

Das Herz von Dixie



October 2021



Found hiding among the hundreds of lesser cars at Century Auto's Cars & Coffee:
Joe Still's beautifully restored 914

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Treasurer – Regan Carlile
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Cover Photo Credit: Scott Witt
Joe Still’s 914

President’s Corner

By Jim Cambron



Having completed three quarters of the year, it appears the Heart O’ Dixie Porsche Club is back on track after the COVID-19

shutdown. I’m proud our region officers have presented you with 24 opportunities to exercise your Porsche and fellowship with our 431 club members: Eight first-Saturday-of-the-month Pit Stop Breakfasts, five second-Thursday-of-the-month Membership Dinner Meetings, three Tech Sessions, seven Saturday day-tours, the 60th Anniversary Celebration for the distribution of anniversary badges, and 14 members attending the annual Porsche Parade in French Lick, Indiana.

Likewise, we have a full club schedule the fourth quarter to finish the year: Three Pit Stop Breakfasts, three Membership Dinner Meetings, a Saturday day-tour, the 7th Annual Overnight Tour to the Tail of the Dragon and Fontana Village, and the Annual Business Meeting followed by the heavily subsidized Christmas Dinner at *The Grill on Main*, Providence.

Our current club membership of 431 includes 260 primary Members and 171 active family members representing a net growth of six members over the last nine months. When I joined the club in 2002, we had 98 primary members, classifying us as a PCA “Small Region.” Our primary membership grew 40 percent over the next nine years to 137 primary and 237 total members at our 2011 50th anniversary. We grew 36 percent over the next five years with 186 primary and 318 total membership for our 2016 55th anniversary. This year’s 260

primary members represent a 40 percent growth over the last five years for our 60th anniversary, or a primary member growth of 162 members (265 percent) and an annual growth of 14 percent over the last 19 years.

The club supplemented its monthly Membership Dinners with the monthly Pit Stop Breakfasts in 2006. In 2002, we only held a couple of day-tours each year and started offering monthly day-tours in 2011. The first Tail of the Dragon overnight tour was in 2004, with this year being the seventh iteration. We also held a couple of overnight tours to Helen, GA.

While we have always supplemented the cost of our annual Christmas Dinner, the supplement has never exceeded 50 percent like this year, so please remember to get your check for \$37.17 per person to Fran Witt to hold your reservation, currently limited to 50 members and guests. Make checks payable to the Heart O' Dixie Region, mail them to Fran Witt, 2 Benefit St NW, Huntsville, AL 35806. And remember to make your lodging reservations at the Fontana Lodge for our November 20th Tail of the Dragon Tour. Rooms at the Lodge are \$119 plus taxes, call 1-800-849-2258.

From Your Editor

By Scott Witt



Let's talk about Porsche Parade. Fran and I had heard a lot about "parades" since we joined HOD in 2016, but we never had the motivation to get up and go to one. We didn't really know what it was all about or if we'd enjoy it, and it seemed like a long way to go for a shot in the dark.

Well, our relentless club president kept talking and talking and talking about what a great time there was to be had and how everyone should at least try to go to one Parade. So, we did it. And, *mirabile dictu*, we had a blast!

So what the heck is Parade all about? Well, in simple terms, it's PCA's annual gathering where every member in America is invited to come for about a week of Porsche, Porsche, and more Porsche. There is literally something for everyone. In fact, the whole thing is a little overwhelming in the initial stages, where you have to register and decide which of about 30 events you want to participate in.

This year's Parade was in French Lick, IN. Part of the attraction for us was that it's not that far from Huntsville, and they had RV parking and hookups. Perfect!

French Lick is a beautiful resort. Stunning, in fact. The hotel filled up fast, but there is an associated hotel at West Baden that was

also available and was a short trolley ride away. The quality of service can only be described in superlative terms. They made the logistics of taking care of all those people look easy. Hardly a glitch at all.



French Lick Resort Hotel



The Rotunda at West Baden Resort Hotel, with rooms opening to the inside.

Since this was our first Parade, we didn't take a Porsche (we really don't want to tow one behind the RV). Our plan was to participate in events that looked like fun and to volunteer at a bunch of different venues so we could get a feel for how things work. Our plan worked out great.

I guess there were around 3,000 people who made it, and almost all of them brought their Porsches. And there was every kind of Porsche you could imagine. Hundreds and hundreds of them.

After staring at all those cars for a week, my favorite was the vintage Porsche 550 race car. Made from 1953-1956, it was a mid-engine, 1.5L, 4-cyl air-cooled racer that was hugely successful during its racing career. I love mid-engine Porsches and it was wonderful to see this ancestor to my Cayman GTS. There were only 90 made. One was recently sold at Sotheby's for almost \$5 million. The best news: the owner actually let Fran climb in and take a seat!



