

THE BIG BENDER

**BIG BEND FLORIDA
UNIT 153 REGION 3**

**AIRSTREAM CLUB
INTERNATIONAL**



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



PRELUDE TO SUMMER

By Jim Weilhammer

The May Rally at Silver Springs State Park promises to be lots of fun. We have record registration and I have fielded three calls from WBCCI members from other units who want to join us, but cannot get reservations at the state park. I am recommending they continue to check the Reserve America website for late cancellations in addition to calling the Park Rangers. There is a private campground across from the state park, Silver Springs Campers Garden RV Resort, 3151 NE 56th Avenue, Silver Springs, FL, (352) 236-3700 that is another alternative. If you decide to stay outside the state park, please remember to contact the rally hosts, RoseMarie and Gary Anderson and Martina Pelley so they can plan for your participation. If you want to tour the Gypsy Gold Horse Farm on Saturday, don't forget to buy your tickets online at www.gypsygold.com. Make a note in the comment box in the online form that you are part of the Airstream Club group.

In addition to touring activities, we are supporting two community service activities at the May Rally. We will be collecting donations of canned food for *America's Second Harvest of the Big Bend* (Second Harvest). Second Harvest is part of a national network of 203 food banks across the country. Their mission is to feed the hungry in 11 counties in the big bend area and to educate and engage the community in the fight against hunger.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued . . .

Last year, they collected 61,852 pounds of food or an equivalent of 4.8 million meals. Most Florida schools recess for the summer in May. Many children will face food insecurity without access to the free and reduced school lunch program. Members are asked to donate a plastic grocery sack filled with the six super foods: canned fruit; canned vegetables; canned meat/poultry/fish; whole grain cereal; hearty soups/stews; and peanut butter. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

In addition, the May Rally may be the last time many of us gather before the summer travel season begins. Please remember to bring in your pull tabs from home. We will donate the tabs at the WBCCI International Rally in July 2017 to benefit children's charities in the host community of Escanaba, MI.

If you are staying home this summer, there are two unit activities planned. The first is an informal dinner on Saturday, June 10th at 6:00 p.m. We will dine at:

Little Italy Pizzeria and Restaurant
Magnolia Courtyard Commercial Center
111 South Magnolia Drive (at Park Avenue)
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(850) 878-7781

The restaurant offers a wide variety of Italian specialties which you can preview at <http://littleitalyally.weebly.com/>. Please contact me by calling (850) 894-4416 or send an email to j.weilhammer@gmail.com by June 3rd to reserve your place.

The second is a Family Day Trip to Florida Caverns State Park, 3345 Caverns Road, Marianna, FL on Saturday, August 26th. There is a cave tour, small museum and hiking trails. It is a great trip for younger children or grandchildren. There are several dining options for us to pick from for lunch after the tour. Please contact me by calling (850) 894-4416 or send an email to j.weilhammer@gmail.com by August 14th so we can determine the level of interest in a day trip and to "vote" for the down home southern buffet at The Oaks or finer dining at the Madison Warehouse.

Plans are still under consideration for a possible unit mini-caravan to Escanaba, MI based on travel requirements and schedules and my health status.

Looking ahead, the reservation window for Ft. Pickens Campground and Cotton Hill are now open for the September and October rallies. We need rally hosts and co-hosts for Ft. Pickens. Please consider volunteering.



RALLY SPOTLIGHT: Cedar Key RV Resort

By Bonnie and Jim Lewis



The April 7-10th rally was held at Cedar Key RV Resort in Cedar Key, Florida. We all agreed it was one of the nicest RV parks we've been to. In town, the *"Old Florida Celebration of the Arts"* was being held and all attendees seemed to make an effort to participate, even if it was just driving through town when most everything had ended! Contrary to reports heard about previous year's events, the crowds were manageable, which made finding a parking space and walking around each booth much easier.

Our hosts for the weekend were Linda and Bill Coleman and Gayle and John Duncan. Also attending the rally were Tom and Karon Beyer; Dick and Ursula Glenn; Jim and Doris Greene; Jim and Pat Hentz; Katherine Kamiya and Jim Weilhammer; Jim and Bonnie Lewis; Martina Pelley; and Gordon Johnson and his guest, Jan Sentman.

On Friday, following the social hour, there was a fantastic pot luck dinner. One new member, Doris Greene, was overheard saying, "I may not know these people yet, but I sure know they can cook"! New dishes were made, old recipes that hadn't been made in a while were there, and gourmet looking and tasting dishes graced the table. No one left hungry and accolades were heard all around.



