

Tom & Ellen's Almost Excellent Journey!

*A cross-country
7,826 mile roadtrip,*

July 20th – August 30th, 2015

**To see family, friends, and
Our Beautiful Country!**

& ...

*... to attend Tom's 50th High School Reunion
in New Milford, New Jersey*

Foreword

“It is truly meet, right, and salutary, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God,”... that we survived our coast to coast summer odyssey of 2015!

I would be remiss in not giving a little automotive history of our means of transportation, a 1993 Volvo 940 turbo station wagon. Reading this will reveal that by this choice of vehicle, I was not subjecting my dear wife to danger & peril on our nations highways. Although there were moments that certainly tried, perhaps even exhausted her patience, the list below shows that in spite of the “little Volvo demon” that is still hiding under the hood, there was ample preparation over the past couple years for our journey. I was not, as my old USAF buddy, Mike Plackett enjoys telling me, “defying logic”!

Although all parts except the converter were new, there were few genuine Volvo parts

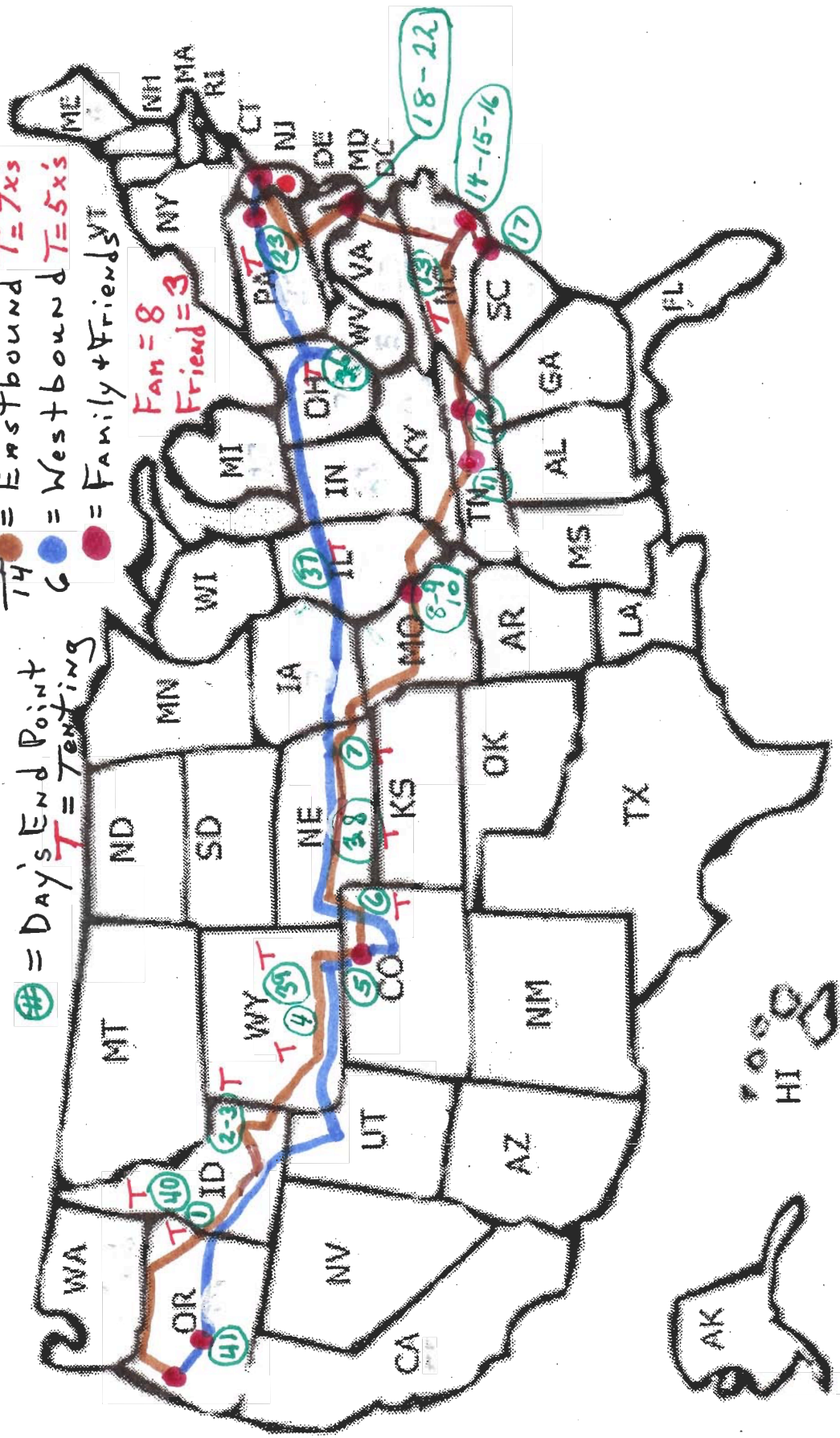
- 1) Four Tires, Brake Rotors & Pads (all around)**
- 2) Complete New Headlight & Taillight Assemblies**
- 3) Rear Shocks & Front Struts**
- 4) Cam Belt, Front Seals, & Water Pump**
- 5) New Turbo & O2 Sensor**
- 6) Exhaust System (Tailpipe to Converter) Exhaust Manifold Gaskets**
- 7) New U-Joints & Center Bearing & Driveshaft Balanced**
- 8) Engine Rear Main Seal, Transmission Seals-Filter-Gasket**
- 9) Torque Converter (Rebuilt) & Transmission Mount**
- 10) New Radiator & Every Belt and Hose Under The Hood**
- 11) Distributor Refurbish (Plus Cap, Rotor, Wires, Plugs)**

Cross Country Odyssey 2015

Days $\frac{\text{Days}}{14}$ = Eastbound T=7x's
 G = Westbound T=5x's
 ● = Family & Friends VT

= Day's End Point
 T = Tenting

Fam = 8
 Friend = 3



Cross-Country, Reunion-Run Journal

Tom & Ellen Demarest

(Ellen reserves her right to dis-avow any or all portions of this document)

Monday July 20th, Day #1:

Finally hit the eastbound trail about 10:00 am today and took Ethan out for lunch in Portland, which was supposed to be brunch at the Country Cat. We set out on I-84 east from Portland at 2:00, stopping for gas @ The Dalles. Ellen spent much time on the iPad and on my Samsung S6, trying to find a current phone # for Kathy Robocker Eckland, a college roommate who lives(ed) in La Grande. It was determined and confirmed by the present occupant of John Eckland's former home/business that Kathy does in fact live 12 + miles northeast of La Grande. But it was now 6:30 and without a number to confirm that she was home and not off traveling as many school teachers are, we elected to stay on course heading southeast on I-84.

It was a beautiful evening drive to Ontario where we fueled up, splurged on Subway sandwiches and forged on to the Boise/Meridian KOA, arriving @ 10:30 PDT. There were no sites of any type available & we were just about to leave when one of the owners pulled up next to us and asked if we were looking for a place to stay. Since we were camping, all we needed was a grassy space so he found a reserved RV site that apparently had become available and so we had all we needed, a patch of grass just big enough for our tent. Day one into the history books!

Tuesday July 21st, Day #2:

We awoke fairly early amid the hustle and bustle of RVs leaving all around us, had a quick breakfast, and set off to Winco!! Where else? Had to get a few supplies and then headed off, determined to get at least well into Wyoming by days end. Hours later, about 3:00 with Ellen at the wheel we were merging from I-86 onto I-15 in Pocatello, to head south to the US 30 cutoff over to Little America, WY on I-80. Essentially taking one side of the triangle formed by staying on I-84 down into Utah to catch I-80.

Out of the blue the old Volvo performed two great stumble-lurches and died, fortunately at the top of the grade that was the onramp to I-15, and we were able continue rolling a great distance as the first mile or so of I-15 was a healthy downgrade. Mind racing, I instructed Ellen off the first exit near the bottom and low & behold we merged onto Pocatello Creek Blvd, a nice wide street & still a downgrade. Near the bottom, as we slowed I saw a strip mall with lots of parking so we turned right and rolled into a pull through space in case we were going to have to call Triple A. In great dismay, we looked out the windshield and we were right in front of the Triple A office! The Lord does keep a special eye on fools & small children. Ellen went in to collect information about parts stores and I donned my thinking cap as this was quite a predicament and I had no idea what part I might need. The good old 940 Volvo can't hold a candle to Buford-da-Bus when it comes to providing sleeping, cooking, and other facilities.

A light bulb came on as I remembered Ellen had commented earlier about hearing a sound like bees buzzing which, in hindsight, was most likely the fuel pump failing and unable to keep up with the constant high fuel flow demands of the day, but might function for normal around town driving. It was all I had to go on so I tried to start it and schazam! We had wheels to get to a parts store for a new pump & to the KOA. O'Riellys could have one tomorrow @ 8:00 AM out of Salt Lake and we secured a wonderful site under two huge elm trees for tomorrows foray into my all too familiar "shade tree mechanics" venture. We had covered 303 miles today and I figured I could have the new pump & filter installed and be showered & back on the road by noon and we'd not be too far behind schedule!



Wednesday July 22nd, Day #3:

Wednesday dawned a beautiful day and with it great optimism, soon to be incrementally dashed. I took off to collect parts which took me to two different O'Riellys, one for the pump one for the filter & hand goop, rags, & some torx bits. Then I found a Lowes and raided their scrap barrel for a couple chunks of 2" x 8" to keep my jack from sinking into the soft ground at the KOA and slowly crushing the mechanic. Arriving back I began the disassembly but quickly discovered I lacked some fender washers & a large vise grip for squeezing off the fuel line from the tank to keep $\frac{3}{4}$ of a tank of gas from draining onto the ground. So it was back into town to Fred Meyers where I opted for a deep throat clamp since I have vise grips galore back home. But ... the clamp wouldn't stay in place so, back to Fred's to buy yet another set of vise grips.

Back at the KOA, having squeezed off the fuel line and disconnected it, I discovered that I needed a 23mm wrench for disconnecting the filter, soooo... after reconnecting the fuel line to the low-pressure input on the pump it was back to O'Riellys for the wrench then back to the KOA. This time I actually got to get the pump & filter assembly out of the car only to discover that the other end of the filter, which couldn't be seen when in the car, required a wrench much larger than 23 mm!!! With the help of Ellen standing on some channel-locks which I did have, which barely held the hex on the filter, I did managed to break loose the banjo fitting and remove the filter and get everything apart & cleaned up.

After re-assembly on the picnic table and constructing the aftermarket wiring connectors, re-installation began about 1:00. Finally installed I had Ellen turn the key to position II and to my delight the pump sprang to life. So I said "Start it up!" and immediately fuel starts pouring out of a seam in the pump itself, fortunately not on the high pressure end. This is clearly a big time pump defect!! Ellen got right on the horn to O'Rielly's and thank God they could get us a replacement from Twin Falls by 5:30 and deliver it to us at the KOA because we were no longer mobile. I removed the pump assembly and dis-assembled it as much as needed to connect the new pump and waited for 5:30 for the new pump to be delivered.



Just about the time the new pump arrived, so did a thunderstorm complete with some pretty good wind. I hastily gathered up tools and we got everything into the car, and us into the tent where I sat with filthy hands unable to touch anything or myself, and unable to get to the restroom to wash up in the downpour. So work for the day was ended. After the storm passed I got cleaned up, and we ate dinner in the car.

Thursday July 23rd, Day #4:

We awoke to another beautiful day and after coffee I got right to work. This time all went well until one of the wire connectors broke so I had to partially remove the assembly to reconstruct that. I had to borrow a large crescent wrench from the campground office to be sure all the high pressure connections were tight and when the car was started we had no leaks!!

