Our 62nd Year of Airstreaming

The Hillbilly



Publication of Watchung NJ Airstream Club www.airstreamclub.org/watchung-nj November 2026

President's Message



Hello Everyone!

We recently returned from our last club rally of the year. It was a fun event at Janes Island in Md, thanks to George, Linda, Mark and Angie and to all those who participated. Our hosts planned a fabulous dinner for which we all brought our favorite TG side dishes to accompany a wonderful turkey freshly smoked by Mark Ratliff. We all agreed it was an excellent way to make dinner for a rally and to celebrate a "Friendsgiving"!

At the rally we also held our last meetings of 2026 and voted in our new slate of officers. They are listed later in this publication. Some of our officers are fairly new members! We are very excited to have fresh ideas and perspectives on our Executive Board!

We have welcomed so many new friends into our Watchung Airstream family this year as in past years. Many of them are already hosting events and becoming active members of our club.

Still to come for 2026 and rolling into 2027 are our winter luncheons! More information is in the following pages of this edition, and we hope you will check them out and plan on joining us!

And don't forget the fundraiser that Rich Short has put together on November 12. More information is also in this Hillbilly.

Speaking of all things new and changing…

Congratulations to our member Jason Trama on the publication of his first novel, *Annin Street*!

And a special thank you to Linda Kiesel! Linda has been our Sunshine Committee for almost a decade. Anyone who has received a card in celebration, sympathy, or for any number of reasons in the past 9 years, has Linda to thank. Lois Wagner will be stepping into the position in the New Year.

So now we find ourselves thinking about winterizing our rigs, end of year maintenance and prepping for next year's adventures! What does the next season have in store for you? Brian and I love getting ideas from everyone. We plan to spend a few weeks in Florida at Travelers Rest again. Then in the fall we hope to be heading out for our first caravan, The Crooked Road Caravan in Virginia. Sprinkled throughout the season are of course rallies and other surprises.

I hope you are all having the same lovely fall weather that we have been blessed with in south Jersey these past weeks.

Happy trails and safe travels,
Heidi

22024



Sunset, Janes Island State Park. Photo by L. Wagner

Region 2 President's Message

Editor's note: This article, which relates some of the history of the Watchung Airstream Club, is excerpted from this month's issue of The Region 2 Beat. The full issue can be found here.

What's In a Name?

By Patti Galupo, Region 2 President

What do Tusten, NY, a billy goat, and a hillbilly have in common?

Look no further than the Watchung NJ Airstream Club. Intrigued? Read on?

Now listen up! (a Jersey term of endearment). I'm gonna exert a few street creds here. Most of you know, I am the daughter of the Jersey Shore. Born and raised in the heart of the pine barrens, City of Absecon, County of Atlantic, the Great State of New Jersey. So, when I asked President Heidi Cullen and her team, Past Region 2 President Rich Short, Club Historian Lea Plant, Newsletter Editor Derek Conley and all around Watchung guy, George Kiesel (who has held numerous positions in the club along with Lea) to Zoom with me for this series, I thought I knew what to expect. Boy, was I wrong.

First, a quick behavioral profile of Jersey folk (enter street creds). We are known to be a collection of contradictions; that have been turned into numerous memes. Think, "which exit" (off the NJ Turnpike, in reference to where you live) the Jersey devil, the entire view of North Jersey as a chemical dump. I could go on and on. But what most don't pick up immediately, is that the directness, or brashness that is almost inbred, is truly shrouded in humility. We are "in your face", but if something goes south, we'll be the first to lend a hand! Our pride is really an outtake of intense loyalty- and we are sometimes embarrassed to tout our own accomplishments.

So, I had to drag it out of them! Let's start with geography and demographics. Watchung recently celebrated their 60th anniversary in 2025. Chartered on June 26, 1965 as the Watchung New Jersey Unit, they formed to fill a void for the campers from northern New Jersey, who didn't quite connect with the current New Jersey Unit (primarily drawing campers from south Jersey) because of the geographic stretch. They huddled up with clubs from Pennsylvania and New York, but enter "loyalty"; it just didn't feel right. So, Watchung was born!

