



"the Great Basin Airstream RV Association"

SierraNevadaAirstreams.org/SNU



LUNCHEON AT J.T.'s

The dire predictions for a major storm didn't quite meet expectations and the SNU December luncheon at J.T.'s had a great turn out. 19 in all! We were delighted to see several people we haven't seen much this past year. We were especially glad to meet John and Sandra Shields. They have been members for several years but scheduling conflicts have made rallies hard to arrange. We certainly hope to see them more often in the future.

We were also delighted to welcome guests Ken and Judy Bechthold. Judy is the 2nd VP of Region 12. They came to our November 2007 lunch and it was really good to see them again this year. Mike and Cindy Gower have had a busy year which has included getting ready to do some plumbing and water pipe work as well as other repairs on their Airstream. Scott and Icyll Mulligan have also been busy sprucing up their Argosy. Among other things they have been repainting the exterior and have a new rock guard to put over the front window. Randy and Vicki have spent a lot of time with family this year so we had a lot of catching up to do at this lunch. Gary and Anita Haskett have also been busy with family and other commitments. A special surprise was Fran Reid. She has been involved with the SNU off and on for four years and she came to the lunch with Jerry and Dyann. Other luncheon participants were Jerry and Dyann Thornburg, Don and MaryLou Damoth and Bryan and Diane Leipper.

The only business type activity conducted at this lunch was passing out copies of the SNU 2008 Achievements and a thank you to members. Go to the links page listed in this newsletter to see both of these documents. As usual, the food at J.T.'s was great and the holiday decoration made it very festive. Lunches are a great way to stay in touch during the winter. I think though, we are all looking forward to March and our first rally so we have plenty of time to



share stories, and catch up on news.



DEATH VALLEY RALLY

Gail and Don (Motoman) Williams

The Sierra Nevada Unit closed out its 2008 season with a special November rally in Death Valley. Gail and I, the most southern members in the Sierra Nevada Unit, hosted this unique rally with some concern; would our unit members travel almost 300 miles to visit some of the most beautiful desert in California?

Gail, Zorro and I left Riverside in early afternoon and stopped in Baker, California at the historic Mad Greek Restaurant for a late lunch; 5 PM! Our hunger appeased, we drove north on CA-127 and then west on CA-178 across Jubilee Pass into the south end of the valley. The south end of the valley is usually a great drive but the darkness and the 25+ miles of construction and graveled roadway made it an early evening nightmare. The one highlight was the valley floor, which seemed to glow like snow in the dim light before the moonrise. We reached Mesquite Spring Campground at 9 PM, picked a pull through site and settled in for the night.

Dawn brought the sun and an obligatory walk with Zorro and what did we see, a Squarestream! It turns out that the first to arrive on Monday and unknowingly for our rally, was Jim Dodds or jimmini on the AIR Forums. Wait a minute, Jim is a Four Corners Unit member and what's he doing here? Jim was off for a couple of weeks by himself relaxing at different campgrounds through out Arizona and Southern California. Little did he know he would be swept up into and be the focal point of the Sierra Nevada Unit rally at Death Valley. [continued on page 2]

[continued from page 1] Gail and I spent Wednesday visiting with Jim, setting up my amateur radio station for a California statewide emergency exercise on Thursday and checking out the campground. Mesquite Spring Campground is located about two miles south of the northern entrance into Death Valley near Scotty's Castle. The campground has 30 campsites and sits next to Death Valley Wash with a large sloping plateau flanking Tin Mountain to the west. That night we sat around Jim's small propane fire



pit and shared Airstream stories.

On Thursday I had a brief breakfast and then turned on my amateur radio and checked in with operators that work in Riverside County Office of Emergency Services' Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service or RACES. RACES operators are sworn volunteer amateur radio operators that provide emergency communications throughout the county at no cost to the taxpayers. Conditions were very good in the early morning allowing very clear communications with operators in the Coachella Valley area near Palm Springs and in the western county area near the city of Riverside. While this was a statewide exercise, each county and/or municipality developed its own scenario around the theme of a major earthquake on the San Andreas Fault. I monitored stations in LA County, Mariposa, California, Reno, NV and Las Vegas, NV checking in with various agencies to offer help if they needed assistance.

