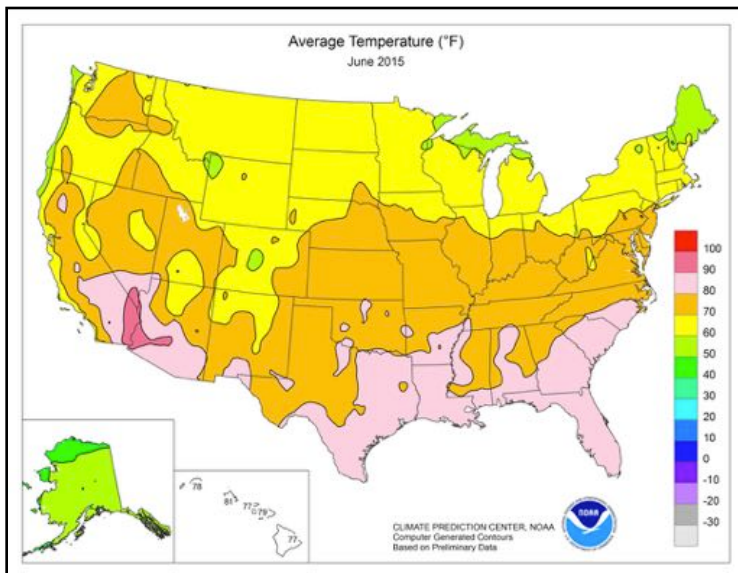


Going Around in Circles

by David Broad

If your lifestyle allows you to be free to travel most of the year and you want to live in the optimum climate as you make your way around the USA, what helps you decide your itinerary? Family, friends, national holidays, school vacations, hurricane and forest fire risks, sports or cultural events, seasonal premium camping pricing, seasonal activities and scenery, climate? We decided that climate would be the dominant factor, but all the other factors were desirable! We set our preferred temperature zone as 60 to 70 degrees - neither heating nor cooling required - and plan our route accordingly.



Typical NOAA Average Temperature map of the USA for June. The optimum 60° to 70° isotherm is in yellow.

Our go-to resource is the NOAA website which publishes month by month isotherm maps of the USA which make it pretty obvious where to be! What is not obvious is the effect of elevation on temperatures, and these color banded maps give you some great indications. Average monthly temperatures do vary year to year due to all sorts of variables such as El Niño and La Niña, so it's helpful to print out the last 24 months so you can compare the same month and assess the

variations over a two year or even a three year period.

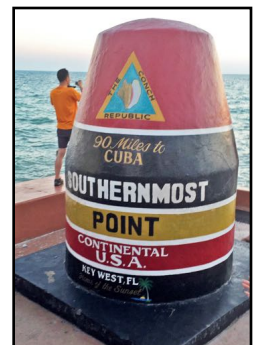
Inevitably the winter has to be in the south either Florida, Texas, Arizona or California. Mexico is a possibility and there are choices of static campsites or organized caravans that you can join to go safely south of the border.

Summer pushes you north, generally beyond the 49th parallel into Canada either into the east coast Maritimes or west coast to British Columbia, or even to Yukon and Alaska.

Typically our year begins around early December with provisioning and completion of Airstream repairs and modifications back at our base on the Rappahannock River in Virginia. Sometime late in December we head south and make our first stop either Charleston SC or Savannah GA, both renowned for their excellent cuisine and interesting sights and activities. Usually that's far enough south so that our first night we reserve a full hookup to dewinterize and become a fully functioning Airstream once again!

Florida pretty much requires reservations if you are going to spend time in a desirable location, which definitely should be south of Orlando to ensure really warm weather on our isotherm map. Our philosophy is to take pleasure from our surroundings and when planning a week or longer in one site we really try to find a waterfront spot with a view and enjoy beach or waterfront, sunsets and grilling. Typically our Florida Keys reservations are made one year ahead and secured with a deposit to guarantee our peace and tranquility. Apart from some choice and hard to snag National Parks, this is the only reservation which we lock into so far ahead.

Aside from the Keys, our Florida itinerary includes half a dozen locations where we meet up with friends, some



January - the highway south stops in the Florida Keys for the most reliable winter warmth.

life long and some more recent friends from our Airstream caravanning experiences. This year we will add a stop in Naples for solar panel and power upgrades by Solar Tech Energy Systems, then make a one night stop at the Escapee RV campground at Bushnell for a complete SmartWeigh detailed and accurate analysis of truck and trailer loads. We will describe that process in detail in the Spring of 2019.

Staying as far south as possible, by mid February we are usually headed to Louisiana and Texas, hugging the Gulf coast, with either South Padre Island or Big Bend NP as planned destinations. Our solar upgrades will give us substantial endurance improvements and allow us to get off the grid and comfortably spend a week or longer on the beach or in wilderness boondocking sites.

Continuing clockwise to Arizona and Southern California puts us in the Organ Pipe NP and Borrego Springs SP areas which have a great very favorable climate in February. This time is also probably the only tolerable period in the entire year that one can comfortably boondock in Death Valley!

