



THE VINTAGE ADVANTAGE

News Items for Vintage Airstream Owners & Admirers



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Vintage Airstream Club

A WBCCI IntraClub

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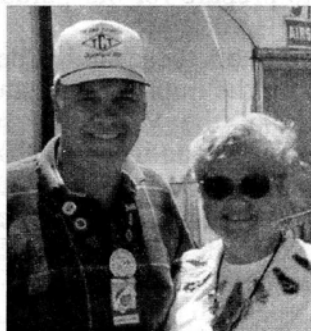
The Vintage Advantage Quarterly Newsletter

Annual dues of \$10 payable to "Vintage Airstream Club". Send all dues and applications and classified ads to the VAC Membership Chairman, Dr. Richard Mumma. **The Vintage Advantage (VA)** is the official newsletter of the Vintage Airstream Club, which is an IntraClub of the Wally Byam Caravan Club International, Inc. (WBCCI), the RV club of Airstream owners.

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RESIDENT'S MESSAGE



There has been much positive club activity since the last issue of the **Vintage Advantage**. I am pleased to announce that Patrick Ewing (#3675) has assumed our Treasurer position. Ed Stanley (#21491) has assisted the club once more by meeting with Patrick and helping to facilitate a smooth transition.

Our VAC web site has been combined with Airstream.Net to provide Airstreamers with one of the finest sites on the web. The classifieds are easy to access and a Question & Answer Forum has been included. The response to this new

and improved forum has been outstanding. Ed Stanley has assumed the duty of *Forum Respondent* and has done a remarkable job by providing detailed responses to numerous questions. Bud Cooper (#26019) will be adding a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page to the site. Bud will draw on his extensive experience as our Technical Correspondent to provide VAC members with this valuable resource. I know this material will assist both novice and experienced Airstreamers. I have asked Bud to submit this material for publication in the VA, so that all of our members will be able to access this valuable material.

Although Duane Hedahl (#1175) is not going to assume total responsibility for the distribution of the VA as he has done in the past, he has agreed to help coordinate a change in the distribution process. I am pleased that we can, through Duane's assistance, continue our association with the Easter Seals Society as the agent that assists the VAC in the mailing of the VA. I did not want to lose this association and am pleased that we will be able to support their efforts. Many thanks to Duane for his VAC service and for allowing us to continue our working relationship with the Easter Seals.

In the last issue I listed goals that I wish to see accomplished during my 1998-99 term as your VAC President. The following progress has been made toward the realization of these goals:

1. *Development of a greater VAC presence at the Florida State Rally.*

Rally information has been posted on the VAC Web Site. The Rally Director has been contacted and asked to provide information regarding the clubs involvement in a parade to the rally site, VAC parking, social activities, and an open house.

I would like all VAC members

that are planning on attending to personally contact me for information updates.

2. *Development of a community service project in conjunction with the International Rally.*

An individual has been contacted about coordinating this project. I am awaiting a response.

3. *Development of VAC rallies and caravans by geographical regions.*

Don Perry (#5031) and Tom Howarth (#6490) hosted the first such VAC Gathering. Other members have expressed a desire to develop Vintage Gatherings and Rallies by geographical regions. Tom Reed (#10283) is developing a greater Vintage presence at the successful WBCCI Hobo Rally.

4. *Development of standards for Concours d'Elegance categories, awards, and judging criteria.*

I am currently compiling the suggestions I have received from club members and officers. An article in the spring issue of the VA will detail new guidelines and rules for the 1999 International Rally.

5. *Development of "Favorite Places" Caravans, in which VAC members take others to their favorite camping locations within their state.*

I have not had any direct response to this item but am aware of VACers considering leading caravans to their favorite camping locations.

A record number of VAC members participated in the caravan training program at Boise International Rally so that I hope the enthusiasm they expressed to me in Boise has not diminished. I hope to hear some concrete plans for future Vintage Caravans. Our two Wagon Wheels Caravans prior to the 1995 and 1997 International Rallies were very successful and it is my personal

belief that VAC caravans might well be the single most important activity that our club can sponsor.

6. *Development of a program to move our Friends subscribers to full WBCCI membership status.*

A letter was sent to WBCCI officials indicating our desire to increase WBCCI membership through a cooperative effort. The WBCCI has contacted Region Presidents concerning personal contact with VAC Friends. Every effort is being made to invite our VAC Friends to WBCCI activities.

Plans for the 1999 Wagon Wheels Way Caravan prior to the Dayton International are beginning to take shape. If you wish to visit a nuclear power plant, an island in Lake Erie, an Amish store and restaurant, a restored village, camp in a farmer's pasture, ride in a canal boat and experience the works of a master carver, plan on this eight to ten day caravan under the direction of former VAC President Clyde Wagner (#8441). The caravan will meet up with other rally attendees at a preRally in Springfield, Ohio, on June 24th, to prepare for our parade into Dayton.

Your input on these and other suggestions for the improvement and advancement of the VAC will be appreciated. My address is 200 Rainbow Drive, #10918, Livingston, TX 77351; Phone Message Service is 1-888-757-7701 Ext. 49945; E-mail is F23Bone@aol.com.

Forrest Bone, #9712



THE EDITOR'S DESK

With the holiday season behind us, it's time for the snowbirds to congregate and the rest of us working stiffs to add additional restoration onto our trailers for next year.

VAC activities are being organized for the three upcoming rallies: 39th Annual Hobo Rally (Feb. 8 to 14 in Blythe, CA), FL State Rally (Feb. 24 to 28 in Sarasota, FL) and Region 9 Rally (Mar. 1 to 4 in Zavalla, TX) with announcements scattered throughout this issue.

Vintage members should be taking note of these and other WBCCI rallies where we might want to consider conducting VAC activities in addition to the planned WBCCI event. On the first weekend in October, we joined in for the tail end of the Autumn Leaf Festival National Rally (ALR) at Penn Woods Airstream Park in Clarion, PA. This was our first visit to both Penn Woods and to the ALR and boy did we come away impressed. Excellent family entertainment nightly, great meals and beautiful scenery. The point is that if the VAC organizes itself prior to these events, the enhancement of the activities will benefit all. I also must thank the Freemans (#12990), Doug Pederson (#4702), Ralph Kellogg (#11988) and the many fine members of the Pennsylvania Unit (#164) for their hospitality and accommodating manner.

This issue of the **Vintage Advantage** is pleased to present several different membership perspectives on "doin' the VAC thing." That is, we have three different stories from VAC members on their method of vintage 'streamin'.

The VAC is also proud to officially announce its website merger with Airstream.Net as authored by Ewan McDonnell. The combination of these two sites now makes the VAC website one of the premier websites for all types of RVs, vintage or not. We are also experimenting with new ways to post questions, announce gatherings and gather other information in a timely and professional manner.

So, until next spring, keep them wheels a rollin' and the skin a shinin'!



VAC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Merger of the VAC Website with Airstream.Net

The Vintage Airstream Club, an intra-club of the Wally Byam Caravan Club International, is pleased to announce the merger of its web site with Airstream.Net, hosted by Mr. Ewan McDonnell.

The combination of these two sites will provide the best news, views, resources and services for Airstream owners

and enthusiasts. The e-list is a perfect way to get your questions answered while the classified section will allow you to buy, sell, or price your trailer. The links will connect you with other noteworthy Airstream related sites.

The Vintage Club takes pride in providing its members with outstanding caravans, social and educational programs. These services are provided through a comprehensive quarterly newsletter, the **Vintage Advantage**, special events at the WBCCI Rallies including the very popular Concours d'Elegance and open house at the International Rally and in concert with these, a complete Airstream website of note. The combination of these sites will continue the VAC tradition of providing the very best for the Airstream community.

Visit our site at

www.vac.airstream.net

Forrest Bone, #9712

East Coast Vintage Gathering

The First Annual, we hope, East Coast Vintage Gathering was a relaxing and lazy long weekend from Thursday, November 5th to Sunday, November 8th at Killen's Pond State Park in Felton, DE. The weather was sunny and crisp with a beautiful fall foliage setting.

In attendance were nine VAC families representing seven states. Those present included: Rick Davis (#1602) from TN; Donas (#5071) and Tylers (#6477) from upstate NY; Pildis/Price (#14813) from NC; Pokorski (#7329) from WI; Sandys from NJ (#4159); Bronsnahan (#8709) and Perrys (#5031) from CT; and Howarths (#6490) from MD.

We exchanged ideas, visited trailers with our own mini "Open House," went to outlets, visited the

Dover Air Force Museum, had dinner around the campfire on Friday and Saturday nights followed by evening fellowship around the campfire each night.

For four of the nine families, this was their first vintage outing. All attendees thought that this was an enjoyable and relaxing way of getting to know each other as well as being able to meet other members who have been unable to attend the WBCCI International Rally.

Realize that these VAC "Gatherings" are open to all VAC members whether they be Friends subscribers, Associates or full members. The Gathering concept is more informal than that of Rallies. It is more of a meet your VAC neighbors and friends than actual planned events, however as all the attendees can attest, they stayed busy while enjoying a relaxed atmosphere.

Rumor has it that we have found a volunteer to host the Second Annual East Coast Vintage Gathering about the same time in 1999 at a location in the southeast. This concept of VAC Gatherings can be done throughout the country, Canada and Mexico so please consider volunteering to host other such events.

Thanks to all who attended, keep those wheels a rollin'!

Don Perry, #5031
Tom Howarth, #6490

39th Annual Hobo Rally

Hello Vintage Airstream Club Members. The 1999 WBCCI Hobo Rally is scheduled for Blythe, CA during the week of February 8-14, 1999. This year the VAC has arranged for special parking for Vintage Trailers. The selected spaces are next to the main auditorium and close to restrooms and showers. Additionally, there will be water and electric for each space.

The Hobo Rally is one of the premier National WBCCI Rallies held

each year. The food is always good, just wait until you taste the hobo stew, and this year Rick Sharp (#2921), 2nd VP of Region 12, has lined up some great entertainment. The weather that time of year in Blythe is typically warm and sunny although it has been known to rain a day or two just to make things interesting. Surprisingly the area around Blythe also offers lots to see and do. There is the huge Quartzite swap meet, rock and mineral show, the casinos and shows in Laughlin, NV, the London Bridge in Lake Havasu, fishing and water sports on the Colorado River, the General Patton Museum, Joshua Trees National Monument Park and Anza Borrego Park.

Fees for the Rally are \$110 for two and \$82 for one if you registered before January 1, 1999. After January 1, the fee is \$115 and \$87, respectively. It is my understanding that the fees will also be discounted if you are not able to attend all seven days of the rally.

This is really the first opportunity for Vintage Airstream Members to get together as a group on the west coast. So how about dusting off that beloved old trailer and coming to the Hobo Rally?

For more information on registering look at the Vintage Airstream Club Website (<http://www.vac.airstream.net>) or look in the October and November 1998 issues of the Blue Beret for the Hobo Rally Coupon (be sure to note that you are a Vintage Club member on the coupon). There is also a coupon in this issue of the **Vintage Advantage** Newsletter although it is past the January 1 discount period. You can also register when you arrive at the rally.

If you have friends that belong to the Vintage Club, please pass the word along to them about the Hobo Rally. For more information please contact me at tereed@pacbell.net or 909-735-3920. It will also be helpful if you let me know if you wish to park with the Vintage group so that I have enough spaces.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the 39th Annual Hobo Rally and the 1st West Coast Vintage Airstream Club Rally.

Tom Reed, #10283
1st Vice President, VAC



Wagon Wheels '99 Vintage Caravan

We made an announcement during the annual meeting in Huntsville, that there would be a Vintage caravan prior to the 1999 International Rally in OH. At that time we had hopes an experienced leader would volunteer but that did not happen so Ellen and I will do our best to show you some interesting parts of our state. Ohio, of course, does not have the natural beauty found in South Dakota or Idaho but we will do our best to display some very interesting places.

We plan to begin the caravan Wednesday June 16, in the northern part of the state and visit one of the Lake Erie Islands, a nuclear power plant and tour a winery. We will then move to Amish country and camp in a pasture (weather permitting) where we will shop at Lehman's country store. The next move will take us to view the works of one of the nations master carvers before moving to Rosco Village, where we will ride a canal boat and tour the village. Our final move will take us to the Pre-Rally in Springfield for our parade into the rally grounds on Friday June 24, giving us 9 nights and 10 days to see some of the sights Ohio has to offer.

If you plan to bring children or are young at heart, come early and visit Cedar Point, one of the nation's premier amusement parks. Let me know and I'll send you details.

