



# THE BIG BENDER

VOLUME 52

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NUMBER 3

## 2026 Officers

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**Gaye Baltz**

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**Jason Friedrich**



## Presidents Message:



WOW—what a great kickoff to the 2026 rally season! We joined forces with the South Carolina Coastal Airstream Club for an amazing rally. Be sure to check out all the details in this newsletter. Many thanks to Henry Knight and Esther Aichner for being such wonderful co-hosts.

I, for one, am more than ready for spring—warmer weather and more camping adventures can't come soon enough. Spring camping is invigorating: new life popping up everywhere, trees bursting into bloom, and vibrant color returning after the drab winter months.

We have three exciting spring rallies on the horizon. *Silver in the City – Bainbridge* is currently full, but you can add your name to the waitlist. Details can be found later in the newsletter. *Camping on the Prairie* in April promises a truly unique experience, featuring wild-roaming bison, horses, alligators, deer, and many other animals. A waitlist is also available for this rally.

Good news—*Off to the Races* rally in May still has availability! It's going to be a **race-ful** time, and you won't want to miss it.

Enjoy your spring travels, and I hope to see you at a rally soon!

*Amy Waymire*

President,  
Big Bend Florida Airstream Club

**Up Next...**

<p>Silver in the City-Bainbridge March 19-22, 2026</p>	<p>Rally FULL Registrants will receive an email soon with rally info. If you plan to drive over to spend a day with us please let Amy know so you can be included in rally info.</p>
<p>Camping of the Prairie Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park April 10-12, 2026</p>	<p>The campground at Paynes Prairie is currently full. I've started a waiting list—please let me know if you'd like to be added. If you need to cancel your reservation, contact me so we can coordinate with someone on the waitlist.</p>
<p>Off to the Races Eastbank COE Park May 1-3, 2026</p>	<p>Make your reservations at <a href="http://recreation.gov">recreation.gov</a>, choose Section C. Do you have your hats and bowties?</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>

**BIG BEND FLORIDA AIRSTREAM CLUB**  
Statement of Income  
08 Nov 2025 - 07 Feb 2026

<b>Beginning Balance</b>	<b>4381.56</b>	
 <b>Income</b>		
Chapter Dues	670.00	
Rally Fees      Nov 110, Feb 100	210.00	
Member badges	70.00	
Christmas luncheon	1000.00	
Diaper Drive	50.00	
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>2000.00</u>	<b>\$6,381.56</b>
 <b>Expense</b>		
Rally              Nov-Anderson 26.22,Friedrich 14.47,Brinkley 247.63	288.32	
Other              Diaper Drive	50.00	
Presidents gift	72.09	
Memorial donation	202.53	
Christmas luncheon	1000.00	
Office supplies (printer ink treasurer)	27.86	
<b>Total expense</b>	<u>1640.80</u>	<b>\$1,640.80</b>
 Net Income (Loss)		 <u><b>\$4,740.76</b></u>

## The Golden Isles – Port of Call Rally

by Patricia McElhaney

Our inaugural rally of 2026 was held at the Coastal Georgia RV Resort in Brunswick, Georgia on February 6-8, 2026. The Golden Isles – Port of Call Rally was hosted jointly by the Big Bend Florida and the South Carolina Coastal Airstream Clubs. There were eleven trailers of attendees from the Big Bend Club and at least that many from South Carolina. The campground was well designed and maintained with abundant facilities and spacious campsites.

The rally kicked off with a meet and greet on Friday afternoon, followed by a taco bar dinner and desserts provided by the South Carolina club. The meal was followed with several spirited games of bingo.

After a group continental breakfast on Saturday morning, the rally was treated to a New Airstream Owners seminar that was led by Henry Knight of the Coastal Carolina Club. Henry provided valuable maintenance information on Airstreams and answered questions from the audience. After lunch, Henry hosted another seminar on the care and maintenance of awnings. Both seminars were well attended and informative.

The Saturday afternoon meet and greet was followed by a dinner provided by the Big Bend Airstream Club, consisting of Brunswick stew (we were, after all, in Brunswick!) and desserts. The evening was closed out with an intense game of Left,Right,Center.

The weather was cool and the rally was well attended by both clubs. It afforded all in attendance the opportunity to meet new 'Streamers, share stories, and make new friends. We all left with smiles on our faces and excitement for the upcoming rallies for the remainder of the season.



