

## Bud & Tom's Road Trip Adventure To Tulsa (And Back)

By Tom Kenney

On June 15, 1957 a new gold and white 1957 Plymouth Belvedere was buried in a time capsule in Tulsa, OK as part of Oklahoma's semi-centennial festivities. There was a contest to guess the population of Tulsa in 2007 and the Plymouth was to be awarded 50 years later to the winner, or their closest living relative.

I read about Tulsarama sometime in January 2007. On June 15, 2007, as part of the state's yearlong centennial celebration, the 1957 Plymouth was to be unearthed, along with other artifacts buried with it 50 years earlier.

To celebrate this historic event, the Tulsarama Invitational Car show was planned for 100 selected cars in the convention center. Also, there was to be a large outdoor car show for the hundreds of additional cars expected.

When I applied for the invitational car show and was accepted, I knew I wanted to go. The invitational show featured cars of the 50's - not necessarily 100-point cars - but cars from that era. Since DeSotos are rare, my car was accepted, flaws and all.

You could say I went to Tulsa for bragging rights. My 1955 DeSoto (Old Blue) is a driver, not a show car. It's never going to win points for being the best of a judged show.

I figured the best way to get to Tulsa was to drive (1,225 miles each way). I didn't have access to a trailer or tow vehicle. When Bud Currey said that he would accompany me and bring tools and his mechanical expertise, I knew we would be able to go and have a great time too.

The East Coast Plymouth Prowler group was also going to Tulsarama and we tagged along with them. They chose the route and the motels along the way. We enjoyed talking with the Prowler members each morning and evening on the trip to Tulsa.

Getting there was at least half the fun. The DeSoto's 185 HP, 291 CI Hemi ran smooth as silk between 60 and 65 mph, just fast enough to keep up with interstate traffic, but not fast enough to keep up with the Prowlers. The DeSoto doesn't have power anything - brakes, steering, or A/C. - and rides on bias ply tires. So we got the real experience and feel of a long trip in a '50s era car.



*Old Blue at the Tulsarama Invitational Car Show*

Bud and I enjoyed the thumbs up signals we received from passing motorists. The big rig trucks showed respect for Old Blue as they passed us wide, moving to the left and making a rumbling sound from the rumble strips on the side of the highway.

The rolling hills of Western Maryland and West Virginia were a thrill. The DeSoto maintained a steady speed up and down the mountains, which finally gave way to flatter terrain after crossing the Ohio River. The remainder of the trip was straight and flat. We stopped



*Dirt and rust covered the 1957 Plymouth Belvedere on the stage*

overnight in Columbus, OH and Fenton, MO.

Once in Tulsa, we placed the DeSoto in its reserved spot for the indoor invitational car show. With our exhibitor's badges, we had access and tickets to all the events. We watched the unearthing of Miss Belvedere from its crypt-like vault on the large-screen TV in the arena. We walked outside in time to see the Plymouth, covered in a protective bag, moved into the convention center on a flatbed trailer. Later that evening the Plymouth was uncovered with great fanfare.

Even though Miss Belvedere was covered with rust and dirt, it was still a grand Plymouth Belvedere. The cylindrical time capsule, buried with the Plymouth, was in perfect condition. The items stored inside for 50 years were well preserved. When the Master of Ceremonies reached in and pulled out a large American flag, the big audience erupted in spontaneous applause. It was an electrifying moment.

The next day, the Plymouth was placed on a lighted stage at the indoor car show. We were able to view it early in the morning before spectators were allowed inside the arena. The artifacts in the time capsule were also displayed. The show floor was crowded well into the evening.

Later Saturday night we went to the Mayor's Sock Hop featuring Fabian, Bobby Vee and the Chiffons. It was a rocking good time.

We enjoyed talking to all the car enthusiasts. When it came time to drive home, we knew the DeSoto would get us back home. We were home in 1-1/2 days. We traveled 2,450 miles without a drop of rain on the way there. On the way home we had one brief period of rain. On the entire trip, we never saw an accident. Old Blue averaged 16-1/2 mpg. Gas prices varied between a low of \$2.73 to a high of \$3.14 per gallon.