

THE BIG BENDER

**BIG BEND FLORIDA
UNIT 153 REGION 3**

**AIRSTREAM CLUB
INTERNATIONAL**



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



LEWISBURG AND MORE . . .

By Bill Coleman

If you've never experienced an Airstream International Convention, it is definitely worth a go. Nowhere on earth can one experience such masses of Airstreams - in this case glowing amidst the beautiful rolling hills of West Virginia and the true spirit and pageantry of thousands of exuberant Airstreamers. To many, these are yearly reunions with friends made during decades of caravanning with WBCCI.

Region 3 was one of the most represented regions with over 300 members present. The Big Bend Florida Unit was well represented. Gary & RoseMarie Anderson, Carol & Winston Montague, Shelia & Jim Skipper, Elna & Jay Thompson, Ken & Isabel Pollard, Sherry & Jack White, Judy & John White, Martina Pelley, Katherine Kamiya and Jim Weilhammer joined Linda and me in Lewisburg.

Sadly the convention was overshadowed by the devastation of flooding in the area. Those who came early experienced severe storms with power outages. For most of the rally, the local water was not potable. Many local tours were cancelled due to flooding, but there were many seminars, vendors and wonderful nightly entertainment to fill the days. Lewisburg and More is continued on pages two through four.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued . . .

Some ventured out to the scenic Cass Railroad for a day trip.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued . . .

Linda and I enjoyed a tour of the *National Radio Astronomy Observatory* in Green Bank.



Gary Anderson forged the Gorge Bridge Walk high above humanity. RoseMarie Anderson won awards for her photography and Carol Montague won for her Joker skills! At the Region 3 picnic, I accepted a 2015 Superior Merit Unit Award on behalf of past president Jim Hentz.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued . . .

Many felt we Airstreamers were there for a higher purpose. WBCCI members contributed in excess of \$40,000 in relief funds for the area not including thousands of dollars for the local pet shelter and goods and cash for local charities selected before the flood. Many members spent hours unpacking trucks and filling buckets with needed clean-up products for distribution in the area.

Looking ahead to our fall activities, please consider attending our three remaining rallies. We hope to meet and welcome our six new members. It would be great to have good participation to show them how wonderful our Unit is.

RALLY SPOTLIGHT: 59th International Rally

By Carol Montague

This year the 59th Airstream International Rally was held in Lewisburg, WV. It is probably the last one that will end on July 4th (Wally Byam's birthday). Next year the rally in Escanaba, MI will be from July 22 – 29, 2017 and I am told registration is already filling up. An International Rally is a wonderful place to make new friends and renew old friendships, to learn about Airstreams and to explore a new area. It is expected that national caravan leaders will attend the International Rally. Consequently four Big Bend Florida caravan leader couples (Anderson, Montague, Skipper and Thompson) joined others who arrived on June 17th. We had a day of training and review, set up tables where we sat and visited with members telling about our caravan, signing up caravan participants and just enjoying ourselves.



By the formal start of the convention on June 28th, with the presentation of flags at the Opening Ceremony, we were joined by six other Big Bend rigs (Pelley, Pollard, Weilhammer/Kamiya, Coleman, and both White couples). The ten rigs from the Big Bend Florida Unit were spread out all throughout the West Virginia Fairgrounds. The parkers told us they had 45 different areas where they were parking rigs.



RALLY SPOTLIGHT: 59th International Rally continued . . .

We had to make some effort to get together and we did – at Food and Friends Restaurant, a Region 3 picnic, a unit cookout at the Anderson’s, lunch at Angelo’s Restaurant, as well as more informal socializing.



Ken & Isabel Pollard, Gary & RoseMarie Anderson, Martina Pelley, Judy (hand only) & John White and Linda & Bill Coleman (in the background) at Food and Friends Restaurant. Elna & Jay Thompson, Katherine Kamiya and Jim Weilhammer also participated and are out of view at a corner table.

Daytime activities included seminars, news from the Airstream Company and fun diversions like the Pet Show and Ladies Tea featuring models RoseMarie Anderson and Linda Coleman.





RALLY SPOTLIGHT: 59th International Rally continued . . .