Here's the first stunner in their history. Trying to help out with the gas shortages of the early 70's (yes, I remember those days, long lines at the pump, odd-even days based on your tag) they did what any motivated club would do, BUILT THEIR OWN CAMPGROUND.

What?

Just over the most northwest point of Jersey, right up the remnants of the Delaware River and in the foothills of the Catskills, they morphed into true-blue pioneers. In the little town of Tusten, NY, they bought land by offering shares to their roughly 90-member club at that point. They cleared the land, built a pavilion, added stacks and voila, had a place to leave their trailers and economize on fuel to drive the short distance to do what we all signed up to do, CAMP. That's pure resilience and joy; all wrapped up together.

Adaptable is as adaptable does. As the gas shortage eased, they knew that the silver machines were meant to travel to new places; experience new adventures, so they sold the property.

Now to what started this series- the name of their newsletter, The Hillbilly. Being from the pine barrens of the south, I couldn't quite connect the word hillbilly to anything that is "Jersey." So, I had to rid myself of my own Jersey perceptions based on what and where I knew. The flat pine barrens of south Jersey are imbedded in white sand. Around them in adjoining counties are vast swaths of farmland that give our state it's license plate moniker "The Garden State." When you head north up the Turnpike or the Garden State Parkway toward the Big Apple, Jersey gets very hilly, to the point where the Watchung Mountains reside; a series of three long ridges of volcanic origin between 400-500 feet high. Local lore tells us that in the early 20th century, there was a section of town colloquially referred to by the locals as the "Hillbilly" section. Leave it to Jersey to be just a tad bit sarcastic!

Editor Derek Conley and former editor Lea Plant recall the days when the newsletter was actually MAILED to members. With an envelope and a stamp! Imagine that! Then they added a mascot, the billy goat. Go figure! (see the little creature above all decked out for Mardi Gras).

But when you read through it, it contains many personal touches; birthdays and anniversaries of their members, little nuggets of meditation (we all could use some of that!) and a sunshine section; where George's wife Linda makes sure that folks who need an extra boost because of a health problem or something else going on in their life, is tended to. I was the lucky recipient of a "sunshine card" from the Club when I was sick. The thoughtfulness is never forgotten.

Another part of the Watchung culture includes giving back to the community. Each year, the incoming president chooses a charity and the Club holds raffles throughout the year to support that charity. This year, it's Stomp Out Bullying. These are the things that I had to pull out of them. They don't want to draw attention to themselves or any one individual, but to do their work quietly and with humility. My respect shot up ten-fold after this interview.

To gain members you gotta get out in the field. Besides a heavy rally schedule, Watchung sets up a table at Colonial Airstream to recruit new members every President's Day weekend in February. They've worked hard with Colonial in forming this partnership over the years. Derek will mail copies of the newsletter to them as well in pursuing this effort.

In closing, these guys stick together. They draw others in with their quick wit, welcoming smiles and do perhaps the most important thing any of us can do- SHOW UP. That's the takeaway. As I was ending the Zoom, Lea Plant summed it up perfectly. When she lost her husband 10 years ago- she was ready to hang it up. Couldn't see herself camping anymore. Her club wouldn't let her. They winterized. They made sure she was okay.

Who wouldn't want to be part of the Watchung NJ Airstream Club? Wally would be proud. And Region 2 is a better place because of them.

