

*AIRSTREAM  
MAINTENANCE*

*PRESENTED BY:*

*CINDY & JEFF MCKEE  
(BRN 07441)*

*5/2/24*

*REGION 9 RALLY  
BANDERA, TX*



# *AGENDA*

- Introduction
- Interior Maintenance
- Exterior Maintenance
- Final Tips & Takeaways
- Q & A



# *INTRODUCTION*

- RV: 2019 Tommy Bahama FBQ 27'
  - Purchased from original owner in 2022
  - We have 3 Battleborn 100-amp lithium-ion batteries and 400 watts of solar installed (there is a separate session on solar after this session)
- Tow Vehicle: 2019 Ford F350
- We are based in Austin, TX (both retired)
- In 2023 our long trip was 4 months, 20,000+ miles, 25 National Parks across US and Canada, International Rally and lots of fun
- In 2024 our long trip will be 3.5 months up North including the Grapes and Grains Rally in the Finger Lakes of NY, and to the Northeast (Acadia National Park), then the to the International Rally in MO



# *INTERIOR MAINTENANCE*



# *RESOURCES*

The (nearly) Complete Guide to Airstream Maintenance, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by Rich Luhr (available on Amazon)

Airstream Manuals, provided by Airstream and carried at all times in the rig

Phil Enoch His website where you can find his products

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

We have the step brace, door lockout solution, thumb turn upgrade for A/C returns and the A/C drip line cleaning kit

Most used tools

Screwdriver set (make sure you have a short set included)

Plastic putty knife

# *INTERIOR MAINTENANCE ITEMS PRIOR TO EXTENDED TRIP (BEST AT THE INITIAL STOP) PG 1*

Beginning in our front bedroom (farthest from the exterior door)

- Check for any signs of water intrusion (follow book recommendations if there are signs)
- Remove A/C return filters and rinse (set these aside to dry while you proceed)
- Turn on the thermostat and see that it is working
- Check the emergency window for normal operation and other windows check the locking mechanisms
- Wipe down walls and ceiling (makes it easier to see if you have water coming in later)

# *INTERIOR MAINTENANCE ITEMS PRIOR TO EXTENDED TRIP (BEST AT THE INITIAL STOP) PG 2*

- Check toilet plumbing
  - I put a paper towel under the plumbing on the floor then flush the toilet. If any water shows on the towel, check the flush valve which is a known breaking point and easily replaceable with those short screwdrivers
  - Check sink making sure the hot water heater lights when hot water is requested, also check the screen and remove and rinse if water pressure is low to this faucet
  - Check shower drain and that all items are attached and working
  - Under the closet is our water pump, I remove the screen and rinse out any debris
  - A quick tip is to turn on the water pump and run water from any of the faucets for a minute then turn off water, if the water pump continues to pressurize (turns off then on repeatedly) then you probably have a plumbing leak so check behind all cabinet doors for water

# *INTERIOR MAINTENANCE ITEMS PRIOR TO EXTENDED TRIP (BEST AT THE INITIAL STOP) PG 3*

- In the kitchen:
  - Check the faucet, again remove the screen if low pressure to this faucet
  - Turn on the stove burners to be sure propane is adequate
  - Check the exhaust fan and light
  - Look under cabinets for any moisture



# *ONGOING MAINTENANCE*

- Run a de-humidifier while in the rig
- Leave Dry-Z-Air moisture gathering beads while in storage
- Winterizing your rig:
  - Empty all tanks
  - Open low point drains and move the hitch receiver up and down to be sure tanks are empty
  - Blow out the lines using compressor and opening both hot and cold on each faucet one at a time. I remove the handheld shower hose both interior and exterior. Flush the toilet without the water pump on to remove as much water as possible and open and close this while using the compressor as well.
  - Add RV antifreeze to just traps (sinks and shower)
  - We add a towel around the bottom of the toilet to protect the flush valve
- Inspect for water leaks, especially after a freeze or heavy rain
  - We had the seal procedure done at the Airstream dealer
- If you run out of propane then connect another canister use the Stove then purge air out of the line by running one burner (if you don't your LP setting on the refrigerator may not work properly from a full LP tank)
  - Turn on a full propane tank SLOWLY so the ball stop valve won't engage
- Replace the Smoke Detector batteries (9v) annually