Evenings activities were another opportunity to be with friends. The entertainment this year included great storyteller, Bill Lepp, Canadian country singer, Crystal Gale, The Avalon's and the wonderful WBCCI band. They are always amazing and entertained us well.



The Avalon's

At many International Rallies, the silver trailers seem to attract the sun and it becomes the hottest it has ever been for the area. This year was definitely unique. It would seem that we also attract water. Lewisburg is in Greenbrier County and the county was hit with what has been called a 1,000 year flood. With continuous rain over two days and because of the hilly area and many creeks, the water built up quickly. Homes were washed off their foundations and a number of people died with many more re-located to shelters. Greenbrier County was one of the worst hit areas although Lewisburg itself received somewhat less damage than two areas just 8 miles away – White Sulphur Springs and Rainelle. The Airstreamers quickly volunteered and tried to assist in any way they could – both with time and money.

If you have never been to an International you have missed something. They keep getting better!



RALLY RECIPE: Butt Fries

Submitted by Katherine Kamiya

Smokin' Gun is a state fair vendor that opened for participants of the 59th International Rally in Lewisburg, WV. It was conveniently located on the fairground property and Jim and I made a special effort to support a business that provided over \$20,000 in meals to relief workers and families affected by the local flooding. On the recommendation of a number of participants, we tried their specialty, Butt Fries. The name is odd but descriptive. It was classic fair food - not healthy but surprisingly tasty.

Ingredients:

Freshly prepared straight cut French fries

Pulled smoked pork

Cheddar cheese sauce

Sliced green onions

Sour cream

BBQ sauce



Directions:

1. Mound hot French fries on a plate.
2. Sprinkle hot pulled smoked pork over the French fries.
3. Pour bubbling cheddar cheese sauce, to taste, over the French fries.
4. Sprinkle the mound with green onions.
5. Top with a dollop of sour cream.
6. Serve with your favorite BBQ sauce.



CARAVANS – PART 1

Compiled by Katherine Kamiya

Car-a-van (kar' e van'), n. 1. A group of travelers, as merchants or pilgrims, banded together for safety in journeying through deserts, hostile territory, etc. 2. Any group traveling in or as if in a caravan and using a specific mode of transportation, as pack animals or motor vehicles: a camel caravan. 3. A large covered vehicle; van. 4. Brit. a house on wheels; trailer.

The dictionary definition of a caravan includes many of the elements of an Airstream caravan but does not quite capture the essence of what Wally Byam envisioned when he started the caravan movement. The Big Bend Florida Unit has more national caravan leaders than any other WBCCI unit. Four couples – the Thompson's, Montague's, Skippers and Anderson's have extensive experience as caravan participants and leaders of five national caravans - Southwest Adventure, Florida Fantasy, Golf-N-Around, Georgia Plantations and a new caravan under development, the Bourbon Trail. The Big Bender surveyed the unit caravan leaders to gather their wisdom and advice for members thinking about signing up for a caravan or considering a leadership role for an existing caravan or development of a new caravan. This is the first article in a series and will focus on the caravan participant experience.

1. What are the benefits of traveling on a caravan?

- Traveling with like-minded folks who have an awesome hobby – Airstreaming
- Making lifelong *friends*
- Planning and research of an area is done for you with advance reservations for camping and activities
- Always having someone to share a hike, lunch or other experience
- Traveling to places and doing things you probably would not do on your own
- Traveling with others for *safety and security*
- Having help to solve problems as they arise
- *Lower cost* than commercial caravans because leaders are volunteers

2. What are the responsibilities of the caravan participants?

- Coming with a smile, good attitude, flexibility and willingness to step out of your comfort zone
- *Getting involved* and helping make the caravan a success
- Coming with a rig that is in top shape with good tires, full propane tanks and fuel



CARAVANS – PART 1 continued . . .

