

January 14, 2011

Mid-Winter IBT Issues

John Sellers, Wisconsin Unit President

In just two weeks the International Board of Trustees will be meeting in Robstown, Texas. Region 7 President Joan Lahr will be representing our unit at this meeting. If we have any concerns about the outcome of this meeting we need to make them known to her.

Bylaws amendments

The direction that this mid-winter IBT meeting may take is uncertain. Two special committees have been empanelled to recommend changes to the WBCCI, a Constitution and Bylaws *Revision* Committee (separate and distinct from the standing Constitution and Bylaws Committee) and a Motor Home Study Committee.

The Revision committee is tasked with simplifying and modernizing the Bylaws. One member of the committee has reported that the Revision committee will submit a completely new set of Bylaws. An agenda for the mid-winter IBT has been published on the WBCCI web site <http://www.wbcci.org/documents/IBT%20Agenda%20January%2028%202010%20revised.pdf> but the report of the Constitution and Bylaws Revision Committee is missing. So we do not know what changes may be proposed.

The report of the Motor Home Study Committee *is* included in the agenda (page 33), and it contains a paragraph which is cause for some concern: “The other alternative would be for a motion be presented to allow any member who owns a current Airstream Motor home to replace it with another brand class A coach.” This is a controversial issue. An amendment to the WBCCI constitution to allow membership to certain non-Airstream motor homes was defeated by a large margin at the Delegates Meeting at the 2007 International Rally.

Out of concern that the IBT might pass such a Bylaw amendment without the acquiescence, or even knowledge, of the membership, three Wisconsin Unit members, Sandy Emerick, Ed Emerick, and John Sellers, sent a letter to all members of the IBT, with copies to all unit presidents, asking that no such vote of the IBT be undertaken without first sending the matter to the units for comments. This letter can be seen (on page 3 of this document).

Constitutional Amendment Proposed by Region 11

Article XVI of the WBCCI Constitution provides a means for units of the WBCCI to amend the constitution. (The WBCCI Constitution can be viewed on the WBCCI web site, <http://www.wbcci.org/documents/BB%20Code%20Table%20of%20Contents%20Constitution3.pdf>) Region 11 has proposed an amendment in accordance with this article. As part of this process the standing Constitution and Bylaws Committee is supposed to “make a written report to Headquarters containing its recommendations regarding the proposed amendment”.

The issue facing this mid-winter IBT is that the chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee has informed Region 11 that its proposed amendment will not be reviewed by the committee and he will “not allow it to go forward”.

The Denver Colorado Unit which originally proposed this amendment has sent several letters to all unit presidents explaining their position. (These are attached to this document)

Letter to All WBCCI members (on page 4 of this document)

Requests for Region 11 Motion to Amend (on page 7 of this document)

Region 11's Motion – What's the problem, aren't we just a camping club (on page 8)

The Region 11 president has introduced a motion at the mid-winter IBT that the IBT direct the chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee to carry out his duties under the Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies of the WBCCI and report this proposed amendment to Headquarters for forwarding to all units.

My reading of the constitution concurs with that of the Region 11 president: The chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee has every right to report the proposed amendment out of committee with a recommendation that it not be passed, but he does **not** have a right to block the amendment by bottling it up in his committee and preventing it from being voted on.

If you have opinions on either or both of these issues you are invited to contact our Region President Joan Lahr prior to the midwinter IBT, January 24 – 28. lahr@wbcci.net

I would appreciate it if you would cc: me on any emails so I will know what members of the unit think about these issues. sellersj@erinet.com .

To: International Board of Trustees
From: The undersigned members of Wisconsin Unit #116
Subject: Non-Airstream Motor Homes
Date: December 12, 2010
Cc: All Unit Presidents, Cindy Reed – WBCCI Headquarters

Recent events and statements made at rallies this fall have once again brought the motor home issue to the forefront. A brief summary of the history of this issue might be helpful at this point.

At present Article VI, Section 1 of the WBCCI Constitution limits *membership* in WBCCI to owners of Airstream recreational vehicles, while Article IV, Sections 9 and 10 of the Bylaws and Policy limit *attendance and participation* at club events—except for Unit buddy rallies—to WBCCI members while using only their Airstream recreational vehicles. An exception is permitted allowing members to attend WBCCI functions provided members do not attend in any other make of recreational vehicle.

In a 2003 membership survey, approximately 80% of the respondents disapproved of opening up WBCCI to non-Airstream recreational vehicles. In 2007 an amendment to Article VI of the WBCCI Constitution was proposed to open WBCCI membership to owners of certain other Thor motor home brands. This amendment was voted down by a sizeable majority.

