



SEPTEMBER 2026 · FREE

Alamosa, Colorado · Photo by Jeff Nicla [BRN 6925](#)

WISC-UP AIRSTREAM CLUB



RIVETED TOGETHER

INSIDE

Your 2026–2027 officers
and the vote on October 17

PLUS

Future Streamers, the International at Minot,
and a solar build with every receipt

IN THIS ISSUE

The calendar, the people, and how to reach us.

STILL TO COME IN 2026

OCT 16–18 Fall Rally & Annual Business Meeting
Rustic Barn Campground · Kieler, WI
Hosts: Chris & Wendy Brown **BRN 21124**

LOOKING INTO 2027

MAY 14–16 Road America Joint Rally (*proposed*)
With the Northern Illinois Airstream Club
Elkhart Lake, WI · see page 29

JUN 26–JUL 1 ACI International Rally
Sweetwater Events Complex · Rock Springs, WY

SUMMER Fungus Amongus Rally (*in planning*)
Runkle Lake Campground · Crystal Falls, MI
Hosts: Pat Conway **BRN 7208** & Jane Carmichael **BRN 219**

ALREADY BEHIND US

FEB 21 Valentines Luncheon
Delafield Brewhaus · Hosts: Jenny & Jeff Bibler **BRN 8484**

MAY 14–17 Uuf Da, We're Doing This Again
Viroqua, WI · Hosts: Jim Guthrie & Joanne Peterson **BRN 11970**

JUN 18–21 Mississippi River Rat Rally
McGregor, IA · Hosts: Jenny & Jeff Bibler **BRN 8484**

AUG 13–16 Future Streamers Buddy Rally
Rio, WI · Hosts: Zach & Steph Lee **BRN 8583** · page 9

No luncheons are on the calendar. If you would like to put one together, see page 31.

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	Jenny Bibler
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT	Zachary Lee
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT	Chris Brown
TREASURER	Kurt Jorgensen
SECRETARY	Jason Staffin
FIRST TRUSTEE	Jeff Bibler
SECOND TRUSTEE	Matt Lee
THIRD TRUSTEE	Carol McMahon
PAST PRESIDENT	Morten Lindstad

Serving through the annual business meeting on October 17. Your next slate is on page 5.

COMMITTEES

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS	Elizabeth Gamsky Rich
MEMBERSHIP	Open · see page 6
NEWSLETTER	Zachary Lee
WEBSITE	John Cooper · Bob Manak

EDITOR



Zachary Lee **BRN 8583**

zacharyalee@gmail.com

With Steph and the girls



All events



Facebook



Register



WHAT'S UP!

Everything that happened, while you were out.

BY EDITOR ZACH · BRN 8583

This is the first full issue since the July lite edition, and it is full because you filled it. Some of it I chased. More of it arrived because somebody offered first.

Thirty-six of us went to Future Streamers at Silver Springs in August: ten rigs, twenty adults, sixteen children, and one family who had never towed an Airstream and spent the weekend in mine. Meghan Lee was the rally reporter, the way every rally has one, and her account starts on page 9.

At least five of our households were at the International at Minot. Two wrote it up, from what were plainly two different rallies, so we are running both. Jeff Nicla offered his before I asked and sent thirty-five photographs with it, which is why it runs as long as it does. Jenny Bibler went as our president. And Chuck Zellermayer came home from it as president of Region 7, page 17. All of it from page 14.

Page 22 is something new. Every issue from here will carry one member walking through a project on their own trailer, with real numbers attached. Jeff offered that one too: the solar and lithium system he and a friend built in a Phoenix driveway. The cost comparison in it is the most useful thing we have printed all year.

Then there is the business. Six members have agreed to stand for office and the club votes on October 17 at the Fall Rally. That vote needs ten percent of our voting membership in the room or it does not count. Page 5 lays out who is standing and page 6 what the day looks like. I am on that list myself, which makes this an awkward paragraph to write, so I will leave it there and let the pages speak.

Further out, we are going back to the Upper Peninsula. Pat Conway and Jane Carmichael have spent the summer building a rally at Crystal Falls around the Humongous Fungus Festival. Page 30, and worth reading now rather than next spring.

One thing has not changed since July. I am still rebuilding the map that Ed and Sandy carried in their heads for four years, and I am still missing most of it. If you fixed something, went somewhere, took a photograph you like, or know a thing about this club that has never been written down, send it. Do not wait to be asked.

Zach

BRN 8583

A Message from President Jenny Bibler **BRN 8484**



JENNY BIBLER
BRN 8484

Jenny and the two fur babies, aboard the Biblers' vintage Airstream.

THINKING ABOUT
HOSTING?

jenny.giles@att.net

THE RALLY SHE MEANS

October 16–18
Rustic Barn Campground
Kieler, Wisconsin

Hosted by Chris & Wendy Brown
BRN 21124, their first. The weekend
is laid out on page 26.

THE VOTE SHE MEANS

Saturday, October 17

It needs ten percent of our voting
membership in the room to count.
The slate is on page 5; the shape of
the day is on page 6.

Hello everyone, and welcome to the fall season of Airstreaming.

As the weather cools down, it definitely signals that time of year again for the fall annual WISC-UP meeting and rally. We will be meeting at the Rustic Barn Campground in Kieler, hosted by Chris and Wendy Brown, and I am looking forward to seeing many of you there. I want to give a big shoutout to Chris and Wendy: just like Jeff and I back in June, they are first-time rally hosts. I hope that stirs your interest if you have thought about hosting a rally, or if you have a place in mind you would not mind some company at.

On Saturday, October 17, as part of the rally, we will conduct the annual business meeting and vote on the new officers for 2026–2027. Always an exciting time of year, and I get excited about new ideas and new adventures for the year ahead. We have an excellent, dedicated and experienced list of nominees, and I already know it is going to be a great year.

I want to give a big thank you to Morten Lindstad, our past president, for reaching out to some of you and securing the nominations for the slate.

Remember too that if you want to get your feet wet before hosting a rally, we would love to have you host a luncheon. Over the years many of these have had a holiday theme, and again, a great reason and excuse to get together, catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

With the change in seasons I have been thinking about winter camping. My first rally was in November at Kohler-Andrae State Park. Of course all the water and the bathrooms were closed, and I was surprised to see how many people enjoy winter camping. Not so much like us, with the luxury of a furnace and lights in our trailers. I am still amazed at the tent campers who withstand the elements and love them.

“There is still time for a November rally. At least you know there probably is not the problem of the campground filling up. Anyone up for it???”

I look forward to seeing many of you in a few weeks in Kieler, and if not, I will see you at a luncheon or next summer at a rally.

Jenny Bibler, President
BRN 8484

Your 2026–2027 Officers

Six members said yes. Now it is your turn.

