



The Alamo Bugle

Texas Alamo Unit



VOLUME 46, ISSUE 4
RICH ESPINOSA - PRESIDENT

APRIL 2024
MUFFIN CAMP - EDITOR

Presidential Ponderings April 2024

From President Rich Espinosa:

*We are planning to update the TAU group photo for the Facebook page. The plan is to take the photo at the Installation Rally in September on Saturday afternoon. Time TBD at Lake Buchanan RV Park. If you are unable to attend the rally. You can still stop by for the photo shoot. Visit: lakebuchananrvresort.com

*The Espinosa's 4th annual Pizza Party. May 11, 2024 at 2:00 pm - 31372 Longhorn Trail / Bulverde, TX / 78163

*Please register with our club if attending our TAU rallies. <https://airstreamclub.org/texas-alamo>. We need to get a count of attendees for food.

*Make your reservations for the April rally: Patriot RV Park; 5784 US-90 ALT East Gonzales, TX 78629 (830) 468-5709

Please register for the May rally (it's a Buddy rally!)

There are slots available for the Region 9 rally. If you plan to attend and not bring your rig. You need to still resister. There will be overflow parking available.

https://form.jotform.com/240463319594158?fbclid=IwAR2erBjR7h16CV32HnuygOE4DJRU51_qAs67gdK2liT7sIB5uqVjx-uDduQ_aem_AXpNYzborqtuTdM6bXTbqvTJHdSqJ4O4uYqXvGGcgmIIM1bJbfR7nk2jN8_T1HZSZ-4

https://www.riverwalkresorttexas.com/?gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMlosaE9siPhQMV7tzjBxIBqQNsEAAYASAAEgJ_BPD_BwE

Vintage Trailer Magazine TrailerFest <https://www.trailerfestally.com/crystal-beach-tx.html>. All years welcome.



President
Rich Espinosa

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Part of Airstream maintenance article by Cheryl Toth Mar 05, 2024 @airgear.com.

Sewer Maintenance

Thomas Jefferson referred to it as “the necessary.” The British call it the loo. Most of us were taught not to talk about what we actually do while we are in it. Especially not at the dinner table. But using it is something none of us can avoid. We're talking, of course, about the toilet.

It may surprise you that not every RV traveler uses theirs. In fact, two Airstream newbie couples recently told us that they only use campground bathrooms—not their Airstream toilet. They just aren't sure about the whole thing, and they have yet to purchase a sewer hose.

We also receive interesting poo-related questions by email. One of these—“how do you lube the black tank valves?”—had us conjuring a variety of nightmare scenarios. Thankfully, the answer to this question is: you don't need to lube the black tank valves. Then, a few months back, we came across this online post:

“...Today at the service center we ran into a couple having warranty work done on their 1 year old Airstream. They told us that during the entire year they've owned it, they have never once used the toilet, and it still has plastic on it. And they camp every other weekend!”

So, we decided it was time to take the fear out of pooping in an Airstream or other brand RV toilet, and provide some practical guidance about toilet and sewer maintenance.

The good news is, nothing about these maintenance steps is rocket science. Here are the answers to the most common questions we're asked.

1. WHAT'S OK / NOT OK TO FLUSH DOWN THE TOILET?

This answer is simple: Only toilet paper and anything you've previously eaten or drunk. That means none of these things are ok to flush, so do not put them in your toilet.

- Paper towels
- Pre-moistened wipes—even if the package says they are flushable, don't
- Feminine hygiene products—this should be obvious but...
- Anything made of cloth—that means no rags or undies (you'd be surprised what Rich has witnessed being pulled out of clogged black tanks)
- Any product that contains petroleum distillates—Airstream's Owner's Manual explains that products with this ingredient will attack the rubber seals of your toilet and dump valves
- Dish detergent or abrasive cleaners
- Bleach

2. DO I NEED TO PURCHASE THAT SPECIAL RV TOILET PAPER?

No. The need for special RV toilet paper is a myth and it's more expensive than regular brands. We don't use it, and we don't recommend it.

Single-ply toilet paper (any brand) will not clog the system, as long as you don't use copious amounts, and you use enough water when you flush.

3. OK, SO HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD I USE WHEN I FLUSH?

It's commendable that many Airstream and other brand RV owners try to conserve water when they travel, but the pooper is not the place to skimp.

If you don't use sufficient water when you flush, solid waste can build up and ultimately create a thick or semi-solid pyramid down there.

Trust us, you don't want to build your own personal poop emoji in your potty. Getting rid of it is messy and could be expensive.

