

# IDAHO AIRSTREAM CLUB



## A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT



**Calvin Huit**  
President

chuit.idaho@gmail.com

Rally season is just around the corner: before we know it, our first rally of the year will be a reality! If you have not already done so, please register for this rally as soon as possible! This rally is our business rally so we will be voting on changes to our Constitution and By-laws, if you want to weigh in, this is your chance to be involved!

The administration of our club is all volunteer, and without commitment from the

membership, our Idaho Airstream Club simply would not exist. Many members are not retired, so being involved in administration requires a little more commitment. As a recently semi-retired member, I'd like to say thank-you to our group of dedicated volunteers. I have personally experienced the challenge of balancing work and play and know they don't always mix. The Idaho Airstream Club is understanding and does everything it can to be accommodating in these types of situations.

In light of this, it has become necessary for Mark Pinkman (1<sup>st</sup> VP) and Gary Betts (2<sup>nd</sup> VP) to swap positions in leadership. This change will require action by the board for approval; if any member has issue with this, please contact me directly with your comments and suggestions.

The Airstream Club International (i.e., the Wally Byam Caravan Club International, or WBCCI) began in 1951 when Wally Byam (the founder of Airstream) conceived the idea to lead a group of travel trailer friends on a trip to Central America. This beginning and focus launched WBCCI; its history is full of experiences, friendship, excitement, and exploration which continues today!

This did not, however, happen without organizational structure. We have a constitution and a set of by-laws to help

keep things on track and operating smoothly. But our success is also dependent on volunteers.

Within the next month or so, a nominating committee will be established. The purpose of this committee is to find members willing to join the administrative team. Several positions within administration will become available that provide the ability to learn about what it takes to make a club like ours successful! Please consider volunteering. Even if you don't have prior club experience, the opportunity to learn from the most exciting and experienced club lays before you! All recent board meetings have been conducted virtually over the internet, so members can live anywhere and still be a part! To get involved, please contact Gary Betts!

And speaking of volunteers, Region 10 is asking us to host the Sun Valley Jazz festival Rally. If anyone is willing to host this event, please reach out to Sherry Home, our Rally Coordinator.

Lorrie Bauer has the Membership Directory ready. Please email her at [lorriebauer@msn.com](mailto:lorriebauer@msn.com) for your copy! This has been a rather tedious task – thanks for all your work, Lorrie, to make this happen!

I'd like to draw attention to the website work Tony Wilson has done. If you haven't had a chance to take a look, please browse to <https://airstreamclub.org/idaho>. We are in the procurement process for JotForm software, which will provide the ability to make online payments for our rallies!

Lastly, and on another topic, I recently came across an article I found interesting: it appears Airstream and Porsche have collaborated a new camper design that looks modern (and cool)! You can read about it and see pictures of it by navigating with your browser to <https://www.thedrive.com/news/airstream-abandons-tradition-for-futuristic-collaboration-with-porsche>

Calvin Huit  
President, Idaho Airstream Club

## Some Idaho Airstream Club Information

*by Michael Archer, Past President*

**Club Name:** Idaho Airstream Club

**Region:** 10    **Club Number:** 035

**Annual Dues:** \$15.00

**Website:** <https://airstreamclub.org/idaho>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/Airstream-Idaho-WBCCI-Unit-035-584058601725727>

### Officers

**President:** Calvin Huit, BRN 8843

**First VP:** Gary Betts, BRN 4637

**Second VP:** Mark Pinkman, BRN 6858

**Third VP:** Vacant

**Corresponding Secretary:** Vacant

**Recording Secretary:** Kelly Huit, BRN 8843

**Treasurer:** Mike deRuyter, BRN 6631

### Trustees

Lorrie Bauer, BRN 4209

Roger Staats, BRN 6535

Ray Hoem, BRN 2938

Betty Burke, BRN 5631

### Chair Positions

**Constitution & Bylaws:** Charlie Burke, BRN 5631

**Membership:** Mim Davidson, BRN 30657

**Newsletter Editor:** Gary Betts, BRN 4637

**Webmaster:** Anthony Wilson, BRN 4209

## In Memory



Long-time member **Barbara Brace** left this earthly rally in February 2023. Barbara and Earl celebrated almost 16 years of marriage - if you only count 29 February starting with 1960.