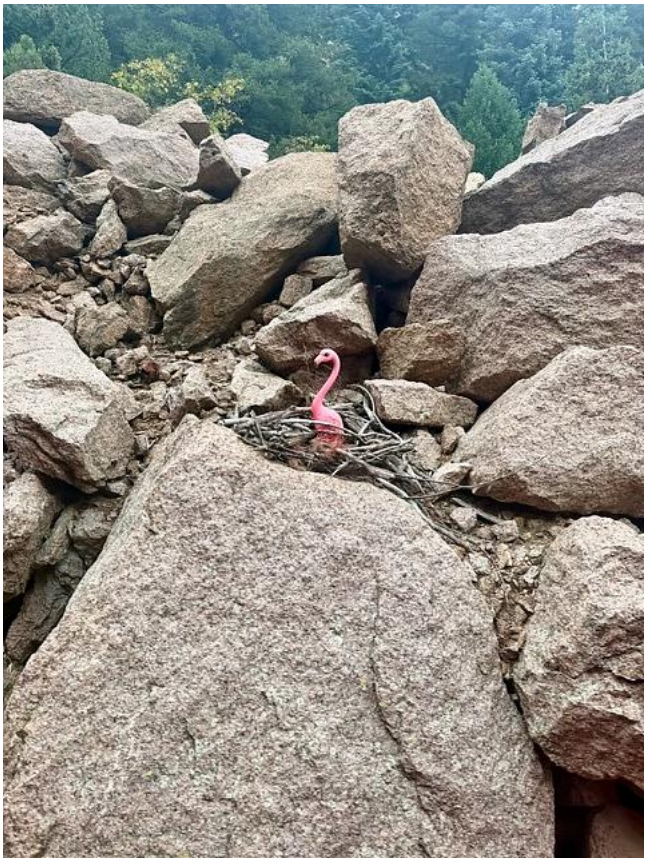
Watchung Club Events Schedule

DATE	*WHAT/WHEN*	HOSTS	COHOSTS	VENUE
November 2026	*Luncheon/Saturday November 14*	Barbara Taylor and Michael Koczwara	Lois Wagner and Derek Conley	The Little York Tavern Milford, NJ
December 2026	*Installation luncheon/Saturday Dec 12 1-4 PM*	Steve and Cynthia Gemansky	Heidi and Brian Cullen	Il Mondo Vecchio, Madison, NJ
January 2027	*Luncheon/January 23*	David Etherton and Linda Derika	Heidi and Brian Cullen	Acacia Restaurant, Lawrenceville, NJ
February 2027	*Luncheon/TBD*	Gary and Sandra Molinaar		TBD
March 2027	*Luncheon/TBD*	Linda and Darryl Zack		TBD
April 2027	*TBD*			
May 2027	*Region 2 Rally/May 13-16*	NA	NA	Sun Outdoors Campground Ocean City, MD
June 2027	*International Rally/June 26-July 1*	NA	NA	Rock Springs, WY
July 2027	*Pennsylvania State Rally*	Keystone Airstream Club	NA	Codorus State Park, Hanover, PA
August 2027	*Club Rally/Aug 13-16*	George and Linda Kiesel	Ed Showmen and Karen Smith	Jersey Shore Haven
September 2027	*Luma Festival Rally/TBD*	Rebecca Glick	Christine Kukel	Binghamton, NY
October 2027	*TBD*			
November 2027	*Luncheon/TBD*	Barbara and Michael Koczwak	Lois Wagner/Derek Conley	The Little York, Milford, NJ
December 2027	*Installation Luncheon/TBD*	Rebecca Click	Steve and Cynthia Germanskuy	TBD

Watchung Club Officers for 2027

At the general meeting October 10, 2026 the following volunteers were elected to fill the club's management roles for 2027.

President:	Steve Germansky
1st VP	Rebecca Glick
2nd VP `	Linda Dereka
Treasurer	Christine Kukel
Recording Secretary	Rich Short
Corresponding Secretary	Cynthia Germansky
Membership	George Kiesel
Sunshine	Linda Kiesel
Directors	
Nancy Deibert	
George Trunk	
David Etherton	
Meg Reilly	



A rare sighting of a Rocky Mountain Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber rockius*) in its nest. This fledgling was photographed near Pikes Peak, Colorado in July 2026 by club member Lynda Kresge.

Fundraising Event for This Year's Charity

STOMP Out Bullying®
End The Hate… Change The Culture

Richard Short writes:

Attention Watchungers! Here is an opportunity not to be missed…a chance to do some Holiday shopping, enjoy a 15% discount on purchases, and support our 2026 Charity **STOMP Out Bullying.** Here is how it works:

On Thursday, November 12th Watchung members will be able to take advantage of a ONE Day-24 HOUR FLASH SALE at https://noelledass.com/ and enjoy a 15% discount at checkout.

