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SNU 49TH ANNIVERSARY RALLY - TOPAZ LAKE
OCT 9TH - 12TH
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the Airstreamer



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It's an interesting experience to prepare and pack for a 12 day camping trip with no potential for resupply (other than ice). Yes, we're headed to Burning Man - our third year. I'm planning on visiting the 2 large Airstream camps and talking with some of our fellow Airstreamers - so maybe it will inspire some of you to try it out. First and foremost, Burning Man is a serious camping endeavor in our own backyard. The Airstream might be the best way to spend your time on playa. Funny thing, the Reno Airstream dealer was super busy helping Airstreamers heading to the playa. I was told they sold a brand new unit and were delivering it to some lucky folks at Black Rock City. Wow!

We look forward to seeing the rest of you at the Hope Valley Rally in September.

Brian Root, also know as:

Rad Dad (and Weather Girl)

< Rad Dad & Weather Girl didn't have much control over the weather in 2025 as a few photos in Facebook tell part of the story!! - editor >

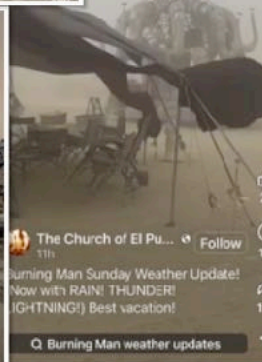
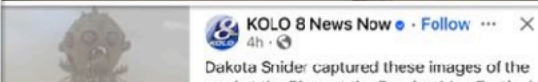
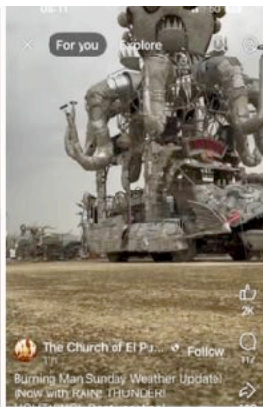
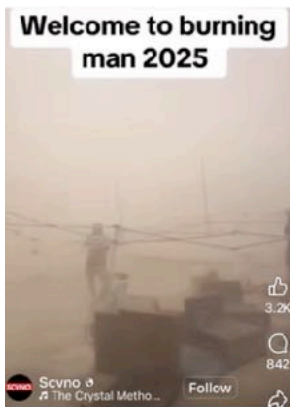
*Stay up-to-date
with Rally News*



Hope Valley Dispersed Area,
Markleeville, CA
September 15th – 18th



Route to Region 12 Caravan/
Rally, Topaz Lake (SNU 49th
Anniversary Rally) and Tuttle
Creek October 9th - 15th



SEPTEMBER'S HOPE VALLEY RALLY

Rally season is winding down but we've still got rallies to go, our Hope Valley Dispersed Rally in September and a rolling Anniversary Rally in October.

Our Hope Valley Dispersed Rally is only days away; starts on Monday, September 15th and ends on Thursday the 18th. Hope Valley offers shaded or sun drenched campsites among the forest with meadows just off the Carson Pass Highway (CA-88), just 1.5 miles west of CA-89. Plan for brights sunny days and brisk mornings and evenings (maybe not as brisk as 2022 nor as uncontrolled as Burning Man); highs upper 60s to low 70s - lows high 30s. This link will take you there in Google Maps: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/TgFRjo9HZm4M4u4c6>.



You'll have the opportunity to hike a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail, visit Devils Ladder Lookout Historic Landmark; see Red Lake and the steep mountainside where the wagon wheels of over 150,000 pioneers were grooves in the granite rock surfaces crossing Carson Pass. Need a bit more, visit Caples Resorts' Marina, Restaurant and Lounge to walk a portion of the Emigrant Trail, relax by the Lake or enjoy a meal or adult beverage.



Hope Valley Dispersed Area has no facilities so come with your water tank full and black and gray tanks empty. Early morning temps can be in the 30s so make sure you have propane too. Of course we'll have our standard evening potluck meals and maybe squeeze in some breakfast pastries.