1950s-vintage Porsche 550 racer

There is plenty to do at Parade, whether you want to participate in events or volunteer to help. Literally hundreds of people volunteer to help move things along, and they had a

nice dinner for all of us at the end to show their appreciation.

If you want to participate, there is the Concours, of course. Also, autocross racing, SIM racing, RC (radio-controlled) model racing, multiple tours in the area, dinner on the train that the resort runs. Plenty to do for kids/grandkids, too, if you bring them along. By far, the biggest event was the Concours. There were people (couples often) who would spend more than 100 hours preparing their cars for judging. Yowza!

As I mentioned, we didn't participate in any of that stuff (well, I did participate in the SIM racing, which I was terrible at), but we did volunteer. I worked at the Autocross out at the airport, which was a real learning experience for me. I also helped out at the Historic Display. Fran worked in the Hospitality Suite, the PCA/Parade Store and at the SIM Racing venue. There is a whole lot more, which you find out about when you register.

There were plenty of socials and dinners to pick from, or you could go out and try the local flavors.

One of the highlights for me was afternoons on the enormous porch/veranda at the hotel. At 4 pm every day in conjunction with Happy Hour, a small Dixieland Jazz band played and man, they were very, very good. Their trumpeter, Eric Long, was among the best I've ever heard. I bought him a drink and let him know he made my day.



Eric Long, trumpeter extraordinaire.

There was a good group of us from HOD: Jim and Suki Cambron, Regan and Beth Carlile, Ed Stone and Marcia Elkins, Gil and Rita Ferguson, Greg and Romy Bayuga, Dave and Ann Schroetter, and Fran and I.



HODers at Parade in French Lick, IN

Would we do it again? We would! Next year's Parade will be in the Poconos and we've never been there. We're going to fix that.

Ed and Marcia kept a log of their activities, which was a good idea. It's easy to lose track with all the stuff going on. I'm including it here as kind of an example of what the days at Parade can be like:

Overall impressions:

- Our first Parade experience
- Mostly very well organized by Parade staff.
- Great support by the French Lick Resort staff;
- Excellent guided tours at both French Lick Resort Hotel and West Baden Hotel; super guides.
- The area provided very nice driving tours.
- Beautiful facilities.

July 10th – Saturday, enroute to French Lick Resort, French Lick, IN;

- Checked in to Resort's RV Campsite, Check-in was smooth. The resort's transportation department provided super support.
- Dinner in the hotel's Power Pub
- Sat on the veranda listening to rag-time music; nice.

July 11th – Sunday, at RV Campsite, French Lick Resort, French Lick, IN

- We went to the Parade Check-In station for our 09:30 assigned time; there was a long line, but when the station doors opened the line moved very quickly. We received our check-in package, our tour and event

envelopes with our tickets etc., our gym bag of giveaway items, etc. I also received my Parade grill badge (purchased for \$60).

- Confirmed our volunteer assignments and received volunteer t-shirts
- After Parade Check-in, Marcia and I walked through the ornate hotel, looking at the Porsche cars on display, etc.
- At our "happy-hour" time, we joined other members from PCA Zone 3 for a social gathering. It was a nice no-host event. I received a Mobil One ballcap as a souvenir.
- \$30 each for the social small plate of food was not worth it; we will never do that again.
- Dinner in the hotel's Power pub

July 12th – Monday, at RV Campsite, French Lick Resort, French Lick, IN

- We walked through the parking garage; one area included the Historic Cars competition area.
- Another area of the garage had the Concours cars on display and being prepared for judging. There were so many cars! Beautiful cars! Perfect cars! And many more cars!
- Walked through the sponsors' area to learn about their products, and receive their giveaways.
- Also stopped at the hospitality area
- Did the Patoka Lake Wine Tour; service staff was ready; food was delicious and served hot. Wine was

good; even bought a bottle of the dessert wine to take with us.

July 13th – Tuesday, at RV Campsite, French Lick Resort, French Lick, IN

- Walked through the French Lick Resort Event area hallways, observing the Porsche cars on display,
- Visiting the hospitality area and the Parade store.
- Went on the hotel guided tour; the history of the hotel was very interesting.
- Went to French Lick's town museum; more interesting information.

July 14th – Wednesday, at RV Campsite, French Lick Resort, French Lick, IN

- Participated in Parade driving tour to Churchill Downs in Louisville, KY.
- Driving Tour pre-departure organization superb
- Tour route was very nice
- Bus into and out of Louisville very good.
- There needed to be more time for touring the museum.
- Our Churchill Downs historical guide was fantastic; I went back to give him a tip.
- Catered lunch very good.