Barbara and their daughter Alison shared many adventures with Earl. They lived in Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina, Benin, and Nepal, as well as other states. They spent 5 months traveling in Europe in a VW pop-top camper when they left Africa after Earl drove

it across the Sahara Desert. She learned to speak Spanish and Portuguese while living in South America. After Earl retired, he looked for an RV to continue exploring. Barbara asked that he buy one that would allow her to have a social life and not be left in camp alone in the RV while he rambled. That is how they came to the Idaho Airstream Club in 2001. Barbara was caring and generous. She frequently brought peanut butter and crackers to help Betty provide snacks to her classes in Mountain Home.

Barbara wasn't recently active with the club due to deteriorating health. We miss her. Earl continues to take their Airstream on adventures and is often joined by their daughter Alison.



Barbara standing in 4 states at Four Corners while on the Autumn with the Anasazi Caravan in 2013

## In Memory

We are saddened to learn that **Patty Pedersen** of Hailey unexpectedly passed recently. She is survived by her husband Bob, their 2 pups, and extended family. She and Bob were married 25 years.

We met the Pedersens at the Nat Soo Pah rally in May 2022. They were members of the Wasatch Club, and soon added Idaho to their clubs. Patty looked forward to using the modifications Bob made to their Airstream this winter. Bob said she enjoyed every part of the Airstream life, especially the new friends that she made.

A celebration of Patty's life is tentatively planned for the summer.

## Membership Thoughts

*by Mim Davidson, Membership*

In the 1920s, Wally Byam began building travel trailers for his own use. In 1931 he started selling trailers and the Airstream company was formed.

Fast forward to 1951 when he conceived the idea to lead a group of travel trailer friends on a trip to Central America. He later led several caravans to Mexico and Canada. Many caravanners were repeat participants and soon wanted to form a club. Wally eventually gave in and the Wally Byam Caravan Club, International (WBCCI) was founded in August 1955. The Idaho Airstream Club formed in 1961.

We are a 501(c)(7) club, organized for pleasure, recreation, and other nonprofitable purposes. Our main purpose is to camp, explore and have fun, but we do hold at least one business meeting each year to meet requirements to keep our nonprofit, federal income tax status. Our meetings are usually short, but keep us on track. This year we have 2 meetings: one in April; the other will be in August.

Our big task this year is reviewing and updating our Constitution and Bylaws. We did this in 2015, and planned a review in 2020 (required every 5 years), but the pandemic and changing information from the International Board complicated that process. This is (finally) the time for that review! Your participation and vote matter!

All Idaho Airstream Club members will get a copy of the Idaho meeting agenda in early April. Regular members will be asked to review and vote on proposals. Absentee ballots are provided for those who are unable to attend the meetings. Voting has changed from 1 vote per BRN (Big Red Number) to 1 vote from each primary and partner member. Affiliate members are welcome to attend the meetings, but do not vote.

I hope you'll register for the April rally, and consider participating in the Idaho Airstream Club's various parts. Members are the reason! We will camp, explore, and have fun.

## Welcome New Members and Affiliate Members

*by Mim Davidson, Membership*

### Brian and LeeAnne Ballard (Affiliate)

Eagle, ID BRN 7515

It was great to meet you all at the breakfast meeting the other day.

- » This is our First Airstream, but not our first RV. We have had a travel trailer, 5th Wheel, and a motorhome in the past.
- » LeeAnne is retired and I am mostly retired! We are working on our 37th year of marriage, we enjoy all sorts of outdoor activities, as well as enjoying adult beverages from time to time. We do several trips a year both RV and other vacation travels, mostly within the US. Although we hope to get to a few destinations abroad in the coming years.

### Shane Brosius

Osburn, ID BRN 28000

This is my first RV and I'm super excited about it. Have eyed Airstreams for the past decade and finally pulled the trigger. I'm an avid mountain biker and skier and plan on using the airstream to explore more of the country and enjoy my hobbies with my Bernese mountain dog. I am fortunate to work from home and will continue doing so from the road.

Thanks for the warm welcome and the info on the rallies, breakfast and the inland club.

