

The Hillbilly



Publication of Watchung NJ Airstream Club

www.airstreamclub.org/watchung-nj February 2025

President's Message



We are warming up! I can feel the change in the sun. February is the month of love where we celebrated Valentine's Day. Did you know Valentine's Day has the largest number of flowers bought and the 2nd greatest number of holiday cards sold. Candy is the most purchased gift. The heart shaped candy box was introduced in 1865, there are about 36 million heart shaped candy boxes sold. We spend 1.1 billion valentine dollars on our pets too.

The January Luncheon was a tremendous success. The food was excellent and we had some new members attend, which was genuinely nice. The venue was unique and the staff attentive. Steve and Cynthia had a novel idea for the charity raffle and I for one enjoyed watching the Super Bowl to see who our lucky winners were. Thank you for making the raffle different! Congratulations to: Cynthia and Steve, Lauren and Bruce, Pat and Flo, and Ceyan.

The March luncheon is filling up and shaping up to be an enjoyable time. There is still time to join us.

Our upcoming camping season is shaping up to be a great one. We have 26 rigs signed up so far for International in York. Don't forget to let us know if you sign up as we want to park together at the rally. If you decide to go and haven't already done so please let Rich Short know (rcshort49@gmail.com).

Leslie

Region 2 President's Message

Hello from the Snowy North!

Right now, this is the view from my back patio door. It's not ready for a backyard picnic at the moment! I have approx. 2-3 ft of snow on our back deck. Great for snowshoeing after you dig your driveway out.

On Valentine's Day we decided to check out the George Eastman House and see the Dutch Connection where they had their Spring floral display out for viewing. I've attached a photo to get Airstreamers dreaming about this year's camping season.

Registrations for the Region 2 International Rally Luncheon at York, the Region 2 Rally at the Center County Grange Fairgrounds, and the joint Sampson State Park Rally, are now open. The links are below. There is limited space for seating at the International Luncheon in York so do not delay! Right now, we have 235 rigs signed up for the International. If everyone attends, that works out to approx. 425 people for the Luncheon. Mission BBQ is catering the meal, and we have quite the spread planned!

Region 2 International Rally Luncheon at York registration

<https://form.jotform.com/250156206580148>

This year's Region 2 Rally is being sponsored by the Washington DC Unit. The theme is Kentucky Derby. We will be showing the race live at the Rally along with other activities.

Region 2 Rally at Center County Grange Fairgrounds registration

<https://form.jotform.com/243194535933159>

This is the 5th year for this Rally at Sampson. This year the Pennsylvania, New York Finger Lakes and Region 1 are the sponsors for this event. The theme is A Taste of New York and New England. Come join the Rally. There will be a wine and craft beer tasting at the Rally with charcuterie boards and gourmet popcorn, two catered dinners, and a Sunday Continental Breakfast. There is also a separate bus wine tour if you are so inclined.

Sampson State Park registration

<https://form.jotform.com/243194600769159>

This rally has a limited number of sites so don't delay your registration. Last year we had a wait list for this event.

Again, I want to remind people that headquarters will be sending out a notice searching for Executive Council candidates to fill the subsequent slate of nominee positions. If you are interested in becoming a candidate to help direct the Airstream club, I want to encourage you to fill out an application form. Even if you are not interested, your vote does count! Please take the time to read about the candidates, get acquainted with them, and reach out to their local Club President or the Region officers if you have any questions while making your voting decisions.

Why not YOU? The search is on. My term as Region 2 President comes to an end on July 31, 2025. The Region 2 team is looking for a 2nd VP. Region 2 covers the following areas: Ontario Canada, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Washington DC, Delaware, and Maryland. If you are interested in volunteering as a Region officer, please contact me, Patti Galupo or Matt Moore to join this dynamic team!

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Support positions at the International are still open. Tours Chair and Community Service both report to Sherrye McCabe. Sherrye works out of the Jackson Center office. Debbie Wood is also looking for people to support the Meals & Refreshments committee. Please contact Jackson Center if interested.

If you see an area of support that interests you, please step up.

