

THE BIG BENDER

**BIG BEND FLORIDA
UNIT 153 REGION 3**

**AIRSTREAM CLUB
INTERNATIONAL**



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



THE STRENGTH OF WBCCI BEGINS WITH STRONG LOCAL UNITS

By Jim Weilhammer

When Katherine and I were visiting future rally sites last year, we tried to look for campgrounds that would have some geographic balance across the membership. The opinions you shared were also an important factor. So far, we are delighted with the efforts you have made to take part in the Big Bend Florida Airstream Club's events. At the January rally, a member said to me, "the strength of the International Airstream Club begins with strong local units." I am personally very grateful that so many members have volunteered to serve as officers, committee members and rally hosts. Your participation, as volunteers and rally participants, is key to the strength of our club.

The Recreational Vehicle Industry Association predicts that 435,000 RV's will be ordered by dealers in 2017. This means that many people will be visiting our beautiful southern states. It also means that we will have lots of competition for campsites in our area. We had several members who were unable to participate in the January rally because there was no availability at the campground. The lesson is that we need to reserve campsites as early as possible.

WHAT'S INSIDE

2017 International Rally Update...	2
Rally Spotlight	3
Region 3 Rally Camping.....	6
Rally Recipe.....	7
The Canopener Rally.....	8
Texas Country Air Rally.....	10
Technical Tip.....	11
Membership Report.....	12
Golf-N-Around.....	12
American Pioneers Day Rally...	13





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued . . .

The upcoming President's Day Rally is a Buddy Rally that will be held February 17-21 2017 at Yellow Jacket RV Resort, www.yellowjacketrvresort.com. The resort sits along the beautiful Suwannee River and outdoor activities include boating, hiking and biking along the Nature Coast Greenway. Other local attractions include the Levy County Quilt Museum, Dakota Winery, Manatee Springs State Park and Fanning Springs State Park. Saturday evening we are excited to have karaoke after dinner.

Looking ahead, the March Rally, March 10-12, 2017 will be held during American Frontier Days at F.D. Roosevelt State Park, <http://gastateparks.reserveamerica.com>. There will be lots to do on-site in addition to rich historic sites in the immediate area. This park does not make advance site assignments. When you arrive, request Loop 5 so we will all be together near a covered pavilion.

Looking farther down the road, we are seeking ideas for a unit mini-caravan to Escanaba, MI. If you are interested in traveling together, please send me an email about when you wish to arrive in Escanaba and any suggestions for camp grounds or sites to see on the way.

2017 INTERNATIONAL RALLY UPDATE

Two off site locations have been secured for WBCCI members who were unable to get reservations at the fairgrounds.

Pioneer Trail Park

(<http://wbcci.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d4890b147df3ee8248cd39b32&id=f6c4e96d04&e=f8c0c2e7fe>)

Sites at this park are being held exclusively for "Airstream Club" members from January 1st to February 28th. After that date, registrations are open to the public. To make reservations, call (906) 786-1020 or (906) 553-7700 and identify yourself as a member of the Airstream Club. Email lorimathews@deltacd.org. This park is 3 miles from the fairground.

Gladstone Bay Campground

(<http://wbcci.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d4890b147df3ee8248cd39b32&id=0f624fa6e5&e=f8c0c2e7fe>)

Campground sites can be reserved at this campground by leaving a message at (906) 428- 9222. This park is 7 miles from the fairground.

It will be up to you to make reservations at these sites and then register for the rally as staying offsite. The offsite fee is \$95.00 per adult and entitles you to all the events at the fairground. This includes all the seminars, meals, entertainment, and access to the vendor area. If you are considering staying at one of these campgrounds, do not procrastinate, space is limited.