As in past Vintage caravans, there will be a limit of 25 Vintage trailers. Because there will be some difficult maneuvering involved, if your trailer

**39th Annual Hobo Rally
Colorado River County Fairgrounds
Blythe, California
February 8 - 14, 1999**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

WBCCI # _____ Unit _____

In Party _____ Handicapped? _____

Wheelchair? _____

Year of Trailer _____ Length _____

Rally Fee : Airstream with two adults \$115
Airstream with one adult \$87; Guest \$28
FEES WILL BE DISCOUNTED \$5.00 per
unit if mailed before January 1, 1999

Make checks payable to:
Region 12 WBCCI
Mail to: Betty Conner, 13401 Roberta
Circle, Garden Grove, Ca 92843

For additional information contact:
Tom Reed at 909-735-3920 or e-mail:
tereed@pacbell.net

is longer than 25 feet, please call me before you send in your money. We will be camping without hookups as was done during Wally's caravans but will not go more than four days without visiting a dump station.

Our caravan fee is \$250 to include two Vintage Caravaners. Subtract \$75 for singles but add \$75 for each additional person (let me know if they are under 12). Send a deposit or the full amount to Clyde Wagner, 4105 Fenn Road, Medina, OH 44256. Any questions? Just call 330/725-0784 or e-mail at clydewag@bright.net.

Clyde Wagner, #8441
Wagon Wheels '99 Caravan
Wagon Master

VAC WEBMASTER REPORT

*Airstream.Net - The Vintage
Airstream Club Website*

On Valentine's Day 1998, I put a simple little website on the Internet called "The Airstream Archive," which was little more than a collection of historic Airstream photographs that the Airstream Company had supplied me with as supporting materials for a magazine article. I figured that the photographs were better off on the Internet than gathering dust in my files. What a surprise I got when the visitors started rolling in, signing the guest book, and sending complimentary emails. Flushed with enthusiasm for this popular little website, I added more features and services and gave it a push.

It was quite an honor to be invited by the Vintage Airstream Club to become involved in the running of their website, and an invitation that I did not have to contemplate for long before accepting. Rather than run my

site and the VAC site side by side, effectively competing with each other with duplicate content, it made more sense to merge them, thereby creating the new expanded site now commonly known as Airstream.Net.

Together we have a lot of complementary content. A popular starting point of interest is the single biggest repository of historical Airstream photographs on the internet. Secondly, the site is home to the largest and *friendliest* email based discussion group on the net. The group comprises a large number of experienced and new Airstreamers alike, who freely share information, tips, advice and banter. The viewer is assured of a warm welcome when they decide to drop in on the group.

The website also carries a popular and effective classified advertisements section where you can buy or sell your Airstream or seek out the obscure parts you need. Because of the nature of the Internet, the VAC website classified ads is typically more timely when one is searching or selling an Airstream trailer.

A viewer can pose questions to the VAC gurus on the Question and Answer Forum, and receive timely and informed advice. They can register for rallies, search out books and films, and keep up to date with VAC announcements. You can use the site as a jumping off point for finding and exploring most of the other sources of Airstream information on the internet.

VAC members will also appreciate the ability to change their existing email address to one that features the format of name@airstream.net. This is done by hyperlinking a mail forwarding to your existing service in a "mirror" fashion. This will provide the VAC member with an email address that is easy to remember and can go with you where ever you go, no matter how many times you change your Internet access provider.

If you have not already, please do stop by the VAC website and discover the amazing on-line

Airstreamers network. You can visit the VAC website at:

www.vac.airstream.net

Ewan McDonell
VAC Webmaster
Ewan@airstream.net

VAC MEMBERSHIP REPORT

To understand the levels of VAC membership and subscribers, the following classifications are provided.

Member: Members of the Wally Byam Caravan Club International (WBCCI) who own a vintage Airstream trailer (where a vintage trailer is defined as an Airstream trailer 25 years old or older). This is the dues paying, voting membership. A VAC member may hold office or be appointed to a position.

Associate: WBCCI members who do not qualify by owning a vintage Airstream trailer but wish for mutually beneficial reasons to belong. Associate members pay dues, vote and have all the benefits of a regular member, except that they may not be elected to office or park their trailer in the Vintage area at the annual WBCCI International Rally. A VAC associate may be appointed to a position.

Honorary Member: Membership bestowed upon VAC benefactors provided that they are WBCCI members. This is non-dues paying and a nonvoting membership.

Friend: Any person 18 years or older who has an interest in vintage Airstream trailers and wishes to receive the VAC newsletter (**Vintage Advantage**). Trailer ownership is not a requirement. This category is for non-WBCCI members who want a subscription to the newsletter only. It is the hope of the VAC that the Friends subscribers will be introduced to the WBCCI through the VA and then join the WBCCI such that they may be full VAC members.

Since the Fall 1998 issue of the **Vintage Advantage**, we have welcomed in 68 VACers. New Members (28), Associate Members (3) and Friend subscribers (37). Our total membership, as of November 30, 1998, is 1,181 including 659 Members, 61 Associate Members, and 461 Friend subscribers.

Interest in the VAC appears to be remaining at a high level when considering the increasing membership as an indicator of that interest.

NOTICE #1: The V A newsletter will NOT be forwarded by the US Postal Service so that we (VAC) do not know if a subscriber is receiving their newsletter. To ensure that you will continue to receive the VA, please notify me of any address changes at:

Dr. Richard Mumma
670 Plantation Drive
Titusville, FL 32780

407.269.8209
RDMumma@aol.com

NOTICE #2: Please be advised that if your address label is identified as (Jul98), you will be dropped as a VAC Member or Friend after this issue. To reinstate your VAC membership, send your \$10 dues (to the order of "The Vintage Airstream Club") to me at the above address.

Dick Mumma, #04333
VAC Membership Chairman

VAC TREASURER REPORT

For the reporting period of 7/01/98 to 11/30/98, the VAC financial status is as follows:

Beginning:	\$9,173.79
Income	\$3,263.00
Expenses	<\$3,087.02>

Ending Balance: \$9,349.77

Patrick Ewing, #3625
VAC Treasurer

WORLD'S LIGHTEST, FASTEST, EASIEST TOWING 16, 19, 22 and 28 ft. TRAILERCOACHES

AIRSTREAM LINERS

NOW AVAILABLE IN 4 SIZES

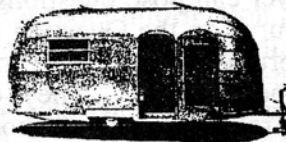
"A Size and Floor Plan to Suit You"



"DOUG" TOWED THIS ONE ON HIS TRICYCLE.

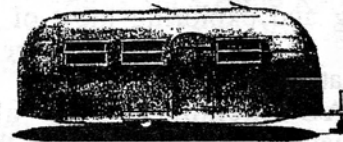


AIRSTREAM'S baby model—the "WEE WIND" (just a little wind). Body length 14 feet, 16 ft., overall. Weight right at 1200 lbs. completely furnished. Overall height 8 ft. 1 in., width 7 ft., inside head room 6 ft. 3 in. Weight on the hitch approximately 88 lbs. (Three floor plans, sleeping two, three, or four persons.) Note the screen door. Panel fits into the door and is doubly sealed against dust, cold, and rain. Truly, the EASIEST TOWING trailercoach ever built! Price \$1495.00*



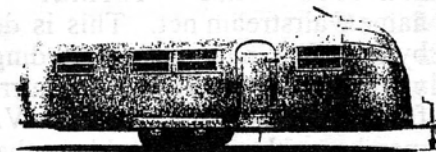
AIRSTREAM'S latest creation—body length 17 ft., 18 ft. overall. Weight right at 1500 lbs., completely furnished. (Tires floor plans sleeping two, three, or four persons.) Overall height 8 ft. 2 in., width 7 ft., inside head room 6 ft. 3 in. Weight on the hitch approximately 100 lbs.

This new model was especially designed because of the huge demand for a size between the popular 22 footer and the "WEE WIND" model. Remember the three bears? "THERE'S ONE IS JUST RIGHT!" This coach embodies all the features for livability and is without doubt the easiest towing trailer ANYWHERE near its class. (Standard model) price \$1995.00. Deluxe model (brakes included) \$2135.00.*



AIRSTREAM'S ever popular 22 footer. Body length 22 ft., overall. Weight right at 1800 lbs. completely furnished. Overall height 8 ft. 2 in., width 7 ft., inside head room 6 ft. 3 in. Weight on the hitch approximately 125 lbs. (Note awning rail.)

Seven floor plans to choose from in this popular size. Sleeps two to five. Six standard models to price \$2495.00. Electric refrigeration \$135.00 additional in the "Seabreeze" model. (Note the door with panel closed. This door fits snugly and is also dust, cold, and water tight.)



You will be absolutely ASTOUNDED how easy this 28 footer tows. THERE'S JUST NOTHING LIKE IT! AND you can have it furnished the way you want it... as many beds as you need... toilet, shower, electric refrigeration, oil heater, hot water heater, four or more clothes closets, roof lockers, chest of drawers, etc., etc. Oh yes, and a lot of "gadgets," too. And of course you can see clear through the trailer from your car rear sight mirror—another brother. "That's stuppin'." Price \$3995.00.

Because all Airstream Liners are built in the typical and genuine aircraft type of construction they cost more to build—but this cost is more than offset by their long life and low upkeep. Never needs paint, exceptionally well insulated for life.

REMEMBER—all Airstream Liners are fire-resistant but should the occasion arise, the front and rear windows act as emergency exits. (On all models.) To prove that you do not need overload springs on your car when towing an Airstream Liner, stand on the rear bumper of your car—notice how little the car goes down—it will go down even less when hitched to an "Airstream Liner—REGARDLESS of whether it is the 16, 19, 22, or 28 ft. model.

Airstream Liners are so easy to hitch to your car: even a child can do it.

Mr. Wally Byam, the Airstream manufacturer, and Cornelius Vanderbilt are now touring Europe in an Airstream Liner. Their interesting and exciting trip will be chronicled in leading newspapers and magazines in the near future.

*Prices quoted include federal excise taxes. All prices f.o.b. Glendale, California—Transportation is not included. (All prices and specifications are subject to change without notice.)

AIRSTREAM'S "Super Duper" liner, the "WHIRLWIND"—body length 26 ft., 28 ft. overall. Weight right at 2900 lbs. completely furnished. Overall height 8 ft. 5 in., width 7 ft., inside head room 6 ft. 3 in. Weight on the hitch will run between 125 lbs. and 140 lbs. Just think of that! This model has two doors—one on either side, or both on the same side.



WRITE FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION

VACers In the News I: Paul Nelson (#9422)

The following partially reprinted article is from the Wednesday, October 14, 1998 Lifestyles section of the Bozeman Daily Chronicle.



Paul Nelson peers out of his Airstream trailer that, besides providing years of recreation, has been immortalized by the Franklin Mint.

Franklin Mint immortalizes local man's 30-year-old travel trailer

Story by **Joan Haines**

Photography by **Deirdre Eitel** of the Chronicle

A Bozeman man's 30-year-old Airstream trailer has been immortalized forever. Paul Nelson, a former music teacher at Bozeman Junior High School (now Chief Joseph) believes he's the only person in the United States who can make that statement.

A scale model of Nelson's vintage trailer has been cast in aluminum by the Franklin Mint. People can order a miniature replica from Franklin Mint Precision Models that looks as though it should be parked next to a doll house.

"Three people spent three days pawing over this thing, measuring it, photographing it and making scale drawings," Nelson said last week, gesturing toward the full-size Airstream near his home.

Nelson's scale Airstream, on display in his living room, is authentic down to the last detail. Look closely and you can see the three-burner stove, two single beds, a double sink and curtains on the window.

The replica has many moving parts. Refrigerator doors open. The wheels turn. The outside awning goes up and down.

After the trailer models were finished and went on sale two years ago, Franklin Mint officials gave Nelson 10 of them.

"My relatives have a lot of Airstreams," Nelson said.

His life-size Airstream was bought nine years ago for a practical purpose, and it continues to serve a purposeful existence.

He lives in it when he's on the road.

Nelson bought his immortal Airstream in 1989 because he wanted to join the Wally Byam Caravan Club International. To become part of the group, which holds annual conventions and embarks on many trips, Airstream ownership is a must.

It isn't surprising to Mike Alexander, who sells recreational vehicles at Big Sky RV, that an Airstream made in 1968 can still hit the road.

They're held together with sturdy rivets, Alexander said.

"Airstreams are one of the finest travel trailers built," he said.

"They're supposed to pull real easy. They're built the same today as in the past."

The large international Airstream gatherings may be familiar to Bozeman residents who have seen thousands of Airstreams parked near Montana State University during international conventions in past years.

His Airstream is big — 30 feet long by seven feet wide and made of airplane-grade aluminum.