The renewed interest in the motor home issue has been prompted by two recent announcements:

First, the chairman of Airstream, Inc. indicated that Airstream would be willing to manufacture a quantity of new motor homes if WBCCI members expressed sufficient interest. We hope that WBCCI pursues that option, as it would solve the problem of present WBCCI motor home owners being unable to replace their units without any need to alter the WBCCI's identity as the association of *Airstream* owners.

Second, it was reported that one member had solved the problem of WBCCI membership by being named co-owner of a friend's Airstream trailer then purchasing a non-Airstream motor home in which to travel. We are concerned that, as part of the revision of WBCCI Bylaws and Policies proposed for the next Mid Winter IBT, Article IV, Sections 9 & 10 might be amended or eliminated so that members in that position could then fully participate in WBCCI events in non-Airstream recreational vehicles. Any amendment to the by-laws and policies does *not* require a vote from the general membership, and requires only a majority vote from the IBT to pass. While meeting the letter of the WBCCI Constitution and Bylaws—as so revised—this would clearly represent an end-run around the spirit of the Constitution and Bylaws as currently written. It would also contradict the wishes of the membership as expressed in both the 2007 vote and the 2003 membership survey.

We are requesting that any motion presented at any future IBT meeting that would allow non-Airstream manufactured recreational vehicles or their owners to participate in WBCCI events or qualify for membership, be tabled or sent back to the maker/committee until each Region President has requested a vote from their units. Only then should a motion be reintroduced for a vote by the IBT. This is the only way that region officers can accurately represent their units. The motor home issue was not included in at least some of the “round table discussions” held by the region officers (and many members were not present for them), so a majority of the WBCCI membership would not be accurately represented.

A motion of this magnitude brought forth without any advance publication cannot be ethically voted on by any region or international officer, even though our constitution allows for bylaw and policy change without the vote of the general membership. A motion to change the very foundation of our club requires a vote from ALL members. We trust that all officers of the International Board of Trustees will agree with this request.

Very respectfully,

Sandy Emerick, Treasurer

Ed Emerick, Past President

John Sellers, Unit President

Subject: Letter to All WBCCI Members
From: DENCO Unit 24 <DENCO_Unit@live.com>
Date: Wed, 5 Jan 2011 09:41:15 -0700
To: undisclosed-recipients.;

Hello,

The Denver Colorado Unit is asking all Unit Presidents in the WBCCI to distribute, read, or publish in newsletters the following letter regarding Region 11's Motion to Amend the WBCCI Constitution.

Thank you for your service to your Unit and the WBCCI.

The Officers of the Denver Colorado Unit #24

The Betraying Good-faith Actions

Tennessee Williams said, "We have to distrust each other. It is our only defense against betrayal."

At some point in their tenure every International President has written that the Units and their members are the most important elements of the Club. Current President Norm Beu recently stated, "participation is the key." Immediate Past President Tom Collier urged members, "to put your ideas for change in motion form, present the motion to your unit, and if you [sic] unit approves the motion, send the motion to your Region President." Past President Jerry Larson reminded us that, "This club was formed with the understanding and purpose that our Units would be the foundation on which we operate. It is only through the Unit that our Constitution may be changed." Stated most notably though was Past President Don Shafer's letter, "The Silent Majority" (as published in the Blue Beret, President's Corner, May 2007), "We believe that the HEART of our organization is the Units. Collectively they express their goals for the Club."

In that light, all the Units comprising Region 11 recently passed a motion to amend the WBCCI Constitution. Prior to that, the proposal was posted and informally discussed beginning December 18, 2009 on both the WBCCI Member Forum and Airforums. Officially, the Motion was published February 2010 and June 2010 in the Denver Colorado Unit newsletters. After prolonged debate and discussion, DENCO voted and passed the motion at its May 2010 business meeting. This was done with then Region 11 President, Janie Lichtfuss, herself a certified parliamentarian, present. Afterward, DENCO's Recording Secretary sent a formal certified letter to President Lichtfuss, providing her with the final wording of the motion, the results of the vote and requesting that it be disseminated to all the Units in Region 11 for them to debate and vote on.

The DENCO newsletter is sent to every Unit President in Region 11, the Region 11 President, and WBCCI HQ (for distribution to International Officers). In total, all Region 11 Unit Presidents were given notice of this motion three times - twice from the DENCO Newsletter and once from the Region 11 President. Minutes and announcements become "official" when published in a Unit's newsletter. So, the fact that prior notification was made to all Units is a matter of record.

