



WBCCI - SIERRA NEVADA UNIT - NEWSLETTER

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"The Great Basin Airstream RV Association"

May 2015

Sierra Nevada Airstreams.org

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Rally and events schedule

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- ◆ [June 11th Sweetwater Summit Hwy 338 NV](#)
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Fort Sage Rally Review

We got the full variety pack weatherwise at the Ft Sage Rally. Thursday was almost perfect. Warm, sunny, and almost no wind. From then on we got a little thunder, lighting, winds, rain, snow, and colder temps. By Sunday once again we had clear sunny skies. I guess this was the SNU way of celebrating Earth Day. Celebrate we did! We celebrated in being together in such a beautiful spot, by initiating Jerry & Dyann's Moho as the SNU alternative dining room, and we celebrated by having a great time regardless of the weather. We had both our Friday and Saturday dinners in Jerry & Dyann's Moho as it was just too windy to be outside. It worked out really well so I guess we'll let them keep that moho, at least for the time being.

One of the neat things about Ft Sage other than the panoramic views, are the wildflowers. There was an abundance of lupine, paintbrush, primroses and other flowers. The place has undergone some more updating since we were there two years ago. The biggest improvement was leveling out the large parking area. We all hope the BLM doesn't get carried away though with improvements. It's now just about a perfect spot for an SNU rally. Because of the weather, we all spent time tucked in our Airstreams, reading, napping, playing games, and indulging in other indoor activities. During breaks in the weather we gathered outside. Friday morning we had a nice campfire. Also on Friday, Gary, Anita, and Diane took a short ride to check out the new parking/camping area at Ft Sage. It was very nice but too small for the SNU. They also drove up the hill where you can get magnificent views of Long Valley. Saturday afternoon, Gene and various grandkids rode some of the trails on his ATV. They also got in a little target practice. Sunday morning although a little cool, was sunny and calm.



Just right for one last campfire before heading home. We had five Airstreams at the Ft Sage rally. Participants included Gary & Anita, Bryan & Diane, Jerry & Dyann, Gene & Carmen (and grandkids) and Randy & Vicki. We all had thoughts of Bruce and Kathy. Bruce's introduction to the SNU was meeting Randy & Vicki at Ft Sage. In 2013, Bruce & his wife Kathy attended their only SNU rally with their Airstream at Ft Sage. Tragically a month after that rally they were both killed when their vintage Cessna crashed. Ft Sage is one of our favorite sites. There is sure to be more rallies at this location in the future.

Sierra Nevada Unit Business

Item 1: Don Williams has been asked to be the SNU delegate for the 2015 WBCCI meeting at the International Rally in July. He will be confirmed at the May SNU rally.

Item 2: [Check the recent email from the Region 12 President](#) with some time sensitive information and a PDF of a proposed WBCCI constitution amendment

May at Lassen RV Resort



This will be the first SNU rally at Lassen RV Resort. The dates are Thursday May 14 – Sunday May 17, 2015. Lassen RV Resort is a full service venue. The parking spots are large and level with lots of space between sites. Lassen RV Park is located approximately 175 miles North of Reno. It is eight miles east of McArthur, CA. and one mile off Hwy. 299. If you haven't already, contact Randy (randyg@pyramid.net.) to make a reservation to guarantee a site close in to rally central. Nevertheless, any last minute rally participants will be welcome. The rally will include the usual SNU shared meals on Friday and Saturday evening. Friday's dinner will be a BBQ. Everyone should bring their own meat

to BBQ. Saturday we plan on a brunch with Randy's special waffles. If someone has a back up waffle iron they could bring, that would be a big help. Rally participants could also bring some berries or melons for the brunch. Happy hours and other activities will depend on the whims and motivations of the rally participants. We haven't planned any specific tours for this rally but there are all sorts of possibilities. There are lots of nearby places for sightseeing. The park has some nice hiking trails. The park has a large enclosed picnic building that will be a good backup for meals and other activities. This will be a pretty special rally in a scenic part of Northeastern CA. We hope you have rsvp'd so you can join us at the rally and also provide your input about considering Lassen RV Resort for future SNU rallies. Randy plans on bringing the **SNU diorama** he and Vicki created in 2006 for the 30th Anniversary of the SNU. If you haven't seen this amazing creation, come to Lassen and check it out.



Park entrance and office

Region 12 Cali Rally

Don and Gail Williams #14207

The National Hobo Rally held at Blythe, California ended its 55-year or so reign, attendance having dwindled from several hundred of rigs at its peak to numbers in the 50s in 2014 with most coming from it's home region. Region 12 committed to a new rally for 2015, maybe not on the scale of the once popular Hobo, but a rally that would draw it's own WBCCI members in droves. The rally committee delivered with the 2015 Cali Rally at the Camatta Ranch outside of Santa Margarita, California with 58 rigs or more in attendance including SNU families and two couples from our Alaskan Caravan. Not recalling everyone I won't list any to avoid embarrassment.

