

Yes, Virginia, There is Life After Seventeen Hours in a T-Type

7:10 pm "We'll keep her at 4200. That's about 58 MPH, so we should be able to average 50." And so Carl Vogel and I settled down for a motor to Milwaukee--the long way.

After a sedate take off we were soon left behind by our fellow travelers. The first car we caught up with was Frank's. We passed each other through Chicago, on the Skyway, and through Indiana. He went on as we pulled into the first rest area in Michigan.

9:10 pm "Look who's here. Gerry Risner! How the hell did he get here so fast? He must have a semi-trailer a la Knight Rider that picks him up, speeds ahead, lets him out so someone can see him on the road, then picks him up again." "That's got to be it."

10:45 pm "I'll have another chocolate chip cookie."

11:30 pm A set of head lights appears in the rear view mirror. "Here comes somebody." Varoom. Beep. Beep. At least Vi and Phil smiled and waved as they blew our doors off.

12:35 pm As per our plan we should be turning right to cut over to Route 27. But the divided highway goes further. "Let's try it." "But what about the gas? The green light is on." "How far is it to the next town?" Not to worry--an all night truck stop. There's Vi and Phil. A quick fill up. Add a quart of oil to the engine and a squirt of 3-in-1 oil to the squeaky tach and we're off.

1:15 am "Look at those stars." There's the Big Dipper hanging over the top of the windscreen. "See what those other cars are missing by having their tops up." (I never did find the Little Dipper or the North Star.) The half moon is up and very bright...click...but, no...click, not bright enough to drive by.

2:24 am At last a rest stop to put on some warm clothes and to change drivers. We're putting on every bit of extra clothes we have. Several tour buses are also using the rest area. Why are those people walking way around us? Is it because we look a little strange? Doesn't everyone wear their sweatshirt over their head with the sleeves tied under their chin?

3:25 am There's someone pulled off on the side of the road. Let's check it out. It's Frank. As we pull off and start to back up, he takes off. What were you doing Frank?

4:10 am It's getting light as we approach the bridge. (I don't remember a thing about the actual drive across.) God, don't forget the receipt! "Is there a gas station open?" "Ya, on the right." Well the jerk was wrong. It was to the left, on the left.

5:00 am The prettiest part of the trip, right along the shore, and I couldn't have cared less. At least it was light enough that there weren't any deer wandering around on the road.

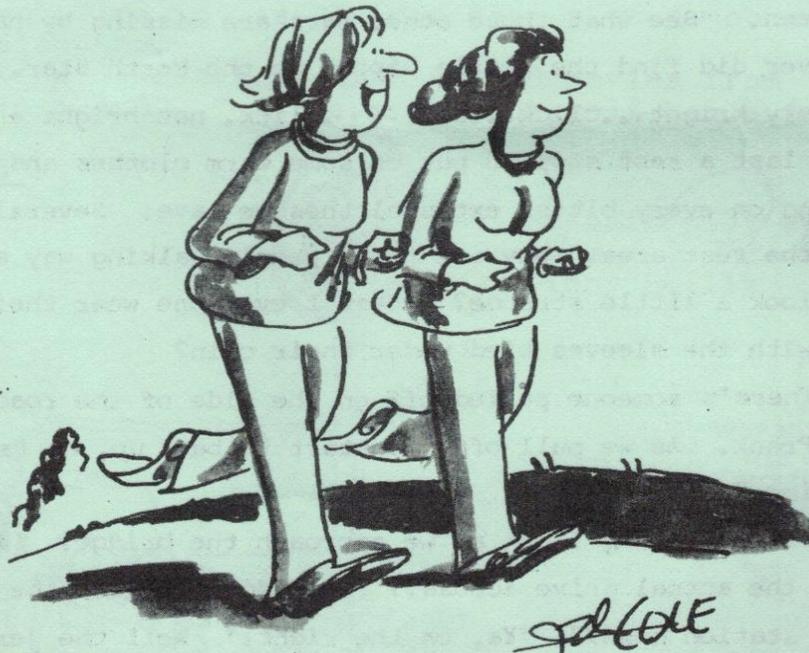
6:30 am We've got us a convoy. Frank is in front. We're in the middle. And Gerry is right behind. Damn, road work. The earlier cars weren't slowed down by this. "Let's stop. I want to check the oil." Only took two quarts! We also made a road side pit stop. Very interesting flora.

8:15 am Thank God Carl is holding up so well. I'm in no shape to even think about driving. "I've got to stop and get out of the car." A sign of civilization--McDonalds. We're actually sitting down, and we're not in the car! I know I was wired--no sleep, too much coffee and No-Doz. I must have been hallucinating--there was a young thing that was so-oh well developed. But Carl admits that he saw her too. We lost at least a half hour by stopping. Even after taking out my contacts and washing up, it was another hour before I was up to driving.

11:10 am The last fifty miles were the longest. And it became an obsession to finish by noon. I pushed harder than ever. Damn, a stop light. "When we pull in, you jump out, hit the ground running, and get our ticket punched." The front desk was a little hectic, so we didn't get clocked in until 12:01. However, we did get our rooms right away!

Don't ever remind me of this trip--until it's time to do it again next year.

Ric Maitzen



"I don't mind growing old as long as I'm still growing!"