July 15th – Thursday, at RV Campsite, French Lick Resort, French Lick, IN

- Ed volunteered to work at the PCA Parade store today from 09:00 to 14:00; received Parade store apron

- Participated in Dinner Train at 5 PM; it was very nice; meal was tasty; service was excellent; train car AC not operating; it got warm.

July 16th – Friday, at RV Campsite, French Lick Resort, French Lick, IN

- Ed and Marcia have volunteered to work at the PCA Parade Art Show Fri 13:00 to 17:00.

July 17th – Saturday, depart French Lick Resort RV Campsite in morning; continuing touring in the area.

That's our Parade story for 2021. And we're looking forward to 2022! Ed and Marcia

I do have two member articles for you this issue. Nancy Corbeille wrote a nice précis and a thank you to Dave Schroetter for our outstanding HOD Mountain Tour in August...it was most excellent!

And we have a great article by Bill Mitchell about his 6,198-mile trip out west in his Cayenne to visit a slew of National Parks and Monuments. Enjoy!

Heart O' Dixie Charity

Charity Committee News

By Dave Bender



As you may know, HOD has been a strong supporter of the Kids to Love KTECH program. Funds raised at our 2019 Silent Auction and 2020 Poker Run

have provided two grants of \$3500 each. The students awarded those grants have not only distinguished themselves in the classroom but have now launched their careers with local advanced manufacturing companies. One is with Toyota Manufacturing and the other with the new Mazda Toyota Plant. By all accounts they are poised to achieve great things in the years to come.

A third grant was also funded by our 2021 campaign. KTECH will award that to another deserving young person for the first 2022 session beginning in January,

KTECH offered to give us a tour of their facility and explain exactly how things work with the students. On September 13th, a small group of us met with Dorothy Havens, the Workforce Development Director, who hosted us for a two-hour show-and-tell and walkthrough of the classrooms and training facilities. We got a chance to meet students

and instructors and even spend some time with a class in session.

Our small group consisted of Dave Bender, Fran and Scott Witt, Nancy Corbeille and Rita Ferguson, so we got personalized attention (and free coffee and donuts!). Check out the link below to KTECH's Facebook post after our visit.

<https://www.facebook.com/965123773570923/posts/4318360744913859/?d=n>



HOD at KTECH for a tour with Dorothy Havens

We came away totally impressed with the professionalism, scope, and intensity of the program. Their application process is very selective, and the curriculum is by design both challenging and demanding. They are laser-focused on preparing young people with the skills and attitude needed to succeed in the modern high-tech workplace.

Not only do students get certified in various disciplines like soldering, engineering

mechanics, robotics operation and repair, but they also go to a "Life Lab" that teaches some of the so-called soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Subject matter includes teamwork, managing interpersonal relationships, identifying one's strengths and weaknesses, and using that information to improve performance. There is also a section on personal finance, time management and other similar skills needed to survive in the adult world.

KTECH is an initiative of the Kids to Love Foundation, a recognized 501(c)3. Since established in 2016, they have graduated 60 diverse and deserving young people. They have an unheard of 100% completion rate with 93% of their students achieving Siemens Certification.

Bottom line: KTECH has been a wonderful charity partner who has delivered outstanding stewardship of the funds donated by our membership. If you're looking to engage with or support an organization that can make a tangible, local difference in the lives of some of our struggling young people, KTECH deserves your consideration.

Where We Were

With the weather cooperating and with folks finding their "norm" as the pandemic waxes

and wanes, we've seen increasing turnout at our monthly events.

We had breakfasts at Another Broken Egg and IHOP, and dinners at The Railyard in Decatur, The Freight House in Hartselle, and at a new venue for us, the Full Moon BBQ right here in Huntsville.

We had 20 cars for the Schroetter Mountain Tour, even in spite of the rain! Most I've ever seen since I've been in the club. And we didn't lose anyone!



Mountain Tour. Porsches love the rain!

We also had a great turnout, 14 cars, for the Ed Stone Lookout Mountain tour. The weather was just perfect...all the convertible and Targa tops were down. We finished the tour with an outstanding lunch outdoors at the Café on the Corner. Bonus: some of us went back and watched the hang gliders do their thing, flying off the mountain 2,000 feet down into the valley. Spectacular!



Lookout Mountain Tour. TN DOT failed to check with us before starting paving on our route.

We had a great turnout for the Tech Session at Jim Cambron's Garage in August where we installed three grills and painted a bunch of wheel hubs. You learn a lot about your car at these sessions.