Subsequently, by October 11th, those Units also voted and passed the motion. Per instructions from WBCCI Corporate Manager, Cindy Reed, all Units sent letters (both by USPS and Email) certifying the results to current Region 11 President, Dan Neumarkel, and he, in turn, sent the motion and his letter of certification to WBCCI Headquarters.

All of this, done in good faith, to comply with Article XVI, Sections 1 and 3, of the WBCCI Constitution. Also acting in compliance with those requirements, Headquarters in turn sent the motion and the letters of certification to the Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Past International President, Don Shafer.

AND THERE the motion remains, Chairman Shafer stating, in Emails to Region President

Neumarkel, that he, "cannot in good conscience make comment on [the] proposed amendment and allow it to go forward." Since, in his "opinion," the, "maker of the motion did not follow the procedures as listed in the WBCCI Constitution." His, "biggest concern, however, is the motion itself and the need for it... If the originators of the motion could explain to me the importance of the 'Bylaws' portion of their motion, I could better help them to redo their motion to accomplish their purpose if valid. As of now, I consider the motion as unnecessary."

The Units of Region 11 voted unanimously in favor of the motion, because they see its necessity, and in so doing, collectively expressed their members will and "goals for the Club." No one is asking Chairman Shafer to share their vision. All that is asked is for he and his committee to do their duty (as required by the Constitution and Bylaws) and return the motion with their letter of recommendation to HQ so that it can be distributed to all the other Units in the Club.

The purpose of this letter is not to defend the motion. We feel it and its rationale speak for itself. What is of greater importance is that the members good faith actions not be undermined and thwarted by, what is certainly seen by some as, an entrenched autocracy. In that regard, the motion is secondary. We are perfectly willing to accept whatever the outcome of a vote might be, but we reject the idea that the members do not get to vote.

International Treasurer, Bob Moss, wrote President Beu, "I cannot understand how the Chairman of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee has the power to stop something from going forward, when a region jumped through all the hoops of the Blue Book and had their motion approved by an entire region." In correspondence with Region President Neumarkel, he wrote, "I still am of the opinion that the C&BL chairman has only the right to give his opinion on the motion and pass it along... If the members feel it is improper... then it will fail, if on the other hand it passes then the Club will deal with the new rule."

Region President Neumarkel intends to make a motion at the 2011 Mid-Winter IBT meeting requiring the C&BC to provide a letter of recommendation (good, bad or indifferent) to HQ. However, there are already indications that his motion will be ruled out of order. Wrote International Parliamentarian, Dona Garner, "This motion, however, is improper since the date of March 20... is still in the future and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee has until that time to write their report on any Constitutional amendment that they receive."

That date, March 20, is only a deadline and does not prevent the committee from issuing a more timely report, especially since they will likely meet at the Mid-Winter IBT. Besides, the point is that Chairman Shafer has indicated there will be no report - period. Without it, Region 11's motion to amend the WBCCI Constitution is stalled, because HQ will not forward the motion to all the other Units without it.

This rank gamesmanship and obstructionism is destructive to the morale of the Club because it demonstrates that at least some in high places have no confidence in the collective wisdom of the membership and betrays their good faith actions.

There we know best attitude is spelled out in Chairman Shafer's 2007 letter. He acknowledged that there is, "common sense and good judgment of the membership as exercised in our normal operating processes," but emphasized that, "the prospective of the entire organization IS seen from this office. With primary input from the Units, the entire Executive Committee and the International Board of Trustees do their best to accomplish what they believe is best for the Club." At the time, it was Shafer's concern that, "the development of a very vocal minority," not impose its will on, "the silent majority." "The officers of WBCCI," Shafer insisted, "exist to serve the majority while respecting the minority. Whether sometimes silent or when major issues rise to the top... their vote reestablishes the will of the majority."

That is precisely what we are asking for, to let the majority vote and establish their will, as opposed to that of one man. We encourage all members to contact their respective Region President to demand the right of the members to vote on the Region 11 Motion to Amend.

Sincerely,

The Officers of the Denver Colorado Unit #24

Subject: Requests for Region 11 Motion to Amend
From: DENCO Unit 24 <DENCO_Unit@live.com>
Date: Thu, 6 Jan 2011 20:13:10 -0700
To: undisclosed-recipients;

Dear Unit Presidents,

We have received numerous requests to produce the motion that is being held back by the Int'l C&BC Chairman. Our fear is that Units prematurely voting on the motion create procedural problems that could invalidate its passage. In fact, the Chairman of the C&BC argues that the Region 11 vote was improper because he believes the Utah Unit voted on it prior to the Denver Colorado Unit. We don't believe that happened and even if it did then the Utah vote can be rejected without having any effect on the overall results. However, we do not want to create additional problems.