"When you start living in it, it

doesn't seem so big," Nelson said. He recently resided there for a month during a convention in Boise.

A Florida man, Bud Cooper, started a vintage club for Airstreams and Nelson joined it. When Franklin Mint workers called Cooper looking for owners of vintage Airstreams, Nelson's name was one of those mentioned.

He wasn't the first person called, but he was the first person who gave his permission to have a replica made. Nelson retired six years ago after teaching music to seventh and eighth graders for 22 years at Bozeman Junior High.

The Franklin Mint, with headquarters in Franklin Center, Pa., advertises precision replicas. Recently the business advertised a model of a 1907 Harley-Davidson to commemorate Harley's 90th anniversary. "Now the legend can be yours," the ad says.

Another ad pictured a drawing of Dracula and touted a "monster movie collector knife accented in 24-karat gold which folds into a coffin decorated with bats."

The metal of Nelson's Airstream was tough enough to withstand pock marks when a bad hailstorm hit during a international Wally Byam gathering in Bismarck, N.D., six years ago.

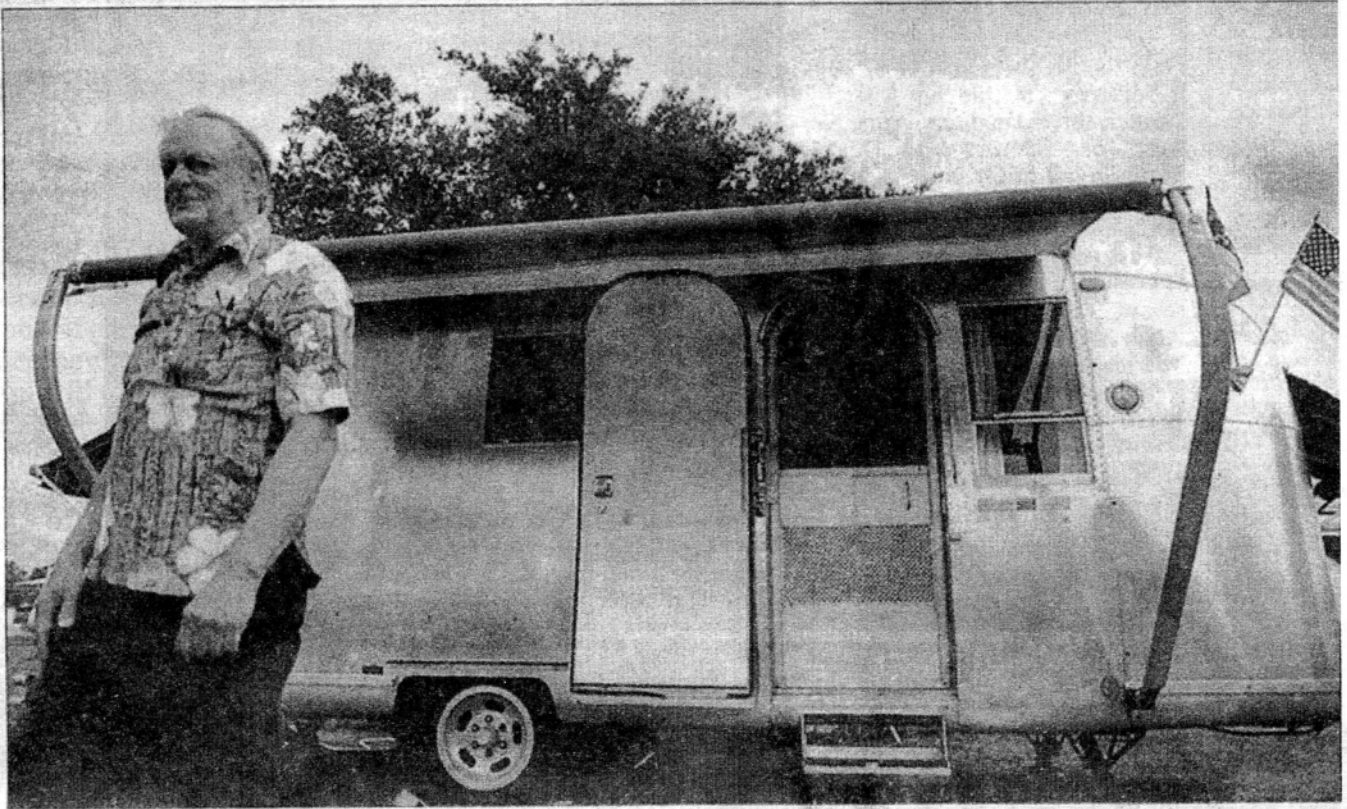
"The newer trailers were damaged," Nelson said.

VACers In the News II:

Charles Pildis (#14813)

The following partially reprinted article is from the Saturday, May 16, 1998 Local & Regional section (Section C) of *The Sun News* (Myrtle Beach, SC). An accompanying article ("Sleek trailers spur friendships") discussed the WBCCI and the Region 3 Rally last spring at the Ocean Lakes Family Campground in Myrtle Beach, SC.

All around in an Airstream



Photos by Janet Blackmon Morgan/The Sun News

Above: Charles Pildis of Cullowhee, N.C., is at Ocean Lakes Family Campground for the gathering of owners of Airstream recreational vehicles. Pildis bought his 1965 vintage model for \$1,000.



COOP'S CORNER

Our First Restoration -

Things were different back in 1989, nobody restored Airstreams; the trailers were simply passed from hand to hand until they could no longer be moved. At about that time, Bettye and I found ourselves temporarily without a trailer. A dealer in McAllen, TX was advertising a 1962 Airstream. All gas appliances were missing, dented or weathered, we bought it for a song. Our plan was to get it's systems functioning, then we

would have a bottom-rung trailer for carefree trips to Mexico. What we failed to consider was our own penchant for perfection. A crude trailer just isn't fun. First one thing, then another had to be fixed. This continued for two full years.

We used this, our only trailer, for Region 4 events. To their credit, these lovely democratic people never complained when we showed up with our wretched, weathered old Safari. We were never treated as outcasts, however,

one could occasionally detect a withholding of full approval. We encouraged visits. As the trailer got better and better, we think we identified five stages:

1) Entering and examining the trailer in complete silence. Finally, "My, the trailers were simple in those days, weren't they?"

2) With condescension, like a visit from your case-worker. One felt that they were thinking "Too bad, fairly nice people, and for whatever reason reduced to this. Surprisingly clean, though. I feel sorry for them".

3) Acceptance and curiosity. "Say, it's not bad in here. You say you are restoring it? Guess I never heard of that before, but it's going to be nice."

4) Enthusiasm and admiration. "Say, this is just great. The shiny outside is beautiful, how long does that take? 140 hours? Wow!"

5) Pride. "Excuse us, please. Would it be all right if our friends looked in too? We remember when these folks first showed up with this vintage trailer. It wasn't beautiful like this back then."



Personal -

To the person who gave me dues money at International, I turned it in to the treasurer, but since you don't fill in your name, you won't get credit for it. Sorry.



Avion History -

Since Avion was the most successful of the Airstream look-alikes, there have been frequent questions about its origins. The following is condensed from a history written by Chris Barr and Arvene Nelson of the Avion Travelcade Club, Ray Mandes brought it to my attention.

In the early 1950's, a dedicated camper and trailerite had a dream. Loren Cayo wanted a recreational vehicle that could be used with full hook-ups, or be self contained. He couldn't buy what he wanted so he built it.

In 1955, the Avion Coach

Corporation was formed in Benton Harbor, MI. Loren Cayo was already highly successful in the metal fabricating business along with partners Allen Grams and Larry Zuhl who were contractors. All three were dedicated campers. Allen Grams served as president for several years. The corporation grew and prospered.

Loren Cayo emerged as the major owner of the corporation until his death in 1967. Robert Cayo succeeded him. In 1970, the controlling interest in the Avion Coach Corporation was sold to Legan Enterprises. In 1976, Legan Enterprises sold Avion to Fleetwood Enterprises of Riverside, CA who's RV building experience dates back to 1951. Production continues under their banner. Today all resemblance to Airstream has vanished.

In June of 1959, a caravan of 8 units toured Alaska. During 1960, there were some attempts to organize a club of Avion owners. On January 20, 1961, the Avion Travelcade Club was officially organized at its first National Rendezvous in Moore Haven, FL. At the top is a group of International officers. In 1996 there were 34 units. Most units consist of one state, and its activities are administered by a President. Each unit has a Spring and Fall rally. On the International level, a Winter, Summer, and Fall rendezvous are held each year.

There are also 12 Regions with governors. There is a national paper called the Avion Travelcade News, and most units publish a newsletter. There is no Avion vintage club.

This history reveals no apparent connection between Airstream and Avion. One remaining member of the Cayo family recently refused to be interviewed.

Noland Vogt (#447), A Profile

The name is familiar to you as the man who maintains all of the VAC old manuals, newsletters and such, and will sell you a copy of anything for a very reasonable price. Not a high profile person, he has done his job quietly and efficiently. Few of us actually knew the man nor his charming wife Barbara. They hail from Woodside, CA.

That all changed at Boise where they showed up with a prize winning Bambi (details covered in the last issue of the VA) but we also got to meet the exceptional owners.

Nolan was, in his former life, a design engineer, and his trailer has offered him a variety of opportunities to show off his ability to conceive and execute solutions to problems. A rare stand-up air conditioner, hidden in a closet, was the neatest solution to air conditioning a Bambi that I have ever seen. Nothing showed from the outside, and the invasion of space was minimal.

All 16' Bambis need a table for eating. The original factory solution was a loose table which folded for storage. While this technically solved the dining problem, it left some things to be desired. For example, the owner had to decide how the folded table could be stored for transport. Then, there was the nuisance of manipulating the table several times each day. Nolan solved this problem by providing a table which stores by being folded up against the closet near the door. Multi-pivoted, it unfolds neatly to address the davenport across the isle, thus providing eating for two with satisfactory rigidity and zip-zip speed. Not only was the idea well thought out, but the execution was superb. There was no "hardware-store" look and no edges of plywood showing. Instead, one saw plastic parts looking like just-out-of-the-mold, and wood

contrasted with chrome plated surfaces.

The Vogts have both a '78 and a '74 Argosy motor home. Noland is currently working on the '74.

As many of you are aware, Noland has agreed to accept a position in line for VAC Presidency.

✱
Burt C. Byam Urges Support for Helen Byam Schwamborn

Let me tell you about all these Byam names. First, Burt Byam (#1621) is a living and breathing relative (fourth cousin) to Wally. He is also an expert on the life of Wally and a personal friend of mine. He is one of the "good guys".

Helen Byam Schwamborn (#2) is a first cousin to Wally, and worked with him at Airstream where she ran the caravan office among other duties.

Elkhart, IN is the home of the RV/MH Heritage Foundation and Hall of Fame. This place houses a museum, a library, and a collection of historic RV's. It is also the focal point of the RV Hall of Fame. Wally Byam is already a Hall-of-Fame member. Helen could and should be listed now as a LIVING member of the Hall-of-Fame, and I am asking you to write a letter saying that you think so too. Consider the following:

Helen, working for Wally, assembled a list of trailer owners who were interested in caravanning and in June 1954 wrote and distributed the first Caravanner magazine. In 1955, she led the Eastern Canada caravan. It was on this caravan, with Helen's urging, that the Caravan Club was organized. This started the wave of activity culminating into WBCCI the same year. For years Helen wrote the caravanner magazine which was sent to all members, and was further distributed by Airstream dealers. Later, she edited the Blue Beret.

She was Executive Secretary under Art Costello and served on

the Airstream board of directors. She retired in 1979.

Send a letter today supporting her nomination to the RV/MH Hall-of-Fame at the following:

RV/MH Heritage Foundation, Inc
801 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46516

✱
Region 9 Rally Features VAC Activities -

Great food, good location, Concours, open house, prizes, R & R, laughter. All of the above will be featured at the Region 9 rally, the oldest region rally to offer continuous VAC activities. If you have never attended such a rally, or if you do not belong to WBCCI, this would be an ideal time to break the ice. Non-WBCCI members get VIP treatment. Come see.

Hosted by Bettye and Bud Cooper, it is expected to attract vintage Airstreamers from surrounding states as well as the usual winter Texans. Featured during the open house will be a partially restored 1948 Airstream, an example of the model which was engineered by Curtiss-Wright. An engineer will be on hand to explain its novel design.

There will be an all new talk based on Wally Byam's first caravan with many of its humorous and tragic aspects. Thought provoking.

This rally has a tradition of good food. Covered in your rally fee will be a number of catered meals making a big hit with the ladies who are freed temporarily from household chores and it gives everyone a chance to socialize and meet a select group of Texans and Oklahomans. You will enjoy all the benefits of a good region rally with Vintage parking and a VAC program.