Investing a little sweat equity in the car

Century Automotive, where a lot of us buy and trade our Porsches, hosted its first Cars & Coffee on Sunday, September 26th in the Mid-City parking lot behind the new Trader

Joe's (open September 30th!). There were at least 300 cars there, of all kinds. It was a charity event with donations going to the Lee Coggins Patient Care Fund at the Huntsville Hospital Care Foundation. So, it was \$15 for a cup of coffee and \$30 for a T-shirt, but their intentions were good. We brought our own coffee, as we usually do; life's too short for bad coffee! There was a fairly large collection of Porsches there, with many HOD members showing up.

I took a couple of pics of some of the odder vehicles I saw there. All in all, it was a fun event, blessed with good weather, expensive coffee and lots of car talk.



The ubiquitous (in Europe) Fiat Cinquecento. Not the fastest car there, but cool wheels and an Abarth exhaust.



Ariel Atom. 500 hp V-8. Yowza. Look it up.



?

Here's a handy list of upcoming events for your schedule. Jim Cambron, our president, publishes them weekly in his email to the membership, so be sure and check it or the website (www.hodpca.org) for changes and updates:

- **Oct 2, 7:00 AM** in the parking lot of *Little Libby's* restaurant, 234 Lime Quarry Rd, off Highway 20 in

Madison. Move inside at **7:30 AM** for the **Monthly Pit Stop Breakfast**. *Please bring a can of food for our Food Drive!*

- **Oct 14, 6:00 PM** in *Terranova's Italian Restaurant*, just off University Blvd, parking lot, move inside at **6:30 PM** for the **Monthly Membership Dinner Meeting**. *Please call our Club Hostess Beth Carlile at 256-682-4744 for dinner reservations, or email at beth.carlile@knology.net.*
- **Oct 16, 8:00 AM** assemble for the *Ted Sendak David Crockett State Park, Lawrenceburg, TN, Tour* at the Madison Planet Fitness parking lot, 8050 University Blvd and depart promptly at 8:30 AM. The State Park offers an all-day, family-style, all-you-can-eat breakfast. There will be one twenty-minute rest stop en route at Lexington, AL. The Crockett Museum will also be open for visitation and Amish country is right up the road.
- **Oct 21, Board of Directors Meeting**, Porsche of Huntsville Conference Room, 5:00 PM.
- **Nov 6, 7:00 AM** in the parking lot of *Edgar's Bakery* at 2004 Airport Rd SW. Move inside at **7:30 AM** for the **Monthly Pit Stop Breakfast**. *Please bring a can of food for our Food Drive!*
- **Nov 11, 6:00 PM** in the *Jones Valley Mellow Mushroom* parking lot, 2230 Cecil Ashburn Dr SE. Move inside at

6:30 PM for the Monthly Membership Dinner Meeting. Please call our Club Hostess Beth Carlile at 256-682-4744 for dinner reservations or email at beth.carlile@knology.net.

- **Nov 20: The Club's Seventh Overnight Trip to the Tail of the Dragon and Fontana Village Lodge.** Assemble near the **MAPCO Service Station, 1582 US72 East, at 7:00 AM** and depart promptly at 7:30 AM. If you've never driven the Dragon's 318 turns in 11 miles, you have no idea what you are missing.
- **Dec 4, 7:00 AM** in the parking lot of **Another Broken Egg** restaurant, 2722 Carl T Jones Dr SE, Jones Valley Mall. Move inside at **7:30 AM** for the **Monthly Pit Stop Breakfast. Please bring a can of food for our Food Drive! HOD Board of Directors Meeting** follows the Pit Stop.
- **Dec 5, 3:00 PM HOD Region Annual Business Meeting at Porsche of Huntsville:** Elect the 2022 Club Officers, vote on the draft Club Bylaws Amendment, and distribution of door prizes, followed by the club-subsidized **Christmas Dinner** at the *Grill on Main, Providence*.
- **Dec 9, 6:00 PM** in the parking lot of **Champy's Famous Fried Chicken**, 8020 Madison Blvd, move inside at **6:30 PM** for the **Monthly Membership Dinner Meeting. Please call our Club**

Hostess Beth Carlile at 256-682-4744 for dinner reservations or email at beth.carlile@knology.net.

Who's New

We've had a bunch of new members join since the last newsletter. We're glad you're all here and look forward to meeting you soon at any of our events:

Chris Britt

David Hurst

Francis Doyle

William Robinson

Robert Pepper

Dexter Martin

Scott Bell

Clifford Mead

Ellen Bames

Joseph Hicks

Greg Williams

Vince Schoonover

Steven Mosher

Lester Phillip

Thaddeus Montgomery

Keith Ferguson

Michael Durboraw

Luke Henke

Welcome aboard, y'all!

