

## Alaska Region - 2017 Parade

Dave Oliver (2010 - 911 Carrera 4S) was the first member to head for Spokane on June 28<sup>th</sup> from a Florida snowbird nest. He set out early to sightsee at Mt. Rushmore and the Badlands with a stop at his parents' in Washington State. While driving through Sioux City, Iowa, he ran into rain with the added "bonus" of hailstones! Ouch! There were over fifty dents in his hood, so after an otherwise delightful drive discovering the Needles Highway in South Dakota, he made arrangements to have the dents repaired in Seattle following Parade. He made the trip to Spokane on time for his volunteer stint at registration. (His drive proved to be slightly less calamitous than the remainder of the group).

From the North, the Alaskan Parade-bound members began their trek on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Mike & Teri Holtzclaw (Red w/blue tape, 1986 - 911), Don & Tess Faulkenberry (GTS Cayenne), Dave Rein & Candy ?LASTNAME? (Blue Boxster convertible), Jamie & Tracy Benard with their son CJ (2006 - 911, license plate DSRPTER and Red 2006 Cayenne, license plate REDPPR), and Yvonne Oliver (2017 Miami Blue 718 Boxster S) all met in Palmer, Alaska. Jamie brought U.S. flags for each car, and Tracy provided us each with beanie baby mascots and water bottles from the club. We were escorted by Alaska member Terrance Pearson, who wished he could attend Parade, but turned homeward after a couple of hours for a date with his lawn mower.

When we reached the frost heaves (think skiing moguls!) near Glennallen, Mike slowed considerably, as his car had been lowered an inch when he put on bigger tires in preparation for the drive south. He also had a new battery and rebuilt alternator installed, along with an alignment. With each unavoidable bump, the tires rubbed and worried him. Through radio contact, we would try to warn him of upcoming dips by saying "BUMP!" quite frequently. The group waited for the Holtzclaws in order to cross the Canadian border together. We spent our first night in Beaver Creek, after a short 8-hour day.

The next day, Mike continued to take it easy, so the rest of us would periodically pull off the road and let him catch up. At one point, around Destruction Bay and Kluane Lake, we waited for Mike...and waited...and waited. After a leisurely lunch break by the lake, we returned to an area with cell phone reception to find out the Holtzclaws had stopped at Frosty's in Haines Junction, Yukon for ice cream and were on their way to Whitehorse, an hour *ahead* of us! The group reassembled at Wal-Mart in Whitehorse and continued on to Watson Lake, arriving at 10PM. Yvonne had reservations at the "Nice Motel", but the office was closed and no one could be roused, so she was without a room. Her husband Dave, booked the room for her thinking she would prefer the amenities there over "Andrea's Hotel", where the rest of the group stayed. Andrea's Hotel hotel was filled for the night, so the Holtzclaws let Yvonne bunk with them. Needless to say, none of us thought the "Nice Motel" was actually very nice after our 12-hour day.

The next morning, we took advantage of the continued good weather with a photo op in front of the "Sign Post Forest" that Watson Lake is known for, before heading out. We saw many black bears and a brown one, too. We relished the drive along Muncho Lake although we had to wait for the goats to clear from the road at one point. We stopped at Liard Hot

Springs for a couple hours of soaking and lunch until proceeding southeast, past Stone Mountain, through Fort Nelson on our way to Fort St John. It was a nicely paced 11-hour day.

The fourth day began with Don & Tess striking out early on their own. They were concerned that the CV joint in their Cayenne might be going out, and wanted to take it easier. The rest of us trailed them until Jamie, our leader, was unable to avoid a 3" quick disconnect coupling and pipe laying in the middle of the road. He knocked it out of the way for most of us, but Jamie's right rear tire had a three-finger sized hole in it! Fortunately, we were only about 25 miles out of Fort St John, so Jamie & Tracy took their Cayenne back there and rented a U-Haul auto trailer to tow Jamie's car until they could get new tires for it. Mike had extra tires from having won the long distance award at Parade several times and had Alaska Airlines Gold Streak (overnight service) two tires down to family in Bellingham, WA area. While waiting, CJ gathered the couplings and other debris, and the Holtzclaws got on the phone. Yvonne drove to the next little town of Hudson's Hope for a pit stop and headed back armed with Creamsicles to beat the heat. A quarter of the way back, she found Dave & Candy on the side of the road having discovered a fist-sized hole in his back tire! He had hit the same coupling as Jamie, not realizing his tire was damaged also. They had called back to Mike for help, but could not locate the security key to unlock the lug-nuts for tire removal. Apparently the dealer he purchased the used Boxster from did not check for or include the key. Many a good Samaritan stopped and checked on us all and tried to help, but it was determined that Dave needed to get a tow back to Fort St John and stay there to get one or two new tires.

Three hours later, and the remaining vehicles were on the road again. We had a brief pit stop in Hudson's Hope for sandwiches where Tracy tripped over the trailer hitch retrieving a cup of ice. She skinned her knee, bruised her elbow, and cut her mouth on the cup itself. She was our only physical casualty and a real trooper. Dave Rein didn't get his tow for seven hours, but got back to Ft St John before a thunderstorm hit. Teri rode with Yvonne, CJ with Mike, and Jamie & Tracy in their Cayenne. We drove into the thunder and lightning storm with torrential rain. Mike's car began to sputter so he stopped and applied a raincoat over the spoiler and engine vents thinking water was getting into the engine compartment and causing problems. It was later determined the alternator was failing and not charging the battery. Luckily, we had a spare battery in Jamie's car that was being towed, so they swapped them out. Yvonne would then jump the dead battery (now in DSRPTER), to get the car started and running on the trailer to recharge the battery until the next swap was necessary. This continued as-needed until we reached Spokane.