The ranch access dictated an International Rally like Bull Pen just off the highway, the road through the ranch being one lane wide. We, Dan Randall and another rig were led almost immediately 1.3 miles through the ranch proper; past the main house, the entertainment stage and ranch dining area, maintenance and out buildings, animal corrals, bird enclosures and side roads to rally central. Rally central was a large grove of oak trees where programs, entertainment, breakfast, dinners, and campfires brought the guests together. Rigs were somewhat circled around rally central in the historic Wally Byam style. Another Wally similarity, one that SNU members experience but new to most attendees, was boon-docking or dry camping in a farmers field.

Thursday evening featured happy hour, hamburger/hotdog dinners and a young local girl, runner up fiddle champion, sang and entertained us while the campfires crackled to life. At dusk our Alaskan caravan friends walked along the ranch roads and spied a small herd of wild boar, luckily headed away from their location (note the ranch owners lead javelina hunts all year long).



Friday brought a breakfast of coffee/tea/hot chocolate, juice, muffins and yogurt, a hay wagon tour of the ranch and early seminars on Pre-Travel Checklist and Light Maintenance, and Bringing the Indoors Outside (trending to Glamping). Evening brought social hour and mixer, a featured chili cook-off, campfire and the ranch family's daughter entertaining us with song, guitar and ukulele. Those of us that did not compete in the chili cook-off provided side dishes; I am positive my scratch made Caramelized Onion Sourdough Biscuits would have taken a prize if not limited to chili competitors!

Saturday brought the norm of hot wake up drinks, biscuits and gravy, leftover juice and yogurt and another tour of the ranch. Early afternoon featured Olive Oil and Vinegar Tasting and archery with local professionals coaching the guests. Late Saturday evening we were driven and carried by wagon to the ranch stage and dining area for social hour and mixer (a vintner sold boxes of her own local wine for us to enjoy and take home), barbequed chicken and tri-tip (ranch raised), beans and side dishes and home made berry crumble for dessert. A local band entertained us with a wide variety of old rock, folk and country music throughout the evening.

On Sunday a couple of guest slipped out early but most stayed to enjoy a special treat; breakfast was home made Old Fashion Oatmeal with a dip of ice cream, brown sugar, raisins. Rally guests started leaving after 9 AM with a few staying overnight at the ranch. Overall, everyone I talked to thought it was a great rally and were bragging on their ability to camp in comfort with only their Airstreams, generators and solar panels. With the exception of making chili or our support dishes for Friday evening, we didn't have to lift a finger except to eat, drink and recreate!

Rumor is they want to host another rally here; the pasture has room for more than 100 rigs. They may skip a year or two while they visit other locations but the boon-docking Cali Rally was a great success. We'll be back when they come here again.

[Check out more of Don's pictures of the Cali Rally](#)

Upcoming 2015 Events

Lassen RV Resort - McArthur CA,
Thursday May 15 – Sunday May 17, 2015

Sweetwater - Sweetwater Summit on Hwy 338 NV
Thursday June 11– Sunday June 14 2015

WBCCI International Rally - Farmington, NV
June 28 – July 4, 2015

Weed Heights - Yerington NV,
Thursday July 9 - Sunday July 12, 2015

Prosser Family campground - Truckee CA

Wednesday August 5 – Sunday 9, 2015

Obsidian Dome - June Lake CA,
Thursday September 24 – Sunday 27 2015

Region 12 Rally Silver City RV Resort - Minden NV,
October 6-11, 2015

Overlander - Gardnerville NV,
Saturday November 14, 2015

Bavarian World - Reno NV
Saturday December 12, 2015

Don Damoth



On April 18 I received an email from Don Damoth's daughter, Becky. Here is what she had to say:

"My father passed away on April 12 while riding his bike with my brother Paul. He was riding happily and having a great time, laughing with my brother when he was stricken by a heart attack. He had just had a wonderful birthday party with family and friends the day before when he turned 80. He had an incredible life and enjoyed having adventures with many of you. His friends enhanced his life and he told us many stories about his life with you."

Don and his wife Mary Lou were avid Airstreamers and long time SNU members. Their three kids grew up traveling in Airstreams. Don served in various board positions with the SNU, including president in 2006. He was also editor of the newsletter for many years. Don and Mary Lou were instrumental in helping the SNU **through some rough years**. In 2002 the SNU had only 3 active members. It was Don & Mary Lou, along with Fred & Ann Hersey and Bryan & I, who decided we liked camping together with our Airstreams so we'd keep on going and see what might happen. At that time the only suggestions given to the SNU were to fold or merge with another Unit. We all felt neither of those were viable options. It was Don and Mary Lou who suggested Twin Lakes as a rally site. The SNU held several very successful rallies there. Don and Mary Lou also organized an SNU picnic at Spooner Lake. One year they hosted a special Christmas celebration at their house. Don was the one that created the SNU logo for the 30th Anniversary of the Unit. Don provided us with a little excitement at a rally at Boca Springs in 2005. He was gathering fire wood when a freak accident severely cut his thumb. Bryan took him and Mary Lou to the hospital in Truckee where a surgeon who was very familiar with hands and other body parts being cut by snow blowers, had just the expertise needed to fix Don right up. Bryan brought Don and Mary Lou back to Boca Springs and they enjoyed the rest of the rally.