## Member Celebrations

*by Mim Davidson, Membership*

### March Birthdays

Kim Blackburn, Mark Cork, Jacque Cork, Bart Davis  
Faith Dawson, Elizabeth Donaldson, Ray Hoem,  
Kerry Kelley, Jerry Settle, Mark Whitham,  
Matt Wonser

### March Anniversaries

George & Jeanne Mitchell

### April Birthdays

Kim Kelley, Danny Robinson, Gary Betts,  
Betty Burke, Paula McMullen, Niels Vernegaard,  
Joni Simmons, Jack Goldberg

### April Anniversaries

Jon & Becky Brougher  
Audrey & Pete Cole  
Tent & Kelin Schoessler

## 2023 Rally Schedule

*by Sherry Hoem, Rally Coordinator*

Hi fellow travelers! I hope all is well and you and your airstreams are getting tuned up for some great travel adventures. Our May rally had a date change. Please make a note on your calendars. See you all soon!

Contact Sherry if you have suggestions or want to participate.  
[goodshepherd1@gmail.com](mailto:goodshepherd1@gmail.com)

DATE	EVENT	HOSTS
April 20-23	Trinity View Resort, Mountain Home	Davidsons and Robinsons
May 26-28	Jordan Valley, OR	Huits and Pinkmans
June 21-23	Caravan to International Rally	Davidsons
June 24-30	International Rally, Rock Springs, WY	
July 21-24	Arrowhead Resort, Cascade	Smith & Ekblad and Pinkmans
August 17-20	Picabo Angler RV Park, Picabo	Hoems
September 21-24	Lake Walcott and Minidoka NWR	Hoems
October 5-9	Bruneau Dunes State Park	Davidsons and Staats
October 18-22	Jazz Festival National Rally, Ketchum	
November 11	Harvest Dinner - Location TBD	

## 2023 International Rally

### Caravan to Rock Springs.

Are you signed up for the International Rally in Wyoming this summer? It is June 24-30 at Rock Springs, WY. This will be one of the biggest events for the Airstream Club in many years. The Idaho Unit is planning a 2 night caravan. We'll leave Boise on Wednesday, June 21 and arrive in Rock Springs on Friday, June 23.

Please let Fonny & Mim Davidson (208-336-8325 voice) know ASAP if you are interested. We may encounter other Region 10 caravans as we travel.



**Jerry & Marilyn Collins**  
**SkyMed Ambassadors**  
**(208) 867-8739**

### Learn How SkyMed Could Save Your Life and Your Money

Be prepared! SkyMed, Inc., Number One in medical evacuation services, provides emergency medical transport from wherever you are (at home and globally) or however you travel. Services include air, ground, & helicopter transport; return of RV, auto, pets, physical remains; visitor transport; primary driver disability; free travel arrangements, plus more.. When a member suffers a critical illness or injury sending you to hospital, SkyMed *TAKES YOU HOME* to your own doctor, hospital, and family, saving you thousands of dollars and possibly your life.

Membership fees are now locked for life — same price when you renew. Also, through Dec. 31, 2022, the SkyMed 22 Stimulus Program offers free bonuses, including up to 22 weeks to new members, up to 5 months for referring a member, and a one-time offer of up to 6 months for Thank You for Your Service for military, law enforcement, medical, or fire experience.





## Breakout Rally April 20 - 23, 2023 Trinity View RV Park Mountain Home, ID

Hosts: Fonny & Mim Davidson, Danny & Dorothea Robinson

Warm weather is springing out! It's time to take your Airstream out of hibernation and get it ready for summer fun! This 3-night rally is the first one of our 2023 rally season.

Start the weekend early. We'll build (& install) bluebird houses, hike, bike and explore! We'll also have business meetings Saturday morning. Participate in round-table safety discussions and camping tips. Sign up and watch the newsletters for more information.

We'll have good food and good times! Our deadline is April 8. Sure hope you can join us!

### Breakout Rally Registration, 4/20 - 23, 2023 Trinity View RV Park, Mountain Home, ID

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ WBCCI #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrive date: \_\_\_\_\_ Depart date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Text phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Number in Party: \_\_\_\_\_ # of pets: \_\_\_\_\_ Trailer \_\_\_\_ MH \_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Select electric needs: 30 amp service \_\_\_\_ 50 amp service: Require \_\_\_\_ Prefer \_\_\_\_

Please send this registration form and rally

deposit payable to **Idaho Airstream Club** to:

Fonny & Mim Davidson

3422 N Tamarack Dr.

Boise, ID 83703

208.336.8325

mimad.gk@gmail.com

Initial Rally Deposit: No. \_\_\_\_ x \$5 pp = \_\_\_\_\_

A \*final rally fee\* will be collected before the rally ends.