Member Articles

Rainy Day in Huntsville

By Nancy Corbeille

On Saturday, August 21, 2021, Dave and Ann Schroetter led some of us on a tour of local mountains and hollows in the south Huntsville vicinity. In case you don't remember, it was a rainy day. Well, that didn't stop 20 Porsches. And the rain showers took note. The mountains we toured were Green Mountain, Keel Mountain, and Crow Mountain. The route included some of our favorite backroads, such as Cherry Tree, Keel Hollow, and AL-65 N. And it was nice to see the Paint Rock River again.

We are not sure why but, as you know, local Dollar Generals are our go-to Pit Stops. Well, our Crow Mountain stop this time three different Dollar Stores for our choices. An acute business ploy on their parts, perhaps? However, just to be sure, Dave may have had to do a fast recount to make sure everyone was getting into their vehicles at the time of departure!

The last leg of the tour brought the group over the picturesque Cecil Ashburn Drive to Carl T Jones Drive and our final destination near the Longhorn Steakhouse in Parkway Place for some lunch. Great trip. Thanks, Dave. And then the rain came.

COVID Escape Trip

By Bill Mitchell

Reading the account in *Das Herz von Dixie* of Fran and Scott Witt's transcontinental drive in their Macan S last year gave me the impetus to write down a narrative of my own road trip in the time of COVID, before the brain cells that contained those memories faded into oblivion. Alas, life (and procrastination) got in the way and nearly a year later I'm attempting to do so with the help of my travel notes that I thankfully saved. So here goes.

After being imprisoned at home for most of 2020, we, like almost everyone else in the developed world began to chafe at all the restrictions, and as things began to open up in the redder states, we discussed with some friends the idea of an epic road trip. I have traveled extensively in the American west and in particular the southwest, but had never visited Glacier N.P., so that was a must for the itinerary. Our traveling companions, Jerry and Rosie Bong of Huntsville, had not seen nearly as much but Jerry was originally from South Dakota so we put together an itinerary that included SD and Glacier, with several other interesting places thrown in for good measure. We decided September would be a good time to take the trip since school (if there was to be school) would be in session and the crowds would be much less, we hoped. (Boy, were we wrong!)

The vehicle of choice for this journey would be my trusty 2017 Porsche Cayenne with less than 40,000 miles on the odometer as neither of our sedans could carry everything, and my Cayman was obviously not up to the task, although I longed to take it on the trip. Jerry planned out most of the SD portion and I filled in the Montana part, throwing in Idaho just for the heck of it, and we agreed that Yellowstone and the Tetons should also be included. We wanted to be a bit flexible, but with pandemic uncertainties, we felt it best to have lodging reservations in place to avoid unpleasant consequences with closed or full hotels and such.

I consulted a good friend who had just returned from a family trip to Colorado and picked his brain for things such as how hotels were functioning, finding restaurants that were open to the public, and a myriad of other tidbits I felt we needed to arm ourselves with before launching off into the Great COVID Unknown.

So, with all these preparations in place, my wife Karen, Jerry, Rosie, and I loaded up and headed out early (for the girls 8 a.m. is early) on Monday, September 7, 2020. We had traveled from our home in Fort Payne to Huntsville on Sunday evening to stay with the Bongs and thus be 75 miles closer to our destination. We wished to travel as much as possible on the 'blue roads' and avoid interstates, but knew this would prove impossible due to the tremendous distances involved. We did, however, avoid them for the first leg of the journey, heading north out

of Huntspatch into Tennessee, taking a series of roads leading through Fayetteville, Lawrenceburg, Jackson, and Dyersburg before taking I-155 into Missouri and I-55 up to St. Louis. We made it to Columbia, MO the first day to gain knowledge by staying in a Holiday Inn Express.

Day two was all interstate to Kansas City and then up I-29 to Sioux Falls, SD for the second night, gracing the Marriott Springhill Suites with our presence before setting off on Wednesday across the vast prairies of South Dakota. We had included a small cooler among our supplies and, except for the very first day, we utilized that to have roadside lunches in mostly scenic locations, which avoided contact with outsiders, cut our meal costs, and increased the travel time available. So far, we had seen some mildly interesting terrain, but no real tourist stops. That was about to change.

Day four was all I-90 with some stops. First up, Mitchell, SD and the famous Corn Palace. It was really quite amazing what all can be built/made/fashioned out of corn, and while this didn't rank very high on my favorites for the trip it was interesting and gave us an excuse to stop in my namesake town. The crowd, if you could call it that, was about six other people, partly because we hit it right after opening and partly because, well, I guess because it's corn(y). Back in the trusty Cayenne, it was off down I-90 for some mindless miles. I will admit, South Dakota is not as flat as I imagined, and since we weren't seeing it in the dead of

winter it was pretty interesting scenery with rolling hills, river gorges, and as we approached Chamberlain, an enormous statue of a Native American woman. The sculpture is called “Dignity” and represents a Cheyenne woman on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River in traditional Plains-style dress. It’s quite impressive and we stopped for a look-see. They had nice clean bathrooms, too.



