

Where is Sparky?



By Beth and Regan Carlile

We miss Sparky - our 2016 Porsche Panamera S E-hybrid. He's silver, has a fantastic ceramic coat, and is a "looker."

Sparky has been away for a while. He is missing his weekly exercise. And, so are we!

It all started one very nice December Sunday afternoon giving Sparky a much-needed bath. We proceeded to move Sparky from his home in the garage to the driveway. He started his engine via the combustible engine and not the E-hybrid battery. That should have been a red flag as the battery was charged. We gave no thought to it and started bathing the boy.

After Sparky was all clean and shiny, we gave him a vacuum cleaning as black carpet shows everything you don't want to see. So, now, our good-looking Sparky was ready to go back in the garage. Or, so we thought. Our boy had other plans. Sparky wasn't turning over at all; he made no noise, just a message saying "Hybrid Failure."

How do you get a 5000 lbs. car from the driveway into the garage? Sheer push/pull force, of course. But, when the power steering doesn't work and your garage is 90

degrees off the driveway, you kind of have an issue. We won't mention that the driveway has an upward incline. We went for more horsepower and our neighbor's son was up to the task.

Sparky spent the rest of 2021, clean and shiny, in the garage waiting in the queue for repair. After all the Happy New Year Celebrations occurred, Sparky was able to get into the dealership to determine what was wrong with him. We received a call that the E-hybrid controller failed and the dealership would have to order a new one along with a new set of E-hybrid batteries from Germany.



Sparky – Off to the dealership

Being early 2022, with parts being hard to come by due to COVID-19 plant shutdowns and ports of entry clogged up, we thought, oh no, we won't get Sparky back until maybe summer. And, what's this going to cost for a new E-hybrid controller and E-hybrid batteries for this spectacular Porsche? The dealership told us they are both under warranty. Whew! Good news for a change.

About six weeks later, February 8th to be exact, Sparky was ready to come home. It had been two months since we were able to drive him and like a little kid, we were excited to drive him home. Once, again, Sparky was home in the garage where he belonged.

We planned for a reconnaissance drive Friday morning, February 11th, for the HOD February 19 Tour to Guntersville. Since Sparky was now home and in good

spirits, we decided to take him for the reconnaissance drive. We took off from home around 8:25 and Research Park Blvd Southbound was busy with the usual morning rush hour traffic. We usually stay in the outside lane, but this morning slower traffic caused us to drive in the inside lane. Very near University Drive it always slows down; but this morning was abnormal. We're slowing down but continuing to move closer and closer to the SUV ahead of us. Just before we completely stopped, the 2021 black Camaro (driver got brand new in December) hit us from behind which pushed us into the SUV ahead of us. Crap!!



Sparky – Crap!

Once it was safe to get out of the car, we noticed another car in between the Camaro and next to the concrete barrier. We also noticed his front passenger bumper was sticking out. We then noticed Sparky's rear driver bumper sticking out. Crap!! The Acura must have been close behind the Camaro and swerved into the emergency lane to stop and Sparky stopped him. We called the police, then called for a tow truck. As it turns out, the car that was three cars ahead of Sparky had blown a tire. The driver was a young woman that didn't know what to do; so, she stopped her car. The truck behind her got stopped. The SUV behind the truck got stopped. The Police Report said I got stopped and the Camaro hit me and pushed me into the SUV. Then the police wrote a second report that the Acura hit me from behind. Luckily no one was injured. From our perspective, we only felt one collision, but the police have their rules.

After calling the police, we called 1-800-Porsche to request a towing service. The 1-800-Porsche number wasn't very helpful. The police can get a tow truck to the scene within 30-40 minutes whereas calling for your own tow truck takes 2+ hours. Our only thoughts were that calling Porsche and dealing with a national bureaucracy takes a lot longer than the local police requesting a local towing service. We're sure it's a matter of priorities for the local towing service. Lesson learned; in an emergency, 1-800-Porsche is not the best choice. Let the local police do their job and let them get a towing service.

It took a while for the multiple towing services to clear the scene, Sparky was the last to be loaded onto the flatbed. A sad scene seeing Sparky with both ends broken. We drove Sparky up on the tow truck bed and away they went. Then our neighbor picked us up and took us back at home. We got the van and away we went to the dealership. It was about 10:30. We got everything done with the dealership and the insurance company around noon. You guessed right, no reconnaissance drive.

As mentioned above, the police wrote two accident reports. Therefore, the insurance company opened up two claims. This was the beginning of the confusion; Century Porsche responded to both quotes by providing two estimates. There must have been multiple estimators, because there were duplications of parts on the two estimates.

For the next many weeks and months, correspondences with the insurance company and numerous phone calls with the dealership made us wonder if we would ever get Sparky back home. We kept hearing that the damage was only superficial. But, why is it taking so long? Oh, that's right. These are the normal times of today – parts and workers are hard to come by. We finally got the call that Sparky would be ready to be picked up in the next day or so. All that was required was that Century Porsche would need to come to agreement with the insurance company on the final cost. A week later, May 3, we got the call, we could come get Sparky.

Yea!!!

Where is Sparky?



Sparky is back in his garage looking clean and happy to be home.