with YOU!”