Wichita Falls, TX, March 22-28, 1999. See coupon in **Blue Beret**, or send \$120 to R. Bradford (#4680), 200 Walnut Hill Avenue, Hillsboro, TX 76645.

Frame Separation, One More Final Word -

I was reminded by Rick Davis (#1602) that there were at least two other methods used to draw the frame up to meet the body in the rear. (See article in the Spring 1998 issue of the **V i n t a g e Advantage**). They were:

- 1) A steel cable, say 1/8", was connected to the frame on both sides at the rear. This was run up and over the rain gutter of the rear window. A turn buckle took up the slack, drawing the frame up to meet the body.
- 2) A heavy steel bracket was bolted to the frame rails where they emerge from under the trailer in the rear. Just above this point, the aluminum body shell was reinforced by riveting on a heavy gage aluminum plate. This plate was say 1/16" thick and half circular in shape, about 15" long. It was finished in a way so as to not appear ugly, and was attached with about eight 3/16" rivets. With a steel angle bracket bolted to the aluminum, the frame and body could be drawn together with a bolt.

I will resist the urge to comment.

✱
Vintage Flags -

You may order a 2' by 3' Vintage flag for \$20. Send a check to:

Dan and Julie Kelner (#7398)
11087 Ogle Road
Poulsbo, WA 98370

Make checks payable to: Dan Kelner.

Rutherford L. Cooper, #26019



Rig of the month

by William P. Pence

PICKING up the Riviera at Buick's Flint, Michigan plant meant that the long drive back to the writer's Salisbury, North Carolina home would be an excellent way to break in the new sport coupe tow car. My hometown dealer knocked off the transportation delivery charge on the car, some \$112, so using this for travel expense, I flew up from nearby Charlotte, eating my way to Chicago and across the lake to Flint where a white-frosted Buick representative kindly escorted me from the airport to the customer drive-out building.

Soon I was standing beside the new tow vehicle admiring its graceful lines and immaculate details for motoring luxury and comfort. The Riviera Gran Sport comes standard as nearly ready to pull travel trailers as any car on the market. With 430-CID, 360-hp engine, heavy-duty cooling, heavy-duty suspension, 3.42 to 1 axle ratio, and several other features including positive traction, the car had been carefully ordered with extras including custom seats, 225R15 radial ply tires, and disc front-end brakes.

To the FM-AM radio I added a cigarette-package-size transistor short-wave device designed for me by Scientific Associates, a little trick to bring in the Nation's correct time station WWV

direct from Ft. Collins, Colorado, the armed forces radio and television network station, a favorite international missionary broadcast station from Quito, Ecuador, the BBC and other interesting stations on the 15 meter band, playing through the car's regular speakers. A small tape recorder, Norelco's 150 cassette portable, plays "live" tapes I've recorded, or pre-recorded monaural or stereo cassette tapes newly available from houses like Lafayette Radio Electronics. This unit, too, plays through the car's radio system, or inside the travel trailer or on a picnic bench as the user prefers.

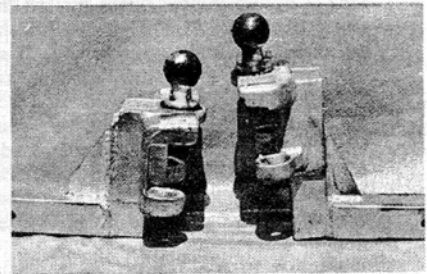
Meanwhile, back at the plant, quick paper work allows me to head toward the Ohio Turnpike in short time, and next day I stop in Virginia to allow, by appointment, a small travel-trailer dealer to put on a Reese frame hitch, minus the hitch head. After all, the trailer sat in the driveway back in Salisbury.

A grinding noise in the car's rear axle worried the life out of me driving home from Virginia, causing me to wire the factory and waste some time investigating the trouble, but assurances from Flint set me at ease, and weeks later my dealer installed a kit of shims, taking out excess play in the axle, and

completely eliminating the friction sound. No sweat.

Slipping the old hitch head, taken off an older tow car, into the new hitch, I coupled on the 26-foot Airstream International and went out Interstate 85 toward Charlotte for a test run. Man, what a washboard ride! I paid little attention to the slight forward tilt of the trailer and the somewhat up position of the car hood. To tell you the truth, the car's rakish lines made it difficult for me to judge its level, and I was careless about careful attention to details like putting the yardstick to the car's front and back bumpers.

Believe me, friend, I was smitten by the Riviera's new Cruise Control feature and, setting my speed on a legal digit, I was cooing over the nice details



New hitch on right shows 5-degree tilt toward trailer plus added height

GRIFFIN'S TRAILER NEWS

of this outfit, and not giving much thought to the rather rough ride down the pike. Maybe the water tank in the trailer is low, I thought. Perhaps it is the shorter wheelbase of this personal-size coupe. After all, it is six inches shorter in wheelbase than the older sedan, and nine inches shorter overall than the Buick Electra, so maybe one must expect it to ride a bit stiffer.

Well, my co-pilot/wife, Evy, trailered to Florida twice with me using the new Riv, and had little praise for the new combination. She gladly let me take my 79-year-old mother west to the HemisFair at San Antonio, towing with the Riviera. She said little when I struck out for Myrtle Beach with the rig, for a troublesome spine bothered her while riding anyway, and there is Ken, 17, still in high school, touching base at home between meals.

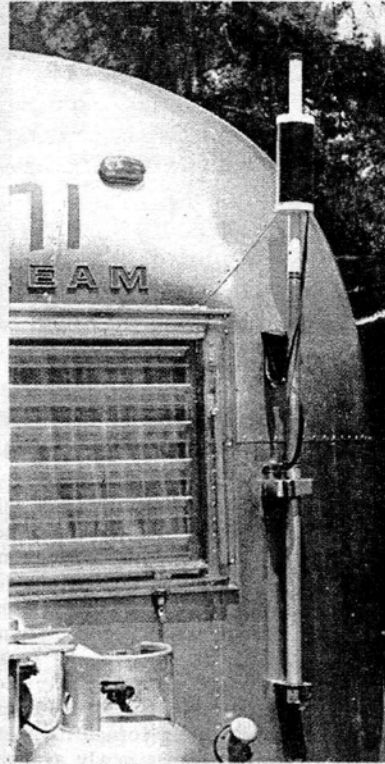
Buckling down to the problem of improving the car and trailer ride, I first stopped in Bennettsville, South Carolina at the Davis tire agency on Hwy. 9 bypass and let Manager Quick direct installation of new Airstream shocks I had previously ordered from the trailer plant. The old ones were in bad shape. One leaked oil. Others were "frozen" or very stiff. Then Mr. Quick recommended balancing the trailer wheels. "Tell you what," he ventured, "if they prove to need lead, I'll charge you a buck and a half for that wheel. If they do not there will be no charge." Gee, that fellow added eleven ounces of lead to balance one tandem wheel, five to six ounces for others, no charge for one wheel.

Sure enough, the trailer towed more easily. My ego rose with the miles, and it was not until W. R. Deans of Rocky Mount and Raleigh, North Carolina deflated me that I realized I was finally getting to the meat of the coconut—a level car and trailer. This experienced travel-trailer dealer wasted no time on introductions. "Friend, you've got a nice car and trailer, but your hitch head is too low. You are not getting the full benefit of your hitch's capacity to properly distribute trailer weight on your car's frame." I stood at the office door of his Wally Byam store and park, and looked across the pavement toward that sweet package. Maybe this fellow has an angle, I thought suspiciously. "I see your problem every day," Deans said brusquely but not unkindly. "Folks from the North come through on our route U.S. 301 past our door, heavily loaded for their Florida stay, and their cars are down in back and the trailer fronts are low. There seems to be little attention to a level hitch."

"Well," I admitted cautiously, "wife Evy says this car rides pretty rough." I explained the hitch head was off the

family sedan, and it seemed to strain the stabilizer bars when I hitched them in a high link. To conclude briefly, Mr. Deans sold me a properly designed hitch head, tilted the proper degree toward the trailer, and the first mile convinced me the car was riding smoother, the bumps passed easily, and humming home I said to myself, "O! boy, now you're using your head!"

Next thing I knew, we were taking trips to "get away from it all," but wanted good TV reception, too . . . without a lot of fuss.



"Signal Orbitor" in travel position

I finally came up with the Bug Catcher travel-trailer aerial. This new solid state television and radio antenna is designed to receive color and black-and-white TV, both VHF-UHF, and AM-FM/FM-stereo frequencies. Called the "Signal Orbitor," it's barely larger than Maggie's rolling pin, no trouble to raise and lower on the writer's trailer, and sure eliminates flapping metal rods that can rattle around on your rig's roof when the wind bloweth . . . and the wind do bloweth, from California to Maine!

Our original trailer antenna was probably designed for medium to long distance, sharp picture reception, sometimes very far from the transmitter. We even had a handy inside rotor. Nonetheless, you must unlatch, unfold and raise your present antenna to its normal

height, tighten clamps firmly to keep sections from coming loose and slumping down on your castle's metal lid during night breezes. People inside your rig turn on the TV and yell, "Turn it, that's it, more, m-o-r-e, whoa, back, b-a-c-k," and words like that while you manfully twist and point the thing toward one station.

Not so with the "Signal Orbitor" or the Bug Catcher, as affectionately renamed by a trailerist friend. With this nineteen-inch-tall, non-corrosive gem atop your rolling pad, you may find yourself getting as many networks and programs as you formerly did with your original antenna, and you may do even better across the dial, for this radar-like device receives programs within an estimated 40-70 miles from ALL directions *without rotating*, provided you don't live in Flatonia, Texas. In Flatonia you'd better forget about this or any other trailer antenna. Better roll over and catch some Z-z-z's!

The "Signal Orbitor" retails around \$13.95, give or take a buck, and is made by UniScience Laboratories, Inc., P.O. Box 661, Lewisburg, Ohio 45338. If you live closer, write Miss Joan McCoy, Automotive Wholesalers, P.O. Box 576, Yadkinville, North Carolina 27055. Joan tells us she is receiving orders for this new item from all across the country. Might pay you to ask Joan for the firm's free 1968-69 catalog. This wholesale dealer handles quality travel trailer parts and supplies.

Mounting the "Signal Orbitor" on your rig may take a bit of experimenting for best results. Study the accompanying photograph closely. You may find you will need to remove only one section of your TV mast and insert the hard, durable plastic-like bottom arm into your mast's hollow top. The fit should be snug and reclamped. Don't be afraid to clip your flat lead-in line to the trailer. Determine how much line from the new antenna you wish to leave. Cut. Bare a half-inch, both new and old line, connect, twist neatly in parallel and wrap securely with plastic tape. Roll up surplus line on your palm when your "Signal Orbitor" is in travel position, and cover with the odd-shaped mount provided, wedging same between antenna and trailer. It rides beautifully on our rig without even touching a clamp. If you want, cover the rolled up line with a small plastic bag, the open end pointed groundward.

Try it on a trip. See how reception averages out from location to location. You may not be a Benjamin Franklin, but nothing ventured, nothing gained!

We've got this rig just about the way we want it now, but if we come up with another improvement, I'll be sure to let you know!

How We Became Airstreamers

We like looking at campers and have owned different types over the years. We had a Coleman folding trailer that we towed behind a 1973 Volkswagen camper bus. We had sold our motorhome to get the Coleman, but that is another story. While browsing at a flea market, we spotted an Argosy travel trailer on an RV lot that backed up to the flea market. Since we had never seen one, we went over to the lot to check it out. The trailer was a 1976 24' Argosy in well-used condition. We told the salesman we were just looking and he pretty much left us alone to figure out all the workings of this unit. He appeared to know less about these trailers than we did.

In our inspection we were impressed at the lay out and the way the windows opened. After about 45 minutes of discovering how everything worked we left but on the way home we talked about the trailer and how neat it was. It was really well used and dirty but the more we talked, the more we liked the overall design in spite of the current condition.

Over the next week we couldn't get this trailer out of our minds so we went back for a second look. The trailer was rougher and dirtier than we had noticed the first time so we did not look at it very long. Since we had just bought a new folding trailer the previous fall, and had used it only a couple of times, the thought of an old trailer wasn't of real interest to us, although we still loved the design.

A phone book search did not list a nearby Airstream dealer so I started looking on the Internet and discovered a dealer located 130 miles away. The next Saturday we drove to the dealership and got our first look at what an Airstream really was, or so we thought. The salesman I had talked to on the phone was busy so we looked at all the trailers they had. The new ones were very nice and we liked the layouts in them. They had only three used ones and each was well used accompanied by poor quality modifications. So we just got a brochure and headed home.

