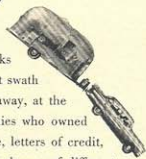


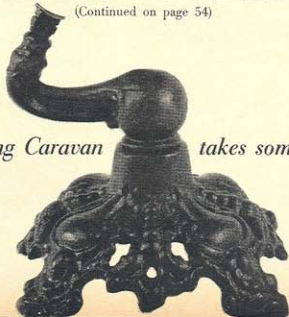
HOW TO PLAN A WORLD TRIP

On the docks, waiting for the clutch of the giant hoists that would swing them onto freighters bound for the Orient, were 48 tow trucks and travel trailers, each specially rigged to cut a neat, self-sufficient swath through some of the most primitive terrain in the world. □ A mile away, at the last meeting they'd have before setting sail for Singapore, were the families who owned them—105 people, all armed with the visas, licenses, inoculations, insurance, letters of credit, guide-books, and clothes they'd need to take themselves and their trailers to dozens of different countries, with many different climates and customs. □ And just over the horizon was one of the great adventures of the decade. □ This was San Pedro, California, last September—rendezvous point for the Wally Byam Around-the-World Caravan, an automated wagon-train of men, women, and children with big smiles, blue berets, and enough daring to get out and see the world under their own steam. □ Their future for the next 14 months? A challenge as big as the earth. Their chances of meeting it successfully? Excellent—mostly because of Helen Byam Schwamborn, the woman who spoke to them now, on the eve of departure—reminding them: (1) to assure a plentiful supply of Kleenex by packing some, unboxed, in the pockets of the clothes they were taking aboard ship; (2) to be sure they had three sets of keys to their trailers and trucks; (3) that there'd be plenty of extra Dramamine in her stateroom; and (4) that they were ambassadors of good-will, who should memorize the words for “thank you” and “please” in each of the languages they'd encounter—a list of which she just happened to have handy, neatly printed, and properly punched to fit into their well-filled “Around-the-World Bulletin” binders. □ Helen Schwamborn is part diplomat, part den-mother, international expert and organizer *par excellence*. She's a pleasant-faced woman in her fifties, with a soft voice and gracious ways. In fact, she looks like the kind of easy-going matron who might have a hard time deciding whether to serve fruit cocktail or tomato aspic at the Ladies' Aid luncheon next Tuesday. □ But nothing could be more deceptive. Under Helen's clubwoman-type hat is a mind like a block-long computer. People who know her agree that if she ever decides to take over the State Department, the professional attaché-case carriers might as well resign. As one of her assistants puts it, “She isn't just the center of a world-wide organization. She *is* a world-wide organization, all by herself.” In any case, Helen's unique talents are exactly what it took to plan, organize, and nurse to successful completion the massive and incredibly complex preliminaries to the Around-the-World Caravan. □ Helen's official title is National Secretary of the Wally Byam Caravan Club. She's closely associated with Airstream, the trailer-manufacturing company founded by her cousin, Wally Byam. She is, in fact, one of the chief instruments of the philosophy that sparked Wally until his death last

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Organizing a globe-girdling Caravan takes someone who's part den-



Left top, Helen Byam Schwamborn, one-woman whirlwind, sets up the reams of paperwork that made the Wally Byam Around-the-World Caravan possible. Left bottom, just one of the 1001 details that Helen oversees as Caravan planner: obtaining the flags of host nations to deck out the Airstreams. Below, in San Pedro, California, a giant crane loads the trailers aboard ship for the long voyage to Singapore, where the Caravanners will meet them.



mother, part international expert and part IBM computer / By Jess Morrison

World Trip

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year and now jet-propels his successors in the Caravan Club: the idea that a trailer is a go-places thing, a vehicle for adventure and excitement, a self-contained home that has the whole world as its backyard—and that group caravans to faraway places are the best way to keep trailer owners moving, learning, expanding, getting the most out of life.

Helen has been on the Airstream team for many years, and she got her baptism of fire during the preliminaries to the spectacular Capetown-to-Cairo Caravan of 1959-1960. On a "quiet" day, her office is a madhouse of maps and charts, bulletin boards and blackboarded timetables, incoming and outgoing mail and phone calls, overstuffed filing cabinets and unstuffed bulletins to the WBCC's 8000-member families.

