



East Texas Lakes Newsletter

President's Note

Just A reminder the Region 9 Rally will be held at the Skyline RV Ranch Park in Bandera, TX from May 1st-5th. ETLU will have a basket in the fundraiser. There have been some secondary spots open up if interested.

Also, in September ETLU will host the Sedalia Caravan Kickoff Rally with NTxAC from September 27th-29th. Rally participants do not have to be participating in the caravan to attend the Rally. If interested, please let me know at your nearest convenience. The caravan will be traveling to the International Rally from September 29th to October 16th.

We also have plans for an ETLU Rally in Palo Duro Canyon State Park October 23rd to 27th. All our spots in the group campground are reserved, but we can secure more spots in the adjacent campground if needed. It would be great to have more ETLU members attend as the park is amazing.

I look forward to seeing you all on the road.

Shelley Tumino
President, ETLU

Maintenance Minute

No hot water can certainly make a camping trip a little less homey. For those with the "old" style Atwood hot water heater, it needs to be cleaned once or twice per year. The process is not hard and can be done in a few minutes if done regularly. For regular maintenance you only need a couple tools.

1. A 7/8" or 15/16" socket and extension
2. A hot water flush wand. This can be found on Amazon or your camping supply store for about \$15.



If you tank has not been cleaned in a while, you might also need a couple gallons of cleaning vinegar as well. This will be used to break loose the solid deposits than are inside the tank. If you have an Atwood (most Airstreams), they use an aluminum tank, so there is no anode rod like there is in a Suburban tank. If your drain plug is damaged or more than a couple years old, you might consider replacing it as well. It is also a good idea to keep a couple spare drain plugs in your repair kit. I know some folks

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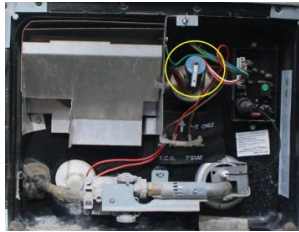


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have installed a brass drain valve on their tanks. While convenient, it is not recommended as the nylon drain plugs are a safety feature that is a last defense if your tank overheats.

Steps

1. Turn off power and propane as well as the water supply (turn off pump if not on city water). If the tank was hot, let it set for a several hours to cool, preferable overnight.
2. Open the access panel and open/flip up the pressure relief valve.



3. If you have access to an air compressor, you can use it to blow out the burner tube. Not always necessary, but a good idea to check it.



4. Open the drain valve by removing the plug with the socket. If water is slow to run out, you probably forgot step #2. I cut out an old funnel to fit under the burner tube so I did not have as

much water running down the access panel and I could drain into a 5 gal bucket. It is not a problem, just personal preference.

5. Once the water is drained, attach the wand to a garden hose and flush water through and out of the drain. Continue flushing until you see no more solids coming out with the flush water. If you tank is very dirty and there are a lot of deposits, you might want to fill the tank with 50% vinegar and 50% water and let it sit overnight. You can fill the tank by unscrewing the pressure relief valve and removing it. Just remember to put the plug back in first and then re-install the pressure relief valve.
6. Once you are satisfied with the flushing, you should install a new drain plug. Since it is nylon, you are not required to put PTFE tape on it. If it makes you feel better, use it.
7. Close the pressure relief valve and turn on your water. Check for leaks around the plug. If no leaks turn on power and gas and let your tank do its thing.

For those with a newer style tankless heater, I will give you those procedures next month. I don't have one, so I need to do some research.



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New Members

We have a new member this month. Please welcome Roger and Katherine Burrow from Tyler. We had the pleasure to meet both Roger and Katherine at the Tyler State Park Rally last month and they are a wonderful addition to our membership.

People Profile

No volunteers this month. Please send us a short bio so we can send it out next month in the newsletter. You might get asked next month...

Pet Profile

No pets to share this month, but we need to hear about the Terry's little pup.

Social Media Update

Don't forget to follow ETLU on social media. The sites are up and running:

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/East>
- [TexasLakesAirstream/](https://www.texaslakesairstream.com/)
- Instagram: east_tx_lakes_ac
- Airstream Website:
- <https://airstreamclub.org/east-texaslakes>

ETLU Gear

We still have some hats left. If you are interested, please let me know (everyone should have received an order form).



The final cost on each of these hats is the following:

- Richardson Color Logo: \$31.30/each
- '47 Monochrome: \$27.15/each

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These are being sold at cost to Unit Members so we can show some ETLU spirit.

Product Review

We are looking for product reviews. Is there something you find helpful while Airstreaming? Send it to us.

We have been debating for over year about adding a hitch to the back of our International. We finally broke down and added the Torklift hitch custom made for both widths of Airstream trailers (www.torkliftcentral.com) .



Installation was very easy on our International as the rear bumper access made it simple to drill the four mounting holes. Other trailers are a bit more difficult, but they include a snake tool that helps get the bolts in the right hole. It comes with two bumper brackets, two draw bar brackets and the draw bar with the 2" receiver. Also included are all the bolts, nuts and washers you need.

Installation took about 45 minutes and I was able to do it myself, although two people would be easier. No special tools required as I used my 18V cordless drill, a step bit from Harbor Freight, 3/4" combination wrenches and a 3/4" socket and break over. I did re-torque the hardware down with a 1/2" break over and got most of the bolts to about 130-140 ft-lbs.

We made it all the way to Big Bend with no major issues. I did find that I needed to tighten the bolts again (thus the 1/2" socket and breakover). I did not torque them enough on the initial install and it developed a little bit of play. But once I got them torqued down, it was very solid.

The hitch can hold up to 450 lbs. I would not personally recommend that, but it works great for the 75 pounds of bikes and Yakima rack we have back there.

There are a lot of forums that say not to do anything to the Airstream's frame. It is a risk. So far we really like it. Just do not overload it and put excessive weight behind the axles. It probably goes without saying, but it is not a trailer hitch, just looks like one.



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Do you have another style? Let us know what you have on your rig.

Who's going where?

Send your travel plans to the Unit Gmail address by the 15th to be included in that month's newsletter.

The Battles are heading out on another long adventure that includes a stop by the mother ship for some repairs. Looking forward to hearing about all the stops and activities.

The Towns have a couple more state parks on the agenda for April, May and June. Trying to get to all 88 Parks and we are nearly halfway there!

Trip Diary

We had a great time at Shelley's Vintage and Tear Drop Rally at Tyler State Park. There were some really amazing rigs from the 2-story trailer to my favorite non-Airstream, the Holiday House. The front window was really awesome.

Competition was fierce on the corn hole field. Hawley Towns and Niki Coats did ETLU proud and finished second to the Vintage Guys. Everyone enjoyed potluck on Friday and a shrimp boil on Saturday. There were a couple run-ins with the local raccoons, but we had a great time in Tyler State Park and got to meet some new people as well.

Other Stuff

If you have any ideas for the newsletter, please let us know. We would like to add birthdays and anniversaries, but we don't have many in our data base. You can send those to the ETLU Gmail address (no years please, just day and month).

We will also be organizing some non-rally socials to get people together. If you have an idea, let us know. We are thinking about a trip to Hawkins to eat at the Taste of Italy on the Lake. It is some of the best Italian we have had in East Texas. Of course, the Towns are always in to meet anyone at True Vine about any weekend we are not camping.

**Hawley Towns – Newsletter
Coordinator**

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