



# Sierra Nevada Unit

Wally Byam Caravan Club International

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## Future SNU Rallies

August - Thursday August 24 -  
Sunday August 27, 2017 Green  
Creek near Bridgeport

September - Thursday Septem-  
ber 21 - Sunday September 24,  
2017 Lassen RV Resort, McAr-  
thur, CA

October 11 - 15, 2017 Region  
12 Rally Jackson Rancheria,  
Jackson, CA

October - Thursday October 19 -  
Sunday October 22, 17 Boca  
Rest near Truckee

November 18, 2017 Saturday -  
Black Bear Fernley

November, TBA Death Valley  
Mesquite Campground

December 16, 2017 Saturday -  
J.T.'s Basque Restaurant, Gard-  
nerville



## Crocker Rally Canceled

For the first time in almost 15 years, the SNU canceled a rally. For a variety of reasons, the SNU has always tried to hold our scheduled rallies as planned. We have held rallies during snow showers, wind storms, sand storms, rain and other adversities. The weather forecast for the weekend of the rally at Crocker on June 22, 2017 made canceling the safest and wisest option. The week of the rally Northern Nevada was experiencing a hot spell with temperatures in Reno hovering around 100F. It was supposed to cool off a little by the weekend. By Wednesday, forecasts had changed and temps around 100 were anticipated throughout the weekend. Crocker is a USFS campground with no amenities. Even with a slightly higher elevation and lots of trees, temps in the upper 80's to mid 90's would make enjoying the rally difficult. In fact the weather station near Crocker, stated the temp at 6pm on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> was 92 degrees! Not much of an evening cool down. Several options for the rally were considered and checked into. In the end, canceling was the best choice. Although the SNU prides itself on being consistent and doing what it says it plans to do, we have always had a caveat that things can change. We try to keep people informed by posting in the Zephyrs web blog and on the SNU FaceBook page. It's always good to check for any changes or updates before heading out.

## Weed Heights Rally in July

Time to exercise air conditioners! **The July rally** will be at the full service RV park in Weed Heights. Dates are Thursday July 20 to Sunday July 23, 2017. The RV park is located in the Township of Weed Heights just west of Yerington, NV off Hwy Alt 95. This RV park is up on a hill behind the Anaconda mine pit with wide open BLM land behind the park. There are panoramic views of the valley. This will be a nice relaxing weekend. Dinner plans include Jerry's famous Nevada surf-n-turf BBQ on Friday with ice cream for dessert. Hope to see you all at Weed Heights.



## A Place to Camp or Something Else?

The SNU has some experience with topic of this discussion. Our favorite rally sites are dispersed areas with "free range" parking and few or no facilities. Years ago, we wrote a letter to the Nevada State Parks Department regarding such areas in Nevada parks. The focus of that letter was an open space at Dayton State Park. The Parks Department chose to build extensive and expensive trail systems with signage and other such things instead of creating a simple area for group camping. There are areas at the Fort Churchill complex as well as at other State Parks where minimally developed group camping areas would make a welcome addition. We have also experienced old style BLM and USFS campgrounds where access roads and sites are meant for tents or smaller RV's.



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*"The Great Basin  
Airstream  
RV Association"*



## Foam Noodles

Say what? These **foam tubes** primarily a play thing in swimming pools, can be put to good use in a variety of other ways. Airstreamers have come up with all sorts of creative uses for these items. For instance, they can be slipped on the edge of open windows to not only make the open window more visible, they cushion any accidental bumps on the head. They can be used on open awning struts for the same purpose. They can be used to protect outside water hoses. They can be used as markers when trying to maneuver an RV in tight spaces. Foam tubes can be put on ladders to protect your Airstream if you need to climb up to inspect the roof. They can be used inside the trailer as bumpers for various corners or metal parts near couches or beds, primarily in older Airstreams. These tubes come in a variety of colors and can be found in hardware, home improvement and other stores. They are lightweight and easy to cut as needed.