Drive through the gate off Hwy 88 to the wye. You'll find campsites located along the roadway both right and left; look right first for the silver Twinkies (Airstreams), don't see us look left. Your editor and wife Gail plan to be there early so look for the Aluminum.

Please RSVP in case an early winter in the Sierra Nevada causes us to change rally locations (happened in 2024 and almost in 2022); club157@airstreamclub.org.

P.S. we need co-hosts to help meet and greet rally attendees.

SNU MEMBER NEWS

The SNU Board thanks Tom & Kitsie Larkin # 1292 from Nevada City, CA and Richard Palmer #18261 from Discovery Bay, CA for renewing for 2026.

AIRSTREAM INC.'S "LIVE RIVETED" BLOG

Midnight Flamingo Upgrade Package for Flying Cloud



Your Airstreamer covered this new model briefly in the January issue but Airstream is putting more emphasis on the upgrade with many exterior parts getting a monochromatic blackout treatment; LP cover, segment or wrap protectors (stone guards), from window solar stone guards, belt line trim and wheels plus some interior and electrical upgrades too. Check it out in the link here: <https://www.airstream.com/blog/midnight-flamingo-a-new-flying-cloud-upgrade-package/>.

2026 Travel Trailer Updates - "Every travel trailer in the Airstream family is affected in Model Year 2026's exciting improvements. To name a few: A new bathroom window in all 25FB

and 27FB floor plans welcomes even more light into the interior of Globetrotter, International, Flying Cloud, and Trade Wind Travel Trailers. New A/C vents on all ducted units across the lineup increase air flow throughout the trailer and can be closed individually for maximum comfort. And for Bambi through Classic travel trailers, better back-up cameras improve the parking and backing up experience." Many models get a more powerful converter to recharge your batteries faster 80A vs 55 in the past and all Basecamps get the previously optional X package as standard. Read more about it and see some of the upgrades here: <https://www.airstream.com/blog/model-year-2026-travel-trailer-upgrades-and-improvements/>.

Electrical System options in M/B Touring Coaches - Three electrical configurations will be available from meek to mighty (if 10.3 kWh is considered meek):

Advanced Power System:

- Solar panels with 250 - 400 watt capacity
- 10.3kWh lithium battery capacity w/built-in heaters
- 3,000W inverter for simultaneous use of multiple appliances
- 1,000W single-burner induction cooktop (no propane required)
- Combined heating and hot water system powered by electricity or the diesel fuel in your tank
- Charge controller for solar monitoring
- Marine-grade alternator with regulator for high-output charging via an app.



Optional E1 Package:

- Additional lithium battery capacity totaling 12 kWh
- Adds smart energy management tools to the Advanced system “for urban explorers, tech-savvy travelers, and anyone seeking a low-maintenance, eco-conscious power system.”

Advanced Power System Plus:

- Additional lithium battery capacity totaling 17.2 kWh

Read more here: <https://www.airstream.com/blog/electrical-system-options-in-airstreams-mercedes-benz-touring-coaches/> .

<beats our 4.800 kWh lithiums but we best their solar charging with 600 watts! - editor>

AIRSTREAM CLUB'S SEPTEMBER PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We are just entering my favorite camping season ... autumn! It's the perfect time to be traveling across this beautiful land in our Airstreams ... catching those last rays of the late summer days. For John and me, the upcoming adventure in Tennessee with the Region 6 Rally promises to be full of excitement and camaraderie as well as a bucket-list drive through the backroads of the Great Smoky Mountains. I hope you can find some time for your own camping moments.

Meanwhile, back in Ohio, we just wrapped up our 68th International Rally at York, Pennsylvania. Between the abundant historical sites and the perfect weather, York was everything we hoped it would be and more! You can see a few highlights on our Airstream Club International social media pages, as well our website. The kick-off for the 69th Rally in Minot, North Dakota is well underway and you will want to DEFINITELY sign up as soon as possible — Minot is rolling out the red carpet for us, and it is going to be one incredible trip! Many of us are taking advantage of the region to add on a few more miles to visit several National Parks and head up into Canada! I think John and I are going to turn it into a RAL-AVAN... a Rally and a Caravan in one!

