



FREEDOM ROAD RALLY

“the classic car enthusiast’s
DREAM VACATION”

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NEWSLETTER 2011 3rd Quarter

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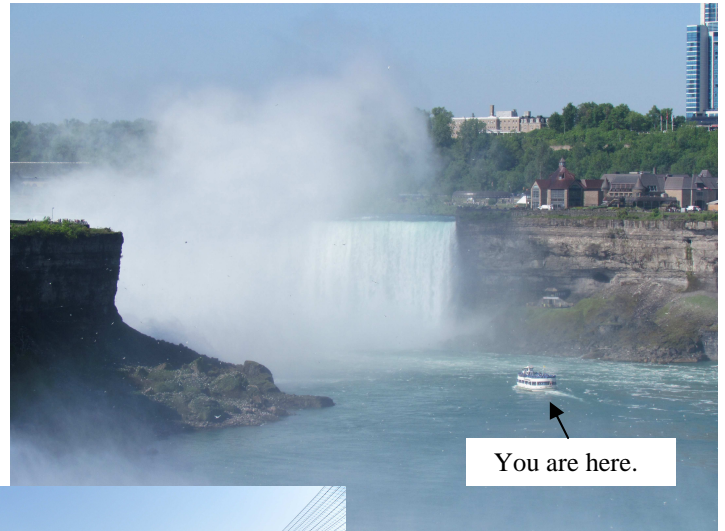
Michigan Ahead

The Cars Are Family

Another Tatra Tale

Waterfalls, Wineries, White Deer and Watkins Glen

From the forty-three returning participants to the fifteen fresh new faces, everyone found something special to enjoy in the Niagara & Finger Lakes regions of New York in June. For some it was the thrill of getting up close and personal with the thundering roar of Niagara Falls aboard the



Maid of the Mist. Others found thundering around the Watkins Glen International race track to be the real thrill. A few folks enjoyed more quiet moments, like relaxing with friends on the patio of The Thirsty

Owl Winery while taking in the tranquil view of Cayuga Lake or trying to catch a glimpse of one of the regions rare white deer.

At some point we all got to feel like kids again. We explored beneath the decks of WWII naval vessels, whizzed

around on an antique carrousel singing God Bless America along with the Wurlitzer band organ and enjoyed eating ice cream in the middle of warm summer days.

Along with a great destination we were blessed with terrific weather and remarkably few car troubles. For the first time ever, no vehicles went on the rescue trailer. For the FRR staff the smiles and laughter of the participants having fun with their vehicles and other car enthusiasts were what made the trip most memorable.

Our Sights Are Set On Michigan

Although we'd be happy to just bask in the wonderful memories of the Finger Lakes trip and the great new friends we made in June, we're busily preparing for the September tour. Michigan promises to be equally exciting and we hope that anyone who didn't make it to New York can join us there. The car museums are world class. We've found some great old diners and terrific shops. The state of Michigan is jam packed with interesting things to do and see, from classic art and architecture to quirky roadside oddities.



The Cars are Family—Dick & Sherrie's '65 Chrysler 300L

Sherrie was putting her life back together. She had run away from a bad life in Florida and moved back to Shreveport with 3 young kids. It was September 1973 and she had no car and no job. A friend found her this Chrysler for sale in a neighborhood driveway for \$400. Yes that's cheap, but it was also 1/2 of her total bank account! But at least with a car she could get around and found a job.

When I met Sherrie she was driving the 300. It was March 1974. Each weekend I would work on the Chrysler and still have time to date Sherrie. We married July 10, 1976. She still claims I married her for the Chrysler. Sometimes it doesn't pay to argue.

But the 300 was driven to high school by son David. The good news - he didn't wreck it. After he went to college Sherrie's sister, Tracy, needed a ride. We let her drive it until one day it came back on a wrecker hook, dead! The 300 went to a motor shop then a painter. Lastly it just got stored for 30 years.

After the 2010 Indiana Loop Freedom Road Trip in a 1927 Chrysler, I owed Sherrie a better ride - you guys know - like a car with brakes, a trunk, rear seats and A/C! The 300 got freshened up and got a chance to see Niagara Falls. Both Sherrie and the 300 got along great. We never picked up a screw driver and it was a fun ride.

An interesting story came with the car. The man who sold it to Sherrie told her he was told the car had originally belonged to the Lyndon B. Johnson family and was used in the oldest Johnson girls wedding. This could never be documented. But the original owner on the title was a lady from Karnack, TX., home of Lady Bird Johnson. Sherrie is the 3rd owner. —Dick Nelson



Mister Slezak Goes To Washington

Last November, Ivo received an invitation from the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington D.C. to display his Czech-made 1948 Tatra T-87 (air-cooled rear engine) automobile in a Tatra exhibition on the Embassy's grounds during the European Union Open House event of May 5-7, 2011, in which 28 Embassies in D.C. participated.

It so happens that a 1941 Tatra T-87 (owned by a couple from California) was declared the winner of the 2010 Collectible Car of the Year Contest by the *New York Times*; and the Embassy thought the Open House would provide a good opportunity to familiarize the public about this Czech company's vehicles—both past and present. Ivo's T-87 was displayed along with a 1938 T-77a, a 1935 T-57 (from Jeff Lane's automobile museum in Nashville, TN, www.lanemotormuseum.com), and two new T-815 trucks (all of which can be viewed on the Embassy's website:

http://www.mzv.cz/washington/en/economy_trade/news/tatra_auto_show.html) and http://www.mzv.cz/washington/en/culture_events/news/vgsfv.html.

On May 5, the Tatra owners attended a seminar and reception at the Embassy with guests from the Obama administration, Congress, and business leaders. The guests viewed the Tatras outside the Embassy building prior to the seminar during which Tatra Company representatives introduced their newest truck, the T-815. On May 6, an identical seminar was attended by military attaches from various Embassies in D.C. On May 7, the Czech



Embassy gates opened to approximately 3,000 visitors during the EU Open House Day. During each of the three days, the Tatra owners explained their auto's features and answered visitors' and guests' questions—just like at any car show.

Other Open House events at the Czech Embassy included tours of the Ambassador's residence, sampling of Czech cuisine (goulash and beer), and Czech-bred police-trained German Shepherds demonstrating obedience, and crime combating techniques and exercises. We learned that 50 percent of German Shepherd police dogs in the U.S. come from the Czech Republic, where they are bred specifically for their working instinct rather than as show dogs.

All in all, it was a great experience acquainting the Embassy staff and the public with some amazing examples of Tatra automobiles.

— submitted by Ivo Slezak & Brenda Letourneau

(I like the velvet ropes, ed.) —>

