



# Trailhusker

The Newsletter of the Nebraska Unit, WBCCI

May 2010

## From the Desk of Unit President Selwyn Heese

Florene and I finally got out of Nebraska (away from the North Pole) and experienced a very enjoyable Classic Airstream Club Caravan through the western part of Louisiana Cajun Country. Lots of shrimp, crayfish, crab and oysters served grilled, fried, broiled or as an ingredient in gumbo, jambalaya or etouffee.

Back home again we attended the Nebraska Spring Rally in Fremont, which was followed by the Region 8 Rally at the same site. With the exception of a torrential downpour during the Unit Rally, both Rallies went well. The fact that our unit was in charge of parking gave us a chance to meet everyone coming into the campground and get a little better acquainted. It also caused me to resolve that I will never again criticize someone on the parking committee.

Region President June Ryan called in some markers and provided us with excellent weather for the Region Rally. That, plus the results of the beanbag baseball tournament made the Rally especially successful (for the Nebraska Unit).

During the Region Board Meeting, a proposal was discussed regarding the future of the International Rally. The 2020 Committee, which is the International's steering committee, has been charged with determining if it is a good idea to co-locate the International Rally with a Region Rally. Region 8 Units have been asked for guidance as to whether members want to experiment by changing our Region 8 Rally dates, on a one time only basis, and holding our 2012 rally at the same location as the International Rally. It would be either five days immediately before, or it would overlap by a couple of days.

There is a possibility that the 2012 International Rally will be held in Sedalia, MO and I would appreciate input from our members as to whether they would favor holding our Region 8 Rally at the same site, in conjunction with the International Rally. Based on our experience in Fremont, the prospect of back-to-back rallies is appealing. Plan to discuss this at our next luncheon.



Nebraska Unit President and First Lady Selwyn and Florene Heese

North Iowa Unit President, Dave Shaw  
Region 8, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Pres., Pat Shaw

Region 8 Rally Opening Ceremony  
Fremont, Nebraska

## FORMALDEHYDE AND THE RV By Sue Heist

When Betty Ann asked if I would write an article on formaldehyde for the newsletter my mind went immediately to biology lab and frogs, worms and fetal pigs. Perhaps not everyone gets to experience opening a jar of formaldehyde solution and fishing out your frog for lab. It is a smell one never forgets after that.

Now let's discuss the serious part. There appear to be two issues. One is the carcinogenicity of formaldehyde and the other is what formaldehyde does to septic tanks.

Lets start with carcinogenicity. Refer to the U.S. National Institute of Health, [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov). In 1987, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classified formaldehyde as a probable human carcinogen under conditions of unusually high or prolonged exposure in. Formaldehyde can be found in many building materials and household products, pressed-wood products, glues and adhesives, permanent-press fabrics, paper product coatings and certain insulation materials. It is used in industry as a fungicide, germicide and disinfectant.

Formaldehyde is also a by-product of normal metabolic processes. This means there is always a low level of formaldehyde present in the air, usually less than 0.03 parts per million. If the level exceeds 0.1 ppm some individuals, such as me, may experience one or more of the following; watery eyes; burning sensations in the eyes, nose and throat; coughing; wheezing; nausea; and skin irritation. Some people are just normally sensitive to formaldehyde while others aren't.

The adhesives and pressed-wood products used in most RVs will give off formaldehyde when they are new. This is especially noticeable when it is hot and the vehicle has been closed tightly for long periods. The mobile homes donated for victim of Katrina are examples of this. A RV sales person told me that they often put trays of kitty litter in the shower stalls of new RVs to adsorb as much of the "new" odor as possible.

If formaldehyde isn't a carcinogen under normal conditions and assuming most RV owners have found ways to reduce the odors from the RV components why worry about putting products containing formaldehyde in the RV sewage system? Formaldehyde is only one of many chemicals that shouldn't be used in RV sewage systems.