Every October this club elects the people who run it for the next year, and every October that depends on someone having done the quiet work of asking. This year that was **Morten Lindstad BRN 1636**, our past president, who spent August calling and emailing members until he had a full slate, and who sent the final list from Norway.



PRESIDENT

Zachary Lee

BRN 8583



FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Chris Brown

BRN 21124



SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Jane Hyer

BRN 4297



FIRST TRUSTEE

Matthew Lee

BRN 24601



SECOND TRUSTEE

Mallory Smith

BRN 3907



THIRD TRUSTEE

Peter Fell

BRN 9155

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The slate reaches every voting member at least twenty days before the vote. Ballots come back to the president and are held until October 17, when they are added to the votes cast in the room. The mechanics, and why your being there matters, are on page 6.

PUT A FACE TO YOUR NAME

Some of these were the largest photograph we could find. If yours is missing, soft, or twenty years old, log in at **wisc-up.org** and update your member profile. It takes two minutes, and it is where this newsletter, the directory and the rally lists all go looking.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

October 17 does not work without you in the room.

The annual business meeting needs ten percent of our voting membership present to seat next year's officers. That is not a formality. It is the whole thing.

WHEN

Saturday
October 17, 2026

WHERE

Rustic Barn Campground
Kieler, Wisconsin

PART OF

The Fall Rally
October 16–18 · page 26

QUORUM

10% of voting
members, in person

THE AGENDA

OPEN

Opening, roll call, approval
of minutes

BUSINESS

Old and new business
Rallies, luncheons, and what next year
looks like

REPORTS

Budget, membership, public
relations, technology
Treasurer, committees,
newsletter, website

THE VOTE

Election and announcement of
2026–2027 officers

INSTALL

Installation by Region 7
Chuck Zellermyer, our Region 7
President, installs the new officers

HOW THE VOTE ITSELF WORKS

- The slate reaches every voting member at least twenty days beforehand
- Ballots come back to the president and are held until the meeting
- Votes cast in the room are counted and added to them on the day

WE NEED A MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Kathleen Anderson has stepped down after taking the role on last October, and we are grateful to her for carrying it this year. The seat is now open.

It is not a heavy job. You welcome new members, keep the roster honest, and tell the newsletter who has joined so we can put their names in print. If you have ever thought about being useful to this club without hosting a rally, this is the one.

Say so to Jenny at jenny.giles@att.net, or find any board member at the Fall Rally.



Register for the
Fall Rally

wisc-up.org · sites are first
come, first served

Welcome, new members of WISC-UP.

Six households have joined or transferred in since the July issue. Two of them signed on at the International in Minot, which is a nice thing to be able to say.

Brandon & Jenny Roeglin

Waukesha, WI · **BRN 5802**

2026 Caravel RB 16'

Bob & Michele Weinschrott

Milwaukee, WI · **BRN 3830**

2024 Globetrotter 27FBT

Jeffry & Kristine Von Holzen

Washburn, WI · **BRN 6463**

2025 Flying Cloud 25'

Bob & Mary Ann Fish

Crestview, FL · **BRN 6542**

2026 Stetson 27'

Amna Aziz & Peter Block

Mequon, WI · **BRN 25610**

2025 Basecamp 20'

Brent & Betsy Dane

Hobart, WI · **BRN 10531**

2021 International FBQ Hatch 25'

Two of the six come to us as affiliates, which means their home club is somewhere else and they have chosen to run with us as well. Bob and Michele Weinschrott are a Member at Large household who now camp with Wyoming, Montana and WISC-UP. Bob and Mary Ann Fish call Big Bend Florida home. Both are every bit as welcome, and both are a long way to come for a Wisconsin rally.

ONE OF THESE YOU HAVE ALREADY MET

Amna Aziz and Peter Block spent the weekend of August 13 camped with us at Future Streamers in Rio, along with their three children and a newborn who was too new to count on the registration form. They were Members at Large at the time, towing a 2025 Basecamp from just up the road in Mequon.

A week later, at the International in Minot, they transferred their home club to WISC-UP. We are not going to claim the corn boil did it. But the order of events is the order of events, and they are on page 12 in a camp chair looking like they had a good weekend.

ARE YOU NEW HERE?

Send the editor two sentences about yourself and your trailer and we will run it properly. Where you are from, what you tow, and one thing you are hoping to do with it. That is the whole ask.

zacharyalee@gmail.com

Jeff McCaffrey

BRN 10258 · MCHENRY, ILLINOIS · DIED AUGUST 17, 2026

Caryle McCaffrey wrote to Ed and Sandy Emerick in September to tell the club that her husband Jeff had died on August 17, after a year with brain cancer. She asked that it be shared here, and it should be.

Members who have been with WISC-UP a few years have read Jeff, whether or not they knew the name. In March 2024 he gave this newsletter five pages on replacing factory skylights: the tool list down to the carpet knife and the rubber mallet, and the tip about running the bead of sealant on the skylight frame rather than the curb, so that sliding it into place does not disturb it. It is still the most useful thing we have printed about a roof.

That November he wrote something else entirely. “Dear Toby, Remember when we...” was a letter to the Cairn Terrier he and Caryle had lost that September, after twelve years. He had started writing it to help himself get through it, and then printed part of it here, which is braver than it sounds. In it he counts the nights: two Airstreams, a hundred and twenty-four of them, and Toby along for every one. Three trips to Colorado, and Maine for the 2022 International.

Last September he and Caryle wrote a member update. It opens happily — MacTavish, the new puppy, riding two trips in a converted kid’s Burley trailer — and then turns, on the way home from Lanesboro, into a droopy lip, an emergency room, a scan and a nine-and-a-half-hour surgery. He set the diagnosis down as plainly as everything else, and ended the piece this way:

“I’m planning to last longer as Caryle and I have more Airstream adventures to do.”

JEFF MCCAFFREY · SEPTEMBER 2025

He got another year out of it. Caryle wrote that he had been doing better for a while and that the end came quickly. She also wrote a line that will find anyone towing to Kieler next month: “He would’ve loved the trip to the Rustic Barn; we were there once and it was a beautiful setting.”



Jeff and Toby

His own photograph, November 2024



Cadillac Mountain, Acadia

The Maine trip, 2022 International

FOR CARYLE

If you knew Jeff, or if you only knew his pages, Caryle would be glad to hear from you. She also has a **trailer valet** and a **Blue Ox hitch** to sell, and asked whether anyone in the club might have a use for them.

carylemc@gmail.com



AUGUST 13–16 · RIO, WISCONSIN

Future Streamers Buddy Rally

Hosts Zach & Steph Lee **BRN 8583** · reporting by Meghan Lee **BRN 24601**

RIGS

10

ADULTS

20

YOUNG CAMPERS

16

BUDDY RIGS

1 and it was mine

The premise of a buddy rally is simple and slightly risky: bring somebody who does not own an Airstream and see what happens. Jeff and Kate Verhelst took that further than anyone expected. They came as guests and spent the weekend in my 1999 Airstream B190 van, handed over on Thursday afternoon with a short speech about the propane.