Gordon Johnson, Jan Sentman, Doris & Jim Greene, Tom & Karon Beyer and Bonnie Lewis.

Saturday started with breakfast of individual sausage and egg muffins and hash brown potatoes. The muffins were beautiful and abundant. Many of us took leftovers back for snacking or breakfast later on.



RALLY SPOTLIGHT: Cedar Key RV Resort continued . . .

The day was free for browsing at the art festival in town and enjoying Tony's award-winning clam chowder. Rumor has it that quarts went home in several camper freezers.



Gayle Duncan, Martina Pelley, Pat & Jim Hentz.



RALLY SPOTLIGHT: Cedar Key RV Resort continued . . .

We stayed behind at the campground with the Coleman's in order to meet guests, Jim and Linda Hockman, new Airstream owners from St. George Island, FL. We had lunch together and encouraged them to join the club.



Linda Coleman, Jim & Bonnie Lewis,
John & Linda Hockman.

Purchases were made and experiences shared over an abundant table of appetizers in the clubhouse.

Gayle bought an elegant silver bracelet, Pat bought a bud vase, and Katherine showed off her origami paper charm bracelet. Martina bought a tiled pelican which we had to imagine as it was wrapped for travel and she steadfastly refused to unwrap it. A description is best left to her!

John Duncan at the appetizer table.





RALLY SPOTLIGHT: Cedar Key RV Resort continued . . .



Bill Coleman as Steve Harvey

For the benefit of our guests, we went around the circle and told a little about ourselves. We learned quite a bit about folks we have known for a long time!

Many of us stayed for a friendly game of Family Feud. Our host, Steve Harvey's half-brother once removed (aka Bill Coleman) kept us in stitches as he tried to keep his moustache on and the rest of us tried to learn the rules of the game and guess the right answers.

Sunday, we enjoyed a tasty continental breakfast and bid farewell to those who were leaving. Some of us stayed on and ventured back into town to enjoy more browsing at the arts festival. Dick and Ursula were the most ambitious, exploring the shell mound and then going for a bike ride. Others just relaxed and visited at the resort. In the late afternoon, Jim and Pat, Gordon and Jan, and Jim and Katherine celebrated Palm Sunday at St. Andrew's Catholic Chapel. Along with Martina, we joined them in downtown Cedar Key at Steamers Clam Bar and Grill, a wonderful seafood restaurant overlooking the Gulf.



On Monday, those who had stayed an extra day, reluctantly parted ways, with another fine rally under our belts.



RALLY RECIPE: Southern Peas and Okra

By Karon Beyer



When I was a young girl, my younger sister and I spent our summers on my grandparent's farm in South Georgia. My grandfather tended his pine trees and grew cotton, tobacco, pecan trees, and sugar cane. My grandmother tended to her cows (Pink, Heart and Bossy), chickens, Guinea hens, and most importantly, her garden. She had peach trees, and grew beans, corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, other assorted vegetables, and peas.

As a child I learned that there were many varieties of peas.....purple hulls, pink eyes, white acre, Crowder, and cream 40's. Grannie grew them all at one time or another. As kids, my sister and I learned how to shuck, peel, shell, slice, and pickle Grannie's wonderful home grown garden delights. But shelling peas was my favorite. To this day I still "put up" vegetables and lots of peas.

For many years I grew a garden at home but in the last few years things have changed. Instead of tilling, weeding, fertilizing, and fighting garden insects, I found a wonderful place in Bainbridge, GA that is a U-Pick farm. They take care of all the labor involved with farming and all I have to do is pick what I want and bring it home to "put up" to enjoy all year long. Guess what? They grow all of the same type peas that my grandmother did! I love this place. I solicit the help of TJ and his 92 year old mother and we sit and shell peas for hours. Last year it was a two-day process and then the next step is the blanching and freezing. This process assures that you will have fresh peas all year long.

When your taste buds tell you it's time for peas all you have to do is go to the freezer and take out a bag and prepare them for pure southern pleasure. Cooking the peas is the easiest part. Let the peas defrost. Add bacon grease and salt to taste and bring to a slow boil and then turn to low to simmer until tender. I like to add whole okra to steam on top of the peas.....it's the icing on the cake. That's all there is to it. If you don't grow your own peas or go to U-Pick farms, you'll have to rely on farmer's markets or the grocery store. It's hard to find frozen field peas. I've seen some in Wal-Mart and Harvey's.....white acre peas mostly. But I know you agree they are worth the search. There's nothing like home grown vegetables. Enjoy!