Since we liked what we had seen, we continued looking including spending hours on-line. My research showed that vintage Airstream trailers did not weigh as much as the new ones which got us thinking of the possibility of an older one in good condition.

We attended a VW Camping Rally in the Quad cities over Memorial Day weekend. Typical Memorial Day weekend in the Midwest as it rained most of the time, however we did notice that in the campground was an Airstream trailer. Vicky and I, being the shy ones, walked up to the door, knocked and told the lady that answered we were looking at Airstream trailers and would like to talk to someone that owned one. Well were we in for a pleasant surprise! The lady invited us

in and for the next hour we talked and learned about how they had become Airstreamers. Her husband was sleeping in the back and when he woke up we were introduced and talked some more. They told us about the WBCCI and showed us the **Blue Beret**. These were elderly people that live in their trailer full-time and have been doing this for over 20 years now. I think a most intriguing part of our brief encounter was the way they talked about where they were going after visiting with their daughter. This couple had traveled for over 20 years in their Airstream and still wanted to do more!

After talking about Airstreams all the way home, we started our search in earnest fashion once we arrived home. I continued spending hours on the Internet searching for trailers in the Midwest. We also talked with everyone we knew about our mission. The more we looked, the more frustrated we got. We looked at a 1969 trailer that a gentleman had just put new carpeting in. Nice trailer but not what we were looking for. There are not a lot of Airstreams for sale in northern IL.

On the 4th of July weekend we are camping at Rock Cut State Park which is a beautiful park located only 5 miles from our home. A camping friend with a folding trailer came with his parents and their 31' Prowler travel trailer. Their trailer only proved to us that we wanted an Airstream even more. We are sitting around the campfire when low and behold an Airstream pulls in. A comment is made that there is our trailer. We did let these people park before we ran, walked over and started talking to them. This couple was wired as they had just come from the International Rally in Huntsville. We were invited in and got the grand tour of their 1976 trailer. This is the trailer we wanted. We fell in love with the complete design of this unit. Furthermore, this trailer was clean and everything worked. This only got us more anxious to find a trailer.

Back to the Internet searching out ads and tracking out all the leads we could find. I finally located a 1976 31' Argosy in Racine, WI, which we went and looked at. It was gorgeous. After inspecting the trailer, we could not find a thing that needed fixing. The problem was the weight. About 2,000 pounds more than our old Caddy could pull. What a beautiful trailer though.

It was soon Labor Day weekend and we headed for St. Louis for another VW bus weekend. There is also an Airstream dealer located there but again, they only had 3 or 4 used units on the lot and each was a late model unit. We looked at the new ones to see if we were on the right track or not in looking for at vintage models. The new ones are very nice and the lay outs are good compared to other brands of trailers. However, the older ones still seemed to be more to our liking. On this trip we had taken the VW bus and left

the folding trailer at home. After two nights sleeping in a VW with temperatures in the 90's, we had had enough fun so we left and headed home a day early. On the drive home we talked about the 31' Argosy we had seen just before we left. It really was what we wanted but it still left questions.

Once home, I turned on the computer and read an email from a friend about a 27' Airstream in a Chicago paper. I called the number and the gentleman told me his story about the trailer. It sounded interesting so I asked if he would be home all evening. Now realize this was 7 pm on Labor Day and we had already driven over 300 miles returning from St. Louis earlier in the day. We live in Rockford about 130 miles away from this couples house in south Chicago.

I called the couple that had informed us about the trailer to see if they wanted to ride along. We picked them up on the way out of Rockford and soon found that I-90 was full of folks headed home from wherever. The trip through Chicago was bumper to bumper. I was so excited that the traffic really did not bother me. We finally arrived at the house around 10:30 and the trailer turns out to be as described. Not perfect, but in good condition and reasonably priced. Vicky and I talk and talk some more. The trailer is not in the condition of the Argosy but is shorter which means that this is an Airstream that our Caddy can tow. We decide this is it, leave a deposit and explain we will be back in a couple of weeks to pick it up.

The ride home was quiet as everyone slept but me. I was too wired to sleep as I really believed we had found "our" trailer. Little do we know what adventure lays ahead for us now, all we know is we are committed to getting this trailer and do not fully understand the scope of what is yet to come.

During the next two weeks, I have a hitch and brake unit installed on the Caddy. We have an old 1965 Fan trailer that has an Equalizer type hitch so I figured this will do to get the Airstream home. Finally, two weeks later we head south to get our dream. We leave real early and arrive at 9:00 am. The trailer looks as good as we remembered it to be. We pay for it and get it all hitched up and leveled out. The tires look good and the brakes work. *Most* of the lights work. I had mirrors to fit on the fenders but they didn't fit so I decide to stay off the interstate and get the feel of this set up first. This means mostly city traffic and wide roads to start out with. The trailer tows well but rearward visibility is poor. After 60 miles out we get onto the interstate and head home. We soon realize how big a load this trailer is for the old Caddy. We have the small V-8 so it slows down for the hills quite a bit. The trip home is slow but interesting. Got home with no problems and we are impressed with how nicely the trailer tows.

We live on a farm so when we get home we parked the trailer in the yard near the back door of the house.

Water and electric are closer this way. The couple that originally went with us, stop by for a full tour of our "new" vintage trailer.

The first thing we do is join WBCCI and prepare the trailer for winter. We figured out how most everything worked and decided the front sofa bed had to go. We started trying to design what we wanted the front living area to be. After our first **Blue Beret** arrived, we talked about attending the International Rally. We had no idea what one was like as we had only talked to two couples that had been to one. When our WBCCI membership book arrived, we looked up people in the Rockford area. Found one couple and called them. Terry and Sue Chestnut (#1262) told us about a local Unit and sent us their Unit newsletter. We stopped by their place and talked for a long time. They had the same excitement about Airstream trailers and the International Rally, so we decided to go to Idaho and see what the Rally is all about.

Now all we have to do is prepare for about 4,000 miles in a trailer we haven't even used yet. It is only November and we have lots of time to get ready, right? After sending a check for the rally preregistration, we start our planning. This is going to be a long winter and we finally decide on a design for the front area of the trailer. I start working on it. We have now moved the trailer around the back of the house where I have run a 30-amp outlet so that we can have power for the winter. We take out the green shag carpet and discover a small amount of bad wood by the front door. This is easily replaced and we opt for vinyl flooring instead of carpet. I build cabinets across the front, narrow the table, and install a desk. We order new curtains for the front living area.

Soon it is January now and we decide to visit our daughters in Colorado and Oregon, respectively, before we head to Boise this summer. This will have to be a fast trip as I can only get so much time off of work. With the round trip of 4,600 miles, we decide the old Caddy isn't up to pulling that far so we cancel the trip and start looking for a tow vehicle.

Anyone who has been through this before knows how much fun the process can be. After much looking and discussion, we decide on a GMC full size van. Used ones like we want do not exist so we decide on a new one. The only way to get what we want is to find a dealer that will order one for us. Not as easy as it sounds. Finally one salesman we talked with understood we were serious and placed our order.

The work on the trailer did not go as fast as planned. Items ordered came in slow. When the weather warmed up and we turned the water on there were leaks. I began to wonder if we would pull everything together in time to head for Boise.

The van came in May 12th and except for a color change, was as ordered. Plenty of time yet. Took two weeks to get it in for the wiring and brake controller.

The old Equalizer hitch would not work so we purchased a new one that was supposed to just bolt on. Yea right. Took the trailer to a dealer and had the brakes examined plus a new set of tires. Finally brought the trailer home on a Tuesday. We were planning to leave on Thursday evening after work and had not even taken this trailer out on a trial run yet.

I'm at work Thursday and in the late afternoon the clouds begin to roll in. The electricity goes out so they tell me to leave early. On the way home half of the traffic lights are out as this is a severe thunderstorm. Vicky was going to have the trailer loaded so we can leave as soon as I get home from work, however, with the power out she is real frustrated. I fire up the water heater in the trailer so she can take a shower. The clothes in the washer will just have to stay there. I finish loading the trailer and she runs to the store for some last minute items. When she gets home it is raining so hard she sits in the car for 20 minutes waiting for it to let up. This was horizontal rain with trees bending and anything not fastened down blowing away. Finally the rain lets up and we head out. On the way through town it is bad. Trees down, roofs blown off, traffic lights out and debris all about the road. About 30 miles out of Rockford the sky clears and for the rest of our trip the weather is fantastic.

I am wired and Vicky is ready to sleep. The plan is to drive straight through to Ft. Collins for a Friday afternoon arrival. Remember this is the first time out with this trailer. We must have lived right as the trip to Colorado is flawless. We used the WBCCI courtesy parking that we had heard about and this turned out great. We found our hosts home without trouble and discovered that they had left for Boise already. The hose and electric cord were out along with a note of apology they couldn't be there.

We then spend two days visiting with our daughter and then continued west to Oregon to visit another daughter and our first granddaughter. The trip to Oregon was trouble free and our choice of tow vehicle was working out great. Three days and it is time to head for Boise.

The drive to Boise was the shortest leg of our trip. We wondered how we would find where all the Airstreams would be as we had left the directions at home on the table. However, we soon discovered that this was not a problem as WBCCI signs led us directly to the Rally site. We pulled into the bullpen Friday about sunset. After parking, we walked around not believing we were really here.

When we walked into a tent and spotted a guy reading a **Blue Beret**, we figured he might be able to give us some information. Vicky and I introduced ourselves to a gentleman named Preston Pearson (#5502). We had no idea who he was at this point but when he found out that we had a vintage trailer it was suggested we park in back of this big tent when the

parkers got to us in the morning.

We continued walking around and looked up the couple at whose house we had stayed while in Colorado. This turned out to be real easy, only took about 15 minutes to find them in the mass of trailers. We were impressed with the organization and friendliness of everyone we met.

Saturday morning we were parked and still impressed with the efficiency of everything. We had electric and water hookups quickly and then discovered our first situation with the trailer, our water pump will not prime. I'm becoming frustrated when our neighbor offers us a ride downtown to get registered. Vicky went and I stayed to repair the water situation.

In the Fall 1998 edition of the **Vintage Advantage** (page 17, top photograph) you can see me in the lower right corner getting advice from a gentleman with a hat. The water problem turned out to be a clogged screen in the filter. Because the trailer had sat for about two years, all the traveling loosened up the sediment in the tank.

The rest of our time at the International Rally was wonderful. As we were told by many "You are only a first timer once." The people we met all made us feel at home and we look forward to next year in Dayton.

Yes we now feel we have become Airstreamers and continue to look forward to lots of adventure.

Dan & Vicky Kirkpatrick, #5168



Project Airstream

Timing is everything. For some years my wife, Maria, had become increasingly nostalgic about the happy family times that she experienced growing up camping in Yosemite National Park in her favorite uncle's little trailer. Her uncle had bought the trailer to live in temporarily with his new bride after returning from WWII while his house was being built. After they moved into their new home, her family would annually trek into Yosemite with the trailer. Years later, when her uncle passed away, she was disappointed to find the trailer had been sold to strangers.

Soon she started talking about procuring a travel trailer and camping. Now, we are both in our early 50's and I had no desire to tramp out to the wilderness or anywhere else and camp. I was past that or so I thought! My passion was restoring classic cars. I had restored a 1962 Corvette, joined a Corvette Club, and went on trips like a civilized person - to a hotel.

However, when my wife sets her mind on an idea she is the most determined person I know, and she knows how to get what she wants. And, she has me figured out. Instead of asking for a new trailer, she started talking about vintage Airstreams. For Christmas, Maria bought me the Franklin Mint "Classic Airstream" model (*see the VACers in the News I in this issue of the Vintage Advantage for a story about this model*). She then started pointing them out on the road and in movies. I resisted, but after some time I started looking at them when she wasn't around and got hooked. Unfortunately, I got hooked at the same time as the Hollywood crowd which meant that the prices were skyrocketing in our area. Undaunted, I started taking Maria out to various RV shows where we saw 1950's and '60's Airstreams for sale at incredible prices, unrestored! She stared at me with that, "if you had done it when I asked you to" look.

We thought about purchasing the new 25' Safari with the special \$299 down, \$299 per month deal for the rest of your life, but, while I think the new Safaris are nice, I just didn't care for the windows, vinyl cabinets, and lack of a conventional oven. And, as Maria says, "they just aren't cute like the old ones!"

I was soon saved by a friend. He was looking for a car trailer and found an advertisement in the local free paper with a laundry list of things for sale including a 1963 Airstream trailer. Maria called and found that the fellow selling all these things was a bachelor whose girlfriend of seven years had moved out leaving him with an ultimatum - marriage and a house, or good-bye forever. All his toys were on the block for sale.