I took a break from the radio and we took a break from the rally tradition and held our first potluck as a luncheon so we could cook Gail's spicy chili and Jim's hot links with solar power and our 12-volt lunch-box cooker. After lunch I returned to monitoring the exercise however conditions for communications deteriorated in the early afternoon so I shut down my station around 2 PM. While I wasn't able to participate in the same capacity as being at the emergency operations center, listening remotely gave me a different perspective of the communications activity for the exercise, what we do well, what we need to improve and were it not for our commitment to host the Rally in Death Valley, I would have been back in Riverside helping with the exercise instead of sitting in a beautiful setting next to our Airstream. Hard choice huh?

Our third rally guests, Wheels and Doris Wheeler, arrived in mid afternoon, as Gail and I were getting ready to take the underground tour of the basements and tunnels at Scotty's Castle. Wheels and Doris had setup their camp by the time we returned so we congregated at Jim's trailer around his fire pit for the evening.

Friday Wheels and Doris toured Scotty's Castle and wore themselves out taking both the standard tour through the home and grounds and then the underground tour. In retrospect they might now recommend a taking the two on different days unless you like a lot of walking and standing for almost four hours! While the Wheelers enjoyed Scotty's Castle I took a hike to a low peak and on the long sloping plateau to the west of the campground. I missed finding the ancient rock petroglyphs but did find more recent rock art in the form of geometric shapes, Cairns, a peace sign and even a caricature of a woman. We all closed out the day with a potluck dinner and campfire at Jim's Squarestream.

Saturday found Wheels and Doris touring the Furnace Creek and lower Death Valley, Jim relaxing at his Squarestream while Gail and I repeated a portion of my Friday hike. the main valley Gail and I hiked on the plateau. That evening we changed the routine; shared potluck dinner followed by Doris serenading us around the campfire with her beautiful country voice and guitar. We even attracted the attention of another amateur musician in the campground who brought over his banjo and joined in our sing along.

All good things must end; Sunday found each of us following our own lead, Jimmini packed up and headed down to Furnace Creek to camp there for a few days, Gail and I packed up for our trip home to Riverside, leaving Wheels and Doris to spend another night at Mesquite Spring Campground before they headed off to camping at Edwards Air Force Base.

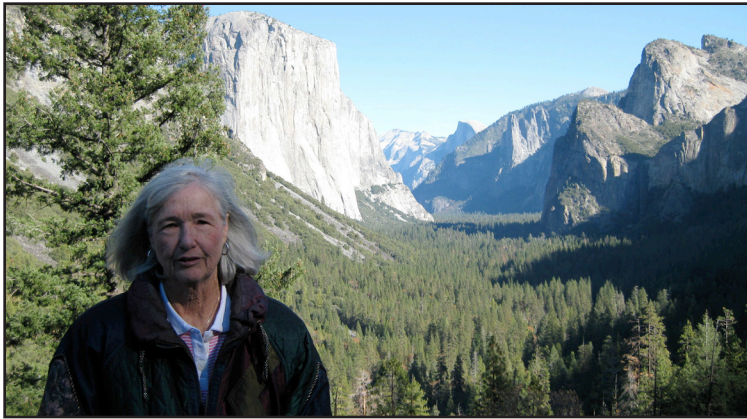
Ask any of the three and they will tell you that Death Valley was a great end of the season rally. Lets see if the Sierra Nevada Unit can make it a greater success in 2009.

P.S. The Wheelers traveled about 300 miles one way to the rally, Gail and I 330 miles and nobody knows how many Jim traveled but it exceeded 500 over a several day period.



DRY CAMPING

Wheels Wheeler



We had an enjoyable stay in Death Valley with a small contingent of the Sierra Nevada Unit and an even smaller, but welcome, contingent of the Four Corners Unit. We then moved south to the Family Campgrounds at Edwards Air Force Base. We parked in a nice pull through with some trees in fall color.