So it was off to the showers, we broke camp, checked out and went to Fred Meyers for some odds & ends & gas. We were happily tooling down I-15 toward the US 30 cut off by 1:00 hoping to reach at least Laramie WY for the night.

However, this was not to be! We got on I-80 at Little America, the western spot, not the big one in Cheyenne. Ellen celebrated our seemingly good fortune with a \$.75 ice cream cone as I tried to perfect the art of taking selfies, somewhat a futile effort. But it was a premature celebration as after traveling no more than 20 miles on I-80, the identical scenario as on Tues occurred. We had covered a total of 250 miles from Pocatello. Sitting on the shoulder of I-80 with semi after semi roaring by at 80 mph, I recalled that I had let the engine sit about 10 mins on Tues at the AAA office and it had started. That being pretty much my only option, I figured I'd try that and Wa-La!! We were off to the races again. Relief lasted only 30 miles and we were again on the shoulder, this time with less room between us and the trucks. Ten minutes later we were underway again and made it all the way to Rawlins, about 110 miles. We found a nice campsite at West Hills Campground & miracle of miracles, the wind was not ripping in at 40mph through the whole town from the west as it has been every time we've been in Rawlins since 1980!

We went to a fun place, Bucks Bar & Grill for some food where everything on the menu is priced in .. Bucks, on dollar signs. In Buck's napkin dispenser I found the perfect shop towel dispenser for QED, my friend Mike Packett's engineering company back in Corvallis. Before turning in for the night I posted an urgent plea for ideas on the Volvo Forums website.





Friday July 24th, Day #5:

Overnight I'd received a couple good responses on the forum suggesting either a bad Crank Position Sensor or a faulty Radio Suppression Relay which also supplies voltage to the injectors. I checked in vain for both parts in Rawlins so we got back on 80 and Ellen started calling ahead to every parts store in Laramie, Cheyenne, and Fort Collins, CO. No luck on the relay anywhere, but AutoZone in Fort Collins could have a Crank Sensor by 1:00 that afternoon. Since we were already two days behind schedule we were not going to drop down to Ft Collins, but stay on 80 into Nebraska and visit the Johnson's on our way back west, but ... now it seems we are going to Ft Collins after all.

Just east of Laramie there is an 8,600' grade, several miles long and wouldn't you know, that was the scene the Volvo chose for our next event which I've come to call a "flame out". That's air force jargon for a jet engine just spontaneously shutting down. We have absolutely no warning when this is about to happen. This pass is one of the most serious grades on I-80 before you move into the rolling hills of western Nebraska and it is beautiful if one can ignore the fact that as one sits on the narrow shoulder there are wave after wave of groups of semi's crawling up the grade in low gear, many not being able to move into the middle lane because of other traffic passing them as they round the curve and see our flashers. Again, our only hope was that after 15 mins or so, it would start, ... and it did ... and we made it all the way Fort Collins. Dr Garmin led us directly to the AutoZone store where the part had arrived and we felt as if our dilemma would be over as soon as we got to the Johnson home (Ellen's youngest sister Sharman's family's home)

Again, this was not to be as "flame out" # 5 occurred in stop & go traffic in historic downtown Ft Collins! We were in the left lane and there is diagonal parking between north & south bound sides of the street so from either direction, you can just pull in to park. No sooner had Ellen's words, something like "I really don't like that" or "What a dumb idea", passed her lips than we halted and there immediately in front of us was one of these "dumb" parking spaces. I said "Quick! Go stand in that space so no one coming the other direction pulls into it!" and I tried in vain to get another 20 feet of movement out of the car. If we had a standard shift car I could have used the starter to accomplish this but ... we were just starting to try to push it while waving off folks who started to pull into our coveted space from the other side of traffic, when the parking patrol saint arrived in the form of a huge guy who told me to get in and he pushed us out of the stream of frustrated drivers having to maneuver around us.

Our grateful conversation with this fellow included him recounting having experienced similar symptoms with his car that was remedied by installing a Crank Position Sensor, the very part we possessed after stopping at Autozone 5 mins. earlier! He assured us we could leave the car there overnight if need be as long as we called the number on the card he gave us.

Ignoring the obvious debacle, it was a delightful place to be stranded so we wandered around the shops for an hour and then ... the magic repeated itself and we drove to the Johnson's. There we found the door unlocked, & no one home as Sharman had predicted. She was still at our house in Corvallis for another week or so and the three young Johnsons were not expecting us since last the report had us not visiting until the end of August by which time mom would be home. So, suffice it to say, we walked into a home where three, albeit, very well behaved, quite mature, young adults are living & not even suspecting that their Aunt & Uncle are popping by for an overnight stay!

When Leah arrived, she & Aunt Ellen got things pretty ship shape and then Leah took Ellen on a bike tour of the area. Around 7:30 Nathan & Jacob arrived home from a long hot day of laboring as landscapers, and there was much catching up and pizza eating for the evening. The Johnson home was truly a "Haven off the Road" for us, and in addition, I possessed the "Silver Bullet" which I had installed on the back of the engine in a mere 15 mins. So We Were Golden!

We retired to a real bed without having to set up the tent for the first time in our journey. I had a morning of fixing the Johnson van planned out with the boys before we had to shove off eastward.

Saturday July 25th, Day #6:

Leah left for work at six before anyone was stirring. Nathan & Jacob rustled up a fine breakfast while I got the van prepped for diagnosing the power steering problem. First lesson learned by the fledgling mechanics was that when even a new battery is left in a modern day vehicle there are little systems such as the clock and radio settings etc that will completely drain the battery. So if a car is going to sit for a prolonged period of time, remove at least one of the battery cables.

This meant that the van had to be rocked back and forth numerous times to gather inertia to eventually push it up on the ramps by the three of us while Ellen hit the brakes to keep it from rolling off the back of the ramps once it reached the top. That being accomplished it was pretty easy to determine from Jacob's description of his first repair and the nature of the second leakage scenario that it was almost certainly just a bad hose. Replacing them both would be relatively easy, they should be available from any aftermarket supplier, and only one of them might be a little expensive as it had a crimped on metal elbow on one end.

Nathan then spent some time @ Volvo School with UT (Uncle Tom) and Jacob had a couple Subaru questions I was able to help him with from the recesses of my memory of old Subaru experiences. After showers we headed out confidently towards Nebraska.

On the map one can note there is a gigantic right triangle formed by I-80 running east to west from Cheyenne WY to Ogalala NB, I-25 going north-south from Cheyenne to Denver, and I-76 forming the Hypotenuse from Denver back up to Ogalala. There is also a very good and beautiful secondary road, Colorado state highway 14 that goes almost due east across the middle of said triangle from Fort Collins on I-25, intersecting with I-76 at Sterling CO, a distance of about 110 miles. Since I felt we surely had solved our problem we set out in this vast openness of northeastern Colorado. I was a beautiful journey that would save us much time, many miles, and allow us to get well into eastern Nebraska. It bears mentioning that this is the first trip cross country either of us have ever made in a vehicle with air conditioning so we felt very comfortable as well as confident.

However, we were soon to learn that we were again basking in false confidence as our trusty steed again performed evil deed #6 of shutting down about 80 miles into this wilderness of grassland. So here on the shoulder of CO Rt 14 we had to wait the allotted 15 mins and had to open the windows as it was in the nineties and quickly warming up in the car. The Bill Staines song we know "Little Black Flies"

immediately came to both our minds as the old Volvo immediately took on a squadron of at least fifty flies! Fortunately they were not the biting type, but none the less unpleasant and several would linger in their new found home for a day or so. Episode #6 ended in the customary fashion within 20 mins and we proceeded to Sterling which, unbeknown to us, was about to become our home for the next 20 hrs.

As I recalled the various answers to my posts on the Volvo Forum there was one from Pierce, a fellow who is very knowledgeable. While he had endorsed the Crank Sensor & RSR solutions of a couple others, he also suggested a faulty in tank fuel pump as being the root cause of a noisy, failing main pump. Even though it was well after 5:00 pm on a Saturday, all the parts stores were still open and AutoZone had the pump in stock!!

So the plan was to proceed on to Ogalala where I would install the in-tank pump in the morning. We cruised thru Sterling and as we drove up the on ramp to I-76 we noticed a campground just beyond the turn on to the ramp and also noticed a sign as we merged onto the interstate that read "Colorado State Prison; Do not pick-up hitch-hikers". We chuckled as we passed it and were glad that we wouldn't be staying at that campground we had just passed. Well,... after proceeding less than a half mile, episode #7 began and we were again on the all too familiar shoulder of an interstate. Fortunately I-76 is not nearly as heavily traveled as I-80, 70, or 25 and it was Saturday evening, so that was the silver lining to this black cloud. However, the prospect of proceeding towards Ogalala in the approaching darkness in this uncertainty was a cloud too ominous to consider, thus backing up on the shoulder to & down the on ramp was our only option. This time however it seemed that the engine was more reluctant to run normally so backing up for that half a mile in fits & starts while traffic was flying by us was less than fun.

Finally, having backed down the ramp onto highway 14 again we managed to limp into that campground we had chuckled about, we set up camp for the night. After regrouping my thoughts I resigned myself to the fact that our Sabbath would be spent by me installing an in-tank fuel pump rather than worshipping with the Bronners at their church in St Louis, a plan scuttled several days previously. So we turned our thoughts toward food.

Our hopes were rewarded as the old Volvo returned to it's new "normal" and we drove into Sterling and got some steaks & charcoal etc and my lovely, talented wife began preparing a fine dinner, complete with Pinot Noir from the Volvo's larder, and having prepared the car for surgery the next day, we dined as the dazzling lights came on at the state penitentiary about a half mile west of us.

Now Colorado does not honor Oregon's concealed carry permits so our S&W 380 bodyguards had been secured in the locked case hidden in the spare tire compartment since leaving Wyoming. But in the close proximity of the prison, in conjunction with the childhood memories of escaped cons coming after her dad as the DA who had put them behind bars, there was no way Ellen was going to allow me into the tent without our weapons. So as intentional violaters of Colorado law, we ended week one of our adventure

Cross-Country, Reunion-Run Journal, Week #2

Tom & Ellen Demarest

(Ellen reserves her right to dis-avow any or all portions of this document)

Sunday July 26th, Day #7: (Left Sterling, Colorado) [Odometer 206905 miles]

Last night passed with no sirens blaring from the prison so I locked our weapons back up and unlocked my toolbox, donned my black surgical gloves and began the day's Volvo operation. My dear wife, shown preparing last night's dinner, soon provided coffee & then breakfast so all things were looking up.



I did not have to crawl under the car for this pump replacement, as the access panel to the pump in the gas tank is in the cargo area right behind the back seat that has been folded down during the whole journey. However, as with most things in the auto repair world designed by engineers who should be required to deal with their designs in the real world, this access panel is just a little too small! The removal of the fairly large, oddly shaped, pump & fuel-gauge-float assembly has to be accomplished through this slightly too small opening requiring some very uncomfortable hand & body positioning for a 68 yr. old fellow working on his knees the whole time.



Sans all the details & mutterings, the task was accomplished, the main fuel pump did seem to run more quietly, which Pierce from the forum had mentioned, so showers were had and we were on the road again by about noon.

We soon entered Nebraska and merged onto Interstate 80 which carried a lot more truck traffic than I-76. Within the next several miles we discovered why we had been getting curious glances from passing motorists. Our rear cargo door had not been securely closed and was wide open sailing behind us! Pulling over we determined that our only loss was my bath towel that had been spread out on our sleeping pads to dry. Fair warning to anyone who we may visit from here on, "Unwashed mechanic on board!"

