

Mountain views await Airstreamers headed to spring rally at Queen Wilhelmina State Park

BY LARRY MADDEN

RAZORBACK UNIT PRESIDENT

In early January, my wife, Terry, and I took the day off from the household duties to visit Queen Wilhelmina State Park, the location of our unit's spring rally set for April 14 - 17, 2016. It was our first visit to this beautiful jewel of the Arkansas State park system.

The staff members with whom we visited were very friendly and helpful. As our hosts they are committed to ensure our rally is a memorable one.

The park is surrounded by the Quachita National Forest and offers many family oriented activities: miniature golf, volleyball, five hiking trails of various lengths and a well-equipped playground for children. A unique way to see the park is to take a ride on the miniature train which circumferences the park.

The lodge, known as the "Castle in the Clouds," reopened in June of last year after an extensive remodel from the foundation to the roof. The views from the lodge are spectacular!

"Named after the Dutch monarch of the Netherlands, this renowned hostelry continues a lodging tradition born at the site in 1898.



Queen Wilhelmina

Today's state park lodge is the third mountain inn to grace this spectacular setting on 2,681-ft. Rich Mountain, Arkansas's second highest mountain," according to the Arkansas Parks and Tourism website.



Bird's-eye view of the Queen Wilhelmina State Park camping area.

The lodge is home to the Queen's Restaurant, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week. Breakfast is served from 7 a.m. until 10 a.m. Lunch is served 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. Dinner is served from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. The restaurant serves delicious Southern cuisine. The menu varies from ribeye steak to an old fashioned Rich Mountain Burger and other traditional southern favorites.

A-must-place-to-visit during the rally is the Country Store, located a mile or so from the state park. The owner's name is Steve and he is as friendly as they come. Steve also serves breakfast with what he calls the "tallest pancakes in county."

Currently there are 14 unit rigs registered. There is still time and reservations are available. To make reservations, con-



Queen Wilhelmina lodge

tact the lodge at 1-800-264-2477. Ask for the Airstream Group or use the reservation number assigned: 1734013.

The park is located 13 miles west of Mena on Ark. 88 (Talimena National Scenic Byway). During inclement weather, go six miles north on U.S. 71, then travel nine miles west on U.S. 270, then go two miles south up Ark. 272 to the park.

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Members enjoy year's first lunch at Doe's

Arkansas Razorback Unit members met at Doe's Eat Place in Little Rock on Feb. 4. Those attending the luncheon included from left, B.J. Davis, Jane Pankey, Carole and Bill Barton, Char and Roger Feldt, Jane Landrum, Laura Wessinger, Jim Pankey and Paul Moore. Not pictured, Mark Magie.

The next unit luncheon begins at 11:30 a.m., Thursday, April 7, 2016 at Corky's Ribs & BBQ at 12005 Westhaven Dr. in Little Rock.

Queen Wilhelmina park has Dutch connection

Excerpts from the Arkansas Parks and Tourism website -

The beginning of a lodging tradition on 2,681-foot Rich Mountain, Arkansas's second highest mountain, is rooted in the 1890s. Arthur Stilwell, vice president of the Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf Railroad (KCPG), decided to build the first north-south railroad, a route stretching from Kansas City, Mo., to Port Arthur, Texas, to provide rail access to the Gulf of Mexico.

This brought the railroad's route through Arkansas. During the routing of the tracks through the valleys of the rugged east-west trending mountains, a flat area near the top of Rich Mountain was discovered. This windswept location with panoramic views was brought to the attention of the investors of the KCPG, many of whom were Dutch, as a site to build a resort retreat featuring a grand hostelry to entice railroad passengers from the North and South to travel the rails and help build up traffic.

The railroad spared no expense in constructing the luxurious hostelry of Victorian splendor. Built of native stone and timber at a cost of \$100,000, the inn was illuminated by carbide lights, making it a glorious site as wagons pulled by draft mules topped Rich Mountain from the train stop at the base of mountain's north side. An especially beautiful setting was the 300-seat dining room which could be converted to a ballroom.

The young Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands was to be crowned in September 1898. Since the railroad was largely financed by Dutch investors, and to give it a touch of grandeur, the mountain resort was called Wilhelmina Inn to honor the new queen. The company reserved a suite of rooms located in the southeast corner of the second floor for the queen in vain hope she would choose to visit, which she never did.