Soon you will be seeing a new addition to the regular features in the Blue Beret and our Blog...our esteemed International Secretary, Kendall Felder, will be having a monthly column highlighting the happenings within the IBT. He will be providing insights into the topics discussed and project updates from monthly meetings of the Executive Council and the quarterly meetings of the International Board of Trustees. You will get an insider's look at everything we are working on in our Club's governance, and keep an eye out for some sneak peeks at upcoming special events! We are planning some big things for you....and we'll keep you posted!

Finally, as I work through all of the “To-Do” items required to keep our momentum going strong, I need YOU! Many of us have great ideas, but frankly, it's what YOU would like to see accomplished that I am curious about. Please email me with your thoughts – even your concerns...and give me your suggestions for improving things you feel need to be addressed. Also, jump in! We need the folks that aren't afraid to work toward the greater good – and as in so many things in life, you will get so much more out of it than you put in. So, reach out...we WELCOME your involvement.

Jenny Schnettler

International President

BRN # 151 jschnettler@airstreamclub.org

**AIRSTREAM CLUB BLUE BERET BLOG****Finance Director's Report**

By Alan Rabb | BRN 404

A message from your International Finance Director.

Hello everyone! I hope this communication finds everyone doing well. I wanted to drop everyone a short note and give y'all an update on mid-year finances and where we are with the financial health of our club.

As of June 30, we have accomplished our membership plan (both members and income) for 2025. We planned a balanced budget for the first time in more than eight years. This year, we created three distinct sets of books for our club. These are a set of books for the club (ACI), Caravan and International Rally — they all have their own income statement, balance sheet and cash flow statement. Each business will operate their own sets of books each year. As a part of the ACI budget, we intentionally planned contributions to our three reserves – operational, software and capital. To date, we are on track with our contributions to the reserves and our reserve balances have increased from \$200,000 as of late last year to over \$300,000 thru July 2025. We have also reduced our mortgage by over \$80,000 this year.

One of the more significant financial savings in our budget is the recognition of annual savings of more than \$150,000 per year for credit card banking fees. This was accomplished three ways. First, caravan banking fees are now included as a part of the cost of what you pay when you pay your fees via credit card. Second: banking fees for the international rally are now included in the total fee you pay to attend an International Rally. Last: effective September 1, 2025, when renewing your annual international and club dues, a 3% service fee will be added to your total cost when using a credit card.

Summary – As a headline, we have increased our controls and accountability system, have balanced budgets for all three businesses, our expenses are under control, the three reserves are increasing and our debt is going down. The club is well on its way to better financial health. We have accomplished this through a dedicated and committed International Board of Trustees (IBT), headquarters staff and finance committee. Our finance committee is fully staffed and working for all of you on a daily basis.

Below is your finance committee and their responsibilities:

Alan Rabb, Region 3: Chair of the finance committee.

Shawn Blom, Region 12: Quarter/year-end closing and special projects.

Craig Fegley, Region 9: Banking, payment platforms and special projects.

Christine Kirk, Region 11: Insurance, communications, strategy and special projects.

Sally MacDonald, Region 12: Policy, procedure, records retention, national treasurer's handbook, treasurer's forums and special projects.

Timi Ann Neri, Region 1: Caravan Liaison support and special projects.

Millie O'Donnell, Region 9: EC liaison.

We have accomplished a lot over the last year, and I am very proud of the work this team has done to manage expenses and increase controls.

To more fully understand what your finance team has done and is doing, I would encourage everyone to watch and participate in IBT meetings and review the past meeting information on our website.

As always, if there are any questions, please reach out to me, a member of your finance committee or a member of your IBT.

<note, we've got two Region 12 members on the financial committee, reach out to them if you have any questions - editor>

EXCITING NEW CHANGES AT

Vinnie has said many times that he doesn't want to sit behind a desk. He wants to be working on rigs, innovating design, going to rallies and training the next generation of craftsmen. That's his passion and he had to find a way to carve out time to make that happen.