From Edwards we made a day trip north to the US Naval Museum of Armament and Technology at China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station. Most of the air launched missiles used by the Air Force, Navy, Marines and Army have been developed here and their museum shows the pride they take in their work.

When we returned to our camp site at Edwards I noticed water dripping under our trailer. From the outside it appeared that the fresh water tank was dripping. Wait that can't be right, our fresh water tank was almost empty from our stay in Death Valley. Inside the trailer water was coming out of the shower and flowing down through a hole in the floor for plumbing to the area around the tanks. I found the faucet on the bathroom sink had not been completely shut off and during the whole day enough water had gone into the grey water tank to back up into the shower. I quickly drained the grey water tank. Well that is I retrieve the fitting to connect to the sewer connection from the depths of my truck under the chairs I was bringing to my step daughter for use at Thanksgiving, and behind the kindling I had brought for starting campfires at Death Valley. Someday I'm going to have to organize that stuff. Maybe I don't need all those things. I pulled out the dump hose from under the trailer. Fortunately, I have not had time to make that more difficult. Although I might, the cover came off on the road about 50 miles north of Bakersfield. Nothing was lost just a 60 mile an hour test of the tether. I emptied the grey water tank successfully. We wiped up the water. A little water got on the rug in the bedroom and gave use wet feet for a few days. I made a new rule-when hooked up to city water and leaving for any period of time turn off the water supply out side.

I visited the museum at Edward that displays some of the aircraft that have been tested at the Air Force Flight Test

Center there. A trip to Palmdale to see the Blackbird (SR-71) on display there was a bust because the display is only open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

We moved the trailer to the RV Campground at Naval Air Station Lemoore in the center of the San Joaquin Valley, west of Visalia.

From there we visited Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. These are some big old trees. The sequoias are not as tall as the redwoods but they are older. There is lots of evidence that they have survived some significant wild fires in their time.

One morning, after breakfast, I went out to empty the trash. When returning to the trailer I noticed it was leaking water again. How could this happen. I was sure we had turned all the faucets off last night and the rug had finally dried out and I didn't get wet feet getting up this morning. Wait this is coming from someplace else. After a closer inspection water was coming out of the fresh water overflow. How could this be happening? I had not put water in the fresh water tank since leaving home. The water from the city water must be getting to the fresh water tank. I shut of the city water and the over flow stopped. I looked at the water pipes in the vicinity of the pump and could see nothing I recognized as a check valve to prevent back flow through the pump to the fresh water tank. I called Airstream and they said the check valve is part of the way the pump is built. They would replace it if I took it to a dealer for determination of the problem, performance of the replacement and return of the defective part to Airstream. This didn't sound too appealing. I think I'll shut of the water and go to Yosemite National Park like I planned.



Yosemite has lost none of its beauty. It is particularly beautiful when there is snow. There was very little snow. I used to be stationed at Merced and would visit often. Nothing has changed except more people and more controls to keep them from damaging the park. It was cold in the shadow of the mountains in the valley. Oh yeah I'm supposed to think of a way to avoid towing my trailer to a dealer to have them take a day to figure out what I know and then remove the pump and wait for the replacement to arrive. I can't do that until I get home and then I'll have to wait to winterize the trailer. There must be a better way. I think I'll install a conventional check [Death Valley continued on page 5]

MISSING MADISON?

BRING YOUR BERET TO ELKO!

