



THE BIG BENDER

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NUMBER 7

2026 Officers

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Newsletter

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Presidents Message:



The summer months have flown by, although the temperatures remind us that summer isn't quite ready to let go! I hope everyone has enjoyed their summer travels. Be sure to look for some of the adventures our members have shared with us later in this newsletter.

I'm ready for the fall camping season, and I'm sure many of you are, too. Every fall, I find myself thinking that this must be my favorite season to camp. There's something wonderful about the relief from the summer

heat, the cooler days and evenings, and the beauty that comes with the changing season.

Just as the seasons change from summer to fall, so do our lives. Our circumstances change, our priorities change, and even the way we camp can change over time. I hope we can embrace those changes just as we embrace the changing seasons. Nothing lasts forever, so let's make the most of the time we have and spend as much of it as possible doing what we enjoy with the people we love.

Things are busy for us Big Benders! We have our September rally at Lake Martin, our October rally in Pensacola, and the club caravan. And don't forget our Installation Rally in November at Coastline RV Resort in Eastpoint. There are still plenty of opportunities to get together, make memories, and enjoy the friendships that make our club so special.

It's hard to believe that my year as your President is already drawing to a close. At our September rally, we will present the slate of officers for 2027.

I look forward to seeing many of you around the campfire this fall.

Amy Waymire

President,
Big Bend Florida Airstream Club

UP NEXT !!!!

Wind Creek State Park
Lake Martin
Alexander City, Alabama

Thursday, September 10

Dinner on your own

7:00 p.m. A Taste of Colorado – Sample beverages from Colorado, Wind Creek, Site to be assigned

Friday, September 11

9:00 a.m. Breakfast, Eggs, grits, sausage and toast

2:00 p.m. Visit Blue Bell Creameries, Sylacauga, AL

5:30 p.m. The Landing at Parker Creek Restaurant, Outdoor seating, casual atmosphere

Saturday, September 12



Spend the day on the lake if we can arrange boat drivers. We can rent pontoon boats from the state park, but drivers must have proof of boater safety course. Boat rental for four hours, \$136.88 for 6-8 people (not including gas). If we get enough drivers for everyone to be able to ride, we will have a hamburger cookout on an island that is equipped for such an outing. PLEASE LET MONICA KNOW IF YOU ALREADY HAVE THE BOATER SAFETY COURSE OR ARE WILLING TO DO THAT BEFORE THE RALLY. If we can't do the boat rental, we will have the hamburger cookout at the campground.

Sunday, September 13

9:00 For those interested, Church in the Pines, Lake Martin, open-air, non-denominational worship. If you have your camper packed and ready to pull out, you will have time to attend worship then come back to pick up camper and checkout before checkout time.



Wind Creek State Park

David Ludlow

September 10-13 is the Big Bend Rally at Wind Creek State Park outside of Alexander City, Alabama. At over 1400 acres, the park is the largest state park in the USA. Wind Creek SP is located on the 40,000 + acre Lake Martin, so obviously there is availability for boating and fishing. Also, along the shoreline there is a zipline through the trees or you can, if you wish, do a horseback ride. Walking trails are abundant.

In Alexander City there is a Car Museum of Muscle Cars of the 1960's and 1970's. Another downtown highlight is an old-fashioned drug store soda fountain, and, of course, throughout the area there are breweries and barbeques.

If nothing else, enjoy nature and companionship with all the other Airstreamers.

Lunch at Trident Restaurant

On July 18, seventeen Big Benders gathered at Trident Restaurant in Panacea, Florida, for lunch. From the moment you step through the doors, you feel as though you're either under the sun or under the sea. With floor-to-ceiling windows, Trident offers spectacular views of Florida's Forgotten Coast from every seat.

Some enjoyed selections from the brunch menu, while others opted for the traditional grouper sandwich. Either way, everyone enjoyed a delicious meal along with plenty of fellowship and laughter. This group always enjoys spending time together!

A common theme of conversation was the desire for cooler weather and the anticipation of the upcoming fall rally season. It was a wonderful afternoon, and a good time was had by all.

Thanks to Elwood for coordinating this fun get-together!



Nuts 4 Ruts

When we purchased our Airstream and joined the club in 2014, the “senior” members said you must go on a caravan. I listened but thought to myself, there is no way for us to participate in an activity like this since we work. Fast forward to May 2026. I retired one week and headed out on our first caravan the next week!