On September 1st Briston Lowell, who is well known to our customers as a partner in Master Applied Coatings and actively involved in Vinnie's, became the official owner of our Vinnie's Sacramento

location.

Vinnie Lamica still owns his other shop, Vinnie's East Coast in Tallahassee.

What does this mean for our customers?? Essentially nothing changes because Vinnie is still going to be at our Sacramento shop and he'll continue to travel to Tallahassee to mentor his East Coast team.

This is such an exciting new chapter for Vinnie's in Sacramento, but especially for Vinnie Lamica "The Airstream Whisperer." He's been set free from his desk to do the work he loves!

Congratulations Vinnie and Briston! Your team is so excited for the future!!

ANTELOPE LAKE RALLY REVIEW



Antelope Lake - Monday, August 11, 3 nights - some stayed longer! We had 5 rigs + a SOB (some other brand) guest, cousins of Jim Anderson. The focus for this rally had to be evenly divided between outdoor activities and shared dinners -

wow!

6 of us headed out on kayaks Tuesday hoping to find the local eagles and it didn't take long until we heard their calls. About a half-mile from the campground, we spotted 1 perched in a tree! Yes, we spotted more that day and I even got video of one catching a fish. We also saw ducks, grebes (who knew the Grebe Festival was an annual thing up in Chester?), and other water fowl. Brian & I took a trip Wednesday morning and came across a family of otters snorting and enjoying swimming excursion. Cutest things ever! We also spotted some deer on the banks and additional eagles (one really large one, momma perhaps?).



I finally got Mary on the kayak for a sunset cruise - such a lovely and peaceful time of the evening. And then there were the nighttime kayak trips, hoping the Perseid meteor showers would impress...but alas, they were a bust. The darks skies, Milky Way, and moon risings made up for the limited shooting star activity. Before the rally ended, we had nicknamed Eagle Island, Otter Cover, and Pelican Bay.

Susie's pup Chase learned to swim, while Maggie decided she'd rather stay on all 4 legs. Sally, Bill & Mary's pup, was ALL about the water and retrieving the floating stick. We witnessed a short 10 minute rest and then she was back at it.

Kim & Ellen Sterrett joined our rally, coming from the weekend Lake Tahoe rally at Almador. So fun to have new faces join! They were able to enjoy a bicycle ride around the lake. Brian, the Anderson's, and their cousins also got some cycling in, checking out the various other campgrounds and lake views.



Knowing there were the 5 of us ahead of time, we decided to have a designated main meal host, supplemented by others' sides/desserts. We all agreed it worked out well, as no one had to "cook" every night, but everyone contributed - and we did not starve! Susan's Tomale Casserole kicked off Monday, followed by Brian's pizza, and the cousin's chili. Everyone contributed delicious salads, fresh fruits/veggies, and desserts. The "cousins" were able to convert that 20# zucchini from the Root garden (ok, maybe not quite 20 pounds, but it WAS at least 5) into a delicious appetizer. Mary's pasta salad, Susie's cobbler, Susan's brownies, and my own homemade peach ice cream with peach crisp were all pretty tasty. Too many good foods to mention!

As far as the campground, it's 2 hours north of Reno (Janesville turnoff). Someone might have had a nightmare about coming back down, but it was all good. Trees were tight, but once again, no issues (other than Starlink a little restricted). Weather was warm during the day and cooled down nicely at night. Plenty of first come/first service sites available the entire week. No bear boxes, but they are starting to come into camp and there were some air horns in use 1 night. No other problems and we all agreed we'd definitely come back to Antelope Lake again.

Jen Root

49TH ANNIVERSARY RALLY OCT 9TH - 12TH

The Sierra Nevada Unit will celebrate its 49th Anniversary and hold its Annual Meeting for the election of 2026 officers in October at:

Topaz Lake - the first stop on our Rolling to Region 12 Rally. No, you won't have to make all the stops; you can tailor your travels to fit your schedule or just stop in for the meeting and celebration on the 11th so please plan ahead! Look for more information on our Airstream Club web page: <https://airstreamclub.org/events?from=&to=&type=-1&state=-1&club=46237&list=1> or in the Events section of our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SierraNevadaUnit>.