Here are our tips for a proper flush:

- Little potty—After you go, flush all liquid and toilet paper, and hold the foot pedal down for maybe another few seconds to wash the bowl.
- Big potty—Before you sit, fill the toilet bowl about $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ with water (hold the foot pedal down just a bit so water flows but the toilet doesn't flush). After finishing your business, flush it all down and hold the foot pedal another few seconds for good measure.

4. MUST WE WEAR GLOVES WHEN HOOKING UP THE SEWER HOSE AND DUMPING THE TANKS?

No, you don't have to. But many people choose to.

If you choose not to wear gloves (as we do), you must wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after you are finished dumping.

If you choose to wear gloves to avoid touching the sewer hose or the residual liquid that sometimes drips out of the black tank outlet, use disposable vinyl or latex gloves and throw them away after one use.

Finally, always keep the sewer hose in a "dirty" compartment or bin away from other items like the fresh water hose. For example, we keep the sewer hose in the back bumper compartment of our Airstream Globetrotter.

5. WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO DUMP THE TANKS?

Whether you have hookups at the campsite or you are using the dump station, it's as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. Pull open the black tank valve and keep it open until you can tell hear that all of the nastiness has shot through (this will be quite obvious)
2. Close the black tank valve
3. Pull open the gray tank valve and keep it open until you can hear that liquid in the gray tank. The gray tank water will flush out the black tank goo left in the hose.

6. WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THE SEWER HOSE THAT HAS A CLEAR PLASTIC ELBOW AT ONE END? DO WE NEED ONE?

Again, the use of this equipment is a choice.

Some RVers, especially when they are new, appreciate the clear elbow because during a black tank flush they can see when yucky stuff has been emptied, and the water has become clear.

Just know that the plastic window is only to show you what's flowing out of the hose; it does not have a technical purpose and you can do without it as you become a more experienced dumper.

We do not have a clear plastic elbow on our sewer hose. (Yet ironically, the elbow itself is made of yellow plastic...)

7. IS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD DO TO MAINTAIN THE TOILET/SEWER SYSTEM?

Yes. Use RV toilet treatment chemicals each time you dump the tanks.

The enzymes reduce smell, minimize chunks in the black tank, and generally keep things flowing.

Here's how to use them:

- Dump the gray and black tanks
- Turn on the pump and fill the toilet bowl with water
- Pour in the recommended amount of RV chemicals (read the label)
- Flush the toilet and all of the chemicals down

There are dozens of brands of RV toilet treatment chemicals. They are inexpensive and you can get them at Wal-Mart, Camping World, or other RV stores. We don't have a recommended brand, but here is one we've used.

8. HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE PERFORM A "BLACK TANK FLUSH?"

The "black tank flush" is a feature installed in all modern Airstreams and most other RV brands. Essentially, it's a little shower head in the black tank that lets you rinse down the tank periodically. For example, in an Airstream, you hook up a freshwater hose to the fitting marked "Black Tank Flush" and turn the water on full. Check your Owner's Manual for details.

There is no specific, factory recommendation about the frequency of a black tank flush. The Airstream Owner's Manual only recommends that the tank flush be used "on a regular basis or the holes on the spray head may become closed."

If you follow proper dumping procedures, use RV toilet treatment chemicals after each dump, and don't put the wrong stuff down your toilet, you shouldn't need to perform a black tank flush because the tank won't get gunked up or clogged. Certainly you can perform the task for peace of mind or personal preference, but many RVers have traveled for years without needing it.

9. SHOULD THE BLACK VALVE REMAIN OPEN WHEN AT A FULL HOOKUP SITE?

No. It's ok to open the gray valve and empty the gray tank if you need to during your stay, but not the black valve. The goal is to keep the contents of the black tank in the black tank, until the tank is nearly full. That ensures that everything comes out in one great whoosh of water.

10. HOW DO I KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME TO DUMP THE GRAY TANK?

In an Airstream, the tank monitor (See Level II in late model trailers) will show "100%" and/or water will stop going down into your sinks, toilet, and shower. It's a real treat when the gray tank fills up when you are taking a shower. If you're not fond of that, you should dump it every 2-3 days of typical use.

11. SHOULD I CLEAN THE GRAY AND BLACK TANK WITH BLEACH?

No. Your tanks are simply storing the yucky stuff until you dump at the campsite or dumping station. Where do you think it goes after that? Into someone's septic system, that's where.

Bleach kills the natural bacteria that makes those septic systems work. So, be kind to other people's septic systems—do not put bleach into your tanks. And do not use bleach to clean the shower or sinks, either.