1. Provide local information for International Club's Marketing/Communications including:
 - Identify several contributors to write articles for club publications about the rally locale,
 - Best routes to the rally site,
 - Camping suggestions for enroute to the rally through the region,
 - Staging areas near the rally site for members to meet up before entering rally site (for parking together),
 - Suggestions for local vendors to participate in the exhibitor show, and
 - Other local information specific to the region and rally site that is useful to members traveling in the area.
2. At the Sedalia Rally, the **Ambassador program** was started and well received. A signup list will be coming from Jackson Center.
 - Recruited volunteers from the local clubs in the region will act as **Ambassadors** at the rally which will involve:
 - Answering questions, providing directions to events in the park and being that enthusiastic presence ready to offer a smile and some assistance.
 - Attending an orientation session at the start of the rally to be briefed on the rally logistics and other information as needed, and to set up the rally event app and learn to use it.
 - Wearing special vests provided by the rally that identifies them as Rally Ambassadors.
 - Posting at strategic locations around the rally site to assist members with questions, directions, or local information.
 - Manning the doors to the Exhibitor Hall before opening hours to allow only exhibitors to enter.
3. Identify
 - Community Service programs
 - Local tourist attractions

As you can see, we have multiple opportunities to help at the York Rally.

Please contact

4. Primary: Debbie Wood, 704-430-9196, dwood@airstreamclub.org \
5. Secondary: Sherrye McCabe, 937-722-1436, smccabe@airstreamclub.org

Let's Make History at the 68th Airstream Club International Rally located in York, Pennsylvania: August 23-28, 2025. Registration is now open. Go to the Airstream Club website today and don't miss out seeing old friends and making new ones at the event. This event is in our Region -- let's show them how to have fun!!!

Regards, Gary Russo

Announcements

Sunshine Report

The club did not receive any requests to send sunshine cards this month. Here's hoping everyone is good!

Would you like to have a card sent to another club member to wish them well or mark a milestone? Please send a note to Linda Kiesel our Sunshine Director at lkiesel@ptd.net.



How to Find, Sign Up and Pay for an ACI Event Online

- Log on to <https://airstreamclub.org/>
- Click on the EVENTS tab
- A map of the US will be displayed containing pins for all the events for all the Airstream clubs. Just above the map on the right side of the screen is the Clubs box. Click on the down arrow to display the list of clubs then scroll down to **Watchung NJ Club**. Clicking on this will cause the map to display only Watchung club events.
- Find the event you wish to sign up for and click on the associated pin.
- A text box giving a brief description of the event will be displayed. Click on the arrow in the orange box that says **More**.
- A new page will be displayed. If a registration form has been created for the event this page will give you two options: online registration or mail-in registration using a download of the form. The online form allows payment via PayPal. If you prefer to pay via check download and print the form, which includes payment instructions. If there is no registration form available yet one will be at a later date.

This Month's Birthdays

Lea Plant
Gail Lloyd
Gary Brink (A)
Carolyn Hagman
Angela Ratliff
Patty Ciak

Items for the newsletter?

Send them by the 25th of each month to: (dconley1810@gmail.com)

Interested in joining the Watchung NJ Airstream club?

Contact:

Membership: George Kiesel (gkiesel861@gmail.com)

President: Leslie DeHerde (lesairstreaming@gmail.com)



2025 Watchung Airstream Club Rally and Luncheon Schedule

From First VP Heidi Cullen:

Just a quick reminder: we still need hosts for June and September. Please let me know if you are interested and we will help you all the way! reach out to me at 973-945-3406 (text or phone) or email at heidi.watch.air@gmail.com.