# *A/C VENT (IMPROVEMENTS)*

- Replace Phillips head screws with thumb screws (no more potential scratching your ceiling with the screwdriver)



# *FANS / VENTS (IMPROVEMENTS)*



- Installed 2 fans above master bed mounted to ceiling using direct wire power
- Sirocco II fan (great for boondocking) only draws 0.12A on Low direct wired 3 speeds and 4 timers, gimbaled to move in any direction and one click moves these up flat against the cabinet and out of the way



- Replaced OEM vents with Airkrafters in bedroom and bathroom (3) to provide more airflow, control and more direction options



## *CLOSET HINGE*

- Replaced hinge with one that will allow the doors to go nearly flat for easier pass through in the hall and better access to the closet

# *CABINET STRUTS*

- Added struts on cabinet above the refrigerator, original hinges do not lock in the open position



# *REFRIGERATOR* *“THERMISTOR”*



- If your refrigerator is running warm check this thermistor position since the tube can slip
  - It may move down during travel days
- Move the tube in the plastic sleeve all the way up to make it colder

# *ENTRY DOOR*



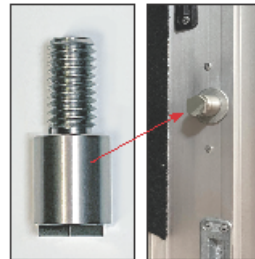
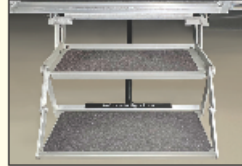
- Nolox Anti-Lockout System
- Brake caliber plug (rubber gasket) to prevent slide lock from closing
- According to Phil “The Door Guy” you should lube the mechanism by removing the plate’s three screws and using boeshield T9 lube 14 moving areas
  - At the July ‘23 International Rally we had Phil lube the door to open and close much more easily
- We only use the bolt lock, not the door handle lock
- Tip:
  - We have not been locked out but didn’t have a set of keys with us when we went to storage once so now we have a secure key storage in the battery bay containing the front door keys
  - We have been locked in but the door opened fine from the outside (thanks Tim) and we were saved from having to use the emergency exit window (which is a long way down)

# NOLOX SOLUTIONS

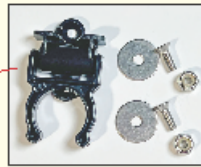
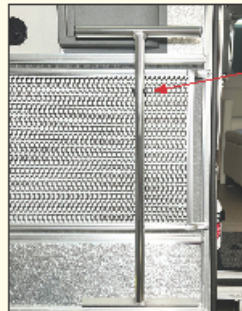
**NoLOX**  
Solution

Airstream Modifications  
Send inquiries or questions to:  
noloxsolution@gmail.com

**Step Brace** - Available in anodized aluminum or gloss black powder coated aluminum. The step brace adds considerable stability to the steps and removes the soft spongy feel. Place the step brace between the first and second step of the two step aluminum steps with the round tube resting on the frame and floor of the Airstream. The angle portion will rest on the back of the lower step with the labels facing out. The step brace will NOT work with the black metal steps.



**Striker Bolt** - The stainless steel striker bolt is designed to replace the OEM striker bolt and eliminate the 3/4" head that can cause closing and opening issues with the Airstream door. When installing the NoLOX striker bolt use a 9/16" 6 pt. socket and orange or blue thread locker for best results. **DO NOT USE RED** thread locker.



**Step Brace Clip** - The clip is designed to be used for transit only. For both the front and rear door models, mount the step brace clip approximately 5-1/2" from the side and 1-3/4" from the top of the screen guard on the hinge side of the door. Mount the clip so it folds up when not in use. All stainless steel hardware is included.