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**MAPLE LEAF CARAVAN**

Written by: Frankie Worthington

Our first caravan...thanks to Nancy Davis, was the Maple Leaf in 2004. Nancy told us about it and we told her we would love to go. She immediately called Gracie and Al (leaders of the caravan). They had a spot and we were in!!

After the International Rally in Lansing, Michigan ended our club members traveled together to the Maple Leaf Caravan rendezvous in Harve, Michigan. Bill was elected to be the caravan leader to get us there. There were only two rules...1) Stop for breakfast; 2) Stop to sightsee all interesting things to them!! Running back roads sure was fun to find places to park roughly 6 BIG rigs with tow vehicles!!

We traveled 364 miles on our first day. We found a campground that wanted to park all of us in the same sight and charge each of us full price! We chose to move on. We stayed in the National Forest Park in Munising, Michigan, about 10 miles or further down the road for \$10.00, except Jay...being a senior, he paid \$5.00. We all had to get our feet wet in Lake Superior. The next day was not good – rain and heavy fog was not our friend. Unfortunately, we made a wrong turn in Deluth because of the weather. A nightmare of a road that became known as “oh sh?? road.” It was extremely steep...and several red lights to boot...which all caught us! I held my head down, held on and prayed. Not easy pulling straight up a steep hill from a dead stop with overloaded tin cans!!! It was a long slow pull. But we all finally found flat road again!!

Another day on our adventure we stopped in the little town of Saco, Montana. Every building was lined up all on the same side of the highway. Across the road were train tracks. It seemed so inviting...all rigs parked lined up. Best parking ever! We did get a lot of stares as we walked in the café for breakfast. All the locals couldn't believe how many was coming in...they also wondered why...where we came from. The waitress alone was entertaining. She warmed up to us before long. Nancy ordered milk...so the waitress got money from the register and left. She was back in no time with milk. Then when eggs were ordered she left again and came back with eggs. It was a hoot to all of us. We asked how the store's meat was... “the best” she said. So, after breakfast we thanked her, gave her a nice tip and walked two doors down to the store and all stocked up with pretty meat. [Waitress was right...very good meat.]

Jay was interested in a monument of Charles Russell who was a western writer of paperbacks. He wanted to see it before leaving. He was told it was just across the road. We all walked over to see...it was so small we would have missed it. We reached our destination in the afternoon. We met up with others. The next day we took a tour of Harve's Historical Underground Railroad Museum.

We crossed the border...we have left the USA! We reached our destination of Ft. Macleod Canada in the afternoon of July 13, 2004! Our time in Canada was spent seeing the Royal Canadian Mounted Cadets, the Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo-Jump, Indian dances, and of coarse Calgary Stampede...bull riding, calf roping, barrel races, chuckwagon races, Clydesdales, as well as the closing entertainment and fireworks. [Stampede was several days.]

We toured many places...such as Peaks Lodge [ski resort]. There we took the gondola to the top of the slope and what a view!! We visited many waterfalls and they were all different. Banff was another great place to visit. The caravan had lunch in the Springs Hotel there...a huge place. Marilyn Monroe stayed there when making a movie. She was not allowed in the dance hall because she wore pants!! We spent time in the Icefields as well. All enjoyed the ride to it, walking around and back to the center. We all ate chili together that night!

When in Jasper, after a long day, we gathered at Jay and Elna's campsite to cook and enjoy a fire while talking about all we saw and did that day. We were all talking, laughing and eating.

Then here comes a camp worker telling us there were too many people, others were trying to sleep. How many times have any of you been approached by a teenager telling 50 and 60 year olds to break it up and go home?!

Naturally we shopped everywhere we went. Just make sure you change your money into Canadian money. Speaking about spending money...some of us had haircuts...\$32.00...so many dollars and so little hair on the floor!!! Moving forward...I hate to think what today's cut would be. Just might come home with hair down to my knees!

We scouted out a few lakes and enjoyed their beauty. And it happened...a loud sound that sounded like thunder. We all turned and saw two avalanches across the lake. Amazing sight! They were small but they packed a very loud sound.

Throughout our travels we saw all kinds of animals...bears, elk, mountain goats, moose. We also saw many, many waterfalls. They were all different and beautiful in their own way. Oh, my, the food...wow, it was so good. I'm not sure just what was the best. But one place that sticks with me is the luncheon the caravan was treated to at the Springs Hotel in Banff. I have never seen such a variety of dishes. Seems like we all tried to taste everything, but there was just no way any of us succeeded. Mercy, it was unbelievable.