DATE	WHAT/WHEN	HOSTS	COHOSTS	VENUE
March 2025	Luncheon/March 15	Frank and Leslie DeHerde	Ken and Nancy Egan	Knights of Columbus 130 Main St. Woodbridge NJ
April 2025	Unbutton-your-rig rally and club business meeting/April 24-27	George and Linda Kiesel	Saskia Schmidt and Brian Stein	Holly Acres Campground, Egg Harbor, NJ
May 2025	Region 2 Rally/May 1-4	Washington DC Unit	NA	Centre County Grange Encampment & Fair, 169 Homan Lane, Centre Hall PA 16828
June 2025	Club Rally/	Host Needed	CoHost Needed	
July 2025	Club and Buddy Rally/July 11-14	Steve and Cynthia Germansky	Lois Wagner/Derek Conley	Croton Point Park, Croton-on-Hudson, New York
August 2025	International Aug 23-28 and club business meeting	WBCCI	N/A	York, PA
September 2025	Club Rally/	Host needed	CoHost Needed	
October 2025	Club Rally/Annual Business Meeting October 3-5	Pat and Florence Attanasio	CoHost needed	Kymer's Camping Resort, Branchville, NJ
November 2025	Luncheon/TBA	Barbara Taylor and Michael Koczwara	CoHost needed	TBA
December 2025	Installation Luncheon/TBA	Heidi and Brian Cullen	Leslie/ Frank DeHerde	TBA

In addition to the club and International rallies, ACI also offers National Event Rallies. Find the [complete list of National Event Rallies on AirstreamClub.org](#).

New Member Drive

Lea Plant writes:



The Watchung New Jersey Airstream Club was again honored to be asked by Colonial Airstream to attend their Next Adventure Sales Event. It was a fun way to spend Valentine's Day! Other members who were there on Friday, February 14th were, Rich and Kathi Short, Cynthia and Steve Germansky and Ken and Nancy Egan. It was nice to get caught up with Watchung members and with our Colonial friends.

Saturday our members included: Heidi and Brian Cullen, George Trunk and Susanne Schumakoff (members since October of 2024), Rebecca Glick and Lois Wagner and Derek Conley. Saturday, we had so many helpers, that we were

brought another table and chairs. Colonial is so accommodating. They even provided a continental breakfast and sandwiches for lunch! As usual, much information was exchanged. We always learn something.

Rob Stratton, Sales Account Manager for Equal-i-zer has been attending for as long as Watchung has been. A new vendor to Colonial this year was Jeremy Puglisi from The RV Atlas. He and his wife co-wrote many books and had a variety with him, along with coffee. Both have donated items for our annual charity raffle.

Thanks to Alex Rivera, the Lenzo Family and all our friends at Colonial Airstream for their invitation and hospitality. We look forward to next year's Next Adventure Sales Event in Millstone Twp. - and we also look forward to seeing them at International in York, PA!



The Saturday crew.

Hillbilly Cooking

WAC*Salad

The toppings and dressings for this salad can be made at home before the trip.

For the salad:

One large head of romain lettuce chopped

3 scallions sliced thin

One broccoli head broken up in small pieces, about 2 cups

Usually I make this just before serving but it can be made a day or two in advance and packaged in a sealed plastic bag.

Toppings

1 package Raman oriental-seasoned noodles, crushed with the flavoring packet set aside

¼ cup sunflower seeds

½ cup sliced almonds

2 tablespoons of butter

Melt the butter in a saute pan. Add the crushed noodles, seeds and nuts and cook over medium heat until lightly browned. Cool then place in a sealed container.

Dressing

½ package of the seasoning from the noodles

½ cup canola oil

½ cup sugar

¼ cup white vinegar

1-1/2 tablespoons soy sauce

I generally make the dressing just before serving but it too can be made ahead of time and put in a sealed container for travel.

To serve, place the salad in a large bowl, add the toppings and dressing, and mix thoroughly.

* Watchung Airstream Club

March Luncheon



Hosted by: The DeHerdes and the Egans

Come celebrate St. Patricks Day with a corned beef meal with all the sides!

BYOB

Saturday March 15th 1 PM-4:30 PM

Knights of Columbus
130 Main St
Woodbridge, NJ

Price: \$21 PER PERSON

March Luncheon

Name: _____

Number Attending: _____ x \$21 per person = total \$ _____

Mail check to:

Leslie DeHerde 22 Hissim Rd, Great Meadows, NJ 07838 or pay through Jot Form.

Unbutton Your Rig, April 2025

Holly Acres Campground
218 S. Frankfurt Ave. Egg Harbor City NJ 08215
609-965-5055

Hosts: George & Linda Kiesel 908-930-0550 Brian Stein 609-992-7006

When: Thursday April 24th through Sunday April 27th, 2025 Hosted by George and Linda Kiesel.
Cohost Saskia Schmidt and Brian Stein.