Dignity, Chamberlain, SD

From there it was westward to the most touristy stop of the entire trip, and the least favorite of us all. The (in)famous Wall Drug in Wall, SD. I called it Gatlinburg West but that does a great disservice to Gatlinburg. At one time I guess it was quaint and interesting, but now it’s a series of shops and stalls crammed together with the sole purpose of extracting as much money from the public as possible, while delivering the least possible goods and services. And the crowds, oh the crowds. We wore our masks most everywhere but the majority of folks at Wall Drug seem to never have heard of

them, and social distancing was impossible if you entered any establishment. Needless to say, after getting a picture of the girls on the Jackalope we hustled on our way, feeling a bit creepy and totally taken.



Karen and Rosie and their Jackalope friend at Wall Drug

Next up was Badlands N.P. and an eye-opening experience. The badlands had never been very high on my list of places to visit, but after having done so I gained a better appreciation for the place, and while we only had a few hours to visit, it made an impression on me. The entire park is vast at 244,000 acres, and most tourists (us included) only see a very small portion of it. We had our first encounter with prairie dogs

there, cute little critters, but I wouldn't want one for a pet. We also saw a bighorn sheep from a distance and lots of hills all jumbled together. There were quite a few bison (buffalo) scattered throughout the area. It really does look a bit otherworldly in appearance and is well worth a visit, I wish we had had more time, but we had reservations that evening in Rapid City, our base for the next two days.



Badlands N.P., South Dakota

However, on the way out of the park we decided to detour to visit another NPS site, the Minuteman Missile Complex almost directly across from the entrance to Badlands. We couldn't visit the silo where the nuclear missiles were once housed due to COVID, but the visitor center was open and we spent some time there reliving our 60's experiences with "duck and cover."



Mt. Rushmore, South Dakota

While staying in Rapid City we made the obligatory trip to Mt. Rushmore and were once again surprised by the number of visitors. I'm sure in a normal year in summer the crowds are much larger, but there were plenty of people there when we stopped by. It is impressive to say the least, but doesn't merit a very long visit. The Visitor Center was once again open and offered many interesting exhibits and facts on the history of the making of the monument and the man who envisioned it and brought it to fruition.

Leaving there we found the Crazy Horse Memorial but didn't go in as the line was long and the entrance fee high. We could see it from a distance and get the picture anyway. Next up was Custer State Park where we spent some time hiking and seeing our first snow of the trip, as it had been cold the week before we arrived and they got several inches.

From a purely Porsche standpoint, the drive on the Needles Highway was the high point of this day, and I was wishing for my Cayman GTS instead of the still-capable Cayenne.



The Needles, from Needles highway

On the drive we viewed several pronghorn antelope and some wild burros as well as additional bison.

The next day we left our hotel early to make the short trip to Spearfish, SD. On the way we stopped in Sturgis since it was “on the way” and we were about the only people in town it seemed. Stores hadn’t opened but wouldn’t you know, before we could get out of town a souvenir shop opened up so the ladies could spend time and money there. We then stopped briefly in Deadwood but since it was so early the town was dead.

Two of the most interesting things we saw on the entire trip centered around Spearfish. First, there is a fish hatchery in the town that raises several species of trout, and they have a below-waterline viewing area that offered us a fisheye view of the delicious animals.

The other really interesting place on the tour this day was the town of Lead (pronounced “leed”) where there once was a large open pit gold mine, and an even larger underground mine, diving over 8000 feet down. The mine today is operated jointly by Stanford University and the US government for research, and is only open to tours by appointment, which we did not have.

However, there is a really nice museum downtown adjacent to the open pit mine which proved to be fascinating. Seems the mine is used to shoot sub-atomic particles underground back and forth to the Fermi Lab

in Chicago. Who knew? Big Bang fans will be overjoyed at all the geekiness there.



Open-pit mine, Lead, SD

The next morning, we would leave South Dakota and enter Wyoming to first visit Devil’s Tower. But before we totally abandoned SD, we stopped in Belle Fourche (pronounced “Bell Foosh”). Why? Well, any good geography student would know that Belle Fourche is the geographic center of the United States. The large stone monument is in a little park right in the center of town, but it’s really the false center, because the real one is in a farmer’s field outside of town. We didn’t take the time to find that one and decided the marker in town was close enough for government work.



Karen in the center of the United States

We thought surely such an out-of-the-way place as Devil’s Tower would see sparse traffic on this September day, but boy, were

we wrong. Throngs of folks had managed to find this place, most just to stare up at the volcanic plug but many to hike around it and a few hardy souls to climb the sucker. Cue the Close Encounters theme. There is also a rather large prairie dog town on the road leading to the tower, so don't go horseback riding there.