We were able to get on the Oregon Trail a/k/a Nuts 4 ruts caravan. 21 units met up and started in Independence, Missouri for what was going to be a trip of a lifetime. We were all strangers to one another. That didn't last long through various social functions and caravan responsibilities. Each caravan stop built on each other for a history lesson on how our country settled the West. My ox “truck” broke down and we were stranded for 6 days as the ox mended itself. We were able to catch up with our group at the last stop in Oregon City, OR. When we pulled into the campground it was like the prodigal son that came home to his family. We were overwhelmed with the love and support from our newfound friends! We concluded the caravan with a nice celebration banquet. The next day we had a “parting of the ways” which was filled with hugs and tears. We did not want this experience to end!



Unfortunately, all good things have to come to an end. People ask, what is the best thing you liked about the caravan? I say everything-especially the people we met! We started out as strangers and now we are lifelong friends! My best advice to club members, go and give it a try. You will not regret it! Next stop: New York State caravan in May 2027!

See you down the road!

Craig Brinkley



SILVER ON THE RIVER

June 12 – 22, 2026

Rhone River, France

Eight Big Bend members just returned from a fantastic Airstream rally/caravan: An 8 day cruise down the Rhone River in France. Many of us also enjoyed pre and post cruise adventures in Europe that we will tell you about in another installment. For the cruise, over 80 Airstreamers met in Lyon, France, where we boarded the luxury river ship Riverside Ravel on 15 July. We sailed down to Arles, France, before heading back upstream to Avignon where we disembarked on 22 July, seven wonderful days.

The ship was ours, there were no other passengers. The Big Benders were RoseMarie and Gary Anderson, Gaye and Don Baltz, Pat and Lane Watkins, and Dawn and Guy Neff. Other Airstreamers included folks from California, Oregon, Washington state, Texas, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Georgia.



All expenses were prepaid: Cabin, food, liquor, tips, transportation, on shore excursions. Everything. The food was always fantastic....as well as the service. Each room had its own Butler...(yes, really!) who was there to take care of anything we needed. The rooms were supplied with drinks, chocolates every day and the best of all was the wall window that opened with a button to let in fresh air. Ask Gaye about Lavender Spritzes!

We were treated to several (daily, almost hourly it seemed) wine tastings wherever we went. How to pair wine with various foods, especially cheeses. Even

with Valrhona chocolate! On our 176 mile journey we passed through 12 locks dropping us 530 feet.



We toured Roman ruins, fantastic churches, ancient cities, the birthplace of Nostradamus, some of the haunts of Van Gogh, Monet's home (and garden, which was the inspiration for many of his paintings) and explored the agricultural side of Provence. Towns we stopped at were Vienne (wine tasting, Roman ruins), Tain l'Hermitage (Valrhona Chocolate, Wine tasting!), Viviers (prehistoric cave art, truffles), Chateau-neuf-du-Pape (Popes palace, more wine tasting!), Arles (Vincent Van Gogh), Tarascon (Medieval castle) and, finally, Avignon (the famous Pont du Gard aqueduct). At Avignon, we went our separate ways, some flying home and many continuing to exciting post cruise adventures. This was an unforgettable, once in a lifetime dream vacation!

Submitted by Big Bend Cruisers



Why Not Minot?

by Chris Stockstill

Big Bend Florida Airstream Club was represented in Minot! Chad Jones, our 1st Vice President, carried the Big Bend flag during the Opening Ceremonies on Saturday, August 22.

Chad's wife Dolores, John and Nancy Smith, and Sammy and Chris Stockstill were also in attendance.



This has been a fantastic International Rally, with approximately 1,000 Airstreams participating at the North Dakota State Fairgrounds. We've attended seminars and block parties, shopped the vendors, and drove golf carts as volunteers. That was fun! We've also run into old friends from previous rallies and caravans, and we've certainly made new friends this week as well.

Plans are already being made for next year's 70th Annual Airstream Club International Rally in Rock Springs, Wyoming. We rally together!



The Best Meal You Never Had

Think about the last time you rolled down a two-lane highway toward a rally. Somewhere along that route was a diner that has been serving perfect fried catfish for forty years. A roadside stand. A spring, a trail, a museum with one astonishing story in it. You passed it at 55 miles an hour and never knew it was there.

I've been using AI to fix that.

