

Another Great Road Trip

By Ole Gal

Assisted By Read Van Zile

Here I am again reporting about the great trip I had with my owner Joanne Day and my chief driver Read Van Zile.

Boy, did we have a neat trip to New York state: Cooperstown, Norwich, Watkins Glen and Corning. Joanne and Read decided to let me take them on the trip and we left on Sunday morning, June 28th. Our first stop was to take Joanne's dogs to the kennel. That alone was funny to see as our luggage, a small cooler, Joanne and two dogs were in the back seat; and the big dog was in the front seat. Remember, we Thunderbird convertibles don't have any trunk space when the top is down.

Joanne's twelve year old great nephew, who lives in Florida, is on a baseball team that went to Cooperstown. The place is called Cooperstown Dreams Park. It has twenty-two baseball diamonds – all for kids about his age. There are dormitories where they live for a week. Each week for ten weeks during the summer there's a new group of 96 teams. The kids' families rent motels, B & Bs or houses, and go to watch the games. As far as we can tell, this is not directly related to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

It turns out that Cooperstown was an absolutely charming little town right on Lake Otsego. Joanne and Read had found a motel that overlooked the lake. Once we got settled in, we went looking for Joanne's family and found them easily (thank goodness for cell phones)! They all went to dinner in a big SUV, leaving me in the driveway to be admired by the neighbors.

The next morning, I drove them around the town and they went to lunch at a great lakefront restaurant – Blue Mingo. From there we went to watch a game and Brett (the great nephew) was the pitcher for five of the six innings. His team won 9 to 2. After the game, I took Joanne and Read back into town so they could wander the main street. Joanne said that she had never seen so

many stores selling so much baseball paraphernalia in her life.

After driving them around the area, I ended up taking them to the Lake Front Restaurant for dinner where they said they had a great meal with a spectacular view of the Lake. I stayed outside, of course, and loved the admiring looks I was getting.

Tuesday morning was cool with a little sprinkle of rain here and there. It was so cool that Joanne and Read both ended up buying sweatshirts. We checked out of the motel and met up with Joanne's niece and family. We went to see more baseball, but the game got rained out. There was torrential rain and a little hail thrown in for good measure, but my beautiful black paint was OK.



Showing off my vanity plates

Once the rain let up, we left and drove to Norwich, NY. The next morning we went to the Northeast Classic Car Museum. Opened in 1997, the Museum's mission is to showcase the automotive history of New York. It features the Staley Collection – rare cars from the early era; Franklins, which were produced in Syracuse; coach-built classics; unrestored “barn finds” from New York; and many



Scenes from inside the Museum



Concours quality prestigious makes – among them Packard, Auburn, Cord and Duesenberg.

The Museum has over 100 cars, including the world's largest collection of Franklins. Most of the cars are from the Staley collection. George Staley is still alive at age 91 and occasionally comes in, takes one of his cars and replaces it with a different one. They also have a display of several cars in the process of restoration. They don't do any of the restoration work at the Museum, just let them sit there so you can get an idea of where they start from, especially the barn finds.

The museum is only about 12 years old, but is really spectacular. Joanne and Read spent much more time in there than they had originally planned. The Museum plays period music, including a player piano into which you can put quarters to make it play; and they have many manikins dressed in the style of the era of the cars they are near. My only regret about the Museum was that I wasn't allowed to come in the service entrance and also look at these fine brethren like Joanne and Read did.

Later that day, (Wednesday), I drove them to Watkins Glen, home of much automobile racing over the years. Read and Joanne found a great motel right on the lake with a spectacular view. They took a tour of Lake Seneca on a tour boat (Watkins Glen is at the southern end of Lake Seneca, one of New York's Finger Lakes).

Well, the next morning, Thursday, was devoted to me. I got to drive the original Watkins Glen race course – 6.6 miles through the town and surrounding area. Boy was that fun. You may remember that they wouldn't let me drive the race course at Daytona last year, but at least I did Watkins Glen this year.

From there, I drove them to Corning, NY, where they went to visit the Corning Glass Museum. They both came out raving about what beautiful items they had. And finally, it was drive, drive, drive back to Baltimore. We picked up the dogs and were back home by dark.