## Africa 1959

### Mark your Calendars!

### Send in your reservations!

The September rally at Lassen RV Resort promises to be the highlight of the year. Randy and Vicki are working with park owners, Phil and Jasmin on a variety of entertainment options and some pretty special meals. **Visit the website for more information.** Contact Randy for costs and reservation forms. **Email: [randy@pyramid.net](mailto:randy@pyramid.net)**



Imagine if you will, taking a year to travel with 41 other **Airstreams across Africa**. This was in 1959-1960. You are talking about traveling through countries that had never seen anything like an Airstream never mind a whole caravan of them. Countries where roads were often non-existent and those that did exist usually made today's jeep trails seem like highways. You are talking about hauling a trailer through mud, sand, water, and over mountains, through forests, and over rivers on very precarious bridges and "ferries". You are talking about a trip through countries where basic supplies such as gas, oil, food, and other essentials had to be planned for and brought in especially for the caravan. Gas stations, repair shops, grocery stores or laundromats, didn't exist. No cell phones. No GPS. No full service RV Parks. You are talking about Airstreams with no A/C, no black tank and no microwave. You are talking about the need to keep things to bare essentials to keep the weight down as much as possible.

Despite all this, one of my favorite pictures that Pee Wee shared was the group photo near the end of the trip at the Imperial Palace of the Emperor Haile Selassie. Even after almost a year on the road, all the Caravanners are dressed in their best clothes looking like they just arrived at a cocktail party. One lady even has her fur stole over her shoulders. And of course, many have on their blue beret.

As it states in the forward to the list of caravan participants, *"Another of Wally's dreams has come true. Our knight in helmet and boots, as crusader of old, is leading his beloved Caravanners into another new land filled with new adventure. And what planning and work and anxiety is has caused! Not only just at Caravan Headquarters, but reaching throughout our country and across the seas."*

Pee Wee said *"Wally did months, if not years of pre-planning for the African Caravan. He talked to African travelers. He purchased books written by travelers in Africa. He pondered maps looking for roads and directions to take the Caravan. Wally also wrote to embassies, tourist bureaus, corporations and anyone that could advance and enhance the 1959 African Caravan. He found the sights, the activities, the towns, and cities to visit."*



Pee Wee & the  
Scout Truck



*"The Great Basin  
Airstream  
RV Association"*



To keep informed about the Sierra Nevada Unit - select any of the following links.

**SNU newsletter and article information**

**SNU 2017 Rally Schedule - Mark your calendars**

**SNU Facebook Page**

*What's new in  
Sierra Nevada  
Airstreams.org*



## WBCCI - Sierra Nevada Unit - Newsletter

### Africa 1959

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Along on this caravan were 9 girls ages 6 to 21 and 12 boys ages 8 to 20. One of the boys, was Dale (Pee Wee) Schawmborn, first cousin once removed of Wally Byam. Pee Wee was an advance scout for the caravan. Among other duties, this meant he, along with Nick Charles were the ones who arrived in towns and villages ahead of the caravan and met with officials, checking out the campsite and in general, smoothing the way. There was also a mechanic on this caravan. Art Ruiz hauled a small utility trailer full of tools and spare parts.

**Allene and Harry Halbritter**, participants in this caravan, wrote a letter to Helen (Pee Wee's Mother and first manager of WBCCI ) that reviewed their experience. The letter included and itemized list of their expenses for the trip. Here is how the Halbritter's described the caravan. *"The Halbritters have again taken advantage of the opportunity offered by the Wally Byam Caravan Club of having gone on the 17,000 mile African Caravan. In our estimation this was the most terrific trip ever thought up and the most exciting, interesting and enjoyable one we have ever been on."*



That is a real testament to all the planning, preparation and organization on the part of Wally, Helen and others that went into making this trip possible. Especially when you consider the conditions and challenges the caravan met along the route.

There were some discussions about trying to re-create this caravan in 2009 on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the original adventure. Times have changed. The political climate has changed. So many other things have changed. It just turned out to be impossible to attempt another caravan across Africa.

