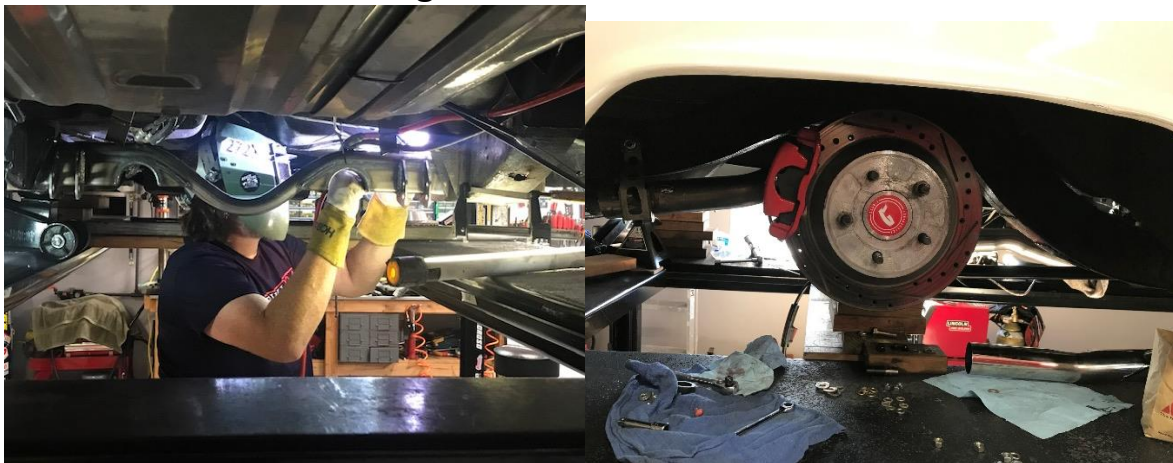


## A CHRISTMAS TAIL

'Twas 20 nights before Christmas, and all through the house  
Not a keyboard was stirring, nor even a wireless mouse;  
The stockings were hung up, even though we were sure  
no mystical person was going to show up with a beard and white hair..  
There was a hell of a racket out there on the lawn.  
Sounded like the neighbors new Porche had a wheel bearing gone.  
But no, it was a miniature sleigh and flying rein-deer a heap.  
I knew then, no more magic brownies before sleep.  
Then his turbo spooled and the entire lot was up on my roof.  
If the red nosed one poops, I'll kick the galoot.  
A fat man came out of the chimney and grabbed packages galore.  
He looked like a bloody porch pirate for sure.  
While I looked for my phone to call 911,  
The wanker drank up my last Cuban rum.  
Up the chimney he went high as a kite,  
Singing out, "You'll pay for this holiday for many a night".

Apologies to Clement Clarke Moore

Now, the boring part. For Harry, lots of car shows as usual. No rides on the back of a flatbed so that was a nice change. Most of that success was due to literally throwing away the entire rear end and installing a new four link. So far, so good.



I did take the little red trailer up to visit the cousins a few times. Once to its regular Saturday show just across the border and after staying the night, going out to Tsawwassen for not only a car show but a festival. One booboo, I arrived for one show and it was canceled so to avoid a wasted trip I turned around, stopped at the duty-free store and bought two bottles of Cuban rum (only place you can get it besides Cuba). The customs guy liked my story and didn't even charge me duty.

ALERT: Mary went to a car show. This was on the Washington/Oregon border at Maryhill. A millionaire named Sam Hill (really) back in 1914 built an amazing museum, a replica of Stonehenge (nicknamed cement henge), and a road along the Columbia River. A state park is adjacent so we stayed in the park with the trailer and went to the show, The Concours de Maryhill. I didn't see any cars there that qualified as concours but it was a fun day. (Free admission to the museum with entrance fee.)

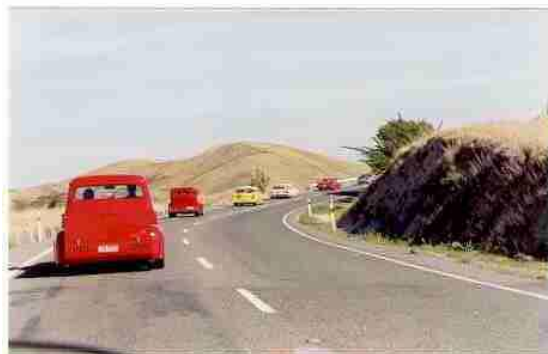


After another night in the park, we drove up the coast to visit and cockroach a night with a widowed club lady. A gastronomical treat, for sure. Then to visit John and Rita on Marrowstone Island, old boating friends, for our last night. This is closer to the type of trip that Mary likes. And did I mention it poured from the minute we left Ocean Shores till we returned home. Summer is over.

And now that you mention car shows in exotic places, how's a trip to New Zealand for a car show sound? In mid-February, I leave for three weeks in Godzone, as the Kiwis call it. It was in '98, 25 years ago that Mary and I left from New Zealand's Great Barrier Island heading for the

Southern Austal's, about 200 miles south of Tahiti. 2000 miles of Southern Ocean, incredible surfing down the biggest waves I've ever seen, getting pooped, the normal scary stuff and a story for another time.

Short story, I love EnZed. I loved it from the moment I first arrived in 1978. My infatuation grew during another four summers I spent there. So, I'm going back, not on a boat but on an Airbus 330. And the why, not for anything reasonable but for a car show.



Above: Mad Dog and his club cruise the South Island in their Yank tanks. Nothing like it.

Back In '09, Mad Dog, a Kiwi pen pal (cyber mate, really) sent me a ball cap from the show. That was the starting of the itch. The web site, modern now, "new and improved", was so enticing that I couldn't resist. The show is called AMERICARNA, and is in New Plymouth, south west coast of the North Island. It's 4 days, includes cruises with up to 900 cars and the big show, which costs nz\$275 (which is about 35 bucks US). Okay, it's not that good but it is better than the Canadian exchange rate.



Doesn't really matter as I am not taking my car this year....but....? The main show is limited to 300 cars, all of which have to be American made classics as do they all. Visit the web site. You'll see more American flags than any Fourth of July you have ever been to. It's summer so the weather's a box of fluffy ducks. Only sad part, Mad Dog, was killed in a motorcycle accident two years ago. I know this as I sent an email to the show contact address asking if anyone knew Mike or his wife. All I had were two first names from 14 years ago yet a lady wrote back instantly saying she'll have Kerrie contact me the next day. This is in a country of almost 5 million people. This is some kind of deja moo. I was meant to go.

Lastly, even if the country is nicknamed Godzone, I'd say that god doesn't like their petrol machines. She makes it very apparent with the three dollars a liter price. That's about 11 bucks for a US gallon. Would you like to drive a 1957 Chrysler Imperial a thousand kilometers to a car show at \$3 a liter? AND on the wrong side of the road.



Merry Christmas from Harry and Mary. I hope you all have a wonderful holiday and I hope you get to fulfill a dream of yours before time slips away. Don't wait. And fyi, New Zealand really isn't that far....

....unless you go in a stupid sail boat.

**Harry and Mary**