It will include host-provided meals, etc.

**Registration due by April 8.**

- ⇒ Send us your completed registration form with the initial rally deposit (\$5 per person). Specify your arrival and departure dates, and electric service preference.
- ⇒ We'll send you your campsite #, and provide the phone number to complete your reservation.
  - ▶ You must call the RV Park to complete your reservation and pay for your site.
  - ▶ Idaho Airstream Club special rate is \$48/night.
  - ▶ Sunday late check-out is available at no charge.

A \*final rally fee\* will be calculated and collected before the rally ends. This per person fee covers expenses not known at the time of the Initial Rally Deposit. It will include shared expenses such as host-provided meals, etc. (The initial rally deposit is not refundable.)

Trinity View sites are full hookup. A dump station is also available.

## Jordan Valley Rally

*There's gold and silver in those hills ...*

**May 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Sunny Ridge RV Park**

**Jordan Valley, OR**

Join us at Jordan Valley, OR as we visit the yesteryear of gold and silver mining! We will travel the stagecoach route from Jordan Valley to the remote Silver City, a mining ghost town from the 1880's, to explore it and the ruggedness intrigue of the area. We will drive past the newly re-activated gold mine of Delamar.



An authentic Dutch oven cookout is planned, and you won't want to miss it!

Attendees will have the opportunity to visit the resting place of the youngest member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau (he's the son of Sacajawea), and learn a little about his life after the expedition.

And what Idaho Airstream Club rally is complete without ice cream or espresso – available just down the road from the RV Park!?

This should be a fun and rather relaxing rally, however, if you plan to tour Silver City on foot, you will want to bring your hiking shoes. Silver City is authentic, so the roads are not graded or paved.

This area is also rich in wildlife: you may wake up to deer in your vicinity.



If you are a rockhound, you may also want to bring some gear and do some exploring along the way! Owyhee County, Idaho is one of the reasons Idaho is called the Gem state.

Jordan Valley is one of the most remote communities in all of Oregon, so you will want to bring whatever supplies you need with you. There is a gas station, convenience store, and Rockhouse Coffee (with Ice Cream)!

The Sunny Ridge RV Park is a full-service (water, power, and sewer) hookup park. It also provides bathroom, shower, and laundry facilities. More recent amenities include Wi-Fi! The spaces are approximately 45' X 100', and none are pull-through. If you need help backing in, there are several of us that can help you.

**Jordan Valley Rally**  
**May 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Sunny Ridge RV**  
**41 Delmar Way, Jordan Valley, Oregon 97910**  
<https://sunnyridgerv.com/> or (541) 586 - 2870

Attendee Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ WBCCI#: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrive Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Depart Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone #: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ Text Phone #: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Pets: \_\_\_\_\_ Trailer ☐ Motorhome ☐ Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Number in Party: \_\_\_\_\_ X \$5 per person (Club Fee) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Dutch Oven Dinner projected cost: \$16.50/per person = + \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Idaho Airstream Club Deposit **Total** of: = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this completed registration form and payment for the total (payable to **Idaho Airstream Club**) to:

Calvin Huit  
 2468 East Pistol Creek Drive  
 Meridian, ID 83642  
 Chuit.idaho@gmail.com

**WAIT ... there's more:** You must also go to Sunny Ridge RV's website (<https://sunnyridgerv.com/>) to pay for your site for the entire duration of your stay (you may want to arrive early or stay afterwards).

**Please register soon; the Dutch oven dinner event can only accommodate 28 people, and you won't want to be left out!!** Menu items include BBQ pork tenderloin, Huit's BBQ beans, Huit's beef potatoes, house salad, rolls, and Cobbler!

**Cancellations:** The Initial Idaho Airstream Club rally deposit of \$5 per person is non-refundable. If the cancellation is made at least 7 days before the rally, we can refund your Dutch Oven Dinner costs. Sunny Ridge has a cancellation policy posted on their website. At the time of this writing, their policy states that cancellations must be made 7 or more days prior to the arrival date, and a \$20 transaction fee will be charged. No refunds or credits will be made for early departure. They also state no refunds will be given due to weather, bugs, or general discomfort.