Where: Holly Acres Campground. Egg Harbor City NJ 08215

Schedule

Thursday: arrivals, Official check in time is any time after 12pm.

Friday: Enjoy the day on your own. Many activities in the area. Happy hour 5pm. Hot dogs and Hamburgers 6pm. Bring your own plates and utensils to **all meals**. Campfire weather permitting

Saturday: Breakfast 8:30-9:30, Blueberry pancakes, sausage, coffee, juice. Enjoy day on your own. Many activities in and around the area, see activities list attached.
Happy hour 5pm, Dinner 6pm, Catered dinner, Lasagna, Chicken Marsala, Green salad and dessert. Charitable auction/ collection for Covenant House following dinner. Campfire weather permitting. Executive board meeting 7:30 pm

Sunday: Continental Breakfast 8:30-9:30. Business meeting 10am.
Cleanup and departure. Check-out time is 11am, but no later than 1pm.

Please note that you are asked to not bring your pet to the pavilion during happy hour / mealtimes. Thank you.

Please call the campground directly for reservations. If you pay for Friday and Saturday, the campground will give you Thursday for free!! Mention the Airstream Club to Hailey.

Name _____ Email _____ Cell# _____

Rally Fee per adult; \$20.00 x number of adults = \$ _____ (no fee for Kids)

Make checks payable to; Watchung NJ Airstream Club or pay online with paypal

Mail checks to Lois Wagner 29 Colony Court New Providence NJ 07974

Region 2 Rally: Kentucky Derby Days

Sponsored by: Washington DC Unit

Location: Centre County Grange Encampment & Fair, 169 Homan Lane, PO Box 271, Centre Hall, PA 16828

Dates: May 1-4, 2025

Cost: \$230 per trailer, plus \$60 per person rally fee (children under age 12 are free)

Early Check-in: 11:00 am, Wednesday, April 30th is the only available option due to other activities at the venue. If you plan on arriving April 30th the cost is \$48.30. This fee needs to be paid with your registration below.

Check-in: 11:00 am, Thursday, May 1st (parking volunteers arrive at 11:00 am)

Departure: 3:00 pm, Sunday, May 4th. There is no option of extending the departure date this year due to another event scheduled at the venue.

Rally Reservation Limit: unlimited sites available

Additional Information:

- All sites have electric and water service.
- Water pressure is HIGH so bring a pressure regulator.
- There is a waste station on the Fairgrounds.
- Coin operated shower facilities (\$2 for 4 minutes).
- Restroom facilities onsite.
- Each trailer will receive a welcome bag.
- If bringing a pet you must be able to present up-to-date valid immunization paperwork. Pets must on a leash at all times and owners are responsible solely for cleaning up after their pets.
- As with any campsite, you are responsible for securing all food, beverages and valuables.
- Link to park website <https://www.grangefair.com/>

Planned activities include:

- Catered breakfast - Saturday morning
- Saturday catered buffet dinner followed by Run for the Roses, games and Derby Party!!!
- Music by our own Party Girl Dancing Patty G.
- Sunday continental breakfast

RALLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE: April 20th.

Use this link to register: <https://form.jotform.com/243194535933159>

Refund policy:

Before March 30th - 80% refund

March 30th - April 20th - 50% refund

After April 20th - No refund

July Rally

Watchung Airstream Club July BUDDY Rally* - Croton Point Park & Pleasantville Music Festival Friday, July 11th – Monday, July 14th, 2025



Where: Croton Point Park, Croton Point Ave, Croton-On-Hudson, NY 10520

Details: <https://parks.westchestergov.com/croton-point-park>
www.pleasantvillemusicfestival.com

Location: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/6W6GMwGDP9hXSSz7>

Hosts Cynthia & Steve Germansky **Cohosts:** Lois Wagner & Derek Conley (sites #14 and #16)

Book your spot for the Croton Point & Pleasantville Music Festival Rally. Croton Point Park is a 508-acre park, the largest peninsula on the east shore of the Hudson River. Arrive Friday, stay until Monday if you desire. **Twenty sites are being held for Watchung AC until February 28th.** Currently eight sites are booked. **Available remaining sites reserved for Watchung AC through Feb 28:** 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 21, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39

Reservations by phone only, call 914-862-5290

ACI Website Link: [Watchung July 2025 Rally | ACI](#)

RV Site – full hookups: \$60/night (see park website for map and be sure to read the park’s rules and regulations. For example, no alcoholic beverages and no “ground fires”. Solo stoves are apparently OK.)

