

RAZORBACK UNIT

ARKANSAS RAZORBACK UNIT 005 / WBCCI

MARCH - APRIL 2014

The Silver Snail

Even floor repair can lead to new friendships

By **Larry Madden**

Razorback Unit member

The Silver Snail is a clever name for an Airstream. It expresses creative thinking as well as a good sense of humor. Indeed, the proud owner of the Silver Snail is all these things and much more.

There is an old idiom which states that every cloud has a silver lining. Roughly translated - you should never feel hopeless because difficult times always lead to better days. I can assure you when my foot almost went through the floor of our Airstream as we were on our way for a planned day of adventure, I did not see the silver lining!

After much negotiation with the service manager in Jackson Center, Ohio, it was agreed I would return our Airstream to the factory and the work replacing the rotten floor would be covered under the warranty. This came as a big relief as the warranty was expired by a month.

My arrival in Jackson Center was on a Saturday and as prearranged, I dropped off our camper for the needed repairs. It was at this point I noticed a couple of campers that were settled in the Tara Port.

My attention was focused on one in particular because the windows were open and I heard some music emanating from it. I went and knocked on the door. My first greeting was from a fairly large, and I sensed, friendly dog. Then another friendly smile appeared. I introduced myself and expressed my reason for being in Jackson Center. Without hesitation the door was opened and I was invited in.

Sharon is the proud owner of the Silver Snail, a 2007 20-foot Safari. She



AT JACKSON CENTER - Worker prepares to seal roof seams with caulk.

shares her small but comfortable abode with Harley, her beloved pet dog. For the next two hours Sharon made me feel right at home. I took a break from the thoughts of the long trip back to Fort Smith and enjoyed the friendly conversation, iced tea and stories about Sharon's life on the road.

My first impression was what a lucky young lady Sharon is, living this life of adventure. But the reality is, luck has very little to do with Sharon's success living on the road. Rather, with hard work, planning and determination, coupled with a mastery of available internet technology, she is able to work as a graphic arts designer from almost any venue.

Sharon's travels have covered thousands of miles of blacktop highway throughout the country, from Maine to California, mostly on the back roads of



FAMILY PORTRAIT - Silver Snail owner Sharon Pieniak, with her cat, Peyton, and dog, Harley. The family travels from coast-to-coast full time, while Sharon uses her graphic arts talents from any location with Internet access. She maintains a log of her travels at her website www.thesilversnail.com

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From the president --

Where is the nice weather? I know many of you are ready to be out on the roads heading to campgrounds around the state and beyond, but Mother Nature keeps presenting us with challenges. It won't be long until Spring and if you're like me, we'll be asking for cooler, milder weather when those Summer temperatures break 100-degrees.

The weather didn't keep many away from the Feb. 6 luncheon at Smokin' Buns – the same place our group went during our rally in North Little Rock last September. We welcomed Rucker Richardson of Bald Knob, our newest member. I hope to see you all at our next luncheon on April 3 at Carino's Italian Restaurant in North Little Rock.

Our Spring Buddy Rally is May 29 - June 1 in Mountain View at the Mtn. View RV Park. Charles Duran is the point of contact and he may be reached at cduran136@gmail.com or by calling 501-745-1590. By then, the caravaners will have returned from their Southwest and West caravan and will be loaded with experiences to share with the group.

I hope everyone is doing well. As always, I offer my thanks to all who are so willing to volunteer their time and energy to the Razorback Unit.

Sincerely,
Jim Pankey, Razorback Unit president

One more ... brrrrrr



OK, IN THE LAST NEWSLETTER, I included a photo from the Internet of a snow covered Airstream. The one above is my own and if anyone knows of covered parking in the Little Rock area, let me know! I'll will refrain from anymore snow photos until next winter. I promise!