More on the Rolling to Region, as noted, **our first rally stop is three nights at Topaz Lake Recreation Area, Monday October 9th thru Sunday the 12th**; reserved, first come first served and dispersed camping are available 775.782.9835. We'll host our Annual Meeting and anniversary celebration on Saturday the 11th.

Sunday morning we'll round up the rigs and head south on US-395 headed for **our second rally stop, Tuttle Creek BLM Campground near Lone Pine, Ca for a three nights stay through Wednesday the 15th**. Wednesday morning we'll again round up the rigs and head south to the Region 12 Rally at Bonelli Bluffs RV Resort & Campground. No reservation is needed for the two SNU rolling rallies at Topaz Lake or Tuttle Creek but you will need a reservation for Region 12; click the link: <https://form.jotform.com/241275710134145>.

AIRSTREAM SPA DAYS, RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY & IMPLANTS

I promised a thorough review of the work on our Airstream back in the June issue of the Airstreamer. Some background material is important.

Gail and I have been Airstreaming for 20 years, starting in late 2004 with a 2005 22' International CCD. Our 1996 Jeep Cherokee was working its heart out towing the 22' up the mountain grades needed to escape Southern California's Inland Empire so in 2005 we bought a Dodge Ram 2500 with the Cummins diesel. Woah, now we could tow anything that Airstream made! That Fall and returning from one of our many trips back East we happened upon a one year old 25' International CCD while getting some warranty work done in Tennessee. Seven years and 80,000 miles later we decided to upgrade again to what is our current Airstream, a 2012 28' International Signature Series. Not to let moss under the wheels, our rig had 177,000 miles on it plus or minus a couple. Time for maintenance, repair and some upgrades; we chose Vinnie's (Northbay Airstream Repair) for the work.

Spa Days

• Annual Inspections of Airstream and Systems:

- * Water - replace city water inlet (plastic pressure reducing valve leaks).
- * Alarms - smoke, CO and LP detectors (replace).
- * Balky stove burner igniter repair exposed wiring).
- * Various rivets inside and out (belly pan, with age and backcountry roads the rivet heads loosen and eat thru the aluminum belly pan skin).
- * Repair the floor vinyl in the bedroom.
- * Brake and bearing clean and inspection (no repairs needed).
- * Roof top clean, inspection and reseal including air conditioner condensate cups and casketing.
- * Replace LED clearance/marker lights.
- * Replace damaged stainless steel segment protector clips, doubler plates for areas where skin cracked and remove dent in lower edge.

• Sealtech Leak Check:

- * Check, clean and caulk leaks found.
- * Mostly window gaskets needing a slight tightening of the pull in latches.

• Replace Skylights with MaxxAir clear view custom skylights.

• Master Applied Coating

- * thoroughly clean the exterior, apply their Ceramic Coating to all surfaces and polish.

Reconstructive Surgery

- Vinnie's three inch lift kit and replace leaky shock absorbers (to soon on shocks replaced in 2020, guess all those gravel and backcountry roads in the Northwest Territories took their toll).
- Remove two existing solar panels (170 watts) and install 6 new 100 watt panels and wiring.



3 Inch Lift Kit (Vinnie's Design)

Implants

- Victron 3 kilo-watt Multiplus converter/inverter.

- Victron MPPT 100/50 solar charge controller (50 amp replaces MPPT 150/30 30 amp controller).
- Victron Cerbo GX interface and Touch 50 control panel.
- One new Battle Born 100AH lithium battery to existing 3 Battle Born giving 400 AH (4.800 kWh total).

Spa Days - The regular and deferred maintenance; the new marker lights and ceramic coating made it look like a new Airstream and possibly no more waxing in my lifetime! Okay, there are a few filiform spots still there when you're close enough to



Hope Valley near our Rally Site

notice but there's no way to get rid of it unless you replace the affected panels or buy a new rig. We are highly recommend this pricy option for most rigs, especially if it's new and you hope to minimize your cleaning effort and the dreaded filiform.