We drove out to the hill area where he lived and found the trailer in the back of his lot. It turned out to be a 1963 24' Tradewind with rear bath, single axle, twin bed, all original. The trailer had been

manufactured at the Santa Fe Springs (CA) plant in November 1962, and was originally purchased by a doctor in Long Beach in March of 1963. The trailer had been in Southern California for its entire life.

Unfortunately, the trailer had been painted silver many years earlier and the paint was now peeling on the roof. I figured that if the trailer had been sanded before it had been painted, then it would likely be difficult, if not impossible, to return to prime condition. Complicating the situation, it was now starting to get too dark to see clearly, although in the dim light it didn't appear like the skin had been sanded on top. The overall condition was good and I felt I could fix most of the items that needed redoing.

The trailer needed a lot of work and cosmetics, but the fellow selling it had done some of the basic work already, and he had done a good job. The turning point was when the owner pulled out the table that came with the trailer - it was in perfect condition, and Maria fell in love with it. She started poking me in the ribs to buy it, so we made the *deal*.

I was gambling that the trailer had not been sanded prior to painting and, thank Heaven, I was right. I used four gallons of aircraft stripper to remove the old paint and then spent the next six weeks (evenings and weekends) polishing the aluminum skin, using VAC Technical Correspondent Bud Cooper's (#26019) VAC video as the guide. Bud's video is excellent and he explains the process well, however, the time and effort it takes to polish a trailer this size is considerable, not to mention the greasy mess from the polishing compound that fly's everywhere.

For polishing, I recommend a long sleeve shirt, hat, respirator, earplugs, as well as drugging your wife so that she won't notice the smell and your tracks in the house on her clean floors and in her sinks. I also used Bud's tip in the Spring 1998 issue of the **Vintage Advantage** (see Coop's Corner, page 4) to use clear bathtub caulking in order to mount the black rubber window moldings to the glass. Thanks Bud (but, I still need help getting out some dents if you're reading this).

The original interior *Zolitone* wall paint, counter tops, sinks, tub, stove, cabinets, and the original yellow and black Formica free standing table, were all in great condition. Many of the interior cabinet panels and all of the doors and drawer fronts needed the oak veneer replaced. The interior cabinetry was stained a 1960's green which didn't work for us, so I stripped, bleached, sanded, and stained all of the interior wood with an oak stain.

A word of caution to other restorers - if you ever want peace again in your house, rethink about using the original table that your wife is in love with as a workstation in the garage. Your wife will catch you,

and the minute you tell her to "leave you alone - you know what you're doing," you will cut a chunk out of the side with the Skill saw and there will be hell to pay. I won't mention how much it cost me to get the table fixed, but a lot. 'Nuff said.

All of the cold water copper lines were badly corroded and leaking. I replaced them with gray plastic tubing that's easy to work with. The three faucets were replaced and I installed a hand held shower along with a Shurflo pump, 25-gal freshwater tank, Aqua Magic toilet, and repair of all of the leaky drains. I cleaned and tuned-up the old Tappan four burner stove and sent the chrome parts out for chroming. I replaced the split rims with new steel wheels and Goodyear Marathon "D" rated tires, replaced the shocks, rebuilt the brakes and replaced the magnets.

I did not want to deal with removing the old floor tiles. My solution was to install a foam thermal barrier under the plywood sub-floor with dry wall screws, and then cover the new floor with low pile industrial carpet. Vinyl peel & stick squares were used in the bath.

Maria chose the Rt- 66 fabric for the front sofa bed and then covered the mattresses with a soft chenille fabric in similar color tones with new bolsters and pillows to match. I built a removable bridge to convert the twin beds into a double bed by simply sliding one of the mattresses across the center isle at night. We had wanted a trailer with a queen size bed, but Maria liked the two couches. She asked me why I couldn't just build a platform that rested on two wood lips so we could put the mattresses together. It really annoys me when she comes up with those kind of obvious great ideas. We bought a "bed sack" with removable velcro sheets that is simple to use and eliminates having to make up the bed. All the upholstery and bedding is made from bacteria resistant materials.

We also upgraded the trailer with air conditioning, which was a relatively simple job. After removing the original center vent/fan and a simple rewiring (a separate 20 Amp circuit was already in place), and with the help of a friend to lift the A/C in place (I built a scaffold out of 2x4's), the job took less than an hour.

I installed a batwing antenna, park cable/DSS hook-up, electric jack, breakaway switch, smoke & LP gas detectors, fire extinguisher, stereo with CD player, and 2 inch PVC venetian blinds on the windows.

A Black & Decker coffee maker was hidden under the kitchen sink and a microwave under the C.S. bed. Future plans include a gray water tank, Fantastic fan, and LP generator. I would like to talk with other VAC members with generators in trailer experience (Days: 310.535.8350 or SteveMelton@merisel.com).

Last thing in was a double door Dometic refrigerator (single door was original). This required building a new oak enclosure to match the original cabinets, moving an electrical box, modifying the interior refrigerator vent and running a new 12 VDC

line from the battery since new refrigerators require 12 VDC to power their computer controls. This addition was well worth the effort as the old Norcold was no longer up to the task, even after replacing the thermostat. Plus, the new refrigerator has a convenient automatic switching feature between LP gas and 110 V.

My advice to anyone restoring an old trailer is that if your wife takes one look at the old refrigerator, wrinkles up her nose, and says "this thing is disgusting and will never stay cold - I want a new one," you might as well bite the bullet and save yourself a lot of work trying to rebuild the old one. On our first camping trip the old Norcold died spoiling all the food Maria had packed, and she was not happy about throwing our food provisions into the nearest trash can.

C&G Trailers in Bellflower (authorized Airstream service center) installed Zip Dee awnings and a screen patio room. This was another issue that Maria put her foot down about. She insisted on getting the Zip Dee awnings, in the original blue fancy fabric, for both sides and the back window, WITH the attachable screen room and floor (she told me she had no intention of being eaten alive by mosquitoes, stung by yellow jackets, or being driven insane by deer flies). This has been my first experience with Zip Dees beautiful, high quality products, and, darn it but she was right again! The awnings cost as much as the trailer, but they are absolutely wonderful. And, of course, Maria found matching chairs to go with them.

We now have an Airstream trailer that is 1,200 pounds lighter than a new Safari with many of the same features, plus a few more, for less than half the cost. This has been a fourteen-month project that has not only been fun but often a challenge. We took the trailer camping twice as well as to two Car Shos this past summer. The rewards are watching the people line-up to see the "Airstream" and being able to use and enjoy the never-finished project. We're now looking for an early 1960's Cadillac convertible to tow with.

Maria & Steve Melton, #8618

*We wish to thank Rod at C&G Trailers for his help, Charlie Burke and the "Airstream Central" web site (www.airstreamcentral.com) and the **Vintage Advantage** for all of the great restoration tips. Without these valuable resources this project would have been work!*



The Modern VAC Family?

This photograph is a print advertisement by the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company for their on-going Camel Cash Mighty Tasty Lifestyles Sweepstakes. This is one of a series of four different contests where this particular advertisement is for the "Million-To-One Lotto Winner," Lifestyle #4 contest. One of the prizes in this contest is the "Airstream Trailer" valued at \$40,000! *[The trailer is the same as that of the VA Editor, a 1953 21' Airstream Flying Cloud. Not sure if they modeled the wife and I in their ad!]*

Vintage 'streamin' with the Kids

Entries from the Howarth Cross-Country Summer 1997 Trip Log Book

In the summers of 1997 and 1998 I was able to arrange my work schedules such that my family could tow our vintage Airstream trailer across this great country. The fun and enjoyment of these trips are something that we will never forget. Both during and since these trips we have been asked about the trip particulars and, perhaps more importantly, the adventures and misadventures of travelling with three young children (and the family cat). At the start of the 1997 summer trip, our children were the following ages; Benjamin, age 6; Samuel, age 4 and Colin, age 2 (and Tabby the cat was 7 years old). The children were familiar to travelling with the trailer on shorter trips, such as ones lasting one to two weeks, but to date we had not travelled west with the exception of a 1995 round trip between Orlando, FL and Austin, TX.

Over the next few issues I will try to present highlights from our 1997 cross-country trip logbook. This issue features the beginning of our trip including the 1997 International Rally in Huntsville, AL.

Tuesday, June 24, 1997, PM: After working all day, coming home and taking a brief nap followed by last minute packing, we finally pull out from our home in southern MD at 11 PM. Our plans are to drive most the night to try and reach TN by the next day. Although the children had been anxious all day, they were asleep before we were out of town while the family cat insisted laying on my lap while I was driving. Kathy and I were also excited but we kept reviewing all the supplies and house shut-down procedures to make sure that we had not forgotten anything. We had been planning this 32 day trip for over six months so that now it seemed hard to believe that everything was in place. This was actually a good time to leave because at this hour we were able to cruise through the Washington beltway without traffic on our way towards I-81 in VA.

Wednesday, June 25, 1998: About 4 AM we pulled into a rest area along the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Shenandoah Valley, moved all the kids and the cat into the trailer, and slept until about 7 AM. We awoke and moved back into the van where we popped the movie "Bambi" into the van's VCR for the kids. This was the first of several "new" movies that the children would see during the trip. After the movie and a couple hours driving,

we stopped at McDonalds for breakfast. This stop was followed by a showing of the movie "Homeward Bound II," which lasted long enough to get us near the campground. After the movie we saw a doe and its baby eating grass along the side of the road.

We pulled into a Jellystone Park Resort in Heiskell, TN, around noon time on Wednesday, June 25th. The campground appeared a bit dated but was relatively clean, had a nice pool and playground as well as a petting zoo and planned events.

After lunch in the trailer, dad took a nap while mom and the boys went to the pool. It was very warm out (> 90 degrees F) so the pool was refreshing. The children also wandered into the "petting zoo," which consisted of a couple of hogs, a goat, a rooster, two hound dogs and some rabbits. However, with the heat of day all the animals were kicking back and napping such that there wasn't much activity.

That night, the campground was offering a spaghetti dinner special in their dining area. Judging by the number of campers in the room, apparently the dinner special was a popular feature. Dad was the first to answer the Final Jeopardy question correctly and won a free pecan pie!

After dinner, mom and the boys went on a hayride around the campground where they met with Yogi and Boo Boo upon their return. Soon after that we all went to bed.

Thursday, June 26, 1997: Mom woke up about 7 AM and went off to shower when upon her return, dad and the boys went to do the same while mom made breakfast and began to prepare the trailer for towing. By 9:45 AM, we were back on the road.

As we travelled, we kept seeing signs for "Ruby Falls," such that by noontime we were ready to stop for a break so we decided to visit. Ruby Falls is located in Chattanooga, TN, and is a large, underground cave that leads into the interior of a mountain where there is a beautiful waterfall. The tour was a long walk but once we reached the waterfall the children thought it was well worth it.

After a trailer prepared lunch in the parking lot, we were back on the road by 2 PM. We soon entered AL and continued on to Huntsville, arriving at the International Rally site at 4:30 PM. We were parked alongside the end of the VAC row and soon hooked up with electricity and water.

After hooking up we ate dinner at the trailer and began visiting with our VAC friends. After a walk for ice-cream cones, we retired for the evening.

Friday, June 27, 1997: After a late awakening and trailer prepared breakfast, we gathered our things and went off to find a shower and register. We found a nearby Golds Gym and paid \$20 to "join" for the week. This entitled us to using their shower and locker room facilities for the week while we were attending the Rally. Now our trailer has a shower, but with five people showering daily things never seem to dry out and the holding tank fills much too quickly. So we typically find a local health club, or use facilities at nearby colleges, to make things easier.

After nice, relaxing showers in an air-conditioned environment, we went over to Rally registration. We followed this with lunch back at the trailer and then dad went off to the VAC Business Meeting while mom and the boys went to the childrens' tee shirt painting craft time.

We got back together for dinner at the trailer, then followed this with a visit to the playground, followed by ice-cream cones and off to bed. The time we had between events we spent around the VAC parking site enjoying past and present fellowship.

Saturday, June 28, 1997: Errand Day. We started off at the hardware store, followed by the barber shop, showers, grocery shopping and then home for lunch. In the afternoon, dad went off to hear Airstream President Larry Huttle speak while mom and the boys went off to the laundromat. A heavy rain storm came over us at dinner so we went out for pizza, playground and ice-cream to complete the evening.

Sunday, June 29, 1997: A heavy rainstorm greeted us in the early AM as we got up early to attend the 7 AM VAC Breakfast at Quincy's Restaurant. More than 50 folks showed up through the rain. Dad and the boys enjoyed the all-you-can-eat menu with several return trips to the buffet.