I've been building Cultural Primers — curated field guides for the areas around our rally locations, researched and written with the help of AI. They aren't tourist brochures. They're opinionated on purpose: no chains, a strong preference for hole-in-the-wall diners, fish camps, farmers markets, and the places locals actually eat on a Tuesday. They cover local history, food, hikes and bike rides, paddling, wildlife, festivals during the event dates — and each ends with a list of anything the AI couldn't verify, so you know what to double-check before you travel.

What surprised me is how good AI has become at this. Give it a location, a radius, your dates, and your interests, and it will surface the sixty-year-old barbecue joint two exits past the ramp — the kind of thing you'd normally only learn from someone who lives there.

I've built primers for all twelve of our scheduled 2026 and 2027 events. They're in a Google Drive folder anyone with the link can open:

<https://bit.ly/4fbfSwB>

I also included the prompt itself — Cultural Prompt.docx. To build a primer for your own trip, no technical skill needed: copy the entire prompt, paste it into an AI assistant like Claude (claude.ai), answer ten quick questions about where you're going, and it builds the whole document for you, ready to print.

The trailer gets us to beautiful places; knowing the place is a different problem. AI won't replace the joy of stumbling onto something wonderful, but it dramatically raises the odds. Somewhere on your next route is the lunch counter that becomes the story you tell at the next rally. Now you'll actually stop.

See you down the road,

Shawn Montague

2026 Rally Schedule

September 10-13, 2026	Windcreek State Park	Alexander City, AL	Lake Life	Window is open www.alapark.com
October 9-11, 2026	Pensacola RV Park	Pensacola, FL	Angels & Airstreams	Window is open 1-850-944-1734
November 13-15, 2026	Coastline RV Resort	Eastpoint, FL	Not So Forgotten Coast Installation Rally	Window is open 1-850-799-1016

There is still time to register for any of our upcoming fall rallies! **Easy Peasy!**

First, contact the campground and make your reservation. Then, be sure to register for the rally using the Jotform.

Already have your campground reservation? Great! Just make sure you have also completed the Jotform so we know you're coming.

To register for a rally, visit:

<https://airstreamclub.org/events?map=1>

Once you find the rally you're interested in, scroll down and click "**See Who's Coming**" to see which of your fellow Big Benders will be there. We hope to see you around the campfire this fall!



2027 Rally Schedule

DATES	CAMPGROUND	WHERE	HOST	RESERVATIONS
February 11-14, 2027	Suwannee River Music Park	Live Oak, FL	Pfaff Ludlow	Now accepting reservations for Feb. 11-14. Call the park at 386-364-1683 and mention Big Bend Florida Airstream group.
March 19-21, 2027	Tallahassee Car Museum	Tallahassee, FL	Brinkley Montague	sites saved- instructions pending
April 7-11, 2027	Region 3	Sevierville, TN		
April 15-18, 2027	Lake Pines	Columbus, GA	Gardner	706-561-9675
April 18-27, 2027	Brews with Views		Stockstill	Caravan currently full. email stockcm1@gmail.com for waiting list
May 13-16, 2027	TH Stone Memorial Sp	Port St. Joe, FL	Baltz	window open 6-13-2026 https://reserve.floridastateparks.org/
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	Brock	window open 11-7-2026
November 11-14, 2027	Reed Bingham SP	Adel, GA		window open 10-11-2026 GA state park

Rally Hosts Needed

The heart and soul of our club is the local rally — and great rallies only happen because members like you step up to help make them happen.

We're currently looking for volunteers to host our 2027 rallies, and we'd love to have you involved. Never hosted a rally before? No problem at all. We can pair first-time hosts with experienced rally volunteers who will help guide you through the process.

If you're willing to help host a 2027 rally — or would like to learn more — please contact Chad at: cjanddo@gmail.com

BIG BEND FLORIDA AIRSTREAM CLUB
Statement of Income
08 May 26 - 07 Aug 26

Beginning Balance		4773.68	
<u>Income</u>			
Chapter Dues		140.00	
Rally Fees		0.00	
Member badges			
Total Income		<u>140.00</u>	\$4,913.68
<u>Expense</u>			
Rally	April 119.06, May 43.63	162.69	
Other	credit Naman food May rally	-30.00	
	memorial donation WBCCI inc cc fee	102.53	
	food pantry donation - Bainbridge	65.00	
	Big Bend Rally sign	41.29	
Total expense		<u>341.51</u>	\$341.51
Net Income (Loss)			\$4,572.17

Visit us on the Web <https://airstreamclub.org/big-bend-florida>



[Bend Florida Airstream Club \(Group\)](https://airstreamclub.org/big-bend-florida)



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