Pee Wee has been very generous in sharing his memories and memorabilia from the estate of his Mother regarding this caravan. It makes for an interesting and unique look at all that went into the caravan and what it was like to be a participant. Reading through Pee Wee's comments and other documents, looking through the photo galleries and memorabilia, can in some small way, provide you with a virtual experience of what it must have been like to be on that caravan.



Visiting the Imperial Palace of Emperor Haile Selassie

*"The Great Basin  
Airstream  
RV Association"*



**Camping with pets** – Nothing better than taking your best friends camping with you. Summertime camping and rallies call for a little extra planning and preparation. We all know never to leave a pet in a car when it is even a little warm outside. Leaving your pet in your RV, even with windows open, fans or A/C on isn't always the best solution either. Pets have suffered heat stroke and even died at rallies in hot weather. Best advice is know your pet, know your options, plan your destinations, be prepared, and be informed. For some general good information on camping with pets (dogs in this case) [check this link](#).



## A Place to Camp

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*Zephyrs Blog July 2013*

The **Coyote Blog** notes When Environmentally Sustainable Actually Was Sustainable

"The US Forest Service has built more campgrounds, by far, than any other entity in the world. For decades, particularly in the western United States, the USFS had a very clear idea about what they wanted in a campground — they wanted it to be well-integrated with nature, simple, and lightly developed. They eschewed amenities like pools and playgrounds and shuffleboard. They avoided building structures except bathroom and shower buildings. The camp sites were simple, often unpaved with a table and fire ring and a place for a tent. They used nature itself to make these sites beautiful, keeping the environment natural and creating buffers of trees and natural vegetation between sites. I have never seen an irrigation system in a western USFS campground — if it doesn't grow naturally there, it doesn't grow.

This has proven to be an eminently sustainable design."

The BLM and USFS both follow this idea but other agencies appear more prey to the 'PC Campground' problem — like maybe state and local park departments.

"Over the last several months, I have been presented with plans from three different public parks agencies for parks they want to redevelop. Each of these have been \$10+ million capital projects and each one had a major goal of being "sustainable." I have run away from all three. Why — because each and every one will be incredibly expensive and resource intensive to operate and of questionable popularity with the public. Sustainability today seems to mean "over-developed with a lot of maintenance-intensive facilities".

Agencies that use public facilities as bragging points tend to miss one big market. Some people just want to camp in the woods and wilds. If they want a resort or to hold a convention, they'll find a place that does what they want. Dispersed camping is popular in large part because it doesn't offer anything except access to the land. Most RV's are fully able to spend a weekend off grid and take out anything and everything they bring in. Doing that is the essence of 'sustainable' and the idea of leaving no indication anyone was there at all.

Now, if the USFS and BLM would just upgrade the ancient campgrounds to better accommodate RV's a bit larger than people used fifty years ago ...

## Fridge Ideas

**Zephyrs Blog Dec. 2016**

Dan Fink has a good discussion on **Choosing Your Off-Grid Refrigerator** in *HomePower* Issue #176, November / December 2016. He describes the specialty refrigerators before he gets to the "conventional fridges." The conventional refrigerators are getting to be quite energy efficient and the economies of scale can make them rather cost effective. Also note the comments about chest type freezers. These can also be had rather inexpensively but may need an external thermostat for refrigerator use. Also note the Colorado commenter who described his need to remove perishables from the freezer in the winter. That sort of problem could also be addressed by a separate freezer.

Advances in solar systems and batteries put 'conventional refrigerators' as a distinct possible option for RV's. They don't suffer altitude problems like many RV propane refrigerators do, they will chill down much faster, and can offer other advantages. The energy needs don't seem to be influenced by size much. Big or little, a standard fridge seems to need about a kilowatt hour per day of energy. That means a minimum base system of 2 lead acid batteries and 200 watts solar. Dan gets into a lot of the issues and considerations on this topic. That helps to understand just what is involved and what to consider.