Thirty-six of us in all. Chuck and Janet Zellermayer **BRN 10230** registered in February, six months out, which tells you how this weekend is regarded.



📍 FOUR DAYS IN RIO

Nobody checked a schedule



Business concluded, poolside



The pool, most of Friday



The wagons, all weekend



Fires started early



Ten rigs, thirty-six people, one borrowed van and four days laid out in advance so that nobody arriving had to work out what to do next. What it did not require was a trailer of your own.



📅 NEXT YEAR

Bring the friend who keeps asking.



We parked corral style, which is why July's issue told everyone to pack an extra length of hose. Twenty shirts in Ice Blue were ordered weeks ahead, and most of the weekend was settled before anybody arrived.

FROM THE RALLY REPORTER

Four days in Rio

BY MEGHAN LEE · BRN 24601

If you were looking for a weekend where the kids could run, swim, play, make new friends and generally keep everyone wondering “are they ever going to get tired?”, the Future Streamers Rally at Silver Springs delivered.

We had ten rigs join us this year, with a great mix of camping styles, from big rigs to base camps and even a B190. But the real stars of the weekend were our sixteen young campers, from brand new little adventurers to our teenage crew.

One of the best features of Silver Springs was that our group had a more intimate setup. All ten campers were parked in a circle facing inward, so the middle naturally became our gathering place. Somewhere to sit, relax, visit, keep an eye on the kids and simply enjoy being together. Rather than everyone disappearing into their own campsite, we had our own little Airstream neighborhood with the action right in the middle. It made it incredibly easy to wander over, pull up a chair and join the fun.

This was our fifth or sixth kids rally with the group, so it was good to see everyone again and better still to welcome some new families. What makes this rally special is watching the kids go from “do I know anyone here?” to “where are you going, can I come too?”

The list of options was long: a jumping pillow, the pool, a pond with inflatables and paddle boats, fishing, even the chance to stuff their own stuffed animals. With the weekend bringing plenty of summer heat, the pool quickly won. Of course the adults occasionally had to perform the difficult task of locating a shady chair and supervising all this fun. It is a tough job, but somebody had to do it.

Each evening our host provided hot dogs and s’mores to roast over the fire. There is something about sitting around a campfire with good friends, a roasting stick in hand and a s’more that is either perfectly golden or spectacularly on fire, that just feels like camping.

We also had a potluck of smash burgers made to order and a pancake breakfast with all the fixings. Movie night was another big hit: the kids got the film, the adults got to sit back and catch up. Happy kids, happy parents, and perhaps a few moments where everyone stayed in one place long enough to finish a conversation.

What we love most is that this rally really is centered on the kids. But do not let the theme fool you. **The adults had plenty of fun too.**

From big rigs to little campers, hot dogs to s’mores, swimming pools to campfires, and ten rigs gathered in a perfect circle, this year was another great reminder of what makes camping with friends so special.

Ten rigs, and the people who towed them.



Nathan & Emily Lee
BRN 9115



TK Lee & Philip Sobutka
BRN 5460



Matthew & Meghan Lee
BRN 24601



Tom & Sue Lawn
BRN 19741



Amna Aziz & Peter Block
BRN 25610



Chuck & Janet Zellermayer
BRN 10230



Zach & Steph Lee, hosts
BRN 8583

ALSO THERE

Bob & Colette Probasco [BRN 2884](#) · Jeff & Kate Verhelst, our buddy household · and a few more friends and family who came out to join us for the weekend.

If your name belongs on this page and is not here, write in and it goes in November.

Mostly in the water, and then in the dark.



The pool won, every afternoon



Off the dock



The wagons



Our own corn boil



Between everything else



The chair row



Bailing, supervised



Husking, also supervised

The park had its own Corn Boil Weekend running while we were there. Ours was separate, at our own site, put on by Emily and Nathan Lee [BRN 9115](#), who also did most of the husking.

AND THEN IT GOT DARK



Movie on the lawn



A fire that ran late



The glow stick parade



THE INTERNATIONAL

Rows and rows of Airstreams

Two of our members wrote up the International this year, and they were at two completely different rallies. We are running both.

Jeff Nicla [BRN 6925](#) and his wife Veronica drove up early, spent a week at Fort Stevenson State Park doing nothing much, and caravanned the last hour into Minot with friends from Arizona. His account starts on page 18.

Jenny Bibler [BRN 8484](#) went as our president, with Region 7 business in her head and a club to represent. Hers is on page 15.

They were not the only ones there. Chuck Zellermyer [BRN 10230](#) took office as president of Region 7 while he was at it, which is page 17.

WHERE

North Dakota State Fair
Grounds, Minot

WISC-UP THERE

At least five
households

PICKED UP AT MINOT

Two transfers
into our club

NEXT YEAR

Rock Springs, WY
Jun 26 – Jul 1

Representing WISC-UP

By Jenny Bibler · BRN 8484

The Airstream Club International Rally is the largest gathering of Airstream owners in the country each year, and this year Jeff, Della, Tessa — our two Chorkie pups — and I headed to Minot, North Dakota, as first-time attendees.

As I write this, please know that I had no idea what to expect as we pulled out of the driveway and headed northwest. North Dakota was a first for me too. The first thing Jeff did was build a special bed and landing for Della and Tessa so they could sit up high and have a bird's eye view of the whole trip, through northern Wisconsin, Minnesota and then across North Dakota to Minot. That way they could enjoy the scenery too, from the northern woods of the Chippewa National Forest to the flatness of the Great Plains.

Our first stop was the Winnie Dam Campground in the Chippewa National Forest, on Lake Winnibigoshish. If you find yourself on Highway 2 through the forest, I highly recommend it. From there we headed west and stopped at Grahams Island State Park just outside Devils Lake, North Dakota. It is a neat campground because it is on an island, and no, we did not take a ferry — there is a causeway over Devils Lake. We had a lake site and a view that night. Another recommendation if you find yourself out that way.

On Thursday we made it to Minot, known as the Magic City for its rapid growth and welcoming spirit. We had no problem with the registration line. A volunteer not only led us to our site but stayed to help park us and make sure we were exactly where we were supposed to be. We met our neighbors straight away and they had dogs too, so we all had something in common sharing puppy stories. All of them were well behaved and got along just fine.

The first people we saw, just down the road from our site, were Chuck and Janet Zellermyer [BRN 10230](#). Of course there was a group of us gathered outside their trailer to watch the Packers game on an outdoor screen.

