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Local News

## Airstream trailer rally comes to Granum

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By Rob Vogt, Local Press Writer

You have probably seen them on the highway – silver trailers that kind of look like a bullet.

They are Airstream trailers, and they have a huge following throughout the world.

Owners can become part of the Wally Byam Caravan Club International, or more simply the Airstream Club.

Rallies are held every year where owners and their trailers gather to learn, tour, and renew friendships.

An Airstream rally was held at Granview Park in Granum this past weekend, from May 17 to 20, attracting 19 Airstreams and about two people per unit.

Susan Huntley of Bragg Creek was one of the organizers of the rally, and explained they did and saw a lot.

They toured a Crystal Springs, a cheese farm by Nobleford; Broek farm, a pork operation in the same area; Art that Spins east of Claresholm; and the Granum Old Jail and Museum. When the rains came, they also took comfort at Putters at the Bridges at Claresholm Golf Club.

Huntley, with her husband and 2004 unit, has been a member of the Airstream club five years.

“It’s been such a great group of people,” she said. “It’s like a family.

“We’ll help each other out – it’s been wonderful.”

On Sunday, May 19, people opened their trailers to the public for an open house where everyone could see inside, ask questions, and learn more about Airstreams.

Adolph Knopp and his wife Hazel are from Calgary and own a 1994 unit.

He explained the club is named after Wally Byam, who built the first Airstream in the 1930s.

Byam had experience in the aircraft industry, which is why the trailer is aluminum and riveted.

He soon started taking people and their trailers on caravans, including one to Africa.

“That’s how they became famous for their travels.”

In the mid 1950s, a meeting was held in Nova Scotia and the Wally Byam Caravan Club was born.

Local or unit, regional, and international rallies are held yearly.

The rally in Granum was a unit rally, encompassing Alberta and Saskatchewan members.




trailer rally - There was an Airstream rally at Granview Park in Granum from May 17 to 20, attracting close to 20 of the silver, bullet-shaped units. Here, Randy McGillivray, president of the Airstream club that includes this area, stands with his 2012 unit. Photo by Rob Vogt

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Alberta and Saskatchewan are part of Region 10, which also includes B.C., Northwest Territories, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska.

The Knopps have been involved since 1999 when they bought their Airstream.

Since then, Adolph has been quite active, serving as a unit president, regional president, and international treasurer.

They went on their first caravan shortly after where they met a retired American army colonel named R.B. Bernd who had a profound impact on his life.

"We had a great friendship," he said.

Their trailer is 30 feet long, fully self-contained, with air conditioning and hand-built oak cabinets.

"It's got a lot of miles on it," Adolph said, with all the rallies they have been too. "We've towed it a long way."

It is the people that attracts Airstream owners to the club.

"You become very good friends," Hazel said.

"The trailer seems to be the glue that (binds) the people's interest and the people's association," Adolph said.

"We've had a lot of fun and met a lot of terrific people."

Randy McGillivray, of Saskatoon, is the current president of the club.

He owns a 2012 Airstream which celebrates the 80th anniversary of continuous production.

Moreover 60 to 70 per cent of Airstreams produced are still on the road.

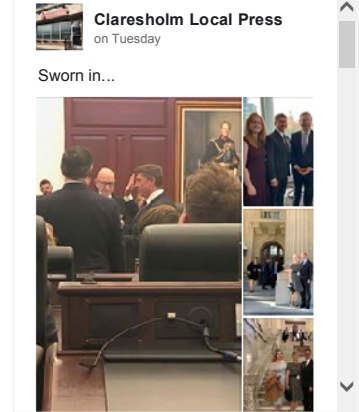
"They really retain their value," he said.

"We sure enjoyed ours in the six years we've owned it."

The club is also a place where people can access years of experience, should they have a challenge with their unit.

But there is one benefit that stands out for McGillivray and for everyone.

"It's the friendships," he said.



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