RALLY SPOTLIGHT: Coastline RV Resort

By Karon Beyer

2017 started with a bang! The January Kids and Grandkids Rally was a great success and the Coastline RV Resort was a beautiful setting. In attendance were Martina Pelley, Jim and Bonnie Lewis, Jim and Pat Hentz, Jason Friedrich, Bill and Linda Coleman, Karon and TJ Beyer, Chip and Mary Adams, Craig and Monica Brinkley, Amy and Lamar Waymire, Jim Weilhammer and Katherine Kamiya. Monica and Craig's daughter Whitney, her husband Phil and their daughter Audrey, who was a perfect angel, came and entertained us the entire weekend.



Craig and Monica Brinkley with their daughter Whitney and granddaughter Audrey

The weekend before our campout, the temperature was 27 degrees. Our campout weekend had temperatures in the upper 70's. It was a beautiful weekend with clear blue skies and a soft breeze. We could have all been in shorts but Bill Coleman was the only one who thought ahead and packed correctly.

Thursday early arrivals ate in nearby Lanark Village at the Pearle Restaurant. Clams, oyster stew, crab, shrimp, and oysters were the favorites. On Friday we all tried to stay in the shade as we awaited the arrival of the rest of the members. We moved our chairs as the sun moved. Craig said we looked like a "progressive porch party" as we moved down the fence line.

During the day on Friday, trips were made to Apalachicola and to nearby locations for sightseeing. We all kept running in to each other as we traveled around. Friday night was a potluck dinner that, as usual, has never failed. We had a delicious ham with a variety of vegetables, salads, casseroles, and desserts. We sure do know how to cook!



RALLY SPOTLIGHT: Coastline RV Resort continued . . .

We were excited to meet new members Buck Jackson and Kelly Wood who drove over from Tallahassee and joined us for dinner. Their Airstream is currently gutted and not road ready.



Buck Jackson, Kelly Wood, and Chip Adams

On Saturday, most everyone went back into Apalachicola to enjoy the Oyster Cook-off festivities. Because the weather was so perfect there was a big crowd and lots of traffic. Most of us enjoyed "street watching" while others of us were able to enjoy the treat of the weekend.....raw oysters!!!



Jim and Pat Hentz, Katherine Kamiya, "Oysterman," Martina Pelley and Jim Weilhammer

Dinner was at the Owl Cafe where everyone ordered their favorite seafood dish and visited with each other. No one left disappointed.



RALLY SPOTLIGHT: Coastline RV Resort continued . . .

Sunday started with church for some and a mid-morning brunch of delicious French toast casserole, sausage, ham, and fruit. Later in the afternoon, hidden talents were revealed when Monica and Amy led a team of eager participants in free style painting. Even a few of the guys participated. Jim and Katherine's great grandchildren, Liam and Harper joined the fun and painted mini-canvasses and themselves. The results were keepsakes to take home and enjoy and to remember a great weekend by.



Mary Adams and Bonnie Lewis



The artists and their paintings

Our numbers grew for the Open Grill on Sunday evening with Jim Weilhammer's son Nick and his wife Twyla (who brought the great grandchildren), their daughter Tazara and her husband Mallory, and another of Jim's grandchildren, Alexa and her boyfriend Matt. We had a FULL house of Airstream family members.





RALLY SPOTLIGHT: Coastline RV Resort continued . . .

The campout extended into Monday because of the Martin Luther King Holiday and everyone enjoyed themselves before leaving to travel home. No one ever leaves a campout disappointed and those who are going to the February Rally at Yellow Jacket RV Resort in Old Town, FL look forward to more fun times.

It was another wonderful time with our Airstream family and friends. A special thanks to Katherine and Jim for taking over host responsibilities for the weekend and for their helpers who helped behind the scenes. A good time was had by all.