At registration we met Chris and Kay Olsson, the Region 7 past president and his wife, who were rally ambassadors, and we were one of many who got to ring the big gold bell as first timers. It was quite the honor. We got our badges, and we had WISC-UP badges made for Della and Tessa, who are now official Airstream dogs.

Friday night was my personal highlight. With the other local club presidents, I stood in line with Byron Day, president of the Minnesota Airstream Club, and Mary Maier, president of the North Dakota Peace Garden Unit, to present the club flags for Region 7. We marched out in the opening ceremony, and as I tipped the WISC-UP flag I was honored to represent our club.



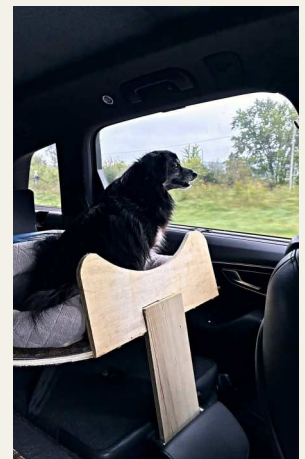
Carrying the WISC-UP flag out

Photo: Jeff Bibler



Byron Day, Chuck Zellermyer, Mary Maier and Jenny Bibler

Region 7, left to right



Della, taking in the sights

On Jeff's landing

Nine hundred trailers, and one royal encounter.

The North Dakota State Fairgrounds played host, and wow, did they outdo themselves. If you needed a ride anywhere on the grounds there was always a volunteer with one of the hundreds of golf carts running up and down the rows of over nine hundred Airstreams.

The hardest part of the entire rally was deciding which sessions to attend. There was everything from All About Caravans to How to Play American Mahjong. I went to the ones on hosting rallies, boondocking and full-timing, while Jeff learned all about axle maintenance and repairs. The sessions and the social events are probably the best reason to come.



The sun comes up at the fairgrounds

Photo: Jenny Bibler · BRN 8484

Another big highlight was the parade of vintage Airstreams through the campground, and the open house the owners held afterward. It is interesting, the personality these oldies but goodies take on.

And speaking of vintage Airstreams: Jeff and I stopped to admire one we thought was cool and had a lot of character. The owner heard us and came out to tell us about her trailer. I wish I could remember the year and model, but we will never forget the owner, Millie O'Donnell. Millie is the Airstream Club International President. When she introduced herself, Jeff said, "I think we are standing in front of royalty." Millie laughed and told us about the sessions she would be leading. How to crochet.

Editor's note: the trailer was a 1980 Caravelle. Millie tows it out of the North Texas club, with an orange cat named Quinn.

Chuck and Janet, as the new Region 7 president and first lady, hosted a Region 7 breakfast. It was well attended and it was nice to meet members from our Minnesota and Dakota neighbors. Again, congratulations, Chuck.

From there we visited many of the seventy vendors and toured a lot of the 2027 Airstreams. It seems the World Traveler and the luxury motorhomes — Atlas, Interstate and Rangeline, built on Mercedes-Benz chassis — are making a big splash. I will stick with the Flying Cloud and the Excella, but it was fun to go in and look. It sure beats watching YouTube videos.



Open for walking through

Photo: Jeff Nicla · BRN 6925

As first timers, not knowing what to expect, we did not plan very well and had to cut the trip a little short and head home early. What we have learned is how to plan better, not work full time, and make sure the babysitting is arranged properly for the cat at home.

I am already planning for the 70th International Rally in Rock Springs, Wyoming, June 26 to July 1, 2027. Some of you have been there, so if you can give us tips, that would be great. I highly recommend you go. It was bigger and better than I could have imagined, and the thought I keep coming back to is almost a thousand silver trailers of every shape and size, all neatly packed together. For a week it was its own city.

See you in Rock Springs.
Jenny Bibler, President **BRN 8484**

One of ours runs the region

Chuck Zellermyer · BRN 10230

At the International in August, Chuck Zellermyer took office as president of Region 7, with Janet as first lady. They are ours, out of Waukesha, and you have already met them in this issue, on page 15, camped just down the road from Jenny with the Packers game running on a screen outside their trailer.

Region 7 is Wisconsin, Minnesota, the Dakotas and Manitoba, and he is not the only one of ours on its board. Kim Walls **BRN 10179**, of Brookfield, was installed at the same rally as second vice president, and Bob Manak **BRN 6151** keeps the region's website. Three of the nine chairs, out of one club.

Nor is it new. Two years ago the region's president was Ginger Slattery **BRN 2041**, its past president Jane Carmichael **BRN 219**, its photographer John Cooper and its vintage representative Ed Emerick. Chuck was second vice president and treasurer on that same board. He has worked his way along the row.



Hosting the Region 7 breakfast

Chuck & Janet Zellermyer · BRN 10230



Thanking the outgoing president

Chuck Zellermyer and Chris Olsson



Kim Walls installed as
Region 7 second vice president

Kim Walls · BRN 10179



Janet with Ginger Slattery

First lady, and a past president

REGION 7, AS IT STANDS TODAY

Chuck Zellermyer 10230

President

Christopher Olsson 7827

Past President

Monica Kubischta 5592

Membership Chair

Vernon Petersen 1573

First Vice President

Kay Olsson 7827

Recording Secretary

Timothy Doherty 27507

Newsletter Editor

Kim Walls 10179

Second Vice President

Cordell Woods 5148

Treasurer

Bob Manak 6151

Webmaster

WISC-UP households in bold · airstreamclub.org/region7

Coming in from Fort Stevenson

By Jeff Nicla · BRN 6925

Last August my wife Veronica and I attended our first Airstream Club International rally, in York, Pennsylvania, on our own. This year we drove to Fort Stevenson State Park outside Garrison, North Dakota, to meet friends from Phoenix and caravan with them into Minot. Because we became full-timers earlier this year we had the freedom to arrive a week early and spend some time chilling before the rally. How relaxing and fun that was.

There was excitement in the air as we noted increasing numbers of Airstreams on the road as we traversed toward Minot. Even so, we were not at all prepared for the sheer numbers. We are used to being the only Airstream, or maybe one of two. At Fort Stevenson we were one of thirty or forty.

A number of local people from Garrison stopped and talked to us as they walked through the park, asking what was going on. Why so many Airstreams, and what is the significance of those big red numbers? All of which made for some fun, interesting conversations. Those moments add something precious to our existence, as we get the tiniest of glimpses into the lives of others.



Jeff and Veronica Nicla

BRN 6925



THE ROW, AT THE END OF A DAY

On Friday morning we made the hour-long journey with our Arizona friends, and some new Arizona friends, from Fort Stevenson to Minot. How different it is to travel with other Airstreams on the road. People tend to really look as they pass by.