Click on the link above and browse Noelle Dass's beautiful, colorful, and whimsical artwork. You will be immersed in her signature style of uplifting art featuring animals, birds, outdoor scenes and…Yes, Airstreams! Kathi and I purchased several of Noelle's Airstream works. One hangs in the shiny 1512 and another was given as a gift to our granddaughter. Members will enjoy a 15% discount at checkout with coupon code ***WatchungCares15.*** Additionally, the artist will donate 50% of net sales proceeds to **STOMP Out Bullying** in conjunction with our Watchung NJAC. It's easy. Hit the web link, browse, find some artwork that you love for yourself or as a gift. You receive a discount at checkout, and our charity gets a donation. A Win-Win for all!

WATCHUNG NJAC 2026 CHARITY FUNDRAISING EVENT FEATURING ARTIST NOELLE DASS SAVE THE DATE- NOV 12, 2026

STOMP Out Bullying®

End The Hate...
Change The Culture

WATCHUNG NJAC 2026 CHARITY FUND RAISING EVENT FEATURING ARTIST NOELLE DASS SAVE THE DATE- NOV 12, 2026

Noelle Dass is the artist behind a delightful collection of whimsical and vibrant paintings that celebrate life, humor, and the joy of animals and nature. And airstreams! Her artistic journey began at the age of three, when she first grasped a pencil. Later, she pursued formal training in classical oil painting, achieving notable success. However, she eventually chose to unleash her imagination through her signature style: stylized animals, bold, colorful, and often humorous works that use her love of animals to reflect human emotions like happiness, love, friendship, bliss, and playful silliness - elements essential for a fulfilled life. Beyond her artistic endeavors, Noelle is deeply committed to giving back. She donates a portion of her proceeds to organizations that support both animal welfare and human causes, ensuring her art contributes to meaningful change in the world. This generosity is made possible by the support of those who connect with her work. That is where you come in. Ms. Dass has agreed to donate 50% of net proceeds of sales of her reproduction artwork, to **Stomp Out Bullying,** during a One Day Flash Sale for our members!



One Day Flash Sale
November 12

https://noelledass.com/

Be sure to search for Noelle's airstream artwork on her website

Announcements

Sunshine Report

The club sent get well cards to Ed Sowney, David Cahall, and Judy Cahall, and a sympathy card to Angie Ratliff.

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

George Kiesel	Kathie Short
Valerie Nehlig	Jean Dillon
Barbara Taylor	Ed Sowney



Missed Something?

Past issues of *The Hillbilly* going back to January 2021 are online at https://airstreamclub.org/watchung-nj/newsletter-hillbilly

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 068membership@gmail.com
President: Heidi Cullen (heidi.watch.air@gmail.com)



November Watchung Airstream Luncheon
Saturday, November 14, 2026 at 12:00 Noon
Location: The Little York, 569 Spring Mills Rd, Milford NJ

Hosts: Barbara & Michael Koczwara Contact: allofus1989@gmail.com or 609-947-6789
Co-hosts: Lois Wagner & Derek Conley Contact: airstreaminglois@gmail.com
Entrée Choices – Please Select When Signing Up for Luncheon

____ 1-Caesar Salad with Ken's Tableside Dressing, Croutons and Parmesan topped with All-Natural Grilled Chicken

____ 2-Crispy Garlic Chicken Sandwich with mozzarella, lettuce, tomato and mayo with hand cut fries

____ 3- Fried Onion Smashburger with Cooper Cheese served with hand cut fries

Luncheon Includes:
Pizza Appetizers
Pitchers of Soda on the Table
Coffee and/or Tea
Assorted Mini Desserts

Cash Bar is Available

Please Bring a Donation for Our Food Drive (Flemington Area Food Pantry)

Maximum of 30 attendees – please sign up early!

Name:_____ WBCCI #: _____

Email: _____ Telephone #: _____

# of People: _____ @ $32.00 per person = Total $: _____

Food Choice: ___ Caesar Salad ___ Crispy Chicken Sandwich ___ Smashburger

* Signup online at our website *
–OR-
Mail check and completed form to: Barbara Taylor 44 Titus Mill Rd Pennington NJ 08534
Make Checks payable to Watchung NJ Airstream Club

Thanksgiving in October: Janes Island Rally

By Laura Reilly

Jane's Island was a winner. Super clean, hot showers, cool and quiet. The only downside was the mosquitoes, but that's Mother Nature for you. You know you are in for it when the park gift shop features an extensive array of insect repellents.