Our confidence level was rising as we sailed across Nebraska without any flame outs, making it to our destination for the night, a campground on the SW outskirts of Lincoln, NB. Setting up the tent @ 9:00 pm to the deafening night sounds of katydids in the still humid 86 degree temperature was a stark welcome to the Midwest. Even though it was 10:00 on a Sunday evening, we managed to find a great restaurant called Leadbelly's, in the Haymarket Section of downtown Lincoln.

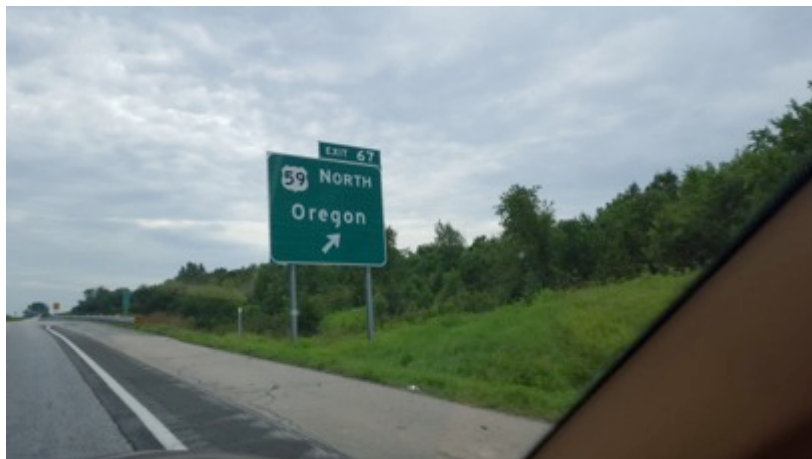


We soon were the only ones in this neat old setting, had a superb waiter & even invited him to look us up on his hoped for journey to the NW.

As unpleasant as the weather was for those used to nights getting cool, we managed to get to sleep

Monday July 27th, Day #8: *(Left Lincoln, Nebraska) [Odometer 207297 miles]*

By 10:00 we were on the road headed to what turned out to be a fine coffee house called The Mill, right near Leadbellys. After spilling a 16 oz Cappuccino on our car seats, the Mill gave us a new one for free!! We soon found our way to NB Rt 2 which would take us due east into Iowa to catch I-29 across the Missouri River in Iowa. I-29 would take us south to Kansas City, MO where we would take I-70 across Missouri to St Louis. After our "flame out" free day yesterday, we were sure that the in tank pump installation had been the Silver Bullet and we would have smooth sailing from now on, right past Oregon, MO.



Not long after heading east on I-70 we stopped at a grocery for some vitals for lunch. On our way back to the highway the trusty Volvo stumbled and we rolled to a stop. The good news was that we were on a small town road in a town where there was an AutoZone. After the allotted 15 mins had passed, the car started and ran fine so we proceeded to AutoZone where I was told they could surely have the RS relay (which I wasn't even sure would solve the problem) in three days. So ... it was back on the road and we prayed for the best. And the best was provided in that we arrived at Mike & Sylvia Bronner's beautiful home in High Ridge, a suburb SW of St. Louis proper, in time for dinner after soldiering on through some pretty heavy Midwest rain. In addition to having wonderful accommodations and enjoying lots of reminiscing of times spent together in Corvallis, Oregon, we didn't have to set up a tent!!

Tuesday July 28th, Day #9: *(At High Ridge, Missouri)*

After a wonderful lazy morning, Mike set off on his various & sundry pastoral duties and I set off in the pursuit of Volvo parts and a Verizon store seeking answers to questions which seasoned citizens come up with and that younger folks are not smart enough to think of. Questions like, "How do I forward a text message??"

I successfully forwarded a text to Ellen saying I was not successful finding the parts I was seeking and would be back as soon as I found a store by which to replenish Mike's beer larder with a six pack of Yuengling. Little did I know it would require a half case before we were able to get the old Volvo out of their driveway!

As I ventured into an unknown area of town, I noticed the rush-hour traffic quickly building up on the other side of the six lane highway I was on and in which I would be ensnarled on my return. So I took the first exit and meandered through a less than "nice" part of west St. Louis and suddenly stalled at an intersection where fortunately there was virtually no traffic, but absolutely no shade in the 98 degree, 98% humidity in the full 5:00 sun! I called Ellen who had my AAA card and got the account & phone #s as I was not having any luck getting started again. All of a sudden, the trusty Volvo roared to life and I quickly headed back toward the six lane hoping to make it back to High Ridge.

However, it was not to be. I made it onto the highway, hugging the right lane of three lanes of westbound creeping traffic as we crossed the Merrimack River. Then I stalled again at precisely the midpoint of the bridge. I was on the phone with AAA when a police car pulled behind me with lights on. He came to the window and I told him I was on the phone with triple A and as I have been enjoying saying, he said "I'm gonna push you off the bridge!" I refrained from saying "Isn't that a little drastic?" because he quickly added "... over to that gas station on the off ramp."

That all went well and I waited in the air-conditioned Quik-Mart at the station for AAA to arrive 45 mins later. When the driver had his truck bed all tilted into position, I said "It will probably start up fine by now and you can just drive it up the ramp onto the truck." That he did, much to his delight, and he backed it right off when we got to the Bronner's upscale neighborhood where not to many of the neighbors have the AAA wrecker off loading cars in front of their houses.

By the time we all sat down for dinner accompanied by their daughter Andrea's family, the Volvo was in their garage awaiting surgery the next morning. I just wasn't sure what I would replace so I put it out of my mind for the evening and we ended a not so good day with our oh so good friends

Wednesday July 29th, Day #10: *(At High Ridge, Missouri)*

The weather took a welcome turn for the better today so I decided I'd take advantage of that turn of good fortune and the fact that I had a decent place to crawl under the car. I'd been unhappy with the sound of the second fuel pump I had installed in Pocatello, especially since the first one from the same supplier

was so badly defective. Carquest could have a fuel pump by 1:00 so Mike took me over there where I also bought a fuel pressure regulator to carry along and install if we still had a problem.

A generous offer was extended to Ellen by Sylvia to let us borrow their van to travel east & back so at least we'd have reliable transportation for that half of the journey. Fully understanding their concern for our safety, Ellen declined their offer although I felt a slight "chink" in my armor, sensing Ellen's understandable waning confidence in her perhaps foolish knight's dragon slaying. I'm sure most all wives would feel the same. Just another one of those "for better or worse" moments?



As I have become quite adept at installing fuel pumps in Volvo 940's, I was done and showered pretty quickly. We treated our kind & long suffering host & hostess to a fun dinner at 91 North in Kirkwood. The evening ended with a large serving of "Concrete" at a local frozen custard place. Anyone familiar with St Louis knows what "concrete" is in that sense. It was not at our favorite place, Ted Drew's, but it was wonderful.

Thursday July 30th, Day #11: *(Left High Ridge, Missouri) [Odometer 207774 miles]*

The day dawned to yet another pleasant day. Sylvia had to leave early so we bid her farewell and after a leisurely morning, we left Mike and High Ridge Tennessee behind about 11:00 & headed for Nashville, Tennessee, needing only to accomplish about 350 miles for the day. We picked up I-64 east right across the Mississippi in Illinois, then about half way across Illinois, we turned south on I-57 to where I-24 starts and that took us into Kentucky and then Tennessee, all the way to Nashville. We stopped once in Cadiz, Kentucky for gas but other than that, there were no unscheduled, spontaneous, stops.

Our planned visit in Nashville was with my nephew Eric Phillips, my late sisters oldest son, and his young family. As Dr Garmin led us right into Eric & Kristina's driveway in SW Nashville, we de-carred to find that the humidity had followed us, and in-fact, intensified. Pastor Eric had recently accepted a call to Concordia Lutheran Church (LCMS) in Nashville. We'd last seen Eric on the "Pass The Hat Tour" bus trip with four of our five sons, across the US in 2000. We did know Kristina, but had never met any of their "high energy" offspring, ages 6, 5, and 3. Eric arrived at their house at almost the same time as we did and

after some beer, time reminiscing & meeting their children, we took the brood out to one of their favorite haunts for pizza.



Due to having lost travel days the previous week, we were only going to be able to spend one night in the Country Music Capitol of the world. One of my disappointments was that this meant not being able to have a personal tour of the Ryman Theater that a friend back in Corvallis, who has connections at the theater, was going to arrange for us. Oh well, so much to do, so little time!

The Phillip's small cottage was rather full so we pitched our tent on their back deck being advised not to share the ground in their spacious back yard with the chigger population that had recently bloomed in the grass. We required no persuasion to heed that advice and the temperature & humidity had abated for the day.

Friday July 31st, Day #12: *(Left Nashville, Tennessee) [Odometer 207xxx miles]*

We awoke to an abundance of bird noises, most notably that of the mocking birds, so called for their repertoire of many calls of other birds which they perform over & over like a 1960s cover band! After spending the morning with Kristina & the kids, we met Eric for a walk around the very beautiful church located not far from Vanderbilt University. After lunch at a nearby coffeehouse, we pushed off eastwardly on I-40



Our next destination was a dinner engagement with one of my closest cousins, Bill Gosling, on my mom's side of the family who had retired to Knoxville TN from Wheaton IL where our whole "tribe" had visited

him & his family on the 2000 bus tour. Knoxville is only about 175 miles from Nashville and since we were feeling like we had solved our car problem, we'd be at Bill & Lynn's front door easily by 5:00.

At 3:25 pm about 140 miles west of Knoxville, incident #10 soon shattered any illusions that we were yet out of the "mechanical woods"! We sat on the shoulder of I-40 for the prescribed bit of time and once rolling again took the next exit, pulled off into a shady spot at a truck stop & I replaced the fuel pressure regulator which I had purchased in St. Louis on Wednesday when I replaced the second defective fuel pump. This only took 15 mins. & I skillfully avoided getting a single drop of gas on my hands as I bled off the 30 to 40 lbs of fuel pressure in the system. Ellen was most grateful not to be trapped in the car with a driver reeking of gasoline!

Incident #11 presented itself only 27 miles after #10 so obviously the fuel pressure regulator was not the problem. During this 15 min unscheduled stop we were paid a visit by a very nice Tennessee State trooper who whizzed by in traffic, then pulled over and backed up a hundred yards or so to determine our problem. Since we didn't appear to be marijuana smugglers from Oregon, he believed my strange tale of these random 15 min incidents although in the back of his mind he was probably thinking "Why doesn't this cheap skate just take his car to the Volvo dealer?" In his distinctly Tennessee accent he told us he'd take our plate number and pass it along I-40 so other troopers would be looking out for us, in a helpful way that is. We refrained from saying "You sure remind me of Gomer! Do you get more than one bullet?" until after I had rolled the window back up.

After our 15 min rest, we only had one more flame out for the day 35 miles later, making it an even dozen since Pocatello. While sitting along I-40, we called Bill & Lynn to explain our tardiness. We knew their guest room was not available as their granddaughter has been living with them so we also wanted to find out which motels were near their home. Much to our delight they said their granddaughter was gone for the weekend and they were just about to call us and say forget about finding a motel. That was wonderful news as this very nerve wracking day was ending.

We did arrive at their wonderful cozy home on the outskirts of Knoxville about 9:30 and were immediately served a wonderful dinner. Not knowing when we would arrive, they had eaten so that allowed for lots of reminiscing since only two of us had to chew while talking! Bill is nine years my senior and I loved hearing stories of my/our early life that I don't remember all that well.

