



# WBCCI - SIERRA NEVADA UNIT - NEWSLETTER

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"The Great Basin Airstream RV Association"

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[Sierra Nevada Airstreams.org](http://Sierra Nevada Airstreams.org)

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Rally and events schedule  
Click on a link below for details

- ◆ Wed. August 5th  
Posser Family Campground  
Truckee, CA
- ◆ Thur. Sept. 24th  
Obsidian Dome  
June Lakes, CA
- ◆ Oct. 6th Region 12  
Rally Silver City  
RV Resort, Minden
- ◆ November 14th  
Overland in  
Gardnerville, NV

## Weed Heights Highlights

We couldn't have asked for better weather than we had for the SNU July rally at Weed Heights. Although with electricity we could run air conditioners if they were needed, temps in the upper 70's to mid 80's were so much more enjoyable than temps around 100. This weekend was the tail end of a series of days with rain showers. We had a few showers on Friday and also Saturday night. Always a treat to hear rain on the roof of your Airstream. The park sits up



on a hill. We had a panoramic view of the clouds and thundershowers moving across the valley and coming over the mountains behind us. As usual for the SNU, we had a lot of good eats. Friday's dinner included slow cooker pulled pork with strawberry shortcake for dessert. Saturday on a short trip to town, Jerry got inspired to have what he called Nevada style surf 'n' turf for dinner. He and Dyann also stopped by the



local bakery before heading back to the park. Jerry grilled teriyaki marinated tri-tip and fresh snapper for dinner. A variety of salads and watermelon contributed to the meal. For dessert we had a delicious strawberry and rhubarb pie with whipped cream. We invited Mark and Carrie, the new managers of the park to join us for dinner. They are great people and consider the park their "front yard". From the looks of things, the park will continue to be well cared for. All in all it was a nice relaxing weekend.

## 2016 Membership Renewal

It's time to renew your membership in the SNU and WBCCI for 2016. Starting this year, renewals can be done **online through WBCCI**. Be sure to indicate that your home Unit is the Sierra Nevada Unit (#157) and that you include the SNU dues of \$10 plus the WBCCI dues of \$65. If you prefer to pay by check, you can print the PDF form available on the WBCCI website and mail that with your check to WBCCI. You can also mail your dues check to the SNU at 716 Terra Ct, Reno, NV 89506 or pay at an SNU rally or luncheon. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact us at [hq@sierranevadaairstreams.org](mailto:hq@sierranevadaairstreams.org).

## Region 12 Newsletter

Check out the **July Region 12 newsletter**. Contents include an overview of the WBCCI Rally in Farmington and the delegates meeting. It also includes information on the October 2015 Region Rally in Minden, NV

## Joint Rally with NorCal at Prosser

The first ever joint rally with NorCal will be at **Prosser Family campground** near Truckee Off Hwy 89. The dates are Wednesday August 5 to Sunday 9, 2015. Hopefully you have reserved your site and will be joining us for this rally. SNU members Don and Gail and NorCal members Claudette and George have come up with a full agenda for this weekend. They have managed to create a unique event combining ideas and rally styles of two very different Units. Among the many activities that may be on the agenda are: A trip to nearby Independence Lake Nature Preserve, a sourdough pancake breakfast for Saturday morning with a short discussion of sourdough a possible evening at Sand Harbor to see the musical "Fantasticks", a trip to go up the Squaw Valley gondola to do some hiking from Squaw Valley's High Camp, discussions of Water Use Management, Unexpected Repairs, Electrical System Management and other things associated to boon-docking. Don also plans on a slide show of the Alyeska the Great Land Caravan that he and Gail went on in 2014. It seems most of the sites in the campground have already been reserved so if you can't make the rally, consider coming up for a visit sometime during the weekend.



## Airstream Trailers

What makes WBCCI unique is the Airstream trailer and the fact that the club is the oldest single product RV club still in existence. This is a compilation of comments about Airstreams from various people and historical documents. [Check the website](#) for photos and information about early Airstream trailers provided by Pee Wee from the Estate of his mother, Helen Byam Schwamborn.

**From the 1952 Issue of Neil Vanderbilt's newsletter Vagabonding with Vanderbilt** - A word about my new landliner Commodore IV. It was built especially for me by Airstream Trailers in Los Angeles. Wally Byam, head of the company is travelling with me on this first shakedown cruise, It is 33 feet long, is made of aluminum and fibre-glass, done entirely in the modern manner, and in the famous colors of my great, great, grandfather Commodore Vanderbilt's blue and white. The interior decorative scheme is the work of Charles Criqui, Jr. of Buffalo and Beverly Hills, Calif. The main cabin seats 12 comfortably. The top feature of the new Commodore IV is the astradome, a



clear plexiglass bubble from which I can take motion pictures either through the bubble or rolled back through the opening above the heads of the crowds. It gives the Commodore IV a rocket-ship appearance. We have gas-refrigeration from our own butane supply, TV and radio, a practical and luxurious bathroom, places for all my many trunks and bags and a short-wave, two way phone-service.

The names of all the principal places that the previous Commodore trailers have been to are lettered around the sides. It has plenty of picture windows, making it a perfect goldfish bowl for the crowds that are always peering in.

**Pee Wee found a note in his files written by Wally Byam** describing his definition of a travel trailer "A travel trailer is one whose unladen weight is not more than the normal passenger car that tows it. Used mainly for travel and not as a residence exclusively and legally towable without permits in any state in which it is used."