- Becoming familiar with information in the Driver’s Manual and being on time for scheduled meetings and events
 - *Sharing caravan duties* such a parking, cooking, keeping a caravan journal, hosting getting acquainted meetings, etc.)
 - Keeping the caravan leaders informed about your schedule, and sharing any problems or issues you are having with them first
 - Traveling with 2-3 other units (not a convoy) for *safety and more fun*
3. *For a “first timer” what type of caravan would you recommend?*
- Try a *shorter caravan of 2-3 weeks* first if you haven’t spent more than a weekend in your Airstream
 - If you have driven hundreds of miles and spent many weeks in your Airstream, any length caravan would be comfortable
 - It is surprising how many people’s first caravan is one of the long ones, often Aleyeska or Southwest Adventures – *any caravan that sparks your interest* is the right one to be first!
4. *When should I sign up?*
- Sign up as soon as you have a desire to go – popular caravans often have a two-year plus waiting list
 - *Never be afraid to be on a stand-by list* – experience has shown that we often go through twice as many people before we finalize the actual caravan participants
 - Feel free to contact a caravan leader by email or telephone to get more information to help you decide
5. *What does the kitty fee cover?*
- All expenses related to the caravan that are shared by the members including *camping fees, entrance fees to parks or activity venues and some group meals*
 - Administrative cost to run the caravan such as production of the Driver’s Manual and supplies
 - Advance scouting of the route for the caravan
 - *Mileage reimbursement for the leaders* and other expenses that are not “compensated” by the vendors



CARAVANS – PART 1 continued . . .

6. *Do the leaders get paid to run the caravan?*

- Yes, we get “paid” in all of the thanks we get for running a caravan and by making so many new friends
- *No, it is a volunteer job*
- Leaders do get expense money to cover mileage and do not pay for those activities (camping fees, meals, activity fees) that other caravan members receive
- Negotiations done in scouting trips by the leaders typically lower costs by making the *leaders’ costs complimentary* which in turn reduces the overhead cost to the caravan

7. *What happens if something comes up at the last minute and I can’t go on the caravan?*

- Contact your leader as soon as possible and they will try to work with you
- Each leader establishes and advertises a cancellation policy with dates
- Typically, there is a *small cancellation fee (\$50-\$100)* and if they cannot fill your spot with someone from the stand-by list you will be charged any costs that cannot be recovered

8. *Are there any limitations of traveling on a caravan?*

- Leaders try to have as *few “rules”* as possible but there are a few - letting the caravan leader know if you will miss an event is one and expecting you to arrive at a campground in the time frame given is another
- Activities, travel, and locations are scheduled for the group and you must follow that schedule, however, you *do not have to participate in everything* as long as you inform the leaders with sufficient time to cancel
- Dry camping may be an issue if a CPAP is necessary
- Some activities may not be appropriate for those with limited mobility (but this should not discourage overall participation)
- For some individuals, it’s just not their bailiwick to travel with a group. There IS a schedule on a caravan, and if you are the type who doesn’t want to go with the flow, then *strike out on your own and make a new river*. That’s what Airstreaming is all about!

“If you never sign up, you will never get on a caravan.”

- Jay Thompson



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE BIG BEND



The Big Bend Florida Unit is an active camping group. We have been successful in the past because of the talents of our members and their willingness to volunteer their time. It is the time of year when we are putting together a slate of officers and looking for members who can help in other ways.

Here are a few ways you can help:

- serve as an officer (vacancy for Second Vice President)
- serve as a trustee (vacancies for 1 -year and 2-year trustees)
- serve as committee member
- serve as a host (or co-host) for a rally
- arrange a special event or tour at a rally
- send cards to members who are sick
- mentor a new member
- write an article for the newsletter
- reach out to the local newspaper for club publicity

To volunteer, please contact Tom Beyer at bucklake@hotmail.com or Jim Weilhammer at j.weilhammer@gmail.com.



MEMBER NEWS

The September Rally will be a Buddy Rally at Eagles Roost RV Resort in Lake Park Georgia. This will be a no host rally, but there will be organized events. Friday evening, September 9th plan on a pot luck dinner and Saturday evening, September 10th, will be a restaurant dinner. Plans are being finalized and more information will be provided in a separate email prior to the rally.

In conjunction with the October Rally, tickets are still available for **Swamp Gravy**, the official folk life play of Georgia. Please contact Bill and Linda Coleman at ourplantation@gmail.com before August 14th to reserve your tickets.