So one more day of traveling in "fits & starts" came to an end in a way, unimaginable only several hours previously, in a comfy bed in the wonderful, air conditioned home of dear relatives.

Saturday August 1st, Day #13: *(Left Knoxville, Tennessee) [Odometer 208xxx miles]*

As has become our pattern, coffee & breakfast became a long, lazy event followed by the harsh reality of seeking Volvo parts. This time however, Bill was my guide & driver rather than watching the Garmin as Ellen searched for "Auto Parts Stores Near Me" on google maps in a town that we knew nothing about.



My only diagnostic thought was that perhaps the ignition coil had a small break in the primary windings that would only separate when subjected to extreme under-hood temperatures. This makes sense as yesterday's rapidly occurring flame outs ceased as the quite extreme temperature/humidity of the day abated. I know any informed auto guys among you are chuckling as, "Yall got a bad coil!" is the age old "sucker punch" thrown at suspecting customers by disreputable repair shops. But at this point, it made sense as more & more things seemed to point to a heat related electrical circuit issue.

We located one that I could pick-up on the Knoxville northerly I-40 bypass as we left town. So after a fond farewell & hearty encouragement for a Gosling visit to Oregon, we headed east.

We missed the exit for the Autozone so had to circle back to procure the coil, our latest "Silver Bullet". We didn't have to wait long for the next experiment, #13, as Murphy's law came into affect again about 40 miles east of Knoxville @ 1:05 PM. I was at that very moment on the phone with one of my mechanical consultants, Jon Franke who was at that moment in Wisconsin, his usual summer pilgrimage to the land of his birth.

As I was recounting all our past trials to John, the Volvo faltered and stalled, but alas we were able to roll on a slight downhill to an exit and down the exit ramp and onto a wide shoulder at the stop sign. John suggested getting some compressed air used for cleaning computer keyboards and spraying it on various electrical components & connections since it is very cold as it sprays out.

We restarted after the allotted 15 mins. and soon managed to procure some compressed air at a dollar store in the small burg at the exit. I also installed the ignition coil at that point in a shady spot and after filling the gas tank, we headed off into one of the most perilous parts of the journey to attempt in an unreliable vehicle. Anyone who has driven I-40 in far Eastern Tennessee to Ashville, North Carolina will remember this twisty-turney-up & down segment as one of the worst of Eisenhower's magnificent Interstate highway system.

With my knuckles white, and Ellen's right foot numb from riding the brake on the driver's side, we arrived in Ashville, a most charming little town. Ellen purchased a small door matt at an artist's fair that we happened onto during our brief stop. From now on, each time we step off the last step of the steps from our second story, we'll think of Ashville, NC (and how we almost died on I-40 getting there!)

We managed to get to the KOA in Statesville, NC without any more breakdowns. After setting up our tent in the twilight, we headed off in search of a place to have dinner. Dr Garmin led us off to one restaurant that no longer existed in east Statesville, but then to west Statesville & the Twisted Oak, a most enjoyable restaurant we would recommend to all venturing this way. At one time the building was a livestock auction barn and our waiter gave us a little tour after dinner.

Returning to the KOA, which was only about 500 yds from I-73, we soon found sleep amid the serenading of katydids & Kenworths!

Sunday August 2nd, Day #14: *(Left Statesville, North Carolina) [Odometer 208599 miles]*

In the morning the katydids were silent but the highway was still humming. After some breakfast we showered, broke camp, made a couple quick adjustments under the hood and after a quick stop at Walmart in Statesville got back on I-40.

Interstate 40 makes a very serpentine path through North Carolina and we had to follow it all the way to it's end in Wilmington, on the coast in the southeast corner of the state. After several texts & emails, we finally established phone contact with my nephew Gareth, my sister's younger son whose home we were heading for in Wilmington. We purposed to get to Gareth & Noel's by 10:00 pm when Noel would be

getting off work. This of course was subject to the Old Volvo continuing to restart if she should flame out between hither & yon.

Suffice it to say we did have two more incidents #s 14 & 15, the first near Burlington, NC and the second on a huge detour we had to take northeast to I-95 just past Raleigh because of serious construction on I-40 between Raleigh and the actual junction of I-40 and I-95.

We arrived in Wilmington at 9:00 just as it was getting dark. After locating Gareth & Noel's street, we found a neat little Irish Pub called The Harp in their neighborhood to unwind until Noel got home at 10:00.

We arrived at their very artistically appointed house almost on the stroke of ten and Noel greeted & treated us with a bottle of very pleasant white wine. The time passed quickly and before one could say "Bob's your Uncle!", Gareth arrived home from work with a fine red wine.

Before long all the day's woes were but a faint nagging memory ... and it was 4:00 am. As we retired we failed to realize that we were falling into the metaphysical "Phillips time warp" which has beset and beguiled others who have visited this charming couple. More to come in explanation of that!



Cross-Country, Reunion-Run Journal, Week #3

Tom & Ellen Demarest

(Ellen reserves her right to dis-avow any or all portions of this document)

Monday August 3rd, Day #15: (At Wilmington, North Carolina) **[Total of 3,565 miles Corvallis to Atlantic]**

Today begins a week of less travel between visits which is a good thing considering the hour at which we retired. We awoke around 9:30, about an hour & a half before our host & hostess who are surely on a different bio-rhythm. They both work late thus have made a conscious decision to adjust their daily schedule to allow for dinner & after dinner time to occur in the traditional sequence except for the non-traditional clock hour which the sequence begins, anywhere from midnight till two AM.

Ellen & I had coffee by ten and we all a nicely prepared breakfast provided at noon. It was quite a rainy morning in Wilmington, off & on, but by mid afternoon it had let up. So we set off on the obligatory trip to Carquest to procure a fuel pump relay, the latest "silver-bullet-suggestion" from Dave's Volvo Page, my latest resource on Al Gore's amazing internet. That only took a few minutes and they then took us to Greenfield Lake, a favorite park/jogging site of theirs.

Their mention to us of alligators in the lake served to dissuade me from diving right in! In fact it encouraged me to be a little extra vigilant as we strolled on the lakeside path. It wasn't long before we spotted one or maybe he spotted us? Thankfully he didn't seem interested in living up to the image of alligators I'd formed from watching Tarzan or Jungle Jim in my youth. We soon spotted another enticing creature, a VERY large spider, that would also discourage me from ever living here. North Carolina has been a beautiful state when viewed from air conditioned places, but the temperature in conjunction with the humidity has been the most intense of the journey so far.



We returned to the house by way of a tour through the Old Town section of Wilmington, directly across the Cape Fear River from the Battleship North Carolina on permanent display. It's a delightful part of Wilmington and where Manna, the restaurant where Gareth works, is located. It's a fairly short bike ride from their house, and my hat is off to anyone who rides a bike on cobblestone streets!



Gareth is a trained sommelier, thus we were treated to some fine wine and a special house drink from Manna. In addition, amid a mini jam session interrupted by a quick fuel-pump-relay installation, Uncle Tom introduced his nephew to a single malt he'd not yet tasted that had been procured on our way to Carquest earlier. So, ... I believe it was close to 11:00 when we sat down to a fine dinner.

Trying to adjust to the Phillip's "time wrap" was moderately successful but around 3:00 AM the near septuagenarian in the group finally faded. His young bride made it till about 4:45

Tuesday August 4th, Day #16: *(At Wilmington, North Carolina)*

Needless to say our day got off to a very slow start, but around 12:00 it did start with a fine leisurely breakfast. Sometime late afternoon it was decided we would head to the beach over at Wrightsville (named for the Wright Bros.), a beautiful ocean-side community due east of Wilmington proper.



We stayed there until almost dusk and then proceeded to Trader Jo's in search of pasta, bread, & wine. Immediately upon pulling out of the parking lot, Gareth was rear ended by a Volvo 940! Fortunately no one or no thing was adversely affected so after the customary exchange of information (with Ellen capturing everything on video) we went back to the house, had a wonderful meal and retired about 2:00 AM, an "almost normal" bedtime.

Wednesday August 5th, Day #17: *(Left Wilmington, North Carolina) [Odometer 208976 miles]*

We arose at a somewhat normal hour, gathered up our belongings, and after another fine breakfast, bid farewell to Gareth & Noel and headed south about 15 miles to the small town of Winnabow, NC where my childhood friend George Nimorwicz and his wife Nicki live.

We were expected for lunch but our departure from Gareth & Noel's was delayed by a frantic, futile search for my prescription sunglasses. We had pretty much concluded that they had fallen out of the car the day before until, en-route, I lowered the visor and discovered my glasses in the clip I had just put them in earlier that morning so I'd know where they were! Some-zimers!!! Thus our arrival time at George & Nicki's made for a rather late lunch.

Ellen & Nicki soon left to do a few errands while George & I watched some video clips of a cross-country journey he & fellow high school chum Charlie Messineo took in 1996 from NJ to Seattle in a Model A that George had re-constructed. That's only a couple notches above a Conestoga Wagon! While we were watching I heard the sound of a banjo coming from the room where their grandchildren were playing. I asked if the older one was learning to play banjo? George said "No, but come here I'll show it to you."

He then tells me that he had made this banjo. I'd seen the very nice guitars he's built at our Yeomen Reunion in New Milford in 2011. Handing it to me to play he says, "What do you think?" Expressing my amazement, again, with the craftsmanship similar to his guitars, he says, "It's yours! You can play it, I can't!" I was flabbergasted, to say the least, but he was serious. As the Yeomen banjo player, I was now tasked with improving my playing to justify playing such a fine instrument. Just a word to all you prim & proper musicians, yes, "A banjo is an instrument!" The only downside was that now in addition to keeping track of which states honor Oregon Concealed Carry Permits. I'd also have to find out which states considered carrying two banjos in one vehicle a felony!

So we did a little Nimor-instrument jamming, George playing the finest of his several guitars and me playing the one & only Nimor-banjo! This was recorded and preserved on video for anyone wishing to see it.

The infamous heat & humidity of NC kept us inside basking in the comfort of air-conditioning for the whole day which ended with a wonderful pasta dinner followed by more reminiscing & story telling. Again we retired in the comfort of an air conditioned home.

Thursday August 6th, Day #18: *(Left Winnabow, North Carolina) [Odometer 209000 miles]*

Upon waking and walking into the living room, I was shocked by the amount of moisture that had condensed on the outside of the windows. Nicki indicated that that meant it would be very hot & humid and she was spot on!

Soon after our leisurely breakfast Nicki had to leave for an appointment so we said goodbye to her and then to George about an hour later @ noon.



We found our way back to I-40 west, stopping for gas just outside Wilmington and in about an hour, got onto I-95 north. It was oppressively hot & humid and we made a rest stop and got some ice & lunch food about 120 miles into the days journey. When we were ready to resume, the car wouldn't start. This, #16, was a new scenario but a new indicator that our problem was definitely related to the ambient temperature under the hood.

After about 20 mins it started and we got back on I-95 but within the next 50 miles we had two more flameouts, #17 and 18, after which I exited onto a rural road and we found some shade, raised the hood and allowed everything to really cool down. A thunderstorm approaching from the south provided some wind and a slight cooling of the air so we resumed travel ahead of it and we never had another problem all the way to Baltimore, a total of 430 miles for the day.