When we arrived at the designated lot for meeting up with even more of the Arizona group there were lots of handshakes and hugs as people greeted one another. At noon we lined up our Airstreams and left the lot in a caravan of shining silver.

A well oiled machine, and one bad morning.

Volunteers zipped around on golf carts collecting BRNs and making sure we were lined up as we wanted to be. Thirty minutes later another volunteer led our group into a different area where we would be camped together for the week. A group of men with long plastic straps began using them to define our temporary spaces in the gravel, directing us in turning, pulling ahead and backing in. Then a new set of volunteers came and made sure everybody had the cables and dogbone connections needed to hook up to fairground power.

The entire operation worked like a well oiled machine, each piece doing its part. Rattled nerves calmed quickly, anxious feelings passed away quietly, and in a short time we found ourselves parked, surrounded by rows and rows of Airstreams. All of that was done by two o'clock.

ON THE WAY IN

About half an hour before we arrived there was a lot of chatter on WhatsApp about a horrific crash between an Airstream trailer and an Amtrak engine. By the time we made it to the gate we went right by the scene. It was shocking to see how little was left of the trailer. Fortunately nobody in the tow vehicle or on the train was hurt, and the train moved on. While few people there knew those involved, it made all of us think about the complexity that is towing a trailer, and how split second decisions can be momentous. That scene remained on everyone's minds and hearts days later.

If you come to a rally like this you will be amazed at the number of people who make things happen. People to register participants, to direct parking, to sort the electrical setup for each rig, to hand out information and goodies, to run the post office. If you are so inclined you can volunteer yourself. Boredom is not a problem. Many brought bikes to cross the half mile to the main building, and yet more volunteers in golf carts gave lifts to anyone who needed one.

Each night there is the main event at the auditorium, and during the day presentations on maintenance and repairs, towing and safety, boondocking, caravanning.

At noon lots of people ate at the food trucks, and each time we sat down we met new folks. One day it was three former career foreign service workers, and what conversations we had comparing their world travel with travel in our Airstreams.



A small city of Airstreams, for a week.

Photographs by Jeff and Veronica Nicla BRN 6925



The vendor hall took most of an afternoon, and then most of another



Seminars ran all day. This one on fitting everything in



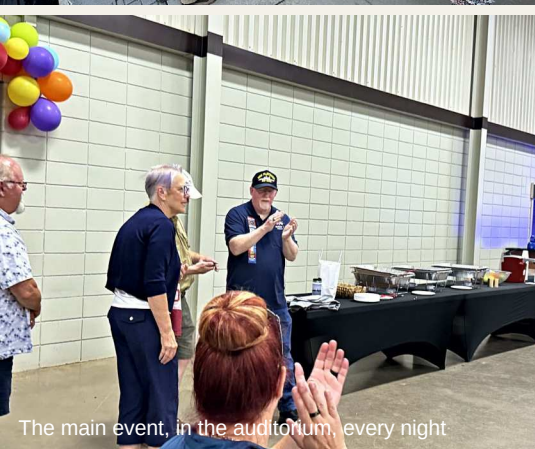
The shuttle into town



The line went around the mural and kept going



Lunch, with people we had not met at breakfast



The main event, in the auditorium, every night



Downtown Minot, hanging baskets and all



The map. Our block is the one you cannot find

"At noon lots of people ate at the food trucks, and each time we sat down we met new folks. One day it was three former career foreign service workers, and what conversations we had comparing their world travel with travel in our Airstreams."



MINOT · AFTER SIX

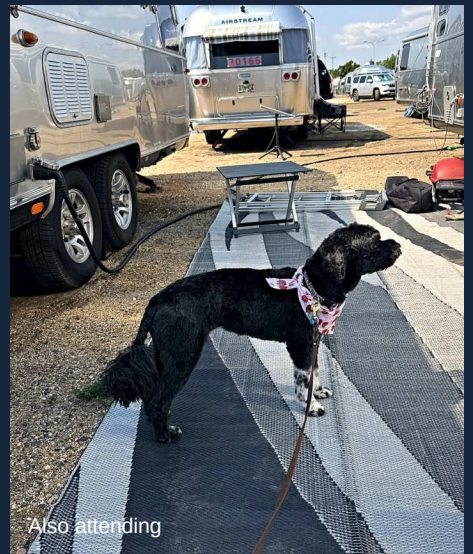
Chairs come out, and nobody moves.



Between the rigs, every evening



The hall, on the night everyone found a hat



Also attending

“In the evening people gathered on folding chairs between the Airstreams and shared food, drink and conversation as people came and went. Before we knew it the week was done.”

JEFF NICLA · BRN 6925

Next year the whole thing happens again at Rock Springs, Wyoming, 26 June to 1 July 2027. Several WISC-UP households are already talking about going together. Page 29.



NEW THIS ISSUE · UPGRADE & REPAIR

What it really costs to build your own power system

JEFF NICLA · **BRN 6925** · 2021 AIRSTREAM 30FC OFFICE, "FRANKLIN"

This is the first of a section that will run in every issue from here. One member, one project done to their own trailer, with the actual numbers. Not a review, not a spec sheet. What you put in, what it cost, and how it has held up since.

Jeff and Veronica Nicla joined WISC-UP about a year and a half ago. In January Jeff retired from full-time ministry in Waupun. In February they traded a 2006 25FB Safari for a 2021 30FC Office so that Nica could actually work from the trailer. On April 14 they sold the house, moved into Franklin, and left. They have not stopped since.

What they wanted was the ability to boondock properly. They asked around, and the shops quoted **\$18,000 to \$20,000** for the system they had in mind.

Then a friend in Phoenix, an engineer, offered to do the job at cost. Jeff worked alongside him for several weeks and learned the trailer from the inside out.

QUOTED BY THE SHOPS

\$18,000 to \$20,000

WHAT THE PARTS ACTUALLY COST

\$6,645.83

Jeff asked us to be fair to the left-hand number, and he is right to. It is a great deal of work, it takes tools and knowledge most of us do not have, and nobody in that trade is a bandit. The \$20,000 was a deal Ewald's had going on new rigs, and on a trailer shorter than theirs. What a thirty-footer would have run, nobody ever quoted.

THE SYSTEM

960 watts up top, 24 volts through the middle.