After breakfast we went to check out the new Airstreams, decided we were more than happy with our vintage model. Our next stop was the daily shower visit to Golds Gym where once we were ready to leave, the rain had started back up again. We decided this would be a good time to go see the new Batman movie. Upon finding our seats and starting in on the popcorn, Sam, Colin and dad each fell asleep before the opening. Dad and Sam woke around the middle of the movie but Colin slept through the entire showing. We left the theater, fully rested, and went back to the trailer for dinner. We hurried through our meal and went over to the Civic Center to see Roy Clark. It was a great show, each of the children clapped along and had a ball. Afterwards we returned to the trailer for bed. A fun day in spite of the rain.

Monday, June 30, 1997: Got up early and went directly over to Golds Gym. After showering, we joined the WBCCI Youth Trip gathering area for the trip over to the Huntsville Space and Rocket Center. A hundred and fifty-five folks were joining in for WBCCI Day at the Center. We drove our van accompanied with Vern Goodwin III (#1311) and his son Jason. Our visit was from 10 AM to 4 PM and included a box lunch followed by a bus tour and hands-on museum. Inside the museum was the original Airstream trailer used to house the Apollo astronauts upon their return to earth. Along the tour we observed many of the components now being used in the space station. We also saw an IMAX movie detailing a typical shuttle voyage. By the time we returned home, everyone was exhausted.

Tuesday, July 1, 1997: Dad got up early and started washing the trailer. Today was "game day," that is, today was the VAC Open House including the Concours d'Elegance and the competition was looking fierce this time around. Rumor (and later confirmation) has it that some contestants were out polishing their trailers at 2 AM (yes we're referring to you Barney, *God bless ya!*). After breakfast, mom and the boys went out to the grocery store for last minute items. By the time they got back, the trailer was shinin' like a mirror - just the way dad likes it. The day was already beginning to be hot and humid...by noon time the temperature was 98 degrees F with humidity at 88%.

The VAC Open House was slated for 1 PM to 4 PM with approximately 30 trailers participating. Judges came early to our trailer because we were parked near the end. Over the next three hours we had over 200 visitors. While dad conducted tours, mom and the boys had set up an ice-tea stand, drinks with ice were 10¢ a cup. With the high heat and humidity, the stand was a big success. Although Colin was no help, Benjamin and Sam maintained the business to the tune of \$14.60! The heat had just worn Colin down such that he moved inside the trailer to the back bed to play with toys and drink his bottle, however his actions kept the traffic in the trailer moving quickly (we did get him to stop spitting but his yelling was equally as disturbing). At 4 PM, the trailers were locked up and we all went down the street for the VAC group photograph (previously shown in the Fall 1997 issue of the VA) and then off to the pavilion for happy hour and the awards ceremony. Unfortunately Colin was not being cooperative so he and mom returned to the trailer where he fell asleep in five minutes.

Later, everyone went out for dinner at Perkins, followed by ice-cream cones at the rally site. By the end of the day everyone had gotten too much sun and were ready for bed. At 11 PM it was still in the 80's with the high humidity. Sleeping was difficult and the limited use electricity did not permit air conditioning use.

Wednesday, July 2, 1997: About 4 AM, mom and dad were awakened, along with several neighbors, by the sound of screechin' cats. Although we did not hear Tabby's voice, we knew he was outside (usually he hangs out under our trailer on hot nights) and likely involved. Dad went outside with a flashlight and a cup of water. Three trailers down, Tabby was backed into a corner by a smaller cat (Tabby weighs almost 20 lbs and is likely intimidating to look at by other cats but he is not a fighter at all). Dad threw the cup of water on the two of them and Tabby high tailed it back to the trailer. Even though Tabby was inside the trailer, he continued with a deep growl, was shaking and still visibly upset. He stationed himself on the window sill the rest of the night looking out for the bad guys while we went back to bed.

We woke up four hours later and were wet from the humidity. As the sun was rising higher, the temperature was following suit. Noted some small blood droplets on the window sill so we tried to examine Tabby, however he was not cooperating. After breakfast, dad and the boys took Tabby in the van to visit with Dr. Bert Kalet (#6957), the official WBCCI veterinarian and noted VACer (who was parked in the pet area for this Rally). Bert's recommendation was that Tabby appeared alright for now but that he found a puncture wound so we should keep an eye on him for infection. After Tabby's inspection, Bert examined Colins stuffed bear Boo and Sams stuffed puppy to ensure their good health. That made the boys happy and helped them stop worrying about the cat.

Upon return, mom and the boys went off to the laundromat and to find shoes for Colin. Dad needed to repair a couple of water leaks emitting from the water tank. While involved in tracing these down, several Airstream employees came by for a visit of the trailer.

After lunch, the Danahers (#12897) stopped by for a visit. They had brought some photographs for use in future issues of the VA. Dad was then supposed to be preparing the trailer for travel although he spent as much of the time hanging out around the rally site. Finally at 7 PM, the trailer was hooked up to the van and off we went. Because it was still hot as can be, our first stop was a final visit to Golds Gym for a refreshing shower.

By 8 PM we were on the road. Because of Huntsville's location, we needed to take back roads through AL and TN before we reached an interstate. By leaving at night, we were able to avoid traffic. We drove until 4 AM until we stopped at a rest stop in Arkansas for a couple of hours sleep.

Next issue...we travel into Oklahoma City, find Rt-66 and follow it (as best we can) through to CA!

TECH TALK

Octane Levels

A question was posed in the Spring 1998 issue of the **Vintage Advantage** (see The Editors Desk) about why the octane levels at gas stations out west are less than those found in the east.

The answer is: they can get away with it!

As altitude increases, air pressure decreases which means that less air is sucked into the piston chamber, and less air is compressed. This is also the basic reason why engines have less power at high altitudes. The less air compressed is tantamount to lowering the compression ratio of the engine. This fact thus implies that if you have less compression, you can use lower octane gasoline to maintain similar engine performance as that at lower elevations.

Now the reason that one finds the lower octane at gas stations out west is that lower octane gasoline is cheaper. Therefore, at high altitudes, lower, cheaper gasoline works just as well as more expensive high octane gasoline so guess what choice the gas companies make!

However, one must realize not to take a tank full of high altitude gasoline down to a lower altitude or your vehicle will tend to ping with "pre-ignition knock". This phenomena is easily noticed going down with a full tank of gas obtained from west of the cascades into sea level Seattle. When travelling East, the altitude drop is usually gradual enough that you do not arrive at sea level with much high altitude gasoline left.

Octane was the original additive to gasoline used to retard the speed of the explosion. This retardation of the explosion is necessary since if fuel explodes too rapidly, it causes a "knock" or "ping" in the engine. The knock or ping responses are actually cavitation responses that over time will deteriorate and erode the walls of the motor.

If the burn is slower, the result is a smoother power stroke.

Higher compression ratios increase the heat of the gasoline-to-air mixture in order to speed up the chemical reactions and extract more energy out of the fuel. Diesel engines get around the high temperature knocking problem by slowly injecting fuel into the cylinder head to control the speed of the explosion. If one has a turbocharged engine, they must be careful to purchase high octane fuel at both low and high altitudes, otherwise don't bother to purchase high octane gasoline at high altitudes.

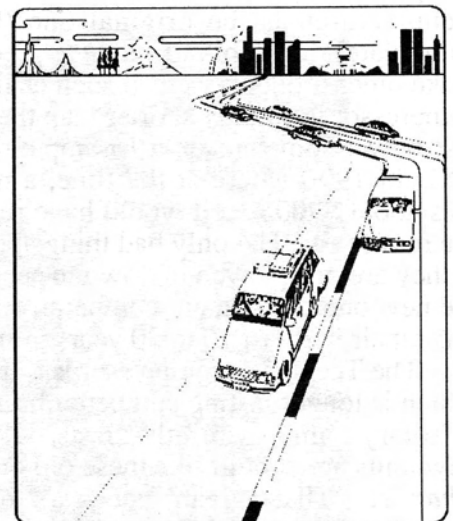
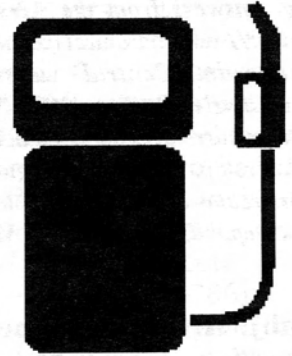
Don Grayson, #2758

Did You Know

In the early 1900's, North Carolina pioneered a new idea in connection with traffic safety programs by placing a white line down the center of the highway. The idea was suggested by John S. Cockwell, who at the time owned and operated a bus line in North Carolina. His idea was discussed, looked upon with favor, and adopted by the NC DOT.

This little white line has saved a lot of lives over the years, and drivers depend on it today. The white line has become so necessary that if it is missing, the highway department post huge signs saying "Unmarked Highway". All drivers are grateful for the little white line down the center of our highways.

Sent in by Steve Melton (#8618) as found in an old Auto Club magazine.



BEST OF THE WEB

Questions & Charlie Answers

This column is a regular VA feature with the best questions and answers from the Airstream Central Internet website (<http://www.channell.com/users/brosius/air.htm>). The Airstream Central website (and this column) is written by Mr. Charles Burke, a 1972 Airstream factory trained technician who is currently employed in the parts department at an Airstream dealership. Mr. Burke regularly answers questions concerning Airstreams and has agreed to take the best of these each quarter and republish them for the VA.

Subj: A/C Replacement for a 1963 Tradewind

Question: What is best replacement for the original air conditioning unit for a 1963 Tradewind?

Charlie: You have two choices: Airstream makes an adapter pan that collects the condensation run off and channels it down an existing drain tube built into the wall of the coach. In order to use this pan you must use a Dometic Penguin series air conditioner as it is custom fitted for that unit. If your installer is a clever person, it is possible to adapt any current model AC to work, however, you typically won't include the hidden drain feature.

Subj: Armstrong A/C Follow-up

Question: Here is a follow up to an earlier response on repairing Armstrong air conditioners. The original Armstrong A/C is definitely repairable if all you need is a compressor. Start by inspecting the condenser and the fan to ensure that is good. If they are good but the unit isn't cooling, you either have a freon leak or the compressor is finished. In my case, I needed a new compressor which I was able to buy from the same manufacturer as the original one (built in 1973 on nameplate). The brand name is Tecumseh and they make other products as well such chain saws. The new compressor is slightly shorter than the original and uses less power so it runs on a 15-amp circuit. It cost \$400 USD in 1996 where at the time, a new unit installed was about \$900 and it would have required modifying the roof to fit. The only bad thing about these old units is they are noisy, even on low fan speed compared with the new ones, which are comparatively quiet. I expect this repair will last 10 to 20 years or more.

The Tecumseh compressor is a "reciprocating type" which is longer lasting and better built. New A/C's use a "rotary compressor" that lasts only 10 years so the new units aren't built like these old ones.

Charlie: That's great. For years the big concern has been the compressor. It is great to know that someone out there is willing to take on finding the right replacement compressor. Thanks for the information.

Subj: Tire Selection

Question: Should I use bias ply or radial LT truck tires on my 27' trailer? I currently have LT 15x7 tires that have cup shaped wear patterns and are 5 yrs old with only 12,000 miles. I tow with a 1972 Suburban and it has Radial tires.

Charlie: You shouldn't use LT series tires on your trailer. These tires are designed for use as Light Truck tires on pickups and such. The correct tire is an ST series which is designed for RV use. The ST series tire is designed to optimize straight line tracking and UV protection for extended periods of exposure. Typically, RV tires rot before the tread wears out. The correct tire is the ST 225 75R15. Airstream uses Goodyear Marathons that are radials.

The cupping wear pattern is often caused by weak shock absorbers. They should be changed.

Subj: 1) LP Gas and 2) New Window for 1970 27' Landyacht

Question: We've just purchased this trailer and tried lighting the stove only to find that although we can hear some gaseous substance coming through the lines, the burners won't light, nor will the pilot light (yes the valve is open on the tanks and the main valve up by the burners is open as well). I'm not sure if there is another valve located below the stove unit or elsewhere that I might have missed.

Also, we 'lost' the rear window on the Airstream yesterday. Not sure if it was kids or a rock from a passing car, but it's gone in a pile of shards. So, today we called the Airstream factory and they are sending out a new rear window. My question: any advice or tips on how to replace it? Is it straight forward or do we need to get our copy of the 1972 repair manual first before we can tackle it?

Charlie: I highly recommend having the LP gas system pressure and leak tested to any new owner of a used coach. It sounds possible that if the system has not been used for awhile and you just hooked up the LP bottles that there may still be air in the lines. By opening a stove valve and keeping a flame nearby it can take several 15-30 seconds for gas to get to the burner.