We stopped for dinner about sundown in Fredricksburg. Emerging from the restaurant in the rain, we decided to push on to Baltimore rather than finding a campground and setting up the tent in the rain. This last leg of the day's journey was rather tense as driving at night is no longer the enjoyable thing it was in my youth in addition to the rain and the amt of traffic & construction in the D.C. Baltimore area. Our only view of Washington was the Jefferson Memorial & the Washington Monument as we crossed the Potomac on the interstate bridge.

Dr Garmin led us directly to the church where Trent & Maritza are living in the attached parsonage. It is a beautiful church but in a less than desirable part of the city. We expected this location as his vicarage involves working in inner city ministry. Thankfully it is not near the area where the recent racial disturbances were regarding the death of Freddie Grey.

There is ample off street parking so we unloaded everything of value from the car and retired to our very comfortable, air conditioned quarters. It is so good to have arrived here at one of our most important destinations.

Friday August 7th, Day #19: *(At Trent & Maritza's)*

Today's breakfast table was rather crowed as two of the three pastors Trent & two other seminarians are working under, came by and joined us along with another pastor from Philadelphia who is considering a call to this church connected to the parsonage. It could be said that "This morning's breakfast table was in a very pastoral setting"



Early afternoon we headed over to meet Fr. Charles who is Trent's overseer at Our Savior Lutheran in NE Baltimore. It is quite an old and very beautiful gothic building that Fr. Charles has been familiar with all his life as he grew up not very far from it. Thus the tour he gave us of the building was extremely interesting, historical, doctrinally correct, and sprinkled with personal anecdotes.



We then went down to the Inner Harbor, Baltimore's famous touristy area, and strolled around for a couple hours before heading to dinner at 7:00 at one of Trent's favorite seafood restaurants, "Bertha's Muscles". It was a warm but very pleasant evening and the by the time we walked back to our car the nigh-time street-life was jumping in very much of a New Orleans fashion.



Thus ended our first day with Trent & Maritza, and a fine one it was.

Saturday August 8th, Day #20: *(At Trent & Maritza's)*

After a slow morning we decided to go to the Walter's Art Museum, a private & free museum about midtown Baltimore. It was quite a large and impressive place. We were only able to see part of it before it became time to think about lunch.

As an aside while at the museum, we observed a fairly large group of black young adults from some sort of military program or school doing an organized tour of the museum. From observing & talking with one of the leaders, we learned it was an inner-city program based in D.C. The focus is on getting these folks out into the world around them, getting their GED, and experiencing some technical training to improve their employability. They use a military school model for the first 5 months in which they voluntarily subject themselves to that style of authority. Seeing this in action & listening to one of the instructors, also in uniform, was so uplifting as an example of positive action in the lives of these high risk folks.

We were in the area surrounding a famous monument, a lofty tower topped with a statue of George Washington. Lunch found us at "Georges", one of Fr. Charles favorite spots, but neither he nor George were dining there today. We then found a wine shop Trent was familiar with to procure a pairing for the steak dinner they had planned for the evening.

Since arriving in Baltimore we had been observing numerous helicopters circling over the city. As we were leaving the wine shop we heard a loud PA similar to what one might hear coming from a fire truck or police car. We soon realized it was coming from one of the helicopters doing a tight circle several blocks away from the corner where we were. This "ghetto-bird", as we were told was the local label for them, obviously was tracking some miscreants and aiding the ground police in the hunt. Yet another confirmation of my decision long ago that I wanted to live far away from the east coast cities, and cities in general!

Returning to the parsonage we spent a long evening there & were treated to a great dinner.

Sunday August 9th, Day #21: *(At Trent & Maritza's)*

Soon after our morning ablutions, it was off to Sunday school & church at Our Savior where Trent assists with the worship service. There were two baptisms today, one young teenage girl & one toddler thus there was a luncheon after the service. The congregation is 90% black so we were obviously visitors, a curiosity as Vicar Trent's parents, and almost aliens-beings because we live in Oregon! (Or-re-gone). True to his nature, Vicar Trent's uncular attraction is irresistible to the young parishioners.



After a lazy afternoon we met Fr. Charles for dinner at another of his favorite restaurants. This 73 year old bachelor "man-of-the-cloth" drives a fairly new Volkswagon Bug so I couldn't resist giving him a CD of my song "The Bug is Back!", but I did resist suggesting that he put a crucifix in the Bug's flower holder on the dash.

After a slightly long accidental tour of a western section of the city, Trent chauffeured us back to Highland & Bank streets to the parsonage and the day ended.

Cross-Country, Reunion-Run Journal, Week #4

Tom & Ellen Demarest

(Ellen reserves her right to dis-avow any or all portions of this document)

Monday August 10th, Day #22: *(At Trent & Maritza's)*

Trent mentioned that as he & Maritza were sitting on the front steps of the parsonage late last night right on the edge of Bank Street, they were lit up by the sweeping search-light of a circling ghetto bird. Rather an unsettling experience!

I'm sure, that like me, most of you don't know that today is St. Lawrence Day? So it was off to Redeemer Lutheran church with only a cup of coffee to survive on. When one has a son in the seminary many heretofore obscure dates & facts come your way. Such as this one Pastor Roy Coats mentioned from the pulpit this morning as a testimony of this martyr's strength of conviction, even having a sense of humor, in the face of death. "When St. Lawrence was being executed by fire while being chained to a huge grill, he said to his executioner, *Turn me over, I'm quite done on this side*". After the service, which was held in another beautiful old stone church, one of many in Baltimore, it was off to a quaint little dinner in Caitonsville for breakfast.

A change in Trent's seminary studies means that he will be staying in Baltimore through this school year. Maritza has recently been hired as the new kindergarten teacher at a Lutheran School just outside the city to the NW. So we then went there for a tour of the school & for her to make an assessment of how to attack the process of setting up her first classroom by next week!!

Our last afternoon in Baltimore was spent at their house and the evening spent dinning in their cozy kitchen.

Tuesday August 11th, Day #23: *(Left Trent & Maritza's)* *[Odometer 209443 miles]*

Trent & Maritza both had appointments today so we planned our departure for late morning. We gathered up our belongings minus our wedding gift to them, a large kitchen mixer we had transported from Oregon. That newly available square footage of space seemed to disappear! After the obligatory photo, we bid our fond farewells and headed north.

First we had to stop for the next Volvo organ for implanting at our next flame-out, an ignition control module (ICM), I had located at a Carquest right on our route NW out of Baltimore. Instead of trusting my internal compass and map reading skills, Trent introduced me to Google Maps on my "smarter-than-me phone"! Technology guided me straight to Carquest used cars, about 5 miles in what I sensed was the wrong direction, and it was. I'm sure it was operator error but some things are best done the old fashioned way by we grey-beards.

Next on our agenda of folks to see was another of my high school Yeomen chums, Frank Viola in Hillsborough NJ & then my brother Bob in Tannersville PA. However each of them are recovering from or about to have surgeries. So we decided to first visit Gettysburg en-route to NJ. Like many historical places in the east, I'd never been there before so didn't know anything about what was there other than the battlefield. My lack of uncertainty made Ellen less than eager to go and see what there was to see.

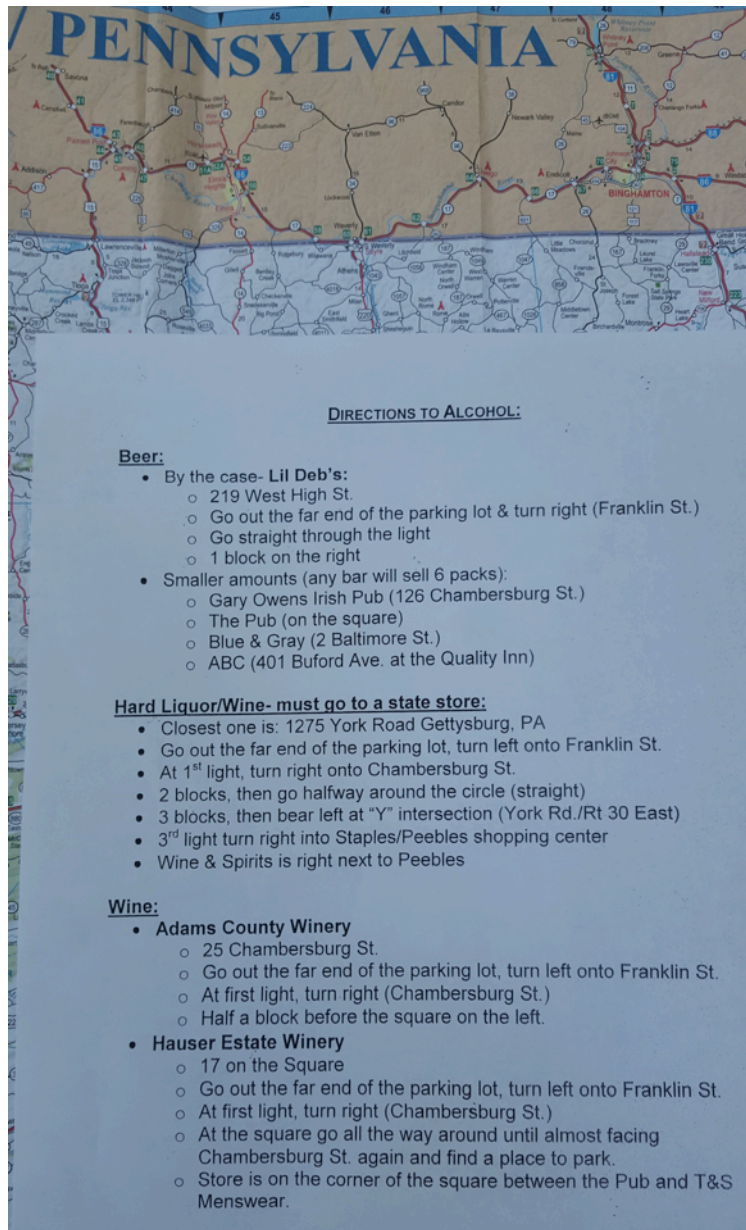
We were both humbled by our ignorance and overwhelmed by the amazing job that has been done memorializing this awesome, awful, event in our history. It was only a 75 mile trip from Trent & Maritza's so we had most of the afternoon but could have spent another day. After seeing the wonderful movie, the 360 degree cyclorama, & museum at the visitor's center (complete with Ellen meeting a Union Soldier and holding an actual musket used in the Battle of Gettysburg by a 14 yr soldier) we walked up to the

cemetery, the site of Lincoln's Gettysburg address, then out to the statue of General Meade at the point from which he observed the defeat of Pickett's Charge, the decisive event of the three day battle.



Returning to our car we realized that we were the last one in our parking lot but the park was still open for a couple hours so we drove up past several monuments overlooking the same view as General Meade had of Pickett's Charge and the point from which French artist, Paul Phillippoteaus painted the awesome Gettysburg Cyclorama we had just experienced. Our visit was truly a sobering experience.

It was then off to the burg of Gettysburg to get some groceries and then to the KOA just west of town. This being Pennsylvania we were reminded of the weird liquor laws they have when we looked for a bottle of chardonnay to have with the sumptuous chicken dinner Ellen had planned. Probably tired of similar questions, costomer service at this grocery store has handouts prepared for “non-Pennsy” folks. I could not resist including it here.



An excellent example of states rights run amuck. I've found Alcohol laws to be a most powerful tool in teaching the constitutional clause regarding states rights to my inmate students!

After a four mile round trip east to the Wine & Spirits outlet, we headed 4 miles west to the campground where I set up the tent by flashlight, Ellen prepared a fine dinner by propane lantern light while being run into by a huge bug. The night noise was incredible as we retired in one of the more pleasant campgrounds quite secluded in the dense woods of Pennsylvania that I remember so well from my youth.