**NoLOX Door Kit** - The kits supplies the necessary hardware to install the locking arm to prevent accidental lockouts. Also included in the kit is the hardware to strengthen the interior door handle. The kit does not include the complete handle. The kit is a retrofit for your existing handle.



**Vent Kit** - This kit includes the necessary hardware to replace the Phillips screws in the return air vents with stainless steel thumb screws. The difference between the 50 amp kit and the 30 amp kit is the amount of hardware supplied for each kit. The kit will not work with the new 2023 Coleman AC units.



**AC Cable** - The stainless steel aircraft cable is used to help clear obstructions from the condensation tube that exits in the wheel well of the Airstream. Use **CAUTION** when removing the zip ties from the cable for the first time. The cable is under tension for packaging purposes.



# *EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE*



# *EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE ITEMS / SCHEDULE*

- Clear out Refrigerator, furnace and water heater compartments
  - Insect nests, bee hives, spider webs, leaves, etc
- Inspect A/C unit(s) annually or more frequently if you have been camping under a tree
  - Squirrels can get into the Dometic units
  - Consider wire mesh on the inside of the cover to keep the critters out
- Annually clear out A/C drip lines that terminate in the wheel wells with kit (airplane wire) from Phil Enoch
- Clean the 7-way connector periodically (if it has corrosion then use a small metal file) apply dielectric grease (Air Gear has a kit for this)
- Keep a set of fuses for the RV and tow vehicle
  - We had a short to our Power Hitch Jack that was blowing a 30-amp fuse
  - Used electrical tape to fix the pinch of the wires from the cut out in the propane tank holder
  - Have the manual jack for the Power Hitch in the event of an electrical issue
- Washing
  - We use Walbernize, warm water if available, sponges and microfiber towels to dry then we apply F11 Ceramic spray on (thanks Kevin)
- Awnings – lubricate (silicon spray) periodically as needed, if put away wet then dry awnings soon after
- Visually check the tires before each trip for tread wear, objects in tire
  - Adjust the appropriate PSI when the tires are cold then use a TPMS to monitor when driving
- Have a Departure Checklist and an Arrival Checklist to go through each time
  - “Slow is the new fast”

# *EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE*

- TPMS (Tire Pressure Monitoring System)
  - We chose Tire Minder and start with 60 PSI cold on our tires that are rated to 80 PSI cold
    - I have a cordless digital tire pressure pump (Rigid brand from Home Depot) which is convenient to adjust pressure
  - Had to use the signal booster to get the signal from the TPMS sensors to the control unit in the tow vehicle
  - We connected this to a battery stored in the AGM battery compartment
  - Must make sure the booster is pointing down to the pavement to bounce the signal from the sensors
  - Have extra sensor batteries since they seem to run out in less than a year
  - Replace original tire valve stems with metal valve stems (tire shops like Discount Tire may do this for free)



# *TIRES & WHEEL BEARINGS*

- We use Goodyear Endurance ST225/75R15 117/112 N load with E1 rating
- Consider replacing every 10,000 – 15,000 miles or when the tread depth gets down to 4/32"
- Be careful of tire rot if you don't take your rig out very often or if you bought a used one that may have sat for a long time
- At 3 years old took the RV to the Camper Clinic II Airstream dealer (Buda, TX) and they replaced all the never lube bearings/seals
- Seems one tire has a small discharge after 1 year (25K miles) of operation after emailing with Dexter we were assured these NevRLube bearings last a long Nervule time and a small amount of grease is totally normal