Please email Steve Germansky your arrival/departure dates and site # egerms@verizon.net 973-495-1067

Group meals: To be collected at the rally, details to follow

* Buddy Rallies allow Watchung members to invite non-Airstream owning friends to camp with the club.

October Rally and General Meeting

Hosts: Pat & Florence Attanasio pjattanasio@yahoo.com fcattanasio@yahoo.com Cell: 201-859-7481

When: Friday, October 3rd – Sunday, October 5th. Early arrival, Thursday, October 2nd.

Where: Kymer's Camping Resort, 69 Kymer Road, Branchville, NJ 07826 **Office:** 973-875-3167

<https://www.njcamping.com/kymers/index.htm> kymers@NJcamping.com

The October Rally brings us to rural Northern NJ and the last weeks of the Fall colors. Kymer's Camping Resort will be home base for daily excursions to surrounding parks, museums, antiques and adult beverage purveyors. Or simply stay on site and enjoy your Airstream. Kymer's will place us as close together as possible while optimizing their site-to-RV size placements. Your hosts will be in Oak-5. The campground will accept your reservation at any time, but to ensure optimal placement please reserve as soon as possible, preferably before March 1st. Refer to their web site (above) for current pricing.

Site Fees:

- 30 amp, electric, water, cable TV (no sewer): \$70
- 30 amp, above plus sewer: \$80
- 50 amp, electric, water, cable TV and sewer: \$85

Rally fees include breakfast on Saturday and Sunday mornings as well as a catered dinner Saturday night. Please consider contributing a dessert to Saturday's dinner.

Rally fees will be calculated and collected on Sunday morning after we have totaled our actual expenses. We're estimating at least \$25 per person.

To attend this event,

- Call the campground, tell them you're with this group and reserve your site
- Email pjattanasio@yahoo.com with your BRN, site number, days attending and number attending. Please note any dietary restrictions or accommodations so that we can plan appropriate menus.

Check-in: 2:00pm

Check-out: 2:00pm

Tentative Agenda:

- Thursday: Arrivals and Free-range activities, 1:00pm-5:00pm
- Friday: Breakfast, 8:00am-9:30am
- Arrivals and Free-range activities, 9:30am-5:00pm
- Happy hour, 5:00pm-6:00pm, dinner on your own, campfire
- Saturday: Breakfast, 8:00am-9:30am
- Free range activities, 9:30am-5:00pm
- Happy hour, 5:00pm-6:00pm, dinner to follow, campfire
- Sunday: Breakfast, 8:30am-10:00am
- Club Exec/Business Meeting – 10:00am-12:00pm
- Pack out, hit the road (2:00pm checkout), 12:00pm -

Spring trip part 5

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

In the spring of 2024, we took an 8,267-mile trip from New Jersey to the Oregon pacific coast and back. This article picks up where we left off in last month's issue: headed east from Malta Montana and our visit to the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument for our next stop, Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Text and photos by Lois Wagner and Derek Conley

Although Montana has, [officially](#), 62 named mountain ranges and thousands of named mountains, they are all in the west and south of the state. Where we were, up on the [Highline](#), US route 2, just south of the Canadian border and headed east for North Dakota, it's mostly flat with some gently rolling hills, almost all rangeland. We passed Fort Peck Lake, Montana's largest, created by damming the Missouri, then at the town of Wolf Point turned off US2 to US25, crossing the Missouri below the dam and heading south for Medora, North Dakota, the gateway to the South Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

At this point we can't resist retelling an old joke.

A scout rode up to report to General Custer as his regiment approached Little Bighorn. "General," the scout said, "I have some bad news and some good news." "What's the bad news?" asked Custer. "Sir, there are about 10,000 Indians camped at Little Bighorn waiting to massacre us." "OK," said Custer, "what's the good news?" "Sir," said the scout, "we won't have to go back to North Dakota."