Wednesday August 11th, Day #24: (Gettysburg, PA) [Odometer 209526 miles]

Crossed Jersey Stateline @ 1:00 PM, Arrived @ Jim & Carrie's @ 2:30

After showers & breaking camp, we set out in search of a good coffee shop. With the help of Google Maps, we found one right near the large “round-about” in the center of charming Gettysburg.

We set off for my eldest brother Jim's house in Hawthorne, New Jersey where we were expected for dinner. Jim & his wife Carrie & their eldest daughter Michelle share an upstairs/downstairs two family home in a wonderful neighborhood, very reminiscent of the Demarest home on Asbury Street in New Milford where I and my three siblings grew up. From the first mention of our trip east this summer, they insisted we stay in their finished basement for the duration of our visit. This was the perfect home base for visiting Frank & Sandy Viola, an hour south; New Milford, 20 minutes east; and the location of the reunion, 20 minutes North.

The younger of my older brothers, Bob, was to have eye surgery today so our visit with him & wife Shirley in Tannersville, PA was on hold pending his recovery. We headed north on PA 15 to I-81 then I-78 which took us across the Delaware River into The Garden State. We soon intersected I-287 north to NJ 208 south, which took us directly to Hawthorne. In my youth the only interstate in the area was an "in-process-I-80" thus traveling around most places in NJ was a complex and time consuming process. This day it was a real breeze except for the outrageously rude Jersey drivers with whom I am all too familiar. Ellen was more than delighted to have me do all the driving during our 12 day stay in the NY metropolitan area.

We arrive mid-afternoon and there was a gathering of nephews Steve, Tim, & my cousin Allan Demarest for dinner and much reminiscing. Jim's wife Carrie recently had just had surgery and was confined to a rehab center for a week so we won't get to see her until tomorrow.

As we retired, again we are privileged to enjoy central air-conditioning. Although the weather for the last few days has been unseasonably cool by east coast standards, it is a blessing we are very grateful for.

Thursday August 12th, Day #25: (At Jim & Carrie's) [*Odometer 209809 miles*]

Outside of a visit with Carrie, the very improved and "anxious-to-be-home-Italian-Mama", this whole day was spent with Jim. At 82, he has the honor of surviving longer than any male in our branch of the Demarest family for numerous generations. Our family genealogy is nearly complete to 1096 so this is no small honor. It is the blessing of cardiac-bypass-surgery, which most older male Demarest's related to me have had. My brother Jim, who has always been the consummate athletic competitor, endeavors to hold on to this title and raise the bar for all the rest of us each day!! He is recovering from a recent broken hip, a broken ankle, and a bout with a MRSA infection. Thus he's not too active but has a sharp mind, a keen sense of hearing and a great TV, which is all an avid Yankee & soccer fan needs at 82!!





Friday & Saturday, August 13th, & 14th, Day #26 & # 27: *(At Jim & Carrie's)*

These days were carbon copys of Thursday, with the exception of picking up some pizza and beer on Friday on our way home from visiting Carrie. Jim was delighted by this since Michelle & Carrie's non-carb diet has meant no pizza and beer for Jim in quite a while!!

Sunday August 15th, Day #28: *(At Jim & Carrie's)*

We went to church at Saint Mathew's Lutheran in New Milford this morning and then I drove around the town pointing out places I remembered and where various childhood friends had lived. We stopped at the end of Berkley Street, a block west of my house and found the "brook" and the surrounding wooded area that was like my extended backyard and the magnet that drew the neighborhood kids to play, build forts, dam up the brook, etc. etc. The old shot is the homestead in 1980 with Ellen, Josh, & my mom & dad.



After lunch back in Hawthorne we were about to set off for Frank & Sandy Viola's just over an hour away when Ellen discovered her wallet was missing. At church she discovered it wasn't in her purse but now it was nowhere to be found. We had everyone looking and we called or went by places we'd been yesterday and then headed south after calling the credit card company who advised us to just check on the phone with them a couple times a day to see if any unauthorized activity had occurred as cancelling the account and getting new cards would take a week. Upon arriving at Frank & Sandy's, Ellen discovered her wallet in the depths of her suitcase, much to our relief.

It was great seeing our dear friends, my only classmate who has ever visited us in Oregon. Frank is recovering well from his two recent surgeries and is sure he'll be up for playing at the reunion. We dined on some fine steaks and the Jersey mosquitoes dined on our ankles! We made plans to do some music tomorrow and again retired in the comfort of central air conditioning.

Tom & Ellen Demarest

(Ellen reserves her right to dis-avow any or all portions of this document)

Monday August 17th, Day #29: *(At Frank & Sandy Viola's)*

Frank needs to get his leg elevated frequently and had visits from the physical therapist & the home health nurse, so we stayed at the house & inside all day as the humidity made venturing out pretty unpleasant. Since getting into the mid-west, specifically Nebraska, July 27th, the humidity was pretty miserable for two weeks straight, except for one day in St Louis, and another in Wilmington. We actually had some nice days between Baltimore & Hawthorne but our recent weather luck may have run out.



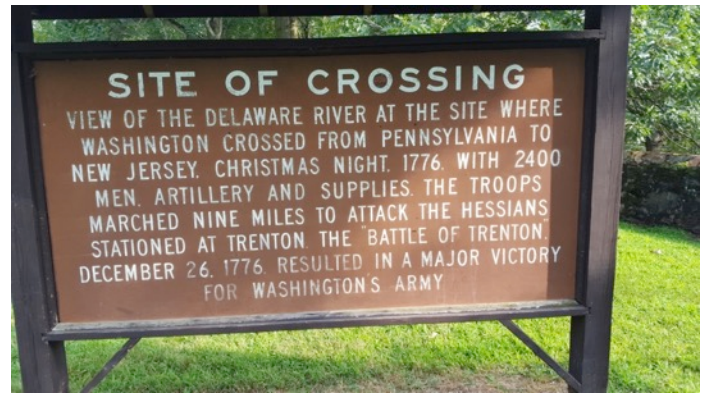
Frank & I recorded mp3s of all the songs we might end up doing at the reunion and sent them & copies of the lyrics to Artie Caughlan, the third Yeomen and the strongest vocalist. He hasn't kept up his guitar playing but Frank & I could hold that all together well and we both love to sing harmony most of the time to Artie's lead part. We sure were missing George's harmony part but we did get together as a four piece in 2011. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJ_5XTZdD4UDo4eZvMY2FJC1sSmqX5TiP

Frank got good reports from both medical visitors today and his planned visit into Slone Kettering Cancer center in New York tomorrow was postponed. With traffic issues, that would have meant their leaving @ 5:00 AM and probably not returning until a late dinner. We had planned on doing a little sight seeing while they were gone but now we would do that together.

Tuesday August 18th, Day #30: *(At Frank & Sandy's)*

Late morning we set off for New Hope, Pennsylvania, a very artsy small town right on the PA side of the Delaware. Frank has total use of his right leg so driving provides a great sense of freedom & mobility. The drive is through some of the beautiful farm country for which New Jersey is accurately named "The Garden State". The thing that is never off my mind however, is how nearby all the madness is, even in this beautiful part of the state.

We had lunch at a neat riverside restaurant but unfortunately the heat & humidity kept us from eating out on the deck. We then drove down the PA side of the river to Washington's Crossing where the Colonial Army crossed the Delaware on Christmas day 1776 and carried off a surprise attack and victory over the Hessian army in the Battle of Trenton.



Back at the house Frank & I worked out the details of what we would play at the reunion and made sure everything was clear for Artie as we would not be rehearsing beforehand. We were counting on the same kind of memory that retains bike-riding, burping babies, etc. Frank & Sandy's son Matt and his family came by to disassemble Frank's downstairs bedroom as he was given medical clearance on Monday for climbing stairs.

We retired with a plan to return to Hawthorne tomorrow afternoon.

Wednesday August 19th, Day #31: *(At Frank & Sandy's)*

The morning was pretty full with Frank's medical folks coming by along with some friends stopping in. His daughter Beth also comes by frequently so he & Sandy have a good support group.

We left early afternoon and had a good amount of rain on our way back up I-287. This cool weather on driving days has kept the Volvo demons at bay!

We arrived to a yummy dinner and a much needed early bedtime.

Thursday August 20th, Day #32: *(At Jim & Carrie's)*

We spent most of the day around the house visiting with Jim until mid-afternoon when we went to see Carrie on her last full day in the rehab center. She is most anxious to get home tomorrow.

Below is an attempt to show the proximity of Hawthorne to New York City. These shots are taken from a hill just west of where Jim & Carrie live, about 20 miles west of the George Washington Bridge into the city. New Milford is about 10 miles closer to the city, and that's way to close to all those crazies!!

These days we find ourselves singing my song, "Carry Me Back ... to Oregon"



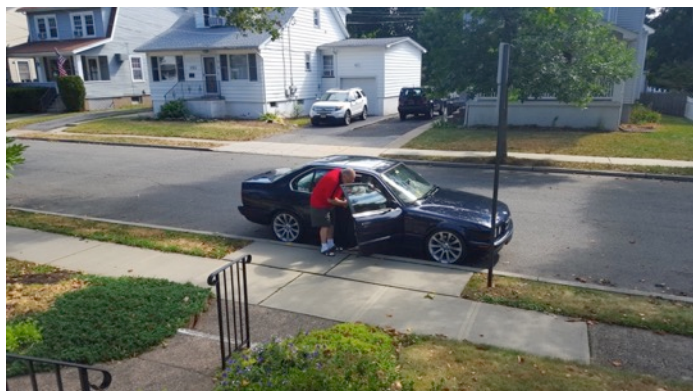
We then attempted to go to the Park Ridge Marriot where some of the reunion organizers were setting up in preparation for the many folks from out of town arriving tomorrow. Our efforts were stymied however as I realized that we were about to get on the NJ Parkway from Rt 4 in Paramus. The Parkway is a toll-road and we didn't have a dime's worth of cash!

We turned off Rt 4 into the Garden State Plaza, a mall I was once familiar with, but no more! Unable to find a place to park at 4:30, Ellen went in to try to get some cash but none of the retailers give any cash back on purchases & the only ATM she found was out of cash. When I called my classmate Laurie Hartman to explain our predicament and say we wouldn't & couldn't get to the Marriot, her response was "Don't you have E-Z pass?" Knowing that that's an automatic toll scanning sticker one puts on their car, I chuckled. "Why in the world would anyone from Oregon have E-Z pass? There is not a toll booth in the state and we haven't paid a single toll in our 4,000 mile journey." Country bumpkins come to town!

So.... needless to say, we were stuck so we returned to Jim & Carrie's for another great dinner and another early bedtime.

Friday August 21st, Day #33: *(At Jim & Carrie's)*

Today was a busy day as Carrie was coming home ... Steve brought her home in son Kyle's tricked out BMW with low-profile tires & sporty suspension. "It's all about looks, not the ride!" Right Carrie? Ellen is shown with Marshal, Jim's part time live in aide.



And then later, around 4:00, the Class of 1965's wild rumpus begins with a tour of New Milford High School and then to the Park Ridge Marriot for a gathering of those who have arrived by today. The pictures below of people you don't know give enough details to adequately bore you. This evening was an informal gathering sans-nametags, so there was a lot of name-guessing, jaw-dropping, and "You're kidding, ... you're so & so ... ?"



Although you don't know any of these folks besides Ellen & me, suffice it to say that many of them I knew from kindergarten, neighborhood gangs, (not gang in the contemporary vernacular) thru high school graduation. We shared experiences in Boy Scouts, church youth group, school band & chorus, and athletic teams. My mind still spins seeing all the photos of the weekend. If you've encountered long lost friends, I'm sure you can relate!