SOLAR

960W

8 × Renogy 120W Shadowflux,
plus a 400W portable suitcase

BATTERY

1,256 Ah

4 × Wattcycle 12V
314Ah LiFePO4

INVERTER

3,000W

Victron MultiPlus-II 24/3000

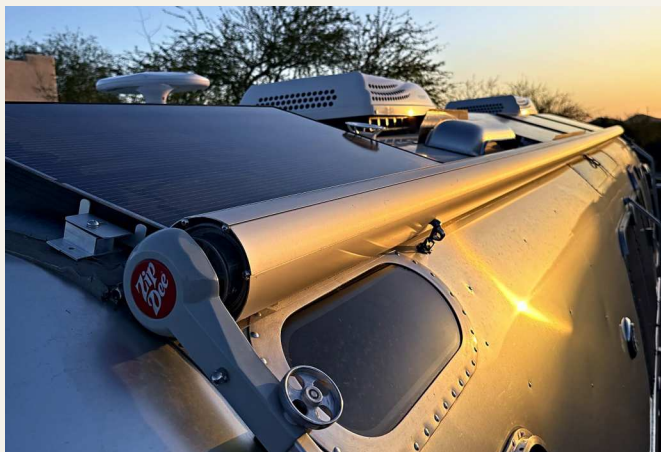
ARCHITECTURE

24 volt

rather than the stock 12



The MultiPlus and the distributor, before the lid went back on



Panels laid out on the roof in Phoenix, before anything was stuck down

WHY 24 VOLTS

This is the decision most owners will not have considered, and it came out of the length of the trailer rather than any preference.

A thirty foot Airstream means a long run from the fuse panel under the refrigerator back to the batteries. At 12 volts, the wire gauge needed to avoid losing voltage over that distance was impractical. Going to 24 volts let them use much smaller cable on the two long runs, from the EMS to the MultiPlus and from the MultiPlus to the breaker panel. Jeff notes that some of it still looked enormous to him.

One inverter output runs essentially the whole trailer. The second feeds the rear air conditioner, which only runs on shore power.

NO HOLES IN THE ROOF

The panels are held down with 3M Very High Bond tape and curved z-brackets. Jeff's line: "I think I read that a similar product, if not this one, was used to hold the heat tiles on NASA's Space Shuttles. It's amazing stuff."



The 12 volt panel, and the label you hope nobody ever needs

What it cost

Parts only. The labor was a friend working at cost, and Jeff on the other end of the wire.

8 × Renogy 120W Shadowflux panels	\$619.98
4 × Wattcycle 12V 314Ah LiFePO4	\$1,716.00
Victron MultiPlus-II 24/3000/70-50	\$1,145.80
Inverter and battery cable	\$446.75
Victron SmartSolar 150/60 controller	\$368.90
Victron Orion DC-DC charger	\$356.15
GX Touch 70 monitor	\$270.45
6/4 SOOW AC cable	\$249.50
Cerbo GX	\$248.20
Victron Lynx distributor	\$211.65
8 × curved mounting z-brackets	\$191.92
6/3 SOO cable to second AC output	\$110.50
Truck and trailer welding cable, 65 ft	\$260.96
Blue Sea switch, breaker and fuse blocks	\$162.41
MEGA fuses, 100A / 250A / 400A	\$43.26
Bluetooth adapter, VE.Direct, RJ45	\$116.45
Anderson connectors, sheathing, SAE adapter, VHB tape, panel cables	\$127.95
Total, parts	\$6,645.83

Jeff's caveat, kept in his words: "They may, frankly probably are, be very different depending on the day."

WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU

- Wire size has to account for the distance the run traverses, or voltage loss eats you
- There is an art and a science to crimping. A bad crimp means resistance, heat, and potentially catastrophe
- Cables going to the battery posts must be of equal length
- It looked far easier than it was. Specialty knowledge and specialty tools did most of the work

THE TOOLS DID MOST OF IT

Jeff is clear that the parts list is only half the story. "While it all seemed pretty straightforward as we were doing it, there was so much specialty knowledge and some tools that really made it look far easier than it was."

Which is the honest argument for paying a shop, and the reason the page opposite exists.



Four batteries and 1,256 amp hours, in the galley bench



Lid back on, and it is a bench again



Somebody is asleep on the power system

SIX MONTHS IN

What it is actually like to live on it.

Starlink runs twenty-four hours a day. Lights, televisions and the water pump draw almost nothing. One air conditioner runs four to six hours at the end of the day. The coffee maker pulls 1,400 watts for four minutes and does not trouble the system.

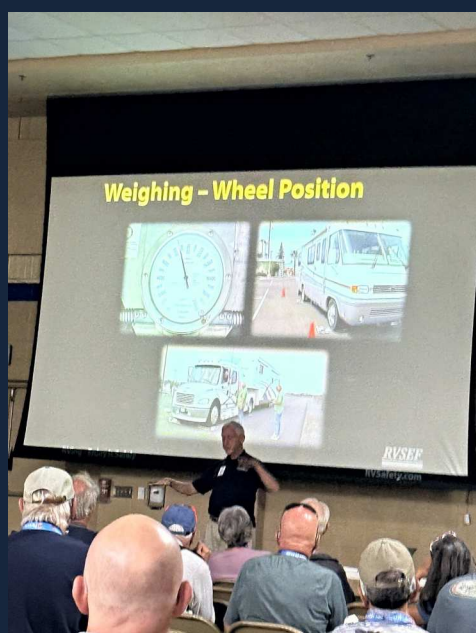
The fridge is the one to watch. On AC it draws around 400 watts continuously and will flatten even this bank in three or four days, so off grid it runs on propane. Their rule is not to run two hungry things at once. In full sun the bank comes back most of the way, never quite to 100.

LONGEST STRETCH OFF GRID

7 days

AND WHAT STOPS THEM AT SEVEN

Water



The talk at Minot that started it

WHAT HE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

The most useful thing Jeff brought back from the International was not a part. It was a number.

Not the electrics. In mid-nineties heat they still move to a park with power, because one air conditioner does not do the job. Beyond that the limit is the fresh water tank, not the battery bank.

The surprise came at the rally, where they had the rig weighed wheel by wheel rather than by axle. The truck was fine. **The trailer was over.** The batteries come to 172 pounds and the panels to another 152, and they had been towing with full water tanks on top of that. Heavy items have since moved into the truck bed and the tanks travel empty.

“Would we do it again? Probably. But it is a thing I never gave any thought to.”

One thing worked out by accident. Putting the batteries under the bench, rather than along one side, left the trailer evenly loaded side to side.



NEXT UP · OCTOBER 16–18

Fall Rally & Annual Business Meeting

Hosts Chris & Wendy Brown **BRN 21124**

Chris and Wendy Brown are hosting us along the Great River Road, in the rolling Driftless hills of southwest Wisconsin, at peak color. This is also the annual business meeting and the installation of next year's officers. If you make one rally this autumn, make it this one.

WHEN

October 16–18

WHERE

3854 Dry Hollow Rd
Kiel, Wisconsin

RALLY FEE

\$10 per person

SITES

First come,
first served

BOOK NOW, NOT LATER

Rustic Barn held a block of sites for WISC-UP through August 1. That block has been released, so sites are now first come, first served. Call **608-568-7767** and say you are with the WISC-UP Airstream Club. Ten or more club bookings earns everyone a ten percent discount.