Vancouver was terrific – a beautiful place. Our group ate on the wharf. Three guys were playing and singing – very good – drew a crowd. It happened to be “BC Day” when we were there (Aug. 2, 2004). We had fish and chips – a/k/a halibut and fries – delicious.

The caravan went on a 2 ½ dinner cruise while in Vancouver. The dinner and cruise were nice and relaxing. All 170 guests had a great time and we were not crowded. The food was a variety of salads, desserts, drinks and meats. The next day we went on another shopping spree! This time we found a “Tilly Hat Store!” You guessed it – we all had to buy one...even those of us that don't wear hats!! Then off to the wharf for more fish and chips. BUT at a different restaurant. BIG mistake – didn't even come close to the other.

There is much more to tell about this caravan – but it would take too long. Some of the guys took a chartered boat and went salmon fishing. Limited to catching two and some did while others caught none. The caravan took a 2 ½ hour boat tour where you can only go by boat. This boat took on passengers and delivered mail.

Victoria was a beautiful place as well. We rode double-decker buses, visited Butchart Gardens. Visited different sections of Victoria...one was China Town.

Friday, Aug. 13, 2004, was our last night in Canada...filled with mixed emotions...we wanted to stay and go. Had a great time. But USA here we come!! We had a farewell banquet and yes, great food. It took time for everyone to say their farewells...everyone will be heading in different directions when we get to stateside.

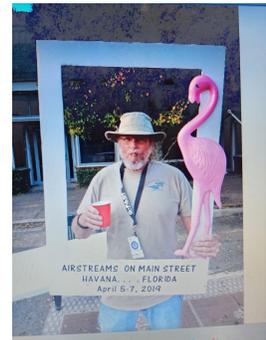
On the ferry now...heading to good old USA!!! Our club group made it across the border. The Skippers were searched but the rest got through. We all got together and made it to Lacey Airstream Campground in Washington State...we met up with a few other caravanners there. Oh, did I mention we had a great advantage on this caravan. Gracie is a Canadian. So, she could tell us so much more about the things and places we saw.

We did a few other caravans too. One that is truly memorable was “THE OREO EXPRESS CARAVAN”. You never heard of it?! You probably want...it was a one-time-three-month-run to Alaska. It was an amazing dream trip we put together with just three couples. So...what is your dream trip? Don't just dream it...live it!! Don't wait...live it now!! Tomorrow may never come. Happy travels Streamers.

From the desk of the Historian - Jason Friedrich

As we gear up for our Boondocking Rally, in Bainbridge. I thought it would be fun to rewind the clock and visit our Silver On Main Street Rally in Havana, Florida.

The April 2019 rally was probably the most attended rally in recent years. With attendance to be approximately 85 trailers. Many people were instrumental with the planning and setup for this rally. Top honors going to Jay Thomson who was the gel that brought it all together.



Crew on Wednesday ready for a Thursday set up.



Birds eye view



Margarita anyone?





Finishing the job

Our mystery members from February's issue are;

Charlie & Annette Hurst  
Bill & Frankie Worthington

Happy Travels Everyone

Jason

## 2026 Rally Schedule

Dates	Campground	Where		Hosts	Reservation
March 19-22, 2026		Bainbridge, GA	Silver in the City-Bainbridge	No Host Rally	FULL
April 10-12, 2026	Paynes Prairie Prsv State Park	Micanopy, FL	Camping on the Prairie	David & Julie Ludlow & Jessica Cassella	Window is open <a href="http://www.reserve.floridastateparks.org">www.reserve.floridastateparks.org</a>
May 1-3, 2026	EastBank COE	Chattahoochee, FL	Off to the Races	Everyone	Window is open <a href="http://www.recreation.gov">www.recreation.gov</a>
Aug 22-27, 2026		Minot, ND	International		
September 10-13, 2026	Windcreek State Park	Alexander City, AL	Lake Life	Craig & Monica Brinkley	Window is open <a href="http://www.alapark.com">www.alapark.com</a>
October 9-11, 2026	Pensacola RV Park	Pensacola, FL	Angels & Airstreams	Namans & Andersons	Window is open 1-850-944-1734
October 11-18, 2026	<i>Club Caravan</i>	Natches, MS - Lynchburg, TN	Tracin' & Tastin' Caravan	Chad & Dolores Jones	Currently Full
November 13-15, 2026	Coastline RV Resort	Eastpoint, FL	Not So Forgotten Coast Rally	Sammy & Chris Stockstill Jason Friedrich	Window is open 1-850-799-1016