**PLEASE NOTE:** a final rally fee, if any, will be calculated before the rally ends: this will reflect changes in grocery costs for the Dutch oven dinner.

Come join us as we explore and have a great time!

Here's the scoop on the July Rally!

## Arrowhead RV Park on the Payette River in Cascade

<https://arrowheadpark.com/>

### DATES:

The official Rally is Friday July 21<sup>st</sup> through Sunday morning July 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Club has reserved the dates from Thursday July 20<sup>th</sup> to Monday July 24<sup>th</sup> – so stay an extra day or two, as other members will probably do so, too.

### RESERVE YOUR SPOT NOW:

The resort can potentially accommodate everyone in the club – subject to availability. They are guaranteeing us 16 sites of which 14 are on or near the river, **until April 1<sup>st</sup>**. If more than 16 club members want to participate, great, but the sooner you call the resort and reserve, the better your chances!

To reserve a spot, you must personally call resort manager Kylie (208) 382-4534. You will pay in full at that time.

IMPORTANT: Be sure to mention Karen Ekblad or Idaho Airstream Club.



NOTE: The cancellation policy is very strict. You lose one full day of payment if you cancel, no matter how far ahead. They will let you keep the 1 day as a credit to use at another time or give it to another person.

### FUN at CASCADE:

- The Rally will have social (cocktail) hours and a hosted dinner.
- Hikes: We'll organize an alpine meadow walk at Tamarack Resort (\$20 lift ticket). We'll also lead one other hike (a moderate one), and provide information on more nearby hikes for all abilities.
- Boating and fishing: You can bring small boats and kayaks or possibly rent a kayak from them. There is a small boat launch at Arrowhead.
- Arrowhead offers wood-carving, shuffleboard, horse shoes, volleyball, and more.
- And there is a lot to do nearby, including Gold Fork Hot Springs, Lake Cascade, McCall...

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Please contact Karen Ekblad with any questions.

206-617-3333



# Water Fun Rally 2023

## Friday July 21 thru Sunday July 23\*\*

### Arrowhead RV Park on the Payette River

955 S. Main Street (HWY 55) Cascade, Idaho 83611

(\*\*Want to stay longer? You can also reserve your site Thursday July 20 and Monday July 23)

**Hosts:** Karen Ekblad & Gary Smith     **Co-hosts:** Jeannie and Mark Pinkman

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ WBCCI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Depart: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number in Party: \_\_\_\_\_ Trailer Length: \_\_\_\_\_ Motorhome Length: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Initial Rally Deposit</b> \$5 per person over 10 yrs old	# Persons _____	x \$5.00 ea.	= \$ _____
			<b>Total Initial Rally Deposit</b>

**NOTE: Final Rally Fee** for Hosted Food will be collected at Rally

Please send this form and the Initial Rally Deposit payable to "Idaho Airstream Club"  
by April 1<sup>st</sup> to:

Karen Ekblad  
 1923 S. Ridge Point Way  
 Boise, ID 83712

Questions? Please contact Karen at (206) 617-3333 or [ekblad@smithandstark.com](mailto:ekblad@smithandstark.com)

**IMPORTANT:** To be guaranteed a site with the Club near the Payette River, you must make your site reservations by April 1<sup>st</sup> directly with Arrowhead RV Park. Call Park Manager Kylie at (208) 382-4534, and remember to tell her you are with the Idaho Airstream Club.

**NOTE:** The first 14 reservations will be sit ed together close to the river. Later reservations will be accepted but may not be located with the group.

**RV Park Cancellation Policy:** The cancellation policy is very strict.

- The Park will hold back one full day of payment if you cancel, no matter how far ahead. However, they let you keep the 1 day as a credit to use at another time or give to another person.
- If you cancel with less than 72 hours' notice, you will lose the full deposit.
- Please carefully review the RV Park policies at: <https://www.arrowheadpark.com/>

**Annual Installation Rally**  
**Picabo Angler RV Park in Picabo, ID**  
**August 17-20, 2023**  
**Hosts: Raymond and Sherry Hoem**



Join us for the Annual Installation Rally. It is much like most other rallies except that on Saturday morning we'll have an Idaho Airstream Club meeting followed by the installation of our new 2024 officers. Preceding this meeting will be a hosted breakfast at the Angler Store, which is located across the street from the RV park. Cost will be \$17.70 per person including the tip. Saturday evening will feature a Pot Luck dinner and a Variety Show!