As renewal members after a long absence, Meg and I noticed the increase in new members that are in our fine Watchung club. We are so glad to be back.



Hosts George and Linda Kiesel serve up Friday's dinner.



Carl Dashman and Sheryl Skolnick.

What a terrific Rally!

WELCOME 1st time rally goers John Swider and Robin Davidson, the winners of the charity raffle grand prize from Torklift. So glad you are in the Watchung club!



Mark Ratliff, incoming president Steve Germansky, and rally host George Kiesel.

Let's give a BIG thanks to our hosts, George and Linda, and cohosts. Mark and Angie Ratliff. Angie, you were missed.

Our hosts had the grill cooking a yummy dinner Friday night of hotdogs, hamburgers and veggie burgers. Yes, it was Regifting Bingo night by lantern light and everyone went home with treasured prizes.

On Saturday morning coffee jumpstarted our day then we dined on George's famous pancake breakfast, which included real maple syrup!. During the day some of our campers went into the nearby town of Crisfield for the annual Heritage Festival, which included live demonstrations of crab picking, oyster shucking,



Saskia Schmidt and Brian Stein.



Mark Ratliff watches intently as Rich Short carves Mark's smoked turkey.

decoy carving, seafood cooking, fish cleaning, and net making. Some of the more intrepid ralliers went kayaking on the sound.

We were all anticipating Saturday's "Thanksgiving" dinner. Little did we know that Mark Ratliff was smoking a turkey and ham for the main course. Thanksgiving would not be the same without the traditional side dishes: stuffing, mashed potatoes, acorn squash, cranberry sauce, mashed sweet potatoes and Watchungers cooked all of these dishes to make a delicious Thanksgiving In October. The hosts would like to give a big SHOUT OUT to all members who brought the folding tables so we had somewhere better than our laps for our very full dinner plates, lanterns for light, and all who helped with the cleanup. Did I mention the most delicious desserts? The meal was a labor of love from the group. For the charity, "Stomp Out Bullying", we raised $238 thanks to our generous attendees.



Bingo by lantern. Rich Short holds the light while George Kiesel calls the numbers.



At the Crisfield Heritage Festival incoming director and past president Meg Reilly joined outgoing treasurer Lois Wagner in the supersized crab pot photo booth. Meg wouldn't make it as a crab.

Because the rain was threatening to keep us inside on Sunday, some of us wanted to do something to get us out of the confines of our trailer. Meg looked up where there might be big screen TVs and off about eight of us went downtown Crisfield's waterside Sunset Seafood Grill, which specializes in great crab cakes (Crisfield being the blue crab capital of the world) as well as many other seafood dishes and, on fall Sundays, football. There was a busload of Washington Commander fans at the restaurant, including its owner. The Commanders were playing the Giants, so we had a friendly rivalry going on. At the end no one was happy because the game ended in a rare tie! But never mind, these Washington fans came prepared with a DJ and even a professional photographer to record the outing, and us! Dancing called us onto the floor, even Betty joined Meg and I. Who knew she had grooves! A good time was had by all!



Meg and Laura Reilly cleaned their plates at the Sunset Seafood Grill while watching Sunday football action.



In the summer Captain Will runs a tour boat to Smith Island and Tangier Island. In the winter he carves prize-winning decoys.



Demonstrating how to craft a fishing net with just string, a shuttle and intricate knots.



Decoy carving demonstration at the annual Crisfield Heritage Festival.



The rally group campsite at Janes Island State Park. Most of the campground trees are tall, stick-straight loblolly pines, the second-most prevalent tree species in the US after the red maple and, due to their fast growth (2 feet per year) the most commercially important tree in the southeastern US. Loblolly pine seeds were carried aboard the Apollo 14 flight to the moon. On its return, the seeds were planted in several locations in the US, including the grounds of the White House.

Kick Off 2027 at the Watchung Tailgate Luncheon!