Meanwhile, we got word from Faulkenberrys ahead of us, that the road to Cache Creek was closed due to wildfires—we would have to detour through Kamloops. They spent the night in their Cayenne, when the hotels closed and the evacuated area lost power.

While swapping batteries at the gas station in Mackenzie, under cover from the rain, the men in our party nearly had a heart attack when a Mountie, sirens blaring, came racing in. Our guys were all wondering who was getting a ticket this time! We witnessed Canada's finest hurriedly fill his tank, and screech out down the road to direct traffic around the fires. With worries of impounded Porsches past, we made it to Prince George about 9:30PM and began the hunt for rooms. Between a monster truck show, a Watchtower convention, and the fire

evacuees, there was “no room at the inn” except three smoking rooms. Not yet that desperate, Mike called Super 8 and got us reservations at “Esther’s Inn” for three rooms. When we got there, the desk clerk wanted to know who said they had space, since they were completely full. The night manager asked how many in our party, because they had one family room with three double beds (and one bathroom). We replied “six of us, but two of us are singles!” A cot and a “foamie” were located, and we proceeded to have a slumber party that night! A quick walk for fast food, pizza, and adult beverages before stores closed concluded our 13-hour day! We pretty much felt like family by then, so the accommodations were appropriate.

Day five was the day we planned to reach Spokane originally. The roads were fairly decent on the way to Kamloops, where it was decided that Yvonne and Teri would head directly to Spokane for a late-night arrival. The rest of the crew would go to Lynnwood, retrieving tires for Jamie’s car, after swapping batteries once again. Yvonne misjudged clearing a curb edge while pulling up to jump the dead battery now in Jamie’s car and took out the radiator on the right side of her Boxster, losing all the coolant. A call to her husband, AAA for a tow, and looking up the nearest Porsche dealership ensued. It was determined Kelowna, B.C. was the closest town with a Porsche dealer, and we all headed the direction Teri and Yvonne had planned on, but an extra 200 miles out of the way for the rest of the group. Yvonne rode with the tow truck driver and got a guided tour along the way. We arrived at the address from the website to find the dealership was not yet opened. Yvonne asked a passerby where we might find the current headquarters and he thought it might be the Audi dealer. The tow truck driver knew the way and we left the Boxster at the night drop. Everyone squeezed into REDPPR and Mike’s car. It was getting dark, so Mike followed closely, driving without headlights to conserve the battery. Sometime around midnight Mike was pulled over by a female Mountie who was very understanding. She may have been charmed by him as so many are, as he received no citation. He kept his lights on for the rest of the night. We reached Lynnwood around 4AM after an easy border crossing. The guard probably felt sorry for our rag-tag vehicles. We dragged ourselves to hotel rooms to finally end our 18-hour day with four to five hours of sleep ahead of us.

Jamie, Tracy, and CJ arose early to get new tires on Jamie’s 911 and to return the U-Haul trailer. CJ noticed a hitchhiker on Mike’s car—a dead mouse, hanging off the bottom of the door. We doubt it had enjoyed the ride much. A new battery, inverter and battery charger were purchased for Mike’s car. He and Jamie macgyvered the heck out of the inverter that converted the 12 volts DC from a power outlet in the back of the Cayenne to 120 volts AC so they could plug the battery charger in to provide 12 volts DC to charge the battery from Mike’s car! We left at noon to arrive in Spokane just as registration was closing, and felt like our luck was finally changing when we were let in to register 10 minutes after registration had officially closed for the day! A big thank you to all the Parade staff that took care of us! We had a nice, normal Parade experience with a large Zone 11 party with our Hawaiian members. Many of us visited with family or friends living in the area. Our region won the President’s award for the 7<sup>th</sup> year in a row! We enjoyed the company of our scattered Alaskan members who made it to Parade also. Mike had his car repaired and raised back up for the trip home. Don’s car turned

out to have a problem with the front drive shaft and had it corrected. Susan Bently performed a purification ceremony in the parking garage for us and our cars between the volunteer lunch and the Parade of Porsches. At the final Victory Banquet, Dave Rein's ticket was pulled to win a door prize; his pre-purchased tickets had been resold by Mike. The generous crowd shouted "give him the prize!" after it was explained he was still stuck in Canada. This was quite possibly the first time in Parade history that the assemblage had not cried "pull again!" Saying goodbye to 2017's Parade lasted to midnight and beyond.

Don & Tess remained in the Spokane area, looking for real estate to retire to. Dave & Yvonne struck out for Seattle at 3AM on Sunday to drop the Carrera off at Barrier Porsche to have the hail damage corrected. Their son, local to the area, met them at 7AM and took them to SEATAC for their flight to Kelowna to reclaim the Boxster. The General Manager of Kelowna Audi picked them up on arrival and opened the dealership to turn over their repaired Boxster. They made Prince George an hour ahead of the rest of the group, having all skirted more fires. Team Alaska was able to keep their 12-hour schedules, and made it back to the Land of the Midnight Sun in three days without further incident. Dave Rein traveled home at a more leisurely pace.

Our thanks go out to Susan Bently for the travel blessings. We also thank Spokane Porsche and Kelowna Audi for fixing our cars in time to drive back as a group! We were able to see wild horses, a bison herd, foxes, and more bears on the return trip. We once again enjoyed a stop at Pickhandle Lake to watch the ducks. We *all* got ice cream at Frosty's this time. Amazing friendships are forged on road-trips. 2017 Porsche Parade will always be a trip to remember for the Alaska Region and one by which to gauge future trans-Canadian travel.