Reconstructive Surgery - the lift kit makes it easier to take our Airstream to those SNU 3, 4 and 5 rated Rally Site Categories <http://sierranevadaairstreams.org/snu/rally-docs/11ag19-rallysite-categories.html>, you don't think about some of the rocks and washouts you have to cross though we always got our rig through areas that most wouldn't attempt. I'll acknowledge Jerry and Dyann's Thornburg's trips to Jarbidge may have exceeded most of our travels but we didn't come back with the refrigerator ajar nor the water tank needing a fix either.

Implants - Various Victron components and BattleBorn Batteries make up the 12v and 120v electrical system:

- Existing Victron BMV (battery monitor & Bluetooth) can handle 500 Amps or 6000 watts at 12 volts; allows one to monitor battery voltage, amp or watt load, remaining battery capacity, etc.



- MPPT 100/50 solar charge controller can handle 50 amps of current or 700 watts at 12 volts from a solar array and there are work arounds to handle 1400 watts at 24 volts used by some large RVs.

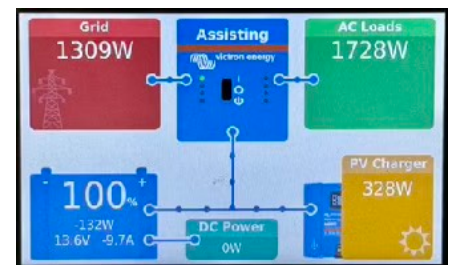
- CerboGX and the Touch 70 screen allow the user to monitor and control all the Victron equipment; battery monitor, solar charge controller and MultiPlus II converter/inverter over Victron's V.E. Smart Network (Bluetooth and wired) with a graphical interface to access, monitor and change the settings for the different devices.



The real magic is in the MultiPlus II converter/inverter.

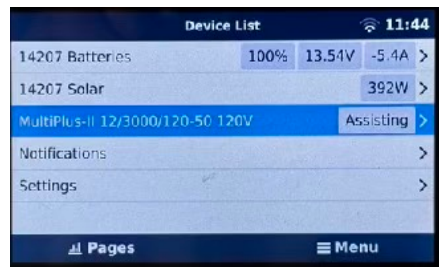


MultiPlus II



Hybrid Mode 1309 watts from ac
460 watts from Batteries & Solar

- The MultiPlus can handle 120 volts and 50A input to pass through to supply AC devices and its battery charge function.
- Need to operate AC devices on batteries; it can produce 3000 VA or watts for a short time but its continuous duty rating is 2400 watts. Could run the air conditioner for proximately 2 hours with our 400 AH of batteries when it's really hot out. Can easily handle our Nespresso Coffee maker, run a regular waffle maker or toaster (ours only take 300 and 500 watts respectively so even our old 1000 watt inverter was enough).



• At a campground or RV park with questionable power, voltage drop when the a/c kicks on, small generator or at your families home on a 15 amp outlet? The MultiPlus II can operate in Hybrid mode and draw power or assist from your batteries and solar to

supplement the outside 120v a/c input from the mains or commercial power to operate your air conditioner and other AC devices.

Real World Experiences

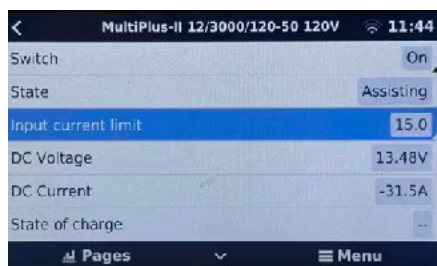
Customer Service and Spa Days

First off, Vinnie personally brought out our rig, helped with the hitch setup and did the walk thru on the work performed. Many of the Spa treatment were immediately evident; broken rivet replaced, door closes with ease, skylights bright and clear, marker lights sparkle and a commanding presence with the three inch lift (think the Tim the Toolman's ar-arr-arr! The ceramic coating, new marker lights and belt line trim make sour 13 year old Airstream look like it just came off the showroom floor to be delivered to the first buyer!