It is not too early to reserve your campsite for the 2017 rallies. Registration is now open for the January, February, March, April and May rallies. For more information on each rally site, check the website at <http://bigbendfl.wbccci.net/>. At private campgrounds ask for the Big Bend Florida Unit rate when making your reservations. State and federal campgrounds fill up early, cancellation costs are nominal, and transferring your reservation to another party is possible if your plans change. If you are interested in hosting a rally and designing the schedule of activities, or if you have any questions, please contact Jim Weilhammer by calling (850) 894-4416 or writing to j.weilhammer@gmail.com.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We are very pleased to have new members in the Big Bend Florida Unit and look forward to meeting them soon at an upcoming rally or event.

Dianne and Tom Mallini (#2957)
Gainesville, FL
2016 30' Classic Trailer

Mallen and Tony Komlyn (#12421)
Tallahassee, FL
2016 19' Flying Cloud

Jason and Annette Friedrich (#10926)
Lamont, FL
2013 25' Flying Cloud Trailer

WBCCI NEWS

A new logo for WBCCI was debuted at the International Rally. The new logo changes the club name to the Wally Byam Airstream Club with a tag line featuring Rallies and Caravans (see the August Blue Beret and the front page of The Big Bender). New membership materials are under development to reach the new and younger Airstream buyer and templates for customizable cards and products will be available soon at VistaPrint. WBCCI is working with the Airstream Company to strengthen dealer relations and raise service quality.



Rainbow after all the storms in Lewisburg, WV

"We live in a wonderful world full of beauty, charm and adventures. There is no end to the adventures we can have if only we seek them with our eyes open."

Jawaharlar Nehru, first Prime Minister of India



BIG BEND FLORIDA UNIT 153 REGION 3

2016 RALLY SCHEDULE

BILL COLEMAN, PRESIDENT

Last Updated: 08/07/2016

Please email Bill Coleman at ourplantation@gmail.com and the rally hosts to confirm your participation and site number.

DATE/HOST	PLACE	ATTENDEES	SITES
September 9-11 No host rally	Buddy Rally Eagles Roost RV Resort 5465 Mill Stone Road Lake Park, GA 31636 (229) 559-5192 www.eaglesroostresort.com Suggested activities: adjacent flea market, Lake Park Outlet Mall, Wild Adventures Amusement Park, Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village (45 miles), Farmhouse Restaurant.	Bill & Linda Coleman Annie & Bill Daws Katherine Kamiya & Jim Weilhammer Karon & Tom Beyer Jim & Shelia Skipper Charlie & Annette Hurst Monica & Craig Brinkley John & Gayle Duncan Jason & Annette Freidrich	
October 7-10 Hosts: John & Gayle Duncan	Installation Rally Emerald Lake RV Resort** 698 Enterprise Road Colquitt, GA 39837 (229) 758-9929 www.emeraldlakerv.com Suggested activities: Walking tour of Colquitt murals, Tarrer Inn, 15 S. Cuthbert Street, Colquitt, (229) 758-2888. Contact Bill Coleman before August 14 th to reserve tickets for Swamp Gravy .	** Please reserve your sites through the hosts and <u>not</u> the campground. Bill & Linda Coleman John & Gayle Duncan RoseMarie & Gary Anderson Katherine Kamiya & Jim Weilhammer Pat & Jim Hentz Sandy & Don Wood Mary & Chip Adams Bonnie & Jim Lewis Carol & Winston Montague Chip & Mary Adams Jason & Annette Friedrich	



DATE/HOST	PLACE	ATTENDEES	SITES
November 4-6 Hosts: Rosemarie & Gary Anderson and Linda & Bill Coleman	Live Oak Landing 229 Pitts Avenue Freeport, FL 32439 (877) 436-5063 Rates will be adjusted based on the total number of units participating. Five to nine units will be given a 15% discount; 10 to 25 will be given a 20% discount.	Bill & Linda Coleman Rosemarie & Gary Anderson Jim Weilhammer & Katherine Kamiya Chip & Mary Adams Tom & Karon Beyer Craig & Monica Brinkley Jason & Annette Friedrich	

SAVE THE DATE
FOR THE HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

Saturday, December 10, 2016
Noon Luncheon at
Marie Livingston's Steakhouse
Tallahassee, FL