During your stay, visit the Picabo Angler Fly Shop. You can explore or fish the scenic Silver Creek, which is famous for trophy Rainbow and Brown trout. You can also take some fly casting lessons . . . *if needed*.

You must make your own RV reservations directly with Picabo Angler RV Park. Call Chad Chorney at (208) 788-3536. Costs are \$65.00 for pull-through sites and \$55.00 for back-in sites. All sites have full hookups.

For questions, contact Raymond or Sherry at [goodshepherd1@gmail.com](mailto:goodshepherd1@gmail.com).

**Annual Installation Rally at Picabo Angler RV Park**  
**August 17-20, 2023**

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_ **WBCCI #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Arr Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dep Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Alt Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number in Party:** \_\_\_\_\_ **# of Pets:** \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Trailer ☐ MH **Length:** \_\_\_\_\_ ft

**Electrical Service:** 50 Amp \_\_\_\_\_ 30 Amp \_\_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_\_

**Initial Rally Deposit:** No. \_\_\_\_\_ x **\$5.00 pp** = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Installation Breakfast:** No. \_\_\_\_\_ x **\$17.50 pp** = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Rally Deposit** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send this Rally Coupon with your Total Rally Deposit to:

Sherry Hoem, 3972 N 1400 E, Buhl, ID 83316

[goodshepherd1@gmail.com](mailto:goodshepherd1@gmail.com)

**Registration is due by July 1, 2023**

**Don't forget to make your RV reservations!**

## Idaho Airstream Club Snowbirders

*by Jerry Settle*

A group of Idaho Club members have banded together and head to Arizona when the weather gets cold. They call themselves the Idaho Airstream Club South. Each year in January they gather for lunch and conversation. This year they met at the Raceway Bar and Grill in Maricopa, AZ and then toured the Dwarf Car Museum.



In attendance were Jerry & Marilyn Collins with friends Gerry & Carolyn Keener from Tucson, Bob & Faith Simms from Mesa, Bob & Darlene Caldwell from Indio, CA, Jerry & Linda Settle from Mesa and friends Richard & Jackie Mounts from Oro Valley, AZ





## An Unforgettable Day in the World of the Great Wapiti

*by Calvin Huit (Part 2 of 2)*

We were so excited to have had an entire herd of elk advance toward us from across the river and were anxious to see how our pictures of the event had turned out! I had taken about a thousand photos. So, we left Yellowstone Park and headed back to our Airstream so I could load them on my laptop.

To my disappointment, I had selected the wrong auto-focus mode. However, when you take hundreds of pictures, you are bound to have some good ones, and I had a few.

After some research and making proper adjustments to the camera settings, and practicing on the rehab grizzlies, we headed back into the park. By this time, we didn't have a lot of daylight left. Kelly, my wife was driving so I could watch for



wildlife; the pursuit of wapiti (the Indian name for elk) has been a passion of mine since I was 13 years old, and I was in my element! We were just heading into a burn area when I spotted something out of place – about eight inches of elk rack reflecting sunlight in what was otherwise burned-out black branches, some 100 yards up the mountain. Traffic buzzed by, completely oblivious to what was just above them on the mountain side. We were going about 30 miles an hour and the next turnout was a few hundred yards down the road. I asked my wife to pull over there, but not abruptly, as I didn't want to create a traffic jam. Factoring in the human element is necessity if you want to see and photograph wildlife, especially in Yellowstone!

Once my camera was ready to go, I nonchalantly got out of the truck and started walking along the river towards where I had seen the elk. And to keep from drawing attention, I hid my camera, a 70-200 mm f/2.8 lens with a 1.4X multiplier. I made my way to where on-coming traffic couldn't see me; behind the only tree I could find between the river and the road. I crouched down so my

eyes were at the same height as the road to further hide myself from those passing by on their way out of the park.

Quickly the magic began to happen - here came another entire herd of elk! This time, they were coming down off the mountain headed to the river for a cool evening drink.