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## Upcoming 2015 Events

- Prosser Family campground - Truckee Wednesday August 5 – Sunday 9, 2015
- Obsidian Dome - June Lakes, Thursday September 24 – Sunday 27 2015
- Region 12 Rally Silver City RV Resort - Minden, October 6-11, 2015
- Overland - Gardnerville, Saturday November 14, 2015
- Bavarian World - Reno Saturday December 12, 2015

## Airstream Trailers

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**The bulletin for the 1957 WBCCI Caravan to Mexico written by Wally Byam** "An Airstream trailer can go over any road. Only in a few places will your trailer ever be hooked up to electricity or water from a hose."

**Wally Byam - Trailer Travel Here and Abroad** "Several things surprised those of us who started building trailers commercially in the early days. \* The ease with which they could be towed. \* The apparent unlimited number of gadgets that could be incorporated into trailer design \* The way folks took to trailers, even during the depression years...."

**Bob Cummings - introduction to the book *Airstream*** "Somewhere in this book, someone lauds the founder of the Airstream Trailer for finding a way to camp without sleeping in cow patties. The rest is history. Americans in the 1930s and 40s began packing their belongings into twenty, then thirty-foot riveted aluminum wagons and hitting the road."

Airstreams are the only travel trailers made that have stood the test of time. They continue to prove their durability and appeal. Airstreams are one of the few, if not the only travel trailers that people seek out regardless of age. Vintage Airstreams that are 50, or 60 years old or even older are highly prized and very often, lovingly restored. There are several SNU members who can attest to the appeal of vintage Airstreams. Among them are Barney & Marybeth with their 1951 Cruisette and Brian & Jeni with their 1954 Cruiser. Both have recently been restored. Take a look at these Airstreams and many others in the [Show-N-Tell section](#) of our website. Also check out some experts from [early Airstream promotional brochures](#). If you are ever in Jackson Center, OH schedule a tour of the [Airstream factory](#) and see how Airstreams are made today.

## Automotive Tech: They don't build them like they used to.

This was [written in 2011](#). Since then even more advances have been made in automotive technology that enhance the driving experience and increase safety.

*Popular Mechanics* lists [23 Ways Your Car Is Better Than Your Dad's – Auto Industry News – Popular Mechanics](#) and *Wired* lists ten examples of [Hidden Tech That Makes Modern Driving Better](#). A lot of these items increase comfort and reduce fatigue and are in tow vehicles as well as the everyday automobile.

Active noise canceling systems and acoustic glass help make for a quieter ride. Direct and minutely controlled fuel injection along with turbo charging systems provide more power for less engine at better fuel efficiencies. Integrated GPS is being used to determine sun angle and adjust climate control. Magnetorheological dampers adapt the suspension for driving conditions. Security is improved making vehicles a more difficult target for thieves. Sound systems make the stereo of yesteryear, even the home ones, look rather anemic and low-fi.

The reliability is also a target. Engine alternators are producing 1.6 kw and fan belt driven pumps are moving to electrical. Tires get better traction, are less prone to damage from road hazards, and last longer. Engines and drive trains often come with warranties up to five times (or more) as long as they did in the past.

They don't build them like they used to and much of the improvement is behind the scenes and stuff we take for granted.



## An Academic View of WBCCI

In 2005, while doing research for a presentation, Charles Booth who is with Bristol Business School at the University of the West of England came across our website. Charles areas of expertise include: Cultural History, Cultural Heritage, and Historiography. His presentation was titled *Tin Can Tourists or Cold War Caravanserai? Wally Byam, The Airstream, and The WBCCI*. Although I haven't seen the final presentation, Charles provides an interesting perspective on Wally Byam and WBCCI. The Abstract for this presentation, along with other [information from Charles](#) can be found on our website. In brief, Charles had three goals for this presentation. The first was to explore the social, cultural and technological developments in the evolution of the travel trailer prior to the incorporation of Airstream. The second was to explore what Charles saw as the "combined values of ingenuity, entrepreneurship and the technical excellence of the American engineer with a secular evangelism concerning travel, adventure and wilderness; and with a commitment to camping as a communal activity." The third goal was to "assess whether Byam and the WBCCI can unambiguously be classified as *cold warriors*." In this part he discusses the concept that the caravans were "about putting Airstream, Byam and the WBCCI on display to the world as a form of cultural diplomacy, as much as they were about self-discovery through travel and adventure." I don't think other than Booth's presentation, these perspectives on RV travel, WBCCI, and Wally Byam have been explored. It makes for an interesting addition to RV and WBCCI history.



Wally's Caravan Post Card Number One - Europe 1956

## Numbers and Names

Mike Orchard has been introduced in previous [SNU newsletters](#). He has a unique hobby that has enabled him to compile a comprehensive and one of a kind history of WBCCI. Mike's hobby is documenting WBCCI membership numbers, who the numbers belonged to and rallies and caravans the Airstream with that number participated in.



He got started with this hobby in 1966 when he was 6 years old. He and some friends visited a rally in his hometown of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia and sold raspberries and blackberries to the Caravanners. In addition to logging and documenting membership numbers, Mike has also compiled a very interesting list of vanity plates he has seen on Airstream RV's and tow vehicles. Some examples from his lists include: 4 US @, Tin Box, EZ LIVN, SLVTNT, 64AIR, and BLIMP. [Check our website](#) for more on Mike's special hobbies and lists of vanity plates.

Keep informed about the Sierra Nevada Unit - select any of the following links.

[SNU newsletter and article information](#)

[SNU 2015 Rally Schedule - Mark your calendars](#)

[SNU Facebook Page](#)

[What's new on the SierraNevadaAirstreams.org](#)