Heading north along the Californian coast in March can be harsh due to the colder coastal currents that effect the immediate coastal zone, however, a short hop inland to the other side of the coastal mountain range can take you into a relatively balmy climate. A windy and wet San Simeon can be swapped out for a warm and wine tasting extraordinary Paso Robles!

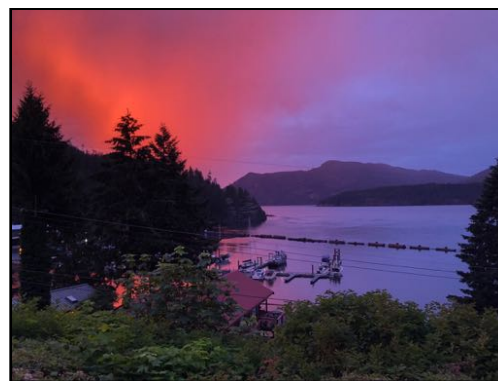
At this point in our USA circular travel with four months under way we take a break and stay with family in Berkeley, put our Airstream into storage at Bay Area Airstream in Fairfield CA along with any maintenance requests, then fly back to Virginia or further afield and enjoy a month of alternative non-Airstream life.

As the heat and humidity of the Chesapeake build up in early June we are glad to get back on the road, fly back to the Bay Area, head our rig north to Oregon and Washington with both state coastlines bristling with outstanding State Parks. Last year we joined the Alaska caravan in mid July

In June and July explore Oregon and Washington, with dozens of coastal State Parks and other campgrounds



for two months. In previous years we've meandered around British Columbia, Vancouver Island, Kelowna, Jasper and Banff to avoid the heat. To our dismay we did have to plan evasive action to avoid some of the several hundred wild forest fires in the Canadian Rockies.



July on Vancouver Island at Campbell River on the Alaska Marine Highway

Winter starts early with sudden temperature drops. Arctic fronts and early snowfalls can make you change your plans rapidly. From the Rockies your options are either south-west to the Pacific North-West or south-east to the Dakotas. Winter comes early to Wyoming and Montana especially at high altitude and campsites do start closing for the winter season starting mid September. One icy September trip to Yellowstone had us high tailing our way 900 miles south to Arizona before we were once again back in our comfort zone!



Early September in Yellowstone will beat the crowds but, be prepared to move on by mid-month.

At lower elevation the eastern side of Wyoming and western end of South Dakota provide an interesting touring base and prolonged season. We particularly enjoyed Little Big Horn, Devil's Tower, Mt Rushmore, the Custer State Parks and the Badlands before making our swift 1,800 mile, five day transit east back to base to complete our second four month expedition.

In prior years the summer northerly loops have focused on the Canadian Maritimes, Quebec and New England with several stops in one of our favorite provinces Prince Edward Island - oysters, mussels and lobsters! The isotherm maps follow the same pattern and by mid September the cold weather will chase you south and you know it's safe to return to Virginia with the inevitable repairs, overhaul and improvements before setting out for the next annual cycle.



October in Albuquerque, NM - the spectacular International Balloon Festival.

If you had any doubts where to be each month of the year, an inspired and reliable reality check is the WBCCI caravan schedule! Aside from obviously being the best USA regions to enjoy, just examine the dates and itineraries and one understands clearly that these caravans

are fine tuned to the perfect climate. Cajun in March, Alaska in August, Texas in October, Springtime in the Rockies in June, Kentucky Blue Grass in September, South East Coast starts in Delaware in October and ends in Georgia in early November. Perfect!

NOAA Isotherm Maps can be found under http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/regional_monitoring/1-month-archive.shtml look under average temperatures. You will note that the last update is 2015 - maybe the budget ran dry? We keep the last three years filed by month in a ring binder for

easy reference. The sample June map shows the yellow 60°F to 70°F comfort zone throughout the northern states. Note isolated pockets in the yellow zone in certain parts of Arizona, California, Utah and Nevada that suggest great weather destinations and suitable areas to explore.

As we travel we discover almost nothing goes according to plan! Weather has to be one of the highest variables, and traveling within the isotherms can only be a rough plan. You soon learn to react quickly, change direction, take advantage of favorable conditions and opportunities, and be flexible enough to turn right around and backtrack a few hundred miles! See you down the road....



Hiking in Death Valley, CA, in February - about the coolest it ever gets! Margaret & David Broad (WBCCI #2381 / Ham: W7BRO) from Tappahannock, VA, traveling 8 months of the year since July 2016 in their 2015 Flying Cloud 25 RD. Their travel blog is at www.flyingcloud25.blogspot.com and David publishes an Airstream Tweaks improvement discussion at www.facebook.com/airstreamtweaks.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Be sure to give a big "Hi Y'all" to our newest new members (they transferred from a different unit) when you meet them:

PEZZOLI, , John & Susan
WBCCI #6750
518 N. 1st Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902
434-242-0040
john.pezzoli@gmail.com