Game Day: **Saturday, January 23, 2027**
Kick-off: **Noon – 3 PM**
Stadium: **Acacia Restaurant** • 2637 Main Street, Lawrenceville, NJ
(access to parking behind the restaurant via Craven Lane or Phillips Ave)
Hosts/Co-hosts: Linda Dereka & David Etherton / Heidi & Brian Cullen

Let's get into the spirit of the Super Bowl season!
Get out your team colors and swag and reconnect with Watchung club friends for an indoor, pre-Super Bowl tailgate celebration. The restaurant is ours for the duration of our event, so we'll have a private afternoon of great food, good company, and a little friendly competition.

TAILGATE BUFFET

- Buffalo and BBQ chicken wings
- Pulled pork sliders
- Plus… appetizers, pasta, salad and sides
- Coffee and tea (soft drinks extra)

Game day tip! **Acacia is BYOB**, so bring your favorite game-day liquid refreshment!

GAME-DAY FUN

Participate in any or all of the planned fun:

- Wear your team colors
- Get lucky with Super Bowl Squares (and donate to the 2027 club charity)
- Enter your favorite cookie or bar in the baking contest (sign up in the RSVP)
- Brush up on your bag toss technique and play in the corn hole competition

SIGN-UP DETAILS

- $37 per person
- RSVP / pay online **by January 8** (or sooner!)
- Sign up via Jotform at https://shorturl.at/azhmh or the QR code, here:

Coming soon…

We'll be sending a form for submitting your favorite Super Bowl game-day recipe (optional) for a Watchung Super Bowl Recipe Booklet.

Watch for it!

Email Linda Dereka at lida.andriana@gmail.com.

Other 2027 Rallies to Put On Your Calendar

Region 2 Rally: Registration Open

Sun Outdoors Campground, Ocean City, MD May 13–16, 2027

- Full hookup RV site
- Swimming pools and splash pad
- Mini golf
- Fitness center
- Sports courts
- Walking trails
- Dog parks
- Clubhouse facilities
- Resort activities
- Courtesy Shuttle Service Ocean City and Assateague Island
- Catered seafood dinner

For more information and to register click here.
To view the Sun Outdoors Ocean City website click here.

Pennsylvania State Rally: Registration Open

Codorus State Park, Hanover, Pennsylvania July 29–August 1, 2027

Keystone Adventure – Discover Pennsylvania Together will feature a weekend of camping, food, fellowship and activities, along with an optional Gettysburg Experience. The rally is hosted by the Keystone Airstream club and it is designed and intended as a rally for all members of Region 2 (and beyond!). We hope you will consider attending.

Registration is $60 per person, with the optional Gettysburg Experience available for $60 per person. We also have a limited number of rally-held campsites available for the three nights.

Registration is now open: https://pci.jotform.com/form/262424679992170

See next page for additional information.



Left: Meg Riley inspects some of the entries in the Criswell Heritage Festival decoy carving competition. Right: One of the winners.




★ 2027 PENNSYLVANIA STATE RALLY ★
KEYSTONE ADVENTURE
DISCOVER PENNSYLVANIA TOGETHER
JULY 29–AUGUST 1, 2027
CODORUS STATE PARK
HANOVER, PENNSYLVANIA
CAMP • EXPLORE • RELAX
ALL ARE WELCOME!
★ HISTORY • NATURE • FRIENDS • ADVENTURE ★
REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!
SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT:
https://pci.jotform.com/form/262424679992170
$60 per person | Optional Gettysburg Experience: $60 per person
Limited number of rally-held campsites available at $145 per site (3 nights)
Attendees may also make their own campsite reservations directly with Codorus State Park.
Hosted by
AL-MON-O PENNSYLVANIA AIRSTREAM CLUB



2026 Watchung Club Officers

President	Heidi Cullen
1st Vice President	Steve Germansky
2nd Vice President	Rebecca Glick
Correspondence Secretary	Brian Cullen
Recording Secretary	Richard Short
Treasurer	Lois Wagner
Directors	Nancy Deibert
	George Trunk
	Jay McCarthy
	Christine Kukel

Other Club Roles

Membership	George Kiesel
Sunshine	Linda Kiesel
Web Master	Mark Ratliff
Directory	Chris Forster
Newsletter	Derek Conley
Quartermaster	Jason Pomerleau