**Reservations are open for all campgrounds!**  
**After securing your spot, don't forget to fill out the rally registration form at [airstreamclub.org](http://airstreamclub.org) so your hosts can plan for your arrival.**



## 2027 Rally Schedule

DATES	CAMPGROUND	WHERE	HOST	RESERVATIONS
February 11-14, 2027	Suwannee River Music Park	Live Oak, FL		sites saved -instructions pending
March 19-21, 2027	Tallahassee Car Museum	Tallahassee, FL	Brinkleys	sites saved- instructions pending
April 8-11, 2027	Lake Pines	Columbus, GA		706-561-9675
April 11-22, 2027	Brews and Views		Stockstills	Unit Caravan details to follow
May 13-16, 2027	TH Stone Memorial Sp	Port St. Joe, FL		window open 4-13-2026
June 26-July 1, 2027	International Rally	Rock Springs, WY		details to follow
September 16-19, 2027	Crooked River SP	Kingsland, GA		window open 8-16-2026 GA state park
October 7-10, 2027	Topsail Hill Preserve SP	Santa Rosa Beach, FL		window open 11-7-2026
November 11-14, 2027	Reed Bingham SP	Adel, GA		window open 10-11-2026 GA state park



Did you know the Big Bend Florida Airstream Club has a website? We do! 🌐

Visit us at <https://airstreamclub.org/big-bend-florida>, where our new Webmaster, **Bryan Green**, is hard at work updating and improving the site.

Curious about what our **Constitution & By-Laws** say? Check the website. Missed an issue of **The Big Bender**? You'll find all prior issues archived there as well.

There's lots of great information to explore and share.

Coming soon: a **merchandise page** where you'll be able to order Big Bend T-shirts, hats, flags, and more—directly from the vendor.

Have ideas or suggestions for the website? Feel free to share them with Bryan at [bryan@gmail.com](mailto:bryan@gmail.com).

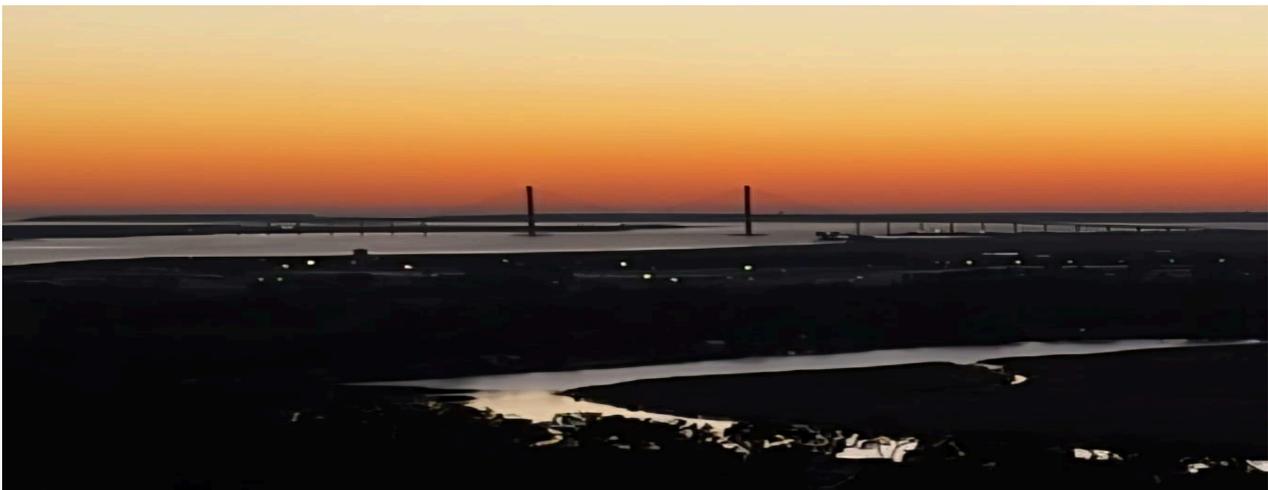


Photo credit: Vince Naman

"Adventure is where you find it, any place, every place, except at home in the rocking chair." ~  
Wally Byam

Visit us on the Web

<https://airstreamclub.org/big-bend-florida>



[Bend Florida Airstream Club \(Group\) | Facebook](#)

Zelle

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