Don and Mary Lou had moved from Reno to Henderson, NV a few years ago to be closer to their daughter. They still kept in touch with Don's annual Christmas letter. This picture of Mary Lou and Don was taken in March 2015. Don and Mary Lou were high school sweethearts. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2008. Don will be greatly missed by his family and by his many friends including those in the SNU.

Joint Rally with NorCal Unit

SNU members, Don and Gail will be working with NorCal members George and Claudette to make the first joint rally a pretty special event. The rally will be held at Prosser Family Campground near Truckee, CA. The dates are **Wednesday August 5 – Sunday 9, 2015**. If you haven't already reserved your site, now is the time. Although the campground doesn't open till the end of May, you can make reservations online right now. **Check the website for more information and links to make reservations.**

Firewood Available

Retired SNU members Fred and Ann Hersey recently contacted me and said they have an abundance of firewood. They would like to give it to the SNU for campfires. Ann said that although they can no longer attend rallies, this would be a way for them to be there in spirit. Fred and Ann live off Hwy 395 a little south of Gardnerville/Minden. If anyone is heading that way and can pick up some firewood for SNU rallies, let me know (hq@sierranevadaairstreams.org) and I'll give you details on how to get in touch with Fred and Ann.

Helen Byam Schamborn

The information in this article comes from phone and email conversations with Helen's son Dale (Pee Wee) Schwamborn and also from documents and other memorabilia from the Estate of Helen Byam Schwamborn.

Who is **Helen Byam Schamborn**? In short, she was Wally Byam's first cousin. Their fathers were brothers, Bert and Ray Byam. As children and young adults Wally and Helen had little contact. That all began to change in the late 1920's through a series of circumstances.

When you learn more about the Byam family and especially their outlook on the world, you can begin to understand the characteristics that made both Wally and Helen uniquely appropriate to create and develop a product and a club that has stood the test of time. As Pee Wee says "It was an inside thing for Wally to remind my Mother that she was a Byam and a Byam can do it, or she would remind Wally that he was a Byam. This ongoing family affirmation meant something. To be a Byam was positive and full of the can do attitude to accomplish things. Helen was Wally's confidant. She listened, she 'had sage', Wally valued her, her opinions, her work ethics, and he valued her as someone he could count on"

It was this "can do" attitude helped Helen learn how to tow an Airstream. Wally told his "little cousin" (as he always fondly called her) that there was nothing to towing a trailer, if you can drive a car, you can tow a trailer. Besides that he told her, you're a Byam. Helen hitched up her Airstream and headed cross country to go on a caravan. She towed for tens of thousands of miles, crossing the United States too many times to count. She towed #2 (her Airstream number) to Europe, Canada, and Mexico. Often she traveled with her son (Dale), a niece or a friend. However, she did all of her own towing and driving, almost unheard of for a woman of the 1950's and 1960's.

When the participants of the 1955 caravan of Eastern Canada started talking about creating a club, Wally asked Helen to join the caravan. He needed someone to take over the mechanics and the administrative demands for a Club, especially since he had to leave the caravan to go to Europe.

Among Helen's many contributions to the club over the years:

- She organized all of the early Caravans, including those to Mexico, Central America, the 1956 European Caravan, the 1959 African Caravan and the 1963 Around the World Caravan.
- As one of the founding members of the WBCCI, Helen led a caravan, was the first editor of the Blue Beret and she created the first club directory, the first club history, and first song book.
- Helen was writer and editor of the newsletter "The Caravanner",
- She sat on the Airstream board of directors.
- She led the Wally Byam Foundation.

When on a caravan or at a rally, Helen's door was always open. She was the one people came to anytime, night or day, when there was a problem or something needed to be straightened out. Helen, along with Wally's wife Stella, were the ones who occasionally had to smooth ruffled feathers which Wally once in a while stirred up with his exacting and sometimes cantankerous manner.

Helen retired from WBCCI in 1979 at age 75. She was 99 when she died in 2004. The quote made at her Bakersfield Memorial Service, probably sums up whom she was.



"She never met a stranger!" Few of us can present this to people we have never met. My Mom was such a remarkable person. A Mother, a business lady, a friend, a confidant to many people. Those that knew her loved her very much. She really was an asset to Airstream and the Club."

I say this not just because she was my Mother, but was an extraordinary human being. - Pee Wee

This photo is the 1960 organizational rally of the Arizona Unit. Helen is standing on the left, kneeling on her left is J. Aubrey Lyons (deceased) past International President. My Grandmother Jo Harrison is standing behind Helen's left shoulder. My Grandfather is standing on the right. Standing on the far right is "Pop" Riley first president of the WBCCI - This photo is from Jo & Bryan Harrison's memorabilia



Helen Byam Schamborn



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