DESTINATION POINT: NASA Kennedy Space Center

By Jim Hentz

At the conclusion of the Big Bend Florida Rally at Cedar Key, Pat and I traveled to the NASA Kennedy Space Center (Center) for a two-day visit. I had called Jim and Sheila Skipper to find out what campground they used when their caravan visited the Center. They used The Great Outdoors RV Resort (TGO) in Titusville. Their location was very convenient to the Kennedy Space Center. The price included full hookups but no cable or WIFI at the campsite. Pat and I agreed that TGO was a wonderful place to stay and a most unusual one in that there must have been at least 1,000 campsites. All apparently are privately owned (mostly by snowbirds) and each is individualized to the owner's taste. In addition to the campsites, the grounds include a church, a restaurant, individual homes, swimming pools, hot tubs, and more. TGO is a really nice and upscale place to stay.

Well, we got off to the Kennedy Space Center Tuesday morning. The kennel and visitor's center open at 8:30 and the Center opens at 9:00. We dropped Gracie off at the kennel (think prison). She didn't like it at all but..... Then we headed over to the visitor's center to figure out what we needed to see and do before the gates opened. We found out that two different guided bus tours were available so we signed up for the Kennedy Space Center Explore Tour. This is about a 2-3 hour tour of selected launch pads, the Vehicle Assembly Building, and a stop on the NASA Causeway for a panoramic view of the rocket launch sites at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. Our bus tour did not begin until 11:20 so we had a couple hours to visit some of the attractions at the Center campus. The next day we signed up for the Kennedy Space Center Launch Control Center Tour. This is an almost 3 hour tour of the launch control center where engineers perform system checks leading up to a launch. There were some duplication on both tours but was well worth having an expert explain all the technical aspects. The Center is one of ten NASA field centers and has been the leader in human space flight.





DESTINATION POINT: NASA Kennedy Space Center continued . . .

We learned that the launch control center is responsible only for the launch; once the rocket is launched Houston Mission Control Center takes over. Both tours ended at the Apollo/Saturn V Center which means having to board another bus to get back to the Center's main campus. Both tours passed by a tremendous eagle nest that has been in existence for about 50 years. Cape Canaveral has the third largest eagle population in the country and is situated in the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and along the Canaveral National Seashore.

Our time before and after the guided tours on Tuesday and Wednesday was spent touring the visitor center complex. We enjoyed walking about the Rocket Garden that featured rockets that tell the story of Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo missions. There is a Heroes and Legends Hall of Fame that pays tribute to the heroes of the space program.

NASA and Airstream have a shared history. The Apollo 11, 12, 13 and 14 crews were quarantined in a Mobile Quarantine Facility aboard the USS Hornet that was built by Airstream to assure no contamination was brought from the moon to earth. At the Center, there is a museum that had, among many other features, a 1983 Airstream Excella, dubbed the Astrovan. It is a motor home that was used for over 25 years, logging 26,754 miles, transporting our astronauts to their space shuttle.



I enjoyed the IMAX theatre that featured a number of presentations that showcased the past and the future of our space program. Pat and I wandered into the gift shop. I found a great t-shirt that said "I NEED MY SPACE". Alas, I was not allowed to buy it.

We enjoyed our tour of the NASA Kennedy Space Center. Two days would be needed to take in everything assuming one would want to take the bus tour. By early afternoon we were ready to return to the campground and so was Gracie.



FLORIDA SCALLOP AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

By Craig Brinkley



October is a beautiful time to visit on The Forgotten Coast. The sunsets are spectacular! The first weekend in October is normally the Florida Scallop and Music Festival in Port St. Joe, FL. In conjunction with that, I would like to hold a rally that weekend at the El Governor RV Park. This is a small RV park located in Mexico Beach, FL and is right across the street from the Gulf of Mexico. They have 48 sites and they book up fast. By 2019, they will have a new clubhouse/laundry facility for us to use.

I have spoken to the manager about having a rally there. I know it is V-E-R-Y early, but we need to speak for a site before they fill up. The campground is already full for 2018!

I have blocked off 10 or so sites for the weekend of **October 4-6, 2019**. What you need to do is call Marsha at the park at (850) 648-5432. Her email is marsha@sugarsanddays.com. If you have any questions, please call or email her! What she needs is your name, address, length of trailer and 30/50 amp service to put your name on the site. All you are doing is reserving, not paying. **We all know that things change, so we can always cancel out, but for planning purposes, if you think you want to go, please go ahead and reserve NOW.** The more the merrier. After you make reservations, please let me know so that I can keep up with progress!