So why is it ok to use bleach to sanitize the freshwater tank, then? Because such a minute amount is used in the disinfection process. The dilution calculation is in this blog we recently posted on how to sanitize the freshwater tanks.

12. I'VE READ THAT ICE CUBES CAN CLEAN THE BLACK TANK. IS THAT TRUE?

No. This is an urban myth. The only benefit is that once melted, the water will keep things properly sloshy.

13. DOES THE TOILET NEED TO BE WINTERIZED?

Definitely yes, as part of a complete winterization procedure. If you don't winterize, you'll run an issue like one of our campsite neighbors had last year: They bought a brand new Airstream then ended up unexpectedly having to store it for six months over the winter before ever traveling in it. They weren't told about how to winterize it, so they didn't. During the winter, the water line to the toilet cracked. On the Airstream's maiden voyage out of storage, they discovered the leak the hard way. They connected their trailer to water in the campground and left for the day, only to come back to a flood inside.

If you're looking for winterizing steps, download this free resource: [The simple guide to winterizing an Airstream](#).

You'll also find the winterizing procedure in your Owner's Manual, by Googling it, or in Rich's book, *The (Nearly) Complete Guide to Airstream Maintenance*, 2nd edition.



Rally Schedule. 2023-2024



September 22-24 Roadrunner RV Park
501 S Hwy 281, Johnson City 2023
830-255-7650

Mar 22-24, 2024
Miller Creek RV Park
5618 U.S. 81 South
Johnson City, TX 78636
(830) 251-6673

Oct 27-29, 2023 Mystic Quarry
13190 FM 306 Canyon Lake, TX 78133
POC Monica 830-964-3330

Nov 23-26, 2023 Oakwood Resort
FM 2093 Fredericksburg, TX 78624
POC: Malinda 830-997-9817

Dec 2023 ~~NO~~ RALLY

Jan 26-28, 2024 Longhorn RV Resort
12921 Camino Real Niederwald, TX 78640
512-398-3677

Feb 23-25, 2024 Parkview Riverside
2561 Co Rd 350, Concan, TX 78838
830-232-4006

April 19-21, 2024 Patriot RV Park
5784 US-90 ALT East Gonzales, TX 78629
(830) 468-5709

May 2-5, 2024 Region 9 Rally
Skyline Ranch RV Park
2231 Hwy. 16N Bandera, TX 78003
830-796-4958

May 17-19, 2024 *Please note that our May rally location has changed to Majestic Oaks RV Park*
1298 TX-188, Rockport, TX 78382
Please call 361-727-0034 to make reservations and tell them you're with TAU.

Sept 27-29, 2024 Lake Buchanan
1420 FM690, Burnet, TX 78611
512-887-7410

Weekend Schedule

Thursday Early Arrivals:

4 pm Social Hour
6 pm Potluck Dinner

Friday:

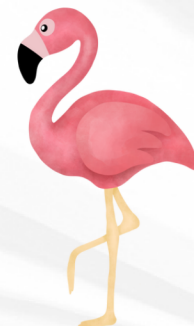
4 pm Social Hour
5 pm Opening Ceremonies
6 pm Dinner

Saturday

8:30 am Breakfast
4:30 pm Pay Rally Fees
5 pm Social Hour
6 pm Dinner
7:30 pm Games

Sunday

8:30 am Breakfast
9:00 am Devotional





APRIL

Birthdays:

02 Jimmy Cook
09 Stephanie McConnell
12 Barbara Brennecke
13 Kevin Adams

APRIL

Anniversary:

04 David and Cathy Willis

Have we missed
your birthday or
anniversary? email:
muffincamp@gmail.
com with your
information

The April Business Meeting requires a quorum of 5 units represented.



Elections for upcoming officers is the only agenda item. Please make sure you sign-up on the TAU website so we can have a good head-count. If we do not have a quorum for April, we will conduct the election via email.

April 19-21, 2024
Patriot RV Park
5784 US-90 ALT East
Gonzales, TX 78629
(830) 468-5709

PLEASE RSVP via the WBBCI / TAU website to let us know that you are coming.

Nomination Committee Slate of Officers for 2024-2025

Past President - Richard Espinosa
President - AnnMarie Esparza
1st Vice President - Jimmy Cook
2nd Vice President - Johnda Pugh
3rd Vice President - Terry Serface
Treasurer - Roseann Young
Corresponding and Recording Secretary - Diane Espinosa

1 Year Trustees - Eldon Sheffer and Luke Brennecke
2 Year Trustees - Morris Camp and Tom St. Pierre

Meet Laurie and Craig Darilek

Q: That's an unusual last name. What's the origin and how do you pronounce it?

