

Joe Perryman's Acceptance Speech

I am happy and honored to accept the role of WBCCI President. I do so with a deep sense of humility. I also accept the responsibility that goes with it. This is the world's best RV club; we have so much going for us

- We are the world's largest single brand club.
- We are very democratic, with a system based on the unit first and International last.
- We have a great social structure, easily the most social of the large RV clubs.
- We have great history going back over 50 years.
- No other RV club has more potential for greatness.

Yet, we have not fully realized this potential for the past few years. We have lost our way, lost sight of our purpose, our core reason for existence. So I ask you today - Are we as healthy as we should be? Or can we do better?

It's always easy to write a vision statement. The hard part is to keep sight of the vision through the stresses and knocks of everyday operations. We have to continue to ask ourselves what we are here for, why we exist?

NO! I don't mean to leave the impression that the club is falling apart. This is not at all true. We remain quite sound in fact. We enjoyed a modest increase in membership for the 2nd year in a row. We still have a large agenda of fine rallies hosted across the country by Units, Regions and International. Our great success story is our caravan program, ours is the best that exists.

But, to be completely honest, I must admit that while we are sound we are not without areas of weakness. I believe we can do better and I believe we will!

We have weakened ourselves with personal agendas and bickering; division created over trivia. We have given away much of our power. Power that comes from a unified whole striving to simply achieve the highest levels of excellence.

What Happened? Self-interest happened. Too many of us became so sure that we had all the answers, our plan was the only right one for the club, our beliefs were the only right beliefs, our way the only right way.

So, What Happened? We lost sight of our purpose. We stopped working on new and better rallies, we stopped promoting unit caravans. We became so involved with our cliques that there was no place for new members. We became so set in our ways that we couldn't accept anyone with new or different ideas. We became narrow, closed, and critical of anyone who didn't agree with us. That's what happened.

NO! It's not about whether you are a traditionalist or a progressive. It is about how sure you are that they are just wrong and are ruining the club. It is about how willing you are to listen, and look for synergy. In the words of Steven Covey, "Seek first to understand, second to be understood, and then find common ground to build synergy on".

Now some have looked to me as an agent of change. That is simply not true. I like our club a lot just like it is (without the division of course.) I'm not the change agent because what I think has little to do with it. Who is? Well that would be you, the membership. It is you who will set the direction of the club. You have the power; you and only you.

In the words of the famous philosopher, Dr. Seuss:

- You have brains in your head.
- You have feet in your shoes.
- Together they will take you any direction you choose.

I'm going to ask you again. Are we as healthy as we should be? It's a simple question with an obvious answer. I bring up these negative issues not to sound like a part of the doomsday crowd, but because I know you will respond by providing the club with solutions.

Yes, we have lost our vision; we have forgotten what we are about, our purpose, our very reason for existence, which is to provide recreation and social opportunities for Airstreamers. So here is my challenge for you. Step up! Step in. Engage in a campaign to bring the club back to its roots. Let's be winners, one great rally at a time, one great caravan after another and with a continuous stream of outstanding social events. IT'S OUR JOB, IT'S WHAT WE DO, and nobody, nobody on the face of God's green earth can do it better!

I know we can, I know we will, because I know you. I have faith in your ability, in your energy, in your commitment. Let's band together and make this great club even greater. We have a bright future. The demographic may not be there for us to reach 25,000 members again in the foreseeable future. But Greatness is not measured by size; it's measured solely in the value of our contribution to our membership. With this vision as job one, our greatest years lie ahead of us.

Thank you for electing me to be your president. What a privilege to be a part of the continuing greatness of the world's best RV club. You have my pledge that I will do my best for you and this club.

- Joe Perryman, 2014 International Rally at Gillette