

RALLY & CARAVAN SEASON IS COMING, ARE YOU READY?

- Sierra Nevada Unit Newsletter Editor Don Williams KD6UVT #14207

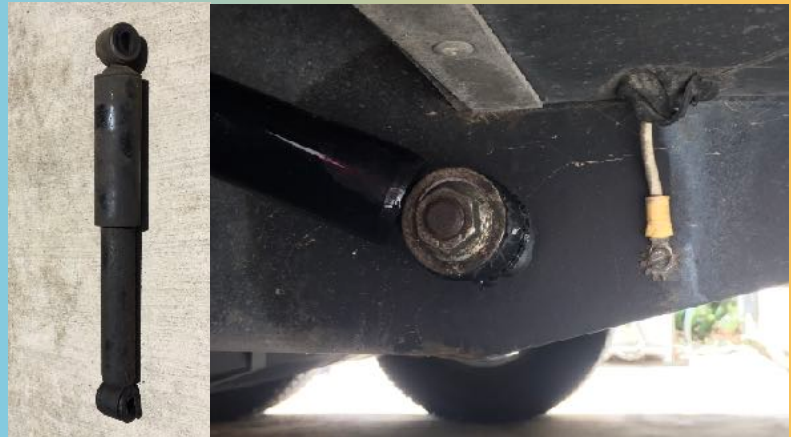
I hope you have been making good use of your time over the winter. Now's the time to invest your own elbow grease in prepping your trailer for the opening of travel season. Come prepared to learn and get your hands dirty at the Joint Lake Tahoe and Sierra Nevada Maintenance Rally at Weed Heights RV Park in April. Here are some tips culled from various Airstream and other sources so you're prepared.



Take a look at our Airstream, it looks like it's 10 years old and over 140,000 miles of bumps and bruises. It's been swept out, floors mopped and polished, walls wiped down, stove cleaned (I feel like a domestic). After that it was washed outside, Walbrornized and cleaned and polished all the plastic vents, skylights and marker light lenses. I'm done and ready to caravan right? Well maybe not, it looks ready to hit the road but is it?

There was one hint of work needed on the inside, I needed to replace about 20 rivets in the dinette, head,

bedroom and even in the closets and overhead lockers. Many of the broken rivets were on the curb side; old, worn and out of balance tires? No, all have been replaced over the last few years. But there was a tell-tale sign under the trailer, oil stain on the curb side front shock absorber and on the frame at the mounting stud, all those miles have taken their toll on the shocks. Only time will tell but four new shocks from "Out-of-Doors Mart", the online parts store for Airstream of Greensboro, North Carolina, at a great sale price and two days delivery to California should fix the problem! Set aside three hours installation time to also rotate and air up the tires, torque lug nuts and inspect the wheel wells, belly pan and the various water tank enclosures for missing rivets and bolts, dents, gouges, etc. (we've been on a lot of roads worse than those found at Sierra Nevada Unit rallies). I've replaced 40% of the belly pan rivets over the years so I had a jump start there, all were good.



Bearing & Brakes

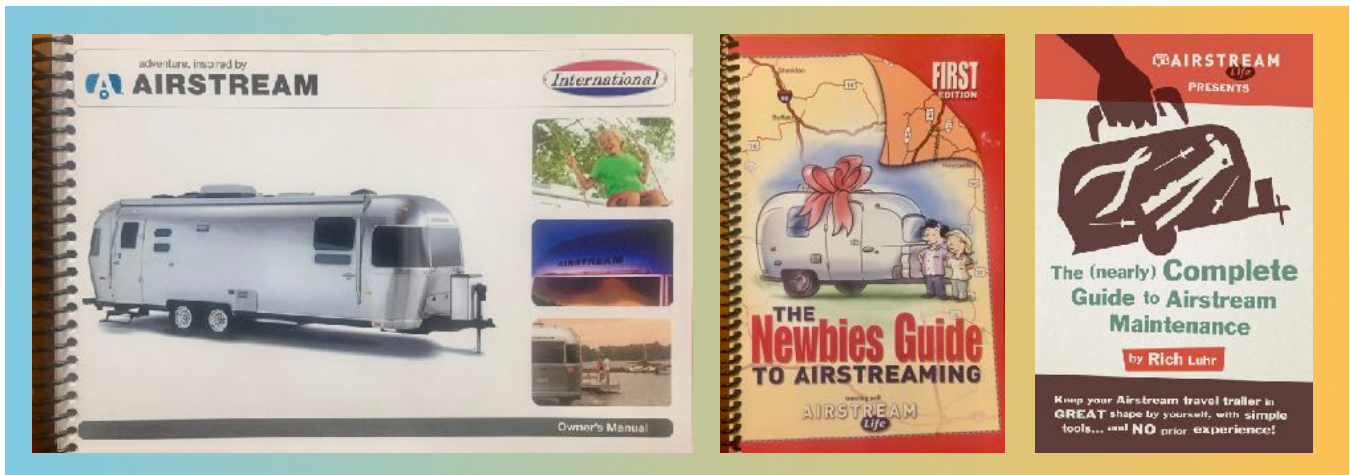
Did I leave anything out? Bearings and brakes; older model Airstreams have separate inner and outer wheel bearings and manual adjusting brakes so bearing removal, inspection, cleaning, repacking and adjusting is important. Brake shoes should be cleaned and inspected and then adjusted or replaced as necessary. Don't forget inspecting the brake drums, both the braking surface for the shoes and the flat surface for the magnets. The drums can be turned by a brake shop but if worn or grooved too deep the whole hub/brake drum will need to be replaced. What about us with newer trailers, we have Dexter's Nev-R-Adjust Brakes and NEV-R-LUBE bearings? We are good right? Maybe not! Airstream still recommends that the bearing and brakes be checked every 10,000 miles or every 6 months. The inner and outer bearings are now part of a cartridge that is pressed into the hub/brake drum. While we can't adjust them we can check for leaking grease (not typical) or freeplay in the bearings. Too much play or leaking grease and they should be replaced, either by a competent person or shop. Any of us can replace the entire hub/brake drum (pricey \$\$\$) but

