



FRYEBURG FAIR TO HOST AIRSTREAM CLUB INTERNATIONAL RALLY JULY 23-29, 2022

Fryeburg Fair will welcome hundreds of “Silver Bullets,” also known as Airstream campers to the fairgrounds this summer for the Airstream Club International (ACI) Rally. The ACI rallies started in 1958 and are held annually in locations all over North America.

The 2021 international rally was held in Lebanon, Tennessee. This is the Club’s first time visiting Maine.

ACI’s event requires a facility as large as Fryeburg Fairgrounds to host 1,200 campers and their owners with amenities like electrical, wifi, bathrooms and large buildings for meetings and gatherings.

ACI is the longest running, single-branded club in the world. Anyone can join, but, of course, you must have an Airstream camper. Tye Mott, President of ACI, says a stripped down model of Airstream can cost around \$50K and many run up into the \$200K range. “Buying a new Airstream can be difficult right now as they are



at least a year behind in production.”



Airstream campers were designed and created by Wallace M. “Wally” Byam. Byam, born in Oregon in 1896 started travelling at a very young age with his grandfather who led a mule train. In the 1920’s Byam began building travel trailers and in 1931 he founded the company Airstream. In 1936, Airstream built its first iconic riveted aluminum travel trailer. In response to WWII, Byam closed Airstream and determined the best way

David Andrews, Fryeburg Fair’s General Superintendent with AIC leadership: Lori Plummer, Corporate Manager; Linda Shelton, International Secretary; Kristy Yonyon, Marketing Communications Manager, RJ Dominic, A/V Committee Chair; & Tye Mott, International President during their summer planning visit in Fryeburg.

for him to help the country was by lending his knowledge in aluminum fabricating. He took positions at Lockheed and Curtis Wright during the full duration of the war. After WWII, he reopened Airstream. The economy boomed and recreational travel skyrocketed. By 1948, Airstream campers became one of the most recognizable American-made products in the world. Byam and his family continued to travel. Other Airstream owners joined in and the Airstream caravan was born. Often members' Airstreams and vehicles were shipped overseas for travel abroad and destinations included Cuba, Europe, Africa, Jamaica & China. These caravans were the inspiration for the non-profit Wally Byam Caravan Club International, now ACI, intended to promote travel via Airstream.



Airstreams are big enough for great danes! Per & Lilli Hamnqvist from Merrimack, NH with their Great Dane, Magnus. Per Hamnqvist is ACI's 3rd Vice President.

ACI is comprised of 12 regions in North America and Canada and within that region there are many smaller clubs totaling 103 in all. Maine is part of Region 1 which includes all New England states and parts of Canada.

ACI has six employees. They are located in Jackson Center, Ohio, population 1,400. They are closeby to Airstream headquarters where 800 people are employed in the manufacture of their well-known silver trailers and recreational vehicles.

Currently the youngest member of ACI is 19 and the eldest is 96. About 70% of the membership are retired and many are still in the workforce including engineers, teachers, pilots and finance professionals.

“There is no one type of person that is an Airstreamer. We have a vast variety of folks. But the commonality is a certain level of wanderlust!” says Kristy Yonyon, the head of marketing for ACI.

Lori Plummer, ACI's Corporate Manager says, “Our rallies are predominantly social and educational and very fun. About one-third of our members are Airstream rally first-timers. And many have been doing this for 10, 20, 40 years! It's a great way to learn about trailering, caravanning and to see the world. We have many families with kids and pets and we love having new people join.”



Tye Mott, President of Airstream International, and his Welsh Terrier, Doakie, is their Airstream.

The lead team of ACI (see photo) visited Fryeburg in July 2021 to map out and organize their upcoming 2022 event at the fairgrounds. The team is looking at restaurants, museums, hiking trails, golfing, water sports, shopping, historical sites and cultural and learning opportunities. Day trips will likely include as far as Portland. “Many of our Airstreamers drive here from California, so an hour or so to discover wonderful new adventures is no big deal,” says Mott.

“Our Club is very excited to support local businesses while we're here in the Fryeburg area,” Mott adds.

“Our main goal is to learn more about using our Airstreams while also learn-

ing more about this part of the country. And we like to stay active.” says Yonyon. “We are currently accepting applications for exhibitors, speakers, presenters and vendors. People should contact me if interested. We’re an enthusiastic audience!”

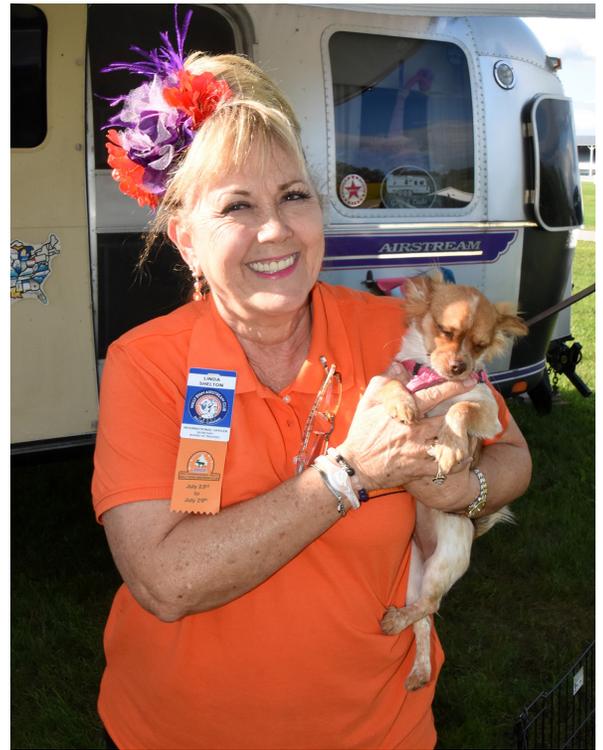
David Andrews, Fryeburg Fair’s General Superintendent, says, “We’re really excited that Airstream chose Fryeburg Fair for their big event. The process started about three years ago when Steve Graustein (Fryeburg Fair’s IT Director) and I met one of their reps in Las Vegas when we were attending a fair conference there. ACI was interested in big buildings and the types of amenities and space we can offer. They’re great people to work with. The Airstream Rally will bring about \$2M in new revenue to this area. They are working with the MWV Chamber of Commerce on what to see and do locally.”

Airstreamers will start arriving around July 17 and some will stay as long as July 31. The rally itself will run six full days, July 23-29. “We’ll have about 200-250 campers pulling in daily,” says Mott.

ACI will offer an Open House for the general public on Sunday, July 24th from 11am to 4pm. Mott says, “We welcome anyone to come, view and talk about our Airstream life! We want to share what we love!”

If you have opportunities that Airstreamers may want to hear about, please email Kristy Yonyon, Marketing Communications Manager, at kyonyon@airstreamclub.org at Airstream Club International. For more information about the Club, go to www.airstreamclub.org.

Written & photographed by Rachel Andrews Damon, Fryeburg Fair, www.fryeburgfair.org



Linda Shelton, ACI Secretary, is from Georgetown, TX. Here with her Longhaired Chihuahua Gracie Mae. Linda owns a 1990 Excella Airstream and has been a member of ACI since 1998. “I’m looking so forward to being in Fryeburg. I’ve met so many nice and helpful people there. We’re getting so excited about enjoying the hospitality and beautiful scenery!”



This 1992 34’ Airstream Excella 1000 is one of the original triple-axle Airstream models and is owned by Tye Mott, President of ACI. Mott purchased this in 2007 and has been involved with the Club since 2008.