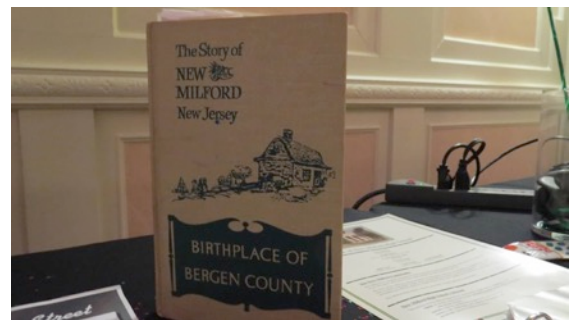
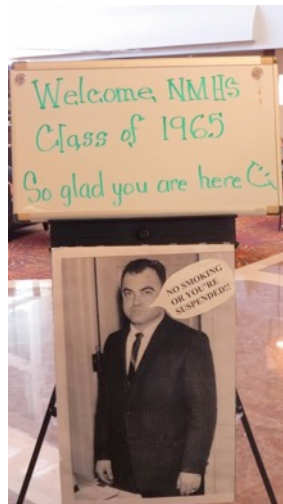
Saturday August 22st, Day #34: *(At Jim & Carrie's)*

As has been the overarching theme of this journey, I awoke to the challenge of rectifying an automotive issue. Two days ago at the Garden State Plaza, our AC/heater fan quite working. The prospect of starting our westward journey tomorrow sans-air conditioning was not a pleasant thought!!

The upshot of the ordeal is that along with some helpful thinking from nephew Steve, I found the culprit in an overheated fan connector that was easily remedied without spending any money or replacing any parts. Happy Day!!

After spending the day around the house we got ourselves gussied up for the big doo and set out for the Park Ridge Marriot with enough cash to pay the tolls on the Garden State Parkway.

As we walked through the parking lot we encountered Annie Bambino, a girl I had such fine memories of and I thought this might be an omen of a fine evening to follow, and it was. Mr. Larrow, our dear departed, once dreaded Vice Principal even greeted us at the door saying "No smoking or you're suspended!"



There were ample photographers & cell phone cameras to capture most salient moments, most of which I will refrain from including, but a few photos must be included.



Charlie Messineo, Gary Williams (1965 Class Pres.)
Tom & Glen Ashworth



Matt Bonanno center, was an IA teacher & theatrical coach back in the day!! Charlie, on left was an original Yeomen. Joe Digrazia on the right was founder of The Coachmen, the local Rock Group of our day!!



Artie,(Yeomen lead singer) and Joe with wives.



Steuben School Kindergarten Class 1953



For Frank & me, the high point of the evening was playing a few tunes for the class. After our first song, Tom Paxton's "Where I'm bound," I held up the banjo George had made and given to me during our recent visit with him in NC. I said, "Though George is not able to be here, he's with us in spirit & craftsmanship!" Artie had not rehearsed with us but he pulled it off like the pro he is with the great pipes he's always had!





The only complaint I heard was that unlike the statement in our yearbook “When the Yeomen sing, everyone knows it!” there were a few in the room that didn’t seem to know it, and their chatter interfered with those who wanted to listen. Watching the video does confirm that, but up front, we didn’t notice, so we have no excuse for any flubs that occurred!

The only other negative of the evening was that in addition to the \$130/person tab for the event, wine cost \$9 a glass. I jokingly mentioned to Ellen that I should go out to the parking lot and get the bottle of Oregon Pinot we had tucked away in our travel provisions. In hind sight, had I known that she would have given her blessing to my gauche, high-schoolish, suggestion, I’d have been out the door in an instant!

Looking through the booklet we were all given, I managed to speak to fifty-some classmates, albeit some very briefly. It was a very fun evening defusing the warning I’d been given about high school reunions.

“Beware! At my high school reunion a bunch of old fogies showed up and ruined the whole event!”

We arrived back at Hawthorne by midnight and set our minds to our morning departure toward the west.

Cross-Country, Reunion-Run Journal, Week #6

Tom & Ellen Demarest

(Ellen reserves her right to dis-avow any or all portions of this document)

Sunday August 23rd, Day #35: *(Leaving Jim & Carries in Hawthorne, NJ)) [Odometer 210043 miles]*

We awoke fairly early today and packed up the few things remaining from our departure preparations yesterday. We had plans for meeting Susan & David Milillo, my sister Marje's daughter, for brunch in Hackettstown, NJ, about 40 miles west. After the ceremonial picture we departed Hawthorne late morning, finally heading west on Interstate 80 toward my brother Bob's in Tannersville, PA, our destination for today. His eye surgery seems to have been very successful and his vision is returning.



We arrived at Bob & Shirley's mid-afternoon after experiencing horrendous traffic issues for the last 20 miles from the Delaware Water Gap to Bartonsville, PA. The Pocono's of eastern PA were almost wilderness when my brother Bob started buying land in Tannersville in the late 50s. Now it's almost like a high class suburb of New York City. There are actually commuter buses that make the 90 mile run on I-80 into the city.

When I reached driving age in the '60s, my buddies & I would camp on Bob's land and drive the old '52 pickup around the back-roads on and around Big Pocono, which is now renamed Camelback Mt, complete with a ski resort, chateau resort/conference center. Then there's NASCAR's Pocono Raceway just west of Big Pocono, and several gigantic waterparks, etc etc. Progress or?

On the plus side, they treated us to a fine dinner at a restaurant that wouldn't be there if not for the population that demands such things. Then to breakfast at their favorite "Down home place where everyone knows everyone else in the room", on one of the back-roads that only the locals know!



Monday August 24th , Day #36: *(Leaving Bob & Shirl's, Tannersville, PA)) [Odometer 210133 miles]*



Their son Dan, who lives next door in the house our parents owned in the '80s, takes care of the mowing. He handles that mower like the best landscaper I've ever seen!



Round about noon we headed out on our first real day of travel through the “Endless Mountains” of Pennsylvania which is a mighty long state. Our destination was Canton, Ohio where we would visit Ellen’s 90 year old Aunt Rachael who is in a care facility there. We arrived about 7:30 for an hour visit with a plan to return in the morning.



After getting some groceries, Dr Garmin lead us to the KOA on the south side of Canton and it was again the familiar drill of me setting up the tent by flashlight while Ellen worked her culinary magic by propane lantern & stove. Outside of camping one night in Gettysburg, we've been living under real roofs, sleeping in real beds since Garreth & Noel's in Wilmington, NC on August 2nd. The weather was actually quite cool, an excellent end to our 415 mile day. We would have to do at least that many miles tomorrow.

Tuesday August 25th, Day #37: *(Leaving Canton, Ohio)*) [Odometer 210548 miles]



We were a little slow getting started & back to see Rachel but we made it by about 10:00. It was pretty chilly with a look of rain, but Ellen did get a chance to take her out for a stroll & collecting wildflowers.



We said our good-byes about 2:00 pm and after a stop to pick up food for lunch we headed north to get back on I-80, now called the Ohio Turnpike, only the second toll road of our journey.

We were again blessed with a rather cool traveling day which, experience has taught us, is our best chance of avoiding the "Volvo Flame-Out-Demon" which has been held at bay since August 6th, that hot & humid day in North Carolina when we last found ourselves stranded on the shoulder of I-95. Our goal for today was to get to some point west of Chicago, into the rural region of Illinois. Given the late hour of our departure from Canton, we had our work cut out for us. Now that we were out of the DC/Baltimore and NYC metropolitan area, I had my companion driver available again so we were able to rack up the miles pretty quickly. Just east of Gary Indiana, the New Jersey trained driver had to take over to navigate the mess of six lane insanity that can get one through the rat's nest of Interstates on the south side of Chicago, and then hopefully spit one out onto I-80 west, across Illinois, toward Iowa!



By the end of this, tense and now nocturnal, ordeal, we found our way to the KOA just east of LaSalle, Illinois, about 70 miles SW of Chicago. After setting up our tent, Dr Google found us a wonderful restaurant in “downtown” LaSalle @ 9:58 pm. Ellen rushed up to a waitress who was moving tables inside for their 10:00 closing, and asked if the kitchen was still open? In true mid-west hospitality, we were welcomed in and treated to a wonderful dinner on their screened in sidewalk seating area. The dinner and setting was wonderful although my companion’s antics might indicate otherwise!



We had accomplished our goal of getting into central Illinois, logging 473 miles for this day. So as I drifted off to sleep with the insanity of the Chicago area behind us, I was feeling curiously close to home!

Wednesday August 26th , Day #38: *(Leaving LaSalle, Illinois)) [Odometer 211021 miles]*

As we awoke to the sound of numerous bird calls, we realized that this was one of the nicest campgrounds we’d been fortunate to find. After coffee, breakfast, and showers, we set out across Illinois. The weather this morning is still quite cool and overcast but looking ahead it seems to be more clear and

sure enough by the time we crossed the Mississippi into Iowa it was sunny and getting warmer.

The saying that the Midwest is America's breadbasket is certainly born out in Iowa, although it's probably more corn-bread than wheat-bread along I-80. Ellen drove across most of Iowa then I took over before we got into Nebraska and our last messy city traffic scenario of Omaha. The day was warming up quite a bit and we stopped at a rest area about 150 miles into Nebraska to figure out how far we might get before dark. Our plan for tomorrow was to drop down to Loveland, CO to visit Anne Lenord, a dear elderly friend of Ellen's who recently moved there from Corvallis to live with her daughter.

We figured we could get to North Platte tonight and then with an early start in the morning, reach Loveland by noon, and take Anne out for lunch. That was another 200 miles so Ellen took over driving again.

Somewhere real close to milepost 250 we were jolted out of our now comfortable "easy travelling mode" by the 19th return of the Volvo Demon!! However this time I felt as if I was prepared and almost welcomed the chance to try my latest hunch which could only be tested in the heat of battle, so to speak! Ellen rolled to a stop well off the wide shoulder partly on the grass, a spot almost serene compared to some of our other forced landings.

This was very rural Nebraska with not too heavy traffic, but the late afternoon sun beating down on the hood of the car seemed to prove our hypothesis that whatever was causing this stall-out was the result of excessive ambient heat developing under the hood. Not in anyway an engine temperature issue although the heat generated by the turbo-charged engine was surely contributing to the excessive heat.

*(Just a little lesson in auto mechanics here. The principle of turbo-chargers is that of a double ended fan. One end is driven very fast by the extremely hot exhaust stream from the engine on it's way out the tail pipe. This causes the other end of the fan to blow fresh air into the engine in greater amounts possible than in non-turbo engines thus allowing far greater combustion power to occur. It's not uncommon for a turbo to glow red-hot. Since they are oil cooled, **it's very important for a turbo engine to idle for a couple minutes before being shut off to allow the turbo to cool a little.** I'm sure all you turbo owners do that, right????)*

Back to the adventure: As soon as the car stopped I sprang into the action I'd prepared for by having my Torx 25 driver and the new Ignition Control Module sitting on the console of the car since Baltimore! I knew I could R & R this unit in 5 mins and if the car started right up, it would seem to indicate I had exorcized this demon! The logic seemed flawless. I manned the tools & Ellen manned the camera & stopwatch and within 7 minutes we were again cruising at 75 mph with the engine seeming to be running better than usual. My optimism, immense although guarded, seemed to be warranted as we cruised on to North Platte with nary a hint of trouble.



(FYI; It's the wind that's causing what looks like a bulge under my shirt!! So no snide comments please!)