Questions go to Chris Brown **BRN 21124** at chrisbrowncpa@gmail.com or 262-227-4308.

THE WEEKEND

Three days in the Driftless

FRIDAY 16

Fish fry at a local restaurant, then campfire and social back at the campground.

SATURDAY 17

Breakfast, the business meeting and installation of officers, a Potosi Brewery tour, a free afternoon, dinner on your own, campfire.

SUNDAY 18

Breakfast and farewells.

IF SATURDAY AFTERNOON IS YOURS

Whispering Bluffs Winery in Potosi, the Driftless creamery and cheese tour, Dickeyville Grotto, or the National Mississippi River Museum down in Dubuque. Cyclists have the Heritage, Rountree Branch and Mound View trails within easy reach, and Galena is a short drive across the Illinois line.

Saturday morning is the business meeting, and it is the one on page 6 that needs you in the room. It runs before the brewery tour, so the day is not asking you to choose between them.

ONE MORE THING

Rustic Barn runs its annual Halloween weekend that Saturday, with campsite decorating, trick or treating and bingo. Pack the decorations.

The WISC-UP block was released on August 1, so sites are first come, first served now. Booking details are on page 26.

Scouted and photographed by Chris Brown, who has camped here more than once.



The grounds at Rustic Barn



The hills below the campground



ON THE COVER

“A magical, stormy night in Alamosa, Colorado!”

Photographed by **Jeff and Veronica Nicla** [BRN 6925](#), somewhere in the San Luis Valley, on a night when the sky was clearly the main event. That is Franklin under it, with one window lit.

Jeff sent this in as the first entry to our cover contest, along with that caption, which we have run exactly as he wrote it. *We said we would make you famous.*

YOUR TURN

One photo, one sentence about where it was taken. No theme, no category, no fee. The winner runs full bleed on the next cover, gets a page inside, and becomes our Facebook banner. Highest resolution you have.

Three invitations for 2027.

ROAD AMERICA · MAY 14–16, 2027

The Northern Illinois club has asked us to join them

Jennifer Hughes **BRN 18135**, First Vice President of the Northern Illinois Airstream Club, wrote to us in September proposing a joint rally at Road America in Elkhart Lake over the weekend of May 14 to 16, 2027. They expect ten to twenty trailers and somewhere between twenty and fifty people.

Two things make this worth taking seriously. It is in our own territory, an hour from Milwaukee. And spring 2027 is otherwise completely empty on our calendar, which is the gap the board has been asking someone to fill all year.

If this appeals to you, say so. They have asked who our point of contact would be, and that could be you. Write to Jenny or to the editor.



MINOT, 2026. ROCK SPRINGS WILL LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS

THE INTERNATIONAL · JUNE 26 TO JULY 1, 2027

Rock Springs, Wyoming

Next year's International Rally is at the Sweetwater Events Complex in Rock Springs. If Minot taught us anything, and pages 14 to 18 suggest it did, it is that the members who go come back with something to say.

Registration and details come through Airstream Club International. If enough of us are going, we will park together, which is worth arranging early.

AND THE THIRD

The UP, in August

The Fungus Amongus Rally at Crystal Falls, Michigan, is further along than any of this. Twenty sites are held, the pavilion fee is waived, and an entire town festival is attached to it. Turn to page 30.

There is a fungus among us.

HOLD AN AUGUST WEEKEND

Runkle Lake Campground has **twenty-plus electric sites blocked for every August weekend of 2027**, and will release all but ours once Crystal Falls announces its festival dates. The city manager has said he wants the 2027 festival held in August. We arrive Thursday and leave Sunday. If you are penciling a year, pencil August.

WHAT THE FESTIVAL IS

Crystal Falls sits on top of an *Armillaria gallica* that spreads through more than thirty-seven acres of soil as a single organism, thousands of years old and one of the largest living things on earth. The town has thrown it a party every summer since 1992.

The 2026 festival ran on 31 July and 1 August. A parade goes down the main street on the Friday evening and the soap box derby races the same hill straight after. Saturday brings live music at the historic Crystal Theatre, vendors and cook-offs.

Runkle Lake Park itself is municipal and within walking distance of downtown: full hookup and electric sites, showers, a dump station, a beach, a boat launch, a fishing pier and a lakeside playground. Sites are flexible enough to park us facing inward, which after Silver Springs we now know matters.

WHAT JANE HAS ALREADY SECURED

- Twenty-plus electric sites held
- Ten percent off camping fees
- Pavilion rental fee waived
- A wood supplier lined up
- A Lions Club catered chicken dinner, priced per head
- A fish fry for forty, being looked into

HOSTS

Pat Conway **BRN 7208** with Deb, hosting his first rally, and Jane Carmichael **BRN 219** with Ed Klein, a long-time member and UPer from Marquette.

The end-of-July Kids, Kids, Kids rally still works alongside this. Nobody has to choose.

ON THE TABLE, NOT YET AGREED

IN THE TOWN

Our Airstreams in the Friday parade. A mini-Airstream in the soap box derby. Tours of the county courthouse and the historic theater.

AT THE CAMPGROUND

Open houses so the town can walk through our trailers. A drone photograph of the whole corral. A pancake breakfast. An ice cream truck.

IF WE ARE LUCKY

A talk from Nick Baumgartner, the Iron River snowboarder who won Olympic gold in 2022, with the medal in the room.

YOUR TURN

Host a rally. Or just a lunch.

Every event on our calendar exists because one member said “I’ll do it.” Here is what that actually takes, and what the club now does to help.

NEW FOR 2026

Rally hosts are reimbursed up to \$300 for campsite fees

Approved at the April board meeting, paid from club funds on receipt to the treasurer. Anything above that needs board approval. It is not built into your rally fees. In plain terms: if you host, your site is largely on us.

HOSTING A RALLY

- Pick a campground and a weekend, then block some sites
- Send the details to John Cooper, who sets up registration and the email blast
- Sketch a loose agenda. A meal, a campfire and one activity is a complete rally
- Show up and say hello. That is genuinely most of it

HOSTING A LUNCHEON

- Pick a restaurant with a room or a long table
- Pick a date and tell us. That is the whole job
- Two hours, no towing required
- A good way to see people between rally weekends

OR TRY A POP-UP

Jenny raised this in July and nobody has taken her up on it yet, so here it is again. You are already going camping next summer. Tell the club where and when. Whoever wants to join you, joins you. That is a pop-up rally, and it can be as casual as you like.

No agenda, no fee, no registration. Just a location and an open invitation.

ANYONE FOR NOVEMBER?

Jenny put this on page 4 and it is worth repeating here. There is still time this year, and a campground in November is not going to be full. Somebody only has to pick one.