The original stove used in a 1970 coach is obsolete. I'm afraid your faced with either lighting the burners individually or getting a new stove.

Replacing the window/frame is simple but perhaps not obvious. To remove the window/frame open it from the inside first. From outside, separate the lift mechanism from the frame. Holding on to the frame lift it up to over rotate the top hinges on the window frame from the hinge mounted on the coach. Take the new window/frame and carefully align the two hinge pieces and lock them together by rotating it down. Reattach the lift mechanism and your done.

Subj: Dead Battery Affects Furnace?

Question: Will a dead battery affect the operation of the furnace even though it is hooked up to 120 Vac?

Charlie: By all means. The 12VDC electrical system depends on a serviceable battery being in place. With either no battery or a dead battery, the converter will try harder to charge the battery in what is called "pushing". When the converter pushes, its voltage output gets ragged and fluctuates. It is not uncommon for a ragged converter output to be responsible for damaging the fan motor. So for saving 50-75 dollars on a battery, you might have to pay up to \$265 for a new converter and \$125 for a new furnace motor.

Subj: Hot Bambi Refrigerator

Question: The gas refrigerator in my Bambi generates a lot heat in the rear of the trailer. Previous owners installed a couple of vents in the rear of the trailer to try to dissipate the heat. When I first got the trailer, I had the systems, including the refrigerator, checked out. The refrigerator was cleaned and I was told that it was OK, but is it normal to create that much heat?

Charlie: Actually the previous owners may have aggravated the problem. To operate properly, the back of the refrigerator must have a draft not unlike a chimney. This promotes airflow up through the coils and supports heat transfer. By adding vents, the airflow is disrupted and the refrigerator works harder trying to cool and thus generates more heat.

By design, RV absorption refrigerators generate quite a bit of heat. But that is supposed to go up and out through vent just below the window. The tag above your rear door may no longer be there, but there once was one that said "in hot weather leave door open".

Charlie and Betty Burkes newest addition.

Our new "baby " is a February 1961 built Bambi. It is a one-owner coach out of Billings, MT. It came with an awning built in July 1962. The refrigerator has been changed to an electric, but we will eventually change it back to an absorption type. The original papers that came with it indicate that the trailer was originally pulled behind a Packard. Picture that!

We have had a chance to take it out once and thoroughly enjoyed it. It tows like a dream behind our big ole Ford pickum' up. So far we have had the original latex foam cushions replaced. Next on the list is replacing the second-generation floor covering. Over the winter several things need to be done before Jim Weston (www.airmarktools.net; 918/438-2786) does his polishing tour out this way and then gives our exterior a shinin'!

Had a particularly interesting time the other week when a fella from Sun Valley brought down his Bambi for some work. His is a March 1961 built coach. Interesting the differences a month makes. He has a "Bambi" logo casting along with an outside light and a factory built, front mounted battery box. Inside, the furnace air pipe area was enclosed which closes off a good storage area.

Stay tuned for future adventures and commentary.





CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Anyone may advertise in the **Vintage Advantage** since membership in the VAC is not a requirement. Starting with the next issue (Spring 1999), all personal classified advertisements are \$5.00 per advertisement.

To place an advertisement in the **VA**, please send all information to Mr. Patrick Ewing, Treasurer, who will then forward them onto the **VA** Editor in the format shown.

Beginning with the Winter 1999 issue of the **Vintage Advantage**, the Vintage Airstream Club will begin accepting commercial advertisements that are of direct interest to the VAC membership. To help ensure that the **VA** does NOT become a commercially driven publication but remains a newsletter for its membership, the following policy will be maintained for advertising in the **Vintage Advantage**.

1. Only advertisements deemed of direct interests to the VAC membership shall be accepted (as determined by the **VA** Editor).
2. All commercial advertisements in the **VA** cost \$25/issue.
3. Commercial advertisements will be placed only in the classified advertisement section of the **VA**.
4. A principal commercial advertiser must be a VAC Member (Member, Associate or Friend subscriber) to place a commercial advertisement in the **Vintage Advantage**. Advertisers get a 20% discount if they are a WBCCI Member.

COMMERCIAL

Beginning with this newsletter, this section will feature commercial products and/or services of direct interest to the Vintage Airstream Club membership. Principal advertisers must be VAC members.

Memorabilia: Three-dimensional pewter vintage camper key chain, perfect for the trailerite or collector. Camper is a miniature replica of a 21' 1953 Airstream Flying Cloud travel trailer. Just introduced to market and now available for \$12.99 plus \$2 S+H (US), payable by check or money order. Allow six weeks for delivery. TRH Enterprises, 5860 Scaggs Road, Owings, MD 20736.

Rt-66 Vintage RV Tour: Chicago to LA, the most famous highway in the world. Join our group of fellow vintage RV enthusiasts for a fun-filled trip. Units must be 30+ years old. ADVENTURETOURS: 800/455-8687 or on the web @ www.adventuretrek.com.

Renovations and Parts: We renovate trailers from the 1950's through the 1970's and have misc. parts available including full interiors, bed hardware, small 'fridge, fiberglass tubs, interior cowlings, etc. Have just completed two 1960's Airstreams (Land Yacht and Ambassador) as well as a 1975 Safari. I have parts left over from each, call for details. Tad Taylor, 802/896-6891.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RALLY: The Tin Can Tourist's Classic Trailer and Motor Coach Gathering will be held May 20 to 23, 1999, at beautiful Camp Dearborn in Milford, Michigan. Activities include food, fun, fellowship, open house, Concours d'Elegance, and planned tours of Detroit Diesel, Greenfield Village (entrance fee), University of Michigan athletic facilities and/or botanical gardens. Facilities include dump station, heated restrooms, showers, 27 hole golf course, adventure golf, fishing lakes and paddle boats. Each site is a level cement slab with picnic table, some have fire pits and grills. For additional information, contact Forrest Bone at 888/757-7701x49945 or F23Bone@aol.com. See us on the web at www.tincantourists.com.

RALLY: The Vintage Vacations Spring Antique Travel Trailer Rally will hold its charter rally from Wednesday, March 31 to Sunday, April 4 (Easter Sunday) at the Black Star RV Ranch in the hills above Irvine, CA (Orange County). A tentative schedule and list of costs is available at the Vintage Vacations Website (www.vintage-vacations.com) or call me, Craig Dorsey, Vintage Vacations Wagon Master @ 714/288-9233.

AIRSTREAM PARTS

For Sale: Salvaging a 1971 18' Safari. Front collision damage and minor dents all around. Interior in very good condition. Front dinette, RS gaucho, CS galley. Call with your need or will sell complete for \$950. Richard Keegan (#9542), 39 Conifer Rd., Rindge, NH 03461; 603/899-5285.

For Sale: Following has been removed from a 1974 27' Land Yacht Overlander and are for sale: complete assembly for front couch/pull out bed with new upholstery and frame with 3 tambour doors; credenza with table assembly; bed/couch cushions for rear bed; 80" long rock guard. Patricia Hall, 1017 Highland St., Branson, MO 65616; 417/335-8126.

Wanted: Armstrong 14 airconditioning for a 1978 31' Sovereign. Also need glass for three skylights for same unit. John Hamilton, 2522 Hagberg Street, Duluth, MN 55811; 218/726-1560.

TRAVEL TRAILERS WANTED

Bambi or Bubble, Desire a small Airstream to pull with my '49 Chrysler. James Westrich (#7093), 1405 Hite-Speece Rd., Morganfield, KY 42437; 502/822-4704.

TRAVEL TRAILERS FOR SALE

1956 22' Airstream Land Yacht, \$5,500. Front living room, rear bed and bath with shower and original toilet, new 10 gal. water heater, original LP Dometic fridge, single axle w/ spare. Matt & Barb Lucas, PO Box 96, McAlpin, FL 32062; 904/362-7730.

1956 22' Airstream Safari, Extensive restoration makes this better than new, photos and restoration journal available. John Simone, 1623 W. Knapp Dr., Vista, CA 92083; 760/941-3349 or 760/726-8581; FAX is 760/726-6061.

1956 23' Airstream, \$6,500 or best offer. Completely restored interior, new LP/elec fridge, A/C, upholstery, tires, brakes, hubs, plumbing. Sharp and road ready! Needs exterior polishing. Dave Keller (#8297), 1350 Mission Valley Blvd, Nokomis, FL 34275; 941/485-4746.

1962 17' Airstream Safari, \$6,500. Completely refurbished incl. new elec, new plumbing, new heating system, new LP tanks, new gas lines, new septic system, new elec fridge, new running lts, new braking system, central vent wired for A/C. George and Christine Cunliffe, 414 Newton St., South Hadley, MA 01075; 413/532-2798.

1963 20' Airstream Safari Land Yacht, Excellent condition inside and out, tires good, fully self-contained including microwave, full bath, stove, oven, fridge, double sink, portable A/C, cat. heater,

copper pipes, new hot water heater. Michael Taft, San Diego, CA; gmtaft@aol.com.

1969 28' Airstream Ambassador, \$3,000 or best offer. Center double bed, rear bath, good condition. Needs commode and furnace. Clarence Edmondson; 860/742-6124.

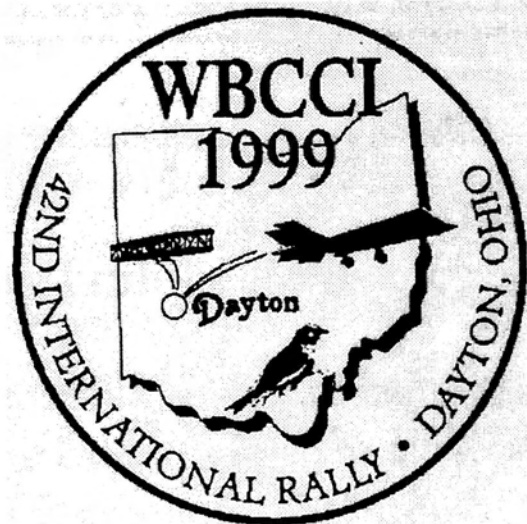
1963 31' Airstream, Tandem axles, under cover last 10 yrs, located in Franklin, NC. Don Martin, 2211 E. Main St., Leesburg, FL 34748; 800/397-7989.

1968 21' Airstream Globe Trotter, Extensive restoration makes this better than new, photos and restoration journal available. John Simone, 1623 W. Knapp Dr., Vista, CA 92083; 760/941-3349 or 760/726-8581; FAX is 760/726-6061.

1969 25' Airstream Land Yacht, \$4,500 firm. Interior bright and cheerful, exterior needs polishing. Jim & Britta Tipton (#4074), 1045 Chevy Chase, Gladewater, TX 75647; 903/845-2886.

1972 27' Airstream Overlander, \$4,500. Rear bath, twin beds, new furnace (used approx. 5 hrs since installation), roof A/C w/ elec heat, fridge works great, good tires. Interior in good shape, exterior needs polishing. Also have awning setup and bathroom counter top. Dan Roxbury (#2645), 9636 Ruth Dr., Noblesville, IN 46460; 317/773-8863.

1973 Airstream Land Yacht Overlander, \$7,500. Rear bath, center gaucho bed, large wardrobe, 6 drawer dresser, new upholstery & carpet & drapes, large pantry, Zip Dee awning, new tires (tandem axle), large LP oven, no pets, no smokers, clean. Mary Ann Atwell (#28915), 705 Tranquillo Drive, Victoria, TX 77905; 512/575-5375.



Membership Application
Vintage Airstream Club
A WBCCI IntraClub

Please Print

Date _____

Last Name _____ First Name (His) _____ (Hers) _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone Number _____ WBCCI# _____ Unit Number & Name _____

Trailer Year _____ Length _____ Model _____ Serial Number _____

Hobbies & Interests (His & Hers) _____

Occupation (now or before retiring) _____

Winter Address & Telephone Number _____

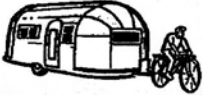
- Please check one: Member (own a vintage Airstream & belong to WBCCI)
 Associate Member (do not own a vintage Airstream but belong to WBCCI)
 Friend (am interested in vintage Airstreams but do not belong to WBCCI)

Send this application, along with your dues payment of \$10.00 to Dr. Richard Mumma, Membership Chairman, 670 Plantation Drive, Titusville, FL 32780; (E-mail: rdmumma@aol.com).

Note: If you are not a WBCCI member, we will be happy to assist you with the application.
Caution: Joining this Club could change your life!

The Vintage Advantage
Dr. Richard Mumma,
Membership Chairman
670 Plantation Drive
Titusville, FL 32780

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