

What is Wally Doing?

Forward

One of the interesting aspects of the Airstream Forum is the diverse comments made on subjects, sometimes from pear jam, to rivet lines. This posting is no different.

It is my choice to put the answer on the Sierra Nevada Unit's site. This will introduce you to more pictures and history of the Club, Airstream, Wally Byam, Helen Byam Schwamborn, and Caravans.

My answer requires three sections. History! Comments! and Purpose!

Enjoy!



What is Wally doing?

Section One

The picture begins many years before it was taken. A young Wally Byam growing up in Oregon and his relationship with the maternal side of the family. Carrie Biswell Byam was part of the sturdy frontier stock. The Biswell's, among other things, were sheep ranchers. In the summer Wally herded the sheep from Oregon to Idaho. He camped out, lived in the open air, and fended for himself.

Wally continued to hike, camp out, and enjoy roughing it. Wally began manufacturing the Airstream trailer in 1931. This made it possible to camp in style.

My parents Henry and Helen Schwamborn moved to California in 1931. Wally and his first wife Marion took the Schwamborns under their wings. Many weekends were spent camping in the desert, and at one of Wally's favorite areas Del Mar, CA.

Here are several pictures taken in 1933, and later on in the decade.



Wally sitting in tent, Marion holding the flap open (Del Mar, CA).



Wally cooking over a camp fire in front of a "Torpedo" Sitting on the ground my Dad (Henry), sitting in the chair is Bill Blich (a good friend of Wally's), and then Marion (Del Mar).



My Mom, Helen sitting with Marion Byam in front of a "Torpedo".



My Dad, sitting, with Marion standing in from of a "Torpedo."



1935, Del Mar, Helen Sitting in chair

Airstream just wasn't a product, a livelihood, but it was a way of life that Wally enjoyed, practiced and share with family and friends.

Through the years Wally not only camped and traveled in his Airstreams, but he never gave up his love of the outdoors. My first extended time with Wally was in September on 1951 hiking through, up and over the Sierra Nevada's. This was

a prelude to the 1st Caravan and many more Airstream miles. I was the youngest, the shortest, but the fastest...Wally appropriately gave me my nickname, Pee Wee.

From one of Wally's Sierra campouts is the following picture. He dearly loved his burros, Pike and Jenny.



Section Two

You need to see some of the more "fascinating" comments given for "What is Wally Doing." I will limit this section to words, phrases or concepts.

"Nuclear chili, slop jar, morning coffee, potluck bound, watering sheep or cacti, carrying oatmeal, gathering greens, pouring the pasta, very small holding tanks, picking berries, an Easter bunny, Cowboy coffee, goat's milk, #1 and #2, fresh water, shaving bowls, thunder mugs, fetching gasoline, sucking heads, playing Moses, Stella paste, a peace offering, Road Runner gumbo, Mayan sacrificial offering, soapy water, Snookie's play toy, kryptonite-infused green chilies, a Jack and Jill thingy, feeding the burros, Malt-o-Meal, boiled eggs, a Leprechaun and pots of gold, Tres Nanners, a jug of yin, a pot of yang, and last but not least a honey bucket."

The next section will put the real purpose and meaning of the picture for all of us to ponder. And finally there will be the disclosure of what Wally is doing.

Section Three

Is necessity the Mother of Invention? Why did the chicken cross the road? What came first the chicken or the egg? Questions we ask jokingly too frequently to admit to.

We mentioned that the picture was taken in 1933. What does it really stand for? Why does Wally Byam have foresight boiling over from his hindsight?

Let's mention a few words that are today's jargon in the world of Airstream, and the RV Industry.

- ☺ Self Contained Units
- ☺ Grey Water Tanks
- ☺ Black Holding Tanks
- ☺ Caravans
- ☺ Owner's Club
- ☺ Feel Free to Travel
- ☺ Boondocking
- ☺

This is just a partial list that can be derived from the picture.



Helen doing a demo with the "Byam Shower" at Wally's home at St. Andrews Place, 1935

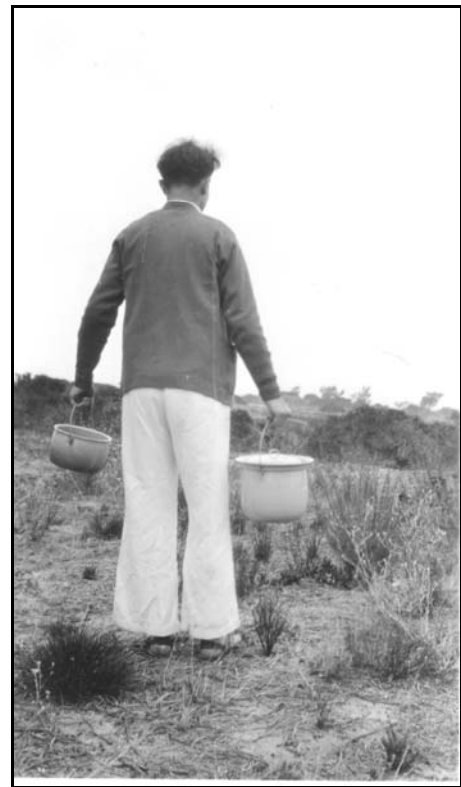
Today you can camp just about anywhere you can tow your Airstream. You no longer carry water. You no longer carry and dispose of your night time duties. Early camping companionships have grown into Caravans and the Wally Byam Caravan Club.

This picture is the story of today's Airstream in the making. It is not so different than the beginning sunrise shot from the movie, *2001, the Space Odyssey*.

Thank you Wally for your camping experience, your manufacturing go-getting, your engineering concepts, and your marketing prowess in always-being-out-in-front of the other competitors.

Thank you with gratitude!

Now the Answer....



Yes, it was the original Porta-Potti. Wally, again ahead of the market.