The grand opening was held on June 22, 1898. The luxury accommodations earned the inn the title of "Castle in the Sky." Less than three years after the inn's opening, the KCPG, facing enormous

financial troubles, was sold to what is now the Kansas City Southern Railroad. With the new owners in place, the inn was abandoned by its former owners to languish into disrepair. Although the inn did not close permanently until 1910, its heyday had quickly come to an end. The building soon fell into decay.

By the 1930s, only remnants of the original structure's stone fences and fireplaces remained, standing as stark silhouettes against the sky. The old rock wall that served as part of the reservoir for the original 1898 inn can still be found on the side of the mountain on the park's Reservoir Trail.

The year 1940 brought a brief respite and renewed hope for the desolate remains. Earnest Rolston, a professor from Centenary College in Shreveport, La., decided to create a summer music school using a portion of the inn. The idea was a good one, but the timing of it was not. The beginning of World War II in 1941 ended any further attempt to restore the ruins.

After the decade of the 40s, the 1950s brought new opportunities into sight. State Senator Landers Morrow and other community leaders created Resolution 17 to establish a new Arkansas state park on the site where the Wilhelmina Inn once graced Rich Mountain. Act 76 was passed by the Arkansas General Assembly in 1957. Plans were soon underway to construct a new state park lodge on the site of the original inn.

The second inn opened its doors on June 22, 1963. Operated for 10 years by the state of Arkansas, the lodge was a popular travel attraction until the evening of November 10, 1973, when it was destroyed by a fire that began in the kitchen area.

Arkansas State Parks lost no time in constructing a new lodge on the same site. The \$3 million state park lodge opened in 1975. From February 2012 to June 2015, this lodge underwent a major renovation and expansion. The lodge reopened to the public on July 1, 2015.

Simple fix prevents electrical woes later on

BY LARRY MADDEN
RAZORBACK UNIT PRESIDENT

As a young airman in the Air Force, I was quickly learning many new terms and acronyms associated with the field of aircraft maintenance. Most made absolutely no sense to me due to my lack of knowledge and experience. However, after a few years of sowing my oats on the flight line, like magic, the once unfamiliar terms all came together and made perfect sense.

In the spectrum of aviation there are words and acronyms which have a higher level of urgency. Most reflect a safety of flight issue, and tend to get everyone's attention. Safety of flight was always the number one priority.

"The fleet is grounded for a one-time inspection" pretty much means just what it says. If a safety of flight problem is found on one aircraft, it is rightly assumed to be a problem throughout the fleet. So a one-time inspection is initiated and all aircraft are grounded until the inspection is complete.

This past fall while we were enjoying the Amish Rally in Sugar Creek, Ohio, we made some new friends, Steve and Gail. Steve shared with me an experience they



had with their Airstream which I think is a safety issue for all of us who own Airstreams and warrants each of us to accomplish a one-time inspection to avoid a similar issue.

While on a trip with their 2014 International, Steve found a burned wire that had gotten so hot the insulation was completely burned off the wire and the exposed wire strands were so brittle they would break apart with little or no effort.

Steve's concerns are well-founded. A shorted wire which produces enough heat to melt the insulation from the wire could have possibly led to catastrophic fire. But for a missing length in the chain of events, (in this case a propane leak) Steve's experience had a happy ending.

The wire in question is the only wire on

your Airstream that is hot (has power on it all the time if your batteries are installed). It carries twelve volts (12vdc) directly from the battery to the jack motor (assuming you have an electrical jack). It is routed down the jack stand, under the cover for the propane tanks, to the battery box. In the case of Steve's Airstream, the propane cover had chafed through the jack power wire and caused a short, which burned the wire harness.

Later that evening, I took some time to inspect the routing of our jack's power wire and sure enough, I found I was very close to having the same experience Steve had!

Airstream has addressed the issue and developed a fixed on later models. They have notched a little tunnel at the bottom left on the propane tank cover for the wire to pass through which has eliminated the chaffing issue.

A good temporary fix is to thoroughly wrap the wire with electrical tape where it contacts the bottom of the propane cover. However for a permanent fix, applying what Airstream has done, by notching out a little tunnel for the power wire to pass under the cover is the best option.