Which is of course totally unfair to North Dakota.



Solly Creek meets the Little Missouri River (left) at the recently renamed Rough Rider State Park outside Medora, North Dakota. The black line in the cliffs above the creek is a coal seam. The cliffs are typical of the North Dakota badlands.

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The joke's low opinion of the state probably stemmed from two things: the weather (blazing hot summers, astoundingly cold winters), and North Dakota's badlands, so named (in 19th century diaries and books they are referred to as "Bad Lands", capital B capital L) because to someone on foot or on a horse, they are just plain bad if you want to get somewhere, not to mention their uselessness for farming or ranching or even mechanical transportation (the transcontinental railroad goes around them to the north, and to this day there are only two roads that cross them, I-90 and US-12). Theodore Roosevelt tried ranching in the badlands and 60% of his 1,000-head herd died in the winter of 1886-7. He gave up, wrote three books about his experiences there, and became president instead in 1901. For the purposes of civilization, the badlands may indeed be bad, but for us, products and beneficiaries of that civilization, they are also beautiful, even spectacular, and that's why we went to Medora, North Dakota.

The North Dakota badlands (as distinct from the badlands of South Dakota, Nebraska, Montana and Alberta, among others) start near the southwest corner of the state and follow the winding course of the Little Missouri River, which carved them, ending east of Williston, North Dakota where the Little Missouri enters the Missouri River, a distance of about 150 miles. With an average width of about 35 miles, these badlands cover about five thousand square miles or 3.3 million acres. Shortly after Roosevelt died in



A view across the badlands from Theodore Roosevelt National Park's scenic loop drive. The wildly uneven terrain renders travel by foot or horse almost impossible, hence the name.

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1919, a movement began to commemorate the president with a national park in the badlands where he lived for a few years. After some [twists and turns](#), Theodore Roosevelt National Park was founded in 1947 in honor of the 26th president, who died aged 60 in 1919. It is the only national park named after a single person. For a western national park, it is small: three units separated by some 80 miles totaling 70,000 acres (Yellowstone is over 2.2 million acres). We visited the south unit, the largest and most visited. Although we did not go there (next time!) the north unit is apparently wilder and less popular. The third unit is just a few acres that preserves what's left of Roosevelt's ranch.

The park may be small, but it is a gem, a miniature portrait of what the badlands, and much of the great plains, was like until roughly 200 years ago: native grasslands, prairie dog towns, bison, wild horses, antelope, elk, big horn sheep and of course that wonderful landscape. The south unit, which is hard by I-94, has a 48-mile scenic loop road that allows visitors on short stays to make the most of their visit.

The entrance to the south unit is in the town of [Medora](#), North Dakota, which, due to its location next to the interstate and the park, has become principally a tourist town, albeit one that is pretty upscale as tourist towns go, with a lot of new development including an outdoor mall, amusement and water park, campgrounds, a golf course, several restaurants and hotels, guest ranches, a theater, conference center, and a surprising amount of new upscale homes perched on the hills outside of town.

Because the National Park campground has no services (water, electric, sewer) we stayed instead about a mile out of town at Solly Creek State Park which has since been renamed [Rough Rider State Park](#) and is undergoing a \$4 million expansion. Our site, a turnout off the park road, had water and electric. Morning and evening we were serenaded by a [western meadowlark](#) sitting a stone's throw away on a fence post. Prior to the expansion (which is apparently starting this year) Solly Creek/Rough Rider had 11 electric and water sites. Because we were there in late April we had no difficulty reserving a site a couple of days in advance but this is unlikely to be the case during the summer months. Medora does have at least four other commercial RV parks and campgrounds if no space is available at the state park.



*Western Meadowlark.
Photo Wikipedia.*



The campground at Solly Creek/Rough Riders State Park sits on a triangular piece of land bounded on two sides by tall cliffs, on the third by the Little Missouri River.

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Beavers had been busy next to the campground.