The EPA and many states are regulating RV parks and owners of dump sites more closely than they used to. Septic systems have two major components: a septic tank and an absorption field or leachfield. The septic tank separates solids from liquids and promotes partial breakdown of contaminants using “good” aerobic bacteria. If the bacteria in the system are killed the system cannot treat waste adequately and when this happens chemicals and untreated wastewater can contaminate nearby ground water, rivers and streams. If RV parks owners don’t take measure to control hazardous chemical disposal into their waste treatment systems and their system causes contamination they may be forced to close the dump station or the park until the problem is corrected. Clean up is costly and can take years.

What is true for the dumpsites is also true for the RV tanks. So conscientious RVers should take certain precautions. A partial list of things **NOT** to put in the RV waste system:

- Chemical treatments (some contain formaldehyde)
- Chemical odor maskers
- Bleach
- Methanol
- Alcohol
- Laundry detergents
- Disinfectants (formaldehyde is one)
- Toilet bowl cleaners
- Homemade concoctions; pine oil, automatic dishwasher detergent, mineral, coconut, or cooking oils, yeast
- Cleansing powders
- Polishes
- Sink & tub cleaners
- Antibacterial soaps
- Pesticides
- Any petroleum-based product
- Acids
- Cleaning fluid

All of the items listed above have a negative impact on the aerobic bacteria that are necessary for the proper functioning of sewage treatment systems both in the RV tanks and dump stations. With ample air, which enters each time the toilet is used, and water, these good bacteria decompose waste efficiently in the holding tanks. If the system is functioning properly, minimum odor should be produced, which with proper venting should not be a concern. The vent pipe must be just through the top of the waste tank, not submerged so that it is blocked. It should be checked periodically to make sure it isn’t blocked elsewhere, especially at the roof.

Because of these issues most RV forums recommend the use of bacterial holding tank products. They also say that the available enzyme products won’t do any harm and can sometimes help. Active aerobic bacteria are what the RV owner needs to have a properly functioning holding tank system so lets keep them happy.

In the next issue: “How to prepare and maintain a natural aerobic bacterial system in your holding tanks.”

### News from Members

Fran and Bob Olson, LaDon and Bill Kallmer, and Cheryl and Gary Burrows attended the Florida State Rally, at the Sarasota County Fairgrounds, February 16 – 21. The group also enjoyed dinner at Linder Lodge where alligator and fried green tomatoes were served.



### Nebraska Unit Spring Rally Fremont, Nebraska – April 22 – 25

Those members attending the rally at Christianson Field were: Sam and Mary Ann Boman, Roger and Mimi Brandt, Roscoe Corall, Selwyn and Florene Heese, Bill and LaDon Kallmer, Murt Letcher, Dwight and Lana Olson, Paul and June Ryan, Glen Sanders, Dave and Pat Shaw, Bert and Donajean Sherwin, Roscoe and Leona Shields, John and Betty Ann Sutton. Wendell and Shirley Sisk from the Kansas City Unit also attended.

Committee members, the Olsons, Sherwins, and Shields made sure everyone was busy and well fed. Tours included the Louis May Museum and Christiansen Lumber Company.



Louis May Museum, Dodge County Historical Society



Grill Master, Dwight Olson, cooked hamburgers and brats for the Friday night barbeque. He and Lana also organized an outdoor pancake and eggs breakfast.



**Tour of Christiansen Lumber.**

**The group observed automated construction of building trusses and learned about the company's growth and modernization.**

Other tours were to the Soukup Toy Museum and Midland Lutheran College Planetarium. Many rally attendees also shopped at the antique stores and Schwesser's in downtown Fremont.

There were competitions for card games, holey board, joker, and beanbag baseball. Guess which team won the beanbag baseball tournament and will represent Region 8 at the International Rally competition?