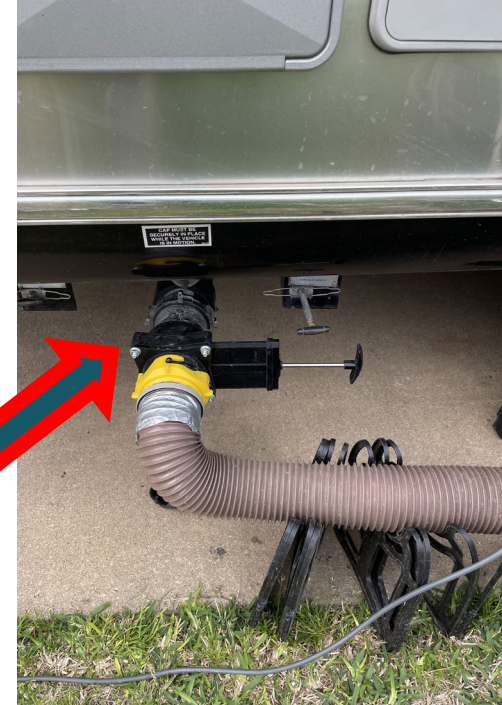
# *ADDITIONAL STABILIZATION*

- X Chock
  - We use the X Chocks to help stabilize the rig (when staying for more than 1 day)
  - Remember to remove them before departing (☺)



# HOSE

- We had Kleen Tank clean our grey and black tanks at last year's International Rally
- They said to open the grey slightly to fill all the grooves in the hose then drain your black then drain your grey and rinse
- Added on another valve to the OEM valve to minimize excess run-off (be sure it does not stick out more than the tires)
- Ladder system to support and angle the hose
- Sandbag to keep the hose secure to the septic
- Wear reusable rubber gloves that stay with the hose in the trailer bumper
- Use the valve tool when the hose is too tight



# STARLINK

*(ERIC HAS A FULL SESSION TODAY)*

- Had Vinnie's in Sacramento, CA install the plug replacing the "satellite in" with the Starlink Ethernet plug
- Kept the co-axle cable plug
- Spliced the Starlink wire to have the Starlink router stored below our refrigerator
- Purchased a Starlink pole custom for the ver 2 dish since pole seem sturdier than the Harbor Freight flag poles
- Use block under pole to keep steady and raise height of the dish above the rig
- Mounted a flagpole holder to the A-frame
- Had to bend out the holder (machine shop) to keep clear of the front window and rig (due to the outward bow)





# *WATER*

- Y splitter (copper instead of plastic) to have a 2<sup>nd</sup> option for water
- Water pressure valve (metal) to prevent high pressure situations or boost, with adjusting the value, for high and low pressure
- Basic water purifier attached to potable water valve (change it every few months)
- Purchased a Camco EvoFlex 35 ft water hose





# POWER

- SurgeGuard 50-amp surge protector
- 50-amp shore cable is heavy so planning to bring just the 30-amp shore power cable, dog bone for the surge protector to plug into the 30-amp connection at the pedestal
- When hooking up to power be sure the appropriate breaker switch at the pedestal is OFF then plug it, turn on the breaker and verify the surge protector turns green / has the appropriate voltage (120v for 30 Amp and 240v for 50 Amp)



# *FAN-TASTIC FAN COVER*

- MaxAir brand vent cover for Fan-Tastic Fans
- Can run the fan when it rains
- Helps protect the OEM Fantastic fan