Here are a couple of websites that can give you more information on the festival and region:

<http://www.scallopfestfl.org/>

<http://www.forgottencoast.biz/>

<https://www.visitgulf.com/>

<http://www.myforgottencoast.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MyForgottenCoast>

<http://mexicobeach.com/>

<http://www.mexicobeachrvpark.com/>



TECHNICAL TIP: Nitrogen Tire Inflation

By Bill Coleman

During one of my many recent trips to J.D. Sander RV, I had a conversation with Wayne in the sales department. In addition to selling Airstreams they are a dealer for Rockwood RV. Unlike Airstreams, the Rockwood RV's are sold with nitrogen filled tires. Wayne reports a 35% reduction in blowouts with nitrogen. That comment made me wonder whether this is something to consider for my Airstream trailer?

I did some additional investigation and found a great article online at **TIRE RACK** .com entitled *"Clearing the Air About Nitrogen Tire Inflation."* Summarizing key points, pure nitrogen inflation of tires is not new. It has been used for years to inflate critical tire applications, such as race cars, heavy-duty mechanical equipment, and commercial and military aircraft. Pure nitrogen is considered an inert, dry gas and does not support moisture or combustion. Over time, it reduces the loss of pressure due to permeation through rubber by about 1/3. Nitrogen's greater stability may reduce blowouts. Nitrogen is gaining acceptance but may not be widely available and currently it may come at a premium cost.

Compressed air that is available in gas stations, tire stores and auto-repair shops is a mix of nitrogen (78%), oxygen (21%) and other gases (1%). Oxygen is considered a fast, active gas that reacts with many materials and when combined with hydrogen will form water which can contribute to corrosion. Compressed air is more reactive to ambient temperature changes and the heat generated by driving. The change is about one psi (pound per square inch) for every 10 degrees of Fahrenheit change in temperature. Compressed air is widely available and often free or very low cost.

The article concluded (as did I):

"Overall, inflating tires with nitrogen won't hurt them and many provide some minimal benefits. Rather than pay extra for nitrogen, most drivers would be better off buying an accurate tire pressure gauge and checking and adjusting their tire pressures regularly."



NATIONAL PARKS SENIOR PASS

By Bill Worthington



The National Parks Senior Pass is a great value for seniors 62 years or older. It provides lifetime access to over 2,000 federal recreation sites managed by the National Park Service, National Wildlife Refuges, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Land Reclamation, and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. To be eligible you must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, be a minimum of 62 years of age and provide proof of age, residency or citizenship.

Passes are available for sale at federal recreation sites for \$10.00 or online at <https://store.usgs.gov/pass/senior.html> for \$20.00, which includes a document processing fee. The National Park Service Centennial Act passed in December 2015 will raise fees to start an endowment to help improve visitor experiences and provides more opportunities to volunteer at federal sites. Fees are expected to rise to \$80.00 sometime this year. Buy your pass now to get the bargain prices.

TRIBUTE TO A GOOD DOG

By T.J. and Karon Beyer

We lost a very close friend last month, our beloved companion, Cassie. She was a rescue puppy when we got her 11 years ago and she quickly had a big place in our hearts. We loved her very much. Cassie was equally at home with the wind in her face on the river boat or curled up in the motor home. She was an accomplished escape artist (just ask Chip and Mary about our trip to Key West last year) but always come back home. Cassie has a special place on a portion of our property that we have sectioned off for our beloved pets that have passed over the years. We already miss her very much on our camping trips. We loved taking her and Gertie along and she so enjoyed going. For those of you who have loved a dog (or cat) you will know what a big hole they leave when they are gone. We miss you Cassie.





*“The sun is the past, the earth is the present,
the moon is the future.”*

*Quoted by inventor Nikola Tesla about
modern science*



BIG BEND FLORIDA AIRSTREAM CLUB

UNIT 153 REGION 3

2017-2018 PRELIMINARY EVENT/RALLY SCHEDULE

As of 04/16/17

If you have any questions or are interested in signing up to be a rally host, please contact Tom Beyer at bucklake@hotmail.com or (850) 509-7231.

To take advantage of off-season rates, please note two rallies have switched locations from the initial draft of the 2017-2018 Preliminary Event/Rally Schedule distributed at F.D. Roosevelt State Park.

NOTE: All rallies are scheduled for Friday-Sunday. Participants can opt to arrive early or stay late.