**Unit Board Meeting – (L to R) Dwight Olson, Selwyn Heese, Bert Sherwin, John Sutton, LaDon Kallmer, Bill Kallmer, Florene Heese**

**Nebraska Dream Team with mascot and trophy**

**Region 8 Rally April 28 – May 2  
Christiansen Field, Fremont, Nebraska**

As always, the evening entertainment was splendid. The Clef Dwellers, an acappella group from Midland Lutheran College sang for us. The last evening we listened and danced to Uncle Ozzie's dance music.

Region 8 President June Ryan and husband Paul hosted the Highways to History Rally. There were enough tours, activities, competitions, and entertainment to keep everyone quite busy.

The most popular tour was Bernie's Memory Barn in Elkhorn. Bernie's antique and vintage cars are most likely the largest privately owned collection in the mid-west. He has filled seven buildings with 150 immaculately restored vehicles. Everything from Locomobiles and early Fords to a recent Chrysler Prowler.

He also collects collections: old record players and Victrolas, automobile art, and Victorian birdhouses that he builds "in his spare time." Bernie is also a humanitarian; he donates all proceeds from tours of his facility to the Shriners' Children's Hospitals.

**Region 8 President June Ryan and Uncle Ozzie singing the "Walmart Waltz"**



Fred and Dottie Steurer organized a geocaching hunt, where teams used their GPS units to locate treasures hidden in the Fremont area. All teams participating located all four hidden boxes. Blue Ox Company conducted a seminar on towing and towing equipment. Martin and Rachel Hughey from the Kansas City Unit presented a Maintenance and Refurbishing workshop.

The Rally concluded with Sunday breakfast and church service, entitled The Potter's Clay.

**Bert Sherwin and Bernie, discussing the 1914 Locomobile**

## Friday Night Talent Show



**Musical Skit**  
Performed to Oh, You Beautiful Doll

Can you identify the owners of the legs?



**Region 8 Orchestra**  
The musicians used their voices to "play" their paper instruments.

## Camping World RV

Camping World in Council Bluffs is now an authorized Airstream dealer. They are selling and servicing Airstreams. They also have parts and accessories for Airstreams. For more information email John Lewis: [jlewis@cwrvs.com](mailto:jlewis@cwrvs.com). Camping World phone number is 712-352-1624 or you can call John Lewis at 712-242-5592.

Camping World was very generous with their donations for the Region 8 Rally door prizes. Several Unit members won \$20 gift cards.

## Another Example of Senior Power

In December, 2009, the National Forest Service announced its plans to increase fees for people using the Golden Age or Disabilities Pass. The NFS proposed decreasing the fee discount from 50% to 10%. U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell dropped the plans after receiving more than 4,000 comments from the public. (*The source of this information is the AARP Bulletin, May 2010, p.6.*)

## Department of the Interior

Airstreamers are always open to hints and solutions to problems, even from owners of rigs from other manufacturers. This winter, we met some full-timers with a fifth-wheel who had a unique method for dealing with dirty laundry. Most of us use pop-up baskets or attempt to hide the dirty clothes in the closet or in the drawers under the bed. These RVers threw the laundry into baskets that they kept in the back seat of their truck. You know it's time to go to the laundromat when you can't see out the rear window!

## Nebraska Unit 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*Next year the Unit celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Do you have photos, directories, Trailhuskers, or other memorabilia to share? We'd love to use copies of your items in future issues of the Trailhusker and next year's directory.*

## Editor's Note

If you have an email address listed in the directory, you will receive your Trailhusker and rally coupons via email. If you want a printed copy mailed to you, let me know. BAS

## 2010 NEBRASKA UNIT OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD

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1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Bert Sherwin
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Sue Heist
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## Trailhusker

Editor – Betty Ann Sutton  
Technical Advisor – John Sutton

*The deadline for items for the next issue of the TRAILHUSKER is August 30, 2010. Send items and pictures to Betty Ann Sutton, 17500 NW 48<sup>th</sup> St., Raymond, NE 68428.*

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