Once we set up we explored the campground area. The Maah Daah Hey trail runs between the campground and the edge of the Little Missouri river. We hiked north along it towards its junction with Solly Creek. On

the way we passed a stand of cottonwood trees that had been half levelled by beavers. We also spotted hoof prints (deer or antelope?) and lots of horse tracks. When we reached the junction of the creek and river we looked in vain for the footbridge that seemed to be indicated on our map; the trail at that point crossed to the other side of the river before continuing north. Stymied, we turned around as the map we had seemed to show a footbridge across the river just beyond the creek. Later, a park ranger told us that in summer the Little Missouri dwindles to the point where it can be easily forded whether on foot or horse and the marks on our map indicated the fording point. In April, however, both the river and the creek were far too high to ford.



A prairie dog stands watch next to the scenic drive. Just like suburban squirrels and chipmunks, prairie dogs darted across the road right in front of oncoming cars. Unlike in suburbia, we saw no accident victims.



A few of the thousands of burrows in one of the park's dozen prairie dog towns. This one stretches for over a mile along the loop road and in places is over a mile and a half deep. Some of the other towns can only be reached on foot. In all, the towns occupy more than 10 square miles scattered throughout the park.

Next, we stopped at the park visitor's center, which is right in the middle of Medora, to take in the exhibits and a short movie about the park. Then we took a leisurely drive around the [scenic loop](#), which, when we were there, was not a loop due to construction. However, with a bit of back tracking we covered about 90% of the road in about four or five hours, driving slowly and stopping often to take in the views and watch the wildlife, particularly the bison, some of

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which grazed watchfully right next to the road. As it was spring, they were in the process of shedding their winter coats, giving them a shaggy appearance. The park maintains a constant population of 350 of the massive, prehistoric-looking creatures, co-managing the population with the nearby Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara tribes, which maintain their own bison herds, to increase the herd's genetic diversity.

As we drove along the scenic drive we encountered 11 trailheads. On foot (or on a horse) is probably the best way to really see all the park has to offer. Unfortunately, due to our tight travel schedule, we had nowhere near enough time to take a proper hike. If we had, we would have been able to see the park's petrified forest, in the far north end, and its painted canyon, in the south end.

With regret at having to leave so soon and hopeful promises of returning again, we packed up the next morning and headed for our next stop, the very different Badlands National Park in South Dakota.



Bison grazing next to the park's scenic drive.

Alumalina Update: Might Still Happen

For a number of years, several members of Watchung Airstream Club have been attending the Alumalina rally held each October. For the past few years, the rally has been held at the Camping World rally field in Marion, North Carolina, one of the few places in the state large enough to accommodate the roughly 300 rigs that participate. In September, flooding from Hurricane Helene destroyed the rally field (and most other campgrounds in the area), canceling last year's rally and throwing this year's into doubt. Last week Lois Wagner corresponded with John Leakes, the founder of Alumalina, about the prospects for this year. John replied:*

"Susan and I JUST TODAY drove to Marion to see firsthand how things looked at the Park. This is crazy good karma. We wanted to see it for ourselves before we posted any news.

"We spoke to several of the folks that work there. Although nothing "official", one said hopefully all done by summer. They did say that work goes on EVERYDAY, so a good thing. We could see equipment on the grounds.

"A lot has been done there, with a lot more left to do. I am cautiously optimistic that we will gather this October, it is still 8 months away and with good weather, much can be accomplished.

"The dates for 2025 were set long before Helene blew through and are still good. So, for planning purposes, mark your calendars for October 23-26. We anticipate no changes to all the previous years of handling things: Come early/stay late, pay when you get there. I cannot commit to camping rates or rally fees but can assure you it will remain a bargain as always.

"There is no way to know for sure if it can happen, so please write the dates in pencil. We will keep everyone posted."

Lois adds:

If Alumalina does happen Derek and I will be attending. As we get closer, we will get an updated status out to our Club. It would be great to get a large group to represent New Jersey. This year's Watchung Club October rally and business meeting is scheduled for October 3-5, so the good news is we can attend both if we so desire :)

* A mashup of "Airstream" and "Carolina", Alumalina, held every year for the past 13 except for 2024, is the personal project of John Leakes and is not an official ACI rally.



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