For those who cannot attend the WBCCI International Rally in Madison, the Utah Unit invites you to join us in Elko, NV for the 46th National Basque Festival July 2 – 5, 2009. The activities include a dinner at the historic Star Hotel in Elko as well as enjoying the Festival events such as the Fourth of July parade Saturday morning and the afternoon activities at the fairgrounds racetrack including Basque dancing, sheepdog trials, feats of strength. Later that evening, a Basque ball (casual, begins at 10:00) or a movie (begins after sunset) projected on the rear of the town's museum. The wrap-up is back at the fairgrounds Sunday afternoon for the big, Basque barbeque. If all of this isn't enough, there's also hiking, biking and skiing in the Ruby Mountains, nearby. We will be staying at the Iron Horse RV Park. As it is associated with the Hilton Garden Inn next door, its amenities (pool, fitness) are available to us. As it is the festival weekend, the park has asked that we have our committed units count by May 15th for close-in parking; units reserving after that will be parked where available and reservations after June 22nd will probably not be possible. Questions or reservations: 1st VP Michael Glenn (michael@glenn.net) or 2nd VP Susan Glenn (susan@glenn.net) 801/406-9876, 801/400-3893, 801/400-3894. Also check the [SNU web-site link](#) listed in this newsletter.

YEAR IN REVIEW

2008 was a good year for the SNU. Membership reached an all time high of 40. Participation in rallies increased. We initiated the restoration of a historic custom Airstream. We have brand new SNU flags. We had five members at the WBCCI International rally. We welcomed guests at four of our rallies. We held rallies in three new locations. Some SNU members attended rallies of other WBCCI Units. We supported the 1st SNU rally at Death Valley. Most of all, we had a lot of fun. The success of the SNU is directly due to the support and participation of it's membership. Many people contributed in one way or another, directly and indirectly to the SNU in 2008. We wish to take this opportunity at the beginning of a new year to thank each and everyone of you. We look forward to an even better year in 2009. To see the full list of SNU achievements in 2008 and a list of some of the contributions of SNU members check the [link listed in this newsletter](#).

SUPPORT THE SNU

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Just a reminder, membership dues for 2009 can still be paid up till the end of May 2009. We hope that those of you who haven't yet renewed will do so and those of you who are considering joining, we'd be delighted to welcome you to the SNU.

MORE INFO ON THE WEB

Web links to information discussed in this newsletter including info for the January luncheon in Reno at Cabela's, SNU 2008 Achievements, SNU announcement list sign up, and the Utah Unit rally in Elko, <http://sierranevadaairstreams.org/snu/2009/09news/index.html>

SHOP SNU

A must visit site – shop SNU online. Show up at SNU rallies with a new shirt, ball cap, tote bag, apron, jacket, coffee mug and other logo items. See the link page listed in this newsletter and get ready to show others what a great Unit you belong to.



SNU FLAGS

There are still a few SNU flags available for sale. The flags are 3ft X 5ft and look fantastic flying in front of our Airstreams. The flags are \$85 each. Email: hg@sierranevadaairstreams.org or phone 775 972 5011 if you are interested in purchasing a flag. They even look good on the back side



ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

The newsletter is the SNU's primary communications tool and takes the biggest chunk of our budget. You can help keep costs to a minimum by signing up for the newsletter announcement list. This opt-in service means that when the newsletter is published you will be notified via email and provided with the link to the current issue as well as links to information and other items mentioned in the newsletter. The online version is in color and if you prefer to read a print copy that you can hold in your hands or pass along to others, you can print as many copies as you want.

ANNUAL SNU RALLY FEE

The SNU is currently the only WBCCI Unit to offer members an opportunity to pay an annual rally fee. You can do this online or at the first rally. The fee is \$100 and covers every rally for 2009 whether you come for one night or three. By paying the annual fee you won't have to bother with payments at each rally and if you attend all the rallies you come out ahead. Even if you aren't able to make all the rallies, the annual rally fee is a great way to support the SNU. This fee covers just the SNU \$15 per night kitty call for rallies. Luncheons and any additional rally costs are not included.

JANUARY LUNCHEON

Saturday January 24th will be the first SNU event of 2009 – lunch at Cabela's. Cabela's is located off I 80 approx 10 miles west of Reno. This will be a great time to shop for all those neat little gadgets that you can't live without that will enhance your rally and camping experience in the coming year. Lunch starts at 11:30 am. We have reserved one of Cabela's meeting rooms for this lunch. It is located right by the cafe. We will depart from our usual SNU lunch procedure this month. We will go through the grill line. Each person will choose their own food and pay for their own meal. In addition to the usual menu items Cabela's also offers elk, wild boar, venison bratwurst and other items. RSVP's much appreciated. Email hq@sierranevadaairstreams.org or call 775 972 9392.