Devil's Tower, near Sheridan, WY

The heart of the trip for me was to visit Glacier National Park in Montana, hard up against the Canadian border. It's a long way from anywhere and as many times as I had traveled in the American West, I had never made it up there. Yellowstone, Zion, Arches, Grand Canyon, Yosemite, yes to all those gems but there never seemed to be enough time or the distance was too great to add Glacier to any of my previous treks. So this was my main goal, the prize I was holding out for, and, well, it was a bust.

Remember the big fires last year in CA and OR? Well, they were in full blaze in September of 2020 and the smoke was drifting all the way to the east coast. We arrived in our base camp for Glacier, the little burg of Big Fork on the northeast shore

of Flathead Lake not far from the park. We stayed in a themed hostelry, you know, one room like a French boudoir, one like an Arabian sheikh's harem, etc. The place was a bit shaky but our room was huge and served us well even though there was no TV. Our friends' room did have TV but we were on the move so much it was hardly missed.

But back to the smoke. Arriving, we detected the distinct hint of wood smoke that would accompany us for the next few days as Oregon was apparently burning up and sending distress smoke signals to everyone. One had warning signs about the high winds and they weren't kidding. Our plates, napkins and some food items were blown into South Dakota that day. Next up—Yellowstone country and back to Wyoming.



One of our many roadside picnic stops.

I had rented a VRBO house in West Yellowstone for our time there, and it was a nice place on the outskirts of the tourist town

with numerous warning signs inside and out to secure all foodstuffs and dispose of garbage in the bearproof containers, so we were diligent in doing so. After setting up housekeeping, we headed into town to find some dinner, and were once again confronted by large throngs of others intent on doing the same. The wait time at our chosen spot was around 45 minutes, sitting outside where we got to know some other visitors and compared notes from our travels thus far. Naturally, we found a group from Alabama so we could at least understand one another's conversation.

Early the next day we took off for the park to spend a long day trying to take in as much as possible of this gigantic gift to America. It really is an amazing place with so many geothermal features and its very own Grand Canyon (of the Yellowstone). Yellowstone N.P. is actually a giant caldera (look it up) formed by a collapsing volcano and it sits right over a very active hot spot deep underground. All that heat is forever trying to get out and does in various places throughout the park.

Some places we visited had few others vying for the best vantage point, but in others we were elbow-to-elbow and traffic would get congested, especially at intersections and where wildlife was present. Did I mention wildlife? In spades. Bison, OK, I'll just stoop to calling them buffalo like everyone else, were ubiquitous in the park, and just like the bear jams in GSNP, wherever the traffic started backing up there was usually

one of these scraggly creatures nearby. Once we were parked to read some interesting signage when a rather large fellow came lumbering around the bend, walking smack dab in the middle of the road, followed by, oh, about 200 cars and RV's. His park, his road, and by gum he'd move when he darn well pleased.



Buf in the road

In addition to the buffalo were elk, deer, more elk, a couple of wolves, still more elk, prairie dogs, and did I mention we saw a lot of elk?



Bull elk observing the tourists

The geothermal features were amazing and we ventured onto several of the trails to see some not visible from the road, marveling at the variety of colors created by the various lichen, moss, and bacteria that thrived in the superhot waters. It really is a unique place in all the world and I highly recommend it.

At one of the parking lots for the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, I saw one of the first C8 Corvettes and snapped a picture for my friend who was home waiting for his allocation to come up. We saw many Macan and Cayenne iterations of our German steed but very few sports cars.



One of the first new C8 Corvettes I'd seen in the wild.

The smoke from the fires was still present, but not nearly as thick as it had been in Glacier, and most of our views were less long distance so it wasn't much of an imposition at Yellowstone.

After a long day in the park, we retired to our house in W. Yellowstone for the evening only to return to the park the next morning before moving down to Grand Teton N.P. I have to mention that getting on the road early is a great advantage in avoiding the

crowds since so many folks don't seem to stir until 9 or 10 a.m. I also have to mention that I am positive we saw every RV registered in the USA on this trip, they were everywhere in abundance.

We had been surprised by the large number of people at most of the places we had been thus far, but were floored by the vast hoards at Grand Teton N.P. I tried to find a parking spot for the first two visitors centers we encountered but cars were parked out on the road a good ¼ mile from the building, so we only stopped for pictures along the way until we got to Moose, where we were able to get close enough to a visitor center to park in a lot. In many of the parks we visited, the visitor centers were closed (Yellowstone was one) but the Park Service would always have an EZ-up out front with a couple of rangers to answer questions and stamp your passport.