'Take it outside' is message on new Hog shirts

Unit member Anita Smith has a nephew who designs t-shirts for NCAA schools. He has designed and received authorization for a t-shirt for Airstreamers who are Razorback fans with the Hog logo superimposed on an Airstream trailer. "Take it outside" is the wording. The soft, red shirts sell for \$13 each, but we must order at least 24 to make it happen.

Contact Anita right away at acrowsmith@gmail.com to let her know you are interested. Send the form below with a check made out to her at 14306 Longtree Dr., Little Rock, AR 72212.



Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

How many of each size do you want?

S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ 2XL _____ 3XL _____

No. of shirts _____ @ \$13 each = Total \$ _____

Exciting year ahead; help wanted sign goes out

Greetings from Arizona!

As Terry and I wind down our trip to Casa Grande, Arizona we are refocusing our attention on an exciting year ahead for the Razorback Unit starting with our Spring Rally in April, a "Come & Go" Caravan in May, followed in September with our 50th Anniversary celebration Rally at Bull Shoals White River State Park.

There is however, a more pressing issue on my mind that I need to address.

Carole and Bill Barton have served with the Razorback Unit in an officer's capacity for many years. In the not too distant past Carole was simultaneously acting as club president and treasurer in the same year. Last Fall Carole graciously agreed to one last year as the unit's treasurer. This September she will pass the books over to our new treasurer.

I am reaching out as a recruiter looking for a new Razorback Unit treasurer. No doubt this is the most challenging of all the officer positions. It requires a dedicated individual who will keep the books up to date and birdog



how we allocate our funds. The pay is slightly less than the president's but truly more powerful!

I would respectfully ask each of you to give this opportunity some consideration. The treasurer is a position that you serve for one year. Carole will walk the new treasurer (elect) through the duties and responsibilities of the office and be available for clarification of questions as they may arise.

If you are interested please contact me.

Larry Madden
Live long and prosper!

Unit's 'golden' rally set for first WBCCI Rally site

Mark your calendars now for the Arkansas Razorback Unit's 50th Anniversary Celebration which coincides with the Fall Election Rally set for Sept. 22-25, 2016 at Bull Shoals-White River State Park. The state park claims its place in Airstream history by being the site of the Wally Byam Caravan Club's first WBCCI international rally in 1958.

Many unit members have already signed up for a block of 15 sites. Those wishing to attend should reserve a space by calling the park at 870-445-3629.

RAZORBACK NEWSMAKERS

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3/15 - Henry Landrum
3/16 - J.W. King

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

3/14 - Bill & Carole Barton

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

4/6 - Dana Landrum
4/9 - Joyce Fitzhugh
4/18 - Barbara Moore
4/25 - Emogene Duran

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

4/3 - Terry O'Brian & Martha Moore
4/7 - Larry & Terry Madden

SAVE THE DATES -

For the latest information on upcoming events, check the Razorback Unit website at www.arkansasrazorback.wbcci.net



- ++ APRIL 7, 2016 - Unit luncheon, Corky's Ribs & BBQ, 12005 Westhaven Dr., Little Rock, 11:30 a.m.
- ++ APRIL 14-17, 2016 - **Razorback Unit Spring Rally**, Queen Wilhelmina State Park, Mena
- *Make reservations with the Airstream group. Call 479-394-2863.*
- ++ May 12-22, 2016 - **Come-and-Go Caravan** through northwest Arkansas.
- *Contact Caravan Master Paul Moore at pauullrarusa@usa.com to reserve a space.*
- ++ JUNE 2, 2016 - Unit luncheon, location to be announced.
- ++ JUNE 28 - JULY 4, 2016 - 59th International Rally, Lewisburg, West Virginia
- ++ AUGUST 4, 2016 - Unit luncheon, location to be announced.
- ++ SEPTEMBER 22-25 - **50th Anniversary Celebration/Razorback Unit Fall Election Rally**, Bull Shoals State Park, Ark.
- *Contact Bull Shoals State Park at 870-445-3629 to make reservations.*
- ++ OCTOBER 6, 2016 - Unit luncheon, location to be announced.
- ++ DECEMBER 1, 2016 - Unit luncheon, location to be announced.