Reconstructive Surgery -

The lift allowed me to use a much shorter shank for the hitch and with front end separation being a large part of the work at Vinnie's for front bedroom models, he encouraged me to reduce the preload on the hitch spring bars which reduces stress on the trailer A-frame. We dialed back from 8 links to 6 on my Blue Ox Sway Pro Hitch which sagged the back of the truck another inch or so but still acceptable for a 3/4 ton tow vehicle. Read the many posts and praises of the lift on the various forums; almost all claim no noticeable side affects. Well the Engineer gives a qualified maybe. At any reasonable speeds, those posted for curves, hills and mountains and both normal and emergency maneuvers it is safe, but either the Engineer's subconscious mind or his extraordinary senses says there is a slight difference. Would I still recommend it? YES, if your camping style or even your driveway approach finds you dragging parts below the bodywork.

Implants -Next Vinnie went over basics of the Victron equipment installation, the Touch 70 display, description of its functions and encouraged me to review the many videos on the internet on how to use and control devices. (I didn't tell him as a life long Engineer I preferred to read the manufacturers instructions). The Touch 70 showed the solar producing over 400 watts recharging the batteries;



Input set to 15A



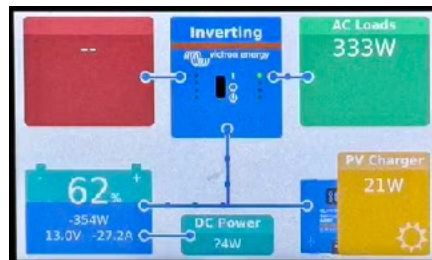
pretty good for late in the afternoon when the sun is at a low angle to the panels so an immediate plus!

After the Drive-A-Way or Honeymoon (Airstream's, not the owners!)

As the driver I was more relaxed with the extra ground clearance in picking through the many rocks and rough roads to camping sites on our solo caravan across the country and it was much easier to dump the tanks.



Touch 70 Below Systems Monitor

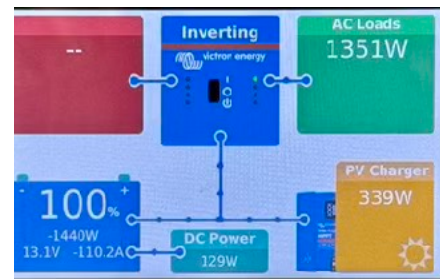


MultiPlus 333 watts to Refrigerator

On the second day I decided to somewhat stress test the solar and batteries, switching the refrigerator to 120v (about a 350 watt load) while we drove rather than running it on LP or propane; for the most part I left the refrigerator on 120v the entire caravan. We only have a 15A outlet in Southport, NC to plug the Airstream into so we used the MultiPlus's hybrid mode

to supply additional current when running the air conditioner and refrigerator while parked there.

We sometimes dread coming home when driving west into the region's high temperatures. Phoenix's temperatures, while moderated by tropical moisture and clouds didn't disappoint, 105F coming through the city proper on the freeways. Temps farther west dropped into the mid 90s but out thermos bottle, err Airstream, was amply warmed up when we stopped for fuel and to turn on the air conditioner. We drove the next 90 minutes or so to Salome, AZ where we camped for the night. It was refreshing to open the door and not be faced with hours bringing the inside temps down from over 100 to 80 or so (only one a/c unit).



Air Conditioner on Batteries

All told, we believe the

Airstream is ready for its next 100 or 200 thousand miles if the owners can make it. Ask us to show how everything works at the next rally or two (we'll be there).

Hope to see you on the road.

Don Williams #14207

Power Demand Observed for Appliances on the MultiPlus

Parasitic Loads - control boards & LP detector	20 watts
Furnace	100 watts
Refrigerator on 120v a/c	340 watts
MultiPlus Battery Charging batteries state of charge	up to 600 watts depending upon
Water Heater on 120v a/c	1250 watts
Air Conditioner	1350 watts