Spring 2027 is wide open too. The UP, the Door, the Driftless, anywhere you already like going. The board’s goal is one event a month in camping season and we are short of it. Two of this year’s hosts were hosting for the first time.

Things Outside My Airstream

Ed Emerick started it: point the phone at whatever is in front of the door, post it, say nothing else. If you can see it from your step, it counts. Three members filled the group this summer, and one of them did not even open the door.



Escanaba in da Moonlight
Greg Hyer · BRN 4297



Cedar Point, out the door
Ed Emerick · BRN 4425



Headwaters of the Mississippi,
on the road to Minot
Greg Hyer · BRN 4475



Cheticamp, Cape Breton
Greg Hyer · BRN 4297



Cheticamp again, from the same window
Greg Hyer · BRN 4297



And the wooden one
Ed Emerick · BRN 4425

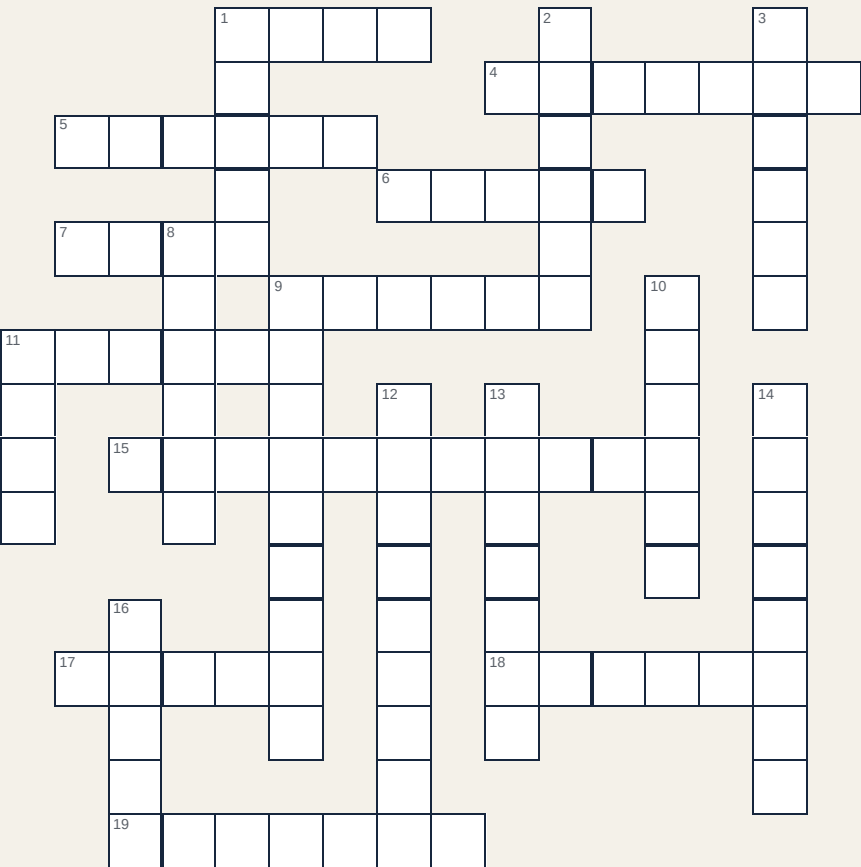


Your turn

Post your view to the group, or email it to the editor. Tell us where if you feel like it. If you do not, we will make something up. The group is private, and it is where most of this happens between issues.

The September Crossword

Every answer is somewhere in this issue. The page number is on the clue, so nothing here needs looking up anywhere else. New this issue, and staying — there will be something on this page every time.



ACROSS

- 1 First timers get to ring the big gold one p 15
- 4 What now lives in the Nicla galley bench p 22
- 5 National park where Jeff and Toby climbed Cadillac Mountain p 8
- 6 Kim ____, the region's new second vice president p 17
- 7 The Cairn Terrier who got his own letter p 8
- 9 __ Springs, Rio, where Future Streamers camped p 9
- 11 What a trailer met on the way into Minot p 19
- 15 Chuck ____, who took office as president of Region 7 at Minot p 17
- 17 The Magic City p 14
- 18 __ Lake Campground, Crystal Falls p 29
- 19 Colorado town under the storm on our cover p 1

DOWN

- 1 Future Streamers __ Rally p 9
- 2 Where we are all towing in October p 26
- 3 __ Amongus, the rally in planning for 2027 p 30
- 8 Converted kid's trailer the pups rode in p 15
- 9 What Jeff McCaffrey gave us five pages on in March 2024 p 8
- 10 Ten percent of the voting membership, in the room p 6
- 11 What Jeff Bibler went to learn about p 16
- 12 The hills the Fall Rally is pitched in p 26
- 13 Game on a screen outside the Zellermayers' trailer p 15
- 14 Ginger ____, a Region 7 past president of ours p 17
- 16 Jeff ____, whose photograph is on the cover p 1

ACROSS 1 Bell, 4 Lithium, 5 Acadia, 6 Walls, 7 Toby, 9 Silver, 11 Amtrak, 15 Zellermayers, 17 Minot, 18 Runkle, 19 Alamosa · DOWN 1 Buddy, 2 Kiefer, 3 Fungus, 8 Burley, 9 Skylights, 10 Quorum, 11 Axle, 12 Driftless, 13 Packers, 14 Slattery, 16 Nicla

Our members need to know.

The November issue closes on **Sunday, November 15**. That one is the last of the year, so it gets the whole season in it.

WHAT TO SEND

- A one-line title, 100 to 600 words, and your BRN
- One to six photos as originals, not screenshots
- Trip reports, rally photos, repairs and upgrades
- Anything you fixed, built, or wish you had done differently

WHAT THE CLUB STILL NEEDS

- A **membership chair**, the one seat still open
- Somebody's upgrade or repair, to keep page 22 going
- A luncheon, anywhere, hosted by anyone. We have not had one since February
- Your profile photo on **wisc-up.org**, so the roster has faces
- Were you at Minot? Nobody took a roll call. Tell us and we will put it right in November

WHERE TO SEND IT

zacharyalee@gmail.com

Subject line: "WISC-UP newsletter, [your topic]"

No format required and nothing too small. A paragraph and one photograph is a piece. Half of what is in this issue arrived that way.

Send photographs as they came off the phone or camera. A screenshot of a photo, or one pulled back out of a text message, arrives at a fraction of the size and will not print.

If writing is not your thing, send the facts and I will write it. That is most of what an editor does.

PUT YOUR PHOTO ON THE COVER

Send one photo and one sentence about where it was taken. That is the whole entry. No theme, no category, no fee. The winning frame runs full bleed on the next cover with your name and BRN, gets a page inside, and becomes our Facebook banner until the issue after.



Events



Facebook



Register