[Death Valley continued from page 3] valve in the output line of the pump and live with the pump I have. It seems to pump and hold pressure with out cycling when not in use.

I found a brass check valve at Lowes and when I got to Bakersfield I put it in. When I tested it under city water pressure it had a slight leak, it even had a leak under pump pressure, cheap China products. I got another check valve from Home Depot, still made in China. It did not leak this time.

It was a very worthwhile trip to spend Thanksgiving with my step daughter and to visit later with my daughter. We returned with out incident and winterized the trailer and decided to worry about the pump next spring. I may not do anything since it seems to work now.

Since things have settled down I have had time to think about the whole affair. If I stuck to dry camping none of this would have happened.

REMEMBER YOU CAN NOW PAY YOUR RALLY KITTY FEES ON-LINE!

[HTTP://SIERRANEVADAAIRSTREAMS.ORG/SNU/2007/PAYONLINE/SNU-SHOPPING.HTML](http://SIERRANEVADAAIRSTREAMS.ORG/SNU/2007/PAYONLINE/SNU-SHOPPING.HTML)

RALLY AND EVENTS SCHEDULE FOR 2008

- * Saturday February 21, 2009 El Charro Avita - Carson City South of downtown Carson City, NV on S Carson Street
- * Thursday March 26 – Sunday 29, 2009 Rally at Weed Heights Full service RV Park
- * Thursday April 23 - Sunday 26, 2009 Rally at Boca Springs or Boca Rest
- * Thursday June 25 – Sunday 28, 2009 Sweetwater Summit dispersed USFS area
- * WBCCI International Rally - June 28 - July 4, 2008, Madison, Wisconsin
- * Thursday July 23 – Sunday 26, 2009 Thomas Ranch near Pittville
- * Thursday August 20 – Sunday, August 23, 2009 Obsidian Dome (Inyo Nat'l Forest) dispersed camping
- * Thursday September 17 – Sunday 20, 2009 Blue Lakes, dispersed area
- * Mason Valley Wildlife Area – Friday October 15 - Sunday October 18, 2009
- * October 14 – 18, 2009 Region 12 Rally
- * Saturday November 14, 2009 - Gold Hill, Hotel, Virginia City
- * Death Valley Mesquite Campground November 2009
- * Saturday December 12, 2009 - Overland Hotel & Basque restaurant

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON UPCOMING RALLIES CHECK THE WEBSITE

[HTTP://SIERRANEVADAAIRSTREAMS.ORG/SNU/2009/EVENTS/DOCS/09-RALLYSCHEDULE.HTML](http://SIERRANEVADAAIRSTREAMS.ORG/SNU/2009/EVENTS/DOCS/09-RALLYSCHEDULE.HTML)

ANITA'S ADVENTURES

Notes from the SNU President

Happy New Year! Plan on marking your calendars with a Sierra Nevada Unit event! January at Cabela's would be a good place to start. This would be a chance to travel with your airstream, and park at Cabela's RV parking. There is also a KOA next door. With your airstream along, you will have a chance to check out some of the systems to see if they are functioning properly, have plenty of room for any large purchases at Cabela's, and have a warm place for your pet. I would like to meet those of you that I haven't met yet. If you have any comments, questions, concerns, etc., contact me through the SNU.

My Airstream is doing okay on its 30th birthday. My projects list and wishlist seem to get longer. My catalytic heater just fell off the wall on its last trip. I'm trying to decide about replacing it with a new one. The catalytic heater is one must have item for me. I have been able to get along without a generator because of having a catalytic heater.

- Anita

DON'T FORGET!

You are invited to help Jerry and Dyann celebrate birthdays at a party on **January 24, 2009**. This will be Jerry's 60th. The party will be after the SNU luncheon at Cabela's No presents please. For Details and to **RSVP**. (775-867-2797).



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