Apalachicola Oyster Cook-off

DEADLINE FOR REGION 3 CAMPSITE RESERVATIONS

The reservation block of 150 campsites at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in Hiawassee, GA will expire February 15th and after that date, sites will be available on a space available basis, www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com. The Region 3 Rally is scheduled for April 26-30, 2017. The program agenda and rally fee are not yet finalized. Check the Region 3 website for current information, <http://region3.wbcci.net/>



RALLY RECIPE: Watermelon Feta Salad

Submitted by Linda Coleman

Ingredients:

4-oz. feta cheese,
cut in small bite-sized pieces
2 lbs. watermelon slices or quarters,
cut in small bite-sized pieces
8-oz. grape tomatoes, cut in half
3 Tbsp. olive oil
2 tsp. white balsamic vinegar
½ tsp. kosher salt
3 cups arugula greens (about 5-oz.),
washed and dried
1 cup red onions, thinly sliced



Directions:

1. Whisk oil and vinegar and salt to blend; set aside.
2. Place arugula, onions and tomatoes in a salad bowl. Add vinaigrette and toss to coat.
3. Add feta cheese and melon; serve.

Makes 4 servings.



THERE IS ALWAYS TIME FOR THE FIRST TIME

By Gary Anderson

RoseMarie and I traveled to Topsail Hill Preserve State Park on Thursday January 5th for our first venture into the Air Forums' *Canopener Rally*. Airstreams, Airstreams everywhere – the fellow next to us was in a different brand but he did not start out with the usual “How are you” instead it was “You Airstreamers must be having some sort of convention.” Thursday’s weather was very nice and we enjoyed the evening with an open grill at Charlie and Annette Hurst’s trailer. In addition to Charlie and Annette, Jim Weilhammer and Katherine Kamiya, Jay and Elna Thompson, Craig and Monica Brinkley and Lamar and Amy Waymire attended the “convention.” The rally entertainment for the evening had to cancel because of sickness, but that didn’t slow the organizers down. They recruited a very talented musician from the Gainesville area, (who happened to be a friend of the Park Ranger’s son) who jumped into his car and was on stage Thursday night just before the scheduled time. He was an excellent guitarist, singer and song composer, entertaining the rally participants well into the evening.



Friday found us visiting with friends that RoseMarie and I have not seen in quite a while. We took a break during lunch to dine at the clubhouse – it was the Chili Cook off. While it was not really a cook off there must have been 20 to 25 different types of chili and all the fixings to go with it. Delicious! Chairs were set out in front of the clubhouse around the corn hole tournament. So again, dining with entertainment! The rains Friday night did not stop our group from heading to one of the fine restaurants in the area.



THERE IS ALWAYS TIME FOR THE FIRST TIME continued . . .

Saturday morning dawned with cold weather but our senior chef –in- residence was not to be stopped. Jay, enduring and ignoring, a 34 degree temperature and a cold northerly wind, cooked a black kettle breakfast for the ten of us. Elna set up chairs inside their Airstream and we had a fun time over a well appreciated hot breakfast.



Jay Thompsen does his black kettle magic while Katherine Kamiya looks on.

A hike with the Ranger at noon, Airstream Open House and craft displays and sales made the afternoon whiz by. The evening ended with a Cajun Food Tasting at the Clubhouse that including a jam session. Sunday morning was cold, but the planned “come in your pajamas” for coffee and lite rolls still drew hardy partygoers.

Prior to attending our first ***Canopener Rally*** we did not have any expectations. The rally was a laid back, enjoyable outing with plenty of activities. There were door prize drawings all weekend, plus a map with the site location of each Airstream that registered. We never heard a final count, but there were probably close to 150 Airstreams at the park, coming from all over the Southeast and other parts of the country.

To attend the rally next year, register on the Air Forums website, www.airforums.com and book your camp site at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park as soon as possible for the first full weekend in January 2018. See you next year!



TEXAS COUNTRY AIR RALLY, Quannah, TX

By Elna Thomspen

On our way home from the Southwest Adventure Caravan October 18-23, 2016, Jay and I decided to attend the Texas Country Air Rally in Quannah, Texas. You may ask, “Where the heck is Quannah, Texas, and why would we want to go there?” Well, we searched our map and certainly depended on our GPS to get us half way between Amarillo and Ft. Worth in the plains area of northern Texas. In a rest stop outside of town, we were greeted by its mayor and led by some other residents in to our parking places. We were parked on the streets surrounding the central historic County Courthouse. Our place was beside a bank across the street after spending the first night being blown away by the whistles of passing trains!