# *EXTERIOR SHOWER QUICK CONNECT*

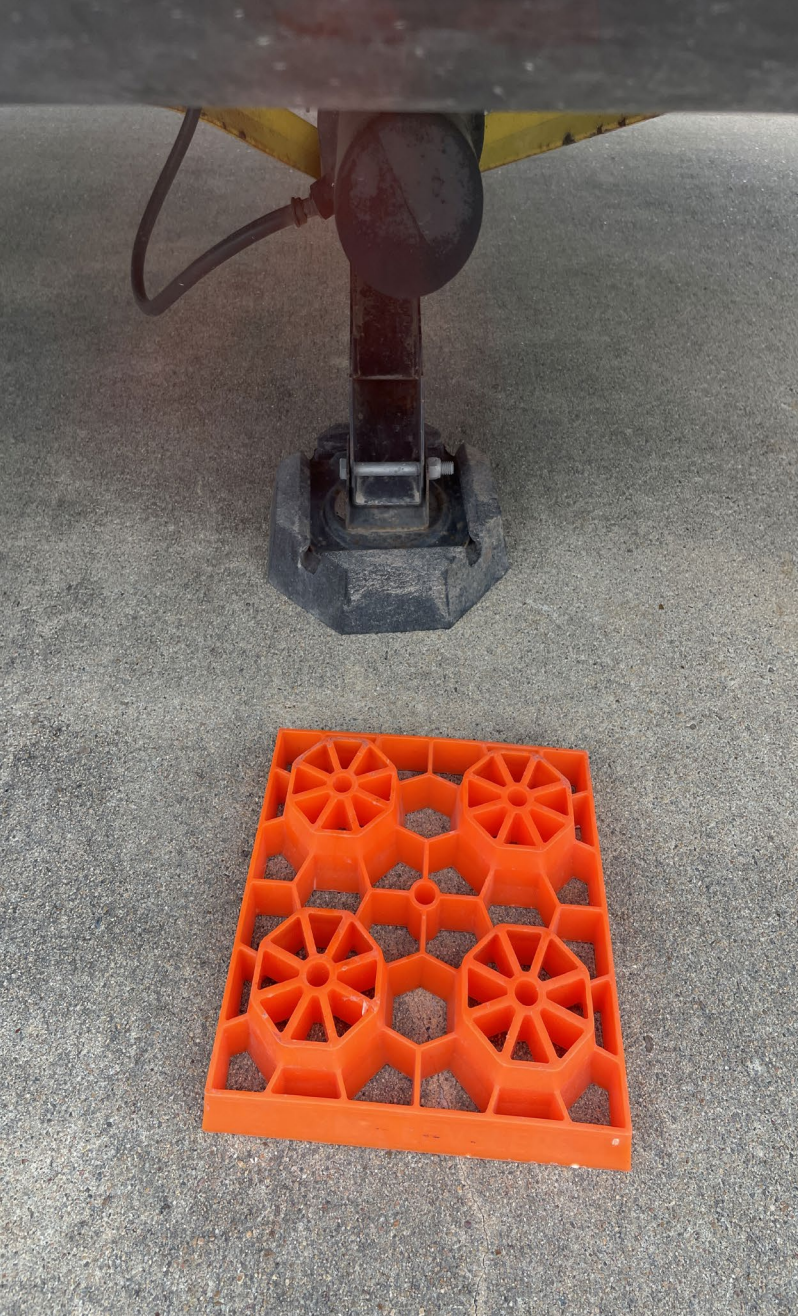


- Replaced exterior shower handle with quick connect hose
- Help when washing the rig and need warm water

# *PROPANE COVER PANEL*

- Bought this at the International event (Airboard)
- Additional storage space
- Have not upgraded the top propane lid to the taller one





## *STABILIZER LEVELING PADS (SNAPPAD XTRA RV LEVELING PADS)*

- Helps prevent metal stabilizer feet from becoming bent
- Helps if it rains creating mud since these have more surface area than just the metal feet and won't sink as easily



# *GREASE*

- Green grease to lube the tow vehicle ball hitch and the RV hitch
- Recommended every 5,000 miles or 90 days
- For our equalizer hitch do not use this or WD40 on weight distribution bars as they are supposed to have friction

# *DC TO DC CONNECTION*



- F350 (6.7L diesel) has 2 HD Alternators and 2 batteries
- Hardwire connection from one battery under truck to bumper that connects to the Battleborn batteries in the front storage bay of the RV
- Recharges the batteries about 5% per hour when driving (excludes solar re-charging of the batteries in parallel)
- Could use this system if boondocking and running low on battery by connecting to the truck and running it
- Considering getting a 200-watt external solar panel for additional solar

# *7-WAY PLUG*

- We've had issues with the 7-way plug during travel days due to corrosion giving us turn signal warning failure
- If it has corrosion then use a small metal file then apply dielectric grease (Air Gear has a kit for this)





# *TIPS AND TAKEAWAYS*

- “Slow is the new fast”
- Have a checklist for inside and outside maintenance for hook-up and set-up



# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



*THANK YOU*  
*(BRN 07441)*

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