And just like that, without planning, I found myself once again right in their path and in their way! I had no idea I was where they would want to cross the road to get to the river!

It was intimidating to say the least: they were towering above me: remember, I was crouched down with my eyes at road level. They looked massive ... just a little more than the width of the road away!



## An Unforgettable Day in the World of the Great Wapiti (*cont.*)

*by Calvin Huit (Part 1 of 2)*

In the lead was a cow. She appeared to be the one in charge. She looked straight at me for just a few moments, then started to cross the road. I had been distracted with shooting pictures, but knew if she didn't change course, I was going to have to bust my cover and get out of there, quickly ... but she took a turn and headed away from me to the other side of the large spruce tree that was providing me cover, creating a little buffer, and giving me an opportunity to escape to a safe distance.

I began to reflect on past experiences: a day when we were in the woods - my brother Kenneth was still alive. A hunter had spooked a cow elk. Kenneth had watched her leap over a logging road, clearing it, before running into the large ravine below him. Suddenly she popped up over the embankment next to him and stood within arm's reach, panting hard and looking back from where she came! She didn't know he was there - he was down wind and motionless! He didn't know what to do ... scared of what might happen once she caught wind of him. Can you imagine?! After what seemed like an eternity, he firmly said "Boo", as if it were Halloween. She jumped about 4 feet straight in the air, and in a flash was gone into the woods.

In this case, I was the one out of place, and needed to gracefully leave!



She just wanted a drink, and after getting one, looked back at the others as if to say "What's wrong with you guys? He's harmless. Aren't you thirsty?"

I greatly admire elk. They are incredible athletes! They were in their element, and I was an intruder, too close. It had all happened so fast. Traffic was now starting to back up: the entire herd was in plain sight on the other side of the road.

I quickly backed out, toward the pickup to give the elk due space. Other photographers started to converge on me. One guy decided to get up close to the cow that was now getting her drink. A few of us asked him to step back and give the animals some space.

Another guy walked up behind me with a huge lens that must have been a 1200+ mm lens. There's crazy high-end camera gear in Yellowstone!



## An Unforgettable Day in the World of the Great Wapiti (*cont.*)

*by Calvin Huit (Part 1 of 2)*

By this time, I could see the bull a safe distance above the road, once again behind the heard. He was hiding behind some large boulders some 60-70 yards away, so the folks on the road couldn't see him. He was very savvy ...

Then the park ranger came on the scene and was trying to get folks to move on: people were parked in the road backing up traffic.

If you've been to Yellowstone in recent years, you have no doubt experienced these events: traffic can be backed up for 20 miles, and by the time you get there, whatever was there is long gone, leaving you to wonder what happened!

I was excited when I got back to the truck to view the pictures I had taken. We were able to get back in the lane headed out of the park.

I then looked behind me to see the bull cross the road and the Madison River. He was trying to catch up with his heard. I realized my day was not done – he would be crossing the river yet again ...



I jumped out of the truck (we were stalled in traffic anyway) and began to run. The bull was several hundred yards ahead of me and moving away from me!

He then slowed down, before crossing the river. I was able to catch up and get the camera shot I wanted: him crossing the river with the low setting sun outlining the bull and the splashing water with intense golden sunlight!

Through the many pictures I was able to take, I could see this bull had found a wallow somewhere on the mountain that day and had been "wallowing in it". This helps him cool down and the layer of mud helps him manage flies.

Later, as he and his heard made their way out into the meadows away from people, he looked back and gave one last awesome pose!

The traffic was starting to move on a stop-and-go pattern. I was able to cross the road safely, and my wife was able to pick me up without disruption.

I was so excited - this day was full of phenomenal opportunities: wow!! We both had stories to tell and spent the rest of the evening telling them. We had taken some awesome photos!

The next morning, we had to head home. That was in 2018, and sadly we haven't made our way back.

Millions of people from all over the world come to see Yellowstone (we are privileged to live close to it) ... Since the beginning of Covid, it has seen a record number of visitors. It's a coveted place to visit for a reason! If you have not been to Yellowstone, you are missing out!

I hope you've enjoyed this two-part story of our experience. If you have a picture or experience from a trip, please consider sharing it with us! Contact our newsletter editor, Gary Betts ([gsbetts@msn.com](mailto:gsbetts@msn.com)).