The rally was officially opened with a ceremony with a U.S. Air Force Color Guard greeting from Altus Air Force Base. About 100 rigs attended, mostly from Texas and Oklahoma, but there were several of us from as far away as Virginia, Kansas, California, Georgia, Colorado, and Florida. There was no rally or camping fee as the rally was sponsored by the Quannah Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

There are no hookups except, we learned, for a few trailers with persons with handicaps. Most depended on their own generators or shared ones. We and several others have solar panels and most days were sunny and bright! We learned the town is named for Quannah Parker, the last Chief of the Comanche Tribe. His mother as a young girl was captured by the Indians, married a chief and had Quannah. She was eventually recaptured by her family. The story was romanticized in the movie *The Searchers* starring John Wayne.

One the tours provided was to visit the “ghost town” of Mineral Springs where we explored the two remaining buildings in town, then went to the nearby medicine mounds area. This area is considered to be “sacred” by the Indians. There we met the grandson and great-granddaughter of Quannah Parker. They blessed us with smoke in an Indian ceremony. Another tour took us to the Comanche Springs Observatory where we studied stars in the night sky. You know they are big and bright “deep in the heart of Texas!”

There were several craft type seminars, a painting exhibition on the courthouse lawn, walking tours of the town, programs on Homeland Security, Helicopter emergency evacuation from the hospital, trailer weight and safety and many other surprisingly interesting topics plus big band music at night. The entire community participated in the rally, attending and performing in the entertainment, leading tours and presenting seminars. The county judge was the Master of Ceremony and the mayor plus other county and town officials were involved in support.



TEXAS COUNTRY AIR RALLY continued . . .

Meals were prepared and sold by various civic, church and school groups to raise money for their organizations. The volunteer firemen, high school band boosters, high school senior class and several churches participated.



We made some new friends and found an “old friend.” This is a picture of our former trailer parked in Quannah! This was an interesting and fun rally. We could visualize something of this type happening in our area and would like your suggestions. Dream a little...

TECHNICAL TIP: LED Lighting

By Buck Jackson

LED's, or light emitting diodes, are semi-conductor devices that produce visible light when an electrical current is passed through them. Unlike an incandescent or halogen light bulb, LED's do not radiate heat. Energy Star certified LED's have a higher initial cost but a longer useful life than traditional lighting. LED lighting is now standard in many late model trailers.

I am currently in the process of restoring an older Airstream trailer. Based on my conversations with other members at the January rally, I am sharing a source I have used and that was featured on a vintage Airstream podcast. The website is <http://www.m4products.com>. I have found their prices are competitive, there is a good selection of products, and the quality is a little better depending on what you buy (good, better, best).



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Chip and Mary Adams

This report is a compilation from the WBCCI Audit List as of November 11, 2016. The list contains 47 members of the Big Bend Florida Unit #153. Twelve (12) of those members have not renewed membership for 2017.

- ❖ 1 member bought some other brand
- ❖ 3 members had death and/or illness in family
- ❖ 1 member is no longer able to travel
- ❖ 1 member moved
- ❖ 4 members have never attended a rally and reason for non-renewal are unknown
- ❖ 2 members' reason for non-renewal is unknown

These members will remain on the list until 2018. If they do not renew in 2018 their WBCCI membership number will be withdrawn and available for re-assignment to a new member. Without these members we have 35 active Regular members. Four (4) members, who have not renewed since 2015, have expired memberships. The audit list contains six (6) new members for 2016.

The Membership Chairs contacted 56 prospective members in 2016. The six new members give us about a 10 % success rate. These contacts include the monthly CPC List we receive from WBCCI of new buyers, Airstream owners we meet on the road in our travels, and in the past included Members At Large (MAL) who lived near our unit. The *Blue Beret* no longer provides location or addresses for MAL.