DATE/HOST	PLACE	DIRECTIONS/NOTES
TBD	<i>Holiday Luncheon</i>	
Fri. January 19- Sun. January 21, 2018	<i>Holiday and New Year Celebration</i> Seminole State Park 7870 State Park Drive Donaldsonville, GA 39845 Reservations: 800-864-7275 State Park: 229-861-3137 http://gastateparks.org/Seminole	Rate: \$30.00/night. Located 16 miles south of Donaldsonville via Georgia Highway 39 or 23 miles west of Bainbridge on Georgia Highway 253/Spring Creek Road. From Tallahassee (approximately 1 hour, 10 minutes) take Highway 27 north into Bainbridge then Highway 253/Spring Creek Road west.
Fri. February 16- Sun. February 18, 2018	<i>Valentine's Day Celebration</i> Eagles Roost RV Resort 5465 Mill Store Road Lake Park, GA 31636 Resort: 229-559-5192 https://www.eaglesroostresort.com/	Rate: \$33.00/night. Advise "Big Bend Airstream" when making reservations for 10% group rate. From junction I-75 (exit 5) and Highway 376, go 500 feet east on Highway 376, then ½ mile south on Mill Store Road.



DATE/HOST	PLACE	DIRECTIONS/NOTES
Fri. March 16- Sun. March 18, 2018	<i>Daylight Savings Time Celebration</i> T. H. Stone Memorial St. Joseph Peninsula State Park 8899 Cape San Blas Road Port St. Joe, FL 32456 Park: 850-227-1327 https://www.floridastateparks.org/park/St-Joseph	Rate: \$24.00/night; Florida residents are half price. Reservations made through https://www.reserveamerica.com up to six months in advance. Reservations fill up so don't wait too long. There is a pavilion close to sites 80 through 95. Stores and restaurant right outside the entrance, and that special sidewalk Donut Shop.
Fri. April 20 – Sun. April 22, 2018	<i>Spring Celebration</i> Salt Springs Recreation Area 13851 Highway 19 N Ft. McCoy, FL 32134 Information: 352-685-2048 Reservations: 877-444-6777 https://www.recreation.gov/camping/salt-springs-recreation-area/r/campgroundDetails.do?contractCode=NRSO&parkId=73853	Senior Rate: \$19.00/night. Reservations can be made through https://www.recreation.gov up to 6 months in advance. Sites 4-22 are around a bath house and are grouped together at the far end and are convenient. There is not a covered pavilion but the sites are concrete and large. We will need a couple of canopy covers for inclement weather. (Beyer's have one.)
Tues. April 24 – Sun. April 24, 2018	<i>Region 3 Rally</i> Myrtle Beach, SC	Please consider volunteering to represent the unit at this rally.
Fri. May 18 – Sun. May 20, 2018	<i>Summer Celebration</i> Gunter Hill Campground 561 Booth Road Montgomery, AL 36108 Campground: 334-269-1053 https://www.reserveamerica.com/camping/gunter-hill/r/campgroundDetails.do?contractCode=NRSO&parkId=71187	Rate: \$18.00/night. Reservations can be made through https://www.reserveamerica.com up to 6 months in advance. There are many things to do around Montgomery, more details at a later date.



DATE/HOST	PLACE	DIRECTIONS/NOTES
Sun. June 17 – Sat. June 30, 2018	61st WBCCI International Rally Oregon State Fairgrounds Salem, OR http://wbcci.org/international-rally/caravans/rallies/international-rally/2018-salem-or/2018-salem-or	Please consider volunteering to represent the unit at this rally.
Fri. September 14- Sun. September 16, 2018	End of Summer Celebration Live Oak Landing 229 Pitts Avenue Freeport, FL 32439 Landing: 877-436-5063 http://rvcoutdoors.com/live-oak-landing/	Rate: Off Season rate: \$45-47/night. -10% off - 5 to 9 units -15% off - 10 to 20 units Advise "Big Bend Airstream" when making reservations.
Fri. October 19- Sun. October 21, 2018	Columbus Day Celebration Hardridge Creek Campground 592 U.S. Government Road Abbeville, AL 36310 Campground: 334-585-5945 https://www.reserveamerica.com/campin/g/hardridge-creek/r/campgroundDetails.do?contractCode=NRSO&parkId=71190	Rate: \$24.00/night. Reservations can be made through https://www.reserveamerica.com up to 6 months in advance.
Fri. November 16- Sun. November 18, 2018	Installation Rally Sugar Mill RV Park 4857 McMillan Road Ochlocknee, GA Reservations: 229-227-1451 http://www.sugarmillrvpark.com/	Rate: \$25.38/night. Advise "Big Bend Airstream" when making reservations