Mark Magie, Newsletter Editor

Razorback Unit is online

Paul Moore is the webmaster for our unit web page:

<http://arkansasrazorback.wbcci.net>

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this great land. To most everyday working people who have had the pleasure to meet Sharon, her life seems somewhat of a fantasy! She has to some degree reached celebrity status, to those of us, her fans who follow her travels.

Sharon has designed and developed her own web page (www.thesilversnail.com) which chronicles her many adventures. It is here that she methodically outlines roads traveled, interesting people she has met and places she has called home for short periods of time. Sharing her honest critiques of campgrounds both public and private, she offers her opinion on which to visit or those to avoid. Sharon also visualizes her escapades for us with stunning photographs of *National Geographic* quality.

SWEET TURTLE TOES, REDNECK REVENGE and DIRTY DOG are just a few of the names on Sharon's repertoire of adult drink recipes. Each recipe is accompanied with photos to help with the proper presentation of the cool, refreshing drinks. All these drink creations were inspired by destinations and memories of places visited by the Silver Snail.

As a literary entrepreneur, Sharon has started yet a new endeavor, "Joy Rides of America." Her goal is to take readers along the roads less traveled, to enjoy America in slow motion and to add to the senses, the people and places that make America such a wonderful place to live, visit and experience.

Sharon leaves one with that feeling you have made a friend for life. Her kindness is seemingly as boundless as the

roads she travels. All too soon, it was time to tackle the long trip back to Fort Smith America! As we said goodbye with a final wave, I was making a right turn on Pike street.

On my trip home, the anxiety and despair I had experienced over the rotten floor was replaced with renewed enthusiasm for Airstream. I came to realize that all roads traveled in our lives have challenges ... some more difficult than others. While the rotten floor was disappointing, it was properly fixed by two exceptional craftsmen who exceeded my expectations. In the process, I was granted an opportunity to meet a modern day trail blazer who lives life on her own terms. As for me, I found the silver lining within the cloud and a new friend, the Silver Snail!

Change the bulb -- now that's a bright idea

By Larry Madden

Razorback Unit member

Sometimes you just have to laugh to keep from crying.

I pride myself in thinking through problems to find the most cost-effective and time-saving way to resolve issues with our home, cars and the Airstream (AKA, the Silver Bullet). I guess it's the challenge and satisfaction when a plan comes together.

During my training and education in the field of mechanics, one point has always been stressed: begin your troubleshooting with the obvious and work from there. It's a sound principal, but one I seem to overlook from time to time.

On a lovely summer evening while camping on the white River at Bull Shoals State Park, my wife, Terry, and I were having a glass of her favorite wine as we enjoyed watching the deer graze in the twilight hours. When Terry got up to "refill" our empty stemware, she noticed the bright little exterior step light was not working. I heard her flip the toggle switch a few times before she declared, "Larry, the step light is burned out!" This was my first indication of an emergency.

I always like to put the Silver Bullet away ready to go on our next trip. So I needed to take care of a few little pesky items, one of which was the step light that was "burned out." I started with the light because I thought it would be a quick fix (That's what I get for thinking). Ours is a 2008 Safari and the step light I soon discovered is a sealed LED unit that is hard-wired.

Calling Airstream to check on availability of the light, I soon discovered two unpleasant bits of information: the price of the light and the cost of shipping this little five ounce jewel. As I said thank you and good bye to the pleasant Airstream parts lady, I went to "Plan B."



I found some information on the back of the plastic housing of the light - part number and manufacturer. After a quick Internet search I found the web site and a phone number. The associate I spoke with was very friendly and helpful. The light cost \$6.35. Shipping FREE!

Three days later the light arrived by mail and I was back in business. I had already anticipated what was required to change the light: wire strippers, rosin core solder, heat shrink and a solder iron.

As I began the removal and replacement process, it was clear there was not much "extra" wire to work with coming off the wire harness of the camper. So using due diligence, I was careful to cut the wire as close to the back of the light as possible. The rest of the job went quickly, finishing up by installing the new chrome beauty ring around the light.