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it takes a large hydraulic press if only the bearing cartridge is replaced. Regarding the Nev-R-Adjust Brakes, we clean and inspect them for damage and wear, magnets and drums too; replace as necessary.

Am I done now? Well maybe. With the mild winter climate, Gail and I never really winterize our Airstream so we don't need to sterilize, flush and fill although it is a task we do once a year since the Airstream is also our earthquake kit with water, power, food and clothing. But there's more, I've summarized your tasks from the **AIRSTREAM OWNER'S MANUAL** to save you the time trying to find yours but you can also use **THE NEWBIES GUIDE TO AIRSTREAMING** (included in the briefcase of manuals in some late model Airstream) or **THE (NEARLY) COMPLETE GUIDE TO AIRSTREAM MAINTENANCE**, both by Rich Luhr from Airstream Life.



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from the **AIRSTREAM OWNER'S MANUAL**

EVERY 5000 MILES OR 90 DAYS

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|-----------------------------|--|
| • Exterior Door Locks | Lubricate with dry graphite; |
| • Exterior Hinges | Lubricate with light household oil < 3-in-One or CorrosionX ; |
| • LPG Hold Down | Lubricate with light household oil; |
| • LPG Regulator | Check bottom vent for obstructions, dirt, dead bugs and webs; |
| • Main Door Striker Pocket | Coat with paraffin <spray internal lock pivots and linkage with CorrosionX>; |
| • Wheel Lug Nuts | 110 ft-lbs for alloy wheels, 100 ft-lbs steel wheels, check your manual; |
| • Break Away Switch | Pull pin and lubricate with household oil; |
| • 7-Way Plug | Spray with contact (electrical) cleaner; |
| • Hitch Ball Latch | Lubricate with non-detergent motor oil; |
| • Hitch Ball | Lubricate with hitch ball lube or wheel bearing grease; |
| • Range Exhaust Hood | Clean fan blades and wash filter; |
| • Roof Vent Elevator Screws | Lubricate with light household oil |
| • Main Door Step | Lubricate moving part |

EVERY 10,000 MILES OR 6 MONTHS

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|--------------------------|--|
| • Brakes | Inspect, adjust or replace; |
| • Wheel Bearings | Clean and repack; |
| • Tires | Inspect and rotate <check and adjust air pressure, Editor>; |
| • Spare Tire Carrier | Lubricate moving parts; |
| • Seals, Windows & Door | Clean with mild detergent and coat with silicone lubricant; |
| • TV Antenna | Lubricate all moving parts with silicone lubricant; |
| • Exterior | Wash & wax (do not use abrasive cleaner or wax); |
| • Escape Window | Lubricate latches with WD-40 <better to use Boeshield T9, Editor>; |
| • Battery | Clean, neutralize and coat terminals; |
| • A-Frame, Step | Wire brush and paint frame at front and rear; |
| • LP Bottles | Have purged by LP Supplier <I found this is easy to do yourself when camping or at rallies, the furnace will quit or the stove burners go out when the second tank empties!, Editor>; |
| • Seams | Check and reseal exterior seams, windows, lights and vents as needed - use Acryl-R seam sealer or equivalent; |
| • Hitch Coupler and Ball | Check for wear or damage, assure all parts operate freely, replace components if worn or damaged, <inspect your safety chains and tow vehicle hitch receiver for unusual wear and cracks, wire brush and paint as needed, Editor>; |

All this work is easily performed by the average Airstream owner with the exception of Brakes and Wheel Bearings which require minor mechanical skills that many have chosen not to develop or a few speciality tools not possessed. Once you've completed your maintenance tasks Once you've complete your maintenance tasks run through the following checklists you should use on every travel day.