The Moose center has a big gift shop so it was open, no uniformity in their rules for open or closed it seemed, but the dollar ruled. After an appropriate time for viewing and picture-taking, we went into Jackson for lunch and to take the obligatory photo in the town square under one of the elk antler archways.



Karen at the elk arch in Jackson.

Being a skier, as is Jerry, we had decided we were going to see Jackson Hole Ski Resort. We've never skied it as it's just too hard to get to when the Utah and Colorado resorts are so much more accessible. So, we took the time to drive into the next valley from Jackson to see it and buy a couple of stickers at one of the shops. Then we headed off into Idaho for one of those out-of-the-way adventures that sometimes prove inspired.

Of necessity, we stayed in chain hotels on the way out and back, places on the interstates or in larger cities that we could reliably predict would be open and provide for our needs. After leaving Jackson Hole, we went back into town (Jackson) for lunch, finding a city park with shaded tables and away from the sounds and smells of the

downtown traffic. I visited Jackson, WY for the first time in 1984 and since then it has grown exponentially, to the point it is no longer a nice, quaint town but now a typical tourist trap with all the expected fast-food restaurants and T-shirt shops. Wyoming's loss.

So, after lunch we packed up and headed out for Idaho. When off the beaten path, however, we tried to utilize more colorful and "funky" places, within reason. Case in point was the themed-room lodging in Big Fork. Our destination was the Teton Tepee hotel/motel located outside of Driggs, ID.

Driggs is a farming/ranching community of surprising size that boasts a good-sized airport with private jet traffic, why I don't know. The Teton Tepee is a '70s-era ski lodge, the main focal point being the central gathering spot in the shape of a Tepee, with all the rooms opening onto it and radiating out like spokes of a wagon wheel. The rooms were small but adequate, and the central lodge comfortable and quiet, just the place for reading or napping in one of the stuffed chairs or couches.

After getting settled we went back to Driggs for dinner, and ate at the Warbirds Cafe, one of the places recommended by all the locals we spoke to. While we were eating, not one, but two private jets landed, taxiing right by our table. After a delicious meal we were offered a tour of the adjoining museum which housed, among other planes, an SNJ, a N3N biplane, an FJ4 Fury, and a MiG-15.

While small, it was immaculate and interesting. Who knew?

While in the area, Jerry and I drove up from our lodging to Grand Targhee ski resort, which is actually in Wyoming but on the back side of the Tetons. They had just finished a mountain bike race but we were able to get a couple of trail maps for the 2020 ski season which was curtailed by the pandemic, of course.

The next morning, our Tepee hosts provided us a nice breakfast featuring fresh fruit and cornbread blueberry muffins, after which we packed up to head further west for a relatively unknown destination.

The main reason we crossed over into Idaho was to visit Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. This is a unique park that I visited with a friend back in the '90s and wanted my wife and traveling companions to see, so we had put it into the itinerary. The nearest town is Arco, which houses the first operational nuclear reactor, but the museum was closed when we went by on the way to the park. Craters of the Moon is a vast lava field and looks like it just solidified yesterday, with jagged spikes of lava poking up everywhere, and lava tubes that are normally open for inspection but unfortunately closed last year due to COVID. For once the crowd was manageable with only a few dozen folks competing for the trails and signage. We had a long day to travel so only spent about four hours there.



Craters of the Moon N.M.



Warbirds Cafe in Driggs, ID. Snoopy standing guard.



Teton Tepee lodge outside Driggs, ID (actually in Wyoming)

Our planned stop for the evening was Pinedale, WY, but on the way, we followed the Snake River from ID into WY and experienced some beautiful fall color. My

phone camera could not do it justice as the colors were rich and vibrant with brilliant reds to contrast with the yellow and gold of the Aspen.



Our stay in Pinedale provided our last opportunity for a stay in a “colorful” lodge, and this one harked back to the early days of highway travel in America, as we stayed in a genuine “motor lodge” as they were once called. We now just refer to them as motels.

The quirky place was called the Log Cabin Motel, as each unit was just that. Originally built in the 1920s, and now on the Historic Register, the motel was VERY rustic but at the same time comfortable and provided us with kitchenettes and clean but very old accommodations. The owner’s wife was German and very interesting to converse with.

The visit in Pinedale was all too brief and then it was back to interstate travel with stops in Sidney, NE (HQ city for Cabela’s), Manhattan, KS (another university town). and finally Conway, AR before reaching Sweet Home Alabama. Strangely enough, our best meal was in Conway where Mike, the owner of Mike’s Place, provided us with

entertaining dinner conversation and a wonderful meal.

So, 6,198 miles in the Cayenne, two couples who were still cordial with one another afterward, and a ton of memories are the sum total of this road trip.