We do understand your curiosity. However, the purpose of our previous letter wasn't to promote the motion, but to get the C&BC to issue its letter of recommendation so that your Units can get the motion through official channels. We're not the ones holding it back from you! We want you to have it!

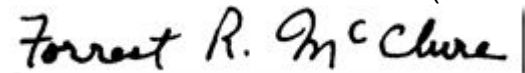
Our Unit newsletters are open for public viewing though. The motion can be found in the Minutes on page 6 in the June 2010 publication. Here is a link to it on our website: <http://www.wbccidenco.org/Newsletters/2010/Jun10.pdf>

One Unit President wrote back to us saying, "You make direct, emotionally based, negative accusations toward specific WBCCI Intl officers but don't have the integrity to sign your names. As far as I'm concerned, if you can't sign your name, your thoughts have no merit. Stand up and be accountable!"

We are, and our intent is to build the Club, not tear it down. Our letter was signed as being from the "The Officers of the Denver Colorado Unit #24." We thought that sufficient. There was no intent to hide our identities, as they are published in the 2011 WBCCI Membership Directory, on our website, and in our newsletters. Never-the-less, so that there is no doubt as to who we are the DENCO Unit Executive Committee is:

President Patricia Reed (#1953)
1st VP Carl Russell (#4481)
2nd VP Virgil Turner (#4306)
Treasurer Joe Bent (#4246)
Corresponding Secretary Tom Reed (#1953)
Recording Secretary Patrice McClure (#2671)
Trustee Randy Leitner (#13713)
Trustee Norman Ferguson (#4979)
Trustee Ron Herro (#1654)

and Trustee Forrest McClure (#2671)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Forrest R. McClure". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Subject: Region 11's motion - What's the problem, aren't we just a camping club?

From: DENCO Unit 24 <DENCO_Unit@live.com>

Date: Sat, 8 Jan 2011 00:05:41 -0700

To: undisclosed-recipients.;

One Unit President wrote asking, "I am of the principle that WBCCI is 'just camping'. That said, what problem are we trying to solve with this motion? The legal speak in your news letter surely must have been triggered by something you felt was unfair. What was the catalyst to you even seeking the amendment in the first place? I mean, are you not able to go camping and pick your campgrounds, have happy hour and stuff? Some background would be really helpful."

Yes, certainly we can go camping, pick our campgrounds, have happy hour and stuff, but in reality, all that can be done without a club. So, this is about the Club, not camping.

The Club is losing members and money for a reason. When we were a company driven, Airstream pumped a lot of money into the Club and its dealer network actively promoted it. This was certainly attractive to the membership, but it was also good business for Airstream because the WBCCI was its primary customer base, representing over 60 percent of sales. But when the WBCCI stopped being a company club (historically this was due to IRS demands), Airstream lost its vote on the board and its Trustee position became mostly honorary. Today, WBCCI members represent only about 10 percent of sales resulting in Airstream withdrawing nearly all its support. So, while the Club was originally designed to meet Airstream's needs, today Airstream no longer needs the Club.

Airstream itself didn't immediately recognize this paradigm shift. It was a struggle for Airstream to get the Club membership to accept Argosy, the B-Van, the Land Yacht (aka SquareStream) and nearly every new and different product it manufactured. Working through the International leadership it failed altogether in getting its name inserted in the Club name, and likewise the attempt to bring in Thor-made Motorhomes. Some may disagree that Airstream was a driving force behind those schemes, but it would be naïve to believe Airstream had no influence what-so-ever. Larry Huttel himself told me, just last summer, how frustrating it has been for Airstream to work with our organization.

This is why so many efforts, by so many different parties, fail to change our organization. We have failed to address the basic fact that we are not company driven, but member driven. We changed, but the basic organizational structure we inherited - Constitution, Bylaws and Policy - didn't.

The original structure was designed to maintain the status quo to protect Airstream's investment, not evolve to meet changing conditions and a new type of member - young upwardly mobile urban professionals with children. Airstream's customer base is increasingly NOT retired senior couples. As a Club we are ineffective in attracting and keeping the new customer base, because we are largely irrelevant and unresponsive to their needs.

In a very general sense the purpose of the Region 11 motion is to realign the structure of the Club to make it more responsive to those needs and break the status quo strangle hold. If you want real-life examples of why this is so necessary, then consider the failure experienced last year to change numbered Unit caravan requirements, or the current situation with the Region 11 motion. Our motion so far has had nearly unanimous support from the membership, but is being held up by the very thing it hopes to change.

- Written by Forrest McClure, DENCO Unit Trustee and Past President. The opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by other members of the DENCO Unit Executive Board.