We send e-mails to new owners from the CPC List if one is provided; if not membership letter and the rally sites, dates, and locations are sent by postal service. We have followed-up with WBCCI post cards if no response is received within month, but this hasn't increased responses.

We should encourage prospective members to attend a rally before joining. This seems to be the best action for retention. We will continue to encourage those members who have not renewed to do so.

GOLF-N-AROUND CARAVAN

By Jim and Shelia Skipper

The Golf-N-Around Caravan will follow the 60th Airstream International Rally in Escanaba, MI. The upper peninsula of Michigan is a beautiful place in the summer and has a lot to offer. It has many beautiful golf courses, museums, lighthouses and tours. There are five stops on the caravan. The caravan will start on August 2, 2017 in Manistique and stop in Munising, Brimley, St. Ignace and end in Mackinaw City on August 22, 2017. We have planned three days at each stop. Each stop will include two days of golfing and one day of touring. We would be happy to answer any questions and love for you to join us.



AMERICAN FRONTIER DAYS RALLY SCHEDULE: F.D. Roosevelt State Park, Pine Mountain, GA

By Karon and Tom Beyer

The region has a wide range of activities to appeal to diverse interests. On-site at the campground, American Frontier Days will highlight pioneer skills and include demonstrations and activities on Saturday and Sunday. A daily schedule is currently under development and will be available soon. Gratefully, our campsites will be a little nicer than the one above!

Next door at Callaway Gardens, US Highway 27, Pine Mountain, GA, (800) 898-4868, www.callawaygardens.com the azaleas should be coming into full bloom. Also offered are daily demonstrations of Free-flight Birds of Prey, the Day Butterfly Center, and TreeTop Adventure Ziplining and Obstacle Course. A visit to the Callaway County Store on the top of Pine Mountain is very worthwhile. Downtown Pine Mountain has many quaint gift and antique shops for shoppers.

Nearby in Warm Springs, are the FDR Museum and Roosevelt's Little White House, 401 Little White House Road, Warm Springs, GA, (706) 655-5870, https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/presidents/roosevelts_little_white_house.html. The Little White House is open daily with special 90-minute in depth tours on Saturday at 9:30 a.m. Both the Museum and Little White House are historic treasures.



Early Bird arrivers (or late stayers) can opt for more local touring and enjoy local restaurants. Two favorites are New Orleans cuisine at Crickets Restaurant, 14661 Georgia Highway 18 West, Pine Mountain, GA, (706) 663-8136 and American cuisine at Bulloch House, 70 Broad Street, Warm Springs, GA, and (706) 655-9068. Below is the preliminary rally schedule.

NOTE: Request a site on Loop 5 when checking in so we will all be together near a covered pavilion.

Friday March 10, 2017

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 5:00 p.m. | Social Hour. Bring your beverage of choice. |
| 6:00 p.m. | Baked Ham Pot Luck Dinner. Please bring a salad, vegetable casserole or dessert to share. |

Saturday March 11, 2017

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 8:30 a.m. | Breakfast of egg casserole, muffins, juice and coffee. |
| 9:15 a.m. | General Business Meeting. |
| 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. | American Frontier Days at F.D. Roosevelt State Park. |
| 5:30 p.m. | Social Hour. Bring your beverage of choice. |
| 6:30 p.m. | Dinner of spaghetti, salad, rolls and dessert. |

Sunday March 12, 2017

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Breakfast snacks. |
| 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. | American Frontier Days at F.D. Roosevelt State Park. |

NOTE: All meals are **Eastern Standard Time**. Please bring eating utensils, dishes and your beverage of choice.



Amy Waymire at sunset at Eastpoint, FL

“The beautiful affair of sun, sky and sea brings a perfect moment of love, peace and joy.”

Umar Siddiqui, author