Over all this normal turmoil, Helen presides with unruffled serenity. But nothing that came before was real preparation for a trip that would go through Malaya, Thailand, Burma, Pakistan, India, Iran, possibly Iraq and Syria, Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Russia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany—and, if there was time, maybe a few other countries.

For the office of the Caravan Club, the Around-the-World adventure began five years ago. "We were still up to our ears in Africa," Helen says, "when Wally started us writing letters about the possibility of a caravan that would go across the Pacific to the Orient, across Asia, Europe, and back across the Atlantic—and wherever possible, over routes that ordinary tourists never take."

It was an overwhelming prospect, particularly the part through Malaya, Burma, and Pakistan. The terrain was a mountainous jungle, the political situation uneasy, the attitude of local officials not entirely hospitable. Besides, the roads were awful. But Wally always used to say, "Roads? They're important, but we can do something about them—build 'em if necessary. What counts is the weather. Check the weather. That's the one thing we can't fix."

Helen checked the facts about the weather—and about visas, topography, health hazards, special events, and general traveling conditions.

"We started sending out letters," she says. "And we read everything we could get our hands on. As we'd learn more about the country and the places to see, we'd take another look at the tentative itinerary and note alternate routings to be checked. In January there's a festival 30 miles from Bangkok. But is there a road? Is there a way to cross the river with an unpronounceable name in a country that's only a dot on a world map? Sometimes there's a ferry, but the

bank is too steep to cross with a trailer. Sometimes there's a lovely bridge, but no road leading to it. These are things we have to know at the very beginning."

While Helen worked out the details with maps and letters and guide-books at home, Wally, beating through the back country of Turkey at the end of the Africa Caravan, made contacts abroad. Slowly the path of the Around-the-World adventure began to take shape.

Once the route was set, the real work began. Helen's job was to make sure that wherever the Caravan went, its basic needs would be met: that there'd be shipping accommodations, parking space, gas and butane—and a welcome from local officials.

But there was more to it than that. A Caravan isn't just an adventure: it's fun. Her plans had to include such small but important details as finding out where in Asia a large group of active Americans could find a good game of golf. All this meant correspondence, reams of it. Not just hundreds of letters—thousands, including at least one, usually more, to the mayors or their equivalents in every town along the way.

And there were trips to be made, mostly to Washington. Conferences with government officials, with the US Army Engineers, with the State Department, USIA, Peace Corps, and the embassies of all the countries on the itinerary.

On one of her trips, Helen got visas. "For some countries," she says, "you *have* to get them in Washington, right at the embassies. There's no other way. So to save our Caravanners a trip to the capital we got these for them. But it took some doing."

First Helen made up stacks of application forms, had them approved by the various embassies, and sent them out to the Caravanners. Each person filled them out and returned them—along with health cards, ten copies of a letter from his bank guaranteeing his financial responsibility, four copies of a note from his church, ten copies of a clearance from the local police department, and 24 passport-sized pictures—plus his passport, signed. And if you've ever been abroad, you know that a US passport is worth its weight in diamonds.

Helen had a hundred of 'em. She stuffed them and the other documents into a suitcase, sat on it to lock it shut, and looking a little like an international spy in the pay of the PTA, took off for Washington with her precious cargo.

Her first stop was at the embassy of a Near Eastern nation, whose response to the preliminary inquiries had been polite, but not what you could call enthusiastic. A little nervous, Helen fiddled with the lock of her suitcase as she explained her mission. Suddenly the lid flew up. Documents spewed out like Old

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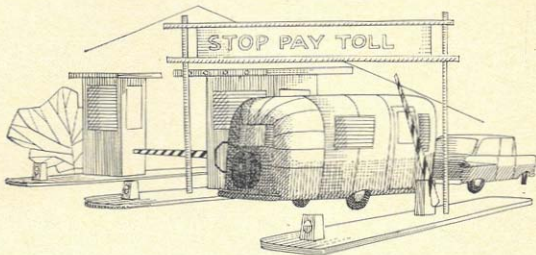
(Continued from page 55)

Faithful in triplicate. At the sight of this king's ransom in passports, the diplomats gasped, stared, murmured—and then smiled and helped Helen retrieve them.

"It sort of broke the ice," Helen says. "After that they couldn't have been more friendly."

But international correspondence and official palaver were just part of the

In the first place, the Caravan planners decided to limit Around-the-World recruits to people who had been on at least one previous Caravan to Mexico, Canada, Europe, or Africa—and had some idea that the going could get rough. Some of the interested couples had to pass up the trip when they learned it would take more than a year; others when they realized that ship's passage, living expense, and miscellaneous costs would put the total tab some-



preparation for Around-the-World. The rest involved the people and equipment that would actually make the trip.