A: Yes, it certainly is. It is Czech. You pronounce it "darj-lek". Laurie's maiden name is "Busenlehner". When we got married, the officiant tried to convince me to hyphenate it. Haha...no thank you.

Q: Why did you decide to buy an Airstream? Why drew you to them?

A: We were drawn to the understated classy elegance and the symbol of Americana that came with them. We read reviews where people spoke of the strong workmanship and quality. We joined online forums to hear feedback and get tips before purchasing. Craig had truly been looking at them years prior, but Laurie wasn't ready to bite the bullet at that time. We had been doing lots of "plane" travel and were afraid of having to always travel "close to home". We are finding that that doesn't necessarily have to be the case.



Q: How long have you had it?

A: We purchased it in October of 2023. Craig found it online and we enlisted the help of broker Sean Crimmins to assist with the inspection, purchase, and transportation, as this would be our first RV purchase.

Q: What kind of Airstream do you have?

A: We have a 2021 International FBT. At first we were perplexed as to why there were so many twin models on the lot in Buda, but after seeing the additional storage and walking space, we were all in. No regrets.

Q: What is your Airstream's name?

A: Her original name from the first owner is Dorothy, due to the many travels far from home that she would take him. We debated changing it to the CLAMper for our family (Craig, Laurie, Avery & MacKenzie). So, we think that she's become Dorothy (also Craig's grandmother's name) the CLAMper.



Q: What have been your favorite spots that you've traveled in the Airstream?

A: With both of us still working full time, we've just had the opportunity for mainly long weekend trips. We've enjoyed Kerrville-Schreiner Park and a Harvest Host in Wimberley. Our initial trip was to Firefly in Luckenbach, which was quite swanky, and the furthest that we've traveled with her was to the Davis Mountains in December.

Q: What do you have planned in the future?

A: We are spending a week and half this summer heading out to New Mexico and Arizona for some sights, boondocking, and exploring. A bucket list item is certainly going with the Airstream group to the Albuquerque Balloon Festival. Once retired, we hope to be able to participate in some of the further caravanning trips. We love visiting National Parks and look forward to taking Dorothy to as many as we can.

Q: Have you done any boondocking?

A: Yes, we joined Harvest Hosts and spent a weekend at a micro-farm in Wimberley. It was a blast and we enjoyed the challenge and experience. We look forward to finding new adventures via HH and trying some BLM areas.

Q: What's your favorite thing about Airstreaming?

A: We love the time that we get to spend together, as well as seeing new places and meeting new people. We have only had a chance to join one rally, but loved the AS family and look forward to more in the future.

Q: Do you still work? If so, what do you do?

A: Yes, we both still work full time. We love our jobs, but look forward to retirement and the extra travel time that it will provide. Craig is a marine charterer for Valero. Laurie is an elementary librarian for North East ISD.

Q: Tell us a little bit about your family.

A: We have two daughters. MacKenzie is 25, married and living in Conroe with her husband. She is a mechanical engineer for a laser company out of Austin. Avery is 23 and lives in San Antonio while she's in medical school. We are all die hard Longhorns, so you may see orange seeping out of our camper. Hook 'em!





I spy a leprachaun!



Tech talk was riveting!



Cathy and David Willis



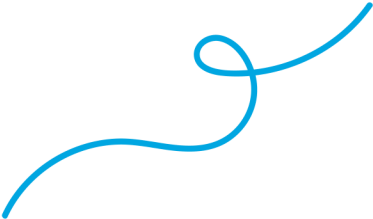
President Rich with Nancy and Terry Surface

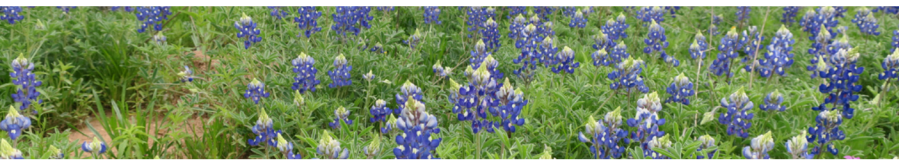


Eldon and Barbara Sheffer



Julie Lechtenberger with Roseann Young





March Rally

March 22-24, 2024 Johnson City, TX



Wine tasting in Johnson City at an Airstream, of course!



Our group took a rest from Saturday's activities



Our fearless flamingo leader is ready to initiate Terry and Nancy Surface



Reverse Charades at its finest!



Kitchen Crew: David and Cathy Willis along with Morris and Muffin Camp



The men bring on their acting skills for Reverse Charades