Satisfied the job was complete, I reached into the Silver Bullet and

flipped the toggle switch to turn the light on. Much to my surprise and dismay, it didn't work. I stood there dumbfounded for a minute wondering what could be wrong. More importantly, what could I have done wrong? There are only two wires ... I know I got that right. It's a brand new light, it should be good. Maybe the toggle switch is bad.

Thinking I must have a bad toggle switch, I pulled the four Phillips head screws out to remove the panel holding the toggle switches in the cabinetry. And there it was! The female lead from the step light had simply vibrated off the male lead from the back of the toggle switch. I started to laugh at myself as I slipped the lead back on the switch and gave it a little crimp with my pliers to hold it on tighter. Presto, the light works! It seems like I had spent a lot of time and energy to fix something that really was not broken.

It's my personality to always look at the bright side of life. So on the bright side (no pun intended), I did fix the problem. I found a new source for parts and in the process, I saved a lot of money! But the most important benefit: I now have a spare step light. So when the new one burns out in about ten years, I will be able to respond to the emergency properly!

Take life in stride, it's too short to worry about the little things!

Events ahead --

- **Arkansas Southwest & West Caravan** - April 24 - May 4
Paul Moore, 501-993-2148 / paulrrarusa@yahoo.com
- **Spring Buddy Rally** - May 29 - June 1, Mtn. View RV Park
Charles Duran, cduran136@gmail.com
- **WBCCI International Rally** - June 28 - July 4, Gillette, Wy.
See February *Blue Beret* for registration information.

Next luncheon slated for April 3

The next luncheon for the Arkansas Razorback Unit is April 3 at Carino's Italian Restaurant at 11:30 a.m. The restaurant is at 4221 Warden Road in North Little Rock next to McCain Mall.

The restaurant phone number is (501) 758-8226 and the web address is www.carinos.com

Save the dates ...

Future luncheon dates are below. Locations will be announced later:

June 5, 2014
Aug. 7, 2014
Oct. 2, 2014
Dec. 4, 2014

From the February luncheon --



LUNCHING RAZORBACKS -- Razorback Unit members gathering for lunch at Smokin' Buns near Jacksonville on February 6 include from left, Jim and Jane Pankey, Donna and B.J. McNair, Rucker Richardson (new member and guest of Paul Moore), Mark Magie, Paul Moore, Carole and Bill Barton.

Even though the weather was snowy in some areas of the state, the group braved the conditions and enjoyed the food and fellowship.

Recipe corner -

Good at home or in your Airstream

Happy Soup

Ingredients:

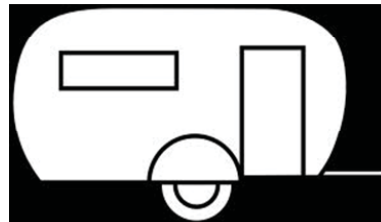
3 14-oz. cans of chicken broth (low sodium)
Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes
Pinch of dried basil
8 oz. of fresh cheese-filled tortellini
1 15-oz. can of kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 Tbsp. grated romano cheese
1 7-oz. can of whole kernel corn

Directions:

In a large pot over medium high heat, bring the broth to a boil. Add the red pepper flakes and basil to taste, then add the tortellini and cook per package instructions or until tender.

Add the beans and cheese and reduce heat to medium. Simmer for 5 to 8 minutes, or until beans are tender. Add the corn and allow to heat through, about 2 minutes.

Serves 3-4 hungry campers.



NEWS MAKERS

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3/14 -- Helen Bourgeois
3/16 -- B.J. McNair

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

4/7 -- Joan Zumwalt
4/9 -- Joyce Fitzhugh
4/18 -- Barbara Moore
4/25 -- Emogene Duran

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

3/14 -- Bill & Carole Barton

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

4/7 -- Larry & Terry Madden

Did we miss your special day? Let me know at mark.magie@yahoo.com