All 8000 club members had been told about the "big one" early in the game. The idea appealed to hundreds of them, but of course not all of them could go,

where between \$10,000 and \$15,000. And a few turned pale, swallowed hard, and said "No, thanks," when they read the formidable schedule of inoculations they'd have to take.

Eventually the group of "possibles" was trimmed down to a core of "prob-

ables." The last and most important part of the process of elimination was a massive orientation meeting—a day-long conclave held in five separate parts of the country for the couples who wanted to go. Ethel and Martin Mathison of North Hollywood, California, attended the one in Southern California, and their reaction was typical. "Mostly it was about the hardships and dangers of the trip," Ethel says, "especially the part through the Malay Peninsula. It sort of intimidated *me*, but not my husband."

The Mathisons decided to join the Caravan—largely because of their confidence in its planners. During the meeting they found out about the stacks of documents they'd need—and that Helen would take care of most of them. They were told that their trailer would need important modifications—and that Airstream service centers all over the country had been alerted to give number-one priority to their needs.

They were told that the Caravan would be led all the way by well-trained Airstream personnel, including Chairman of the Board Andrew Charles—probably the only top executive in the country who would leave his desk for 14 months in order to lead a bunch of his ex-customers on a trip around the world.

After the orientation meeting, in an incredibly detailed series of bulletins that Helen wrote, had printed, and mailed at carefully calculated intervals, each Caravanner got a set of instructions that put every step in simple, "now do this" reference form. "Those bulletins were a complete travelers' encyclopedia," a Caravanner reported. "They outlined everything you had to do about the forms, the shots, the equipment, the insurance; they told what to read, what to buy, what to pack, how to pack, how to remember everything about twenty thousand different details. They were all so efficient that if I didn't know Helen I'd be scared of her."

Helen's thorough and matter-of-fact approach had another effect. All over the country, Around-the-Worlders slowly began to believe in the unbelievable. Like a well-tended fire, the mass excitement glowed, caught sparks, and spread.

By the time the great day rolled around, the atmosphere was supercharged. You could feel it on the docks of San Pedro, at the motels, at the kick-off dinner. You could almost touch it when the blue-bereted Caravanners boarded the *President Cleveland*.

The last one up the gangplank was Helen Schwamborn, checklist in hand. Except for a few chores, like supervising shipboard meetings, her job was mostly done.

And was it worth all the trouble it took to get them launched?

"Well, certainly," said Helen. "Didn't you see their faces" •

AIRSTREAM'S BAMBI GROWS



AIRSTREAM's popular little Bambi travel trailer has grown a foot in length this year to become a 17-footer with the designation "Bambi II."

Like its predecessor, the 17-foot Airstream continues to be regarded as a limited production model. It replaces the 16-footer in this year's model line and is presently on Airstream dealer lots throughout the country.

Except for its size the new Bambi II is a full-fledged member of Airstream's quality travel trailer line. It shares with the larger (19, 22, 24, 26 and 30 feet) Airstreams all the accustomed qualities of light, easy towing and luxurious comfort features. Like them it is fully self-contained in its standard form.

Externally, the Bambi II is 17 feet in overall length and seven feet wide. Its smooth rounded ends are formed by five close-riveted segments of pre-stressed aluminum—Airstream's famous super light "monocoque" construction. Underneath, the all aluminum under surface completes the Bambi II's streamlining and protects against water, mud and road grime.

Airstream's exclusive Dura-Torque axle, independent wheel suspension, oversized shock absorbers, Aero-Stress steel chassis and electric braking system are all

standard equipment on the diminutive travel trailer.

The new Bambi sleeps four adults in complete comfort, as compared with three for the original model. Additional galley and storage space and a new window on the curb side of the trailer also are other direct benefits of the added foot in length.

Like its popular predecessor, the Bambi II is one of the very few small trailers providing full bathroom facilities, including a shower bath. The new model has its own separate lavatory, shaving mirror and cosmetic setup and flush toilet. As with all Airstreams produced in recent years, sewage can be retained in the Bambi II's holding tank.

Write the manufacturer, Airstream, Inc., Jackson Center, Ohio 45334 for colorful literature and complete information. **X**