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from the **AIRSTREAM OWNER'S MANUAL**

Interior Trailer

1. Turn off water pump switch.
2. Check battery water level.
3. Close windows and vents.
4. Lock all interior cabinet doors.
5. Latch refrigerator door. (Seal containers first.)
6. Hold down or stack securely all loose, hard and sharp objects.
7. Fasten sliding and foldette doors.
8. Drain toilet bowl.
9. Turn off interior lights.
10. Set table in upright position.
11. Pull up or retract step.
12. Lower blinds.
13. Secure and lock main door and dead bolt.

Exterior Trailer

1. Disconnect and stow the electrical hookup cord, the sewer hookup hose, and the water hookup hose.
2. Turn off gas at LP tanks.
3. Retract stabilizing jacks.
4. Check Hitch: It must be properly attached, <insert a clip or pin in hitch ball latch, Editor>.
5. Check safety chains and breakaway switch cable.
6. Fully retract jack. Remove and stow jack stand, foot, or wood block.
7. Check clearance, turn signals, and stop lights.
8. Check lug nuts.
9. Check tires for correct pressure.
10. Check that TV antenna is properly stowed.
11. Lock main door dead bolt.
12. Adjust tow vehicle mirrors.
13. Pull forward some 50 ft., test brakes, and check site for forgotten objects and cleanliness.

Trailer Equipment and Accessories

1. Water hose, 5/8 in. high pressure, tasteless, odorless, non-toxic, (or two 25 ft. sections).
2. "Y" connection for water hose.
3. The sewer hose with clamp.
4. Drain cap with hose drain.
5. Holding tank cleaner and deodorizer.
6. Power cord adapter 30-amp capacity.
7. 50 ft. electric cord, 12-3 wire, 30-ampere capacity.
8. 25 ft. electric cord, 10-3, 30-ampere capacity.
9. Woodblocks for leveling.
10. Wheel chocks.
11. Hydraulic jacks.
12. Cross type lug wrench.

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from the **AIRSTREAM OWNER'S MANUAL**

13. Torque Wrench
14. Quality tire gauge.
15. Emergency road warning triangle.

Home

1. Leave house key with your neighbors
2. Valuables and important papers should be stored in a safe place.
3. Newspaper, milk and other deliveries should be discontinued.
4. Ask the Post Office to hold your mail for you.
5. Arrange with the telephone company for discontinued or "vacation service".
6. Arrange care for your pets.
7. Your lawn, garden and houseplants should be cared for.
8. Lock all windows and doors securely. Keep shades open for a lived in look.
9. Cover all food to keep out mice and insects.
10. Eliminate all fire hazards. Place matches in a tin box or glass jar.
11. Store oil, gasoline, and other flammables properly.
12. Destroy all newspapers, magazines and oily rags.
13. Notify police of your departure and return dates.

Personal

1. Tow vehicle insurance to cover you and your family fully along with proof of insurance.
2. Try to avoid large amounts of cash. Use Travelers Checks and credit cards.
3. Confirm reservations.
4. Have sunglasses, sun block, and bug spray for everyone.
5. Pack camera and film.
6. Make a checklist of clothing for everyone, and toilet articles.
7. Prescribed medications.
8. Birth certificate, Passport.
9. Medical insurance cards.

Motoring Essentials

1. Display the tow vehicle and trailer registration properly.
2. Carry valid drivers license.
3. In Mexico must have special auto insurance.
4. Carry an extra set of the ignition and truck keys in a separate pocket, or in your wallet.
5. Keep an operating flashlight with fresh batteries in the glove compartment.
6. Pack so that you can reach the tools and spare tire without completely unpacking.
7. Keep sharp or hard articles securely packed wherever they may be.
8. Do not packed things in the passenger seating area. You need the maximum space for comfort.
9. Wear easy wash, drip-dry traveling clothes.
10. Do not make your vacation trips a mileage marathon. Stop and relax frequently.
11. Carry a first-aid kit.
12. Carry your pet's dish, food, leash, and health and registration papers.