We found our campground & a Walmart to procure some groceries for dinner, along with a celebratory bottle of Chardonnay for having slain the beast. Today was our highest mileage day of the entire journey @ 682 miles and the prospect of getting home was never more likely in my over taxed, mechanically challenged mind!

Thursday August 27th , Day #39: *(Leaving North Platte, Nebraska)) [Odometer 211703 miles]*



After coffee & breakfast we confidently set off on I-80 to the I-76 cut off to Denver just past Ogallala, Nebraska. Satisfied that all was well with the car, Ellen took over just after we entered Colorado. We sailed past Sterling where I had installed the in tank fuel pump several weeks ago and stayed on I-76 all the way to US 34 which would take us all the way to Loveland where Anne was eagerly awaiting our arrival and an enjoyable lunch.

We switched drivers as we were about to get into a bit of an urban area and as we drove into Greeley, we learned, once again in the heat of the day, that the demon was still with us!! Incident #20 lacked all of the serenity yesterday's event provided, and was only the precursor to three more incidents, one in the left turn lane of a congested four lane highway!!!

Cutting to the chase, we did get to Anne's house but we certainly weren't going to take her anywhere in our "demon car"!! So our invitation to take her out for lunch turned into her (with Ellen's help) providing us with lunch. But it was all very fun and while we were there the weather changed and it even rained so by the time we left, 3 hrs later, driving conditions were much improved.



While at Anne's I tapped into a couple wires that supply voltage to two more possible circuits that might be the source of our problem. I ran these wires into the passenger seat area and connected up my Volt-Ohm-Meter so that, with a little tutoring, Ellen could check these wires to see if they showed voltage as we were shutting down, should the occasion present itself.

After filling the gas tank we set out north on I-25 which would take us to Cheyenne WY where we would hit I-80 west. Pins & needles is the only apt description for our mental state as we set out with the morning's incidents still fresh on our minds.

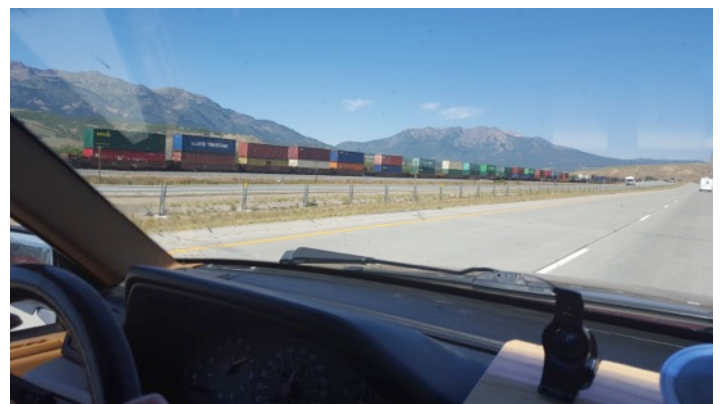
The cloudy & cool conditions again proved to be the remedy for keeping the Volvo demons at bay and we were able to finally relax and enjoy the awesomeness and immensity of Wyoming.



Experiencing no more flame outs, we made it all the way to Rawlins and made camp at the same campground we stayed at going east, five weeks ago to the day. The woman at the check in remembered Ellen, which I don't find hard to believe at all. I remembered her well after the first time I met her.

We found a very good Thai restaurant for dinner (that may seem like an extreme anomaly to anyone familiar with Rawlins Wyoming) and returned to the campground. Shortly before retiring a fierce North wind came up which actually made Ellen fearful that our tent would actually end up in Kansas on top of a wicked witch!! Sometime during the night the wind did subside and we never moved an inch. We traveled 476 miles today but only moved 372 miles in a westward trajectory.

Friday August 28th , Day #40: (Leaving Rawlins, Wyoming)) [Odometer 212179 miles]



We left Rawlins about 8:00 with Ellen at the wheel burnin' up I -80, cutting off in Utah to the northwest on I -84, we made it non stop to Ogden, Utah, about 280 miles. The day was getting pretty warm when we stopped at a Walmart for some lunch, leaving the hood up in the parking lot.



We made our way back to the interstate and all was going well for about 25 miles when we started to go into a stall. Fortunately we had enough inertia and were able to roll up a rural off ramp exit to Brigham City as Ellen was testing the voltage on our two test wires. They both still showed 12 volts so neither the injectors nor the air mass meter were losing voltage so that answered two more questions. We had a reasonably pleasant spot with a nice view to wait out our 15 mins of cool down time from incident #24.

I now moved one of the test wires to the supply side terminal of the coil. Once we started moving again, we only had to wait 16 miles to learn that the coil supply voltage wasn't the problem. Event #25 put us in a very precarious spot, right where I-15 splits off north to Pocatello. We were on the south side of the cut-off, about 100 yds from it. This was barely enough distance to get this Volvo Turbo up to speed to avoid

getting rear-ended by someone exiting I-84 onto I-15 at 80mph because we were just over the crest of a hill. Thus I had to watch the crest of a second higher hill, a half mile back, to determine when there was no vehicle in the low area between the two hills, about to come over the near hill planning to exit.

Practicing this theory a couple times and after the allotted 15 mins of rest time, I calculated a good chance to go for it. I slammed the hood, jumped in the car, it started, and all worked well and we were back on the road, but for only 4 miles. However, this time we were in a spot with a truly majestic view of the valley we'd just crossed. This was a scene few passersby have the chance to contemplate for 15 mins! Since we'd passed the I-15 cutoff, traffic was much lighter so this was, in it's own way, an enjoyable time. After 15 mins, we left locale #26 hoping to make more than 4 miles in this now oppressive, but dry, heat.

And we did! We travelled 14 miles before #27. Once on the road again, event #28 occurred just before an off ramp 6 miles later. We could see the road ahead going down to one lane due to construction. This would create a bad situation for us to be on the shoulder, so after we were running again, I opted to take the off ramp just ahead of us. This was one of these off ramps called "ranch" exits. They're very remote besides the off & on ramp for both directions of the Interstate, the road immediately turns to gravel.

I figured I could get into some good shade under the Interstate overpass and where we could do a serious cool down or else we'd be traveling in five to ten mile increments until sundown. So we spent close to an hour there and only one tractor pulling a piece of equipment came by under the underpass on the gravel road although lots of cars & semis whizzed overhead.



Once on the road again we exited, got gas & took another long shady rest in Snowville, Utah, the last town in Utah before entering Idaho. Things were starting to cool down with the promise of some cloud cover on the horizon so with our full tank of gas we were not going to stop until we had to.

"Had to", turned out to be our planned stop for the night in Fruitland, Idaho which is about 50 miles west of Boise. It's right on the Snake River that is the Idaho-Oregon border at this point. After picking up a

pizza we actually crossed the Snake into Oregon to get to the Walmart only a half mile west of downtown Fruitland. Our campsite was a little unusual as it was in the backyard of the campground owners home. It was very comfy and quiet which, after a very late, dark, final fifty miles from Boise, was a welcome end to our 660 mile day fraught with Volvo Demons.

Saturday August 29th, Day #41: *(Leaving Fruitland, Idaho)) [Odometer 212839 miles]*

Our goal for today was to simply to get to son Josh & Claire's home in Bend, Oregon, about 380 miles straight across Oregon on US 20. We got an early start after showers, coffee & breakfast and with gaining an hour entering the Pacific Time Zone, we figured we could make it by noon. We are not disappointed to be looking toward sleeping in a real bed tonight after camping for the last five nights. We've been pretty comfortable on our foam pads but my 68 yr old muscles & joints aren't suited to getting up off the ground and getting dressed in a tent in which one can't stand up!!

We crossed the Snake again, back into Oregon, on US 395 and meandered through Ontario and turned west onto US 20 which would take us to Bend. No more Interstates on this trip. The weather is supposed to remain cool & overcast for most of the day so "theoretically" we should have no car troubles from here on out.

This route through the middle of Oregon is simply wonderful if one has the time and the weather is OK. The first segment of the journey, about 130 miles from Ontario to Burns, is through the Malheur Mts of eastern Oregon, some truly awesome, very sparsely populated countryside. I think we only encountered three fellow westward travelers whom we easily passed so had totally unrestricted travel. We didn't pass a whole lot of eastbound traffic either and most importantly, no roadside rests due to mechanical issues!! Photos below capture a little of that beauty.



The second leg of the journey from Burns to Bend is also about 130 miles and is across what is referred to as Oregon's high desert. Obviously not a desert by the Mojave or Sahara definition, but by precipitation & vegetation characteristics, you can see that it is certainly desert like and pretty deserted!



We arrived at Josh & Claire's in time for a yummy lunch and then a hike through some wonderful Central Oregon woods along a crystal clear trout stream. Oh so good to be home!! After a stop at one of their favorite coffee haunts it was back to the house for wine, cheese, pita chips & humus, and a great steak dinner! The weather has been idyllic with very little humidity although there's been some sprinkles. Did I mention that I'm glad to be back in Oregon? And oh yes, by east coast standards, no mosquitoes!



Sunday August 30th, Day #42: *(Leaving Bend, Oregon,)* *[Odometer 213108 miles]*

After some great coffee, we hit one of their favorite breakfast spots, then returned to the house to depart on the final leg of this grand odyssey, the 125 miles over the Cascades into the heart of the Willamette Valley, Corvallis (CorVallee)!

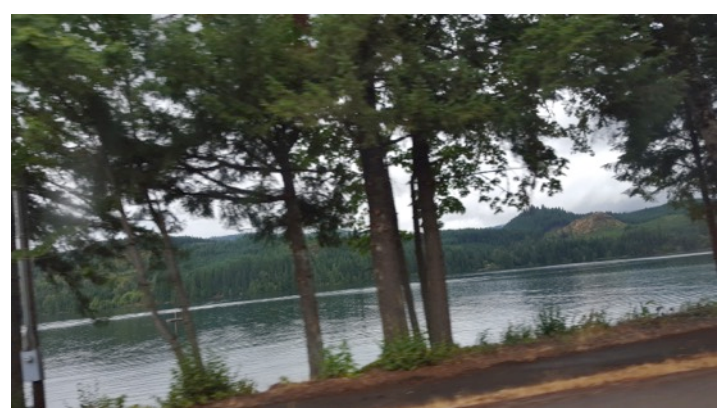
After a couple photos, we headed out of Bend on US 20 west.



By the time we reached Sisters we got into some sprinkles that turned into real rain as we started up the east slope of the Cascades to Santiam Pass.



As we started down the west side most of the rainy weekend early returning traffic split off on 22 toward Salem or 126 to Eugene. Thus we had a very pleasant trip on that beautiful, twisty turny decent along the South Santiam River. The rain subsided and once we were out in the valley it really felt like home.



We backed into the driveway about noon and were greeted by Reid & Sharman... and Ethan ... and a house that was fresh & airy, not like one that had been shut up and empty for six weeks!
Thanks to all you house-sitters!

I first unloaded the car onto the porch just so we could see it all in one pile! Not too much stuff for living on the road for 42 days? Since leaving Hawthorne, we'd logged 3,194 miles in six travel days. Our odometer reads 213,237 miles, total mileage for all six weeks is 7,826 miles and I made good on my promise to have her home by today, her birthday! I suppose it could be said we averaged a roadside breakdown every 280 miles! For enduring this, my dear wife should be sainted!



But better than being sainted, she was treated to one wonderful birthday dinner prepared by three sons, one daughter –in-law, one sister, and highlighted by two grandsons!

Here are departure & arrival photos from Sharman!

July 20, 2015

August 30, 2015

